

Prelims Exam Topics

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS INDEX 2026

Context

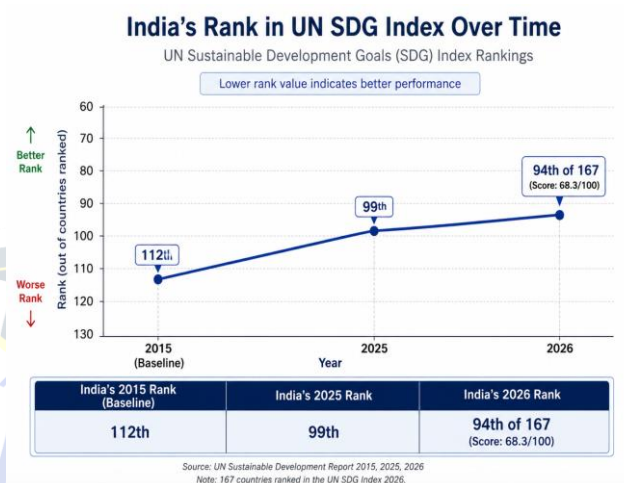
The UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) released the Sustainable Development Goals Index 2026, which assesses global progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

About SDG Index

- The **SDG Index 2026** is an annual report that assesses countries' progress towards achieving the **17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.
- Released by the **UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN)**.

Key Findings (2026)

- **None** of the **17 SDGs** is on track to be achieved by **2030**.
- **Top Performers:** Finland, Sweden, and Denmark.
- **Lowest Performers:** Chad, Central African Republic, and South Sudan, due to conflict, political instability, insecurity, and limited fiscal capacity.
- India achieved its **best-ever rank of 94th** in the **SDG Index 2026**, but remained behind **Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka**.



JONATHAN - THE GIANT TORTOISE

Context

During his visit to the **Seychelles**, the PM of India interacted with giant tortoises. The visit also highlighted **Jonathan**, a Seychelles giant tortoise recognised by the **Guinness World Records** as the world's oldest living land animal, estimated to be **194 years old**.

About Seychelles Giant Tortoise

- **One of the Largest Tortoises:** Among the world's largest reptiles, renowned for exceptional longevity.

- **Native Range:** Endemic to the **Seychelles archipelago** in the western Indian Ocean.
- **Conservation Status**
 - IUCN – Vulnerable
 - CITES – Appendix II
- **Major Habitat:** Most wild populations inhabit the **Aldabra Atoll**, a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** that supports over **100,000 giant tortoises**.
- **Protective Domed Shell:** Possesses a thick, high-domed **carapace** fused with the skeleton, providing strong protection from predators and environmental threats.
- **Slow Metabolism:** Its exceptionally low metabolic rate enables survival for weeks without food or water by utilising stored fat reserves, contributing to its remarkable lifespan.
- **Herbivorous Diet:** Feeds on grasses, leaves, fruits, and woody plants, while obtaining much of its water requirement directly from vegetation.
- **Highly Developed Sense of Smell:** Depends primarily on an acute sense of smell to locate food and navigate, compensating for limited vision and the absence of external ears.

SANTHAL REBELLION

Context:

PM Modi pays tribute to heroes of Santhal Hul (rebellion) on Hul Diwas.

About Santhal Rebellion

- The **Santhal Hul (1855–56)** was one of the earliest organized tribal-peasant uprisings against the British colonial administration.
- It was launched in **1855** under the leadership of **Sidho Murmu, Kanho Murmu, Chand Murmu, Bhairav Murmu**, along with **Phulo Murmu** and **Jhano Murmu**.
- The rebellion was directed against the British administration and the exploitative '**Dikus**'—a term used by the Santhals for **zamindars, moneylenders, darogas (police officials), and upper-caste outsiders**.
- The movement sought to safeguard the **land, livelihood, culture, and traditional rights** of the Santhal community.

