



Guiding Dreams, Empowering Future
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EXCLUSIVE CURRENT AFFAIRS BULLETIN

India–Nordic Summit 2026

Why in News?

- The Prime Minister of India participated in the 3rd India–Nordic Summit held in Oslo, Norway in 2026.
- The summit brought together India and the five Nordic countries – Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden.
- The summit focused on green technology, innovation, maritime cooperation, defence, climate action, AI, and trade integration.

About the India–Nordic Summit

- The India–Nordic Summit is a high-level platform for strategic cooperation between India and Nordic nations.
- The first summit was held in Stockholm, Sweden in 2018.
- The second summit was held in Copenhagen, Denmark in 2022.
- The third summit was hosted by Norway in Oslo in 2026.
- The next summit will be hosted by Finland.

Nordic Countries

- The Nordic region includes Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden.
- Nordic countries are known for innovation, sustainability, green technologies, and high human development.
- They possess advanced expertise in renewable energy, shipping, clean technology, and Arctic governance.

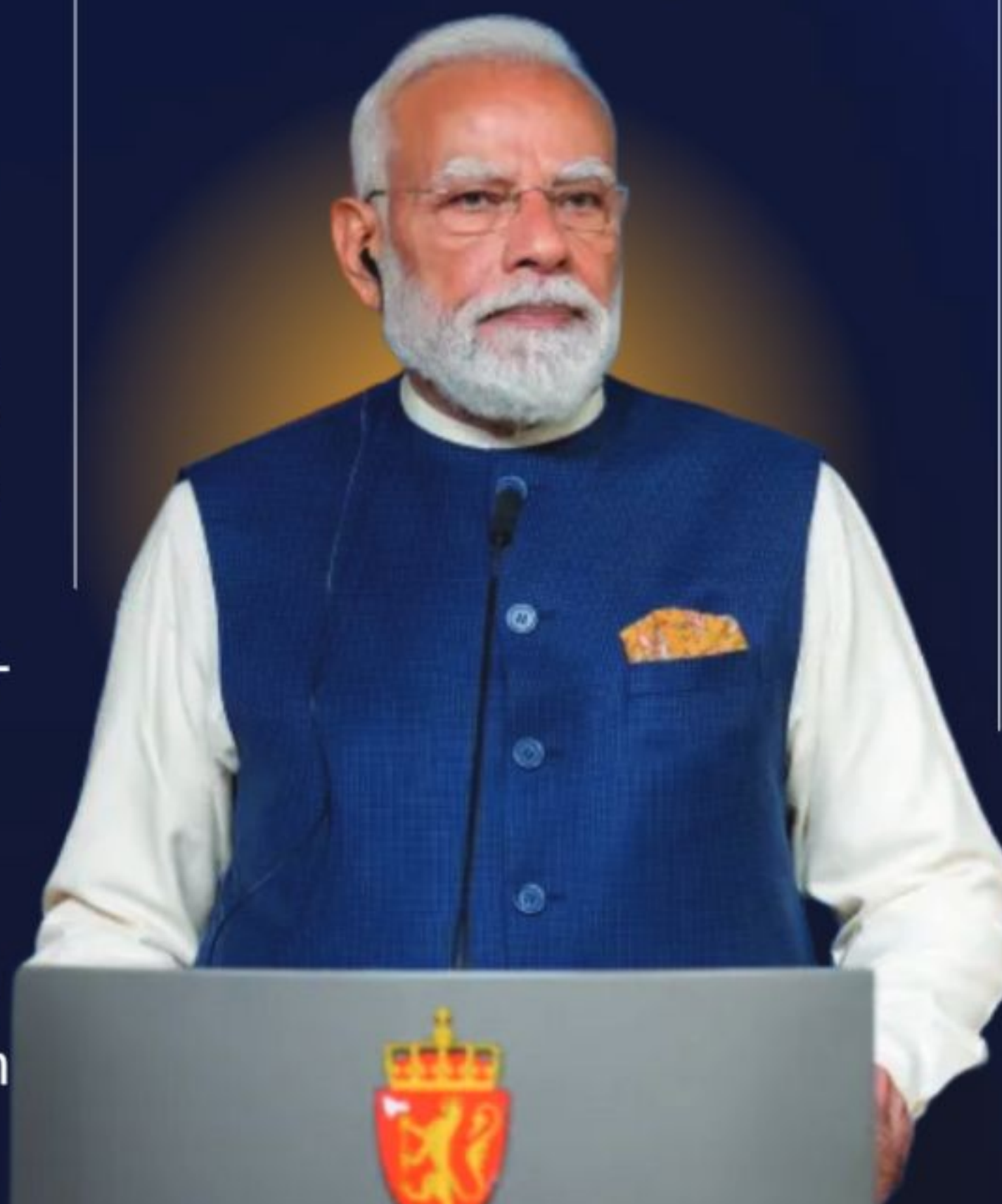
Major Outcomes of the Summit

- India and Nordic nations upgraded ties into a Green Technology and Innovation Strategic Partnership.

- Focus areas included AI governance, 5G/6G technology, green hydrogen, maritime security, climate resilience, and supply chain diversification.
- India and Nordic countries agreed to deepen cooperation in Arctic research and Blue Economy.
- The summit emphasized implementation of India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA).

Trade & Economic Cooperation

- Nordic countries are important sources of investment, clean technologies, and innovation.
- India provides a large market, skilled workforce, and manufacturing potential.
- The India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement aims to attract nearly USD 100 billion investment into India.
- The agreement is expected to create around one million direct jobs in India.



Green Technology and Climate Cooperation

- Nordic countries are global leaders in green transition and sustainable development.
- Cooperation areas include renewable energy, carbon neutrality, green hydrogen, and circular economy.
- India and Nordic nations support climate-resilient development and decarbonisation of industries.
- Iceland joined LeadIT 2.0, which focuses on low-carbon industrial transition.

LeadIT 2.0

- LeadIT stands for Leadership Group for Industry Transition.
- It is a global initiative launched by India and Sweden in 2019.
- It promotes low-carbon transition of heavy industries.
- LeadIT 2.0 expands cooperation among governments, industries, and private sector for green industrialisation.

Technology and Innovation Cooperation

- The summit highlighted collaboration in Artificial Intelligence (AI), digital infrastructure, quantum technology, and semiconductors.
- India and Nordic countries emphasized secure and trusted 5G and 6G ecosystems.
- Cooperation in research, innovation, and startup ecosystems was expanded.

Maritime & Blue Economy Cooperation

- Both sides stressed sustainable maritime

▶▶ Continued on P2

India–Sweden Strategic Partnership & Joint Action Plan 2026–2030



Why in News?

- During the Prime Minister's visit to Sweden in May 2026, India and Sweden elevated bilateral relations to the level of a Strategic Partnership.
- Both countries adopted the India–Sweden Joint Action Plan 2026–2030 to operationalise the upgraded partnership.
- The partnership focuses on defence, AI, quantum technologies, green transition, trade, trusted connectivity, and sustainable development.

Background of India–Sweden Relations

- India and Sweden established diplomatic relations in 1948.
- Sweden is one of India's key Nordic partners in Europe.
- Relations have evolved from trade-oriented engagement to strategic and technology partnership.
- The first India–Nordic Summit was held in Stockholm in 2018.

