



VAJIRAM & RAVI
Institute for IAS Examination

The Analyst

CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout

29th January 2026



Urbanisation and the Question of Inclusivity



CONTEXT: An Article in IE, reflecting on the Issue of Urbanisation getting political attention, we present a comprehensive lowdown on the issue of Inclusivity in urban Areas.

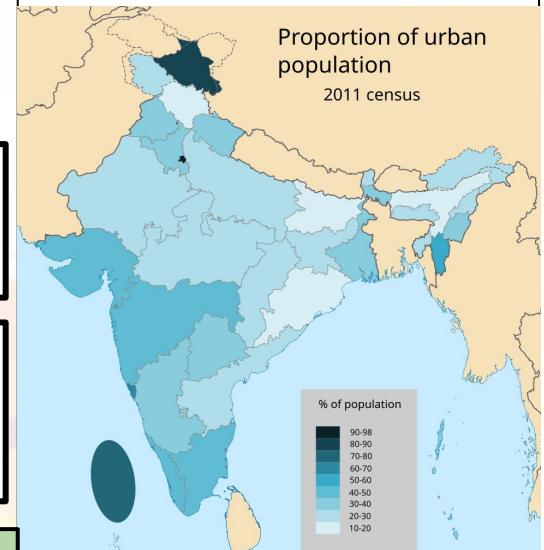
MAINS PYQ 2023 AND 2025 : Same same but different

18. क्या भारतीय महानगरों में शहरीकरण गरीबों को और भी अधिक पृथक्करण और/या हाशिए पर ले जाता है? (उत्तर 250 शब्दों में दीजिए)

Does urbanization lead to more segregation and/or marginalization of the poor in Indian metropolises? (Answer in 250 words) 15

8. भारत में स्मार्ट शहर, शहरी गरीबी और वितरणात्मक न्याय के मुद्दों को कैसे संबोधित करता है? (उत्तर 150 शब्दों में दीजिए)

How does smart city in India, address the issues of urban poverty and distributive justice? (Answer in 150 words) 10



Significance of Urbanisation

- India is the **second largest urban** system in the world – 11% of the total global urban population living in Indian cities. (Niti Aayog)
- City contributes – 60 % GDP – 3% land area.
- Centre of Eminence – Institutions
- Acculturation Role; Social mobility
- Raising Living standards – The average MPCE in rural and urban India in 2023-24 has been estimated to be Rs. 4,122 and Rs. 6,996, respectively
- Future of Growth

Implementing the Smart City Mission is carried out primarily through

Two Approaches

1st

Under the Smart Cities Mission, cities are being developed using an **Area-Based Development (ABD)** approach, where each of the 100 cities has selected a defined area for targeted interventions. These ABD areas, chosen through citizen participation, are being developed as replicable models for other parts of the city.



2nd

Every city has included **Pan-City Projects**, which are technology-driven solutions.



In India, an area is classified as urban based on specific criteria:

Criteria for Census Towns

- ✓ Minimum population of 5,000
- ✓ At least 75% of the male workforce engaged in non-agricultural activities.
- ✓ Population density of at least 400 people per square kilometer.

India's Urban Transition

- India had a population of 1210 million in 2011, with an urbanisation rate of 31.1%.



All India	Rural to rural	Urban to rural	Rural to urban	Urban to urban
Person	55.0	10.2	18.9	15.9



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JNNURM: Urban Rejuvenation Mission

LAUNCHED: 2005

DURATION: 7 Years (Extended to March 2014)

CORE OBJECTIVES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban Infrastructure Slum Development & Housing Urban Governance Reforms Community Participation

KEY FOCUS AREAS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water Supply & Sanitation Severeag & Drainage Solid Waste Management Roads & Flyovers Affordable Housing

GOVERNANCE REFORMS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> E-Governance Decentralization (74th CAA) Resource Moblization Transparency & Acoartaiblity

FUNDING & IMPLEMENTATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central Govt. Sponsored Grant-based (Centre-State Share) Upto 50-90% Central Share City-Level Reform MoUs

REPLACED BY: AMRUT & Smart Cities Mission (2015)

UPSC
UPSC Prelims Factsheet

Political Focus shift, But challenges remain.

