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THURSDAY • 10 SEPTEMBER 2026

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PRACTICE ZONE

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SUNDERNAGAR • MANDI • HIMACHAL PRADESH



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Editor's Focus

A heavily GS-II day dominated by governance and international relations. **Hormuz & BRICS** together frame West Asia's energy geopolitics and the de-dollarisation debate before the 18th Summit; **marital rape, Article 371 for Ladakh, and the NSA-detention verdict** test constitutional fundamentals (rights, federalism, preventive detention); and the **Census-NPR-NRC** and **sugar-regulation** pieces are classic policy-and-governance material. Practise the interplay of *judiciary vs legislature* and *Centre vs regional autonomy*.

01 Hormuz Tensions Flare as Iran, U.S. Intensify Strikes

GS PAPER II

The Hindu • Pg 1

WHY IN NEWS

A fresh escalation between the U.S. and Iran near the Strait of Hormuz — U.S. strikes on Iranian oil tankers and Iranian missile and shipping retaliation — pushed Brent crude past \$100 a barrel for the first time since July 2024, spotlighting the world's most critical oil choke point.

Hormuz tensions flare as Iran, U.S. intensify strikes

U.S. attacks Iranian oil tankers and Tehran responds by targeting at least 20 ships trying to pass through the Strait of Hormuz; Brent crude futures cross \$100 a barrel for first time since July 2024

Stanly Johny

Tensions between the United States and Iran flared again on Tuesday night after U.S. forces struck five Iranian oil tankers in retaliation for what Washington said was Tehran's attack on its warships near the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran responded by firing a barrage of ballistic missiles at the U.S. base in Al-Azraq in Jordan, and targeted at least 20 ships trying to pass through the Strait, according to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

This is the second U.S. strike on Iranian oil tankers in less than a week, which U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) said was a direct response to Iran's attacks on American



An image released by the U.S. Navy on Wednesday shows a sailor on the flight deck of guided-missile destroyer USS Mason. AFP

warships enforcing a naval blockade on Iranian ports. Following the flare-up, Brent crude futures breached \$100 a barrel on Wednesday, for the first time since July 2024.

On Tuesday night, CENTCOM said in a statement that U.S. forces destroyed five Iranian crude

oil carriers after the IRGC targeted a Navy warship with ballistic missiles twice over the past two days.

"In response to Iran's most recent failed attacks, CENTCOM destroyed the IRGC crude oil carriers M/T Kaviz, M/T Charminar, M/T Horizon 1, and M/T Riesco in the Gulf of Oman

as well as M/T Derya near Kharg Island. American forces directed the crews to abandon ship before the vessels were struck and rendered inoperable," CENTCOM said.

The IRGC said in a statement that its forces continue to exercise full control over the Strait. It also, according to an AFP report, added parts of the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea to a new "prohibited zone", saying that exact coordinates will be announced later. "If a vessel enters that area without coordination, it will be subject to our sanctions," IRGC spokesperson Hossein Mohebi told state television.

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The Strait of Hormuz linking the Persian Gulf to the Arabian Sea.

'The Hindu', Pg 1 — Hormuz tensions report.

- ◆ Tensions flared after U.S. forces struck **five Iranian oil tankers** in retaliation for what Washington called Tehran's attack on its warships near the Strait of Hormuz.
- ◆ Iran responded by firing **ballistic missiles at the U.S. base in Al-Azraq, Jordan**, and targeted at least **20 ships** attempting to pass through the Strait (per the IRGC).
- ◆ This was the **second U.S. strike** on Iranian tankers in a week; **CENTCOM** named the destroyed carriers (M/T Kaviz, Charminar, Horizon 1, Riesco, Derya) and said crews were told to abandon ship before vessels were rendered inoperable.
- ◆ The IRGC declared parts of the **Gulf of Oman and Arabian Sea** a new 'prohibited zone', warning of sanctions on vessels entering without coordination.
- ◆ **Brent crude breached \$100/barrel** — a direct demonstration of how West Asian instability transmits to global energy markets and to import-dependent economies like India.

STRAIT OF HORMUZ — GEO-STRATEGIC SNAPSHOT

- Connects the **Persian Gulf** to the **Gulf of Oman** and onward to the **Arabian Sea**.
- Bordered by **Iran** (north) and **Oman/UAE** (south); narrowest point ~**21 nautical miles**.
- Carries roughly **a fifth of global oil** and a large share of LNG — the single most important petroleum choke point.
- India sources a major part of its crude and LPG through it; any closure spikes India's **import bill, inflation and rupee pressure**.

Prelims Pointers

- **Bordering nations of the Persian Gulf:** Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, UAE, Oman.
- **IRGC** = Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (Iran's elite military force).
- **CENTCOM** = U.S. Central Command, responsible for the West Asia theatre.
- **Kharg Island** — Iran's principal crude oil export terminal in the Persian Gulf.
- Other key choke points: **Strait of Malacca, Bab-el-Mandeb, Suez Canal, Strait of Bosphorus.**

India Angle

India must diversify crude sources (U.S., Russia, Latin America), deepen the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, accelerate the West-coast refining and green-energy transition, and use its ties with both Iran (Chabahar) and Gulf states to press for de-escalation.

SYLLABUS LINK: GS II — India & its Neighbourhood; Effect of policies of developed & developing countries on India's interests; International relations. GS III — Energy security.

02 Onus on Legislature to Make Marital Rape Punishable: SC

GS PAPER II

The Hindu • Pg 12

WHY IN NEWS

A three-judge Bench of the Supreme Court, hearing appeals on the marital-rape exception, held that while married women's autonomy and safety are guaranteed, whether non-consensual sex within marriage is labelled 'rape' may be for the legislature to decide.

Onus on legislature to make marital rape punishable: SC

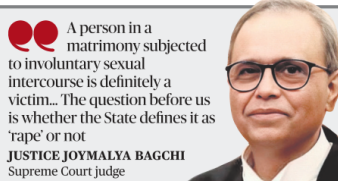
Bench says though it recognises the individual autonomy of married women, both the Indian Penal Code and the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita exempt marital rape from being considered a crime

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday guaranteed safety and security to sexually abused married women, but questioned if courts can direct rape prosecutions against husbands when the penal law exempts marital rape from criminal liability.

A three-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant made a point that though it recognised the individual autonomy of married women, the second exception to Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) states that "sexual intercourse or sexual acts by a man with his own wife, the wife not being under 15 years of age, is not rape".

Section 63 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, which replaced the IPC in 2023, has carried forward the exemption given to marital rape under Section 375 though statutorily raising the age-threshold of the wife to 18.



"This is the law as it stands, rightly or wrongly. It is a penal law. Before a constitutional court renders a verdict that the exception is unreasonable or manifestly arbitrary, can we permit a prosecution on that score? Is it within the domain of a prosecutor to prosecute a person when there is a clear exemption under Section 375 or Section 63," Justice Joymalia Bagchi questioned.

