



**VAJIRAM & RAVI**  
Institute for IAS Examination

# The Analyst

**CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout**

**17th March 2025**



# "Hidden Hunger": Malnutrition in India



**CONTEXT:** In the coming financial year, two Union government schemes will receive higher allocations — Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0. But will this fix India's nutrition challenge?

## What is Malnutrition?

- 'deficiencies, excesses or imbalances' – energy & nutrients

## Types of Malnutrition?

- Undernutrition
- Micronutrient-related Malnutrition
- Obesity
- Diet-related NCDs

## Consequences of Malnutrition in India

- **Health Implications:** Stunted Growth, Weakened Immune System – infections, Micronutrient Deficiencies
- **Educational Consequences:** Cognitive Impairment – learning outcomes; Increased School Dropouts
- **Economic Impact:** Productivity Loss, Increased Healthcare Costs – OoPE
- **Inter-generational Impact:** Maternal and Child Health – cycle of nutritional deficiencies; Long-term Health Effects – health challenges in adulthood
- **Social Consequences:** Increased Vulnerability – marginalised – social inequalities; Stigma and Discrimination – mental well-being
- **National Development:** Reduced Human Capital – socio-economic progress; Increased Healthcare Burden – diversion of resources



**Micronutrient  
FORUM**

## Prevalence of Anaemia:

- 25.0% in men (15-49 years)
- 57.0% in women (15-49 years)
- 31.1% in adolescent boys (15-19 yrs)
- 59.1% in adolescent girls

## Hunger watch

The nutritional status of children in India barely improved in 2019-20 from the levels in 2015-16, the National Family Health Survey-5 data show

(IN %)



Indicator	2019-20	2015-16	2005-06
Children aged six to 59 months who are anaemic	67.1	58.6	69.4
Children under five who are stunted	35.5	38.4	48
Children under five who are wasted	19.3	21	19.8
Children under five who are severely wasted	7.7	7.5	6.4
Children under five who are underweight	32.1	35.8	42.5
Children aged six to 23 months receiving an adequate diet	11.3	9.6	-
Institutional births	88.6	78.9	38.7

- Over **three billion people** lack all year access to nutrient rich healthy diets. This indicator leapt upwards in one year (2020) as it did in the preceding five.
- An estimated **two billion people** suffer from micro-nutrient deficiencies prior to the pandemic. This number is rapidly rising.
- Nearly **one in three women** of reproductive age suffer from anemia.
- **One in every three people** is overweight or obese.
- Almost a **quarter of all children under five** are short for their age or stunted.
- A tenth of the global population, around 811 million people, are estimated to be undernourished.





# "Hidden Hunger": Malnutrition in India

**CONTEXT:** In the coming financial year, two Union government schemes will receive higher allocations — Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0. But will this fix India's nutrition challenge?

## Challenges in Handling Malnutrition in India

- **Widespread Inequality:** Low economic capacity – affordability, food insecurity – disasters, conflicts or price fluctuations; 74%
- **Inadequate Dietary Intake And Dietary Shifts:** Processed and sugar-laden alternatives; Cereals > Millets; deficient in essential nutrients
- **Poor Sanitation:** Inadequate WASH – pathogens – infections – affect the absorption and utilisation of nutrients; NFHS-5 – 69%
- **Lack of Primary Health Infrastructure:** Inadequate access – immunisation, antenatal care – risk of diseases – 0.73 doctors and 1.74 nurses / 1000 people.
- **Delayed and Inconsistent Delivery:** Inefficient PI; Fund delays – nutritional interventions; NFHS-5 – 50.3% – Anganwadi
- **Inadequate Monitoring and Evaluation:** Assessment issues – Ineffective Policy

## Way forward to fight Malnutrition:

- **Enhanced Fortification:** Need – economically viable – large-scale implementation; NIDDCP
- **Focused SBCC Action Plan:** Diverse diet, Millets, ETC. – IEC – **EDITORIAL** – Local Elites/Community
- **Enhance Healthcare Infrastructure:** **EDITORIAL** – Robust LDSs – HWCs, Focus on Urban, Nutritional Staff; NHP – 1.2% to 2.5% – Focus – Grassroots
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Assessment – nutrition interventions – Poshan Tracker
- **Consumption of Locally Nutritious Food:** **EDITORIAL** – local cuisines – POSHAN Vatikas
- **Communication Strategies:** community radio, videos, and door-to-door outreach – vernacular languages

## Initiatives by Government of India:

- Mission Poshan 2.0
- ICDS Scheme
- Rice Fortification
- Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana
- PM POSHAN
- Scheme for Adolescent Girls
- Mother's Absolute Affection
- Poshan Vatikas

## Benefits of Millet

Gluten free- good for Celiac disease

Boosts immunity

Easy to digest

Supports brain development

Rich in antioxidant



## ABOUT THE GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX SCORES



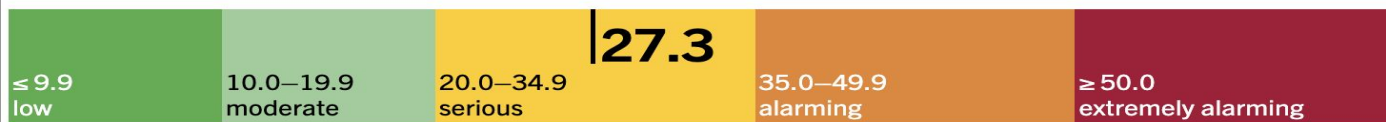
The Global Hunger Index (GHI) is a tool for comprehensively measuring and tracking hunger at global, regional, and national levels. GHI scores are based on the values of four component indicators:

