

The Hindu Important News Articles & Editorial For UPSC CSE
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Page 01 : GS II : Indian Polity & Governance/ Prelims Exam

On February 26, 2026, a three-judge Bench led by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant took suo motu cognizance of a newly released Class 8 Social Science textbook, Exploring Society: India and Beyond, Vol II. The court imposed a "complete and blanket ban" on the book following a section that detailed "corruption in the judiciary."

SC bans textbook, orders seizure of all copies

Court initiates contempt action over a section on 'corruption' in judiciary in Class 8 NCERT textbook | The remarks are a 'calculated move' to instil bias in children, 'heads must roll', the Bench insists | Court would not let the issue fade with an apology from government or NCERT, the Chief Justice said

Krishnadass Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday said there was a "deep-rooted conspiracy" behind the "very, very calculated move" to portray the judiciary as a venal institution in a Class 8 social science textbook with "selective reference" about "corruption" in it.

The court ordered a "blanket and complete" ban on the book and the immediate seizure and sealing of each and every copy, both in digital and physical form.

The textbook was published by the National Council of Education Research and Training (NCERT), an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Education, in February.

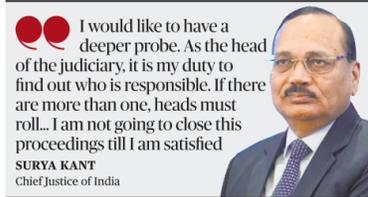
A three-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of

India Surya Kant, in a suo motu case hearing, said the "reckless, irresponsible, motivated, contemptuous conduct and manner" of the textual depiction was meant to instil a bias against the judiciary in the "impressionable minds" of young schoolchildren, and through them, to society at large and even future generations.

Unconditional apology
The Bench said that "heads must roll" and initiated contempt action.

"All of us are holding our heads in shame," Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, said and offered the court an unconditional and unqualified apology.

The court would not let the issue fade into oblivion after a word of apology from the government or the NCERT, Chief Justice Kant said.



SURYA KANT
Chief Justice of India

"This is a well-orchestrated and planned move. I would like to have a deeper probe. As the head of the judiciary, it is my duty to find out who is responsible. If there are more than one, heads must roll. I am not going to close this proceeding till I am satisfied," the Chief Justice told the Union government.

Mr. Mehta said the people who worked on the textbook would never be assigned the task again by the Education Ministry.

If he had his way, Mr.

Mehta added, they would not be employed by any other Ministry either.

Initiating contempt action, the court issued a show cause notice to both the Secretary of the Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education, and the NCERT Director, Dinesh Prasad Saklani, whom the court said had "defended" the "offensive content" even when the Supreme Court Secretary General, on the instruction of Chief Justice Kant, had sought an

Modi calls for accountability

NEW DELHI
Prime Minister Narendra Modi has called for fixing accountability over the chapter on "corruption" in judiciary in NCERT's textbook. » PAGE 5

explanation. "They fired the gun and the judiciary is bleeding today," Chief Justice Kant said, addressing the law officer.

'Definitely deliberate'

The court said that, *prima facie*, an examination of the book's contents and the response from the director, seemed like a calculated move to undermine the institutional authority and demean the dignity of the judiciary.

The Bench said, in its order, that the publication

"washed off with one stroke of the pen the illustrious history associated with the Supreme Court, the High Courts" and their substantive contributions towards the preservation of democratic values.

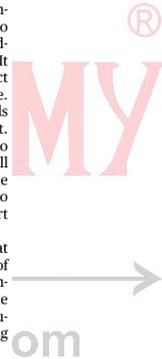
"The text fails to mention the imperative role of the judiciary in upholding constitutional morality and basic structure which is the lifeblood of the Indian citizenry. The narrative of the book chooses not to delve into any of the transformative measures or initiatives to overhaul even the legal aid and streamline the ease of access to justice mechanism. This silence is particularly egregious given the sheer volume of high ranking officers who have been censured by this very court in the past for corrupt practices, fraudulent activities," the Bench noted.

Senior members of the

Bar, including senior advocates Kapil Sibal, A.M. Singhvi, and Supreme Court Bar Association president Vikas Singh, agreed that the content was "definitely deliberate".

"The book will not remain confined to students only. Its contents are bound to travel from teacher to pupil to parent and to the entire society, including the next generation... It may have a lasting impact on judicial independence. Such misconduct falls within criminal contempt. If this conduct proves to be deliberate, it will amount to scandalising the institution and bring it to disrepute," the court observed.

The court clarified that its *suo motu* registration of the case should not be construed as a move to stifle legitimate criticism of public institutions, including the judiciary.



Core Issues & Judicial Observations

Calculated Bias: The Bench described the inclusion as a "calculated move" and a "deep-rooted conspiracy" to instill bias in "impressionable minds."

Institutional Dignity: The CJI remarked that the narrative "demeaned the dignity" of the judiciary by focusing selectively on corruption and pendency while ignoring its role in upholding the Basic Structure Doctrine and providing legal aid.

Criminal Contempt: The court noted that such lopsided portrayals could amount to Criminal Contempt as they tend to "scandalize" the institution and lower its authority in the eyes of the public.

Accountability: Rejecting a simple apology, the court issued show-cause notices to the NCERT Director and the Education Secretary, insisting that "heads must roll" to ensure future accountability.

Key Analysis

1. Static Section: Constitutional & Legal Framework

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Daily News Analysis

Article 129 & 215: The Supreme Court and High Courts are "Courts of Record" with the power to punish for contempt of themselves.

Independence of Judiciary: A basic feature of the Constitution. The court argues that biased pedagogy threatens this independence by eroding public trust.

Contempt of Courts Act, 1971: Defines Criminal Contempt as any publication that scandalizes or lowers the authority of any court.

NCERT's Mandate: As an autonomous body, it is responsible for neutral, evidence-based pedagogy. This case raises questions about the oversight mechanism in textbook drafting.

