The Hindu Important News Articles For UPSC CSE

Thursday : 04 June, 2026

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Page 01 : GS III :Indian Economy/ Preliminary Examination

Recently, the Office of the US Trade Representative (USTR) has proposed imposing a 12.5% tariff (import duty) on 54 countries, including India, as part of an investigation being conducted under Section 301 of the U.S. Trade Act, 1974. The US alleges that these countries have failed to impose effective restrictions on the import and sale of goods made from 'forced labor'. The move comes at a time when India and the US are negotiating to finalise a bilateral Interim Trade Agreement. The Indian government has responded by saying that it is actively discussing the matter with the US administration.

Core Analysis Points

U.S. moots 12.5% tariff on India for failure to enforce 'forced labour' regulations

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
WASHINGTON

The U.S. government has proposed to levy a tariff of 12.5% on imports from 54 countries, including India, that it says have "failed to impose and effectively enforce" prohibitions on the import of goods produced using forced labour.

In response, the Indian government has said it "remains engaged" with the U.S. government regarding this development as well as the finalisation of an Interim Agreement on trade.

The office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) had, in March this year, launched an investigation under Section 301 of the U.S. Trade Act of 1974 to look into whether its trade partners were taking enough steps to stop the import of goods made using forced labour.

The latest tariff announcements, as part of this investigation, are not final as yet.

Countries, including India, can submit requests to take part in public hearings by June 22, submit written comments by July 6, and participate in the public hearings on July 7.

Tool to impose tariff

According to trade experts, investigations under Section 301 was seen as a tool for the U.S. to impose tariffs on its imports after the country's Supreme Court in February struck down the reciprocal tariffs – including the 50% levied on India – that had been imposed by U.S. President Donald Trump.

"The results of this investigation indicate that the acts, policies and practices of India related to the failure to impose and effectively enforce a forced labour import prohibition are unreasonable and burden or restrict U.S. commerce," the USTR report said.

The proposed tariffs put India in the same tariff bracket as several of its competitors, including Bangladesh, China, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam.

The proposal by the USTR also includes a separate mechanism for textile and apparel products, under which a certain volume of imports from selected economies would be allowed to enter the U.S. at lower tariff rates.

According to Agneshwar Sen, trade policy leader at EY India, the impact of these tariffs on India could be multidimensional.

"In the near term, exporters in labour-intensive industries such as textiles, garments, carpets, leather products, and brassware could face at least an additional 10% levy under Section 301, adding to their existing tariff exposure," Mr. Sen said. "India should therefore submit detailed written representations by July 6 and participate proactively in the July 7 public hearing to challenge these conclusions," he added.

Govt. response

"India remains engaged with the U.S. on the matter as a part of Section 301 proceedings," the Ministry of Commerce and Industry said in a statement on Wednesday. "India is also parallelly engaged with the U.S. for finalisation of a framework agreement as was announced on February 2, 2026, and in accordance with the joint statement released on February 7, 2026," it added.

A negotiating team from the U.S. is currently in India on a three-day visit that will conclude on June 4.

According to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the purpose of the trip is to "finalise the details" pertaining to the Interim Agreement between the two countries and take forward the negotiations on a broader Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA).

Blow-by-blow | A timeline of U.S. tariff-related events

- **Feb. 20, 2026:** U.S. Supreme Court scraps reciprocal tariffs. Trump imposes 10% 150-day tariffs on all imports
- **March 2026:** U.S. Trade Representative launches investigations on partners
- **June 1-4:** U.S. negotiators visit India to finalise trade deal
- **June 2:** USTR announces findings of investigations related to forced labour
- **June 22:** Deadline to submit requests to take part in public hearings on the case
- **July 6:** Deadline to submit written comments
- **July 7:** Date of public hearings related to the investigation
- **July 24:** Expiry of 10% U.S. tariffs

1. Section 301 and America's New Stand

- **Use as a punitive means:** After the US Supreme Court invalidated the 50% reciprocal tariffs imposed on India by President Donald Trump in the past, Washington is now using 'Section 301' as a new weapon.
- **USTR's Argument:** The USTR report claims that India's policies and practices are "unfair" in enforcing laws against forced labor, which impede or restrict U.S. commerce.
- **Global Competitors in the Same Bracket:** The proposal has put India in the same tariff **bracket of 12.5% with its major export competitors such as Bangladesh,** China, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam.

2. Multidimensional Impact on Indian Economy and Exports

- **Direct Hit to Labour-Intensive Sectors:** The most severe impact of this additional duty will be on the sectors of India that generate employment on a large scale. Such as:
  - Textiles& Garments
  - Carpets
  - Leather Products
  - Brass Pottery/Handicraft (Brassware)
- **Reduced Competitiveness:** According to trade experts (such as EY India), this additional burden of 12.5% on top of the already applicable duty will make Indian goods more expensive in the US market, weakening India's competitiveness in the global market.

3. Government of India's Strategy and Response

- **Legal and Diplomatic Response:** The Government of India is involved in this process of the USTR. India has until 22 June to request participation in the public hearing and submit written comments by6 July 2026, followed by a public hearing on 7 July. Experts believe that India should present strong data to challenge these findings.

- **Parallel Trade Negotiations:** Despite this dispute, the two countries **are negotiating to finalize the Bilateral Trade Agreement (**BTA) **and the** Framework/Interim Agreement (which was announced in February 2026). A team of US negotiators is also visiting India in early June 2026 in this regard.

4. Non-Tariff Barriers and the 'Weaponization' of Human Rights

- **New form of protectionism:** Developing countries have often argued that Western countries (especially the US and the European Union) use human rights, environmental standards, and labour laws **as "non-tariff barriers"** to protect their domestic industries from external competition (protectionism or protectionism).

