

Topics of discussion:

1. As flight disruptions continue, how Indigo hit perfect storm: New rules, crew shortage
 2. Modi-Putin talks today: Strategic economic 2030 roadmap likely
 3. Putin's N-power hard sell: SMRs, new-gen large nuke reactors, serial production in India
 4. The census is about who we are. It cannot ignore caste and migration
 5. After E20 rollout, Govt should now focus on flex fuel vehicles
 6. Why Railways wants to expand its High Density Network
-

As flight disruptions continue, how Indigo hit perfect storm: New rules, crew shortage

Syllabus:

Preliminary Examination: Current events of national and international importance

Mains Examination: General Studies-II: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation

What's the ongoing story: IndiGo has seen scores of flight cancellations and delays over the past few days, affecting thousands of fliers. The primary reason for this disruption with the airline — India's largest, accounting for over 60 per cent of domestic passenger traffic — are crew shortages in the wake of the new Flight Duty Time Limitation (FDTL) norms.

Key Points to Ponder:

- What is the purpose of revising FDTL norms?
- What is the role and responsibilities of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)?
- What are the challenges of the civil aviation sector?
- What are the measures needed to strengthen India's civil aviation sector?
- How has the aviation sector evolved in India?

Key Takeaways:

- The disruption has led to chaos at various Indian airports. Social media was replete with IndiGo passengers expressing their frustration at long delays and cancellations. Many also complained that they had to take expensive flights with other carriers due to the disruption.

— The new **New Flight Duty Time Limitations** (FDTL) rules apply to all domestic airlines, so why has IndiGo been so severely affected? According to industry insiders, the answer lies in a number of factors, including IndiGo's massive scale of operations and a high-frequency network, significant number of late night and wee hour flights, and its model of high aircraft and crew utilisation levels.

— Also, other Indian carriers are at present operating at lower-than-optimal aircraft utilisation levels due to reasons like delayed new aircraft deliveries and planes grounded for refit. This gives them more flexibility in crew rostering as more pilots are available relative to their fleet sizes.

— Under the new FDTL rules, weekly rest period for pilots has been increased to 48 hours from 36, and night landings have been limited to two from six earlier.

— The new norms have also extended the definition of night hours and capped consecutive night duties to just two days a week, which has also imposed additional constraints on IndiGo's operations, as the airline operates a significant number of night-time flights. The new norms were implemented in two phases—from July 1 and November 1.

— A champion of the low-cost carrier model, IndiGo's aircraft and crew utilisation levels are higher than other Indian carriers. The airline also has more high-volume night-time flights than the others. With its fleet of over 400 aircraft, IndiGo operates over 2,300 flights a day, connecting over 90 domestic and 45 international destinations. And it does so with a lean staffing model.

— The [DGCA directed IndiGo to submit a mitigation plan](#) for current disruptions, listing the immediate steps to stabilise operations and ensure a progressive reduction in cancellations. It also directed the airline to submit a detailed progress report every 15 days "covering operational improvements, crew availability, and roster stability".

— The Federation of Indian Pilots (FIP) said that the disruption is a direct consequence of IndiGo's "prolonged and unorthodox lean manpower strategy across departments, particularly in flight operations". It also claimed that there are growing concerns that the flight delays and cancellations may be used to "arm-twist regulators" whenever rules do not suit the airlines.

— “Despite the two-year preparatory window before full FDTL implementation, the airline inexplicably adopted a hiring freeze, entered non-poaching arrangements, maintained a pilot pay freeze through cartel-like behavior, and demonstrated other short-sighted planning practices,” the FIP said in a statement.

Do You Know:

— While addressing the annual general meeting of the International Air Transport Association (IATA), PM Modi listed maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) as a sunrise sector, saying that India is accelerating efforts to become a global hub for aircraft maintenance and establish a \$4-billion MRO hub in the country by 2030.

— He said that in 2014, India had 96 MRO facilities, which has now increased to 154, adding that 100 per cent FDI under the automatic route, GST reduction, and tax rationalisation measures have given fresh momentum to the sector.

— India is the world’s third-largest and fastest-growing major aviation market, and has an expanding aviation sector with global manufacturers like Airbus and Boeing sourcing components and services worth billions of dollars. Other aviation and aerospace companies are also increasing their engagement with India.

— The Prime Minister outlined three pillars driving India’s aviation sector—a vast market, strong demographic and talent pool in domains like artificial intelligence, robotics, and clean energy, and an open and supportive policy ecosystem. Modi said that with these strengths, India is poised to elevate its aviation sector to unprecedented heights.

