

The Hindu Important News Articles & Editorial For UPSC CSE

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The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) in its report to the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has revealed that **over 50% of Grossly Polluting Industries (GPIs) in Uttar Pradesh** are not complying with pollution control norms. Despite ongoing projects like **NamamiGange** and judicial interventions, industrial effluents remain a major source of Ganga pollution. This raises critical questions about the effectiveness of regulatory enforcement and India's commitment to sustainable development goals.

Key Findings of the CPCB Report (Sept 2022–23 inspections)

- **Industries inspected:** 1,370 GPIs (858 operational, 512 non-operational).
- **Compliance status:** Of 858 operational GPIs, only **415 (48%) complied** with pollution guidelines; **443 (52%) violated norms**.
- **ETPs inspected:** Out of 8 Effluent Treatment Plants (ETPs), 4 were compliant, 4 non-compliant.
- **Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs):** 36 inspected, many underperforming (data not fully disclosed in report).

Static Linkages

1. **NamamiGange Programme (2014)**

- Integrated conservation mission for effective abatement of pollution, river rejuvenation.
- Covers **sewage treatment, river surface cleaning, industrial effluent monitoring, rural sanitation**.
- Implemented by the **National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)** under the Ministry of Jal Shakti.

2. **CPCB (Central Pollution Control Board)**

- Statutory body under the **Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974**.
- Functions: monitoring water quality, enforcing pollution standards, advising Centre and States.

3. **NGT (National Green Tribunal, 2010)**

- Specialised judicial body to handle environmental disputes.
- Has repeatedly directed action on Ganga pollution (Allahabad HC also active in U.P. cases).

4. **Grossly Polluting Industries (GPIs)**

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50% of U.P. industries flout norms: report on Ganga pollution

Nikhil M. Babu
NEW DELHI

In its recent report submitted to the National Green Tribunal, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) stated that over 50% of the “operational” Grossly Polluting Industries (GPIs) in 62 districts of Uttar Pradesh were not in compliance with the government-stipulated pollution guidelines.

In July 2022, the Allahabad High Court directed the CPCB to test samples from industries in U.P. The board then formed 50 teams and undertook a surprise inspection of 1,370 GPIs, 36 Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs)

and eight Effluent Treatment Plants (ETPs) in the State, the report stated.

“Total of 1,370 inspection reports of GPIs (including 858 operational units and 512 non-operational units) have been prepared. Of the 858 operational GPIs, 415 were found complying and 443 are non-compliant with the norms,” the CPCB report dated September 17 read. It also mentioned that, of the 512 non-operational units, eight ETPs were found to be operational.

“Out of these eight units, four units have been found complying, whereas the remaining four units were found non-compliant,” the report stated.

Daily News Analysis

- Industries discharging >100 kg/day of Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD) or >10,000 litres/day wastewater into rivers.
- Major sectors: tanneries (Kanpur, Unnao), sugar mills, distilleries, paper and pulp, textiles.

Current Context & Analysis

1. **Enforcement Gap**
 - Despite **NamamiGange**, **judicial oversight**, and regulatory inspections, **industrial effluents remain unchecked**.
 - Indicates **weak enforcement, corruption, and lack of adequate treatment capacity**.
2. **Urban Sewage vs Industrial Waste**
 - CPCB data shows **over 70–80% of Ganga pollution is from untreated sewage**, but industries add **toxic heavy metals, chemicals, tannery effluents**.
 - Both together make river restoration extremely difficult.
3. **Accountability Issues**
 - Many GPs continue operations despite repeated violations.
 - Non-functional or underperforming STPs/ETPs show **public investment inefficiency**.

Way Forward / Recommendations

- **Strengthening Enforcement:** Automatic penalties, stricter monitoring of GPs through real-time effluent discharge data.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** In STP/ETP management for efficiency.
- **Judicial Monitoring:** NGT and High Courts should ensure compliance via continuous oversight.
- **Technology Adoption:** Zero liquid discharge (ZLD) and modern effluent treatment systems.
- **Community Involvement:** Local communities, civil society must be involved in vigilance.
- **Holistic Approach:** Combine sewage treatment, industrial regulation, afforestation, and public awareness.

Conclusion

The CPCB report exposes a stark reality: **industrial non-compliance continues to undermine India's flagship river conservation mission, NamamiGange**. Unless **regulatory enforcement, technological upgrades, and governance accountability** are strengthened, the rejuvenation of the Ganga will remain elusive. For India, ensuring clean rivers is not only an **ecological necessity** but also a **constitutional duty (Article 21, Right to Life)** and a **commitment under SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation)**.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Ques: Consider the following pairs:

Project/Programme : Associated Ministry

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|--|
| 1. NamamiGange | : | Ministry of Jal Shakti |
| 2. National Green Tribunal | : | Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change |
| 3. Central Pollution Control Board | : | Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change |

Which of the above pairs is/are correctly matched?

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

Ans: c)

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Ques: Despite repeated judicial interventions, Ganga continues to remain one of the most polluted rivers of the world. Discuss the role of the judiciary, CPCB, and state governments in ensuring compliance of pollution control norms. **(250 Words)**

Page 06 :GS 2 : International Relations / Prelims

India and Russia have recently discussed the creation of a **BRICS Grain Exchange** during the World Food India 2025 program in New Delhi. The idea, raised by Russian Deputy PM Dmitry Patrushev and welcomed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, aims to strengthen **agriculture trade ties among BRICS members**. This initiative reflects a new dimension of **trade diplomacy**, especially at a time when global food supply chains face disruptions due to **climate change, conflicts, and protectionist measures**.