➔ Continued on P3

➔ From P1

- governance and Blue Economy cooperation.
- India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) complements Nordic maritime interests.
- Cooperation includes low-carbon shipping, port sustainability, and marine technology.
- The Hong Kong Convention for safe and environmentally sound ship recycling was highlighted.

Arctic Cooperation

- Nordic countries are major stakeholders in Arctic governance.
- India has observer status in the Arctic Council.
- Cooperation includes polar research, climate studies, and sustainable Arctic development.
- Arctic developments are strategically important due to climate change and emerging shipping routes.

Defence & Security Cooperation

- Nordic defence firms are exploring greater cooperation with India.
- The partnership supports secure supply chains and resilient infrastructure.
- India and Nordic countries support a rules-based international order and freedom of navigation.

Importance of Nordic Countries for India



- Provide advanced technologies and innovation capabilities.
- Support India's clean energy and sustainability goals.
- Important partners in Arctic research and maritime cooperation.
- Enhance India's engagement with Europe and Indo-Pacific strategies.

Challenges in India–Nordic Relations

- Trade volume remains relatively low compared to potential.
- Strict ESG and regulatory standards create market access barriers.
- Geopolitical differences on Russia-Ukraine conflict occasionally affect alignment.
- Need for stronger connectivity and faster implementation of projects.

Conclusion

The India–Nordic Summit 2026 reflects the growing strategic convergence between India and Nordic nations in green technology, climate action, maritime cooperation, and innovation. The partnership combines Nordic technological expertise with India's market scale and developmental priorities. As cooperation expands in AI, Arctic research, clean energy, and sustainable industrialisation, the India–Nordic partnership is expected to become an important pillar of India's engagement with Europe and the Indo-Pacific region.

PYQ (Prelims)

Question: With reference to the Arctic Council, consider the following statements:

1. India has observer status in the Arctic Council.
2. The Arctic Council deals with issues related to sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic region.
3. All Nordic countries are members of the Arctic Council.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (d) 1, 2 and 3

►► From P2

Four Pillars of the Strategic Partnership

- Strategic Dialogue for Stability and Security.
- Next-Generation Economic Partnership.
- Emerging Technologies and Trusted Connectivity.
- Shaping Tomorrow Together – People, Planet, Health and Resilience.

Strategic Dialogue and Security Cooperation

- India and Sweden agreed to strengthen cooperation on counter-terrorism.
- Both countries will deepen parliamentary and strategic exchanges.
- The India–EU Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism will support coordination.
- Track 1.5 dialogues such as the India Nordic Dialogue will be strengthened.

Trade and Economic Cooperation

- India and Sweden agreed to double bilateral trade and investment within five years.
- The proposed summit 'India–Sweden: Stronger Together – towards 2047' will be held in 2027.
- Both countries will promote 'Make in India' and 'Made with Sweden' initiatives.
- Swedish companies are active in sectors such as telecom, defence, green technology, and manufacturing.

Technology and Innovation Cooperation

- The partnership focuses on Artificial Intelligence (AI), 6G, semiconductors, quantum computing, and cybersecurity.
- Both countries announced the Sweden–India Technology and Artificial Intelligence Corridor (SITAC).
- India and Sweden will launch Joint Innovation Partnership 2.0.
- An India–Sweden Joint Science and Technology Centre (ISJSTC) will be established.

Space Cooperation

- India and Sweden expanded cooperation in satellite communications and geospatial technologies.
- The Swedish Institute of Space Physics will contribute to ISRO's Shukrayaan mission.
- Cooperation will focus on AI-enabled space applications and scientific research.

Green Transition and Climate Cooperation

- Sweden is a global leader in sustainability and green technologies.
- Both countries agreed to strengthen cooperation in green hydrogen, clean energy, and industrial decarbonisation.
- India and Sweden will continue collaboration under LeadIT initiative.
- The partnership supports India's net-zero target by 2070.

LeadIT Initiative

- LeadIT stands for Leadership Group for Industry Transition.
- It was launched jointly by India and Sweden in 2019.
- The initiative promotes low-carbon transition of heavy industries.
- LeadIT 3.0 is proposed to be announced during COP31.

Defence and Strategic Cooperation

- Both countries agreed to deepen defence manufacturing and co-development.
- Sweden's defence technology expertise complements India's manufacturing capacity.
- Cooperation includes secure supply chains and critical technologies.
- The partnership strengthens India's engagement with Europe in defence sector.

Trusted Connectivity and Digital Cooperation

- India and Sweden emphasized secure and trusted digital infrastructure.
- Cooperation will expand in cyber resilience, telecom, AI governance, and emerging digital technologies.
- The partnership aims to create resilient and diversified technology supply chains.

Importance of Sweden for India

- Sweden provides advanced industrial and technological expertise.
- The partnership supports India's innovation and manufacturing ecosystem.
- Sweden is important for India's engagement with Nordic and EU regions.
- Cooperation strengthens India's climate and clean technology ambitions.

Challenges in India–Sweden Relations

- High technology transfer costs and intellectual property concerns.
- EU regulatory barriers and sustainability standards.
- Need for faster implementation of innova-

tion partnerships.

- Critical mineral and semiconductor supply chain dependencies.

Strategic Importance for India

- Strengthens India's engagement with Europe and Nordic region.
- Supports resilient global supply chains beyond China.
- Enhances India's capabilities in AI, semiconductors, and green technologies.
- Promotes strategic autonomy and sustainable industrial development.

Way Forward

- Accelerate implementation of Joint Action Plan 2026–2030.
- Expand semiconductor and clean technology cooperation.
- Strengthen defence industrial partnerships.
- Promote joint innovation and startup ecosystem collaboration.
- Increase educational, scientific, and cultural exchanges.

Conclusion

The India–Sweden Strategic Partnership and Joint Action Plan 2026–2030 represent a major step in strengthening India's engagement with Europe through technology, sustainability, defence, and innovation cooperation. The partnership combines Sweden's advanced technological capabilities with India's manufacturing scale and strategic importance. Successful implementation of the roadmap can significantly enhance cooperation in AI, green transition, trusted connectivity, and resilient supply chains while supporting India's broader economic and strategic objectives.

PYQ (Prelims)

Question: With reference to the Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT), consider the following statements:

1. LeadIT was launched jointly by India and Sweden.
2. The initiative focuses on low-carbon industrial transition.
3. LeadIT is associated with climate-resilient and sustainable industrial development.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (d) 1, 2 and 3



Prime Minister's Visit to the UAE

Why in News?

- The Prime Minister of India concluded an official visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in May 2026.
- The visit resulted in major agreements in energy security, defence cooperation, artificial intelligence, maritime infrastructure, and investment.
- The visit further strengthened the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between India and the UAE.

Major Outcomes of the Visit

- India and UAE signed agreements related to strategic petroleum reserves, defence industry collaboration, AI cooperation, and maritime infrastructure.
- UAE entities pledged nearly USD 5 billion in investments into India.
- India and UAE expanded cooperation in high-performance computing, digital payments, logistics, and skilled workforce development.
- The visit reinforced cooperation under I2U2 and India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC).

Energy Security Cooperation

- Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Limited (ISPRL) and Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) signed an agreement for storage of crude oil in India's Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR).
- The agreement includes storage facilities at Visakhapatnam and upcoming facilities at Chandikol in Odisha.
- Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) and ADNOC Gas signed agreements for long-term LPG supply.
- The UAE remains one of India's major crude oil and LNG suppliers.

Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR)

- SPRs are emergency crude oil stockpiles maintained to tackle supply disruptions.
- India currently has strategic reserves at Visakhapatnam, Mangaluru, and Padur.
- ISPRL manages India's SPR system.
- The International Energy Agency recommends maintaining oil stocks equivalent to at least 90 days of net imports.

Defence & Security Cooperation

- India and UAE established a Strategic Defence Industrial Framework.
- Cooperation includes cyber defence, maritime security, joint innovation, and defence technology.
- Joint military exercises such as Exercise Desert Cyclone and Desert Flag strengthen interoperability.
- The partnership is moving from buyer-seller relations towards defence co-development.

Artificial Intelligence and Technology Cooperation

- India's Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) and UAE's G42 signed a term sheet to establish an 8 Exaflop Supercomputing Cluster.
- The project supports the IndiaAI Mission and advanced computing capabilities.
- India and UAE are expanding collaboration in AI, fintech, cybersecurity, and digital infrastructure.

Maritime Infrastructure and IMEC

- Cochin Shipyard Limited and Drydocks World signed an MoU to establish a ship repair cluster at Vadinar, Gujarat.
- The project supports India's Maritime Development Fund Scheme.
- India-UAE maritime cooperation strengthens the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC).
- Safe navigation through the Strait of Hormuz remains strategically important for global trade and energy security.

Economic & Trade Relations

- India-UAE bilateral trade crossed USD 100 billion in FY 2025-26.
- The UAE is India's third-largest trading partner.
- Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) aims to increase non-oil trade to USD 200 billion by 2032.
- Trade basket includes petroleum products, gems, textiles, engineering goods, food products, and chemicals.

Investment Cooperation

- The Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA) committed investments into India's National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF).
- UAE investments support infrastructure, renewable energy, logistics, and financial sectors in India.
- ADIA established operations in Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City).

Digital and Financial Integration

- India and UAE are operationalising the Local Currency Settlement (LCS) system using INR and AED.
- UPI integration with UAE's AANI platform is under progress. [▶▶ Continued on P5](#)

Why in News?

- India and the Netherlands adopted the 'Roadmap of India–Netherlands Strategic Partnership 2026–2030' during high-level bilateral discussions.
- The roadmap aims to deepen cooperation in trade, defence, semiconductors, green transition, water management, emerging technologies, and Indo-Pacific cooperation.
- The agreement reflects India's growing strategic engagement with European countries.

Background of India–Netherlands Relations

- India and the Netherlands established diplomatic relations in 1947.
- The Netherlands is one of India's important partners in Europe.
- The relationship has evolved from trade-oriented engagement to strategic and technology cooperation.
- The Netherlands is among the largest foreign investors in India.

►► From P4

- RuPay and JAYWAN debit card linkage will strengthen cross-border payments.
- Digital integration reduces dependence on the US dollar in bilateral trade.

Minilateral and Geopolitical Significance

- India and UAE cooperate under I2U2 grouping involving India, Israel, UAE, and USA.
- IMEC aims to improve connectivity among India, the Middle East, and Europe.
- The partnership supports a multipolar and rules-based regional order.
- India reiterated support for regional stability amid West Asian tensions.

Challenges in India-UAE Relations

- Trade imbalance due to India's large crude oil imports.
- China's growing economic and strategic presence in the UAE.
- Regional instability in West Asia affects trade and energy routes.
- Indian workers face labour and visa-related concerns under Emiratisation policies.

Roadmap of India–Netherlands Strategic Partnership 2026–2030



Major Pillars of the Strategic Partnership Roadmap

- Economic and trade cooperation.
- Defence and security partnership.
- Green and clean energy transition.
- Technology and semiconductor cooperation.

Importance of UAE for India

- The UAE is a key pillar of India's Think West Policy.
- The UAE acts as India's gateway to West Asia, Africa, and Europe.
- The Indian diaspora in UAE is nearly 3.5 million.
- The UAE is strategically important for India's energy security and maritime interests.

- Non-tariff barriers continue to affect Indian exports.

Way Forward

- Strengthen cooperation in green hydrogen and renewable energy.
- Expand digital and fintech integration.
- Promote defence co-development and maritime security cooperation.
- Improve protection and skilling of Indian workers in UAE.
- Strengthen connectivity under IMEC and regional logistics corridors.

Conclusion

The Prime Minister's visit to the UAE reflects the rapid transformation of India-UAE relations into a multidimensional strategic partnership. Coopera-

- Water management and climate resilience.
- People-to-people and educational exchanges.

Trade and Economic Cooperation

- The Netherlands is India's major trading partner in Europe.
- Bilateral trade crossed USD 30 billion in 2025–26.
- The Netherlands acts as a gateway for Indian exports into Europe through Rotterdam Port.
- Indian exports include pharmaceuticals, chemicals, machinery, textiles, and IT services.
- Dutch investments in India are concentrated in logistics, renewable energy, ports, agriculture, and technology.

Importance of Rotterdam Port

- Rotterdam is Europe's largest seaport.
- It serves as a critical logistics hub connecting Europe with global trade routes.
- Indian companies use Rotterdam as an

tion in trade, energy security, artificial intelligence, defence, maritime connectivity, and digital integration highlights the growing geopolitical and economic importance of the partnership. As both countries deepen engagement through frameworks like CEPA, IMEC, and I2U2, India-UAE relations are expected to play a major role in shaping regional stability and economic connectivity in West Asia and the Indo-Pacific.

PYQ (Prelims)

Question: Which of the following countries are members of the I2U2 grouping?

1. India
2. Israel
3. United Arab Emirates
4. United States of America

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 1, 2 and 3 only
- (c) 2, 3 and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer: (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

- entry point into European markets.
- The port is strategically important for India-Europe trade connectivity.

Technology & Semiconductor Cooperation

- India and the Netherlands agreed to strengthen cooperation in semiconductors and advanced manufacturing.
- The Netherlands hosts ASML, a global leader in semiconductor lithography technology.
- Both countries aim to develop resilient semiconductor supply chains.
- Cooperation includes AI, cybersecurity, quantum technologies, and digital innovation.

Green Energy and Climate Cooperation

- Both countries agreed to expand cooperation in green hydrogen and renewable energy.
- The Netherlands supports India's clean energy transition.
- Climate resilience and circular economy initiatives form important areas of collaboration.
- The partnership aligns with India's net-zero commitment by 2070.

Water Management Cooperation

- The Netherlands is globally known for expertise in water management and flood control.
- India and the Netherlands cooperate under the Strategic Water Partnership.
- Focus areas include river rejuvenation, urban water systems, irrigation efficiency and coastal resilience.
- Dutch expertise supports India's efforts in climate adaptation and disaster management.

Defence & Maritime Security Cooperation

- Both countries support a free, open, and rules-based Indo-Pacific region.
- India and the Netherlands cooperate in maritime domain awareness and naval engagement.
- The partnership focuses on secure sea lanes and maritime security.
- Both countries support UNCLOS 1982 and freedom of navigation.

Indo-Pacific Significance

- The Netherlands released its Indo-Pacific

Guidelines in 2020.

- India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) complements Dutch Indo-Pacific strategy.
- The partnership contributes to resilient supply chains and maritime connectivity.
- Both nations support multipolarity and strategic stability.

Agriculture & Food Processing Cooperation

- The Netherlands is a global leader in agricultural technology and food processing.
- India seeks Dutch expertise in precision farming, dairy technology, and horticulture.
- Cooperation promotes sustainable agriculture and food security.



