



VAJIRAM & RAVI
Institute for IAS Examination

The Analyst

CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout

18th February 2026



CONTEXT: India and France on Tuesday elevated their already robust partnership to a “Special Strategic Relationship”, signalling a new phase in ties anchored in defence, high technology and geopolitical alignment.

1. Upgrade of Ties

- Strategic partnership (since **1998**) elevated to “**Special Global Strategic Partnership**.”
- Reflects deeper, long-term cooperation at global level.
- Guided by **Horizon 2047 Roadmap** (centenary of India’s independence).
- Annual **Foreign Ministers Comprehensive Dialogue** announced.

2. Defence Cooperation

- Focus on **co-design, co-development, and co-production** of defence systems.
- Contract endorsed for **26 Rafale Marine jets** for Indian Navy.
- Expansion of **Make in India** defence manufacturing.



- Key initiatives:
 - MRO facilities for **LEAP and M-88 engines**.
 - **HAMMER missile** manufacturing JV with Bharat Electronics.
 - **H125 helicopter** final assembly line (Tata-Airbus).

Strategic Partnership vs Special Global Strategic Partnership

	Strategic Partnership	Special Global Strategic Partnership
Basic meaning	Formal high-level cooperation in key strategic sectors	An upgraded category indicating deeper, exceptional, and globally aligned cooperation
Depth of ties	Strong, but limited to major sectors (defence, trade, technology, etc.)	Very deep, institutionalized, and multi-sectoral across almost all domains
Geographic scope	Primarily bilateral or regional interests	Cooperation extends to global issues (Indo-Pacific, multilateral forums, global governance)
Political signal	Important strategic partner	Among the closest and most trusted partners with priority status
Usage	Common diplomatic term used with many countries	Rare, used selectively to denote special, top-tier relationships
Example (India)	India-France Strategic Partnership (1998)	India-Japan Special Global Strategic Partnership (2014 upgrade)



India-France Relations

CONTEXT: India and France on Tuesday elevated their already robust partnership to a “Special Strategic Relationship”, signalling a new phase in ties anchored in defence, high technology and geopolitical alignment.

- Continued **Scorpene submarine** cooperation.
- French interest in India’s **Pinaka rocket system**.

3. Technology & Emerging Areas

- Strong push in:
 - **Artificial Intelligence** (secure, trustworthy, people-centric AI).
 - Cybersecurity cooperation and UN coordination.
 - Space cooperation:
 - Space situational awareness.
 - Defence space.
 - India to attend France’s **International Space Summit 2026**.

4. Nuclear & Climate Partnership

- Cooperation across nuclear value chain:
 - Large reactors.
 - **SMRs and AMRs**.
- Progress discussions on **Jaitapur Nuclear Power Plant**.
- Joint commitment to:
 - **Paris Agreement**.
 - **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**.
 - **CDRI** and ocean governance initiatives.

5. Multilateral & Global Governance

- France invited India to **G7 Summit 2026**.
- Strong French support for:



- India’s **permanent UNSC membership**.
- Coordination on:
 - UNSC reforms.
 - Rules-based **Indo-Pacific**.
 - **IMEC corridor** and supply chain resilience.

People-to-People & Mobility

- Pilot **visa-free transit** for Indians via French airports.
- Target: **30,000 Indian students in France by 2030**.
- Cultural initiatives:
 - **India-France Year of Innovation 2026**.
 - Museum and academic collaborations.
- New **AI-focused health research centre**.