Key Highlights of the Meeting

- **Participants:** PM Modi and Russian Deputy PM Dmitry Patrushev.
- **Main agenda:** Agricultural cooperation, fertilizers, food processing.
- **New proposal:** Creation of a **BRICS Grain Exchange** to facilitate transparent, reliable grain trade among member-states.
- **Other discussions:** Progress on **India-Eurasian Economic Union Free Trade Agreement**.
- **Context:** In 2024, **India-Russia trade turnover reached a historic high**, largely due to oil, fertilizers, and defense cooperation.

Static Linkages

1. **BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, + new members in 2024 like Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, UAE, Saudi Arabia)**
 - Formed in 2009 (original BRIC, expanded in 2010).
 - Focus: Multilateral trade, reform of global institutions, south-south cooperation.
 - New initiatives: BRICS Bank (New Development Bank), BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement, discussions on local currency trade.
2. **Grain Trade & Global Context**
 - Russia is the world's largest wheat exporter.
 - India is a major producer of rice, wheat, pulses but restricts exports to ensure food security.

India, Russia discuss BRICS grain exchange plan to boost agriculture trade ties

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi met Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Patrushev here on Thursday and discussed plans of creating a common agricultural food exchange that will help in boosting agriculture trade among the BRICS member-countries. Mr. Modi conveyed his greetings to President Vladimir Putin saying he is looking forward to welcoming him for the 23rd India-Russia annual summit to be hosted here later this year.

"Happy to meet Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Patrushev at the World Food India 2025. We discussed ways to strengthen our win-win cooperation in agriculture, fertilizers and food processing,"



Trade diplomacy : Deputy Prime Minister of Russia Dmitry Patrushev with Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the World Food India 2025 program in New Delhi, on Thursday. DPR PMO

said Mr. Modi after the meeting.

The Russian Embassy said the two sides discussed the ongoing work on a Free Trade Agreement between India and the Eurasian Economic Union. "Additionally, the topic of creating a BRICS Grain Exchange was raised – a move that will help boost mutual agricultural trade,"

said the Embassy.

"Russia highly values its special and privileged partnership with India. India is one of Russia's key allies in the international arena. Every year, Russian-Indian economic cooperation reaches impressive levels. In 2024, the trade turnover between our two countries reached a historic high," said Mr. Patrushev.

Daily News Analysis

- Food inflation and supply chain disruptions (Ukraine war, climate shocks) make alternative trade platforms significant.
- 3. **India–Russia Agricultural Cooperation**
 - Russia: key supplier of fertilizers, wheat, sunflower oil.
 - India: exports tea, rice, marine products.
 - Both exploring **joint ventures in food processing and agri-tech**.

Current Context & Analysis

1. **Geopolitical Angle**
 - Russia is seeking stronger trade ties with India due to **Western sanctions** post-Ukraine war.
 - BRICS Grain Exchange would reduce reliance on **Western-controlled trade platforms** and **dollar-based transactions**.
2. **India's Interests**
 - Ensuring **fertilizer and grain security** for its 1.4 billion people.
 - Diversifying trade beyond Western markets, aligning with **South-South cooperation**.
 - Balancing strategic autonomy — deepening ties with Russia while engaging with U.S. and EU.
3. **Economic Potential**
 - A Grain Exchange could bring **price transparency, stable supplies, and food security cooperation**.
 - However, challenges remain — India has **export bans on wheat/rice** to protect domestic consumers, which may limit participation.

Challenges

- Diverging agricultural export policies (India's restrictions vs Russia's surpluses).
- Coordination among **diverse BRICS members** with competing food security priorities.
- Infrastructure & logistics bottlenecks (ports, shipping, storage).
- Global criticism: May be seen as **fragmenting world trade systems**.

Way Forward

- India should leverage the platform for **fertilizer security, agri-tech exchange, and food processing investment**.
- Promote **rupee-ruble or local currency trade** within BRICS.
- Balance between **domestic food security** and **export commitments**.
- Strengthen **multilateral South-South trade institutions** to ensure food access for Global South.

Conclusion

The proposal for a **BRICS Grain Exchange** reflects an attempt by emerging economies to reshape global trade architecture, especially in the face of geopolitical turbulence and food crises. For India, it is both an **opportunity to secure critical agri-imports** and a **platform to project itself as a responsible food provider**. The success of this initiative will depend on **harmonizing diverse member interests, ensuring transparency, and aligning with national food security priorities**.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Ques: With reference to the BRICS grouping, consider the following statements:

1. The New Development Bank was established by BRICS with its headquarters in Shanghai.
2. The Contingent Reserve Arrangement aims to provide support through liquidity and precautionary instruments in response to short-term balance of payment pressures.
3. In 2025, BRICS discussed the idea of a Grain Exchange to boost agricultural trade.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Ans: (d)

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Ques: The proposed BRICS Grain Exchange reflects both economic cooperation and geopolitical strategy. Critically analyze its implications for India's food security and foreign policy. **(150 Words)**

Page 08 :GS 2 : Indian Polity/ Prelims

The recent violent protests in Ladakh (September 2025) highlight the **deepening mistrust between locals and the Centre**. Despite earlier agreements granting job reservations, domicile rules, and cultural recognition, demands for **Statehood, Sixth Schedule inclusion, job guarantees, and greater political autonomy** remain unresolved. Ladakh's **strategic location bordering China and Pakistan**, along with its fragile ecology and unique cultural diversity, makes the situation sensitive and complex.

Issues in Current Context

- **September 24 Violence:** Protests turned violent in Leh; 4 killed, BJP office and Hill Council HQ vandalised.
- **Protest Demands:**
 1. Full **Statehood** for Ladakh.
 2. **Sixth Schedule inclusion** for tribal autonomy.
 3. **Job reservation** for locals.
 4. Greater **political representation**.
- **Civil Society Groups:**
 - **Leh Apex Body (LAB)** – Buddhist-majority Leh.
 - **Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA)** – Muslim-majority Kargil.
 - Despite differences, both united in four-point agenda.

May 2025 Agreement: Promised 95% local job quota, 33% women reservation in Hill Councils, strict domicile, recognition of local languages.

