



## Implications of the Israel-Iran Conflict

**For Prelims:** [Red Sea](#), [Suez Canal](#), [India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor](#), [G20](#), [Belt and Road Initiative](#), [Inflation](#), [Indian stock market](#), [Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries](#), [OPEC+](#), [United Nations](#)

**For Mains:** [Israel and Iran Conflict](#), Implications of the Israel-Iran conflict, Effect of Policies & Politics of Countries on India's Interests

**Source:** [BS](#)

### Why in News?

The conflict between [Israel and Iran](#) has entered a volatile phase, raising concerns across various sectors, particularly trade and economics. As tensions escalate, the implications for India, an emerging player in the global market are becoming increasingly significant.

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## What are the Implications of the Israel-Iran Conflict on India?

- **Disruption of Trade Routes:** The conflict has heightened the risk of disruptions along key shipping routes crucial for India's trade with Europe, the US, Africa, and West Asia.
  - The **Red Sea and Suez Canal routes** are particularly vital, as they facilitate the movement of goods worth over USD 400 billion annually.
  - The instability threatens not just shipping lanes but also the overall **security of maritime trade**.
- **Economic Impact on Exports:** The escalation of conflict has already begun to affect Indian exports. For instance, exports fell by **9% in August 2024**, primarily due to a substantial 38% decline in petroleum product exports caused by the **Red Sea crisis**.
  - These exports accounted for a significant portion of India's trade, with Europe receiving 21% of total petroleum product exports.
  - The **tea industry is particularly vulnerable**. With **Iran being one of the largest importers of Indian tea** (India's exports reaching 4.91 million kg in early 2024), concerns about the impact of conflict on shipments have arisen.
- **Rising Shipping Costs:** As shipping routes become longer due to conflict-related diversions, **costs have increased by 15-20%**.
  - This surge in shipping rates has strained the **profit margins of Indian exporters**, especially those dealing in low-end engineering products, textiles, and garments, which are highly sensitive to freight costs.
  - Exporters have reported that rising logistics costs could **negatively impact their overall**

**profitability**, forcing them to reconsider pricing strategies and operational efficiencies.

- **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC):** The **IMEC**, during **India's G20 presidency** to create an efficient trade route connecting India, the Gulf, and Europe, aims to reduce dependency on the Suez Canal while also countering **China's Belt and Road Initiative**.
  - However, the ongoing **conflict threatens the progress and viability of this corridor**, impacting bilateral trade between India and its partners as well as regional economic dynamics.
- **Impact on Crude Oil Prices:** The ongoing conflict has led to a spike in **global crude oil prices**, with Brent crude nearing USD 75 a barrel. As **Iran is a major oil producer**, any military escalation could disrupt oil supplies, further pushing prices upward.
  - Higher oil prices may hinder **central banks from cutting interest rates**, as increased **inflation** can complicate economic recovery efforts.
- **Effects on Indian Markets:** India relies heavily on **oil imports (more than 80% of its oil needs coming from abroad)**, making it vulnerable to price fluctuations. A sustained rise in oil prices may lead investors to shift focus from **Indian equities to safer assets like bonds or gold**.
  - The **Indian stock market** has already felt the impact, with major indices like the **Sensex and Nifty** opening lower amid fears of a prolonged conflict.
- **Gold as a Safe Havens:** Gold prices have **reached new highs**, fueled by geopolitical tensions and shifts in investment strategies.
  - In times of uncertainty, investors often flock to **gold as a safe haven**, which could further elevate its price.
- **Logistics Challenges:** Indian exporters are currently navigating a **"wait and watch"** situation. Some exporters are urging the government to invest in developing a reputable Indian shipping line to mitigate the reliance on foreign shipping companies, which often impose high transport charges.

## What is the Status of India's Trade with Israel and Iran?

- **India- Israel Trade:**
  - **Significant Growth:** India-Israel trade has doubled over the last five years, growing from approximately USD 5.56 billion in 2018-19 to USD 10.7 billion in 2022-23.
    - **In FY 2023-24, the bilateral trade was USD 6.53 billion** (excluding defence) witnessing a decline due to regional security situation and trade route disruption.
    - **India is Israel's second-largest trading partner in Asia.** During FY 2022-23, Israel was India's 32nd biggest trading partner.
  - **Key Exports:** The primary exports from India to Israel include diesel, diamonds, aviation turbine fuel, and Basmati rice, with **diesel and diamonds alone accounting for 78% of total exports in 2022-23.**
  - **Imports:** India primarily imports space equipment, diamonds, potassium chloride, and mechanical appliances from Israel.
- **India-Iran Trade:**
  - **Declining Trade Volumes:** In contrast to the robust trade with Israel, India's trade with Iran has seen a contraction over the past five years, with bilateral trade amounting to just USD 2.33 billion in 2022-23.
    - **In FY 2023-24, the bilateral trade Iran reached USD 1.52 billion** during the first 10 months (April-January).
  - **Trade Surplus:** In 2022-23, India enjoyed a trade surplus of approximately USD 1 billion, exporting USD 1.66 billion worth of goods to Iran, primarily agricultural products, while importing USD 0.67 billion.
  - **Major Indian exports to Iran:** Basmati rice, tea, sugar, fresh fruits, drugs/pharmaceuticals, soft drinks-other than sharbat, kernels H.P.S, boneless bovine meat, pulses etc.
  - **Major Indian imports from Iran:** Saturated methanol, petroleum bitumen, apples, liquified propane, dry dates, inorganic/organic chemicals, almonds, etc.

## Reasons for the Iran-Israel Conflict

- **Formation of Israel (1948):** The creation of Israel led to the **Arab-Israeli War**. Although Iran

opposed Israel's formation and voted against the Partition Plan in 1947, it recognized Israel in 1950 under the **Pahlavi regime (last Iranian royal dynasty)**, fostering friendly relations characterised by economic and military ties.

- Despite formal ties, segments of Iranian society remained sympathetic to the Palestinian cause. The **Iranian Revolution in 1979** marked a turning point, ending **Pahlavi rule** and leading to the deterioration of Israel-Iran relations.
- **Religious and Ideological Differences:** Iran, governed by **Shia Islam**, and Israel, a predominantly **Jewish state**, have fundamental religious and ideological differences that **fuel mutual suspicion and animosity**.
- **Post-1979 Revolution Relations:** The Islamic Republic severed diplomatic ties with Israel, labelling it "**Little Satan**."
  - Shia clerics in Iran view the **Old City of Jerusalem** as a holy site and oppose its Israeli control. After the revolution, Iran promoted the idea of a **Palestinian state** and branded **Israel an "illegal" entity**.
- **Israeli-Palestinian Conflict:** Iran supports **Palestinian causes, backing groups like Hamas and Hezbollah**, which Israel designates as terrorist organisations. Iran's calls for the destruction of Israel exacerbate tensions.
- **Nuclear Program:** Israel perceives **Iran's nuclear ambitions as an existential threat**, fearing potential nuclear weapons development.
  - Israel has criticised the **Iran nuclear deal (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action)** and undertaken covert operations to disrupt Iran's nuclear activities.
- **Proxy Conflicts:** The Iran-Israel conflict has seen significant proxy warfare involving several groups. Iran supports **Hezbollah in Lebanon**, which frequently engages in fights with Israel, and the **Houthis in Yemen**, who have targeted Israeli shipping in the Red Sea.
  - Additionally, Iranian-backed Shia militias in Iraq have been retaliating against US forces while also resisting Israeli actions in the region.
  - These proxy conflicts enable Iran and Israel to wage indirect warfare, complicating regional stability and raising the risk of direct confrontations amid increasing tensions.
- **Regional Power Dynamics:** The competition between Iran and its allies versus Israel and its allies contributes to ongoing tensions and conflicts in the region.

