



VAJIRAM & RAVI
Institute for IAS Examination

The Analyst

CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout

28th December 2025



Myanmar: Calculated Shift beyond Emergency



CONTEXT: Polls amid civil war and humanitarian crisis

Why Polls Now?

- Formal End to Emergency Rule
- 2008 Constitution
- Declared Rationale
- International Goal
 - Sanctions
 - Legitimacy
- Domestic Goal
 - Facade?
 - Portray institutional transition



Myanmar: Calculated Shift

Only a Calculated Shift by Junta?

- No Power Transfer
- Continued Military Dominance: NDSC
- Response to Military Setbacks
- Current War Status
- Military Weakness Signs
- Tactical Pause
- Elections as a Tool
- Exclusionary Process
- Limited Geographic Reach
- Risk of "Two-State" Reality
- Regional Diplomacy Motive
- International Reactions
 - China
 - India
 - Japan
 - West



Myanmar: Calculated Shift beyond Emergency



CONTEXT: Polls amid civil war and humanitarian crisis

India Myanmar

Significance

Strategic

- 1,643 km land border
- Only ASEAN country adjoining
- 'Act East' and 'Neighbourhood First'

Historical & Cultural Ties

- Shared Buddhist heritage
- Cultural exchanges

Defence Cooperation

- MoU on Border Cooperation, military training
- Counter-insurgency & border security

Economic Ties

- Bilateral trade - \$2.1 billion (FY25)
- Indian exports: Pharma, machinery, vehicles
- imports: Pulses (urad, tur), wood, agri
- Rupee-Kyat Trade Settlement (2024)
- India is 11th largest investor
- Energy Potential

Connectivity Projects

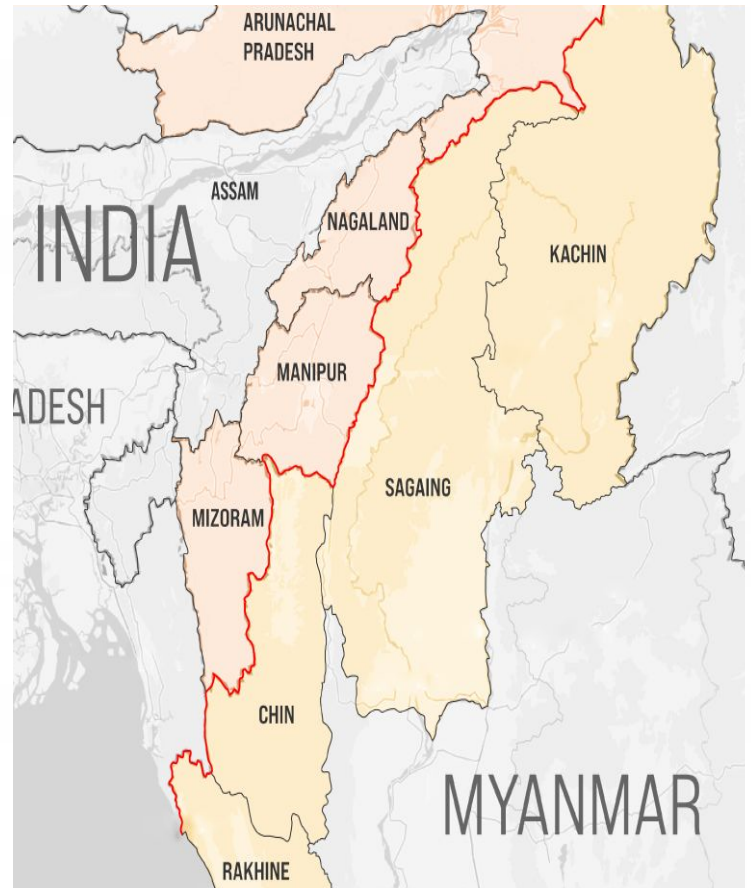
- Kaladan Multimodal Transit Corridor:
 - Sittwe Port
 - Zorinpui-Paletwa
- IMT Trilateral Highway

Development & Humanitarian Assistance

- Border Area Development Programme
- Rakhine State Development Programme
- Operation Brahma (2025 earthquake)
- Flood relief (2024)