2. Dynamic Section: Contemporary Debate

Judicial Overreach vs. Institutional Defense: While the SC clarified it does not want to "stifle legitimate criticism," the ban raises a debate on where the line between "education about systemic challenges" and "institutional defamation" lies.

Digital Regulation: The court's order to seize digital copies and issue take-down orders highlights the challenge of "information withdrawal" in the internet age.

Curriculum Reforms: Under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, textbooks are being revised. This incident serves as a cautionary tale for the "Syllabi Revision Committees" regarding balanced representation.

Conclusion

Aim, Think & Achieve

The Supreme Court's "blanket ban" underscores the judiciary's role as the protector of its own institutional integrity. While the right to criticize public institutions is a democratic virtue, the court posits that presenting a "one-sided, biased narrative" to schoolchildren crosses the line into institutional sabotage. For civil services, this highlights the administrative necessity of rigorous peer review and multi-stakeholder consultation in public education to maintain the delicate balance between transparency and institutional respect.

UPSC Prelims Exam Practice Question

Ques : With reference to the powers of the Supreme Court of India, consider the following statements:

1. The Supreme Court has the power to punish for contempt of itself under Article 129 of the Constitution.
2. Criminal Contempt includes publications that scandalize or lower the authority of any court.
3. The power of contempt of the Supreme Court is derived only from the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Ans: a)

UPSC Mains Exam Practice Question

Ques: "The power of contempt is essential for maintaining judicial authority, but its excessive use may conflict with democratic principles of free speech." Examine in the context of educational content and public discourse. **(250 Words)**

Page 08 : GS II : International relations / Prelims Exam

The visit occurred at a delicate geopolitical juncture, characterized by Israel's increasing international isolation over the Gaza conflict and heightened tensions between the U.S. and Iran. While the visit solidified defense and technological bonds, it sparked debate regarding India's "de-hyphenated" foreign policy and its traditional balance between Israel and the Arab world.

Key Outcomes & Developments

Strategic Elevation: Ties were upgraded to a **"Special Strategic Partnership,"** moving beyond the 2017 "Strategic Partnership."

Manpower Agreement: A significant pact to facilitate the employment of **50,000 additional Indian workers** in Israel over the next five years, particularly in manufacturing, construction, and services.

Technological Frontier: Signed over 15 MoUs, including the **Critical and Emerging Technologies Partnership** focusing on AI, semiconductors, quantum computing, and critical minerals.

Economic Integration: The announcement of **UPI (Unified Payments Interface) rollout in Israel** and a commitment to finalize a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) by May 2026.

Regional Initiatives: Reiteration of commitment to the **I2U2 (India-Israel-UAE-USA)** group and the **IMEC (India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor)**.

Key Analysis

1. Static Section: Evolution of Ties & Principles

De-hyphenation Policy: India's shift from a pro-Palestine stance to a "de-hyphenated" approach, where relations with Israel are handled independently of ties with Palestine.

Energy Security: The "Link West" policy is vital, as India relies on the Arab world for over **60%** of its crude oil imports and hosts a diaspora of nearly **9 million** in the Gulf.

Article 51 (Directive Principles): India's constitutional commitment to promote international peace and security, which forms the basis for its support of a **Two-State Solution**.

2. Dynamic Section: Challenges and Geopolitical Risks

Taking sides

India's relations with Israel should not be at the cost of ties with the Arab world

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 24-hour visit to Jerusalem was a significant bilateral outreach to Israel, but a missed opportunity on Palestine, with complex consequences for India's ties with West Asia. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had announced the visit in December and confirmed the dates on Sunday, indicating Israel's keen interest in hosting Mr. Modi. From Mr. Modi's landing, to every engagement up to his departure, Mr. Netanyahu personally escorted Mr. Modi everywhere. After bilateral talks on Thursday, the two leaders agreed to upgrade ties to a "Special Strategic Partnership", and signed a critical technologies partnership among more than 15 MoUs in AI, agriculture, culture and education. They also agreed to facilitate the employment of 50,000 Indian workers in Israel over the next five years. The engagement, and Mr. Netanyahu's deep praise for Mr. Modi and the India relationship was even more intense than during Mr. Modi's 2017 visit. This possibly accrues from the timing of the visit, as Israel faces growing isolation over high casualties in Gaza and Mr. Netanyahu's West Bank settlement plans. In the past week, Israel's West Bank proposals have been condemned by dozens of countries, which includes Germany, France, and the U.K. that have been measured so far. Mr. Netanyahu heads into an election later this year, which will be seen as a referendum on his record, in terms of alleged corruption in his government as well as for accountability for security lapses in 2023 and the civilian toll of Israel's response. Mr. Modi's visit would bolster him politically. In his speech at the Knesset, Mr. Modi referred only obliquely to Palestinian sovereignty, saying that the U.S.-led Gaza Peace Initiative, which commits to a two-state solution, "holds the promise of a just and durable peace... including by addressing the Palestine Issue". The Prime Minister said that India shared the pain and grief of every life lost in the October 2023 terror attack by Hamas but made no mention of the high toll - more than 72,000 killed - in the strikes on Gaza by Israel since then.

It is hoped that Mr. Modi will clarify India's position on the conflict, as he did after his last visit, by following it up with a visit to Palestine. His decision to travel amidst the threat of U.S. attacks on Iran carried the possible risk of taking sides in the event of a conflict. Beyond the bilateral, the outcomes of his visit will be judged globally by its impact on the larger West Asian neighbourhood. First, his announcement that India-Israel-UAE and India-Israel-UAE-U.S. "I2U2" would develop new momentum, as would the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), indicates New Delhi believes that regional initiatives are still viable despite the polarised atmosphere and recent deep fault-lines. Second, a decision to "stand with Israel, firmly..." could come at the cost of India's relations with other West Asian powers, which expect India to remain steadfast to its historically calibrated regional balance, and to principles of peace, morality and compassion in the Israel-Palestine conflict.

