



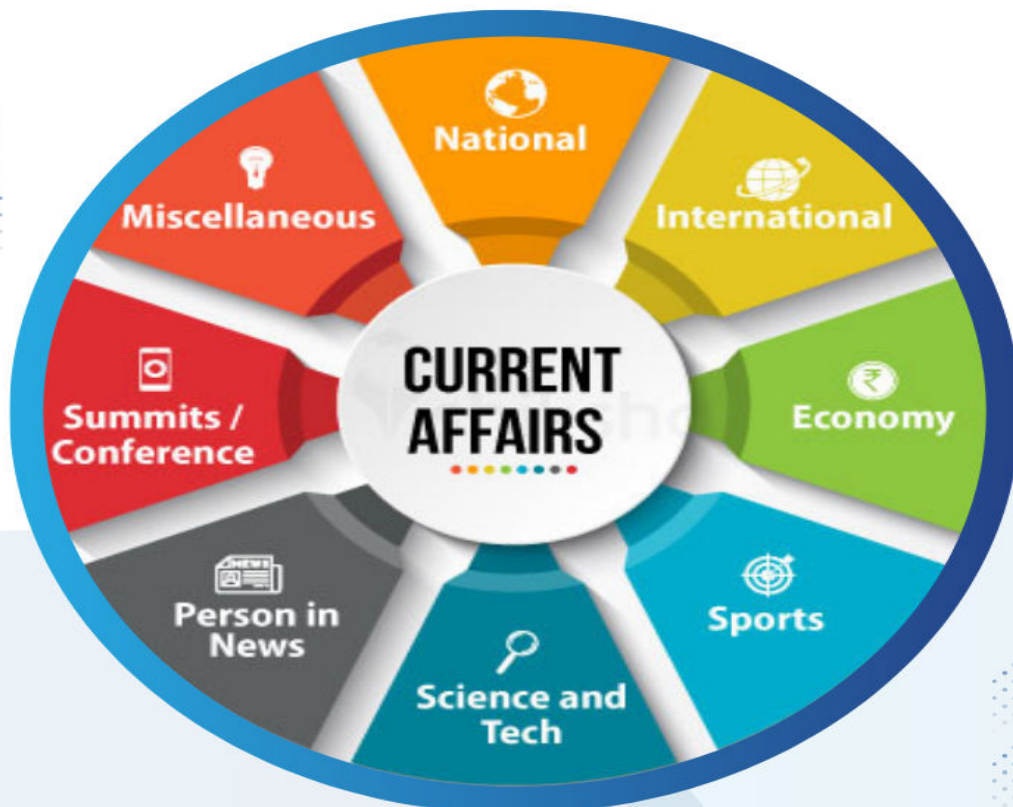
"We help you reach for the star"

**VIDHVATH IAS KAS ACADEMY
&
STUDY CENTRE**

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

FOR UPSC CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION

DATE: 07/07/2026 (TUESDAY)



