

The Hindu Important News Articles & Editorial For UPSC CSE**Saturday, 22 June , 2024****Edition: International | Table of Contents**

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The Union government has enacted the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024, effective June 21, to combat cheating in government recruitment exams.

Act punishing organised cheating comes into effect

The law has provision for up to five years' imprisonment and a fine of up to ₹1 crore for exam malpractices; the UGC-NET exam cancelled on June 19 will not be covered by the new legislation

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024 that has provision for up to five years' imprisonment and a fine of up to ₹1 crore for malpractices and organised cheating in government recruitment exams was notified by the Union government to come into effect from Friday.

The UGC-NET 2024 examination that was cancelled on June 19 on grounds of being compromised and is being investigated by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) will however not be covered by the newly enacted law.

On February 6, Parliament passed the Bill.

A notification issued by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) on Friday said, "In exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (2) of Section 1 of the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024 (1 of 2024), the Central government hereby appoints the 21st day of June, 2024 as the date on which the provisions of the said Act shall



Worrying state: National Students Union of India (NSUI) supporters stage a protest against the irregularities in NEET-UG, in Nagpur on Friday. ANI

come into force."

The Act mentions punishments for "leakage of question paper or answer key", "directly or indirectly assisting the candidate in any manner unauthorised in the public examination" and "tampering with the computer network or a computer resource or a computer system" as offences done by a person, group of persons or institutions.

List of offences

Besides these, "creation of fake website to cheat or for monetary gain", "conduct of fake examination, issuance of fake admit cards or offer letters to cheat or for monetary gain" and "manipulation in seating

arrangements, allocation of dates and shifts for the candidates to facilitate adopting unfair means in examinations" are also among the offences punishable under the law.

"Any person or persons resorting to unfair means and offences under this Act shall be punished with imprisonment for a term not less than three years but which may extend to five years and with fine up to ₹10 lakh," said the Act.

A service provider, engaged by the public examination authority for conduct of examinations, shall also be liable to be punished with imposition of a fine up to ₹1 crore "and proportionate cost of examination shall also be re-

covered" from it, according to the Act.

Such service providers shall also be barred from being assigned with any responsibility for the conduct of any public examination for a period of four years.

The Act defines service provider as any agency, organisation, body, association of persons, business entity, company, partnership or single proprietorship firm, including its associates, sub-contractors and provider of support of any computer resource or any material, by whatever name it may be called, "which is engaged by the public examination authority for conduct of public examination".

- The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024 was enacted to prevent malpractices and organised cheating in government recruitment exams.
- The Act was passed by Parliament on February 6, 2024, and came into effect on June 21, 2024.

Daily News Analysis

➡ **Fine and Imprisonment:**

- **Imprisonment:** Offenders face imprisonment for a term not less than three years, extendable up to five years.
- **Fine:** A fine of up to ₹10 lakh for individuals involved in malpractices.
- Service providers can be fined up to ₹1 crore and have to bear the proportionate cost of the compromised examination.
- Service providers will be barred from public examination responsibilities for four years.

➡ **List of offences:**

- Leakage of question papers or answer keys.
- Unauthorised assistance to candidates.
- Tampering with computer networks, resources, or systems.
- Creation of fake websites for cheating or monetary gain.
- Conducting fake examinations, issuing fake admit cards, or offer letters for monetary gain.
- Manipulation in seating arrangements, allocation of dates, and shifts to facilitate cheating.

➡ **Authority:** The Act was notified by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT).

➡ **Purpose:** To uphold the integrity and fairness of public examinations and deter fraudulent activities and organised cheating.

Page 11 : GS 3 : Indian Economy

In June, India's steel exports are encountering sluggish demand in key markets like the EU, West Asia, and Southeast Asia.

- ➡ India's steel exports face sluggish demand in June across key markets like the EU, West Asia, and Southeast Asia.
- ➡ Hot rolled coil (HRC) offers to Southeast Asia and West Asia are hindered by competitive Chinese pricing resistance, with offers to West Asia around \$600 per tonne, higher than expected.
- ➡ European demand remains subdued due to economic challenges, though Hot rolled coil (HRC) prices saw a slight increase to \$560-610 per tonne due to extended safeguard measures restricting imports.
- ➡ Cold rolled coil offers to Europe decreased by 6-7% to \$700 per tonne, impacting India's export prospects.
- ➡ Indian steel mills have kept HRC export prices to Europe steady amidst domestic market focus and expectations of market sluggishness post-monsoon.
- ➡ Monsoon onset in India is expected to dampen domestic steel demand, coupled with increasing import competition, leading to downward price pressure and pessimistic market sentiment.

Global headwinds may dampen India's exports of steel

Abhishek Law
NEW DELHI

The country's steel exports continue to see sluggish demand in June across key markets that include the Europe Union, West Asia and the South East Asian region.

While higher-than-expected price quotations are said to be a key reason for subdued demand, sources said hot rolled coil (HRC) offers to South East Asia and West Asia continue to face Chinese competitive price resistance, thereby impacting demand.

Offers to West Asia are apparently in the \$600 per tonne range as against expectations (primarily Chinese offers) being in the \$550-580 per tonne range.

European demand

In case of Europe, sluggish economic conditions - after a brief period of improvement in early-June - persist.

In case of Europe, there was slight increase in price quotations early June, rising to \$560-610 per tonne (lower and higher end) after settling in the \$560-600 range, by mid-June.

In contrast, European HRC prices experienced a marginal uptick despite lacklustre demand.

This increase coincides with the European Union's extended safeguard measures, aimed at restricting imports from specific countries and potentially tightening supply within Europe.

India will be among the countries that could see a hit in its exports to Europe.

On the other hand, cold rolled coil offers to Europe



saw a 6-7% decline to \$700 per tonne, as against \$750 in the previous week.

According to consultancy firm, BigMint, the Indian steel mills have maintained their HRC export offers to Europe "unchanged", focusing on the domestic market as a priority.