Genesis of the Revolt

- In **1832**, the British established **Damin-i-Koh (Santhal Pargana)** to settle displaced Santhal tribes and encourage agriculture.
- Despite promises of secure land and livelihood, the Santhals soon faced:

- **Land alienation** by zamindars and moneylenders.
- **Begari (bonded labour)** and exploitative debt practices.
- Two oppressive forms of bonded labour became prevalent:
 - **Kamioti:** Borrowers had to work for the lender until the debt was repaid.
 - **Harwahi:** Borrowers were compelled to provide personal services and plough the lender's fields.
- Excessive interest rates and harsh lending conditions made repayment virtually impossible, trapping the Santhals in **perpetual debt bondage**.
- **These exploitative land, labour, and revenue practices, coupled with the failure of British authorities to protect tribal rights, became the immediate causes of the Santhal Hul (1855).**

Aftermath

- The rebellion eventually contributed to the enactment of the **Santhal Parganas Tenancy Act, 1876**, which:
 - Restricts the **transfer of Adivasi land to non-Adivasis**.
 - Permits **inheritance of land within the tribal community**.
 - Protects the customary **land and self-governance rights** of the Santhals.

SUMAN (SURAKSHIT MATRITVA AASHWASAN) ROADMAP 2030

Context

- The Union Health Minister launched the **SUMAN Roadmap 2030**

About SUMAN Roadmap 2030

- A **national strategy** by the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW)** to reduce **preventable maternal and newborn deaths** through **data-driven and technology-enabled healthcare**.
- Reduce **Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)** to **below 70 per 100,000 live births** by 2030 (SDG target).
- Achieve significant reductions in **Neonatal Mortality Rate (NMR)** and **Infant Mortality Rate (IMR)**.
- Ensure **universal and equitable maternal and newborn healthcare** across India.
- **SUMAN Panchayats:** Monitor maternal health, promote **100% institutional deliveries** and **child immunisation**.

- **Bi-weekly ASHA visits:** Home check-ups during the **8th and 9th months of pregnancy** to identify high-risk cases.
- **JANANI Portal:** Real-time digital platform to track **high-risk pregnancies** and health data.
- **NASG Deployment:** Use of **Non-Pneumatic Anti-Shock Garments (NASG)** to manage severe postpartum haemorrhage.
- **24×7 SUMAN Call Centre:** Grievance redressal and emergency support, along with **Centres of Excellence** for healthcare training.
- **Continuum of Care:** Integrates maternal health services with **Samagra Shishu Bal Swasthya Karyakram (SSBSK)** to provide care for **mother and child up to 36 months**.

WHITE-RUMPED VULTURE

Context

- The first attempt to reintroduce a **captive-bred White-rumped Vulture** in South India failed after a **radio-tagged bird was electrocuted by a power line near Mudumalai Tiger Reserve**.

About White-rumped Vulture

- **Distribution:** Found across the **Gangetic plains, central India, and semi-arid regions of India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, and parts of Southeast Asia**.
- **IUCN Status: Critically Endangered**
- **Major Threats**
 - **Veterinary diclofenac** in cattle carcasses causes **kidney failure** and **visceral gout** in vultures.
 - Other threats include:
 - **Electrocution** from uninsulated power lines.
 - **Pesticide contamination.**
 - **Habitat loss and degradation.**

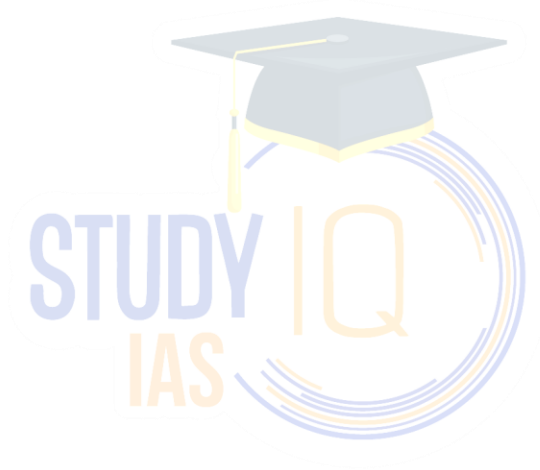
PROJECT BRAHMANK

Context

- **Project BRAHMANK** of the **Border Roads Organisation (BRO)** celebrated its **16th Raising Day** on **29 June 2026** at **Ranaghat, Arunachal Pradesh**.

