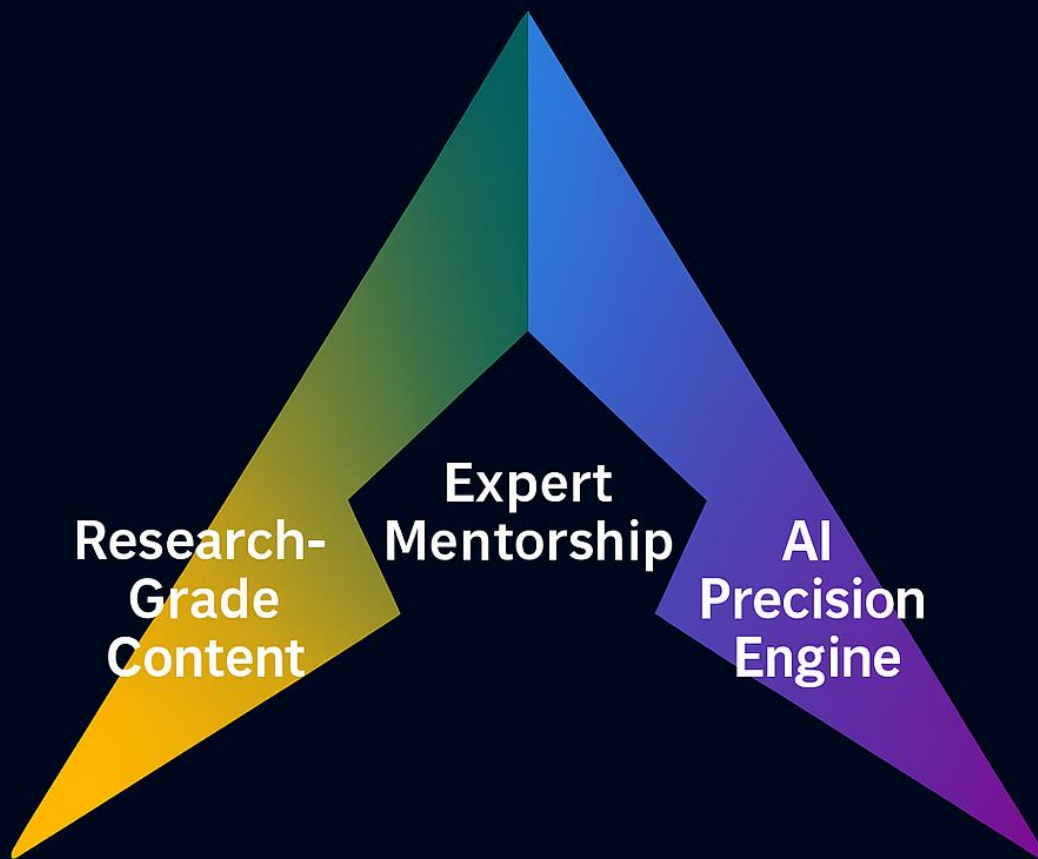


PrepAlpine

The Next-Generation UPSC Institution

Where Research Meets Mentorship & Precision



Preparation Meets Precision

A Next-Generation Learning Institution

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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.

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

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS DATED 22.11.2025

GS Paper II: Polity

1. Governor's Powers Under Article 200: The Supreme Court's New Interpretation

Article 200 of the Constitution outlines the Governor's role when a State Legislature passes a Bill. While it specifies the choices available to the Governor, it does not explain what happens if the Governor does not act at all. This silence has increasingly affected State-level lawmaking, giving rise to constitutional uncertainty and prompting the Supreme Court to clarify the boundaries of gubernatorial discretion.

a. The Constitutional Dilemma

When a Bill is presented to the Governor, the Constitution permits four actions:

i. Grant Assent

The Bill becomes law.

ii. Withhold Assent

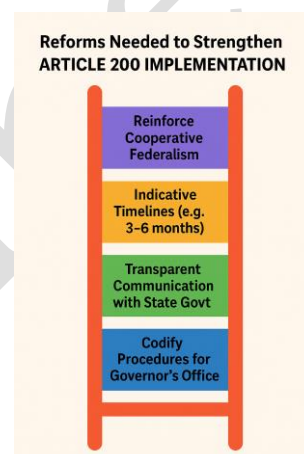
The Bill is rejected.

iii. Return the Bill

(Except Money Bills) for reconsideration by the Legislature.

iv. Reserve the Bill

For the President's consideration.