Educational and Cultural Relations

- Indian students form one of the fastest-growing international student groups in the Netherlands.
- Academic collaboration is expanding in science, engineering, and technology sectors.
- Cultural exchanges strengthen people-to-people ties.

Challenges in India–Netherlands Relations

- Regulatory barriers and trade standards in Europe.
- Need for stronger technology transfer mechanisms.
- Competition from other global manufacturing hubs.
- Differences in climate and environmental standards.

Strategic Importance for India

- Strengthens India's engagement with the

European Union.

- Supports diversification of supply chains beyond China.
- Enhances India's semiconductor and clean technology ecosystem.
- Improves maritime and logistics connectivity with Europe.
- Promotes sustainable development and green transition.

Way Forward

- Expand semiconductor and high-tech manufacturing cooperation.
- Strengthen defence and maritime engagement.
- Promote green hydrogen and circular economy partnerships.
- Enhance educational and innovation exchanges.
- Accelerate implementation of India-EU trade and technology cooperation.

Conclusion

The India–Netherlands Strategic Partnership Roadmap 2026–2030 reflects the growing convergence between both countries in trade, technology, maritime security, climate action, and semiconductor cooperation. The partnership combines Dutch technological expertise with India's market scale and strategic importance in the Indo-Pacific region. Successful implementation of the roadmap can significantly strengthen India's engagement with Europe while supporting resilient supply chains, sustainable development, and strategic autonomy.

PYQ (Prelims)

Question: Consider the following statements regarding the Indo-Pacific region:

- The Indo-Pacific concept emphasizes maritime connectivity and freedom of navigation.
- UNCLOS 1982 provides the legal framework governing maritime activities.
- India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) focuses only on military cooperation.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only

ECI Announces Phase 3 of

SIR



Why in News?

- The Election Commission of India (ECI) announced Phase 3 of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.
- Phase 3 will begin from May 2026 across 16 States and 3 Union Territories.
- The exercise aims to ensure accurate, inclusive, and error-free electoral rolls before upcoming elections.

What is Special Intensive Revision (SIR)?

- SIR is a comprehensive revision and verification of electoral rolls conducted by the ECI.
- The process involves house-to-house verification by Booth Level Officers (BLOs).
- Its main objective is to remove duplicate, deceased, shifted, and ineligible voters.
- It also ensures inclusion of newly eligible voters.
- The exercise strengthens the democratic principle of 'One Person, One Vote'.



Legal & Constitutional Basis

- Article 324 of the Constitution gives the ECI powers of superintendence, direction, and control of elections.
- Section 21(3) of the Representation of the People Act (RPA), 1950 empowers ECI to conduct special revision of electoral rolls.
- Article 326 guarantees universal adult suffrage.
- Articles 325 and 326 ensure non-discrimination in electoral registration.

Coverage of Phase 3

- Phase 3 covers nearly 36.73 crore voters.
- It extends SIR to most parts of the country.
- Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, and Ladakh are currently excluded from this phase.
- The revision exercise is expected to continue till late 2026 in some states.

Process of SIR

- Booth Level Officers conduct door-to-door verification.
- Enumeration forms are distributed and verified.
- Electors may be required to submit supporting identity and residence documents.
- Draft electoral rolls are published for public objections and corrections.
- Final electoral rolls are released after verification and disposal of claims.

Objectives of SIR

- Removal of ghost voters and duplicate entries.
- Updating voter lists due to migration and demographic changes.
- Inclusion of first-time and eligible voters.
- Strengthening transparency and electoral credibility.
- Preventing electoral fraud and impersonation.

Importance of Electoral Rolls

- Electoral rolls are the official lists of eligible voters.
- They form the foundation of free and fair elections.
- Accurate rolls ensure equal voting rights and democratic legitimacy.
- Errors in rolls can lead to disenfranchise-

ment or electoral malpractice.

Challenges Associated with SIR

- Large-scale verification is administratively complex.
- Possibility of wrongful exclusion of genuine voters.
- Migrant workers and marginalised communities may face documentation issues.
- Political controversies may arise regarding voter deletions.
- Digital and logistical gaps can affect implementation.

Supreme Court's Observations

- The Supreme Court upheld ECI's authority to conduct SIR under Article 324.
- The Court suggested accepting documents such as Aadhaar, voter ID, and ration cards during verification.
- The judiciary emphasized balancing electoral integrity with voter inclusion.

Role of Technology in Electoral Roll Management

- ECI uses ERONET for electoral roll management.
- Digital databases help identify duplicate and fake entries.
- AI-based anomaly detection may strengthen verification processes.
- Online voter services improve transparency and accessibility.

Concerns Raised by Critics

- Fear of exclusion of economically weaker sections and migrant populations.
- Concerns regarding misuse for political purposes.
- Need for greater transparency and grievance redressal. ➔ **Continued on P8**

Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2025

Why in News?

- The National Statistical Office (NSO) released the Annual Report of the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2025.
- The report provides detailed data on employment, unemployment, labour force participation, wages, and sectoral employment trends in India.
- PLFS 2025 is the first comprehensive report based on the calendar year format (January–December 2025).

About PLFS

- Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) was launched in 2017 by the National Statistical Office (NSO).
- NSO functions under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).
- PLFS is India's main survey for labour market data.
- It provides estimates related to employment, unemployment, labour force participation, and wages.
- The survey replaced the earlier Employment-Unemployment Survey conducted by NSSO.

Objectives of PLFS

- To estimate key employment and unemployment indicators at regular intervals.

- To provide quarterly labour force data for urban areas.
- To generate annual employment and unemployment estimates for both rural and urban areas.
- To support evidence-based labour and economic policymaking.

Major Findings of PLFS 2025

- Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) remained stable at 59.3% for persons aged 15 years and above.
- Unemployment Rate (UR) declined marginally to 3.1%.
- Worker Population Ratio (WPR) increased to 57.4%.
- Approximately 61.6 crore people were estimated to be employed in India.



- Regular salaried employment showed gradual improvement.
- Manufacturing and services sectors witnessed employment expansion.

Gender Dimensions

- Male LFPR stood at around 79.1%, while female LFPR was about 40%.
- Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFPR) has improved significantly compared to earlier years.
- Rise in rural female participation contributed strongly to overall labour force growth.
- Gender wage gaps continue to persist across sectors.
- Women remain concentrated in informal and low-paid jobs.

Youth Employment and NEET Concern

- Nearly one-fourth of youth remained in the NEET category (Not in Employment, Education or Training).
- Youth unemployment remains higher than overall unemployment.
- Skill mismatch and lack of quality jobs are major concerns.
- Urban educated youth face greater employment pressure.

▶ Continued on P9

▶ From P7

- Requirement of safeguards against arbitrary deletions.

Related Electoral Reforms in India

- Introduction of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs).
- Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT).
- National Voters' Service Portal (NVSP).
- Online voter registration and correction services.
- Debates on simultaneous elections and electoral transparency.

Way Forward

- Ensure transparent and inclusive revision process.
- Strengthen grievance redressal mechanisms.
- Use technology carefully without compromising voter rights.
- Increase awareness among citizens

regarding voter verification.

- Balance electoral integrity with democratic inclusiveness.

Conclusion

The Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise reflects the Election Commission's effort to strengthen electoral integrity through accurate and updated voter rolls. While the process is essential for preventing duplication and ensuring fair elections, it must also protect democratic inclusiveness and avoid wrongful exclusion of genuine voters. Transparent implementation, technological safeguards, and effective grievance redressal are essential for maintaining public trust in the electoral process.

