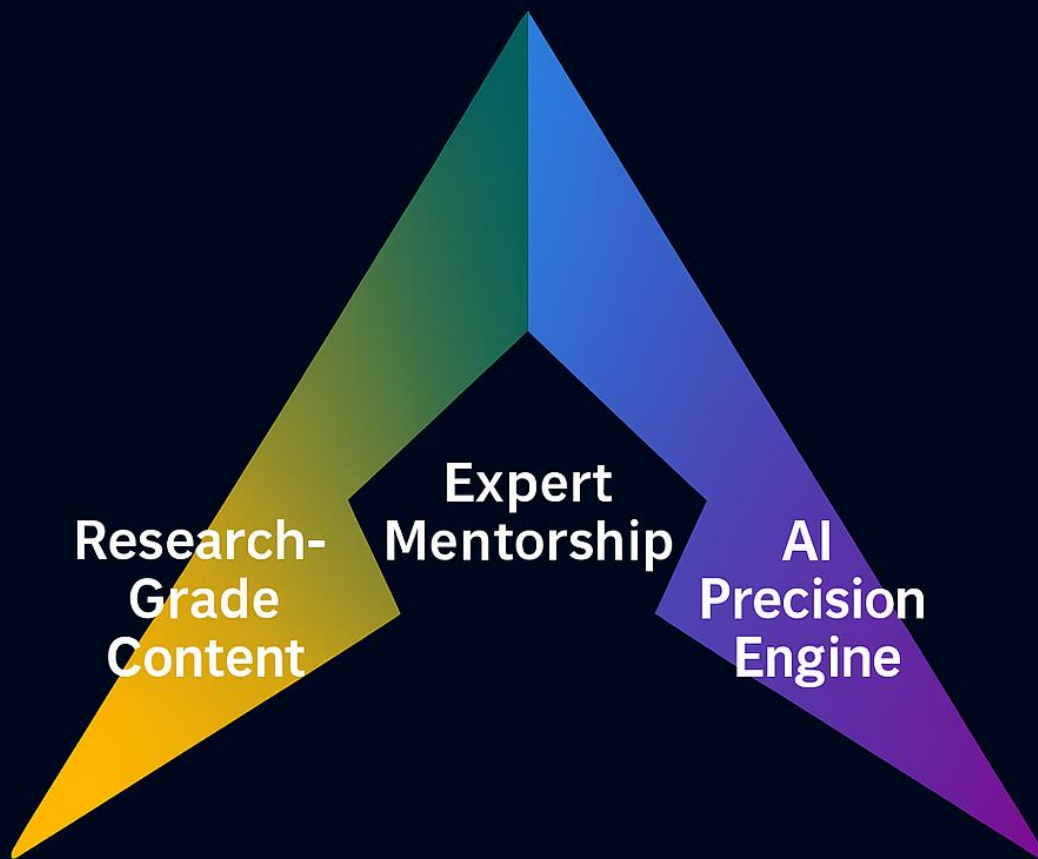


PrepAlpine

The Next-Generation UPSC Institution

Where Research Meets Mentorship & Precision



Preparation Meets Precision

A Next-Generation Learning Institution

Copyright © 2025 PrepAlpine

All Rights Reserved

No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means—whether photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods—without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain non-commercial uses permitted by copyright law.

For permission requests, please write to:

PrepAlpine

Email: PrepAlpine2025@gmail.com

Website: PrepAlpine.com

Disclaimer

The information contained in this book has been prepared solely for educational purposes. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, PrepAlpine makes no representations or warranties of any kind and accepts no liability for any errors or omissions. The use of any content is solely at the reader's discretion and risk.

First Edition: November 2025

Printed and published by PrepAlpine

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:

- **Research-Grade Content:**

Every content is crafted and reviewed by civil servants, educators, and scholars, and follows UPSC's Intro–Body–Conclusion format. Content is built from official reports, verified data, and visual pedagogy — flowcharts, frameworks, maps, and comparative tables.

- **Two-Tier Mentorship:**

Interview-qualified mentors and Subject-Matter Experts provide structured strategy, accountability, doubt-solving, and exam-aligned depth — bridging the gap between preparation and performance.