- **Credentials of the data:** Several statutory provisions (such as the Bonded Labour System Abolition Act, the Prohibition of Child Labour Law, and the ratification of the International Labour Organization – ILO Conventions) are in force to prevent forced labour in India. Therefore, it is natural to question the objectivity of the allegations made by the US.

Way Forward

- Robust Evidence-Driven Advocacy: India must present irrefutable evidence proving labor reforms, regulatory enforcement, and supply chain transparency in the country before the July 6 deadline.

- **Leveraging the Interim Trade Agreement:** India should use the ongoing three-day US negotiations as a bargaining chip to shelving this tariff proposal or obtaining a waiver under the interim agreement.

- **Strengthening of Domestic Labour Standards:** To avoid such shocks in global markets, India has to make the monitoring of globally accepted labour standards and working conditions in its textile and manufacturing units more transparent and robust.

Conclusion

The US's proposal for a 12.5% tariff on India reflects the contradiction between the geopolitical partnership and economic interests. While the two countries are strategic partners in the Indo-Pacific region, differences on the trade front continue to emerge. India needs a mix of aggressive legal lobbying and shrewd diplomacy to deal with this crisis. India has to make it clear that trade agreements cannot be held hostage through unilateral and subjective assessments of human rights. India's commitment to Sustainable Development Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) is strong, and it cannot be sacrificed on the altar of US trade protectionism.

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UPSC Prelims Exam Study Questions

Question: Consider the following statements:

1. **The** Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act**,** 1976 was enacted to abolish bonded labour in India.

2. **India has accepted several** ILO standards **for the protection of workers**.

3. Bonded labour is limited to the agricultural sector only.

Choose the correct answer:

(**a)** Only 1 and 2

(**b)** 2 and 3 only

(**c)** Only 1 and 3

(**d)** 1**,** 2 and 3

Answer: (**a)**

UPSC Mains Practice Questions

Question: India-US relations have strategic partnerships and trade differences in parallel. Discuss in the context of the recent tariff dispute. **(150 words)**

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Page 08 : GS III :Indian Economy / Preliminary Examination

Recently, the latest data of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) (April **2026) has been released by the** Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI). This data is extremely important for two reasons: First, it is **the first data released under the new** Base Series 2022-23 of the index; And second, it has been released amid disruptions in global oil and gas supply chains following the US-Israel war on Iran. India's industrial production registered a growth of 4.9% **year-on-year in April 2026**, reflecting the resilience of the Indian economy amid global shocks, although the recovery is not broad-based.

Core Analysis Points

1. Resilient but Fragmented Growth

- **Jump in Capital Goods**: The production of capital goods has registered **a robust growth of 16%.** This shows thatthe public capital expenditure (capex) being done by the government on infrastructure is yielding positive results.
- **Subdued Consumption:** In contrast, consumer durables have grown marginally by just 4.3% and non-durable goods (FMCG) by a mere 2.8%. This is a sign that the increased fuel and energy costs due to the global conflict are putting pressure on the budgets of middle- and lower-class households.

2. Major Overhaul of IIP

Comprehensive changes have been made in the basket, weights and functioning of IIP to accurately reflect the rapidly changing Indian economy:

- **New Sector Included:** For the first time, Water supply, sewerage and waste management has been added as the fourth major sector in the index, with a weightage of **2.02**%.
- **Expansion of Electricity and Gas Sector:** The 'Electricity' category has been expanded to 'Electricity and Gas Supply', and its weightage has been increased from 7.99% to **10.87%.**
- **Manufacturing Dominates:** Manufacturing still remains the most prominent part of the index, although its weighting has decreased slightly from 77.63% **to 76.06%.**
- **Reduction in Mining Weight: The** weightage of primary resource extraction i.e. mining and quarrying has been reduced from 14.37% to **11.05%.**

Conclusion of the Change: These shifts suggest that the Indian economy is now emerging as a 'component manufacturing hub' associated with value-added infrastructure

Base and framework

Industrial fundamentals have remained resilient, but are not broad-based

Earlier this week, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation released the latest Index of Industrial Production (IIP), a key barometer of India's industrial health. The April 2026 print assumes added significance as it is the first release under the new 2022-23 base series and the second full month following the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran. Industrial output grew 4.9% year-on-year in April. While direct comparisons with earlier data should be treated with caution given the extensive revisions to the index's basket, weights and methodology, the numbers suggest that India's industrial fundamentals have remained relatively resilient despite disruptions to global oil and gas supply chains. A granular reading, however, reveals that this resilience is far from broad-based. Capital goods output expanded by a robust 16% year-on-year, reflecting the continuing effects of elevated public capital expenditure and infrastructure spending. By contrast, consumer durables output grew only 4.3%, while consumer non-durables expanded by a modest 2.8%, suggesting that rising fuel and energy costs may be exerting pressure on household consumption.

More significant than the headline growth number, however, is the extensive overhaul of the IIP itself. The revised series seeks to better reflect the structure of a rapidly changing economy. New products and sectors have been incorporated and several obsolete items dropped. A fourth major sector – water supply, sewerage and waste management – has been introduced with a weight of 2.02%. The electricity category has been expanded into Electricity and Gas Supply, with its weight rising to 10.87% from 7.99% earlier. Manufacturing remains the dominant component of the index, though its weight has declined marginally to 76.06% from 77.63%. More notable is the reduction in the weight of mining and quarrying to 11.05% from 14.37%. These shifts suggest that the importance of value-added infrastructure and utility services in gauging industrial activity has expanded, while the relative significance of primary resource extraction has diminished. Together, these changes better capture India's emergence as a components and value-added manufacturing hub integrated into global supply chains. Most importantly, the government has indicated its intention to move towards a chain-linked framework with more frequent updates to sectoral weights. Such a system would allow official statistics to better keep pace with structural changes in the economy, making the IIP a more accurate and timely gauge of industrial health.

and global supply chains rather than primary extraction.

