

## Prelims Exam Topics

### JYOTIRAO PHULE: PIONEERING INDIA'S CONSTITUTIONAL IMAGINATION

#### Context

As the bicentenary year of Mahatma Jyotirao Phule begins, his legacy is increasingly viewed not just as social reform, but as a foundational "constitutional project" that reimagined Indian society based on equality, dignity, and the redistribution of power.

#### Background

- Jyotirao Govindrao Phule was a social reformer who worked against social evils like untouchability and caste system, and was a strong advocate of women empowerment and education of girl child.
- Born on **April 11, 1827**, in Katgun, Maharashtra, Jyotirao Govindrao Phule belonged to the Mali (gardener) community, categorized as Shudra in the traditional varna hierarchy.
- He was bestowed with the title of Mahatma on May 11, 1888 by a Maharashtrian social activist **Vithalrao Krishnaji Vandekar**.

#### Contributions to Social Reform

- **Pioneer of Women's Education:** Recognizing that "lack of education leads to lack of wisdom," Phule opened India's first school for girls at Bhide Wada, Pune, in 1848.
  - He educated his wife, **Savitribai Phule**, making her the first female teacher in India.
- **Abolition of Untouchability:** In a radical act for the 19th century, he opened his own home's water tank to "untouchables" in 1868, challenging the ritual purity laws that denied marginalized communities access to basic resources.
- **Satyashodhak Samaj (1873):** He founded the "Truth Seekers' Society" to provide a platform for Shudras, Ati-Shudras, and Dalits.
  - The society focused on rational thinking and rejected the need for priestly intermediaries in religious ceremonies.
- **Widow Remarriage & Child Marriage:** He was a vocal advocate for widow remarriage and established a home for pregnant widows (*Balhatya Pratibandhak Griha*) to prevent infanticide and provide them a life of dignity.

#### Key Literary Works

- **Gulamgiri (Slavery, 1873):** His most famous work, written in the form of a dialogue. He dedicated it to the American movement to abolish slavery, drawing a parallel between the plight of Black Americans and the oppressed castes in India.
- **Shetkaryacha Asud (The Cultivator's Whipcord, 1883):** A scathing critique of how the alliance of the bureaucracy and the priestly class exploited the illiterate peasantry.
- **Sarvajanik Satya Dharma (Universal Religion of Truth):** Published posthumously, this book outlined his vision of a world where all humans are equal, regardless of birth or gender, under a single "Creator."

#### Phule's Thought as a Constitutional Project

Long before the drafting of the Indian Constitution, Phule's work functioned as a "constitutional project", a structural reimagining of power and rights in India.

- **Intellectual Foundations of Natural Rights:** Influenced by **Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man*** (1847), Phule viewed a constitution not merely as a legal document, but as a framework to ensure "the general happiness" and protect the natural rights of every individual.
- **Universal Rights and Institutional Efforts:** He moved beyond rhetoric to create structural responses to oppression, including the establishment of schools for women and opening public wells to those deemed "untouchable."
- **The Theory of Reinforcing Injustices:** Phule was among the first to argue that social hierarchy, economic exploitation, and state indifference were mutually reinforcing.
  - He realized that a marginalized farmer could not educate his children because the economic system was rigged to ensure his survival was always at stake.
- **State Responsibility (Hunter Commission, 1882):** In his submissions to the Education Commission, he demanded a proactive state role:
  - **Compulsory primary education** for all children up to the age of 12.
  - **Targeted scholarships** for communities where education had historically made no progress.
  - **Incentivizing female literacy** through liberal government measures.

Phule's vision was the direct precursor to the work of **B.R. Ambedkar**, who regarded Phule as one of his three "Gurus." The modern constitutional guarantees, such as the Abolition of Untouchability (Article 17), Fundamental Rights, and affirmative action, are the concrete legal expressions of Phule's 19th-century vision.

