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30+ QUESTION REFLECTIONS

From

SMART

CURRENT AFFAIRS PROGRAMME 2026

Appeared In

UPSC Mains 2026

Here are some of them



Question - 1

GS2 - Q1

Right to privacy relating to self-identity is very dear to every human being and well protected under Article 21 of the Constitution. In this context, examine the effect of the amendment in 2026, to the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019.

Explanation

SMCA Mains 2026

Lecture Date: 13/06/26

TG - Issue of Identity

TG Act 2019

→ Sec. 4(2) - self-identification

→ Directly DM

→ All inclusive

→ Only Exception:

Transgender → Male/Female

→ Medical Board

→ Only Biological & Traditional

Comparison - 2019 vs 2026

Parameter	2019 Act	2026 Amendment
Main Idea	Based on personal feeling and identity choice.	Based on biology, body measurements, and traditional groups.
Definition	Broad: Covered anyone whose gender identity didn't match their birth sex.	Narrow: Limits identity to strict medical rules and traditional groups.
Getting an ID	Self-ID: You could change your legal gender by submitting a simple affidavit.	Medical Filter: A doctor-led Medical Board must check you before you get an ID.
After Surgery	Voluntary: You chose if and when to update your ID after a medical transition.	Mandatory: Hospitals must report surgeries to the state, forcing an ID update.
Government Council	Flexible: State officials on the national council could be of any rank.	Rigid: State officials on the council must hold a high rank (Director or above).

Issues with the Amendment

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Privacy → Dependence on state → Exclusion → F. Right violation
14, 15, 19, 21 → Against Yogyakarta Principle | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Criminalisation of support system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rigorous imprisonment
10 Years + 2L fine → Against Judgement (NALSA) → Previous certificate - legal status?
32,000 certificates |
|--|--|

Question - 2 GS3 - Q9

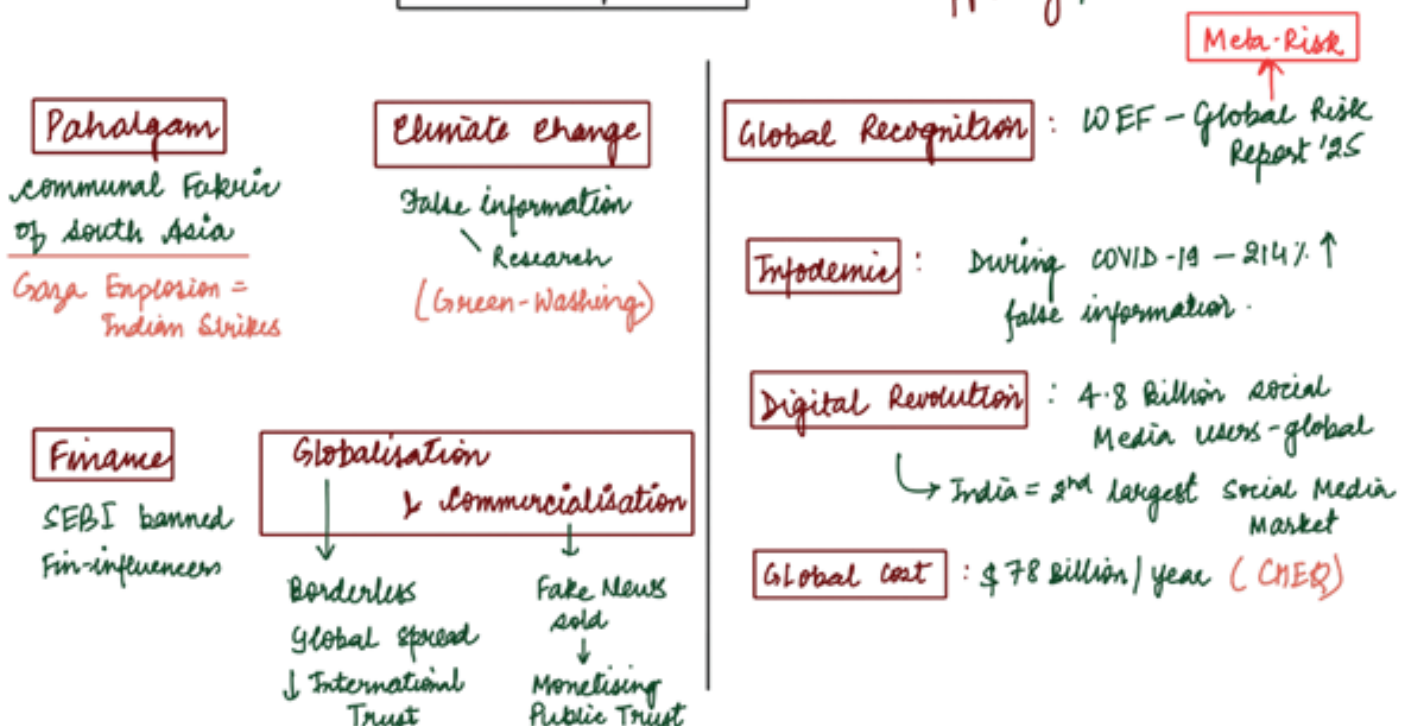
Explain how fake news and disinformation pose threat to Internal Security and Public Order in Indian context? In this regard, discuss salient features of amendments in respect of Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021.

Explanation

SMCA PCM26

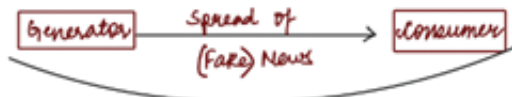
Lecture Date: 19-09-2025

[Mis] Dis - information - What's happening / Scale



Mis/Dis-information

- Impact = War on Mind & Society (GS Dimension)



Economic

- Financial Fraud** = Market Volatility
- Fake Review** = Financial Loss
- Investment**
- Firm**: Reputation Damage
- Cost of Prevention**
 - Audit Fake News
 - Diseases (anti-vaccine)
 - ↓
 - Eg: UK Measles

Social

- Riots / lynching
 - (Ex) Muzaffarnagar '13
- Mental stress / Anxiety
- Online Harassment
- Social trust

Political

Polarisation
46% Fake News = Political

Security

- State Sponsored Propaganda
 - Eg: China - Doklam
 - Pakistan - Op. Sindoor
- Deepfake + AI
 - Eg: Russia - Ukraine
- Liar's Dividend to dodge justice
 - ↓
 - Hurts Judicial System.

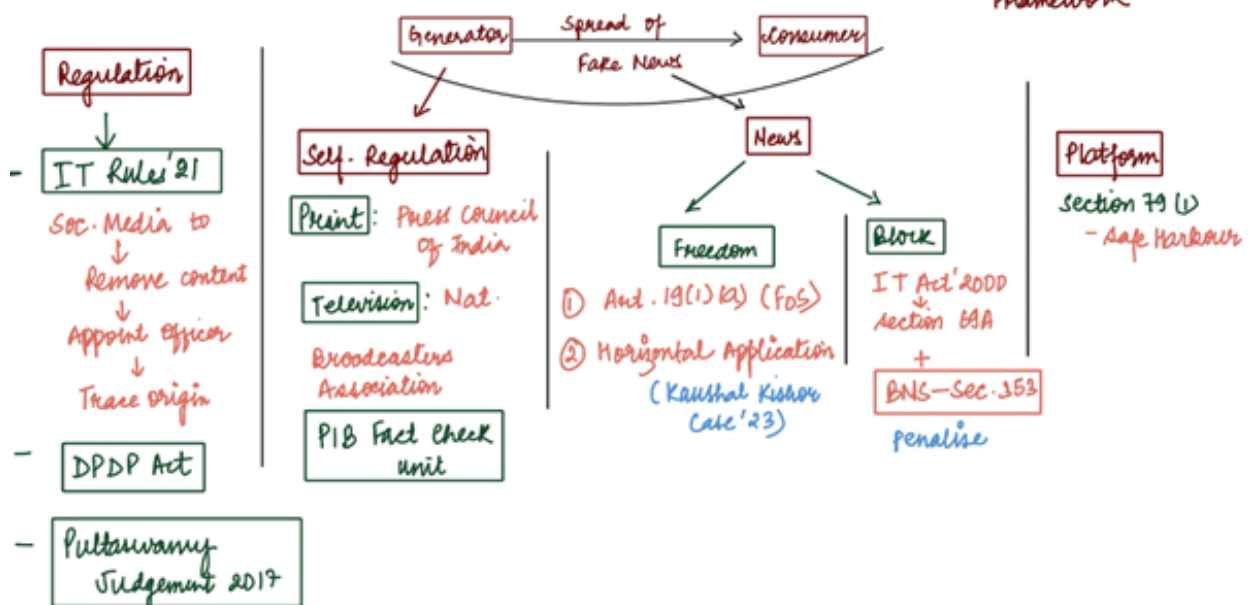
Misinformation, Disinformation, Mal-information - Definitions / Differences

- Misinformation**: False / inaccurate info + No malicious Intent.
Eg: COVID-19 home remedies / Sharing army videos Op. Sindoor.
- Disinformation**: Deliberate creation and spread of false info
Eg: Deepfake video of politician
- Mal-information**: Genuine, truthful info + Intention to cause harm.
Eg: leaking private photo

Social + Legal Responses will differ

Mis/Dis-information

- India's Legal & Regulatory Framework



Question - 3

GS2 – Q7

Malnutrition in India is not merely a public health concern; it is also a challenge of social equity, human development and effective welfare governance. Discuss.

