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

## **DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS**

**FOR UPSC CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION**

**DATE: 07/09/2026 (MONDAY)**



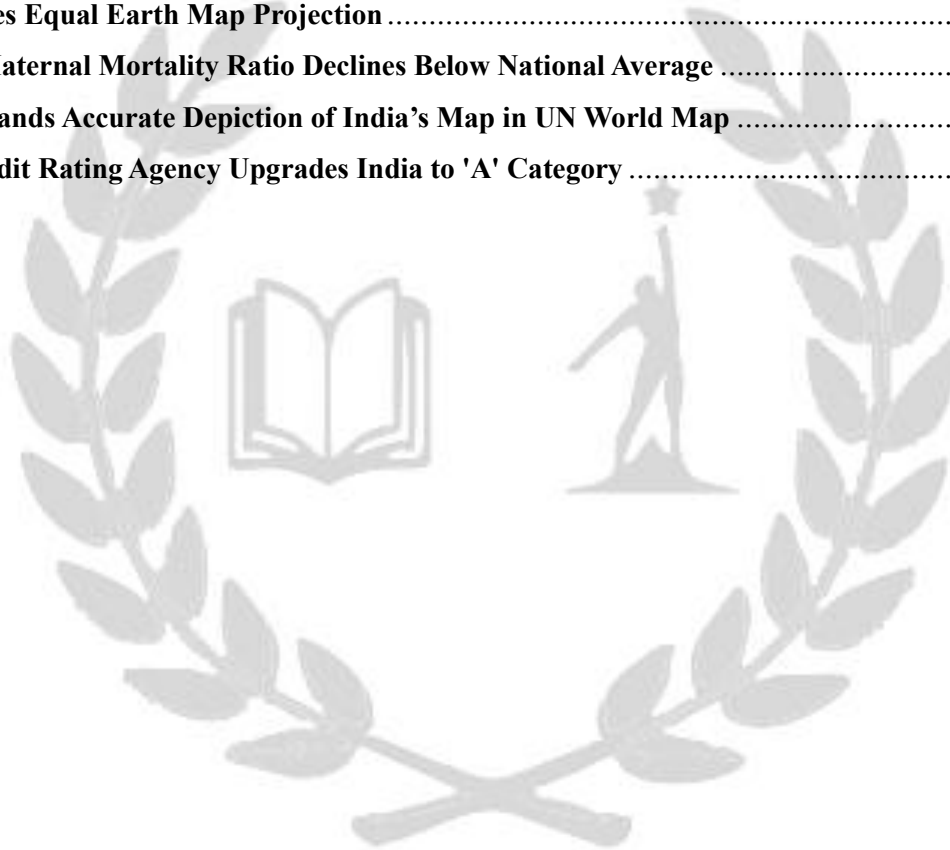
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**VIDHVATH IAS ACADEMY**



## 1. India-China Military Dialogue in Arunachal Pradesh

### Key Highlights & Summary

- **First Eastern Sector Dialogue:** India and China held their first Corps Commander-level talks in the Eastern Sector at the Vacha-Damai Border Personnel Meeting Point in Arunachal Pradesh.
- **Expansion Beyond Ladakh:** This marks a critical expansion of the high-level military dialogue mechanism beyond eastern Ladakh (Chushul-Moldo point), where talks were previously concentrated following the June 2020 Galwan Valley clashes.
- **Indian Delegation:** Lieutenant-General Girish Kalia led a 12-member Indian delegation, which included an Inspector-General of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP).
- **Operational Command Responsibility:** The 3 Corps (Spear Corps), headquartered at Rangapahar, Nagaland, handles operational areas along the LAC in Arunachal Pradesh, alongside Tezpur-based 4 Corps.
- **Border Tensions:** The meeting took place amid concerns over military build-up, conflicting territorial claims, and reports of Chinese incursions in the Taksing area of Upper Subansiri district.
- **Geopolitical Timing:** The dialogue was conducted shortly before India hosts the BRICS Summit in New Delhi, expected to be attended by Chinese President Xi Jinping.



### Essential Definitions

- **Line of Actual Control (LAC):** The non-demarcated boundary separating Indian-controlled territory from Chinese-controlled territory, broadly split into Western (Ladakh), Middle (Himachal/Uttarakhand), and Eastern (Arunachal/Sikkim) sectors.
- **Corps Commander-Level Talks:** Highest operational-level military dialogue conducted between lieutenant generals of the Indian Army and equivalent PLA commanders to manage border standoffs.

### Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 1 & 257(1) of the Indian Constitution:** Affirms national territorial integrity and the Union's executive power to direct states on maintaining strategic infrastructure for national defense.
- **Bilateral Border Agreements:** Guided by foundational treaties including the 1993 Peace and Tranquility Agreement, 1996 Agreement on Military Confidence Building Measures, and 2012 Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC).
- **Indo-Tibetan Border Police Act, 1992:** Provides statutory backing for ITBP as India's primary border guarding force along the 3,488 km LAC.

