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FOR UPSC CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION

DATE: 08/09/2026 (TUESDAY)



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VIDHVATH IAS ACADEMY



1. No Privatisation of ISRO, Expansion of Space Economy Envisaged

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Clarification on Privatisation:** ISRO Chairman V. Narayanan allayed employee concerns by clarifying that ISRO remains a government organisation supported by public investment and is not being privatised.
- **Expanding the Space Economy:** The primary goal of partnering with the private sector is to grow India's national space ecosystem to meet escalating technological and commercial demands.
- **Satellite Deployment Shortfall:** ISRO currently maintains 56 operational satellites in space against a national requirement of nearly 500 satellites, necessitating rapid scalability.
- **Launch Frequency Target:** To bridge operational gaps, the space ecosystem requires an ambitious target of approximately 50 rocket launches annually.
- **Deep Industry Integration:** Around 80% of ISRO's budget is already invested in external industries, with over 450 industrial partners actively contributing to PSLV and GSLV missions.
- **Synergy with IN-SPACE:** Collaboration with single-window nodal bodies like IN-SPACe aims to enable non-government entities to build launch vehicles, satellites, and space-based applications.

Essential Definitions

- **Space Economy:** The full range of activities and the use of resources that create value and benefits to human beings in the course of exploring, understanding, managing, and utilizing space.
- **IN-SPACe (Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre):** An autonomous single-window nodal agency under the Department of Space designed to promote, authorize, and handhold private sector space activities.
- **NewSpace India Limited (NSIL):** The commercial arm of ISRO responsible for commercializing space technologies, manufacturing launch vehicles through industry partners, and managing satellite launches.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Indian Space Policy 2023:** Provides an overarching framework enabling end-to-end participation of Non-Government Entities (NGEs) in space activities while keeping ISRO focused on advanced research and development.
- **Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules:** Placed the Department of Space directly under the purview of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) to streamline strategic policy execution.
- **Article 51A(h) of the Indian Constitution:** Mandates a fundamental duty upon every citizen to develop the scientific temper, humanism, and the spirit of inquiry and reform.



Conclusion Clarifying ISRO's public identity while fostering private sector collaboration highlights a strategic strategy for national space development. Expanding the space economy allows India to bridge capability gaps, meet growing satellite demands, and position itself as a global hub for space technology.



UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper III (Science & Technology):** Indigenization of technology, space technology developments, Indian Space Policy 2023, public-private partnerships (PPP) in strategic sectors, and commercialization of space assets.
- **GS Paper II (Governance):** Institutional reforms, role of autonomous bodies like IN-SPACe, and policy frameworks for high-technology sectors.

2. DAC Approves Acquisition Proposals Worth ₹1.1 Lakh Crore

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Massive Defense Capital Procurement:** The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) accorded Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) for procurement proposals worth approximately ₹1,10,000 crore across the Army, Navy, and Air Force.
- **Focus on Indigenization:** Approximately 98% of the total approved acquisitions will be sourced directly from the domestic defense industry under the "Make in India" initiative.
- **Army Operational Mobility:** Cleared critical assets including CBRN Recce Vehicles for hazardous environment monitoring, High Mobility Vehicles (HMs), Self-Propelled Mechanical Mine Layers (MMLs), Trawl Tanks, and Sarvatra Bridge Systems.
- **Naval Air & Propulsion Upgrades:** Granted AoN for indigenous Arudhra 4D radars to replace legacy Air Route Surveillance Radars at naval air stations, along with Marine Gas Turbines (MGTs) for warship propulsion.
- **Air Force Electronic Warfare:** Approved Ground-Based Multi-Purpose Jammers (GBMPJs) to counter adversary radars, Advanced Light Helicopters (ALHs), and the RFID-based Defence Forces Secure Access Card (DEFSAC) system.
- **Strategic Autonomy:** Indigenous procurement of propulsion systems and advanced sensors drastically reduces operational reliance on foreign OEMs for critical spares and technical upgrades.



