



VAJIRAM & RAVI
Institute for IAS Examination

The Analyst

CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout

24th May 2025



North East: Economic Imperatives



CONTEXT: Increasing focus upon the region

North East: Background

Pre-Independence Era

- **Ahom Kingdom (13th–19th Century):**
 - Shans
 - British intervention (1818)
 - Treaty of Yandaboo (1826)
 - Ahom kingdom annexed by British by 1838
- **British Colonial Rule:**
 - Assam initially part of Bengal Province
 - "East Bengal & Assam" (1905–1921) → reverted
 - Hill areas (Khasi, Jaintia, Naga, Lushai) forcibly merged into Assam Province
- **Migration & Tensions:**
 - Large-scale immigration from Bengal
 - Demographic shifts
 - Muslim League vs. Congress rivalry over Assam's future

North East: Economic Challenges

1. Infrastructure Deficit

Power Sector:

- **Potential:**
 - 38,000 MW hydro (30% of India)
 - 62,000 MW solar potential
- **Challenges:**
 - Per capita availability: 570.9 kWh
 - Hydropower hurdles: Funding gaps, land issues, geological risks

Road Connectivity:

- Reliance on 22-km **Siliguri Corridor**
- Intra-regional roads
- Climate risks: Floods, landslides

2. Financial Resource Deficit

- Dependence on central funds
- High debt-to-GSDP ratios

3. Educational Deficit

- School infra, teacher, dropouts

4. Financial Inclusion Gaps

- **Banking Penetration:**
 - Low credit-to-GDP ratio (0.31)
 - Limited rural cooperatives

5. Cross-Border Migration Impacts

- **Economic Strains:**
 - Land disputes, environmental degradation
 - Pressure on urban infrastructure
- **Social-Security Issues:**
 - Ethnic tensions, smuggling
 - Welfare burden

North East: Strategies for Economic Growth

1. Green Infrastructure Development

- Urban green spaces
- Restore wetlands
- Rehabilitate floodplains



North East: Economic Imperatives



CONTEXT: Increasing focus upon the region

2. Renewable Energy Push

- **Potential:**
 - 1,28,962 MW untapped capacity (current: 4,834 MW)
 - Potential 3.4 million jobs (solar/wind sectors) – CEEE
- **Suggestions:**
 - Small hydro projects
 - PPPs, tax incentives & green bonds
 - Microgrids

3. Ecotourism Promotion

- Low-impact wildlife tourism
- State-specific campaigns for adventure tourism branding

4. Education & Skill Development

- **Himachal Model:**
 - Community participation, teacher incentives
- **NE Adaptation:**
 - Locals in school infra maintenance
 - Remote-area incentives for teachers
 - Cross-party political commitment

