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The Analyst

CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout

24th July 2026



Can Fast-Track Courts Really Deliver Faster Justice?

CONTEXT: Prime Minister's promise to set up fast-track courts to take up paper leak cases has turned attention to what is seen as a silver bullet to judicial delays.

What Exactly is a Fast-Track Court?

PM MODI ON PAPER LEAK ISSUE

- To Set Up Fast-track Courts To Ensure Action Against Paper Leaks
- Directed The Concerned Authorities To Take All Necessary Measures
- Continue Our Series Of Steps For Safeguarding Interests Of Students
- Those Who Try To Harm The Future Of Our Youth Will Not Be Spared
- Nothing Is More Important Than The Welfare And Future Of Our Youth



- Same law
 - Same evidence
 - Same judge
- Priority scheduling**

But Can Government Create a Fast-Track Court for Any Case?

Supreme Court (Objective factors)

- Nature of offence
- Vulnerability of victims
- Public interest
- Legislative objective

Article 14

State of West Bengal v. Anwar Ali Sarkar (1952)

- West Bengal's Special Courts Act, 1950
- "intelligible differentia" test

How Courts Have Since Carved Exceptions

- Satyam Scam (2009-10)
- 2G Spectrum Case (2011)
- Crimes against women
- POCSO cases

If we rename every court as Fast-Track Court, will justice automatically become faster?

Legislative/Policy Backbone

14th FC (2015-20)

1,800 FTCs: heinous crimes + property disputes pending 5+ years + vulnerable groups

2019 CSS

Criminal Law Amendment Act, 2018 (rape + POCSO) Nirbhaya Fund

BNSS, 2023

Trial completion within **2 years 2 months** for sexual offences

P. Ramachandra Rao v. State of Karnataka (2002)

- Courts cannot impose a rigid time-limit on trials "Judicial legislation"

Regular FTCs functioning

862 (21 states/UTs)

FTSCs functioning

774 (29 states/UTs)

— of which exclusive POCSO courts

398

FTSC disposal rate

~96%

New cases instituted in FTSCs (2024)

88,902

Cases resolved (2024)

85,595

Avg. disposal/ FTSC/ month

9.5 cases (~3x a regular court's 3.3/month)

Pendency in FTSCs (2023)

2.4 lakh+ cases



Can Fast-Track Courts Really Deliver Faster Justice?

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"A Fast-Track Court addresses only one part of this chain"

LawChakra

Delhi's Fast-Track Courts Running Slow?: POCSO Trials Take Nearly Five Years Instead of One

Despite fast-track courts meant to expedite justice, Delhi averages nearly five years to decide POCSO cases, breaching timelines.

31 Jan 2026

"Speed of processing $\neq$ elimination of backlog if inflow > outflow"

- 21 judges per million population**
 - Law Commission 1987: 50/mn
 - US (~150) or UK
- Vacant judicial posts.**
- Adjournments.**
 - Many **pending cases.**
 - Appeals = MORE DELAY**

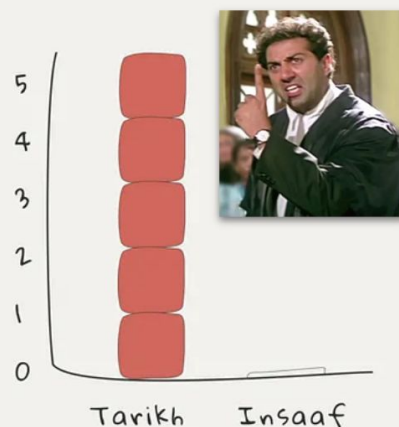
How can justice remain meaningful if it arrives too late?

Courts should get out of adjournment culture, not grant adjournments mechanically: Supreme Court

The Supreme Court said that time has come to 'change the work culture and get out of the adjournment culture' so that the confidence and trust put by litigants on the justice delivery system is not shaken.



"Tarikh par Tarikh, Tarikh par Tarikh, Tarikh par Tarikh, Tarikh par Tarikh, milti rahi par insaaf nai mila my lord"



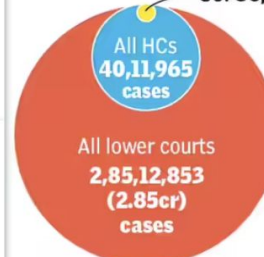
How can justice remain meaningful if it arrives too late?

Data from the National Judicial Data Grid provides a glimpse at the enormity of the backlog these benches are meant to address. The Supreme Court currently has 96,045 pending cases. Civil matters make up most of this burden, standing at 74,244 cases, while criminal matters account for the remaining 21,801.

Within this backlog, there are 24 civil cases and two criminal cases that have been pending before the court for over 30 years. The oldest civil case has been pending since 1986, while the oldest criminal case was registered in 1991.

Another 525 civil cases and seven criminal cases were registered between 1996 and 2005, and have been pending ever since. The bulk of the older backlog lies in the 10- to 20-year bracket, which accounts for 7,993 civil cases and 1,585 criminal cases.

SC: 60,938



Waiting for decades

- About 525 pending civil cases and seven criminal cases were registered between 1996 and 2005.
- The bulk of the older backlog lies in the 10- to 20-year bracket, at 7,993 civil cases and 1,585 criminal cases.

- Laws**
- Courts**
- Public Trust**

Top five Indian states with highest backlog of cases

State	Cases pending at district courts	Judges at district courts	Judges per/mn people
UTTAR PRADESH	53,63,613	2,068	10
MAHARASHTRA	31,54,681	2,353	21
GUJARAT	21,98,280	1,205	20
BIHAR	14,33,511	1,361	13
WEST BENGAL	13,42,122	744	8



Can Fast-Track Courts Really Deliver Faster Justice?

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"A Fast-Track Court addresses only one part of this chain"

- Delayed **investigations**.
 - Poor chargesheets → weak prosecution
- Weak **forensic** capacity.
- **Cooperation of stakeholders**
 - Bar associations going on strike
 - Witness turning hostile
 - Adjournment culture
- Poor **(digital) infrastructure**.



26% of court complexes do not have separate ladies' toilets; 16 % do not have toilets for gents

5% have medical facilities

32% have separate record rooms
51% have a library



27% have a computer on judge's dais with video conferencing facility

The Indian Express

[Budget 2026-27 | 5 crore pending cases, but judiciary gets only 0.08% allocation: Adv Asim Sarode](#)

He noted that increased pendency is not always due to insufficient courts but also stems from inadequate court staff and courtroom...

