# UPSC Current Affairs

Tuesday, 17 November 2026 · Sources: PIB and The Hindu · 56 items

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## GS Paper I: Heritage, Culture, History, Geography & Society

AGRICULTURE

### El Nino impact drives record surge in crop insurance registrations across Karnataka

MEDIUM IMPORTANCE · Both · Agriculture, Geography

• El Nino impact drives record surge in crop insurance registrations across Karnataka

**Prelims pointers**

• Key terms: El Nino, Karnataka

**Static connect: El Niño / La Niña**

• El Niño is unusual warming of the central and eastern equatorial Pacific; it usually weakens the Indian monsoon.
• A positive Indian Ocean Dipole can offset El Niño's effect on India.

*UPSC angle: Monsoon variability, drought and agriculture (GS1, GS3).*

**Source:** The Hindu, National, 16 Nov 2026 · https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/el-nino-impact-drives-record-surge-in-cro

ECONOMY

## Indias Solar Growth Enters a New Era

MEDIUM IMPORTANCE · Both · Economy, Geography, Governance & Social Justice

• India's solar energy sector has experienced significant expansion across installed utility capacity, domestic manufacturing, and distributed solar adoption.
• Growth is driven by deliberate policy support, infrastructure development, and programs fostering decentralized solar power.

### Why it matters for India and UPSC

Solar power is the core driver of India's energy transition, decarbonisation commitments, and import substitution in power generation.
• **Economy:** Reduces crude and coal reliance while demanding domestic solar PV cell and module manufacturing via Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes.
• **Environment:** Crucial for meeting India's nationally determined contributions (NDCs) of reducing GDP emissions intensity by 45% by 2030.

### Prelims pointers

• India targets 500 GW of non-fossil fuel installed electricity capacity by 2030 (Panchamrit commitments).
• PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana is the central scheme driving rooftop solar installation across households.

### Static connect: International Solar Alliance (ISA)

• Joint initiative launched by India and France at COP21 in Paris (2015).
• Headquartered in Gurugram, Haryana, India.
• Aims to mobilize investment in solar energy deployment under the 'Towards 1000' strategy.
*UPSC angle: Standard topic for GS Paper 3 (Energy and Climate Change) and GS Paper 2 (multilateral diplomacy).*

### Mains angle

Evaluates challenges and progress in achieving clean energy targets through solar power, including supply chain bottlenecks and grid integration (GS Paper 3).

**Source:** PIB, PIB Backgrounder, 17 Nov 2026 · https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2337251

GEOGRAPHY

## How are tropical cyclones named?

HIGH IMPORTANCE · Both · Geography, Disaster Management

• Tropical cyclones are among the deadliest natural hazards globally, surpassed in devastation primarily by major earthquakes.
• Cyclones are systematically named through an established international procedure managed by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and regional bodies.

### Why it matters for India and UPSC

Tropical cyclones regularly impact Indian coastal populations and infrastructure; understanding their nomenclature, formation, and warning systems is a core UPSC requirement.
• **Geography & disasters:** High ocean heat content in the northern Indian Ocean fuels rapid intensification of storms, posing grave risks to vulnerable coastal ecosystems and populations.
• **International relations:** Regional cooperation through the WMO/ESCAP framework illustrates effective institutional meteorological diplomacy across South Asia and the Middle East.

### Prelims pointers

• Naming of tropical cyclones in the North Indian Ocean (Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea) is overseen by the WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones (PTC).
• The PTC comprises 13 member countries (including India, Bangladesh, Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Thailand), each contributing names sequentially.
• Names must be short, neutral, non-offensive, and pronunciation-friendly across languages.

### Static connect: Tropical Cyclone Naming and Conditions

• Requires sea surface temperatures exceeding 27°C, sufficient Coriolis force, low vertical wind shear, and pre-existing low-pressure disturbance.
• India Meteorological Department (IMD) acts as the Regional Specialized Meteorological Centre (RSMC) for assigning names in the North Indian Ocean.
*UPSC angle: Frequently tested in Prelims (geography/cyclone names) and Mains GS Paper 1 & 3 (cyclone formation and disaster management).*

### Mains angle

Explains the meteorological conditions for cyclone genesis in the North Indian Ocean and the disaster risk reduction framework needed for coastal resilience (GS Paper 1 & 3).

### Practice question

*Discuss the mechanism of naming tropical cyclones in the North Indian Ocean region. Also, examine why the Bay of Bengal experiences more frequent and destructive cyclones compared to the Arabian Sea.*

**Source:** The Hindu, National, 17 Nov 2026 · https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/cyclone-arnab-how-are-tropical-storms-named/article

## Pollution in Yamuna increased despite huge expenditure on cleaning: Supreme Court

MEDIUM IMPORTANCE · Both · Geography, Polity & Constitution, Governance & Social Justice

• “This court is of the opinion that everything that is wrong with the civic administration in towns, cities and villages situated along the banks of the river is reflected in the poor health of the river and in the 520 drains that discharge wastewater into the Yamuna,” said SC

### Why it matters for India and UPSC

• **Governance & polity:** Judicial review and the separation of powers; such rulings often clarify fundamental rights or federal relations and become Mains examples.
• **Society:** Access to justice and pendency (over 5 crore cases) affect citizens' trust in institutions.
• **Environment:** Air pollution is a public-health emergency in North India; NCAP, GRAP and the Commission for Air Quality Management (2021) are the policy tools.

### Prelims pointers

• Key terms: Pollution, Yamuna, Supreme Court

**Source:** The Hindu, Environment, 16 Nov 2026 ·
https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Delhi/pollution-in-yamuna-increased-despite-huge-expe

POLITY & CONSTITUTION

## Tamil Nadu government cannot ban transportation of minerals to other States, rules Madras High Court

HIGH IMPORTANCE · Both · Polity & Constitution, Geography

• Madras High Court declared Rule 3A of the TN Prevention of Illegal Mining, Transportation and Storage of Minerals and Mineral Dealers Rules, 2011 unconstitutional.
• The court held that state governments cannot ban the inter-State transportation of minerals.

### Why it matters for India and UPSC

State restrictions on inter-State mineral movement disrupt India's single common market and test constitutional limitations on federal regulatory powers.
• **Governance & polity:** Affirms judicial enforcement of economic federalism, preventing protectionist state policies violating Part XIII.
• **Economy:** Prevents supply-chain bottlenecks and arbitrary price escalations of critical construction and industrial raw materials across state borders.

### Prelims pointers

• Article 301 guarantees freedom of trade, commerce, and intercourse throughout the territory of India.
• Article 304(b) permits reasonable restrictions by state legislatures on trade with other states only with prior presidential sanction.

