

UPSC CURRENT AFFAIRS

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Registered / Corporate Office:

CL Educate Limited, A – 45, Mohan Co-operative Industrial Estate, New Delhi – 110044

Contact No. 011-41280800 / 1100

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1. C P Radhakrishnan is the new Vice-President of India



- NDA candidate and Maharashtra Governor C.P. Radhakrishnan has been elected as the new Vice-President of India, defeating I.N.D.I.A. bloc candidate and former Supreme Court judge B. Sudershan Reddy by 152 votes.
- Out of 781 electors, 767 MPs voted, with 752 valid votes and 15 invalid.
- The election was necessitated by the resignation of former Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar due to health issues.
- Born in Tiruppur, Tamil Nadu, Chandrapuram Ponnusamy Radhakrishnan began his political career as a student leader and was associated with the RSS and Jan Sangh.
- He has served twice as an MP from Coimbatore.
- Mr. Radhakrishnan has also served as Governor of Jharkhand, Telangana, Puducherry and Maharashtra.
- An agriculturist and industrialist, he is widely respected for his integrity, vision, and clean public life.

Vice President of India

Articles Involved:

- **Article 63:** There shall be a Vice-President of India.
- **Article 64:** The Vice-President shall be the ex officio Chairman of the Rajya Sabha.
- **Article 66:** Election of Vice-President

- **Article 67:** Term and removal
- **Article 68:** Time of election to fill vacancy
- **Article 69:** Oath or affirmation
- **Article 71:** Matters relating to the election of the President and Vice-President

Election & Appointment of Vice President

Eligibility Criteria

As per Article 66(3)

- Must be a citizen of India
- At least 35 years old
- Qualified to be elected as a member of the Rajya Sabha
- Must not hold any office of profit under the Government of India or a state government

Electoral College:

The Vice President is elected by an Electoral College consisting of:

- Members of both Houses of Parliament (Lok Sabha + Rajya Sabha)
- Nominated and elected members are both included
- MLAs are **NOT** involved in this election (unlike the President's election)

Voting System:

- Proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote
- Voting is done by secret ballot

Term of Office:

- 5 years from the date he enters office
- Can resign earlier by submitting resignation to the President
- Can be re-elected for any number of terms

Oath of Office:

- Administered by the President of India

As per Article 69, he swears to:

- Bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution
- Faithfully discharge the duties of his office

Emoluments:

- As Chairman of Rajya Sabha, receives salary as decided by Parliament under the Salaries and Allowances of Officers of Parliament Act
- Does not receive a separate salary as Vice President

Removal of Vice President

- Article 67(b) – Procedure for Removal:
- Can be removed by a resolution of the Rajya Sabha passed by a majority of all the then members (absolute majority)

- This resolution must be agreed to by the Lok Sabha by a simple majority
- 14 days' notice must be given before moving such a resolution

Important Points related with Indian Vice President:

- No impeachment procedure like the President (Article 61)
- Grounds for removal are not mentioned in the Constitution
- The Supreme Court can also declare the election void under Article 71, if found unconstitutional or invalid due to malpractices

Vacancy in Office

A vacancy can occur due to:

- Completion of the term
- Resignation
- Removal
- Death
- Invalidation of election

As per Article 68(2):

- The election must be held within 6 months from the date of vacancy

Role during Presidential Vacancy

- In the event of the President's death, resignation, removal, or otherwise, the Vice President acts as President (under Article 65)
- Can act as President for a maximum of 6 months, until a new President is elected

QUESTIONS

1. Consider the following statements regarding the Vice-President of India:

1. The Vice-President is elected by Members of both Houses of Parliament and all State Legislative Assemblies.
2. The Vice-President is the ex officio Chairman of the Rajya Sabha.
3. The Vice-President can be removed by a resolution of both Houses of Parliament.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

2. With reference to the Vice-President of India, consider the following statements:

1. The Vice-President's term of office is five years.
2. The Vice-President can resign by submitting resignation to the President.
3. The Vice-President can be re-elected for multiple terms.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

3. Consider the following statements regarding the Vice-President of India:

1. The Vice-President must be at least 35 years old.
2. The Vice-President can hold an office of profit under the Government of India.
3. The Vice-President must be qualified to be elected as a member of the Rajya Sabha.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

4. With reference to the Vice-President of India, consider the following statements:

1. In the event of a vacancy in the office of President, the Vice-President acts as President.
2. The Vice-President can act as President for a maximum period of 6 months.
3. The Vice-President becomes the President automatically for the remainder of the term in case of a vacancy.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

5. Consider the following statements about the election of the Vice-President of India:

1. Voting is done by proportional representation through single transferable vote.
2. The voting for Vice-President is done through an open ballot.
3. The Electoral College for Vice-President includes both elected and nominated members of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

2. Nepal PM Oli Resigns amid Widespread Violent Protests

- Nepal's Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli has resigned following widespread violent protests led largely by Gen Z demonstrators.
- The unrest erupted in response to government-imposed bans on social media and alleged mishandling of protests, which resulted in civilian deaths.
- Protesters stormed the Prime Minister's office and set his private residence in Balkot on fire.
- Residences of several political leaders, including ministers and former prime ministers, were attacked across Kathmandu Valley and beyond.



- Defying curfew orders, youths continued to gather in major areas like New Baneshwar and Kalanki Chowk, burning tyres and blocking roads.
- In Rautahat district, clashes with police intensified, with a police vehicle being torched.
- In response, authorities imposed strict curfews in Kathmandu, Lalitpur, and Bhaktapur districts, banning all public gatherings and movement.
- Exceptions have been made for essential services, including ambulances, media, and diplomatic vehicles.
- Despite these measures, tensions remain high across the country.

Gen Z

- Generation Z (often abbreviated as Gen Z) refers to the generation born roughly between 1997 and 2012 (though exact dates can vary slightly depending on the source).

Key Traits of Generation Z:

Digital Natives:

- Grew up with smartphones, social media, and the internet.
- Often more tech-savvy than previous generations.

Socially Conscious:

- Concerned with issues like climate change, equality, and mental health.
- Tend to value diversity and inclusion.

Independent Learners:

- Used to finding information online (e.g., YouTube, Reddit, Google).
- Prefer on-demand and visual learning over traditional methods.

Financially Cautious:

- Grew up during or after the 2008 financial crisis.
- Tend to be more financially pragmatic than Millennials.

Mental Health Awareness:

- More open about mental health challenges.
- Push for better resources and conversations around anxiety, depression, and stress.

Creative and Entrepreneurial:

- Many start side hustles or small businesses early.
- Comfortable creating content (TikTok, YouTube, etc.).

Communication Style:

- Prefer quick, visual, and informal communication (memes, emojis, gifs).
- Text and DM > email and phone calls.

Technology Milestones of Gen Z:

- **Grew up with:** iPhones, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok.
- Witnessed the rise of AI, streaming (Netflix, YouTube), and gaming (Twitch, esports).

Social Media

What is Social Media?

- Social Media refers to digital platforms that allow users to create, share, and interact with content and other users online.
- It enables communication, networking, and content sharing in real-time.

