



VAJIRAM & RAVI
Institute for IAS Examination

The Analyst

CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout

30th November 2025



30th November 2025

CONTEXT: The doctrine is the conscience that keeps our democracy from drifting into absolutism.

The Basic Structure Doctrine: A History

1951

Shankari Prasad v. Union of India

Parliament's power of amending the Constitution under Article 368 held to include the power to amend Part III containing the Fundamental Rights.



1965

Sajjan Singh v. State of Rajasthan

Parliamentary supremacy & its power to amend any part of the Constitution upheld again. Importantly, Mudholkar and Hidayatullah JJ dissents.



1967

Golaknath v. State of Punjab

In a complete reversal, the court rules that Fundamental Rights could not be amended by Parliament, unless another constituent assembly is formed.



1971

24th Constitutional Amendment

Articles 368 and Article 13 modified to allow Parliament to unilaterally amend Fundamental Rights, overturning the Golaknath ruling.



1973

Keshavananda Bharti v. State of Kerala

Court rules all parts of the Constitution, including Fundamental Rights, can be amended keeping its 'basic structure' intact.



1975

39th Constitutional Amendment

Election of president, vice president, prime minister and speaker placed beyond the scope of judicial review, in the backdrop of the Emergency.



1975

Indira Gandhi v. Raj Narain

Applying the 'basic structure' doctrine for the first time, the court strikes down the Amendment. Free & fair elections held to be part of basic structure.



1976

42nd Constitutional Amendment

Constitutional amendments protected against being called in question by any court. Parliament's constituent power to amend declared as limitless.



1980

Minerva Mills v. Union of India

Modifications rejected by the court, which clarified that Parliament's power to amend the constitution is limited by the Constitution itself.



Examples of Basic Features

- Kesavananda v. State of Kerala, AIR 1973 SC 1461
 - Supremacy of the Constitution
 - Sovereign, Democratic, Republican Structure
 - Article 32, Article 50
 - balance between Part III and IV
- Indira v. Rajnarain, AIR 1975 SC 2299
 - Rule of law
 - Principle of Separation of Power
 - Parliamentary System of Government
 - Principle of Free and Fair Elections
- Minerva, Mills v. Union of India, AIR 1980 SC 1789
 - Federalism
 - Secularism
 - Freedom & dignity of the individual

Effect on Related Doctrines

Doctrine of Legislative Overruling

- Parliament's tool to nullify judicial pronouncements
 - 1st Amendment
 - 24th Amendment
 - SC/ST Amendment Act
- Impediment by BSD

Doctrine of Constitutional Morality

- Both judicially created, open-ended
- Twinning
- Coterminous application
 - Navtej Singh Johar vs UoI
 - Manoj Narula vs UoI: norms & RoL
 - NCT of Delhi vs UoI



30th November 2025

CONTEXT: The doctrine is the conscience that keeps our democracy from drifting into absolutism.

Significance of Basic Structure

- Supremacy of Constitution
- Preserve ideals of founding fathers
- “North Star” for guidance
- Prevent totalitarianism
- Article 368: No express limitation on Parliament
- Fundamental Principles
 - Judicial Independence & JR
 - Fundamental Rights
 - Democratic principles
- Responsibly applied by judiciary

Criticism of Basic Structure

- No constitutional basis
- Vague & Ambiguous
- Subjectivity
- Anti-Democratic & Counter-majoritarian
- Violates Separation of Powers
- Judicial overreach
- Legislative Inefficacy/ Govt of Judges

nanda **Bharati case verdict**, which enunciated the basic structure doctrine, is “**not... a mere legal precedent**” but “stands instead, as one of the most **profound affirmations of India’s commitment to constitutionalism and the rule of law**”.

The CJI Surya Kant said that the basic structure doctrine is “**the conscience that keeps our democracy from drifting into absolutism**”.

neither a flight of judicial fancy nor an indulgence in philosophical abstraction. It was, in truth, an act of constitutional archaeology: the judges unearthed, from within the four corners of the Constitution, those foundational principles that had always lain embedded in its design, waiting to be revealed by interpretation rather than invention.”

