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The Analyst

CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout

17th November 2026



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17th November, 2026

India and SCO

CONTEXT: India will host the SCO's 1st Civilisational Dialogue Forum at Purana Qila in New Delhi.

About SCO

- **Shanghai Cooperation Organization** is a Eurasian political, economic, international security, and defense organization.
- **Established** - 2001, in Shanghai, China.
- **"Shanghai Five"** formed in **1996,** consisting of **China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan**.
    a. This group was initially created to address security concerns and manage border issues after the dissolution of the Soviet Union.
    b. With the admission of **Uzbekistan** in **2001,** the "Shanghai Five" was **officially transformed into the SCO.**
- **10 members:**
    a. **China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia,** and **Tajikistan**, **Uzbekistan, India** and **Pakistan** (both joined in 2017), **Iran** (joined the in 2023), and **Belarus** (joined in 2024).
- **Secretariat:** Located in **Beijing, China**
- **RATS (Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure):** Located in **Tashkent, Uzbekistan**, focusing on intelligence sharing, counter-terrorism, and security coordination.
- **Head of State Council:** The supreme decision-making body that meets annually at the SCO Summit.

About 1st Civilisational Dialogue Forum

- **Proposed by: Prime Minister Modi** at the SCO leaders' summit in **Tianjin in 2025.**
- **Hosted by:** India - 20 November to 22 November 2026, **Purana Qila in New Delhi.**
- **Aim:**
    - Strengthen cultural ties, promote mutual understanding.
    - To showcase the shared art, literature and traditions of the region's ancient civilisations.
- **Organised by:** The **Ministry of Culture** is partnering with the **Ministry of External Affairs.**
- **Participants:** Culture ministers from **all 10 SCO member states** have been invited, along with **representatives from observer countries and dialogue partners.**
- **Themes of discussions:** Discussions are expected to cover **civilisational links, cultural diplomacy and cooperation** in areas including heritage, education and traditional knowledge systems.

Significance of SCO

- **Geopolitical and Strategic Influence:**
    - 80% of the Eurasian landmass and about 40% of the world's population.
    - Members range from **nuclear powers** (Russia, China, India, Pakistan, and now Iran) to **resource-rich Central Asian states. .**
- **Platform for Dialogue:** bilateral tensions (e.g., India-China, India-Pakistan)
    - **China's** Medog mega-dam in Tibet.
- **Operationalising Multi-Alignment:**
    - India's membership in the **Quad** with the **US, Japan, and Australia.**
    - India simultaneously engages with China and Russia through the SCO.



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Significance of SCO

- Reinforces India's doctrine of strategic autonomy and ***issue-based alignment.***
- **Overcoming India's Continental Disconnect:** institutional access to the Central Asian republics despite India's lack of direct land connectivity.
- **Energy Security:**
  - **With the inclusion of Iran,** world's oil (20%) and natural gas (44%) reserves.
  - **Russia and Iran** for hydrocarbons and **Kazakhstan** for uranium.
- **Counter-Terrorism and Security:**
  - **SCO's Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure -** mechanism for intelligence exchange and coordination against the "three evils"—terrorism, separatism and extremism.
- **Disrupting the Narco-Terror–Organised Crime Nexus:**
  - Drugs originating from the Afghanistan–Pakistan region
  - interconnected threats of narcotics trafficking, illegal arms, cybercrime and terrorist financing.

Challenges for India in Navigating SCO Relations

- **China–Pakistan Axis and Consensus Capture:**
  - growing "all-weather" strategic alignment between China and Pakistan
  - Pakistan will hold the SCO presidency during 2026–27.
  - **India rejected the 2025 Qingdao, China Defence Ministers' communiqué** because it **omitted the Pahalgam terrorist attack** while **accommodating Pakistan-backed narratives**, exposing double standards on terrorism.
- **Internal Conflicts and Bilateral Tensions:**
  - India-China Border Disputes
  - India-Pakistan Animosity
- **China-Centric Institutional Architecture:**
  - agenda-setting dominance and make the SCO's economic vision increasingly Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)-centric.
  - **India remains the only SCO member opposing** the **BRI** because **CPEC** passes through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.
- **Selective Definitions of Terrorism:** India often criticizes state-sponsored cross-border terrorism, while other members protect regional proxies or disagree on specific terror group designations.
- **Declaration–Delivery Deficit:**
  - Projects such as an SCO Development Bank, common payment arrangements have progressed slowly.
  -
- **Lack of a Free Trade Area:**
  - This limits its potential for deep economic integration compared to other blocks like **ASEAN (21%) or the EU (60%).**