**Conclusion** Extending Corps Commander talks to the Eastern Sector demonstrates a proactive shift towards comprehensive border management. Resolving localized frictions like those in Taksing through institutional dialogue is essential for long-term stability along the LAC.



## UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II (International Relations):** India and its neighborhood-relations, bilateral mechanisms, regional blocs (BRICS), and conflict resolution.
- **GS Paper III (Internal Security):** Security challenges in border areas, management of international borders, role of border forces (ITBP), and defense infrastructure development.

## 2. Proposed Dissolution of Tamil Nadu State Planning Commission

### Key Highlights & Summary

- **End of 55-Year-Old Institution:** The Tamil Nadu government is considering abolishing the Tamil Nadu State Planning Commission (SPC), an advisory body established 55 years ago in 1971.
- **Vacant Leadership Posts:** Key posts such as Vice-Chairperson and full-time members have remained unfilled following the resignation of the team appointed by the previous administration.
- **Ex-Officio Leadership:** By convention, the Chief Minister serves as the ex-officio Chairperson of the SPC, alongside the Chief Secretary and Finance Secretary as ex-officio members.
- **Shift to Expert Committees:** The administration intends to replace the central standing planning panel with domain-specific expert committees for subject-focused policy inputs.
- **Streamlining Policy Governance:** Senior officials highlight that since the body primarily offers advisory policy inputs, ad-hoc bodies tapping specialized experts offer better flexibility.
- **Administrative Restructuring:** The move aligns with the broader paradigm shift from traditional top-down planning commissions to flexible, specialized think-tank models across state governments.



### Tamil Nadu State Planning Commission

With the Vice Chairman and the entire panel of members at the Tamil Nadu State Planning Commission all originally appointed during the previous DMK regime having tendered their resignations following the formation of the TVK-led government in the State, senior officials within the Commission have confirmed that the government will soon take an appropriate decision on thoroughly reconstituting the advisory body.

### Essential Definitions

- **Extra-Constitutional & Non-Statutory Body:** An organization created by an executive order of the government rather than established by a specific constitutional provision or statutory act of Parliament/State Legislature.
- **Advisory Think-Tank:** An institutional mechanism designed purely to offer expert recommendations, data analysis, and strategic policy inputs to the executive without legislative or statutory powers.

### Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 243ZD:** Mandates the constitution of District Planning Committees (DPCs) in states to consolidate rural-urban plans, highlighting that decentralised planning holds a statutory constitutional backing unlike state planning commissions.
- **Executive Power under Article 162:** Grants state governments executive jurisdiction over matters with respect to which the State Legislature has power to make laws, under which non-statutory commissions are set up and abolished.
- **Directive Principles of State Policy (Article 38 & 39):** Directs the State to secure a social order for the promotion of public welfare and ensure equitable resource distribution, guiding state planning priorities.



**Conclusion** The proposed abolition of the Tamil Nadu State Planning Commission reflects a transition from rigid centralized planning institutions to agile, domain-specific advisory bodies. Strengthening decentralised constitutional mechanisms alongside expert panels will ensure balanced regional development.

#### UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II (Polity & Governance):** Executive bodies vs. Constitutional/Statutory bodies, administrative reforms, and mechanisms for policy formulation.
- **GS Paper III (Indian Economy & Planning):** Institutional changes in planning mechanisms, evolution of decentralized planning, and shift towards flexible policy advisory systems.

### 3. Andhra Pradesh Focuses on FDI in Strategic Sectors

#### Key Highlights & Summary

- **Focus on Strategic Sectors:** The Andhra Pradesh government is targeting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in key strategic areas, including AI infrastructure, critical minerals, semiconductors, and energy transition.
- **High Global Investment Share:** The targeted strategic domains globally account for approximately 45% of total greenfield industrial projects.
- **Expanding Investment Pipeline:** The state leadership aims to broaden its foreign investment pipeline to create a strong ecosystem for industrial expansion and revive subdued manufacturing growth.
- **Focus on Grounding Investments:** Directives have been given to state officials to streamline execution, remove operational bottlenecks, and convert signed investment proposals into real production and employment.
- **Upcoming CII Partnership Summit:** These policy directives precede the upcoming Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Partnership Summit scheduled to take place in Visakhapatnam.
- **Promoting Competitive Federalism:** The state's proactive investment strategy aligns with broader competitive sub-national federalism to attract high-tech foreign capital.



#### Essential Definitions

- **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI):** Cross-border investment made by an entity resident in one economy to acquire a lasting interest and significant management control in an enterprise based in another economy.
- **Greenfield Investment:** A type of foreign direct investment where a parent company creates a completely new operational subsidiary or facility in a foreign country from the ground up.

#### Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), 1999:** Serves as the primary statutory framework regulating foreign capital inflows, foreign exchange, and cross-border investments in India.



- **DPIIT Consolidated FDI Policy:** Issued by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), it specifies sectoral caps, entry routes (Automatic Route vs. Government Route), and compliance conditions.
- **Seventh Schedule (State List & Union List):** Foreign affairs and international trade/commerce fall under the Union List (Entries 10 and 41), whereas industries and land administration fall under the State List (Entries 18 and 24), requiring close Center-State alignment for project implementation.

**Conclusion** Andhra Pradesh's initiative to target emerging tech sectors like AI, critical minerals, and semiconductors reflects a shift towards attracting high-value foreign capital. Eliminating administrative bottlenecks will be vital to translating these investment commitments into sustainable manufacturing output and employment.

#### UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper III (Indian Economy):** Mobilization of resources, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) trends, growth and investment models, and manufacturing sector challenges.
- **GS Paper II (Governance & Federalism):** Center-State relations, competitive federalism, ease of doing business, and state-level policy interventions for economic development.

## 4. Karnataka Seeks Reduction in Cauvery Water Release

### Key Highlights & Summary

- **Appeal for Reduction:** Karnataka filed an appeal before the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) seeking to reduce its daily water release to Tamil Nadu from 9,000 cusecs to 2,000 cusecs.
- **Contested Mandate:** The original order required Karnataka to release 9,000 cusecs daily for 15 days starting August 25 at the Biligundlu gauge site, totaling 11.66 tmc ft.
- **Hydrological Distress:** Karnataka cited severe hydrological distress in its basin area, with cumulative inflows into its four Cauvery reservoirs being 49.18% below the 30-year average.
- **Monsoon Deficit:** The state highlighted that the southwest monsoon is nearing its end, leaving little prospect for fresh inflows into Karnataka's reservoirs.
- **Reassessment Demand:** Karnataka urged the authority to adopt a cautious approach and defer further decisions until evaluating the upcoming northeast monsoon.
- **Review Meetings Scheduled:** Both the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC) and the CWMA are scheduled to meet on September 8 to review the ground situation.



### Essential Definitions

- **Hydrological Distress:** A situation where water availability in a river basin or reservoir system falls significantly below normal historical averages due to deficient rainfall or drought conditions.
- **Cusec & TMC Ft:** Cusec measures the rate of flow (one cubic foot per second), whereas TMC Ft (Thousand Million Cubic Feet) measures the volume of standing water stored or released.



## Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 262 of the Indian Constitution:** Empowers Parliament to enact laws for the adjudication of disputes relating to waters of inter-state rivers or river valleys, excluding the jurisdiction of courts if provided by law.
- **Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956:** Provides the statutory setup for constituting water dispute tribunals to resolve inter-state water sharing issues.
- **Cauvery Water Management Scheme, 2018:** Framed under the direction of the Supreme Court, establishing the CWMA and CWRC to monitor and implement the final allocation awards among riparian states.

**Conclusion** The recurring dispute over Cauvery water allocation during distress years underscores the need for a dynamic, scientific distress-sharing formula. Institutional cooperation between riparian states is vital to balance agricultural needs, drinking water security, and ecological flows during monsoon deficits.

## UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II (Polity & Governance):** Inter-State relations, federal water governance, Article 262, and statutory bodies like CWMA.
- **GS Paper III (Environment & Agriculture):** Sustainable water resource management, river basin management, drought mitigation, and climate change impacts on monsoons.

## 5. Judicial Integrity and Accountability in Higher Judiciary

### Key Highlights & Summary

- **Allegations Against Acting Chief Justice:** Supreme Court judge Justice Sandeep Mehta wrote three letters to the Chief Justice of India (CJI) detailing grave allegations of maladministration, roster manipulation, and nepotism against the Acting Chief Justice of the Rajasthan High Court, Justice Sanjeev Prakash Sharma.
- **Concerns Over Prolonged Tenure:** Justice Sharma served as Acting Chief Justice for nearly 11 months, raising institutional concerns regarding extended governance by acting heads rather than permanent appointments.
- **Bar Association Boycott:** Escalating discontent led lawyers at the Rajasthan High Court to stage sit-in protests, forcing the Acting Chief Justice to abstain from judicial proceedings.
- **Supreme Court Collegium Intervention:** On August 31, the Supreme Court Collegium recommended the appointment of Justice Sanjay Agrawal as the regular Chief Justice of the Rajasthan High Court.
- **Gaps in Institutional Response:** Despite verifiable complaints from a sitting apex court judge, delays in invoking formal internal disciplinary procedures highlighted institutional hesitation in addressing judicial misconduct.
- **Sub-optimal Accountability Mechanisms:** The episode exposes fundamental flaws in evaluating, investigating, and disciplining members of the higher judiciary under existing framework rules.