## SPACE-BASED SOLAR POWER

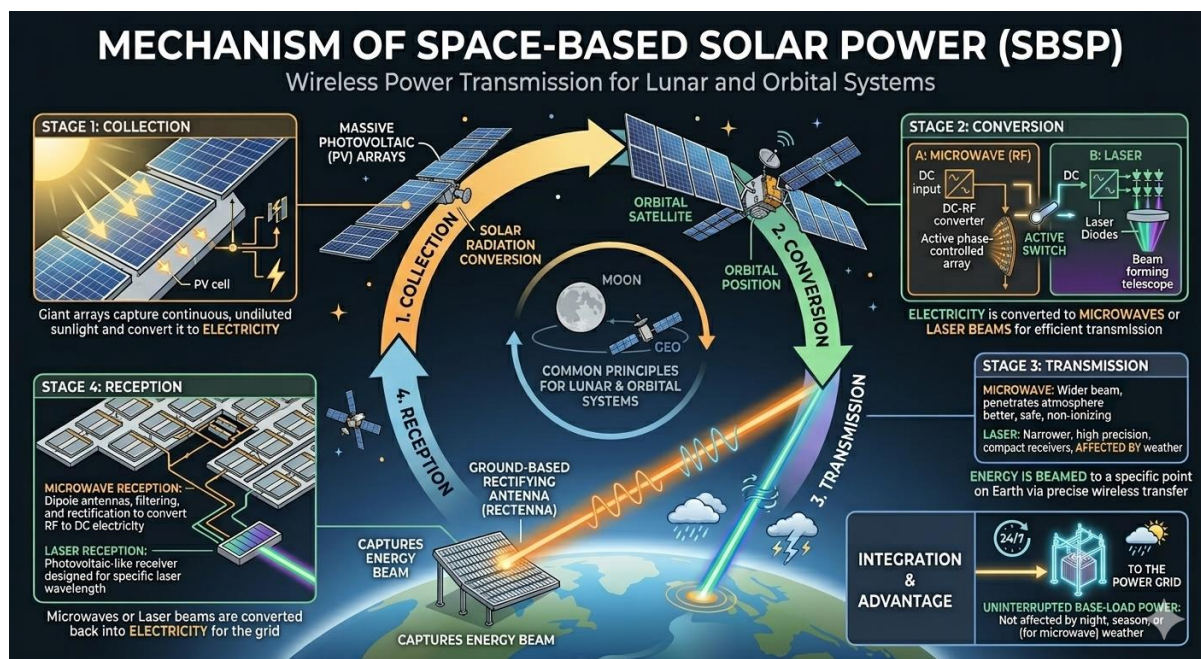
### Context

Companies like Japan's Shimizu Corporation are now proposing mega-scale engineering projects to make space-based solar power a reality.

### Core Concepts: Orbit vs. Lunar Surface

The fundamental goal is to collect sunlight where it is most abundant, outside Earth's atmosphere, and transmit it back for consumption.

- **The "Lunar Ring" Proposal:** Shimizu Corporation suggests an 11,000 km belt of solar panels along the moon's equator. Robots would build this structure using lunar soil (regolith), beaming the energy to Earth via **microwaves**.
- **Space-Based Solar Power (SBSP):** A more traditional concept involving giant arrays of satellites in **Geostationary Orbit (GEO)**. Unlike Earth-based panels, these would collect sunlight 24/7, unaffected by weather, seasons, or the day-night cycle.



### Challenges-Why It Isn't Here Yet?

- **Logistical Costs:** Even with cheaper launches (e.g., SpaceX), transporting thousands of tonnes of hardware to the moon or deep orbit remains prohibitively expensive.
- **Energy Loss:** Beaming power through the Earth's atmosphere is inefficient; a significant portion of the energy is lost as heat during the transmission process.
- **Space Debris:** In orbit, a single collision with a piece of space junk could destroy a multi-billion dollar array, creating even more debris in a "Kessler Syndrome" chain reaction.
- **The Terrestrial Rival:** Rapidly falling costs and increasing efficiency in terrestrial solar and battery technologies make the massive financial and logistical risks of space-based power systems currently difficult to justify.

## CENTRE NOTIFIES TAR-BALLS MANAGEMENT RULES, 2026

### Context

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has notified the draft Tar-balls Management Rules, 2026, to tackle on-shore and off-shore marine pollution.

### Key Provisions

- **Lifecycle Management:** The rules provide a comprehensive roadmap covering the entire lifecycle of tar-balls, including their **generation, collection, storage, transport, treatment, and final disposal**.
- **'Polluter Pays' Principle:** It fixes legal responsibility on oil operators and shipping agencies. There are strict provisions for **environmental compensation** if their activities lead to the formation of these pollutants.
- **Stakeholder Responsibilities:** The draft clearly defines the roles of various agencies:
  - **CPCB/SPCB:** For monitoring and technical standards.
  - **Indian Coast Guard:** For offshore detection and response.