"Some sluggishness in domestic market is expected post June, as monsoon set in," a steel mill official told *businessline*. "Budget expectations will also weigh in on trade level prices while mills are also expecting counter-measures to safeguard duties of the EU," the official added.

Domestic market

India's imports of bulk HRC and plates have begun to grow, outpacing exports.

The onset of the monsoon season is anticipated to reduce demand across various regions of India too.

"Narrowing profit margins and reduced sales within the trading sector, is fostering a pessimistic market sentiment. Moreover, the increasing influx of imports is poised to exert additional downward pressure on prices," BigMint said in its report.

(The writer is with *The Hindu businessline*)

Page 11 : GS 3 – Indian Economy

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) proposes amendments clarifying that resolution plans under the IBC do not automatically release personal guarantors from liabilities.

- ➡ The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) proposes amendments to clarify that approving a resolution plan under the IBC does not release guarantors from their debt obligations.
- ➡ The IBBI's move follows the Supreme Court's stance in *Lalit Kumar Jain vs Union of India*, affirming that resolution plan approval does not absolve personal guarantors from liability.
- ➡ Experts like Sushmita Gandhi and Misha express support but note concerns about potential conflicts with creditor agreements.
- ➡ Hari Hara Mishra of the Association of ARCs in India sees the proposal as beneficial for creditors, enhancing recovery efforts.
- ➡ Sumit Khanna highlights the amendment's role in strengthening creditor positions and improving recovery rates, crucial amid current recovery challenges.

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI):

- ➡ **Establishment:** The IBBI was established on October 1, 2016, under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (IBC).
- ➡ **Regulatory Authority:** It serves as the regulatory body overseeing insolvency resolution and bankruptcy processes in India.

Key Functions:

- ➡ Regulates insolvency professionals (IPs), insolvency professional agencies (IPAs), and information utilities (IUs).
- ➡ Develops and enforces the Code's rules and regulations to ensure fair and efficient resolution processes.

IBBI to strengthen creditors' rights on personal guarantors

K.R. Srivats
NEW DELHI

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India proposes to make it unequivocally clear that the submission or approval of a resolution plan for a corporate debtor under the IBC does not automatically release guarantors from their liability to repay the debt.

The IBBI now seeks to amend its CIRP regulations to ensure that submitting a resolution plan does not prevent creditors from enforcing their rights against the personal guarantor. Insolvency law experts said the IBBI's plan is likely to provide legislative clarity, strengthen creditors' position, and boost recoveries from personal guarantors.

The IBBI has released a discussion paper addressing, among other things, the "release of guarantees in a resolution plan." The last date for public comments through electronic mode is July 10, IBBI has said.

SC's approach

To clarify that approving a resolution plan does not automatically discharge a personal guarantor's liabilities from an independent contract, the IBBI has followed the Supreme Court's approach in *Lalit Kumar Jain vs Union of India*.

In the *Lalit Kumar Jain vs Union of India* judgment, the Supreme Court upheld the November 15, 2019, MCA notification enforcing the IBC's provisions on personal guarantors' insolvency.



Bringing clarity: The regulator has issued a discussion paper and sought public comments by July 10. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

The court also ruled that approving a resolution plan does not absolve personal guarantors from their obligations or extinguish their liability.

Experts' take

Sushmita Gandhi, Partner, INDUSLAW, said the case of *Lalit Kumar* is one of the many instances where judicial interpretation bridged the lacuna in the IBC, which is still a nascent law. "The proposal indicates that the IBBI is cognisant of such gaps and is attempting to bridge the same to avoid ambiguity relating to the position of release of guarantees," she added.

'Raises concerns'

Misha, Partner, Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas & Co., said the language of the proposed amendment raises concerns.

"On a plain reading, it suggests that a resolution plan cannot prevent creditors from enforcing their rights against the guarantors of the corporate debtor. This should not be the case where the creditors have agreed to discharge the guarantor along with

the corporate debtor," she observed.

Hari Hara Mishra, CEO of the Association of ARCs in India, said the IBBI proposal, if implemented, will be a shot in the arm for creditors and a boost to improve recovery from the enforcement of guarantees.

'Sanctity of contracts'

"This will reinforce the sanctity of contractual obligations, the backbone of a robust framework of credit culture," he said.

Sumit Khanna, Partner, Deloitte India, said, "By prohibiting resolution applicants from extinguishing guarantees, this change strengthens creditors' positions, promising a more efficient recovery process. With creditors recovering close to 2 per cent of claims from PGs, this amendment is crucial for bolstering recovery."

Vishwas Panjiar, Partner, Nangia Andersen in India, said personal guarantors remain liable for the guarantees they have provided.

(The writer is with The Hindu businessline)

Daily News Analysis

- Facilitates corporate and individual insolvency resolution through its framework and guidelines.

Role in Resolution Process:

- Monitors and supervises corporate insolvency resolution processes (CIRP) and liquidation proceedings.
- Adjudicates on issues arising from the insolvency resolution process.
- Provides clarity and guidance through circulars and notifications to stakeholders.

Impact:

- Has significantly influenced the corporate and financial landscape by providing a structured framework for distressed asset resolution.
- Aims to enhance creditor confidence and promote a faster resolution of insolvency cases in India.
- This framework aims to promote transparency, efficiency, and accountability in insolvency proceedings, crucial for economic stability and creditor rights protection.

Page 11 : GS3 – Indian Economy – Issues relating to Planning

Ashima Goyal and Jayanth R. Varma, external members of the RBI's MPC, called for a 0.25% rate cut, warning that maintaining a tight monetary policy could hinder growth.

'Growth sacrifice' view grows in MPC

External member Goyal cautions MPC against repeating the mistake of 2015, when policymakers avoided cutting interest rates on fears that crude prices could rise again and thus hurt growth; joins Varma in voting for a 25 bps rate reduction

Lalatendu Mishra

MUMBAI

Ashima Goyal joined Jayanth R. Varma as the two external members of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted as a minority for a 0.25% rate cut at the latest MPC meeting, warning against the rising risks of 'status quosim' and 'growth sacrifice' as a result of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) persisting with its tight monetary policy approach, the minutes of the June 5-7 meeting released on Friday show.

