STUDY IQ PUBLICATIONS

PSIR Pulse

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Geopolitics at Glance

G20 Summit 2025 Johannesburg

G20 Summit 2025

Introduction

The 2025 G20 Leaders Summit held on 22 and 23 November in Johannesburg marked a historic moment as the first ever G20 meeting hosted on African soil. Guided by the Ubuntu philosophy which means I am because we are, the summit emphasised collective responsibility, developmental equity, climate justice, debt sustainability, and Global South solidarity. Despite geopolitical tensions and the absence of the United States, leaders adopted a comprehensive 122 point declaration focused on global economic reforms, climate financing, human development, sustainable energy transitions, food security, and technology governance.

What is the G20

- The G20 is an informal intergovernmental forum comprising 19 countries along with the European Union and African Union.
- It represents nearly 85 percent of global GDP, more than 75 percent of world trade, and almost two thirds of the global population.

- Established in 1999 after the Asian Financial Crisis, it provides a platform for advanced and emerging economies to coordinate macroeconomic policies and global governance.
- The presidency rotates annually and is supported by a Troika system which in 2025 consisted of Brazil, South Africa and the United States.

Highlights of the G20 Summit 2025 Johannesburg

Ubuntu Philosophy and Multilateralism

- The summit adopted the Ubuntu theme, emphasising interdependence, collective problem solving, and human centred development.
- Leaders reiterated that global challenges such as inequality, conflict, climate change, food insecurity and financial instability cannot be resolved through unilateral action.

First G20 Summit in Africa

- Johannesburg hosted the first ever G20 Leaders Summit on the African continent.
- This marked a major elevation of Africa's geopolitical importance and global developmental priorities.

Adoption of a 122 Point Leaders Declaration

- The declaration was adopted on the first day itself, indicating consensus despite deep geopolitical divides.
- The document focuses on development finance, climate action, debt sustainability, gender equity, inclusive digital growth and energy transitions.

Key Outcomes of the Johannesburg Declaration 2025

Greater African Representation in Global Finance

- The G20 endorsed the creation of a new twenty fifth IMF Executive Board seat dedicated to Sub Saharan Africa.
- Leaders supported channeling more than one hundred billion dollars in Special Drawing Rights to African nations.

Debt Sustainability and Reform of the Common Framework

- The Common Framework for Debt Treatment was strengthened for greater transparency, predictability and timely restructuring for vulnerable economies.

Climate Action and Just Energy Transition

- Leaders recognised that developing nations need between five point eight trillion and five point nine trillion dollars before 2030 to achieve climate goals.
- A call was made to significantly scale up climate finance including grant based and concessional funding.
- The summit launched Mission three hundred to electrify three hundred million Africans by 2030.
- Leaders supported tripling renewable energy capacity globally.

Critical Minerals Framework

- A new framework was adopted for sustainable mining, local value addition, and resilient supply chains.
- This will help mineral rich developing countries like those in Africa and Latin America to capture more value.

Global Food Security

- Leaders reaffirmed the Right to Food and supported agricultural resilience and African farmer empowerment.
- Integration of agricultural markets through the African Continental Free Trade Area was encouraged.

AI and Digital Inclusion

- The AI for Africa Initiative was launched to promote inclusive and ethical digital technologies and human centric AI governance.

Youth and Gender Commitments

- Targets set to reduce NEET youth by five percent and achieve twenty five percent gender parity in workforce participation by 2030.

UN Security Council Reform

- Leaders acknowledged the need to make the UNSC more representative and reflective of twenty first century realities with greater voice for developing regions.

India's Priorities and Contributions at G20 2025

India's Strategic Priorities

- India emphasised the need for rethinking global developmental models that create deprivation and unsustainable resource extraction.
- Called for a more equitable world order and stronger voice for the Global South in institutions like the IMF and UNSC.
- Highlighted holistic human development by integrating material progress with social and ecological well being.

Major Initiatives Proposed by India

- **G20 Initiative on Countering the Drug Terror Nexus:** A global mechanism to curb narcotics trafficking linked to terror financing, including synthetic drugs.
- **G20 Africa Skills Multiplier Initiative:** Aimed to train one million certified trainers in Africa over the next decade.
- **Global Traditional Knowledge Repository:** To preserve indigenous knowledge systems for sustainable lifestyles and health.
- **Global Healthcare Response Team:** A rapid response network for humanitarian and medical crises.
- **Open Satellite Data Partnership:** To improve agriculture, fisheries, disaster management and climate adaptation through accessible satellite data.
- **Critical Minerals Circularity Initiative:** Focus on recycling, urban mining, second life batteries and value addition.
- **ACITI Partnership:** India launched a new partnership with Australia and Canada to enhance cooperation on AI, clean energy and resilient supply chains.

Challenges Ahead

- Limited attention to conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza indicates a lack of consensus on global security issues.
- Climate finance commitments require huge accountability and institutional capacity, especially for developing nations.
- Debt distress among low income countries remains high due to slow restructuring and opaque debt structures.
- Absence of key leaders including the US President has raised concerns about global cohesion.
- India's proposals require financial commitments and clear implementation mechanisms.
- Critical minerals governance must protect communities and ensure developmental benefits.
- Digital technologies and AI pose risks related to privacy, algorithmic bias, misuse and widening digital divides.

Way Forward

- Reform global governance by widening representation in IMF and UNSC and strengthening voice of the Global South.
- Translate climate finance commitments into actual disbursements including operationalising the Loss and Damage Fund.
- Reform the G20 Common Framework for easier debt restructuring and promote debt for climate swaps.
- Ensure just energy transitions through renewable energy investment and Mission three hundred.
- Develop global AI norms that are inclusive, transparent and respectful of digital sovereignty.
- Promote resilient agriculture, food security, youth skilling and gender centred economic growth.

Quote to Use

Nelson Mandela: The true test of global leadership lies not in the wealth of nations but in the wellbeing of humanity.

Where to Use

- GS Paper 2: International Relations.
- GS Paper 3: Economy and Climate Change.
- Essay on Global Governance, South South Cooperation, Development Equity, Multilateralism.
- PSIR Optional topics including Global South, Multilateralism, G20, Indian Foreign Policy.
- Interview answers on India Africa relations, global governance, climate justice.

Scholarly Opinions

Realist Scholars

- Realists argue G20 outcomes reflect power asymmetry where major powers still dominate decision making despite rhetoric of inclusivity.
- They highlight that absence of the United States illustrates fragmentation of global leadership and weakening institutional commitment.

Liberal Scholars

- Liberals see the Ubuntu focused summit as strengthening multilateral cooperation and rule based governance.
- They argue expanded African representation in IMF and global climate coordination signals deepening institutional reforms.

Marxist Scholars

- Marxist thinkers argue that debt relief frameworks still preserve global capitalist structures that transfer resources from the South to the North.
- Critical minerals frameworks risk continuing extractive relationships unless value addition and labour protections are ensured.

Feminist Scholars

- Feminist scholars welcome commitments to gender workforce parity but argue that without child care, safety norms, and wage equality, gender targets alone will not translate into transformation.
- They critique that women's digital access remains limited and must be prioritised within the AI for Africa Initiative.

Postmodern Scholars

- Postmodernists argue that the Ubuntu narrative challenges Western centric models of development by placing community and relational identity at the centre.
- They caution against grand narratives in declarations and call for localised and culturally grounded approaches.

Introduction

India unveiled its AI Governance Guidelines as the country adopts a measured approach to regulating artificial intelligence by emphasizing trust, equity and innovation. The guidelines, released by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology after a consultation process that drew more than 2500 submissions from government bodies, academia, think tanks and the private sector, reflect the vision of AI for All articulated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Calls for AI regulation have intensified after multiple cases of misuse including proliferation of deepfakes. With the rapid development of AI and its wide societal impact, there is a growing consensus that effective regulation is necessary to ensure responsible and ethical use of this technology.

Need for Regulation of AI

1. **Bias and discrimination:** AI inherits biases from training datasets, leading to discriminatory outcomes. For example, facial recognition algorithms show higher error rates for women and people with darker skin tones.
2. **Lack of transparency:** Many algorithms function as black boxes. For example, a medical AI tool may recommend treatment without being able to justify its reasoning.
3. **Privacy and data protection issues:** AI relies on massive datasets. Cases of privacy breaches and lawsuits against Big Tech reveal the risks.
4. **Security vulnerabilities:** AI is susceptible to cyber attacks. For example, adversarial attacks can mislead autonomous vehicles or healthcare systems.
5. **Ethical concerns:** AI raises issues of job displacement, widening inequality and concentration of power. Automated hiring tools have shown patterns of gender and racial bias.

6. **Artificial General Intelligence risks:** AGI can self-learn beyond human control, creating concerns about unpredictability and security.
7. **Autonomous weapons:** AI weapons could take life and death decisions without human supervision, causing major ethical dilemmas.
8. **Mass state surveillance:** AI enabled facial recognition and mass data analysis can enable round the clock monitoring of citizens, reducing political dissent.
9. **Deepfake challenges:** AI generated deepfakes raise risks for women's safety, create the liar's dividend, and can inflame violence through fabricated videos of armed forces abusing civilians.

Challenges in Regulating AI

1. **Rapid technological evolution:** Regulatory frameworks struggle to keep pace with swiftly advancing AI capabilities.
2. **Complexity of AI systems:** High technical sophistication makes designing effective regulations difficult.
3. **Cost of compliance:** Regulatory compliance burdens smaller companies and start-ups, limiting innovation and competition.
4. **Liability and accountability gaps:** Difficulty in fixing responsibility when AI makes harmful or erroneous decisions.
5. **International divergence:** Lack of global consensus and differing national interests complicate cooperation.

Status of AI Regulation

India

- **AI Governance Guidelines:** India's first detailed regulatory blueprint. It adopts a light touch, flexible architecture using existing laws like the IT Act 2000 and the Digital Personal Data Protection Act 2023.
- **Digital India Framework:** A comprehensive framework under preparation to safeguard digital citizens and ensure trusted AI deployment.
- **National AI Programme:** Promotes responsible and efficient AI use across sectors.
- **National Data Governance Framework Policy:** Governs data collection, storage and usage for AI purposes.
- **Draft Digital India Act:** A proposed law to replace the IT Act with a dedicated chapter on emerging technologies including AI, deepfakes and algorithmic safety.

Rest of the World

1. **European Union:** Proposing a comprehensive AI Act based on risk categories.
2. **United States:** Released a non binding Blueprint for an AI Bill of Rights that outlines principles for safe deployment.
3. **Japan:** Uses the Society 5.0 approach that employs innovation to solve social issues.
4. **China:** Created a Next Generation AI Development Plan and issued guidelines for algorithms, recommendation systems and generative AI.

Way Forward

1. **Universal adoption of the Bletchley Declaration:** Countries must adopt the global safety norms outlined in the Declaration.
2. **Build a comprehensive and flexible regulatory framework:** Governments should create clear rules on privacy, transparency, accountability and algorithmic bias.
3. **Increase international cooperation:** Global coordination is essential. Platforms like the G7 Hiroshima AI Process can help develop shared principles.
4. **Encourage industry self regulation:** AI companies must uphold ethical guidelines and internal audits.
5. **Invest in AI research and education:** Public and private investment in R and D and capacity building will ensure a skilled workforce able to manage AI responsibly.

Quote

"Artificial intelligence is neither good nor evil. It is a tool. The responsibility lies with the one who uses it." – Eliezer Yudkowsky

Where to Use

GS Paper 3: under science and technology, cybersecurity and digital governance.

Essay paper themes on AI ethics, innovation and regulation.

PSIR topics related to state capacity, governance and technology policy.

Interview answers on AI deepfakes, Digital India Act, MeitY initiatives or global technology governance.

Scholarly Opinions

Realist Scholars

Realists emphasise AI as a strategic asset. Regulation is necessary to safeguard national security, prevent cyber warfare and counter information manipulation. AI governance is viewed as part of state power.

Liberal Scholars

Liberals highlight the need for transparent institutions, rule based governance and participatory consultation. They argue that regulation enhances trust, innovation and global cooperation.

Marxist Scholars

Marxists warn that AI may deepen capitalist exploitation, intensify surveillance capitalism and widen economic inequalities. Regulation must prevent concentration of data power in large corporations.

Feminist Scholars

Feminist thinkers highlight algorithmic discrimination, gendered datasets and risks of AI generated harms like deepfakes against women. Governance must prioritise inclusivity, fairness and protection of vulnerable groups.

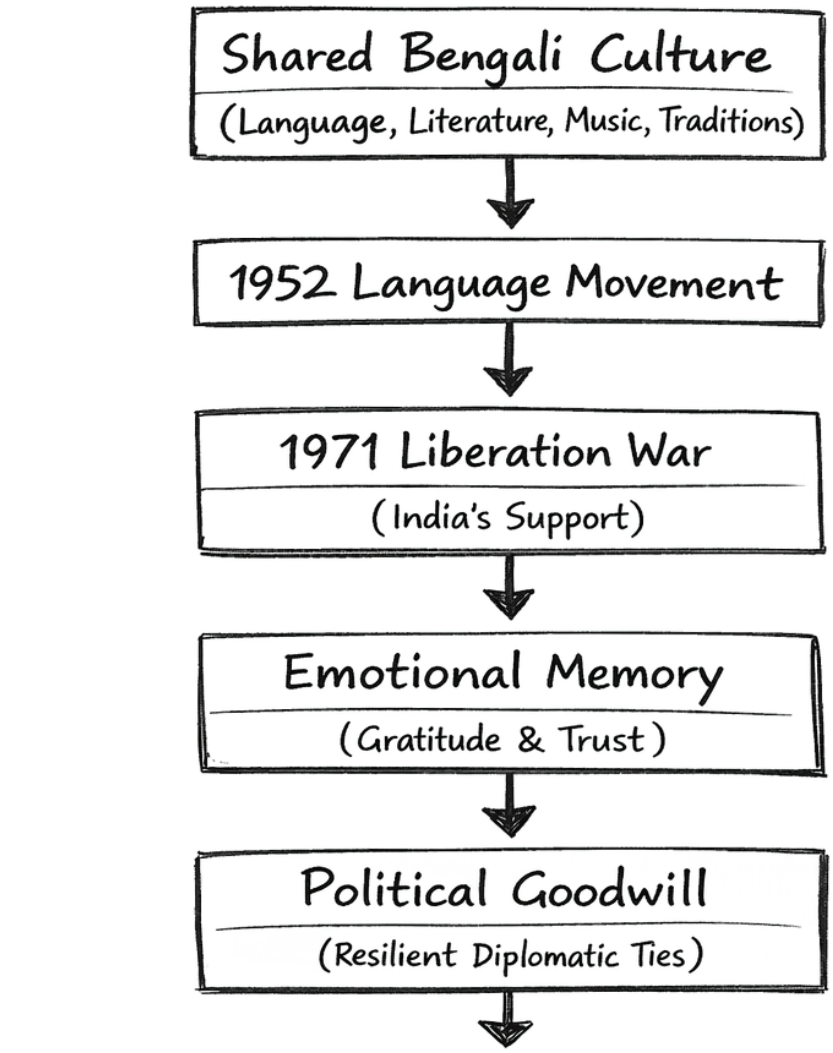
Postmodern Scholars

Postmodernists caution that AI mediated realities destabilise truth and certainty. Deepfakes, synthetic media and algorithmic narratives challenge democratic discourse. Regulation must address meaning, identity and truth production.

