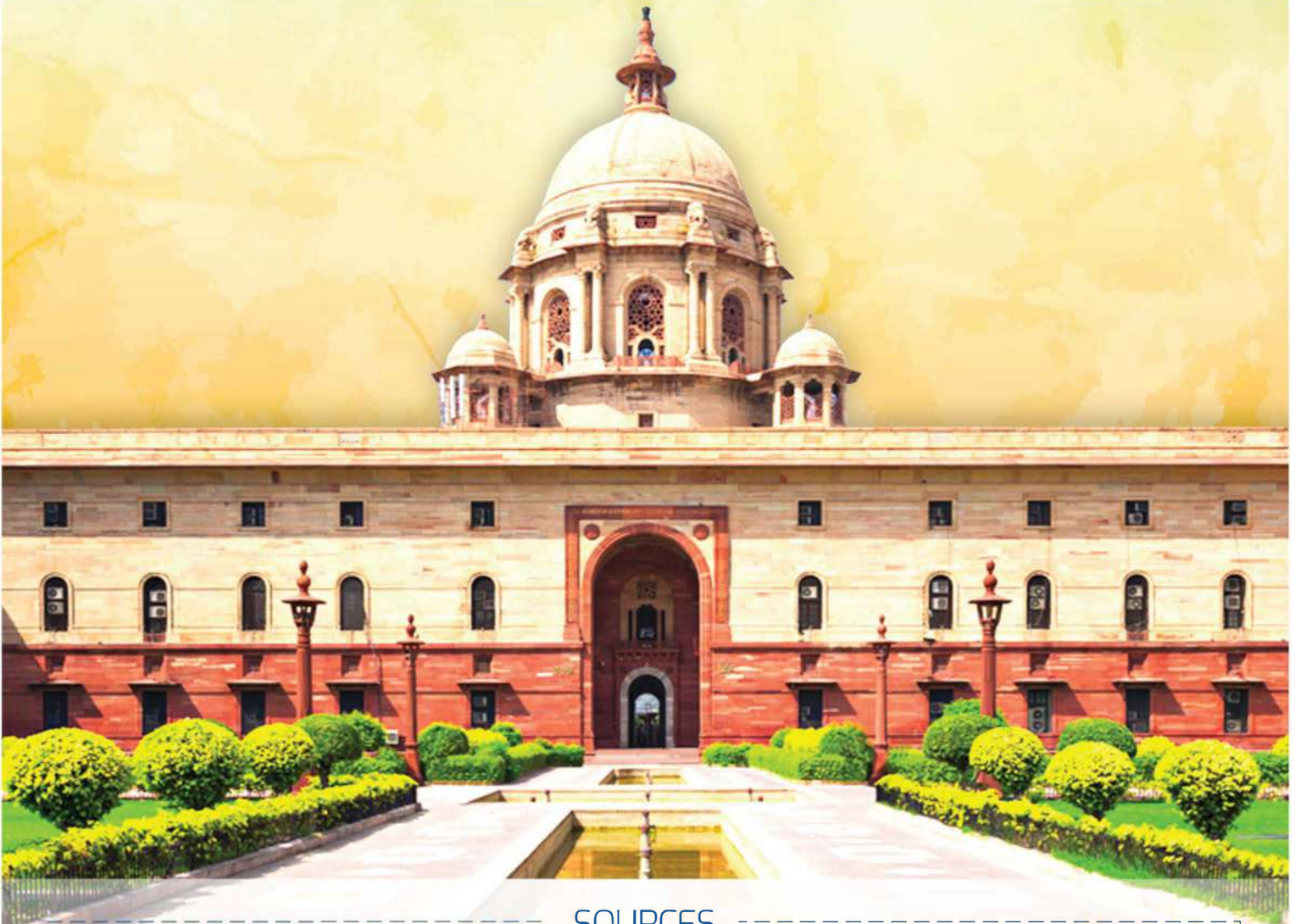




**UPSC  
Mentorship**  
A Unit of Mentorship India

# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

09 August 2024



SOURCES



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## GS I

# 1. Why Himalayan towns need a different kind of development

Source: The Hindu

**Context:** The Indian Himalayan Range (IHR) encompasses 11 States and two Union Territories, experiencing rapid urban growth with a decadal growth rate exceeding 40% from 2011 to 2021. **Despite the expansion of towns and urban settlements, Himalayan towns face distinct challenges requiring a unique approach to urbanisation.**

### Current Urban Challenges in IHR Towns:

Himalayan towns, including major cities like Srinagar, Guwahati, Shillong, and Shimla, face significant challenges in managing civic issues, including sanitation, waste management, and water supply.