The primary case before the Bench is an appeal filed against a 2022 decision of the Karnataka High Court, which held that a husband could be charged with rape if he had forced himself on his wife. The High Court had relied on the Justice

J.S. Verma Committee report of 2013 which had found the exception regressive. The High Court Bench had observed that "a man is a man; an act is an act; rape is a rape, be it performed by a man the 'husband' on the woman 'wife'". It had noted that "no exception under law can be so absolute that it becomes a licence for the commission of a crime against society".

But the Supreme Court questioned the High Court's logic on Wednesday. "Can a court order prosecution until the constitutional validity of the exception is examined and, if needs be, declared *ultra vires* or read down. It

is the law right now, constitutional or otherwise," Justice Bagchi debated.

Definition of rape

While Justice Bagchi agreed that a "person in a matrimony subjected to involuntary sexual intercourse is definitely a victim", he said "the question before us is whether the State defines it as 'rape' or not".

The court mooted that it may be for the legislature to decide if an act should be made a crime.

Senior advocate Indira Jaising, who appeared for the wife in the Karnataka case, said there was enough elasticity to interpret the present law and justify the High Court's decision to order prosecution for rape. She also noted that the age of consent in Section 63 has been raised from 16 to 18 years.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said the exception for marital rape must continue until the top court took a final call on its reasonableness.

- ◆ The Bench (headed by **CJI Surya Kant**) recognised the **individual autonomy of married women** but questioned whether courts can direct rape prosecution of husbands when the penal law exempts marital rape.
- ◆ **Exception 2 to Section 375 IPC**: sexual acts by a man with his own wife (wife not under 15) is 'not rape'. **Section 63 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023** retained the exemption but raised the age threshold to **18**.
- ◆ The lead case is an appeal against a **2022 Karnataka HC** ruling that a husband *could* be charged with rape — the HC relied on the **Justice J.S. Verma Committee (2013)**, which called the exception regressive: "a man is a man; an act is an act; rape is a rape."
- ◆ **Justice Joymalya Bagchi**: a person subjected to involuntary sexual intercourse in matrimony is "definitely a victim", but the question is whether the State defines it as 'rape'.
- ◆ The Court mooted that **defining an act as a crime may be the legislature's domain** — raising the classic separation-of-powers question of judicial vs legislative competence.

KEY INSTRUMENTS & ARGUMENTS

- **Section 375/376 IPC → Section 63/64 BNS**: definition of rape and its marital exception.
- **Justice Verma Committee (2013)**: recommended removing the marital-rape exemption post the Nirbhaya case.
- **For criminalisation**: bodily autonomy, Articles 14, 15, 19 & 21; consent cannot end at marriage.
- **Concerns raised**: possible misuse, evidentiary difficulty, and whether it is for Parliament to legislate.

Prelims Pointers

- **BNS 2023** replaced the **IPC 1860** w.e.f. 1 July 2024; rape provisions are **Sec 63–64 BNS**.
- **Age of consent** under the exception raised from 15 (IPC) to **18** (BNS).
- **Article 142** — SC's power to do 'complete justice'; relevant to remedial directions.
- **Independent Thought v. Union of India (2017)** read down the exception for wives aged 15–18.

SYLLABUS LINK: GS II — Indian Constitution; Fundamental Rights; Separation of powers; role of judiciary; issues relating to women.

03 MHA Proposes New Chapter 'K' under Article 371 for Ladakh

GS PAPER II

The Hindu • Pg 11

WHY IN NEWS

The Ministry of Home Affairs has proposed an **elected body for the UT of Ladakh** through a new constitutional provision — a 'Chapter K' under Article 371 — responding to long-standing demands for Statehood, Sixth-Schedule status and democratic governance.

MHA proposes new Chapter 'K' under Article 371 for Ladakh

Provision being made to bring elected body for Union Territory; civil society members who attended MHA meet say they were 'disappointed' as they are yet to receive draft proposal; they also sought compensation for families of violence victims

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has proposed an elected body for the Union Territory (UT) of Ladakh by introducing a new constitutional provision under Article 371 of the Constitution in a proposed Chapter K, civil society members who attended a meeting with MHA officials in Delhi on Wednesday said.

Cherring Dorjay Lakruk of the Leh Apex Body (LAB) told *The Hindu* that they were "disappointed" as this was a reiteration of the May 22 meeting, and were given a PowerPoint presentation mentioning Chapter K on Wednesday but were yet to get a detailed "draft proposal" from the MHA.

A statement released by the civil society members said, "The MHA stated that the intended UT-level body, would be elected by direct



Making a point: People from Ladakh have staged several protests over the years seeking Statehood. ANI

election, and would have legislative powers with respect to land, culture and language, forest, environment, natural resources, and any other subject matter reserved for the UT under Article 240."

Ladakh chief secretary Ashish Kundra, who attended the meeting, said in a post on X, "Attended the sub-committee meeting with leaders of Ladakh at MHA in Delhi today. A general air of positivity prevailed as the broad con-

tours of a Sui-generis model of governance under Article 371 of the Constitution were discussed. Deepening democracy is the goal."

Representatives of the LAB and the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) asked the MHA to ensure that the Lieutenant-Governor of Ladakh does not take any major decisions concerning the administration, bureaucracy or land until the proposed constitutional safeguards are put in place,

while pressing for the legislation to be passed in the upcoming Winter Session of Parliament.

The members also sought compensation for the families of the victims of the violence that broke out on September 24, 2025, in Leh city, where four people were killed in police firing. They further sought the withdrawal of criminal cases against 80 people, along the lines of the protection afforded to those who took part in the "Gen Z protest" at Delhi's Jantar Mantar in July. The violence in Ladakh erupted amid a protest that was called to demand constitutional safeguards.

Article 371, which currently has chapters that run from A to J, deals with "Temporary, Transitional and Special Provisions" and exists under Part XXI of the Constitution. It is currently applicable in 12 States: Nagaland, Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Andhra

Pradesh, Telangana, Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Sikkim, and Karnataka.

After Ladakh lost its special status under Article 370 of the Constitution as part of the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir, it was turned into a Union Territory without a legislative assembly in 2019. Since then, the LAB and the KDA have been demanding Statehood and tribal status for Ladakh and seeking a larger role for local residents in decisions relating to land and infrastructure projects.

Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk, who was also part of the delegation that met MHA officials, said, "We cannot say that the meeting was a complete success. We hoped to get a draft proposal assuring us protection under Article 371. However, that was not provided. We have asked the government to take back the cases registered against protesters after last year's incident in Leh city."

'The Hindu', Pg 11 — MHA proposal on Chapter 'K' for Ladakh.

- ◆ Per civil-society members who met the MHA, the intended **UT-level elected body** would have legislative powers over **land, culture & language, forest, environment and natural resources** and any subject reserved for the UT under **Article 240**.
- ◆ **Article 371** (Part XXI — "Temporary, Transitional and Special Provisions") currently runs **A to J** and applies to **12 States**: Nagaland, Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Sikkim, Karnataka.
- ◆ After the **abrogation of Article 370 (2019)**, Ladakh became a UT **without a legislature**; the Leh Apex Body (LAB) and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) have since demanded Statehood and Sixth-Schedule tribal protection.
- ◆ Civil society (incl. activist **Sonam Wangchuk**) called the meeting only a partial success — they still await the detailed draft and sought withdrawal of cases from the **Sept 2025 Leh violence**.
- ◆ **Article 240** lets the **President make regulations** for peace, progress and good government of certain UTs without legislatures; such regulations carry the force of an Act of Parliament.

