

The Hindu Important News Articles For UPSC CSE

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India's Index of Industrial Production (IIP) growth slowed to **6.7% in July 2026** compared to an updated 8.8% in June. While buoyed by high performance in manufacturing and electricity, the granular data highlights a stark divergence: robust consumer durables growth juxtaposed with contracting consumer non-durables, signaling persistent sluggishness in rural demand.

Key Issues & Structural Divergence

- **K-Shaped Consumption Pattern:** Consumer durables grew by **10.5%**, and sectors like motor vehicles (**22.2%**) and electrical equipment (**28.3%**) surged, driven by urban, credit-linked, and higher-income demand.
- **Subdued Rural Demand:** Consumer non-durables contracted by **1.0%**, while basic items like food products (**2.6%**) and clothing (**-0.6%**) stagnated, reflecting constrained rural household incomes and inflationary pressures on daily essentials.
- **Sectoral Anchors:** Manufacturing expanded at **7.3%**, supported primarily by engineering, automobiles, electronics, and plastics, keeping overall industrial output resilient despite uneven domestic spending.

Related Static Dimensions

1. Index of Industrial Production (IIP)

- **Base Year:** 2011–12.
- **Compiled & Published by:** National Statistical Office (NSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).
- **Broad Sectors:** Mining (14.37%), Manufacturing (77.63%), and Electricity (7.99%).
- **Use-Based Classification:** Primary goods, Capital goods, Intermediate goods, Infrastructure/Construction goods, Consumer durables, and Consumer non-durables.

2. Core Industries & Weightage

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IIP slows to 6.7% in July; economists warn of sluggish rural consumption

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

India's industrial growth in July 2026 stood at 6.7%, slower than the 8.8% seen in June.

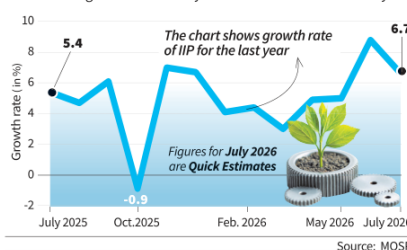
July's performance of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) was, however, the second-best growth the index has seen since December last year, and was buoyed by the manufacturing and electricity and gas supply sectors. The IIP data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation also saw June's IIP growth upgraded from the provisional 7.3% announced last month to 8.8%.

According to economists, the data in particular shows a divergence in India's consumption trends, with rural consumption levels exhibiting weakness.

The manufacturing sector grew by 7.3% in July

Growth dips

India's industrial growth rate fell to **6.7% in July 2026**, the second-best growth recorded by the Index since December last year



2026, down from the 9.5% it saw in June, but faster than the 5.1% growth in July of last year. "The manufacturing sector growth was propelled by industries like engineering [electric and non-electrical] and automobiles [all kinds of transport] besides electronics and plastic and rubber products," Madan Sabnavis, chief economist at the Bank of Baroda, said.

Industries such as beverages, wood, paper, and non-metallic minerals also supported this relatively high growth, he said.

Rajeev Sharan, head of research at Brickwork Ratings, however, said the main 6.7% growth in the IIP might be overstating "the breadth of the recovery" as the underlying data shows a split in the way Indians are spending their

money. That is, the data seems to suggest that expenditure on daily-use items is slowing while spending on durables seems to be doing well.

"The July numbers show a widening gap in household spending," Mr. Sharan said. "Consumer durables, the big-ticket items such as vehicles and appliances, grew 10.5%, while everyday goods such as food and toiletries [consumer non-durables] fell 1%," he added.

Mr. Sharan added that a similar split runs through factory output, with the motor vehicles sector up 22.2% and electrical equipment up 28.3%, while food products grew a much slower 2.6% and clothing contracted 0.6%. "This suggests discretionary and credit-linked purchases remain strong, while everyday items, more closely tied to rural incomes, remain weak," he said.

Daily News Analysis

- Eight Core Industries constitute **40.27%** of the weight in IIP.
- *Decreasing Order of Weightage:* Refinery Products > Electricity > Steel > Coal > Crude Oil > Natural Gas > Cement > Fertilizers.

3. Key Economic Concepts

- **K-Shaped Recovery:** An economic recovery scenario where different sectors or income groups recover at starkly different rates or directions.
- **Discretionary vs. Non-Discretionary Spending:** Discretionary spending relies heavily on urban wages and credit availability, whereas non-discretionary (essential) spending reflects foundational real income levels in rural and informal sectors.

Strategic Measures Required

- **Rural Income Augmentation:** Strengthen targeted rural wage initiatives (like MGNREGA) and boost agri-infrastructure investments to revive essential demand.
- **Broadening Capital Expenditure:** Expand public infrastructure spending to generate direct employment and crowd-in private investments across non-durable manufacturing sectors.
- **Controlling Essential Inflation:** Mitigate food and daily-use commodity inflation to protect real purchasing power among low-income households.