The "Palestine Silence": Critics argue that the Prime Minister's speech at the Knesset focused on the October 2023 terror attacks but omitted the high civilian toll in Gaza (over 72,000), potentially signaling a tilt that could irk Arab partners like Riyadh and Abu Dhabi.

Connectivity vs. Conflict: The IMEC and I2U2 rely on regional stability. The ongoing Gaza conflict and the lack of progress on Israel-Saudi normalization pose a direct threat to these multi-continent infrastructure projects.

Domestic vs. Foreign Policy: The labor agreement provides economic opportunities for Indians but places them in a high-risk conflict zone, raising concerns about **citizen safety** and the ethical implications of replacing Palestinian labor.

Conclusion

The 2026 visit signifies that India views Israel as an indispensable partner for its **"Viksit Bharat 2047"** goals, particularly in defense and deep-tech. However, the "missed opportunity" to visit Ramallah or more forcefully address the humanitarian crisis in Gaza suggests a pivot toward a more transactional strategic interest. To maintain its leadership in the Global South, India must ensure that its "Special Strategic Partnership" with Israel does not erode the hard-won trust of its Arab neighbors or its moral standing on the Palestinian issue.

UPSC Prelims Exam Practice Question

Ques: With reference to the grouping I2U2, consider the following countries:

1. India
2. Israel
3. Italy
4. United Arab Emirates
5. United States

Which of the above are members of I2U2?

- (a) 1, 2, 4 and 5 only
- (b) 1, 3, 4 and 5 only
- (c) 2, 3 and 5 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Ans: a)

Ques: The elevation of India–Israel ties to a 'Special Strategic Partnership' marks a significant milestone in bilateral relations. Analyze its implications for India's traditional balancing strategy in West Asia. **(250 Words)**

Page 08 : GS III : Science and Tech / Prelims Exam

On February 25, 2026, ISRO broke a year-long silence regarding the NVS-02 navigation satellite, which was launched on January 29, 2025. While the GSLV-F15 rocket successfully placed the satellite in a transfer orbit, the satellite failed to reach its final destination. This disclosure comes amid a series of recent setbacks for ISRO, including back-to-back failures of its "workhorse, the PSLV, in May 2025 and January 2026.

The Technical Failure: NVS-02

According to the "Apex Committee" report:

The Glitch: A drive signal meant to activate a pyro valve in the engine's oxidizer line never reached its destination.

The Cause: Disengagement of at least one contact in an electrical connector. This affected both the primary and backup lines, suggesting a single point of failure in what should have been a redundant system.

The Consequence: Without the oxidizer, the liquid apogee motor could not fire for orbit-raising maneuvers, leaving the ₹600-crore satellite stranded in an elliptical orbit and unusable for its navigation mission.

A brittle shell

ISRO should choose transparency to reinforce public confidence

A venerable institution, facing accusations of opacity, decided to stun its detractors with some transparency. The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) made public the report of a technical committee, constituted to analyse why the NVS-02 satellite, which was launched aboard a GSLV rocket on January 29, 2025, could not be placed in its intended orbit. Until this week, there was no official explanation why this had happened. An accompanying press statement – not a report it must be noted – surmised that an 'apex' committee had concluded that a signal meant to activate a key valve in the engine's oxidiser line never reached it. This valve is crucial for firing the engine to raise the spacecraft's orbit and this likely happened because at least one connection in the electrical connector – in both the primary and backup lines – came loose or failed, preventing the signal from getting through. All of this is useful information, but only for ISRO to be cautious in future missions. In fact, the press statement continued, these learnings were "successfully implemented" in a November 2, 2025 mission by the LVM-3 M5 launch vehicle that placed the GSAT-7R, India's heaviest communication satellite, in its intended orbit. When the ISRO releases a statement on an event from a year ago, it must strive to illuminate rather than be seen to declassify under duress. It should have revealed whether the connection came loose because of an oversight; whether multiple levels of personnel – or machines – who scrutinise every nut and screw on the assembly line failed, or if a manufacturing anomaly had compounded over time in a way that would have escaped detection even by the most vigilant overseers.

At the other end, doing so reinforces public confidence in the institution. It should be able to reveal such information without blaming individuals or withholding proprietary or strategic information. Making such 'Failure Analysis' reports public, as they are called, used to be a routine affair. However, ISRO seems to have retreated into a shell following the back-to-back failures of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicles in January and in May 2025. In fact, beyond the technical committees – another committee has been set up to probe "systemic issues" underlying the failures of these rockets – ISRO should not choose insularity at a time when traditional business models all over the world are being disrupted.

Key Analysis

1. Static Section: Space Technology & Governance

Launch Vehicles: Understanding the difference between GSLV (using cryogenic stages for heavy payloads) and PSLV (the four-stage workhorse with alternating solid and liquid stages).

Redundancy Systems: A core engineering principle in aerospace where critical components are duplicated to prevent mission failure. The NVS-02 case is a rare example of "Common Cause Failure," where the redundancy was undermined by a shared connector.

