



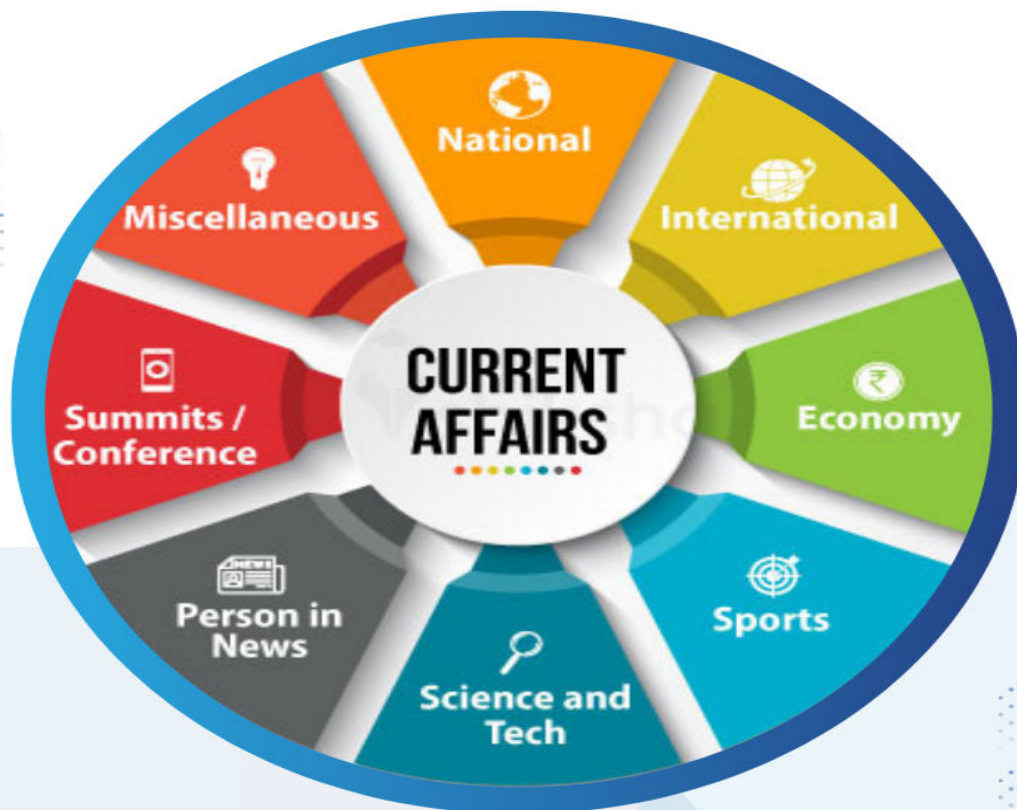
“ We help you reach for the star ”

# **VIDHVATH IAS KAS ACADEMY & STUDY CENTRE**

## **DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS**

**FOR UPSC CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION**

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 **9972258970 & 9740702455**

**#317/A SKB Arcade, D. Subbaiah Road,  
Ramaswamy Circle, Mysuru-570004**



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**VIDHVATH IAS ACADEMY**



## 1. Record Voter Turnout in Assembly Elections: Trends and Implications

- **Unprecedented Participation Levels:** The 2026 Assembly elections witnessed historic democratic participation, with Assam recording its highest-ever turnout at 85.91% and Puducherry reaching a landmark 89.87%. Kerala maintained its robust democratic tradition with a turnout of 78.27%, nearing its 1987 all-time high, signaling a deeply engaged electorate across diverse geographies.
- **Administrative Precision and Roll Revision:** The high turnout follows a Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, ensuring greater accuracy and inclusion. A total electorate of over 5.31 crore across 296 seats was vetted, highlighting the Election Commission of India's (ECI) efforts in purifying rolls and enhancing voter confidence in the electoral machinery.
- **Micro-level Engagement in Assam:** In a significant trend for electoral studies, many polling booths in Assam reported over 95% participation. This "historic" surge is often interpreted by political analysts as either a strong pro-incumbency consolidation or a decisive mandate for change, reflecting high stakes in the state's socio-political landscape.
- **Bypolls and Regional Trends:** Beyond major state elections, bypolls in Karnataka, Nagaland, and Tripura also recorded substantial participation (ranging from 68% to 82%). This indicates that even localized contests are drawing significant voter interest, reinforcing the "festivals of democracy" narrative in the Indian federal structure.
- **Incumbency vs. Aspirations:** Leaders across party lines have interpreted the high numbers as a mandate for their respective visions. While incumbents view the turnout as an endorsement of stability and welfare governance, opposition forces link the surge to a "mood for change," emphasizing the qualitative aspect of quantitative data in post-poll analysis.
- **Peaceful Conduct of Polls:** Despite the massive scale and high intensity of the campaigns, the polling remained largely peaceful, including in sensitive regions. This underscores the efficacy of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) and the deployment of security forces in maintaining the integrity of the democratic process.

