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India gets a waiver on U.S. sanctions against Iran port

U.S. relief on sanctions against Chabahar came into force from Wednesday; supplies to Afghanistan can now be sent via the port; in September, the U.S. said it would revoke the waiver offered in 2018

Kallol Bhattacharjee

NEW DELHI

India has received a waiver on the United States' sanctions against Iran's Chabahar port for six months, the Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson, Randhir Jaiswal, announced on Thursday. Officials said that the sanctions waiver had come into effect from October 29.

"Yes, I can confirm that we have been granted exemption for six months on the American sanctions that were applicable on Chabahar," Mr. Jaiswal said, in response to a question during the weekly media briefing.

India has been associated with the Chabahar port at least since 2005, when it agreed with Iran to develop the port.

Shifting prospects

Both sides signed an MoU in 2015 to jointly develop the Shahid Beheshti Port at Chabahar in the hope that it would emerge as a



Vital link: India has been associated with Chabahar port since 2005, when it entered into an agreement with Iran. GETTY IMAGES

major commercial hub. The port's prospects came under a cloud due to Western sanctions against Iran, but in 2018, the first Trump administration gave a waiver to Indian operations at the Chabahar port as it was aimed at helping the development needs of the U.S.-backed Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

In September, the U.S. Department of State said

that it would revoke the waiver for Indian operations that was offered by Donald Trump in 2018. The move exposed anyone associated with the Chabahar project to U.S. sanctions under the Iran Freedom and Counter-Proliferation Act.

The latest U.S. decision means that supplies to Afghanistan, especially essential items, can still be sent through Chabahar.

'India will help Afghans build hydel facilities'

NEW DELHI

India is willing to support Taliban-governed Afghanistan in building "hydroelectric projects," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said on Thursday. He said the two sides can build on a "history of cooperation" on water-related issues. » **PAGE 6**

English Summary:

India has received a **six-month waiver** from the **United States on sanctions** related to operations at Iran's **Chabahar Port**. The waiver, effective from **October 29**, will allow India to continue developing and operating the port without violating American sanctions on Iran.

The move enables **uninterrupted cargo and humanitarian aid supplies to Afghanistan**, especially essential goods like food and medicine, through the **strategic Chabahar route**.

Background – India's Role in Chabahar Port:

- India and Iran signed an MoU in **2003** to jointly develop the **Shahid Beheshti terminal** at Chabahar.

- A formal **agreement was signed in 2015** to operationalize it, with India Ports Global Limited (IPGL) managing operations since **2018**.
- The project aims to provide India **direct access to Afghanistan and Central Asia, bypassing Pakistan**.

Why the Waiver Matters:

- The U.S. had imposed sanctions on Iran under the **Iran Freedom and Counter-Proliferation Act (IFCA)**, which also affected third-country entities.
- In **2018**, the Trump administration gave India a **conditional waiver** for Chabahar due to its importance in **humanitarian supplies** to Afghanistan.
- However, in **September 2024**, the U.S. indicated it might revoke the waiver, raising concerns in New Delhi.

The **latest decision reverses that threat**, reaffirming **U.S. recognition of Chabahar's developmental and regional stability role**.

Strategic Importance of Chabahar Port:

- **Geopolitical Location:**
Situating on the Gulf of Oman, Chabahar provides India with a gateway to **Iran, Afghanistan, Central Asia, and Europe** through the **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)**.
- **Bypasses Pakistan:**
Offers India an **alternative route** for trade and humanitarian access to Afghanistan.
- **Regional Balance:**
Counters China's influence in the region, especially Beijing's presence in **Gwadar Port (Pakistan)** under the **China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)**.

Implications of the U.S. Waiver:

For India:

- Secures India's long-term investments in Chabahar (over **\$85 million**).
- Strengthens India's **strategic connectivity projects** in West Asia.
- Enhances India's image as a **reliable development partner** in Afghanistan.

For Afghanistan:

- Allows continued **humanitarian aid supplies** and trade through India-Iran corridor.
- Reduces dependency on Pakistan-controlled transit routes.