"Headline inflation has

Debate widens

MPC member Goyal joins Varma in voting for a rate cut, cites risks to growth from keeping policy restrictive for unduly long

■ MPC's headline inflation projection of 4.5% gives an average real repo rate of 2%, says Goyal

■ This implies the real repo rate will be above neutral for too long if the repo rate stays unchanged, she argues

■ Policy must stay focused on aligning inflation to target or risk undermining medium-term growth: RBI's Patra



been around 5% since January... while core inflation has been below 4% since December 2023," Dr. Goyal noted. "The headline inflation projection

of 4.5% for 2024-25 gives an average real repo rate of 2% implying that the real repo rate will be above neutral for too long if the repo rate stays un-

changed," she pointed out.

Stating that slowing inflation had raised real repo above unity, she said this would reduce real growth rate with a lag. "Expected growth is around 7% in 2024-25 below the 8% achieved in 2023-24. Status quoism is praised as being cautious. But if doing nothing distorts real variables it aggravates shocks instead of smoothing them and raises risk," she asserted.

Dr. Goyal stressed that it was necessary to avoid the mistake of 2015 when global crude oil prices fell substantially but the fear that they would rise again pre-

vented an adequate cut in the policy rate. "Real interest rates rose substantially and hurt growth."

Mr. Varma said: "I expressed concern about the growth sacrifice in 2024-25 induced by restrictive monetary policy. It now appears that the maintenance of restrictive policy for unwarrantedly long will lead to a growth sacrifice in 2025-26 as well."

RBI Deputy Governor Michael Debabrata Patra, however, said policy needed to stay focused on aligning inflation to the target or risk undermining medium-term growth.

- ➡ Ashima Goyal and Jayanth R. Varma, external MPC members, voted for a 0.25% rate cut at the latest MPC meeting.
- ➡ They warned against the risks of maintaining a tight monetary policy, leading to 'status quo sim' and 'growth sacrifice.'
- ➡ Goyal highlighted that headline inflation has been around 5% since January and core inflation below 4% since December 2023.
- ➡ She noted the projected headline inflation of 4.5% for 2024-25 implies a real repo rate of 2%, which would stay above neutral for too long if unchanged.
- ➡ Goyal warned that high real repo rates would reduce real growth rates, with expected growth for 2024-25 at 7%, down from 8% in 2023-24.
- ➡ She emphasised avoiding past mistakes, such as 2015's insufficient rate cuts despite falling global crude oil prices.
- ➡ Jayanth Varma expressed concerns about restrictive monetary policy inducing growth sacrifices in 2024-25 and potentially in 2025-26.

Daily News Analysis

- ➡ RBI Deputy Governor Michael Debabrata Patra argued for maintaining focus on aligning inflation to target to avoid undermining medium-term growth.

Location In News : Delos

Delos, a UNESCO World Heritage site situated close to Mykonos, Greece, played a pivotal role as a sanctuary in the ancient Greek and Roman civilizations.

- ➡ Scientists warn that Delos faces imminent destruction within the next 50 years due to rising sea levels caused by climate change.