- **State Governments:** For shore-side cleanup and management.
- **Disaster Declaration:** The framework mandates rigorous monitoring and reporting, with a specific provision to declare a '**State Disaster**' in cases of severe coastal contamination.

#### Tar Balls

- **Formation:** These are sticky, dark-colored lumps created due to the **weathering of oil** following maritime leaks, spills, or accidents.
  - They form through a combination of **physical, chemical, and biological processes** (such as evaporation and emulsification) when oil interacts with seawater, sand, and other marine contaminants.
- **Hazardous Nature:** Because they are composed of heavy, complex hydrocarbons (like Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons or PAHs), they can travel hundreds of miles from the original spill site and persist in the ocean for months.
  - Under the new rules, tar-balls are classified as **hazardous waste**.

## MULTI-HAZARD EARLY WARNING DECISION SUPPORT SYSTEM (MHEW-DSS)

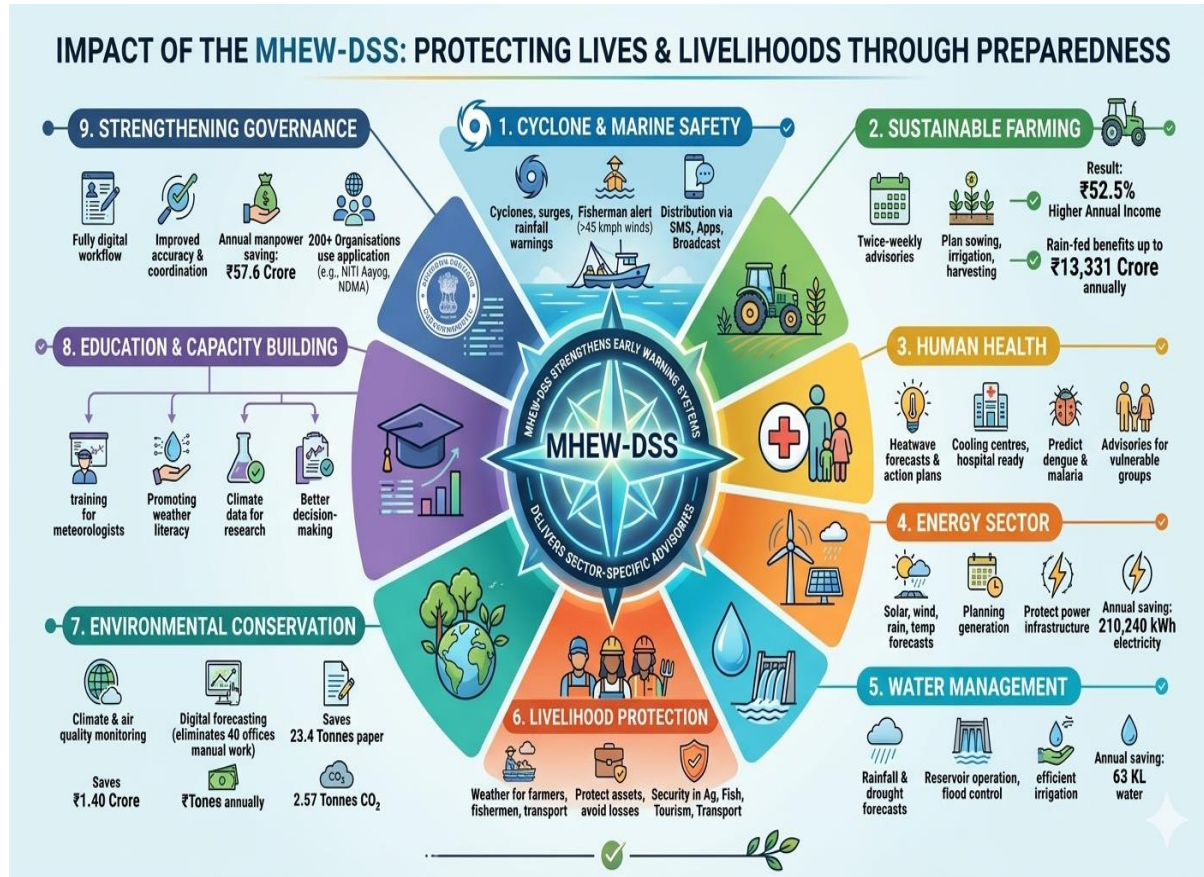
### Context

India has taken a significant leap in disaster preparedness with the launch of the Multi-Hazard Early Warning Decision Support System (MHEW-DSS).

