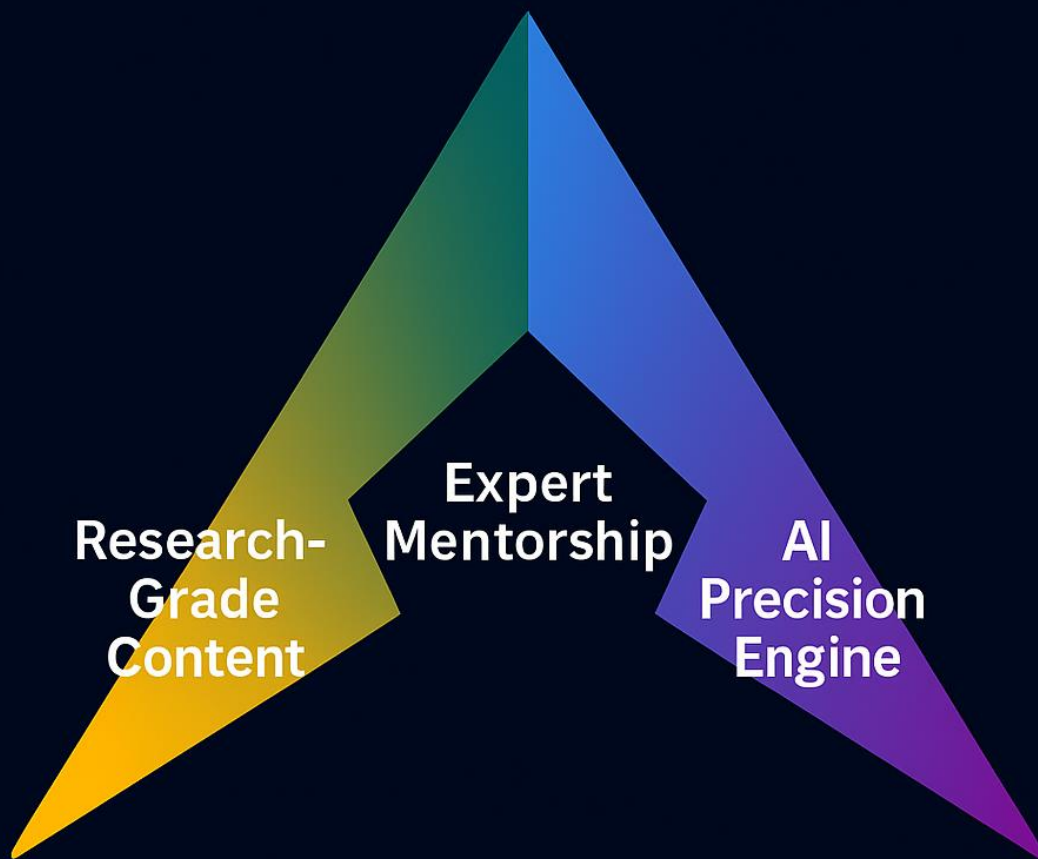


PrepAlpine

The Next-Generation UPSC Institution

Where Research Meets Mentorship & Precision



Preparation Meets Precision

A Next-Generation Learning Institution

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PrepAlpine — Where Research-Grade Content Meets Mentorship, and AI Makes It Personal

PrepAlpine is India's next-generation UPSC institution — built by educationists, retired bureaucrats, IITians, and experienced educators, and powered by a 500+-member technology firm specialising in AI-driven education infrastructure.

We're not another coaching platform — we're a complete preparation ecosystem that unites:

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PrepAlpine — From Aspirant to Authority. Lead the State, Not the Struggle.

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS DATED 11.11.2025

GS Paper II: International Relations

1. India–Bhutan Relations: Managing Asymmetry with Mutual Respect

a. Introduction

India and Bhutan share one of the most friendly and stable relationships in South Asia. Even though India is much larger and stronger in terms of geography, economy, and power, both countries have built a bond based on trust, equality, and mutual respect.