PYQ (Prelims)

Question: With reference to electoral

rolls in India, consider the following statements:

1. The Election Commission of India prepares and maintains electoral rolls.
2. Article 324 of the Constitution empowers the ECI to supervise elections.
3. Section 21 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950 allows special revision of electoral rolls.



Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (d) 1, 2 and 3

►► From P8

Sectoral Employment Trends

- Agriculture still employs the largest share of workforce.
- Gradual movement of labour towards manufacturing and services was observed.
- Construction sector remained a major employment generator.
- Growth in formal salaried jobs indicates partial labour market formalisation.

Informal Sector & Job Quality

- A large share of India's workforce continues to work in the informal sector.
- Informal jobs often lack social security, job stability, and fixed wages.
- Underemployment and disguised unemployment remain structural concerns.
- Quality employment generation remains a major policy challenge.

Skill Development Issues

- Only a small proportion of workers received formal vocational training.
- Skill gaps continue to affect productivity and employability.
- Industry-academia mismatch reduces job readiness.
- Need for stronger skilling ecosystem under Skill India Mission.

Wage Trends

- Average wages increased gradually across sectors.
- Women's wages showed relatively faster growth in some sectors.
- However, substantial gender wage inequality still exists.
- Real wage growth remains uneven due to inflationary pressures.

Changes Introduced in PLFS from 2025

- Survey period shifted from July–June cycle to January–December calendar year.
- Quarterly labour force estimates extended to rural areas for the first time.
- Sampling design revamped for higher-frequency labour market indicators.
- Age-disaggregated NEET data introduced for improved policy targeting.

Challenges Highlighted by PLFS

- Jobless or job-poor growth concerns.
- High dependence on agriculture for employment.



- Low female workforce participation in urban areas.
- Persistent informalisation of labour.
- Skill mismatch and low productivity employment.

Government Initiatives Related to Employment

- Skill India Mission.
- PM Vishwakarma Scheme.
- Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme.
- Make in India.
- Digital India and Startup India initiatives.
- Employment-linked skilling and apprenticeship programs.

Importance of Labour Data

- Helps government design employment and welfare policies.
- Useful for monetary and fiscal policy planning.
- Supports targeted interventions for youth and women.
- Provides indicators for inclusive growth and demographic dividend.

Way Forward

- Promote labour-intensive manufacturing.
- Increase investment in skilling and vocational education.
- Strengthen MSMEs for employment generation.
- Improve women's workforce participation through childcare and safety measures.
- Expand formal employment and social security coverage.

- Enhance labour market flexibility while protecting workers' rights.

Conclusion

The PLFS 2025 report reflects gradual improvement in India's labour market through declining unemployment, rising labour force participation, and increasing formal employment opportunities. However, structural challenges such as informal employment, youth unemployment, gender wage gaps, and skill mismatch continue to remain significant concerns. Achieving inclusive and employment-intensive growth will require stronger labour reforms, skill development, manufacturing expansion, and better quality job creation.

PYQ (Prelims)

Question: With reference to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), consider the following statements:

1. PLFS is conducted by the National Statistical Office (NSO).
2. PLFS provides data related to employment and unemployment in India.
3. PLFS was launched to replace the earlier Employment-Unemployment Surveys of NSSO.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (d) 1, 2 and 3

Coal Gasification Scheme

Why in News?

- The Union Cabinet approved the 'Scheme for Promotion of New Surface Coal/Lignite Gasification Projects for Production of Syngas and Downstream Products'.
- The scheme aims to reduce dependence on imported fuels, chemicals, fertilisers and natural gas.
- Coal linkage tenure for gasification projects has also been extended to 30 years to provide long-term policy certainty.

Targets and Financial Outlay

- The government allocated 37,500 crore under the new coal gasification scheme.
- India aims to gasify 75 million tonnes (MT) of coal/lignite by 2030.
- The larger national target is 100 MT coal gasification by 2030.
- The scheme is expected to attract investments worth nearly 3 lakh crore.

What is Coal Gasification?

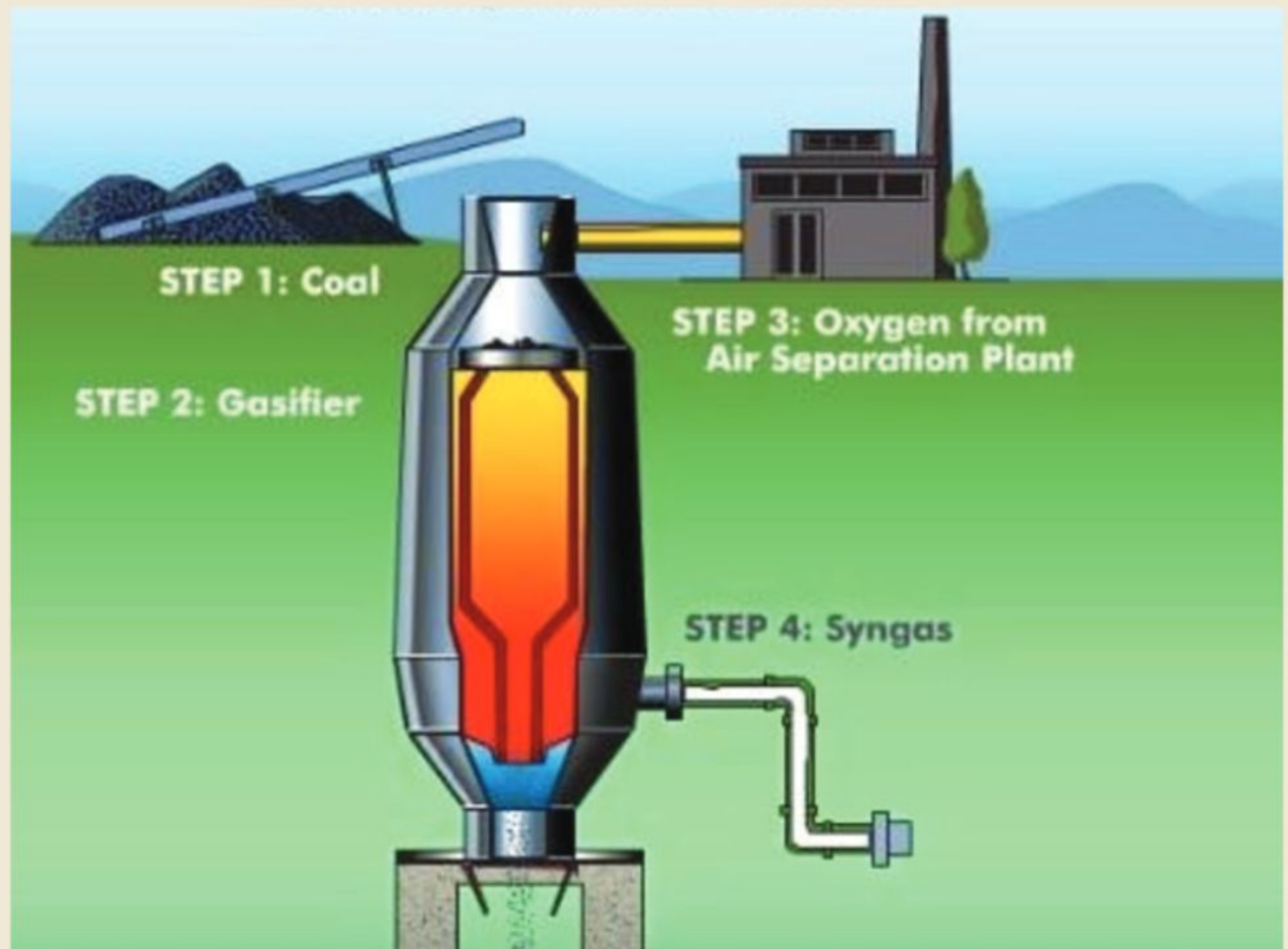
- Coal gasification is the process of converting coal into synthetic gas (syngas).
- Coal is partially oxidised using oxygen, air, steam or carbon dioxide.
- The resulting syngas mainly contains hydrogen, carbon monoxide and methane.
- Syngas can be used for power generation, fertilisers, methanol, chemicals and hydrogen production.

