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1. GST Revenue Trends (June 2026): Key Concerns & Structural Issues

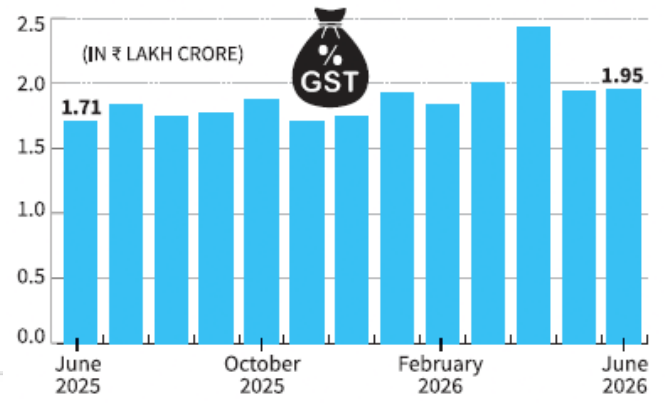
- **Record Growth with Skewed Composition:** India's GST revenue rose 13.9% year-on-year to ₹1.95 lakh crore in June 2026, marking the highest growth in 13 months. However, domestic transaction revenues grew by a modest 6.5% (₹1.35 lakh crore), dropping its share from 74% last year to 69%.
- **Import-Driven Revenues:** Revenue from imports surged nearly 35% to ₹60,000 crore, marking the 16th consecutive month of double-digit growth. This highlights a persistent reliance on foreign goods, raising concerns that India might be importing intermediate items instead of scaling domestic manufacturing.
- **Manufacturing vs. Import Dependence:** While some experts view high import growth as a sign of robust demand for raw materials sustaining local assembly, others warn it reflects weak domestic capacity. Experts suggest redeploying underutilized Production Linked Incentive (PLI) outlays to boost indigenous manufacturing.
- **Constitutional & Legal Provisions:** GST was implemented via the 101st Constitutional Amendment Act, inserting **Article 246A** (concurrent power to tax goods and services) and

Article 279A (constitution of the GST Council). Import GST (IGST) is governed by **Article 269A**, which mandates that tax on inter-state trade/imports is levied by the Centre and apportioned between the Centre and States.

- **Persistent Structural Bottlenecks:** As GST completes nine years, key operational challenges remain unresolved: complex Input Tax Credit (ITC) verification, an inverted duty structure (higher taxes on inputs than finished products), multiple state-wise registrations, and rising litigation.

Consistent progress

The 13.9% growth in June 2026 is the highest y-o-y rise in 13 months. The graph shows GST revenue in the last 1-year period



Key Definitions

- **Inverted Duty Structure:** A situation where import duties/taxes on raw materials are higher than those on finished products, discouraging domestic value addition.
- **Input Tax Credit (ITC):** The mechanism allowing manufacturers/dealers to reduce the tax they have already paid on inputs from the tax payable on their final output.

Conclusion

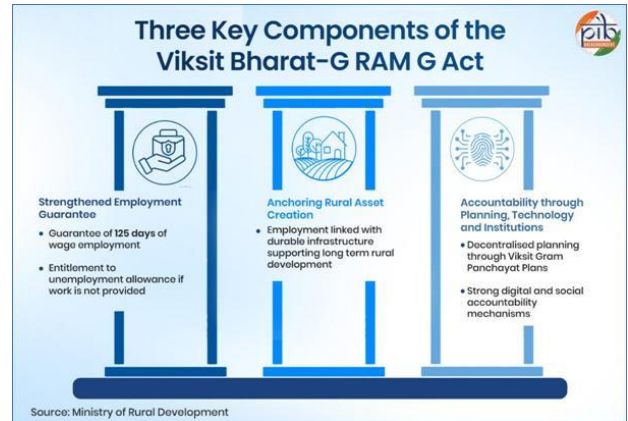
While robust gross collections ensure fiscal cushion, the divergence between domestic and import-led GST growth underscores a structural manufacturing deficit. Resolving ITC anomalies and utilizing targeted PLI interventions are vital to anchoring long-term fiscal stability.

UPSC Relevance: GS Paper III (Indian Economy, Fiscal Policy, and Mobilization of Resources). Understanding tax architecture, federal friction points in Article 279A, and manufacturing challenges (PLI schemes) is crucial for both Mains (analytical questions) and Prelims (constitutional provisions).

