



RAMAKRISHNA MISSION - GEO IAS DAILY UPSC NEWSPAPER ANALYSIS 23 SEPTEMBER 2026



TODAY'S HIGH-PRIORITY UPSC THEMES

- 4F crisis: food, fuel, fertilisers and finance; global guardrails and reformed multilateralism.
- Water security as national security; river-basin and groundwater governance.
- RBI liquidity management through bond sales, FX operations and reverse-repo absorption.
- Critical minerals: overseas nickel/lithium assets, recycling and value-chain security.
- SEMICON India 2026: design, fabs, packaging, equipment, R&D; and talent.
- India-New Zealand FTA; campus well-being; traditional medicine standards; narcotics coordination; Greenland/Arctic geopolitics.

SOURCE NOTE

- The Hindu is the priority newspaper in this series, but its website was inaccessible to automated retrieval this morning. No claim is falsely attributed to it. Today's edition is cross-checked with fresh Indian Express, PIB and Reuters reporting, plus static official/institutional background.



1. THE '4F' CRISIS AND GLOBAL GUARDRAILS

UPSC syllabus: GS-II International Relations | GS-III Economy & Food/Energy Security

1. THE '4F' CRISIS AND GLOBAL GUARDRAILS

WHY IN NEWS

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar warned at the United Nations that simultaneous stresses in food, fuel, fertilisers and finance - the '4F' crisis - require global guardrails.

PRELIMS POINTER

Prelims trap: the '4F crisis' is a policy framing, not a formal UN treaty or institution.

MAINS ANGLE

Food shocks arise from conflict, climate extremes, export restrictions and logistics disruptions. Fuel shocks transmit through inflation, current account and transport costs. Fertiliser shocks affect farm input costs and food prices. Finance shocks tighten borrowing conditions for developing economies.

WAY FORWARD

Create transparent emergency food/fertiliser corridors and avoid indiscriminate export bans. • Expand MDB counter-cyclical and concessional finance for vulnerable economies. • Diversify energy, fertiliser and critical-input supply chains. • Reform multilateral representation and crisis-response rules.

COMPLETE ANALYSIS

- External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar warned at the United Nations that simultaneous stresses in food, fuel, fertilisers and finance - the '4F' crisis - require global guardrails.
- Food shocks arise from conflict, climate extremes, export restrictions and logistics disruptions. Fuel shocks transmit through inflation, current account and transport costs. Fertiliser shocks affect farm input costs and food prices. Finance shocks tighten borrowing conditions for developing economies.
- UN = United Nations; WTO = World Trade Organization; IMF = International Monetary Fund; MDB = Multilateral Development Bank.
- India's policy interest lies in diversified supply chains, affordable energy, resilient fertiliser access, open food trade and reformed multilateral institutions.
- Prelims trap: the '4F crisis' is a policy framing, not a formal UN treaty or institution.

KEY POINTS FOR UPSC

- Static link: revise the institution/concept and map location connected with this issue.
- Prelims: focus on definitions, full forms, constitutional/institutional status and statement traps.
- Mains: use today's development as a contemporary example under the stated GS syllabus.

WAY FORWARD

- Create transparent emergency food/fertiliser corridors and avoid indiscriminate export bans.
- Expand MDB counter-cyclical and concessional finance for vulnerable economies.
- Diversify energy, fertiliser and critical-input supply chains.
- Reform multilateral representation and crisis-response rules.

2. WATER SECURITY AS NATIONAL SECURITY

UPSC syllabus: GS-I Geography | GS-II Governance | GS-III Environment

2. WATER SECURITY AS NATIONAL SECURITY

WHY IN NEWS

The 9th India International Water Week brought water security into focus, with emphasis on river-basin management, groundwater recharge, rainwater harvesting and efficient irrigation.

PRELIMS POINTER

Prelims trap: groundwater is not replenished uniformly; aquifer geology strongly controls recharge and storage.

MAINS ANGLE

India faces a compound challenge: spatial and seasonal rainfall variability, groundwater stress, pollution, urban demand and climate-linked floods/droughts.

WAY FORWARD

Shift from administrative boundaries to basin/aquifer-based planning. • Meter and audit high-use sectors while protecting basic lifeline access. • Scale treated-wastewater reuse and urban sponge infrastructure. • Link crop choices and irrigation incentives to agro-climatic water budgets.

COMPLETE ANALYSIS

- The 9th India International Water Week brought water security into focus, with emphasis on river-basin management, groundwater recharge, rainwater harvesting and efficient irrigation.
- India faces a compound challenge: spatial and seasonal rainfall variability, groundwater stress, pollution, urban demand and climate-linked floods/droughts.
- IWRM = Integrated Water Resources Management; NDSA = National Dam Safety Authority; JJM = Jal Jeevan Mission.
- Water is primarily a State subject, while inter-State rivers, national programmes and environmental regulation create major Union roles.
- Prelims trap: groundwater is not replenished uniformly; aquifer geology strongly controls recharge and storage.

KEY POINTS FOR UPSC

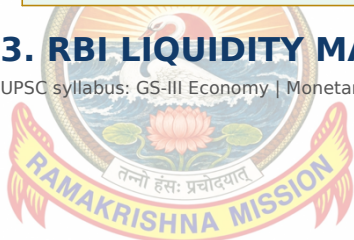
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WAY FORWARD

- Shift from administrative boundaries to basin/aquifer-based planning.
- Meter and audit high-use sectors while protecting basic lifeline access.
- Scale treated-wastewater reuse and urban sponge infrastructure.
- Link crop choices and irrigation incentives to agro-climatic water budgets.

3. RBI LIQUIDITY MANAGEMENT, FX SWAPS AND BOND SALES

UPSC syllabus: GS-III Economy | Monetary Policy | External Sector



3. RBI LIQUIDITY MANAGEMENT, FX SWAPS AND BOND SALES

WHY IN NEWS

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) sharply reduced surplus banking-system liquidity using bond sales, foreign-exchange operations and reverse-repo absorption.

PRELIMS POINTER

Prelims trap: OMO purchase injects liquidity; OMO sale absorbs liquidity.