Conclusion

While a 6.7% IIP growth demonstrates baseline industrial resilience, the growing chasm between luxury/durable demand and essential consumption poses structural risks. A balanced economic trajectory requires macro-policy to shift focus from top-tier consumption toward revitalizing rural purchasing power and broad-based demand.

UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Question: With reference to the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), consider the following statements:

1. IIP measures changes in the volume of industrial production in India.
2. It is compiled and published by the National Statistical Office.
3. Manufacturing has the largest weight among the three broad sectors of IIP.
4. The current base year of IIP is 2011–12.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 1, 2 and 3 only
- C. 2, 3 and 4 only
- D. 1, 2, 3 and 4

Ans:D)

UPSC Mains Practice Questions

Question: "A high rate of industrial growth does not necessarily imply a broad-based economic recovery." Discuss with reference to the recent divergence between consumer durables and non-durables demand in India.(10 Marks, 150 Words)

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India signed a Letter of Offer and Acceptance (LOA) with the United States to acquire the **Javelin Anti-Tank Guided Missile (ATGM)** system via the U.S. Foreign Military Sales (FMS) route. Triggered under the emergency procurement framework following **Operation Sindoor**, this move addresses operational anti-armour gaps while elevating bilateral defence industrial cooperation.

Key Dimensions & Analysis

- **Tactical Capabilities:** The Javelin is a modern "**fire-and-forget**" medium-range missile. Its top-attack capability targets the vulnerable upper armor of enemy tanks, significantly enhancing mountain infantry effectiveness along volatile borders without exposing troops to counter-fire.
- **Emergency Procurement Route:** Procured under the Sixth Tranche of Emergency Procurement (capped at ₹300 crore per equipment category), the deal ensures quick delivery by 2026–27 to bridge frontline operational deficits.
- **Strategic Bilateral Alignment:** Coming through the U.S. FMS route, the procurement underscores the deepening India–U.S. Major Defence Partnership. It lays the ground for future co-production and technology transfer, aligning with broader Indo-Pacific security architectures.

India signs Javelin procurement deal with U.S., boosts defence ties

Saurabh Trivedi
NEW DELHI

India signed a Letter of Offer and Acceptance (LOA) with the U.S. on Friday to procure Javelin anti-tank guided missile systems through the U.S. Foreign Military Sales route, marking a significant step in the defence partnership between the two countries.

The missile system is being bought under the emergency procurement powers granted to the armed forces to augment critical operational capabilities following Operation Sindoor, defence sources said. The Indian Army is procuring Javelin missiles in limited numbers. Under the emergency framework, the armed forces can make purchases of up to ₹300 crore for each equipment category. Deliveries of contracts under the sixth tranche of emergency procurements are expected to



The Javelin is a medium-range, anti-tank guided missile designed to engage armoured vehicles and fortified positions. AFP

begin by the end of 2026–27, sources said.

The U.S. Embassy in New Delhi welcomed the signing of the LOA, saying it demonstrated the growing depth of the U.S.-India Major Defence Partnership, and would pave the way for greater cooperation between the defence industries of the two countries. "With the signing of the LOA, India becomes a customer of the Javelin system," the Embassy said.

U.S. Ambassador to India Sergio Gor said the agreement reflected a defence partnership that was "growing deeper, more capable, and consequential". He said it demonstrated U.S. support for the Indian Army and created opportunities for the two countries to work together.

The Javelin is a medium-range, anti-tank guided missile designed to engage armoured vehicles and fortified positions.

Its fire-and-forget capability lets the operator fire the missile and move to another position without having to guide it throughout its flight.

The Javelin system is produced by the Javelin Joint Venture, comprising RTX and Lockheed Martin. Currently, the U.S. Army, U.S. Marine Corps and several international customers operate it. The U.S. Embassy said the signing would facilitate discussions on mutually beneficial co-production and create additional opportunities to strengthen the defence industrial bases of India and the U.S.

The procurement assumes significance in the backdrop of India's efforts to rapidly strengthen its anti-armour capabilities following Operation Sindoor, while simultaneously deepening defence-industrial cooperation with America.

Related Static Dimensions for UPSC

1. Anti-Tank Guided Missiles (ATGMs) Classification

○ Generation Types:

- **1st Gen:** Manual guidance via wire (e.g., SS.11).
- **2nd Gen:** Semi-Automatic Command to Line of Sight (SACLOS) via wire/radio (e.g., MILAN, Konkurs).
- **3rd Gen:** Fire-and-forget using IR/imaging sensors (e.g., Javelin, Nag, MPATGM).