### Static connect: Inter-State Trade and Commerce (Part XIII)

• Article 301 establishes freedom of trade, commerce, and intercourse throughout the territory of India.
• Article 302 empowers Parliament to impose restrictions in the public interest.
• Article 304(b) allows states to impose reasonable restrictions in the public interest, provided a bill is introduced only with prior presidential sanction.
*UPSC angle: A core area under GS II Indian Constitution and Federal issues relating to economic unity.*

### Mains angle

Examines constitutional limits on state powers concerning inter-State trade and federal regulatory balance under Articles 301–304 (GS Paper II).

### Practice question

*Examine the constitutional safeguards governing the freedom of trade, commerce, and intercourse under Articles 301 to 304, in light of judicial rulings curbing unilateral state restrictions on inter-State movement of goods.*

**Source:** The Hindu, National, 17 Nov 2026 ·
https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/tamil-nadu-government-cannot-ban-transpo

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ALSO IN THE NEWS (LOWER PRIORITY)

• Tokyo lodges protest after aircraft believed to be Russian violate Japan airspace (The Hindu, International, 17 Nov 2026)
• 3,478 pregnant women identified for shifting to hospitals amid cyclone alert (The Hindu, National, 16 Nov 2026)

# GS Paper II: Polity, Governance, Social Justice & IR

AGRICULTURE

## India’s Horticulture Production Set to Reach Record 386.9 Million Tonnes in 2025-26: Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan Releases Third Advance Estimates

MEDIUM IMPORTANCE · Prelims · Agriculture, Governance & Social Justice

• Ministry of Agriculture released the Third Advance Estimates of area and production of horticultural crops for 2025-26.
• Total horticulture production is estimated to reach a record 386.9 million tonnes (3,869.15 lakh tonnes), an increase of 161.77 lakh tonnes over the previous estimate.

**Why it matters for India and UPSC**

Demonstrates structural shifts in Indian agriculture from grain-centric production to high-value horticulture, which is central to agricultural policy and farmer income debates.
• **Economy:** Rising horticulture volumes necessitate substantial investments in cold-chain logistics, processing infrastructure, and reduction of post-harvest losses.
• **Society:** Higher availability of fruits and vegetables directly aids in addressing micronutrient deficiencies and supporting dietary diversity.

**Prelims pointers**

• Horticulture production in India continues to outpace food grain production in volume terms.
• Advance estimates of crop production are released periodically by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.

**Static connect: Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH)**

• Centrally Sponsored Scheme covering fruits, vegetables, root and tuber crops, mushrooms, spices, flowers, and aromatic plants.
• Sub-schemes include National Horticulture Mission (NHM) and Horticulture Mission for North East & Himalayan States (HMNEH).
*UPSC angle: Frequently referenced in GS Paper 3 questions on crop diversification and doubling farmers' income.*

**Mains angle**

Examines trends in agricultural diversification towards high-value horticulture crops and its implications for farm income and post-harvest infrastructure (GS Paper 3).

**Source:** PIB, Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, 17 Nov 2026 · https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2337301

GOVERNANCE & SOCIAL JUSTICE

## India and Egypt form working group to explore trade deal contours

MEDIUM IMPORTANCE · Both · Governance & Social Justice, International Relations, Economy

• During his ongoing visit to Egypt, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal co-chaired, along with Egypt’s Minister of Investment and Foreign Trade Mohamed Farid Saleh, the 7th session of the India-Egypt Joint Trade Committee (JTC) in Egypt’s New Administrative Capital.

**Why it matters for India and UPSC**

• **Economy:** Affects India's export competitiveness, MSMEs and jobs in labour-intensive sectors; India's recent FTAs include UAE, Australia, EFTA (TEPA) and the UK.
• **International relations:** Trade is now a tool of geopolitics; India defends policy space at the WTO on food security (public stockholding) and agriculture.

**Prelims pointers**

• Key terms: India and Egypt, During, Egypt, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal, Minister of Investment and Foreign Trade Mohamed Farid Saleh

**Source:** The Hindu, National, 16 Nov 2026 · https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/piyush-goyal-in-egypt-for-india-egypt-joint-trade-c

## Oocyte racket: Police seek records from 14 fertility centres, probe financial trail

MEDIUM IMPORTANCE · Both · Governance & Social Justice, International Relations, Economy

• Investigators are examining bank statements, call detail records and digital evidence of the accused to identify intermediary doctors, fertility centres visited and the number of women recruited for egg donation.

**Why it matters for India and UPSC**

• **Society:** Women's safety, workforce participation and representation (Women's Reservation Act 2023, one-third seats after delimitation).
• **Governance & polity:** Laws such as the POSH Act 2013 and the new criminal laws (BNS 2023) and their implementation gaps.

**Prelims pointers**

• Key terms: Oocyte, Police, Investigators

**Source:** The Hindu, National, 16 Nov 2026 · https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/telangana/oocyte-racket-police-seek-records-from-14

## Pakistan human rights body warns of escalating threats to democracy and fundamental freedoms

MEDIUM IMPORTANCE · Both · Governance & Social Justice, International Relations, Science & Technology

• According to a press release issued by HRCP, the commission's General Body expressed alarm over the systematic erosion of freedom of expression through censorship, surveillance, restrictive regulations and the misuse of criminal laws

**Why it matters for India and UPSC**

• **Internal security:** Cross-border terrorism and infiltration across the LoC remain India's core security concern; links to J&K, drones dropping arms/drugs in Punjab, and terror financing (FATF).
• **International relations:** India's stated policy: no talks with terror; Indus Waters Treaty (1960) held in abeyance since April 2025; China–Pakistan nexus including CPEC through PoK.

**Prelims pointers**

• Key terms: Pakistan, HRCP, General Body

**Source:** The Hindu, International, 16 Nov 2026 ·
https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/pakistan-human-rights-body-warns-of-escalating

## Millions of students take NEET, yet hundreds of medical seats go vacant

MEDIUM IMPORTANCE · Mains · Governance & Social Justice, Economy

• Medical seats remain vacant despite millions sitting for NEET due to the 'Float and Freeze' counseling structure.
• Candidates carried forward seat allotments without taking admission, and opted out even in Round 3, impairing seat utilization.

**Why it matters for India and UPSC**

Vacant medical seats worsen the doctor-to-population ratio and highlight flaws in centralized counselling and higher education governance.
• **Governance & polity:** Exposes loopholes in central seat-allotment algorithms and policies that allow seats to lapse without penalty.
• **Society:** Wastes subsidized higher education infrastructure, slowing progress toward achieving WHO-prescribed doctor-to-patient standards.

**Prelims pointers**

• National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) is conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA) for undergraduate medical admissions in India.

**Static connect: National Medical Commission (NMC)**

• Established under the National Medical Commission Act, 2019, replacing the Medical Council of India (MCI).
• Regulates medical education, medical institutions, and medical professionals across India.
*UPSC angle: Tested under GS II Social Justice/Governance issues relating to healthcare human resources.*

**Mains angle**

Analyses structural issues in health education administration and inefficient allocation of scarce public healthcare resources (GS Paper II).