- **Undernourishment:** the share of the population with insufficient caloric intake.
- **Child stunting:** the share of children under age five who have low height for their age, reflecting chronic undernutrition.
- **Child wasting:** the share of children under age five who have low weight for their height, reflecting acute undernutrition.
- **Child mortality:** the share of children who die before their fifth birthday, partly reflecting the fatal mix of inadequate nutrition and unhealthy environments.

Based on the values of the four indicators, a GHI score is calculated on a 100-point scale reflecting the severity of hunger, where 0 is the best possible score (no hunger) and 100 is the worst. Each country's GHI score is classified by severity, from low to extremely alarming.

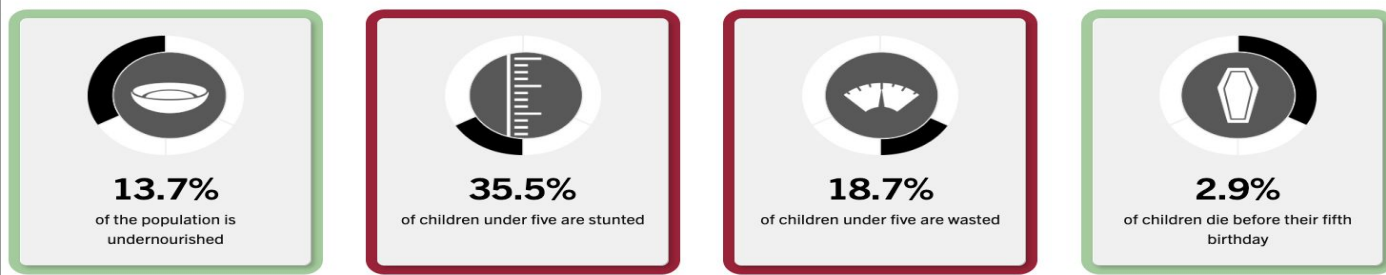
# "Hidden Hunger": Malnutrition in India

**CONTEXT:** In the coming financial year, two Union government schemes will receive higher allocations — Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0. But will this fix India's nutrition challenge?



In the 2024 Global Hunger Index, India ranks **105<sup>th</sup>** out of the **127 countries with sufficient data to calculate 2024 GHI scores**. With a score of **27.3** in the 2024 Global Hunger Index, India has a level of hunger that is **serious**.

India's GHI Score is based on the values of four component indicators:



"Malnutrition in India is a multidimensional challenge that goes beyond food insecurity to include socio-cultural, economic, and lifestyle factors. Discuss the major causes of malnutrition in India and critically evaluate the effectiveness of government initiatives in addressing this issue. Suggest a holistic approach to tackle malnutrition across all sections of society."

**(15 Marks, 250 words)**

7. निर्धनता और कुपोषण एक विषाक्त चक्र का निर्माण करते हैं जो मानव पूंजी निर्माण पर प्रतिकूल प्रभाव डाल रहा है। इस चक्र को तोड़ने के लिए क्या कदम उठाए जा सकते हैं? (उत्तर 150 शब्दों में लिखिए)
- Poverty and malnutrition create a vicious cycle, adversely affecting human capital formation. What steps can be taken to break the cycle? (Answer in 150 words)

**CONTEXT** The debate over the language formula in the NEP rages, though the SC had favoured “linguistic secularism”, or **the acceptance of the legitimate aspirations of the speakers of different languages** in India, in 2014.:

## What is Linguistic Secularism?

- **equal recognition and accommodation of all languages** – multilingual society – NO IMPOSITION
- Upholds – right of individuals and communities – linguistic identity ~ national unity
- U.P. Hindi Sahitya Sammelan vs State of U.P. (2014) – “**organic, accommodative, and non-rigid approach**”

## Importance of Linguistic Secularism

- **Protects Linguistic Diversity: 8th Schedule**, numerous **dialects** – Linguistic secularism – no language – marginalized
- **Strengthens National Unity**: reduces linguistic conflicts – fosters inclusive nationalism
- **Upholds Constitutional Values**:
  - **Article 29(1)**: linguistic and cultural rights
  - **Article 19(1)(a)**: freedom of expression.
  - **Article 343**: **Hindi** – official language; safeguarding – regional languages
- **Ensures Educational Inclusivity**: mother tongue-based education – learning outcomes
- **Promotes Social and Economic Mobility**: Improved accessibility – education, jobs, and government services

## Challenges to Linguistic Secularism in India

- **Imposition of a Dominant Language** – Policies like the three-language formula – NEP- opposition – TN; Article 351 – promotion of Hindi – ‘favoritism’
- **Regional Language Disparities: regional languages** – lack institutional support; Several dialects and tribal languages – extinction
- **Political and Identity Conflicts**: Language-based Regionalism – Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and West Bengal – threat to their cultural identity; Tensions in Hindi vs. Non-Hindi-speaking States

- **English as a Socio-Economic Barrier**: Jobs – English proficiency – disadvantaging non-English speakers; Rural vs. Urban Divide

## The Way Forward

- **Strengthening Multilingual Education**: Mother-Tongue-Based Education, Flexible Three-Language Policy, Promote Indigenous & Tribal Languages
- **Ensuring Language Parity in Governance**: Expand E-Governance in Regional Languages, Improve Translation Infrastructure
- **Encouraging Linguistic Harmony: language** – ‘bridge for cultural understanding’, Inter-State Exchange Programs.