## What are the Global Implications of the Israel-Iran Conflict?

- **Energy Supply and Pricing Dynamics:** Iran, a member of **Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)**, produces approximately **3.2 million barrels per day (bpd)**, constituting about **3% of global output**.
  - Despite facing **U.S. sanctions**, **Iranian oil exports have surged, primarily due to demand from China**. The country's strategic importance in the global oil market cannot be overstated.
- **OPEC's Spare Capacity:** **OPEC+** possesses significant spare oil production capacity, with estimates suggesting that **Saudi Arabia could increase output by up to 3 million barrels per day** and the UAE by about 1.4 million.
  - This capacity provides a **buffer against potential Iranian supply disruptions**, but the situation remains delicate.
- **Long-term Energy Security:** The increasing diversity of global oil supply, particularly due to rising **US production**, has provided a degree of insulation from price shocks associated with conflicts in the Middle East.
  - The US produces approximately **13% of global crude oil and nearly 20% of total liquid production**, which helps stabilise the market amid uncertainties.
- **Potential for Escalation:** Israel has not yet launched attacks on Iranian oil facilities, but the **possibility remains**. If Israel were to strike key installations, such as the **Kharg Island oil port**, it could provoke a significant military response from Iran.
  - Historically, conflicts have escalated quickly in this region, leading to unintended consequences for global supply chains.
- **Geopolitical Considerations:** The US is likely to **exert pressure on Israel to avoid major military escalation**, aiming to maintain regional stability and prevent a broader conflict.

- This reflects a nuanced approach to foreign policy that seeks to balance support for Israel with global economic interests.
- Other global players, **especially China, which has significant energy ties with Iran**, will be closely observing developments.
  - The outcome of this conflict may influence **international energy strategies and alliances**, potentially reshaping the geopolitical landscape.
- **Humanitarian Crises:** A wider conflict could lead to **significant refugee flows, impacting Mediterranean countries** like Italy and Greece, and straining **international humanitarian resources**.

## What are the Possible Solutions to De-escalate the Iran-Israel Conflict?

- **Immediate Ceasefire Agreement:** Urging both Iran and Israel to agree to an immediate ceasefire can serve as a foundational step toward reducing tensions and facilitating dialogue.
  - Global powers, particularly the **United States and China**, should leverage their diplomatic influence to press for a ceasefire and promote negotiations between the conflicting parties.
- **Regional Collaboration:** Engaging **Gulf Arab states** in discussions can provide a more comprehensive approach to de-escalation, addressing shared concerns about Iran's influence in the region.
- **Humanitarian Aid and Support:** Increasing **humanitarian assistance** to affected regions, can alleviate suffering and foster goodwill, potentially easing hostilities.
- **International Organisations:** Engaging organisations like the **United Nations** to mediate discussions and facilitate conflict resolution efforts can provide neutral ground for negotiations.
- **Long-term Peace Initiatives:** Regional powers should collaborate to establish a comprehensive security framework that includes confidence-building measures, arms control agreements, and peaceful conflict resolution mechanisms.
  - Addressing underlying issues such as historical grievances, **territorial disputes, and religious extremism** will foster a conducive environment for lasting peace.

Read more: [Iran-Israel Conflict](#)

### Drishti Mains Question:

Discuss the implications of the Israel-Iran conflict on India's trade and economic interests.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

### Prelims

**Q 1. Which one of the following countries of South-West Asia does not open out to the Mediterranean Sea? (2015)**

- (a) Syria
- (b) Jordan
- (c) Lebanon
- (d) Israel

**Ans: (b)**

**Q2. The term “two-state solution” is sometimes mentioned in the news in the context of the affairs of (2018)**

- (a) China

(b) Israel

(c) Iraq

(d) Yemen

Ans: (b)

### **Mains**

Q . "India's relations with Israel have, of late, acquired a depth and diversity, which cannot be rolled back." Discuss. (2018)

## **Social Media Regulation for Children**

For Prelims: [Digital Personal Data Protection Act \(DPDPA\) 2023](#), [Prime Minister](#), [High Court](#), [General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\)](#), [Children's Online Privacy Protection Act \(COPPA\)](#)

For Mains: Social Media and Its Regulation in India, Related Laws, Implications for Regulating Social Media Platform, Way Forward

[Source: TH](#)

### **Why in News?**

Recently, the Australian **Prime Minister** has announced a plan to implement a **minimum age for social media usage**, aiming to protect children from potential online harms.

- This initiative is in response to **rising concerns over children's safety online**, especially following the pandemic, which saw increased screen time among youth.

**Sharenting:** It is a combination of the words "**sharing**" and "**parenting**".

- It describes the increasingly popular **habit of parents sharing photos, videos, or other information about their children on social media**.

### **What are the Global Regulatory Efforts Regarding Social Media Usage?**

- **Social Media:**
  - Social media refers to the **means of interactions** (collection of websites and apps) among people in which they **create, share, and/or exchange information and ideas** in virtual communities and networks. Example: **Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn** etc.
  - A newspaper is a type of print media which is **not considered social media**. It is a traditional form of media that includes magazines, journals, and newsletters.
- **In India:**
  - [Digital Personal Data Protection Act \(DPDPA\) 2023](#) aims to **regulate children's use**