- **Indigenous Alternatives:** DRDO's **Nag** (vehicle-mounted) and **MPATGM** (Man-Portable ATGM) form the core of domestic self-reliance (Atmanirbhar Bharat).

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2. India-U.S. Defence Frameworks

- **Major Defence Partner (MDP) Status:** Granted to India by the U.S. in 2016 to facilitate technology sharing comparable to NATO allies.
- **Foundational Agreements:**
 - **GSOMIA (2002):** General Security of Military Information Agreement.
 - **LEMOA (2016):** Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement.
 - **COMCASA (2018):** Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement.
 - **BECA (2020):** Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo-Spatial Cooperation.
- **iCET & INDUS-X:** Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology and the India-U.S. Defence Acceleration Ecosystem aimed at joint defense co-production.

3. Emergency Procurement Powers

- Delegated financial authority given to Service Vice-Chiefs to fast-track weapons induction during heightened threat environments without going through full-cycle Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP) delays.

Strategic Measures Required

- **Co-Production Acceleration:** Leverage the Javelin LOA to transition from direct foreign acquisition to domestic joint manufacturing (co-development) under the *Make in India* defense roadmap.
- **Indigenization Synergy:** Complement limited off-the-shelf imports with accelerated trials and mass production of indigenous systems like MPATGM to ensure long-term self-sufficiency.

Conclusion

While emergency imports like the Javelin provide vital operational readiness against immediate frontline threats, sustained security lies in combining short-term foreign procurements with joint industrial co-production and robust indigenous research and development.

UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Question: The “fire-and-forget” capability of a missile primarily implies that:

- A. The missile can be launched without identifying the target
- B. The missile does not require continuous guidance from the operator after launch
- C. The missile automatically returns to the launcher if it misses the target
- D. The missile can engage only stationary targets

Ans: B)

UPSC Mains Practice Questions

Question: How can India leverage foreign defence acquisitions to achieve technology transfer, joint production and integration into domestic defence value chains rather than remaining dependent on finished imports? **(10 Marks, 150 Words)**

Page 06: GS II : International Relations / Preliminary Examination

Five years after the August 2021 U.S. withdrawal, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA 2.0) presents a dual narrative: macro-security and monetary stabilization alongside socio-political regression and severe economic isolation. Framed by **UNSC Resolution 2593**, the global consensus on withholding formal recognition remains largely intact, even as regional powers transition toward pragmatic, transactional engagement.

Five years on, Taliban are still at a fork in the road

For a people long regarded as at the crossroads of civilisations, the past five years of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) under Taliban rule resemble the backwaters. After 47 years of bloodletting, terrorism and foreign occupation, the current "stability" is a respite. But the ongoing time-freeze only postpones an eventual transition to modern universality. So far, the process has been glacial and selective, causing pain and uncertainty. It is time to take stock of the past half-decade and try to fix the broad contours of a foreseeable future.

A more stable country

The IEA's overall performance since the August 15, 2021 takeover has been a binary. On the positive side, though the IEA 2.0 transition was as chaotic as the IEA 1.0 transition in 1996, it spared the country from mass retribution. Afghanistan is now largely stable and secure. The country's "Badlands" were long associated with militant groups such as al-Qaeda. Their 9/11 attacks unleashed two decades of bloody U.S. retribution on both al-Qaeda and the IEA 1.0. The IEA 2.0 has disallowed the use of their territory for operations against other countries. During the past five years, an estimated 5.7 million refugees from Pakistan and Iran have returned to Afghanistan. While this return of an eighth of the country's population has exacerbated the penury, the government has managed it reasonably well. These unmistakable shifts from the ruinous policies of the previous Islamic Emirate (1996-2001) have partially mitigated the world's concerns.

But many of the IEA 2.0 domestic policies are a carbon copy of IEA 1.0; its socio-political contrast with the preceding western-designed Republic was widely perceived as a huge regression. To the universal abomination, Taliban 2.0 swiftly reinstated the harshest rules in the contemporary Islamic world: a ban on music, no education for girls beyond class six, gender segregation, lifting the ban on child marriages and a narrow power base shutting out women, non-Pashtuns and ethnic minorities. The Taliban theocrats defended these measures, citing Islamic Sharia, Sunni Deobandi Islam, Hanafi jurisprudence and Pashtun traditions.

