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JANUARY 2025 – FEBRUARY 2026 | INDEX OF TOPICS

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CURRENT AFFAIRS (JAN 2025 – FEB 2026)

ECONOMIC & DEVELOPMENT REPORTS

World Economic Outlook (WEO) 2025 – India the 4th Largest

The IMF's World Economic Outlook (October 2025) reaffirmed India as the world's fastest-growing major economy with projected growth of 6.5% for FY26 against a global average of 2.8%, and confirmed that India had become the world's 4th largest economy on nominal terms by overtaking Japan during 2025. The report revised global growth estimates upward from April while flagging trade-war risks from Trump's reciprocal tariff drive.

News in Brief

- **Published by** – International Monetary Fund (IMF).
- **Frequency** – twice a year (April, October) + two 'update' editions (January, July).
- **India's growth (FY26)** – 6.5%.
- **Global growth** – 2.8% (downgrade from 3.2%).
- **India's nominal GDP rank** – 4th largest (crossed Japan in 2025).
- **Top risks flagged** – trade tensions, geo-economic fragmentation, climate disruptions.

Prelims Connect

- **World Economic Outlook (WEO)** – IMF's flagship publication analysing global economic developments and prospects; uses IMF's macroeconomic models and inputs from its country desks; forecasts growth, inflation, current account balances for 190 economies.
- **WEO database** – publicly available; widely used by investors, governments and media for cross-country data; allows custom queries by indicator, country, group (G7, BRICS, LIC).
- **IMF – quick facts** – est. July 1944 Bretton Woods Conference, operational 27 Dec 1945; HQ Washington DC; 190 members; MD Kristalina Georgieva (Bulgaria, since Oct 2019); chief economist Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas.
- **Other IMF flagships** – **Global Financial Stability Report (GFSR)** – financial markets & stability, twice a year; **Fiscal Monitor** – global public finances, twice a year; **External Sector Report** – exchange rates, BoP, annually.
- **IMF Article IV consultation** – annual bilateral surveillance with each member country; results published as Country Reports; India's latest under Article IV flagged fiscal consolidation and asset quality improvement.
- **GDP forecasting approaches** – demand-side (C+I+G+NX), supply-side (sectoral GVA), econometric (DSGE, VAR models); IMF uses a mix and benchmarks against national accounts.
- **India's nominal GDP ranking history** – 2014: 10th → 2019: 5th → 2022: 5th → 2025: 4th (overtook Japan). Next target: 3rd (overtake Germany) likely by 2027-28 on IMF projections.

Prelims Connect

IMF's four flagship publications

Report	Focus	Frequency
World Economic Outlook (WEO)	Growth, inflation, macro	Apr/Oct + 2 updates

Global Financial Stability Report	Financial markets, banks	Apr/Oct
Fiscal Monitor	Public finance, debt, deficits	Apr/Oct
External Sector Report	BoP, exchange rates	Annual

Prelims Pointers

- **WEO is published by** – IMF.
- **WEO frequency** – 2 main + 2 updates per year.
- **IMF established** – Bretton Woods, 1944.
- **IMF members** – 190.
- **India's 2025 GDP rank** – 4th (crossed Japan).
- **IMF MD** – Kristalina Georgieva.

Global Economic Prospects – World Bank's View on India

The World Bank's Global Economic Prospects (GEP), released twice a year in January and June, projected India's growth at 6.7% for FY26 – the highest among major economies – while global growth was pegged at just 2.6%. The report highlighted improving inflation outlook and strong services exports, but flagged weak private investment and external risks.

News in Brief

- **Published by** – World Bank.
- **Frequency** – June and January (twice a year).
- **India FY26 growth** – 6.7% (highest among major economies).
- **Global growth** – 2.6%.
- **Theme Jan 2026** – 'Navigating High Debt in Uncertain Times'.
- **Key concern** – EMDE growth to slow; developing countries' debt at historic highs.

Static Background – Concepts & Terms

- **Global Economic Prospects (GEP)** – World Bank Group's flagship forecast of global economic conditions and emerging risks, especially for **Emerging Market and Developing Economies (EMDEs)**; covers near-term (2-year) and medium-term projections.
- **World Bank Group – 5 institutions** – **IBRD** (International Bank for Reconstruction & Development, 1944); **IDA** (International Development Association, 1960 – concessional loans to poorest); **IFC** (International Finance Corporation, 1956 – private sector); **MIGA** (Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency, 1988); **ICSID** (International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes, 1966).
- **WBG leadership** – President Ajay Banga (Indian-American) since June 2023; HQ Washington DC; India is a founding member (1944) and also an IDA graduate and contributor.
- **World Bank – other flagship reports** – **World Development Report** (annual, themed); **Ease of Doing Business** (discontinued 2021, replaced by B-READY from 2024); **Poverty & Shared Prosperity** (biennial); **Commodity Markets Outlook** (quarterly); **State of the Global Climate Finance**.
- **B-READY** – new World Bank business-climate index launched 2024, replacing Doing Business; assesses regulatory framework, public services and operational efficiency across 180 countries.
- **IBRD lending** – IBRD lends at near-market rates to middle-income countries; IDA offers 0%/low interest loans and grants to poorest ~75 countries (GNI per capita < \$1,315 for IDA20).
- **India-World Bank relationship** – India was 8th-largest borrower from IBRD (2024); IDA graduate (last IDA loans 2014); India also hosts the World Bank South Asia Region office in Delhi.

Prelims Connect

World Bank Group – 5 institutions

Institution	Year	Function
IBRD	1944	Lends to middle-income
IDA	1960	Concessional loans – poorest
IFC	1956	Private sector financing
MIGA	1988	Political risk insurance
ICSID	1966	Investment dispute settlement

Prelims Pointers

- **GEP issued by** – World Bank.
- **Frequency** – Jan, Jun.
- **WBG President** – Ajay Banga (June 2023–).
- **IBRD founded** – 1944.
- **IDA founded** – 1960.
- **B-READY replaced** – Doing Business (2021).

UNCTAD – Trade & Development Foresights 2025

UNCTAD's Trade and Development Foresights 2025 (April 2025) projected India to remain the fastest-growing major economy with 6.5% growth in 2025, while global growth was expected to decline to just 2.3%, marking a shift towards a recessionary path. UNCTAD's Technology and Innovation Report 2025 also launched the new Frontier Technologies Readiness Index, which ranked India 36th out of 170 countries.

News in Brief

- **Publisher** – UNCTAD.
- **India growth 2025** – 6.5% (fastest major economy).
- **Global growth 2025** – 2.3% (near recessionary).
- **Frontier Tech Readiness Index** – India 36/170 (up from 48 in 2022).
- **Private AI investments** – India 10th globally.

Static Background – Concepts & Terms

- **UNCTAD** – United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, est. 1964 after the first UNCTAD conference in Geneva; intergovernmental UN body dealing with trade, investment and development; 195 member states.
- **UNCTAD HQ** – Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland.
- **UNCTAD Secretary-General** – Rebeca Grynspan (Costa Rica), since September 2021; first woman and first Central American to lead UNCTAD.
- **UNCTAD flagship reports** – **Trade and Development Report (TDR)** – annual macroeconomic trends; **World Investment Report** – annual FDI & multinationals; **Technology and Innovation Report** – biennial; **Least Developed Countries Report**; **Trade and Development Foresights** (new).

- **Frontier Technologies Readiness Index (FTRI)** – UNCTAD composite index first published 2021; measures countries' readiness to use, adopt and adapt frontier technologies; 5 pillars: ICT deployment, skills, R&D activity, industry activity, access to finance.
- **Frontier technologies – UNCTAD definition** – technologies that take advantage of digitalisation and connectivity: AI, IoT, big data, blockchain, 5G, 3D printing, robotics, drones, gene editing, nanotechnology, solar PV, concentrated solar, biofuels, biomass, biogas, wind energy, green hydrogen, EVs. 17 frontier technologies in total.
- **WIR – World Investment Report** – UNCTAD's annual report on global FDI flows, themed each year; 2024 theme: 'Investment facilitation and digital government'; global FDI inflows \$1.33 trillion in 2023; India 7th largest FDI recipient.

Prelims Connect

UNCTAD's frontier technologies list (17)

Category	Technologies
Digital & ICT	AI, IoT, big data, blockchain, 5G
Manufacturing & materials	3D printing, robotics, drones, nanotech
Biotech	Gene editing
Green energy	Solar PV, CSP, biofuels, biomass, biogas, wind, green H2, EVs

Prelims Pointers

- **UNCTAD established** – 1964, Geneva.
- **UNCTAD HQ** – Palais des Nations, Geneva.
- **UNCTAD SG** – Rebeca Grynszpan (2021–).
- **FTRI released by** – UNCTAD.
- **India FTRI 2025 rank** – 36/170.
- **WIR publishes** – FDI data annually.

State of Social Protection Report 2025 – World Bank

The World Bank's State of Social Protection Report 2025 highlighted that nearly 2 billion people in low- and middle-income countries lack adequate social protection – 1.6 billion receiving no benefits at all and 400 million receiving insufficient support. The report emphasised the need for reforms and investments to strengthen social protection systems globally.

News in Brief

- **Published by** – World Bank.
- **Key finding** – 2 billion people in LMICs lack adequate social protection.
- **No benefits** – 1.6 billion.
- **Insufficient benefits** – 400 million.
- **Recommendation** – reform and invest in social protection systems.

Static Background – Concepts & Terms

- **Social protection – definition** – policies and programmes designed to reduce poverty and vulnerability by promoting efficient labour markets, diminishing people's exposure to risks, and enhancing their capacity to manage economic and social risks.
- **Three pillars of social protection (ILO)** – **Social insurance** (contributory – pensions, health insurance, unemployment); **Social assistance** (non-contributory – cash transfers, food programmes, in-kind benefits); **Active labour market policies** (skills training, job placement, wage subsidies).
- **ILO Social Protection Floor** – 2012 Recommendation (No. 202); guarantees four social security essentials: (1) access to essential health care, (2) basic income security for children, (3) basic income for the unemployed/disabled/working poor, (4) basic income for the elderly.
- **India's social protection framework** – National Food Security Act 2013 (81 cr beneficiaries); MGNREGA 2005 (rural employment guarantee); PMJJBY (life insurance), PMSBY (accident insurance), APY (pension) under Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile trinity; e-Shram portal for unorganised workers (30+ cr registrations).
- **Code on Social Security 2020** – one of four new labour codes; consolidates 9 existing laws; aims to extend social security coverage to unorganised workers, gig and platform workers, and self-employed; still awaiting full notification.
- **PM-JAY / Ayushman Bharat** – world's largest health insurance scheme; covers 55+ crore beneficiaries with ₹5 lakh/year per family cashless hospitalisation.
- **Universal Basic Income (UBI)** – proposed unconditional periodic cash transfer to every citizen; discussed in India's Economic Survey 2016-17 (Arvind Subramanian); widely debated but not implemented at scale.

Prelims Connect

India's flagship social protection schemes

Scheme	Year	Coverage
NFSA (PDS)	2013	81 cr beneficiaries
MGNREGA	2005	100 days wage employment
PM Jan Arogya (PM-JAY)	2018	55 cr, ₹5 lakh cover
PMJJBY	2015	Life insurance
PMSBY	2015	Accident insurance
Atal Pension Yojana	2015	Pension
e-Shram	2021	Unorganised workers

Prelims Pointers

- **State of Social Protection Report** – World Bank, 2025.
- **LMICs without adequate SP** – 2 billion.
- **ILO Recommendation 202** – Social Protection Floors (2012).
- **India's health scheme** – PM-JAY (Ayushman Bharat).
- **PM-JAY cover** – ₹5 lakh/family/year.

The UN's flagship SOFI report 2025, jointly published by FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO, tracks global hunger and nutrition and monitors progress towards SDG 2 (Zero Hunger). The 2025 edition highlighted that approximately 12% of India's population (172 million people) is undernourished, and 42.9% of Indians cannot afford a healthy diet. India faces a 'double burden' of rising obesity alongside undernutrition.

News in Brief

- **Full form** – State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI).
- **Published jointly by** – FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, WHO.
- **India undernourished** – ~12% of population (~172 million).
- **Cannot afford healthy diet** – 42.9% of Indians.
- **Women anaemia (15–49)** – 53.7%.
- **Global hungry** – ~733 million people in 2023 (1 in 11 globally).

Static Background – Concepts & Terms

- **SOFI Report** – annual UN publication since 2017 (in current 5-agency form); monitors progress on SDG Target 2.1 (end hunger) and SDG Target 2.2 (end all forms of malnutrition); key data source for global hunger narrative.
- **Five publishing agencies** – **FAO** (Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, est. 1945, HQ Rome, DG QU Dongyu); **IFAD** (International Fund for Agricultural Development, 1977, Rome); **UNICEF** (United Nations Children's Fund, 1946, New York, HQ Anthony Lake then Catherine Russell); **WFP** (World Food Programme, 1961, Rome – Nobel Peace 2020); **WHO** (World Health Organization, 1948, Geneva, DG Tedros Ghebreyesus).
- **SDG 2 – Zero Hunger** – end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, promote sustainable agriculture; 8 targets including ending hunger (2.1), ending malnutrition (2.2), doubling productivity (2.3), sustainable food production (2.4).
- **Key hunger metrics** – **Prevalence of Undernourishment (PoU)** – people with food intake below dietary energy requirement; **Severe Food Insecurity (FIES)** – people out of food due to lack of money/resources; **Child Stunting** (low height for age); **Child Wasting** (low weight for height); **Overweight; Anaemia in women.**
- **Malnutrition – double burden** – coexistence of undernutrition (stunting, wasting, micronutrient deficiencies) with overweight/obesity and diet-related non-communicable diseases within populations, households, and even individuals.
- **Affordable healthy diet – FAO definition** – a diet is unaffordable if its cost exceeds 52% of a household's average food expenditure; India's score reflects high cost of fruits, vegetables, dairy vs staple grains.
- **India's key hunger/nutrition data** – (NFHS-5, 2019-21): Stunting 35.5%, Wasting 19.3%, Underweight 32.1%, Severe Acute Malnutrition 7.7%; Anaemia in children 6–59 months 67.1%, women 15–49 57.0%.
- **POSHAN Abhiyaan 2.0** – India's National Mission for Holistic Nutrition; merged Anganwadi Services, POSHAN Abhiyaan, Scheme for Adolescent Girls into single 'Saksham Anganwadi and POSHAN 2.0' (2021); uses Anganwadi Workers and Poshan Trackers.