Explanation

SMCA Mains 2026

Lecture Date: 22-07-2026

Topic: CHILD & ADOLESCENT NUTRITION IN INDIA – SMCA M26

WHY IN THE NEWS

- **World Obesity Day (4 Mar 2026) + World Obesity Atlas 2026:**
 - India 2nd globally after China in children with high Body Mass Index (BMI) — 41 million high-BMI,
 - 14 million obese [World Obesity Federation]
- **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Child Nutrition Global Report 2025:**
 - **obesity overtook underweight** as commonest child malnutrition form worldwide, first time ever
- **UNICEF 'Feeding Profit' report (2025):** retail/marketing food-environment failures
- **National Family Health Survey-6 (NFHS-6, 2023-24):**
 - sharp fall in child stunting/wasting; steep rise in adult obesity and Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) risk [Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW)]
- **West Bengal midday-meal egg-removal controversy (mid-2026) —**
 - revived protein-adequacy debate in PM POSHAN (Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman) vs. Tamil Nadu/Odisha's egg-inclusive menus

The Nutritional Status Spectrum — Triple Burden

- **Undernutrition:**
 - stunting (chronic, height-for-age), wasting (acute, weight-for-height;
 - Severe/Moderate Acute Malnutrition [SAM/MAM]), underweight (composite) — vs. World Health Organization (WHO) Child Growth Standards
- **Micronutrient deficiency ("hidden hunger"):** inadequate iron, Vitamin A, iodine, zinc — impairs immunity/cognition without visible thinness
- **Overnutrition/obesity:** excess weight-for-height/age
- **Triple, not double, burden:** micronutrient deficiency now treated as a distinct third strand — a child can be stunted + micronutrient-deficient + obesity-prone simultaneously
- **Thin-fat phenotype:** child appears lean/normal-weight but carries excess visceral fat + adult-level triglycerides —
 - raised Type 2 diabetes/hypertension/cardiovascular risk despite normal BMI.
 - **Considered a distinctly South Asian pattern**, linked to early-life undernutrition + rapid exposure to modern obesogenic diet within 1–2 generations

THE CRISIS — DATA

Undernutrition — India (NFHS-6, 2023-24)

- Stunting: 35.5% → 29.3% — largest inter-survey fall on record, ~30 million under-five children
- Severe wasting: 7.7% → 5.2%; overall wasting still ~one-fifth of children
- Underweight: 32.1% → 31.8% — near-stagnant
- **Minimum Acceptable Diet** MAD (6–23 months): 11% → 15.3%; over 80% still not receiving adequate diet
- Adolescent stunting: 27.4%
- **Related:**
 - sub-optimal breastfeeding: 32.6% of infants 1–5 months;
 - anaemia in women 15–49: 53.7% (203 million, India 4th globally);
 - undernourished population: 12% (172 million, 48th globally) [State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) 2025]

Obesity — India and Global

- **Global crossover (2025):**
 - child (5–19) obesity prevalence 9.4% > underweight 9.2% — first time in history [UNICEF]
- **India scale:** [Source: World Obesity Atlas 2026]
 - 15 million (5–9 yrs) + 26+ million (10–19 yrs) overweight/obese in 2025;
 - 41 million high-BMI, 14 million obese — 2nd globally after China;
 - projected 56 million high-BMI by 2040 [World Obesity Atlas 2026]
 - India may have 27 million obese children/adolescents — 11% of global burden
- **Adult markers (NFHS-6):**
 - obesity: women 24%→30.7%, men 22.9%→27.3%;
 - 19.7% adults below normal BMI (India carries both extremes)
- **Projected disease burden 2025–2040 (ages 5–19):** [Source: World Obesity Atlas 2026]
 - hypertension 2.99m→4.21m |
 - hyperglycaemia 1.39m→1.91m |
- **Rural spread:** obesity-linked lifestyle shifts once urban-only now measurable in rural India too

Economic and Regulatory Data

- **Source:** State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) 2025, Child Nutrition Report 2025
- Obesity cost India ~\$29 billion (1% of GDP) in 2019 — could reach 2.5% of GDP by 2060
- Unhealthy diets = 56% of India's total disease burden

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Why Children Bear the Worst of All Four Layers

- **Biological:** metabolic/fat-storage systems still forming — exposure can permanently shift fat storage (thin-fat mechanism)
- **Behavioural/agency:** zero purchasing power — children eat what's provided/marketed
- **Targeted external:** deliberate marketing targets children specifically; school environment often fails to protect
- **Structural/institutional:** only 35.5% school-meal coverage; no HFSS label exists; growth monitoring blind to thin-fat phenotype

CAUSES

The Nutrition Transition (Historical Root, ~20 years)

- **Baseline:** home-cooked, cereal-vegetable diets; activity built into daily life by default
- **UPF consumption:** \$900m (2006) → \$37.9bn (2019), 33%+ annual growth — structural food-supply shift within one generation
- **Dual-working households** → convenience food (time scarcity, not preference)
- **Marketing** + retail density normalise HFSS (High Fat, Sugar, Salt) as everyday
- **"Energy out" shrinks simultaneously:** urbanisation, screen time, deprioritised school activity (74% of adolescents miss activity targets)
- **Poverty** accelerates, doesn't protect: cheapest calories = most obesogenic
- **Compounding effect:** today's children born into this environment — obesity shifted from adult/urban to childhood/rural

Structural/Systemic Causes (Common to Both Burdens)

- **Cereal-centric PDS** — calorie access without dietary diversity/protein/micronutrients
- **Gender inequality** — women's lower financial/decision-making power shapes food choices
- **Supply-side policy bias** — food reaches households, use isn't ensured
- **Global regulatory vacuum:**
 - only 18% of 202 countries mandate school-meal nutrition standards;
 - only 19% tax both unhealthy food and sugary drinks [UNICEF]
- **India's specific gap:** Front-of-Pack Labelling (FOPL) un-finalised since 2014

Wrong Diet Composition (Core Mechanism)

CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

Institutional Delivery

- **POSHAN 2.0:**
 - supply-side bias; doesn't decide/monitor – who gets the food?
 - detection blind spot (can't catch thin-fat);
 - only 1.03 lakh of ~14 lakh Centres "Saksham"-upgraded;
 - AWW vacancies 1.5+ lakh;
 - AWWs earn ₹4,500–10,000/month with rising digital workload
- **PM POSHAN:**
 - only 35.5% coverage; as private schools and class beyond 8th are excluded.
 - NEP 2020 breakfast recommendation unimplemented;
 - diversity gap even where delivered
- **SAG:**
 - geographically restricted (Aspirational Districts/NER only);
 - age-band gap (10–13 uncovered)
- **Audit findings:**
 - Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) 2017 and 2023 audits found beneficiary-coverage shortfalls,
 - delayed Anganwadi Centre construction,
 - fund under-utilisation (one state used only 54.77% of SAG funds, 2018-23);
 - West Bengal PM POSHAN fund-misuse allegations triggered special CAG audit
- **Convergence remains siloed** at block level despite the 26-ministry design