Trigger for Violence: Hospitalisation of hunger-striking elderly activists (including Sonam Wangchuk).

Static Linkages

1. **Ladakh as UT (2019)** – Carved out of J&K post Article 370 abrogation. Directly governed by Centre.
2. **Sixth Schedule of Constitution** – Provides autonomy to tribal areas in NE states (Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Tripura). Demand in Ladakh for similar protection of land, culture, and jobs.
3. **Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils (LAHDCs)** – Leh (1995) and Kargil (2003). Limited powers; main demand is for stronger legislative/administrative authority.
4. **Strategic Importance** –
 - Borders: China (Aksai Chin), Pakistan (Gilgit-Baltistan).
 - Military: Key deployment zone for India-China standoff.
 - Ecology: Cold desert, climate-vulnerable region.

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Mistrust in Ladakh

Legitimate aspirations of a people need to be taken into account

The festering unrest in the Union Territory of Ladakh turned violent on September 24, which resulted in the deaths of four persons and several others being injured. In the eyes of the Centre, the protest leaders had acted in bad faith even as efforts were underway to address their long-standing demands. These demands include statehood for Ladakh, inclusion under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution (which grants autonomy to tribal areas), reservation in jobs for locals, and greater political representation. The protest leaders and organisations at the forefront of the agitation have, however, said that the arson and violence were carried out by those outside the control. The protesters and the Centre have agreed to the youth of Ladakh to remain calm. The Ladakh protests have been championed by two major civil society coalitions – the Leh Apex Body (LAB), representing Buddhist-majority Leh, and the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), representing Muslim-majority Kargil. While the groups do have many disagreements, they are united in a four-point agenda for constitution safeguards and greater political autonomy for the region. On Wednesday, a shutdown called by the youth wing of LAB turned violent in Leh, which included the burning of the office of the Bharatiya Janata Party and the vandalising of the headquarters of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC).

The Centre and these outfits had reached an agreement in May 2025, which seemingly addressed core concerns through measures such as 33% reservation in jobs for locals (including Scheduled EWS), 33% reservation for women in the Hill Development Council, strict domicile criteria and recognition of local languages such as Bhojipoti, Balti and Shina. However, on September 24, the hospitalisation of two elderly protesters who were on a hunger strike with climate activist Sonam Wangchuk, triggered a fresh round of protests mostly led by youth. The Centre no longer insists that Mr. Wangchuk is instigating violence. While a resolution to all demands has been in the works, the Centre has also hinted at the involvement of foreign elements. There is evidently a gap between the perceptions of the protesters and the Centre on both the issues at hand and the way forward. Ladakh is a sensitive security space for the country. This makes it all the more important that the people of the region are taken into confidence even while troublemakers are brought under control. The legitimate aspirations of the people can be addressed without

Daily News Analysis

Analysis of the Situation

1. **Centre's View:** Protest leaders acting in "bad faith," violence instigated by external/foreign elements.
2. **Protesters' View:** Centre not honoring commitments, fear of demographic change and marginalisation.
3. **Trust Deficit:** Despite agreements (reservations, domicile), **core demand of statehood and Sixth Schedule safeguards remain unaddressed.**
4. **Security Dimension:** Being a border UT, Ladakh requires strong central control. Excessive autonomy may be viewed as a security risk by the establishment.
5. **Socio-political Unity:** Rare cooperation between Leh's Buddhist groups and Kargil's Muslim groups on common agenda signals **deep grassroots dissatisfaction.**

Way Forward

- **Dialogue & Trust-Building:** Centre must engage with LAB, KDA, and civil society leaders in **inclusive talks.**
- **Constitutional Safeguards:** Explore **special provisions (like Sixth Schedule or Article 371-like arrangements)** without compromising national security.
- **Balanced Autonomy:** Empower LAHDCs with **greater financial and legislative authority.**
- **Youth Engagement:** Prevent alienation by addressing education, jobs, ecological livelihood concerns.
- **Security + Development Approach:** Integrate strategic security imperatives with people's democratic aspirations.

Conclusion

The Ladakh unrest underscores the challenges of governing frontier regions where **geopolitical sensitivities intersect with local aspirations.** While India cannot compromise on security in such a volatile borderland, **ignoring the legitimate democratic demands of the people risks long-term instability.** A calibrated approach — ensuring **autonomy, representation, and cultural safeguards within the constitutional framework** — is vital for peace, stability, and integration of Ladakh into India's democratic mainstream.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Ques: With reference to the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, consider the following statements:

1. It provides for autonomous administrative arrangements for certain tribal areas of the Northeast.
2. The Governor of the state concerned has the power to determine the jurisdiction of District and Regional Councils.
3. Ladakh is already included under the Sixth Schedule.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Ans: (a)

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Ques: The ongoing protests in Ladakh reveal the tension between local aspirations and national security imperatives. Discuss the constitutional and governance options available to address this issue. **(150 Words)**

Extreme heat, aggravated by climate change, is emerging as one of the most severe **public health and development challenges** in the Global South. The recent debate in India over energy-efficient air conditioning (default setting at 24°C) highlights the tension between **energy conservation goals** and the **urgent need for universal access to cooling**. For vulnerable populations, cooling is no longer a luxury but a **frontline adaptation measure** to save lives, protect livelihoods, and ensure climate justice.

Cooling rights in a sweltering South

Access to air conditioning is currently severely limited in developing countries, including in India. Enhancing this access is urgently required as a public health safeguard and a necessity for adaptation to climate change. Cooling is no longer a matter of comfort for the global South, but a frontline adaptation need

EXPLAINER

Ankita Ranjan

In June 2025, the Government of India (GoI) proposed that all new air conditioning systems (ACS) in homes, commercial spaces and vehicles must operate within the temperature range of 20°C to 28°C, with 24°C as the default setting. The Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) estimates that this proposal could save 20 billion units of energy annually, amounting to ₹10,000 crores and emissions reduction of 16 million tonnes. While such energy-saving measures are important there are more fundamental issues that need to be addressed. Access to air conditioning is currently severely limited in developing countries, including India. Enhancing this access is urgently required as a public health safeguard and a necessity for adaptation to climate change. By treating cooling primarily as an energy and emissions concern, the need to universalise access to cooling and provision of public facilities that can protect vulnerable populations from heat stress often gets sidelined.