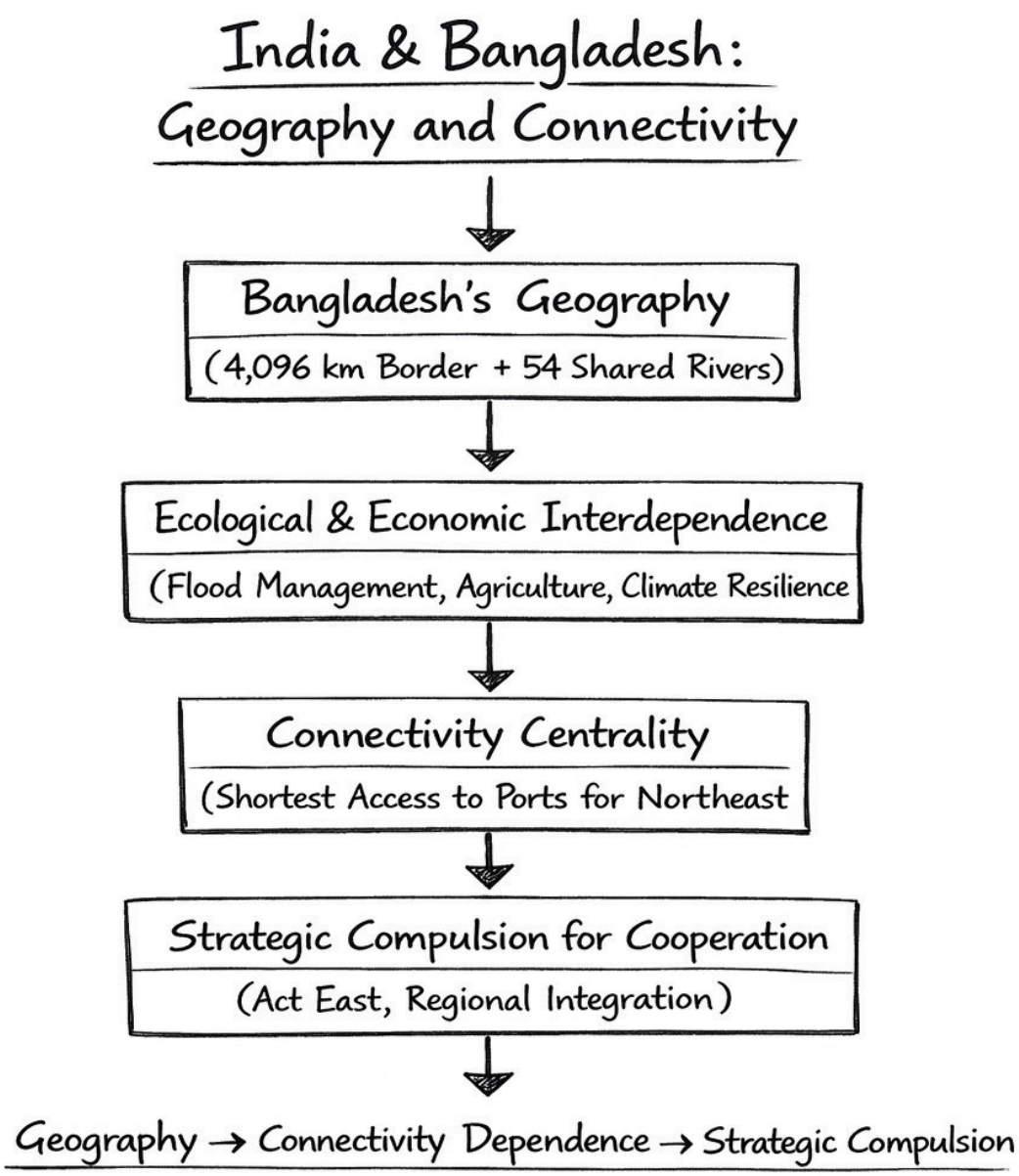
Bangladesh has once again entered a phase of serious political instability following the death of July Revolution leader Sharif Osman Hadi due to gunshot injuries. His death acted as a catalytic event, converting underlying political dissatisfaction into open mass mobilisation across Dhaka. What began as grief quickly transformed into protests targeting state institutions and media houses, reflecting anger not just at the incident but at the broader political order.

The unrest soon acquired a regional and diplomatic dimension. Demonstrations were reported near the Indian High Commission in Dhaka and Assistant High Commissions in Chittagong, Khulna, and Rajshahi.

India & Bangladesh: Shared History & Culture



Shared Suffering → Shared Memory → Political Goodwill



Any deterioration in relations directly raises India's logistical costs and security risks in the region.

Political Evolution and Recent Developments 2024–25

Political Transition

Exit of Sheikh Hasina → Interim Govt led by Muhamnad Yunus

Narrative Reset

Balanced signals + sensitive remarks revive old tensions

Diplomatic Recalibration

Leadership change → Narrative reset → Diplomatic recalibration

Resurfacing of Security Challenges

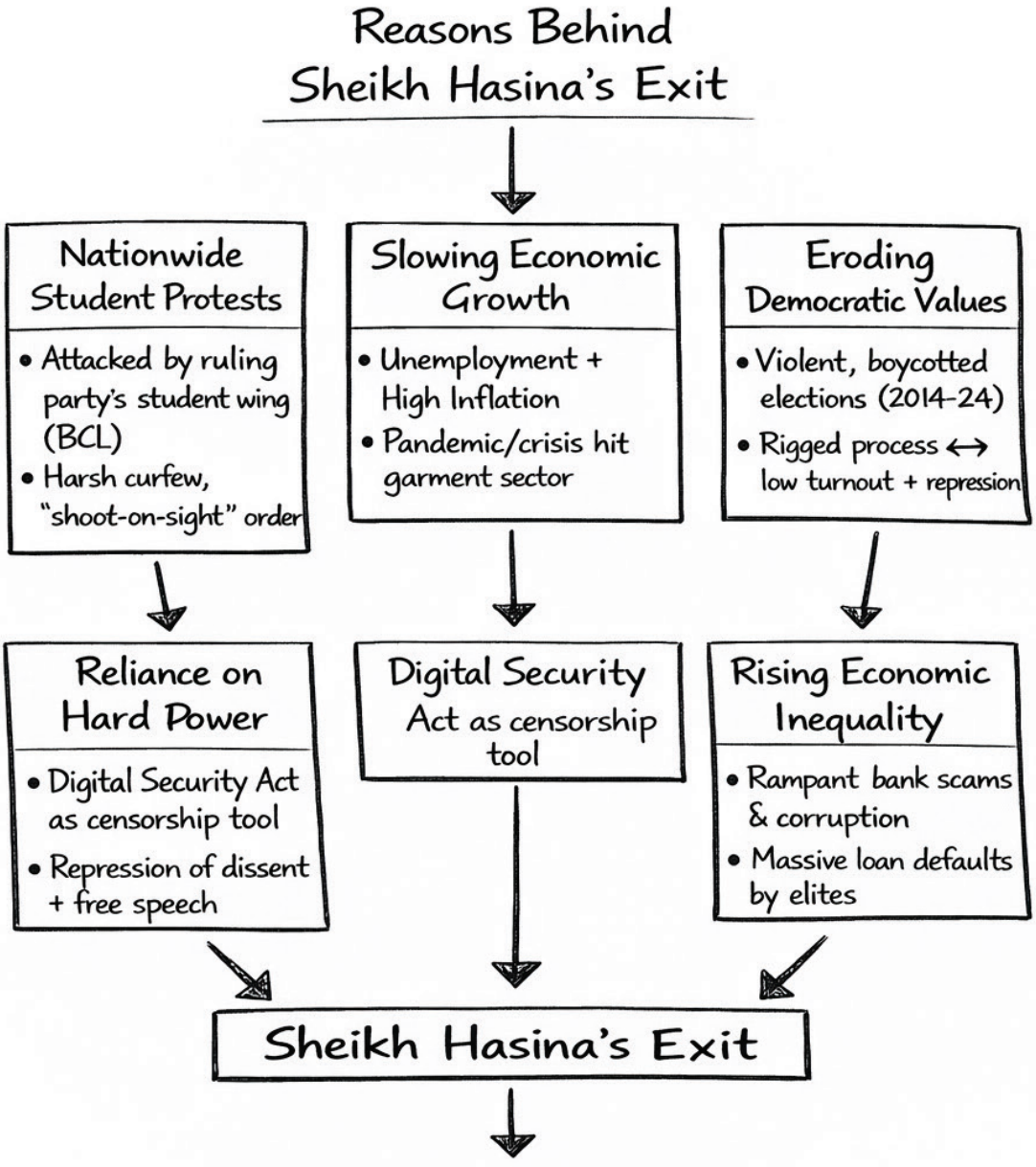
Internal Instability in Bangladesh → Extremist Revival Risk → Regional Security Stress

Internal instability in Bangladesh → Extremist revival risk → Regional security stress

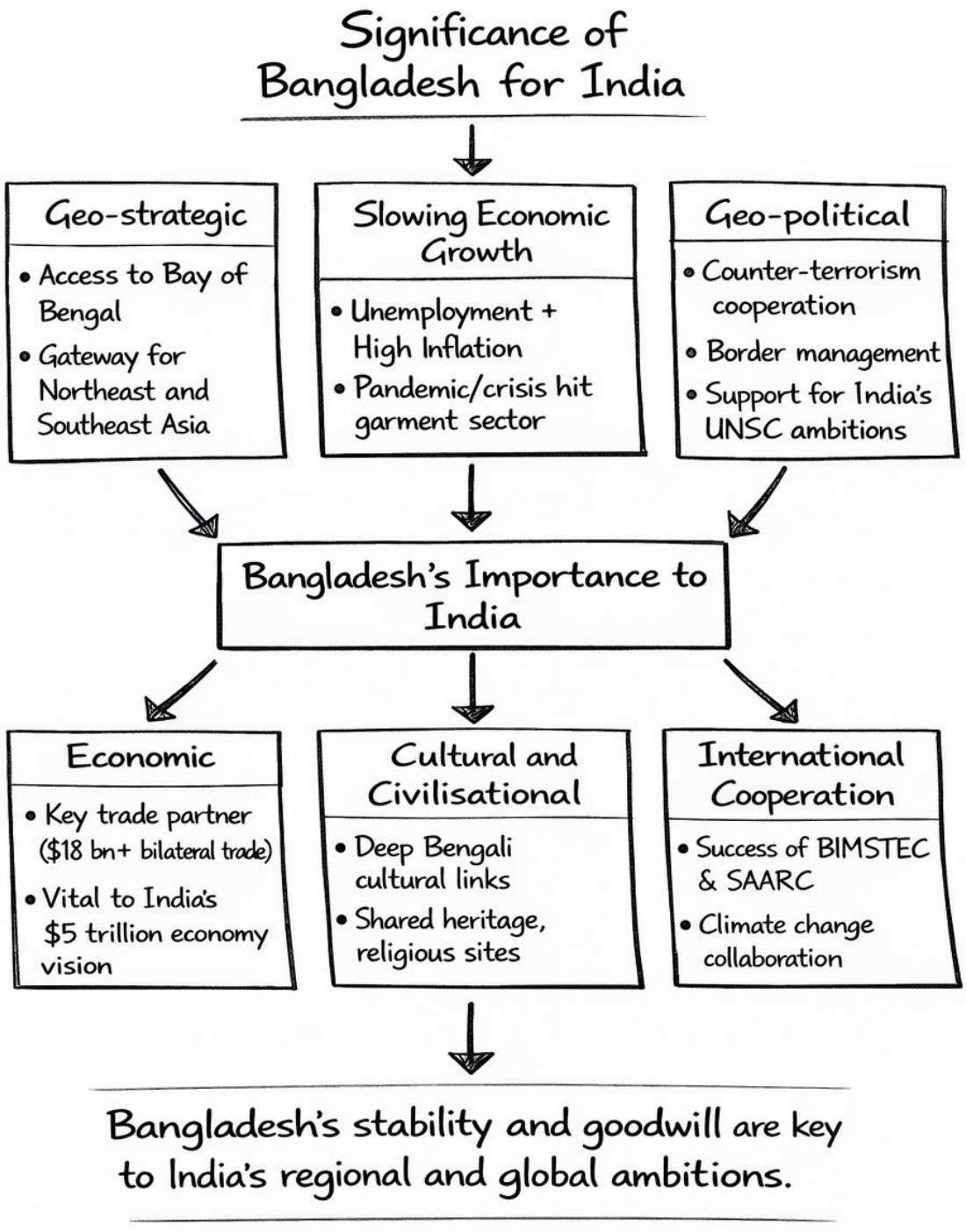
Threat to India's Northeast Connectivity

