



**VAJIRAM & RAVI**  
Institute for IAS Examination

# The Analyst

**CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout**

**27th March 2026**



**CONTEXT:** With the patent expiry of semaglutide-based drugs, cheaper generics may expand access to anti-obesity medications at a critical time when India is facing a silent epidemic of obesity.

### What is GLP-1?

- GLP-1 (Glucagon-Like Peptide-1) is a **natural hormone** produced in your small intestine.
- Role: It helps **regulate blood sugar** by telling the pancreas to release insulin after you eat and signals the brain that you are full.
- The Problem: Natural GLP-1 breaks down in the body within minutes.

### What is Semaglutide?

- It is a **lab-made drug** designed to mimic the natural hormone.
- The Advantage: Semaglutide is modified to stay **in the body** for an **entire week**.
- It is sold by the Danish company **Novo Nordisk** under three famous brand names:
  - **Ozempic:** For Type 2 Diabetes (injectable)
  - Wegovy: Specifically for Weight Loss (higher-dose injectable)
  - Rybelsus: For Type 2 Diabetes (oral pill)

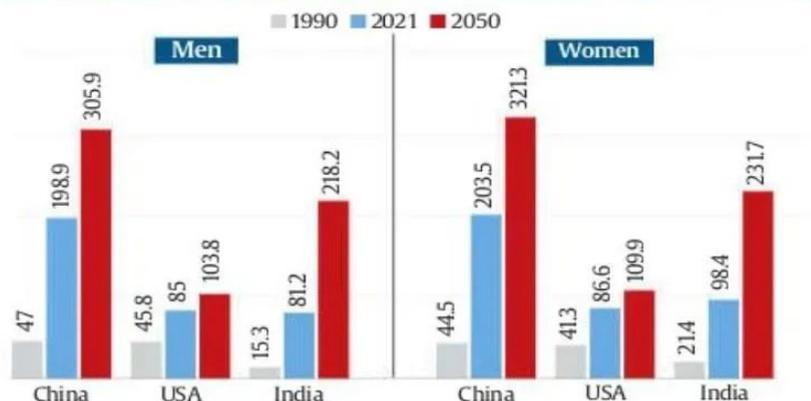
### Structural Inflection Point

- The primary **patent** for Semaglutide (the active ingredient in Ozempic), held by Novo Nordisk, **expired in India** on March 20, 2026.
  - Whereas patents in the US and Europe extend into the 2030s
- **Price Crash:** Earlier ₹8,000 and ₹16,000 per month.
  - New Indian generics launched at prices as low as ₹1,290 per month.
- **Accessibility:** This makes a "luxury" drug accessible to millions of India's 101 million diabetics

### WHO IS MOST AT RISK, WHERE IN THE WORLD

CATEGORY	RANK					
	YEAR1990		YEAR2021		YEAR2050	
<b>CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADOLESCENTS (5 - 14 YEARS)</b>						
Boys	China	7.3 mn	China	19.5 mn	China	19.5 mn
	USA	4.6 mn	India	13.3 mn	India	16.1 mn
	India	4.6 mn	USA	7.6 mn	Nigeria	12.5 mn
Girls	China	5.4 mn	China	13.9 mn	China	14.8 mn
	India	4.5 mn	India	12.4 mn	India	14.4 mn
	USA	4.2 mn	USA	7.5 mn	Egypt	10.6 mn
<b>OLDER ADOLESCENTS (15-24 YEARS)</b>						
Youngmen	China	9.1 mn	India	16.8 mn	India	22.7 mn
	USA	6.1 mn	China	16.3 mn	China	19.5 mn
	India	4 mn	USA	10.5 mn	Nigeria	14 mn
Youngwomen	China	6.9 mn	India	13 mn	India	16.9 mn
	USA	4.8 mn	China	11.4 mn	China	14.8 mn
	India	3.3 mn	USA	10.9 mn	USA	11.9 mn

### ADULTS OVER THE AGE OF 25 YEARS



**CONTEXT:** With the patent expiry of semaglutide-based drugs, cheaper generics may expand access to anti-obesity medications at a critical time when India is facing a silent epidemic of obesity.