**of social media.** Section 9 of DPDPA outlines 3 conditions for handling children's data under the age of 18 years.

- **Verifiable Parental Consent:** Companies must obtain consent from a parent or guardian.
- **Alignment with Child Well-being:** Processing of personal data must prioritise the child's well-being.
- **Restrictions on Monitoring and Advertising:** There is a ban on tracking, behavioural monitoring, and targeted advertising aimed at children.
- **Karnataka High Court:** In 2023, Karnataka **High Court** suggested to the Union Government to implement an **age limit of 21** for **accessing social media**, citing concerns about excessive addiction among schoolchildren and its negative impacts.
- **Global Context**
  - **South Korea:** The **Cinderella Law**, also known as the **Shutdown Law**, restricted children under 16 from playing online games between midnight and 6 AM.
    - The law was passed in 2011 to address concerns about internet addiction and was abolished in August 2021.
  - **United States:** The US passed the **Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), 1998** that requires websites to **obtain parental consent** before collecting data from children under 13, leading many platforms to restrict access for this age group.
    - The Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) of 2000 mandates that **schools and libraries** receiving federal funds **filter harmful online content**.
  - **European Union:** In 2015, the EU proposed a **law banning children under 16** from accessing the internet **without parental consent**.
    - The **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), 2018** sets **strict data privacy standards** in the EU, giving **users control over their personal information** and serving as a global benchmark.
  - **United Kingdom:** The UK, while part of the EU, set the age for parental consent for online access at 13. In May 2024, a government panel recommended raising it to 16. The UK also introduced the **Age-Appropriate Design Code**, which requires platforms to prioritise children's safety and privacy by implementing stronger default settings and minimising risks.
  - **France:** In July 2023, France passed a **law that requires social media platforms** to block children under 15 without parental authorization, imposing **finances of up to 1% of global sales for non-compliance**.
    - Also, if a **child under 16 works as an influencer and earns income**, their parents **cannot access that income until the child reaches the age of 16**.
  - **China:** In August 2023, China set strict limits on children's internet usage: **minors aged 16-18 can use it for two hours daily**, ages 8-15 for one hour, and under 8 for 40 minutes, with access restricted from 10 PM to 6 AM.
    - **Exceptions apply for development-focused apps.**
  - **Brazil:** In April 2023, Brazil enacted child data protection laws to limit how digital companies collect and handle children's data, part of broader efforts in Latin America to enhance online safety for minors.

## State of Digital Literacy in India:

- Digital literacy in India is low with **only 40%** of Indians knowing **basic computer functions**, as per **NSSO (National Sample Survey Office)** 2021 data.
- A survey in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities found **80% of children help their parents navigate online platforms**, highlighting a digital gap.
- Additionally, India's **linguistic diversity and common device-sharing practices** make it **challenging to implement consistent digital safety measures** across the population.

## What are the Reasons for Regulating Social Media Usage for Children?

- **Safety Concerns:** Increased **exposure to harmful content, cyberbullying, and online**

**predators** poses significant risks to children.

- Children are also **vulnerable to mental health issues** exacerbated by social media use, including anxiety and depression.

- **Pornography:** The proliferation of explicit content on social media platforms exposes **young people to age-inappropriate material**, potentially shaping their understanding of sexuality and **relationships in unhealthy ways**.
- **Misleading:** Social media can be a source of misleading information, and children may be vulnerable to being influenced by propaganda.
- **Promoting Real-life Connections:** A ban would encourage children to **engage in face-to-face interactions**, fostering better social skills and emotional intelligence.
- **Technological Responsibility:** There are arguments that technology companies should be held accountable for creating safer online environments for children, rather than relying solely on parental oversight.

## What are the Issues Against Banning Social Media Usage for Children?

- **Enforcement Challenges:** Bans are difficult to enforce in a digital environment. Children **often find ways to circumvent age restrictions**, as evidenced by the failure of **South Korea's Cinderella Law**.
- **Burden on Parents:** Implementing age restrictions places an unreasonable burden on parents, particularly in regions with low digital literacy.
  - Many **parents may lack the skills to navigate online platforms** effectively, making it challenging to monitor their children's activities.
- **Loss of Positive Engagement:** Social media can provide **valuable opportunities for learning, socialisation**, and creativity.
  - A blanket ban may deprive children of these benefits and limit their ability to develop digital skills essential for future employment.
- **Freedom of Expression:** Minors have the right to express themselves and access information. A ban could infringe upon these rights, limiting their ability to engage with diverse ideas and communities.
- **Benefits of Social Media:** Social media fosters community building by connecting young people with supportive networks that affirm their identities, while also serving as a valuable tool for learning and keeping youth informed about global issues and trends.

## Way Forward

- **Education and Awareness:** There is a need to introduce **digital literacy programs** in schools to **teach safe online navigation**, privacy, and recognizing risks.
  - Also, there should be **warning labels on social media apps** to highlight **mental health risks for teens**, similar to cigarette packaging.
- **Safe Platform Design:** Tech companies must prioritise child safety by implementing protective features and user-friendly privacy settings.
- **Collaborative Regulation:** Governments, educators, and tech firms should collaborate on regulations that balance safety with digital engagement, adopting models like the **UK's Age-Appropriate Design Code**.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Continuously assess regulations and platform changes, ensuring transparency and accountability from tech companies.
- **Parental Involvement:** There is a need to **encourage parents to model healthy online habits and discuss** digital experiences with their children, providing resources to help them understand platforms.

### **Drishti Mains Question:**

Discuss the challenges in enforcing age restrictions on social media platforms and analyse the roles of parents, educational institutions, and tech companies in safeguarding children online.



## **Prelims:**

**Q1. 'Right to Privacy' is protected under which Article of the Constitution of India? (2021)**

- (a) Article 15
- (b) Article 19
- (c) Article 21
- (d) Article 29

**Ans: (c)**

**Q2. Right to Privacy is protected as an intrinsic part of Right to Life and Personal Liberty. Which of the following in the Constitution of India correctly and appropriately imply the above statement? (2018)**

- (a) Article 14 and the provisions under the 42nd Amendment to the Constitution.
- (b) Article 17 and the Directive Principles of State Policy in Part IV.
- (c) Article 21 and the freedoms guaranteed in Part III.
- (d) Article 24 and the provisions under the 44th Amendment to the Constitution.

**Ans: (c)**

## **Mains:**

**Q. Examine the scope of Fundamental Rights in the light of the latest judgement of the Supreme Court on Right to Privacy. (2017)**

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## **State Control of Temples**

**For Prelims:** Freedom of Religion, Fundamental Rights, [Article 25](#).

**For Mains:** Issues of State Control of Places of Worship, Transparency and Accountability in Temple Governance, Government Policies & Interventions

**[Source: IE](#)**

### **Why in News?**

The recent controversy regarding the **Tirupati laddu**, a sacred offering at the **Tirumala Venkateswara Temple**, has highlighted the issue of government control over Hindu temples.

- The detection of **adulterated ghee in the laddus** has prompted renewed demands for freeing these temples from state interference.

### **Tirumala Venkateswara (Tirupati Balaji) Temple**

- It is situated in **Tirumala, Andhra Pradesh**, on **Venkata Hill**, one of the seven hills (Saptagiri) of the Tirumala Hills.
- It is dedicated to **Lord Venkateswara**, an **incarnation of Lord Vishnu**.