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Way Forward

- **Deepening Economic cooperation:**
  - SCO startup forum & SCO energy club
  - **Establishing the SCO Development Bank:** reduce reliance on Western financial systems and fund regional projects.
- **RATS into an Enforcement Network:**
  - Real-time intelligence fusion, terror-finance blacklisting, cryptocurrency tracing and joint forensic investigations under the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure. .
- **Bridge connectivity gaps:** Chabahar–INSTC corridor
- **Convert Civilisational Affinity into Strategic Social Capital:**
  - India should institutionalise the SCO Civilisation Dialogue Forum as permanent Track-II and people-to-people mechanisms.
- **Digital Connectivity:**
  - cross-border e-commerce, and digital payment systems to foster seamless economic interaction.
  - e.g. sharing India's UPI success, digital public infrastructure models.
- **Non-Traditional Security Threats:**
  - **Climate Change:** water scarcity

Mains Practise Question

"The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) offers India an important platform for advancing its Eurasian interests; however, geopolitical differences and limited economic integration constrain its effectiveness. Critically examine India's strategic interests, opportunities and challenges within the SCO."

(15 Marks, 250 words)



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Understanding Food Price Pressures

CONTEXT: Why food inflation could be a major worry in 2027.

Understanding Food Price Pressures

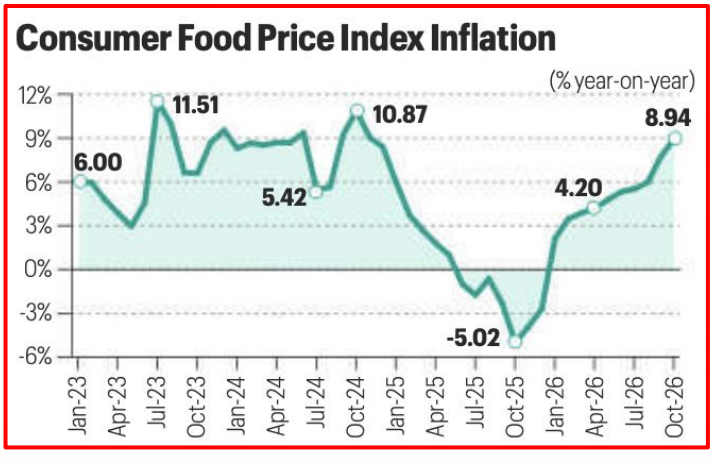
Factors Responsible for Price Volatility in Agricultural Markets:

- **Climatic factors:**
  - e.g. Whitefly infestation caused the July 2023 tomato price spike, while **El Niño (2023–24)** affected kharif production.
  - **Rainfall deficiency:** Southwest monsoon (June–September): 12.6% below normal.
- **Fuel v/s food debate:** India achieved its goal of E20 in petrol nationwide in 2025—**five years ahead of the original 2030 target.**
- **Food wastage & Low value addition:**
  - With over a third of global food wasted (UN) and India losing ₹90,000 crore annually post-harvest (NITI Aayog).
- **Infrastructure Bottlenecks:** According to a 2022 MoFPI–NABCONS study, losses were estimated at around 15% for fruits and 12% for vegetables.

India bars sugar-based ethanol in 2026-27 tender, cuts maize incentive

The move comes amid concerns over domestic sugar availability and rising prices after poor rainfall in key sugar-producing States, including Maharashtra and Karnataka, raised the risk of lower output

Updated - October 18, 2026 03:44 pm IST - New Delhi



- **Geopolitical Spillovers:** Fuel prices - Rising prices of mil
- **Changed Consumer Preferences:** protein inflation
- **Cobweb Phenomenon:** .e.g. Tomato and onion price crashes during harvest followed by lean-season spikes.
- **Market Fragmentation:** Fragmented APMC markets, multiple intermediaries, and poor interstate market integration, distort efficient price discovery.