3.Move to a 'Chain-linked Framework'

- The government has **indicated the adoption of** a chain-linked framework in the future, under which the sectoral weights will be updated periodically and more frequently.
- It currently takes a decade to change the base year, making the data outdated. The chain-linked system will allow official data to keep pace with the immediate structural changes in the economy, making the IIP a more accurate and real-time indicator of economic health.

Way Forward

- **Reviving Rural and Consumer Demand: Instead of relying solely on public infrastructure to make** industrial growth 'broad-based', the government has to formulate policies that increase the purchasing power of the general publicand drive private consumption.
- **Managing Energy Costs:** To deal with geopolitical tensions (such as the US-Israel-Iran war), India should use its Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR) wisely and diversify domestic energy sources to reduce the cost burden on industries and consumers.
- **Implementing Statistical Reforms:** The Ministry of Statistics (MoSPI) should implement the 'Chain-Linked Framework' at the earliest so that the global credentials of Indian data can be further strengthened and policymakers can take decisions based on more accurate data.

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Conclusion

The new base year of the IIP (2022-23) and the changes made to its framework are a commendable step towards reconciling the modern realities of the Indian economy (such as waste management and gas grids). Industrial growth of 4.9% despite the global energy crisis proves India's strong economic fundamentals. However, for sustainable and inclusive growth, it is necessary that this luster of the manufacturing sector is not limited to heavy industries and government spending, but its benefits also reach the consumer market and employment-oriented sectors of the country.

UPSC Prelims Exam Study Questions

Question: Consider the following statements regarding **the Index of Industrial Production (**IIP):

1. It measures the short-term performance of industrial activities in the country.

2. It is released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (**MoSPI**).

3. IIP covers only the manufacturing sector.

Choose the correct answer:

(a) Only **1** and **2**

(b) 2 **and** 3 **only**

(c) Only **1** and **3**

(d) 1, 2 and **3**

Answer: (**a**)

UPSC Mains Practice Questions

Question: Recently the base year series of IIP has been converted to 2022-23. Analyse the importance of this change and its role in reflecting the changing structure of the Indian economy. **(150 words)**

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Page 08 : GS II : Indian Polity / Preliminary Examination

Recently (on May 29, 2026), the Delhi High Court **has passed a significant order regarding the 'Right to Be Forgotten' (RTBF**). The case brings to the fore the conflict between two basic principles of Indian constitutional law: first, **the principle of**'open justice' which advocates public scrutiny of court proceedings and the preservation of historical records; and second, the **'right to informational** privacy' **recognised by the Supreme Court under the Puttaswamy judgment (2017**). The digitization of courts has made access to court judgments extremely easy through the internet and search engines, but due to this, the record of old (or acquitted) cases of a person is recorded forever in the digital world, which affects his personal life.

Preserving the record

The right to be forgotten must be set against public interest

On the one hand, constitutional law holds up a principle of open justice that, among other things, allows public scrutiny of courts, facilitates public understanding of the law, and creates a historical record of the administration of justice. On the other, in *Justice K.S. Puttaswamy* (2017), the Supreme Court of India recognised the right to informational privacy, including the ability of individuals to exercise some control over personal information about themselves. The Delhi High Court order on May 29 concerning the 'right to be forgotten' illustrates how these two principles can sometimes point in opposite directions. While the digitisation of court records transformed the ability of anyone with an Internet connection, but also search engines and automated archivers, to access judgments and legal records, it also altered the consequences of publicity. In Europe, where the resulting persistence of digital information first gave rise to the 'right to be forgotten', the right is usually weighed against the freedom of expression and public interest. In India as well, the right should accommodate the principle of open justice without necessarily breaching the bounds of the right to privacy. Yet, the High Court decided otherwise. Justice Sachin Datta concluded that simply updating records would not suffice as search engines could excerpt small portions without sufficient context, that open justice does not demand the ability to discover particular details of the case using the accused person's name, and that updating the official version would not necessarily update records that have since been copied to other websites.

The real problem is incompleteness, not discoverability. If a court acquitted or discharged a person from a dispute, anyone looking for the proceedings should also find that decision, rather than limiting a searcher's ability to find the original decision. This is crucial if open justice is understood to require the records to be practically accessible rather than merely exist somewhere. Court records are official acts of the state and their obfuscation in any manner *vis-à-vis* the public record will have serious ramifications for the public record, to echo the court in the closely related *Indian Kanoon* matter (2024). While the High Court's concern about the petitioner's right to privacy is commendable, it should also consider digital accuracy as the way out. That is, judicial records must be wholly public as well as updated to prominently reflect major actions and decisions, rather than preserve the accusation alone, and the judiciary must impose conditions on any platform, including court registries, indexing legal information to refresh their databases on a regular basis and endeavour to display the results of any user queries with the proper context. Doing so would protect both fundamental rights and address the problem's root cause.

Key Analysis Points

1. Stand and Reasoning of Delhi High Court

Justice Sachin Dutta, while prioritizing the petitioner's right to privacy, made the following arguments:

- **Search Engine Limitations:** It is not enough to simply 'update' the official record, as search engines like Google show small snippets of court decisions without full context, tarnishing the image of the person.
- **No need to search by name:** 'Open Justice' does not mean that the general public should have unlimited freedom to search personal information of an accused's case using his name.
- **Dissemination of data:** Once the court decision is on the internet, it is copied by other private websites. Merely updating the official version does not automatically update the data of those other websites.

2. The main concern of the editorial: the real problem is 'imperfection', not 'ability to find'

The article disagrees with whether court records should be hidden or obfuscated from the public eye:

- **Truthfulness and Completeness:** If a person has been acquitted oracquitted by the court, the problem is not that people are able to find that case on the internet. The real problem is that people only see the initial 'accusation', not the 'final verdict of acquittal'.