Institutional Framework: ISRO operates under the Department of Space (DoS), which reports directly to the Prime Minister. Historically, ISRO has been lauded for its

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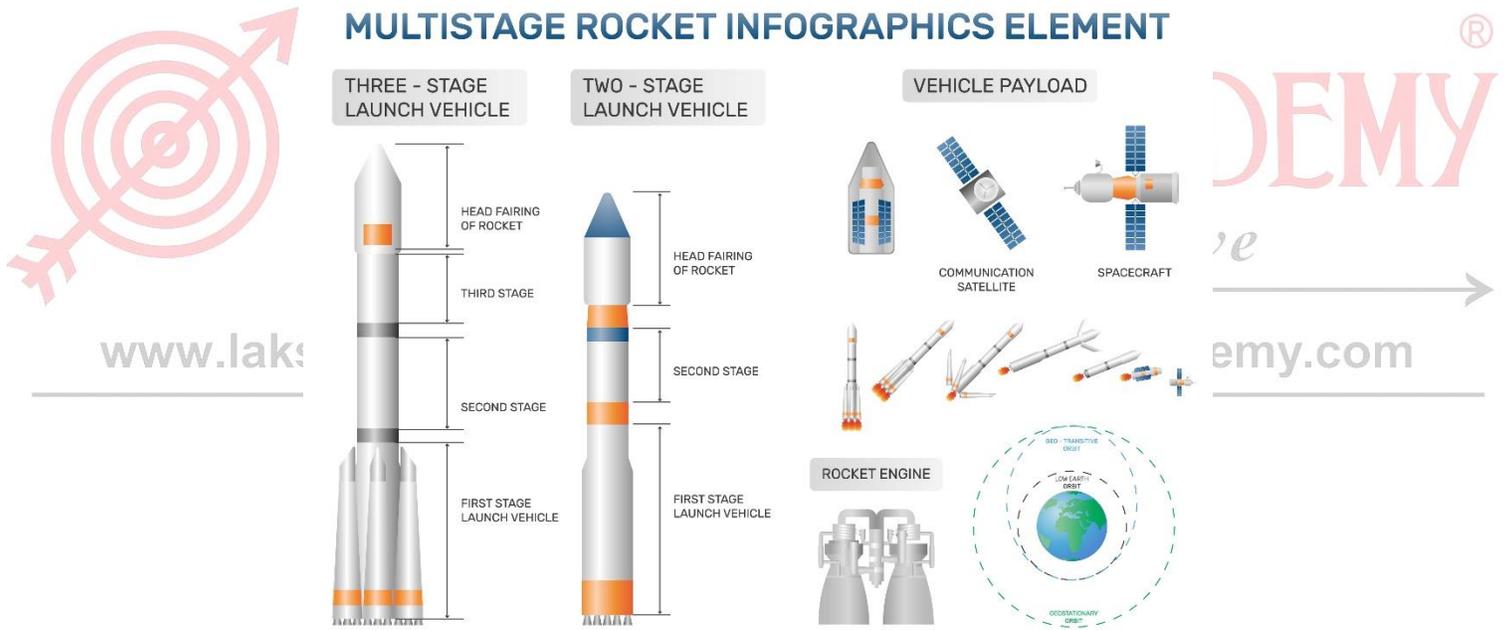
"Failure Analysis Reports" being open to scientific scrutiny.

2. Dynamic Section: Transparency & Accountability

The "Opacity" Argument: The editorial argues that ISRO is retreating into a "brittle shell." Releasing a press statement a year late—and only after successful missions (like the GSAT-7R on November 2, 2025)—suggests a "success-only" communication strategy.

PSLV Crisis: The consecutive failures of PSLV-C61 (May 2025) and PSLV-C62 (January 2026)—both involving third-stage anomalies—have raised "systemic" concerns. A national-level committee, including former Principal Scientific Advisor Prof. K. VijayRaghavan, has been tasked with probing these issues.

Commercial Implications: With the entry of private players and NewSpace India Limited (NSIL) targeting the global launch market, institutional transparency is no longer just a democratic requirement but a commercial necessity to maintain insurance and client trust.



MULTISTAGE ROCKET INFOGRAPHICS ELEMENT

THREE - STAGE LAUNCH VEHICLE

- HEAD FAIRING OF ROCKET
- THIRD STAGE
- SECOND STAGE
- FIRST STAGE LAUNCH VEHICLE

TWO - STAGE LAUNCH VEHICLE

- HEAD FAIRING OF ROCKET
- SECOND STAGE
- FIRST STAGE LAUNCH VEHICLE

VEHICLE PAYLOAD

- COMMUNICATION SATELLITE
- SPACECRAFT

ROCKET ENGINE

LOW EARTH ORBIT

ORBITAL DEBRIS

www.lakshyaacademy.com

Conclusion

For a premier scientific body like ISRO, transparency is not a sign of weakness but a hallmark of a robust "safety culture." While the agency successfully "fixed" the pyro-valve issue in the November 2025 mission, the editorial warns that withholding the process of failure—whether it was human oversight or a manufacturing anomaly—erodes public and global confidence. In an era of private space disruption, ISRO must balance its strategic "shell" with the need for technical candor.

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UPSC Prelims Exam Practice Question

Ques: With reference to Indian launch vehicles, consider the following statements:

1. PSLV uses alternating solid and liquid propulsion stages.
2. GSLV employs a cryogenic upper stage.
3. SLV is primarily used for launching heavier communication satellites into Geostationary Transfer Orbit (GTO).

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Ans: a)

UPSC Mains Exam Practice Question

Ques: Explain the concept of redundancy in aerospace systems. How can "common cause failure" defeat redundancy, as seen in satellite missions? (250 words)

Page 10 : GS II : Indian Polity & Governance/ Prelims Exam

A Division Bench of the Allahabad High Court, while hearing a petition from a family in Hamirpur district, has challenged the administrative trend of punitive demolitions. The petitioners faced property sealing and demolition threats immediately following an FIR against a relative, despite not being named in the criminal case themselves. The court has framed five substantive questions to determine if these actions violate the "due process" guaranteed by the Constitution.

Why bulldozers threaten due process

The Allahabad High Court examines whether demolitions carried out immediately after FIRs violate constitutional principles, stressing that punishment lies exclusively with the judiciary; it warns that such selective demolitions, carried out without notice or hearing, undermine due process, erode constitutional rights

LETTER & SPIRIT

G.S. Bajpai

With five-pointed questions recently, the Allahabad High Court has laid bare bulldozer justice. Punitive demolitions transform executive discretion into punishment without due process. In a constitutional democracy, coercive state power is expected to follow a predictable sequence: allegation, investigation, adjudication, and only thereafter sanction. Yet, in recent years, Uttar Pradesh has witnessed a troubling administrative trend popularly described as 'bulldozer justice', in which properties linked to persons accused of crimes are demolished shortly after incidents of alleged wrongdoing.