Brief History of Social Media

Year	Platform	Milestone
1997	Six Degrees	First recognizable social network
2003	LinkedIn	Professional networking site launched
2004	Facebook	Initially for Harvard students, later global
2005	YouTube	First major video-sharing platform
2006	Twitter	Popularized microblogging
2010	Instagram	Photo and video sharing
2011	Snapchat	Temporary photo/video messaging
2016	TikTok	Short-form videos took off globally
2020s	Threads, BeReal, Clubhouse	Rise of niche and real-time platforms

Types of Social Media

Type	Description	Examples
Social Networking	Connect with friends/family	Facebook, LinkedIn
Microblogging	Share short updates	Twitter (X), Threads

Type	Description	Examples
Photo Sharing	Visual content sharing	Instagram, Pinterest
Video Sharing	Short/long-form videos	YouTube, TikTok
Messaging Apps	Private/group messaging	WhatsApp, Messenger
Forums/Communities	Interest-based discussions	Reddit, Quora
Live Streaming	Real-time broadcasting	Twitch, YouTube Live

Uses of Social Media

- Personal Communication – Stay in touch with friends and family
- Business Marketing – Brand promotion and customer engagement
- News & Information – Breaking news and educational content
- Entertainment – Memes, videos, and viral content
- Networking – Career opportunities and collaborations
- Education – Online learning and community support
- Activism – Social justice, political movements (e.g., #BlackLivesMatter)

Benefits of Social Media

- Global Connectivity
- Free and fast communication
- Creative expression
- Career opportunities
- Business growth through marketing
- Learning and knowledge sharing
- Civic participation and awareness

Risks & Challenges

Risk	Description
Privacy Issues	Data leaks, tracking, and misuse of personal info
Cyberbullying	Harassment, hate speech, trolling
Addiction	Excessive use affects productivity and mental health
Misinformation	Spread of fake news and conspiracy theories
Mental Health Effects	Anxiety, depression, self-esteem issues from comparison
Echo Chambers	Reinforced beliefs without exposure to other viewpoints

Tools & Features in Social Media Platforms

- Likes / Reactions
- Comments
- Sharing / Retweeting / Reposting
- Stories / Reels / Shorts
- Live Streams
- Hashtags (#)
- Filters & AR Effects
- Direct Messaging (DMs)
- Monetization Options (ads, creator funds)

Social Media by the Numbers (2025 est.)

- Users Worldwide: Over 5 billion
- Average Time Spent: ~2.5 hours/day

Most Popular Platforms:

- Facebook (~3 billion users)
- YouTube (~2.7 billion)
- WhatsApp (~2.5 billion)
- Instagram (~2.4 billion)
- TikTok (~1.8 billion)
- WeChat, Snapchat, X (Twitter), LinkedIn follow closely

The Future of Social Media

- **AI Integration:** Smarter recommendations, content creation
- **Metaverse & VR:** Immersive social interactions
- **Web3 & Decentralization:** User-owned platforms
- **Digital Well-being:** Features to promote healthy use
- **Stronger Privacy Laws:** Data protection enforcement (GDPR, etc.)

Nepal

Category	Details
Official Name	Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal
Capital	Kathmandu
Area	147,516 km² (56,956 sq mi)
Population	~30 million (2024 est.)
Official Language	Nepali
Currency	Nepalese Rupee (NPR)
Time Zone	NPT (UTC +5:45)
Calling Code	+977
Internet TLD	.np
National Symbols	Flower: Rhododendron, Animal: Cow, Bird: Himalayan Monal

Geography

- Location: South Asia, landlocked between India (south, east, west) and China/Tibet (north).

Major Regions:

- **Himalayan Region:** Includes Mt. Everest (8,848.86 m), the world’s highest peak.
- **Hill Region:** Includes Kathmandu Valley.
- **Terai Region:** Fertile plains in the south, part of the Gangetic belt.
- **Rivers:** Koshi, Gandaki, Karnali
- **Climate:** Ranges from subtropical (Terai) to alpine (Himalayas).

Administrative Divisions

Federal System with 7 Provinces:

- Koshi Pradesh
- Madhesh Pradesh
- Bagmati Pradesh
- Gandaki Pradesh
- Lumbini Pradesh
- Karnali Pradesh
- Sudurpashchim Pradesh

- **Local Units:** 753 local levels (municipalities and rural municipalities)

Government & Politics

- **Type:** Federal Parliamentary Republic
- **President:** Ceremonial Head of State
- **Prime Minister:** Executive Head of Government
- **Parliament:** Bicameral (House of Representatives & National Assembly)

History

- **Ancient Period:** Influenced by Hinduism and Buddhism; Lumbini is the birthplace of Buddha (Siddhartha Gautama).
- **Medieval Period:** Malla Kingdoms; development of art, architecture.
- **Unification:** Achieved in the late 18th century by King Prithvi Narayan Shah.

Modern Era:

- **1951:** End of Rana rule (autocratic regime).
- **1990:** Democracy restored (constitutional monarchy).
- **2006:** Civil war ends; monarchy abolished.
- **2008:** Republic declared.
- **2015:** New Constitution enacted.

International Relations

- **UN Member:** Since 1955
- **Key Relations:** Close ties with India and China
- **Peacekeeping:** Active contributor to UN peacekeeping missions

Culture

Religions:

- Hinduism (81%)
- Buddhism (9%)
- Islam, Christianity, Kirat, etc.

Festivals:

- | | |
|-----------|------------------|
| • Dashain | • Buddha Jayanti |
| • Tihar | • Indra Jatra |
| • Holi | |

Traditional Dress:

- Daura Suruwal for men
- Gunyo Cholo or Sari for women

UNESCO World Heritage Sites:

- Kathmandu Valley (Durbar Squares of Kathmandu, Patan, Bhaktapur)
- Lumbini

- Sagarmatha National Park
- Chitwan National Park

Languages

- **Official:** Nepali (Devanagari script)
- **Ethnic Languages:** Maithili, Bhojpuri, Tharu, Tamang, Newar, Magar, etc.

Economy

- **Type:** Developing, largely agrarian

Major Sectors:

- Agriculture (~25% of GDP)
- Tourism
- Remittances (over 25% of GDP)
- Hydropower (huge potential)
- **Main Exports:** Carpets, clothing, pashmina, tea, handicrafts
- **Challenges:** Infrastructure, political instability, brain drain

Tourism

Top Attractions:

- Mount Everest (trekking, climbing)
- Lumbini (Buddha's birthplace)
- Kathmandu Valley (temples, heritage)
- Pokhara (lakes, paragliding)
- Chitwan National Park (safari)
- Annapurna Circuit (world-famous trek)

Adventure Activities:

- Trekking, mountaineering
- White-water rafting
- Paragliding
- Bungee jumping

Health & Education

- **Education:** Literacy rate ~67% (higher among youth)
- **Health:** Improving but still faces challenges in rural areas
- **Medical Tourism:** Increasing, especially for Ayurvedic treatments

Interesting Facts

- Never colonized — one of the few countries in the region to maintain sovereignty.
- Home to 8 of the world's 14 highest peaks.
- The flag is non-rectangular — the only national flag that is two triangular shapes.
- Lumbini is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a major pilgrimage site for Buddhists.

QUESTIONS

6. Consider the following statements regarding the recent political events in Nepal:

1. Nepal's Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli resigned due to violent protests led largely by Generation Z.
2. The unrest was triggered by government-imposed bans on social media and alleged mishandling of protests.
3. Authorities imposed curfews in several districts but allowed movement of essential services.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

7. Consider the following statements about Generation Z (Gen Z):

1. Gen Z includes individuals born roughly between 1997 and 2012.
2. Gen Z is less concerned with mental health issues compared to previous generations.
3. They are considered digital natives, having grown up with smartphones and social media.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

8. With reference to social media, consider the following statements:

1. TikTok, launched in 2016, popularized short-form videos globally.
2. Social media platforms are exclusively used for personal communication and entertainment.
3. Risks associated with social media include misinformation, cyberbullying, and privacy concerns.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

9. Consider the following statements regarding Nepal's geography and administrative divisions:

1. Nepal is landlocked between India and China.
2. Nepal has 7 provinces and 753 local levels including municipalities and rural municipalities.
3. Kathmandu is located in the Terai region of Nepal.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

10. With reference to Nepal's modern history, consider the following statements:

1. The monarchy in Nepal was abolished in 2006.
2. Nepal became a federal democratic republic in 2008.
3. The new constitution of Nepal was enacted in 2015.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

3. India Unveils UPI-UPU Integration at Universal Postal Congress in Dubai

- At the 28th Universal Postal Congress in Dubai, Union Minister Jyotiraditya M. Scindia launched the UPI-UPU Integration project, collaboration between India's Department of Posts, NPCI International, and the Universal Postal Union (UPU).
- The initiative links India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) with the UPU Interconnection Platform, aiming to make cross-border remittances faster, cheaper, and more inclusive by combining UPI's real-time digital payments with the global reach of postal networks.
- Scindia described it as a social and technological milestone that would benefit migrant families, postal services, and financial inclusion efforts. India also pledged USD 10 million to support innovation, digital payments, and training in the postal sector and confirmed its candidature for the UPU Council of Administration and Postal Operations Council.