Regulatory and Governance

- **FOPL** unfinalised 12 years (2014–2026) despite Supreme Court contempt-proceeding threats;
- **No legal definition** of HFSS/UPF exists

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- **Advertising regulation** toothless — 2017 recommendation – to restrict HFSS ad, but no legal action taken since then
- **Industry capture of regulation**: 2021 stronger **traffic-light model** (like UK) - draft abandoned under lobbying
- **Existing Indian Nutrition Rating** misleads (2–3 stars for HFSS foods)
- **Genuine technical issues too**:
 - real unresolved questions on thresholds and format,
 - MSME (Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises) impact
 - Audit and testing cost
- **Awareness campaigns**: limited evidence of real behaviour-change impact;
 - ignore the affordability inversion

Detection and Surveillance

- Growth monitoring weight/height-only — structurally blind to **thin-fat phenotype**
- **Region-specific obesity data** gap prevents targeted intervention design
- **Malnutrition surveillance** floor Stree - (low-income, low-cost: national operational framework)

Political, Cultural, Structural, Vulnerability

- **Technical decisions politically hijacked** (West Bengal egg case);
 - "no single food" framing trap distracts from **real diversity questions**; Eg: Egg vs non-egg
 - livelihood trade-offs in meal-prep model shifts – Odisha centralised model vs SHG led model of West Bengal
- **Poverty-obesity paradox**:
 - 40%+ of Indians can't afford a healthy diet;
 - cheapest calories = most obesogenic
- **Gender inequality as root cause**:
 - central obesity even in active poor children;
 - urbanisation of a "rural-exempt" problem
- **Children's four-fold vulnerability**:
 - zero agency,
 - targeted marketing,
 - failing school environment,
 - weakest institutional protection

Agriculture, Clinical, Community-Model Limits

- **Fortification/biofortification**:
 - input-stage fixes only, don't change household behaviour;
 - ICAR research is slow-acting relative to crisis urgency
- **Clinical treatment (bariatric/GLP-1)**:
 - reactive not preventive;
 - urban-private-concentrated,
 - inaccessible to low-income households most affected

Question - 4

GS2 - Q9

"IPMDA (Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness) bridges the gap between India's SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) vision and the Quad's collective Indo-Pacific strategy." Make a critical assessment of the statement focusing on IPMDA.

SMCA Mains 2026

Lecture Date: 26/06/26

And Date: 29/07/26

Explanation

-
- Latest deals
 - Letter of request for Javelin anti-tank guided missiles co-production
 - Maritime
 - India seafarers killed, IRLS Dena incident.
- Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Aw. (IPMDA)

Question - 5

GS2 - Q19

"India's global diaspora acts as a living bridge, as a critical economic factor and knowledge network in transforming cultural heritage into geopolitical influence and strategic leverage worldwide." Critically examine this statement.

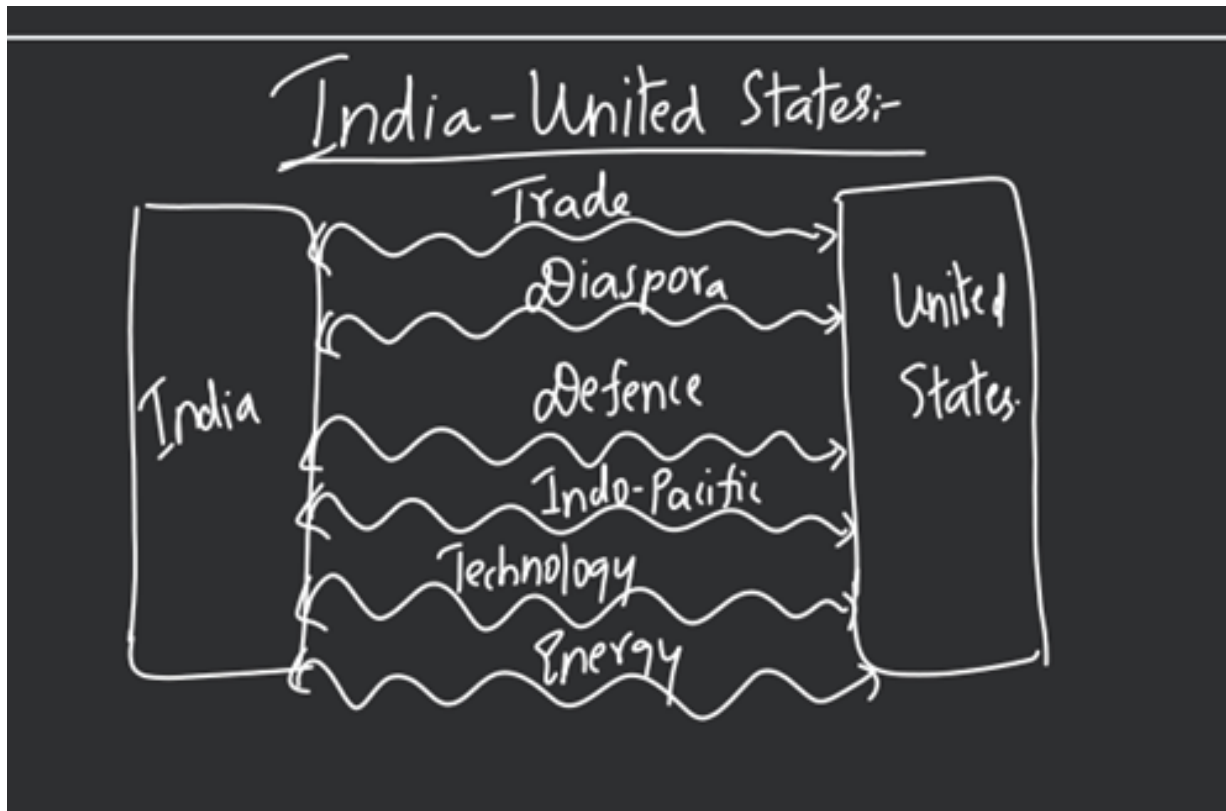
SMCA Mains 2026

Date: 26/06/26 -

India Russia Diaspora Discussion

Explanation

-
- Migration & Cultural
- ① Indians Caught in Ukraine War - Recent Agreement on Co-op. in Combatting Irregular Migration
 - ② Russia Today channel - Indian edition
 - ③ Labour Mobility Agreement.



Question - 6 GS2 - Q20

"China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has transformed South Asia from a regional space into a theatre of great power competition." Analyse the strategic implications of the BRI for India's security and regional influence in South Asia.

Explanation

SMCA Mains 2026

Lecture Date: Session 1 of

IR - 22/06/26

→ Latest developments → CPEC 2.0.
 → Indus. clusters, Supply chain.
 → "third party" in CPEC.

Nexus → Deepened.
 → Calculated.
 → Mutually beneficial.

Issue:- Sino-Pak nexus - Bangladesh

Pakistan

- ① First time since - Pak. navy ship in Chittogram port. 1971
- ② Direct flights.
- ③ Direct sea links.
- ④ Pak-Bangl. Know-Corridor.
- ⑤ Civil Service Training - Lahore

China:-

- ① Largest trading partner.
- ② third largest FDI
- ③ Kunming - "medical tourism"
- ④ Teesta investment.
- ⑤ China's outreach - BNP Jamat
- ⑥ Trilateral - Kunming

