



VAJIRAM & RAVI
Institute for IAS Examination

The Analyst

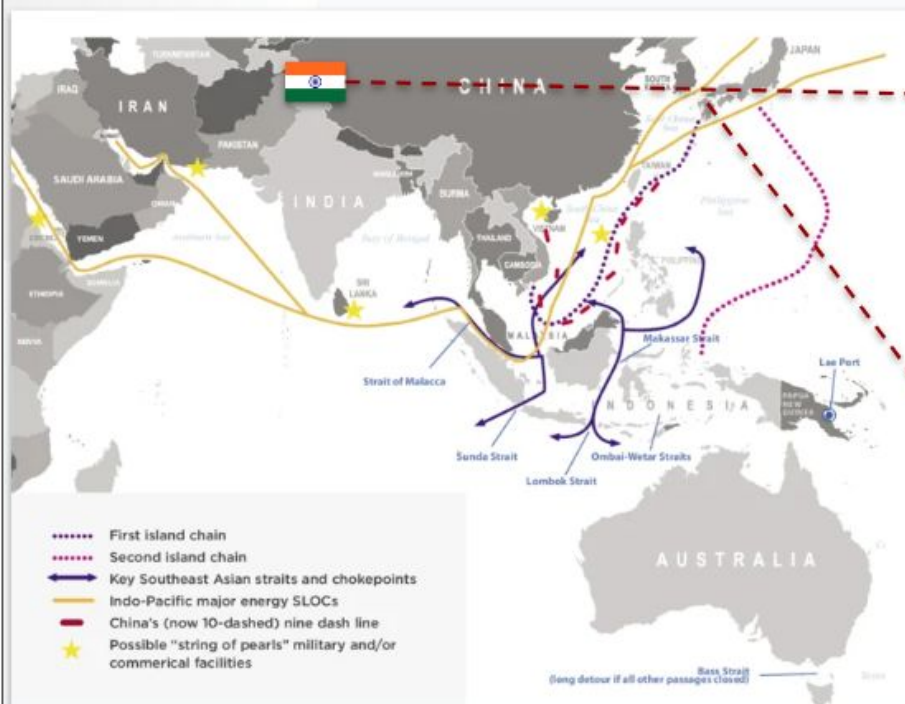
CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout

21st August 2026



CONTEXT: Decoding the **India-Japan Maritime Pact**

INJP Why India and Japan Are Natural Maritime Partners



1. IoR central position
2. Large coastline
3. China
4. Expanding naval capability
5. Shipbuilding + defence-manufacturing hub

1. China
2. Dependent on maritime trade
3. Tech capabilities
4. Advanced maritime industrial ecosystem

Memorandum of Arrangement on Maritime Security



PRELIMS POINTER: Key Bilateral Exercises

- **JIMEX** (Naval)
- **Dharma Guardian** (Army)
- **Veer Guardian** (Air Force)
- **Malabar Naval Ex** (QUAD)

From "Look East" to "Special Strategic Partners"

- **Japan's Official Development Assistance**
- **2014: Special Strategic and Global Partnership**
- **Anxiety over an expansionist China**

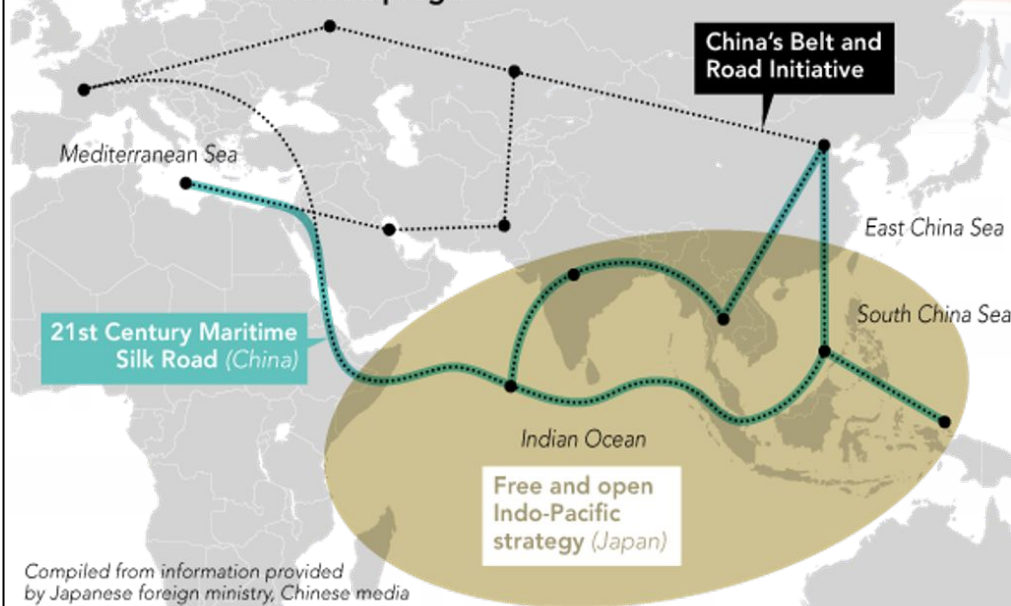


CONTEXT: Decoding the **India-Japan Maritime Pact**



Free and Open Indo-Pacific

Mapping Japan's Indo-Pacific investment strategy, China's Maritime Silk Road program



