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DATE : **AUGUST 13, 2026**



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1. Retail Inflation Reaches 19-Month Peak Driven by Food and Fuel Costs

Key Highlights & Summary

- **19-Month Peak:** Headline retail inflation in India surged to a 19-month high of 4.45% in July, primarily propelled by escalating food and fuel prices.
- **MoSPI Data Release:** Official Consumer Price Index (CPI) figures were released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).
- **Key Cost Drivers:** Transportation, food items, restaurant meals, and accommodation services experienced notable price increases during the month.
- **Divergence in Services:** While transport and hospitality costs rose, service sectors such as healthcare and recreation registered a marginal cooling in inflation.
- **Monetary Policy Impact:** The uptick, though within the Reserve Bank of India's target band, limits immediate scope for monetary easing by the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC).
- **Supply-Side Challenges:** Seasonal agricultural supply fluctuations and volatile global energy benchmarks continue to pose persistent risks to domestic price stability.

Essential Definitions

- **Consumer Price Index (CPI):** A macro-economic indicator measuring retail-level price changes in a fixed basket of goods and services consumed by households.
- **Headline Inflation:** The total inflation rate in an economy, including volatile commodities like food and energy prices, measured using the overall CPI basket.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934 (Section 45ZA):** Mandates the Central Government, in consultation with the RBI, to determine the inflation target every five years (currently set at 4% with a tolerance band of +/- 2%).
- **Section 45ZB of RBI Act:** Provides statutory backing for the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) to set the policy interest rate to achieve the prescribed inflation target.
- **Seventh Schedule (List I, Entry 48 & 49):** Equips Parliament with legislative authority over stock exchanges, futures markets, and national economic planning framework.

Conclusion While retail inflation remains within the statutory 2%-6% target corridor, elevated food and energy prices constrain consumer spending and complicate monetary policy formulation. Addressing supply-chain bottlenecks and stabilizing agricultural output are vital for securing long-term price stability.



UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper III:** Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development, and employment; Monetary policy, inflation management, and functions of the RBI.
- **GS Paper II:** Statutory frameworks (RBI Act, 1934) and executive governance through specialized policy institutions like the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC).

2. Environmental Activist Approaches NGT Against Illegal Mining Near Kaziranga

Key Highlights & Summary

- **NGT Petitioned:** Environmental activist Mohajon Kro petitioned the National Green Tribunal (NGT) and MoEFCC against mechanized riverbed sand mining in the Deihori river, Karbi Anglong district, near Kaziranga National Park.
- **Violation of Supreme Court Ban:** The illegal mining activity violates the Supreme Court's 2017 complete ban on mining along Kaziranga's southern boundary and falls within its proposed Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ).
- **Disruption of Wildlife Refuge:** The hilly terrain of Karbi Anglong serves as a vital natural refuge for rhinos, tigers, and deer during seasonal monsoon flooding in Kaziranga.
- **Impact on Indigenous Communities:** Heavy machinery and unmonitored sand extraction have increased sediment turbidity, damaged fish breeding grounds, and threatened the water supply relied upon by local Scheduled Tribe populations.
- **Breach of Sustainable Guidelines:** The operation violates the principles established under India's Sustainable Sand Mining Management Guidelines, 2016.



- **Regulatory Oversight Breakdown:** The petition highlights regulatory failures by district forest authorities in enforcing mandatory safeguards governing sand and gravel quarry leases.

Essential Definitions

- **Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZ):** Buffer areas designated around Protected Areas, National Parks, and Wildlife Sanctuaries under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, to regulate damaging human activities.
- **National Green Tribunal (NGT):** A statutory quasi-judicial body established under the NGT Act, 2010, dedicated to the expeditious disposal of civil cases relating to environmental protection and conservation.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 48A:** Mandates that the State shall endeavor to protect and improve the environment and safeguard the forests and wildlife of the country.
- **Article 51A(g):** Imposes a Fundamental Duty on every citizen to protect and improve the natural environment, including forests, lakes, rivers, and wildlife.
- **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986:** Authorizes the Central Government to notify ESZs and enforce environmental safeguards around ecologically fragile zones.
- **Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957:** Regulates mining activities, where sand is classified as a minor mineral under state regulatory domain.