- He emphasized India's digital inclusion model—highlighting Aadhaar, Jan Dhan, and India Post Payments Bank—which has enabled over 560 million bank accounts, mostly for women, and cited India's leadership in digital payments, with UPI handling 185 billion transactions worth USD 2.83 trillion in 2024–25.
- The initiative supports the UN SDG goal of reducing global remittance costs below 3% by 2030, while reinforcing the postal sector's role in community services.
- UPU Director General Masahiko Metoki commended India's leadership and commitment to global postal and financial innovation.

Universal Postal Union (UPU)

- The Universal Postal Union (UPU) is a specialized agency of the United Nations that coordinates international postal policies and services.
- It was established in 1874 to facilitate and standardize international mail exchange among countries.

Key Facts about UPU:

- **Founded:** 1874
- **Headquarters:** Bern, Switzerland
- **Members:** 192 member countries (almost all UN member states)
- **Purpose:** To promote and coordinate efficient and accessible international postal services

Functions:

- Sets rules for international mail exchanges
- Facilitates cooperation among postal operators worldwide
- Develops international standards for postal services and technologies
- Helps ensure universal access to postal services globally

Why is UPU important?

- It simplifies sending mail internationally by creating uniform regulations and standards.
- It helps postal operators across the world collaborate and exchange mail reliably.
- It supports postal development in emerging and less developed countries.
- It promotes innovation in postal services and adapts to technological changes.

Unified Payments Interface (UPI)

- Unified Payments Interface (UPI) is a real-time payment system developed by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) that enables instant money transfer between bank accounts through a mobile platform.
- It's designed to facilitate seamless, fast, and secure transactions, making digital payments easy for individuals and businesses.

Key Features of UPI:

- **Instant Transfers:** Money is transferred immediately between bank accounts 24/7.
- **Single Mobile Application:** Allows linking multiple bank accounts into one app.
- **Virtual Payment Address (VPA):** Users can create a unique ID (like yourname@bank) instead of sharing bank details.
- **Multiple Transaction Types:** Supports person-to-person (P2P), person-to-merchant (P2M), bill payments, etc.
- **No Need for Account Details:** Payments can be made using VPA, QR codes, or mobile numbers.

- **Secure and Regulated:** Uses two-factor authentication and is regulated by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

How it Works:

- Link your bank account to a UPI-enabled app (like Google Pay, PhonePe, BHIM)
- Create a Virtual Payment Address (VPA).
- Use the VPA or scan QR codes to send or receive money instantly.
- Authorize transactions via a PIN for security.

Why is UPI Popular?

- It's fast and works 24/7.
- It eliminates the need for cash or cards.
- Works on smartphones without requiring internet banking separately.
- Widely accepted across merchants and services in India.

UN SDG goal

- The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a universal set of 17 goals adopted by all UN member states in 2015, aimed at ending poverty, protecting the planet, and ensuring prosperity for all by 2030.

17 SDGs:

- **No Poverty** – End poverty in all its forms everywhere.
- **Zero Hunger** – End hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.
- **Good Health and Well-being** – Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
- **Quality Education** – Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
- **Gender Equality** – Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
- **Clean Water and Sanitation** – Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.
- **Affordable and Clean Energy** – Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all.
- **Decent Work and Economic Growth** – Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.
- **Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure** – Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation.
- **Reduced Inequality** – Reduce inequality within and among countries.
- **Sustainable Cities and Communities** – Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.
- **Responsible Consumption and Production** – Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
- **Climate Action** – Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
- **Life Below Water** – Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources.

- **Life on Land** – Protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, manage forests sustainably, combat desertification, and halt biodiversity loss.
- **Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions** – Promote peaceful and inclusive societies, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable institutions.
- **Partnerships for the Goals** – Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

QUESTIONS

11. Which of the following statements regarding the UPI–UPU Integration project is/are correct?
1. It links India’s Unified Payments Interface (UPI) with the Universal Postal Union (UPU) Interconnection Platform.
 2. It aims to facilitate faster, cheaper, and more inclusive cross-border remittances.
 3. The initiative is solely funded by the Universal Postal Union, with no financial contribution from India.
- A. 1 and 2 only
B. 2 and 3 only
C. 1 and 3 only
D. 1, 2, and 3
12. The Universal Postal Union (UPU) is:
- A. A specialized agency of the United Nations that coordinates international postal policies and services.
B. An intergovernmental organization established in 1945 to regulate international trade of goods.
C. Headquartered in Vienna, Austria, and has 193 member countries.
D. A financial institution that provides development funds for postal sectors in member countries.
13. Consider the following statements regarding UPI (Unified Payments Interface):
1. It allows instant money transfers between bank accounts 24/7.
 2. It requires sharing bank account details for every transaction.
 3. Users can make payments using Virtual Payment Address (VPA), QR codes, or mobile numbers.
- How many of the statements given above are correct?
- A. Only one
B. Only two
C. All three
D. None
14. The UPI–UPU Integration initiative contributes to which United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) by aiming to reduce global remittance costs below 3% by 2030?
- A. SDG 1 – No Poverty
B. SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth
C. SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities
D. SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals

15. Which of the following correctly lists the components of India's "digital inclusion model" highlighted at the Universal Postal Congress?
- A. UPI, Aadhaar, Jan Dhan, India Post Payments Bank
 - B. UPI, Digital Rupee, Jan Dhan, NPCI International
 - C. Aadhaar, Digital India, India Post Savings Bank, Blockchain
 - D. Jan Dhan, UPI, SWIFT, Aadhaar

4. India explores rare-earth deal with Myanmar after Chinese curb



- India is exploring a strategic and unconventional route to secure critical rare earth elements (REEs) by engaging with the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), a powerful armed rebel group controlling mineral-rich territories in northeastern Myanmar.
- This move is driven by India's urgent need to diversify rare earth supplies amid tightening Chinese export controls.

Mining Push amid China's Monopoly

- Although rare earth elements are not inherently rare, China dominates the global supply chain, especially in processing REEs into magnets essential for electric vehicles, electronics, and defense systems.

- In 2025, China has further restricted exports to countries like India, pushing New Delhi to seek alternative sources.
- India's Ministry of Mines has asked both state-owned IREL (Indian Rare Earths Limited) and private firm Midwest Advanced Materials to explore sample collection from Myanmar's KIA-held mines.
- These samples will be tested for heavy rare earths like dysprosium and terbium, critical for high-tech industries.

Secretive Cooperation with KIA

- India's engagement with the KIA marks a rare instance of working with a non-state armed group, especially one in conflict with Myanmar's military junta, which China supports.
- The KIA has already started gathering samples for Indian analysis, and discussions are underway about the feasibility of bulk exports.
- The initiative was reportedly discussed during a virtual meeting in July involving India's Mines Ministry, IREL, Midwest, and other entities. While Indian officials publicly emphasize commercial partnerships, none directly confirmed cooperation with the rebel group.

A Complicated Geopolitical Equation

- India's rare earth strategy is taking shape in a complex regional backdrop. The KIA seized control of the Chipwe-Pangwa mining belt—a globally important source of heavy rare earths—after Myanmar's 2021 coup. Although the KIA continues to supply China, tensions have emerged between the two, especially as Beijing urges the group to ease military pressure on junta strongholds like Bhamo.
- This friction has opened the door for increased India-KIA engagement, with Delhi viewing the situation as an opportunity to compete with China for critical minerals.