- **Obesity** is commonly measured using Body Mass Index (BMI), which is the ratio of a person's weight to their height squared.
  - BMI > 30 → Obese
  - BMI 25-30 → Overweight
- India is facing a **silent epidemic of obesity**, transitioning from undernutrition to a **dual burden of malnutrition**.
- **NFHS-5 (2019-21):**
  - ~24% women & 23% men are overweight/obese
  - Around 1/3rd of India's population may now be overweight/obese (2025 estimates)
  - 41 million children already have high BMI
- Rapid Increase Across All Age Groups
  - **Under-5** overweight increased from 2.1% → 3.4%
- Gender & Regional Patterns
  - Higher among **women** and **affluent** groups
  - Rural obesity is rising rapidly

## Causes of Obesity in India

### Dietary Transition

- Ultra-processed, high sugar-fat foods
- Fast food & sugary beverages



### Sedentary Lifestyle

- Urbanization & Desk Jobs
- Increased Screen Time



### Socio-economic Factors

- Rising Incomes, Higher Calorie Intake
- "Healthy = Well-Fed" Perception



### Biological & Genetic Factors

- "Thin-Fat" Indian Phenotype
- Abdominal Obesity in Women



### Urbanization & Built Environment

- Lack of Walkability
- Poor Physical Activity Spaces



### Stress & Mental Health Issues

- Work Stress & Poor Dietary Choices



## Impacts of Obesity

- **Health Impacts**
  - Diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular diseases
  - India = diabetes capital linkage
  - Increased cancer risk
- **Economic Burden**
  - Rising healthcare costs
  - Loss of productivity
- **Social Impacts**
  - Reduced quality of life
  - Mental health issues (body image, stigma)



**CONTEXT:** With the patent expiry of semaglutide-based drugs, cheaper generics may expand access to anti-obesity medications at a critical time when India is facing a silent epidemic of obesity.



## Government Initiatives to Address Obesity

- **POSHAN Abhiyaan (National Nutrition Mission):** Targets both undernutrition and obesity through dietary interventions and behavior change.
- **Eat Right India Movement (FSSAI):** Promotes safe, healthy food habits through social media.
- **Fit India Movement:** Encourages active lifestyles through regular fitness campaigns.
- **School Health Programme** under Ayushman Bharat: Focuses on healthy eating, physical activity, and periodic health check-ups.
- **Trans Fat Free Initiative:** By FSSAI, to eliminate industrially produced trans fats
- **Fortification of Foods:** Like rice, wheat, and edible oil to improve nutrition. Eg. Iodised salt.
- **Healthy Food Environment Guidelines:** By FSSAI to regulate availability of unhealthy food in school canteens and public places.

## Way Forward

- **Preventive Approach (Most Important)**
  - Promote healthy diets + physical activity
  - School-based interventions
- **Policy Measures**
  - Tax on sugary drinks
  - Front-of-pack labelling
  - Regulation of junk food ads
- **Health System Strengthening**
  - Integrate obesity screening in healthcare
  - Behavioral counselling
- **Urban Planning**
  - Walkable cities, cycling infrastructure
- **Incentivizing Healthy Choices**
  - Subsidizing fruits, vegetables, and other nutritious food items.
- **Targeted Use of Drugs**
  - For clinically obese patients only
  - Under medical supervision

## Role of New Drugs (Semaglutide Context)

- **Potential Benefits**
  - Effective in weight loss & diabetes control
  - With patent expiry → cheaper generics → wider access
  - Can help high-risk population
- **Limitations**
  - Not a mass solution
  - Risk of over-medicalization
  - Side effects & need for medical supervision
  - Obesity is multifactorial → cannot be solved by drugs alone
  - Drugs are complementary, not substitute for public health measures.