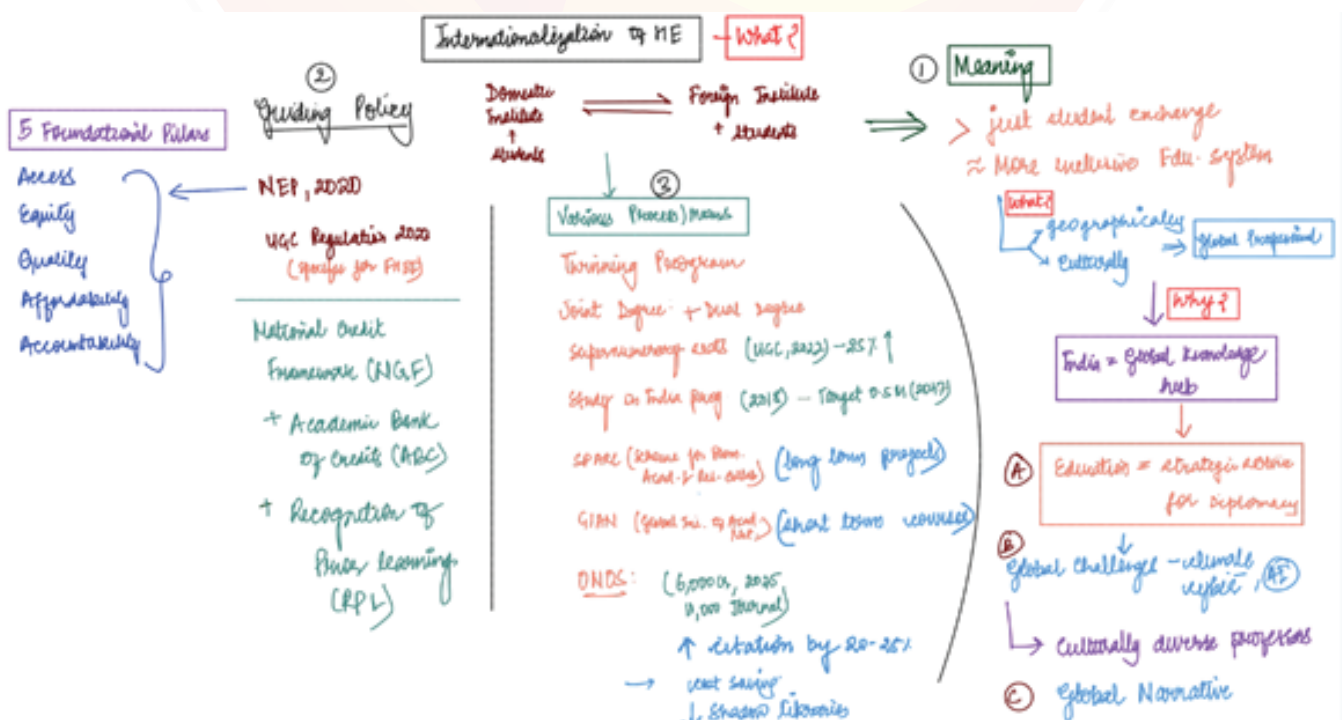
Question - 7 GS2 - Q18

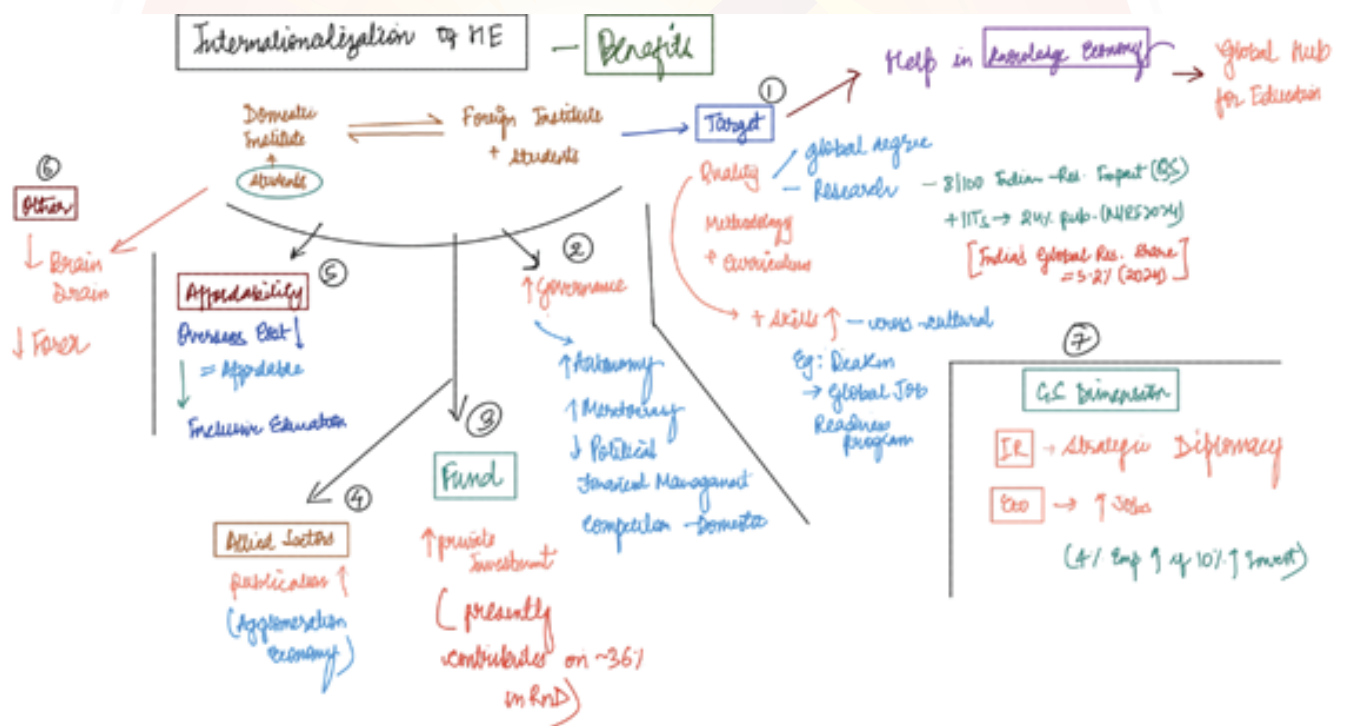
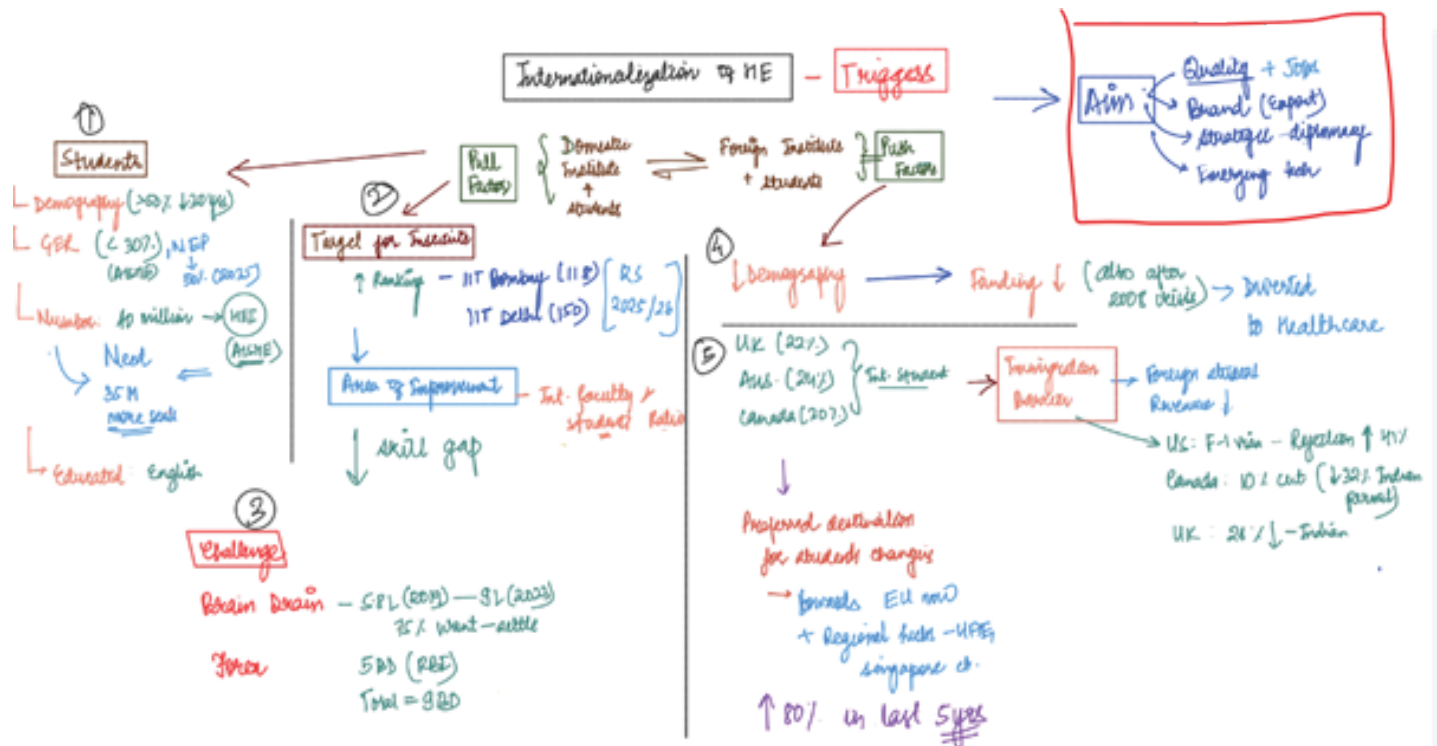
Should education be treated primarily as a welfare obligation of the state or as a strategic investment for building a globally competitive, knowledge-driven nation? Critically evaluate.