Logistical and Technical Challenges

- While talks are advancing, transporting large volumes of rare earths through remote, mountainous terrain remains a major hurdle.
- Currently, the region's infrastructure supports transport to China, not India. IREL is reportedly interested in supporting the initiative but wants private firms to handle logistics.
- Moreover, India still lacks the advanced processing capabilities needed to refine rare earths at scale. Despite investments and attempts to build domestic capacity—with support from Japan and Korea—India remains far behind China's technological edge in this area.

Long-Term Strategic Vision

- India is reportedly exploring a long-term partnership with the KIA to build a reliable supply route for rare earths.
- The success of this venture depends not only on political will and rebel cooperation but also on solving technical bottlenecks in transport, refining, and scalability.
- This marks a significant but risky step in India's broader bid to reduce reliance on China and strengthen its position in the global clean energy and tech race.

Critical Rare Earth Elements (REEs)

- Critical Rare Earth Elements (REEs) refer to a subset of the 17 rare earth elements that are considered essential for modern technologies and economically and strategically important, yet face supply risks due to limited global production and geopolitical concentration (especially in China).

What Are Rare Earth Elements?

There are 17 REEs:

- **15 lanthanides:** La, Ce, Pr, Nd, Pm, Sm, Eu, Gd, Tb, Dy, Ho, Er, Tm, Yb, Lu
- **2 chemically similar elements:** Scandium (Sc) and Yttrium (Y)

Critical Rare Earth Elements:

- Not all REEs are equally valuable or scarce. The critical REEs are typically those with:
 - High demand for advanced technology applications
 - Limited or concentrated supply chains
 - Few or no viable substitutes

As of recent assessments (*e.g.*, USGS, DOE, EU reports), the most critical REEs include:

Element	Key Use	Reason for Criticality
Neodymium (Nd)	Permanent magnets in EV motors, wind turbines	High demand, limited substitutes
Praseodymium (Pr)	Magnets, aircraft engines	Similar to Nd, used in alloys
Dysprosium (Dy)	Magnets in high-heat applications	Scarce, essential for magnet stability
Terbium (Tb)	Magnets, green phosphors	Very low abundance
Europium (Eu)	Red/blue phosphors in screens	Scarce, limited production
Yttrium (Y)	LEDs, lasers, phosphors	Supply risk, essential in defense/tech
Samarium (Sm)	Magnets, nuclear reactors	Used in SmCo magnets
Gadolinium (Gd)	MRI contrast agents, nuclear reactors	Specialized, with few substitutes

Why Are They Critical?

Technological dependence:

- EVs, smartphones, defense systems, wind turbines, lasers, fiber optics.

Supply chain vulnerability:

- ~70–90% of REE production and processing is dominated by China.

Recycling challenges:

- Low recycling rates and complex separation processes.

Geopolitical tension:

- Trade restrictions, export bans, and military applications make REEs strategically sensitive.

Efforts to Reduce Dependency:

- Recycling and urban mining
- New mining projects (*e.g.*, in Australia, USA, Canada, Greenland)
- Substitute materials
- Processing capability development outside China

QUESTIONS

-
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5. Why France's govt collapsed, again



- France's centrist Prime Minister François Bayrou has been ousted after just nine months in office, following a crushing defeat in a parliamentary confidence vote.
- The National Assembly voted 364 to 194 against Bayrou's government, rejecting his proposed austerity measures aimed at tackling the country's deepening debt crisis and budget deficit.
- Bayrou warned lawmakers of the urgent need to control public spending, framing the debt crisis as a threat to national sovereignty.
- However, his appeal was dismissed by both the far right, led by Marine Le Pen, and a coalition of left-wing parties, who opposed cuts to welfare and public holidays.
- Le Pen instead proposed targeting immigration spending.
- This marks France's fourth government collapse in just 20 months, highlighting chronic political instability.
- President Emmanuel Macron, increasingly isolated amid international diplomatic efforts, announced he would accept Bayrou's resignation and appoint a new prime minister in the coming days.

Political turmoil in France in Last few years:

1. Pension Reforms and Labor Protests

What happened?

- President Emmanuel Macron pushed through a controversial pension reform in 2023, raising the retirement age from 62 to 64.

Why the backlash?

- Millions of French citizens protested, viewing the reform as unfair, especially for lower-income and manual workers.
- **Political impact:** Macron's use of Article 49.3 (bypassing parliament) deepened public distrust in democratic processes.

2. Rising Cost of Living and Economic Inequality

- Fuel prices, inflation, and stagnant wages have triggered widespread discontent.
- The “Yellow Vest” (Gilets Jaunes) movement, which began in 2018, was a grassroots response to fuel tax hikes and broader economic inequality.
- Economic grievances often turn into broader anti-government sentiment.

3. Immigration and Integration Tensions

- France has faced repeated tensions over immigration, integration, and secularism.
- Issues like urban unrest in banlieues (suburbs), often linked to police violence and discrimination, have sparked riots (e.g., July 2023 riots after the police shooting of Nahel Merzouk).
- The rise of far-right rhetoric has polarized public debate around national identity and immigration.

4. Rise of Populist and Extremist Parties

- Traditional parties (Socialists, Republicans) have weakened, creating a vacuum filled by:
 - **Far-right:** Marine Le Pen's National Rally (RN)
 - **Far-left:** Jean-Luc Mélenchon's France Insoumise (LFI)
- These parties challenge Macron's centrist bloc, making governance more difficult.

5. Fragmented Parliament

- In the 2022 legislative elections, Macron's coalition lost its absolute majority.
- This has created a “hung parliament”, making it hard to pass laws without alliances or controversial methods (like Article 49.3).
- Leads to legislative gridlock and increased public frustration.

6. Political Elitism and Disconnect

- Many citizens feel alienated from the political elite.
- Macron, often seen as “president of the rich,” has been criticized for being out of touch with ordinary people.
- Low voter turnout and political apathy reflect deepening distrust in institutions.

7. Security and Terrorism Concerns

- France has faced Islamist terrorist attacks (e.g., Nice, Paris), leading to heightened security laws and debates over civil liberties.
- These events inflame tensions over religion, immigration, and surveillance.

8. Climate Policy and Environmental Disputes

- Green policies (e.g., fuel taxes, zoning laws, agriculture reforms) have sparked backlash from farmers, drivers, and rural communities.
- Farmers' protests in 2023–2024 echoed discontent over EU regulations, climate targets, and falling incomes.

9. European Union Tensions

- While Macron is pro-EU, a sizable portion of the population is Euroskeptic.
- Discontent over EU policies, especially on migration and economic regulations, fuels anti-establishment sentiment.

French Revolution (1789–1799)

- The French Revolution (1789–1799) was a major period of radical social and political change in France that fundamentally altered the course of French — and world — history.

What Was the French Revolution?