# Obesity in India

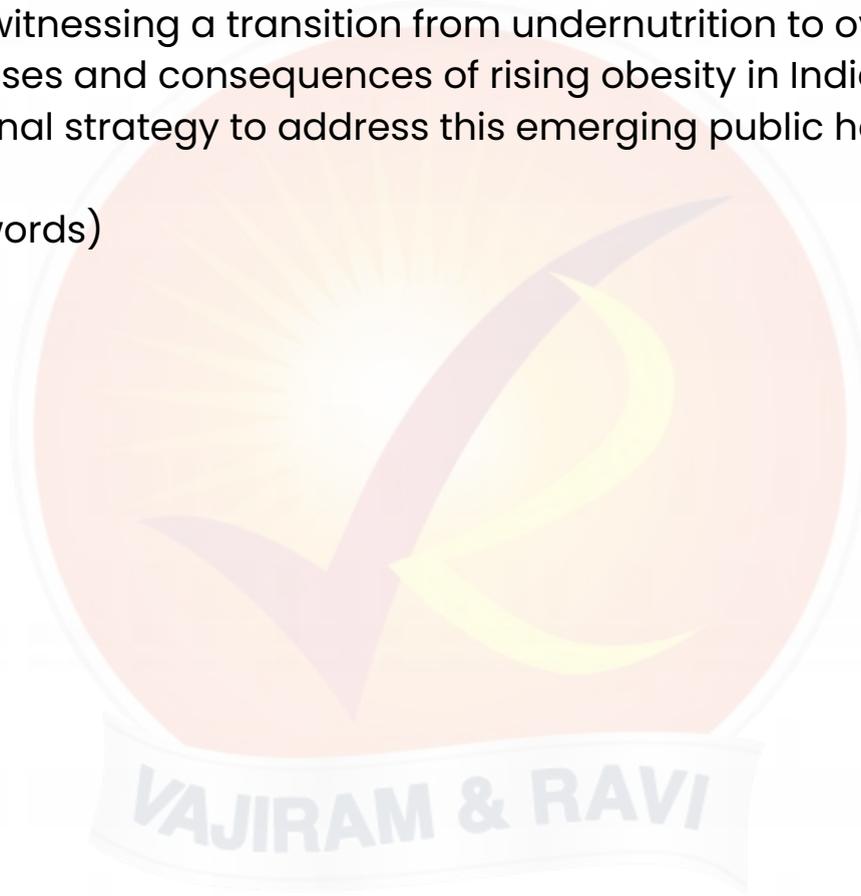


**CONTEXT:** With the patent expiry of semaglutide-based drugs, cheaper generics may expand access to anti-obesity medications at a critical time when India is facing a silent epidemic of obesity.

## MAINS PRACTISE QUESTION

**Ques.** "India is witnessing a transition from undernutrition to overnutrition." Discuss the causes and consequences of rising obesity in India. Suggest a multi-dimensional strategy to address this emerging public health challenge.

(10 marks, 150 words)



**CONTEXT:** The recent verdict by a Los Angeles jury holding tech giants like Meta and Google liable for addiction-induced harm marks a turning point in recognizing social media addiction as a public health issue rather than just an individual behavioral problem.

## Social Media Platforms



## What is Social Media Addiction?

- A form of behavioral addiction characterized by:
  - Excessive use
  - Loss of control
  - Continued use despite harm
- Not formally classified like substance abuse, but linked to dopamine-driven reward cycles

## Magnitude of the Problem (India Context)

- India: **2nd largest** social media user base
- Average usage: **2.5–3 hours/day**
- In India, with over **970 million internet users (Eco. Survey)**, platforms like Instagram and YouTube have become deeply embedded in daily life—raising concerns about mental health & productivity.
- Studies suggest ~10–15% adolescents show addictive patterns

## Signs of Social Media Addiction



**CONTEXT:** The recent verdict by a Los Angeles jury holding tech giants like Meta and Google liable for addiction-induced harm marks a turning point in recognizing social media addiction as a public health issue rather than just an individual behavioral problem.

## THE CYCLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION



# Social Media Addiction



**CONTEXT:** The recent verdict by a Los Angeles jury holding tech giants like Meta and Google liable for addiction-induced harm marks a turning point in recognizing social media addiction as a public health issue rather than just an individual behavioral problem.

