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VIDHVATH IAS KAS ACADEMY & STUDY CENTRE

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

FOR UPSC CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION

DATE: 05/08/2026 (WEDNESDAY)



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1. Political Representation of Youth in India

Key Highlights and Summary

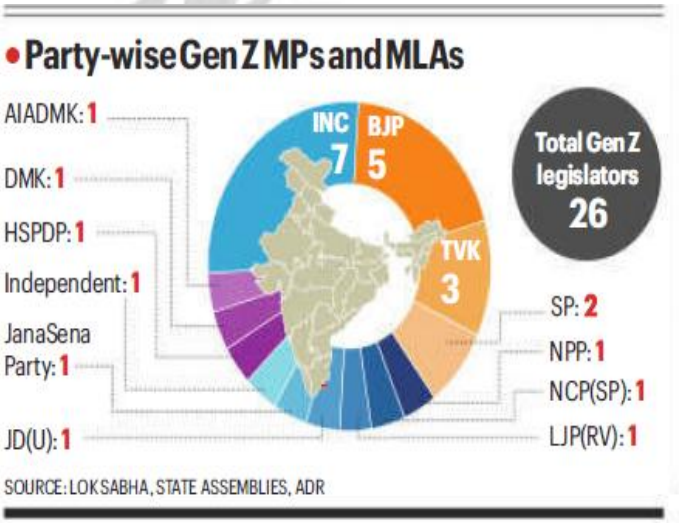
- **Severe Underrepresentation:** Gen Z accounts for nearly 26 percent of India's population, yet they hold a negligible share of political power with only 6 Lok Sabha MPs and 20 MLAs across the country.
- **Statutory Eligibility Barrier:** The minimum age requirement to contest elections for the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies is 25 years, legally barring a significant portion of the younger demographic from direct electoral participation.
- **Party-wise Distribution:** Major national parties like the INC (7) and BJP (5) lead in Gen Z representation, followed by regional outfits like TVK (3) and SP (2), with smaller parties holding solitary seats.
- **Civic Activism vs. Electoral Politics:** While younger cohorts actively shape public discourse, protests, and grassroots movements on streets and digital platforms, their transition into institutional legislative bodies remains restricted.
- **Structural Bottlenecks:** Politics in India continues to be heavily dominated by entrenched leadership networks, dynastic politics, and older cohorts, making resource mobilization difficult for younger aspirants.

Essential Definitions

- **Gen Z:** Demographically defined as individuals born roughly between 1997 and 2012, characterized by digital nativity, heightened social awareness, and active participation in modern socio-political movements.
- **Legislature:** The supreme law-making body of a nation or state, consisting of elected representatives responsible for enacting laws, debating policy, and holding the executive accountable.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 84(b) of the Constitution:** Stipulates that the minimum age for a person to be chosen as a member of Parliament (Lok Sabha) is 25 years.
- **Article 173(b) of the Constitution:** Sets the minimum age at 25 years for contesting elections to a State Legislative Assembly (Vidhan Sabha).
- **Article 326 of the Constitution:** Guarantees universal adult suffrage, establishing that elections to the Lok Sabha and Legislative Assemblies shall be based on adult suffrage for citizens not less than 18 years of age.



- **Representation of the People Act, 1951:** Governs the conduct of elections and lays down qualifications and disqualifications for membership in Parliament and state legislatures, reinforcing the age threshold of 25.

Conclusion

The stark divide between India's youthful population and its aging legislative chambers highlights an urgent need for structural political inclusion. Lowering candidate entry barriers, fostering youth wings within political parties, and institutionalizing mentorship programs are vital steps to bridge this democratic deficit and ensure holistic national governance.

UPSC Relevance

This topic is highly relevant for UPSC Civil Services Examination under General Studies Paper II (Indian Polity and Constitution), specifically concerning representation of people, salient features of the Representation of the People Act, structural challenges in Indian democracy, and inclusive governance.

