



VAJIRAM & RAVI
Institute for IAS Examination

The Analyst

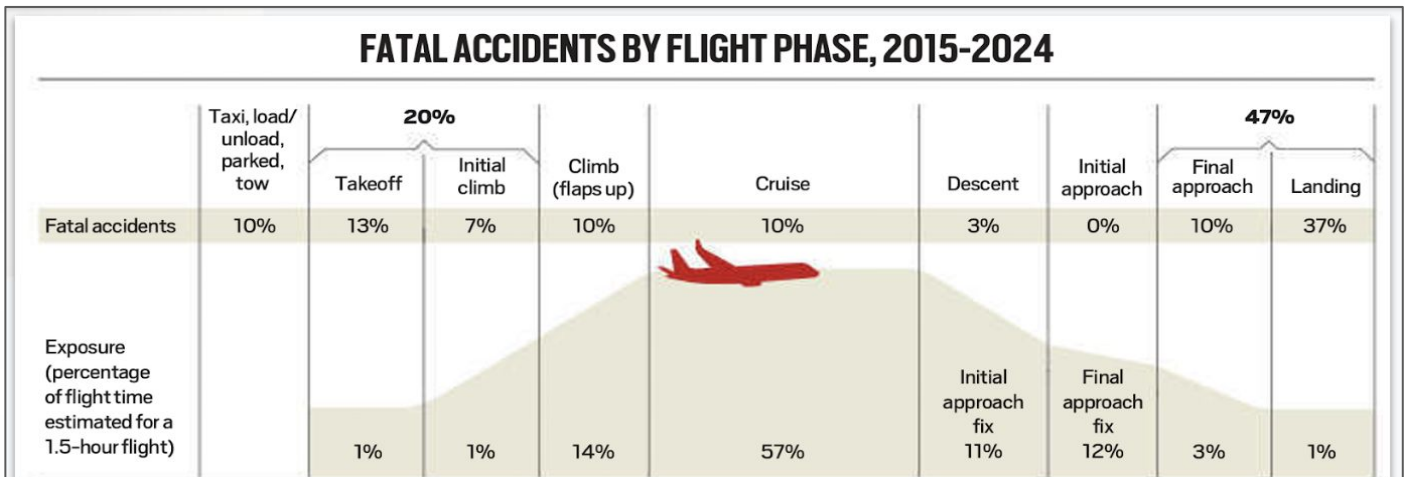
CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout

13th June 2025



CONTEXT: Data show that the majority of all aviation accidents occur during the short window of time when the aircraft is taking off or landing.

Ahmedabad Crash: **Most Risk-Prone Phases in Aviation**



Nature of this Disaster

Man-made Disaster	Aviation accident caused by technical failure , human error , or both
Urban Disaster	Occurred in a densely populated area , risking secondary disaster
Technological Disaster	Involves modern transport systems with complex machinery

Ahmedabad Crash: **Why Are Takeoff and Landing Riskier Than Cruise?**

1. Proximity to the Ground

- No altitude buffer = **little time** to recover from failure.
- Less room for **maneuvers** in case of emergency.
- Even a small error → crash risk.

2. High Workload for Pilots

- During these phases, pilots are:
 - Communicating with ATC,
 - Adjusting speed and flaps,
 - Monitoring engine power and navigation.
- The **cognitive load** is highest

3. Weather Sensitivity

- Wind shear, crosswinds, poor visibility, and storms **impact control** more near the ground.
- Rain or fog = runway friction issues → **skidding** risk.

4. Mechanical Failures Show Up Early

- Many system faults, especially **engine problems**
- Example: Bird strikes

5. Airspace Congestion

- Airports are **high-traffic areas**.
- Risk of miscommunication with **Air Traffic Control** or other aircraft is higher.

6. Obstacles Near Airports

- Buildings, electric towers, or trees around airports = danger if plane loses power.



CONTEXT: Data show that the majority of all aviation accidents occur during the short window of time when the aircraft is taking off or landing.

Ahmedabad Crash – Possible Causes

Official investigation is pending, possible factors include:

Engine Failure – Sudden loss of thrust after takeoff.

Weight Imbalance – Cargo/passenger load miscalculation.

Pilot Error – Incorrect emergency procedure.

System Malfunction – Boeing 787 has had past electrical issues.