This partnership shows that when two nations understand each other's needs and respect each other's sovereignty, differences in size or power don't become a problem. Over time, the relationship has grown from being focused mainly on security to covering trade, culture, education, and technology.

b. Historical Background

i. The Treaty of 1949

The Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation (1949) was the starting point of modern India–Bhutan relations. According to this treaty:

- Bhutan agreed to be *guided by India* in its foreign policy.
- India promised *not to interfere in Bhutan's internal matters*.

This reflected India's concern about securing its northern borders soon after Independence.

ii. Bhutan's Political Transition

Bhutan slowly transformed from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional democracy in 2008 under King Jigme Singye Wangchuck.

India supported this peaceful change, understanding that a stable and democratic Bhutan contributes to peace and stability in the region.

iii. The 2007 Treaty Revision

The treaty was updated in 2007 to reflect modern realities.

The earlier clause saying Bhutan would be "*guided by India*" was removed and replaced by one promising mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and independence.

This showed that India treats Bhutan as an equal partner, not a junior ally — a major reason for the trust that defines their ties today.



c. Key Pillars of the Relationship

i. Economic Cooperation

Hydropower is the backbone of India–Bhutan relations.

India helped Bhutan build projects like Chukha, Tala, and the new Punatsangchhu-II (2025). Bhutan sells clean electricity to India and earns major revenue, which funds its development.

This partnership has helped Bhutan become one of the few carbon-negative countries in the world, while also supporting India's renewable energy goals.

ii. Security Cooperation

India helps train Bhutan's defence forces and provides equipment when needed, but always respects Bhutan's independence. Both countries share common security interests, especially because Bhutan borders China — a region sensitive to India's strategic concerns.

iii. Cultural and Spiritual Links

Shared Buddhist heritage forms the emotional and spiritual bond between the two nations. Events like the exhibition of Buddha's relics from India's Piprahwa site in Bhutan highlight their civilisational connection that goes far beyond politics.

iv. New Areas of Cooperation

In recent years, both sides have expanded their partnership to include digital technology, fintech, innovation, space cooperation, and cross-border rail links. This shift marks a move from a traditional donor-recipient model to a modern, forward-looking collaboration.

d. Bhutan's Foreign Policy Approach

Bhutan follows a careful and balanced foreign policy. While it builds relations with other countries like Japan, South Korea, and the European Union, it continues to keep India at the centre of its diplomacy.

Bhutan has no formal diplomatic ties with China, though it holds border talks from time to time. This cautious approach helps Bhutan maintain peace and protect its independence while staying aligned with India's security concerns.

e. Lessons from the India-Bhutan Model

- **Respect for Sovereignty** – India manages the power difference with sensitivity, not dominance.
- **Development-led Partnership** – Hydropower projects are transparent and benefit both sides.
- **Shared Security Goals** – Defence cooperation ensures safety for both nations.
- **Peaceful Dispute Management** – Even issues like the Doklam crisis (2017) are handled through dialogue.
- **Cultural Soft Power** – Shared religion and culture make the bond people-centric and enduring.

Together, these lessons show that mutual respect and shared growth can turn power differences into lasting friendship.

f. Challenges and Concerns

Despite strong ties, some challenges remain:

- **The China Factor:** Bhutan's unresolved boundary with China and Beijing's growing presence in the Himalayas remain sensitive issues.
- **Project Delays:** Hydropower projects sometimes face delays and cost overruns, affecting Bhutan's finances.
- **Economic Dependence:** Bhutan is trying to diversify its economy so it's not overly dependent on India.

- **Youth Aspirations:** Bhutan's young population looks to India for education, jobs, and technology opportunities.

Managing these issues with transparency and cooperation will be key to maintaining the trust built over decades.

g. Way Forward

- Diversify Cooperation:** Move beyond hydropower into clean energy, tourism, higher education, and digital innovation.
- Focus on Sustainability:** Ensure new projects are financially and environmentally sound.
- Improve Connectivity:** Strengthen rail, road, and air links to boost trade and tourism.
- Democratic Support:** Continue helping Bhutan build strong democratic and institutional capacity.
- People-to-People Ties:** Expand youth exchanges, academic partnerships, and cultural circuits to connect future generations.

Conclusion

The India–Bhutan relationship is often called a model of friendly diplomacy in South Asia. It proves that even a large and small neighbour can share deep trust, mutual respect, and genuine cooperation.