Conclusion Unregulated riverbed excavation near critical ecological reserves severely threatens biodiversity corridors and indigenous livelihoods. Strictly enforcing Supreme Court mandates and statutory guidelines via NGT oversight is essential to preserving delicate riparian ecosystems.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper III:** Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment; Issues relating to illegal mining and biodiversity loss.
- **GS Paper II:** Statutory bodies (NGT) and constitutional directives (Articles 48A and 51A(g)) regarding environmental governance.

3. Inter-State Dispute Over Structural Strengthening of Mullaperiyar Dam

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Inter-State Grievance in SC:** Tamil Nadu petitioned the Supreme Court, accusing Kerala of an "obstructionist attitude" that has stalled critical structural safety and strengthening works at the Mullaperiyar Dam.
- **Non-Implementation of SC Order:** The non-cooperation prevents implementation of a 2014 Constitution Bench ruling that allowed Tamil Nadu to raise the reservoir water level from 136 feet to 142 feet.
- **Ownership and Geography:** Located in Idukki district (Kerala) across the Periyar river, the 131-year-old British-era masonry dam is owned, operated, and maintained by Tamil Nadu under an 1886 lease agreement.
- **Safety Concerns vs. Water Security:** Kerala cites structural safety risks to downstream populations, whereas Tamil Nadu highlights its dependence on the reservoir for irrigation and drinking water needs in southern districts.
- **Stalled Maintenance Works:** Specific pending measures include tree-felling permission, strengthening the baby dam and earth dam, and transporting machinery for main dam grouting.

- **Long-Term Water Level Goal:** Upon completing mandatory structural reinforcement, Tamil Nadu maintains the legal right to restore the water level to its ultimate height of 152 feet.

Essential Definitions

- **Mullaperiyar Dam Lease Agreement (1886):** A 999-year lease agreement executed between the Maharaja of Travancore and the Secretary of State for India (British Crown), granting water rights to the Madras Presidency.
- **Supervisory Committee on Mullaperiyar Dam:** A Supreme Court-mandated regulatory body set up to oversee dam safety, structural inspections, and water level management between the two basin states.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 262:** Authorizes Parliament to enact legislation for the adjudication of disputes relating to the use, distribution, or control of waters in inter-State rivers or river valleys.
- **Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956:** Enacted under Article 262 to establish specialized tribunals for resolving inter-State river water sharing conflicts.
- **Dam Safety Act, 2021:** Enacted to provide an institutional mechanism for monitoring, inspection, operation, and maintenance of specified dams to prevent dam failure disaster hazards.
- **Article 131:** Grants the Supreme Court original jurisdiction over disputes between the Government of India and one or more States, or between two or more States.



Conclusion Resolving the long-standing Mullaperiyar friction requires strict adherence to judicial orders alongside collaborative technical evaluation by neutral authorities. Balancing lower riparian water rights with upper riparian safety concerns is essential for preserving cooperative federalism.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II:** Federal Structure and Inter-State Relations; Issues and challenges pertaining to federalism; Mechanisms for dispute resolution (Articles 131 and 262).
- **GS Paper III:** Disaster Management and Dam Safety Infrastructure (Dam Safety Act, 2021); Water resource management and inter-State river conflicts.

4. Defence Ministry Floats Tender Worth Rs 1 Lakh Crore for 60 Multirole Transport Aircraft

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Massive Procurement Drive:** The Ministry of Defence issued a tender worth approximately Rs 1 lakh crore for 60 Multirole Transport Aircraft (MTA) to modernize the Indian Air Force's (IAF) aging cargo fleet.
- **Domestic Lead Partnerships:** Tenders have been issued to domestic defence majors, including HAL, Mahindra Defence, and Tata, partnering with global OEMs like Embraer and Lockheed Martin.
- **Indigenization Mandate:** Around 20% of the aircraft will be inducted in fly-away condition, while 80% will be manufactured domestically with over 60% indigenous content.
- **Strategic Capabilities:** The multirole platforms will handle tactical troop movement, heavy military asset transportation, and potential aerial refuelling configurations.