He said the “true brilliance of the Kesavananda majority lay in recognising that what could not be amended, was what made the Constitution meaningful—



Basic Structure Doctrine

30th November 2025

CONTEXT: The doctrine is the conscience that keeps our democracy from drifting into absolutism.

trine, but that it proved a young Republic could, by the strength of its conscience, rise to the moral stature of a much older one. That decision revealed something intrinsic about India's democratic temperament. It showed that our constitutional culture is not brittle; it bends without breaking. It adapts, but it never abandons its moral compass."

legs, but the rope—that interlacing of restraint, balance, and moral discipline—is what makes the entire structure useful, just, and lasting."

The CJI said, "The idea that power must remain answerable to principle was always there, quietly embedded in the Constitution's design..." and the Kesavananda verdict "gave form to what the Constitution had always whispered: that no authority, however exalted, may amend away the promise of justice."

Justice P S Narasimha said the basic structure doctrine is "not a claim of judicial supremacy but an affirmation of constitutional supremacy," ensur-

Prelims PYQ

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. The Constitution of India defines its 'basic structure' in terms of federalism, secularism, fundamental rights and democracy.
2. The Constitution of India provides for 'judicial review' to safeguard the citizens' liberties and to preserve the ideals on which the Constitution is based.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Mains PYQs

- Starting from inventing the 'basic structure' doctrine, the judiciary has played a highly proactive role in ensuring that India develops into a thriving democracy. In light of the statement, evaluate the role played by judicial activism in achieving the ideals of democracy. **(2014)**
- Judicial Legislation is antithetical to the doctrine of separation of powers as envisaged in the Indian Constitution. In this context justify the filing of large number of public interest petitions praying for issuing guidelines to executive authorities. **(2020)**



Basic Structure Doctrine

30th November 2025

CONTEXT: The doctrine is the conscience that keeps our democracy from drifting into absolutism.

MAINS PRACTISE QUESTION

The Doctrine of Basic Structure, touted as a judicial safeguard against majoritarian excesses, remains debated regarding its legitimacy. Discuss the evolution of the doctrine, its contemporary significance, and the major criticisms it faces.



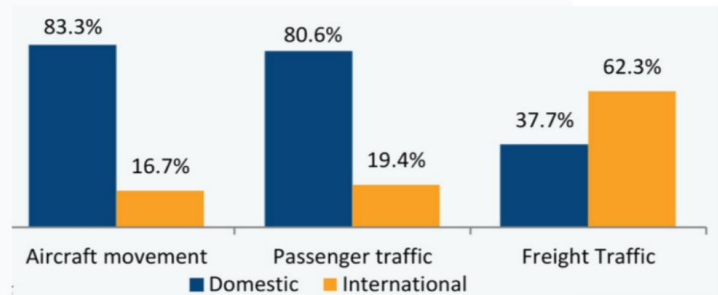
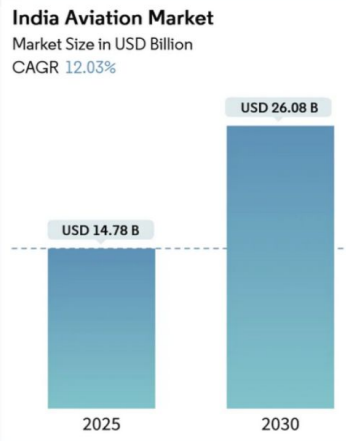
Aviation Sector

30th November 2025

CONTEXT: Urgent software upgrade on Airbus A320 aircraft

Aviation Sector: Facts

- domestic air passenger traffic 10–12% annually
- commercial airline fleet: 400 in 2014 to 2359 in 2040



Aviation Sector: Growth Drivers & Challenges

- DRIVER**
- Post-COVID passenger rebound and airport capacity expansion
 - India's FY27 target of over 220 operational airports
 - Increase in defense capital outlay driving military aircraft orders
 - Growing express cargo demand from e-commerce in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities
 - Tax incentives supporting indigenous avionics research and development
 - SAF blending mandate from 2027 catalyzing new aviation fuel supply chains

- RESTRAINT**
- Persistent volatility in aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices and limited hedging options
 - Infrastructure bottlenecks at Tier-3 airports affecting logistics efficiency
 - Shortage of skilled pilots and aircraft maintenance engineers despite training initiatives
 - Rupee depreciation posing risks to dollar-denominated aircraft lease agreements