- **AI Precision Engine:**

Developed with our 500+-member AI & EdTech partner firm, the PrepAlpine AI system integrates Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG), adaptive MCQ engines, AI-based answer evaluation, and intelligent revision tracking. It continuously identifies each learner's strengths, weaknesses, and learning patterns — ensuring preparation evolves dynamically with every step.

This fusion of research-grade content + expert mentorship + enterprise-grade AI technology has created a credible, scalable, and aspirant-first platform.

Every PrepAlpine module is built not just to inform, but to transform — converting effort into precision and hard work into predictable progress.

We're reimagining UPSC preparation as a research-led, mentor-guided, AI-personalised journey that adapts to every aspirant.

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

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS DATED 23.11.2025

GS Paper II: Current Affairs

1. e-KYC Under MGNREGA: Between Transparency and the Risk of Exclusion

a. Introduction

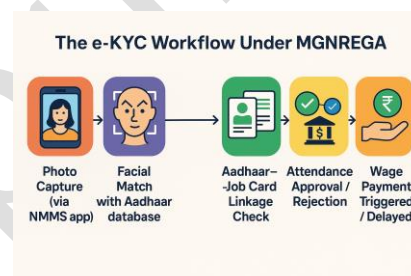
The government's decision to introduce electronic Know Your Customer verification for workers under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act has triggered a nationwide debate. While authorities argue that e-KYC strengthens transparency and prevents fraud, many States and civil society organisations have reported an unusual and worrying rise in job-card deletions. This has created fears that genuine workers—often the poorest households—may be unintentionally pushed out of the programme.

The debate is not about whether verification is necessary, but whether the *process* of verification is accessible, fair, and sensitive to rural realities.

b. Why e-KYC Has Been Introduced

The government's primary aim is to maintain the integrity of MGNREGA's beneficiary database. Through Aadhaar-based identity matching, the system seeks to:

- Eliminate duplicate or false entries
- Ensure wages go only to legitimate workers
- Improve transparency in attendance and payment systems



In this view, e-KYC is an extension of efforts already underway—such as Aadhaar-based payments and digital attendance tracking—to strengthen financial accountability.

c. Verification Before e-KYC: A Brief Overview

Before e-KYC, MGNREGA relied on multiple layers of checks:

i. Physical Verification by Panchayats

- Officials regularly checked worksites to confirm worker presence.
- Attendance was managed manually and cross-checked by supervisors.

ii. National Mobile Monitoring System (NMMS)

- Introduced in 2022, requiring geotagged photos uploaded twice a day.
- Ensured real-time attendance but depended on smartphone availability.

iii. Aadhaar-Based Payment System (ABPS)

- Fully adopted in 2023.
- Required perfect linkage between Aadhaar, bank accounts, and job cards.

These tools show that MGNREGA already had strong monitoring systems even before e-KYC was added.

d. How the e-KYC System Functions

Under the current system:

- i. A supervisor takes the worker's photograph through the NMMS app.
- ii. The image must match the Aadhaar database using facial recognition.
- iii. Aadhaar must be correctly linked to the worker's job card, bank account, and the National Payments Corporation of India records.

Even minor mismatches—such as spelling differences, errors in birth dates, or variations in naming patterns—can disrupt the process. Any mismatch can delay attendance or prevent workers from accessing wages.

e. The Risk of Exclusion: Why Concerns Have Grown

The biggest red flag has been the sharp rise in job-card deletions across several States. Many deletions appear to be connected not to fraud, but to data mismatches and system failures. The key reasons include:

i. Data Inconsistencies

- Rural naming conventions vary widely.
- Spelling differences across languages are common.
- Simple clerical errors in Aadhaar or bank details cause rejection.

ii. Digital Barriers

- Poor network connectivity prevents photo uploads.
- Many workers lack smartphones or digital literacy.
- Frequent app failures mean attendance is not recorded.