### Key Definitions

- **Voter Turnout:** The percentage of eligible voters who cast a ballot in an election. It serves as a primary indicator of the health of a democracy and the level of public trust in the political system.
- **Special Intensive Revision (SIR):** A process undertaken by the ECI to update electoral rolls by visiting households to enroll new voters, remove deceased or shifted names, and correct errors to ensure a "clean" list before polling.

### Constitutional & Legal Provisions

- **Article 324:** Grants the Election Commission of India the power of superintendence, direction, and control of elections. The record turnout is a testament to the ECI's constitutional mandate to conduct free and fair polls.
- **Article 326:** Establishes "Adult Suffrage," ensuring that every citizen of India who is not less than 18 years of age has the right to be registered as a voter, forming the bedrock of the high participation observed.

#### Making it count

Assam, Kerala, and Puducherry marked higher turnouts than in previous polls; this comes against the backdrop of the SIR (special revision in Assam) leading to deletion of names from voter rolls



**Mandate on line:** People standing in queue to cast their votes at a polling station in Guwahati on Thursday. RITU RAJ KONWAR

Assam (126 seats)	
Voter turnout	85.91%
2021 turnout	82.04%
Kerala (140 seats)	
Voter turnout	78.27%
2021 turnout	74.06%
Puducherry (30 seats)	
Voter turnout	89.87%
2021 turnout	83.28%

PROVISIONAL TURNOUT AS OF 12:00 A.M.



- **Representation of the People Act, 1951:** Provides the legal framework for the conduct of elections, registration of political parties, and the mechanism for counting votes (scheduled for May 4 in this cycle).

### Conclusion

The record-breaking turnout in the 2026 polls reflects a maturing Indian democracy where the electorate increasingly views the ballot as a potent tool for socio-economic transformation. While the administrative success of the ECI in managing 5.31 crore voters is commendable, the high percentages also place a greater burden of accountability on the incoming representatives to honor the massive mandate.

### UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II (Polity):** Salient features of the Representation of the People Act; Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions, and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies (ECI).
- **GS Paper IV (Ethics):** Participation in democratic processes as a civic duty; Integrity of the electoral process.

## 2. World Bank Revisions to India's FY27 Growth Outlook: Analysis and Drivers

- **Downward Revision of GDP Projections:** The World Bank, in its latest India Development Update, has lowered India's GDP growth forecast for the fiscal year 2026-27 to 6.6%, down from the previously estimated 7.2%. This adjustment reflects a shift from an optimistic "pro-growth reform" trajectory to one tempered by external geopolitical shocks, specifically the prolonged conflict in West Asia.
- **Impact of Global Energy Disruptions:** The primary driver for this 0.6 percentage point cut is the anticipated "extended disruption" in global oil and gas supplies lasting until the end of 2026. As India remains a major energy importer, volatility in the Middle East directly impacts the current account balance and domestic production costs, leading to a slowdown in both household and government consumption.
- **Resilience Amidst Headwinds:** The report highlights that in a scenario devoid of conflict, India was poised for a 7.2% growth rate, backed by strong momentum from the final quarter of FY26. This suggests that India's domestic economic fundamentals—including industrial activity and reform agendas—remain structurally sound, though currently vulnerable to imported inflation and supply chain bottlenecks.
- **Regional Economic Context:** The slowdown is not isolated to India; the South Asia Economic Update 2026 indicates a regional deceleration to 6.3%. India, however, continues to outpace the regional average, maintaining its position as a relative bright spot despite the downward revision, provided it can navigate the energy market's turbulence.
- **Focus on Private Sector and Employment:** World Bank officials have emphasized that boosting private sector-led growth is non-negotiable for economic resilience. With a burgeoning youth population, the focus must shift toward creating a conducive environment for private investment to absorb the expanding workforce, thereby insulating the economy from public spending constraints.





- **Industrial and Consumption Drag:** The revision underscores a cautious outlook for industrial activity, which faces higher input costs due to energy prices. Furthermore, reduced government consumption—as fiscal space tightens to manage subsidies or energy shocks—combined with cautious household spending, creates a temporary "growth ceiling" for the upcoming fiscal cycle.

### Key Definitions

- **GDP (Gross Domestic Product):** The total monetary or market value of all the finished goods and services produced within a country's borders in a specific time period, serving as a comprehensive scorecard of its economic health.
- **FY27 (Fiscal Year 2026-27):** In the Indian context, this refers to the accounting period starting April 1, 2026, and ending March 31, 2027.
- **India Development Update:** A biannual flagship publication of the World Bank that analyzes recent economic developments in India and provides a near-term outlook.

### Constitutional & Legal Provisions

- **Article 112 (Annual Financial Statement):** While the World Bank provides external projections, the Union Budget (Article 112) is the primary legal document where the Government of India outlines its own growth targets and fiscal policy to counter such global headwinds.
- **Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act, 2003:** This legal framework mandates the government to ensure fiscal discipline. Downward growth revisions often make it challenging for the government to meet its fiscal deficit targets as tax revenues may dip.
- **Energy Security Policy:** Though not a single constitutional article, India's strategic petroleum reserves and diversified energy procurement legalities are critical to mitigating the "West Asia" risks mentioned in the report.