- Overcrowding** – Housing Shortage : MoHUA 2018 – 20 Mn. shortfall of Housing unit.
 - Slum Creation** – Census 2011 – 17.3 % popu in slums, Creation of **vicious** cycle
- Environmental Challenges** – Pollution, Resources – Aravali,
- Infrastructural Bottlenecks** –
- Inequality – Urban crime – social Challenge**
- According to the NCRB **Crime in India 2023** report, urban crime in 19 major Indian metropolitan cities surged by 10.6% compared to 2022, with a total of 9,44,291 cognizable crimes registered, **Variety**
- Question on Sustainability** –

AMRUT |

First Water-focused Mission launched on 25th June, 2015
Universal water supply, improvement in sewerage & septage management in 500 Mission cities.

Project Components

- Water Supply
- Sewerage & Septage Management
- Storm Water Drainage
- Non Motorized Urban Transport
- Green Spaces & Perks

Allocation: ₹77,640 Crore

Source- MoHUA

Causes of Issues

- Planning** – 65% of the 7933 urban settlements do not have any master plan.
- Political** – Prioritisation of Market led development
- Urban Apathy** –
- Structural issues**
 - lack of Decentralisation.
 - Lack of sustainable finances for urban india –
 - Own revenues of ULBs account for only ~30–35% of total municipal receipts
 - Lack of Diversification
 - Missing Capacity building**
- Implementation** issues of schemes Smart city –



Urbanisation and the Question of Inclusivity



CONTEXT: An Article in IE, reflecting on the Issue of Urbanisation getting political attention, we present a comprehensive lowdown on the issue of Inclusivity in urban Areas.

The Nehruvian vision of dams and heavy industry, which displaced communities of tribals and farmers, has been succeeded by the glass tower-and-highway, corporate-friendly path taken by post-liberalisation India. The latter has a greater reach and a more sweeping mandate that is opening up new fault lines closer to home.

In the last few weeks alone, we have seen agitations against the commercial exploitation of the Aravalli hills, concern over the Great Nicobar Island Development Project and complaints of poor pay and endangerment by gig workers against service aggregators.

Way Forward for Resilient sustainable urban India

- Investments** - (~USD 840 billion by 2036) to meet the demands of its fast-growing urban population –
 - Transit oriented development – walkable living spaces
- Satellite** cities to decongest eg.
- Organic but **planned** redevelopment – of villages to city with focus on new economic opportunities.
Eg. **Hauz Khas** Village, Shahpur Jat village.
- Cues from Global case studies.**
Eg. – Baan Mankong Project Thailand Indian Suitability

- Political Empowerment of Urban Governance**
- Participatory Leadership** – UN Habitat Report 2017 – “**Cities Alive**” – Women
- Social Movements** –
- Environment at the centre**

What Can We Learn from Thailand's Inclusive Approach to Upgrading Informal Settlements?

By Emily Norford and Terra Virsila May 12, 2016



Housing along the canals in Bangkok. Photo by Alex Berger/Flickr

#GirlsatDhabas: How Eating In Public Became a Thing in Pakistan

The photograph shows a truck stop on the outskirts of Karachi, Pakistan's largest and most violent city.



Mains Practise Question

Question : Despite being engines of economic growth, Indian cities remain deeply unequal and exclusionary.” Critically examine the major challenges to social and economic inclusivity in urban India.
(15 Marks, 250 words)



India, the beautiful : Tourism sector in India



CONTEXT: Recent Write up on Indian tourism, allows a closer look at the challenges and potential of India's Tourism sector.

• Reflection in past PYQs

Q.2 "While we flaunt India's demographic dividend, we ignore the dropping rates of employability." What are we missing while doing so? Where will the **jobs** that India desperately needs come from? Explain. (200 words, 12.5 marks)

Q.2 Terrorist activities and mutual distrust have clouded India – Pakistan relation. To what extent the use of **soft** power like sports and culture exchange could help generate goodwill between the two countries. Discuss with suitable examples. [200 Words, 12.5 Marks]

Q.6 The state of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand are reaching the limits of ecological carrying capacity due to **tourism**. Critically Evaluate. [200 Words, 12.5 Marks]



Andaman and Nicobar Islands | Adventure

Adventure sports in and around Sri Vijaya Puiram: Thrills amidst nature's...



Andhra Pradesh | Adventure

The 8 best adventure sports in and around Visakhapatnam



Arunachal Pradesh | Nature

Likabali to Mechuka - A journey through Arunachal Pradesh's...