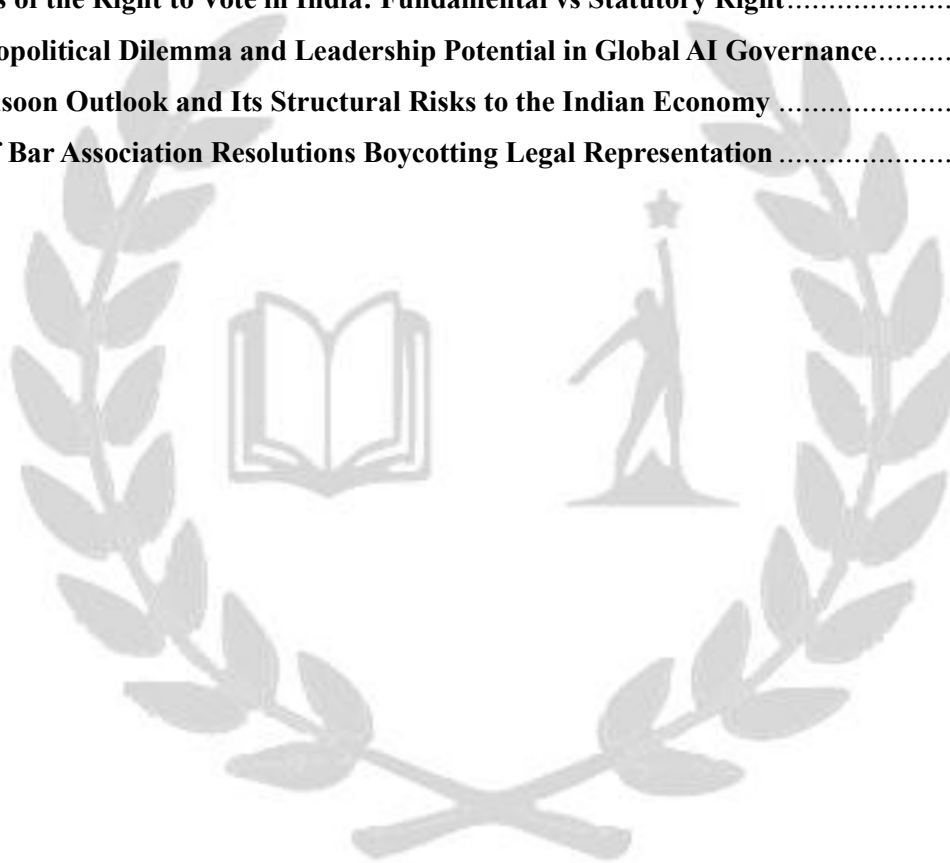
9972258970 & 9740702455

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



Table of Contents

1. Facing Backlash, Govt Likely to Delay Higher 25% Ethanol Blend in Petrol	2
2. Proposed Infrastructure and Protection Projects at Indira Point	3
3. Centre to Launch Cooperative Life Insurance Firm and Utility Aggregator	4
4. Limits of ICE and the Holistic Transition to Electric Mobility	5
5. Engineering Interventions to Tackle Urban Waterlogging in Gurugram	7
6. Sewage Surveillance and Intensified Immunization: The Ghaziabad Polio Response	8
7. Commissioning of INS Mahendragiri: Strategic Addition to India's Naval Stealth Fleet	9
8. Tamil Nadu Opposes Per Capita Amendment to National Food Security Act	11
9. Legal Status of the Right to Vote in India: Fundamental vs Statutory Right	12
10. India's Geopolitical Dilemma and Leadership Potential in Global AI Governance	14
11. Weak Monsoon Outlook and Its Structural Risks to the Indian Economy	15
12. Legality of Bar Association Resolutions Boycotting Legal Representation	16



VIDHVATH IAS ACADEMY



1. Facing Backlash, Govt Likely to Delay Higher 25% Ethanol Blend in Petrol

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Proposed Delay in E25 Rollout:** Amid growing consumer backlash, the Government of India is likely to postpone the proposed shift to E25 fuel (75% petrol, 25% ethanol).
- **Rapid Transition Concerns:** The domestic blend rate rapidly increased from 10% to 20% (E20) in just three years, far ahead of the original target year of 2030, raising widespread consumer anxieties.
- **Primary Consumer Backlash:** Public concerns primarily revolve around a noticeable drop in vehicle mileage and potential long-term engine damage due to higher ethanol concentrations.
- **Strategic Objectives:** While the government aims to leverage ethanol to lower carbon emissions and reduce heavy fiscal dependence on fossil fuel imports, it plans to address consumer and technical bottlenecks before advancing further.



Essential Definitions

- **Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP):** A bio-fuel mixture where ethyl alcohol (produced primarily from sugarcane, damaged food grains, and agricultural residue) is blended with conventional petrol to reduce crude oil consumption.
- **E20 and E25 Fuels:** Alphabetic notations representing the volumetric percentage of ethanol in the fuel mix. E20 contains 20% ethanol and 80% petrol, whereas E25 contains 25% ethanol and 75% petrol.
- **Corrosive Nature of Ethanol:** Ethanol is hygroscopic (absorbs moisture from the air), which can cause water-induced phase separation, fuel line corrosion, and damage to non-compatible rubber or plastic gaskets in older internal combustion engines.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **National Policy on Biofuels, 2018:** The nodal policy framework amended in 2022 to advance the target of achieving 20% ethanol blending in petrol to the ESY (Ethanol Supply Year) 2025-26 from the earlier target of 2030.
- **Industries (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016:** Ensures the central government retains regulatory control over industrial alcohol, balancing its diversion for EBP without compromising potable alcohol revenues for states.
- **Constitutional Mandate:** Aligned with **Article 48A** (Directive Principles of State Policy) to protect and improve the environment, and **Article 51A(g)** (Fundamental Duties) to protect the natural environment.

Conclusion

Advancing towards higher bio-fuel blends like E25 is crucial for India's energy security and net-zero commitments. However, forcing rapid transitions without adequate consumer safeguards, engine optimization by automakers, and transparent cost-benefit communications can trigger public resistance. A calibrated approach that addresses engine compatibility and mileage drops is vital for long-term sustainability.



UPSC Relevance

- **Preliminary Exam:** National Policy on Biofuels, EBP targets, bio-fuel generations (1G to 4G), and the chemical properties of ethanol.
- **Main Exam (GS Paper III):** Infrastructure, Energy Security, Environmental Conservation (reducing GHG emissions), and the technological challenges of transitioning to green fuels.

2. Proposed Infrastructure and Protection Projects at Indira Point

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Clearance Sought for Indira Point:** The Directorate of Lighthouses and Lightships (Sri Vijaya Puram) has sought environmental clearance for protection and development works at Indira Point, Great Nicobar Island.
- **Proposed Infrastructure:** The development plan includes establishing a convention centre, a museum, and carrying out fortification work to protect the historic Great Nicobar lighthouse.
- **Ecologically Sensitive Zone:** The proposed construction falls within the highly sensitive Island Coastal Regulation Zone categories, specifically ICRZ-1A and ICRZ-IVA.
- **Permissible Activities under ICRZ:** Under the strict ICRZ-1A classification, standard developmental activities are prohibited, except for exceptional, specified purposes such as eco-tourism and essential road construction.
- **Strategic and Tourism Push:** The project highlights the central government's ongoing focus on augmenting infrastructure, strategic footprints, and eco-tourism in the strategically vital Andaman and Nicobar archipelago.



Essential Definitions

- **Indira Point:** India's southernmost point, located on Great Nicobar Island. It is home to a prominent lighthouse and serves as a vital geographic and strategic landmark in the Indian Ocean Region.
- **Island Coastal Regulation Zone (ICRZ):** Coastal zones of Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep regulated by the central government to manage development, protect marine biodiversity, and ensure sustainable economic activities.
- **ICRZ-1A and ICRZ-IVA:** Ecological classifications where ICRZ-1A represents the most environmentally vulnerable areas (like coral reefs and mangroves) where development is highly restricted, and ICRZ-IVA designates the water area from the Low Tide Line up to twelve nautical miles seaward.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986:** The foundational legal statute under which the Island Coastal Regulation Zone (ICRZ) notifications are issued and enforced by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).



