



VEDANTA COACHING ACADEMY

The Hindu & Analysis

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T U E S D A Y

01 September 2026

Based on The Hindu · GS Paper 1 · 2 · 3

SCO Summit — Modi in Bishkek

V-Dem Democracy Index

India-Russia Ties

Indus Waters Treaty

INS Nipun Commissioned

Political Demography

The Baltic Way

AYUSH Regulation

Vulture Electrocutation



Compiled by **Sapna Chauhan**

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In Today's Booklet

Nine analysed themes · value-addition · full practice zone

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◆ Editor's Focus

Today's edition is dominated by the **SCO Bishkek summit** — India's bilaterals with **Iran** and **Russia** anchor the diplomacy set, while the **Indus Waters Treaty** arbitration and the **V-Dem** democracy report test static-current linkages in polity and IR. **INS Nipun** and the **vulture-electrocution** story round off GS-3, and the **political demography** and **Baltic Way** editorials are rich mains fodder. Focus your revision on institutions, treaties and mapping.

Ensure peace, freedom of navigation, PM urges Iran

WHY IN NEWS

In the first top-level India–Iran meeting since the war on Iran began in February, PM Narendra Modi met Iranian President **Masoud Pezeshkian** on the sidelines of the **SCO summit** in Kyrgyzstan's Bishkek, urging peace and stability in West Asia and freedom of navigation in the **Strait of Hormuz**.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ◆ Mr. Pezeshkian blamed **Israel and the U.S.** for the conflict and asked India to “use its extensive contacts with various parties” to aid the dialogue process.
- ◆ He stressed that “**civilians and civilian infrastructure**, including commercial shipping and seafarers, must not be harmed under any circumstances.”
- ◆ Mr. Modi said he looked forward to welcoming Pezeshkian to India for the upcoming **BRICS summit**, reaffirming India's long-standing friendship and intent to diversify the trade basket.
- ◆ India called for freedom of navigation and commerce — vital as nearly two-thirds of India's crude imports transit the Strait of Hormuz.

Ensure peace, freedom of navigation, PM urges Iran

Modi meets Iran President on sidelines of SCO summit, calls for stability in West Asia; Pezeshkian requests India to use its 'extensive contacts' to help with the dialogue process, blames U.S. for war

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

In the first top-level meeting between Iran and India since the beginning of the war on Iran in February, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday met Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian in Kyrgyzstan's Bishkek and urged him to ensure peace and stability in West Asia and freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz.

Mr. Pezeshkian blamed Israel and the U.S. for the conflict and requested Mr. Modi to “use India's extensive contacts with various parties” and help the dialogue process.

After the meeting that took place on the sidelines of the SCO summit, Mr. Modi said on X, “Reiterated our commitment to



Strategic meet: Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Iran President Masoud Pezeshkian in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on Monday. PTI

strengthening India's long-standing friendship with Iran across diverse sectors. We want to expand and diversify our trade basket in the times to come. We had a discussion on the prevailing situation in the region. India will continue to support all efforts aimed at en-

suring lasting peace.” The Ministry of External Affairs said Mr. Modi called for freedom of navigation and commerce.

“Civilians and civilian infrastructure, including commercial shipping and seafarers must not be harmed under any circum-

U.S., Iran trade strikes for first time in weeks

TEHRAN

U.S. President Donald Trump threatened to hit Iran “hard” after the two countries traded fire for the first time in over a month. Late on Sunday, the U.S. said it had carried out strikes on an Iranian island, with Tehran quickly retaliating by attacking U.S. military targets in West Asia. » **PAGE 14**

stances,” he said.

Mr. Modi said he looked forward to welcoming Mr. Pezeshkian to India for the upcoming BRICS summit.

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PM MEETS PUTIN

» **PAGE 11**

The Hindu, Page 1 — “Ensure peace, freedom of navigation, PM urges Iran” (PTI)



SCO: a Eurasian intergovernmental & security bloc — members and observers



SCO evolution: Shanghai Five (1996) → SCO (2001) → expansions

VALUE ADDITION — SCO AT A GLANCE

- **Origin:** Began as the “**Shanghai Five**” (1996) — China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan — to resolve border disputes; became the **SCO in 2001** when Uzbekistan joined.
- **Mandate:** Regional development and security — combating the “three evils” of **terrorism, separatism and extremism**.
- **Expansion:** India & Pakistan (2017), **Iran (9th member, 2023)**, Belarus (10th member, 2024).
- **RATS** (Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure) is a permanent organ, headquartered at **Tashkent, Uzbekistan**.
- **Official languages:** Russian and Chinese.

VALUE ADDITION — BRICS

- Now **eleven members**: Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa + Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, UAE (all from Jan 2024) and **Indonesia (Jan 2025)**.
- BRIC formalised in **2006** (UNGA, New York); first summit at **Yekaterinburg, Russia (2009)**; South Africa added in 2010 (attended 3rd Summit, Sanya, 2011).
- Ten **Partner Countries** joined in 2025 (Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Nigeria, Thailand, Uganda, Uzbekistan, Vietnam).
- India to host the **18th BRICS Summit**; theme thread — “Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability.”

PRELIMS POINTERS

Strait of Hormuz connects the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman · **SCO HQ:** Beijing (Secretariat) · **RATS HQ:** Tashkent · **SCO official languages:** Russian & Chinese · Iran = SCO's 9th member · Belarus = 10th.

SYLLABUS LINK GS II — India & its neighbourhood; bilateral, regional and global groupings involving India and affecting India's interests.



V-Dem's democracy index rates India at its lowest since 1975

WHY IN NEWS

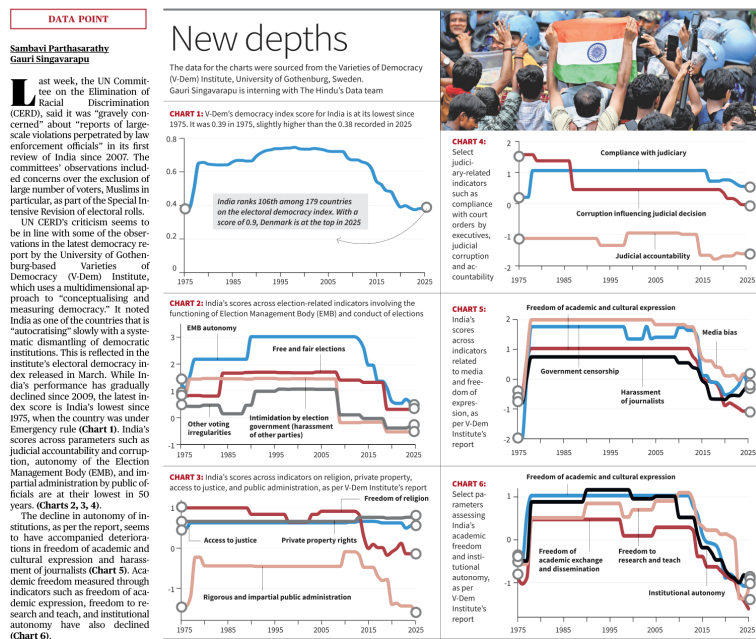
The **UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD)** – in its first review of India since 2007 – flagged “large-scale violations” by law-enforcement, echoing the **V-Dem Institute's** data showing India's democratic backslide to its lowest electoral-democracy score since **1975**.