Guwahati | Spiritual

8 Hours in Guwahati – The pictures capture the candidness of this...

Facts of the matter :

- Inbound vs Outbound** – As on June 2025, inbound tourism stood at **16.5 lakh visitors**, while outbound tourism was recorded at 84.4 lakh travellers.
- Total Arrival – 56 lakh – till August 2025, Singapore – 116**
- Foreign Exchange earning – 2022 – 17.6 Bn\$; Thailand – 60 bn\$**



Maldives is the new Mumbai, but why is it Bollywood's favourite travel destination?



CONTEXT: Recent Write up on Indian tourism, allows a closer look at the challenges and potential of India's Tourism sector.

Facts of the matter :

- **GDP Contribution** overall – 5.1 % – 15.73 lakh crore ; 1766 Mn. Domestic
- **Jobs** – Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), the sector generated 36.90 million direct employments and 47.72 million indirect employments, together accounting for 13.34% of total employment in the economy.
- **Domestic** – UP and Tamil Nadu
- **Foreign Tourist** – Gj and Maharashtra



Woman raped by five men at dhaba near Green Line station in Bahadurgarh

Samad Hoque / Updated: Jan 15, 2026, 22:10 IST

Comments Share AA

Gurgaon: A 42-year-old woman was allegedly gangraped at a deserted roadside dhaba in Bahadurgarh early on Monday by a group of men who had followed the bus she was travelling in. Four of the

Root cause of Problems

1. Infrastructure Deficit – Poor last-mile connectivity and inadequate urban amenities at tourist destinations reduce visitor experience.

2. Governance & Coordination Gaps

-Tourism being a State subject leads to fragmented planning and weak Centre-State execution.

Taxation

3. Skill & Service Quality Issue –Shortage of trained hospitality workers and guides lowers service standards and repeat tourism.

4. Safety & Perception Concerns – Issues related to safety, hygiene, and overcrowding negatively impact India's global tourism image.

5. Limited Marketing & Product Diversity –

Over-reliance on few tourist circuits and weak promotion of niche tourism restrict growth potential



Female Korean Travel Blogger Says 'I Hate India' | Korean YouTuber Emotional Truth

1.8K views • 2 months ago

Laughing Nomads

A female Korean travel blogger arrived in India expecting a colorful and memorable journey, but her trip quickly turned into one of

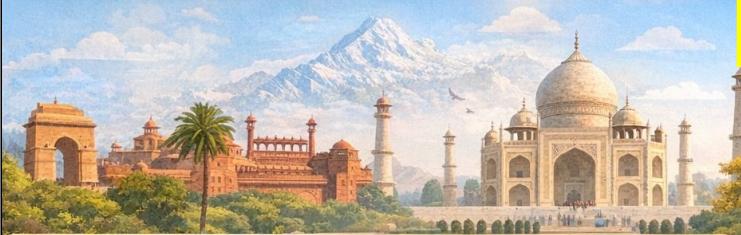


India, the beautiful : Tourism sector in India



CONTEXT: Recent Write up on Indian tourism, allows a closer look at the challenges and potential of India's Tourism sector.

Major Schemes for Tourism Sector



PRASHAD (Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Heritage Augmentation Drive)

Develops pilgrimage site to provide world-class amenities and infrastructure.



Swadesh Darshan

Creates themed tourist circuits for integrated, heritage-rich experiences



Incredible India 2.0

Promotes India as a unique cultural and heritage destination to domestic and international tourists.



Dekho Apna Desh

Encourages domestic tourism through initiatives and awareness campaigns.



MICE Tourism (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Exhibitions)

Boosts business travel by providing support for hosting events and conferences.



NIDHI (National Integrated Database of Hospitality Industry)

Collects data on tourism infrastructure to aid in policies and planning.



Other steps -

Regional Connectivity - UDAN, Vande Bharat

Luxury travel - Palace on wheels

Suggestions to make India - appealing

- **Marketing the Niche**
- **Newer promotion** – Taglines – Experience the Infinite
- **Involving Locals** and creation of Decentralised tourism –
- Standardising the service sector
- **Bridging Infra Gap** WB report. – by Investment – PPP, AMP
- Tourist friendly **Immigration policy**
- **Sustainable Tourism**

country is impossible. We must segment our appeal – Spiritual India, Adventure India, Luxury India – and market each with clarity and conviction to different audiences abroad. It is time for 'Incredible Indias', in the plural, to be sold to the world. The Buddhist circuit, the Ramayana circuit, even the cricketing circuit should all be marketed to appropriate foreign constituencies.

Mains Practise Question

Question : Despite immense cultural, natural, and historical assets, India's tourism sector has not realised its full potential." Analyse the key challenges faced by the tourism sector in India and suggest measures to unlock its growth potential.