- **Island Protection Zone (IPZ) Notification:** Specifies distinct developmental guidelines for Andaman and Nicobar Islands, balancing national security interests and mega-infrastructure projects with tribal rights and fragile marine ecosystems.
- **Constitutional Protection: Article 243G and Schedule 11/12** considerations along with special provisions for the protection of scheduled tribes (such as the Shompen and Nicobarese) under the **Fifth/Sixth Schedule** ethos, ensuring that developmental projects do not infringe upon indigenous rights or critical tribal reserves.

Conclusion

The proposal to develop a museum and convention centre at Indira Point underscores the delicate balancing act between boosting strategic eco-tourism and safeguarding pristine marine ecology. While strengthening the structural integrity of the historic lighthouse is essential, executing infrastructure works within strict ICRZ-1A zones necessitates rigorous environmental impact assessments to ensure that the unique biodiversity of Great Nicobar remains uncompromised.

UPSC Relevance

- **Preliminary Exam:** Geography of Andaman and Nicobar Islands (channels, national parks like Galathea, indigenous tribes), and environmental laws like the ICRZ classifications.
- **Main Exam (GS Paper III):** Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), infrastructural development versus ecological conservation challenges, and the strategic security importance of the island territories.

3. Centre to Launch Cooperative Life Insurance Firm and Utility Aggregator

Key Highlights & Summary

- **New Cooperative Ventures:** The Union Government announced the upcoming launch of a national cooperative life insurance company and a cooperative-led utility aggregator.
- **Expanding Grassroots Footprint:** The upcoming utility aggregator will be structured on the lines of *Bharat Taxi*—India's first cooperative-led ride-hailing platform operating on a zero-commission model.
- **Leveraging Proven Models:** The proposed insurance venture builds upon the success of the *IFFCO-Tokio* general insurance model to significantly scale up cooperative presence within the life insurance sector.
- **Massive Economic Contribution:** Cooperatives currently drive a substantial portion of India's rural economy, accounting for 20% of agricultural credit, 35% of fertilizer distribution, 21% of sugar production, and 35% of milk production.
- **Federal Convergence Confirmed:** Marking the fifth foundation day of the Ministry of Cooperation, it was highlighted that despite initial friction regarding cooperation being a State subject, no states have reported central interference over the past five years.



Centre will start cooperative life insurance firm on the lines of Bharat Taxi: Amit Shah





Essential Definitions

- **Cooperative Society:** An autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise.
- **Utility Aggregator:** A centralized platform that pools multiple public or consumer utility services (such as transport, delivery, or retail distribution) through a single interface to minimize customer acquisition costs and eliminate intermediaries.
- **Zero-Commission Model:** A business framework where the aggregation platform does not charge a brokerage fee from the service providers (e.g., drivers or farmers), ensuring direct distribution of operational profits to the members.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Seventh Schedule (Distribution of Legislative Powers):** "Cooperative Societies" is a legislative subject enumerated under **Entry 32 of the State List (List II)**, while "Multi-State Cooperative Societies" with objects not confined to one state fall under **Entry 44 of the Union List (List I)**.
- **97th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2011:** Granted constitutional status and protection to cooperative societies, introducing **Article 19(1)(c)** (Right to form cooperatives), **Article 43B** (DPSP for promotion of cooperatives), and **Part IXB** (governing their incorporation, terms, and running).
- **Multi-State Co-operative Societies (Amendment) Act, 2023:** Introduced electoral reforms, established a Cooperative Election Authority, and set structural standards to enhance corporate governance and transparency in bodies operating across multiple states.

Conclusion

The transition of the cooperative sector into advanced financial domains like life insurance and digital service aggregation marks a structural shift toward tech-enabled rural empowerment. By combining the social equity of the cooperative model with modern digital infrastructure, the government can enhance last-mile delivery, reduce transaction leakages, and ensure that a larger share of the economic surplus remains with grassroots stakeholders.

UPSC Relevance

- **Preliminary Exam:** Provisions of the 97th Constitutional Amendment Act, Seventh Schedule jurisdictions, structural composition of the Ministry of Cooperation, and operational roles of multi-state cooperatives.
- **Main Exam (GS Paper II & III):** Devolution of powers and federal challenges in state-list subjects, mobilization of resources, agricultural marketing, and the role of cooperatives in promoting financial inclusion and rural development.

4. Limits of ICE and the Holistic Transition to Electric Mobility

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Technological Limits of ICE:** Internal Combustion Engines (ICE) have largely reached their thermodynamic and efficiency ceilings, with considerable energy lost as heat and friction.
- **The True EV Carbon Footprint:** While Electric Vehicles (EVs) eliminate tailpipe emissions to improve urban air quality, their net environmental benefit depends heavily on decarbonizing the power grid.



- **Efficiency via Regenerative Braking:** Unlike conventional vehicles where kinetic energy is dissipated as heat during braking, EVs utilize regenerative braking to recover energy and feed it back to the battery.
- **Core Challenges to Adoption:** Mainstreaming electric mobility faces major bottlenecks, including inadequate charging infrastructure and complex battery life-cycle management, such as recycling and safe disposal.
- **Hydrogen as an Alternative:** Hydrogen fuel cell technology holds long-term promise for heavy transport and large buses, but remains constrained by high infrastructural costs and energy-intensive production.