5. Financial Inclusion

- Digital banking in remote areas
- Financial literacy programs

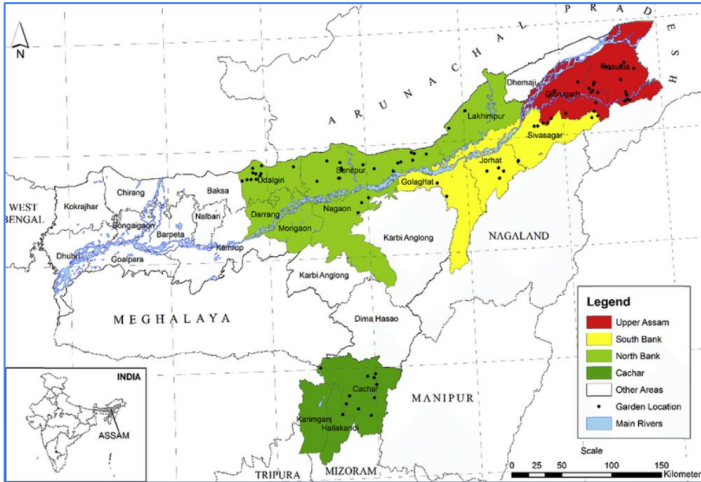
North East: Statewise Strategies

Assam

- **Tea Industry**
 - ~5% of Assam's GSDP
 - **Challenges:**
 - i. Stagnant per-capita tea consumption (750 gm/yr)
 - ii. Rising labour wages
 - iii. 95% small landholdings
 - **Suggestions:**
 - i. Contract farming for cost efficiency
 - ii. 'Brand Assam Tea'
- **Horticulture**
 - Cold storage infrastructure
 - Crop-specific soil health cards
- **MSMEs** – Handloom, sericulture, handicrafts
 - **Export infrastructure** (trade centres, cold chains, river ports)
 - **Product-specific parks** (Tea, Bamboo, Food, Pharma)
 - **Simplify GST rules** for e-commerce MSMEs
 - **Digital initiatives**



CONTEXT: Increasing focus upon the region



Nagaland: Apiculture Potential

- Ideal climate: Moderate temps, distributed rainfall
- Diverse flora
- Organic honey potential

Recommendations

- **Training:** Govt-NGO collab
- Beekeeping cooperatives for equipment
- Microloans, subsidies
- **Quality Control:** Standardized processing
- "Brand Nagaland Honey"

Sikkim: Organic Farming

- **Challenges**
 - Lower yields
 - Costs (imported organic fertilizers)
 - Lack of premium pricing
- **Recommendations**
 - ICAR collab
 - "Sikkim Organic" branding

Manipur: Ethnic Conflict & Social Harmony

- Meitei demand ST → Kuki fears marginalization
- Perceived political bias favoring Meiteis
- Illegal immigration, drug trade & poppy

Suggestions

1. **Equitable Resource Allocation:** legis seats
2. **Border Security:** coop with Myanmar
3. **Local Governance**

Mizoram: Pisciculture Development

Current Potential

- Ideal freshwater conditions
- **Constraints:**
 - Shortage of quality fingerlings
 - Weak market linkages
 - farmer training in modern techniques

Recommendations

- Hatcheries: local fingerling production
- Post-Harvest Infra
- Training on aquaculture tech, disease
- Sustainable fisheries policy

Arunachal Pradesh

- **Land Acquisition & Forest Clearances**
- Single Approval Body: land, forest, project
- Border-Specific SOPs
- Strategic Project Exemptions



North East: Economic Imperatives



CONTEXT: Increasing focus upon the region

Meghalaya & Tripura – Bamboo Potential

- **Bamboo Resources:**
 - India: 30% of global bamboo
 - NE India: 28% of India's bamboo stock
 - Tripura: 23% of state's area
 - Meghalaya: 6% of India's stock
- **Untapped Potential:** Only 4% share in global bamboo market
- **Recommendations:**
 - Large-scale plantations
 - Value-Added Processing: flooring, furniture, handicrafts, panels
 - Financial Support
 - Infra: Bamboo clusters
 - Policy & Institutions
 - Eco-Branding: as sustainable

Prime Minister's Development Initiative for North East Region (PM-DevINE)

- Initial allocation of Rs 1,500 crore will be made initially in 8 projects
- Will fund infrastructure, in the spirit of PM GatiShakti, and social development projects based on felt needs
- Will be implemented through the North-Eastern Council
- Will not be a substitute for existing central and state sponsored schemes

MAINS PRACTISE QUESTION

Despite its rich natural resources and strategic location, North-East India continues to face persistent economic challenges. Examine the major economic challenges faced by North-East India. Suggest a multi-pronged strategy for sustainable and inclusive economic development in the region.



CONTEXT: Misuse for Publicity

Need

- **Access to Justice**
 - Marginalized groups
- **Protects Fundamental Rights**
 - **Hussainara Khatoon v. State of Bihar, 1979**
 - **Bandhua Mukti Morcha (1984)**
 - **Olga Tellis (1985)**
- **Ensures Government Accountability**
 - **Vineet Narain case**
- **Environmental Safeguards**
 - **MC Mehta (1987):** Closure of polluting industries near Taj Mahal
 - **Vellore Citizens' Welfare Forum (1996):** Remediation of industrial waste
- **Social Reforms**
 - **Vishaka Guidelines**
 - Gender justice – **Shayara Bano**
- **Judicial Innovation**
 - *Suo moto* PILs address urgent issues (e.g., migrant crisis during COVID-19)
- **Strengthens Democracy**