Essential Definitions

- **Acceptance of Necessity (AoN):** The formal in-principle administrative approval granted by the DAC that initiates the defense procurement process under the Defense Acquisition Procedure.
- **Arudhra Radar:** An indigenous 4D multi-function active phased array radar developed by DRDO and manufactured by BEL, capable of tracking aerial targets with electronic beam steering.
- **CBRN Recce Vehicle:** A specialized armored vehicle designed to detect, identify, monitor, and mark areas contaminated by Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear agents.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Defense Acquisition Procedure (DAP) 2020:** Regulates capital acquisitions for the Indian Armed Forces, prioritizing domestic manufacturing through 'Buy (Indian-IDD)' and 'Make' categories.
- **Seventh Schedule (Union List - Entry 1 & 2):** Designates Defense of India and Naval, Military, and Air Forces as exclusive subjects under the legislative domain of the Union Parliament.



- **Transaction of Business Rules, 1961:** Provides institutional authority to the DAC, chaired by the Union Defence Minister, to decide capital defense procurements.

Conclusion The DAC's ₹1.1 lakh crore acquisition clearance reinforces India's defense modernization while advancing structural self-reliance. Sourcing nearly all equipment domestically strengthens the national defense industrial base, reduces foreign vendor dependence, and enhances joint force readiness across multi-domain battlefields.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper III (Security):** Defense indigenization, Atmanirbhar Bharat in defense, electronic warfare systems, technology transfers, and military force modernization.
- **GS Paper II (Governance):** Institutional decision-making frameworks (DAC), defense procurement policies, and national security governance.

3. Swachh Vayu Survekshan 2026 Rankings

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Category 1 Top Performers:** Lucknow won the first prize (₹1.50 crore) among cities with a million-plus population in Swachh Vayu Survekshan 2026, followed by Indore in second place (₹1 crore) and Jabalpur in third place (₹50 lakh).
- **Category 2 & 3 Winners:** Rourkela topped Category 2 (3-10 lakh population), followed by Firozabad and Guntur tied at second, and Amravati third. Kalinga Nagar led Category 3 (<3 lakh population), followed by Angul and Talcher.
- **Bottom-Tier Cities:** Chennai, Jamshedpur, Kota, Kolkata, and Madurai ranked at the bottom of Category 1, while major metros like Delhi and Mumbai secured 30th and 37th positions respectively.
- **Evaluation Parameters:** Cities were assessed across key domains including waste management, road dust suppression, construction and demolition dust management, vehicular emission control, and industrial pollution control.
- **Ambient Air Quality Gap:** Despite securing top rank, Lucknow has yet to achieve the national ambient air quality standard for PM₁₀ set at 60 µg/m³ under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP).
- **Grassroots Recognition:** For the first time, municipal wards demonstrating noticeable ambient air quality improvements were separately awarded alongside city-level recognitions.

• AIR QUALITY: TOP-RANKING CITIES

	Category	City	Cash award (in Rs)
Category 1 (Million-plus population)	1st	Lucknow	150 crore
	2nd	Indore	1 crore
	3rd	Jabalpur	50 lakh
Category 2 (3-10 lakh population)	1st	Rourkela	75 lakh
	2nd	Firozabad and Guntur	50 lakh
	3rd	Amravati	25 lakh
Category 3 (less than 3 lakh population)	1st	Kalinga Nagar	37.5 lakh
	2nd	Angul	25 lakh
	3rd	Talcher	12.5 lakh

Essential Definitions

- **Swachh Vayu Survekshan:** An annual assessment initiative by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) ranking cities based on execution of clean air action plans under NCAP.
- **PM₁₀:** Particulate Matter with an aerodynamic diameter less than or equal to 10 micrometers, capable of penetrating deep into human respiratory tracts.



- **PRANA Portal:** Portal for Regulation of Air-Pollution in Non-Attainment cities, a digital dashboard tracking physical and financial implementation under NCAP.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981:** Framework authorizing Central and State Pollution Control Boards to enforce air quality standards and abate air pollution.
- **National Green Tribunal (NGT) Act, 2010:** Enforces statutory judicial remedies for environmental protection and compliance with national clean air mandates.
- **Article 48A & 51A(g):** Constitutional mandates requiring the State and citizens to protect and improve the natural environment and safeguard public health.

