



INSIGHTSIAS

SIMPLIFYING IAS EXAM PREPARATION



**INSIGHTS
DAILY
CURRENT
AFFAIRS + PIB
SUMMARY**

30 DECEMBER 2024

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JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Syllabus: Polity

Context: Recent instances of judicial misconduct in India have reignited the debate on the mechanisms to hold judges accountable, emphasizing the need for transparency and responsibility in judicial actions.

- A speech delivered by **Justice Shekhar Kumar Yadav**, that made apparent his biases against the Muslim community, has once again spotlighted the difficulty in India's review mechanism to hold judges of the higher judiciary accountable.



What is Judicial Accountability?

Judicial accountability refers to the principle that judges must take responsibility for their decisions and actions. It ensures transparency in decision-making and mandates judges to act within the framework of the law, upholding the trust vested in them by society.

Provisions for Judicial Accountability:

- **Constitutional Provisions:**
 - **Article 124(4) and 124(5):** Allows impeachment of Supreme Court judges for proven misbehavior or incapacity.
 - **Article 217:** Impeachment of High Court judges based on similar grounds.
 - **Article 235:** Empowers High Courts to control and supervise subordinate courts.
 - **Restatement of Judicial Values (1997):** Acts as a code of conduct for higher judiciary members.
- **Legal Provisions:**
 - **Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968:** Establishes a mechanism to investigate misconduct through a three-member panel.
 - **Contempt of Courts Act, 1971:** Ensures that judiciary functions independently without undue influence.
 - **Judicial Standards and Accountability Bill (pending):** Aims to enhance transparency in judicial conduct and strengthen oversight mechanisms.

Need for Judicial Accountability:

- **Ensuring Public Trust:** Upholding the credibility of the judiciary and maintaining citizens' confidence in the legal system.
- **Preventing Misconduct:** Ensures that judges adhere to ethical standards and constitutional principles.
- **Enhancing Transparency:** Judicial decisions should be open to scrutiny to promote fairness.
- **Balancing Independence and Responsibility:** Prevents misuse of judicial independence for personal or political interests.
- **Promoting Rule of Law:** Ensures decisions are unbiased, equitable, and in line with constitutional mandates.

Examples of Judicial Accountability:

1. **Justice Soumitra Sen's Impeachment (2011):** Found guilty of financial misconduct as a court-appointed receiver, showcasing accountability through parliamentary processes.
2. **Justice P.D. Dinakaran's Resignation (2011):** Resigned amid allegations of land grabbing and corruption, highlighting the role of public scrutiny in judicial conduct.
3. **RTI and Judiciary (2020):** Supreme Court upheld the applicability of RTI to itself, ensuring transparency and accountability in judicial appointments and decisions.

Challenges to Judicial Accountability:

- **Impeachment Complexity:** The current impeachment process is cumbersome, requiring a two-thirds majority in Parliament.
- **Limited Oversight Mechanisms:** Lack of robust external mechanisms to monitor judicial behaviour.
- **Independence Concerns:** Excessive accountability measures may threaten judicial independence.
- **Resignations Before Proceedings:** Judges resigning to avoid inquiries hinder the accountability process.
- **Lack of Transparency:** Closed-door deliberations reduce public trust in judicial proceedings.

Way Ahead:

- **Legislative Reforms:** Expedite the passage of the [Judicial Standards and Accountability Bill](#) for structured oversight.
- **Strengthening Internal Mechanisms:** Develop independent judicial review bodies to monitor conduct.
- **Codifying Ethical Guidelines:** Expand and enforce the Restatement of Judicial Values.
- **Public Scrutiny:** Enhance transparency through regular publication of judgments and judicial activities.
- **Training and Awareness:** Conduct regular ethical training for judges to ensure adherence to constitutional principles.

Conclusion:

Judicial accountability is pivotal for preserving the [judiciary's](#) independence and integrity. Transparent mechanisms and institutional reforms are vital to reinforce public trust and ensure that justice delivery aligns with democratic principles.

