



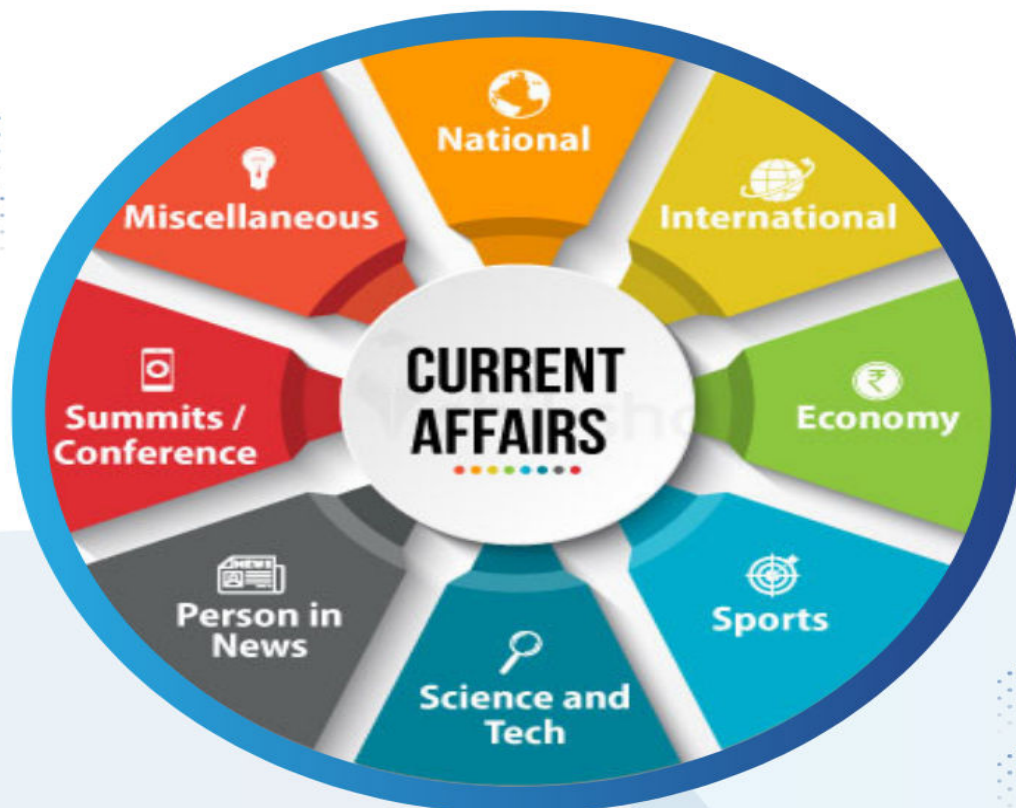
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VIDHVATH IAS KAS ACADEMY & STUDY CENTRE

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

FOR UPSC CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION

DATE: 15/05/2026 (FRIDAY)



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VIDHVATH IAS ACADEMY



1. Government Proposal to Reduce Withholding Tax on Foreign Investments

- **Policy Shift for Capital Inflow:** The Government of India and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) are evaluating a significant reduction or total elimination of the withholding tax on government bonds to encourage foreign investment.
- **Current Tax Burden:** At present, non-resident investors are subject to a withholding tax rate of approximately 20% on interest income from Indian government bonds, which is currently among the highest global rates.
- **Historical Context:** This proposed move follows the expiration of a concessional 5% tax rate in 2023, after which the rate reverted to the higher standard, potentially dampening foreign investor sentiment.
- **Macroeconomic Objectives:** The primary goals of this measure are to stabilize the capital account, bolster foreign exchange reserves—which have seen a \$38 billion depletion in recent months—and prevent further depreciation of the Rupee.
- **Strategic Austerity:** This proposal aligns with broader austerity measures and calls to curb foreign exchange drainage, such as reducing gold imports and promoting fuel conservation, amidst volatility caused by geopolitical conflicts in West Asia.
- **External Account Security:** By making Indian markets more attractive to global capital, policymakers aim to secure the external account and mitigate the impact of the "foreign capital strike" currently affecting emerging markets.



Key Definitions

- **Withholding Tax (WHT):** A tax deducted at source by the payer from the income of the recipient (in this case, foreign investors) and paid directly to the government. It acts as an advance payment of income tax.
- **Government Bonds:** Debt instruments issued by the central or state governments to fund their fiscal requirements, offering a fixed interest rate to investors.
- **Capital Account:** A component of the Balance of Payments (BoP) that records all transactions between residents of a country and the rest of the world involving changes in assets or liabilities.
- **Foreign Exchange (Forex) Reserves:** Assets held by a central bank in foreign currencies, used to back liabilities and influence monetary policy.

Legal and Constitutional Provisions

- **Income Tax Act, 1961:** The primary legislation governing withholding tax (Tax Deducted at Source) in India. Specifically, Section 194LD previously provided for the lower 5% rate on interest income for FPIs and QFIs in certain bonds.
- **Article 246:** Under the Seventh Schedule (Union List, Entry 82), the Parliament of India has the exclusive power to levy taxes on income other than agricultural income.
- **Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITs):** These international agreements often influence tax treatments and provide protections for foreign investors, impacting how withholding taxes are negotiated.



- **Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA):** Tax treaties signed between India and other nations that help investors avoid paying taxes twice and often provide for lower withholding tax rates than the domestic law.

Conclusion

The government's consideration of a withholding tax cut reflects a proactive stance in navigating global economic headwinds and domestic currency pressures. By lowering the cost of entry for foreign capital, India seeks to integrate more deeply with global bond indices and ensure a steady flow of "patient capital" to finance infrastructure and development. This move is a strategic lever to balance the necessity of tax revenue against the urgent requirement for foreign exchange liquidity and external account stability.

UPSC Relevance

This topic is highly significant for the UPSC Civil Services Examination, primarily under **General Studies Paper III (Indian Economy)**. Key areas of focus include Resource Mobilization, Government Budgeting, and the mechanics of the Balance of Payments (BoP). It also intersects with **General Studies Paper II (Governance & Polity)** regarding the legislative powers of taxation and international relations via economic diplomacy and DTAA's. For the **Preliminary Exam**, students should focus on terms like WHT, Forex reserves, and capital accounts, while for the **Main Exam**, the focus should be on the impact of fiscal policy on macroeconomic stability and India's attractiveness as a global investment destination.

