



**VAJIRAM & RAVI**  
Institute for IAS Examination

# The Analyst

**CURRENT AFFAIRS** Handout

**08th October 2025**



# It's time for Maoists to lay down arms

**CONTEXT:** It is clear that the movement, already in decline for some time, is now at its weakest

## It's time for Maoists to lay down arms

### Maoism – The Ideology

- **Mao Zedong** – Chinese Communist Revolution
- Evolved from Marxism–Leninism; emphasised **agrarian peasant-led revolution**

### Core Features:

- Class Struggle
- Protracted People's War
- Armed Struggle
- Rejection of Parliamentary Democracy

### In India:

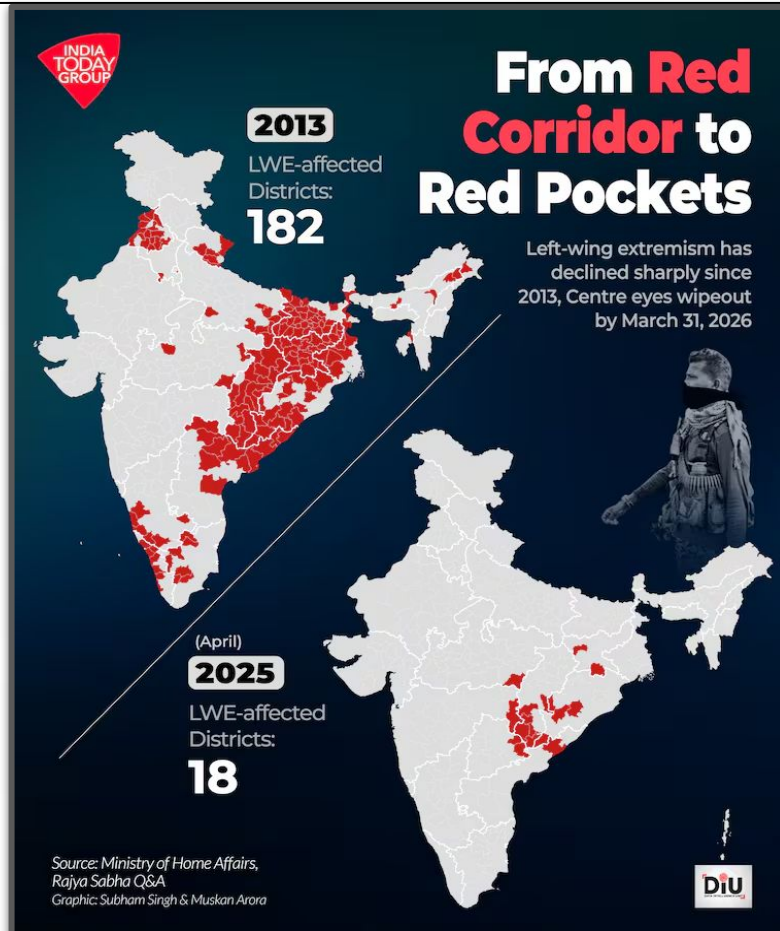
- **Maoist insurgency** – Naxalite Movement – Left-Wing Extremism
- Believe in **overthrowing the Indian state** – "people's government"
- **CPI (Maoist)**, 2004 – PWG & MCC
- Active in parts of **Central and Eastern India**

### What is CPI(M) then?

- Split from **CPI** in **1964** – **Ideological Differences**
- **Registered Political Party** – RPA
- **Ideology:** Marxism–Leninism – **Parliamentary Democracy**
- **CPI (Maoist)** – UAPA

### Reasons for the Rise of Naxal Movement in India

- **Historical and Structural Factors:** Colonial legacy, Unfinished land reforms after independence, Alienation of tribal communities



- **Socio-Economic Inequalities:** Poverty and deprivation in tribal belts, Inequitable development, Exploitation by landlords and contractors
- **Governance Deficit:** Weak presence of the state in remote areas, Corruption and failure in delivery of welfare schemes, Human rights abuses by local elites or security forces
- **Political Factors:** Factionalism within Left parties, Perceived state repression
- **Immediate Triggers:** Naxalbari uprising (1967), Spread to other regions

### From Corridor to Pockets: The Decline of Naxal Movement

- **Organisational Decline:** Central Committee, Politburo, Cadre
- **Recent security operations & outcomes:** Killed, Surrendered, Senior Leaders Killed
- **Waning influence in different Geographies:** once a declared 'Liberated Zone'



# It's time for Maoists to lay down arms



**CONTEXT:** It is clear that the movement, already in decline for some time, is now at its weakest

## Why the Maoist movement weakened?

- **Leadership Vacuum and Ageing Cadre:** Ethnic Divide
- **Tribal Disillusionment:** Locals initially – inspired by cultural propaganda, Salwa Judum (2005–07) – alienated local communities
- **Strategic & Ideological Weakness:** Political Mobilisation – Educated Youths
- **Security operations modernised –** CoBRA, DRG
- Decapitation operations & targeted strikes
- **Mass Surrenders and Arrests**
- Successful **civil society**–led democratic movements

## How to Sustain Security Gains: The Way Forward

- **Sustain Tactical & Security Gains**
- **Robust Rehabilitation & Reintegration Schemes**
- **Local Governance & Development**
- **Trust with Tribal Communities**
- **Political Engagement & Grievance Redressal**
- **Prevent Ideological Vacuum**
- **Deradicalisation**

## Mains Practise Question

*The Maoist movement in India which was a result of many factors, is now in decline. Analyse the reasons for this decline and suggest measures to permanently end left-wing extremism.*