Indian Diaspora

- 1.5-2.5 million people of IO



Myanmar: Calculated Shift beyond Emergency



CONTEXT: Polls amid civil war and humanitarian crisis

Challenges

- **Tatmadaw**
 - 2021 coup
 - Response: Ethnic Armed Org, PDFs
 - Fear of Farce Elections
- **Rohingyas**
 - Ethnic Muslim minority - in Rakhine
 - Acts of genocide
- **Chinese Interference**
 - Ally of military regime
 - China-Myanmar Economic Corridor: Letpadaung copper mine, Tagaung nickel processing plant
 - Resentment among people
- **Economic Collapse**
 - Nationalised resources
 - Foreign investors pulled out
- **Junta - Ethnic Groups Clashes**
 - Brotherhood Alliance: MNDAA, AA, TNLA
 - Retaliation & refugees
- **Free Movement Regime**
 - Migration of Kuki-Chin
 - New guidelines to regulate
 - Border pass & biometrics
 - Now only 10 km
- **Earthquake**
 - Need loans: already debt US\$ 12.1 bn
 - Damage to IMT infra
- **Japanese Aid post Coup**
 - Suspended new aid projects
 - Scaled down diplomatic engagement
 - Supporting ASEAN's Five-Point Consensus

Impact on India's NE

- Porous border
- Smuggling
- Ethnic ties
- Investments
- Trade routes
- Stability & Peace

Suggestions

- HIDPs
- Supporting Democratic Institutions
- Economic vs Humanitarian Goals
- Multilateral cooperation
- Multi stakeholder engagement

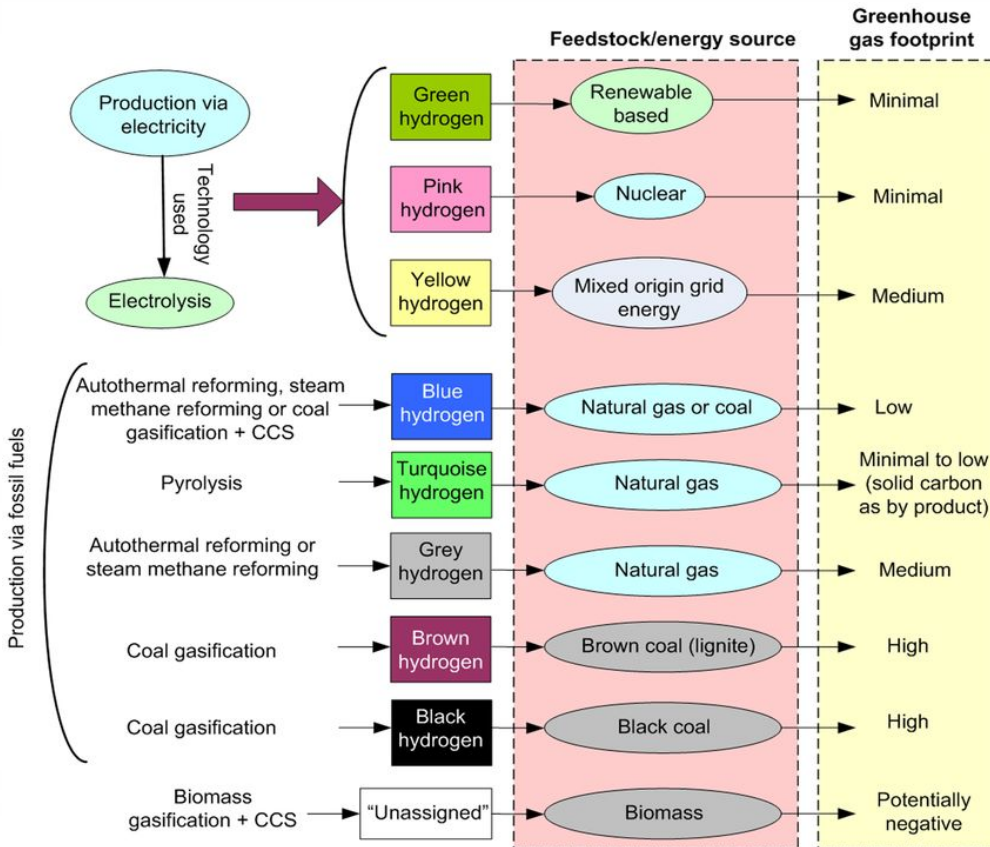
MAINS PRACTISE QUESTION

Myanmar is a key pillar of India's 'Act East Policy', yet its ongoing political transition has posed new challenges to bilateral relations. Discuss the significance of India-Myanmar relations and highlight the major challenges in the bilateral ties.

