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DAILY QUIZ — SOLVED

Daily Quiz — March 28, 2026

28 March 2026



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DAILY QUIZ — SOLVED ANSWER KEY

Daily Quiz — March 28, 2026

28 March 2026 · 30 Questions · Answers & Explanations Included

Question 1

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The 84th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2001, extended the freeze on delimitation of Lok Sabha seats until the first Census after which year?

A 2021

B 2026 ✓

C 2031

D 2036

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

✓ EXPLANATION

The **84th Amendment (2001)** extended the delimitation freeze — originally imposed by the **42nd Amendment (1976)** based on the **1971 Census** — until the first Census conducted after **2026**. This means the earliest possible delimitation exercise based on updated population data can occur after the **2031 Census** (assuming 2021 Census was not conducted and 2031 becomes the first post-2026 census).

📖 CONCEPT NOTE

The **Delimitation Commission** under **Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai** (constituted **2020**) completed delimitation for **J&K** in **2022**, redrawing all **90 Assembly constituencies**. The **European Parliament** uses **degressive proportionality** — smaller states like Malta get more seats per capita than Germany — a model some Indian scholars propose for post-2026 delimitation.

Article 170 governs state assembly seat allocation separately. The **Rajya Sabha** already uses unequal representation (**Article 80**), giving smaller states disproportionate voice, providing a constitutional precedent for weighted representation models.

Q1  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

This topic bridges **GS2** (Polity — federal structure, **Articles 81-82, 42nd/84th Amendments**) and **GS1** (Society — population dynamics, demographic transition in southern vs northern states). The fiscal dimension connects to **GS3** (Economy — **Finance Commission** devolution, tax sharing formula, **16th FC** GDP criterion) because states that controlled population fear losing both seats AND fiscal share.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

fiscal federalism, degressive proportionality, demographic divergence, cooperative federalism, population-weighted representation. Use "demographic asymmetry" in **GS2** answers on delimitation; use "fiscal contribution-representation mismatch" for the southern states argument that they contribute more tax revenue but may receive fewer seats.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students confuse the **84th Amendment (2001)**, which extended the freeze until first Census AFTER 2026, with the **87th Amendment (2003)**, which allowed SC/ST seat readjustment based on **2001 Census** without changing total state-wise allocation. The freeze is on **TOTAL** seats per state, not on internal constituency boundaries within a state.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC **2024 Prelims** tested delimitation provisions directly. Always pair the **42nd Amendment (1976, original freeze using 1971 Census)** with the **84th Amendment (2001, extension until first Census after 2026)**.

The trigger is "first Census after 2026" — which means the **2031 Census**, not 2026 itself, since the **2021 Census** was not conducted.

 **INTERVIEW**

If you were on the **Delimitation Commission**, how would you balance the democratic principle of equal representation with the legitimate concern of southern states like **Kerala** and **Tamil Nadu** that successfully controlled their population growth and now face potential seat reduction?

 **QUICK FIRE — TEST YOURSELF**

1 Which Amendment Act originally froze Lok Sabha seats based on the 1971 Census?

Find answer → </editorials/2026/03/north-south-divide-delimitation-federalism>

2 Under which Articles of the Constitution is the allocation of Lok Sabha seats to states governed?

Find answer → </editorials/2026/03/delimitation-2026-lok-sabha-expansion-north-south>

3 Who is the Chairman of the 16th Finance Commission?

Find answer → [current-affairs-today](#)

 [Read Full Article](#) →

Question 2

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Consider the following statements about the Finance Commission of India:

1. Article 280 mandates the constitution of a Finance Commission every five years.
2. The 16th Finance Commission introduced GDP contribution as a criterion for horizontal devolution for the first time.
3. The Finance Commission recommendations are binding on the Union Government.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

A 1 and 2 only ✓

B 2 and 3 only

C 1, 2 and 3

D 1 only

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

EXPLANATION

Statements 1 and 2 are correct. **Article 280** mandates a **Finance Commission** every five years, and the **16th FC (Arvind Panagariya)** introduced a **10% weight** for state GDP contribution — a first.

Statement 3 is wrong: FC recommendations are **advisory, not binding**, though the Union Government has historically accepted them in practice.

CONCEPT NOTE

The **1st Finance Commission** (Chairman **K.C. Neogy, 1951**) used only population and contribution as criteria. Over **16 commissions**, the formula evolved to include area, forest cover, income distance, and now GDP contribution.

The **GST Compensation Cess** (introduced **2017**, extended to **June 2022**) created a parallel fiscal transfer mechanism outside FC jurisdiction, with states like **Punjab** and **Kerala** heavily dependent on it. The **Inter-State Council (Article 263)**, reconstituted in **2021**, provides an alternative forum for resolving fiscal disputes but has met only sporadically since its establishment in **1990**.

Q2  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

This topic is central to **GS2** (Polity — **fiscal federalism**, Centre-State relations, **Article 280**) and equally important for **GS3** (Economy — public finance, tax devolution, Union Budget). The **16th FC** GDP criterion has a **GS1** (Society) dimension too, since population weight reduction implicitly rewards states with better demographic outcomes.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

horizontal devolution, income distance criterion, fiscal asymmetry, vertical devolution, tax effort criterion, GDP contribution weight. Use "degressive proportionality in fiscal transfers" when arguing for the southern states position; use "equity-based redistribution" when defending the population-weighted approach of poorer states.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students assume FC recommendations are constitutionally binding because they are usually accepted in practice — but **Article 280** makes them advisory. The Union Government tables the FC report with an Action Taken Report but is not legally obligated to implement every recommendation. Also, do not confuse **vertical devolution** (Centre-to-States share, retained at **41%** by **16th FC**) with **horizontal devolution** (inter-State distribution formula).

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC **2023 Prelims** asked about FC criteria weights. The **16th FC** replaced the **2.5%** "Tax and Fiscal Effort" criterion with a **10% GDP contribution weight** — a **4x increase** that shifted shares toward industrialised states like **Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu**. Memorise the shift from **15th to 16th FC** criteria.

 **INTERVIEW**

If states like **Karnataka** and **Tamil Nadu** contribute disproportionately to GDP but receive less per capita devolution, does the current fiscal transfer system create moral hazard — rewarding underperformance and penalising economic dynamism?

 **QUICK FIRE — TEST YOURSELF**

- 1** What percentage weight did the 16th Finance Commission assign to GDP contribution in horizontal devolution?
[Find answer → /editorials/2026/03/north-south-divide-delimitation-federalism](/editorials/2026/03/north-south-divide-delimitation-federalism)

- 2** Under which Article of the Constitution is the Finance Commission constituted?
[Find answer → /editorials/2026/03/finance-commission-tax-devolution](/editorials/2026/03/finance-commission-tax-devolution)

- 3** What is the vertical devolution percentage retained by the 16th Finance Commission?
[Find answer → current-affairs-today](#)

[Read Full Article →](#)

Question 3

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ASSERTION (A)

The Supreme Court of India recognised menstrual health and hygiene as a fundamental right under Article 21.

REASON (R)

Article 15(3) of the Constitution permits the State to make special provisions for women and children.

- A** Both A and R are correct and R is the correct explanation of A
- B** Both A and R are correct but R is NOT the correct explanation of A ✓
- C** A is correct but R is incorrect
- D** A is incorrect but R is correct

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

Both statements are factually correct. The **Supreme Court (CJI Surya Kant bench, 2026)** did recognise MHH as an **Article 21** right, and **Article 15(3)** does permit special provisions for women.

However, the Court grounded its recognition in **Article 21** (right to life and dignity), NOT in **Article 15(3)**. **Article 15(3)** is an enabling provision for affirmative action — it is not the constitutional basis for the MHH ruling.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

The **Maternity Benefit Act 1961** (amended **2017**) increased paid maternity leave from **12 to 26 weeks** for the first two children, making India one of the most generous globally. **Spain** became the first European country to introduce paid menstrual leave in **February 2023** under its organic law on sexual and reproductive health.

The **Vishaka Guidelines (1997)** and the **POSH Act 2013** established the broader framework for workplace gender justice. **CEDAW** (ratified by India in **1993**) under **Article 11** mandates non-discrimination in employment, providing international law backing for gender-specific workplace policies.

Q3  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

This topic intersects **GS1** (Society — women empowerment, gender dynamics in workplace) and **GS2** (Polity — fundamental rights, judicial pronouncements expanding **Article 21**, intersection of **Articles 14, 15, and 21**). For **GS4** (Ethics), the dilemma between protective legislation and reinforcing biological essentialism is a rich source for case studies on gender justice.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

substantive equality, biological essentialism, gender mainstreaming, protective discrimination vs equal treatment, dignity jurisprudence. Use "dignity-based expansion of **Article 21**" when discussing the SC ruling; use "protective paternalism critique" when presenting the counter-argument that menstrual leave reinforces stereotypes about women being biologically weaker.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students conflate **Article 15(3)** (permissive provision enabling the State to make special provisions for women) with **Article 21** (right to life and dignity, which the Court used as the actual constitutional basis). **Article 21** is expansive and self-executing; **Article 15(3)** is merely permissive and does not create rights by itself.

The A-R format specifically tests whether students can distinguish the legal basis from a related but non-explanatory provision.

 **EXAM TIP**

Assertion-Reason questions always test whether R explains A — here both are true facts but R is NOT the reason for A. **Bihar** was the first Indian state to introduce menstrual leave for government employees in **1992** under **Lalu Prasad**; **Karnataka** introduced the most comprehensive policy in **2025** covering both public and private sectors with **12 paid days per year**.

 **INTERVIEW**

Is menstrual leave an equality measure that acknowledges biological reality, or a protective measure that inadvertently reinforces gender stereotypes and makes employers reluctant to hire women? How do you reconcile the Japanese experience — where the **1947** menstrual leave law sees less than **1%** utilisation — with legislative intent?

 **QUICK FIRE — TEST YOURSELF**

1 Under which Article did the Supreme Court ground its recognition of menstrual health and hygiene as a fundamental right?

Find answer → </editorials/2026/03/menstrual-leave-gender-workplace-policy>

2 Which country became the first in Europe to introduce paid menstrual leave in February 2023?

Find answer → </editorials/2026/03/menstrual-leave-gender-workplace-policy>

3 What does Article 15(3) of the Indian Constitution permit the State to do?

Find answer → </editorials/2026/03/sc-maternity-leave-paternity-leave>

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Question 4

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[Source →](#)

Which state became the first in India to introduce menstrual leave for government employees?

A Kerala

B Karnataka

C Bihar ✓

D Odisha

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

✓ EXPLANATION

Bihar was the first state in India to introduce menstrual leave in **1992**, granting **two days** of special leave per month exclusively to female government employees. **Karnataka** introduced the most comprehensive policy in **2025** — covering both public and private sectors with **12 paid days per year**. **Kerala** introduced leave for students (not employees) in **2023**.

📖 CONCEPT NOTE

The **Menstrual Hygiene Scheme (2011, Ministry of Health)** provides subsidised sanitary napkins to adolescent girls in rural areas through **ASHA workers**. The **GST Council** reduced the tax on sanitary napkins from **12% to 0%** in **July 2018** following sustained campaigning by civil society groups.

Zomato introduced a **10-day** annual menstrual leave policy for all employees (including transgender persons) in **August 2020**, becoming the first major Indian private company to do so. The **ILO Convention 183** on Maternity Protection (**2000**) provides the international framework for workplace protections linked to biological functions.

Q4  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

This topic connects **GS1** (Society — women empowerment, social reform through legislation) with **GS2** (Governance — state-level policy innovation, **laboratory federalism**). The comparison with international models (Japan **1947**, Spain **2023**, Zambia) adds a **GS2** (IR) dimension on global gender policy benchmarking.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

gender equity, workplace flexibility, laboratory federalism, state-level policy diffusion, protective vs empowering legislation. Use "state as laboratory of democracy" when discussing **Bihar** pioneering this policy; use "sectoral coverage gap" when contrasting Bihar (only government employees) with **Karnataka** (public and private sectors both covered).

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students pick **Kerala** because it is associated with progressive social indicators and high HDI — but Kerala introduced menstrual leave for students in educational institutions (**2023**), not for government or private sector employees. **Bihar** (**1992**, under CM **Lalu Prasad Yadav**) pioneered the employee-focused policy after a **32-day strike** by women government employees. **Karnataka** (**2025**, under CM **Siddaramaiah**) was the first to mandate it for both public and private sectors.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC frequently tests state-level firsts in governance and social policy. Maintain a comparative table: **Bihar** (**1992**, government employees, **2 days/month**), **Karnataka** (**2025**, all sectors, **1 day/month** i.e. **12/year**), **Kerala** (**2023**, students only). Globally, Japan has the oldest menstrual leave law (**Labour Standards Act, 1947**) but utilisation is below **1%**.

 **INTERVIEW**

With Japan having the oldest menstrual leave law (**1947**) yet less than **1%** utilisation due to workplace stigma, does legislation alone change outcomes? Should India focus on menstrual health infrastructure (sanitary facilities, subsidised products) rather than leave policies that may discourage hiring women?

 **QUICK FIRE — TEST YOURSELF**

1 How many paid days of menstrual leave per year does Karnataka provide under its 2025 policy?

Find answer → </editorials/2026/03/menstrual-leave-gender-workplace-policy>

2 Which private Indian company first introduced menstrual leave for all employees including transgender persons in 2020?

Find answer → </editorials/2026/03/menstrual-leave-gender-workplace-policy>

3 In which year was the Maternity Benefit Act amended to increase paid maternity leave from 12 to 26 weeks?

Find answer → </editorials/2026/03/sc-maternity-leave-adoptive-mothers>

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Question 5

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Match List I with List II and select the correct answer:

LIST I (GDP METHODOLOGY TERM)	LIST II (DEFINITION)
A. Double Deflation	1. Survey of informal enterprises conducted annually
B. PFCE	2. Adjusting both inputs and outputs separately using respective price indices
C. ASUSE	3. Total household spending on goods and services
D. SNA 2008	4. International standard for national accounts compilation

A A-2, B-3, C-1, D-4 ✓

B A-3, B-2, C-4, D-1

C A-1, B-4, C-3, D-2

D A-4, B-1, C-2, D-3

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
 **EXPLANATION**

Double deflation adjusts both inputs and outputs with their respective price indices (A-2). **PFCE (Private Final Consumption Expenditure)** measures total household spending (B-3).