Insta Links:

1. [Code-of-conduct-for-judges](#)

PYQ:

1. Who are entitled to receive free legal aid? Assess the role of the National Legal Services Authority

(NALSA) in rendering free legal aid in India (UPSC-2023)

- Critically examine the Supreme Court’s judgment on ‘National Judicial Appointments Commission Act, 2014’ with reference to the appointment of judges of higher judiciary in India. (UPSC-2017)

GS Paper 3:

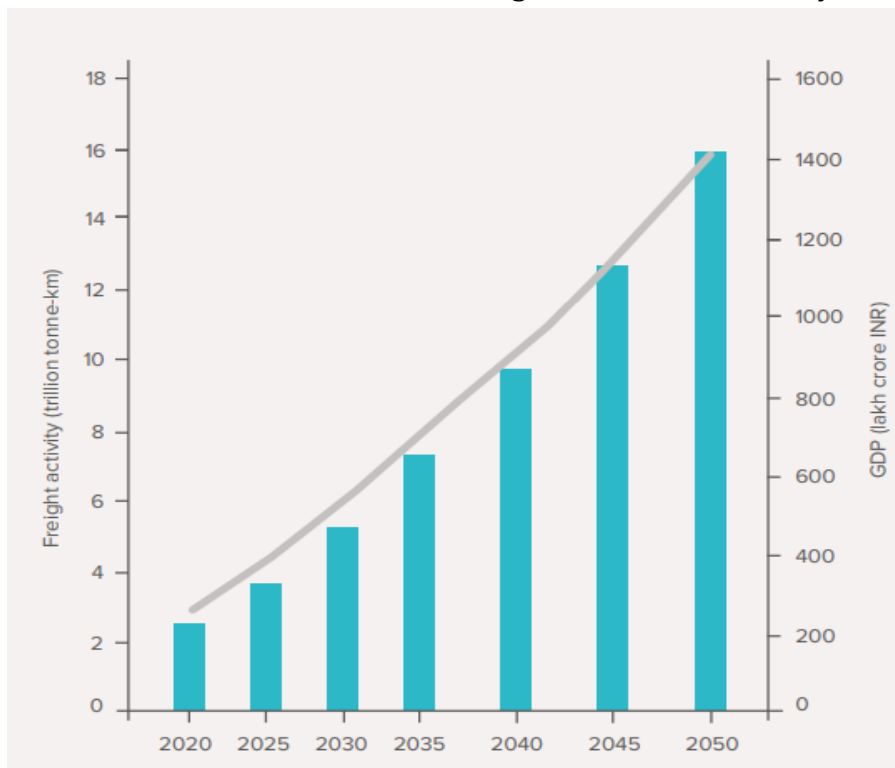
INDIA LOGISTICS MOVEMENT

Syllabus: Economics

Context: India’s logistics sector is transforming with initiatives like the National Logistics Policy and PM Gati Shakti to cut costs, boost efficiency, and enhance connectivity. Contributing 14% to GDP, it is pivotal to the \$5 trillion economy goal.

Logistics Movement Data in India:

- Logistics Cost Reduction:** Declined by 0.8-0.9 percentage points of GDP between FY14-FY22.
- Sector Contribution:** Logistics contributes 14% to India’s GDP and is valued at \$250 billion.
- Transportation Efficiency:** Average truck travel distance increased from 225 km to 300-325 km due to GST implementation.
- Bilateral Trade Facilitation:** Unified Logistics Interface Platform (ULIP) has processed 382 use cases for automation and trade facilitation.
- Rail vs. Road Share:** Road accounts for 66% of freight, rail 31%, waterways 3%, and air 1%.



Modes of Logistics Movements in India:

- Road:** Largest contributor, with 66% share; key for short-haul and last-mile delivery.
- Rail:** 31% share, suited for bulk goods and long-haul transportation; expanding with dedicated freight corridors.
- Waterways:** 3% share; cost-effective for heavy goods; potential for coastal and inland navigation.

- **Air:** 1% share; critical for high-value, time-sensitive goods.

Importance of a Strong Supply Chain:

- **Cost Reduction:** Efficient logistics reduce production costs and improve profitability.
- **Global Competitiveness:** Enhances India's export potential and competitiveness in global markets.
- **Economic Growth:** Drives investment and supports MSMEs by reducing inefficiencies.
- **Sustainability:** Promotes eco-friendly practices like rail and waterway usage, reducing emissions.
- **Employment:** Generates jobs across transportation, warehousing, and technology sectors.

2024 Recent Government Initiatives:

- **PM Gati Shakti:** Multi-modal integration of transportation infrastructure for seamless connectivity.
- **ULIP:** Facilitating data-driven logistics through process digitization and automation.
- **NLP Marine Policy:** Boosts port logistics and coastal shipping efficiency.
- **Capital Expenditure:** 11.1% rise in infrastructure spending to support logistics networks.
- **FAME II Scheme:** Promoting electric vehicles for clean logistics.

Challenges Faced by Logistics Movement:

- **High Costs:** Logistics costs remain at 14% of GDP, higher than the global average.
- **Infrastructure Gaps:** Limited last-mile connectivity and inadequate warehousing facilities.
- **Modal Imbalance:** Over-dependence on road transport, underutilization of rail and waterways.
- **Skilling Deficiency:** Lack of trained workforce for advanced logistics management.
- **Environmental Concerns:** High emissions from diesel-powered trucks and poor fuel efficiency.

