

CURRENT AFFAIRS

UPSC CSE 2026



**DAILY CURRENT
AFFAIRS NOTES**

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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.

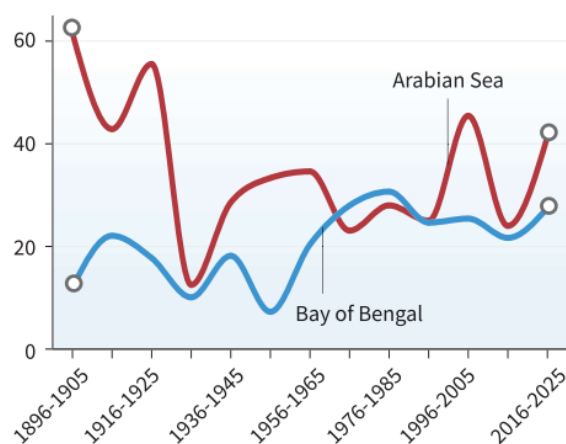
Magnetic moment

- 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**.