### Factors contribute to these challenges:

- **Inadequate Planning Models:** Planning institutions often rely on urban models adapted from the plains, which are ill-suited to the unique geographical and climatic conditions of the Himalayas. This leads to ineffective urban planning and infrastructure development.
- **Resource Constraints:** City governments are severely understaffed, with a shortage of human resources by about 75%.
- **Urban Sprawl and Environmental Impact:** Cities expand into peripheral areas, encroaching on commons, open spaces, forests, and watersheds. For instance, in Srinagar, land use changes from 2000 to 2020 saw a 75.58% increase in built-up real estate, while water bodies decreased by nearly 25%. This unchecked urban sprawl leads to environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity.
- **Waste Management Issues:** Nearly 90% of liquid waste is discharged into water bodies without treatment, contributing to pollution and health hazards.

### Causes of Urban Challenges:

Several factors contribute to the urban challenges in the IHR:

- **Pressure from Tourism and Development:** High-intensity tourism and unsustainable infrastructure development exacerbate resource use, leading to deforestation, land degradation, and pollution.
- **Climatic Variations:** Changing precipitation patterns and rising temperatures contribute to water scarcity, biodiversity loss, and increased pollution.
- **Inadequate Infrastructure:** Inappropriate constructions, poorly designed roads, and inadequate waste management systems replace eco-friendly infrastructure, further damaging biodiversity and ecosystem services.

### Strategies for Sustainable Urbanization:

To address these challenges, a redefined approach to urbanisation in the IHR is essential:

- **Climate-Resilient Planning:** Urban planning should prioritise climate resilience, incorporating geological and hydrological mapping to identify vulnerabilities. A **bottom-up approach** involving local communities should guide the planning process, ensuring that urban development aligns with ecological and socio-economic realities.





- **Enhancing Institutional Capacity:** Planning institutions should develop tailored models that address the specific needs of Himalayan towns, moving away from consultant-driven processes. **Increasing human resources and investing in training** will improve governance and service delivery.
- **Sustainable Tourism Development:** Promoting **ecotourism and environmentally friendly infrastructure** can mitigate the adverse impacts of tourism. Implementing **solid waste management practices and preserving natural resources** are crucial for long-term sustainability.
- **Financial Support and Urban Financing:** The Finance Commission should **address urban financing for the IHR**, considering the unique financial challenges faced by these towns. Increasing intergovernmental transfers from the centre to urban local bodies from 0.5% to 1% of GDP would provide the necessary capital for infrastructure development.
- **Public Participation and Eco-centric Planning:** Engaging communities in **planning and decision-making processes** fosters ownership and ensures that urban development meets local needs while preserving cultural and natural heritage.

**Conclusion:**

Urbanisation in the Indian Himalayan Range presents unique challenges that require innovative, context-specific solutions. By prioritising climate resilience, sustainable resource management, and community involvement, the IHR can achieve sustainable urban growth that supports both human and environmental well-being.



## GS II

### 2. Change in Bangladesh, the challenges for India

Source: The Hindu

**Context:** The recent political developments, including the ousting of Prime Minister and the appointment of a Nobel laureate as head of the interim government, highlight the complexities of democratic governance and military influence in Bangladesh.

**Historical Context:**

- In February 2009, **Prime Minister of Bangladesh** faced a severe crisis with the **Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) mutiny**, which threatened her newly elected government.
- Despite this early challenge, she managed to stabilise her rule, but her tenure has since seen increasing discontent due to **issues such as dwindling democratic space, economic challenges, and rising unemployment among the youth.**
- The situation culminated in recent protests led by the **Anti-Discrimination Student Movement**, which were met with government force, further alienating the administration from the populace.

**Recent Developments:**

- In 2024, the **political landscape shifted dramatically with the army stepping in to facilitate the removal of the PM.**
- The **appointment of a Nobel laureate as the head of the interim government marks a departure from the traditional military-led governance model.** Known for his advocacy of democratic values, presents a new direction for Bangladesh, potentially paving the way for a third political force that challenges the dominance of the Awami League and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party.