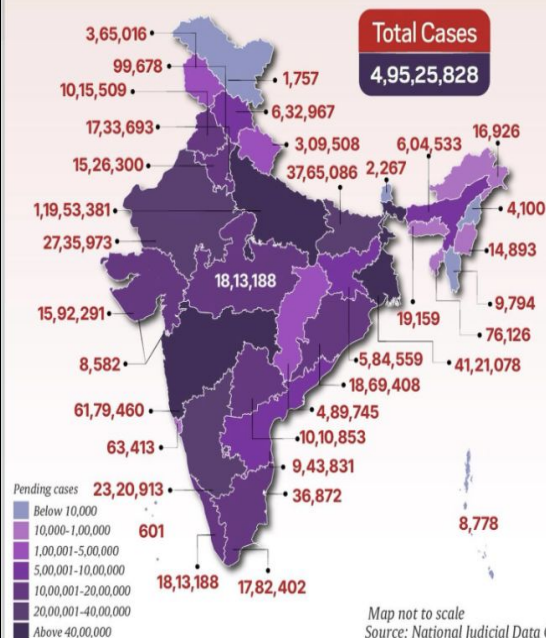
3 Feb 2026

INDIA through MAPS

The Indian EXPRESS

DISTRICT COURT BACKLOG IN INDIA AROUND 5 CRORE

State-wise pending court cases



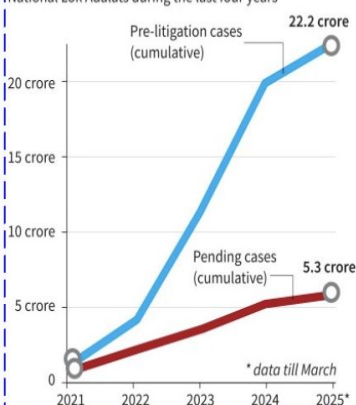
CAUSES OF DELAY IN DISPOSAL OF CASES IN LOWER COURTS

Counsel not available	62,03,680
Accused absconding	35,18,310
Missing witnesses	26,67,741
Stayed by lower courts	22,64,721
Awaiting documents	14,18,493
Frequent appeals	4,51,634
Stayed by dist courts	5,725
Stayed by SC	914

Total civil & criminal cases: 1,77,74,583

Source: National Judicial Data Grid; As of Sept 25, 2025

Chart 4: Cumulative number of cases disposed of in National Lok Adalats during the last four years



Related Issues

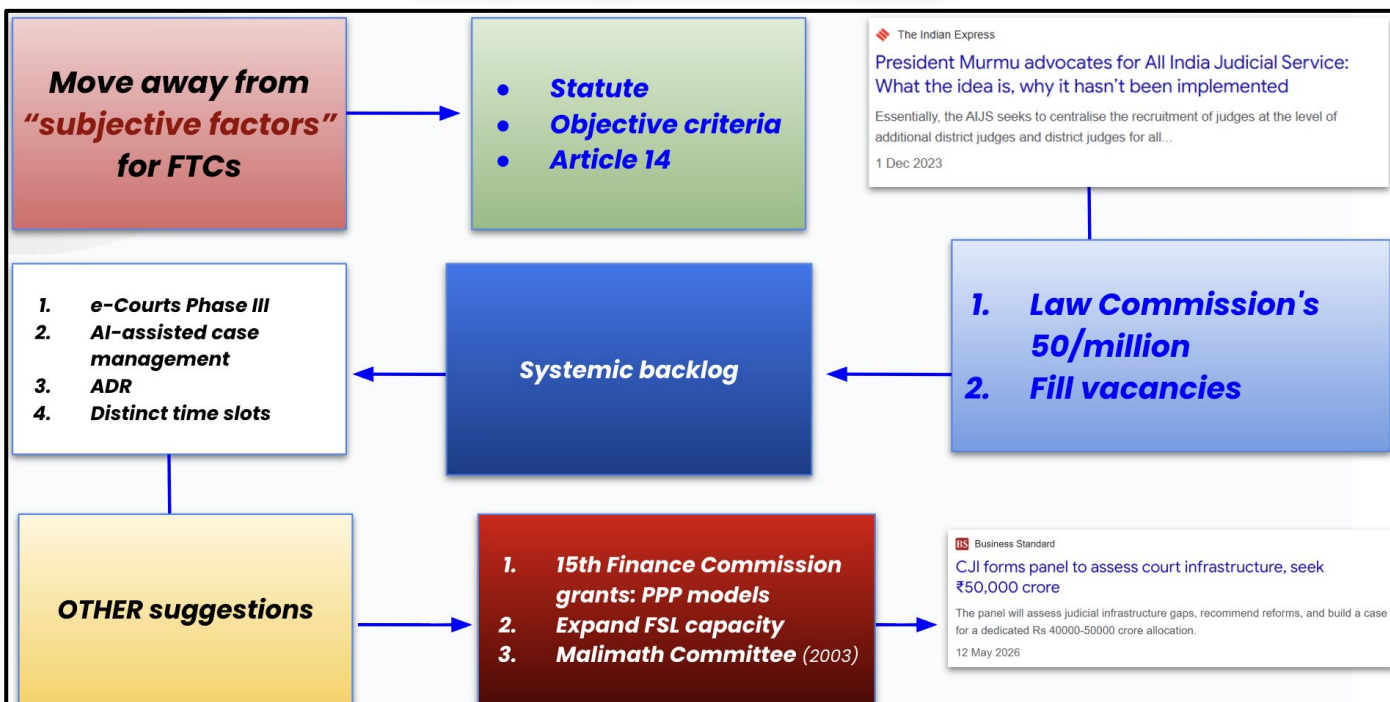
1. 30-35% vacancy
2. 75% of India's prison population are **undertrials**
3. CAG: Nirbhaya Fund



Can Fast-Track Courts Really Deliver Faster Justice?

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Way Forward



QUICK DELIVERY

Courts across the country have delivered quick justice over the years. A few examples of fast-track trials

Rohtas, Bihar: A court concluded a rape trial in just two days in June 2006 and sentenced a man to seven-year imprisonment for raping a minor.

Jaipur, Rajasthan: A rape trial was concluded in seven days in April 2006. A man was sentenced for raping a German student.

Jodhpur, Rajasthan: The local court finished the trial in two weeks and sentenced two men to life imprisonment for raping a 47-year-old German tourist.

Hoshiarpur, Punjab: The local court concluded a rape trial in nine days and sentenced a man to 10-year imprisonment.

Delhi: A fast-track court completed the December 16, 2012 gang rape-cum-murder case in 9 months and gave death penalty to convicts Mukesh, Vinay, Akshay, Pawan.