- **Reliability of Public Records:** Court records are the official Acts of the State. Any tampering or concealment of information in these can prove to be dangerous for the history and credibility of the 'public record' (as also highlighted in the 'Indian Law' case of 2024).

3. Global vs Indian Context

- **European Union (**EU) Model: In Europe, where the 'right to be forgotten' originated, **this right is always enforced by weighing the scales of 'Freedom of Expression'** and **'Public Interest**'.
- **Need for Balance in India:** In India too, this right should be enforced in such a way that the privacy of the individual is protected without harming the principle of 'open justice system'.

Way Forward — The Solution to 'Digital Accuracy'

The editorial provides a practical path to strengthen **"digital accuracy and context**" rather than hiding court records:

- Complete and Updated Records: Court records should remain fully public**,** but any major changes (such as acquittals or appeals) should be prominently and clearly updated so that only the charges are visible.
- **Imposing conditions on private databases:** The judiciary should impose conditions on court registries (such as Indian law, SCC online) and general search engines to regularly update their databases.
- **Showing results in the proper context:** If a user searches for a query related to an accused or case, search engines will have to display the results with the entire legal context (from the initial charge to the final verdict).

Conclusion

The controversy over the 'right to be forgotten' versus the 'open justice system' is a complex constitutional challenge of the digital age. The Delhi High Court's tilt towards privacy is commendable, but the obfuscation of the judicial record strikes at the principle of 'transparency' of democracy. The solution lies not in removing the record from the internet, but in making it **'accurate, complete, and context-in**'. Until the final justice (acquittal) gets the same prominence on the internet as the initial slander (accusation), the digital justice system will remain incomplete. India has to create a balanced 'digital ecosystem' between its judicial transparency and the fundamental rights of citizens (Article 21).

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UPSC Prelims Exam Study Questions

Question: The 'Right to Be Forgotten' (RTBF) is mainly related to which of the following fundamental rights**?**

(a) Article **14 –** Right to equality

(b) Article **19(1)(a) –** Freedom of expression

(c) Article **21 –** Right to life and personal liberty

(d) Article **32 –** Right to Constitutional Remedies

Answer: c)

UPSC Mains Practice Questions

Question: "In the digital age, striking a balance between the right to privacy and judicial transparency has become a major challenge of democratic governance. Discuss. **(150 words)**

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Page 09 :GS II :Indian Polity / Preliminary Examination

In recent times, the public debate about **'judicial holidays'** or long holidays in Indian courts has intensified again. Critics argue that while the country's courtsare burdened with crores of pending cases, it is unfair for judges to go on long vacations. However , senior advocate Kapil Sibal has rejected the notion and clarified that 'leave' in the judiciary does not mean 'leave from work'. This article brings out the 'unseen' part of court functioning that demands the intellectual and personal commitment of judges.

Why judicial holidays are necessary

The debate over judicial holidays has resurfaced in recent weeks, with critics questioning why courts observe extended breaks. The assumption is that judges, like most professionals, step away from work during these periods. That assumption is largely wrong.

For most judges, a holiday is rarely a holiday in any conventional sense.

The public sees only the visible part of the work: judges presiding over courtrooms, hearing arguments, questioning lawyers and delivering orders. What they do not see is the considerably longer phase that begins after court hours, when judges return home to write judgments. This work often stretches past midnight. Each judgment requires close analysis of facts, application of legal principles, reference to precedent, and precision in language, since every word carries legal weight.

A single decision can affect lives, businesses, reputations and personal liberty.

A time for uninterrupted work

This pattern is not unique to India.

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who was a judge of the United States Supreme Court for 27 years, was known to arrive at her chambers shortly after lunch and work late into the night. Her former law clerk Goodwin Liu, now a Justice of the California Supreme Court, has spoken of receiving voicemails from her at two or three in the morning, when she was at the height of her writing. From oral argument to majority opinion, she averaged 60 days, the fastest pace on her Bench. When she underwent surgery for colon cancer in 1999, and again for pancreatic cancer in 2009, she scheduled her procedures so as not to miss a single day on the Bench.

In India, the workload is no less demanding. Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, during his eight-year tenure in the Supreme Court, authored over 600 judgments and sat on more than 1,200 Benches before retiring as the 50th Chief Justice of India in November 2024. Few professions outside the Bench demand such sustained intellectual output year after year, and that too with little public recognition of the labour involved.

Kapil Sibal

Senior lawyer and Member of the Rajya Sabha

A judge's duty does not pause when courts close. It continues through late night drafting, early morning preparation, and constant engagement with the law

The mornings begin no easier. Long before court assembles, judges are reading voluminous case files, studying precedents and preparing for the day's hearings. By the time proceedings open, hours of unseen work have already gone in.

Judicial breaks, then, are not periods of rest but working windows. During these breaks, judges complete pending judgments, study lengthy case records and prepare for matters of constitutional importance. With case backlogs continuing to rise across courts, these are often the only stretches available for uninterrupted work.

Families bear much of the strain. Spouses and children of judges describe a familiar pattern: even on holidays, judges are occupied with their laptops, files or video calls with law clerks. The time supposed to be shared in company with their family is regularly interrupted by judicial work. Thus, judicial service is not only an individual commitment. It becomes a shared one for the household.

Not as lucrative

The economic side of the Bench is also not discussed often. While judges receive a structured and respectable salary, it is not comparable to what senior lawyers earn at the top end of the bar. A senior advocate may earn in a single hearing what a judge earns over several months. Judges, in turn, carry the greater burden of decision-making and accountability.

Many take the Bench after giving up lucrative practices, choosing service to the nation over personal financial gain.

The pressures do not end with the workload. Judicial decisions are scrutinised publicly and legally. Judges must remain neutral and detached, even when the cost of doing so is high.