**Challenges and Opportunities:**

- While the **Nobel laureate's leadership** offers hope for a democratic transition, it also presents challenges.
- The **possibility of unrest being hijacked by opposition forces**, including the Bangladesh Nationalist Party and the banned Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, poses a threat to stability.
- Furthermore, the **rise of anti-India sentiments and attacks on the Hindu minority could complicate India-Bangladesh relations.**
- For the military, balancing the need for control with public aspirations for democracy is critical.

**Implications for India:**

- **India's relationship with Bangladesh is at a crossroads.**
- Historically, **India has played a significant role in Bangladesh's liberation and development.**
- However, the **current situation requires nuanced diplomacy.** The parallels with Myanmar and the Maldives highlight the risks of supporting one faction without engaging with broader political forces.
- India's strategic interests, including **border security, trade, and regional stability, necessitate a proactive approach.**
- **Strengthening development partnerships** and working with both Nobel laureates and the military can help safeguard India's interests and support democratic governance in Bangladesh.



**Conclusion:**

The unfolding political scenario in Bangladesh presents both challenges and opportunities for India. By fostering dialogue and collaboration with Bangladesh's interim government and civil society, India can play a crucial role in supporting democratic processes and ensuring regional stability. The situation underscores the importance of adaptable foreign policy strategies that prioritise both national interests and regional cooperation.

## 3.CBI arrests ED official for taking bribe from jeweller

**Source:** The Hindu

**Context:** The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has arrested an Assistant Director with the Enforcement Directorate (ED) for allegedly demanding and receiving ₹20 lakh in bribe from a Mumbai-based jeweller for not arresting his son.

**What is CBI?**

- **Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)** is the premier investigating police agency in India.
  - It provides assistance to the Central Vigilance Commission and Lokpal.
- It functions under the superintendence of the Deptt. of Personnel, Ministry of Personnel, Pension & Public Grievances, Government of India - which falls under the prime minister's office.
  - However, for investigations of offences under the Prevention of Corruption Act, its superintendence vests with the Central Vigilance Commission.
- It is also the nodal police agency in India which coordinates investigations on behalf of Interpol Member countries.
- Its conviction rate is as high as 65 to 70% and it is comparable to the best investigation agencies in the world.

**What is ED?**

- **Purpose:**
  - Combat economic crime and enforce economic laws in India.
  - Handles violations of exchange control laws and the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).
- **Department Affiliation:**
  - Reports to the Department of Revenue for administrative purposes.
  - The Department of Economic Affairs is responsible for policy aspects related to FEMA (Foreign Exchange Management Act).
  - The Department of Revenue handles policy matters for the PMLA.
- **History:**
  - Originally tasked with handling foreign exchange violations under the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act (FERA) of 1973.
  - Renamed the Enforcement Directorate in 1957.
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi, India.
- **Leadership:** Headed by the Director of Enforcement, who is an Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer.
- **Regional Offices:**



- Chandigarh
- Kolkata
- Chennai
- Mumbai

## GS III

### 4. Andhra Pradesh seeks Karnataka's help to address human-elephant conflict

Source: The Hindu

**Context:** Karnataka has sent 67 kumki elephants to various States. In 2022-23, four elephants were sent to Uttar Pradesh, 14 to Madhya Pradesh, and three to Maharashtra for their help.

**Background:**

- The **human-elephant conflict in Andhra Pradesh has become a growing concern**, with incidents of crop damage, human casualties, and elephant deaths becoming increasingly frequent.
- This conflict arises from habitat loss, fragmentation, and competition for resources between humans and elephants.
- As elephants stray into human settlements in search of food and water, the need for effective management strategies becomes crucial.

**Key Initiatives:**

- During the meeting, **Andhra Pradesh requested the assistance of Karnataka's Forest Department to deploy trained kumki elephants**. These elephants are used to manage, drive, and capture wild elephants to mitigate conflicts.
- While Karnataka has a significant number of semi-trained kumki elephants, it clarified that those participating in the Dasara celebrations in Mysore would not be available for transfer.
- Instead, Karnataka proposed a **more sustainable approach involving the training of mahouts and kavadis (elephant caretakers) in Andhra Pradesh**.