## SC’s take on this issue:

- State of Karnataka vs Associated Management of Primary & Secondary Schools – **Article 19**
- Inspired from – Pierce v. Society of Sisters (U.S. Supreme Court, 1924) – “**A child is not a mere creature of the State**”
- Allahabad High Court (1982 judgment)

## Mains Practise Question

“Linguistic secularism is essential for maintaining India’s unity in diversity. Discuss the significance of linguistic secularism in the Indian context and examine the challenges associated with its implementation. Suggest measures to promote a balanced and inclusive language policy in the country.”

(15 Marks, 250 words)





**DEFENCE SECY: ATTACKS WILL CONTINUE UNTIL SHIPPING ATTACKS STOP**

## Trump launches large-scale strikes on Yemen's Houthis, at least 31 killed

PHIL STEWART & MOHAMMED GHOBARI  
WASHINGTON, ADEN, MARCH 16

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump launched large-scale military strikes against Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis on Saturday over the group's attacks against Red Sea shipping, killing at least 31 people at the start of a campaign expected to last many days.

Trump also warned Iran, the Houthis' main backer, that it needed to immediately halt support for the group. He said if Iran threatened the US, "America will hold you fully accountable and, we won't be nice about it."

The unfolding strikes - which one US official told Reuters might continue for weeks - represent the biggest US military operation in the Middle East since Trump took office in January. It came as the US ramped up sanctions pressure on Tehran to bring it to the negotiating table over its nuclear program. "To all Houthi terrorists, YOUR TIME IS UP, AND YOUR ATTACKS MUST STOP. IF THEY DON'T, HELL WILL RAIN DOWN UPON YOU LIKE NOTHING YOU HAVE EVER SEEN BEFORE!" Trump posted on Truth Social platform.

At least 31 were killed and 101 others injured in the US strikes, mostly from women and children, Aneesa Al-Abadi, spokesperson for the Houthi-run health ministry said on Sunday. The Houthi political bureau described the attacks as a "war crime."

"(The attacks) terrified our women and children," one resident, Abdullahi Yafsa, told Reuters.



People gather on the rubble of a house hit by a US strike in Yemen's Saada city on Sunday, Reuters

Strikes also targeted Houthi military sites in Yemen's southwestern city of Taiz. Another strike on a power station in the town of Dahyan in Saada led to a power cut, Al-Masirah TV reported early Sunday. Dahyan is where Abdul Malik al-Houthi, the leader of Houthis, meets visitors. A Pentagon spokesperson said the Houthis have attacked US warships 174 times and commercial vessels 145 times since 2023. The Houthis say the attacks are in solidarity with Palestinians over Israel's war in Gaza with Hamas.

US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth told Fox News: "The minute the Houthis say we'll stop shooting at your ships, we'll stop shooting at your drones, this campaign will end, but until then it will be unrelenting."

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said the US government had "no authority, or business, dictating Iranian foreign policy." Meanwhile Houthis said they targeted US carrier USS Harry S Truman with ballistic missiles and drones without offering evidence.

**EXPLAINED**

### Fears of US-Iran conflict grow

AFTER DONALD Trump's Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth warned Iran over its backing for the Houthis, a key concern for observers is whether US might use military means against Tehran amid pressure from Israel. The US has already been putting pressure on Iran to bring it to the negotiating table over its nuclear programme. The top commander of Iran's Revolutionary Guards, Maj Gen Hossein Salami, told state media: "We warn our enemies that Iran will respond decisively and destructively if they take their threats into action."



Areas of control, May 5th 2021

■ Houthi rebels ■ Pro-government coalition  
■ Southern Transitional Council

Source: Polgeonow.com

The Economist

## Who are the Houthis?

The Houthis, also known as Ansar Allah (supporters of God), are an armed group that control most parts of Yemen, including the capital, Sanaa, and some of the western and northern areas close to Saudi Arabia.

The Houthis emerged in the 1990s but rose to prominence in 2014, when the group rebelled against Yemen's government, causing it to step down and sparking a crippling humanitarian crisis.

The group then spent years, with Iran's backing, fighting a military coalition led by Saudi Arabia. The two warring sides have also repeatedly tried to hold peace talks.

However, analysts say the Shia group should not be seen as an Iranian proxy. It has its own base, its own interests – and its own ambitions.