MAINS ANGLE

OMO = Open Market Operation; FX = Foreign Exchange; LAF = Liquidity Adjustment Facility; VRRR = Variable Rate Reverse Repo.

WAY FORWARD

Calibrate durable and transient liquidity tools separately. • Improve communication on liquidity objectives to reduce market uncertainty. • Coordinate FX intervention with inflation and monetary-policy transmission needs. • Deepen government bond markets and stable long-term institutional participation.

COMPLETE ANALYSIS

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) sharply reduced surplus banking-system liquidity using bond sales, foreign-exchange operations and reverse-repo absorption.
- OMO = Open Market Operation; FX = Foreign Exchange; LAF = Liquidity Adjustment Facility; VRRR = Variable Rate Reverse Repo.
- An RBI bond sale absorbs rupee liquidity. A dollar sale for rupees can also drain domestic liquidity. FX swaps can alter both spot/forward currency positions and rupee liquidity depending on structure.
- Liquidity management improves monetary-policy transmission: very large surplus liquidity can pull overnight rates below the desired policy corridor.
- Prelims trap: OMO purchase injects liquidity; OMO sale absorbs liquidity.

KEY POINTS FOR UPSC

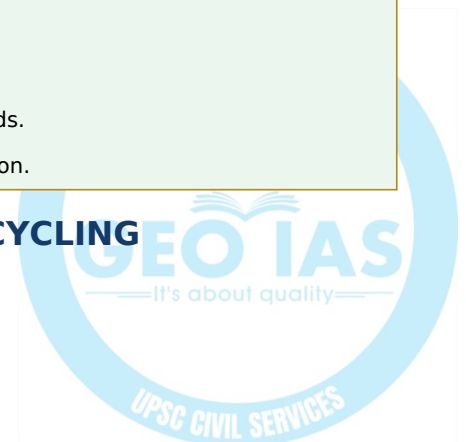
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4. CRITICAL MINERALS: NICKEL, LITHIUM AND RECYCLING

UPSC syllabus: GS-III Science & Technology | Energy Security | Resource Geography



4. CRITICAL MINERALS: NICKEL, LITHIUM AND RECYCLING

WHY IN NEWS

Indian critical-mineral firms are seeking overseas nickel and lithium assets while the government is emphasising recycling, innovation and supply security.

PRELIMS POINTER

Prelims trap: 'rare earths' are a group of 17 elements; they are not necessarily geologically rare, but economically viable concentrated deposits and processing capacity are limited.

MAINS ANGLE

Nickel is important in several high-energy-density battery chemistries; lithium is central to lithium-ion batteries. Rare earth elements are vital for permanent magnets and many clean-tech/defence applications.

WAY FORWARD

Build transparent strategic stockpiles for selected minerals. • Accelerate battery and magnet recycling with traceability standards. • Support overseas mineral partnerships with environmental and social safeguards. • Invest in refining, precursor/CAM and magnet manufacturing - not only mining.

COMPLETE ANALYSIS

- Indian critical-mineral firms are seeking overseas nickel and lithium assets while the government is emphasising recycling, innovation and supply security.
- Nickel is important in several high-energy-density battery chemistries; lithium is central to lithium-ion batteries. Rare earth elements are vital for permanent magnets and many clean-tech/defence applications.
- CAM = Cathode Active Material; EPR = Extended Producer Responsibility; EV = Electric Vehicle.
- Security requires a portfolio: domestic exploration, overseas assets, recycling/urban mining, substitution, strategic partnerships and processing capacity.
- Prelims trap: 'rare earths' are a group of 17 elements; they are not necessarily geologically rare, but economically viable concentrated deposits and processing capacity are limited.

KEY POINTS FOR UPSC

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WAY FORWARD

- Build transparent strategic stockpiles for selected minerals.
- Accelerate battery and magnet recycling with traceability standards.
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- Invest in refining, precursor/CAM and magnet manufacturing - not only mining.

5. SEMICON INDIA 2026: FROM SILICON TO SYSTEMS

UPSC syllabus: GS-III Science & Technology | Manufacturing



5. SEMICON INDIA 2026: FROM SILICON TO SYSTEMS

WHY IN NEWS

SEMICON India 2026 highlighted India's shift from isolated chip projects toward an ecosystem spanning design, fabrication, equipment, packaging, research and talent.

PRELIMS POINTER

Prelims trap: a fabless company designs chips but outsources wafer fabrication.

MAINS ANGLE

Fab = semiconductor fabrication facility; OSAT = Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test; ATMP = Assembly, Testing, Marking and Packaging; R&D = Research and Development.

WAY FORWARD

Link incentives to ecosystem depth, yield and domestic value addition. • Create university-industry pilot fabs and packaging research centres. • Develop precision equipment, chemicals and specialty-gas supplier clusters. • Build technician and process-engineer pipelines alongside chip designers.

COMPLETE ANALYSIS

- SEMICON India 2026 highlighted India's shift from isolated chip projects toward an ecosystem spanning design, fabrication, equipment, packaging, research and talent.
- Fab = semiconductor fabrication facility; OSAT = Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test; ATMP = Assembly, Testing, Marking and Packaging; R&D = Research and Development.
- Semiconductor resilience depends on ultra-pure water, reliable power, specialty gases/chemicals, precision equipment, design tools, skilled engineers and high process yields.
- Advanced packaging is increasingly strategic because chiplets and heterogeneous integration can improve performance and energy efficiency.
- Prelims trap: a fabless company designs chips but outsources wafer fabrication.

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6. INDIA-NEW ZEALAND FTA: TRADE AND STRATEGIC ECONOMICS

UPSC syllabus: GS-II International Relations | GS-III Economy



6. INDIA-NEW ZEALAND FTA: TRADE AND STRATEGIC ECONOMICS

WHY IN NEWS

India and New Zealand are moving toward implementation of a Free Trade Agreement (FTA), bringing tariff, services, mobility and rules-of-origin issues into focus.

PRELIMS POINTER

Prelims trap: an FTA does not imply a customs union; members retain independent external tariffs against non-members.