Explanation

SMCA PCM26

Leature Date: 26-08-2025





Question - 8 GS3 - Q11

Explain the key challenges for India's energy security. What measures do you suggest for ensuring energy security along with economic growth and sustainability?

Explanation

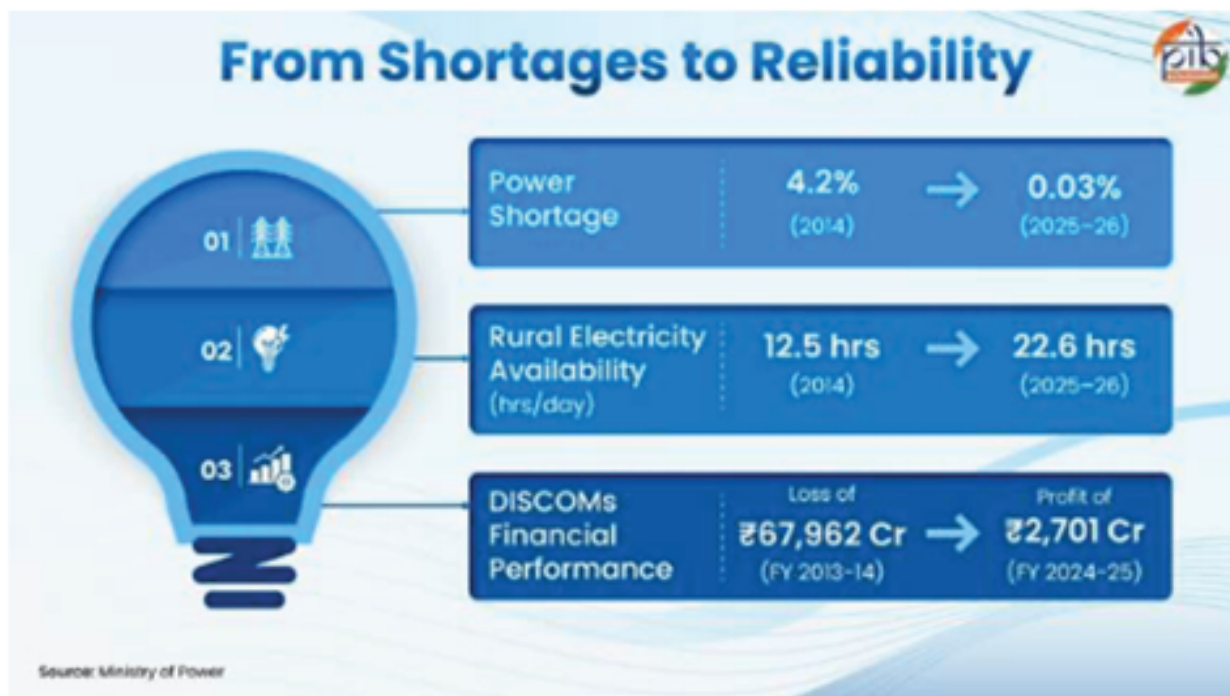
SMCA Mains 2026

Date: 08-07-2026 – Coal Gasification and Energy Security

VAJIRAM & RAVI

ENERGY SECURITY & ELECTRIFICATION

India's power sector witnessed major improvements in reliability, electricity availability, and financial performance in the last decade. Power shortage declined sharply from **4.2% in 2014** to **0.03% in 2025–26**. Average rural electricity availability increased from **12.5 hours** to **22.6 hours per day** during the same period. DISCOM finances also improved significantly, shifting from losses of **₹67,962 crore in FY2013–14** to profits of **₹2,701 crore in FY2024–25**.



India's installed power capacity reached **532.74 GW** by March 2026, compared to **248 GW** in 2014. India also achieved its COP21 target of sourcing **40% of its electricity capacity from non-fossil fuel sources** nearly a decade ahead of schedule.

India emerged among the world's leading renewable energy producers after 2014:

- 3rd largest clean energy capacity globally
- 4th largest installed wind energy capacity globally

Schemes to promote energy security/Power:

1. PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana, 2024
2. GOBARdhan Scheme (2018)
3. Saubhagya Scheme-2017
4. International Solar Alliance (ISA)-2015
5. Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA)-2023
6. Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)-2016



In the News: India's peak power demand hit record ~270 GW (2026) even as import bills stay high — need for domestic, controllable energy sources.

- **India's energy demand:** peak ~270 GW (2026); coal = 55%+ of primary commercial energy, ~72-74% of electricity generation.
- **Import dependence snapshot:** crude ~85-90%; gas ~45-50%; methanol 80-90%; ammonia ~100%; coking coal ~90%.
- **Five-Pillar Energy Sovereignty Doctrine:**
 - (1) Coal gasification,
 - (2) Biofuels (₹92,000 cr to farmers via ethanol blending),
 - (3) Nuclear (SMRs, thorium),
 - (4) Green Hydrogen (5 MT/yr by 2030 target),
 - (5) Pumped hydro storage.
- **Why coal specifically:** India lacks control over global oil/gas geopolitics, BUT has genuine domestic abundance in coal (5th largest reserves) — most "actionable" lever among fossil fuels.
- **Recurring pattern:** every major Indian energy shift follows an external shock — 1973 oil shock → first gasification pilot;
 - 2026 West Asia crisis → ₹37,500 cr scheme.

MPQ – Mains Probable Question

Ques. "Coal gasification is often projected as a technology that can simultaneously advance India's energy security and its industrial self-reliance, without compromising its climate commitments. Critically examine this claim in light of India's recent policy push in this sector." (15 marks, 250 words)

MPQ

Question: "While biofuels provide a vital 'drop-in' shield against global crude oil shocks, their rapid adoption triggers serious resource trade-offs and structural policy issues." Critically analyze the role of biofuels in India's energy security. (250 Words | 15 Marks)

Question - 9 GS3 - Q2

Examine the view that financial inclusion is an integral part of social and economic inclusion in a country like India. Also throw light on the usefulness of the R.B.I.'s Financial Inclusion Index.

Explanation

Date: 29-06-2026 and 23/07/26
SMCA Mains 2026

DIGITAL FINANCIAL INCLUSION

Question: Define Financial Inclusion and the role of AI in it. What steps has the Government taken to integrate AI through DPI in promoting financial inclusion?

Financial Inclusion:

- a. Timely
- b. Adequate
- c. Affordable

Role of AI in FI**Government Steps:**

1. JAM
2. UPI
3. DBT
4. BHASINI
5. RBI Regulatory Sandbox
6. Mule hunter AI
7. Digital Shram Setu
8. Unified Lending Interface (ULI)
9. Account Aggregator Framework

Question - 10**GS3 – Q3**

Describe the various Technology Missions initiated in Indian agriculture and examine their role in food security.