**Source:** The Hindu, Health, 16 Nov 2026 · https://www.thehindu.com/education/millions-of-students-take-neet-yet-hundreds-of-medical-

## Matrescence: when motherhood needs mental health support

MEDIUM IMPORTANCE · Both · Governance & Social Justice

• At least one in five women will experience mental health problems during pregnancy until till the first year after childbirth.
• This cannot be ignored any longer: we need better, more comprehensive policies and programmes to support mothers during this vulnerable period

**Why it matters for India and UPSC**

• **Society:** Women's safety, workforce participation and representation (Women's Reservation Act 2023, one-third seats after delimitation).
• **Governance & polity:** Laws such as the POSH Act 2013 and the new criminal laws (BNS 2023) and their implementation gaps.

**Prelims pointers**

• Key terms: Matrescence

**Source:** The Hindu, Health, 16 Nov 2026 · https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/health/matrescence-when-motherhood-needs-mental-health-s

## WHO sounds the alarm on antimicrobial resistance threat

MEDIUM IMPORTANCE · Both · Governance & Social Justice, Science & Technology, Reports & Indices

• Only 42 countries -- less than one in five -- had a national action plan on AMR that was financed, implemented and monitored, according to the World Health Organization

**Why it matters for India and UPSC**

• **Society:** Public health outcomes and out-of-pocket spending; schemes like Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY and the TB-elimination target.
• **Governance & polity:** Health is a State subject; centre–state coordination and the One Health approach for disease surveillance.

**Prelims pointers**

• Key terms: WHO, Only, AMR, World Health Organization

**Static connect: Antimicrobial resistance**

• Microbes stop responding to medicines; India has a National Action Plan on AMR and a Red Line campaign on antibiotics.

*UPSC angle: Public health (GS2, GS3).*

**Source:** The Hindu, Health, 16 Nov 2026 · https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/health/who-sounds-the-alarm-on-antimicrobial-resistance-

## U.S. lawmakers welcome court order scrapping $100,000 H-1B visa fee

MEDIUM IMPORTANCE · Both · Governance & Social Justice

• US lawmakers welcomed a court order overturning a proposed $100,000 fee for H-1B visas.
• Lawmakers stressed the visa's importance for filling critical shortages of healthcare workers and teachers in rural regions.

**Why it matters for India and UPSC**

Immigration rules affecting H-1B visas directly influence India's IT services exports, skilled migration patterns, and diaspora contributions.
• **Economy:** Protects revenue streams of Indian technology firms and ensures stability in remittances from skilled professionals abroad.
• **International relations:** Remains an enduring subject of bilateral engagement between India and the United States regarding ease of movement for professionals.

**Prelims pointers**

• The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant US work visa permitting US employers to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations.

**Static connect: H-1B Visa Framework**

• Created by the US Immigration and Nationality Act of 1990 for specialty occupations requiring specialized knowledge.
• Indian IT professionals and healthcare specialists are among the largest recipients of H-1B visas annually.
*UPSC angle: Relevant to GS II Indian Diaspora and international trade in services (Mode 4 of GATS).*

**Mains angle**

Examines global mobility of skilled Indian professionals and the impact of immigration policies on the Indian diaspora and economy (GS Paper II).

**Source:** The Hindu, International, 17 Nov 2026 ·
https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/us-lawmakers-welcome-court-order-scrapping-100

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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

## Trump’s Asia trip: Deals in Manila and Shenzhen, nuclear summit with Xi and Putin, maybe Kim meeting

HIGH IMPORTANCE · Both · International Relations

• Trump said he plans to talk about Russia's war in Ukraine during the highly anticipated meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian leader Vladimir Putin in China

**Why it matters for India and UPSC**

• **Economy:** US is India's largest export market; tariffs, H-1B visa rules and trade-deal talks hit IT services, textiles, gems and pharma exports and the rupee.
• **International relations:** Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership: defence deals, iCET/TRUST technology cooperation, Quad; India balances this with strategic autonomy (Russian oil, BRICS).
• **Internal security:** Dependence on Russian defence equipment (S-400, Su-30) and the push for indigenisation (Atmanirbhar Bharat in defence).

**Prelims pointers**

• Key terms: Trump, Asia, Deals, Manila and Shenzhen, Xi and Putin

**Source:** The Hindu, International, 16 Nov 2026 ·
https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/trumps-asia-trip-deals-in-manila-and-shenzhen-

## Beijing hails ‘groundbreaking significance’ of U.S., China, Russia summit in Shenzhen

HIGH IMPORTANCE · Both · International Relations

• The meeting is likely to be more symbolic than substantial.
• officials have indicated that the agenda is the war in Ukraine, the situation in West Asia, including stabilising global energy supplies, and nuclear arms control

**Why it matters for India and UPSC**

• **Internal security:** Unsettled LAC (eastern Ladakh, Arunachal): border infrastructure, disengagement and buffer zones; China's dual-use villages (Xiaokang) and dams on the Brahmaputra (Yarlung Tsangpo).
• **Economy:** Large trade deficit and dependence on Chinese inputs (APIs, electronics, solar, rare earths) drive PLI schemes, Press Note 3 (2020) FDI curbs and supply-chain diversification.
• **International relations:** Strategic competition in the Indian Ocean (String of Pearls), BRI vs connectivity alternatives (IMEC), and balancing via Quad while engaging in BRICS/SCO.

**Prelims pointers**

• Key terms: Beijing, China, Russia, Shenzhen, Ukraine

**Source:** The Hindu, International, 16 Nov 2026 · https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/beijing-hails-groundbreaking-significance-of-u

## Prime Minister participates in the 23rd India-ASEAN Summit in Manila

HIGH IMPORTANCE · Both · International Relations, Polity & Constitution, Governance & Social Justice

• Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in the 23rd India-ASEAN Summit held in Manila, Philippines.
• Philippines chaired ASEAN under the theme 'Navigating Our Future, Together' and served as Country Coordinator for India.
• Discussions focused on deepening the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between India and ASEAN.

**Why it matters for India and UPSC**

ASEAN is central to India's Act East Policy and economic-security architecture across the broader Indo-Pacific region.
• **International relations:** Strengthens institutional multipolarity in the Indo-Pacific while resisting unilateral hegemony in regional waterways.
• **Economy:** Facilitates ongoing reviews of the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA) to address non-tariff barriers and trade deficits.

**Prelims pointers**

• ASEAN comprises 10 member states: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.
• India-ASEAN relations were elevated to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2022.
• ASEAN Secretariat is based in Jakarta, Indonesia.