PAST INCIDENTS INVOLVING 787

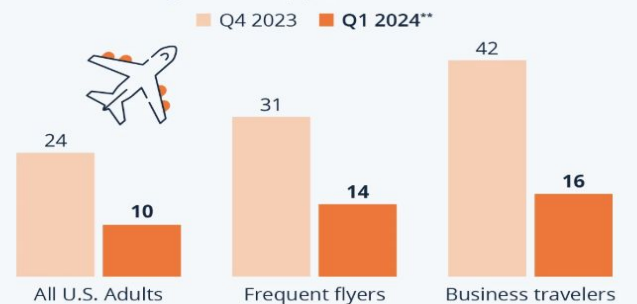
JULY 2013: An empty Ethiopian Airlines 787 caught fire on the ground at Heathrow airport in an incident later linked to a short-circuit in an Emergency Locator Transmitter.

2013: Regulators temporarily grounded the global 787 fleet following the overheating of lithium batteries on two Japanese planes in Tokyo and Boston, resulting in design changes to better contain the risk of thermal runaway.

MARCH 2024: 50 were hurt when a 787 operated by LATAM Airlines dropped in mid-flight from Sydney to Auckland. Investigators focused on an involuntary forward movement in the pilot seat. — REUTERS

Trust in Boeing Plummets After Safety Incidents

Net trust among U.S. respondents who are familiar with the Boeing brand (in p.p.)*



* Net trust is the share of respondents who trust a brand minus the share who distrust a brand
** From Jan. 1.-Feb. 28, 2024
Source: Morning Consult Brand Intelligence



statista

Lessons for Disaster Risk Reduction

Institutional Roles (India)

DGCA	Air safety regulations , crash investigations
AAI	Operates and maintains airport firefighting standards
NDMA/SDMA	Coordinates national/state-level response
NDRF/SDRF	Rescue and evacuation
MoCA	Policy for safer urban airport layouts and aviation safety audits

1. **Urban Planning** around Airports
2. Strengthen **Airport Fire Services**
3. Enhance **Mass Casualty Management**
4. **Awareness** and **Preparedness**
5. Use of **Technology**

What is a black box?

Recording data

Data acquisition unit

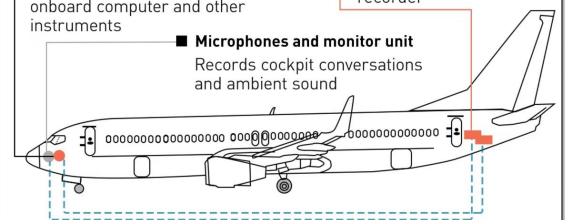
Formats data coming from sensors, onboard computer and other instruments

Microphones and monitor unit

Records cockpit conversations and ambient sound

Black boxes

Flight data recorder and cockpit voice recorder



The black boxes

Flight data recorder

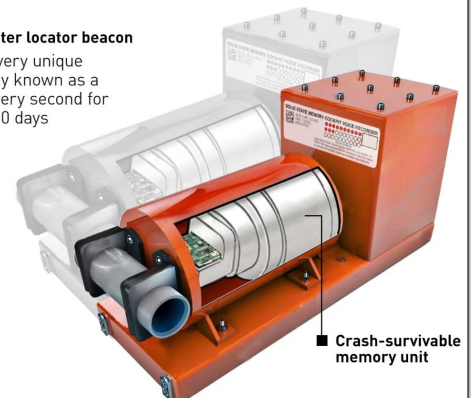
Records engine power, position of flaps, ailerons and rudder

Cockpit voice recorder

Collects and stores acoustic data recorded from the cockpit

Underwater locator beacon

Emits a very unique frequency known as a "ping" every second for around 30 days



CBC NEWS

Source: Honeywell, BEA, Boeing, Reuters



CONTEXT: Data show that the majority of all aviation accidents occur during the short window of time when the aircraft is taking off or landing.

Deadliest accidents in Indian aviation history

INDIAN AIRLINES FLIGHT 440 (1973)

ON MAY 31, 1973, Indian Airlines flight 440 crashed during its approach to Palam Airport. Boeing 737-200 encountered severe weather and struck high-tension wires just short of the runway. Of the 65 on board, 48 died, including politician Mohan Kumaramangalam.

ON JANUARY 1, 1978, Dubai-bound Air India Flight 855, a Boeing 747, plunged into the Arabian Sea shortly after taking off from Mumbai, killing all 213 on board. The disaster occurred only 101 seconds into the flight when a faulty Attitude Director Indicator led the captain to misinterpret the aircraft's orientation.