Mumbai, Maharashtra: A city court completed the Shakti Mills gang rape case in seven months and awarded death penalty to three convicts and life imprisonment to one convict.

Imphal, Manipur: In June 2013, an Imphal court completed a rape trial in 8 months and sentenced four convicts, including two India Reserve Battalion (IRB) jawans, to life imprisonment.



Mains Practise Question

Fast-track courts are often a symbolic response to public outrage rather than a structural solution to judicial delay in India. Critically examine this statement with reference to constitutional principles and recent developments.

(15 Marks, 250 words)



FDI in inventory model for e-com exports

CONTEXT: India's Retail Policy 2.0: Why Has the Government Suddenly Allowed FDI in the Inventory Model?

India's Great Retail Dilemma



Walmart Effect
[wɜːl-mart i-ˈfekt]

An economic change, such as store closures and lower wages, that occurs in local communities when a large retail store opens.

Why is This Important?

1991 LPG

- FDI, tech, SS chains
- + Social Stability

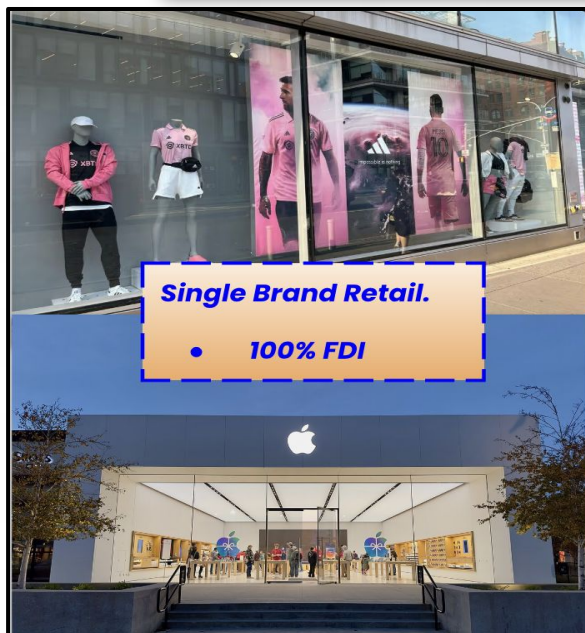
The market landscape : Understanding India's three-format grocery ecosystem

DEZERV

Feature	Kiranas	Big Box Retail	Online Commerce
Market Size (2025)	₹50.9 Lakh Cr (\$598 Bn)	₹3.4 Lakh Cr (\$40 Bn)	₹1.6 Lakh Cr (\$19 Bn)
Market Share	91%	6%	3%
Growth Rate (CAGR)	7%	13%	29%
2030 Projection	\$849 Billion	\$74 Billion	\$69 Billion
The Shopper	233M Low-to-mid income households (80% of India)	Urban, middle-class value seekers	42M Affluent, urban households (Top 12%)
Basket Size	₹100–200	₹800–2,500	₹350–700
Frequency	10–20 times / month	1–2 times / month	4–8 times / month
The Hook	Proximity & Trust (Khata)	Deep discounts on bulk packs	10–30 minute convenience

Source : Redseer Research and Analysis

Understanding FDI in Retail



Single Brand Retail.

- 100% FDI



Multi Brand Retail.

Why not simply allow FDI?

- kirana stores
- unemployment
- concentration of market power
- dominance by global corporations



FDI in inventory model for e-com exports



CONTEXT: India's Retail Policy 2.0: Why Has the Government Suddenly Allowed FDI in the Inventory Model?

Inventory vs Marketplace Model

Inventory Model

Company
(Stock + Price + Discounts)
↓
Warehouse
↓
Customer

Marketplace Model

Seller
↓
Amazon/Flipkart Platform
↓
Customer

India requires foreign e-commerce companies to operate under this

Reduce the possibility of predatory pricing

But Companies Found Another Route...

CNBC

Walmart agrees to a \$16 billion deal to buy a majority stake in India's Flipkart

Walmart agrees to a \$16 billion deal to buy a majority stake in India's Flipkart ...
Walmart has agreed to a deal to buy a majority stake in...

9 May 2018

Reuters

Walmart-backed PhonePe targets up to \$10.5 billion valuation in India IPO, sources say

That suggests the IPO will raise about \$900 million to \$1.05 billion. But even at the top end, the deal would mark a cut from the \$12 billion...

4 Mar 2026

Now, the debate is not only about retail ...

THE DEPARTMENT for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) on Thursday permitted foreign direct investment (FDI) in the inventory-based model of e-commerce, a step that is aimed at boosting exports.

This comes a day before the US is expected to replace 10% global tariffs under Section 122 with new tariffs.

Indian exports through e-commerce currently stand at only \$5 billion, against China's \$300 billion

For the first time, foreign e-commerce companies are allowed to operate under the Inventory-Based Model, but only for exports of goods manufactured in India.

Who actually exports most products through e-commerce?



FDI in inventory model for e-com exports

CONTEXT: India's Retail Policy 2.0: Why Has the Government Suddenly Allowed FDI in the Inventory Model?

But Why Aren't MSMEs Exporting More?

How to Export Handicrafts from India

- 1 Business Registration**
Apply for registering business as sole proprietorship, private or private limit company
- 2 Get an Import Export Code (IEC)**
Select the Handicraft Products, from woodwork, textiles, brassware
- 5 Understand Export Documentation**
Common export pricing uses secure payment methods like Letter of Credit
- 6 Pricing and Payment Terms**
Partnering with reliable freight forwarders or export agents
Tip: Always verify buyer authenticity Use secured credit
- 7 Logistics and Shipping**
Partnering with reliable, freight forwarders or export agents
- 8 Promote and Build Brand**
Build a strong online presence through

Reuters

US targets India with forced labour tariff amid talks on trade pact

The United States has proposed an additional tariff of 12.5% on imports from India, saying it is among 60 economies that failed to curb...

1 month ago

- export documentation
- customs procedures
- foreign exchange rules
- packaging standards
- international labelling norms
- quality certification
- testing requirements
- product traceability
- shipping arrangements
- returns management

The government now wants

MSME



Manufactures Product



amazon Flipkart



Handles Compliance



Exports

- technology, documentation systems,
- AI- demand forecasting,
- logistics,
- legal teams,
- compliance experts.

MSMEs IMPACT ON INDIA'S ECONOMY



Hidden Concept: Traceability

EU = Digital Product Passport

- origin,
- raw materials,
- manufacturing process,
- sustainability information,
- lifecycle information

FDI in inventory model for e-com exports

CONTEXT: India's Retail Policy 2.0: Why Has the Government Suddenly Allowed FDI in the Inventory Model?