## Essential Definitions

- **Master of the Roster:** The exclusive administrative prerogative enjoyed by the Chief Justice (or Acting Chief Justice) of a High Court or Supreme Court to constitute benches and allocate judicial cases.
- **In-House Mechanism:** An internal, non-statutory investigatory framework adopted by the Supreme Court in 1999 to examine allegations of ethical breaches or misconduct against sitting higher court judges without resorting to immediate parliamentary removal proceedings.

## Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Articles 124(4) & 217(1)(b):** Prescribe the constitutional procedure for the removal (impeachment) of Supreme Court and High Court judges on proven grounds of misbehaviour or incapacity through an address by Parliament.
- **Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968:** Regulates the statutory procedure for investigating charges of misbehaviour or incapacity initiated by a motion in Parliament prior to impeachment.
- **K. Veeraswami vs Union of India (1991):** The Supreme Court held that prior written permission of the CJI is mandatory before registering a First Information Report (FIR) or conducting a criminal investigation against a sitting higher court judge.
- **Judicial Standards and Accountability Bill, 2010:** A proposed legislative initiative to enforce asset declarations and establish statutory complaint mechanisms against judges, which ultimately lapsed without becoming law.

**Conclusion** Addressing judicial corruption requires urgent structural reforms in appointments, roster allocation, and disciplinary oversight. Establishing an independent statutory accountability mechanism while safeguarding judicial independence remains crucial to preserving public faith in the judiciary.

## UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II (Polity & Governance):** Structure, organization, and functioning of the Judiciary; Judicial Independence vs. Judicial Accountability; the Collegium System; and executive-judicial dynamics.
- **GS Paper IV (Ethics & Human Interface):** Institutional ethics, integrity in public office, conflict of interest, and moral leadership in statutory bodies.

## 6. India's Unemployment Data Dilemma

### Key Highlights & Summary

- **Shift to High-Frequency Data:** India has transitioned its Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) to release monthly indicators using the Current Weekly Status (CWS) approach, seeking to track labor dynamics more dynamically.
- **Seasonal Dip in Headline Unemployment:** The PLFS reported a four-month low unemployment rate of 5.1% for ages 15+, primarily driven by a drop in rural unemployment to 4.5% during the peak kharif agricultural season.
- **Distress-Driven Employment vs. Quality Jobs:** The decline in rural unemployment reflects seasonal absorption in agriculture,



construction, and local trade rather than structural expansion of formal, high-productivity employment.

- **Informal Sector Data Gaps:** With around 90% of the workforce in the informal sector, high-frequency metrics struggle to capture employment quality, underemployment, wage trends, and labor mobility.
- **Invisible Migrant Labor:** The monthly survey framework fails to adequately capture seasonal circular migration, which involves an estimated 30-35 million workers across India.
- **Fragmented Administrative Sources:** Current data integration across EPFO, ESIC, GST-based databases, corporate payrolls, and gig economy platforms remains unintegrated, limiting overall data reliability.



India's unemployment data dilemma

### Essential Definitions

- **Current Weekly Status (CWS):** An activity status approach where an individual is classified as employed or unemployed based on their activity during the 7-day reference period preceding the survey date.
- **Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR):** The percentage of persons in the population who are either working or actively seeking work.
- **Disguised Unemployment:** A situation where more people are engaged in a work responsibility than required, resulting in marginal productivity approaching zero, commonly seen in rural agriculture.

### Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 39(a) & (e) of the Indian Constitution:** Mandates Directive Principles directing the State to secure adequate means of livelihood for citizens and ensure workers' health and strength are not abused.
- **Article 41:** Directs the State to make effective provisions for securing the right to work and public assistance in cases of unemployment within its economic capacity.
- **Code on Social Security, 2020:** Provides a statutory legal framework to extend social security benefits to unorganized, gig, and platform workers to improve labor welfare.

**Conclusion** Transitioning to monthly labor indicators provides a useful short-term signal, but headline unemployment numbers alone cannot measure structural economic health. Policy focus must shift toward capturing work quality, formalizing informal jobs, and generating sustainable, high-productivity employment.