READY-RECKONER: ARTICLE 371 SERIES

Article	Special provision for
371	Maharashtra and Gujarat
371-A	Nagaland
371-B	Assam
371-C	Manipur
371-D / E	Andhra Pradesh & Telangana / Central University in AP
371-F	Sikkim

371-G	Mizoram
371-H	Arunachal Pradesh
371-I / J	Goa / Karnataka

Prelims Pointers

- **Article 371** lies in **Part XXI** of the Constitution.
- **Sixth Schedule** — autonomous district councils; currently for tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram.
- Ladakh became a UT (without legislature) via the **J&K Reorganisation Act, 2019**.
- **Article 240** UTs (President's regulation power): A&N Islands, Lakshadweep, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Ladakh, and (in specified circumstances) Puducherry.

SYLLABUS LINK: GS II — Indian Constitution — features, provisions; federal structure; devolution of powers; issues & challenges of the federal structure.

04 Ex-officials Flag Concerns over Census Data Quality, NPR–NRC Link

GS PAPER II

The Hindu • Pg 10

WHY IN NEWS

The Centre's decision to advance the Population Enumeration phase of **Census 2027** in four poll-bound States, along with new schedule questions, has led former Census officials to warn of data-quality risks and potential linkages between the Census, the NPR and, ultimately, the NRC.

Ex-officials flag concerns over Census data quality, potential NPR, NRC link

While records show Census data was used to prepare NRC in 1951, former senior official says such data is confidential and can only be used for statistical purposes; advancing Census in 4 States may lead to under-enumeration of migrants, he adds

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

The Union government's decision to advance the Population Enumeration phase of Census 2027 in four poll-bound States, coupled with the introduction of several new questions in the Census schedule, has prompted some former Census officials to raise concerns regarding the quality of data that is to be collected and the potential links between the Census, the National Population Register (NPR) and, ultimately, the National Register of Citizens (NRC).

There is a precedent for Census data having been used to prepare the NRC. Records show that this took place in 1951, during Independent India's first Census, when the NRC was prepared across the country by "copying" data from the Census schedules. However, for unspecified reasons, a countrywide NRC was never published, except in undivided Assam, which at the time also included Manipur and Tripura.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, former Deputy Registrar General of India K. Narayanan Unni stressed that any link between the Census



Keeping track: A final updated NRC list, after a long exercise, was published for Assam on August 31, 2019. FILE PHOTO

and population-registration activities remains speculative. However, some of the information being sought in the latest Census questionnaire resembled data collected during previous NPR update exercises.

The NPR, first created in 2011 and initially proposed to be updated with the first phase of the now-scrapped Census 2021, has been put on the back burner due to stiff opposition from political parties and civil society groups.

Mr. Unni said, "NPR is generated under the Citizenship Act, and data is supposed to be published. The NPR had been updated in 2015 and already has the family-wise database of 119 crore residents.

data was used to prepare the NRC in Assam."

On August 14, 2026, the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India (RG&CCI) notified a set of 40 questions to be asked during the Population Enumeration phase of the Census.

Some of the additional questions, such as particulars of a person's parents, including their names, religion, place of birth, Aadhaar, mobile phone number, voter ID and driving licence details, mirror those asked in the rehearsal form of the NPR in 2019.

The 1951 exercise

The NPR had been updated in 2015 and already has the family-wise database of 119 crore residents.

The 1951 Census report by R.B. Vaghaiwalla, the Superintendent of Census Operations for Assam, Manipur and Tripura, shows that the NRC was conceived primarily as a Census and administrative tool rather than a citizenship-verification exercise.

"An important innovation of this Census was the preparation of the NRC, in which all important Census data was transcribed from the Census slips. The Register uses the same symbols and abbreviations and is a copy of the Census slips," the 1951 report said.

Missing NRC entries were copied from Census slips, and missing Census slips were recreated from NRC entries under a special reconciliation exercise undertaken by Vaghaiwalla.

According to Vaghaiwalla, the register was intended to be maintained permanently and updated by village officials, thereby providing continuity between Censuses. Though Section 15 of the Census Act, 1948, ensures confidentiality and says that "records of census [are] not open to inspection nor admissible in evidence", the NRC was prepared using the data, establishing a precedent of using Census

data to prepare the register.

A former Census official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said the NPR and the Census were legally distinct exercises governed by different laws. The official pointed out that the update of the NRC in Assam in 2019 was not based on NPR data and required a separate data collection exercise.

On September 5, the RG&CCI advanced the Population Enumeration phase of Census 2027 in the poll-bound States of Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Uttarakhand and Goa, while deferring the exercise in violence-hit Manipur.

Mr. Unni said that the decision to conduct the Census in four States ahead of the rest of the country could lead to under-enumeration of migrant workers, particularly from Uttar Pradesh.

Mr. Unni also questioned the utility of some of the new questions, particularly those relating to identity documents and vaccination history.

"Many of these details are already available in administrative databases. It is not clear what statistical purpose some of these questions will serve," he said.

- ◆ There is a **precedent**: in the **1951 Census** (independent India's first), the NRC was prepared by 'copying' data from Census schedules — but a countrywide NRC was never published, except in undivided Assam (then including Manipur & Tripura).
- ◆ Former officials stress Census data is **confidential** and can be used **only for statistical purposes**; advancing the Census in four States may lead to **under-enumeration of migrants** (esp. from Uttar Pradesh).
- ◆ New schedule questions mirror NPR-type fields (name, place of birth, Aadhaar, mobile, voter ID, driving licence), raising questions on statistical purpose and privacy.
- ◆ **Census Act, 1948** (Sec 15) makes records confidential and not open to inspection or admissible in evidence; the NPR is governed instead by the **Citizenship Act, 1955** rules.

NPR — CENSUS — NRC: HOW THEY RELATE

- **NPR (National Population Register)**: list of all *usual residents* (resident ≥6 months + intends to stay ≥6 months); includes citizens *and* non-citizens.
- **Census**: socio-economic & demographic data by self-declaration; backed by the **Census Act, 1948**.
- **NRC (National Register of Citizens)**: verifies citizenship; per Citizenship Rules 2003, NPR is the **first step** toward a NRC (only if notified).
- NPR first collected **2010**, updated **2015** (~119 crore residents); legal basis — Citizenship Act 1955 & Citizenship (Registration...) Rules 2003.

Prelims Pointers

- **Census Act 1948** → Census; **Citizenship Act 1955** → NPR/NRC.
- NPR ≠ citizenship drive — it records foreigners resident >6 months too.
- 'Usual resident' threshold for NPR: **6 months + 6 months intended**.
- **RG&CCI** = Registrar General & Census Commissioner of India (under MHA).
- Census 2027 to be conducted in **two phases**; first digital & caste-enumerated Census.

SYLLABUS LINK: GS II — Government policies & interventions; statutory bodies; issues relating to development & management of population data; citizenship.