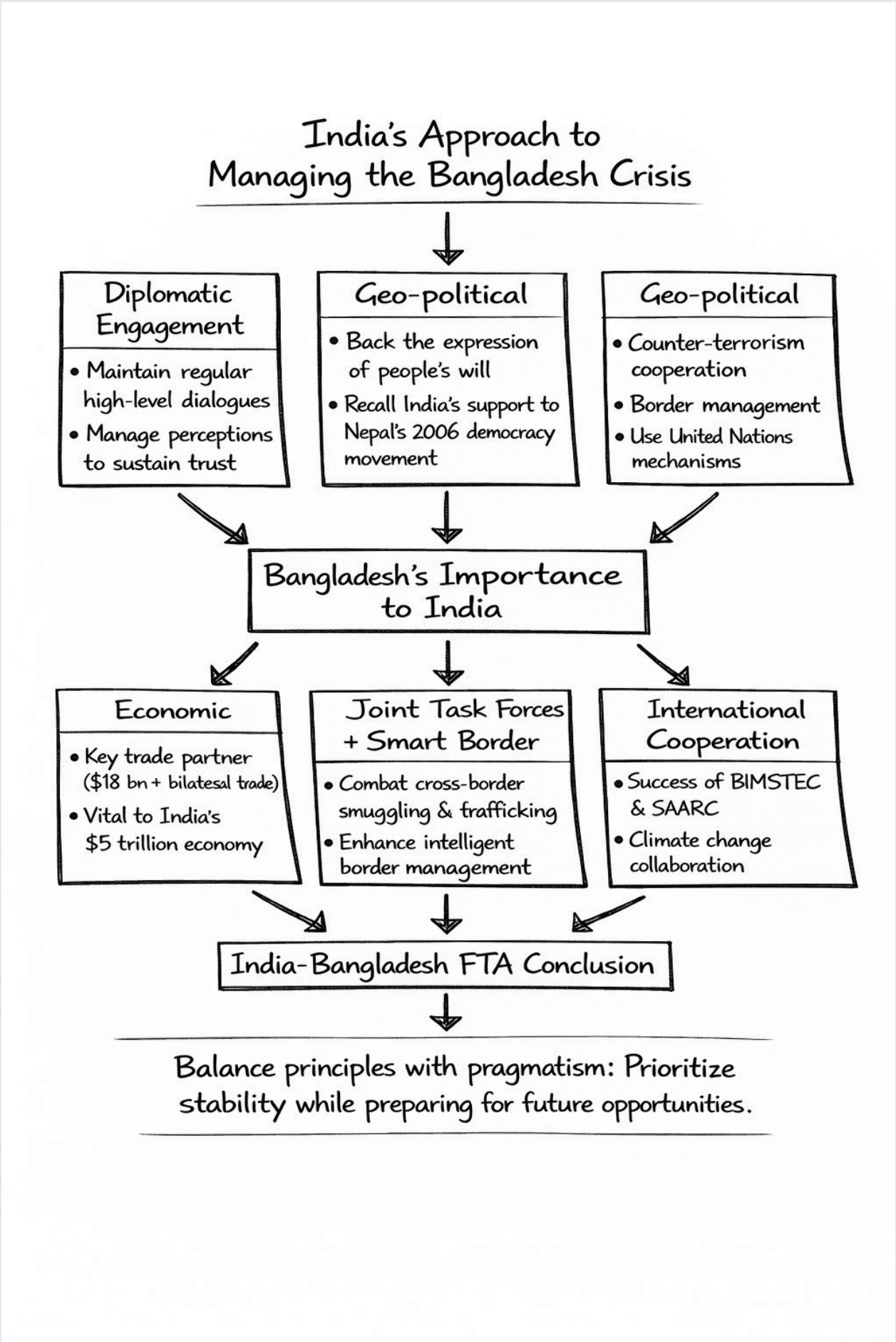
Transit denial → Strategic isolation → Internal instability

This makes stable ties with Dhaka a strategic necessity rather than a diplomatic preference.



Thus, Bangladesh's internal politics are no longer separable from India's national security calculus.


Significance of Bangladesh for India
Geo-strategic
• Access to Bay of Bengal
• Gateway for Northeast and Southeast Asia
Slowing Economic Growth
• Unemployment + High Inflation
• Pandemic/crisis hit garment sector
Geo-political
• Counter-terrorism cooperation
• Border management
• Support for India's UNSC ambitions
Bangladesh's Importance to India
Economic
• Key trade partner ($18 bn+ bilateral trade)
• Vital to India's $5 trillion economy vision
Cultural and Civilisational
• Deep Bengali cultural links
• Shared heritage, religious sites
International Cooperation
• Success of BIMSTEC & SAARC
• Climate change collaboration
Bangladesh's stability and goodwill are key to India's regional and global ambitions.


India's Approach to Managing the Bangladesh Crisis
Diplomatic Engagement
• Maintain regular high-level dialogues
• Manage perceptions to sustain trust
Geo-political
• Back the expression of people's will
• Recall India's support to Nepal's 2006 democracy movement
Geo-political
• Counter-terrorism cooperation
• Border management
• Use United Nations mechanisms
Bangladesh's Importance to India
Economic
• Key trade partner ($18 bn + bilatesal trade)
• Vital to India's $5 trillion economy
Joint Task Forces + Smart Border
• Combat cross-border smuggling & trafficking
• Enhance intelligent border management
International Cooperation
• Success of BIMSTEC & SAARC
• Climate change collaboration
India-Bangladesh FTA Conclusion
Balance principles with pragmatism: Prioritize stability while preparing for future opportunities.

Scholarly Opinions and Strategic Commentaries on India–Bangladesh Relations

- **Riva Ganguly Das**, former Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh, argues that India–Bangladesh relations are best understood as a case of "functional interdependence," where cooperation on connectivity, energy, and security has historically insulated bilateral ties from periodic political churn in Dhaka. She cautions, however, that over-identification with a single political leadership risks weakening India's leverage during regime transitions.
- **Harsh V. Pant** observes that Bangladesh represents one of India's most successful neighbourhood relationships, largely because New Delhi moved beyond a security-only lens to embrace trade, transit, and developmental partnerships. He notes that political instability in Dhaka tests this model, but abandoning engagement would only create strategic space for China and Pakistan.
- **Sreeradha Datta** highlights that domestic political changes in Bangladesh have repeatedly altered the tone, but not the structural importance, of India–Bangladesh relations. She argues that issues such as river water sharing, minority protection, and border management resurface during transitions, making sustained institutional dialogue more important than leader-centric diplomacy.
- **C. Raja Mohan** points out that Bangladesh's geography makes it "indispensable" for India's eastern strategy. According to him, any instability in Dhaka directly affects India's Northeast connectivity and Bay of Bengal strategy, forcing India to prioritise pragmatic engagement over normative posturing during political crises.
- **Amitabh Mattoo** stresses that India's credibility in Bangladesh depends on its ability to balance democratic values with strategic restraint. He argues that overt political signalling during internal crises can backfire, reinforcing perceptions of Indian interference and strengthening nationalist or anti-India narratives within Bangladesh.
- **Constantino Xavier** notes that China's expanding footprint in Bangladesh must be seen less as ideological alignment and more as infrastructure-driven opportunism. He argues that political instability in Dhaka lowers bargaining capacity, allowing Beijing to expand influence unless India responds with patient, long-term economic engagement rather than reactive diplomacy.
- **Veena Sikri**, former Indian diplomat, emphasises that people-to-people ties and historical memory of 1971 continue to act as stabilisers in India–Bangladesh relations. However, she warns that generational change and new political actors in Bangladesh may not share the same emotional connect, requiring India to recalibrate its narrative outreach.
- **Bangladeshi scholar Imtiaz Ahmed** argues that India's biggest challenge in Bangladesh is perception management. He notes that while India views itself as a benign partner, segments of Bangladeshi society interpret Indian actions through a prism of asymmetry and dominance, especially during periods of internal political stress.

How to Use These Scholarly Views in Answers

- Use **Riva Ganguly Das or Harsh Pant** while discussing continuity and resilience in India–Bangladesh relations
- Use **C. Raja Mohan or Constantino Xavier** when analysing strategic geography, China factor, and connectivity
- Use **Amitabh Mattoo** to balance democracy versus realism in India's response
- Use **Imtiaz Ahmed** to add a rare Bangladeshi perspective and score differentiation marks

You can write lines like: "Scholars such as C. Raja Mohan argue that Bangladesh's geography makes stability in Dhaka a strategic compulsion for India rather than a diplomatic choice."

Where to Use in UPSC

- **PSIR Paper II**
  - India–Bangladesh relations
  - Domestic politics and foreign policy linkage
  - China's role in South Asia
- **GS Paper II**
  - India and its neighbourhood
  - Foreign policy challenges
  - Protection of minorities abroad
- **Essay**

- India's neighbourhood diplomacy
- Stability versus democracy in South Asia

Where to Use in UPSC

GS Paper II

Use in questions related to:

- India and its Neighbourhood
- Role of Diaspora and People-to-People Ties
- Protection of Minorities and India's Constitutional Values

Best fit for questions like: "Discuss how political instability in neighbouring countries impacts India's internal security and foreign policy."

GS Paper III

Use selectively under:

- Internal Security
- Border Management
- Role of External State and Non-State Actors

Especially relevant while linking: Bangladesh instability → Northeast security → border crime → radicalisation

Essay Paper

Highly suitable for essays on:

- "India's neighbourhood policy in a changing regional order"
- "Democracy and stability in South Asia"
- "Soft power as a tool of foreign policy"

You can use: 1971 legacy → current instability → need for mature neighbourhood diplomacy

PSIR Optional Paper II

Direct application in sections on:

- India's Foreign Policy
- India and its Neighbours
- Regional Security in South Asia

Ideal for 15 or 20 marker answers asking about:

- India–Bangladesh relations
- Impact of regime change on bilateral ties
- Neighbourhood First policy challenges

PSIR Optional Paper I (Selective Use)

Use conceptually under:

- State behaviour and legitimacy
- Democracy, protest movements, and political authority
- Relationship between domestic politics and foreign policy

India–Central Asia Relations

Introduction

India's engagement with Central Asia has gained renewed strategic urgency as global alignments shift. The renewed focus on Tajikistan's Ayni airbase, growing digital and economic initiatives, and rising competition from China and Russia underline the need for India to deepen long term partnerships. As Central Asian states balance great power influence, India leverages historical, cultural and security linkages to remain a key regional actor.

Central Asia Region

1. **Geographical Location:** Situated in the heart of Eurasia, bordered by Russia in the north, China in the east, Afghanistan and Iran in the south, and the Caspian Sea in the west.

2. **Member States:** Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan. All five are landlocked with strategic value for connectivity and energy routes.

Evolution of India–Central Asia Relations

1. Ancient and Medieval Periods: Trade through the Silk Route, spread of Buddhism, Sufi connections and Central Asian origins of medieval rulers like the Mughals created deep civilisational ties.
2. Post 1991 Phase: After the dissolution of USSR, India established diplomatic ties with all five republics by 1992. Engagement remained limited in the 1990s but expanded rapidly from the 2000s.
3. Key Milestones
   - 2015: Prime Minister of India visited all five republics in a single trip, establishing political momentum
   - 2017: India became full member of SCO
   - 2020: India–Central Asia Business Council launched
   - 2022: First India–Central Asia Summit held

Recent Developments

External Affairs Minister hosted the 4th India–Central Asia Foreign Ministers Dialogue after a gap of more than three years.

Key Highlights

1. **Economic Cooperation:** Agreement to expand trade in pharmaceuticals, IT, textiles, agriculture and energy.
2. **Digital Partnership:** Launch of India–Central Asia Digital Partnership Forum to promote digital public infrastructure and innovation.
3. **Critical Minerals:** Support for joint exploration after the first Rare Earth Forum in 2024.
4. **Global Partnerships:** Central Asian states invited to join ISA, GBA, IBCA and CDRI.
5. **Support for India at UN:** All five states reaffirmed support for India's UNSC permanent membership bid.
6. **Security and Counterterrorism:** Condemnation of Pahalgam attack and reinforcement of the need to adopt CCIT.
7. **Connectivity and Stability:** Emphasis on INSTC, Chabahar Port access and cooperation for Afghanistan's stability.

Significance of Central Asia for India

1. Geostrategic Importance: Central Asia acts as India's extended neighbourhood and a gateway into Eurasia. Its strategic relevance increases in the context of China's BRI, Russia's influence and the changing Afghan situation.
2. Energy and Mineral Resources
   - Central Asia contains vast reserves of natural gas, uranium and rare earths.
   - Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are major uranium suppliers to India.
   - Turkmenistan holds the world's fourth largest natural gas reserves.
3. Security Cooperation: Shared concerns about terrorism, radicalisation and drug trafficking drive joint exercises such as DUSTLIK and KAZIND and cooperation in Tajikistan's Ayni Airbase.
4. Economic Potential: Bilateral trade reached one point seven billion dollars in 2023, though far below potential. Indian investment since 2010 totals about one point five billion dollars mainly in energy.
5. Cultural and Soft Power: India's Sufi connections, yoga, cinema, cuisine and Ayurveda enjoy popularity. Programmes like Project Mausam and youth exchanges strengthen people to people ties.

Major Initiatives to Boost Relations

1. Connectivity and Trade Corridors
   - International North South Transport Corridor to cut cargo costs
   - Chabahar Port to bypass Pakistan and access Central Asia
   - Ashgabat Agreement for multimodal transport cooperation
   - TAPI pipeline for Turkmen gas (stalled due to Afghan instability)
2. Economic and Technological Cooperation
   - Expansion of trade in pharmaceuticals and textiles
   - Sharing digital public infrastructure such as Aadhaar and UPI
   - Capacity building through ITEC scholarships and vocational programmes
3. Defence and Security Cooperation
   - Strategic Partnership Agreements with Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan
   - Joint military exercises including KAZIND twenty twenty four
   - Institutionalised NSA consultations on regional stability
4. Science, Innovation and Critical Minerals
   - Rare Earth Forum twenty twenty four for cooperative exploration
   - Expansion of space technology collaboration
5. Cultural Diplomacy
   - Youth delegations such as the Central Asian Youth Programme twenty twenty five
   - Strengthening cultural centres, Sanskrit chairs and tourism exchanges

Challenges in India–Central Asia Relations

1. **Geographical Disadvantages:** No direct land border; dependence on Iran, Russia and Afghanistan makes routes vulnerable.
2. **Low Trade Volume:** Bilateral trade at one point seven billion dollars remains minimal compared to China's one hundred billion dollar trade with the region.
3. **Growing Chinese Dominance:** BRI investments and rapid infrastructure creation give China a strategic edge.
4. **Security Problems from Afghanistan:** Taliban rule has intensified terrorism, drug trafficking and regional instability.
5. **Political and Bureaucratic Barriers:** Closed political systems, opaque regulations and language issues limit Indian business.

6. **Limited People to People Linkages:** Tourism, education and cultural exchanges remain underdeveloped.
7. **Banking and Financial Constraints:** Lack of direct banking channels hampers payments, trade financing and remittances.

Way Forward

1. **Enhance Connectivity:** Operationalise INSTC fully, expand multimodal corridors, and integrate customs digitisation.
2. **Secure Energy and Minerals:** Revive TAPI discussions when feasible, pursue new uranium supply agreements and scale rare earth cooperation.
3. **Strengthen Trade and Finance:** Promote rupee settlement mechanisms, digital payments and B2B collaboration through ICABC.
4. **Deepen Digital Cooperation:** Expand use of India Stack, pilot digital governance and fintech projects.
5. **Develop Human Capital:** Increase ITEC scholarships, medical training and joint university programmes.
6. **Enhance Regional Security Engagement:** Expand counterterrorism training, cyber cooperation and SCO based coordination.
7. **Strengthen Cultural and Strategic Relations:** Promote cultural festivals, film diplomacy and tourism while expanding cooperation in IT, health, and renewable energy.