(15 Marks, 250 words)



President's Address to the Parliament



SYLLABUS: Prelims: Indian Polity

GS Paper : 2 – Executive; **Newspaper:** Indian Express; **Page Number:** 6

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS: ARTICLE 87

The Voice of the Government

KEY DETAILS

- CONSTITUTIONAL BASIS: Article 87
- MANDATE: President addresses both Houses assembled together
- WHEN: First session after each General Election + First session of year (Budget Session)
- NATURE: Not personal views; Statement of Government Policy
- DRAFTED BY: Council of Ministers; Approved by Cabinet

FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURE

- MOTION OF THANKS: 
- Moved & Debated in both Lok Sabha & Rajya Sabha
- AMENDMENTS 
- Members may propose changes
- CRITICAL: Defeat in Sabha = Lack of Confidence in Govt. 

New Delhi's emergence as a global economic force despite "various global crises."

Murmu said the world was passing through "a phase of complexities" where "long-standing global equations are also undergoing change," and that conflicts were straining global stability and the economy. Against this backdrop, she projected India as a stabilising force, stating that "India is playing the role of a bridge in the world," and that "even nations engaged in conflict, express their trust in India on important issues."

Murmu described India as the "fastest growing major economy in the world," with inflation

under control. Apart from the FTA, she referred to GST and income tax reforms, saying, "A historic decision has been taken to exempt income up to Rs 12 lakh from taxation."

President Murmu also talked about the VBRAM G Act, which drew audible protests from Opposition. "For employment and development in rural areas, a law named Viksit Bharat G RAM G has been enacted. This new law will ensure 125 days of guaranteed employment in villages," she said, adding that it would also ensure "stopping corruption and leakages."

Underlining the importance of agriculture, she quoted Tamil poet-saint Thiruvalluvar, saying, "Irrespective of their vocations in society, the life of every

of Tamilnadu
OPMENT AND

Constitutional Basis

- Provided under **Article 87 of the Indian Constitution**, Governor - 176 President addresses **both Houses of Parliament assembled together**

When is it delivered?

- First session after each General Election and First session of every year** (Budget Session)

Nature of the Address

- Not the President's personal views**
- Reflects the **polices and programmes of the Council of Ministers**

Who drafts it?

- Drafted by the **Council of Ministers** Approved by the **Cabinet**

Follow-up Procedure

- Motion of Thanks moved in **both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha**
- Members may propose **amendments but** Defeat of Motion of Thanks = **Lack of confidence in the government**



SYLLABUS: Prelims: Indian Polity

GS Paper : 2 – Executive; Newspaper: Indian Express; **Page Number:** 6

individual is dependent on the arduous labour of a hard-working farmer." She also cited the message of Kerala reformer Sree Narayana Guru: "Acquire knowledge through education and become powerful through organisation." The references come ahead of elections in Tamil Nadu and Kerala, states where cultural idioms often carry political weight.

Assam and the Northeast, also electorally significant, featured prominently. Murmu said, "Soon, a semiconductor chip manufactured in Assam will become a lifeline for electronic products worldwide," and highlighted rail, road and health infrastructure, including the State Cancer Institute in Itanagar and a medical college in Sivasagar.

Referring to cross-border terrorism, the President said the world had witnessed "the valour and prowess of the Indian Defence Forces during Operation Sindoar." She added, "Using its own resources, our country destroyed the base camps of terrorists. My government sent a strong message that any terrorist attack on India will receive a firm and decisive response." She linked the "suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty" to India's fight against terrorism and said "Mission Sudarshan Chakra is in progress to further strengthen" defence systems.

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Tirukkural (Tamil: "Sacred Couplets") also called Kural, is a classic Tamil text written by **Thiruvalluvar**, believed to have lived sometime between the **2nd century BCE and the 5th century CE**.