Unlike many other regional relationships marked by suspicion, India and Bhutan have shown how to turn asymmetry into strength. Their bond, rooted in shared history and culture, continues to guide the idea of “neighbourhood first” and offers lessons for India’s wider diplomacy in the region.

GS Paper III: Science and Technology

2. India’s AI Governance Guidelines – Balancing Innovation and Regulation

a. Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is changing how governments, businesses, and citizens interact. It now supports policymaking, healthcare, policing, education, and many other areas of public life. However, this rapid growth also brings new risks—such as data misuse, algorithmic bias, deepfakes, misinformation, and threats to privacy.

To address these challenges, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) released AI Governance Guidelines (2025).

The goal is to ensure that India’s use of AI remains safe, transparent, and ethical, while still promoting innovation and growth.

The guiding philosophy is “Do No Harm”—meaning AI should help society without causing damage or discrimination.

Instead of creating strict new laws, India has chosen a balanced approach: guiding AI through principles, coordination, and accountability, so that innovation continues but citizens’ rights remain protected.

b. Why AI Governance is Needed

AI is now used widely in governance and daily life. For example:

- Policymakers use AI tools for welfare targeting, predicting crime, or monitoring infrastructure.
- Generative AI models—like chatbots, image generators, or video synthesizers—can create fake or misleading content that looks real.
- Officials sometimes use AI tools that rely on sensitive government data, which can risk privacy or security if not managed properly.

These developments make it essential to ensure ethical, transparent, and safe use of AI. Rather than passing a completely new AI law, India’s model builds on existing laws such as the Information Technology Act (2000) and the Digital Personal Data Protection Act (2023). This keeps regulation flexible, adapting as technology evolves.

c. Core Features of the AI Governance Guidelines

The guidelines are built around six main pillars, each addressing a key aspect of responsible AI use.

Pillar	Core Idea	Example / Initiative
Risk Management	Identify and control risks based on potential harm.	Creation of a National AI Risk Assessment Framework and AI Incident Database to track safety and ethical violations.
Content Authentication	Prevent misuse of fake or manipulated content.	Mandatory watermarks or labels on AI-generated images, videos, and text to show that they are synthetic.
Accountability and Liability	Assign responsibility when AI systems cause harm.	Graded liability system—higher accountability for high-risk applications.
Infrastructure and Data Sovereignty	Build India’s own capacity in AI and data.	Development of AIKosh (a national dataset repository), domestic GPU infrastructure, and integration with Digital Public Infrastructure like UPI and Aadhaar.
Capacity Building	Train people to understand and use AI responsibly.	Awareness and training for bureaucrats, police, students, and citizens on safe AI practices.
Institutional Coordination	Ensure coordination across ministries and sectors.	Establishment of an AI Governance Group (AIGG) and an AI Safety Institute (AISl) to review and audit AI systems.

Together, these pillars aim to create a human-centred, proactive, and safety-oriented system of AI regulation.

d. India’s Approach – Flexible and Human-Centric

India’s AI policy follows a “light-touch” regulatory model. Instead of controlling technology through rigid laws, the focus is on guiding innovation responsibly.

Key ideas behind this approach include:

- **Human-Centric Design:** AI must support human decision-making, not replace it.
- **Adaptive Regulation:** Policies evolve as technology changes, rather than being fixed.
- **Local Relevance:** AI should be trained on Indian languages and datasets so that it reflects India’s diversity and values.

- **Responsible Innovation:** Developers should include ethical checks from the design stage itself.

This approach tries to strike a balance—protecting people without slowing down innovation or economic growth.

e. Ethical and Governance Principles

India's AI framework is built on five clear ethical principles that guide how technology should be designed and used.

- **Do No Harm** – AI should not cause physical, mental, or social harm to individuals or groups.
- **Transparency** – Users must know when they are interacting with AI and understand its decision-making logic.
- **Privacy by Design** – Data protection should be built into AI systems from the start.
- **Accountability** – Developers and institutions must take responsibility for how AI behaves and what outcomes it produces.
- **Human Oversight** – AI should assist, not replace, human judgment in sensitive areas like justice, policing, or healthcare.

