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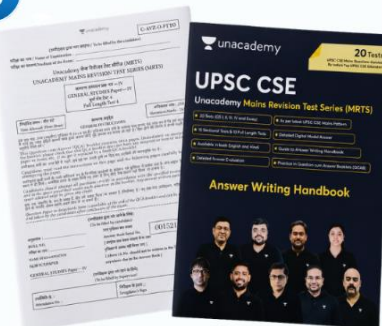


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World Environment Day was established in 1972 by the [United Nations](#) at the [Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment](#) (5–16 June 1972), that had resulted from discussions on the integration of human interactions and the environment. One year later, in 1973, the first WED was held with the theme "Only one earth".^[6]

This tension shaped the Stockholm Conference. India's Prime Minister **Indira Gandhi** attended the conference and famously argued that poverty and environmental degradation are closely linked. Her intervention helped ensure that environmental protection was not framed as anti-development.

The conference led to three major outcomes:

- Stockholm Declaration with 26 principles
- Action Plan for the Human Environment
- Creation of the United Nations Environment Programme

Core Idea

The Stockholm Declaration recognised that human beings have the right to live in an environment of quality, dignity and well-being.

At the same time, it said that humans also have a responsibility to protect and improve the environment for present and future generations.

This balance between **rights and duties** became a major theme of environmental law later.

The Declaration linked environment with:

- Human dignity
- Development
- Natural resources
- Pollution control
- Wildlife protection
- Intergenerational equity
- International cooperation
- State responsibility

UNEP

One of the most important outcomes of the Stockholm Conference was the creation of the **United Nations Environment Programme**.

UNEP became the main global environmental body within the United Nations system. It coordinates international environmental action, supports environmental treaties, publishes assessments and helps countries develop environmental policies.

UNEP is headquartered in **Nairobi, Kenya**. This was significant because it was one of the first major UN bodies headquartered in a developing country.

Impact on India

The Stockholm Conference had a major impact on India's environmental governance.

After the conference, India amended the Constitution through the **42nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1976**. This added:

- **Article 48A**: The State shall protect and improve the environment and safeguard forests and wildlife.
- **Article 51A(g)**: Every citizen has a fundamental duty to protect and improve the natural environment.

The Stockholm Declaration also influenced later Indian environmental laws, especially the **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986**. This Act was enacted after the **Bhopal Gas Tragedy** and also drew constitutional support from **Article 253**, which allows Parliament to make laws for implementing international agreements and conventions.

Major Indian laws influenced by the post-Stockholm environmental framework include:

- **Water Act, 1974**
- **Air Act, 1981**
- **Environment Protection Act, 1986**
- **Forest Conservation Act, 1980**
- **Wildlife Protection strengthening measures**
- **Environmental Impact Assessment framework**

Funding India's climate future, a trillion-dollar question

There is one figure that should command the attention of every policymaker, banker, and financial expert in India. India will require $\$162.5$ trillion – roughly $\$2.5$ trillion – by 2030 to meet its Nationally Determined Contributions. Over the longer term, the cost of achieving net-zero emissions by 2070 is estimated at $\$10.1$ trillion, nearly three times India's current GDP.

This is not a counsel of despair. India has more tools to bridge this gap than it has deployed so far. But doing so requires a clear financing strategy and the institutional resolve to build mechanisms that can mobilise capital at scale.

The financing gap

Decarbonising just four sectors – steel, cement, power, and road transport, which together account for more than half of India's carbon emissions – will require $\$467$ billion in additional capital expenditure between 2022 and 2030, roughly $\$54$ billion annually, or 1.3% of GDP. These are sectors where the private sector will not lead without strong regulatory incentives, because the economics of green steel and green cement simply do not yet work without policy support.

By 2030, developing economies are estimated to need $\$5$ trillion to $\$6$ trillion for climate action. The developed world promised $\$100$ billion annually at Paris – and missed it. The Baku New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) commits $\$300$ billion by 2035 – which India rightly considers insufficient. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI)'s own Report on Currency and Finance estimates that India needs an additional annual investment of at least 2.5% of GDP for green financing until 2030.

The international community will not fill this gap on India's behalf. The honest answer is that India must mobilise most of it from within.

India is not starting from zero. By the end of 2024, India had issued $\$55.9$ billion in green, social, sustainability, and sustainability-linked debt – a 186% rise since 2021. Green debt leads, making up 83% of the total, with most funds directed to clean energy and transport. Sovereign green bonds worth $\$477$ billion have helped set benchmarks and boost investor confidence. This is genuinely impressive.

The instruments exist. The challenge is deploying them at scale. India already has green bonds, sovereign green bonds, sustainability-linked bonds, blended finance structures, transition finance instruments and infrastructure investment trusts. What is missing is the connective tissue: a taxonomy, a guarantee architecture, a liquidity mechanism, and the regulatory incentives that make green finance cheaper than brown finance.

The most significant shift in India's



Balakrishna Pisupati

Head of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) office in India

India's bottleneck is not funding, but the institutional architecture needed to move it where it is needed

climate-finance landscape in 2025 did not occur at a climate conference but in Mint Street. In 2025, the RBI's Climate Finance and Management of Climate Change Risks Directions for Commercial Banks and Small Finance Banks established a comprehensive framework requiring banks to integrate climate risks into their lending and risk-management practices. Importantly, eligible green activities can qualify as priority sector lending (PSL), while investments in sovereign green bonds are also recognised under the framework.