WHAT THE REPORT SAYS

- ◆ CERD's concerns include the **exclusion of large numbers of voters**, Muslims in particular, during the **Special Intensive Revision (SIR)** of electoral rolls.
- ◆ V-Dem uses a multidimensional approach to “conceptualising and measuring democracy” and finds India “**autocratising**” slowly through systematic dismantling of institutions.
- ◆ India's scores on **judicial accountability, corruption, autonomy of the Election Management Body (EMB)** and impartial administration are at their lowest in 50 years.
- ◆ Declines accompany deterioration in **freedom of academic & cultural expression** and rising **harassment of journalists**.
- ◆ The 2026 report continues to classify India as an “**electoral autocracy**” – a zone it entered in **2017** – among the “worst autocratizers” globally.

V-dem's democracy index rates India at its lowest since 1975

The UN CERD's concerns about the exclusion of a large number of voters is in line with the V-Dem Institute's data on India's democratic backslide



The Hindu Data Point — “New depths”: V-Dem indicators for India, 1975–2025

VALUE ADDITION — V-DEM & REGIME TYPES

- **V-Dem (Varieties of Democracy) Institute:** based at the **University of Gothenburg, Sweden**; publishes the annual *Democracy Report* and multiple indices (electoral, liberal, participatory, deliberative, egalitarian).
- Regime types: closed autocracy, **electoral autocracy**, electoral democracy, liberal democracy.
- **Electoral autocracy** is the most populous regime type in 2025 – covering **~46% (3.8 billion)** of the world; India, Pakistan and Indonesia are among the largest.
- On the **liberal democracy index**, India ranks **105 of 179** (down from 100). On the electoral democracy index, India is 106th of 179 (Denmark tops in 2025).

PRELIMS POINTERS

CERD monitors the **ICERD** (1965) — India ratified in 1968 · **V-Dem HQ**: Gothenburg, Sweden · India entered “electoral autocracy” in **2017** · Emergency (1975) is the benchmark low year.

SYLLABUS LINK GS II — Functioning of important international institutions; salient features of representation; elections; comparison of democratic indices.



GS PAPER 2 | The Hindu p.11

PM calls for ‘end of war’ at meeting with Putin

WHY IN NEWS

On the sidelines of the SCO Bishkek summit, PM Modi met Russian President **Vladimir Putin**, saying the world “must move from endless war to end of war for the benefit of humanity,” and discussed conflicts in West Asia and the **Black Sea** region affecting Indian seafarers.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ◆ The two leaders discussed conflicts in West Asia and the **Black Sea**, where Indian seafarers have recently been attacked by both Russian and Ukrainian forces; both reiterated **dialogue and diplomacy** as the way forward.
- ◆ Focus areas of the **India–Russia Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership**: energy, innovation, space, fertilizers and people-to-people links.
- ◆ Putin will visit India for the **18th BRICS Summit on 12–13 September**; 2026 marks the **80th anniversary** of India–Russia diplomatic relations.
- ◆ Indian students in Russia rose almost **seven-fold in a decade** (~40,000 now); bilateral trade turnover up >2% and tourist exchange up 16% in 2025.

PM calls for ‘end of war’ at meeting with Putin

The two leaders discuss conflicts in West Asia and Black Sea region, impact on maritime trade and safety of Indian seafarers; Putin highlights positive trends in Moscow-New Delhi economic ties

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday met Russian President Vladimir Putin on the sidelines of the SCO summit in Bishkek and said the world “must move from endless war to end of war for the benefit of humanity”.

The External Affairs Ministry said the two leaders discussed conflicts in West Asia and in the Black Sea region, where, in recent months, Indian seafarers have been attacked by both Russian and Ukrainian forces.

“Had extensive discussions with President Putin. Discussed the full range of the India-Russia Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership. It is gladdening to see significant progress across various sectors in recent years. Focus areas for India-Russia friendship remain energy, innovation, space, fertilizers, and people-to-people linkages,” said Prime Minister Modi.

In a statement, the External Affairs Ministry said,



Number of Indian students in Russia increased almost seven-fold in a decade, says Putin

“They also shared perspectives on key regional and global issues of mutual interest, including the conflicts in West Asia and the Black Sea region which have impacted maritime trade and the safety and security of Indian seafarers. Prime Minister reiterated that dialogue and diplomacy was the way forward in

resolving conflicts.” The upcoming BRICS summit featured prominently in the discussion, and Mr. Modi said he “looks forward to welcoming President Putin in India for the 18th BRICS summit on 12-13 September”.

80th anniversary of ties The Bishkek meeting between Mr. Modi and Mr. Putin featured in talks during External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar’s visit to the Kremlin on August 24, when Mr. Putin had indicated that he would meet Prime Minister Modi in

Kyrgyzstan and also at the BRICS summit in Delhi.

“This time, our meeting is taking place on the eve of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Summit - an organisation that works to deepen contacts among the countries of the Global South and East, promotes the region’s socioeconomic and cultural development, and contributes to building a just multipolar world,” said President Putin in his remarks, reminding that next year will mark the 80th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between New Delhi and Moscow.

Mr. Putin noted that the number of Indian students in Russia has increased almost seven-fold in a decade, and currently 40,000 Indians are studying in Russia.

President Putin said trade and economic cooperation between Russia and India is showing positive trends, with trade turnover increasing by more than 2%. He noted the growth in tourist exchanges between the two countries, with a 16% increase in 2025.



The Black Sea, its littorals and the Turkish Straits (Bosporus–Dardanelles)

The Hindu p.11 — “PM calls for ‘end of war’ at meeting with Putin” (ANI)

VALUE ADDITION — BLACK SEA GEOGRAPHY (MAPPING)

- **Littoral states (6):** Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania.
- **Turkish Straits:** the **Bosporus** and **Dardanelles** (separated by the Sea of Marmara) link the Black Sea to the Mediterranean via the Aegean Sea.

- The **Montreux Convention (1936)** gives Turkey control over the Straits and regulates warship passage.
- Sub-features: **Sea of Azov** (via Kerch Strait), Crimean Peninsula, Taganrog Gulf.

PRELIMS POINTERS

India–Russia relations = “**Special & Privileged Strategic Partnership**” · **18th BRICS Summit**: India, 12–13 Sept · **80 years** of diplomatic ties (2026) · Black Sea drains via Bosphorus → Marmara → Dardanelles → Aegean.

SYLLABUS LINK GS II — Bilateral relations; effect of policies & politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests.



GS PAPER 2 | The Hindu p.11

India rejects Hague court's Indus Waters Treaty ruling, says it has no jurisdiction

WHY IN NEWS

India rejected a ruling of the **Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA)** at The Hague that the **Indus Waters Treaty (IWT)** remains “fully in force,” calling the “very establishment of this alleged arbitral body” a “grave violation” of the treaty and asserting the court has **no jurisdiction** over India's sovereign decisions.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ◆ India said it “never recognised” the illegally-constituted Court of Arbitration, has never appeared before it, and rejects its award on the **Ratle Hydro-Electric Plant (RHEP)**.
- ◆ India placed the IWT “**in abeyance**” after the **Pahalgam terror attack (22 April 2025)**, and reiterated that this decision “remains in force.”
- ◆ The PCA held that “none of these grounds could justify suspension or termination” and that India must observe its obligations, including on the design/operation of hydro projects on the Western Rivers.
- ◆ The court is chaired by **Prof. Sean D. Murphy (U.S.)**; its neutral-expert decision on RHEP is expected by **July 2027**.

