CURRENT AFFAIRS

UPSC CSE 2026

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS NOTES

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INA not founded by Subhas Bose, he took up the reins only later, claims new book

- A new book claims **Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose didn't establish the Indian National Army (INA)**.
- The INA was initially set up by the **Japanese Army intelligence** and **Indian nationalists outside India** to fight a **common enemy — the British**.
- The book, **'The Forgotten Indian Prisoners of World War II'** by **Gautam Hazarika**, says Netaji took over the INA later and gave it **wider recognition**.
- According to the book, the INA's formation **"was a joint plan"** requiring agreement between both sides.
- A **pre-war alliance** existed between Japanese Army intelligence and Indian nationalists outside India.
- **Major Fujiwara Iwaichi** and **Giani Pritam Singh** agreed to form the INA in **Bangkok**, days before Japan attacked **Pearl Harbour/Southeast Asia on December 7/8, 1941**.
- According to the book, **Captain Mohan Singh** of the **14th Punjab Regiment** became the **first commander of the INA**. He said **Netaji reached Singapore in July 1943**.
- During the interregnum, **Rash Behari Bose kept the INA alive**, and it was later **handed over to Netaji**, who took it to **greater heights**.

The infirmities in the SIR of electoral rolls

- The ECI has undertaken a **Special Intensive Revision (SIR)** of the electoral roll just months before Assembly elections, raising concerns regarding legality, timing, and citizenship verification.

On revisions and voter citizenship

- The ECI has the **statutory right** to conduct a **comprehensive revision** of the electoral roll, but why it should be done **just a couple of months before elections** remains unanswered.
- **Intensive revision involves a massive exercise**: visiting households, collecting data, dealing with claims/objections, and deciding appeals.
- Between **2003 and 2024**, despite multiple Lok Sabha and State elections, the ECI **did not conduct an SIR**, making the current timing **intriguing**.
- **Section 21 of the RP Act, 1950** deals with electoral roll preparation and revision:
  - Revision before general elections is **mandatory**.
  - Other revisions can happen in **"any year"** if ECI directs it, with **reasons recorded**.
- **Rule 25 of the Registration of Electors Rules 1960**:
  - Revision under Section 21(2)(a) before elections is **summary**.
  - Revision under Section 21(2)(b) in "any year" is **intensive**, akin to a **new roll**.
  - Intensive revision is **time-consuming** and ordinarily **delinked from elections**. Therefore, **SIR just before elections is not envisaged** under the RP Act, 1950.
- **Citizenship verification concerns:**
  - Under **Article 326**, only citizens can vote. At enrolment, documents to prove **citizenship** become crucial.
  - ECI did not include **Aadhaar**, as it views Aadhaar as **not proof of citizenship**. Supreme Court's interim order directed ECI to **accept Aadhaar** as identity proof.
- **What are the ECI's powers to determine documents for citizenship?**
  - **Citizenship** is governed by **Articles 5–11** and the **Citizenship Act, 1955**.
  - Citizenship administration lies with the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**, not ECI.
  - ECI only has authority to **verify documents notified by the government**.
  - ECI **cannot decide** what documents prove citizenship.
  - MHA has **not notified any comprehensive list** of documents; in its absence, the ECI **arrogates to itself** this power. **Article 326** impliedly requires the government to specify such documents.

A key decision

- It is unclear how many voters were **removed** in Bihar after SIR for not producing ECI-specified documents.
- Supreme Court's ruling in **Lal Babu Hussein v. Electoral Registration Officer (1995)** is crucial: When a voter's name is already on the roll, it must be **presumed** that procedural requirements were fulfilled earlier.

- **Article 14** forbids arbitrary state action.
- **Article 21** forbids deprivation of liberty except through a **fair and just procedure**.

Exploited workers, a labour policy's empty promises

- Against this grim backdrop — where **11 million people endure modern slavery in India**, the world's highest — the government unveiled the **draft Shram Shakti Niti 2025**, claimed to be a "future-ready" policy cloaked in **"ancient Indian ethos"**, but blind to the brutal realities that workers face.

A case of 'employer ease'

- The policy **flouts labour laws**, enables **wage theft**, erodes **worker dignity**, defying **Articles 14, 16, 23**.
- Introduces **portable Universal Social Security Account** merging EPFO, ESIC, PMJAY, e-SHRAM, State boards — invoking **Article 41**.
- Dodges **funding** — no gig employer mandates or state matches; risks **e-SHRAM's paltry payouts**.
- **Digital IDs** cause exclusion of women, senior citizens, low-literates (38% household literacy), violating **Article 15**.
- Absence of **union safeguards** affects bargaining; initial phase must ensure **offline access** and **tripartite funds**.