- A revolution that overthrew the monarchy, established a republic, experienced violent political turmoil, and led to the rise of Napoleon Bonaparte.
 - Before the Revolution (Ancien Régime)
 - Absolute monarchy under King Louis XVI.
- Society divided into 3 Estates:
 - **First Estate:** Clergy
 - **Second Estate:** Nobility
 - **Third Estate:** Commoners (97% of the population, heavily taxed)

1789

- **May:** Estates-General convened (hadn't met since 1614)
- **June:** Third Estate declares itself the National Assembly
- **June 20:** Tennis Court Oath
- **July 14:** Storming of the Bastille — symbolic start of the revolution
- **August:** Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen

1791

- Constitutional Monarchy formed
- King attempts to flee (Flight to Varennes)

1792–1793

- Monarchy abolished, France becomes a republic
- Louis XVI executed (Jan 1793)
- Queen Marie Antoinette executed (Oct 1793)

1793–1794: The Reign of Terror

- Led by Robespierre and the Jacobins
- Thousands executed by guillotine (including Robespierre)

1795–1799

- Power shifts to the Directory (a 5-man executive)
- Period of corruption and instability

1799

- Coup d'état by Napoleon Bonaparte
- End of the Revolution and beginning of the Napoleonic Era

Major Causes

- **Economic crisis:** Huge debt, poor harvests, famine
- **Inequality:** Unfair taxation and privileges for nobility/clergy
- **Enlightenment ideas:** Liberty, equality, popular sovereignty
- **Weak leadership:** Louis XVI seen as indecisive and out of touch

Liberty, Equality, Fraternity

- Inspired by Enlightenment thinkers like Rousseau, Voltaire, and Montesquieu
- Emphasis on natural rights, democracy, and popular sovereignty

Key Documents

- Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789)
- First modern human rights declaration, inspired other revolutions

Impact of the Revolution

- End of absolute monarchy in France
- Rise of modern democratic ideals
- Set precedent for future revolutions (*e.g.*, Haiti, Latin America)
- Led to Napoleon's rise and the reshaping of Europe

QUESTIONS

21. Why did France's Prime Minister François Bayrou's government collapse in 2025?
- A. Failure to secure parliamentary approval for austerity measures to control public spending.
 - B. Massive public protests against pension reforms.
 - C. Presidential impeachment due to EU policy disagreements.
 - D. Military intervention following riots in urban areas.
22. Which of the following factors contribute to chronic political instability in France in recent years?
1. Fragmented parliament and weakened majority of Macron's coalition.
 2. Rising populist influence from both far-right and far-left parties.
 3. Continuous EU financial support eliminating economic grievances.
- A. 1 and 2 only
 - B. 2 and 3 only
 - C. 1 and 3 only
 - D. 1, 2, and 3
23. The use of Article 49.3 of the French Constitution is significant because it:
- A. Allows the Prime Minister to dissolve the parliament unilaterally.
 - B. Permits the government to pass legislation without a parliamentary vote.
 - C. Enables the President to bypass judicial review in budgetary matters.
 - D. Grants the military authority to enforce emergency economic measures.

24. Which historical similarity can be drawn between contemporary political discontent in France and the French Revolution of 1789?
- Both periods involved radical labor law reforms imposed by monarchs.
 - Popular discontent over inequality and perceived elitism fueled political crises.
 - Both were triggered by external invasion threatening national sovereignty.
 - Military coups replaced democratic governments in both cases.
25. Which of the following statements regarding France's pension reform controversy is/are correct?
- The retirement age was increased from 62 to 64 in 2023.
 - Public opposition was strongest among low-income and manual workers.
 - The reform successfully increased public trust in Macron's government.
- 1 and 2 only
 - 2 and 3 only
 - 1 and 3 only
 - 1, 2, and 3

6. Katchatheevu



- Katchatheevu is a small, uninhabited island located in the Palk Strait between India and Sri Lanka.
- It has been the subject of geopolitical and legal disputes for several decades, particularly between India and Sri Lanka, and within India—especially in the state of Tamil Nadu.

Facts about Katchatheevu

- **Size:** ~285 acres (115 hectares)
- **Location:** Between Rameswaram (India) and Jaffna (Sri Lanka), in the Palk Strait
- **Inhabitants:** Uninhabited, but visited by Indian and Sri Lankan fishermen and pilgrims
- **Religious Site:** St. Anthony's Shrine (important for Christian pilgrims from both nations)

Pre-Independence:

- Katchatheevu was part of the Ramanathapuram Kingdom (in Tamil Nadu) before colonial times.
- Under British rule, it remained loosely administered without much focus due to its small size and uninhabited nature.

Post-Independence:

- After India and Sri Lanka became independent, both countries laid claim to the island.
- Disputes intensified in the 1950s and 1960s, especially due to fishing rights.

1974 Agreement:

- In 1974, the Indian government under Prime Minister Indira Gandhi signed an agreement with Sri Lanka recognizing Sri Lankan sovereignty over Katchatheevu.
- India handed over the island, claiming it would help improve diplomatic relations.
- However, no parliamentary ratification was done—something that has been legally challenged in Indian courts.

Fishing Rights Dispute

- Indian fishermen, especially from Tamil Nadu, regularly fish near Katchatheevu.
- Sri Lankan Navy has detained Indian fishermen for allegedly trespassing into Sri Lankan waters.
- The 1974 and 1976 agreements allowed Indian fishermen to dry nets and visit the church, but over time, enforcement became stricter.

Legal and Political Controversies

- Tamil Nadu politicians across party lines (AIADMK, DMK, BJP, etc.) have opposed the 1974 agreement.
- Legal petitions have been filed in the Supreme Court of India seeking retrieval of the island.
- The central government has argued in court that territory once ceded cannot be reclaimed.

Recent Developments (as of 2024-2025)

- Katchatheevu returned to the headlines after renewed political interest and RTI revelations suggesting no parliamentary approval was sought during the handover.
- It has become a major political issue in Tamil Nadu and national politics, especially before elections.
- There's ongoing pressure to renegotiate fishing rights or challenge the handover legally or diplomatically.

Strategic and Environmental Importance

- The area is rich in marine biodiversity, making it valuable for both fisheries and environmental conservation.
- It's also situated close to key maritime routes.

Relation between Sri Lanka and India

1. Historical and Cultural Ties

- **Ancient links:** Both countries share centuries-old historical and cultural connections. Buddhism, which originated in India, is the majority religion in Sri Lanka.
- **Ramayana connection:** The Hindu epic Ramayana mentions Lanka (modern-day Sri Lanka), showing mythological ties.
- **Cultural exchange:** Both nations have rich traditions in art, dance, language, and literature that have influenced each other.

2. Political Relations

- India was one of the first countries to recognize Sri Lanka's independence in 1948.
- High-level visits and bilateral talks are common between the countries.
- India supports Sri Lanka in international forums like the UN and SAARC.

3. Ethnic Issue and Civil War

India has had a complex role during Sri Lanka's civil war (1983–2009):

- India sent the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) in 1987 after the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord.
- It also expressed concern for the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka, with whom India shares ethnic ties (especially with Tamil Nadu state).
- Post-war, India has helped in reconstruction and rehabilitation in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka.

4. Economic and Trade Relations

India is one of Sri Lanka's largest trading partners.

Key elements:

- Free Trade Agreement (FTA) signed in 2000.
- Indian investments in infrastructure, energy, telecom, tourism, etc.
- Sri Lanka imports petroleum products, vehicles, medicines, and more from India.

5. Strategic and Security Relations

- The Indian Ocean region is of strategic importance to both.
- India is concerned about China's growing influence in Sri Lanka, such as the Hambantota Port lease to China.
- India and Sri Lanka have cooperation in maritime security, defense training, and counter-terrorism.

6. Development Assistance

India has provided over \$3 billion in development assistance to Sri Lanka:

- Housing projects for war-displaced people.
- Construction of railway lines.
- Cultural centers and hospitals.

India was also one of the first responders during Sri Lanka's economic crisis in 2022, providing:

- \$4 billion in aid (credit lines, fuel, food, medicines).

7. People-to-People and Cultural Relations

- Strong tourism exchange, especially religious tourism (*e.g.*, Buddhist pilgrimage to Bodhi Gaya in India).
- India organizes scholarships and cultural programs for Sri Lankan students.
- Shared languages (Tamil) and festivals.

8. Challenges

- Fishermen conflict in the Palk Strait due to alleged poaching by Indian fishermen.
- Concerns in India over Chinese investments and projects in Sri Lanka.
- Domestic political shifts in Sri Lanka sometimes impact bilateral relations.