Recent Government Initiatives:

- **Revamped PM-AASHA (2024):** Integrates Price Support Scheme , Price Deficiency Payment Scheme Market Intervention Scheme and the Price Stabilisation Fund.
- **Expansion of e-NAM:** connects 1,400+ mandis and has 1.8+ crore farmers.
- **Promotion of Farmer-Producer Organisations:** Formation of 10,000 FPOs.
- **PM Fasal Bima Yojana:** Provides risk coverage against crop losses due to climatic shocks.
- **Agriculture Infrastructure Fund:** build decentralized post-harvest assets, funding primary processing and sorting units at the farm-gate level.
- **PM-KISAN Cash Cushion:** assured ₹6,000 annual direct benefit transfer, critical baseline liquidity to absorb sudden open-market price shocks.
- **Comfortable Foodgrain Stocks:**
  - Unlike 2023–24, government foodgrain stocks are currently around **3.3 times the minimum buffer requirement**.



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Understanding Food Price Pressures

CONTEXT: Why food inflation could be a major worry in 2027.

Understanding Food Price Pressures

- As of October 1, 2026:
  - **Rice:** 55.5 million tonnes (all-time high).
  - **Wheat:** 46.3 million tonnes (highest in five years).
  - **3.8 million tonnes of pulses**, including chana, tur and other pulses.

Way Forward

- **Adopting 'Fork to Farm' approach:** upgrading agro-logistics (storage & transportation), agro-processing and marketing.
- **Sustainable Ethanol:** rely on damaged foodgrains, agricultural residues and second-generation ethanol.
- **Correcting Market Distortions: e.g. Sahyadri FPO –** Solar-Powered Cold Chain & supplies tomato paste and orange squash.
- **Expand Integrated Cold Chains:** The Mega Food Parks Scheme provides common cold storage, warehousing, and processing facilities.
- **Crop Diversification:** Promote climate-resilient traditional crops such as millets and sorghum (jowar).
- **Knowledge-intensive agriculture:** Precision farming and gene-edited crops reduce input use and improve resilience.
  - CRISPR-Cas technology has been used in developing drought- and salt-tolerant rice varieties, such as **Pusa DST Rice 1,** developed by **ICAR-IARI.**

PYQ (2024)

"What are the causes of persistent high food inflation in India? Comment on the effectiveness of the monetary policy of the RBI to control this type of inflation. "

(10 Marks, 150 words)

Mains Practise Question

"Explain the factors responsible for price volatility in agricultural markets in India. Highlight the recent government initiatives aimed at ensuring stable and remunerative incomes for farmers."

(10 Marks, 150 words)



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The road to a disease-free world goes through water

Newspaper : The Hindu , **Page No : 06**

Context: Global Polio Eradication Success - Since 1988, wild poliovirus cases have declined by over 99% due to vaccination, surveillance and community outreach.

Need for a Systems Approach:

- The final stage of eradication requires ***sustained efforts beyond vaccination,*** including addressing systemic factors as **contaminated water systems** that may inadvertently facilitate disease transmission.
- To make progress permanent, we must understand that **health and water are integral to the equation.**
- **Data Point:**
  - **WHO and UNICEF:** In **2024**
    - 2.1 billion people lacked safely managed drinking water
    - 3.4 billion lacked safely managed sanitation.
    - **In 2019 –** no access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene contributed to at least ***1.4 million preventable deaths.***

Evolve from responding to outbreaks to anticipating them:

Regard water infrastructure as preventive health infrastructure:

- **Clean water** can prevent disease.
- **Safe sanitation** can break the chain of transmission.
- **Wastewater systems** - By studying the presence of pathogens in wastewater, the spread of disease can be more closely tracked.
  - **E.g.** Abu Dhabi, AI-enabled wastewater surveillance

Case Study: UAE worked with **The Gates Foundation.**

- **Reaching the Last Mile Fund,** established by the UAE and the Gates Foundation, works in **dozens of countries** to accelerate the elimination of diseases that disproportionately affect people living in poverty.

Case Study:

- **European Wastewater Surveillance Dashboard,** a tool designed to track movements of diseases through wastewater monitoring and analysis.

2026 UN Water Conference:

- Taking place in Abu Dhabi
- **SDG 6:** ensuring the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.



