



**VAJIRAM & RAVI**  
Institute for IAS Examination

# The Analyst

**CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout**

**10th March 2026**

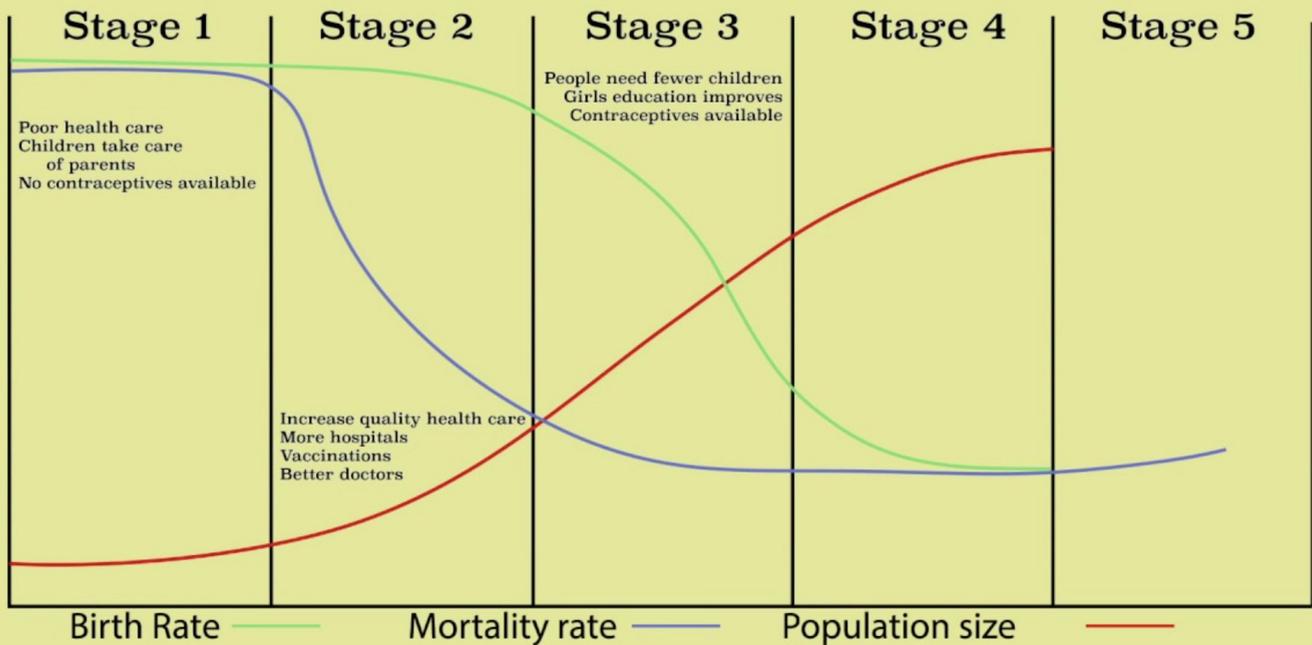


**CONTEXT:** When Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu recently proposed a cash incentive of Rs 25,000 for couples having a second or third child, it revived an important question about India's demographic future: Can governments reverse falling birth rates through financial incentives?

7. 'जनसांख्यिकीय शीत (डेमोग्राफिक विन्टर)' की अवधारणा क्या है? क्या यह दुनिया ऐसी स्थिति की ओर अग्रसर है? विस्तार से बताइए। (उत्तर 150 शब्दों में दीजिए)

What is the concept of a 'demographic winter'? Is the world moving towards such a situation? Elaborate. (Answer in 150 words) 10

## Demographic Transition Model



### National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) (2019-21):

- India's TFR has declined to **2.0**, below the **replacement level of 2.1**.
- Several states have much lower fertility rates.
- Sikkim – around **1.1**
- Andhra Pradesh – around **1.4**
- Tamil Nadu – around **1.6**

### Declining fertility – Causes

#### 1. Rising Female Education and Empowerment

- Female literacy in India rose from **54% in 2001 to about 77% by 2021**.
- Kerala:** near-universal female literacy and early achievement of replacement fertility.
- West Bengal:** female literacy above national average with declining TFR.



