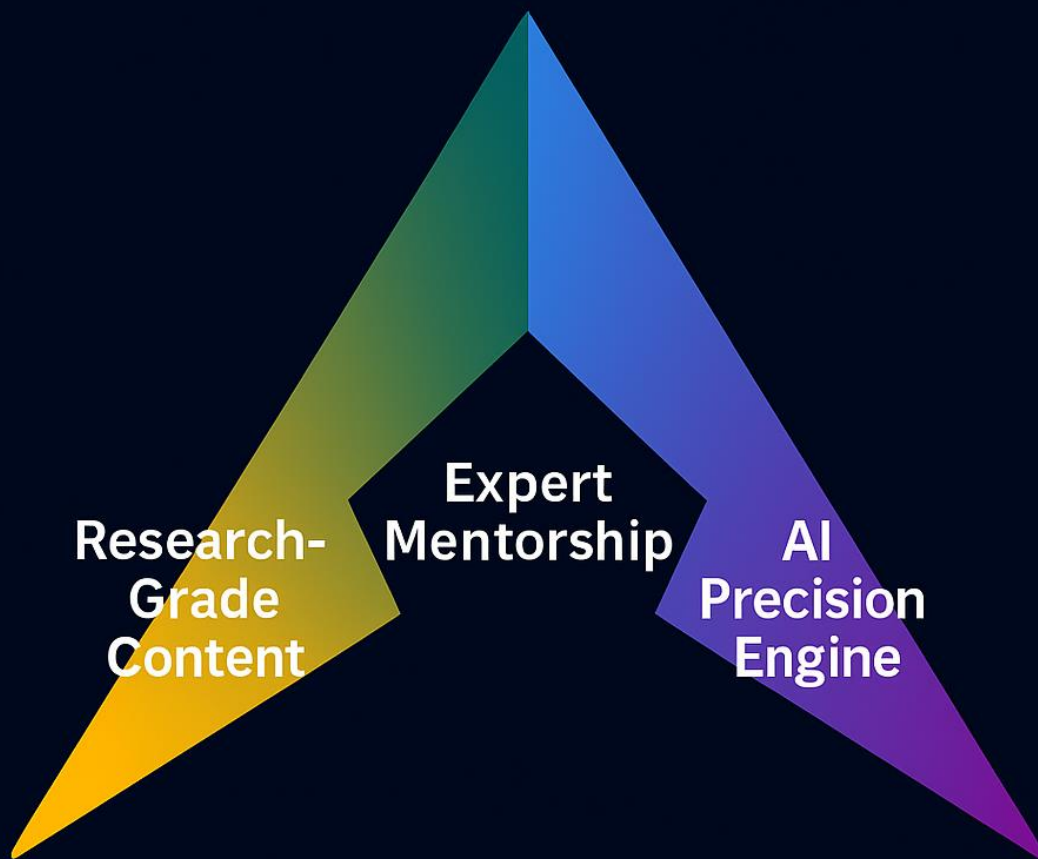


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First Edition: November 2025

Printed and published by PrepAlpine

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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS DATED 09.11.2025

GS Paper II: Current Affairs

1. The Undertrial Crisis in India: Justice Denied to the Poor

a. Introduction

A recent study by the *Square Circle Fair Trial Programme* of NALSAR University has uncovered a disturbing truth about India's justice system. Over 70 percent of India's prisoners are undertrials—individuals who have not been convicted yet and are still awaiting trial. Even more shocking is that only 7.91 percent of these prisoners have accessed their right to free legal aid, largely because they are unaware such support exists.

Supreme Court Justice Vikram Nath described this as a “*disturbing trend*,” which threatens the core principle of equality before law. The situation reveals that justice in India often depends not on innocence or guilt, but on economic capacity.

b. Understanding Undertrials and Legal Safeguards

Undertrials are persons detained during investigation or trial, who are presumed innocent until proven guilty. The Constitution of India guarantees multiple safeguards to protect them from prolonged or unjust detention.

i. Constitutional Protections

1. Article 21 – Right to Life and Personal Liberty:

Ensures a *fair and speedy trial* as a part of the fundamental right to life.

2. Article 39A – Free Legal Aid:

Directs the State to provide *free legal assistance* to those who cannot afford it, ensuring true equality before law.

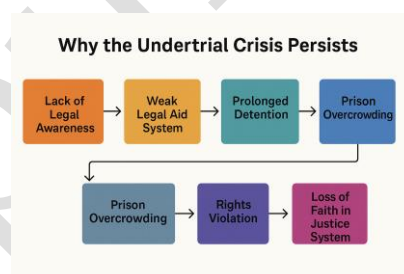
ii. Legal Framework

1. Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987:

Established the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) to provide free legal services through state and district-level bodies.