### About Multi-Hazard Early Warning Decision Support System (MHEW-DSS)

- The MHEW-DSS is an advanced digital forecasting platform developed by the IMD using open-source technology and in-house expertise.
- Introduced in 2024 under **Mission Mausam**
- **Primary Objective:** To build an integrated and indigenous forecasting system capable of delivering accurate, real-time, and impact-based multi-hazard forecasts across India.
- **Salient features**
  - **Automated Weather Data Processing:** Over 90% of weather data collection, quality checks, and integration are automated, enabling faster detection of weather systems and their possible impacts.
  - **Better Use of Forecast Models:** More than 95% of numerical weather prediction model inputs are now used in forecasting, improving risk assessment for different weather hazards.
  - **Re-engineered Forecasting System:** The entire forecasting and warning generation process has been re-engineered, enabling real-time alerts and faster decision-making.
  - **Longer Forecast Lead Time:** Forecast lead time has increased from 5 days to 7 days, allowing authorities and communities to prepare in advance.
  - **Faster Forecast Preparation:** The time required to prepare forecasts has reduced by about 3 hours from 6 hours, enabling quicker dissemination of warnings.
  - **Cost Savings and Self-Reliance:** The system has generated around ₹250 crore in cost savings and eliminated dependence on foreign vendors, strengthening India's technological self-reliance.

- **Effective Cyclone Forecasting:** Accurate forecasts during Cyclone Biparjoy and Cyclone Dana enabled timely evacuation, resulting in zero casualties in Gujarat and Odisha.
- **Reduced Evacuation Costs:** Improved early warnings have helped reduce evacuation costs to one third from 1999 to 2024 due to a reduction in cyclone landfall point forecast error in the 3-5 days ahead forecast issued by IMD.



#### Mission Mausam

- It is a flagship initiative aimed at strengthening weather forecasting and early warning capabilities across the country.
- The mission aims to enhance the accuracy, resolution and lead time of forecasts for extreme weather events such as cyclones, heavy rainfall and heat waves.

#### Mausamgram

- It is a web-based, hyper-local weather forecasting portal developed by the IMD under the MoES.
- The platform delivers location-specific forecasts up to 10 days covering more than 1.5 lakh pin codes, 5,700 blocks, and over 6.2 lakh villages across India.
- Accessible through the IMD website, the Mausam mobile app, the SACHET platform, e-Panchayat Seva, and APIs, the portal ensures wide public and institutional access.

## ROLE OF MIDWIVES: MISSING GAP IN INDIA'S NATURAL CHILDBIRTH JOURNEY

### Context

India has made notable strides in maternal health, with the **Maternal Mortality Ratio declining from 130 per lakh live births (2014–16) to 93 (2019–21)**. However, a contrasting trend has emerged in the rising number of caesarean deliveries from 6.4% in 2008–09 to over 27% in 2024–25. This is significantly above the 10–15% range suggested by the World Health Organization, pointing to an over-medicalisation of childbirth.

### Factors driving the rise in caesarean deliveries

- **High prevalence in private healthcare:** Caesarean rates in private hospitals have climbed to nearly 47.4%, indicating excessive reliance on surgical methods.
- **Regional disparities:** States like Telangana report rates exceeding 60%, reflecting uneven practices across regions.
- **Economic motivations:** Surgical deliveries are more expensive, creating financial incentives for private healthcare providers.
- **Revenue dependence:** A substantial portion (70–80%) of private gynaecologists' income comes from deliveries, which may indirectly promote caesareans.
- **Cultural influences:** Some families opt for planned births on astrologically favourable dates, increasing elective surgeries.

### Health risks linked to unnecessary caesareans

- **Maternal complications:** Greater chances of infections, excessive bleeding, and post-surgical adhesions.
- **Future pregnancy risks:** Increased likelihood of complications in subsequent pregnancies.
- **Long-term conditions:** Possibility of issues such as scar endometriosis.
- **Child health concerns:** Higher risk of respiratory problems, asthma, and obesity in children.
- **Impact on gut health:** Disruption of the newborn's microbiota, though breastfeeding may partly restore it.