Previous year UPSC Mains Question Covering similar theme:

Examine the development of Airports in India through joint ventures under Public–Private Partnership (PPP) model. What are the challenges faced by the authorities in this regard? (UPSC CSE 2017)

Modi-Putin talks today: Strategic economic 2030 roadmap likely

Syllabus:

Preliminary Examination: Current events of national and international importance

Mains Examination: General Studies-II: Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

What's the ongoing story: Russian President [Vladimir Putin](#), who reached New [Delhi](#) Thursday evening on a two-day state visit, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi are likely to unveil a declaration for the Development of Strategic Areas of India-Russia Economic Cooperation until 2030, move forward on a free trade agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union, seal a labour mobility agreement and team up on Arctic shipbuilding, The [Indian Express](#) has learnt.

Key Points to Ponder:

- What is the significance of this visit of Putin to India?
- What are the areas of cooperation between India and Russia? (Defence, trade, technology, **nuclear energy**, labour mobility)
- How has the India and Russia relationship evolved?
- Is there any impact of the Russia-Ukraine war on India-Russia relationship?
- What are small modular reactors (SMR)?
- What is the status of India's nuclear energy sector?
- What role can be played by Russia in this sector?
- What are the major defence imports from Russia?

Key Takeaways:

- In a special gesture indicating the close ties between the two countries and their leaders, Modi received Putin at [Delhi](#) airport. They also met for a private dinner at the Prime Minister's Lok Kalyan Marg residence.
- This is Putin's first visit to India since the start of the Ukraine war in February 2022 – he was last here in December 2021.
- The Russian President's visit is being keenly tracked for the outcomes given that it is taking place at a time when the Trump administration has imposed a 25 per cent penalty tariff on India over [its purchase of Russian oil](#).

— Sources said the two sides are also discussing various defence projects and equipment, including the S-400 air defence systems and the latest version of Sukhoi-57 fighter aircraft, as part of the dialogue between the Defence Ministers. There could also be progress on [civilian nuclear cooperation](#), including Russian small modular reactors.

— India has to navigate the issue of US tariffs and Russian oil imports – Delhi has had to reduce oil imports from Russia ever since the secondary tariffs kicked in. This could involve moderating expectations of the USD 100-billion target that had been set, riding on increased oil imports from Russia.

— Bilateral trade between India and Russia reached a record high of USD 68.7 billion in FY 2024-25. But that's lopsided since India's exports were only USD 4.9 billion while imports from Russia, mainly oil, amounted to USD 63.8 billion.

— Sources said India will want to increase its exports to Russia – more market access for Indian products, including fruits, vegetables, pharmaceuticals among others. Last month, Russia allowed import of Indian potatoes and pomegranates. India also wants to import more fertiliser from Russia and Delhi is keen to deepen cooperation there.

— This December 21 will mark the 15th anniversary of the adoption of the joint statement that noted the elevation of Russia-India relations to the level of a special and privileged strategic partnership.

— The leaders are also expected to exchange views on a range of international issues, including cooperation in the UN, the SCO, the G20 and BRICS. Putin will be invited to the BRICS summit in 2026 when India will be the chair.

Putin's N-power hard sell: SMRs, new-gen large nuke reactors, serial production in India

— Russian nuclear company Rosatom State Corporation is likely to make a strong pitch for deploying its small modular reactors (SMR) for targeted applications in India, alongside efforts to position its large new-generation atomic power reactor-based projects as the cornerstone of the bilateral cooperation between the two countries in the field of nuclear energy.

— Russia has a lead in the nascent field of SMRs, which are advanced nuclear reactors that have about a third of the generating capacity of most traditional nuclear power reactors but can produce a large amount of low-carbon electricity.

• NUCLEAR SOLUTIONS TO POWER INDIA'S ELECTRICITY NEEDS

Next-gen nuclear energy solutions like SMRs offer scalable options for India's industrial and urban power demand growth, says a Rockefeller Foundation report

Nuclear power plants in India

CURRENT: 8 GW operational capacity, 5 GW in construction

TARGET: 100 GW by 2047

What nuclear could achieve by 2050

168-328 GW: Nuclear capacity under modelled scenarios

13-28%: Electricity generated via Small Modular Reactors (SMRs)

10-21%: Cost reduction if nuclear capacity is merged with renewable expansion.