In India, access to air conditioning remains severely inadequate, and the main challenge is insufficiency. Cooling is no longer a matter of comfort for the global South, but a frontline adaptation need. In 2021, only 13% of urban and 1% of rural households in India owned an AC. While efficiency and behavioural measures can reduce the emissions footprint of existing users, without simultaneously prioritising access to the most vulnerable, such policies risk becoming symbolic gestures that are ineffective in confronting deeper inequities at the heart of climate justice.

While the national average of AC ownership in India is approximately 5%, it is overwhelmingly concentrated amongst the urban rich. In 2021, the richest 10% in India, mostly residing in urban areas, owned 72% of the total ACs.

This disparity is also reflected in



The per capita electricity consumption for space cooling is 7 GJ in the U.S., which is over 28 times higher than in India, 19 times higher than in Indonesia and 13 times higher than in Brazil. FILE PHOTO

interstate and regional differences.

The inter-country cooling divide is even more stark and inequitable. Developed countries have long enjoyed near universal access to thermal comfort, primarily through widespread heating systems, but more recently through the increased adoption of air conditioning. In 2020, nearly 90% households in the U.S. and Japan owned an AC, as compared to 22% in Central and South America and only 6% in Sub-Saharan Africa. The per capita electricity consumption for space cooling is 7 GJ in the U.S., which is over 28 times higher than in India, 19 times higher than in Indonesia and 13 times higher than in Brazil.

During the European heatwave, which peaked around 42°C in cities like London and Paris, urgent public investments were made in cooling infrastructure, with the current AC ownership doubling in Europe since 1990, and the International Energy Agency (IEA) projecting a four-fold increase by 2050. While several major cities in the global South routinely record temperatures above 40°C, the international discourse around their rising cooling demand is widely framed as a mitigation problem, while it is justified

as a necessary adaptation measure for the North, indicating a troubling hypocrisy.

The Imperative of cooling

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that between 2000 and 2019, heat exposure contributed to approximately 489,000 global deaths, with India alone recording more than 20,000 heat-related deaths in this period. While extreme heat is increasingly recognised as one of the prominent health threats in the global South, the resulting mortality or morbidity rate is not solely a function of rising temperatures. It in fact reflects the acute shortage of protective infrastructure such as thermally secured housing, reliable electricity supply and adequately equipped public health systems. In 2022, the majority of the health care facilities in high-income countries had a reliable power supply, whereas nearly one billion people in the lower-middle and low-income countries were served by facilities with unreliable or no power supply.

In South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), 12% and 15% health centres, respectively, had no electricity, while only

50% hospitals in SSA reported having a reliable power supply.

Without adequate energy infrastructure, providing essential services such as neonatal care, climate-controlled emergency rooms, and vaccine refrigeration becomes precarious as they rely on stable cooling systems.

During periods of extreme heat, countries like Kenya, Ghana and Burkina Faso have recorded sharp spikes in cardiovascular, respiratory and renal conditions that cannot be treated safely in overheated and underpowered facilities. Beyond hospitals, the lack of cooling access also undermines workplace safety and labour productivity.

In India, almost 80% of the labour force is engaged in sectors such as agriculture, construction and street vending; jobs that require strenuous outdoor activities. Recognising this vulnerability, several Indian States and cities have developed Heat Action Plans (HAPs) that include early warning systems, information sharing, heat shelters and public awareness campaigns. However, their implementation is often constrained due to underfunding, limited institutional coordination and weak legal foundations. Addressing these intersecting challenges in the global South requires an urgent need to integrate heat resilience as a core development priority through policies that focus on stronger labour protection, targeted social safety nets and comprehensive heat action plans.

As low-income nations already face staggering challenges due to economic and energy poverty, without large-scale investments in public infrastructure and access to finance from the North, cooling will remain unaffordable for billions in the South. Closing this gap is important to prevent avoidable deaths, protect livelihoods and build climate-resilient public systems. Therefore, cooling must not be treated as a climate liability to be rationed, but as a non-negotiable development right that is crucial for strengthening equity and enabling adaptation.

THE GIST

In 2020, nearly 90% of households in the U.S. and Japan owned an AC, compared to 22% in Central and South America and only 6% in Sub-Saharan Africa

In India, the national average of AC ownership is around 5%, concentrated mostly among the urban rich

The World Health Organization estimates that between 2000 and 2019, heat exposure caused approximately 489,000 deaths globally

Key Issues Highlighted

- **Access disparity:** In India, only **5% households own ACs** (13% urban, 1% rural); ownership heavily skewed towards the richest 10%.
- **Global divide:** ~90% households in the U.S. and Japan have ACs, compared to only 6% in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- **Health impact:** WHO estimates ~489,000 deaths globally due to heat exposure (2000–2019); India recorded over **20,000 heat-related deaths**.
- **Labour vulnerability:** 80% of India's labour force works in outdoor heat-exposed sectors like agriculture, construction, and vending.
- **Public health infrastructure gaps:** 12–15% of health centres in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa lack electricity; only ~50% of SSA hospitals have reliable power supply.
- **Policy response:** Heat Action Plans (HAPs) exist in some Indian states but suffer from weak funding and poor implementation.