But There Are Concerns Too...

GTRI: Policy Spillover.

**Export v Domestic
inventory separation?**

B2B habitual regulations

**Is India's export potential
being realised?**

ONDC OPEN NETWORK FOR DIGITAL COMMERCE

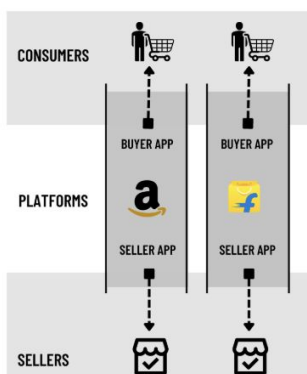
Open network-centric model backed by Government of India



INTERNET
FREEDOM
FOUNDATION

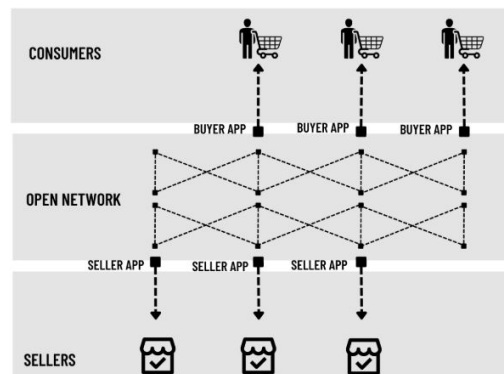
Platform Centric Models

Buyers and sellers can only interact within walled platforms.



Network Centric Models (like ONDC)

Buyers and sellers can interact with each other in a platform-agnostic manner.



Mains Practise Question

By shifting compliance, logistics, and global market access from individual MSMEs to large digital platforms, the government aims to transform e-commerce into an engine of export-led growth while continuing to protect the domestic retail ecosystem from unrestricted foreign inventory-based competition. Comment.

(15 Marks, 250 words)



Newspaper : The Hindu Page No : 04

Himachal farmers pioneer sustainable cultivation of endangered herb

Newspaper The Hindu

Page Number 4



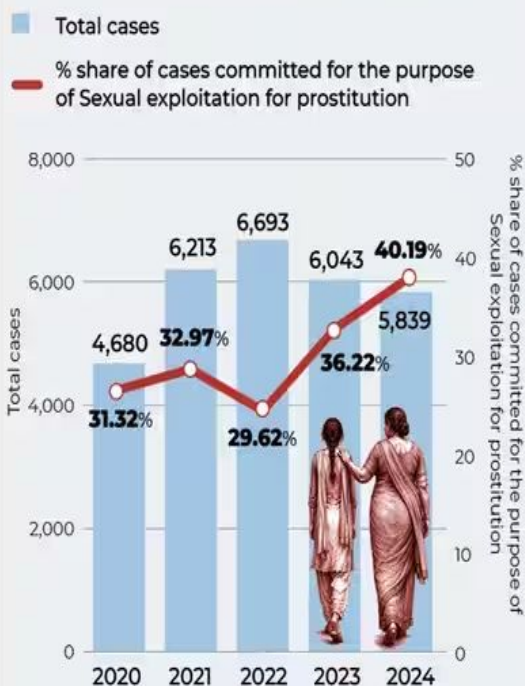
Picrorhiza kurroa, **Endangered**
2,700–4,500 m

Himalayan Research Group

- Stolon-based harvesting method
- **180** farmers in the Mandi
- **₹1,500 per kilogram**
- Collective Marketing

Growing proportion of human trafficking cases involving sexual exploitation for prostitution

TOI



Source: Volume III, Crime in India Report 2020 to 2024, NCRB

Odisha govt. plans new policy to curb human trafficking

Odisha = highest number of human trafficking victims in India for **four consecutive years**

- 83.3% **rural** population
- **Limited formal** market
- **22.85% ST** population
- **Gender literacy gap** (64% F vs. 82% M)
- 20 lakh seasonal **migrants**

"Nutan Sakala" Framework

Newspaper The Hindu

Page No. 4

- Village **migration registers**
- **Integrated Victim Support Centres**
- Fast-track and special **courts**
- **PMLA, 2002**
- Nutana Sakala Corpus **Fund**



Newspaper : The Indian Express **Page No :** 06

Need a regulatory framework for virtual digital assets, says House finance panel

WHAT IS INCLUDED?

-  **Crypto Assets**
e.g., Bitcoin, Ethereum, Solana
-  **NFTs (Non-Fungible Tokens)**
Digital ownership of art, collectibles, in-game items, music, etc.
-  **Utility Tokens**
Provide access to a platform or service
-  **Stablecoins**
Pegged to fiat currency (e.g., USDT, USDC)
-  **Others**
DeFi tokens, Governance tokens, and similar digital assets

Proposed regulation of VDAs by Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance

1. **Interim Regulatory Framework** via **Self-Regulatory Organisations**
2. Clearer VDA **Classification**
3. Stakeholder **Consultations**

'Crypto transactions crossed ₹51,000 cr. in 2024-25 in India'

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

The value of cryptocurrency transactions in India crossed ₹51,000 crore in 2024-25, up 41% over the previous year, an analysis of data shared with Parliament showed.

The data, shared by the Ministry of Finance in reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha, showed that the government collected ₹511.8 crore as Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) on crypto transactions in 2024-25. As the rate of TCS is 1% on every transaction, this means the value of total transactions that year stood at ₹51,180 crore.

Under the Finance Act

The government had collected ₹511.8 crore as TDS on crypto transactions in 2024-25, data showed

2022, the government had introduced a provision in the Income Tax Act 1961, which has been retained in the I-T Act 2025, mandating a 1% TDS on any transfer of Virtual Digital Assets (VDAs) or cryptocurrencies. The government had collected TCS worth ₹221.3 crore in 2022-23 and ₹362.7 crore in 2023-24, implying transactions worth ₹22,130 crore and ₹36,270 crore were conducted in those two years, respectively.



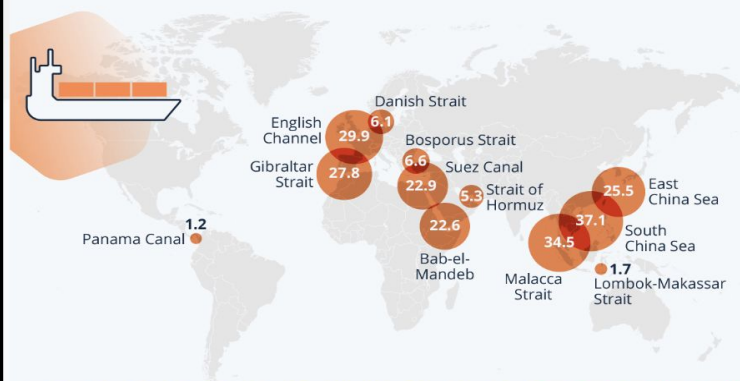
Why is Bab el-Mandeb Strait in news?