According to the report titled 'The Role of Nuclear Energy in Powering Universal Energy Abundance for Emerging Economies', India could achieve nuclear capacity of

160 GW: At 10 GW/ year

320 GW: At 20 GW/ year (15 GW after 2030)

India's electricity demand growth projections

2025-2050: 1,811 TWh per year – 7,250.7 TWh per year; **Annual growth rate:** 5.3%



“This modelling highlights a powerful opportunity for India”

DEEPALI KHANNA,
SENIOR VP AND HEAD OF ASIA,
THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION

SOURCE: BAYSIAN ENERGY/ RADIANT ENERGY GROUP/ THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION
NOTE: *TWh/Yr: TERAWATT HOURS PER YEAR; GW: GIGAWATT

— One of the key negotiating points for Moscow is the promise of serial construction of high-capacity nuclear power units of Russian design in India, based on the new-gen 'VVER-1200' reactor models. Technical specifications for a new nuclear power plant in India featuring 'VVER-1200' reactor units are being proposed by the Russian side, government officials indicated.

— In the civil nuclear sector, New [Delhi](#) is now pushing SMRs as a technology of promise that can help in industrial decarbonisation, including a determined hard sell of the country's ability to take something of a leadership role in the dissemination of this technology.

Do You Know:

— In the civil nuclear sector, New [Delhi](#) is now pushing SMRs as a technology of promise that can help in industrial decarbonisation, including a determined hard sell of the country's ability to take something of a leadership role in the dissemination of this technology.

— These are important in offering base load power that could give grid operators some degree of flexibility, especially given the imperative of inducting large-scale renewables into the grid that brings with it the accompanying challenge of ramping up base load generation to balance out the vagaries of renewable power output.

— While thermal generation is seen as important in this regard, nuclear energy offers a more carbon-neutral base load generation option.

— India currently has 24 operational nuclear reactors totalling 7,943 MWe of capacity, with six reactors – 4,768 MWe – under construction. Another 10 units – some 7 GWe of capacity – are in pre-project stages.

— The Centre has a target to expand its nuclear energy capacity to 100 GWe by 2047, for which it plans to pursue a two-pronged approach: the deployment of large-capacity reactors as well as the use of SMRs to ensure faster deployment of units.

— The government has allocated more than \$2 billion for research and development on SMRs with a plan for at least five indigenously designed and operational SMRs by 2033.

Previous year UPSC Prelims Question Covering similar theme:

(1) Recently, India signed a deal known as 'Action Plan for Prioritization and Implementation of Cooperation Areas in the Nuclear Field' with which of the following countries? (UPSC CSE 2019)

- (a) Japan
- (b) Russia
- (c) The United Kingdom
- (d) The United States of America

Previous year UPSC Mains Question Covering similar theme:

What is the significance of Indo-US defence deals over Indo-Russian defence deals? Discuss with reference to stability in the Indo-Pacific region. (UPSC CSE 2020)

The census is about who we are. It cannot ignore caste and migration

Syllabus:

Preliminary Examination: Current events of national and international importance

Mains Examination: General Studies-II: Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

What's the ongoing story: S Y Quraishi writes: When a nation counts itself, it renews itself. A census is the constitutional moment when a republic measures who it is, who it includes, and who

it leaves behind. For 143 years, India counted itself every decade without fail. Until now. India last counted its people in 2011. The Census due in 2021 never happened.

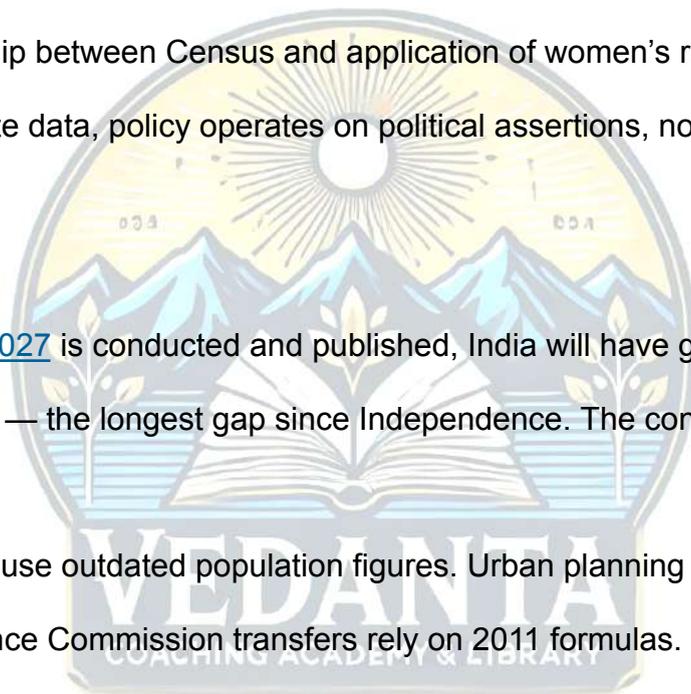
Key Points to Ponder:

- What is the census and its significance?
- What is the history of census in India?
- What is the difference between Census, caste census and SECC?
- How is the census conducted in India?
- Analyse the potential of the caste census in mobilizing the caste in politics.
- What are the various arguments in favour and against the caste census?
- What is the relationship between Census and application of women's reservation Act?
- Without accurate caste data, policy operates on political assertions, not demographic reality.

