VAJIRAM & RAVI
Institute for IAS Examination

The Analyst

CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout

22nd August 2025

Digi Kerala mission & Digital Literacy

CONTEXT: Kerala State Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan declared Kerala as India's first totally digitally literate state.

🌐 Digi Kerala: A Digital Literacy Revolution

📊 Impact Metrics

Surveyed Households	83.45 lakh
People Surveyed	1.51 crore
Digitally Illiterate	21.88 lakh
Training Completion Rate	99% (21.87 lakh passed evaluation)
Senior Citizens Trained	7.77 lakh (60–75 yrs), 1.35 lakh (76–90 yrs), 15,221 (90+ yrs)
Gender Inclusion	13 lakh women, 8 lakh men, 1,644 transgender persons

📱 What *Digital Literacy* Covers?

- Use smartph, tabs, PC
- Internet and digital services
- Sending emails, using social media, online payments
- e-governance platforms and retrieving OTPs
- Avoiding misinformation and online fraud

🛠️ The Digi Kerala Model: A Blueprint for Success

📶 Digital Ecosystem

1. Target Group	All ages, no upper limit. Included 90+, transgenders, all socio-economic groups.
2. Curriculum	15 practical tasks in 3 modules: smartphone basics, social media, online payments & govt. services.
3. Training Army	2.57 Lakh Volunteers from NSS, Kudumbashree, library councils, SC/ST promoters.
4. Training Methods	• At MGNREGS worksites & Kudumbashree groups • Door-to-door visits • Family-led training by youth
5. Rigorous Evaluation	Volunteers evaluated trainees on performing 6 out of 15 tasks. Failures were re-trained.
6. Third-Party Audit	Evaluated by the Economics and Statistics Dept.

Demographic Breakdown of Trained Citizens:

- 👵 **Age 60–75:** 7.77 Lakh
- 👵 **Age 76–90:** 1.35 Lakh
- 👴 **Age 90+:** 15,221
- 👩 **Women:** Over 13 Lakh
- 👨 **Men:** 8 Lakh
- 🏳️‍⚧️ **Transgender** Persons: 1,644

KFON
INTERNET - A BASIC RIGHT

Digi Kerala mission & Digital Literacy

VAJIRAM & RAVI

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Pillars of Digital India

Key Milestones of the Digital India Journey

2015 Digital India Program launched by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi

2016 Launch of Bharat Interface for Money App

2017 Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN) was launched

2018 Prime Minister launched the Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA)

2019 National Policy on Electronics was approved

2020 The Aarogya Setu app was launched

2021 The Prime Minister inaugurated the "UMANG International"

2022 Government of India launched the "National Language Translation Mission"

2023 G20 was hosted by India

2024 India hosted Global India AI Summit

- 🖼 **Broadband** Highways
- 📶 Universal **Mobile Access**
- 🏠 **Public Internet** Access
- 🏛 **E-Governance**
- 🖥 **E-Kranti**
- 🖼 **Information for All**
- 📊 **Electronics** Manufacturing
- 💻 **IT** for Jobs
- 🚀 **Early Harvest** Programs

❋ Flagship Initiatives Under Digital India

Aadhaar	Biometric-based unique ID for residents.	**MyGov**	Citizen engagement in policy making.
BharatNet	Rural broadband connectivity via optical fiber.	**e-Hospital**	Online registration, appointments, and health records.
Startup India	Support ecosystem for entrepreneurs.	**SWAYAM**	Free online courses from top institutions.
e-NAM	Online agricultural market integration.	**UMANG App**	Unified access to 1000+ government services.
Digital Locker	Secure cloud storage for documents.	**Smart Cities Mission**	Tech-driven urban development.
BHIM UPI	Seamless digital payments via mobile.	**Digital India Act, 2023**	Replaces IT Act 2000; governs AI, blockchain, data protection.
eSign	Digital signature for online document authentication.		

Digi Kerala mission & Digital Literacy

CONTEXT: Kerala State Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan declared Kerala as India's first totally digitally literate state.

⚠ Challenges on the Path to a Digital India

What the Data Says

1. The Digital Divide	• **Internet Penetration**: ~47% (2021) • Rural (32%) vs. Urban (67%) divide. • Only 1.7/2.5 lakh **panchayats** connected by BharatNet (2021).
2. Digital Literacy	**Only 38%** of Indians (2022, Oxfam).
3. Cybersecurity Threats	Over 1.1 million cybersecurity incidents reported in 2020 (CERT-In).
4. Skills Gap	20% of tech professionals lack future digital skills (NASSCOM).
5. e-Governance	Service delivery and identity verification in remote areas

DIGITAL EQUALITY STILL A DREAM

OXFAM India

The Oxfam report also highlights **digital inequality based on region, income, caste and education.**