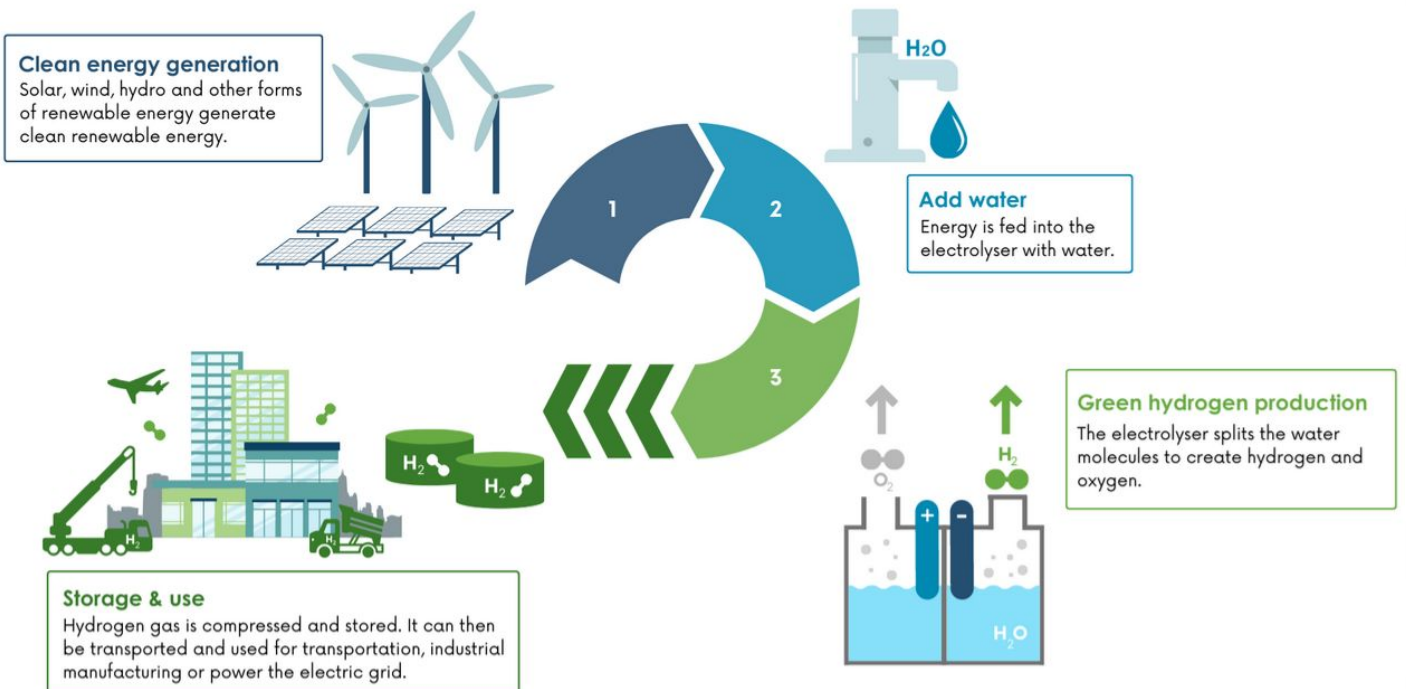


CONTEXT: Energy storage and green hydrogen would fundamentally reshape India's renewable energy ecosystem

Green Hydrogen



GREEN HYDROGEN PRODUCTION



Energy Storage, Green Hydrogen to reshape RE



CONTEXT: Energy storage and green hydrogen would fundamentally reshape India's renewable energy ecosystem

Benefits

- Energy storage
- Monetary benefits
- Flexible energy carrier
- Net Zero Transition: Reduced emissions
- Global dominance

Challenges

- High cost
- High energy consumption
- Fuel Cell Vehicles viability
- Safety concerns
 - Volatile and flammable
 - High pressure

NATIONAL GREEN HYDROGEN MISSION

Cabinet approves National Green Hydrogen Mission with initial outlay of Rs. 19,744 crore.