**Static connect: Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)**

• Established in 1967 with the signing of the ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration).
• India became a Sectoral Partner in 1992, Dialogue Partner in 1995, and Summit Partner in 2002.
*UPSC angle: Regularly tested in Prelims (members, initiatives) and Mains GS Paper 2 (Act East Policy).*

**Mains angle**

Assesses ASEAN centrality in India's Act East Policy and Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (GS Paper 2).

**Practice question**

*'ASEAN centrality remains the bedrock of India's Act East Policy.' In light of the recent India-ASEAN Summit, examine the economic, maritime, and strategic imperatives driving India's engagement with Southeast Asia.*

**Source:** PIB, Prime Minister's Office, 17 Nov 2026 · https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2337360

## English Translation of Prime Minister’s Opening Remarks during the 23rd India - ASEAN Summit

HIGH IMPORTANCE · Both · International Relations, Polity & Constitution

• Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the 23rd India-ASEAN Summit, marking his 13th interaction with ASEAN leaders.
• The PM emphasized India's commitment to ASEAN unity, ASEAN centrality, and the Act East Policy.
• The Philippines (led by President Marcos) served as the ASEAN Chair and Country Coordinator for India.

### Why it matters for India and UPSC

ASEAN is central to India's Act East Policy and Indo-Pacific vision, playing a crucial role in regional economic integration and maritime security.
• **International relations:** Reinforces India's diplomatic leverage and balance of power in Southeast Asia amidst increasing Chinese influence.
• **Economy:** Drives engagement on reviewing the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA) to create more balanced trade ties.

### Prelims pointers

• ASEAN was established in 1967 with the Bangkok Declaration; it currently comprises 10 Southeast Asian nations.
• India became a Sectoral Partner of ASEAN in 1992, Dialogue Partner in 1995, and elevated the relationship to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2022.

### Static connect: Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

• Established on 8 August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand, by Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand.
• Operates under the ASEAN Charter and functions on principles of consensus and non-interference (the 'ASEAN Way').
• India-ASEAN trade is facilitated under the ASEAN-India Free Trade Area (AIFTA).
*UPSC angle: Frequently tested in Prelims regarding member states and summits, and in Mains under Regional Groupings affecting India's interests.*

### Mains angle

Examines India-ASEAN relations, the centrality of ASEAN in India's Act East Policy, and Indo-Pacific maritime security (GS Paper II).

### Practice question

*Assess the strategic and economic significance of ASEAN centrality in India's 'Act East' policy amidst shifting geopolitical dynamics in the Indo-Pacific region.*

**Source:** PIB, Prime Minister's Office, 17 Nov 2026 · https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2337295

## Our future must be shaped by ‘cooperation, not competition’: PM Modi to ASEAN leaders

HIGH IMPORTANCE · Both · International Relations, Economy

• At the India-ASEAN summit, PM Modi stressed that the future of the partnership must be shaped by 'cooperation, not competition'.
• Reaffirmed that New Delhi's commitment to ASEAN's unity and centrality remains steadfast.

### Why it matters for India and UPSC

ASEAN is critical for counterbalancing assertive regional actors, ensuring maritime freedom of navigation, and expanding India's manufacturing export footprint.
• **International relations:** Positions India as a reliable security and developmental partner adhering to rules-based international maritime law (UNCLOS).
• **Economy:** Encourages deeper regional value chain integration and resilient supply chains independent of single-country dominance.

### Prelims pointers

• India's Act East Policy succeeded the Look East Policy in 2014, placing ASEAN at the core of India's Indo-Pacific strategy.

### Static connect: India's Act East Policy

• Launched in 2014 to upgrade the 1991 'Look East Policy' into a proactive, outcome-oriented framework.
• Focuses on 4Cs: Culture, Commerce, Connectivity, and Capacity building.
• Encompasses ASEAN nations along with East Asian partners like Japan, South Korea, and Australia.
*UPSC angle: Central topic under GS II Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India.*

### Mains angle

Focuses on India's strategic positioning within regional multilateral architectures and fostering economic and maritime cooperation in Southeast Asia (GS Paper II).

### Practice question

*'Cooperation, not competition, is key to sustainable regional security and economic growth in the Indo-Pacific.' In this context, analyze the strategic convergence between India and ASEAN.*

**Source:** The Hindu, National, 17 Nov 2026 ·
https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/pm-modi-asean-summit-address-india-world-leaders-ma

## China, Southeast Asia pledge to avoid disputes during talks on South China Sea pact

HIGH IMPORTANCE · Both · International Relations

• China and Southeast Asian nations pledged to avoid disputes during negotiations for a South China Sea Code of Conduct (COC).
• Decades-long territorial claims involve China, Taiwan, and four ASEAN members: Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam.
• The South China Sea remains a vital international waterway and critical node for global maritime trade.

### Why it matters for India and UPSC

Peace and freedom of navigation in the South China Sea directly affect India's international trade and geopolitical balancing in the Indo-Pacific.
• **International relations:** Over 55% of India's trade passes through the South China Sea and Malacca Strait, making rule of law and UNCLOS compliance vital for its economic and strategic interests.
• **Geography & disasters:** The waterway hosts vital maritime choke points, where instability can disrupt critical regional supply chains and oil lanes.

### Prelims pointers

• Disputing parties in South China Sea: China, Taiwan, and ASEAN members Brunei, Malaysia, Philippines, Vietnam.
• UNCLOS (1982) serves as the primary legal framework for maritime zones, EEZs, and navigation rights.

### Static connect: South China Sea and Maritime Geography

• It is a marginal sea of the Western Pacific Ocean, bordered by nations including China, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, and the Philippines.
• Major disputed geographical features include the Paracel Islands, Spratly Islands, and Scarborough Shoal.
• It connects the Indian Ocean to the Pacific Ocean via the Strait of Malacca, carrying over one-third of global maritime shipping.
*UPSC angle: Frequently tested in Prelims map-based questions and Mains questions on maritime security and Indo-Pacific geopolitics.*

### Mains angle

Maritime stability in the South China Sea is vital for India's trade and Indo-Pacific security architecture (GS Paper II).

### Practice question

*The ongoing negotiations for a Code of Conduct (COC) in the South China Sea remain critical yet fraught with structural challenges. Analyze the implications of maritime disputes in this region for India's Indo-Pacific vision and energy security.*

**Source:** The Hindu, International, 16 Nov 2026 ·
https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/china-southeast-asia-pledge-to-avoid-disputes-

## Raksha Mantri to attend 4th India-Japan 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue and hold bilateral talks with his Japanese counterpart in Tokyo

MEDIUM IMPORTANCE · Both · International Relations

• India and Japan will hold the 4th edition of the 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Dialogue in Tokyo.
• The dialogue brings together the Defence Ministers and External Affairs Ministers of both nations to discuss strategic and defence ties.