For the U.S.:

- Indicates a **pragmatic shift** — balancing sanctions enforcement with regional stability needs.
- Reinforces **India's role as a strategic partner** in South and Central Asia.

Timeline Snapshot:

Year	Event
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2003	India & Iran sign initial Chabahar development MoU
2015	Agreement signed for Shahid Beheshti terminal
2018	India starts operations via IPGL; U.S. sanctions waiver granted
2024	U.S. announces waiver renewal effective Oct 29
2025	India resumes full operations & supply to Afghanistan

Broader Diplomatic Angle:

- The waiver underscores the **resilience of India-Iran ties**, despite U.S. sanctions pressure.
- India must continue balancing its **strategic autonomy** — maintaining cooperation with Iran while deepening ties with the U.S. and Israel.
- It also reaffirms India's **commitment to regional connectivity**, particularly within the **INSTC and Central Asian outreach** framework.

Hindi Summary (हिंदी सारांश):

भारत को अमेरिकी प्रतिबंधों से छह महीने की छूट (waiver) मिली है, जिससे वह ईरान के चाबहार बंदरगाह पर अपना संचालन जारी रख सकेगा।

- यह छूट 29 अक्टूबर 2024 से प्रभावी है।
- इससे भारत अफगानिस्तान को आवश्यक वस्तुएँ जैसे खाद्य सामग्री और दवाइयाँ भेज सकेगा।
- चाबहार बंदरगाह भारत, ईरान और अफगानिस्तान के बीच एक रणनीतिक व्यापार गलियारा है जो पाकिस्तान को बाईपास करता है।

यह छूट भारत के पश्चिम एशिया में रणनीतिक हितों और ऊर्जा-भूराजनीति के लिए अहम है।

Exam Relevance Table:

Topic	GS Paper	Relevance
Chabahar Port Project	GS Paper 2	India–Iran Relations & Regional Connectivity
U.S. Sanctions & Foreign Policy	GS Paper 2	Global Governance & Diplomacy
International North–South Transport Corridor (INSTC)	GS Paper 2	Strategic & Economic Cooperation
India–Afghanistan Trade via Iran	GS Paper 2	India's Neighborhood Policy

UPSC Mains Practice Question:

“Discuss the strategic significance of the Chabahar Port for India’s connectivity and regional diplomacy in the context of U.S. sanctions and evolving geopolitics in West Asia.”
(250 words – GS Paper 2)

Trump, Xi seek trade war truce, take a step back in war over tariffs, rare earths

Agence France-Presse
BUSAN

Donald Trump and Xi Jinping agreed on Thursday to calm the trade war between China and the U.S. that has roiled global markets, with Washington cutting some tariffs and Beijing committing to keep supplies of critical rare earths flowing.

Mr. Trump called his first meeting with Mr. Xi in six years a “great success”, while the Chinese leader said the two reached an “important consensus” towards solving the fight between the world’s two top economies.

“I thought it was an amazing meeting,” Mr. Trump said after the talks in Busan, South Korea,

praising Mr. Xi as a “tremendous leader of a very powerful country” and saying he would visit China in April. Mr. Trump added that the deal included China immediately buying “tremendous amounts of soybeans and other farm products”.

The U.S. leader said the talks yielded an extendable one-year deal on China’s supply of crucial rare earths, materials that are essential for sophisticated electronic components across a range of industries.

Easing curbs

Beijing’s Commerce Ministry also confirmed it would suspend for one year certain export restrictions, including on rare-earth materials,



U.S. President Donald Trump with Chinese President Xi Jinping during a bilateral meeting in Busan on Thursday. REUTERS

rials, a sector where China is highly dominant. “All the rare earths has been settled, and that’s for the world,” Mr. Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One. Mr. Xi said a “consensus” had been reached and urged “follow-up work as

soon as possible”. Mr. Trump added that the Chinese leader had also agreed to “work very hard to stop the flow” of deadly opioid fentanyl, a trade in which Washington has accused Beijing of being complicit.