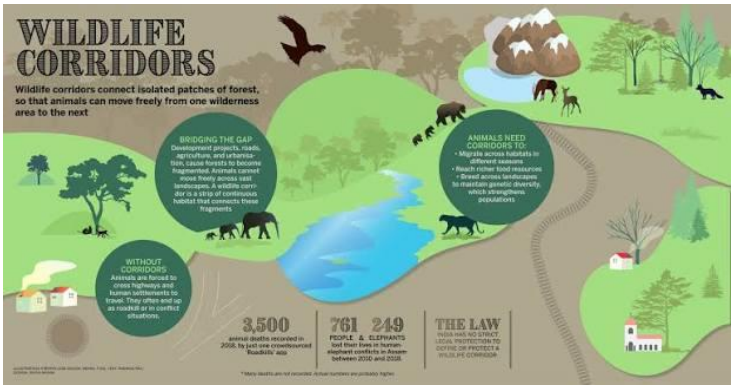
2. Environmental Governance and Wildlife Corridors

Key Highlights and Summary

- **Project Clearance in Sensitive Zone:** The Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife (SC-NBWL) recommended clearance for the 1800 MW Panari pumped storage hydropower project located in the Panna-Ranipur tiger corridor.
- **Ecological Fragmentation Risks:** The project requires 411.48 hectares of forest land, threatening continuous movement patterns of tigers, leopards, and bears between the Panna Tiger Reserve and Ranipur Tiger Reserve.
- **Mitigation Stipulations:** The clearance includes mandatory mitigation measures such as constructing three 30-metre-wide wildlife overpasses across the Baghain River and realigning muck-dumping areas.
- **Conflicting Expert Views:** While local forest officers raised strict reservations regarding habitat fragmentation and increased wildlife movement due to the Ken-Betwa river-linking project, central advisory bodies like WII and NTCA favoured clearance with mitigation caveats.
- **Strategic Development vs. Conservation Trade-off:** The decision highlights the ongoing friction between pushing clean energy storage infrastructure (pumped storage projects) and preserving critical ecological corridors.

Essential Definitions

- **Wildlife Corridor:** A strip of natural habitat connecting wildlife populations otherwise separated by human-built structures, roads, or industrial development, allowing gene flow and safe animal dispersal.
- **Pumped Storage Plant (PSP):** A type of hydroelectric energy storage system where water is pumped from a lower reservoir to an upper reservoir during off-peak hours and released to generate power during peak demand.



Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Provides the legal framework for the creation, protection, and regulation of national parks, sanctuaries, and tiger reserves, governing activities within protected wildlife zones.

- **National Board for Wildlife (NBWL):** A statutory body constituted under Section 5(A) of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, chaired by the Prime Minister, mandated to review all wildlife-related matters and approve projects in or near protected areas.
- **Article 48A of the Constitution:** Directs the State to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forests and wildlife of the country as part of the Directive Principles of State Policy.
- **Article 51A(g) of the Constitution:** Imposes a fundamental duty on every Indian citizen to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers, and wildlife, and to have compassion for living creatures.

Conclusion

Balancing the transition toward green energy infrastructure with ecological preservation requires strict adherence to science-based impact assessments. While pumped storage projects are crucial for renewable energy integration, compromising critical tiger corridors risks undermining long-term biodiversity conservation efforts.

UPSC Relevance

This topic holds high relevance for UPSC Civil Services Examination under General Studies Paper III (Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment) and General Studies Paper II (Statutory and Regulatory Bodies).