### Significance of professional midwives

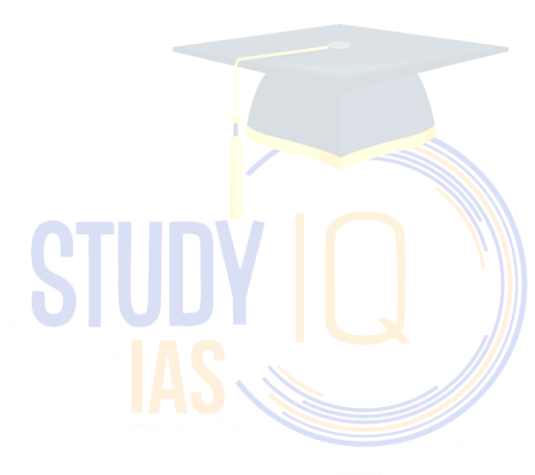
- **Promoting natural childbirth:** Midwives treat labour as a natural physiological process rather than a medical condition.
- **Continuous care:** They provide close monitoring during labour, reducing unnecessary interventions.
- **Early risk detection:** Timely identification of complications ensures prompt referral to specialists.
- **Reducing surgical dependency:** Their presence encourages safe normal deliveries.
- **Wider outreach:** They improve maternal care access in both rural and urban healthcare settings.

### Challenges in expanding midwifery services

- **Workforce shortage:** There is a significant gap between demand and availability of trained midwives.
- **Doctor-centric system:** Healthcare remains heavily dependent on physicians, limiting midwives' roles.
- **Private sector bias:** Financial incentives favour surgical procedures over natural births.
- **Social attitudes:** Many families perceive caesarean delivery as safer or more convenient.
- **Weak integration:** Midwives are not sufficiently embedded within public health systems, especially in rural and tribal areas.

### Way forward

- Scale up midwifery education and training programmes nationwide.
- Integrate midwives into primary healthcare and maternity services.
- Promote awareness about the benefits of natural childbirth.
- Strengthen regulations to curb unnecessary caesarean procedures in private hospitals.
- Establish robust referral systems linking midwives with obstetricians.



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## Mains Exam Topics

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### A CONVICTION, A RECKONING IN TAMIL NADU

#### Context

The recent custodial deaths in Sattankulam, Tamil Nadu, brought to light deep-rooted flaws in policing and judicial oversight. Arrested for relatively minor violations, they were subjected to extreme custodial brutality that ultimately led to their deaths. The episode underscores the abuse of police authority, fragile safeguards, and weak accountability mechanisms. At the same time, the eventual conviction reflects how judicial intervention, credible evidence, and sustained public pressure can challenge institutional impunity and deliver justice.

#### Background of the case

- **Arrest on minor grounds:** An individual was detained for alleged lockdown violations, which did not warrant harsh legal action or prolonged custody.
- **Escalation of events:** The situation intensified when his son questioned police conduct, resulting in further detention and increased use of force.
- **Severe custodial abuse:** Both individuals were subjected to brutal third-degree methods, including physical and sexual violence, leading to grave internal injuries.
- **Falsification of records:** Police allegedly manipulated FIRs and records, attributing injuries to self-inflicted causes.
- **Breakdown of safeguards:** Medical authorities declared them fit for remand, and the magistrate issued routine remand orders without adequate scrutiny.
- **Neglect in custody:** Despite visible injuries, they were moved between facilities and eventually died, reflecting continued negligence and brutality.
- **Public response:** The incident sparked nationwide outrage, with the victims' family pursuing a prolonged legal battle for justice.

#### Significance of the verdict

- **Application of the “rarest of rare” doctrine:** The court awarded the death penalty to nine policemen, recognising the extreme nature of custodial torture and murder.
- **Collective accountability:** Conviction of nearly the entire police station staff marks an unprecedented acknowledgment of institutional failure.
- **Abuse of authority highlighted:** The judgment noted that law enforcers themselves violated constitutional duties and legal norms.
- **Changing approach to custodial violence:** The verdict signals a shift toward holding multiple officials criminally responsible.
- **Debate on punishment:** The imposition of the death penalty raises concerns regarding proportionality and reformative justice.
- **Deterrent effect:** It sends a strong message against police excesses, challenging the long-standing culture of impunity.

