



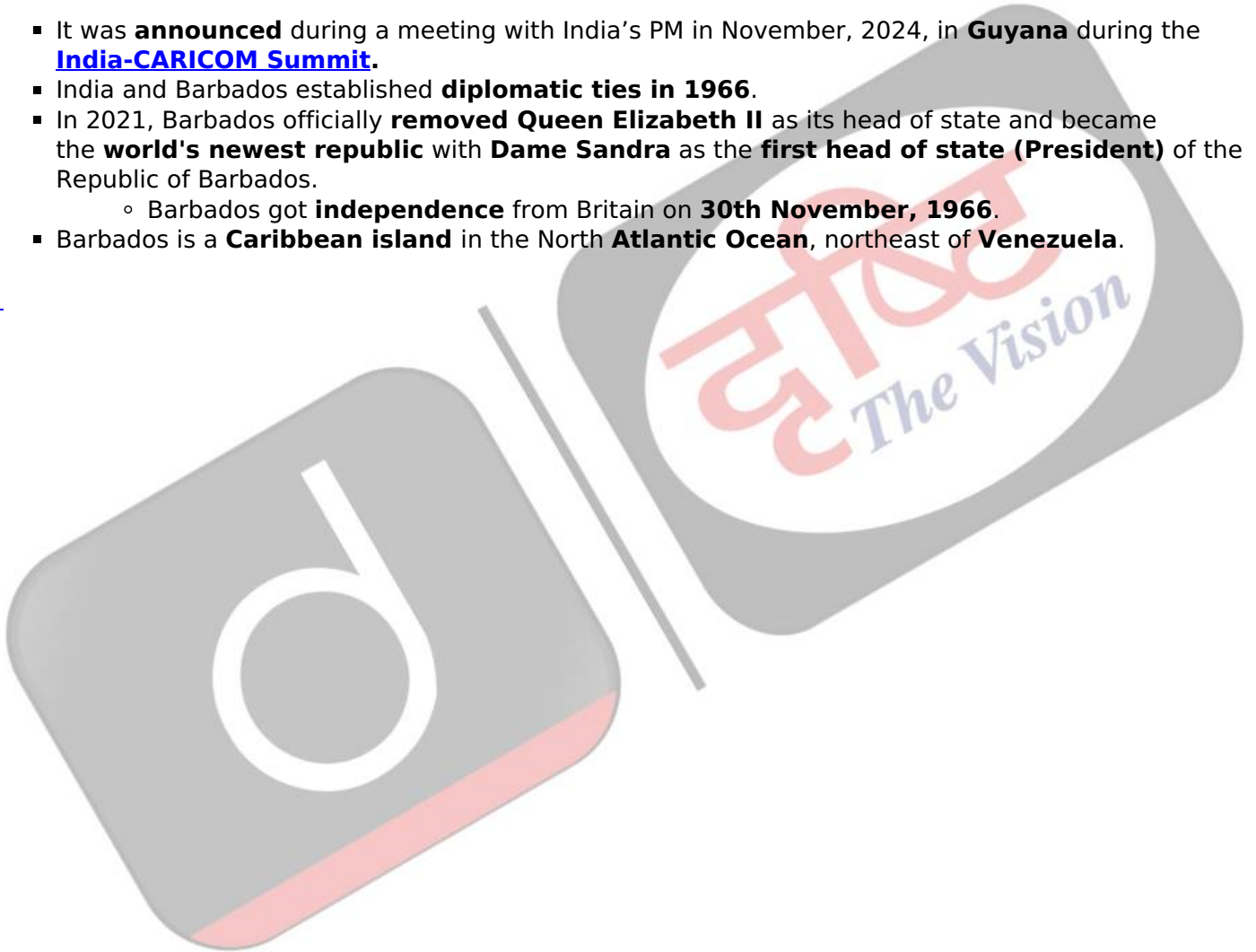
Order of Freedom of Barbados

[Source: PIB](#)

India's Prime Minister has been conferred the '[Honorary Order of Freedom of Barbados](#)' in recognition of his **strategic leadership** and support during the [Covid-19](#) pandemic.

- It was **announced** during a meeting with India's PM in November, 2024, in **Guyana** during the [India-CARICOM Summit](#).
- India and Barbados established **diplomatic ties in 1966**.
- In 2021, Barbados officially **removed Queen Elizabeth II** as its head of state and became the **world's newest republic** with **Dame Sandra** as the **first head of state (President)** of the Republic of Barbados.
 - Barbados got **independence** from Britain on **30th November, 1966**.
- Barbados is a **Caribbean island** in the North **Atlantic Ocean**, northeast of **Venezuela**.

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- PM Modi's list of international awards now includes **19 prestigious recognitions**. Notable awards include Russia's "**Order of St. Andrew the Apostle**" and the US's "**Legion of Merit**."

Read More: [Barbados: World's Newest Republic](#)

KVIC's Honey Mission

[Source: PIB](#)

The [Khadi and Village Industries Commission \(KVIC\)](#) has distributed **bee boxes, honey colonies, and toolkits** to beekeepers under the '[Honey Mission](#)' to spread the [Sweet Revolution](#).