3. India's Surge in Goods and Services Tax Collections

Key Highlights and Summary



- **Record Mop-up in July:** India's gross goods and services tax collections rose to over ₹2.11 trillion in July, marking the second-highest monthly mop-up since the indirect tax regime began in 2017.
- **Growth Outpacing Nominal GDP:** GST revenue growth has accelerated in FY27, with July collections recording a 15.4% year-on-year increase, outperforming the Union budget's nominal GDP growth assumption of 10%.
- **Economic Formalization and Compliance:** The expansion is driven by better tax compliance, technology-driven monitoring via e-invoicing and e-way bills, and a widening taxpayer base crossing 9.6 million registered entities under state administrations.
- **Healthy Refund Disbursals:** GST refunds rose 13.1% year-on-year to ₹29,968 crore in July, while net GST collections still increased 15.8%, proving that revenue growth reflects genuine economic activity rather than delayed refund processing.
- **Surge in Import-Related Taxes:** A key driver behind the July surge was a 28.8% rise in GST collected on imports, highlighting a disproportionately large contribution from external trade.

Essential Definitions

- **Goods and Services Tax (GST):** A comprehensive, multi-stage, destination-based indirect tax levied on the supply of goods and services across India, subsuming most central and state indirect taxes.

- **Input Tax Credit (ITC):** A mechanism allowing businesses to reduce the tax they have already paid on inputs (purchases) from their final tax liability on output (sales), incentivizing supply chain formalization.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **One Hundred and First Amendment Act, 2016:** Inserted Articles 246A, 269A, and 279A into the Constitution of India, providing the foundational legal framework for the implementation of the GST regime.
- **Article 279A of the Constitution:** Mandates the establishment of the GST Council as a joint forum of the Centre and the States to make recommendations on tax rates, exemptions, and thresholds.
- **Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST) Act, 2017:** Governs the levy and collection of tax on intra-state supplies of goods and services by the Central Government.

Conclusion

The remarkable surge in GST collections underscores structural improvements in India's indirect tax framework. By leveraging technology to curb evasion and formalize economic transactions, the tax regime has established itself as a reliable, high-frequency indicator of macroeconomic health and resilient domestic consumption.

UPSC Relevance

This topic is highly relevant for the UPSC Civil Services Examination under General Studies Paper III (Indian Economy, Mobilization of Resources, Growth and Development, and Tax Reforms).

4. India as a Global Data Embassy Hub

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Strategic Vision:** The Centre is formulating a comprehensive road map to position India as a premier global host for foreign governments' data embassies and enhance international sub-marine cable connectivity.
- **Rapid Market Expansion:** India's data centre market, valued at $8.94 billion, is projected to scale up to $31.36 billion by 2035, with total installed capacity surging past 12 GW.



- **Massive Foreign Investments:** Global technology majors and domestic conglomerates have committed over $250 billion in investments to expand data centre capacity across the country.
- **Infrastructure and Energy Challenges:** Despite rapid growth, heavy reliance on imported IT hardware (servers, storage, graphics processing units), potential power grid strains, and shortages of specialized AI infrastructure professionals remain key bottlenecks.
- **Global Ranking Jump:** Driven by competitive cost advantages and expanding edge networks, India has climbed from 13th place globally in mid-2024 to 6th position in operational data centres.

Essential Definitions

- **Data Embassy:** A secure, sovereign cloud infrastructure or server facility hosted within a foreign nation's territory but legally protected under the laws and diplomatic status of the home country, ensuring digital continuity during crises.
- **Hyperscaler:** Large-scale cloud service providers capable of scaling computing resources massively to support enterprise-level data storage, high-performance computing, and artificial intelligence workloads.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Information Technology Act, 2000:** Serves as the primary legal statute regulating cyber law, electronic governance, and data security standards in India.
- **Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023:** Establishes the statutory framework for processing digital personal data, safeguarding individual privacy rights, and regulating cross-border data flows.
- **International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) Act, 2019:** Regulates financial products, financial services, and financial institutions in IFSC zones like GIFT City, providing the regulatory sandbox required for international data embassy frameworks.

Conclusion

Transforming India into a global data embassy hub represents a strategic convergence of digital diplomacy, infrastructure development, and economic self-reliance. By overcoming hardware import dependencies and securing sustainable energy pathways, India can cement its position as an indispensable pillar of the global digital economy.

