



VAJIRAM & RAVI
Institute for IAS Examination

The Analyst

CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout

25th July 2025



CONTEXT: Goa opposing Mahadayi project

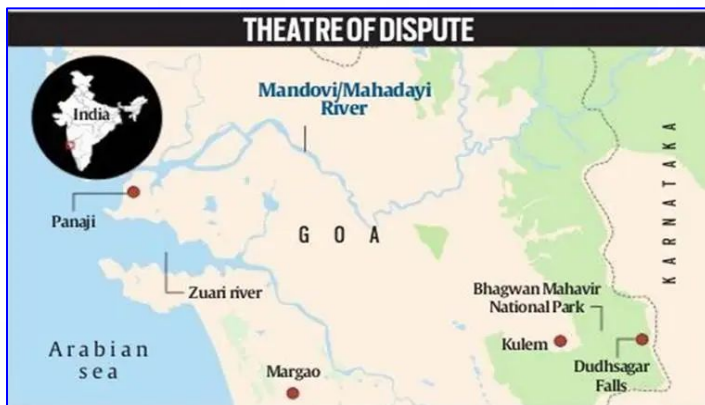
Interstate Water Disputes: Case Study 1

Mahadayi

- **Origin:** Bhimgad WS
- **Tributaries:** Rogaro, Kushavati, Nanorem, Nanuz, Valvota, Mapusa, Kalasa Nala
- **Basin Area:** 78% in Goa, 18% in Karnataka, and 4% in Maharashtra

Dispute

- **Karnataka's Project:** Kalasa-Banduri Nala
- **2010:** Mahadayi Water Disputes Tribunal
- **2018 Verdict:**
 - Karnataka: 13.42 tmcft (1.72 from Kalasa, 2.18 from Bhandura)
 - Goa: 24 tmcft (plus 9.395 tmcft for existing use)
 - Maharashtra: 1.33 tmcft



Interstate Water Disputes: Case Study

2: Cauvery :

- **1892:** Presidency of Madras and Princely state of Mysore
- **1924:** Agreement for 50 years
- **After 1974:** Karnataka diverting water
- **1990:** Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal
- **2007:** Final award
 - water share - different periods of the year
 - Monitoring authority
 - No detailed formula when insufficient rains
- **2013:** Govt notified the order - Tamil Nadu approached SC
- **2018:** SC judgement - Cauvery a national asset.
 - upheld the water-sharing arrangements finalised by the CWDT
 - Cauvery Management Scheme, CWMA



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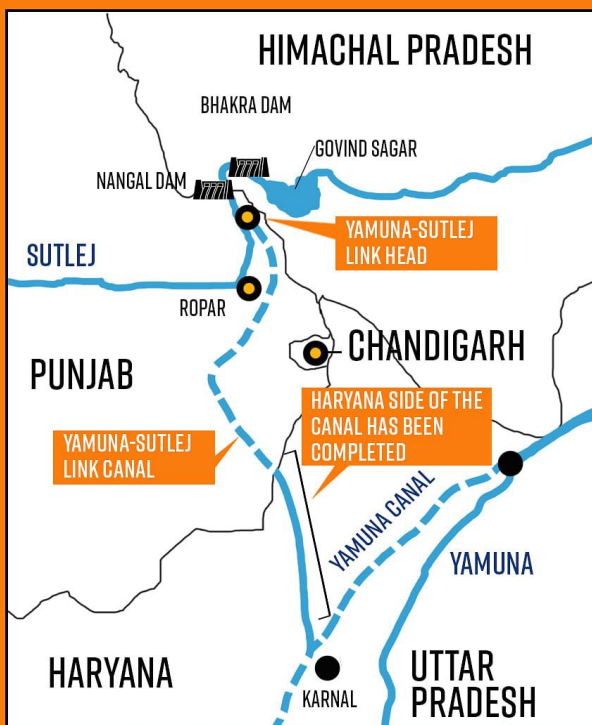
Interstate Water Disputes: Case Study

3 : SLV Canal :