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## LOWEST FERTILITY RATE IN J&K

STATES	NFHS-5	NFHS-4	Reduction
	2019-21	2015-16	
Jammu & Kashmir	1.4	2.0	0.6
West Bengal	1.6	1.8	0.2
Delhi	1.6	1.8	0.2
Punjab	1.6	1.6	0.0
Andhra Pradesh	1.7	1.8	0.1
Himachal Pradesh	1.7	1.9	0.2
Karnataka	1.7	1.8	0.1
Maharashtra	1.7	1.9	0.2
Kerala	1.8	1.6	-0.2
Telangana	1.8	1.8	0.0
Chhattisgarh	1.8	2.2	0.4
Odisha	1.8	2.1	0.3
Tamil Nadu	1.8	1.7	-0.1
Assam	1.9	2.2	0.3
Gujarat	1.9	2.0	0.1
Haryana	1.9	2.1	0.2
Uttarakhand	1.9	2.1	0.2
Madhya Pradesh	2.0	2.3	0.3
Rajasthan	2.0	2.4	0.4
Jharkhand	2.3	2.6	0.3
Uttar Pradesh	2.4	2.7	0.3
Bihar	3.0	3.4	0.4
<b>India</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>0.2</b>

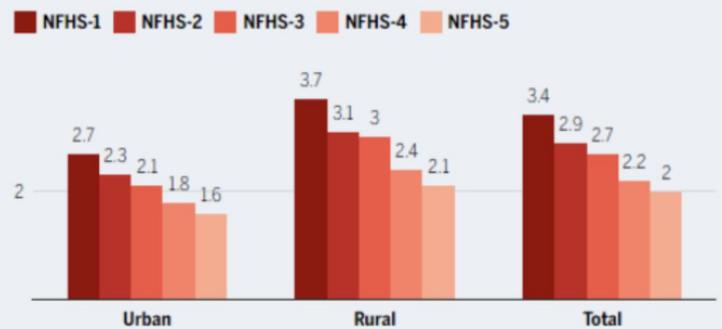
### Delay in Marriage and Childbearing

- In some states, the **average childbirth age increased from about 25–26 years in 2010 to nearly 28–35 years today.**
- Rapid urbanisation centres like **Delhi, Gujarat, Maharashtra** have seen sharp fertility decline partly due to this trend.

### 3. Urbanisation and Rising Cost of Living

- According to NFHS-5:
- **Urban fertility rate: 1.6 & Rural fertility rate: 2.1**

## Downward trend in fertility rate



TOI Source: National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5)

### 4. Greater Access to Family Planning and Contraception

- Contraceptive prevalence among married women increased from **54% (NFHS-4)** to **67% (NFHS-5)**.

### 5. Declining Infant and Child Mortality

### 6. Changing Social Norms and Aspirations

- **"quality over quantity":**
- Higher investment in education
- Better health and living standards for fewer children.
- Career aspirations and economic independence also influence reproductive choices.

### 7. Lifestyle Factors and Rising Infertility

- Urban lifestyles **biological fertility challenges** (stress, obesity, sedentary lifestyle, environmental pollution.)

### 8. Migration and Demographic Mobility



**CONTEXT:** When Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu recently proposed a cash incentive of Rs 25,000 for couples having a second or third child, it revived an important question about India's demographic future: Can governments reverse falling birth rates through financial incentives?

## 1. Population Ageing

- **United Nations Population Fund India Ageing Report 2023** – India's **60+ population will rise from about 10% (2021) to nearly 20% by 2050.**

## 2. Shrinking Workforce in the Long Run

- Possible **loss of demographic dividend** after the mid-21st century.

## 4. Regional Demographic Imbalances

## 5. Changes in Family Structure

## 6. Impact on Economic Growth

- Countries such as **Japan and South Korea** face economic stagnation partly due to ageing populations.

## 7. Possible Gender and Marriage landscape Imbalances

### India's Demographic Future – Pro natalist policies

The government of Sikkim introduced several incentives around 2022:

- Salary increments for government employees after second and third child
- One year maternity leave
- Paternity leave
- Childcare attendants for working mothers
- Financial support for **IVF treatment under the Vatsalya scheme**

## • Global Experience with Pro-Natalist Policies

- Singapore: TFR around **1.0** despite generous baby bonuses.
- South Korea: TFR around **0.7**, the lowest globally despite large government spending.
- Japan: TFR around **1.3**, persistent ageing population.
- China: TFR around **1.0** even after relaxing the one-child policy.
- A partial exception is Hungary where fertility increased from **1.23 in 2011 to around 1.55**, but still below replacement level.