### Nature and patterns of custodial violence

- **Meaning and scope:** Custodial violence includes physical assault, psychological harassment, and sexual abuse used for coercion or dominance.
- **Methods employed:** Practices range from beatings and deprivation to humiliation and intimidation, causing severe harm.
- **Sexual violence as control:** Such acts are used to assert authority, leaving deep psychological and social scars.
- **Culture of impunity:** Police often operate with a sense of unchecked power, normalising violence.
- **Institutional complicity:** Failures across police, medical, and judicial systems enable such abuses to persist.

### Challenges in addressing custodial deaths

- **Low conviction rates:** Accountability remains weak, with very few convictions despite numerous cases.
- **Rising incidents:** Data indicates a significant number of deaths in both police and judicial custody across the country.
- **Impact on vulnerable groups:** Marginalised communities are disproportionately affected, revealing social bias.
- **Weak investigation and prosecution:** Poor evidence collection and prosecution often result in acquittals.
- **Systemic gaps:** Institutional failures across multiple agencies hinder effective justice delivery.

### Existing safeguards against custodial violence

#### Constitutional Protections

- **Article 21** ensures the right to life and dignity.
- **Article 20(3)** protects against self-incrimination.
- **Article 22** guarantees rights during arrest and detention.
- **Article 39A** promotes access to free legal aid.

#### Legal and Institutional Measures

- Penal provisions under IPC address wrongful confinement and custodial abuse.
- CrPC mandates judicial inquiry into custodial deaths.
- Bodies like NHRC and SHRC function under the human rights framework.
- Provisions under BNS also penalise misconduct by public officials.

#### Judicial Guidelines

- **D.K. Basu vs State of West Bengal (1997):** Established procedural safeguards such as arrest memos and medical checks.
- **Joginder Kumar vs State of UP (1994):** Emphasised that arrests must be justified and not routine.
- **Nilabati Behera vs State of Orissa (1993):** Recognised state liability and compensation.
- **Paramvir Singh (2020):** Directed installation of CCTV cameras in police stations.

### Way forward

- **Enact a dedicated anti-torture law:** A comprehensive law should criminalise custodial torture, align with international conventions, and ensure strict penalties and victim compensation.

- **Enhance judicial oversight:** Independent judicial inquiries and strict enforcement of guidelines must be ensured.
- **Create independent monitoring bodies:** Oversight institutions with investigative and prosecutorial powers should be established.
- **Implement police reforms:** Recommendations such as those in police reform cases should be fully executed to ensure professionalism and reduce misuse of power.
- **Strengthen surveillance mechanisms:** CCTV coverage, audio-video recording of interrogations, and regular audits should be made mandatory to improve transparency.

### INDIA'S NEEDS TO GIVE PRIMACY TO MARITIME DOMAIN IN ITS' STRATEGIC THINKING

**Context:** India's growing alignment with the Arab Gulf reflects a strategic shift toward maritime priorities, reviving the Bombay School's vision while integrating it with enduring continental security concerns.

#### **Continental vs Maritime Thinking of India's Strategic Lens**

Historically, the defense of the Indian Subcontinent has been viewed through two distinct lenses, born out of the British Raj's "Great Game."

Feature	Bombay School (Maritime)	Ludhiana School (Continental)
Key Propounders	Mountstuart Elphinstone, John Malcolm, and later influenced by Alfred Thayer Mahan.	The Lawrence Brothers (Henry & John), Claude Wade, and influenced by Halford Mackinder.
Strategic Logic	"Littoral" Logic: Security is achieved by controlling the "outer ring" (coasts and ports) and maintaining command of the sea.	"Frontier" Logic: Security is achieved by controlling the "inner ring" (mountain passes and buffers) and maintaining a forward presence.
Primary Geography	Arabian Sea, Persian Gulf, and the wider Indo-Pacific.	Afghanistan, Central Asia, and the Himalayan frontiers (LAC/LoC).
Core Philosophy	<b>Mercantile Realism:</b> Wealth and trade are the primary engines of national power.	<b>Territorial Realism:</b> Land and physical sovereignty are the primary engines of national security.