- **1955:** Ravi and Beas river waters calculated and divided
- **1966:** Punjab Reorganisation Act, Sutlej Yamuna Link Canal planned
- **1980:** Haryana completed, protests by SAD
- **1985:** Insurgency in Punjab, PM accord with SAD – Eradi Tribunal
- Militancy in Punjab
- **2002–04:** Supreme Court direction to Punjab to work on the SYL
- **Punjab Termination of Agreements Act**
- **2016:** SC – PTAA invalid
- **2020:** SC: CMs to negotiate and Centre to mediate

SUTLEJ-YAMUNA LINK CANAL

ThePrint



Inter – State Water Disputes :

- **Article 262** – bars court's jurisdiction
- **ISWD Act, 1956** – adjudication by tribunals
- **Temporary tribunals** – dissolved after award, force of SC decree, binding on states
- **Governance Challenges**
 - Adversarial litigations
 - No avenues to redress grievances after tribunal dissolved
 - Constitutional crisis – pitching legislature against judiciary
 - Institutional vacuum for implementation
 - Vote bank politics
 - Deficit years allocation
 - Absence of transparent info gathering and sharing

SOLUTIONS :

- **Multipronged**
- **ISRWD Amendment Bill 2019**
 - Dispute Resolution Committee – 1 year + 6 M
 - Permanent tribunal – 2+1 years
 - Expert agency for data collection – rain, irrig, SW – at basin level
- Utilising **Interstate Council**
- Not equal but **equitable distribution** – **Helsinki Rules & Campion Rules**
- **State not owner but public trustees**
- **4R**



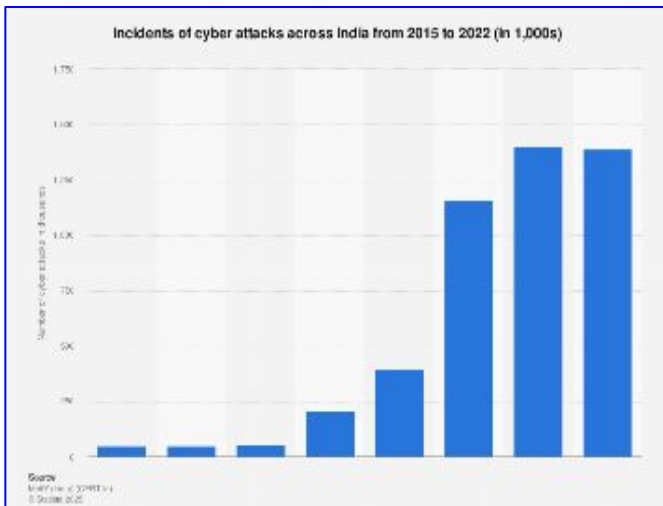
Cybersecurity: ICAR data breach



CONTEXT: Data breach at ICAR

Cybercrimes:

- **Cyber espionage** - intruding to steal info
- **Cyber Crimes** - electronic fraud
- **Cyber attacks** - interrupt digital services or systems
- **Cyber war** - large scale digital attack on critical infra
- **Common cyber crimes** - identity theft, social engineering, Phishing, PUPs



Challenges:

- **Recent Cyber Attacks**
 - Ransomware attack on a defence unit
 - ICMR data leak
 - Loss of Rs 1.24 lakh crore in 2020
- **Vulnerability of Critical Infrastructure** - Ukraine, Stuxnet (2010 Iran nuclear), Petya (EU banks)
- **Under-Preparedness** - CERT-In guidelines
- **Limited Private Sector Participation**
- **Added Complexity:**
 - AI, ML, data analytics, cloud computing, IoT, techno-legal issues.
 - 5G and quantum computing - potency of malicious software.

• **Financial Vulnerability**

- SWIFT system

• **Personal Data sold on Dark Web**

• **New Threats** - Digital Arrests, IoT risks

Institutional Setup:

- **National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS)** - apex agency - NCSC
- **National Information Board (NIB)** - NSA
- **National Cyber Coordination Centre (NCCC)** - by CERT-In, under NIB
 - cybercrime prevention strategy, investigation training, review of outdated laws
- **National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC)** - CS
- **CERT-IN** - monitors cyberspace, coordinates alerts, warning, detection
- **NCIIPC** - under NTRO, 2014
- **Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)**
- **Initiatives**
 - **Cyber Surakshit Bharat Initiative**
 - **Cyber Swachhta Kendra**
 - **PMGDISHA**