VALUE ADDITION — INDUS WATERS TREATY

- Signed on **19 September 1960** between India and Pakistan, brokered by the **World Bank**, after nine years of negotiation.
- **Eastern rivers** (Ravi, Beas, Sutlej) — waters allocated to **India** (unrestricted use).
- **Western rivers** (Indus, Jhelum, Chenab) — largely to **Pakistan**; India allowed non-consumptive, limited storage, run-of-the-river power & certain irrigation use.
- Dispute mechanism (graded): **Permanent Indus Commission → Neutral Expert → Court of Arbitration**.
- **PCA** (The Hague, est. 1899) is **not** a UN body and is distinct from the **ICJ**.

India rejects Hague court's Indus Waters Treaty ruling, says it has no jurisdiction

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

Hours after the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague said the Indus Waters Treaty remains "fully in force" and called on India to "observe its obligations", the External Affairs Ministry rejected this, saying that the "very establishment of this alleged arbitral body" was a "grave violation" of the treaty.

"This so-called Court was constituted by the World Bank in patent breach of the terms of the Treaty, and India categorically rejects its so-called award," the Ministry said on Monday.

It went on to say that India had "never recognised the existence in law of this illegally-constituted and so-called Court of Arbitration, and has consistently maintained that the very establishment of this alleged arbitral body constitutes a grave violation of the Indus Waters Treaty".

"Accordingly, India has never appeared before this body and has refused to take any cognisance of its earlier pronouncements," the Ministry said.

India had placed the In-



India had placed the treaty in abeyance following the Pahalgam terror attack.

dus Waters Treaty "in abeyance" following the Pahalgam terror attack on April 22, 2025, and the Ministry, in its response on Monday, reiterated its position. "India's decision to hold the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance remains in force," it said.

The Ministry also said that "this so-called Court of Arbitration has no jurisdiction whatsoever to pronounce on India's sovereign decisions".

It added that the court's pronouncements, "now or in the future, will have no effect on India's actions in connection with the projects being undertaken by India".

Earlier, the arbitration body, considering Pakis-

tan's plea, examined the reasons under which India placed the treaty "in abeyance" and said that "none of these grounds could justify suspension or termination of the Treaty".

Issuing an "award" on the "Status of the Indus Waters Treaty and Order on Interim Measures concerning the Ratle Hydro-Electric Plant (RHEP)", the Permanent Court of Arbitration said, "Accordingly, the Indus Waters Treaty remains fully in force, and India must observe its obligations under the Treaty, including those relating to the design and operation of its hydro-electric projects on the Western Rivers."

It had also considered Pakistan's plea on imposing measures on India regarding the RHEP, saying, "In a unanimous decision, the Court decided to impose measures prohibiting India from concreting the RHEP dam wall and power intake structure above certain levels until 90 days after the Neutral Expert's final decision, which is expected in July 2027."

The Court of Arbitration is chaired by Prof. Sean D. Murphy of the U.S.

The Hindu p.11 — India rejects Hague court's IWT ruling

The Indus Waters Treaty (IWT)

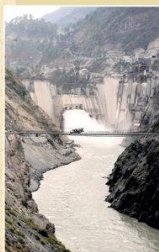
■ The distribution of waters of the Indus and its tributaries between India and Pakistan is governed by the Indus Water Treaty (IWT).

■ Was signed on Sept 19, 1960, between India, Pakistan and a representative of World Bank after nine years of negotiations.

■ Partition of India cut across the Indus river basin, which has the Indus river, plus five of its main tributaries.

Western rivers Chenab, Jhelum, Indus

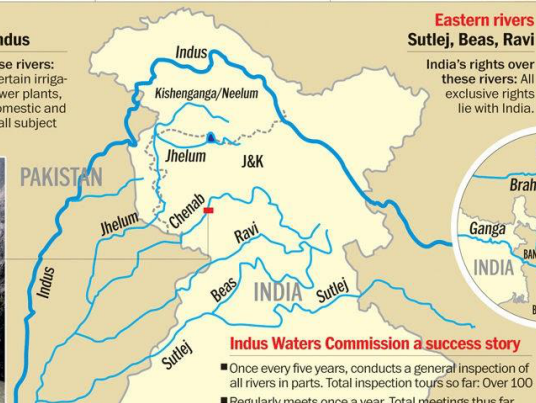
India's rights over these rivers: Limited — can set up certain irrigation, run-of-the-river power plants, very limited storage, domestic and non-consumptive use, all subject to conditions



Baglihar dam on Chenab

Eastern rivers Sutlej, Beas, Ravi

India's rights over these rivers: All exclusive rights lie with India.



Indus Waters Commission a success story

- Once every five years, conducts a general inspection of all rivers in parts. Total inspection tours so far: Over 100
- Regularly meets once a year. Total meetings thus far, including those for taking up Pak objections: Over 100

The Indus Waters Treaty (1960): Western rivers (Chenab, Jhelum, Indus) & Eastern rivers (Sutlej, Beas, Ravi)

PRELIMS POINTERS

Western rivers: Indus, Jhelum, Chenab · **Eastern rivers:** Ravi, Beas, Sutlej · IWT signed **1960**, World Bank broker · **Ratle** project on Chenab · PCA ≠ ICJ · Treaty in abeyance since Apr 2025.

SYLLABUS LINK GS II — Bilateral relations; international treaties & agreements; dispute-resolution mechanisms and their bearing on India's interests.



GS PAPER 3 | The Hindu p.12

Navy commissions INS Nipun for advanced operations

WHY IN NEWS

The Indian Navy commissioned **INS Nipun** at the Naval Dockyard, Mumbai — the **second Diving Support Vessel (DSV)** of the **Nistar class** — significantly enhancing deep-sea diving, underwater intervention and **submarine rescue**. It was indigenously designed and built by **HSL, Visakhapatnam**.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ◆ Presiding officer: **Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Krishna Swaminathan**; the commissioning marks a step towards **self-reliance in defence shipbuilding**.
- ◆ Nipun is an integrated multi-mission mothership for **deep-sea saturation diving**, underwater salvage, hydrographic intervention and distressed-submarine rescue.
- ◆ It provides indigenous, round-the-clock submarine rescue and salvage capability, reducing dependence on foreign assistance in the **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)**.



Navy commissions *INS Nipun* for advanced operations

The Indian Navy commissioned *INS Nipun* on Monday at the Naval Dockyard in Mumbai. It is the second Diving Support Vessel (DSV) of the Nistar class and will significantly enhance the Navy's capabilities in deep-sea diving, underwater intervention, and submarine rescue. Presiding over the ceremony was Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Krishna Swaminathan. According to the Ministry of Defence, *INS Nipun* is a specialist platform built to undertake complex underwater operations. The vessel was indigenously designed and built by the HSL in Visakhapatnam. Its induction marks another step towards self-reliance in defence shipbuilding.



INS Nipun (A17), a Nistar-class Diving Support Vessel

The Hindu p.12 — “Navy commissions INS Nipun for advanced operations”

VALUE ADDITION — NISTAR-CLASS CAPABILITIES

- **Integrated Saturation Diving Complex:** diving bells, mixed-gas breathing systems and hyperbaric recompression chambers sustain divers at extreme depths for prolonged periods.
- **DSRV carrier:** launch, recovery and support platform for **Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicles** to rescue crew from disabled/sunken submarines.
- **Dynamic Positioning (DP):** automated thrusters hold exact position at sea despite currents, wind and swell.
- **Underwater intervention & robotics:** heavy-lift cranes, side-scan sonar and **ROVs** for wreck inspection and seabed survey.
- Supports India's expanding conventional and **nuclear submarine fleet**.