Prelims Connect

NFHS-5 key nutrition indicators (India)

Indicator	Value
Stunting (< 5 yrs)	35.5%
Wasting (< 5 yrs)	19.3%

Underweight (< 5 yrs)	32.1%
Anaemia in children	67.1%
Anaemia in women 15-49	57.0%
Exclusively breastfed < 6 m	63.7%

Prelims Pointers

- **SOFI published by** – FAO + IFAD + UNICEF + WFP + WHO.
- **FAO HQ** – Rome.
- **FAO DG** – QU Dongyu.
- **WFP HQ** – Rome; Nobel Peace 2020.
- **WHO HQ** – Geneva.
- **SDG 2** – Zero Hunger.
- **India's stunting (NFHS-5)** – 35.5%.

Economic Survey 2024-25 – Pre-Budget Blueprint

The Economic Survey 2024-25, authored by Chief Economic Adviser V. Anantha Nageswaran and tabled in Parliament a day before the Union Budget, projected India's real GDP growth at 6.3–6.8% for FY26. The theme was 'Deregulation as a Growth Enabler' – calling for removing the accumulated 'license, permit, compliance' burden on businesses.

News in Brief

- **Authored by** – CEA V. Anantha Nageswaran.
- **Tabled** – 31 January 2025 (day before Union Budget).
- **Growth projection** – 6.3–6.8% for FY26.
- **Main theme** – Deregulation as a Growth Enabler.
- **Volume 1** – thematic chapters; **Volume 2** – conjunctural assessment.

Static Background – Concepts & Terms

- **Economic Survey** – annual flagship document of the Ministry of Finance, Department of Economic Affairs; reviews the economy's performance in the past year and outlines prospects; presented in Parliament a day before the Union Budget.
- **History** – first Economic Survey presented in 1950-51; became an independent document in 1964 (delinked from Budget); currently in two volumes since 2014-15 (Rajan era format).
- **Chief Economic Adviser (CEA)** – top economic advisor to Ministry of Finance; not a constitutional post; notable CEAs – I.G. Patel (1961-67), Manmohan Singh (1972-76), Raghuram Rajan (2012-13), Arvind Subramanian (2014-18), K.V. Subramanian (2018-21), V. Anantha Nageswaran (2022–).
- **CEA vs RBI Governor** – CEA is part of Finance Ministry, advises on fiscal policy; RBI Governor heads the central bank and runs monetary policy. Both collaborate on Macro Economic Framework Statement.
- **Economic Survey vs Union Budget** – **Survey** is a review/forecast document with no policy announcements; **Budget** is the government's annual financial statement (Article 112) with actual tax/spending proposals.
- **Volume structure (since 2014-15)** – Volume I: thematic analysis on structural issues; Volume II: review of the current year's economic developments (macro, sectors). Volume II has been optional in recent years.

- **Macroeconomic aggregates tracked** – GDP growth (real & nominal), CPI & WPI inflation, fiscal deficit, current account deficit, employment, investment (GFCF), consumption, exports, imports, savings rate, capital formation.

Prelims Connect

Economic Survey 2024-25 – key projections

Indicator	FY25E	FY26P
Real GDP growth	6.4%	6.3–6.8%
CPI Inflation	4.8%	~4.5%
Current Account Deficit	0.9%	<1.5%
Fiscal Deficit (Centre)	4.8%	4.4%

Prelims Pointers

- **Economic Survey tabled by** – Ministry of Finance (DEA).
- **Author** – Chief Economic Adviser.
- **Current CEA** – V. Anantha Nageswaran.
- **First Economic Survey** – 1950–51.
- **Theme 2024-25** – Deregulation as Growth Enabler.
- **FY26 growth projection** – 6.3–6.8%.

POVERTY, HUNGER & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDICES

Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2025 – India at 102

The Global Hunger Index 2025, jointly released by Concern Worldwide (Ireland) and Welthungerhilfe (Germany) in October 2025, ranked India 102nd out of 123 countries with a GHI score of 25.8, placing India in the 'serious' category. Somalia, South Sudan, Madagascar, DR Congo and Haiti remained among the worst-affected countries.

News in Brief

- **GHI 2025 rank** – India 102/123.
- **GHI score** – 25.8 (Serious).
- **Published by** – Concern Worldwide + Welthungerhilfe.
- **Most affected** – Somalia, South Sudan, Madagascar, DRC, Haiti.
- **India's neighbours** – Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh rank higher than India.
- **India's position** – disputed by GoI on methodology grounds.

Static Background – Concepts & Terms

- **Global Hunger Index (GHI)** – annual peer-reviewed publication designed to comprehensively measure and track hunger at global, regional, and country levels; published since 2006; current joint publishers Concern Worldwide (Ireland) and Welthungerhilfe (Germany).
- **4 component indicators** –
 - (1) **Undernourishment** – share of population with calorie intake below requirement (FAO data, 1/3 weight);
 - (2) **Child Stunting** – low height-for-age, under-5 (1/6 weight);

- (3) **Child Wasting** – low weight-for-height, under-5 (1/6 weight);
- (4) **Child Mortality** – under-5 deaths per 1,000 live births (1/3 weight).
- **GHI severity bands** – ≤9.9 Low; 10–19.9 Moderate; 20–34.9 Serious; 35–49.9 Alarming; ≥50 Extremely Alarming. India has been in 'Serious' category consistently.
- **India's GHI trend** – 2014: 55 (of 76); 2016: 97; 2018: 103; 2020: 94; 2021: 101; 2022: 107; 2023: 111; 2024: 105; 2025: 102. Movement reflects both performance and changing sample size.
- **Government of India's objections** – India has rejected GHI methodology citing: (i) use of FAO's 'Prevalence of Undernourishment' estimate from a small opinion-based Gallup poll (~3,000 respondents); (ii) 3 of 4 indicators relate to children, not adults; (iii) no accounting for India's flagship POSHAN and PMGKAY programmes.
- **FAO Prevalence of Undernourishment (PoU)** – core metric estimating share of people unable to afford minimum dietary energy (~1,800 kcal/day); uses calorie distribution from household surveys + food balance sheet data; GoI's main objection centres on its 2020–22 estimate for India.
- **SDG 2 linkage** – GHI is a leading non-UN indicator used to track progress towards SDG 2 (Zero Hunger); published each October to coincide with World Food Day (16 October).

Prelims Connect

GHI severity scale

GHI Score	Category
≤ 9.9	Low
10 – 19.9	Moderate
20 – 34.9	Serious
35 – 49.9	Alarming
≥ 50	Extremely Alarming

Prelims Pointers

- **GHI published by** – Concern Worldwide + Welthungerhilfe.
- **4 indicators** – Undernourishment + Child Stunting + Wasting + Mortality.
- **India GHI 2025** – 102/123.
- **India category** – Serious.
- **World Food Day** – 16 October.
- **GHI first published** – 2006.

Human Development Report 2025 & HDI – India in 'Medium' Category

UNDP's Human Development Report 2025 placed India at 132 out of 193 countries with an HDI value of 0.685, keeping it in the 'Medium Human Development' category – narrowly missing the 'High' threshold of 0.700. The report also introduced an AI-human development link theme, arguing that AI could widen or narrow inequality depending on governance choices.

News in Brief

- **HDR 2025 theme** – AI and human development – 'A Matter of Choice'.
- **India HDI** – 0.685 (Medium HD).

- **India rank** – 132/193.
- **World HDI** – 0.739.
- **Top countries** – Switzerland, Norway, Iceland (Very High).
- **Bottom** – South Sudan, Somalia, CAR (Low).

Static Background – Concepts & Terms

- **Human Development Report (HDR)** – annual flagship of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); launched in 1990 by Pakistani economist Mahbub ul Haq in collaboration with Amartya Sen; each report has a theme (e.g., 2025: AI and Human Development).
- **Human Development Index (HDI)** – composite statistic developed as an alternative to GDP to measure a country's development. Uses geometric mean of 3 sub-indices:
 - **Long & healthy life** – Life Expectancy at Birth.
 - **Knowledge** – Expected Years of Schooling + Mean Years of Schooling.
 - **Decent standard of living** – GNI per capita (PPP \$).
- **HDI categories** – Very High (≥ 0.800), High (0.700–0.799), Medium (0.550–0.699), Low (< 0.550). India is in 'Medium' with 0.685.
- **Related UNDP indices** – **Inequality-adjusted HDI (IHDI)** – discounts HDI for inequality in each dimension; **Gender Development Index (GDI)** – ratio of female to male HDI; **Gender Inequality Index (GII)** – reproductive health, empowerment, labour market; **Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)** – OPHI-UNDP.
- **Planetary Pressures-adjusted HDI (PHDI)** – introduced in HDR 2020; adjusts HDI for countries' per capita CO2 emissions and material footprint to reflect planetary boundaries.
- **UNDP – quick facts** – United Nations Development Programme, est. 1965 (merger of EPTA 1949 and Special Fund 1958); HQ New York; Administrator Achim Steiner (Germany, since 2017); global UN agency for development, operating in 170+ countries.
- **HDI in India vs state HDIs** – India's sub-national HDIs computed by Global Data Lab: Kerala (0.775), Delhi (0.746), Goa highest; Bihar, Jharkhand, UP among lowest.

Prelims Connect

HDI dimensions & indicators

Dimension	Indicator
Long & healthy life	Life expectancy at birth
Knowledge (1)	Expected years of schooling
Knowledge (2)	Mean years of schooling
Standard of living	GNI per capita (PPP \$)

Prelims Pointers

- **HDR published by** – UNDP.
- **First HDR** – 1990.
- **HDI creator** – Mahbub ul Haq, with Amartya Sen.
- **India HDI 2025** – 0.685 (rank 132/193).
- **Very High HDI threshold** – ≥ 0.800 .
- **PHDI** – adjusts HDI for CO2 & material footprint.
- **UNDP HQ** – New York.

Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) 2025

The Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2025, jointly published by UNDP and the Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative (OPHI), recognised India as the country that had reduced multidimensional poverty the most in the past 15 years – with 415 million Indians estimated to have escaped MPI poverty between 2005-06 and 2019-21. India's MPI headcount ratio fell from 55.1% to ~16.4%.

News in Brief

- **Publisher** – UNDP + OPHI (Oxford).
- **Methodology** – Alkire-Foster (dual cut-off).
- **India's reduction** – 415 million escaped MPI poverty (2005-06 → 2019-21).
- **India headcount fall** – 55.1% → 16.4%.
- **National MPI (NITI Aayog) 2023** – fell to 11.28% (2022-23 estimate).
- **Global poverty** – ~1.1 billion people MPI-poor.

Static Background – Concepts & Terms

- **Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)** – composite measure that captures acute poverty by identifying deprivations across health, education, and standard of living; jointly published by UNDP (in HDR) and OPHI (University of Oxford) since 2010.
- **Alkire-Foster method** – developed by Sabina Alkire (Oxford) and James Foster (George Washington) in 2007; uses a dual cut-off approach: (1) deprivation cut-off for each indicator, (2) poverty cut-off on weighted deprivation score – household is MPI-poor if deprived in $\geq 1/3$ weighted indicators.
- **10 indicators of Global MPI** – **Health (2)**: Nutrition, Child Mortality; **Education (2)**: Years of Schooling, School Attendance; **Standard of Living (6)**: Cooking Fuel, Sanitation, Drinking Water, Electricity, Housing, Assets.
- **National MPI – India** – NITI Aayog's India-specific version, launched 2021 with baseline report in 2021 using NFHS-4 (2015-16); second edition 2023 with NFHS-5 (2019-21); uses 12 indicators (2 added: Maternal Health and Bank Account).
- **India's MPI trajectory** – (National MPI) 2015-16: 24.85% → 2019-21: 14.96% → 2022-23: 11.28% (projected). 135 million escaped in 5 years per NITI Aayog 2022 discussion paper.
- **Indicator weights – global MPI** – Each dimension equally weighted (1/3 each). Health (each indicator 1/6), Education (each 1/6), Standard of Living (each 1/18).
- **OPHI** – Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative; est. 2007 at University of Oxford; Director Sabina Alkire; works closely with UNDP, World Bank, national governments to develop multidimensional measures.
- **MPI vs income poverty** – Income poverty (poverty line/\$2.15 PPP day) measures only monetary deprivation; MPI captures overlapping deprivations across life dimensions – a household may be MPI-poor even if not below income line.

Prelims Connect

Global MPI – dimensions & indicators

Dimension	Indicators	Weight each
Health	Nutrition, Child mortality	1/6
Education	Yrs of schooling, School attendance	1/6

Living std	Fuel, sanitation, water, electricity, housing, assets	1/18
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Prelims Pointers

- **Global MPI published by** – UNDP + OPHI.
- **Method** – Alkire-Foster.
- **National MPI launched** – 2021 (NITI Aayog).
- **Indicators** – **Global MPI** – 10; **National MPI** – 12.
- **National MPI added indicators** – Maternal health, Bank account.
- **OPHI based at** – University of Oxford.

World Inequality Report 2026

The 3rd World Inequality Report 2026 (WIR 2026), released by the World Inequality Lab (Paris School of Economics), highlighted that the top 10% of the world's population now own 75% of global wealth and are responsible for 77% of capital-linked emissions. In India, the top 1% captured 22% of national income – the highest level since 1922.

News in Brief

- **Published by** – World Inequality Lab, Paris School of Economics.
- **Top 10% wealth** – 75% globally.
- **Top 10% emissions** – 77% of capital-linked emissions.
- **India – top 1% income share** – 22%.
- **India – top 10% income share** – 57%.
- **Key authors** – Thomas Piketty, Lucas Chancel, Emmanuel Saez, Gabriel Zucman, Nitin Kumar Bharti.