This is a bigger deal than it looks. PSL requirements are one of the most powerful levers that the RBI holds over bank behaviour. Currently, for every $\text{₹}10,000$ crore in loans, banks must ensure $\text{₹}4,000$ crore of PSL.

The RBI can and must go further. It has proposed accepting sovereign green bonds as collateral with more flexibility in margin requirements and adjusting reserve requirements to support credit flows to green sectors. The next frontier is differentiated capital requirements based on climate risk – essentially, making brown lending more capital-intensive and green lending less so.

The RBI's Climate Risk Information System on climate-related financial risks for commercial banks, and its inclusion of sustainable finance in its regulatory sandbox, are steps in the right direction.

The next critical step is a comprehensive climate stress-testing framework for Indian banks – one that assesses the flood risk of a loan portfolio in Bihar as rigorously as it evaluates credit risk.

The taxonomy unlocks everything else

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced in the Union Budget 2024-25 that India would develop a climate-finance taxonomy. This is the foundation of the entire ecosystem. Without a clear legal definition of what counts as "green", green bonds cannot be credibly verified, PSL classifications remain questionable, international investors cannot make compliance claims, and regulators cannot effectively curb greenwashing.

The Ministry of Finance's Climate Finance Taxonomy and the Ministry of Steel's Green Steel Taxonomy will facilitate standardised sustainable investments and boost investor confidence.

The international climate finance system has one instrument that India has chronically underused: blended finance – the strategic use of public or concessional funds to de-risk private investment. Financial instruments such as green bonds, climate funds, and blended finance models are important in mobilising capital for sustainability initiatives, and unlocking

investment at scale will help drive long-term resilience in India's most climate-sensitive sectors.

Here is the arithmetic that makes blended finance so compelling. A first loss guarantee of $\$100$ million from a public source can unlock $\$500$ million to $\$1$ billion in private co-investment in solar, offshore wind, green hydrogen, or climate-resilient agriculture, because it absorbs the risk that private capital finds unacceptable. It needs a capitalisation injection and an expanded mandate to get there.



Where the finance gap is most acute

One dimension of India's climate finance challenge that receives almost no attention is its federally disaggregated nature.

Climate adaptation – the kind of finance that protects coastal villages in Odisha, drought-prone farming in Vidarbha, or spring rejuvenation in the Himalayas – is delivered at the State level. But States have neither the borrowing capacity nor the institutional infrastructure to access international climate finance. Tamil Nadu and Kerala have shown that ambitious State-level climate programming is possible. The financing architecture needs to catch up with the ambition.

There are four things that India must do now. First, finalise and enact the Climate Finance Taxonomy without further delay. It is the single most leveraged action available.

Second, the RBI must move from enabling green finance to mandating it – through differentiated capital requirements, mandatory climate stress testing for banks, and expanded PSL targets that include climate adaptation alongside mitigation.

Third, establish a State Climate Finance Facility, capitalised for example, by the Union, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), and international sources, to give States and municipalities genuine access to green debt markets.

Fourth, scale sovereign green bond issuances rapidly and embed them in the SLR framework to deepen the domestic market and attract foreign capital.

India's climate-finance challenge is large and urgent, but not insurmountable. The instruments exist, the regulatory framework is taking shape, and capital is available. What is missing is not money, but the institutional capacity to deploy it at scale. Fixing that is the work of the Budget cycles. The country that solves this challenge fastest will shape the future of climate finance in the developing world.

The views expressed are personal

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Mains Practice Question

Q. The international community will not fill the climate finance gap on India's behalf. The honest answer is that India must mobilize most of it from within. Critically examine.

(250 words; 15 marks)

The power of mangroves over seawalls

India's coastline relies on seawalls and embankments, while Ecosystem-based Adaptation through mangroves, seagrasses and coral reefs continues to reduce climate risks

When Cyclone Dana made landfall near Bhitarkanika on Odisha's coast, the region's mangroves quietly provided a form of protection that billions of rupees in coastal infrastructure often struggle to deliver: reducing climate impacts while strengthening ecosystems and livelihoods. Across India's coastline, mangroves, seagrass meadows, and coral reefs are already helping communities adapt to rising climate risks. Yet seawalls, groynes, and embankments continue to dominate adaptation spending, even though they can be costly to maintain and sometimes transfer risks elsewhere. Despite their proven benefits, these ecosystem-based interventions are rarely recognised as Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA), limiting their visibility in adaptation planning and finance.

For millions living along India's coastline, climate change is already a lived reality. From rising sea levels across the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal to saline intrusion, intensifying cyclones and storm surges, climate change is multiplying threats along India's 11,000-kilometre coastline. These interacting hazards not only reshaped the ecologically fragile coastal

landscape but also directly upend the lives, livelihoods and homes of around 250 million people. In this context, EbA offers a promising strategy for reducing climate risk while sustaining the ecosystems that support fisheries, agriculture, and tourism.