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Aadhaar accessibility issues: SC warns of Contempt

SYLLABUS: Prelims: Polity
Newspaper : The Hindu; **Page No : 01**

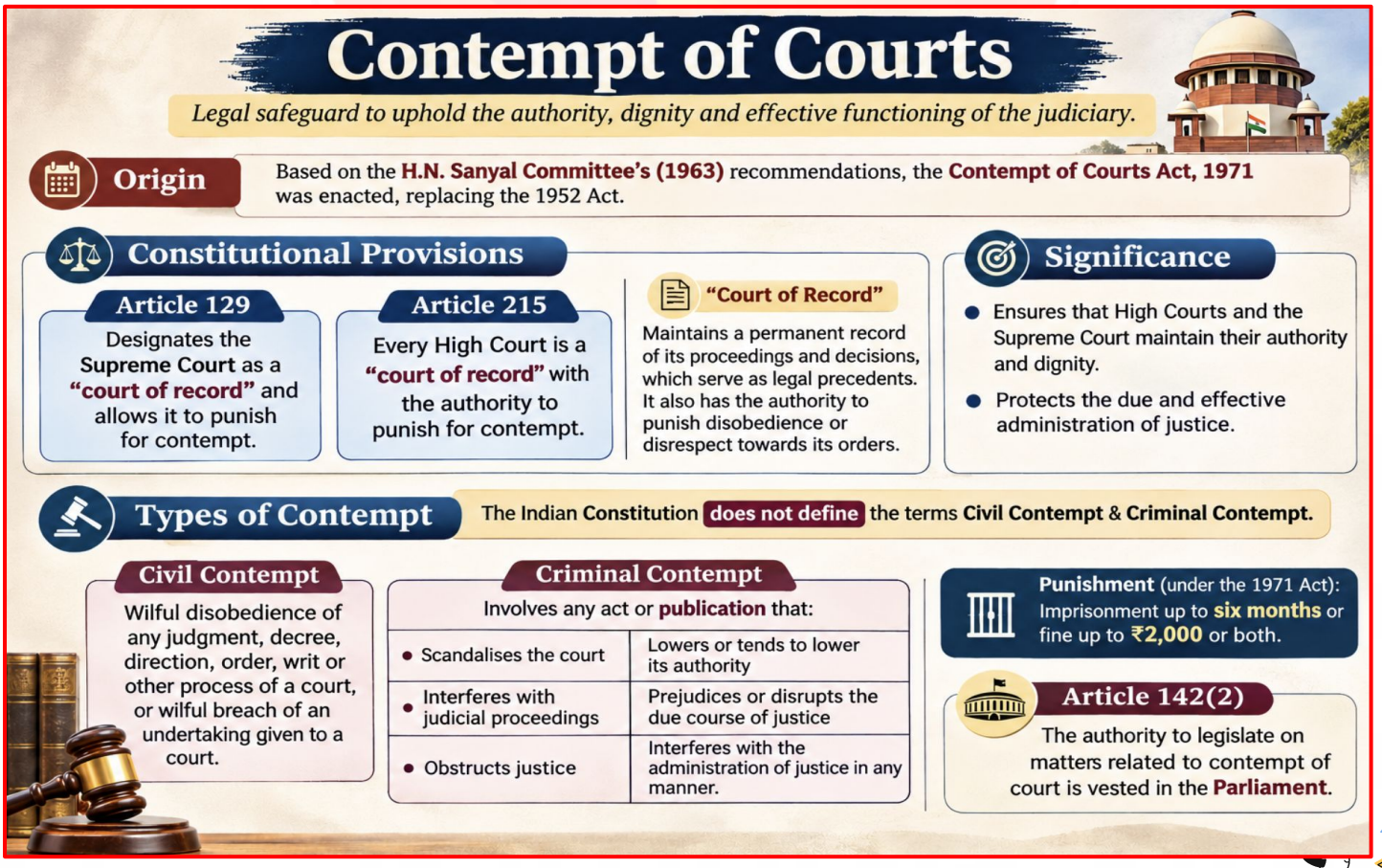
1. Accessibility Challenges in Aadhaar Authentication
- Blind and low-vision persons are unable to independently complete Aadhaar face authentication as it ***requires users to focus their eyes and look into the camera.***
- This affects access to **e-KYC services**, including banking and other digital services.

2. Supreme Court's Intervention
- SC issued notice to the Centre and concerned authorities over non-compliance with its **2025 judgment in Pragya Prasun v. Union of India**.
- The judgment directed authorities to ensure digital accessibility and ease of access for persons with disabilities.