QUESTIONS

26. Which of the following statements regarding Katchatheevu island is/are correct?

1. Katchatheevu is located in the Palk Strait between India and Sri Lanka.
 2. India ceded Katchatheevu to Sri Lanka in 1974 through an agreement ratified by the Indian Parliament.
 3. St. Anthony's Shrine on Katchatheevu is significant for pilgrims from both India and Sri Lanka.
- A. 1 and 2 only
B. 1 and 3 only
C. 2 and 3 only
D. 1, 2, and 3

27. The 1974 agreement between India and Sri Lanka regarding Katchatheevu primarily addressed:

- A. Recognition of Sri Lankan sovereignty over Katchatheevu and Indian fishermen's rights.
- B. Transfer of all naval bases in Tamil Nadu to Sri Lanka.
- C. Demarcation of maritime boundaries in the Andaman Sea.
- D. Joint construction of ports on Katchatheevu for trade purposes.

28. Which of the following are major concerns for India in its bilateral relations with Sri Lanka?

1. Fishermen conflicts in the Palk Strait
 2. China's growing influence in Sri Lanka
 3. High Indian export tariffs on Sri Lankan goods
- A. 1 and 2 only C. 1 and 3 only
B. 2 and 3 only D. 1, 2, and 3

29. India's role in Sri Lanka during the civil war (1983–2009) included:

- A. Deployment of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) under the 1987 Indo-Sri Lanka Accord.
- B. Annexation of northern provinces to protect Indian Tamils.
- C. Complete non-involvement due to UN sanctions.
- D. Imposition of trade embargoes on Sri Lanka during the entire war.

30. Which of the following statements regarding India–Sri Lanka cultural and historical ties is/are correct?
1. Buddhism, originating in India, has been historically significant in Sri Lanka.
 2. The Hindu epic Ramayana makes references to Lanka, connecting India and Sri Lanka mythologically.
 3. Both countries share Tamil language and cultural festivals.
- A. 1 only
B. 1 and 2 only
C. 1 and 3 only
D. 1, 2, and 3

7. India Rankings (IR) in NIRF 2025



- The India Rankings (IR) 2025, based on the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF), largely followed previous trends, with older public institutions continuing to dominate the top positions.
- Since its inception in 2016, the NIRF has seen significant growth in participation, expanding from 3,565 institutions to 14,163 and from four categories to 17, covering a broad spectrum of higher education sectors in India.

Ranking Parameters and Their Shortcomings

- **Institutions are evaluated on five key parameters:**
 - Teaching, Learning & Resources (30%)
 - Research and Professional Practice (30%)
 - Graduation Outcomes (20%)
 - Outreach and Inclusivity (OI) (10%)
 - Peer Perception (10%)

- However, concerns remain about the fairness and effectiveness of these parameters.
- Specifically, peer perception—based on feedback from experts and employers—is seen as subjective and potentially biased.
- Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has criticized this component, as it favors well-known institutions and disadvantages suburban and state-run colleges.

Flaws in Data Collection and Verification

- Despite its claim of using verifiable metrics and third-party audits, the NIRF heavily relies on self-declared data from institutions and bibliometric sources, raising concerns over data reliability.
- A significant weakness lies in the inadequate monitoring of false submissions, potentially allowing manipulation of ranks for branding purposes, especially by private institutions.

Concerns around Outreach and Inclusivity (OI)

- The treatment of the Outreach and Inclusivity (OI) parameter is another major flaw.
- While the NIRF claims to measure diversity, its focus is largely limited to regional and gender representation, neglecting economically and socially disadvantaged students and those with disabilities, despite each having designated weightage within the OI score.
- Notably, only Jawaharlal Nehru University and AIIMS Delhi scored above 70 in this category among the top 10.

Need for Structural Reforms

- The framework must go beyond rankings and act as a catalyst for reform in Indian higher education. This includes:
 - Expanding OI to include reservation adherence in faculty hiring.
 - Addressing regional disparities and faculty shortages in non-elite institutions.
 - Encouraging legacy institutions to mentor newer ones.
 - Penalizing institutions submitting false data.
 - Promoting quality and equity, not just reputation.

National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2025

- The Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), traditionally known for engineering, continue to make their mark in management education, as reflected in the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2025 rankings.
- Among the IITs, the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi secured the 4th position in the management category, emerging as the highest-ranked IIT.
- IIT Kharagpur followed at the 12th spot, while IIT Madras and IIT Bombay were placed at 13th and 14th, respectively. IIT Roorkee stood at the 22nd position.
- The top ten positions in the management category were largely dominated by the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs).
- IIM Ahmedabad, IIM Bangalore, and IIM Kozhikode took the top three ranks, while IIM Lucknow, IIM Calcutta, IIM Indore, and IIM Mumbai secured positions between fifth and eighth.
- Management Development Institute (MDI), Gurgaon, and XLRI - Xavier School of Management, Jamshedpur, ranked ninth and tenth, respectively.
- These rankings serve as a key benchmark for management aspirants, highlighting institutions that provide strong academic environments and placement opportunities.

- The Ministry of Education has introduced changes in the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2025 to enhance fairness and credibility, Secretary of Higher Education Vineet Joshi said.
- Introduced in 2015 by the Ministry of Education, the NIRF evaluates institutions across parameters including Teaching, Learning and Resources, Research and Professional Practices, Graduation Outcomes, Outreach and Inclusivity, and Perception.
- These indicators collectively assess the academic environment, research output, inclusivity, and overall reputation of higher education institutions in India.

31. Which of the following statements about the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2025 is/are correct?

32. Which of the following are criticisms of the NIRF rankings as of 2025?

33. Regarding NIRF 2025 management rankings, which of the following statements is/are correct?

34. Which of the following reforms have been suggested to improve the fairness of NIRF rankings?

35. Which of the following statements regarding the growth and scope of NIRF since its inception are correct?

1. NIRF began in 2015 and initially covered only four categories.
2. Participation has grown from around 3,500 institutions to over 14,000 institutions in 2025.
3. NIRF now evaluates 17 categories of higher education institutions in India.

A. 1 and 2 only

C. 2 and 3 only

B. 1 and 3 only

D. 1, 2, and 3

8. India's First Malaria Vaccine could be a Turning Point in Disease Fight

- In a landmark move, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has licensed its first indigenous multi-stage malaria vaccine, AdFalcivax, to five pharmaceutical companies.
- This step is considered a significant advancement in India's ongoing battle against malaria, aligning with the national goal of malaria elimination by 2030.

The Vaccine: AdFalcivax

- Developed by the Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC), Bhubaneswar, under ICMR, AdFalcivax targets the Plasmodium falciparum parasite — the deadliest strain of malaria.
- Unlike previous treatments, the vaccine works at multiple stages of the parasite's life cycle, preventing its entry into the bloodstream and blocking community transmission.

Key features of the vaccine

- Effective against P. falciparum
- Multi-stage protection
- Stable for over nine months at room temperature
- Affordable and scalable for mass production

The vaccine has been licensed to:

- Indian Immunologicals Limited
- TechInvention Lifecare Private Limited
- Panacea Biotec Limited
- Biological E Limited
- Zydus Lifesciences

India's Fight Against Malaria: Progress and Plans

- Under the National Framework for Malaria Elimination (2016–2030) and the National Strategic Plan (2023–2027), India aims to:
- Achieve zero indigenous malaria cases by 2027
- Reach total malaria elimination by 2030

India's Own Malaria Shield?



ICMR's New 'AdFalcivax' Vaccine Could Protect Millions By Blocking Infection & Community Transmission

www.thebetterindia.com

@thebetterindia   

Significant progress has already been made:

- Malaria cases fell from 6.4 million in 2017 to around 2 million in 2023
- Deaths dropped from 11,100 to 3,500 in the same period
- In 2024, India exited WHO's High Burden to High Impact (HBHI) category

Challenges Remain: Hotspots and New Outbreaks

- Despite national-level success, malaria hotspots persist in certain regions:
 - Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Northeastern states
- Particularly severe in tribal and border areas with limited healthcare access
- Additionally, flooding and poor urban sanitation have triggered outbreaks in:
 - Delhi, Noida, and Ghaziabad
 - Delhi recorded 264 cases as of September 2025 — the highest in four years
 - Health experts warn that malnutrition, poor infrastructure, and cross-border transmission continue to hinder malaria control in these regions.