AIR INDIA FLIGHT 855 (1978)

INDIAN AIRLINES FLIGHT 113 (1988)

AMID POOR VISIBILITY ON OCTOBER 19, 1988, Indian Airlines Flight 113, a Boeing 737-200, crashed on its approach to Ahmedabad Airport. The flight, arriving from Mumbai, struck trees and crashed short of the runway, killing 133 of the 135 on board.

INDIAN AIRLINES Flight 605 crashed while approaching Bengaluru's HAL Airport, killing 92 of the 146 on board. The Airbus A320 descended too low and hit the ground short of the runway, skidding onto a golf course.

INDIAN AIRLINES FLIGHT 605 (1990)

CHARKHI DADRI MID-AIR COLLISION (1996)



Arvind Yadav/Express archive

ON NOV 12, 1996, 349 people were killed in what became India's most devastating aviation disaster. Saudia Flight 763, a Boeing 747, and Kazakhstan Airlines Flight 1907, an Ilyushin Il-76, collided mid-air near Charkhi Dadri in Haryana. The accident was the result of a communication failure and the Kazakh crew descending below their assigned altitude. Following the, India introduced significant aviation safety measures, including mandating the installation of TCAS on all commercial aircraft.

ALLIANCE AIR FLIGHT 7412 crashed into a densely populated area in Patna while attempting to land. The Boeing 737-200 experienced a stall at low altitude due to the reported improper handling during the final approach. Sixty people were killed, including five on the ground.

ALLIANCE AIR FLIGHT 7412 (2000)

AIR INDIA EXPRESS FLIGHT 812 (2010)



AIR INDIA EXPRESS Flight 812 overshot the runway while landing at Mangaluru International Airport. Boeing 737-800, coming from Dubai, plunged into a gorge beyond the tabletop runway and burst into flames, killing 158. It brought increased scrutiny to India's tabletop airports.

AIR INDIA EXPRESS Flight 1344, operating as part of the Vande Bharat repatriation mission, skidded off the runway while landing at the Kozhikode (Calicut) Airport on August 7, 2020. Amid heavy rain, the aircraft over-shot the wet tabletop runway, plunged into a valley and split into two. Of the 190 on board, 21, including two pilots, lost their lives.

AIR INDIA EXPRESS FLIGHT 1344 (2020)



Source: PTI

Mains Practise Question

The Ahmedabad plane crash reminds us that aviation disasters aren't just aviation problems—they're also urban governance and disaster management challenges. Do you agree? Comment.

(15 Marks, 250 words)



CONTEXT: How India handles public transit now will define urban quality of life in coming decades.

The Scale of India's Urban Mobility Challenge

India's Urbanisation in Numbers

Urban shift (by 2060s)	60%+ of India's population (~900 million people)
Daily mobility need	India needs 200,000 urban buses but has only 35,000
Current Shortfall	Only 37% of urban Indians have easy access to public transport
Growth	Existing Tier-1 cities & metros expanding rapidly




Root Causes of the Crisis

- Overdependence on **Private Vehicles** → Traffic jams, pollution.
- Metros Are Expensive & Slow to Build** → Most don't recover costs.
- E-Buses Face High Costs** → Battery replacements, subsidies needed.
- Last-Mile Connectivity Gaps** → Metro stations far from homes/offices.

Some Government Interventions in Urban Transport

PM e-Bus Sewa	10,000 urban buses	Ongoing	High operational costs
PM e-Drive Scheme	14,000 e-buses + 1.1L e-vehicles	Newly launched	Battery costs, subsidies needed
Metro Expansion	20+ cities	Slow progress	Low ridership, high construction costs

Comparison with Other Countries

Country	Access to Public Transit
	50% of urban population
	50% of urban population
	Only 37% of urban population