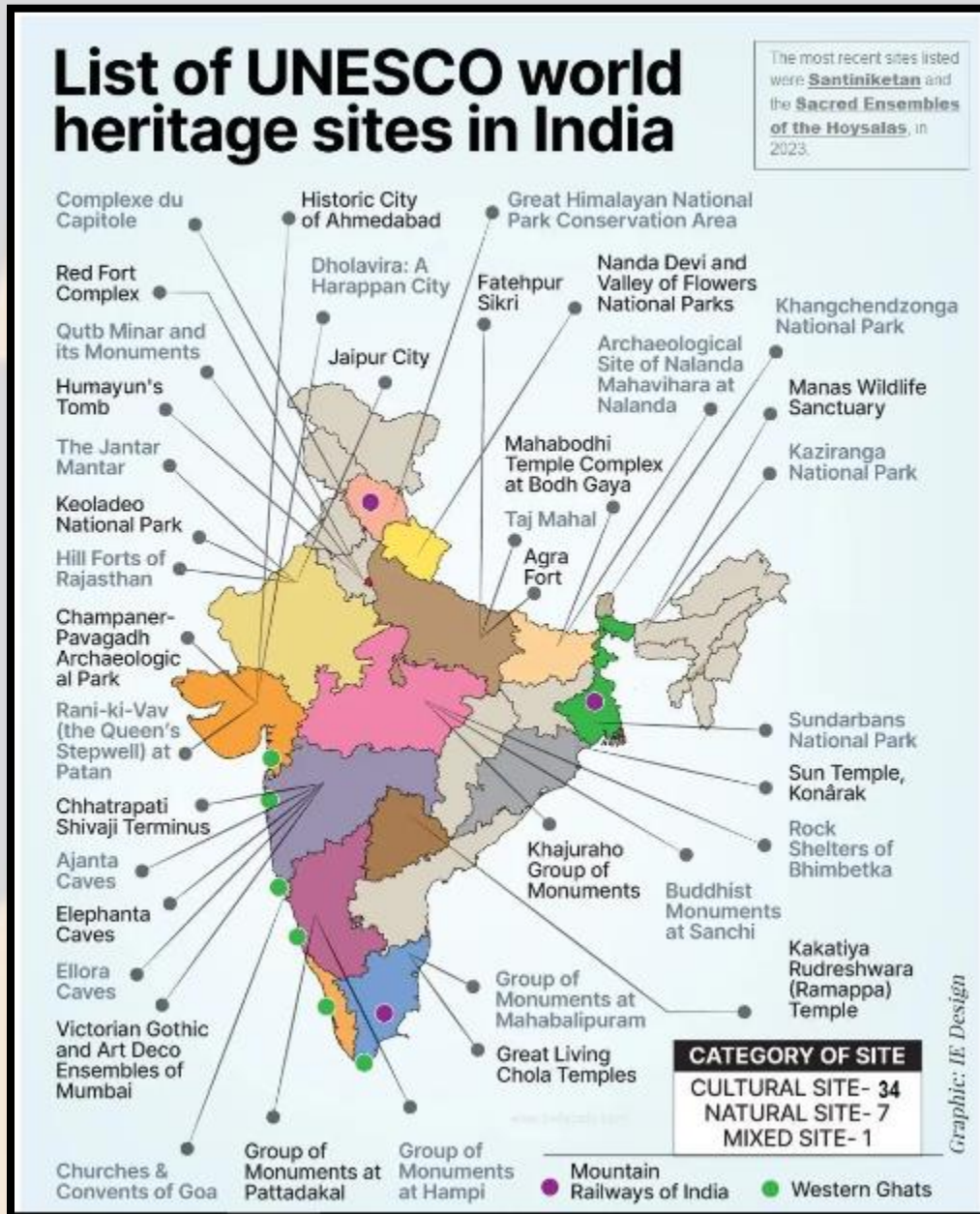


About Delos

- ➡ Delos is a small island located in the Aegean Sea, part of the Cyclades archipelago in Greece.
- ➡ It is considered as the birthplace of Apollo, the god of light, arts, and healing, and his sister Artemis, the goddess of the hunt.
- ➡ Its ancient ruins date back to the 3rd millennium BCE.
- ➡ These ruins include temples, houses, sanctuaries, theatres, and other public buildings.
- ➡ It served as a port and trading hub, connecting the civilizations of the eastern Mediterranean with those of the west.
- ➡ Delos was declared as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1990.
- ➡ **Ruins and Monuments:** Some of the most notable ruins and monuments on Delos include the Terrace of the Lions, the Temple of Apollo, the House of the Dolphins, the Theater District, and the Sacred Lake.

Important Sites in India:

- ➡ There are 42 World Heritage Sites in India.



- Out of these, 34 are cultural, 7 are natural, and 1, Khangchendzonga National Park, is of mixed type.
- India has the sixth-most sites worldwide.
- The first sites to be listed were the Ajanta Caves, Ellora Caves, Agra Fort, and Taj Mahal, all of which were inscribed in the 1983 session of the World Heritage Committee.
- The most recent sites listed were Santiniketan and the Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas, in 2023.

Page : 06 Editorial Analysis

A progressive Indian policy on Myanmar outlined

Three years on, the military in Myanmar, which overthrew the elected civilian government in February 2021, continues to kill, maim and displace its own people. India has steadfastly maintained formal relations with this regime, which has so far murdered more than 5,000 people and displaced some 2.5 million people. In its second tenure, the Narendra Modi government did very little to engage with the pro-democracy resistance, which now has both political and military wings. Indian foreign policy scholars and practitioners have doggedly defended this policy by arguing that India needs to work with the junta if it has to protect its “interests” in Myanmar and not get swayed by an idealistic preoccupation with “values”.

How India can step out of China's shadow

But, in foreign policy, there is no clear line between “values” and “interests” simply because neither has a standard definition. It all depends on how a country defines these terms. This is also the case with India's Myanmar policy. New Delhi has long defined its “interests” in the Southeast Asian country in narrow strategic terms. But now, it needs to leverage a unique set of “values” to better defend its interests. It is possible for India to put in place a more progressive, values-driven Myanmar policy that works in favour, and not against, its national interests.

This new policy should have two key pivots, namely, democracy and human security. The new National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government, therefore, needs to take four interlocking steps immediately.

First, India needs to use its credentials as the largest federal democracy in the region to sharpen its influence in Myanmar. For long, Myanmar's pro-democracy political elites and civil society have looked up to India as a model of a federal democratic union with a well-oiled power-sharing arrangement between the centre and various subnational units. This is even more relevant today as the democratic resistance in Myanmar, which is led by the National Unity Government (NUG), dozens of ethnic revolutionary organisations, civil society organisations, and trade unions, strives to replace the military-drafted 2008 constitution with a



Angshuman Choudhury

New Delhi-based researcher and writer from Assam, and formerly an Associate Fellow at the Centre for Policy Research

New Delhi's stance of defining its ‘interests’ in the Southeast Asian country in narrow strategic terms needs to change

federal constitution. By helping this vibrant opposition achieve its aim through capacity-building and knowledge exchange programmes, India can distinguish itself from China, its primary regional competitor in Myanmar. Both Beijing and New Delhi can sell military hardware to Myanmar, but only India can sell the spirit of federal cooperation. Here is a chance for the new Indian government to outmanoeuvre the Chinese in their own ‘backyard’.

Weapons sales and humanitarian outreach

Second, India needs to immediately halt all weapon sales to the Myanmar military. According to the advocacy group, Justice For Myanmar (JFM), Indian state-owned military hardware manufacturers have sold a range of non-lethal and semi-lethal equipment to the junta since the 2021 coup. In its most recent report, published on March 27, the group claimed that on January 2, the Indian Air Force transferred a package which had 52 items, including navigation and communication parts, to its Myanmar counterpart. Another recent investigation by Frontier Myanmar claims that India sold more than \$1.5 million worth of navy-grade diesel to junta-linked entities since the coup. New Delhi needs to immediately put a stop to these, as the Myanmar military continues to use all its three services – the army, air force, and navy – to attack non-combatant civilians using imprecise lethal tactics.

