

UPSC Notes from Newspaper Coverage

Here are the UPSC notes from the newspaper, covering all relevant news items across key domains including Polity & Governance, Indian Economy, Science & Technology, International Relations, Environment & Food Security, Internal Security, History & Culture, and Miscellaneous topics.



Polity & Governance

Sixth Schedule of the Constitution

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi advocated for the inclusion of **Ladakh** under the **Sixth Schedule**.

About: It contains provisions for the administration of **tribal areas** in **Assam**, **Meghalaya**, **Tripura**, and **Mizoram**.

Key Feature: It provides for the formation of **Autonomous District Councils (ADCs)** and **Regional Councils** with powers to make laws on specified subjects like land, **forests**, and social customs to safeguard the rights of the **tribal population**.

Election Observers

Context: The **Election Commission of India (ECI)** will deploy 470 officers as **observers** for the **Bihar Assembly election** and by-polls.

Role: Observers (General, Police, and Expenditure) are considered the "eyes and ears" of the ECI.

Purpose: They are deployed to ensure a **level playing field** and the conduct of **free and fair elections**.

Anti-Cheating Law in Uttarakhand

Context: The **Uttarakhand** Chief Minister highlighted the state's tough **anti-cheating (copying) law**.

Significance: It is cited as the country's toughest law against cheating in examinations, reflecting a move towards ensuring **fair and transparent recruitment processes**.

Commissions of Inquiry

Context: Following the **Karur stampede tragedy**, the **Tamil Nadu government** instituted a one-member **Commission of Inquiry** headed by retired High Court judge **Justice Aruna Jagadeesan**.

Purpose: Such commissions are set up to investigate definite **matters of public importance**. Action is often taken based on the findings and recommendations in their reports.

Indian Economy

State Finances and Fiscal Health

Context: A decadal analysis by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) highlights the macro-fiscal health of Indian states.

Vertical Fiscal Imbalance: Refers to the mismatch between the revenue-raising powers and expenditure responsibilities of different levels of government. Poorer states show high dependency on Union transfers. For example, Maharashtra raised nearly 70% of its receipts internally in 2022-23, while Arunachal Pradesh managed only 9%.

Debt-to-GSDP Ratio: A key indicator of a state's fiscal health. States with high ratios include Punjab (around 45%), Rajasthan (40%), Bihar (39%), and Kerala (37%). Odisha has one of the lowest at nearly 15%, aided by mining windfalls.

Revenue Sources: Some states rely on volatile sources like lotteries (Kerala) and mining royalties (Odisha).

Impact of COVID-19: The pandemic led to a spike in borrowings for almost all states as tax revenues shrank and emergency spending increased.

Capital Markets: FPIs vs. Domestic Investors

- **Context:** Domestic investors, particularly through mutual funds, are increasingly supporting the Indian stock market as foreign investors pull out.
- **FPI vs. DII:** Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) invest in another country's financial assets. Domestic Institutional Investors (DII) are Indian investment bodies like mutual funds and pension funds.
- **Trend:** FPI ownership in NSE-listed companies has fallen to a 13.5-year low, while the share of Domestic Mutual Funds (DMFs) has reached a record high.
- **Systematic Investment Plans (SIPs):** These are the primary drivers for DMF growth, leading to increased retail participation.
- **Financial Inclusion:** Investor participation is growing, particularly from smaller towns and cities. The share of individual investors' assets in the Indian stock market has steadily increased.

Science & Technology



AstroSat: India's Space Observatory

Context: AstroSat completed **10 years of operations** .

Key Facts :

- It is India's first dedicated **multi-wavelength space observatory**.
- Launched by **ISRO** on **September 28, 2015**, using a **PSLV-C30 rocket**.
- It can observe the universe simultaneously in the visible, ultraviolet, low and high-energy X-ray regions of the electromagnetic spectrum.
- It is a collaborative project involving **ISRO, IUCAA, TIFR, IIA**, and **RRI**.



Multi-Messenger Astronomy

Concept: A method of studying the universe using more than one type of "**messenger**" from space.

Messengers: Includes not just light (**electromagnetic radiation**) but also **gravitational waves, neutrinos, and cosmic rays**.

Significance: Combining signals provides a more complete picture of cosmic events. For example, the 2017 observation of a **neutron star collision** involved both light and **gravitational waves**, confirming theories about the formation of heavy elements.

Agricultural Science: Plant Communication in Maize

Context: A study revealed how maize plants communicate to enhance **insect resistance**.