### India's Demographic Future – way forward

- **Strengthen childcare infrastructure** – Affordable childcare enables women to continue working after childbirth.
- **Promote gender-equal parenting** – Paternity leave and shared caregiving responsibilities are essential.
- **Improve work-life balance** – Flexible workplaces and remote work options can encourage family formation.
- **Support reproductive health** – Access to fertility treatments and reproductive healthcare can address infertility.
- **Build long-term family confidence** – Stable employment, housing affordability, and social security shape fertility decisions more than cash incentives.



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## Family-friendly ecosystems rather than cash incentives.

France and Nordic countries provide

- Affordable childcare
- flexible work arrangements
- strong parental leave policies
- housing support for families.

## Mains Practice Question

**Q. "Declining fertility rates across several Indian states signal a major demographic transition." Discuss the causes of declining fertility in India and analyse its socio-economic implications. (250 word / 15 Marks)**

7. 'जनसांख्यिकीय शीत (डेमोग्राफिक विन्टर)' की अवधारणा क्या है? क्या यह दुनिया ऐसी स्थिति की ओर अग्रसर है? विस्तार से बताइए।  
(उत्तर 150 शब्दों में दीजिए)

What is the concept of a 'demographic winter'? Is the world moving towards such a situation? Elaborate.  
(Answer in 150 words) 10



# One Nation, One election - Benefits Opposition



**CONTEXT:** Former Union Minister Mr. Ghulam Nabi Azad has told the joint committee examining the One nation one election bill, that opposition would benefit from simultaneous Lok Sabha and assembly polls.

3. “लोकसभा और राज्य विधानसभाओं के एक ही समय में चुनाव, चुनाव-प्रचार की अवधि और व्यय को तो सीमित कर देंगे, परंतु ऐसा करने से लोगों के प्रति सरकार की जवाबदेही कम हो जाएगी।” चर्चा कीजिए।

(उत्तर 150 शब्दों में दीजिए)

“Simultaneous election to the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies will limit the amount of time and money spent in electioneering but it will reduce the government’s accountability to the people.” Discuss. (Answer in 150 words) 10

### 1. Reduction in Election Expenditure –

Estimates suggest 2024 GE surpassed 1 lakh crore ceiling

### 2. Minimising Governance Disruptions –

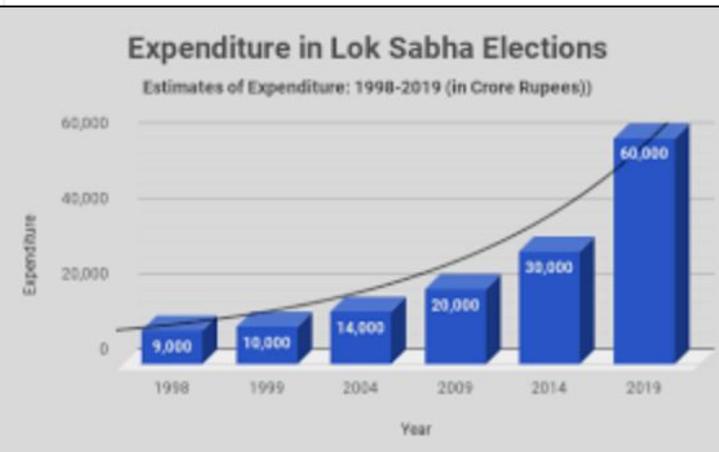
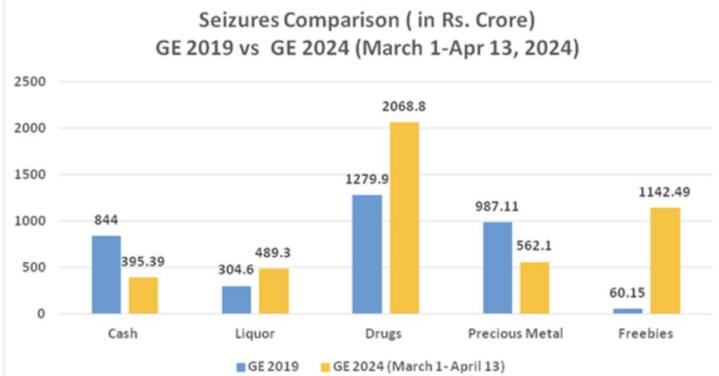
NITI Aayog has noted that frequent elections interrupt development programmes and governance processes.