Static Background – Concepts & Terms

- **World Inequality Lab (WIL)** – research centre at Paris School of Economics (PSE); founded 2011; provides open-access data on global inequality through **World Inequality Database (wid.world)**; co-directors include Thomas Piketty, Emmanuel Saez, Gabriel Zucman.
- **Thomas Piketty** – French economist (b. 1971); author of 'Capital in the Twenty-First Century' (2013) – seminal work on wealth inequality; argued $r > g$ (return on capital > growth rate) drives inequality; professor at EHESS & PSE.
- **Measures of inequality** – **Gini coefficient** (0-1 scale, Lorenz curve-based); **Palma ratio** (top 10% / bottom 40% income share); **Theil index**; **Percentile shares** (top 1%, 10%, bottom 50%); **Kuznets curve** (inverted-U).
- **India – historical inequality data** – Top 1% income share trajectory: ~21% in 1922 (British India) → ~13% in 1950s-60s (post-Independence) → ~6% in 1980s (License Raj lowest) → rising post-liberalisation to ~22% by 2023, surpassing colonial peak.
- **Billionaire Raj paper (2024)** – published in WIR supplement by Nitin Kumar Bharti et al.; argued India's wealth concentration now exceeds the British Raj era; triggered widespread debate in India.
- **OXFAM inequality reports** – published at Davos each January; 'Survival of the Richest' 2023 (India report); noted 40% of India's wealth held by top 1%; highlights CEO-worker pay ratios, billionaire wealth.
- **Climate inequality** – WIR 2026 extends inequality analysis to emissions: top 10% responsible for ~50% of global CO2 emissions; bottom 50% only ~12%. Reinforces 'climate justice' debate in UNFCCC.
- **India – consumption vs income Gini** – India's consumption Gini (0.30-0.35, relatively low) differs sharply from income Gini (~0.50+, high) because consumption surveys miss the top of the distribution.

Prelims Connect

India – top 1% income share (historical)

Period	Top 1% share
1922 (British India)	~21%
1950s (post-Independence)	~12–13%
1980s (License Raj)	~6%
2000 (post-liberalisation)	~9%
2014	~15%
2022-23	~22%

Prelims Pointers

- **WIR published by** – World Inequality Lab (PSE).
- **Co-founder** – Thomas Piketty.
- **Capital in the 21st Century** – author – Piketty.
- **Piketty's key inequality** – $r > g$.
- **Gini 0 means** – perfect equality.
- **Palma ratio** – top 10% / bottom 40%.

State of Social Protection & Asia-Pacific SDG Progress Report

Alongside World Bank's Social Protection Report, the UN Economic & Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP) released the Asia-Pacific SDG Progress Report 2025 themed 'Engaging communities to close the evidence gap', which found that only 54% of SDG indicators had at least two data points as of 2024, hampering monitoring across the region.

News in Brief

- **Asia-Pacific SDG Progress Report 2025** – by UN ESCAP.
- **Theme** – engaging communities, closing evidence gap.
- **SDG indicators with ≥ 2 data points** – only 54%.
- **SDG achievements** – Income poverty (Goal 1), undernourishment (Goal 2) – reductions.
- **SDG challenges** – Quality education (Goal 4), Decent work (Goal 8).

Static Background – Concepts & Terms

- **UN ESCAP** – United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific; est. 1947 as ECAFE; HQ Bangkok, Thailand; regional arm of UN ECOSOC; 53 member states + 9 associate members; current ES Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana (Indonesia).
- **SDGs** – Sustainable Development Goals; adopted at UN Sustainable Development Summit, New York, 25 September 2015 as '2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development'; 17 goals, 169 targets, 231 unique indicators; successor to Millennium Development Goals (2000–2015).
- **Key SDG goals** – Goal 1: No Poverty; 2: Zero Hunger; 3: Good Health; 4: Quality Education; 5: Gender Equality; 6: Clean Water & Sanitation; 7: Affordable & Clean Energy; 8: Decent Work; 9: Industry & Innovation; 10: Reduced Inequality; 11: Sustainable Cities; 12: Responsible Consumption; 13: Climate Action; 14: Life Below Water; 15: Life on Land; 16: Peace & Justice; 17: Partnerships.

- **Sustainable Development Report (Global)** – annual report by Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) and Bertelsmann Stiftung; ranks countries on 'SDG Index' score; 2024: India 109/166.
- **India's SDG governance** – NITI Aayog is the nodal body; publishes **SDG India Index** annually (since 2018) with 115+ indicators for states; latest 2023-24 report has Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Goa, Sikkim as 'Front Runners'.
- **Voluntary National Review (VNR)** – each UN member country periodically presents its SDG progress at High-Level Political Forum (HLPF); India presented its first VNR in 2017, second in 2020, third in 2025.
- **Regional UN Economic Commissions** – ECA (Africa, HQ Addis Ababa), ECE (Europe, HQ Geneva), ECLAC (Latin America & Caribbean, Santiago), ESCAP (Asia-Pacific, Bangkok), ESCWA (Western Asia, Beirut). All under UN ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council).

Prelims Connect

UN Regional Economic Commissions

Commission	Region	HQ
ECA	Africa	Addis Ababa
ECE	Europe	Geneva
ECLAC	Latin Am & Caribbean	Santiago
ESCAP	Asia-Pacific	Bangkok
ESCWA	Western Asia	Beirut

Prelims Pointers

- **ESCAP HQ** – Bangkok.
- **ESCAP established** – 1947.
- **SDGs adopted** – 25 September 2015, New York.
- **Number of SDGs** – 17 goals, 169 targets.
- **SDG India Index** – NITI Aayog (since 2018).
- **HLPF** – High-Level Political Forum on SD.

GENDER, INEQUALITY & SOCIAL INDICES

Global Gender Gap Index 2025 – India Slips to 131/148

The World Economic Forum's (WEF) Global Gender Gap Report 2025, released in June 2025, ranked India 131st out of 148 countries with a parity score of 64.1%, a marginal improvement from the previous year's 129/146 but still below the South Asian regional average.

News in Brief

- **Rank:** India 131/148; parity score 64.1%; Iceland 1st (for 16th consecutive year) followed by Finland, Norway, UK, New Zealand.
- **Publisher:** World Economic Forum (WEF), Geneva – since 2006.
- **Dimensions:** 4 sub-indices – Economic Participation & Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health & Survival, Political Empowerment.
- **Bangladesh 24th, Bhutan 119th, Nepal 125th, Sri Lanka 130th** – India trails all South Asian neighbours except Pakistan (148/148, last).

- **India's gains:** Economic Participation up (estimated earned income, labour force participation); Educational Attainment near parity.
- **India's setbacks:** Political Empowerment fell (fewer women ministers, head-of-state years); Health & Survival low due to skewed sex ratio at birth.

Static Background – Concepts & Terms

- **Index origin:** Launched in 2006, the Global Gender Gap Index is the longest-running benchmark tracking gender parity. It measures gaps (not levels) – a poor country with equal distribution can outrank a rich country with skewed distribution.
- **Score interpretation:** 1.0 = full parity, 0 = complete inequality. India's 64.1% means women enjoy only 64.1% of the opportunities men enjoy.
- **4 sub-indices weightage:** Economic (0.25), Educational (0.25), Health (0.25), Political (0.25) – equal weights, each with 3–5 indicators.
- **Economic indicators:** labour force participation, wage equality, estimated earned income, legislators/senior officials, professional & technical workers.
- **Political indicators:** women in parliament, women in ministerial positions, years with female head of state (over last 50).
- **Global picture:** Global parity reached 68.8% in 2025 – at current pace, full parity is 123 years away. Economic gap closing slowest (60.7%); Educational nearly closed (95.1%).
- **Iceland's secret:** Gender-quota laws on corporate boards (40% women), paid paternity leave, and Vigdis Finnbogadottir – the world's first democratically elected female president (1980).

Prelims Connect

4 Dimensions of the Global Gender Gap Index

Sub-index	Key Indicators	Weight
Economic Participation	Labour force; wage equality; earned income	25%
Educational Attainment	Literacy; primary/secondary/tertiary enrolment	25%
Health & Survival	Sex ratio at birth; healthy life expectancy	25%
Political Empowerment	Women in parliament; ministers; head-of-state years	25%

Do not confuse with UNDP's Gender Inequality Index (GII) or Gender Development Index (GDI) – those measure absolute deprivation, while GGGI measures gap between men and women only.

Prelims Pointers

- Publisher: World Economic Forum (WEF) – HQ Geneva, Founder Klaus Schwab (1971).
- Launched: 2006; annual report.
- India rank 2025: 131/148 (score 64.1%).
- Top 5: Iceland, Finland, Norway, UK, New Zealand.
- 4 equal-weighted sub-indices (each 25%).

- Current pace: Full parity 123 years away (WEF 2025).
- Regional best in South Asia: Bangladesh (24th).

Gender Inequality Index (GII) 2025 – UNDP

Released as part of the UNDP Human Development Report 2025, the Gender Inequality Index placed India at 108 out of 166 countries with a score of 0.401, reflecting gains in reproductive health but persistent gaps in labour and political empowerment.

News in Brief

- **India:** GII rank 108/166; score 0.401 (lower is better).
- **Top:** Denmark (0.013), Norway, Switzerland – lowest inequality.
- **Publisher:** United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
- **Three dimensions:** Reproductive Health, Empowerment, Labour Market.
- **India's gains:** Maternal mortality down to 97/lakh live births; adolescent birth rate falling.
- **Gaps:** Female labour force participation at ~33% (vs 76% male); women in parliament at ~14%.

Static Background – Concepts & Terms

- **Launched:** GII was introduced in the 2010 Human Development Report, replacing the earlier Gender-related Development Index (GDI) and Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM).
- **Three dimensions, five indicators:** Reproductive Health (maternal mortality, adolescent birth rate); Empowerment (parliamentary seats, secondary education); Labour Market (labour force participation).
- **Score range:** 0 (perfect equality) to 1 (maximum inequality). India's 0.401 is better than the South Asian average (0.478).
- **GII vs GDI:** GDI (revived 2014) measures the ratio of female to male HDI – tracks absolute achievement. GII measures loss due to inequality – tracks gaps.
- **Maternal mortality ratio (MMR):** Deaths per 100,000 live births. India's MMR fell from 130 (2014-16) to 97 (2018-20) per SRS data – crossed SDG target.
- **Reference framework:** GII is one of 4 composite gender-related indices UNDP publishes – along with HDI (overall), PHDI (planetary pressure-adjusted HDI) and MPI (multidimensional poverty).

Prelims Connect

UNDP Gender & Development Indices – Cheat Sheet

Index	Full Form	Dimensions	Year
HDI	Human Development Index	Health + Education + Income	1990
GII	Gender Inequality Index	Repro Health + Empowerment + Labour	2010
GDI	Gender Development Index	Female HDI / Male HDI ratio	2014
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index	Health + Education + Living Standards	2010

PHDI	Planetary-Pressures-Adjusted HDI	HDI adjusted for CO ₂ & material footprint	2020
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Prelims Pointers

- Publisher: UNDP (launched 2010 in HDR).
- Score: 0 (equal) to 1 (unequal).
- India 2025: 108/166; score 0.401.
- Three dimensions: Health, Empowerment, Labour.
- MMR India: 97/lakh (SRS 2018-20).
- Female LFPR India: ~33% (PLFS).
- Top performer: Denmark.

Women Peace & Security (WPS) Index 2025 – India at 128

The 2025 WPS Index by Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security (GIWPS) and Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) ranked India 128 out of 177 countries, reflecting concerns over women's inclusion, justice, and physical security.

News in Brief

- **India:** Rank 128/177 in 2025 edition – a marginal decline from 2023.
- **Publisher:** GIWPS (Georgetown University) + PRIO (Oslo).
- **Top:** Denmark, Switzerland, Sweden, Iceland, Luxembourg.
- **Bottom:** Afghanistan (last), Yemen, South Sudan.
- **Three dimensions:** Inclusion (economic, social, political); Justice (formal laws, informal discrimination); Security (family, community, society).
- **11 indicators** – ranging from cell phone use and financial inclusion to son bias and intimate partner violence.

Static Background – Concepts & Terms

- **WPS Agenda:** Launched via UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), which recognised women's crucial role in conflict prevention, peace negotiations and peacebuilding. India was the first country to deploy an all-women UN peacekeeping unit (Liberia, 2007).
- **Inclusion dimension:** Years of schooling, financial inclusion, employment, cell phone use, parliamentary representation – captures 'voice' of women in public life.
- **Justice dimension:** Absence of legal discrimination, son bias (sex ratio at birth), discriminatory social norms – captures 'formal and informal rules'.
- **Security dimension:** Intimate partner violence, community safety, organised violence deaths – captures 'freedom from violence'.
- **3 Ps framework:** WPS is built on Participation, Protection, Prevention (and later Relief & Recovery) – the 'Ps' of UNSCR 1325.
- **Indian NAP:** India has not yet adopted a National Action Plan (NAP) on WPS, though many countries have. The MEA and MoD participate in UN WPS discussions.

Prelims Connect

WPS Index – The 3 Dimensions

Dimension	Sample Indicators	Weight
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Inclusion	Education, Employment, Mobile access, Parliament seats	1/3
Justice	Legal discrimination, Son bias, Norms	1/3
Security	Intimate partner violence, Community safety, Deaths	1/3

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) is the foundational WPS resolution. It was the first to explicitly link women's experiences of conflict to international peace and security.

Prelims Pointers

- Publisher: GIWPS (Georgetown) + PRIO (Oslo).
- India 2025: 128/177.
- 3 dimensions: Inclusion + Justice + Security.
- Basis: UNSCR 1325 (2000).
- Top: Denmark; Bottom: Afghanistan.
- India first to deploy all-women UN peacekeepers (Liberia 2007).