The West, in particular, felt deeply betrayed by the Taliban's cynical disregard for their commitments under the transitional accord signed in Doha in 2020 to pave the way for U.S. and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) troop withdrawal. Two decades of the U.S. military campaign against the Taliban, which caused 6,379 deaths and cost \$2.26 trillion in expenses, now seem in vain. Despite intense Pakistani lobbying for the IEA 2.0 to be accepted and formally recognised, there was global unanimity to withhold both till such draconian policies were moderated. The global community's response to the Taliban's re-takeover was framed by the United Nations



Mahesh Sachdev
Retired Indian Ambassador, specialising in West Asian and oil issues

Security Council resolution 2593 adopted on August 30, 2021. It demanded, *inter alia*, that Afghan territory not be used for terrorism and that human rights, including the rights of women, children, and minorities, be upheld. It also encouraged all parties to seek an inclusive, negotiated political settlement, with the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women, that responds to the desire of Afghans to sustain and build on the gains Afghanistan had made over the preceding 20 years, in adherence to the rule of law. Five years on, this resolution remains a cornerstone of global policy on the IEA.

The IEA 2.0's political architecture of an uncoded unitary theocracy evolved informally from the Quetta Shura, later called Rabbani Shura. It received the endorsement of 3,000 Afghan clerics and tribal leaders under the aegis of a Loya Jirga (Grand Assembly) held in Kabul in mid-2022. Accordingly, Hibatullah Akhundzada was appointed Supreme Leader (Amir al-Mu'minin), with combined powers as head of state, commander-in-chief, and religious leader of Afghanistan. He heads the 26-member Leadership Council, the IEA 2.0's top decision-making body, which includes Prime Minister Hassan Akhund and three Deputy Leaders. Its decisions are implemented by the Cabinet. The IEA 2.0 has often cited the Holy Koran as its Constitution and Hanafi jurisprudence as its common law.

Fragile economic progress

The latest available figures are tentative, but point to a relative improvement in the Afghan economy. Draconian measures have curbed rampant corruption and smuggling. Thanks to better fiscal discipline, the national currency, the Afghani, is stable. Consumer inflation was 2% in 2025. The Nominal GDP is \$19.66 billion, contributed by services (49%), agriculture (26%), manufacturing and mining (13%) and construction (12%). Its growth rate for 2025 was 4.3% and is expected to be 2.3% in 2026. The country's GDP dropped by nearly 20% following the Taliban's return to power. The GDP/capita is only \$448, less than one-sixth of India's.

Nearly half of Afghanistan's 49 million population lives under the national poverty line, facing acute food shortages. Still, most western official development assistance (ODA) remains suspended, and many multilateral agencies restrict their funding. Some non-governmental organisations have continued to help mitigate the dire situation. The population rose by 11% in 2025, largely due to immigration. This led to a 4% decline in GDP per capita despite healthy economic growth. Afghanistan has a Human Development Index (HDI) score of 0.496, among the world's lowest. Formal unemployment is put at 13.3%, with most women and a quarter of young men jobless. While foreign trade reached \$13.9 billion in 2025, Afghan exports barely cover 15% of its imports. Despite a rise in tax revenues, negligible foreign investments and declining

external grants leave the government with insignificant funds for welfare or decrepit infrastructure mauled by nearly five decades of instability. After the formation of IEA 2.0 in 2021, the U.S. froze \$9.6 billion worth of Afghanistan's foreign assets.

During the past five years, the IEA 2.0 has sought international acceptance and legitimacy without undertaking the necessary domestic reforms. Nevertheless, the ostracising consensus has frayed, and realpolitik has spurred engagement. The IEA now claims to have 40 active diplomatic missions abroad and more than 20 countries represented in Kabul, even as Russia is so far the only country to have recognised the IEA and opened an embassy in Kabul. Pakistan, China, Iran and India have established links with Kabul at variously nuanced *de jure* levels without extending formal recognition. Some trade and mineral exploitation transactions have also been made. Iran, the Central Asian Republics, the Gulf countries and Türkiye have extended trade and logistical links. With the solitary exception of neighbouring Pakistan, with which it is in conflict, Afghanistan's links with most regional countries are stable.

New Delhi's Afghan engagement

India was initially sceptical of the IEA 2.0, but has since come full circle. New Delhi continues to conform to global norms by not having full diplomatic recognition, without preventing substantive bilateral engagement. Following the Afghan Foreign Minister's successful visit to India in October 2025, three other Afghan Ministers have also visited India. Despite Pakistan's denial of overland transit, India-Afghan annual trade has hovered around one billion dollars, with India becoming one of the largest markets for Afghan exports. India has provided the IEA with valuable humanitarian assistance. Indian mentoring has improved the Afghan cricket team's performance.

With five years of governance behind them, some IEA leaders are beginning to see the unsustainability of their hardline domestic socio-political agenda. For instance, the Taliban now claim that the ban on higher education for girls is due to a lack of funds for segregated education. The need of the hour now is for the world community to encourage this trend. It should collectively come up with a critical mass of incentives to gently induce the IEA to reform.