Expected Mission Outcome:

- Development of green hydrogen production capacity of at least 5 MMT (Million Metric Tonne) per annum
- Renewable energy capacity addition of about 125 GW in country
- Over Rs. Eight lakh crore in total investments
- Creation of over Six lakh jobs
- Over Rs. One lakh crore cumulative reduction in fossil fuel imports
- Abatement of nearly 50 MMT of annual greenhouse gas emissions

2/3

PYQ 2015

With reference to 'fuel cells' in which hydrogen-rich fuel and oxygen are used to generate electricity, consider the following statements:

1. If pure hydrogen is used as a fuel, the fuel cell emits heat and water as by-products.
2. Fuel cells can be used for powering buildings and not for small devices like laptop computers.
3. Fuel cells produce electricity in the form of Alternating Current (AC).

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 and 3 only
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

PYQ 2023

With reference to green hydrogen, consider the following statements:

1. It can be used directly as a fuel for internal combustion.
2. It can be blended with natural gas and used as fuel for heat or power generation.
3. It can be used in the hydrogen fuel cell to run vehicles.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) All three
- d) None



Energy Storage, Green Hydrogen to reshape RE



CONTEXT: Energy storage and green hydrogen would fundamentally reshape India's renewable energy ecosystem

Battery Energy Storage Systems

Why

- Renewable energy transition
- Grid stability - intermittancy
- Energy security, peak load management, EV integration

BESS Technologies

1. **Lithium-Ion Batteries** – Most common (high efficiency, fast response)
2. **Flow Batteries** – Long-duration storage, better cycle life
3. **Solid-State Batteries** – Emerging tech (higher energy density, safer)
4. **Lead-Acid Batteries** – Low-cost but shorter lifespan
5. **Chemical Energy Storage** – Stores energy in chemical bonds

Challenges in BESS

- **High Costs** – Expensive tech, import
- **Supply Chain Risks** – Li, Co, Ni
- **Environmental Concerns** – recycling & disposal risks
- **Efficiency Decline** – Battery degradation over time
- **Policy Uncertainty** – Lack of clear incentives
- **Safety Risks** – Fire hazards in Li-ion batteries

India's BESS Landscape

- **Targets:**
 - 500 GW non-fossil capacity by 2030 (217.62 GW achieved by Jan 2025)
 - 47 GW BESS by 2032
- **Challenges:**
 - Slow grid upgrades & BESS deployment
 - Critical mineral shortages (Li, Co)
 - Financing gaps for large-scale projects

Govt Initiatives

- **National Energy Storage Mission** – for domestic manufacturing
- **PLI Scheme** – ₹18,100 crore for battery production
- **VGF for BESS** – ₹3,760 cr - 4 GWh projects
- **Energy Storage Obligation** – Mandates storage-backed renewables
- **Green Hydrogen Policy** – Promotes BESS for hydrogen projects
- **FAME, SECI & NTPC Pilots** – Boosts storage adoption

Way Forward

- **Expedite large-scale BESS projects** for central/state grids
- **Boost local manufacturing** (gigafactories, alternative chemistries)
- **Secure critical minerals** via global partnerships & domestic mining
- **Enhance recycling** & second-life battery use
- **Leverage alliances** (e.g. BESS consortium)



Energy Storage, Green Hydrogen to reshape RE



CONTEXT: Energy storage and green hydrogen would fundamentally reshape India's renewable energy ecosystem

MAINS PRACTISE QUESTION

What is the need of Battery Energy Storage Systems for India's transition towards renewable energy and ensuring grid stability? Examine the key challenges in their deployment, and discuss the government initiatives taken to promote them.