Third, India needs to immediately open cross-border humanitarian corridors to help civilians affected by the conflict along three border provinces – Sagaing Region, Chin State and northern Rakhine State. According to United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) data, Sagaing Region has seen the largest quantum of internal displacement in all of Myanmar since the coup (as of March 25, 2024). Rakhine comes next, while Chin State sits tenth in the list. Continuing air strikes by the junta and clashes between armed groups in these areas have only pushed more civilians across the borders. New Delhi needs to first revoke its plans to fence the India-Myanmar border and reinstate the Free Movement Regime,

or the FMR, which the Union Home Ministry suspended in February 2024. Then, it should engage existing humanitarian aid networks along the India-Myanmar border to send emergency relief assistance including medicines, food and tarpaulin to the other side. Mizoram, where a multi-layered asylum and aid ecosystem is already operational, is a good starting point. India should also collaborate with local and international non-governmental organisations with experience in the field. Best practices from Thailand, which recently started cross-border aid deliveries into Myanmar, should also be adopted. New Delhi should use its clout to ensure that the aid is not distributed by the junta, which not only has a disastrous track record in this field, but is also not even in control of large areas along the India-Myanmar border. It is also possible to run cross-border aid corridors without allowing contraband to pass through, with stringent checks and pre-delivery vetting.

Detention of asylum seekers

Fourth, the Narendra Modi government should immediately halt the detention and deportation of asylum seekers from Myanmar. This is especially so in the case of Manipur, where the BJP-led government has so far deported 115 asylum seekers to Myanmar – the latest round was on June 11. These are people who entered India not because they wanted to or with mal-intent, but because they were forced to. Regardless of the fact that India has not ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention, it is incumbent upon the government to treat them as refugees in need of humanitarian assistance and protection rather than as “illegal immigrants”. Both the Indian Constitution and international law allow the Indian state to do so. In fact, the customary international legal principle of non-refoulement discourages India from deporting refugees back to a home country where they face a threat of persecution or death. The Centre should also urge the BJP-led Assam government to release the 27 Chin refugees detained in the State and house them in a humane refugee shelter.

India, the “*Vishwabandhu*”, routinely claims to stand with the people of Myanmar. It should now walk the talk.

GS Paper 02 : International Relations – Bilateral Relations

Practice Question: Explain the strategic significance of India's cooperation with Myanmar, focusing on key sectors and challenges. Propose measures to strengthen bilateral relations in light of current regional dynamics. (150 w/10m)

Context : The article critiques India's foreign policy towards Myanmar amid ongoing military violence since the 2021 coup. It advocates for a shift towards supporting Myanmar's pro-democracy movement, halting arms sales to the junta, establishing humanitarian corridors, and protecting Myanmar asylum seekers in India.

- New Delhi's stance of defining its 'interests' in the Southeast Asian country in narrow strategic terms needs to change.

How India can step out of China's shadow

- Three years on, the military in Myanmar, which overthrew the elected civilian government in February 2021, continues to kill, maim and displace its own people.
- Indian foreign policy scholars and practitioners have doggedly defended this policy by arguing that India needs to work with the junta if it has to protect its "interests" in Myanmar and not get swayed by an idealistic preoccupation with "values".
- But, in foreign policy, there is no clear line between "values" and "interests" simply because neither has a standard definition.
- It all depends on how a country defines these terms. This is also the case with India's Myanmar policy.
- New Delhi has long defined its "interests" in the Southeast Asian country in narrow strategic terms.
- But now, it needs to leverage a unique set of "values" to better defend its interests.
- It is possible for India to put in place a more progressive, values-driven Myanmar policy that works in favour, and not against, its national interests.
- This new policy should have two key pivots, namely, democracy and human security.

The Steps

- First, India needs to use its credentials as the largest federal democracy in the region to sharpen its influence in Myanmar.
- For long, Myanmar's pro-democracy political elites and civil society have looked up to India as a model of a federal democratic union with a well-oiled power-sharing arrangement between the centre and various subnational units.

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- This is even more relevant today as the democratic resistance in Myanmar, which is led by the National Unity Government (NUG), dozens of ethnic revolutionary organisations, civil society organisations, and trade unions, strives to replace the military-drafted 2008 constitution with a federal constitution.
- By helping this vibrant opposition achieve its aim through capacity-building and knowledge exchange programmes, India can distinguish itself from China, its primary regional competitor in Myanmar.
- Both Beijing and New Delhi can sell military hardware to Myanmar, but only India can sell the spirit of federal cooperation.

Weapons sales and humanitarian outreach

- Second, India needs to immediately halt all weapon sales to the Myanmar military.
- New Delhi needs to first revoke its plans to fence the India-Myanmar border and reinstate the Free Movement Regime, or the FMR, which the Union Home Ministry suspended in February 2024.
- Then, it should engage existing humanitarian aid networks along the India-Myanmar border to send emergency relief assistance including medicines, food and tarpaulin to the other side.
- Mizoram, where a multi-layered asylum and aid ecosystem is already operational, is a good starting point.
- India should also collaborate with local and international non-governmental organisations with experience in the field.
- Best practices from Thailand, which recently started cross-border aid deliveries into Myanmar, should also be adopted.
- New Delhi should use its clout to ensure that the aid is not distributed by the junta, which not only has a disastrous track record in this field, but is also not even in control of large areas along the India-Myanmar border.
- It is also possible to run cross-border aid corridors without allowing contraband to pass through, with stringent checks and pre-delivery vetting.

Way forward

- Regardless of the fact that India has not ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention, it is incumbent upon the government to treat them as refugees in need of humanitarian assistance and protection rather than as "illegal immigrants".
- Both the Indian Constitution and international law allow the Indian state to do so.
- In fact, the customary international legal principle of non-refoulement discourages India from deporting refugees back to a home country where they face a threat of persecution or death.
- India, the "Vishwabandhu", routinely claims to stand with the people of Myanmar. It should now walk the Talk.

India – Myanmar Relations:

- **Importance of Myanmar for India:**

Daily News Analysis

- **Strategic Location:** Provides India with access to Southeast Asia and beyond, crucial for India's Act East Policy.
- **Energy Security:** Source of natural gas and potential for hydroelectric power collaboration.
- **Security Cooperation:** Joint efforts against insurgent groups along the border.
- **Energy Sector Collaboration:** Includes exploration of Myanmar's offshore gas reserves and cooperation in hydroelectric power projects.