- **Honey Mission (2017):** It is an initiative of **KVIC** that promotes **beekeeping and honey production (apiculture)**, and integrates **bee farming with agriculture** for additional income.
 - Apiculture products include **honey, royal jelly, beeswax, pollens** that are widely used in **pharmaceuticals, food, beverages, beauty**, and other industries.
- **KVIC:** It is a **statutory body** established under the **Khadi and Village Industries Commission Act, 1956** and functions under the **Ministry of MSME**.
 - It **plans, promotes, and implements** programs for Khadi and village industries, coordinating with rural development agencies.

Note: Like KVIC's Honey Mission, the **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare** implements the **National Beekeeping & Honey Mission (NBHM)**, a **Central Sector Scheme** aimed at promoting **scientific beekeeping** to promote the **Sweet Revolution** in India.

- **Sweet revolution** promotes **apiculture (beekeeping)** to boost the **production of high-quality honey** and other bee-derived products.

Read More: [Honey Mission and Sweet Revolution](#)

Namami Gange Programme

[Source: PIB](#)

Why in News?

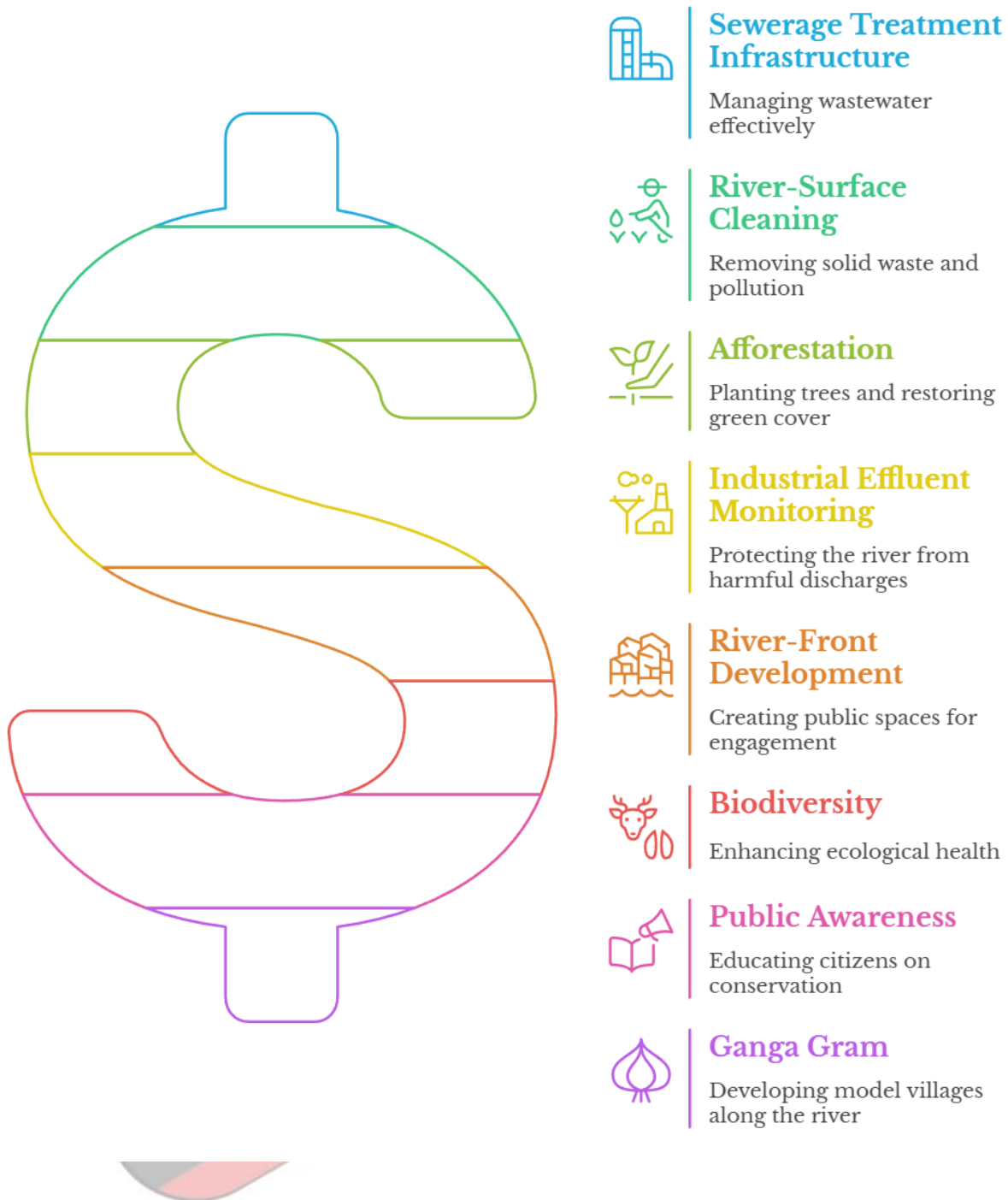
The [Namami Gange Programme \(NGP\)](#) has marked significant progress in its mission to rejuvenate the **sacred River Ganga**.