## Why are the Houthis attacking Red Sea ships?

The Houthis say their attacks on commercial and military ships with potential Israeli links are primarily aimed at pressuring Tel Aviv to end its war on Gaza. On November 18, the group took over a cargo ship called the Galaxy Leader, which they have since turned into a tourist attraction for Yemenis.



**SYLLABUS:**

**GS**

**2:**

International

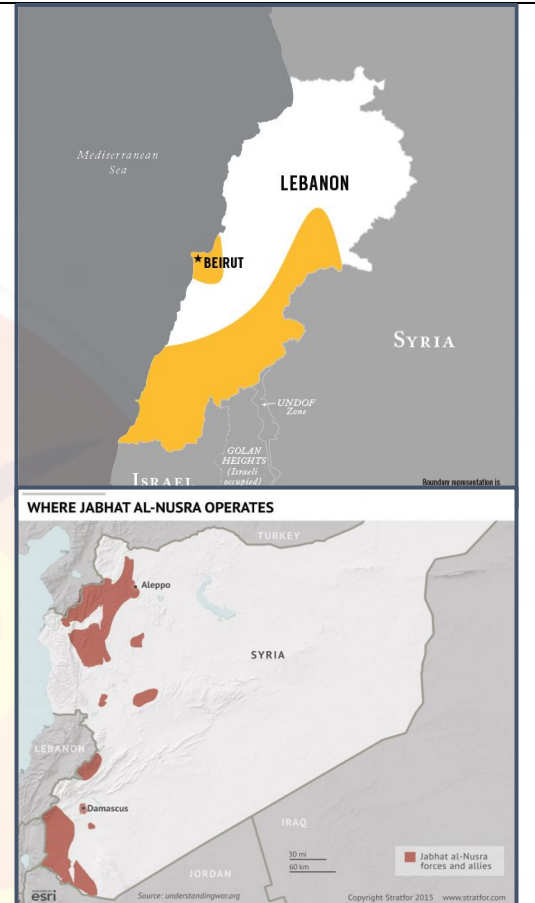
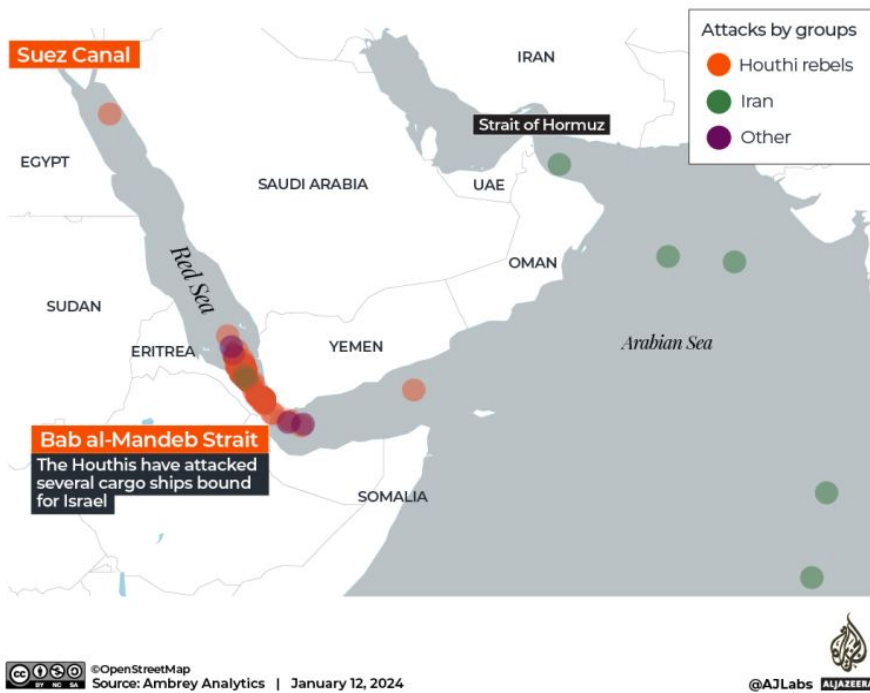
Relations

**Newspaper : Indian Express Page No: 14**

## ISRAEL'S WAR ON GAZA

### Attacks in the Red Sea

Houthi rebels have attacked ships in the Red Sea, disrupting maritime trade. The map shows attacks from November 19 to January 11.