On the occupational safety front

- Pledges strict enforcement of **Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code 2020**, with **risk audits** and **gender-sensitive standards**, honouring **Directive 42** and **ILO Convention 155**.
- Goal of **"near-zero fatalities" by 2047** appears fanciful without penalties and given **inspector shortages**.
- **Digital tools** exclude informal workers, undermine equality; ignoring gig mental health; **union audits** weaken **Article 19**.

Areas of concern

- Hints that MoLE will become an **employment facilitator** using **AI-driven NCS** for job matching, credential checks, skill alignment in Tier-II/III cities and MSMEs, merging **Skill India** to tackle **91.75% graduate mismatches**.
- Absent **AI bias safeguards** risks **caste- and gender-based Article 15 violations**.
- Ignoring **Wages Code minima** for **12 million gig workers** — "flexibility" as a cover for abuse; unclear transition benefits demand **ethics audits** and **union-vetted algorithms**.
- Targets **35% female labour participation by 2030** through childcare, flexible gigs, equal pay, apprenticeships — aligning with **Article 15** and **ILO Convention 195**; but without quotas, penalties, maternity support for informal workers, success unlikely.
- Overlooking **youth mental health** and **caste-gender data gaps** hides challenges faced by **Dalit women**; **union-led audits** essential.
- **Green-tech vision**: AI-enhanced safety, reskilling coal workers — aligns with **SDG 13** and **Article 21**; but "just transitions" lack substance without income support or union involvement, risking **ILO Convention 29** violations.
- Widening **rural-AI gaps** and urban-centric green jobs marginalise **400 million informal workers**; requires **tripartite funding** and **OECD safeguards**.
- Policy hints at convergence through **LEPEI dashboards**, linking NEP with Digital India, aiming to realise **Article 12**; but weak enforcement of **Digital Personal Data Protection Act** risks **surveillance** and undermines **Article 19**.
- Beneath "rights-driven, future-ready" rhetoric lie gaps: **weak regulatory oversight**, **digital exclusion**, **unenforced penalties**, **fragile adherence to ILO conventions**, accelerating union decline.

It is about dignity, rights and justice

- Without **concrete funding** and **institutional safeguards**, universal social protection may collapse.
- Success will be measured by its power to restore **dignity, rights, and justice** to India's working poor.
- **2025–47 rollout** needs urgent **pilots**, **rights audits**, **tripartite enforcement**, **offline access**, **transparent grievance redressal**. Without these, there is risk of **symbolic rhetoric** over justice for India's labouring millions.

Fishing troubles

- The arrest of **14 Tamil Nadu fishermen** by the **Sri Lankan Navy** for allegedly crossing the **International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL)** is part of the painful legacy of the **Palk Bay dispute**.

- The incident reflects an issue India and Sri Lanka have **still not resolved**, despite the livelihoods of fishing communities being at stake.
- The practice involves **bottom trawling**, which **damages coral beds**, shrimps' habitats, and **depletes fish stocks**.
- Experts have suggested several measures to resolve the issue, including **learning from EU Baltic countries** and adopting **equitable quotas** to conserve living resources.
- India and Sri Lanka can set up a **research station in the Palk Bay region** to increase living resources and safeguard the **marine environment**.
- To build confidence among fishermen of the **Northern Province**, India should launch a **liberal assistance scheme** to help them **move out of bottom trawling** and adopt **deep sea fishing**. India should eventually **impose a ban** on the pernicious practice of bottom trawling.

When data became the first responder

- Andhra Pradesh displayed a **new level of maturity in disaster governance** while dealing with **Cyclone Montha**, which struck the State's coast.

Coordinated and technology-driven response

- Andhra Pradesh fought back with **precision** — guided by **data, technology, and teamwork**. **Pre-positioning resources**, keeping **transformers ready**, ensuring **uninterrupted road access**.
- Use of **digital dashboards**, **predictive analytics**, **drone surveillance**, **GIS tools**.
- **AWARE 2.0** and **RTGS** created a **live, interconnected decision system** linking multiple departments.
- The **RTGS-led Data Lake project** aims to integrate all departmental data, improve efficiency, enable digital document storage, and strengthen analytics-based decision-making.