UPSC Relevance

This topic is highly relevant for the UPSC Civil Services Examination under General Studies Paper III (Infrastructure, IT and Computers, Cybersecurity, Growth and Development) and General Studies Paper II (International Relations and Bilateral Agreements).

5. RBI Monetary Policy Committee and Inflation Management

Key Highlights and Summary



- **Navigating Global Uncertainties:** As the RBI Monetary Policy Committee convenes, persistent West Asian volatility and global geopolitical tensions continue to cloud the macroeconomic outlook, though dollar inflows remain strong.
- **Resilient Domestic Growth:** High-frequency indicators show robust economic growth, and headline inflation has consistently surprised on the downside, averaging 3.9% in the June quarter against a forecast of 4.2%.
- **Monsoon Revival and Food Prices:** The monsoon gathered strength in July, reducing the cumulative rainfall deficit and boosting crop sowing, which successfully contained seasonal spikes in perishable food items.

- **Core Inflation Stability:** Core inflation remains closely aligned with its long-term average, providing the central bank ample headroom to maintain a wait-and-watch approach without signaling premature rate hikes.
- **Managing Liquidity and Forex:** Beyond interest rates, the focus shifts to liquidity management as the banking system absorbs foreign currency deposits through FCNR(B) inflows and monitors narrowing Indo-US bond yields.

Essential Definitions

- **Monetary Policy Committee (MPC):** A statutory body of the Reserve Bank of India entrusted with fixing the benchmark interest rate (repo rate) to contain inflation within the targeted mandate.
- **Core Inflation:** A measure of inflation that excludes volatile items like food and energy prices, reflecting the underlying, long-term trend of price pressures in an economy.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Section 45ZB of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934:** Empowers the Central Government to constitute a six-member Monetary Policy Committee to determine the policy rate required to achieve the inflation target.
- **Inflation Targeting Framework:** Established through an agreement between the Central Government and the RBI under Section 45ZA of the RBI Act, mandating a target Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation of 4% with a band of +/- 2%.

Conclusion

The resilience of domestic growth, supported by a reviving monsoon and subdued core inflation, equips the RBI to look past temporary supply-side shocks. Maintaining a data-dependent stance ensures a fine balance between safeguarding financial stability and sustaining macroeconomic growth.

UPSC Relevance

This topic is vital for the UPSC Civil Services Examination under General Studies Paper III (Indian Economy, Monetary Policy, Inflation, Growth and Development, and Banking Sector Reforms).

6. India's ₹2000 Crore Horticulture Cluster Scheme

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Targeted Cluster Development:** The Centre is rolling out a ₹2000 crore central sector scheme to develop peri-urban horticulture clusters for fruits and vegetables within a 100-kilometre radius of major consumption centres.
- **Inflation Control and Supply Chain Efficiency:** By shortening supply chains and linking production centers closer to urban markets, the scheme aims to curb food inflation, reduce freight costs, and minimize post-harvest losses.
- **Stakeholder Collaboration:** The five-year initiative will engage private players, Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), and cooperatives to build robust farm-to-market linkages and improve logistics.



- **Addressing Price Volatility:** With vegetables accounting for 6.82% and fruits and nuts carrying 3.70% weight in the Consumer Price Index, supply shocks in these categories serve as key drivers of headline inflation.
- **Phased Implementation:** The first phase will cover state capitals and cities with populations of 1.5 million or more based on the 2011 Census, followed by cities exceeding 1 million residents in subsequent rollouts.

Essential Definitions

- **Peri-Urban Agriculture:** The practice of cultivating, processing, and distributing food products located in and around towns and cities, providing immediate access to fresh produce for urban consumers.
- **Farmer Producer Organization (FPO):** A legally recognized entity formed by primary producers, such as farmers and milk producers, to leverage collective bargaining, improve market access, and enhance agricultural incomes.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH):** A centrally sponsored scheme for the holistic growth of the horticulture sector, covering fruits, vegetables, root and tuber crops, mushrooms, spices, flowers, aromatic plants, coconut, cashew, cocoa, and bamboo.
- **Article 48 of the Constitution:** Directs the State to organize agriculture and animal husbandry on modern and scientific lines, serving as a directive principle for agrarian policies.
- **Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020:** Deregulates the storage and movement of key agricultural commodities like cereals, pulses, potato, onion, and edible oils, empowering private investments in cold-chain and supply infrastructure.