### UPSC Relevance

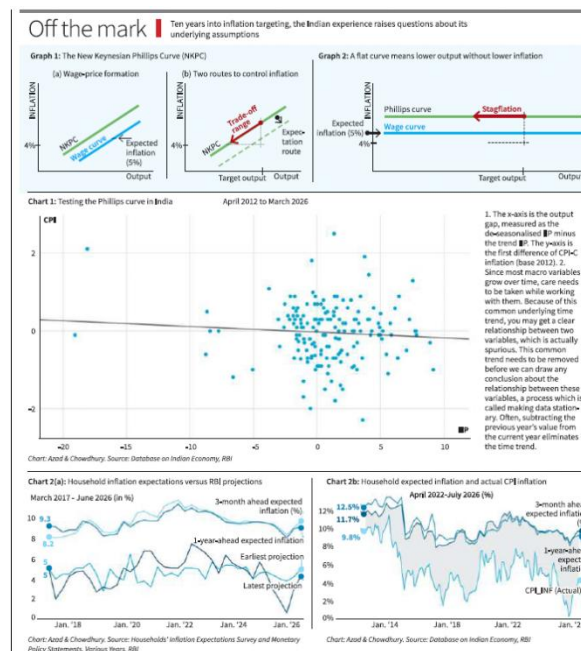
- **GS Paper III (Indian Economy):** Issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development, and employment; informal sector challenges; and data collection methodologies.
- **GS Paper II (Governance & Social Justice):** Government policies and interventions for development in unorganized sectors, labor welfare schemes, and social security.



## 7. Evaluation of Inflation Targeting Framework in India

### Key Highlights & Summary

- **A Decade of Inflation Targeting:** India completed ten years of Flexible Inflation Targeting (FIT), under which the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) aims to contain CPI inflation at 4% within a (+/-)2% tolerance band.
- **Dual Transmission Channels:** The RBI operates monetary policy by raising repo rates to curb aggregate demand and by anchoring public inflation expectations to control future price-setting behavior.
- **Theoretical Phillips Curve Premise:** FIT relies on the New Keynesian Phillips Curve (NKPC) framework, assuming higher output strengthens worker bargaining power, driving up money wages and prices.
- **Empirical Evidence of Flat NKPC:** Analysis of IIP and CPI data reveals that India's NKPC is flat, indicating that demand compression lowers output and employment without meaningfully reducing inflation.
- **Structural Informal Sector Reality:** Around 92% of Indian workers are informal price-takers lacking wage bargaining power, invalidating the core assumption that output growth inherently leads to wage-push inflation.
- **Persistent Expectation Mismatch:** RBI household surveys demonstrate that public inflation expectations remain consistently higher than official central bank projections by nearly four percentage points.



### Essential Definitions

- **Flexible Inflation Targeting (FIT):** A monetary policy framework where the central bank adjusts interest rates to maintain consumer price inflation within a specified target range while balancing economic growth priorities.
- **New Keynesian Phillips Curve (NKPC):** A macroeconomic model depicting the relationship between output, inflation expectations, and current inflation, driven by wage negotiations and pricing power.
- **Repo Rate:** The key policy rate at which the central bank lends short-term funds to commercial banks, directly influencing market lending rates and economic credit demand.

### Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Act, 1934:** Amended in 2016 under Section 45ZA to provide a statutory basis for the Flexible Inflation Targeting framework and inflation target formulation in consultation with the Central Government.
- **Monetary Policy Committee (MPC):** A statutory six-member committee constituted under Section 45ZB of the RBI Act to fix the policy repo rate required to achieve the inflation target.



- **Directive Principles of State Policy (Articles 39 & 41):** Directs the State to secure adequate means of livelihood and promote the right to work, highlighting structural concerns when monetary tightening curtails job creation without arresting inflation.

**Conclusion** While inflation targeting maintains monetary discipline, its execution in an economy with predominant informal employment and supply-side constraints risks inflicting real output and employment losses. Calibrating monetary policy to structural domestic realities remains crucial to supporting sustainable growth alongside price stability.

#### UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper III (Indian Economy):** Monetary policy transmission, RBI role, inflation targeting dynamics, New Keynesian Phillips Curve limitations, and informal labor market structure.
- **GS Paper II (Governance & Policies):** Institutional mechanisms (MPC/RBI), legislative provisions under the RBI Act, and policy alignment with developmental goals.

## 8. Gram Sabha Consent and Forest Clearance under FRA

### Key Highlights & Summary

- **Ministry's Stance on FRA:** The Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs stated that the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006 contains "no provision for obtaining consent of the Gram Sabha for forest clearance" for Stage-II clearances.
- **Purview Clarification:** In communications with the Ministry of Power regarding NHPC hydroelectric projects, the Tribal Affairs Ministry maintained that Gram Sabha consent issues for forest diversion fall outside its purview.
- **Process Rules vs Statutory Text:** While statutory FRA text does not explicitly phrase Gram Sabha consent for diversion, regulations under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 require recognition of rights and a No-Objection Certificate (NOC) prior to formal land diversion.
- **Delays in Infrastructure Projects:** A Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Undertakings report noted that forest clearances average 106 months, identifying mandatory Gram Sabha consent as a critical bottleneck for key infrastructure, such as the Teesta-IV HEP.
- **Super-Majority Consent Proposal:** The panel examined recommendations for replacing 100% consent with a "qualified super-majority consent" of 70-75% of affected Gram Sabhas for large hydropower projects of national importance.
- **Implementation Mandate:** The Tribal Affairs Ministry reiterates that while it acts as the nodal agency for FRA, practical enforcement and execution of forest rights settlement rest primarily with State and UT governments.