The Core Problem: Inaction

Difficulties arise when the Governor chooses none of these options. If no assent is granted and no refusal or reasons are communicated, the Bill remains stalled indefinitely. Such inaction prevents an elected government from implementing its policies while avoiding the political accountability that comes with an explicit refusal.

b. The Supreme Court's 2025 Advisory Opinion

i. Silence Is Constitutionally Impermissible

The Supreme Court held that the Governor must act on Bills presented under Article 200. Prolonged silence violates constitutional duty.

ii. Duty to Provide Reasons When Assent Is Withheld

If the Governor refuses assent, reasons must be conveyed to the State government. This enhances transparency and prevents arbitrary decision-making.

iii. No Timeline Prescribed

The Court, however, refused to specify a time limit. It argued that rigid timelines could reduce the "elasticity" or flexibility needed in constitutional functioning.

This creates a unique situation: the Governor cannot remain silent, but may still take an undefined amount of time before acting.

c. Problems Created by the Absence of a Timeline

i. Potential for Long, Unexplained Delays

Bills may remain pending for months or years, without any communication.

ii. Legislative Programmes Can Be Blocked

An elected government's policies can be stalled—not through disagreement, but through inaction.

iii. Federal Tensions May Increase

Since Governors are appointed by the Union, prolonged delays may be viewed as interventions in State affairs.

iv. More Litigation for Clarification

Without a benchmark for “reasonable time,” State governments may repeatedly seek judicial remedies.

d. Understanding “Constitutional Elasticity”

i. Purpose of Elasticity

The Court believes constitutional offices require discretion to handle complex situations. Flexibility allows thoughtful decision-making.

ii. Criticism of Unlimited Flexibility

Critics argue that undefined discretion may encourage inaction, not deliberation. Elasticity cannot justify silence when such silence disrupts democratic functioning and the legislative process.

e. Lessons from the Earlier Tamil Nadu Judgment

In a previous case involving Tamil Nadu, the Supreme Court informally indicated that acting within six months would be reasonable for Article 200.

This was not a binding rule but acted as a practical safeguard. The new advisory, by avoiding any reference to timelines, reintroduces ambiguity for State governments.

f. Constitutional Stakes: Democracy, Federalism and Institutional Balance

i. Democracy

State legislatures represent the people's will. Their decisions should not be nullified silently.

ii. Federalism

Unrestricted gubernatorial discretion can disturb the delicate division of powers between the Union and the States.

iii. Separation of Powers

When disputes over inaction reach the judiciary, political decision-making shifts to the courts—creating new tensions.

iv. Constitutional Morality

Constitutional offices carry responsibilities, not just powers. Prolonged inaction violates the spirit of responsible governance.

g. Way Forward

i. Need for Clear Timelines

Flexible but indicative timelines would help prevent misuse and protect legislative functioning.

ii. Transparent Communication

Reasons for both assent and refusal should be mandatory.

iii. Codified Procedures

Guidelines on how Bills should be handled—steps, documentation, expected timelines—can reduce confusion.

iv. Strengthening Cooperative Federalism

Governors must act as neutral constitutional authorities, not political actors.

Conclusion

The Supreme Court's 2025 advisory rightly recognises that gubernatorial silence under Article 200 is unconstitutional. However, by avoiding clear timelines, it leaves space for delays that may hinder democratic governance and weaken federal balance. For Article 200 to function smoothly, constitutional elasticity must be paired with constitutional responsibility. Only then can the legislative process remain transparent, accountable and consistent with the democratic values the Constitution seeks to uphold.

GS Paper III: Economics

2. The Four Labour Codes: A Consolidated Framework for Modern Labour Governance

a. Introduction

For decades, India implemented labour governance through 29 scattered Central laws, each dealing with specific aspects such as wages, social security, industrial disputes, or workplace safety. This fragmentation created overlapping compliances, confusion among employers, and limited protection for workers, especially in the unorganised sector. To streamline this landscape, the Government consolidated these laws into Four Labour Codes, intended to create a modern, transparent, and unified labour framework that supports both worker welfare and economic growth.

i. Code on Wages, 2019: Establishing a Uniform Wage System

Purpose and Scope

The Code on Wages replaces older laws related to payment of wages, minimum wages, bonus, and wage definition. Its primary goal is to simplify wage regulation and ensure universal coverage across all categories of workers.

Uniform Definition of 'Wages'

Multiple wage definitions in earlier laws caused disputes and litigation. A single definition now brings clarity, predictability, and reduced compliance complexity.