2. Judicial Precedents:

- *Hussainara Khatoon vs State of Bihar (1979)*: Prolonged pre-trial detention violates Article 21.
- *Khatri vs State of Bihar (1981)*: The right to legal aid begins from the moment of arrest, not just at the trial stage.



c. Key Findings of the NALSAR Report (2019–2024)

Based on data collected across multiple states, the report highlights deep social and institutional failures:

i. Undertrial Proportion

Over 70 percent of prisoners are awaiting trial — one of the highest ratios globally.

ii. Access to Legal Aid

Only 7.91 percent have received free legal aid, revealing a vast awareness and access gap.

iii. Lack of Representation

- 41 percent had no lawyer during their trial.
- 51 percent lacked crucial case documents.

iv. Socio-Economic Vulnerability

- 68 percent belong to marginalised caste groups.
- Nearly 80 percent work in the informal sector, showing how poverty correlates with incarceration.

v. Health and Disability

More than half reported physical or mental health issues.

vi. Excessive Detention

Many undertrials have spent longer in jail than the maximum possible sentence for their alleged offence.

d. Why This Is a Grave Concern

i. Violation of Fundamental Rights

Extended detention without conviction violates the right to liberty and human dignity under Article 21, effectively turning trial delays into pre-emptive punishment.

ii. Unequal Access to Justice

Economic inequality leads to *legal inequality*. While affluent accused easily obtain bail or hire competent lawyers, the poor remain behind bars for minor offences.

iii. Overcrowded and Inhumane Prisons

With jails overflowing with undertrials, living conditions become degrading—marked by poor hygiene, inadequate healthcare, and violence.

iv. Weak Legal Aid System

Many legal aid lawyers are overburdened, underpaid, and lack motivation. This results in poor-quality representation and mechanical bail filings.

v. Lack of Awareness and Documentation

Most undertrials are unaware of their right to legal aid. Absence of proper documentation or case tracking further compounds their neglect.

e. Wider Implications for the Justice System

A fair trial is central to any democracy. When a majority of prisoners are unconvicted, it signals a breakdown of justice and governance.

i. Democratic Accountability

The way a nation treats its poorest prisoners reveals its true commitment to justice and equality.

ii. Judicial Efficiency

Effective legal aid helps decongest courts and prisons by ensuring faster disposal of cases.

iii. International Commitments

As a signatory to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), India is obligated to guarantee fair and speedy trials — a standard it is currently struggling to meet.

f. Way Forward

i. Strengthening Legal Aid Institutions

Provide more funding and trained personnel to NALSA, SLSAs, and DLSAs.
Regular *legal awareness camps* in prisons can empower inmates to seek legal aid.

ii. Integrating Technology

Link court, police, and prison databases digitally to automatically identify undertrials who have already served more than their possible sentence.

iii. Reforming Bail Procedures

Simplify bail norms — promote *personal bonds* instead of cash sureties, especially for minor offences and poor defendants.

iv. Speedy Trial Mechanisms

Set up Fast-Track Courts to handle petty and long-pending cases, reducing unnecessary incarceration.

v. Capacity Building

Train legal aid lawyers and paralegals in case documentation, client communication, and follow-up practices.

vi. Public Legal Awareness

Launch outreach campaigns in rural and marginalised areas to educate people about their right to free legal aid from the time of arrest.

Conclusion

India's undertrial crisis is not merely about overcrowded prisons—it reflects deep structural inequities in access to justice.

For the poor, an arrest often becomes a sentence by itself, even before conviction. Ensuring equality before law means ensuring that every citizen, regardless of income or caste, can access competent legal help.

A truly democratic justice system must protect not only against wrongful conviction but also against wrongful confinement.

Justice delayed may be justice denied — but justice denied to the poor is democracy diminished.

GS Paper II: Current Affairs

2. Sustainable Fisheries in India's Exclusive Economic Zone: A Shift Towards Science and Equity

a. Introduction

The Government of India has introduced new Rules for Sustainable Harnessing of Fisheries in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

These rules represent a major reform in India's marine fisheries governance, aiming to make fishing more scientific, environmentally responsible, and socially inclusive.

Unlike earlier regimes that favoured large private fleets, the new policy gives preference to fishermen cooperatives and Fish Farmer Producer Organisations (FFPOs).