- It has had an immense influence on Tamil culture and life.
- It is a collection of 1,330 couplets (kurals) that offer timeless wisdom on various aspects of life, including ethics, governance, love, and spirituality.
- **Sree Narayana Guru** (20 August 1856 – 20 September 1928) was a saint, philosopher, spiritual leader, and social reformer from Kerala.
- The Guru was born into an Ezhava family
- Philosophy: **"One Caste, One Religion, One God for Mankind"** and is a core message advocated by Shri Narayana Guru.
- Later changed by **Sahodaran Ayyapan**
- **Aruvippuram Movement (1888)**: Sree Narayana Guru consecrated a Shiva idol at Aruvippuram, Kerala – symbolising resistance against social injustice..
- Under the Indian Companies Act, the **Sri Narayana Guru Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNDP)** was established in 1903.
- The Guru also led the 'Vaikom Satyagraha' protest movement against caste discrimination, untouchability, and inequality

≡  Search

THE  HINDU

Karnataka Governor likely to skip portions of text in his address to State legislature

Thaawarchand Gehlot has expressed reservations over 11 paragraphs in the speech prepared by the Congress government in Karnataka; these paragraphs include strong criticism of the Central government for introducing the VB-G RAM G Act



Rajasthan brings Law against Honour killing



SYLLABUS: Prelims: New legislations, Society; **GS Paper : 1** Caste System; Paper : 2 - Rights issue; **Newspaper:** The Indian Express; **Page Number:** Page 6

- Honour Killing = **Honour killing** (also known as custom killing or shame killing) is an extreme form of violence, typically murder, committed by family or community members against a relative—most often a woman—who is perceived to have brought "dishonour" upon the family, clan, or community.
- Faulty definition
- Reasons for rejection - provision already exist
 - Section 103 - BNS = Murder

had been cited in the case of The Rajasthan Protection from Lynching Bill, 2019, with the government saying that BNS Sections 117 (voluntarily causing grievous hurt) and 189 (unlawful assembly) are sufficient to deal with such an act.

The Bill had made lynching a cognisable, non-bailable and non-compoundable offence punishable with life imprisonment and a fine of up to Rs 5 lakh.

In its grounds, the state government said that the Bill deals with certain sections of the IPC and CrPC, both of which have now been repealed. Additionally, the government said that Section 103 of the BNS, 2023, is sufficient to deal with honour killing. As per BNS Section 103,

murder is punishable by death or imprisonment for life, as well as a fine.

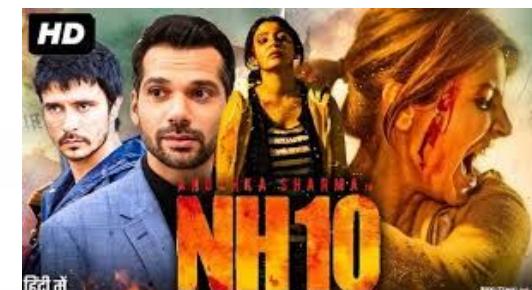
- **Real and portrayed in reel as well**
- **Indian - Manoj and Babli, Nitish Katara**
- **Global - Qandeel Baloch**
- **Fundamental Right : Right to choose**
 - **Shafin Jahan Vs KM ashokan**
- **SC guidelines -**
- **No right to marry - Supriyo Chakrabarty**

Five years after Supreme Court's direction, Maharashtra issues guidelines to prevent honour killings and mob lynching

Police have been instructed to be on the alert and respond quickly

Published - October 21, 2022 09:34 pm IST - Mumbai

THE HINDU BUREAU



Visit >



SYLLABUS: Prelims: International Groupings; GS Paper 2 : IR
Newspaper: The Indian Express; Page Number: 10

Jaishankar to attend minerals meet hosted by Rubio on Feb 4

Shubhajit Roy
New Delhi, January 28

IN WHAT will be External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's first visit to the US this year, he will travel to Washington DC for the inaugural Critical Minerals Ministerial meeting on February 4, sources said.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio is hosting the inaugural Critical Minerals Ministerial to strengthen global supply chain cooperation. The meeting focuses on securing resilient supply chains for critical minerals essential to national security and energy transition.

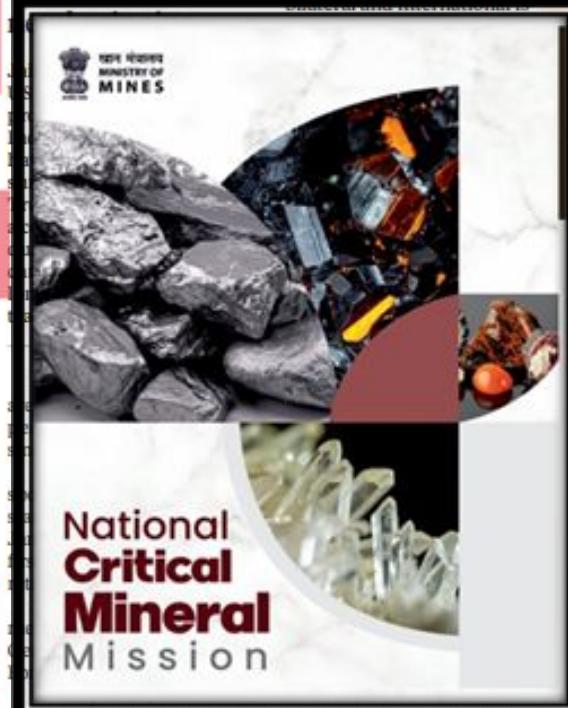
While the ministerial meeting will be the ostensible reason, it will also be an opportunity for the two ministers to repair strained ties.