- **Synergy with C-295 Program:** The MTA initiative complements the ongoing induction of 56 C-295 transport aircraft under the Airbus-Tata domestic manufacturing partnership.
- **Broader IAF Modernization:** The tender aligns with pending acquisition plans for 114 Multirole Fighter Aircraft (MRFA) and 100-plus trainer aircraft.

Essential Definitions

- **Multirole Transport Aircraft (MTA):** High-payload military airlifters capable of performing logistics transport, medical evacuation, troop deployment, and air-to-air refuelling.
- **Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM):** A company that manufactures goods or components that are subsequently purchased and retailed by another firm under its own brand name.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP) 2020:** Governs the procurement of military hardware and technology for the Indian Armed Forces, prioritizing 'Make in India' and indigenous manufacturing categories.
- **Seventh Schedule (List I, Entry 1 & 2):** Grants Parliament exclusive jurisdiction over Defence of India and Naval, Military, and Air Forces.
- **Strategic Partnership (SP) Model:** A policy framework under DAP enabling Indian private companies to tie up with foreign OEMs to build complex defence platforms locally.



Conclusion Inducting 60 multirole transport aircraft under domestic manufacturing partnerships significantly enhances India's airlift capabilities and strategic mobility. Fostering Joint Ventures with global defence major firms deepens India's indigenous aerospace ecosystem while reducing critical dependency on foreign imports.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper III:** Indigenization of technology and developing new technology in defence; Security challenges and their management in border areas; Defense procurement procedures.
- **GS Paper II:** Executive policies and statutory frameworks governing national security and defense preparedness (DAP 2020).

5. Centre Set to Refer FCRA Amendment Bill to Joint Parliamentary Committee

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Referral to JPC:** Facing widespread backlash, the Union government decided to move a Lok Sabha resolution referring the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026 to a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC).
- **State Assembly Resolution:** The Tamil Nadu Assembly unanimously passed a resolution urging the Centre to withdraw the Bill and initiate comprehensive consultations with State governments and relevant stakeholders.

- **Public and Minority Protests:** Mass rallies were organized in Mizoram by the Council of Churches over fears that the legislation disproportionately impacts minority-run educational and social welfare institutions.
- **Sweeping Executive Powers:** Opposition focuses on provisions granting designated executive authorities control over land, buildings, and funds of NGOs whose FCRA registrations are cancelled or not renewed.
- **Absence of Judicial Safeguards:** Concerns were highlighted regarding the lack of adequate judicial oversight during government acquisition or management of charitable organizational assets upon registration expiry.
- **Democratic Consensus Building:** Referring contested legislation to a bipartisan parliamentary committee enables detailed clause-by-clause scrutiny and stakeholder consultation prior to formal enactment.

Essential Definitions

- **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA):** A parliamentary statute regulating the acceptance and utilization of foreign donations or hospitality by individuals and associations to safeguard national sovereignty.
- **Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC):** An ad-hoc parliamentary committee established through a motion adopted in Parliament, comprising members from both Houses, to scrutinize specific bills or public issues.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 26 & 30:** Guarantees fundamental rights to religious denominations to manage their affairs and grants minorities the right to establish and administer educational institutions.
- **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010:** Statutory legal framework governing foreign funding inflow, compliance obligations, and operational registration of non-governmental organizations in India.
- **Rules of Procedure (Rule 254):** Parliamentary rules governing the constitution, reference, powers, and procedures of Joint Committees of both Houses of Parliament.

Conclusion Referring the FCRA Amendment Bill to a JPC demonstrates democratic responsiveness and parliamentary scrutiny. Harmonizing legitimate national security regulations on foreign funding with the constitutional rights and operational autonomy of civil society organizations remains crucial.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II:** Indian Constitution—fundamental rights (Articles 26 and 30); Parliamentary committees, law-making process, and governance reforms; Development processes and the role of NGOs and civil society.
- **GS Paper III:** Internal security threats, foreign funding regulation, and money laundering safeguards.