The central goal is to ensure that India's rich marine resources are used in a way that is:

- Sustainable — protecting biodiversity and fish stocks.
- Equitable — empowering traditional fishing communities.

- Traceable — ensuring transparency and export quality.

b. Understanding the Background

i. India's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)

Under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS, 1982), every coastal country has sovereign rights over marine resources up to 200 nautical miles from its coast.

India's EEZ extends across an enormous 2.02 million sq. km, with about half surrounding the Andaman, Nicobar, and Lakshadweep Islands.

However, most Indian fishing activity occurs within 50 km of the coast, leading to:

- Overexploitation of shallow coastal zones, and
- Underuse of deeper waters, rich in untapped fish resources.

ii. Why Deep-Sea Fishing Matters

Deep-sea fishing involves harvesting fish from offshore waters beyond the continental shelf. It:

- Reduces pressure on coastal ecosystems,
- Accesses high-value export species (like tuna and squid), and
- Expands India's Blue Economy, combining economic growth with marine conservation.

iii. Government Support for the Transition

Key initiatives facilitating this transformation include:

- Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY): Modernises boats, cold chains, and processing units.
- Blue Economy Policy Framework (2021): Integrates ocean development with ecological sustainability.

c. Key Features of the New EEZ Rules

The framework combines scientific management with equitable access, ensuring that India's deep-sea fisheries remain both productive and sustainable.

i. Objective

To regulate deep-sea fishing through scientific principles while conserving marine biodiversity and promoting social justice.

ii. Priority for Cooperatives and FFPOs

Fishing rights will primarily go to cooperatives, Self-Help Groups, and FFPOs, ensuring that local fishermen—not corporations—benefit from deeper water fishing.

iii. Definition of Operator

"Operators" include individuals, companies, or cooperatives responsible for vessel operation and compliance.

iv. Mother-and-Child Vessel System



Smaller boats (child vessels) transfer their catch at sea to larger “mother” ships, improving fuel efficiency and allowing longer fishing durations.

v. Ban on Destructive Fishing

Harmful methods like LED light fishing, pair trawling, and bull trawling are prohibited to protect juvenile fish and fragile marine habitats.

vi. Catch Certification

All catches must carry legal and health certificates issued by the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) — ensuring food safety and traceability for exports.

vii. Digital Monitoring via ReALCRaft Portal

Every vessel must be digitally registered and GPS-tracked to curb illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

viii. Minimum Legal Size (MLS)

Species-specific size limits prevent capture of immature fish, allowing populations to replenish naturally.

ix. Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs)

Each region will follow a scientifically prepared plan dictating fishing quotas, seasons, and gear types.

x. Training and Capacity Building

Traditional fishers will receive training in navigation, onboard safety, and hygienic handling of catch.

xi. Promotion of Mariculture

The rules encourage sea-cage farming and seaweed cultivation—new livelihood options that reduce dependence on capture fishing.

d. Significance of the New Rules

i. Strengthening the Blue Economy

By managing deep-sea resources responsibly, India can expand seafood exports while safeguarding ecological balance.

ii. Empowering Traditional Fishers

Cooperative-based rights ensure that small fishers share in the economic gains of deep-sea exploration.

iii. Promoting Environmental Sustainability

Bans on destructive gear and enforcement of catch limits protect coral reefs and fish nurseries.

iv. Enhancing Global Market Competitiveness

Certification and traceability make Indian seafood compliant with international quality standards, boosting exports.

v. Data-Driven Resource Management

Scientific surveys guide sustainable catch limits, preventing overfishing and ensuring long-term yields.

vi. Diversifying Coastal Livelihoods

Encouraging mariculture and seaweed farming gives coastal families steady income even when fish catches fluctuate.

e. Challenges in Implementation

i. Monitoring and Enforcement

India's vast EEZ makes surveillance difficult. Thousands of vessels must be tracked through satellite and digital tools to prevent violations.

ii. Financial Constraints

Deep-sea fishing demands larger vessels and costly equipment. Cooperatives often lack access to affordable loans and insurance.

iii. Climate Change Impacts

Warming oceans and changing currents are shifting fish distribution, making resource prediction complex.

iv. Data and Coordination Gaps

Fisheries management requires accurate stock data and coordination among central and state agencies—currently a weak link.

v. Capacity and Awareness Deficits

Many traditional fishers are unfamiliar with digital monitoring, documentation, or modern navigation systems.

f. Way Forward

i. Institutional Strengthening

Creation of a National Deep-Sea Fisheries Authority can unify regulation, research, and enforcement efforts nationwide.

ii. Financial and Technological Support

Subsidised credit, insurance, and equipment upgrades can help cooperatives adopt sustainable and efficient practices.

iii. Scientific Research and Stock Assessment

Regular marine surveys should determine safe catch limits and identify breeding zones for seasonal protection.

iv. Digital Traceability and Real-Time Monitoring

Expanding vessel tracking networks and online reporting will improve transparency and deter illegal fishing.

v. Skill and Capacity Development

PMMSY training modules must cover deep-sea navigation, onboard hygiene, processing, and export-value addition.

vi. Alignment with Global Goals

The initiative directly advances Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 – “Life Below Water”, promoting conservation of marine resources for long-term welfare.