### Conclusion

The World Bank's revision serves as a reminder of the "polycrisis" environment where domestic reforms can be shadowed by external geopolitical volatility. For India to regain the 7% plus growth trajectory, a dual strategy of diversifying energy dependencies and aggressively incentivizing private capital expenditure (Capex) will be essential to offset the dampening effects of global supply disruptions.

### UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper III (Economy):** Issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development, and employment; Effects of liberalization on the economy; Energy security and infrastructure.
- **GS Paper II (International Relations):** Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests (specifically West Asia conflict impacts).

## 3. India's First Quantum Reference Facility: Paving the Way for Quantum Leadership

- **Launch of National Quantum Infrastructure:** Andhra Pradesh is set to host India's first quantum computing testing beds, known as the Quantum Reference Facility (QRF). Scheduled for dedication on April 14, 2026—coinciding with World Quantum Day—this facility marks a critical milestone in India's quest to join the elite group of nations with sovereign quantum capabilities.
- **The Amaravati Quantum Valley Initiative:** The facility is a product of the State government's ambitious "Amaravati Quantum Valley" programme. It consists of two dedicated testing beds located



at SRM University-A.P., developed in a public-private partnership involving the Amaravati Quantum Research Facility and Qubit Force.

- **Filling the Technological Void:** Until now, India lacked a localized "reference computer" capable of benchmarking and testing indigenous quantum components. This facility will serve as the national standard for verifying the performance of various hardware and software elements within the domestic quantum ecosystem, reducing reliance on foreign testing labs.
- **Human Capital and Research Synergy:** The project integrates a specialized team of 50 researchers, scientists, and students. This collaborative environment at SRM University aims to bridge the gap between academic research and industrial application, fostering a talent pipeline essential for the next generation of computing.
- **Strategic Timing on World Quantum Day:** The launch on April 14 highlights India's alignment with global scientific commemorations. It signals a shift from theoretical quantum research to applied engineering, focusing on building a functional and scalable quantum computing infrastructure within the country.
- **Economic and Scientific Implications:** By providing a standardized testing ground, the QRF is expected to accelerate the development of quantum-secured communications, drug discovery, and complex financial modeling, positioning Andhra Pradesh as a primary hub for deep-tech innovation in South Asia.



### Key Definitions

- **Quantum Computing:** A type of computing that uses quantum-mechanical phenomena, such as superposition and entanglement, to perform calculations significantly faster than classical computers for specific complex problems.
- **Quantum Reference Facility (QRF):** A specialized infrastructure that provides a "gold standard" or benchmark environment to test, calibrate, and validate quantum hardware, sensors, and algorithms.
- **Superposition:** A fundamental principle of quantum mechanics where a quantum system can exist in multiple states simultaneously until it is measured.

### Constitutional & Legal Provisions

- **Article 51A (h):** The Indian Constitution mandates that it shall be the duty of every citizen to develop "scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform." Initiatives like the QRF are direct embodiments of this Fundamental Duty at a state and national policy level.
- **National Quantum Mission (NQM):** Approved by the Union Cabinet in 2023, this mission provides the overarching legal and financial framework for quantum research in India. The Andhra Pradesh facility acts as a regional implementation wing that complements the NQM's goal of developing intermediate-scale quantum computers.
- **Science, Technology, and Innovation Policy (STIP):** This facility aligns with the national policy of achieving "Atmanirbhar Bharat" (Self-reliant India) in critical and emerging technologies (iCET), ensuring data sovereignty and technological security.



## Conclusion

The establishment of the Quantum Reference Facility in Andhra Pradesh transitions India from the "experimental" phase to the "standardization" phase of quantum technology. By creating a hub where indigenous components can be vetted against global standards, India is securing its position in the global technological race, ensuring that the future "Quantum Internet" and "Quantum Economy" have a strong Indian foundation.

## UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper III (Science & Technology):** Developments and their applications and effects in everyday life; Achievements of Indians in science & technology; Indigenization of technology and developing new technology.
- **GS Paper III (Economy):** Infrastructure and its role in industrial growth; Public-Private Partnership (PPP) models in high-tech sectors.