India's coastal adaptation landscape reveals a stark preference for engineered measures such as seawalls, groynes, embankments, and tetrapods. This preference is also reflected in public spending. While coastal States spent ₹2,641 crore on hard protection measures over the last decade, the National Coastal Mission's budget fell from ₹195 crore in 2022-23 to ₹50 crore in 2024-25. Although grey measures remain necessary and effective in many high-density urban contexts, they are expensive to maintain and can displace underlying risks rather than resolve them. In Kerala, for example, hard armouring along eroding coastlines has protected specific sites while accelerating erosion and damage in adjacent areas.

Untapped adaptation asset

EbA uses biodiversity and ecosystem-based measures to help people adapt to climate change.

India's coastline hosts a range of ecosystems, including mangroves,



Green refuge: Across India's coastline, mangroves, seagrass meadows, and coral reefs are already helping communities adapt to rising climate risks. GETTY IMAGES

seagrasses, coral reefs, and wetlands, that act as natural buffers against climate impacts. Research identifies India as a global 'hotspot' for coastal EbA, with mangroves protecting more people per hectare than almost any other country. Yet this ecological shield remains an underutilised asset in India's climate resilience strategy.

The benefits of EbA are already visible on the ground. In the Sundarbans, for instance, over 18,000 women restored 4,600 hectares of mangroves, blunting the devastation of cyclones Amphan and Yaas. The restoration also streng-

thened livelihoods through activities such as honey collection and crab farming, highlighting EbA's social and economic co-benefits.

EbA remains peripheral to India's adaptation agenda. Fragmented mandates, weak monitoring, and a preference for visible infrastructure often leave ecosystem-based interventions buried within broader sectoral programmes rather than recognised as adaptation in their own right.

The most overlooked barrier, however, is the ambiguity surrounding the term EbA. The policy space is crowded with overlapping

concepts such as Nature-based Solutions (NbS), Ecosystem-based Coastal Adaptation (EbCA), Ecosystem-based Disaster Risk Reduction (Eco-DRR), and other ecosystem-centred approaches, creating uncertainty about what qualifies as EbA. Additionally, many ecosystem-based interventions are implemented through broader development, conservation, or restoration programmes, with their adaptation benefits rarely assessed or recorded separately. As a result, many coastal EbA interventions remain concealed within sectoral initiatives or generic policy categories, making India's coastal EbA portfolio appear much weaker than it truly is.

Why classification matters

The Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats & Tangible Incomes programme illustrates the disconnect. It aims at restoring 540 square kilometres of mangroves across nine States. Although designed to protect coastal communities from the impacts of climate change, it is primarily framed as a restoration programme.

Without clear recognition and classification, many EbA interven-

tions remain fragmented across different labels and schemes. Clear classification helps identify, monitor, and evaluate adaptation outcomes while ensuring that the socio-economic benefits of EbA are properly reflected in planning and finance. This matters even more as the Global Goal on Adaptation has renewed attention to how adaptation outcomes are measured and reported. Without clear ways of identifying and tracking EbA interventions, India risks undercounting some of its most effective climate responses.

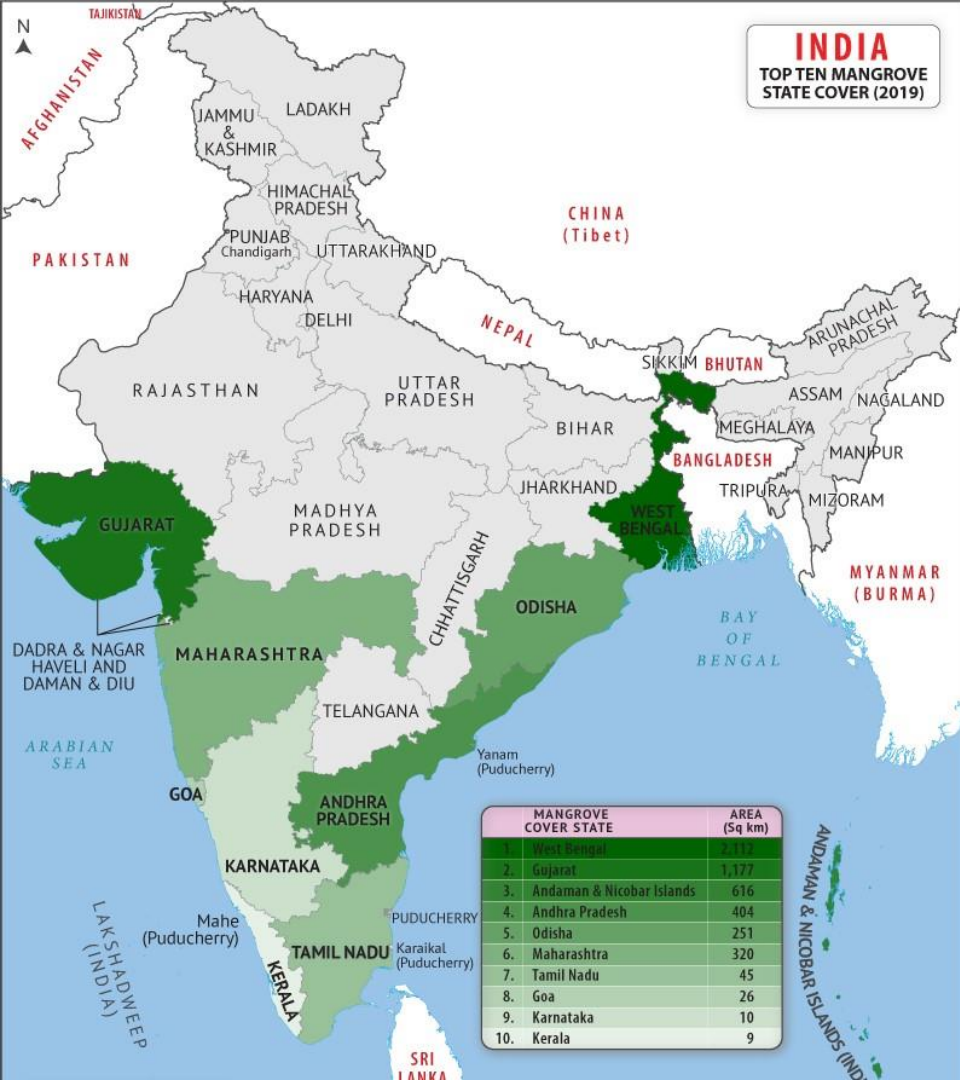
While this may appear to be a question of terminology, it carries real policy consequences. For better adaptation action, India must move from dispersed projects to a coherent strategy that embeds EbA within coastal planning and adaptation policy. The challenge is no longer whether ecosystem-based adaptation works but whether our policy frameworks are prepared to recognise, measure, and scale it. By operationalising EbA as a core climate and development strategy, India can reposition its natural capital as one of its most resilient and equitable lines of defence.