Courts have repeatedly been called upon to examine whether demolitions carried out immediately after the registration of criminal cases conform to constitutional principles. In 2024, the Supreme Court intervened to delineate the boundaries of lawful action, issuing explicit directions against punitive demolitions. However, the recurrence of such practices indicates that the tension between executive discretion and constitutional restraint remains unresolved.

Present episode
The latest instance reached the Allahabad High Court when a family from Hamirpur district sought protection against the threatened demolition of their residence and commercial premises following the registration of charges against a relative. The petitioners themselves were not implicated, yet municipal notices were issued and some properties were sealed soon after the FIR.

The Division Bench noted that such sequences were becoming increasingly routine. It reaffirmed the foundational principle that punishment lies exclusively within the domain of the judiciary and



A bulldozer being used in Prayagraj in June 2022 to demolish an 'illegally constructed' residence. (PI)

cannot be assumed by administrative authorities. To examine the legality of the action, the court framed five substantive questions, including whether such demolitions violated Supreme Court directions and infringed the guarantees of equality and life under Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution.

A careful appreciation of the statutory framework is essential. Laws such as the Uttar Pradesh Municipal Corporation Act, 1973, and the Uttar Pradesh Urban Planning and Development Act, 1973, empower authorities to remove unauthorised constructions. These powers, however, are circumscribed. Demolition is permitted only through a structured process; authorities must first identify a violation, issue a written notice detailing the grounds, provide a reasonable opportunity to respond, consider objections, and then pass a reasoned order.

Most statutes also allow appeals and possibilities of regularisation, showing that demolition is intended as a regulatory measure of last resort rather than an instrument of instant action. Equally important is the limited purpose of these laws: municipal statutes regulate buildings and land use; they do not

determine criminal culpability. The registration of an FIR neither renders a structure illegal nor justifies accelerated enforcement.

The court's guidance

The Supreme Court addressed this precise concern in the *Re: Directions in the Matter of Demolition of Structures* (2024) 15 SCC 860 case and categorically held that property cannot be demolished merely because its owner is accused of an offence. The court reinforced that criminal guilt must be established through adjudication alone. Municipal powers cannot be transformed into parallel instruments of punishment; permitting such use would undermine both the presumption of innocence and the integrity of the justice system.

State authorities often contend that demolitions are independent exercises under municipal law. While the existence of such power is not in dispute, constitutional analysis looks beyond form to substance.

Notices issued immediately after FIRs, targeting only those connected to the accused and executed without delay, strongly suggest punitive intent. Administrative law describes this as a

colourable exercise of power – the use of a lawful instrument to achieve an impermissible objective. These practices erode the separation of powers by allowing the executive to impose consequences that only a court may authorize. The deprivation of a home or livelihood based on suspicion alone is incompatible with constitutional governance.

Larger implications

The Allahabad High Court's questions highlight enduring issues: Can the mere apprehension of demolition infringe fundamental rights? What standards should guide preventive judicial intervention? What mechanisms ensure accountability exist when municipal powers are misapplied?

These are not abstract concerns. Demolitions inflict immediate and often irreversible harm on families who may ultimately be found innocent. Beyond individual hardship, they corrode public confidence in impartial governance.

A necessary balance

No city can function without enforcing building regulations. Yet that authority must remain strictly within constitutional boundaries. Selective or exemplary demolitions convert regulatory power into punitive action and breach administrative neutrality.

The Constitution guarantees that no person shall be deprived of property except by procedure established by law, notice, hearing, reasoned decision, and judicial oversight. When demolition precedes adjudication, this sequence is inverted and due process defeated.

Bulldozers have a legitimate role in urban management, not in determining guilt. Punitive demolitions, however labelled, are legally unsustainable. Preserving this distinction is essential to upholding the rule of law.

G.S. Bajpai is the Vice-Chancellor of National Law University. Contributions of Vibhuti Sharma, Academic Fellow, are acknowledged. Views are personal

THE GIST

The Allahabad High Court examined whether municipal action taken in close proximity to criminal proceedings reflects a pattern of administrative overreach and a colourable exercise of power.

Referring to safeguards under the Uttar Pradesh Municipal Corporation Act, 1973 and the Supreme Court ruling, the Bench underscored that demolition is a regulatory measure of last resort, not an instrument of exemplary action.



The Legal "Five-Pointed" Inquiry

The Court's investigation centers on whether the state is using municipal laws as a facade for extra-judicial punishment. Key questions include:

- Did the demolition follow the Supreme Court's 2024 guidelines?
- Were the principles of Natural Justice (notice and hearing) bypassed?
- Does the action violate Article 14 (Equality) and Article 21 (Life and Liberty)?
- Is this a "Colorable Exercise of Power"—using a legal tool (building codes) for an illegal purpose (punishment)?
- Can the executive assume the role of the judiciary in determining guilt?

Key Analysis

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1. Static Section: Constitutional & Administrative Law

Separation of Powers: The core tenet that the Executive investigates, the Judiciary adjudicates, and the Legislature makes laws. Punitive demolition merges these roles into the Executive.

Article 300A: Right to Property is a constitutional right; no person shall be deprived of their property save by "authority of law."

Doctrine of Due Process: Derived from *Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India* (1978), establishing that any state procedure must be "just, fair, and reasonable."

Natural Justice (Audi Alteram Partem): The right to be heard. Municipal laws (UP Act of 1959/1973) mandate a notice period (usually 15 days) and an opportunity to appeal before demolition.

2. Dynamic Section: Judicial Precedents & Trends

SC Directions (2024): In *Re: Directions in the Matter of Demolition of Structures*, the Supreme Court ruled that being an accused is not a ground for demolition. It mandated that even "illegal" structures cannot be razed without following a structured timeline and providing alternative housing in some cases.