Conclusion

The new EEZ Fisheries Rules mark a paradigm shift in India's ocean governance—from open-access exploitation to science-based stewardship. They blend sustainability with social equity, ensuring that the seas remain both a source of livelihood and of ecological balance.

By empowering local communities, promoting innovation, and enforcing traceable practices, India is laying the foundation for a responsible blue economy that benefits both people and planet.

“Sustainable fishing is not about catching more fish — it is about ensuring that there will always be fish to catch.”

GS Paper III: Economics

3. EPFO Reforms: Towards a Transparent and Citizen-Centric Social Security System

a. Introduction

The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)—India's flagship social security institution—has recently launched a series of reforms and outreach initiatives to make its services faster, transparent, and more citizen-friendly.

For decades, EPFO members—particularly low-income and informal-sector workers—faced difficulties such as name mismatches, pension delays, and withdrawal issues. The new reform agenda addresses these long-standing challenges through a blend of digital transformation and human outreach, ensuring that every worker can access social security efficiently, fairly, and with dignity.

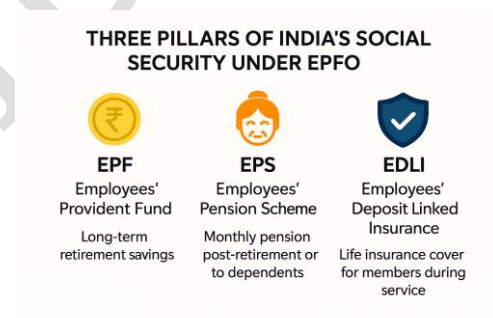
b. Background

i. What is the EPFO?

The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation, operating under the Ministry of Labour and Employment, manages three major schemes under the EPF and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952:

1. Employees' Provident Fund (EPF): A long-term retirement savings mechanism for employees.
2. Employees' Pension Scheme (EPS): Provides a regular pension post-retirement or to dependents after a member's death.
3. Employees' Deposit Linked Insurance (EDLI): Offers insurance coverage to employees during service.

At present, EPFO manages over 30 crore accounts, with around 7 crore active contributors, and a financial corpus exceeding ₹26 lakh crore—making it among the world's largest social security bodies.



ii. Why Reforms Became Necessary

Over the years, EPFO's functioning was hampered by outdated processes and weak grievance handling. Key issues included:

- Paper-based record systems, leading to errors and duplication.
- Delays in claim settlements and pension disbursement.
- Low awareness about online services or complaint mechanisms.
- Limited accountability and slow response to grievances.

Recognising these bottlenecks, EPFO has undertaken a comprehensive reform drive to align with the principles of Digital India, ensuring governance that is both efficient and empathetic.

c. Major Initiatives by EPFO

i. Samadhan Initiative

A daily grievance redressal mechanism where members can personally meet EPFO officers at local offices. Each case is tracked by a designated officer until it is fully resolved.

ii. Nidhi Aapke Nikat Programme

A monthly outreach programme connecting EPFO officials with workers, pensioners, and employers. It helps members verify account details, raise issues, and learn about entitlements through direct interaction.

iii. Single Window Death Claim Counter

A dedicated service desk for families of deceased members to simplify documentation and ensure quick settlement of claims without bureaucratic hurdles.

iv. IT System Overhaul (2023–24)

In partnership with C-DAC and the Ministry of Electronics and IT, EPFO has merged 123 old databases, enhanced server capacity, and redesigned its online forms for smoother processing and faster claim approvals.

v. Database Modernisation

Decades-old paper records are being digitised, allowing even retired members to access data seamlessly online.

vi. Process Simplification

Key forms like Form 19 (Withdrawal) and Form 13 (Transfer) have been simplified and redesigned to minimise errors and reduce paperwork.

d. Significance of the Reforms

i. Faster and Fairer Grievance Redressal

Members can now resolve long-pending issues in a single visit rather than waiting for months. Accountability has improved through officer-wise tracking.