Explanation

SMCA Mains 2026

Date: 2/06/26

**Challenges in export:**

1. Supply-Side & Production Constraints
2. Agriculture Trade Surplus
3. Non-Tariff Barrier (NTB)
4. Farm Subsidy
5. India's FTA
6. Investment & Technology
7. Gaps in infrastructure
8. Domestic policy constraint

Steps to boost export:

1. APEDA (Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority)
2. Export Promotion Forum (EPF)
3. Agriculture Export Policy (AEP)
4. District as Export Hub (DEH)
5. Transportation and Marketing Assistance (TMA)
6. Trade Infrastructure for Export Scheme (TIES)
7. Farmer Connect Portal (FCP)

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) IN INDIAN AGRICULTURE

Application of AI in agriculture:

1. Precision Farming and Resource Optimization:
2. Crop Monitoring:
3. Predictive Analytics and Advisory Services
4. Soil Health, Crop Planning, and Supply Chain

Government Initiatives to promote AI in Agriculture:

1. Digital Agriculture Mission 2024
2. Bharat-VISTAAR (Virtually Integrated System to Access Agricultural Resources)-2026
3. India AI Mission 2024
4. Kisan e-Mitra 2023

SCHEMES OF FPI:

1. Mega Food Parks 2008-09
2. Agro-Processing Cluster ((APC)-2017
3. Operation Green-2018
4. Formalisation of Micro-Food Processing Enterprises (FME)-2020
5. Production Linked Incentive Scheme (PLI)-2021

- **Budget** = Rs 10900 cr
- **Target:** Rs 33,494 cr worth of processed food and 2.5 Lakh employment
- **Components:**
 - a. Manufacturing: Ready to Eat, Processed Fruits & Vegetables, Marine Products, Mozzarella Cheese
 - b. Innovate Organic products of SME
 - c. Branding & Marketing

6. PM Kisan Sampada Yojana-2017/2020

Aim:

1. Boost FDI
2. Better Prices for farmers
3. Employment in rural areas
4. Wastage in agriculture
5. Processing level
6. Export of processed food

Components:

1. Integrated Cold Chain & Value Addition Infrastructure
2. Agro-Processing Clusters
3. Food Processing & Processing Facilities
4. Food Safety & Quality
5. Operation Green

Question - 11 GS3 – Q16

What is agentic Artificial Intelligence (AI)? Explain its working. Describe its applications with suitable examples. Discuss the advantages, risks and challenges associated with agentic AI systems.

Explanation

SMCA Prelims 2026

Date: 21/03/26

Agentic AI

Current Affairs

- **The Era of AI Agents:** In 2026, we have transitioned from "Chatbots" (which provide information) to **AI Agents** (which execute outcomes).

Core Concept

- **Generative AI: Reactive.** It only moves when you prompt it. Eg: If you ask for a trip itinerary, it writes a list; you do the booking.
- **Agentic AI: Proactive.** You give it a high-level goal, and it figures out the steps, finds the tools, and works until the job is done.

Process - The "PRA-L" Loop

Agents operate in a continuous cycle rather than a single response:

1. **Perceive:** Reads the environment (emails, live web, databases).
2. **Reason/Plan:** Breaks a goal into a sequence of smaller sub-tasks.
3. **Act (Tool Use):** Uses **APIs** (the "hands" of the AI) to interact with other software.
4. **Learn/Adapt:** If a step fails (e.g., a flight is sold out), it re-plans and tries a different route.

Multi-Agent Systems (MAS)

In 2026, the trend has shifted from "Single Agents" to **Orchestrated Squads**.

- **The Manager Agent:** Oversees the project and delegates tasks to specialists.
- **Specialist Agents:** A "Researcher" finds data, a "Writer" drafts the report, and a "Legal Auditor" check for compliance.
- **Orchestration:** Ensures the agents do not contradict each other and consolidates the final result.

Agentic AI Self-Governance

- Enterprises moving ahead of regulation — payments, cybersecurity, product design — creating their own laws and rules proactively — before govt. does
- **India AI Impact Summit's Agentic AI Roundtable** themes — For Agentic AI:
 - verified agent identity;
 - "blast radius" problem;
 - 2D→3D risk shift.
- **Human-in-loop consensus** —
 - treat agents as employees;
 - audit logs, kill switches
 - always maintaining human oversight
- **Gap** — IBM 2025 report:
 - ~60% lack formal policy;
 - only 37% have implemented AI access controls;
 - Just 42% detect "shadow AI." - (unauthorised, unsanctioned use of AI tools within an

Question - 12 GS3 – Q15

Mention salient features of 'Mission Drishti'. Discuss the imaging techniques used in the satellite launched on 3rd May 2026. Why it is being considered world's first satellite of its kind?

Explanation

SMCA Mains 2026

Date: 08-07-2026

TOPIC: INDIA'S PRIVATE SPACE INDUSTRY - SMCA M26 – Handout

CURRENT-AFFAIRS TRIGGER — WHY THIS TOPIC, NOW

- Skyroot becomes a unicorn — raised funding from GIC and BlackRock, crossing \$1 billion valuation; India's first space start-up unicorn.
- Vikram-1 orbital attempt (Mission Aagaman) — Skyroot's window July 12–August 4, 2026 for India's first-ever private orbital launch;
- Space Meetings Veneto 2026 (Italy) — nine Indian start-ups signed collaborations directly with Italian firms — private-sector-led space diplomacy, not just government-to-government.
- GalaxEye's Drishti launched (May 2026, via SpaceX) — world's first Opto-SAR satellite (optical + radar fusion on one platform); backed by Infosys.
- ISRO's structural strain — only 5 launches in 2025 against an internal target of 8, while running Gaganyaan, satellite replenishment, and NGLV development in parallel.
 - PSLV failures — PSLV-C61 (May 2025) and PSLV-C62 (Jan 2026) — India's 5th launch failure in 7 years; global small-satellite launch share fell from 35% (2017) to near-zero (2024).

Satellite & data companies: Pixxel Space — world's highest-resolution hyperspectral imaging; customers NASA, Rio Tinto, Ministry of Agriculture; backed by Google, Lightspeed.

- GalaxEye — Drishti (Opto-SAR world-first); Infosys-backed.
- Dhruva Space — end-to-end satellite missions.
- Azista Space — Azista First Runner (AFR), India's first privately-built EO satellite (civil + defence use); ~₹500 cr Gujarat payload factory.
- Bellatrix Aerospace — green propulsion, UK/France deals.
- Digantara — ground stations/debris tracking (Reliance stake).