The unseen cost

In his autobiography, *Neither Roses Nor Thorns*, Justice H.R. Khanna recalled the night before he delivered his lone dissent in the *ADM Jabalpur* case during the Emergency. Sitting in the moonlight in his compound with the Ganges flowing in front of them, he turned to his younger sister and said, "I have prepared a judgment which is going to cost me the Chief Justiceship of India." He was right. The following year he was superseded for the top post by Justice M.H. Beg, who had ruled with the majority, and resigned soon after.

His dissent, eventually vindicated when the Supreme Court overruled *ADM Jabalpur* in the *Puttaswamy* verdict of 2017, is now remembered as one of the bravest decisions in Indian judicial history.

The dedication asked of a judge does not end with retirement either. Lord Denning, whom Margaret Thatcher described as probably the greatest English judge of modern times, served on the Bench for 38 years and delivered around 2,000 reported judgments before retiring at 83. He continued writing books on the law till his 100th birthday.

Closer home, Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer kept producing books, articles and lectures on jurisprudence long after his retirement from the Supreme Court, almost until his death at 99 in 2014.

The debate on judicial holidays deserves a more informed footing. A judge's duty does not pause when courts close. It continues through late night drafting, early morning preparation, and constant engagement with the law.

Before questioning the system, it may help to first understand what it actually asks of those who serve in it.

Core Analysis Points

1. The 'Unseen Phase of Judicial Work'

- **Not limited to the courtroom:** The general public is only able to see the visual part of the judges' work—such as sitting in court, hearing arguments, and passing orders. But according to Sibal, the real work begins after court hours.
- **Writing of Judgments Overnight:** Judges have to return home and write judgments by midnight. Each judgment involves a granular analysis of the facts, the application of legal principles, anda reference to past judgments. Since one wrong word can ruin one's life, liberty, business or reputation, this work requires extreme mental vigilance.

2. Global and Indian Context

The author has given several global and historical references to prove that the workload of judges is extraordinary:

- **U.S. Supreme Court (Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg):** Ginsburg, the famous judge of the US Supreme Court, used to come to her chamber in the afternoon and write judgments till two or three in the morning.
- **Indian Context (Justice D.Y. Chandrachud):** Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, who retired as the 50th Chief Justice of India (CJI) in November 2024, wrote over 600 judgments and was part of over 1,200 benches in his 8-year tenure. Judges study case files for hours even before court starts in the morning.

3. Holidays as 'Working Windows'

- **Working Hours Without Interruption:** Judicial holidays are not rest days, but **rather "working windows** ". Away from the pressure of daily court proceedings, this is the time when judges complete their pending judgments and study complex cases of constitutional importance.
- **Family and Personal Tensions:** The family of the judges also shares this stress. Even on holidays, judges are busy with laptops, files, and video calls with their law clerks.

4. The Unseen Financial and Moral Cost

- **Lower income than advocacy:** A senior advocate can earn as much in a single hearing as a judge gets in the form of salary over several months. Many judges leave their highly lucrative advocacy practice to serve the country and become part of the bench (the post of judge).
- **Huge Cost of Decision Making (ADM Jabalpur Case):** Judges face heavy public and legal scrutiny. The author **cited the historical example of Justice H.R. Khanna (ADM Jabalpur case,** Emergency), who lost the opportunity to become the Chief Justice of India (CJI) due to a 'dissenting judgment' delivered on the voice of his conscience, but his same judgment is considered to be the most courageous judgment in Indian judicial history today.

UPSC Mains-Oriented Suggestions

While the need for vacations is unavoidable, a balanced approach can be taken given the growing backlog:

- **Staggered Vacations:** Instead of closing the entire court at once, the judges' leave can be staggered in such a way that the courts remain open for twelve months of the year and the judges also get work breaks on a rotation basis.
- **Use of Technology and AI:** 'Agentic AI' and advanced software should be used to manage court files and find legal references, so as to reduce the administrative and clerical workload of judges.
- **Modernization of Court Infrastructure:** The number of judges (especially in the High Courts and lower courts) should be increased so that the workload per judge can be brought down to a logical level.

Conclusion

The debate on judicial leave needs to be understood beyond mere superficial statistics such as 'number of working days'. The purpose of justice is not just to expedite the disposal of cases, but to provide **"quality and thoughtful justice**". A tired and mentally stressed judge can compromise the quality of justice, which will be more fatal to democracy. So, as Kapil Sibal has concluded, before criticising the judiciary, we have to understand the system that demands the highest intellectual and personal sacrifices from those who are dedicated to the service of the country.

UPSC Prelims Exam Study Questions

Question: Which of the following is the correct statement related to the Indian judiciary**?**