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India's Mangrove Cover

- As per the Indian State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2023, India's mangrove cover is around 4,992 sq. km, constituting 0.15% of the country's total geographical area.
- Major mangrove ecosystems are found in Odisha (Bhitarkanika), Andhra Pradesh (Godavari-Krishna delta), Gujarat, Kerala, and the Andaman Islands.
- The Sundarbans is the largest contiguous mangrove forest in the world, while Bhitarkanika is the second largest in India.

Untapped adaptation asset

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Mains Practice Question

Q. Write a note on India's mangrove cover and how Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) through mangroves can help mitigate coastal hazards arising due to climate impact?

(250 words; 15 marks)

When El Niño becomes an economic crisis

As climate risk increasingly becomes economic risk, stronger adaptation through heat-resilient cities, worker protection and better water management is essential

India often meets the arrival of extreme heat and erratic rain with a familiar shrug: the weather is harsh, the monsoon is uncertain, and life must go on. But that response misses the larger point. If El Niño returns as forecast, India will not face merely a weather disturbance; it will face a development crisis in which heat stress, water scarcity, crop losses, and food inflation expose the fragility of the informal economy.

The U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) ENSO Diagnostic Discussion Report (2026) states that El Niño is likely to emerge soon, with an 82% chance during May-July 2026 and a 96% chance of continuing through the winter of 2026-27. India's own weather office, the India Meteorological Department (IMD), in its Long Range Forecast for the Southwest Monsoon Season (2026), has projected monsoon rainfall at 92% of the long-period average, placing it in the

"below normal" category.

That matters because, in India, climate shocks do not remain confined to the atmosphere. They move quickly into the labour market, the mandi, the household kitchen, and the city street. A weak monsoon is not simply a concern for meteorologists; it is a warning that rural incomes may weaken, food prices may rise, and working hours may shrink. For a country where a large share of employment remains informal and climate-exposed, El Niño is best understood as an economic transmission mechanism.

The heat economy

The first channel is heat. Long and punishing summers reduce the productivity of workers who cannot escape outdoor exposure – construction labourers, delivery riders, street vendors, and agricultural workers. Climate change affects them the most because they have the least protection and economic security. A hotter India is



Counting clouds: When rainfall becomes uncertain, sowing decisions become riskier, irrigation costs increase, and groundwater extraction intensifies. FILE PHOTO

not merely a warmer India; it is an India where earning a livelihood becomes increasingly difficult. Heat stress lowers productivity, reduces working hours, and deepens income insecurity for millions who depend on daily wages.

The second channel is agricul-

ture. A 2026 *Reuters* report on India's monsoon outlook noted that the southwest monsoon supplies nearly 70% of the rainfall needed to water crops and recharge reservoirs and aquifers. When rainfall becomes uncertain, sowing decisions become riskier, irrigation

costs increase, and groundwater extraction intensifies. For small and marginal farmers already struggling with volatile prices and rising input costs, climatic uncertainty magnifies economic instability. In that sense, El Niño is not merely a climatic event; it is a shock to the production base of the rural economy.

The price shock

The third channel is inflation. Food prices are often where climate stress becomes visible to every household, not just farming communities. According to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation's Consumer Price Index Press Release (2026), food inflation rose to 4.2% in April 2026, raising concerns that a weaker monsoon could intensify price pressures further. If rainfall weakens and crop stress deepens, price pressures can

quickly spread across vegetables, pulses, and other essentials. For policymakers, this creates a difficult balancing act: the same climate shock can simultaneously weaken growth and intensify inflationary pressures.

Urban India is increasingly becoming a heat trap due to concretisation and shrinking green cover. But the burden is unequal. While wealthier households can adapt through better housing and cooling, poorer households face overcrowding, water scarcity and prolonged heat exposure. Climate change is thus widening urban inequalities.

