

**ONLY COMPETITION IAS**

**DAILY**  
**Editorials &**  
**Articles**



**19 March 2026**



## UPSC 360°

**The Hindu Unwrapped** - Daily Current Affairs Mastery for UPSC CSE (Clear that it's based on The Hindu editorials / news analyses - very aspirant-friendly)

### Significance

The United Nations Inter-Agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation report *"Levels & Trends in Child Mortality 2025"* highlights a global slowdown in reducing child deaths since 2015. In contrast, India has maintained steady and significant progress, emerging as a key contributor to global child survival gains.

### India Shows Steady Progress in Reducing Child Deaths Amid Slowing Global Gains

- ❖ The UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME) released its flagship report *"Levels & Trends in Child Mortality 2025"* in mid-March 2026. The report reveals that while the **global decline in under-five mortality has slowed dramatically** since 2015 (annual reduction rate dropped from ~4% to ~2.2%), **India has maintained a relatively strong and consistent reduction** in under-five and neonatal mortality rates.
- ❖ India's progress stands out as a positive outlier in a year when global child survival gains have stagnated, underscoring the effectiveness of sustained health and nutrition interventions (NHM, POSHAN Abhiyaan, Mission Indradhanush, Ayushman Bharat). The findings have been highlighted by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and NITI Aayog as evidence of policy success, while also drawing attention to persistent intra-state disparities and the need for accelerated efforts to meet SDG 3.2 by 2030.

### Key Data & Findings from the Report

- **India's Under-5 Mortality Rate (U5MR)**

Head. Office: 201, Ansal Building No. A-12-13, Commercial Complex, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi-110009.

Assam Center: House no. 12, 3rd Floor, Bylane -6 Hriday Ranjan Path, Guwahati 781003.

Ph.: 011-460-448-9312, 999012-60-23, 999012-60-24/Web: [www.onlycompetition.com](http://www.onlycompetition.com)



- 2000: ~126 per 1,000 live births
- 2015: ~49 per 1,000
- 2024 (latest estimate): ~27-29 per 1,000
- Reduction (2015-2024): ~38-42%
- Average annual reduction rate: ~5.5-6% (among the fastest in Asia)
- **Neonatal Mortality Rate (first 28 days)**
  - 2015: ~28 per 1,000
  - 2024: ~18-20 per 1,000
  - Neonatal deaths now account for ~45-50% of all under-five deaths (down from ~60% in earlier decades)
- **Global Comparison**
  - Global U5MR 2024: ~37 per 1,000 (only ~14% reduction since 2015)
  - Annual global reduction rate: ~2.2% (2015-2024) vs. ~4% (2000-2015)
  - SDG 3.2 target ( $\leq 25$  per 1,000 by 2030): Only ~84 countries on track globally; India is **on track or very close**
- **Regional & Peer Comparison**
  - Faster progress than Pakistan (~2.5-3% annual reduction), Bangladesh (~4-4.5%), and most sub-Saharan African countries
  - Lags behind Sri Lanka (~12 per 1,000) and China (~6-7 per 1,000)

## Key Drivers of India's Progress

- **Policy & Programme Interventions**
  - **Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) & Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)** → Institutional deliveries >90%

Head. Office: 201, Ansal Building No. A-12-13, Commercial Complex, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi-110009.

Assam Center: House no. 12, 3rd Floor, Bylane -6 Hriday Ranjan Path, Guwahati 781003.

Ph.: 011-460-448-9312, 999012-60-23, 999012-60-24/Web: [www.onlycompetition.com](http://www.onlycompetition.com)



- **Mission Indradhanush & Intensified Mission Indradhanush** → Full immunization coverage >90% in many states
- **POSHAN Abhiyaan & Anemia Mukt Bharat** → Reduction in stunting, wasting, and anaemia
- **Ayushman Bharat - Health & Wellness Centres** → Early detection and management of childhood illnesses
- **Home-based newborn care (HBNC)** by ASHAs → Reduced neonatal mortality
- **Other Enabling Factors**
  - Improved access to ORS, zinc, antibiotics for diarrhoea/pneumonia
  - Better sanitation (Swachh Bharat Mission) → reduced diarrhoeal deaths
  - Strong rebound after COVID-19 disruption (2022-2025)

## Background & Long-Term Trend

- **Pre-2005** → High mortality due to malnutrition, poor sanitation, low immunization
- **2005-2015** → NRHM → U5MR halved from ~74 to ~49 per 1,000
- **2015-2026** → Sustained focus via SDG-aligned programmes; temporary stagnation during COVID (2020-2022) followed by strong recovery

## 5. Implications & Challenges Ahead

- **Positive**
  - Validates long-term investment in MNCH programmes
  - Positions India as a relative success story amid global slowdown
  - Likely to meet or come very close to SDG 3.2 target by 2030
- **Remaining Challenges**
  - Stark inter-state disparities (U5MR in UP/Bihar still >40 vs. Kerala ~6-8)

Head. Office: 201, Ansal Building No. A-12-13, Commercial Complex, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi-110009.