Rule of Law and Freedom of Navigation

Economic Prosperity

Peace and Stability

MAHASAGAR and SAGAR initiative



CONTEXT: Decoding the **India-Japan Maritime Pact**

⚙️ Beyond Handshakes

4 Pillars of the 2026 Maritime MoA

Reciprocal access to ship
repair and maintenance
facilities + **naval
shipbuilding**

**UNICORN & ATLA + mine
countermeasures**

**Maritime Domain
Awareness + Special
Operations Forces
TRAINING**

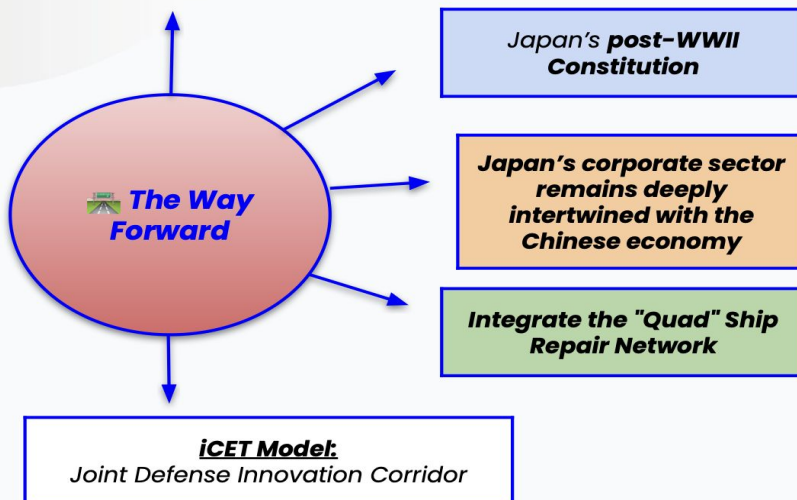
**Director-General/Joint
Secretary-level Working
Group**

**Report to 4th "2+2" Foreign
and Defence Ministerial
Dialogue**



What more is needed?

India's Island Infrastructure:
"Iron Curtain" across the Malacca Strai



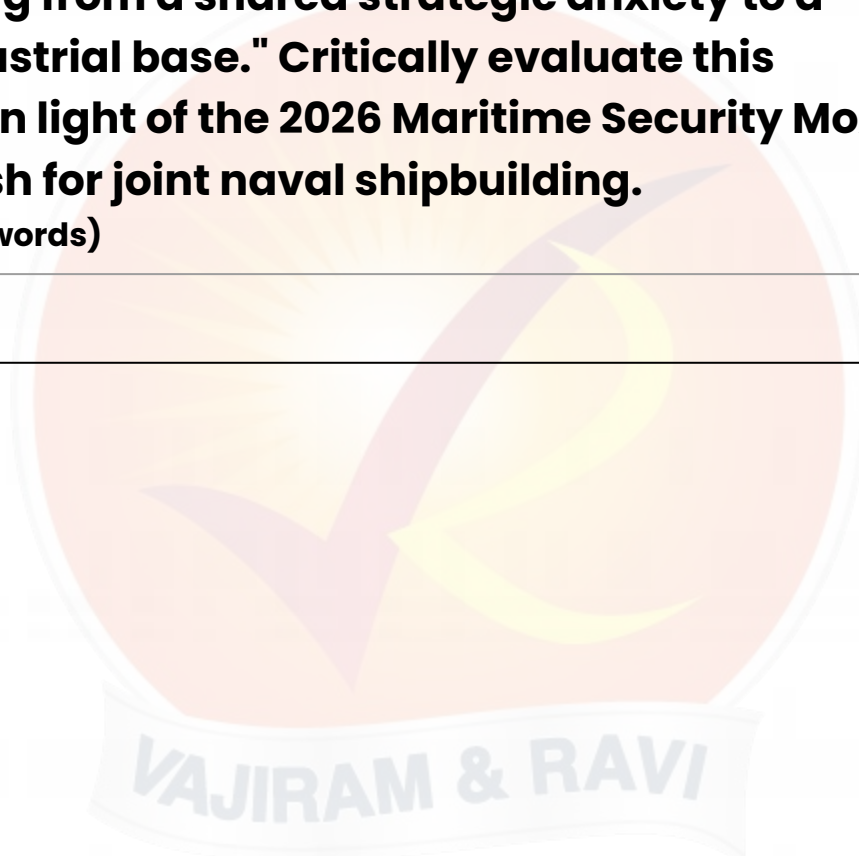
India – Japan Maritime Security Pact



CONTEXT: Decoding the [India-Japan Maritime Pact](#)