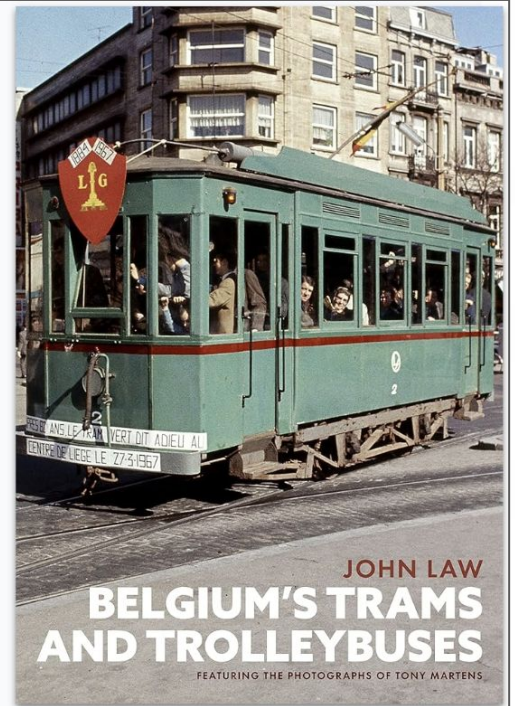
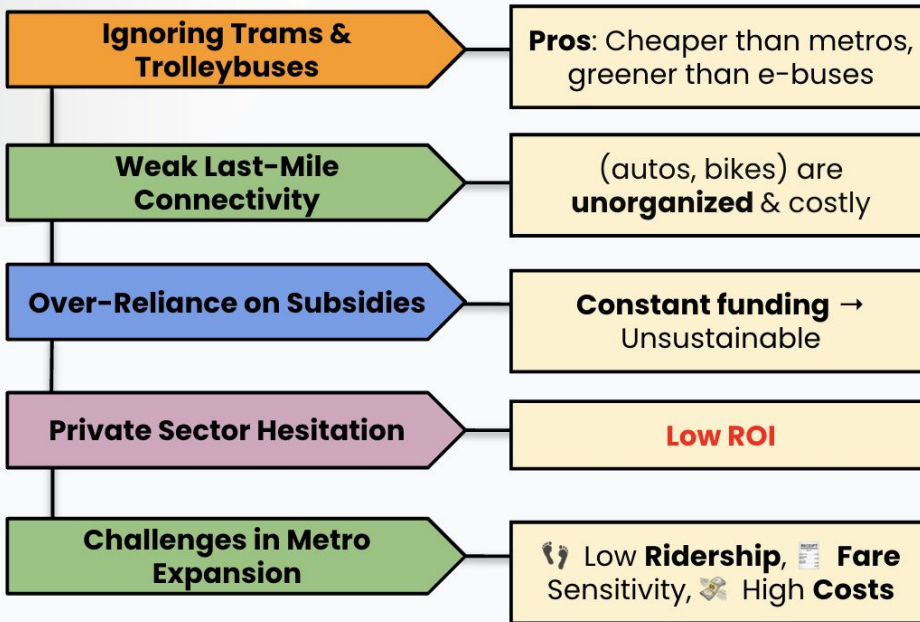
Why Are These Not Enough?

- Metros:** Take 10-15 years to build; most run at a loss.
- E-Buses:** 82% loss over 70 years due to battery replacement costs.
- Funding Issues:** Private players avoid investing due to low profitability

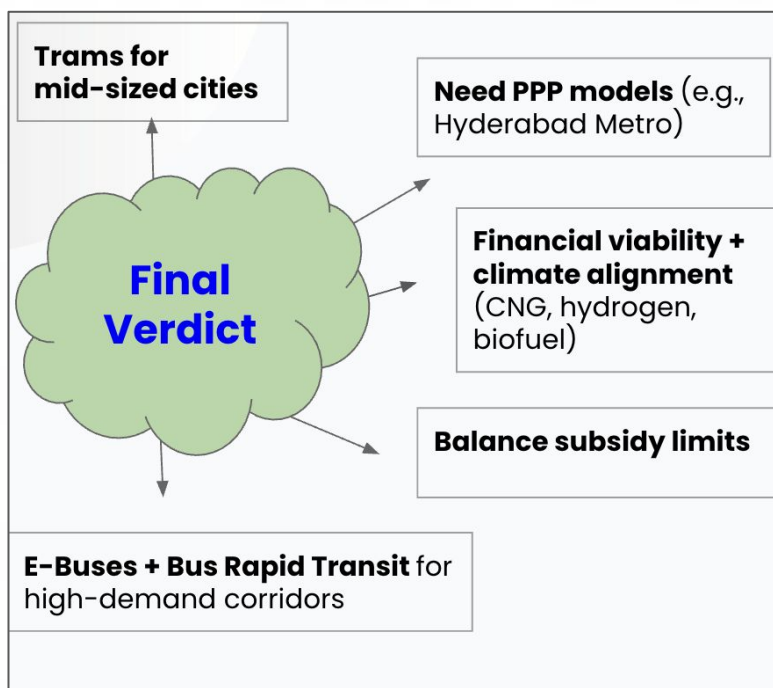


CONTEXT: How India handles public transit now will define urban quality of life in coming decades.