These principles ensure that technology remains aligned with democratic values and human rights.

f. Key Challenges Ahead

Even with strong guidelines, India faces several challenges in implementation:

- **Data Privacy Risks:** AI systems can sometimes infer private information even from anonymised data.
- **Confidentiality Issues:** Officials may accidentally share sensitive government data with third-party AI tools.
- **Dependence on Foreign Technology:** Most large AI models are still owned by global companies, raising questions about data sovereignty.
- **Weak Enforcement:** Current mechanisms rely on voluntary compliance, which may not be enough to prevent bias or misuse.

These challenges show that India's next step must be to strengthen institutions, awareness, and legal capacity.

g. The Way Forward

To make AI governance more effective, India can focus on:

- Creating a Dedicated AI Law in the future that defines rights, responsibilities, and remedies for AI-related harm.
- Setting up AI Ethics Boards in key ministries to oversee high-risk uses such as surveillance and policing.
- Encouraging Local Innovation by supporting Indian research, especially in regional languages and local datasets.



- iv. Raising Public Awareness about deepfakes, misinformation, and safe AI practices.
- v. Global Cooperation through the G20, UN, and other platforms to build shared global rules for AI safety.

h. Why These Guidelines Matter

India's framework represents a middle path between two extremes:

- The European Union's strict rules, and
- The unregulated approach of some advanced economies.

By choosing this middle path, India aims to become a global leader in ethical and inclusive AI. It protects data privacy, human rights, and national interests while encouraging innovation and digital growth.

This approach also strengthens India's vision of digital sovereignty—the idea that data and technology should serve national and social goals.

Conclusion

India's AI Governance Guidelines (2025) are a major step towards creating a safe and inclusive AI ecosystem.

By combining innovation with accountability, they promote a future where technology empowers people without exploiting them.

The real test ahead lies in maintaining this delicate balance—using AI to drive development and efficiency, while upholding ethics, privacy, and human values in an increasingly algorithm-driven world.

GS Paper III: Environment

3. Tropical Forest Forever Facility (TFFF): A New Global Mechanism for Forest Conservation

a. Introduction

Tropical forests are often called the lungs of the Earth because they absorb carbon dioxide, regulate rainfall, and support immense biodiversity. They are also home to millions of indigenous and forest-dependent communities.

Yet, despite their global importance, tropical forests continue to shrink due to agriculture, logging, and mining.

To address this crisis, the Tropical Forest Forever Facility (TFFF) has been proposed as a new financial mechanism that rewards countries for protecting their forests.

Its central idea is simple but powerful — make a living forest more valuable than a cleared one. By offering long-term financial rewards for conservation, the TFFF aims to make forest protection economically viable for developing nations.

b. Why a New Fund Was Needed

Existing climate finance mechanisms, such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF) or REDD+, have achieved limited success. They often depend on short-term donor commitments, which are unpredictable and slow to reach recipient countries.

Challenges with the Current System

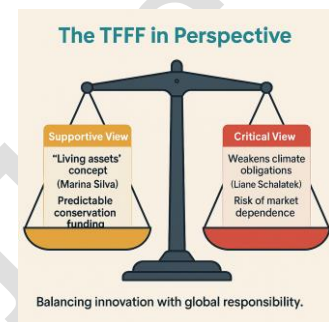
- Many tropical nations like Brazil, Indonesia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo find it difficult to secure consistent conservation funding.
- Deforestation continues because cutting forests yields immediate profits, while protecting them offers no short-term economic benefit.
- Funding decisions are often bureaucratic and delayed, discouraging countries from long-term conservation.

The TFFF tries to correct this imbalance by providing a steady, predictable financial stream tied directly to forest protection outcomes. It transforms conservation from a moral obligation into an economic opportunity.

c. Core Idea and Structure of the TFFF

The TFFF is designed as a permanent, self-financing global fund that rewards countries for maintaining or increasing their tropical forest cover.