About Project BRAHMANK

- A specialized project that develops and maintains strategic roads, bridges, and air infrastructure to ensure all-weather military connectivity and improve access to remote border villages.
- **Parent Organisation: Border Roads Organisation (BRO).**
- **Area of Responsibility:** Develops and maintains strategic infrastructure across **five districts of Arunachal Pradesh** and adjoining **border areas of Assam**.



Mains Exam Topics

INDIA-JAPAN RELATIONS

Context:

The Prime Minister of Japan arrived in New Delhi for the 16th India-Japan Annual Summit.

What Are the Key Pillars of India–Japan Bilateral Relations?

- **Economic Cooperation:** Trade, investment, technology, and industrial collaboration form the backbone of economic engagement.
 - E.g., The **India–Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)** (2011), bilateral trade of **US\$ 22.85 billion (FY 2023–24)**, and the **India–Japan Industrial Competitiveness Partnership (IJICP)** (2021).
- **Defence and Security Cooperation:** Both countries have strengthened defence ties through institutional dialogues, agreements, and military exercises.
 - E.g., **2025 Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation**, **2+2 Ministerial Dialogue**, and exercises such as **JIMEX**, **Dharma Guardian**, **MILAN**, and **MALABAR**.
- **Development and Connectivity Partnership:** Japan is a key partner in India's infrastructure development and regional connectivity initiatives.
 - E.g., **Mumbai–Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail (MAHSR)** and the **India–Japan Act East Forum** for the development of Northeast India.
- **Logistics Cooperation:** The **Reciprocal Provision of Supplies and Services Agreement (2020)** facilitates logistics support, joint exercises, and humanitarian assistance.
- **Clean Energy Cooperation:** Collaboration promotes the energy transition and climate action.
 - E.g., **India–Japan Clean Energy Partnership (2022)** on hydrogen, renewables, and decarbonisation.
- **Space Cooperation:** Expanding collaboration in frontier technologies.
 - E.g., **ISRO–JAXA LUPEX** lunar mission.
- **Tourism and Cultural Exchange:** Strengthening societal linkages through cultural initiatives.
 - E.g., **2023–24 Year of India–Japan Tourism Exchange**.
- **Skill Development and Mobility:** Facilitating employment and skill exchange.
 - E.g., **Technical Intern Training Programme (TITP)** and **Specified Skilled Worker (SSW)** programme.

How Does India–Japan Cooperation Contribute to Global Order?

- **Promoting a Rules-Based Indo-Pacific:** India and Japan support a **Free, Open and Inclusive Indo-Pacific (FOIP)** based on international law, freedom of navigation, and peaceful dispute resolution.
 - **E.g.,** Through the **Quadrilateral Security Dialogue**, they cooperate on maritime security, critical technologies, and resilient supply chains.
- **Strengthening Multilateral Governance:** Both countries advocate reforms of global institutions to make them more representative and effective.
 - **E.g.,** As members of the **G4**, India and Japan support each other's bid for permanent membership of a reformed **United Nations Security Council**.
- **Advancing Development in Africa:** India and Japan jointly promote sustainable, transparent, and inclusive development across Africa.
 - **E.g.,** The **Asia–Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC)** and the **Japan–India Cooperation Initiative for Sustainable Economic Development in Africa** strengthen connectivity, capacity building, and infrastructure.
- **Building Resilient Supply Chains:** The two countries work to diversify global supply chains and reduce excessive dependence on a single source.
 - **E.g.,** Along with Australia, they launched the **Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI)** to strengthen regional economic resilience.
- **Shaping the Global Technology Order:** India and Japan collaborate to establish secure, trusted, and resilient technology ecosystems, supporting an open and rules-based digital order.
 - **E.g.,** India–Japan Digital Partnership and semiconductor cooperation.