05 Trade Between BRICS Countries Shows Marked Increase

GS II

GS III

The Hindu • Pg 7 (Data Point)

WHY IN NEWS

Ahead of the **18th BRICS Summit** (New Delhi, 12–13 Sept 2026, chaired by India), data show intra-BRICS trade and import-dependency rising sharply — strengthening the case for a cross-border payments system and reduced reliance on the U.S. dollar.

Trade between BRICS countries shows marked increase

The rise in intra-BRICS trade strengthens the case for a cross-border payments system

DATA POINT

Nitika Francis
Gandha Sneha

Reducing global dependence on the U.S. dollar is expected to be a key part of the discussions in the 18th BRICS Summit, chaired by India, happening in New Delhi on September 12 and 13, 2026. Finance ministries' and central bank governors from BRICS countries met in August to discuss the facilitation of cross-border payments and strengthening of national currencies.

The BRICS bloc with its 10 member countries – Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran, and the UAE – has grown in strength in its objective of advancing trade and diplomatic relations within the Global South, which makes cross-border payments desirable.

Currently, making payments across countries requires a string of transactions via correspondent banks, which hold accounts with each other. When two countries do not have such correspondent banks, they route their payments through international banks, converting the currency of the sender country to a dominant currency such as dollars, and then converting the dollars to the currency of the receiving country. This process, besides being slow at times, comes with the cost of foreign exchange margins and the fee charged by the intermediaries. Seeing that the BRICS comprises many developing economies, this can be among the many impediments to trade opportunities.

Trade data shows that merchandise exports by BRICS countries made up about one-fourth of all global exports in 2024 (Chart 1). The BRICS countries have all drastically increased their exports over the years, with China touching \$500 billion in 2024. Other members such as Brazil, India, Indonesia, Russia, and the UAE also re-

corded large figures between \$80 and \$180 billion. In addition to this, their trade amongst each other has also increased. Chart 2 shows that as of 2024, all members of BRICS, except China, received more than 30% of imports from other members.

Iran depends on BRICS for more than 65% of its imports, and Ethiopia nearly 45%. Intra-BRICS import dependency could be on the rise due to the heterogeneity of goods available among its members, as noted in a report by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

Concurrently, export dependency within the bloc has also risen. In the last decade, five members (Russia, China, the UAE, Brazil, and Indonesia) have doubled and even quadrupled their exports to members of the bloc. However, China has consistently shown the lowest dependency on intra-BRICS exports due to its diversified export market (Chart 3).

Russia saw a rapid increase in its export dependency between 2020 and 2023, in the middle of its invasion of Ukraine, during which countries such as India imported its fuel. The country saw a decline in export dependence in 2024. It was under Russia's chairmanship in 2024 that the BRICS argued against the dominance of the U.S. dollar. Russia was hit directly by the dollar monopoly in 2022; due to sanctions from the U.S., Russian banks were cut off from the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Technologies (SWIFT) which enables institutions to settle amounts. Hence, international transactions proved difficult for the Russia.

While the U.S. is the largest economy in the world, the BRICS bloc does not fall far behind, as China, India, and Russia are in the top 10 in terms of Gross Domestic Product (current prices) (Table 1). Whether this collective economic strength can challenge the dominance of the dollar is to be seen in the coming days.

Dollar detour

The data for the charts were sourced from report by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development titled 'Two Decades of Intra-BRICS Trade: Trends, Patterns and Policies' and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).



CHART 1: In 2025, exports from BRICS countries made up about 25% of global merchandise exports. BRICS countries include Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran, and the UAE. Values in \$ trillion



CHART 2: All BRICS countries have increased their dependency on imports from other nations from the bloc.

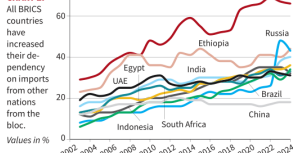


CHART 3: The exports from BRICS countries as a share of each country's total exports.

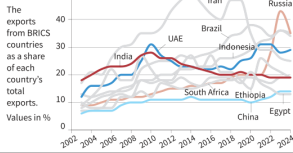


TABLE 1: Country-wise size and ranking of Gross Domestic Product of 2025 (current prices). Values are estimated by IMF.

Country	GDP, current prices (billions of \$)	Rank
China	19,626.247	2
India	3,916.312	7
Russian Federation	2,587.938	9
Brazil	2,279.918	12
Indonesia	1,445.642	18
United Arab Emirates	571.643	32
South Africa	427.141	43
Iran	371.196	46
Egypt	364.64	47
Ethiopia	109.109	74

"Collectively, the 10 member countries account for 27 per cent of world output, 24 per cent of merchandise exports, and 22 per cent of FDI inflows by 2024".
Two Decades of Intra-BRICS Trade: Trends, Patterns and Policies report

Gandha Sneha is interning with The Hindu

'The Hindu', Pg 7 — Data Point on intra-BRICS trade and de-dollarisation.

- ◆ BRICS now has **10 members** — Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, **Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran, UAE**; merchandise exports were about **one-fourth of global exports** in 2024.
- ◆ As of 2024, **all members except China** received **>30%** of imports from within the bloc; **Iran** depends on BRICS for **>65%** of imports and **Ethiopia** ~45%.
- ◆ Export dependency within the bloc rose too — Russia, China, UAE, Brazil, Indonesia doubled/quadrupled intra-bloc exports; **China** shows the lowest dependency due to a diversified export market.
- ◆ Correspondent-banking routing forces conversion via the dollar — slow and costly (FX margins + intermediary fees). After 2022 SWIFT cut-off, transactions became difficult for Russia — driving the **de-dollarisation** and local-currency-settlement push.
- ◆ The **New Development Bank (NDB)**, HQ Shanghai, has approved **>\$40 billion** for infrastructure and sustainable development.

BRICS — VALUE ADDITION

- Origin: **BRIC (2006)** → South Africa joined **2010** → major expansion **Jan 2024**.
- **NDB (2014, Fortaleza Summit)** & **Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA)** — a \$100 bn currency swap safety net.
- India's priorities: reformed multilateralism, Global South voice, digital public infrastructure, cross-border payments (UPI linkages), counter-terrorism.
- **SWIFT** = Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication.

Prelims Pointers

- 2024 new members: **Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, UAE** (Saudi Arabia invited; Argentina declined).
- **NDB HQ: Shanghai**; first President: **K.V. Kamath** (India).
- India ranks in the **top 10 by GDP** (current prices) — with China & Russia among BRICS.

- Iran depends on BRICS for >**65%** of imports; Ethiopia ~**45%**.

Analysis

A BRICS cross-border payments rail (local-currency settlement, linked fast-payment systems like UPI) could cut FX costs and de-risk sanctions exposure — but faces hurdles: currency non-convertibility, the yuan-dominance concern, and members' deep trade ties with the West.

SYLLABUS LINK: GS II — Important International institutions, groupings; bilateral/regional/global groupings involving India. GS III — Effects of liberalisation; changes in industrial policy; economy.

06 India Has to Act on Its 'Sugar' Problem

GS PAPER II

The Hindu • Pg 7 (Editorial)

WHY IN NEWS

FSSAI, prodded by the Supreme Court, has proposed a bold **front-of-pack red warning** for foods high in fat, salt or sugar. The editorial argues this is welcome but insufficient without enforcement, coverage of the unorganised sector, and an honest debate on a **sugar tax**.