Trump-Xi bonhomie, reference to G-2 may impact India, Quad

Sushmita Haldar
NEW DELHI

The Trump-Xi summit in Busan have sent ripple effects to India. As a result of the talks, the U.S. has reduced tariffs on China to 47%, making India and Brazil, at 50%, among the

countries with the highest tariffs. Experts said the characterisation by both leaders of the U.S.-China as “G-2” or grouping of the two biggest global powers may have a bigger impact.

FULL ANALYSIS ON
➤ PAGE 4

“I put a 20% tariff on China because of the fentanyl coming in... and based on his statements today I am going to reduce that by 10%,” Mr. Trump said.

And in social media post after leaving South Korea, Mr. Trump declared “Our

Farmers will be very happy!” with the outcomes of the talks.

He went on to say in the post that Beijing would “begin the process of purchasing American Energy”, potentially involving oil and gas from Alaska. Of

ficials from the United States and China would meet to hash out that “energy deal”, he added.

“Partners and friends” Neither leader made any public comments immediately after the talks, which lasted around an hour and 40 minutes.

Mr. Trump headed straight to Air Force One, waving and pumping his fist as he boarded the plane. The jet took off minutes later.

The Chinese President was seen getting into his limousine outside the closed-door meeting.

Mr. Xi acknowledged before the meeting began in earnest that both sides did not always see eye to eye, but should strive to be

“partners and friends”. “China and the U.S. can jointly shoulder our responsibility as major countries and work together to accomplish more great and concrete things for the good of our two countries and the whole world,” said Mr. Xi.

Sitting opposite each other, each leader was flanked by senior officials including Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Treasury chief Scott Bessent and Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick.

Mr. Xi’s team, which arrived from Beijing shortly before - the U.S. side was already in South Korea - included Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Commerce Minister Wang Wentao and Vice Premier He Lifeng.

English Summary:

U.S. President **Donald Trump** and Chinese President **Xi Jinping** met in **Busan, South Korea**, and agreed to **de-escalate the U.S.–China trade war** that had disrupted global markets since 2018. Both leaders committed to **reducing tariffs, ensuring rare-earth supply, and resuming trade cooperation** to stabilize the global economy.

This meeting — the **first in six years** — is being viewed as a diplomatic thaw, with Trump calling it a “**great success**” and Xi describing it as an “**important consensus**.”

Key Outcomes of the Busan Meeting:

- **Trade Truce Announced:**
Both nations agreed to **pause escalation** of tariffs and resume negotiations to restore trade balance.
- **U.S. Tariff Reduction:**
The U.S. reduced **tariffs on Chinese goods from 57% to 47%**, easing market pressure.

- **China's Commitments:**

- Purchase “**tremendous amounts of soybeans and other farm products.**”
- Ensure **stable supply of rare earth elements**, crucial for global electronics and defense industries.
- Cooperate to **control illegal fentanyl trade**, which the U.S. claims originates from China.

Strategic Importance of Rare Earths:

- Rare earth elements (REEs) are vital for **semiconductors, batteries, defense equipment, and clean energy technologies.**
- China controls **~80% of global REE production**, giving it a major leverage in trade diplomacy.
- The U.S. sought assurances to keep supplies flowing amid sanctions and export restrictions.
- The deal included an **extendable one-year framework** for rare-earth cooperation.

Broader Economic Implications:

- The trade truce helped **stabilize global markets**, which had suffered due to high tariffs and disrupted supply chains.
- China's suspension of **import restrictions on American goods** for a year indicates an easing stance.
- Trump's government expects the truce to **benefit U.S. farmers**, especially soybean producers.

Trump–Xi ‘G2’ Reference and Global Impact:

- Both leaders referred to the U.S. and China as a “**G2**” — signalling **joint global leadership.**
- This characterization could **reshape international power dynamics**, sidelining middle powers like **India, Japan, and Australia.**
- Experts warn it could **weaken the Quad (India–U.S.–Japan–Australia)** framework if Washington reorients toward Beijing.