### Essential Definitions

- **Gram Sabha:** A body consisting of persons registered in the electoral rolls relating to a village comprised within the area of Panchayat at the village level, serving as the primary democratic institution in forest areas.



- **Stage-II Forest Clearance:** Final administrative approval granted under forest conservation rules after fulfilling preliminary conditions and settling rights for diverting forest land for non-forestry purposes.

### Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 (FRA):** Recognizes individual and community forest rights of tribal populations and empowers Gram Sabhas to manage community forest resources.
- **Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980:** Regulates the diversion of forest land for non-forestry development projects, mandating compliance with environmental rules and rights settlement protocols.
- **Fifth Schedule of the Indian Constitution:** Guarantees special administrative protection and self-governance rights to Scheduled Areas inhabited by tribal communities.

**Conclusion** Balancing infrastructure execution with indigenous community rights requires clarity on Gram Sabha oversight mechanisms. Streamlining procedural timelines without diluting statutory forest rights protection remains essential for sustainable development in ecological zones.

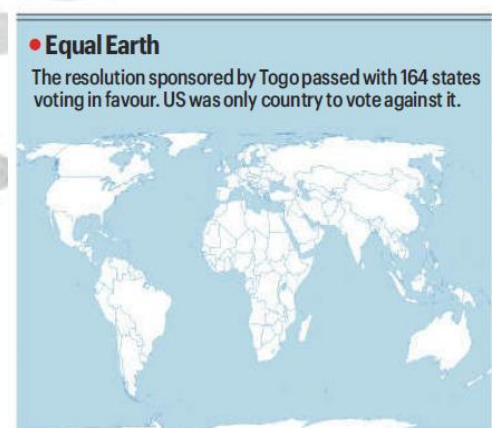
### UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II (Polity & Governance):** Tribal rights, functioning of Gram Sabhas, Fifth Schedule areas, inter-ministerial coordination, and legislative implementation.
- **GS Paper III (Environment & Infrastructure):** Environmental impact assessment, forest clearance procedures, sustainable development vs. infrastructure growth, and hydro-power projects.

## 9. UN Endorses Equal Earth Map Projection

### Key Highlights & Summary

- **UN Endorsement:** The United Nations endorsed the "Equal Earth" map projection on September 4 to represent global landmasses, particularly Africa, more accurately.
- **Resolution Sponsored by Togo:** The resolution, sponsored by Togo, passed with 164 member states voting in favor, with the United States being the sole country voting against it.
- **Addressing Map Distortion:** The initiative targets the centuries-old Mercator projection, which severely exaggerates land sizes near the poles while shrinking tropical landmasses like Africa (which is actually 14 times larger than Greenland).
- **Voluntary Transition:** The resolution does not ban the Mercator projection or legally impose a replacement, but actively encourages governments and international institutions to adopt the Equal Earth map.
- **Historical Context:** The traditional Mercator map has been in widespread global use since the 16th century, primarily designed for maritime navigation rather than relative land area representation.



### Brave New World Map

The new world map that the UN endorsed on September 4 represents Africa, which is 14 times larger than Greenland, more accurately. The UN move encourages governments and institutions around the world to replace the traditional Mercator map, used since the 16th century, with the Equal Earth projection. Friday's resolution does not ban the Mercator projection or impose a replacement, but only encourages the use of the Equal Earth projection, the UN said. AP



- **Cartographic Equity:** Adoption of an equal-area projection seeks to rectify Eurocentric spatial bias and present an accurate geographic proportion in education and policy.

### Essential Definitions

- **Equal Earth Projection:** An equal-area pseudocylindrical map projection created in 2018 that visually presents landmasses in relative proportion to their true surface area while maintaining an aesthetically pleasing shape.
- **Mercator Projection:** A conformal cylindrical map projection created by Gerardus Mercator in 1569 that preserves local angles and shapes for navigation but drastically inflates the size of objects as latitude increases toward the poles.

### Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **UN General Assembly Rules of Procedure:** Governs voting mechanisms for non-binding recommendations aimed at international cooperation in educational and cultural spheres under Article 13 of the UN Charter.
- **Article 51 of the Indian Constitution:** Directs the State to foster respect for international law, treaty obligations, and international organizations like the United Nations.
- **Survey of India Policy Guidelines:** Regulates official map production and cartographic standards within India under the National Map Policy.