World Inequality Report 2026 – Top 1% Hold 22% of India's Income

The World Inequality Report 2026, published by the World Inequality Lab (Paris School of Economics), reveals that India's top 1% earn 22.6% of national income – surpassing levels last seen under British colonial rule – while the bottom 50% earn only 15%.

News in Brief

- **Top 1% share:** 22.6% of national income, 40.1% of national wealth (India).
- **Bottom 50%:** 15% of income, only 6.4% of wealth.
- **Publisher:** World Inequality Lab – co-directed by Thomas Piketty, Emmanuel Saez, Gabriel Zucman, Lucas Chancel.
- **'Billionaire Raj':** Authors use this phrase to describe India's extreme concentration – worse than even the 'Raj' era of 1922-1947 on some measures.
- **Global:** Top 10% earn 52% of global income; bottom 50% earn only 8.5%.

Static Background – Concepts & Terms

- **World Inequality Lab:** Founded in 2011 at the Paris School of Economics; produces the World Inequality Database (WID.world), the most comprehensive source on the historical evolution of income and wealth inequality.
- **Thomas Piketty:** French economist, author of 'Capital in the Twenty-First Century' (2013) – popularised the formula $r > g$ (return on capital > growth rate) as the engine of inequality.
- **DINA methodology:** Distributional National Accounts – combines tax data, surveys and national accounts to build consistent long-run inequality series. Considered the gold standard.
- **Income vs wealth:** Income = flow (salary, business income, dividends received in a year). Wealth = stock (total assets minus debts). Wealth inequality is always higher than income inequality.
- **Gini alternative:** WIL prefers percentile ratios (top 1%, top 10%, bottom 50%) over the Gini coefficient because Gini is insensitive to changes at the extremes.
- **India specific:** Chancel & Piketty's 2024 paper 'Income and Wealth Inequality in India, 1922-2023: The Rise of the Billionaire Raj' triggered the policy debate on wealth tax in India.

Prelims Connect

Income & Wealth Shares – India 2025

Population Slice	Income Share	Wealth Share
Top 1%	22.6%	40.1%
Top 10%	57.7%	64.6%
Middle 40%	27.3%	29.0%
Bottom 50%	15.0%	6.4%

Gini coefficient: a measure from 0 (perfect equality) to 1 (perfect inequality). India's consumption Gini is ~0.32-0.35; income Gini ~0.50; wealth Gini ~0.75.

Prelims Pointers

- Publisher: World Inequality Lab (Paris).
- Key authors: Piketty, Saez, Zucman, Chancel.
- India top 1% income: 22.6%; wealth: 40.1%.
- Global top 10%: 52% of income.
- Formula: $r > g$ (Piketty).
- Database: WID.world.

OECD Social Protection Overview & UN ESCAP Report 2025

The UN ESCAP Asia-Pacific SDG Progress Report 2025 warned that the region is off-track on 14 of 17 SDGs and that Asia-Pacific will not meet the 2030 Agenda without sharp acceleration, especially on SDG 5 (Gender), SDG 10 (Inequality) and SDG 13 (Climate).

News in Brief

- **Publisher:** UN ESCAP (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) – HQ Bangkok.
- **Regression SDGs:** SDG 13 (Climate), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) – Asia-Pacific is moving backwards.
- **On-track:** Only 3 of 17 SDGs – SDG 7 (Energy), SDG 9 (Industry), SDG 17 (Partnerships).
- **Pace:** At current rate, Asia-Pacific will achieve the SDGs only in 2062 – 32 years behind schedule.
- **Data gap:** For 48% of SDG indicators, insufficient data exists for trend analysis.

Static Background – Concepts & Terms

- **UN ESCAP:** Established 1947 as ECAFE; renamed UN ESCAP in 1974. One of 5 UN Regional Commissions (others: ECA Africa, ECE Europe, ECLAC Latin America, ESCWA Western Asia). 53 member states + 9 associate.
- **SDG framework:** 17 Goals, 169 Targets, 231 unique Indicators – adopted by UNGA in September 2015 as part of Agenda 2030.
- **Asia-Pacific's 3 progress tiers:** On-track (1-3 goals), insufficient progress (most), regression (SDG 10, 13). India contributes heavily to regional aggregates.
- **Data revolution:** The report highlights that 52% of SDG indicators have sufficient data – up from 42% in 2017, largely due to improved national statistical systems.
- **Sendai Framework link:** Asia-Pacific is also the most disaster-prone region, making SDG 11 (sustainable cities) and SDG 13 (climate action) especially urgent.

Prelims Connect

5 UN Regional Commissions

Commission	Region	HQ	Year
ECA	Africa	Addis Ababa	1958
ECE	Europe	Geneva	1947
ECLAC	Latin America	Santiago	1948
ESCAP	Asia-Pacific	Bangkok	1947
ESCWA	Western Asia	Beirut	1973

Prelims Pointers

- Publisher: UN ESCAP (HQ: Bangkok).
- Est. 1947 as ECAFE; renamed 1974.
- Asia-Pacific will meet SDGs only by 2062.
- Regressing SDGs: 10 (Inequality), 13 (Climate).
- On-track: SDGs 7, 9, 17.
- SDGs adopted: Sept 2015; 17 Goals, 169 Targets.

GOVERNANCE, DEMOCRACY & FREEDOM INDICES

Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2025 – India at 91/180

Transparency International's CPI 2025, released in February 2026, ranked India 91 out of 180 countries with a score of 39/100, a slight fall from the 2024 edition. Denmark retained its top rank for the 8th consecutive year; two-thirds of all countries scored below 50.

News in Brief

- **India:** Rank 91/180; score 39/100 (lower = more corrupt perception).
- **Top:** Denmark (90), Finland (88), Singapore (84), New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland, Norway.
- **Bottom:** South Sudan (8), Somalia, Venezuela, Syria.
- **Publisher:** Transparency International (TI), Berlin – NGO founded 1993 by Peter Eigen.
- **Global finding:** Average score 43/100; two-thirds of 180 countries scored below 50.
- **South Asia:** India (91) outranks Pakistan (135), Bangladesh (149), Sri Lanka (121).

Static Background – Concepts & Terms

- **Methodology:** CPI is a 'poll of polls' – it aggregates perceptions of corruption in the public sector from 13 different sources (including World Bank, WEF, EIU, Bertelsmann). At least 3 sources must cover a country for it to be ranked.
- **Focus:** Public sector corruption only – bribery, diversion of public funds, absence of rules, cronyism, nepotism. Does not measure private-sector or political corruption directly.
- **Score scale:** 0 = highly corrupt, 100 = very clean. Changed from 1-10 to 0-100 in 2012 to allow year-on-year comparability.
- **India's trajectory:** Score has hovered between 38-41 since 2014, broadly stable but not improving – described by TI as 'stagnation'.

- **Rule of Law link:** TI flags strong correlation between high CPI scores and strong rule-of-law indicators – countries with independent judiciaries, free press and civil society consistently top the index.
- **Key treaty:** UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), 2005 – India ratified in 2011. Covers prevention, criminalisation, international cooperation, asset recovery.

Prelims Connect

CPI Score Interpretation Bands

Score Range	Interpretation	Example Countries
80-100	Very clean	Denmark, Finland, Singapore
60-79	Moderately clean	UK, Japan, US
40-59	Moderately corrupt	Italy, Saudi Arabia
20-39	Highly corrupt	India, Brazil, Indonesia
0-19	Extremely corrupt	South Sudan, Somalia

Transparency International (TI) also publishes the *Global Corruption Barometer* (people's own experiences) and *Exporting Corruption Report* (OECD Anti-Bribery Convention compliance).

Prelims Pointers

- Publisher: Transparency International (TI), Berlin, 1993.
- India CPI 2025: 91/180; score 39/100.
- Scale: 0 (corrupt) to 100 (clean).
- Top: Denmark; Bottom: South Sudan.
- UNCAC 2005 – India ratified 2011.
- India's CVC established 1964 (Santhanam Committee).

Democracy Index 2024 (EIU) – India 'Flawed Democracy'

The Economist Intelligence Unit's (EIU) Democracy Index 2024, published in February 2025, categorised India as a 'flawed democracy' with a score of 7.29, ranking 41 out of 167 countries – down one place from 2023.

News in Brief

- **India:** Rank 41/167; score 7.29 – 'Flawed Democracy'.
- **Global finding:** Only 6.6% of world's population live in a 'full democracy'; 39.2% in authoritarian regimes.
- **Publisher:** Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) – research arm of The Economist Group, UK.
- **Top:** Norway (9.81), New Zealand, Sweden, Iceland, Switzerland – all Full Democracies.
- **Categories:** Full democracy (>8), Flawed democracy (6-8), Hybrid regime (4-6), Authoritarian (<4).
- **5 pillars:** Electoral Process & Pluralism, Functioning of Government, Political Participation, Political Culture, Civil Liberties.

Static Background – Concepts & Terms

- **Launch:** EIU Democracy Index began in 2006, annual since 2010. Uses 60 indicators grouped under the 5 categories. India has consistently been 'Flawed Democracy' since 2010.
- **Methodology:** Mix of expert assessments and public opinion surveys (World Values Survey, Eurobarometer, Latinobarómetro). Each indicator scored 0, 0.5, or 1.

- **Why 'flawed'?** Full democracies score >8 on all 5 pillars; flawed democracies score well on electoral process but have weaker political culture, low participation, or underdeveloped civil liberties.
- **India's weak spots:** EIU flagged erosion of civil liberties, media freedom and political participation metrics.
- **Comparison:** USA also 'Flawed Democracy' (since 2016); UK 'Full Democracy' (18th). World's largest democracy (India) vs oldest democracy (USA).
- **V-Dem contrast:** Sweden's V-Dem Institute has downgraded India to 'electoral autocracy' – a more critical assessment than EIU's 'flawed democracy'.

Prelims Connect

EIU Democracy Index – Categories & 5 Pillars

Category	Score Range	% of Countries	Example
Full Democracy	8.01-10	14.4%	Norway, India's aspiration
Flawed Democracy	6.01-8	29.3%	India, USA
Hybrid Regime	4.01-6	17.4%	Bangladesh, Turkey
Authoritarian	0-4	38.9%	China, Russia, N Korea

Other democracy rankings: V-Dem (Sweden) – 'Varieties of Democracy'; Freedom House – 'Freedom in the World' (Free/Partly Free/Not Free); Polity Project – autocracy-democracy scale (-10 to +10).

Prelims Pointers

- Publisher: EIU (Economist Intelligence Unit), UK.
- India 2024: 41/167; score 7.29; 'Flawed Democracy'.
- Top: Norway; Bottom: Afghanistan.
- 5 pillars: Electoral, Govt, Participation, Culture, Civil Liberties.
- Began: 2006.
- Only 14.4% of countries are 'Full Democracies'.

World Press Freedom Index 2025 – India at 151/180

Reporters Without Borders (RSF)'s 2025 World Press Freedom Index ranked India 151 out of 180 countries – a marginal improvement from 159 in 2024 but still within the 'very serious' category. Norway retained the top spot; Eritrea ranked last.

News in Brief

- **India:** Rank 151/180; category 'Very Serious' (red zone).
- **Top:** Norway (1st for 9th year), Estonia, Netherlands, Sweden, Finland.
- **Bottom:** Eritrea (180), North Korea, China.
- **Publisher:** Reporters Without Borders (Reporters Sans Frontières, RSF) – HQ Paris, founded 1985.
- **Global finding:** Economic indicator worst ever – media's financial model under severe threat globally.
- **5 indicators:** Political, Legal, Economic, Socio-cultural, Safety.

Static Background – Concepts & Terms

- **Methodology (reformed 2022):** RSF uses 5 contextual indicators, each scored 0-100 via a questionnaire filled by RSF correspondents, academics and journalists, plus quantitative data on abuses against journalists.

- **Economic indicator:** Added prominently in the 2022 methodology overhaul – captures media concentration, advertising dependence and newsroom layoffs.
- **India's specific issues flagged:** Media ownership concentration, 'Godi media', legal cases against journalists, internet shutdowns, press safety in Kashmir.
- **Press freedom under threat globally:** Number of journalists killed in Gaza since October 2023 is the highest in any conflict since WWII – RSF calls it an 'unprecedented bloodbath'.
- **World Press Freedom Day:** Celebrated May 3 annually (UNESCO, since 1993). The 'Windhoek Declaration' (1991) is the foundational document.
- **RSF vs Freedom House:** RSF's index focuses on journalism practice; Freedom House's 'Freedom of the Press' (discontinued 2017) looked at broader media regulation.

Prelims Connect

5 Indicators of the Press Freedom Index

Indicator	Captures	Weight
Political	State interference in media	20%
Legal	Criminal defamation, censorship laws	20%
Economic	Media concentration, ad revenue	20%
Socio-cultural	Societal barriers to free expression	20%
Safety	Physical attacks, arrests, killings	20%

World Press Freedom Day – 3 May. Theme 2025 was 'Reporting in the Brave New World: The Impact of AI on Press Freedom and the Media'.

Prelims Pointers

- Publisher: Reporters Without Borders (RSF), Paris, 1985.
- India 2025: 151/180 ('Very Serious').
- Top: Norway; Bottom: Eritrea.
- 5 indicators (each 20% weight).
- World Press Freedom Day: 3 May.
- Windhoek Declaration: 1991.

Rule of Law Index 2024 – India at 79/142 (WJP)

The World Justice Project's Rule of Law Index 2024 ranked India 79 out of 142 countries, reflecting middling performance on constraints on government powers, open government and absence of corruption.

News in Brief

- **India:** Rank 79/142 (2024); score 0.50 (out of 1).
- **Publisher:** World Justice Project (WJP) – NGO founded 2006 by William H Neukom (ex-Microsoft).
- **8 factors:** Constraints on Govt Powers, Absence of Corruption, Open Govt, Fundamental Rights, Order & Security, Regulatory Enforcement, Civil Justice, Criminal Justice.
- **Top:** Denmark, Norway, Finland, Sweden, Germany.