SYLLABUS : GS 3 Paper : Science and Tech
Newspaper: The Hindu Page Number: 9

Background

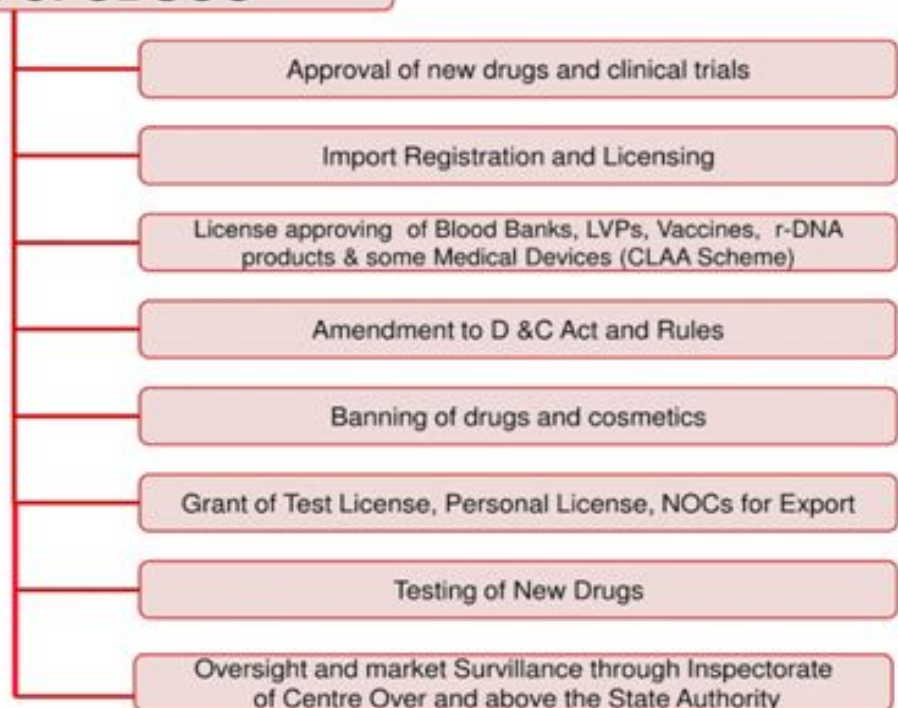
Poor Quality Drugs Classification

- Not of Standard Quality (NSQ)
- Spurious
 - a. Imported under another drug's name
 - b. Imitation/Substitute
 - c. Fictitious or non-existing manufacturer
- Misbranded
 - a. Coloured, coated to conceal damage or therapeutic value
 - b. Label false or misleading claims
- Adulterated
 - a. filthy, putrid or decomposed substance
 - b. insanitary conditions
 - c. poisonous or deleterious substance
 - d. Mixed with any substance to reduce its quality or strength

Issues in Pharma Sector

- Spurious Drugs
- No law to recall bad drugs
- Fixed Dose Combination Drugs
- Financial Disbursement
- e-pharmacies
- Import dependency for APIs
- Antimicrobial Resistance
- Generic Medicines
- GMP & QC regulation costly

Functions of CDSCO



SYLLABUS : GS 3 Paper : Science and Tech
Newspaper: The Hindu Page Number: 9

Decoding the News

THE HEALTH department in Australia has raised an alert against a leading Indian anti-rabies vaccine, stating that counterfeits have been circulating in the country since November 2023. It has urged people who received the vaccine 'Abhayrab' to reach out to their healthcare providers to check whether they needed a replacement dose.

Countering the alert, the vaccine manufacturer, Indian Immunologicals Limited (IIL), has said: "The company strongly refuted the over-cautionary and misplaced reference to 2023 (batch of vaccines) made in a recent Australian health advisory, stressing that it does not reflect the current situation. IIL has al-



SYLLABUS: Prelims: IR **GS 2 Paper : Bilateral/Multilateral Grouping**
Newspaper: The Hindu **Page Number: 10**

Background

RCEP

- Signed November 2020
- 10 ASEAN (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam) + China, Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand
- World's largest FTA by economic scale
- 30% of global GDP, 30% of global population
- **Current Salience of Debate:** intensifying US-China geopolitical rivalry and recent US tariff measures

Merits of Joining RCEP for India

- Access to Vast Integrated Markets
- Reduced Tariffs for Exporters
- Increased Export Prospects
- Projected Economic Gain
- Strategic Signaling
- Technical Cooperation
- Supply Chain Integration
- Attracting Investment
- MSME Market Access, Scaling & Tech

Demerits of Joining RCEP for India

- Chinese Manufacturing Imports
- Dairy Imports
- Impact on Local Producers
- Worsening Trade Deficit
 - ASEAN, South Korea, Japan soared by 302%, 164%, 138% respectively post-FTAs
- Conflict with Domestic Initiatives
- Specific Unresolved Issues from 2019
 - Amendments in tariff differentials
 - Alterations in the base rate of customs duty