3. Gaps in Implementation: Absence of an effective grievance redressal mechanism
- Accessibility audits.
- Nodal officers for addressing complaints.
- Human review of rejected KYC applications.

4. Monitoring compliance: SC sought clarification
- how the Ministry would address accessibility complaints
- provide a mechanism to monitor compliance by regulated entities.

5.Related Development: Mandatory Aadhaar Authentication:
Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas
- making ***biometric Aadhaar authentication compulsory*** for subsidised domestic LPG refills from **October 1, 2026.**



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Aadhaar accessibility issues: SC warns of Contempt

SYLLABUS: Prelims: Polity

Newspaper : The Hindu; **Page No : 01**

PYQ (2022)

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. Pursuant to the report of H.N. Sanyal Committee, the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971 was passed.
2. The Constitution of India empowers the Supreme Court and the High Courts to punish for contempt of themselves.
3. The Constitution of India defines Civil Contempt and Criminal Contempt.
4. In India, the Parliament is vested with the powers to make laws on Contempt of Court.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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



The Analyst Handout
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How does India address service outages?

SYLLABUS: Prelims: Polity
Newspaper : The Hindu; **Page No : 08**

About the News

Background: Global Microsoft Outage

- On **November 12–13, 2026,** a ***network capacity upgrade failure*** at Microsoft disrupted access to Microsoft 365 services worldwide, including Outlook.
- **Larger question -** whether companies providing services on which lakhs of people depend are ***required to account for such failures in India***.

Three Regulatory Frameworks in India:

A. CERT-In Directions (IT Act, 2000)

- CERT-In directions dated **April 28, 2022** require reporting of specified cyber incidents within **6 hours**.
- **Gap:** Cover cyber attacks and intrusions, but not ordinary technical outages.
- CERT-In can seek explanations under **Section 70B(6)** of the IT Act.

B. RBI's Outsourcing Directions (2025) - managing risks in outsourcing

- Banks using cloud services must:
  - Assess dependence on service providers.
  - Maintain an exit strategy.
- **RBI can hold banks responsible for outsourcing failures;** banks may seek explanations from service providers under contractual agreements.

C. Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023:

- Defines personal data breach to include accidental **loss of access to personal data**.
- Rules scheduled to come into effect in **May 2027**, requiring breach reporting to the **Data Protection Board** and **affected individuals.**
- Failure to report can attract a penalty of up to **₹200 crore**.
- **Responsibility lies with the Data Fiduciary** (organisation collecting the data), even when data is stored on a third-party cloud server.

Regulatory gap:

- Indian law does not require a ***minimum threshold of harm to report a breach.***
- It is unclear whether a temporary outage constitutes a "loss of access" and thus a breach or not.

How are cloud companies accountable in different countries?

EU's NIS2 Directive:

- Complete service unavailability for **more than 30 minutes**.
- Partial failure lasting over **1 hour**, affecting more than **5% or 1 million users**, whichever is lower.
- **Reporting requirements:**
  - **national authority** within **24 hours** & Detailed incident notification within **72 hours**.



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How does India address service outages?

SYLLABUS: Prelims: Polity

Newspaper : The Hindu; **Page No : 08**

About the News

Singapore – Digital Infrastructure Law:

- Mandates reporting of service interruptions to the regulator.

South Korea:

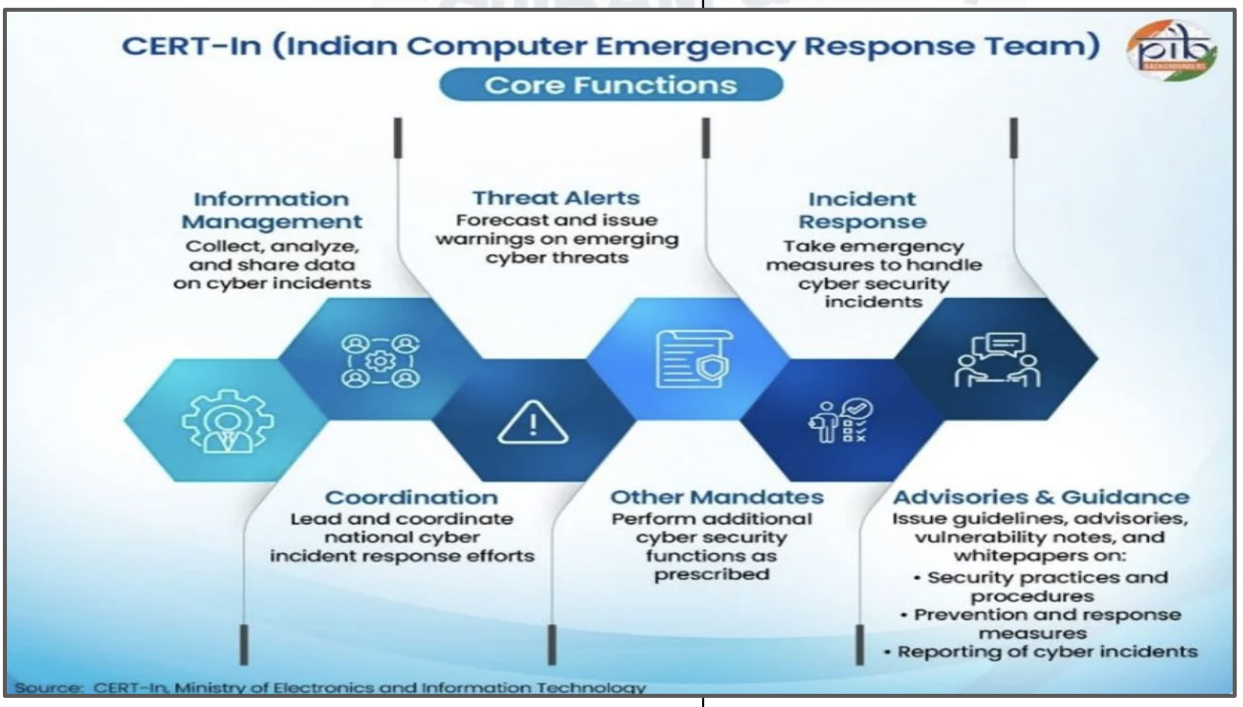
- **July 2023 -** large platforms and data centres must ***submit disaster management plans*** to the government.

Key Difference: India vs Other Countries

- Unlike India's framework, the ***EU uses clearly defined downtime and user-impact thresholds*** to determine reportable cloud service incidents.

Measures to Strengthen Cloud Service Accountability:

- **Data Protection Board** may ***clarify before May 2027*** whether ***service outages qualify as personal data breaches*** and who is responsible for reporting them.
- **Promoting Domestic Cloud Service Providers:**
  - December 2025, the government informed Lok Sabha that **12.68 lakh official email accounts** had shifted to Chennai-based Zoho.
- **Address Regulatory vacuum:** India needs clear rules defining:
  - When an outage qualifies as a reportable incident.
- National nodal agency for ***responding to computer security incidents*** as and when they occur.
- **Functions under** Ministry of Information & Electronics Technology..
- **Objective:** Securing Indian cyberspace.
- **Operational** since **January 2004.**
- **Functions:** The ***Information Technology (Amendment) Act, 2008 inserted Section 70B into the Information Technology Act, 2000,*** providing for CERT-In to serve as the national agency for cybersecurity incident response.