Conclusion Swachh Vayu Survekshan 2026 drives competitive federalism among urban local bodies to improve ambient air quality. Achieving prescribed PM10 limits across urban centers necessitates expanding mechanized road sweeping, accelerating EV adoption, and enforcing strict construction dust control measures.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper III (Environment & Ecology):** Environmental pollution, National Clean Air Programme (NCAP), CPCB frameworks, and air quality standards.
- **GS Paper II (Governance):** Urban local body governance, competitive federalism, performance-linked financial incentives, and inter-ministerial coordination.

4. Lessons from Seasonal Flu Surges for Pandemic Readiness

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Inter-Pandemic Preparedness:** Recent seasonal influenza surges across Indian states—reporting 2 to 10 times higher cases than previous years—serve as vital operational tests to strengthen pandemic management before future global health crises occur.
- **Three Pillars of Outbreak Management:** Effective pandemic response rests on three fundamental pillars: surveillance (early detection and genomic tracking), prevention (targeted advisories and vaccination), and control (adequate medical infrastructure and prompt antiviral administration).
- **Surveillance-to-Action Bottlenecks:** The current health architecture experiences disconnects between laboratory surveillance bodies (ICMR), disease response coordination centers (NCDC), and state healthcare execution systems, resulting in delayed public health responses.
- **Call for Integrated Command Structure:** Health experts advocate establishing a unified, inter-agency command structure equipped with statutory authority to coordinate real-time disease intelligence and direct emergency responses.
- **Low Vaccine and Antiviral Uptake:** Influenza vaccination coverage remains low even among high-risk demographics due to affordability issues and perceived threat gaps, while early antiviral administration rates in hospitals remain under 10%.
- **Public Dashboard and Risk Communication:** Establishing a transparent, publicly available disease dashboard—similar to ambient air quality tracking—helps calibrate public advisories, manage health communication, and prevent unhelpful panic.



Essential Definitions

- **Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI):** An acute respiratory infection characterized by a history of fever or measured fever of $\geq 38^{\circ}\text{C}$ along with cough, requiring immediate hospital admission.
- **Genomic Surveillance:** The practice of constantly monitoring pathogen gene sequences to detect novel variants, assess viral transmission dynamics, and gauge population susceptibility.
- **Inter-Pandemic Period:** The interval between recurring global pandemics, which provides a strategic window for health authorities to refine surveillance tools, build stockpiles, and evaluate response capabilities.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897:** Provides administrative powers to containment authorities to issue special regulations, quarantine measures, and restrict movement during infectious disease outbreaks.
- **Disaster Management Act, 2005:** Statutory framework utilized for multi-sectoral emergency response, allowing Central and State authorities to mobilize resources and enforce unified command protocols during health disasters.
- **Article 47 of the Indian Constitution:** A Directive Principle of State Policy (DPSP) establishing the primary duty of the State to raise the level of nutrition, improve the standard of living, and safeguard public health.

Conclusion Treating recurring influenza surges as dry runs for future pandemics provides critical opportunities to patch structural deficiencies in public health governance. Transitioning from reactive administrative advisories to an integrated command structure supported by transparent disease data is essential to safeguard public health and mitigate future epidemic risks.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II (Governance & Social Justice):** Issues relating to the development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, institutional roles of ICMR and NCDC, and public emergency governance.
- **GS Paper III (Science & Technology & Disaster Management):** Disease surveillance mechanisms, biological disaster management, pandemic preparedness, and public health infrastructure response systems.

5. China's Advances in Humanoid Robotics and Technological Implications

Key Highlights & Summary

- **World Robot Conference Platform:** China hosted the 11th World Robot Conference featuring over 300 companies showcasing more than 3,000 products, with nearly 90% of exhibitors hailing from domestic Chinese firms.
- **Rapid Industrial Shift:** China has rapidly positioned itself as a primary hub for robotics development, displacing traditional global leaders like Japan through aggressive state subsidies, policy support, and supply chain indigenization.
- **Geopolitical Technology Rivalry:** The rapid scaling of physical artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics by Chinese firms has triggered national security and economic competitiveness concerns across Western economies.