SYLLABUS : Prelims : Mapping aspects
Newspaper : The Hindu **Page No : 01**

How one geographical chokepoint can become an economic weapon

Global Shipping's Chokepoints

Share of maritime-traded goods between non-neighboring nations passing through the following chokepoints (in %)



World's Major Maritime Chokepoints

Strait of Hormuz	Gulf Oil Exports
Bab el-Mandeb	Red Sea–Suez Route
Suez Canal	Europe–Asia Trade
Strait of Malacca	East Asia Trade
Panama Canal	Atlantic–Pacific
Bosporus	Black Sea

Welcome to Geoeconomics:

1. shipping routes
2. energy supplies
3. semiconductor supply chains
4. rare earth minerals
5. digital infrastructure.

On **20 July 2026**, **Yemen's Houthis** announced a **naval blockade** against **Saudi Arabia**, threatening shipping through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait.

The regional conflict

Key players in the conflict

In March 2015, a **Saudi-led coalition** – backed by the **US** – intervened militarily in Yemen in a bid to **fight the Houthis**, restore **Hadi's government**, and reverse what they say is growing **Iranian influence** in the region.



YEMEN

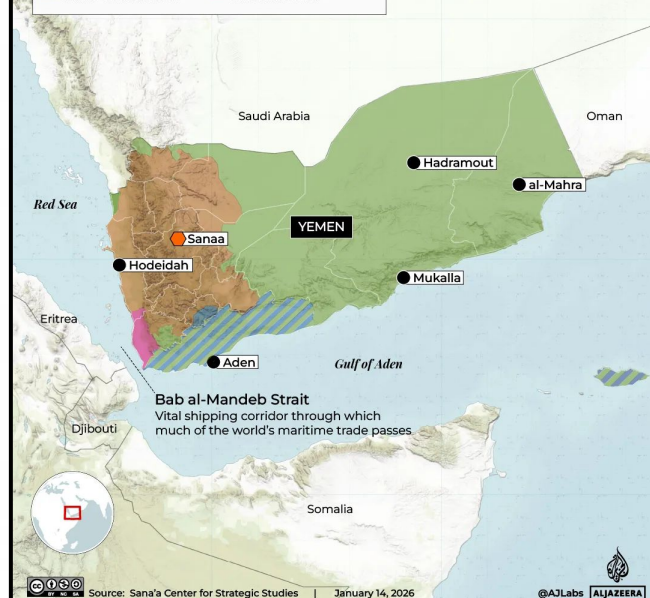
Who controls what in Yemen?

The Houthis control the northwestern regions of Yemen, including the capital Sanaa, while the Yemeni government controls most of the rest of the country.

AREAS OF CONTROL

- Houthi forces
- Southern Transitional Council-affiliated forces
- Government-affiliated forces
- Tareq Saleh's National Resistance Forces

Control is contested between the STC and the Yemeni government in some parts of southern Yemen.



Why is Bab el-Mandeb Strait in news?

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

1973

Full blockade during the Arab-Israeli War. During the Yom Kippur War, Egypt imposed a naval blockade at Bab-el-Mandeb.



2000s

Early 2010s due to the Somali pirate threat. The waters near the strait saw frequent pirate attacks, especially linked to Somalia.



2015

Onward Yemen war spills into maritime domain. The Yemeni Civil War extended into the Red Sea and Bab-el-Mandeb. Iran-backed Houthi forces used missiles, drones, and naval mines against vessels.



2023

Houthi forces stepped up attacks on ships passing through the strait in response to Israel's invasion of Gaza.



Traffic fell below half of its normal level as shipping companies began rerouting around the Cape of Good Hope, adding significant time and distance to their routes.

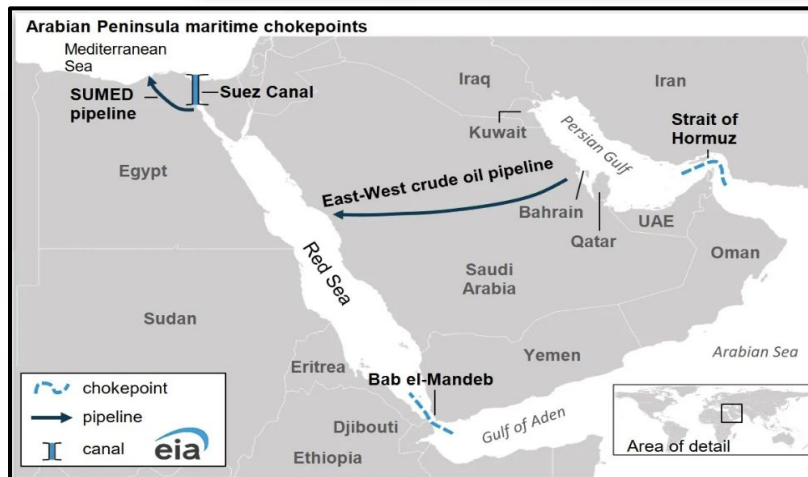
Arrivals at the Cape of Good Hope were up 89% that year, and oil flows through Bab-el-Mandeb were cut in half, according to the US Energy Information Administration.



Why is Bab el-Mandeb Strait in news?

SYLLABUS : Prelims : Mapping aspects
Newspaper : The Hindu **Page No : 01**

Why is Bab el-Mandeb So Important?