1. There is a provision for judicial leave in the High Courts and the Supreme Court.

2. Vacation benches can be formed **during vacations**.

3. Judicial leave is clearly mentioned in the Constitution.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

(**a)** Only 1 and 2

(**b)** 2 and 3 only

(**c)** Only 1 and 3

(**d)** 1**,** 2 and 3

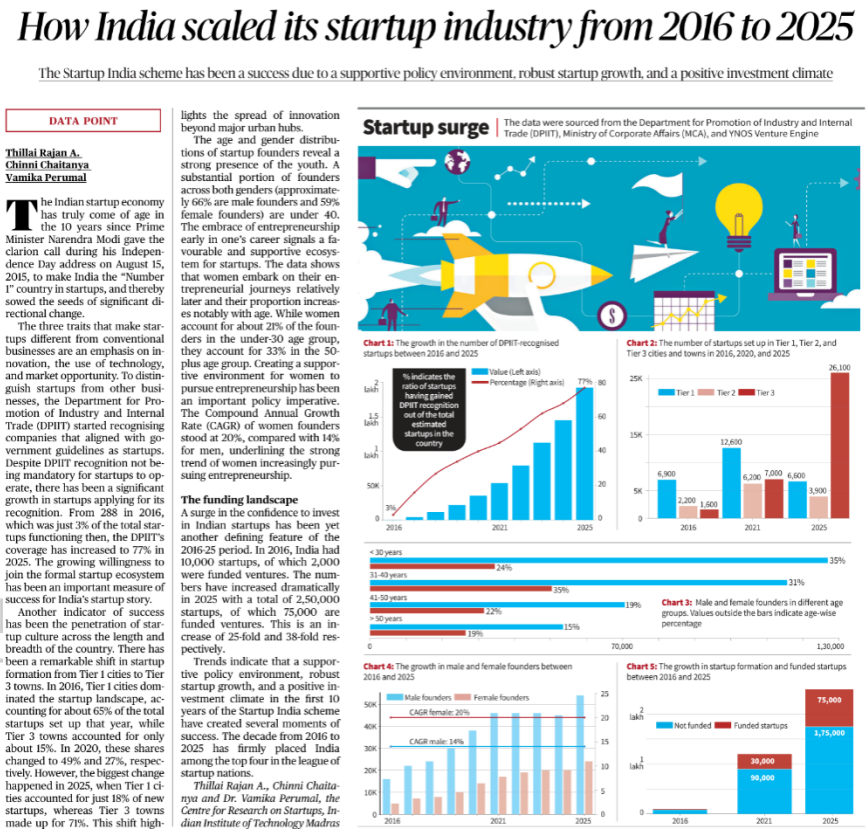
Answer: a)

UPSC Mains Practice Questions

Question: The debate over judicial holidays is linked to broader questions of the efficiency of the Indian judiciary and access to justice. Comment. **(150 words)**

Page :09 : GS III :Indian Economy / Preliminary Examination

The Indian startup economy has come a long and historic journey in the last 10 years (**2016-2025**) since the clarion call for "Startup India" given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on **15th** August **2015**. **According to a recent report by** the '**Centre for Research on** Startups' of the Indian Institute of Technology (**IIT**) Madras**, India has today joined the league of the top four startup countries in the world due to** a supportive policy environment**,** spread of innovation, and a positive investment climate. This analysis highlights this major structural shift in the country**'s economy**.



How India scaled its startup industry from 2016 to 2025

The Startup India scheme has been a success due to a supportive policy environment, robust startup growth, and a positive investment climate

DATA POINT

Thillai Rajan A.
Chinni Chaitanya
Vamika Perumal

The Indian startup economy has truly come of age in the 10 years since Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave the clarion call during his Independence Day address on August 15, 2015, to make India the "Number 1" country in startups, and thereby sowed the seeds of significant directional change.

The three traits that make startups different from conventional businesses are an emphasis on innovation, the use of technology, and market opportunity. To distinguish startups from other businesses, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) started recognising companies that aligned with government guidelines as startups. Despite DPIIT recognition not being mandatory for startups to operate, there has been a significant growth in startups applying for its recognition. From 288 in 2016, which was just 3% of the total startups functioning then, the DPIIT's coverage has increased to 77% in 2025. The growing willingness to join the formal startup ecosystem has been an important measure of success for India's startup story.

Another indicator of success has been the penetration of startup culture across the length and breadth of the country. There has been a remarkable shift in startup formation from Tier 1 cities to Tier 3 towns. In 2016, Tier 1 cities dominated the startup landscape, accounting for about 65% of the total startups set up that year, while Tier 3 towns accounted for only about 15%. In 2020, these shares changed to 49% and 27%, respectively. However, the biggest change happened in 2025, when Tier 1 cities accounted for just 18% of new startups, whereas Tier 3 towns made up for 71%. This shift highlights the spread of innovation beyond major urban hubs.

The age and gender distributions of startup founders reveal a strong presence of the youth. A substantial portion of founders across both genders (approximately 66% are male founders and 59% female founders) are under 40. The embrace of entrepreneurship early in one's career signals a favourable and supportive ecosystem for startups. The data shows that women embark on their entrepreneurial journeys relatively later and their proportion increases notably with age. While women account for about 21% of the founders in the under-30 age group, they account for 33% in the 50-plus age group. Creating a supportive environment for women to pursue entrepreneurship has been an important policy imperative. The Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of women founders stood at 20%, compared with 14% for men, underlining the strong trend of women increasingly pursuing entrepreneurship.

The funding landscape

A surge in the confidence to invest in Indian startups has been yet another defining feature of the 2016-25 period. In 2016, India had 10,000 startups, of which 2,000 were funded ventures. The numbers have increased dramatically in 2025 with a total of 2,50,000 startups, of which 75,000 are funded ventures. This is an increase of 25-fold and 38-fold respectively.

Trends indicate that a supportive policy environment, robust startup growth, and a positive investment climate in the first 10 years of the Startup India scheme have created several moments of success. The decade from 2016 to 2025 has firmly placed India among the top four in the league of startup nations.

Thillai Rajan A., Chinni Chaitanya and Dr. Vamika Perumal, the Centre for Research on Startups, Indian Institute of Technology Madras

Startup surge | The data were sourced from the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA), and YNOS Venture Engine

Chart 1: The growth in the number of DPIIT-recognised startups between 2016 and 2025

Chart 2: The number of startups set up in Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 cities and towns in 2016, 2020, and 2025

Chart 3: Male and female founders in different age groups. Values outside the bars indicate age-wise percentage

Chart 4: The growth in male and female founders between 2016 and 2025

Chart 5: The growth in startup formation and funded startups between 2016 and 2025

Core Analysis Points

1. Formalization and Enhancement of DPIIT Accreditation

- **Definition of Startup:** According to the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (**DPIIT**),** a traditional business and a startup have three basic distinctions—emphasis on **innovation,** use oftechnology**,** and new market opportunities.