Factors Contributing to Growth of PIL in India

- **Constitutional Framework**
 - Written Constitution with FR & DPSP
- **Progressive Social Legislation**
 - Bonded labor, minimum wages, environment
 - Courts compel executive action for enforcement

- **Relaxed Locus Standi**
 - public-spirited individuals/NGOs
 - suo moto cognizance based on news
- **Judicial Expansion of Fundamental Rights**
 - Article 21
- **Pro-Poor Judicial Innovations**
 - **Asiad Workers Case:** Direct access to SC for minimum wage violations
- **Court-Appointed Commissions**
 - Helps weak petitioners by gathering evidence

Issues with PIL

- **Misuse for Personal Gain**
 - Frivolous/fraudulent cases
 - Private interests disguised as public concerns
- **Judicial Activism vs. Overreach**
 - Theory of Vacuum filling & Social Want
 - Overstepping mandate
- **Overuse & Dilution of Seriousness**
 - Trivialize genuine cases
 - Not first resort for every public grievance
- **Resource Strain & Delayed Justice**
 - Pendency
 - Limited judges/courts
- **Harassment Tool**
 - Low court fees



CONTEXT: Misuse for Publicity

Judicial Observations

1. Subhash Kumar vs. State of Bihar

- Ex-employee against former company - alleging wrongful practices
- PIL misused for personal vendetta
- Must **verify absence of malice/publicity** behind PIL claims

2. Chhetriya Pradushan Sangharsh Samiti vs. State of U.P.

- Land dispute disguised as environmental PIL
- Complaints filed after failed property reacquisition
- Emphasized "**clean intentions**" requirement

3. S.P. Gupta vs. Union of India

- **Restrictions on PIL:**
 - Cannot be filed for socio-economic crimes
 - Prohibited in cases involving offences against women

4. Common Cause vs. Union of India (2008)

- PIL sought judicial directive to enact Road Safety Act
- **Cannot compel legislative action**
- beyond judicial ambit

MAINS PRACTISE QUESTION

Public Interest Litigation has emerged as a powerful tool for social justice in India. Critically examine the need for PIL, the issues arising from its misuse, and key judicial observations that have shaped its evolution.



Electric Vehicles: More Polluting?



SYLLABUS: GS Paper 3: Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation
Newspaper : The Indian Express; **Page No :** 15

Background

Benefits of Electric Vehicles

- less maintenance
- alternative to ICE
- intensity of GHG emissions
- geopolitical tensions affecting oil prices
- future innovation in mobility
- regional industries
- homegrown manufacturing
- Employment – production, charging
- sustainable transportation solutions – rising urbanization

Challenges of Electric Vehicles

- Charging Infrastructure
- Slow Charging: 12 hours for slow charger
- Stable Policy For EV Production
 - capital intensive sector
 - long term planning to break even
- Technological Challenges: batteries, semiconductors, controllers
- Infrastructural Support
 - AC versus DC charging stations
 - grid stability
 - range anxiety
- Import of lithium and cobalt

Govt Initiatives

1. FAME India Scheme

- **Phase I (2015–19)**
 - Focus: Demand generation, tech advancement, pilot projects, charging infra
- **Phase II (2019–ongoing)**
 - Focus: Public/shared transport electrification

2. PLI Scheme

- domestic manufacturing of advanced auto tech (AAT)
- Target: \$5 B investments in 5 years

3. Electric Mobility Promotion Scheme (2024)

- Focus: E-2W & E-3W adoption

4. Battery Swapping Policy

- Standardized battery specs (2W/3W)
- Battery safety, ID tracking, recycling norms

5. Other Key Initiatives

- **Tax Benefits:**
 - GST cut: EVs (12%→5%), charging stations (18%→5%)
 - Customs duty waiver for Li-ion cell machinery
 - Road tax waivers to reduce EV costs
- **Registration & Permits:**
 - Green license plates for EVs
 - No permits require



Electric Vehicles: More Polluting?



