

The Hindu Important News Articles For UPSC CSE

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The upcoming signing of the India-European Union (EU) Free Trade Agreement (FTA) scheduled for December 16, marks a watershed moment in international trade diplomacy. Often described as the "mother of all deals", this pact bridges two major global economies representing a quarter of global GDP and a market of two billion people, aiming to structurally recalibrate economic ties, enhance supply chain resilience, and deepen strategic convergence.

India, EU to sign free trade agreement on December 16

Deep Analysis for UPSC

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

The Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between India and the European Union (EU) will be signed on December 16, two diplomatic sources have separately confirmed to *The Hindu*.

This will be part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's back-to-back trips in December to Canada, the U.S., and Belgium, where three separate FTAs are currently either being negotiated or in the process of approval.

Further, as the EU FTA has received "majority approval" in Europe, it will not require separate ratification by each EU country once the European Council gives its go-ahead.

The next step, after the signing, will be passage in the European Parliament, which will take another one to two months, paving the way for a roll-out in "early 2027".

"The most recent development was the European Commission finalising the text of the deal and sending it to the European Council," a diplomatic source told *The Hindu*.

"The signing is scheduled for December 16, after which it will go to the European Parliament."

Negotiations on the India-EU FTA, dubbed the "mother of all deals" by leaders on both sides, restarted in June 2022 after a long hiatus and were concluded in January 2026.

Final touches

Negotiations on the India-EU Free Trade Agreement, dubbed the "mother of all deals", were concluded in January 2026

The FTA will see the EU dropping tariffs on

99.5% of Indian exports to the region, with most tariffs going down to **0%**

India will give tariff concessions on **97.5%** of the traded value between the two economies

After the signing, the deal will take 1-2 months to pass in the European Parliament, paving the way for an 'early 2027' roll-out

The deal would see the EU dropping tariffs on 99.5% of items India exports to the region, with most tariffs going down to 0% immediately once the agreement comes into effect.

India, on the other hand, has given tariff concessions on 97.5% of the traded value between the two economies.

Signing in Brussels

A second source confirmed the date, adding that it would take place in Brussels in the presence of Prime Minister Modi.

"The deal has majority support in Europe, and so it will not need to be individually ratified in each EU country," the first source added. A reason for this support is that the two sides agreed to leave out contentious issues from the deal and not make "the best enemy of the good".

Mr. Modi is expected to travel to Canada first, probably around December 12, prior to the G-20 Summit in Miami. Confirming the

visit, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said trade negotiations had made "good progress". "Our commitment to each other, PM Modi and myself last year at the G20 (in Canada) was to look to conclude negotiations by G20 of this year (in the U.S.). That's the middle of December, 14-15 December," Mr. Carney said at a briefing in New York on Tuesday.

In an interview with Canada's *Globe and Mail* newspaper, India's High Commissioner to Canada, Dinesh Patnaik, also confirmed the visit, adding that he expected the India-Canada FTA to be "completed by November" and Mr. Modi would be in Canada in December to sign the deal.

Mr. Modi is then expected to attend the G20 meeting in Miami, where the India-U.S.

Interim Agreement on trade and a larger Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) will also be on the agenda. Both agreements have already missed several deadlines.

- **Market Access and Tariff Reductions:** The agreement mandates the EU to eliminate tariffs on 99.5% of Indian exports immediately upon implementation, while India offers tariff concessions on 97.5% of traded value. This offers massive export competitiveness for labor-intensive Indian sectors like textiles, leather, gems and jewellery, and marine products.
- **Pragmatic Compromise and Institutional Pathways:** By securing "majority approval" in Europe, the deal bypasses cumbersome individual national ratifications, requiring only the European Council's go-ahead and European Parliament passage. This pragmatic approach—leaving out highly contentious issues ("not making the best the enemy of the good")—streamlines enforcement for an early 2027 rollout.
- **Diversification and Economic Security:** For both partners, the FTA acts as a crucial hedging strategy against global protectionism and economic volatility. It diversifies trade away from traditional dependencies, fostering secure trade corridors between the world's largest democracies.
- **Professional Mobility and Services:** Beyond goods, the agreement paves the way for seamless professional mobility (Mode 4 services), easing temporary entry for Indian technocrats, skilled professionals, and service suppliers into European markets.

Related Static Dimension

- **Evolution of India-EU Trade Dialogue:** Originating from the 1994 Cooperation Agreement, talks evolved into the Broad-based Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA) initiated in 2007, which stalled for years due to

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Daily News Analysis

divergences over data security, labor standards, intellectual property rights (IPR), and market access, before being successfully revived.

- **Types of Regional Trade Pacts:** The India-EU FTA is a comprehensive Comprehensive Economic Partnership/Free Trade Agreement that goes beyond goods to integrate services, investment protection, and sustainable development commitments, aligning with WTO's Enabling Clause and Article XXIV of GATT.
- **Constitutional and Legal Framework:** Under the Indian Constitution, the executive power of the Union (Articles 73 and 253) empowers the central government to enter into international treaties and implement international agreements, though domestic statutory modifications may be required for specific tariff notifications.