Quote

"Central Asia is the core of Eurasia and the fulcrum on which the future of Asian geopolitics can balance."

– Zbigniew Brzezinski

Where to Use

- **GS Paper 2:** India's neighbourhood first policy, bilateral relations, SCO
- **GS Paper 3:** Energy security, internal security, terrorism
- **PSIR Paper 2:** Regional cooperation, Eurasian geopolitics
- **Interview:** Tajikistan Ayni airbase, INSTC, China's BRI

Scholarly Opinions

Realist Scholars

Zbigniew Brzezinski highlighted the geostrategic centrality of Eurasia and argued that states controlling Central Asia influence global power balances. This supports India's pursuit of strategic access and influence in the region.

Liberal Scholars

Joseph Nye notes that soft power and economic interdependence shape modern diplomacy. India's cultural outreach, education exchanges and digital cooperation align with this liberal approach.

Marxist Scholars

Amiya Kumar Bagchi argues that global capitalism creates unequal power structures. China's economic dominance in Central Asia illustrates this imbalance, limiting India's manoeuvrability.

Feminist Scholars

Amrita Basu emphasises inclusion and people centric engagement. India's limited people to people contact and low educational links show a gap that hinders deeper social connectivity.

Postmodern Scholars

Michel Foucault's ideas on knowledge and power illuminate how states shape narratives of influence. China's BRI discourse and Russia's historical legacy overshadow India's narrative presence in Central Asia, requiring stronger cultural and informational diplomacy.

Indian Government and Politics (IGP)

Labour Codes 2025

Introduction

The Government of India has notified that all four Labour Codes, namely the Code on Wages 2019, Industrial Relations Code 2020, Code on Social Security 2020, and Occupational Safety Health and Working Conditions Code 2020, will come into force from 21 November 2025. These Codes subsume and consolidate twenty nine existing labour laws.

The reform aims to modernise labour governance, expand social security, improve ease of doing business, and create a future ready workforce aligned with the vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat.

Labour and Constitutional Rights in India

1. Article 19 clause 1 subclause c provides the right to form associations or unions.
2. Article 23 prohibits forced labour.
3. Article 24 prohibits child labour in hazardous occupations for children below fourteen years.
4. Article 38 clause 1 directs the State to promote people's welfare.
5. Article 38 clause 2 seeks to reduce inequalities of income and wealth.
6. Article 43A provides for worker participation in management.

Overview of Labour Codes

Code on Wages 2019

Subsume: Payment of Wages Act 1936, Minimum Wages Act 1948, Payment of Bonus Act 1965, Equal Remuneration Act 1976.

Key Provisions:

1. Uniform definition of wages.

2. Right to minimum wage for all workers in all sectors.
3. Timely payment of wages.
4. Equal remuneration for men and women for same or similar work.

Industrial Relations Code 2020

Subsume: Trade Unions Act 1926, Industrial Employment Standing Orders Act 1946, Industrial Disputes Act 1947.

Key Provisions:

1. Simplified trade union registration and recognition.
2. Establishment of negotiation unions or councils.
3. Mandatory sixty day strike notice for public utility services.
4. Grievance redressal mechanisms.
5. Retrenchment or closure threshold raised from one hundred to three hundred workers.
6. Fixed term employment introduced.

3. Code on Social Security 2020

Subsume: EPF Act 1952, ESI Act 1948, Maternity Benefit Act 1961, Payment of Gratuity Act 1972, Unorganised Workers Social Security Act 2008.

Key Provisions:

1. Coverage expanded to gig workers and platform workers.
2. Creation of social security fund for unorganised sector.
3. Maternity benefits and gratuity extended to more categories.
4. Universal registration through Aadhaar linked UAN.

4. OSHWC Code 2020

Subsume: Factories Act 1948, Mines Act 1952, Contract Labour Act 1970, Inter State Migrant Workmen Act 1979.

Key Provisions:

1. Annual health check ups.
2. Safety and welfare standards.
3. Single licence for contractors.
4. Higher thresholds for applicability.
5. Welfare responsibilities shifted to principal employer.

Before vs After Labour Codes

1. Formalisation of Employment
   - Pre: No mandatory appointment letters.
   - Post: Written appointment letters compulsory for all workers.
2. Social Security
   - Pre: Limited and fragmented.
   - Post: PF, ESIC, insurance extended to all, including gig workers.
3. Minimum Wages
   - Pre: Only for scheduled industries.
   - Post: Applicable to all workers.
4. Preventive Healthcare
   - Pre: No mandate.
   - Post: Mandatory annual health check ups.

5. Timely Wages
   - Pre: Weak enforcement.
   - Post: Strict mandate for timely wage payment.
6. Women Workforce Participation
   - Pre: Restrictions on night shifts and certain occupations.
   - Post: Women allowed in all occupations with safety.
7. ESIC Coverage
   - Pre: Area based coverage.
   - Post: Pan India ESIC including one worker in hazardous units.
8. Compliance Burden
   - Pre: Many licences and returns.
   - Post: Single licence and unified return.

Benefits to Major Categories of Workers

Fixed Term Employees

1. All benefits similar to permanent workers.
2. Gratuity eligibility after one year.
3. Direct hiring encouraged.

Gig and Platform Workers

1. First ever legal recognition.
2. Aggregators must contribute one to two percent of turnover.
3. Aadhaar linked UAN ensures portability.

Contract Workers

1. Fixed term contracts with social security.
2. Gratuity after one year.
3. Principal employer responsible for welfare.

Women Workers

1. Equal pay for equal work.
2. Night shift allowed with consent.
3. Mandatory representation on committees.
4. Expanded family definition.

Youth Workers

1. Guaranteed minimum wage.
2. Formal employment through appointment letters.
3. Paid leave mandated.

MSME Workers

1. All MSME workers included under social security.
2. Mandatory welfare facilities.
3. Double overtime.

Beedi and Cigar Workers

1. Minimum wages fixed.
2. Overtime voluntary and double rate.
3. Bonus after thirty days of work.

Plantation Workers

1. Coverage under OSHWC and Social Security Codes.
2. Safety training for chemical handling.
3. Full ESIC benefits.

Audio Visual and Digital Media Workers

1. Appointment letters mandatory.
2. Overtime double pay.
3. Guaranteed social security.

Mine Workers

1. Commuting accidents treated as employment related.
2. Uniform safety standards.
3. Free annual check ups.

Hazardous Industry Workers

1. Safety committees mandatory.
2. Women allowed with safeguards.
3. Annual check ups.

Textile Workers

1. Migrant workers covered fully.
2. Overtime double rate.
3. PDS portability assured.

IT and ITES Workers

1. Salary to be released by seventh of every month.
2. Equal pay and night shift options for women.
3. Dispute resolution strengthened.

Dock Workers

1. Formal recognition and PF, pension, insurance.
2. Annual check ups.
3. Better sanitation.

Export Sector Workers

1. FTEs get full social security.
2. Annual leave after one hundred eighty days.
3. Women allowed night work with safety.

Challenges With the New Labour Codes

1. **Uneven implementation across States**
   - Labour is in the Concurrent List, so both Union and States must frame their own rules.

- By mid-2025, more than thirty States and Union Territories had notified draft rules, but several others such as West Bengal and Meghalaya had not progressed. This creates a fragmented labour environment where a worker in Karnataka may enjoy higher protections, while an identical worker in Assam may not have comparable safeguards. The absence of uniformity also confuses employers operating in multiple States and complicates compliance.

2. **Excessive delegation of powers to the executive**
   - Many substantive aspects such as wage definition components, retrenchment thresholds, and safety standards are left to delegated rules rather than being clearly defined in the Codes themselves.
   - This results in reduced parliamentary oversight and increases discretionary power in the hands of bureaucratic authorities. The Standing Committee on Labour in 2023 explicitly warned that such excessive delegation may lead to arbitrary notifications and inconsistent application across sectors.
3. **Inadequate protection for gig and informal workers**
   - Although the Codes extend formal recognition to more than thirty crore unorganised workers through the e-Shram portal, actual benefits remain unclear.
   - State efforts exist but are uneven. For example, Karnataka's 2025 legislation mandates aggregator contributions to a welfare fund. Maharashtra is mapping ten lakh gig workers for targeted benefits. Telangana's 2023 study found gig workers working more than ten hour shifts earning around twenty thousand per month, often without insurance or accident safeguards.
   - The Union Budget 2025–26 extended PM-JAY coverage to gig workers, yet a comprehensive national welfare architecture remains missing.
4. **Weakening of collective bargaining rights**
   - The Industrial Relations Code's requirement of at least seventy five percent approval for calling a strike makes mobilisation nearly impossible for large enterprises.
   - In 2024, major trade unions organised protests in Delhi, Lucknow and Kolkata, labelling this provision anti-worker and arguing that it violates the spirit of Article 19 clause 1 subclause c. Unions also fear that negotiation councils dominated by employers may dilute worker representation.
5. **Reduced job security due to higher retrenchment thresholds**
   - Raising the threshold for prior government permission for layoffs, retrenchment or closure from one hundred to three hundred workers gives employers more flexibility but directly reduces worker protection.
   - In Gurugram's auto-component belt, several medium-sized firms in 2024 reduced workforce strength without seeking approval, which would not have been possible under older laws. This shift tilts the balance toward ease of doing business over job security.
6. **Precarious fixed-term contracts and risk of "permanent temporariness"**
   - While fixed-term employment expands formalisation, many employers use repetitive short-term contracts to deny long-term benefits.
   - In 2024, the Supreme Court criticised exploitative contract renewals and held that repeated re-engagements without permanency constitute unfair labour practice.
   - Telangana High Court in 2025 directed regularisation of long-serving contractual staff, calling the system exploitative and inconsistent with dignity of labour.
7. **Broad exemptions diluting labour protections**
   - Governments can exempt industries in the "public interest," but the phrase remains undefined.
   - This allows exemptions even for commercial reasons unrelated to public welfare, potentially enabling factories to bypass norms on wages, health and safety, and working hours.
   - Without clear criteria, such exemptions may be misused for political or economic expediency.
8. **Low awareness and weak compliance capacity, especially among MSMEs**
   - A 2024 CII survey showed only forty six percent of small enterprises were fully aware of the new Codes.
   - MSMEs often struggle with digital filings, compliance fees and portal-based registrations.

- Informal sector workers also lack awareness about e-Shram registrations, social security coverage, or grievance mechanisms.
- This widens the protection gap between large formal firms and small enterprises that employ the majority of India's workforce.

Way Forward

1. **Uniform implementation across States**
   - The Union should create an inter-state coordination mechanism similar to a GST Council model for labour.
   - This council could harmonise minimum wages, safety rules, social security norms and enforcement mechanisms.
   - Such institutional architecture will reduce regulatory confusion, ensure portability of benefits, and protect migrant workers.
2. **Strengthening legislative clarity**
   - Critical elements like definitions of wages, conditions for retrenchment, exemption limits, overtime rules and occupations hazardous for women should be explicitly written into the Codes.
   - Clear statutory language prevents arbitrary use of delegated powers and ensures uniformity across the country.
3. **Comprehensive social security for gig and informal workers**
   - A national Gig and Platform Workers Policy is needed that mandates aggregator contributions, ensures accident insurance, pension portability, and health coverage through PM-JAY.
   - Integration of e-Shram with DBT systems will ensure benefits reach workers directly, irrespective of state migration.
4. **Reviving collective bargaining rights**
   - Reducing the seventy five percent strike approval requirement to fifty one percent will make collective action feasible while maintaining industrial discipline.
   - Strengthening tripartite mechanisms involving the government, employers, and workers will help resolve disputes amicably and reduce strikes or lockouts.
5. **Balancing employer flexibility with worker security**
   - Employers should get flexibility for hiring in cyclical industries, but this must be balanced with mandatory unemployment insurance and reskilling programs for retrenched workers.
   - This aligns with global best practices in countries like Germany and South Korea, where labour market transitions are supported through state and employer contributions.
6. **Regulating fixed term contracts**
   - Introduce a cap on how many times an employer can renew a fixed term contract, such as allowing only two or three renewals.
   - Beyond that, workers must be given permanency or enhanced social security rights such as higher gratuity or mandatory pension.
7. **Restricting the scope of exemptions**
   - The phrase "public interest" must be defined narrowly.
   - Exemptions should be time bound, criteria based, transparent, and subject to limited judicial or legislative review.
   - This ensures that exemptions are not misused to circumvent labour rights.
8. **Improving awareness and compliance**
   - Launch multilingual campaigns for both workers and employers.
   - Establish State level Labour Help Desks, digital facilitation centres for MSMEs, and mobile grievance units for informal workers.
   - Simplified compliance forms, WhatsApp based filing systems, and district level labour literacy drives can significantly improve awareness.

Scholarly Opinions

Realist Scholars

Realists argue that labour flexibility is essential for competitiveness in the global economy. They highlight that the Codes support economic growth by improving ease of doing business, attracting investment and reducing compliance burdens.

Liberal Scholars

Liberals appreciate the expansion of social security, formalisation of employment, and uniform wages. However, they caution that strong institutions and transparent rule making are necessary to ensure worker rights are not diluted.

Marxist Scholars

Marxist thinkers critique the Codes as pro capitalist reforms that weaken unions, increase managerial power, and increase precarity through fixed term contracts and easier retrenchment. They emphasise that labour should not be treated merely as a factor of production.

Feminist Scholars

Feminist scholars appreciate expanded opportunities for women, including night shifts and equal pay provisions. They argue that workplace safety, grievance redressal and intersectional vulnerabilities require stronger implementation mechanisms.

Postmodern Scholars

Postmodern perspectives focus on gig work, algorithmic management and fragmentation of labour identities. They emphasise the need for adaptive regulation addressing digital precarity, platform surveillance and invisibilised labour.

Quote

"Labour is the superior of capital and deserves much the higher consideration."

This quote strengthens answers on labour dignity, social security and the need for worker centric reforms.

Where to Use

1. **GS Paper 2:** Social justice, labour rights, governance reforms.
2. **GS Paper 3:** Economic reforms, industrial growth, gig economy.
3. **Essay Paper:** Future of work, social security, labour welfare.
4. **PSIR:** State market relations, welfare state, globalisation and labour.
5. **Interview:** Gig workers, labour reforms, employment policy.

Introduction

Regional movements in India have often escalated into separatist tendencies, as seen in the Bodoland movement. While regionalism can be a democratic expression of identity and aspiration, its extreme forms pose serious internal security challenges.

What is Regionalism?

1. **Definition:** Regionalism refers to loyalty, identity, and collective consciousness rooted in a specific geographical region based on shared language, culture, history, and socio-economic interests.
2. **Positive Regionalism:** Strengthens unity and social cohesion, protects regional culture, and promotes development by highlighting local needs.
3. **Negative Regionalism:** Creates excessive regional loyalty over national identity, leading to division, conflict, and threats to internal security.