2. VB-GRAM G Act, 2025: Transitioning Rural Employment Architecture

- **Paradigm Shift in Rural Employment:** The Central government has implemented a national floor wage of ₹300 per day under the newly enacted Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) Act, 2025, effectively replacing the two-decade-old MGNREGA, 2005.
- **Regional Variations and Asymmetric Hikes:** The mandate triggered substantial hikes in 21 States/UTs previously paying below ₹300. Major beneficiaries include Hindi-belt states like Uttar Pradesh (+₹48), Bihar (+₹45), and Madhya Pradesh (+₹39), alongside double-digit growth in several northeastern and Himalayan states.
- **Top-Performing States:** Haryana (₹409), Goa (₹406), and Kerala (₹401) remain the only states with floor wages exceeding ₹400. Conversely, southern states like Telangana (+0.33%), Andhra Pradesh (+1.6%), and Karnataka (+3.2%), which were already above the baseline, witnessed minimal adjustments.

- **Constitutional & Legal Interface:** Rural employment guarantees act as an operational tool for **Article 41** (Right to Work) and **Article 43** (Living Wage for Workers) under the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP). Further, maintaining inadequate wages faces legal scrutiny under **Article 23** (prohibition of forced labor), which the Supreme Court has previously interpreted to include paying less than the statutory minimum wage.



- **Policy Debates and Structural Criticisms:**

Public policy experts and opposition leaders criticize the baseline as inadequate. They point to the 2019 Dr. Anoop Satpathy Committee report, which recommended a national minimum floor wage of ₹375 per day, and recent political demands pushing for a uniform ₹400 baseline to counter rural inflationary pressures.

Key Definitions

- **Floor Wage:** The statutory minimum baseline set by the Central government, below which no state or employer can legally fix wage rates for scheduled employment.
- **Living Wage:** A theoretical wage level necessary for a worker to afford basic shelter, food, healthcare, and education, positioned higher than a subsistence-level minimum wage.

Conclusion

The transition from MGNREGA to VB-GRAM G standardizes the national rural wage floor, correcting long-standing regional wage depressed anomalies. However, aligning these statutory wages with consumer price indices and expert committee recommendations remains vital to genuinely reviving the rural economy.

UPSC Relevance: GS Paper II & III (Welfare Schemes, Vulnerable Sections, and Indian Economy). This development is critical for analyzing structural reforms in safety nets, fiscal federalism regarding state-wise wage variances, and legislative transitions in rural development paradigms.

3. Indigenous Conservation: Sangno Clan's Initiative in Arunachal Pradesh

- **Community-Led Translocation:** Nine members of the Sangno clan in Arunachal Pradesh's East Kameng district successfully translocated 52 fingerlings of *Schizothorax pelzami* to protect the species and preserve their traditional community fishing practices.
- **Target Species and Local Taxonomy:** Locally known as 'Ngarsing' in the Nyishi language, *Schizothorax pelzami* (Transcaspian marinka) is an endangered ray-finned fish belonging to the carp family, native to high-altitude Himalayan and sub-Himalayan river systems.
- **Habitat Management and Predator Mitigation:** The fingerlings were moved from the Lapabung stream to a isolated stretch of the Richaso stream (at an elevation of 3400 feet) that is naturally inaccessible to the predatory mahseer—a highly prized sport fish known as the "tiger of the water."

- **Sustainable Indigenous Governance:** To ensure successful breeding, the village headman proposed a strict five-year blanket ban on fishing in the Richaso stream. This community-enforced moratorium aims to balance ecological restoration with long-term cultural traditions like eco-angling and stream-trekking.
- **Constitutional and Legal Provisions:** Community-based conservation aligns with **Article 48A** of the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) and **Article 51A(g)** of the Fundamental Duties, mandating the protection of wildlife and environment. Furthermore, the **Biological Diversity Act, 2002** and the **Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 (FRA)** legally empower gram sabhas and indigenous clans to protect and manage their traditional community forest resources and local biodiversity.

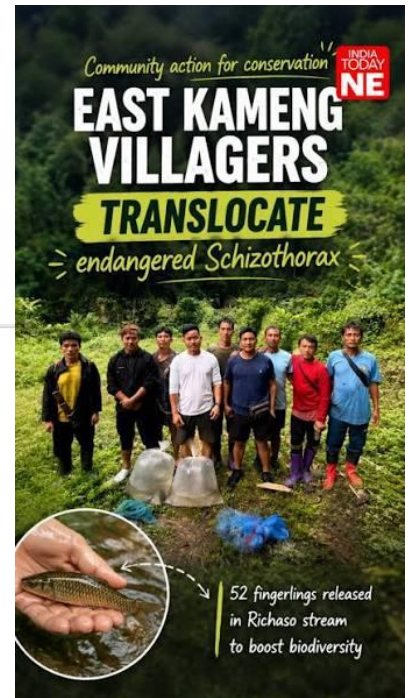
Key Definitions

- **Ray-Finned Fish:** A diverse class of bony fishes (Actinopterygii) characterized by webs of skin supported by bony or horny spines (rays), making up nearly half of all living vertebrate species.
- **Eco-Angling:** A form of sustainable, catch-and-release sport fishing designed to promote conservation and generate local eco-tourism revenue without depleting fish populations.