Only about **9% of students** have access to the internet

In India, **70% population** has poor or **no internet connectivity**

There's a **gap of 30%** between men and women owning phones
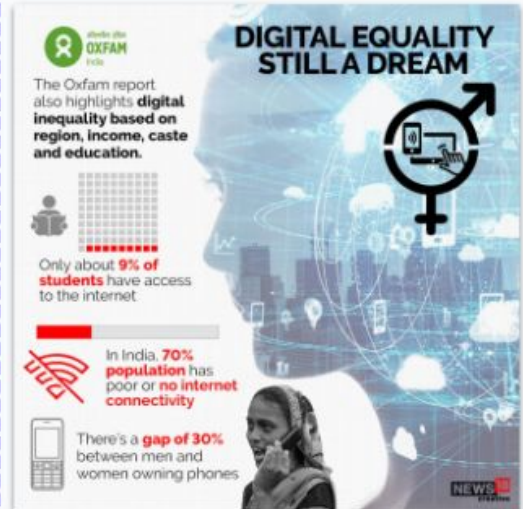
🗻 The Way Forward & Targets

Bridging the Divide	**PM-WANI** / **5G** 40% by 2025 / Complete **BharatNet**
Enhancing Literacy	Scale up **PMGDISHA** / Digital literacy into **school curricula**
Strengthening Security	**National Cyber Security Strategy** DPDP, 2023 / **50% reduction** in cyber crimes by **2026**
Skilling for Future	AI, IoT, Cybersecurity **30 mn** professionals by **2026**
Improving Governance	**DIGIKerala** / Unified digital identity for all **Govt. services**

Digi Kerala mission & Digital Literacy

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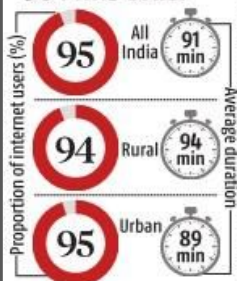## RURAL LIKELY TO DOMINATE INDIA'S INTERNET USER PIE

Internet users may go past 900 million in 2025, with more users coming from rural India, according to the Internet in India report by IAMAI and Kantar
UDISHA SRIVASTAV

2023	2024	2025
821 mn (Urban **378** mn, Rural **442** mn)	**886** mn (Urban **397** mn, Rural **488** mn)	**900** mn+

TOP ACTIVITIES ON INTERNET IN 2024

Activity	%
Users (in %)	83
OTT (audio + video)	75
Communication	74
Social media	74
Online gaming	54
Net commerce	54
Digital payment	54
Online learning	46
	3

AVERAGE TIME SPENT IN 2024: 90 MINS DAILY

Proportion of internet users (%) / Average duration

- **95** All India — **91** min
- **94** Rural — **94** min
- **95** Urban — **89** min

INTERNET PENETRATION ACROSS STATES IN 2024

■ Internet penetration (in %)

State	Internet penetration (%)	Y-o-Y user growth (%)
Kerala	72	4
Goa	71	2
Maharashtra	70	4
Jharkhand	50	13
Uttar Pradesh	46	15
Bihar	43	18

There are **870 million** internet users (98% of internet users) who have accessed internet in Indic languages in 2024

57% of internet users prefer accessing internet content in Indic languages in urban India

Source: Internet in India report

INDIA 2ND LARGEST AFTER CHINA

- **227m** Rural India
- **205m** Urban India

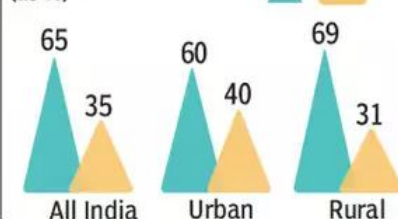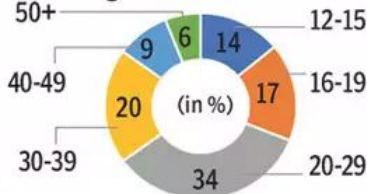**71m** kids aged between 5-11 also go online using adults' devices

- **503m** India
- **850m** China

Source: IAMAI/Nielsen

Gender Distribution (as %)

	Male	Female
All India	65	35
Urban	60	40
Rural	69	31

Age Distribution (in %)

Age group	%
12-15	14
16-19	17
20-29	34
30-39	20
40-49	9
50+	6

MAINS PRACTISE QUESTION

The Digital India initiative is one of the most ambitious and transformative governance projects ever undertaken. However, India is still a long way to way. Analyse.
(15 Marks, 250 words)

The Skills Check

VAJIRAM & RAVI

CONTEXT: India's Vocational Education and Training (VET) landscape, its challenges, and the roadmap for reform.