Static Linkages

1. **National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC, 2008)** – includes missions on energy efficiency, renewable energy, and adaptation.
2. **India Cooling Action Plan (ICAP, 2019)** – first country-level strategy on sustainable cooling; targets affordable and sustainable cooling access across sectors.
3. **Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE)** – statutory body under the Energy Conservation Act, 2001; mandates star labelling and AC efficiency standards.
4. **Heat Action Plans (HAPs)** – local adaptation measures including heat shelters, early warning systems, hydration points.
5. **SDGs Linkages** – SDG 3 (Good health), SDG 7 (Affordable clean energy), SDG 13 (Climate action), SDG 10 (Reducing inequality).

Current Context & Analysis

- **Equity & Climate Justice:** Developed countries frame cooling demand in the South as a “mitigation burden,” while justifying their own cooling needs as adaptation. This highlights **global hypocrisy**.
- **Energy vs Health Dilemma:** Policies like setting AC defaults at 24°C may save energy, but fail to address **lack of access among vulnerable groups**.
- **Productivity Loss:** Rising heat reduces labour productivity, increasing economic vulnerability for the poor.
- **Infrastructure Gaps:** Hospitals and health centres without reliable cooling undermine basic health care, including neonatal care and vaccine storage.
- **Financing & North–South Divide:** Without climate finance and technology transfer, the South cannot bridge the cooling gap.

Way Forward

1. **Universalise Cooling as a Right** – Recognise access to thermal comfort as part of **public health and social equity**.

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Daily News Analysis

2. **Strengthen India Cooling Action Plan (ICAP)** – Ensure affordable cooling technologies reach rural and poor populations.
3. **Public Infrastructure Investment** – Develop heat shelters, green housing, reliable hospital cooling, and workplace protection laws.
 4. **International Climate Finance** – Push developed nations to support adaptation financing for cooling infrastructure.
 5. **Energy-Efficient Innovations** – Encourage passive cooling, green buildings, district cooling systems, and renewable-powered ACs.

Conclusion

Cooling is no longer a matter of luxury or comfort — it is a **development right and survival necessity** in the age of climate change. For India and the Global South, ensuring equitable access to cooling must go hand-in-hand with energy efficiency. Policies must shift focus from mere **mitigation optics** to **adaptation justice**, integrating cooling into public health, labour safety, and infrastructure planning. Bridging the cooling divide is central to building a **climate-resilient and equitable future**.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Ques : Consider the following statements about India's cooling policies and challenges:

1. The India Cooling Action Plan (ICAP) aims to ensure sustainable and affordable access to cooling, targeting both energy efficiency and adaptation needs.
2. In India, less than 15% of urban households and less than 5% of rural households owned air conditioners as of 2021.
3. Heat Action Plans (HAPs) in India are primarily implemented under the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE).
4. Developed countries justify high cooling demand as an adaptation need, while framing rising cooling demand in the Global South primarily as a mitigation problem.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

Ans: (b)

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Ques: Cooling is not just a comfort but an adaptation right in the Global South." Critically analyse in the context of India's climate vulnerabilities and policy framework. **(150 Words)**

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The emergence of **provincial citizenship** reflects the rising influence of **nativist and sub-nationalist politics** in India. Rooted in emotional belonging to a State rather than the nation, it challenges the constitutional ideal of **"one nation, one citizenship"** under Articles 15, 16, and 19. By prioritising domicile-based rights, this trend redefines the relationship between **citizenship, migration, and political participation**, raising concerns about the rights of internal migrants and the inclusivity of Indian democracy.



Citizens, domicile, migrants: Why should we worry about Provincial Citizenship?

Provincial citizenship emerges from nativist politics rooted in an emotional belonging to a State, which gains immediate leverage in regional electoral politics. It challenges the idea of singular Indian citizenship, sparking debates over definitions of 'native', 'indigenous', 'Adivasi', 'local', or 'son of the soil'

Swatashiddha Sarkar

Ranjan, A. (2025). Provincial Citizenship: Jharkhand Domicile, Migration and Politics of Scale. *Studies in Indian Politics*, forthcoming (published online, September 2025)

Mobility in its many forms has long been considered core to the notion of progress and the formation of civilisation. Conversely, sedentarism – the practice of living in one place – emerges from the need to link property, descent, and lineage to the control of resources. World history is replete with the caravan trails of tribes, pastoralists, traders, and soldiers. This historical context of mobility is reinforced by today's global networks, which facilitate a new world defined by the flow of not only goods, services, and capital but also labour. This, of course, alludes to globalisation – a force that has affected our social, cultural, political, and economic standpoints, as well as our very perspectives and identities.

A matter of concern

Given this backdrop, it's curious that while the idea of mobility has expanded, our physical mobility often remains restricted, particularly when it comes to seeking livelihoods outside one's home State. Despite the precarity of migrant workers becoming painfully evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, Indian metropolises remain the most coveted destinations for destitute rural workers from different States.

More recently, in the wake of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) updation and the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of Electoral Rolls, the mistreatment of migrant labour in various cities has become a matter of national debate and anxiety. While there has been an upsurge of a media-fed "public mood", the "public mind" needs to be nudged toward a deeper engagement with complex issues like inter-state migration.

In this regard, it's worth reflecting on provocative discussions in academic forums where fresh insights, such as "provincial citizenship" (a term pitched by Alok Ranjan, a PhD candidate at JNU), are sparking deep reflection. Following Ranjan's lead, it is meaningful to explore the idea of inter-state migration for a broader audience, especially for those who might think this issue only concerns the directly affected or the policymakers tasked with providing relief.

Ranjan's work reflects on inter-State migration and how it has drafted a new chapter in the "politics of domicile" within India's democratic body politic, though this operates only at the provincial level. "Provincial citizenship" emerges from nativist politics rooted in an emotional belonging to a State, which gains immediate leverage in regional electoral politics. In the process, the entanglement of spatial identity, freedom of movement, and citizenship allows domicile to surface as a new category for political mobilisation. Crucially, these tendencies accentuate the significance of States as sites of citizenship, even at a time when a more inclusive, national-level "citizenship" is being emphasised as the fulcrum of *Akhanda Bharat* (Undivided India).