**Memorandum of Understanding (MoU):**

This MoU, to be formalized during the **International Conference on Human-Elephant Conflict Management-2024 in Bengaluru**, outlines several key initiatives:

- **Institutional Collaboration:** Establishing formal arrangements between the Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka Forest Departments to **jointly address man-animal conflict**.
- **Expert Deployment:** Forming expert teams for capturing elephants and training personnel.
- **Training Programs:** Conducting **specialized programs for mahouts and kavadis**, emphasizing sustainable conflict management practices.
- **Knowledge Transfer:** Sharing expertise in running elephant camps, including standard operating procedures for darting and capturing elephants.
- **Nutrition and Welfare:** Providing expertise in elephant nutrition and food management to improve the health and well-being of both captive and wild elephants.





#### Broader Implications:

- This collaborative approach highlights the importance of inter-state cooperation in wildlife conservation and conflict management.
- By leveraging Karnataka's expertise and resources, Andhra Pradesh aims to enhance its capacity to manage human-elephant conflicts effectively.
- The initiative also underscores the need for sustainable solutions that balance conservation efforts with human needs.

#### Challenges and Opportunities:

- While the MoU presents a promising framework for collaboration, several challenges remain. The **effective implementation of training programs and knowledge transfer** is crucial to achieving long-term success.
- Additionally, **addressing the socio-economic aspects of human-elephant conflict**, such as compensation for crop damage and community engagement, remains essential.
- Need for **enhanced coordination in addressing illegal activities** that threaten forest resources and biodiversity.

#### Conclusion:

- In conclusion, the collaboration between Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka represents a significant step towards managing human-elephant conflict through sustainable and cooperative approaches.
- By fostering inter-state partnerships and knowledge exchange, India can work towards achieving a harmonious coexistence between humans and wildlife.

## 5. Viral encephalitis outbreaks claims 73 lives in Gujarat

Source: The Hindu

Context: Gujarat is going through its worst outbreak of chandipura virus and viral encephalitis, in which 73 people have died so far.

#### Japanese Encephalitis:

- Japanese Encephalitis (JE) is a viral infection that can cause inflammation in the brain.
- It is caused by a flavivirus that belongs to the same genus as dengue, yellow fever and West Nile viruses.
- Japanese encephalitis virus (JEV) is also a major cause of Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) in India.

#### Transmission:

- The disease is transmitted to humans through bites from infected mosquitoes of the Culex species.
- These mosquitoes breed mainly in rice fields and large water bodies rich in aquatic vegetation.





**Treatment:**

- There is no antiviral treatment for patients with JE.
- Treatment, available, is supportive to relieve symptoms and stabilise the patient.

**Prevention:**

- Safe and effective JE vaccines are available to prevent the disease.
- JE vaccination is also included under the Universal Immunisation Program of the Government of India.

## 6.No clinical trial for drugs approved in select nations

**Source:** The Hindu

**Context:** Rare diseases, characterised by their infrequent occurrence and severe impact on patients' lives, have emerged as a significant health challenge globally and in India.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines these diseases as conditions with a prevalence of 1 or less per 1000 population, while varying definitions exist across countries. In India, rare diseases are often overlooked despite their substantial burden, with over 8 to 10 crore Indians affected, predominantly children. This article examines the global burden of rare diseases, challenges in India, and the impact of existing policies, along with recommendations for improvement.

**Global and National Burden of Rare Diseases:**

- Globally, approximately 300 million people are affected by rare diseases, with a prevalence of 3.5% to 5.9% of the population.
- In India, over 450 rare diseases have been identified, affecting about 8 to 10 crore people. The majority of these conditions are genetic and affect children, with 75% of rare diseases having an onset during childhood.
- Despite this high prevalence, the management of rare diseases in India faces significant hurdles, including limited awareness, diagnosis, and treatment options.

**Challenges in Managing Rare Diseases in India:**

- **Delayed Diagnosis:**
  - One of the major challenges is the prolonged diagnostic process, which averages around 5 years due to limited scientific knowledge and lack of awareness.
  - Symptoms of rare diseases often overlap with common conditions, leading to misdiagnosis.
- **Treatment Accessibility:**
  - Fewer than 50% of identified rare diseases in India are treatable. Approved treatments are available for only about 20 diseases, and access to these treatments is restricted to a limited number of **Centres of Excellence (CoEs)**.
  - These centres are unevenly distributed and often lack coordination, affecting equitable access to care.