This follows a conversation between Jaishankar and Rubio on January 13, when they had discussed a possible meeting in February. An invitation followed after the phone call.

Earlier this month, US Ambassador Sergio Gor had said that India would be invited to the US-led strategic initiative Pax Silica. In their conversation, Jaishankar and Rubio had discussed bilateral trade negotiations, critical minerals, defence, nuclear cooperation, energy and a possible meeting next month.

E. EXPLAINED

Promise of a



foreign ministers' meeting.

In September 2025, in their first meeting after the Trump

administration levied 50 per cent tariffs on India and decided to impose a \$100,000 fee for H-1B visa applicants, their conversation covered a range of

release the tension in the relationship even as two sides continue negotiating a trade deal.

- **What it is:** US-led ministerial-level international forum on critical minerals
- **Launched by:** United States Department of Energy (DoE) - NOT UN
- **Nature:** Non-treaty, voluntary cooperation platform
- **Objective:** Secure reliable, diversified, and resilient supply chains of critical minerals
- **Why important:** Critical minerals are essential for
 - Clean energy transition (EVs, batteries, solar, wind)
 - Defence & strategic technologies
 - Advanced electronics & semiconductors

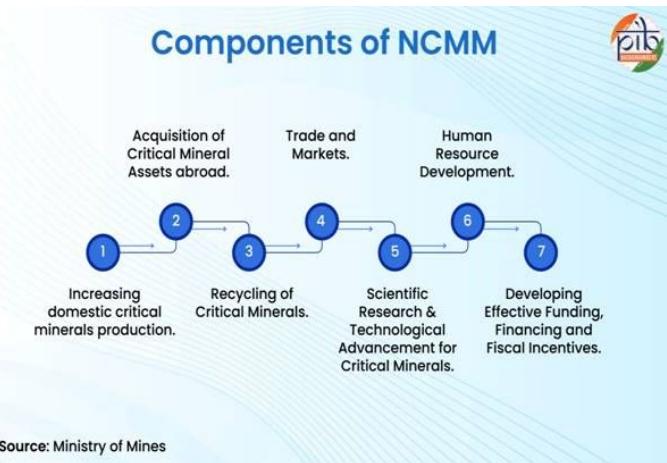


Critical Minerals Ministerial



SYLLABUS: Prelims: International Groupings; GS Paper 2 : IR
Newspaper: The Indian Express; Page Number: 10

- Key minerals covered:**
Lithium, Cobalt, Nickel, Graphite, Rare Earth Elements (REEs)
- Participants include:**
USA, India, Australia, Canada, Japan, South Korea, EU countries
- Linked initiatives:**
 - Minerals Security Partnership (MSP)
 - QUAD cooperation on critical minerals
- INDIA's NCMM** - January 2025, India responded with the **National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM)**, launched for a period of seven years from **2024-25 to 2030-31**,
- with a proposed expenditure of **Rs.16,300 crore** and an expected investment of **Rs.18,000 crore** by Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) and other stakeholders



Countries identify minerals critical for them based on their national priorities. In 2023, the Ministry of Mines, released a list of 30 critical minerals for India. These minerals are Antimony, Beryllium, Bismuth, Cobalt, Copper, Gallium, Germanium, Graphite, Hafnium, Indium, Lithium, Molybdenum, Niobium, Nickel, PGE, Phosphorous, Potash, REE, Rhenium, Silicon, Strontium, Tantalum, Tellurium, Tin, Titanium, Tungsten, Vanadium, Zirconium, Selenium and Cadmium.

Why Critical Minerals Matter for India's Clean Energy Future

Critical minerals sit at the heart of India's energy transition, powering technologies from solar panels to electric vehicles. Their role cuts across key sectors. As demand surges, these resources are emerging as the foundation of a stronger strategic future.