Under MGNREGA, attendance equals wages. So when attendance fails due to technological issues, workers immediately lose income—making digital exclusion a direct livelihood risk.

f. The Government's Position

The government argues that:

- i. e-KYC is not responsible for the deletions.
- ii. A 2025 Standard Operating Procedure clearly defines when deletions are permitted.
- iii. Deletions reflect routine “cleaning” of the database to remove inactive or duplicate entries.

However, many States with the highest e-KYC completion rates are also witnessing unusually high deletions. This mismatch has raised doubts and contributed to public scepticism about the official explanation.

g. Analytical Perspective: Weighing Benefits Against Challenges

i. Benefits of e-KYC

- Improves accuracy of beneficiary lists.
- Reduces chances of ghost workers.
- Enhances financial transparency.
- Boosts public trust in the scheme.

ii. Challenges and Risks

- Digital divide can exclude the poorest households.
- Aadhaar dependency can create wage delays for genuine workers.
- Local officials face higher administrative burden.
- Frequent technical glitches frustrate workers and supervisors.

At a broader level, the shift raises important concerns about the right to work, fairness in welfare delivery, and the practical limits of using technology in rural settings.

h. A Way Forward: Making Verification Fair and Inclusive

A balanced approach should protect both transparency and worker rights. Key steps include:

i. Multiple Modes of Verification

- Allow manual verification where digital systems fail.
- Use local-level certification or physical checks when required.

ii. Correction Drives for Aadhaar Details

- Organise village-level camps to fix errors.
- Assist workers with corrections rather than penalising them.

iii. Strengthening Digital Infrastructure

- Improve rural connectivity.
- Enhance technical support for NMMS.

iv. Safeguards Against Wrongful Deletions

- No deletion without a home visit.
- Clear timelines for appeals.
- Stronger grievance redressal and social audits.

These steps ensure that verification protects the programme without compromising the rights of genuine workers.

Conclusion

The introduction of e-KYC under MGNREGA illustrates the difficult balance between efficiency and equity. Technology can indeed make welfare delivery cleaner and more transparent. But without proper safeguards, it can also create new forms of exclusion that undermine the very purpose of the programme. The challenge before policymakers is clear: build systems that enhance accountability while safeguarding the rights and livelihoods of the rural poor who depend on MGNREGA the most.

GS Paper II: International Relations

2. The Trilateral ACITI Partnership: India, Australia, and Canada

a. Introduction

The Australia–Canada–India Technology and Innovation Partnership (ACITI) represents a coordinated effort by three democracies to shape the governance, development, and deployment of emerging technologies. It seeks to bring together India's digital scale, Australia's critical mineral resources, and Canada's strength in frontier research. At a deeper level, ACITI reflects a wider realignment in global technology politics, where like-minded states are forming trusted coalitions to reduce vulnerabilities and build resilient innovation ecosystems.

b. Why These Three Countries Came Together

ACITI rests on the complementarities of scale, resources, and research capacity that each nation brings.

i. India's Digital Capacity and Human Capital

India contributes:

- A vast digital economy supported by Digital Public Infrastructure.
- Deep human capital in information technology, software services, and data systems.
- The ability to deploy technology solutions across large and diverse populations.

These strengths make India a natural anchor for technology adoption and scalable innovation.

ii. Australia's Critical Mineral Advantage

Australia provides:

- Large reserves of lithium, cobalt, nickel, and rare earth elements.
- Stable and transparent regulatory frameworks for mining.
- Capacity to support global renewable-energy and electronics supply chains.

These resources are crucial for semiconductors, electric vehicles, and advanced batteries.

iii. Canada's Frontier Research Ecosystem

Canada contributes:

- Global leadership in artificial intelligence and machine learning.
- Strong universities and publicly funded R&D networks.
- Capabilities in quantum science and biotechnology.

Its participation connects ACITI to established Five Eyes protocols and secure research standards.



c. Principal Areas of Cooperation

i. Critical and Emerging Technologies

ACITI focuses on collaborative development in:

- Artificial intelligence
- Quantum science
- Secure communication systems
- Cybersecurity
- Semiconductor manufacturing

These domains define future economic competitiveness and national resilience.

ii. Supply-Chain Resilience

The partnership aims to:

- Diversify sourcing of critical minerals.
- Reduce dependence on single-country suppliers.
- Build transparent, trusted, and predictable supply chains for electronics and batteries.