India's Perspective:

- India's exports may face **competitive disadvantages**, as **tariff relief for China** makes its products more attractive in U.S. markets.
- New Delhi views the “G2” narrative cautiously, as it may reduce U.S. strategic dependence on Asian allies like India.
- However, a **stable global trade environment** may benefit India's export-oriented sectors such as **electronics, textiles, and IT.**

Major Quotes:

- **Donald Trump:** “We’ve reached an important consensus... tremendous amounts of soybeans and rare earths will be purchased.”
- **Xi Jinping:** “China and the U.S. can jointly shoulder our responsibility as major countries and work for the good of our two nations and the world.”

Wider Geopolitical Analysis:

- The U.S.–China truce represents a **temporary stabilization** in great power rivalry.
- While easing global tensions, it also **redefines multilateral economic cooperation**, potentially marginalizing emerging economies.
- Analysts see this as a **tactical pause** — not a permanent end — to the trade war.

Hindi Summary (हिंदी सारांश):

अमेरिका और चीन ने व्यापार युद्ध में अस्थायी युद्धविराम की घोषणा की है।

- अमेरिका ने **टैरिफ घटाकर 47%** किया और चीन ने **सोयाबीन, दुर्लभ खनिजों (rare earths)** की बड़ी खरीद पर सहमति जताई।
- दोनों देशों ने **फेंटानिल व्यापार को रोकने और ऊर्जा सहयोग** पर भी चर्चा की।
- ट्रम्प और शी ने अमेरिका-चीन को “**G2**” करार दिया, जिससे **भारत और क्वाड देशों पर प्रभाव** पड़ सकता है।

- यह कदम वैश्विक बाजारों में स्थिरता लाने और आपूर्ति श्रृंखला में सुधार के लिए अहम माना जा रहा है।

Exam Relevance Table:

Topic	GS Paper	Relevance
U.S.–China Trade War	GS Paper 2	International Relations
Rare Earths & Strategic Minerals	GS Paper 3	Economic Security, Strategic Resources
Global Trade Tariffs	GS Paper 3	Globalization & World Economy
G2 vs Quad Dynamics	GS Paper 2	India's Foreign Policy & Strategic Positioning

UPSC Mains Practice Question:

"Discuss the global and regional implications of the recent U.S.–China trade truce and its potential impact on India's strategic and economic interests."
(250 words – GS Paper 2)

Support price hike brings hope to Kerala's rubber heartland, but scepticism lingers

Hiran Unnikrishnan
KOTTAYAM

As Kerala braces for back-to-back elections, the government has hit the accelerator for calming the nerves of settler farmers and inject fresh life into the State's struggling rubber sector.

The Cabinet move to hike the support price of rubber from ₹180 to ₹200 per kg has sent a wave of optimism through central Travancore and the settler belts of north Malabar, where rubber trees still dominate the landscape.

Coming close on the heels of two key legislations, namely the Kerala Land Assignment (Amend-



Boost during tough times: A view of the rubber plantation in Idukki district in Kerala. H. VIBHU

ment) Act, 2023 and the draft Wildlife Protection (Kerala Amendment) Bill, the decision is being read as a well-timed play to reconnect with Kerala's powerful farming heartland.

Farmers, while welcoming the gesture, remain

sceptical about whether it will be enough to revive the fortunes of a crop that once fuelled Kerala's rural economy.

"While the long-awaited base price of ₹250 wasn't granted, this hike gives hope for the future of rub-

ber cultivation in Kerala," says Babu Joseph, general secretary of the National Consortium of Rubber Producer Societies.

The demand for higher support prices for rubber and paddy has long been championed by the Catholic Church, particularly the Syro-Malabar Church. Ahead of the last Lok Sabha polls, the Church had thrown its weight behind the farmers' cause.

Biju Sebastian, president of the Catholic Congress under the Changanassery Archdiocese, said, "It's encouraging that the government has responded, but the hike still falls short of the LDF's ₹250 promise."