Conclusion

The horticulture cluster scheme is a progressive step toward transforming India's agricultural supply chain from a reactive system to an organized, demand-linked network. By mitigating post-harvest losses and dampening urban food price volatility, it secures twin benefits for farmers' realizations and consumer price stability.

UPSC Relevance

This topic is highly relevant for the UPSC Civil Services Examination under General Studies Paper III (Agriculture, Marketing of Agricultural Produce and Issues, Economics of Animal Rearing, Food Security, and Inclusive Growth).

7. Potential Return of Merchant Discount Rate on UPI Payments

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Legislative Shift on MDR:** A newly introduced Bill in the Lok Sabha paves the way for the potential reintroduction of the Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) on select Unified Payments Interface (UPI) transactions.
- **Empowering the Reserve Bank:** The amendment alters how covered payment modes are determined under statutory provisions, giving the government and the RBI the power to selectively prescribe or exempt charges rather than imposing a blanket prohibition.



- **Industry Viability Concerns:** Payment aggregators, acquiring banks, and fintech firms have long argued that processing high-volume zero-MDR UPI payments creates a severe revenue deficit, threatening ecosystem sustainability.
- **Targeted Impact on Large Entities:** If re-introduced, MDR is expected to be restricted strictly to large merchants, high-value commerce, and specific transaction thresholds, protecting small vendors and everyday retail users.
- **Beneficiaries and Losers:** While payment gateways (like Razorpay, PayU), acquiring banks, and third-party application providers stand to gain steady revenue streams, large merchants accepting high-value UPI transfers could face slightly higher operational processing costs.

Essential Definitions

- **Merchant Discount Rate (MDR):** A small fee charged to a merchant by acquiring banks or payment facilitators every time a customer makes a digital payment, which is then distributed among participating banks, card networks, and infrastructure providers.
- **Unified Payments Interface (UPI):** An instant real-time payment system developed by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) that facilitates inter-bank transactions through mobile devices using a single virtual handle.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Section 269SU of the Income-tax Act, 1961:** Mandates specified businesses to provide facilities for accepting payments through prescribed electronic modes, which previously included a blanket statutory protection keeping UPI free of merchant fees.
- **Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007:** Provides the overarching regulatory framework for the regulation and supervision of payment systems in India by the Reserve Bank of India.
- **Article 246 of the Constitution of India:** Empowers Parliament to legislate on matters enumerated in the Union List, including banking, currency, and foreign exchange, serving as the legislative basis for financial market amendments.

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Conclusion

The proposed statutory change regarding MDR represents a pragmatic recalibration to ensure the financial viability of India's booming digital payments infrastructure. By shifting toward a targeted, threshold-based fee structure, policymakers can safeguard fintech innovation and system sustainability without overburdening small vendors or ordinary citizens.

UPSC Relevance

This topic is highly relevant for the UPSC Civil Services Examination under General Studies Paper III (Indian Economy, Digital Economy, Financial Inclusion, Banking Sector Reforms, and Mobilization of Resources).

8. Government Engagement with Big Tech on Content Moderation and Safety

Key Highlights & Summary

- **High-Level Summoning:** The Union Government summoned Meta's top global executives, including Joel Kaplan, for high-level meetings in New Delhi to address critical content moderation and safety lapses.
- **Censorship of Public Discourse:** The meeting was triggered after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Facebook post addressing Indian youth and promising strict action against exam paper leaks was temporarily restricted on the platform.
- **Child Safety Lapses:** Beyond political censorship, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology raised severe concerns over platform failures in curbing child sexual abuse material (CSAM).
- **Inadequate Technical Explanations:** While Meta attributed the restriction of the Prime Minister's post to a technical glitch and apologized, the government dismissed the explanation as inadequate for a technology leader.
- **Accountability of Intermediaries:** The development underscores tightening state oversight on major social media platforms regarding arbitrary content takedowns, algorithmic transparency, and statutory compliance.