Conclusion

The India-EU FTA transcends standard commercial calculus, evolving into a vital geopolitical anchor. By institutionalizing deep economic integration, both regions insulate themselves against external trade shocks, setting a global template for rules-based, multi-aligned economic cooperation in a fragmented world.

UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Question: With reference to Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), consider the following statements:

1. An FTA seeks to eliminate or reduce tariffs and other trade barriers among participating countries.
2. Unlike a customs union, members of an FTA generally retain their own external tariff regimes.
3. GATT Article XXIV provides a framework under which certain regional trade agreements involving goods may be permitted.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Ans: d)

UPSC Mains Practice Questions

Question: "Free Trade Agreements are increasingly becoming instruments of economic security rather than merely mechanisms for tariff reduction." (10 Marks, 150 Words)

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Recent reports highlighting internal disagreements and formal objections recorded by Election Commissioners within the Election Commission of India (ECI) have brought the mechanics of multi-member constitutional bodies into public focus. While the poll body has defended these notes as standard internal deliberations, the discourse underscores vital questions regarding administrative transparency, statutory compliance, and institutional checks and balances.

Differing views by members a part of decision-making: EC

Deep Analysis for UPSC

• **Nature of Multi-Member Governance:**

Under Article 324 of the Constitution, the ECI functions as a multi-member body comprising the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and Election Commissioners (ECs) who hold equal rank. Healthy friction, administrative notes, and differing viewpoints are intended to serve as internal checks against unilateral actions.

• **Technological Centralization vs.**

Decentralization: Debates surrounding electoral roll databases (such as digital platforms like ECINet/ERONet) highlight a core administrative tension: balancing modern digital efficiency and cybersecurity with the statutory autonomy of Electoral Registration Officers (EROs).

• **Transparency and**

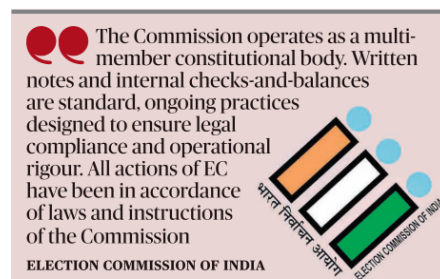
The poll body was responding to a news report that the two Election Commissioners recorded objections at least 14 times over 10 months; all actions have been 'in accordance of laws', says EC

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

Responding to reports of dissent within the Election Commission, the poll body on Wednesday said all its actions have been in accordance with the relevant laws and instructions. Highlighting "certain specific" internal notes or observations spread over a 10-month period while overlooking the much larger body of approvals, decisions, and initiatives give only "one part of the picture".

It was responding to an *Indian Express* report about dissent within the three-member Commission. The two Election Commissioners, Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi, said major decisions were being made without their knowledge in the name of the full Commission, which includes Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar. The two ECs had recorded formal objections at least 14 times over the last 10 months, the report said.

The EC first issued a source-based clarification to the report. "All decisions of the Election Commission of India, including SIR [the ongoing special intensive revision of electoral rolls], have been unanimous and with the appro-



val of both the Election Commissioners and the Chief Election Commissioner," the clarification said.

'Standard practice'

A formal, written statement followed. "The Commission operates as a multi-member constitutional body. Written notes, observations, technical suggestions and internal checks-and-balances are standard, ongoing practices designed to ensure complete transparency, legal compliance and operational rigour. All actions of ECI have been in accordance of laws and instructions of the Commission," it said.

The statement said that any operational queries or inputs raised by Commission members during draft stages are part of standard administrative practice, aimed at safeguarding voter rights. The suggestions given by the Commission-

were for further improving the electoral processes, it added.

The poll body said that differing views and observations are a normal part of deliberation in any institution and were part of the decision-making process before a final decision is taken. "Not only the three Commissioners, but every officer of the Commission is fully authorised to give his suggestions to the Commission for improving the electoral system," the statement said.

Highlighting certain specific internal notes or observations spread over the period of 10 months while overlooking the much larger body of approvals, decisions, instructions, and initiatives gives only one part of the picture, it argued. In recent months, the Commission has taken numerous decisions, issued instructions, introduced around 40 new

initiatives, and undertaken many electoral reforms, including the conduct of electoral roll revisions across the country. All these decisions are an outcome of the unanimous decisions of the full Commission over the past year, it said.

"All official orders, decisions and administrative directions issued by the Commission carry full legal sanctions and follow established statutory procedures under The Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023," the statement said.

According to the *Indian Express* report, both the Election Commissioners had red-flagged several key issues, including the centralisation of the electoral roll database. They warned that "centralised software now overrides ground-level Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) decisions, blocking eligible voters," the report said.