30th November 2025

CONTEXT: Urgent software upgrade on Airbus A320 aircraft

Aviation Sector: Safety

Regulatory Framework

- DGCA
 - airworthiness standards
 - licensing aviation personnel
 - certifying aerodromes and air traffic management facilities
 - investigations into smaller incidents
- AAI
 - statutory body
 - air traffic management services
 - manages airports, terminals
- AAIB
 - aircraft accidents, serious incidents
 - Aircraft (Investigation of Accidents and Incidents) Rules, 2017, aligned with ICAO standards
 - Functions
 - i. classifying aviation occurrences
 - ii. preparing final reports
 - iii. issuing safety recommendations to DGCA
 - iv. systemic safety studies
- Bureau of Civil Aviation Safety
 - aviation security standards
 - monitoring security implementation
 - surprise checks

Safety Issues in Civil Aviation - Standing Committee

- ATC Vacancies
- Airworthiness of aircraft engines
- Navigation technology at airports
- Budget allocation to AAIB
 - Global Standards

- Unmanned Aircraft Systems
- Safety of helicopter operations
 - Guidelines for unfavorable weather
 - Airworthiness
- Bird Hits

Govt Initiatives

UDAN Achievement:

- **RCS-UDAN Connecting India:** operationalised 649 routes, connected 93 aerodromes, 12 airports/heliports in N-E
- **Milestone Achieved:** 1.5+ crore passengers
- **Expanded UDAN:** aims 120 new destinations, 4 crore passengers in the next 10 years
- **UDAN Yatri Café**



Objectives & Significance of UDAN Scheme

- Enhances regional air connectivity by operationalizing unserved and underserved airports across India.
- Makes air travel affordable through Viability Gap Funding (VGF) and operational cost concessions.
- Promotes tourism and boosts local economies, leading to balanced regional development.
- Generates employment opportunities in the aviation sector and related industries.
- Strengthens socio-economic integration by bridging the rural-urban connectivity divide.
- Encourages private participation in aviation through a market-driven approach.



30th November 2025

CONTEXT: Urgent software upgrade on Airbus A320 aircraft

Key Schemes in Aviation



Source: Ministry of Civil Aviation

MAINS PRACTISE QUESTION

Discuss the major growth drivers of India's aviation sector, the key challenges it faces, and the recent government initiatives aimed at strengthening the sector.