- **Formalization Success:** In **2016, only** 3% (288 **startups)** of the total functioning startups **in the country were recognized by DPIIT**. But by **2025**, this figure has increased **to 77%.** While this recognition is not

mandatory, the huge surge in it shows how eager Indian entrepreneurs are to be a part of the **official ecosystem**.

2. Democratization of Startups: Shift from Tier-1to Tier-3Cities

This is the most important trend in **terms of India**'s inclusive growth:

- Status of **2016:** India's large metros (**Tier-1** cities) dominated the startup landscape, accounting **for 65%,** while small towns (**Tier-3** cities) accounted for only **15%.**
- **The Historical Shift of 2025:** Now this equation has been completely reversed. **In** 2025, the share of **tier-1 cities in newly established startups** has **come down to a mere** 18**%,** while the share of **tier-3cities has increased to 71%.** It shows that innovation and entrepreneurship are no longer hostage to big cities, but have reached rural and semi-urban areas of India.

3. Demographic Dividend and Youth Entrepreneurship

- **Youth Participation:** India's young workforce **is moving towards job** creators **rather than job seekers in a big** way. According to the data, about **66% of male founders and 59% of female founders are under the age of 40**. This ability to take risks early in a career reflects a maturing ecosystem.

4. Rapid growth in women entrepreneurship

- **Faster Growth Rate:** Although women start their entrepreneurial journey a little later than men (**women founders** under the age of 30 **make** up 21**%,** while **in the 50+** age group, it increases to **33**%**),** their growth rate is fantastic.
- **Growth in CAGR:** Female founders had **a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 20%, significantly higher than** that of men (**14%**). This underscores the growing women empowerment and financial independence in the startup sector.

5. Financial Inclusion and Investment Landscape

Global and domestic investor confidence in Indian startups has increased phenomenally in the last decade:

- **Numerical Explosion:** In **2016, there were only** 10,000 **startups** in India, of which **2,000** received funding.
- **Leap to 2025:** By **2025,** the total number of startups has increased **to 2,50,000 (25-fold increase)** and the number of funded ventures has increased **to 75,000 (38-fold increase**).

Key Policy Enablers of Startup India's Success

- **Simplified Regulatory Framework: The** drastic reduction in the cost of **tax holidays, self-certification**, and patent registration under the '**Startup India**' scheme reduced the compliance burden.

- **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI):** Technological infrastructures such as **India Stack,** UPI, **and Open Network for Digital Commerce (**ONDC) also provided startups from tier-3 cities with direct access to the pan-India market.

- **Fund of Funds for Startups (FFS):** The availability ofseed funding by the government through **SIDBI** reduced the risk of investors and encouraged new ideas.

Way Forward

- **Strengthening Tier-3Infrastructure:** Since **71%** of the startups are now coming from Tier-3cities**,** high-speed internet**,** incubation centres and logistics networks in these areas have to be further strengthened.

- **Support to women entrepreneurs in the early stages:** Special mentorship and collateral-free (collateral-free) loan schemes should be expanded to promote entrepreneurship for women in early career (under-30age group).

- **Focus on Sustainability and Manufacturing:** Indian startups should not be limited to software and e-commerce **(Services Sector**) but **should move** towards '**deep-tech**', **space**, **defence**, **manufacturing (**hardware) **and eco-friendly** technologies.

Conclusion

The decade from 2016 to 2025 has been a period of **"Techade" (Decade of Technology) and an entrepreneurial revolution for India**. **The** 'Startup India' scheme has not only been a means to create a few tech-billionaires**,** but it has changed the economic geography of India. The **71%** share of **Tier-3** cities and the growth rate of women **at 20**% proves that this growth is inclusive and democratic. This startup **ecosystem will be the most important engine in achieving the goal of making India a** $5 **trillion economy and** a '**Viksit Bharat**'.

Page :08 : Editorial Analysis

After Maoism, the next battle is for Adivasi trust

On May 19, 2026, the Union Home Minister addressed a press conference in Jagdalpur, Chhattisgarh, his first since March 31, 2026, when India was officially declared Maoist-free. The most encouraging aspect of the briefing was his assertion that "the fight against Maoism would remain incomplete until every resident of Bastar is integrated into the mainstream".

The road to 2031

Having accomplished the March 31 objective, the Union Home Minister mentioned that 2031 would be the next milestone for ensuring the overall welfare of Bastar's Adivasis. This is welcome, since insurgencies do not have an expiry date. According to the Home Minister, this objective is to be achieved through democratic values, cooperation and development. The government also intends to expand its outreach by delivering welfare schemes to the doorsteps of local communities through designated centres operated by the security forces.

One of the methodologies that the Home Minister emphasised for the empowerment of Adivasis was a commitment to the tiered system of governance, from the tehsil level upwards to the Centre. The constitutional vision of this system was to be based on two parallel channels. The first comprised the Panchayati Raj Institutions, with the Gram Sabha as the basic unit. The second consisted of government-appointed officials such as tehsildars, District Collectors and others. The distinction is that the former is elected by the people, while the latter is appointed by the government. These channels were not to converge or be overshadowed by the government-appointed channel, which normally has been the case on the ground. The Home Minister outlined a blueprint for the government's future initiatives. However, sustained peace will require addressing deeper structural issues. Surprisingly, his press conference made no mention of the most crucial of these concerning grassroots governance as guaranteed by the Constitution.

Shashank Ranjan

An Indian Army veteran (Colonel) with substantial experience in counter-terrorism operations, currently teaching at the O.P. Jindal Global University, Sonepat, Haryana

Constitutional guarantees hold the key to Bastar's lasting peace

Welfare schemes, the road laying, and the installation of mobile communication towers do contribute significantly to improving the ease of living. However, the larger issues relate to *jal*, jungle and *zameen* (water, forest, and land). These are the concerns that will ultimately determine the people's trust in the government.