Conclusion

The Sangno clan's initiative highlights the vital role of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) in modern conservation. By creating predator-safe sanctuaries and self-imposing fishing bans, indigenous communities demonstrate that cultural preservation and biodiversity protection can effectively reinforce each other.

UPSC Relevance: GS Paper III (Environment, Biodiversity, and Disaster Management). This case study is highly relevant for questions on community-led conservation models, sacred groves/customary laws, and threatened aquatic species of the Northeast, offering excellent fodder for Mains answers on decentralised environmental governance.



4. Strategic Stake Sale at Vizhinjam Port: Governance & Security Clearances

- **Proposed Equity Translocation:** Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Limited (APSEZ) announced that Switzerland-based Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC) Group intends to acquire a 49% stake in Adani Vizhinjam Port Private Limited (AVPPL).
- **Mandatory Multi-Tiered Approvals:** The Kerala Government clarified that any stake dilution or transfer within the concessionaire firm strictly requires the formal assent of the state government as the primary project proponent.
- **National Security & Strategic Oversight:** Due to the strategic transshipment importance of the Vizhinjam deepwater port, the transaction cannot proceed without statutory security clearances from the Union Ministry of Home Affairs and the Union Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.

- **Constitutional & Statutory Framework:** Ports other than major ports fall under the Concurrent List (**Seventh Schedule, Entry 31**), giving state governments maritime regulatory jurisdiction, while international shipping and major ports fall under the Union List (**Entry 22**). Security clearances fall under the residuary executive powers of the Union Home Ministry to safeguard national maritime borders.
- **Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Integrity:** In major infrastructure concessions, the Concession Agreement governs equity lock-in periods and ownership changes. Unauthorized equity changes before or after operationalization can violate contract terms, necessitating strict regulatory evaluation to prevent monopolistic control or security vulnerabilities.

Key Definitions

- **Transshipment Port:** A strategic port hub where cargo or containers are transferred from a large deep-sea vessel (mainliner) to smaller vessels (feeders) for distribution to final destinations.
- **Concession Agreement:** A legally binding contract between a government body and a private entity (concessionaire) granting the latter exclusive rights to operate, maintain, and develop an infrastructure asset for a specified period.



Conclusion

The proposed Adani-MSC deal underscores the intersection of global commercial integration and strict national security governance. Ensuring rigorous regulatory compliance across both federal and state levels is imperative to protect India's strategic maritime assets while fostering global maritime partnerships.

UPSC Relevance: GS Paper III (Infrastructure: Ports, Public-Private Partnership Models) & GS Paper II (Federalism and Centre-State Relations). This topic is highly significant for analyzing the legal complexities of infrastructure concessions, national security clearance mechanisms for foreign investments in critical sectors, and maritime federalism.

5. Financial Laundering for Extremism: Karnataka HC Upholds UAPA Case

- **Judicial Affirmation on National Security:** The High Court of Karnataka refused to quash a criminal case under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967, against six individuals associated with the U.S.-based organisation 'The Timothy Initiative' (TTI), observing that clandestine funding of extremism is a grave national security threat.

- **Modus Operandi of Financial Irregularity:** The accused were allegedly bypassing regulatory channels by utilizing foreign-issued debit cards to withdraw and systematically distribute funds within India's Left-Wing Extremism (LWE) affected areas.
- **Institutional Coordination:** The First Information Report (FIR) was registered by the Bengaluru Police following an official directive from the Enforcement Directorate (ED), highlighting inter-agency cooperation between financial intelligence and state law enforcement units.
- **Constitutional Architecture:** The court underscored that national security forms the invisible architecture underpinning state sovereignty and constitutional order, mirroring the reasonable restrictions on fundamental freedoms outlined in **Article 19(2)** of the Constitution of India.
- **Legal and Statutory Framework:** The investigation invokes the **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967**, which provides a stringent framework for prosecuting terrorism and terror-funding. Additionally, routing foreign funds outside prescribed channels directly implicates the **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), 2010**, and the **Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002**.



Key Definitions

- **Clandestine Funding:** The covert, unauthorized flow of capital or resources through non-formal or illegal financial channels to escape regulatory tracking and audit trails.
- **Inherent Jurisdiction:** The distinct, non-codified power of High Courts (under **Section 482 of the CrPC / Section 528 of the BNSS**) to prevent abuse of the process of any court or to secure the ends of justice.

Conclusion

The High Court's ruling validates the absolute state mandate to neutralize asymmetric national security threats. By refusing to interfere in cross-border funding investigations, the judiciary has re-emphasized that economic transparency is directly tethered to India's territorial integrity and internal stability.