Rule of Law vs. Rule by Law: "Rule of Law" ensures the law is supreme and protects citizens. "Rule by Law" uses the law as a tool of state oppression. "Bulldozer Justice" is often criticized as the latter.

Collective Punishment: Targeting the homes of relatives of an accused violates the principle of individual criminal responsibility, essentially punishing an entire family for the alleged acts of one member.

Conclusion

The Allahabad High Court's stance reaffirms that in a constitutional democracy, the process is as important as the outcome. While the state has a legitimate interest in removing unauthorized constructions, the "coincidence" of demolitions immediately following criminal allegations suggests a punitive motive rather than a regulatory one. For civil services aspirants, this case highlights the judiciary's role as a "check and balance" against executive overreach, ensuring that "instant justice" does not replace "institutional justice."

UPSC Prelims Exam Practice Question

Ques: With reference to the Right to Property in India, consider the following statements:

1. The Right to Property is a Fundamental Right under Part III of the Constitution.
2. Article 300A provides that no person shall be deprived of property except by authority of law.
3. The Right to Property can be enforced directly under Article 32.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Ans: a)

UPSC Mains Exam Practice Question

Ques: "Bulldozer justice raises fundamental concerns about due process and separation of powers." Discuss. **(250 Words)**

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A "base year" serves as the reference point for calculating real GDP growth by neutralizing inflation. Since 2011-12, the Indian economy has undergone structural shifts—including the implementation of GST (2017), the surge in digital services, and the post-pandemic recovery. The 2022-23 series aims to capture these contemporary realities through "data-driven" rather than "proxy-driven" estimation.

New GDP data set to capture economy more accurately

The new series of national accounts to be released on Friday is the culmination of a wide consultative process, spanning multiple sub-committees, and incorporating many changes

NEWS ANALYSIS

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
 NEW DELHI

The new series of national accounts data to be released on Friday will incorporate several methodological and statistical upgrades that will make India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Gross Value Added (GVA) data more accurate and granular, an analysis of the various changes being implemented shows.

Over the last week, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation has made public the reports of various sub-committees tasked with looking at specific ways to upgrade the national accounts data. These upgrades include better methodologies, and the inclusion of new data sets, such as the Goods and Services Tax (GST) data.

The most visible of the changes in the national accounts data is that the base year will be updated from 2011-12 to 2022-23, making both the GDP and GVA data more accurate representations of the current economy, while also improving comparisons over time periods. The Sub-Committee on Methodological Improvements proposed several sector-wise improvements that have been implemented.

For instance, for the non-financial private corporate sector, the current-

New avatar

The upgrades include better methodologies, and the inclusion of new data sets, such as the GST data



- Most visible change in national accounts data is the base year's update from 2011-12 to 2022-23
- Activity-wise revenue share for a company used to calculate the value added in each business activity
- New series to also include value of the housing services provided by governments to their employees

ly-used 2011-12 series of data deals with companies that operate across sectors by allocating that entire company's GVA to the sector in which the bulk of its activity is. In the new series, the activity-wise revenue share for a company is being used to calculate the value added in each business activity. This will help capture all the activity in each sector.

Another improvement, to do with the general government sector, is that the new series will also include the value of the housing services provided by governments to their employees. This will mean that the value of services provided is more accurately captured when measuring the output of the general government. Further, the coverage of autonomous institutes and local bodies has also been enhanced.

For households, the new series will use the Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (ASUSE) and Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)

on an annual basis instead of extrapolating data as was done in the 2011-12 series. This will mean that the household sector, which has a significant contribution to the economy, is directly estimated each year.

Another major component of the economy – private final consumption expenditure, or basically consumption spending by the people – will also be measured in a more granular manner through the enhanced use of Household Consumer Expenditure Surveys and direct estimation based on production and other data sources.

New data sources

The new series of national accounts data will also include new data sources and will use existing sources better. For example, GST data was so far being used in the quarterly accounts of GDP and GVA, and only for some sectors in the annual data.

In the new series, GST data will be used to better estimate the regional out-

put of private corporations, and will also be used to more accurately determine the contribution of the value added by private companies to the GDP of the country. The GST data will also be used to identify active private companies to improve the accuracy of estimating the value added by non-reporting companies. This will ensure that output and value added data more accurately captures what is happening on the ground.

The Sub-Committee on Incorporation for New Data Sources, Rates and Ratios also noted that States have enhanced their reporting of data from local bodies and state autonomous bodies, which will increase the amount of data that can be directly estimated rather than imputed.

The new series will use the Statistical Table Related to Banks in India (STRBI) published by the Reserve Bank of India to estimate the activity of both public sector banks as well as private sector banks. Further, the earlier proxy-based approach to estimate the activity of private Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) is being replaced by the use of actual financial data of NBFCs from the Ministry of Corporate Affairs.

Overall, the ASUSE data has been used more effectively to capture aspects that were earlier not being included accurately.



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Key Methodological Upgrades

| Area | 2011-12 Series (Old) | 2022-23 Series (New) |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| Corporate Sector | GVA allocated based on a company's primary activity only. | Activity-wise revenue share used to calculate GVA for multi-sector firms. |
| Household/Informal | Extrapolated from old census data using static ratios. | Annual use of ASUSE and PLFS for direct, yearly estimation. |
| Government | Excluded non-monetary benefits like housing. | Includes value of housing services provided to government employees. |
| Data Sources | Minimal use of administrative data. | Deep integration of GST, e-Vahan, and PFMS data. ® |
| Price Adjustment | Largely relied on "Single Deflation." | Transition to " Double Deflation " for the manufacturing sector. |

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Key Analysis

1. Static Section: National Income Accounting

GVA vs. GDP: While GDP measures the total value of goods and services produced, Gross Value Added (GVA) provides a picture from the supply side (Producer side).