### Why it matters for India and UPSC

Japan is a cornerstone partner for India in maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific, technology transfer, and infrastructure cooperation.
• **International relations:** Bolsters high-level strategic alignment between Tokyo and New Delhi amidst evolving geopolitical dynamics in East Asia and the Indian Ocean.
• **Internal security:** Expands bilateral maritime domain awareness and operational interoperability between the armed forces.

### Prelims pointers

• 2+2 Dialogue involves the Foreign and Defence Ministers of two countries.
• India holds 2+2 ministerial dialogues with key strategic partners including the US, Japan, Australia, and Russia.

### Static connect: India-Japan Strategic Relations

• Upgraded to 'Special Strategic and Global Partnership' in 2014.
• Bilateral military exercises include Dharma Guardian (Army), JIMEX (Navy), and Veer Guardian (Air Force).
*UPSC angle: Standard GS Paper 2 topic concerning bilateral relations and regional security in the Indo-Pacific.*

### Mains angle

Evaluates the deepening India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership in the context of Indo-Pacific security and Quad convergence (GS Paper 2).

**Source:** PIB, Ministry of Defence, 17 Nov 2026 · https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2337279

## India and Egypt reaffirm commitment to strengthen bilateral trade, investment and industrial cooperation

MEDIUM IMPORTANCE · Prelims · International Relations, Governance & Social Justice, Economy

• Union Minister of Commerce and Industry visited Egypt, co-chairing the 7th Session of the India–Egypt Joint Trade Committee (JTC).
• Both countries reaffirmed commitments to expand trade, industrial cooperation, and investments.
• The visit marked the Minister's first bilateral visit to an African nation.

### Why it matters for India and UPSC

Egypt acts as a vital geopolitical pivot connecting Africa, the Arab world, and the Mediterranean, directly affecting India's trade corridor interests.
• **International relations:** Deepens India's engagement with key Global South partners in North Africa and the West Asia region.
• **Economy:** Offers Indian businesses potential access to the Suez Canal Economic Zone (SCZONE) for manufacturing and re-exporting to European and African markets.

### Prelims pointers

• Suez Canal in Egypt connects the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea.
• India and Egypt upgraded their bilateral ties to a Strategic Partnership in 2023.

### Static connect: Suez Canal and Egypt's Strategic Geography

• Operates as a vital maritime choke point connecting European and Asian waters.
• Egypt is a founding member of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) alongside India.
*UPSC angle: Crucial for GS Paper 1 geography mapping and GS Paper 2 West Asia/North Africa relations.*

### Mains angle

Analyses Egypt's significance as a strategic and logistical gateway for India's trade into Africa and Europe (GS Paper 2).

**Source:** PIB, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, 17 Nov 2026 · https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2337258

## ASEAN Summit LIVE updates: PM Modi at ASEAN-India Summit; Quad meeting likely after President Trump arrives

MEDIUM IMPORTANCE · Both · International Relations

• Leaders of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) — India, the US, Japan, and Australia — planned meetings on the sidelines of regional engagements.
• The summit marks continued high-level alignment among Quad leadership on maritime security and supply chain resilience.

**Why it matters for India and UPSC**

The Quad is India's preeminent plurilateral strategic partnership for maintaining balance of power and open sea lanes in the Indo-Pacific.
• **International relations:** Provides an alternative governance and infrastructure framework in the Indo-Pacific that upholds rule of law and freedom of navigation.
• **Internal security:** Enhances coastal security through shared maritime satellite tracking via the Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA).

**Prelims pointers**

• The Quad comprises India, Japan, the United States, and Australia.
• Quad was originally conceived in 2007 by Shinzo Abe and revived in 2017.

**Static connect: Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad)**

• Focus areas include maritime domain awareness (IPMDA), critical and emerging technologies, climate resilience, and supply chains.
• All four Quad members also participate together in the Malabar naval exercise.
*UPSC angle: High-yield topic under International Relations in GS Paper 2.*

**Mains angle**

Discusses the evolution of the Quad as a plurilateral grouping focused on public goods, maritime domain awareness, and regional balance in the Indo-Pacific (GS Paper 2).

**Source:** The Hindu, National, 17 Nov 2026 ·
https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/asean-india-summit-manila-november-2026-quad-l

## EU accuses Russia of stalling Ukraine peace talks to target power plants as winter nears

MEDIUM IMPORTANCE · Both · International Relations

• At talks in Brussels, EU foreign ministers said the priority should be to secure a ceasefire and then a real peace agreement

**Why it matters for India and UPSC**

• **International relations:** India's strategic autonomy: abstentions at the UN, call for dialogue and diplomacy, while keeping ties with Russia and the West.
• **Economy:** Discounted Russian crude, fertiliser and defence spares; Western sanctions and secondary tariffs create payment and trade risks for India.
• **Internal security:** Dependence on Russian defence equipment (S-400, Su-30) and the push for indigenisation (Atmanirbhar Bharat in defence).

**Prelims pointers**

• Key terms: Russia, Ukraine, Brussels

**Source:** The Hindu, International, 16 Nov 2026 ·
https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/eu-accuses-russia-of-stalling-ukraine-peace-ta

## ICJ to rule on Rohingya ‘genocide’: Refugee crisis, timeline of the case, and more

MEDIUM IMPORTANCE · Both · International Relations

• The international community is closely watching the top UN court’s Rohingya verdict as an archetype for the case filed by South Africa against Israel over its campaign in Gaza.

**Why it matters for India and UPSC**

• **Internal security:** 1,643 km border with the North-East; Free Movement Regime (the Centre decided in 2024 to end it and fence the border), refugee inflows into Mizoram and Manipur, insurgent camps and drug trafficking (Golden Triangle).
• **International relations:** Act East connectivity: Kaladan Multi-modal project (Sittwe port) and the India–Myanmar–Thailand Trilateral Highway depend on stability in Rakhine and Chin areas.
• **Economy:** India imports most of its crude oil, much of it from the Gulf; conflict raises oil prices, shipping and insurance costs, inflation and the current account deficit.
• **Society:** About 9 million Indians live in the Gulf; their safety (evacuation operations such as Ajay/Kaveri) and remittances (India is the world's largest recipient) are at stake.

**Prelims pointers**

• Key terms: ICJ, Rohingya, Refugee, South Africa, Israel

**Static connect: Gaza Strip**

• Narrow Palestinian territory on the Mediterranean coast, bordering Israel and Egypt (Rafah crossing).
• India's long-standing position supports a two-state solution.