Elaborate.

Key Takeaways:

- By the time [Census 2027](#) is conducted and published, India will have gone 16-17 years without updated population data — the longest gap since Independence. The consequences go beyond statistics.
- Welfare programmes use outdated population figures. Urban planning treats migrant cities as yesterday's towns. Finance Commission transfers rely on 2011 formulas. India has been budgeting for a situation that no longer exists.
- The government's decision to call it Census 2027— rather than a delayed Census 2021 — is constitutionally significant: It unambiguously satisfies the 84th Amendment's requirement for "the first Census after 2026". But it also means that women's reservation cannot begin before the mid-2030s.
- [Census 2027 will be India's first digital census](#). It will also trigger women's reservation — though the government's 2029 promise is mathematically impossible given delimitation's four-to-six-year track record — and enable the first Lok Sabha delimitation since 1976, frozen by the 84th Constitutional Amendment until "the first Census after 2026".



— The government has not said if caste will be included, relegated to a separate exercise, or avoided altogether.

— Caste was last comprehensively counted in 1931 under the colonial administration.

Independent India counted Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes for reservation. The rationale was nation-building: The republic would not reinforce caste categories by officially enumerating them.

— The 2011 Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) attempted to count all castes, but its findings remain unreleased — officially due to data quality concerns, unofficially due to political sensitivities. Over a decade later, that data sits unused, neither published nor discarded.

— Comprehensive caste data would help reshape debates around OBC reservations, social justice policies, and resource allocation. It would give marginalised communities demographic evidence to support their claims. It would also intensify caste-based political mobilisation.

— Census 2027 should enumerate caste comprehensively, with the same rigour applied to age, literacy, or occupation. Democracy requires information, even uncomfortable information.

— Census 2027 must correct another blind spot — migration. Tens of millions work outside their home states. Construction workers build [Mumbai](#) but are counted in Bihar. Factory workers manufacture in Haryana but are enumerated in Uttar Pradesh

— Migrants are registered in ancestral villages they left years ago, not cities where they live, work, and some even pay taxes.

— Cities are governed based on census populations, including migrants, but those migrants cannot vote in municipal elections because they are registered as voters elsewhere. Urban governance becomes unaccountable to urban residents. Rural areas receive allocations for citizens who are no longer there.

— Census 2027 will be digital-first, conducted on tablets rather than paper. This offers advantages: Faster enumeration, reduced errors, real-time monitoring, and quicker results. But it also creates risks. The Census will collect personal information.

— Citizens must know that being counted doesn't mean being tracked. Strict legal constraints are essential: Census data cannot be shared with law enforcement or used for citizenship verification. Independent audits must verify data protection.

— Census 2027 is the foundation of everything that follows: Resource allocation, representation, and planning. The six-year delay has already imposed costs. We cannot afford more delays or half-measures.

— Census 2027 must be comprehensive (including caste), accurate (counting people where they live), transparent (giving states data access), and protected (ensuring enumeration doesn't become surveillance).

— A republic that stops counting eventually stops caring. When we count with fairness and foresight, we govern with justice. Census 2027 is not just about how many we are. It is about who we choose to be as a democracy.

Do You Know:

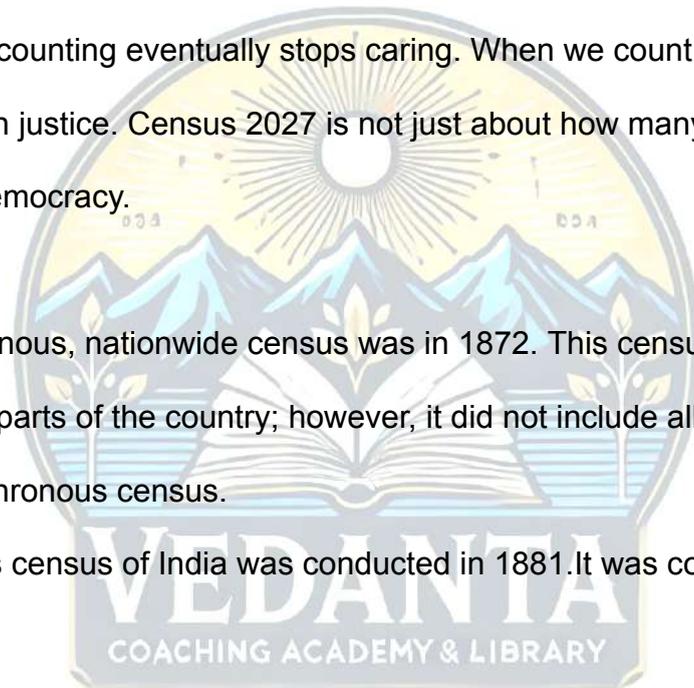
— The first non-synchronous, nationwide census was in 1872. This census involved counting individuals across most parts of the country; however, it did not include all territories under British control. It was non-synchronous census.