- **Funding and Resource Allocation:**

- Budget allocations for rare diseases have increased but remain inadequate. For the fiscal year 2023–2024, only Rs 93 crore was allocated, with significant portions remaining unutilized. Inefficiencies in fund utilisation, where some CoEs exhaust their budgets quickly while others have underutilised funds, exacerbate the problem.

- **Policy Implementation:**

- The **National Policy for Rare Diseases (NPRD)**, 2021 aims to address these issues by categorising rare diseases into three groups based on treatment requirements.
- However, the absence of a clear definition for rare diseases and implementation challenges continue to hinder effective policy execution.

**Policy Responses and Recommendations:**

The NPRD, 2021 categorises rare diseases into:

- **Group 1:** Disorders amenable to one-time curative treatment.
- **Group 2:** Diseases requiring long-term or lifelong treatment with relatively lower costs.
- **Group 3:** Diseases with high treatment costs and challenges in patient selection.

The policy provides financial support of up to Rs 50 lakhs for patients and integrates with the **Umbrella Scheme of Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi (RAN)**, which offers up to Rs 20 lakhs for specified rare diseases. Despite these provisions, gaps in implementation remain, and further reforms are necessary.

**Recommendations for Improvement:**

- **Enhanced Diagnostic Facilities:** Investment in diagnostic infrastructure and training for healthcare professionals can reduce delays in diagnosis and improve early detection.
- **Increased Funding and Efficient Utilisation:** Allocating adequate funds and ensuring their effective utilisation across all CoEs will address disparities in treatment access.
- **Comprehensive Policy Framework:** Developing a clear, inclusive definition of rare diseases and strengthening the implementation of existing policies will enhance support for patients.
- **Public Awareness and Support:** Raising awareness about rare diseases among the public and healthcare providers can foster a supportive environment and improve patient outcomes.

**Conclusion:**

Rare diseases represent a critical yet often overlooked aspect of public health in India. While the National Policy for Rare Diseases (NPRD) provides a framework for addressing these challenges, significant gaps remain. By improving diagnostic facilities, increasing and efficiently utilising funds, and enhancing policy frameworks, India can better support individuals affected by rare diseases and improve their quality of life.



## Editorial, Ideas and Opinions

### 7. A moment for just transition litigation to take wing

**Source:** The Hindu

**Context:** The recent Supreme Court case of M.K. Ranjitsinh and Others vs Union of India has highlighted the critical intersection between climate action and biodiversity protection.

**Understanding Just Transition:**

- Just transition is a framework that aims to ensure mitigative climate action is both inclusive and fair.
- Originating in the 1970s as a tool to protect workers affected by environmental regulations, the concept has since expanded to include a wider range of vulnerable groups, such as indigenous communities, women, children, and minorities.
- Just transition seeks to equitably distribute the burdens and benefits of decarbonization, ensuring that no community bears a disproportionate share of the negative impacts.

**The Case for Just Transition in M.K. Ranjitsinh:**

The core issue in the M.K. The Ranjitsinh case revolves around protecting the Great Indian Bustard from the adverse effects of solar and wind energy projects.

The Court has an opportunity to frame this issue through the lens of just transition, which offers several advantages:

- **Equitable Climate Action:** By adopting a just transition framework, the Court can facilitate climate action that is equitable and inclusive. This approach counters the traditional framing of biodiversity protection versus decarbonization, promoting a holistic view where both can coexist as complementary objectives.
- **Expanding the Conceptual Boundaries:** Introducing the non-human environment as an affected entity in just transition represents a groundbreaking expansion of the concept. By considering the Great Indian Bustard within this framework, the Court can develop jurisprudence that recognizes nature as a stakeholder in climate action, drawing on its eco-centric rulings on the rights of nature.
- **Catalyzing Research and Litigation:** Applying just transition in this case can foreground existing just transition litigation in India and stimulate much-needed research in this area. By identifying and mapping such litigation, India can contribute to the global understanding of equitable climate action.

**Broader Implications:**

Introducing just transitions in the Indian legal landscape can have far-reaching implications. As countries worldwide strive for **net-zero emissions**, just transition litigation is likely to become more prominent. Currently, there are 20 ongoing disputes related to renewable energy projects in India, underscoring the need for equitable sharing of the burdens and benefits of decarbonization.