*UPSC angle: India's West Asia policy and humanitarian law (GS2).*

**Source:** The Hindu, International, 16 Nov 2026 ·
https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/icj-to-rule-on-rohingya-genocide-refugee-crisi

## Ukraine hits Russia's Crimea bridge in 1,300-drone barrage

MEDIUM IMPORTANCE · Both · International Relations, Science & Technology

• The strike on the bridge appeared to inflict only minor damage, though drew an angry response from Russian-installed officials

**Why it matters for India and UPSC**

• **International relations:** India's strategic autonomy: abstentions at the UN, call for dialogue and diplomacy, while keeping ties with Russia and the West.
• **Economy:** Discounted Russian crude, fertiliser and defence spares; Western sanctions and secondary tariffs create payment and trade risks for India.
• **Internal security:** Dependence on Russian defence equipment (S-400, Su-30) and the push for indigenisation (Atmanirbhar Bharat in defence).
• **Society:** Drug abuse among youth; NDPS Act, 1985 and Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyaan.

**Prelims pointers**

• Key terms: Ukraine, Russia, Crimea, Russian-installed

**Source:** The Hindu, International, 16 Nov 2026 ·
https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/ukraine-hits-russias-crimea-bridge-in-1300-dro

## Daily Quiz: Communication with extraterrestrial intelligence

MEDIUM IMPORTANCE · Both · International Relations, Science & Technology, Environment & Ecology

• From a radio telescope in Puerto Rico to a distant globular cluster, explore the science, symbolism and audacious ambition behind humanity’s 1974 attempt to communicate with extraterrestrial intelligence

**Prelims pointers**

• Key terms: Daily Quiz, Communication, From, Puerto Rico

**Source:** The Hindu, Science, 16 Nov 2026 · https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/science/daily-quiz-communication-with-extraterrestrial-i

## Clear the path: On SCO Civilisational Dialogue Forum in New Delhi

MEDIUM IMPORTANCE · Both · International Relations

• India should use multilateral fora to advance bilateral cooperation

**Prelims pointers**

• Key terms: Clear, SCO Civilisational Dialogue Forum, New Delhi

**Static connect: Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)**

• Founded in 2001; India and Pakistan became full members in 2017.
• Secretariat in Beijing; Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) in Tashkent.

*UPSC angle: India's engagement with Central Asia, China and Russia (GS2).*

**Source:** The Hindu, Editorial, 16 Nov 2026 · https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/clear-the-path-on-sco-civilisational-dialogue-f

## Over 12,000 Devotees Pay Homage to the Sacred Relics of Shakyamuni Buddha at Golden Pagoda, Namsai, in the First Two Days

MEDIUM IMPORTANCE · Prelims · International Relations

• Sacred Relics of Shakyamuni Buddha were placed for public exposition at the Golden Pagoda (Kongmu Kham) in Namsai, Arunachal Pradesh.
• The exposition attracted thousands of devotees from across the region to pay homage.

**Why it matters for India and UPSC**

Buddhist heritage expositions in Arunachal Pradesh underline India's cultural diplomacy and regional spiritual integration in border states.

• **Society:** Strengthens preservation and national integration of indigenous Buddhist traditions such as the Tai Khamti in Arunachal Pradesh.

**Prelims pointers**

• Golden Pagoda (Kongmu Kham), built in the Burmese architectural style, is located in Namsai, Arunachal Pradesh.
• Theravada Buddhism is practiced prominently by the Tai Khamti community in the Namsai region.

**Static connect: Kongmu Kham (Golden Pagoda)**

• It is a prominent Buddhist monastery located at Tengapani in the Namsai district of Arunachal Pradesh.
• The pagoda reflects traditional Burmese Buddhist architecture and serves as a major centre for Theravada Buddhism in Northeast India.
• The region is primarily inhabited by the Tai Khamti ethnic group.

*UPSC angle: Directly relevant for Art & Culture Prelims questions regarding Buddhist sites and North-East cultural heritage.*

**Source:** PIB, Ministry of Culture, 17 Nov 2026 · https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2337248

### POLITY & CONSTITUTION

## Indian central bank seeks review of Supreme Court’s Yes Bank AT-1 bonds order

MEDIUM IMPORTANCE · Both · Polity & Constitution, Economy

• The RBI filed a review petition in the Supreme Court against its judgment that set aside the write-off of ■8,415 crore of Yes Bank’s additional tier-1 bonds

**Why it matters for India and UPSC**

• **Governance & polity:** Judicial review and the separation of powers; such rulings often clarify fundamental rights or federal relations and become Mains examples.
• **Society:** Access to justice and pendency (over 5 crore cases) affect citizens' trust in institutions.
• **Economy:** RBI's MPC targets 4% CPI inflation (±2%); rate decisions affect EMIs, credit growth, investment and the rupee.

**Prelims pointers**

• Key terms: Supreme Court, Yes Bank AT-1, RBI, Yes Bank

**Source:** The Hindu, National, 16 Nov 2026 ·
https://www.thehindu.com/business/indian-central-bank-seeks-review-of-supreme-courts-yes-b

## Deve Gowda writes to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking review of Cauvery Tribunal Award in the light of climate change

MEDIUM IMPORTANCE · Both · Polity & Constitution, Environment & Ecology

• He writes to PM seeking revision of CWMA powers besides early clearance to Mekedatu project and increase in Karnataka's share in Godavari-Cauvery linking project

**Why it matters for India and UPSC**

• **Environment:** India's NDCs (45% cut in emission intensity of GDP from 2005 levels by 2030, 50% non-fossil power capacity, net zero by 2070) and the principle of CBDR-RC.
• **International relations:** India speaks for the Global South on climate finance and technology transfer; carbon border taxes like the EU's CBAM affect Indian exports.

**Prelims pointers**

• Key terms: Deve Gowda, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Cauvery Tribunal Award, CWMA, Mekedatu

**Source:** The Hindu, National, 16 Nov 2026 · https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/deve-gowda-writes-to-prime-minister-naren

## SIR row: Supreme Court to hear Rahul Gandhi's application on December 9

MEDIUM IMPORTANCE · Mains · Polity & Constitution, International Relations, Economy

• The Supreme Court is set to hear an application regarding a row over a Special Summary Revision (SIR) exercise by the Election Commission of India.
• The affidavit noted that the exercise led to the exclusion of approximately 13 crore voters based on an ECI decision.

**Why it matters for India and UPSC**

Electoral integrity and universal adult suffrage depend on transparent, error-free electoral rolls prepared without wrongful disenfranchisement.
• **Governance & polity:** Scrutinizes the administrative discretion of the ECI in updating electoral rolls versus voters' fundamental rights to participate in elections.

**Prelims pointers**

• Article 324 of the Constitution vests the superintendence, direction, and control of electoral rolls in the Election Commission of India.