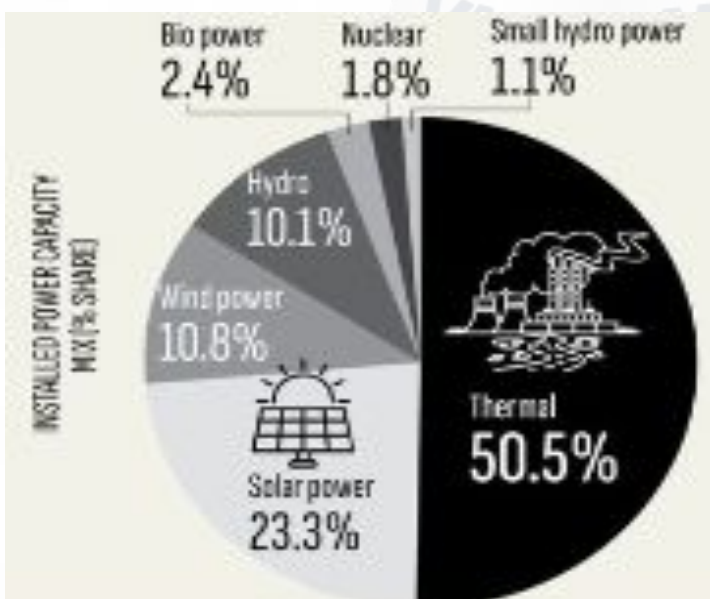
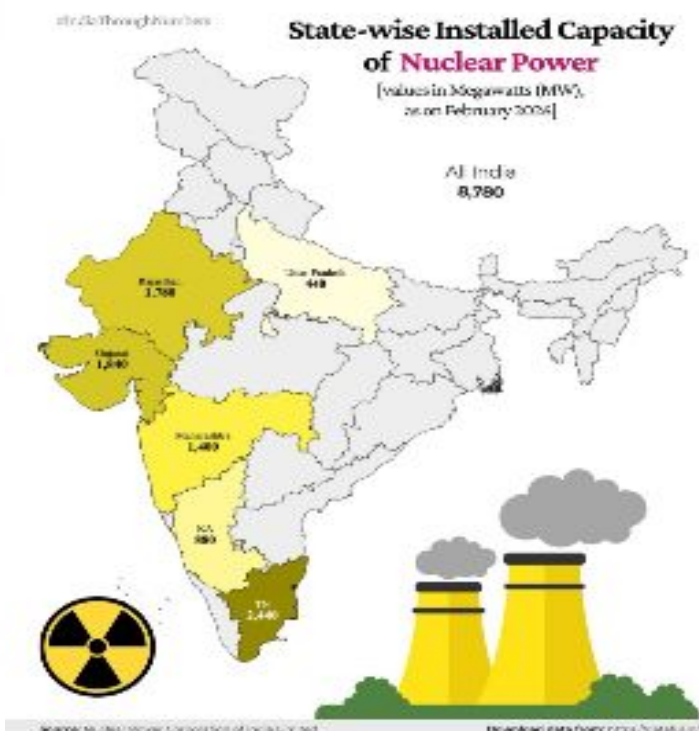
Mains Practise Question

"The India-Japan maritime partnership is transitioning from a shared strategic anxiety to a shared industrial base." Critically evaluate this statement in light of the 2026 Maritime Security MoA and the push for joint naval shipbuilding.
(15 Marks, 250 words)

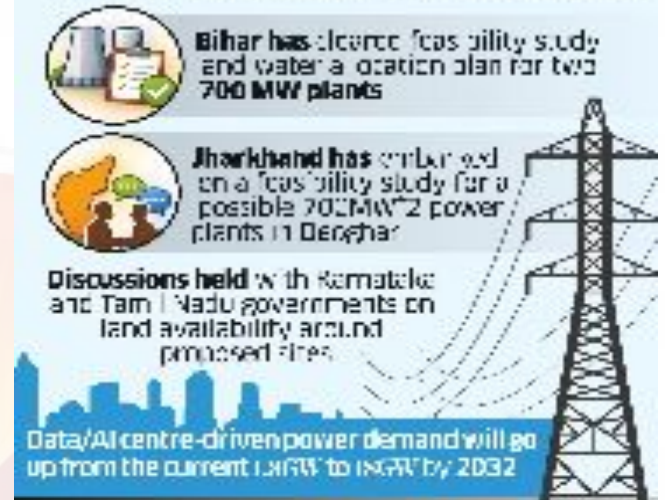


CONTEXT: New Draft Rules have been framed under the SHANTI Act.

A Brief History of India's Nuclear Rulebook



Progress in Some States



Atomic Energy Act (AEA), 1962

A Timeline of Major Nuclear Accidents Worldwide

Major nuclear accidents reported worldwide since 1952 by INES severity level (only levels 4-7)



Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act (CLNDA), 2010



CONTEXT: New Draft Rules have been framed under the SHANTI Act.

Key Nuclear Institutions

PRELIMS POINTERS:

Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd

- **PSU u/Department of Atomic Energy**

Atomic Energy Regulatory Board

- The **apex safety regulator**
- **Exec body** (not statutory)
- **Reports to Atomic Energy Commission** (DAE Secy)

Nuclear Energy Regulatory and Development Council

- **Proposed statutory body**



Key Features of the SHANTI Act

Private Sector

Statutory status to Atomic Energy Regulatory Board

Liability Framework
₹3,000 crore (large plants), ₹1,500 crore (medium), ₹100 crore (SMRs)

Nuclear Liability Fund

Removes supplier liability

*Plant operations, power generation, equipment manufacturing, Refining and enrichment of **uranium-235**, radiation exposure*

Regulation of Non-Power Applications

Licensing and Safety Oversight

Atomic Energy Redressal Advisory Council + Appellate Tribunal for Electricity

Nuclear Damage Claims Commission

Territorial Scope of Compensation



CONTEXT: New Draft Rules have been framed under the SHANTI Act.

