

PSIR Pulse

August 2025



By- Shashank Tyagi
Ex Consultant, Office of Minister Social
Welfare, GNCTD
Faculty - PSIR Optional, StudyIQ IAS



Table of Contents

GEOPOLITICS AT GLANCE	3
• India–Africa Relations: Gateway to a Shared Future	3
• India’s Act East Policy	7
• INDIA-UK Relations	10
• INDIA-Maldives Relations	15
• INDIA-EU Relations	19
INDIAN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS (IGP)	23
• The Constitution (130th Amendment) Bill, 2025	23
• Section 152 BNS & the New Sedition Debate	26
• Elections and Transparency	29
• 5 Years of New Education Policy	32
• Judicial Pendency	36
• One nation, one election	40
• Executive Accountability	44
SCHOLAR DIGEST: KNOW YOUR SCHOLARS	48
• Friedrich Nietzsche	48
• Hannah Arendt	49
• John Rawls: A Visionary in Political Philosophy	50
• Derrida	51

GEOPOLITICS AT GLANCE

INDIA–AFRICA RELATIONS: GATEWAY TO A SHARED FUTURE



"When Gandhi inspired Mandela, a bridge was built between Asia and Africa — a bridge still under construction today."

INTRODUCTION

- ❑ Recently, PM Narendra Modi addressed Namibia's National Assembly. Namibia is not just mineral-rich and politically stable, but also a strategic gateway for India to expand its footprint in Africa. Let us decode the **history, present, significance, and challenges** of India–Africa ties.
- ❑ India–Africa relations trace back to anti-colonial solidarity. India's freedom struggle inspired African nationalists, while African decolonisation drew consistent support from India at the UN. Built on **mutual trust and South–South cooperation**, the partnership has today diversified into trade, education, skill, health, security, digital transformation, and global governance. Both regions aspire for a **win-win future** based on greater trade, investment, and strategic partnerships.

HISTORICAL ROOTS OF INDIA–AFRICA SOLIDARITY

- ❑ Shared struggle against **colonialism and imperialism** since the 1920s.
- ❑ Independent India became a strong voice for African decolonisation at the UN.

- ❑ **South–South cooperation:** Despite poverty, India shared resources with Africa.
- ❑ **1964: ITEC programme** launched → training, HRD, and capacity building (Africa was the largest beneficiary).
- ❑ India's Africa policy rests on **three pillars**:
 1. **Shared history** (anti-colonial solidarity),
 2. **Pragmatic cooperation** today,
 3. **Future-oriented investments** in long-term ties.

CURRENT STATE OF RELATIONS

1. Economic & Trade

- Bilateral trade touched **\$83.34 bn (2023-24)** → target **\$200 bn by 2030**.
- India = Africa's **3rd largest trading partner** (after EU, China).
- Cumulative Indian investments ≈ **\$70–75 bn** (energy, mining, telecom, pharma).
- **Exports to Africa:** petroleum products, pharma, vehicles.
- **Imports from Africa:** crude oil, minerals, precious stones (77% of imports).
- **LoCs worth \$12.26 bn** → e.g. Senegal irrigation project boosted rice yield 6x.

2. Social Cooperation

- **ICCR scholarships:** 50,000+ African students in 5 years.
- **ITEC programme:** training and capacity building.

3. Security Cooperation

- African states in **IORA** → focus on Indian Ocean security.
- **2020:** First-ever **India–Africa Defence Ministers' Conclave** (Lucknow).

4. Digital Cooperation

- **Pan-African e-Network (2009):** Tele-education + Tele-medicine in 53 nations.
- **e-VBAB (2018):** Free tele-education for 4,000 African students/year + training 1,000 doctors/nurses.
- **UPI success story:** Namibia became 1st African country to adopt India's UPI digital transaction platform.

5. Global & Diplomatic Cooperation

- India lobbied for **African Union's permanent membership in G20 (2023)**.
- Support for Africa's **UNSC permanent seat demand**.
- Joint stances at WTO & WIPO (e.g., Agricultural Framework Proposal, Geographical Indications).

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PARTNERSHIP

1. Economic Potential

- AfCFTA → world's largest free trade area (geography).
- Could lift 30M Africans out of poverty.
- Scope for IT, fintech, mobile payments, pharma, telemedicine.

2. Infrastructure Development

- India's start-up ecosystem can boost **digital infra** in Africa.
- Opportunities in cross-border supply chains (food, pharma, essentials).

3. Soft Power

- Large **Indian diaspora** (Mauritius, Kenya, South Africa).
- Diaspora = trust-building + smoother project execution.
- India's support in healthcare/education = goodwill.

4. Common Agendas

- Both are developing regions → shared stance on:
 - ✓ UNSC reforms,
 - ✓ Climate change,
 - ✓ WTO negotiations,
 - ✓ South–South solidarity.

"Friendship with Africa cannot be built on promises alone; it must be cemented with consistency, trust, and delivery."

KEY CHALLENGES IN THE PARTNERSHIP

1. Irregular High-Level Engagements

- The **India–Africa Forum Summit (IAFS)**, cornerstone of diplomatic ties, has been inconsistent.
- Last summit was in **2015** → huge gap compared to China, EU, US who hold **regular summits** with AU.

2. Flaws in India's Development Strategy

- Lack of **clear development vision** for Africa.
- LoCs, grants, and ITEC programs run in **silos** — no synchronisation towards broader goals like food/health security, clean energy, education.
- **Poor project implementation**: low disbursement rates, delays, incomplete projects → weak development impact.

3. China's Expanding Presence

- China's **BRI investments** in roads, ports, and energy projects dwarf India's efforts.
- Its **"no-strings-attached" loans** + huge financial capacity give it an edge in Africa's natural resources & big-ticket projects.

4. India's Lack of Focus

- Strategic distractions: Indo-Pacific, Quad, UK & EU ties.
- Africa often remains **secondary** in India's diplomatic bandwidth.

5. Intense Competition from Global Powers

- US, EU, Japan, and China all aggressively investing in Africa.
- Education: China = 2nd most popular destination for African students after France (~95,000).
- India offers many scholarships but poor education quality limits uptake.

6. Racial Attacks in India

- Incidents of attacks on African nationals in India damage goodwill.
- Risk: goodwill deficit → trust erosion despite strong official ties.

STEPS TO STRENGTHEN THE RELATIONSHIP

1. Craft a Clear Africa Strategy

- Prepare a **10-year vision plan** with targeted goals in **food & health security, climate adaptation, gender equality**.

2. Sustain Focus on Capacity Building

- Beyond physical infrastructure → **human capital** (skills, jobs, education).
- Africa's **youth bulge** makes skill development critical.

3. Harness Civil Society & Diaspora

- Partner with NGOs (e.g., **Pratham, Barefoot College**) & diaspora networks to deliver projects at **low cost with high local trust**.

4. Timely Completion of Projects

- Improve LoC execution by learning from global peers with better track records.

5. Boost Education Quality in India

- Large-scale investments in higher education → project India as **education hub** for Africa.

6. Improve Experience of Africans in India

- Ensure **safety, dignity, inclusion** of African students & workers.
- Public campaigns to **educate Indians about Africa** → stronger people-to-people bonds.

CONCLUSION

The future of India–Africa partnership lies in aligning with **Africa's own priorities** (Agenda 2063, AfCFTA). Guided by the **Gujral Doctrine of generosity**, India must ensure that commitments translate into consistent delivery. Its **credibility as a Global South partner** will depend not only on intent, but also on **follow-through, empathy, and shared growth**.

PSIR
Optional Subject (2026-27)
LIVE CLASSES & TEST SERIES

- 400+ Hours Live Lectures
- Comprehensive coverage of PYQ
- Hand written notes & crux
- Answer Writing Sessions
- Mains Test series
- One to One Mentorship

Gyan Bhandar

SHASHANK TYAGI



INTRODUCTION

The Indian Railways has recently inaugurated a 51 km railway line to Sairang, located near Mizoram's capital Aizawl. This development fuels expectations for India's ambitious Act East Policy, which envisions establishing rail and road connectivity with Southeast Asia.

Following the conclusion of the Cold War, most nations altered their economic and strategic orientations to adapt to new geopolitical circumstances. India too recognized Southeast Asia's growing significance in 1992 and therefore initiated the 'Look East Policy'. Its objective was to integrate more closely with the region and with U.S. allies in the post-Cold War era. In 2014, this approach was expanded into the 'Act East Policy', designed to deepen economic and strategic partnerships with Southeast Asian countries.

Through this policy, India has promoted collaboration on several projects, such as the Kaladan Multi-Modal Project and the Trilateral Highway. Nonetheless, multiple obstacles continue to hinder smooth cooperation.

ABOUT INDIA'S ACT EAST POLICY

The policy was unveiled during the 12th ASEAN-India Summit in Myanmar in 2014. It rests upon four pillars, known as the 4 C's – Culture, Commerce, Connectivity, and Capacity Building. Act East seeks to build broad economic and strategic partnerships with Southeast Asia and to further consolidate India's position in the Indo-Pacific.

Its major objectives include:

- ☐ Strengthening economic linkages with ASEAN.
- ☐ Expanding infrastructural networks and encouraging foreign direct investment.

- ❑ Advancing regional growth in India's North-East.

The Act East Policy aims to enhance trade through improved rail and road connectivity with ASEAN and East Asian nations such as Japan and South Korea, while also advancing diplomatic ties and strengthening security cooperation. It represents a more ambitious and comprehensive continuation of the 1992 Look East Policy, which itself was conceived in 1991.

COMPARING LOOK EAST AND ACT EAST POLICIES

- ❑ **Scope:** The Look East Policy had a limited vision, primarily targeting economic cooperation. In contrast, the Act East Policy has a broader agenda, combining economic engagement with infrastructural development, strategic relations, and security cooperation.
- ❑ **Geopolitical focus:** Look East concentrated mainly on enhancing trade and investment with Southeast Asia, as India sought alternatives for economic growth following the USSR's collapse. The Act East Policy, however, addresses the evolving geopolitical landscape, specifically aiming to counter China's influence in the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean Region.
- ❑ **North-East development:** Under Look East, the North-East was largely sidelined in India's engagement with East Asia. The Act East Policy, however, emphasizes the North-East as a vital hub for connectivity and development.
- ❑ **People-to-people ties:** Look East neglected aspects such as cultural and civilizational exchanges. Act East, by contrast, places importance on historical, cultural, linguistic, and religious linkages through stronger people-to-people interactions.

PROGRESS ACHIEVED UNDER THE ACT EAST POLICY

- ❑ **Engagement with ASEAN:** The India-ASEAN partnership has grown stronger and reached new milestones. India has emerged as ASEAN's fourth-largest trading partner. Southeast Asian nations welcome India's deeper role as a counterbalance to China's expansionist agenda in the region. At the India-ASEAN Summit, India committed \$1 billion to boost connectivity.
- ❑ **Regional Cooperation:** India is leading several sub-regional programs and initiatives, including the BBIN corridor, the Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway, and the Kaladan Multi-Modal Project.
- ❑ **Development of the North-East:** A central priority of the Act East Policy is the transformation of India's North-East, which is considered the gateway to ASEAN. Various initiatives under AEP include:
 - Between 2014–15 and 2024–25, the Centre raised budgetary allocations for the region by 300%.
 - Construction of over 10,000 km of highways and 800 km of railway tracks, alongside the establishment of eight new airports.
 - Japan has pledged investments of nearly ₹13,000 crore in both ongoing and new projects across the North-East, and the India-Japan Act East Forum was launched in 2017 to support modernization in the region.
 - The newly operational Sairang railhead in Mizoram is strategically significant for the AEP, expected to facilitate goods movement from the India-supported Sittwe Port in Myanmar.
- ❑ **Security Cooperation:** Defence ties with East Asian countries have strengthened. In 2014, India signed an MoU with Vietnam enabling a line of credit for defence purchases. Since 2015, India has undertaken joint maritime law-enforcement patrols and military exercises with ASEAN states.

- ❑ **Engagement with the Far East:** India has extended its outreach to the Russian Far East, announcing a \$1 billion line of credit for development there. The resource-rich region is crucial for India's energy needs and economic growth.

FACTORS HINDERING THE SUCCESS OF ACT EAST POLICY

- ❑ **China's Role:** China's growing clout, coupled with India-China tensions, has complicated the regional scenario. Both Beijing's direct influence and that of ethnic Chinese communities are expanding.
- ❑ **Economic Concerns:** Regional actors express dissatisfaction with India's trade policies. Few major agreements have been signed, apart from a memorandum on oceans and fisheries with South Korea. Moreover, India was the only nation to withdraw from the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).
- ❑ **Myanmar's Crisis:** Political instability and conflict in Myanmar present major challenges. As a crucial land corridor for India's connectivity projects (such as the Trilateral Highway and Kaladan Project), turmoil there delays projects, undermines security, and disrupts cross-border trade.
- ❑ **Delayed Projects:** Flagship connectivity initiatives like the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway and the Kaladan Multi-Modal Project have experienced repeated setbacks due to legal hurdles, security threats, logistical bottlenecks, and land acquisition issues.
- ❑ **Weak Infrastructure in the North-East:** The success of the policy hinges on strong infrastructure in India's North-Eastern states, yet road, rail, and air networks remain underdeveloped, restricting effective connectivity.
- ❑ **Ethnic Conflicts:** Unrest in the North-East, such as the Manipur ethnic crisis, directly obstructs AEP goals. Such instability hampers infrastructure work, deters investors, and fuels concerns about insurgency and arms trafficking.
- ❑ **Religious and Social Concerns:** Criticism of India's treatment of minorities, particularly Muslims and Christians, has grown in the region. Concerns about Hindu majoritarianism influence civil society perceptions in countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore. India's Buddhist diplomacy has also had limited success, given the increasing religious tensions in the region.

WAY FORWARD TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES OF ACT EAST POLICY

- ❑ **Accelerate Key Projects:** The government must fulfill commitments from the 2018 Delhi Declaration, including:
 - Digital connectivity projects in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam.
 - The Trilateral Highway.
 - The Trilateral Motor Vehicle Agreement.
- ❑ **Strengthening the Role of States:** States need greater empowerment to contribute effectively to AEP. For example, establishing a Northeast branch of NITI Aayog could improve Centre-State coordination in policy implementation.
- ❑ **Regional Groupings:** India should enhance cooperation within BIMSTEC, a natural bridge between South and Southeast Asia. Finalizing agreements such as the BIMSTEC MVA, the coastal shipping pact, and the Trade Facilitation Agreement would be crucial.
- ❑ **Streamlining Development Cooperation:** To fast-track projects, bureaucratic delays and paperwork must be reduced. The EXIM Bank of India should open offices across South, Southeast, and East Asia. Greater coordination between the PMO, Finance Ministry, and External Affairs Ministry is needed for smooth implementation.