**Static connect: Election Commission of India (ECI)**

• Constitutional body established under Article 324 of the Constitution of India.
• Responsible for preparing, maintaining, and periodically revising electoral rolls for Parliament and State Legislatures.
• Governed by the Representation of the People Act, 1950 (registration of electors) and 1951 (conduct of elections).
*UPSC angle: Frequently examined under GS II Polity regarding the functioning, independence, and electoral reforms of the ECI.*

**Mains angle**

Pertains to electoral governance, purity of electoral rolls, and constitutional powers of the Election Commission under Article 324 (GS Paper II).

**Source:** The Hindu, National, 17 Nov 2026 · https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/sir-row-supreme-court-to-hear-rahul-gandhis-applica

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

## Tamil Nadu Health Minister Arunraj inaugurates Centre for Advanced Genomics at Ranipet CMC

MEDIUM IMPORTANCE · Both · Science & Technology, Governance & Social Justice

• Tamil Nadu Health Minister inaugurated the Centre for Advanced Genomics at CMC Ranipet.
• The centre aims to provide high-end genetic testing for complex cancers, rare inherited disorders, and infectious diseases.

### Why it matters for India and UPSC

Advanced genomics addresses diagnosis of rare diseases and specialized oncology, critical for healthcare accessibility and precision medicine in India.
• **Science & tech:** Expands molecular diagnostic capacity and precision medicine, reducing reliance on expensive imported genetic testing.
• **Society:** Improves early detection of hereditary conditions and complex cancers, lowering long-term disease burden and out-of-pocket health expenditure.

### Prelims pointers

• Genomic sequencing identifies the precise order of nucleotides within a DNA molecule, aiding diagnostic accuracy in oncology and rare genetic disorders.

### Static connect: Genomics and Molecular Diagnostics

• Involves high-throughput Next-Generation Sequencing (NGS) to analyze genetic material.
• India's Department of Biotechnology previously led the Genome India Project to map Indian genetic diversity.
*UPSC angle: Relevant to GS III Science & Technology under developments and applications of biotechnology in healthcare.*

### Mains angle

Highlights the integration of biotechnology and genomics into public healthcare infrastructure for managing non-communicable and rare diseases (GS Paper III).

**Source:** The Hindu, National, 17 Nov 2026 · https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/tamil-nadu-health-minister-arunraj-inaug

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ALSO IN THE NEWS (LOWER PRIORITY)

• Rajya Sabha Chairman, Shri C.P. Radhakrishnan administers oath to Shri Hardeep Singh Puri (PIB, Rajya Sabha Secretariat, 17 Nov 2026)
• INDIAN NAVAL SHIP SAHYADRI PARTICIPATES IN BILATERAL NAVAL EXERCISE JAIMEX 2026 WITH JAPAN MARITIME SELF-DEFENCE FORCE (PIB, Ministry of Defence, 17 Nov 2026)
• Prime Minister shares Sanskrit Subhashitam emphasizing importance of faith, dedication and self-discipline in the pursuit of knowledge (PIB, Prime Minister's Office, 17 Nov 2026)
• Head of China’s Baidu warns of AI ‘bubble’ ahead of APEC talks (The Hindu, International, 17 Nov 2026)
• North Korea’s Kim visits ski resort as Donald Trump hints at possible meeting (The Hindu, International, 17 Nov 2026)
• Customers at some of the U.S.’ largest banks are reporting difficulty accessing accounts online (The Hindu, International, 16 Nov 2026)
• French troops deployed in Ukraine on secret mission: RFI (The Hindu, International, 16 Nov 2026)
• India shows us a picture full of colour, complexity and possibilities, says Prince William (The Hindu, National, 16 Nov 2026)
• Prime Minister visits Khalsa Diwan Gurudwara in Manila, Philippines (PIB, Prime Minister's Office, 17 Nov 2026)
• IIT-Madras launches heart health awareness campaign (The Hindu, Health, 16 Nov 2026)
• AIIMS Delhi performs a life-changing spinal repair in utero, before the patient’s first breath (The Hindu, Health, 16 Nov 2026)
• NITI Aayog holds first National Workshop on “Leadership as a Mission” on the completion of 25 years of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi as Head of Government (PIB, NITI Aayog, 17 Nov 2026)
• Naturopathy: Natural Healing for a Healthy India (PIB, PIB Backgrounder, 17 Nov 2026)

# GS Paper III: Economy, Environment, S&T, Security & DM

ECONOMY

## Export duty on diesel hiked ■2.5/litre, ATF ■1.5/litre, petrol remains nil

MEDIUM IMPORTANCE · Prelims · Economy, Reports & Indices

• The Government of India raised the export duty (windfall tax) on diesel by ■2.5 per litre and on Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) by ■1.5 per litre.
• The export duty on petrol remained at nil.
• The adjustment comes amid elevated global fuel refining margins and increased vehicular fuel exports to Europe.

### Why it matters for India and UPSC

Windfall duties help balance domestic energy security and fiscal revenue against private refining export profits.
• **Economy:** It prevents domestic fuel shortages by disincentivizing excessive overseas shipments during global supply crunches while adding to sovereign non-tax revenue.

### Prelims pointers

• Windfall tax on fuel exports is revised fortnightly based on international oil price benchmarks and refining crack spreads.

### Static connect: Windfall Profit Tax

• A windfall tax is a higher tax rate levied by governments on unexpectedly large, windfall profits earned by a specific industry.
• In India, it is imposed as a Special Additional Excise Duty (SAED) on domestic crude oil producers and refined fuel exporters.
• The rates are reviewed every two weeks based on global crude and refined product price movements.
*UPSC angle: Relevant to GS Paper III under taxation policy, fiscal management, and energy sector economics.*

### Mains angle

Windfall taxes serve as a fiscal tool to regulate domestic fuel supplies and capture supernormal profits during global energy crises (GS Paper III).

**Source:** The Hindu, Economy, 17 Nov 2026 · https://www.thehindu.com/business/Industry/export-duty-on-diesel-hiked-25litre-atf-15litre

## India’s equity market: The cost of taxation, policy uncertainty and lost investor confidence

MEDIUM IMPORTANCE · Both · Economy

• Investor confidence, once weakened by a series of inconsistent or costly policy decisions, cannot be restored by optimism alone

### Prelims pointers

• Key terms: Investor

**Source:** The Hindu, Lead (Op-Ed), 16 Nov 2026 ·
https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/indias-equity-market-the-cost-of-taxation-policy-unc

ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY

## Big Cat Conservation can be a Powerful Pathway for Climate Change Mitigation: Union Environment Minister at UNFCCC COP31, at Antalya (Türkiye)

HIGH IMPORTANCE · Both · Environment & Ecology

• Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Bhupender Yadav, today highlighted the critical role of big cat conservation in advancing climate change mitigation and strengthening ecosystem resilience at the High-Level Ministerial Side Event titled ‘BIG CATS: Drivers of Climate Change Mitigation’.
• The event was jointly organised by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)…

**Why it matters for India and UPSC**

• **Environment:** India's NDCs (45% cut in emission intensity of GDP from 2005 levels by 2030, 50% non-fossil power capacity, net zero by 2070) and the principle of CBDR-RC.
• **International relations:** India speaks for the Global South on climate finance and technology transfer; carbon border taxes like the EU's CBAM affect Indian exports.
• **Society:** Human–wildlife conflict and the rights of forest dwellers under the Forest Rights Act 2006.