- **Bottom:** Venezuela, Cambodia, Afghanistan.
- **South Asia:** Nepal (71) > India (79) > Sri Lanka (82) > Bangladesh (127) > Pakistan (129).

Static Background – Concepts & Terms

- **4 universal principles:** WJP defines rule of law as four universal principles – Accountability, Just Laws, Open Government, Accessible & Impartial Justice. These are the philosophical anchors of the 8 factors.
- **Sources:** Index draws on 214,000 household surveys and 3,500 legal expert surveys annually – making it the largest rule of law dataset in the world.
- **Launched:** 2008 as a pilot; annual since 2012. Score 0-1 (1 = strongest rule of law).
- **India's strengths:** Constraints on government powers (independent judiciary, federalism), fundamental rights framework.
- **India's weaknesses:** Civil justice (delays, pendency), criminal justice system, absence of corruption factor.
- **RoL in Indian Constitution:** The Supreme Court in Kesavananda Bharati (1973) declared 'Rule of Law' part of the Basic Structure. A V Dicey's 3-fold classical formulation: Supremacy of Law, Equality before Law, Rule of Law as Constitution.

Prelims Connect

8 Factors of WJP Rule of Law Index

#	Factor
1	Constraints on Government Powers
2	Absence of Corruption
3	Open Government
4	Fundamental Rights
5	Order and Security
6	Regulatory Enforcement
7	Civil Justice
8	Criminal Justice

Prelims Pointers

- Publisher: World Justice Project (WJP), 2006.
- India 2024: 79/142; score 0.50.
- 8 factors, 4 principles.
- Top: Denmark; Bottom: Venezuela.
- Rule of Law: part of Basic Structure (Kesavananda, 1973).
- A V Dicey – classical 3-fold rule of law.

Freedom in the World 2025 & V-Dem Democracy Report

Freedom House's Freedom in the World 2025 report again classified India as 'Partly Free' with a score of 63/100, while the V-Dem Institute (Sweden) retained its controversial categorisation of India as an 'electoral autocracy'.

News in Brief

- **Freedom House:** India classified 'Partly Free'; score 63/100 (of which 33 Political Rights + 30 Civil Liberties).
- **V-Dem:** India listed among the world's worst 'autocratising countries'; categorised as 'Electoral Autocracy' since 2018.
- **Publisher (FH):** Freedom House – US NGO founded 1941 by Eleanor Roosevelt & Wendell Willkie.
- **Publisher (V-Dem):** Varieties of Democracy Institute, University of Gothenburg, Sweden.
- **Global finding:** Freedom House: global freedom declined for the 19th consecutive year in 2024.

Static Background – Concepts & Terms

- **Freedom House methodology:** Scores 25 indicators across 2 categories – Political Rights (40 points, 10 indicators) and Civil Liberties (60 points, 15 indicators). Produces 3 categories: Free (70-100), Partly Free (40-69), Not Free (0-39).
- **V-Dem methodology:** Most ambitious of all democracy datasets – uses 5 high-level indices (Electoral, Liberal, Participatory, Deliberative, Egalitarian) and 450+ indicators rated by 4,000 country experts worldwide.
- **V-Dem's 5 regime types:** Closed Autocracy, Electoral Autocracy, Electoral Democracy, Liberal Democracy, (plus nuances in between). India was downgraded from Electoral Democracy to Electoral Autocracy in 2021.
- **Criticism:** Both FH and V-Dem have been questioned by the Indian government, which argues they rely on Western biases and do not capture India's democratic institutions adequately.
- **Historical note:** Freedom House was established amidst the rise of Nazism; Eleanor Roosevelt and Wendell Willkie were co-founders, representing Democratic and Republican traditions respectively.

Prelims Connect

Democracy Rankings – Who Says What About India?

Index	Publisher	India Status
EIU Democracy Index	Economist Intelligence Unit	Flawed Democracy
Freedom in the World	Freedom House (US)	Partly Free
V-Dem Democracy Report	V-Dem Institute (Sweden)	Electoral Autocracy
Polity IV	Center for Systemic Peace	Democracy

Prelims Pointers

- Freedom House: est. 1941; India 'Partly Free' (63/100).
- V-Dem: University of Gothenburg, Sweden; 'Electoral Autocracy'.
- FH categories: Free (70+), Partly Free (40-69), Not Free (<40).
- V-Dem regime types: Closed/Electoral Autocracy, Electoral/Liberal Democracy.
- FH co-founders: Eleanor Roosevelt & Wendell Willkie (1941).

ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE & SUSTAINABILITY INDICES

Emissions Gap Report 2025 – UNEP Warns of 2.6–3.1 °C World

The UNEP Emissions Gap Report 2025, released ahead of COP30 in Brazil, warned that current policies put the world on track for 2.6-3.1 °C warming by 2100, far above the Paris Agreement's 1.5 °C goal. It is the 16th edition of the flagship UNEP report.

News in Brief

- **Trajectory:** Current policies → 2.6-3.1 °C warming; current NDCs → 2.3-2.7 °C; all pledges + net-zero → 1.9 °C.
- **Publisher:** United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) – HQ Nairobi.
- **Gap:** To stay below 1.5 °C, global emissions must fall 42% by 2030 and 57% by 2035 from 2019 levels.
- **G20 share:** Responsible for 77% of global emissions in 2024.
- **Key ask:** Tripling renewables & doubling energy efficiency by 2030 (as agreed at COP28 in Dubai).

Static Background – Concepts & Terms

- **Series:** Emissions Gap Report has been published annually since 2010, comparing 'where we are' with 'where we need to be' to meet the Paris temperature goals.
- **Paris Agreement 2015:** Article 2 sets the 'well below 2 °C' goal with 'pursuing efforts to limit to 1.5 °C'. 1.5 °C became the de facto target after the IPCC Special Report on 1.5 °C (2018).
- **NDCs:** Nationally Determined Contributions – each country's self-declared climate pledge, submitted every 5 years under Paris. India's updated NDC (2022) targets 45% emissions intensity reduction by 2030 and 50% non-fossil electricity capacity.
- **Net-zero pledges:** India → 2070, China → 2060, EU, UK, US → 2050. Covered countries represent ~88% of global emissions.
- **IPCC assessment:** IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report (AR6, 2021-23) concluded that human-induced warming has already reached 1.1-1.2 °C above pre-industrial levels.
- **GHG coverage:** Emissions Gap Report covers all 7 Kyoto gases: CO₂, CH₄, N₂O, HFCs, PFCs, SF₆, NF₃ – measured in CO₂ equivalent.

Prelims Connect

Global Emission Pathways – Emissions Gap 2025

Scenario	Temperature Rise by 2100
Current policies	2.6-3.1 °C
Current NDCs (unconditional)	2.5-2.8 °C
Current NDCs (conditional)	2.3-2.5 °C
All net-zero pledges	1.9 °C
1.5 °C pathway	Emissions ↓ 42% by 2030

India is among few G20 countries whose current policies are consistent with its NDC targets. G20 countries together account for 77% of global emissions.

Prelims Pointers

- Publisher: UNEP (est. 1972, HQ Nairobi).
- Series: Since 2010; 16th edition in 2025.
- Goal: 1.5 °C (IPCC SR 1.5, 2018).
- India NDC 2022: 45% intensity cut; 50% non-fossil capacity by 2030.
- G20: 77% of emissions.
- COP30: Belém, Brazil (Nov 2025).

Global Climate Risk Index 2025 – India 6th Most Affected

Germanwatch's Climate Risk Index 2025 (covering 1993-2022) listed India as the 6th most affected country in terms of climate-related losses, with over 80,000 deaths and USD 180 billion in economic losses during the 30-year period.

News in Brief

- **India:** 6th most affected in long-term index (1993-2022).
- **Publisher:** Germanwatch – German independent think-tank (founded 1991).
- **Top affected:** Dominica, China, Honduras, Myanmar, Italy, India.
- **Metrics:** Deaths, deaths per 100,000, absolute losses, losses per unit GDP – combined into a composite score.
- **Key message:** Countries most affected are often those least responsible for global emissions.

Static Background – Concepts & Terms

- **Germanwatch:** Founded 1991 in Bonn, Germany; known for CCPI (Climate Change Performance Index), Global Climate Risk Index and ASER-style indices.
- **Methodology:** Based on Munich Re's NatCatSERVICE database – one of the world's largest loss event databases. Covers only weather-related events (storms, floods, heat waves), not geophysical events (earthquakes, tsunamis).
- **CRI vs CCPI:** CRI = impact of climate change (past suffering); CCPI = effort to mitigate (current policy). Germanwatch publishes both annually.
- **Loss and Damage:** COP27 (Sharm el-Sheikh, 2022) agreed to set up a Loss & Damage Fund; COP28 (Dubai, 2023) operationalised it, with UAE pledging USD 100 million.
- **India's exposure:** India faces cyclones (Amphan, Biparjoy), floods (Kerala 2018, Uttarakhand 2013), heat waves (2022, 2024), glacier lake outburst floods (Chamoli 2021, Sikkim 2023).
- **Vulnerability Atlas:** India's own Climate Vulnerability Index by the Department of Science & Technology categorises all districts into 4 risk bands.

Prelims Connect

Climate Risk Index – 4 Indicators

Indicator	Weightage
Deaths (absolute)	1/6
Deaths per 100,000	1/3
Losses (PPP, USD)	1/6
Losses per unit GDP (%)	1/3

Do not confuse Germanwatch's CRI with Notre Dame's ND-GAIN Index (vulnerability + readiness) or the Climate Risk Index by XDI (physical risk to infrastructure).

Prelims Pointers

- Publisher: Germanwatch (Bonn, 1991).
- India: 6th most affected (1993-2022).
- Data source: Munich Re NatCatSERVICE.
- Loss & Damage Fund: Operationalised COP28 Dubai (2023).

- Companion index: Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI).
- COP27: Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt (2022).

Energy Transition Index 2025 – India at 71/118

The World Economic Forum's Fostering Effective Energy Transition Report 2025 ranked India 71 out of 118 countries in the Energy Transition Index (ETI), ahead of China (20) in readiness and several BRICS peers, with strong gains in energy equity.

News in Brief

- **India:** Rank 71/118 in ETI 2025 – up from 67 in 2024.
- **Publisher:** World Economic Forum (WEF), in collaboration with Accenture.
- **Framework:** Two dimensions – System Performance (today) + Transition Readiness (future enablers).
- **Top:** Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Switzerland, France – all have high renewable penetration and policy frameworks.
- **Pillars:** Security, Sustainability, Equity (energy trilemma) + Transition Readiness factors.

Static Background – Concepts & Terms

- **ETI origin:** WEF launched ETI in 2018, evolving from the earlier Energy Architecture Performance Index. Measures how well countries balance the energy trilemma with long-term transition.
- **Energy trilemma:** The World Energy Council's concept – Energy Security + Energy Equity (affordability, access) + Environmental Sustainability. ETI uses this as its core framework.
- **India's progress levers:** Electrification drive (Saubhagya scheme, 100% household electrification), LPG access (Ujjwala Yojana), solar capacity scaling (500 GW non-fossil target by 2030).
- **Five pillars of readiness:** (1) Policy commitment, (2) Investment environment, (3) Infrastructure & innovation, (4) Human capital, (5) Regulation & governance.
- **ISA link:** International Solar Alliance, co-founded by India & France at COP21 (Paris, 2015), HQ Gurugram – plays a key enabling role in India's transition.
- **Global trends:** For the first time, renewables crossed 30% of global electricity generation in 2024 (IEA data cited by WEF).

Prelims Connect

Energy Trilemma – Conceptual Framework

Dimension	Captures
Energy Security	Reliability, diversification, import dependence
Energy Equity	Affordability, universal access
Environmental Sustainability	Emissions, renewable penetration
Transition Readiness	Policy, investment, innovation, capital

Prelims Pointers

- Publisher: World Economic Forum (WEF).
- India 2025: 71/118 (up from 67).
- Framework: Energy Trilemma + Readiness.
- Top: Sweden, Finland, Denmark.
- India non-fossil target: 500 GW by 2030.

- ISA: HQ Gurugram; co-founded 2015.

Environmental Performance Index (EPI) 2024 – India at 176/180

The Environmental Performance Index 2024, released by Yale & Columbia universities, ranked India 176 out of 180 countries with a score of 27.6/100, citing poor air quality, biodiversity loss and weak climate policy.

News in Brief

- **India:** Rank 176/180; score 27.6 – among the 5 worst performers.
- **Publisher:** Yale Center for Environmental Law & Policy + Columbia University's CIESIN.
- **Bottom:** Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, Pakistan, India (bottom 5).
- **Top:** Estonia, Luxembourg, Germany, Finland, UK.
- **Issue categories:** Climate Change Mitigation, Environmental Health, Ecosystem Vitality.
- **Indicators:** 58 indicators – air quality, water, waste, biodiversity, fisheries, climate, etc.

Static Background – Concepts & Terms

- **EPI series:** Began in 2002 as the Pilot Environmental Sustainability Index; renamed EPI in 2006. Published every 2 years by Yale + Columbia in collaboration with WEF.
- **3 main issue categories:** (1) Climate Change Mitigation – largest weight (38%); (2) Environmental Health (20%); (3) Ecosystem Vitality (42%).
- **India's rebuttal:** In 2022, India's Environment Ministry rejected the methodology, particularly the use of forecasted emissions trajectories and weight given to climate change over environmental health indicators.
- **Top indicators India failed:** PM2.5 exposure, tree cover loss, GHG emissions growth rate, projected emissions in 2050.
- **Air quality link:** India is home to 9 of the world's 10 most polluted cities (WHO / IQAir annual ranking).
- **Relation to SDGs:** EPI is closely aligned with SDG 13 (Climate), SDG 14 (Life below water), SDG 15 (Life on land).