MAINS ANGLE

FTA = Free Trade Agreement; RoO = Rules of Origin; SPS = Sanitary and Phytosanitary; TBT = Technical Barriers to Trade.

WAY FORWARD

- Build strong RoO verification and customs digitalisation.
- Support MSMEs in meeting SPS/TBT standards and using tariff preferences.
- Use safeguard clauses for sudden import surges in sensitive sectors.
- Pursue services, education, technology and resilient supply-chain gains alongside goods trade.

COMPLETE ANALYSIS

- India and New Zealand are moving toward implementation of a Free Trade Agreement (FTA), bringing tariff, services, mobility and rules-of-origin issues into focus.
- FTA = Free Trade Agreement; RoO = Rules of Origin; SPS = Sanitary and Phytosanitary; TBT = Technical Barriers to Trade.
- An FTA normally reduces tariffs on agreed goods and may cover services, investment, standards, digital trade and customs facilitation. Sensitive sectors can be protected through exclusions, quotas or phase-outs.
- Rules of Origin prevent simple trans-shipment of third-country goods to exploit preferential tariffs.
- Prelims trap: an FTA does not imply a customs union; members retain independent external tariffs against non-members.

KEY POINTS FOR UPSC

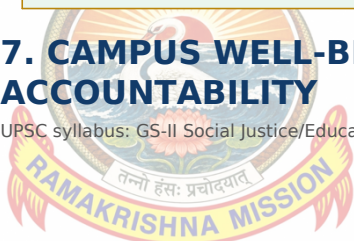
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7. CAMPUS WELL-BEING, DIVERSITY AND INSTITUTIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

UPSC syllabus: GS-II Social Justice/Education | GS-IV Ethics



7. CAMPUS WELL-BEING, DIVERSITY AND INSTITUTIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

WHY IN NEWS

An Indian Express editorial on student deaths at IITs argues that campus governance must adapt to institutions that are more socially, linguistically and economically diverse.

PRELIMS POINTER

Prelims trap: counselling is only one layer; prevention also requires institutional design, early-warning, mentoring and safe grievance redress.

MAINS ANGLE

IIT = Indian Institute of Technology; HEI = Higher Educational Institution.

WAY FORWARD

Independent, confidential and professionally staffed counselling systems. • Faculty/warden training to recognise distress without stigmatisation. • Transparent anti-discrimination and grievance mechanisms with time limits. • Peer mentoring, bridge support and workload policies sensitive to diverse student backgrounds.

COMPLETE ANALYSIS

- An Indian Express editorial on student deaths at IITs argues that campus governance must adapt to institutions that are more socially, linguistically and economically diverse.
- IIT = Indian Institute of Technology; HEI = Higher Educational Institution.
- Mental-health risk is shaped by academic pressure, isolation, discrimination, financial stress, language barriers and weak help-seeking cultures; it should not be reduced to an individual 'resilience' failure.
- Constitutional values of equality and dignity should inform institutional culture, grievance systems and anti-discrimination mechanisms.
- Prelims trap: counselling is only one layer; prevention also requires institutional design, early-warning, mentoring and safe grievance redress.

KEY POINTS FOR UPSC

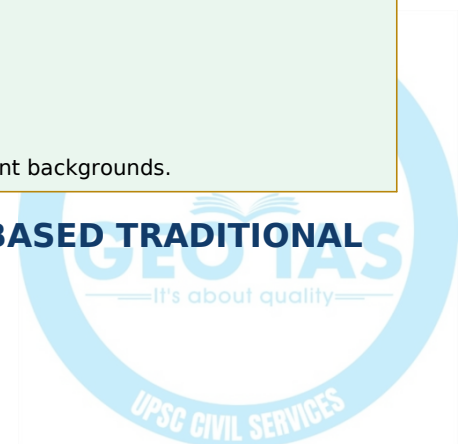
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WAY FORWARD

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8. AYURVEDA DAY, SOWA-RIGPA AND EVIDENCE-BASED TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

UPSC syllabus: GS-II Health | GS-I Culture | GS-III Science



8. AYURVEDA DAY, SOWA-RIGPA AND EVIDENCE-BASED TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

WHY IN NEWS

The 11th Ayurveda Day and a new Sowa-Rigpa working-group meeting under the pharmacopoeial framework have put traditional medicine standards in focus.

PRELIMS POINTER

Prelims trap: traditional use alone is not equivalent to modern clinical evidence for every therapeutic claim.

MAINS ANGLE

AYUSH = Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy; PCIM&H = Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine & Homoeopathy.

WAY FORWARD

• Strengthen pharmacopoeial standards and batch-level quality testing. • Fund rigorous clinical and pharmacovigilance research. • Digitise traditional knowledge with community rights and benefit-sharing safeguards. • Integrate proven interventions into health systems without diluting evidence standards.

COMPLETE ANALYSIS

- The 11th Ayurveda Day and a new Sowa-Rigpa working-group meeting under the pharmacopoeial framework have put traditional medicine standards in focus.
- AYUSH = Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy; PCIM&H = Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine & Homoeopathy.
- Sowa-Rigpa is a traditional medical system associated especially with the Himalayan region and Tibetan medical traditions.
- Public policy challenge: preserve knowledge while insisting on quality control, pharmacopoeial standards, adverse-event reporting, evidence generation and honest claims.
- Prelims trap: traditional use alone is not equivalent to modern clinical evidence for every therapeutic claim.

KEY POINTS FOR UPSC

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WAY FORWARD

- Strengthen pharmacopoeial standards and batch-level quality testing.
- Fund rigorous clinical and pharmacovigilance research.
- Digitise traditional knowledge with community rights and benefit-sharing safeguards.
- Integrate proven interventions into health systems without diluting evidence standards.

9. ANTI-NARCOTICS COORDINATION AND AASHVAST-STYLE FORENSIC CAPACITY

UPSC syllabus: GS-III Internal Security | GS-II Governance



9. ANTI-NARCOTICS COORDINATION AND AASHVAST-STYLE FORENSIC CAPACITY

WHY IN NEWS

A national conference of Anti-Narcotics Task Force heads and new detection/forensic capabilities keep narcotics control high on the security agenda.