**Prelims pointers**

• Key terms: Big Cat Conservation, Powerful Pathway for Climate Change Mitigation, Union Environment Minister, UNFCCC COP31, Antalya

**Static connect: UNFCCC & Paris Agreement**

• UNFCCC adopted at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit; the Conference of Parties (COP) meets yearly.
• Paris Agreement (COP21, 2015): keep warming well below 2°C, pursue 1.5°C; countries submit NDCs.
• India's targets include net zero by 2070.

*UPSC angle: Climate negotiations and India's commitments (GS3).*

**Source:** PIB, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, 16 Nov 2026 · https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2337247

## India and Sweden launch LeadIT 3.0 at COP31 to accelerate Low-carbon Industrial Transition; Brazil joins LeadIT as its newest Country Member

HIGH IMPORTANCE · Both · Environment & Ecology

• India and Sweden launched Phase 3 of the Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT 3.0) at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP31).
• LeadIT focuses on accelerating low-carbon transitions in heavy, hard-to-abate industrial sectors.
• Brazil joined LeadIT as its newest country member during the roundtable.

### Why it matters for India and UPSC

Heavy industries account for a significant share of global and Indian carbon emissions; LeadIT is one of India's flagship co-led multilateral climate initiatives.
• **Environment:** Fosters technology transfer and co-development of clean technologies essential for decarbonising steel, cement, and petrochemicals.
• **International relations:** Positions India as a constructive global leader balancing industrial growth targets with Paris Agreement climate commitments alongside Global South partners like Brazil.

### Prelims pointers

• LeadIT was launched by India and Sweden at the UN Climate Action Summit in 2019.
• Supported by the World Economic Forum and focuses on hard-to-abate sectors like steel, cement, and aluminium.
• Brazil is the newest member of LeadIT.

### Static connect: LeadIT (Leadership Group for Industry Transition)

• Launched by Sweden and India at the UN Climate Action Summit in September 2019.
• Secretariat is hosted by the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI).
• Aims to achieve net-zero carbon emissions from heavy industry by 2050.
*UPSC angle: Important for Prelims under international climate initiatives and GS Paper 3 for industrial decarbonisation.*

### Mains angle

Highlights India's climate diplomacy and international partnerships to decarbonise hard-to-abate industrial sectors while balancing developmental needs (GS Paper 3).

### Practice question

*What is the Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT)? Discuss its significance in decarbonising hard-to-abate sectors and evaluate India's leadership role in driving low-carbon industrial transition.*

**Source:** PIB, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, 17 Nov 2026 ·
https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2337325

## Divergent positions mark draft text of COP31 under way in Turkiye

MEDIUM IMPORTANCE · Both · Environment & Ecology

• Developing countries call for developed nations to lead emissions cuts and climate finance efforts

### Why it matters for India and UPSC

• **Environment:** India's NDCs (45% cut in emission intensity of GDP from 2005 levels by 2030, 50% non-fossil power capacity, net zero by 2070) and the principle of CBDR-RC.
• **International relations:** India speaks for the Global South on climate finance and technology transfer; carbon border taxes like the EU's CBAM affect Indian exports.

### Prelims pointers

• Key terms: Divergent, COP31, Turkiye, Developing

### Static connect: UNFCCC & Paris Agreement

• UNFCCC adopted at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit; the Conference of Parties (COP) meets yearly.
• Paris Agreement (COP21, 2015): keep warming well below 2°C, pursue 1.5°C; countries submit NDCs.
• India's targets include net zero by 2070.
*UPSC angle: Climate negotiations and India's commitments (GS3).*

**Source:** The Hindu, International, 16 Nov 2026 ·
https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/energy-and-environment/cop31-draft-deal-calls-for-accele

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

## Orbital computing could let scientists rent ‘brainpower’ in space

HIGH IMPORTANCE · Both · Science & Technology

• In-orbit or orbital computing involves deploying high-performance data processing units directly aboard satellites.
• The technology enables on-board filtering and analysis of raw data, transmitting only processed, actionable intelligence back to ground stations.
• This architecture drastically reduces downlink bandwidth constraints and cuts down the latency between data recording and user access.

### Why it matters for India and UPSC

Orbital computing represents a major technological leap for Earth observation, defence surveillance, and real-time disaster mapping by resolving the satellite downlink data deluge.
• **Science & tech:** Requires overcoming challenges of cosmic radiation, power management, and thermal dissipation on microprocessors operating in outer space.
• **Geography & disasters:** Enables near real-time detection of wildfires, flash floods, or cyclone landfalls without waiting for bulky raw data passes over ground receiving stations.

### Prelims pointers

• In-orbit computing processes raw sensor and imagery data on the satellite itself using space-hardened edge computing hardware.
• Significantly reduces satellite-to-ground downlink bandwidth bottlenecks and latency.

### Static connect: Edge Computing

• Processes data near the edge of the network where it is generated, rather than relying exclusively on a centralized data centre or cloud.
• Provides lower latency, reduces bandwidth consumption, and improves response times for mission-critical applications.
*UPSC angle: Relevant for Science & Tech syllabus under Information Technology and Space segments.*

### Mains angle

Analyses how space-based edge computing transforms Earth observation, disaster management, and space-asset efficiency (GS Paper 3).

### Practice question

*What is in-orbit (orbital) computing? Discuss how processing data onboard satellites can address downlink bandwidth limitations and enhance real-time disaster response and security monitoring.*

**Source:** The Hindu, Science, 16 Nov 2026 · https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/science/orbital-computing-could-let-scientists-rent-brai

## Noted agricultural scientist K. Prabhakaran Nair dies

MEDIUM IMPORTANCE · Both · Science & Technology, Agriculture

• He made immense contributions to sustainable agriculture, soil science and agronomy, having spent decades conducting research in the field

### Prelims pointers

• Key terms: Noted, Prabhakaran Nair

**Source:** The Hindu, Science, 16 Nov 2026 · https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/noted-agricultural-scientist-k-prabhakaran-n

ALSO IN THE NEWS (LOWER PRIORITY)

• Cyclone Akvan: Andhra Home Minister Anitha puts coastal districts on high alert, warns fishermen (The Hindu, National, 17 Nov 2026)
• DHTI launches first Global Leadership Programme in Defence Governance & Public Administration for officers of Ministry of Defence, Fiji (PIB, Ministry of Defence, 17 Nov 2026)