**Conclusion** The UN endorsement of the Equal Earth projection marks a significant shift toward cartographic fairness and geographical accuracy. Replacing skewed colonial-era projections helps foster an unbiased global perspective across educational curricula and international relations.

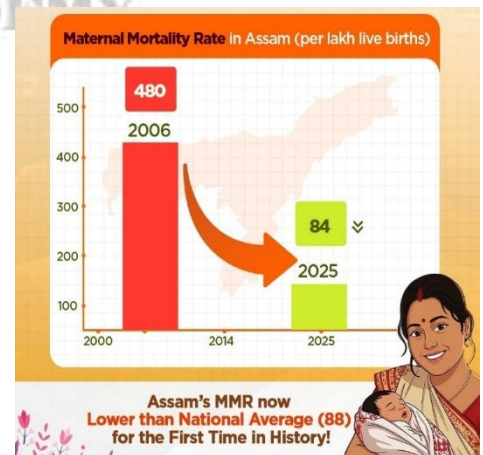
### UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper I (Geography):** Cartography, map projections (Mercator vs. Equal Area), spatial distortion, and geographic representations of global landmasses.
- **GS Paper II (International Relations):** UN General Assembly resolutions, multilateral diplomacy, institutional reforms, and global soft-power dynamics.

## 10. Assam's Maternal Mortality Ratio Declines Below National Average

### Key Highlights & Summary

- **Significant MMR Decline:** Speaking at the convocation of Srimanta Sankaradeva University of Health Sciences (SSUHS), Vice President C.P. Radhakrishnan highlighted that Assam's Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) has fallen below the national average for the first time.
- **Healthcare Expansion in Assam:** The state's medical infrastructure expanded rapidly, increasing from seven medical colleges in 2021 to 15, with nine additional colleges under construction.
- **Advanced Medical Infrastructure:** Advanced healthcare projects, such as the upcoming Proton Beam Therapy Unit at Gauhati Medical College and Hospital, are positioning Assam as a regional hub for specialized cancer treatment.





- **National Public Health Impact:** Over 44 crore Ayushman Bharat cards have been issued nationwide under PM-JAY, saving poor and middle-class families an estimated ₹2 lakh crore in out-of-pocket medical expenses.
- **Vaccine Diplomacy & Global Outreach:** During the COVID-19 pandemic, India provided free vaccines to its 140 crore domestic population while exporting vaccines to over 100 countries globally.
- **Promoting Regional Languages in Medical Education:** SSUHS has advanced medical research and public health education by publishing an Anglo-Assamese medical dictionary and Assamese medical textbooks to aid localized learning.

### Essential Definitions

- **Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR):** The number of maternal deaths during pregnancy, childbirth, or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy per 100,000 live births in a given period.
- **Ayushman Bharat (PM-JAY):** A flagship national health protection scheme providing health cover up to ₹5 lakh per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization.

### Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 47:** A Directive Principle of State Policy (DPSP) mandating the State to raise the level of nutrition and standard of living and improve public health as among its primary duties.
- **Article 21:** Protection of Life and Personal Liberty, which the Supreme Court of India has interpreted to include the fundamental right to health and medical care.
- **Seventh Schedule (State List - Entry 6):** Designates Public Health and Sanitation, hospitals, and dispensaries as primary state subjects, encouraging cooperative federalism for healthcare delivery.

**Conclusion** Assam's reduction in maternal mortality below the national average demonstrates the impact of targeted health infrastructure investments and systemic social sector intervention. Sustaining these gains requires continued integration of tertiary care, localized medical education, and robust primary healthcare delivery.

### UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II (Governance & Social Justice):** Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, maternal health indicators, and Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY implementation.
- **GS Paper III (Technology & Development):** Advanced medical technologies (Proton Beam Therapy) and institutional capacity building in northeastern regions.

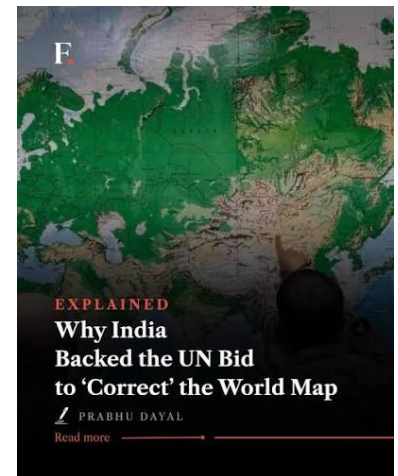
## 11. MEA Demands Accurate Depiction of India's Map in UN World Map

### Key Highlights & Summary

- **Inflexible Sovereign Boundaries:** Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal affirmed that the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh must be accurately depicted per India's official map.
- **Support for Equal-Area Cartography:** India voted in favor of the UN General Assembly resolution titled "Correct the Map: Rebalancing Global Cartographic Representation and Promoting Equitable Representation of the World's Regions, Particularly Africa".