National Floor Wage

The code empowers the Central Government to set a national floor wage, below which no worker can be paid. This ensures a basic minimum standard of living across states.

Universal Minimum Wage Protection

Minimum wages now apply to all workers, not just those in scheduled employments, greatly expanding protection.

Formalisation Measures

Mandatory appointment letters and timely wage payments help integrate more workers into formal systems and reduce arbitrary employer practices.

ii. Industrial Relations Code, 2020: Balancing Rights and Flexibility

Purpose and Rationale

The Industrial Relations Code consolidates laws on trade unions, industrial disputes, and employment conditions, aiming to protect worker rights while giving industries the flexibility needed in a competitive economy.

Key Provisions

- **Recognition of Fixed-Term Employment**
Enterprises may hire workers for project-based or seasonal needs while ensuring they receive the same benefits as permanent employees. This safeguards workers from exploitative short-term contracts.
- **Stricter Strike Provisions**
A 14-day notice is mandatory before a strike. This encourages dialogue, conciliation, and prevents sudden stoppages that disrupt operations.
- **New Threshold for Layoffs and Closures**
Establishments with 300+ workers must seek government approval for layoffs or closure. This offers firms more flexibility while keeping oversight for larger units.
- **Grievance Redressal Committees**
Mandatory committees in establishments act as internal mechanisms to resolve worker concerns quickly and fairly.

iii. Social Security Code, 2020: Expanding the Protection Net

Comprehensive Social Protection

This code merges laws related to provident funds, insurance, gratuity, maternity benefits, and welfare of unorganised workers, aiming to build a unified social security architecture.

Core Features

- **Inclusion of Gig and Platform Workers**
For the first time, workers such as app-based drivers and online delivery partners are included, recognising the changing nature of employment in the digital economy.
- **Expanded EPFO and ESIC Coverage**
More establishments come under provident fund and insurance networks, improving the safety net for formal-sector workers.
- **Gratuity for Fixed-Term Employees**
Eligibility is granted after one year (instead of five), correcting a significant inequity in earlier laws.
- **National Social Security Board**
The board will design policies and coordinate welfare schemes for unorganised workers, including gig and migrant labour.

iv. Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions (OSHWC) Code, 2020: Ensuring Safe and Dignified Work

Scope and Purpose

The OSHWC Code merges multiple laws on factories, contract labour, migrant workers, and construction labour, aiming to establish uniform safety standards and dignified working conditions.

Key Reforms

- **Single Registration and Single Return**
Instead of multiple licences and returns, establishments now follow a simplified single registration mechanism, reducing compliance burden.
- **Annual Health Check-Ups**
Workers in specified sectors receive mandatory health screenings, promoting early detection of occupational illnesses.
- **Women in All Sectors Including Night Shifts**
Women may work across all sectors and night shifts, provided safety measures and consent are ensured. This strengthens gender inclusion.
- **Protection for Migrant and Contract Workers**
Uniform working conditions help prevent exploitation and promote predictable standards across sectors.

b. Significance of the Four Codes

i. For Workers

- Clear wage rights and formalisation
- Wider social security coverage
- Improved safety norms and better working conditions
- Inclusion of gig and platform workers

ii. For Industry

- Streamlined registration and compliance
- Greater operational flexibility
- Uniform definitions reducing ambiguity
- Enhanced ease of doing business

iii. For the Economy

- Encourages formal employment
- Supports "Make in India" and manufacturing competitiveness
- Aligns India's labour governance with global best practices



c. Challenges and the Road Ahead

i. Implementation Delays

Full rollout depends on state-level rules, many of which are still pending.

ii. Worker Concerns

Issues like job security under fixed-term employment and the impact of the wage definition on take-home pay continue to generate debate.

iii. Gig Worker Protection

While recognised legally, practical implementation—especially funding contributions—remains uncertain.

iv. Industry Resistance

Some sectors anticipate increased wage costs due to the new uniform wage definition.

Conclusion

The Four Labour Codes represent one of the most significant reforms in India's labour governance since Independence. By consolidating scattered laws, expanding worker protections, and simplifying compliance, they aim to strike a balance between human welfare and economic efficiency. Their real success, however, will depend on timely state-level implementation, effective enforcement, and constant dialogue between governments, employers, and workers. Over time, these codes have the potential to reshape India's labour market into a more inclusive, transparent, and productive ecosystem.