- It was launched in **2014** with a **Rs 20,000 crore** budget until **2021**, and now extended to **March 2026** with **Rs 22,500 crore** (total: Rs 42,500 crore).

What is the Namami Gange Programme?

- **About:** It is a **flagship programme** for the **rejuvenation of the Ganga River** and its tributaries by **reducing pollution, improving water quality, and restoring the river's ecosystem**.
- **Implementation:** [Five-Tier Structure for Ganga Rejuvenation](#).
- **8 Pillars of NGP:**

Key Pillars of NGP



▪ Key Interventions:

- **Pollution Abatement (Nirmal Ganga):** Setting up **sewage treatment plants (STPs)**, reducing **industrial and domestic waste discharge**.
 - **Improving Ecology and Flow (Aviral Ganga):** Restoring **natural flow and biodiversity**, implementing **water conservation measures**.
 - **Strengthening People-River Connect (Jan Ganga):** Promoting **community participation and awareness**, involving **local stakeholders in conservation efforts**.
 - **Facilitating Research and Policy (Gyan Ganga):** Supporting **scientific research and studies**, formulating **evidence-based policies**.
- **Implementation:** Under the [Hybrid Annuity Model \(HAM\)](#), an [Special Purpose Vehicle \(SPV\)](#) by the winning bidder handles **STP development, operation, and maintenance**.

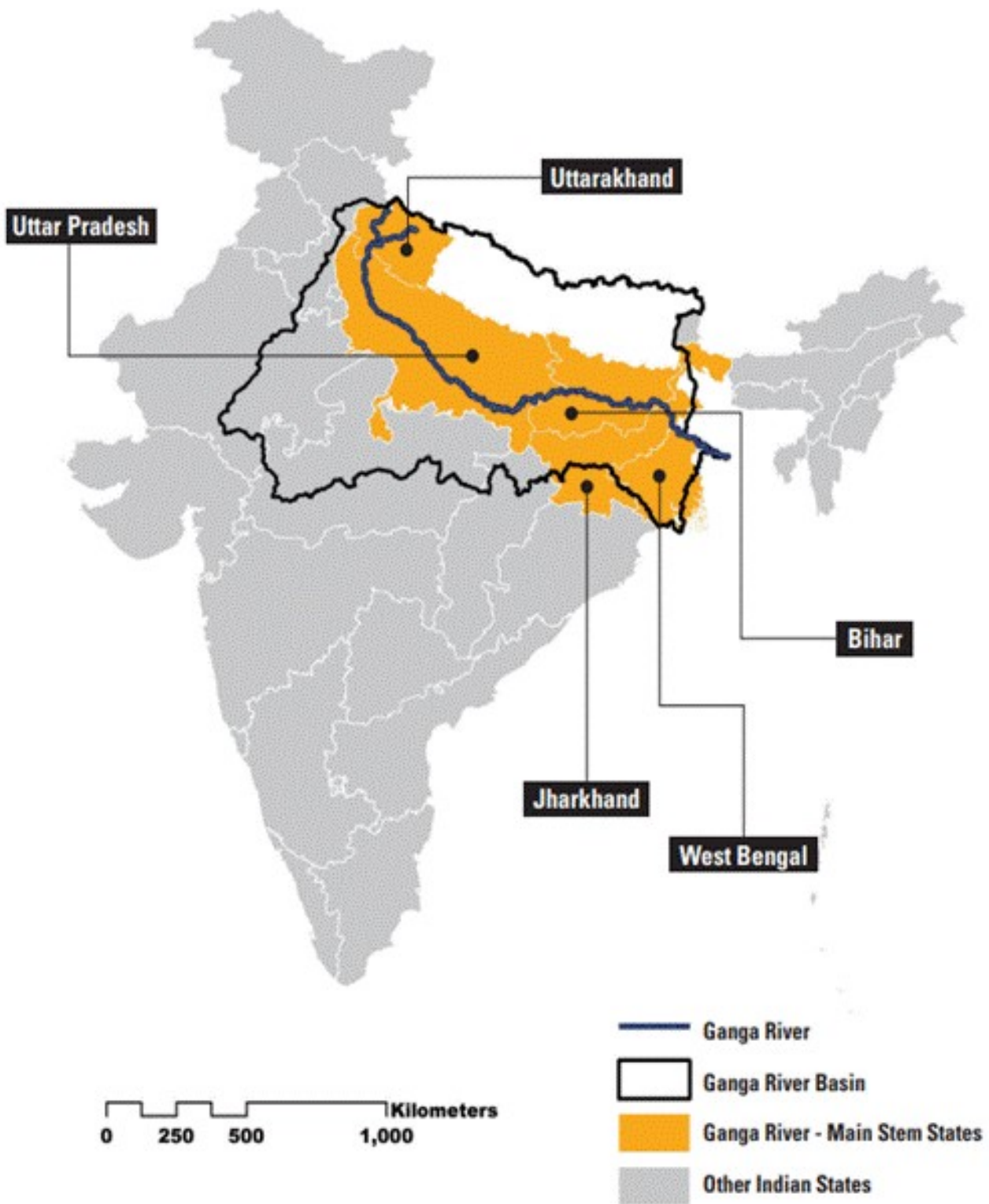
- **40%** of costs are paid **post-construction**, **60%** over the project's **lifespan**.
- **Key Achievements:**
 - **Pollution Abatement:** Sewage treatment capacity **surpassed the pre-2014 capacity by over 30 times**.
 - **Improvement in Water Quality:** Water quality improved in **Uttar Pradesh** from BOD 10-20 mg/l (2015) to **3-6 mg/l (2022)**, in **Bihar** from 20-30 mg/l (2015) to **6-10 mg/l (2022)**, and in **West Bengal** from 10-20 mg/l (2018) to **6-10 mg/l (2022)**.
 - **Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD)** measures **oxygen needed** by microorganisms to **break down organic matter** in water. **Higher BOD** indicates **more pollution**; lower BOD means cleaner water.
 - **Impact on Biodiversity:** The **Gangetic river dolphin** population increased from 3,330 in 2018 to **3,936 in 2024**, with sightings in new stretches like **Bithura to Rasula Ghat (Prayagraj)**, **Babai**, and **Bagmati Rivers**.
- **Global Recognition:** In December 2022, the **UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration** acknowledged **NGP** as one of the **Top 10 World Restoration Flagship Initiatives**.
 - The International Water Association awarded **NGP** the title of **Climate Smart Utility**.