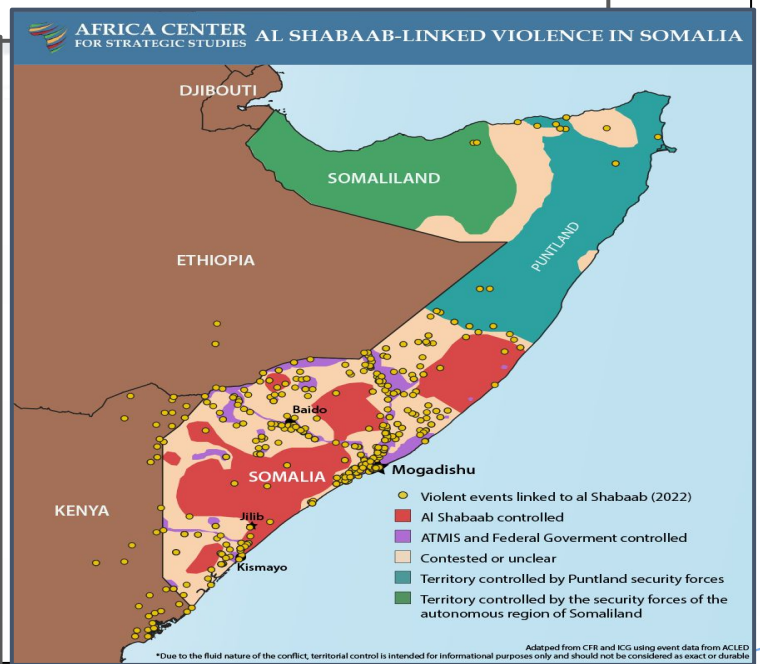
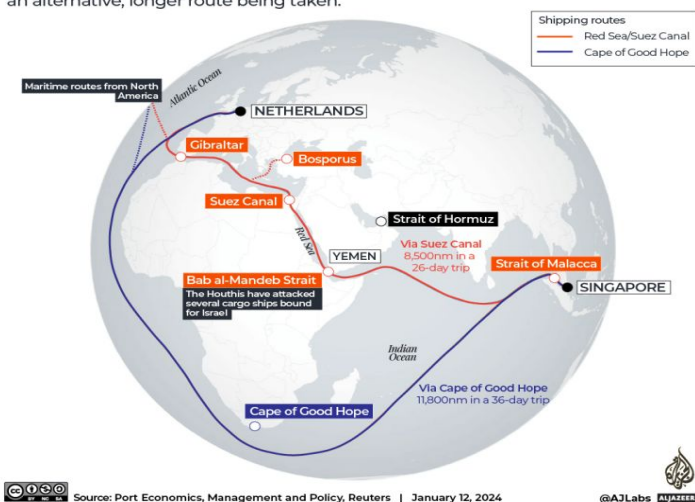


The Red Sea and Suez Canal account for [30 percent](#) of the world's container ship traffic and since the onset of attacks, several shipping companies have [said they will](#) divert ships across Africa instead.

## ECONOMY

### Alternative shipping route to avoid the Red Sea

Attacks by Yemen's Houthi rebels in the Red Sea have disrupted maritime trade along major shipping routes via the Suez Canal and Bab al-Mandeb Strait, leading to an alternative, longer route being taken.





**SYLLABUS:**

**GS**

**3:**

Environment;

Conservation

**Newspaper :** Indian Express **Page No:** 9

MADHAV NATIONAL Park in Shivpuri district, Madhya Pradesh, was declared a tiger reserve earlier this month, taking the tally of such reserves in the country to 58.

The latest tiger reserve is spread over an area of 1,651 sq km, and currently has six tigers, including a cub. It is hoped that the notification of the new reserve will aid the movement of tigers in the Ranthambore-Kuno-Madhav National Park corridor, identified as a promising habitat for a growing tiger population.

## Project Tiger

Although native elites in India had been hunting big game for millennia, it was during British rule that this activity reached an unprecedented scale. Even after Independence, big game hunting flourished

among Indian elites and tourists. For tigers, the apex predator of India's forests, this had huge consequences.

An alarm about declining tiger populations (also courtesy rapid deforestation to carve out farm land) was sounded in the 1960s. In 1969, the Indira Gandhi-led Union government banned the export of tiger skins. The very same year, the landmark 10th assembly of the International Union for Conservation of Nature in Delhi saw tigers being recognised as an endangered species, and a resolution being adopted to put a moratorium on their killing. The government also launched a task force to address the issue, headed by the chairman of the Indian Board for Wildlife, Karan Singh.

The recommendations of this task force paved the way for the launch of Project Tiger in April 1973, soon after the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, was passed. This project was meant to last only for six years initially, but has continued to date. It was



## Purpose of reserves

Project Tiger was launched with nine tiger reserves — Manas (Assam), Jim Corbett (now in Uttarakhand), Kanha (Madhya Pradesh), Palamau (now in Jharkhand), Ranthambore (Rajasthan), Simlipal (Odisha), Melghat (Maharashtra), Bandipur (Karnataka), and the Sundarbans (West Bengal).

These reserves were notified in areas where national parks already existed and were provided funding through a centrally sponsored scheme. The purpose of the reserves was to create a “core” — where felling, grazing, and movement of people, except those involved in conservation activities, was prohibited — and a “buffer zone”, where human activity would

**EXPL**  
**CONSE**



be limited, 'Joining the Dots', the report of the 2005 tiger task force under Sunita Narain, noted.

After amendments to the Wildlife Protection Act in 2005-06, the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), a statutory body, was created for oversight on the implementation of Project Tiger.

## National Tiger Conservation Authority

The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) is a statutory body under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change constituted under enabling provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, for strengthening tiger conservation, as per powers and functions assigned to it under the said Act. The NTCA conducts the All India Tiger Estimation to track the big cat numbers, usually in cycles of four years. As per the 5th cycle summary report of 2022, India has a minimum of 3,167 tigers and is home to more than 70% of the world's wild tiger population.





