



India-EFTA Desk

[Source: TH](#)

India and the [European Free Trade Association \(EFTA\)](#) launched the **India-EFTA Desk** to strengthen economic ties and facilitate investments under the [Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement \(TEPA\)](#).

India-EFTA Desk

- **About:** It is a **dedicated investment facilitation mechanism** established by **Invest India** to serve as a **single-window platform** for businesses from the **EFTA** nations to **invest in India**.
- **Objectives:** The **India-EFTA Desk** aims to **facilitate realising the objective of TEPA** such as:
 - **USD 100 billion FDI** over **15 years**, generating **over 1 million direct jobs** in India.
 - Commitments related to [Intellectual Property Rights](#) in TEPA.
 - **Technology Collaboration** aligning with [Make in India](#) & [Atma Nirbhar Bharat](#).
- **India-EFTA TEPA** is a **comprehensive FTA** signed in **March 2024**.

European Free Trade Association (EFTA)

- EFTA is an intergovernmental organization of **Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland**, established under the **Stockholm Convention (1960)**.
- **India is EFTA's 5th-largest trading partner** (after the **EU, US, UK, and China**).
- **Two-way trade: USD 24 billion (2023-24)**, up from **USD 18.65 billion (2022-23)**, with a trade gap favoring EFTA.
- **Key partners: Switzerland (largest)**, followed by **Norway**.

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MAJOR TRADE AGREEMENTS OF INDIA

Free Trade Agreement (FTA) With Neighbouring Countries

- ↳ India-Sri Lanka FTA
- ↳ India-Nepal Treaty of Trade
- ↳ India-Bhutan Agreement on Trade, Commerce, and Transit

A free trade agreement is a comprehensive deal between countries, offering preferential trade terms and tariff concessions, with a negative list excluding specific products and services.

Regional FTA's of India

- ↳ **India ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (11):** 10 ASEAN countries + India
- ↳ **South Asia Free Trade Agreement (7):** India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and the Maldives
- ↳ **Global System of Trade Preferences** (41 countries + India)

India's CECA's and CEPAs

CECA/CEPA is broader than FTAs, addressing regulatory, trade, and economic aspects comprehensively, with CEPA having the widest scope including services, investment, etc while CECA mainly focuses on tariff and TQR rates negotiation.

- ↳ CEPA with **UAE, South Korea, Japan**
- ↳ CECA with **Singapore, Malaysia**

Others:

- India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA)
- India-Thailand Early Harvest Scheme (EHS)
- India-Mauritius Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA)

An EHS precedes an FTA/CECA/CEPA, where negotiating countries select products for tariff liberalisation, paving way for broader trade agreements and fostering confidence.

Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs)

Partners in a PTA grant preferential access to specific products by lowering duties on agreed tariff lines, maintaining a positive list of products eligible for reduced or zero tariffs.

- ↳ **Asia Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA):** Bangladesh, China, India, S. Korea, Lao PDR, Sri Lanka, and Mongolia
- ↳ **SAARC Preferential Trading Agreement (SAPTA):** Same as SAFTA
- ↳ **India-MERCOSUR PTA:** Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and India
- ↳ India's PTA with **Chile, Afghanistan**



Read More: [India-EFTA Trade Deal](#)

Vishwamitri River and Muggar Crocodiles


Source: [DTE](#)

The Government of **Gujarat** conducted a **crocodile census** in the **Vishwamitri river** of Vadodara, to estimate the population of **muggar or marsh crocodiles (*Crocodylus palustris*)**.

- **Vishwamitri River:** Originates from the **Pavagadh hills** (part of **Western Ghats**) in Gujarat, flows through **Vadodara**, and joins the **Gulf of Khambhat**, fed by tributaries **Dhadhar and Khanpur**.
 - Its banks had ancient settlements dating back to **1000 B.C.**, including **Ankotakka (now Akota)**, which developed during the **Guptas and Vallabhi rule**.
 - It hosts **muggar crocodiles**, freshwater turtles, and **monitor lizards**, making it ecologically unique among urban rivers.
- **Muggar Crocodiles:** Found in **India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Nepal**, with its range extending westwards into **eastern Iran**, mainly in **freshwater habitats** like rivers, lakes, and marshes.
 - Found in 15 Indian states, mainly in the **Ganga River basin** (Bihar and Jharkhand), **Chambal River** (Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh) and **Gujarat**.