— The first synchronous census of India was conducted in 1881. It was conducted by W.C. Plowden.

— The Census 2027 will be the 16th decadal Census overall and the eighth since Independence. During the exercise, village, town and ward-level population data on various parameters are collected. This includes data on housing conditions, amenities and assets, demography, religion, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, language, literacy and education, economic activity, migration, and fertility.

— As per the 2011 Census, the country's population was 1.21 billion as of March 1, 2011. It is projected to climb to 1.41 billion this year. With a projected population of 143.6 crore in 2027, the cost of Census will be approximately Rs 101.8 per person.

Previous year UPSC Prelims Question Covering similar theme:



(2) Consider the following statements: (UPSC CSE 2009)

1. Between Census 1951 and Census 2001, the density of the population of India has increased more than three times.
2. Between Census 1951 and Census 2001, the annual growth rate (exponential) of the population of India has doubled.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

After E20 rollout, Govt should now focus on flex fuel vehicles

Syllabus:

Preliminary Examination: Indian Polity and Governance – Constitution, Political System, Panchayati Raj, Public Policy, Rights Issues

Mains Examination: General Studies-II: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation

What's the ongoing story: After making E20 fuel mandatory nationwide, the government should now push flex fuel vehicles – which run on both petrol and pure ethanol – by lowering the effective tax on such vehicles and making sure flex fuel is priced cheaper than petrol at fuel stations, Vikram Gulati, country head of [Toyota](#) Kirloskar Motor (TKM), said.

Key Points to Ponder:

- What are E20 fuels?
- What is the objective of blending ethanol in petrol?
- What is the purpose of flex fuel vehicles?
- How is blending crucial for a country's energy security?
- What is the status of India's oil imports?
- What is the Ethanol Blending Program (EBP)?

— What is the National Policy on Biofuel 2018?

Key Takeaways:

— Gulati said once a certain fuel blend is established in a country – E20 in India’s case – global examples suggest that the move should be towards promoting flex fuel rather than incrementally increasing the ethanol blend in petrol to 25 per cent or 30 per cent. India mandated E20 fuel compatibility for all new petrol-powered vehicles starting in 2023.

— One of the key challenges due to gradual increases in fuel blends could be its impact on legacy vehicles, which Gulati said would require retesting and re-homologation each time the blend changes.

— Currently no carmaker in India sells flex fuel vehicles owing to their higher cost of ownership over their traditional petrol counterparts. However, companies like Toyota have developed models which can run on flex fuel.

— Underscoring the need for differential pricing for higher ethanol blends, Gulati cited the example of Brazil, where flex fuel vehicles have proven to be a big hit. “In Brazil, there is a law that says ethanol [E100] should be 33 per cent cheaper compared to gasoline with 30 per cent ethanol blend [E30]. This naturally drives the cost-conscious consumers to choose E100”.

— In India, the unilateral move towards a 20 per cent blend of ethanol in petrol (E20) in 2023 had triggered concerns among many car owners, who had flagged a noticeable drop in fuel efficiency, particularly in vehicles sold before 2023, which may not have been designed for such a fuel blend.

— In August, the government termed claims that using E20 petrol—80 parts petrol and 20 parts ethanol—leads to a “drastic” reduction in fuel efficiency in older vehicles as “misplaced”, adding that studies conducted by organisations including the country’s top automobile industry association show that efficiency drop is only marginal, while the blended fuel offers various advantages.

Do You Know:

— Ethanol is produced by fermentation of residues of crops like corn and sugarcane. The ethanol after fermentation is mixed with petroleum, which dilutes the latter and reduces the emissions.