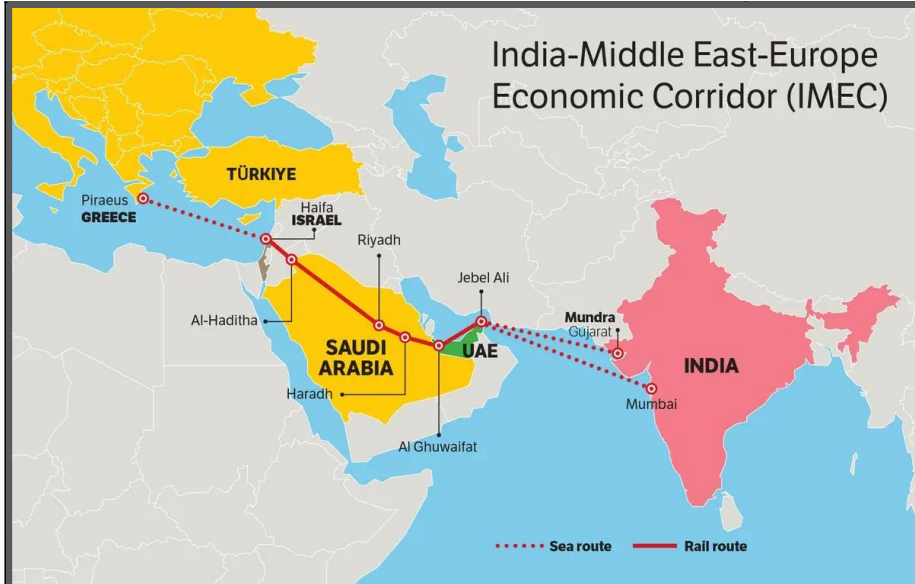
7. Overall Significance

- Expands ties beyond bilateral to **global strategic coordination**.
- Covers **defence, tech, energy, climate, and global governance**.
- Positions both countries as **like-minded strategic partners** in a fragmented world.



India-France Relations

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Civil Services (P) Examination - 2025

India is one of the founding members of the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), a multimodal transportation corridor, which will connect

- (a) India to Central Asia to Europe via Iran
- (b) India to Central Asia via China
- (c) India to South-East Asia through Bangladesh and Myanmar
- (d) India to Europe through Azerbaijan



INDIA INKS BIGGEST \$36B ARM DEAL! BUYS 114 RAFALE JETS FROM FRANCE



Defence Cooperation

- One of India's **strongest defence partnerships**, aligned with **Atmanirbhar Bharat**.
- Key projects:
 - **Rafale fighter jets**
 - **P-75 Scorpene submarines**
- Major joint exercises:
 - **Varuna** (Navy)
 - **Shakti** (Army)
 - **FRINJEX** (Army)

Economic Cooperation

- **Trade:** France is India's **5th largest EU trading partner**.
- **Bilateral trade:** **USD 15.11 billion (2023-24)**; doubled in the last decade.
- **Digital:** **UPI launched in France** for financial integration.
- **FDI:** France is the **11th largest investor** in India.
 - **USD 10.94 billion (2000-2024)**
 - **1.61% of total FDI inflow**



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Space Cooperation

- **ISRO–CNES** collaboration on multiple missions.
- **TRISHNA**: Joint thermal infrared climate-monitoring satellite.
- **Megha-Tropiques (2011)**: Joint satellite for tropical weather and climate studies.

Climate Cooperation

- **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**:
 - Co-founded by India and France in **2015** to promote global solar adoption.

Nuclear Energy Cooperation

- **2008 Civil Nuclear Agreement** between India and France.
- **Jaitapur Nuclear Power Project** (Maharashtra) with French support.
- Plans to co-develop **SMRs** and **AMRs** under strategic dialogue.

People-to-People Ties

- **Indian diaspora**: ~**1.19 lakh** in France, mainly from former French territories like Puducherry.

Year (Jan.-Dec.)	Indian Exports to France	French Exports to India	Total	Y-o-Y % of Increase/Decrease
2017	2,563	1,739	4,302	+32.85
2018	2,459	1,928	4,387	+1.97
2019	2,463	2,004	4,467	+1.82
2020	2,517	2,249	4,766	+6.69
2021	2,370	3,909	6,279	+31.74

Source: India-France Comprehensive Economic and Commercial Brief, Ministry of External Affairs

Differences in Geopolitical Approaches

- Divergence on **Russia–Ukraine conflict**:
 - i. France: strong criticism of Russia.
 - ii. India: balanced, strategic autonomy approach.
- Differences in outlook on **China’s BRI** and regional strategies.

Emerging Global Tensions

- Conflicts and instability affecting strategic priorities:
 - i. West Asia conflicts.
 - ii. Russia–Ukraine war.
 - iii. China’s assertiveness in Indo-Pacific.
- May create **policy divergences or strategic pressures**.