What's Missing in India's Transit Strategy?



India's Best Path Forward



THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

Light tram plan to boost Kochi's connectivity

Giving a lease of life to the light tram project, which was mooted last year, the board of directors of Kochi Metro Rail Limited (KMRL) has given its approval to go ahead with preliminary procedures.



Trams: +45% profit over 70 years vs.
e-Buses: -82% loss



CONTEXT: How India handles public transit now will define urban quality of life in coming decades.

Mains Practise Question

India needs a balanced approach towards urbanisation—not just metros and e-buses, but trams, Bus Rapid Transit, and better last-mile links. Explain.

(15 Marks, 250 words)



Syllabus: GS 3: Government Budgeting
Newspaper :The Hindu, Page No. 14

Central Govt. Schemes Must Pass “Effectiveness Test”

The government is currently in the process of conducting a third party evaluation of all fully funded Central Schemes, while NITI Ayog is appraising the Centrally sponsored schemes. There are 54 Central schemes and 260 Centrally sponsored

Schemes that are fully or partially funded by the Union government will be continued beyond the current financial year only if the “evaluation report for the scheme shows positive outcomes”, proving that it has been “effective” in achieving its set objectives, and if there is a clear need to “continue the scheme in view of its mandate performance or scaling up of targets”, according to a Finance Ministry circular issued on June 6.

Key Changes Explained		Example
Sunset Date	Schemes expire unless proven useful	MGNREGA must show job impact
5.5x Funding Cap	(over 16th Finance Commission cycle (2026–2031)) Budget can't exceed 5.5x past spending <i>More funds for one scheme ↔ must reduce funding in another</i>	If a scheme spent ₹100cr/year, max future budget = ₹550cr
Demand – Driven Limits	Even MGNREGA needs approval for extra funds	If more people need jobs, govt must approve extra money

Where Are the Rules Headed?

 Outcome-Focus	Only effective schemes will continue
 Accountability	Ministries must justify and plan wisely
 Fiscal Prudence	Helps control overspending , especially in times of constrained revenues
 Ending Redundancy	Ensures duplication or outdated schemes are shut down

Benefits

Saves **taxpayer money**

Focuses on **real impact**

Stops **wasteful spending**

Challenges

Some good schemes may **lose funding**

States may oppose fund cuts

Delays in approvals could hurt beneficiaries



Syllabus: GS 2: Role of women
Newspaper :The Hindu, Page No. 1

WHAT IS THE GLOBAL GENDER GAP INDEX?

Dimension

What it Measures

 **Economic Participation & Opportunity**

Employment, wages, leadership

 **Educational Attainment**

Literacy, school & college enrollment

 **Health & Survival**

Sex ratio at birth, life expectancy

 **Political Empowerment**

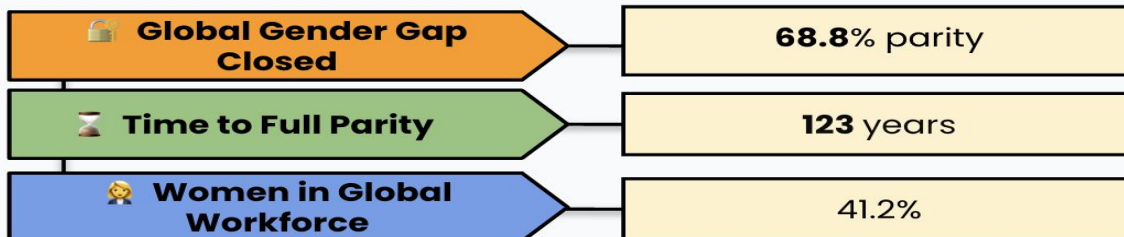
Women in Parliament & Ministerial roles

 **Published By:**

World Economic Forum









 **Countries Covered: 148**

 **Top 5 Countries:**
Iceland (1st for 16th year),
Finland, Norway, UK,
New Zealand



INDIA IN 2025: RANK 131 / 148

 **Slips 2 ranks from 129 in 2024**
Gender Parity Score: 64.1%








Dimension	2025 Score	Change
 Economic Participation	40.7%	 +0.9 points
 Educational Attainment	97.1%	 Improved
 Health & Survival	~94–95% (approx)	 Improved sex ratio at birth
 Political Empowerment	↓	 -0.6 points