2. India-Iran Strategic Cooperation and Maritime Security in West Asia

- **Bilateral Engagement at BRICS 2026:** On the sidelines of the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting in New Delhi (May 2026), India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar held high-level talks with Iranian FM Seyed Abbas Araghchi. The discussions centered on the "considerable flux" in global relations and the intensifying conflict in West Asia.
- **Securing Global Maritime Arteries:** India emphasized the critical need for safe and uninterrupted maritime flows through the Strait of Hormuz and the Red Sea. These waterways are vital for India's energy security, as the country imports nearly 85-90% of its crude oil, much of which transits through the Persian Gulf.
- **Response to Maritime Threats:** Following recent attacks on merchant vessels, including an Indian-flagged ship off the coast of Oman, India has reiterated its stance against the targeting of commercial shipping. New Delhi continues to push for a "rules-based order" to prevent the weaponization of maritime chokepoints.
- **Energy Infrastructure Stability:** The ongoing tensions have driven significant volatility in oil and gas markets. India and Iran discussed the fragility of energy infrastructure and the impact of the regional "foreign capital strike" on emerging economies, seeking ways to stabilize supply chains amidst US-Israel-India tensions.
- **Strategic Connectivity Projects:** Both nations reviewed the progress of the Chabahar Port, a cornerstone of India's "Connect Central Asia" policy. The port serves as a vital gateway for trade with landlocked Afghanistan and Central Asian Republics, bypassing traditional land routes.
- **Multilateral Coordination via BRICS:** Under India's 2026 chairship, the BRICS platform is being utilized to foster consensus on regional stability.





While Iran seeks formal condemnation of external aggression, India is focusing on diplomacy, de-escalation, and safeguarding the interests of the Global South.

Key Definitions

- **Strait of Hormuz:** A narrow, strategically vital waterway between the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman. It is the world's most important oil transit chokepoint, through which roughly 20% of global oil consumption passes.
- **Maritime Security:** The protection of a nation's maritime domain, including its sovereign waters and international sea lines of communication (SLOCs), from threats such as piracy, terrorism, and state-sponsored disruptions.
- **Chokepoint:** A geographical feature on land or at sea, such as a narrow strait, which an armed force is forced to pass, significantly decreasing its combat power and making trade routes vulnerable.
- **Global South:** A term used to describe developing and emerging economies in Africa, Asia, and Latin America that often share common challenges regarding global governance and economic equity.

Constitutional and Legal Provisions

- **Article 51 of the Indian Constitution:** A Directive Principle of State Policy (DPSP) that mandates the State to promote international peace and security, maintain just and honorable relations between nations, and encourage settlement of international disputes by arbitration.
- **UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea):** Often referred to as the "Constitution of the Oceans," it provides the legal framework for all activities in the oceans and seas, including rights of "innocent passage" through territorial waters.
- **Income Tax Act, 1961 (Section 194LD):** While primarily fiscal, such provisions relate to foreign investments (FPIs) in government securities, which are often discussed in bilateral economic dialogues to stabilize capital flows during regional crises.
- **India-Iran 10-year Chabahar Agreement:** The bilateral legal framework that allows India to operate and develop the Shahid Beheshti terminal, ensuring long-term strategic and economic presence in the region.

Conclusion

The evolving security landscape in West Asia necessitates a calibrated diplomatic approach from India. By balancing its strategic partnership with Iran alongside its commitment to maritime stability, India aims to protect its national energy interests while positioning itself as a stabilizing force in a multipolar world. The focus remains on ensuring that regional conflicts do not lead to a permanent disruption of global trade corridors or energy supplies.

UPSC Relevance

This topic is integral to **General Studies Paper II (International Relations)**, specifically concerning "Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India." It is also highly relevant for **General Studies Paper III (Internal Security & Economy)** regarding maritime security challenges and energy security. Aspirants should focus on the geography of the Strait of Hormuz for the Preliminary exam and the strategic implications of the "International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)" and "Chabahar Port" for the Main examination.



3. Judicial Scrutiny of the Selection Process for Election Commissioners

- **Supreme Court Questioning Executive Dominance:** The Supreme Court of India is currently hearing a challenge to the 2023 law regarding the appointment of Election Commissioners (ECs). The court questioned the inclusion of a Union Cabinet Minister in the three-member selection panel instead of a "neutral" or "independent" person, such as the Chief Justice of India (CJI).
- **Structural Imbalance in the Selection Panel:** The bench noted that the current composition—consisting of the Prime Minister, a Cabinet Minister (nominated by the PM), and the Leader of Opposition—creates an inherent 2:1 majority in favor of the executive. This leads to concerns that the executive could exercise total control over the appointment process.
- **Comparison with CBI Director Selection:** Justice Dipankar Datta highlighted an inconsistency in legislative standards, noting that the Chief Justice is included in the panel to select the CBI Director to ensure the "rule of law." The court wondered why a similar standard for an "independent member" is not applied to the selection of ECs, which is vital for "maintaining democracy."
- **Independence and Public Perception:** The court stated that the Election Commission of India (ECI) must not only be independent but also "appear to be so." A selection process perceived as being under executive control could undermine public confidence in the purity and fairness of the electoral process.
- **Constitutional Role of the Judiciary:** The bench emphasized that the maintenance of a pure election is essential for a healthy democracy. The hearing explores whether the 2023 Act aligns with the spirit of the Constitution, which envisions an autonomous body to conduct free and fair elections.
- **Ongoing Legal Challenge:** The Supreme Court is examining whether the removal of the CJI from the selection process (which was previously mandated by a SC judgment before the new law was enacted) violates the basic structure of the Constitution or the principle of institutional integrity.



Key Definitions

- **Election Commission of India (ECI):** A permanent and independent constitutional body established under Article 324 to ensure free and fair elections in India.
- **Executive Control:** A situation where the branch of government responsible for implementing laws (the Cabinet/Ministry) has the dominant power to make key institutional appointments.
- **Rule of Law:** The principle that all people and institutions are subject to and accountable to law that is fairly applied and enforced; a fundamental pillar of the Indian Constitution.
- **Basic Structure Doctrine:** A judicial principle that certain fundamental features of the Constitution of India cannot be altered or destroyed by amendments by the Parliament.

Constitutional and Legal Provisions

- **Article 324:** Grants the power of superintendence, direction, and control of elections to the Election Commission. It also specifies that the appointment of the CEC and other ECs shall be made by the President, subject to any law made by Parliament.
- **The Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023:** The legislation that replaced the previous



process and established the current selection committee comprising the PM, a Cabinet Minister, and the Leader of Opposition.