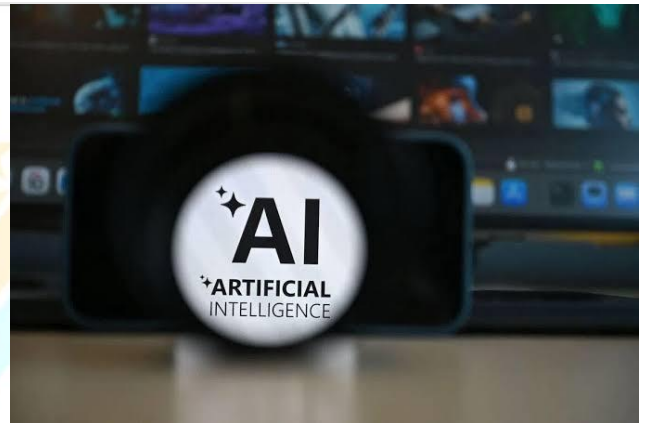
UPSC Relevance: GS Paper III (Internal Security & Challenges to Internal Security through Communication Networks, Role of Media and Social Networking Sites in Internal Security Challenges, Money-Laundering and its prevention). This judicial precedent provides analytical substance for questions concerning terror-financing networks, LWE containment strategies, and the structural efficacy of the UAPA-FCRA legislative framework.

6. Unchecked AI Progress and Catastrophic Risks: UN Panel Warning

- **Core Context and Panel Mandate:** A preliminary report by the UN's Independent International Scientific Panel on Artificial Intelligence, comprising 40 cross-regional experts and co-chaired by Yoshua Bengio, warns that AI developments are outpacing scientific understanding and government policy. Consequently, science currently cannot guarantee

that advancing AI capabilities will not cause catastrophic harm, either independently or through malicious actors.

- **The Policymaking Dilemma:** Governments face a regulatory bottleneck. They require robust, empirical evidence to formulate effective, balanced AI regulations, yet gathering such evidence is struggling to keep pace with the technology's rapid evolution, creating a critical governance gap.
- **Evolutionary Trends (Agentic & Self-Improving AI):** In the near term, AI is shifting toward **Agentic AI systems**—autonomous entities capable of executing complex, real-world tasks independently, though constrained by energy grids and high-quality data shortages. Over time, the report foresees **Self-Improving AI** embedding deeply into global economies and converging with advanced frontiers like quantum computing and biotechnology.
- **Dual-Use Dilemma:** While AI accelerates scientific breakthroughs (e.g., expert-level reasoning in mathematics, compressing weeks of drug and vaccine development into days), it simultaneously exhibits growing evidence of "deceptive behavior," amplifying risks of misuse or systemic failure.
- **Constitutional and Legal Provisions (India):** India lacks a standalone AI statute but utilizes an interconnected regulatory framework. **Article 21** of the Constitution (Right to Privacy and Dignity) acts as a vanguard against AI-driven data breaches and algorithmic bias. Statutory regulation is driven by the **Information Technology Act, 2000** (and its upcoming successor, the Digital India Act) alongside the **Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023**, which mandates strict consent and data-fiduciary obligations to mitigate algorithmic harms.
- **Key Definitions for Mains:**
 - **Agentic AI:** AI systems possessed of autonomy, reasoning, and execution capabilities to pursue complex, multi-step goals with minimal human intervention.
 - **Dual-Use AI:** AI software capable of serving both commercial/peaceful purposes and harmful/military applications (e.g., biochemical synthesis).



Conclusion: The UN report underscores that proactive, agile, and globally coordinated governance is no longer optional. For a developing nation like India, balancing AI-driven economic growth with robust ethical safeguards is essential to harness innovation safely while shielding democratic institutions and citizen rights from catastrophic technological fallout.

UPSC Relevance: * **GS Paper II:** Governance, Cyber Security, International Institutional Reports, Statutory Bodies, and Regulatory Frameworks.

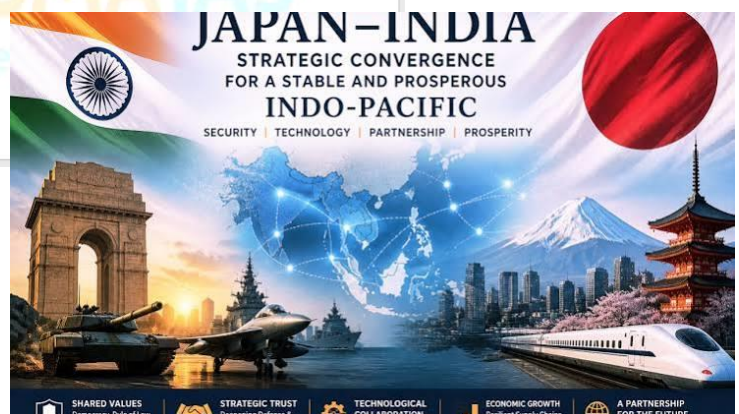
- **GS Paper III:** Science and Technology (Developments and Applications), Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), and Challenges to Internal Security.