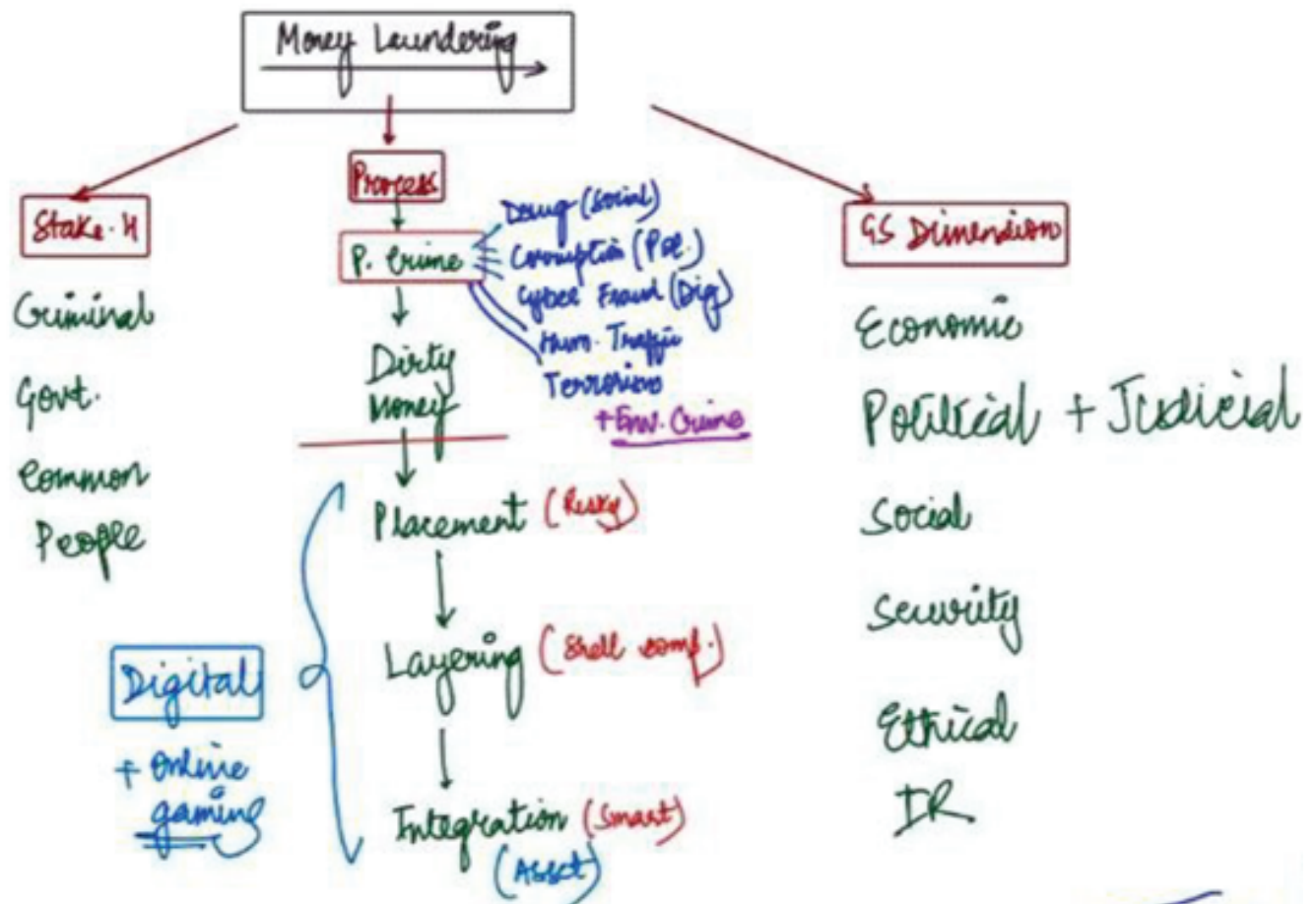
Question - 13 GS3 – Q20

Discuss counterfeit currency and money laundering as major sources of terror funding in India. State the actions being taken at International level to check these menaces. Highlight the role of Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and methods of compliance by its member states in preventing terror funding.

Explanation

SMCA PCM26

Date: 07/08/2025



International Cooperation & FATF – The Global Watchdog

What is FATF?

- Financial Action Task Force – Intergovernmental body created by G7 in 1989

• **Purpose:** Sets global standards (known as **40 Recommendations**) to combat:

- Money Laundering (ML)
- Terrorist Financing (TF)
- Proliferation Financing (PF) – i.e., funding for Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs)

Headquarters: Paris, France

India's Membership: Since 2010

FATF Classifications

- **Black List:** High-risk jurisdictions with serious strategic deficiencies
- **Grey List:** Countries under increased monitoring – must commit to resolving ML/TF/PF flaws swiftly

India's FATF Mutual Evaluation Report – 2024

Assessment Type: Peer-reviewed evaluation of India's AML/CFT (Anti-Money Laundering/Counter-Terror Financing) framework

Top Positive Outcomes:

1. Highest FATF Rating – "Regular Follow-up"

- India placed in **elite G20 group** (with UK, France, Italy)

2. Strong Technical Compliance

- High-level compliance across key AML/CFT areas

Key Areas of Strength

ML/TF Risk Understanding

- Based on 2022 National Risk Assessment → clear grasp of threats

National Coordination & Cooperation

- Inter-agency synergy (e.g., ITBP-ED joint action, I4C operations)

Financial Intelligence Use

- Strong use of FIU-IND data via FINnet 2.0
- Example: Mahadev App, Banmeet Singh investigations (drug dealers, smugglers)

Question - 14

GS2 – Q2

"Women as a class neither belong to a minority group nor are they regarded as forming a backward class." In the light of this statement, discuss the evolution of women's reservation from local bodies to Parliament.

Explanation

SMCA Mains 2026

Date: 10/06/26

Topic-1 : Women's Reservation in Legislature

Questions:

1. "Women's reservation in legislatures is necessary to bridge the gap between women's political participation and political representation." Discuss.
2. Reservation can ensure the descriptive representation of women in legislatures, but not necessarily their substantive political empowerment. Examine.
3. Critically evaluate the effectiveness of legislative seat reservation as a mechanism for women's political empowerment. In this context, compare it with alternative models such as party-level candidate quotas and dual-member constituencies.
4. In the context of the 106th Constitutional Amendment Act, examine the proposition that women's political participation remains incomplete without adequate representation, while representation without effective agency may degenerate into tokenism.

HFK

Political participation, political representation, descriptive representation, substantive representation, symbolic representation, politics of presence, democratic deficit, substantive equality, formal equality, critical actors, tokenism, proxy representation, independent political agency, women's political empowerment, political inclusion, electoral participation, decision-making power, institutional representation, legislative influence, party gatekeeping, candidate selection, winnable constituencies, party-level candidate quotas, legislative quotas, internal party democracy, political leadership pipeline, supply-side barriers, demand-side barriers, gendered political ambition, patriarchal bargain, public-private divide, time poverty, resource poverty, network poverty, unpaid care burden, campaign finance inequality, gendered political violence, online misogyny, intersectional representation,

Participation–Representation Gap

Women's electoral participation has risen substantially:

- Female voter turnout increased from about **37% in 1951–52** to **67.2% in 2019** and **65.8% in 2024**.
- Women's turnout exceeded men's in both 2019 and 2024.
- Women candidates increased from about **3% in 1957** to nearly **10% in 2024**.

Yet representation remains low:

- Only **800 of 8,360 candidates** in the 2024 Lok Sabha election were women.
- **152 constituencies** had no woman candidate.
- Only **74 women MPs**, about **14%**, entered the 18th Lok Sabha.

Thus, women are increasingly decisive voters but not proportionate holders of political power.

Question - 15 GS3 – Q12

How are startups in India promoting entrepreneurship, innovation and employment? Discuss the global and domestic challenges in their working and suggest suitable measures to overcome these challenges.

SMCA Mains 2026

Date: 23/07/26 and 29-06-2026
and 04/07/26

Explanation

EMPLOYMENT & SKILL

SECTOR	% SHARE IN EMPLOYMENT
Agriculture	46.1%
Industries	24.2%
Services	29.7%

- **Employment:**
 - a. 2017-18:
 - b. 2023-24:
- Working Age Population (WAP):
- Youth Employability:
- Formal Skill:
- Shortage of Skilled Labour Force:

SCHEMES:

1. PM Internship Scheme-2025
2. Employment Linked Incentive (ELIS)-2025
3. PM-Employment Guarantee Programme (PM-EGP)-2008
4. PM SVANIDHI-2020
5. PLI-2020
6. Startup and GCC
7. PM-Kushal Vikas Yojana-2015
8. PM-Skilling & Employment Transformation Through Upgraded it is (PM-SETU)-2025