PRELIMS POINTER

Prelims trap: narcotics policy is not only a policing issue; health, rehabilitation, border management and financial intelligence are integral.

MAINS ANGLE

ANTF = Anti-Narcotics Task Force; NCB = Narcotics Control Bureau; NDPS = Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

WAY FORWARD

• Create interoperable real-time intelligence systems across States and central agencies. • Expand accredited forensic labs and rapid field-testing with evidentiary safeguards. • Follow the money through financial intelligence and asset tracing. • Scale prevention, treatment and rehabilitation to reduce demand.

COMPLETE ANALYSIS

- A national conference of Anti-Narcotics Task Force heads and new detection/forensic capabilities keep narcotics control high on the security agenda.
- ANTF = Anti-Narcotics Task Force; NCB = Narcotics Control Bureau; NDPS = Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.
- Drug networks exploit maritime routes, darknet markets, encrypted communication, synthetic chemistry, courier channels and money-laundering networks.
- Effective control requires intelligence-led policing, financial investigation, forensic speed, inter-State coordination and demand reduction/rehabilitation.
- Prelims trap: narcotics policy is not only a policing issue; health, rehabilitation, border management and financial intelligence are integral.

KEY POINTS FOR UPSC

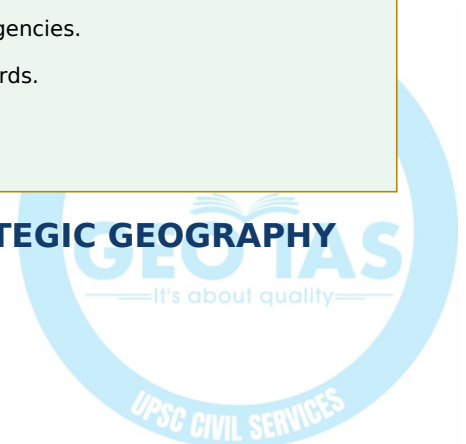
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- Expand accredited forensic labs and rapid field-testing with evidentiary safeguards.
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10. GREENLAND, ARCTIC GEOPOLITICS AND STRATEGIC GEOGRAPHY

UPSC syllabus: GS-I World Geography | GS-II International Relations



10. GREENLAND, ARCTIC GEOPOLITICS AND STRATEGIC GEOGRAPHY

WHY IN NEWS

Renewed discussion around Greenland's strategic status highlights the Arctic's growing geopolitical importance as ice retreat changes access to resources and military calculations.

PRELIMS POINTER

Prelims trap: Greenland is not an independent sovereign state and is not geographically part of Europe, though politically linked to Denmark.

MAINS ANGLE

Greenland is the world's largest island, geographically part of North America and an autonomous territory within the Kingdom of Denmark.

WAY FORWARD

• Respect self-determination and international law in Arctic governance. • Keep scientific/climate cooperation insulated where possible from strategic rivalry. • Strengthen environmental safeguards for mining and shipping. • India should deepen polar science, satellite observation and responsible Arctic partnerships.

COMPLETE ANALYSIS

- Renewed discussion around Greenland's strategic status highlights the Arctic's growing geopolitical importance as ice retreat changes access, resources and military calculations.
- Greenland is the world's largest island, geographically part of North America and an autonomous territory within the Kingdom of Denmark.
- Arctic relevance includes sea routes, fisheries, critical minerals, climate feedbacks, satellite/early-warning infrastructure and great-power competition.
- Arctic Council is a high-level intergovernmental forum for Arctic cooperation; military security is not its core mandate.
- Prelims trap: Greenland is not an independent sovereign state and is not geographically part of Europe, though politically linked to Denmark.

KEY POINTS FOR UPSC

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- Respect self-determination and international law in Arctic governance.
- Keep scientific/climate cooperation insulated where possible from strategic rivalry.
- Strengthen environmental safeguards for mining and shipping.
- India should deepen polar science, satellite observation and responsible Arctic partnerships.



EDITORIAL ANALYSIS - ARGUMENTS FOR MAINS

EDITORIAL FOCUS 1 - IIT STUDENT DEATHS: FROM 'RESILIENCE' TO INSTITUTIONAL DUTY

- The editorial's strongest UPSC value is its shift from individualising distress to examining institutional culture, diversity and authority.
- GS-II: access to education must be accompanied by inclusion and equal dignity. GS-IV: empathy, care ethics, accountability and institutional responsibility.
- Balanced view: academic standards need not be diluted; the issue is whether support systems, evaluation practices and grievance channels are humane and evidence-based.

WAY FORWARD

- Mandatory institutional mental-health audits.
- Independent ombudsperson/grievance channels.
- Diversity-sensitive mentoring and faculty training.
- Publish anonymised indicators on counselling access and serious incidents.

EDITORIAL FOCUS 2 - THE 4F CRISIS AND REFORMED MULTILATERALISM

- Food, fuel, fertiliser and finance shocks are interconnected: an energy shock raises transport/fertiliser costs; food inflation worsens fiscal stress; tight global finance constrains importers.
- India's argument for 'guardrails' can be linked to Global South concerns, supply-chain diversification and reform of multilateral institutions.
- Critical analysis: resilience cannot become a justification for protectionism; diversification should remain compatible with open, predictable trade.

WAY FORWARD

- Crisis-time disciplines against arbitrary export restrictions.
- More representative MDB/IMF governance.
- Regional reserves and supply-chain partnerships.
- Concessional climate/development finance.

EDITORIAL FOCUS 3 - WATER SECURITY AS A GOVERNANCE QUESTION

- Water scarcity is not merely a hydrological deficit; it reflects pricing, crop incentives, pollution, urban design, groundwater governance and fragmented institutions.
- Federal dimension: rivers cross political boundaries while aquifers are often invisible in administrative planning.
- Equity dimension: pricing reform must protect lifeline consumption and small farmers while discouraging wasteful high-volume use.