- Modifications to MFN rule
- Formal recognition of India's federal character in investment determinations

Decoding the News

India and New Zealand on December 22 announced the conclusion of negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement (FTA). Once the FTA comes into effect, India would have such FTAs with all the countries in the RCEP except for China. Trade experts say this strategy has given India market access without surrendering tariff control to China.

son not to sign RCEP was only China. Chinese manufacturing is far superior and competitive. I don't think it's possible to do anything except accept the fact we cannot have China in the picture when it comes to the trade deals."

India and China are currently signatories to the Asia Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA), which is a preferential trade pact that provides lower tariffs on a few items rather than an FTA, which typically lowers most tariffs to zero.



SYLLABUS : Prelims: IR **GS 2 Paper : Effects of policies of Developed countries on India's Interest**

Newspaper: The Hindu **Page Number: 12**

Decoding the News

Global Events of Importance for India in 2025

- Second Trump Term in the US
- Economic Disruption: "Liberation Day" tariffs
- Alliance Shifts
- Global Discourse & Quest for Nobel
- Rise of Ultra-Right Politics
- Oil Price Drop & Climate Concerns
- Slowing Global Growth
- Sanctions for Buying Russian Oil
- Continued Gaza War
- IMEC Standstill
- Diplomatic Awkwardness with Iran
- Regional Turmoil
 - Conflict with Pakistan
 - Gen-Z protests in Nepal toppling govt
 - Mob violence in Bangladesh turning anti-India

What Made the Trump Challenge Most Difficult?

- Shattered Expectations
- Direct Economic Penalties
- Immigration Crackdown
- Undermining India's Pakistan Campaign
- Criticism of Leadership

Diplomatic Successes of 2025

- **Turnaround with Canada**
- **Engagement with the Taliban**
 - Foreign Secretary met Taliban FM Amir Khan Muttaqi
 - Jaishankar according Muttaqi full national honours
 - Strategic benefit: Downturn in Afghan-Pakistan ties

- **Rapprochement with China:** From the Oct 2024 Modi-Xi meeting
 - Reopened Kailash-Mansarovar pilgrimage
 - Restored visas and flights
 - Resumed sharing of water data
 - High-level visits
- **Strengthened Neighbourhood Ties:** Modi visited Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Maldives
 - Support to Sri Lanka after Cyclone Ditwah
 - Aid of \$450 million to Sri Lanka