ASUSE (Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises) covers informal enterprises annually (C-1). **SNA 2008** is the international standard for compiling national accounts (D-4).

India adopted **double deflation** in its **2022-23 base year** revision — a long-overdue alignment with **SNA 2008**.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

The **National Statistical Commission** (Chairman **Pronab Sen, 2001**) recommended creating an autonomous **National Statistical Office** independent of government control. The **Rangarajan Committee (2014)** flagged concerns about India GDP methodology after the controversial **2011-12 base year** revision that showed higher growth under the UPA period. **MoSPI** was merged with the **Ministry of Corporate Affairs** in **2019** but later restored as an independent ministry in **2021**. China similarly revised its GDP methodology in **2019**, adding R&D expenditure, which boosted its nominal GDP by approximately **2.1%**.

Q5  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

This topic is core **GS3** (Economy — national income accounting, GDP measurement, statistical credibility) but connects to **GS2** (Governance — role of **NSO** and **MoSPI** in democratic accountability) because GDP data quality affects policy credibility, fiscal targets, and India position in international economic rankings.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

statistical credibility, nominal vs real GDP, base year revision, deflator methodology, GVA at basic prices, single deflation bias.

Use "statistical sovereignty" when arguing India should develop indigenous measurement frameworks; use "methodological alignment with **SNA 2008**" when discussing the **2022-23 base year revision**.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students confuse **single deflation** (only output prices adjusted using a single deflator, which creates bias when input and output prices diverge) with **double deflation** (both input and output prices deflated separately using their respective price indices, giving more accurate GVA).

Also, **ASUSE (Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises)** is often confused with the older **NSSO quinquennial Enterprise Survey** — ASUSE is annual and was introduced to capture the informal sector more frequently.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC **2019 Prelims** asked about GDP calculation methods.

Know three approaches: production (**GVA**), expenditure (**PFCE + GFCE + GCF + Net Exports**), and income (compensation + operating surplus + mixed income). India moved from **180 to 600 deflators** in the new series, and the nominal GDP revision showed a **Rs 12 lakh crore** reduction — a politically sensitive statistical correction.

 **INTERVIEW**

India nominal GDP fell by **Rs 12 lakh crore** under the new base year series — what does this mean for the **\$5 trillion economy** target timeline? If the methodology is more accurate but produces lower numbers, should the government celebrate statistical honesty or worry about perception?

 **QUICK FIRE — TEST YOURSELF**

1 What is the full form of ASUSE in India national accounts framework?

Find answer → </editorials/2026/03/india-gdp-growth-data-credibility>

2 Which international standard does SNA 2008 set for national accounts compilation?

Find answer → </editorials/2026/03/new-gdp-series-2022-23-base-year>

3 By how much did India nominal GDP fall under the new 2022-23 base year series?

Find answer → </editorials/2026/03/gdp-data-discrepancies>

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Question 6

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Which of the following statements about the Paris Agreement is **NOT** correct?

- A It was adopted at COP21 in Paris on December 12, 2015
- B It entered into force on November 4, 2016
- C It sets legally binding quantified emission reduction targets for all parties ✓
- D It enshrines the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR-RC)

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

The **Paris Agreement** does NOT set legally binding quantified emission targets. Unlike the **Kyoto Protocol** (which had binding targets for **Annex I** countries), the Paris Agreement uses a **bottom-up approach** where countries set their own voluntary **NDCs**.

While the **Enhanced Transparency Framework** is binding, the actual emission targets are self-determined with no penalty for missing them. All other options are factually correct.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

The **UNFCCC** was adopted at the **Rio Earth Summit (1992)** and entered into force in **1994**, establishing the foundational principle of **CBDR**. The **Kyoto Protocol (1997)** created three flexible mechanisms — **Clean Development Mechanism (CDM)**, **Joint Implementation (JI)**, and **Emissions Trading** — which the Paris Agreement replaced with **Article 6** cooperative approaches.

India co-founded the **International Solar Alliance** at **COP21** alongside **France**, headquartered in **Gurugram**. The first **Global Stocktake** concluded at **COP28 Dubai (2023)**, calling for transitioning away from fossil fuels — a historic first mention of fossil fuels in COP decision text.

Q6  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

This topic spans **GS2** (IR — multilateral environmental agreements, North-South divide in climate governance) and **GS3** (Environment — climate change mitigation, carbon markets, **NDC** architecture). For **GS4** (Ethics), the intergenerational equity dimension of climate commitments provides excellent essay and case study material on obligations to future generations.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

CBDR-RC, NDC architecture, voluntary vs binding commitments, climate equity, bottom-up vs top-down approach, transparency framework, global stocktake. Use "architectural shift from Kyoto to Paris" when explaining the move from top-down binding targets (**Annex I** only) to bottom-up voluntary pledges (all parties).
Use "ambition mechanism" when discussing the **ratchet mechanism** requiring progressively stronger NDCs every five years.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students confuse the **Paris Agreement (2015, voluntary NDCs for ALL parties, bottom-up architecture)** with the **Kyoto Protocol (1997, legally binding targets for Annex I/developed countries ONLY, top-down architecture)**.
The Paris Agreement makes transparency and reporting legally binding under the **Enhanced Transparency Framework**, but the actual emission targets within NDCs are self-determined and voluntary with no penalty mechanism for non-compliance.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC **2022 Prelims** asked about Paris Agreement provisions.
Key distinctions to remember: the Agreement was adopted at **COP21 (December 12, 2015)** and entered into force on **November 4, 2016** — the fastest entry into force of any major multilateral treaty. The US withdrew under **Trump** (effective **November 2020**) and rejoined under **Biden (February 2021)**, then withdrew again under **Trump 2.0 (January 2025)**.

 **INTERVIEW**

If Paris targets are voluntary with no enforcement mechanism, what prevents free-riding? Is the "naming and shaming" approach through the **Global Stocktake** sufficient, or does the climate crisis require a return to Kyoto-style binding obligations?

 **QUICK FIRE — TEST YOURSELF**

- 1** At which COP was the Paris Agreement adopted?
[Find answer → /editorials/2026/03/paris-agreement-equity-climate-justice](/editorials/2026/03/paris-agreement-equity-climate-justice)

- 2** What does the acronym CBDR-RC stand for in climate negotiations?
[Find answer → /editorials/2026/03/climate-action-gap-planetary-boundaries](/editorials/2026/03/climate-action-gap-planetary-boundaries)

- 3** Which protocol preceded the Paris Agreement with legally binding targets for Annex I countries?
[Find answer → /editorials/2026/03/paris-agreement-equity-climate-justice](/editorials/2026/03/paris-agreement-equity-climate-justice)

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Question 7

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India updated NDC 3.0 (approved March 2026 for the 2031-2035 period) includes which of the following targets?

1. Reduce emissions intensity of GDP by 47% from 2005 levels by 2035
2. Achieve 60% non-fossil fuel electricity capacity by 2035
3. Achieve net-zero emissions by 2050

Select the correct answer:

A 1 and 2 only ✓

B 2 and 3 only

C 1, 2 and 3

D 1 only

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

EXPLANATION

Statements 1 and 2 are correct: **NDC 3.0** targets **47% emissions intensity reduction** and **60% non-fossil capacity by 2035**. Statement 3 is wrong: India net-zero target remains **2070** (unchanged from the **COP26 Glasgow** commitment in **2021**), not 2050.

The **EU** and **US** target **2050**; **China** targets **2060**. India argues that its later target is justified by its low historical emissions (~4% of cumulative global CO₂).

CONCEPT NOTE

The **National Green Hydrogen Mission (January 2023, Rs 19,744 crore)** targets **5 MMTPA** green hydrogen production by **2030**, which could reduce India annual CO₂ emissions by **50 MMT**. The **PM-KUSUM scheme (2019)** aims for **30.8 GW** of solar capacity through decentralised agricultural installations.

India **Long-Term Low Emissions Development Strategy (LT-LEDS)**, submitted at **COP27**, outlines sector-wise pathways to net-zero by **2070** covering power, transport, industry, buildings, and **LULUCF**. **Brazil**, like India, also set a later net-zero target (**2050**) but faces deforestation-driven emission challenges unlike India efficiency-driven approach.

Q7  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

This topic bridges **GS3** (Environment — renewable energy targets, climate commitments, carbon budget) and **GS2** (IR — India positioning at COPs, climate diplomacy with the Global South). The **2015 NDC** targeted **33-35% emissions intensity reduction** and **40% non-fossil capacity** by **2030** — India achieved both ahead of schedule (**36% intensity reduction** by **2020**, **52.57% non-fossil capacity** by **February 2026**).

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

emissions intensity vs absolute emissions, carbon budget equity, climate finance conditionality, NDC progression, ratchet mechanism. Use "ambition gap vs implementation gap" when discussing the **Climate Action Tracker** critique — India overperforms on targets that CAT considers too modest.
Use "conditional vs unconditional NDC" when discussing climate finance linkage.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students confuse net-zero target years across major emitters: **EU** and **US** target **2050**, **China** targets **2060**, India targets **2070**.
Also, **emissions intensity reduction** (per unit GDP) is fundamentally different from **absolute emissions reduction** — India absolute emissions may still rise even as intensity falls, because GDP growth outpaces efficiency gains. **NDC 3.0** was approved by Cabinet on **March 26, 2026**, not at a COP.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC asks about NDC targets almost every year in both Prelims and Mains.
Know the exact progression: **NDC 1.0 (2015, 33-35% intensity cut + 40% non-fossil by 2030)** was achieved early; **NDC 2.0 (2022, 45% intensity + 50% non-fossil by 2030)** was also nearly met; **NDC 3.0 (2026, 47% intensity + 60% non-fossil by 2035)** extends the trajectory. India also added a **carbon sink target of 4.0 billion tonnes CO2-equivalent** by 2035.

 **INTERVIEW**

India already achieved **36% intensity reduction** by **2020** and **52.57% non-fossil capacity** by **February 2026** — well ahead of schedule. Are the official NDC targets deliberately conservative to preserve negotiating leverage at COPs, or should India set more ambitious targets that reflect its actual trajectory to strengthen its climate leadership credentials?

 **QUICK FIRE — TEST YOURSELF**

- 1** What is India net-zero emissions target year announced at COP26 Glasgow?
[Find answer → /editorials/2026/03/india climate action good story](#)

- 2** What emissions intensity reduction from 2005 levels does NDC 3.0 target by 2035?
[Find answer → /editorials/2026/03/paris agreement equity climate justice](#)

- 3** What carbon sink target in billion tonnes CO2-equivalent did India add in NDC 3.0 for 2035?
[Find answer → /editorials/2026/03/india climate action good story](#)

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Question 8

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ASSERTION (A)

India Strategic Petroleum Reserve provides approximately 9.5 days of crude oil consumption coverage.

REASON (R)

India imports 85-88% of its crude oil requirements, making it highly vulnerable to supply disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz.

- A** Both A and R are correct and R is the correct explanation of A
- B** Both A and R are correct but R is NOT the correct explanation of A ✓
- C** A is correct but R is incorrect
- D** A is incorrect but R is correct

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

Both A and R are factually correct. India SPR capacity of **5.33 MMT** provides roughly **9.5 days** of coverage, and India does import **85-88%** of crude.

However, R does not explain A: the limited SPR coverage is due to insufficient storage infrastructure (only three facilities at **Vishakhapatnam, Mangaluru, and Padur**), not because of the import dependence percentage itself. The **IEA** recommends **90 days** — **Japan** maintains **140 days**.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

ISPR (Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Limited), a subsidiary of **ONGC**, manages all SPR facilities. India became an **IEA Associate Member** in **March 2017** but is not a full member (requires **OECD** membership and **90-day** reserve compliance).

The **National Biofuel Policy 2018** (amended **2022**) advanced the **E20 ethanol blending** target from **2030 to 2025-26**. India crude import bill was approximately **\$157 billion** in **FY2024**.

Operation Rahat (2015, Yemen) and **Operation Kaveri (2023, Sudan)** demonstrated how Gulf instability directly threatens Indian diaspora safety alongside energy supply chains.

Q8  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

This topic connects **GS3** (Economy — energy security, oil pricing, strategic reserves) with **GS2** (IR — West Asia policy, India-Gulf relations, **Hormuz chokepoint** diplomacy). The SPR investment question also touches **GS3** (Economy — capital expenditure priorities, infrastructure investment) because expanding SPR from **9.5 to 90 days** requires massive underground cavern construction.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

energy security, SPR expansion, Hormuz chokepoint, oil import diversification, Phase II expansion, PPP model for strategic reserves. Use "supply-side vulnerability" when discussing the **85-88%** import dependence; use "demand-side management" when arguing for electric vehicles, ethanol blending, and hydrogen as long-term solutions alongside SPR expansion.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students assume high import dependence automatically explains low SPR coverage — but SPR size is a policy choice about infrastructure investment, not a mechanical consequence of import levels. **Japan** is also **85%+** import-dependent for crude oil but maintains approximately **140 days** of reserves through deliberate decades-long investment.

India **Phase II** plans at **Chandikhol (4 MMT)** in **Odisha** and **Padur expansion (2.5 MMT)** in **Karnataka** will add **6.5 MMT** on PPP mode, but even then total coverage would reach only about **22 days**.

 **EXAM TIP**

Remember the three **Phase I** SPR locations — **Vishakhapatnam (1.33 MMT, Andhra Pradesh), Mangaluru (1.5 MMT, Karnataka), and Padur (2.5 MMT, Karnataka)** — totalling **5.33 MMT**. **Phase II** adds **Chandikhol (Odisha)** and Padur expansion. The **IEA** recommends **90 days** of net import coverage as a minimum; India as an **IEA Associate Member** is expected to work toward this benchmark.

 **INTERVIEW**

India SPR covers only **9.5 days** against the **IEA** benchmark of **90 days**. Should India fast-track SPR expansion through massive infrastructure investment, or is diversifying import sources (from Gulf-heavy to Russian, African, and American crude) and reducing oil dependence through EVs and green hydrogen a better long-term strategy?