## Causes

- **Algorithmic Design** (Platform Responsibility)
  - Infinite scroll, autoplay, notifications
  - Designed for maximum engagement (attention economy)
- **Psychological Factors**
  - Need for validation (likes, shares)
  - Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)
- **Socio-cultural Factors**
  - Peer pressure, influencer culture
  - Digital identity shaping self-worth
- **Cheap Data and 5G Rollout**
  - India has some of the world's most affordable data, removing barriers to high-intensity streaming.
- **Pandemic Effect**
  - Increased dependency during COVID-19

## Impacts

- **Mental Health**
  - Depression, anxiety, loneliness
  - Body image issues (especially due to visual platforms like Instagram)

## ● **Cognitive & Behavioral Effects**

- Reduced attention span
- Sleep disruption

## ● **Social Consequences**

- Weakening of real-world relationships
- Cyberbullying

## ● **Economic Impact**

- Reduced productivity
- Digital distraction in workforce

## Ethical & Legal Dimensions

- **Platform Accountability**
  - Should companies be liable for addictive design?
  - Comparison with tobacco/alcohol industries
- **Freedom vs Regulation**
  - Balancing freedom of expression with user protection
- **Data & Algorithm Transparency**
  - Lack of accountability in recommendation systems

## Social Media Regulation in India

- **Information Technology Act, 2000**
  - Main law governing digital platforms
  - Safe Harbour (Section 79): Intermediaries get liability exemption for user content (if no control/modification)



27th March, 2025

**CONTEXT:** The recent verdict by a Los Angeles jury holding tech giants like Meta and Google liable for addiction-induced harm marks a turning point in recognizing social media addiction as a public health issue rather than just an individual behavioral problem.

- **IT Rules, 2021:**
  - Mandate content removal, user safety, grievance redressal
  - Cover issues like privacy, defamation, national security
- **2023 Amendment (Paused):**
  - Required removal of fake content about govt
  - Implementation stayed by Supreme Court
- **Judicial Safeguards:**
  - Shreya Singhal v. Union of India → Section 66A struck down; protects free speech
  - K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India → Right to Privacy under Article 21 → Right to be Forgotten
- **Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023**

### Key Challenges

- Lack of legal definition of "addiction"
- Strong lobbying by Big Tech
- Enforcement issues
- Digital literacy gap
- Difficulty in regulating algorithms

### Way Forward

- **Regulatory Measures**
  - Algorithm audits
  - Age-based restrictions
  - Time-limit features
- **Platform Responsibility**
  - Ethical design (no dark patterns)
  - Transparent recommendation systems
- **Public Health Approach**
  - Recognize as behavioral health issue
  - Integrate into school health programs
- **Awareness & Digital Literacy**
  - Educate youth on healthy usage habits
- **Individual-Level Measures**
  - Screen-time regulation
  - Digital detox practices

### **MAINS PRACTISE QUESTION**

**Ques.** Social media addiction is emerging as a major public health concern in India. Examine its causes and consequences, and suggest a multi-pronged strategy to address it. (10 Marks, 150 words)



# Foreign Exchange Reserves



**SYLLABUS: Prelims: Economy – Foreign Exchange Reserves**

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



## UNDERSTANDING FOREIGN EXCHANGE (FOREX) RESERVES



**DEFINITION:** Foreign currency assets held by a country's central bank  
(In India → Reserve Bank of India)

### PURPOSE:

- Maintain currency stability (₹ vs \$)
- Meet external payment obligations
- Cushion against economic crises / capital flight



### COMPONENTS (VERY IMPORTANT):



**1. Foreign Currency Assets (FCA)**  
→ Largest component



**2. Gold Reserves**



**3. Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) → from International Monetary Fund**



**4. Reserve Tranche Position (RTP)**  
→ IMF quota-related

### VALUATION:

- Expressed in US dollars
- Changes due to exchange rate fluctuations also

### INDIA SPECIFIC FACTS:

- Managed by RBI, not Ministry directly
- India among top countries globally in forex reserves
- Major portion held in US dollar-denominated assets