This creates a buffer against geopolitical disruptions.

iii. Green-Energy Innovation

Joint efforts include:

- Green hydrogen research.
- Next-generation battery technologies.

- Clean industrial processes.
- Shared climate-friendly standards.

The agenda aligns with global shifts towards sustainable energy transitions.

iv. Mass Adoption of Artificial Intelligence

The trio intends to promote:

- Safe, inclusive, and rights-based artificial intelligence systems.
- Use of AI for governance and welfare delivery.
- Development of shared benchmarks for responsible AI.

India will host the Artificial Intelligence Impact Summit in 2026 to advance this mission.

d. Why ACITI Matters

i. A Democratic Technology Coalition

The partnership strengthens the ability of democracies to shape global technology norms grounded in transparency, accountability, and individual freedoms—offering an alternative to surveillance-centric models.

ii. A Boost to Technology Security

Through ACITI, India gains access to:

- Advanced research networks
- Secure digital systems
- Trusted technology partners

This enhances India's capacities in artificial intelligence, quantum science, and semiconductor design.

iii. Long-Term Mineral Security

For India's green-energy transition, stable access to lithium, cobalt, and rare earths is essential. Australia and Canada can provide reliable supply chains free from geopolitical pressure.

iv. Alignment With National Missions

ACITI supports major Indian initiatives such as:

- IndiaAI Mission
- National Quantum Mission
- Semiconductor Mission
- Green Hydrogen Mission

The partnership supplements domestic capacity with global expertise.

v. Strengthening the Indo-Pacific Strategy

India already cooperates with Australia through the Quad and the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework. Canada's participation adds a trans-Atlantic dimension, enabling India to influence technology standards across both the Indo-Pacific and North America.

e. Challenges and Constraints

i. Diplomatic Friction Between India and Canada

Political tensions may slow coordination on sensitive technologies requiring high trust.

ii. Divergent Data and Technology-Governance Laws

Different privacy regimes and regulatory systems could complicate the creation of common standards.

iii. Trust Deficit in Sensitive Technologies

Collaboration in artificial intelligence, quantum computing, or cybersecurity demands long-term institutional trust, which must be carefully nurtured.

iv. Uneven Technological Maturity

Differences in scale, R&D capacity, and industrial ecosystems may require additional coordination mechanisms to ensure balanced and effective cooperation.

f. A Practical Way Forward

i. Establish Shared Governance Norms

Harmonising standards in:

- Artificial intelligence ethics
- Data protection
- Cross-border digital flows

will be essential to smooth cooperation.

ii. Build a Trilateral Critical-Minerals Corridor

Long-term supply contracts and transparent sourcing frameworks can anchor a stable mineral-value chain.

iii. Create Joint Research Centres

Dedicated centres for:

- Artificial intelligence
- Green hydrogen
- Quantum technologies

will help pool expertise and accelerate innovation.

iv. Foster Innovation Ecosystems

Enhanced collaboration among:

- Start-ups
- Universities
- Technology incubators

will broaden the partnership beyond government-level diplomacy.

v. Utilize the 2026 Artificial Intelligence Summit

The summit provides an opportunity to showcase joint initiatives, finalise standards, and propose a democratic framework for emerging technologies.

Conclusion

The ACITI partnership marks a significant step in the evolution of global technology alliances. It brings together India's digital scale, Australia's mineral strength, and Canada's research excellence to shape a secure, sustainable, and democratic technological future. If supported by sustained trust and practical cooperation, ACITI has the potential to emerge as a cornerstone of the emerging global technology order—balancing innovation with values, resilience with inclusivity, and national priorities with shared global responsibilities.