- ◆ The **World Obesity Atlas 2026** projects ~**41 million** Indian children/adolescents (5–19) overweight or obese — driven by what children are sold: sugary cereals, sweetened yoghurts, 'health drinks' marketed on 'energy' and vitamins.
- ◆ In 2024 a leading multinational was found **adding sugar to infant food** in India (not in Europe); a popular 'health drink' was exposed as flavoured sugar syrup, forcing a 15% cut only after public pressure.
- ◆ A red label works only if **enforced**; FSSAI/CBSE norms on school canteens are treated as 'optional'.
- ◆ The rule stops at organised retail — most sugar/salt/trans-fat is eaten **unbranded** (street stalls, dhabas, sweet shops), leaving the unregulated 'half of the plate' untouched.
- ◆ The **UK soft-drinks industry levy** (tiered by sugar content) cut consumption and spurred reformulation — a model for a **calibrated sugar tax** that nudges reformulation and subsidises healthy food.

VALUE ADDITION — HFSS & REGULATION

- **HFSS** = High in Fat, Salt & Sugar foods; linked to obesity, type-2 diabetes, hypertension (NCDs).
- **FSSAI** — statutory body under the **FSS Act, 2006** (Ministry of Health & Family Welfare).
- **Eat Right India**, front-of-pack labelling (Indian Nutrition Rating / star-rating) initiatives.
- **GST on sugary drinks**: aerated/sweetened beverages taxed heavily; a **UK-style tiered levy** would reward lower sugar content.

Way Forward

Mandatory (not optional) food standards; enforceable limits on marketing to children; regulation that reaches the **unorganised sector**; and a progressively designed sugar tax that protects low-income families while nudging reformulation and cheaper healthy food.

India has to act on its 'sugar' problem

This week, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), prodded by the Supreme Court, proposed a simple but overdue idea. Packaged foods high in fat, salt, or sugar should carry a bold red warning on the front of the pack, not buried in fine print on the back. Someone picking up instant noodles, a breakfast cereal, or a "health drink" will finally be told, at a glance, that it is not as wholesome as its advertising claims. This is a welcome step. It is also, on its own, nowhere near enough.

The number of children presenting with morbid obesity and diabetes has climbed sharply within just a few years. The World Obesity Atlas 2026 bears this out – 41 million Indian children and adolescents aged 5 to 19 are now overweight or obese. This is not just because children are eating more; it is about what they are being sold. Breakfast cereals, sweetened yoghurts, and "health drinks" are marketed to parents as filling gaps in a child's diet, emphasising "energy" and vitamins while saying little about the sugar content inside. In 2024, a leading multinational was found adding sugar to infant food sold in India and other lower income countries; sugar was left out of the same product in Europe. When a health drink, popular in Indian homes, turned out to be nothing more than flavoured sugar syrup, it took a social media storm, and not a regulator, to force the company to prescribe a 15% cut in its added sugar.

The problem is worse around schools and colleges, where studies show that the cheapest, most easily



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When the U.K. introduced its soft drinks industry levy, sugar consumption fell. Manufacturers reformulated their drinks to slip below the tax threshold rather than raise prices

available snacks are also the least healthy. A popular "energy drink" among teenagers, priced at just ₹20, packs close to 17 grams of sugar, caffeine, and artificial colour into a single bottle. Its label says it is not meant for children, yet nothing stops a child from buying it. This is the market pricing unhealthy calories to fit within the range of a child's pocket money.

Need for enforcement
None of this is a secret. What has been missing is enforcement. The FSSAI and the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) have long recommended what schools should not sell, but optional rules get treated as optional, and canteens stock whatever sells cheapest. A red warning label only works if it is actually enforced.

Moreover, the new rule stops at the edge of organised retail. Most of India's sugar, salt, and trans fat is eaten unbranded, from street stalls, dhabas, and sweet shops that make up the unorganised sector, none of which is required to declare anything. A red label on a biscuit packet does nothing about the jalebi sold loose beside it. Regulation that reaches only packaged food leaves the unregulated half of the plate untouched.

Then there is the conversation India keeps avoiding – a tax on sugar. When the U.K. introduced its soft drinks industry levy, sugar consumption among both children and adults fell. Manufacturers reformulated their drinks to slip below the tax threshold rather than raise prices. A well-designed sugar tax does not just discourage people from buying a product, it pushes the industry to make the

product itself less harmful.

India already taxes sugary drinks heavily; just not usefully. Since September 2025, aerated and sweetened beverages, sugar free versions included, were folded into one 40% GST slab – so a 'normal' cola and its zero-sugar counterpart pay the same tax, leaving manufacturers with no reason to cut sugar. The U.K.'s levy worked differently, taxing drinks in tiers by sugar content, so that companies could lower their bill by reformulating the product. India could tax products in the same way so that manufacturers have a reason to cut sugar.

The standard objection – that such a tax would hit the poor the hardest – is not wrong, but it is only half the argument. Unregulated, cheap sugar already extracts a heavy price from the poor, who bear the brunt of the diabetes, hypertension and childhood obesity epidemic that sugar heavy diets drive, with the least means to treat it. Doing nothing is not neutral; it is a slower, costlier tax, paid in ill health rather than rupees at the till. The answer is to design the tax calibrated to sugar content so that it nudges reformulation, with part of the revenue set aside to make healthy food cheaper.

The FSSAI's proposed red label is a genuine, if belated, first step. What India needs now is the resolve to finish what it has started – mandatory food standards; limits on how unhealthy food is marketed to children; rules that reach the unorganised sector; and an honest debate on taxing sugar in a way that protects families with the least room to absorb either cost, the tax, or the disease.

'The Hindu', Pg 7 – editorial on India's sugar and ultra-processed-food problem.

SYLLABUS LINK: GS II – Issues relating to health; government policies for the health sector; role of regulatory bodies (FSSAI). GS I/II – Social issues.

07 Turning Economic Cooperation into Shared Prosperity (UAE & BRICS)

GS PAPER II

The Hindu • Pg 6 (Op-Ed)

WHY IN NEWS

In an op-ed ahead of India's 2026 BRICS Summit, a UAE Minister of State frames the bloc's value in **connectivity** – trade, investment, innovation and people-to-people ties – with the UAE-India Comprehensive Economic Partnership as a template for practical cooperation.

- ◆ A full BRICS member since **January 2024**, the UAE frames engagement around a simple principle: economic cooperation should create **tangible opportunities** for countries, businesses and people.
- ◆ The bloc's strength lies in **diversity** – producers and consumers of capital, energy exporters, investment destinations and manufacturing centres – creating complementarities across the Global South.
- ◆ The **NDB has approved >\$40 bn**; the UAE engaged with it well before joining BRICS, reflecting a wider commitment to mobilising capital.
- ◆ **UAE-India CEPA (2022)**: non-oil bilateral trade grew ~17% in 2025 to exceed **\$76 bn**, with a target of **\$200 bn** by 2032; the relationship spans investment, innovation, education and tourism.
- ◆ Non-oil sectors made up **~79% of UAE GDP in 2025**; with sovereign wealth >\$2.9 trillion and 38 CEPAs concluded, the UAE positions itself as a connector of capital, markets and economies.