System of National Accounts (SNA): India is moving toward alignment with **SNA 2025** standards, which advocate for more frequent rebasing (ideally every 5 years) to maintain statistical relevance.

Double Deflation: A sophisticated method where output and input prices are deflated separately. This prevents "illusory" growth that can occur if input costs (like oil) fall while output prices remain steady.

2. Dynamic Section: Implications for Policy

Formalization Capture: By integrating **GST data**, the new series will better reflect the "formalization" of the economy. This may initially show a higher GDP size but could also reveal more accurate (and perhaps lower) growth rates in sectors where informal activity was previously overestimated.

Monetary Policy: The RBI's February 2026 policy projected **FY26 growth at 7.4%**. The new series will provide the "fresh math" needed to assess whether the economy is overheating or if there is room for further rate adjustments.

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Daily News Analysis

The "Normalcy" Benchmark: 2022-23 was selected specifically because it was the first "normal" year post-COVID. 2019-21 were too volatile to serve as a baseline for future growth.

Conclusion

The 2022-23 GDP series represents a transition from an "estimation-based" to a "transaction-based" statistical framework. This highlights the government's push for **Evidence-Based Policy Making**. While "heads might roll" in other administrative sectors (as seen in the NCERT case), in the realm of statistics, "data is now rolling in" to provide a more transparent and credible narrative of India's journey toward a **\$5 trillion economy**.

UPSC Mains Exam Practice Question

Ques: Why is periodic revision of the GDP base year necessary? Discuss its implications for measuring economic growth accurately. **(250 words)**



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Page : 08 : Editorial Analysis

Analysing India's cycle of deprivation and affluence

It was the best of times; it was the worst of times", wrote Charles Dickens in *A Tale of Two Cities*. This sums up the state of affairs in India in the past decade or so. Of particular interest here is the income mobility of different segments of the population which reveals sharp upward and downward shifts between 2014 and 2025. Those experiencing downward mobility among the poor suffer humiliation, hunger, morbidity, infant and child mortality, while the affluent experiencing upward mobility flaunt their wealth in ostentatious living, speculative investments in real estate, business ventures, and high risk gambling. So, movements into and out of deprivation and affluence are of considerable interest. All these changes are likely to influence income distribution that cannot be captured through poverty and income inequality measures. Instead, we demonstrate below that analysis of income mobility during the period 2014-25 yields richer insights into income distributional outcomes. The overall picture has shades of grey but it is not counterintuitive.

The state of households
Households are grouped each year into three income categories based on their 2014 per capita income rank: the top 10%, the next 40%, and the bottom 50%. Income mobility is defined as movement across these groups relative to a household's 2014 position – downward (to a lower group), no change (same group), or upward (to a higher group).

To assess whether elections mattered, the period 2014-2025 is divided into two sub-periods, 2014-19 and 2019-24, each anchored around a national election year. Our analysis draws on real (inflation-adjusted) per capita income data from the Consumer Pyramids Household Survey conducted by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy, spanning 2014-2025. We construct a balanced panel of households that are consistently observed across these years.

At the all-India level, the share of households experiencing downward mobility nearly doubles – from 14% in 2015 to 26.8% in 2025 – while the proportion remaining in the same income group falls sharply from over 70% to below half. Upward mobility does increase over time, rising from 14.1% to 23.5%, but this improvement is gradual and consistently trails the rise in downward movement. What stands out is not just mobility, but its direction: the balance tilts increasingly towards decline rather than ascent. By 2025, more than one in four households are worse-off relative to their 2014 position. The data suggest an economy marked less by broad-based upward progress and more by growing vulnerability and uneven gains.

The rural trends are particularly sobering. By 2025, nearly 29% of rural households are worse-off than they were in 2014, while the share that remained in the same income group has fallen below half. Although some upward

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movement is visible, especially in the early years, it is consistently outpaced by the rise in households slipping down the income ladder. The sharpest deterioration occurs in the first subperiod (2014-19), but the vulnerability persists thereafter.

Urban India fares somewhat better, yet, the picture is hardly reassuring. Downward mobility rises here too, albeit more gradually than in rural areas, even as upward mobility improves at a faster pace than in the countryside.

The contrast suggests that whatever gains have materialised are more concentrated in urban centres, while rural households bear the brunt of economic volatility. Far from a story of broad-based inclusion, the evidence points to a widening experience of insecurity – one that sits uneasily with vociferous claims of steadily falling inequality.

Caste patterns

The caste-wise patterns are equally revealing – and troubling. Since 2014, downward mobility has risen across all social groups, with particularly sharp increases among Other Backward Classes (OBC) and Scheduled Caste (SC) households. By 2025, roughly a quarter or more of households in each of these groups are worse-off than they were in 2014. While upward mobility has improved for the Unreserved and OBCs, it remains muted and uneven for SCs across the entire period.

For SC households, the constraint appears less about dramatic descent and more about the persistent narrowing of pathways upward. The steepest rise in downward mobility occurs in the first subperiod (2014-19), even as upward mobility loses momentum in the years thereafter. This sits uneasily with repeated assertions by the ruling party and the Prime Minister about shrinking inequalities and expanding opportunity.

At the same time, there has been considerable social churn, with the ruling party broadening its base – particularly among OBCs and sections of upper castes in States such as Uttar Pradesh – reshaping traditional hierarchies of influence within the broader caste landscape. Our analysis echoes a longer history of caste-based deprivation in India – where occupational segmentation, unequal access to assets and education, and entrenched social discrimination continue to shape economic outcomes.

Scheduled Tribes display comparatively lower downward mobility and some episodes of stronger upward movement, possibly reflecting targeted interventions and regional development efforts. Yet, the broader message is unmistakable: caste remains a decisive fault line in income mobility, and the promise of equal economic ascent remains illusory.