What is Syngas?

- Syngas means synthetic gas produced from coal gasification.
- It is a mixture of carbon monoxide, hydrogen and small quantities of other gases.
- It acts as a feedstock for producing methanol, ammonia, fertilisers and chemicals.
- Syngas can also support hydrogen economy development.

Need for Coal Gasification in India

- India possesses one of the world's largest coal reserves.
- India imports large quantities of LNG, methanol, ammonia and fertilisers.
- Coal gasification helps reduce import dependence and foreign exchange outflow.
- Supports energy security and industrial self-reliance.
- Provides cleaner utilisation pathway for



domestic coal.

Major Benefits of the Scheme

- Promotes Atmanirbhar Bharat in energy and chemicals sector.
- Encourages domestic production of fertilisers and petrochemicals.
- Supports employment generation and industrial growth.
- Can reduce direct burning of coal in some industries.
- Enhances value addition from low-grade coal resources.

Environmental Dimensions

- Coal gasification is relatively cleaner compared to direct coal combustion.
- It can reduce particulate emissions and improve fuel efficiency.
- Carbon capture technologies can be integrated with gasification plants.
- However, coal gasification still generates carbon dioxide emissions.
- Environmental sustainability depends on carbon management systems.

Underground Coal Gasification (UCG)

- UCG converts coal into gas while the coal remains underground.
- Gas is extracted through wells without traditional mining.

- It reduces surface land disturbance.
- India's first pilot UCG project was launched in Jharkhand.

Government Initiatives Related to Coal Gasification

- National Coal Gasification Mission (2021).
- 8,500 crore incentive scheme approved in 2024.
- Four pilot projects announced in Union Budget 2022-23.
- Talcher Fertilizers Limited project in Odisha for coal gasification-based urea production.
- Task Force for Coal-Based Hydrogen Production.

Sectors Benefiting from Coal Gasification

- Fertiliser industry.
- Petrochemical industry.
- Hydrogen production.
- Steel and cement sectors.
- Power generation and industrial fuel applications.

Challenges Associated with Coal Gasification

- High capital investment requirement.
- Technology complexity and efficiency concerns.

- Water-intensive process creating stress in water-scarce regions.
- Carbon emissions remain significant without carbon capture systems.
- Competition from renewable energy and green hydrogen.

Coal and India's Energy Security

- Coal contributes nearly 55% of India's energy mix.
- More than 70% of electricity generation depends on coal.
- Coal remains essential for baseload power and grid stability.
- India seeks balanced transition towards cleaner energy while maintaining energy security.

Way Forward

- Promote carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS) technologies.
- Increase R&D in cleaner coal technologies.
- Integrate coal gasification with green hydrogen initiatives.
- Ensure environmental safeguards and efficient water usage.
- Gradually align coal utilisation with net-zero commitments.

Conclusion

The Coal Gasification Scheme represents India's effort to utilise its vast domestic coal reserves more efficiently while reducing dependence on imported fuels and chemicals. Although coal gasification offers cleaner utilisation compared to direct coal combustion, environmental concerns and carbon emissions remain important challenges. Balancing energy security, industrial growth and climate commitments will require adoption of cleaner technologies, carbon management systems and gradual integration with renewable energy pathways.

PYQ (Prelims)

Question: Consider the following statements regarding coal gasification:

1. Coal gasification converts coal into synthetic gas known as syngas.
2. Syngas can be used for production of fertilisers and chemicals.
3. Underground Coal Gasification converts coal into gas while the coal remains underground.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (d) 1, 2 and 3

Genomic Mapping of Pangolin Trafficking

Why in News?

- A study published in PLOS Biology developed a DNA-based 'genetic map' to identify the origin and trafficking routes of illegally traded pangolins.
- The research revealed major global poaching hotspots and international trafficking corridors linked to China and Vietnam.
- The study strengthens scientific investigation and law enforcement against illegal wildlife trafficking.

What is Genomic Mapping?

- Genomic mapping is the process of identifying genetic markers and variations within the genome of an organism.
- Scientists analyse DNA sequences to understand population structure, evolutionary patterns, and geographic origin.
- In wildlife conservation, genomic mapping helps trace illegally traded animals and wildlife products.

How the DNA Mapping Was Done

- Researchers analysed 671 specific genomic locations that vary among pangolin populations.
- Both museum specimens and modern pangolin samples were used.
- A geo-referenced genetic database was created covering all eight pangolin species.
- The system can trace seized pangolin scales back to their original habitat regions.

Major Findings of the Study

- Three major global trafficking hotspots were identified.
- Southwestern Cameroon was identified for White-bellied Pangolins.
- Southwestern Borneo was identified for Sunda Pangolins.
- Myanmar border region was identified for Chinese Pangolins.
- The study exposed interconnected local and international trafficking networks.

India-Linked Pangolin Trafficking Network

- The study identified an active illicit wildlife network linked to northeastern India.
- Areas around Arunachal Pradesh and Assam were identified as possible trafficking zones.



▶ Continued on P12



- The trafficking route connects with Yunnan province in China.
- Bhutan may also be part of the regional trafficking corridor.
- The findings highlight India's vulnerability within transnational wildlife crime networks.

Importance of the Study

- Helps identify poaching hotspots accurately.
- Supports evidence-based wildlife crime investigation.
- Improves international cooperation against illegal wildlife trade.
- Can strengthen prosecution through scientific forensic evidence.
- Helps enforcement agencies disrupt trafficking networks at source.

About Pangolins

- Pangolins are the only mammals completely covered with keratin scales.
- They are shy, solitary, nocturnal and insect-eating mammals.
- They mainly feed on ants and termites using a long sticky tongue.
- Pangolins play an important ecological role in pest control and soil aeration.
- They roll into a ball as a defence mechanism.

Species of Pangolins

- There are eight pangolin species globally.
- Four species are found in Africa and four in Asia.
- Asian species include Indian Pangolin, Chinese Pangolin, Sunda Pangolin, and Philippine Pangolin.
- India mainly hosts Indian Pangolin and Chinese Pangolin.

Distribution in India

- Indian Pangolin (*Manis crassicaudata*) is

widely distributed across the Indian subcontinent.

- Chinese Pangolin (*Manis pentadactyla*) is mainly restricted to Northeast India.
- Habitats include tropical forests, grasslands, scrub forests, agricultural fields, and foothills.

Threats to Pangolins

- Illegal trafficking for scales and meat.
- Use of scales in traditional medicine systems.
- Habitat destruction and deforestation.
- Low reproduction rate slows population recovery.
- Roadkills and human-wildlife conflict.