International Initiatives:

- Budapest Convention on Cybercrime
- Global Centre for Cyber security



Cybersecurity: ICAR data breach



CONTEXT: Data breach at ICAR

Need for restructuring:

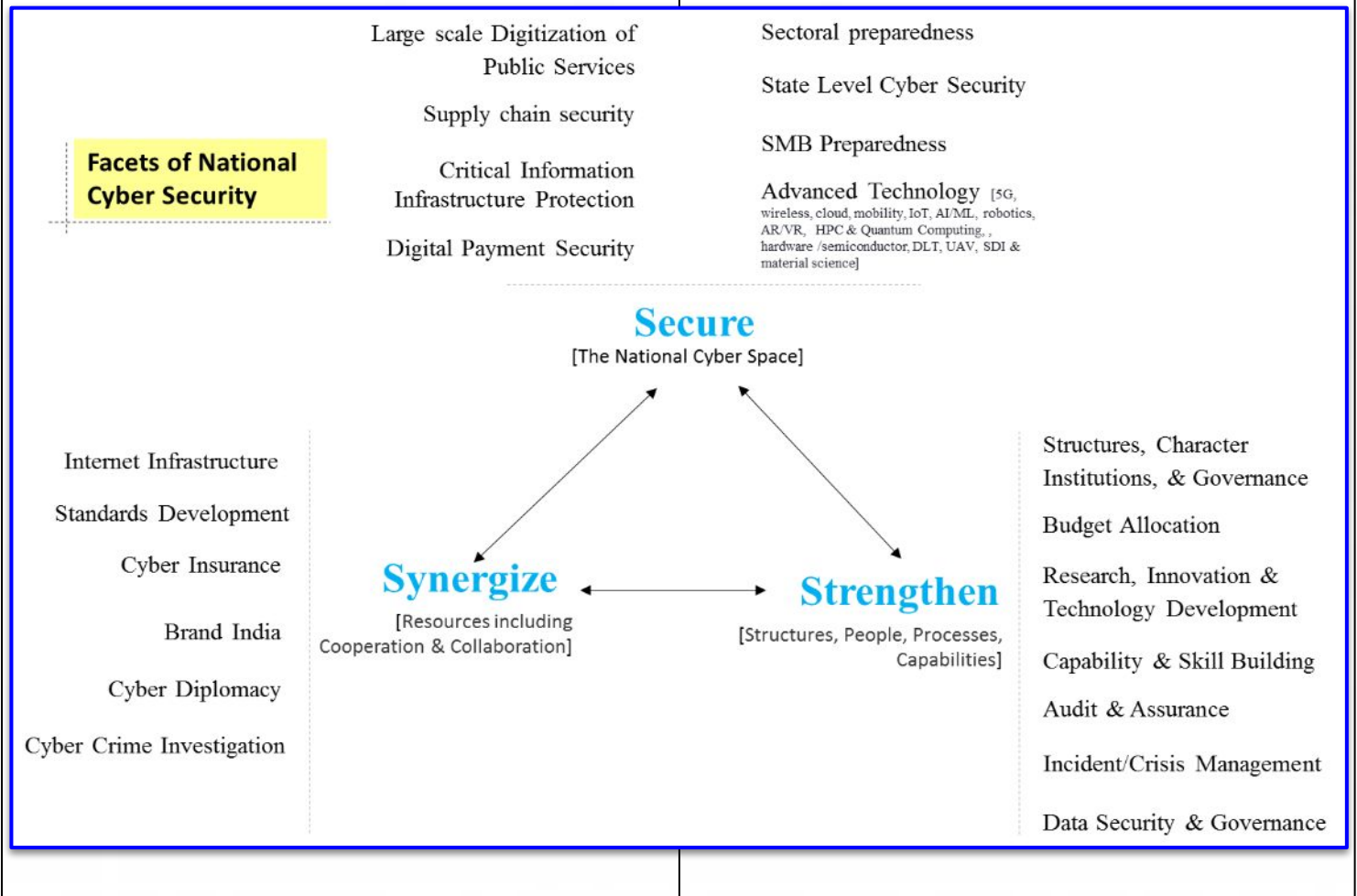
- **Fragmented cyber security ecosystem**
 - MEITY, MHA, MoD, NTRO own cybersecurity units.
 - Additional specialised units include the CERT, I4C
- **No unified agency**