PRELIMS POINTERS

INS Nipun = 2nd **Nistar-class** DSV · Built by **HSL, Visakhapatnam** · Commissioned at Mumbai · Key roles: saturation diving, salvage, **DSRV**-based submarine rescue · CNS: Adm. Krishna Swaminathan.

SYLLABUS LINK GS III — Defence; indigenisation of technology; developing new technology; security challenges in maritime domain.

Political demography, the future of democracy

WHY IN NEWS

Census 2027 operations and the impending **delimitation** of Lok Sabha constituencies (to follow the first Census after 2026) have sharpened debate on **political demography** — how uneven births, deaths, ageing and migration reshape political power, and the rise of **natalism**.

KEY ARGUMENTS

- ◆ **Natalism/pronatalism** — encouraging higher birth rates — has vocal advocates: Musk warns of falling birth rates; Naidu (TDP) and Stalin (DMK) have urged larger families; RSS chief Bhagwat called for three children.
- ◆ Tamil Nadu (TVK govt.) extended **one-year maternity leave** for a third child among women government employees.
- ◆ India's **total fertility rate (TFR)** has fallen to **2.0** — below replacement level — per **NFHS-5**; fertility has declined across every religious community and inter-community gaps are narrowing.
- ◆ Pew (using NFHS) found **Muslim fertility** fell from 4.4 (1992) to 2.4 (2019–21).
- ◆ Demography will challenge the electoral process: the '**one person, one vote, one value**' principle interacts with group rights of representation, fiscal transfers and delimitation.

Political demography, the future of democracy

What is common between Elon Musk, M.K. Stalin, a Catholic bishop in Kerala, N. Chandrababu Naidu, C. Joseph Vijay and Nishan Bhagwat? All of them are asking 'their' people to have more children.

The political consequences of changing patterns of birth, death and the movement of people are being felt the world over. The ongoing Census 2027 operations in India have brought a sense of urgency to this question of uneven population trends across regions and communities. The impending question of delimitation of Lok Sabha constituencies, which is to follow the first Census after 2026, adds another layer of urgency.

Natalism, or pronatalism, is a belief system or policy stance that encourages human reproduction and high birth rates, and there are vocal advocates of this these days in communities around the world. Elections and political debates increasingly involve questions of fertility, migration, ageing, identity and belonging. Mr. Musk speaks of falling birth rates as a major threat to civilisation, particularly western. In India, Mr. Naidu, president of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, has urged Telugu families to have more children. Mr. Stalin, president of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam and former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, invoked the idea of having '16 children', rhetorically, for Tamils. Mr. Bhagwat, Rashtriya Swamanev Sanstha (RSS) chief, has explicitly called for Indian, rather Hindu, families to have three children. The Catholic church asks its members to have bigger families. In the most recent development, the Tamil Nadu government, led by Mr. Vijay, Chief Minister and founder and president of the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), has extended one-year maternity leave to women government employees having a third child in Tamil Nadu. In 2024, West Bengal and Trinamool Congress (TMC) Minister Firdaus Hakeem's remark that Muslims could soon become a majority in the State drew criticism, with the TMC distancing itself from the comment and condemning it.

Take the subject seriously

All this makes political demography — the study of how population changes, such as births, deaths, ageing, and migration, affect government policies, political power, and international security — more salient. Sadly, while there is abundant politics around demography, true scholarship is being stifled by conspiracy theories seeking political capital and by demographic sceptics who view any discussion of the subject as nativism or xenophobia.

While the global population will continue to grow for some time, that growth is uneven across political boundaries and social groups. India itself is moving rapidly through a fertility transition. India's total fertility rate has fallen below replacement level, to 2.0 children per woman



Varghese K. George

according to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5). Fertility has declined across every major religious community, though the pace of decline has been uneven across regions and communities; the gap is narrowing. Pew Research, using NFHS data, found that Muslim fertility declined from 4.4 children per woman in 1992 to 2.4 in 2019-21; fertility declined among every major religious group and fertility gaps between religious communities have narrowed.

Demographic factors will challenge the existing electoral process. The 'One person, one vote, one value' principle in India is not applied blindly, but in consonance with group rights of representation. Social federalism and political federalism are both part of India's democratic design. Rich and poor people both move, though for different reasons. In recent years, around two lakh Indians have been giving up their Indian citizenship on average, each year. The poor also move — from places with fewer opportunities to places with greater opportunities. According to the 2011 Census, India had about 45 crore internal migrants. Some regions are ageing, while others will remain younger for longer. Kerala has the highest median age in India, estimated at 37 years in 2026, and this is projected to reach 47 years by 2051. The median age in Uttar Pradesh is approximately 26.9 years, making it one of the youngest States in India. India's projected median age is about 29.2 years in 2026. Even by 2036, the median age of Uttar Pradesh is projected to reach only 31.7 years, according to some estimates.

What is in focus

Natalism is simplistic rhetoric in response to complex realities. No country or society has easily or consistently reversed a sustained decline in fertility. Countries such as Japan, South Korea, China, and Italy have introduced financial incentives, childcare support, parental leave, and other pronatalist measures, but none has succeeded in restoring fertility to the levels seen in earlier decades. South Korea, despite extensive family policies, continues to have extraordinarily low fertility. Italy, too, has continued to experience declining births despite financial incentives and family-support measures. This suggests that fertility is not simply a question of money. It is tied to housing, employment, education, gender relations, the cost of raising children, and people's expectations about the future.

The reason for continued population growth in many societies is increasingly expanding lifespan and population momentum rather than increasing births. The spread of that growth is uneven across political boundaries and social groups. Similarly, wealth creation and distribution remain uneven and will remain so. Fewer people are being born, people are living longer, moving faster and farther; these factors in combination with demands of democracy and federalism raise challenges that require cool thinking and new imaginative capacity.

Studying the interlinkage between politics and demography is a marginal field within political science and demography, but it should not remain so. In many countries, such as the United States and India, the question of federalism is also in play alongside demography and the economy. A balance will have to be achieved both across social groups nationally and across States in terms of development outcomes, growth, opportunities, and political power. India's southern States, for instance, achieved fertility decline earlier and now face the possibility of ageing faster than States with relatively younger populations.

The political question is not simply who has more people, but who has invested in development, who has fewer young people entering the workforce, who needs resources, and how representation should respond to these differences. In a utopian world, if all of humanity were one, no consideration other than individual identity should come into play. But these questions are, for better or worse, framed in terms of group identities. Recognition of group identities is not alien to democratic practice; it can be an integral and essential part of it. The political problem, therefore, is not that groups exist. It is how democratic institutions and development planning can accommodate changing group identities without turning demographic differences into permanent political antagonisms.

Impact on planning and politics

The changes in demographic patterns affect both planning and politics. Groups with larger populations will claim greater political power, while groups that are shrinking will feel increasingly insecure. As the number of older and retired people grows relative to the working-age population, their care will require higher commitment of national resources. When these demographic differences vary across regions, they can create friction between States as resources and people move across borders — from regions where there is more to regions where there is less. Regional demographic differences can also cause disputes over taxation, fiscal transfers, development, and political representation.

World over, conversations about demographic shifts have become a source of distrust. While one group talks about replacement theory and fears that its race is being wiped out, another dismisses such concerns as conspiracy theories. Demographic change is neither a conspiracy to replace any community nor an imagined phenomenon. It is real, natural, and likely to be difficult to reverse. Politics needs to shift from trying to profit from demographic change to sensitively managing and navigating it. The question, then, is whether there can be a more expansive idea of "The People."