UPSC Skill Development UPSC PYQs

Question 1. "*Success of 'Make in India'* programme depends on the *success of 'Skill India' programme* and *radical labour reforms*." Discuss with logical arguments. (2015)

Question 2. "*Demographic Dividend in India* will remain only theoretical unless our manpower becomes more *educated, aware, skilled and creative*." What measures have been taken by the government to enhance the capacity of our population to be more productive and employable? (2016)

Question 3. "*'Earn while you learn'* scheme needs to be strengthened to make vocational education and skill training meaningful." Comment. (2021)

Key Findings from Global Reports
A. **WEF *Future of Jobs Report* 2025**

1. **Drivers of Change:**
   ○ **Technology & Digital Access (60% employers)**
   ○ **Economic Factors (50% employers)**
   ○ **Climate Change**
2. **Job Market Projections (2030):**
   ○ **New Jobs Created:** 170 mn (AI, G-energy, data)
   ○ **Jobs Displaced:** 92 mn (routine manual/clerical
3. **Skills in Demand:**
   ○ **Technical:** AI, Big Data, cybersecurity.
   ○ **Soft Skills:** EI, leadership, adaptability.
   ○ **59% of workers will need reskilling by 2030**

Future of Jobs Report 2025
WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

Fastest growing and declining jobs by 2030

↑ Top fastest growing jobs	↓ Top fastest declining jobs
1 Big data specialists	1 Postal service clerks
2 FinTech engineers	2 Bank tellers and related clerks
3 AI and machine learning specialists	3 Data entry clerks
4 Software and applications developers	4 Cashiers and ticket clerks
5 Security management specialists	5 Administrative assistants and executive secretaries
6 Data warehousing specialists	6 Printing and related trades workers
7 Autonomous and electric vehicle specialists	7 Accounting, bookkeeping and payroll clerks
8 UI and UX designers	8 Material-recording and stock-keeping clerks
9 Light truck or delivery services drivers	9 Transportation attendants and conductors
10 Internet of things specialists	10 Door-to-door sales workers, news and street vendors, and related workers
11 Data analysts and scientists	11 Graphic designers
12 Environmental engineers	12 Claims adjusters, examiners and investigators
13 Information security analysts	13 Legal officials
14 DevOps engineers	14 Legal secretaries
15 Renewable energy engineers	15 Telemarketers

Note: The jobs that survey respondents report the highest and lowest net growth (%) by 2030.
Source: World Economic Forum. (2025). *Future of Jobs Report 2025.*

The Skills Check

CONTEXT: India's Vocational Education and Training (VET) landscape, its challenges, and the roadmap for reform.

📉 India's VET: Underutilised Potential

Metric	India	Germany/ Singapore / Canada
% of education budget to VET	~3%	10-13%
Formal skill training (workforce)	4%	60-80%
Industrial Training Institutes	14,000+	Extensive dual systems
Seat utilisation (2022)	25L seats **BUT** **48%**	~90%
Employment rate (ITI grads)	63%	80-90%

Dual VET in the German Education System at a Glance
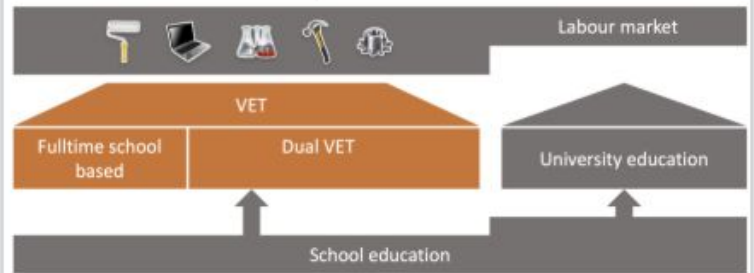
Dangerous paradox: 'Massive youth **unemployment** coexists with critical industry **skill shortages**.'

❇️ Why Is VET Underperforming?

1️⃣ Late Integration in Education

- After Class 10/12 is too late
- Makes VET a choice of last resort

2️⃣ No Pathways to Higher Education

- Outdated Curriculum
- No credit transfer / progression to university.

Singapore: Defined academic pathways via polytechnics and technical universities

3️⃣ Poor Perception & Quality

Issue	India	Singapore
Curriculum	Outdated	Industry; Reg updates
Instructors	>33% vac	Certified trainers
Feedback	Absent	Employer-trainee feedback
Upskilling	Rare	SkillFuture subsidies

📋 Weak Industry Linkages

- **MSMEs** Left Out
- Absent **Private** Engagement
- Ineffective **Sector Skill Councils**

The Skills Check

CONTEXT: India's Vocational Education and Training (VET) landscape, its challenges, and the roadmap for reform.

Government Initiatives & Programs

A. Flagship Schemes

Scheme	Focus	Impact
PMKVY	Free skill training + certification	1.4 crore trained since 2015
NAPS	Apprenticeships with industry	5 lakh apprentices/year
Green Skill (GSDP)	Environment jobs (waste management, solar)	80,000 trained

C. Institutional Support

- **NSDC** (National Skill Development Corporation): Partners with 10,000+ training centers.
- **PMKK** (Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendras): 500+ centers for industry-aligned courses

B. Sector-Specific Programs

- **Textiles**: SAMARTH (4 lakh workers trained).
- **Digital Skills**: Future Skills PRIME (AI, IoT, blockchain).
- **Minorities**: Seekho aur Kamao (2 lakh beneficiaries).

Skill India
कौशल भारत - कुशल भारत

⚠ Why Current Government Schemes Are Insufficient?