 **QUICK FIRE — TEST YOURSELF**

1 What is the total capacity of India three Phase I Strategic Petroleum Reserve facilities in million metric tonnes?

[Find answer → /editorials/2026/03/spr energy security west asia crisis](#)

2 How many days of crude oil reserve does the IEA recommend as a minimum benchmark?

[Find answer → /editorials/2026/03/india energy insecurity oil dependence systemic risk](#)

3 In which three locations are India Phase I SPR facilities situated?

[Find answer → current affairs today](#)

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Match List I with List II and select the correct answer:

LIST I (CENTRAL ARMED POLICE FORCE)	LIST II (PRIMARY BORDER/FUNCTION)
A. BSF	1. India-China border (LAC)
B. ITBP	2. India-Pakistan and India-Bangladesh borders
C. SSB	3. Critical infrastructure (airports, metro, nuclear plants)
D. CISF	4. India-Nepal and India-Bhutan borders

A A-2, B-1, C-4, D-3 ✓

B A-1, B-2, C-3, D-4

C A-2, B-4, C-1, D-3

D A-4, B-3, C-2, D-1

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
EXPLANATION

BSF guards India-Pakistan and India-Bangladesh borders (A-2, raised **1965**). **ITBP** guards the India-China **LAC** (B-1, raised **1962**).

SSB guards India-Nepal and India-Bhutan borders (C-4, raised **1963** as **Special Service Bureau**). **CISF** guards critical infrastructure like airports, metro systems, and nuclear plants (D-3, raised **1969**).

These five CAPFs together have over **10 lakh** personnel.

CONCEPT NOTE

The **Second Administrative Reforms Commission** (Chairman **Veerappa Moily, 2005-2009**) recommended reducing lateral entry of generalist IAS/IPS officers into specialised forces. The **Kargil Review Committee (2000)** and **Group of Ministers Report (2001)** both highlighted the need for professional leadership in paramilitary forces.

The **CRPF**, India largest CAPF with approximately **3.25 lakh** personnel, has seen cadre officers lead operations like anti-Naxal campaigns in Bastar but are denied DG-level appointments. The **Police Act 1861** (still operational in many states) and the **Model Police Act 2006** provide the broader framework for police reforms that remain largely unimplemented.

Q9  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

This topic is core to **GS2** (Polity — security apparatus, **MHA** administrative structure) and **GS3** (Security — border management, internal security architecture). The **CAPF Bill 2026** controversy adds a **GS2** (Polity — separation of powers) dimension because the Bill attempts to legislatively override the **Supreme Court May 2025 OGAS verdict** through statutory codification of IPS deputation percentages.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

CAPF cadre reform, IPS deputation, OGAS status, unified force legislation, border management doctrine, dual control. Use "legislative override of judicial mandate" when discussing the **CAPF Bill 2026** vs the SC **May 2025** verdict; use "professional autonomy vs generalist oversight" when arguing the cadre officers position against IPS deputation at apex levels.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students confuse **SSB** (guards India-Nepal and India-Bhutan open borders, raised **1963** as **Special Service Bureau**, renamed **Sashastra Seema Bal** in **2001**) with **Assam Rifles** (guards Indo-Myanmar border under unique dual control of **MHA** for administrative matters and **Indian Army** for operational control). **ITBP** is often wrongly associated with the India-Myanmar border — it guards only the India-China **LAC**.

BSF was raised after the **1965 Indo-Pak war** specifically because border policing was previously handled by state police.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC **2020 Prelims** tested CAPF founding years and border assignments. Build a mnemonic: **BSF (1965, Pak+Bangladesh)**, **ITBP (1962, China LAC)**, **SSB (1963, Nepal+Bhutan)**, **CISF (1969, infrastructure)**, **CRPF (1939, internal security)**. Over **13,000 Group A** CAPF officers face **15-18 year** stagnation for their first promotion due to IPS officers blocking apex posts through deputation.

 **INTERVIEW**

The **CAPF Bill 2026** proposes **50%** IPS deputation at **IG** level, **67%** at **ADG**, and **100%** at **SDG/DG** — effectively reversing the SC **May 2025** verdict that directed phased IPS reduction. Does this undermine judicial authority, or is Parliament exercising its legitimate legislative power to override judicial overreach into cadre management?

 **QUICK FIRE — TEST YOURSELF**

- 1** In which year was the Border Security Force (BSF) raised?
[Find answer → /editorials/2026/03/capf centralisation internal security](#)

- 2** What was the SSB originally called before being renamed Sashastra Seema Bal in 2001?
[Find answer → current affairs today](#)

- 3** Which force guards the Indo-Myanmar border under dual control of MHA and the Indian Army?
[Find answer → /editorials/2026/03/capf centralisation internal security](#)

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Question 10

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The CAPF (General Administration) Bill, 2026 proposes what percentage of IPS deputation at the rank of Inspector General in the Central Armed Police Forces?

A 33%

B 50% ✓

C 67%

D 100%

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

The **CAPF Bill 2026** proposes a tiered IPS deputation structure: **50%** at **Inspector General (IG)** level, minimum **67%** at **Additional Director General (ADG)** level, and **100%** at **Special Director General (SDG)** and **Director General (DG)** levels. This is significant because the **Supreme Court** in **May 2025** had granted **OGAS (Organised Group A Service)** status to CAPF cadre officers and directed progressive reduction of IPS deputation up to IG rank.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

The **Prakash Singh vs Union of India** case (2006) laid down **seven directives** for police reforms including fixed tenure for DGPs and separation of law-and-order from investigation functions. The **National Police Commission (1977-1981, 8 reports)** was the most comprehensive examination of policing in India.

Article 312 allows creation of All-India Services only through a **Rajya Sabha** resolution by **two-thirds majority** — the demand for an **All-India Paramilitary Service** on par with IPS has been raised repeatedly but never implemented. The **Border Security Force Act 1968** and **CRPF Act 1949** govern individual CAPFs separately, lacking unified cadre legislation.

Q10  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

This topic bridges **GS2** (Polity — separation of powers, parliamentary sovereignty vs judicial review, **Article 312** on All-India Services) and **GS3** (Security — internal security force management, professional military/police ethos). The constitutional question of whether Parliament can legislatively override a Supreme Court directive on service conditions raises fundamental questions about institutional boundaries.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

OGAS status, cadre management, legislative override of judicial mandate, Article 312 (All-India Services), **IPS deputation, professional force culture**. Use "institutional capture through deputation" when presenting the CAPF cadre officers argument; use "unified command chain requiring generalist leadership" when presenting the government justification for IPS presence at apex levels.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students confuse the deputation percentages across ranks — remember the ascending pattern: **50%** at **IG** level, minimum **67%** at **ADG** level, **100%** at **SDG** and **DG** levels. This means cadre officers can never reach the top two ranks in their own forces. Also note that **Article 312** governs All-India Services creation — Parliament can create new AIS only if **Rajya Sabha** passes a resolution by **two-thirds majority**, but the CAPF Bill does not create a new AIS; it codifies deputation norms.

 **EXAM TIP**

The SC **May 2025** verdict (granting **OGAS** status) and the **CAPF Bill 2026** (codifying IPS dominance) represent a textbook separation-of-powers conflict. Over **13,000 Group A** CAPF officers protested the Bill, citing **15-18 year** stagnation for their first promotion. Know the five CAPFs covered: **BSF, CRPF, CISF, ITBP, SSB** — together comprising over **10 lakh** personnel.

 **INTERVIEW**

Is the **CAPF Bill 2026** a legitimate exercise of parliamentary sovereignty in cadre management, or an executive-backed legislative attempt to circumvent the **Supreme Court May 2025 OGAS verdict**? If cadre officers who spend **30+ years** in a force cannot lead it, what does this say about meritocracy in India security architecture?

 **QUICK FIRE — TEST YOURSELF**

- 1** What percentage of IPS deputation does the CAPF Bill 2026 propose at the SDG and DG levels?
[Find answer → /editorials/2026/03/capf centralisation internal security](#)

- 2** In which year did the Supreme Court grant OGAS status to CAPF cadre officers?
[Find answer → current affairs today](#)

- 3** How many Group A CAPF officers face promotion stagnation due to IPS deputation blocking apex posts?
[Find answer → /editorials/2026/03/capf centralisation internal security](#)

[Read Full Article →](#)

Question 11

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Which of the following about the Noida International Airport (NIA) is **INCORRECTLY** stated?

- A It is developed under the PPP model by a subsidiary of Zurich Airport International AG
- B The concession agreement is for a period of 40 years from October 2021
- C It has the IATA code DXN and is designed as India first net-zero emissions airport
- D **Phase 1 has a capacity of 30 million passengers per annum with two operational runways ✓**

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

Option D is incorrect: **Phase 1** of **NIA** has a capacity of **12 MPPA** (not 30) with a single runway of **3,900 metres** (not two). The **30 MPPA** target with **2 runways** is planned for **Phase 2** (by **FY32**).

All other statements are correct: **YIAPL** (**Zurich Airport** subsidiary) operates it under a **40-year PPP concession**, the IATA code is **DXN**, and it is designed as India first **net-zero emissions airport**.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

The **UDAN** (**Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik**) scheme launched in **2016** aims to make regional air connectivity affordable with viability gap funding for airlines operating on underserved routes. India had **157 operational airports** as of **March 2026** under the **NABH Nirman** (**NextGen Airports for Bharat**) initiative targeting **220 airports** by **2030**.

The **Airports Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA)**, established under the **AERA Act 2008**, regulates tariffs at major airports with annual passenger traffic exceeding **35 lakh**. **Delhi IGI Airport** (operated by **DIAL, GMR Group**) handles approximately **72 MPPA**, making it India busiest airport by passenger volume.

Q11  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

This topic connects **GS3** (Economy — infrastructure development, PPP models, FDI in aviation) with **GS2** (Governance — cooperative federalism in mega infrastructure projects involving Centre, state, and private operators). The net-zero airport design links to **GS3** (Environment — sustainable infrastructure, green building standards).

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

greenfield vs brownfield airports, DBFOT model, NABH Nirman, UDAN scheme, aviation infrastructure deficit, PPP concession framework. Use "viability gap funding in aviation PPP" when discussing how greenfield airports achieve financial closure; use "multi-modal connectivity" when discussing NIA integration with Noida Metro, Delhi-Mumbai Expressway, and proposed HSR.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students confuse **Phase 1** capacity (**12 MPPA**, single **3,900m** runway, Terminal 1) with **Phase 2** (**30 MPPA**, two runways, Terminal 2) and the full build-out target (**70 MPPA by 2050**, six runways, four terminals).
The 4-phase master plan scales progressively: **12 to 30 to 50 to 70 MPPA**. Also, **YIAPL (Yamuna International Airport Private Limited)** is a wholly-owned subsidiary of **Zurich Airport International AG** — it is not a joint venture.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC tests aviation sector facts in both Prelims and economy sections. Know the key greenfield airports: **NIA Jewar** (YIAPL/Zurich), **Navi Mumbai** (NMIAL/Adani), **Mopa Goa** (GMR), **Bhogapuram** (AAI).
100% FDI is allowed under the automatic route for greenfield airports. The concession period for NIA is **40 years** from **October 2021**, which means it runs until **2061**.

 **INTERVIEW**

With NIA designed for **70 MPPA** at full build-out — comparable to **Singapore Changi** — should more Indian airports be developed through PPP with foreign airport operators rather than **AAI**, given AAI struggles with passenger experience at existing airports like Delhi T1?

 **QUICK FIRE — TEST YOURSELF**

- 1** What is the IATA code assigned to Noida International Airport?
 Find answer → [noida international airport jewar](#)

- 2** What is the full build-out passenger capacity target of NIA by 2050?
 Find answer → [noida international airport jewar](#)

- 3** Which subsidiary of Zurich Airport International AG is developing NIA?
 Find answer → [noida international airport jewar](#)

 [Read Full Article](#) →

Question 12

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Which of the following correctly describes the principle of "double deflation" in GDP calculation?

- A Adjusting GDP for both wholesale and retail price inflation simultaneously
- B Deflating both output prices and input prices separately to calculate real value added ✓
- C Using two different base years to cross-verify GDP growth estimates
- D Adjusting GDP for both domestic inflation and exchange rate depreciation

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

EXPLANATION

Double deflation is the internationally recommended practice (**SNA 2008**) where both output prices and input prices are deflated separately using their respective price indices, and real value added is calculated as the difference.

India adopted this in the **2022-23 base year** series (**February 2026**).

Under the old **single deflation** method, only output prices were adjusted — causing bias when input and output prices moved at different rates.

CONCEPT NOTE

The **Central Statistics Office (CSO)** was merged with the **National Sample Survey Office (NSSO)** in **2019** to form the **National Statistical Office (NSO)** under **MoSPI**. The **Sustainable Development Goals India Index (NITI Aayog)** relies heavily on GDP and GVA data for measuring **SDG 8** (Decent Work and Economic Growth).

India moved its base year from **2004-05** to **2011-12** in **January 2015**, which controversially showed higher GDP growth rates for the UPA period. The **UN Statistical Commission** sets global standards through SNA updates, with **SNA 2025** currently under development to replace **SNA 2008**.

Q12  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

This is a core **GS3** (Economy — national income accounting, statistical methodology) topic that also connects to **GS2** (Governance — institutional credibility of statistical bodies like **NSO**, independence of **MoSPI**). The political implications of GDP revision — India nominal GDP fell by **Rs 12 lakh crore** — make this relevant to **GS3** (Economy — fiscal policy, **\$5 trillion** target) discussions.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

GVA methodology, price indices (WPI for manufacturing, CPI for services), base year revision, statistical reform, SNA 2008 compliance, deflator granularity. Use "measurement bias under single deflation" when explaining why the old method overstated GVA in sectors where input costs rose faster than output prices.

Use "statistical honesty vs narrative management" when discussing the political sensitivity of downward GDP revision.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students confuse **double deflation** (a technical GVA computation method where output is deflated by output prices and inputs by input prices separately) with concepts like double-digit inflation, dual deflator systems, or **GDP deflator vs CPI**.

The key insight is that **single deflation** applies ONE deflator to gross output, ignoring that input prices may move differently — creating systematic bias. India used **180 deflators** previously; the new **2022-23** series uses **600 deflators** for greater sectoral granularity.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC **2019 Prelims** asked about GDP at market prices vs GDP at factor cost. Know the formula: **GVA = Gross Output minus Intermediate Consumption**.