- ❑ **Low-Hanging Opportunities:** India should seize immediate opportunities such as starting international flights from Imphal to Southeast Asian nations, which would boost medical tourism. For example, Imphal's Shija Hospital already attracts patients from Myanmar.
- ❑ **Widening Scope:** The outreach of the policy should be expanded to include neighbors like Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, enabling stronger integration of Eastern and Northeastern India.
- ❑ **Balancing China:** While continuing engagement with China, India must simultaneously present credible alternatives and fortify regional partnerships to counter Beijing's growing dominance in key infrastructure and strategic sectors.
- ❑ **Ensuring Peace in the North-East:** Addressing insurgency, ethnic strife, and border issues is essential, as stability in the region is a prerequisite for AEP's success.

CONCLUSION

India must further reformulate the Act East Policy to enhance its soft power in Southeast Asia. Strengthening cultural influence will generate multiplier effects in realizing the broader objectives of the policy.

INDIA-UK RELATIONS



INTRODUCTION

- ❑ **India and the UK have recently entered into a Free Trade Agreement named the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA).** This agreement is not just an economic arrangement but also aims to foster mutual prosperity. It comprises specific chapters focusing on trade in goods and services, innovation, intellectual property rights, and public procurement. The agreement is projected to favour Indian sectors such as agriculture, MSMEs, footwear, jewellery exports, engineering products, and seafood.

WHAT IS THE HISTORICAL BACKDROP OF INDIA-UK RELATIONS?

India and the United Kingdom have a deep and intricate relationship dating back several centuries.

- ❑ **Colonial Period (1858–1947):** Following the 1857 revolt, Britain assumed direct control over India in 1858, and the British monarch became the Emperor or Empress of India.
- ❑ **Post-Independence Period:** After gaining independence, India opted to remain part of the Commonwealth of Nations upon becoming a Republic in 1950.
- ❑ **Period of Tensions:** During the Cold War, relations between India and the UK were tense. While India pursued a non-aligned foreign policy, the UK was aligned with NATO and supported the US. Britain opposed India's wars with Pakistan and its nuclear tests.
- ❑ **Improvement in Ties:** Post-Cold War and following India's economic liberalisation in the 1990s, the UK displayed greater interest in enhancing economic relations with India, marking the beginning of improved bilateral ties.
- ❑ **Strategic Engagement Phase:** In 2004, both nations upgraded their relationship to a Strategic Partnership, which was recently elevated further to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. The India-UK Vision 2035 outlines specific goals to strengthen cooperation. Frequent high-level exchanges have facilitated collaboration in sectors like defence, trade, investment, and interpersonal connections.

At present, the India-UK relationship represents a modern partnership rooted in shared historical connections and joint membership in the Commonwealth. Both nations collaborate across numerous sectors and are working toward achieving a full-fledged strategic partnership by 2030.

IN WHAT DOMAINS DO INDIA AND THE UK COLLABORATE?

1. **Geo-Political Cooperation:** The UK endorses India's bid for a permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council. It also serves as a vital partner for India in global forums such as the EU, G7, and G20. Political collaboration is enhanced through mechanisms like the India-UK Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Dialogue, the India-UK Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism, and bilateral consultations between their Foreign Offices.
2. **Economic Collaboration:** The formation of the Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO) in 2005 has further reinforced India-UK economic relations:
 - Between 2007 and 2019, trade between the two nations more than doubled.
 - In 2022–23, bilateral trade reached USD 20.36 billion.
 - In 2022, India ranked as the UK's 12th largest trading partner, contributing 2% to the UK's total trade.
 - India has launched 120 projects and generated over 5,000 jobs in the UK, making it the UK's second-largest FDI source after the US.

- The recently signed Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) is a landmark that aims to increase bilateral trade to \$112–120 billion by 2030.
- 3. Defence and Security:** A Defence and International Security Partnership (DISP) was signed in November 2015, providing strategic direction to defence cooperation. Currently, about 70 UK-based firms provide components and support for aircraft platforms such as the Jaguar, Mirage, and Kiran.
- 4. Nuclear Collaboration:** In 2010, India and the UK signed a Civil Nuclear Cooperation Declaration to enhance collaboration in nuclear technology. This was followed by a Nuclear Collaboration Agreement in 2015 as part of broader energy and climate partnerships.
- 5. Educational Cooperation:**
 - India and the UK have strong ties in education:
 - ✓ In 2019, the 'UKEIRI Mobility Programme: Study in India' was launched, encouraging UK institutions to partner with Indian ones and send their students to study in India.
 - ✓ The UK remains a top destination for Indian students, with around 50,000 currently enrolled there.
- 6. Healthcare Cooperation:**
 - There has been notable collaboration in health management:
 - ✓ The joint effort between Oxford University, AstraZeneca, and Serum Institute of India on the COVID-19 vaccine highlighted the potential for collaborative solutions to global health issues.
 - ✓ Both sides are also working together on antimicrobial resistance, pandemic readiness, digital health, Ayurveda and traditional medicine, and healthcare workforce exchange.
- 7. Climate and Environment:** The India-UK Green Growth Equity Fund facilitates institutional investments in Indian sectors like renewable energy, electric mobility, waste management, and environmental services.
- 8. Cultural Engagement:** In 2010, the two countries signed an MoU on Cultural Cooperation. The Nehru Centre (TNC) in London, established in 1992, functions as India's cultural representative in the UK.
- 9. Diaspora Relations:** Roughly 1.5 million individuals of Indian descent reside in the UK, playing a significant role in British society. The presence of people of Indian origin has increased in the British Parliament, and the UK's previous Prime Minister was also of Indian heritage.
- 10. Further Cultural Collaboration:** India and the UK have signed a Programme of Cultural Cooperation (POCC), which aims to strengthen the cultural bond between the two nations. This initiative reflects their mutual commitment to fostering creativity and supporting economic development through cultural ties.

WHY ARE CLOSER INDIA–UK RELATIONS IMPORTANT?

- ❑ **India–UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA):** The FTA is expected to further stimulate India's labour-intensive industries, enhance the country's service exports, and broaden its range of trade partners.
- ❑ **Advantages for India:** The FTA offers 99% duty-free market access for Indian exports to the UK, encompassing nearly all traded items. This represents a major boost to sectors such as textiles, leather, footwear, marine goods, gems and jewellery, toys, and sports equipment—since 45% of India's merchandise exports to Britain will now face no tariffs.
 - Additionally, products like engineering items, automotive parts, and organic chemicals will benefit, as will agri-exports like spices, mango pulp, and pulses.

- Indian consumers stand to gain too, with greater access to British imports—including beverages, cosmetics, automobiles, and medical devices—as tariffs fall from an average of 15% to just 3%. British goods like aerospace components and medical instruments will become more affordable and widely available.
- At the same time, India has protected key agricultural items—such as dairy, apples, walnuts, and whey—by excluding them from tariff reductions.
- The **Double Contribution Convention Agreement**, a social security accord, aims to spare Indian professionals working in the UK from making dual contributions to social security funds.
- ❑ **Advantages for the UK:** The UK, in turn, secures wider access to the Indian market. Duties on major UK exports such as gin and whisky will be slashed (initially from 150% to 75%, and eventually to 40% over ten years). Import taxes on luxury vehicles like Rolls-Royce and Jaguar Land Rover will fall drastically (from 110% to just 10%) through a quota-based system.
- ❑ **Geo-Political Significance:** Robust ties between the two nations are key for advancing shared interests in regions such as the Indo-Pacific, Afghanistan, and international platforms like the UNSC, G20, and Commonwealth. For example, India has supported the UK's involvement in the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative's Maritime Security section.
- ❑ **Geo-Strategic Importance:** Strengthening ties with Britain enables India to counterbalance China's assertiveness in the Indian Ocean Region. The UK, through its "China Plus One" strategy, can look to India as an alternative investment destination to China.
 - (Note: The "China Plus One" strategy encourages companies to diversify their operations beyond China to mitigate risks.)
- ❑ **Climate Change Cooperation:** A stronger India–UK partnership can contribute towards meeting Paris Agreement goals and implementing the Glasgow Climate Pact. Notably, the two countries have committed to accelerating the rollout of the **Global Green Grids – One Sun, One World, One Grid (OSOWOG)** initiative under the ISA framework.
- ❑ **Technological Innovation:** India–UK Vision 2035 highlights the need to co-develop cutting-edge technologies across several domains—such as future telecommunications, artificial intelligence, quantum computing, advanced materials, biotechnology, semiconductors, and critical minerals.
- ❑ **Indian Diaspora:** The over 1.6 million people of Indian origin in the UK form a vibrant bridge between the two countries, facilitating cultural exchange and reinforcing bilateral engagement.

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR CHALLENGES IN INDIA–UK RELATIONS?

1. FTA-Related Concerns:

- India's most substantial concession under the CFTA is the opening of its public procurement market to UK firms. These companies now enjoy **Class-2 status** under the "Make in India" framework, which mandates a domestic value addition between 20% and 50%.
- Such a move could potentially dilute the aims of flagship schemes like **Make in India** and **Atmanirbhar Bharat**, reducing India's capacity to use government contracts as tools for promoting import substitution, domestic industry, and job creation.

2. UK's Engagements with Pakistan and China: Britain's established ties with Pakistan complicate its potential to build deeper security and defence links with India. Moreover, the two nations often differ in their approach to China. India sees China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as a strategic challenge in the Indo-Pacific, whereas the UK has chosen to actively engage with the BRI.

3. **Khalistan Issue:** India has repeatedly flagged concerns regarding the activities of pro-Khalistan extremists operating in the UK. These groups are viewed as threats to India's unity and security, and New Delhi has pressed London to take stronger action to curb their activities.
4. **Slow Progress in Defence Cooperation:** Britain has been relatively slow to embrace India's increasing preference for government-to-government (G2G) and Foreign Military Sales (FMS) models in defence acquisitions.
5. **Divergent Views on the Russia–Ukraine Conflict:** The UK has openly condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine, while India has refrained from doing so. This divergence could emerge as a sticking point in their bilateral relationship.
6. **Extradition Challenges:** Although both nations have an extradition treaty in place, speedy repatriation remains elusive. High-profile fugitives such as **Vijay Mallya** and **Nirav Modi** have yet to be extradited from the UK despite long-standing Indian efforts.
7. **Illegal Immigration:** More than 100,000 undocumented Indian migrants currently reside in the UK. Although Britain is pressing for their return, the two nations have yet to finalise a **migration and mobility agreement**.
8. **Anti-Colonial Resentment Toward the UK:** India continues to carry the burden of colonial legacies like Partition, issues involving Pakistan, and the Kashmir dispute.

WHAT STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN GOING FORWARD?

1. **Joint Revitalisation of Multilateralism:** India and the UK need to overcome their differing views in global institutions like the WTO and UNFCCC. The UK should stand in support of the developing and underdeveloped nations, rather than aligning only with the developed world.
2. **Migration and Mobility Pact:** Both countries should consider finalising a migration and mobility agreement to facilitate the legal entry of Indian citizens into the UK.
3. **Streamlining Extradition Processes:** The UK must uphold its pledge to extradite Indian fugitives. For instance, Nirav Modi's case, which is nearing completion, should be concluded swiftly.
4. **Strengthened Defence and Security Ties:** Given the convergence of Indian and UK interests in the Indian Ocean, the two nations must deepen their defence and security cooperation. They should also advocate for transparency and sustainability in infrastructure projects in the region.
5. **Balanced Foreign Relations:** The UK must ensure that its relationships with China and Pakistan do not hinder its growing partnership with India. Doing so would further strengthen bilateral ties.

CONCLUSION

In 2025, India–UK relations have reached a new peak, fuelled by the recent Free Trade Agreement, increasing strategic engagement, and common global goals. The two nations are building on this partnership to promote innovation, expand economic possibilities, and confront global issues together—laying the groundwork for a more dynamic and interconnected future.

INDIA-MALDIVES RELATIONS



INTRODUCTION

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the chief guest at the Maldives' Independence Day celebrations on July 26. This visit marks Modi's first trip to the island nation since a change in its leadership. In recent times, the India–Maldives relationship has emerged as a key foreign policy concern for New Delhi.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF INDIA–MALDIVES RELATIONS

India and Maldives share longstanding **ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious, and commercial ties**, tracing back to ancient history. The name 'Maldives' is likely derived from Sanskrit – **Mala** (garland) and **Dweep** (island). The islands have likely been settled since the 5th century BCE, mainly by migrants from **southern India and Sri Lanka**. These ties facilitated extensive trade during both ancient and medieval times.

KEY PHASES IN INDIA–MALDIVES BILATERAL HISTORY

- ❑ **1965:** Maldives gained independence from British rule. India was among the earliest nations to establish diplomatic engagement, opening a mission in Male by 1972.
- ❑ **1978:** Maumoon Abdul Gayoom assumed power as President. His frequent visits to India helped deepen bilateral cooperation.
- ❑ **1988:** India dispatched military forces and naval assets to assist President Gayoom in suppressing a coup attempt involving a Maldivian businessman and Sri Lankan Tamil insurgents.

- ❑ **2008:** Mohamed Nasheed became President, further strengthening ties. India provided two helicopters, a Dornier aircraft, and patrol vessels to support maritime security and surveillance.
- ❑ **2013:** Abdulla Yameen from the opposition PPM came to power. His tenure brought tensions with India. India objected to his imposition of emergency measures. Yameen moved towards pro-China policies, signing a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with China and allowing Chinese firms to undertake major infrastructure projects like the Hulhumalé housing scheme and the China-Maldives Friendship Bridge. He also threatened to expel Indian pilots and defence personnel.
- ❑ **2018:** Ibrahim Mohamed Solih was elected President, defeating Yameen. Solih reoriented Maldives' foreign policy under an **"India First" approach**. India was invited to lead several major infrastructure initiatives, including the \$500 million Greater Male Connectivity Project. In 2021, India and Maldives inked the Uthuru Thilafalhu (UTF) project, allowing India to build a coast guard base — which in turn triggered the **"India Out"** movement.

EXPLAINING THE 'INDIA OUT' CAMPAIGN AND THE 'INDIA FIRST' POLICY

- ❑ **India Out Campaign:** This is a **domestic political movement** in the Maldives opposing the presence of Indian military forces. The movement gained momentum following developments like the UTF deal and India's plan to establish a consulate in Addu Atoll.
- ❑ **Supporters:** Former President Abdulla Yameen backed the movement. During his leadership (2013–2018), he pushed for pro-China alignment, signed an FTA with China, and issued a deadline to remove Indian helicopters from key atolls.
- ❑ **Current Support:** The newly elected President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu has also built political capital around the campaign.
- ❑ **India First Policy:** This strategy reflects Maldives' preference for India as its top partner in defence cooperation, development projects, and crisis response (e.g., COVID-19 vaccine support).
- ❑ **Proponent:** President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih introduced this approach after coming to power in 2018 to reverse the anti-India tilt seen during Yameen's term.