- The temple has a rich history, with significant contributions from various South Indian dynasties, including the **Pallavas, Cholas, and Vijayanagara rulers.**
  - It has traditional **South Indian temple architecture**, featuring a towering **gopuram (gateway)** and **intricate carvings.**
- A notable practice at the temple is the **donation of hair by devotees as an offering.**

## How are the Places of Worship Managed in India?

- **Hindu Temples:**
  - **Government Control:** A majority of Hindu temples are managed under **state regulations**, with many states enacting laws that grant government authority over temple administration.
    - For example, Tamil Nadu's **Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (HR&CE)** department oversees temple management, including finances and appointments of temple heads.
    - The **Andhra Pradesh** government oversees and appoints the head of the **Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD)**, which manages the **Tirupati Temple.**
  - **Income Utilisation:** Revenue from major temples is often allocated for the **maintenance of smaller temples and social welfare** initiatives, such as **hospitals, orphanages, and educational institutions.**
  - **Legal Framework:** The power for state intervention is derived from **Article 25(2)** of the Indian Constitution, which allows regulation of economic and social activities related to religious practices to ensure accountability.
    - Hindu temples form the majority of the around 30 lakh places of worship in India (**Census 2011**).
- **Muslim and Christian Places of Worship:**
  - **Community Management:** Muslim and Christian places of worship are typically overseen by **community-based boards or trusts**, functioning independently of government control, which promotes a decentralised management approach.
- **Sikh, Jain, and Buddhist Temples:**
  - The management of Sikh, Jain, and Buddhist temples is subject to varying levels of government regulation based on the state, while community involvement plays a crucial role in their administration.
- **State Legislation and Intervention:**
  - Religious endowments and institutions are listed under the **Concurrent List** of the **Seventh Schedule** of the Constitution, allowing **both the Centre and states** to legislate on the subject. This has led to **diverse regulatory frameworks** across states.
  - Some states, such as **Jammu and Kashmir** with the **Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Act, 1988**, have enacted **specific legislation for individual temples**, which outlines their administration and funding.

## What is the Historical Background of State Regulation of Temples?

- **Colonial Legislation:** Between 1810 and 1817, the East India Company enacted laws in Bengal, Madras, and Bombay, allowing interference in temple administration to prevent income misappropriation.
- **Religious Endowments Act (1863):** This Act of the British government aimed to secularise temple management by transferring temple control to committees but retained government influence through legal frameworks like the **Civil Procedure Code** and the **Charitable and Religious Trusts Act (1920).**
- **Madras Hindu Religious Endowments Act (1925):** It established the **Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Board**, a statutory body and empowered provincial governments to legislate on temple matters, allowing oversight by a board of commissioners.
- **After Independence:**
  - In 1950, the **Law Commission of India** recommended legislation to prevent the misuse of

temple funds, leading to the enactment of the [Tamil Nadu Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments \(TN HR&CE\) Act, 1951](#).

- It provides for the creation of a **Department of Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments** for the administration, protection, and preservation of temples and their properties.
- Around the same time, **Bihar Hindu Religious Trusts Act, 1950** was passed in Bihar to regulate the religious institutions.

## What are the Constitutional Provisions for State Regulation of Religion?

- **Article 25:**
  - **Article 25(1)** gives people the **freedom to practise, profess, and propagate their religion** which is **subject to public order, morality, and health**.
  - **Article 25(2)** allows the **state to regulate economic, financial, political, or secular activities linked to religious practices** and to **enact laws for social welfare, reform,** and opening Hindu religious institutions to all classes of Hindus.
    - Hence, the issue of **regulating secular aspects of religious practice** is distinct from **providing access to worship**.
- **Judicial Precedents for State Management of Religion:**
  - ***Shirur Mutt vs. The Commissioner, Hindu Religious Endowments, Madras Case, 1954***: The [Supreme Court \(SC\)](#) of India ruled that religious institutions have the right to manage their affairs independently under [Article 26\(d\)](#), as long as they do not engage in activities contrary to public order, morality, or health.
    - However, the state can regulate the administration of religious or charitable institutions. The case set important precedents for the protection of religious freedoms and property rights in India.
  - ***Ratilal Panachand Gandhi v. State of Bombay Case, 1954***: The SC held that religious practices are as much a part of religion as religious faith or doctrines, but this protection extends only to essential and integral parts of religion and the state can regulate the administration of trust properties.
  - ***Pannalal Bansilal Pitti vs. State Of Andhra Pradesh Case, 1996***: The SC upheld a **law abolishing hereditary rights over temple management** and rejected the argument that such laws must apply equally to all religions.
  - ***Stanislaus v. State of Madhya Pradesh Case, 1977***: The SC held that the right to propagate religion under **Article 25 does not include the right to convert** another person to one's own religion. This judgement **upheld the validity of anti-conversion laws**.

## Demands for Freeing Temple from Government Control

- **Initial Resolution by RSS (1959)**: The **Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)** passed its **first resolution demanding the freeing of temples from government control**, highlighting the need for Hindu self-management of religious institutions.
- **Kashi Vishwanath Temple Case (1959)**: The Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha (ABPS) urged the Uttar Pradesh government to return the management of the Kashi Vishwanath Temple to Hindus, criticising the state's monopolisation of religious affairs.
- **Recent Developments (2023)**: The Madhya Pradesh government initiated steps to relax state oversight of temples, indicating a growing trend toward reassessing government control of religious institutions.

## What are the Arguments in Favour and Against the State Control of Places of Worship?

- **Arguments in Favour of State Control:**
  - **Preventing Mismanagement**: Government control ensures **transparency in the**

**administration of temple funds**, preventing misappropriation.

- **Access for All Castes:** State supervision helps **enforce social reforms**, such as allowing people from all castes to enter Hindu temples.
- **Welfare Activities:** Large temples **fund welfare activities such as hospitals and schools**. Government oversight ensures these funds are **used for the public good**.
- **Protection from Commercialization:** The state can protect temples from exploitation by vested interests.
- **Arguments Against State Control:**
  - **Religious Freedom:** [Article 26](#) of the Constitution guarantees the right of religious denominations to manage their own affairs, and excessive **state intervention is seen as a violation of this right**.
  - **Political Interference:** State control of temples frequently results in **political interference**, with temple resources being manipulated and funds diverted for non-religious purposes.
  - **Discriminatory:** Government control over Hindu temples is seen as discriminatory, as **similar controls are not imposed on other religious places** of worship.
  - **Cultural Autonomy:** Temples are cultural centres, and their management should reflect the **interests and traditions of the local community**, not the state.

## Way Forward

- **Separation of Religious and Administrative Domains:** It is essential to establish a **clear delineation** between **religious operations and secular administrative** functions to ensure effective governance.
- **Good Governance Principles:** A **State-level Temple Administration Board**, comprising state officials, can be formed to work alongside a **Temple Management Committee (TMC)** and local **Temple Level Trusts**, including priests and community members, to **oversee various administrative functions**.
  - The **Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Act, 1991**, also provides for the establishment of such a Temple Administration Board.
- **Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV):** A **Temple Development and Promotion Corporation (TDPC)** should be created to **handle development initiatives for all temples**, focusing on **tourism, temple networking, research promotion, IT enhancements, training, and capacity building**.
- **Adopting Best Practices:** The **Devaswom model in Kerala**, which emphasises **accountability and transparency**, serves as an effective framework for **minimising corruption in temple management**.