**SYLLABUS:**

**GS**

**3:**

**Environment;**

**Conservation**

**Newspaper : Indian Express Page No: 9**

Eastern Hills and Brahmaputra floodplains, and the Sundarbans.

Corbett, with 260 tigers, boasts the largest population of the big cat followed by Bandipur (150), Nagarhole (141), Bandhavgarh (135), Dudhwa (135), Mudumalai (113), Kanha (105), Kaziranga (104), Sundarbans (100), Tadoba-Andhari (97), Sathyamangalam (85), and Pench (77).

Among states, Madhya Pradesh with 785 has the biggest tiger population, followed by 563 in Karnataka, 560 in Uttarakhand, and 444 in Maharashtra.

## Tiger distribution

India is home to an estimated 3,681

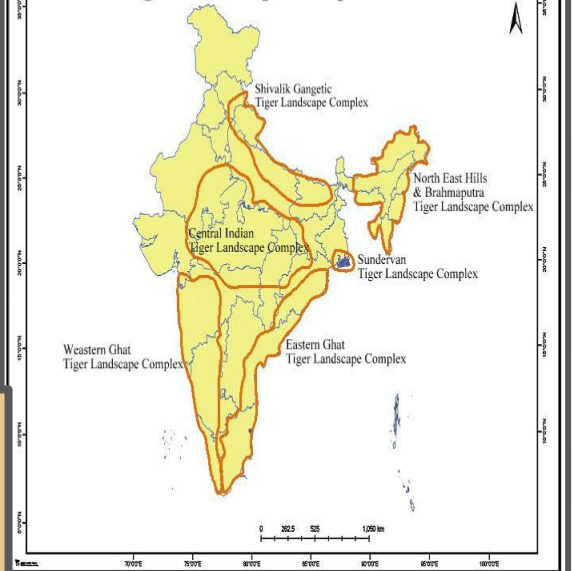
**IN  
ED  
ATION**

tigers (range 3167-3925), as per the last population estimation released in 2022-23. The big cats occupy around 89,000 sq km area, as

per NTCA. That is equivalent to the area of Jordan, and larger than that of Austria.

Tigers are broadly distributed across the following "landscapes" — Shivalik Hills and Gangetic Plains, Central Indian Highlands and Eastern Ghats, Western Ghats, North

## Tiger Landscape Complex In India



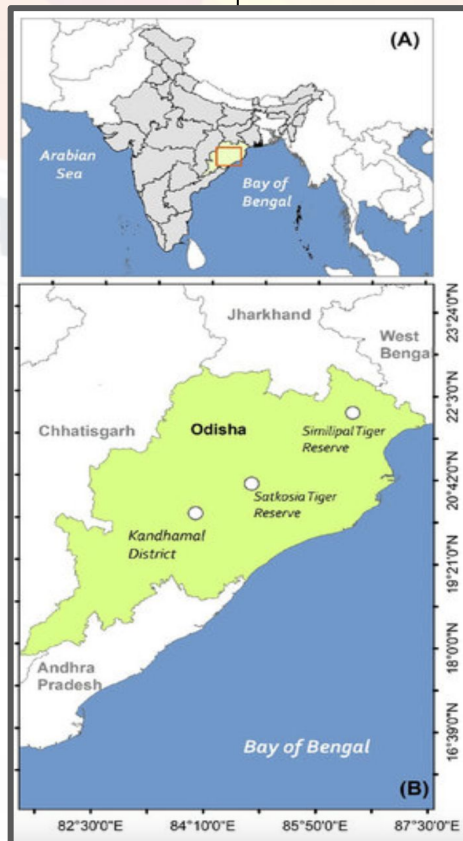
## Areas of concern

Today, there are 26 tiger reserves with a population of more than 50 tigers.

In the remaining 27 reserves, there are concerns about the tiger density. In fact, there were some 16 reserves with either no tigers, or male-only populations, or fewer than five tigers, as per the 2022 report. These reserves were in Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Telangana, and Odisha.

Of particular concern is the situation across Telangana, Odisha, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, where the tiger population has either remained static, declined, or even gone locally extinct, as is the case of the Satkosia reserve in Odisha.

The research published in *Science* had highlighted that poor socio-economic conditions, lack of political stability, insurgencies, the pressures of mining, development projects, and competition for forest resources had all contributed to this situation.

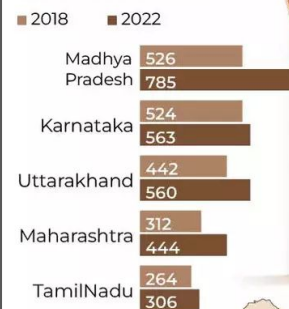


## The Tiger Count

Tiger numbers in India:

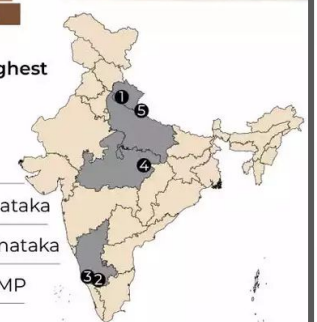


### States with highest tiger numbers



### Reserves with highest tiger population

- 1 Jim Corbett, Uttarakhand
- 2 Bandipur, Karnataka
- 3 Nagarhole, Karnataka
- 4 Bandhavgarh, MP
- 5 Dudhwa, UP



A recent study published in the journal *Science* said that between 2006 and 2018, the area occupied by tigers has gone up by 30%, and more interestingly, some six crore people lived in around 45% of the area occupied by tigers.