WHY IS MALDIVES IMPORTANT FOR INDIA?

- ❑ **Geo-Economic Importance:** Maldives lies along crucial international shipping lanes. Roughly **50% of India's overseas trade** and **80% of its energy imports** move through sea lanes near the Maldives.
- ❑ **Geo-Political Importance:** Maldives collaborates with India in numerous regional platforms like **Colombo Security Conclave (CSC), SAARC, IORA, SASEC**, and India's **SAGAR** initiative. Maldives also backs India's bid for permanent membership in the **UN Security Council**.
- ❑ **Strategic Security Importance:** Maldives is India's frontline defence against threats like **terrorism, piracy, narcotics, and other maritime crimes**. Its location serves as a checkpoint between two critical zones: the western Indian Ocean (Gulf of Aden, Strait of Hormuz) and the eastern Indian Ocean (Strait of Malacca).
- ❑ **Indian Diaspora Significance:** A large number of Indians work in Maldives across sectors like **education, healthcare, tourism, and hospitality**.

AREAS OF COOPERATION BETWEEN INDIA AND THE MALDIVES

India has played a key role in supporting the Maldives in its development. The primary sectors of collaboration between the two nations include:

ECONOMIC COLLABORATION

Economic ties form a fundamental part of India–Maldives relations. Highlights include:

- ❑ India has committed \$500 million in grants and financial support for improving maritime connectivity.
- ❑ An \$800 million line of credit has been extended by the Export-Import Bank of India.
- ❑ India ranks as the Maldives' second-largest trade partner.
- ❑ The Maldives is a major tourist hub for Indian travelers, and tourism is vital to the Maldivian economy.

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

India has prioritized the development of sustainable infrastructure in the Maldives. Key projects include:

- ❑ The **Greater Male Connectivity Project**, the largest infrastructure initiative in the Maldives, aims to link Male with Villingili, Gulhifalhu, and Thilafushi via bridges, causeways, and roads. It will be crucial for the upcoming Gulhifalhu Port and will drive job creation and economic growth.
- ❑ India is redeveloping the **Hanimaadhoo International Airport**.
- ❑ The **Uthuru Thila Falhu (UTF) Harbour Project** is being developed as a strategic base for the Maldivian Coast Guard.
- ❑ India is also constructing 61 police facilities across the country to enhance law enforcement accessibility and community security.

DEFENCE AND SECURITY COOPERATION

Given its geographical vulnerability, the Maldives relies significantly on trilateral maritime cooperation with India and Sri Lanka. India's contributions include:

- ❑ Joint efforts in maritime domain awareness, maritime security, and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR).
- ❑ India has gifted the Maldives a Landing Assault Craft and 24 Utility Vehicles to strengthen maritime security.
- ❑ A **Comprehensive Action Plan for Defence** was signed in April 2016 to advance bilateral defence relations.
- ❑ India provides the majority—approximately 70%—of training for Maldivian National Defence Force (MNDF) personnel.
- ❑ Joint military drills such as **"Ekuverin," "Dosti," "Ekatha,"** and **"Operation Shield"** have been regularly conducted.
- ❑ In 1988, **Operation Cactus** was launched by India to assist the Maldivian government in quelling a coup.

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

India has consistently extended humanitarian support to the Maldives. Examples include:

- ❑ A 2019 MoU for **High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs)**, focusing on grassroots socio-economic development.
- ❑ India delivered 100,000 doses of Covishield vaccines in January 2021. During the pandemic, **Operation Sanjeevani** airlifted 6.2 tonnes of essential medicines to the Maldives.
- ❑ Two sea ambulances were handed over to the Maldivian Ministry of Defence.
- ❑ India aided the Maldives post the 2004 Tsunami and provided emergency drinking water supplies in 2014 through **Operation Neer**.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP IN ECONOMY AND MARITIME SECURITY

In October 2024, a high-level strategic framework was launched during Maldivian President Muizzu's visit to India. It focuses on boosting cooperation in economic development, trade, infrastructure, and maritime security, rooted in shared democratic ideals and regional peace.

CHALLENGES IN INDIA–MALDIVES RELATIONS

- ❑ **Political Frictions:** The most recent presidential election became a contest between the 'India First' and 'India Out' narratives. The win of Mohamed Muizzu has been interpreted as an endorsement of the 'India Out' movement. Both Muizzu and former President Yameen have vocally opposed Indian military presence in the Maldives.
- ❑ **Rising Radicalisation:** A significant number of Maldivian nationals have joined extremist groups like ISIS. In recent years, many have been recruited to jihadist groups operating in Pakistan. This increases the risk of the Maldives being used as a launchpad for attacks targeting India.
- ❑ **China's Expanding Influence:** Beijing has expanded its footprint in the Maldives, which is seen as a strategic node in China's 'String of Pearls' policy in South Asia. With the return of a pro-China government in Male, India's diplomatic influence may face constraints.
- ❑ **Climate Vulnerability:**
- ❑ Both India and the Maldives are susceptible to climate threats such as rising sea levels and oceanic heatwaves. The Maldives, being a low-lying island nation, is particularly at risk of submersion.

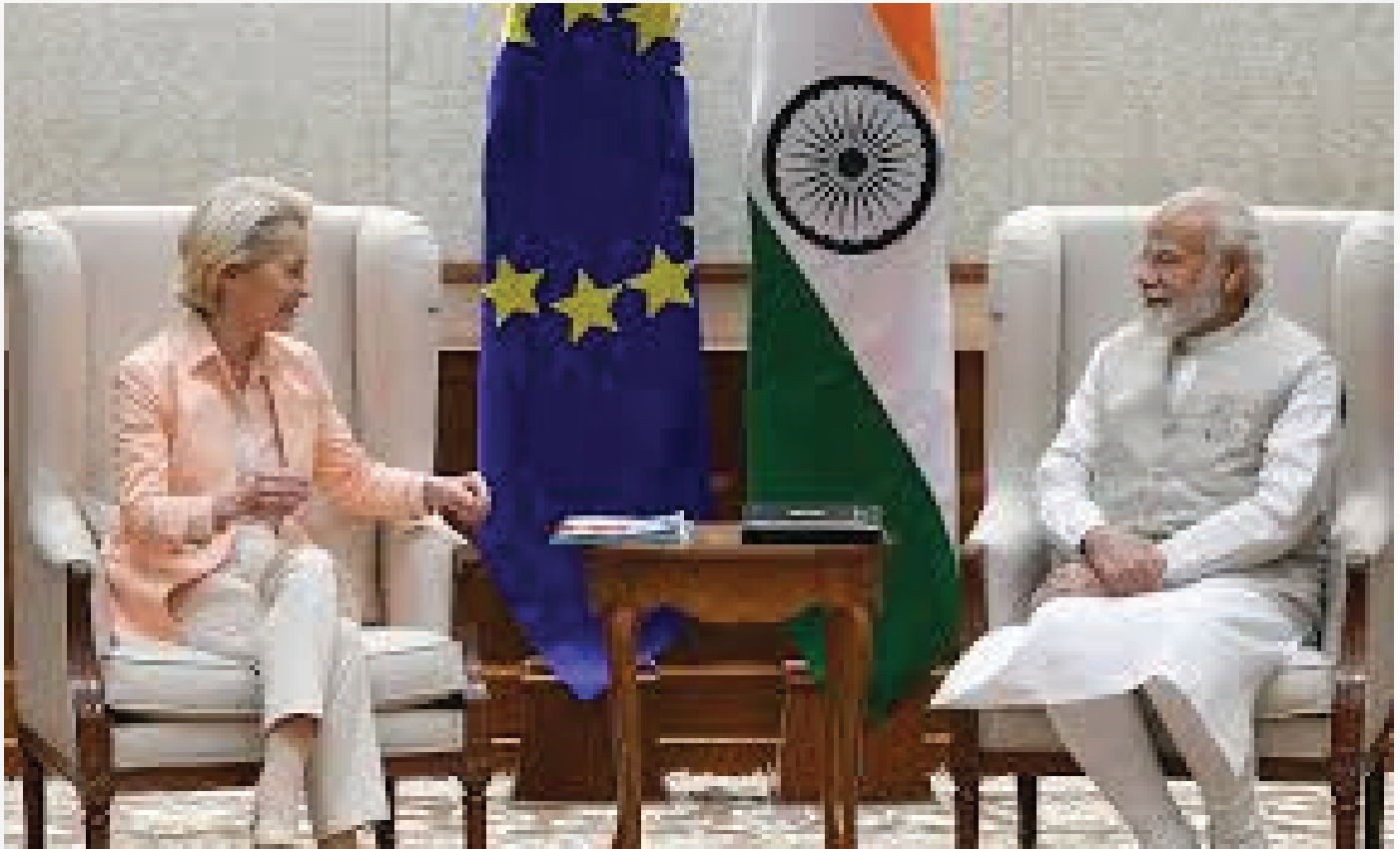
WAY FORWARD FOR INDIA–MALDIVES RELATIONS

- ❑ **Strengthen Ties with the New Administration:** India should proactively engage with the new Maldivian leadership to build trust. It must emphasize that ongoing projects aim to serve the Maldivian people. For instance, the airport redevelopment in Hanimaadhoo is expected to increase tourism by expanding runway and terminal capacity.
- ❑ **Enhance Development Assistance:** India should scale up development aid and prioritize projects that visibly benefit the general populace. This approach could help in neutralizing the 'India Out' sentiment.
- ❑ **Ensure Timely Delivery of Projects:** Completion of major Indian-backed projects—especially the Greater Male Connectivity Project (GMCP)—can position India as a reliable development partner and present a viable alternative to Chinese investments.
- ❑ **Focus on Youth Empowerment:** India's HICDP initiatives in the Maldives should prioritize youth-focused employment and entrepreneurial opportunities. This could help deter radicalization and violent extremism.
- ❑ **Boost Financial Aid:** Continued expansion of Indian aid and support is essential to help the Maldives avoid debt traps and economic instability.

CONCLUSION

The Maldives plays an integral role in India's **Neighbourhood First** policy and its **Vision MAHASAGAR**. Recent developments—such as President Muizzu's visit to India last year and the invitation to Prime Minister Modi as chief guest for the Maldives' Independence Day—signal a commitment to repair strained relations and build stronger bilateral ties.

INDIA-EU RELATIONS



INTRODUCTION

As global dynamics grow increasingly unstable and fragmented—driven by the rise of authoritarian regimes and the Trump administration’s transactional approach to bilateral relations—middle powers like India and Europe are now striving for stronger mutual integration. Both parties align on the goal of advocating for a multipolar world order grounded in international law, inclusive institutions, and pluralistic values.

SIGNIFICANCE OF INDIA-EU RELATIONS

- ❑ **Key Trade Ally:** The European Union remains either the largest or one of the most prominent trading partners for India, with the two-way trade in goods approaching \$137 billion in the fiscal year 2024–25. The EU also stands as India’s top export market.
- ❑ **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI):** The EU plays a major role in India’s foreign investment landscape, contributing to 17% of the overall FDI inflow and generating substantial employment. Between 2015 and 2022, FDI from the EU into India rose by 70%, with French investments alone surging by over 370%.
- ❑ **Common Democratic Ethos:** India and the EU, being two of the world’s largest democratic entities, are committed to multilateralism, a rule-based global order, and shared ideals like democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. These common values form a strong bedrock for their strategic engagement.
- ❑ **Advocates of a Multipolar World:** Both India and the EU view themselves as autonomous centers in an evolving multipolar system, striving to sustain international peace and order. Amid rising geopolitical uncertainties,

they regard each other as dependable, like-minded partners capable of preserving strategic autonomy and promoting stability across regions such as the Indo-Pacific.

- ❑ **FTA (Free Trade Agreement) Dialogue:** Ongoing efforts to finalize a comprehensive FTA aim to enhance market access for Indian exports and services, encourage investment, reduce trade restrictions, and better integrate India with European and global value chains. This agreement also intends to support robust supply chains, digital trade, and environmentally sustainable commerce.
- ❑ **Leadership in Climate and Clean Energy:** India and the EU share a commitment to addressing climate change and advancing sustainable energy. Joint efforts in fields like solar power, green hydrogen, and energy efficiency bolster India's renewable energy targets and decarbonization roadmap.
- ❑ **Strategic Concerns over China:** Both view China's growing assertiveness—militarily, economically, and technologically—as a significant strategic concern.

CHALLENGES IN THE INDIA-EU RELATIONSHIP

- ❑ **Stalled FTA Talks:** Negotiations around the Free Trade Agreement have remained unresolved for over 15 years due to ongoing disputes concerning market access, tariffs, and regulatory frameworks—especially in areas like services, agriculture, and intellectual property rights.
- ❑ **Non-Tariff Challenges:** The EU maintains strict non-tariff requirements involving labor rights, environmental norms, and technical standards, which prove costly and difficult for Indian exporters to comply with.
- ❑ **Sectoral Disputes:** India is reluctant to open sensitive markets such as dairy and wine to European imports, while the EU insists on deeper tariff reductions. These conflicting interests have complicated negotiations.
- ❑ **IPR Conflicts:** India's emphasis on the affordability of generic medicines stands at odds with the EU's stringent intellectual property regulations.
- ❑ **Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM):** The EU's independently implemented climate measures—especially CBAM—pose significant threats to Indian exports of high-emission goods such as steel and cement.
- ❑ **Technology and Data Governance:** India's push for broader technology access faces challenges from European data privacy rules and cybersecurity laws like the GDPR, which create regulatory roadblocks for Indian tech firms.
- ❑ **Mobility and Visa Restrictions:** Indian professionals and students encounter restrictive visa and work permit systems in the EU, limiting both business and cultural exchange.
- ❑ **Strategic and Defence Mismatches:** India's heavy reliance on Russian defense systems inhibits closer military technology cooperation with Europe. Despite active collaborations like the Franco-Indian submarine projects and Spain's C-295 aircraft, India's defense ties with the EU lag behind those with Russia or the US.
- ❑ **Russia-Ukraine War Fallout:** India's non-aligned position on Russia's invasion of Ukraine stands in contrast with the EU's outspoken condemnation and sanctions, causing diplomatic friction and mistrust. The EU remains uneasy about India's enduring ties with Russia.
- ❑ **China's Dual Role:** Although they share concerns, both India and the EU retain strong economic relations with China. The EU trades far more with China than with India, and China continues to be India's biggest source of imports in 2024.
- ❑ **Different Security Lenses:** India views China as an immediate, militarized regional threat, whereas the EU interprets the China challenge largely through the lens of trade, global norms, and economic resilience—still seeing Russia as the more imminent security concern.