Prelims Connect

EPI 2024 – 3 Issue Categories

Category	Weight	Example Indicators
Climate Change Mitigation	38%	CO ₂ growth, black carbon, projected emissions
Environmental Health	20%	PM2.5 exposure, lead exposure, drinking water
Ecosystem Vitality	42%	Tree cover loss, biodiversity, fisheries

Prelims Pointers

- Publisher: Yale (YCELP) + Columbia (CIESIN).
- India EPI 2024: 176/180; score 27.6.
- Biennial (every 2 years).
- 3 categories, 58 indicators.
- Top: Estonia. Bottom 5 includes India.

Mangrove Breakthrough Report 2025 – First Global Mangrove Risk Index

The Mangrove Breakthrough Financial Roadmap 2025, released at COP28 and updated in 2025, introduced the first standardised Mangrove Risk Index and aims to secure the future of 15 million hectares of mangroves globally by 2030.

News in Brief

- **Global goal:** Restore 15 million hectares of mangroves globally by 2030 (Mangrove Breakthrough).
- **Funding:** USD 4 billion targeted for mangrove projects by 2030.
- **India:** Covers 4,992 km² (ISFR 2023); hosts the Sundarbans (largest single tract in the world).
- **Publisher:** Global Mangrove Alliance (IUCN, WWF, The Nature Conservancy, Conservation International, Wetlands International).
- **MISHTI Scheme:** India's Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats & Tangible Incomes, announced in Budget 2023-24.

Static Background – Concepts & Terms

- **Mangroves:** Salt-tolerant trees growing in tidal estuaries of tropical and subtropical coasts. They store 4× more carbon per unit area than terrestrial forests – 'blue carbon' ecosystems.
- **Ecosystem services:** Storm surge buffer, coastal erosion prevention, fish nursery, biodiversity hotspots, carbon sequestration. A single hectare can sequester 3000+ tonnes of CO₂ over its lifetime.
- **Sundarbans:** Shared by India (West Bengal) & Bangladesh; UNESCO World Heritage Site (1987); Ramsar site; home to the Royal Bengal Tiger and Irrawaddy dolphin. It is classified as 'Endangered' under the IUCN Red List.
- **Indian mangrove states:** West Bengal (42%), Gujarat (23%), A&N Islands, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha.
- **Ramsar linkage:** India has 85 Ramsar wetlands (2025); Sundarbans designated in 2019. Ramsar Convention signed 1971 in Iran, India party since 1982.
- **MISHTI specifics:** Targets mangrove plantation across 540 sq km along India's coastline in 11 states and 2 UTs, converging with MGNREGA and CAMPA funds.

Prelims Connect

India's Mangrove Cover – Top States (ISFR 2023)

State/UT	Area (km ²)	% of India
West Bengal	2,114	42.3%
Gujarat	1,164	23.3%
A&N Islands	616	12.3%
Andhra Pradesh	405	8.1%
Maharashtra	320	6.4%
Odisha	260	5.2%

Mangrove Alliance for Climate (MAC): Launched at COP27 (Egypt, 2022) by UAE and Indonesia; India joined in 2022.

Prelims Pointers

- Publisher: Global Mangrove Alliance + IUCN + UNEP.

- Mangrove Breakthrough target: 15 million ha by 2030.
- India cover: 4,992 km² (ISFR 2023).
- Largest tract: Sundarbans (WB + Bangladesh).
- India scheme: MISHTI (Budget 2023-24).
- MAC: Launched at COP27 (2022).
- Ramsar Convention: 1971 Iran;

INNOVATION, TECHNOLOGY & DIGITAL INDICES

Global Innovation Index 2025 – India Steady at 38/139

WIPO's Global Innovation Index 2025 (18th edition) ranked India 38 out of 139 countries, retaining its position as a top performer among middle-income economies. Switzerland held the top spot for the 15th year in a row.

News in Brief

- **India:** Rank 38/139 in 2025 (up from 81 in 2015).
- **Publisher:** World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) – UN specialised agency, HQ Geneva.
- **Top 5:** Switzerland, Sweden, USA, UK, Singapore.
- **Middle-income leader:** India is the #1 innovation economy in Central and Southern Asia (for the 14th year).
- **Key strengths:** ICT services exports, unicorns, venture capital, quality of universities (top 3 in emerging markets).
- **Weaknesses:** Environmental performance, tertiary enrolment, institutions (regulatory quality).

Static Background – Concepts & Terms

- **GII origin:** Launched in 2007 by INSEAD and Cornell; WIPO joined as co-publisher in 2012 and became sole publisher from 2021. It is considered the most authoritative innovation ranking globally.
- **7 pillars (structure):** 5 input pillars – Institutions, Human Capital & Research, Infrastructure, Market Sophistication, Business Sophistication; 2 output pillars – Knowledge & Technology Outputs, Creative Outputs.
- **Innovation ratio:** GII publishes an 'Innovation Efficiency Ratio' = Output/Input. India is among the top for this ratio – it innovates more than its inputs would predict.
- **Global Innovation Tracker:** A sub-feature of GII since 2022, tracking short-term innovation indicators (R&D spending, VC deals, IP filings, top-corporate R&D).
- **WIPO background:** Formed in 1967 by the WIPO Convention in Stockholm; became a UN specialised agency in 1974. Administers 26 international treaties including Paris, Berne, Madrid, PCT.
- **India's IP push:** NIPAM (National IPR Awareness Mission) – launched to train 10 lakh students; India ranks 6th globally in patent filings (WIPO 2025 IP Facts).

Prelims Connect

7 Pillars of the Global Innovation Index

Type	Pillar
Inputs	1. Institutions
	2. Human Capital & Research
	3. Infrastructure

	4. Market Sophistication
	5. Business Sophistication
Outputs	6. Knowledge & Technology Outputs
	7. Creative Outputs

WIPO-administered IP treaties India has joined: Paris Convention (1998), Patent Cooperation Treaty/PCT (1998), Berne Convention (1928), Madrid Protocol (2013), Marrakesh Treaty (2014 – first country to ratify).

Prelims Pointers

- Publisher: WIPO (HQ: Geneva).
- India GII 2025: 38/139 (up from 81 in 2015).
- Launched: 2007 by INSEAD/Cornell; WIPO sole since 2021.
- 7 pillars: 5 input + 2 output.
- Top: Switzerland (15 years).
- India: #1 in Central & Southern Asia.

Frontier Technologies Readiness Index 2025 – India at 36/170 (UNCTAD)

UNCTAD's Technology and Innovation Report 2025 placed India 36 out of 170 countries on the Frontier Technologies Readiness Index, a big jump from 48 in 2023, reflecting strong ICT infrastructure and a robust AI talent pool.

News in Brief

- **India:** Rank 36/170 – up 12 places from 2023.
- **Publisher:** UNCTAD (UN Conference on Trade and Development) – HQ Geneva.
- **5 pillars:** ICT deployment, Skills, R&D, Industry activity, Access to finance.
- **Top:** USA, Sweden, Singapore, Switzerland, UK.
- **Frontier techs covered:** AI, IoT, Big Data, Blockchain, 5G, 3D printing, Robotics, Drones, Solar PV, Gene editing, Nanotechnology, Green hydrogen.
- **India highlights:** 3rd largest AI talent base after US and China; strong growth in R&D publications.

Static Background – Concepts & Terms

- **UNCTAD background:** Established 1964 as a permanent UN body with HQ in Geneva; Secretary-General currently Rebeca Grynspan (since 2021). Publishes World Investment Report, Trade & Development Report, LDC Report, Digital Economy Report.
- **FTRI methodology:** 5 pillars aggregated into a single composite score – ICT (mobile + internet subscriptions), Skills (tertiary enrolment, high-skill employment), R&D (publications, patents), Industry (diversity, high-tech production), Finance (private credit).
- **Why it matters:** Frontier technologies market expected to grow from USD 2.5 trillion (2023) to USD 16.4 trillion (2033). UNCTAD warns of a widening 'frontier technology divide'.
- **Digital divide:** 2.6 billion people (1/3 of humanity) are still offline; digital divide compounds the frontier technology divide, locking in inequality.
- **India's policy actions:** IndiaAI Mission (₹10,372 crore, 2024), National Quantum Mission (₹6,003 crore, 2023-31), National Strategy for AI (NITI Aayog 2018), Semicon India Programme.

Prelims Connect

UNCTAD FTRI – 5 Pillars

Pillar	Example Indicators
ICT deployment	Mobile subscriptions, Internet users, Fixed broadband
Skills	Mean years of schooling, Tertiary enrolment
R&D	Scientific publications, Patents
Industry activity	High-tech production, Exports
Access to finance	Domestic credit to private sector

Prelims Pointers

- Publisher: UNCTAD (est. 1964, HQ Geneva).
- India FTRI 2025: 36/170 (up from 48).
- Current SG UNCTAD: Rebeca Grynspan.
- 5 pillars: ICT, Skills, R&D, Industry, Finance.
- 12 frontier techs covered.
- India AI Mission: ₹10,372 crore (2024).

Network Readiness Index 2025 – India at 49/131

The Portulans Institute's Network Readiness Index 2025 ranked India 49 out of 131 economies (up 11 places from 2024) based on technology, people, governance and impact – the four pillars of digital readiness.

News in Brief

- **India:** Rank 49/131 in NRI 2025 (up from 60 in 2024).
- **Publisher:** Portulans Institute (Washington DC) + University of Oxford.
- **Top:** USA, Singapore, Finland, Sweden, Switzerland, Netherlands.
- **4 pillars:** Technology, People, Governance, Impact.
- **India's standout:** #1 in AI scientific publications; #2 in AI talent concentration; top 10 in mobile broadband internet traffic.

Static Background – Concepts & Terms

- **NRI origin:** Originally created by World Economic Forum in 2001 (authored by Soumitra Dutta, then at INSEAD). After WEF retired it in 2016, Portulans Institute revived it in 2019.
- **4 pillars, 12 sub-pillars:** Technology (access, content, future), People (individuals, businesses, governments), Governance (trust, regulation, inclusion), Impact (economy, quality of life, SDG contribution).
- **India's 10-year arc:** India ranked 89/139 in 2016 – climbed to 49/131 by 2025, a jump of 40 places in less than a decade, driven by UPI, mobile broadband and public digital infrastructure (DPI).
- **DPI:** India's 'India Stack' (Aadhaar + UPI + DigiLocker) is being replicated as a Digital Public Infrastructure model globally – promoted by India at G20 (2023) and endorsed in the UN Global Digital Compact.
- **Portulans Institute:** Non-partisan research institute founded 2019 by Soumitra Dutta and Bruno Lanvin (former INSEAD).

Prelims Connect

NRI 4 Pillars, 12 Sub-pillars

Pillar	Sub-pillars
Technology	Access, Content, Future technologies
People	Individuals, Businesses, Governments
Governance	Trust, Regulation, Inclusion
Impact	Economy, Quality of life, SDG contribution

Prelims Pointers

- Publisher: Portulans Institute (DC) + Oxford University.
- India NRI 2025: 49/131 (up from 60).
- Originally: WEF (2001-16), revived 2019.
- 4 pillars, 12 sub-pillars.
- Top: USA; India #1 in AI publications.
- India Stack: Aadhaar + UPI + DigiLocker.

Stanford AI Index 2025 – US-China-India the Top 3

Stanford University's AI Index 2025 (Human-Centered AI Institute, HAI) highlighted India as the third-largest AI nation by talent, publications and venture capital, while noting that the US still leads in notable AI models and China leads in AI patents.

News in Brief

- **India:** 3rd largest AI talent pool and 3rd highest AI skill penetration (LinkedIn data).
- **Publisher:** Stanford University Human-Centered AI Institute (HAI).
- **US leads:** In 2024, US produced 40 notable AI models vs China 15, Europe 3.
- **Cost collapse:** The cost of querying GPT-3.5-level performance fell 280× between Nov 2022 and Oct 2024.
- **Global AI funding:** USD 252 billion in 2024 (up 26% YoY); Generative AI alone: USD 45 billion.

Static Background – Concepts & Terms

- **Stanford HAI:** Founded 2019 by Fei-Fei Li, John Etchemendy and other Stanford scholars; publishes the annual AI Index (since 2017) as a comprehensive assessment of global AI progress.
- **12 chapters:** Research & Development, Technical Performance, Responsible AI, Economy, Science & Medicine, Policy, Education, Diversity, Public Opinion, Index Data Appendix, and more.
- **India's AI ecosystem:** 5+ unicorns in AI (Haptik, Uniphore, Yellow.ai, etc.); IndiaAI Mission includes shared compute of 10,000+ GPUs, foundational model development, AI safety institute.
- **NITI Aayog's role:** Released India's first 'National Strategy for AI – AI for All' in June 2018; identified healthcare, agriculture, education, smart cities, smart mobility as focus areas.
- **Global AI governance:** Bletchley Declaration (UK AI Safety Summit, Nov 2023) signed by 28 countries + EU; India signed. Followed by Seoul AI Summit (2024) and Paris AI Action Summit (Feb 2025).
- **EU AI Act:** World's first comprehensive AI law – adopted by European Parliament in March 2024; risk-based approach (Unacceptable / High / Limited / Minimal).

Prelims Connect

Global AI Governance Milestones

Year	Milestone
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2018	India's National Strategy for AI (NITI Aayog)
2023	Bletchley Declaration (UK AI Safety Summit)
2024	EU AI Act (first comprehensive AI law)
2024	Seoul AI Summit
2024	India AI Mission launched (₹10,372 cr)
2025	Paris AI Action Summit (India co-chair)

Prelims Pointers

- Publisher: Stanford HAI (est. 2019 by Fei-Fei Li).
- AI Index: Annual since 2017.
- 2024 notable models: US 40, China 15.
- India: #3 in AI talent (LinkedIn).
- Bletchley Declaration: UK 2023.
- EU AI Act: 2024 (first in the world).
- India AI Mission: ₹10,372 cr (2024).

Digital Threat Report 2024-25 – India's Cyber Resilience

India's Digital Threat Report 2024, jointly released by CERT-In, SISA and Data Security Council of India (DSCI) in 2025, flagged ransomware, AI-powered phishing and deepfakes as the top three cyber threats facing Indian enterprises.