### Drishti Mains Question:

Examine the impact of state control over places of worship in India on religious freedom, secularism, and the management of religious institutions. Discuss with constitutional and legal perspectives.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

### **Mains:**

**Q.** How the Indian concept of secularism is different from the western model of secularism? Discuss. (2016)

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# India-France Strategic Dialogue

**For Prelims:** [Indo-Pacific Region](#), [Major Exercises](#), [India France Relations](#).

**For Mains:** India France Relations, Major Areas of Cooperation between India and France,

[Source: TH](#)

## Why in News?

Recently, during the **India-France Strategic Dialogue**, the French President praised India's peace efforts in a meeting with [National Security Advisor \(NSA\)](#) Ajit Doval and highlighted India's role in global diplomacy.

- Discussions also centered on a significant cost reduction for Rafale-M fighter jets and the enhancement of military capabilities.



## What are the Key Highlights of the Visit?

- Commitment to Horizon 2047:**
  - The NSA reiterated India's commitment to the **Horizon 2047 initiative**, which aims to

strengthen India-France relations.

▪ **Peace Initiatives:**

- French president acknowledged the importance of India and France's efforts in advancing peace, particularly regarding the [Russia-Ukraine Conflict](#) and New Delhi's mediation role.

▪ **Bilateral Defence and Space Cooperation:**

- Talks with the French armed forces minister focused on strengthening bilateral defence ties and expanding space collaboration.
- Key discussions covered Rafale Marine jets, Scorpene submarines, and the integration of indigenous weapons on the Rafale jet.

**Note:**

- **Horizon 2047:** It outlines the roadmap for **France-India relations** across all sectors until 2047, the year that will commemorate 100 years of India's Independence, a century of diplomatic ties, and **50 years of the Indo-French strategic partnership.**

- This vision document aims to enhance collaboration in defense, space, civil nuclear energy, renewable resources, cyberspace, digital technology, counter-terrorism, maritime security, joint defense exercises, and the blue economy.

## What are the Major Areas of Cooperation between India and France?

▪ **Strategic Partnership:**

- [India and France](#) have deep-rooted cultural, trade, and economic ties.
- The strategic partnership established in **1998** has gained momentum, evolving into a closer, multifaceted relationship encompassing various areas of cooperation.

▪ **Defence Partnerships:**

- Beginning with the [Rafale deal](#) and extending to the acquisition of 26 Marine aircraft, France has offered India some of its top defense systems.
- The **technology transfers** by France have already helped India construct six **Scorpene-class submarines** with another three now being procured to boost the navy's falling numbers.
- **Joint Exercises:** [Exercise Shakti \(Army\)](#), [Exercise Varuna \(Navy\)](#), [Exercise Garuda \(Air Force\)](#).

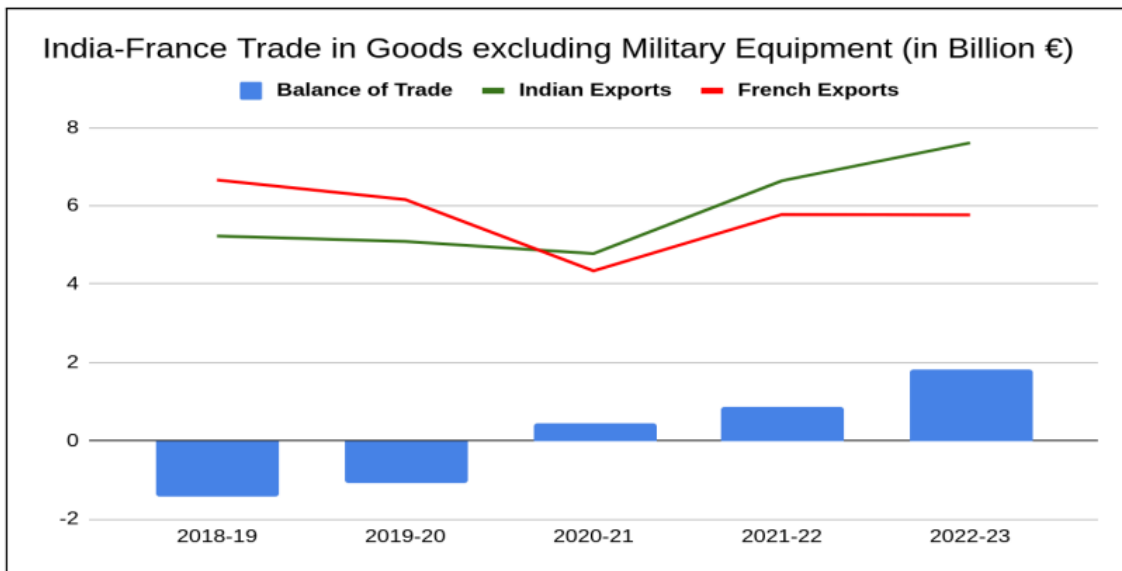
- **Civil Nuclear Cooperation:** India and France signed a civil nuclear cooperation agreement in 2008. France is involved in the development of the Jaitapur Nuclear Power Project, although progress has been slow since the initial agreement.

- Additionally, both nations have agreed to partner on Small Modular Reactors (SMR) and Advanced Modular Reactors (AMR).

- **Marine and Maritime Cooperation:** Indo-French maritime collaboration is guided by the India-France Roadmap on Blue Economy and Ocean Governance, which was adopted in 2022.

▪ **Economic Cooperation:**

- France has become a key source of [FDI \(Foreign Direct Investment\)](#) for India, with over 1,000 French companies operating in the country.
- It ranks as the **11<sup>th</sup> largest foreign investor**, contributing USD 10.84 billion (1.63% of total FDI) from April 2000 to December 2023, according to DPIIT data.



Source: Ministry of Commerce & Industry (Data rounded off to nearest billion €)

## What are the Challenges in India-France Relations?

- **FTA Stagnation:**
  - The absence of an [FTA \(Free Trade Agreement\)](#) between France and India hinders the maximisation of their trade potential.
- **Differing Defense and Security Priorities:**
  - Despite a strong defense partnership, differing priorities can impact cooperation. India's regional focus and non-aligned stance sometimes conflict with France's global interests. For, e.g. differing stance on Russia- Ukraine conflict.
- **Intellectual Property Rights Concerns:**
  - France has expressed concerns over India's insufficient intellectual property protection, which affects French businesses and hinders a favourable environment for bilateral trade.
- **Human Trafficking Concerns:**
  - Cases like the Nicaragua flight human trafficking incident highlight the need for stronger cooperation in tackling transnational crimes and ensuring individual safety.
- **Visa Barriers:**
  - Correspondents in India voiced their concerns through a letter of protest, noting that they have been facing tighter visa restrictions in recent years which is resulting in challenges for reporting and coverage.
- **Barriers to Indian Products in France:**
  - India has faced difficulties exporting to France due to Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures, which can discourage Indian products from entering the French market.

## Way Forward

- India and France can collaborate to shape the international order and counterbalance dependencies. The **Indo-Pacific framework** has bolstered their relations, with France having key interests in **Indian Ocean stability** due to its territories and bases.
- France already plays a critical role in India's ambitious plans to expand domestic weapon production with **increased private and foreign investment**. Discussions should cover new collaboration areas such as **connectivity, climate change, cybersecurity, and science and technology**.