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE INITIATIVES TO BOLSTER THE RELATIONSHIP?

- ❑ **Free Trade Agreement (FTA) Talks:** Both India and the EU have prioritized the finalization of a comprehensive, equitable, and mutually rewarding Free Trade Agreement, aiming for completion by 2025. This agreement spans goods, services, investment safeguards, and geographical indications. Its core objectives are to improve access to each other's markets, reinforce robust supply networks, support digital and ecological shifts, and harmonize with present-day regulatory norms.
- ❑ **Trade and Technology Council (TTC):** Introduced in 2022, the TTC serves as a high-level platform for addressing issues that intersect trade, reliable technology, and security. It deals with matters such as digital innovation, sustainable technologies, AI, semiconductors, and cyber safety.
- ❑ **Ministerial Dialogue on Trade and Investment:** This top-level forum offers political leadership for the trade and investment partnership, ensuring consistent interactions and addressing obstacles related to market entry and trade regulations.
- ❑ **India-EU Strategic Partnership: Roadmap to 2025:** Formulated in 2020, this roadmap provides direction for collaborative efforts and aims to fortify strategic engagement in areas like commerce, climate cooperation, security, and sustainable progress.
- ❑ **Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) & Maritime Strategy:** India's participation in the EU's IPOI and Maritime Security Strategy underlines a mutual commitment to safeguarding a free, inclusive, and rules-based Indo-Pacific. Joint naval drills, including those in the Gulf of Aden and Gulf of Guinea, have further advanced maritime defense cooperation.
- ❑ **Clean Energy and Climate Partnership (CECP):** Launched in 2016 and now entering its third stage (2025–2028), the CECP targets intensified collaboration in green hydrogen, offshore wind power, and energy efficiency. India served as the exclusive partner for the European Hydrogen Week in 2024, while the EU was a key participant in the Green Hydrogen Conference in Delhi the same year.
- ❑ **Scientific and Research Cooperation:** India's associated status in CERN and agreements on peaceful nuclear R&D demonstrate growing collaboration in science and technology between both sides.
- ❑ **India-EU Connectivity Partnership:** Established in 2021, this initiative is focused on improving physical, digital, and energy connectivity, as well as strengthening people-to-people links. It supports sustainable, reliable infrastructure growth and aligns with the EU's Global Gateway framework.
- ❑ **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC):** Though not solely a bilateral project, IMEC represents a major strategic initiative aimed at enhancing transport and trade links between India and Europe via the Middle East. It strengthens commercial routes and energy reliability. With potential to serve as a modern Silk Road, IMEC connects regions through commerce, energy, enterprise, and innovation. It answers the Indo-Pacific's need for infrastructure that is open, sustainable, and sovereignty-respecting.

WHAT CAN BE THE WAY FORWARD?

- ❑ **Speeding Up FTA Negotiations with Realism:** Both sides should embrace a balanced and realistic mindset to conclude the FTA, tackling delicate sectors incrementally and improving regulatory alignment via mutual recognition. This includes resolving long-standing differences around intellectual property, market entry, and sustainable norms.
- ❑ **Boosting Technological Cooperation:** Future efforts should focus on creating structured mechanisms for tech sharing, equitable access, and strengthened coordination in AI, semiconductors, and cybersecurity. Agreements on data governance that uphold privacy while enabling innovation are essential. The EU's strengths in deep

tech, digital manufacturing, and semiconductors complement India's prowess in software, scalable platforms, and digital public goods like UPI. Together, they can lead advancements in green innovation, ocean health, biotech, food systems, and healthcare resilience.

- ❑ **Harmonizing Climate and Energy Agendas:** Developing a joint policy blueprint to promote renewable energy, align investment strategies, and tackle challenges like CBAM is crucial to protect Indian exports. Expanding financial and technological backing for hydrogen, carbon neutrality, and sustainability initiatives will be equally important.
- ❑ **Expanding Security and Defence Ties:** Opportunities must be explored for collaborative defense production, enhanced Indo-Pacific maritime security, and deeper intelligence and cyber cooperation. India's interest in joining EU's PESCO projects and inking a Security of Information Agreement signals movement in this direction.
- ❑ **Strengthening Global Multilateralism:** India and the EU should continue their coordinated efforts in global platforms such as the UN, WTO, and G20, pushing for reforms that reflect the realities of the 21st century and advancing their shared democratic ethos.
- ❑ **Facilitating Human Mobility:** A comprehensive framework for student, researcher, and professional mobility would enrich talent exchange, mitigate India's unemployment challenges, and spur bilateral innovation. In today's knowledge-driven world, transnational thinkers are as vital as cross-border capital.

CONCLUSION

India and the European Union must unlock the vast promise of their alliance by joining forces on key and emerging technologies, creating stable supply chains, and enhancing strategic and security coordination. Together, they should strive to foster trust, reform global governance, and uphold the shared principles of democracy, multilateralism, and rule of law.

PSIR

Optional Subject (2026-27)

LIVE CLASSES & TEST SERIES



**400+ Hours
Live Lectures**



**Answer Writing
Sessions**



**Comprehensive
coverage of PYQ**



Mains Test series



**Hand written
notes & crux**



**One to One
Mentorship**



Gyan Bhandar



SHASHANK TYAGI

INDIAN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS (IGP)

THE CONSTITUTION (130TH AMENDMENT) BILL, 2025



INTRODUCTION

“Can democracy afford leaders who govern from jail? Or does removing them without conviction weaken the very idea of democracy?”

CONTEXT OF THE BILL

- ☐ Introduced by **Union Home Minister** in Lok Sabha during the Monsoon Session.
- ☐ Passed by **voice vote**, referred to **Joint Parliamentary Committee** for scrutiny.
- ☐ Strongly opposed by Opposition → labelled as “unconstitutional, undemocratic, draconian.”
- ☐ Triggered by **recent cases** where incumbent CMs/Ministers (Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Jharkhand) governed from prison, sparking debates on constitutional morality vs. political vendetta.

WHAT DOES THE 130TH AMENDMENT BILL PROPOSE?

1. **Automatic Removal after 30 Days’ Detention**
 - If a minister (including PM/CM) is arrested and detained continuously for **30+ days** for offences carrying **5+ years imprisonment**, removal is automatic on the 31st day.
2. **Authorities of Removal:**
 - Union: President (on PM’s advice or directly) removes PM/Union Ministers.

- States: Governor removes ministers (on CM's advice) or CM directly.
 - UTs (Delhi, J&K): Similar provisions under amended **Article 239AA**.
- 3. Focus on Detention, Not Conviction**
 - Unique feature: removal triggered by **custody**, not a **judicial conviction**.
 - Justification: to safeguard **constitutional morality** & prevent governance from prison cells.
 - 4. Reappointment Allowed**
 - Removed ministers can be **reappointed post-release**, even before trial ends.
 - Seen as a **temporary preventive measure**, not permanent disqualification.
 - 5. Targeted Offices**
 - Applies to **PM, Union Ministers, CMs, State Ministers, UT Ministers**.

WHY WAS THE BILL INTRODUCED?

- 1. Upholding Constitutional Morality**
 - Ministers are expected to maintain conduct “beyond suspicion.”
 - Continued governance from jail erodes **public trust** in democratic institutions.
- 2. Filling a Constitutional Gap**
 - No explicit constitutional provision for automatic removal of PM/CMs in custody.
 - Existing law → **Representation of the People Act, 1951** disqualifies only upon **conviction**, not arrest.
- 3. Curbing Criminalization of Politics**
 - Data: ~43% MPs face criminal cases (ADR report, 2019).
 - The Bill signals **zero tolerance** for leaders accused of grave crimes.
- 4. Parallel with Bureaucrats**
 - Civil servants suspended after **48 hrs custody**.
 - Ministers, as “public servants,” should face **higher standards**.
- 5. Prompting Accountability**
 - 30-day window considered sufficient to obtain bail.
 - Prolonged detention = serious charges → hence automatic removal justified.

CRITICISMS & CONCERNS

- 1. Violation of ‘Innocent Until Proven Guilty’**
 - Removal based on detention = punishment without trial.
 - Undermines **Article 21 (fair trial)** & due process.
- 2. Unconstitutional Parallel Mechanism**
 - Constitution already has remedies (PM's collective responsibility, impeachment).
 - Bill creates a **new removal tool**, bypassing parliamentary/constitutional procedures.
- 3. Weaponization Against Opposition**
 - Arrests via **ED/CBI** could topple opposition-ruled governments.
 - Risk: Centre destabilizing states by detaining CMs/Ministers.

4. No Safeguards

- Arrest decisions left to investigating agencies → not neutral or independent.
- No requirement of **judicial review** before removal.

5. Conflict with Existing Legal Framework

- **RPA, 1951**: Disqualification only on conviction.
- **Lily Thomas Case (2013)**: Conviction (2+ years) = disqualification from legislature.
- Bill creates **lower threshold for ministers** than MLAs/MPs.

6. Arbitrary 30-Day Rule

- No constitutional logic; aligns only with judicial remand cycle.
- Appears **politically convenient**, not principled.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DEBATE

☐ For Accountability:

- Aims to reduce political corruption & uphold public faith.
- Aligns ministers with standards expected from bureaucrats.

☐ Against Democracy:

- Risks chilling effect on opposition-led states.
- Weakens the principle of **federalism & separation of powers**.

☐ Constitutional Question:

- Should detention (without conviction) be enough to unseat the highest executive offices?
- Raises tension between **constitutional morality vs. legal morality**.

CONCLUSION

The Bill confronts India's **real challenge of criminalized politics**, but risks creating a **political tool of convenience**. Unless strong safeguards (judicial review, senior officer approval, time-bound checks) are built in, it could **erode democratic legitimacy**.

The test for India will be: can we strike a middle path — ensuring accountability of ministers without reducing democracy to a contest of agency-led arrests?

EXAM VALUE (WHERE TO USE)

- ☐ **GS-II (Polity)**: Constitutional Amendments, Accountability of Executive.
- ☐ **GS-II (Governance)**: Criminalization of Politics, Constitutional Morality.
- ☐ **Essay**: "Public Trust and Political Morality in India's Democracy."
- ☐ **PSIR Paper II**: Union–State Relations, Constitutionalism, Executive Accountability.

QUESTIONS

1. **Mains Q**: "The 130th Constitutional Amendment Bill aims to uphold constitutional morality but risks undermining federal democracy. Critically discuss." (250 words)

2. MCQ: Which Articles does the 130th Amendment Bill seek to amend?

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| (a) 74, 324, 239AA | (b) 75, 164, 239AA |
| (c) 75, 356, 370 | (d) 75, 163, 356 |

Ans.: (b)

"The law may silence corrupt leaders in jail — but it must not silence democracy in the process."

SECTION 152 BNS & THE NEW SEDITION DEBATE

"The colonial ghost of sedition may be gone, but has it merely returned wearing new robes?"

INTRODUCTION

Recently, the **Assam Police summoned the editor of a news agency under Section 152 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS)**. The provision criminalizes acts that "endanger India's sovereignty, unity, and integrity" — but critics see it as a **rebranded sedition law**, raising concerns over vagueness and misuse.

WHAT IS SEDITION?

- ☐ Defined under **Section 124A IPC**: promoting hatred, contempt, or disaffection against the Government of India.
- ☐ Classified as:
 - **Cognisable** (no warrant required for arrest),
 - **Non-bailable**,
 - **Non-compoundable**.
- ☐ Repealed under BNS → replaced by **Section 152**, which punishes up to **7 years to life imprisonment** for acts encouraging **secession, rebellion, or subversion**.

HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF SEDITION LAW

- ☐ **1870**: Introduced in IPC (to suppress Wahabi movement).
- ☐ **1891**: First trial – Jogendra Chandra Bose (Bangobasi editor).
- ☐ **1897**: Tilak tried for sedition (Kesari writings).
- ☐ **1922**: Gandhi trial → called sedition "**the prince among IPC sections designed to suppress liberty**."

KEY JUDICIAL LANDMARKS (POST-INDEPENDENCE)

- ☐ **Punjab HC (1951) & Allahabad HC (1959)**: Held 124A unconstitutional.
- ☐ **Kedar Nath Singh v. Bihar (1962)**:
 - Upheld constitutionality of 124A.
 - Allowed **criticism of govt** as long as it didn't incite violence or disorder.
- ☐ **P. Alavi (1982)**: Criticism of Parliament/judiciary ≠ sedition.
- ☐ **Balwant Singh (1995)**: Slogans like "**Khalistan Zindabad**" not sedition if not leading to violence.

CRITICISMS OF SECTION 152 BNS

1. **Vague Language**
 - Phrases like “**endanger sovereignty, unity, integrity**” are undefined.
 - Subjective interpretation → risk of arbitrary arrests.
2. **Proxy Sedition Law**
 - Same spirit as 124A, just renamed.
 - Chilling effect on dissent, protests, journalism.
3. **Lower Threshold for Offense**
 - Uses “**knowingly**” → prosecution without intent to incite violence.
 - Risk: social media posts or critical opinions punished.
4. **Suppression of Dissent**
 - Cognisable & non-bailable → immediate arrests, no judicial oversight.
 - Misuse risk against journalists, activists, opposition leaders.

ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF SECTION 152

1. **Protecting National Sovereignty**
 - Needed to counter **armed rebellions, separatist calls, terrorism**.
2. **Modernization**
 - Removed colonial term “sedition.”
 - Focus shifted from “disaffection with govt” → **real threats to unity**.
3. **Addressing New Threats**
 - Social media propaganda by extremists & foreign powers.
 - Law expands to cover **electronic & financial subversion**.
4. **Law Commission Recommendations**
 - Retain with safeguards (SP-rank officer inquiry before FIR).
5. **Distinguishing Dissent vs. Subversion**
 - Criticism of govt policies ≠ crime.
 - Only acts inciting violence/secession to be targeted.

THE WAY FORWARD

1. **Clearer Legal Definitions**
 - Terms like **subversion, sovereignty, integrity** must be precisely defined.
2. **Institutional Safeguards**
 - SP-rank officer approval for FIR.
 - Mandatory **preliminary inquiry** before arrest.
3. **Judicial Oversight**
 - SC must revisit **Kedar Nath Singh (1962)**.
 - Distinguish **advocacy (protected)** vs. **incitement (punishable)**.

- Set **high conviction threshold**.
- Limit custodial interrogation for non-violent dissent.

4. Periodic Review Mechanism

- Independent committee (judiciary, civil society, academia) → track misuse, suggest reforms.

CONCLUSION

India needs a **balanced legal framework** — strong enough to deter separatism, yet precise enough to **protect free speech**. Without safeguards, Section 152 risks becoming a **colonial echo in a modern democracy**. Its legitimacy depends on **clarity, restraint, and consistent judicial checks**.