History of Regional Movements in India

1. **Colonial Roots:** British policies created administrative and economic disparities between regions, sowing seeds of regional consciousness.
2. **Southern Regional Movements:** The Dravida movement in 1940s Tamil Nadu demanded an independent Dravida Nadu, shaping future linguistic politics.
3. **Potti Sriramulu's Fast (1954):** Triggered mass regional mobilization and led to the creation of Andhra Pradesh.
4. **States Reorganisation Act, 1956:** Based on Fazal Ali Commission's report, reorganised states on linguistic lines to accommodate regional aspirations.
5. **Northeast Insurgencies:** Ethnic-tribal insurgencies in 1970s–80s led to statehood for Manipur, Tripura, Meghalaya (1971), and later Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh (1986).
6. **21st Century Regional Aspirations:** Regional disparity movements resulted in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand (2000) and Telangana (2014).

Forms of Regionalism in India

1. **Cultural Regionalism:** Driven by efforts to preserve linguistic-cultural identity. Example: Telangana's demand rooted in its distinct cultural ethos.
2. **Economic Regionalism:** Arises from perceived developmental neglect. Bihar's division demands reflect such grievances.
3. **Political Regionalism:** Regional parties like DMK, Akali Dal, and Shiv Sena mobilize regional consciousness for political gains.
4. **Secessionist Regionalism:** Extreme form seeking independence. Seen in Kashmir conflict, Khalistan movement, and Northeast insurgencies.

Factors Behind Regionalism in India

1. **Linguistic and Cultural Identity:** Strong language-based consciousness fuels sentiments, as seen in Tamil Nadu.
2. **Ethnocentrism and Insider–Outsider Divide:** Marathi Manoos sentiment in Maharashtra reflects exclusionary tendencies.
3. **Tribal Identity:** Distinct culture, land issues and marginalization led to Jharkhand, Bodoland, and Gorkhaland movements.
4. **Unequal Resource Distribution:** Perceived neglect fuels demands like Darjeeling's (GNLF) agitation.
5. **Developmental & Administrative Discontent:** Lack of political representation and regional underdevelopment drove Telangana's formation.

Impact of Regionalism on Internal Security

1. **Rise of Separatist Movements:** Movements such as Kashmir, Khalistan, and Greater Nagalim threaten territorial integrity.
2. **Intensification of Insurgencies:** Northeast insurgencies and tribal rebellions in central India show how regional grievances convert into armed struggle.
3. **Ethnic and Communal Conflicts:** Bodo–non-Bodo, Meitei–Kuki, and Naga border conflicts destabilize internal peace.
4. **Migration-related Violence:** "Sons of soil" movements fuel riots and displacements, seen in Maharashtra and Assam.
5. **Law and Order Breakdown:** Frequent blockades (e.g., Manipur) and violent agitations strain security forces and governance.
6. **Political Radicalization:** Youth mobilised through regional identity narratives often become susceptible to extremist recruitment.
7. **Strain on Federal Relations:** Water-sharing disputes like Cauvery intensify inter-state tensions and require central intervention.
8. **Economic Security Risks:** Regional unrest discourages investment and slows development, creating fertile ground for extremism.

Positive and Negative Impacts of Regionalism

Positive Impact	Negative Impact
Strengthens federalism and state autonomy	Encourages secessionism and threatens national unity
Enhances political representation	Fuels identity-based discrimination
Protects cultural diversity	Leads to political fragmentation
Democratic outlet for grievances	Regional priorities override national interest

Government Measures to Manage Regionalism

Constitutional Measures

1. **Federal Structure** with powers distributed across Centre and States.
2. **Special Provisions under Article 371 Series** for Nagaland, Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh.
3. **Fifth and Sixth Schedules** providing autonomy to tribal regions.

4. **Inter-State Council** to promote dialogue.

Legal & Institutional Measures

1. **States Reorganisation Act (1956)**
2. **Zonal Councils** for cooperative conflict resolution.
3. **NHRC and Minority Commissions** for rights protection.

Policy Measures

1. **National Integration Council (1961)**
2. **Industrial policy incentives** for backward regions
3. **Finance Commission grants** for reducing regional disparity.

Developmental Measures

1. **Aspirational Districts Programme**
2. **North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme**
3. **Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF)**
4. Special packages for Bihar, Bundelkhand, Vidarbha.

Security & Governance Measures

1. **Peace Accords**: Mizo Accord (1986), Bodo Accords, Naga Framework Agreement.
2. **Strengthening local governance** through PRIs and Autonomous Councils.

Social & Cultural Measures

1. Promotion of **Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat**
2. Recognition of **22 Scheduled Languages**
3. Cultural exchange and national service programmes.

Way Forward

1. **Foster National Unity** through education and cultural integration.
2. **Strengthen Cooperative & Competitive Federalism** to address regional aspirations.
3. **Ensure Inclusive Development** targeting backward regions.
4. **Functional Autonomy**: Centre should intervene only when essential.
5. **Deepen Local Governance** for grievance redressal at grassroots.
6. **Balanced Approach**: Address genuine demands but curb extremist elements.

Conclusion

Regionalism in India is a dual-force phenomenon. When directed positively, it strengthens democracy, cultural identity, and federalism. When misused or allowed to escalate, it triggers separatism, insurgencies, and internal security threats. India must balance accommodation of regional aspirations with firm national integrity mechanisms to ensure unity in diversity.

Scholarly Opinions

Realist Scholars

- See regionalism as a security challenge that can weaken the state and its monopoly over coercive power.
- Example: Northeastern insurgencies viewed as threats to sovereignty.

Liberal Scholars

- Emphasize negotiation, decentralisation, and institutional responses like federalism and dialogue.
- Regionalism is a democratic expression needing accommodation.

Marxist Scholars

- Argue regionalism stems from economic inequality and uneven development caused by capitalist exploitation.
- Solution lies in equitable resource distribution.

Feminist Scholars

- Highlight how regional conflicts disproportionately affect women through displacement, violence, and loss of livelihoods.
- Stress gender-sensitive rehabilitation.

Postmodern Scholars

- View regional identity as fluid and socially constructed.
- Believe state boundaries should accommodate diverse cultural narratives rather than enforce singular nationalism.

Quote to Use

"India's unity has always grown through accommodation, not assimilation." **— Granville Austin**

Where to Use This?

- **GS2:** Federalism, Centre–State relations
- **GS3:** Internal Security, Insurgency, Border Management
- **PSIR Paper1:** Indian Politics, State Politics, Secessionism
- **Essay:** Diversity, Regionalism, National Integration
- **Interview:** Governance, conflict resolution, identity politics

National Human Rights Commission

Introduction

The appointment of former Supreme Court judge Justice V Ramasubramanian as Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission has revived debate over the transparency and credibility of NHRC appointments. The principal opposition party

issued a dissent note calling the selection process a predetermined exercise driven by numerical majority rather than consensus. This controversy has reopened larger questions regarding the independence, effectiveness and structural limitations of NHRC.

What is NHRC and its Mandate

Composition

- **Chairperson**
  - Retired Chief Justice of India or Judge of the Supreme Court
- **Members**
  - One member who is or has been a Judge of the Supreme Court
  - One member who is or has been Chief Justice of a High Court
  - Three members having knowledge and experience in human rights, including one woman
- **Appointment Authority**
  - President of India on recommendation of a six member committee consisting of:
  - Prime Minister (chair), Speaker of Lok Sabha, Deputy Chairperson of Rajya Sabha, Leaders of Opposition in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, Union Home Minister
- **Tenure**
  - Three years or till seventy years of age, whichever is earlier
  - Eligible for reappointment

Mandate

1. **Investigation of Human Rights Violations:** NHRC investigates complaints or takes suo moto cognisance of violations or negligence by public servants.
2. **Protection and Preventive Oversight:** Monitors conditions of prisons, mental health institutions and detention centres and recommends reforms.
3. **Judicial Intervention:** May intervene in court proceedings related to human rights violations with court approval.
4. **Review of Safeguards:** Examines constitutional and legal safeguards and recommends improvements.
5. **Awareness and Education:** Promotes human rights literacy through publications, seminars and public outreach.

Provisions for Human Rights Protection in India

1. **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** principles form the basis of Indian human rights commitments.
2. **Articles fourteen to eighteen** guarantee equality and prohibit discrimination.
3. **Articles nineteen to twenty two** guarantee freedoms including speech, assembly, movement and personal liberty.
4. **Articles twenty three and twenty four** prohibit trafficking, forced labour and child labour.
5. **Judicial expansion of Article twenty one** in Bandhua Mukti Morcha case interpreted right to life as right to live with dignity.

Successes of NHRC

1. Major interventions in discrimination faced by HIV positive patients and ensuring non denial of services.
2. Intervention in child abuse cases such as Nithari killings in Noida.
3. Suo moto cognisance of Tuticorin police firing deaths during Anti Sterlite protest.
4. Intervention after killing of journalist Shujaat Bukhari following civil society appeals.

These examples show NHRC's relevance despite structural constraints.

Failures and Continuing Human Rights Challenges

1. Custodial Torture and Extrajudicial Killings**:** Cases like Sathankulam custodial deaths show NHRC lacks deterrent power.

2. Arbitrary Arrests and Detentions: Both NHRC and SHRC have weak enforcement ability to prevent police excesses.
3. Gender Based Violence: Persistent failures in addressing violence against women, children and marginalised communities.
4. Manual Scavenging: Continues despite statutory prohibitions. More than twenty six lakh insanitary latrines reported in Census twenty eleven.
5. **Loss of GANHRI A Status:** NHRC lost its A status for two consecutive years indicating global concerns over independence and effectiveness.

Structural Limitations and Challenges

1. NHRC's **recommendatory status** prevents enforceability of decisions.
2. Lack of **independent investigative staff** forces reliance on police agencies.
3. **One year limitation** bars investigation of delayed complaints.
4. Cannot investigate **armed forces violations**, leading to partial justice.
5. Seen as **post retirement destination** for judges and bureaucrats, limiting diversity.
6. **Underfunding and understaffing** reduce reach and efficiency.

Way Forward

1. **Make recommendations enforceable** with statutory backing for compliance.
2. **Reform membership** by including civil society experts, activists and marginalised community representatives.
3. **Independent cadre of investigators** directly recruited by NHRC rather than deputed police staff.
4. Develop a **scientifically grounded human rights framework** customised for India's social realities.
5. Ensure **transparent and consultative appointment mechanisms** to restore credibility.

Quote

"Human rights are not a luxury for the good times but the first obligation of governance." **– Justice J S Verma**

Where to Use

- **GS 2:** governance, statutory bodies, human rights
- **GS 3:** internal security and police reforms
- **PSIR Paper 1:** Indian governance structures, role of NHRC
- **Essay:** democracy, justice, social equity
- **Interview:** questions on custodial deaths, civil liberties, NHRC reforms

Scholarly Opinions

Realist Scholars

Thomas Hobbes emphasised that without strong institutions violence and abuse of power become natural outcomes. NHRC's weak enforcement power reflects this institutional limitation. Sudha Pai notes that coercive apparatus in India often escapes accountability.

Liberal Scholars

John Locke stressed rule of law and protection of natural rights. Amartya Sen argues that institutions must expand capabilities and freedoms which NHRC has inconsistently delivered.

Marxist Scholars

Karl Marx viewed state institutions as instruments of dominant classes. K G Kannabiran's critique reflects this: NHRC cannot effectively confront custodial torture because it lacks independence from state power.

Feminist Scholars

Nivedita Menon argues that human rights institutions must centre gendered experiences of violence and exclusion. NHRC's limited success in addressing gender based violence shows a structural blind spot.

Postmodern Scholars

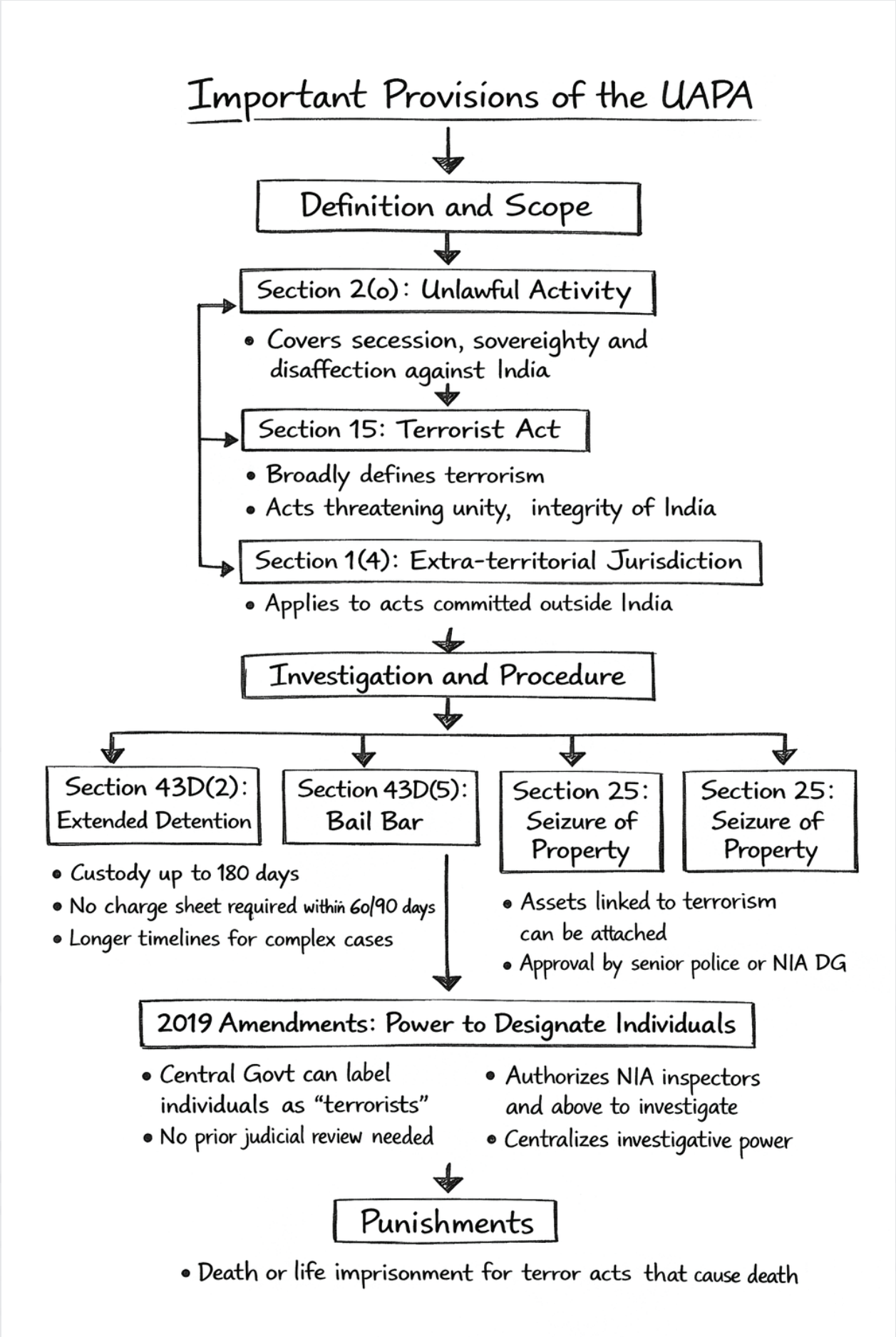
Michel Foucault's idea of state surveillance and power relations helps explain how violations persist despite formal bodies. NHRC's inability to check institutional violence reflects deeper power asymmetries.

Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA): Context and Evolution

Introduction

The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act is India's principal counter-terrorism legislation, first enacted in 1967 in the aftermath of the 16th Constitutional Amendment, which empowered the state to impose reasonable restrictions on fundamental rights in the interest of sovereignty and integrity of India.

- Over time, the law has undergone major amendments in 2004, 2008, 2012, and 2019, each expanding its scope, investigative powers, and punitive reach.
- **1967 focus on secession**
  - Post-2004 shift to terrorism
  - Post-2019 expansion to individuals
- This evolution reflects India's changing security environment, from secessionist movements to transnational terrorism and network-based radicalisation.


Important Provisions of the UAPA
Definition and Scope
Section 2(o): Unlawful Activity
• Covers secession, sovereighty and disaffection against India
Section 15: Terrorist Act
• Broadly defines terrorism
• Acts threatening unity, integrity of India
Section 1(4): Extra-territorial Jurisdiction
• Applies to acts committed outside India
Investigation and Procedure
Section 43D(2): Extended Detention
Section 43D(5): Bail Bar
Section 25: Seizure of Property
Section 25: Seizure of Property
• Custody up to 180 days
• No charge sheet required within 60/90 days
• Longer timelines for complex cases
• Assets linked to terrorism can be attached
• Approval by senior police or NIA DG
2019 Amendments: Power to Designate Individuals
• Central Govt can label individuals as "terrorists"
• No prior judicial review needed
• Authorizes NIA inspectors and above to investigate
• Centralizes investigative power
Punishments
• Death or life imprisonment for terror acts that cause death

Significance and Rationale of the UAPA

- **Preventing Secession** was the original rationale of the Act, targeting movements challenging India's territorial integrity, such as insurgencies in the Northeast and separatist campaigns.
- **Pre-emptive Security Logic** distinguishes UAPA from ordinary criminal law.
  - **IPC addresses completed crimes**
  - UAPA targets ideological, organisational, and preparatory stages
- **Modern Terror Definition** enables the law to address economic terrorism, counterfeit currency networks, and cyber-enabled terror activities.
- **Network Disruption** through banning organisations and designating individuals helps dismantle leadership structures and prevent lone-wolf attacks.
- **International Obligations** are met through alignment with FATF standards and implementation of UNSC Resolution 1373 on terror financing and asset freezing.
- **Extended Investigation Periods** recognise that terror cases involve cross-border coordination, digital footprints, and clandestine financing channels.

Major Criticisms of the UAPA

Low Conviction Rates

- Parliamentary data (2025) indicates conviction rates hovering around 3 percent.
- 2019–2023
  - 10,000+ arrests
  - 335 convictions

This raises concerns about overuse versus effective prosecution.

Prolonged Incarceration Without Trial

- In cases such as Bhima Koregaon and the Delhi Riots conspiracy, accused persons have remained incarcerated for four to five years without trial commencement.
- This creates a punishment-through-process scenario.

Arrest

- bail denial
- trial delay
- liberty erosion

Bail Bar and Prima Facie Standard

- Courts must rely almost exclusively on prosecution material at the bail stage, without cross-examination or defence evidence.
- This undermines the presumption of innocence and converts judicial scrutiny into a largely procedural exercise.

Overbroad Definition of "Unlawful Activity"

- The inclusion of "disaffection against India" raises fears of criminalising dissent, protest, and critical speech, particularly in politically sensitive contexts.

Absence of Sunset Clause

- Unlike TADA and POTA, UAPA has no mandatory parliamentary renewal or periodic review, entrenching extraordinary powers permanently.

Weaponisation Against Dissent

- Human rights organisations and UN Special Rapporteurs have flagged use of UAPA against journalists, human rights defenders, and student activists, including cases like Khurram Parvez.

Federalism Concerns

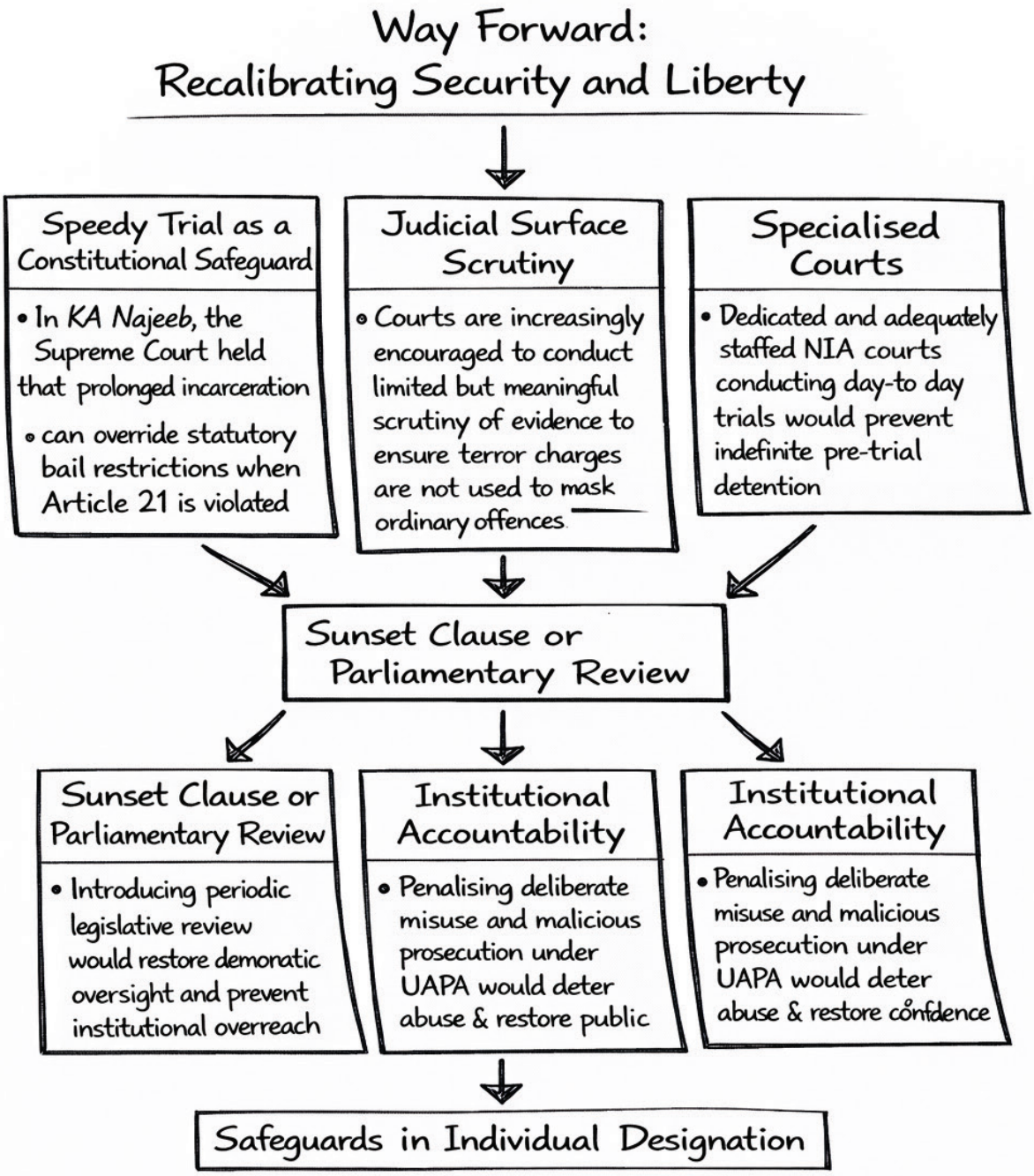
- Policing and public order are state subjects, yet UAPA allows the NIA to take over investigations without state consent.

Centralisation

- Erosion of cooperative federalism

Critique of the 2019 Amendment

- Designating individuals as terrorists without prior judicial determination raises due process concerns and weakens procedural safeguards.



The government should be required to disclose a reasoned summary of evidence when designating individuals, enabling meaningful legal challenge without compromising national security.

Quotes You Can Use

- **Justice D. Y. Chandrachud:** "Liberty cannot be sacrificed at the altar of procedure."
- **Justice Rohinton Nariman:** "A statute which confers draconian powers must be narrowly construed."
- **Granville Austin:** "The Indian Constitution balances national security with individual freedom, not one against the other."
- **Supreme Court in KA Najeeb:** "Statutory restrictions do not eclipse constitutional guarantees."

Scholarly and Expert Commentaries on UAPA

- **Gautam Bhatia** argues that UAPA represents a shift from criminal justice to preventive national security law, where the process itself becomes punitive due to prolonged incarceration and restricted bail.
- **Faizan Mustafa** highlights that anti-terror laws must meet a higher threshold of procedural fairness, warning that vague definitions and executive discretion risk chilling democratic dissent.
- **Pratap Bhanu Mehta** views UAPA's expansion as symptomatic of a broader trend where the state prioritises order over deliberative democracy, potentially weakening constitutional culture.
- **Harsh Mander** emphasises that the moral legitimacy of counter-terror laws depends on their sparing and proportionate use, especially against non-violent actors.
- **Supreme Court jurisprudence** increasingly reflects unease with the mechanical application of the bail bar, signalling a constitutional pushback against executive overreach.

Where to Use in UPSC (Paper-wise)

GS Paper II

- Fundamental Rights vs National Security
- Rule of Law and Due Process
- Role of Judiciary in Protecting Liberty

GS Paper III

- Internal Security
- Terrorism and Counter-Terror Frameworks
- Role of NIA and Central Agencies

Essay Paper

- "Liberty and security in a constitutional democracy"
- "When laws meant to protect the state weaken the Constitution"

PSIR Optional Paper II

- Internal security laws and democratic accountability
- National security policy and civil liberties
- Judicial responses to executive power

PSIR Optional Paper I

- State power, coercion, and legitimacy
- Rights, justice, and constitutionalism

Environmental Degradation and Constitutional Turn to Article 21

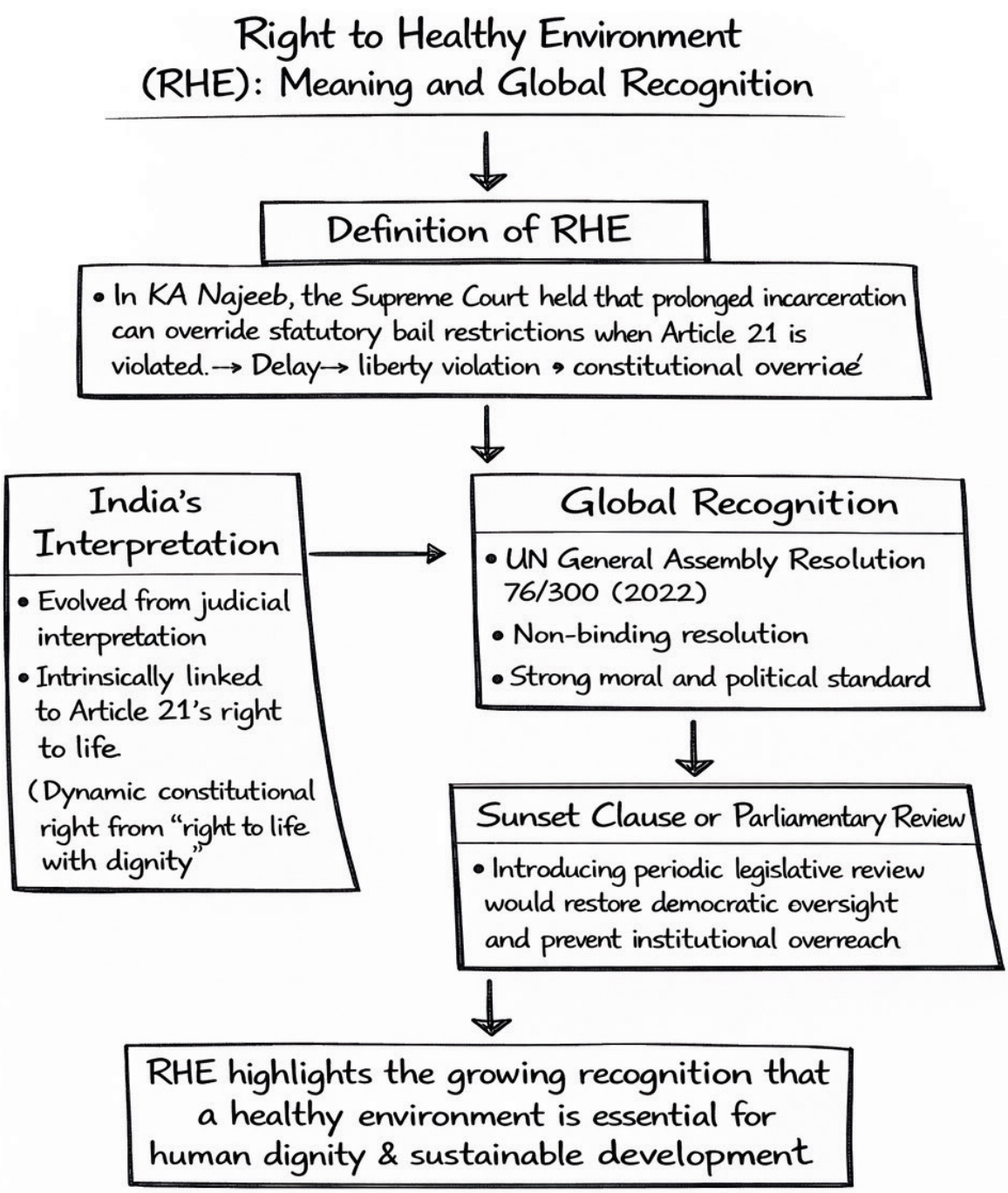
Introduction

Every winter, the national capital and several Indian cities are engulfed in severe smog, resulting in hazardous air quality that disrupts daily life and poses serious public health risks. The recurrence of this crisis has exposed the limitations of policy-based environmental governance and has pushed citizens to seek judicial enforcement of environmental protections.