Economic aspects

- Limits depth of economic engagement.
- Bilateral trade with France **much lower than with Germany**.
- **Trade Imbalance & IPR Concerns**
 - France enjoys **trade surplus** with India.
 - French firms raise concerns over **intellectual property protection** in India.
- **Stalled or Slow Projects**
 - Some major agreements face **delays in implementation**.
 - Example: **Jaitapur Nuclear Power Plant** project.



India-France Relations



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Trade

- Enhance trade, investment, and technology flows.

Implement Migration & Mobility Agreement

- Facilitate movement of:
 - Students
 - Professionals
 - Skilled workers
- Joint action against **irregular migration**.

Boost Trade and Investment

- Promote **joint ventures and technology partnerships**.
- Encourage **cross-border investment**.
- Expand cooperation in emerging sectors (AI, clean energy, defence).

Fast-track Stalled Projects

- Create **joint working groups** for monitoring.
- Expedite projects like **Jaitapur Nuclear Plant**.

Mains Practise Question

Question : India–France relations have witnessed significant strategic deepening in recent years. Discuss the significance of the India–France partnership. What are the key challenges in the relationship and suggest the way forward. (10 Marks, 150 words)



Need for Police Reforms in India

CONTEXT: A write-up has appeared discussing various aspects of police reforms in India.

Constitutional Status

- **Police and Public Order:** State subjects

1. Police–Population Ratio

- **≈197 police per 100,000 population**– Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPRD), 2022
- UN recommended benchmark: **222 per 100,000**

2. Women in Police

- **11.7% of total police strength (2022) (MHA)**
- Target: **33% representation**

3. Custodial Deaths

- Judicial inquiries into **625 jail custodial deaths in 2022 (NCRB)**

4. Number of Police Stations

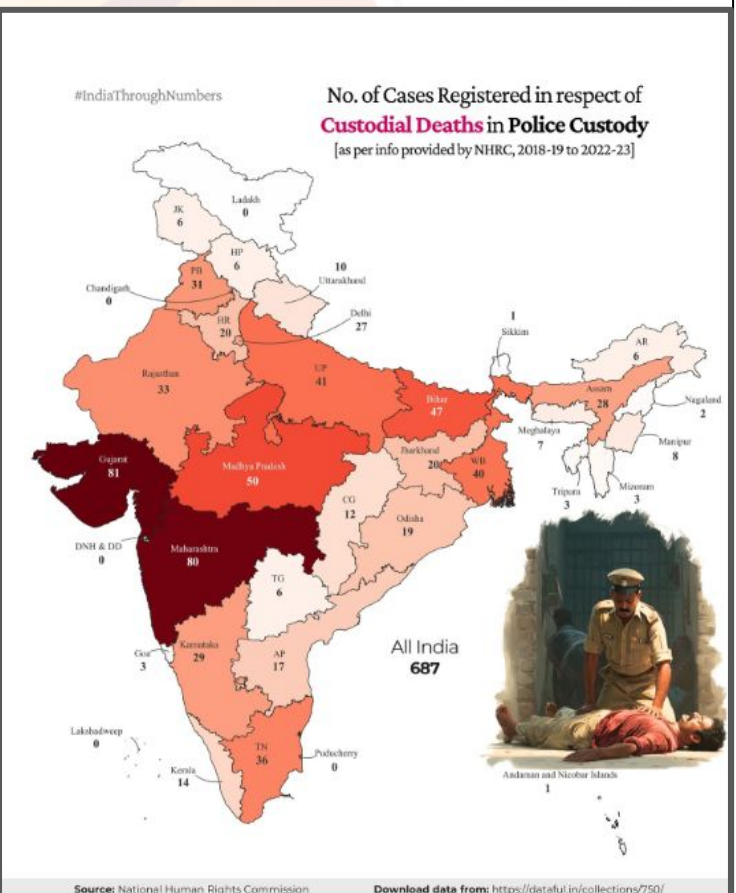
- **17,957 police stations (2022) (BPRD)**

Related Initiatives

- **SMART Policing** (nationwide)
- **Automated Multimodal Biometric Identification System (AMBIS)** – Maharashtra
- **Real-Time Visitor Monitoring System** – Andhra Pradesh
- **CyberDome** (Tech R&D centre) – Kerala

Need for Reform

- Colonial legacy of the **Police Act, 1861**
- Custodial violence and deaths
- Lack of accountability mechanisms
- Political interference
- Poor gender sensitivity
- Communal/caste bias allegations
- Absence of a comprehensive **anti-torture law**



CONTEXT: A write-up has appeared discussing various aspects of police reforms in India.