In its response, the EC said that its digital platforms, such as ECINet, operate under strict data security protocols to prevent unauthorised tampering. IT security checks and audit controls are standard cybersecurity measures implemented across national databases.

Daily News Analysis

Accountability: Public disclosures of internal dissent reveal structural challenges in consensus-building. While administrative bodies require confidentiality for smooth functioning, transparency regarding procedural disagreements helps maintain public trust in the neutrality of electoral management bodies.

- **Statutory Framework Compliance:** Administrative actions and internal work allocations must stringently adhere to governing legislation—such as the Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023—to prevent institutional friction from impacting operational efficiency.

Related Static Dimension

- **Constitutional Provisions: Article 324** vests the superintendence, direction, and control of elections in the Election Commission, providing the constitutional foundation for its independence.
- **Evolution of the Commission:** Originally a single-member body, the ECI became a multi-member body in 1989 (temporarily) and permanently via the Election Commissioner Amendment Act, 1993, to diffuse authority and strengthen collective decision-making.
- **Independence Safeguards:** Constitutionally, the CEC can be removed only through impeachment similar to a Supreme Court judge, while other ECs can be removed only on the recommendation of the CEC, ensuring insulation from executive pressure.

Conclusion

Aim, Think & Achieve

Internal notes and differing perspectives within a regulatory institution reflect the complexity of managing large-scale democratic exercises. For the ECI, preserving its time-tested reputation for absolute impartiality requires reconciling procedural rigor with internal harmony, ensuring that collective leadership functions effectively in spirit as well as in letter.

UPSC Prelims Exam Study Questions

Question: With reference to the Election Commission of India, consider the following statements:

1. Article 324 vests the superintendence, direction and control of elections in the Election Commission.
2. The Constitution itself fixes the number of Election Commissioners at two in addition to the Chief Election Commissioner.
3. The President may fix the number of other Election Commissioners from time to time.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Ans: b)

UPSC Mains Exam Study Questions

Question: "Internal dissent in a constitutional institution need not necessarily weaken institutional independence; its management determines whether it strengthens or undermines public trust." **Marks, 150 Words)**

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A recent study by the Climate Impact Lab warns that the prevailing "Super El Niño" could trigger approximately 15,800 additional heat-related deaths in India between September 2026 and February 2027. Described as a "postcard from our future," this climate phenomenon exposes vulnerable populations to temperature anomalies expected decades ahead, underscoring urgent challenges for India's public health, energy security, and disaster management architecture.

Deep Analysis for UPSC

• **Public Health Vulnerability and Mortality:**

Persistent high temperatures disproportionately impact tropical developing countries. In India, abnormal warmth compounding baseline winter and summer temperatures severely stresses elderly populations, outdoor laborers, and urban poor who lack adequate cooling infrastructure.

• **Energy-Water-Food Nexus Stress:**

Extreme heat spikes electricity demand for cooling, resulting in critical coal shortages across thermal power plants and threatening grid stability. Simultaneously, a national monsoon rainfall deficit (standing around 15% below normal) amplifies agrarian distress, threatening food security and water tables.

• **Proactive Adaptation vs. Crisis Management:**

The findings stress that relying solely on reactive relief is inadequate. Policymakers must institutionalize forward-looking adaptation frameworks, including heat action plans (HAPs), early-warning systems, and resilient urban design.

• **Global Inequality in Climate Impacts:** The burden of climate anomalies heavily falls on the Global South despite their minimal historical emissions, compounding economic vulnerabilities through lost labor productivity and surging healthcare expenditures.

Super El Niño to add 15,800 heat deaths in India: report

Climate Impact Lab says this year's El Niño is a 'postcard from our future', bringing temperatures climate change is projected to deliver 20 years later; national rainfall deficit is at 15% below normal

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

India could see an estimated 15,800 additional heat-related deaths, give or take 1,600, between September 2026 and February 2027, as the current Super El Niño drives unusually high temperatures, according to a report made public on Wednesday by the Climate Impact Lab. The estimate is relative to average conditions during the corresponding months from 1996-2025.

Globally, the report projects 451,000 additional heat-related deaths during the first six months of the El Niño event, including 19,300 deaths in Indonesia; 19,400 across the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, and Cambodia; 13,300 in Brazil; and 66,800 across the Sahel, a 5,000-kilometre swathe of about 10 countries across Africa, including Senegal, the Gambia, and northern Nigeria.

"This report allows decision-makers to see exactly where emergency actions



Dry spell: Heat is increasing electricity demand with nearly 40% of coal-fired power plants clocking critically low fuel stocks. FILE PHOTO

can be taken now to save tens of thousands of lives in the coming months," Michael Greenstone, co-founder, Climate Impact Lab, University of Chicago, said.