Laws Related to Cyber Security in India:

- **Information Technology Act, 2000**
- **National Cyber Security Policy, 2013**
- **Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023**

Suggestions:

- Statute
- Agency
- National Cyber Security Strategy
- Offensive capabilities - deterrence, software to intercept attacks
- Air gapping
- Big data analytics, Cloud computing capabilities
- International Cooperation



India-UK FTA: Benefits & Concerns



SYLLABUS : GS 2: Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

Newspaper: Indian Express **Page Number:** 1,9,10,13

Category	India's gains	UK's gains
Export sectors	Tariff elimination for textiles, apparel, gems, jewelry, leather, machinery, auto parts, pharma, agri-products, chemicals, processed foods, marine products	Duty-free access for 64 % exports. E.g. alcoholic beverages, cosmetics, processed food, digital services.
Tariff impact	Zero or reduced tariff for 99 % of Indian exports	Average from 15 % to 3 %
MSME and regional growth	Export boost from manufacturing clusters	Market access for UK brands
Professional mobility	Recognition of professional qualifications, Visa relaxation, social security waivers	60,000 Indian professionals, filling skill gaps
Green tech and energy	UK investment in solar, hydrogen, battery technology, EV infrastructure	Strategic entry
Category	India's gains	UK's gains
Agriculture and food processing	Duty-free treatment for 95 % of agriculture tariff lines. Boost for basmati, spices, tea, seafood	SPS regulations
Marine and fisheries	Duty-free access for 99 %	Premium seafood import options
GI	Protection for Indian GI products	Preferential access
Consumer impact	Cheaper UK luxury cars and spirits	Indian textiles, pharmaceuticals, processed foods, and jewelry
Strategic gains	Access to the EU via UK hubs	Digital and defense links

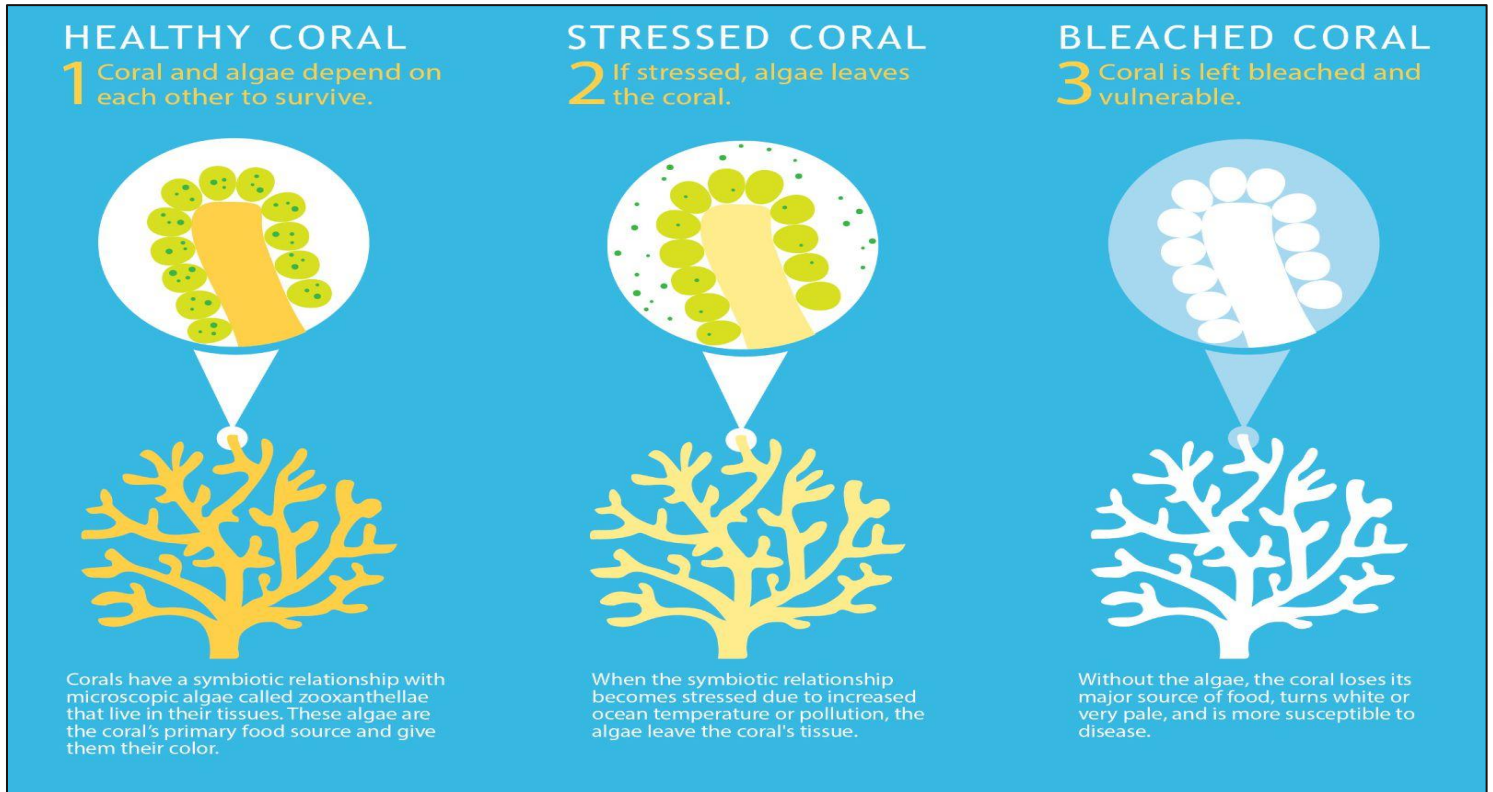
Public Health Concerns due to India-UK FTA