**3. Better Utilisation of Security and Administrative Resources –** reduced repeated deployment and enable **more efficient use of administrative machinery.**

**4. Reduction in Political Polarisation –** Divisive politics – Caste, religion, and communal issues.

**5. Stability in Policy Making – Stable governance environment – Long-term policy decisions over short-term populist policies –** Enabling continuity of policies long-term development planning.

**6. Indirect socioeconomic cost –** Missing functionaries like Teachers, officials etc.



• The report emphasised that simultaneous elections could **reduce election-related expenditure and governance disruption.**

### 2. Parliamentary Standing Committee (2015)

• The **Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice** examined the issue.

• Elections may be held in **two phases** instead of all at once.

## One Nation, One election - Recommendations

### 1. Law Commission of India (170th Report, 1999)

• The **Law Commission of India** recommended restoring simultaneous elections.



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### 3. Law Commission Consultation Paper (2018)

- The **Law Commission of India (Draft Consultation Paper, 2018)** stated that **simultaneous elections are desirable but not feasible without major constitutional amendments.**

### 4. NITI Aayog Discussion Paper (2017)

- The **NITI Aayog** supported the concept and recommended: a phased synchronisation of elections, constitutional amendments to align election cycles.

### 5. 23rd Law Commission

- One Nation One Election Bills ( 129<sup>th</sup> CA bill 2024) do not violate the basic structure. Federalism and the voter's rights remain fully protected.

### 1. Constitutional and Legal Constraints

- Several constitutional provisions govern the tenure of legislatures.
- **Article 83** – tenure of Lok Sabha
- **Article 172** – tenure of State Assemblies
- **Article 327** – Power of Parliament to make provision with respect to elections to Legislatures.

**2. Federalism Concerns** – prioritise national issues over regional concerns.

### 3. Risk of Simultaneous Dissolution –

No-confidence motion to constructive vote of no confidence (would require institutional reforms.)

**4. Logistical Challenges** – Over 96 crore voters participated in the 2024 general elections according to the Election Commission of India.

**5. Impact on Voter Behaviour** – Same party at both national and state levels, potentially disadvantaging regional parties.

**6. Erosion of persistent scrutiny** – Frequent elections and their outcomes keep a check on arbitrariness.

- **Gradual Synchronisation** – Instead of immediate implementation, elections could be synchronised **in phases over several electoral cycles.**

- **Constitutional and Legal Reforms** – Necessary amendments to constitutional provisions governing legislative tenures should be undertaken through **broad political consensus.**

- **Constructive Vote of No Confidence** – Adopting mechanisms such as **constructive vote of no confidence**, where a government can be removed only if an alternative government is ready, could prevent premature dissolution.

- **Strengthening Electoral Infrastructure** – The **Election Commission of India** should be equipped with additional resources to manage simultaneous elections effectively.



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(उत्तर 150 शब्दों में दीजिए)

“Simultaneous election to the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies will limit the amount of time and money spent in electioneering but it will reduce the government’s accountability to the people.” Discuss. (Answer in 150 words) 10

## Mains Practice Question

**Q.** “Simultaneous elections can improve governance efficiency but raise constitutional and federal concerns.” Critically examine the feasibility of holding simultaneous elections in India. (15 Marks / 250 Words)

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# Chief election commissioner impeachment



**SYLLABUS: Prelims: Constitutional Bodies**

**Newspaper: The Indian Express; Page Number: 01**

## PART XV ELECTIONS

**324. Superintendence, direction and control of elections to be vested in an Election Commission.**—(1) The superintendence, direction and control of the preparation of the electoral rolls for, and the conduct of, all elections to Parliament and to the Legislature of every State and of elections to the offices of President and Vice-President held under this Constitution <sup>1\*\*\*</sup> shall be vested in a Commission (referred to in this Constitution as the Election Commission).