Assam Center: House no. 12, 3rd Floor, Bylane -6 Hriday Ranjan Path, Guwahati 781003.

Ph.: 011-460-448-9312, 999012-60-23, 999012-60-24/Web: [www.onlycompetition.com](http://www.onlycompetition.com)



- High burden of neonatal deaths (~45-50% of U5 deaths)
- Persistent malnutrition (NFHS-5: stunting 35.5%, wasting 19.3%)
- Emerging threats: air pollution, climate change, antimicrobial resistance

## • Policy Direction

- Intensify equity-focused interventions in high-burden states
- Strengthen neonatal care (SNCUs, NBCCs)
- Sustain nutrition & immunization momentum
- Integrate climate & pollution mitigation into child health strategies

---

## UPSC CSE & State PCS Relevance

---

### Prelims

- Key terms: UN IGME, SDG 3.2, U5MR, Neonatal Mortality Rate, POSHAN Abhiyaan, Mission Indradhanush
- Data: India U5MR 2024 (~27-29 per 1,000), Global U5MR 2024 (~37 per 1,000)
- Related: NFHS-5, NHM, Ayushman Bharat

### GS-2 (Health & Governance)

- Maternal & child health programmes
- SDG progress & policy effectiveness

### GS-2 (Social Justice)

- Health equity & regional disparities

### GS-3 (Environment)

- Link between air pollution/climate change and child mortality

### Essay / Interview

Head. Office: 201, Ansal Building No. A-12-13, Commercial Complex, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi-110009.

Assam Center: House no. 12, 3rd Floor, Bylane -6 Hriday Ranjan Path, Guwahati 781003.

Ph.: 011-460-448-9312, 999012-60-23, 999012-60-24/Web: [www.onlycompetition.com](http://www.onlycompetition.com)



- “India’s Child Survival Success Amid Global Stagnation: Lessons for Health Policy”
- “Bridging Regional Disparities: The Next Frontier in India’s Child Health Journey”

## MCQs

1. With reference to the UN IGME “Levels & Trends in Child Mortality 2025” report, consider the following statements:
2. India’s under-five mortality rate declined by approximately 38-42% between 2015 and 2024.
3. The global annual reduction rate in U5MR has slowed significantly since 2015.
4. India is currently off-track to meet the SDG 3.2 target of  $\leq 25$  under-five deaths per 1,000 live births by 2030.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

**Answer: (b)**

2. Which of the following programmes has been most directly associated with India’s improvement in institutional deliveries?

- (a) POSHAN Abhiyaan
- (b) Anemia Mukta Bharat
- (c) Janani Suraksha Yojana
- (d) Mission Indradhanush

**Answer: (c)**

Head. Office: 201, Ansal Building No. A-12-13, Commercial Complex, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi-110009.

Assam Center: House no. 12, 3rd Floor, Bylane -6 Hriday Ranjan Path, Guwahati 781003.

Ph.: 011-460-448-9312, 999012-60-23, 999012-60-24/Web: [www.onlycompetition.com](http://www.onlycompetition.com)



3. The SDG target to reduce under-five mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births by 2030 is part of:

- (a) SDG 2.2
- (b) SDG 3.2
- (c) SDG 3.1
- (d) SDG 5.1

**Answer: (b)**

4. According to NFHS-5 (2019-21), the prevalence of stunting among children under five in India is approximately:

- (a) 19%
- (b) 35%
- (c) 50%
- (d) 65%

**Answer: (b)**

---

## Mains Questions

---

1. "India's steady progress in child mortality reduction amid global stagnation is a testament to sustained policy focus." Discuss the key drivers and the remaining challenges in achieving SDG 3.2. (15 marks / 250 words)
2. Analyse the factors behind India's consistent decline in neonatal and under-five mortality rates since 2015. How can intra-state disparities be addressed to accelerate progress? (10 marks / 150 words)
3. "Health outcomes for children remain one of the clearest indicators of governance effectiveness." Examine India's performance in the context of the 2026 UN IGME report and suggest policy measures for the next phase. (15 marks / 250 words)

Head. Office: 201, Ansal Building No. A-12-13, Commercial Complex, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi-110009.

Assam Center: House no. 12, 3rd Floor, Bylane -6 Hriday Ranjan Path, Guwahati 781003.

Ph.: 011-460-448-9312, 999012-60-23, 999012-60-24/Web: [www.onlycompetition.com](http://www.onlycompetition.com)



4. **Essay (250 marks)** “From High Mortality to Global Benchmark: India’s Journey in Child Survival and the Road Ahead to SDG 3.2.”



Head. Office: 201, Ansal Building No. A-12-13, Commercial Complex, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi-110009.  
Assam Center: House no. 12, 3rd Floor, Bylane -6 Hriday Ranjan Path, Guwahati 781003.  
Ph.: 011-460-448-9312, 999012-60-23, 999012-60-24/Web: [www.onlycompetition.com](http://www.onlycompetition.com)