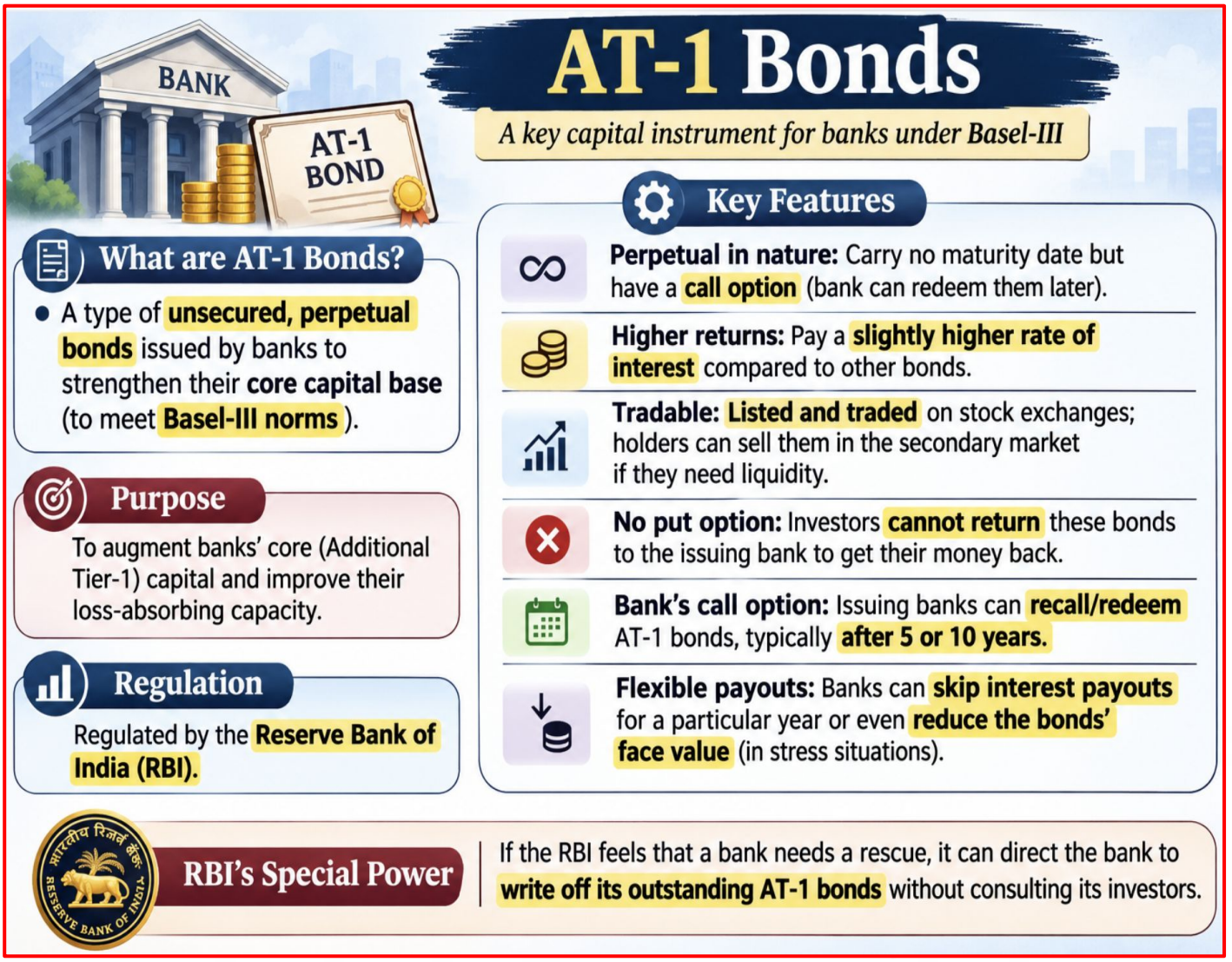




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Additional Tier-1 Bonds

SYLLABUS: Prelims: Economy
Newspaper : The Hindu; **Page No : 13**



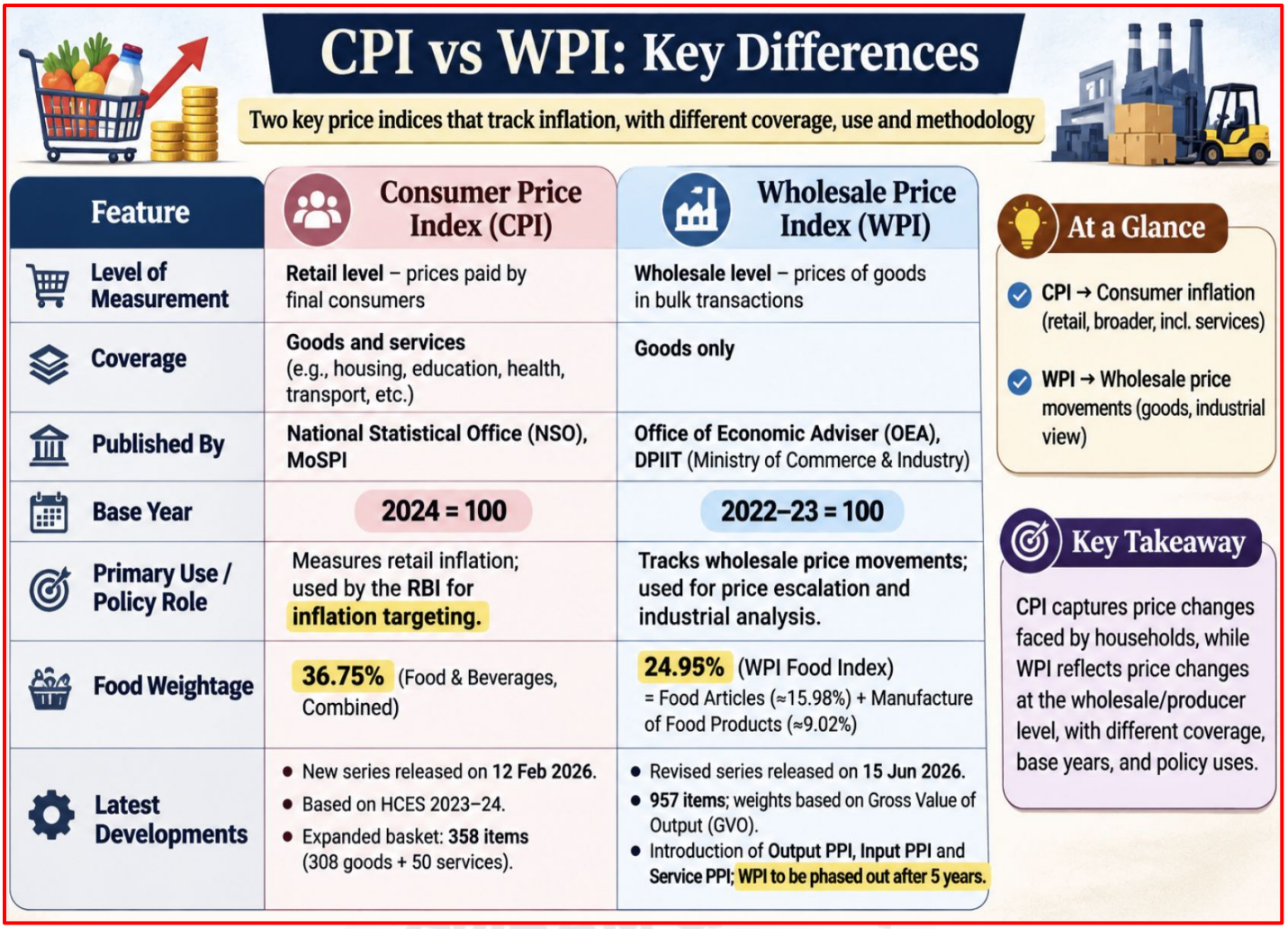
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Wholesale inflation

SYLLABUS: Prelims: Economy

Newspaper : The Hindu; **Page No : 13**



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Daily Quiz

Q1. With reference to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and Wholesale Price Index (WPI), consider the following statements:

1. CPI measures changes in prices at the retail level, whereas WPI tracks price movements at the wholesale level.
2. WPI covers both goods and services, whereas CPI covers only goods.
3. The National Statistical Office (NSO) publishes CPI, while the Office of Economic Adviser (OEA) publishes WPI.

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

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

Answer: b

Q2. With reference to Additional Tier-1 (AT-1) bonds, consider the following statements:

1. AT-1 bonds are unsecured and perpetual debt instruments issued by banks.
2. They carry a fixed maturity date and cannot be redeemed before maturity.
3. They help banks strengthen their Additional Tier-1 capital base under Basel III norms.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: b

Q3. With reference to the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In), consider the following statements:

1. CERT-In is the national nodal agency for responding to computer security incidents in India.
2. It functions under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
3. It was established under the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023.
4. CERT-In directions require reporting of specified cyber incidents within six hours.

How many of the statements given above is/are NOT correct?

a) Only One
b) Only Two
c) Only Three
d) All Four

Answer: a

Q4. With reference to the constitutional provisions relating to Contempt of Courts in India, consider the following statements:

1. Article 129 empowers the Supreme Court to punish for contempt of itself.
2. Article 215 declares every High Court to be a Court of Record.

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: c

Q5. With reference to the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), consider the following statements:

1. The SCO was established in 2001 in Shanghai, China.
2. India and Pakistan became members of the SCO in 2017.
3. The SCO Secretariat is located in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: a





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