GS Paper III: Economics

3. India's Agricultural Exports: Understanding the Recent Rebound

a. Introduction

India's agricultural exports have shown a notable recovery in the last two years. What makes this improvement remarkable is that it comes during a phase of softening global food prices and domestic export restrictions aimed at controlling inflation. The rebound indicates that India's export base is becoming more diversified, competitive, and stable, supported by access to new markets and rising demand for specific farm products.

Agricultural exports revived after a period when India had imposed policy restrictions on items like rice, wheat, sugar, and onions to protect domestic consumers. As monsoon performance improved, stocks stabilised, and price pressures eased, export volumes began to expand again. Structural factors—such as rising competitiveness and diversified export destinations—also strengthened this improvement.

b. Factors Behind the Rebound

i. Lifting of Export Restrictions

Between 2022 and 2024, export controls were imposed to curb domestic inflation. As supply conditions improved, these restrictions were relaxed, allowing exports of rice, fruits and vegetables, marine products, buffalo meat, and sugar-based goods to grow again.

ii. Diversification of Export Markets

Indian exporters expanded beyond the traditional United States market, especially after US tariff barriers increased. Shipments were redirected to China, the European Union, Vietnam, Canada, and West Asian countries. This spread reduced dependence on any single market and helped maintain stable export volumes.

iii. Improved Competitiveness in a Soft Price Environment

Global food prices, measured by the FAO Food Price Index, fell after peaking during the Ukraine conflict. Yet Indian agricultural exports continued to rise due to competitive domestic pricing, better quality control, and strong demand from regions like West Asia and Southeast Asia. Marine products, fruits, vegetables, and coffee particularly benefited from quality improvements.

iv. Growth in High-Demand Product Segments

Exports increased sharply in non-basmati rice, buffalo meat, marine products, coffee, and fresh/processed fruits and vegetables. This growth was driven by steady foreign demand, policy easing, and expanded market access.

c. India's Leading Agricultural Export Items

India's top agricultural exports today include non-basmati rice, marine products, buffalo meat, coffee, spices, and basmati rice. Improved monsoons helped rice exports, while better logistics and quality certifications expanded opportunities for marine and horticulture exports. Buffalo meat shipments strengthened due to sustained demand in the Gulf region, and Indian coffee benefited from high global prices and consumer preference for premium varieties.

d. Import Trends: Understanding the Other Side

India's primary imports include:

i. Edible Oils

Large quantities of palm, soy, and sunflower oil are imported due to domestic shortfalls.

ii. Pulses

Recurring shortages keep import levels high.

iii. Fresh Fruits

Almonds, pistachios, walnuts, and apples show rising import trends.

iv. Raw Cotton

Stagnation in cotton yields and limited technological breakthroughs since Bt cotton have increased raw cotton imports.

Imports grow when domestic production lags behind consumption, when processing capacity is inadequate, or when global prices make imports cheaper than local supply.

e. Structural Trends in India's Agricultural Trade

i. Export Volatility

Exports rise during years of good monsoons and fall when domestic prices increase. India often resorts to export bans on wheat, sugar, onions, and rice to protect domestic consumers, but these measures create uncertainty for exporters.

ii. Persistent Import Dependence

Continued reliance on edible oils, pulses, and certain fruits exposes India to global price fluctuations and supply disruptions. This emphasises the importance of investing in domestic productivity and processing capacity.

f. Economic and Strategic Significance of the Recent Rebound

- Improves farm incomes
- Boosts agro-processing industries
- Enhances foreign exchange earnings
- Strengthens India's reputation as a reliable food supplier

- Reduces dependence on a narrow set of global markets

g. Persisting Challenges

i. Policy Uncertainty

Frequent export bans create reliability concerns among global buyers.

ii. Import Dependence

High imports of edible oils and pulses pose long-term risks.

iii. Climate Variability

Erratic rainfall and rising temperatures disrupt both irrigated and rainfed agriculture.

iv. Competitiveness and Processing Gaps

India needs stronger branding, higher-value processing, and better logistics to remain competitive globally.

Conclusion

India's recent agricultural export recovery reflects improved domestic conditions and deeper structural changes such as market diversification, better competitiveness, and expanding high-demand product categories. Even as imports rise, the overall pattern suggests a dynamic and evolving agricultural trade sector. To sustain momentum, India must invest in productivity, processing, and predictable trade policies, while managing vulnerabilities linked to climate, imports, and global price swings. With steady reforms, India can strengthen its role as a stable and competitive agricultural exporter.



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.

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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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