 **+0.3 Overall Gain in Index**

Labour Force Participation stayed at all-time high: 45.9%

Female literacy rates and college enrollments increased

Better sex ratio at birth and healthy life expectancy

Cou ntry	Rank
	24 
	125
	119
	130
	131 
	138
	148 (last)

 India's **biggest drop** is in **Political Empowerment** — now below 2023 levels

 **Bangladesh (RANK: 24):** South Asia's best performer due to political & economic strides

UPSC PYQ (P) 2009

Who among the following is the founder of World Economic Forum?

- (a) Klaus Schwab
- (b) John Kenneth Galbraith
- (c) Hobert Zoellick
- (d) Paul Krugman

UPSC PYQ (P) 2019

The Global Competitiveness Report is published by the

- (a) International Monetary Fund
- (b) United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
- (c) World Economic Forum
- (d) World Bank

Syllabus: GS 2: Important International institutions, agencies and fora
Newspaper : The Hindu, **Page No. 18**

IAEA: 🌐's nuclear watchdog

Basic Details

- 📅 **Established:** 1956 (Started work in 1957).
- 📍 **Headquarters:** Vienna, Austria.
- 👥 **Members:** 178 countries

How is the IAEA Structured?

General Conference	All 178 members meet yearly to set policies & budgets.
Board of Governors	35 countries decide key issues
Secretariat	Runs daily operations, led by the Director General.

Key Functions of the IAEA

A. Nuclear Safeguards (Anti-Weapons Checks)

- Inspections
- Monitoring: uranium/plutonium.
- Reports to UN

B. Promoting Peaceful Nuclear Tech

- ⚡ Helps **build nuclear power plants.**
- 🏥 **Health:** Supports cancer treatment
- 🌱 **Agriculture:** Improves crop yields with nuclear tech.

C. Emergency Response

- ⚠️ **Disasters:** Helps during nuclear accidents (e.g., Fukushima).
- 🛡️ **Security:** Prevents nuclear terrorism.

🇮🇷 Iran vs. Global Nuclear Watchdog: What's Happening?

The UN nuclear watchdog's board of governors on Thursday formally found that Iran is not complying with its nuclear obligations for the first time in 20 years, a move that could lead to further tensions and set in motion an effort to restore UN sanctions on Tehran later this year.

Iran reacted immediately, saying it will establish a new enrichment facility "in a secure location" and that "other measures are also being planned".

- ✅ **Undeclared Nuclear Activities** – Iran didn't explain traces of uranium found at secret sites.
- ✅ **High-Level Uranium Stockpile** – Enough 60% enriched uranium for 9 nuclear bombs (if refined further).
- ✅ **No Cooperation** – IAEA says Iran is blocking inspections.

📅 **Broken Promises:**

- ⚡ **Iran Deal (JCPOA)**
- After US left the deal in 2018, Iran started breaking rules again.

Why Should You Care?

- ⚠️ Higher **Oil Prices**
- ⚠️ Risk of **War** – Israel/US vs. Iran = Big Middle East conflict.
- ⚠️ **Nuclear Threat**



Syllabus: GS 2: Important International institutions, agencies and fora
Newspaper :The Hindu, **Page No. 18**

UPSC PYQ (P) 2018

In India, why are some nuclear reactors kept under "IAEA safeguards" while others are not?

- (a) Some use uranium and others use thorium
- (b) Some use imported uranium and others use domestic supplies
- (c) Some are operated by foreign enterprises and others are operated by domestic enterprises
- (d) Some are State-owned and others are privately owned