- They feed on fish, reptiles, birds, and mammals. They are hole-nesting species, laying 25-30 eggs during the dry season, with an incubation period of 55-75 days.
- Face threats from **habitat destruction, poaching, and human-wildlife conflict.**
- **Conservation:** Vulnerable (**IUCN**), **CITES** (Appendix I), and Schedule I (**Indian Wildlife Protection Act ,1972**).

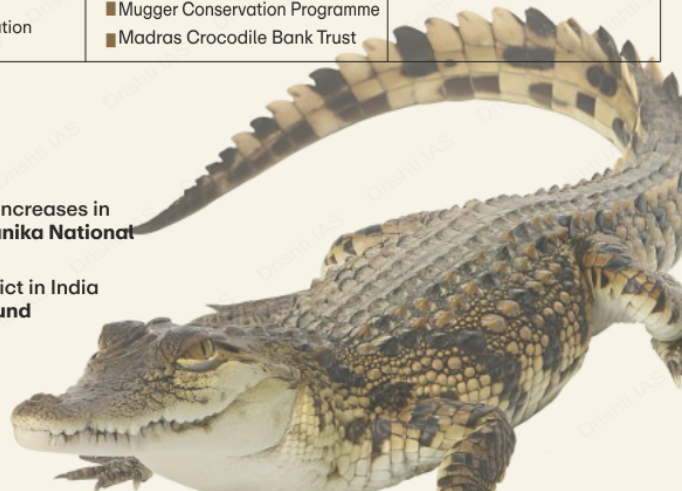
CROCODILE SPECIES IN INDIA

India harbours three diverse  crocodile species—Mugger, Saltwater, and Gharial—found in distinct habitats nationwide.

Aspects	Gharial	Mugger/Indian Crocodile	Saltwater Crocodile
Scientific Name	<i>Gavialis Gangeticus</i> 	<i>Crocodylus Palustris</i> 	<i>Crocodylus Porosus</i> 
Distribution: India	Viable Population: National Chambal Sanctuary (U.P, Raj, M.P) Small Non-Breeding Population: Son, Gandak, Hooghly, Ghagra & Satkosia WLS (Odisha)	Throughout India	East Coast (Odisha's Bhitarkarnika WLS, Andaman & Nicobar Islands coast & Sundarbans)
Distribution: Neighbourhood	Brahmaputra of Bhutan & Bangladesh & Irrawaddy River	Extinct in Bhutan and Myanmar	Across Southeast Asia
Special Feature	Longest of all Crocodile, Long and thin Snout	Egg-laying, Hole-nesting, Wide & U-shaped Snout	Largest living reptile, Pointed & V-shaped Snout
Habitat	Freshwater	Freshwater	Saltwater, Brackish & Wetlands
IUCN Status	CR	VU	LC
CITES Status	Appendix I	Appendix I	Appendix I
CMS Status	Appendix I	-	Appendix II
WPA,1972 Status	Schedule I	Schedule I	Schedule I
Threats	Dams, Pollution, Sand mining	Habitat Destruction	Hunted for its skin and Habitat loss
Government Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Odisha: Rs. 1000 award to conserve Gharial in Mahanadi River Basin ■ Indian Crocodile Conservation Project,1975 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Indian Crocodile Conservation Project,1975 ■ Mugger Conservation Programme ■ Madras Crocodile Bank Trust 	Indian Crocodile Conservation Project,1975

MISCELLANEOUS FACTS

- 🕒 **17th June:** World Crocodile Day
- 📊 **Annual Reptile Census, 2023:** Marginal Increases in number of saltwater crocodiles (**Bhitarkanika National Park and its nearby areas**)
- 📍 **Odisha's Kendrapara District:** Only district in India where **all three species of crocodiles** found