## 4. Higher Education in India: Moving Scholarships from Margins to Centre

- **The GER Challenge and Infrastructure Gap:** While India's higher education institutions have grown from 51,534 in 2014-15 to over 70,000 in 2025-26, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) remains at 29.5% (2022-23). To reach the National Education Policy (NEP) target of 50%, the focus must shift from merely building seats to addressing the "cost and risk" of participation that prevents capable students from graduating.
- **Triple Constraints of Access, Affordability, and Quality:** The sector faces intersecting challenges where regional disparities (access) and high long-term investment costs (affordability) often deter students from tier-2 and tier-3 towns. Without a robust support system, enrolment remains restricted to the advantaged, leaving a vast pool of distributed talent untapped and hindering national capability.
- **Scholarships as Embedded Pathways:** Current scholarship models often act as peripheral "financial plug-ins." The evolving narrative suggests reimagining them as integral, multi-year commitments that provide stability. By linking scholarships to mentorship, leadership development, and specific regional needs (like AI or healthcare), they can transform from mere aid into instruments of social mobility and academic fulfillment.
- **Lessons from Ancient and Global Models:** Historical Indian institutions like Takshashila practiced inclusive fee structures, including work-study and deferred payments, ensuring merit was never turned away. Modern international examples from the U.S. and China further demonstrate that treating scholarships as a core part of academic culture—aligned with local development priorities—is essential for high-performing education systems.
- **Public Policy and Philanthropic Synergy:** To sustain a 50% GER, public policy must incentivize private philanthropy through tax benefits for endowments. Adoption of "need-blind" or "need-sensitive" admission processes, as seen in institutions like Ashoka University and ISB, proves that diversity can be achieved without diluting academic standards through donor-supported ecosystems.
- **Linking Equity with National Growth:** Scholarships sit at the intersection of equity, quality, and economic growth. They determine who enters and who persists in the system. Moving them to the





center of the higher education strategy ensures that talent discovery is not limited by economic background, ultimately strengthening India's human capital and global competitiveness.

### Key Definitions

- **Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER):** A statistical measure used in the education sector to determine the number of students enrolled in school at several different grade levels (like elementary, middle, and high school), expressed as a percentage of the official school-age population.
- **Need-Sensitive Admission:** An admission policy where an institution considers a student's financial situation as a factor in the admission decision, often used to balance the university's financial aid budget.
- **Central Sector Scheme:** Schemes that are 100% funded by the Union Government and implemented by the Central Government machinery.

### Constitutional & Legal Provisions

- **Article 21A:** While primarily for free and compulsory education for ages 6 to 14, the "Right to Education" spirit is increasingly being extended to higher education through policy frameworks to ensure "Right to Progress."
- **Article 46 (DPSP):** Mandates the State to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, which forms the constitutional basis for scholarships and financial aid.
- **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020:** Sets the ambitious goal of increasing the GER in higher education to 50% by 2035 and emphasizes the internationalization and liberalization of the sector.

### Conclusion

Achieving a 50% GER is not merely a numbers game of building campuses; it is about ensuring that the most capable minds can afford to enter and stay in those campuses. By integrating scholarships into the very fabric of institutional design—supported by both state policy and private philanthropy—India can ensure that financial constraints do not become a ceiling for national talent.

### UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II (Social Justice):** Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Education, Human Resources; Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors.
- **GS Paper III (Economy):** Human resource development; Employment and its relation to education; Mobilization of resources.

## 5. Transitioning Women's Empowerment from Intent to Infrastructure

- **Structural Shift in Development Paradigm:** Over the last decade, India has transitioned from viewing women as passive recipients of welfare to active drivers of economic growth. This "designed" approach has integrated women into the core of national infrastructure, focusing on financial inclusion, health security, and entrepreneurship as pillars for a developed India (Viksit Bharat) by 2047.
- **Financial Inclusion and Entrepreneurship:** The PM Jan Dhan Yojana has facilitated over 57 crore accounts (55% held by women), creating a formal financial foothold. This is bolstered by the MUDRA scheme, where 70% of loans are directed toward women, and a massive network of 90 lakh



Self-Help Groups (SHGs) comprising nearly 10 crore women, fostering grassroots economic resilience.

- **Impact of Ease of Living Schemes:** Infrastructure interventions like PM Ujjwala Yojana (10.5 crore households) have reduced "time poverty" by freeing women from labor-intensive fuel collection. Simultaneously, the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao initiative and rising STEM participation (among the highest globally) are shifting social attitudes and preparing women for leadership in knowledge-driven sectors.
- **Healthcare and Labor Participation:** Targeted programmes such as Ayushman Bharat and PM Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan have lowered maternal vulnerability. These health gains, combined with policy pushes, have seen Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFPR) rise to nearly 37%, reversing long-term declines and integrating more women into the productive economy.
- **The Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam:** As a landmark political reform, the Women's Reservation Act provides the legal framework to move from "access to authority." By mandating legislative representation, it ensures that policy design is informed by lived experiences, creating a self-reinforcing cycle of responsive governance and leadership pipelines.
- **The Challenge of Policy Penetration:** The future mandate for administrators shifts from "policy creation" to "policy saturation." Achieving the last-mile delivery requires moving beyond measuring outputs (schemes announced) to tracking outcomes (lives changed), utilizing data-driven monitoring and district-level ownership to ensure no eligible woman is left behind.



### Key Definitions

- **Nari Shakti (Women Power):** A socio-political term used to denote the collective strength, agency, and leadership of women in national development.
- **Financial Inclusion:** The process of ensuring access to financial services and timely and adequate credit where needed by vulnerable groups such as weaker sections and low-income groups at an affordable cost.
- **STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics):** An educational and professional umbrella where India currently shows a high proportion of female graduates, critical for the future knowledge economy.