EXAM VALUE (WHERE TO USE)

- ☐ **GS-II (Polity):** Fundamental Rights, Free Speech vs. Security.
- ☐ **GS-II (IR):** National Security Laws.
- ☐ **Essay:** “Free Speech and National Security: Friends or Foes?”
- ☐ **PSIR Paper I:** State, Sovereignty, Rights in Liberal Democracies.

QUESTIONS

- Mains Q:** “Section 152 of BNS is nothing but old wine in a new bottle. Critically evaluate.” (250 words)
 - Hint: Compare IPC 124A vs. BNS 152 → Judicial safeguards → Global best practices.
- MCQ:** Which landmark case upheld sedition law but limited its scope to incitement of violence?

(a) Balwant Singh (1995)
 (c) Kedar Nath Singh (1962)

(b) P. Alavi (1982)
 (d) Jogendra Chandra Bose (1891)

Ans.: (c)

PSIR

Optional Subject (2026-27)

LIVE CLASSES & TEST SERIES



**400+ Hours
Live Lectures**



**Answer Writing
Sessions**



**Comprehensive
coverage of PYQ**



Mains Test series



**Hand written
notes & crux**



**One to One
Mentorship**



Gyan Bhandar



SHASHANK TYAGI



Electoral Transparency in India

INTRODUCTION

Recently, concerns have been voiced by several members of civil society regarding the working of the Election Commission of India (ECI), particularly about the initiation of the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls in Bihar, which has been criticized for its lack of transparency. The Leader of Opposition has also questioned the conduct of the ECI in the Karnataka Lok Sabha elections and the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly polls, accusing the ECI of “vote theft.” Such allegations have drawn attention to the issue of transparency deficits in the electoral process and in the ECI itself.

WHAT IS ELECTORAL TRANSPARENCY?

Electoral transparency means ensuring openness, clarity, and accessibility in all aspects of elections—including processes, information, and funding—so that citizens, stakeholders, and oversight institutions can examine and trust the credibility of the electoral system. It forms the backbone of democratic governance by enabling public scrutiny, limiting corruption, and preserving the legitimacy of electoral outcomes.

WHY IS ELECTORAL TRANSPARENCY SIGNIFICANT?

1. **Fosters Public Confidence and Legitimacy:** A transparent electoral process reassures voters, candidates, and parties, thereby strengthening the legitimacy of the government formed and the stability of democracy.
2. **Strengthens Accountability:** Transparency makes the ECI, political parties, and candidates answerable for their conduct. It deters malpractice. Example: Publicly available data on election spending allows citizens and watchdogs to track expenses and flag violations of expenditure limits.
3. **Prevents Fraud and Malpractice:** Clear, open procedures reduce opportunities for rigging and manipulation. Example: The presence of polling agents from different parties, videography, and monitoring during polling and counting deter booth capturing, bogus voting, and tampering.
4. **Supports Informed Voter Choices:** Transparency gives voters access to candidate information, including criminal background, financial details, and party manifestos. Example: Mandatory disclosure of assets and liabilities ensures voters can judge candidates' financial standing and potential conflicts of interest.
5. **Encourages Participation:** When people view elections as fair, they are more willing to vote and engage politically. Example: Regularly updated, publicly accessible electoral rolls help citizens check their status and encourage new voter registrations.
6. **Protects Fundamental Rights:** Transparency reinforces rights such as freedom of information (Article 19(1) (a)) and the right to vote. Example: The Supreme Court struck down the Electoral Bonds scheme, affirming citizens' right to know political funding sources.

ISSUES WITH ELECTORAL TRANSPARENCY IN INDIA

1. **Political Funding Opacity:** Anonymous donations obscure who finances parties, raising concerns about quid pro quo and corporate influence. The 2017 Electoral Bonds scheme, while intended to curb black money through formal banking channels, has been criticized—including by the ECI—for increasing secrecy. Such opacity weakens trust, encourages crony capitalism, and skews policymaking towards donors.
2. **Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs):** Critics call EVMs “black boxes” since voters cannot verify whether their votes are recorded accurately. Though the VVPAT was introduced to provide paper slips as proof, only five randomly chosen machines per constituency are verified. Opposition parties demand 100% VVPAT matching with EVM results.
3. **Accuracy and Transparency of Voter Rolls:**
 - Duplicate Entries: Individuals are sometimes listed multiple times, across constituencies or states, raising risks of fraudulent voting.
 - Exclusion of Genuine Voters: Migrant workers and marginalized groups often find their names missing, leading to disenfranchisement.
 - Aadhaar Linkage Controversy: Attempts to link Aadhaar with voter IDs for de-duplication have sparked fears of exclusion due to failed authentication or privacy concerns, despite claims of voluntary linkage.
 - Abnormal Voter Growth: In Maharashtra, about 4 million voters were added within six months between the general and Assembly elections, raising suspicion.
 - Special Intensive Revision: In Bihar, the ECI deleted nearly 65 lakh names but withheld full details of those removed and reasons for deletion. This opacity prevents public verification and disproportionately affects marginalized groups, which may influence outcomes and undermine trust.

4. **Transparency in Appointing Election Commissioners:** The Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners Act, 2023 altered the appointment committee. While the Supreme Court earlier recommended a panel of the CJI, Prime Minister, and Leader of Opposition, the new law replaced the CJI with a Union Cabinet Minister. This gives the government majority control in the committee, raising concerns about the ECI's independence.
5. **Restricted Access to CCTV Footage:** Amendments to the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961 limit access to CCTV recordings of polling. The Leader of Opposition argues that granting access to party nominees is essential to address complaints effectively.
6. **Opacity within the ECI:**
 - **Special Intensive Revision:** By not disclosing the methodology and findings that justify the mass verification exercise, the ECI denies citizens their right to know why decisions impacting their franchise are taken. The Commission also refers to 2003 records that are unavailable in the public domain.
 - **Response to Allegations:** Critics say the ECI has failed to respond substantively to the Leader of Opposition's accusations, either remaining silent or appearing aligned with the ruling party rather than acting as an impartial body.

WHAT INITIATIVES HAVE BEEN UNDERTAKEN TO IMPROVE ELECTORAL TRANSPARENCY?

1. **Candidate Asset and Liability Disclosure:** After the Supreme Court's ruling in *Union of India v. Association for Democratic Reforms* (2002), the ECI made it mandatory for every candidate to file an affidavit revealing their criminal background, financial assets, liabilities, and educational details.
2. **Supreme Court Judgment on Electoral Bonds:** In February 2024, the Supreme Court invalidated the Electoral Bonds scheme, declaring it unconstitutional. It ordered the State Bank of India (SBI) to submit details of all bonds purchased and redeemed to the ECI, which subsequently published the data.
3. **First Level Checking (FLC) of EVMs/VVPATs:** Prior to each election, EVMs and VVPATs undergo First Level Checking by engineers from BEL and ECIL, the manufacturing PSUs. Political party representatives are invited to observe, inspect, and confirm the machines' integrity before they are deployed.
4. **Electoral Roll Management via ERO Net:** The ECI developed ERO Net, an online platform that streamlines voter roll management, covering registration, field verification, and support for Electoral Registration Officers (EROs). It reduces mistakes, curbs duplicate records, and improves transparency in voter enrolment and updates.
5. **Multiple Qualifying Dates for Enrolment:** Amendments now allow individuals who turn 18 on January 1, April 1, July 1, or October 1 to apply for enrolment, instead of only January 1. This broadens inclusivity and makes the voter list more accurate and transparent.
6. **cVIGIL Application:** The cVIGIL mobile app enables citizens to report violations of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) or election expenditure rules by submitting geo-tagged images and videos directly to the ECI. Action is promised within 100 minutes, empowering citizens, improving monitoring, and ensuring swift enforcement of MCC provisions.

WHAT STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN MOVING FORWARD?

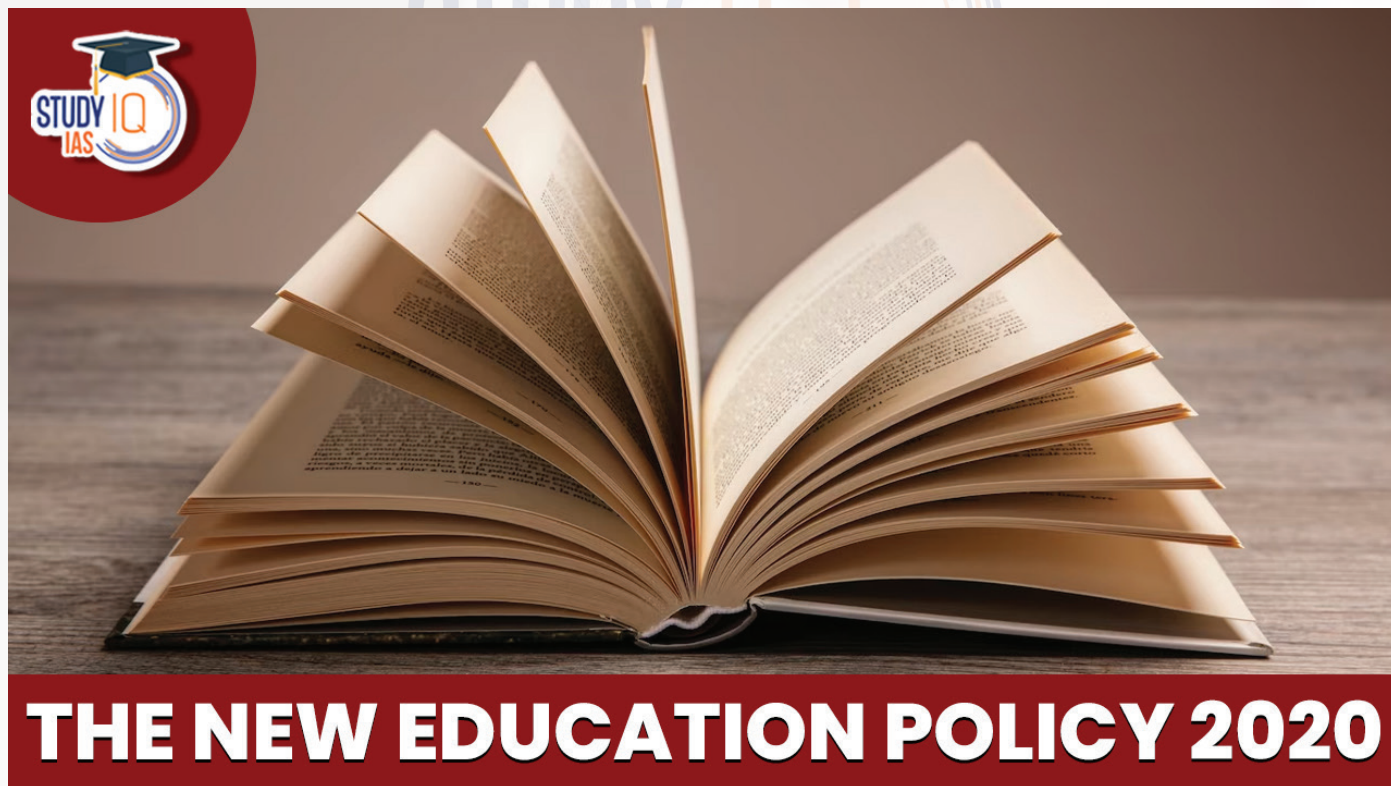
1. **Include Political Parties under RTI:** Political parties, especially those receiving public funding or engaging in matters of public interest, should fall under the RTI Act. This would allow the public to demand information about their funding and spending.

2. **Lower the Threshold for Anonymous Donations:** The current limit of ₹20,000 for undisclosed cash donations should be drastically reduced—preferably eliminated. All contributions should be routed through verifiable channels like bank transfers, cheques, or digital payments.
3. **Expand VVPAT Verification:** A scientifically determined, statistically reliable sample size of VVPAT slips should be counted to increase confidence in EVM results. If any mismatch occurs, the constituency should undergo full manual counting of VVPAT slips.
4. **Ensure Real-Time and Transparent Roll Updates:** Electoral roll updates should be real-time and visible online. All modifications, including additions and deletions, should be instantly published for public review and objection.
5. **Publish Rolls and Voter Turnout Quickly:** The ECI should release consolidated, digital, and machine-readable electoral rolls along with real-time voter turnout figures for every election. Form 17C data and CCTV recordings from polling stations should also be publicly accessible to resolve doubts and foster confidence.
6. **Guarantee Observer Access:** Domestic and international observers, as well as party agents, must be given unrestricted access to polling and counting centers to ensure impartial oversight.

CONCLUSION

The responsibility rests with the ECI to strengthen electoral transparency and restore public faith in the voting process as free and fair. The Commission must reclaim its institutional authority to address current challenges and introduce greater openness in exercises like Special Intensive Revision (SIR), thereby reinforcing confidence in institutions that safeguard democracy.

5 YEARS OF NEW EDUCATION POLICY



INTRODUCTION

This year marks five years since the launch of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The NEP 2020 promised a comprehensive overhaul of school and higher education and represents significant progress in the field of education and learning.

NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020

The NEP 2020 was framed on the recommendations of the Kasturirangan and T.S.R. Subramanian committees. It is the third education policy introduced in India since independence.

It focuses on reforms at all levels of education, from pre-primary to higher education, with the objective of reshaping the system to address the challenges of the 21st century.

KEY PROVISIONS OF NEP

SCHOOL EDUCATION:

- ☐ Achieving universal education by 2030 with 100% Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) from pre-primary to secondary level.
- ☐ Establishing an open schooling system (similar to NIOS but without admission restrictions) for children outside the school system.
- ☐ Replacing the current 10+2 structure with a 5+3+3+4 curricular design.
- ☐ Instruction in the mother tongue until class 5, without enforcing any particular language.
- ☐ Reduction in the emphasis on high-stakes board examinations. From 2026, CBSE will allow class 10 students to appear for board exams twice a year.
- ☐ **Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE):** Target of universal ECCE by 2030. NCERT's **Jaadui Pitara** learning kits are already in use, and MoWCD has rolled out a National ECCE Curriculum.

HIGHER EDUCATION:

- ☐ Undergraduate education to be broad-based, multi-disciplinary, and holistic, with a flexible curriculum, integration of vocational courses, multiple entry-exit options, and degrees in regional languages.
- ☐ Introduction of Four-Year Undergraduate Programs (FYUP).
- ☐ Academic credits to be transferable through the Academic Bank of Credits, enabling movement between institutions.
- ☐ Creation of the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) as the overarching regulator, excluding legal and medical education.
- ☐ Promotion of multilingual education in both schools and colleges.
- ☐ Gradual phasing out of the affiliation system.
- ☐ Launch of engineering programs in regional languages in around 14 smaller institutions.
- ☐ Common University Entrance Test (CUET), initiated in 2020, as the primary route for UG admissions.
- ☐ Establishment of Indian campuses abroad and setting up of foreign university campuses in India.