SYLLABUS: GS Paper 3: Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation
Newspaper : The Indian Express; **Page No :** 15

Decoding the News

EVs and Air Pollution

- Heavier EVs (due to batteries) cause more tyre degradation
 - a. EVs are 15-20% heavier than petrol
- Microplastics/nanoplastics into air
- Faster acceleration → More tyre stress → More microplastics

Tyre Degradation Process

- **Two types of particles released:**
 - Small (1-10 μm): Airborne pollutants
 - Large (>100 μm): Settle on ground
- **Primary causes:**
 - Sudden braking/potholes → Smaller particles

- Gradual wear → Larger particles

Study Findings (TIFR, IIT-B, Columbia University)

- Heavier & faster EVs → More small particles (airborne pollution)
- Road quality improvement reduces large particles but not small ones

Policy & Industry Responses Needed

- Current air quality standards (PM_{2.5}/PM₁₀) don't cover tyre microplastics
- **Solutions:**
 - Stronger EV tyres (R&D)
 - Emission standards for non-exhaust pollutants
 - Tech fixes: Capture tyre fragments at source

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SYLLABUS: GS Paper 3: Environment

Newspaper : The Indian Express; **Page No :** 7

Background

COUNTER-CONTINGENCY PLAN

CHINESE DAMS

- > China plans to construct a **60,000 MW hydropower project on the Yarlung Tsangpo at Medog** on Arunachal Pradesh's border ostensibly to push for carbon emission reduction & attain carbon neutrality by 2060
- > Dams also to **utilise the freshwater** in water scarce southern China
- > It has also been reported that **China plans to divert Brahmaputra water** from the project to its northern arid region
- > Construction underway - **360 MW hydro project at Gyatsa & 560 MW hydro project at Jiexu**
- > 3 more - **640 MW project at Dagu, 710 MW project at Bayu & 800 MW project at Zhongyu** - in advance stage of planning



CONCERNS

- > Dam planned at Medog at Arunachal Pradesh border **may adversely impact the lower riparian states**, particularly India, including environmental consequences & creating artificial floods
- > Diversion of water could **strain India's agricultural need in the northeast region**
- > Mismanagement could lead to **overflows and floods in India**
- > Dams on Himalayan rivers before they reach India **may causes losses & difficulties for India & Bangladesh**

INDIA'S PLAN

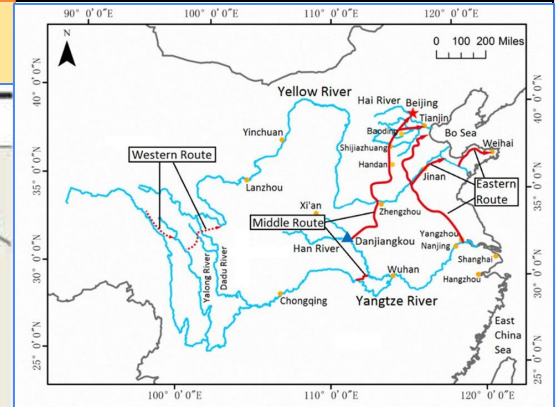
- > **11,000 MW Upper Siang** multipurpose storage project in Arunachal Pradesh
- > Project feasibility report **submitted on**

December 30, 2022

- > **3 stalled hydro projects** in Arunachal Pradesh for possible allocation to NHPC after recommendations of

evaluation committee and in-principle approval by ministry of power

- > **2,880 MW Dibang** multipurpose Project



- Less lean season flows - techno-economic feasibility of the Lower Siang Hydroelectric Project
- Economy and infrastructure of Arunachal Pradesh
- Employment, Fish breeding, water transport, water sports, revenue from hydro

Need

- China plans to divert Yarlung River
- Arunachal and Assam are heavily dependent
- Large volume of water storage by China at the Great Bend Project - artificial floods during monsoon in Arunachal Pradesh and Assam

Concerns

- Environmental & social impact
- Threat to ecosystems, biodiversity
- Displacement of Adi Tribe
- Forest Conservation Act exemptions - strategic projects within 100 km of borders