**Conclusion:**

The **M.K. The Ranjitsinh** case presents a watershed moment for the Supreme Court to embrace a just transition framework, paving the way for equitable climate action. By doing so, the Court can set a precedent for future climate litigation, ensuring that India's transition to a low-carbon economy is just, inclusive, and mindful of both human and non-human stakeholders.

## 8. On monetary policy and financial markets

**Source:** The Hindu

**Context:** In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, global financial markets have shown signs of recovery, yet the global economy remains in uncharted waters.

**The Role of Monetary Policy:**

- Monetary policy plays a crucial role in managing economic stability by influencing inflation and employment levels.
- Central banks typically use interest rates as a tool to balance these two factors, operating under the assumption that there is a trade-off between unemployment and inflation.
- Some argue that increasing unemployment to control inflation places an undue burden on workers, especially during times of economic stress. Alternative strategies, such as reducing corporate profit margins and breaking monopolies, are proposed as fairer means to manage inflation.

**The Threat of Recession;**

- The fear of recession often drives financial market behaviour, as seen in the recent U.S. employment report that showed weaker-than-expected job growth.
- This triggered a rapid sell-off in equity markets, fueled by concerns over a potential economic downturn.
- The "Sahm rule," which triggers automatic unemployment benefits when unemployment rates rise above a certain threshold, was enacted, further stoking recession fears despite the economy not officially being in recession.
- This highlights the challenge of conducting monetary policy in a volatile financial environment. Market reactions can outpace the ability of policymakers to respond, as expectations of future economic conditions can drive asset prices more than actual economic data.

**The Impact of the Carry Trade:**

- The Bank of Japan's decision to raise interest rates disrupted the global carry trade, where investors borrowed at low rates in Japan to invest in higher-yielding markets abroad.
- This shift caused a reversal of capital flows, leading to stock sell-offs in other Asian markets. The carry trade exemplifies how domestic monetary policies can have far-reaching effects on global finance, creating challenges for policymakers in managing economic stability.
- Similar scenarios have occurred in the past, such as the "taper tantrum" following the 2008 global recession, when low U.S. interest rates led to capital inflows into emerging markets like India.



- As U.S. rates rose, **capital rapidly excited these markets**, putting pressure on their external accounts.

#### **The Interplay of Monetary Policy and Financial Markets:**

- The recent volatility in financial markets underscores the complex interplay between monetary policy and global finance.
- The speed and ease with which financial assets can be traded across borders pose significant challenges for policymakers trying to maintain economic stability.
- As financial markets become more integrated, the potential for rapid asset value changes increases, complicating the task of monetary authorities.

#### **Conclusion:**

The current global financial landscape highlights the need for a nuanced approach to monetary policy that considers the interconnectedness of global markets. Policymakers must navigate the challenges of maintaining economic stability while managing the expectations and reactions of financial markets. As the world continues to recover from the pandemic, the lessons learned from recent market volatility can guide future policy decisions, ensuring a more resilient and equitable global economy.



## In Brief

# 9. RBI keeps repo rate unchanged at 6.5%; Inflation, GDP growth forecast for FY25 retained

**Source:** Times of India

**Context:** Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) unveiled its latest review of the Monetary Policy.

**What are the Highlights of the Review?**

**GDP Growth Forecast:**

- The MPC slashed its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth estimate to 6.8% for the fiscal year 2022-23, from 7% earlier.
- This comes a day after the World Bank raised its growth forecast to 6.9% for financial year 2022-23 from a revised 6.5% in October 2022.

**Inflation & Interest Rates:**

- The MPC has maintained the forecast for headline inflation (the total inflation in an economy) in the financial year 2022-23 at 6.7%.
- RBI expects headline inflation to stay above the 6% mark for 15 straight months. Even after that, hitting the 4% level will likely take time.

**Repo Rate:** The MPC increased the repo rate by 35 basis points (bps) to 6.25%

**What is the Monetary Policy Committee?**

- **Origin:** Under Section 45ZB of the amended (in 2016) RBI Act, 1934, the central government is empowered to constitute a six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC).
- **Objective:** Further, Section 45ZB lays down that “the Monetary Policy Committee shall determine the Policy Rate required to achieve the inflation target”. The decision of the Monetary Policy Committee shall be binding on the Bank.
- **Composition:** Section 45ZB says the MPC shall consist of 6 members:
  - **RBI Governor** as its ex officio chairperson,
  - **Deputy Governor** in charge of monetary policy,
  - **An officer of the Bank to be nominated by the Central Board,**
  - **Three persons to be appointed by the central government.**
- This category of appointments must be from “persons of ability, integrity and standing, having knowledge and experience in the field of economics or banking or finance or monetary policy”.