### Constitutional & Legal Provisions

- **Article 14 & 15:** Guarantee equality before the law and prohibit discrimination on the grounds of sex, forming the bedrock of all gender-centric legislations.
- **Article 39(a) & (d):** Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) that mandate the State to ensure men and women have an equal right to an adequate means of livelihood and equal pay for equal work.
- **Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam (128th Constitution Amendment Act):** Provides 33% reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies, aimed at enhancing women's participation in the highest levels of decision-making.



## Conclusion

India's journey over the past decade proves that when political will aligns with infrastructure design, women's empowerment becomes an economic multiplier. The focus must now pivot toward institutionalizing this leadership and ensuring "saturation" in delivery. As representation translates into capability, women will not just participate in India's growth trajectory—they will redefine it.

## UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II (Social Justice):** Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, and Human Resources; Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections.
- **GS Paper II (Polity):** Constitutional amendments (Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam) and their impact on federalism and representation.

## 6. Frontline Diplomacy: The Role of Indian Missions in Conflict Zones

- **Last Line of Presence in War Zones:** Indian diplomats consistently serve as the final official presence in volatile regions, staying long after other international entities withdraw. Their role shifts from traditional statecraft to crisis management, involving the continuous dispatch of ground-level intelligence to New Delhi while managing high-stakes communication with host governments and warring factions.
- **Operational Duties Amidst Crisis:** Within "burning buildings" or embassies under threat, diplomatic staff perform dual roles: administrative and humanitarian. While senior officials maintain diplomatic channels to prevent escalation, skeletal staff manage essential logistics—stockpiling food, water, and medicine—and coordinate safe exit routes for Indian nationals via land boundaries or sea ports.
- **Coordinating Mega-Evacuations:** Missions provide the critical ground support for the Indian Navy and Air Force during large-scale rescue operations, such as Operation Sukoon (Lebanon, 2006) and efforts in Libya (2011). Embassy personnel often set up mobile desks at harbors and airports, even under active bombardment, to verify documents and issue emergency permits for thousands of fleeing citizens.
- **Persistence Under Direct Threat:** Historical precedents in Kabul (2008), Tripoli (2011), and Damascus (2012) highlight the physical risks involved. Despite losing personnel to suicide bombings or facing street battles, Indian missions have traditionally avoided total evacuation, maintaining a skeletal presence to assist stranded citizens and even detained journalists, demonstrating "diligence in duty" over personal safety.
- **The Decision-Making Dilemma:** Diplomats face the immense psychological burden of deciding when to stay and when to recommend a full mission withdrawal. This "equally difficult decision" involves assessing the safety of families and staff against the sovereign necessity of maintaining a diplomatic foothold and protecting the Indian diaspora during a total breakdown of local order.
- **Evolution of Crisis Diplomacy:** The transition from writing routine dispatches to managing bunkers and airstrike protocols reflects the changing nature of modern diplomacy. Indian foreign service officers are increasingly required to be stoic crisis managers, navigating "civilizational" threats and





regional conflicts (e.g., Iran-West Asia tensions) to ensure national interests remain protected in the absence of peace.

### Key Definitions

- **Diplomatic Mission:** A group of people from one state or an international intergovernmental organization present in another state to represent the sending state/organization officially in the receiving state.
- **Non-combatant Evacuation Operation (NEO):** An operation conducted to assist the departure of civilian non-combatants and non-essential military personnel from danger in a foreign nation to an appropriate safe haven.
- **Skeletal Staff:** The minimum number of personnel required to keep an organization or mission functioning at a basic level during an emergency or crisis.

### Constitutional & Legal Provisions

- **Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961):** The international treaty that defines the framework for diplomatic relations, including the "inviolability" of mission premises. Even in war, the receiving state is theoretically obligated to protect the mission, though Indian diplomats often rely on their own grit when local systems fail.
- **Article 73:** Extends the executive power of the Union to matters with respect to which Parliament has power to make laws, including "External Affairs," which empowers the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) to conduct these overseas operations.
- **Passports Act, 1967:** Provides the legal basis for the issuance of emergency certificates and travel documents by missions for citizens who lose their passports during conflicts.

### Conclusion

The resilience of Indian diplomats in conflict zones underscores a unique facet of India's foreign policy: the commitment to "no citizen left behind." While diplomacy is often viewed as a desk-bound profession, the experiences in Beirut, Kabul, and Tehran reveal it to be a frontline service. As global geopolitics becomes more volatile, the capacity of the Indian mission to function under fire remains the ultimate litmus test of the state's reach and its duty toward its diaspora.

### UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II (International Relations):** Indian Diaspora and its issues; Role of Indian Missions abroad; Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests.
- **GS Paper II (Governance):** Institutional framework for crisis management and evacuation operations.