Turning economic cooperation into shared prosperity

At a time when the international landscape is becoming more complex and uncertain, the case for meaningful international cooperation has rarely been stronger. Its value must increasingly be measured by its ability to deliver stability, resilience and shared prosperity.

For the United Arab Emirates (UAE), this is central to how it approaches BRICS. Since becoming a full member in January 2024, its engagement has been guided by a straightforward principle: economic cooperation should create tangible opportunities for countries, businesses and people.

A diversity that creates opportunities

The strength of BRICS lies partly in its diversity. Its members bring different economic structures, resources, capabilities and development experiences – from major producers and consumers to sources of capital, investment destinations, energy exporters and manufacturing centres.

These differences create opportunities for complementarity – connecting markets, capital, capabilities and ideas in ways that can benefit its members, and by extension the Global South.

The UAE's participation in BRICS is part of its broader commitment to multilateralism, constructive dialogue and diversified international partnerships. It seeks to build bridges between economies and regions. It supports an open international system that advances peace, stability, sustainable development and shared prosperity.

For the UAE, BRICS' ultimate value lies in implementation. Dialogue should translate into easier trade, stronger investment flows, more resilient supply chains, better connectivity and greater opportunities for businesses.

India's 2026 BRICS Chairship, centered on resilience, innovation, cooperation and sustainability, provides a timely framework for this agenda. At a time when trade restrictions, supply-chain disruptions and uncertainty are increasing costs for businesses and consumers, the response should not be to retreat from global economic integration, but to make it more resilient and inclusive.

BRICS stands out when cooperation can produce tangible benefits: through strengthening



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The United Arab Emirates promotes open, resilient economic cooperation through its engagement with BRICS

the multilateral trading system, facilitating trade and investment, improving connectivity, supporting resilient global value chains, and promoting sustainable development.

Development finance is also part of this equation. The New Development Bank (NDB) has approved more than \$40 billion in financing since its establishment, supporting infrastructure and sustainable development across its member countries. The UAE's active engagement with the NDB long before joining BRICS reflects its wider commitment to mobilising capital towards productive investment and long-term growth.

The UAE's own economic partnership with India demonstrates what practical connectivity can achieve.

On UAE-India ties, the UAE's advantages

The UAE-India Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement has helped create a more enabling environment for trade and investment between two highly complementary economies. In 2025, non-oil bilateral trade grew by 17% to exceed \$76 billion and the UAE and India have set the ambition of increasing bilateral trade to \$200 billion by 2032.

But the strength of the UAE-India relationship extends beyond trade. It is reinforced by investment, innovation, education, tourism and long-standing connections between their businesses, institutions and people.

This experience points to a broader lesson for BRICS: the strongest economic partnerships are built not only through agreements between governments, but through lasting connections across societies – creating the trust, opportunity, and resilience that allow commercial ties to deepen over time.

Economic connectivity is strengthened when businesses, entrepreneurs, investors, and institutions develop greater familiarity with one another. It is reinforced through education, research, tourism, cultural exchange and engagement of younger generations, which help build the trust and networks on which longer-term economic relationships grow.

The opportunity for BRICS is therefore to deepen the quality of connectivity among its members – connecting not only economies but also institutions, ideas and people.

The UAE is particularly well positioned to contribute because connectivity lies at the heart of its own economic model.

Non-oil sectors accounted for almost 79% of GDP in 2025, supported by world-class infrastructure, trusted financial institutions, advanced logistics and energy capabilities, and an open investment environment that enables businesses to scale upwards and outwards.

The UAE's ports, airports and logistics networks connect markets across Asia, Africa, Europe and beyond. Its financial centres connect international capital with opportunities across the region, while, its universities, research institutions and innovation ecosystem connect talent, knowledge and ideas.

With sovereign wealth assets exceeding \$2.9 trillion, and 38 concluded Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreements, the UAE has built the capacity to connect capital, markets and economies at scale.

For the UAE, connectivity is not simply about moving goods from one market to another. It is about creating the conditions in which capital, knowledge, technology, talent and people can interact and create new opportunities.

The UAE's approach is not to build economic cooperation around division, but around connectivity.

The path under India's leadership

As India leads BRICS through 2026, there is an opportunity to move further toward delivery: building resilience without closing markets, supporting innovation while widening opportunity, and strengthening connections among the businesses, institutions and people of the UAE and India. The UAE also looks ahead with confidence to China's BRICS Chairship in 2027, where it hopes to build on the momentum of India's leadership and carry forward the same energy of openness, connectivity and practical cooperation.

Ultimately, the success of BRICS cooperation will be measured by the opportunities it creates. That is the approach that the UAE brings to BRICS. As India hosts the 2026 Summit (September 12-13), the UAE stands ready to continue the work that translates cooperation into ways that support shared prosperity.

'The Hindu', Pg 6 — op-ed by UAE Minister of State Saeed bin Mubarak Al Hajeri.

VALUE ADDITION — UAE-INDIA TIES

- **CEPA** = Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (India-UAE, into force May 2022).
- UAE is among India's **top trade partners** and a key source of remittances & investment (via sovereign funds such as ADIA, Mubadala).
- Shared platforms: **I2U2** (India-Israel-UAE-US) and **IMEC** (India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor).
- India assumed the BRICS chair for **2026**; China chairs in **2027**.

SYLLABUS LINK: GS II — Bilateral, regional & global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests; effect of policies of developed & developing countries.

08 'Ray of Hope': Courts Push Back on Reflexive Arrests of Activists

GS PAPER II

The Hindu • Pg 6 (Editorial)

WHY IN NEWS

The Allahabad High Court quashed the **National Security Act (NSA)** detention of a 25-year-old law student and activist, calling it an “abuse of the draconian preventive detention law” — a check on executive overreach against dissent.

Ray of hope

Courts are coming down on reflexive arrests of activists

The district administration in Noida, Uttar Pradesh, went to great lengths to detain 25-year-old Delhi University law student and activist Akriti Chaudhary on April 11, 2026, in connection with protests by workers in the city. But on September 2, the Allahabad High Court quashed her National Security Act (NSA) detention, terming it an “abuse of the draconian preventive detention law” and came down heavily on the administration. The High Court’s intervention is a silver lining in the dark cloud of extreme executive arbitrariness that is smothering the democratic soul of India. It termed the Noida administration’s conduct “despotic”, its allegations against the activist a “concocted story”, and noted that the District Magistrate had passed the NSA detention order “without application of mind”. Without mincing words, the High Court warned that an unhinged bureaucracy could reduce the State of Uttar Pradesh to an “Orwellian dystopia”. The Division Bench of Justices Atul Sreedharan and Achal Sachdev ordered compensation of ₹5 lakh for Ms. Chaudhary, which is to be deducted from the salaries of the officers concerned. The facts of the case were brazenly in contradiction with the claims of the police and the district administration, but it also took a rigorous and conscientious Bench to provide this relief. It noted in its order that Ms. Chaudhary was already in the custody of the police when the violence that she is accused of took place.

ence that she is accused of took place.