Why AdFalcivax Matters

- Health experts and officials believe AdFalcivax could be a game-changer:
 - By blocking transmission, it can prevent local outbreaks from spreading
 - Supports the “Test, Treat, Track” strategy already in use
 - May accelerate India’s malaria elimination timeline
- Though human trials are pending, licensing for manufacturing suggests confidence in the vaccine’s potential.

Understanding Malaria and Its Spread

- Malaria is caused by Plasmodium parasites transmitted via the bite of infected female Anopheles mosquitoes. The disease:
 - Is not transmitted person to person
 - Can spread through infected blood, needles, or organ transplants
 - Is preventable and treatable, but P. falciparum can be fatal within 24 hours if untreated
 - Symptoms appear 10–15 days after infection and typically include fever, headache, and chills.

Prevention Measures

To prevent malaria:

- Avoid mosquito bites by using nets, repellents, and wearing protective clothing
- Consult doctors before visiting high-risk areas and consider chemoprophylaxis
- Participate in community mosquito control efforts, especially in outbreak-prone areas

QUESTIONS

36. Which of the following statements about India’s first indigenous malaria vaccine, AdFalcivax, is/are correct?
1. AdFalcivax targets the Plasmodium falciparum parasite.
 2. It works at multiple stages of the parasite’s life cycle.
 3. The vaccine has completed human trials and is ready for mass administration.
- A. 1 and 2 only C. 2 and 3 only
B. 1 and 3 only D. 1, 2, and 3

- 37.** Which of the following features make AdFalcivax suitable for mass vaccination programs in India?
1. Stability at room temperature for over nine months
 2. Affordability and scalability
 3. Complete prevention of all malaria strains
- A. 1 only
B. 1 and 2 only
C. 2 and 3 only
D. 1, 2, and 3
- 38.** Regarding India's malaria elimination goals under the National Framework for Malaria Elimination (2016–2030), which of the following statements is/are correct?
1. India aims to achieve zero indigenous malaria cases by 2027.
 2. Total malaria elimination is targeted by 2030.
 3. India has already achieved zero malaria cases nationwide as of 2024.
- A. 1 only
B. 1 and 2 only
C. 2 and 3 only
D. 1, 2, and 3
- 39.** Which of the following regions in India are identified as malaria hotspots despite overall progress?
1. Odisha and Chhattisgarh
 2. Jharkhand and Northeastern states
 3. Delhi, Noida, and Ghaziabad
- A. 1 and 2 only
B. 1 and 3 only
C. 1, 2, and 3
D. 2 and 3 only
- 40.** Which of the following are true about malaria and its transmission?
1. Malaria is transmitted through the bite of infected female Anopheles mosquitoes.
 2. It can spread from person to person through casual contact.
 3. P. falciparum malaria can be fatal within 24 hours if untreated.
- A. 1 only
B. 1 and 3 only
C. 2 and 3 only
D. 1, 2, and 3

ANSWER KEY AND EXPLANATION

1. B 2 and 3 only

- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** Only **MPs of both Houses** elect the Vice-President; MLAs are **not part of the electoral college**.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** Article **64** designates the Vice-President as the **ex officio Chairman of Rajya Sabha**.
- **Statement 3 is correct:** Article **67(b)** allows removal of the Vice-President by a **resolution of Rajya Sabha**, agreed to by **Lok Sabha**.

2. D 1, 2, and 3

- All three statements are **correct**:
 - Term is **5 years** (Article 67).
 - Resignation is submitted to the **President** (Article 67).
 - There is **no limit on the number of terms**.

3. B 1 and 3 only

- **Statement 1 is correct:** Minimum age is **35 years**.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** Holding any **office of profit** under Union/State government disqualifies a person.
- **Statement 3 is correct:** Must be **qualified to be elected as a member of Rajya Sabha** (Article 66).

4. A 1 and 2 only

- **Statement 1 is correct:** Article 65 mandates the Vice-President to act as President in case of vacancy.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** Maximum acting period is **6 months**.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** The Vice-President **does not automatically become President**; a new election must be held.

5. B 1 and 3 only

- **Statement 1 is correct:** Voting is by **proportional representation and single transferable vote**.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** Voting is by **secret ballot**, not open ballot.
- **Statement 3 is correct:** Electoral College includes **all MPs**, elected and nominated.

6. C 1, 2, and 3

- **Statement 1 is correct:** KP Sharma Oli resigned following protests largely led by Gen Z demonstrators.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** The protests erupted due to government-imposed social media bans and alleged mishandling, causing civilian deaths.
- **Statement 3 is correct:** Authorities imposed strict curfews in Kathmandu, Lalitpur, and Bhaktapur but allowed essential services (ambulances, media, diplomatic vehicles).

7. B 1 and 3 only

- **Statement 1 is correct:** Gen Z typically includes those born between 1997 and 2012.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** Gen Z is **more open and conscious** about mental health compared to previous generations.
- **Statement 3 is correct:** Gen Z grew up with smartphones, social media, and the internet, making them digital natives.

8. B 1 and 3 only

- **Statement 1 is correct:** TikTok, launched in 2016, became a global platform for short-form videos.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** Social media is **multi-purpose**, used for business marketing, activism, education, and networking, not just personal communication.
- **Statement 3 is correct:** Risks include **misinformation, cyberbullying, privacy issues, addiction, and mental health impacts**.

9. A 1 and 2 only

- **Statement 1 is correct:** Nepal is landlocked between India (south, east, west) and China/Tibet (north).
- **Statement 2 is correct:** Nepal has a federal system with **7 provinces** and **753 local units**.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** Kathmandu is located in the **Hill region**, not the Terai region.

10. B 2 and 3 only

- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** The monarchy was abolished in **2008**, not 2006.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** Nepal became a **republic in 2008** after the civil war ended.
- **Statement 3 is correct:** The **new constitution** of Nepal was enacted in **2015**.

11. A 1 and 2 only

- **Statement 1 is correct:** The project connects UPI with the UPU Interconnection Platform.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** The aim is to make cross-border remittances faster, cheaper, and more inclusive.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** India has pledged USD 10 million to support the initiative; it is not solely funded by the UPU.

12. A A specialized agency of the United Nations that coordinates international postal policies and services.

- UPU was **founded in 1874** and is a UN specialized agency for international postal cooperation.
- It is **headquartered in Bern, Switzerland**, not Vienna.
- It is **not a financial institution**, though it facilitates postal development in countries.

13. B Only two

- **Statement 1 is correct:** UPI enables **instant transfers round the clock**.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** **UPI does not require sharing bank account details for every transaction**, as VPA or QR codes can be used.
- **Statement 3 is correct:** Users can pay via VPA, QR codes, or mobile numbers.

14. C SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities

- The initiative **reduces the cost of cross-border remittances**, improving financial inclusion for migrant families, which directly contributes to **reducing inequality within and among countries** (SDG 10).
- While SDG 17 and SDG 8 may be indirectly supported, the primary SDG is SDG 10.

15. A UPI, Aadhaar, Jan Dhan, India Post Payments Bank

- Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia highlighted **Aadhaar, Jan Dhan accounts, India Post Payments Bank, and UPI** as key pillars of India's digital financial inclusion model.
- Options (b), (c), and (d) include unrelated components such as SWIFT, Digital Rupee, Blockchain, or NPCI International, which were **not cited as part of the model in this context**.