El Niño is not merely a weather event but a development challenge. India needs stronger climate adaptation measures through heat-resilient cities, worker protection and better water management. Climate risk is now economic risk, and its burden falls most heavily on the poor.



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Fire and fire

Poor compliance and weak enforcement have led to deaths in fires

Indian cities rely on an economic ecosystem in which businesses often operate beyond the approved limits while enforcement remains sporadic. A fire *per se* is not odd, but a slew of deadly fires in urban areas, from the Uphaar Cinema fire in 1997 to the Arpora nightclub fire in 2025, has involved the same vulnerabilities: overcrowding, blocked escape routes, unapproved modifications to interior spaces, poor compliance, and weak enforcement. Prior inquiries, court rulings, and promises of reform have not prevented similar safety failures from recurring. Many of the victims of the B&B fire in Delhi on June 3 were medical tourists, lodged there due to the proximity to South Delhi's hospitals. Many were also infirm and could not act quickly to escape heat or suffocation – a situation that likely prevailed in the ICU fire at a Muzaffarpur hospital on June 4, which claimed four lives, including two elderly individuals. According to the Delhi Fire Services and the Municipal Corporation, the B&B lacked a fire department clearance, violated fire safety norms, and had more than thrice as many rooms as allowed for B&Bs. These bodies are also answerable to how the facility operated in this way, especially since the Delhi High Court had directed the municipality in January to audit the city's hospitality hubs. The building had been rebuilt in 2013 and reportedly exploited land-use exemptions to bypass municipal bylaws that required wider roads for fire tenders.

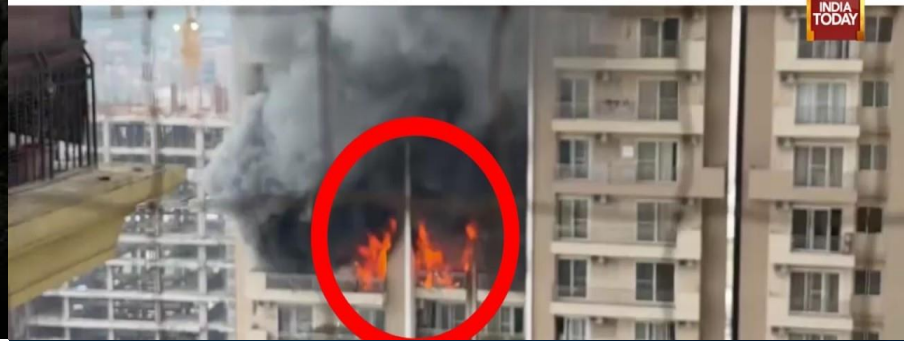
The tolerance of hazardous conditions with a high fire risk persists because cost-cutting entities, whether establishments or governments, overlook the value of safety measures when there is no fire, even if the measures prevented a fire. The state must inculcate fire safety using principled inspections, incentives, and sanctions, and sustain a culture in urban centres to practise it as a matter of course. Local authorities often blame owners for 'clandestine' modifications; the Delhi police have charged the B&B's owner with culpable homicide not amounting to murder. But the implication that long-standing negligence was the distal cause must extend to the absence of enforcement. The particular charge also results inconsistently in convictions, undermining the penal system's ability to deter such incidents. The misuse of provisions for B&Bs finally points to failures that the Tourism Department should investigate; the city's decision to rescind them is not adequate as an answer. Political blame-games are a red herring: a deadly fire is a product of the incidental causes on that day and systemic factors that preserved the risk. In the same vein, the government's response must encompass these factors or they may amount, once more, to little.



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Think Ahead. Think Growth.

**HOTEL FIRE KILLS
21 PEOPLE IN DELHI**

**WATCH: FIRE ENGULFS
SOCIETY IN NOIDA !**



5 killed, several injured in Bihar hospital blaze

Fire broke out at the ICU of a private hospital in Muzaffarpur in the early hours; State govt. forms a five-member panel to probe the incident, and announces ₹4 lakh ex gratia to the kin of victims

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India, U.K. launch observatory for critical minerals

Union Minister Shri G. Kishan Reddy and UK Foreign Secretary Rt Hon Yvette Cooper MP Launch India-UK Critical Minerals Global Supply Chain Observatory

Posted On: 04 JUN 2026 4:11PM by PIB Delhi

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Seeking to expand cooperation and technology-sharing in the realm of critical minerals, India and the United Kingdom on Thursday formally launched the **Critical Minerals Global Supply Chain Observatory (GSCO)**.

The platform – to be jointly operated by **India's Technology Innovation in Exploration & Mining Foundation (TEXMiN)**, **Indian Institute of Technology (ISM) Dhanbad** and **U.K.'s University of Cambridge** – will institute a **data-driven platform to monitor and analyse global critical mineral supply chains**.

In a social media post, Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy wrote, “This is a major step towards **strengthening critical mineral supply chains, supporting clean energy transitions, and building resilient global supply chains** through the **India-U.K. partnership.**”



Union Minister for Coal Kishan Reddy with U.K. Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper.

India and the U.K. were well-positioned to construct a mutually beneficial partnership on the back of their **newly firm-ed-up comprehensive trade deal** and the **defence industrial road map**, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said on Thursday. He made the remarks during a meeting with British Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper.