TEACHER EDUCATION & TRAINING:

- ☐ A 4-year integrated B.Ed. degree to become the minimum teaching qualification by 2030.

- ❑ Mandatory 50 hours of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for teachers annually.
- ❑ Development of National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) by 2022.
- ❑ **Increased Public Investment:** The goal is to raise public spending on education to 6% of GDP from the current ~4.6%.

GENDER & INCLUSION:

- ❑ Launch of a Gender Inclusion Fund to ensure equitable quality education for girls.
- ❑ Special Education Zones (SEZs) to be designated for disadvantaged groups and areas.

DIGITAL & ASSESSMENT REFORMS:

- ❑ Creation of the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) as an autonomous body for sharing ideas on using technology in teaching, assessment, planning, and administration.
- ❑ Establishment of **PARAKH** (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development) as the National Assessment Centre to define assessment standards and guidelines. Under PARAKH, progress cards will evaluate students not just on marks but also on self- and peer-assessment.

SIGNIFICANCE OF NEP 2020

- ❑ **Structural Overhaul:** The old 10+2 structure has been replaced with the 5+3+3+4 framework, bringing Indian education in line with global standards. This model stresses strong foundational learning for ages 3–8, equips students for analytical thinking, and provides flexibility in subject selection at the secondary stage.
- ❑ **Early Childhood Education Focus:** A central feature is the universalization of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) for children aged 3–6, ensuring they begin primary school with solid foundational skills.
- ❑ **Mother Tongue and Multilingualism:** NEP 2020 advocates teaching in the mother tongue or regional language until at least Grade 5 (preferably Grade 8), as research indicates this improves learning and retention.
- ❑ **Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education:** Moving away from rote learning, the policy highlights creativity, critical thinking, and conceptual clarity. It promotes multidisciplinary education across all stages, blending sciences, arts, and vocational studies for a well-rounded experience.
- ❑ **Skill Development and Vocational Training:** Skill-based and vocational education is introduced from early classes, aimed at making learners “future-ready” and better aligned with employment needs.
- ❑ **Equity and Inclusion:** Through mechanisms like the Gender Inclusion Fund and Special Education Zones (SEZs), the NEP ensures fair access to quality education, particularly for girls, children with disabilities, and socially or economically disadvantaged groups.
- ❑ **Foundational Skills Emphasis:** The **NIPUN Bharat** initiative, launched in 2021, seeks to ensure that every child can read and perform basic arithmetic by the end of class 3.

LIMITATIONS OF NEP 2020

- ❑ **Funding Concerns:** Although the policy repeats the goal of raising education spending to 6% of GDP, it does not lay out a specific plan or immediate financial guarantees to realize this. Without sufficient funding, many reforms risk staying unimplemented.
- ❑ **Three-Language Formula:** NEP requires three languages in schools, with at least two being Indian languages. However, this has been politically contentious in states such as Tamil Nadu, which follows a Tamil-English structure, viewing the provision as a push to impose Hindi.

- ❑ **Teacher Education Reform Pending:** The National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education, expected in 2021, has yet to be released. While the 4-year integrated B.Ed program has been proposed, institutions offering existing programs like Bachelor of Elementary Education are resisting change.
- ❑ **Technology Access Issues:** Despite the policy's emphasis on digital learning, India's digital divide—urban vs. rural and socio-economic disparities—poses a challenge. Many learners and educators lack internet connectivity, devices, and digital skills. Over 90% of students reportedly lack adequate devices for comprehensive online education, widening the education gap.
- ❑ **Rising Privatization:** Critics argue that while the NEP speaks of higher public spending, it simultaneously encourages greater private involvement, which may commercialize education and reduce access for marginalized groups.
- ❑ **Over-centralization (Centre vs. State):** The proposal for a centralized regulator like HECI may lead to reduced institutional autonomy. Concentrating power at the central level could undermine states' ability to address regional educational requirements. Opposition-led states such as Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal have opposed some provisions, refusing to sign MoUs for PM-SHRI schools, citing mandatory full adoption of NEP.

WAY FORWARD

- ❑ **Capacity Building:** Effective implementation requires strong institutional systems and extensive capacity building at all levels—state, district, sub-district, and block—ensuring stakeholder ownership and understanding of NEP principles.
- ❑ **Bridging Digital and Infrastructure Gaps:**
 - Provide teachers and students with modern classroom tools, greater access to laptops and devices, interactive boards, and reliable high-speed internet.
 - Strengthen digital infrastructure in rural and disadvantaged regions with devices, connectivity, and offline options to prevent widening inequalities.
- ❑ **State Empowerment:** States should have the flexibility to adapt NEP to local contexts, languages, and priorities. Strengthening directorates of education is necessary to ensure the policy reaches district and zonal clusters.
- ❑ **Financial Resources:**
 - Develop a clear, time-bound plan to reach the 6% GDP spending goal, backed by defined budgetary provisions for each reform.
 - Establish a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) to ensure NEP funding is available and implementation stays on track.
 - Encourage private philanthropy to support both public and private higher education institutions.

CONCLUSION

For NEP implementation, research, monitoring, and documentation are crucial, along with coordination and integration of related policies and programs.

JUDICIAL PENDENCY



INTRODUCTION

Swift delivery of justice forms the bedrock of people's faith in the judicial system, a principle summed up in the saying, "justice delayed is justice denied." Lengthy delays often dissuade individuals from seeking redress through the courts. In 2023, President Droupadi Murmu referred to this reluctance as the '**Black Coat Syndrome**'.

CASE BACKLOG IN INDIAN COURTS

The volume of pending cases across the Indian judiciary has crossed **5 crore**, with the following distribution:

- ❑ **Supreme Court:** Over **86,700** cases awaiting disposal.
- ❑ **High Courts:** More than **63.3 lakh** cases pending.
- ❑ **District and Subordinate Courts:** Nearly **4.6 crore** cases in backlog.

At the district level — which handles the majority of these — **only 38.7%** of civil cases are resolved within one year, whereas **about 20%** extend beyond five years.

JUDICIAL VACANCIES

India's judiciary is currently operating at **79% of its sanctioned capacity**. Out of **26,927** approved positions, **5,665** remain unfilled, adding significantly to the workload.

The nation has only **15 judges per 10 lakh (1 million) people**. Even if all sanctioned posts were filled, the figure would rise only to **19 per 10 lakh**, well below the **Law Commission's 1987 recommendation** of **50 judges per 10 lakh**.

District and subordinate courts, which are responsible for most litigation, have a sanctioned strength of **25,771 judges**, averaging **18 per 10 lakh people**.

WHY ARE CASES PILING UP IN INDIAN COURTS?

- ❑ **Low Judge-to-Population Ratio:** India's ratio of judges to its population is among the lowest globally and significantly below international benchmarks. The **Law Commission** has advocated for increasing the figure to **50 judges per million people**, but the current number stands around **21 per million**, and this target remains unmet.
- ❑ **High Vacancy Levels:** A substantial share of judicial posts across all levels — including the **Supreme Court**, **High Courts**, and particularly **lower courts** — are vacant. These unfilled positions sharply reduce judicial capacity to handle and clear cases.
- ❑ **Poor Infrastructure:** Many courts, especially at the **district and subordinate** levels, suffer from inadequate infrastructure — from a shortage of courtrooms and judges' chambers to even basic amenities. These courts, which serve the largest volume of litigants, are the least equipped to ensure timely adjudication.
- ❑ **Limited Technological Adoption:** Although efforts like **e-courts** have been introduced, the adoption of modern tech — such as **e-filing**, **video hearings**, and **AI-assisted case management** — remains inconsistent and patchy. The continued reliance on **manual operations** reduces efficiency.

PROCEDURAL AND SYSTEMIC DELAYS

- ❑ **Frequent Adjournments:** Unwarranted adjournments are among the top contributors to judicial delays. Lawyers frequently request postponements for trivial reasons, significantly prolonging trial durations.
- ❑ **Outdated and Complex Legal Framework:** India's legal system still depends heavily on old colonial laws and intricate procedural codes — such as the **Civil and Criminal Procedure Codes** — which enable multiple appeals and lengthen the litigation process.
- ❑ **Delays in Investigation and Evidence:** Slow-paced investigations, backlogs in **forensic reports**, and difficulties in **tracking witnesses** often extend the duration of **criminal trials**.
- ❑ **Government as a Major Litigant:** The **government**, including central and state agencies along with PSUs, is the **largest litigant** in Indian courts — contributing up to **50%** of pending cases. Many of these are considered **unnecessary or frivolous**.
- ❑ **Inflow from New Legal Avenues:** The introduction of new legal tools — like **Public Interest Litigations (PILs)** — has also increased the number of cases entering the judicial system.

CONSEQUENCES OF JUDICIAL PENDENCY

"Justice Delayed is Justice Denied" aptly describes the primary fallout of delayed court proceedings. Victims may wait years for a verdict, while the accused may remain imprisoned for extended periods without a conviction, thereby denying both parties timely justice.

- ❑ **Violation of Fundamental Rights:** The right to a speedy trial is embedded within **Article 21** of the Indian Constitution, which guarantees the right to life and liberty. Excessive trial durations infringe upon this right, especially impacting undertrials subjected to prolonged incarceration.
- ❑ **Socio-Economic Repercussions:** Legal delays seriously hinder economic development. Disputes related to contracts, commercial transactions, and bankruptcies often remain unresolved for years, discouraging investment and causing uncertainty for businesses. This affects financial viability, halts major projects, and locks up public funds in ongoing litigations—ultimately impairing development and public services.

- ❑ **Prison Overcrowding:** A major outcome of prolonged criminal proceedings is the high number of undertrial inmates. Indian jails are overcrowded, and a significant portion of the population consists of individuals awaiting trial, resulting in poor conditions and further violations of human rights.
- ❑ **Loss of Evidence and Witnesses:** As time progresses, witnesses may forget important details, turn hostile, become untraceable, or even die, weakening the evidentiary value and impacting the fairness of trials.
- ❑ **Policy Paralysis:** Legal cases involving policy decisions, administrative actions, or infrastructure projects can remain pending for long periods, creating governance paralysis and obstructing policy implementation.
- ❑ **Overworked Judiciary:** Judges are burdened with excessive caseloads, often leading to burnout and reducing the time available for thorough deliberation. This overload may affect the depth and quality of judgments.
- ❑ **Erosion of Judicial Credibility:** Persistent delays and mounting case backlogs can erode public trust and respect for the judiciary, a critical democratic institution.

INITIATIVES BY GOVERNMENT AND THE SUPREME COURT

Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for Judicial Infrastructure:

This scheme funds states and union territories for the construction of court halls, judges' residences, lawyers' halls, restrooms, and digital facilities to strengthen infrastructure across court levels.

E-COURTS MISSION MODE PROJECT (PHASES I, II, III):

A flagship effort aimed at digitizing court functions and improving judicial productivity. Key initiatives include:

- ❑ **Court Computerization:** A significant number of subordinate and district courts have been digitalized.
- ❑ **Video Conferencing:** Enabled between courts and jails to reduce the need for physical transfers.
- ❑ **e-Sewa Kendras:** These centers help lawyers and litigants with tasks such as checking case status, e-filing, and retrieving orders or judgments.
- ❑ **Virtual Courts:** Set up in various states/UTs to deal with minor offences like traffic violations, allowing remote hearings and online fine payments.

FAST TRACK COURTS (FTCs):

As suggested by the **14th Finance Commission**, around 1,800 FTCs were established to handle serious crimes, civil disputes involving vulnerable groups, and property-related cases. Many are now operational across the country.

- ❑ **Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR):**
 - **Civil Procedure Code (Amendment) Act, 1999:** Gave formal recognition to ADR methods in civil litigation.
 - **Arbitration and Conciliation Act (1996, amended in 2015, 2019, 2021):** Enhanced India's arbitration framework in line with international standards.
 - **Mediation Act, 2023:** Enacted to formalize and encourage mediation as a mode of dispute resolution.
 - **Lok Adalats:** Conducted regularly by Legal Services Authorities to amicably settle minor civil and compoundable criminal matters.
- ❑ Between **2021 and 2025**, ADR mechanisms have resolved **27.5 crore cases**—including **22.21 crore pre-litigation cases** and **5.34 crore pending court cases**.
- ❑ **National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms (2011):** Launched to reduce case backlogs and enhance efficiency and accountability across the judiciary.

- ❑ **Arrears Committees:** Set up at the High Court and District Court levels to prioritize long-standing cases—particularly those pending over five years.
- ❑ **National Litigation Policy (NLP):** Introduced to reduce the number of government-initiated cases, which form a substantial share of the total case backlog.

WAY FORWARD: SOLUTIONS TO JUDICIAL PENDENCY

- ❑ **Speedy Judicial Appointments:** A top priority must be filling vacant judge positions at all court levels—especially in subordinate courts—through a streamlined and transparent appointment process.
- ❑ **Court Infrastructure Development:** Both central and state governments should work together to upgrade court buildings, recruit adequate administrative staff, and provide necessary facilities for smooth court operations.
- ❑ **Procedural and Case Management Reforms:**
 - **Adjournment Control:** Limit adjournments to genuine circumstances, with penalties for baseless delays.
 - **Proactive Case Management:** Grant judges authority to maintain case timelines, conduct case management hearings, and ensure progression at every stage.
- ❑ **Mandatory Pre-Litigation Mediation:** For specific civil and commercial disputes, pre-litigation mediation should be made compulsory before a case can enter formal court proceedings. The **Mediation Act 2023** supports this shift.
- ❑ **Online Dispute Resolution (ODR):** Broaden the use of ODR platforms to quickly settle minor civil disputes and consumer issues using technology.
- ❑ **Internal Government Dispute Mechanisms:** Encourage ministries and departments to resolve internal conflicts through administrative channels, avoiding unnecessary litigation.
- ❑ **Simplify Legal Codes:** Revise outdated and complex laws like the **CPC** and **CrPC** to reduce technical hurdles and expedite case proceedings.

CONCLUSION

Resolving India's case backlog is essential not just for restoring faith in the judiciary, but also for ensuring justice is timely and effective for all citizens. Reforms must focus on judicial capacity, infrastructure, procedural efficiency, and the integration of technology to bring about lasting change.

ONE NATION ONE ELECTION



INTRODUCTION

Recently, 2 former CJs, appearing before the Joint Committee of Parliament on One Nation, One Election, have said that the Bill to introduce simultaneous elections does not violate the basic structure constitution. However, they have also expressed the concern over the unbridled power granted to ECI without providing any oversight clause.

WHAT IS THE ONE NATION, ONE ELECTION?

The concept of One Nation, One Election involves conducting simultaneous elections for State Assemblies and the Lok Sabha rather than having separate, continuous elections.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Simultaneous elections were the standard practice in India until 1967. Elections for the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies were held together in 1952, 1957, 1962, and 1967.