Way Ahead:

- **Modal Diversification:** Increase rail and waterway share through investments in infrastructure.
- **Technology Adoption:** Expand digital platforms like ULIP for efficient operations and tracking.
- **Sustainable Practices:** Promote electric vehicles and alternative fuels.
- **Policy Alignment:** Streamline regulations and ensure implementation of logistics-focused policies.
- **Skill Development:** Invest in training programs to enhance workforce capabilities.

Conclusion:

India's logistics sector is on a transformative journey, driven by robust policies and investments. With continuous advancements in technology, infrastructure, and sustainable practices, the sector is poised to be a cornerstone in India's economic aspirations.

Insta Links:

1. [NITI Aayog Freight Report](#)

PYQ:

1. The Gati-Shakti Yojana needs meticulous coordination between the government and the private sector to achieve the goal of connectivity. Discuss. (UPSC-2022)

SHIVIKA: A SYMBOL OF COURAGE AGAINST CHILD MARRIAGE

Anecdote: In the quaint village of Karauli, Rajasthan, 15-year-old Shivika refused to bow to the age-old tradition of [child marriage](#). Burdened by debt, her father planned to marry off all four of his daughters in a single ceremony, a common practice in the region. Yet, Shivika, despite her youth, stood firm in her resolve to change their fate. Guided by her teachers and an NGO, Shivika fought against societal pressures and the weight of poverty. Her courage led to the intervention of child rights activists who not only halted the marriages but also helped her father secure employment. Shivika, now back in school, dreams of becoming a social worker to protect other girls from similar fates. Her story underscores how knowledge, courage, and community support can shatter age-old chains of oppression and pave the way for transformative change.



Relevance to UPSC Exam Syllabus:

- **Social Issues (GS Paper 1):** Highlights gender inequality, societal customs, and child rights in India.
- **Governance (GS Paper 2):** Reflects the role of NGOs, judiciary, and grassroots initiatives in combating social evils.
- **Ethics and Integrity (GS Paper 4):** Illustrates moral courage and the ethical challenges faced by vulnerable communities.
- **Essay Writing:** Provides real-life examples for essays on women empowerment and social justice.

SPADEX MISSION

Context: The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is set to conclude 2024 with the PSLV-C60/SpaDeX mission, scheduled for launch on December 30, 2024.



About SpaDeX Mission:

- **Launch Vehicle:** Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C60) in its core-alone configuration.
- **Aim:**
 - **Primary:**
 - Demonstrate **rendezvous, docking, and undocking** of two spacecraft.
 - **Secondary:**
 - **Transfer electric power** between docked spacecraft for future robotic applications.
 - Composite **spacecraft control and post-docking** payload operations.
- **Features:**
 - Launch of two satellites: **SDX01 (Chaser)** and **SDX02 (Target)**, each weighing 220 kg.
 - Placement in a 470-km circular orbit at a **55-degree inclination**.
 - **Progressive docking process:** From a 20-km separation (Far Rendezvous) to a 3-meter docking distance.
 - Demonstration of electrical power transfer between the two spacecraft post-docking.
- **Significance:**

- Lays the groundwork for India's **Bharatiya Antariksh Station (BAS)** and future lunar missions.
- Essential for advanced missions like **Gaganyaan** and the construction of an Indian space station.
- Paves the way for satellite repair and refueling, reducing mission costs.
- Boosts India's capability to participate in global space station projects.

Insta links:

1. [SpaDex-mission](#)

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Context: The recognition of Bosnia's Sevdalinka, also known as "**Balkan Blues**," as part of UNESCO's National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage highlights global efforts to preserve and celebrate diverse cultural traditions.



About UNESCO's National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage:

- **Established in:** Adopted in 2003, came into force in 2006 under the Convention for the Safeguarding of [Intangible Cultural Heritage](#).
- **Aim:** To safeguard cultural practices, expressions, and knowledge systems endangered by globalization, ensuring respect for community heritage.
- **Criteria:**
 1. Must demonstrate the importance of the practice for cultural identity.
 2. Should involve active community par-

ticipation.

3. Must align with the principles of human rights and sustainable development.

- **Types of Lists:**

- Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.
- List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding.
- Register of Good Safeguarding Practices.

- **India and UNESCO:**

- **UNESCO Committees Membership:** India is a member of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) Committee (2022–2026) and the World Heritage Committee (2021–2025).
- **Previous Tenures:** India served on the ICH Committee from 2006–2010 and 2014–2018.
- **Nodal Office:** The [Sangeet Natak Akademi](#), under the Ministry of Culture, manages intangible cultural heritage matters and prepares nomination dossiers for UNESCO's Representative List.