Under single deflation, only gross output is deflated; under double deflation, both gross output AND intermediate consumption are deflated separately, giving more accurate real GVA. India move to double deflation aligns it with advanced economy practices following **SNA 2008** guidelines.

 **INTERVIEW**

India increased its deflator count from **180 to 600** and adopted **double deflation** — but the result was a **Rs 12 lakh crore** reduction in nominal GDP. Does more methodological granularity guarantee more accurate data, or does it introduce new sources of measurement error through data quality issues in **600** separate price series?

 **QUICK FIRE — TEST YOURSELF**

1 How many deflators does India new 2022-23 base year GDP series use compared to 180 in the old series?

Find answer → </editorials/2026/03/india-gdp-growth-data-credibility>

2 What are the three approaches to calculating GDP?

Find answer → </editorials/2026/03/new-gdp-series-2022-23-base-year>

3 Which body was formed by merging CSO and NSSO in 2019?

Find answer → </editorials/2026/03/gdp-data-discrepancies>

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Question 13

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Which Article of the Constitution establishes the Supreme Court as a "court of record" with the power to punish for contempt of itself?

A Article 124

B Article 129 ✓

C Article 136

D Article 141

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

✓ EXPLANATION

Article 129 establishes the **Supreme Court** as a **court of record** and confers on it all the powers of such a court, including the power to punish for **contempt** of itself. This is the constitutional basis for the SC exercising contempt jurisdiction — as it did in the **2026 NCERT textbook case**.

Article 215 is the corresponding provision for **High Courts**. **Article 124** deals with establishment and composition of the SC; **Article 136** with special leave to appeal; **Article 141** with law declared by SC being binding.

📖 CONCEPT NOTE

The **Contempt of Courts Act 1971** replaced the **Contempt of Courts Act 1952** and codified both **civil contempt (Section 2(b))** and **criminal contempt (Section 2(c))**. **Article 19(2)** lists "contempt of court" as a reasonable restriction on free speech under **Article 19(1)(a)**.

The **National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC)** was struck down in **2015** in the **Fourth Judges Case**, reinforcing judicial supremacy in appointments and indirectly strengthening the judiciary protective stance. In **Re Arundhati Roy (2002)**, the SC convicted the author of criminal contempt for her statements outside court premises, establishing that contempt jurisdiction extends beyond courtroom conduct.

Q13  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

This topic is central to **GS2** (Polity — judiciary, contempt jurisdiction, separation of powers, judicial accountability) and connects to **GS4** (Ethics — institutional integrity, balance between judicial authority and free speech). The NCERT textbook case raises the question of whether contempt power can extend to banning academic content, bringing in **GS2** (Governance — education policy, academic freedom, **NCERT** autonomy).

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

judicial overreach, court of record, inherent contempt power, academic freedom vs judicial authority, proportionality doctrine. Use "constitutionally inherent power" when explaining that **Article 129** contempt jurisdiction is not derived from or limited by the **Contempt of Courts Act, 1971** — it exists independently as a constitutional provision.

Use "chilling effect on academic discourse" when critiquing the NCERT textbook ban.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students confuse **Article 129** (court of record + contempt power) with **Article 142** (power to do complete justice — a different expansive power).

The SC has clarified that its contempt power under **Article 129** is constitutionally inherent and cannot be restricted by ordinary legislation including the **Contempt of Courts Act, 1971**. **Article 215** is the exact parallel provision for High Courts — both are worded identically.

 **EXAM TIP**

Always pair **Article 129** (SC as court of record with contempt power) with **Article 215** (HC as court of record with contempt power) and **Section 2(c)** of the **Contempt of Courts Act, 1971** (definition of criminal contempt as acts that scandalise or lower court authority). The other options test adjacent knowledge: **Article 124** (SC establishment), **Article 136** (SLP jurisdiction), **Article 141** (law declared by SC binding on all courts).

 **INTERVIEW**

In the NCERT textbook case, the SC used its contempt power to ban an entire academic textbook that discussed judicial functioning. If the judiciary can ban books about itself using contempt jurisdiction, who holds the judiciary accountable? Does this create a dangerous precedent where any critical academic analysis of judicial conduct becomes punishable?

 **QUICK FIRE — TEST YOURSELF**

1 Which Article of the Constitution is the corresponding provision for High Courts as courts of record?

[Find answer → /editorials/2026/03/ncert-textbook-judiciary-curriculum-independence](#)

2 What does Article 141 of the Constitution declare about the law declared by the Supreme Court?

[Find answer → /editorials/2026/03/judicial-accountability-anti-corruption](#)

3 What is the maximum punishment for contempt under the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971?

[Find answer → /editorials/2026/03/ncert-textbook-judiciary-curriculum-independence](#)

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Question 14

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Assertion (R): NCERT is a statutory body established by an Act of Parliament.

Reason (A): NCERT is designated as the academic authority for curriculum under Section 29 of the RTE Act, 2009.

Select the correct option:

- A Both A and R are correct and R is the correct explanation of A
- B Both A and R are correct but R is NOT the correct explanation of A
- C A is correct but R is incorrect
- D A is incorrect but R is correct ✓

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

The Assertion is INCORRECT: **NCERT** is NOT a statutory body. It is an autonomous organisation established on **September 1, 1961** under the **Societies Registration Act, 1860** — it has no parent statute of its own.

The Reason is CORRECT: **Section 29** of the **RTE Act, 2009** does designate NCERT as the academic authority responsible for laying down curriculum and evaluation procedures. This distinction matters — NCERT derives curriculum authority from the **RTE Act**, not from its own founding statute.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

The **National Curriculum Framework 2023 (NCF 2023)** is the first revision since **NCF 2005** and was prepared under the **National Education Policy 2020** framework. The **Kothari Commission (1964-66)** recommended the **three-language formula** and laid the foundation for NCERT role in national curriculum design.

SCERT (State Council of Educational Research and Training) bodies in each state adapt NCERT frameworks for state-level implementation. The **Right to Education Act 2009 (Article 21A)**, inserted by the **86th Amendment 2002** provides the constitutional mandate that NCERT curriculum authority ultimately serves.

Q14  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

This topic connects **GS2** (Polity — autonomous vs statutory vs constitutional bodies, education governance framework) with **GS2** (Governance — institutional design, accountability structures for public institutions). The distinction between statutory and autonomous bodies is foundational for understanding India administrative architecture and frequently tested across all competitive exams.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

institutional autonomy, curriculum governance, NCF 2023, academic freedom, statutory vs non-statutory classification, Societies Registration Act 1860. Use "delegated authority without statutory independence" when discussing **NCERT** vulnerability to executive pressure — it performs statutory functions (under **RTE Act Section 29**) but lacks the institutional protection that a dedicated statute provides.

Use "institutional design deficit" when arguing NCERT needs statutory status.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students assume **NCERT** is a statutory body because it performs functions mandated by statute (**RTE Act, Section 29**).

But its legal status is that of a registered society under the **Societies Registration Act, 1860** — not a body created by its own Act of Parliament. Contrast: **UGC** is statutory (**UGC Act, 1956**), **AICTE** is statutory (**AICTE Act, 1987**), **NCTE** is statutory (**NCTE Act, 1993**) — but NCERT is NOT statutory. It operates as an autonomous wing of the **Ministry of Education**.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC regularly tests the statutory vs autonomous vs constitutional body distinction.

Build a classification table: Constitutional bodies (**EC, CAG, UPSC**), Statutory bodies (**UGC, AICTE, NCTE, NHRC, FSSAI**), Autonomous/Registered Societies (**NCERT, ICSSR, ICHR, ICAR**). NCERT was established on **September 1, 1961**, by merging seven pre-existing government institutions including the **Central Bureau of Textbook Research** and the **CIET**.

 **INTERVIEW**

NCERT performs the most critical educational function in India — designing curriculum for **250+ million** school students — yet it lacks statutory protection and can be directed by the **Ministry of Education**. Should NCERT be given statutory status through a dedicated Act to protect its academic independence from both executive interference and judicial overreach?

 **QUICK FIRE — TEST YOURSELF**

- 1** Under which Act is NCERT registered as an autonomous organisation?
 Find answer → </editorials/2026/03/ncert-textbook-judiciary-curriculum-independence>

- 2** Which section of the RTE Act designates NCERT as the academic authority for curriculum?
 Find answer → </editorials/2026/03/ncert-textbook-judiciary-curriculum-independence>

- 3** In which year was NCERT established by merging seven pre-existing government institutions?
 Find answer → </editorials/2026/03/ncert-book-ban-judicial-transparency>

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Under the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971, the 2006 Amendment introduced which of the following?

- A Abolished criminal contempt for "scandalising the court" entirely
- B Made truth a valid defence in contempt proceedings if the act was bona fide and in public interest ✓
- C Transferred contempt jurisdiction from the Supreme Court to a National Judicial Tribunal
- D Reduced the maximum punishment for contempt from six months to three months imprisonment

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

The **2006 Amendment** to the **Contempt of Courts Act** introduced **truth as a valid defence** in contempt proceedings, provided the court is satisfied that the publication was in public interest and made bona fide. Before **2006**, truth was not a defence — even factually accurate statements could be punished if they "scandalised" the court.

Note: the **UK** went further and abolished the offence of "scandalising the court" entirely through the **Crime and Courts Act, 2013**.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

The **Judges (Inquiry) Act 1968** provides the only formal mechanism for removing Supreme Court and High Court judges through impeachment (**Article 124(4)**), requiring a **special majority** in both Houses. **Justice V. Ramaswami (1993)** was the first judge to face impeachment proceedings, though the motion failed in Lok Sabha.

The **National Judicial Accountability Bill 2010** proposed a **Judicial Complaints Commission** but was never enacted. **Section 10** of the **Contempt of Courts Act** provides a limitation period of **one year** for contempt proceedings, though the SC has held its constitutional power under **Article 129** is not subject to this statutory limitation.

Q15  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

This topic spans **GS2** (Polity — contempt law, judicial accountability, free speech under **Article 19(1) (a)**) and connects to **GS2** (IR — comparative law, UK abolition of scandalising offence) and **GS4** (Ethics — tension between institutional respect and accountability, whistleblower protection in institutional contexts).

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

Section 2(c) criminal contempt, scandalising the court, judicial accountability, prior restraint, truth as defence, bona fide requirement, Law Commission 274th Report.

Use "qualified truth defence" when explaining the **2006 Amendment** — truth alone is not enough; it must be coupled with bona fide intent AND public interest, and the court itself determines whether both conditions are met, creating a structural bias.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students confuse three distinct reforms: (1) the **2006 Indian Amendment** (added truth as a conditional defence — truth + bona fide + public interest), (2) the **Law Commission 274th Report, 2018** (recommended abolishing the scandalising offence entirely — NOT yet implemented), and (3) the **UK Crime and Courts Act, 2013** (abolished the scandalising offence altogether). India implemented only the first; the other two remain unimplemented or apply to the UK only.

 **EXAM TIP**

The **Prashant Bhushan case (2020)** is the most tested recent contempt case. He posted tweets criticising the CJ and the role of the last four CJs — the SC found him guilty of criminal contempt but imposed a symbolic fine of **Re. 1** (with alternative punishment of **three months imprisonment** and **three-year practice debarment** for non-payment). The SC rejected his truth defence, holding it was not "bona fide."

 **INTERVIEW**

The **2006 Amendment** allows truth as a defence but requires the contemnor to prove bona fide intent to the very court whose authority was allegedly scandalised — is this structurally fair? Should India follow the UK in abolishing the scandalising offence entirely, as the **Law Commission 274th Report (2018)** recommended?

 **QUICK FIRE — TEST YOURSELF**

1 In which case did the Supreme Court convict Prashant Bhushan of criminal contempt and impose a Re. 1 fine?

Find answer → </editorials/2026/03/ncert-textbook-judiciary-curriculum-independence>

2 Which country abolished the offence of scandalising the court through the Crime and Courts Act, 2013?

Find answer → </editorials/2026/03/ncert-textbook-judiciary-curriculum-independence>

3 What did the Law Commission 274th Report (2018) recommend regarding the scandalising offence?

Find answer → </editorials/2026/03/judicial-accountability-anti-corruption>

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The Matsya 6000 deep-sea submersible, developed under the Samudrayaan mission, is designed to reach a target depth of 6,000 metres. Which organisation developed it?

- A Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)
- B Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)
- C National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), Chennai ✓
- D Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

Matsya 6000 was developed by the **National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT)**, Chennai, under the **Ministry of Earth Sciences**. NIOT is the nodal agency for the **Samudrayaan mission**, which is part of the **Deep Ocean Mission** (launched **2021**, budget **Rs 4,077 crore**).

The submersible uses a **Ti6Al4V titanium alloy** hull (**2.1 m** diameter, **80 mm** thick), can carry **3 crew** for **12 hours** continuously, and aims to explore **polymetallic nodules** in the **Central Indian Ocean Basin**.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

The **Deep Ocean Mission** (launched **June 2021**, five-year budget **Rs 4,077 crore**) has **six pillars** including deep-sea mining, ocean climate change advisory services, and underwater robotics. **UNCLOS Part XI** established the **International Seabed Authority (ISA)**, headquarters **Kingston, Jamaica**, established **1994** to regulate seabed mining in international waters designated as "Area" beyond national jurisdiction.

India was among the first **pioneer investors** recognised by ISA in **1987**. China **Jiaolong** submersible reached **7,062 metres** in the Mariana Trench in **2012**, and the **Fendouzhe** reached **10,909 metres** in **2020**, demonstrating the strategic significance of deep-sea capability.

Q16  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

This topic bridges **GS3** (Science and Technology — deep-sea exploration, indigenous technology development) and **GS2** (IR — **UNCLOS** maritime zones, **International Seabed Authority** pioneer investor status, India exploration rights in the **Central Indian Ocean Basin**). The strategic dimension connects to **GS3** (Security — seabed resource competition, underwater domain awareness).

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

polymetallic nodules, blue economy, International Seabed Authority, deep-sea mining, pioneer investor, Deep Ocean Mission. Use "technological sovereignty in ocean exploration" when discussing India indigenous submersible development; use "common heritage of mankind" (**UNCLOS** principle) when discussing the regulatory framework for seabed mining under ISA.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students attribute **Matsya 6000** to **DRDO** (defence applications) or **ISRO** (space) because of the "mission" framing — but ocean technology falls under the **Ministry of Earth Sciences**, and **NIOT** (established **1993**, headquartered in **Chennai**) is the implementing agency. Also, do not confuse **Matsya 6000** (crewed submersible for **6,000m**) with autonomous underwater vehicles (AUVs) that India has already deployed — crewed deep-sea vehicles are far more complex due to life support systems and pressure hull engineering.