- **Anoop Baranwal v. Union of India (2023):** The landmark Supreme Court judgment which originally ruled that the selection committee should include the PM, the Leader of the Opposition, and the CJI until Parliament enacted a specific law.
- **Article 141:** The law declared by the Supreme Court is binding on all courts within the territory of India, raising questions about how the 2023 Act interacts with previous judicial directives.

Conclusion

The debate surrounding the appointment of Election Commissioners highlights the delicate balance between legislative prerogative and judicial oversight. While the Parliament has the authority to frame laws for appointments, the Supreme Court's scrutiny ensures that such laws do not compromise the institutional autonomy of the ECI. Ensuring a neutral selection process is not just a matter of legal technicality but a fundamental requirement for the credibility of Indian democracy.

UPSC Relevance

This topic is of critical importance for **General Studies Paper II (Governance, Constitution, and Polity)**. It directly relates to "Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies." For the **Preliminary Exam**, candidates should focus on the composition of the selection committee and the provisions of Article 324. For the **Main Exam**, the focus should be on the tension between the Executive and Judiciary, the "Basic Structure" implications of institutional independence, and the recommendations of various committees (like the Dinesh Goswami Committee) on electoral reforms. Understanding the shift from the *Anoop Baranwal* judgment to the 2023 Act is essential for answering analytical questions on constitutional morality.

4. Strategic Economic Measures Amidst Regional Instability and Climate Risks

- **Fiscal Policy to Stimulate Inflows:** In response to a significant depletion of foreign exchange reserves (down by \$38 billion in two months), the Government of India and the RBI are considering a reduction or total elimination of the withholding tax on government bonds. The current rate of 20% is among the highest globally, and reducing it aims to stabilize the capital account and prevent the Rupee's depreciation.
- **Maritime Security and Global Trade:** During a BRICS ministerial meeting in New Delhi, India emphasized that the security of international chokepoints like the Strait of Hormuz and the Red Sea is non-negotiable for economic health. With India importing nearly 85-90% of its crude oil, any disruption in these waterways poses a direct threat to domestic energy security and inflation management.
- **Agricultural Trade Restrictions:** The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) has placed sugar exports in the "prohibited" category until September 30, 2026. This preemptive move is driven by the double threat of El Niño—which risks poor monsoon rainfall—and the West Asia conflict, which has choked the supply of essential fertilizers through maritime routes.
- **Macroeconomic Stability through Austerity:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi has called for national austerity measures, including reducing gold imports and promoting fuel conservation. These steps are designed to curb the drainage of foreign exchange and secure India's external account against global volatility.



- **Domestic Resource Management:** Despite having sufficient sugar stocks for immediate needs, the government is taking "no chances." Closing stocks are projected to hit a nine-year low by late 2026, necessitating a ban on exports to ensure domestic availability and prevent food inflation.
- **Geopolitical Balancing in BRICS:** India is leveraging the BRICS platform to seek regional stability. While engaging with Iran to ensure safe maritime flows, India remains committed to a rules-based international order, condemning attacks on commercial vessels to maintain the sanctity of global supply chains.

Key Definitions

- **Withholding Tax (WHT):** A tax deducted at the source of income (like interest on bonds) before it is paid to the foreign investor, acting as a tool for the government to collect revenue from non-residents.
- **Strait of Hormuz:** A narrow waterway between the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman; it is the world's most vital oil transit chokepoint.
- **El Niño:** A climate pattern involving the warming of surface waters in the eastern Pacific Ocean, which typically leads to deficient monsoon rainfall in India.
- **Capital Account:** A record of all transactions between residents of one country and the rest of the world that involve changes in ownership of assets.

Constitutional and Legal Provisions

- **Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992:** The legal framework under which the DGFT issues notifications to prohibit or restrict the export and import of goods to maintain domestic supply.
- **Article 246 (Seventh Schedule):** The Union List gives the Central Government exclusive power over "Duties of customs including export duties" and "Taxes on income other than agricultural income."
- **Article 51 (DPSP):** Directs the State to promote international peace and security and maintain just and honorable relations between nations, providing the constitutional basis for India's maritime diplomacy.
- **Income Tax Act, 1961:** Specifically Section 194LD, which governs the concessional tax rates for Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) on interest from government securities.

Conclusion

India's current policy stance is a complex interplay of fiscal maneuvering, diplomatic engagement, and preemptive trade restrictions. By considering tax cuts for foreign investors and banning essential food exports, the government is attempting to build a "firewall" around the domestic economy. The success of these measures depends heavily on the de-escalation of conflicts in West Asia and the actual intensity of the El Niño phenomenon in the coming seasons.

UPSC Relevance

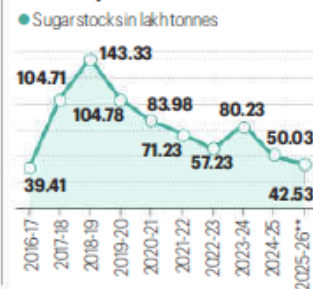
This multi-dimensional topic is highly relevant for **General Studies Paper III (Economy & Environment)** and **General Studies Paper II (International Relations)**. In the **Preliminary Examination**, questions may

• MEASURING INDIA'S SUGAR LEVEL

Chart 1: Sugar tally in 2025-26* (lakh tonnes)

Opening stock (1)	50.03
Domestic production (2)	279
Total supply (1+2)	329.03
Domestic consumption (3)	280
Exports (4)	6.5
Closing stock (1+2-3-4)	42.53

Chart 2: Sugar closing stocks at a nine-year low



*The 'sugar year' runs from October to September, **Industry estimates; Source: National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories Ltd; Note: Complete chart on indianexpress.com



arise regarding the mechanics of withholding tax, the geography of maritime chokepoints, or the impact of El Niño on agriculture. For the **Main Examination**, it provides excellent material for answers on India's "Energy Security," "Inflation Management," and "Bilateral Relations with West Asia." The integration of fiscal policy with geopolitical strategy is a recurring theme in the UPSC syllabus, emphasizing the need for a holistic understanding of how global events dictate domestic economic priorities.