### SOURCES OF FOREX RESERVES:



**Exports**  
(goods & services)



**Foreign investments**  
(FDI/FPI)



**Remittances**



**External borrowings**



**Import payments**  
(oil, defence, etc.)



**Exchange rate intervention**



**Debt servicing**



### KEY CONCEPT: Import Cover

- Number of months imports can be financed
- Safe level ≈ 8–10 months (indicative)



**SYLLABUS: Prelims: Economy – Foreign Exchange Reserves**

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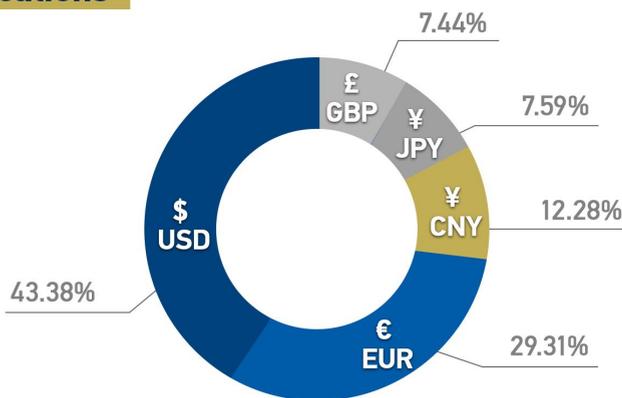
## Special Drawing Rights (SDR) - By IMF

- Not a currency → an international reserve asset
- Value based on a basket of currencies
- Used by countries to supplement forex reserves
- Can be exchanged for freely usable currencies
- Often referred to as "Paper Gold"

## Exam Traps

- Managed by Ministry of Finance → WRONG
- Forex reserves include only foreign currency → WRONG
- Gold is not part of forex reserves → WRONG
- Increase in forex reserves always due to exports → WRONG
- SDR is a currency like dollar → WRONG

## SDR allocations

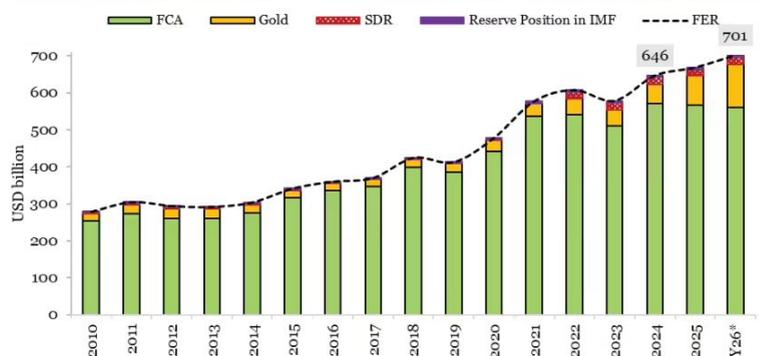


Source: IMF

## Reserve Tranche Position (RTP) - By IMF

- Part of a country's quota (membership fee)
- Amount country can withdraw from IMF anytime
- Considered very liquid & safe component of forex reserves
- No conditions attached (unlike IMF loans)

Chart IV.23: Composition of India's foreign exchange reserves



Source: RBI (<https://tinyurl.com/235dzyy9>).  
Note: FY26\*- As of 16 January 2026.



**SYLLABUS: Prelims: Polity – Executive body**  
**Newspaper: The Indian Express; Page Number: 10**

## Registrar General of India (RGI)

» **Established** : Permanent office created in May 1949 for systematic collection of population statistics.

### » Functions of RGI

- Housing & Population Census – statutory authority under Census Act, 1948.
- Civil Registration System (CRS) – Registrar under RBD Act, 1969.
- National Population Register (NPR) – under Citizenship Rules, 2003.
- Mother Tongue Survey – linguistic analysis of recurring mother tongues.
- Sample Registration System (SRS) – provides birth rate, death rate, IMR, MMR.

### » Current RGI

- Mritunjay Kumar Narayan, appointed Nov 1, 2022, tenure extended to August 4, 2026.

## Legal Framework

### » Census Act, 1948

- Provides duties, responsibilities, penalties, and census procedure.
- **Before 1951** : Census machinery was ad-hoc.

