

The Hindu UPSC Notes

Comprehensive analysis of **current affairs** for **UPSC preparation**, covering **international relations, governance, security, and policy developments** with **strategic insights** for both Prelims and Mains examinations.

The Legend IAS



India-U.S. Ties: Warmer Tones, Tests Ahead

Recent Developments

Prime Minister Narendra Modi publicly welcomed **U.S. President Donald Trump's** "**special relationship**" remark, signalling strengthened bilateral ties. **External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar** is scheduled to represent India at the **United Nations General Assembly** on September 27th, with particular attention on scheduling the **Quadrilateral Security Dialogue** summit in India this year.

Strategic Framework

The "**Comprehensive and Global Strategic Partnership**" framework established in 2020 continues to guide India-U.S. relations, balancing **strategic autonomy** with **great-power competition** dynamics.



UNGA Resolutions

Non-binding nature - unlike **UNSC resolutions**, these lack **enforceability**

QUAD Framework

Strategic forum, not **collective-defence alliance** - no **Article 5-style clause**

Partnership Status

Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership since 2020 - distinct from **NATO ally status**

① **Mains Application:** **Strategic autonomy** versus **great-power competition**, **trade irritants** (tariffs, energy) versus **convergences** (**Indo-Pacific cooperation**)

Key Strategic Concepts in India-U.S. Relations



Strategic Autonomy

India's policy of maintaining **independent choices** without **bloc alignment**, allowing flexibility in international relations whilst pursuing **national interests** across multiple partnerships and forums.



QUAD Partnership

India-U.S.-Japan-Australia **forum** dedicated to ensuring a **free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific region** through coordinated diplomatic and **strategic initiatives**.



Deterrence Signalling

Calibrated public messaging and **strategic actions** designed to influence and shape an **adversary's decision-making processes** and **strategic choices**.



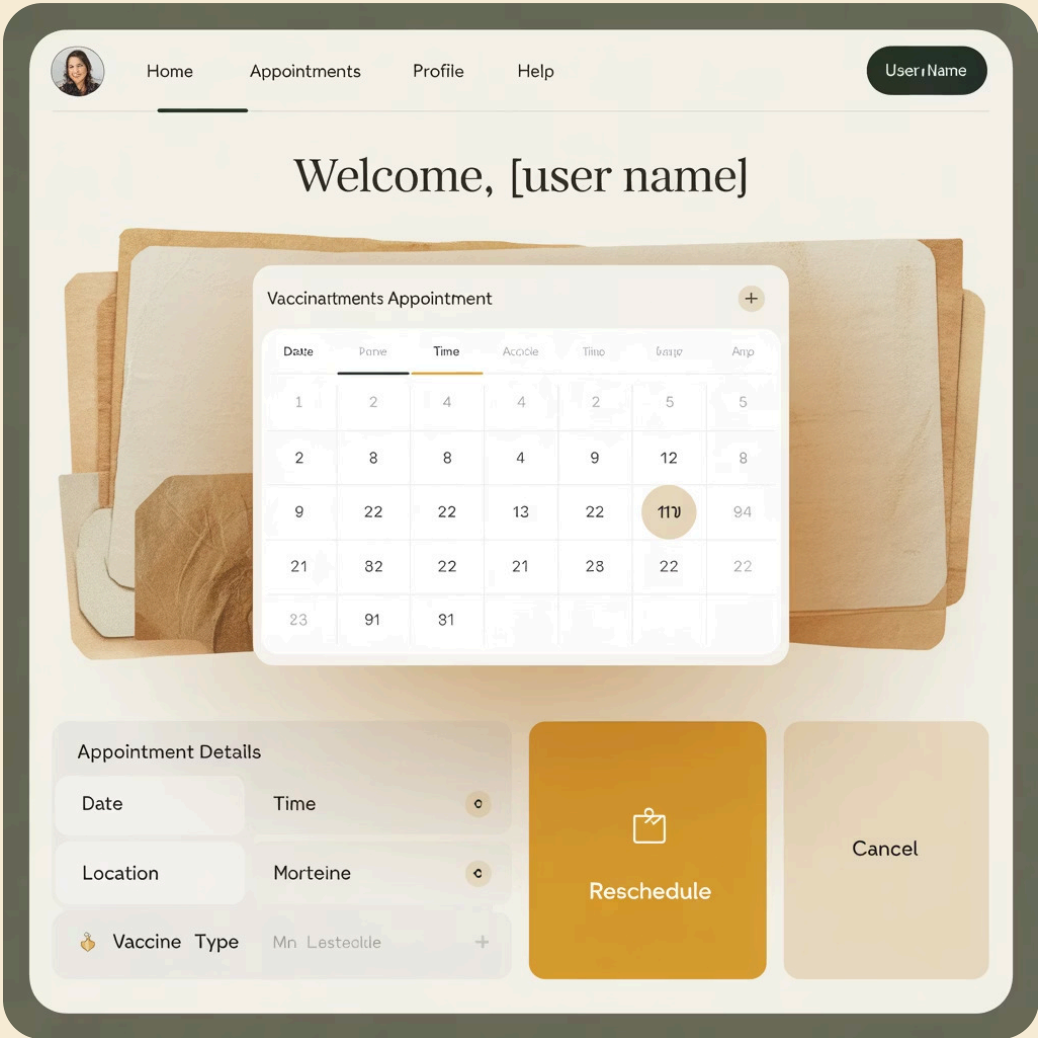
CoWIN Outage Crisis: Digital Infrastructure Under Stress