5. Reconceptualization of PCOS to PMOS: A Multisystem Health Shift

- **Evolution of Nomenclature:** Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) is being globally renamed to **Polyendocrine Metabolic Ovarian Syndrome (PMOS)**. This shift reflects a move away from focusing solely on ovarian cysts to recognizing the condition as a complex, multisystem disorder.
- **Prevalence in India:** Experts estimate the prevalence of this condition in India to be between 16% and 18%. Given the genetic predisposition of Indians to heart disease and diabetes, early and accurate diagnosis is critical for long-term health management.
- **Broad Spectrum of Symptoms:** PMOS encompasses endocrine, metabolic, reproductive, psychological, and dermatological features. It includes risks such as obesity, Type 2 diabetes, hypertension, and metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD).
- **Misleading Traditional Labels:** The term PCOS was often misleading because many affected women do not actually have ovarian cysts. By emphasizing the metabolic and endocrine nature, the new name, PMOS, helps prevent delayed diagnosis and improves patient communication.
- **Multidisciplinary Management:** The renaming encourages clinicians to adopt a more comprehensive approach, focusing on lifestyle modifications and screening for cardiovascular risks, rather than treating infertility or irregular periods in isolation.
- **Global Implementation:** The new terminology is part of a major global shift in medical science and will be introduced globally over the next three years to reduce stigma and improve the quality of patient care.



Key Definitions

- **Polyendocrine Metabolic Ovarian Syndrome (PMOS):** The new medical term for PCOS, highlighting its nature as a multisystem disorder affecting metabolism and multiple endocrine glands, not just the ovaries.
- **Androgens:** A group of hormones, such as testosterone, that regulate masculine characteristics. In PMOS, excess androgens lead to symptoms like acne and hirsutism (excessive hair growth).
- **Metabolic Syndrome:** A cluster of conditions—including increased blood pressure, high blood sugar, and abnormal cholesterol levels—that occur together, increasing the risk of heart disease and stroke.
- **Ovulatory Dysfunction:** A condition where ovulation (the release of an egg) is infrequent or irregular, which is a primary cause of infertility in women with PMOS.



Legal and Policy Context

- **National Programme for Prevention and Control of NCDs (NP-NCD):** PMOS management aligns with India's national policy to curb Non-Communicable Diseases, as it is a major precursor to diabetes and cardiovascular ailments.
- **Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act, 1994:** While primarily for preventing sex selection, the use of ultrasound for PMOS diagnosis must adhere to the regulatory frameworks of this Act regarding the registration of imaging centers.
- **Maternal Health Guidelines:** The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) includes screenings for gestational diabetes and hypertension, both of which are high-risk factors for pregnant women with PMOS.
- **Right to Health:** Though not a standalone Fundamental Right, the Supreme Court has interpreted Article 21 (Right to Life) to include the right to health, necessitating public awareness and accessible diagnostic facilities for widespread conditions like PMOS.

Conclusion

The transition from PCOS to PMOS signifies a landmark shift in the medical community's understanding of women's health. By treating the condition as a metabolic and endocrine challenge rather than just a reproductive one, healthcare systems can better address the root causes of associated lifestyle diseases. For a country like India, this terminology change is a vital step toward reducing the long-term burden of chronic illnesses and improving the reproductive and psychological well-being of millions of women.

UPSC Relevance

This topic is highly relevant for **General Studies Paper II (Social Justice - Health)** and **General Studies Paper III (Science and Technology)**. In the **Preliminary Examination**, questions may focus on the biological aspects of endocrine disorders or the prevalence of NCDs in India. For the **Main Examination**, it serves as an excellent case study for "Issues relating to the development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health" and the impact of nomenclature on public health policy. Aspirants should be prepared to discuss the socio-economic implications of high NCD prevalence and the importance of gender-specific health interventions in the Indian context.

6. Strategic Fiscal and Diplomatic Maneuvers for Macroeconomic Stability

- **Revision of Withholding Tax (WHT):** The Government and the RBI are contemplating a significant reduction or total elimination of the 20% withholding tax on interest income from government bonds for non-residents. This move aims to reverse the "foreign capital strike" and stabilize the capital account following the depletion of forex reserves by \$38 billion in early 2026.



- **Curbing Gold Imports via Advance Authorisation (AA):** To prevent the drainage of foreign exchange, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) has capped duty-free gold imports under the AA Scheme at 100 kg. This follow-up to the recent customs duty hike is designed to plug price arbitrage loopholes and ensure that duty-free imports are strictly used for genuine re-export purposes.



- **Maritime Diplomacy and Energy Security:** In high-level BRICS meetings, India has underscored that "safe and unimpeded maritime flows" through the Strait of Hormuz and the Red Sea are non-negotiable for global economic health. Given the West Asia conflict, India is engaging with regional powers like Iran and the UAE to protect vital sea lines of communication (SLOCs).
- **Call for National Austerity:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi has appealed for austerity measures, including reducing gold purchases and optimizing fuel consumption through carpooling and public transport. These behavioral shifts are aimed at reducing the Current Account Deficit (CAD) and easing pressure on the Indian Rupee.
- **Strengthening Export Compliance:** New regulations mandate physical inspections of manufacturing facilities and require fulfillment of 50% of export obligations before subsequent duty-free authorizations are granted. This represents a shift toward a more monitored and centralized policy oversight mechanism to prevent misuse of trade incentives.
- **Geopolitical Balancing Act:** India's diplomatic stance maintains that "stability cannot be selective." By condemning attacks on Indian-flagged vessels while simultaneously hosting BRICS dialogues, New Delhi is positioning itself as a key mediator in safeguarding Global South interests amidst escalating regional tensions.

Key Definitions

- **Withholding Tax (WHT):** An income tax deducted at the source from payments (like interest) made to non-residents, ensuring tax collection before the income leaves the country.
- **Advance Authorisation (AA) Scheme:** A trade incentive that allows the duty-free import of inputs (like raw gold) which are physically incorporated into an export product (like jewelry).
- **Forex Reserves:** Assets held by a central bank in foreign currencies, used to back liabilities and influence monetary policy to maintain exchange rate stability.
- **Price Arbitrage:** The practice of taking advantage of a price difference between two or more markets; in this context, importing gold duty-free to sell in the domestic market where duties are high.

Constitutional and Legal Provisions

- **Article 246 (Seventh Schedule):** Under the Union List, the Parliament has exclusive power over "Duties of customs including export duties" (Entry 83) and "Taxes on income other than agricultural income" (Entry 82).
- **Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992:** Provides the legal framework for the DGFT to formulate and implement the Foreign Trade Policy (FTP), including schemes like Advance Authorisation.
- **Article 51 of the Constitution:** A Directive Principle of State Policy (DPSP) that mandates the state to promote international peace, security, and the maintenance of just relations between nations.
- **Income Tax Act, 1961:** Governs the levying and collection of Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) and sets the statutory rates for withholding taxes on foreign investments.