About Balkan Blues (Sevdalinka):

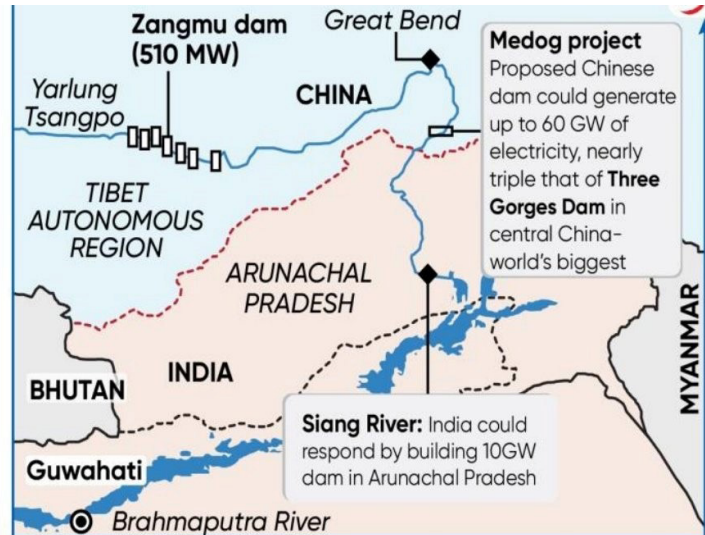
- **What it is:** A melancholic urban love song blending South Slavic oral poetry and Ottoman music, often referred to as the "Balkan Blues."
- **Nation:** Bosnia.
- **Features:**
 - Traditionally performed a cappella or with instruments like the saz (lute).
 - Originates from the 16th century, carrying themes of love and melancholy.
 - Recognized as a cultural symbol of Bosnia's history and identity.

Insta links:

1. [Garba-of-Gujarat](#)

SIANG UPPER MULTIPURPOSE PROJECT

Context: Arunachal Pradesh CM stated that the ₹1.13 lakh crore [Siang Upper Multipurpose Project](#) aims to generate electricity, maintain year-round river flow, and mitigate flood risks from excess water released by China.



About Upper Siang Multipurpose Project:

- **What it is:** A multipurpose hydroelectric project aimed at flood mitigation, maintaining the Siang River's natural flow, and electricity generation with a capacity of 11,000 MW.
- **Location:** Upper Siang District, Arunachal Pradesh, near the Siang River (Brahmaputra).
- **River:** Siang River, a major tributary of the [Brahmaputra River](#).
- **States Involved:** Arunachal Pradesh and Assam (infrastructure development and approach roads).
- **Key Features:**
 - **Reservoir capacity:** 9 billion cubic metres (BCM).
 - **Installed capacity:** 11,000 MW.
 - Jointly developed by **NHPC and NEEP-CO**.
 - Designed to mitigate flooding from upstream water releases by China and maintain river flow during lean seasons.

Insta links:

1. [Brahmaputra-river](#)

SANSKRIT INSCRIPTIONS

Context: A recent discovery of an ancient Sanskrit inscription in Gilgit, Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir was decoded by the Archaeological Survey of India ([ASI](#)).



About Sanskrit Inscription:

- **Location Found:**
 - **Gilgit, Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir** – Written in Brahmi script, **4th century CE**.
 - **Near Peshawar, Pakistan** – Written in Sharada script, **10th century CE**.
- **About the Inscription:**
 - **Gilgit Inscription:**
 - Mentions “**Pushpasingha**,” who installed a Mahesvaralinga for his guru's merit.
 - Written in **Brahmi script**.
 - Indicates strong religious ties, specifically to [Shaivism](#).
 - **Peshawar Inscription:**
 - Fragmentary, engraved on a slab.
 - Written in **Sharada characters**.
 - Refers to Buddhist **Dharini (chants)** in line six.

Insta links:

1. [Stone-inscriptions-of-grantham](#)

INDIA-AUSTRALIA ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND TRADE AGREEMENT

Insta links:

1. [India - Aus ECTA](#)

Context: The India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement ([Ind-Aus ECTA](#)) has completed two years, marking a significant milestone in bilateral trade relations and fostering mutual growth.