6. NCSC Panel Initiates Probe into Union Government De-reservation Proposals

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Comprehensive Review Initiated:** The National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) decided to comprehensively review all Union government proposals received over the last three years seeking to de-reserve quota posts.
- **Objection Timeline Expanded:** NCSC interventions prompted the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) to double the timeframe allowed for Commissions (SC, ST, OBC) to object to de-reservation proposals, expanding it from two weeks to one month.
- **Procedural Flaws Flagged:** The NCSC observed that de-reservation proposals are frequently incomplete and fail to demonstrate genuine efforts to fill reserved posts, leading the panel to reject all recent proposals submitted across various Union ministries.
- **Strict Statutory Norms:** DoPT regulations enforce a general ban on de-reservation, permitting exceptions in Group 'A' direct recruitment only when leaving a post vacant adversely impacts public interest.
- **Multi-Tier Approval Process:** Valid de-reservation requests require examination by relevant Commissions, a Committee of Secretaries, and final authorization by the Minister of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions.
- **Alternative Solutions Proposed:** The NCSC recommended exploring deputation or short-term contractual appointments of eligible SC candidates as alternative measures prior to seeking complete de-reservation.



Essential Definitions

- **De-reservation:** The exceptional process of declaring a reserved quota vacancy as unreserved due to non-availability of eligible candidates from designated categories.
- **National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC):** A constitutional body established under Article 338 to safeguard constitutional rights and evaluate protective measures guaranteed to Scheduled Castes.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 338:** Establishes the NCSC with powers to investigate, monitor, and participate in planning socio-economic development while evaluating constitutional safeguards for SCs.
- **Article 16(4) & 16(4A):** Empowers the State to make provisions for reservation in appointments and promotions in favor of backward classes not adequately represented in state services.
- **DoPT Guidelines:** Formulate procedural frameworks restricting de-reservation while safeguarding recruitment mandates for reserved category candidates.

Conclusion The NCSC's intervention reinforces institutional oversight against arbitrary de-reservation practices in Union services. Ensuring rigorous adherence to procedural safeguards guarantees constitutional protection for backward communities while maintaining administrative efficiency.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II:** Constitutional bodies—powers, functions, and responsibilities of NCSC (Article 338); Social justice, affirmative action, and government policies governing reservations (Article 16).
- **GS Paper II:** Governance—role of civil services in a democracy, executive accountability, and administrative procedures under DoPT guidelines.

7. Rajya Sabha Passes Bills to Rename Kerala to Keralam and Strengthen NCDC

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Legislative Approval:** The Rajya Sabha passed two key legislations—the Kerala (Alteration of Name) Bill, 2026, and the National Co-operative Development Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 2026.
- **Renaming State to Keralam:** The Kerala (Alteration of Name) Bill aligns with the 2024 Kerala Legislative Assembly resolution requesting the Centre to rename the state as 'Keralam' in the First Schedule of the Constitution.
- **Decolonization Commitment:** Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai stated the renaming reflects the government's commitment to eliminating colonial names and honoring indigenous cultural heritage.
- **Enhanced Mandate for NCDC:** The NCDC Amendment Bill broadens the authority of the National Co-operative Development Corporation to extend direct loans and financial grants to primary cooperative societies.
- **No Extra Budgetary Burden:** Union Minister of State for Cooperation Murlidhar Mohol clarified that the NCDC expansion requires no additional budgetary financial assistance from the Central Government.
- **Monsoon Session Productivity:** With these approvals, the Upper House completed the passage of about 10 non-money Bills alongside returned Money Bills during the session.



Essential Definitions

- **Alteration of Name of a State:** The constitutional process under Article 3 empowering Parliament to change the name of any State by law, amending the First Schedule of the Constitution.
- **National Co-operative Development Corporation (NCDC):** A statutory corporation established under the NCDC Act, 1963, functioning under the Ministry of Cooperation to plan and promote programs for cooperative sector production and processing.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 3:** Empowers Parliament by law to form new States, alter boundaries, or change the name of any State, requiring prior recommendation of the President and reference to the affected State Legislature.

- **First Schedule:** Contains the list of States and Union Territories along with their territorial extents, which is amended following state renaming legislation.
- **97th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2011:** Added Article 19(1)(c) recognizing the right to form cooperative societies as a fundamental right and inserted Part IXB to guide cooperative administration.
- **Seventh Schedule (List II, Entry 32):** Places cooperative societies under the legislative domain of States, while multi-state cooperatives fall under List I, Entry 44.