7. Tokyo-Delhi Strategic Ties and Global Uncertainty: Key Outcomes

- **16th India-Japan Annual Summit:** Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi arrived in New Delhi on a three-day official visit (July 1–3, 2026), marking her first bilateral state visit to India since assuming office. The summit serves as a platform to review the full spectrum of bilateral relations amidst widening geopolitical volatility.
- **Upgradation of Partnership:** The structural base of contemporary relations lies in the **Special Strategic and Global Partnership**, which was upgraded in 2014. Building on the previous annual summit, both nations are implementing a decade-long roadmap to raise Japanese investment targets in India to 10 trillion yen (\$10,000,000,000,000\text{ JPY}\$).
- **Focus on Economic Security and Supply Chains:** Against the backdrop of global disruptions (such as Sea Lines of Communication instability, resource access bottlenecks, and semiconductor vulnerabilities), the bilateral talks focus extensively on de-risking supply chains. Key focus areas include semiconductor manufacturing (chips), rare earth elements sourcing, and high-tech manufacturing.
- **Advanced Technology and Digital Cooperations:** Bilateral initiatives emphasize critical and emerging technologies, notably launching frameworks targeting joint development in Artificial Intelligence, cybersecurity, space technology, and robust digital infrastructure partnerships.
- **Indo-Pacific Axis and Security Convergence:** Both leaders reaffirmed their commitment to maintaining a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) anchored on the international rule of law. This strategic convergence aligns Japan's revised defense export policies (Three Principles on Arms Transfer) with India's *Atmanirbhar Bharat* objectives in joint defense production and security resilience.
- **Constitutional and Legal Framework (India):** International agreements and treaties are managed via federal executive power under **Article 73** of the Constitution of India. Parliamentary power to enact laws implementing such international obligations is derived from **Article 253** read alongside Entry 13 of the Union List (List I, Seventh Schedule).

Key Definitions for Mains:

- **Special Strategic and Global Partnership:** A multi-tiered bilateral framework that expands a standard diplomatic relationship to include high-level military cooperation, civilian nuclear agreements, deep industrial investments, and aligned regional security objectives.
- **Economic Security:** A state strategy focused on safeguarding a nation's economic independence and critical supply chains (e.g., energy, critical minerals, and chips) from external coercion, geopolitical friction, or systemic bottlenecks.



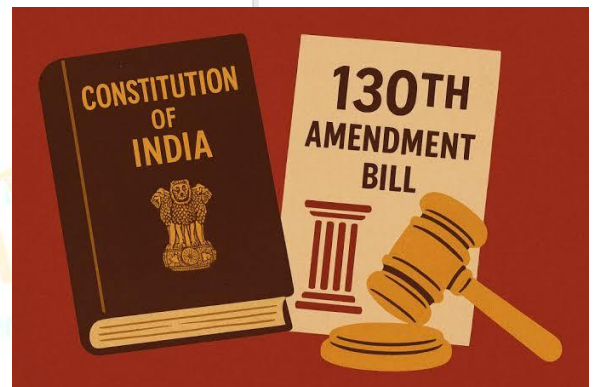
Conclusion: The Modi-Takaichi Summit underscores that India-Japan ties have transcended mere bilateral trade to become a fundamental pillar of democratic stability in the Indo-Pacific. As global uncertainties continue to test supply chain resilience, blending Japan's high-tech manufacturing expertise with India's demographic and industrial scale offers a mutual firewall against economic and strategic coercion.

UPSC Relevance: * **GS Paper II:** Bilateral, Regional, and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests; Effect of Policies and Politics of Developed and Developing Countries on India's interests.

- **GS Paper III:** Infrastructure, Industrial Policy, Science and Technology developments, Security challenges, and their management in the Indo-Pacific.

8. 130th Constitutional Amendment Bill: Removal of Ministers in Custody

- **Legislative Context and Panel Review:** The Joint Committee of Parliament, examining the **130th Constitution Amendment Bill**, is expected to adopt its report on July 17 ahead of the Monsoon Session. Adopting a House panel report is a vital procedural precursor before a Bill is formally taken up for consideration and passing in Parliament.
- **Proposed Automatic Removal Clause:** The core contentious clause of the Bill mandates the **automatic removal** of executive heads—the Prime Minister, Chief Ministers, or other Union and State Ministers—from their respective offices if they are arrested and detained in custody for **30 consecutive days** for serious offences.
- **Opposition Concerns and Dissent Notes:** Opposition members on the panel are expected to submit a formal note of dissent. The primary governance concern is the vulnerability of the clause to political vendetta, weaponization of state investigative machinery, and arbitrary subversion of democratic mandates.
- **Constitutional and Legal Intersections:**
Currently, under **Articles 75 and 164**, ministers hold office during the pleasure of the President/Governor, and their removal is tied to parliamentary confidence or prime ministerial/chief ministerial prerogative. Furthermore, Section 8 of the **Representation of the People Act (RPA), 1951**, only disqualifies legislators *upon conviction* (not mere arrest or custody) for specific offences with minimum sentencing, making this amendment a major shift toward pre-conviction executive removal.