~12% of global merchandise trade

~5% of global oil, petroleum flows

Asia-Europe container traffic



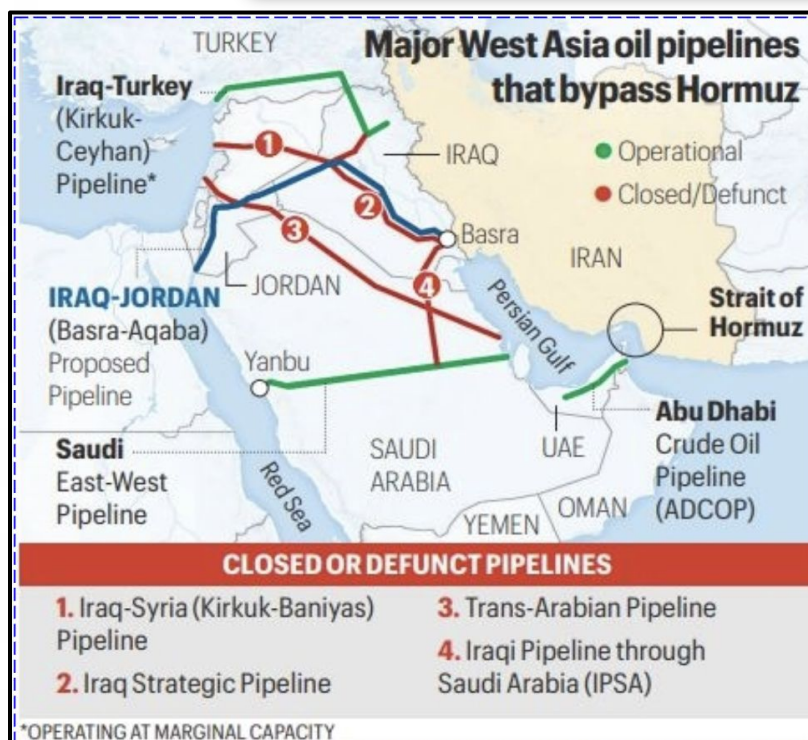
"Gate of Tears"

- narrow channel
- difficult navigation
- strong currents
- pirate activity.

29 km wide

Yemen + Djibouti + Eritrea

Saudi Arabia's Problem



"Backup route is itself under pressure"

Hormuz ⚠ severe geopolitical pressure

East-West Petroline

Yanbu => Red Sea => Bab el-Mandeb

Supply Shock again for India
Insurance costs

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------|
| • Engineering goods | • Chemicals |
| • Pharmaceuticals | • Automobiles |
| • Textiles | • Containers |
| | • Fertilizers |

NSA Powers for Delhi Police Commissioner



SYLLABUS : Prelims : Fundamental Rights
Newspaper : The Hindu Page No : 12

Why in News?

2 DELHI GAZETTE : EXTRAORDINARY PART IV]

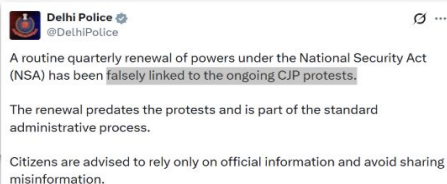
HOME (POLICE-II) DEPARTMENT NOTIFICATION

Delhi, the 15th July, 2026

F.No. 2/1/88/HP-II/Pt.-I/ e-Office No.280430/1346-1349.— Whereas the Lt. Governor of the National Capital Territory of Delhi is satisfied that it is necessary to do so;

Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by sub section (3) of section 3, read with clause (e) of Section 2 of the National Security Act, 1980, the Lt. Governor of the National Capital Territory of Delhi is pleased to direct that during the period 19/07/2026 to 18/10/2026 the Commissioner of Police, Delhi may also exercise the powers of detaining authority under sub section (2) of the section 3 of the aforesaid Act.

"routine administrative renewal"

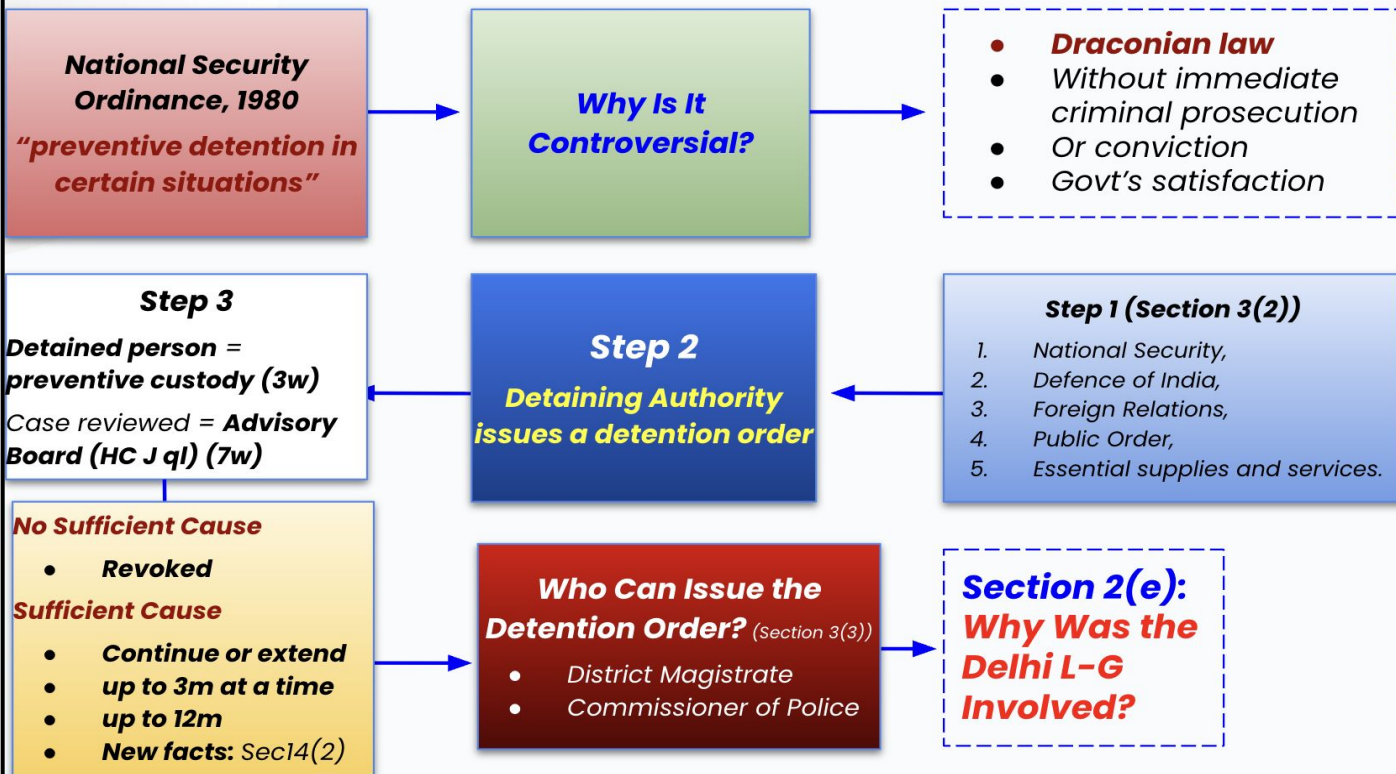


CONTEXT

The **Delhi Lieutenant Governor (L-G)** issued an order **allowing the Delhi Police Commissioner to exercise powers under the National Security Act (NSA) from 19 July to 18 October 2026.**

Why do criminal laws exist?
Preventive Detention

What is the National Security Act (NSA)?