➡ Challenges:

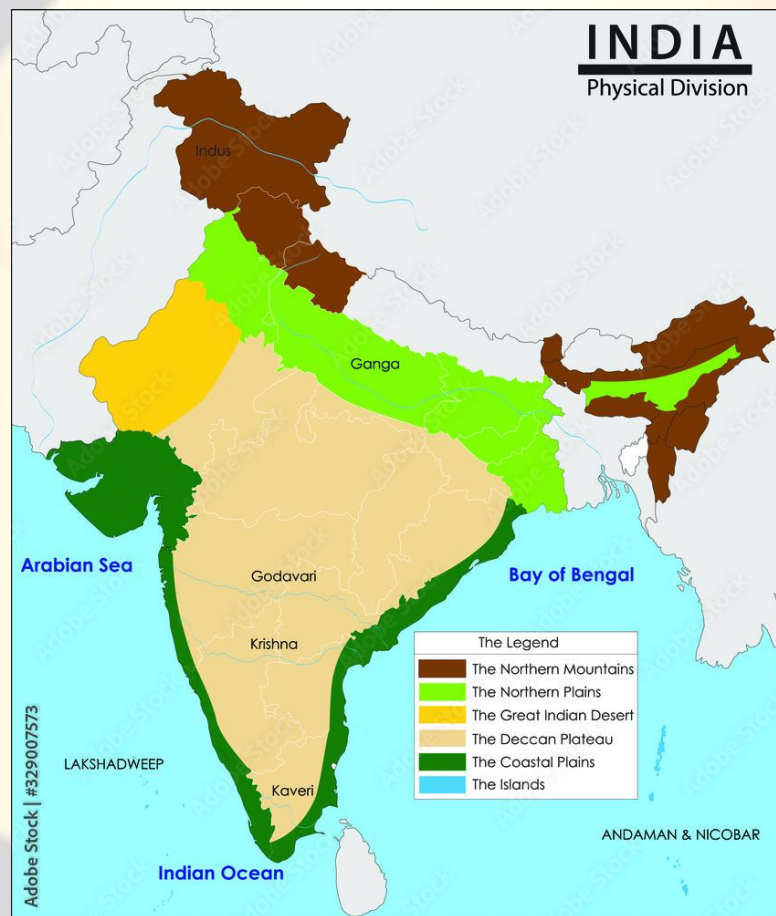
- **Political Instability:** Myanmar's internal political situation affects bilateral relations.
- **Chinese Influence:** Competing influence in Myanmar's infrastructure projects and economy.
- **Rohingya Crisis:** Humanitarian concern impacting regional stability.
- **Border Issues:** Management of cross-border trade and security challenges.

➡ Way Forward:

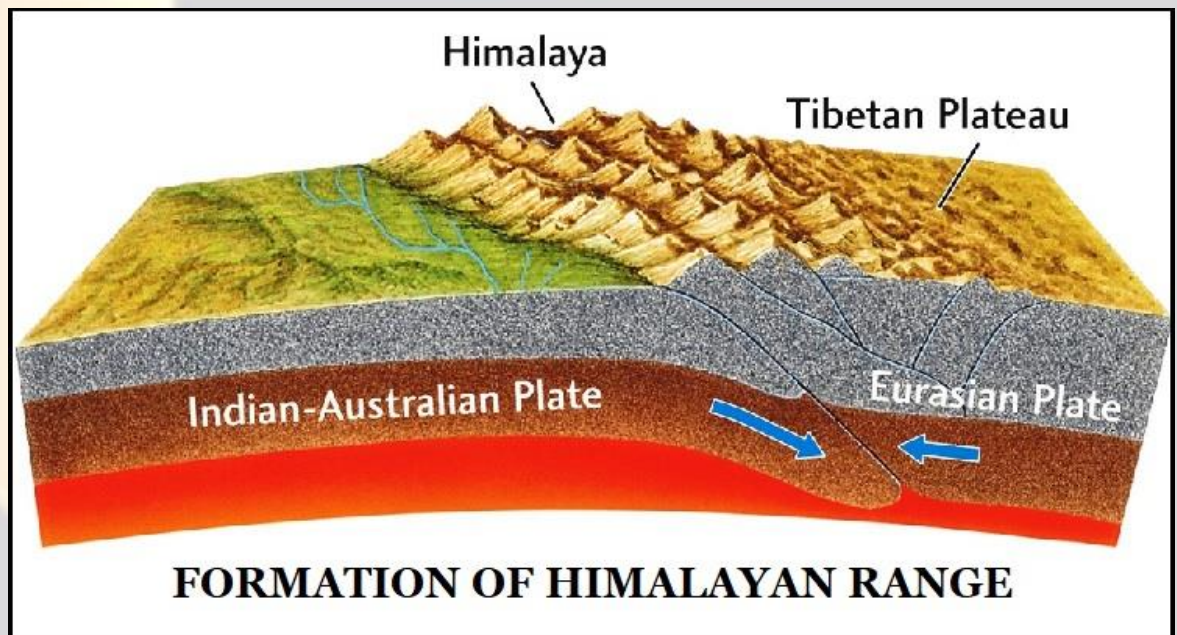
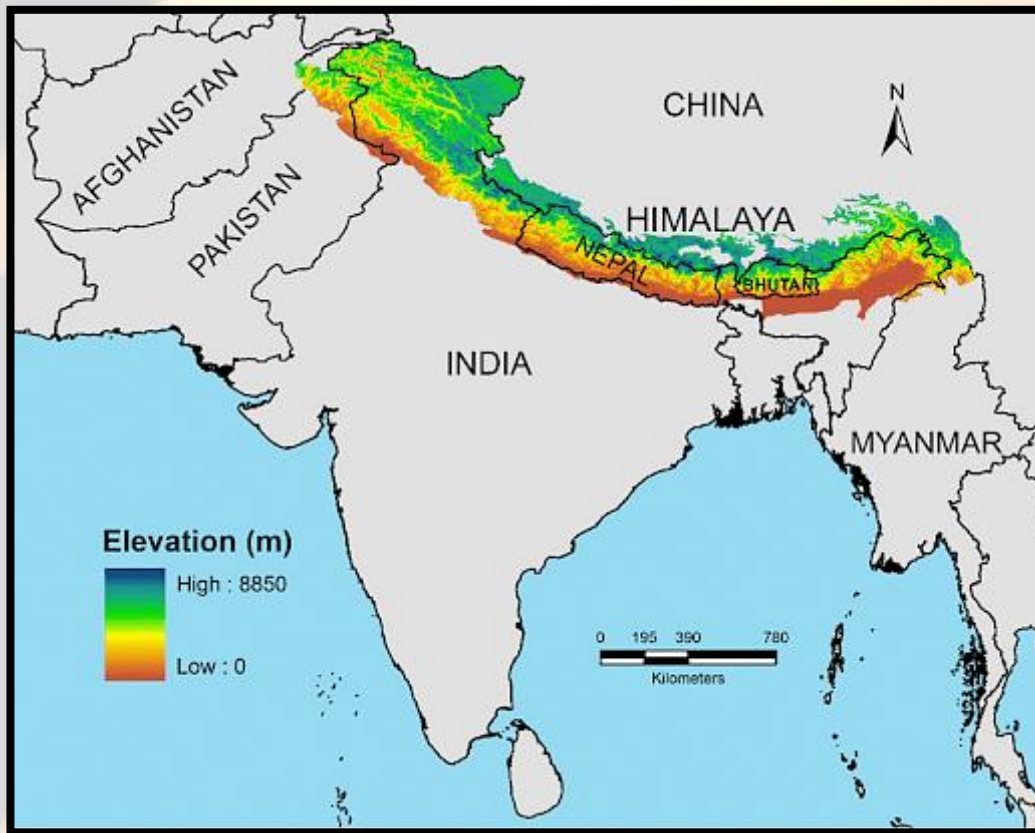
- **Enhanced Diplomatic Engagement:** Strengthening bilateral dialogue and high-level visits.
- **Economic Cooperation:** Focus on infrastructure development and connectivity projects such as Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project.
- **Security Collaboration:** Continued cooperation on counter-terrorism and border security.
- **Humanitarian Assistance:** Support for Myanmar's democratic transition and humanitarian aid for Rohingya refugees.