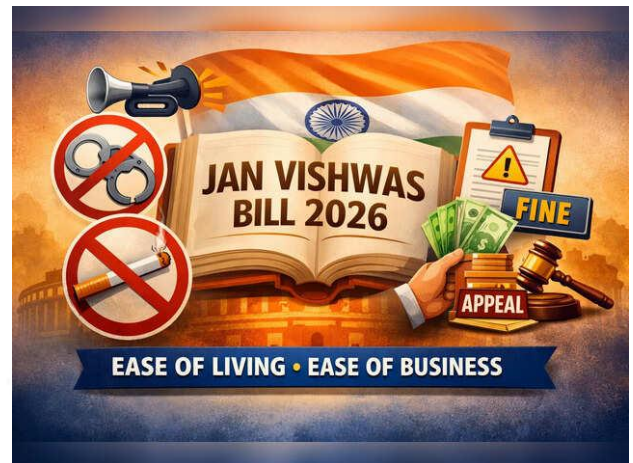
## 7. Decriminalising Minor Defaults: The Jan Vishwas (Amendment) Bill, 2026

- **Transition to Trust-Based Governance:** The Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026, marks a fundamental shift in India's regulatory philosophy from a punitive model to one rooted in "trust-based governance." By addressing the "anathema" of unnecessary criminalisation, the Bill seeks to ensure that the severity of the State's response bears a rational and proportionate relationship to the gravity of the regulatory default.
- **Massive Scope of Decriminalisation:** Building on the 2023 Act, the 2026 Bill proposes amendments to 784 provisions across 79 Central Acts spanning 23 ministries. Specifically, 717



provisions are earmarked for decriminalisation, replacing the threat of imprisonment for minor procedural lapses, missed filings, or technical defaults with civil and administrative penalties.

- **Economic Equity and MSME Support:** A primary objective is to protect Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), which are disproportionately affected by compliance risks. By removing the "spectre of prosecution" for non-intentional technical errors, the Bill lowers the barriers to formalisation and encourages small business owners to engage transparently with the formal economy without the fear of incarceration.
- **Judicial Relief and Resource Allocation:** With Indian subordinate courts burdened by over 4.8 crore pending cases as of December 2025, the Bill serves as a rational reallocation of judicial resources. Diverting routine regulatory matters from criminal dockets allows the judiciary to focus on cases involving genuine public harm, fraud, or wilful evasion.
- **Replacement Mechanisms and Grading:** The Bill introduces a graded response system where first-time or minor defaults trigger warnings or advisory notices rather than immediate prosecution. It empowers adjudicating officers to resolve cases within defined timelines through expanded compounding provisions and monetary penalties that are periodically revised to maintain their deterrent value.
- **Institutional Challenges and Implementation Risks:** While the Bill promotes efficiency, it places a heavy burden on administrative agencies. Key concerns include the potential for excessive administrative discretion, the need for robust appellate safeguards to prevent arbitrariness, and the requirement for uniform standards across different laws to ensure the reform is not just a change on paper.



### Key Definitions

- **Decriminalisation:** The process of removing criminal sanctions for an act, though it may still remain subject to civil or administrative penalties such as fines.
- **Compounding of Offences:** A settlement mechanism where the offender pays a specified sum to avoid criminal prosecution, effectively "closing" the case without a full trial.
- **Proportionality:** A legal principle requiring that the nature and extent of a state's intervention (punishment) must be proportionate to the objective it seeks to achieve (gravity of the offence).

### Constitutional & Legal Provisions

- **Article 21:** The Right to Life and Personal Liberty. The Bill aligns with this by ensuring that citizens are not deprived of liberty for minor procedural lapses that lack "moral turpitude."
- **Ease of Doing Business (EoDB):** While not a specific article, the Bill fulfills the State's objective under the Directive Principles to promote a stable economic environment and rational legal order.
- **Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act, 2023:** The predecessor legislation which set the stage for this reform by decriminalising 183 provisions across 42 Central laws.



## Conclusion

The Jan Vishwas Bill, 2026, is a landmark reform that attempts to bridge the gap between regulatory compliance and common sense. Its success will depend on the "last-mile" implementation—specifically, whether administrative authorities are equipped with clear guidelines and whether appellate mechanisms function as genuine checks against potential bureaucratic overreach.

## UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II (Governance & Polity):** Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors; Fundamental rights (Article 21); Judicial reforms and pendency of cases.
- **GS Paper III (Economy):** Ease of Doing Business; MSME sector challenges; Formalisation of the economy.