System Breakdown

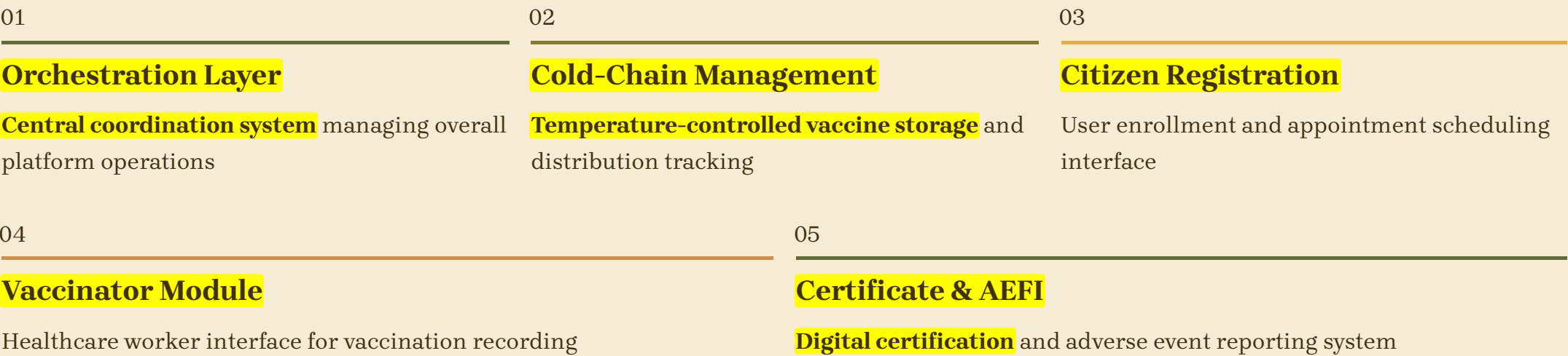
The **CoWIN portal**, operated by the **Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**, has experienced a significant **outage** since August, severely disrupting the download of **vaccination certificates** and **travel documents**. Users report that even **DigiLocker** integration has failed, creating widespread inconvenience.

Technical Architecture

CoWIN was designed with **five integrated modules**: orchestration, cold-chain management, citizen registration, vaccinator interface, and certificate/AEFI feedback systems.



⚠ Critical services disrupted affecting **travel** and **verification processes**



Digital Public Infrastructure: Lessons and Challenges

Digital Public Good Status

CoWIN operates as a **government digital public good** offered **internationally** in 2021, not a private application. This distinction is crucial for understanding its **governance and accessibility framework**.

AEFI Integration

Adverse Event Following Immunisation reporting is built directly into CoWIN's **architecture**, enabling **real-time safety monitoring** rather than relying solely on offline reporting mechanisms.

Continued Relevance

Vaccination certificates remain necessary for **visa applications** and **international travel** even after achieving **mass vaccination coverage**, maintaining the **platform's critical importance**.

Mains Application: Resilience of digital public infrastructure; citizen-centric service delivery; data interoperability challenges in governance systems

Digital Public Good (DPG)

Open, interoperable digital system

designed to serve public needs at scale with **transparent governance**

DigiLocker Integration

Government cloud-based storage

system for verified documents with **seamless platform integration**

AEFI Monitoring

Any untoward medical occurrence

following vaccination, systematically tracked for **public health safety**

Canada's Risk Assessment: Khalistani Funding Networks

Intelligence Findings

A comprehensive Canadian government **risk assessment** has identified **Babbar Khalsa International (BKI)** and **International Sikh Youth Federation (ISYF)** as **Khalistani extremist organisations** receiving substantial **financial support** originating within Canada itself.



Money Services Businesses

Abuse of **MSBs** for **illicit fund transfers**



Cryptocurrency Networks

Digital currency channels for **anonymous funding**



Non-Profit Organisations

Charitable entities misused for **fundraising**



Criminal Activities

Illegal drug trafficking as primary source



Illegal drug trafficking remains the top **money-laundering threat** according to Canadian authorities



Understanding Terror Finance Mechanisms



Classification Framework

Politically Motivated Violent Extremism (PMVE) focuses specifically on political self-determination and representation goals, distinct from racial or ethnic supremacy-based extremism. This classification helps authorities understand motivations and funding patterns.

Legal Framework

Terror listings under **Canada's Criminal Code** encompass various international groups including **Hamas, Hezbollah, and Khalistani organisations**, demonstrating comprehensive coverage beyond Middle-Eastern groups.