Major Challenges Facing Police Forces in India

1. Colonial Legacy of the Police Act, 1861

- colonial mindset, force-centric approach, excessive force, custodial torture.
- Status of Policing in India Report, 2025:* 30% personnel supported third-degree methods even for minor theft cases.

2. Trust Deficit with the Public

- fear among marginalized groups, historical discrimination, weak community intelligence, poor crime prevention.
- Outreach models: *Janamaithri* (Kerala), *Mohalla Committees* (Maharashtra) as rare exceptions.

3. Excessive Workload and Personnel Shortage

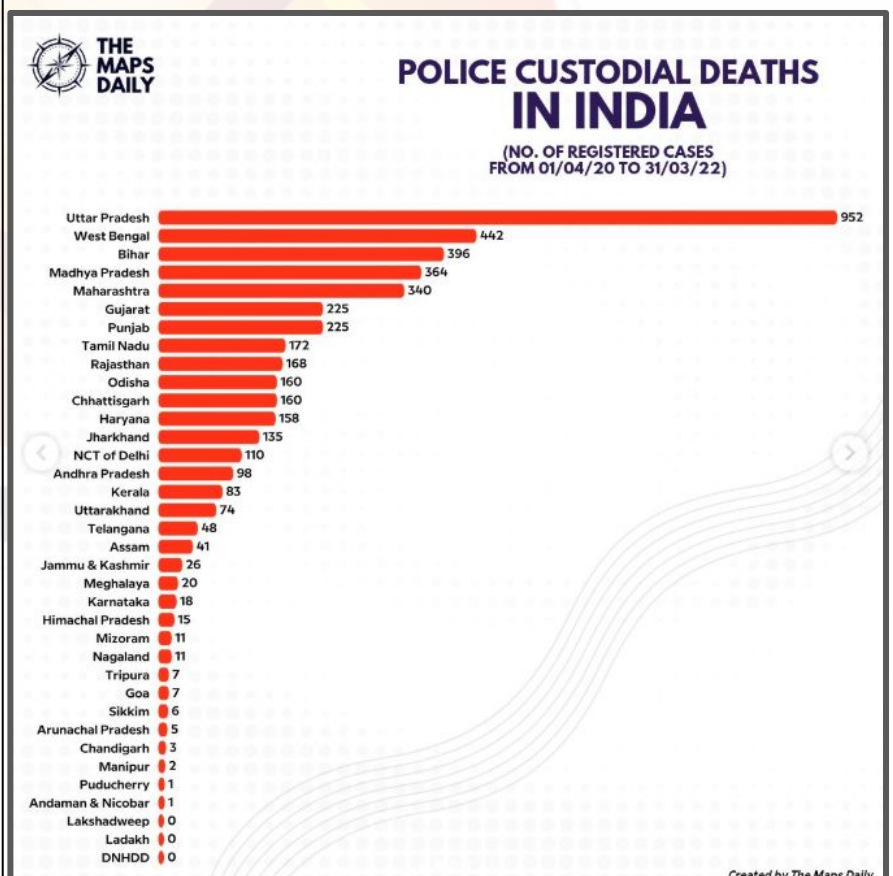
- low police-population ratio, overwork, long duty hours, multiple non-policing tasks.
- 24% work over 16 hours; 44% over 12 hours; average workday 14 hours.

4. Poor Infrastructure and Technology Gaps

- Keywords:** weak forensic capacity, poor training, cybercrime gap, faulty investigations, case backlogs.
- Forensic shortage: 0.33 experts per 100,000 vs 20–50 in many countries.

5. Political Interference

- Keywords:** transfer control, lack of autonomy, partisan policing, pressure in sensitive cases.
- 2019 study:* 72% officers faced political pressure in cases involving influential persons.