 **EXAM TIP**

With **Matsya 6000**, India will become the **sixth country** to operate crewed deep-sea submersibles at **6,000m+** depth, joining the **US, Russia, France, Japan, and China**. The **Ti6Al4V** titanium alloy hull (**2.1m** diameter, **80mm** wall thickness) withstands pressures exceeding **720 bars**. India holds ISA exploration rights over **75,000 sq km** in the **CIOB** for polymetallic nodules containing **manganese, nickel, copper, and cobalt**.

 **INTERVIEW**

India holds ISA pioneer investor rights over **75,000 sq km** in the **Central Indian Ocean Basin** — but deep-sea mining faces strong environmental opposition from marine scientists concerned about disrupting fragile abyssal ecosystems. How should India balance resource extraction ambitions with the precautionary principle in international ocean governance?

 **QUICK FIRE — TEST YOURSELF**

- 1** What titanium alloy is used for the Matsya 6000 pressure hull?
[Find answer → current affairs today](#)

- 2** How many square kilometres of exploration rights does India hold in the Central Indian Ocean Basin under ISA?
[Find answer → current affairs today](#)

- 3** What is the total budget and duration of the Deep Ocean Mission launched in 2021?
[Find answer → current affairs today](#)

[Read Full Article →](#)

Question 17

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[Source →](#)

Which of the following about the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013 is **NOT** correct?

- A It covers up to 75% of the rural population and 50% of the urban population
- B It provides 5 kg of foodgrains per person per month at subsidised prices to priority households
- C It includes pulses, millets, and eggs as part of the PDS entitlement basket ✓
- D It converts existing food security programmes like mid-day meals and ICDS into legal entitlements

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

EXPLANATION

Option C is INCORRECT: the **NFSA 2013** does NOT include pulses, millets, or eggs in the PDS basket. The **PDS** distributes only rice (**Rs 3/kg**), wheat (**Rs 2/kg**), and coarse grains (**Rs 1/kg**).

The absence of protein-rich foods like pulses and eggs from the PDS is a major criticism — the system addresses caloric poverty but not nutritional diversity. This is central to the "nutrition scarcity to excess" editorial debate.

CONCEPT NOTE

The **Shanta Kumar Committee (2015)** recommended reducing NFSA coverage from **67% to 40%** of the population and introducing cash transfers instead of physical grain distribution. **FCI (Food Corporation of India, established 1965)** maintains buffer stocks of approximately **60-70 million tonnes**, far exceeding the buffer norm of **21.04 million tonnes** (July quarter).

The **One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC)** scheme launched in **2019** enables portability of PDS entitlements across states using **Aadhaar-linked biometric authentication**. The **Targeted PDS (1997)** replaced the **Universal PDS** by classifying beneficiaries into **Above Poverty Line** and **Below Poverty Line** categories.

Q17  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

This topic is core to **GS2** (Governance — food security architecture, legal entitlements, welfare state design) and equally important for **GS3** (Economy — PDS reform, food subsidy fiscal burden, agricultural diversification incentives). The nutrition dimension connects to **GS1** (Society — poverty, malnutrition, double burden of disease) because a cereal-only PDS perpetuates the "calorie trap" while ignoring protein and micronutrient deficiencies.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

calorie trap, nutrition security vs food security, PDS diversification, biofortification, cereal-centric food policy, NFSA reform. Use "legal entitlement without nutritional adequacy" when critiquing the NFSA cereal-only basket; use "fiscal sustainability of universal PDS" when discussing the **Rs 2+ lakh crore** annual food subsidy after the **PMGKAY** merger in **January 2023** (which made all NFSA grains free, removing even the Rs 1-3/kg nominal prices).

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students assume PDS includes pulses because some states independently distribute eggs and pulses through their own supplementary schemes — **Tamil Nadu** distributes free eggs through mid-day meals, and **Odisha** provides eggs under its state nutrition programme. But the central **NFSA** entitlement basket is strictly limited to three cereals: rice, wheat, and coarse grains.
Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) households get **35 kg per family per month** (not per person).

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC **2021 Prelims** asked about NFSA provisions.
Key facts: coverage formula is **75% rural + 50% urban** (~**81.35 crore** beneficiaries); Priority Households get **5 kg/person/month**; AAY households get **35 kg/family/month**. Since **January 2023**, all NFSA grains are distributed free (**PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana** merged with NFSA, removing the Rs 1/2/3 per kg central issue prices).

 **INTERVIEW**

The NFSA guarantees caloric adequacy through cereals but not nutritional adequacy — India has a child anaemia rate of **67.1% (NFHS-5)** partly because the PDS does not distribute protein-rich foods like pulses, eggs, or fortified foods. Should the NFSA be amended to mandate a diversified nutrition basket as the legal entitlement standard?

 **QUICK FIRE — TEST YOURSELF**

1 What quantity of foodgrains per person per month does the NFSA guarantee to priority households?

[Find answer → /editorials/2026/03/nutrition scarcity to excess india health](#)

2 Since which year have all NFSA grains been distributed free after PMGKAY merger?

[Find answer → current affairs today](#)

3 How much foodgrain per family per month do Antyodaya Anna Yojana households receive?

[Find answer → /editorials/2026/03/nutrition scarcity to excess india health](#)

 [Read Full Article →](#)

Question 18

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[Source →](#)

According to NFHS-5 (2019-2021), which of the following nutritional indicators showed a WORSENING trend compared to NFHS-4?

1. Stunting in children under 5
2. Anaemia in children aged 6-59 months
3. Overweight/obesity in women aged 15-49

Select the correct answer:

A 1 and 2 only

B 2 and 3 only ✓

C 1 and 3 only

D 1, 2 and 3

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

EXPLANATION

Statements 2 and 3 showed worsening trends. Anaemia in children WORSENERD from **58.6% (NFHS-4)** to **67.1% (NFHS-5)** — a shocking **+8.5 percentage point** increase.

Women overweight/obesity WORSENERD from **20.6% to 24.0%**. However, stunting IMPROVED (declined) from **38.4% to 35.5%**, so Statement 1 is wrong.

This data illustrates India "**double burden of malnutrition**" — undernutrition declining slowly while overnutrition rises rapidly.

CONCEPT NOTE

The **Global Hunger Index 2024** ranked India **105th out of 127** countries with a score of **27.3** (categorised as "serious").

The **Lancet 2023** study estimated malnutrition contributes to approximately **68%** of under-5 child deaths in India.

The **Swachh Bharat Mission (2014-2019)** declared India open-defecation free, but **NFHS-5** data shows only **70%** of households use improved sanitation, indicating a gap between declared and actual ODF status that affects nutritional absorption through enteric infections. The **Saksham Anganwadi** and **Mission POSHAN 2.0** (merged in **2021-22 budget**) combined **ICDS** with **POSHAN Abhiyaan** under a single umbrella with **Rs 20,263 crore** allocation.

Q18  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

This topic bridges **GS1** (Society — population health, demographic indicators, women empowerment) and **GS2** (Governance — health policy effectiveness, **ICDS/POSHAN Abhiyaan** evaluation). The "**double burden of malnutrition**" framing connects to **GS3** (Economy — nutrition economics, food processing industry role in ultra-processed food proliferation) because India nutrition transition is driven by economic growth patterns.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

double burden of malnutrition, nutrition transition, POSHAN Abhiyaan effectiveness, anaemia crisis, ultra-processed food proliferation. Use "epidemiological transition with nutrition lag" when explaining how India simultaneously faces undernutrition (stunting, wasting) and overnutrition (obesity, NCDs).
Use "programme failure vs structural determinant" when analysing why anaemia worsened despite **POSHAN Abhiyaan** and **ICDS** interventions.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students assume ALL child malnutrition indicators worsened in **NFHS-5** — but stunting (**38.4% to 35.5%**), wasting (**21.0% to 19.3%**), and underweight (**35.8% to 32.1%**) actually IMPROVED, though insufficiently.
The alarming worsening was specifically in anaemia (**58.6% to 67.1%**, a **+8.5 percentage point** reversal) and childhood overweight. Women anaemia also worsened from **53.1% to 57.0%**.
The divergent trends are what define the "double burden."

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC repeatedly tests **NFHS-5** data in both Prelims and Mains. Memorise the critical indicators: children stunting **35.5%**, wasting **19.3%**, underweight **32.1%**, anaemia **67.1%**; women overweight **24.0%**, anaemia **57.0%**.
The anaemia reversal is the most striking finding — it worsened despite iron supplementation programmes under **POSHAN Abhiyaan** (launched **2018, Rs 8,000+ crore** outlay).

 **INTERVIEW**

Child anaemia **WORSENERD** by **8.5 percentage points** between **NFHS-4** and **NFHS-5** despite **POSHAN Abhiyaan** and **ICDS** spending thousands of crores on supplementary nutrition.
Is the programme delivery model fundamentally flawed — relying on take-home rations that are often diverted — or are structural factors like poor sanitation, intestinal infections, and dietary monotony the real drivers that no supplementation programme can overcome?

 **QUICK FIRE — TEST YOURSELF**

- 1** What was the child anaemia rate in India according to NFHS-5?
 Find answer → </editorials/2026/03/nutrition-scarcity-to-excess-india-health>

- 2** By how many percentage points did child anaemia worsen between NFHS-4 and NFHS-5?
 Find answer → </editorials/2026/03/nutrition-scarcity-to-excess-india-health>

- 3** In which year was POSHAN Abhiyaan launched and what was its budget outlay?
 Find answer → [current-affairs-today](#)

[Read Full Article →](#)

Question 19

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[Source →](#)

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) was established under which legislation?

- A Consumer Protection Act, 2019
- B Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 ✓
- C Essential Commodities Act, 1955
- D Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

EXPLANATION

FSSAI was established under the **Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006** (operationalised in **2008**). It is a statutory body under the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** that consolidated all former food safety laws including the **Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954** (now repealed).

FSSAI regulates manufacture, storage, distribution, sale, and import of food in India.

CONCEPT NOTE

The **Prevention of Food Adulteration Act 1954** was the primary food safety law for over **50 years** before being replaced by the **FSS Act 2006**. **FSSAI Eat Right India Movement** (launched **2018**) encompasses **Eat Right Station** (railway station certification), **Eat Right School**, and **Eat Right Campus** initiatives.

The **Codex Alimentarius Commission** (established **1963** by **FAO** and **WHO**) sets international food standards that FSSAI often references. India food processing sector grew at approximately **8.3% CAGR** between **2014-2024**, and the **PM Kisan Sampada Yojana (2016, Rs 6,000 crore)** supports food processing infrastructure through mega food parks and cold chain facilities.

Q19  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

This topic connects **GS2** (Governance — regulatory bodies, statutory authority framework) with **GS3** (Economy — food processing industry regulation, consumer protection). The **FSSAI** trans-fat regulation and **front-of-pack labelling** debate links to **GS1** (Society — public health, NCD prevention) because regulatory choices directly affect population health outcomes.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

FOPNL (front-of-pack nutrition labelling), Eat Right India campaign, trans-fat regulation, ultra-processed food (UPF) regulation, food safety consolidation. Use "regulatory consolidation through umbrella legislation" when discussing how the **FSS Act 2006** replaced **8 pre-existing food laws** including the **Prevention of Food Adulteration Act 1954**.
Use "regulatory capture vs public health" when discussing industry resistance to front-of-pack warning labels.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students confuse three food-related bodies with overlapping mandates: **FSSAI** (food safety regulation, under **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**, established under **FSS Act 2006**), **APEDA** (agricultural product export promotion, under **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**), and **FCI** (food procurement, storage and distribution, under **Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution**).
FSSAI is the safety regulator; FCI is the procurement and distribution agency; APEDA handles exports.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC **2023 Prelims** asked about food safety regulation.
Key facts: FSSAI capped industrial trans-fats at **2% of total fats** from **January 1, 2022** — making India one of the strictest countries globally on trans-fat limits (ahead of the **WHO 2023** global deadline). India became the second Asian country after **Thailand** to adopt trans-fat elimination policies.
The **Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954** is now repealed and replaced by the **FSS Act, 2006**.

 **INTERVIEW**

India has not implemented mandatory front-of-pack warning labels (like Chile star system or Mexico octagonal warnings) despite **FSSAI** drafting regulations and the **Supreme Court** direction in **2025**. Should consumer health information prevail over food industry lobbying, or would aggressive warning labels unfairly stigmatise packaged food products and hurt the food processing sector?

 **QUICK FIRE — TEST YOURSELF**

1 Which Act did the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 replace?

Find answer → </editorials/2026/03/nutrition-scarcity-to-excess-india-health>

2 From what date did FSSAI cap industrial trans-fats at 2% of total fats?

Find answer → </editorials/2026/03/nutrition-scarcity-to-excess-india-health>

3 Under which ministry does FSSAI function?

Find answer → [current-affairs-today](#)

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Question 20

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India per capita CO₂ emissions stand at approximately 1.9 tonnes (2023). This is approximately what fraction of the United States per capita emissions?

- A One-third
- B One-fifth
- C One-eighth ✓
- D One-tenth

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

India per capita CO₂ emissions (~**1.9 tonnes**) are approximately **one-eighth** of US per capita emissions (~**15 tonnes**). India is the world **third-largest CO₂ emitter** in absolute terms (~**2.9 Gt/year**), but per capita it is well below the global average of **4.7 tonnes**.

India historical cumulative share is only ~**3-4%** of global emissions (vs US ~**25%**, EU ~**22%**). This data forms the backbone of India climate equity argument at COPs.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

The **Global Carbon Project** (established **2001**) provides annual estimates of global CO₂ emissions and carbon budgets. India submitted its **Biennial Update Report (BUR-4)** to the **UNFCCC** in **2024**, reporting emissions of **3.47 GtCO₂e** for **2019**.

The concept of "**carbon colonialism**" — where developed nations outsource manufacturing emissions to developing countries through trade — is quantified by **consumption-based emissions accounting**, which would reduce India emissions further. The **Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF, 55 member nations)** and **V20** group represent countries most at risk from climate change, providing a developing-country counterweight to the developed world **OECD** bloc.