Conclusion Renaming Kerala to Keralam demonstrates the alignment of state aspirations with parliamentary constitutional processes. Simultaneously, empowering the NCDC to provide direct credit access strengthens grassroots credit delivery, advancing economic federalism and boosting India's cooperative sector.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II:** Indian Constitution—historical underpinnings, features, amendments, and significant provisions (Articles 3, 19(1)(c), First Schedule); Parliament and State Legislatures—structure and conduct of business.
- **GS Paper III:** Development processes, role of cooperatives in the rural economy, and statutory financial institutions (NCDC Act, 1963).

8. Parliamentary Panel Enquires on De-Dollarisation Agenda Ahead of 18th BRICS Summit

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Parliamentary Scrutiny:** The Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs, chaired by MP Shashi Tharoor, questioned the Union government regarding its strategy on de-dollarisation for the 18th BRICS Summit in New Delhi.
- **BRICS Chairship 2026:** India assumed the rotating chairship of the BRICS grouping on January 1, 2026, leading up to hosting the leaders' summit in September.
- **RBI Proposal on Digital Currencies:** The Reserve Bank of India advocated linking member nations' Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs) for cross-border trade and tourism to reduce US dollar dependency.
- **Financial Sovereignty Push:** Committee members urged the government to pursue financial autonomy mechanisms to insulate domestic trade from geopolitical friction and unilateral sanctions.
- **Local Currency Trade Bottlenecks:** The panel noted that bilateral local currency settlement mechanisms, such as with Russia, faced operational hurdles, warranting broader BRICS-led solutions.
- **Geopolitical Counter-Pressures:** The debate arises amid explicit warnings from the US administration threatening punitive tariffs against nations attempting to challenge dollar dominance.

Essential Definitions

- **De-Dollarisation:** The process where sovereign nations reduce reliance on the US dollar as a global reserve currency, medium of exchange, or unit of account in international trade.
- **Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC):** A digital form of a country's official fiat currency issued and regulated by its central bank (such as India's e-Rupee).

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 246 & Seventh Schedule (List I, Entries 10 & 36):** Authorizes Parliament to legislate exclusively on foreign affairs, international trade, currency, foreign exchange, and coinage.
- **Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934:** Grants legal authority to the RBI for regulating monetary policy, managing foreign exchange reserves, and operating currency settlement systems.
- **Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), 1999:** The legal framework facilitating external trade and cross-border payments while regulating foreign exchange transactions in India.

Conclusion Promoting local currency mechanisms and interoperable CBDCs aligns with India's long-term goal of financial resilience. Balancing de-dollarisation initiatives with strategic international partnerships requires calibrated economic diplomacy to safeguard national trade interests without attracting trade frictions.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II:** Bilateral, regional and global groupings involving India (BRICS); Parliamentary committees, structure, and legislative oversight functions.
- **GS Paper III:** Indian Economy—effects of globalization, foreign exchange management, Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDC), and international trade settlement frameworks.

9. Tribal Council Alleges Concerns Overlooked in Great Nicobar Island Project

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Tribal Council Allegations:** The Tribal Council of Great and Little Nicobar accused the local administration of attempting to force the Shompen into a "modern lifestyle" and overlooking tribal concerns regarding the Rs 91,000-crore Great Nicobar Island (GNI) project.
- **Impact on Shompen Habitat:** Tribal leaders highlighted risks from proposed infrastructure like the Galathea power plant near Shompen settlements, contradicting official assurances that the project will not disturb or displace the indigenous community.
- **Demand for Relocation to Ancestral Lands:** The Tribal Council reiterated its demand to relocate Nicobarese members to their ancestral villages along the west coast of Great Nicobar.
- **Absence of Free Prior Informed Consent:** Council members questioned why indigenous consent was not obtained before notifying wildlife reserves and developing township projects across island habitats.



- **Vulnerability of Shompen:** The Shompen are a hunter-gatherer Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) with fewer than 300 members, making them extremely susceptible to external contact and ecological disruption.
- **Omission of Tribal Grievances:** The council stated that key issues raised during meetings with administration officials were omitted from subsequent administrative directives, deepening local distrust.