(2) The Election Commission shall consist of the Chief Election Commissioner and such number of other Election Commissioners, if any, as the President may from time to time fix and the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners shall, subject to the provisions of any law made in that behalf by Parliament, be made by the President.

(3) When any other Election Commissioner is so appointed the Chief Election Commissioner shall act as the Chairman of the Election Commission.

(4) Before each general election to the House of the People and to the Legislative Assembly of each State, and before the first general election and thereafter before each biennial election to the Legislative Council of each State having such Council, the President may also appoint after consultation with the Election Commission such Regional Commissioners as he may consider necessary to assist the Election Commission in the performance of the functions conferred on the Commission by clause (1).

(5) Subject to the provisions of any law made by Parliament, the conditions of service and tenure of office of the Election Commissioners and the Regional Commissioners shall be such as the President may by rule determine:

Provided that the Chief Election Commissioner shall not be removed from his office except in like manner and on the like grounds as a Judge of the Supreme Court and the conditions of service of the Chief Election Commissioner shall not be varied to his disadvantage after his appointment:

- **Tenure** – Six years or until attaining the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier
- **Removal** – A resolution passed to that effect by both the Houses of Parliament with **special majority**, either on the **ground of proved misbehaviour or incapacity**.
- Other election commissioner or a regional commissioner cannot be removed from office except on the recommendation of the chief election commissioner.

### CSE 2017

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. The Election Commission of India is a five- member body.
2. The Union Ministry of Home Affairs decides the election schedule for the conduct of both general elections and bye-elections.
3. Election Commission resolves the disputes relating to splits/mergers of recognized political

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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



**SYLLABUS: Prelims: Science and Technology, Health**

**Newspaper: The Indian Express; Page Number: 11**

UTTAR PRADESH'S success against Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) and Japanese Encephalitis (JE) stand as a remarkable public health turnaround in recent times. Driven by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's execution, the state moved from over 5,400 cases and 650 deaths in 2017 to a sharp decline in cases and zero fatalities in 2024.

orium, often leading to death within hours, while survivors suffered lifelong neurological and physical disabilities. By 2017, nearly 50,000 lives were lost to AES and JE. Poor water quality, malnutrition, unhygienic living conditions, and inadequate sanitation created fertile ground for transmission, while crippled health infrastructure compounded the crisis. This was not merely a medical tragedy but a reflection of sustained negligence and lack of political will by successive administrations. It was against this grim backdrop that the issue became central to the 2017 election campaign, when PM Modi pledged decisive action.

## Japanese Encephalitis

- It is a **viral zoonotic disease** caused by the Japanese Encephalitis (JE) virus.
- It is a **flavivirus related to dengue, yellow fever and West Nile viruses**
- The virus is **transmitted to humans by the infected Culex mosquito**
- There is **no human-to-human transmission** of the virus.
- It is **most common in rural areas of Asia, particularly during monsoon seasons**
- It **affects the brain**, leading to symptoms like fever, headache, vomiting, and neurological signs such as confusion, seizures, and paralysis.

- While many infected individuals may show mild or no symptoms, **severe cases can lead to permanent brain damage or death**
- **Vaccination is the most effective prevention strategy; There is no antiviral treatment for patients with JE.**

## Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES):

- AES is characterized by a **sudden onset of high-grade fever, convulsions, altered sensorium, and multi-organ dysfunction.**
- Common symptoms include **vomiting, diarrhoea, and in severe cases, respiratory failure with nasal bleeding.**
- AES can be **caused by a variety of pathogens**, including viruses, bacteria, fungi, and parasites, as well as toxins and chemicals.
- **Diagnosis challenges:** The diagnosis of AES can be challenging due to the similarity of symptoms with other viral infections like Chandipura Vesiculovirus (CHPV), Enterovirus, Meningitis, and Japanese Encephalitis