As South Asia's trendsetter, India is well suited to match mutual expectations and create a pathway for normalisation of IEA 2.0, preferably through a multilateral donors' conference. Ironically, five years ago, Pakistan tried to get the world to accept the IEA 2.0. It failed because the Taliban, then flushed with victory over the U.S., saw no need to adopt. In case India decides to take up this "great game", New Delhi would need to gingerly begin at both ends. A progressive and moderate Afghanistan, thus created, would be an asset not only to India but also to the world at large.

A fortnight ago, the Taliban completed five years in power, bringing stability; but Afghans still yearn for a political, economic and social makeover

Key Analytical Dimensions

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Daily News Analysis

- **Internal Governance & Security Binary:**

- *Positives:* Reduced internal armed conflict, successful management of ~5.7 million returning refugees from Pakistan and Iran, and prevention of large-scale external terrorist operations from its territory.
- *Negatives:* Rigid socio-political regression under Hanafi jurisprudence/Pashtunwali norms—including bans on girls' higher education, gender segregation, exclusion of non-Pashtun minorities, and an uncoded theocratic executive headed by Supreme Leader Hibatullah Akhundzada.

- **Economic Fragility vs. Fiscal Discipline:**

- *Fiscal Stability:* Draconian measures reduced corruption and smuggling, stabilizing the national currency (*Afghani*) with low inflation (2% in 2025) and modest GDP growth (2.3% projected for 2026).
- *Structural Weakness:* Low GDP per capita (\$448), massive trade deficits (exports cover only 15% of imports), frozen foreign reserves (\$9.6 billion held by the U.S.), and high youth unemployment drive acute poverty affecting nearly half the population.

- **Geopolitical Realpolitik & Shifting External Dynamics:**

- While global formal recognition remains withheld (with Russia being an exception in establishing full diplomatic status), over 20 nations maintain active presence in Kabul.
- Regional actors (China, Iran, Central Asian republics) prioritize pragmatic economic and security links over Western liberal-democratic conditions.

Related Static Dimensions

1. **UNSC Resolution 2593 (2021)**

- Adopted under India's UNSC presidency in August 2021.
- **Core Pillars:** Counter-terrorism (ensuring Afghan soil is not used to threaten any country), protection of human rights (specifically women and minorities), human assistance delivery, and a negotiated inclusive political settlement.

2. **India-Afghanistan Relations & Strategic Stakes**

- **Strategic Assets:** Bilateral trade (~\$1 billion), the Chabahar Port transport corridor bypassing Pakistan, and soft-power diplomacy (humanitarian aid, capacity building, sports mentoring).
- **Security Imperatives:** Preventing terrorist safe havens (LeT, JeM) in Afghanistan and curbing cross-border drug trafficking (Golden Crescent integration).

Daily News Analysis

- **Diplomatic Shift:** Evolution from total non-engagement with Taliban 1.0 (1996–2001) to pragmatic, non-recognitional functional diplomacy with Taliban 2.0.

3. Key Terms & Concepts

- **Quetta/Rahbari Shura:** The governing council of leadership framing Taliban executive decisions.
- **De facto vs. De jure Recognition:** De facto implies practical working engagement without formal legal approval; De jure represents complete, legal international recognition.

Strategic Measures Required

- **Incentivized Engagement Strategy:** The international community should create a calibrated framework offering conditional financial assistance and infrastructure funding in exchange for incremental domestic social reforms (e.g., funding segregated female education).
- **India's Leadership Role:** As a regional stabilizer, India can leverage its historical soft power and economic goodwill to broker a multilateral donors' consensus, guiding Afghanistan toward gradual political moderation and economic self-sustainability.

Conclusion

Afghanistan under IEA 2.0 stands at a critical juncture where security stability has failed to translate into socio-economic viability. Mitigating human suffering and preventing regional instability requires the international community—led by pragmatic regional actors like India—to transition from complete isolation to structured, incentive-based engagement.

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UPSC Prelims Exam Study Questions

Question: The Golden Crescent is associated with:

- A. Major opium-producing regions of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran
- B. A group of Central Asian republics
- C. A regional energy corridor connecting Central Asia with India
- D. A maritime security arrangement in the Indian Ocean

Ans:A)

UPSC Mains Exam Study Questions

Question:“Chabahar Port is an important instrument of India's strategic autonomy in continental Asia.” Discuss its significance for India's Afghanistan and Central Asia policy. **(10 Marks, 150 Words)**

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Daily News Analysis

- **Article 21:** Right to privacy, dignity, and the choice of a life partner (reaffirmed in *Navtej Singh Johar* and *Shafin Jahan* cases).
- **Lata Singh v. State of UP (2006) & Shakti Vahini v. Union of India (2018):** Supreme Court explicitly ruled that Khap Panchayats' interference in consensual adult marriages is illegal, ordering stringent state action against extra-judicial dictates.