30th November 2025

SYLLABUS : GS 3 : Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment

Newspaper: Indian Express **Page Number :** 01

Chart 3: Regional Share in India's Export Basket

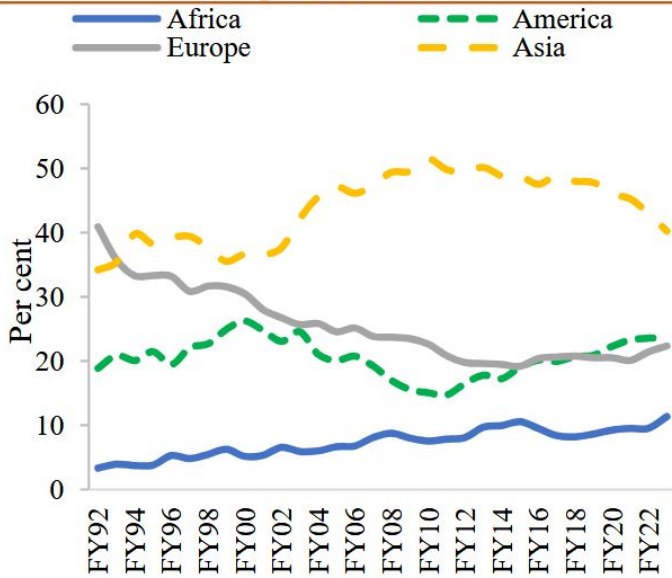


Chart 4: Regional Herfindahl Index

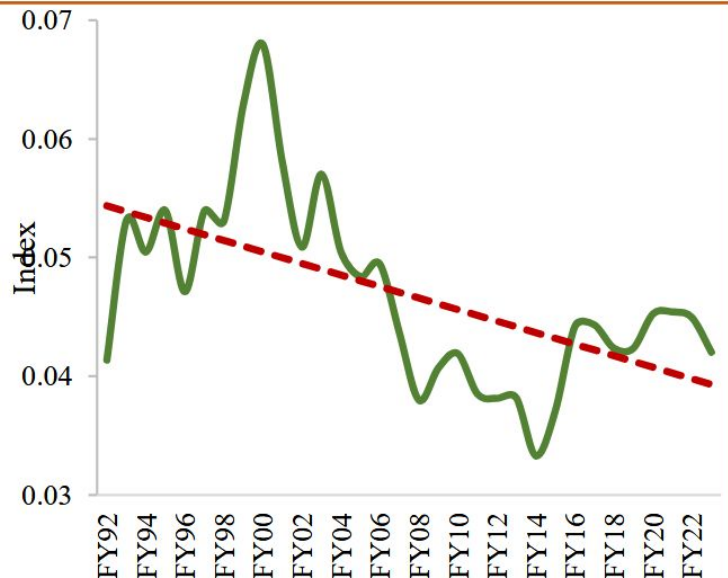


Chart 5: Sectoral Share in India's Export Basket

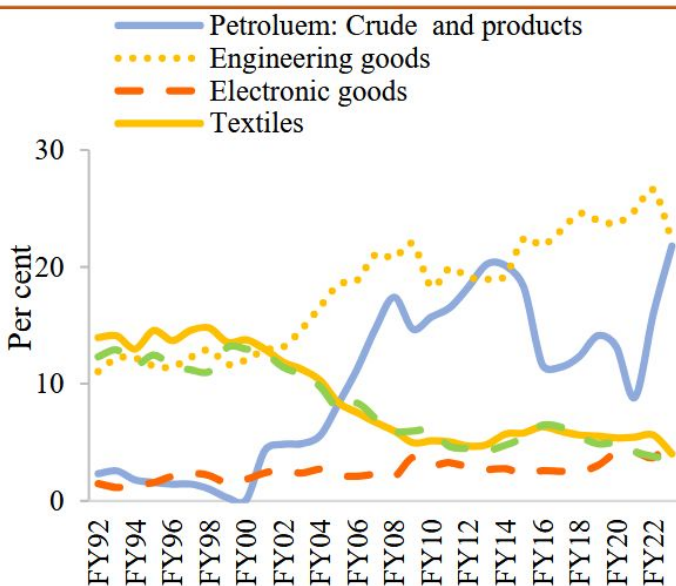
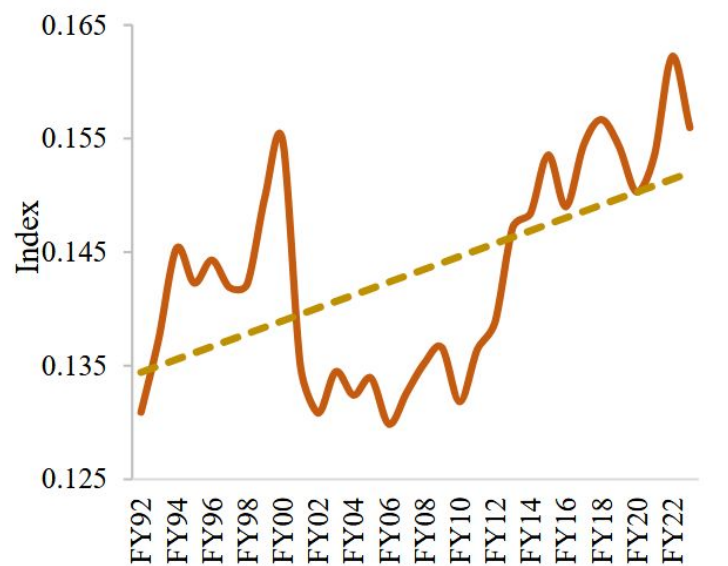