- **Objective** – To create a long-term global fund that pays developing countries for conserving tropical forests.
- **Funding Target** – \$125 billion total — \$25 billion from governments and philanthropies, and \$100 billion from private investors.
- **How It Works** – The fund’s capital will be invested in safe financial assets (like government and corporate bonds). The annual returns from these investments will be distributed as payments to forest-rich nations.
- **Monitoring System** – Independent satellite data will track yearly changes in forest cover, ensuring transparency and accuracy.
- **Participating Countries** – About 70–75 tropical forest nations in South America, Africa, and Asia — including Brazil, Indonesia, DR Congo, and India (for the Western Ghats and Andaman forests).
- **Key Supporters** – Supported initially by Brazil, Indonesia, Colombia, Norway, and a few European nations.



In short, the TFFF shifts forest conservation from a charity-based model to a market-linked investment mechanism.

d. Significance of the TFFF

The TFFF carries both ecological and political significance, representing a step toward financially rewarding environmental stewardship.

- **Environmental** – Protects major carbon sinks and biodiversity hotspots, contributing to global climate goals.
- **Economic** – Makes conservation a profitable activity rather than an economic burden.
- **Global Equity** – Recognises that tropical countries provide ecosystem services for the planet and deserve fair compensation.
- **Sustainability** – Establishes a permanent, predictable funding source, less dependent on donor politics.
- **Accountability** – Satellite-based monitoring ensures data integrity and transparent payment systems.

e. Criticisms and Concerns

While the TFFF is innovative, it has also attracted strong criticism from climate finance experts.

- **Exposure to Financial Risks** – Since the fund invests in global markets, a financial crisis could reduce returns — making conservation payments unstable.
- **Outside the UN System** – The TFFF is not linked to the UNFCCC or the Paris Agreement, allowing rich countries to claim climate credit without meeting their formal obligations.
- **“Financialising Nature”** – Treating forests as financial assets could shift the focus from ecological value to profit motives.
- **Power Imbalance** – Wealthy investors may influence fund management, sidelining local and indigenous stakeholders.
- **Uncertain Payments** – Without guaranteed minimum payouts, forest nations could suffer if investment returns are low, despite meeting conservation goals.

f. Expert Opinions

- **Supportive Perspective:**
Marina Silva (Brazil’s Environment Minister) has praised the initiative for recognising forests as “living assets” that provide ecosystem services, arguing that it can offer steady and predictable financing for conservation.
- **Critical Perspective:**
Liane Schalatek (Climate Finance Expert) warns that the TFFF might undermine international climate commitments by allowing developed nations to bypass their duty to provide public climate finance.

These differing views show the tension between innovation and accountability in global climate governance.

g. Broader Analysis

- **Economic View** – Uses market tools for conservation, but financial volatility poses long-term risks.
- **Ethical View** – Raises the moral question: Should saving nature depend on profit? True conservation must go beyond market logic.
- **Governance View** – Success depends on transparency, local participation, and fair benefit-sharing.
- **Political View** – Empowers developing countries to seek fair compensation, yet could weaken the North–South responsibility principle under the Paris framework.

h. Way Forward

To strengthen the TFFF and ensure its credibility, several measures are essential:

- i. **Integrate with UN Frameworks:** Align the TFFF with UNFCCC and Paris Agreement systems to ensure legitimacy and global oversight.
- ii. **Financial Safeguards:** Establish a stabilisation fund or insurance mechanism to protect against market downturns.
- iii. **Community Inclusion:** Involve indigenous and local communities in planning and benefit-sharing to ensure equitable outcomes.

- iv. **Blended Finance Approach:** Combine TFFF investments with public grants and traditional conservation funding to reduce market dependence.
- v. **Transparency Measures:** Use public dashboards and annual audits to report investments, returns, and disbursements.

Conclusion

The Tropical Forest Forever Facility represents a bold experiment in reimagining climate finance. By rewarding countries for keeping their forests standing, it reframes conservation as an investment in global sustainability rather than a charitable expense.

If implemented carefully, it could make forest protection economically rewarding, environmentally secure, and globally fair.

However, without strong safeguards and accountability, it risks turning nature into a tradable commodity and weakening existing climate obligations.

For true impact, the TFFF must combine financial innovation with ecological ethics and inclusive governance, ensuring that the forests it seeks to save remain alive, thriving, and forever.

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.

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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.

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