Essential Definitions



- **Intermediary:** Any entity that on behalf of another person receives, stores, or transmits an electronic record or provides any service with respect to that record, including social media platforms, internet service providers, and search engines.
- **Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM):** Any visual depiction of sexual abuse involving minors, the distribution, hosting, or transmission of which constitutes a grave transnational and domestic cybercrime.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021:** Imposes strict due diligence requirements on social media intermediaries, including appointing grievance officers, enabling traceability, and deploying automated tools to proactively remove CSAM and unlawful content.
- **Section 79 of the Information Technology Act, 2000:** Governs the safe harbor protection granted to intermediaries, specifying that immunity from liability is contingent upon strict compliance with government due diligence norms.
- **Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution:** Guarantees the freedom of speech and expression, balancing digital platform communication rights with reasonable restrictions under Article 19(2) in the interest of public order, decency, and sovereignty.

Conclusion

The friction between regulatory bodies and global tech giants highlights the imperative for robust accountability in digital spaces. Ensuring platform safety against heinous crimes like CSAM alongside

unhindered public communication necessitates strict enforcement of intermediary liabilities without compromising democratic discourse.

UPSC Relevance

This topic is highly relevant for the UPSC Civil Services Examination under General Studies Paper II (Government Policies and Interventions for Development in various sectors) and General Studies Paper III (Internal Security, Cyber Security, and Role of Media and Social Networking Sites).

9. Supreme Court Directive on Curbing Digital Arrest Scams

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Judicial Intervention:** The Supreme Court directed the Centre, states, the Reserve Bank of India, and telecom authorities to formulate standard operating procedures (SOPs) to effectively combat digital arrest scams.
- **Operational Redressal Mechanisms:** The court mandated authorities to operationalize prompt grievance redressal mechanisms, initiate criminal actions via zero first information reports against cyber fraudsters, and ensure time-bound restitution of monetary losses to victims.
- **Decline in Reported Incidents:** According to the status report submitted by the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre under the Ministry of Home Affairs, complaints regarding digital arrests dipped from 123672 in 2024 to 58249 in 2025, and stood at 16377 for the period ending June 30, 2026.
- **Continued Vigilance Required:** While noting that the statistical drop in complaints is encouraging, the Supreme Court emphasized that sustained monitoring and proactive inter-agency coordination remain essential.
- **Multi-Stakeholder Synergy:** Tackling complex cyber extortion rings requires coordinated action across financial institutions, law enforcement agencies, telecom service providers, and digital platforms to intercept fraudulent transactions in real-time.



Essential Definitions

- **Digital Arrest:** An emerging form of cyber fraud where scammers impersonate law enforcement or regulatory officials via video calls, intimidating victims into confinement under false pretexts of criminal investigations to extort money.
- **Zero FIR:** A First Information Report that can be registered at any police station regardless of the place where the crime was committed, later transferred to the appropriate jurisdiction for regular investigation.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Information Technology Act, 2000:** Governs cybercrimes, electronic transactions, and provides the legal basis for investigating online fraud, data breaches, and digital impersonation offences in India.
- **Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023:** Replaces the Code of Criminal Procedure, providing updated procedural mandates for registering FIRs, conducting electronic investigations, and managing digital evidence.

- **Article 21 of the Constitution:** Guarantees the right to life and personal liberty, which is severely infringed upon when citizens are subjected to psychological terror and illegal confinement through digital arrest scams.