Essential Definitions

- **Internal Combustion Engine (ICE):** A heat engine where the combustion of a fuel occurs with an oxidizer in a confined space, converting chemical energy into mechanical energy.
- **Regenerative Braking:** An energy recovery mechanism that slows a vehicle down by converting its kinetic energy into electrical energy, which is then stored in the battery for future propulsion.
- **Well-to-Wheel Emissions:** A life-cycle assessment method used to measure the entire energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions of a vehicle, from the initial production of the fuel/electricity to its actual consumption on the road.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **FAME India Scheme:** The Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid &) Electric Vehicles policy framework implemented to provide demand incentives and build a robust charging ecosystem across urban areas.
- **Battery Waste Management Rules, 2022:** A statutory framework published under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, mandating Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) to ensure the safe recycling and disposal of waste batteries.
- **Constitutional Directive:** Aligns with **Article 48A** of the Directive Principles of State Policy, which commands the State to protect and improve the environment, and **Article 21**, as the Supreme Court recognizes the right to clean air as an integral component of the right to life.

Conclusion

The transition from conventional internal combustion engines to electric mobility represents an inevitable technological shift. However, substituting vehicle types is insufficient on its own; true sustainability requires a simultaneous transition toward cleaner, renewable sources of electricity generation. Addressing infrastructure gaps and establishing a circular battery economy remain critical milestones for realizing a zero-emission transport sector.

UPSC Relevance

- **Preliminary Exam:** Working mechanisms of regenerative braking, fuel cells versus lithium-ion batteries, and central green mobility schemes like FAME India.



- **Main Exam (GS Paper III):** Scientific limits of energy conversion, infrastructure development, e-waste management challenges, and strategies for reducing India's crude import bill through sustainable transport.

5. Engineering Interventions to Tackle Urban Waterlogging in Gurugram

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Targeted Anti-Waterlogging Plan:** The Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA) has implemented two key engineering interventions to mitigate chronic monsoon waterlogging along the critical Hero Honda Chowk–Umang Bhardwaj Chowk arterial corridor.
- **Dual Engineering Interventions:** The strategy relies on creating direct cross-connections between surface and master stormwater drains alongside constructing dedicated water chutes (road gullies).
- **High-Traffic Economic Corridor:** The intersection is a vital commercial and administrative lifeline, anchoring major manufacturing units, tech parks, and connecting NH-48 (Delhi-Jaipur Expressway) with the Dwarka Expressway.
- **Enhanced Drainage Capacity:** To accelerate runoff discharge from main carriage ways, officials installed 600-mm diameter pipeline linkages to bypass existing clogs and directly connect surface infrastructure to master stormwater networks.
- **Addressing Systemic Bottlenecks:** The drainage interventions are specifically designed to bypass local networks heavily compromised by illegal civic overlaps where residents mixed sewage connections into stormwater lines.

How Gurgaon is planning to tackle its perennial waterlogging issue this monsoon



Essential Definitions

- **Urban Waterlogging:** The accumulation of rainwater on city surfaces at a rate faster than local drainage networks can absorb, evacuate, or divert it, leading to localized flooding and severe traffic paralysis.
- **Cross-Drain Connections:** Engineering linkages built between superficial roadside surface drains and subterranean master stormwater channels to provide an immediate overflow relief pathway during intense rainfall events.
- **Water Chutes (Road Gullies):** Specially designed concrete or metallic sloped channels or grates located along road margins intended to rapidly capture surface runoff and funnel it downward into the primary drainage network.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority Act, 2017:** The state statutory framework that empowers the GMDA to plan, execute, and maintain core urban infrastructure, master drainage, and coordinated transit systems within the metropolitan area.



- **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986:** Governs statutory municipal responsibilities concerning surface runoff management, preventing mixed liquid waste contamination, and maintaining natural local hydrologic flow regimes.
- **Constitutional Mandate:** Under the **74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992**, urban planning, public health, and sanitation are core functions devolved to Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and metropolitan planning authorities via the **Twelfth Schedule (Entry 1, 5, and 6)**.

Conclusion

Gurugram's engineering interventions highlight a proactive shift toward localized structural solutions to counter recurring urban flooding. However, short-term engineering fixes like pipelines and chutes must be integrated with long-term systemic remedies. Stopping illegal sewer connections into stormwater lines, clearing systemic encroachments on natural flow paths, and updating old civic master plans remain crucial for lasting urban resilience.

UPSC Relevance

- **Preliminary Exam:** Urban governance statutory bodies, mechanisms of urban hydrology, and constitutional provisions under the Twelfth Schedule.
- **Main Exam (GS Paper I & III):** Urbanization challenges, civic infrastructure deficits, disaster management protocols for urban flooding (NDMA guidelines), and sustainable metropolitan planning models.

6. Sewage Surveillance and Intensified Immunization: The Ghaziabad Polio Response

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Detection via Environmental Surveillance:** A sewage sample collected from Vijay Nagar, Ghaziabad, tested positive for vaccine-derived poliovirus (VDPV), triggering an immediate public health response.
- **Early Warning Mechanism:** While India was declared wild poliovirus-free in 2014, wastewater testing continues as a crucial proactive mechanism to detect silent transmissions before clinical cases manifest.
- **Targeted Intensified Campaign:** Following the detection, health authorities traced the connected sewage network to map out 12 high-risk neighborhoods housing approximately 150,000 residents for targeted intervention.
- **Door-to-Door Immunization:** Hundreds of frontline healthcare workers and Anganwadi staff have been deployed to ensure complete oral polio vaccine coverage for all children under the age of five.
- **Overcoming Vaccine Hesitancy:** Frontline teams face structural challenges, including locked migrant households at construction sites and deep-seated community hesitation, which are countered through localized awareness counseling.



Essential Definitions

- **Environmental Surveillance:** The regular collection and laboratory testing of wastewater or sewage samples from community nodes to monitor for the presence of pathogens, serving as an early indicator of subclinical infections in a population.