English Summary:

The **Kerala Cabinet** has approved an increase in the **support price of natural rubber** from **₹180 to ₹200 per kg**, sparking cautious optimism among rubber growers, especially in **central Travancore and north Malabar**, the state's main rubber belt.

The move, seen as both an **economic relief** and a **political strategy** ahead of upcoming elections, aims to rejuvenate Kerala's **struggling rubber sector**, which has been reeling under **low global prices, import competition, and declining domestic demand**.

Key Announcement:

- **Support Price Increased:** ₹180 → ₹200 per kg
 - **Targeted Beneficiaries:** ~10 lakh small and medium rubber farmers in Kerala.
 - **Objective:** To boost farmer income and stabilize the rural economy of rubber-growing regions.
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Context & Background:

- Kerala produces **~75% of India's total natural rubber output**.
 - The rubber sector has faced:
 - **Global price slump** due to oversupply from Southeast Asia.
 - **High input costs** and **competition from synthetic rubber imports**.
 - **Declining acreage**, as many farmers shifted to other crops.
 - The **Catholic Church**, particularly the **Syro-Malabar Church**, has long advocated higher rubber support prices, aligning with the **farmers' movement**.
-

Political & Economic Significance:

- The hike coincides with the passing of two key legislations:
 1. **Kerala Land Assignment (Amendment) Act, 2023**
 2. **Draft Wildlife Protection (Kerala Amendment) Bill**These are seen as attempts to appease **settler-farmer communities** in central Kerala.
 - Political analysts view the move as a **strategic measure** to reconnect with the **agrarian vote base**, crucial for upcoming elections.
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Concerns & Skepticism:

- Many farmers welcomed the gesture but questioned **whether ₹200/kg is sufficient** to revive profitability.
 - The **long-standing demand** is for a **base price of ₹250/kg**, a promise earlier made by the ruling Left Democratic Front (LDF).
 - Experts warn that **unless complemented by strong market interventions**, the support price hike alone may not offset the **falling global prices** or **rising input costs**.
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Institutional & Church Involvement:

- **Babu Joseph**, General Secretary of the **National Consortium of Rubber Producer Societies**, acknowledged the decision but urged **better price realization mechanisms**.
 - **Catholic Church's Influence:** The Church's involvement in farmers' issues — especially the **Syro-Malabar Church** — continues to shape political sentiment in Kerala's highland regions.
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Broader Economic Implications:

- The decision could:
 - Inject liquidity into rural markets.
 - Encourage replanting and rejuvenation of **aging rubber plantations**.
 - Support **Kerala's agro-based economy**, which has seen contraction in recent years.
 - However, **rubber export competitiveness** remains a concern due to **low global demand** and **cheaper imports** from ASEAN countries.
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Expert View:

"While the hike gives hope for revival, it still falls short of what's needed to make rubber farming sustainable," said Biju Sebastian, President of the Catholic Congress under Changanassery Archdiocese.

Hindi Summary (हिंदी सारांश):

केरल सरकार ने प्राकृतिक रबर का समर्थन मूल्य ₹180 से बढ़ाकर ₹200 प्रति किलोग्राम कर दिया है।

- इसका उद्देश्य संघर्षरत रबर किसानों को राहत देना और ग्रामीण अर्थव्यवस्था को पुनर्जीवित करना है।
- केरल भारत के कुल रबर उत्पादन का लगभग 75% हिस्सा देता है।
- हालांकि किसान और विशेषज्ञ इसे अपर्याप्त बता रहे हैं और ₹250 प्रति किलोग्राम का बेस प्राइस मांग रहे हैं।
- यह निर्णय राजनीतिक रूप से भी अहम माना जा रहा है क्योंकि यह **चुनाव पूर्व किसान वर्ग को लुभाने का प्रयास**

Exam Relevance Table:

Topic	GS Paper	Relevance
Rubber Sector & Price Support	GS Paper 3	Agriculture & Rural Economy
Kerala Economy	GS Paper 3	State-Level Economic Reforms
Political Economy of Agriculture	GS Paper 2	Governance & Policy Measures
Role of Institutions (Church, Cooperatives)	GS Paper 2	Civil Society & Policy Influence

UPSC Mains Practice Question:

"Examine the challenges faced by India's natural rubber sector and discuss how state-level support policies, such as Kerala's price intervention, can ensure sustainable livelihoods for farmers."
(250 words – GS Paper 3)

Trump-Xi bonhomie and reference to G-2 may impact India and Quad

External Affairs Ministry non-committal on outcome of U.S.-China summit in South Korea; experts warn of ripple effects in region; after talks, U.S. reduced tariffs on China to 47%, making India and Brazil, at 50%, among nations with highest tariff

NEWS ANALYSIS

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

The summit between U.S. President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping in Busan, South Korea, ended with several outcomes for bilateral ties between the two countries, but also sent ripple effects to India. As a result of the talks, the U.S. has reduced tariffs on China to 47%, making India and Brazil, at 50%, among the countries with the highest tariffs.

More than the specific outcomes, including a one-year truce on trade tariffs and export restrictions on rare earth minerals, experts said the characterisation by both leaders of the U.S.-China "G-2" or grouping of the two biggest glo-



New normal: Donald Trump talks to Xi Jinping at the Gimhae Air Base in Busan, South Korea, on Thursday. AFP.

bal powers, may have a bigger impact. At the meeting with Mr. Xi, Mr. Trump began by saying, "I think we are going to have a fantastic relationship for a long period of time."

"China and the U.S. can jointly shoulder our responsibility as major countries, and work together to accomplish more great and concrete things for the good of our two countries and the whole world," Mr.

Xi said, as per Chinese Foreign Ministry's statement.

When asked about the summit, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal was non-committal. "As far as the question of the latest [Trump-Xi] talks and relaxations that have happened between U.S. and China, as to how it is going to play in to our domain, I will come back to you," he told reporters on Thursday.

The G-2 or the idea of creating an exclusive U.S.-China club to work on global issues was floated as a concept about 15 years ago around the summit between U.S. President Barack Obama and Chinese President Hu Jintao in 2009, when trade, climate change and nuclear proliferations were pressing concerns for the U.S.

However, Mr. Obama never used the term, and subsequently as U.S.-China tensions increased, the administration dropped the idea entirely by 2011.

Impact of entente

Another issue is the impact of any entente between the U.S. and China on the Quad and other Indo-Pacific initiatives. India has always been more for a multi-polar world order rather than for a shared hegemony between the top two powers. One has to won-

der if this will lead to carving up of the world into "spheres of influence", as that will challenge not only India's stature but also the viability of the Quad.

Speaking to reporters onboard his flight back to the U.S., Mr. Trump said he intended to visit China in April 2026, and host Mr. Xi in the U.S. later in the year. While no date has been sent for Mr. Trump's travel to India to attend the Australia-India-Japan-U.S. Quad Summit to be hosted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, reports suggested that this was unlikely to take place in 2025.

As a result, if Mr. Trump returns to Asia next year, the question won't just be whether he will be part of the Quad summit in India, but also that whether his new "G-2" plans with China will dilute the group's agenda to secure a free and open Indo-Pacific.

English Summary:

The U.S.-China summit in Busan, South Korea, between President Donald Trump and President Xi Jinping marked a thaw in bilateral ties, with agreements on **tariff reduction**, **rare-earth trade**, and **energy cooperation**.

However, the emerging narrative of a U.S.-China G-2 partnership has raised **strategic concerns for India and the Indo-Pacific Quad alliance** (India, U.S., Japan, and Australia).