- Solar Energy**
Photovoltaic cells, the heart of solar panels, depend on elements like silicon, tellurium, indium, and gallium to turn sunlight into electricity. India's solar power capacity, now at **64 GW**, leans heavily on these critical minerals, driving the nation's solar dreams.
- Wind Power**
Wind turbines are powered by **neodymium and dysprosium**. These elements drive the high-performance magnets that make turbines spin efficiently. With India aiming to expand its wind power from **42 GW to 140 GW** by 2030, demand for these critical minerals will soar, making them essential for the clean energy revolution.
- Electric Vehicles (EVs)**
At the heart of every electric car lies a battery fueled by **lithium, nickel, and cobalt**. These minerals make clean mobility possible, storing energy that powers EVs on the road. With the government pushing for **30% EV penetration by 2030**, the hunger for these resources is set to multiply.
- Energy Storage**
Lithium-ion systems are vital for renewable integration, depending once again on **lithium, cobalt, and nickel**. These minerals make it possible to store surplus power and provide backup when demand peaks.

Charting India's Critical Mineral Roadmap

The National Critical Mineral Mission aims to secure a place for India as a global player in the emerging green economy. The legal and policy framework for NCMM is grounded in the amendment of the **Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act (MMDR Act)**, under which the central government has the exclusive power to auction **24 out of the 30** identified critical minerals.

The NCMM has been designed with the primary objectives of **securing domestic and international supply sources** and **strengthening mineral value chains** covering exploration, mining, processing, recycling, research and development, and human resource development.



Can ED File Writ Petition



SYLLABUS: Prelims: Polity – Writs; **GS Paper : 2 – Statutory Orgainsations –ED**
Newspaper: The Hindu; **Page Number:** Text and Context

- 5 Writs – mentioned in the constitution
- Article 32 – “is the Heart of the constitution and the very soul of it” – B. R. Ambedkar

18. With reference to the **writs** issued by the Courts in India, consider the following statements :

1. Mandamus will not lie against a private organisation unless it is entrusted with a public duty.
2. Mandamus will not lie against a Company even though it may be a Government Company.
3. Any public minded person can be a petitioner to move the Court to obtain the writ of Quo Warranto.

Which of the statements given above are correct ?

- 1 and 2 only
- 2 and 3 only
- 1 and 3 only
- 1, 2 and 3

Why did Kerala approach the SC?

The dispute traces its origin to a September 26, 2025 ruling of a Division Bench of the Kerala High Court, which held that the ED, established by the Union government under Section 36 of the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (1999 Act) pursuant to a June 2000 notification, is a statutory body entitled to invoke the writ jurisdiction of High Courts under Article 226 of the Constitution.

The ruling arose from a writ petition filed by the ED challenging the Kerala government's decision to constitute a Commission of Inquiry (CoI) in connection with the diplomatic gold smuggling case. The case relates to the seizure of 30 kg of gold, valued at ₹14.82 crore, from diplomatic baggage arriving from the United Arab Emirates at the

THE GIST

In India, the Supreme Court is vested with the power to issue prerogative writs under Article 32 of the Constitution, while High Courts exercise a similar jurisdiction under Article 226.

The Kerala government has questioned the ED's locus to maintain a writ petition, contending that it is merely a department of the Union government and not a juristic person or body corporate capable of suing or being sued.

In August 2021, a single judge of the High Court rejected the State government's objection to the maintainability of the ED's writ petition, observing that ED officers exercise statutory powers and that the agency cannot be treated as merely a department of the Union government.

- In 1957, the unit was renamed as the Enforcement Directorate.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance

Objectives of the ED

- The prime objective of the Enforcement Directorate is the enforcement of three key Acts of the Government of India namely:
 - Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA),
 - **Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002** (PMLA), and
 - Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018 (FEOA).



Can ED File Writ Petition



SYLLABUS: Prelims: Polity – Writs; GS Paper : 2 – Statutory Organisations – ED
Newspaper: The Hindu; **Page Number:** Text and Context

Writ	Meaning	Against Whom?	The Prelims "Trap" (Special Features)
Habeas Corpus	<i>To have the body</i>	Public & Private	Locus Standi Relaxed: Anyone can file it. Not for lawful detention.
Mandamus	<i>We Command</i>	Public Officials/Bodies	Discretionary duties & Private bodies are exempt. Cannot hit President/Governor.
Prohibition	<i>To Forbid</i>	Judicial/Quasi-Judicial	Preventive only. Issued during pendency. No administrative/private scope.
Certiorari	<i>To be Certified</i>	Judicial/Administrative	Both Preventive & Curative. Quashes an order after it is passed.
Quo-Warranto	<i>By what authority</i>	Public Office holders	Locus Standi Relaxed: Any "interested" person can file. Only for Substantive offices.