Preparedness and field deployment

- **NDRF** and **SDRF** teams deployed in advance.
- Critical equipment such as **communication kits** and **high-capacity pumps** stationed in vulnerable areas.
- Arterial roads kept clear; **digital inventory management** tracked every machine, transformer, and vehicle.

Institutionalising resilience

- Cyclone Montha must serve as a **blueprint for institutionalised resilience**.
- Technology alone cannot guarantee safety; preparedness must be a **daily practice**.
- Schools and community buildings must be **retrofitted** as cyclone shelters; coastal regions reinforced with **mangroves and embankments**.
- Budgets must support **underground power cabling**, **flood-resistant embankments**, and **real-time sea-level monitoring**.

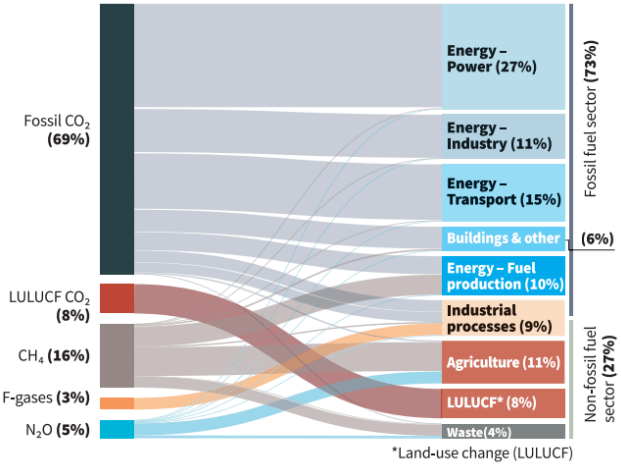
Ecological dimensions

- Fiscal planning must prioritise **long-term infrastructure resilience** such as power grids, communication networks, and transport corridors.
- **Cyclone Montha exposed ecological vulnerability**: deforestation, mangrove loss, unregulated coastal construction. **Sustainable coastal planning** and **ecosystem restoration** must complement technological innovation.

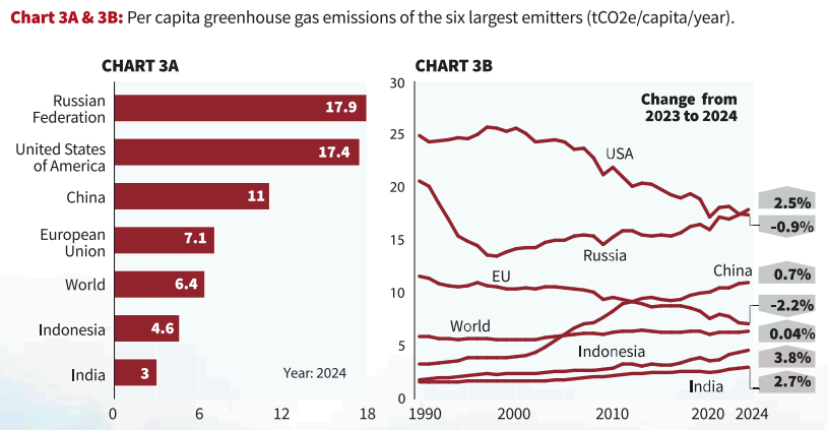
India recorded the highest greenhouse gas emissions for 2024

- In **2024**, India registered the **largest absolute increase in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions** among all countries compared to the previous year.
- India was **third largest overall emitter of GHGs** in 2024, behind **China** and the **United States**, in absolute terms.
- India's **per capita GHG emissions** remained **less than half the global average**, showing relatively low emissions intensity despite rapid growth.

Chart 2: Total net greenhouse gas emissions by gas, sector, and fossil or non-fossil category in 2024



- Worldwide, **GHG emissions are increasing**; in 2024, **57,700 MtCO2e** of anthropogenic GHGs were emitted, the **highest on record**.
- **Fossil CO_2 emissions** from burning **coal, oil, and natural gas** accounted for **69% of GHG emissions** in 2024.
- **Power generation** was the **largest single source** of fossil CO_2 emissions, followed by **industrial combustion**, **transportation**, and **fuel production**. **Anthropogenic methane (CH_4) emissions**, mainly from **agriculture and waste management**, accounted for **16%** of total GHG emissions, the **second largest share**.
- **Deforestation and land-use change** also contributed significantly to the rise in emissions in 2024.
- India's **per capita GHG emissions** in 2024 were **3 tCO_2e**, less than half the **global average of 6.4 tCO_2e**.