The report describes the current event as a Super El Niño, an informal term generally used for exceptionally strong El Niño conditions. El Niño occurs when waters in the central and eastern tropical Pacific become unusually warm, altering atmospheric circulation and shifting rainfall and temperature patterns worldwide. Forecasts earlier this month projected a greater than 90% chance of a very strong El Niño

during the northern hemisphere autumn and winter, with eastern equatorial Pacific sea surface temperatures already more than 3°C above normal.

Its effects are already being observed in different regions. Indonesia has experienced conditions conducive to wildfires, while parts of Central America have faced drought-related agricultural impacts. "This year's El Niño is also a 'postcard from our future', bringing temperatures climate change is projected to deliver 20 years in the future. In this way, it offers a glimpse at what lies ahead without new invest-

ments in adaptation," an accompanying press statement noted.

Rainfall deficit

In India, the southwest monsoon is entering its withdrawal phase after a season marked by deficient rainfall. The national rainfall deficit stood at about 15% below normal up to September 22, 2026 with larger shortfalls in southern and eastern parts of the country.

The heat is also increasing the demand for electricity, with nearly 40% of India's coal-fired power plants reporting critically low fuel stocks amid increased power demand associated with hotter than usual weather linked to the El Niño.

The Climate Impact Lab says it applies previously estimated temperature-mortality relationships across 24,378 regions to seasonal temperature forecasts, accounting for local climate, vulnerability, and adaptive capacity. The report does not spell out the underlying numerical relationship or coefficients connecting a particular temperature increase to a number of deaths.

Related Static Dimension

- **The El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) Mechanism:** El Niño involves the abnormal warming of sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean, weakening trade winds and disrupting global atmospheric circulation, which typically suppresses the Indian monsoon and elevates temperatures.
- **Constitutional Mandates:** Managing public health and mitigating natural disasters align with the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP)—specifically **Article 47**, which places a duty on the State to raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living and to improve public health.
- **Institutional Frameworks:** Disaster management in India is anchored legally by the **Disaster Management Act, 2005**, which provides the institutional mandate for the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to formulate guidelines for managing extreme weather events like heatwaves.

Conclusion

The Super El Niño serves as a stark reminder of escalating climate realities, shifting the policy imperative from long-term projections to immediate mitigation. Safeguarding human capital against severe thermal stress requires a coordinated, multi-sectoral approach integrating health infrastructure, energy grid optimization, and climate-resilient urban planning.

UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Question: With reference to the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO), consider the following statements:

1. El Niño is associated with abnormal warming of sea-surface temperatures in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean.
2. El Niño generally weakens the Walker circulation.
3. El Niño invariably causes deficient rainfall over every part of India.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Ans: a)

UPSC Mains Practice Questions

Question: What is El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO)? Explain its potential influence on India's climate, agriculture and water security.. (10 Marks, 150 Words)

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Recent breakthroughs where frontier artificial intelligence models successfully solved legendary open mathematics problems (such as the Navier-Stokes existence and smoothness problem and Erdős problems) have ignited profound introspection within the global academic community. While these tools act as powerful amplifiers for mathematical research, they also raise critical questions regarding commercial control, transparency, and the future role of human mathematicians.

Deep Analysis for UPSC

• Redefining Research and Productivity:

Advanced AI models operate at the speed and scale of a graduate-student army, drastically reducing the cost of complex reasoning. Mathematicians are utilizing AI coding agents to process thousands of lines of code and proofs, accelerating discovery in areas like number theory and algebraic geometry.

• The "Black Box" and Comprehension Crisis:

AI-generated proofs frequently skip intuitive, core steps and employ opaque, alien terminology that is difficult for humans to parse. This shifts the mathematical community from "proof scarcity to proof abundance," risking "proof indigestion" where results are accepted without genuine understanding of the underlying principles.

• Commercialization vs. Academic Openness:

The race to solve historic mathematical problems is largely driven by tech corporations seeking investor validation and benchmarks for artificial general intelligence (AGI). This creates tension, as corporate motives often

As AI marches on math research, scholars ponder the future

A flurry of AI-generated proofs has left mathematicians in various emotional states; some are cautiously excited, some are critical of the AI companies' commercial motives behind their relentless mining of open math problems and are insisting on more careful regulation, and some are left asking existential questions

Rohini Subrahmanyan
BENGALURU

In July 2020, mathematician Levent Alpoge, who works at the artificial intelligence company Anthropic, dropped a casual post on X. He claimed the company's advanced large language model Claude GPT-4 had produced a counterexample to an 87-year-old open problem in algebraic geometry called the Jacobian conjecture. He was working on it during the PISA World Cup final. AI had helped disprove a conjecture that many mathematicians had been working on for decades — and the world got the news about it in a short social media post.