- **Risks:** Tariff-free entry of UK-made HFSS foods
- **Aggressive Marketing:** cheap, unhealthy foods
- **Weak Regulations in India:** Unlike the UK (bans HFSS ads before 9 PM, traffic-light nutrition labels)
 - Proposed mandatory Front-of-Pack Warning Labels (FOPNL) stalled

- **Lessons from Mexico:** Post-NAFTA, surge in HFSS consumption
- **Rising Lifestyle Diseases**
- **Economic gains vs health**
- **Urgent Safeguards Needed:**
 - Mandatory warning labels
 - Ban HFSS ads targeting children
 - Healthier school meals
 - Strengthen public health oversight in trade negotiations



SYLLABUS : GS 3 : Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation
Newspaper: The Hindu Page Number: 5



Corals:

- marine invertebrates or animals not possessing a spine
- Hard & Soft corals

Coral Bleaching

- Stress in their environment
- zooxanthellae start producing reactive oxygen species
- severe bleaching and prolonged stress

Significance:

- Marine biodiversity
- Economic contribution
- Protection from storm waves

Mass Bleaching Events:

- 1998
- 2002
- 2014-2017
- 2024?

WHAT CAUSES CORAL BLEACHING?



Change in ocean temperature

Increased ocean temperature caused by climate change is the leading cause of coral bleaching.



Runoff and pollution

Storm generated precipitation can rapidly dilute ocean water and runoff can carry pollutants — these can bleach near-shore corals.