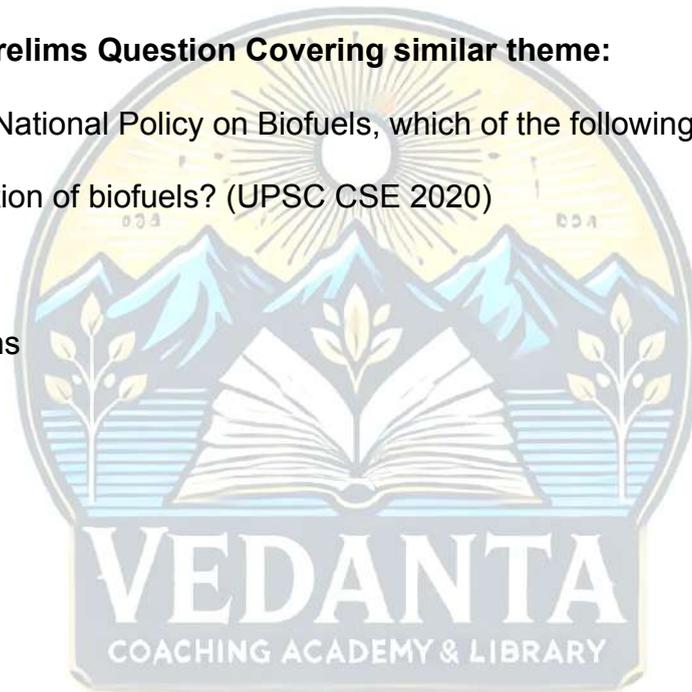
Ethanol-10 or E10 is the most common blend in which 10 per cent composition is Ethanol.

— The Indian government approved the “National Policy on Biofuel” in 2018. It aims at reducing dependence on imports by encouraging fuel blending. With bioethanol, biodiesel, and bio-CNG in focus, its key parts include the Ethanol Blending Programme (EPB), production of second-generation ethanol (derived from forest and agricultural residues), increasing capacity for the production of fuel additives under the “Make in India” program, R&D in feedstock, which is the starting material for ethanol production, and financial incentives for achieving these goals.

Previous year UPSC Prelims Question Covering similar theme:

(3) According to India’s National Policy on Biofuels, which of the following can be used as raw materials for the production of biofuels? (UPSC CSE 2020)

1. Cassava
2. Damaged wheat grains
3. Groundnut seeds
4. Horse gram
5. Rotten potatoes
6. Sugar beet



Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1, 2, 5 and 6 only
- (b) 1, 3, 4 and 6 only
- (c) 2, 3, 4 and 5 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6

Why Railways wants to expand its High Density Network

Syllabus:

Preliminary Examination: Current events of national and international importance.

Mains Examination: General Studies-III: Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

What's the ongoing story: The Centre has approved the construction of a third and fourth line on the 32-km Badlapur-Karjat section in Maharashtra, a key extension of the [Mumbai](#) Suburban Corridor.

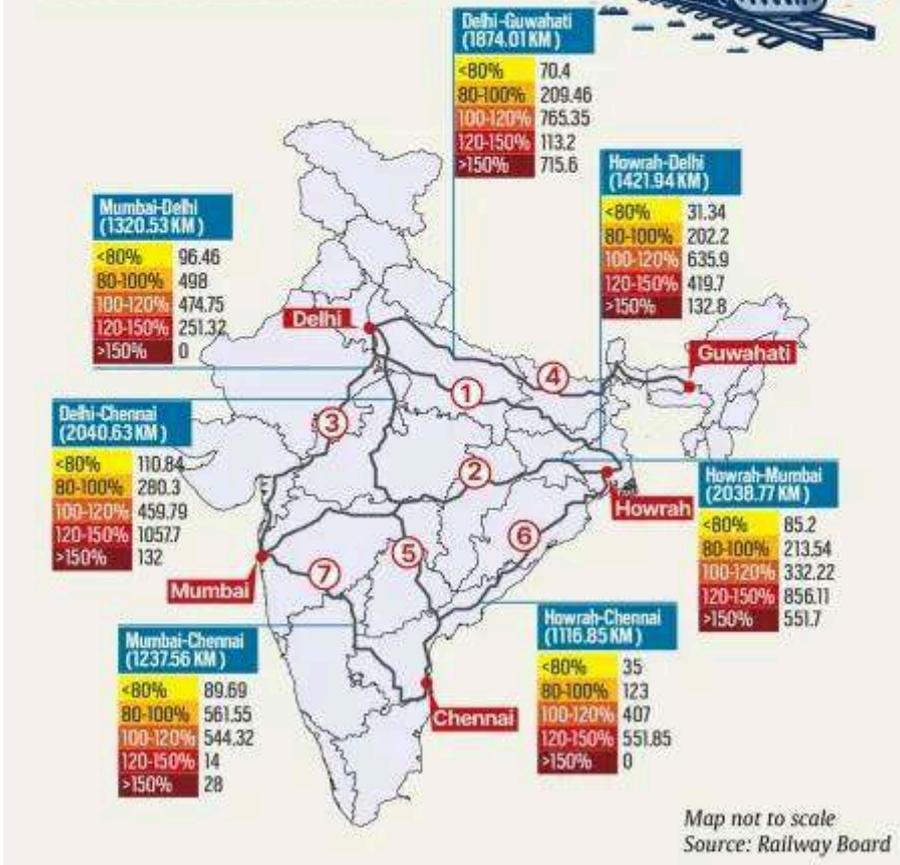
Key Points to Ponder:

- What is the significance of High Density Network or Corridors?
- What is the Golden Quadrilateral?
- What is the significance of railways for the Indian economy?
- What is the importance of dedicated freight corridors (DFCs)?
- What are the various initiatives undertaken by the government to build robust railway infrastructure?

Key Takeaways:

- The decision earlier this week is significant from the perspective of not just beefing up the suburban capacity, the stretch is also a crucial link on the 1,238-km Mumbai-[Chennai](#) High Density Network (HDN). This is one of Indian Railways' most saturated corridors, which connects Mumbai with Chennai via [Pune](#), Solapur, Guntakal and Arakkonam.
- The Cabinet's approval is part of Indian Railways' long-term initiative to decongest all the seven High Density Network or Corridors. They together form almost 16 per cent of the entire network, but handle 41 per cent of the total rail traffic.
- High Density Network or HDN is formed by passenger-freight corridors where trains are running beyond capacity in most sections. This causes congestion, delays in passenger and freight operations, and affects the efficiency of the network.

LINE CAPACITY UTILISATION OF HIGH DENSITY NETWORK ON INDIAN RAILWAYS



High Density Network

— Out of the total 69,181 route-km network of Indian Railways, the High Density Network accounts for 11,051 route-km or 15.97 percent of the total. These saturated corridors have been further divided into 237 sections with different kilometre ranges.

— While there is not a single universal benchmark for the “right capacity utilisation”, it is considered that a rail network should operate at 70-80 percent of its total capacity to keep the flow of trains seamless.

— According to the latest report of the Planning Directorate, Railway Board, only 4.60 percent of the entire route of HDN is operating below 80 per cent capacity.

— The report further shows that out of the total 237 sections on the corridor, only 24 sections or 10 per cent of the total have less than 80 per cent line capacity utilisation, 41 sections have 80-100

per cent, 81 sections have 100-120 per cent, 58 sections have 120-150 per cent, and 33 sections are seeing more than 150 per cent capacity utilisation.

— The HDN covers all four sides of the country... HDN 3 or Delhi-Mumbai corridor, a part of the Golden Quadrilateral, is one of the only two HDN which does not have line capacity utilisation more than 150 per cent for any stretch.

— The National Rail Plan has estimated that with the current infrastructure, congestion in HDN will increase so much that none of the sections will be operating with capacity utilisation of less than 100 percent and 92 per cent of the network shall be operating on capacity utilization higher than 150 per cent by 2051.

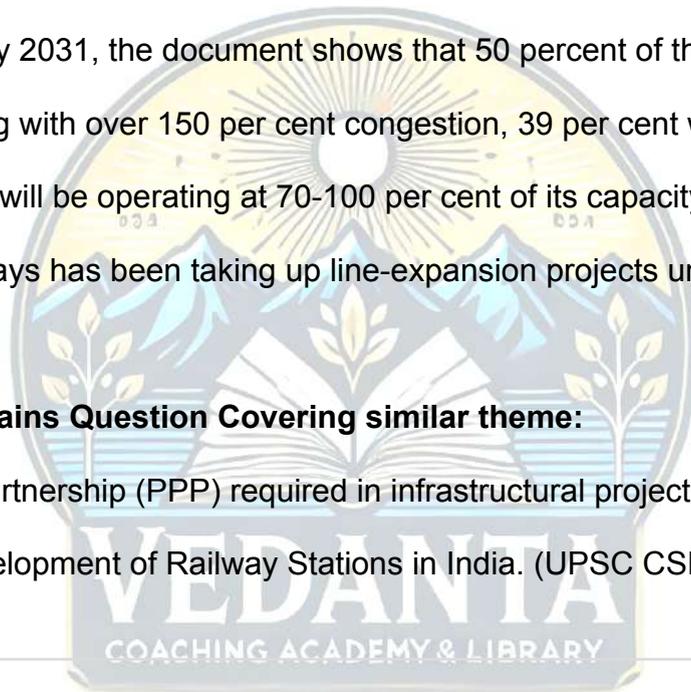
— For the near future, by 2031, the document shows that 50 percent of the total High Density Network will be operating with over 150 per cent congestion, 39 per cent with 100-150 per cent capacity, and 9 per cent will be operating at 70-100 per cent of its capacity.