Chart 6: Sectoral Herfindahl Index



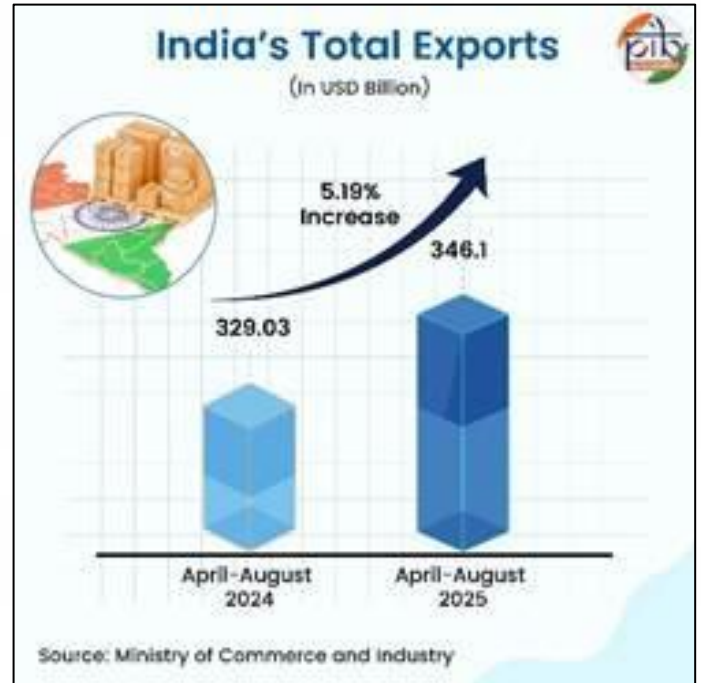
30th November 2025

SYLLABUS : GS 3 : Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment

Newspaper: Indian Express **Page Number :** 01

Factors driving Diversification

- Regional FTAs - UAE, Japan, South Korea
- Govt Outreach
 - 40 key importing nations - 3/4 textile demand
 - Foreign Trade Policy
 - Market Access Initiative
 - PLI schemes - competitiveness
- Supply Chain Strengthening
- Long Term dependence
- Non-US markets
 - Marine exports to China, Rice to Iran, Tea to UAE, Germany



Share of top export markets in India's total exports (2017 and 2024)

Country	2017	2024
US	15.6%	18.3%
UAE	10.1%	8.5%
Hong Kong	5.1%	1.5%
Netherlands	1.8%	5.6%
China	4.2%	3.6%



30th November 2025

SYLLABUS : GS 3 : Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment

Newspaper: Indian Express **Page Number :** 01



Ravi Dutta Mishra & Anil Sasi

New Delhi, November 29

ASSTEEP 50 per cent US tariffs effective August 27 begin to weigh on Indian goods exports. Several product categories such as shrimps, gems and jewellery, auto components and electric machinery have managed to redirect some of that output into other Asian and European markets.

Analysis of data released by the Commerce and Industry Ministry showed that while gems and jewellery exports to

the US plummeted 76 per cent in September compared with last year, total gems and jewellery exports registered only a marginal 1.5 per cent dip. Shipments to the United Arab Emirates jumped 79 per cent, to Hong Kong 11 per cent and Belgium 8 per cent, the data showed.

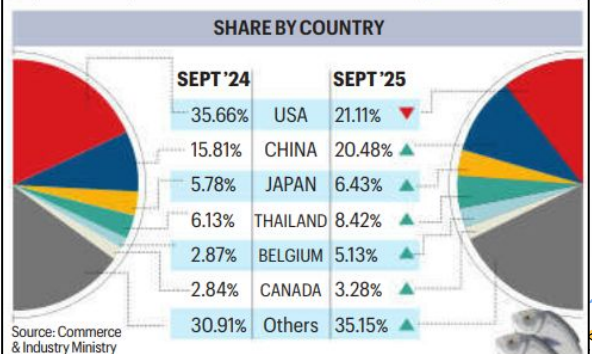
A similar pattern was visible in auto components, whose exports to the US dropped 12 per cent in September, but shipments to Germany, the UAE, and Thailand, helped total auto component exports grow 8 per cent. Marine products grew 25

However, low-margin, labour-intensive product segments such as cotton garments, sports goods, carpets, and leather footwear, which face stiff competition from China and the Association of South-east Asian Nations (Asean) countries, are struggling to diversify their shipments, indicating that the long-term impact of US tariffs could be uneven, hitting small units operating across the country more. The low-margin products are typically more susceptible to trade-related shocks due to working capital stress and unable to set up units abroad.