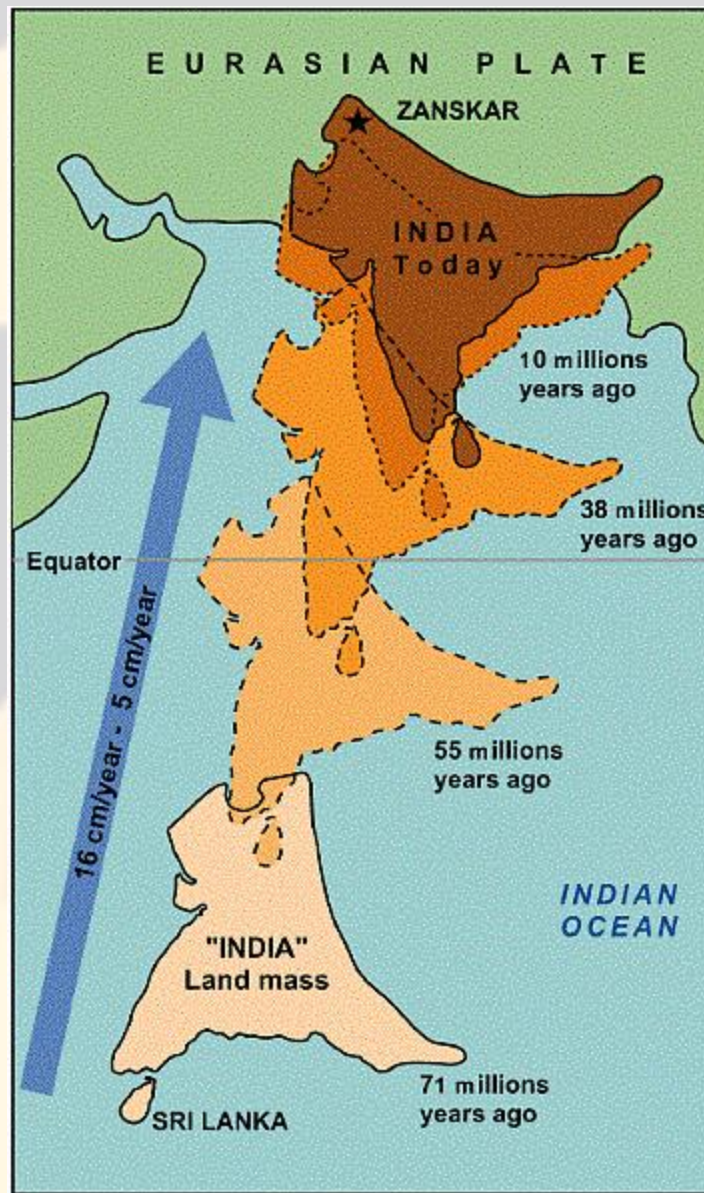
Major Physical Divisions of India

1. The Himalayan Mountains
2. The Northern Plains
3. The Peninsular Plateau
4. The Indian Desert
5. The Coastal Plains
6. The Islands