- **No Political Boundary Endorsement:** New Delhi clarified that supporting equal-area projections does not constitute an endorsement of any specific map, political cartography, disputed boundaries, or place names.
- **Voting Breakdown:** The Togo-sponsored resolution passed with 164 votes in favor, six abstentions (Estonia, Georgia, Lithuania, Moldova, Serbia, Ukraine), and one against (United States).
- **Non-Negotiable Sovereignty:** Official spokesperson stated that India's position regarding its sovereign territory and territorial integrity remains clear, consistent, and non-negotiable.
- **Technical Cartographic Scope:** The resolution purely aims to preserve relative sizes of continental landmasses without legally authenticating international boundaries.



### Essential Definitions

- **Political Cartography:** The practice and study of map-making specifically focused on depicting sovereign borders, administrative divisions, territorial claims, and political jurisdiction.
- **Equal-Area Projection:** A map projection method designed to retain accurate proportional areas of landmasses across the globe, preventing geographic size distortion.

### Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 1 of the Indian Constitution:** Defines India as a Union of States, comprising its states and specified Union Territories, establishing the constitutional mandate over Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh.
- **Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1961:** Criminalizes the publication or questioning of India's official territorial boundaries in a manner prejudicial to safety and security.
- **UN Charter Article 2(7):** Prohibits the United Nations from intervening in matters strictly within the domestic jurisdiction of any sovereign state, safeguarding national integrity.

**Conclusion** India's conditional backing of the UN cartographic resolution balances global cartographic fairness with strict protection of national integrity. By explicitly separating political boundaries from equal-area projections, New Delhi reinforces its non-negotiable stance on territorial sovereignty while contributing to global multilateral initiatives.

### UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II (International Relations & Polity):** Sovereignty, territorial integrity, Article 1 of the Constitution, UN resolutions, and diplomatic engagement.
- **GS Paper I (Geography):** Principles of cartography, map projections, spatial representation, and regional geographic distortions.

## 12. Japan Credit Rating Agency Upgrades India to 'A' Category

### Key Highlights & Summary

- **Sovereign Rating Upgrade:** On September 2, Japan Credit Rating Agency (JCR) upgraded India's long-term sovereign rating from BBB+ to A-, raising the country ceiling to A, marking India's return to an "A" grade after 36 years.



- **Historical Retrospective:** The last time India held an A-grade was January 1988 under Moody's (A2), preceding fiscal stress and the 1991 Balance of Payments crisis that degraded ratings to non-investment junk grade.
- **Macroeconomic Growth Dynamics:** The upgrade is backed by real GDP growth of 7.8% in Q1 FY27, driven by robust private consumption, public investment, and a gross fixed capital formation growth of 11.9%.
- **Financial Sector Strengthening:** JCR cited structural reforms like the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) and RBI supervision, which reduced the banking sector's gross Non-Performing Assets (GNPA) ratio to 1.8%.
- **Statistical Methodological Upgrades:** The validation comes alongside India's updated System of National Accounts (SNA) 2008 framework, incorporating the Output Producer Price Index (PPI), double deflation, and over 300 individual price deflators.
- **Impact on Corporate Capital Flows:** Transitioning into an A-category rating lowers the risk premium for Indian corporations, boosting foreign direct investment (FDI) and lowering cross-border borrowing costs.



### Essential Definitions

- **Sovereign Credit Rating:** An independent assessment of a national government's creditworthiness, evaluating its likelihood of default on debt obligations.
- **Producer Price Index (PPI):** An index measuring average changes in prices received by domestic producers for their output, used as an implicit deflator in GDP estimation.
- **Double Deflation:** A method where real value added is calculated by deflating gross output and intermediate inputs separately using specific price indices.

### Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act, 2003:** Mandates statutory fiscal targets and disciplined debt-to-GDP reduction strategies for long-term fiscal stability.
- **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), 2016:** Provides a statutory framework for time-bound resolution of stressed corporate assets, improving banking asset quality.
- **Article 292 of the Indian Constitution:** Regulates executive borrowing powers of the Union Government against the security of the Consolidated Fund of India.

**Conclusion** The sovereign upgrade to A- category by a major international rating agency validates India's structural reforms, fiscal consolidation, and institutional consensus. Maintaining this momentum requires sustaining capital expenditure, consolidating fiscal deficits, and navigating global geopolitical trade frictions.

### UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper III (Indian Economy):** Sovereign credit ratings, GDP calculation methodologies, banking sector reforms (IBC, NPA management), fiscal deficit targets, and foreign capital flows.
- **GS Paper II (Governance):** Institutional frameworks, center-state fiscal relations (GST Council), and global economic policy positioning.