- **Hardware vs Intelligence Lag:** While hardware mechanical capabilities—such as sprinting speed and coordinated maneuvers—are advancing rapidly, commercial viability remains constrained by bottlenecks at the AI software and decision-making intelligence layer.
- **Demographic Cushioning Strategy:** Physical manifestations of AI and embodied robotics are being prioritized to offset labor supply shocks caused by China's rapidly aging and shrinking domestic workforce.
- **Flywheel Effect in Tech Innovation:** Early capital inflow, state backing, and public spectacles are driving talent accumulation and incremental hardware supply-chain improvements, creating long-term competitive advantages.

Essential Definitions

- **Embodied AI:** An approach in artificial intelligence where an AI agent interacts directly with the physical world through a robotic body, processing real-time physical sensor data to execute real-world tasks.
- **Supply Chain Indigenization:** The strategic industrial process of replacing imported foreign technological components and raw materials with domestic manufacturing capacities to ensure sovereignty.
- **Intelligence Layer Bottleneck:** The operational gap where physical robotic hardware outpaces the AI software's ability to process unstructured real-world training data and make autonomous decisions.



Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **National Strategy for AI (India):** NITI Aayog's policy framework guiding the ethical development, adoption, and scaling of artificial intelligence and automation across key economic sectors.
- **Draft National Robotics Strategy:** Formulated by MeitY to position India as a global robotics hub, promoting domestic R&D, innovation clusters, and integration into global value chains.
- **Article 51A(h) of the Indian Constitution:** Directs citizens to develop scientific temper, humanism, and the spirit of inquiry and reform to drive national technological advancement.

Conclusion China's aggressive integration of state support and industrial supply chains in humanoid robotics demonstrates the strategic value of embodied AI. Bridging the gap between physical hardware capabilities and software intelligence will be pivotal for nations seeking to mitigate demographic declines and lead future technological domains.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper III (Science & Technology & Economy):** Development and application of AI, robotics, industrial automation, technology indigenization, and impact of automation on labor markets.
- **GS Paper II (International Relations):** Global technology supply chains, strategic tech rivalries, global governance of emerging technologies, and national industrial policies.



6. Tariff Wars and Global Trade Fragility: Luxembourg Deputy PM's Perspective

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Lose-Lose Dynamics of Tariff Wars:** Luxembourg Deputy PM Xavier Bettel emphasized that trade and tariff wars create a lose-lose situation, artificially driving up costs for middle-class consumers rather than yielding strategic economic gains.
- **Expanding India-EU FTA Framework:** Highlighted the pending India-European Union Free Trade Agreement (FTA) as an essential institutional framework needed to bridge market information gaps and unlock bilateral investment across fintech, AI, and space logistics.
- **India's Balanced Strategic Autonomy:** Praised India's proactive diplomacy in maintaining open communication channels with both Moscow and Kyiv during the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, serving as a vital diplomatic bridge for peace.
- **Constructive Foreign Energy Sourcing:** Noted that global energy trade decisions must account for market availability and alternatives, emphasizing that restricting energy trade without feasible alternatives exacerbates economic vulnerability.
- **Regulated Migration over Populism:** Called for objective, well-regulated immigration frameworks in Western nations to balance security with economic needs, contrasting structured governance with subjective populist rhetoric.
- **Strengthening India-Luxembourg Ties:** Highlighted expanding institutional cooperation across frontier sectors, including artificial intelligence, digital finance, satellite communications, and higher education.

Essential Definitions

- **Tariff War:** An economic conflict where nations impose escalating import duties or trade barriers on each other's goods, triggering retaliatory protectionist measures.
- **Free Trade Agreement (FTA):** A pact between two or more nations to reduce or eliminate tariffs, quotas, and non-tariff barriers to encourage seamless international trade and investment.
- **Strategic Autonomy:** A foreign policy doctrine where a sovereign state pursues its national interests independently without aligning unconditionally with any major global power bloc.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 51 of the Indian Constitution:** Directs the State to promote international peace and security, foster respect for international law and treaty obligations, and encourage settlement of international disputes by arbitration.
- **World Trade Organization (WTO) Marrakesh Agreement:** Provides the global legal foundation for multilateral trade rules, regulating tariffs and preventing arbitrary protectionist measures.
- **Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992:** Regulates India's foreign trade operations, empowering the Union Government to formulate trade policies and tariff structures.

Conclusion Navigating protectionism through institutional mechanisms like the India-EU FTA reinforces international trade resilience. India's diplomatic commitment to strategic autonomy and regulated economic engagement provides a balanced roadmap for fostering global economic stability and strategic cooperation.



UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II (International Relations):** India-EU bilateral relations, international trade diplomacy, strategic autonomy, global governance, and multilateral frameworks.
- **GS Paper III (Indian Economy):** Impact of global tariffs on domestic inflation, supply chain vulnerabilities, foreign direct investment (FDI), and free trade agreements.

7. ISRO Places EOS-05 Satellite in Elliptical Geosynchronous Orbit

Key Highlights & Summary

- **First Geosynchronous Imaging Satellite:** ISRO launched EOS-05 aboard GSLV-F17 from Sriharikota, making it India's first Earth observation satellite positioned in a geosynchronous orbit to maintain persistent coverage over the region.
- **Orbit Selection & Dynamics:** Scientists selected a slightly elliptical Geosynchronous Orbit (GSO) instead of a circular Geostationary Orbit (GEO), utilizing progressive Liquid Apogee Motor (LAM) burn maneuvers to raise and stabilize its orbital position.
- **Heavy Payload Accomplishment:** Weighing 2,367 kg, EOS-05 represents the heaviest payload successfully injected into a sub-Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit by a standard three-stage GSLV configuration.
- **Continuous Real-Time Surveillance:** Positioned at roughly 36,000 km altitude, EOS-05 matches Earth's rotational speed, acting as an "Eye in the Sky" for continuous weather monitoring, cloudburst tracking, and environmental hazard assessment.
- **Strategic Defense Applications:** Beyond meteorological utility, the mission provides high-frequency imagery and critical domain awareness for strategic users, including maritime situational monitoring for the Indian Navy.
- **Restoration of Launch Cadence:** The successful GSLV-F17 injection validates India's cryogenic upper stage reliability and marks a key technical comeback following previous Gsat/EOS-03 mission setbacks.



Essential Definitions

- **Geosynchronous Orbit (GSO):** An Earth-centered orbit with an orbital period that matches the Earth's rotation on its axis (23 hours, 56 minutes, 4 seconds), enabling a satellite to synchronize with Earth time.
- **Geostationary Orbit (GEO):** A specialized circular subset of GSO situated directly above the equator with zero inclination, causing the satellite to appear permanently fixed at a single point in the sky.
- **Liquid Apogee Motor (LAM):** A chemical propulsion engine onboard spacecraft used to perform precise orbit-raising maneuvers after deployment from the launch vehicle.



Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Indian Space Policy 2023:** Mandates ISRO to focus on advanced technological research, strategic space infrastructure, and deep-space missions while enabling commercial applications.
- **Article 51A(h) of the Indian Constitution:** Encourages the development of scientific temper, humanism, and the spirit of inquiry and reform as a fundamental duty of every citizen.
- **Outer Space Treaty (1967):** Governs international space activities, ensuring space exploration remains peaceful, non-discriminatory, and beneficial for national development.

Conclusion Deploying EOS-05 into a geosynchronous orbit upgrades India's remote-sensing architecture from periodic Low Earth Orbit snapshots to real-time, continuous regional observation. Combining strategic defense inputs with disaster response mechanisms reinforces sovereign space-based domain awareness and technical self-reliance.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper III (Science & Technology & Security):** Indigenization of space technology, GSLV launch architecture, Earth observation capabilities, disaster response applications, and maritime security data integration.
- **GS Paper I (Geography):** Satellite orbits (LEO, GSO, GEO differentiation), spatial surveillance, weather pattern tracking, and physical remote sensing.