The relief from the High Court has not set the activist free, as she is named by the U.P. Police in 11 other cases. It will be a long journey of legal battles to get her the freedom that every citizen in a democratic country deserves. That the police would go to such an extent to make life difficult for someone who stood up for the underprivileged must shock the conscience of the nation. Between April 10 and 18, 2026, industrial and contractual workers in Noida had staged protests demanding a wage hike and wage parity with neighbouring Haryana. On April 13, the protests allegedly turned violent. The Noida Police claimed to have “strong electronic and video-graphic evidence” of incitement against Ms. Chaudhary, and it turned out to be merely that, a claim which could not be established. Ms. Chaudhary could receive legal support and media attention that hundreds of others in comparable situations cannot easily access, while the workers remain trapped in miserable conditions because of oppressive business models and state policies that favour capital owners, with the promises made to them still unfulfilled. Yet, the Allahabad High Court’s intervention in Ms. Chaudhary’s case is a ray of hope that democratic protests will be heeded rather than suppressed by the strong-arm tactics of the executive.

‘The Hindu’, Pg 6 — editorial ‘Ray of hope’ on reflexive arrests of activists.

- ◆ On **Sept 2, 2026**, the Allahabad HC quashed the activist's NSA detention, terming the administration's conduct “**despotic**” and its allegations a “**concocted story**”
- ◆ The Court found the District Magistrate passed the NSA order “**without application of mind**” and warned an unhinged bureaucracy could reduce the State to an “**Orwellian dystopia**.”
- ◆ The Bench ordered **₹5 lakh compensation** to be deducted from the salaries of the officers concerned — a rare accountability measure.
- ◆ The case arose from industrial/contractual workers' protests (April 2026) in Noida demanding wage parity with Haryana; the ‘electronic evidence’ of incitement could not be established.
- ◆ The editorial calls it a ‘**silver lining**’ against executive arbitrariness — a signal that democratic protest should be **heeded, not suppressed**.

VALUE ADDITION — PREVENTIVE DETENTION

- **NSA, 1980** allows preventive detention for up to **12 months**; no FIR/charge needed.
- **Article 22** — safeguards for detainees, but clauses (4)–(7) permit preventive detention with an **Advisory Board** review.
- ‘Preventive detention’ is in the **Concurrent List**; the NSA is a Union law.
- Judicial checks: writ of **Habeas Corpus (Art 32 & 226)**; ‘application of mind’ doctrine.

Prelims Pointers

- **Preventive vs Punitive detention** — preventive is to *prevent* a future act, without trial.
- Max preventive detention without Advisory Board opinion: **3 months** (Art 22).
- Related laws: **UAPA, PSA (J&K), COFEPOSA**.
- Writs available: Habeas Corpus, Mandamus, Prohibition, Certiorari, Quo Warranto.

SYLLABUS LINK: GS II — Indian Constitution; Fundamental Rights (Art 21, 22); role of judiciary; structure & functioning of the executive; mechanisms for protection of rights.

Practice Zone

Two Mains questions (bilingual, with approach), ten Prelims MCQs with a full answer key & rationale, a Quick Revision Recap, Trap-Setters, Prelims Bytes and Connect-the-Dots — built from today's eight topics.

Mains Q1

GS II • Health & Governance • 250 words / 15 marks

“The rising consumption of foods high in salt, sugar and unhealthy fats has emerged as a major public health challenge in India.” Examine its health and socio-economic implications. Also suggest regulatory and behavioural measures to promote healthier food choices.

“नमक, चीनी और अस्वास्थ्यकर वसा की अधिक मात्रा वाले खाद्य पदार्थों की बढ़ती खपत भारत में एक प्रमुख सार्वजनिक स्वास्थ्य चुनौती के रूप में उभरी है।” इसके स्वास्थ्य एवं सामाजिक-आर्थिक प्रभावों का परीक्षण कीजिए। साथ ही, स्वस्थ खाद्य विकल्पों को बढ़ावा देने हेतु नियामक एवं व्यवहारगत उपाय सुझाइए।

APPROACH: Intro with a data hook (World Obesity Atlas 2026 — ~41 mn obese children; rising NCDs). Health implications — obesity, type-2 diabetes, hypertension, premature mortality. Socio-economic — productivity loss, out-of-pocket health spend, burden on the poor (cheap HFSS foods). Measures — front-of-pack red label (mandatory), sugar/HFSS tax (UK levy model), marketing curbs for children, reaching the unorganised sector, Eat Right India, behavioural nudges & school canteen norms. Conclude with a balanced, equity-sensitive regulatory mix.

Mains Q2

GS II • Polity / Federalism • 250 words / 15 marks

The demand for democratic and autonomous governance in Ladakh has revived debate on special constitutional provisions. Discuss how Articles 371 and 240, and the Sixth Schedule, could address the aspirations of a Union Territory without a legislature.

लद्दाख में लोकतांत्रिक एवं स्वायत्त शासन की मांग ने विशेष संवैधानिक प्रावधानों पर बहस को पुनर्जीवित कर दिया है। चर्चा कीजिए कि अनुच्छेद 371 एवं 240 तथा छठी अनुसूची किस प्रकार बिना विधानमंडल वाले एक केंद्र शासित प्रदेश की आकांक्षाओं को संबोधित कर सकते हैं।

APPROACH: Context — post-2019 Ladakh UT without legislature; LAB & KDA demands (Statehood, Sixth Schedule). Explain Article 371 (Part XXI special provisions), the proposed ‘Chapter K’, and Article 240 (President's regulation power). Weigh Sixth-Schedule tribal autonomy vs administrative UT model; land, culture & environment safeguards. Balance regional aspirations with national interest & strategic sensitivity; conclude with a cooperative-federalism way forward.

PRELIMS MCQS (1–10)

Q1. With reference to the Strait of Hormuz, consider the following statements:

1. It connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman.
2. It is bordered by Iran to the north and Oman & the UAE to the south.
3. Kharg Island, a major Iranian oil terminal, lies within the Strait.

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. The marital rape exemption in Indian criminal law is presently contained in:

- (a) Section 375, IPC only
- (b) Section 63, Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023
- (c) Section 498A, IPC
- (d) The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005

Q3. Article 371 of the Constitution, which contains special provisions for certain States, is placed under which Part?

- (a) Part XIV
- (b) Part XX
- (c) Part XXI
- (d) Part XV

Q4. Consider the following pairs of Article and State:

1. 371-A – Nagaland
2. 371-F – Sikkim
3. 371-G – Mizoram
4. 371-J – Karnataka

How many pairs are correctly matched?

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

Q5. With reference to Article 240 of the Constitution, consider the following statements:

1. It empowers the President to make regulations for certain Union Territories.
2. Such regulations have the same force as an Act of Parliament.
3. It currently applies to Puducherry only.

Which of the statements are correct?

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

Q6. The National Population Register (NPR) is prepared under the provisions of:

- (a) The Census Act, 1948
- (b) The Citizenship Act, 1955 and rules thereunder
- (c) The Representation of the People Act, 1950
- (d) The Aadhaar Act, 2016

Q7. Which of the following are members of BRICS as of 2024–26?