Scheme	Objective	Critical Gap
Employment Linked Incentive	Offers monetary incentives to employers for new hires registered with EPFO.	No skilling component. Incentivizes hiring, not training.
PM Internship Scheme	Provides one-year placements in top companies.	No pathway to permanent jobs; limited to top companies.
ITI Upgradation Scheme	Modernizes 1,000 govt. ITIs in partnership with industry.	Focuses on infrastructure, not necessarily training quality or curriculum.

UNION BUDGET 2024-25
MINISTRY OF FINANCE

Employment & Skilling

Prime Minister's Package: 3 schemes announced under 'Employment Linked Incentive'

Scheme A: First Timers
- Direct benefit transfer of 1-month salary in 3 installments up to ₹ 15,000 to first-time employees registered in EPFO

Scheme B: Job Creation in Manufacturing
- Incentive to be provided directly to both employee and employer as per their EPFO contribution, in the first 4 years of employment

Scheme C: Support to Employers
- Reimbursement to employers up to ₹ 3,000 per month for 2 years towards their EPFO contribution for each additional employee

@PIB_India @PIBHindi @pibindia @pibindia @pibindia @pibindia

The Skills Check

CONTEXT: India's Vocational Education and Training (VET) landscape, its challenges, and the roadmap for reform.

📈 Towards Viksit Bharat: 🗺 The Blueprint for Reform

1. Early Integration	Integrate VET into schooling system at **secondary level** (Classes 9-12) as recommended by **NEP 2020**.
2. Create Progression Pathways	Fast-track the **National Credit Framework** to allow **credit transfers** and **lateral entry** from ITIs to universities.
3. Enhance Quality & Relevance	• **Industry-led** curriculum design. • Expand **NSTIs** to fill instructor vacancies. • Strengthen **ITI grading** with trainee/employer feedback.
4. Forge Strong Industry Links	• Scale **Public-Private Partnerships**. • Leverage **CSR funds** for skilling. • Incentivize **MSMEs** to engage with ITIs.
5. Increase & Optimize Funding	• Raise VET allocation to **at least 10%** of the education budget. • Grant ITIs **financial autonomy** to generate revenue.

Mains Practise Question

An overhaul of the VET system is not just an educational reform; it is an economic and strategic imperative. Comment.
(15 Marks, 250 words)

Status of vocational training in India for 2023-24
(age group 15-59 years)

Percentage share of workforce

Did not receive any vocational/technical training	65.3
Hereditary	11.6
Learning on the job	9.3
Self learning	7.1
Received vocational training	4.1
Others	2.5

Source: Institute for Competitiveness/ Economic Survey of India 2024-25; Annual PLFS report 2023-24

The Analyst Handout
22nd August 2025

Two-Rate GST Structure Proposal

SYLLABUS : **Prelims** Economic Development **GS 3** Government Budgeting
Newspaper The Hindu **Page Number :** 01

UPSC PYQ (P) 2017

What is/are the most likely advantages of implementing 'Goods and Services Tax (GST)'?

1. It will replace multiple taxes collected by multiple authorities and will thus create a single market in India.
2. It will drastically reduce the 'Current Account Deficit' of India and will enable it to increase its foreign exchange reserves.
3. It will enormously increase the growth and size of the economy of India and will enable it to overtake China in the near future.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

🧮 Existing GST Structure

Slab	Items Covered
0%	Essential food items
5%	Basic goods/services
12%	Processed food, footwear
18%	Majority of goods/services
28%	Luxury/sin goods
+ Cess	On top of 28% for demerit goods

❌ **Confusion**, overlaps

❌ **Burden, litigation**

Classification disputes

Inverted duty

SINGAPORE	GERMANY
7%	19%
MALAYSIA	DENMARK
6%	25%
THAILAND	UK
7%	20%
INDONESIA	FRANCE
10%	20%

EXPLAINED

E.

Why the need

GST WAS introduced in July 2017. But it is riddled with a multiplicity of rates. According to the Finance Ministry, the end of compensation cess has created fiscal space, providing greater flexibility to rationalise and align tax rates within the GST framework.

Two-Rate GST Structure Proposal

SYLLABUS : **Prelims** Economic Development **GS 3** Government Budgeting
Newspaper The Hindu **Page Number :** 01

🔄 The New Proposed Structure: Multi-Tier to Two-Tier

Current	Proposed	Key Changes
0%	0% (Likely to remain)	No change for essential items.
5%	5% (Retained)	99% of items in 12% → 5% *Essentials, medicines, insurance, food items*
12%	→ To be REMOVED	
18%	18% (New Standard Rate)	90% of items in 28% → 18% *Most goods/services, electronics, cement*
28%	→ To be REMOVED	Cess→ To be ABOLISHED
N/A	<1% (New)	A new "Concessional Rate" for precious stones, rare metals? (**Speculative**).
N/A	~40% (New)	A new "Sin Rate" for only 5-7 specific demerit goods

Rate revisions

The 12% and 28% GST slabs will be done away with soon. Of these, 99% of items currently in the 12% slab will be moved to the 5% rate and 90% of goods and services in the 28% bracket will move to 18% slab

CURRENT SLABS
- 0.25% (diamonds & semi-precious stones)
- 3% (jewellery & precious metals)
- Apart from these, the slabs were 5%, 12%, 18%, 28% and compensation cess

PROPOSED SLABS
- Less than 1% (only items earlier in 0.25% and 3% slabs)
- Apart from this, the main slabs will be 5%, 18%, with a 40% rate applicable on only five to seven 'sin' goods

🏛 What is the GST Council?