The study revealed that only 25% of the tiger habitats were in the core areas of tiger reserves, while buffer areas accounted for 20% of the big cat's habitat.





**SYLLABUS:**

**GS**

**2:**

**International**

**Relations**

**Newspaper : The Hindu Page No: 12**

**Dinakar Peri**  
NEW DELHI

**G**lobal challenges and intelligence-sharing mechanisms, as well as immigration and extradition, were among a host of issues discussed at the fourth conference of global intelligence and security chiefs hosted by National Security Adviser Ajit Doval on Sunday. The meeting had over 28 attendees, according to official sources.

The conference is usually held a day before the annual three-day Raisina Dialogue, which is scheduled this year from March 17 to 19. This year's conference and the Dialogue are being held amid the global uncertainties caused by U.S. President Donald Trump's policies and the resultant ripple effects in major issues across the globe.

"The top points on the agenda were counterterrorism, Indo-Pacific cooperation, global security and intel-sharing mechanisms,



**Building ties:** U.S. Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard met PM Modi last month during his visit to Washington DC. AFP

immigration and extradition, and transnational crimes, narcotics and terror funding," an official source in the know said. Intelligence sharing on transnational crimes and counterterrorism were the key issues for India, another official said.

Around 20 countries were represented at the conference, including the U.S., Canada, Australia, and Russia, it was learnt. U.S. Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard attended the meeting and reportedly also held talks

with Mr. Doval. She was also scheduled to speak at the Raisina Dialogue.

"I am Wheels Up on a multi-nation trip to the Indo-Pacific, a region I know very well having grown up as a child of the Pacific. I'll be going to Japan, Thailand, and India, with a brief stop in France en route back to DC. Building strong relationships, understanding, and open lines of communication are vital to achieving President Trump's objectives of peace, freedom and prosperity..." Ms. Gabbard

posted on X on March 11 before beginning her trip.

The chiefs of the Five Eyes countries, comprising Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the U.S., were all present, though it was not clear if a separate meeting of the Five Eyes chiefs with Mr. Doval was in the offing.

The visit of Canadian spy chief Daniel Rogers has come as India looks to reset its with Ottawa after a deep freeze in bilateral relationship over Hardeep Singh Nijjar murder case.

The conference is organised by the country's external intelligence agency, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) that reports to Mr. Doval.

The meet was held for the first time in April 2022 a day before the start of the Raisina Dialogue, India's flagship conference on geopolitics and geo-strategy, organised by the Ministry of External Affairs in collaboration with the Observer Research Foundation.

**SECRET - AUS/CAN/N.Z./U.K./U.S. EYES ONLY**

■ **1946:** U.S. and UK agree unrestricted exchange of intelligence on communications of foreign nations

**United States:** Lead agency – National Security Agency (NSA)



**UK:** Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ)



**Canada:** Communications Security Establishment (CSE)



**Australia:** Australian Signals Directorate (ASD)



**New Zealand:** Govt. Communications Security Bureau (GCSB)



■ **Cold War:** Canada joins alliance in 1948, followed by Australia and New Zealand in 1956





# What are Menhirs?

**SYLLABUS:** GS 1 : Art & Culture  
**Newspaper :** Indian Express **Page No:** 9

THE MUDUMAL megalithic menhirs in Telangana's Narayanpet district are set to be the second UNESCO World Heritage Site in the state, and one of the six Indian sites to be added to the tentative list by the World Heritage Centre in 2025.

## What are menhirs?

A menhir is a standing or an upright stone usually tapered at the top. It is man-made, in that it is sculpted and placed by humans, and usually quite large – the largest surviving menhir, the Grand Menhir Brisé or the Great Broken Menhir in Brittany, France, once stood 20.6 m tall.

The term 'menhir' is derived from the Brittonic "*maen*" meaning "stone", and "*hîr*" meaning "long", and entered the archaeological lexicon in the late 18th century. It was first used by French military officer and Celticist antiquarian Théophile Corret de la Tour d'Auvergne.



## Why were they erected?

The ones in Europe were originally associated with the Beaker culture who lived during the late Neolithic and early Bronze Age – roughly 4,800 to 3,800 before present (BP). But the oldest European menhirs are today dated to as early as 7,000 BP. The ones in Mudumal, dated to roughly 3,500 to 4,000 BP, are the oldest known menhirs in India.

Menhirs can either be found alone, or as a part of a larger complex of prehistoric megaliths, simply, large stone structures. While the exact purpose of many mega-

lithic sites are debated, they likely served ceremonial functions. Some were markers of graves, while others might have served some astronomical purposes.

The Mudumal site has been described as a "megalithic astronomical observatory" by the UNESCO dossier. "... Some menhirs are aligned with the rising and setting sun during the summer and winter solstices, suggesting their use as an ancient observatory," the dossier says.