Ms. Cooper stated the observatory could also serve “as a foundation for broader cooperation across the critical minerals sector and related strategic industries.”

(With PTI inputs)

Energy tie-up tops bilateral agenda as Modi meets Delcy

PM holds discussions with **Venezuela's Acting President** on also expanding cooperation in critical minerals, technology, agriculture and health; importance of Global South solidarity emphasised

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

India's partnership with Venezuela is of "immense importance" for the Global South, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday, welcoming Delcy Rodriguez, the Acting President of Venezuela, even as the South American country called "energy security a fundamental pillar of the bilateral relationship".

Venezuela is still dealing with the aftermath of the abduction of President Nicolas Maduro by the U.S. military in January. Officials said Ms. Rodriguez, whose country is dealing with 'political transition' and 'fundamental economic transformation', described India as a "trusted partner". The leader, who arrived here on Wednesday, is on a five-day visit.

"We had extensive discussions on expanding our



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Venezuelan Acting President **Delcy Rodriguez** in New Delhi on Thursday. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

cooperation in energy, critical minerals, technology, agriculture, health and people-to-people ties. As a valued partner in Latin America, our close cooperation with Venezuela holds immense importance for the Global South. We will continue to work together for the mutual benefit of the people of our nations," said Mr. Modi after the meeting.

A press release from the Venezuelan government said the meeting was aimed at "strengthening the role of both nations in the geopolitical context of the Global South and on boosting mutually beneficial macroeconomic agreements". It described India as "one of the main destinations for the Nation's energy exports, making energy security a funda-

mental pillar of the bilateral relationship".

Ms. Rodriguez, who was accompanied by Ministers of Economy, Foreign Affairs, Science and Technology, and Transport and Communications, conducted a "comprehensive review of the mutual cooperation map", the press note said, adding that the bilateral relation is in an "excellent state".

Officials revealed that Ms. Rodriguez discussed the political situation in Venezuela in a "frank conversation" with Mr. Modi during official-level talks and over the working lunch that followed. "We all know there was a transition in Venezuela, and we are working with a government that is friendly and that wants partnership with India. We want to reciprocate that," said Rudendra Tandon, Secretary (East) of the External Affairs Ministry, while briefing the media.

Rajnath announces revised financial powers for armed forces to boost autonomy

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday revised the financial powers of the defence forces via the framework for the **Delegation of Financial Powers for Defence Services**, including for medical and works projects. The move aims to enhance **operational efficiency**, **accelerate procurement**, and **strengthen self-reliance** in the defence sector.

According to the Ministry of Defence, **financial powers have been enhanced by up to 100%** and, in certain cases, **more than doubled**. The move is expected to **empower field commanders with greater decision-making authority**, enabling **faster conclusion of contracts** and **timely execution of projects**.

The Ministry stated that



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh during a meeting regarding the approval of enhanced financial powers for armed forces. PTI

financial powers related to indigenisation and research and development within the military ecosystem have been doubled to further the government's **Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative** and **reduce dependence on foreign Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs)**. The revised framework is expected to facilitate **procurement worth over ₹1.25 lakh crore** through the revenue route,

in line with the current year's budgetary allocations.

Special financial powers delegated to Army, Navy, and Air Force commanders have also been significantly enhanced, including a 100% increase in the overall ceiling to meet urgent operational requirements. The revised provisions **additionally promote joint procurement by the lead service**.

Raksha Mantri approves two-fold increase in financial ceiling for Field Commanders to strengthen operational efficiency

Enhanced financial delegation to support procurement exceeding Rs 1.25 lakh crore through revenue route

Revised Financial Powers for indigenisation and R&D doubled to boost Aatmanirbharta in defence & minimise import dependency

New provisions introduced to accelerate Joint-Service procurement by the Lead Service with enhanced powers

Posted On: 04 JUN 2026 1:05PM by PIB Delhi

Draft SC rules prohibit use of AI for judicial outcomes, witness profiling

They underline that AI systems used in court processes must 'function solely in an assistive capacity' and remain 'strictly subservient to human judgment and judicial authority'; comments and suggestions invited from the public till June 20

Aaratrika Bhaumik
NEW DELHI

Prohibiting the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to determine judicial outcomes, the Supreme Court AI committee has proposed draft regulations that bar AI-assisted sentencing without mandatory human oversight, prevent AI systems from profiling parties or witnesses, and disallow the use of "opaque" or "unexplainable" AI systems in any court process.

The proposed regulations come amid concerns expressed by the top court in recent months over the growing reliance on AI by courts in rendering judgments. In March, a Bench headed by Justice P.S. Narasimha chided a trial court for relying on non-existent judgments generated with the help of AI, observing that it was not merely "an error in decision-making" but amounted to judicial "misconduct".

The preliminary draft of the 'Regulations for Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Courts, 2026', made pu-



The draft regulations permit the use of AI for administrative functions such as case listing and scheduling. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

blic on Wednesday, underlines that AI systems used in court processes must "function solely in an assistive capacity" and remain "strictly subservient to human judgment and judicial authority".

The committee, chaired by Supreme Court judge Justice P.S. Narasimha and comprising Justices Sanjeev Sachdeva, Raja Vijayaraghavan V., Anoop Chitkara and Suraj Govindaraj, has invited comments and suggestions from stakeholders as well as members of the public on the draft regulations before they are finalised.