**(15 Marks, 250 words)**





# Tragic Hospital Fires



**CONTEXT:** Massive fire in a Hospital in Jaipur claimed the lives of 6 people.

## Tragic Hospital Fires

- Major Public Safety Concern
- Recent Major Fire Accidents
  - City Hospital, Dindigul
  - Rajkot & Ahmedabad COVID-19 Hospital Fire - 2020
  - Delhi - Vivek Vihar - June, 2024
  - Maharani Laxmi Bai Medical College and Hospital, Jhansi - Nov, 2024

## Common Causes of Hospital Fire Accidents

- **Electrical Short Circuits** - Overloaded circuits; Poor maintenance
- **Lack of Fire Safety Equipments** - Absence of fire extinguishers, smoke detectors; Non-functional equipments
- **Flammable Materials** - Improper storage of inflammable items
- **Building Code Violations** - Non-compliance with FSS; Lack of fire exits or blocked routes
- **Human Negligence** - Lack of training - fire safety protocols; Delayed response to alarms
- **Overcrowding** - Limited infrastructure capacity - Overcrowded ICUs and wards

## Regulatory Framework for Fire Safety in Hospitals

- **NBC, 2016** - Provides detailed guidelines for fire prevention and safety measures
- **State Fire Safety Norms** - Fire NOC - local fire departments; Annual Audits
- **The Indian Electricity Act, 2003** - Emphasizes safe installation and maintenance
- **The Environment Protection Act, 1986** - hazardous material management
- **Clinical Establishments (Registration and Regulation) Act, 2010** - Ensures Compliance

## PROTECTION POINTS

### Hospital fire safety compliance in Tamil Nadu

No fire safety plan |  
**2,023 hospitals**

No licence | **1,400 hospitals**

No ramp | **1,270 hospitals**

Source: Govt submission at Madras HC in 2018;  
No updates available after this

### Hospital fire accidents in India since July 2020

Major fires | **11**

Minor | **13**

Victims | **93**

### Fire safety requirements in Tamil Nadu

➤ Minimum two fire extinguishers per floor

➤ Hydrant all around the building

➤ Automatic detection

and alarm system

➤ At least one ramp (2.4metre wide)

➤ Smoke vents

➤ Set back area of 7 metres

## Way Forward

- **Strict Compliance with Fire Safety Norms** - NBC & State FS Guidelines
- **Regular Fire Audits** - Third Party; Independent
- **Staff Training** - Fire Drills
- **Fireproof Design** - non-flammable materials; Proper Ventilation
- **Electrical System Upgrades** - Regular maintenance; MCBs
- **Dedicated Fire Safety Teams** - :specialized personnel - Fire Hazards
- **Technology Integration** - AFDs, Suppression Systems
- **Patient Safety Measures** - Prioritize ICU and immobile patients
- **Public-Private Collaboration** - Upgradation of Infra
- **Policy Reforms** - Stricter penalties for non-compliance; Incentives for hospitals

## Mains Practise Question

*Examine the underlying causes of increasing incidence of fire accidents in hospitals across India. Suggest measures to improve fire safety standards in healthcare facilities.*  
**(15 Marks, 250 words)**



**Jacob Koshy**  
NEW DELHI

The Nobel Prize for Physics this year will be awarded to three scientists – John Clarke, Michel Devoret and John Martinis, the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences said on Tuesday. The three worked together and devised experiments to tease greater insight into the workings of the quantum world: the realm of the ultra-small when objects, broken down to single, constituent particles, cease to behave in the way we ordinarily expect them to.

One of the mind-boggling behaviours that particles are capable of here is “tunnelling”, literally, the

## Quantum magnified

Nobel for quantum behaviour scaled up



JOHN CLARKE MICHEL H. DEVORET JOHN M. MARTINIS

- The laureates proved that entire electrical circuits can obey quantum mechanical laws

- They used Josephson junctions to observe tunnelling and energy quantisation in superconducting circuits



SOURCE: NOBEL PRIZE OUTREACH

- Their findings underpin superconducting qubits, quantum sensors, and precision measurement technologies

ability of particles to pass through physical walls. It is as if a cricket ball hitting the pitch will surely bounce up, but the odd cricket-ball particle will simply burrow into the

ground.

Such strange behaviour cannot be observed at the macroscopic level but these scientists showed that it was possible to organise a multitude of single

particles and coerce them to exhibit “tunnelling” properties.

### Electrical circuit

Much like early insight into quantum mechanics paved the way for transistors and silicon chips in the 1950s, the three scientists devised an electrical circuit with two superconductors, components that can conduct a current without any electrical resistance.

They separated these with a thin layer of material – called a Josephson junction – that did not conduct any current at all.

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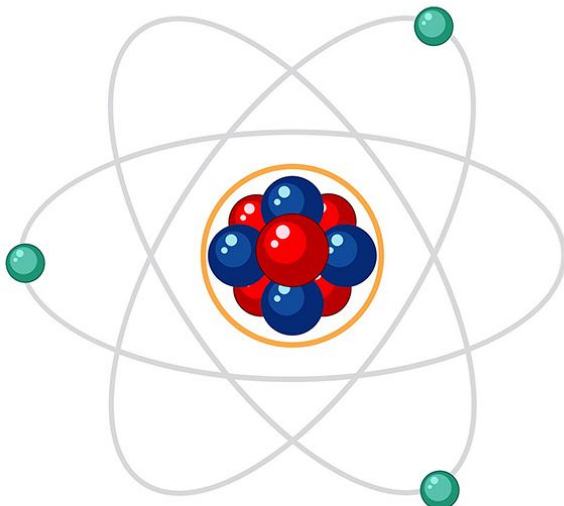
**EDITORIAL ON**

» PAGE 6

In this experiment, they showed that they could control and investigate a phenomenon in which all the charged particles in the superconductor behave in unison, as if they are a single ‘particle’ that fills the entire circuit.