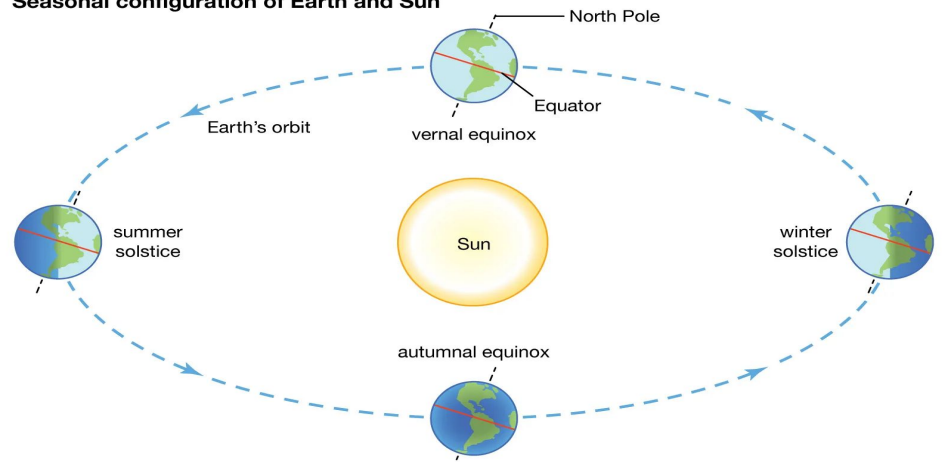
Over time, the Mudumal menhirs became closely associated with local legend, with "one particular menhir being worshipped as Goddess Yellamma".

## Why do they deserve UNESCO recognition?

■ They give an insight into the ingenuity of early humans. Not only do these tonnes-heavy stones need a deep understanding of physics to be sculpted and moved to precise locations, their placement indicates how much early humans knew about astronomy and solstices.

■ The effort taken to build these megalithic structures tells us that they were undoubtedly meaningful to the people who built them. This in turn can help better understand the cultures that have left no written material for the historical record.

Seasonal configuration of Earth and Sun



© Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.

# AI being used for collusion: CCI chief

**MANU KAUSHIK**

NEW DELHI, MARCH 16

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) is being used for “collusion” by sections of Indian industry, Ravneet Kaur, Chairperson of the Competition Commission of India (CCI), said on Sunday, adding that the regulator would equip itself to deal with it.

“Companies are using AI to coordinate prices without explicit agreements, and are engaging in

algorithmic discrimination under the garb of dynamic pricing,” Kaur said. According to her, the rapid adoption of AI has become a driving force in modern markets. “Through the use of AI, we are seeing that there could be potential ways of collusion which don’t require human intervention. The regulators need to be up to date, be abreast of these developments, and its implications for competition,” she said.

The CCI chief added that today, market power is about network ef-

fects, data and platform reach. “The innovation in technology and emergence of new business models are happening at an astronomical pace. At the same time, regulations need to encourage innovation while ensuring that we have a dynamic and proactive approach in balancing innovation with competition,” Kaur said. In 2024 alone, 42 antitrust cases were placed before the commission, and, prima facie, violations were found and detailed investigations ordered in eight cases. **FE**

## Competition Commission of India

The **Competition Commission of India (CCI)**, constituted under the **Competition Act, 2002** serves as India's principal competition regulator. It was officially formed on October 14, 2003, and operational since **May 2009**, the CCI functions as a **statutory body** under the **Ministry of Corporate Affairs** with its headquarters in **New Delhi**.

- The Competition Commission of India (CCI) was established in response to the **economic liberalization** of 1991, with a mandate to enforce competition laws, foster a competitive market, and prevent anti-competitive practices.
- Replacing the outdated **MRTTP Act of 1969**, the CCI aligns India's competition laws with global standards, following recommendations from the **Raghavan Committee**.
- **Objectives:** Preventing anti-competitive agreements, curbing abuse of dominance, promoting healthy competition, safeguarding consumer interests, and ensuring freedom of trade.





**Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the Global Hunger Index (GHI):**

1. In the 2024 GHI report, India was ranked 105th out of 127 countries.
2. A higher GHI score indicates a better hunger situation in a country.

**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**

**Q2. Consider the following statements regarding the constitution of India:**

1. Article 29(1) of the Indian Constitution grants linguistic and cultural minorities the right to conserve their distinct language, script, or culture.
2. Article 343 states that Hindi shall be the sole official language of India, with no provisions for the continued use of English.

**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 Red Sea:**

1. It connects to the Mediterranean Sea through the Strait of Gibraltar.
2. The Red Sea lies between the Arabian Peninsula and the northeastern part of Africa.

**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: b**

**Q4. Consider the following statements regarding India's tiger reserves:**

1. Madhav National Park in Madhya Pradesh was recently declared India's 58th tiger reserve.
2. Madhya Pradesh now has the highest number of tiger reserves among all Indian states.

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

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 and 2

**Answer: c**

**Q5. The "Five Eyes" alliance is an intelligence-sharing network comprising which of the following groups of countries?**

- a) USA, UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand
- b) USA, France, Germany, UK, Canada
- c) USA, Russia, China, UK, Australia
- d) USA, India, Japan, Australia, Canada

**Answer: a**





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