The SHANTI Rulebook: 4 Pillars of Private Integration

"De-risk nuclear investments"

- **Single Composite Licence**
- **"In-Principle Approval" before safety license**
- **Reactor design must be certified and already operational in its "country of origin"**
- **Intellectual Property vesting rules**
- **Nuclear Liability Fund**

• SETTING UP GUARDRAILS

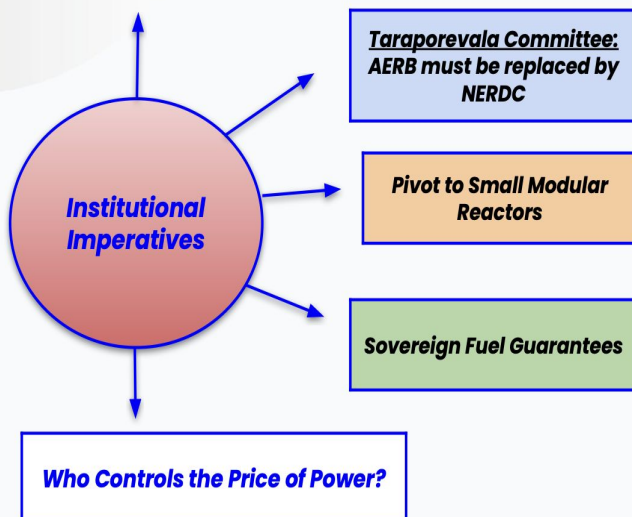
- Under SHANTI Act, operators of reactors above 3,600 MWe face a maximum liability of Rs 3,000 crore, while those between 1,500 MWe and 3,600 MWe face a cap of Rs 1,500 crore
- The limits fall to Rs 750 crore for reactors between 750 MWe and 1,500 MWe and Rs 300 crore for those between 150 MWe and 750 MWe
- For reactors up to 150 MWe, fuel-cycle facilities other than spent-fuel reprocessing plants, and transportation of nuclear material, the liability is capped at Rs 100 crore



If the damage exceeds ₹1,500 Crore, the Central Government steps in to cover the gap (up to **300 million SDRs**)

The Way Forward

NITI Aayog "PPP" Model:
"Front-end" + "back-end"



SMALL MODULAR REACTORS (SMR)



- Compact and simple
- Electric power up to 300 MWe
- They can produce electricity, high-temperature steam or hydrogen and provide useful heat to desalinate sea water
- Demineralising properties in the next few decades
- Modular production at a factory and transport to the site for assembly and operation

Main characteristics



Benefits

- Smaller
- Better fueling and maintenance
- Reduced production footprint
- Flexibility in choice of site
- Greater efficiency
- Possible hybridisation with other energy sources
- Diversity of applications

Over **70** different designs at various stages of development

Sources: [The Nuclear](#), [US DOE](#), [World Nuclear Association](#)



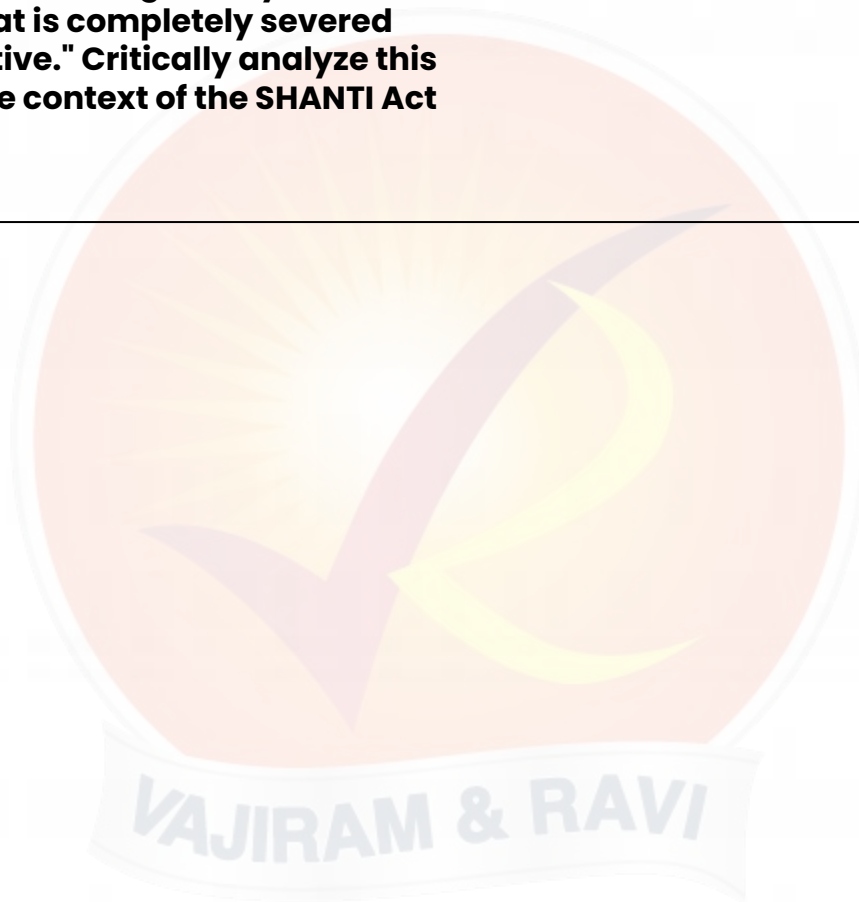
SHANTI Act draft rules



CONTEXT: New Draft Rules have been framed under the SHANTI Act.