The deadline for sub-

mitting responses is June 20. Under the draft regulations, the processing of personal data through AI systems shall be governed by the provisions of the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023. It also underlines that AI systems must not "perpetuate, amplify, or introduce bias" on grounds of race, religion, caste, sex, gender, disability, language, economic status, or any other ground prohibited under the Constitution.

'Human-in-the-loop'

"Applications involving higher levels of risk to personal liberty, any lawful

right of a person, or the integrity of judicial outcomes shall be subject to correspondingly heightened safeguards, including mandatory human-in-the-loop requirements and independent oversight," the draft states.

It further cautions that AI-assisted judicial systems should not "widen digital divides" and must remain accessible to all stakeholders, including those from rural, economically disadvantaged, or linguistically diverse communities.

While the draft regulations permit the use of AI for administrative functions such as case management, preparation of cause lists, scheduling of hearings, transcription of court proceedings and translation of judgments, they make it clear that AI systems cannot be used for "risk scoring" in court processes. This includes assessing flight risk, predicting recidivism, evaluating bail eligibility, or determining the credibility of parties or witnesses.

It also bars authorities from using AI systems for the surveillance or contin-

uous monitoring of judicial officers, advocates, litigants and other stakeholders, "except as may be specifically authorised by applicable law for the time being in force".

'Apex body'

To supervise the adoption of AI in the judiciary and steer standard-setting and policy development, the draft regulations propose the creation of a full-time "apex body" at the Supreme Court.

The apex body, it recommends, would comprise two Supreme Court judges nominated by the Chief Justice of India (CJI), one of whom shall serve as the ex-officio chairperson; two High Court Chief Justices and two High Court judges nominated by the CJI; one member from an institution of national importance or any institution of repute, as nominated by the CJI; an officer not below the rank of Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology; a finance expert and a cybersecurity expert nominated by the CJI; among others.

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Prelims Bytes

Govt. has turned Northeast from region of conflict to hub of opportunities: Shah

Union Home Minister addresses 73rd plenary session of North Eastern Council in Shillong, urges CMs to shift focus from law and order to shielding citizens' rights as insurgency no longer an issue

Rahul Karmakar
GUWAHATI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday said the Narendra Modi-led government at the Centre transformed the Northeast, comprising eight States, from a region of conflicts into a “hotspot” of opportunities.

Addressing the 73rd plenary session of the North Eastern Council (NEC) in Meghalaya’s capital, Shillong, he said that opportunities in the region surfaced after the Modi government ended the era of violence associated with secessionist activities.

Mr. Shah said the NEC was fulfilling the people’s aspirations and promoting culture while serving as an institution for strategic planning to develop the landlocked region.

He urged the Chief Ministers of the region, scheduled to review India-Bangladesh border security in Tripura on Friday, to shift their focus from law and order to shielding the rights



Home Minister Amit Shah, Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia and Meghalaya CM Conrad K. Sangma during the 73rd plenary session of the North Eastern Council in Shillong on Thursday. ANI

of the citizens as insurgency is no longer an issue.

Mr. Shah directed the States to build Artificial Intelligence, machine learning, and blockchain infrastructure for new generations. He also instructed them to market the region’s potential in aromatic oil-yielding agarwood, foreign trade, and health tourism.

The Chief Ministers of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura attended the ses-

sion along with the Department of North Eastern Region Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia and other senior officials.

Five missions for region

Mr. Scindia outlined five missions for the region – high-resolution village resource mapping; monitoring of wetlands, forests, rivers and landscapes; support for geospatial and space-tech start-ups; NER Shield for disaster resilience and early warning; and green wealth and natu-

ral capital accounting.

Later, in a memorandum submitted to Mr. Shah, Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma highlighted key concerns. He urged the Centre to strengthen mechanisms for checking illegal immigration.

“We suggested that measures such as the Meghalaya Residents Safety and Security Act and the Inner Line Permit (a British-era temporary travel document), for which the State Assembly passed resolutions, could serve as viable mechanisms to regulate and check illegal immigration,” he said.

Mr. Sangma also sought the inclusion of Khasi and Garo languages in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said the NEC session reflected the ambitions of a confident region. “...the focus is now on preparing the Northeast for the opportunities of the future,” he said.

The North Eastern Council (NEC) hold its 73rd Plenary Session on 4th June, 2026, in Shillong, Meghalaya.

- North Eastern Council – It was constituted as a statutory advisory body under the NEC Act, 1971 and came into being on the 7th November, 1972 at Shillong.
 - North Eastern Region (8 States) – Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura.
- Sikkim's Inclusion – Sikkim was not part of the original 1971 composition, included via an amendment to the NEC Act in 2002.
- Nodal Ministry – Ministry of Development Of North Eastern Region (DoNER).
- Composition
 - Ex-Officio Chairman– Union Home Minister
 - Ex-Officio Vice-Chairman – Minister of state, ministry of development of north eastern region (DoNER).
 - Members – It comprises governors & chief ministers of constituent states and three members nominated by the President.
- Function – It serves as the apex regional planning body for the North Eastern Region & plays a pivotal role in fostering coordinated development and strengthening cooperative federalism in the region.