ii. Digital Empowerment of Workers

An upgraded IT system enables quicker online claims, fewer errors, and greater transparency in account management.

iii. Inclusion of Informal Sector Workers

Through outreach programmes, even small factory and rural workers—often outside the formal safety net—are brought into EPFO's fold.

iv. Transparency and Trust

Face-to-face interaction, backed by digital monitoring, ensures that every transaction is traceable and verifiable, enhancing public confidence in the system.

v. Strengthening Good Governance

The reforms embody the principles of Good Governance—efficiency, accountability, transparency, and empathy—turning social security into a true citizen service.

e. Challenges Ahead

i. Limited Digital Literacy

Many workers, especially in the informal sector, struggle to use online services and depend on intermediaries.

ii. Legacy Data Errors

Old records—often incomplete or inaccurate—continue to create mismatches during claims and transfers.

iii. High Workload on Local Offices

Regional offices handle millions of cases, putting pressure on limited manpower and slowing service delivery.

iv. Low Awareness of Rights

A large section of workers still remain unaware of their EPF entitlements or grievance redressal mechanisms.

v. Connectivity Constraints

Poor internet connectivity in remote areas limits the effectiveness of online systems.

f. Way Forward

i. Expanding Awareness Campaigns

Conduct awareness drives in industrial clusters, small enterprises, and rural areas to educate workers about benefits, claim procedures, and digital tools.

ii. Improving Digital Access

Set up mobile help centres or digital kiosks in regional offices to assist those with limited literacy or internet access.

iii. Continuous IT Modernisation

Keep upgrading digital systems and strengthen cybersecurity frameworks to handle increasing online transactions securely.

iv. Training EPFO Personnel

Equip staff with both technical and soft skills—combining efficient service with empathetic communication.

v. Feedback and Monitoring Systems

Introduce structured feedback loops—via SMS, calls, or online forms—to assess satisfaction levels and continuously improve service quality.

Conclusion

The EPFO reform programme signifies a powerful transition—from bureaucratic processes to citizen-first governance. By simplifying procedures, digitising records, and fostering direct interaction, it ensures that social security is not merely a legal right but a lived reality for millions of workers.

These changes reflect the broader national vision of “Ease of Living” and “Minimum Government, Maximum Governance”, ensuring that every worker—formal or informal—receives timely, transparent, and humane service.

“Public service is not about processing files — it is about resolving lives.”

4. Relocation of Forest Tribes from Tiger Reserves: Balancing Conservation and Community Rights

a. Introduction

The Government of India has recently introduced a new policy framework to guide how forest-dwelling tribal communities living inside tiger reserves can either continue in their traditional habitats or relocate voluntarily.

This step follows protests from tribal groups after a June 2024 directive by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) urged states to expedite relocations.

The new framework thus seeks to balance wildlife conservation with tribal rights, ensuring that India's commitment to protecting tigers does not come at the cost of human dignity, consent, and livelihood security.

It promotes the idea that conservation and community welfare can coexist—reflecting a more inclusive approach to environmental governance.

b. Background

i. Project Tiger (1973)

Launched in 1973, Project Tiger aimed to revive India's dwindling tiger population through strict protection and habitat conservation.

It established a network of tiger reserves divided into two zones:

- Core zones: Inviolable areas reserved exclusively for wildlife protection.
- Buffer zones: Transitional areas where controlled human activity is permitted.

This model significantly increased tiger numbers but also displaced several forest-dwelling communities over the years.

ii. Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006

The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 — commonly called the FRA — represented a historic correction to colonial-era forest policies. It recognised the rights of forest dwellers to:

1. Live and cultivate in forest areas.
2. Access, collect, and manage forest produce.
3. Protect, regenerate, and conserve forests sustainably.

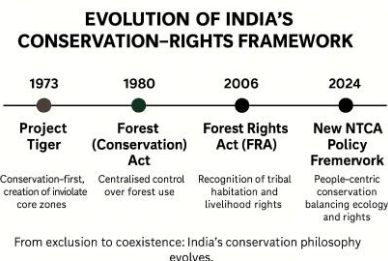
Most importantly, relocation under FRA is permitted only if scientifically proven essential for conservation, and must be voluntary with *free, prior, and informed consent*.

iii. Legal Conflict and the Need for Balance

Two important laws often overlap:

- The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, which mandates inviolable areas for wildlife.
- The FRA, 2006, which guarantees residence and livelihood rights to forest dwellers.