Overexposure to sunlight

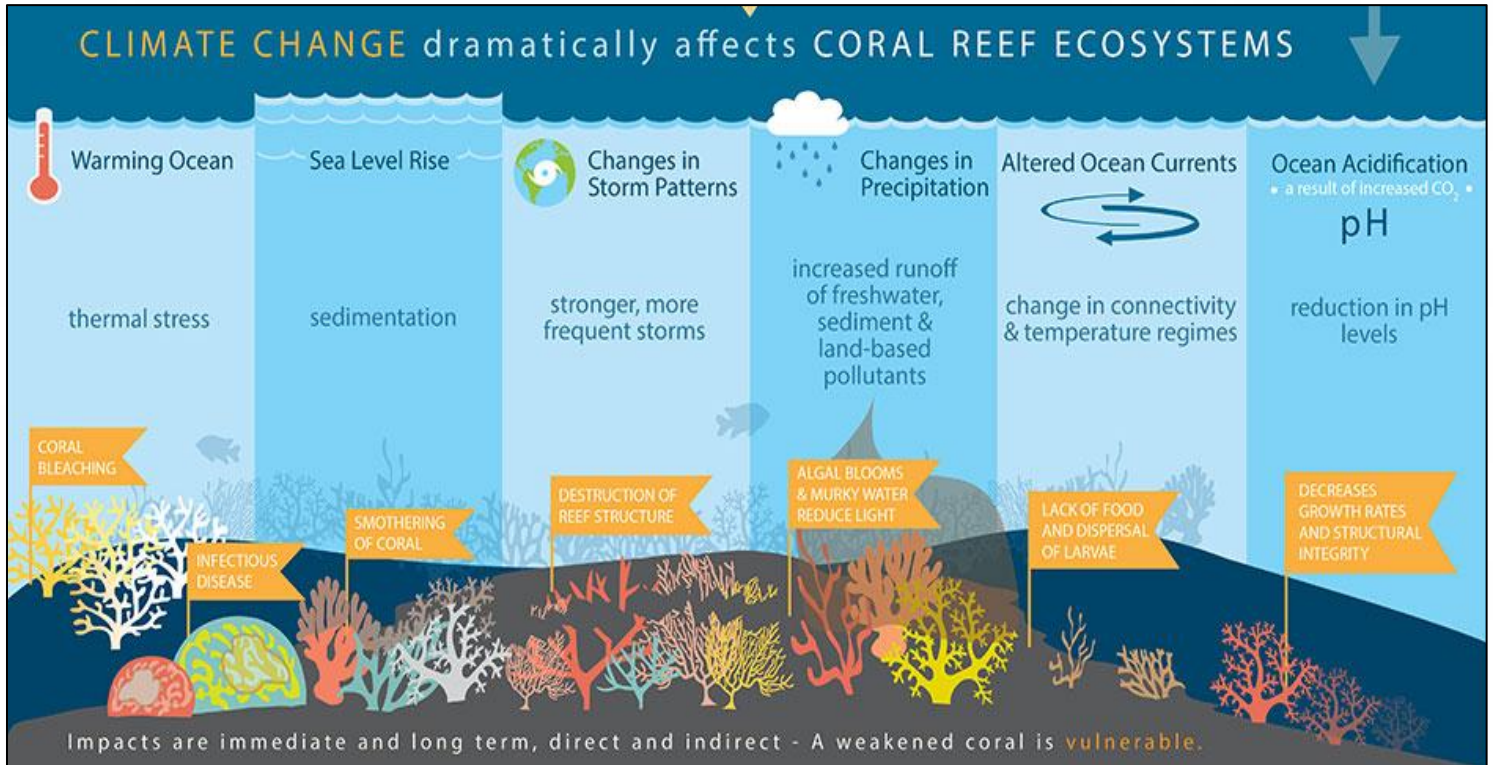
When temperatures are high, high solar irradiance contributes to bleaching in shallow-water corals.



Extreme low tides

Exposure to the air during extreme low tides can cause bleaching in shallow corals.

SYLLABUS : GS 3 : Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation
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Ocean. The 24-year-long study shows that corals in the Lakshadweep archipelago have declined to half of what they were in 1998 as a result of repeated marine heatwaves, exacerbated by climate change.

However, local conditions, such as wave exposure and depth, play essential roles in shaping how reefs respond to and recover from these events.

The study, 'Local Environmental Filtering and Frequency of Marine Heatwaves Influence Decadal

Trends in Coral Composition', published in the journal *Diversity and Distributions*, uses long-term data sets to propose a predictive framework, which could help identify vulnerable reefs, and reefs that may still have the potential

Reduced recovery rate

"Over 24 years, coral cover declined from 37.24% to 19.6%, reflecting a roughly 50% reduction from the 1998 baseline. This decline was explained by reduced recovery rates after each bleaching event, despite coral mortality decreasing with successive events. Recovery rates dramatically increased after six years, suggesting a critical period of bleaching-free years needed for reefs to recover.