Click Here to Read: [What are the Challenges in the Namami Gange Programme?](#)

Importance of River Ganga

- **Lifeline of India:** Supports **47% of India's population** across **11 states**.
- **Agriculture & Economy:** **65.57% of the basin** is used for agriculture.
- **Cultural & Religious Significance:** Sacred to million people across different religions.
- **Water Scarcity:** The **Ganga River Basin** is the **second most water-stressed** in India, receiving only **39% of the average per capita annual rainwater input**.





UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Which of the following are the key features of 'National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA)'? (2016)

1. River basin is the unit of planning and management.
2. It spearheads the river conservation efforts at the national level.
3. One of the Chief Ministers of the States through which the Ganga flows becomes the Chairman of NGRBA on rotation basis.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Q. Consider the following statements: (2014)

1. Animal Welfare Board of India was established under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
2. The National Tiger Conservation Authority is a statutory body.
3. The National Ganga River Basin Authority is chaired by the Prime Minister.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Ans: (b)

India's Energy Strategy

For Prelims: [Liquefied Natural Gas](#), [International Energy Agency](#), [Ethanol Blended Petrol](#), [Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries](#), [Global Biofuel Alliance](#)

For Mains: Energy Security & Diversification, Opportunities and challenges in India's Energy Security.

[Source:TH](#)

Why in News?

India has committed to increasing its oil and natural gas imports from the US, with energy trade expected to rise from **USD 15 billion to USD 25 billion** in the near future. This move is part of a broader goal

to [double bilateral trade to USD 500 billion.](#)

- The decision enhances [India's energy security](#) while strengthening **economic ties amid global geopolitical shifts.**

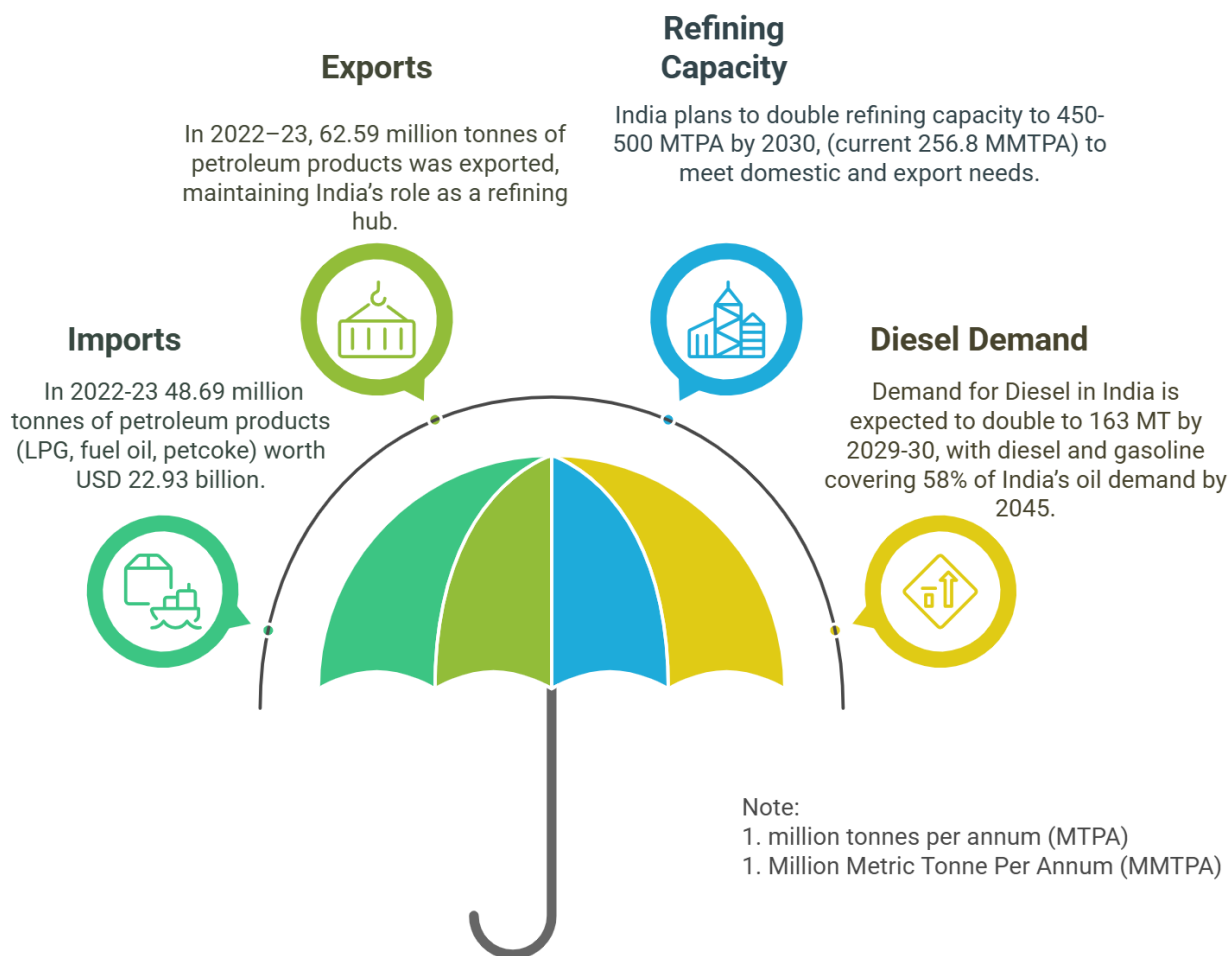
Why is India Expanding Energy Trade with the US?