Q20  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

This topic spans **GS3** (Environment — climate change, emissions accounting frameworks) and **GS2** (IR — climate negotiations, North-South divide, India positioning at **UNFCCC**). The per-capita vs absolute emissions framing is also relevant to **GS4** (Ethics — intergenerational equity, distributive justice in global commons) because it raises fundamental questions about fairness in carbon budget allocation.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

per capita vs absolute emissions, historical responsibility, carbon budget equity, CBDR-RC, cumulative emissions. Use "stock vs flow" framing when distinguishing historical cumulative emissions (stock — where the US leads at **~25%**) from current annual emissions (flow — where China leads at **~32%**).

Use "climate apartheid" when discussing how developed countries that industrialised using cheap fossil fuels now demand that developing countries bear disproportionate decarbonisation costs.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students cite India as the "third-largest emitter" in absolute terms without providing per-capita context — UPSC expects nuanced framing that acknowledges both dimensions.

India per-capita emissions (**~1.9 tonnes**) are well below the global average (**~4.7 tonnes**), while China (**~8-9 tonnes**) has already exceeded the global average. India cumulative historical share is **~3-4%** of total global CO₂, not **~10%** as some outdated sources state.

 **EXAM TIP**

Memorise the per-capita emissions hierarchy for quick comparison: **US (~15 tonnes) > Russia (~12) > Japan (~9) > China (~8-9) > EU average (~6) > Global average (~4.7) > India (~1.9)**. India argument at COPs rests on three pillars: low per-capita emissions, low cumulative historical share (**3-4%**), and the right to development under **CBDR-RC**.

 **INTERVIEW**

India argues for per-capita equity in carbon budgets — but China has roughly **4-5x** India per-capita emissions and still claims developing country status at the **UNFCCC**. Is per-capita the right metric for carbon justice, or should metrics like HDI-adjusted emissions, carbon intensity of GDP, or cumulative historical emissions provide a more complete framework for equitable burden-sharing?

 **QUICK FIRE — TEST YOURSELF**

1 What is India historical cumulative share of global CO₂ emissions?

[Find answer → /editorials/2026/03/india climate action good story](#)

2 What is the approximate global average per capita CO₂ emissions in tonnes?

[Find answer → /editorials/2026/03/paris agreement equity climate justice](#)

3 Which country has the highest cumulative historical CO₂ emissions at approximately 25% of the global total?

[Find answer → /editorials/2026/03/india climate action good story](#)

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Question 21

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Match List I with List II and select the correct answer:

LIST I (CLIMATE FINANCE MILESTONE)	LIST II (YEAR/EVENT)
A. \$100 billion/year pledge	1. COP28 Dubai (2023)
B. Loss and Damage Fund operationalised	2. COP29 Baku (2024)
C. NCQG of \$300 billion/year agreed	3. Copenhagen (2009)
D. Loss and Damage Fund established	4. COP27 Sharm el-Sheikh (2022)

A A-3, B-1, C-2, D-4 ✓

B A-3, B-4, C-1, D-2

C A-4, B-1, C-3, D-2

D A-2, B-3, C-4, D-1

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

The **\$100 billion/year** pledge was made at **Copenhagen** in **2009** (A-3). The **Loss and Damage Fund** was established at **COP27 Sharm el-Sheikh** in **2022** (D-4) and operationalised at **COP28 Dubai** in **2023** with the **World Bank** as interim trustee (B-1).

The **NCQG (New Collective Quantified Goal)** of **\$300 billion/year** was agreed at **COP29 Baku** in **2024** (C-2). The \$100 billion target was only met in **2022** — three years late.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

The **Green Climate Fund (GCF)**, established at **COP16 Cancun (2010)** and operationalised in **2015** with headquarters in **Songdo, South Korea**, is the primary multilateral channel for climate finance with approximately **\$12.8 billion** pledged.

The **Adaptation Fund** (established under the **Kyoto Protocol** in **2001**) finances adaptation projects in developing countries through a **2% share-of-proceeds** from **CDM** transactions.

India **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)**, launched by PM Modi at the **2019 UN Climate Action Summit**, represents India leadership in climate adaptation infrastructure alongside the **ISA** for mitigation.

Q21  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

This topic bridges **GS2** (IR — multilateral climate architecture, COP negotiations, North-South finance divide) and **GS3** (Environment — climate finance mechanisms, adaptation vs mitigation funding). The "grants vs loans" debate within climate finance connects to **GS3** (Economy — international development finance, debt sustainability for vulnerable nations).

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

NCQG, climate finance gap, grants vs loans composition, Loss and Damage Fund, polluter-pays principle, climate debt. Use "broken promises" framing when discussing the **\$100 billion** pledge (made **2009**, met only in **2022** — **13 years** late).
Use "quantity without quality" when discussing **Oxfam** analysis that the grant-equivalent of \$100 billion was only **\$21-24.5 billion** because most was disbursed as market-rate loans.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students confuse the COP where the **Loss and Damage Fund** was ESTABLISHED (**COP27**, Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, **2022** — a landmark decision after **30 years** of developing country demand) with the COP where it was OPERATIONALISED (**COP28**, Dubai, UAE, **2023** — with the **World Bank** designated as interim trustee and initial pledges totalling **~\$700 million**).
Also, the **\$300 billion NCQG** agreed at **COP29 Baku** fell far short of the **\$1-1.3 trillion** demanded by developing countries.

 **EXAM TIP**

COP milestones are tested virtually every year in both Prelims and Mains.
Build a structured timeline: **COP15 Copenhagen 2009** (\$100 billion pledge), **COP21 Paris 2015** (Paris Agreement), **COP26 Glasgow 2021** (India net-zero 2070), **COP27 Sharm el-Sheikh 2022** (L&D Fund established), **COP28 Dubai 2023** (L&D Fund operationalised, first Global Stocktake), **COP29 Baku 2024** (\$300 billion NCQG).

 **INTERVIEW**

Oxfam estimates the grant-equivalent of the \$100 billion climate finance was only **\$21-24.5 billion** — the rest was loans that added to developing country debt.
Are developed countries using creative accounting (counting loans, export credits, and private finance) to inflate climate finance figures and avoid genuine wealth transfers under the **polluter-pays principle**?

 **QUICK FIRE — TEST YOURSELF**

- 1** Where is the Green Climate Fund headquartered?
 Find answer → </editorials/2026/03/paris-agreement-equity-climate-justice>

- 2** What was the NCQG amount agreed at COP29 Baku in 2024?
 Find answer → </editorials/2026/03/climate-loss-damage-fund>

- 3** Which body serves as the interim trustee of the Loss and Damage Fund?
 Find answer → </editorials/2026/03/paris-agreement-equity-climate-justice>

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Question 22

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Education falls under which List of the Seventh Schedule of the Indian Constitution?

- A Union List (List I)
- B State List (List II)
- C Concurrent List (List III) ✓
- D Residuary powers of the Union under Article 248

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

✓ EXPLANATION

Education is on the **Concurrent List (Entry 25, List III, Seventh Schedule)**. It was originally in the **State List** but was transferred to the Concurrent List by the **42nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1976** — the same amendment that froze delimitation.

This means both the Centre and States can legislate on education, though in case of conflict, the central law prevails under **Article 254**. The **RTE Act, 2009** is a central legislation enabled by this Concurrent List entry.

📖 CONCEPT NOTE

The **44th Amendment (1978)** reversed several provisions of the **42nd Amendment** but did NOT reverse the transfer of education to the Concurrent List. The **Swaran Singh Committee (1976)** recommended the changes implemented by the 42nd Amendment.

Prior to **1976**, states like **Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and West Bengal** had developed distinctive education policies reflecting regional linguistic and ideological priorities. **NEP 2020** proposed replacing the **10+2** structure with a **5+3+3+4** system and establishing the **Higher Education Commission of India (HECI)** to replace **UGC** and **AICTE** — legislation for which remains pending as of **2026**.

Q22  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

This topic is foundational for **GS2** (Polity — federal structure, legislative powers, **Seventh Schedule**, distribution of subjects) and connects to **GS2** (Governance — education policy, **NEP 2020** implementation, Centre-State coordination in curriculum design). The **42nd Amendment** transfer of education to the Concurrent List has a **GS1** (Society) dimension because it enabled national-level education reforms like the **RTE Act 2009** and **NEP 2020**.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

42nd Amendment, Concurrent List transfer, legislative competence, Article 254 (repugnancy doctrine), NEP 2020, NCERT autonomy, curriculum governance. Use "centralisation through Concurrent List transfer" when arguing the 42nd Amendment eroded state autonomy in education; use "national minimum standards" when defending the transfer as necessary for ensuring uniform educational quality across India.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students sometimes still place education in the **State List**, forgetting the **42nd Amendment (1976)** moved it to the **Concurrent List**. Also, do not confuse **Entry 25** of the Concurrent List (education generally — including technical, medical, and university education) with **Union List entries 63-66** (which cover specific institutions declared to be of national importance, like **BHU, AMU, IITs**, and institutions under the Institutes of National Importance Act).

 **EXAM TIP**

The **42nd Amendment (1976)** is a UPSC favourite — know at least five major changes it made: (1) added "**Socialist, Secular, Integrity**" to the Preamble, (2) gave primacy to **DPSPs** over **Fundamental Rights** in case of conflict, (3) transferred **five subjects** to the Concurrent List (education, forests, weights and measures, protection of wild animals and birds, administration of justice), (4) froze delimitation based on **1971 Census**, (5) curtailed judicial review powers.

 **INTERVIEW**

The **42nd Amendment** transferred education from the State List to the Concurrent List in **1976**, enabling central legislation like the **RTE Act 2009** and national frameworks like **NEP 2020**. Should education be moved back to the State List to allow greater regional customisation of curricula — especially given India linguistic and cultural diversity — or would this fragment the national education framework?

 **QUICK FIRE — TEST YOURSELF**

- 1** Which five subjects were transferred to the Concurrent List by the 42nd Amendment?
 Find answer → </editorials/2026/03/ncert-textbook-judiciary-curriculum-independence>

- 2** Under which Entry of the Concurrent List does education fall?
 Find answer → </editorials/2026/03/ncert-textbook-judiciary-curriculum-independence>

- 3** Which Amendment reversed several provisions of the 42nd Amendment but kept education in the Concurrent List?
 Find answer → </editorials/2026/03/vbsa-bill-higher-education-centralisation>

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Question 23

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Which of the following about the "Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat" initiative is correct?

- A It was launched on August 15, 2014 to promote interstate trade and commerce
- B It was launched on October 31, 2015 to promote inter-state cultural exchange and national integration ✓
- C It was launched on January 26, 2016 to provide financial support to state-level cultural academies
- D It was launched on November 1, 2017 to integrate tribal communities into mainstream education

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

EXPLANATION

Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat was launched on **October 31, 2015** — **Rashtriya Ekta Diwas** (National Unity Day), which marks the birth anniversary of **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel**. Its purpose is to promote inter-state cultural exchange and national integration.

The **Madhavpur Ghed Fair (27-31 March 2026, Porbandar, Gujarat)** linking Gujarat with Northeast India is a prime example, celebrating the **Rukmini-Krishna legend** connecting the **Idu Mishmi tribe** of **Arunachal Pradesh** with Gujarat.

CONCEPT NOTE

The **North Eastern Council (NEC)**, established **1971** under the **NEC Act** is the nodal agency for economic and social development of the eight northeastern states. The **Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER)**, established **2001**) allocates **10%** of central ministry budgets to the Northeast under the **Gross Budgetary Support** formula.

The **Sixth Schedule (Articles 244(2) and 275(1))** provides autonomous district councils for tribal areas in **Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram**. The **Act East Policy (2014)**, evolved from **Look East Policy 1991**) specifically targets **ASEAN** connectivity through the Northeast as India gateway to Southeast Asia.

Q23  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

This topic connects **GS1** (Culture — Indian heritage, tribal cultural traditions, mythology as cultural bridge) with **GS2** (Governance — national integration initiatives, Centre-State cultural diplomacy, **Act East Policy** through cultural engagement with the Northeast). The **Madhavpur Ghed Fair** specifically bridges India western and northeastern frontiers through a shared mythological narrative.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

cultural integration, national unity, tribal heritage preservation, Northeast connectivity, laboratory of cultural federalism. Use "mythology as soft-power bridge" when discussing how the **Rukmini-Krishna legend** connects the **Idu Mishmi tribe** of **Dibang Valley** (Arunachal Pradesh) with **Madhavpur** (Gujarat) across **3,000+ km**.
Use "bottom-up integration vs top-down nationalism" when contrasting EBSB with previous national integration approaches.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students confuse **Rashtriya Ekta Diwas (October 31, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel birth anniversary, National Unity Day)** with **National Integration Day (November 19, Indira Gandhi birth anniversary)**. Also, the **Idu Mishmi tribe** is found specifically in the **Dibang Valley** and **Lower Dibang Valley** districts of **Arunachal Pradesh** — not in Assam or Nagaland. The **Bhishmaka-Rukmini** connection derives from Puranic tradition linking **King Bhishmaka** of Vidarbha/Northeast with **Krishna** of Dwarka.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC tests tribal connections to mythology, cultural geography, and specific geographic locations. Key details: **EBSB** pairs states and UTs for annual cultural exchanges — each state is paired with another for a year.
The programme covers education, tourism, language, cuisine, and sports exchanges. The **2015** launch on **Rashtriya Ekta Diwas** (marking Patel **140th** birth anniversary) was deliberately symbolic.

 **INTERVIEW**

Can cultural festivals like **Madhavpur Ghed Fair** — which brings together tribal communities from **Arunachal Pradesh** and local communities in **Gujarat** through a shared mythological narrative — effectively bridge the geographic and psychological distance between India western and northeastern frontiers? Or are these symbolic events insufficient without addressing infrastructure connectivity, economic integration, and **AFSPA**-related grievances in the Northeast?