The Leaflet
What RTI data reveals about custodial torture, lack of CCTV facilities in Tamil Nadu's police stations
RTI information revealed that in 2024, three hundred inmates entered prison with broken limbs, petty offenders were more vulnerable to custodial torture and...
12 Jun 2025

The Hindu
20 custodial deaths in two years in Rajasthan; rights groups express concern
Rajasthan faces scrutiny over 20 custodial deaths in two years, sparking calls for accountability and reforms in police procedures.
13 Sept 2025



Need for Police Reforms in India



CONTEXT: A write-up has appeared discussing various aspects of police reforms in India.

Key Committees/Commissions on Police Reforms in India

Committee / Judgment	Core Recommendation
Gore Committee (1971)	Professional, service-oriented policing; focus on human rights and ethical training.
National Police Commission (1977–81)	Separate investigation from law & order; fixed tenure for senior officers; new Model Police Act.
Ribeiro (1998) & Padmanabhaiah (2000) Committees	Independent oversight bodies; modern training; promote community policing.
Malimath Committee (2003)	Strengthen forensics & investigation; central agency for federal crimes; witness protection.
Prakash Singh vs Union of India (2006)	7 directives: State Security Commission; fixed tenure for DGP/SP/SHO; separate investigation & L&O; Police Establishment Board; Police Complaints Authorities; National Security Commission.
Model Police Act (2006) & NHRC (2021)	Emphasize autonomy, accountability, and regulation of surveillance.
SMART Policing (2015)	Technology-driven, accountable, responsive, community-oriented policing.



Need for Police Reforms in India

CONTEXT: A write-up has appeared discussing various aspects of police reforms in India.

Reforms Needed to Improve the Effectiveness of Policing in India

Globally Recognized Policing Case Studies

Japan	UK	USA (NY)	Singapore
			
Koban System	Neighborhood Teams	CompStat	Smart Policing
Deep Community Trust	Problem-Solving with Public	Data-Driven Accountability	Tech-Enabled Efficiency
			
Permanent Beat Posts, Door-to-Door Policing	Local Policing Teams, Community Meetings	Crime Analytics Dashboards	Integrated Surveillance & Command Centers
			

1. Full Implementation of Supreme Court Directives (2006)

- institutional autonomy, SSC with non-political majority, policy oversight, misuse prevention.
- Create independent **State Security Commissions (SSC)**.
- Establish **Police Complaints Authorities (PCA)** at state and district levels with statutory powers.

2. Strengthening Internal Accountability

- transparent transfers, merit-based postings, performance audits, outcome-based policing.
- Empower **Police Establishment Boards**.
- Use objective metrics: public satisfaction, crime prevention, investigation quality.

3. Functional Specialization

- investigation-law & order separation, professional detectives, higher conviction rates, forensic strengthening.
- Separate investigation wing at police station level.
- Upgrade cybercrime units and forensic labs.
- Implement nationwide **NATGRID** for integrated security databases.

4. Institutionalizing Community Policing

- police-public partnership, trust building, grassroots intelligence, inclusive policing.
- Structured community policing programmes.
- **Police-as-Service model**, Citizens' Charters, social media grievance redressal.



Need for Police Reforms in India



CONTEXT: A write-up has appeared discussing various aspects of police reforms in India.

5. Addressing New-Age Security Challenges

- specialized crime units, pan-India coordination, inter-agency data sharing, joint operations.

Mains Practise Question

Question : Discuss the major challenges faced by the police system in India. Suggest suitable measures to address these challenges and make policing more effective, accountable, and citizen-centric.
(10 Marks, 150 words)



SYLLABUS: GS Paper 2: Executive, Health

Newspaper: The Hindu; Page Number: 08

Front-of-Package Warning Labels: Supreme Court Directions

Context : Supreme Court directed **FSSAI** to consider **mandatory front-of-package warning labels** on foods high in: Sugar, Salt, Saturated fat

- Aim: Protect **right to health** and curb rising NCDs.

Key Directions

- FSSAI asked to **submit response within four weeks**.
- Earlier (2025), Court had directed an **expert committee** to suggest changes to:
 - **Food Safety and Standards (Labelling and Display) Regulations, 2020.**
- In **Feb 2026**, Court expressed **dissatisfaction** with slow progress.