Following this, they were able to demonstrate that such a particle could be made to behave simulating the flow of electricity even without voltage, a prerequisite for the flow of current.

## What is QUANTUM PHYSICS?



Quantum physics is a branch of physics that studies the behavior of subatomic particles, such as electrons and photons, at the most fundamental level.

Unlike classical physics, which describes the macroscopic world, quantum physics is based on principles like superposition and entanglement, allowing particles to exist in multiple states simultaneously.

It also introduces the concept of probability and the inherent uncertainty at the quantum level.

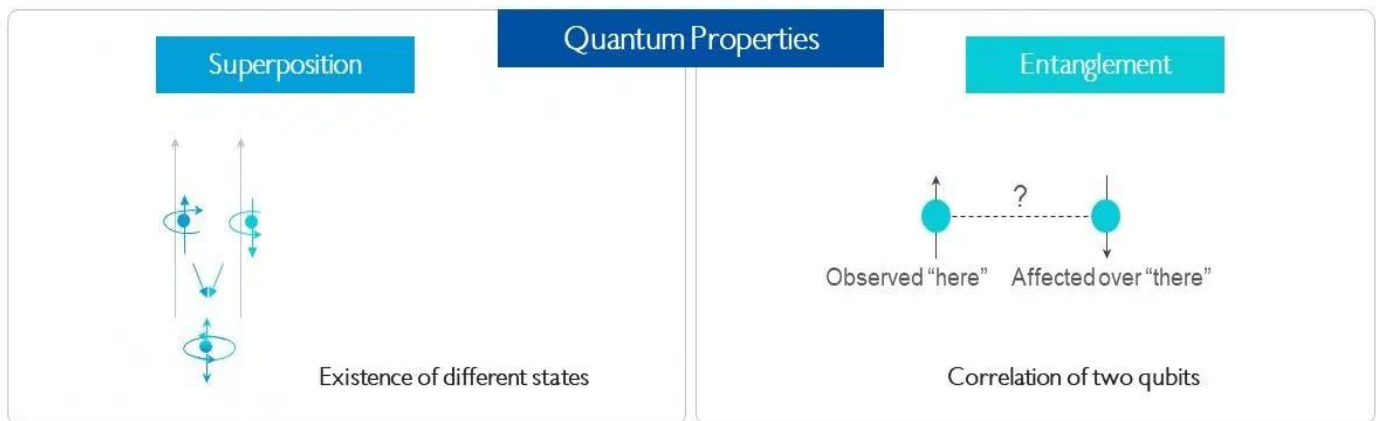
This theory has led to technological advances and revolutionized our understanding of the universe at very small scales.





## Properties of Quantum Behavior – Superposition and Entanglement

This slide represents the superposition and entanglement of quantum behavior. It also shows how qubits can correlate with each other even if they are not physically connected.



### Superposition

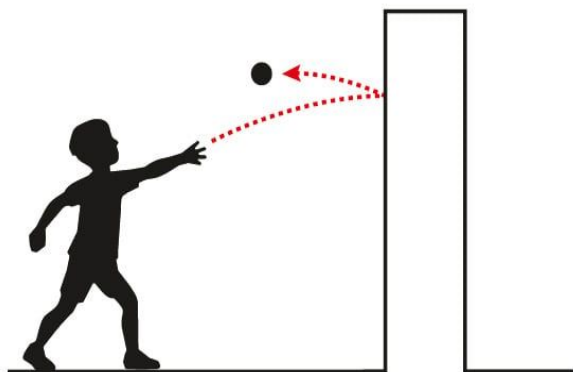
Unlike classic computers, quantum computers can represent either '0', '1' or both possible states at a time



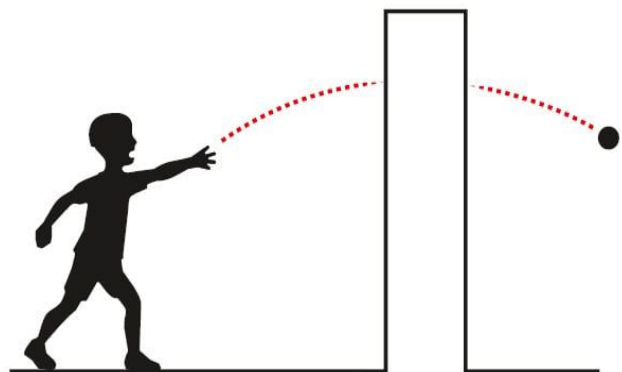
### Entanglement

Two qubits can strongly correlate with each other even if they are located light-years apart. In the quantum world, this entanglement is used to encode problems

This slide is 100% editable. Adapt it to your needs and capture your audience's attention.



When you throw a ball at a wall, you can be sure it will bounce back at you.



You would be extremely surprised if the ball suddenly appeared on the other side of the wall. In quantum mechanics this type of phenomenon is called tunnelling and is exactly the type of phenomenon that has given it a reputation for being bizarre and unintuitive.



# Physics Nobel – 'quantum tunnelling'

**SYLLABUS : GS 3: S&T**

**Newspaper The Hindu Page Number : 01**



- 1 In a normal conductor, the electrons jostle with each other and with the material.