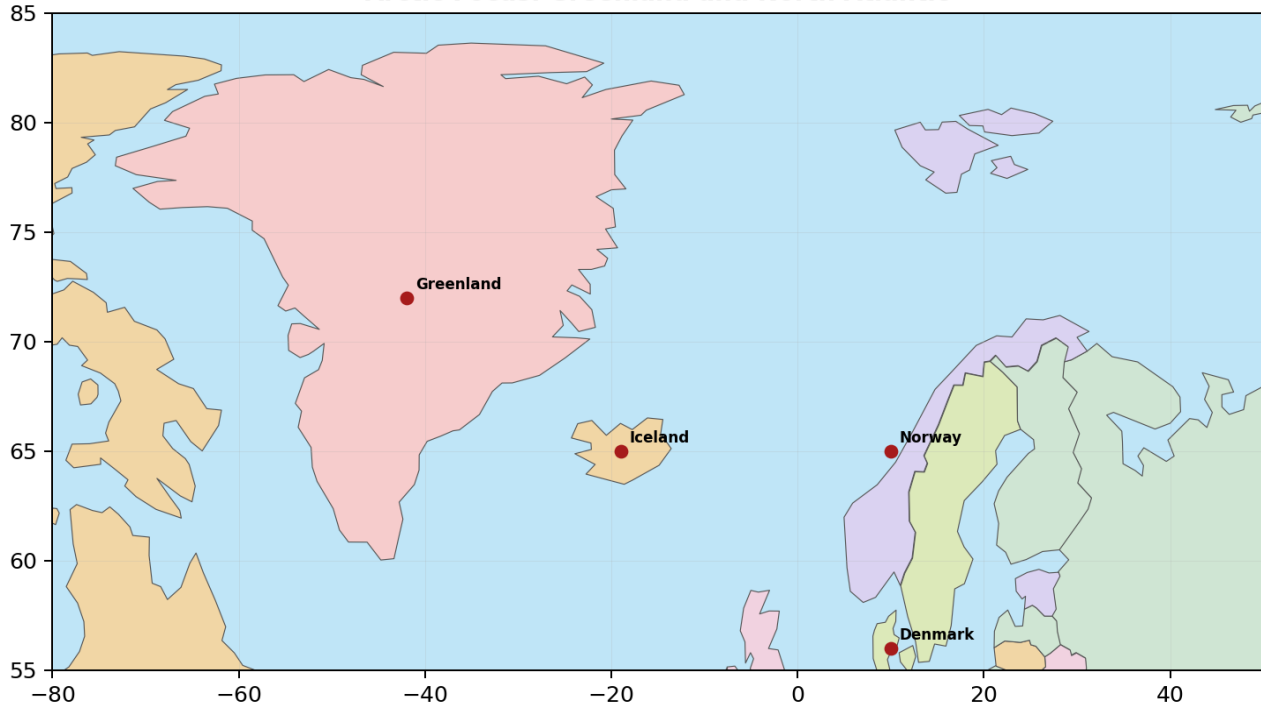
WAY FORWARD

- Aquifer mapping plus local water budgets.
- Basin-level institutions with transparent data.
- Wastewater reuse and demand management.
- Climate-resilient urban drainage and floodplain protection.

MAP PRACTICE - ORIGINAL, LABELLED & EXAM-ORIENTED

Arctic Focus: Greenland and North Atlantic

Arctic Focus: Greenland and North Atlantic



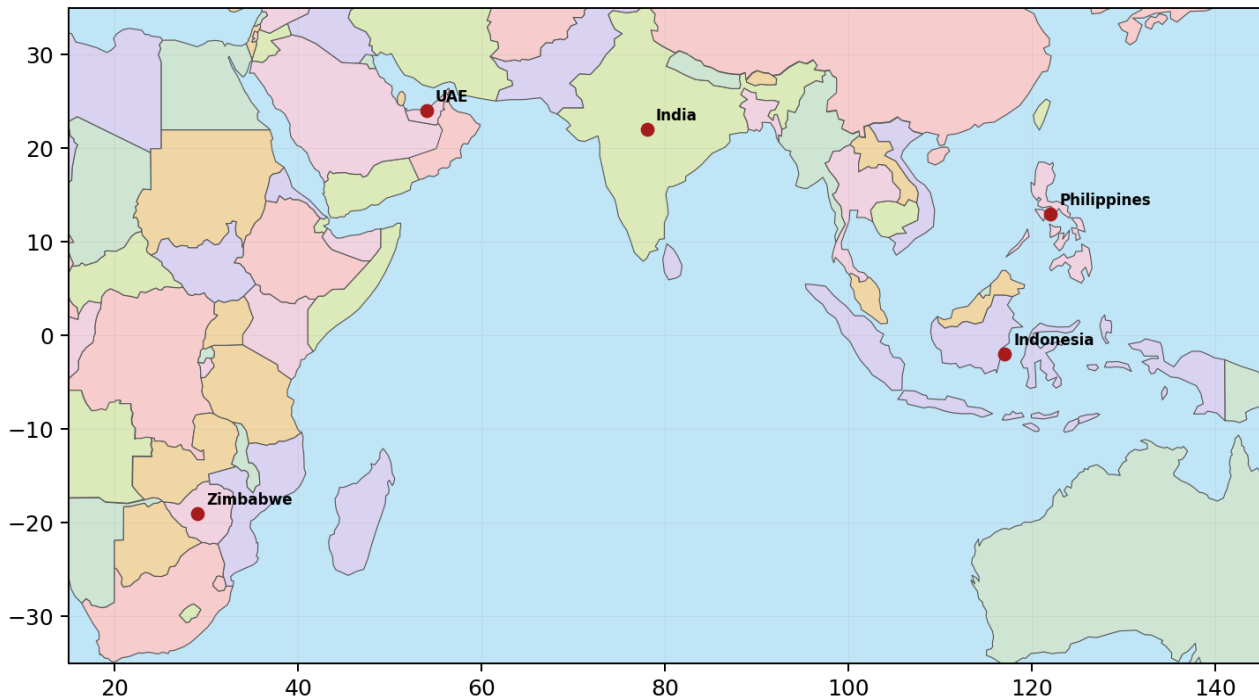
MAP TASK

- Locate every labelled place without notes.
- Add one neighbouring country/state or water body.
- Write one current-affairs trigger and one static fact beside each.