- Autonomous body under- **MoH&FW**
- established **under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006**, which is a **consolidating statute related to food safety and regulation in India**.
- **Vision:** Build a new India by enabling citizens to **have safe and nutritious food, prevent diseases**, and lead a healthy and happy life.
- **Mission:**
 - Set globally **benchmarked standards for food**,
 - encourage and ensure that **food businesses adhere to these standards**,
 - adopt **good manufacturing and hygiene practices**,
 - and **ultimately enable citizens to access safe and right food**.

Issue of Contention : FSSAI proposed an Indian Nutrition Rating model.

- Petitioners opposed it, saying it was **not aligned with global standards**.

Health Rationale : High sugar, salt, and saturated fat linked to:

- Diabetes, Hypertension, Cardiovascular diseases
- **ICMR-INDIAB 2023 data:**
 - Diabetes: 101 million, Prediabetes: 136 million, Hypertension: 35.5%

Significance

- Encourages **informed consumer choices**, Promotes **preventive healthcare**.
- Pushes **ultra-processed food industry** toward transparency.

FSSAI has been mandated by the FSS Act, 2006 for performing the following functions:

1. Laying down the Standards and guidelines in relation to articles of food and specify appropriate system for enforcement.
2. Specifying limits for additives, contaminants, pesticides, veterinary drug residues, heavy metals, processing aids, mycotoxins, antibiotics & pharmacological active substances & irradiated foods.
3. Laying down food labelling standards including claims on health, nutrition, specify dietary uses & food category system for foods.
4. Laying down procedures & guidelines for accreditation of certification bodies & laboratories.
5. Prescribing the procedure, & the enforcement of quality control in relation to any imported article of food into India.

Initiative

Description

Eat Right India

A comprehensive initiative to promote safe, healthy and wholesome food

RUCO (Repurpose Used Cooking Oil)

Initiative to collect and convert used cooking oil into biodiesel

FoSTaC (Food Safety Training and Certification)

A program to train food handlers and improve hygiene practices

Diet4Life

Awareness campaign about metabolic disorders and healthy eating



SAHI and BODH Health Initiatives

SYLLABUS: GS Paper 2, 3: Health, IT & Computers

Newspaper: The Hindu; Page Number: 13

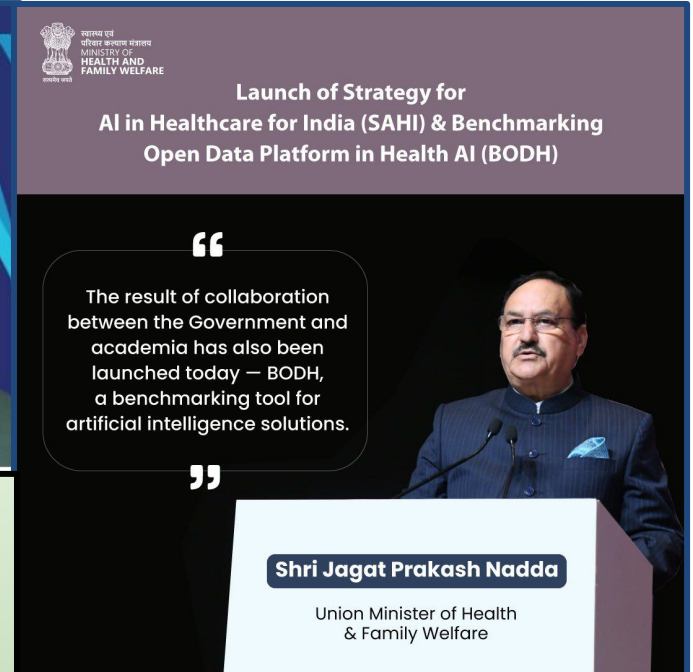


SAHI and BODH: Digital Health AI Initiatives

- Announced during the **India AI Impact Summit**.
- Aim: Promote **safe, ethical, and evidence-based deployment of AI** in India's healthcare ecosystem.