This has led to frequent legal and administrative friction. The new framework therefore strives to reconcile ecological priorities with social justice, ensuring that tiger protection and tribal rights are treated as complementary, not competing, goals.



c. Key Provisions of the New Policy Framework

- i. **Objective:**
To conserve tigers while upholding the *dignity, consent, and legal rights* of forest-dwelling tribal and traditional communities.
- ii. **Applicability:**
The framework applies to Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers living within the core zones of tiger reserves.
- iii. **Voluntary Relocation Only:**
Relocation must be voluntary, rights-based, and supported by scientific justification. Any form of forced eviction is strictly prohibited.
- iv. **Right to Stay:**
Communities have the option to remain in their ancestral forest habitats under protection of the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006.
- v. **Consent Requirement:**
Consent must be obtained both from individual families and the Gram Sabha before any relocation is approved.
- vi. **Compensation Package:**
Each relocating family will receive ₹15 lakh in compensation or an equivalent land-and-housing package with livelihood support measures.
- vii. **Facilities for Those Staying Back:**
Families who choose to stay in forest areas must be provided with basic amenities such as healthcare, education, roads, electricity, and drinking water.
- viii. **Monitoring Mechanism:**
Independent annual audits will review all relocations to ensure compliance with human rights standards and FRA provisions.
- ix. **National Database (NDCCI):**
The National Database for Conservation and Community Integration (NDCCI) will track relocation details, compensation payments, and post-relocation outcomes.
- x. **Joint Oversight:**
The Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) will jointly monitor implementation to ensure transparency, fairness, and coordination.

d. Why This Policy Matters

i. Protection of Tribal Rights

It reinforces that no forest-dwelling family can be displaced without voluntary consent. This upholds constitutional guarantees under Articles 21 (right to life) and 46 (promotion of tribal welfare).

ii. Balancing Ecology and Human Welfare

Recognises that coexistence, not separation, is often the more sustainable path — where communities act as partners in conservation.

iii. Preventing Misuse of Authority

By mandating Gram Sabha approval and scientific justification, the framework curbs misuse of relocation powers and ensures procedural fairness.

iv. Institutional Accountability

Regular audits and a national database enable independent monitoring, reducing corruption and ensuring that benefits reach intended families.

v. Inter-Ministerial Coordination

Joint monitoring by MoTA and MoEFCC bridges the divide between conservation agencies and tribal welfare departments, leading to holistic decision-making.

e. Challenges and Concerns

i. Implementation on the Ground

Despite clear safeguards, informal pressure or misinformation may still influence communities to relocate involuntarily.

ii. Post-Relocation Hardships

Families often face economic distress after moving—losing access to forest produce, traditional livelihoods, and cultural ties.

iii. Limited Awareness

Many Gram Sabhas and tribal households lack awareness of their legal rights under FRA, making them vulnerable to manipulation.

iv. Ecological vs. Social Priorities

In certain fragile ecosystems, genuine conservation needs may warrant relocation—but such decisions must be transparent and scientifically validated.

v. Administrative Capacity Gaps

Local officials often lack proper training to integrate wildlife laws with FRA provisions, leading to uneven and sometimes unjust enforcement.

f. Way Forward

i. Community-Led Conservation

Encourage joint forest management and community-based tiger protection, where local people are recognised as custodians rather than intruders.

ii. Empowering Gram Sabhas

Strengthen the Gram Sabha's authority to approve, verify, and monitor relocation plans, ensuring full participation of affected families.

iii. Sustainable Livelihood Support

Develop alternative livelihoods through eco-tourism, handicrafts, honey collection, bamboo products, and agro-forestry, ensuring stable income after relocation.

iv. Science-Based Relocation

Relocation should occur only when scientific evidence shows that coexistence threatens tiger survival—not as an administrative shortcut.

v. Transparency and Public Oversight

Make NDCCI data publicly accessible to track compensation, consent, and post-relocation outcomes—building citizen trust and accountability.

Conclusion

The new relocation framework marks a significant shift toward people-centred conservation. It replaces exclusionary models of wildlife protection with a rights-based and participatory approach.

By recognising forest tribes as partners in preservation, not obstacles, it aligns ecological goals with social justice.

Empowering communities to choose with dignity—whether to stay or relocate—ensures that India’s forests remain both biologically rich and socially just.

“Conservation succeeds not by excluding people, but by empowering them to protect what they call home.”

GS Paper III: Environment

5. India’s Call for Climate Justice: Developed Nations Must Move Toward Net-Negative Emissions

a. Introduction

At the Global Climate Summit in Brazil, held ahead of COP30, India made a strong appeal to developed nations to take greater responsibility for global warming.