NSA Powers for Delhi Police Commissioner



SYLLABUS : Prelims : Fundamental Rights
Newspaper : The Hindu Page No : 12

Was This Extraordinary?

HOME (POLICE-II) DEPARTMENT

NOTIFICATION

Delhi, the 10th January, 2020

No. F. 2/1/88-HP-II/124-127.—Whereas the Lt. Governor of the National Capital Territory of Delhi is satisfied that it is necessary to do so;

Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by sub section (3) of section 3, read with clause (e) of Section 2 of the National Security Act, 1980, the Lt. Governor of the National Capital Territory of Delhi is pleased to direct that during the period 19/01/2020 to 18/04/2020 the Commissioner of Police, Delhi may also exercise the powers of detaining authority under sub section (2) of the section 3 of the aforesaid Act.

CAA + NPR + NRC
"routine periodic notification"

By Order and in the Name of the Lt. Governor
of the National Capital Territory of Delhi,
D. N. SINGH, Spl. Secy. (Home)

आशीष कुमार, उप सचिव (गृह)

HOME (POLICE-II) DEPARTMENT

NOTIFICATION

Delhi, the 16th October, 2015

No. F. 2/1/88-HP-II/8718.— Whereas the Lt. Governor of the National Capital Territory of Delhi is satisfied that it is necessary to do so;

Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by the sub-section (3) of section 3, read with clause (e) of Section 2 of the National Security Act, 1980, the Lt. Governor of the National Capital Territory of Delhi is pleased to direct that during the period 19-10-2015 to 18-1-2016 the Commissioner of Police, Delhi may also exercise the powers of detaining authority under sub section (2) of the section 3 of the aforesaid Act.

2015: three-month period

By Order and in the Name of the Lt. Governor
of National Capital Territory of Delhi,
ASHISH KUMAR, Dy. Secy (Home)

Criticisms of the NSA

- Affects personal liberty
- Immediate criminal prosecution?
- Scope for misuse
- Broadly in matters of "public order"

Government's Justification

National security

- Terrorist threats
- Riots
- Large-scale violence
- Essential supplies



How cities should reclaim footpaths?

SYLLABUS : Prelims : Constitutional Rights
Newspaper : The Hindu **Page No :** 10

"A good city is one where the easiest thing to do is walk."



Where should the pedestrian walk?

"Walking on demarcated footpaths is a Fundamental Right."

The Times of India

The right to walk: After Supreme Court judgment, who will reclaim our footpaths?

P. Ayyappan) delivered by a bench of Justices P S Narasimha and A S Chandurkar, Supreme Court declared the right to walk on safe, demarcated...

2 weeks ago

Maniyar Iliyaz @ Shaik Riyaz vs P. Ayyappan (2026)

1. Article 19(1)(d)
2. Article 21

Direct States + UTs

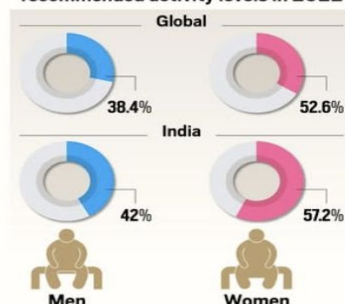
- formulate policies
- construction,
- maintenance,
- and protection

Hidden Dimension: "Urban Planning = Public Health"

50% Indians Physically Unfit

Half of Indian adults are not physically active sufficiently

% of adults who didn't meet recommended activity levels in 2022



WHO Recommends

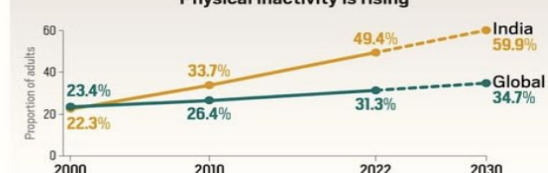
150–300 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity per week

or

75–150 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity




Physical inactivity is rising



Source: The Lancet Global Health Report
Graphic: Subham Singh & Mudita Singh

"Walkability"

- continuous footpaths,
- safe crossings,
- adequate width,
- ramps,
- lighting,
- shade,
- benches,
- accessibility,
- freedom from encroachments.

Footpaths as Preventive Medicine



How cities should reclaim footpaths?

SYLLABUS : Prelims : Constitutional Rights
Newspaper : The Hindu Page No : 10



"Road Design" Dimension

INDIA ROAD ACCIDENT STATS - 2025

Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister for Road, Transport and Highways, while addressing a seminar on road safety in New Delhi on 25 March 2025, revealed the following facts:

Annual Road Crashes

~4.8 TO 5 LAKH
accidents per year

Annual Fatalities

BETWEEN 1.5 LAKH & 1.88 LAKH
deaths per year

Age-wise Death Distribution:

18-45 YEARS:
~66% of fatalities

UNDER 18 YEARS:
~10,000 child deaths annually

Equivalent to

3% OF INDIA'S GDP
each year

Serious Injuries:

~4 LAKH INDIVIDUALS
suffer serious injuries annually



"National Active Mobility Mission"

- **Citizens' Role**
- **Government's**
 - Ward-level footpath maps
 - Annual audits
- **Functional infra:** Trees, Benches Toilets

SYLLABUS : Prelims : 123 Agreement

Newspaper : The Indian Express Page No : 13

Why in News?

The US and Saudi Arabia have signed a **controversial deal** that could potentially enable the latter to kickstart a civilian nuclear programme. Heralded as a **"peaceful nuclear cooperation agreement"**, the 30-year pact effectively seeks to offer **"great access for American companies in the Saudi nuclear energy program"**, according to the US Department of Energy (DoE).

Text from the deal is yet to be made public. First reported by the *Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times*, the **deal could allow Saudi Arabia to enrich uranium** — which is primarily to be used as **fuel for power plants**, but can also be **diverted to make nuclear bombs**. **President Donald Trump said the deal would not allow this.**

Inside the US-Saudi Nuclear Deal

What is proposed?

US expected to sign a 30-year civil nuclear agreement with Saudi Arabia

Pact could eventually allow uranium enrichment in the kingdom

US companies to help develop the programme

Key Concerns

Uranium enrichment can produce fuel for nuclear power but also provides technology that can be used to develop nuclear weapons if further steps are taken

What's Missing?

No International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Additional Protocol expected

Means fewer enhanced international inspections and safeguards

Why Now?