— The Ministry of Railways has been taking up line-expansion projects under its doubling schemes.

Previous year UPSC Mains Question Covering similar theme:

Why is Public Private Partnership (PPP) required in infrastructural projects? Examine the role of PPP model in the redevelopment of Railway Stations in India. (UPSC CSE 2022)

ALSO IN NEWS

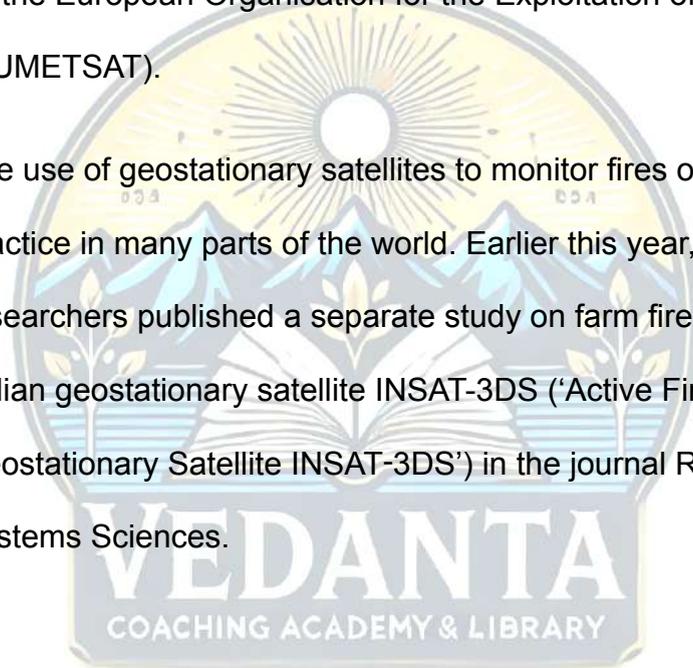


Farm fires dip may be undercount, ISRO study flags shift in stubble-burning time

A study by the [Ahmedabad](#)-based Space Applications Centre (SAC) of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) using data captured by European geostationary satellites has reported a gradual shift in peak farm-fire activity in Punjab and Haryana from the early afternoon to early evening over the five years beginning 2020.

The ISRO study used data from the geostationary Meteosat Second Generation (MSG) meteorological satellites equipped with the Spinning Enhanced Visible and Infrared Imager (SEVIRI) that are owned and operated by the European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites (EUMETSAT).

The use of geostationary satellites to monitor fires on the ground is standard practice in many parts of the world. Earlier this year, this same team of ISRO researchers published a separate study on farm fires using data from the Indian geostationary satellite INSAT-3DS ('Active Fire Detection using Indian Geostationary Satellite INSAT-3DS') in the journal Remote Sensing in Earth Systems Sciences.



National security cess not on essential goods, says FM Nirmala Sitharaman

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said Thursday that the proposed Health and National Security Cess will be levied only on demerit goods, like pan masala, and not on essential commodities, and the revenue will be shared with states for spending on health schemes.

While moving the 'Health Security Se National Security Cess' Bill, 2025, Sitharaman said its purpose is to create a "dedicated and predictable

	<p>resource stream” for two domains of national importance—health and national security.</p>
<p>India misses road accident target again as crashes, fatalities creep up in 2024</p>	<p>India has once again missed its target to reduce road accident deaths, recording a marginally higher number of fatalities in 2024 over the previous year.</p> <p>According to data presented by Nitin Gadkari, the Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, in Lok Sabha on Thursday, 1.77 lakh people died in road accidents in 2024, an increase of 2.31 per cent from 2023, when 1.73 lakh fatalities were recorded in 4.80 lakh road accidents.</p> <p>The Stockholm Declaration on Road Safety, adopted at the 3rd Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety in February 2020, set a global target to reduce road traffic deaths and injuries by 50% by 2030. India is a signatory to that.</p> <p>According to World Road Statistics, a non-profit organisation, India continues to be the top country in terms of the total number of people killed by road accidents, followed by China and the US. The fatality rate per lakh population in China is 4.3. The figure is 12.76 in the US and 11.89 in India.</p>

1. (b) 2. (d) 3. (a)