Conclusion

The Supreme Court's directives mark a crucial step toward institutionalizing a multi-agency defense against sophisticated cyber extortion. Curbing digital arrest scams demands a robust combination of technical tracking, rapid financial freezing mechanisms, and heightened public legal awareness.

UPSC Relevance

This topic is highly relevant for the UPSC Civil Services Examination under General Studies Paper III (Internal Security, Cyber Security, Prevention of Cyber Crimes) and General Studies Paper II (Constitutional and Statutory Bodies, Judiciary).

10. Kerala Disaster Resilience System and Flood Management

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Pilot Resilience Initiative:** Kerala announced the establishment of a state-of-the-art disaster resilience system in Pathanamthitta on a pilot basis to strengthen preparedness against recurring monsoon floods.
- **Advanced Monitoring Infrastructure:** The proposed system integrates a denser network of rain gauges and an advanced early-warning mechanism developed in association with research bodies like CUSAT and the Hume Centre.
- **Carrying Capacity Crisis:** Chief Minister V.D. Satheesan linked the worsening flood situation directly to the declining carrying capacity of rivers, highlighting widespread siltation and inadequate post-flood maintenance since 2018.
- **Escalating Climate Toll:** Persistent extreme rainfall events, cloudbursts, and frequent landslides have driven the death toll to 25 over four days, prompting orange alerts across nine districts.
- **Proactive Mitigation Focus:** The state government prioritized post-flood de-siltation of river channels and rapid evacuation protocols to counter shrinking response times caused by sudden cloudbursts.

Essential Definitions

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- **Carrying Capacity:** The maximum volume of water or sediment a river channel can safely transport downstream without overflowing its banks and causing destructive floods.
- **Cloudburst:** A localized, sudden, and very heavy rainfall event exceeding 100mm per hour over a small geographical area, frequently triggering flash floods and catastrophic landslides in hilly terrains.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Disaster Management Act, 2005:** Establishes institutional mechanisms at national, state, and district levels (NDMA, SDMA, DDMA) for disaster management, mitigation planning, and emergency financial response.
- **National Policy on Disaster Management, 2009:** Emphasizes a paradigm shift from a relief-centric approach to a proactive regime encompassing prevention, mitigation, preparedness, and capacity building.

- **Article 21 of the Constitution:** Guarantees the right to life, encompassing the right to live in a safe environment, imposing a positive duty on the State to protect citizens from preventable natural disasters.

Conclusion

The recurring flood crises in Kerala underscore the urgent need to transition from reactive disaster relief to proactive infrastructure resilience. Restoring river carrying capacities, deploying hyper-local early-warning systems, and enforcing strict land-use regulations in eco-sensitive zones are vital for long-term climate adaptation.

UPSC Relevance

This topic is highly relevant for the UPSC Civil Services Examination under General Studies Paper III (Disaster Management, Environmental Pollution and Degradation, and Climate Change Adaptation).

11. Evolution of NATO and Transatlantic Burden-Sharing

Key Highlights and Summary



- **Shifting Transatlantic Compact:** For the first time since NATO's inception in 1949, Washington is urging Europe to assume primary responsibility for its conventional security, marking a foundational shift away from absolute U.S. dependency.
- **U.S. Strategic Rebalance:** Prompted by its National Security Strategy, the U.S. has gradually scaled down its military presence in Europe to approximately 75,000 to 80,000 troops, redirecting its strategic focus toward the Indo-Pacific.
- **Phased Evolution of the Alliance:** NATO has transitioned through three distinct periods: NATO 1.0 (Cold War collective deterrence), NATO 2.0 (Post-Cold War eastward expansion and out-of-area operations), and the current third phase focused on a balanced partnership.
- **Financial and Capability Commitments:** European allies have stepped up significantly, pledging higher defense outlays—such as targeting core defense spending of 3.5% of GDP by 2035—alongside €70 billion in military assistance for Ukraine.
- **Strategic Implications for India:** A self-reliant Europe allows Washington to reinforce the Indo-Pacific security balance against China while opening avenues for India to partner with European nations in defense manufacturing and advanced technology.