Conclusion

The current economic strategy reflects a dual-pronged approach: incentivizing foreign capital inflows by easing tax burdens while simultaneously restricting the outflow of foreign exchange through tighter control on gold imports. This "defensive fiscalism," coupled with proactive maritime diplomacy in West Asia,



highlights the government's priority to shield the domestic economy from external shocks. While austerity measures address the demand side, regulatory shifts in the AA scheme address the supply-side leakages, aiming for a sustainable balance in India's external account.

UPSC Relevance

This topic is critical for **General Studies Paper III (Economy)**, specifically regarding "Issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, and development." It also covers "Indian Economy and issues relating to inflation, government budgeting, and foreign trade." For **General Studies Paper II (International Relations)**, it is relevant to "Bilateral, regional and global groupings involving India and/or affecting India's interests." Aspirants should analyze the linkage between fiscal policy (WHT cuts), trade policy (AA Scheme caps), and geopolitics (Strait of Hormuz security) as a cohesive strategy for maintaining macroeconomic stability in a volatile global environment.

7. Shift in India's Sugar Export Policy: From Restricted to Prohibited

- **Regulatory Shift in Export Regime:** The Government of India has moved sugar exports from the "restricted" category to the "prohibited" category until September 30, 2026. This mandate by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) effectively halts the export of raw, white, and refined sugar to prioritize domestic food security.
- **Domestic Production and Supply Concerns:** With annual consumption estimated at 28 million tonnes (mt), current production for the 2025-26 season is projected to barely meet this requirement at approximately 28 mt. The early closure of mills—with only five operational by late April compared to 19 the previous year—indicates a significant tightening of the supply side.
- **Inflationary Pressures and Festive Demand:** The primary trigger for the ban is the rising trend in wholesale sugar prices. By curbing exports, the government aims to prevent a retail price spike ahead of the high-consumption festive season, thereby managing overall food inflation.
- **Climatic Risks and El Niño Factor:** Policymakers are wary of the impact of El Niño on sugarcane yields. Potential water stress in key producing states like Maharashtra and Karnataka could lead to a second consecutive year of suboptimal production, necessitating the conservation of current stocks.
- **Linkage with Biofuel Goals:** The ban ensures that sugarcane byproducts remain available for the Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme. Maintaining a steady supply of feedstock for ethanol is crucial for meeting India's green energy targets and reducing the crude oil import bill.
- **Global Market and Trade Reliability:** As the world's second-largest sugar producer, India's exit from the export market has led to an immediate rise in international prices. While this benefits competitors like Brazil and Thailand, it raises concerns regarding India's "policy predictability" and its reputation as a reliable global food supplier.



Key Definitions

- **Prohibited Category:** A trade classification under the Foreign Trade Policy where goods cannot be exported at all, except under specific permissions or bilateral agreements.
- **El Niño:** A climate pattern characterized by the unusual warming of surface waters in the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean, often leading to suppressed monsoon rainfall in India.



- **Ethanol Blending:** The process of mixing ethyl alcohol (derived from sugarcane molasses or grains) with petrol to reduce vehicular emissions and fuel imports.
- **Food Inflation:** A persistent rise in the price levels of food products, measured in India primarily through the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Constitutional and Legal Provisions

- **Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992:** The principal legislation that empowers the Central Government to notify the Export and Import (EXIM) Policy and prohibit or restrict trade in specific goods.
- **Essential Commodities Act, 1955:** This Act allows the government to regulate the production, supply, and distribution of a whole range of commodities (including sugar) to ensure availability at fair prices.
- **Article 39(b):** A Directive Principle of State Policy (DPSP) which dictates that the State shall direct its policy towards ensuring that the ownership and control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as best to subserve the common good.
- **Seventh Schedule (Union List):** Entry 41 (Trade and commerce with foreign countries) and Entry 83 (Duties of customs including export duties) provide the constitutional basis for the Union's exclusive control over export bans.

Conclusion

The abrupt ban on sugar exports underscores the government's "India-first" approach to food security and inflation management. While the move protects domestic consumers and the ethanol program, it creates a challenging environment for sugar mills and international trade relations. Balancing the interests of farmers, who benefit from high export prices, with the urban consumer's need for affordable staples remains a complex task for fiscal and agricultural planners.

UPSC Relevance

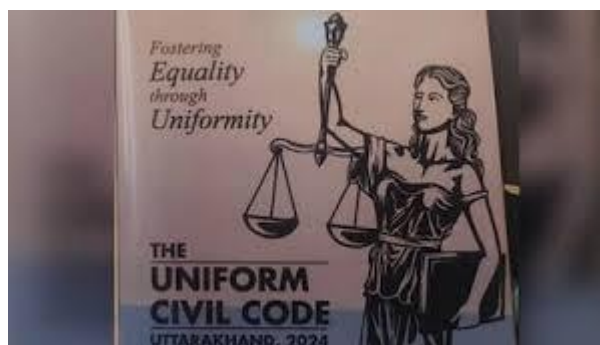
This topic is highly relevant for **General Studies Paper III (Economy & Agriculture)**, particularly under the heads of "Major Crops/Cropping Patterns," "Food Security," and "Inflation." It also links to **General Studies Paper II (Governance)** regarding the use of executive power in trade regulation. For the **Preliminary Exam**, candidates should focus on the role of the DGFT and the impact of El Niño on Indian monsoons. For the **Main Exam**, the focus should be on the tension between "Export-led Growth" and "Domestic Price Stability," as well as the implications of frequent policy shifts on India's standing in global trade forums like the WTO.

8. Implementation of Uttarakhand Uniform Civil Code: First Nikah Halala Case

- **First Legal Invocation of UCC:** For the first time since its enactment, the Uttarakhand police have invoked specific provisions of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in a case involving the practice of 'Nikah Halala'. The charges were added following an investigation into a complaint filed in Haridwar, marking a significant milestone in the implementation of the state's unified civil laws.
- **Multi-dimensional Charges:** The case is not limited to marriage laws; it involves a combination of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), the Dowry Prohibition Act, and the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act. This reflects a comprehensive legal approach to addressing complaints of dowry harassment, cruelty, and illegal marriage practices.



- **Specific UCC Provisions Applied:** During the investigation, evidence led the police to add Sections 32(1)(ii) and 32(1)(iii) of the Uttarakhand UCC. These sections specifically target practices that impose regressive conditions on remarriage, treating them as punishable offenses under the new civil framework.
- **Curbing Regressive Practices:** The invocation of the UCC in this context highlights the state's objective to abolish practices like Nikah Halala, which have been historically contentious. The law seeks to ensure that marriage and divorce procedures are governed by a uniform standard that protects the dignity and fundamental rights of women.
- **Judicial and Police Action:** Following the registration of the FIR in April, a chargesheet has been submitted naming nine accused individuals. The swift transition from investigation to chargesheet under the UCC suggests a high degree of state resolve in enforcing the new civil mandates.
- **Context of Legal Reform:** This case serves as a litmus test for the UCC's ability to interact with existing criminal laws and personal law protections. It sets a legal precedent for how future disputes regarding personal practices will be adjudicated within the jurisdiction of Uttarakhand.