2. Sociological Dimensions

- **Kinship & Exogamy:** Clan (*gotra*) and village exogamy are traditional marriage rules in North India. Khaps view same-gotra unions as incestuous, creating friction with modern individual choice.
- **K-Shaped Social Transition:** Rapid economic and digital exposure coexisting alongside deeply rigid agrarian patriarchy, leading to heightened social friction.

3. Key Demographic Indicators

- **Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB):** Haryana has historically suffered from severely skewed sex ratios (declining to 898 girls per 1,000 boys in early 2026), making gender-restrictive diktats socio-demographically counterproductive.

Strategic Measures Required

- **Strict Enforcement of Judicial Directives:** State machinery must proactively enforce the Supreme Court's *Shakti Vahini* guidelines to prevent extra-constitutional bodies from imposing unlawful sanctions or ostracisation on consenting adults.
- **Strengthening Local Self-Governance (Panchayati Raj):** Empower democratically elected, inclusive Gram Panchayats—where female representation is constitutionally mandated—to diminish the authority of unelected, caste-based Khaps.
- **Socio-Legal Awareness & Youth Engagement:** Promote institutional platforms for dialogic engagement between community elders and youth to bridge generational divides without compromising fundamental rights.

Conclusion

The collision between Khap traditionalism and Gen Z's digital assertiveness signals a crucial transition in rural India. Upholding constitutional morality over customary coercion requires the state to protect individual liberties firmly while encouraging organic socio-cultural modernization from within.

UPSC Mains Exam Study Questions

Question: "Transparency in judicial functioning must be balanced with institutional confidentiality, privacy and judicial independence." Examine this tension in the context of the Right to Information. **(10 Marks, 150 Words)**

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A decade after the enactment of the **Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016**, the institutional framework in India remains heavily focused on the individual with disabilities, often overlooking the severe socio-economic and psychological strain borne by lifelong caregivers. Incidents of mental breakdown, career sacrifices—especially by women—and anxiety over the future of adult dependents highlight systemic deficiencies in state-led social security nets.



Key Issues & Structural Gaps

- **The Caregiver Crisis & Gendered Burden:** Primary caregiving falls disproportionately on mothers, leading to career foreclosures, social isolation, and severe mental health challenges. This is compounded by social stigma and instances of spousal abandonment.
- **The "After-Life" Dilemma:** The absence of long-term assisted-living infrastructure creates extreme distress for aging parents regarding the care of adult dependents (18+ years) with intellectual or neurological conditions.

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Daily News Analysis

- **Policy Convergence Failure:** Government schemes suffer from poor inter-departmental integration (Education, Health, and Social Justice), leaving gaps in early detection, lifelong therapy, and financial pension coverage.
- **Information Asymmetry & Exploitation:** Lack of awareness regarding developmental milestones makes vulnerable families targets for unscientific "magical cures," leading to financial distress.

Related Static Dimensions for UPSC

1. Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016

- **Expanded Coverage:** Increased recognized disability types from 7 to 21 (including cerebral palsy, autism spectrum disorders, and muscular dystrophy).
- **Core Principles:** Respect for inherent dignity, non-discrimination, full inclusion, and accessibility (Section 40).
- **Institutional Framework:** Mandates National and State Advisory Boards, along with Special Courts for speedy trials.

2. National Trust Act, 1999

- Constituted specifically for the welfare of persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation, and Multiple Disabilities.
- **Key Schemes:** *Niramaya* (health insurance), *Samarth* (respite care), and *Gharaunda* (group homes for adults).

3. Constitutional & International Mandates

- **Article 41 (Directive Principles):** Directs the State to make effective provision for securing the right to work, education, and public assistance in cases of disablement.
- **UNCRPD:** United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (ratified by India in 2007).

Strategic Measures Required

- **Institutionalizing Respite Care:** Scale initiatives like Kerala's *Anpu* homes across all districts to provide short-term residential relief for primary caregivers.
- **Community-Led Assisted Living Models:** Support public-private and cooperative community-living projects (such as parent-pooled housing models) to ensure safe, dignified spaces for adult PwDs.
- **Skill Adaptation & Vocational Integration:** Transition from welfare handouts to deploying adults with intellectual disabilities into structured, repetitive mechanical roles, fostering self-reliance.
- **Inter-Departmental Convergence:** Integrate Primary Health Centres (PHCs), District Early Intervention Centres (DEICs), and Composite Regional Centres (CRCs) to provide seamless lifetime support to both PwDs and their families.

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Conclusion

True disability empowerment requires expanding the policy framework from a person-centric approach to a **family-centric care model**. Fulfilling the spirit of the RPwD Act demands robust social security, state-supported assisted living, and institutionalized caregiver relief to ensure dignity for both differently abled individuals and their families.