## 8. Gaganyaan Recovery and Re-entry Dynamics: Ensuring Astronaut Safety

- **Aerobraking and Kinetic Energy Dissipation:** The Gaganyaan crew module orbits at approximately 7,800 m/s. Upon re-entry, it utilizes "aerobraking," where atmospheric drag serves as the primary brake to shed the vast majority of its kinetic energy. This thermal and mechanical challenge is the first critical phase of returning human occupants safely to Earth.
- **Multi-Stage Parachute Deployment:** Once the module descends to an altitude of 12 km, a complex multi-stage parachute system is deployed. This system is designed to progressively reduce velocity. While sea landings can tolerate a touchdown speed of 7-9 m/s due to water's natural energy absorption, land landings (like the Soyuz or Shenzhou) require retro-rockets to achieve a soft landing of 1-2 m/s.
- **The Inverse-Square Penalty of Parachutes:** Using parachutes alone to reach speeds below 2 m/s is technically impractical. Due to the inverse-square relationship between speed and drag area, slowing a module from 7 m/s to 1 m/s would require a parachute nearly 49 times larger. Such a canopy would be too heavy, voluminous, and prone to tangling during deployment.
- **Elliptical Landing Footprints:** Re-entry modules aim for a large "landing ellipse" rather than a precise point. Because kinetic energy is concentrated along the flight track, minor atmospheric fluctuations cause significant overshooting or undershooting (longitudinal deviation). Conversely, lateral (sideways) deviations are minimal, resulting in the characteristic elongated footprint.
- **Post-Splashdown Recovery Protocols:** After splashing down in the Bay of Bengal, the module employs multiple locating aids: GPS coordinates, homing signals, high-intensity strobe lights for night visibility, and the release of bright green fluorescent dye. To contrast with the ocean, the module and its flotation bags are painted "international orange."
- **Indian Navy-Led Extraction:** The recovery operation is a coordinated effort led by the Indian Navy. Once naval divers secure the module with a flotation collar and towing gear, it is winched onto a ship's deck. This ensures the safe extraction of the crew and protects the hardware for post-flight analysis and potential refurbishment.





## Key Definitions

- **Aerobraking:** A spaceflight maneuver that reduces the high point of an elliptical orbit (apoapsis) by flying the vehicle through the upper edges of a planet's atmosphere to create drag.
- **International Orange:** A specific set of colors used in aerospace and marine environments to set objects apart from their surroundings, particularly for recovery and safety.
- **Retro-rockets:** Small auxiliary rocket engines used to provide thrust in the direction opposite to the motion of a spacecraft to decelerate it.

## Constitutional & Legal Provisions

- **Article 51A(h):** Part of the Fundamental Duties, it encourages the development of "scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry," which is embodied by the Gaganyaan mission's push for indigenous space exploration.
- **Space Liability Convention (1972):** An international treaty to which India is a signatory, establishing rules for damage caused by space objects on the surface of the Earth or to aircraft. Safe recovery systems are essential to mitigate risks under this convention.
- **National Space Policy 2023:** Provides the framework for ISRO's transition toward advanced research and human spaceflight missions, emphasizing the synergy between civil and defense sectors (like the Indian Navy) for mission success.

## Conclusion

The Gaganyaan recovery system represents a pinnacle of Indian engineering, balancing the physics of re-entry with the logistical realities of the Indian geography. By opting for a sea splashdown in the Bay of Bengal, ISRO leverages the ocean's energy-absorbing properties while utilizing the maritime expertise of the Indian Navy. This mission not only tests India's technological limits but also establishes the robust safety protocols required to become a global leader in human space exploration.

## UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper III (Science & Technology):** Awareness in the fields of Space; Achievements of Indians in science & technology; Indigenization of technology.
- **GS Paper III (Security):** Role of the Indian Navy in non-traditional security and search and rescue (SAR) operations.

## 9. AI and Copyright Law: The Delhi High Court Mandate on Autonomous Authorship

- **Judicial Direction to Copyright Office:** The Delhi High Court has directed the Registrar of Copyrights to decide, within eight weeks from April 27, 2026, whether an Artificial Intelligence (AI) system can be granted sole authorship rights for an artwork. This follows a long-pending application by American computer scientist Stephen Thaler regarding his AI system, DABUS.
- **The Concept of "Autonomous" Authorship:** The petitioner argues that the AI system, "Device for the Autonomous Bootstrapping of Unified Sentience" (DABUS), generates creative works through artificial neural networks without direct human contribution. This challenges the traditional legal requirement that only a "natural person" can be recognized as an author under copyright law.





- **Global Jurisprudential Context:** Thaler has approached 16 jurisdictions worldwide with similar claims. However, major jurisdictions like the US, UK, and Ireland have consistently refused AI-sole authorship, maintaining that copyright requires a "human persona." Conversely, a 2023 Chinese court ruling suggested that AI-generated images reflecting "original intellectual investment" could be protected, though the owner must still be a natural person.
- **The Indian Precedent (RAGHAV AI):** In 2020, India's Copyright Office granted co-authorship to the "Robust Artificially Intelligent Graphics and Arts Visualiser" (RAGHAV AI) alongside a human owner for the artwork "Suryast." The current case seeks to push this boundary further by requesting "sole authorship" for the machine, potentially removing the human element entirely.
- **Legal Friction with Existing Statutes:** The Indian Copyright Office maintains that current law requires a "proper name of author" and a No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the author in favor of the applicant. This highlights a significant "discrepancy" between the accelerating capabilities of generative AI and the anthropocentric (human-centered) nature of the Copyright Act, 1957.
- **Implications for IP Policy:** The outcome of this case will set a major precedent for the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT). Recognizing AI as a sole author would necessitate a fundamental re-evaluation of Intellectual Property (IP) ownership, liability, and the incentive structures that currently drive human creativity.

### Key Definitions

- **Copyright:** A legal right that grants the creator of an original work exclusive rights to its use and distribution, usually for a limited time, with the intention of enabling the creator to receive compensation for their intellectual effort.
- **Natural Person:** In legal terms, a human being as distinguished from a "juridical person" (like a corporation or an AI system). Current copyright laws globally are largely designed for natural persons.
- **DABUS:** An AI system claimed by its creator to possess a level of autonomy that allows it to generate novel ideas and creative works independently of human input.