This was not AI's first major mathematical conquest. On May 20, OpenAI released a series of posts on X claiming that its internal, general reasoning model had found a solution to the planar unit distance problem, an open problem proposed by Hungarian mathematician Paul Erdős in 1946. Many expert mathematicians who verified the solution realised that if humans had solved this on their own, the result would be out in a top journal.

The floodgates were opened. On August 1, OpenAI announced that its newest model 'GPT-4o' had solved ten more open math problems, three of which were from the legendary list of Erdős problems that included the unit distance conjecture. AI had been solving other less exciting Erdős problems and International Math Olympiad questions even before tackling the unit distance problem — but this latest set had many people at tip and toe.

Yuan posted, "I did not just hear about these problems from my friends or from seminars. I feel their importance in my bones; I deeply care about the answers to these questions." The most significant advance yet, on September 6, OpenAI announced that an unexcited internal model had solved a Millennium Prize problem called the Navier-Stokes existence and smoothness problem — one of six heavily researched math problems with a million-dollar bounty.

OpenAI said that the model had solved the problem by using a technique called 'tree search', which is a way of exploring a large number of possibilities. The model had also used a technique called 'tree search', which is a way of exploring a large number of possibilities. The model had also used a technique called 'tree search', which is a way of exploring a large number of possibilities.

But even as it rattles the maths world, the achievement is already surrounded in controversy. On September 7, New York University mathematician Tristan Breda revealed he and Alpoge had been personally building on previous work by other mathematicians and working on a solution for a similar version of the problem using similar methods for about a year, and they were assisted by both Anthropic and OpenAI models in their efforts.

While OpenAI has denied specifically accessing the data, the company noted "they cannot rule out that de-identified data from the data's usage of their products helped improve their models."

This flurry of AI-generated proofs has left mathematicians in various emotional states. Some are cautiously excited about how the fast-improving models can help them in their research. Some are critical of the AI companies' commercial motives behind their relentless mining of open math problems and are insisting on more careful regulation. And some are left asking existential questions: If AI can solve important problems at this alarming rate, what role will mathematics play in the future?

The use of AI has generated an unprecedented level of discourse and introspection among mathematicians about what they really value and enjoy about doing maths, with one sentiment prevailing among them. As MIT mathematician Andrew Sutherland put it, "I think it's going to change the way mathematicians do research going forward."

Andrew Booker, a number theorist in the University of Bristol, had been stuck making a central problem in number theory with a collaborator for about ten years. Called the converse problem for ζ -functions, they would work on it for a few weeks, give up out of frustration, and periodically return to it. "And suddenly, that all changed in April," he said.

Dr. Sutherland had gifted Dr. Booker

Recent frontier AI models have become a lot better at reasoning compared to older versions, while they need expert guidance in hard problems, they can, on occasion, find something very obvious that humans completely missed

A gift subscription to Claude Max, finally pushing him to use Claude GPT-4o, which is Claude's AI coding agent, on the problem. He was not expecting much — but the AI model wrote 30,000 lines of code and about 200 pages of maths in the first week, "an amount I would write in a year," he said. Although they were not completely solved the problem yet, "within two weeks we had made more progress than in the previous five years."

The frontier AI models released in the last year have become a lot better at reasoning compared to the older, more 'stochastic' versions. "It works almost eerily like a human," said Dr. Booker. "It makes things out in the same way. It makes the same mistakes as a human. It needs expert guidance in the hard problems, but it can, on occasion, find something very obvious that humans completely missed."

They are not perfect, but they are operating at the level of a grad student, with the difference that they are a hundred times faster than grad students," Dr. Booker said. "It is like having a grad student army, if you like."

That feels powerful because it has made thinking, which is usually different from the way we think, much more accessible. It has made thinking, which is usually different from the way we think, much more accessible. It has made thinking, which is usually different from the way we think, much more accessible.

Dr. Booker said, "If I left unchecked for too long, you may be left with the fact that it is highly valued in the future as it was in the past." Dr. Sutherland added, "Improving the expansion of AI into mathematics research is a lot more than just finding theorems or using AI assistance to tackle and understand hard problems; it may be more important. But people passionate and excited about maths should still pursue it, he said, willing to work with students who engage with AI tools in their research. Current students' careers may look very different from their own advisers', he noted, but that does not mean they will not have one."

"Generous with ideas" After a 2025 conference titled "Mechanization and Mathematical Research" at Leiden University, a small group of the participants stayed in touch and drafted a set of small, practical guidelines for responsible AI use. They came to be called the "Leiden Declaration on Artificial Intelligence and Mathematics". With many distinguished endorses, including Dr. Tao, the June 2024 declaration has emerged as an important step in understanding how AI tools affect mathematics, and with more and more people coming to understand how to use them.