Antibiotic-Resistant Infections: Risks, Costs, and Clinical Imperatives

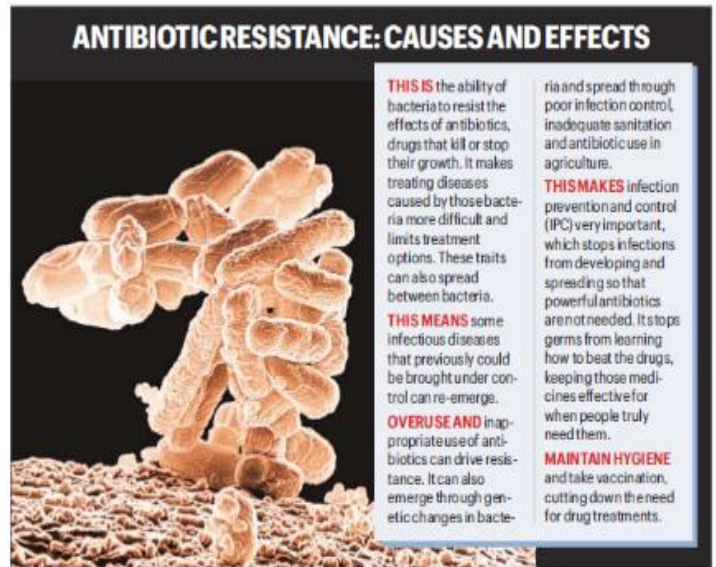
Key Highlights & Summary

- **Comprehensive ICMR Study:** An Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) study analyzing 159,336 patients across 20 tertiary-care hospitals revealed that antibiotic-resistant bacterial infections cause significantly higher mortality rates and steeper treatment costs.
- **Carbapenem Resistance Surge:** Nearly 61.1% of patients studied harbored infections resistant to carbapenems—a class of powerful, broad-spectrum reserve antibiotics used to treat severe drug-resistant bacterial strains.
- **Elevated Mortality Metrics:** Carbapenem resistance increased death risks markedly: *E. coli* mortality rose to 24.4% (vs 17.3% in susceptible cases), *K. pneumoniae* to 31.2% (vs 23.5%), *A. baumannii* to 37.9% (vs 32.8%), and *P. aeruginosa* to 28.9% (vs 20.2%).
- **Healthcare-Associated Transmission:** Over 85% of bloodstream infections across the four targeted bacteria were classified as healthcare-associated infections (HAIs), emphasizing gaps in hospital hygiene, device management, and sanitation.
- **Financial Escalation:** Resistant bacterial strains significantly increased direct medication costs; for instance, antibiotic therapy costs for resistant *E. coli* reached ₹39,846 compared to ₹20,034 for susceptible strains.
- **Integrated Response Mechanism:** Public health experts advocate moving beyond mere antibiotic stewardship toward robust infection prevention and control (IPC), rapid diagnostic identification, and integrated clinical-surveillance systems.



Essential Definitions

- **Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR):** The mechanism through which microorganisms like bacteria evolve to withstand the drugs intended to eliminate them, rendering standard clinical treatments ineffective.
- **Carbapenems:** A critical class of broad-spectrum, last-resort beta-lactam antibiotics reserved for managing complex or multidrug-resistant bacterial infections.
- **Healthcare-Associated Infections (HAIs):** Nosocomial infections acquired by patients during the course of receiving medical treatment within healthcare facilities that were not present upon admission.



Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **National Action Plan on AMR (NAP-AMR):** India's strategic policy framework modeled on the One Health approach to combat AMR across human health, animal husbandry, agriculture, and environment.
- **Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945 (Schedule H1):** Regulatory provision restricting the over-the-counter sale of strong antibiotics without a registered medical practitioner's prescription.
- **Article 47 of the Indian Constitution:** Directs the State to regard the improvement of public health as among its primary duties, underpinning statutory interventions against health hazards.

Conclusion Addressing the growing burden of antibiotic resistance requires prioritizing hospital infection control, hygiene protocols, and targeted diagnostic tools alongside judicious drug prescription. Safeguarding last-resort carbapenems through unified One Health surveillance is crucial to protect clinical health outcomes and mitigate escalating medical costs.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper III (Science & Technology & Health):** Antimicrobial resistance, biotechnology applications, superbugs, One Health framework, and pharmaceutical regulation.
- **GS Paper II (Governance & Social Justice):** Public health policy, healthcare infrastructure management, implementation of NAP-AMR, and regulatory enforcement under Schedule H1.

8. Why Apex Sikh Religious Body Has Not Conducted Polls in 15 Years

Key Highlights & Summary

- **15-Year Electoral Interregnum:** The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), India's largest elected religious body governing major historical gurdwaras, has not held a general election since 2011.
- **Litigation and Disqualification:** A major court dispute over voting rights of Sikhs who trim or shave their hair (*keshas*) delayed the tenure of the 2011-elected house until a 2016 statutory amendment formally disqualified them from being voters.