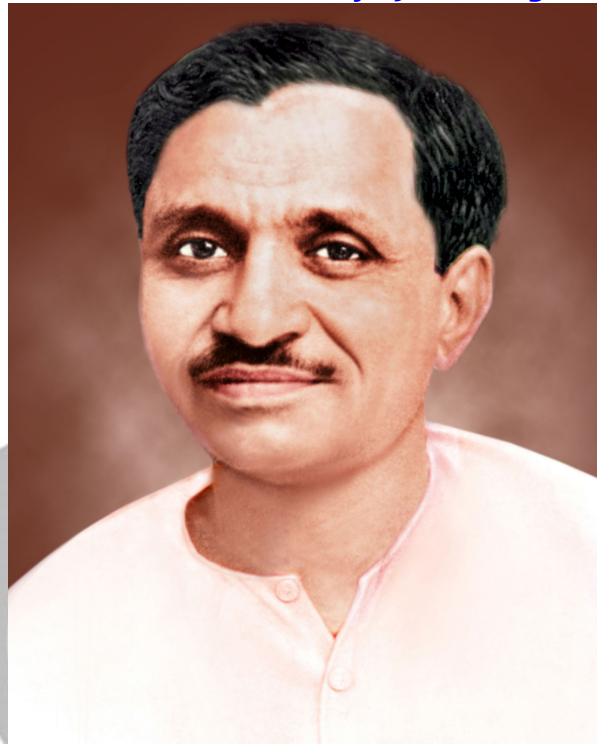
Read more: [Mugger Crocodile](#)

Death Anniversary of Pt Deendayal Upadhyaya

Source: [PIB](#)

The **Prime Minister** has paid tributes to [Pt Deendayal Upadhyaya](#) on his **death anniversary (punya tithi)**. He passed away on **11th February 1968**.

- **About Pt Deendayal Upadhyaya:** Born on **25th of September 1916**, he was an Indian **politician, philosopher, and ideologue** of the [RSS](#) and [Bharatiya Jana Sangh \(BJS\)](#) (the predecessor of the Bharatiya Janata Party).



- **Contributions:** He focused on **Antyodaya** i.e., uplifting the last person and addressing the needs of the **most disadvantaged**.
 - His philosophy of **“Integral Humanism”** emphasized welfare, social justice, economic equality, and self-reliance.
- **Recognition:** Since **25th September 2014**, his birth anniversary is observed as **Antyodaya Diwas** to honor his contributions to the nation.
 - In **2015**, [National Rural Livelihood Mission \(NRLM\)](#) was renamed [Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-NRLM](#).
 - In 2018, **Mughalsarai Junction** in Uttar Pradesh was renamed after him.

Read More: [Sangathan se Samridhi: DAY-NRLM](#)

Shankari Prasad Case and the First Amendment Act

For Prelims: [First Amendment Act, 1951](#), [Right to Property](#), [Ninth Schedule](#), [Zamindari System](#)

For Mains: Land Reforms in India, Fundamental Rights vs. Constitutional Amendments

Why in News?

The [Shankari Prasad Singh Deo v. Union of India, 1951](#) case was a key moment in Indian constitutional law, challenging the [First Amendment Act, 1951](#), which curtailed the [Right to Property](#).

What was the First Amendment Act, 1951?

- **Key Provisions:**
 - **Ninth Schedule:** The [Ninth Schedule of the Indian Constitution](#), was introduced by the **First Amendment Act, 1951**, lists laws that cannot be challenged in courts, protecting them from [judicial review](#), especially land reform laws. Initially, **13 laws** were added to the schedule.
 - **Protection of Land Reforms:** Articles **31A** and **31B** were inserted into the Constitution, which **shielded land reform laws from judicial review**, particularly laws aimed at the **acquisition of estates**.
 - **Article 31A:** Stated that any law related to land reforms **could not be struck down for violating fundamental rights**, particularly **right to property (Article 31)**.
 - **Article 31B:** Ensures that the laws specified in the **Ninth Schedule**, even if they conflict with fundamental rights, will remain valid and enforceable.
 - **Other Changes:** **Restricted free speech under Article 19**. Strengthened **caste-based reservations** by allowing laws for social and educational upliftment.
- **Need for Amendment:** This was crucial in the context of **India's post-independence land reform** efforts aimed at reducing the power of large landowners ([zamindars](#)) and redistributing land to the peasants.

What was Shankari Prasad Singh Deo v. Union of India Case, 1951?