SYLLABUS : GS 3: Indian Economy

Newspaper: The Hindu Page Number: 15

Draft Telecom Policy 2025:

Vision:

- **Self-reliant, digitally empowered economy** with universal, secure, and future-ready connectivity
- **Global leader in telecom technology**, innovation, and manufacturing

Strategic Missions:

1. Universal & Meaningful Connectivity:

- 100% 4G & 90% 5G coverage by 2030: Digital Bharat Nidhi
- Fiberize 80% of towers, connect all GPs via BharatNet
- 1 million public Wi-Fi hotspots: PM-WANI
- Satellite and Non-Terrestrial Networks (NTN) for remote areas

2. Innovation:

- Top 10 global hub for 5G/6G, AI, IoT, and quantum tech
- Support 500+ telecom startups, boost R&D spending
- Develop Standard Essential Patents (SEPs) for global leadership
- Set up Telecom Data Sandbox for anonymized data use

3. Domestic Manufacturing:

- Telecom manufacturing output by 150%
- 50% import substitution
- Telecom Manufacturing Zones (TMZ) and 30 advanced research labs
- 1 million new jobs in the sector
- Launch industry-aligned courses (5G, IoT, quantum)

4. Secure & Trusted Network:

- quantum-resistant cryptography for cybersecurity
- Establish National Telecom SafeNet for threat resilience
- Strengthen biometric-based telecom user identification
- Enforce AI-driven threat detection

5. Ease of Living & Doing Business:

- Reduce grievance redressal time by 50%
- Simplify compliance via Digital by Design approach
- Infrastructure sharing and spectrum efficiency

6. Sustainable Telecom:

- Reduce telecom sector's carbon footprint by 30%
- Transition 30% of telecom towers to renewable energy
- Promote e-waste recycling and circular economy models
- Right to Repair framework

Key Targets for 2030:

- Double telecom sector's GDP contribution
- Achieve ₹1 lakh crore annual investment in telecom infra
- Double telecom exports and R&D spending
- Upskill 1 million workers for future telecom demands



Thailand - Cambodia Dispute

SYLLABUS : GS 2: Effect of Policies and Politics of Developed and Developing Countries on India's interests

Newspaper: The Hindu **Page Number:** 16

Why are Thailand and Cambodia fighting?:

- Colonial-era border disputes
- 1962 ICJ ruling
- 2008 Unesco tensions
- 2011 ICJ ruling
- National pride & politics
- Economic & cultural tensions: temple antiquities, cross-border trade, resource access

What caused the most recent clash?

- **May 2024 skirmish:** A Cambodian soldier killed in Chong Bok
- **Landmine explosion** (June)
- **Border militarization**
- **Diplomatic breakdown:** Thailand closed border crossings, expelled Cambodia's envoy; Cambodia retaliated - bans on Thai imports, media, and energy
- **Leaked phone call** (18 June)
- **Thursday clashes :** Fighting near **Prasat Ta Moan Thom temple**; both sides blame each other for firing first

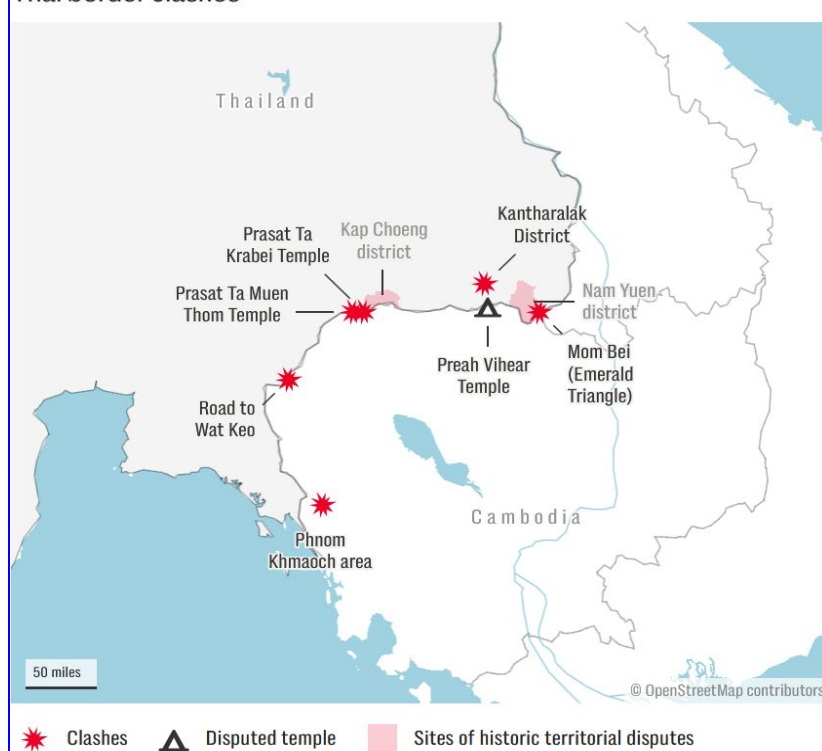
Regional & Bilateral Implications:

- ASEAN's limitations:
 - Non-interventionist norms hinder conflict resolution
- Trade disruptions: Cross-border communities hit
- Thailand's credibility: Political instability weakens regional trust
- Cambodia's strategy: ICJ appeal, tests ASEAN unity

Long-Term Risks:

- Historical disputes, fueled by nationalism and domestic politics
- ASEAN infrastructure projects at risk
- Diplomatic de-escalation hinges on political will

Thai border clashes



Dissent in Democracy



SYLLABUS : GS 2: Governance

Newspaper: *Indian Express* **Page Number:** 10

Significance of Dissent:

- Freedom of Speech & Expression
- Preamble
- Citizens as watchdogs
- Feedback to the government
- Representative democracy
- Majoritarianism as an antithesis of democracy
- Necessary voice to oppressed and marginalised
- Can always use force to suppress a violent protest
- Cornerstone of a constitutional democracy
- Tagore

Examples of Dissent:

- Judicial Dissent
- Political Protests
- Religious Dissent
- People's movements
 - a. Anti-Vietnam war protests in US (1968)
 - b. Velvet Revolution and the Romanian Revolution (both 1989)

Concerns Over Maharashtra's Public Security Bill and LWE Definition:

- **Lack of Legal Clarity:**
 - Maharashtra bill **criminalizes** without defining it
- **Vague & Arbitrary Application:**
 - Risk of **misuse**
 - "**Urban Naxal**" rhetoric used to conflate dissent with extremism
- **Overlap with Existing Laws:**
 - Many activities banned are already illegal (UAPA, IPC)
 - Duplicate legal instruments, increase executive overreach
- **Threat to Free Speech & Dissent:**
 - **Criticism of government** could be framed as "endangering peace"
 - No **pre-screening mechanism**—police act first, Advisory Board intervenes later
- **Selective Enforcement:**
 - **Right-wing incitement** (e.g., against minorities) ignored
- **Broader Democratic Implications:**
 - **Criminalizes protest & dissent**, weakening democracy



Q1. Consider the following statements :

1. Entry 56 of the Union List gives power to the Central Government to regulate & develop inter- state rivers
2. Under the provisions of the Article 262, the Parliament has enacted the River Board Act 1956
3. The Inter - State river dispute tribunals are created under the Inter - State River Water Dispute Act 1956.

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

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

Answer: c

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding the Corals :

1. Corals are marine invertebrates or animals that do not possess a spine.
2. Corals get into a symbiotic relationship with algae called zooxanthellae.
3. The increasing cases of global warming induced marine heatwaves leads to coral bleaching.

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

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

Answer: c

Q3. Consider the following statements regarding the Draft Telecom Policy :

1. It aims to create a digitally empowered self - reliant economy to make India a global leader in telecom technology.
2. Under Digital Bharat Nidhi, the policy aims for 100% 4G & 5G coverage across the country by 2030.
3. Under PM - WANI, the policy aims to create 1 million public Wi-Fi Hotspots.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

Answer: c

Q4. Consider the following countries :

1. Laos
2. Vietnam
3. Thailand
4. Singapore
5. Myanmar

How many of the above countries share a boundary with Cambodia?

- a) Only Two
- b) Only Three
- c) Only Four
- d) All Five

Answer: b

Q5. Regarding the India - UK

Comprehensive Economic & Trade

Agreement often seen in the news,

consider the following statements:

1. The trade pact will result in a 100% cut on import tariffs which were earlier being charged by the United Kingdom on the Indian products.
2. The pact will help the United Kingdom to attract skilled labour from India under the Social Security Pact.

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





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