- **Vaccine-Derived Poliovirus (VDPV):** A rare strain of poliovirus that has genetically mutated from the weakened virus contained in the Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV) over time, occasionally circulating in under-immunized or densely populated communities.
- **Subclinical Transmission:** A state of infection where individuals carry and shed a pathogen (such as through feces into a municipal sewer line) without exhibiting noticeable physical symptoms or clinical illness.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897:** Provides the statutory backing for state authorities to implement emergency containment measures, intensify surveillance, and mandate public health inspections during biological threats.
- **Universal Immunization Programme (UIP):** A major flagship health initiative under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare aimed at providing free immunization against preventable life-threatening diseases across India.
- **Constitutional Directive:** Aligned with **Article 47** of the Directive Principles of State Policy, which explicitly mandates the State to 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.

Conclusion

The detection of mutated poliovirus strains in urban wastewater demonstrates the high efficacy of India's environmental surveillance networks. However, maintaining a polio-free status requires more than robust monitoring; it demands absolute consistency in closing immunization gaps. Overcoming community hesitation, tracking transient migrant workforces, and improving sanitation infrastructure remain crucial pillars for preventing old public health threats from re-emerging.

UPSC Relevance

- **Preliminary Exam:** Characteristics of Wild Poliovirus versus VDPV, differences between Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV) and Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV), and major public health schemes.
- **Main Exam (GS Paper II):** Issues relating to the development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, effectiveness of early warning governance, and managing structural vaccine hesitancy.

7. Commissioning of INS Mahendragiri: Strategic Addition to India's Naval Stealth Fleet

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Sixth Project 17A Frigate:** The Indian Navy is set to commission INS Mahendragiri at Visakhapatnam, marking a major milestone as the sixth indigenous stealth frigate built under Project 17A.
- **Indigenous Design and Construction:** Designed entirely by the Navy's Warship Design Bureau, the vessel was constructed by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) in Mumbai, exemplifying the *Aatmanirbhar Bharat* vision.
- **Advanced Stealth and Automation:** The warship features enhanced survivability, a significantly reduced radar signature, a high degree of operational automation, and a modern combined diesel or gas propulsion system.



- **Multi-Mission Capabilities:** It is equipped to execute anti-air, anti-surface, and anti-submarine operations, making it versatile for maritime security, power projection, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR).
- **Boosting Domestic Defense Supply Chains:** Over 75% of the frigate's content is indigenous, integrating a vast network of Indian industries, including numerous micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs).
- **Indo-Pacific Strategic Context:** The addition of these advanced surface combatants serves as a force multiplier for the Indian Navy, safeguarding national maritime interests and ensuring stability across the wider Indo-Pacific region.

Essential Definitions

- **Project 17A (Nilgiri-class):** A follow-on class of stealth guided-missile frigates built for the Indian Navy, utilizing advanced modular construction techniques to improve structural integrity and reduce build times.
- **Stealth Frigate:** A fast, highly maneuverable warship designed with geometric angling and radar-absorbent materials to drastically minimize its radar cross-section (RCS), making detection by enemy sensors difficult.
- **Combined Diesel or Gas (CODOG):** A propulsion system configuration that uses diesel engines for fuel-efficient, long-range cruising and switches to powerful gas turbines for high-speed combat operations.



Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Defense Acquisition Procedure (DAP):** The overarching statutory framework governing the procurement and manufacturing of defense hardware, heavily prioritizing indigenous design and development (IDDM).
- **Constitutional Allocation:** Under the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India, "Naval, military and air forces; maritime domain; and any other armed forces of the Union" fall under **Entry 1 and Entry 2 of the Union List (List I)**, placing exclusive legislative and executive control with the central government.
- **Territorial Waters, Continental Shelf, EEZ and Other Maritime Zones Act, 1976:** Provides the foundational legal framework defining India's sovereign rights, jurisdiction, and security enforcement obligations within its maritime boundaries.

Conclusion

The imminent induction of INS Mahendragiri reflects India's evolving capabilities in advanced warship design and manufacturing. By achieving high indigenization rates and integrating local MSMEs into capital defense production, the project strengthens national security while reinforcing India's position as a dependable security provider in the Indian Ocean. Balancing technological induction with quick deployment schedules remains critical to maintaining a tactical edge.

**UPSC Relevance**

- **Preliminary Exam:** Specifications of Project 17A frigates, major domestic shipyards (MDL, GRSE), indigenization components, and geographic distribution of naval commands.
- **Main Exam (GS Paper III):** Achievements of Indians in science & technology, indigenization of technology, security challenges and their management in coastal areas, and strategic dynamics of the Indo-Pacific region.

8. Tamil Nadu Opposes Per Capita Amendment to National Food Security Act**Key Highlights & Summary**

- **Opposition to NFSA Amendment:** Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay has urged the Prime Minister to drop a proposed amendment to Section 3 of the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013.
- **Shift to Per Capita Entitlement:** The Centre's proposed amendment seeks to replace the fixed household entitlement with a per capita allocation of 7kg per person per month, subject to an upper household ceiling of 35kg.
- **Impact on Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY):** Currently, AAY guarantees a uniform 35kg of foodgrains per month to the poorest of the poor households, completely irrespective of the number of members in the family.
- **Penalizing Smaller Families:** Since Tamil Nadu's average AAY family size is 3.54 due to successful family planning initiatives, shifting to a per capita model would structurally reduce foodgrains for nearly 70 lakh vulnerable citizens.
- **Federal Concerns:** The state argues that the amendment inadvertently penalizes progressive southern states with smaller family sizes, undermining the unconditional nature of safety nets meant for widows, disabled persons, and landless laborers.

NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY ACT, 2013

MAJOR KEY POINTS

1. RIGHT TO FOOD

 - Recognizes the right of every person to access adequate quantity of quality food at affordable prices.
2. COVERAGE

 - Up to 75% of rural population and 50% of urban population are entitled to receive subsidized foodgrains.
 - Identified through Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) 2011.
3. ENTITLEMENT

 - Eligible persons entitled to receive 5 kg of foodgrains per person per month at subsidized prices.
 - Prices: Rice – ₹3/kg, Wheat – ₹2/kg, Coarse Grains – ₹1/kg.
4. SPECIAL PROVISIONS

 - Pregnant women entitled to maternity benefit of at least ₹6,000.
 - Children (6 months – 6 years) entitled to nutritious meals.
 - Lactating mothers entitled to additional nutrition.
5. TARGETED PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM (TPDS)

 - Continuation and strengthening of TPDS.
 - Fair Price Shops to be established by the State Governments.
 - Use of technology for transparency and accountability.
6. ACCOUNTABILITY & TRANSPARENCY

 - Grievance Redressal Officer and Appellate Authority at State & District levels.
 - Social audits and transparency in implementation.
 - Non-availability of foodgrains or denial of entitlements is punishable.
7. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

 - Legal entitlement – justiciable in nature.
 - States are responsible for implementation.
 - Central Government to provide foodgrains to States.
8. OBJECTIVE

 - To ensure food and nutritional security in human life cycle approach, especially for the most vulnerable sections.

NOTE: The Act does not cover middle class and higher income groups, who can access food through the market.

★ CIVIL SERVICES EDUPAPERS ★

Essential Definitions

- **National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013:** A landmark legislation that provides legal entitlement to subsidized foodgrains to approximately two-thirds of India's population under targeted public distribution systems.
- **Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY):** A central government scheme launched to identify the poorest of the poor among Below Poverty Line (BPL) families and provide them with highly subsidized foodgrains on a fixed household basis.
- **Per Capita Benefit:** A distribution methodology where welfare allocation is calculated strictly per individual member rather than pooling a uniform entitlement for the entire domestic unit or household.



Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Section 3 of NFSA, 2013:** The core legal provision defining the right to receive foodgrains at subsidized prices under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS).
- **Article 21 (Right to Life):** The Supreme Court has repeatedly expanded the scope of the Right to Life to include the "Right to Food" and freedom from starvation as fundamental constitutional protections.
- **Article 47 (Directive Principles of State Policy):** Explicitly directs the State to raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living of its people, treating the improvement of public health as one of its primary duties.
- **Seventh Schedule (Concurrent List):** "Trade and commerce in, and the production, supply and distribution of foodstuffs" falls under **Entry 33 of the Concurrent List (List III)**, requiring legislative and administrative convergence between the Centre and States.

Conclusion

The debate over the NFSA amendment highlights a deeper governance challenge in balancing fiscal targeting with social safety nets. While the Centre aims to resolve intra-category inequities, a rigid per capita shift threatens to diminish the food security of households with fewer members. To maintain cooperative federalism, welfare metrics must avoid creating a paradox where states are penalized for successfully implementing demographic and family stabilization goals.

UPSC Relevance

- **Preliminary Exam:** Provisions of NFSA 2013, eligibility criteria for AAY, and relevant entries under the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution.
- **Main Exam (GS Paper II):** Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections, issues relating to poverty and hunger, center-state relations, and federal implications of demographic transitions.

9. Legal Status of the Right to Vote in India: Fundamental vs Statutory Right

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Evolving Constitutional Debate:** A renewed debate surrounds the legal status of the right to vote, questioning whether it should be elevated to a fundamental right rather than its long-standing classification as a statutory right.
- **Traditional Judicial Position:** Beginning with *N.P. Ponnuswami* (1952) and reaffirmed in *Kuldip Nayar* (2006), the Supreme Court has historically held that the right to elect and be elected flows strictly from Parliamentary statutes like the Representation of the People Acts.
- **The Voting Paradox:** The judiciary has gradually extended fundamental rights protection under **Article 19(1)(a)** to many essential facets of voting—such as the right to know candidates' backgrounds (2002), the freedom to make an informed choice (2003), and the right to reject candidates via NOTA (2013)—yet the actual act of voting remains a statutory right.
- **Basic Structure Divergence:** While the Supreme Court recognizes democracy and free and fair elections as part of the Basic Structure of the Constitution (*Kesavananda Bharati*, 1973), the individual citizen's vote continues to sit outside the core of Part III fundamental protections.



- **Constitutional Source of Franchise:** Article 326 explicitly establishes universal adult suffrage, ensuring that any eligible citizen's right to be registered as an elector stems directly from the constitutional text itself rather than from standard legislation.

Essential Definitions

- **Statutory Right:** A legal right created, defined, and conferred entirely by an Act of Parliament or a State Legislature, which can be modified or restricted through ordinary legislative processes.
- **Fundamental Right:** A core constitutional right guaranteed under Part III of the Constitution of India that is immune from standard legislative interference, enforceable directly via Article 32 and Article 226.
- **Universal Adult Suffrage:** A constitutional principle guaranteeing that every citizen who is not less than 18 years of age has the inherent right to be registered as a voter, without discrimination based on sex, race, caste, or religion.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 326:** Mandates that elections to the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies shall be based on adult suffrage, serving as the constitutional source of franchise.
- **Article 19(1)(a):** The Right to Freedom of Speech and Expression, under which the Supreme Court has constitutionalized electoral facets like voter information, secrecy of the ballot, and political expression through NOTA.
- **Representation of the People Act, 1951:** The primary statutory tool that operationalizes Article 326, prescribing the procedural mechanisms, qualifications, and disqualifications for voters and candidates.