Member	Role
Union Finance Minister	**Chairperson**
Union Minister of State (Finance)	Member
State Finance Ministers	Members
UT Representatives	Members (with legislature)

📋 **Decision-Making** in the GST Council

🔒 Approval requires **≥75% majority**

Quorum Requirement: ½ of total members

Meeting in the Capital Thursday, state ministers who are part of the GoM said all members supported the "pro-people" proposal. Two specific concerns, however, stood out: whether there will be any institutional mechanism to compensate states for revenue loss; and whether the benefits from GST rate cuts will percolate to the ultimate beneficiary – the common person.

Some states were also of the view that the work done by the GoM over the last few years will now essentially be wasted as they would be simply handing over the Centre's proposal to the GST Council.

"We have neither approved nor rejected it. Centre cannot give its proposal directly to the Council, so we will be just handing over the Centre's proposal to the Council," a top state government official told *The Indian Express.*

Lipulekh Dispute

🗺️ The Lipulekh Pass Dispute

Uttarakhand's **Pithoragarh district**

Nepal claims **Kalapani, Lipulekh, and Limpiyadhura**

Route for **Kailash Mansarovar Yatra**

- ◆ **Treaty of Sugauli** (1816)
  - West of Kali (Mahakali/Sarada) River
  - **DISPUTE**: River's source.

Nepal's Claim	India's Claim
The Kali River originates from **Limpiyadhura**, far to the northwest. Thus, **Lipulekh, Limpiyadhura,** and **Kalapani** lie to the **east of the river and are part of Nepal.**	The Kali River originates from springs **much below the Kalapani springs.** British-era **administrative and revenue records show Kalapani has always been part of India's Pithoragarh district.**

1954 → **1962** (ITBP) → **2015** (India & China trade; Nepal protests) → **2019** (New political map) → **2020** (Nepal's Constitution) → **2025** (Ind–Ch border trade talks)

Strategic Importance for India 🇮🇳

🚧 *Military Significance*

- Vantage point (20,000 ft) → observation post on **China border**.
- Key for **border infrastructure & LAC readiness**.

🏞️ *Infrastructure & Connectivity*

- **BRO road (2020)**: 80 km route → Kailash Mansarovar.
- Cuts Chinese dependency: Pilgrims travel mostly on **Indian roads (84%)**, less on Chinese soil.

📈 *Trade*

- India's **earliest border posts with China** (Shipki La, Nathu La).

🕉️ *Religious Importance*

- Route for **Kailash Mansarovar Yatra**.
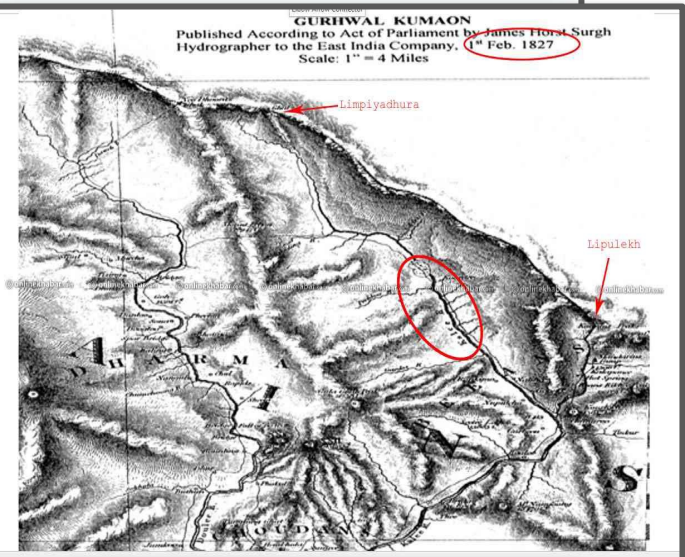
CN The Crucial China Angle: *The Third Player*

- **Strategic Posturing** to needle India
- **Influence** in Nepal
- **India's "Proxy" Allegation** in 2020, then-Indian Army Chief
- Chinese media (Global Times) advised "*neutrality*"