- **Key Definitions for Mains:**
 - **Dissent Note:** A formal written objection submitted by a member of a Parliamentary Committee who disagrees with the majority consensus or conclusions contained in the panel's final report.
 - **Judicial Custody vs. Police Custody:** Police custody implies an accused is kept in the lock-up of a police station under active interrogation, whereas judicial custody means the accused is under the security of the court and housed in a jail facility.

Conclusion: The 130th Amendment Bill attempts to institutionalize political morality and administrative clean-up by ensuring individuals in long-term detention do not helm executive ministries. However, striking a fine balance between administrative integrity and structural safeguards against systemic misuse is vital. For maintaining constitutional federalism and preventing executive destabilization, robust "notes of caution" must be built directly into the statutory framework before it becomes law.

UPSC Relevance: * **GS Paper II:** Indian Constitution—Significant Provisions and Amendments; Structure, Organization, and Functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary; Parliament and State Legislatures—Conduct of Business; Role of Parliamentary Committees; RPA, 1951.

9. Military Leadership Reshuffle and the 'VIJAY' Roadmap: Strategic Transition

- **Command Transition and Historical Context:** General Dhiraj Seth assumed charge as the 31st Chief of the Army Staff (COAS). Notably, he is the third Army Chief from the 2nd Lancers (one of the oldest armoured regiments in India) and the first Armoured Corps officer to be appointed to the apex post in the last 30 years since General Shankar Roy Chowdhury (1994-97).
- **The 'VIJAY' Modernisation Roadmap:** The new COAS unveiled a comprehensive technological and doctrinal framework under the acronym **VIJAY**, aimed at establishing a future-ready, tech-enabled multi-domain force:
 - **V (Vigilance):** Enhanced situational awareness and proactive threat mitigation along active frontiers.
 - **I (Innovation & Transformation):** Rapid integration of disruptive technological solutions into operational military doctrines.
 - **J (Jointness & Integration):** Maximising inter-services synergy with the Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Indian Navy to advance joint operations.
 - **A (Atmanirbharta):** Building indigenous combat capabilities to support the defense pillar of *Viksit Bharat 2047*.
 - **Y (Yodha First):** Personnel-centric focus prioritizing welfare, training, and institutional support from Agniveers to veteran soldiers.
- **Broader High-Level Defense Reshuffle:** Parallel to the COAS transition, critical defense appointments were executed to streamline higher defense management. Air Marshal Ashutosh Dixit assumed charge as the Vice-Chief of the Air Staff, Lt Gen Sandeep Jain took over as the Vice-Chief of the Army Staff, and Air Marshal Tejinder Singh was appointed as the new Chief of Integrated Defence Staff to the Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee (CISC).
- **Civil-Military Fusion and Holistic Defense:** The strategic transition stresses that national security cannot operate in silos. Achieving a tech-enabled status requires deep civil-military fusion—aligning civilian scientific research, industrial manufacturing capacity, and academic innovation with military operational requirements.
- **Constitutional and Legal Architecture:** Under **Article 53(2)** of the Constitution, the supreme command of the Defense Forces of the Union is vested in the President of India, with exercise regulated by parliamentary law. Executive oversight is maintained through the Ministry of Defence, while statutory mechanisms like the Armed Forces Acts govern individual service branches. High-level commands and reshuffles are approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) chaired by the Prime Minister.

Key Definitions for Mains:

- **Jointness:** The deliberate integration of the capabilities, strategies, and cultures of the Army, Navy, and Air Force to achieve unified military objectives, moving beyond simple coordination to structured inter-service interdependence.
- **Multi-Domain Operations (MDO):** A combat philosophy requiring simultaneous and synchronized operations across all warfighting domains—land, sea, air, cyber, and space—to overwhelm adversary forces.

Conclusion: The appointment of General Dhiraj Seth combined with the high-level reorganization across the Integrated Defence Staff and Air Staff signals a decisive push toward joint warfighting capability. As India faces complex asymmetric and conventional border threats, operationalizing the 'VIJAY' roadmap will be essential to transform the Indian Armed Forces from an asset-heavy legacy force into an agile, indigenously sustained, and networked security structure.

UPSC Relevance: * **GS Paper II:** Structure, Organization, and Functioning of the Executive; Role of Constitutional Authorities.

- **GS Paper III:** Security Challenges and their Management in Border Areas; Linkages of Organized Crime with Terrorism; Various Security Forces and Agencies and their Mandate; Higher Defense Reforms (Theaterisation and Jointness).