Dr. Harris and University of California San Diego mathematician Karthik Ganesapathy, two members of the working group involved in drafting the declaration, are both critical of how AI companies do not account of how exactly their internal models have solved a problem — in most cases, the result is declared as a guess release or

as an unceremonious social media post. "The best mathematicians are very generous with their ideas," Dr. Ganesapathy said, unlike giant AI corporations that are incentivised to not be open about their methods. This lack of transparency also makes it hard to ascertain how much the advanced mathematicians working at AI companies played a role in the proof. "University mathematicians are what they really wish to enjoy about doing it."

Nina Zubrilina agreed that the companies should ideally be releasing the prompts they used in the discovery process to get more insight into the model's reasoning. "There is a certain amount of intentional mysticism around how they arrive at certain results, which I find counterproductive for understanding something deeper," she said.

Ideally, these solutions should lead to a deeper theory or "set the groundwork for something bigger." Simply resolving a decades-old conjecture "is not really the right metric for success," she added. "It makes for good headlines, but it is not necessarily what is valued kind of the most for people who do mathematics for a living," she said, while also noting that AI might improve at theory building in the future.

Maths as cultural capital

As a cultural capital, the rise of artificial intelligence has given applications only if humans are able to use it together and apply it. It might even lead to a renaissance where, using opaque methods, produce important proofs will hinder this process.

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Daily News Analysis

prioritize flashy press releases and proprietary models over collaborative scientific transparency.

- **Geopolitical and Access Asymmetries:** Frontier AI models and free academic grants are frequently bound by geopolitical restrictions (such as exclusions affecting researchers in India, China, or Russia). This threatens to create a digital and intellectual divide, hindering developing nations from keeping pace with high-end theoretical scientific research.

Related Static Dimension

- **Nature of Scientific Inquiry:** Scientific discovery traditionally relies on first-principles thinking, rigorous peer review, and deep intuitive conceptualization, pillars that are challenged when machines bypass standard human deductive pathways.
- **Ethical and Regulatory Frameworks:** Initiatives like the *Leiden Declaration on Artificial Intelligence and Mathematics* highlight the growing need for ethical guidelines to govern human-AI collaboration in pure sciences.
- **Education and Skill Development:** Changing technological landscapes necessitate structural shifts in pedagogical frameworks, emphasizing critical evaluation, exposition, and collaboration with AI over rote computational problem-solving.

Conclusion

The integration of artificial intelligence into mathematics represents a fundamental transformation rather than a temporary trend. While corporations push the boundaries of machine reasoning, the long-term integrity of mathematics relies on human oversight, ethical engagement, and ensuring that scientific progress remains a shared global public good rather than a proprietary corporate asset.

UPSC Mains Exam Study Questions

Question: "Artificial Intelligence is transforming scientific research from a process constrained by human cognitive capacity into one increasingly constrained by human ability to comprehend machine-generated knowledge." (10 Marks, 150 Words)

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has upgraded India's economic growth forecast for the financial year 2026-27 to 7.1%, marking an 80-basis-point increase from its previous June projection. Joining other major global ratings agencies, this upward revision highlights India's robust domestic economic foundations amidst international geopolitical tensions and volatile energy markets.

OECD forecasts India growth at 7.1% in '26-27

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan

NEW DELHI

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has become the latest global body to raise its growth forecast for India in the last week, predicting that India's economy will grow by 7.1% in 2026-27, up from

6.3% forecast in June.

This comes soon after the three most-recognised global ratings agencies – Moody's, S&P Global, and Fitch Ratings – raised their respective growth outlooks for India over the last week. The OECD, in its Economic Outlook Interim Report September 2026 released on Wednesday, said

that several countries have been able to mitigate the damage from the West Asia crisis by rapid growth in artificial intelligence-related investment and production in many economies.

For India, however, it said domestic demand and government policy cushioned the impact.

"This was also the case

in China, whilst growth in several other G20 emerging market economies, such as India, Indonesia and Brazil, was underpinned by resilient domestic demand and government policies that cushioned households and firms from the impact of higher energy prices," the report said.

Deep Analysis for UPSC

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- **Drivers of Resilience:** India's strong growth momentum is heavily anchored in robust domestic demand, resilient private consumption, and proactive government policies that insulate households and enterprises from external energy price shocks.
- **Mitigating Global Headwinds:** While supply chain disruptions and geopolitical conflicts in West Asia threaten global trade, emerging economies like India have leveraged domestic buffers and localized demand expansion to sustain high economic activity.
- **Macroeconomic Vulnerabilities and Moderation:** Despite strong early-year performance, structural challenges such as reduced purchasing power, potential inflation pressures, and temporary policy rate adjustments pose risks of economic moderation in the latter half of the fiscal year.
- **Comparative Global Standing:** India continues to outpace major advanced economies and several emerging markets, positioning itself as a primary growth engine for the global economy in an era of plurilateral trade fragmentation.