• HOW MARINE EXPORTS TURNED THE TIDE

\$623.70 mn: Total exports in Sept 2024

\$781.02 mn: Total exports in Sept 2025 (+25.22%)



Background

International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

- Legally binding agreement
- adopted in 2001, in force since 2004
- FAO administers
- 149+EU
- preservation and sharing of plant genetic resources
- Food security & climate resilience

Components the the Treaty

- Multilateral System
- Standard Material Transfer Agreement: Benefit sharing
- Farmers' Rights (Article 9)
- Benefit Sharing Fund
- Annexe I: 64 crops
- IPR Limitation Clause

Proposed Amendments

- Annexe I Expansion - include all Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture within the MLS
- Mandatory Standard Material Transfer Agreement
- Centralised Governance

India's Concerns

- Sovereignty Undermined
- Legal Conflict with BD Act
- Farmers' Rights at Risk: compromised by uniform global regulations
- Federal Dilution: State Biodiversity Boards

Decoding The News

pressing its concern over the "compromise proposal" presented at the 11th session of the governing body (GBII) of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. The proposal pertains to the "enhancement of the functioning of the Multilateral System on Access and Benefit Sharing (MLS)".

The GBII is in session at Lima in Peru. The scientists allege that the proposal is fundamentally unjust, the deal is one-sided, and it's engineered to favour big agri-businesses and big tech corporations. They urged the Centre to reject the proposal.

The "compromise proposal" offered a package of measures to enhance the functioning of the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing, including a revised Standard Material Transfer Agreement

The scientists said the proposal allows multinational enterprises to consolidate a monopoly over the seed sector and gain unfettered control over the vital genetic resources of the Global South. "It is an in-



Uranium in Breast Milk?

30th November 2025

SYLLABUS : GS 2 Health

Newspaper: The Hindu Page Number : 15

- U238 in the breast milk of lactating mothers in Bihar
 - Concentrations from 0 to 5.25 micrograms/liter
 - Linked to GW contamination
 - No established permissible limit for Ur in breast milk
 - Detected levels 6x < WHO's safe limit for Ur in drinking water (30 µg/L)
 - U238 - weakly radioactive, heavy metal found naturally in rock, soil, and water
 -
- Primary health risk
 - Through ingestion
 - Potential to cause bone or liver cancer in high concentrations
 - Actual health impact on infants is likely low
 - Most Ur absorbed by mothers is excreted in urine
 - What next?
 - Breastfeeding is safe and should continue
 - Stopping breastfeeding poses a far greater risk to infants (mortality, infection, malnutrition)
 - Periodic groundwater monitoring

Tainted groundwater

Sixteen States show a high prevalence of uranium concentrations above the WHO provisional guideline value (30µg/L)

- India has no standards for uranium levels in groundwater
- There have been reports of high levels of uranium in Andhra Pradesh
- Over-pumping of groundwater causes a decline in water levels
- This induces oxidation conditions that enhance uranium enrichment in shallow groundwater



Source:
"Large-Scale Uranium Contamination..." Rachel M. Coyte et al.