### Drishti Mains Question

Q. Discuss the evolving strategic partnership between India and France, focusing on defense cooperation, and the Indo-Pacific framework. Highlight the key challenges and opportunities in strengthening bilateral ties, especially in the context of global diplomacy and regional stability. (250 words)

## UPSC Previous Year Question (PYQ)

### Prelims:

#### Q. Consider the following statements: (2016)

1. The International Solar Alliance was launched at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in 2015.
2. The Alliance includes all the member countries of the United Nations.

#### Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Ans: (a)

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## State Regulation Regarding Food Eateries

**For Prelims:** [Food Adulteration](#), [Food Safety and Standards Authority of India \(FSSAI\)](#), [Article 15](#), [Article 17](#), [Article 19](#), [Heavy Metals](#), [Genetically Modified Foods](#), [Organic Foods](#).

**For Mains:** Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, Strengthening food safety in India

[Source: IE](#)

### Why in News?

Recently, the **Uttar Pradesh (UP) government** mandated that **food establishments** prominently display the **names** of their **operators, proprietors, managers**, and other relevant personnel.

- The UP government cited reports of **food adulteration incidents**, such as food items being contaminated with **human waste or other inedible substances** for its latest directives.

### What are the Existing Food Safety Requirements Under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 (FSSA)?

- **Registration or Licence:** Under the FSSA, food business operators are required to **register or obtain a licence** from the [Food Safety and Standards Authority of India \(FSSAI\)](#).
  - Registration certificates or licences, displaying the **owner's identity** and establishment's location, must be **prominently displayed** at the premises.
- **Penalties for No Licence:** Under **Section 63** of the FSSA, any operator carrying on a food business **without a licence** can be punished with up to **six months in prison** and a fine of up to **Rs 5 lakh**.



- This provision reinforces the importance of **proper licensing and display of information**.
- **Non-Compliance with FSSA Regulations:** If a food business operator **violates** the provisions of the **FSSA**, they may receive an **'Improvement Notice'** under **Section 31**.
  - If the operator **fails to comply** with the notice, their licence can be **suspended or cancelled**.
  - Additionally, **Section 58** provides for penalties up to **Rs 2 lakh** for violations where no specific penalty is prescribed.

## What are State Governments' Power to Make Rules Under FSSA?

- **State Authority: Section 94** of the FSSA allows **state governments** to make **rules** with the **prior approval** of the FSSAI.
- **Assignment of Additional Functions:** State governments can prescribe **additional functions and duties** for the Commissioner of Food Safety, appointed under **Section 30** of the FSSA.
  - This includes making rules on matters related to **food safety** within the state's jurisdiction, subject to the central government's oversight.
- **Process of Rulemaking by States: Section 94(3)** of the FSSA requires that any rules made by state governments must be published and **approved by the state legislature**.

## What is the Supreme Court Stand on Such Orders?

- The Supreme Court **intervened and stayed** similar orders issued by the **police in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand** for the **2024 Kanwar Yatra**, where food vendors were required to display their identities.
- The court ruled that while the **Food Safety and Standards Act (FSSA)** allows a "**competent authority**" to issue such orders, the **police cannot usurp** this power.

## Why Such State Government Directives are challenged in court?

- **Violation of Article 15:** Critics argue that such directives force individuals to reveal their **religious and caste identities** and **discriminate** against individuals on the grounds of **religion and caste**, violating **Article 15(1)** of the Constitution.
  - **Article 15(1)** states the State shall **not discriminate** against any citizen on grounds only of **religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them.**"
- **Violation of Article 17:** It may implicitly support the practice of **untouchability**, which was abolished and forbidden under **Article 17** of the Constitution.
- **Violation of Article 19:** Critics argue that the order creates conditions for the complete **economic boycott of specific community** and violates the right to practise any profession under **Article 19(1)(g)**.

# LIST OF FOOD ADULTRANTS

## ADULTERANTS

- Unhygenic water
- Chalk powder
- Soap powder
- Hydrogen peroxide
- Urea

## MILK



## HARMFUL EFFECTS

- Food poisoning
- Heart problems
- Cancer
- Vomiting
- Nausea

## BLACK PEPPER

- Papaya seeds



- Liver disorders
- Stomach disorders

## OIL

- Argemone seeds



- Epidemic dropsy
- Severe glaucoma

## GHEE

- Vegetable oil
- Animal body fats



- Anaemia
- Enlargment of Heart

## CHILLY POWDER

- Brick powder
- Saw dust



- Stomach problems
- Artificial colors can cause cancer

## TURMERIC POWDER

- Yellow aniline dye
- Non-permitted colourants like metanil yellow



- Carcinogenic
- Stomach disorders

EH  
Vision

## What are General Provisions to Prevent Food Adulteration under the FSS Act, 2006?

- **Use of Food Additives:** No article of food shall contain any **food additive or processing aid** unless it is in accordance with the provisions of this Act and regulations made thereunder.
- **Toxic Substances and Heavy Metals:** No article of food shall contain any **contaminant**, naturally occurring **toxic substances or toxins** or **hormone** or **heavy metals** in excess of such quantities as may be specified by regulations.
- **Pesticide and Veterinary Drug Residues:** No food article may contain residues of **insecticides**, **pesticides**, **veterinary drugs**, **antibiotics**, or **microbiological** counts above the limits set by regulations.
  - No **insecticide** shall be used directly on articles of food except fumigants registered and approved under the **Insecticides Act, 1968**.
- **Genetically Modified Foods:** The FSSA restricts the manufacture, distribution, sale, or import of novel foods, **genetically modified foods**, irradiated foods, **organic foods**, health supplements etc unless otherwise provided under the Act and its regulations.
- **Packaging and Labelling:** Food products must be packaged and labelled in accordance with specified regulations.
  - Labels must not contain any **false or misleading claims** about the food products, including their quantity, nutritive value, or any implied medicinal or therapeutic benefits.
- **Unfair Trade Practices:** No person may engage in **unfair trade practices** to promote food articles, which includes making **false representations** about the standard, quality, or usefulness of the foods.

## What is the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India?

- **About FSSAI:** FSSAI is an autonomous **statutory body** established under the **Food Safety and Standards Act, (FSSA) 2006**.
  - FSSA, 2006 **consolidates** various laws related to food, such as the **Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954**, the **Fruit Products Order, 1955**, the **Meat Food Products Order, 1973** etc.
- **Functions of FSSAI:** FSSAI is responsible for protecting and promoting **public health** by regulating and supervising food safety and quality in India, operating under the **Ministry of Health & Family Welfare**.
  - FSSAI was consequently established in **2008** but work within the Food Authority effectively began in **2011** after its rules and key regulations were notified.
- **Powers of FSSAI:** Framing of regulations and standards for food products and additives.
  - Granting of **licences and registration** to food businesses.
  - Enforcement of food safety **laws and regulations**.
  - **Monitoring and surveillance** of food safety and quality.
  - Conducting **risk assessment** and scientific research on food safety issues.
  - Providing **training and awareness** on food safety and hygiene.
  - Promoting **food fortification and organic food**.
  - **Coordinating** with other agencies and stakeholders on food safety matters.
- **Structure of FSSAI:** The FSSAI comprises a **Chairperson** and **twenty two members** out of which **one - third are to be women**.
  - The **Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer** of FSSAI, appointed by the central government.
  - The Chairperson is in the rank of **Secretary** to the Government of India.
- **Initiatives of FSSAI:**
  - **World Food Safety Day**
  - **Eat Right India**
  - **State Food Safety Index**
  - **RUCO (Repurpose Used Cooking Oil)**
  - **Food Safety Mitra**
  - **100 Food Streets**

## Conclusion

The provisions of the **Food Safety and Standards Act (FSSA)** empower state governments to regulate food safety effectively while ensuring **compliance with national standards**. By setting rules on **food additives, contaminants, and advertising practices**, the FSSA aims to protect consumer health and promote transparency in the food industry.