UPSC Prelims Exam Study Questions

Question: The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) primarily seeks to:

- A. Establish a uniform pension system for persons with disabilities across all countries
- B. Promote and protect the full and equal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by persons with disabilities
- C. Replace national disability legislation with a single international law
- D. Restrict disability policy exclusively to medical rehabilitation

Ans: B)

UPSC Mains Exam Study Questions

Question: "The disability question is also a question of gender justice." Discuss the disproportionate burden borne by women caregivers and suggest appropriate policy interventions. (10 Marks, 150 Words)

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A shared disaster, beyond borders and geopolitics

On Wednesday, August 26, 2026, at approximately 8.44 a.m. Nepal time, what initially appeared to be a 4.4-magnitude earthquake struck near the Nepal-China border. It triggered the collapse of an enormous glacial slab, which plunged a kilometre below to the valley floor, resulting in devastating flash floods. The United States Geological Survey later confirmed that the seismic activity was, in fact, the glacial collapse itself and the landslide (later registered as equivalent to an earthquake measuring 5.2) rather than by tectonic shifts. Preliminary estimates suggest that 579 people have perished in Nepal, with nearly 2,000 people missing, many of them believed to be foreigners.

Entire villages and towns that this writer has previously travelled through have been swept away. Vital infrastructure, such as bridges and hydropower stations, has been completely decimated. A staggering 475 megawatts of generating capacity has been wiped off Nepal's electricity grid. This may go down as the most devastating natural disaster Nepal has ever witnessed.

Nature's fury knows no borders

For Nepal and its two neighbours, India and China, which ordinarily see themselves caught up in geopolitical contestations in the country, the catastrophic force of Mother Nature is a reminder that the political dimensions of geography are relevant only insofar as nature does not intervene, unexpectedly and destructively. The natural world does not recognise political boundaries in the same way that the custodians of nation-states do. China and India both suffered substantial losses from Wednesday's floods. Human and property losses continue to mount in all three countries, including Nepal.

China's Gyirong Port, the largest land trade



Bhaskar Koirala

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For Nepal, India and China, the devastating cross-border floods are a stark reminder of nature's fury, and that cooperation must transcend the boundaries of geopolitics

port in the Tibet Autonomous Region and the primary gateway between Nepal and China, was designated an international-standard land port. An upgrade in August 2017 led to its transformation, upgrading it from a bilateral crossing to a fully recognised international gateway.

Built at a cost of \$175.8 million, the port and the services it provided are now effectively buried beneath heavy sediment and debris.

Access roads on the Chinese side leading to the Nepal border, as well as power supplies and local communication links, have been completely severed or severely damaged. There are reports of fatalities on the Chinese side – a number that is almost certain to rise. There are also reports of people missing in Tibet's Gyirong County, including foreign nationals.

The loss of human life for India is tragic, with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) confirming that Indian nationals are missing or untraced. Most of them were tourists-cum-pilgrims headed to the abode of Lord Shiva at Kailash Mansarovar. This is a route this writer has travelled on more than a few occasions. The pilgrims would have driven from Kathmandu through the lush, rocky and distinctly narrow river valley to reach Gyirong Port, before proceeding further upwards to the majestic Tibetan Plateau.

Flood fallout for India

For India, the downstream flood threats to its States have been severe, although the immediate threat from some of these events may have passed. Floodwaters reached the Gandak, Kosi and Ganga rivers in Bihar, prompting authorities in Patna to go on maximum alert and deploy large teams, particularly to the Valmikinagar Barrage and along vulnerable embankments, to monitor alarmingly high water levels. Riverside

communities were evacuated to safer locations. Authorities in Uttar Pradesh also went on alert, with the State's Relief Commissioner tracking rivers from Nepal naturally flow into Indian territory.

Border districts such as Maharajganj and Kushinagar stepped up emergency surveillance and deployed emergency personnel. India's National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) deployed teams across the Bihar-Uttar Pradesh border area. New Delhi also activated an extensive Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief programme. The Indian Air Force dispatched more than 47.5 tonnes of emergency relief material to Nepal, including medical supplies, rations and tents.

A case for cooperation

All of this underscores how severely this calamitous event has affected all three countries – Nepal, India and China. The question that arises, therefore, is how to transcend some of the parochial features of geopolitics, while by no means ignoring the compulsions of realpolitik, and create a feasible framework for collaboration and coordination.

There is little doubt that Nepal, India and China will need to effectively address increasingly unpredictable cross-border natural phenomena such as the one we have just witnessed. There is equally little doubt that such events are likely to recur in the future.

The past few days have underscored the need to find ways to compartmentalise the harder political dynamics of the China-India-Nepal relationship and create space for cooperation when confronted with events that remind us of the fickleness of nature, the fragility of human life, and the physical interconnections that inextricably link the three countries.