Conservation Status

- Indian Pangolin is classified as Endangered on the IUCN Red List.
- Chinese Pangolin is classified as Critically Endangered.
- All eight pangolin species are included under Appendix I of CITES.
- Indian and Chinese pangolins receive protection under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

Wildlife Crime and Global Concerns

- Pangolins are considered the world's most trafficked mammals.
- Illegal wildlife trade is linked with organised crime networks.
- Wildlife trafficking threatens biodiversity and ecosystem stability.
- The trade generates billions of dollars globally each year.

Role of Science & Technology in Wildlife Conservation

- DNA barcoding and genomic mapping improve species identification.
- AI, satellite tracking, and forensic tools strengthen wildlife monitoring.
- Technology improves conservation planning and anti-poaching efforts.
- Scientific databases support cross-border wildlife crime investigations.

International & National Initiatives

- CITES regulates international trade in endangered species.
- World Pangolin Day is observed on the third Saturday of February.
- India has strengthened wildlife protection through Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB).
- Global cooperation is increasing against wildlife trafficking networks.

Way Forward

- Strengthen genomic databases for endangered species.
- Enhance international intelligence-sharing on wildlife crime.
- Increase habitat protection and anti-poaching patrols.
- Promote community participation in wildlife conservation.
- Use advanced forensic technologies for faster prosecution.

Conclusion

The genomic mapping of pangolin trafficking represents a major advancement in wildlife conservation and forensic science.

By scientifically tracing the origin of trafficked pangolins, the technology strengthens law enforcement and international cooperation against organised wildlife crime. Protecting pangolins requires a combination of strong legal enforcement, habitat conservation, technological innovation, and global collaboration to preserve biodiversity and



ecological balance.

PYQ (Prelims)

Question: With reference to pangolins, consider the following statements:

1. Pangolins are the only mammals fully covered with keratin scales.
2. Indian Pangolin is classified as Endangered on the IUCN Red List.
3. All species of pangolins are listed under Appendix I of CITES.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (d) 1, 2 and 3

Canine Distemper Virus (CDV) Threat to Animals

Why in News?

- A six-year-old male tiger was found dead in the Mukki range of Madhya Pradesh's Kanha Tiger Reserve (KTR).
- Authorities suspect that the Canine Distemper Virus (CDV) outbreak caused multiple tiger deaths within a month in the reserve.
- The incident renewed concerns regarding spillover diseases from domestic dogs to wild carnivores.

What is Canine Distemper Virus (CDV)?

- Canine Distemper Virus (CDV) is a highly contagious and often fatal viral disease affecting carnivorous mammals.
- It is caused by a single-stranded RNA virus belonging to the Paramyxoviridae family and Morbillivirus genus.
- The same virus family also includes measles and mumps viruses in humans.
- Domestic dogs are considered the primary reservoir hosts of the virus.

Animals Affected by CDV

- CDV affects domestic dogs, foxes, wolves, jackals, hyenas, ferrets, and raccoons.
- It also infects large wild cats including tigers, lions, leopards, and snow leopards.
- Threatened wildlife populations are highly vulnerable to outbreaks.
- The virus has previously caused major wildlife losses in Gir lions and Serengeti lions.

How CDV Spreads

- The virus spreads mainly through aerosol droplets released during coughing and sneezing.
- Direct contact with infected saliva, urine, faeces, or nasal secretions can transmit infection.
- Consumption of contaminated carcasses may also spread the disease.
- Domestic and stray dogs near forest areas are major carriers.



Impact on the Body

- CDV attacks respiratory, gastrointestinal, immune, and central nervous systems.
- Common symptoms include fever, eye and nasal discharge, coughing, vomiting, and diarrhoea.
- Neurological symptoms include seizures, muscle twitching, paralysis, and abnormal jaw movements.
- Mortality rates are very high among unvaccinated populations.



Kanha Tiger Reserve & CDV Outbreak

- Kanha Tiger Reserve is located in Madhya Pradesh.
- It was established in 1955 and became a Tiger Reserve in 1973 under Project Tiger.
- The reserve is part of the Central Indian Highlands ecosystem.
- The outbreak highlighted vulnerability of tiger populations to infectious diseases.

Spillover Diseases & Wildlife

- Spillover disease occurs when pathogens move from domestic animals to wildlife or humans.
- Human-wildlife-domestic animal interaction increases transmission risk.
- Habitat fragmentation and expanding settlements intensify spillover risks.
- CDV is an important example of wildlife disease spillover.

Vaccination & Prevention Measures

- Vaccination of domestic and stray dogs around reserves is considered the most effective prevention strategy.
- Creation of vaccination buffer zones near tiger reserves is being promoted.
- Wildlife health surveillance systems are being strengthened.
- Frontline forest staff are being trained to identify disease symptoms early.

Role of NTCA & Wildlife Authorities

- National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) monitors tiger conservation efforts in India.
- NTCA advised states to vaccinate stray dogs around tiger reserves.
- Forest departments coordinate with animal husbandry departments for vaccination campaigns.
- Wildlife disease monitoring is becoming an important part of conservation planning.

One Health Approach

- The One Health approach recognises the interconnection between human, animal, and environmental health.
- CDV outbreaks demonstrate the importance of integrated disease management.
- Coordination among veterinarians, forest officials, ecologists, and public health agencies is necessary.

Challenges in Controlling CDV

- Large stray dog populations near forests complicate vaccination drives.
- Wild animals are difficult to monitor and treat.
- Lack of specialised wildlife veterinary infrastructure.

- Habitat encroachment increases wildlife-domestic animal interaction.

Conclusion

The Canine Distemper Virus outbreak in Kanha Tiger Reserve highlights the growing threat of infectious diseases to wildlife conservation in India. The spread of diseases from domestic animals to endangered wildlife reflects the ecological consequences of habitat fragmentation and increasing human-animal interaction. Strengthening surveillance, vaccination, veterinary infrastructure, and adopting a One Health approach are essential for protecting biodiversity and ensuring long-term ecological stability.

PYQ (Prelims)

Question: With reference to the One

Health approach, consider the following statements:

1. It recognises the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health.
2. It is important in controlling zoonotic and wildlife diseases.
3. It promotes coordinated action among multiple sectors and disciplines.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (d) 1, 2 and 3



India–Africa Forum Summit (IAFS)

Background

- India–Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) is the official platform for cooperation between India and African countries.
- It was launched in 2008 to strengthen political, economic, developmental and strategic relations.
- The summit is generally planned once every three years.
- It reflects the spirit of South-South Cooperation and partnership among developing countries.
- African Union (AU) and African Union Commission are major institutional partners.

Timeline of Summits

- First Summit – 2008, New Delhi.
- Second Summit – 2011, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

- Third Summit – 2015, New Delhi.
- Fourth Summit – Scheduled in 2026, New Delhi after a gap of more than a decade.

Importance of Africa for India

- Africa is rich in minerals, oil, gas and critical resources.
- Africa is an important market for Indian medicines, automobiles, engineering goods and digital services.
- India depends on Africa for energy security and strategic maritime cooperation in the Indian Ocean.
- Africa is important for food security, fertilizer imports and rare mineral supply chains.
- African countries support India in international forums such as the United

Nations.

- Africa is central to India's Global South outreach.