Way Forward ✅

- 2000 Vajpayee–Koirala understanding
- Use **BIMSTEC, BBIN**
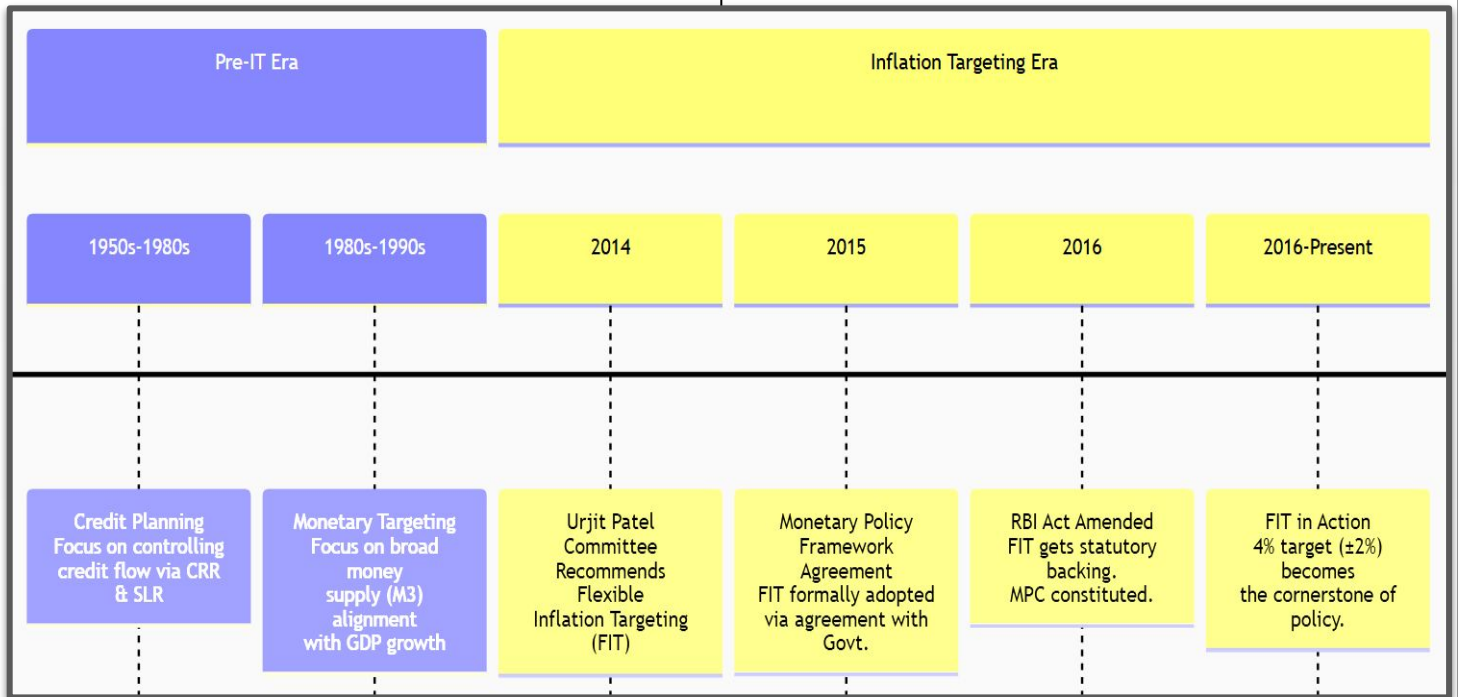- **Development partnerships**
- **Confidence-building**

RBI's Monetary Policy Framework Review

⚖️ The Current Monetary Policy Framework

Pre-IT Era		Inflation Targeting Era			
1950s-1980s	1980s-1990s	2014	2015	2016	2016-Present
Credit Planning Focus on controlling credit flow via CRR & SLR	Monetary Targeting Focus on broad money supply (M3) alignment with GDP growth	Urjit Patel Committee Recommends Flexible Inflation Targeting (FIT)	Monetary Policy Framework Agreement FIT formally adopted via agreement with Govt.	RBI Act Amended FIT gets statutory backing. MPC constituted.	FIT in Action 4% target (±2%) becomes the cornerstone of policy.

✅ Reduced **Inflation** & **Volatility**

✅ **Macroeconomic** Stability

✅ Enhanced **RBI Credibility**

✅ Informed **Policy Decisions**

🎯 What is **Inflation Targeting**?

2016: Section 45ZA of the RBI Act, 1934

The RBI formally adopted the flexible inflation targeting framework in late 2016. As per the framework agreed with the central government, the target is valid for a period of five years, after which it must be reviewed.

the medium-term target for the RBI has been 4 per cent in terms of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation, within a band of 2-6 per cent.

The target, which is valid until March 2026, must be notified again for the five-year period starting April 2026. Earlier this

❓ The Big Questions: What's Under Review?

Questions	RBI's Leaning
1. Headline vs. Core Inflation?	Strongly in favour of **Headline CPI**.
2. Is 4% the Optimal Target?	Yes, 4% is optimal. Raising it could hurt credibility.
3. Revise the 2–6% Band?	Suggests the current band is appropriate.
4. Target a Range Instead of a Point?	Implicitly supports retaining the point target of 4%.

Type	Definition	Pros	Cons
Headline CPI	Includes all items (food, fuel, etc.)	Reflects **actual cost of living**	Volatile due to supply shocks
Core CPI	Excludes food & fuel	More **stable**, demand-driven	Ignores key price pressures for citizens

"India's inflation targeting framework should consider targeting inflation, excluding food. Higher food prices are, more often, not demand-induced but supply-induced. Short-run monetary policy tools are meant to counteract price pressures arising out of excess aggregate demand growth," the Survey had argued.