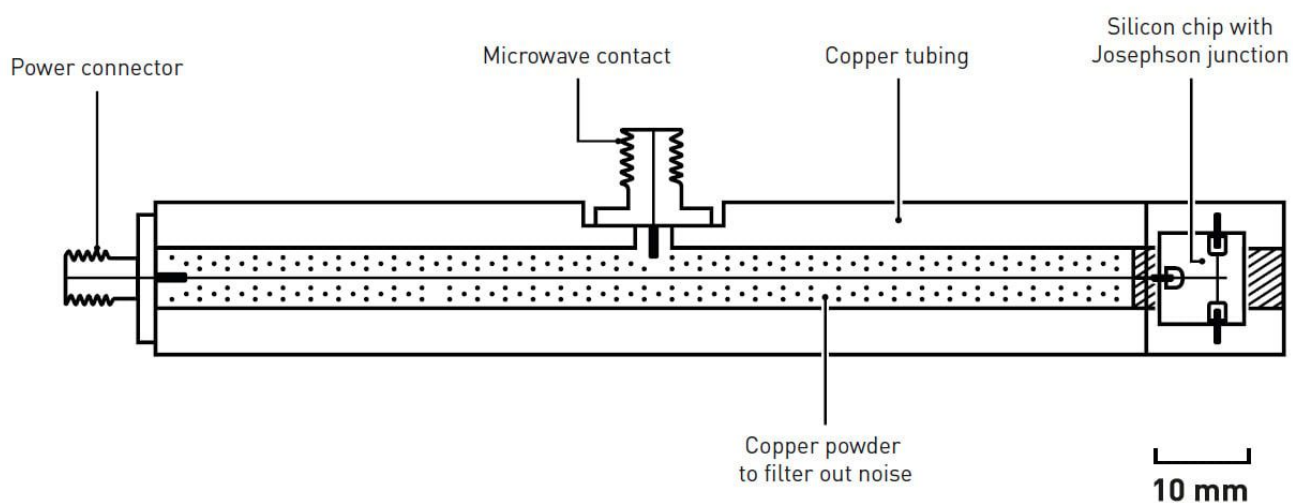


- 2 When a material becomes a superconductor, the electrons join up as pairs, *Cooper pairs*, and form a current where there is no resistance. The gap in the illustration marks the Josephson junction.



- 3 Cooper pairs can behave as if they were all a single particle that fills the entire electrical circuit. Quantum mechanics describes this collective state using a shared *wave function*. The properties of this wave function play the leading role in the laureates' experiment.

©Johan Jarnestad/The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences



John Clarke, Michel Devoret and John Martinis constructed an experiment using a superconducting electrical circuit. The chip that held this circuit was about a centimetre in size. Previously, tunnelling and energy quantisation had been studied in systems that had just a few particles; here, these phenomena appeared in a quantum mechanical system with billions of Cooper pairs that filled the entire superconductor on the chip. In this way, the experiment took quantum mechanical effects from a microscopic scale to a macroscopic one.



# A Revitalised 'Gold Monetisation Scheme'



**SYLLABUS : GS 3:** Indian Economy; Mobilisation of Resources.  
**Newspaper** The Hindu **Page Number : 06**

**A**tmanirbharta has been central to India's story, not just as an economic plan but also as a philosophy of existence. For us, self-reliance has always meant drawing strength from within so that we may stand taller in the world. Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has embraced Atmanirbharta with renewed vigour, transforming ambitious ideas into tangible national achievements across sectors. His governance has propelled India's self-reliance journey, demonstrating unparalleled resilience and innovation even amid global uncertainties.

This instinct has defined India's journey: when droughts struck in the 1960s, the Green Revolution made India food secure; in the 1990s, foresight in the digital sphere turned talent into national strength; during the COVID-19 pandemic, India developed its own indigenous vaccines rapidly, showcasing scientific and manufacturing self-reliance; today, it is advancing towards self-reliance in defence systems. The lesson remains consistent: whenever India has chosen self-reliance, crisis has been turned into capability.

That principle now needs its strongest expression in financing India's growth. India has drawn over \$1 trillion in gross FDI since 2000, yet global realities are shifting. Global investment flows have shrunk by more than 11% in calendar year 2024 while international project finance deals fell by 27%. Foreign portfolio investments, while substantial, remain volatile, swayed by global tremors. As the world retreats from globalisation and the costs of capital rise abroad, India cannot afford to hinge its future on external flows. The time has come to unlock Bharat's own wealth to fuel Bharat's own growth.

## A stock of immense value

The most compelling starting point is gold. For generations, gold has been both a store of value and a symbol of security in Indian households. Over time, this trust has expanded to an extraordinary scale: families in India today

collectively hold close to 25,000 tonnes of gold, making this the single largest private reserve in the world. At today's prices, this translates to about \$2.4 trillion of wealth, or more than 55% of India's GDP in FY26 terms – a stock of value even larger than all the credit extended by India's banks.

Paradoxically, despite such reserves, India remains one of the largest importers of gold, meeting roughly 87% of demand from abroad, with imports accounting for 8% of its total bill. Between 2010 and 2013, gold imports made up almost a third of India's trade deficit. This paradox highlights both an enormous challenge and an unprecedented opportunity.

Because India's relationship with gold is cultural and civilisational, coercive restrictions are not the answer. What is needed instead is a revitalised, trust-based gold monetisation scheme. Unlike past experiments that faltered due to weak infrastructure and limited outreach, a reimagined scheme must build on global best practices. A striking example comes from a few nations that successfully invested in assaying facilities, created innovative gold savings products, and digitised gold flows through mobile apps, managing to bring thousands of tonnes of "under-the-pillow" gold into their formal financial system. India can adapt these lessons.

**Key takeaway:** In crises, India has historically converted challenges into capabilities by relying on its own strengths.

## Need for Financial Self-Reliance

- Since 2000, India has received **over \$1 trillion in gross FDI**.
- However, **global headwinds:**
  - Global investment flows declined **>11% (2024)**.
  - International project finance deals fell **27%**.
  - **Foreign Portfolio Investments (FPIs)** are volatile and subject to global market swings.