Related Static Dimension

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- **Fiscal and Monetary Policy Coordination:** Sustainable growth relies on the careful synergy between Reserve Bank of India (RBI) monetary interventions—managing inflation and liquidity—and targeted fiscal support by the central government.
- **Inflation Targeting Framework:** Governed under the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) maintains a flexible inflation-targeting framework to stabilize prices while supporting growth objectives.
- **Economic Indicators and Growth Measurement:** Gross Domestic Product (GDP) evaluation at constant prices accounts for inflation, reflecting actual changes in the volume of goods and services produced within the domestic economy.

Conclusion

The OECD's upward revision underscores India's structural macroeconomic resilience against external global shocks. Sustaining this high-growth trajectory over the long term will depend on continuous structural reforms, robust infrastructure investments, and effective domestic inflation management.

UPSC Mains Exam Study Questions

Question: "Strong domestic demand can provide significant resilience to an emerging economy facing global economic uncertainty." (10 Marks, 150 Words)

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India and the plausible multilateralism of BRICS

BRICS gatherings always trigger heated debates in India. The primary reason is the importance that the strategic and policymaking community, comprising both optimists and sceptics, attaches to this platform, of which India is an integral pillar. While optimists argue that BRICS could function as an institution capable of multipolarising the global order, or expediting that transition, sceptics highlight the grouping's internal divisions and worry about its possible domination by Russia and China. A third group writes off BRICS altogether, dismissing it as little more than an annual gathering that generates strategic noise. They argue that India should be wary of close association with the grouping and instead focus on preserving and expanding its partnership with the United States, which, in their view, is the only viable path to India's rise.

The 18th BRICS summit, held in New Delhi on September 12-13, 2026, attracted greater national and global attention because of its timing and location. It was the first BRICS annual summit since the U.S. and Israel launched their unprovoked war against Iran, in India's extended neighbourhood, on February 28, 2026. The summit, which brought together the Presidents of Iran, Russia and China, among other leaders, was hosted by India, a close strategic partner of the U.S. and Israel.

Consensus in Delhi

Despite its internal contradictions and the broader chaos enveloping international politics, the summit can be seen as a success on multiple levels. That New Delhi could forge a consensus among the 11 member-countries, including the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Iran, which are involved in an undeclared conflict, was itself an achievement. The Delhi Declaration shows that, despite their differences and even disputes, member-countries continue to find value in supporting a BRICS worldview rooted in the pursuit of a more representative global order.

The consensus was reached through compromises by all parties. Consider India's position. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was in Israel just two days before Israel and the U.S. started bombing Iran. India initially refrained from condemning the attacks or the assassination of Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. This created an impression that New Delhi was siding with the U.S. and Israel. India also watched from the sidelines as Pakistan seized on the diplomatic opening created by the war and stepped in as a mediator between the U.S. and Iran. But India quickly repositioned itself as a traditional balancer in West Asia.

Multilateral platforms such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and BRICS provided New Delhi with space to restore that balancing posture without causing strategic damage to its bilateral relationships. India strongly endorsed the Bishkek resolution of the SCO in September, condemning the strikes on Iran and expressing condolences to the country



Varghese K. George



Stanly Johny

over the killing of Khamenei. It also hosted Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian for the Delhi BRICS summit, even as the war in West Asia grinds on. The image of Mr. Modi walking hand in hand with Mr. Pezeshkian is unlikely to fade any time soon in Washington or Tel Aviv.

Second, while there is no immediate resolution to the border problems with China, which continue to simmer, there is momentum in efforts to reset ties. Multilateral forums such as BRICS provide a platform for India and China to remain engaged even when high-level bilateral visits are not taking place. Their differences are not going to disappear; they have to learn to manage their troubled relationship. History suggests that a lack of engagement between competing major powers can only deepen mistrust, while deepening mistrust, combined with the security dilemma stemming from their competition, could have dangerous consequences. So, it is important for India and China to stay engaged, bilaterally and multilaterally, creating guardrails for competitive coexistence.

Third, on all the major global issues of the present – artificial intelligence regulation, the rules governing global trade and finance, climate change, border conflicts, and the role and status of multilateral bodies – BRICS members may have different approaches and priorities, but they converge on the point that unilateralism by any bloc or power is detrimental to their interests and to the planet.

The Washington predictability

The context in which the Delhi summit was held is also crucial. The total predictability of the U.S. approach – rather than the unpredictability that some commentators labour to establish – towards the rest of the world is that it does not care much about anything other than its own dominance. Several BRICS members have had their own difficult experiences with the U.S., and they are trying to chart their own paths forward. India, a few months ago, was slapped with varying tariffs by Washington. India was also one of the countries most affected economically by the U.S.-Israel war on Iran. On September 16, the U.S. House passed the Russia sanctions Bill, seeking to impose tariffs of up to 100% on countries including India.