Conclusion

The classification of voting as a mere statutory right creates an unyielding paradox against modern judicial jurisprudence. While Parliament must retain the power to regulate procedural details like electoral rolls and age limits, the core right to choose a political representative forms the base of popular sovereignty. Re-evaluating this doctrine is necessary; in a constitutional framework where democracy constitutes the basic structure, the ballot cannot be treated as a secondary legislative privilege.

UPSC Relevance

- **Preliminary Exam:** Provisions of Article 326, core judgements (*ADR case*, *PUCL case*, *NOTA case*), and statutory criteria under the Representation of the People Acts of 1950 and 1951.
- **Main Exam (GS Paper II):** Salient features of the Representation of the People's Act, evolution of the Basic Structure doctrine, judicial interpretation of fundamental rights, and structural challenges in Indian electoral governance.





10. India's Geopolitical Dilemma and Leadership Potential in Global AI Governance

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Shift from Global South to Middle Power:** Hosting the India AI Impact Summit 2026, India originally prioritized the contextual realities and real-world harms of the Global South, but later shifted toward a "middle power" discourse to attract domestic capital and accelerate AI adoption.
- **Alignment with Pax Silica:** By joining the US-dominated semiconductor supply chain initiative (*Pax Silica*), India signaled strategic alignment with Western tech monopolies, compromising its traditional pursuit of strategic autonomy.
- **The Big Tech Dependency Risk:** Relying heavily on foreign tech infrastructure raises fears that India and the Global South could become mere sites for resource extraction—yielding data, land, water, and cheap data-labeling labor—while profits accrue entirely to American Big Tech.
- **Domestic Externalities and Local Resistance:** Accelerating data center projects has triggered community displacement and protests, highlighted by a lack of strict guardrails to stop foreign corporations from scraping public and indigenous knowledge datasets.
- **Sluggish Foundational Innovation:** Despite heavy push for low-value semiconductor assembly and localized use cases, India's fundamental AI innovation remains sluggish due to a lack of massive capital required to build globally competitive foundational models.
- **The UN Geneva Dialogue Opportunity:** The UN Global Dialogue on AI in Geneva (July 2026) offers India a strategic window to reclaim its leadership position, stitching together a fractured Global South coalition to establish sovereign multilateral rules.



Essential Definitions

- **Pax Silica:** A geopolitical and industrial alignment framework dominated by the United States and its allies to secure, control, and regulate global semiconductor supply chains and hardware manufacturing.
- **Middle Power Dilemma:** A strategic paradox where a developing nation aspires to align economically and technologically with advanced economies, yet remains firmly anchored to the Global South due to colonial history and low per capita indicators.
- **Foundational AI Models:** Large-scale artificial intelligence models trained on vast quantities of data that can be adapted to a wide range of downstream tasks, forming the primary infrastructure of modern AI ecosystems.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence:** The NITI Aayog policy roadmap centered on the *#AIforAll* philosophy, originally designed to leverage AI for social inclusion and public sector transformation.
- **Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023:** The primary statutory framework regulating the processing of digital personal data, directly impacting how domestic datasets are scraped, processed, and utilized by foundational models.



- **Constitutional Directive:** Aligned with **Article 51** of the Directive Principles of State Policy, which commands the State to promote international peace and security, maintain just and honorable relations between nations, and foster respect for international law.

Conclusion

India's strategic shift toward the *Pax Silica* alliance risks turning the country into a consumer market dependent on foreign foundational systems. To mitigate data colonialism, India must balance its domestic market ambitions with its traditional role as a geopolitical bridge. Reasserting global leadership at multilateral forums like the UN Geneva Dialogue will allow India to champion a democratic AI framework that protects public purpose, guards against resource extraction, and ensures digital sovereignty for the Global South.

UPSC Relevance

- **Preliminary Exam:** Global AI summits (Bletchley Park, Seoul, Paris), international dialogues on AI governance, and domestic regulatory frameworks like the DPDP Act.
- **Main Exam (GS Paper II & III):** Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, scientific indigenization, challenges to strategic autonomy, and the socio-environmental impacts of large-scale digital infrastructure.

11. Weak Monsoon Outlook and Its Structural Risks to the Indian Economy

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Monsoon Deficit and Below-Normal Forecast:** Following a severe 40% rainfall deficit in June, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast below-normal precipitation for July, elevating risks of a potential "super" El Nino.
- **Three-Pronged Economic Impact:** A weak monsoon directly damages the domestic economy by reducing agricultural production, depressing rural incomes to dent aggregate demand, and driving up food inflation.
- **Cropping Pattern Alterations:** Water stress is shifting cropping choices; while paddy acreage expands in well-irrigated regions like Punjab and Haryana, rainfed maize and vegetable acreages face declines as farmers prefer low-water pulses.
- **Wider Macroeconomic Backlash:** Reduced farm incomes contract non-farm rural sectors like construction, immediately hurting core consumer industries, tractor sales, and two-wheeler markets, which could shave 20-65 basis points off GDP growth.
- **Fiscal Pressures and Supply Constraints:** Compounded by external geopolitical supply shocks, the government approved a Rs 41,533 crore Nutrient-Based Subsidy for Kharif fertilizers. If crops fail, importing shortfall commodities will widen the Current Account Deficit and strain the rupee.