<b>View of the Border</b>	The sea is a <b>bridge</b> ; it is an open space for maneuver and global connectivity.	The mountains are a <b>wall</b> ; they are a site of friction that must be guarded against invasion.
<b>Primary Instruments</b>	Blue-water Navy, merchant shipping, maritime hubs (Ports), and the Diaspora.	Large standing Army, fortifications, border infrastructure, and "Strategic Depth."
<b>Economic Orientation</b>	<b>Geoeconomic:</b> Focused on global supply chain integration and "Blue Economy."	<b>Geostrategic:</b> Focused on self-reliance and securing land-based resource corridors.
<b>Modern Manifestation</b>	IMEC, SAGAR Doctrine, and the "Necklace of Diamonds" strategy.	"Vibrant Villages" program, BRO infrastructure, and high-altitude mountain divisions.

### Reasons for dominance of Continental Domain In India's Strategic Thinking

#### I. Historical–Psychological Factors

- The **legacy of Partition (1947)** created immediate continental compulsions, as India inherited contested and hostile land borders requiring sustained military deployment.
- The **Kashmir conflict** entrenched a permanent state of high-altitude warfare, locking strategic attention and resources onto the northern frontiers.
- A deep-rooted **continental threat perception**, shaped by historical invasions through the northwest passes, reinforced the primacy of land-based security.
- The collapse of the "**Himalayan shield**" **myth** after the Sino-Indian War compelled India to divert significant resources toward guarding its northern borders.

#### II. Institutional & Structural Factors

- The colonial "**Ludhiana School**" **bureaucracy** institutionalized a land-centric strategic culture focused on frontier management and continental defence.
- **Army dominance** in force structure and budgeting reinforced continental priorities, as strategic thinking followed resource allocation.
- The shift of the capital from Kolkata to Delhi in 1911 created a **geographical and psychological bias**, centering policy attention on the northern plains rather than maritime frontiers.

#### III. Economic–Policy Orientation

- Post-independence **socialist inwardness** deprioritized global trade, reducing the strategic relevance of maritime domains.
- The **neglect of ports and maritime infrastructure** during the License Raj limited India's integration into global supply chains.

- A bias toward **internal connectivity (railways and highways)** further entrenched a land-centric development model.

#### IV. Geostrategic Constraints

- The persistent **two-front threat perception** from Pakistan and China necessitated a “boots on the ground” approach to territorial defence.
- Active borders such as the **Line of Control (LoC)** and **Line of Actual Control (LAC)** require continuous military vigilance, reinforcing continental prioritization.
- The pursuit of **strategic depth in Afghanistan** reflects enduring continental anxieties about external destabilization of the Indian heartland.

### Adverse Implications of Continental Over-Focus

#### I. Strategic & Geopolitical Costs

- The “**South Asian Ghetto**” trap leads to India’s hyphenation with Pakistan, thereby constraining its global power projection.
- **Strategic encirclement** results from littoral neglect, enabling external powers to expand their footprint in the Indian Ocean.
- A **reactive defensive posture**, rooted in a “fortress mindset,” prioritizes static defence over proactive strategic shaping.
- The “**continental island**” reality creates a land blockade, making India dependent on maritime routes for global access.

#### II. Military-Strategic Distortions

- The “**continental tax**” leads to an army-heavy allocation of resources, resulting in the underfunding of naval capabilities.
- A **capability imbalance** persists as a weak blue-water navy limits India’s ability to project power beyond its immediate region.

#### III. Geoeconomic & Trade Consequences

- **Geoeconomic stagnation** arises from the neglect of trade-led growth, increasing vulnerability to global supply chain disruptions.
- **Loss of port competitiveness** forces reliance on foreign hubs, leading to both revenue losses and strategic leakage.

#### IV. Structural Strategic Outcome

- The persistence of a **continental overhang** sustains a defence-heavy, inward-looking posture that constrains maritime expansion.

### Need for India to give primacy to Maritime domain in its Strategic Thinking

- **Economic survival and geoeconomic integration** require India to adopt “trade as grand strategy,” as over 90% of trade by volume and critical energy flows through key chokepoints.
- **Overcoming the “Ludhiana” land blockade** demands leveraging India’s peninsular advantage, as maritime corridors like IMEC enable it to bypass hostile land routes and integrate with global markets.
- **Countering strategic encirclement** necessitates a Mahanian maritime approach, as India’s central location allows it to maintain internal lines of communication and outmaneuver external naval powers.