As environmental degradation increasingly threatens human survival, courts and citizens have begun linking environmental rights directly to the Right to Life under Article 21.

Environmental harm – Direct impact on health and dignity – Constitutional enforcement

This shift transforms environmental protection from administrative discretion into a constitutional obligation of the state.

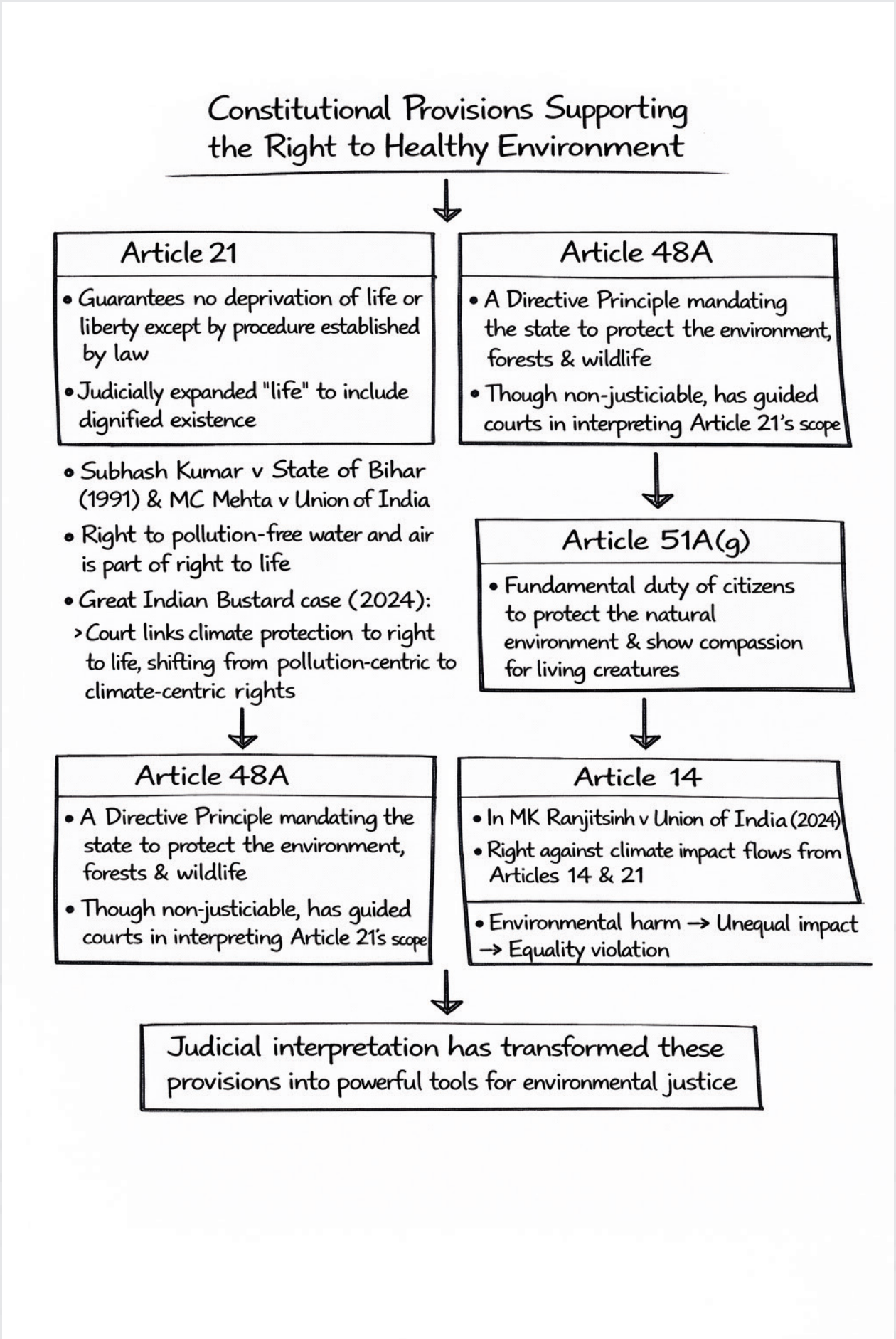

Right to Healthy Environment (RHE): Meaning and Global Recognition
Definition of RHE
• In KA Najeeb, the Supreme Court held that prolonged incarceration can override sfatutory bail restrictions when Article 21 is violated.→ Delay→ liberty violation » constitutional overriaé
India's Interpretation
• Evolved from judicial interpretation
• Intrinsically linked to Article 21's right to life
(Dynamic constitutional right from "right to life with dignity"
Global Recognition
• UN General Assembly Resolution 76/300 (2022)
• Non-binding resolution
• Strong moral and political standard
Sunset Clause or Parliamentary Review
• Introducing periodic legislative review would restore democratic oversight and prevent institutional overreach
RHE highlights the growing recognition that a healthy environment is essential for human dignity & sustainable development

Core Elements of the Right to Healthy Environment

- **Clean Air** implies the right to breathe air free from pollutants that cause disease, disability, or premature death, making air quality regulation a life-protecting obligation rather than a regulatory choice.
- **Safe Climate** recognises protection from the life-threatening effects of anthropogenic climate change, including heat waves, floods, droughts, and sea-level rise.
- **Safe and Sufficient Water** ensures access to clean drinking water and sanitation, which courts have repeatedly linked to public health and dignity.
- **Healthy Food** encompasses access to nutritious and sustainably produced food, free from toxic contamination and ecological degradation.
- **Non-Toxic Environment** demands protection from hazardous chemicals, industrial waste, and unsafe disposal practices that undermine long-term health.
- **Healthy Ecosystems and Biodiversity** acknowledge that forests, wetlands, rivers, and wildlife are not merely resources but life-support systems for human existence.
- RHE is primarily implemented through the **"greening" of existing rights**, especially Article 21, rather than through the creation of new standalone rights.

Right to Life

- Expanded interpretation
- Environmental protection duty on the state


Constitutional Provisions Supporting the Right to Healthy Environment
Article 21
• Guarantees no deprivation of life or liberty except by procedure established by law
• Judicially expanded "life" to include dignified existence
• Subhash Kumar v State of Bihar (1991) & MC Mehta v Union of India
• Right to pollution-free water and air is part of right to life
• Great Indian Bustard case (2024):
> Court links climate protection to right to life, shifting from pollution-centric to climate-centric rights
Article 48A
• A Directive Principle mandating the state to protect the environment, forests & wildlife
• Though non-justiciable, has guided courts in interpreting Article 21's scope
Article 48A
• A Directive Principle mandating the state to protect the environment, forests & wildlife
• Though non-justiciable, has guided courts in interpreting Article 21's scope
Article 51A(g)
• Fundamental duty of citizens to protect the natural environment & show compassion for living creatures
Article 14
• In MK Ranjitsinh v Union of India (2024)
• Right against climate impact flows from Articles 14 & 21
• Environmental harm → Unequal impact → Equality violation
Judicial interpretation has transformed these provisions into powerful tools for environmental justice

Core Principles of Environmental Protection in India

Absolute and Strict Liability

- **Absolute Liability**, evolved in the Oleum Gas Leak case, imposes unconditional liability on enterprises engaged in hazardous activities, with no exceptions. This reflects a zero-tolerance approach to industrial environmental harm.
- **Strict Liability**, borrowed from common law, allows limited exceptions but still holds entities liable for dangerous escapes, even without negligence.
- The shift from strict to absolute liability reflects India's recognition of industrial risk in densely populated contexts.

Precautionary Principle

- The Precautionary Principle mandates preventive action even in the absence of complete scientific certainty where environmental harm may be serious or irreversible.
- It shifts the burden of proof to the project proponent to demonstrate environmental safety.

Scientific uncertainty

- Potential harm
- Preventive restraint
- This principle has been applied in cases involving coastal aquaculture, large dams, and restrictions on polluting activities such as firecrackers.

Polluter Pays Principle

- The Polluter Pays Principle requires polluters to bear the full cost of preventing, controlling, and remedying pollution, including compensating affected communities.
- This principle underpins compensation and cleanup orders issued by bodies like the National Green Tribunal for rivers such as the Ganga and Yamuna.

Public Trust Doctrine

- The Public Trust Doctrine holds that natural resources like air, water, forests, and wildlife are held by the state in trust for the public and cannot be privatised or exploited for narrow interests.
- This doctrine aligns with Article 39(b) and (c), which mandate equitable distribution of material resources and prevent concentration of economic power.

Challenges in Implementing the Right to Healthy Environment

- **Infrastructure Pressures** arise from large-scale development projects that require forest clearance or ecosystem displacement, creating a persistent development–environment tension.
- **Ease of Doing Business Push** often leads to dilution of Environmental Impact Assessment norms, weakening prior scrutiny of ecological risks.
- **Weak Pollution Control Boards** suffer from understaffing, limited expertise, and inadequate funding, resulting in poor monitoring and enforcement.
- **Water Federalism Conflicts** between states delay river conservation efforts, as water remains a state subject requiring high coordination.
- **Fragmented Governance** across departments handling air, water, waste, and forests leads to policy incoherence.
- **Solid Waste Crisis** is visible in massive legacy landfills, with insufficient processing capacity for daily waste generation.
- **Marginalised Communities** such as tribals and forest dwellers face displacement and lack legal capacity to challenge powerful corporate actors.
- **Tragedy of the Commons** in urban areas results in neglect of public spaces, wetlands, and shared resources due to lack of collective responsibility.

Way Forward: Strengthening Environmental Constitutionalism

- **Professionalising Pollution Control Boards** by staffing them with technical experts and ensuring independent funding would improve regulatory effectiveness.
- **National Environmental Authority** on the lines of the Election Commission could reduce conflicts of interest in environmental clearances.
- **Empowering ULBs and Gram Sabhas** would decentralise environmental governance, especially for waste and water management, while effective implementation of the Forest Rights Act would protect indigenous ecosystems.
- **Continuous Emission Monitoring Systems** using IoT sensors would enable real-time pollution tracking and public accountability.
- **Satellite Surveillance** using ISRO data can detect illegal mining, deforestation, and encroachments early.
- **Green GDP Accounting** would internalise environmental costs into economic planning.
- **Circular Economy Incentives** such as tax benefits for zero liquid discharge and recycling-based industries would reduce waste generation.
- **Airshed and Watershed Management** through regional authorities would overcome state-boundary limitations in pollution control.

Quotes You Can Use

- **Justice P N Bhagwati:** "The right to life means the right to live with human dignity."
- **Justice D Y Chandrachud:** "Environmental protection is a facet of the right to life, not a matter of state charity."
- **UN Secretary-General António Guterres:** "Humanity is waging a war on nature, and nature is striking back."
- **Supreme Court (MK Ranjitsinh, 2024):** "Climate change impacts the most vulnerable first, implicating equality and dignity."

Scholarly and Expert Commentaries on Environmental Rights

- **Upendra Baxi** argues that the expansion of Article 21 into environmental domains reflects India's unique form of social action constitutionalism, where courts act as guardians of collective survival.
- **Lavanya Rajamani** notes that Indian courts have played a pioneering role in constitutionalising environmental protection, often moving ahead of legislative frameworks.
- **Shyam Divan** emphasises that environmental rights jurisprudence represents a shift from resource management to rights-based environmental governance.
- **Leelakrishnan** highlights that environmental principles such as precaution and public trust have transformed Indian environmental law into a constitutional discipline rather than a regulatory one.

Where to Use in UPSC (Paper-Wise)

GS Paper II

- Fundamental Rights and DPSPs
- Judicial activism and environmental governance
- State responsibility under Article 21

GS Paper III

- Environmental pollution and climate change
- Sustainable development and regulatory institutions

Essay Paper

- "Development without environmental justice is unsustainable"
- "Right to life in the age of climate crisis"

PSIR Paper I

- Rights, justice, and constitutional interpretation

PSIR Paper II

- Public policy, environmental governance, and judicial intervention

Mains Practice Questions

Q. Examine the challenges to sovereignty of the State in the contemporary world. (15 Marks)

In the contemporary world, the sovereignty of the state faces several challenges that undermine its traditional understanding as the absolute authority within its territory. These challenges arise from various dimensions, including globalization, transnational organizations, supranational entities, and the rise of non-state actors.

1. **Globalization**: The rapid integration of economies, cultures, and technologies has reduced the capacity of states to independently control their domestic affairs. Economic decisions are increasingly influenced by global markets, multinational corporations, and international financial institutions like the IMF and World Bank, which can dictate economic policies.
2. **Supranational Organizations**: Institutions like the European Union (EU) challenge state sovereignty by creating laws and regulations that member states must follow, often superseding national laws. The EU's ability to enforce decisions on trade, immigration, and human rights illustrates how state sovereignty is compromised.
3. **International Law and Human Rights**: The growing importance of international law, particularly in human rights, constrains state actions within their borders. States are increasingly held accountable by international bodies, such as the International Criminal Court (ICC), for actions that may violate global norms, reducing their sovereign autonomy.
4. **Non-State Actors**: The rise of powerful non-state actors, including multinational corporations, terrorist organizations, and transnational advocacy networks, poses significant challenges to state sovereignty. These entities can exert influence across borders, challenge state authority, and even destabilize governments.
5. **Cybersecurity and Information Warfare**: In the digital age, states face new threats from cyberattacks and information warfare that can undermine their sovereignty. These attacks, often originating from non-state actors or foreign governments, can disrupt critical infrastructure, manipulate public opinion, and challenge state control.
6. **Environmental Issues**: Global environmental challenges like climate change require cooperation beyond national borders. International agreements, such as the Paris Agreement, compel states to adhere to collective environmental goals, limiting their sovereign discretion in environmental policy.

While the concept of sovereignty remains central to the state, its absolute nature is increasingly questioned in a globalized world. States must navigate these challenges by balancing their sovereign authority with the demands of international cooperation and global governance.

Q. Make a comparative assessment of Greek perspective of Justice with the Rawlsian concept of Justice.

The concept of justice has evolved over time, as evident from the perspectives of various philosophers across history. In Plato's "Republic," justice was one of the four cardinal virtues alongside temperance, wisdom, and courage. Plato envisioned an ideal state where individuals fulfilled their roles based on their inherent nature. Justice was a fundamental principle, and each person's duty was to be diligently carried out.

Aristotle, building on this foundation, introduced additional dimensions to justice, including considerations of equality, proportionality, and maintaining societal balance. The Greek understanding of justice often included hierarchical elements, drawing from divinity, natural principles, or established traditions.