- **Case Background:** The case arose when **Sankari Prasad Singh Deo**, a zamindar (landowner) from West Bengal, challenged the **First Amendment Act, 1951**, which had curtailed the **Right to Property**.
 - The first amendment sought to give the government power to acquire land from **zamindars without compensation**, which was contrary to the **fundamental rights (Article 19(1)(f) and Article 31)** granted in the original Constitution.
- **Supreme Court Judgment:** A five-judge Bench of the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the government, upholding the First Amendment.
 - The Court distinguished between **Ordinary law** (which cannot violate fundamental rights) and **Constitutional amendments** (which can alter fundamental rights).
 - **Article 13(2)** states that **no "law" can take away fundamental rights**. The Court ruled that **constitutional amendments are not ordinary "laws"**, so they are exempt from this restriction.
- **Significance:** The SC decision **removed legal barriers to land reforms**, allowing states to proceed with **zamindari abolition**.
- **Implications:**
 - **Continued Legal Challenges:** In *Sajjan Singh v. State of Rajasthan, 1964*, the Court upheld judgement of *Sankari Prasad Case* but two judges questioned whether **fundamental rights should be amendable**.
 - In *I.C. Golaknath v. State of Punjab, 1967* the Supreme Court **reversed its stance**, ruling that **Parliament cannot amend fundamental rights**.
 - In *Keshavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala, 1973* a larger Bench overruled *Sankari Prasad* and introduced the [Basic Structure Doctrine](#).
 - The ruling held that **while Parliament can amend the Constitution, it cannot alter its "basic structure"**, including fundamental rights.
 - However, the right to property was **not** considered part of the basic structure, allowing land reforms to continue.

- **Right to Property as Legal Right:** The 44th Amendment Act of 1978 removed the **Right to Property from the list of Fundamental Rights** by repealing **Article 19(1)(f) and Article 31**.
 - Right to Property was then made a legal right under **Article 300A** (no one can be deprived of their property without the authority of law) of the Constitution.

What was the Zamindari System?

- **About:** The **Zamindari System**, institutionalized under British rule by **Lord Cornwallis** in 1793 through the **Permanent Settlement**, gave zamindars control over land and allowed them to collect rent from peasants.
 - By statutory backing, the British made Zamindari an **exploitative institution** through provisions like **rack-renting (excessive rent)**, causing economic inequality.
 - Land revenue was split, with the government getting 10/11th and zamindars the rest, leaving farmers in poverty.
- **Reasons for Abolishing:** The system led to **land concentration in a few hands**, leaving millions of peasants landless. The abolition aimed to **redistribute land** to cultivators and reduce feudal exploitation.
 - **Article 39(b) and (c)** of the Constitution emphasized equitable distribution of resources. The abolition was in line with India's goal of creating a **socialist-leaning economy**.
 - Breaking large estates into **smaller landholdings** was expected to improve productivity.
- **Partial Success:** Except in a few states like **West Bengal and Kerala**, Zamindari abolition failed to break the **feudal land monopoly** due to loopholes allowing **benami transactions**.

Drishti Mains Question:

Q. How did the evolution of land reforms and the change in the legal status of the Right to Property reflect the shift towards a socialist economy in India?

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. What is the position of the Right to Property in India? (2021)

- (a) Legal right available to citizens only
- (b) Legal right available to any person
- (c) Fundamental Right available to citizens only
- (d) Neither Fundamental Right nor legal right

Ans: (b)

Q. 'Economic Justice' as one of the objectives of the Indian Constitution has been provided in (2013)

- (a) the Preamble and the Fundamental Rights
- (b) the Preamble and the Directive Principles of State Policy
- (c) the Fundamental Rights and the Directive Principles of State Policy
- (d) None of the above

Ans: (b)

Mains

Q. What was held in the Coelho case? In this context, can you say that judicial review is of key importance amongst the basic features of the Constitution? **(2016)**

Q. Discuss the role of land reforms in agriculture development. Identify the factors that were responsible for the success of land reforms in India. **(2016)**

Q. The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 has come into effect from 1st January, 2014. What are the key issues which would get addressed with the Act in place? What implications would it have on industrialization and agriculture in India? **(2014)**

Rising Online Child Abuse

For Prelims: [Artificial Intelligence](#), [National Cyber Security Policy](#), [Cyber Surakshit Bharat Initiative](#)

For Mains: Impact of cyberbullying and online sexual exploitation on children, Issues Related to Children

Source: [HT](#)

Why in News?

A study published in **The Lancet**, based on a comprehensive analysis of **123 studies** from various regions, has highlighted the **growing concern of online sexual abuse** faced by children worldwide.

What are the Key Findings of the Study on Online Child Abuse?