SAHI (Secure AI for Health Initiative)

- Not just a technology programme; acts as:
 - **Governance framework**
 - **Policy compass**
 - **National roadmap** for AI in healthcare.
- Guides India in **responsible use of AI**.
- Core principles:
 - Ethical
 - Transparent
 - Accountable
 - People-centric
- Supports development of a **trustworthy and inclusive health-AI ecosystem**.



BODH (Benchmarking Open Data Platform for Health AI)

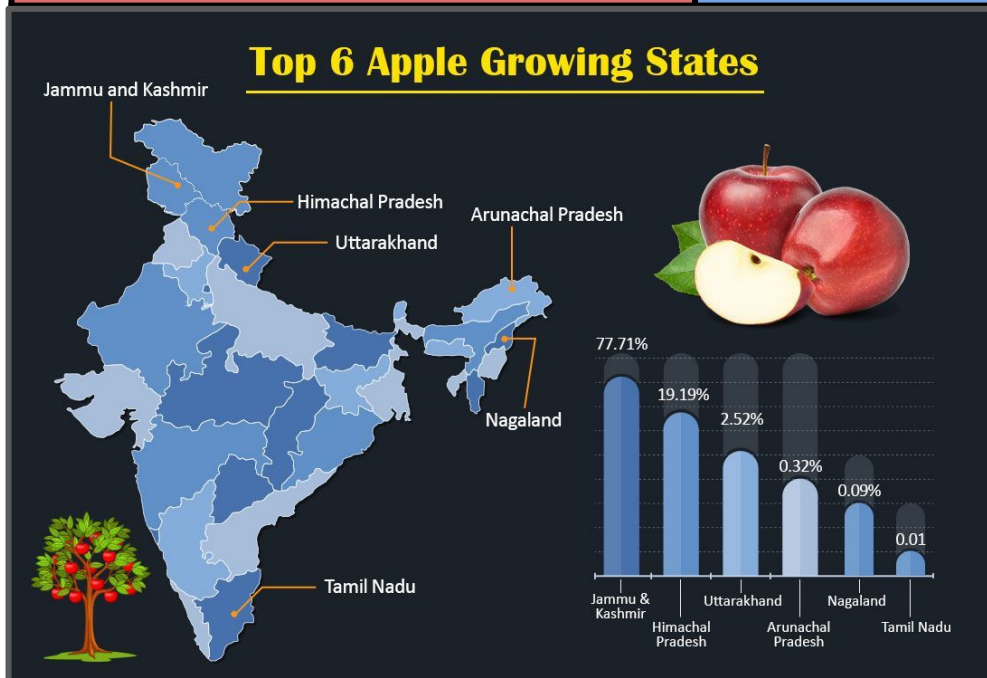
- Developed through **collaboration between government and academia**.
- Provides a **structured mechanism** to:
 - Test AI solutions
 - Validate performance
 - Assess reliability
 - Ensure real-world readiness
- Ensures **rigorous evaluation** before large-scale deployment.



SYLLABUS: GS Paper 3: Major Crops and Cropping Patterns

Newspaper: The Hindu; Page Number: 14

Parameter	Requirement
Crop type	Temperate fruit crop; deciduous tree
Indian growing zones	Mainly Himalayan high-altitude regions where altitude creates temperate climate
Soil type	Well-drained, fertile, loamy soil
Ideal soil pH	5.5 – 6.5
Optimum summer temperature	21–24°C during active growth
Winter requirement	Cool winters needed for dormancy
Ideal altitude	1500–2700 m above sea level
Rainfall	1000–1250 mm annually, well distributed
Excess rainfall impact	Causes flower drop, fungal diseases, poor fruit quality
Sunlight	Requires full sunlight for colour and sweetness



SYLLABUS: GS Paper 3: Major Crops and Cropping Patterns

Newspaper: The Hindu; Page Number: 14



**PRELIMS
2024 :**

Consider the following statements :

Statement-I :

India does not import apples from the United States of America.

Statement-II :

In India, the law prohibits the import of Genetically Modified food without the approval of the competent authority.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements ?

- (a) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II explains Statement-I
- (b) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct, but Statement-II does **not** explain Statement-I
- (c) Statement-I is correct, but Statement-II is incorrect
- (d) Statement-I is incorrect, but Statement-II is correct

The Hindu

<https://www.thehindu.com> > News > India > Other States

Kashmir Valley's growers are anxious as import duty is ...