1. Egypt 2. Ethiopia 3. Iran 4. Argentina 5. UAE

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

Q8. The New Development Bank (NDB), often in news with BRICS, is headquartered at:

- (a) New Delhi
- (b) Beijing
- (c) Shanghai
- (d) Fortaleza

Q9. The National Security Act, 1980 is associated with which of the following?

- (a) Punitive detention after conviction
- (b) Preventive detention without trial
- (c) Regulation of foreign contributions
- (d) Anti-defection measures

Q10. Under Article 22, the maximum period a person may be held under preventive detention without obtaining the opinion of an Advisory Board is:

- (a) One month
- (b) Two months
- (c) Three months
- (d) Six months

Answer Key & Rationale

Q1 (a)

Q2 (b)

Q3 (c)

Q4 (c)

Q5 (a)

Q6 (b)

Q7 (a)

Q8 (c)

Q9 (b)

Q10 (c)

Q1 (A): Statements 1 & 2 are correct. Kharg Island is Iran's main crude export terminal but lies in the **Persian Gulf**, not within the Strait — so 3 is wrong.

Q2 (B): Since the **BNS 2023** replaced the IPC (w.e.f. 1 July 2024), the exception now sits in the Exception to **Section 63 BNS**, which retained it while raising the wife's age threshold to 18.

Q3 (C): Article 371 falls under **Part XXI** — “Temporary, Transitional and Special Provisions.”

Q4 (C): All four are correctly matched — 371-A Nagaland, 371-F Sikkim, 371-G Mizoram, 371-J Karnataka.

Q5 (A): 1 & 2 are correct. Article 240 applies to several UTs (A&N, Lakshadweep, DNH & DD, Ladakh, and Puducherry only when its legislature is dissolved/suspended) — not Puducherry alone, so 3 is wrong.

Q6 (B): The NPR is prepared under the **Citizenship Act, 1955** and the Citizenship (Registration of Citizens...) Rules, 2003. The Census is backed by the separate **Census Act, 1948**.

Q7 (A): Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran and the UAE joined in Jan 2024 (Indonesia too). **Argentina declined** membership — so 4 is excluded.

Q8 (C): The NDB is headquartered in **Shanghai**. It was established at the 2014 *Fortaleza* Summit; its first President was K.V. Kamath of India.

Q9 (B): The **NSA, 1980** provides for **preventive detention** (up to 12 months) to prevent a person from acting prejudicially to national security/public order — no trial or conviction is involved.

Q10 (C): Article 22(4) caps detention at **three months** unless an Advisory Board reports sufficient cause for longer detention.

Quick Revision Recap

- **Hormuz:** ~ $\frac{1}{5}$ of global oil; Brent crossed \$100 (first since Jul 2024).
- **IRGC / CENTCOM:** Iran's Guard Corps / U.S. Central Command.
- **Marital rape:** Exception to **Sec 63 BNS**; age threshold 18.
- **Verma Committee (2013):** called the exemption regressive.
- **Article 371:** Part XXI; runs A–J across 12 States.
- **Article 240:** President's regulation power for certain UTs.
- **Census Act 1948 vs Citizenship Act 1955** (NPR/NRC).
- **NPR:** usual resident = 6 months + 6 months intended.
- **BRICS (10):** +Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, UAE (Jan 2024).
- **NDB:** Shanghai HQ; >\$40 bn approved.
- **UAE–India CEPA (2022):** target \$200 bn by 2032.
- **NSA 1980:** preventive detention up to 12 months.

Prelims Trap-Setters

- **Kharg Island** is in the **Persian Gulf**, not inside the Strait of Hormuz.
- The **NPR** includes **non-citizens** (usual residents); it is **not** a citizenship count.
- Rape provisions are now **Sec 63–64 BNS** — the old Sec 375–376 IPC is repealed.
- **Argentina** was invited to BRICS but **declined** — don't count it as a member.
- Preventive detention beyond **3 months** needs an **Advisory Board** opinion (Art 22).
- The **Census** is backed by the **Census Act 1948**; the **NPR** by the **Citizenship Act 1955** rules.

Prelims Bytes — Persons & Places in News

- **Surya Kant** — Chief Justice of India (heard the marital-rape appeals).
- **Joymalya Bagchi** — Supreme Court judge quoted in the case.
- **Sonam Wangchuk** — activist in the Ladakh Statehood delegation.
- **Saeed bin Mubarak Al Hajeri** — UAE Minister of State (BRICS op-ed).
- **Al-Azraq (Jordan)** — U.S. base targeted by Iranian missiles.
- **World Obesity Atlas 2026** — ~41 mn obese Indian children (5–19).
- **18th BRICS Summit** — New Delhi, 12–13 Sept 2026 (India chair).
- **RG&CCI** — Registrar General & Census Commissioner of India.

Connect the Dots

Energy & Economy: Hormuz instability → Brent > \$100 → India's import bill, inflation, rupee → strengthens the case for BRICS local-currency settlement and SPR expansion.

Rights vs Institutions: Marital-rape verdict and the NSA-detention ruling both turn on the judiciary-legislature-executive balance and the reach of Fundamental Rights (Art 14, 21, 22).

Federal Design: Article 371 'Chapter K' for Ladakh sits alongside the Census-NPR-NRC debate as tests of Centre-region trust and cooperative federalism.

Mains Value-Addition — Data, Keywords & Quotes

DATA HOOKS (USE IN INTROS/CONCLUSIONS)

- **Brent > \$100/barrel** — first since July 2024 (Hormuz).
- Intra-BRICS merchandise trade ~**25%** of global exports (2024).
- **Iran >65%** / **Ethiopia ~45%** imports from BRICS.
- **NDB** has approved >**\$40 billion** since inception.
- **UAE-India non-oil trade >\$76 bn** (2025); target **\$200 bn** by 2032.
- **~41 million** Indian children (5-19) overweight/obese — World Obesity Atlas 2026.
- **NPR** covers **~119 crore** residents (updated 2015).
- Article 371 special provisions across **12 States**; Ladakh UT since **2019**.

HIGH-VALUE KEYWORDS

- **Cooperative & asymmetric federalism**
- **Constitutional morality**; separation of powers
- **De-dollarisation**; local-currency settlement
- **Correspondent banking**; SWIFT alternatives
- **Nutrition transition**; NCD burden; 'HFSS'
- **Preventive detention** vs personal liberty (Art 21)
- **Choke-point geopolitics**; energy security
- **Global South**; reformed multilateralism

QUOTABLE LINES

"A man is a man; an act is an act; rape is a rape." — Karnataka HC (citing the Justice Verma Committee).

An unhinged bureaucracy could reduce the State to an "Orwellian dystopia." — Allahabad High Court.

"Regulation that reaches only packaged food leaves the unregulated half of the plate untouched." — on the sugar problem.

"The Constitution is not a mere lawyers' document, it is a vehicle of Life, and its spirit is always the spirit of Age."

"संविधान केवल वकीलों का दस्तावेज़ नहीं, यह जीवन का वाहक है, और इसकी आत्मा सदैव युग की आत्मा है।"

— B. R. AMBEDKAR | VEDANTA COACHING ACADEMY & LIBRARY