- **Energy Security:** India, the world's **3rd-largest oil importer and consumer**, relies on **imports for over 85% of its crude needs**. With **primary energy demand set to nearly double to 1,123 million tonnes of oil equivalent** by 2040 driven by a projected [Gross Domestic Product \(GDP\)](#) rise to **USD 8.6 trillion**, making supply stability crucial.
 - **Expanding energy trade with the US** reduces dependency on **West Asia and Russia**, while **diversifying sources** mitigates risks from geopolitical disruptions.
- **Bilateral Trade Growth:** Expanding **energy imports** helps balance **India's USD 45.7 billion trade surplus** with the US in 2024, while advancing the **'Mission 500'** initiative to double bilateral trade to **USD 500 billion by 2030**.
- **Infrastructure Boost:** Competitively priced **US crude and Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG)** aim to make the US a **leading supplier** to India, supporting **industrial growth, refining expansion, and petrochemical investments**.
- **Geopolitical Benefits:** Stronger US energy ties support **India's bid for full membership in the International Energy Agency (IEA)**.
 - Strengthened US-India ties in energy can **counterbalance China's influence in global energy markets**.

What is the State of India's Energy Consumption?

- **Crude Oil:**
 - **Total Imports (2023-24): 234.26 million tonnes** of crude oil.
 - **Import Dependence:** India's **crude oil import dependence increased to 87.8%** in 2023-24, with **domestic production meeting less than 13%** of the total demand.
 - **Future Projection:** Crude oil consumption is expected to grow at a [Compound Annual Growth Rate \(CAGR\)](#) of 4.59% to 500 million tonnes by FY40.
- **Petroleum Products and Diesel:**

Petroleum Products and Diesel



- **Natural Gas and Cleaner Fuels:** India aims to increase **natural gas's share in the energy mix to 15% by 2030** (from the current ~6%).
 - **Total LNG Imports (2023-24): 31.80 billion cubic meters (bcm) worth USD 13.405 billion.**
 - **Ethanol Blending Target: Advanced to 20% by 2025-26** to reduce reliance on fossil fuels, with **ethanol production capacity** reaching around **1,600 crore litres** as of September 2024.
 - The **Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP)** programme has reduced CO₂ emissions by 544 lakh metric tons and substituted **181 lakh metric tons of crude oil.**

What is India Doing to Meet the Energy Needs?

- **Increasing Domestic Production:** India aims to **double its oil & gas exploration area** from **0.5 million sq. km by 2025** to **1 million sq. km by 2030**.
 - New projects in the **Krishna-Godavari (KG) Basin** and **offshore exploration** efforts are expected to boost output.
- **Global Energy Partnerships:** India's diversified import strategy from sources like **US, Russia, Brazil, Canada, and Africa** helps ensure supply security amid geopolitical disturbances, though it may **not fully shield against long-term price volatility**.
 - Russia now supplies **40% of India's crude imports** (less than 1% before 2022).
 - India is strengthening ties with **IEA, [Organization of the Petroleum Exporting](#)**

[Countries \(OPEC\)+](#) for long-term contracts.