## 10. Vedanta Group slapped with environmental fine of ₹71.16 crore for unauthorised dumping of fly ash in Odisha

**Source:** The Hindu

**Context:** Odisha State Pollution Control Board has found over 7 lakh metric tonnes of unauthorised fly ash were disposed by the company at various places of Jharsuguda, Sambalpur and Sundargarh districts.

**Fly Ash:**

- **Definition:** Fly ash is a by-product of coal combustion in thermal power plants, comprising the fine particles that rise with flue gases.
- **Formation and Collection:** During coal combustion, fly ash is emitted with flue gases and collected by electrostatic precipitators. It is often turned into a wet slurry to reduce dust emissions and transported to ash ponds.
- **Composition:** The composition of fly ash varies depending on the coal used. It typically includes unburnt carbon, silicon oxides, dioxins, aluminium oxide, ferric oxide, calcium oxide, and heavy metals like beryllium and arsenic.
- **Properties:** Fly ash shares some properties with Portland cement, such as its cementitious nature, which allows it to harden when mixed with water. However, its chemical composition differs significantly from Portland cement.
- **Applications:** Fly ash is utilised in various applications, including concrete and cement products, road base construction, metal recovery, and as a mineral filler.
- **Environmental Impact:** Fly ash particles are considered toxic air pollutants that can cause serious health issues, such as heart disease, cancer, respiratory ailments, and strokes. When mixed with water, it can leach heavy metals into groundwater and soil, affecting root development in plants.
- **Utilisation Challenges:** Despite its potential uses, fly ash is grossly underutilised, leading to significant accumulation. As of 2020-2021, 1,670 million tonnes of fly ash had accumulated, as reported by the Joint Committee under the National Green Tribunal (NGT).



## Daily Quiz

**Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the repo rate:**

1. The repo rate is the interest rate at which commercial banks lend money to the central bank.
2. An increase in the repo rate by the central bank is generally intended to control inflation.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- A. Only statement 1 is correct.
- B. Only statement 2 is correct.
- C. Both statements 1 and 2 are correct.
- D. Neither statement 1 nor statement 2 is correct.

**Q2. Consider the following statements regarding kumki elephants:**

1. Kumki elephants are specifically trained to participate in cultural festivals and religious ceremonies.
2. Kumki elephants are used in conflict management to drive and capture wild elephants.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- A. Only statement 1 is correct.
- B. Only statement 2 is correct.
- C. Both statements 1 and 2 are correct.
- D. Neither statement 1 nor statement 2 is correct.

**Q3. Consider the following statements regarding fly ash:**

1. Fly ash is primarily composed of calcium silicates, calcium aluminate, and calcium aluminoferrite, similar to Portland cement.
2. Fly ash can be used in the production of concrete and cement products.
3. The under-utilization of fly ash poses significant environmental challenges due to the leaching of heavy metals.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2, and 3

**Q4. Consider the following statements about the concept of just transition:**

1. Just transition aims to make climate action inclusive and fair by ensuring equitable distribution of the burdens and benefits of decarbonization.
2. The concept of just transition only includes human communities as affected stakeholders.
3. Just transition was first included in the Paris Agreement in 2015.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- A. 1 only
- B. 1 and 2 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2, and 3

**Q5. Consider the following statements regarding monetary policy and financial markets:**

1. Central banks typically use interest rates to balance inflation and unemployment.
2. The carry trade involves borrowing at low interest rates in one country to invest in higher-yielding assets in another country.
3. The "Sahm rule" mandates automatic disbursement of unemployment benefits when inflation rates breach a certain threshold.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2, and 3



**Q6. Which of the following countries is not part of the Himalayan mountain range?**

- A. Nepal
- B. India
- C. Bhutan
- D. Bangladesh

**Q7. Which treaty between India and Bangladesh is related to the sharing of water from the Ganges River?**

- A. Teesta Water Sharing Agreement
- B. Ganges Water Sharing Treaty
- C. Farakka Agreement
- D. Indus Waters Treaty