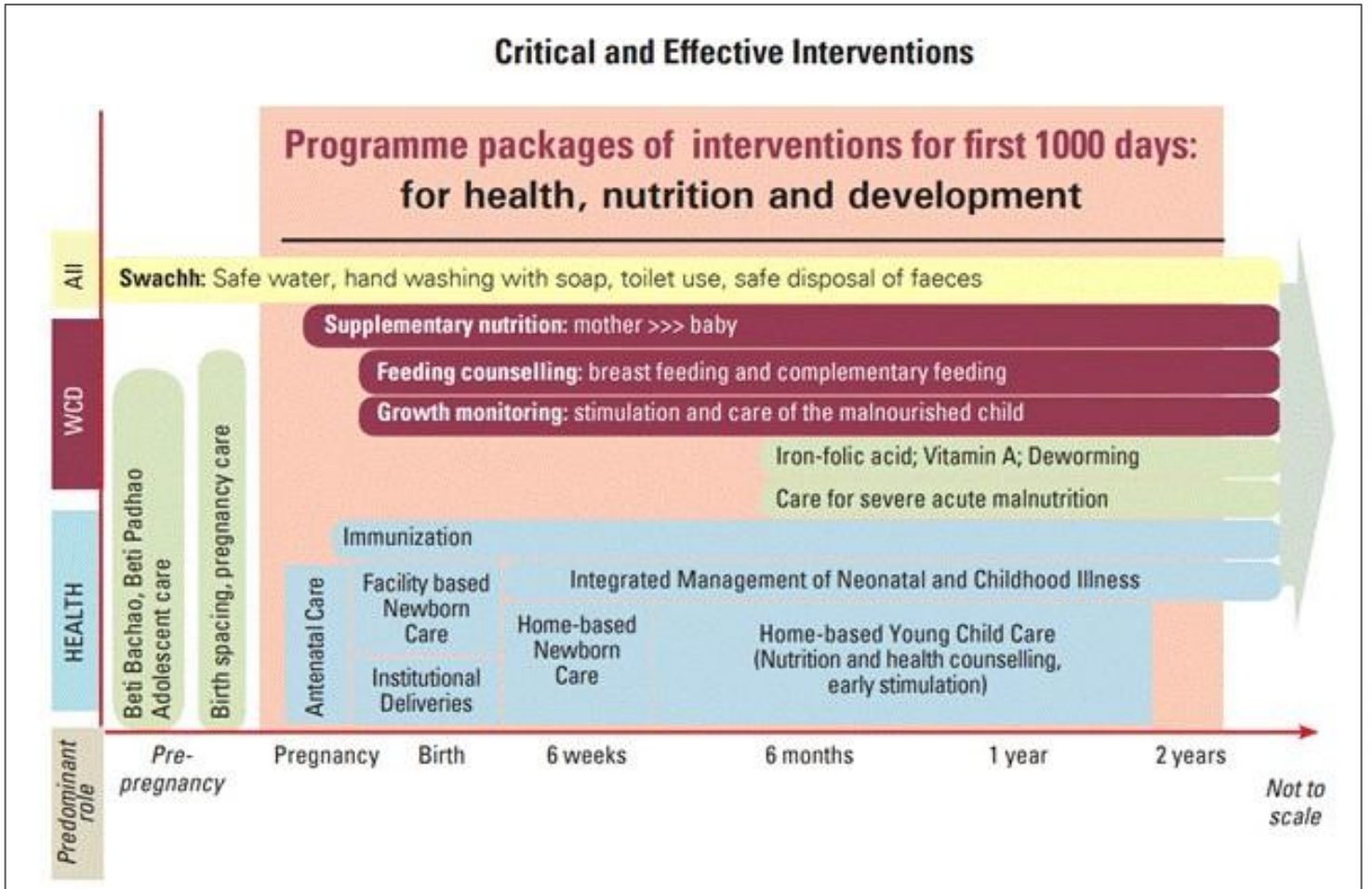
What is Expected in 2026?

- Trade Agreement Breakthroughs
 - Sealed BTAs with UK, Oman, New Zealand in 2025
 - Pending deals (US, EU, Australia, GCC, ASEAN)
- India-EU FTA Finalisation
 - EU Commission President Ursula Von Der Leyen expected Republic Day guest
- Key Neighbourhood Elections
 - Myanmar (Dec 28)
 - Bangladesh (Feb 12)
 - Nepal (March 5)
- AI Summit: India will host in February
- Canadian PM Visit
- Quad Summit Uncertainty
- BRICS Summit in India



SYLLABUS : GS 2 Paper : Health
Newspaper: The Indian Express Page Number: 9


Background















SYLLABUS : GS 2 Paper : Health

Newspaper: The Indian Express Page Number: 9

Key Themes and Behaviours
of POSHAN Abhiyaan to be promoted through Jan Andolan



01 Overall Nutrition 	02 ANC, diet of pregnant women, calcium, supplementation, Institutional delivery & early Initiation of breastfeeding 	03 Optimal breastfeeding 	04 Complementary food and feeding 
05 Full Immunization & vitamin A supplementation 	06 Growth monitoring and promotion 	07 Anaemia prevention in children, adolescent girls and women - diet, IFA, deworming 	08 Food fortification and micronutrients 
09 Diarrhoea management 	10 Girls education, diet and right age at marriage 	11 Hygiene, sanitation & safe drinking water 	12 Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) 


POSHAN VATIKA

- ✓ Initiative led by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- ✓ Aims to promote setting up nutri-gardens at Anganwadi Centres.
- ✓ Poshan Vatikas have been developed in or around 2,67,705 AWC's (Oct 2024)
- ✓ 1.10 lakh medicinal and fruit plants were planted in five different states during Poshan Pakhwada 2021 by National Medicinal Plants Board, Ministry of Ayush.
- ✓ Aims to promote healthy dietary practices, importance of Millets, sensitisation activities on Paushtik Aahar etc.
- ✓ Aims to improve nutritional outcomes among women and children.