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The Hindu editorial page — "Political demography, the future of democracy" (Varghese K. George)

VALUE ADDITION — CONCEPTS & DATA

- **Political demography** = study of how population change (births, deaths, ageing, migration) affects government policy, political power and international security.
- **Replacement-level fertility** ≈ 2.1 children per woman; India's TFR = **2.0 (NFHS-5)**.
- **Delimitation freeze**: the 84th Amendment froze seat allocation on 1971 population figures until the first Census after 2026.

- **Demographic dividend** vs an **ageing** workforce — differential State-level transitions can trigger friction over resources, taxation and representation.

PRELIMS POINTERS

India's **TFR = 2.0** (NFHS-5, below replacement) · **Census 2027** is the next decadal census · Delimitation frozen till first census after **2026** (84th Amendment) · Kerala has the highest median age; UP among the youngest.

SYLLABUS LINK GS I / GS II — Population and associated issues; salient features of the Representation of People's Act; parliament & delimitation.



GS PAPER 1 | The Hindu p.6

The Baltic Way — Gandhi's imprint on Baltic freedom

WHY IN NEWS

23 August 2026 marked the 37th anniversary of the **Baltic Way** — the 1989 human chain that became a watershed of the Gandhian-inspired **Singing Revolution** in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, culminating in the restoration of Baltic independence in 1990–91.

KEY POINTS

- ◆ The **Singing Revolution (1986–91)**, shaped by songs and non-violence during Gorbachev's **perestroika and glasnost**, peaked with the Baltic Way — ~**2 million** people forming a **675-km** human chain from Tallinn through Riga to Vilnius.
- ◆ It was timed to the 50th anniversary of the **1939 Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact**, exposing the secret protocol that had divided Eastern Europe.
- ◆ Gandhi's ideas travelled globally — **ahimsa, satyagraha, civil resistance** — inspiring Baltic activists who declared “We follow Gandhi” and “We are peaceful people.”
- ◆ Since 1992 the Baltics have deepened Gandhian and cultural ties with India — the India–Lithuania Friendship Award, Kallenbach Memorial Lectures, and Gandhi memorials (a bust in Latvia, 2019; a statue in Estonia, 2025).

The Baltic Way — Gandhi's imprint on Baltic freedom

August 23, 2026, marked the 37th anniversary of the Baltic Way, the historic 1989 human chain that became a watershed moment in the Gandhian-inspired Singing Revolution in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, culminating in the restoration of Baltic independence in 1990–91. Conversations across the Baltic states revealed powerful personal reflections on the Baltic Way and Gandhian non-violence: “We studied India's freedom struggle and chose Gandhian non-violent resistance to reclaim our national freedom from Soviet rule.” “We watched the film *Gandhi* on Lithuanian national television, re-broadcast for 24 hours.” “It was thrilling to join a non-violent protest against the Soviet army at Vilnius Cathedral Square, even as a bullet passed near my ear, I stood firm.” “Baltic Way matters a lot for us today.”

A turning point
The Singing Revolution (1986–91), shaped by songs and non-violence during Mikhail Gorbachev's perestroika and glasnost, reached a turning point with the Baltic Way, when two million people formed a 675-kilometre human chain from Tallinn through Riga to Vilnius, demanding freedom from Soviet rule. It remains a powerful symbol of unity, solidarity, and freedom. The Baltic Way was organised on the 50th anniversary of the 1939 Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact to expose its secret protocol, which divided Eastern Europe into German and Soviet spheres of influence, and paved the way for the Soviet annexation of the Baltic states in 1940. Having gained independence in 1918, the Baltics lost it after 22 years. The Baltic Way exposed Soviet-era repression, leading to the Soviet Union's acknowledgement of the secret protocol's existence and the Baltic states' re-independence in 1991. Its global media coverage drew international attention, while its inscription in



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UNESCO's Memory of the World Register and Guinness World Records recognition reinforced its international legacy.

An enduring influence
Gandhi's ideas travelled globally, inspiring movements from the American civil rights struggle to South Africa and beyond. Today, the Baltic Way reflects the enduring relevance of his principles of non-violence, truth, and human dignity, while echoing the non-cooperation and civil disobedience of his 1930 Dandi March. Gandhi showed that moral authority could outweigh military power through ahimsa, satyagraha, civil resistance, mass mobilisation, and the principle that a nation's rule depends on people's consent and cooperation. The Baltic Way and the Singing Revolution stand as a testimony to the success of people's power and civilian-based defence drawn from the Gandhi-led Indian freedom movement.

The Singing Revolution's leaders drew on global traditions of non-violent resistance. Latvian scholar Maija Küle noted that, lacking local theorists, they turned to Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. Latvia's earlier cultural links with India may also have encouraged this attraction to Gandhian ideas. Lithuania, too, played a key role in developing non-violent civilian-based defence inspired by Gandhi. In a 2012 conversation with this writer, the late Prof. Gražina Miniotaitė, a leading ideologue of Lithuania's Singing Revolution, recalled that non-violence was widely understood from the outset as essential. The December 1990 “Republic in Danger” declaration urged adherence to “non-violence and non-cooperation with the occupational authorities”. Unlike other thinkers of non-violence, Miniotaitė regarded Gandhi as the most successful in both theory and practice, demonstrating that non-violent struggle could

effectively resist foreign rule. Richard Attenborough's 1982 film *Gandhi* was broadcast on Lithuanian national television to educate citizens about non-violent resistance. Confronting Soviet troops, people repeated: “We won't fight.” “We follow Gandhi,” and “We are peaceful people.”

Building closer ties
Since 1992, the Baltic states have drawn on Gandhian and cultural ties to deepen relations with India, expanding cooperation in technology, sustainability, the blue economy, and culture. The Government of India's Ministry of Commerce and Industry estimates show that India's total bilateral trade with Lithuania reached \$490.61 million; with Latvia, \$475.66 million, and with Estonia, \$219.69 million in 2025–26.

Baltic political discourse reflects Gandhian influence through Gandhi's Lithuanian-born friend, “soulmate” Hermann Kallenbach; Vydušas's engagement with Gandhian thought; Antanas Plepius's meetings with Gandhi; Sonja Schlesin's secretaryship; and Estonian translations of Gandhi by Linart Hall. These ties continue through annual commemorations of the 2015 Gandhi Kallenbach monument in Kallenbach's birthplace, Ruusé, most recently in July 2026; the Kallenbach Memorial Lectures; and the India–Lithuania Friendship Award (this year, it honoured the people of Goa during the 400th anniversary of missionary Andrius Rudamina). India has also gifted Gandhi memorials to the Baltics, including a bust unveiled in Latvia in 2019 and a statue installed in Estonia in 2025. The Baltic Way endures as a chain of freedom and ideas, linking courage with conscience. Its contemporary significance is multifaceted: a model of non-violent resistance, a site of contested memory, a narrative in Russia–West tensions, and ultimately, a tribute to Gandhi and India.



The three Baltic states — Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania — on the Baltic Sea

The Hindu p.6 — “The Baltic Way — Gandhi's imprint on Baltic freedom” (K.B. Usha)

VALUE ADDITION — MAPPING & LINKAGES

- **Baltic states:** Estonia (capital **Tallinn**), Latvia (**Riga**), Lithuania (**Vilnius**) — all on the **Baltic Sea**; members of the EU and NATO.
- Gandhi's Lithuanian-born associate **Hermann Kallenbach** (his “soulmate” from South Africa) anchors the historical India–Baltic link.
- The **1930 Dandi (Salt) March** is invoked as the model of civil disobedience that shaped global non-violent movements, from the U.S. civil-rights struggle to the Baltics.