12 Sept 2023 — The Union government's decision to relax 20% customs duty on apples imported from the U.S. has left orchardists in the Kashmir Valley jittery.

← Washington Apple (Seb)



From USA

9 MINS

Washington Apple (Seb)

Firm, juicy, and crisp with a balanced sweetness

2 pieces

₹137 ₹174

ADD



SYLLABUS: GS Paper 3: IT & Computers, Robotics

Newspaper: The Hindu; Page Number: 15

India AI Mission 2.0

Second phase of India's national AI mission focusing on **research, indigenous AI models, and large-scale adoption**, after building initial compute infrastructure.

Key announcements

- **20,000 additional GPUs** to be added to the national common compute cluster.
- To be deployed **within about six months**.
- Total compute capacity to cross **38,000+ GPUs**.

Main focus areas

1. **Shift to R&D**
 - Greater emphasis on **core AI research** and innovation.
 - Development of **indigenous foundation models**.
2. **AI diffusion across sectors**
 - Expansion of AI use in **MSMEs, agriculture, healthcare, education, and governance**.

3. UPI-like AI platform

- Sector-specific, ready-to-use AI solutions.
- Aim: **mass adoption of AI**, similar to digital payments success.
- **Investment outlook**
- Government expects up to **\$200 billion in AI investments** across the AI ecosystem in the next two years.



SYLLABUS: Prelims: Current Events of National and International Importance
Newspaper: The Indian Express; **Page Number:** 01

Attribute	Details
Geographical Location	Between Iran (North) and Oman & UAE (South)
Connecting Water Bodies	Persian Gulf (West) and Gulf of Oman/Arabian Sea (East)
Narrowest Width	~33 km (21 miles)
Navigable Channel	2 miles each direction with a 2-mile buffer zone
Daily Oil Flow	~20 million barrels per day (~20% of global consumption)
Major Exporting Countries	Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar
Major Importing Countries	China, India, Japan, South Korea
Governance	Lies within territorial waters of Iran and Oman; governed by transit passage rules under UNCLOS
Strategic Importance	World's most critical oil chokepoint; disruption impacts global energy markets
Key Ports Nearby	Bandar Abbas (Iran), Fujairah (UAE)



Q1. Regarding the 'Eat Right India' movement, consider the following statements:

1. It is a Central Sector Scheme offering financial subsidies to restaurants for upgrading hygiene standards.
2. It is aligned with the National Health Policy 2017.
3. It includes certification initiatives like 'Eat Right Campus' and 'Eat Right Station'.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: d

Q2. Which of the following statements regarding the BODH platform is NOT correct?

- a) It allows AI developers to download the entire repository of patient health records to train their models offline.
- b) It stands for 'Benchmarking Open Data Platform for Health AI'.
- c) It functions as a technical validation layer to test AI models for bias and performance before they are deployed.
- d) It is developed by the National Health Authority in collaboration with IIT Kanpur.

Answer: a

Q3. Consider the following statements regarding the cultivation of Apple:

1. It is a characteristic crop of the Temperate zone, but can be grown in higher altitudes of the Sub-tropics.
2. The crop requires temperatures below 7°C of about 1,000–1,500 hours during winter.
3. Frost during the flowering season is highly beneficial for fruit setting.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: c

Q4. With reference to the recently announced 'IndiaAI Mission 2.0', consider the following statements regarding the 'Compute Capacity' expansion:

1. The mission aims to add 20,000 additional Graphics Processing Units to the national common compute cluster.
2. The entire procurement and deployment of these GPUs is mandated to be completed by the year 2030.
3. Upon completion of this phase, the total national compute capacity is projected to cross 38,000+ GPUs.

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

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

Answer: b

Q5. Consider the following statements regarding the islands located within or near the Strait of Hormuz:

1. Hormuz Island is a sovereign territory of Oman.
2. Qeshm Island belongs to Iran.
3. The islands of Abu Musa, Greater Tunb, and Lesser Tunb are currently administered by Iran but claimed by the UAE.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: c





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