- The [Global Biofuel Alliance](#), an initiative by **India** which intends to expedite the global uptake of biofuels.
- **LNG & Gas Pipeline Expansion:** The **Unified Pipeline Tariff** aims for "One Nation, One Grid, One Tariff," benefiting remote consumers and boosting gas market growth.
 - India is expanding **city gas distribution networks, and import terminals** to support growing demand.
- **Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR):** SPR Program acts as a buffer against supply disruptions and price volatility in global markets.
 - India aims to commercialize **50% of its SPR** to raise funds and build additional storage tanks to offset high oil prices.
 - **Clean & Renewable Energy:** India targets [500 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2030](#) with expansion of **solar, wind, and hydro projects** to reduce reliance on fossil fuels.
 - The government promotes **ethanol blending, biodiesel, and compressed biogas (CBG)** while announcing a **USD 67 billion investment in hydrogen energy projects in 2024**.
- **Policy Reforms:** The government allows 100% FDI under the automatic route for oil & gas PSUs and upstream and private sector refining projects, boosting investment and energy sector growth.
 - The [Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy](#) aims to increase domestic oil and gas production.
 - Subsidies are provided for **electric vehicles (EVs), green hydrogen, and biofuels** to reduce dependence on crude oil.

Conclusion

India's oil and gas needs are driven by economic growth, rising demand, and high import dependence. To ensure energy security, the country is expanding refining capacity, investing in natural gas, and diversifying imports while transitioning to cleaner energy.

Drishti Mains Question:

How does India's strategy of diversifying its oil and gas imports impact its energy security?

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q.1 With reference to furnace oil, consider the following statements: (2020)

1. It is a product of oil refineries.
2. Some industries use it to generate power.
3. Its use causes sulphur emissions into environment.

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

Ans: (d)

Q.2 The term 'West Texas Intermediate', sometimes found in news, refers to a grade of (2020)

- (a) Crude oil

- (b) Bullion
- (c) Rare earth elements
- (d) Uranium

Ans: (a)

Mains:

Q. The question of India's Energy Security constitutes the most important part of India's economic progress. Analyse India's energy policy cooperation with West Asian countries. **(2017)**

Q. "Access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy is the sine qua non to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)". Comment on the progress made in India in this regard. **(2018)**

Poshan Abhiyan

Source: PIB

Why in News?

Poshan Abhiyaan aims to improve **nutritional outcomes** through **technology, cross-sectoral convergence, and community involvement**.

What is Poshan Abhiyan?

- **About:** It is a flagship **initiative of the Ministry of Women and Child Development**, launched on 8th March 2018 in Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan. The program aims **to address the nutrition needs of adolescent girls, pregnant women, lactating mothers, and children (0-6 years)** through a targeted and convergent approach.



Beneficiaries
10,08,89,775



Children (0-6 Months)
47,53,831



Children (6 Months - 3 Years)
3,82,66,444



Children (3 - 6 Years)
4,49,14,794



Pregnant Women
55,41,417



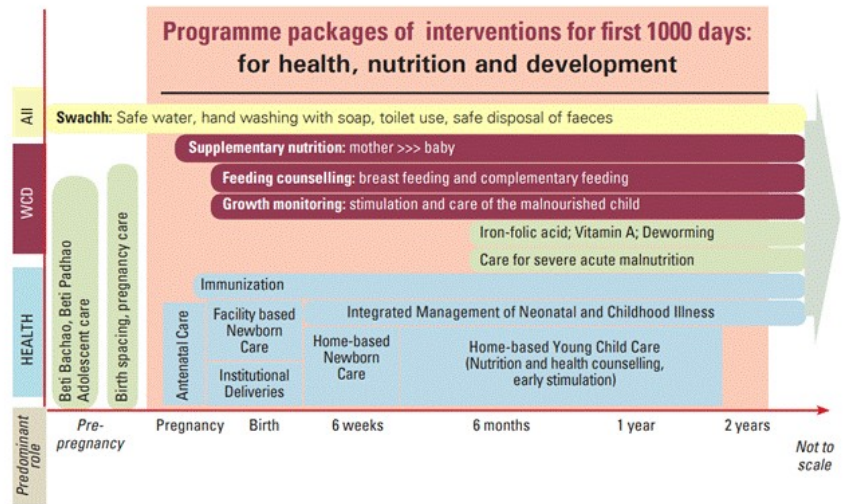
Lactating Mothers
51,28,483



Adolescent Girls
22,84,806

- **Objectives:** It aims to reduce **stunting, under-nutrition, anaemia (among young children, women and adolescent girls) and reduce low birth weight** by 2%, 2%, 3% and 2% per annum respectively
- **Strategic Pillars:** It operates through **four strategic pillars:**
 - **Quality Services:** Strengthens health services via **ICDS, NHM, and PMMVY**, focusing on a child's first **1,000 days**.

Critical and Effective Interventions



- **Cross-Sectoral Convergence:** Integrates ministries like **Water & Sanitation for holistic nutrition.**
 - The **National Council on India's Nutrition Challenges**, led by **NITI Aayog**, **guides policy and reviews** nutrition convergence quarterly.
- **Technology:** Uses the **Poshan Tracker** for real-time data and monitoring and **ICDS-Common Application Software** to strengthen delivery of Anganwadi Services.
- **Jan Andolan:** Promotes **community-led nutrition awareness** and behavioral change.
- **Nutritional Improvement:** As per the **NFHS-5 (2019-21)** for children under 5 years.