Mains Practise Question

"The transition of India's nuclear sector from a state monopoly to a privatized ecosystem requires a regulatory architecture that is completely severed from the executive." Critically analyze this statement in the context of the SHANTI Act 2025.



Newspaper : The Hindu, **Page No :** 1

Newspaper : The Indian Express, **Page No :** 10

EoI seeking proposals to set up data centre project on Andaman and Nicobar Islands withdrawn



CRPF forms core group to review self-harm cases after a spate of suicides

- **Rank Vulnerability:** 80% among lower ranks
- **On-Duty vs. Leave:** 77% on duty

Key Drivers

- High-**stress**, conflict-prone areas
- **Prolonged deployment** + Long working hours
- Severe **work-life balance** issues
- Limited **leave** policies
- **Stagnation & Grievance Redressal**

Key Drivers

- **NHRC notices** to the MHA + CRPF Director General
- Creation of a High-Level Core Group
- **"Talking Circles"**
- **Ayushman CAPF**
- **Chaupal** System

Green AI/Data Centre Vertical

- **Seawater**-based Cooling
- **Waste-Heat** Recovery for Desalination
- **Submarine** Connectivity

The Carrying Capacity Conflict

- **Sundaland** Biodiversity Hotspot
- **Thermal** Pollution
- **Land-Use** Overlap
- **Demographic** Swamping
- Threat to **PVTGs**

2021: 57 cases

2022: 43 cases

2023: 57 cases

2024: 46 cases

2025: 59 cases



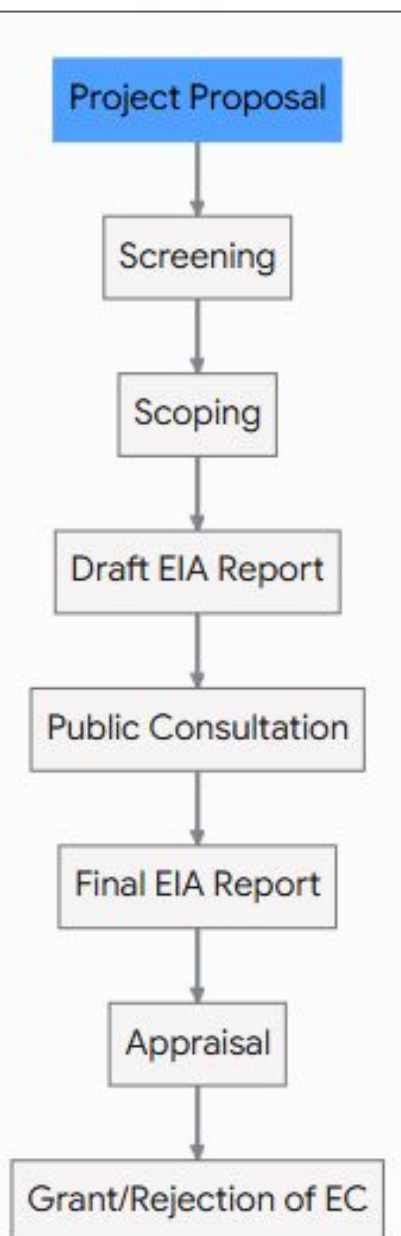
Newspaper : The Hindu, **Page No :** 10

The Vanashakti verdict is balanced and pragmatic

What happens to massive infrastructure and industrial projects **that start building without getting an Environmental Clearance** first?

Vanashakti vs Union of India **(July 2026)**

- **Sec 3 of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 = EIA, 2006**
- Over the years, many projects started without prior EC
 - **2017:** one-time statutory window (**CLOSED**)
 - **2021:** Office Memorandum (**OM**)
- **Supreme Court struck down** the 2021 regularisation route
 - **Administrative OM**
 - **Bureaucratic memos.**



SYLLABUS: Prelims: Core concepts

Newspaper: The Hindu, Page No: 1

The 1978 Bangalore Water Supply Case

E. EXPLAINED

The 'triple test'

The 1978 ruling in Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board v A Rajappa stipulated a "triple test" for identifying an industry. These constituted "systematic activity", "organised by cooperation between employer and employee", "for the production and/or distribution of goods or services calculated to satisfy human wants and wishes."

Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board v. A Rajappa (1978)

An establishment is an "industry" if it involves:

1. **Systematic** activity
2. **Organized by cooperation** between employer and employee
3. For the **production/distribution of goods or services** to satisfy human wants/wishes.

Triggered a "docket explosion"

Sovereign Functions

"only a government can perform"

Non-Sovereign

"that a private player could also do"

Fast forward to the 2026 nine-judge bench ruling

What next?