UPSC PYQ (P) 2020

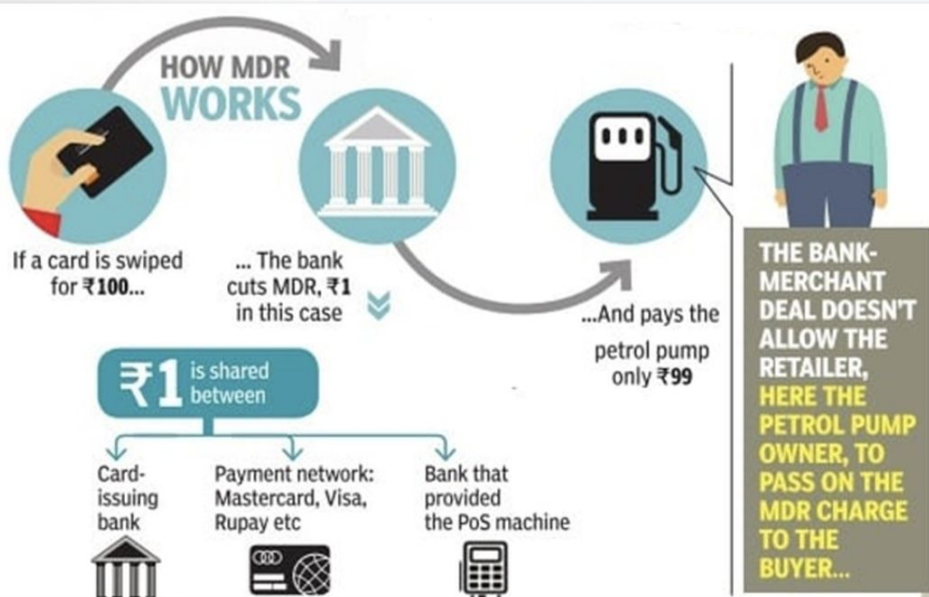
In the Indian context, what is the implication of ratifying the 'Additional Protocol' with the 'International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)'?

- (a) The civilian nuclear reactors come under IAEA safeguards.
- (b) The military nuclear installations come under the inspection of IAEA.
- (c) The country will have the privilege to buy uranium from the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).
- (d) The country automatically becomes a member of the NSG.



Syllabus: GS 3: Indian Economy and issues
Newspaper : Indian Express, **Page No. 14**

What is Merchant Discount Rate?



A fee that shops/businesses pay for accepting digital payments (credit/debit cards, UPI, etc.).

Typical Range: 1%–3% of the transaction value

Why Does MDR Exist?

Key Rules to Know

- ✓ **Automatic Deduction**
- ✗ **No Extra Charges** to Customers

What Did the FinMin Say?

Ministry of Finance
@FinMinIndia

Speculation and claims that the MDR will be charged on UPI transactions are completely false, baseless, and misleading.

Such baseless and sensation-creating speculations cause needless uncertainty, fear and suspicion among our citizens.

The Government remains fully committed to promoting digital payments via UPI.

7:00 PM · Jun 11, 2025

🚫 No MDR	No such plan to impose MDR on UPI
❗ Rumors are false	Speculation is "baseless, false, and misleading"
📱 Govt support continues	Fully committed to promoting UPI & digital payments

UPI Performance Snapshot (2025)

🔄 Total Transactions	18.68 billion
💰 Total Value	₹25.14 lakh crore
📈 Growth (YoY)	33% jump in volume
📅 Avg Daily Volume	602 million transactions
💵 Avg Daily Value	₹81,106 crore

Government Action in 2020

2020 **Waived MDR on UPI and RuPay payments**

Purpose To **encourage digital payments** and reduce reliance on cash



Syllabus: GS 3: Indian Economy and issues
Newspaper : Indian Express, **Page No. 14**

UPSC PYQ (P) 2018

**Which one of the following best describes the term
"Merchant Discount Rate" sometimes seen in news?**

- A. The incentive given by a bank to a merchant for accepting payments through debit cards pertaining to that bank.
- B. The amount paid back by banks to their customers when they use debit cards for financial transactions for purchasing goods or services.
- C. The charge to a merchant by a bank for accepting payments from his customers through the bank's debit cards.
- D. The incentive given by the Government to merchants for promoting digital payments by their customers through Point of Sale (PoS) machines and debit cards.



Syllabus: GS 3: Indian Economy and issues
Newspaper :The Hindu, Page No. 1



What is the Consumer Price Index?

India's retail inflation eased to a **75-month low** of **2.8%** in May 2025, driven downwards by **falling food inflation**, according to data released on Thursday. Inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index was last lower than this in February 2019.

Overall, retail inflation has averaged 2.99% in 2025-26 – based on the two months of data available – the lowest average for the first two months of a financial year since 2017-18.