Money Services Business (MSB)

Entities facilitating currency exchange and remittances, particularly vulnerable to misuse for illicit financial flows



Non-Profit Organisation (NPO)

Charitable and NGO entities that can be exploited for illicit fundraising whilst maintaining legitimate facades



Trade-Based Money Laundering

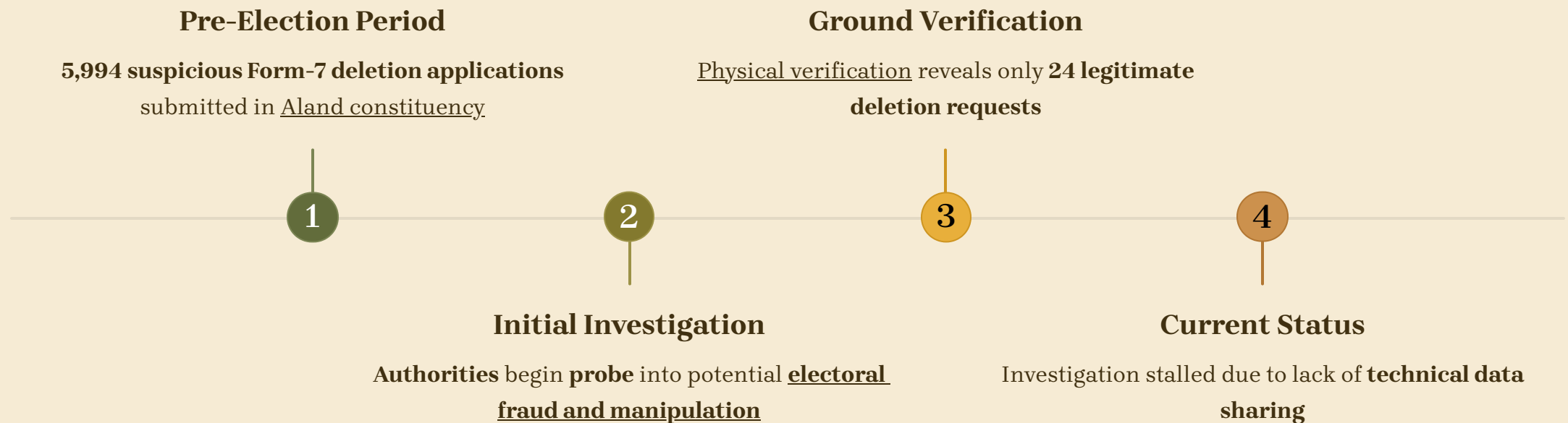
Laundering through mis-invoicing, over-reporting, or under-reporting in commercial trade transactions

Mains Application: **Diaspora networks**, **terror financing mechanisms**, **FATF-style compliance requirements**, **consular diplomacy challenges**

Karnataka Voter Roll Fraud: Electoral Integrity Crisis

Investigation Stalemate

The investigation into **5,994 fraudulent Form-7 applications** for **name deletions** in Aland constituency (Kalaburagi) ahead of the **2023 Assembly election** has reached a dead end. Crucial **technical data** remains unshared, hampering progress despite on-ground verification revealing only **24 genuine deletions**.



Key Examination Points

- **Form-7** is specifically for **deletion from electoral rolls**, not inclusion or correction
- **Booth Level Officers** assist roll management but are not political agents
- **Election Commission** supervises but relies on state **administrative inputs**

Mains Focus: Electoral integrity, data governance, balancing inclusion with roll purity

Punjab Floods: Infrastructure Vulnerabilities Exposed

Ministerial Assessment

Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan identified weakened embankments along the Sutlej, Beas, Ravi, and Ghaggar rivers as a critical factor exacerbating flood conditions. **Illegal mining activities** have significantly contributed to this infrastructure degradation, with a **comprehensive report** to be submitted to the **Prime Minister**.



Embankments fall under state jurisdiction, but effective river-basin management requires **coordinated Centre-State cooperation** for comprehensive flood management strategies.

River-Bed Mining Impact

Extraction of sand and aggregate from river channels leads to over-extraction, destabilising banks and increasing **flood vulnerability**

Non-Structural Measures

Flood zonation, early warning systems, and strategic land-use planning complement hard infrastructure investments

Essential Terms for UPSC Success

Quick Revision Guide

Master these frequently examined concepts that appear regularly in both Prelims and Mains examinations, with particular attention to common traps and misconceptions.

UNGA

United Nations General Assembly - deliberative organ with non-binding resolutions having political, not legal force

DPG

Digital Public Good - open, scalable digital infrastructure used for public services like CoWIN

PMVE

Politically Motivated Violent Extremism - violent pursuit of political outcomes, distinct from race-based extremism

Financial Crime Vectors

MSB (Money Services Business), NPO (Non-Profit Organisation), and TBML (Trade-Based Money Laundering) represent common terror-finance and money-laundering mechanisms frequently tested

Electoral Process

Form-7 deletion applications are used specifically for removal from voter lists - a frequent source of examination traps and misconceptions

- ✔ **Strategic Tip:** Focus on understanding the nuanced differences between similar concepts and watch for definitional traps in both objective and descriptive questions