However, the cycle of simultaneous elections was disrupted due to the early dissolution of certain Legislative Assemblies in 1968 and 1969. Furthermore, the Lok Sabha was dissolved prematurely in 1970, leading to new elections in 1971.

These events caused the breakdown of the simultaneous election cycle in India.

WHAT IS THE KOVIND PANEL ON ONE NATION, ONE ELECTION?

- ❑ **About the Committee:** On September 2, 2023, the Union government established a committee led by former President Ram Nath Kovind to explore the feasibility of the One Nation, One Election initiative.
- ❑ **Members of the Committee:** The committee is chaired by Ram Nath Kovind and includes Home Minister Amit Shah, former Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad, former Finance Commission chairperson N. K. Singh, former Lok Sabha secretary-general Subhash C. Kashyap, senior advocate Harish Salve, and former Chief Vigilance Commissioner Sanjay Kothari.
- ❑ **What are the recommendations of the Kovind Panel Report on One Nation, One Election?:** To implement its recommendations, the committee proposed 15 amendments to the Constitution of India, which include both new provisions and modifications to existing ones, to be executed through two Constitutional Amendment Bills.

FIRST CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT BILL

This bill addresses the transition to a simultaneous election system and outlines the procedure for conducting fresh elections for the Lok Sabha or a State Assembly before their designated five-year terms conclude.

Passage of the Bill: Parliament can pass the bill without needing to consult with state governments or secure ratification from state Assemblies.

PROVISIONS OF THE BILL:

1. **Insertion of a New Article 82A:** Article 82A will create the framework for transitioning to simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies.
 - **Provisions of Article 82A(1):** The President will issue a notification to activate Article 82A on the date of the first sitting of the House of the People after a general election. This notification date will be termed the “Appointed Date.”
 - **Provisions under Article 82A(2):** All Legislative Assemblies formed during any general election after the Appointed Date will conclude upon the expiration of the full term of the House of the People.
 - **Provisions under Article 82A(3):** The Election Commission of India (ECI) will conduct general elections for both the House of the People and the Legislative Assemblies simultaneously.
 - **Provisions under Article 82A(4):** If the ECI determines that elections for a legislative assembly cannot be held simultaneously, it can recommend to the President to delay the elections for that assembly.
 - **Provisions under Article 82A(5):** Even if a state assembly election is postponed, its full term will end on the same date as the term of the House of the People constituted during the general election.
2. **Amendment of Article 327:**
 - Article 327 grants Parliament the authority to legislate regarding elections to the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, and State Legislatures, including creating electoral rolls and delimiting constituencies.
 - The Kovind Panel Report recommends expanding Parliament’s powers under Article 327 to include the “conduct of simultaneous elections.”
3. **Amendments for Simultaneous Elections When Lok Sabha or State Assembly Dissolves Early:**
 - Amendments to Articles 83(2) and 172(1) propose defining the five-year duration of the House of People and State Legislatures as the “full term.”

- Amendments to Articles 83(3) and 172(3) state that if the Lok Sabha or a state assembly is dissolved before the full term ends, the remaining period will be termed the “unexpired term.”
 - New Articles 83(4) and 172(4) establish that a new Lok Sabha or state assembly formed to replace a dissolved one will only serve the “unexpired term.”
- 4. Amendment of Union Territory Laws for Simultaneous Elections:** The Kovind Panel recommends amending specific Union Territory laws to facilitate simultaneous elections:
- The Government of Union Territories Act, 1963
 - The Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act, 1991
 - The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019

SECOND CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT BILL

This bill addresses municipal and panchayat elections, which fall under Entry 5 of the State List titled “Local Government.”

Passage of the Bill: This bill requires ratification by at least half of the state legislatures before Parliament can pass it.

PROVISIONS OF THE BILL:

- 1. Inclusion of a New Article 324A:** This article would enable Parliament to legislate ensuring that municipal and panchayat elections coincide with the General Elections (to the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies).
- 2. Amendment of Article 325:**
 - **Addition of Article 325(2):** This new sub-clause will establish a single electoral roll for every territorial constituency for elections to the House of the People, State Legislatures, municipalities, or panchayats.
 - **Addition of Article 325(3):** The single electoral roll will be prepared by the Election Commission in consultation with the State Election Commissions, replacing any previously prepared electoral rolls.

WHAT ARE THE ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF ‘ONE NATION, ONE ELECTION’?

- 1. Financial Savings for the State:** Continuous election cycles impose a financial strain on state finances. Implementing One Nation, One Election would lower overall political expenditures by the ECI. For example, the 2014 Lok Sabha elections cost the exchequer ₹3,870 crore, while the 2015 Bihar elections alone amounted to ₹300 crore. The ECI estimates the cost of One Nation, One Election at about ₹4,500 crore.
- 2. Efficient Use of Resources by Political Parties:** Simultaneous elections will reduce campaign spending for parties and candidates, assisting smaller regional parties in managing their finances more effectively.
- 3. Shorter Model Code of Conduct Duration:** The frequent imposition of the Model Code of Conduct during elections hampers development work for months. This change would lessen the “policy paralysis” resulting from the Model Code of Conduct’s implementation during election periods.
- 4. Shift in Focus from Elections to Governance:** One Nation, One Election would ensure continuity in policies and programs of both central and state governments, reducing disruptions to public life and limiting political rallies. This would enhance the delivery of essential services.
- 5. Boost to Administrative Efficiency:** Conducting simultaneous elections would enhance the effectiveness of the administrative system since entire state machinery and high-ranking officials from other states are deployed as observers during elections.

6. **Enhanced Internal Security:** The frequent need for security forces during elections consumes a large number of armed personnel, which could be more effectively used for managing internal security challenges like naxalism.
7. **Decreased Black Money Usage:** Elections typically involve significant expenditures by candidates, much of which stems from black money. One Nation, One Election could help reduce the flow of black money within the economy.
8. **Less Populist Measures:** Regular elections compel politicians to prioritize immediate electoral gains over long-term policies, which can detract from effective governance. Simultaneous elections could mitigate this trend.
9. **Higher Voter Turnout:** According to the Law Commission, simultaneous elections could increase voter turnout by making it easier for people to cast multiple votes at once.
10. **Promotion of Social Harmony:** Frequent elections can exacerbate caste, religious, and communal tensions, as they tend to be polarizing events. Holding simultaneous elections could reduce these divisions.

WHAT ARE THE ARGUMENTS AGAINST 'ONE NATION, ONE ELECTION'?

1. **Decreased Accountability:** Regular elections hold the government accountable to the people's will. Critics argue that guaranteed fixed terms might foster autocratic tendencies.
2. **Erosion of Federal Authority:** In recent years, state-specific issues have gained political importance, demonstrated by the rise of regional parties like the DMK in Tamil Nadu, TDP in Andhra Pradesh, and BJD in Odisha. Simultaneous elections may overshadow state elections by focusing attention on national elections.
3. **Challenges for Regional Parties:** Critics assert that simultaneous elections may disadvantage regional parties, as national issues would dominate the narrative, making it harder for them to compete against national parties in terms of finances and strategy.
4. **Contrary to Democratic Principles:** Opponents argue that enforcing simultaneous elections undermines democracy by creating an artificial election cycle and limiting voter choice.
5. **Influences Voter Behavior:** There is a risk that voters might consistently choose the same party at both national and state levels, disadvantaging regional parties. A study by IDFC Institute suggests that simultaneous elections could result in a 77% likelihood of voters favoring the same party, while this figure drops to 61% when elections are spaced six months apart.
6. **Internal Security Risks:** Organizing simultaneous elections requires extensive security forces, posing logistical challenges that could threaten internal security.
7. **Interference with Democratic Will:** The current electoral system was designed to uphold democratic principles by ensuring regular elections, allowing citizens to express their preferences through voting.
8. **Hastened Legislation:** Legislative measures passed in the midst of simultaneous elections may lack adequate public scrutiny, compromising the legislative process.
9. **Constitutional Viability:** Implementing the One Nation, One Election plan necessitates constitutional amendments, raising questions about its feasibility given the complexities involved.
10. **Failure of Similar Attempts:** Previous initiatives to synchronize elections at local levels have often failed, questioning the viability of such an ambitious plan.

CONCLUSION

The One Nation, One Election proposal aims to streamline the electoral process in India, potentially leading to financial savings, efficient governance, and increased voter turnout. However, the implementation of this initiative raises significant concerns regarding accountability, regional representation, and democratic integrity. Balancing the benefits and challenges of this proposal will be crucial for India's future electoral landscape.

EXECUTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY

The Monsoon Session of Parliament is scheduled to commence next week. In parliamentary systems like India's, the legislature serves three fundamental roles—it enacts laws, represents the people by voicing their concerns, and ensures the government is held accountable for its actions. Parliamentary sessions are essential pillars of democracy as they offer a formal platform to scrutinize the executive.

WHAT IS EXECUTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY TO PARLIAMENT?

Executive accountability to the legislature is a core tenet of parliamentary democracies. It mandates that the executive arm—mainly the Council of Ministers led by the Prime Minister—must be answerable to the Parliament for its actions, decisions, and overall governance.

In this system, the executive is not structurally distinct from the legislature; instead, it is composed of members from it and operates under its oversight. Accountability is maintained on two levels: **collective accountability**, where the entire cabinet is responsible to the Lok Sabha, and **individual accountability**, where each minister must answer for the functioning of their own ministry.

WHAT INSTRUMENTS DOES PARLIAMENT USE TO ENFORCE EXECUTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY?

COLLECTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY:

- ❑ **No-Confidence Motion:** The most potent parliamentary tool. If passed, it necessitates the resignation of the entire government.
- ❑ **Budget Discussions and Approvals:** Parliament authorizes the annual financial plan and can question how funds are allocated and utilized. Members can move **cut motions** to reduce allocations and highlight inefficiencies in departments.

INDIVIDUAL MINISTERIAL ACCOUNTABILITY:

- ❑ **Parliamentary Questions:** Members use the **Question Hour** to seek responses from ministers on policy matters and actions. These queries include:
 - **Starred Questions:** Require verbal responses and allow supplementary questions.
 - **Unstarred Questions:** Receive written replies.
 - **Short Notice Questions:** For matters of urgent public interest.
- ❑ **Zero Hour:** Members raise pressing issues without advance notice, compelling real-time responses from the government.
- ❑ **Debates and Discussions:** These allow members to examine, evaluate, and critique policy decisions and bills.
- ❑ **Parliamentary Motions:** Tools like **No-Confidence Motions** and **Censure Motions** are direct ways to challenge the executive. Passage of such motions leads to the government's resignation. Additionally, **Adjournment Motions** allow urgent national matters to be debated.

OVERSIGHT THROUGH PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES:

- ❑ **Standing Committees:** These are permanent bodies that review government performance, finances, and proposed laws. Key committees include:
 - **Public Accounts Committee (PAC):** Examines whether public money is spent according to parliamentary authorization.
 - **Estimates Committee:** Evaluates how efficiently and economically ministries utilize funds.
 - **Committee on Public Undertakings:** Monitors the functioning of state-owned enterprises.
- ❑ **Ad-Hoc Committees:** Temporary committees formed to investigate particular incidents or issues.

ELECTORAL ACCOUNTABILITY:

Elections serve as the ultimate accountability mechanism, where the ruling party or coalition must seek the electorate's approval to continue in office.

WHY IS PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT OF THE EXECUTIVE CRUCIAL IN A DEMOCRACY?

1. **System of Checks and Balances:** Parliamentary scrutiny ensures the executive does not function arbitrarily or accumulate excessive power. It maintains a healthy distribution of power among different branches of government.
2. **Transparency in Governance:** When the executive is regularly questioned and reviewed, it must defend and explain its policies. Instruments like Question Hour, debates, and committee probes make government operations more visible and open to the public.
3. **Strengthening Good Governance and Public Trust:** Being answerable compels the executive to deliver effective, lawful, and citizen-focused governance. This accountability boosts public confidence and ensures that the administration remains responsive and responsible.
4. **Ensuring Fiscal Responsibility:** Through budget discussions and committees like the PAC, Parliament monitors how government resources are spent. It helps guard against corruption, inefficiency, and wasteful expenditures, thereby ensuring that public funds are used judiciously.
5. **Upholding the Rule of Law:** By enforcing executive accountability, Parliament reaffirms constitutional supremacy and legal compliance, ensuring that the government acts within its legal limits.
6. **Enabling Public Voice and Representation:** Debates, questions, and committee work allow MPs to reflect the aspirations and concerns of their constituents. These mechanisms provide the public with indirect yet meaningful engagement in governance and policy-making.
7. **Political Accountability:** The Parliament possesses the ultimate power to support or topple a government by expressing or withdrawing its confidence. This power ensures that the executive remains firmly accountable to the elected representatives of the people.

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES IN ENSURING EXECUTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY?

- ❑ **Frequent Disruptions and Reduced Efficiency:** Regular interruptions, protests, and premature adjournments—especially during critical slots like Question Hour and Zero Hour—drastically cut into the time allotted for Parliament to hold the executive accountable.
- ❑ **Insufficient Time for Deliberation:** The limited time allocated for in-depth examination of legislative proposals, policies, and executive actions undermines the robustness of parliamentary oversight.

- ❑ **Decreased Referral of Bills to Committees:** There has been a notable decline in the number of bills sent to parliamentary committees for detailed analysis. For instance, the proportion of bills referred to committees in the current Lok Sabha has fallen from over 60% in earlier sessions to below 15%, weakening institutional scrutiny.
- ❑ **Rising Concentration of Executive Power:** The increasing use of tools such as ordinances and delegated legislation enables the executive to bypass parliamentary procedures, often relegating the legislature to a ceremonial or approving role rather than a deliberative one.
- ❑ **Limited Access to Government Data:** Parliament often struggles to acquire comprehensive, accurate, and timely information from the executive, which restricts its capacity to perform effective checks and undertake evidence-based oversight.
- ❑ **Lack of Transparency in Committee Proceedings:** Although parliamentary committees are essential for detailed evaluation, their closed-door functioning makes the process opaque, limiting public awareness and reducing the visibility of accountability mechanisms.
- ❑ **Decline in Quality Debates:** In recent years, the frequency and depth of meaningful debates and deliberations in Parliament have diminished, reducing avenues for the executive to be thoroughly examined and questioned.
- ❑ **Constraints of the Anti-Defection Law:** The anti-defection provisions limit the ability of Members of Parliament to vote against their party lines, even if they disagree with government decisions, thereby weakening individual scrutiny and debate.
- ❑ **Inadequate Analytical Support:** Members of Parliament and committees often lack access to dedicated researchers and domain experts, which hampers their ability to thoroughly evaluate complex policy issues, budgets, and administrative data.
- ❑ **Limitations in Question Hour Functioning:** Though a crucial accountability tool, Question Hour sometimes loses its effectiveness due to vague ministerial replies, narrow or localized questions, and a lack of structured processes for questions that span multiple departments.