Released by: NSO, MoSPI (rural/urban/combined)

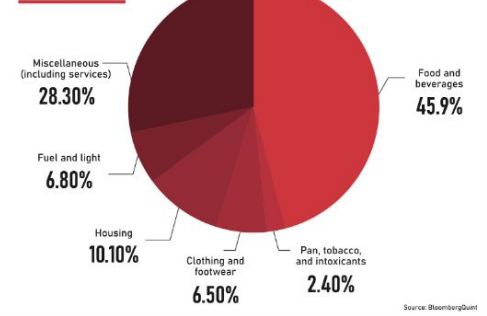
Labour Bureau publishes CPI-IW (2016), AL, RL (1986–87)

April 2014: RBI adopted CPI as official measure of inflation

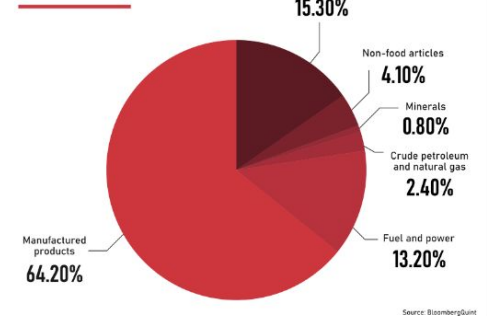
CPI-IW is used for Dearness Allowance

Difference with WPI

CPI Basket



WPI Basket



Inflation @ 2.82% in May 2025



What Caused the Fall?

Urban vs Rural Inflation: stronger **rural demand** due to **real wage growth**

Urban	3.08%
Rural	2.60%

But What About Core Inflation?

- 4.2% (2nd highest in 19 months)

Imported Inflation: Oils & Fats

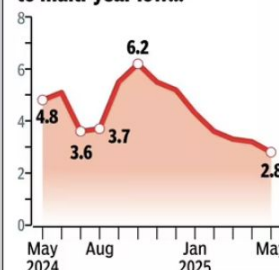
- ↑ to 6.3%

RBI & Policy Implications

- ▼ RBI Repo Rate Cut @5.5%

Food Inflation Lowest Since Oct 2021

Retail inflation (%) softens to multi-year low...



RELIEF POINTS % Change in May

-13.7	Vegetables
-8.2	Pulses & products
-2.8	Spices
-0.4	Meat & fish

PAIN POINTS Price rise in May (%)

17.9	Oils & fats
13.5	Personal care & effects
12.7	Fruits

Source: Govt

What Analysts Say

Crisil	Headline inflation to average 4.0% in FY26 (vs 4.6% in FY25)
Kotak Mahindra	RBI to pause further rate cuts till at least Dec 2025
India Ratings	Sticky core inflation shows healthy demand conditions



Syllabus: GS 3: Indian Economy and issues
Newspaper :The Hindu, Page No. 1

UPSC PYQ (P) 2010

With reference to India, consider the following statements:

1. The Wholesale Price Index (WPI) in India is available on a monthly basis only.
2. As compared to Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (CPI(IW)), the WPI gives less weight to food articles.

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



Q1. Regarding the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), consider the following statements:

1. It is a statutory body under the Ministry of Civil Aviation.
2. It is responsible for regulating civil aviation safety and issuing licenses to pilots and aircraft engineers.
3. DGCA represents India in the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) All of the above

Answer: b

Q2. Regarding the PM e-Bus Sewa (PM e-Drive) Scheme, consider the following statements:

1. The scheme aims to deploy electric buses only in Smart Cities and State Capitals.
2. It promotes the Public Private Partnership (PPP) for the operation of electric buses.
3. The scheme includes support for the development of associated electric charging infrastructure.
4. It is implemented by the Ministry of Power.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- a) 2 and 3 only
- b) 1, 2 and 4 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 2, 3 and 4 only

Answer: a

Q3. Regarding the Global Gender Gap Index, consider the following statements:

1. It is published annually by the World Bank.
2. The index measures gender-based gaps in access to resources and opportunities in four key areas: Economic Participation, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment.
3. A lower score in the index indicates better gender parity.

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

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

Answer: a

Q4. Regarding the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), consider the following statements:

1. It is an autonomous international organization under the United Nations system.
2. It promotes the peaceful use of nuclear energy and prevents its use for military purposes.
3. India is a founding member of the IAEA and has allowed full-scope safeguards on all its nuclear facilities.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: a

Q5. Regarding the Merchant Discount Rate (MDR), consider the following statements:

1. MDR is a fee a bank charges a merchant for accepting digital payments.
2. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) directly receives MDR charges from merchants.
3. The government of India has waived MDR on transactions made through RuPay debit cards and BHIM-UPI for certain entities.

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

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

Answer: b





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