PRELIMS POINTERS

Baltic states & capitals: Estonia–Tallinn, Latvia–Riga, Lithuania–Vilnius · Baltic Way = **1989**, ~675 km · Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact = 1939 · Kallenbach = Gandhi's Lithuanian-born associate.

SYLLABUS LINK GS I — Modern Indian history & the freedom struggle (Gandhian methods); history of the world (mid-20th century movements) and their global legacy.



GS PAPER 2 | The Hindu p.6

Step up regulation — alternative medicine must comply with quality control

WHY IN NEWS

Government data show the **private sector** now dominates AYUSH medical education — non-government institutions accounted for **86% of Ayurveda and 85% of homoeopathy colleges** in 2024 — amid persistent concerns over training quality and regulatory compliance.

KEY ARGUMENTS

- ◆ Permitted seats rose **43%** and total admission capacity **25%** (2021–24); the Centre's **AYURGYAN** allocation increased nearly six-fold.
- ◆ Quality concerns pre-date the boom: a **2005 CAG audit** found insufficient beds/OPD/staff in homoeopathy colleges (bed occupancy 1–71%); a 2020 study reported >50% teaching-staff shortfalls.
- ◆ As of 21 August, the **NCISM** had denied permission to **17 Ayurveda colleges** (all private), several for non-compliance; the **National Commission for Homoeopathy** gave the lowest grade to 41% of colleges.
- ◆ The editorial urges tougher **quality control**, a re-examination of incentives that push private colleges to maximise intake, and scrutiny of the evidence backing AYUSH systems.

VALUE ADDITION — REGULATORY ARCHITECTURE

- **NCISM** — National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (regulates Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha, Sowa-Rigpa); replaced the erstwhile CCIM.
- **NCH** — National Commission for Homoeopathy; replaced the Central Council of Homoeopathy.
- **AYUSH** = Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa-Rigpa and Homoeopathy; the Ministry of AYUSH was created in **2014**.
- **AYURGYAN** scheme supports AYUSH education, training, research, innovation and capacity-building.

Step up regulation

Alternative medicine systems should comply with quality control

Non-government institutions accounted for 86% of Ayurveda and 85% of homoeopathy colleges in 2024, according to government data, showing that the private sector is leading the AYUSH medical education infrastructure's rapid expansion. Permitted seats also rose by 43% and total admission capacity by 25% between 2021 and 2024, when the Centre's AYURGYAN allocation for AYUSH education, training, research, innovation and capacity-building, increased nearly sixfold. While similar concerns *vis-à-vis* allopathic medical education have been confined to whether institutions adequately prepare students for evidence-based practice, the questions of the AYUSH systems are about the quality of training and what students are being trained to practise. Given the combination, it is notable that quality issues in India's AYUSH system long predate the current boom. In a 2005 audit, the Comptroller and Auditor General found insufficient hospital beds, outpatient services, and/or staff widespread among homoeopathy colleges, with bed occupancy from 1% to 71%. A 2020 *Journal of Ayurveda and Integrative Medicine* article similarly reported that many institutions had a shortfall exceeding 50% in the teaching staff required by standards then. The regulator, the National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (NCISM), has often withheld or denied permission to institutions after inspections have found gaps in faculty strength and infrastructure.

While this shows a working regulatory system, the expansion led by the private sector is of additional concern as it is accompanied by incentives for these institutions to maximise student intake while maintaining faculty size and laboratory infrastructure. As of August 21, the NCISM had listed 17 Ayurveda colleges – all private – whose permissions it had denied, several for “non-compliance with inspection process”. In *Hillside Ayurveda Medical College* (2023), the Karnataka High Court acknowledged that “often educational institutions are ... guilty of admitting excess students for financial gains”. The National Commission for Homoeopathy has given 41% of all homoeopathy colleges the lowest grade, including nearly half of all private institutions. Effectively, the expansion of AYUSH education is amid persistent quality issues, including inadequate or disputed faculty strengths, failures in inspection requirements and student intake numbers, and even allegations of fictitious faculty. While it would be premature to infer that the rapid expansion evident will have amplified these problems, the persistent regulatory non-compliance warrants tougher quality control and a reexamination of the incentives for private institutions, together with questions about the evidence backing AYUSH medicinal systems.

The Hindu editorial — “Step up regulation” on AYUSH quality control

PRELIMS POINTERS

NCISM regulates Indian systems of medicine; **NCH** regulates homoeopathy · Ministry of AYUSH est. **2014** · AYUSH = Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa-Rigpa, Homoeopathy · CCIM/CCH replaced by NCISM/NCH.

SYLLABUS LINK GS II — Issues relating to development & management of the Health sector; regulatory bodies; government policies for various sectors.



GS PAPER 3 | The Hindu p.6

Deadly span — India's power infrastructure is emerging as a big threat to vultures

WHY IN NEWS

For decades the chief threat to vultures was chemical (veterinary NSAIDs); now **electrocution** from India's expanding power infrastructure may supersede it — a fresh, under-documented hazard to a population still recovering from a catastrophic crash.

KEY ARGUMENTS

- ◆ In the 1990s India's vultures crashed **99.5% by 2007** (from ~four crore in the 1980s); white-rumped, Indian and slender-billed vultures were nearly wiped out. The culprit: **diclofenac**, a cattle painkiller that destroys vulture kidneys.
- ◆ India banned veterinary diclofenac, with 2023 bans on **aceclofenac** and **ketoprofen**. Loss of vultures left carcasses exposed, boosting feral dogs and rabies — a 2024 study put associated damages at **\$69.4 billion/yr**.
- ◆ Wide wingspans let a single bird bridge two conductors; a 2025 survey found vultures nesting at only **50%** of historic sites. A *Journal of Threatened Taxa* study near Dehradun found relocating a carcass dump 2.4 km away may have saved birds.

- ◆ Solutions: separate feeding sites from power lines, **insulate conductors**, widen the gap between energised & grounded components, and install safe perches.

Deadly span

India's power infrastructure is emerging as a big threat to vultures

Whereas for many decades the chief concern about vulture safety was centered on chemical threats, the threat of electrocution posed by India's expanding power infrastructure may supersede it. In the 1990s, India's vultures suffered one of the world's worst population crashes, nosediving 99.5% by 2007 from a high of around four crore in the 1980s; the white-rumped, Indian, and slender-billed vultures were nearly wiped out. The culprit was diclofenac, a painkiller for cattle that wrecks vulture kidneys. The government banned the use of diclofenac, with additional bans in 2023 to mitigate threats posed by aceclofenac and ketoprofen, among some other NSAIDs. The birds' decline left carcasses exposed for longer, supporting feral dog populations and leading to rabies outbreaks; a 2024 study in American Economic Review estimated that human mortality thus rose 4% and the associated damages cost India \$69.4 billion a year. While electrocution has not become as deadly as NSAIDs have been, the fragility of the vulture population and the proliferation of unsafe power infrastructure warrant early action. One official survey reported in 2025 that vultures were nesting at only 50% of their historic nesting sites. It is no trivial detail that the raptors' wide wingspans mean a large individual can contact two conductors at once. They also

raptors' wide wingspans mean a large individual can contact two conductors at once. They also have a habit of perching on elevated structures, are attracted to open landscapes, and have incentives to congregate where the availability of food is predictable, a risk enhanced by people dumping food waste around electrical installations.