India's foreign policy under Mr. Modi has been interpreted by a section of the strategic commentariat as an evident tilt towards the U.S. camp. Statements by Mr. Modi himself in the early years of his premiership that India had overcome its "hesitation of history" in ties with Washington gave further impetus to this view, though there has also been the parallel official formulation of 'sabke sath' foreign policy, or multi-alignment. India has always had a more complex view of history. And even if it has overcome its "hesitation of history", it has not abandoned the hesitations of its strategic realism.

When India looks back at history and looks around the world today, it sees that countries that

become frontiers in great-power rivalries often pay a huge price. If Pakistan's story is not instructive enough, there are two live battlefronts that illustrate this every day – the UAE and Ukraine.

The UAE and Iran would have been better off dealing with each other than facing the situation in which they currently find themselves. The UAE-Iran bilateral meeting on the sidelines of BRICS in Delhi marks an acknowledgment of this lesson and a quest to use multilateral platforms to address bilateral challenges. Ukraine, which, backed by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), has been fighting Russia for more than four years, does not have any such platform to maintain direct contact with Moscow – which leaves Kyiv's diplomatic options totally dependent on the whims and wishes of Brussels and Washington.

India's learning

This is not to argue that India should downgrade its relations with the U.S. The strategic partnership with Washington is extremely important for India's progress and development, but what India must not allow itself to become, at any cost, is a frontline in the U.S.-China competition. BRICS enables India to pursue that path without having to champion an anti-U.S. agenda or undermine its cooperation with Washington. The U.S., which had come to terms with India's firm adherence to strategic autonomy, has recently been pushing the envelope to draw New Delhi into a more subordinate relationship. For Washington, this is an ongoing theme. But India should pursue multiple pathways to its rise rather than succumb to the temptations of unequal great-power alliances.

While it is true that there are serious internal divisions among BRICS members, there is also a larger reality of external convergence of interests among them. BRICS is not an organisation like the G-7, where American primacy and the western order are accepted by all member-countries. Nor is it the case that every multilateral or plurilateral grouping is converging on all points.

The divisions within BRICS, to a certain extent, prevent any one country from dominating the grouping, while the external convergence of interests – their shared belief that the post-war international system is unfair and that a more representative order should be built – could hold the group together as it lays the foundations and builds the blocks of a new order. The dialectical relationship between internal contradictions and external convergence could ultimately produce a synthesis, which is increasingly evident in the case of BRICS. The contradictions within are therefore not a reason to question the grouping's existence; they are, in fact, part of the reason why it should exist and flourish.

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GS Paper II: IR

UPSC Mains Exam Practice Questions: "India's transition from non-alignment to multi-alignment reflects a transformation in the nature of strategic autonomy rather than its abandonment." **15Marks, 250 Words)**

Context

The role of multilateral platforms like BRICS frequently triggers intense strategic debate in India, oscillating between optimism regarding a multipolar world order and skepticism over internal divisions. Hosting the recent summit in New Delhi placed India's foreign policy balancing act into sharp global focus, demonstrating how plurilateral mechanisms serve as vital instruments for strategic autonomy amidst intensifying great-power competition.

Deep Analysis for UPSC

- **Rebalancing Through Plurilateralism:** Multilateral platforms like BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) provide India with diplomatic space to recalibrate its foreign policy stance—such as restoring its traditional balancer posture in West Asia—without rupturing vital bilateral ties with Western partners.
- **Managing Geopolitical Friction and Competitiveness:** Engaging rivals through institutional frameworks helps establish "guardrails for competitive coexistence". For instance, multilateral dialogue keeps channels open with China even when bilateral high-level visits stall, mitigating the security dilemma and deep mistrust.
- **The Trap of Frontline Realities:** Historical and contemporary lessons (such as the vulnerabilities faced by nations caught in great-power proxy conflicts) show that developing economies must avoid becoming friction points or direct "frontlines" in major power rivalries.
- **Internal Contradictions as a Strength:** While BRICS member-states possess deep internal divergences, their external convergence—driven by a shared belief that the post-war global governance system is unrepresentative—acts as a binding glue, preventing any single power from dominating the grouping.

Related Static Dimension

- **Evolution of Non-Alignment to Multi-Alignment:** Moving away from rigid Cold War blocs, India's modern foreign policy relies on multi-alignment, enabling issue-based cooperation across diverse geopolitical camps.

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- **Global South Advocacy:** BRICS functions as a primary platform for emerging markets and developing countries (EMDCs) to voice collective demands for structural reforms in global financial institutions (like the IMF and World Bank) and the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).
- **Constitutional Principles:** Governed by **Article 51** of the DPSP, India's foreign policy is constitutionally mandated to promote international peace and security, foster respect for international law, and encourage settlement of international disputes by arbitration.

Conclusion

BRICS represents a pragmatic exercise in plausible multilateralism. By leveraging such platforms, India successfully avoids subordinate, unequal alliances while championing a balanced, representative global order, proving that strategic autonomy is best preserved through diversified and independent global engagements.