RBI Surplus Transfer

SYLLABUS: GS Paper 3: Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development

Newspaper: The Indian Express; **Page No :** 13

Background

ECF

- methodology for level of risk provisions and profit distribution
- Section 47 of the RBI Act 1934 - central bank is required to pay the balance of its profits
- **Old ECF:**
 - developed in 2014-15
 - operationalised in 2015-16
 - Bimal Jalan Committee - to review - to propose a suitable surplus distribution policy

Revised ECF

- Review every 5 years
- Targets also include realised equity
- Economic capital - capital, reserves, risk provisions and revaluation balances
- Total economic capital - 20.8% to 25.4% of the RBI's balance sheet
- Contingent Risk Buffer (CRB) - 4.5-7.5%
- If realised equity > required levels =>> entire net income of RBI will be transferred to the govt

SURPLUS TRANSFERRED TO GOVERNMENT

Year	Dividend transfer
2018-19	₹1,76,051 Cr
2019-20	₹57,128 Cr
2020-21	₹99,122 Cr
2021-22	₹30,307 Cr
2022-23	₹87,416 Cr
2023-24	₹2,10,874 Cr
2024-25	₹2,68,590 Cr

Source: RBI

The record dividend payout for 2024-25 was likely on account of robust earnings of the RBI led by large exchange gains from its dollar sales to support the falling rupee and higher revenue earned on foreign assets due to rise in interest rates in the international markets.

The RBI's gross dollar sales surged to \$399 billion in FY25 from \$153 billion in FY24. The pick-up in gross dollar sales was led by Balance of Payments turning negative in FY25, due to slowdown in capital inflows, she said. The RBI's foreign currency assets rose by 1.3 per cent year-on-year in FY25 (till March 28), led by revaluation gains. As a percentage of total assets, for-

foreign currency assets account for 64.4 per cent share and government securities 20.7 per cent share. Around 85.6 per cent of foreign currency assets are held as securities and the rest as deposits with other central banks and the Bank of International Settlements (BIS), Sengupta said.

7.5 per cent. The increase in CRB to 7.5 per cent for 2024-25 reduced the dividend.

The RBI's CRB is the country's savings for a 'rainy day' (a financial stability crisis) which the central bank consciously maintained in view of its role as Lender of Last Resort (LoLR). It is the component of the RBI's economic capital required to cover its monetary and financial stability, credit and operational risks.

"This is a prudent move given rising upward pressure on US treasury (UST) yields which could increase revaluation loss on forex exchange (FX) reserves. Upward pressure on UST yields could persist due to US fiscal risk concerns," Sengupta said.



SYLLABUS: GS Paper 2: Governance

Newspaper : The Indian Express; **Page No :** 13

Objectives & Management

- Bridge academia-industry gap, enhance employability
- Supports Atmanirbhar Bharat
- Administered by: MCA via online portal

Internship Structure

- **Sectors Covered:** 25+ (Pharma, Auto, Banking, Energy)
- **Additional Support:**
 - ₹6,000 one-time incidental grant
 - Insurance under PMJJBY & PMSBY



PM Internship Scheme 2024

Providing internship opportunities to 1 crore youth in top 500 companies over 5 years

Launch Date: October 3, 2024

Internship Opportunities: 1 crore youth across 500 top companies

Monthly Stipend: ₹5,000 / month for selected interns for one year

Portal Opening for Candidates: October 12, 2024

Online Portal: pminternship.mca.gov.in



Digital Implementation

- **Online Process:** Application → Shortlisting → Virtual onboarding
- **Remote Work:** Training/mentorship accessible nationwide

Post-Pilot Enhancements

- **Portal Upgrades:**
 - Geotagging of companies
 - Apply for 3 internships pan-India
- **Monitoring & Outreach:**
 - Performance tracking for states/UTs
 - Awareness drives at colleges/Rozgar Melas
 - Multilingual helpline & grievance redressal

BASED ON the review of the two pilot phases carried out for the PM Internship Scheme (PMIS), the Ministry of Corporate Affairs is planning to undertake certain tweaks in the scheme. Work is currently underway for preparing an internal note that will be sent for a final approval from the Union Cabinet soon, a government source said.