As *The Hindu* reported based on a recent study in the *Journal of Threatened Taxa*, "relocating a livestock carcass dump 2.4 km away from high-tension power infrastructure near Uttarakhand's Dehradun may have saved these large scavengers from ... electrocution". An assessment prepared for the State Climate Resilient Power System Development Project also noted an Egyptian vulture and some steppe eagles had been electrocuted on medium-voltage, rather than high-voltage, lines. Research has noted that persistent mortality due to electrocution alone could render a local population extinct. Avian electrocution is also likely under-documented in India since dead birds can be removed by humans or scavenged. As the study indicated, one inexpensive solution is to separate vulture feeding sites from power infrastructure. Other measures to protect raptors, and even other birds, especially near settlements, include insulating conductors, increasing the gap between energised and grounded components or otherwise preventing a bird from bridging them – non-trivial considering vulture wingspans – and installing safe perches.

The Hindu editorial — "Deadly span" on vulture electrocution

VALUE ADDITION — NINE VULTURE SPECIES OF INDIA (IUCN STATUS)

Species	Note	IUCN
White-rumped Vulture	South & SE Asia	CR
Indian (Long-billed) Vulture	India, Pakistan, Nepal	CR
Slender-billed Vulture	Sub-Himalayan & SE Asia	CR
Red-headed Vulture	Indian subcontinent	CR
Egyptian Vulture	Iberia–N.Africa to India	EN
Bearded Vulture	High mountains	NT
Cinereous Vulture (migratory)	Temperate Eurasia	NT
Himalayan Griffon (migratory)	Himalayas & Tibetan Plateau	NT
Eurasian Griffon (migratory)	Widespread	LC

All nine are listed under **CITES Appendix II** and **WPA Schedule I**. Six are resident; three (cinereous, Eurasian griffon, Himalayan griffon) are migratory.

PRELIMS POINTERS

Diclofenac (+ aceclofenac, ketoprofen, banned 2023) is the key chemical threat · **4 CR** species: white-rumped, Indian, slender-billed, red-headed · Egyptian = **EN** · **Jatayu Conservation Breeding Centre**, Pinjore (Haryana) · **SAVE / Vulture Action Plan 2020–25**.

SYLLABUS LINK GS III — Conservation, environmental pollution & degradation; biodiversity; species protection and human–infrastructure conflict.

VEDANTA COACHING ACADEMY

Practice Zone

MAINS QUESTION 1 · GS PAPER II

1. India's rejection of the Permanent Court of Arbitration's ruling on the Indus Waters Treaty tests the balance between the sanctity of international treaties and a state's sovereign right to respond to changed circumstances. Critically examine. (250 words / 15 marks)

1. सिंधु जल संधि पर स्थायी मध्यस्थता न्यायालय के निर्णय को भारत द्वारा अस्वीकार करना, अंतर्राष्ट्रीय संधियों की पवित्रता और बदली परिस्थितियों पर प्रतिक्रिया के सार्वभौम अधिकार के बीच संतुलन की परीक्षा करता है। आलोचनात्मक परीक्षण कीजिए।

Approach: Intro with the IWT (1960, World Bank) & the abeyance since Pahalgam (Apr 2025). Body — (a) India's stand: PCA lacks jurisdiction, treaty's graded dispute mechanism, sovereignty & security under Art. 62 VCLT (rebus sic stantibus); (b) counter-view: pacta sunt servanda, downstream (Pakistan) & regional stability, precedent risk. Conclude with a calibrated, rules-based yet security-sensitive path.

MAINS QUESTION 2 · GS PAPER III

2. "While veterinary drugs decimated India's vultures, emerging infrastructural hazards now demand a fresh, integrated conservation approach." Discuss, with reference to the ecological and economic costs of vulture decline. (250 words / 15 marks)

2. "जहाँ पशु औषधियों ने भारत के गिद्धों को नष्ट कर दिया, वहीं उभरते अवसंरचनात्मक खतरे अब एक नए, एकीकृत संरक्षण दृष्टिकोण की मांग करते हैं।" गिद्ध ह्रास की पारिस्थितिक और आर्थिक लागतों के संदर्भ में चर्चा कीजिए।

Approach: Intro — the 99.5% crash & diclofenac. Body — (a) ecological role of vultures as scavengers (carcass disposal, disease control) and the feral-dog/rabies cascade (\$69.4 bn cost); (b) shift from chemical to infrastructural threat (electrocution, habitat); (c) integrated response: NSAID bans, Jatayu breeding centres, safe zones, insulated power lines, Vulture Action Plan. Conclude on one-health & mainstreaming biodiversity in infrastructure planning.

PRELIMS PRACTICE

10 MCQs — Test Yourself

Q1. With reference to the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), consider the following statements:

1. It originated from the "Shanghai Five" grouping formed in 1996.
2. Its Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) is headquartered at Astana.
3. Iran became the 9th member of the SCO in 2023.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Q2. Consider the following countries with respect to BRICS full membership as of 2025:

1. Indonesia
2. Ethiopia
3. Saudi Arabia
4. Argentina

How many of the above are full members of BRICS?

- (a) Only two
- (b) Only three
- (c) Only four
- (d) All four

Q3. The “V-Dem” Institute, frequently in the news, is best described as:

- (a) A UN human-rights monitoring body based in Geneva
- (b) An independent research institute at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, that measures democracy
- (c) An arm of the World Economic Forum publishing competitiveness rankings
- (d) An EU agency assessing electoral integrity

Q4. With reference to the Black Sea, consider the following statements:

1. It is connected to the Mediterranean Sea through the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits.
2. Georgia, Bulgaria and Romania are among its littoral states.
3. Passage of warships through the Turkish Straits is governed by the Montreux Convention.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Q5. Under the Indus Waters Treaty, 1960, the waters of which set of rivers are allocated primarily to India?

- (a) Indus, Jhelum and Chenab
- (b) Ravi, Beas and Sutlej
- (c) Chenab, Ravi and Beas
- (d) Jhelum, Sutlej and Indus

Q6. Consider the following statements about INS Nipun:

1. It is a Diving Support Vessel of the Nistar class.
2. It was indigenously built by Hindustan Shipyard Limited, Visakhapatnam.
3. It is designed to carry Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicles for submarine rescue.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Q7. With reference to fertility trends in India, consider the following statements:

1. As per NFHS-5, India's total fertility rate has fallen to 2.0, below the replacement level.
2. Replacement-level fertility is generally taken as about 2.1 children per woman.
3. Fertility has declined across every major religious community.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Q8. The “Baltic Way” of 1989 is associated with which of the following countries?

- (a) Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia
- (b) Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania
- (c) Finland, Sweden and Norway
- (d) Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova

Q9. The National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (NCISM) regulates education in which of the following?

- 1. Ayurveda
- 2. Unani
- 3. Siddha
- 4. Homoeopathy

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Q10. Consider the following pairs of vulture species and IUCN Red List status:

- 1. White-rumped Vulture — Critically Endangered
- 2. Slender-billed Vulture — Critically Endangered
- 3. Egyptian Vulture — Endangered
- 4. Red-headed Vulture — Critically Endangered

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

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

◆ ANSWER KEY WITH RATIONALE

1 – (c) 1 and 3 only. Shanghai Five (1996) → SCO (2001); Iran joined as 9th member in 2023. RATS HQ is at **Tashkent**, not Astana — hence (2) is wrong.

2 – (b) Only three. Indonesia, Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia are full members; **Argentina declined** to join and is not a member.

3 – (b). V-Dem is an independent institute at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, measuring democracy across multiple indices.