Key Definitions

- **Nikah Halala:** A practice in certain interpretations of personal law where a divorced woman must marry another man, consummate that marriage, and then be divorced by him before she can legally remarry her original husband.
- **Uniform Civil Code (UCC):** A common set of laws governing personal matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, and adoption for all citizens, regardless of their religion, as envisioned under the Indian Constitution.
- **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS):** The primary criminal code of India that replaced the Indian Penal Code (IPC), under which the general criminal charges in this case were filed.
- **Chargesheet:** A formal document prepared by law enforcement agencies after an investigation, outlining the specific crimes the accused are alleged to have committed and the evidence supporting those claims.

Constitutional and Legal Provisions

- **Article 44:** A Directive Principle of State Policy (DPSP) which states that the State shall endeavor to secure for the citizens a Uniform Civil Code throughout the territory of India.
- **Article 14 & 15:** Constitutional guarantees of Equality before the Law and Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth, which form the bedrock of the argument for a UCC.
- **Article 25:** Guarantees freedom of conscience and free profession, practice, and propagation of religion, which is often cited in the debate over personal laws versus a uniform code.
- **The Uttarakhand Uniform Civil Code Act, 2024:** The specific state legislation that provides the legal authority to override certain religious personal laws in favor of a uniform secular code within the state.



Conclusion

The filing of the first chargesheet under the UCC for Nikah Halala in Uttarakhand represents a transition from legislative theory to practical enforcement. While it addresses long-standing concerns regarding women's rights and gender justice, it also tests the legal harmony between state-specific civil codes and national criminal statutes. The outcome of this case will likely influence the discourse on the nationwide implementation of a Uniform Civil Code and the protection of individual liberties within personal spheres.

UPSC Relevance

This topic is highly pertinent for **General Studies Paper II (Polity and Governance)**, specifically regarding "Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies" and "Significant provisions and basic structure of the Constitution." It also touches upon **General Studies Paper I (Social Issues)** concerning the "Role of women and women's organization" and "Social empowerment." For the **Preliminary Exam**, focus on the DPSP (Article 44) and the specific jurisdiction of states to enact civil laws. For the **Main Exam**, the focus should be on the challenges of balancing "Religious Freedom (Art. 25)" with "Gender Justice and Equality (Art. 14 & 15)," and the federal implications of a state-led UCC.

9. Transitioning from Sick-Care to Preventive Health Stewardship in India

- **Paradigm Shift in Healthcare:** India is at a civilizational crossroads where it must transition from a system that effectively responds to illness to one that actively preserves health. While the nation has built world-class clinical infrastructure over four decades, the focus must now shift from "treating the broken" to "preventing the break" through continuous, deliberate care.
- **The Burden of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs):** NCDs, including cardiovascular diseases, strokes, cancer, and diabetes, have surpassed infectious diseases as the leading cause of death in India. Approximately 270 million Indians currently live with chronic conditions, with a significant majority remaining undiagnosed until organ failure or severe symptoms occur.
- **The "Turning Point" Decade:** Insights from the Apollo Hospitals Health of the Nation Report 2026 identify the age bracket of 30 to 40 years as a critical window. This decade is when early metabolic and cardiovascular risks typically take root; however, it is also the period when individuals are least likely to seek care because they do not yet "feel unwell."
- **Economic Implications for Democracy:** Preventable illnesses pose a severe threat to India's "demographic dividend." The loss of productivity during an individual's peak working years diminishes their contribution to the economy and family, potentially stalling the nation's trajectory toward its highest potential.
- **Philosophy of Self-Stewardship:** Preventive health is being redefined not as a government policy or campaign, but as a personal and civic duty. It requires a transformation of habit—moving toward a culture of routine health checks and lifestyle corrections while the body remains resilient.
- **Active Commitment to Longevity:** The ambition for India to become a global economic and social leader rests entirely on the vitality of its citizens. This requires understanding health not merely as the absence of disease, but as an active, daily commitment to life made within homes and families.





Key Definitions

- **Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs):** Also known as chronic diseases, these are not passed from person to person. They are of long duration and generally slow progression, often linked to genetics, physiology, environment, and lifestyle.
- **Metabolic Risk:** Biochemical processes that increase the risk of developing cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes, such as high blood pressure, elevated blood sugar, and abnormal cholesterol levels.
- **Demographic Dividend:** The economic growth potential that can result from shifts in a population's age structure, mainly when the share of the working-age population is larger than the non-working-age share.
- **Self-Stewardship:** The philosophy of taking personal responsibility for the management and protection of one's own health as a long-term asset.

Constitutional and Legal Provisions

- **Article 21:** The Right to Life and Personal Liberty. The Supreme Court has repeatedly interpreted this to include the "Right to Health" and the right to live in a healthy environment.
- **Article 47:** A Directive Principle of State Policy (DPSP) which mandates that the State shall regard the raising of the level of nutrition and the standard of living of its people and the improvement of public health as among its primary duties.
- **National Health Policy (NHP) 2017:** Aims to attain the highest possible level of health and well-being for all at all ages through a preventive and promotive health care orientation.
- **Ayushman Bharat (PM-JAY):** While famous for insurance, its first pillar involves establishing Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) to provide Comprehensive Primary Health Care, including NCD screening and prevention.

Conclusion

India's remarkable clinical achievements must now be matched by an equally robust culture of prevention. The "Health of the Nation" depends on recognizing that medical intervention is often a late-stage response to avoidable choices. By focusing on the critical window of early adulthood and embracing health stewardship, India can protect its most valuable resource—its people—and ensure that its economic ambitions are supported by a resilient and long-lived workforce.

UPSC Relevance

This topic is highly pertinent for **General Studies Paper II (Social Justice - Issues relating to Health)** and **General Studies Paper III (Indian Economy - Human Resource Development)**. In the **Preliminary Examination**, candidates should be aware of the trends in NCDs and the objectives of the National Health Policy. For the **Main Examination**, the focus should be on the linkage between "Public Health and Economic Productivity," the challenges of the "Epidemiological Transition" (from infectious to chronic diseases), and the role of "Behavioral Change Communication" in achieving national health targets. Understanding the shift from curative to preventive care is essential for writing balanced essays on India's social sector development.