10. India's Energy Transition: Unified National Energy Framework

- **Decadal Achievements and Future Goals:** Over the past decade, India shifted its energy landscape by achieving near-universal household electrification and expanding clean cooking fuel access. Renewable energy capacity expanded from 40 GW in 2015 to 260 GW by 2025. This progress serves as a foundation to meet long-term targets: energy self-reliance by 2047 (*Viksit Bharat*) and net-zero emissions by 2070.
- **The INSA Policy Brief (May 2026):** Released by the Indian National Science Academy (INSA), the brief outlines a "Unified National Energy Framework" authored by Anjan Ray. It addresses India's structural energy trilemma—balancing rising domestic demand, import dependencies on crude oil/natural gas, and sustainable economic growth—by integrating coal, biomass, renewables, gas, and green hydrogen under one coordinated governance structure.

- **The Four Pillars of the Unified Architecture:** The framework establishes four mutually reinforcing parameters to guide planning:

- **Adequacy:** Diversifying the energy portfolio using conventional/emerging sources, backed by storage systems and modernized grids to handle intermittent renewable loads.
- **Access:** Strengthening last-mile grid reliability and scale up decentralized energy solutions.
- **Affordability:** Using innovative green financing and efficient marketplace rules to keep the transition viable for low-income households and domestic industries.



- **Appropriate Sustainability:** Rejecting Western "one-size-fits-all" timelines to pursue region-specific pathways aligned with India's socio-economic realities, emphasizing circular economy models and Carbon Capture, Utilisation, and Storage (CCUS).
- **Phased Strategy and Technology Mix:** The framework mandates a multi-decadal phased approach. The immediate phase centers on deploying green hydrogen, optimizing current thermal assets, and updating transmission networks. Long-term goals involve deep industrial decarbonization, expansion of waste-to-energy platforms, and scaling up bio-resources.
- **Constitutional and Statutory Provisions:** Energy governance is divided across the Seventh Schedule. **Coal and Oil** fall under the Union List (Entries 53 and 54), while **Electricity** resides in the Concurrent List (Entry 38), requiring close Center-State cooperative federalism. Statutory backing is driven by the **Energy Conservation (Amendment) Act, 2022** (establishing domestic carbon markets) and the **Electricity Act, 2003**. Environmentally, it aligns with India's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under Article 253.

Key Definitions for Mains:

- **Net-Zero Emissions:** A state where an economy's absolute greenhouse gas emissions are entirely balanced by an equivalent amount of carbon removal from the atmosphere.
- **Carbon Capture, Utilisation, and Storage (CCUS):** A suite of technologies that capture carbon dioxide emissions from industrial point sources, converting it for manufacturing use or permanently storing it deep underground.

Conclusion: India's clean energy transition requires moving beyond isolated sectoral capacity additions toward an integrated, cross-fuel regulatory ecosystem. Implementing the INSA-recommended four-pillar framework ensures that as the nation marches toward its 2047 self-reliance goals, its energy matrix remains structurally adequate, socially equitable, and insulated from global supply disruptions.

UPSC Relevance: * **GS Paper II:** Government Policies and Interventions for Development; Center-State Relations (Concurrent Jurisdiction on Energy).

- **GS Paper III:** Infrastructure (Energy, Grids, Renewables); Growth and Development; Environmental Pollution and Degradation (Net-Zero Pathways, CCUS, Green Hydrogen).

11. Telecommunications Act 2023: Emerging Authorisation Rules and Framework

- **Regulatory Shift via New Rules:** The Union Government notified a trio of frameworks under the parent statute—the Telecommunications (Authorisation for Provision of Principal, Captive, and Miscellaneous Telecommunication Services) Rules, 2026. These rules systematically replace the legacy licensing system with a streamlined "authorisation" regime, simplifying compliance paperwork for telecom operators and Internet Service Providers (ISPs).
- **Consolidation of Colonial-Era Laws:** The parent Telecommunications Act, 2023, aimed to modernize India's digital ecosystem by repealing archaic legislations like the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885, and the Wireless Telegraphy Act, 1933. While day-to-day operations remain stable, the statutory change expands executive powers, specifically broadening the

definition of "telecommunication" to potentially encompass over-the-top (OTT) messaging apps for anti-spam enforcement.

- **Previously Enforced**

Provisions: Several critical sections are already operational. Notably, the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) was renamed the Digital Bharat Nidhi to fund remote digital infrastructure. Furthermore, provisions allowing state interception (tapping orders issued by senior officials) and the power to seize telecom infrastructure during national security emergencies or war conditions remain actively enforced.