16. B Securing a diversified supply of critical rare earth elements for strategic and technological use.

- The article highlights that India is exploring a strategic route to **secure critical rare earth elements (REEs)** from KIA-controlled territories, particularly due to China's export restrictions.
- Option (a) is incorrect: India is engaging for commercial and strategic mineral supply, **not for military alliance**.
- Options (c) and (d) are unrelated to the REE initiative.

17. A 1 and 2 only

- Dysprosium and Terbium are critical because they are **scarce, essential for high-tech applications**, and **China dominates their supply**, making supply chains vulnerable.
- Statement 3 is incorrect: **India currently lacks sufficient domestic production** of these heavy rare earths, which is why it is seeking Myanmar sources.

18. B It is an armed rebel group controlling mineral-rich territories independent of the Myanmar military junta.

- The KIA **controls the Chipwe-Pangwa mining belt** and is in conflict with Myanmar's military junta.
- It is **not a formal government authority, UN-mandated body, or private corporation**, making it a non-state actor in this context.

19. B 1 and 3 only

- **Statement 1 is correct:** ~70–90% of REE production and processing is dominated by China.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** REEs are **not inherently rare**, but critical ones have **concentrated supply chains**.
- **Statement 3 is correct:** India, Australia, USA, Canada, and others are investing in **new mining and processing projects** to diversify supply.

20. B Difficult terrain and inadequate infrastructure for transport to India.

- The article notes that **transporting REEs from Myanmar's remote, mountainous regions to India is a logistical hurdle**, as existing infrastructure primarily supports exports to China.
- **Option (a) is incorrect:** Indian firms like IREL are **interested**, although they want private firms to manage logistics.

- **Option (c) is false:** India lacks domestic supply of heavy REEs.
 - **Option (d) is false:** India still **lags behind China technologically** in processing REEs at scale.
21. **A** Failure to secure parliamentary approval for austerity measures to control public spending.
- Bayrou's government lost a **confidence vote in the National Assembly (364–194)** after lawmakers rejected his proposed **austerity measures** aimed at reducing France's budget deficit.
 - **Option (b) is incorrect:** While pension reforms sparked protests in 2023, this was not the immediate cause of Bayrou's government collapse.
 - **Options (c) and (d)** are factually incorrect; there was no impeachment or military takeover.
22. **A** 1 and 2 only
- **Statements 1 and 2 are correct:** Macron's coalition lost its absolute majority, creating a hung parliament, while **Marine Le Pen's RN and Jean-Luc Mélenchon's LFI** have gained influence.
 - **Statement 3 is incorrect:** Economic grievances such as **inflation, stagnant wages, and fuel price hikes** persist; EU support has not eliminated them.
23. **B** Permits the government to pass legislation without a parliamentary vote.
- Article 49.3 allows **the government to force a bill through the National Assembly without a vote**, used by Macron in 2023 to push controversial pension reforms.
 - Options (a), (c), and (d) are factually incorrect; the article does **not dissolve parliament, bypass judiciary, or give military powers**.
24. **B** Popular discontent over inequality and perceived elitism fueled political crises.
- Contemporary unrest (Yellow Vest protests, pension opposition) and the **French Revolution** both reflect **citizen frustration with economic inequality and elitism**.
 - Options (a), (c), and (d) are incorrect: modern reforms are not monarchical; there was no external invasion as in revolutionary threats; and there have been **no coups replacing governments**.
25. **A** 1 and 2 only
- Statements 1 and 2 are correct: Macron **raised the retirement age to 64**, sparking protests among **lower-income and manual workers**.
 - Statement 3 is incorrect: The reform **deepened public distrust**, especially due to the use of **Article 49.3**, which bypassed parliament.
26. **B** 1 and 3 only
- **Statements 1 and 3 are correct:** Katchatheevu lies in the **Palk Strait**, and **St. Anthony's Shrine** is visited by pilgrims from both nations.
 - **Statement 2 is incorrect:** The 1974 agreement **was not ratified by the Indian Parliament**, which has been a point of legal contention.
27. **A** Recognition of Sri Lankan sovereignty over Katchatheevu and Indian fishermen's rights.
- The agreement **recognized Sri Lanka's sovereignty over the island** while allowing Indian fishermen to dry nets and visit the church.
 - Options (b), (c), and (d) are incorrect: there were **no naval base transfers, no Andaman Sea boundary agreements, and no port construction on Katchatheevu**.

28. A 1 and 2 only

- **Statements 1 and 2 are correct:** Conflicts arise due to **fishing disputes**, and India is wary of **China's investments** like Hambantota Port.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** India **does not impose high export tariffs on Sri Lankan goods**; rather, trade is facilitated through FTA (2000).

29. A Deployment of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) under the 1987 Indo-Sri Lanka Accord.

- India sent the **IPKF in 1987** to enforce the accord and address concerns for the Tamil minority.
- Options (b), (c), and (d) are incorrect: India **did not annex territories, it was not completely inactive, nor did it impose continuous trade embargoes**.

30. D 1, 2, and 3

- All statements are correct: India and Sri Lanka share **religious, mythological, linguistic, and cultural links**, including **Buddhism, Ramayana references, and Tamil traditions**.

31. A 1 only

- Statement 1 is correct: NIRF uses five parameters—**Teaching, Learning & Resources, Research & Professional Practices, Graduation Outcomes, Outreach & Inclusivity, and Peer Perception**.
- Statement 2 is incorrect: **OI accounts for only 10%** of the total score, not 20%.
- Statement 3 is incorrect: NIRF **relies heavily on self-declared data**, with only partial third-party audits.

32. B 1 and 3 only

- **Statements 1 and 3 are correct:** **peer perception is subjective**, and false data submissions are inadequately monitored.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** The **OI parameter does not fully capture economic, social, and disability diversity**, even though it is part of the intended weightage.

33. A 1 and 2 only

- **Statements 1 and 2 are correct:** IIT Delhi ranked 4th, and IIM Ahmedabad, Bangalore, and Kozhikode topped the list.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** MDI Gurgaon and XLRI Jamshedpur were ranked 9th and 10th, below IIM Indore.

34. B 1 and 2 only

- **Statements 1 and 2 are correct:** Experts suggest **expanding OI**, monitoring reservation compliance, and **penalizing false submissions**.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** Rankings should **not focus exclusively on research**, as a holistic approach including teaching, graduation outcomes, and inclusivity is essential.

35. D 1, 2, and 3

- **All statements are correct:** Since its **inception in 2015**, NIRF has expanded participation significantly (from 3,565 to 14,163 institutions) and now covers **17 categories** across higher education sectors.

36. A 1 and 2 only

- **Statements 1 and 2 are correct:** AdFalcivax targets **P. falciparum** and provides **multi-stage protection**, preventing the parasite from entering the bloodstream and blocking transmission.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** human trials are still pending, though licensing for manufacturing has been granted.

37. B 1 and 2 only

- **Statements 1 and 2 are correct:** room-temperature stability and cost-effective, scalable production make AdFalcivax ideal for wide distribution.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** The vaccine only targets **P. falciparum**, not all malaria-causing Plasmodium species.

38. B 1 and 2 only

- **Statements 1 and 2 are correct:** zero indigenous cases by 2027 and total elimination by 2030 are official targets.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** India has made significant progress but **has not yet achieved zero cases nationwide**.

39. C 1, 2, and 3

- **All three statements are correct:** Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Northeastern states remain persistent hotspots, particularly in tribal areas.
- Urban outbreaks due to **flooding and poor sanitation** have also been reported in **Delhi, Noida, and Ghaziabad**, with Delhi recording 264 cases in 2025.

40. B 1 and 3 only

- **Statements 1 and 3 are correct:** Malaria transmission occurs via infected female Anopheles mosquitoes, and **P. falciparum** can be rapidly fatal.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** Malaria is **not transmitted through casual person-to-person contact**; it requires mosquito vectors or infected blood/organ transfer.