News in Brief

- **Top threats:** Ransomware, AI-powered phishing, deepfake-based scams.
- **Publisher:** CERT-In (MeitY) + DSCI (Data Security Council of India, a NASSCOM body) + SISA.
- **Scale:** India recorded over 1.5 million cyber incidents in 2024 (CERT-In).
- **Sectors:** BFSI, healthcare, MSMEs and critical infrastructure are the most targeted.
- **Fraud volume:** Digital financial fraud cases crossed ₹11,000 crore in losses (reported in Parliament, 2025).

Static Background – Concepts & Terms

- **CERT-In:** Indian Computer Emergency Response Team – under the Ministry of Electronics & IT (MeitY); operational since 2004 under Section 70B of the IT Act 2000; nodal agency for cyber incidents.
- **Legal framework:** IT Act 2000 (amended 2008) is the primary cyber law. DPDP Act 2023 governs personal data protection. National Cyber Security Policy 2013 sets strategic direction.
- **Institutions:** CERT-In (incidents), NCIIPC (critical infrastructure – under NTRO), I4C (Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre, MHA), NIC-CERT (government networks).
- **Budapest Convention:** The Council of Europe's Convention on Cybercrime (2001) is the only binding international treaty on cybercrime. India is NOT a party – cites concerns over sovereignty and drafting by a regional body.
- **Cyber Surakshit Bharat:** Launched 2018 by MeitY in partnership with NeGD – train CISOs and frontline IT officials.
- **Deepfakes:** India proposed a dedicated global framework on deepfakes; MeitY issued advisories to social media intermediaries under IT Rules 2021 after several high-profile cases.

Prelims Connect

India's Cybersecurity Architecture – Key Bodies

Body	Full Form	Under
CERT-In	Indian Computer Emergency Response Team	MeitY
NCIIPC	National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre	NTRO
I4C	Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre	MHA
DSCI	Data Security Council of India	NASSCOM
NCCC	National Cyber Coordination Centre	MeitY (CERT-In)

DPDP Act 2023 – Digital Personal Data Protection Act, enacted August 2023, based on the B N Srikrishna Committee framework; establishes a Data Protection Board and defines Data Fiduciaries & Data Principals.

Prelims Pointers

- CERT-In: Under MeitY; Section 70B, IT Act 2000.
- DPDP Act: 2023 (August).
- I4C: Under MHA.
- NCIIPC: Under NTRO.
- Budapest Convention: 2001; India NOT a party.
- IT Act: 2000 (amended 2008).

PASSPORT, PEACE, TOURISM & LIVEABILITY

Henley Passport Index 2025 – India at 85/199

The Henley Passport Index 2025 ranked the Indian passport 85th out of 199, giving visa-free access to 57 destinations. Singapore remained the world's most powerful passport (with visa-free access to 195 destinations), while Afghanistan retained the bottom position.

News in Brief

- **India:** Rank 85/199; visa-free access to 57 destinations.
- **Top:** Singapore (195), Japan & South Korea (193), Germany/Italy/France (192).
- **Bottom:** Afghanistan (26 destinations), Iraq, Syria.
- **Publisher:** Henley & Partners, London, based on data from IATA (International Air Transport Association).
- **Big gainers:** UAE (climbed from 62nd to 10th over a decade).
- **Big losers:** USA (dropped out of top 10 for first time in 20 years – now 10th).

Static Background – Concepts & Terms

- **Henley & Partners:** UK-based investment migration consultancy; Henley Passport Index launched in 2006 in cooperation with IATA – covers 199 passports and 227 travel destinations.

- **Methodology:** Score = number of destinations for which the passport-holder does not need a prior visa (or can obtain visa-on-arrival, eTA).
- **India's trajectory:** India was 85th in 2023, 80th in 2024, 85th again in 2025. Visa-free access grew from ~52 (2015) to 57 (2025).
- **Other indices:** Arton Capital's Passport Index and Nomad Passport Index rank differently (Nomad includes factors like tax, global perception, dual-citizenship laws – UAE has topped Nomad).
- **Dark-blue passport:** India issues 3 types – Blue (ordinary), White (official), Maroon (diplomatic). Print: 'Republic of India' in Hindi and English; cover features the Ashoka Lion Capital.
- **E-passports:** India began issuing chip-based biometric e-passports in 2024 under the Passport Seva Programme. RFID chip stores biometric data of holder.

Prelims Connect

Henley Passport Index 2025 – Top & Bottom

Rank	Country	Visa-Free Count
1	Singapore	195
2	Japan / South Korea	193
3	Germany / Italy / France	192
85	India	57
198	Syria	27
199	Afghanistan	26

Prelims Pointers

- Publisher: Henley & Partners (data from IATA).
- India 2025: 85/199; 57 visa-free destinations.
- Launched: 2006.
- Top: Singapore (195 destinations).
- India passport colours: Blue, White, Maroon.
- E-passports: Launched 2024 (biometric RFID).

Global Peace Index 2025 – India at 115/163

The Institute for Economics and Peace's Global Peace Index 2025 ranked India 115 out of 163 countries, marginally improved from 116 in 2024. Iceland retained the top spot for the 18th consecutive year; Yemen overtook Afghanistan as the least peaceful country.

News in Brief

- **India:** Rank 115/163 – marginal improvement.
- **Publisher:** Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), Sydney – founded 2007 by Steve Killelea.
- **Top:** Iceland (1st, 18 years in a row), Ireland, Austria, New Zealand, Singapore.
- **Bottom:** Yemen (163), Sudan, Afghanistan, Russia, Ukraine.
- **Finding:** Global peacefulness deteriorated in 2024 for the 13th time in 17 years; 97 countries deteriorated vs 65 that improved.
- **Economic impact:** Violence cost the global economy USD 19.1 trillion (13.5% of world GDP) in 2024.

Static Background – Concepts & Terms

- **IEP:** Independent non-partisan think-tank with offices in Sydney, Brussels, Mexico City, New York, The Hague. Publishes 3 flagship reports: Global Peace Index, Global Terrorism Index, Positive Peace Report.
- **Methodology:** 23 qualitative and quantitative indicators across 3 domains – (1) Ongoing domestic/international conflict (5 indicators), (2) Societal safety & security (11 indicators), (3) Militarisation (7 indicators).
- **Positive vs negative peace:** Negative peace = absence of violence (what GPI measures). Positive peace = attitudes, institutions, structures that create and sustain peaceful societies (IEP's parallel Positive Peace Index).
- **Global Terrorism Index:** Also by IEP; India traditionally ranked among top 15 in GTI but improved to 14th in 2024 edition. Publishes annually at Chatham House or St Kitts summit.
- **Linked frameworks:** IEP scholars contribute to UN Agenda for Peace (2024); 'Sustaining Peace' UNGA Resolution 70/262 (2016).
- **India's weak indicators:** External conflicts (neighbourhood tensions), militarisation (military expenditure in absolute terms), and incarceration rates drag India down.

Prelims Connect

GPI – 3 Domains & 23 Indicators

Domain	# Indicators	Examples
Ongoing conflict	5	External/internal conflicts, deaths
Societal safety & security	11	Perceived crime, political stability, homicide
Militarisation	7	Military expenditure, UN peacekeeping, nuclear capability

Global Peace Index 2025 is the 19th edition. Companion reports: Global Terrorism Index, Positive Peace Report, Ecological Threat Register.

Prelims Pointers

- Publisher: Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP), Sydney.
- Founder: Steve Killelea (2007).
- India GPI 2025: 115/163.
- 3 domains, 23 indicators.
- Top: Iceland (18 consecutive years).
- Companion: Global Terrorism Index.

Global Liveability Index 2025 – Copenhagen Dethrones Vienna

The Economist Intelligence Unit's Global Liveability Index 2025 ranked Copenhagen as the world's most liveable city, ending Vienna's streak of top rankings. Delhi & Mumbai from India ranked in the middle band; Damascus remained the least liveable.

News in Brief

- **Top:** Copenhagen (1st, for first time), Vienna, Zurich, Melbourne, Geneva.
- **India:** Delhi and Mumbai in the 140s out of 173.

- **Bottom:** Damascus (Syria), Tripoli (Libya), Karachi (Pakistan), Algiers, Dhaka.
- **Publisher:** Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).
- **5 categories:** Stability, Healthcare, Culture & Environment, Education, Infrastructure.

Static Background – Concepts & Terms

- **Launched:** EIU's Liveability Ranking started as an internal benchmark in 2002 for hardship allowances and was made public annually from 2005.
- **Methodology:** Scores 173 cities across 30+ qualitative and quantitative indicators grouped into 5 categories, each weighted differently – Stability (25%), Healthcare (20%), Culture & Environment (25%), Education (10%), Infrastructure (20%).
- **Score scale:** Each factor rated Acceptable / Tolerable / Uncomfortable / Undesirable / Intolerable; aggregated into a 0-100 score.
- **Vienna's fall:** Vienna topped the ranking 2018, 2019, 2022, 2023, 2024 – in 2025, increased 'terrorism threat perception' led to a small drop, letting Copenhagen take 1st.
- **Other liveability indices:** Mercer Quality of Living (HR consultancy, focused on expats); Monocle Quality of Life Index (magazine ranking); OECD Better Life Index (peer comparison).
- **Indian cities:** Under the Ease of Living Index by the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs, Bengaluru and Pune have ranked top in the Million+ category.

Prelims Connect

EIU Liveability Index – 5 Categories & Weights

Category	Weight
Stability	25%
Culture & Environment	25%
Healthcare	20%
Infrastructure	20%
Education	10%

Prelims Pointers

- Publisher: Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).
- 2025 #1: Copenhagen (first time).
- 5 categories; Stability + Culture each 25%.
- Indian equivalent: Ease of Living Index (MoHUA).
- Coverage: 173 cities worldwide.

Travel & Tourism Development Index 2024 – India at 39/119

The WEF's Travel & Tourism Development Index 2024, released in May 2024, ranked India 39 out of 119 countries – the highest among lower-middle-income economies and the leader of South Asia.

News in Brief

- **India:** Rank 39/119 (from 54 earlier).
- **Publisher:** World Economic Forum (WEF) – successor to the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI).

- **Top:** USA, Spain, Japan, France, Australia, Germany, UK.
- **India's strong pillars:** Natural resources (#6), Cultural resources (#9), Air transport infrastructure, Price competitiveness.
- **India's weak pillars:** Health & Hygiene, Environmental sustainability, ICT readiness.

Static Background – Concepts & Terms

- **Index transition:** Until 2019 the WEF published the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI) biennially. In 2022 it was renamed Travel & Tourism Development Index (TTDI) to add sustainability and resilience pillars post-COVID.
- **5 sub-indices, 17 pillars:** (1) Enabling Environment, (2) T&T Policy & Enabling Conditions, (3) Infrastructure, (4) T&T Demand Drivers, (5) T&T Sustainability.
- **India's tourism stats:** Foreign tourist arrivals (FTAs) crossed 9.5 million in 2024 (Ministry of Tourism provisional data); FEE ~USD 28 billion; sector contributes ~9% to GDP.
- **UNWTO:** UN World Tourism Organization – UN specialised agency; HQ Madrid; founded 1975; India founding member. Publishes World Tourism Barometer.
- **India's tourism schemes:** Swadesh Darshan (theme-based circuits), PRASHAD (pilgrimage rejuvenation), Dekho Apna Desh, Nidhi (accommodation database).
- **Recent milestones:** India was G20 Tourism Working Group host in 2023, releasing the Goa Roadmap for Tourism & Sustainable Development Goals.

Prelims Connect

5 Sub-indices of TTDI

Sub-index	Example Pillars
Enabling Environment	Business Env, Safety, Health, HR, ICT
T&T Policy Conditions	Prioritisation, Openness, Price Competitiveness
Infrastructure	Air, Ground, Tourist Services
T&T Demand Drivers	Natural, Cultural, Non-leisure
T&T Sustainability	Environmental, Socio-economic, Pressure & Impact

Prelims Pointers

- Publisher: World Economic Forum (WEF).
- India TTDI 2024: 39/119.
- Successor to TTCI (renamed 2022).
- 5 sub-indices, 17 pillars.
- FTAs 2024: ~9.5 million.
- UNWTO: HQ Madrid; India founding member.

World Urbanization Prospects 2025 – UN DESA

The UN DESA's World Urbanization Prospects 2025 projected that 68% of the world's population will live in urban areas by 2050, up from 56% in 2024. India, China and Nigeria together will account for 35% of the projected urban growth.

News in Brief

- **Global:** Urban share to rise from 56% (2024) to 68% (2050).
- **Top 3 urbanisers:** India, China, Nigeria – 35% of total global urban population increase by 2050.
- **India:** Urban population to rise by 416 million between 2018-2050.
- **Publisher:** UN Department of Economic & Social Affairs (DESA), Population Division.
- **Megacities:** Delhi to become the world's most populous city, overtaking Tokyo.

Static Background – Concepts & Terms

- **UN DESA:** UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs – supports the implementation of Agenda 2030; Population Division publishes World Population Prospects, World Urbanization Prospects, International Migration Report.
- **Definition of 'urban':** Each country defines its own urban threshold. India uses Census definition: population >5,000 + density >400/km² + ≥75% of male workers in non-agriculture.
- **India's urban trajectory:** India's urban share was 17% (1951), 28% (2001), 31% (2011), and projected 40% by 2030 and 50% by 2047.
- **SDG 11:** Sustainable Cities and Communities – aims to make cities 'inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable'; includes New Urban Agenda adopted at Habitat III (Quito, 2016).
- **Megacity:** A metropolitan area with more than 10 million inhabitants. India has 6 megacities (Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad).
- **AMRUT & Smart Cities:** India's flagship urban missions – AMRUT 2.0 (2021-26) and Smart Cities Mission (2015-2024) respond to projected urban growth.

Prelims Connect

India's Urban Share Trajectory

Year	Urban Share (%)
1951	17%
1981	23%
2011 (Census)	31%
2024 (est.)	36%
2030 (projected)	40%
2047 (projected)	~50%

Habitat I (Vancouver 1976), Habitat II (Istanbul 1996), Habitat III (Quito 2016 – adopted New Urban Agenda). UN-Habitat HQ: Nairobi, established 1977.