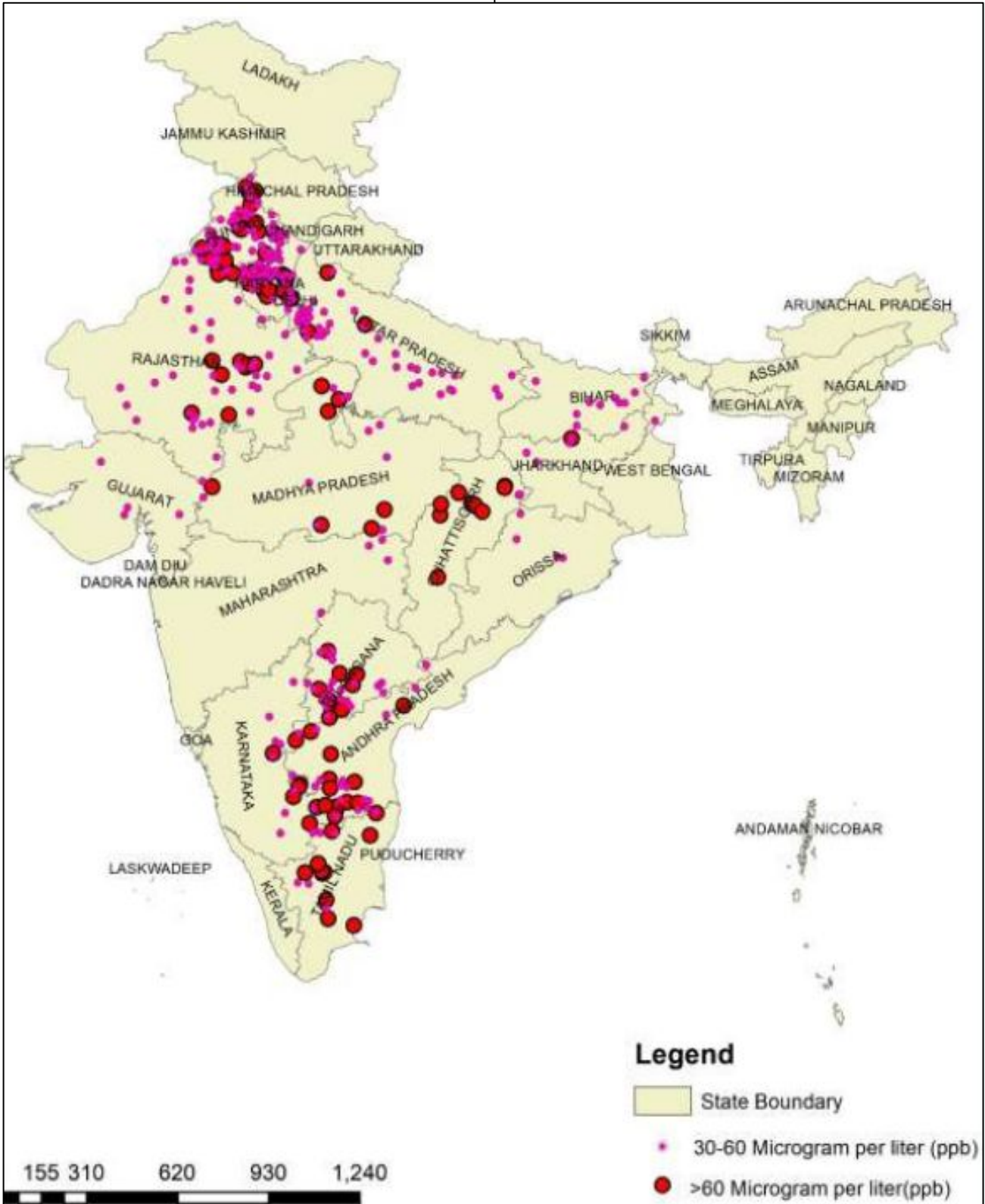


Uranium in Breast Milk?

30th November 2025

SYLLABUS : GS 2 Health

Newspaper: The Hindu Page Number : 15



30th November 2025

SYLLABUS : GS 1 : Indian Culture - Salient aspects of Art Forms, Literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times

Newspaper: The Hindu Page Number : 13

Background

Ellora Caves

- built between the 6th and 10th centuries CE
- Patronage - Vakataka and Rashtrakuta dynasties
- intricate sculptures and carvings
- 34 caves - 17 Brahmanical, 12 Buddhist and 5 Jain
- UNESCO World Heritage site
- near Aurangabad in Maharashtra
- carved out of basalt rock
- Kailasa Temple (Cave 16), dedicated to Lord Shiva, is the largest monolithic structure

Ajanta Caves

- 200BC to 650AD
- Patronage - Vakataka Ruler - Harisena
- series of rock-cut caves in the Sahyadri ranges on the Waghora River
- intricate frescoes and sculptures depicting Buddha's life
- 29 rock-cut caves: prayer halls, monastic chambers, and worship areas
- Abandoned and forgotten until rediscovered in 1819 by a British officer John Smith
- Cave 1 (Maha Chaitya), Cave 2 (Vishwakarma), Cave 16 (Kailasa), and Cave 26 (Chhota Kailash)
- Paintings themed around Buddhism - the life of Buddha and Jataka stories

Decoding News

Golden quadrangle

“Malik Ambar’s tomb [in Khultabad, a few minutes away from the Ellora caves] is totally neglected, locked up. You can’t enter the gate. It can be opened by the government. People can pay tickets and visit. Around it is also the tomb of the first Peshwa. Before

the Marathas, the Ahmednagar rulers also used this title. Again, totally neglected. Full of old plastic bottles, rubbish. People are missing the trick here. These are important monuments. Between Ajanta, Ellora, Daulatabad, Khultabad, it can be a golden quadrangle which can attract a lot of international tourists as well,” he said.