10. India's External Sector Vulnerabilities: Capital Outflows and Currency Strain

- **Unprecedented Rupee Depreciation:** In early May 2026, the Indian Rupee (INR) breached the 95 mark against the US Dollar, hitting all-time lows. This depreciation, exceeding 10% over the last year, is significantly higher than the historical average of 3-5%, driven by a combination of high import bills and massive capital flight.
- **Geopolitical Disruptions and Energy Security:** The outbreak of hostilities in the Persian Gulf and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz have acted as primary triggers for economic instability. With India importing approximately 85% of its crude oil, these disruptions have inflated the import bill, widened the Current Account Deficit (CAD), and sparked fears of persistent "imported inflation."
- **Asymmetric Capital Flight:** A concerning trend in 2026 is that capital outflows from emerging markets like India are occurring even in the absence of actual interest rate hikes by the US Federal Reserve or the Bank of England. This suggests that foreign investors have already "priced in" future rate hikes or are reacting to extreme geopolitical uncertainty, leaving India vulnerable to further pressure if actual rate increases occur.
- **The "Taper Tantrum" Parallel:** The current economic climate echoes the 2013 Taper Tantrum. Investors are withdrawing capital based on the mere expectation of tightening global monetary conditions. This flight to safety (moving capital to the US Dollar) forces a difficult choice: raising domestic interest rates to defend the currency, which risks stalling domestic investment, or allowing the rupee to slide further.
- **Social and Economic Consequences:** The rise in LPG and petrol prices has moved beyond a fiscal issue to a social one, triggering reverse migration of workers from urban centers back to villages. Furthermore, high energy costs are feeding into broader inflationary expectations, potentially leading to a wage-price spiral that could destabilize macroeconomic stability.
- **Policy Interventions and Their Limits:** The government and RBI have employed "moral suasion," increased import duties on gold, and restricted foreign exchange derivative contracts to curb speculation. However, experts warn that these are short-term measures that do not address the underlying structural vulnerability of high dependence on imported energy and volatile foreign portfolio investments.



Key Definitions

- **Capital Flight:** The large-scale exit of financial assets and capital from a country, typically due to geopolitical instability, economic crises, or unfavorable changes in interest rates.
- **Taper Tantrum:** A term referring to the 2013 collective reactionary panic in financial markets after the US Federal Reserve announced it would begin "tapering" its quantitative easing (bond-buying) program.
- **Current Account Deficit (CAD):** A measurement of a country's trade where the value of the goods and services it imports exceeds the value of the products it exports.
- **Strait of Hormuz:** A strategic waterway between the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman; it is the world's most important oil transit chokepoint, through which roughly 20-30% of global oil passes.



Constitutional and Legal Provisions

- **Article 246 (Seventh Schedule):** The Union List (Entry 36) gives the Central Government exclusive power over "Foreign exchange," allowing the RBI and Finance Ministry to regulate capital flows and currency markets.
- **Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), 1999:** The primary legal framework in India that regulates foreign exchange transactions and capital account management.
- **Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act, 2003:** Sets targets for the government to reduce fiscal deficits, which is crucial for maintaining investor confidence and stabilizing the external sector.
- **Article 51 (A) (h) & (j):** While Fundamental Duties, the spirit of scientific temper and striving toward excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity underpins the call for national austerity and economic resilience.

Conclusion

The current strain on the Indian Rupee is a symptom of deep-seated structural vulnerabilities exposed by global geopolitical shocks. While the government's push for austerity in gold and fuel consumption is a necessary signal, it must be supported by long-term strategies such as energy diversification, ethanol blending, and enhancing export competitiveness. India is navigating a "perfect storm" of high oil prices, capital flight, and global uncertainty, necessitating a cautious yet proactive monetary and fiscal stance.

UPSC Relevance

This topic is vital for **General Studies Paper III (Indian Economy)** under "Mobilization of Resources," "Growth and Development," and "Inflation." It is also highly relevant for **General Studies Paper II (International Relations)** regarding how "Global Groupings and Agreements affect India's interests." For **Prelims**, focus on terms like CAD, Taper Tantrum, and the geography of West Asian chokepoints. For **Mains**, prepare to analyze the "Trilemma of International Finance" (the inability to have a fixed exchange rate, free capital movement, and independent monetary policy simultaneously) and its application to the current Indian context.

11. Analysis of India's Labour Market: Insights from PLFS 2025

- **Positive Shifts in Employment Indicators:** According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2025, India's headline employment indicators have shown robustness, with the Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) at 59% and the unemployment rate stabilizing at 3%. A notable decline in youth unemployment across both rural and urban sectors suggests that the economy is beginning to better absorb the 7-10 million young entrants joining the workforce annually.
- **Improving Quality of Work:** There is a visible structural shift toward formalization, with regular salaried employment increasing from 22% to 24%. This transition is critical as salaried roles typically offer higher earnings and better social protection compared to self-employment, which saw a corresponding decline. For women, this shift is particularly impactful, with female earnings in salaried roles growing by 7%, outpacing the 6% growth for men.
- **Structural Transformation and Inclusivity:** The Indian economy is moving away from agrarian dependence, with agriculture's share of employment dropping to 43%. Concurrently, manufacturing and services have expanded to 12% and 13% respectively. Furthermore, occupational segregation based on caste and gender is diminishing among younger cohorts, reflecting the positive outcomes of expanded access to education and increased social mobility.



- **Persistent Gender Pay and Participation Gaps:** Despite progress, a significant "double burden" remains for women, who cite childcare and household duties as primary barriers to workforce entry. Wage disparities are also stark; women in self-employment earn only 36% of what their male counterparts do, while in salaried work, they earn roughly 76%. This highlights the need for gender-responsive interventions to address unpaid care work.
- **The Challenge of NEET and Skill Mismatch:** Approximately 25% of youth aged 15-29 fall into the 'Not in Education, Employment, or Training' (NEET) category, representing a potential detachment from the productive economy. Additionally, while tertiary education has expanded, a gap exists between graduation and job procurement, compounded by the fact that only 4% of the working-age population has received formal vocational training.
- **Strategic Roadmap for Demographic Dividend:** To translate demographic potential into sustained growth, the report advocates for scaling industry-relevant vocational training, where participation rates are significantly higher. Leveraging green sectors and expanding apprenticeship programs are identified as essential pathways to re-engage the NEET population and provide stable, social-protected employment.