SYLLABUS : GS 2 Paper : Health

Newspaper: The Indian Express Page Number: 9



POSHAN MAAH
A flagship programme to improve nutritional status of children & pregnant women

FOCUS

- ▶ Reduce stunting, low birth weight & anaemia among 0 to 59-month-old children
- ▶ Improve nutrition among children up to 6 years, adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women

FEATURES

- ▶ Food & Nutrition
- ▶ Immunization
- ▶ Institutional Delivery
- ▶ De-worming
- ▶ ORS-Zinc
- ▶ Adolescent Nutrition

Decoding the News

AFTER SEVEN states and UTs asked the Centre earlier this year to consider providing breakfast under the PM-POSHAN or mid-day meal scheme, government

Another aspect of the PM-POSHAN scheme that is being deliberated is its extension beyond Class 8, and if this can also be proposed when the scheme is considered for continuation, the source said. “The



SYLLABUS: Prelims: : Economy **GS 3 Paper : Infrastructure**
Newspaper: The Hindu **Page Number: 9**

Rail Safety Initiatives

- **KAVACH:** Indigenous Automatic Train Protection system
- **Mission Zero Accident**
 - Eliminating unmanned level crossings
 - Installing a **TCAS** on high-density routes
- **Rashtriya Rail Sanraksha Kosh**
 - ₹1 lakh crore fund for 5 years (since 2017)
 - Critical safety asset renewal and upgrades
- **Real-Time Train Tracking (RTIS-ISRO)**
 - Satellite-based tracking for faster communication and monitoring, reducing accident response time
- **AI-Based Fatigue Monitoring**
 - Cameras and sensors in locomotives to detect pilot drowsiness
- **Fire Safety Enhancements**
 - Smoke detection, auto fire extinguishers in coaches
- **Track Renewal & Maintenance:** ultrasonic testing and predictive maintenance
- **Modern Yard Safety Systems:** Smart inspection technologies, AI cameras, IoT sensors
- **National Rail Plan 2030:** Long-term vision for a safe, efficient, and future-ready railway

Decoding the News

Having missed the second deadline of December 2025, the Railways is now hopeful of operationalising the automatic train protection system, Kavach, on routes connecting the national capital with Mumbai and Howrah sometime in 2026, with steady progress and an aggressive approach, officials said.

Kavach is an indigenously developed, highly technology-intensive system that helps maintain specified speed limits by automatically applying brakes if the loco pilot fails to do so.



Q1. With reference to India–Myanmar international boundary, consider the following Indian States:

1. Arunachal Pradesh
2. Nagaland
3. Manipur
4. Mizoram

Which of the above States share a border with Myanmar?

- a) 1, 2 and 3 only
- b) 2, 3 and 4 only
- c) 1, 2, 3 and 4
- d) 1, 3 and 4 only

Answer: c

Q2. With reference to different categories of hydrogen, consider the following statements:

1. Green hydrogen is produced using renewable energy sources and is associated with a minimal greenhouse gas footprint.
2. Pink hydrogen uses nuclear energy as the power source for hydrogen production through electrolysis.
3. Blue hydrogen is produced from fossil fuels with the use of carbon capture and storage, resulting in a lower greenhouse gas footprint than grey hydrogen.
4. Yellow hydrogen is produced exclusively using renewable electricity and therefore has a greenhouse gas footprint similar to green hydrogen.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 1, 2 and 3 only
- c) 1, 3 and 4 only
- d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer: b

Q3. With reference to the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), consider the following statements:

1. It was signed in November 2020 by ASEAN and five other Asia-Pacific countries.
2. China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand are members of RCEP.
3. It is the world's largest free trade agreement in terms of global GDP and population covered.

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

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

Answer: c

Q4. Consider the following statements:

1. Poshan Vatikas seek to improve dietary diversity through locally available fruits, vegetables and medicinal plants.
2. Poshan Maah focuses exclusively on supplementary nutrition delivery through Anganwadi Centres.

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

Q5. KAVACH, in the context of Indian Railways, is best described as a:

- a) Signalling software
- b) Automatic Train Protection System
- c) Satellite navigation system
- d) Passenger information system

Answer: b





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