- **Mechanism:** When attacked by insects, maize plants in crowded fields release a volatile compound called **linalool**.
- Exposure to **linalool** activates **jasmonate signalling** in the roots of neighbouring plants.
- This triggers the release of a **defensive metabolite (HDMBOA-Glc)** into the soil, which enriches beneficial bacteria.
- This also affects other plants' **immune responses**, priming them against a wide range of pests and diseases.

Significance: This understanding could be harnessed for **sustainable agriculture** to reduce chemical pesticide use.

SME Listing Platforms

Context: Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are increasingly using dedicated platforms for **IPOs** to raise capital.

Platforms: **BSE SME** and **NSE Emerge** are platforms for small and medium enterprises to get listed on the stock exchanges.

Significance: They provide a crucial avenue for **MSMEs** to tap funds for **growth** and **expansion**.

Non-Banking Financial Channels

Context: India's financial system is seeing a shift towards **non-bank channels** like **NBFCs** and **corporate bonds**.

Trend: In **FY25**, nearly half of the resources to the corporate sector came from **non-bank channels**, while **bank credit demand** declined.

Role of NBFCs: They are vital for providing finance to underserved segments, particularly **MSMEs**, and are accelerating **financial inclusion** for many individuals.

International Relations



India's Engagement with the Global South

Context: India is visibly stepping up its engagement with the Global South, adopting a more assertive stance on issues like the Gaza conflict and UN reform.

Platforms Used: BRICS, IBSA (India-Brazil-South Africa), India- CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States), FIPIC (Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation).

Manmohan Singh on India-China Relations

Context: In a posthumously published essay, former PM Manmohan Singh wrote about the future of India-China ties.

Assessment: He noted that a positive trend is unlikely in the foreseeable future as China displays an "arrogance of power" that India will reject. The consensus reached during his tenure that the two countries would not view each other as a threat is "no longer valid."



India-Russia Relations

Context: Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov emphasized the strength of Russia-India ties, stating they are a "particularly privileged strategic partnership".

Key Stand: Russia respects India's independent foreign policy and national interests. India's ties with other countries (like the U.S.) are often misunderstood as a result of the growing need for strategic autonomy across the globe.

Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)

Context: The essay by Manmohan Singh urged for greater economic engagement with regional groupings, including RCEP.

India's Stance: India opted out of the RCEP in 2019, citing concerns that engagement would not address its trade deficit with partner countries, especially China.

Environment & Food Security and Internal Security

Food Loss and Waste

Context: September 29 is the International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste (IDAFLW).

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Annual Cost

Post-harvest losses cost India nearly ₹1.5 trillion annually

33M

CO2 Emissions

Food loss from 30 key commodities generates over 33 million tonnes of CO2-equivalent emissions annually

Indian Scenario: Most losses in India occur early in the supply chain (handling, processing) due to infrastructure gaps, like in China, where similar issues have led to significant wastage.

Climate Connection: Food loss generates significant Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions. Cereal losses, especially paddy, are major contributors due to high methane intensity.

Government Initiative: The Pradhan Mantri Kisan SAMPADA Yojana (PMKSY) aims to modernise the food logistics backbone, including strengthening cold storage and processing facilities.

Left-Wing Extremism (LWE)

Context: Union Home Minister ruled out a ceasefire with Maoists, stating the goal is to eradicate "violent Naxalism" by March 31, 2026. The Chhattisgarh CM also stated that LWE was on its last legs in the state.

Government Stance: The government is ready to offer a rehabilitation policy for those who surrender their arms but will not agree to a ceasefire.

Crackdown: Security forces have intensified operations. In Chhattisgarh, three Maoists were killed in an encounter in the Kanker district. The government claims that arms trafficking to the banned CPI(Maoist) has been reduced by 90% since 2019 "

History & Culture and Miscellaneous

Borgeet

Context: The late Assamese cultural icon Zubeen Garg was known for revitalising **Borgeet**.

About: These are devotional songs instituted by the **15th-16th century** saint-reformer **Srimanta Sankaradeva** and his disciple **Madhabdeva** in **Assam**. They are a key part of Assamese culture and the **Vaishnavite tradition**.

Cardiovascular Diseases (CVDs) in Youth

Context: A rising trend of **heart attacks** is being observed among **young Indians** (**20-40 years**).

Relevance: Health, Fitness, Disease, and Lifestyle

Causes: The increasing incidence of **Cardiovascular Diseases (CVDs)** in this demographic is attributed more to **lifestyle factors** (sedentary routines, poor diet, stress, lack of sleep) than genetics.

Government Programme: The **National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke (NPCDCS)** is a key initiative to tackle the burden of **Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)**.