What the Supreme Court said about pending industrial disputes

- The 'triple test' of 1978 *Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board* case judgment will **continue** to be applied to pending industrial disputes
- The 'refined' triple test evolved in the opinion of the Chief Justice of India will operate prospectively
- The interpretation of 'industry' under the 2020 Code 'will not be burdened' by the 1978 verdict

All pending cases: 1978 Triple Test

New, future disputes: IRC, 2020

The Dissenting View



1978 'industry' definition void



SYLLABUS: Prelims: Core concepts

Newspaper : The Hindu, Page No : 1

The Way Forward

**2nd National
Commission on Labour
(2002)**

**Exhaustive list of what
constitutes a sovereign
function**

1. **Defense** and national security
2. **Foreign affairs** and international relations
3. **Coinage**, currency, and minting
4. **Legislation** and law-making
5. Justice administration and the judiciary
6. **Law and order** (internal security and policing)
7. **Collection of taxes and state revenue** management.

Public Welfare Workers
(like Anganwadi, ASHA, and mid-day meal staff).

**Creating a "Third
Category" of Workers**

**Mandatory
Notification of
Alternate
Mechanisms**

**Dedicated, fast-track
administrative tribunal
for these excluded
workers**



SYLLABUS: Prelims: Schemes for Vulnerable Sections

Newspaper : The Hindu; Page No : 16

National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem

Key Components of
NAMASTE Scheme



- Profiling of Sewer/Septic Tank Workers (SSWs)
- Occupational Safety Training and PPE Kits Distribution
- Support for safety devices to Emergency Response Sanitation Units (ERSUs)
- Health Insurance Coverage under Ayushman Bharat-PMJAY
- Livelihood Support and Enterprise Development
- Convergence of MoSJE and MoHUA Programs
- Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) Campaign
- MIS and Dedicated Website

Source: Press Information Bureau

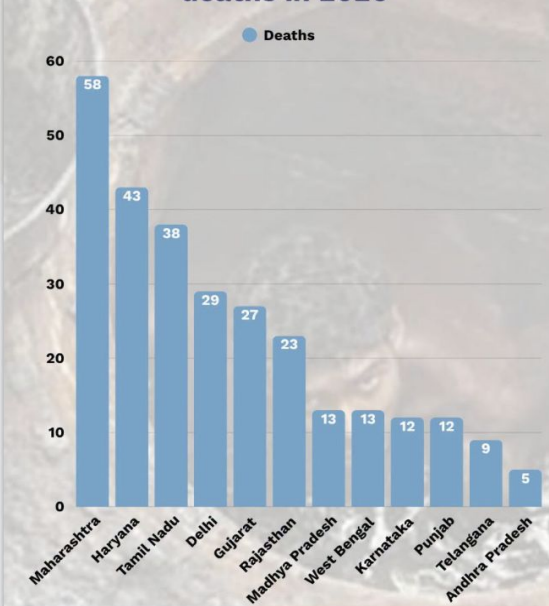
Core Prelims Facts

Self Employment Scheme for the Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers

- **Central Sector Scheme**
- **MoSJE + MoHUA**
- National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation
- **Safai Udyami Yojana** (50% capex to workers/ PSSOs wrt trucks, Robots, etc)
- **Statutory Context:** Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation (PEMSR) Act, 2013

Expanded scope

India records 332 manual scavenging deaths in 2026



Feature	Earlier Scope	New Expanded Scope (Proposed)
Geography	500 AMRUT (urban) cities/towns	Expanding to Rural India
Target Beneficiaries	Sewer and Septic tank Workers, Waste pickers	Expanding to include Drain cleaners, STP, and FSTP workers
Outlay	₹349.70 crore (2023-24 to 2025-26)	₹498.73 crore (up to 2030-31)



21st August, 2026

SYLLABUS: Prelims: NTCA and mapping aspects

Newspaper : The Indian Express; Page No : 6

About National Tiger Conservation Authority

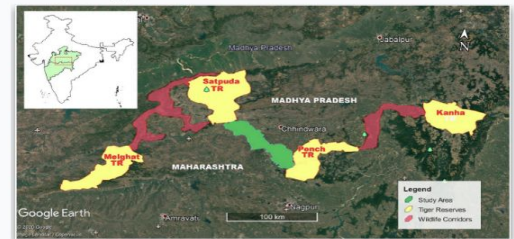
- Tiger Task Force, Dec 2005
- **TRs** administered by **field directors** mandated by NTCA
- No alteration in the boundaries of TRs w/o **NTCA** recommendation + **NBW** approval

NTCA members

- Chairmanship u/ Minister MoEFCC
- 8 Experts
- 3 MPs
- Member Secretary:
Inspector-General of Forests,
in charge of project Tiger

What Are Tiger Corridors?

Tiger corridors are vital **wildlife pathways** that connect tiger habitats, enabling animal **movement, gene flow, and long term survival**. Under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, development projects requiring land in or around tiger reserves or corridors require statutory clearance from the standing committee of the **National Board for Wildlife (SC-NBWL)**.



Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972

Section 38-O (1)(g): TRs + "areas linking one protected area/tiger reserve with another " not diverted for ecologically unsustainable uses

- public interest + NBWL

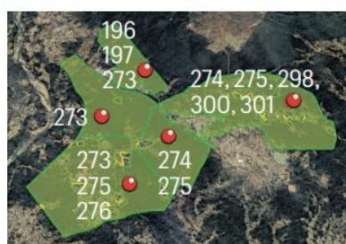
Section 38-V: Tiger Conservation Plan

Least Cost Path Model

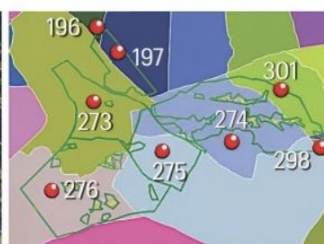
The Bombay High Court's Nagpur Bench has directed a petitioner to approach the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), observing that the authority is best placed to determine whether the area for a mining project in Gadchiroli is connected to the Tadoba-Indravati tiger corridor and therefore requires wildlife clearance.

The court was hearing the matter related to the 937-hectare mining project in Maharashtra's Gadchiroli district and its potential impact on tiger movement corridors and wildlife habitat. According to the court

Project site overlaps Tadoba-Indravati tiger corridor

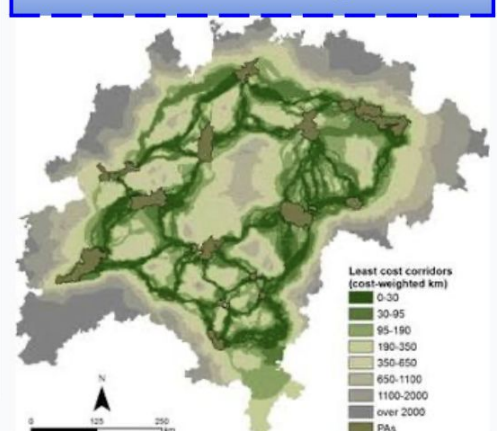


- **Proposed project site**
- **Forest compartments**
196, 197, 273, 274, 275, 276, 298, 300 and 301 cited as part of the project



- **Forest compartments**
196, 197, 273, 274, 275, 276, 298 and 301 marked on Tadoba-Indravati corridor in the NTCA-approved TCP

Issue: LCP was manipulated



Activists have urged the NTCA to reconsider the Least Cost Path model used by state authorities to map the corridor

Variables:

High costs: steep terrain, highways, human settlements, and deforested areas
Low costs: dense forest cover, water streams, and prey density

SYLLABUS: Prelims: NTCA and mapping aspects

Newspaper : The Indian Express; Page No : 6

Next news



The Odisha government has constituted a **high-level inquiry committee** to examine the **relocation of villages** from the Satkosia Tiger Reserve (STR) following **allegations** by residents that they were forcibly evicted from their ancestral villages despite having coexisted harmoniously with wildlife for decades.

Zero tiger population
The STR has a troubled history of tiger conservation. The State's 2007 census recorded 12 tigers but by 2018-19, just one remained. The 2022 tiger census recorded none, leaving the reasons behind the population's disappearance unresolved.

Satkosia Tiger Reserve

Location	Spread across four districts in Odisha (Angul, Boudh, Cuttack, Nayagarh).
Biogeographic Junction	It is the meeting point of the Deccan Peninsula and the Eastern Ghats .
River System	The Mahanadi River passes through a 22 km long gorge here (Satkosia Gorge).
Key Fauna	Both Mugger Crocodiles and critically endangered Gharials inhabit the gorge. It is also an elephant reserve.
Tiger Status	Satkosia was the site of India's first interstate tiger translocation project (bringing tigers from Kanha in MP). The NTCA suspended the project in 2019 after the translocated tigers either died or came into severe conflict with humans.

Rules of Village Relocation

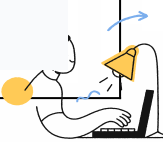
WPA, 1972 + FRA, 2006

- **State** agencies, consulting with independent ecological and social **scientists**
- **Relocation cannot be forced**
- **"Coexistence** between humans and tigers is impossible."
- **Prior Rights Settlement** under FRA
- **Gram Sabha Consent**

Basic terms

Core/Critical Tiger Habitat
u/WPA, 1972: applies **only to tiger reserves**.

Critical Wildlife Habitat
u/FRA, 2006: applies to **National Parks and Sanctuaries** for the conservation of **other wildlife species**



Wildlife news update: NTCA and Satkosia TR



SYLLABUS: Prelims: NTCA and mapping aspects

Newspaper : The Indian Express; Page No : 6

UPSC Prelims 2018 Question:

Consider the following statements:

1. The definition of "Critical Wildlife Habitat" is incorporated in the Forest Rights Act, 2006.
2. For the first time in India, Baigas have been given Habitat Rights.
3. Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change officially decides and declares Habitat Rights for Primitive and Vulnerable Tribal Groups in any part of India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

1. 1 and 2 only
2. 2 and 3 only
3. 3 only
4. 1, 2 and 3

PM PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TRIBAL GROUPS (PM PVTG) MISSION

A Visionary Leap for
Tribal Well-being



Basic facilities like roads, telecommunication, electricity & housing to scattered, inaccessible tribes



Budget of ₹24,000 crore allocated for the mission



Targeting 75 PVTGs in 18 States & UTs living in 22,544 villages



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What is the status of core sectors?