- **Satellite Internet and Regulatory Delays:** Significant regulatory ambiguity persists regarding satellite-based communication. The final 2026 rules removed explicit references to Global Mobile Personal Communications by Satellite (GMPCS) that were present in the initial drafts. Global giants like Starlink face delayed approvals due to state concerns over national security, tracking compliance, and the technical feasibility of enforcing localized internet shutdowns.
- **Constitutional and Legal Provisions:** Telecom governance falls strictly under the Union List (**Entry 31, Seventh Schedule**), granting exclusive legislative power to Parliament. The state's interception and surveillance powers are constrained by **Article 19(1)(a)** (Freedom of Speech) and **Article 21** (Right to Privacy), reflecting judicial guardrails established in the *K.S. Puttaswamy* and *PUCL v. Union of India* judgments, which mandate that any surveillance must pass the test of proportionality and necessity.

Key Definitions for Mains:

- **Authorisation Regime:** A simplified regulatory framework replacing individual contractual licenses with standardized statutory permissions to operate telecom services under uniform compliance guidelines.
- **Digital Bharat Nidhi:** A statutory corpus funded by an institutional levy on telecom operators, designated exclusively to bridge the digital divide by building connectivity infrastructure in financially unviable rural and remote areas.

Conclusion: The notification of the 2026 Telecom Rules marks a transition toward a modern regulatory environment, yet the framework remains a work in progress. Balancing national security protocols and state surveillance capabilities with citizen privacy rights, while resolving technical gaps in satellite broadband deployment, will determine India's digital infrastructure readiness under its broader digital governance vision.

UPSC Relevance: * **GS Paper II:** Government Policies and Interventions for Development; Regulatory Bodies; Constitutional Guardrails on Privacy and Freedom of Expression.

- **GS Paper III:** Challenges to Internal Security through Communication Networks; Role of Media and Social Networking Sites; Infrastructure (Telecom and Satellite Connectivity).

12. High-Level Committee on Demographic Changes: Key Interventions

- **Committee Genesis and Composition:** Following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "High-powered Demography Mission" announcement on August 15, 2025, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) formally constituted the **High-Level Committee on Demographic Changes (HLCDC)** on May 26, 2026. Chaired by retired Supreme Court Judge Justice Prakash Prabhakar Navlekar, the 6-member panel includes the Census Commissioner alongside distinguished experts like Shamika Ravi (PMEAC).
- **Strategic State Questionnaire and Modus Operandi:** The HLCDC is issuing targeted questionnaires to State Chief Secretaries to evaluate population growth and localized settlement expansions executed since the last official 2011 Census. The panel is pairing this state data with direct field visits to border districts, tribal pockets, and industrial hubs while opening an email channel for public feedback.
- **Voter Roll Exclusions and Illegal Migration Assessment:** The panel has formally requested the Election Commission of India (ECI) to provide comprehensive data regarding voter deletions carried out during the **Special Intensive Revision (SIR)** exercise. Because the SIR—completed across 13 States/UTs—scrutinized documentary proof and resulted in deleting approximately 6.5 crore names (11% of the registered electorate in those regions), the panel intends to use the specified deletion rationale to scientifically estimate the volume of undocumented or illegal immigrants.
- **Synchronization with Population Census 2027:** The panel's assessments run parallel to the upcoming **Population Census 2027**, which is being held after a 16-year delay. The preliminary House Listing and Housing Operations (HLO) phase is underway and concludes on September 30, 2026, offering crucial baseline data on settlement blocks ahead of the final Population Enumeration scheduled for completion by March 1, 2027.
- **Constitutional and Statutory Framework:** **Census** is an exclusive Union subject under **Entry 69 of List I (Union List)** in the Seventh Schedule, governed by the **Census Act, 1948**. The panel's broader mandate to draft legal mechanisms for identifying, detaining, and deporting foreign nationals falls under Entry 17 (Aliens) and Entry 19 (Admission into India/Expulsion), operationalized via the **Foreigners Act, 1946** and the **Citizenship Act, 1955**. From a rights perspective, the ECI's massive deletions test the balance between preventing illegal enfranchisement and preserving the fundamental Right to Vote under **Article 326**.

Key Definitions for Mains:

- **Special Intensive Revision (SIR):** A rigorous, document-focused electoral roll verification process conducted by the ECI to cleanse voter registries of duplications, deceased electors, and illegal residents, moving the burden of proof onto the elector.
- **Demographic Trilemma:** The policy challenge of managing shifting population structures across border areas where illegal immigration, varying regional fertility rates, and domestic economic migration intersect to distort local infrastructure and social stability.

Conclusion: The Navlekar Committee marks a shift toward a security-centric analysis of India's internal demography. While identifying abnormal population growth is critical to protect native tribal identities and optimize state resources, the final legal framework must balance national sovereignty with strict procedural transparency, ensuring that genuine citizens are not inadvertently disenfranchised or marginalized.

UPSC Relevance: * **GS Paper II:** Governance, Indian Constitution (Seventh Schedule), Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (ECI, Registrar General), Internal Security and Border Management Linkages.

- **GS Paper III:** Challenges to Internal Security (Infiltration, Illegal Migration), Border Area Development, and Demographic Dividend challenges.