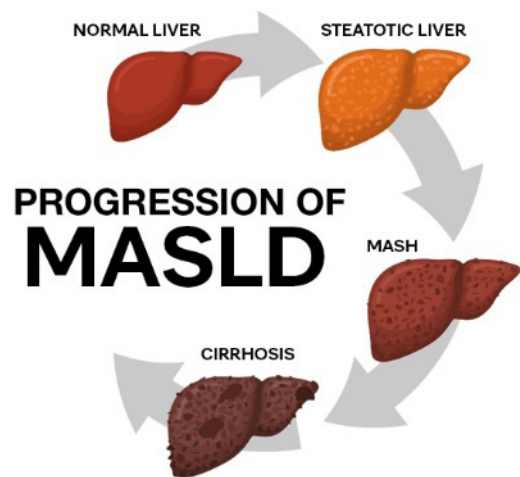
About India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement:

- **Established in:** Signed in 2022.
- **Nations:** India and Australia.
- **Features of the Agreement:**
 - **Trade Preferences:** Provides preferential market access for key goods, including textiles, chemicals, and agriculture products.
 - **Diversification:** Promotes trade in new areas such as gold-studded diamonds and turbojets.
 - **Raw Material Imports:** Facilitates imports of metalliferous ores, cotton, and wood products for industrial support.
 - **MSMEs Focus:** Special emphasis on empowering MSMEs and fostering employment generation.
 - **Bilateral Trade Target:** Aims to reach **USD 100 billion** in trade by 2030.
- **Recent Trends:**
 - **Trade Growth:** Bilateral merchandise trade grew from USD 12.2 billion in 2020-21 to USD 26 billion in 2022-23.
 - **Utilization Rates:** Export utilization at 79% and import utilization at 84% in 2023.
 - **Moderation:** Total trade reached USD 24 billion in 2023-24, with India's exports growing by 14%.

METABOLIC DYSFUNCTION-ASSOCIATED STEATOTIC LIVER DISEASE

Context: Exercise is a cornerstone in managing metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD), according to a study led by an Indian-origin researcher.

- Metabolic Dysfunction-Associated Steatotic [Liver Disease](#) (MASLD), previously known as Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (NAFLD), is a chronic liver condition linked to fat accumulation in the liver.



About Metabolic Dysfunction-Associated Steatotic Liver Disease (MASLD):

- **What it is:** MASLD is a liver disease caused by excessive fat build-up in the liver, often linked to metabolic dysfunction. It can progress to inflammation (MASH) and severe complications like liver fibrosis or cirrhosis.
- **Causes:**
 - [Obesity](#) (BMI \geq 30).
 - Insulin resistance leading to poor blood sugar management.
 - Type 2 diabetes.
 - Dyslipidemia (high cholesterol and lipids).
- **Symptoms:**
 - Fatigue and weakness.
 - Right upper abdominal ache.
 - Swollen belly and yellowing skin (in advanced cases).

- Severe cases may lead to cirrhosis or liver cancer.
- **Diseases Associated:**
 - MASH (inflammation with scarring).
 - Hepatocellular carcinoma (liver cancer).
 - Increased risks of cardiovascular diseases, breast cancer, and colon cancer.
 - [Type 2 diabetes](#) in non-diabetic individuals.
- **Treatment:**
 - **Lifestyle Changes:** Weight loss and regular exercise to reduce liver fat and improve insulin sensitivity.
 - **Dietary Adjustments:** Avoiding high-fat, high-sugar foods.
 - **Pharmacotherapy:** For managing metabolic risk factors like diabetes and cholesterol.
 - **Exercise Protocols:** Tailored regimens can benefit all patients, including those with advanced liver disease like cirrhosis.

About Crimea Peninsula:

- **Location:** Located in Eastern Europe, Crimea is almost entirely surrounded by the **Black Sea** and the [Sea of Azov](#).
 - It connects to mainland **Ukraine** via the **Isthmus of Perekop** and to Russia via the **Crimean Bridge** over the Kerch Strait.
- **Borders:** Shares maritime proximity with Romania to the west and Turkey to the south across the Black Sea.
- **Historical Significance:** Known as the **Tauric Peninsula** in early modern history, it has been under Russian occupation since 2014 after annexation.
- **Geological Features:**
 - **Mountains:** The **Crimean Mountains** dominate the southern region, with Ai-Petri being a notable peak.
 - **Rivers:** Includes small rivers like **Sal-hir** and **Alma**.
 - **Coastal Features:** The **Arabat Spit** separates the Syvash lagoons from the Sea of Azov.

Insta links:

1. [Diabetes-a-non-communicable-disease](#)

Insta links:

1. [Crimea](#)

Mapping:

CRIMEA

Context: A severe environmental crisis unfolded in the Black Sea following a collision between two oil tankers in the [Kerch Strait](#) near Crimea, resulting in a major oil spill.