Essential Definitions

- **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs):** A subgroup among Scheduled Tribes characterized by declining or stagnant population, pre-agricultural level of technology, low literacy, and economic backwardness.
- **Great Nicobar Island (GNI) Project:** A mega-infrastructure development project comprising an international transshipment terminal, power plant, airport, and township in the sensitive island ecosystem.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Fifth & Sixth Schedules / Article 244:** Provides constitutional mechanisms for special administration and governance of scheduled and tribal areas to protect indigenous communities.
- **Andaman and Nicobar Islands Protection of Aboriginal Tribes Regulation (1956):** Declares ancestral tribal habitats as reserved areas, restricting entry and land acquisition to preserve indigenous autonomy.
- **Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006:** Mandates recognition of ancestral habitat rights and free, prior, informed consent of Gram Sabhas before diverting forest land for development projects.

Conclusion Balancing strategic infrastructure development with indigenous rights requires transparent consultation and strict adherence to statutory safeguards. Protecting PVTGs like the Shompen necessitates preserving their habitat autonomy without imposing unrequested cultural transformations.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II:** Mechanisms, laws, institutions, and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of vulnerable sections (PVTGs and Scheduled Tribes); Constitutional provisions (Article 244).
- **GS Paper III:** Conservation, Environmental Impact Assessment, and balancing mega-infrastructure projects with ecological and tribal sustainability.

10. Proposed Amendments to National Food Security Act and Dietary Diversification

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Affordability Improvements:** Household consumption surveys indicate the share of households unable to afford the ICMR-NIN recommended healthy diet fell from about 52% in 2011–12 to around 25% in 2023–24.

- **Draft NFSA Amendment Bill, 2026:** The proposed draft links Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) entitlements to household size, proposing 7 kg per person capped at 35 kg, which requires explicit no-loss safeguards for smaller, vulnerable households.
- **Outdated Beneficiary Ceilings:** Coverage caps remain linked to Census 2011 figures (75% rural, 50% urban), resulting in effective coverage dropping to around 55.6% of India's estimated 2025 population.
- **Tackling Malnutrition and NCDs:** India faces a double burden of malnutrition and rising non-communicable diseases (NCDs), with NFHS-6 showing 29.3% stunting and studies highlighting high diabetes rates tied to carbohydrate-heavy diets.
- **Need for Dietary Diversification:** ICMR-NIN guidelines recommend that cereals and millets provide at most 45% of total daily energy, highlighting the need to incentivize pulses, milk, and protein-rich foods.
- **FPS as Health Gateways:** Fair Price Shops can be leveraged to disseminate nutrition awareness, offer healthcare referrals, and support One Nation One Ration Card portability without denying grain access during authentication failures.

Essential Definitions

- **Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY):** A central scheme launched to target the poorest of the poor households, providing highly subsidized foodgrains per family.
- **Double Burden of Malnutrition:** The coexistence of undernutrition (stunting, wasting) alongside overweight, obesity, or diet-related non-communicable diseases within the same population.



Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 21:** Guarantees the Right to Life, which the Supreme Court has expanded to include the right to live with dignity and the right to food.
- **Article 47:** Directive Principle obligating the State to raise the level of nutrition, standard of living, and public health of its citizens.
- **National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013:** Legal framework providing statutory entitlements to foodgrains for up to 75% of rural and 50% of urban populations through the Public Distribution System (PDS).

Conclusion Reforming India's food security framework requires shifting from basic calorie fulfillment to comprehensive nutritional security. Updating population coverage metrics and diversifying PDS food baskets are crucial steps toward mitigating lifestyle diseases and promoting long-term public health.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II:** Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources; Issues relating to poverty and hunger; Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections.
- **GS Paper III:** Public Distribution System—objectives, functioning, limitations, revamping; Issues of buffer stocks and food security.

11. Military Transformation and Intellectual Leadership in India's Defence Establishment

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Push for Military Transformation:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi directed fast-tracking armed forces reforms during the 2014 Combined Commanders Conference, focusing on cutting flab, operational effectiveness, and tri-service synergy.
- **Lop-sided Restructuring:** Reforms have placed the primary burden of change on the armed forces rather than driving a top-down, whole-of-government overhaul of the Higher Defence Organisation.
- **Inter-Service Consensus Deficit:** Operational integration across the Army, Navy, and Air Force remains hampered by a lack of inter-service consensus and persistent inter-service friction.
- **Intellectual Vacuum in Higher Ranks:** Despite higher academic qualifications among officers, an "upward mobility trap" often penalizes professional dissent and inhibits intellectual engagement with political leadership.
- **Historical Precedents:** Key military strategists like General K. Sundarji, Air Commodore Jasjit Singh, and Rear Admiral Raja Menon successfully shaped national security policy through robust intellectual advocacy.
- **Revitalizing Military Education:** Modernizing Professional Military Education (PME) within war colleges is necessary to build strategic depth and foster institutional innovation.