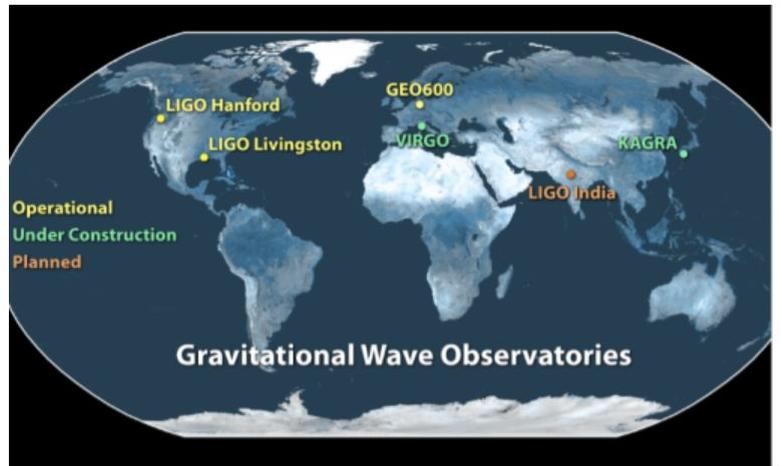


**SYLLABUS: Prelims: Science and Technology**

**Newspaper: The Indian Express; Page Number: 01**

**Laser Interferometer Gravitational Wave Observatory (LIGO-India)**

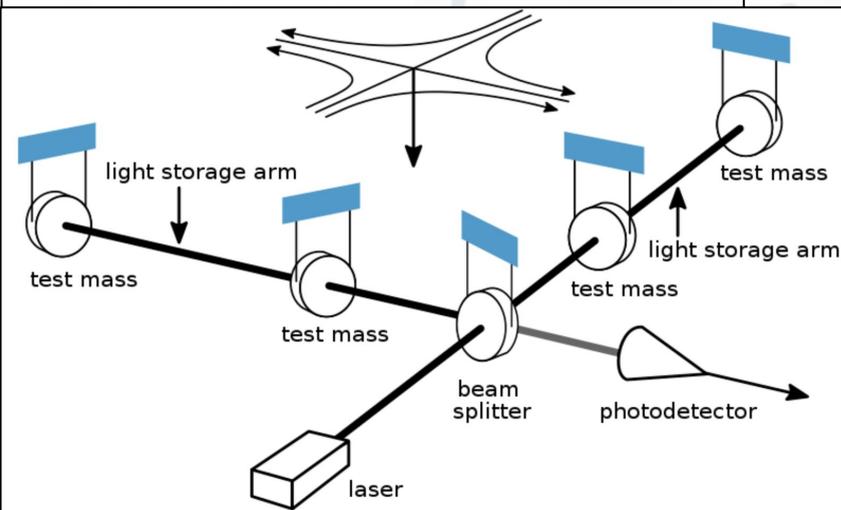
- **Location** – Hingoli, Maharashtra
- **Development** – Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) and the Department of Science and Technology (DST) in collaboration with the National Science Foundation (NSF), USA.
- **Aim** – To study and enhance the knowledge about gravitational waves,
- **Predicted by Einstein's Theory of General Relativity and observed for the first time in 2015. (LIGO – USA)**
- **Gravitational Waves** – These are the space-time ripples created by massive accelerating objects in such a way that 'waves' of undulating space-time propagate in all directions from the source.



Gravitational Wave Observatories

**Institutions involved:**

- Directorate of Construction, Services and Estate Management under Department of Atomic Energy
- Institute for Plasma Research (IPR) - Gandhinagar
- Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA) - Pune
- Raja Ramanna Centre for Advanced Technology (RRCAT) - Indore



10th March, 2025

**SYLLABUS: Prelims: Energy security, International Organisation**

**Newspaper: The Indian Express; Page Number: 11**

## International Energy Agency

- It is an **autonomous intergovernmental organisation within the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development framework**.
- It works with governments and industry to shape a secure and sustainable energy future for all.
- **Established in 1974, in the wake of the 1973–1974 oil crisis**
- **Member Countries:** It consists of 31 member countries and eleven association countries.
- A candidate country to the IEA must be a member country of the (OECD).
- **India joined this organization in 2017 as an Associate member.**
- **Reports published by IEA:** World Energy Outlook, World Energy Balances, Energy Technology Perspectives, World Energy Statistics, Net Zero by 2050.
- **Headquarters:** Paris, France

## India's Strategic Petroleum Reserves

- **Agency** – Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserve Limited (ISPRL), (Special Purpose Vehicle)
- **Capacity** – **5.33 Million Metric Tonnes (MMT)**
- **Locations** – (i) **Vishakhapatnam (1.33 MMT)**, (ii) **Mangaluru (1.5 MMT)** (iii) **Padur (2.5 MMT)**.
- These SPRs can meet approximately **9.5 days of national demand**.