Following Ranjan, we see that a close scrutiny of States like Jharkhand, Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), and Assam can help us understand how domicile becomes a potent political instrument. In J&K, domicile policies were implemented after the 2019 abrogation of its special status as a measure of inclusive politics to safeguard minorities (like the Valmikis, Gorkhas, and West Pakistan refugees). Jharkhand, however, represents a case where domicile was used to articulate majoritarian grievances against the perceived influence of a minority elite in a State formed in 2000. Backed by its unique history, the politics of domicile in Jharkhand departs from the norms seen in Sixth Schedule regions. It tends to encompass the whole State, superseding the nation's federal structure and questioning the national citizenship rights guaranteed by Article 16(2) of the Indian Constitution.

Attaining statehood did not resolve sub-nationalist politics in Jharkhand. Instead, these sentiments were channelled into a democratic politics of domicile after 2000. This transition challenges the "one nation, one citizenship" ideal. Here, the notion of a single national citizenship is undermined by the efficacy of the unofficially constructed idea of provincial citizenship, whose political importance can render the national framework inadequate.

Jharkhand's experience also suggests that conflicts between the interests of internal migrants and the concerns of provincial citizenship cannot be democratically adjudicated within the existing political structure, often requiring the Supreme Court's intervention.

The newness of an old idea

This "unofficial" provincial citizenship problematises the official idea of a singular Indian citizenship. It creates a contest over definitions of 'native', 'indigenous', 'Adivasi', 'local', or 'son of the soil' that exist alongside the identity of an Indian citizen.

The problem of internal migrants in provincial contexts is not new. Myron Weiner, in his book *Sons of the Soil: Migration and Ethnic Conflict in India* (1978), was perhaps the first to assess the social and political consequences of internal migration in States like Maharashtra, Bihar, and Assam. More recent coinages like "citizen-outsiders" (Roy 2010), "differentiated citizenship" (Joyal 2013), and "paused citizens" (Sharma 2024) "hyphenated nationality" (Sarkar 2025) have enriched our vocabulary for analysing this issue.

It is also relevant to consider the recommendations of the States Reorganisation Commission (SRC) of 1955. The members of the SRC anticipated the problems of discrimination and exclusion arising from domicile policies. They were greatly concerned about these rules, finding them inconsistent with Articles 15, 16, and 19 of the Constitution and contrary to the very concept of Indian citizenship. The members stated, "We do not feel called upon to pronounce on the purely legal aspects of these restrictions, but we have no doubt whatsoever that their total effect is the exact opposite of what was intended by the Constitution" (SRC Report 1955, p. 230).

The SRC report recommended that domicile rules should be replaced by appropriate Parliamentary legislation, warning that "Otherwise, the concept of a common Indian citizenship would have no meaning" (pp. 230-231). In many respects, the concept of provincial citizenship echoes these decades-old warnings. Its newness lies in how this concept has transcended the passivity of a written report to become an active and grave reality.

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Key Issues Highlighted

1. **Definition & Emergence:**
 - Provincial citizenship assigns political and economic privileges based on **domicile or local identity**, distinguishing 'natives' from internal migrants.
 - Gains traction in **regional electoral politics** and mobilises local sentiments.
2. **Case Studies:**
 - **Jharkhand:** Post-2000, domicile rules used to safeguard majority interests against perceived minority elites; provincial citizenship undermines national citizenship.
 - **Jammu & Kashmir:** Domicile criteria post-2019 designed for minority inclusivity.
 - **Assam & North-East:** Longstanding "sons of the soil" debates, NRC and citizen-outsider issues.
3. **Historical Context:**
 - **Myron Weiner (1978)** highlighted ethnic conflicts from internal migration.
 - States Reorganisation Commission (1955) warned that strict domicile rules could **undermine the concept of Indian citizenship**.
 - Recent scholarship introduces terms like **"differentiated citizenship"**, "paused citizens," and "hyphenated nationality" to describe these tensions.
4. **Contemporary Concerns:**
 - Internal migrants face **discrimination and exclusion** in employment, education, and political rights.
 - Provincial citizenship challenges the **federal balance** by giving States quasi-sovereign authority over residency-based rights.
 - May require **judicial intervention** (Supreme Court) to resolve conflicts between national and provincial claims.

Static Linkages

- **Articles 15, 16, 19** – Equality, employment rights, and freedom of movement.
- **NRC & SIR** – Recent triggers for anxieties regarding citizenship verification.
- **States Reorganisation Commission (SRC, 1955)** – Recommended domicile rules should not override national citizenship.
- **Sons of the Soil conflicts** – Maharashtra, Bihar, Assam; historical precedent of sub-nationalist politics.

Current Context & Analysis

- **Internal migration** is essential for economic development, urbanisation, and labour supply.
- Provincial citizenship can **marginalise migrants**, impacting urban economies and social cohesion.
- Rise in **regionalist political rhetoric** feeds public anxiety about "outsiders," risking **polarisation** and **conflict**.
- Balancing **provincial identity** with **national integration** is critical for maintaining federalism and democratic inclusivity.

Way Forward

1. **Legal Safeguards** – Ensure internal migrants' rights under Articles 16(2) and 19(1)(d).
2. **Policy Harmonisation** – States should align domicile policies with **national citizenship rights**.
3. **Judicial Oversight** – Supreme Court to adjudicate conflicts between provincial and national claims.

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4. **Public Awareness & Civic Education** – Promote understanding of **internal migration as a national developmental imperative**.
5. **Inclusive Politics** – Political parties must resist nativist mobilisation that undermines migrant rights.