GS Paper III: Disaster Management

UPSC Mains Exam Practice Questions: Explain the geomorphological factors that make the Himalayas particularly vulnerable to landslides, flash floods and other cascading hazards. (10 Marks, 150 Words)

Context :

The catastrophic glacial collapse near the Nepal-China border on August 26, 2026, which registered seismic activity equivalent to a 5.2 magnitude earthquake, highlights the compounding vulnerabilities of the fragile High Mountain Asia region. The resulting flash floods devastated infrastructure, disrupted cross-border trade, and claimed hundreds of lives across Nepal, China, and India. This tragedy serves as a stark reminder that ecological hazards do not respect sovereign boundaries, emphasizing the urgent need to decouple environmental safety from geopolitical rivalry among the three neighboring nations.

Key Analytical Dimensions

1. Environmental & Geological Drivers (GS Paper I & III)

- **Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOF) & Cascading Disasters:** The event demonstrates the transition of climate-induced hazards from simple glacial melt to multi-hazard cascades (earthquakes/landslides triggering mass ice detachment, leading to massive downstream flash floods).
- **Vulnerability of the Hindu-Kush Himalaya (HKH) Region:** Recognized as the "Third Pole," the region is undergoing accelerated thermal warming, destabilizing permafrost and increasing the frequency of catastrophic slope failures.

2. Socio-Economic & Infrastructure Impact (GS Paper III)

- **Grid Collapse & Energy Security:** Nepal lost nearly 475 MW of hydro-generating capacity instantly, exposing the high vulnerability of run-of-the-river hydropower project design in dynamic mountain terrains.
- **Trade Infrastructure Damage:** The devastation of China's Gyirong Port—a \$175.8 million international trade gateway—severely disrupts overland trade routes connecting Tibet to South Asia.
- **Transboundary Human Toll:** High casualties and untraced foreign nationals, including Indian pilgrims on the Kailash Mansarovar route, highlight how seasonal eco-tourism increases human exposure in high-risk zones.

3. Transboundary River Dynamics & Downstream Risks (GS Paper I & III)

- **Impact on Indian Riparian States:** Overflowing river networks directly impacted northern and eastern Indian plains along the Gandak, Kosi, and Ganga systems.
- **State-Level Crisis Readiness:** Demanded swift mobilization by Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, including deployment of NDRF units and high alerts at key hydraulic structures like the Valmikinagar Barrage.

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4. Geopolitics vs. Disaster Diplomacy (GS Paper II)

- **Limits of Realpolitik:** Traditional Sino-Indian strategic competition in Nepal creates structural inertia during transboundary crises, delaying coordinated early warnings and joint relief actions.
- **India's HADR Capability:** New Delhi's rapid deployment of over 47.5 tonnes of relief material to Nepal reinforces India's role as a first responder under its *Neighborhood First* policy.
- **Case for Trilateral Cooperation:** Validates the Track-II Nepal-India-China framework to build institutionalized, non-political channels for emergency response.

Relevant Static Dimensions for UPSC

- **Geography (GS I):** Cryosphere dynamics, GLOF mechanisms, geomorphology of the Himalayas, hydrography of Himalayan river basins (Kosi, Gandak, Karnali systems).
- **International Relations (GS II):** India-Nepal Bilateral Relations, Sino-Indian Strategic Dynamics, Transboundary Water Governance, Regional Disaster Diplomacy.
- **Disaster Management (GS III):** Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015–2030), National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP), Early Warning Systems (EWS) for transboundary river basins, Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI).

Key Recommendations for Institutional Frameworks

- **Establishment of a Joint Himalayan Disaster Task Force:** A trilateral technical mechanism (India-Nepal-China) dedicated exclusively to real-time satellite data sharing, glacial lake monitoring, and early warning systems.
- **Compartmentalizing Eco-Security:** Isolating humanitarian and environmental governance from hard security concerns to prevent strategic distrust from stalling relief work.
- **Climate-Resilient Infrastructure Protocols:** Mandatory multi-hazard risk assessments for all downstream hydro projects, roads, and land ports in border areas.
- **Strengthening ICIMOD's Mandate:** Leveraging the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development for independent, cross-border scientific collaboration and hazard mapping.

Conclusion

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The August 2026 Himalayan disaster demonstrates that ecological fragility is the ultimate equalizer in South Asia. While geopolitical boundaries dictate statecraft, shared geography dictates a common destiny. Nepal, India, and China must evolve from reactive relief operations toward an institutionalized, trilateral disaster management framework. Prioritizing ecological coordination over strategic rivalry is no longer merely a diplomatic choice, but a imperative for human survival across the Himalayan river basins.