- India's per capita GHG emissions grew by **3.7% between 2023 and 2024**, far higher than the **global average increase of 0.04%**.

Why do astronauts wear pressurised suits?

- Space is the **vast area beyond the earth's atmosphere**, filled with stars, planets, and galaxies. In this airless environment, one of the most critical differences from life on earth is the **absence of atmospheric pressure**.
- The **atmosphere** is a thick layer of gases held around the earth by gravity and protects us from **harmful solar radiation**, stabilises temperatures, and provides gases to respirate. Atmospheric pressure presses on our bodies with **about 20 tonnes of force**, but we don't feel it because our bodies **push back with equal force**.
- As altitude increases, the **atmosphere gets thinner** and its pressure drops.
- When the human body is suddenly exposed to **vacuum**, lethal effects occur such as **ebullism** (boiling of bodily fluids), **decompression**, and **lack of oxygen** (hypoxia).
- The absence of pressure causes gases to **expand rapidly** in lungs and tissues, leading to **loss of consciousness in seconds** and **death in minutes**. Astronauts wear **special suits** during space travel for protection.
- **Extra-vehicular activity (EVA) suits**, used outside spacecraft, have **12-14 layers** and act as a **personal spacecraft** protecting against vacuum, extreme temperatures, radiation, and space debris; each weighs **100-130 kg**.
- **Intra-vehicular activity (IVA) suits** are worn inside the spacecraft and include a **flight suit** and a **pressure suit**.
- A **flight suit** provides fire resistance and protection against temperature extremes and low pressure at high altitudes. A **pressure suit** provides **full-body pressurisation**, oxygen supply, and thermal regulation; it weighs **8-10 kg** with two or three layers.
- In **1961**, Yuri Gagarin wore a specialised IVA suit called **SK-1**. The U.S. and Russia have developed **eight to ten IVA suit designs**.
- During the **Soyuz 11 mission (1971)**, three cosmonauts died due to a **vent valve opening early**, causing rapid loss of cabin pressure and suffocation. The disaster led to a **mandate to wear IVA suits** during ascent and descent due to risks such as high G-forces, sudden pressure loss, extreme heat, and vibrations.
- In **Gaganyaan**, India's first human spaceflight mission, the gaganyatris will use the **Russian Sokol KV2 suit** manufactured by Zvezda. The suit has two layers: an **inner pressure bladder** made of rubberised polycaprolactam and an **outer restraint layer** of white nylon canvas for structural support and protection.

Don't use COP30 to change Paris deal 'architecture': India

- India made its **opening statement at COP30 in Belem, Brazil**, underlining that the conference ought to be stressing **"adaptation"**.

- India said the **10th anniversary of the Paris Agreement (2015)** should not be used to **"change the architecture"** of that consensus.
- This "**architecture**" refers to the principle of **common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR)**, meaning all countries must curb fossil fuel emissions **without compromising national development priorities**.
- The **LMDC** is a large collective representing **nearly half of the world's population**, consisting of **China, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Cuba, Egypt** and several others.
- India is yet to submit its **National Adaptation Plan** and the **updated Nationally Determined Contribution** specifying steps to curb emissions by **2035** to the United Nations. It added that developed nations should **invest significantly more in negative emission technologies**.

ISRO conducts crucial safety tests on main parachutes for Gaganyaan crew

- The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** recently conducted an important test on **main parachutes** for the **Gaganyaan Crew Module**.
- The test took place at the **Babina Field Firing Range (BFFR)** in **Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh**.
- It was part of the ongoing **Integrated Main Parachute Airdrop Tests (IMAT)** for qualification of the parachute system for the Gaganyaan mission.
- The parachute system for the Gaganyaan Crew Module comprises **10 parachutes of four types**.
- The descent sequence begins with **two apex cover separation parachutes** that remove the protective cover of the parachute compartment. This is followed by **two drogue parachutes** that stabilise and decelerate module.
- Upon release of the drogues, **three pilot parachutes** deploy to extract **three main parachutes**. The **main parachutes** further slow down the Crew Module to ensure a **safe touchdown**. The system has **redundancy — two of the three main parachutes** are sufficient for a safe landing.
- The main parachutes deploy using **reefed inflation**, where the parachute first opens **partially (reefing)** and then fully opens after a predetermined time (**disreefing**), using a **pyro device**.
- A **simulated mass** equivalent to the Crew Module was dropped from **2.5 km altitude** using the **Indian Air Force's IL-76 aircraft**.