However, the RBI under the then Governor, Shaktikanta Das, had fought back, saying that food prices could not be ignored by the monetary authority.

TREND IN FOOD AND CORE INFLATION
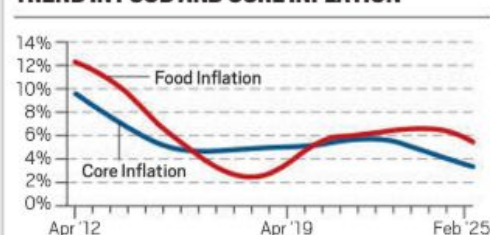
Source: Reserve Bank of India

⚠️ Why RBI is Against Changing the Target

Credibility is Paramount	Hard-earned **reputation, foreign investment**
Global Uncertainty	**Geo-economic** fragmentation
S&P's Endorsement	(to **BBB**) specifically praised India's inflation management
The Danger of "Second-Round Effects"	**Supply-shocks**
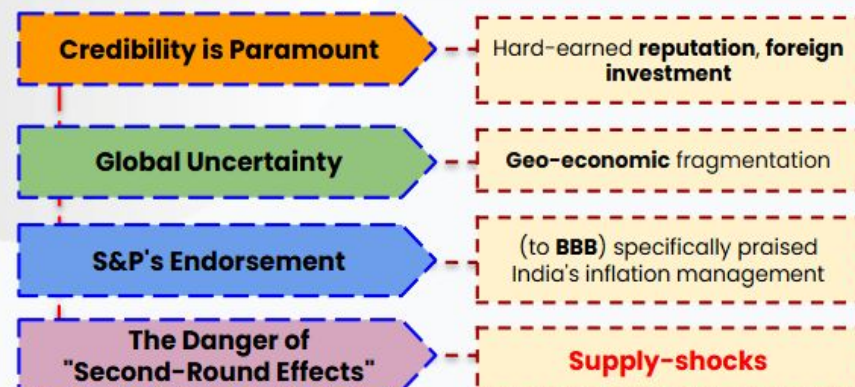
RBI's View on Food Inflation

What happens if high food inflation persists, even if caused by supply shocks?

It spills over into core inflation through higher wage demands, higher costs for businesses, and inflation expectations.

Why is ignoring food and fuel inflation risky?

Because you ignore the seed that can grow into generalized inflation.

📉 Inflation Trends (2014–2025)

Headline CPI	1.5% − 8.6%
Food Inflation	−2.7% to 14.2%
Core Inflation	Relatively stable
July 2025 CPI	Headline: **1.55%** (8-year low), Core: **4.1%**

## 🐘 About National Tiger Conservation Authority

- Tiger Task Force, Dec 2005
- **TRs** administered by **field directors** mandated by NTCA
- No alteration in the boundaries of TRs w/o **NTCA** recommendation + **NBW** approval

NTCA members

- Chairmanship u/ Minister MoEFCC
- 8 Experts
- 3 MPs
- Member Secretary: **Inspector-General of Forests**, in charge of project Tiger

🧭 What Are Tiger Corridors?

Tiger corridors are vital wildlife pathways that connect tiger habitats, enabling animal movement, gene flow, and long term survival. Under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, development projects requiring land in or around tiger reserves or corridors require statutory clearance from the standing committee of the National Board for Wildlife (SC-NBWL).
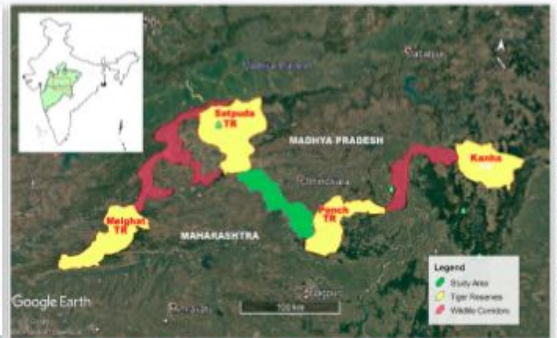
June 25, 2025	Bombay HC issues **notice to NTCA** over Maharashtra's corridor approval policy.
July 25, 2025	NTCA affidavit cites **six benchmarks** for corridor identification.
Aug 21, 2025	**NTCA reverses stance**, limits corridors to 2014 pathways and Tiger Conservation Plans.