### **Drishhti Mains Question:**

Examine the existing provisions under the Food Safety and Standards Act (FSSA) to prevent food adulteration.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question

### **Prelims**

#### **Q. Consider the following statements: (2018)**

1. The Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 replaced the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954.
2. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is under the charge of Director General of Health Services in the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

#### **Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

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

**Ans: (a)**

### **Mains**

**Q.** Elaborate the policy taken by the Government of India to meet the challenges of the food processing sector. **(2019)**

## Discontinuation of Kolkata's Tram Service

**Source: IT**

### **Why in News?**

Recently, the **West Bengal** government has decided to **discontinue [Kolkata's tram service](#)** after 151 years of its introduction.

- A small stretch from **Maidan to the Esplanade** will be retained for tram lovers as a **[heritage](#)**

[stretch.](#)

## What are the Key Facts About Kolkata's Tram Service?

- **About Tram:** A tram is an **urban rail transit system** consisting of **railcars** that transports people and goes along **metal tracks in the road**.
  - In Kolkata, initially it ran on **metre gauge** but after **1902** tracks were converted to **standard gauge**.
- **Beginning of Trams in Kolkata:** The first **horse-drawn** trams in Kolkata began operating on **24th February 1873**, covering a **3.9-km** stretch between Sealdah and Armenian Ghat.
  - **Calcutta Tramways Company** was formed and registered in London in **1880**.
- **Electrification and Expansion:** On **27th March 1902**, Kolkata introduced its first **electric tramcar** from Esplanade to Kidderpore.
  - This was also **Asia's first** electric tram service.
  - In **1946**, the tram was the **first vehicle** to cross the **Howrah Bridge**.
  - By the **early 20th century**, tram routes connected the city extensively, including the Howrah section via the **Howrah Bridge**.
- **Decline from the 1970s:** The rise of cars and buses on Kolkata's narrow streets made trams **cumbersome** and contributed to **traffic congestion**.
- **Cultural Symbolism:** It is depicted in **Satyajit Ray's** 1964 film 'Mahanagar' (The Big City) and other films like **Apur Sansar** reflecting **Kolkata's cultural backdrop**.
- **Recognition:** In 2020, Kolkata introduced India's **first electric tram library**.
  - In **2023**, Kolkata celebrated **150 years** of tram services with a week-long event called "**Tramjatra 2023**".
- **Trams in Other Indian Cities:** Trams started in **Bombay in 1874, Madras in 1895, Delhi in 1904, Kanpur in 1914**, and Poona in the early 20th century.
  - They were **discontinued** in all Indian cities between **1933 and 1964**, except for Kolkata.
- **Trams in Global Cities:** **Melbourne, Lisbon, San Francisco, Amsterdam, Zurich and Berlin** have well functioning tram service.
  - Melbourne has the **oldest** operational tramways in the world which started in **1885**.

## Why Trams Lasted for So Long Only in Kolkata?

- **Narrow Streets:** The city's **narrow streets** and **old architectural structures** limited the expansion of road networks, making trams a practical alternative.
- **Low Car Ownership:** Low car ownership **in Kolkata compared to other metropolitan cities sustained** the demand for affordable public transport like trams.
- **Affordable Ticket Prices:** The affordability of tram rides also contributed to their longevity.

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## India's Balance of Payments (BOP)

[Source: TH](#)

### Why in News?

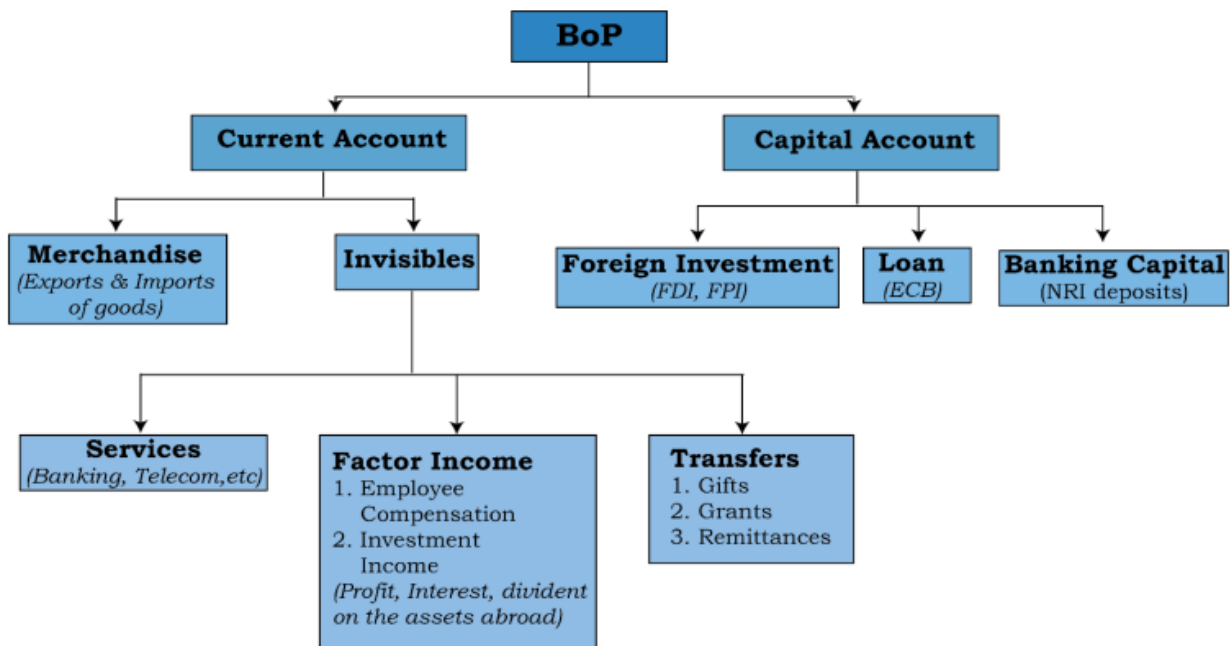
According to recent **RBI** data, India's **Current Account Deficit (CAD)** widened marginally to **USD 9.7 billion (1.1% of GDP)** in Q1 of 2025 reflecting the status of **India's Balance of Payments**.