 **QUICK FIRE — TEST YOURSELF**

- 1** On whose birth anniversary is Rashtriya Ekta Diwas (National Unity Day) observed on October 31?
[Find answer → current affairs today](#)

- 2** Which tribal community from Arunachal Pradesh is connected to the Madhavpur Ghed Fair in Gujarat?
[Find answer → current affairs today](#)

- 3** When was the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) established?
[Find answer → /editorials/2026/03/tribal tourism livelihood](#)

[Read Full Article →](#)

Question 24

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[Source →](#)

 Which of the following about Earth Hour is **INCORRECTLY** matched?

- A First observed — 31 March 2007, Sydney, Australia
- B Organiser — United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) ✓**
- C 2026 edition — 20th anniversary
- D Theme for 2026 — Give an Hour for Earth

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

EXPLANATION

Earth Hour is organised by the **World Wildlife Fund (WWF)**, NOT the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**. **UNEP** organises **World Environment Day (June 5)**.

WWF, founded in **1961** and headquartered in **Gland, Switzerland**, developed Earth Hour in collaboration with advertising agency **Leo Burnett Sydney**. The first Earth Hour was observed on **March 31, 2007**, in **Sydney**, when **2.2 million** people switched off lights for one hour.

CONCEPT NOTE

WWF was founded on **September 11, 1961**, with its iconic panda logo designed by **Sir Peter Scott**. WWF operates the **Living Planet Index** which tracks global biodiversity trends — the **2024** report showed a **73% decline** in monitored wildlife populations since **1970**.

IUCN (founded **1948**) and **WWF** (founded **1961**) are both headquartered in **Gland, Switzerland** but serve distinct roles — IUCN provides the scientific **Red List** classification system while WWF focuses on conservation advocacy and campaigns. India **Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE)** initiative, launched by PM Modi at **COP26 Glasgow (2021)**, promotes individual behavioral change for environmental sustainability, philosophically aligned with Earth Hour grassroots approach.

Q24  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

This topic connects **GS3** (Environment — global environmental awareness campaigns, climate communication) with **GS2** (IR — international environmental organisations, their mandates, and institutional architecture). Distinguishing **WWF**, **UNEP**, and **IUCN** is a recurring Prelims requirement and tests institutional literacy.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

soft-power environmentalism, symbolic vs substantive climate action, WWF mandate, Paris Agreement grassroots mobilisation. Use "awareness-action gap" when discussing whether symbolic campaigns like Earth Hour translate into measurable emissions reductions or merely create feel-good participation without behavioral change. Use "institutional mandate clarity" when distinguishing between environmental organisations in exam answers.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students confuse three major environmental organisations headquartered in or near Switzerland with overlapping but distinct mandates: **WWF** (World Wildlife Fund/World Wide Fund for Nature, founded **1961**, headquartered **Gland, Switzerland** — organises Earth Hour, focuses on conservation), **IUCN** (International Union for Conservation of Nature, founded **1948**, also headquartered **Gland, Switzerland** — maintains the **Red List**), and **UNEP** (United Nations Environment Programme, founded **1972**, headquartered **Nairobi, Kenya** — organises **World Environment Day** on **June 5**).

 **EXAM TIP**

Pair environmental events with their organisers for quick recall: **Earth Hour** (**WWF**, last Saturday of March), **World Environment Day** (**UNEP**, **June 5**), **Earth Day** (earthday.org, **April 22**), **International Day for Biological Diversity** (**CBD/UN**, **May 22**), **World Wetlands Day** (**Ramsar Convention**, **February 2**). Earth Hour **2026** marks the **20th anniversary**, observed under the theme "Give an Hour for Earth" with **190+** countries participating.

 **INTERVIEW**

Earth Hour has operated for **20 years** across **190+** countries — but critics argue it is purely symbolic, with one hour of light-switching having negligible impact on emissions. Has Earth Hour achieved measurable environmental impact, or has it become a comfortable substitute for the harder policy choices (carbon pricing, fossil fuel phase-down, lifestyle changes) that actually reduce emissions?

 **QUICK FIRE — TEST YOURSELF**

- 1** In which year and city was the first Earth Hour observed?
[Find answer → current affairs today](#)

- 2** Where is WWF (World Wildlife Fund) headquartered?
[Find answer → current affairs today](#)

- 3** Which organisation maintains the Living Planet Index that tracks global biodiversity trends?
[Find answer → /editorials/2026/03/biodiversity nba internship conservation governance](#)

[Read Full Article →](#)

Question 25

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[Source →](#)

Which of the following about the Chabahar Port is **NOT** correct as of 2026?

- A It is located in Iran and provides India an alternative route to Afghanistan and Central Asia bypassing Pakistan
- B India Ports Global Ltd (IPGL) is the Indian entity operating the port
- C India allocated Rs 500 crore for Chabahar in the 2026-27 Union Budget ✓
- D The US sanctions waiver for Chabahar operations was set to expire in April 2026

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

Option C is INCORRECT: India allocated **ZERO funds** for Chabahar in the **2026-27 budget**, not Rs 500 crore. The government stated its financial commitment of approximately **USD 120 million** had been fully transferred. Government-nominated directors of **IPGL** resigned en masse following US sanctions, and the company website was taken down. All other statements are correct — Chabahar bypasses Pakistan, **IPGL** operates it, and the US sanctions waiver expires in **April 2026**.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

The **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)**, a **7,200 km** multi-modal network connecting **Mumbai to St. Petersburg** via Iran, depends heavily on Chabahar as the Indian Ocean gateway. India also developed the **Shahid Beheshti terminal** at Chabahar under the **2016 trilateral agreement** with Iran and Afghanistan.

The **Sagarmala Programme (2015, Rs 12 lakh crore)** and **Maritime India Vision 2030** provide the domestic port infrastructure framework. The **CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, \$62 billion)** and **Gwadar Port** represent China competing strategic footprint in the same **Makran coast** region, approximately **72 km** from Chabahar.

Q25  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

This topic bridges **GS2** (IR — India-Iran bilateral relations, India-US strategic partnership tensions, connectivity diplomacy) and **GS3** (Security — strategic infrastructure, alternative trade corridors, **Hormuz chokepoint** proximity). The Chabahar retreat also connects to **GS2** (Governance — foreign policy under financial constraints) because it reveals how US sanctions pressure can reshape India strategic investments.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

multi-alignment doctrine, CAATSA implications, connectivity vs sanctions, strategic retreat, Gwadar-Chabahar competition. Use "strategic autonomy under pressure" when discussing how India balanced its Iran engagement against US sanctions compliance. Use "connectivity diplomacy deficit" when comparing India retreat from Chabahar with China sustained investment in **Gwadar** despite international criticism.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students assume Chabahar is still an active Indian project with ongoing investment — but the **2026** developments represent a significant operational retreat: **zero budget allocation in 2026-27** (vs **Rs 400 crore** revised estimate in 2025-26), **IPGL** government-nominated directors resigning en masse, and the company website being taken down.

The conditional US sanctions waiver expires **April 26, 2026**, and renewal is uncertain. Compare this with the **May 2024** signing of a **10-year bilateral agreement** that seemed to secure India position.

 **EXAM TIP**

Always compare **Chabahar** (India-backed, **Sistan-Baluchestan province**, Iran — bypasses Pakistan for Afghanistan/Central Asia access) with **Gwadar** (China-Pakistan, **CPEC** flagship, **Balochistan province**, Pakistan — part of **Belt and Road Initiative**). Both are strategic ports in the same region separated by only **~72 km** of coastline, serving competing connectivity objectives. India committed approximately **USD 120 million** through **IPGL**.

 **INTERVIEW**

Has India effectively abandoned Chabahar under US sanctions pressure, and what does this signal to other countries about India strategic reliability as a connectivity partner? If India cannot sustain a single port project against US secondary sanctions, how credible is its **multi-alignment foreign policy** doctrine in an era of great power competition?

 **QUICK FIRE — TEST YOURSELF**

1 What is the approximate distance between Chabahar Port (Iran) and Gwadar Port (Pakistan)?

Find answer → </editorials/2026/03/india-foreign-policy-financial-constraints>

2 What is the full length of the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)?

Find answer → </editorials/2026/03/india-iran-foreign-policy-debate>

3 Which Indian entity was set up to operate the Shahid Beheshti terminal at Chabahar?

Find answer → [current-affairs-today](#)

 [Read Full Article →](#)

Question 26

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Consider the following statements about India climate action:

1. India achieved 50% non-fossil fuel installed electricity capacity in mid-2025 — five years ahead of its NDC target.
2. India solar capacity grew from 2.6 GW in March 2014 to 136 GW by February 2026.
3. The Climate Action Tracker rates India overall NDC as "Sufficient."

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

A 1 and 2 only ✓

B 2 and 3 only

C 1, 2 and 3

D 1 only

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

EXPLANATION

Statements 1 and 2 are correct. India achieved the **50% non-fossil capacity** milestone in **mid-2025** (against a **2030** NDC target), and solar capacity grew **52x** from **2.6 GW to 136 GW** in a decade.

Statement 3 is wrong: the **Climate Action Tracker** rates India NDC as "**Insufficient**" (not "Sufficient"), and its non-fossil capacity target as "**Highly Insufficient**." Ironically, CAT acknowledges India will over-achieve its current targets — penalising India for setting modest targets rather than for poor action.

CONCEPT NOTE

The **Energy Conservation (Amendment) Act 2022** established the legal framework for **carbon credit trading** in India and mandated renewable energy use by designated consumers. The **National Hydrogen Energy Mission** targets **5 MMTPA** green hydrogen by **2030** with production cost below **\$2/kg**.

India **Renewable Energy Certificate (REC)** mechanism was introduced in **2011** to facilitate inter-state renewable energy transactions. The **Bharat Stage VI** emission norms (implemented **April 2020**, skipping BS-V entirely) demonstrated India ability to leapfrog environmental standards when political will exists — a precedent applicable to accelerated RE deployment.

Q26  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

This topic spans **GS3** (Environment — renewable energy deployment, climate commitments, energy transition) and **GS2** (IR — climate perception vs reality, India narrative at COPs, ratings paradox). The "overperformance against modest targets" critique from **CAT** is also relevant to **GS4** (Ethics) on institutional credibility and target-setting honesty in international commitments.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

ratings paradox, absolute vs per-capita framing, ISA (International Solar Alliance), Green Hydrogen Mission, PAT scheme, renewable energy trajectory. Use "ambition gap paradox" when explaining the CAT critique — India is rated "Insufficient" not because it underperforms but because it sets targets below what CAT considers **1.5-degree-compatible**. Use "narrative asymmetry" when discussing how India strong RE performance (**52x** solar growth) gets overshadowed by the "Insufficient" headline rating.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students assume the "Insufficient" CAT rating means India is underperforming on climate action — the reality is more nuanced. India overperformed against its own NDC targets (**50%** non-fossil achieved **5 years** early, **36%** intensity reduction achieved by **2020** against a **2030** target of **33-35%**). CAT penalises India for setting targets it considers too conservative relative to the **1.5-degree pathway**, not for implementation failure. This distinction between "**ambition insufficiency**" and "**action insufficiency**" is critical for Mains answers.

 **EXAM TIP**

Know India RE capacity milestones for data-heavy questions: total RE installed capacity **266.67 GW**, solar **136 GW** (**52x** growth since **2014**), wind **47 GW**, non-fossil share **52.57%** of total installed capacity as of **February 2026**. India also co-founded the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)** at **COP21 Paris** in **2015**, headquartered in **Gurugram** — a significant South-South climate leadership initiative.

 **INTERVIEW**

India has the world **fourth-largest** renewable energy capacity and achieved its **50%** non-fossil target **five years early** — yet the **Climate Action Tracker** rates its targets as "Insufficient." Should India set more ambitious NDC targets that reflect its actual trajectory and improve its international ratings, or maintain conservative targets to preserve negotiating leverage and avoid legally binding itself to numbers that may prove difficult during economic downturns?

 **QUICK FIRE — TEST YOURSELF**

- 1** By what factor did India solar capacity grow from March 2014 to February 2026?
[Find answer → /editorials/2026/03/india climate action good story](#)

- 2** What is the Climate Action Tracker rating for India overall NDC targets?
[Find answer → /editorials/2026/03/india climate action good story](#)

- 3** Which organisation did India co-found at COP21 Paris, headquartered in Gurugram?
[Find answer → /editorials/2026/03/paris agreement equity climate justice](#)

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Question 27

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The Perform, Achieve and Trade (PAT) scheme operates through which tradable instrument?

- A Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs)
- B Carbon Credit Certificates under CCTS
- C Energy Saving Certificates (ESCs) ✓
- D Green Hydrogen Certificates

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

EXPLANATION

The **PAT scheme** uses tradable **Energy Saving Certificates (ESCs)** — a **cap-and-trade mechanism** for energy efficiency. It covers over **1,000 designated consumers** across **13 energy-intensive sectors** under the **National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency (NMEEE)**, which is one of the **eight missions** under the **National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC, 2008)**.

PAT has been operational since **2012**.

CONCEPT NOTE

The **Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE)**, established under the **Energy Conservation Act 2001**, administers the PAT scheme and the **Standards and Labelling (S&L)** programme for appliances. The **Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS)**, notified in **June 2023** under **Section 14** of the **Energy Conservation (Amendment) Act 2022**, creates India domestic carbon market aligned with **Article 6.2** of the Paris Agreement.

The **European Union Emissions Trading System (EU ETS)**, launched **2005** is the world largest cap-and-trade system and serves as the international benchmark. India industrial sector accounts for approximately **25%** of national greenhouse gas emissions, making PAT-covered designated consumers critical to net-zero pathways.

Q27  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

This topic connects **GS3** (Environment — energy efficiency, market-based environmental instruments, cap-and-trade mechanism design) with **GS3** (Economy — industrial energy policy, manufacturing competitiveness, **Bureau of Energy Efficiency**). The comparison between three distinct market-based instruments (**ESCerts**, **RECs**, and **carbon credits**) is a high-value exam differentiator.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

cap-and-trade, designated consumers, NAPCC missions, Bureau of Energy Efficiency, specific energy consumption (SEC) targets. Use "market-based vs command-and-control" when comparing PAT (incentive-driven, tradable certificates) with direct regulatory mandates (emission standards, technology mandates).
Use "industrial decarbonisation through efficiency" when discussing PAT within India net-zero pathway.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students confuse three distinct market-based environmental instruments that serve different purposes: **ESCerts** (energy efficiency certificates under PAT scheme, traded on power exchanges like **IEX**), **RECs** (**Renewable Energy Certificates** under **Renewable Purchase Obligation** compliance, also traded on power exchanges), and **carbon credits** (under the **Carbon Credit Trading Scheme** notified **June 2023**, aligning with **Article 6** of the Paris Agreement). All three are tradable but address different environmental objectives.