- **Continuity via Section 51:** Under Section 51 of the Sikh Gurdwaras Act, 1925, an existing Board continues to function "until the constitution of a new Board," enabling the 2011 House to remain in office past its ordinary five-year term.
- **High Court Stay on Roll Revision:** Fresh general elections remain stalled due to an ongoing stay granted by the Punjab and Haryana High Court in the *Baldev Singh* case, which restrained the Gurdwara Election Commission from finalizing fresh electoral rolls.
- **Jurisdictional Realignment:** The territorial scope of the electorate has shifted after Haryana created the independent Haryana Sikh Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee in 2014, abolishing SGPC seats in the state.
- **Vacancies and By-Election Demands:** With 34 seats currently vacant due to deaths and resignations, independent activists have petitioned the High Court under Section 53 to conduct by-elections using existing electoral rolls rather than waiting for general election clearance.

Essential Definitions

- **Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC):** A statutory body constituted under the Sikh Gurdwaras Act, 1925, responsible for administering gurdwaras, properties, and religious affairs across Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, and Chandigarh.
- **Chief Commissioner, Gurdwara Elections:** The statutory authority appointed by the Central Government to oversee electoral roll preparation, nominations, and polling for the SGPC.
- **Ex-Officio Members:** Permanent non-elected members of the SGPC, including the Jathedars of the five Takht Sahibs and the Head Granthi of Sri Harmandar Sahib.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Sikh Gurdwaras Act, 1925:** Central statute establishing the regulatory framework, composition (185 total members including 30 reserved women seats), and operational continuity of the SGPC.
- **Article 26 of the Indian Constitution:** Guarantees fundamental rights to religious denominations to manage their own affairs in matters of religion, establish institutions, and own/acquire property.
- **Article 25 of the Indian Constitution:** Guarantees freedom of conscience and the right to freely profess, practice, and propagate religion, subject to public order, morality, and health.

Conclusion The 15-year delay in SGPC elections highlights structural conflicts between judicial litigation, statutory continuity provisions, and democratic accountability within religious self-governance. Resolving electoral roll stays or executing statutory by-elections under Section 53 is vital to restore democratic representation to the "mini-Parliament of Sikhs".

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II (Polity & Governance):** Administration of statutory religious bodies, tension between state regulation and freedom of religion under Articles 25 and 26, judicial intervention in electoral processes, and statutory continuity mechanisms.
- **GS Paper I (Indian Society & History):** Gurdwara Reform Movement history, institutional evolution of Sikh governance, and socio-religious reforms in post-colonial India.



9. Revival of Namey Dogra Akhar: Dogri Script Renaissance in Jammu

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Civic Script Revival:** Municipal authorities in Jammu have installed public signboards displaying area names in "Namey Dogra Akhar"—the traditional script of the Dogri language—alongside Devanagari (Hindi) and Roman (English) to restore its public visibility.
- **Linguistic Origins:** Dogri belongs to the Western Pahari group within the Indo-Aryan branch of the Indo-European language family, spoken primarily across the Jammu region, parts of Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.
- **Evolution under Dogra Rulers:** Modified from the ancient Takri script under Maharaja Ranbir Singh (1856–1885) by incorporating Devanagari vowels to enable administrative precision, the script became known as "Namey Dogra Akhar" (New Dogra Script).
- **Historical Decline:** The script lost official patronage when Maharaja Pratap Singh replaced Persian with Urdu in 1885 for administrative simplicity, and subsequent rulers promoted Devanagari and Roman scripts to balance regional demands.
- **Shift to Devanagari:** In 1944, literary body *Dogri Sanstha* formally adopted Devanagari to broaden accessibility, which aided the language's official recognition but led to the systemic disuse of its original script.
- **Grassroots Restoration:** Modern revival efforts led by civil society organizations and academic bodies aim to integrate Namey Dogra Akhar into formal school curricula and digital spaces to prevent its total extinction.