Companies beyond the top 500 have shown the intent to participate in the scheme, the source said, adding that industry chambers such as CII and Ficci have also reached out to the government extending their support for the proposed changes.

Under the scheme, an amount of Rs 4,500 is provided per month by the Government of India to selected candidates through Direct Benefit Transfer, with an additional Rs 500 offset provided by the company's CSR (corporate social responsibility).



SYLLABUS: GS Paper 2: Mechanisms, Laws, Institutions and Bodies constituted for the Protection and Betterment of Vulnerable Sections

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

What makes POCSO comprehensive?

- Confidentiality of Identity
- Burden of Proof
- Gender Neutral
- Comprehensive spectrum of criminal sexual offences
- No time limit for reporting
- Child Protection as a collective responsibility

WHAT IS POCSO?

PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AGAINST SEXUAL OFFENCES

A law that came into enforcement in 2012

POCSO protects children - Boys & Girls below 18 years of age



From sexual offences that covers a range of sexual activities such as



POCSO CALLS FOR

Severe punishment if protectors are perpetrators of sexual offences



Police, parents, guardians etc.

Mandatory reporting by all citizens of any case of sexual abuse to the nearest police station



Child friendly procedures to reduce trauma of the victims



aarambh
Supporting Communities to Safeguard Children

The Supreme Court on Friday upheld the conviction of a man for sexually assaulting a minor girl in 2018 but refused to sentence him after noting that they were now married, had a daughter and the victim would be the worst sufferer if the convict was jailed again.

A bench of Justices A S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan said in its judgement: "We exercise our extraordinary jurisdiction under Article 142 of the Constitution of India and hold that though the accused stands convicted, he will not undergo sentence...".

The court said: "In law, we have no option but to sentence the accused and send him to jail for undergoing the minimum punishment prescribed by the statute. However, in this case, the society, the family of the victim and the legal system have done enough injustice to the victim. She has been subjected to enough trauma and agony. We do not want to add to the injustice done to the victim by sending her husband to jail. We as Judges, cannot shut our eyes to these harsh realities."



Q1. Regarding the PM-DevINE (Prime Minister's Development Initiative for North East Region), consider the following statements:

1. It is a central sector scheme focused on infrastructure and social development in the North Eastern Region.
2. The scheme is implemented by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj.
3. It replaces all existing central schemes operating in the NER.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 3 only
- b) 1 only
- c) 2 only
- d) 2 and 3 only

Answer: b

Q2. Consider the following statements:

1. FAME India Phase II primarily supports private Electric Vehicles (EV) purchases across all vehicle segments.
2. PLI for Advanced Automotive Technology seeks to attract investments of over \$100 billion in the EV sector.

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: d

Q3. Regarding the Economic Capital Framework (ECF) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), consider the following statements:

1. RBI must transfer its entire annual surplus to the Consolidated Fund of India.
2. The old ECF, operationalised in 2015-16, was reviewed by the Bimal Jalan Committee.

3. Contingent Risk Buffer range is fixed between 45% and 75% of the balance sheet of RBI.

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

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

Answer: a

Q4. Consider the following factors that have contributed to the rise of Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in India:

1. Presence of Directive Principles without Fundamental Rights.
2. Relaxation of locus standi allowed NGOs to file petitions.
3. Judicial expansion of Article 21 of the Constitution of India.
4. Courts can act suo moto based on media reports.

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

- a) Only One
- b) Only Two
- c) Only Three
- d) All four

Answer: c

Q5. Regarding the Prime Minister's Internship Scheme, consider the following statements:

1. It is implemented by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.
2. It provides monthly stipend support under the National Career Service portal.
3. Internship experience under the scheme is counted as work experience for UPSC Civil Services Exam eligibility.

Which of the statements given above is/are NOT correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 1 only
- c) 3 only
- d) 1 and 3 only

Answer: c





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