ED searches nine locations in Mizoram in illegal *supari* case

The **Enforcement Directorate (ED)** on Thursday conducted searches at nine locations in the **border town of Champhai along the Mizoram-Myanmar frontier** in connection with smuggling of illegal Burmese *supari* (dry areca nuts) into India, involving over ₹970 crore. The ED probe – based on a case registered by the Central Bureau of Investigation on a Gauhati High Court directive dated July 16, 2024, – revealed that Burmese nationals allegedly brought dry areca nuts across the **Tiau river** into India without Customs clearance at **Zokhawthar and Champhai**. The consignments were then handed over to local facilitators at the border.



Gujarat police detain 501 Bangladesh nationals

The Gujarat Police have detained 501 Bangladeshi nationals from various parts of the State over the last two days as part of “**Operation Delta Hunt**”, a State-wide drive against illegal immigration, Deputy Chief Minister and Home Minister Harsh Sanghavi said on Thursday. The operation, which began late on Tuesday night, has been carried out across Gujarat following extensive planning and intelligence gathering. Authorities are simultaneously scrutinising the credentials and backgrounds of more than 6,200 others as part of the ongoing exercise. According to the Minister, a majority of those detained were engaged in manual labour.

LONDON

Chinese spies pose as recruiters to glean state secrets, warn agencies



ISTOCKPHOTO

Chinese spies are posing as job recruiters to trick staff in western governments into disclosing sensitive information, the **Five Eyes alliance of security agencies** has warned. People with security clearance, military personnel, journalists and academics are among those targeted, the Five Eyes added. AFP

The **Five Eyes (FVEY)** is a multilateral intelligence-sharing alliance comprising Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Operating under the historic UKUSA Agreement, these nations collaborate to gather, analyze, and share signals intelligence (SIGINT) to protect mutual national security interests. [Wikipedia +2](#)

Member Countries

- **Australia:** Australian Signals Directorate (ASD)
- **Canada:** Communications Security Establishment (CSE)
- **New Zealand:** Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB)
- **United Kingdom:** Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ)
- **United States:** National Security Agency (NSA) [🔗](#)

Core Functions & History

- **Origins:** The alliance originated during World War II with a secret 1941 communication pact between the US and the UK. It was formalized with the UKUSA Agreement in 1946 and expanded to include the Commonwealth nations to monitor the Soviet Union and its allies during the Cold War. [➤ East Asia Forum +1](#)
- **Intelligence Scope:** Beyond signals intelligence, members frequently share human intelligence, geospatial intelligence, and cybersecurity warnings. [➤ East Asia Forum](#)
- **Expansion Frameworks:** The Five Eyes acts as a core group, occasionally expanding its intelligence-sharing aperture into the "Nine Eyes" and "14 Eyes" (which include several European nations) depending on the specific security

From reducing oil imports to farmer prosperity: Sh. Hardeep Singh Puri launches first Flex-Fuel passenger vehicle

India among countries with lowest fuel price increase despite global crisis: Shri Hardeep Singh Puri

If 50% of all new two-wheelers and four wheelers sold in India runs on Flex-Fuel, it can generate ₹12,403 crore additional income for farmers: Shri Hardeep Singh Puri

Posted On: 04 JUN 2026 4:02PM by PIB Delhi

Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Shri Hardeep Singh Puri today launched India's first flex-fuel passenger vehicle by Maruti Suzuki in New Delhi, fuelling the vision of Aatma Nirbhar Bharat. Union Minister for Road, Transport and Highways, Sh. Nitin Gadkari was also present during the event. Flex-fuel vehicles can operate on a range of ethanol-petrol blends, from E20 up to E100.

Speaking at the launch, the Minister said the entry of flex-fuel technology into the passenger vehicle segment is not merely a product launch, but also the beginning of a new chapter in India's energy transition. Shri Puri noted that India has nearly 37 lakh passenger vehicles representing the aspirations of middle-class India and the future of personal mobility. Large-scale adoption of flex-fuel technology in this segment can significantly multiply the impact of ethanol-based mobility.

NITI Aayog officially classifies ethanol-based Flex-Fuel Vehicles (FFVs), including vehicles running on high ethanol blends such as E85, as Zero-Emission Vehicles. E85 fuel also produces near-zero particulate matter (PM) emissions, making flex-fuel vehicles a promising solution for addressing the country's growing air pollution challenge.

The Minister also outlined the Government's roadmap for creating a nationwide flex-fuel ecosystem. Under the proposed roadmap, E85 has been identified as the mono-fuel standard for Flex-Fuel Vehicles under BIS specifications. The plan proposes an initial roll out of 50-100 FFV-ready fuel retail outlets in the Delhi-NCR and Mumbai-Pune-Nagpur corridors, expanding to nearly 500 outlets by December 2026 and approximately 5,000 outlets across major cities by end-2027.

The Government is also working on supportive measures such as pricing support, road tax concessions, availability of E85 testing fuel, special identifiers for FFVs and retail outlets, consumer awareness initiatives, and development of storage and dispensing infrastructure to increase adoption. Sh. Puri said that this is not merely a transition in fuel, but it is the creation of a complete ecosystem for cleaner mobility, stronger energy security, and greater self-reliance.



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