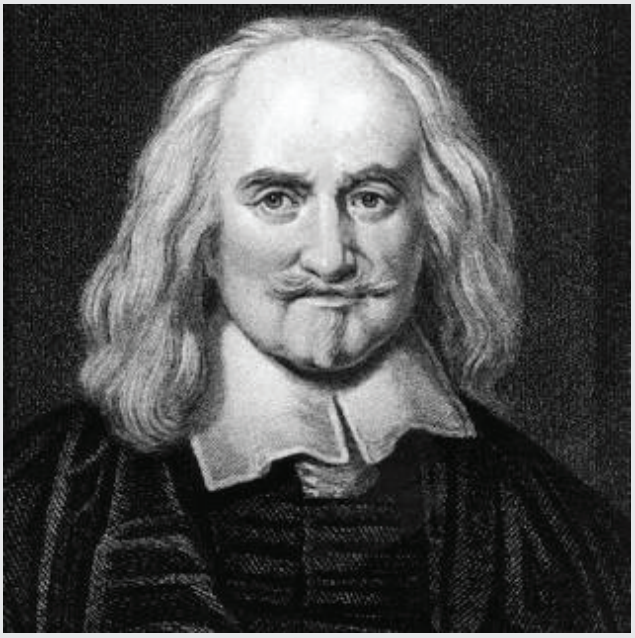
Moving forward in history, John Rawls introduced a modern perspective on justice. He emphasized that justice was achieved when deviations from equality could be reasonably justified. Rawls' theory of justice revolved around the idea of fairness, where societal and economic conditions played a crucial role. His works, "A Theory of Justice" and "Justice as Fairness," delved into the economic and social realities of contemporary societies.

Rawls' assertion that "justice is the first virtue of social institutions" and the emphasis on the "basic structure of society" being the primary focus of justice continues the classical legacy. This echoes Aristotle's observation that people pursue what they consider good and prefer more to less. While Rawls' approach is less abstract than Plato's and more attuned to the current social context, the evolution of justice is evident as it incorporates both historical ideas and contemporary considerations.

In essence, justice remains a moral virtue throughout this evolution. Like Plato, Aristotle, and Rawls, the concept of justice is still tied to a "public conception of justice." As societies evolve, so does the notion of justice, yet it continues to draw from its early philosophical roots while adapting to the changing dynamics of the world.

Scholar Digest: Know Your Scholars

Thomas Hobbes



Introduction

He was an English political philosopher who lived in the 17th century. He is best known for his work "Leviathan," which laid the groundwork for modern political theory. Hobbes believed that humans are naturally selfish and violent, and that a strong, centralized government was necessary to keep society from descending into chaos.

State of nature

Hobbes believed that the natural state of humans is one of war and chaos. In the absence of government, individuals are in a constant state of competition and conflict, where life is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." This state of nature is characterised by a "war of all against all," where individuals are constantly at risk of being harmed or killed by others. According to Hobbes, this makes life in the state of nature "nasty, brutish, and short."

Social contract

To escape the state of nature, Hobbes argued that individuals must enter into a social contract with each other. In this contract, individuals agree to give up some of their natural rights in exchange for protection from the government. The government, in turn, is responsible for maintaining law and order, and ensuring the safety and security of its citizens. Hobbes believed that the social contract was necessary to prevent society from descending into chaos and violence.

Absolute sovereignty

Hobbes believed that the best form of government was an absolute monarchy, where the ruler has unlimited power and authority. According to Hobbes, the sovereign should have complete control over all aspects of society, including religion and the economy. He believed that this was necessary to maintain order and prevent dissent. In Hobbes' view, the ruler's power was absolute and could not be challenged by the people.

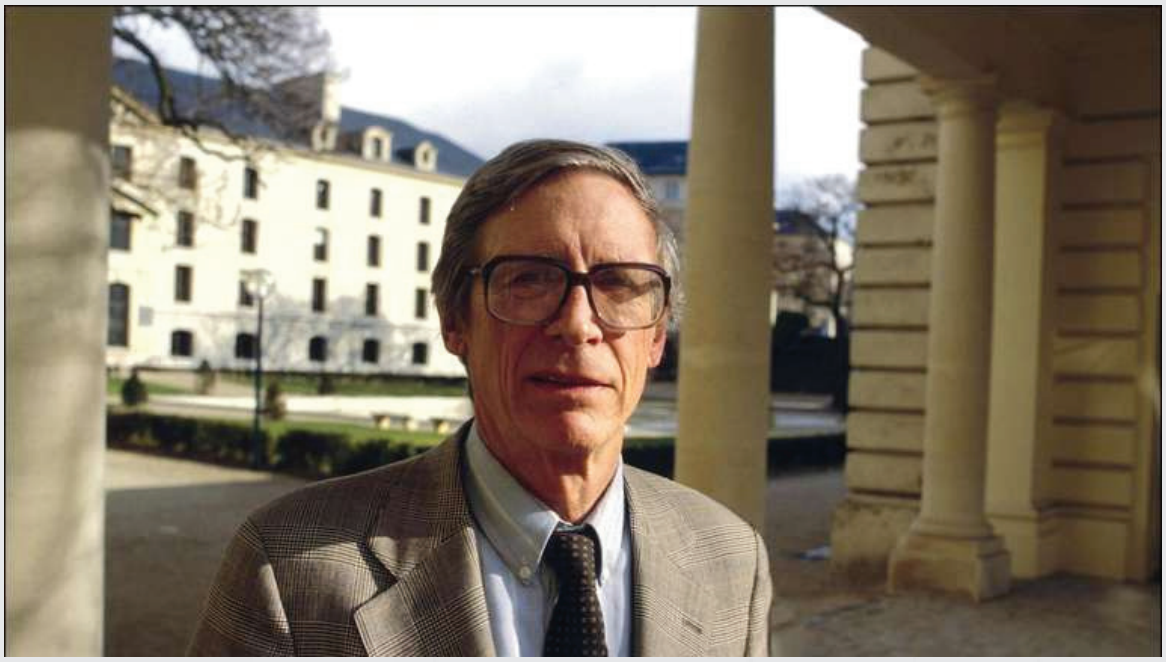
Relevance to modern politics

Hobbes' political philosophy has been influential in modern political theory, particularly in the areas of political sovereignty and social contract theory. His ideas about the need for a strong government to maintain order and prevent chaos have been echoed by many modern political thinkers. However, his view of absolute monarchy has been criticized as undemocratic and authoritarian.

Conclusion

Thomas Hobbes was a pioneering political philosopher whose work laid the foundation for modern political theory. His belief in the need for a strong, centralized government to prevent society from descending into chaos and violence remains relevant today. However, his view of absolute monarchy has been met with criticism and has been replaced by more democratic forms of government. Nonetheless, his contributions to the field of political philosophy have been significant and continue to be studied and debated by scholars today.

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.

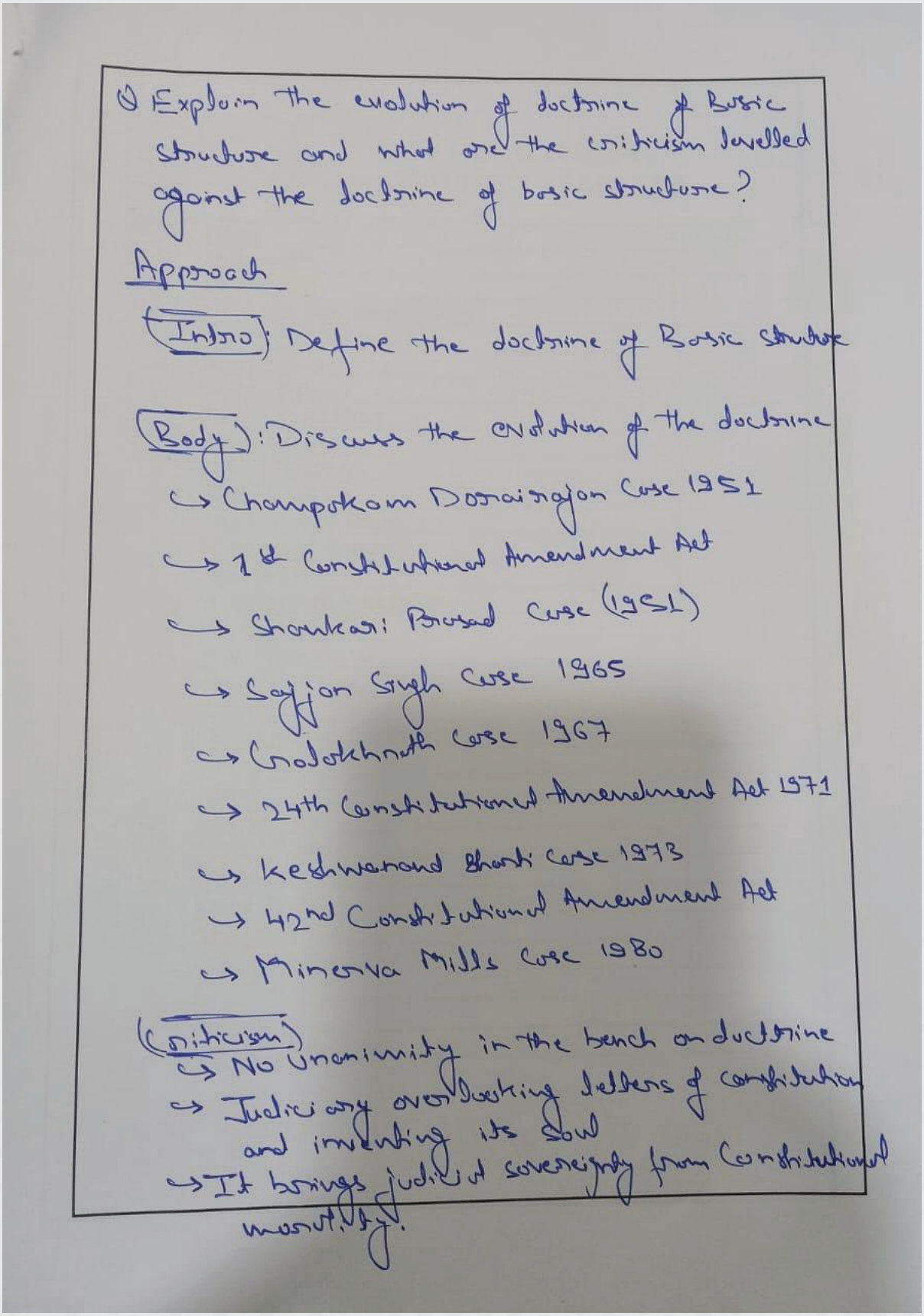
Critiques and Legacy

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.

Enrich Your Answer

Q. Explain the evolution of doctrine of basic structure and what are the criticisms levelled against the doctrine of basic structure.



Q Explain the evolution of doctrine of Basic structure and what are the criticism levelled against the doctrine of basic structure?

Approach

Intro: Define the doctrine of Basic Structure

Body: Discuss the evolution of the doctrine

↳ Champakam Dorairajan Case 1951

↳ 1st Constitutional Amendment Act

↳ Shankari Prasad Case (1951)

↳ Sajjan Singh Case 1965

↳ Golaknath Case 1967

↳ 24th Constitutional Amendment Act 1971

↳ Keshavanand Bharti Case 1973

↳ 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act

↳ Minerva Mills Case 1980

Criticism

↳ No Unanimity in the bench on doctrine

↳ Judiciary overstepping bodies of constitution and inventing its own

↳ It brings judicial sovereignty from Constitutional supremacy.

Q. India needs some creative diplomacy to address the changing environment of the relations between China and Srilanka. Comment

Q→ "India needs some creative diplomacy to address the changing environment of the relations between China and Sri Lanka". Comment.

Answer

Intro: Give India's relations with respect to Sri Lanka.

↳ Relationship between India and SriLanka is inter twined in historical bond. (Rajasingham Jayadevan)

Body: Tell the emerging China-Sri Lanka relations

↳ Hambantota port lease to Sri Lanka.

↳ Sri Lanka's debt to China tripled in last decade.

Give ideas of creative Diplomacy

↳ Using Buddhism as a common link

↳ Resolving small disputes eg fishing etc

↳ Economic interdependence.

Conclusion

↳ Resolve the impending issues and build people to people relations.

Prelims Practice Questions

1. According to the Constitution of India, which of the following are fundamental for the governance of the country?

(a) Fundamental Rights
(b) Fundamental Duties
(c) Directive Principles of State Policy
(d) Fundamental Rights and Fundamental Duties

2. Consider the following statements:

1. An amendment to the Constitution of India can be initiated by an introduction of a bill in the Lok Sabha only.

2. If such an amendment seeks to make changes in the federal character of the Constitution, the amendment also requires to be ratified by the legislature of all the States of India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

3. Which of the following bodies does not/do not find mention in the Constitution?

1. National Development Council
2. Planning Commission
3. Zonal Councils

Select the correct answer using the codes given below.

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

4. Consider the following statements:

1. National Development Council is an organ of the Planning Commission.

2. The Economic and Social Planning is kept in the Concurrent List in the Constitution of India.

3. The Constitution of India prescribes that Panchayats should be assigned the task of preparation of plans for economic development and social justice.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answers

1. (c) Directive Principles of State Policy are guidelines to the central and State government of India to be kept in mind while framing laws and policies. DPSPs aim to create social and economic conditions under which the citizens can lead a good life. They also aim to establish social and economic democracy through a welfare state. They act as a check on the government. It is a yardstick in the hands of the people to measure the performance of the government. It shall be the duty of the state to apply these principles in making laws.

2. (d) An amendment to the constitution of India can be initiated by an introduction of a bill in either house of the parliament. If such an amendment seeks to make changes in the federal character of the constitution, the amendment also requires to be ratified by the legislature of at least half of the states.

3. (d) National Development council is not a constitutional body. It is an extra-constitutional body. Planning Commission is a non-constitutional and non-statutory body. It was created by the Govt. of India in 1950 by a resolution. Zonal councils were set up under the states Re-Organization Act, 1956 (So it is not a constitutional body) to faster interstate co-operation and co-ordination among the states. Currently there are total five zonal councils viz Northern, Western, Eastern, Central and Southern.

4. (b) Directive Principles of State Policy lays down that the State shall take steps to organize village panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self government. Planning for economic development and social justice is one such power given to village panchayats. There are 52 items in the concurrent list. Economic and social planning is placed under entry no. 20. Article -40 of the constitution of India has the provision for organisation of vilage panchayats Directive Principles of state policy lays down that the state shall take steps to organise

village panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self government. Accordingly village panchayats have been entrusted with the task of preparation of plans for economic development and social justice. The national development council includes members of the planning commission, but it is a separate body.

UPSC IAS (Mains)

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