- **Prevalence of Abuse:** It highlights that **one in 12 children globally** (approximately **8.3%**) has **experienced online sexual abuse** in the last decade.
- **Types of Exploitation:** The study identified several subtypes of online sexual abuse, including **online solicitation** involving sexual inquiries/conversations (12.5%), **non-consensual image sharing** (12.6%), **online sexual exploitation** (4.7%), and **sexual extortion** (3.5%).
- **Gender Dynamics:** There is **no significant difference in online abuse rates between boys and girls**, challenging earlier beliefs that girls are more vulnerable.
 - This suggests **changing online environments and behaviors**, with **increasing risks for boys**.
- **Mental Health Implications:** The report links online sexual exploitation to **severe mental and physical health consequences** for victims, including **lower life expectancy** and reduced employment prospects.

What are the Reasons for Rising Online Child Abuse?

- **Increased Internet Access:** **Widespread internet access** has significantly **increased**

children's online presence (1/3 of internet users) rendering them vulnerable to exploitation, especially in unsupervised social media and gaming.

- **Pandemic-Related Factors:** Increased online activity during **Covid-19 pandemic** enabled **offenders to exploit children**, leading to a surge in abuse cases, including a **threefold rise in sextortion since March 2020**.
- **Advancements in Technology:** The large number of **artificial intelligence (AI)** tools and **digital platforms** has made it easier for offenders to create and distribute **child sexual abuse material (CSAM)** that is difficult to **detect and trace**.
- **Lack of Digital Literacy:** **Limited awareness of online safety** makes users vulnerable; only **38% of Indian households are digitally literate**.
- **Inadequate Monitoring and Enforcement:** Law enforcement and technology companies face challenges in keeping up with **rapidly evolving online platforms**, leaving **gaps in monitoring and enforcement**.

India's Initiatives Related to Online Child Abuse

- **Legislative and Policy Measures:**
 - **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012** provides a **legal framework** to combat child sexual abuse, including **online exploitation**.
 - **Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000** contains provisions related to **cybercrimes against children**.
 - **Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015** addresses **child protection issues, including online abuse**.
- **Institutional Mechanisms:**
 - **National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal:** Enables reporting of **online child abuse cases**.
 - **Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)** strengthens law enforcement efforts against **cybercrimes, including child exploitation**.

What Measures Can Be Taken to Prevent Online Child Abuse?

- **Strong Legislation and Enforcement:**
 - **Stronger Legislation:** Implement **stricter legal frameworks** with enhanced penalties for offenders.
 - **International Cooperation:** Strengthen **collaboration with agencies** like **INTERPOL and FBI** to dismantle **cross-border abuse networks**.
 - **Robust Reporting Systems:** Improve **real-time reporting and monitoring tools** for social-media platforms, **establish confidential helplines**, and encourage social networks to report emerging ways to share abuse material.
- **Public Awareness and Education:** Promote **digital literacy and online safety** through **awareness campaigns** for children, parents, and educators.
 - Enhance **online safety through dedicated kids' sections**, features like **"safe search"** on social media and browsing platforms, **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**-based content filtering, and **parental controls**.
- **Collaboration with Tech Industry:** Encourage tech companies to **adopt stricter content moderation, better age-verification**, and develop **ethical AI tools** to prevent CSAM creation on dark web platforms.
- **Need for Further Research:** Invest in **extensive research and data collection**, especially in underrepresented regions around the world, to develop **evidence-based policies** and **strengthen child protection frameworks**.

Drishti Mains Question:

Discuss the state of cybercrime in India and its impact on children. Suggest measures to mitigate these threats.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q.1 In India, under cyber insurance for individuals, which of the following benefits are generally covered, in addition to payment for the loss of funds and other benefits? (2020)

1. Cost of restoration of the computer system in case of malware disrupting access to one's computer
2. Cost of a new computer if some miscreant wilfully damages it, if proved so
3. Cost of hiring a specialised consultant to minimise the loss in case of cyber extortion
4. Cost of defence in the Court of Law if any third party files a suit

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Ans: (b)

Q.2 In India, it is legally mandatory for which of the following to report on cyber security incidents? (2017)

1. Service providers
2. Data centres
3. Body corporate

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Ans: (d)

Mains

Q. What are the different elements of cyber security ? Keeping in view the challenges in cyber security, examine the extent to which India has successfully developed a comprehensive National Cyber Security Strategy. **(2022)**