Comes amid US-Israel military campaign against Iran

Iran insists its enrichment programme is peaceful

Saudi Arabia has previously said it would seek nuclear capability if Iran acquires nuclear weapons

Risk of arms race over U.S.-Saudi nuclear deal

U.S. President Trump approves a so-called 123 Agreement with Saudi Arabia to share nuclear technology without the safeguards necessary to stop materials being used in nuclear weapons programs

NUCLEAR POWER IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Planned Under construction Operational Closed



Strategic ambitions

Why Saudi Arabia Wants Nuclear Power

- **Energy diversification**
- **More oil for export**
- **Regional power**
- **Vision 2030**

Why Does the US Want This Deal?

1. **Strengthen long-term alliance with Saudi Arabia.**
2. **Economic Objectives + Why Timing Matters**
3. **West Asian influence + Counter Chinese + Russia**

Biggest Fear: Regional Nuclear Arms Race



SYLLABUS : Prelims : 123 Agreement

Newspaper : The Indian Express Page No : 13

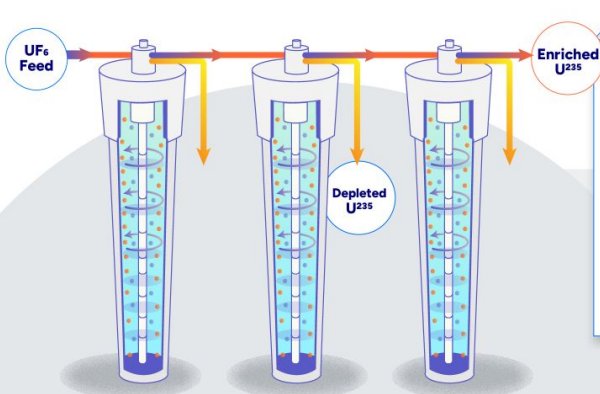
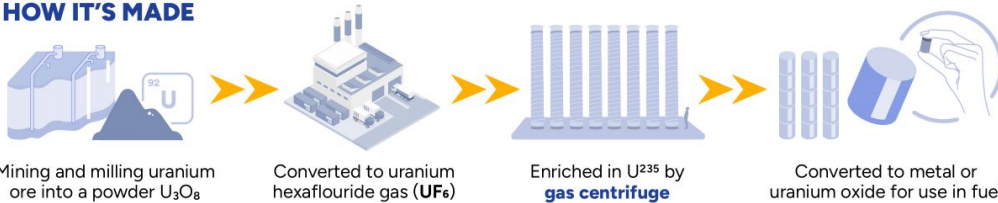
Why Is Everyone Worried?



How Uranium Enrichment Works



HOW IT'S MADE



Gas centrifuge enrichment is the current commercial enrichment process performed in the United States.

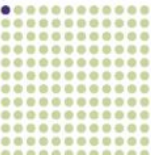
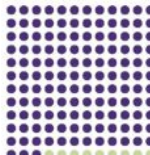
- Spins UF_6 at high speeds
- Collects lighter U^{235} near center
- Enriched gas sent through next cylinder
- Depleted gas recycled back into previous cylinder
- Process repeats until desired enrichment



U.S. DEPARTMENT of **ENERGY** | Office of Nuclear Energy

Why Is This Deal Different? "enrich on own soil"

The Hidden Danger

Natural uranium	Low-enriched	High-enriched	Weapons-grade
contains 0.7% U^{235}	fuel for commercial nuclear power plants 5% U^{235}	fuel for nuclear research reactors 20% U^{235}	90% U^{235}
			

"Nuclear Latency"

How much effort is required to get to weapons-grade uranium?

Very little extra effort is needed to get from 20% enriched uranium to bomb material

83.5% effort needed to reach 4% U^{235} > +8.5% effort needed to reach 20% U^{235} > +8% more effort to reach 90% U^{235}



US-Saudi 123 Nuclear pact



SYLLABUS : Prelims : 123 Agreement

Newspaper : The Indian Express **Page No :** 13

Other aspects

What Is the Bilateral Safeguards Agreement?

- **Regulating** the use of transferred technology,
- Ensuring **peaceful application**,
- Establishing **monitoring mechanisms**.

What India's 123 Agreement?

Why Is It Called a 123 Agreement?

Section 123 of the US Atomic Energy Act, 1954.

Why Is the US Congress Important?

1. **transfer of nuclear materials,**
2. **nuclear equipment,**
3. **technology,**
4. **scientific cooperation,**
5. **safeguards,**
6. **non-proliferation commitments.**



Q1. With reference to the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, consider the following statements:

1. It connects the Red Sea with the Gulf of Aden, providing access to the Indian Ocean.
2. It separates the Arabian Peninsula from the African continent and is divided into two channels by the Perim Island.
3. It serves as a direct maritime link between the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean through the Suez Canal.

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 Preventive Detention and Punitive Detention, consider the following statements:

Statement I: Preventive detention is intended to prevent a person from committing a future offence, whereas punitive detention is imposed after conviction for an offence already committed.

Statement II: A person detained under preventive detention enjoys the same constitutional safeguards under Article 22 as a person arrested under ordinary criminal law.

Which one of the following options is/are correct?

- a) Both Statement I and Statement II are correct, and Statement II is the correct explanation of Statement I.
- b) Both Statement I and Statement II are correct, but Statement II is not the correct explanation of Statement I.
- c) Statement I is correct, but Statement II is incorrect.
- d) Statement I is incorrect, but Statement II is correct.

Answer: c

Q3. With reference to India's 123 Agreement, consider the following statements:

1. It is a bilateral civil nuclear cooperation agreement between India and the United States signed under Section 123 of the U.S. Atomic Energy Act, 1954.
2. The agreement enables India to engage in international civil nuclear commerce despite not being a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

3. Under the agreement, all Indian nuclear facilities are required to be placed under International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards.

How many of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: b

Q4. With reference to the Marketplace Model and Inventory Model of e-commerce, consider the following statements:

1. Under the Inventory Model, the e-commerce entity acts as a digital intermediary connecting buyers and third-party sellers without owning the inventory.
2. Under the Marketplace Model, the e-commerce entity owns the inventory of goods and sells them directly to consumers.
3. Under India's FDI policy, 100% Foreign Direct Investment is permitted under the Marketplace Model, subject to prescribed conditions.

How many of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: a

Q5. With reference to the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC), consider the following statements:

1. ONDC enables buyers and sellers to transact across different e-commerce platforms through an interoperable network.
2. ONDC is a government-owned e-commerce marketplace that directly buys products from sellers and sells them to consumers..

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





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