## Atmanirbharta as India's Enduring Philosophy

- Self-reliance in India is not merely – **economic programme** but a **civilisational idea** – drawing strength from within to face global challenges.
- Atmanirbharta has been given a renewed push, turning ambitious visions into **tangible achievements** in areas like *food security, digital transformation, vaccine development, and defence*.

## Historical Lessons of Self-Reliance

- **1960s – Food security:** Green Revolution helped India overcome drought-driven shortages.
- **1990s – IT & digital transformation:** Early reforms and human capital created a global IT powerhouse.
- **COVID-19 pandemic:** Rapid development of **indigenous vaccines** showcased scientific & manufacturing self-reliance.
- **Present:** A similar push is visible in **defence indigenisation**.





# A Revitalised 'Gold Monetisation Scheme'



**SYLLABUS : GS 3:** Indian Economy; Mobilisation of Resources.

**Newspaper** The Hindu **Page Number : 06**

## The basics

The road ahead demands three essentials. First, infrastructure – hallmarking and purity testing centres need to scale faster for trusted valuation across the country. India requires a formal network of collection and purity testing centres. Only recently has it begun expanding the reach of standardised testing: the number of Bureau of Indian Standards-registered assaying and hallmarking centres has almost doubled in the last four years. Yet, a large share of the market still consists of unbranded gold with uncertain purity, which prevents the efficient recycling of gold into the economy. Second, logistics – banks can manage the money flows, while experienced collection and purity testing centres handle gold movement securely and transparently. Third, digitalisation – every household depositor should be able to track their “metal balance” as easily as a bank account balance. But, above all, trust is the foundation. To build it, we must remove frictions such as goods and services tax and customs scrutiny on deposits, and ensure a simple, “no questions asked” environment where returns flow back directly to depositors without hidden costs.

If structured this way, the economics are favourable. The cost of funds raised through gold monetisation could fall in the range of 4.5%-6.5%, lower than the effective cost of borrowing from international markets. Even if a fraction of India's household is mobilised, the impact would be transformative – easing import pressure, strengthening the current account and creating a vast pool of domestic capital to drive infrastructure, manufacturing and innovation.

## Moment of financial self-reliance

History shows that India has always risen to moments of crisis, transforming them into capability. Just as it attained food security during the Green Revolution and global leadership in IT services during the digital age, its now stands before the call for financial self-reliance. Mobilising domestic wealth, particularly through gold, is not just an economic choice. It is a civilisational one.

This is about building the confidence that Bharat can fund Bharat, harnessing its own wealth, ingenuity, and resilience. The path forward demands trust, foresight and determination. But the prize is unmistakable – an India that defines its growth on its own terms, self-reliant in spirit and substance, and financing its aspirations from within to step boldly into the future.

- With **de-globalisation** and rising capital costs abroad, India must **mobilise domestic resources** to finance its growth.

**Core idea:** “Bharat must fund Bharat.”

## India's Gold Paradox – A Hidden Domestic Resource

- Indian households hold **~25,000 tonnes of gold** (**≈ \$2.4 trillion, >55% of India's GDP in FY26 terms**).
- Yet, India imports about **87% of its gold demand**, contributing to **~8% of the import bill**.
- Gold imports historically worsened the **trade deficit** (2010-13: ~1/3 of deficit).

Gold is thus both a **challenge** (import dependence) and an **opportunity** (untapped domestic capital).

## Mobilising Domestic Gold – The Way Forward

**(a) Past Gaps – Previous Gold Monetisation Schemes (GMS)** had **low uptake** due to weak infrastructure, limited outreach, and lack of depositor trust.

## (b) Learning from Global Best Practices

- Successful models abroad:
  - **Robust assaying & hallmarking infrastructure.**
  - **Innovative gold savings products.**
  - **Digital platforms** enabling easy deposits & withdrawals.

## (c) Key Essentials for a Revitalised Scheme

1. **Infrastructure:**
  - Expand **BIS-registered assaying & hallmarking centres**.
  - Tackle unbranded gold with uncertain purity that limits recycling.
2. **Logistics:**
  - Banks manage finances, while certified centres ensure secure and transparent gold handling.



# A Revitalised 'Gold Monetisation Scheme'



**SYLLABUS : GS 3:** Indian Economy; Mobilisation of Resources.  
**Newspaper** The Hindu **Page Number : 06**

### 3. Digitalisation:

- Depositors should track their **"metal balance"** as easily as a bank balance.

### 4. Trust-Building Measures:

- Remove frictions such as **GST and customs scrutiny** on deposits.
- Ensure **"no-questions-asked" simplicity** and transparent returns to depositors.

**Economic logic:** Mobilised gold can provide funds at **4.5-6.5% cost**, cheaper than external borrowing, and reduce import-related current account pressure.

### Moment for a New Phase of Atmanirbharta

- India has repeatedly turned crises into opportunities — food in the 1960s, IT in the 1990s, vaccines during COVID-19.
- The present challenge is to achieve **financial Atmanirbharta** by **harnessing domestic wealth** — particularly household gold.
- This is both an **economic and civilisational choice** that strengthens India's **strategic autonomy and growth sovereignty**.

Ministry of Finance



## Medium Term and Long Term Government Deposit (MLTGD) components of Gold Monetisation Scheme (GMS) discontinued w.e.f. 26th March, 2025, based on performance of GMS and evolving market conditions

Posted On: 25 MAR 2025 7:24PM by PIB Delhi

The Gold Monetisation Scheme (GMS) was announced on 15<sup>th</sup> September, 2015 with the objective to reduce country's reliance on the import of gold in the long run and mobilise gold held by households and institutions in the country to facilitate its use for productive purposes.