4 – (d) 1, 2 and 3. All correct — the Bosphorus–Dardanelles link, the littoral states, and the Montreux Convention (1936).

5 – (b) Ravi, Beas and Sutlej. The eastern rivers are allocated to India; the western rivers (Indus, Jhelum, Chenab) largely to Pakistan.

6 – (d) 1, 2 and 3. All three statements about INS Nipun (Nistar-class DSV, built by HSL, DSRV-capable) are correct.

7 – (d) 1, 2 and 3. All correct — TFR 2.0 (NFHS-5), replacement level ≈2.1, decline across communities.

8 – (b) Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The 1989 human chain ran from Tallinn through Riga to Vilnius.

9 – (c) 1, 2 and 3 only. NCISM covers Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha (and Sowa-Rigpa). **Homoeopathy** is regulated by the separate NCH.

10 – (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4. All matched — white-rumped, slender-billed and red-headed are CR; the Egyptian Vulture is EN.

QUICK REVISION RECAP — One-Glance Notes

- ✓ **SCO Bishkek:** Modi met Iran's Pezeshkian & Russia's Putin; Iran = 9th SCO member, Belarus = 10th; RATS HQ Tashkent.
- ✓ **BRICS:** 11 members (Indonesia newest, Jan 2025); 18th Summit in India, 12–13 Sept.
- ✓ **V-Dem:** Gothenburg, Sweden; India an “electoral autocracy” since 2017; lowest score since the 1975 Emergency.
- ✓ **IWT:** 1960, World Bank-brokered; India rejects PCA ruling, treaty “in abeyance” since Pahalgam (Apr 2025); Ratle on Chenab.
- ✓ **INS Nipun:** 2nd Nistar-class DSV; built by HSL Vizag; saturation diving + DSRV submarine rescue.
- ✓ **Demography:** TFR 2.0 (NFHS-5); Census 2027; delimitation frozen till first census after 2026.
- ✓ **Baltic Way (1989):** ~2 million, 675-km chain Tallinn–Riga–Vilnius; Gandhian non-violence; Kallenbach link.
- ✓ **AYUSH:** NCISM (ISM) & NCH (homoeopathy); private sector dominates; AYURGYAN scheme.
- ✓ **Vultures:** 99.5% crash (diclofenac); 4 CR species; new threat = electrocution; Jatayu breeding centre, Pinjore.

PRELIMS ONE-LINERS

- ▶ **Strait of Hormuz** — chokepoint between the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman.
- ▶ **Montreux Convention (1936)** — gives Turkey control over the Bosphorus & Dardanelles.
- ▶ **Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact (1939)** — secret Nazi–Soviet division of Eastern Europe; Baltic Way marked its 50th anniversary.
- ▶ **84th Amendment** — froze Lok Sabha seat allocation on 1971 figures till the first census after 2026.
- ▶ **Sowa-Rigpa** — Tibetan/Himalayan system of medicine regulated under NCISM.
- ▶ All nine Indian vulture species are on **CITES Appendix II** and **WPA Schedule I**.

△ PRELIMS TRAP-SETTERS — Don't Get Fooled

- Trap:** “PCA and ICJ are the same UN body.” **Reality:** The **Permanent Court of Arbitration** (est. 1899, The Hague) is **not** a UN organ; the **ICJ** is the UN's principal judicial organ — keep them distinct.
- Trap:** “NCISM regulates homoeopathy.” **Reality:** Homoeopathy is regulated by the separate **NCH**; NCISM covers Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha & Sowa-Rigpa.
- Trap:** “RATS is headquartered in Beijing.” **Reality:** The SCO **Secretariat** is in Beijing, but **RATS is at Tashkent**, Uzbekistan.
- Trap:** “India's TFR is still above replacement.” **Reality:** NFHS-5 puts India's TFR at **2.0** — already **below** the ~2.1 replacement level.
- Trap:** “Western rivers of the IWT go to India.” **Reality:** Western rivers (Indus, Jhelum, Chenab) go largely to **Pakistan**; the **eastern** rivers (Ravi, Beas, Sutlej) to India.
- Trap:** “Iran was a founding member of the SCO.” **Reality:** Iran joined only in **2023** as the 9th member; the founders were the 1996 “Shanghai Five.”
- Trap:** “Indonesia is only a BRICS partner country.” **Reality:** Indonesia became a **full member** in January 2025; Argentina, by contrast, declined membership.
- Trap:** “V-Dem is a United Nations body.” **Reality:** It is an independent academic institute at the **University of Gothenburg, Sweden** — not a UN or EU organ.

PLACES & PERSONS IN NEWS

Bishkek — capital of Kyrgyzstan; venue of the SCO summit.

Strait of Hormuz — vital oil chokepoint (Persian Gulf–Gulf of Oman).

The Hague — seat of the PCA (and, separately, the ICJ).

Tallinn · Riga · Vilnius — capitals of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania.

Masoud Pezeshkian — President of Iran.

Adm. Krishna Swaminathan — Chief of the Naval Staff.

Prof. Sean D. Murphy — chairs the IWT Court of Arbitration.

Hermann Kallenbach — Gandhi's Lithuanian-born associate.

Vladimir Putin — President of Russia; to visit India for the 18th BRICS Summit.

Ratle (RHEP) — hydro-electric project on the Chenab, at the heart of the IWT arbitration.

60-SECOND RECALL — RAPID REVISION

Q. Where was the SCO summit held? **Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.**

Q. SCO's 9th & 10th members? **Iran (2023), Belarus (2024).**

Q. RATS headquarters? **Tashkent, Uzbekistan.**

Q. Newest BRICS full member? **Indonesia (Jan 2025).**

Q. Where is the V-Dem Institute? **Gothenburg, Sweden.**

Q. India's regime type since 2017 (V-Dem)? **Electoral autocracy.**

Q. Black Sea → Mediterranean via? **Bosporus & Dardanelles.**

Q. Straits governed by which pact? **Montreux Convention, 1936.**

Q. IWT eastern rivers (to India)? **Ravi, Beas, Sutlej.**

Q. IWT western rivers (to Pakistan)? **Indus, Jhelum, Chenab.**

Q. INS Nipun's class & builder? **Nistar-class; HSL Vizag.**

Q. India's TFR per NFHS-5? **2.0 (below replacement).**

Q. Baltic Way year & length? **1989; ~675 km.**

Q. Homoeopathy regulator? **NCH (not NCISM).**

Q. How many CR vulture species? **Four.**

Q. Key vulture-killing drug? **Diclofenac.**

Q. Vulture breeding centre? **Jatayu, Pinjore (Haryana).**

Q. AYUSH systems medicine scheme? **AYURGYAN.**

Q. Tibetan medicine under NCISM? **Sowa-Rigpa.**

Q. Ministry of AYUSH created in? **2014.**

Q. Baltic Way anniversary it marked? **Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact (1939).**

Q. Gandhi's Lithuanian-born associate? **Hermann Kallenbach.**

Q. Delimitation freeze until? **First census after 2026.**

Q. IWT signed in / broker? **1960 / World Bank.**

Q. Ratle project is on which river? **Chenab.**

Q. PCA seat & founding year? **The Hague, 1899.**

Q. India's liberal-democracy rank (V-Dem)? **105 of 179.**

Q. BRICS 18th Summit host & dates? **India, 12–13 Sept.**



That completes today's analysis — revise the mapping and institutions, and attempt the MCQs untimed first, then timed.
Compiled by Sapna Chauhan · Vedanta Coaching Academy & Library