VAJIRAM & RAVI



Tirah in Pakistan

SYLLABUS: Prelims: Places in News; **GS:** Prelims specific
Newspaper: The Hindu; **Page Number:** 16

15. The **Radcliffe Committee** was appointed to

- (a) solve the problem of minorities in India
- (b) give effect to the Independence Bill
- (c) delimit the boundaries between India and Pakistan
- (d) enquire into the riots in East Bengal

More than 70,000 people, mostly women and children, have fled a remote region in northwestern Pakistan bordering Afghanistan over uncertainty of a military operation against the Pakistani Taliban, residents and officials said on Tuesday.

Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Mohammad Asif has denied the claim by residents and provincial authorities. He said no military operation was under way or planned in Tirah, a town in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

Speaking at a news conference in Islamabad, he said harsh weather, rather than military action, was driving the migration. His comments came weeks after residents started fleeing Tirah over fears of a possible army operation.

The exodus began a month after mosque loudspeakers urged residents to leave Tirah by January 23 to avoid potential fighting. Last August, Pakistan launched a military operation against Pakistani Taliban in the northwest, displacing hundreds of thousands of people.



Vehicles loaded with belongings of far amid uncertainty over a military opera

Shafiq Jan, a spokesperson for the provincial government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, posted on X that he held the federal government responsible for the ordeal of the displaced people, saying authorities in Islamabad were retracting their earlier position about the military operation.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Suhail Afridi, whose party is led by imprisoned former Prime Minister Imran Khan, has criticised the military and said his government will not allow troops to launch a full-scale operation in Tirah.

Human shields

The military says it will continue intelligence-based operations against

Tirah, also called the **Tirah Valley** (Urdu: تیرا درہ; Pashto: تیرا), is a mountainous region located in the **Orakzai District** and the southern portion of the **Khyber District**, positioned between the **Khyber Pass** and the **Khanki Valley** in Pakistan.^[1] Due to its proximity to the **Afghan-Pakistan border** and challenging terrain, maintaining control of Tirah has been historically difficult for the **Government of Pakistan**. In 2003, for the first time since Pakistan's independence, the **Army** entered the Tirah Valley.^[2]

The region is predominantly inhabited by **Pashtuns**, with minority communities referred to as **Hamsaya** (protected peoples), including a **Sikh community** primarily involved in trade and other professions.^[3]



36. Consider the following pairs :

Region often in news	Country
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- 1. Chechnya : Russian Federation
- 2. Darfur : Mali
- 3. Swat Valley : Iraq

Which of the above pairs is/are correctly matched?

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

CIHS

Wakhan Corridor

Thin Strip Rewriting South Asia's Geopolitical Map



Daily Quiz



Q1. Regarding Tirukkural, consider the following statements:

1. It is composed of around 1,330 couplets known as kurals.
2. It deals exclusively with religious and spiritual themes.
3. Its author, Thiruvalluvar, is generally believed to have lived around the 2nd century BCE to the 5th century CE.

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

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

Answer: b

Q2. Regarding urban development initiatives in India, consider the following statements:

1. AMRUT focuses on ensuring universal access to water supply and sewerage services in selected cities.
2. Smart Cities Mission provides a statutory status to Urban Local Bodies to enhance urban governance.
3. PMAY-Urban aims at providing housing for all through a credit-linked subsidy.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: c

Q3. Regarding the National Critical Mineral Mission, consider the following statements:

1. It aims to secure domestic supply chains for select critical minerals through exploration, mining, and recycling.
2. It is implemented solely by the Ministry of Mines.

3. It seeks to reduce India's import dependence for strategic minerals used in clean energy and high-technology sectors.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: d

Q4. Regarding writs issued by constitutional courts in India, consider the following statements:

1. Habeas Corpus can be issued against both public authorities and private individuals.
2. Mandamus can be issued to enforce a private contract.
3. Certiorari can never be issued even if the petitioner has no personal interest in the matter.

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

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

Answer: a

Q5. Consider the following statements:

1. The Wakhan Corridor provides Afghanistan with a narrow land link to China.
2. The Amu Darya forms a part of Afghanistan's northern boundary.
3. The Helmand River drains into the Caspian Sea.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: b





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