Conclusion

Provincial citizenship illustrates the **tension between regional identity and constitutional citizenship** in India. While States have legitimate interests in safeguarding local culture and resources, **exclusive domicile-based privileges risk undermining national integration, equality, and freedom of movement**. A balanced approach, integrating **legal safeguards, policy coherence, and civic awareness**, is essential to uphold India's **singular, inclusive citizenship framework** while respecting local aspirations.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Ques: Consider the following statements about provincial citizenship in India:

1. It grants political and economic privileges based on domicile rather than national citizenship.
2. States like Jharkhand, Jammu & Kashmir, and Assam have used provincial citizenship policies.
3. Provincial citizenship fully aligns with Articles 15, 16, and 19 of the Indian Constitution.
4. It is primarily a concept emerging from nativist politics to mobilize local sentiments.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

Options:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 1, 2, and 4 only
- (c) 2, 3, and 4 only
- (d) All of the above

Ans: b)

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Ques: Provincial citizenship challenges the ideal of one nation, one citizenship. Critically examine the implications of domicile-based politics for India's federal structure and internal migration. **(150 Words)**

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Eight States with international borders, 0.13% of exports

When U.S. President Donald Trump signed off on an additional 25% tariffs on imports from India in August 2025, citing trade deficits, the buying of Russian crude, and retaliatory precedent, New Delhi responded with its usual posture – of measured language, closed-door diplomacy and no public retaliation. The choreography was familiar. Washington struck, India absorbed. Official narratives framed it as another episode in bilateral turbulence. But these tariffs cut along fault lines that run inside the country, not just between two capitals. What they expose is not just a trade imbalance but also a deeper spatial imbalance that New Delhi has long refused to reckon with.

India's export economy is heavily centralised. The four States of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka account for more than 70% of all merchandise exports. For Gujarat alone, it is over 33%. This concentration is no accident. There has been an alignment of infrastructure, incentives, and political continuity in these zones for decades. Meanwhile, India's most populous States, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Madhya Pradesh, remain on the margins, with barely 5% of the country's outbound trade between them.

A marginalisation of the northeast

Then there is the northeast, whose place in India's export economy is marginal by design. Eight States, with over 5,400 kilometres of international borders, account for just 0.13% of national exports. There is no operational trade corridor linking them to foreign markets. And, no logistical infrastructure to support volume or role in shaping policy. Instead, what exists is a security apparatus calibrated for counterinsurgency and surveillance. Trade has never been part of the mandate.

The northeast remains structurally unrepresented in the institutions that shape India's economic future. Not a single member of the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council hails from the region. The Board of Trade, tasked with steering India's export strategy, has no substantive voice from Mizoram, Tripura, or Arunachal Pradesh. Schemes such as Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) and the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) are rolled out with fanfare in industrial belts stretching from Gujarat to Tamil Nadu. But the hills and the valleys of the northeast are left to navigate global markets without infrastructure, without logistics, and without institutional leverage. This is not mere bureaucratic oversight. It is a cold calculation that the region can be symbolically embraced, yet economically orphaned. As recently as 2024, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade's strategic export plan had 87 pages without a single section on the northeast's corridors. The omission was not protested. It was simply assumed.

In Assam, the tea economy is fraying. Prices stagnate, labour shortages persist, and estates are



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stretched thin. A 25% tariff hike in key western markets threatens to push margins below viability. "We're holding on with fingertips," said a Dibrugarh planter who oversees over 500 workers. "If the US [United States] and EU [European Union] buyers cut orders, we'll have to start scaling back operations immediately."

The region accounts for more than half of India's total tea output, but almost none of the high-value packaging or branding. The bulk is still CTC-grade, sold in auctions, exposed to every market swing. Buyers are in reassessment mode and cost-cutting has begun in the Upper Assam belt and the Dooars. Wages are flatlining. Inputs are thinning. The next to go will be jobs.

At Numaligarh, the refinery runs like a nervous artery through Assam's energy spine. Most of its crude still comes from Oil India and Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited fields nearby, but that is changing. The expansion to nine million metric tonnes per annum means that it must look outward toward Paradip, and, increasingly, toward discounted Russian cargoes.

That is where the risk brews. Washington's tariff play, framed partly as a response to India's Russian alignment, casts a long shadow here. If the next round of sanctions hardens or shipping lanes tighten, it will not show up in Mumbai's balance sheets. It will be Golaghat that will shudder.

A silent border with Myanmar, ASEAN

Since the 2021 coup in Naypyidaw, trade across the India-Myanmar frontier has thinned. Highways once envisioned as arteries of regional integration now vanish into checkpoints, chokepoints, and bureaucratic fog. Once porous and alive with exchange, the border now speaks in silence.

India's two principal gateways to Myanmar, Zokhawthar in Mizoram and Moreh in Manipur, have withered into skeletal outposts. Once central to Act East dreams, they now function more as securitised bottlenecks than trade hubs. Infrastructure remains performative – roads exist on paper, customs offices are understaffed, and cold-chain facilities are nowhere to be found. The scrapping of the Free Movement Regime in 2024 was the final blow, severing not just trade but also kinship, daily life and the interwoven economies of the hills.

Surveillance replaced commerce. These are no longer corridors of trade but containment grids, structured by counterinsurgency logic rather than market demand. Where goods do not move, troops do. And as infrastructure decays, these towns slide from economic relevance into strategic emptiness, mapped not for connectivity but for control. The border is open only to the idea of closure.

The northeast was once mapped as India's strategic region, a bridge to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. The bridge never left the drawing board. In policy circles, trade resilience now means shifting from one product category to

another, electronics to semiconductors, textiles to pharma. Geography is not a part of the equation. The assumption is fixed – trade flows through the same corridors that served colonial ports and post-Independence industrial clusters. The northeast remains outside that frame, not by oversight, but by design.