Indicator	NFHS-4 (2015-16)	NFHS-5 (2019-21)
Wasting (Low weight-for-height)	21%	19.30%
Undernutrition (Low weight-for-age)	35.70%	32.10%
Stunting (Low height-for-age)	38.40%	35.50%

- **Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0:** It is also known as **Mission Poshan 2.0**, that fosters **health, wellness, and immunity** and infrastructure upgrades for **Anganwadi Centre (AWCs)** e.g., dedicated buildings, functional toilets, with drinking water access.

India's Nutritional Status as per Global Hunger Index 2024

India's GHI Indicators in 2024

Undernourishment

Improved food security in India

Child Stunting

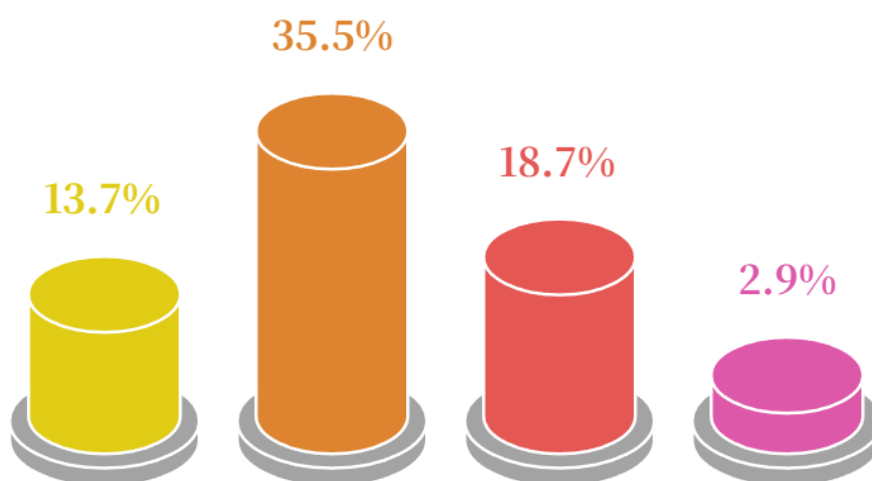
Long-term malnutrition unchanged

Child Wasting

Highest malnutrition rate globally

Child Mortality

Slight decrease in child deaths



UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. Which of the following are the objectives of 'National Nutrition Mission'? (2017)

1. To create awareness relating to malnutrition among pregnant women and lactating mothers.
2. To reduce the incidence of anaemia among young children, adolescent girls and women.
3. To promote the consumption of millets, coarse cereals and unpolished rice.
4. To promote the consumption of poultry eggs.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Ans: (a)

Q. Which of the following is/are the indicator/indicators used by IFPRI to compute the Global Hunger Index Report? (2016)

1. Undernourishment
2. Child stunting

3. Child mortality

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Ans: (c)

Exercise KHANJAR-XII

Source: PIB

The **12th** edition of the **India-Kyrgyzstan Joint Special Forces Exercise KHANJAR-XII** is being held in **Kyrgyzstan**.

- **Initiated in 2011**, it is an **annual exercise** conducted **alternately** in both countries.
- The Indian Army's **Parachute Regiment (Special Forces)** and Kyrgyzstan's **Scorpion Brigade** are participating.
- The exercise aims to enhance cooperation in **counter-terrorism and special operations** in **urban and high-altitude terrain**.
- Key areas of focus include **sniping, building intervention, and mountain warfare**. Additionally, cultural exchanges, including Kyrgyz festival **Nowruz celebrations**, will strengthen bilateral ties.
- This exercise reinforces **India-Kyrgyzstan defence cooperation**, addressing **regional security challenges** like **terrorism** and **extremism**, while promoting peace and stability in the region.
- **Kyrgyzstan**, located in Central Asia, shares the **Fergana Valley** with **Uzbekistan and Tajikistan**. The region is rich in **hydrocarbons**, making it crucial for India's energy security.



Read More: [India-Kyrgyzstan](#)

India 2nd largest Arms Importer: SIPRI

Source: [TH](#)

Why in News?

India's share of global arms imports fell to 8.3% in 2020-24, making it the **2nd-largest arms importer, after Ukraine**, as per the [Stockholm International Peace Research Institute \(SIPRI\)](#) report.