GS Paper III: Environment

3. COP30: Global Roadmaps for Ending Deforestation and Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels

a. Introduction

The thirtieth Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC was held in Belém, in the heart of the Brazilian Amazon. The venue itself symbolised the conference's central concerns: protecting global forests and managing a gradual yet equitable shift away from fossil fuels. COP30 culminated in a landmark decision—mandating two global roadmaps: one to halt and reverse deforestation, and another to guide a just and orderly transition away from fossil fuels. These roadmaps aim to provide clarity, guide cooperation, and ensure fairness as countries undertake climate action from vastly different developmental starting points.

b. Why the World Needs Roadmaps

Countries vary sharply in their economic structures, energy profiles, and environmental capacities. For many developing nations, constraints of finance, technology, and growth imperatives limit the feasibility of rapid decarbonisation. In this setting, global roadmaps serve as shared reference points. They bring structure, align national actions with global climate goals, encourage policy coherence, and embed principles of fairness and differentiated responsibility.

c. Key Decisions Adopted at COP30

i. Global Roadmap to Halt and Reverse Deforestation

This decision establishes a comprehensive global pathway to end net deforestation and restore degraded forests. Its core elements include:

- **Focus on Critical Forest Regions:** The Amazon, Congo Basin, and Southeast Asian tropical forests—key carbon sinks crucial for climate stability.
- **Carbon Sequestration and Biodiversity:** Recognising forests as essential for CO₂ absorption and for safeguarding global biodiversity.
- **Indigenous Stewardship:** Strengthening rights and livelihood frameworks for indigenous communities, the most effective long-term forest custodians.



ii. Roadmap for an Equitable Transition Away from Fossil Fuels

Unlike previous negotiations, COP30 avoided imposing a universal phase-out deadline due to resistance from developing and petroleum-producing economies. Instead, the roadmap stresses:

- **Just, Orderly, Equitable Transition:** Recognising varied developmental stages and energy needs.
- **Historical Responsibility:** Acknowledging that industrialised nations must undertake deeper, faster transitions.
- **Developmental Safeguards:** Ensuring that low-income populations are protected from abrupt shifts that could undermine economic stability.

d. Finance and Equity: Core Demands of Developing Countries

Developing countries reiterated that without assured finance, affordable technology, and long-term capacity-building, ambitious climate action remains unrealistic. Although Article 9 of the Paris Agreement mandates developed nations to provide financial support, actual disbursements remain far

below pledged levels. COP30 revitalised discussions on reforming climate finance architecture, but systemic breakthroughs remained elusive.

e. Trade and Climate: Emerging Areas of Concern

The rise of unilateral carbon-related trade measures, such as the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), sparked concern among developing nations. They argued that such measures risk penalising exports and undermine climate equity principles. COP30 did not resolve these tensions but initiated dialogue on balancing climate ambition with developmental imperatives.

f. Strengthening Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)

COP30 urged nations to enhance their NDCs so that global efforts align with the 1.5°C pathway. Current commitments remain insufficient, and there is a yawning gap between global ambition and national policy frameworks. The conference emphasised that updated NDCs must integrate both mitigation and adaptation priorities.

g. India's Position at COP30

India maintained that imposing uniform fossil fuel phase-out timelines would be inequitable and economically disruptive for developing economies. It highlighted:

- **Energy Security for Growth:** Affordable energy remains essential to meet developmental goals.
- **Chronic Finance Gaps:** Developed nations have not met past finance or technology commitments.
- **Equity and CBDR:** India emphasised long-standing principles of climate justice.
- **Support for Forest Roadmap:** India backed the global effort to halt deforestation and called for deeper international collaboration.

h. Why COP30 Matters

COP30's outcomes reinforce the ethical foundations of climate governance. The dual roadmaps create a coordinated global trajectory for protecting forests and reducing fossil fuel dependence. The emphasis on fairness, responsibility, and cooperation ensures that climate action remains inclusive. These decisions also set the stage for forthcoming negotiations on finance, technology transfer, and NDC enhancement.

Conclusion

COP30 did not produce dramatic breakthroughs, but it succeeded in establishing a structured and equitable framework for future climate action. By mandating two global roadmaps and reaffirming core principles of fairness, the conference brought coherence to a fragmented global process. The coming years will determine how effectively these roadmaps translate into action, but COP30 has ensured that the global community moves forward with clearer direction and stronger shared responsibility.

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.

PrepAlpine