Essential Definitions

- **Burden-Sharing:** The proportional distribution of financial, military, and operational responsibilities among member states of an alliance to ensure collective security.
- **Strategic Autonomy:** A nation's ability to independently formulate and execute foreign policy and defense strategies without undue reliance on external powers.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **North Atlantic Treaty (1949):** The founding international treaty establishing NATO, centered upon **Article 5**, which enshrines the principle of collective defense that an armed attack against one member is an attack against all.
- **Article 51 of the UN Charter:** Recognizes the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense of states, serving as the international legal basis for NATO's collective security architecture.
- **Article 51 of the Constitution of India:** Directs the Indian State to promote international peace and security, foster respect for international law, and encourage settlement of international disputes by arbitration, guiding India's independent diplomatic posture.

Conclusion

NATO's structural transformation reflects a pragmatic redistribution of global security burdens. By urging Europe to take charge of its regional defense, the transatlantic alliance is adapting to a multipolar world, creating fresh opportunities for India to expand high-tech defense partnerships while preserving its strategic autonomy.

UPSC Relevance

This topic is highly relevant for the UPSC Civil Services Examination under General Studies Paper II (International Relations, Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings involving India and affecting India's interests) and General Studies Paper III (Security Challenges and Defense Preparedness).

12. Supreme Court Notice on Central Armed Police Force Act Challenge

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Judicial Scrutiny on CAPF Act:** The Supreme Court issued notices to the Union Home Ministry and DoPT on a writ petition challenging the constitutional validity of the Central Armed Police Force (General Administration) Act, 2026.
- **Core Legal Challenge:** Petitioners, led by CRPF Assistant Commandant Bibhor Kumar Singh, have challenged Sections 3 and 4 of the Act as ultra vires the Constitution, arguing it institutionalizes exclusive deputation quotas for IPS officers.
- **Deputation Quota Controversey:** The impugned Act mandates that 50% of Inspector-General posts, at least 67% of Additional Director-General posts, and 100% of Special Director-General and Director-General posts be filled by IPS officers on deputation.
- **Violation of Prior Judgments:** The petition contends that the legislation circumvents the Supreme Court's May 23, 2025 judgment in the *Sanjay Prakash vs Union of India* case, which favored cadre officers for Higher Administrative Grade positions.
- **Grievance of Cadre Officers:** Direct-entry executive officers argue that reserved top-tier leadership tracks demoralize force personnel, stunt career progression, and undermine operational effectiveness.

Essential Definitions

- **Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs):** Refers to uniform security forces of India under the Ministry of Home Affairs, including the CRPF, BSF, CISF, ITBP, and SSB, tasked with internal security and border guarding.

- **Deputation:** A service arrangement where an officer from an all-India service (like the IPS) is temporarily transferred to hold an executive command or administrative post within a central armed force.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Central Armed Police Force (General Administration) Act, 2026:** Enacted by Parliament to regulate recruitment, management, and conditions of service across CAPFs, overriding prior court judgments regarding cadre stagnation.



- **Article 33 of the Constitution:** Empowers Parliament to determine to what extent any of the fundamental rights shall, in their application to members of the Armed Forces or Forces charged with the maintenance of public order, be restricted to ensure the proper discharge of duties.
- **Article 309 of the Constitution:** Empowers the appropriate legislature to regulate the recruitment and conditions of service of persons appointed to public services and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union.

Conclusion

The legal battle over the CAPF Act highlights the persistent friction between cadre aspirations and cadre-controlling deputation practices in India's security architecture. Striking a balance between professional police leadership and the career progression of internal force commanders remains vital for organizational morale and national security.

UPSC Relevance

This topic is highly relevant for the UPSC Civil Services Examination under General Studies Paper III (Internal Security, Forces and their Mandate) and General Studies Paper II (Structure, Organization and Functioning of the Executive, and Judiciary).

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