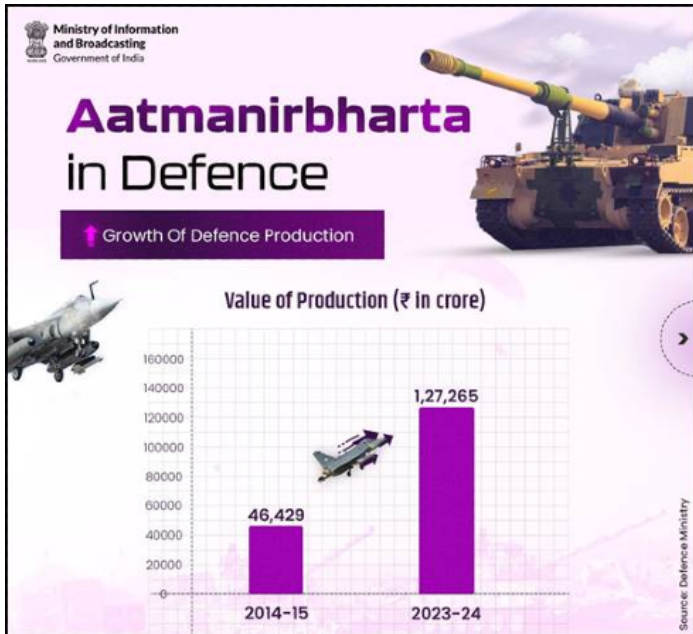
What are the Key Findings of the Report on Arms Trade?

- **India:** India's arms imports declined by 9.3% compared to 2015-19. Russia remained India's top supplier, but its share dropped from 72% (2010-14) to 36% (2020-24).
 - France emerged as **India's second-largest supplier** (28% of its total exports went to India).
- **India's Neighbors:** Pakistan's Arms Imports Grew by 61%. China supplied 81% of Pakistan's total arms imports.
 - For the first time since **1990-94**, China dropped out of the **top 10 arms importers** as its **arms imports declined by 64%**, reflecting a stronger **domestic defense industry**.
- **Asia and Oceania:** India, Pakistan, Japan, and Australia ranked among the 10 largest arms importers globally in 2020-24.
- **US:** Retains position as the largest arms exporter, supplying weapons to Ukraine, [North Atlantic Treaty Organization \(NATO\)](#) allies, and Asia-Pacific nations.

- **Europe:** European arms imports surged by 155%, as countries increased defense spending in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.
 - **France overtakes Russia as the 2nd-largest arms exporter**, with India (28%) as the top buyer, followed by Qatar.
 - India procured **Rafale jets and Scorpene submarines** from France.
 - **Ukraine** saw a 100-fold increase in arms imports due to the [war with Russia](#). It received 8.8% of global arms imports, with the US, Germany, and Poland as top suppliers.
- **Russia:** Russia's global arms exports dropped by **64%**, falling to 7.8% of global exports (third place) due to **Western sanctions and production constraints**.
 - However, **India (38%)**, China (17%), and Kazakhstan (11%) remained its top buyers.
- **Middle East:** Arms imports fell by 20%, but the region remains a major importer, with Qatar becoming the 3rd-largest arms importer globally.
- **Global Arms Transfers:** Global arms transfers remained stable compared to 2015-19 and 2010-14, but were 18% higher than 2005-09, with rising imports in Europe and the Americas offset by decreases in other regions like China.

What are India's Initiatives to Reduce Arms Imports?

- **Budget:** Rs 6.21 lakh crore allocated for defence in [Budget 2024-25](#), with 75% of capital procurement reserved for **domestic manufacturers**.
 - **Self-Reliant Initiatives through Joint Action (SRIJAN)** portal launched to facilitate procurement from Indian vendors.
- **Production:** India's defence production reached a record value of Rs 1.27 lakh crore in 2023-24, a 174% rise from 2014-15.
 - The top three destinations for India's defence exports in 2023-24 were the **US, France, and Armenia**.
- **Positive Indigenization Lists:** [Five 'Positive Indigenization Lists'](#) comprising defence items have been released. These lists place an **embargo on the import of these items**, ensuring they are produced within India.
- **Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP) 2020:** Prioritizes domestic procurement over foreign purchases.
 - Introduced categories like "**Buy (Indian-IDDm)**" (**Indigenously Designed, Developed, and Manufactured**).
 - Promotes [Make-I](#) and [Make-II](#) projects to encourage private-sector participation in defence manufacturing.
- **Defence Industrial Corridors (DICs):** Two corridors established in **Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu** to boost defence manufacturing.
- **Private Sector & FDI Participation:** **74% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) via the Automatic Route** and **100% via the Government Route** in defence manufacturing.
 - 21% of India's total defence production now comes from the private sector.
- **Defence Public Sector Units (DPSUs):** India has 16 DPSUs, including **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)**, Bharat Electronics Ltd (BEL), and Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders.
 - Major indigenization projects led by DPSUs include **INS Vikrant** (India's first indigenous aircraft carrier), **LCA Tejas** (advanced fighter jet developed by HAL).
- **R&D & Innovation:** [iDEX \(Innovations for Defence Excellence\)](#) initiative promotes startups and MSMEs in developing cutting-edge military technology.
- **Future Goals:** India is aiming for Rs 1.75 lakh crore worth of defence production in 2025, with a target of Rs 3 lakh crore by 2029.



Drishti Mains Question:

India's defence production has seen significant growth in recent years. Critically examine the government's initiatives to boost domestic defence manufacturing.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Mains

Q. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the defence sector is now set to be liberalized: What influence this is expected to have on Indian defence and economy in the short and long run? **(2014)**