Critical Minerals: India's Overseas Supply Links



Critical Minerals: India's Overseas Supply Links

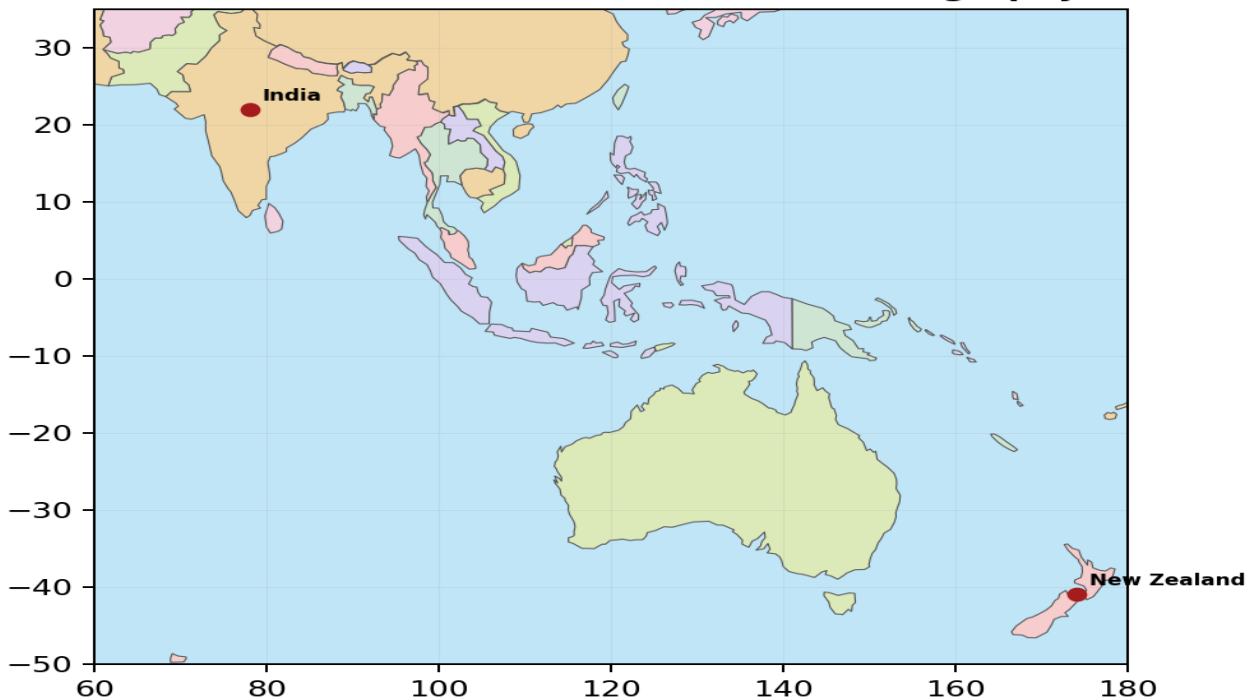


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India-New Zealand FTA: Indo-Pacific Geography

India-New Zealand FTA: Indo-Pacific Geography



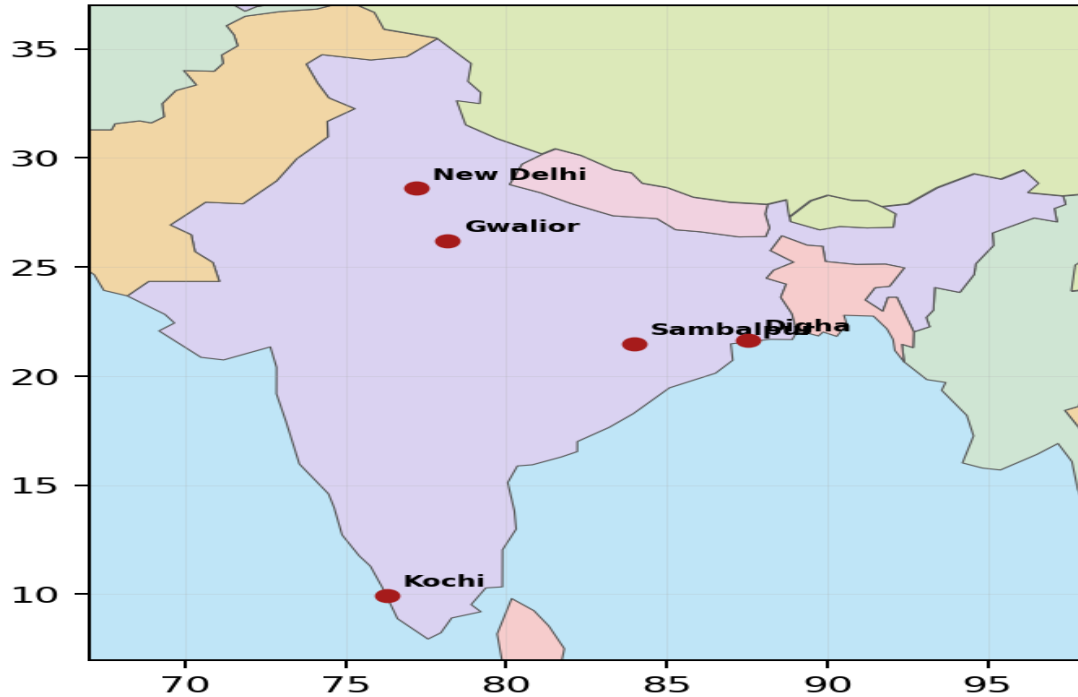
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India Map Practice: Today's Policy & Places Links

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MAP TASK

- Locate every labelled place without notes.
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PRELIMS PRACTICE - 10 MCQs WITH DETAILED SOLUTIONS

Q1. With reference to Open Market Operations (OMOs), consider the following: 1. RBI purchase of government securities generally injects liquidity. 2. RBI sale of government securities generally absorbs liquidity.