Essential Definitions

- **Namey Dogra Akhar:** A modified, standardized version of the historic Takri script developed during the late 19th century under Maharaja Ranbir Singh to write the Dogri language.
- **Takri Script:** An ancient Brahmic script variant historically utilized across the Western Himalayan region for administrative, commercial, and literary record-keeping.
- **Western Pahari:** A linguistic subgroup of Northern Indo-Aryan languages spoken across the lower Himalayan range, encompassing Dogri, Kangri, and related dialects.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Eighth Schedule to the Indian Constitution:** Dogri was included as an official scheduled language via the 92nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 2003, obligating the Union to promote its development.
- **J&K Official Languages Act, 2020:** Recognized Dogri as one of the official languages of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir alongside Kashmiri, Urdu, Hindi, and English.
- **Article 350A of the Indian Constitution:** Directs every State and local authority to provide adequate facilities for instruction in the mother tongue at the primary stage of education.
- **Article 29(1) of the Indian Constitution:** Guarantees citizens with a distinct language, script, or culture the fundamental right to conserve and protect the same.



Conclusion Re-introducing Namey Dogra Akhar on public infrastructure bridges the historical gap between language preservation and script conservation. Institutionalizing formal instruction and digital font infrastructure alongside visual signage is vital to sustain this indigenous Himalayan heritage for future generations.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper I (Indian Art & Culture & History):** Evolution of ancient Indian scripts, linguistic diversity, Himalayan heritage, and regional governance history under the Dogra dynasty.
- **GS Paper II (Polity & Governance):** Constitutional safeguards for minority languages under Articles 29 and 350A, Eighth Schedule provisions, and language policies in Union Territories.

10. SEBI Reassesses Derivatives Settlement Mechanism Post Closing Auction Session Debut

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Regulatory Reassessment:** The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) is proposing changes to the derivative settlement methodology due to market feedback following the introduction of the Closing Auction Session (CAS).
- **Timing Mismatch Bottleneck:** Trading in the CAS ends at 3:30 PM while the derivatives segment extends for an additional 10 minutes until 3:40 PM, creating a key structural timing mismatch that generates price uncertainty.
- **Institutional Retreat:** Institutional investors—accounting for 60–65% of derivatives turnover—have largely stayed out of both CAS and extended derivative sessions due to limited price visibility and time pressure, leading to low trading volumes.
- **Exaggerated Market Volatility:** Thin trading volumes in CAS have allowed small orders to cause large price swings, which directly impact derivative settlement prices linked to CAS-determined underlying stock prices.
- **Slump in Market Turnover:** National Stock Exchange (NSE) total derivatives turnover dropped to Rs 34.48 lakh crore in August—the lowest level since November 2023—with average daily options turnover falling by 20% month-on-month.
- **Proposed Industry Solution:** Market participants urge SEBI to align end-times for derivatives and CAS sessions while delinking derivative contract settlement prices from CAS prices on expiry days to restore hedging predictability.



Essential Definitions

- **Closing Auction Session (CAS):** A dedicated trading window at the market close designed to determine the final official closing price of securities through order-matching algorithms rather than continuous trading.



- **Derivatives Contract:** Financial instruments whose value is derived from an underlying asset, enabling market participants to hedge exposure, protect capital, or speculate on future price movements.
- **Hedging:** A risk management strategy involving an offsetting transaction in a derivative market to reduce the risk of adverse price movements in an underlying cash market asset.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992:** Empowers SEBI under Section 11 to regulate the securities market, protect investor interests, and ensure orderly market functioning through consultation papers and directives.
- **Securities Contracts (Regulation) Act, 1956 (SCRA):** Directs the regulation of stock exchanges, contracts in securities, and derivative trading mechanisms to prevent undesirable speculation.
- **Article 273/Entry 48 (List I, Seventh Schedule):** Grants Parliament exclusive authority to legislate on stock exchanges and futures markets under the Constitution of India.

Conclusion Aligning session timings and refining settlement price mechanisms will address structural friction introduced by the Closing Auction Session. Timely intervention by SEBI will restore price discovery, lower artificially high volatility, and ensure adequate liquidity across India's capital markets.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper III (Indian Economy & Capital Markets):** Financial market infrastructure, role of market regulators (SEBI), derivatives trading mechanisms, risk management, and capital market stability.
- **GS Paper II (Governance & Regulatory Bodies):** Institutional functioning, regulatory predictability, statutory powers under the SEBI Act, and policy consultation processes.