Major Areas of Cooperation

- Trade and Investment
- Capacity Building
- Health Sector
- Digital and Technology Cooperation
- Defence and Maritime Security
- Climate and Sustainable Development

Highlights of the Proposed Fourth IAFS (2026)

- India will host the summit in New Delhi in collaboration with the African Union.
- Theme: "India Africa Strategic Partnership for Innovation, Resilience and Inclusive Transformation".
- Focus sectors include:

- Economy and trade
- Critical minerals
- Defence and security
- Digital systems and fintech
- Agriculture and food security
- Energy and climate action
- Health and education
- Space and high technology

Strategic Importance for India

- Helps India counter growing Chinese influence in Africa.
- Strengthens India's image as a development partner instead of a resource extractor.
- Expands India's diplomatic footprint in Africa.
- Enhances maritime security in the Indian Ocean Region.
- Supports India's aspiration for permanent membership in the UN Security Council.
- Creates opportunities for Indian businesses and startups.

Challenges in India–Africa

Relations

- Strong competition from China, USA, EU and Gulf countries.
- Slow implementation of some Indian projects.
- Connectivity and logistics issues.
- Political instability and conflicts in some African nations.
- Limited private investment compared to China.
- Financing constraints and trade barriers.



Way Forward

- Increase high-level political engagement.
- Improve project implementation speed.
- Strengthen trade agreements and market access.
- Expand digital public infrastructure cooperation.
- Promote defence manufacturing and maritime partnerships.
- Increase cooperation in green energy and critical minerals.
- Encourage Indian startups and MSMEs to invest in Africa.

Conclusion

India–Africa relations are entering a new

strategic phase based on mutual respect, development partnership and Global South solidarity. The India–Africa Forum Summit provides an important platform to deepen cooperation in trade, technology, security, health and sustainable development. Stronger India–Africa engagement will help create a balanced multipolar world and support inclusive global growth.

PYQ Question

Q. With reference to the India–Africa Forum Summit (IAFS), consider the following statements:

1. It is the official platform for cooperation between India and African countries.
2. The first India–Africa Forum Summit was held in Addis Ababa.
3. African Union is associated with the summit process.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

INDIA AI IMPACT SUMMIT 2026

Why in News

- India hosted the India AI Impact Summit 2026 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.
- The summit was organised under the IndiaAI Mission by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).
- It became the first major global AI summit hosted by a Global South country.
- The summit shifted global discussion from “AI Safety” to “AI for Development and Impact”.
- More than 100 countries, global technology companies, researchers, policy makers and international organisations participated.

Background of Global AI Summit Series

- The global AI summit process began with:
 - AI Safety Summit at Bletchley Park, United Kingdom (2023)
 - AI Seoul Summit, South Korea (2024)

- AI Action Summit, Paris (2025)
- India AI Impact Summit, New Delhi (2026)
- India's summit focused on inclusive, development-oriented and affordable AI systems for developing nations.
- The summit highlighted the role of AI in public welfare rather than only advanced technological competition.

Objectives of the Summit

- Promote responsible and inclusive Artificial Intelligence.
- Encourage international cooperation in AI governance.
- Build AI systems suitable for developing countries.
- Expand access to computing infrastructure and datasets.
- Use AI for healthcare, agriculture, education and governance.
- Reduce digital divide between developed and developing countries.
- Strengthen India's leadership in global

digital governance.

Major Themes Discussed

- **AI for Development**
 - AI for poverty reduction and inclusive growth.
 - AI-based public service delivery.
- **Responsible AI**
 - Ethical AI frameworks.
 - Transparency, accountability and fairness.
- **AI Governance**
 - Global standards for AI regulation.
 - Cross-border data governance.
- **AI Infrastructure**
 - Access to semiconductor chips and cloud computing.
 - Data centres and AI compute facilities.
- **AI and Employment**
 - Impact on labour markets.
 - Need for reskilling and digital literacy.
- **Small AI Models**
 - Low-cost AI systems that work on ordi-



nary devices.

- Useful for countries with limited internet and infrastructure.

- **AI and National Security**

- Cybersecurity concerns.
- Deepfakes and misinformation risks.

- **AI and Climate Change**

- AI for climate modelling and disaster management.
- Energy consumption of large AI systems.

IndiaAI Mission

- IndiaAI Mission is the Government of India's flagship programme for AI development.
- It aims to create an AI ecosystem with:
 - Compute infrastructure
 - Datasets
 - Start-up support
 - AI skilling
 - Research and innovation
- It promotes indigenous AI capabilities.
- It supports ethical and responsible AI development.
- The mission is aligned with Digital India and Viksit Bharat 2047.

Important Announcements and Outcomes

- India promoted the idea of "AI for All".
- International cooperation on AI governance received major attention.
- Discussions focused on affordable AI for developing nations.
- Global institutions such as the World Bank supported AI for development initiatives.
- Partnerships were discussed in:
 - Healthcare AI
 - Agriculture technology
 - Education technology
 - Digital governance
 - Fintech and digital public infrastructure
- India highlighted Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) models like:
 - Aadhaar
 - UPI
 - DigiLocker
- AI-driven digital payments and agentic commerce technologies were demonstrated.

Significance for India

- Strengthens India's image as a technology leader of the Global South.
- Enhances India's role in global AI governance discussions.
- Supports India's digital economy expansion.
- Encourages investment in AI start-ups and innovation.

- Helps India build domestic semiconductor and AI infrastructure.
- Promotes employment opportunities in advanced technologies.
- Increases India's geopolitical influence in emerging technologies.

Concerns and Challenges

- Risk of job displacement due to automation.
- Ethical concerns regarding bias and discrimination in AI systems.
- Data privacy and cybersecurity issues.
- Spread of misinformation through deepfakes.
- Unequal access to AI technologies between countries.
- High energy consumption by advanced AI models.
- Dependence on foreign semiconductor supply chains.
- Regulatory uncertainty in global AI governance.

India's Approach to AI Governance

- India supports a balanced and innovation-friendly regulatory framework.
- India follows a sector-led and flexible governance approach.
- Focus on:
 - Transparency
 - Accountability
 - Human oversight
 - Public welfare
- India advocates democratisation of AI access.
- Emphasis on open and trusted digital ecosystems.

International Significance

- The summit reflected increasing global competition in AI technologies.
- It highlighted the importance of multilateral cooperation in AI governance.
- Developing countries demanded equitable access to AI infrastructure.
- The summit strengthened discussions on global digital public goods.
- India emerged as a bridge between

advanced economies and developing nations.

Way Forward

- Increase investment in AI research and semiconductor manufacturing.
- Build strong cybersecurity and data protection systems.
- Expand AI education and skill development.
- Encourage public-private partnerships.
- Develop affordable AI solutions for agriculture, health and education.
- Strengthen international cooperation on ethical AI governance.
- Ensure AI growth remains inclusive and human-centric.

Conclusion

India AI Impact Summit 2026 marked a major milestone in global AI governance by bringing development-focused and inclusive AI into international discussions. The summit strengthened India's position as a leading voice of the Global South in digital governance and emerging technologies. It highlighted that AI should become a tool for inclusive growth, public welfare and sustainable development rather than only a technology of competition and control.

Prelims Practice Question

Q. With reference to the India AI Impact Summit 2026, consider the following statements:

1. It was hosted in New Delhi under the IndiaAI Mission.
2. The summit mainly focused on military use of Artificial Intelligence.
3. India emphasised the concept of "AI for Development and Impact".

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c)