Drawing attention to the empty tomb of the last Ottoman Caliph within the same campus, he said: “There is also the last Caliph’s tomb. He never got buried there. His daughter who had married the Nizam’s son built him a tomb. He died in Paris during the Nazi occupation. Wonder-



Reviving Shipping Corporation of India

30th November 2025

SYLLABUS : GS 3 Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.
Newspaper: The Hindu Page Number : 17

Decoding The News

- SCI to buy over 200 merchant ships via JVs
- Previously facing privatization
- Geopolitical changes – strategic need for a national shipping fleet
- **Historical Capabilities:**
 - SCI was a global leader with a 120+ ship fleet of various types (tankers, liners, gas carriers)
 - Enjoyed cabotage rights and first refusal on India's oil transport
 - Named ships after Param Veer Chakra awardees and Indian saints
 - A technology leader – latest marine engines
 - Operated India's first LNG ship
 - National interests over commerce (e.g., discounted fares, using Indian shipyards)
- Strategic role (e.g., trusted by armed forces, safe passage during Iran-Iraq war)
- A major training ground for seafarers who contributed significant foreign exchange
- **Decline & Privatization:**
 - Decline began in the 1990s with liberalization and WTO/GATS agreements
 - Lost preferential rights for India's oil needs
 - New ship orders stopped; fleet halved and aged (average 18 years)
 - India's share of its own cargo carried by Indian ships fell from 27% to 7%
 - Privatization was planned by 2019, delayed by the pandemic

• Strategic Re-evaluation:

- Pandemic exposed the fragility of global shipping, disrupting Indian exports/imports
- Skyrocketing freight rates and skipped port calls hurt Indian trade
- Lack of Indian-owned container ships left the country vulnerable
- Relaxation of cabotage rules earlier harmed Indian container companies
- Post-pandemic, a global shift towards state-driven initiatives and strategic investment
- The US, for example, is taking stakes in strategic companies (e.g., Intel, U.S. Steel)



30th November 2025

Q1. With reference to the Supreme Court rulings in the context of the Basic Structure Doctrine, consider the following statements:

1. In the Shankari Prasad (1951) case, Parliament's power to amend Fundamental Rights under Article 368 was upheld.
2. In the Kesavananda Bharati (1973) case, the SC held that Parliament cannot amend the Constitution at all.
3. The Minerva Mills (1980) judgment reaffirmed that Parliament's amending power is limited by the Constitution itself.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) Only One
- b) Only Two
- c) All Three
- d) None

Answer: b

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA):

1. It is a legally binding international agreement administered by the FAO.
2. The Treaty came into force in 2001 and currently has all the UN member countries as its constituent parties.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: a

Q3. With reference to the Ellora Caves, consider the following statements

1. The caves were carved out of basalt rock and include Hindu, Buddhist and Jain monuments.
2. The Kailasa Temple at Ellora is the largest monolithic rock-cut structure in India
3. All the Ellora caves were constructed during the Gupta period between the 4th and 6th centuries CE.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) Only One
- b) Only Two
- c) All Three
- d) None

Answer: b

Q 4. Which of the following aviation regulatory bodies is entrusted with the task of licensing aviation personnel?

- a) Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB)
- b) Airports Authority of India (AAI)
- c) Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)
- d) Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS)

Answer: c

Q 5. With reference to the Ajanta Caves, consider the following statements:

1. The caves contain mural paintings mainly depicting the Jataka stories and events from the life of Buddha.
2. The caves are located in the Trimbak hills on the banks of the Godavari River.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: a





VAJIRAM & RAVI

Institute for IAS Examination

A unit of Vajiram & Ravi IAS Study Centre LLP

9-B, Bada Bazar Marg, Old Rajinder Nagar,
New Delhi - 110060 • Ph.: 41007400, 41007500

New No. 62, P Block, 6th Avenue, Anna Nagar,
Chennai - 600040 • Ph.: 044-4330-2121

Visit us at : www.vajiramandravi.com