It urged industrialised countries not only to meet their net-zero targets earlier but to go further — achieving net-negative emissions, i.e., removing more carbon from the atmosphere than they emit.

This position reflects India’s long-standing commitment to climate justice, where global action is guided by fairness and historical accountability. Those who contributed most to climate change must now lead the clean-up effort.

b. Background

i. Climate Inequality

For over a century, developed nations have consumed most of the planet’s carbon budget—the total permissible emissions before global warming exceeds 1.5°C.

Meanwhile, developing countries like India still need developmental space to build infrastructure, eradicate poverty, and industrialise. This imbalance defines the central tension of climate politics: the Global North’s overuse of resources versus the Global South’s right to develop.

ii. India’s Climate Philosophy

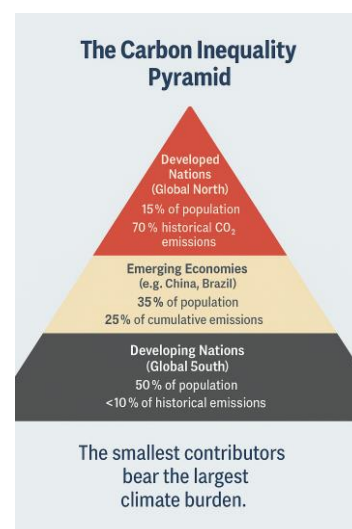
India’s approach is rooted in the principle of “Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC)”, a core tenet of the Paris Agreement.

It recognises that:

1. Every nation must contribute to climate action.
2. Developed countries must do more, and do it faster, due to their historical emissions and financial-technical advantages.

c. Key Concepts Explained

Term	Meaning
Net-zero emissions	A condition where greenhouse gases emitted are balanced by those removed through forests, oceans, or carbon-capture technologies.



Term	Meaning
Net-negative emissions	When a nation removes more carbon than it emits, resulting in an overall decrease in atmospheric CO ₂ levels.
Carbon budget	The total amount of CO ₂ that can still be emitted globally to limit warming below 1.5°C or 2°C.
Tropical Forests Forever Facility	A Brazilian-led initiative to fund the protection of tropical forests. India has joined as an observer, showing its support for sustainable forest management.

d. India's Key Messages at the COP30 Leaders' Summit

i. Developed Nations Must Lead the Way

India urged rich nations to achieve net-zero before 2050 and adopt net-negative pathways, acknowledging their dominant historical share of emissions.

ii. Fairness in Climate Action

India emphasised that climate progress remains stalled because developed countries have not met their commitments on finance, emission cuts, and technology transfer.

iii. Climate Justice for the Global South

The shrinking carbon budget threatens developing nations the most, despite their minimal contribution to the problem.

iv. Reaffirmation of Multilateralism

India reiterated its faith in the Paris Agreement and opposed unilateral, protectionist climate policies that could hurt developing economies.

v. Commitment to Forest Protection

By supporting Brazil's *Tropical Forests Forever Facility*, India highlighted that tropical forests are vital carbon sinks that require global cooperation and financing.

e. India's Domestic Climate Achievements

i. Emission Intensity:

Reduced by 36% between 2005 and 2020, achieving targets ahead of schedule and showcasing strong decoupling between GDP growth and emissions.

ii. Non-Fossil Power Capacity:

Crossed 50% of total installed capacity, significantly lowering India's reliance on coal-based energy.

iii. Renewable Energy Expansion:

Installed nearly 200 GW of renewable energy, making India the third-largest renewable energy producer in the world.

iv. Forest and Tree Cover:

Expanded to 25.17% of total geographical area, representing one of the highest annual net forest gains globally.

v. Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs):

Fulfilled Paris Agreement commitments five years ahead of schedule, setting a global example in climate responsibility.

vi. **Net-Zero Target:**

Committed to achieving net-zero emissions by 2070, striking a careful balance between economic growth and environmental sustainability.

f. Significance of India's Stand

i. Voice of the Global South

India champions the cause of nations that face the harshest climate impacts despite contributing little to global emissions.

ii. Ethical Leadership

By calling for net-negative emissions, India appeals to the moral responsibility of developed nations to reverse centuries of ecological damage.

iii. Model of Balanced Growth

India shows that rapid economic expansion can align with renewable energy growth and sustainable forest management.

iv. Strengthening Global Cooperation

India's multilateral approach fosters trust and collective problem-solving, avoiding the blame game that often divides climate negotiations.

g. Challenges Ahead

i. Unfulfilled Climate Finance Promises

Developed nations have yet to deliver the pledged \$100 billion per year to support developing countries' transitions to clean energy.