WHAT CAN BE THE WAY FORWARD?

- ❑ **Increase Parliamentary Sitting Days:** To allow for comprehensive legislative scrutiny and debates, Parliament must meet more frequently. Introducing a legally mandated minimum number of sitting days, as recommended by various reform committees, would help institutionalize this.
- ❑ **Strengthen Question Hour and Zero Hour Functioning:**
 - **Ensure Smooth Conduct:** Enforce stricter norms and decorum to prevent disruptions during these critical hours, thereby maximizing their utility.
 - **Address Cross-Ministerial Topics:** Create frameworks that ensure complex, multi-ministerial issues receive comprehensive answers, improving clarity and accountability.
 - **Introduce Prime Minister's Question Time:** A weekly or bi-weekly session—modeled on the UK Parliament—where the Prime Minister answers queries from MPs could strengthen direct accountability at the highest executive level.
- ❑ **Mandate Pre-Legislative Scrutiny:** All proposed laws should undergo preliminary examination by parliamentary committees or be subjected to public consultations before being introduced. This allows experts and citizens to provide early feedback and improves the quality of legislation.
- ❑ **Institutionalize Post-Legislative Review:** Establish a formal mechanism to evaluate laws after implementation—typically 3–5 years later—to determine their real-world impact. Parliamentary committees could review

reports from concerned ministries as part of this retrospective analysis, a practice followed in various democratic countries.

- ❑ **Improve Research Capacity:** Each committee should be supported by independent research teams and technical consultants to facilitate rigorous policy evaluation, budget scrutiny, and performance tracking.
- ❑ **Empower the Opposition:** Allow greater participation of opposition parties in setting discussion agendas and choosing debate topics, enabling them to spotlight important public issues and challenge the executive effectively.
- ❑ **Encourage Internal Party Democracy:** Reforms should provide MPs with more space to voice differing opinions within their parties. For example, limiting anti-defection provisions only to no-confidence votes would enable MPs to contribute more freely to legislative debates and oversight.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of making the executive accountable to Parliament is not to undermine governance but to enhance it by ensuring that executive power is exercised responsibly and with the support of legislative deliberation. Strengthening the tools of parliamentary oversight is essential for nurturing a vibrant, participatory, and responsive democracy.

PSIR
Optional Subject (2026-27)
LIVE CLASSES & TEST SERIES

- 400+ Hours Live Lectures
- Comprehensive coverage of PYQ
- Hand written notes & crux
- Answer Writing Sessions
- Mains Test series
- One to One Mentorship

Gyan Bhandar

SHASHANK TYAGI

SCHOLAR DIGEST: KNOW YOUR SCHOLARS

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

INTRODUCTION

“God is dead. Now what?”: With this thunderous line, Nietzsche shattered Europe’s moral certainties. For him, modernity wasn’t just about science and progress — it was about the **collapse of meaning**.

MASTER VS SLAVE MORALITY

Nietzsche claimed morality wasn’t divine truth but a **political invention**.

- ❑ **Master morality**: values strength, pride, excellence.
- ❑ **Slave morality**: born from resentment, it glorifies humility, pity, and obedience.

For him, Christianity and liberal egalitarianism were just chains for the strong.

Exam use: Contrast Rawls’ “justice as fairness” (equality) with Nietzsche’s “justice as vitality.”

WILL TO POWER

At the core of life lies not survival (Darwin) or economics (Marx) — but the **urge to expand, dominate, and create**. This is Nietzsche’s **Will to Power**. It is not mere tyranny, but a force of self-overcoming.

Exam use: Compare with Hobbes’ power-as-security, or with Foucault’s power-as-knowledge.

ÜBERMENSCH (OVERMAN)

Nietzsche’s answer to a world without God was the **Übermensch** — a being who dares to create new values, unchained from herd morality. The Overman is not a tyrant but a creator, turning life itself into art.

Exam use: Link to existentialism, leadership theory, or critiques of democracy.

THE DEATH OF GOD

Nietzsche’s famous claim wasn’t triumphal atheism. It was a warning: with religion gone, humanity risks **nihilism**. The challenge? To build values without metaphysical crutches.

Exam use: Relate to secularism, postmodern relativism, or crisis of liberal order.

PERSPECTIVISM

“There are no facts, only interpretations.” For Nietzsche, truth was not absolute but perspectival — shaped by instinct, culture, and power.

Exam use: Contrast with positivism in Paper I; link to post-structuralism in IR (Foucault, Derrida).

POLITICS ACCORDING TO NIETZSCHE

Nietzsche distrusted **mass democracy**, calling it the rule of mediocrity. He attacked socialism and liberalism as herd politics. Instead, he dreamed of societies led by creators — an **aristocracy of spirit, not birth**.

Exam use: Frame as critique of democracy’s leveling impulse.

TASK FOR YOU:

Nietzsche says **“One must still have chaos in oneself to give birth to a dancing star.”**

Write 2 lines on how this could be applied to India’s democracy today.

HANNAH ARENDT

INTRODUCTION

Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) was a renowned political philosopher whose works continue to shape and challenge our understanding of politics. Through her unique lens, she examined various political phenomena and concepts, offering profound insights that resonate within the field of political science.

THE NATURE OF POWER

Arendt’s examination of power is a key aspect of her political thought. She argued that power is not merely coercive force but a collective phenomenon that emerges from the actions and interactions of individuals in a public realm. Her emphasis on power as a relational concept informs discussions on power dynamics, democratic participation, and the role of citizens in political processes.

THE CONCEPT OF AUTHORITY

Arendt delved into the concept of authority, highlighting its distinction from power. She viewed authority as rooted in legitimacy, consent, and respect rather than coercion. Her analysis sheds light on the sources of authority, the relationship between authority and obedience, and the erosion of authority in modern societies.

TOTALITARIANISM AND THE BANALITY OF EVIL

Arendt’s seminal work on totalitarianism, particularly in “The Origins of Totalitarianism,” remains highly influential. She examined the rise of totalitarian regimes, the erosion of individual freedoms, and the manipulation of truth in such systems. Her concept of the “banality of evil” challenged prevailing notions of evil as a result of extraordinary acts, emphasizing instead the ordinary individuals who participate in oppressive systems.

THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPHERES

Arendt explored the distinction between the public and private realms, highlighting their significance in political life. She argued that genuine political action occurs in the public realm, characterized by plurality, freedom of speech, and public deliberation. In contrast, the private sphere represents the realm of necessity and personal affairs. Her analysis continues to shape discussions on the role of public engagement and the importance of political participation.

THE CRISIS OF MODERNITY AND THE HUMAN CONDITION

Arendt critically examined the impact of modernity on the human condition. She analyzed the loss of meaningful public spaces, the rise of bureaucracy, and the challenges of individual identity in mass societies. Her insights into the disintegration of public life and the consequences for human agency and political action offer valuable perspectives for understanding contemporary political challenges.

CONCLUSION

Hannah Arendt's contributions to political science have been far-reaching and continue to provoke intellectual inquiry and debate. Her writings on power, authority, totalitarianism, the public sphere, and the human condition provide valuable frameworks for analyzing political phenomena and understanding the complex dynamics of our contemporary political landscape. By engaging with Arendt's ideas, political scientists can deepen their understanding of the intricacies of power, authority, and the nature of politics itself.

JOHN RAWLS: A VISIONARY IN POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

INTRODUCTION

John Rawls, an American philosopher, made significant contributions to political philosophy, particularly in the realms of justice and fairness. Born in 1921 in Baltimore, Maryland, Rawls grew up witnessing the socio-political turbulence of the 20th century, which significantly shaped his intellectual pursuits.

Rawls's magnum opus, "A Theory of Justice," published in 1971, revolutionized political philosophy by introducing a fresh perspective on justice and equality. His ideas have influenced scholars, policymakers, and activists worldwide.

THE VEIL OF IGNORANCE

At the core of Rawls's philosophy is the concept of the "original position" and the "veil of ignorance." He asks us to imagine a hypothetical scenario where individuals are about to create a new society but are unaware of their personal attributes, such as wealth, talents, or social status. This "veil of ignorance" ensures that the decision-makers are unbiased and rational, as they are oblivious to their own positions in the forthcoming society.

PRINCIPLES OF JUSTICE

From behind the veil of ignorance, Rawls argues that rational individuals would agree upon two fundamental principles of justice:

The Principle of Equal Basic Liberties: Each person is entitled to the most extensive basic liberties compatible with similar liberties for others.

The Difference Principle: Social and economic inequalities should be arranged so that they benefit the least advantaged members of society. Any inequality must be to everyone's advantage and, notably, attached to positions and offices open to all.

These principles are foundational to Rawls's vision of a just society. They prioritize individual rights, especially those of the most vulnerable, and propose a fair distribution of resources and opportunities.

REFLECTIVE EQUILIBRIUM

Rawls introduced the concept of "reflective equilibrium" to address criticisms and refine his theory continuously. It suggests that moral judgments should align coherently with our considered beliefs. Rawls encourages an ongoing dialogue between our fundamental principles and our intuitive judgments, seeking a state of reflective equilibrium where they mutually reinforce each other.

POLITICAL LIBERALISM

In his later works, particularly in “Political Liberalism” (1993), Rawls adapted his theory to be more inclusive, recognizing the diversity of comprehensive doctrines in a pluralistic society. He aimed to provide a framework for political cooperation that people from different moral, religious, and philosophical backgrounds could accept.

CRITIQUES AND LEGACY

While Rawls’s theory has been influential, it has faced criticism. Some argue that the veil of ignorance is an unrealistic abstraction, while others question the feasibility of achieving the principles of justice in a complex, real-world society. Critics also argue that Rawls’s focus on justice can sideline other important values, such as efficiency or economic growth.

Despite these critiques, Rawls’s ideas have left an enduring legacy in political philosophy. His emphasis on justice as fairness, the original position, and the veil of ignorance has shaped debates on distributive justice, societal fairness, and the role of institutions in creating an equitable social order. Rawls’s work continues to inspire scholars, policymakers, and activists seeking to create a more just and egalitarian world.

DERRIDA



INTRODUCTION

Jacques Derrida, (born July 15, 1930, El Biar, Algeria—died October 8, 2004, **Paris**, France), French philosopher whose **critique of Western philosophy** and analyses of the nature of **language**, writing, and **meaning** were highly controversial yet immensely influential in much of the **intellectual** world in the late 20th century.

EARLY LIFE&EDUCATION

Derrida was born to Sephardic Jewish parents in French-governed **Algeria**. Educated in the French tradition, he went to **France** in 1949, studied at the elite École Normale Supérieure (ENS), and taught **philosophy** at the Sorbonne (1960-64), the ENS (1964-84), and the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (1984-99), all in

Paris. From the 1960s he published numerous books and essays on an immense range of topics and taught and lectured throughout the world, including at **Yale University** and the **University of California**, Irvine, attaining an international celebrity comparable only to that of **Jean-Paul Sartre** a generation earlier.

MAJOR WORKS

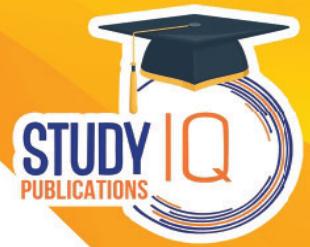
Derrida is most celebrated as the principal exponent of **deconstruction**, a term he coined for the critical examination of the fundamental **conceptual** distinctions, or “oppositions,” **inherent** in Western philosophy since the time of the ancient Greeks. These oppositions are characteristically “binary” and “hierarchical,” involving a pair of terms in which one member of the pair is assumed to be primary or fundamental, the other secondary or derivative. Examples include nature and **culture**, speech and writing, mind and body, presence and absence, inside and outside, literal and metaphorical, intelligible and sensible, and form and meaning, among many others. To “deconstruct” an opposition is to explore the tensions and contradictions between the hierarchical ordering assumed or asserted in the text and other aspects of the text’s meaning, especially those that are indirect or **implicit**. Such an analysis shows that the opposition is not natural or necessary but a product, or “construction,” of the text itself.

In the 1960s Derrida’s work was welcomed in France and elsewhere by thinkers interested in the broad interdisciplinary movement known as **structuralism**. The structuralists analyzed various cultural phenomena—such as **myths**, religious rituals, literary narratives, and fashions in dress and adornment—as general systems of signs **analogous** to natural languages, with their own vocabularies and their own underlying rules and structures, and attempted to develop a metalanguage of terms and concepts in which the various sign systems could be described. Some of Derrida’s early work was a critique of major structuralist thinkers such as Saussure, the anthropologist **Claude Lévi-Strauss**, and the intellectual historian and philosopher **Michel Foucault**. Derrida was thus seen, especially in the **United States**, as leading a movement beyond structuralism to “**poststructuralism**,” which was skeptical about the possibility of a general **science** of meaning.

RELEVANCE TODAY

One might distinguish in Derrida’s work a period of philosophical deconstruction from a later period focusing on **literature** and emphasizing the singularity of the literary work and the play of meaning in avant-garde writers such as Genet, **Stéphane Mallarmé**, **Francis Ponge**, and **James Joyce**. His later work also took up a host of other issues, notably the **legacy** of Marxism (**Spectres de Marx: l’état de la dette, le travail du deuil et la nouvelle Internationale** [1993; **Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International**]) and **psychoanalysis** (**La Carte postale: de Socrate à Freud et au-delà** [1980; **The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond**]). Other essays considered political, legal, and **ethical** issues, as well as topics in **aesthetics** and literature. He also addressed the question of Jewishness and the Jewish tradition in **Shibboleth** and the autobiographical “Circumfession” (1991).

UPSC IAS (Mains)



FEATURES OF THE COURSE -

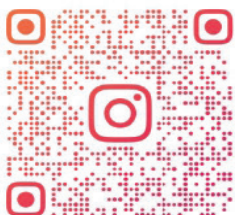
- 1. 400+ hours of live lectures spread over 5 months
- 2. Comprehensive coverage through high quality lecture notes
- 3. Hand written notes and hand written model answers
- 4. Live answer writing program under the guidance of faculty
- 5. Previous Year Questions discussions
- 6. PSIR Current affairs to keep the aspirant updated
- 7. Doubt clearing sessions by the faculty
- 8. Static Session

Contributor:
Sajal Tiwari

For any feedback, Kindly reach out on:
psirsupport@studyiq.com



@SHASHANKTYAGI4U



SHASHANKTYAGI4U

Shashank Tyagi

Faculty PSIR Optional, StudyiqIAS
Ex. Consultant, Office of Minister
Social Welfare, GNCTD