### » Registration of Births & Deaths Act, 1969

- Makes registration compulsory, supervised by RGI.

## History of Census in India

» **1872** – First attempt at nationwide census, non-synchronous.

» **1881** – First synchronous census under W.C. Plowden.

» **After 1881** – Census conducted every 10 years regularly.



**SYLLABUS: Prelims: Polity – Executive body**

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

## Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India

- **Nodal Authority:** Conducts Census of India and maintains vital statistics (births & deaths).
- Functions under the **Ministry of Home Affairs.**
- Last completed Census: 2011
  - Not conducted by Election Commission (common confusion).
- **Executive Body:** Not a constitutional/statutory body per se (office created by executive, but functions backed by laws).

## Exam Traps

- Statutory/Constitutional body → WRONG
- Created under Census Act, 1948 → WRONG
- Functions under Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation → WRONG
- Census conducted by Election Commission → WRONG
- RGI only deals with Census, not birth-death data → WRONG



**SYLLABUS: Prelims: International Organisation**  
**Newspaper: The Indian Express; Page Number: 1**

## G7 (Group of Seven)

- The G7 (Group of Seven) is an **informal forum** of the world's most **advanced** economies
- Origin:
  - Started as **G6 (1975)** in response to the 1973 oil crisis and financial turmoil.
  - Became **G7 (1976)** with Canada
  - Russia joined in 1997 → G8; removed in 2014 after Annexation of Crimea
- **Headquarters: None** (no permanent secretariat)
- Nature:
  - Informal forum (no treaty, no legal status)
  - Decisions are non-binding
- **Key Focus Areas:**
  - Global economy & financial stability
  - Climate change
  - Geopolitics & security
  - Development and health
- **Summit:**
  - Held annually with rotating presidency
- **India** - Not a member (an outreach partner)
- European Union also participates

## G20

### G8

### G7



## Exam Traps

- Formal international organization → **WRONG**
- Has permanent headquarters → **WRONG**
- Decisions are legally binding → **WRONG**
- Russia is still a member → **WRONG**
- India is a member → **WRONG**
- Includes China as a member → **WRONG**



# Enforcement Directorate (ED)



**SYLLABUS: Prelims: Polity – Executive Body**  
**Newspaper: The Indian Express; Page Number: 2**



## ENFORCEMENT DIRECTORATE (ED)



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**PROFILE**



**TYPE:**  
Executive Enforcement Agency  
• Not Statutory or Constitutional



**MINISTRY:**  
Department of Revenue,  
Ministry of Finance

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**ORIGIN & HISTORY**



1956: Established as "Enforcement Unit"



→



Renamed Enforcement Directorate

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**LEGAL POWERS & LEGISLATION**

**FOREIGN EXCHANGE MANAGEMENT ACT, 1999 (FEMA)**



**CIVIL LAW**

**PREVENTION OF MONEY LAUNDERING ACT, 2002 (PMLA)**



**CRIMINAL LAW**

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**KEY FUNCTIONS**



Investigates money laundering cases (PMLA)



Handles foreign exchange violations (FEMA)



Attaches/confiscates proceeds of crime



Files prosecution complaints in courts

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**IMPORTANT POWERS (Prelims Focus)**



Summon, arrest, search & seize under PMLA



Provisionally attach property



Statements made before ED are admissible in court (unlike police statements)

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**NATURE OF OFFENCES (PMLA)**



