

CURRENT AFFAIRS

UPSC CSE 2026



DAILY CURRENT
AFFAIRS NOTES

BY MUDIT JAIN
Ex IRS, Ex IPS



Green washing

- Rampant mining, quarrying and deforestation have contributed to groundwater depletion, loss of ecological sanctity, and worsening air quality in Delhi and Haryana.
- The Supreme Court of India was reluctant to impose a complete ban on mining, citing risks of illegal mining and developmental needs for stone and minerals.
- The Court said that except for government-sanctioned mining of 'critical minerals', there should be a pause.
- The Court acknowledged the central conundrum in the Aravallis: limited State enforcement capacity and conflict of interest due to State revenue from mining.
- The Centre has been promoting the Aravalli Green Wall Project in the last year.
- Reforestation cannot predictably compensate for deforestation.
- The Court accepted an expert committee recommendation that only mountains 100 metres or higher above local relief be considered part of the Aravalli range.
- As per a Forest Survey of India (2010) estimate, 92% of hills would fall outside this ambit.

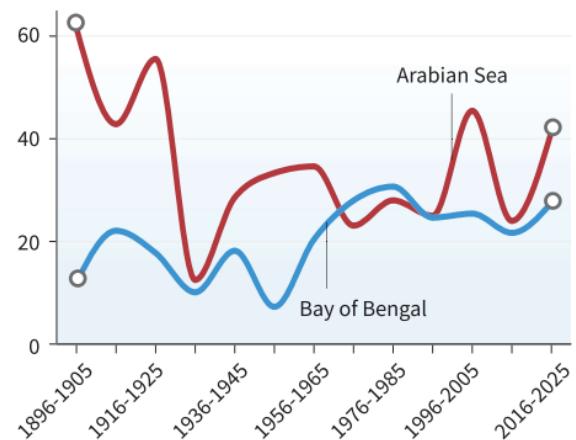
Magnetic moment

- Rare earth elements sit at the intersection of climate ambitions, industrial policy and geopolitics at the end of 2025.
- The key challenge is building resilient and affordable supply chains without replicating environmental and governance problems.
- The principal bottleneck is high-performance permanent magnets, especially neodymium-iron-boron magnets used in EV motors and wind turbines.
- A ₹7,280-crore scheme aims to build an integrated manufacturing ecosystem for 6,000 tonnes of sintered rare earth permanent magnets per year.
- Domestic magnet manufacturing can reduce import exposure and support EVs, wind components, and advanced electronics.
- A major domestic source is monazite-bearing beach sands, which are associated with thorium and nuclear-relevant minerals.
- This pushes the sector into a punctilious governance regime, requiring regulatory coordination, waste management, and community engagement.
- The National Critical Mineral Mission has assigned multiple exploration projects through 2031.
- The State must translate deposit knowledge into separating and manufacturing capacity, needing regulatory clarity, public financing, and enforcement.
- India must augment midstream capacity, make magnet production bankable via long-term offtake, and invest in process innovation. The next phase of the green transition will reward countries that can scale supply chains.

Four trends redefining the North Indian Ocean's storm cycle

- Cyclonic disturbances over the North Indian Ocean including the Arabian Sea, Bay of Bengal, and intervening land area have changed drastically over the last century.
- Frequency of cyclonic disturbances has shifted significantly.
- The overall decline in disturbances in recent years is driven mainly by a sharp drop in the Bay of Bengal.
- The Arabian Sea has seen a marked increase in activity, though its frequency remains lower than the Bay of Bengal.
- While the number of disturbances has decreased, their severity has intensified.
- Disturbances evolve from low-pressure areas (<31 kmph) to depressions, deep depressions, cyclonic storms, and severe cyclonic storms.
- The most destructive stages include very severe, extremely severe, and super cyclonic storms (≥ 222 kmph).
- Arabian Sea disturbances are historically more likely to reach severe levels than those in the Bay of Bengal.
- Warmer oceans provide more energy, making cyclones stronger and harder to predict.

CHART 3: The share (in %) of disturbances that intensified into severe cyclonic storms or higher, across different decades



- The Arabian Sea is heating up more than average, leading to more intense cyclones.
- There is a significant shift in seasonality of storms.
- In the Bay of Bengal, disturbances are increasingly originating in October–December instead of July–September.

Why manufacturing has lagged in India

- India lagged behind China and South Korea due to underperformance of the manufacturing sector despite similar starting positions in the early 20th century.
- High government salaries drew workers away from manufacturing, raised prices, and reduced competitiveness, hindering sectoral expansion.
- Dutch disease refers to an economic windfall causing negative effects on sectors like manufacturing. The term was coined after the discovery of the Groningen gas fields (1959) and its impact on Dutch manufacturing.
- Expansion of the government sector with high wages makes it hard for manufacturing to match wages at existing productivity levels.
- Higher incomes of government employees increase demand, raise domestic prices, and under free trade boost imports, reducing demand for domestic manufactures.
- The theory of induced innovation holds that labour scarcity and high wages can drive technological and capital-biased growth.
- Sir John Habakkuk argued that 19th-century Britain grew faster than the U.S. due to relative scarcity of land and labour.

What is the Bureau of Port Security and its role?

- The Centre constituted the Bureau of Port Security (BoPS) as a statutory body under Section 13 of the Merchant Shipping Act, 2025.

Bureau of Port Security (BoPS)

- Modelled on the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security.
- Functions under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.
- Responsible for regulatory oversight relating to the security of ships and port facilities.

Why BoPS Was Created

- Coastal security responsibilities are currently shared among multiple agencies such as the Coast Guard, CISF, State maritime police, and the Navy. This leads to coordination and communication challenges and possible security gaps. BoPS will act as a single statutory body for regulatory oversight and coordination.

Security Mandate of BoPS

- Addresses threats such as maritime terrorism, arms smuggling, drug trafficking, human trafficking, poaching, illegal migration, piracy, and cybersecurity threats.
- Includes a dedicated division for protecting port IT infrastructure.
- Focus on cybersecurity and collection and exchange of security-related information.
- Will monitor, counter and deter intrusions and coordinate with national cybersecurity agencies.

Legal Authority and Standards

- As a statutory body, BoPS can enforce international standards such as the ISPS Code.
- Under BoPS, CISF is designated as a recognised Security Organisation. CISF will prepare standardised security plans, conduct security assessments, and train private agencies.
- Security measures will be implemented in a graded manner.

India's Maritime Growth

- Cargo growth increased from 974 MMT (2014) to 1,594 MMT (2025).
- Port capacity expanded by 57%. Ship turnaround time reduced to 48 hours. Coastal shipping volumes rose by 118%. Inland waterways cargo increased from 18.1 MMT (2014) to 145.5 MMT (2025).
- Nine Indian ports featured in the World Bank Container Port Performance Index.

Policy and Governance Changes

- Maritime India Vision 2030 launched in 2021.
- The new legislation grants the Union government greater authority over non-major (State-owned) ports.