Essential Definitions

- **Super El Nino:** An extreme climate pattern characterized by an exceptional, prolonged warming of surface waters in the central and eastern Pacific Ocean, heavily correlated with severe monsoon failures and droughts in India.
- **Gross Value Added (GVA):** An economic metric that measures the value of goods and services produced by an individual sector (such as agriculture), showing its direct structural contribution to the economy before taxes and subsidies.



- **Ex-Ante Risk Reduction:** A proactive disaster management approach focused on implementing structural preventive investments (like irrigation and drought-resistant seeds) beforehand, rather than relying on ex-post compensation like crop insurance.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Essential Commodities Act, 1955:** Empowers the central government to regulate the production, supply, and distribution of food items to prevent hoarding and stabilize retail price inflation during agricultural shortfalls.
- **Disaster Management Act, 2005:** Provides the legal framework for the assessment, mitigation, and systemic deployment of financial relief packages across the 315 vulnerable, drought-prone districts.
- **Constitutional Allocation:** Under the Seventh Schedule, "Agriculture" is primarily a state subject under **Entry 14 of the State List (List II)**, whereas "Inter-state rivers and river valleys" and major price-stabilization interventions fall under the **Union List (List I)** and **Concurrent List (List III)** frameworks, requiring cooperative federal planning.



Conclusion

India's current agricultural buffer position cannot mask the systemic vulnerability of its massive rural workforce to climate shocks. Relying solely on ex-post mechanisms like crop insurance is an inadequate defense against successive El Nino occurrences. True economic resilience demands accelerated public capital investment in drought-proofing measures, comprehensive canal networks, and the fast-tracked adoption of climate-resilient crop varieties to secure long-term energy, food, and fiscal stability.

UPSC Relevance

- **Preliminary Exam:** Spatial distribution of India's southwest monsoon, meteorological definitions of rainfall deficits, working mechanisms of El Nino, and the operational guidelines of the Nutrient-Based Subsidy (NBS) scheme.
- **Main Exam (GS Paper I & III):** Distribution of key natural resources, changes in critical geographical features, agricultural cropping patterns, issues of food security, inflation management, and the fiscal impacts of climate change on GDP.

12. Legality of Bar Association Resolutions Boycotting Legal Representation

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Bar Boycott Controversy:** The Faizabad Bar Association's resolution to deny legal representation to the accused in the Ayodhya Ram Temple embezzlement case has revived a critical constitutional question regarding collective legal boycotts.
- **Judicial Invalidation:** In *A.S. Mohammed Rafi v. State of Tamil Nadu* (2010), the Supreme Court declared all Bar Association resolutions boycotting specific accused individuals as wholly illegal, null, void, and against professional ethics.



- **Individual vs Collective Autonomy:** While individual advocates can refuse a brief under special personal circumstances, the Uttarakhand High Court (*Kuldeep Agarwal*, 2019) clarified that this discretion cannot be exercised collectively by a Bar Association to enforce a blanket ban.
- **Precedents of "Sheer Militancy":** Despite clear judicial pronouncements, Bar bodies have historically passed boycott resolutions in high-profile cases, such as the 2008 Mumbai attacks (Ajmal Kasab) and the 2012 Delhi gang rape, actions characterized by the Karnataka High Court as "sheer militancy" that could amount to criminal contempt.
- **Core of Fair Trial:** The Madras High Court (*Manikandan Nair*, 2025) and the Supreme Court (*J. Jayalalithaa*, 2014) have reiterated that a fair trial must be accorded to every accused to protect the interests of the accused, the victim, and society simultaneously.

Essential Definitions

- **Bar Association:** A professional body of legal practitioners that looks after the welfare, administrative coordination, and professional standards of advocates practicing in a specific court jurisdiction.
- **Right to Counsel:** A fundamental constitutional guarantee ensuring that any person accused of an offense has the right to be advised and defended by a qualified legal practitioner of their choice.
- **Brief System:** A professional convention under the Bar Council of India Rules where an advocate practicing in a court is generally bound to accept any case at a standard fee, ensuring access to justice without prejudice.



Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 22(1):** Guarantees that no person who is arrested shall be detained in custody without being informed of the grounds for arrest, nor shall they be denied the right to consult and be defended by a legal practitioner of their choice.
- **Article 21 and Article 14:** The Right to Life and Personal Liberty includes the right to a speedy and fair trial, complemented by Article 14 which ensures equality before the law and equal protection of the laws.
- **Article 39A (DPSP):** Mandates the State to secure the operation of the legal system to promote justice on a basis of equal opportunity, specifically providing free legal aid to ensure justice is not denied due to economic or other disabilities.
- **Bar Council of India Rules (Standards of Professional Conduct):** Rules governing advocate etiquette, which mandate that while individual advocates can decline a brief under explicit personal constraints, collective institutional coercion by a Bar body is prohibited.

Conclusion

Collective resolutions by Bar Associations refusing to represent specific accused individuals undermine the foundational pillars of the rule of law. A trial cannot be fair if the accused is systematically denied professional defense through institutional boycotts. While the public anger surrounding egregious crimes is understandable, the legal fraternity must uphold institutional integrity by ensuring that the constitutional right to counsel remains uncompromised, allowing the judiciary alone to determine guilt.



UPSC Relevance

- **Preliminary Exam:** Constitutional provisions under Part III (Articles 14, 21, 22) and Part IV (Article 39A), the role and regulatory powers of the Bar Council of India, and landmark judgments on fair trial.
 - **Main Exam (GS Paper II):** Structure, organization, and functioning of the Judiciary, issues arising out of the implementation of regular criminal procedures, protection of fundamental human rights, and the ethical obligations of constitutional actors.
-



VIDHVATH IAS ACADEMY