Essential Definitions

- **Higher Defence Organisation (HDO):** The executive structural framework, including the Ministry of Defence, Chief of Defence Staff, and Services Headquarters, responsible for national security planning and command.
- **Professional Military Education (PME):** The systematic academic and operational training provided to military officers through institutions like war colleges to develop strategic thinking and doctrine.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 53(2):** Vests the Supreme Command of the Defence Forces of the Union in the President of India, exercisable in accordance with law.
- **Seventh Schedule (List I, Entry 1 & 2):** Assigns exclusive legislative jurisdiction over national defence, security, and armed forces to the Union Parliament.
- **Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961:** Defines statutory responsibilities, civil-military control, and functional jurisdictions within the Ministry of Defence and the Department of Military Affairs.

Conclusion Achieving meaningful military transformation in a complex security environment requires complementing structural reorganization with strong intellectual leadership. Encouraging professional debate and strategic reflection within the armed forces ensures effective civil-military synthesis and national security readiness.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper III:** Security challenges and their management; Various Security forces and agencies and their mandate; Higher defence management reforms and jointness.
- **GS Paper II:** Civil-military relations, executive accountability, and democratic control over national security institutions.

12. Socio-Economic Drivers of Moroccan Youth Migration to Ceuta

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Ceuta Influx and EU Friction:** Over 72,000 Moroccans attempted to enter Spain's Ceuta territory over two days, resulting in over 80 deaths and triggering acute security and policy disagreements across EU member states.
- **Severe Youth Unemployment:** Despite macroeconomic improvements, Morocco's overall unemployment reached 13%, while youth unemployment (ages 15-24) surged to nearly 37%, almost triple the national rate.
- **Educated Unemployment Trap:** Joblessness disproportionately impacts educated youth, with over 50% of higher education graduates unemployed, including nearly 65% of young women and 54% of young men holding higher degrees.
- **High NEET Prevalence:** Approximately 24.5% of Moroccan youth are Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET), accelerating migration along hazardous Western Mediterranean routes.
- **Border Management and Human Toll:** Moroccan authorities intercepted nearly 80,000 transit attempts in 2024, yet Moroccans accounted for approximately 20% of Spain's total land and sea arrivals in 2026.
- **Intra-EU Policy Divergence:** The surge exposed deep political divisions within Europe regarding border enforcement, unilateral travel restrictions, and national responsibility for managing irregular migration.



Essential Definitions

- **Ceuta:** A Spanish autonomous enclave on the North African coast sharing a land border with Morocco, serving as a primary entry point into the European Union.
- **NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training):** A socio-economic metric measuring the proportion of youth disengaged from both the labor force and educational systems.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **UN 1951 Refugee Convention & 1967 Protocol:** International legal treaties establishing standards for asylum, refugee protection, and the non-refoulement principle preventing forcible returns to danger.
- **EU Pact on Migration and Asylum:** Legislative framework governing border screening, asylum processing, solidarity mechanisms, and joint migration management across European member states.
- **Article 21 (Indian Context for Comparative Analysis):** Article 21 guarantees the Right to Life and Personal Liberty, which Indian jurisprudence extends to human dignity and basic livelihood security.

Conclusion Addressing irregular Mediterranean migration requires structural economic interventions that translate macroeconomic growth into job creation for educated youth. Sustainable solutions depend on bilateral cooperation, expanding legal pathways, and mitigating structural socio-economic inequality.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II:** International relations—impact of global migration policies and geopolitical dynamics; International institutions and treaties governing refugees and human rights.
- **GS Paper III:** Indian Economy and issues relating to employment, inclusive growth, and human capital development amidst jobless growth challenges.