 **EXAM TIP**

Know all **8 NAPCC missions** (launched **June 2008**): (1) **National Solar Mission**, (2) **National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency** (PAT falls under this), (3) **National Mission on Sustainable Habitat**, (4) **National Water Mission**, (5) **National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem**, (6) **National Mission for a Green India**, (7) **National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture**, (8) **National Mission on Strategic Knowledge for Climate Change**. **PAT Cycle I (2012)** covered **478 designated consumers** across **8 sectors**.

 **INTERVIEW**

ESCerts allow energy-efficient industries to profit from their efficiency gains by selling certificates to less efficient peers — but critics argue this creates perverse incentives for paper compliance rather than genuine energy savings.
Can market-based instruments like ESCerts effectively drive industrial decarbonisation at the scale and speed India **net-zero 2070** target requires, or do they merely redistribute efficiency on paper?

 **QUICK FIRE — TEST YOURSELF**

- 1 Under which national mission does the PAT scheme operate?
[Find answer → /editorials/2026/03/india climate action good story](#)

- 2 How many energy-intensive sectors are covered under the PAT scheme?
[Find answer → /editorials/2026/03/carbon credits industrial decarbonisation](#)

- 3 Which Act established the Bureau of Energy Efficiency that administers the PAT scheme?
[Find answer → /editorials/2026/03/india climate action good story](#)

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Question 28

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The remaining global carbon budget to stay within 1.5 degrees Celsius of warming (as per IPCC AR6) will be exhausted in approximately how many years at current emission rates?

A 15-20 years

B 10-12 years

C 6-7 years ✓

D 3-4 years

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

According to **IPCC AR6**, the remaining carbon budget for **1.5 degrees Celsius** is approximately **250 billion tonnes of CO₂** (as of 2024). At current global emission rates of **~40 GtCO₂/year**, this budget will be exhausted in roughly **6-7 years**.

If allocated per capita, India (**17.8%** of world population) would be entitled to **~44.5 GtCO₂**, while the US (**4.3%** of population) would get only **~10.75 GtCO₂** despite having consumed **~25%** of historical emissions.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

The **IPCC** was established in **1988** by **WMO** and **UNEP**, and its Assessment Reports (**AR1 through AR6**) form the scientific backbone of **UNFCCC** negotiations. **AR6 Working Group III (Mitigation, 2022)** identified approximately **100** near-term mitigation pathways to limit warming to **1.5 degrees**.

The concept of "**carbon overshoot**" — temporarily exceeding 1.5 degrees and returning through negative emissions technologies like **BECCS (Bioenergy with Carbon Capture and Storage)** and **DACCS (Direct Air Carbon Capture)** — is increasingly central to climate modelling. The **Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS, 39 members)** has been the most vocal advocate for limiting warming to 1.5 degrees since the 1990s, given existential sea-level rise threats.

Q28  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

This topic is central to **GS3** (Environment — climate science, carbon budget concept, **IPCC** assessment reports) and bridges to **GS2** (IR — climate equity, developing vs developed country positions, burden-sharing frameworks). The **carbon budget** concept also connects to **GS4** (Ethics — intergenerational equity, obligations to future generations, distributive justice in global commons management).

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

carbon budget, polluter-pays principle, historical emissions, climate justice, intergenerational equity, IPCC AR6 findings. Use "stock vs flow" analysis when explaining why historical cumulative emissions (stock) matter more than current annual emissions (flow) for determining responsibility. Use "budget exhaustion timeline" to create urgency in Mains answers — **6-7 years** at current rates is a powerful framing device.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students cite outdated carbon budget estimates without specifying the probability level or base year. The **IPCC AR6 WGI** report estimated **~500 GtCO₂** remaining from **January 2020** for a **50% probability** of staying within 1.5 degrees. A **2023 Nature Climate Change** study updated this to **~250 GtCO₂** as of **January 2023**, accounting for continued emissions. The budget for **2 degrees** is much larger (**~1,150 GtCO₂**), which is why some climate scientists argue the 1.5-degree goal is already practically unreachable.

 **EXAM TIP**

UPSC increasingly tests **IPCC AR6** findings in both Prelims and Mains. Key numbers to memorise: remaining 1.5-degree budget **~250 GtCO₂** (**50% probability**, as of 2023), current global emissions **~40 GtCO₂/year**, exhaustion timeline **~6-7 years**. Per-capita allocation: India (**17.8%** of world population) would be entitled to **~44.5 GtCO₂** of the remaining budget, while the US (**4.3%** of population) would get only **~10.75 GtCO₂**.

 **INTERVIEW**

With only **6-7 years** of carbon budget remaining for **1.5 degrees** at current emission rates, is the 1.5-degree goal already unreachable? Should global climate policy pivot from 1.5-degree mitigation to 2-degree adaptation planning, and what would this mean for vulnerable island nations and coastal communities that face existential threats even at 1.5 degrees?

 **QUICK FIRE — TEST YOURSELF**

- 1** What is the approximate remaining 1.5-degree carbon budget in billion tonnes of CO₂ as per updated IPCC estimates?
 Find answer → </editorials/2026/03/paris-agreement-equity-climate-justice>

- 2** What are the current global annual CO₂ emissions in gigatonnes?
 Find answer → </editorials/2026/03/climate-action-gap-planetary-boundaries>

- 3** Which alliance of countries has been the most vocal advocate for limiting warming to 1.5 degrees since the 1990s?
 Find answer → </editorials/2026/03/paris-agreement-equity-climate-justice>

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Question 29

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Consider the following statements about the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971:

1. Criminal contempt is defined under Section 2(c) as any act that scandalises or lowers the authority of a court.
2. The Law Commission 274th Report (2018) recommended abolishing criminal contempt for "scandalising the court."
3. The United Kingdom abolished the offence of "scandalising the court" through the Crime and Courts Act, 2013.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

A 1 and 2 only

B 2 and 3 only

C 1, 2 and 3 ✓

D 1 and 3 only

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

✓ EXPLANATION

All three statements are correct. **Section 2(c)** defines **criminal contempt** as publication or acts that scandalise or lower court authority.

The **Law Commission 274th Report (2018)** recommended abolishing the "scandalising" component. The **UK** did abolish this offence through the **Crime and Courts Act, 2013**.

India has neither abolished the provision nor implemented the Law Commission recommendation — the **2006 Amendment** only added **truth as a defence**, not abolition.

📖 CONCEPT NOTE

The **First Amendment to the US Constitution** provides absolute protection for free speech with no contempt exception, unlike India **Article 19(2)** which explicitly lists "contempt of court" as a reasonable restriction. **Australia** abolished the common-law offence of scandalising the court through the **Contempt of Court Act 2013 (Cth)**.

The **Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct (2002)**, endorsed by **ECOSOC** in **2006** set international standards for judicial accountability including integrity, propriety, and competence. India has no **Judicial Conduct Committee** or formal code of conduct for judges, unlike the **UK Judicial Conduct and Investigations Office** established in **2013**.

Q29  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

This topic bridges **GS2** (Polity — judiciary, contempt law, judicial accountability mechanisms) and **GS2** (IR — comparative constitutional law, UK-India legal divergence on contempt). The tension between free speech (**Article 19(1)(a)**) and contempt power (**Article 129**) is a recurring **GS2** Mains theme and an excellent **GS4** (Ethics) case study on institutional accountability.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

judicial accountability, free speech vs contempt, Law Commission reforms, UK comparison, scandalising offence, proportionality test. Use "reform trajectory divergence" when comparing India (retained the offence, added truth defence in **2006**, ignored **Law Commission 274th Report** abolition recommendation) with the UK (abolished the offence entirely in **2013** through the **Crime and Courts Act**).

Use "chilling effect doctrine" when discussing how broad contempt powers discourage legitimate criticism of judicial conduct.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students conflate three distinct reform milestones that represent different levels of intervention: (1) the **2006 Indian Amendment** added truth as a conditional defence (truth + bona fide + public interest — all three must be proven to the satisfaction of the court being criticised), (2) the **Law Commission 274th Report (2018)** recommended abolishing the scandalising offence entirely as an anachronism — but this recommendation has NOT been implemented, and (3) the **UK Crime and Courts Act 2013** abolished the scandalising offence completely, ending a common-law tradition that India inherited but the UK itself abandoned.

 **EXAM TIP**

The **Prashant Bhushan case (2020)** is the most tested recent contempt case in UPSC. Key facts: he posted two tweets criticising **CJI Bobde** (riding a motorcycle without a mask during COVID lockdown) and the role of the last four CJIs in "destruction of democracy." The SC convicted him of criminal contempt under **Section 2(c)** but imposed only a **Re. 1** fine (with **three months imprisonment** as alternative for non-payment). His truth defence was rejected as not being "bona fide."

 **INTERVIEW**

India inherited the "scandalising the court" offence from English common law, but the UK itself abolished this offence in **2013** as incompatible with modern free speech norms. The **Law Commission 274th Report (2018)** recommended India follow suit — but **eight years** later, the recommendation remains unimplemented. In the NCERT textbook case, the SC used contempt power to ban an entire textbook.

Is this proportionate, given the proportionality test established in **K.S. Puttaswamy (2017)**?

 **QUICK FIRE — TEST YOURSELF**

1 Under which section of the Contempt of Courts Act is criminal contempt defined?

Find answer → </editorials/2026/03/ncert-textbook-judiciary-curriculum-independence>

2 Which Article of the Constitution lists contempt of court as a reasonable restriction on free speech?

Find answer → </editorials/2026/03/ncert-textbook-judiciary-curriculum-independence>

3 Which country was the first in the Commonwealth to abolish the scandalising offence besides the UK?

Find answer → </editorials/2026/03/judicial-accountability-anti-corruption>

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Nayara Energy, which raised fuel prices in March 2026, operates India second-largest single-location refinery. Where is this refinery located?

A Jamnagar, Gujarat

B Vadinar, Gujarat ✓

C Panipat, Haryana

D Paradip, Odisha

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

✓ EXPLANATION

Nayara Energy (formerly **Essar Oil**) operates a **20 MMTPA** refinery at **Vadinar, Gujarat** — India second-largest single-location refinery. The largest is **Reliance Jamnagar Refinery (68.2 MMTPA)**.

Nayara is majority-owned by **Rosneft** (Russia, **49.13%**) and the **Trafigura-UCP** consortium. It operates over **6,600 retail outlets** — the largest private fuel network in India.

Nayara was acquired by the Rosneft-Trafigura consortium in **August 2017** for **\$12.9 billion**.

📖 CONCEPT NOTE

The **Rangarajan Committee (2006)** and **Kirit Parikh Committee (2010)** both recommended market-linked fuel pricing to eliminate under-recoveries. Petrol was formally deregulated in **June 2010** and diesel in **October 2014**, but OMCs have held prices stable for extended periods (e.g., **137 days** before the **2019 elections** and **245 days** in **2021-22**), suggesting political direction overrides market mechanisms.

The **Ujjwala Yojana (2016, 10.35 crore** LPG connections) addressed clean cooking fuel access but created a separate subsidy burden. India petroleum product tax structure (central excise + state VAT) means taxes constitute approximately **50-55%** of retail petrol prices, making fuel pricing as much a fiscal policy question as an energy policy one.

Q30  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

This topic connects **GS3** (Economy — energy sector, oil pricing deregulation, downstream petroleum industry) with **GS2** (IR — Russia-India energy ties, **Rosneft** ownership implications under Western sanctions). The pricing dimension also touches **GS2** (Governance — **OMC pricing autonomy** vs political direction) because the divergence between private refiner pricing (Nayara raised prices) and public OMC pricing (**IOC/BPCL/HPCL** held prices) reveals political interference in fuel markets.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

fuel price deregulation, OMC pricing autonomy, Brent crude linkage, downstream liberalisation, private vs public fuel retailers, refinery complexity index. Use "asymmetric deregulation" when discussing how private refiners like Nayara adjust prices freely while government-owned OMCs are informally directed to hold prices for political reasons despite claiming deregulation since **2014**.
Use "Russia-India energy interdependence" when discussing the **Rosneft** ownership.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Students confuse **Vadinar (Nayara Energy, 20 MMTPA, Kutch district of Gujarat, refinery complexity 11.8)** with **Jamnagar (Reliance Industries, 68.2 MMTPA combined DTA + SEZ refinery, the world largest single-location refining complex)**.
Both are in Gujarat but are different companies located approximately **100 km** apart. Also, Nayara is NOT an **Oil Marketing Company (OMC)** — it does not receive government subsidies, which is precisely why it raised prices before IOC/BPCL/HPCL.

 **EXAM TIP**

Know the top Indian refineries by capacity: (1) **Jamnagar (Reliance, 68.2 MMTPA — world largest single-location complex)**, (2) **Vadinar (Nayara, 20 MMTPA)**, (3) **Kochi (BPCL, 15.5 MMTPA)**, (4) **Paradip (IOC, 15 MMTPA)**, (5) **Mangalore (MRPL, 15 MMTPA)**.
Nayara plans to double Vadinar capacity to **40 MMTPA**. The **Rosneft-Trafigura** acquisition in **August 2017** for **\$12.9 billion** was the largest FDI transaction in India at the time.

 **INTERVIEW**

Nayara Energy raised fuel prices in **March 2026** while government-owned OMCs held prices steady despite rising **Brent crude** costs — absorbing losses that ultimately burden taxpayers. Should the government formally acknowledge that fuel price deregulation is a fiction, or should it enforce genuine deregulation and let OMCs price freely even at political cost?

 **QUICK FIRE — TEST YOURSELF**

1 What is the capacity of the Reliance Jamnagar Refinery, the world largest single-location refining complex?

[Find answer → current affairs today](#)

2 Which committee recommended market-linked fuel pricing to eliminate under-recoveries in 2010?

[Find answer → /editorials/2026/03/energy security lpg demand](#)

3 In which year was diesel formally deregulated in India?

[Find answer → /editorials/2026/03/india energy insecurity oil dependence systemic risk](#)

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“Perseverance is not a long race; it is many short races one after the other.”

— Walter Elliot