The Himalayan Mountains



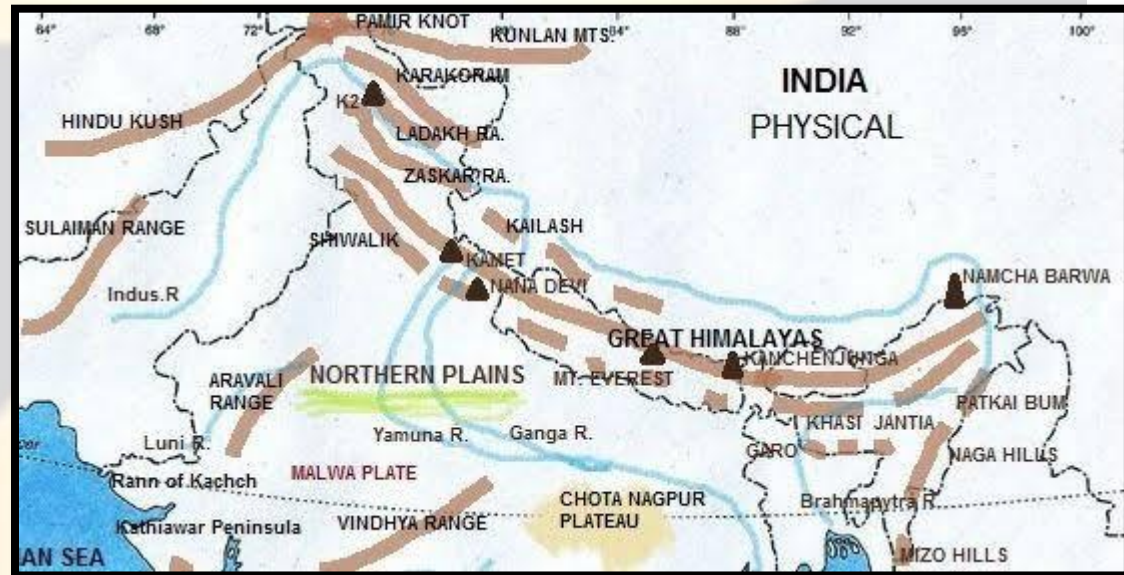


Trans-Himalayas

It is the name denoted to the Himalayan ranges which are north of the Great Himalayan range. They stretch into an east-west direction for a distance of about **1,000 km** and the average elevation of the peaks is approximately **3000 metres** above mean sea level. The Trans-Himalayas is constituted by various ranges such as **Karakoram, Ladakh and Zaskar** explained below:

Karakoram Range: The northern-most range of the **Trans-Himalayan** in India is the Karakoram range.

- ➡ This particular range constitutes India's boundary with Afghanistan and China. The average **width of this range is 110-130 km**.
- ➡ It is home to one of the highest peaks and some of the largest glaciers of the world like **Siachen glacier**.



Ladakh Range: It is considered as the south-eastern extension of the Karakoram Range.

- ➡ It extends towards the south-east from the mouth of the Shyok River in the northern areas of the Kashmir region to the border with the Tibet Autonomous Region of China.
- ➡ The climate of the region is semi arid and the vegetation is scanty and it is limited predominantly to short grasses. The Deosai Mountains, a range of mountains, situated towards the southwest of the Indus River in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK), are occasionally considered as part of the Ladakh range. The Kailash range in the western Tibet is also considered a westward extension of the Ladakh range.

Zaskar Range: It runs more or less parallel to the Great Himalayan range.

- ➡ This range extends south-east from the Suru River to the upper Karnali River.
- ➡ Kamet Peak (25,446 feet) is the highest peak in this range.

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The Trans-Himalayan range contains some of the highest peaks of the world such as **K2 (Mount Godwin Austen) 8611m, which is the second-highest peak in the world.**

The Himalayan Mountain Ranges

The Himalayan ranges are bordered on the northwest by the Karakoram and Hindu Kush ranges, on the north by Tibetan plateau and the south by Indo-Gangetic plains.

- ➔ **Extent:** These are one of the largest mountain chains.
 - The range of the main Himalayas alone stretches for a distance of over **2,400 km from the Indus gorge in the west to the Brahmaputra gorge in the east.**
 - The Himalayan mountain ranges are **wider on the western side compared to the eastern side.** The Himalayan boundary towards south is well defined by the foothills but the northern boundary is rather obscure and merges with the edge of the Tibet Plateau.
- ➔ **Composition of the Himalayas:** The Himalayan range is the **youngest mountain range** in the world and consists mostly of uplifted sedimentary and metamorphic rocks.

Classification of the Himalayan Mountain Ranges

These are further subdivided into **Greater Himalayas, Middle Himalayas and Shiwalik.**

The Greater Himalayas

- ➔ They are also known as the Himadri or the Central Himalayas.
- ➔ It extends towards south-east across the regions of northern Pakistan, northern India, and Nepal before curving eastwards across Sikkim and Bhutan and finally turning towards north-east across northern Arunachal Pradesh.
- ➔ They comprise several of the world's highest mountains, such as **Nanga Parbat, Mount Everest, Kanchenjunga and Namcha Barwa (from west to east).** The orientation of slopes in this range is steep towards north and gentle towards south.

Middle Himalayas:

- ➔ These mountain ranges have mean elevation of about **4500 metres** with an average **width of 60 to 80 km.**
- ➔ They are also called **Lesser Himalayas or Lower Himalayas.** It also consists of several important ranges such as, **Nag Tibba, Mahabharat Range, Dhauladhar, the Pir Panjal and the Mussoorie Range.**

Daily News Analysis

- ➔ Various important rivers such as **Jhelum and Chenab** pass through this range.

The famous **Valley of Kashmir** lies between **Pir Panjal and Zaskar range**, and the Jhelum river cuts beautifully through the Kashmir valley. The famous **hill resorts** like **Shimla, Chail, Ranikhet, Chakrata, Nainital, Almora etc.**, lie in this range.

Shiwalik or Outer Himalayas:

- ➔ It is the southern most range and lies between the Great Plains of North India and the Middle Himalayas.
- ➔ These mountain ranges have mean elevation of about 1500 metres.
- ➔ **Extent of the Shiwaliks:** The Shiwaliks are wider on western side compared to the eastern side. It rises abruptly from the plain of the Indus and Ganges rivers in the south and parallels the main range of the Himalayas in the north, from which it is separated by valleys.
- ➔ **Formation of Doons:** The Shiwaliks are also peculiar due to formation of doons. During the upliftments of the Shiwaliks, many rivers stopped forming temporary lakes. These rivers deposited the sediments at the bottom of the lakes. Over the period of time the river could cut through the Shiwalik therefore, water drained away leaving behind fertile alluvial soils known as Doons in the west and Duars in the eastern part of India. They are important for the cultivation of tea.