Cognizable & Non-Bailable



Linked to Scheduled Offences

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**ADJUDICATION MECHANISM**



- Adjudicating Authority
- Appellate Tribunal under PMLA

**JURISDICTION**



- All India
- Cases with International Linkages

**SYLLABUS: Prelims: Polity – Executive Body**

**Newspaper: The Indian Express; Page Number: 2**

## Enforcement Directorate (ED)

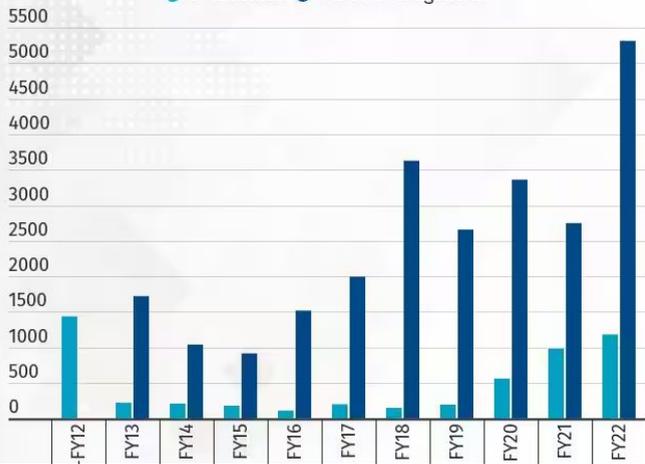
- ED is a premier financial investigation agency tasked with enforcing economic laws (like the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018) and fighting money laundering.

## Exam Traps

- Statutory body → WRONG
- Works under Ministry of Home Affairs → WRONG
- Deals only with corruption cases → WRONG
- FEMA violations are criminal offences → WRONG (civil ✓)
- ED cannot arrest without FIR → WRONG
- Only investigates domestic crimes → WRONG

### RISING ED ACTIVITY

● PMLA cases ● FEMA investigations



## A TYPICAL MONEY LAUNDERING SCHEME

### 1. PLACEMENT



Dirty Money Integrates into the financial System

Collection of dirty Money



### 3. INTEGRATION



Purchase of Luxury Assets  
Financial Investments  
Commercial / Industrial Investments

### 2. LAYERING



Transfer funds between various  
Offshore / Onshore Banks

Wire Transfer



**SYLLABUS: Prelims: International Organisation**

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

**Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)**

- Intergovernmental economic organization to promote economic growth and prosperity.
- Established: **1961** (successor to OEEC, 1948)
  - Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (to implement Marshall Plan)
- Headquarters: **Paris, France**
- Members: **38 countries** (mostly developed)
  - **India: Not a member** (but a Key Partner)
- **Objective:**
  - Promote economic growth, trade, investment, policy coordination
  - Platform for policy dialogue
  - No financial lending (unlike IMF/WB)
  - Nature of Decisions: **Non-binding**
- **Key Reports/Indicators:**
  - Economic Outlook
  - PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment)

**Exam Traps**

- UN specialized agency → **WRONG**
- India is a full member → **WRONG**
- Headquarters in Geneva → **WRONG**
- Provides loans like IMF/World Bank → **WRONG**
- Decisions are legally binding → **WRONG**
- Only European countries are members → **WRONG**

**Which Countries Are in the OECD?**

Members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, by year joined (as of June 2024)



**Q1. With reference to the measurement of Body Mass Index (BMI), consider the following statements:**

1. The World Health Organisation universally defines 'Obesity' as having a BMI of 30 or higher.
2. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has adopted the same WHO cut-off to define clinical obesity for the Indian population.
3. BMI is considered a flawless diagnostic tool as it accurately distinguishes between visceral fat mass and skeletal muscle mass.

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

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

**Answer: a**

**Q2. Consider the following Acts:**

1. Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002
2. Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999
3. Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010
4. Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018

**How many of the Acts given above is/are enforced by the Enforcement Directorate?**

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

**Answer: c**

**Q3. Consider the following statements:**

1. The Special Drawing Right (SDR) is an international reserve currency created by the IMF that member countries can use directly to settle private international trade transactions.
2. The SDR is neither a currency nor a claim on the IMF, but rather a potential claim on the freely usable currencies of IMF members.

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

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Answer: b**

**Q4. Regarding the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India (RGCCI), consider the following statements:**

1. It functions under the administrative control of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.
2. It derives its statutory mandate to conduct the decennial population census from the Census Act, 1948.
3. The office of the RGCCI is also the central authority responsible for implementing the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969.

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

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

**Answer: c**

**Q5. Consider the following statements:**

1. All member countries of the G7 are geographically located in the Northern Hemisphere.
2. Japan is the only Asian member country of the G7.
3. A majority of the G7 member states are also permanent members of the UN Security Council.

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

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

**Answer: b**





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