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

ANSWER: (c)

- Both are correct. OMOs are outright purchases/sales of government securities by the RBI. Purchases pay rupees into the banking system; sales withdraw rupees.

Q2. Which of the following is NOT one of the '4F' stresses highlighted in current diplomacy?

- (a) Food
- (b) Fuel
- (c) Fertilisers
- (d) Forests

ANSWER: (d)

- The framing is Food, Fuel, Fertilisers and Finance. 'Forests' is important for climate policy but is not part of this specific 4F formulation.

Q3. Rules of Origin in an FTA are primarily intended to:

- (a) Fix a common external tariff
- (b) Prevent trade deflection/trans-shipment from non-members
- (c) Create a common currency
- (d) Abolish all non-tariff measures

ANSWER: (b)

- RoO determine whether a product genuinely originates in a partner country and is therefore eligible for preferential tariff treatment.

Q4. Which statement about Greenland is correct?

- (a) It is an independent UN member state
- (b) It is an autonomous territory within the Kingdom of Denmark
- (c) It is geographically part of Europe
- (d) It is a member state of the European Union

ANSWER: (b)

- Greenland is autonomous within the Kingdom of Denmark. Geographically it is part of North America and it left the European Communities in 1985.

Q5. OSAT is associated with:

- (a) Nuclear fuel enrichment
- (b) Semiconductor assembly and testing
- (c) Groundwater aquifer mapping
- (d) Drug trafficking intelligence

ANSWER: (b)

- OSAT means Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test, a back-end part of the semiconductor value chain.

Q6. Sowa-Rigpa is best described as:

- (a) A Himalayan traditional system of medicine
- (b) A classical dance of Odisha
- (c) A wetland type
- (d) A Himalayan pass

ANSWER: (a)

- Sowa-Rigpa is a traditional medical system associated particularly with Himalayan/Tibetan traditions and is recognised within India's AYUSH framework.

Q7. Which mineral is especially important in several high-energy-density battery cathode chemistries?

- (a) Nickel
- (b) Gypsum
- (c) Mica
- (d) Limestone

ANSWER: (a)

- Nickel is used in cathodes such as NMC/NCA chemistries. Battery chemistry varies, so not all lithium-ion batteries require nickel.

Q8. The Arctic Council is best described as:

- (a) A NATO military command
- (b) An intergovernmental forum for Arctic cooperation
- (c) A UN peacekeeping mission
- (d) A customs union

ANSWER: (b)

- The Arctic Council promotes cooperation among Arctic states and Indigenous participants, particularly on sustainable development and environmental protection; military security is not its core mandate.

Q9. Under the Constitution of India, water is primarily:

- (a) A Union List subject
- (b) A State List subject, subject to important Union/inter-State provisions
- (c) A Concurrent List subject only
- (d) Outside the Seventh Schedule

ANSWER: (b)

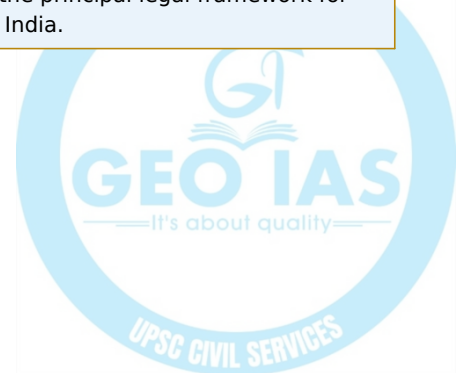
- Entry 17 of the State List covers water, subject to Entry 56 of the Union List concerning regulation/development of inter-State rivers and river valleys in the public interest.

Q10. The NDPS Act is most directly related to:

- (a) Dam safety
- (b) Narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances
- (c) Semiconductor incentives
- (d) Foreign exchange reserves

ANSWER: (b)

- NDPS stands for Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. The Act provides the principal legal framework for control and punishment relating to narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances in India.



MAINS MODEL ANSWERS - COMPLETE READY-TO-STUDY FORMAT

GS-I MODEL ANSWER

Syllabus/PYQ linkage: Geography of resources; water resources; effects of climate variability
15 Marks | 250 words

Question: India's water crisis is increasingly a problem of governance as much as hydrology. Examine.

INTRODUCTION

India's monsoon delivers most annual rainfall in a few months, with large spatial variability. Yet scarcity and floods increasingly coexist because water stress is shaped not only by rainfall but also by groundwater extraction, pollution, crop incentives, urbanisation and fragmented institutions.

HYDROLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS

Rainfall is seasonal and uneven; hard-rock aquifers in much of peninsular India have limited storage; Himalayan and alluvial systems face different risks. Climate variability can intensify both extreme rainfall and dry spells.

GOVERNANCE DRIVERS

Free or under-priced power can encourage groundwater over-extraction. Water-intensive cropping in unsuitable agro-climatic regions distorts demand. Urban lakes, wetlands and floodplains are encroached, while sewage reduces usable supply. Administrative boundaries often ignore aquifers and river basins.

FEDERAL AND EQUITY DIMENSIONS

Water is primarily a State subject, but inter-State rivers require Union coordination. Pricing reforms must distinguish basic human needs and small-farmer vulnerability from wasteful high-volume use.

WAY FORWARD

Adopt aquifer and basin-based planning; publish local water budgets; expand micro-irrigation where agronomically suitable; reuse treated wastewater; restore wetlands; protect floodplains; align crop incentives with water availability; and strengthen real-time hydrological data sharing.

CONCLUSION

Water security therefore requires 'more water' only in limited contexts. The larger task is to manage demand, quality, ecosystems and institutions so that every unit of water produces greater social, ecological and economic value.





GS-II MODEL ANSWER

Syllabus/PYQ linkage: International institutions, Global South, governance and social justice
15 Marks | 250 words

Question: The simultaneous food, fuel, fertiliser and finance shocks expose weaknesses in contemporary multilateralism. Discuss India's possible role in building global guardrails.

INTRODUCTION

The current '4F' stress shows how tightly connected global systems have become: energy shocks raise fertiliser and transport costs; food inflation worsens fiscal pressure; expensive global finance limits the ability of vulnerable countries to respond.