The GMS comprised of 3 components:

- Short Term Bank Deposit (1-3 years)
- Medium Term Government Deposit (5-7 years), and
- Long-Term Government Deposit (12 - 15 years)

Based on the examination of the performance of the Gold Monetisation Scheme (GMS) and evolving market conditions, it has been decided to discontinue the Medium Term and Long Term Government Deposit (MLTGD) components of the GMS w.e.f. March 26, 2025.

Accordingly, any gold deposits tendered at the designated Collection and Purity Testing Centre (CPTC) or GMS Mobilisation, Collection & Testing Agent (GMCTA) or the designated bank branches under the said components of GMS shall not be accepted with effect from March 26, 2025. However, the existing deposits under MLTGD shall continue till redemption as per extant guidelines of GMS issued vide Reserve Bank Master Direction No. DBR.IBD.No.45/23.67.003/2015-16 dated October 22, 2015 (as updated).

Further, the Short-Term Bank Deposits (STBD) offered by the banks under GMS shall continue at the discretion of the individual banks based on the commercial viability as assessed by them. The detailed guidelines of Reserve Bank in this regard shall follow.

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## SYLLABUS : GS 2 : International Relations

Newspaper The Indian Express Page Number : EXPLAINED

BRITISH PRIME Minister Keir Starmer is coming to India on Wednesday for a two-day visit, his first since he assumed office in July 2024. He will hold bilateral talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and attend the Global Fintech summit in Mumbai.

This is a reciprocal visit by the British PM, after Modi travelled to the UK in July and they signed the Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

The FTA has the stamp of a bipartisan consensus in the UK — and that tells the story of India-UK ties broadly.

While Boris Johnson had kickstarted negotiations in 2022, in July this year, after Starmer led the Labour win, he spoke to Modi and “agreed to work towards an early conclusion of a mutually beneficial India-UK free trade agreement”.

### Dependable ties in an uncertain world

In the current global environment, where US President Donald Trump’s disruptive approach has created uncertainties, India and the UK have the opportunity to be reliable and predictable partners.

As an Indian official said, “the FTA is the floor, not the ceiling (for the relationship).”

While Starmer is facing political challenges back home, he continues to play a significant role on the global stage. For instance, after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy’s disastrous White House meeting with Trump in March, he got European leaders and major democracies, including Australia, Canada, and Japan, to form the Coalition of the Willing against Russia’s invasion.

### ‘Living bridge’

The Indian diaspora forms about 2.6% of the UK population, contributing to academia, literature, science, business, and politics. More than 65,000 companies in the UK are owned by the Indian diaspora, and these contribute heavily to job creation, local economic growth, and taxes. This forms the “living bridge” between the two countries.

The India-UK relationship is robust, multi-faceted, and mutually beneficial, and on May 6 this year, it was elevated to a new level, when the two PMs announced the conclusion of the India-UK FTA and the Double Contribution Convention.

Then during PM Modi’s visit to the UK in July, a Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), the Vision 2035 document, as well as a new Defence Industrial

Roadmap were signed.

The key pillars of India-UK Vision 2035 include growth and jobs in the UK and India, education and skills partnership to nurture the next generation of global talent, developing cutting-edge technology, and strengthening defence and security co-operation.

Here’s a look at the different facets of this relationship and the vision for the future.

### Economic cooperation

The India-UK FTA brings together the world’s 5th and 6th largest economies.

Bilateral trade (both goods and services) stood at around USD 56 billion during 2024 with imports at around 17 billion and exports at around 26 billion pounds. Total bilateral trade in goods is around 18 billion pounds while trade in services is around 25 billion pounds in 2024. Now, the bilateral trade is projected to double by 2030.

The FTA is expected to give Indian businesses more competitive market access in focus sectors like textiles, leather, footwear, sports goods and toys, gems and jewellery, engineering goods, auto parts and engines.

Indian and British companies employ more than 650,000 people in each other’s countries.

The India UK CETA provides duty free access to approximately 99 per cent of Indian exports by value. This supports MSMEs too and boosts jobs.

The agreement enables growth in IT and ITeS, financial and professional services, education, and other business services. This has the potential to expand high-skill jobs across India. It also means lower costs for professionals and employers, and the Double Contribution Convention provides a three-year exemption from UK social security for eligible Indian workers on temporary assign-





## SYLLABUS : GS 2 : International Relations

Newspaper The Indian Express Page Number : EXPLAINED

### Defence cooperation

A Defence Industrial Roadmap for collaboration in co-design and co-production of defence products is expected to meet the growing demand in both countries, as well as cater to the world market. A key area the two countries are working towards is jet engines.

A broad spectrum of activities, including joint military exercises, port calls, defence technological cooperation, subject matter expert exchanges for exchange of best practices (SMEEs), defence education, and defence procurement are also taking place.

### Education

The number of Indian students in the UK is around 170,000. Various UK universities are planning to establish campuses in India, including the University of Southampton coming to Gurugram, making it the first foreign university to set up a campus under the New Education Policy.

An MoU for mutual recognition of academic qualifications was signed in July 2022, and hence, UK degrees are formally recognised in India.

**SCHOLARSHIPS AND PATHWAYS:** Chevening Scholarships and the Young Professionals Scheme create a study-to-work pathway between the two countries.

**YOUNG PROFESSIONALS SCHEME:** About 3,000 young professionals from each country can live and work in the other country for up to two years. This supports early career growth and skills transfer.