SYLLABUS: Prelims: Core Sectors

Newspaper : The Hindu; Page No : 1

The Updated Index of Core Industries

INDEX OF CORE INDUSTRIES (ICI)
BASE YEAR 2022-23

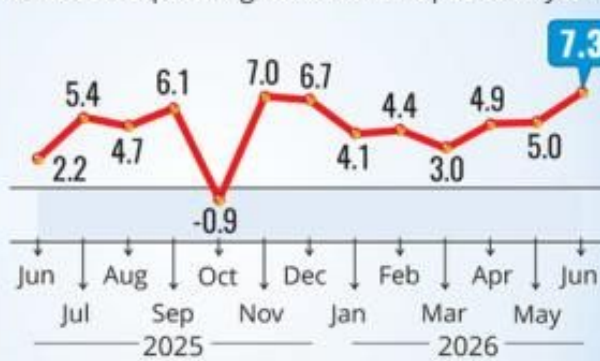
Sector	Weight (%)
1. Coal	5.596
2. Natural Gas	3.841
3. Crude Oil	7.430
4. Refinery Products	22.572
5. Fertilizers	2.731
6. Steel	17.584
7. Cement	4.410
8. Electricity	30.932
9. Iron Ore	4.905
Overall Index	100.000

*Office of Economic Adviser,
DPIIT, MoC&I*

IoECI ~ 40.27% of IIP

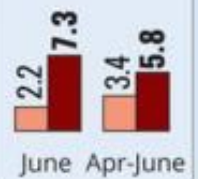
India's Industrial Growth

Per cent change in Index of Industrial Production over corresponding month of the previous year

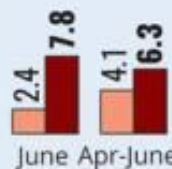


Base:
2022-23=100

Overall
(Weight: 100%)



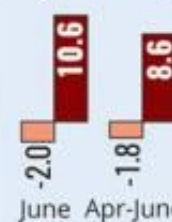
Manufacturing
(Weight: 76.062%)



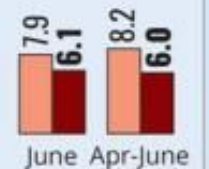
Mining & Quarrying
(Weight: 11.053%)



Electricity & Gas Supply
(Weight: 10.865%)



Water Supply, Sewerage & Waste Management
(Weight: 2.020%)



2025-26 2026-27

Figures for June 2026 are Quick Estimates

KBK Infographics



What is the status of core sectors?



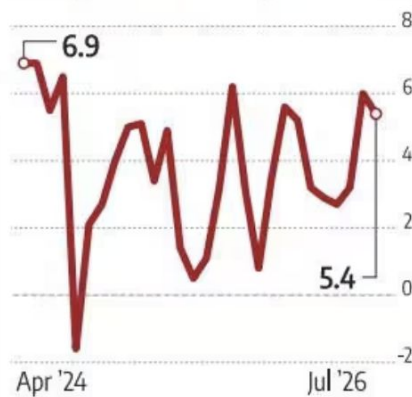
SYLLABUS: Prelims: Core Sectors

Newspaper : The Hindu; Page No : 1

July 2026 Data: A Breakdown

Weak expansion

Overall core sector growth with base year of 2022-23 (Y-o-Y in %)



Note: *July 2026 data is provisional
Source: Ministry of Commerce and Industry

Crude oil drags

Sectoral trends in July

Sector	Y-o-Y growth rate (%)
Iron ore	29.5
Cement	13.1
Electricity	9.0
Coal	7.6
Steel	2.9
Refinery products	2.7
Natural gas	-3.7
Crude oil	-5.3
Fertilisers	-8.0

Geopolitical Supply Choke

Direct victims: **fertilisers, iron ore, and steel sectors**

Natural gas and crude oil
Slowdown

UPSC PYQ (P) 2015

In the 'Index of Eight Core Industries', which one of the following is given the highest weight?

- (a) Coal production
- (b) Electricity generation
- (c) Fertilizer production
- (d) Steel production

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Q1. With reference to the 'Triple Test' laid down by the Supreme Court in *Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board v. A. Rajappa (1978)* regarding industrial disputes resolution, consider the following statements:

1. The activity must involve systematic and organised activity.
2. It must involve cooperation between employers and employees.
3. The activity must be directed towards the production or distribution of goods or services to satisfy human wants and wishes.
4. The test applies only to activities undertaken by private-sector enterprises.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: a

Q2. With reference to the NAMASTE Scheme, consider the following statements:

1. It aims at the rehabilitation of manual scavengers.
2. It promotes mechanised sanitation and worker safety.

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

Q3. With reference to Tiger Reserves in India, consider the following statements:

1. The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) is responsible for approving changes in the boundaries of Tiger Reserves.
2. Tiger corridors facilitate the movement of tigers between protected areas.

3. Tiger Reserves are protected under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

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

- a. Only One
- b. Only Two
- c. All three
- d. None

Answer: c

Q4. With reference to the Index of Core Industries (ICI), consider the following statements:

1. The ICI has a base year of 2022–23.
2. Electricity has the highest weight in the ICI, followed by refinery products.
3. The ICI is associated with the Office of the Economic Adviser under DPIIT.

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

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

Answer: c

Q5. With reference to India's nuclear institutions, consider the following statements:

1. The Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) is the apex safety regulator for atomic energy activities.
2. The AERB is a statutory body.
3. The Nuclear Energy Regulatory and Development Council is a proposed statutory body.

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

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

Answer: b





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

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