- Apart from SPRs, India's oil marketing companies (OMCs) have storage facilities for crude oil and petroleum products for 64.5 days
- **Approval** – (i) **Chandikhol in Odisha (4 MMT)** and (ii) **Padur in Karnataka (2.5 MMT)**

## WHERE DOES INDIA STORE ITS STRATEGIC PETROLEUM RESERVES?



**SYLLABUS: Prelims: Environmental Conservation**

**Newspaper: The Indian Express; Page Number: 01**

- **Establishment - 1981.**
- Created after restructuring the **Pre-Investment Survey of Forest Resources (PISFR).**
- **Ministry - Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).**
- **Headquarters - Dehradun, Uttarakhand.** ( Zonal offices – Shimla, Kolkata, Nagpur and Bangalore)
- **Primary Objective - Assessment and monitoring of forest resources of India** on a regular basis.
- **Publication - Publishes India State of Forest Report (ISFR), Biennially.**
- **Methods -** Satellite remote sensing, Geographic Information System (GIS), Ground truthing surveys
- FSI operates the **National Forest Fire Alert System (NFFAS) using satellite data.**

## Was a pilot project, its utility being assessed: Official

Jay Mazoomdaar  
New Delhi, March 9

THE FOREST Survey of India (FSI), the central government organisation that is responsible for the assessment and monitoring of India's forest wealth, has stopped issuing the fortnightly alerts through which it has kept a watch on deforestation activities in near-real time for more than two years.

The data on the FSI's Anavaran-Deforestation Alert System have not been updated since November 2025.

The portal, which has been operational since January 2024, has been using satellite data and machine learning to enable FSI to issue location alerts on the loss of forest cover



A deforestation alert for Punjab in Oct 2025. Data on Anavaran system have not been updated since November 2025.

to states every 15 days so that targeted field inspections can be carried out.

According to multiple sources, active monitoring through the portal was halted this January, and states stopped receiving the fortnightly deforestation alerts.

Asked why the portal had stalled, FSI joint director Shivani Dogra said Anavaran had been running only as a pilot

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



**Q1. Consider the following statements:**

1. Over the last decade, the mean age at motherhood has remained entirely stagnant due to persistent rural Indian traditions.
2. Rapidly urbanising states such as Maharashtra and Gujarat have witnessed an increase in the average age of childbirth to nearly 28–35 years.
3. The delay in marriage automatically categorises India's demographic dividend as a 'greying population' by 2030.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

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

**Answer:** d

**Q2. Which of the following Articles of the Indian Constitution directly deal with the duration of the Houses of Parliament and State Legislatures, serving as primary targets for amendment to implement One Nation One Election?**

1. Article 83
2. Article 85
3. Article 172
4. Article 324

**Select the correct answer using the codes given below.**

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

**Answer:** a

**Q3. Which of the following statements is correct regarding the removal of Election Commissioners (ECs) other than the Chief Election Commissioner?**

- a) The President of India can remove them upon the recommendation of the Parliament via a special majority.
- b) They hold office during the pleasure of the Parliament and can be removed by a simple majority.
- c) They cannot be removed from office except on the Chief Election Commissioner's recommendation.
- d) They can be removed in the same manner and on the like grounds as a Judge of the Supreme Court.

**Answer:** c

**Q4. Regarding the functioning of the LIGO observatory, consider the following statements:**

1. It operates on the principle of optical interferometry, utilising an L-shaped structure with two identical 4-kilometre-long arms.
2. The passing of a gravitational wave stretches one arm of the detector while simultaneously compressing the other, changing the travel time of the laser beams.
3. Gravitational waves belong to the electromagnetic spectrum and travel slightly slower than the speed of light.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

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

**Answer:** a

**Q5. Regarding the Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR), consider the following statements:**

1. Under Phase I, SPR facilities have been established at Visakhapatnam, Mangaluru, and Padur.
2. All existing Phase I operational reserves are stored in underground 'salt dome' caverns, mirroring the United States' SPR model.
3. The upcoming Phase II expansion includes a new commercial-cum-strategic facility at Chandikhol, located in West Bengal.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

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

**Answer:** b





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