**EDUCATION AS AN INVESTMENT MAGNET:** Education is among the top sectors attracting UK foreign direct investment into India. Queen's University of Belfast and

the University of Surrey are both about to set up their international branch campus at GIFT IFSC, Gujarat.

### Research and Innovation

An India-UK Science and Innovation Council (SIC) is held once every two years to develop bilateral relationships in science, technology and innovation. The UK is India's second largest international research and innovation partner with a joint research programme pegged at 300-400 million pounds.

An MoU was signed in 2023 for wider co-operation, especially in quantum technology, clean energy, pandemic preparedness, AI and machine learning. There is a plan to establish a new India-UK Net Zero Innovation Virtual Centre focusing on industrial decarbonisation, and work on focus areas including use of green hydrogen as a renewable energy source.

### Culture

**FILM CO-PRODUCTION FRAMEWORK:** An updated co-production framework is expected to help Indian and UK producers access incentives in both markets. It supports jobs for crews, VFX and post production, and helps stories travel to wider audiences. Significantly, Trump recently said he would impose 100 per cent tariffs on all movies made outside of the US.

**CREATIVE INDUSTRIES GROWTH:** The cultural agreement signals support for creative businesses. It helps festivals, labels, publishers and production houses to build cross-border projects that generate local jobs for artists, technicians and venue workers.

**PEOPLE FIRST BENEFITS:** More shows and exhibitions in Indian cities, more Indian content on UK platforms and vice versa, and more training and exchange opportunities for young creators.

### Connectivity

**MORE LOCAL ACCESS TO SERVICES:** New Consulates General of India in Manchester and Belfast were inaugurated in March, expanding services beyond London, Birmingham and Edinburgh. This brings passport, OCI and consular support closer to large Indian communities in Northern England and Northern Ireland.

**MORE FLIGHTS AND SEATS:** Virgin Atlantic operates a daily London to Bengaluru service from March 2024. British Airways added a new daily Delhi to London flight from April this year. IndiGo has announced Delhi to Manchester flights starting November 15, using leased Boeing 787-9 aircraft. Air India continues substantial UK operations from multiple Indian cities to London airports.





**SYLLABUS : GS 2 : International Relations**  
**Newspaper The Indian Express Page Number : 01**

## Joint statement: Bid to deploy military infra in Afghanistan is unacceptable

SHUBHAJIT ROY

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 7

IN AN unexpected turn of events, India has joined the Taliban, Pakistan, China and Russia to oppose US President Donald Trump's bid to take over the Bagram air base in Afghanistan. This comes days before the scheduled visit of Taliban-ruled Afghanistan's Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi

later this week.

While not naming Bagram, a sharply worded joint statement issued by participants of the Moscow Format Consultations on Afghanistan said on Tuesday: "They (the participants) called unacceptable the attempts by countries to deploy their military infrastructure in Afghanistan and neighboring states, since this does not serve the interests of regional peace and stability."

The seventh meeting of the



The air base played a key role in US 'war on terror'. AP file

Moscow Format Consultations on Afghanistan was held in Moscow at the level of special

representatives and senior officials of Afghanistan, India, Iran, **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. A delegation from Belarus also attended the meeting as guests.

"For the first time, the Afghan delegation headed by Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi participated in the meeting as a member," the statement said.

Trump has demanded that Afghanistan's ruling Taliban hand over the country's Bagram air base to Washington, five years after he signed a deal with the group that paved the way for the US withdrawal from Kabul.

At a press conference with UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer on September 18, Trump said the US government was "trying to get (Bagram) back". "We gave it to (the Taliban) for nothing. We want that base back," he said. Two days later, he posted on his Truth Social platform: "If Afghanistan doesn't give Bagram air base back to those that built it, the United States of America, bad things are going to happen!"

Quite predictably, the Taliban

have rejected Trump's demand, with chief spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid saying: "Afghans will never allow their land to be handed over to anyone under any circumstances".

Now, interestingly, Delhi has joined in to oppose Trump's plan, ahead of Muttaqi's first visit to India—a historic first for a Taliban foreign minister.

The Bagram air base, which has two concrete runways (one is 3.6 km, the other 3 km), lies about 50 km outside Kabul. Afghanistan's rugged, mountainous terrain makes controlling its airspace difficult, with few places suitable for landing large military planes and weapons carriers. Bagram—the country's largest air base—is one of the few such air bases, making it a strategic stronghold. It played a key role in the US's "war on terror" after 2001.

The Moscow format joint statement also said: "The parties reaffirmed their unwavering support for the establishment of Afghanistan as an independent, united and peaceful state." It said they "called for strengthening

counter-terrorism cooperation at both bilateral and multilateral levels. They emphasised that Afghanistan should be supported to undertake comprehensive measures aimed at the elimination of terrorism and its eradication within a short timeframe so that Afghan soil is not used as a threat to the security of the neighboring countries and beyond. The parties underscored that terrorism constitutes a serious threat to the security of Afghanistan, the region and the wider world."

The reference to "Afghan soil" in the context of "security of the neighboring countries" is from India's perspective—a message to Pakistan.

The parties noted the need for development of economic and trade exchanges, investment cooperation of Afghanistan with regional countries and the international community. They expressed their interest in developing regional economic projects with Afghan participation and promoting progress in fields such as healthcare, poverty alleviation, agriculture and disaster preven-

tion, to help Afghanistan realise independent and sustainable development.

"They supported the active integration of Afghanistan into the system of regional connectivity," the joint statement said, again from India's perspective, a message to the US that has removed the sanctions waiver on the Chabahar port in Iran, used to access Afghanistan from Delhi.

It said the parties reiterated their "commitment to continue humanitarian support to the Afghan people, and called on the international community to intensify provision of emergency humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people, while simultaneously reaffirming opposition to the attempts of politicising it".