ii. Technological Limitations

Critical innovations like carbon capture and storage (CCS) are still costly and underdeveloped, hindering large-scale adoption.

iii. Absence of Binding Commitments

The Paris Agreement relies on voluntary pledges, without strict enforcement mechanisms for accountability.

iv. Burden on Developing Economies

Without sufficient finance and technology sharing, developing countries risk compromising growth to meet emission targets.

h. Way Forward

i. Accelerated Global Emission Cuts

Developed countries must reach net-zero before 2050 and begin moving towards net-negative emissions thereafter.

ii. Scaling Up Climate Finance

The \$100 billion goal must be expanded into a predictable, transparent, and long-term funding mechanism for mitigation and adaptation.

iii. Technology Sharing and Innovation

Promote open access to green hydrogen, carbon capture, and renewable grids, ensuring affordability for developing countries.

iv. Strengthened Forest Protection

Support global forest finance initiatives and encourage community-led conservation, aligning with India's traditional stewardship of nature.

v. Collaborative Green Partnerships

Build international coalitions for green industries, carbon markets, and sustainable investments that ensure mutual benefit.

Conclusion

India's call for climate justice reasserts that the burden of global warming cannot rest equally on unequal shoulders.

While developing nations like India are advancing renewable energy, afforestation, and emission reductions, the historical polluters must now go beyond neutrality to negativity—removing the excess carbon they have added over centuries.

Global climate stability depends not only on promises but on proportionate responsibility and proactive repair.

As India rightly reminded the world:

“Those who filled the sky with carbon must now clear the path for others to grow.”

Reader's Note — About This Current Affairs Compilation

Dear Aspirant,

This document is part of the PrepAlpine Current Affairs Series — designed to bring clarity, structure, and precision to your daily UPSC learning.

While every effort has been made to balance depth with brevity, please keep the following in mind:

1. Orientation & Purpose

This compilation is curated primarily from the UPSC Mains perspective — with emphasis on conceptual clarity, analytical depth, and interlinkages across GS papers.

However, the PrepAlpine team is simultaneously developing a dedicated Prelims-focused Current Affairs Series, designed for:

- factual coverage
- data recall
- Prelims-style MCQs
- objective pattern analysis

This Prelims Edition will be released separately as a standalone publication.

2. Content Length

Some sections may feel shorter or longer depending on topic relevance and news density. To fit your personal preference, you may freely resize or summarize sections using any LLM tool (ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, etc.) at your convenience.

3. Format Flexibility

The formatting combines:

- paragraphs
- lists
- tables
- visual cues

—all optimised for retention.

If you prefer a specific style (lists → paras, paras → tables, etc.), feel free to convert using any free LLM.

4. Monthly Current Affairs Release

The complete Monthly Current Affairs Module will be released soon, optimized to a compact 100–150 pages — comprehensive yet concise, exam-ready, and revision-efficient.

5. Join the PrepAlpine Discord Community

Be part of India's Smartest UPSC Peer Ecosystem → <https://discord.gg/ycrDpXxv>

What You'll Experience

- **Peer-to-Peer Discussions**
Subject-wise channels for GS papers, Ethics, Economics, Polity, Geography, Environment, and Optional subjects.

- **Focused Study Circles**
Deep-dive groups for Optionals (PSIR, Sociology, Geography, Anthropology, etc.) and critical GS themes.
- **Insight Threads**
Collaborative micro-notes, doubt resolutions, PYQ-linked discussions, and peer-reviewed clarity.
- **Community Sessions**
Weekly “Open Mic” sharing sessions where learners discuss strategies, mistakes, breakthroughs, and lessons from their UPSC journey.
- **An Evolving Learning Culture**
A serious, supportive, and intelligent peer environment — no noise, no clutter.
Learning grows here through interaction, reflection, and structured peer collaboration.

“From Isolation to Interaction — Learn the UPSC Way, the Smart Way.”

6. Suggest Topics for Coverage

If you feel any important theme is missing or under-covered, simply post it in the “Suggestions” channel on our Discord server.

Our content team regularly reviews inputs and includes relevant suggestions in upcoming Monthly Current Affairs Modules.

Beyond daily updates, the PrepAlpine Discord functions as a complete UPSC learning ecosystem — offering free peer mentorship, structured discussions, practice threads, AI-powered micro-learning tools, and a community of serious aspirants working together.

Together, these resources embody the PrepAlpine vision:

Better Content. Smarter Mentorship. Intelligent Preparation.

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