Key Definitions

- **Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR):** The percentage of the population that is either working or actively looking for work. It measures the size of the economy's active labour supply.
- **NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training):** A socio-economic indicator referring to young people who are currently disengaged from both the educational system and the labour market.
- **Structural Transformation:** The process by which the share of agriculture in GDP and employment declines, while the shares of manufacturing and services increase.
- **Demographic Dividend:** The economic growth potential that results from a shift in a population's age structure, specifically when the working-age population (15-64) is larger than the non-working-age share.

Constitutional and Legal Provisions

- **Article 39(a) and 39(d):** Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) that mandate the State to ensure all citizens have the right to an adequate means of livelihood and that there is equal pay for equal work for both men and women.
- **Article 41:** Directs the State to ensure the right to work and education within the limits of its economic capacity.
- **Article 43:** Mandates the State to secure a living wage and conditions of work ensuring a decent standard of life for all workers.
- **The Code on Wages, 2019:** Aims to universalize the provisions of minimum wages and timely payment of wages, specifically prohibiting gender discrimination in matters related to wages.

Conclusion

The PLFS 2025 data paints a picture of an evolving labour market that is successfully shedding some of its traditional constraints. While the rise in formal salaried work and declining youth unemployment are markers of progress, the persistent gender earnings gap and the high proportion of NEET youth signify deep-seated structural hurdles. Achieving India's economic ambitions will depend on moving beyond basic



education to high-quality, specialized skill development and creating a supportive ecosystem for women's workforce participation.

UPSC Relevance

This topic is indispensable for **General Studies Paper III (Indian Economy)**, specifically under "Issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment." It also links to **General Studies Paper II (Social Justice)** regarding the "Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors." In the **Preliminary Examination**, candidates should focus on interpreting PLFS terminology and trends. For the **Main Examination**, the data provides evidence for arguments on "Jobless Growth," "Women Empowerment," and the "Skill India Mission." Understanding the nuances of NEET and structural transformation is essential for writing comprehensive answers on India's demographic challenges.

12. Vande Mataram: Historical Context and the Debate on Multicultural Nationalism

- **Mandatory Usage in Official Ceremonies:** In February 2026, the Government of India mandated the playing or singing of the full version of *Vande Mataram* at all official state functions. This was recently observed during the oath-taking ceremony of the 13th Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, C. Joseph Vijay, where the song was performed alongside the National Anthem and the State Anthem (*Tamil Thai Vaazhthu*).
- **Historical Origins and Literary Context:** Written by Bankim Chandra Chatterji in his 1882 novel *Anandamath*, the song was originally set against the backdrop of the Sannyasi Rebellion. Early English translations, such as the 1906 *Abbey of Bliss*, highlight that the novel's narrative contained strong anti-Muslim sentiments and viewed British rule as a transformative force for reviving Hindu objective knowledge.
- **Evolution of the Song's Narrative:** During the independence movement, the song was "sanitized" in subsequent translations (notably in 1941) to remove communal undertones and align with the secular goals of the freedom struggle. While the song became a powerful anti-colonial slogan, scholars argue that the original context remained rooted in religious nationalism rather than a multicultural identity.
- **The 1937 Congress Compromise:** Recognizing that the later stanzas of the song invoked specific religious imagery that could alienate minority communities, a Congress sub-committee led by Jawaharlal Nehru resolved in 1937 to sing only the first two stanzas. These stanzas focus on the natural beauty and abundance of the motherland, omitting the sections with religious glorification.
- **Constituent Assembly and National Status:** During the drafting of the Constitution, despite strong advocacy from members like Syama Prasad Mookerjee, *Jana Gana Mana* was adopted as the National Anthem due to its inclusive character. *Vande Mataram* was accorded the status of "National Song," with the understanding that it held equal honor but a different functional role in a secular state.
- **Modern Debate on Multiculturalism:** The current push to sing the full version has reignited concerns among opposition parties and civil society. Critics argue that imposing a text with specific religious origins at secular government events may undermine the "monocultural vs. multicultural" balance of Indian nationalism and the constitutional promise of secularism.





Key Definitions

- **National Song:** A patriotic song (*Vande Mataram*) that holds equal status with the National Anthem but is not governed by the same strict statutory rules for performance.
- **Multicultural Nationalism:** A form of nationalism that defines the national identity through a synthesis of various cultures, languages, and religions, rather than a single dominant tradition.
- **Secularism (Indian Context):** Unlike the Western concept of separation of church and state, Indian secularism (*Sarva Dharma Sambhava*) implies equal respect for all religions and state neutrality in religious matters.
- **Sannyasi Rebellion:** A late 18th-century uprising in Bengal involving monks and displaced peasants against the East India Company, which served as the historical inspiration for *Anandamath*.

Constitutional and Legal Provisions

- **Article 51A(a):** A Fundamental Duty of every citizen to abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag, and the National Anthem (notably, the National Song is not explicitly mentioned here, though it is respected by custom).
- **Article 25 to 28:** Guarantees Freedom of Religion, which includes the right not to be compelled to participate in religious rituals or prayers in state-funded educational institutions or government functions.
- **State Song Status (Tamil Nadu):** In 2021, the Tamil Nadu government declared *Tamil Thai Vaazhthu* as the State Song, mandating that people stand (except PwDs), following a Madras High Court observation that it was previously regarded only as a prayer song.
- **The Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971:** Provides for punishment for those who intentionally prevent the singing of the National Anthem or cause disturbance to an assembly engaged in such singing. The Act does not currently extend the same penal provisions to the National Song.

Conclusion

The revival of the full version of *Vande Mataram* represents a tension between historical ritual and the evolving needs of a pluralistic democracy. While the song remains a symbol of India's struggle for independence, its mandatory use in official settings raises fundamental questions about state neutrality. Balancing patriotic fervor with the protection of India's multicultural fabric is essential to ensuring that national symbols unite rather than divide the citizenry.

UPSC Relevance

This topic is highly relevant for **General Studies Paper II (Polity & Governance)** under "Significant provisions and basic structure of the Constitution" and **General Studies Paper I (Indian Heritage and Culture)**. In the **Preliminary Exam**, questions may focus on the differences between the National Anthem and National Song, the history of *Anandamath*, or the 1937 Congress resolution. For the **Main Exam**, this is a critical topic for discussing "Secularism," "Regionalism vs. Nationalism," and the "Role of Judiciary in protecting cultural rights." Aspirants should be prepared to analyze the concept of "Constitutional Morality" in the context of state-mandated symbols.