- **Global power projection** is enabled by embracing the “Bombay School,” as a blue-water navy allows India to act as a net security provider and shape the global commons.
- **Strategic decoupling from subcontinental constraints** requires an integrated approach, where maritime expansion complements continental deterrence and aligns India with Indo-Pacific partnerships.
- **Protection of subsea infrastructure** is essential, as undersea fiber-optic cables form the backbone of global finance and digital connectivity.
- **Enhanced maritime domain awareness** is critical, as satellite and AI-enabled surveillance transforms the oceans into a transparent and controllable strategic space.

### Present Need to Maritime Primacy

#### 1. Weaponization of Chokepoints

- **Hormuz Vulnerability:** The February–March 2026 crisis proved that land-centric defense cannot protect India from a maritime "heart attack" when the Strait of Hormuz is restricted.
- **Active Security:** With half of India's crude oil passing through a single artery, the Navy must secure these "outer gates" far from Indian shores to ensure national energy survival.

#### 2. Failure of Continental Redundancy

- **INSTC Paralysis:** Kinetic strikes on Iranian infrastructure have neutralized the International North-South Transport Corridor, exposing the fragility of land-based connectivity during high-intensity wars.
- **The IMEC Pivot:** Stability in the Arab Gulf (UAE/Saudi Arabia) makes the maritime-led IMEC a more resilient alternative to volatile continental routes through conflict zones.

#### 3. Strategic "De-hyphenation"

- **Special Strategic Partnerships:** As of April 2026, ties with the Gulf have evolved from a buyer-seller model into deep security cooperation, decoupling India from regional ideological strife.
- **Commercial Realism:** Supporting the Arab Gulf's political moderation aligns India with partners who prioritize global commerce and stability over revolutionary or proxy warfare.

### Suggestions to pursue maritime primacy

To effectively execute the Bombay School of thought, India must move beyond traditional coastal defense and embrace its role as a "Peninsular Pivot." This requires a shift from viewing the ocean as a barrier to seeing it as a medium for power and prosperity.

#### I. Naval Modernization: Projecting Blue-Water Power

- **Carrier Battle Groups:** Building a three-carrier fleet to ensure continuous presence in the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal while maintaining a third for global contingencies.
- **Silent Deterrence:** Prioritizing the construction of nuclear-powered attack submarines (SSNs) to monitor deep-sea chokepoints and counter rival naval incursions.
- **Unmanned Tech:** Deploying AI-driven surface vessels and underwater drones for persistent, low-cost surveillance of vital sea lanes.

#### II. Geoeconomic Integration: Ports as Power

- **Transshipment Hubs:** Developing domestic hubs like Vizhinjam and Galathea Bay to reduce reliance on foreign ports like Colombo or Singapore.
- **Necklace of Diamonds:** Expanding access to strategic overseas ports such as Chabahar (Iran), Duqm (Oman), and Sabang (Indonesia).

- **IMEC Implementation:** Fast-tracking the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor to bypass hostile land routes and integrate with Mediterranean markets.

### III. Diplomatic Architecture: Leading the Indo-Pacific

- **Mission-Based Deployments:** Maintaining a permanent naval presence in the Gulf of Aden and the South China Sea to uphold "Freedom of Navigation."
- **Logistics Reach:** Leveraging agreements like LEMOA to use global naval bases for refueling, effectively extending India's reach without overseas colonies.
- **Mini-lateral Partnerships:** Strengthening the Quad and I2U2 to ensure a rules-based order that prevents single-power dominance in the Indian Ocean.

### IV. Institutional Reform: Ending the Continental Bias

- **Maritime Theatre Command:** Unifying naval, air, and land assets under a single commander to streamline responses to maritime threats.
- **Budgetary Rebalancing:** Increasing the Navy's share of the defense budget from roughly 18% to at least 25% to reflect modern geoeconomic realities.
- **Coordinated Governance:** Empowering the National Maritime Security Coordinator to sync efforts across the Navy, Coast Guard, and commercial shipping sectors.

India must evolve from a frontier-fixated continental state into a maritime-centric network power, leveraging its Indian Ocean centrality to shape the emerging Indo-Pacific order.