⚖️ The Controversy: NTCA's Narrowed Definition

benchmarks for defining tiger corridors:
- Protected Areas occupied by tigers,
- Least cost pathways identified in 2014,
- Corridors marked in Tiger Conservation Plans (TCPs) of each reserve,
- Corridors identified by Wildlife Institute of India (WII) — "Tiger corridors of eastern Vidarbha landscape" — in 2016,
- Corridors identified by WII — "Telemetry based tiger corridors of Vidarbha" landscape" — in 2021, and
- Distribution of tigers based on quadrennial all-India Tiger Estimations (AITEs)

Then (NTCA's in July 2025)	Now (NTCA's in August 2025)
In its Bombay HC affidavit, NTCA listed multiple, robust parameters to define a corridor:	In its new clarification, NTCA has limited the definition to **only**:
1. Protected Areas with tigers	1. 2014 Least Cost Pathways (32 corridors)
2. 2014 Least Cost Pathways (32 corridors)	2. Corridors in Tiger Conservation Plans (TCPs)
3. Corridors in Tiger Conservation Plans (TCPs)	
4. WII Study, 2016 (Eastern Vidarbha)	It has excluded the newer WII studies (2016, 2021) and the critical AITE data.
5. WII Study, 2021 (Telemetry-based, Vidarbha)	
6. All-India Tiger Estimation (AITE) data	

NTCA & Tiger corridors

🏭 The Beneficiaries

- Western Coalfields Limited
- Lloyds Metals & Energy Ltd

GREEN SIGNAL, RED ALERT

➤ Durgapur extension opencast mine is just 12.25km away from Tadoba

➤ 80.77 ha area is a reserve forest for which extension has been recommended by state

➤ State Board for Wildlife granted wildlife clearance on Aug 12

➤ WCL asked to implement mitigation measures in consultation with WII, Dehradun

➤ WCL plans to mine 15.20 MT of coal from the forest area, equivalent to 182 football fields

➤ Out of 15.20 MT, 7.20 MT coal mined during 2005-2013

➤ WCL says it needs to extract 8 MT of coal reserves that are still to be mined and hence need extension

➤ Proposed area is rich in wildlife and its loss may increase man-animal conflicts

📖 The Scientific Counter

LRC Foundation Study: 192 corridors in 10 states @30TRs + 150 protected areas

This July, researchers from Nagpur-based LRC Foundation applied contemporary Circuitscape modelling, which reflects multiple probable paths of animal movement—not just the "shortest route" – to come up with 192 corridors form a dense network across 10 central Indian states, enabling tiger movement across 30 tiger reserves and around 150 protected areas.

Central Consumer Protection Authority

🏛 What is the CCPA?

🏛 Under **Sec 10** of *Consumer Protection Act, 2019*, replaced 1986 Act

🏛 **Nodal Ministry**: *Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution*.

🏛 **HQ**: Located in **New Delhi**.

- consumer rights are safe and secure
- companies follow the rules set out in Consumer Protection Act
- Speedy and effective redressal if consumer grievances

👥 Composition of CCPA

Chief Commissioner

Two Commissioners:

- One for **goods-related issues**.
- One for **services-related complaints**.

HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 21

THE CENTRAL Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA), the country's top consumer watchdog, has slapped a penalty of Rs 10 lakh on Rapido for "misleading" and "unfair" trade practices.

CCPA, headed by Chief Commissioner Nidhi Khare, had taken suo motu cognisance of Rapido's two "misleading" ad campaigns — 'Guaranteed Auto' and 'AUTO IN 5 MIN OR GET ₹50' — and asked it to "discontinue" them immediately.

"It may be noted Rapido offers its services in over 120 cities, and the impugned advertisement ran for at least 548 days — in multiple regional languages across India....," the CCPA order, issued on Wednesday, read.

It further noted: "Discontinue the misleading advertisement with immediate effect. In light of the nature of the violations detailed in the foregoing paragraphs,

⚖ Powers and Functions

Investigative Authority	Has an **Investigation Wing** headed by a **Director-General** to probe violations.
Class-Action Suits	Can initiate actions for **recalls**, **refunds**, or **license cancellations** affecting groups of consumers.
Regulatory Oversight	Can **order discontinuation** of unfair practices and **impose penalties**.
Advisory Role	Advises ministries and departments on **consumer welfare measures**.
Safety Alerts	Issues **notices** against hazardous goods/services.
Research & Awareness	Promotes **research** and **education** on consumer rights.
International Engagement	Recommends adoption of **global consumer rights covenants**.

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. BHIM UPI enables digital transactions through biometric authentication only.
2. eSign enables the use of digital signatures for authenticating online documents.

Which of the above given statements 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 World Economic Forum Future of Jobs Report 2025:

1. 60% of employers identified Technology & Digital Access as a key driver of change.
2. Economic Factors were cited by 70% of employers as a major influence.
3. Climate Change is considered one of the contributing factors to job market transformation.

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

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

Answer: b

Q3. Consider the following statements regarding the functioning of the GST Council:

1. A quorum requires the presence of half of the total members.
2. For any decision to be approved by the Council, a majority of 50% is sufficient.
3. Decision-making in the GST Council requires a minimum 90% majority approval.

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 statements regarding the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA):

1. The NTCA is chaired by the Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
2. The Member Secretary of NTCA is the Chief Wildlife Warden of India.
3. NTCA includes 8 expert members and 3 Members of Parliament.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
a) 1 and 2 only
b) 2 only
c) 2 and 3 only
d) 1 and 3 only

Answer: d

Q5. Consider the following statements regarding the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA):

1. It was established under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, which replaced the 1986 Act.
2. The CCPA falls under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Which of the above given statements is/are NOT correct?
a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both 1 and 2
d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: b

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