**Q8. Viral encephalitis is primarily an inflammation of the brain caused by which of the following?**

- A. Bacteria
- B. Parasites
- C. Viruses
- D. Fungi

**Q9. Which of the following statements about the Enforcement Directorate (ED) is/are correct?**

1. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) reports to the Department of Economic Affairs for administrative purposes.
2. The ED was established to handle violations under the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act (FERA) of 1973.
3. The Director of Enforcement is an officer from the Indian Administrative Service (IAS).
4. The Enforcement Directorate was renamed in 1957.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2, 3, and 4 only
- C. 2 and 4 only
- D. 1, 2, and 4 only

**Q10. Under which ministry does the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) operate?**

- A. Ministry of Home Affairs
- B. Ministry of Finance
- C. Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions
- D. Ministry of Law and Justice





## Solutions

### 1. Correct Answer is B

#### Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is incorrect** because the repo rate is the interest rate at which the central bank lends money to commercial banks, not the other way around.
- **Statement 2 is correct** because an increase in the repo rate is typically used as a tool to control inflation by making borrowing more expensive, thereby reducing the money supply in the economy.

### 2. Correct Answer is B

**Explanation:** Kumki elephants are trained elephants used primarily in the management of human-elephant conflicts. They assist in driving away wild elephants and capturing them when necessary. While they may participate in cultural events like the Dasara festival in Mysore, their primary role is in conflict management, not ceremonial activities.

### 3. Correct Answer is B

#### Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is incorrect** because, while fly ash exhibits cementitious properties, its chemical composition differs from Portland cement. Fly ash is mainly composed of silicon oxides, aluminium oxide, ferric oxide, calcium oxide, and other compounds, but not specifically calcium silicates, calcium aluminate, and calcium aluminoferrite, which are typical of Portland cement.
- **Statement 2 is correct** as fly ash is used in the production of concrete and cement products.
- **Statement 3 is correct** as the under-utilization of fly ash leads to environmental challenges, including the leaching of heavy metals into groundwater and soil.

### 4. Correct Answer is C

#### Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct** as just transition aims to ensure that climate action is inclusive and equitable.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect** because the proposed application of just transition in M.K. Ranjitsinh suggests extending the concept to include the non-human environment as an affected entity.
- **Statement 3 is correct** as the concept of just transition was included in the Paris Agreement in 2015.

### 5. Correct Answer is A

#### Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct** as central banks use interest rates to manage the trade-off between inflation and unemployment.
- **Statement 2 is correct** as the carry trade involves borrowing in a low-interest-rate environment to invest in higher-yielding markets.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect** because the "Saam rule" is related to unemployment rates, not inflation.

### 6. Correct Answer is D

**Explanation:** Bangladesh is not part of the Himalayan mountain range, while Nepal, India, and Bhutan have portions of the Himalayas within their territories.

### 7. Correct Answer is B

**Explanation:** The Ganges Water Sharing Treaty, signed in 1996, is an agreement between India and Bangladesh that outlines the sharing of water from the Ganges River. It was designed to ensure equitable distribution of water resources during the dry season.



**8. Correct Answer is C**

**Explanation:** Viral encephalitis is an inflammation of the brain caused by various types of viruses. Common viruses that cause encephalitis include the herpes simplex virus, West Nile virus, and Japanese encephalitis virus. Bacterial, parasitic, and fungal infections can also cause encephalitis, but viral causes are the most common.

**9. Correct Answer is C**

**Explanation:**

- **Statement 1 is incorrect.** The ED reports to the Department of Revenue for administrative purposes, not the Department of Economic Affairs.
- **Statement 2 is correct.** The ED was initially tasked with handling violations under FERA of 1973.

- **Statement 3 is incorrect.** The Director of Enforcement is an officer from the Indian Revenue Service (IRS), not the Indian Administrative Service (IAS).
- **Statement 4 is correct.** The ED was renamed in 1957

**10. Correct Answer is C**

**Explanation:** The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) operates under the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions.

**MAINS PRACTISE QUESTION**

Q1. Discuss the concept of just transition in the context of climate change. How can it be applied to ensure equitable and inclusive climate action, especially in cases where environmental protection and decarbonization appear to be at odds? Illustrate your answer with examples.





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