What Are the Major Challenges in India–Japan Relations?

- **Limited Economic Integration:** Despite strong political ties, bilateral trade and market access remain below potential.
 - **E.g.,** In FY 2023–24, Japan exported **US\$17.69 billion** to India, while India's exports stood at only **US\$5.15 billion**, reflecting a persistent trade imbalance.
- **Infrastructure Implementation Delays:** Execution challenges have slowed the progress of flagship bilateral projects.
 - **E.g.,** The **Mumbai–Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail (MAHSR)** project has been delayed due to land acquisition and regulatory hurdles.

- **Business and Regulatory Constraints:** Differences in business culture, language, and regulatory procedures continue to affect investment flows.
 - E.g., Japanese firms cite regulatory complexity and compliance costs despite initiatives like the **Japan–India Startup Hub**.
- **Different Regional Priorities:** India and Japan focus on different theatres of strategic importance, which may limit convergence on some regional issues.
 - E.g., India prioritises **South Asia** and the **Indian Ocean**, while Japan remains primarily focused on **East Asia**, and its alliance commitments with the **United States**.
- **Technology and Defence Collaboration Gaps:** Collaboration in advanced technologies and defence manufacturing has not fully realised its potential.
 - E.g., The proposed **US-2 amphibious aircraft** deal remains pending due to unresolved issues over pricing and technology transfer.

How Can India and Japan Deepen Their Strategic Partnership?

- **Strengthen Supply Chain Resilience:** Deepen cooperation in critical minerals, semiconductors, and emerging technologies to enhance economic security and reduce strategic vulnerabilities.
 - E.g., Collaboration under the **Asia Resilient Supply Chain Initiative (ARSCI)** and greater Japanese investment in India's manufacturing ecosystem.
- **Expand Infrastructure and Connectivity Cooperation:** Accelerate high-quality infrastructure projects and jointly promote sustainable connectivity in third countries.
 - E.g., Greater Japanese **Official Development Assistance (ODA)** for industrial corridors and high-speed rail, along with joint infrastructure initiatives in **South Asia, Africa**, and the **Indo-Pacific**.
- **Deepen Defence and Security Partnership:** Enhance maritime security, defence technology collaboration, and interoperability to support a stable Indo-Pacific.
 - E.g., Expanded **Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA)**, joint military exercises, and defence co-development aligned with **Make in India** and **Atmanirbhar Bharat**.
- **Promote Digital and Critical Technology Cooperation:** Build trusted partnerships in next-generation technologies and digital governance.
 - E.g., Advancing the **India–Japan Digital Partnership 2.0** in **AI, 5G/6G, quantum computing**, cybersecurity, and trusted telecom networks.
- **Advance Clean Energy and Climate Partnership:** Strengthen collaboration on the energy transition and sustainable development.

- E.g., Expand the **Japan–India Clean Energy Partnership (CEP)** through cooperation in **green hydrogen**, offshore wind, energy efficiency, and electric mobility.
- **Enhance People-to-People Ties:** Foster long-term partnerships through education, skill development, tourism, and cultural exchanges.
 - E.g., Expand the **Japan–India Institutes for Manufacturing (JIM)** and **Japanese Endowed Courses (JEC)** in Indian universities.
- **Champion a Rules-Based and Sustainable Global Order:** Work together to address global challenges through multilateral cooperation and support for the Global South.
 - E.g., Joint initiatives in **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)**, global health, sustainable development, and human-centric technology governance.