Implementing PESA in earnest

Now is an opportunity for the government to complete the unfinished agenda of implementing the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) (PESA) Act, 1996. Across India's Fifth Schedule Area States, the record of PESA implementation has been dismal. Since implementation was left to the States, each interpreted and applied the Act differently, often undermining its spirit and intent.

Grassroots governance centred on the Gram Sabha forms the basis of the PESA Act. Its effective implementation in letter and spirit has the potential to deliver justice to the Adivasi. Today, the Adivasi is with the government, largely due to the security forces' tactical victory over the Maoists. However, as the security challenges recede, the government will be tested by the Adivasi on the parameters of justice delivery. The Adivasis are aware of the guarantees that the Constitutional Acts provide and are unlikely to scale down their aspirations.

With decentralised governance at its core, the PESA Act elevates the Gram Sabha to the cornerstone of local self-governance. Under the Act, the Gram Sabha is granted decisive powers to safeguard Adivasi identity, manage community resources and resolve local disputes in accordance with customary laws. The consent of the Gram Sabha on matters affecting lives and livelihoods has the potential to bring about the structural change necessary for positive peace – one that goes far beyond the mere absence of violence. However, State governments have often attempted to circumvent the authority of the Gram Sabha in pursuit of other objectives. A case in point was the Chhattisgarh government's 2022 proposal to amend the Act by replacing "consent" with "consultation". This would have diluted the Gram Sabha's veto power and undermined the essence of the PESA Act. There have also been instances where Gram Sabha resolutions and consent records were allegedly forged or fabricated with *mala fide* intent.

The imperative of trust

The intent here is not to express scepticism about the sincerity of what the Home Minister said during his press briefing. However, for people to place their trust in the government, structural and historical issues must be addressed. Upholding and strengthening constitutional guarantees should be the primary concern of the government. This would help allay the lingering doubts in the minds of Adivasis, many of whom may still be ambivalent. Through genuinely participatory governance, the government should allow Adivasis to define the "mainstream" into which the Home Minister seeks to integrate them.

GS Paper III: **Internal Security**

UPSC Mains Exam Practice Questions: "Military suppression of Maoist violence is necessary, but lasting solutions are possible only through inclusive governance and development." Discuss. **(250 words)**

Reference:

On 31 March 2026**, India was officially declared**Maoist-free, marking a historic and strategic victory for the security forces on the internal security front. Following this success, on 19 May 2026, the Home Minister released a new roadmap till **the year 2031 in Bastar (Chhattisgarh**). The main argument of the author is that achieving a military victory over the Maoists was only the first stage; The real and more complex challenge is **to win the enduring trust of the tribals of Bastar**. This goal will be possible not only by external development (roads, mobile towers), but only by the actual transfer of water, forest, land and constitutional rights.

Core Analysis Points

1. Goal for 2031: From 'Negative Peace' to 'Positive Peace'

- **Difference:** The end of Maoism is 'Absence of Violence'. But the welfare of tribals, democracy and cooperation are yet to bring about 'positive peace' (establishment of justice and trust).
- **New role of security forces:** The government wants to take welfare schemes to the doorsteps of tribals through special centres run by security forces.

2. Structural Imbalance in Grassroots Governance

The Constitution had envisaged two parallel channels for governance in the Scheduled Areas:

1. **Elected Medium:** Panchayati Raj Institutions (Gram Sabhas).
2. **Administrative Medium:** Government Officers (Tehsildar, District Collector).

The problem: On the ground, the administrative (bureaucratic) medium has always been dominated by the elected medium (the people's representative). The Home Minister talked about three-tier governance, but made no mention of removing this basic administrative imbalance.

3. 'Water, Forest, Land' vs Physical Development

- Roads, schools and mobile towers make life easier , but the basic identity and concerns of the tribals **are related to water, forest and land**.
- If the government ignores the traditional claims of the tribals on these natural resources, their long-term trust cannot be won on the basis of physical infrastructure alone.

4. Lacklustre implementation of the PESAAct, 1996

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According to the author, the most infallible weapon of delivering justice to tribals **is the 'Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act**, 1996' (PESA), but its track record has been dismal:

- **Arbitrariness of the States:** Since the onus of implementing PESA was on the States, the Fifth Schedule States interpreted it as per their convenience and undermined its original purpose.
- **The Controversy of 'Consent' vs. '**Consultation': The Chhattisgarh government's attempt to amend the PESA Rules in 2022 was exemplified**, where the '**Consent' **of the Gram Sabha was proposed to be replaced by 'Consultation'** only. It was like taking away the veto power of the Gram Sabha.
- **Fake proposals:** In many cases, allegations of fraud or forgery have also surfaced in the proposals and consents of the Gram Sabha for corporate or other interests.

Way Forward — Practical Tips for the Mains Exam

- **Real Empowerment of the Gram Sabha:** Under the PESA Act, the Gram Sabha should not be considered a mere formal institution but should be given decisive and legal powers for the management of community resources, **dispute settlement, and protection of cultural identity**.
- **Right to change the definition of 'mainstream'**: Instead of imposing any external model of development on tribals, the government should give them the autonomy to decide which 'mainstream' they want to be a part of.
- **Strict adherence to constitutional guarantees:** After the security challenges have subsided, the real test of the government will now be on the scale of 'justice delivery'. Only honest implementation of the rights of tribals (such as the Forest Rights Act, 2006 and PESA) can clear the doubts in their minds.

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Conclusion

The end of Maoism is a new chapter in the history of Bastar, but it is not the final destination but a beginning. As the author has made clear, extremism does not have a fixed 'expiry date'; If injustice and structural deficiencies persist in the system, discontent may re-emerge in some other form. Therefore, the path to 2031 will depend on whether the state sees tribals only as 'beneficiaries' of welfare schemes or accepts them as **'true partners'** under the Constitution. The creation of trust will be the real culmination of the fight against Maoism.