Prelims Pointers

- Publisher: UN DESA, Population Division.
- Global urban share 2050: 68%.
- India + China + Nigeria: 35% of global urban growth.
- Delhi projected world's most populous by 2030.
- SDG 11: Sustainable Cities.
- UN-Habitat: HQ Nairobi; est. 1977.
- New Urban Agenda: Habitat III, Quito 2016.

Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) Baseline Report 2024

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj released the first Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) Baseline Report in April 2025, measuring development across 2.16 lakh gram panchayats against 435 indicators and 9 LSDG (Localisation of SDGs) themes.

News in Brief

- **Publisher:** Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India.
- **Scale:** Covers 2.16 lakh Gram Panchayats – world's largest grassroots dataset.
- **Framework:** 9 themes of LSDG (Localisation of SDGs), 435 local indicators, 566 unique data points.
- **Top state:** Gujarat, Telangana and Tripura rated among the best performing on composite PAI.
- **Categories:** Panchayats classified as Achiever, Front Runner, Performer, Aspirant, Beginner.
- **Tripura:** Notably topped the 'Front Runner' proportion.

Static Background – Concepts & Terms

- **LSDG framework:** The Ministry of Panchayati Raj mapped the 17 SDGs into 9 themes tailored to local governance – Poverty-Free Village, Healthy Village, Child-Friendly Village, Water-Sufficient Village, Clean & Green Village, Self-Sufficient Infrastructure, Socially Just Village, Village with Good Governance, Women-Friendly Village.
- **73rd Constitutional Amendment:** 1992 – added Part IX and 11th Schedule; institutionalised the 3-tier Panchayati Raj system (Gram, Block, District); mandated elections every 5 years, reservation for women (33% now 50% in many states), SC/ST representation.
- **Data collection:** PAI data collected via 14 Lakh+ Panchayat-level officials using eGramSwaraj and Meri Panchayat apps under the Digital Panchayat initiative.
- **5 classification bands:** Achiever (90+), Front Runner (75-90), Performer (60-75), Aspirant (40-60), Beginner (<40).
- **Purpose:** Identifies gaps and enables targeted interventions via convergence with central schemes (MGNREGA, PMAY-G, JJM, SBM-G).
- **Panchayat Sashaktikaran Puraskar:** Annual awards by MoPR to recognise best-performing panchayats under the National Panchayat Awards (NPA).

Prelims Connect

9 LSDG Themes under PAI

#	Theme
1	Poverty-Free and Enhanced Livelihoods
2	Healthy Village
3	Child-Friendly Village
4	Water-Sufficient Village
5	Clean & Green Village
6	Self-Sufficient Infrastructure

7	Socially Just & Secured Village
8	Village with Good Governance
9	Women-Friendly Village

73rd Amendment Act, 1992: Added Part IX + 11th Schedule (29 subjects) to the Constitution; came into effect 24 April 1993 – celebrated as National Panchayati Raj Day.

Prelims Pointers

- Publisher: Ministry of Panchayati Raj.
- Scale: 2.16 lakh Gram Panchayats.
- Framework: 9 LSDG themes, 435 indicators.
- 5 bands: Achiever / Front Runner / Performer / Aspirant / Beginner.
- 73rd Amendment: 1992 (Part IX, 11th Schedule).
- National Panchayati Raj Day: 24 April.

NITI Aayog SDG India Index 2023-24 – Fifth Edition

NITI Aayog's SDG India Index 2023-24, released in July 2024, scored India at 71/100 – up from 66 in 2020-21 and 57 in 2018. Kerala retained the top rank among states; Bihar was at the bottom; Chandigarh topped the UT ranking.

News in Brief

- **India:** Composite score 71/100 (up from 66 in 2020-21).
- **Top states:** Kerala, Uttarakhand, Tamil Nadu (tied), Goa.
- **Bottom:** Bihar, Jharkhand, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh.
- **Top UT:** Chandigarh.
- **Publisher:** NITI Aayog, in collaboration with MoSPI, UN in India (UNDP).
- **Framework:** 113 indicators across 16 of 17 SDGs; updated indicator set in 2023-24 edition.
- **Frontrunner states:** Those scoring 65 or above – now 32 states/UTs (up from 15 in 2020-21).

Static Background – Concepts & Terms

- **SDG India Index history:** First edition released in December 2018 – the first attempt by a government to measure SDG progress at the state/UT level. Subsequent editions: 2019-20, 2020-21, 2023-24.
- **Score bands:** Aspirant (0-49), Performer (50-64), Front Runner (65-99), Achiever (100).
- **What's new in 2023-24:** Expanded to 113 indicators (from 70 in 2018); coverage of 16 of 17 SDGs (excluding SDG 14 on life below water for inland states); integrated gender and disability parity sub-scores.
- **Why no SDG 17?** Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17) is not directly measured because it relies on international indicators – but it is discussed qualitatively in the report.
- **NITI Aayog:** National Institution for Transforming India – replaced the Planning Commission on 1 January 2015. PM is ex-officio Chairperson; Suman Bery is current Vice-Chairperson; B V R Subrahmanyam is CEO (since Feb 2023).
- **VNR:** India's Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) submitted to the UN High-Level Political Forum in 2017, 2020 and an upcoming third VNR – based heavily on SDG India Index data.

Prelims Connect

SDG India Index – Score Categories

Category	Score
Aspirant	0-49
Performer	50-64
Front Runner	65-99
Achiever	100

NITI Aayog also publishes the Export Preparedness Index, India Innovation Index, Agricultural Marketing & Farmer Friendly Reforms Index, Fiscal Health Index of States, and the Multidimensional Poverty Index (India).

Prelims Pointers

- Publisher: NITI Aayog (est. 1 Jan 2015).
- India composite score 2023-24: 71/100.
- Top state: Kerala. Bottom: Bihar.
- Top UT: Chandigarh.
- Indicators: 113 across 16 SDGs.
- Categories: Aspirant / Performer / Front Runner / Achiever.

State Mining Readiness Index (SMRI) 2025 – MoM

The Ministry of Mines released the first State Mining Readiness Index (SMRI) in 2025, ranking 16 mineral-rich states on their policy, investment, governance and sustainability readiness for the mining sector. Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Jharkhand topped the ranking.

News in Brief

- **Top:** Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Jharkhand, Karnataka.
- **Publisher:** Ministry of Mines, in collaboration with FIMI and KPMG.
- **Pillars:** Policy & Regulatory Framework, Investment Climate, Operational Efficiency, Sustainability, Community Engagement.
- **Scope:** Covers 16 mineral-bearing states.
- **Objective:** Foster competitive federalism in mining – help states benchmark themselves and attract investment into critical minerals.

Static Background – Concepts & Terms

- **MMDR Act:** Mines and Minerals (Development & Regulation) Act 1957 – the primary law governing mineral resources; amended multiple times, most recently by the MMDR Amendment Act 2023, which allowed private sector participation in 24 critical and strategic minerals.
- **Critical minerals list:** India released its first Critical Minerals list in June 2023 – 30 minerals including lithium, cobalt, nickel, graphite, rare earth elements (REEs), titanium, tungsten, beryllium, niobium, tantalum.
- **KABIL:** Khanij Bidesh India Ltd – JV of NALCO, HCL and MECL set up in 2019 to secure overseas critical mineral assets; has signed MoUs with Argentina, Chile, Australia for lithium.
- **Geological Survey of India (GSI):** Established 1851; HQ Kolkata; part of the Ministry of Mines; one of the world's oldest geological institutions.
- **Mineral royalty:** Collected by state governments under 7th Schedule (State List Entry 23 & 50); the 2024 SC ruling in Mineral Area Development Authority (MADA) allowed states to impose taxes on mineral rights.

- **National Mineral Policy:** NMP 2019 replaced NMP 2008 and mandates development of 'zero waste mining'.

Prelims Connect

India's Critical Minerals Framework – Key Facts

Item	Detail
Legislation	MMDR Act 1957 (amended 2023)
Critical Minerals List	30 minerals (June 2023)
Overseas arm	KABIL (2019)
Survey body	Geological Survey of India (1851)
Nodal Ministry	Ministry of Mines

The 2023 MMDR Amendment also introduced a new mining lease auction mechanism for critical minerals, allowing transparent, competitive bidding for 24 specified minerals.

Prelims Pointers

- Publisher: Ministry of Mines (2025 debut).
- SMRI Top 3: Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Jharkhand.
- MMDR Act: 1957; amended 2023.
- Critical Minerals List: 30 minerals (2023).
- KABIL: JV of NALCO+HCL+MECL (2019).
- GSI: HQ Kolkata, est. 1851.

Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2024-25 – MoSPI

The PLFS Annual Report 2024-25 released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) in 2025 reported India's Worker Population Ratio (WPR) for 15+ at 58.2%, Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) at 60.1% and Unemployment Rate (UR) at 3.2% – all historic highs for the recent period.

News in Brief

- **LFPR (15+, usual status):** 60.1% (up from 57.9% in 2023-24).
- **WPR (15+):** 58.2%.
- **Unemployment Rate (UR):** 3.2% (down from 3.4% in 2023-24).
- **Female LFPR:** 41.7% (up from 37.0%) – driven by self-employment in rural areas.
- **Publisher:** National Statistical Office (NSO), Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI).

Static Background – Concepts & Terms

- **PLFS history:** Launched by NSO in April 2017 replacing the quinquennial Employment-Unemployment Surveys conducted by NSSO (last round 2011-12). First annual report released for 2017-18.
- **Two reports:** PLFS releases Annual Reports (for rural + urban, Usual Status) and Quarterly Bulletins (urban areas only, CWS). Annual report typically released with ~9-month lag.
- **Three activity measures:** (1) Usual Status (US) – annual reference period; (2) Current Weekly Status (CWS) – 7-day reference period; (3) Current Daily Status (CDS) – each day in the reference week.
- **Definitions:** LFPR = labour force ÷ population; WPR = workers ÷ population; UR = unemployed ÷ labour force. All in percentage.

- **Female LFPR trend:** Rose from 23.3% (2017-18) to 41.7% (2024-25) — largely driven by unpaid helpers in household enterprises and subsistence-oriented self-employment, per ICRIER analysis.
- **NFHS-5 link:** Different from NFHS employment data (National Family Health Survey, by MoHFW) which captures cash employment only.

Prelims Connect

PLFS Activity Measures – Key Concepts

Measure	Reference Period	Use Case
Usual Status (US)	Last 365 days	Long-term employment
Current Weekly Status (CWS)	Last 7 days	Short-term variation
Current Daily Status (CDS)	Each day	Most granular

Demographic Dividend: India's working-age population (15-59) is projected to peak at ~65% around 2036. PLFS is the key dataset for tracking how well India harnesses this dividend.

Prelims Pointers

- Publisher: NSO, MoSPI.
- PLFS launched: April 2017 (replacing NSSO EUS).
- LFPR 2024-25: 60.1%.
- UR 2024-25: 3.2%.
- Female LFPR: 41.7% (up from 23.3% in 2017-18).
- 3 measures: US / CWS / CDS.

NFHS-6 & RBI Handbook of Statistics on Indian States 2025

The NFHS-6 (2024-25) fieldwork concluded in 2025 and the RBI Handbook of Statistics on Indian States 2024-25 — a statistical benchmark for state-level economic analysis — was released in November 2025 covering 46 socio-economic tables across states.

News in Brief

- **NFHS-6 status:** Data collection by IIPS Mumbai (nodal agency under MoHFW) completed 2025; full report awaited.
- **RBI Handbook:** 16th edition of the annual 'Handbook of Statistics on Indian States' released Nov 2025.
- **Sections:** Socio-demographic; state domestic product; agriculture; industry; infrastructure; banking; fiscal.
- **NFHS coverage:** 7 lakh households, all states and UTs — one of the world's largest household surveys.

Static Background – Concepts & Terms

- **NFHS series:** Sponsored by MoHFW; implemented by International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), Mumbai. Rounds: NFHS-1 (1992-93), NFHS-2 (1998-99), NFHS-3 (2005-06), NFHS-4 (2015-16), NFHS-5 (2019-21), NFHS-6 (2023-25 fieldwork).
- **NFHS-5 highlights:** TFR 2.0 (below replacement 2.1 for first time); IMR 35/1000; institutional births 88.6%; sex ratio at birth 929; female literacy 71.5%.
- **Total Fertility Rate (TFR):** Average number of children born per woman; replacement level is 2.1. India reached 2.0 in NFHS-5, matching the replacement level for the first time.
- **RBI Handbook:** Published annually by the Reserve Bank of India since 2009 (first edition). Provides long time-series data for all states on key economic variables — essential reference for state-level analysis.

- **RBI founded:** 1 April 1935 under the RBI Act 1934 (Hilton Young Commission recommendation); nationalised 1949; HQ Mumbai; current Governor Sanjay Malhotra (since Dec 2024).
- **SDP data:** State Domestic Product series compiled by state statistical bureaus and CSO. Used for fiscal devolution calculations by the Finance Commission (16th FC headed by Arvind Panagariya, ToR 2023).

Prelims Connect

NFHS Rounds – Key Milestones

Round	Period	Notable Finding
NFHS-1	1992-93	IMR 79; first round
NFHS-2	1998-99	IMR 68
NFHS-3	2005-06	IMR 57; HIV focus
NFHS-4	2015-16	Expanded districts
NFHS-5	2019-21	TFR 2.0 (replacement)
NFHS-6	2023-25	Fieldwork done 2025

Prelims Pointers

- NFHS sponsor: MoHFW; implemented by IIPS Mumbai.
- NFHS-5: TFR 2.0 (first below replacement).
- RBI Handbook of Statistics on Indian States: Annual since 2009.
- RBI founded: 1 April 1935; HQ Mumbai.
- Current RBI Governor: Sanjay Malhotra (Dec 2024).
- 16th Finance Commission: Arvind Panagariya (Chair).