WEAKNESSES EXPOSED

Global institutions often respond in silos. Export restrictions can worsen food scarcity; energy disruptions spill across borders; debt distress reduces policy space; and representation in major financial institutions still underweights many developing economies.

INDIA'S INTERESTS

As a large food producer, energy importer, fertiliser consumer and voice of the Global South, India has a direct stake in predictable trade, diversified supply chains and affordable development finance.

INDIA'S DIPLOMATIC CONTRIBUTION

India can advocate crisis-time disciplines against indiscriminate export restrictions, transparent commodity data, resilient fertiliser and energy corridors, stronger MDB counter-cyclical lending, and more representative governance of multilateral institutions.

CRITICAL BALANCE

De-risking should not become disguised protectionism. Strategic autonomy is strongest when domestic resilience is combined with open and diversified international partnerships.

WAY FORWARD

Use G20, BRICS, WTO and UN platforms to institutionalise early-warning mechanisms; expand South-South capacity building; promote digital public infrastructure for food/logistics systems; and support climate finance that does not deepen debt vulnerability.

CONCLUSION

India's most credible leadership would connect national resilience with rules that make global interdependence safer rather than weaker.



GS-III MODEL ANSWER

Syllabus/PYQ linkage: Science and technology; indigenisation; energy and mineral security
15 Marks | 250 words

Question: Critical-mineral security requires India to move from a mining strategy to a full value-chain strategy. Analyse.

INTRODUCTION

Energy transition, electronics, defence and advanced manufacturing are increasing demand for lithium, nickel, cobalt, graphite and rare-earth elements. Dependence is often greater in processing and component manufacturing than in ore extraction itself.

WHY MINING ALONE IS INSUFFICIENT

Ore quality, refining technology, environmental permissions, logistics and price cycles determine whether a mine creates strategic security. A country can possess resources yet remain dependent on foreign refining, cathode materials or permanent magnets.

INDIA'S OPPORTUNITY

India can combine domestic exploration with overseas assets, battery recycling, urban mining, material substitution, cathode active material production and rare-earth magnet manufacturing.

RISKS

Overseas mineral acquisition can create geopolitical, environmental and social risks. Rapid mining without safeguards can damage water systems and community trust. Recycling without traceability can shift pollution into the informal sector.

WAY FORWARD

Create selective strategic stockpiles; build transparent overseas partnerships; enforce Extended Producer Responsibility; support hydrometallurgical recycling and design-for-recycling; finance refining/CAM/magnet clusters; and invest in material-science R&D; for substitution.

CONCLUSION

The strategic objective is not ownership of mines but reliable access to processed materials and components through diversified, sustainable and technologically capable supply chains.



GS-IV MODEL ANSWER

Syllabus/PYQ linkage: Probity, empathy, institutional ethics and accountability
15 Marks | 250 words

Question: A public institution can follow formal rules and still fail ethically. Discuss with reference to student well-being in higher educational institutions.

INTRODUCTION

Ethical administration is judged not only by procedural compliance but by whether institutions protect dignity, fairness and human welfare. A campus may meet formal regulations yet fail students if distress, discrimination or exclusion are routinely ignored.

ETHICAL VALUES INVOLVED

Empathy requires administrators to recognise varied social and linguistic backgrounds. Justice requires equal opportunity and non-discrimination. Accountability requires identifiable responsibility for grievances. Non-maleficence requires avoiding preventable institutional harm.

WHY FORMAL COMPLIANCE IS INSUFFICIENT

A counselling centre that students cannot safely approach, a grievance mechanism that lacks confidentiality, or an academic system that treats all vulnerability as personal weakness may satisfy paperwork while defeating its purpose.

INSTITUTIONAL ETHICS

Good systems combine clear rules with humane discretion, early-warning mechanisms, professional counselling, faculty sensitisation, peer mentoring and independent grievance redress. Data should be used to detect patterns without violating privacy.

WAY FORWARD

Conduct periodic well-being and discrimination audits; guarantee confidential professional support; train wardens/faculty in referral protocols; create independent ombudspersons; provide bridge/mentoring support; and publish anonymised outcome indicators.

CONCLUSION

Ethical institutions do not lower standards; they ensure that standards are pursued without sacrificing dignity. The test of governance is whether the system notices vulnerability before it becomes tragedy.



AUGUST-SEPTEMBER PLACES IN NEWS - RAPID REVISION

Place	UPSC relevance
Ceuta & Melilla	Spain's autonomous cities on North African coast; migration and Europe-Africa boundary geography.
Rasuwa / Bhote Koshi, Nepal	Himalayan flash-flood and transboundary climate-risk geography.
Elephanta Island, Maharashtra	UNESCO rock-cut cave heritage and maritime/sea-level research.
Naliya & Jakhau, Kachchh	Great Indian Bustard habitat and coastal mangrove restoration.
Vizhinjam, Kerala	Deep-water transshipment port close to major east-west sea lanes.
Gandhi Sagar & Kuno, Madhya Pradesh	Cheetah landscape and species reintroduction geography.
Digha, West Bengal	Bay of Bengal coast; coastal conservation and erosion/cyclone context.
Sambalpur, Odisha	India's 51st Doppler Weather Radar under weather-preparedness expansion.
Greenland	Arctic geopolitics, ice sheet, critical minerals and North Atlantic strategy.
Indonesia & Philippines	Major nickel geography relevant to Indian overseas critical-mineral strategy.
Zimbabwe	Lithium resource geography linked to Indian overseas mineral investments.
New Zealand	FTA partner; South Pacific/Indo-Pacific geography and trade routes.

FINAL QA VERIFIED

- 10 current-affairs topics; each has its own infographic and dedicated WAY FORWARD.
- Abbreviations expanded inside the relevant article.
- 10 four-option Prelims MCQs with detailed solutions.
- Four complete structured Mains model answers - GS-I, GS-II, GS-III and GS-IV.
- Original labelled maps; no empty placeholders.
- Both approved logos present; visible logo watermarks placed on content pages.