Relative to 2014, downward mobility rises across all religious groups, with the rise being more pronounced among both Hindu and Muslim households over time. Upward mobility increases steadily for Sikh and Christian

households, often outpacing downward movements in several years, while gains for Hindu and Muslim households are more gradual, indicating uneven mobility trajectories across religious groups by 2025. Among Hindus and Muslims, downward mobility spikes around election years, while upward mobility rises more modestly. For Muslims in particular, the rise in upward mobility remains weaker than for Hindus. Again, discrimination against Muslims has restricted their upward mobility and not so much their downward mobility. Sikh and Christian households display stronger upward mobility in the earlier years, though this momentum weakens in the latter half of the decade.

The story is about entrenched inequality

While the headline numbers point to growing downward mobility, a more rigorous statistical analysis reinforces the same conclusion. After accounting for household characteristics, we find that higher income dispersion at the district level is systematically associated with greater downward mobility. In other words, households located in more unequal districts are more likely to slip down the income ladder than to climb up.

Inequality, far from spurring aspiration, appears to harden economic boundaries. The results also echo familiar social fault lines: households from historically disadvantaged caste groups and Muslims exhibit significantly lower mobility, while education, urban location and larger household size are associated with better prospects. The deeper story, then, is about entrenched inequality shaping who moves ahead – and who falls behind.

That 2019 marked a turning point is not surprising as the Bharatiya Janata Party secured a historic victory in the general election. But, soon after, the government had to deal with the catastrophic COVID-19 pandemic that caused massive humanitarian and economic crises. Their inept handling means that the disruption persisted long after the pandemic ceased.

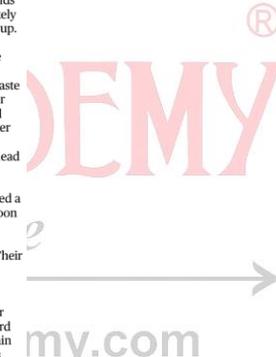
Reckless pursuit of Hindutva without a coherent strategy to revive the informal sector including agriculture, lower increase in upward income mobility while resilience among certain segments – including OBCs and SCs as well as Muslims – helped slow their descent into deprivation. So, perhaps resilience in the face of adversity matters too.

The larger concern is that an economy in which more households are slipping down than climbing up cannot sustain social stability for long. When inequality hardens into reduced mobility, frustration replaces aspiration. Therefore, policy must move beyond headline growth and focus on strengthening public health, education, employment-intensive sectors, and social protection. Policies addressing discrimination are not matters of welfare alone – they are central to restoring mobility and renewing faith in economic progress.

Analysis of income mobility during 2014-25 shows sharp upward and downward shifts, with implications for social stability



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GS Paper III : Indian Economy

UPSC Mains Practice Question: Distinguish between poverty, income inequality, and income mobility. Why is mobility considered a better indicator of long-term distributional change? (250 Words)

Context :

Drawing on data from the **Consumer Pyramids Household Survey (CMIE)**, the analysis creates a balanced panel of households to observe their progress relative to their 2014 per capita income rank. It categorizes them into the Top 10%, Next 40%, and Bottom 50%.

Key Trends in Income Mobility (2014–2025)

| Metric | 2015 Status | 2025 Status |
|-------------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Downward Mobility | 14% | 26.8% |
| Upward Mobility | 14.1% | 23.5% |
| No Change (Stagnation) | >70% | <50% |

The Crucial Takeaway: While both upward and downward mobility increased, **downward mobility nearly doubled** and consistently outpaced the rise in upward movement. By 2025, one in four households was worse off than they were in 2014.

Key Analysis

1. Static Section: Poverty & Inequality Concepts

Income Mobility: The ability of an individual or family to improve (or lose) their economic status. This is a better indicator of "**Equality of Opportunity**" than simple poverty headcounts.

The "Great Gatsby Curve": A concept in economics illustrating the connection between concentration of wealth in one generation and the ability of the next generation to move up the economic ladder. The analysis confirms that **high district-level inequality** correlates with **higher downward mobility**.

Constitutional Mandate: Article 38 of the Directive Principles (DPSP) mandates the State to minimize inequalities in income and eliminate inequalities in status, facilities, and opportunities.

2. Dynamic Section: Socio-Economic Fault Lines

The Rural-Urban Divide: Rural households bore the brunt of economic volatility. By 2025, **29% of rural households** experienced a decline in status, suggesting that the "agrarian distress" often discussed in policy circles has manifested as tangible downward mobility.

Caste as a Barrier: While there has been "social churn" (OBCs and some SC segments gaining political influence), the economic pathways upward remain narrow for SC households. The study highlights that **occupational segmentation** and **unequal access to education** continue to tether marginalized groups to lower income brackets.

The "Turning Point" (2019-2025): The pandemic (2020-21) and the subsequent "K-shaped" recovery are evident. The "inept handling" mentioned in the text refers to the disruption of the **informal sector**, which employs over 90% of India's workforce and serves as the primary engine for upward mobility for the poor.

Religious Disparity: Muslims faced restricted upward mobility, likely due to a combination of lower educational attainment and discrimination, while Sikhs and Christians showed stronger resilience in the early decade.

Policy Recommendations (Way Forward):

Strengthening the Informal Sector: Targeted credit and infrastructure for MSMEs.

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Human Capital Investment: Moving beyond "literacy" to "quality

education" and "marketable skills."

Social Protection: Strengthening safety nets like MGNREGA and universal health coverage to prevent households from slipping into poverty due to "shocks" (morbidity, inflation).

Conclusion

The analysis suggests that India is experiencing "**Economic Volatility**" rather than "**Broad-based Prosperity**." When downward mobility exceeds upward gains, the "aspiration" that drives a developing economy can turn into "frustration," posing a risk to social stability. For the UPSC aspirant, this highlights that **GDP growth (the "headline")** is insufficient if it is not accompanied by **structural reforms** in the informal sector, health, and social protection.