Asia's moves, India's inertia

As China consolidates its grip over northern Myanmar through infrastructure investments, militia alliances and a growing intelligence footprint, India continues to squander its own flanks. The India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway, which begins at Moreh, now vanishes into the jungle. Surveillance, not commerce, defines India's frontier stance. Where goods do not cross, border forces do. And when movement is reduced to patrols, borderlands do not stay still; they drift toward disorder.

What is required is not reinvention but basic state function. Trade runs on roads, not rhetoric. It moves through warehouses, not white papers. In the northeast, those arteries are missing. Infrastructure is sporadic, and policy presence is thinner still. New Delhi may ink a free trade agreement with London and issue joint statements in Washington, but the substance of those agreements rarely crosses the Siliguri Corridor. The northeast remains unintegrated in both design and delivery. India effectively negotiates global trade while ignoring the geographies that could anchor it.

By treating Mr. Trump's tariffs as a passing irritant, India sidesteps the deeper structural fault – its trade economy is spatially lopsided. A flood in Gujarat or a labour strike in Tamil Nadu is enough to choke the national pipeline. That is not dispersion, it is dependence. The global chessboard has shifted. Supply chains are in motion. China is repositioning capital. Southeast Asia is building alternative corridors. India claims a role in the Indo-Pacific equation, but its export architecture still rests on a few coastal enclaves. Strategic talk rings hollow when the eastern frontier remains disconnected from the commerce map.

A state cannot claim regional heft while its eastern flank remains economically brittle. The northeast has never asked for slogans. It requires the minimum grammar of statecraft: roads that reach markets, policies that recognise geography, and governance that sees beyond electoral math. For decades, the region has been told to wait through insurgencies, ceasefires, and empty policy acronyms. But the world is moving. Trade disruptions are more frequent. Corridors are shifting. And delay now resembles design.

No single tariff will break India, but repeated regional omissions erode the idea of a cohesive economy. This is not a call for retaliation. It is a demand to reframe resilience, not as a concentration of strength, but as the ability to absorb shocks from every part of the map. Until then, the blind spot stays intact.

India is negotiating global trade while ignoring key geographies such as the northeast that could anchor a cohesive economy

GS. Paper 03—Indian Economy

UPSC Mains Practice Question: The economic marginalisation of India's northeast undermines trade resilience and strategic objectives. Critically analyse the structural and policy gaps and suggest measures for regional integration. (150 Words)

Context :

The northeast of India, comprising eight international border States, accounts for only **0.13% of national exports** despite over 5,400 km of international borders. Recent U.S. tariffs on Indian exports underscore not just bilateral tensions but also **deep structural imbalances in India's trade economy**. While western and southern industrial clusters dominate exports, the northeast remains economically marginalised, with infrastructure and policy support geared more toward security than commerce. This exposes a **strategic and economic vulnerability** in India's frontier regions.

Key Issues Highlighted

- Export Concentration:**
 - Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka contribute **>70% of merchandise exports**.
 - Northeast States lack operational corridors, logistics, and institutional representation.
- Economic Marginalisation:**
 - Assam produces over **50% of India's tea**, yet remains dependent on low-value bulk exports.
 - Numaligarh refinery and local industries depend on external supply chains, vulnerable to geopolitical shocks.
- Border & Connectivity Issues:**
 - India–Myanmar trade corridors (Moreh, Zokhawthar) are underdeveloped, bureaucratised, and securitised.
 - Scrapping of Free Movement Regime (2024) disrupted trade and kinship networks.
 - India–ASEAN integration hampered by lack of infrastructure, cold chains, and functional highways.
- Strategic Implications:**
 - China invests heavily in northern Myanmar infrastructure, enhancing its regional influence.
 - India's "Act East" ambitions are undermined by **neglect of eastern borders**, turning potential trade hubs into securitised zones.

Static Linkages

- Act East Policy (1991, expanded 2014)** – Emphasises economic integration with ASEAN via the northeast.
- India–Myanmar–Thailand Trilateral Highway** – Key trade corridor; incomplete connectivity hampers regional commerce.
- PLI & RoDTEP schemes** – Incentive schemes concentrated in Gujarat-Tamil Nadu industrial clusters; northeast left out.
- Geopolitics** – Borders with Myanmar, Bangladesh, China; strategic vulnerability due to economic underdevelopment.

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- **Siliguri Corridor (Chicken's Neck)** – Single connectivity

bottleneck for northeast trade.

Current Context & Analysis

- **Economic Resilience:** India's export economy is **spatially lopsided**, dependent on a few coastal hubs. Shocks in the northeast could cascade if ignored.
- **Labour & Livelihood Vulnerability:** Tea estates, local industries, and port-dependent sectors face market fluctuations and tariff risks.
- **Security vs Trade:** Militarisation of borders prioritises surveillance over economic development, limiting regional growth.
- **Geopolitical Risks:** China's growing influence in northern Myanmar can sideline India if connectivity and trade corridors are not developed.
- **Policy Gap:** Lack of northeast representation in national trade bodies and export strategies leads to systemic neglect.

Way Forward

1. **Infrastructure Development** – Strengthen highways, customs, cold chains, and logistics for northeastern exports.
2. **Institutional Representation** – Include northeast stakeholders in PM Economic Advisory Council, Board of Trade, and export planning.
3. **Regional Trade Corridors** – Operationalise India–Myanmar–Thailand highway, Zokhawthar and Moreh gateways.
4. **Economic Incentives** – Extend RoDTEP, PLI, and MSME support schemes to the northeast.
5. **Strategic Integration** – Combine security and commerce policies to ensure borders are economically productive as well as secure.

Conclusion

India's northeast remains a **strategic and economic blind spot**, sidelined in national export and trade policy despite its geopolitical importance. Long-term resilience requires a **paradigm shift** from concentrating exports in traditional hubs toward **inclusive, border-integrated economic development**. Bridging this gap is crucial not only for economic equity but also for securing India's **eastern frontier and Act East ambitions**.