In a historic first, Muttaqi is set to visit India later this week, after the UN Security Council allowed him to travel to New Delhi from October 9 to 16. Since Muttaqi is on the list of sanctioned individuals—applicable to Taliban leaders—under the UNSC Resolution 1988 (2011), he needed the approval.



# Moscow Format & Bagram Air Base

**SYLLABUS : GS 2 : International Relations**  
**Newspaper The Indian Express Page Number : 01**



## About Moscow format:

- What is it?
  - The Moscow format is **one of the several dialogue platforms on Afghanistan** — which **began before the Taliban takeover of Kabul**.
  - It consists of Russia, China, Pakistan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and India.
- The **key objective** of the Moscow format of consultations is to facilitate the national reconciliation process in Afghanistan to establish peace.
- During the meeting, the participants discussed issues related to Afghanistan, including the current humanitarian situation and the ongoing efforts of various stakeholders to provide assistance, intra-Afghan talks, formation of an inclusive and representative government.





**SYLLABUS : GS 3 : Disaster Management**  
**Newspaper The Hindu Page Number : 10**

## The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

A high-level committee chaired by Home Minister Amit Shah has approved ₹707.97 crore of additional Central assistance to the States of Assam and Gujarat, which were affected by flood and landslides during year 2024, a statement by the Ministry said.

The assistance has been

provided from the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF). Out of the total amount of ₹707.97 crore, ₹313.69 crore has been approved for Assam and ₹394.28 crore for Gujarat.

The committee also approved ₹903.67 crore to Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan under the NDRF for expansion and modernisation of fire services.

## About National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF)

- It is defined in Section 46 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005.
- It is a fund managed by the Central Government to meet the expenses for emergency response, relief, and rehabilitation due to any threatening disaster situation or disaster.
- NDRF is constituted to supplement the funds of the State Disaster Response Funds (SDRF) in case of a disaster of severe nature, provided adequate funds are not available in SDRF.
- It is placed in the "Public Account" of the GOI under "reserve funds not bearing interest". Since it is placed in the public accounts, the government does not require parliamentary approval to take money out of this fund.
- Eligibility:
  - NDRF guidelines state that natural calamities of cyclones, drought, earthquake, fire, flood, tsunami, hailstorm, landslide, avalanche, cloud burst, pest attack, and cold wave and frost considered to be of severe nature by the Government of India (GoI) and requiring expenditures by a state government in excess of the balances available in its own SDRF will qualify for immediate relief assistance from NDRF.
  - The NDRF also covers man-made disasters such as terrorist attacks, chemical or biological disasters, or nuclear disasters as notified by the Central Government.
- For availing the NDRF funds, states are required to submit a memorandum indicating the sector-wise damage and need for funds. The Centre, on its part, assesses the damage and grants the additional funds to states.



# National Disaster Response Fund



**SYLLABUS : GS 3 : Disaster Management**  
**Newspaper The Hindu Page Number : 10**

- The financial assistance from NDRF is for providing immediate relief and is not compensation for loss/damage to properties /crops. In other words, the NDRF amount can be spent only towards meeting the expenses for emergency response, relief, and rehabilitation.
  - The NDRF is not used for disaster preparedness, restoration, reconstruction, and mitigation. These activities are funded by other schemes such as the National Disaster Mitigation Fund (NDMF), the National Cyclone Risk Mitigation Project (NCRMP), National Flood Management Programme (NFMP), etc.
- Sources of Financing NDRF:
  - It is financed through the levy of a cess on certain items, chargeable to excise and customs duty, and approved annually through the Finance Bill.
  - The requirement for funds beyond what is available under the NDRF is met through general budgetary resources.
- The National Executive Committee (NEC) of the National Disaster Management Authority takes decisions on the expenses from NDRF.
- The NDRF accounts are audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) every year.



**Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the regulatory framework for fire safety in hospitals:**

1. The National Building Code (NBC), 2016, provides detailed guidelines for fire prevention and safety measures in healthcare facilities.
2. The Indian Electricity Act, 2003, deals exclusively with fire extinguishing systems in hospitals.
3. Under the Environment Protection Act, 1986, management of hazardous materials is mandated to prevent fire hazards.

**How many of the above statements is/are correct?**

- a) Only One
- b) Only Two
- c) All Three
- d) None

**Answer: b**

**Q2. Consider the following statements regarding the 2025 Nobel Prize in Physics:**

1. The prize was awarded for demonstrating macroscopic quantum mechanical tunnelling and energy quantisation in electric circuits.
2. The work successfully demonstrated that quantum mechanical phenomena can occur only at atomic or subatomic levels.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Answer: a**

**Q3. Consider the following statements regarding the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF):**

1. The NDRF is defined under the Disaster Management Act, 2005 and is used for immediate relief, not for long-term rehabilitation or mitigation.
2. Funds from the NDRF can be utilised without requiring parliamentary approval, as they are placed under the Consolidated Fund of India.
3. The fund is audited annually by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India.

**How many of the above statements is/are correct?**

- a) Only One
- b) Only Two
- c) All Three
- d) None

**Answer: b**

**Q4. Consider the following statements regarding the India–UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA):**

1. The FTA is likely to improve access for Indian businesses in sectors such as textiles and engineering goods.
2. Bilateral trade is projected to increase significantly and could double by 2030.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Answer: c**

**Q5. Which of the following groups of locations is located in Afghanistan?**

- a) Mashhad, Shiraz, Tabriz
- b) Baghdad, Mosul, Basra
- c) Mazar-e-Sharif, Bagram, Chaghcharan
- d) Kermanshah, Najaf, Qom

**Answer: c**







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