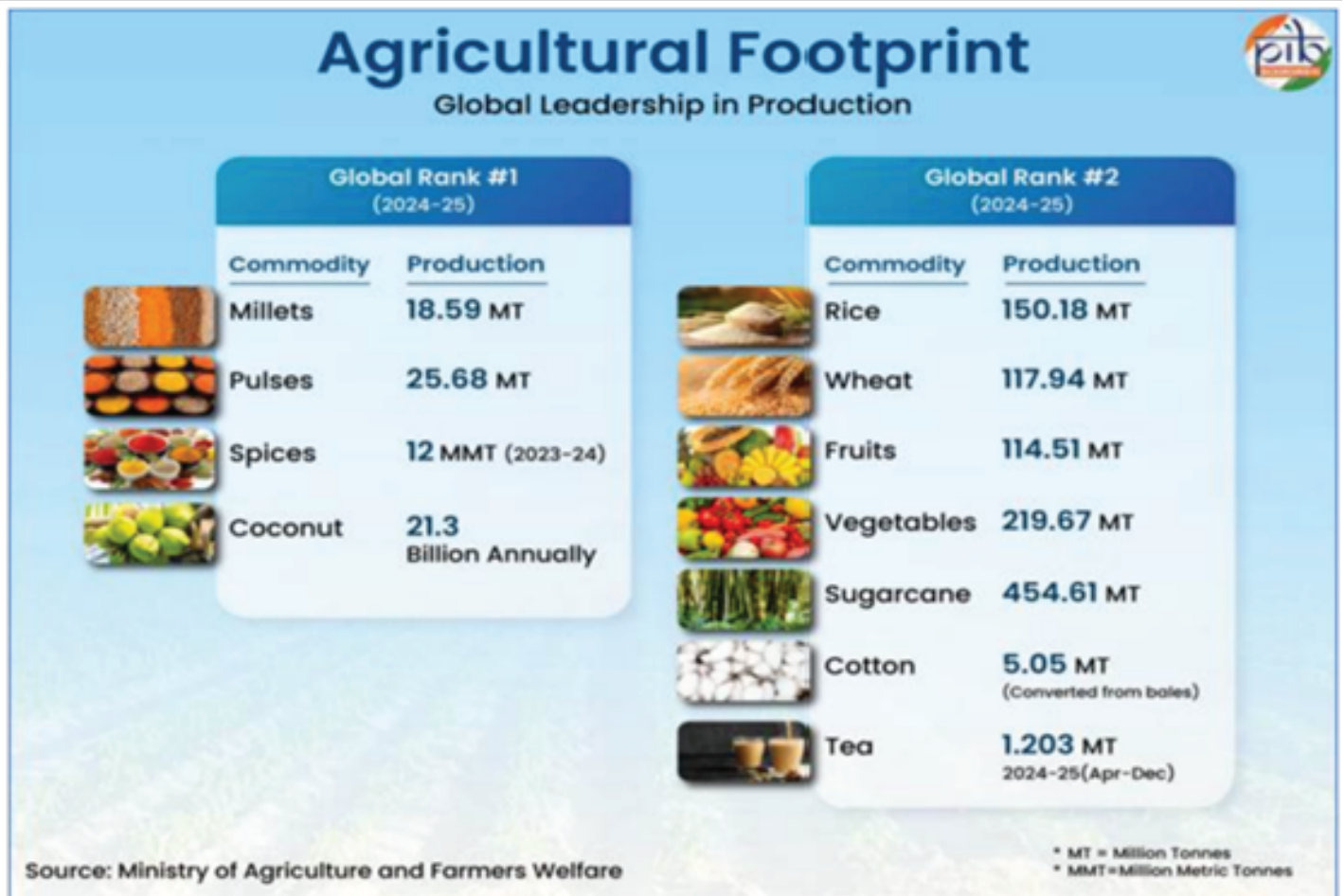
Question - 16 GS3 – Q13

How Indian agriculture has been transformed from food scarcity to food surplus level? Explain the various government policies implemented for diversification of Indian agriculture.

SMCA Mains 2026

Date: 2/06/26 and 04/06/26
and 06/06/26

Explanation



Question - 17 GS1 - Q18

Is caste disappearing in urban India? Illustrate your answer with examples.

Explanation

SMCA PCM26

Date: 04/07/2025

Caste and the contemporary Changes in India

PYQ - Caste System

2023 - Why is caste identity in India both fluid and static?

2020 - Has caste lost its relevance in understanding the multi-cultural Indian Society? Elaborate your answer with illustrations.

2018 - "Caste system is assuming new identities and associational forms. Hence, caste system cannot be eradicated in India." Comment

2015 - Debate the issue whether and how contemporary movements for assertion of Dalit identity work towards annihilation of caste.

Basic AW framework

Components:

1. Hierarchy
2. Mobility
3. Identity
4. Inequality

GS Dimensions:

1. Urbanisation - residence etc.
2. Economy - job etc.
3. Social - Marriage etc.
4. Political - vote bank
5. Cultural

Stakeholder:

1. SC, OBCs
2. Upper caste
3. Women
4. Political Parties
5. State
6. Judiciary
7. Youth

Traditional Features of Caste

Segmental Division → Birth-based, closed groups; fixed status; no mobility

Purity-Pollution Norms → Upper castes = pure; lower = polluting; restricts food, water, touch

Graded Inequality → Hierarchical ladder; each caste above another; low inter-caste unity (Ambedkar)

Untouchability → Dalits denied access to temples, wells, schools; social boycott persists; banned by Article 17

Endogamy → Marriage within jati/sub-jati; maintains purity (Ambedkar); still prevalent

Hereditary Occupation → Job fixed by caste (e.g., Brahmin = priest); no merit; Jajmani system

Civil & Religious Barriers → Lower castes barred from Vedas, education, public life

Caste in All Religions → Found among Christians, Muslims, Sikhs; Bihar Survey (2023) proves persistence

Caste = Social + Structural Control → Regulates status, marriage, jobs, rituals; revived via apps, housing, education

Caste and Contemporary Dimensions

1. Rural vs Urban → Visible & rigid in villages; hidden but active in cities (marriage, housing, jobs)

Insight: Urbanisation ≠ caste disappearance

2. Politics → Vote banks, identity blocs, caste-based parties (BSP, SP); social engineering, caste census, quota debates

Insight: Politics both shapes and is shaped by caste (Rajni Kothari)

3. Economy → Caste-based informal jobs; SC/ST face landlessness, poor credit access, few formal jobs

Insight: Caste restricts economic mobility via "caste capital"

4. Education → SC/ST face poor school access, dropouts, elite bias (e.g., Rohith Vemula case)

Insight: Access + dignity gap in institutions

5. Violence → 40,000+ caste crimes/year (NCRB); inter-caste attacks, temple bans, manual scavenging continue

Insight: Law exists, justice implementation weak

6. Digital Caste → Caste persists via apps, online groups; rise of Dalit digital voices (Dalit Camera, Velivada)

Insight: Caste adapts to digital spaces

7. Emerging Trends → Push for caste census, sub-categorisation; EWS vs social justice tension; rise of Dalit entrepreneurs

Insight: New assertions, old structures coexist

Caste Changes happening

Weakening Trends

- **Inter-Caste Marriages** → Urbanisation, courts, education; still rare (NFHS-5: 5.8%)

- **Decline of Brahminical Supremacy** → Dalit/OBC assertion; secularism, reservations challenged hegemony

- **Occupational Mobility** → Dalits in IAS; gig economy breaks caste-job links

- **Relaxation in Commensality** → Inter-dining ↑ in cities; rural taboos persist

- **Youth Attitudes** → Educated youth more inclusive; bias in marriage choices remains

- **Caste-Neutral Economy** → Startups dilute caste filter; growing economy may reduce caste salience

Re-assertion Trends

- **Caste Politics** → Vote banks, caste parties, quota agitations
- **Dominant Caste Assertion** → Numerical + land dominance (Yadavs, Jats, Kurmis)
- **Local Democracy** → Panchayat/municipality quotas → caste visibility
- **Affirmative Action Centrality** → Jobs, education, sub-categorisation, EWS quota
- **Caste Census Demand** → Equity vs identity hardening debate
- **Key Insight** → Structural erosion vs political entrenchment

Conclusion – Complex Evolution

- Caste is adapting, not vanishing
- Modernity weakens caste → mobility, cities, jobs
- Democracy reinforces caste → quotas, representation
- Future: Empowerment + Inclusion over identity fixation
- Goal: Justice beyond caste, not just through caste

Question - 18

GS4 – Q1b

A business house is working on a project that could displace a forest community from their habitat. As the administrative officer of that district, what ethical challenges are you likely to face?

Explanation

SMCA Mains 2026

Date: 13/07/26

ETHICAL DIMENSION

Dilemma 1: National Security vs Environmental/Human Disaster Risk

- **Nature of conflict:** A conflict between two categories of harm avoidance — collective/probabilistic (external threat) vs near-certain/irreversible (ecosystem and community harm); both are genuine Article 21 duties.
- **Sharper edge here:** Building on Seismic Zone V, tsunami-prone terrain is itself disaster-risk creation — the state may be placing the very security infrastructure into a zone of serious physical danger.
- **Applicable principle:** Precautionary principle — burden of proof should fall on the party proposing the risky action.

Dilemma 2: Environment vs Development

- **Not a false binary:** Amartya Sen's capability approach — development expands human freedom/wellbeing; this is a genuine value, not just corporate profit.
- **Externality-distribution problem:** Those bearing environmental cost (Shompen, Nicobarese, endemic species) are not the primary beneficiaries of development gain (trade competitiveness, tourism revenue to outside investors).
- **Rawlsian test:** Would this arrangement be acceptable behind a "veil of ignorance" — not knowing whether one would be born Shompen or a Mumbai shipping executive?

Dilemma 3: "Justified" vs "Just"

- **Justification:** Outcome-based/technical — EC obtained, NGT cleared, Gram Sabhas technically held, land technically re-notified.
- **Justice:** A deeper standard — did the process honour the moral status and agency of the most vulnerable, regardless of paperwork? This is where signature irregularities, exclusion of the Tribal Council chairman, and the suppressed Pandya report become ethically decisive.
- **Historical echo:** Colonial-era justification systems (terra nullius) were designed to make injustice look procedurally clean — a caution, not an equivalence, for the present case.



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