- CAD occurs when the total value of goods and services a country **imports exceeds** the total value

of goods and services it **exports**.

## What is Balance of Payments?

- **About:** The **balance of payments (BOP)** is the record of **all international transactions** made by the residents of a country.
  - It measures the **relative demand for the rupee** against foreign currencies, crucially influencing exchange rates and economic stability.
- **Constituents of BoP: The Current Account and Capital Account** are the two main constituents of BoP.
  - **Current Account:** It includes those transactions that do not change the assets or liabilities position of a country.
    - **Merchandise:** It includes trade in **physical imports and exports**, indicating the balance of trade. A deficit suggests **higher imports than exports**.
    - **Invisibles:** It includes **services** (e.g., banking, insurance IT, tourism, transport, etc.), **transfers** (e.g., gifts, grants, remittances etc), and **factor incomes** (such as the income earned from investments).
  - **Capital Account:** It reflects the net change in a nation's assets and liabilities over a specific period.
    - **Assets:** It reflects investments such as **Foreign Direct Investment** and **Foreign Institutional Investor (FII)**, essential for economic growth and stability.
    - **Liabilities:** It also reflects factors such as **commercial borrowings, loans, and capital**.



## India's Efforts to Reduce Current Account Deficit

- **Encourage Exports:** The **Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) 2023** aims to boost India's exports to **USD 2 trillion by 2030**. It can counterbalance imports and **reduce CAD**.
- **Promote Import Substitution:** **Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan** is vigorously pursued and provides incentives to domestic manufacturers for the domestic production of goods. E.g., **Production Linked Incentive Scheme**.
- **Increase Productivity:** Enhancing productivity and competitiveness in the domestic economy can **boost exports** and help reduce the trade deficit. E.g., **'future friendly' skills building, Innovation etc.**

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

### Prelims

**Q. Which of the following has/have occurred in India after its liberalisation of economic policies in 1991?(2017)**

1. Share of agriculture in GDP increased enormously.
2. Share of India's exports in world trade increased.
3. FDI inflows increased.
4. India's foreign exchange reserves increased enormously.

**Select the correct answer using the codes given below:**

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

**Ans: (b)**

**Q. With reference to Balance of Payments, which of the following constitutes/constitute the Current Account? (2014)**

1. Balance of trade
2. Foreign assets
3. Balance of invisibles
4. Special Drawing Rights

**Select the correct answer using the code given below:**

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

**Ans: (c)**

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## Mahalaya

**Source: PIB**

Recently, the **Prime Minister** wished the **Bengali community** on the occasion of **Mahalaya** that marks the beginning of **Durga Puja festivities**.

- Mahalaya marks the day when **Goddess Durga** is believed to **descend to Earth** and vanquish the **demon king Mahishasura**, symbolising the triumph of good over evil.
- On this day, artisans **paint the eyes of Goddess Durga**, a moment also known as the **'Chokkhu daan'** (granting the eyes to the Goddess).
- It marks the end of **'Pitru Paksha'** and the beginning of **'Debi Paksha'** (the era of the Goddess Durga).
  - Pitru Paksha is a **16-day period** during which Hindus perform rituals to pay **homage** to their **forefathers**.
- **Durga Puja in Kolkata** has been inscribed on the **UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Humanity**.
  - It is the **first festival in Asia** to achieve recognition as **UNESCO ICH of Humanity**.

Read More: [Durga Puja on UNESCO's ICH](#)

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## Anna Darpan

Source: [PIB](#)

Recently, the **Food Corporation of India (FCI)** has launched a **digital transformation initiative to modernize** its supply chain management system, known as **'Depot Online System'**, with the implementation of a new, microservices-based integrated supply chain management system named **Anna Darpan**.

- **Anna Darpan system:** It is designed with specific key objectives which are aligned with the strategic vision of the FCI leadership.
  - The system aims to address and overcome the limitations present in the existing systems like:
    - Improved Efficiency and Productivity
    - Interactive and User-Friendly UI Design
    - Data-Driven Decision Making
    - Integration with Internal and External Systems
    - Merger of Existing Internal Systems
    - Mobile-First Approach
- The system is being developed to streamline and improve supply chain operations and services at all levels.
  - It covers operations at **Mandis, Mills, Depots (both owned and hired)**, as well as **divisional, regional, zonal, and headquarters levels**.
- **Food Corporation of India (FCI):**
  - FCI is a **Public Sector Undertaking**, under the **Department of Food & Public Distribution, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution**.
  - It is a **statutory body set up in 1965** under the **Food Corporations Act 1964**.
  - It has the primary duty to undertake purchase, store, move/transport, distribute and sell food grains and other foodstuffs.

Read More: [Revamping Buffer Stock](#)

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## Global Innovation Index 2024



[Source: PIB](#)

Recently, India secured **39th position** among **133 global economies** in the **Global Innovation Index 2024**. In 2023, India ranked **40th rank out of 132 economies**.

▪ **Global Innovation Index:**

- The Global Innovation Index serves as a key reference for **evaluating the performance of an economy's innovation ecosystem**.
- It is **published annually** by the [World Intellectual Property Organization \(WIPO\)](#) and acts as a **valuable benchmarking tool for policymakers, business leaders, and other stakeholders**.

▪ **World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO):**

- It serves as the global forum for **Intellectual Property (IP) services, policy, information, and cooperation**.
- It is a self-funding agency of the [United Nations](#), comprising 193 member states.
- The organisation aims to **develop a balanced and effective international IP system** that fosters innovation and creativity for everyone's benefit.
- WIPO's mandate, governing bodies, and procedures are outlined in the **WIPO Convention, which was established in 1967**.



Read More: [Global Innovation Index 2023](#)

# Jal Hi AMRIT Scheme

**Source:** [PIB](#)

Recently, the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** approved the **Jal Hi AMRIT Scheme** to promote efficient [water management](#).

- It is being launched under **AMRUT 2.0 reforms**.
- It **incentivises** states and Union Territories (UTs) to manage [sewage treatment plants \(STPs\)](#) efficiently, ensuring the production of **good-quality, recyclable treated water**.
  - STPs **purify water** by removing **sewage and contaminants**, making it **suitable** to be released into **natural water sources**.
  - **Clean Water Credits** will be awarded in terms of **Star-rating between 3 stars to 5 stars certificate** valid for six months.
  - STPs with **Clean Water Credits of 3-star and above** in different groups as below will be given **financial incentives**.
- According to the [Central Pollution Control Board](#) (March 2021), India's current water treatment capacity is **27.3%** and the sewage treatment capacity is **18.6 %** (with another **5.2 % capacity in development**).
- Both Swachh [Bharat Mission 2.0](#) and [AMRUT 2.0](#) focuses on waste water management.
  - **AMRUT 1.0** primarily aimed at providing basic services such as **water supply, sewerage management** while **AMRUT 2.0** focuses on [City Water Balance Plan \(CWBP\)](#) to **recycle/reuse treated sewage**.

**Read More:** [Waste Water Management](#)

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PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/current-affairs-news-analysis-editorials/news-analysis/04-10-2024/print>