### Constitutional & Legal Provisions

- **The Copyright Act, 1957:** The primary legislation governing IP rights in India. Section 2(d) defines an "author" in relation to various works (literary, dramatic, musical, artistic), traditionally interpreted as a human creator.
- **Article 19(1)(g):** The right to practice any profession or to carry on any occupation, trade, or business. Legal clarity on AI copyright is essential for businesses and creators operating in the digital economy.
- **Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Policy 2016:** Aims to foster innovation and creativity. The current judicial scrutiny aligns with the policy's goal of evolving IP laws to keep pace with technological advancements like AI and Machine Learning.

### Conclusion

The intersection of AI and copyright law represents one of the most significant legal frontiers of the 21st century. While the "natural person" requirement has been the bedrock of IP law, the emergence of autonomous creative systems like DABUS forces a rethink. Whether India chooses to maintain human-centricity or leads the world in recognizing non-human authorship will define its role in the global AI-driven knowledge economy.



## UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper III (Science & Technology):** Awareness in the field of IT and AI; Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) issues and their implications for innovation.
- **GS Paper II (Judiciary & Polity):** Role of High Courts in interpreting statutes; Impact of technology on the evolution of law and governance.

## 10. Strengthening Cooperative Federalism: National Review Conference on 'Sahkar se Samridhhi'

- **Vision of Sahkar se Samridhhi:** The two-day National Review Conference held in Varanasi (April 2026) reinforces the Union Government's vision of "Prosperity through Cooperation." The primary objective is to transition from policy formulation to "outcome-oriented" execution by grounding cooperative reforms at the district level through time-bound Action Plans.
  - **Revitalization of PACS:** A central pillar of the reforms is the expansion of Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS), with a national target of establishing two lakh new units. The strategy involves diversifying PACS into "Multi-Service Centres" that provide Jan Aushadhi Kendras, fertilizer supply, and Common Service Centres (CSCs) to ensure they remain financially viable and socially relevant.
  - **Digital Transformation and Agri Stack Integration:** The conference reviewed the progress of PACS computerization, emphasizing its integration with national digital platforms like Agri Stack and the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) ecosystem. States have been urged to internalize these digital reforms to ensure sustainability beyond the scheme's formal end in March 2027.
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- **World's Largest Grain Storage Plan:** In a bid to reduce post-harvest losses and empower farmers, the Ministry reviewed the decentralized grain storage project. This initiative involves convergence between agencies like FCI, NABARD, and NAFED to create a storage ecosystem that utilizes electronic Negotiable Warehouse Receipts (eNWR) to facilitate easier credit flow for cooperatives.
  - **Cooperative Banking and Financial Inclusion:** The conference called for expedited loan sanctioning and technological upgrades in District Central Cooperative Banks (DCCBs). Key focus areas include enhancing cyber security, ensuring Aadhaar seeding for direct benefit transfers, and adopting doorstep banking to compete with commercial financial institutions.
  - **Collaborative Governance Model:** Highlighting successful models like Amul, the Centre is promoting a "shared learning" platform among States and UTs. This seventh national workshop reflects a shift toward cooperative federalism where the Union provides the framework while the States ensure the "last-mile" delivery of cooperative benefits.

## Key Definitions

- **PACS (Primary Agricultural Credit Societies):** The village-level institutions that provide short-term and medium-term agricultural loans to farmers. They are the foundation of the three-tier cooperative credit structure in India.
- **Agri Stack:** A collection of technologies and digital databases focused on farmers and the agricultural sector to provide personalized services and improve efficiency in the value chain.



- **eNWR (electronic Negotiable Warehouse Receipt):** A digital document that represents the ownership of a commodity stored in a warehouse, which can be used as collateral for bank loans.

### Constitutional & Legal Provisions

- **Article 19(1)(c):** Guarantees the fundamental right of citizens to form "cooperative societies," inserted via the 97th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2011.
- **Article 43B (DPSP):** Directs the State to promote voluntary formation, autonomous functioning, democratic control, and professional management of cooperative societies.
- **Part IXB:** Specifically deals with "The Co-operative Societies" (Articles 243ZH to 243ZT), providing a legal framework for their incorporation and regulation.
- **Multi-State Co-operative Societies (Amendment) Act, 2023:** Recent legislation aimed at enhancing transparency and accountability in the functioning of multi-state cooperatives.

### Conclusion

The Varanasi Conference signals a critical pivot from "Target-setting" to "Ground-level Implementation." By integrating technology with the traditional cooperative spirit, India aims to build a resilient, self-reliant rural economy. The success of this model depends on the effective coordination between District Administrations and State Governments to ensure that the cooperative sector becomes a professionalized engine of inclusive growth.

### UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II (Governance):** Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors; Issues arising out of their design and implementation; Role of NGOs and SHGs.
- **GS Paper III (Economy):** Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices; Public Distribution System; Food security and storage; Inclusive growth.