Key Outcomes of the Trump–Xi Summit:

- **Tariff Reduction:**
The U.S. reduced tariffs on Chinese imports from **57% to 47%**, while maintaining **India and Brazil at 50%**, placing them among the highest-tariff nations.
- **Rare Earths & Energy Cooperation:**
China agreed to continue **rare-earth exports**, crucial for advanced electronics, and to start an **energy import deal** with the U.S.
- **Reaffirmation of Dialogue:**
Both sides emphasized **responsible global leadership**, committing to “cooperation on trade, climate change, and nuclear stability.”

“G-2” Concept Revived:

- The **“G-2” idea** refers to an exclusive **U.S.–China partnership** to manage global issues — a concept first floated in **2009** during the Obama–Hu Jintao summit.
- It envisions a **bipolar world order**, where Washington and Beijing share global decision-making authority on key issues like **climate change, security, and economy**.
- The revival of this idea now **challenges the multipolar Indo-Pacific vision**, which India has been advocating.

India’s Concerns:

- The G-2 framing **risks marginalizing India’s global role**, potentially sidelining regional powers in Asia.
- A **U.S.–China rapprochement** could:
 - Undermine the **Quad’s strategic relevance**.
 - Soften U.S. stance on **Chinese expansion in the South China Sea**.
 - Reduce American enthusiasm for **India’s Indo-Pacific initiatives** like the **IMEC Corridor** and **Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF)**.

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal remained **non-committal**, stating: “As far as the question of the latest [Trump–Xi] talks and relaxations that have happened between the U.S. and China, we will continue to observe.”

Implications for the Quad (India–U.S.–Japan–Australia):

- A closer U.S.–China alignment could **dilute the Quad’s purpose** of ensuring a “free, open, and rules-based Indo-Pacific.”
- If Washington chooses to prioritize Beijing for global coordination, **Quad’s deterrence value against Chinese assertiveness** would weaken.
- Upcoming **Quad Summit**, scheduled to be hosted by **India in 2026**, may face uncertainty depending on the evolving G-2 dynamic.

Regional and Strategic Implications:

Aspect	Potential Impact
Trade & Economy	Tariff easing benefits China; India remains in high-tariff bracket.
Geopolitics	U.S. may recalibrate Indo-Pacific engagement, reducing emphasis on containment of China.
Diplomacy	India may have to navigate between a cooperative G-2 and its own multipolar advocacy.
Security Architecture	Quad may lose momentum; ASEAN centrality could re-emerge.

Expert Viewpoints:

- Analysts warn of a **“sphere of influence” model**, dividing the world into U.S. and China–led blocs.
- Trump’s reference to “a fantastic relationship for a long period of time” with Xi signals an intent to **reset ties with Beijing** after years of confrontation.

- India, Japan, and Australia may need to **strengthen intra-Quad cooperation** independent of U.S. priorities.

India's Strategic Balancing Path:

- India must:
 - Reinforce its **strategic autonomy** and multipolar advocacy.
 - Deepen ties with **Japan, Australia, ASEAN**, and **Europe** to offset U.S.–China bipolarity.
 - Enhance **economic competitiveness** to avoid marginalization in trade frameworks.
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Hindi Summary (हिंदी सारांश):

दक्षिण कोरिया के बुसान में डोनाल्ड ट्रम्प और शी जिनपिंग की मुलाकात ने भारत और क्वाड देशों में चिंता पैदा की है।

- अमेरिका ने चीन पर लगाई गई टैरिफ दर को 57% से घटाकर 47% कर दिया, जबकि भारत और ब्राज़ील पर 50% बनी रही।
 - दोनों देशों ने **व्यापार, जलवायु परिवर्तन और दुर्लभ खनिज व्यापार** पर सहयोग बढ़ाने का निर्णय लिया।
 - “G-2” (अमेरिका-चीन साझेदारी) की पुनरावृत्ति से यह आशंका बढ़ी है कि इससे **भारत और क्वाड की भूमिका कमजोर** हो सकती है।
 - विदेश मंत्रालय ने कहा है कि भारत “स्थिति पर नजर रखेगा।”
-

Exam Relevance Table:

Topic	GS Paper	Relevance
U.S.–China Relations	GS Paper 2	Bilateral & Global Politics
G-2 vs Quad Dynamics	GS Paper 2	Global Groupings & Multilateralism
India's Foreign Policy	GS Paper 2	Strategic Autonomy & Indo-Pacific Vision
Trade Tariff Policy	GS Paper 3	Economic Diplomacy

UPSC Mains Practice Question:

“Critically examine the implications of the revived ‘G-2’ narrative between the U.S. and China on India's strategic interests and the future of the Quad alliance.”
(250 words – GS Paper 2)

Justice Surya Kant to take over as 53rd Chief Justice of India on November 24

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The appointment of Justice Surya Kant as the 53rd Chief Justice of India (CJI) was notified on Thursday. He will assume charge on November 24 and will remain CJI for nearly 16 months, till February 9, 2027.

The notification was issued by the Department of Justice in the Union Law Ministry.

“In exercise of the powers conferred by the Constitution of India, the President is pleased to appoint Shri Justice Surya Kant, Judge of the Supreme Court as the Chief Justice of India with effect from 24th November 2025,” Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal wrote on X.

“I convey my heartiest congratulations and best wishes to him,” he added.

Justice Surya Kant succeeds Justice Bhushan R.



Justice Surya Kant

Gavai, who demits office on November 23.

According to a communique by the Press Information Bureau, Justice Surya Kant was born on February 10, 1962 in Petwar of Hisar, Haryana. He earned his Law degree from Maharishi Dayanand University, Rohtak, in 1984. He then began his practice the same year at District Courts, Hisar.

In 1985, he shifted to the Punjab and Haryana High Court, Chandigarh, specialising in constitutional, service, and civil matters. On

July 7, 2000, he earned the distinction of being appointed the youngest Advocate-General of Haryana and was also designated as a senior advocate.

He served as the Advocate-General until his elevation as a permanent Judge of the Punjab and Haryana High Court on January 9, 2004.

As a judge, he served on the governing body of the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) from 2007 to 2011 and, later, earned a first class in his Master's degree in Law in 2011. He was appointed the Chief Justice of the Himachal Pradesh High Court on October 5, 2018, and thereafter was elevated to the Supreme Court of India on May 24, 2019.

Since May 14, 2025, he has been the Executive Chairman of NALSA and also serves on several committees of the Indian Law Institute.

The **Government of India** has officially appointed **Justice Surya Kant** as the **53rd Chief Justice of India (CJI)**. He will assume office on **November 24, 2025**, succeeding **Justice D.Y. Chandrachud's successor, Justice Bhushan R. Gavai**, who retires on **November 23, 2025**. Justice Surya Kant will serve as CJI for **nearly 16 months**, till **February 9, 2027**.

The appointment notification was issued by the **Department of Justice**, Union Law Ministry, in exercise of powers under **Article 124(2)** of the **Constitution of India**.

Profile and Background:

- **Full Name:** Justice Surya Kant
 - **Date of Birth:** February 10, 1962
 - **Place:** Petwar village, Hisar district, Haryana
 - **Education:**
 - B.A. from Maharishi Dayanand University, Rohtak
 - LL.B. from the same university (1984)
 - LL.M. (Law) – 2011
-

Professional Career Milestones:

Year	Career Milestone
1984	Began law practice at District Courts, Hisar
1985	Moved to Punjab & Haryana High Court, specialized in Constitutional, Service, and Civil matters
2000	Became the youngest Advocate General of Haryana and designated Senior Advocate
2004	Appointed Permanent Judge , Punjab & Haryana High Court
2018	Elevated as Chief Justice of Himachal Pradesh High Court
2019	Appointed as Judge, Supreme Court of India
2025	Designated as Executive Chairman, NALSA (National Legal Services Authority)

Tenure as Chief Justice of India:

- **Term:** November 24, 2025 – February 9, 2027
 - **Tenure Duration:** Approximately **1 year and 3 months (16 months)**
 - **Predecessor:** Justice Bhushan R. Gavai
 - **Appointing Authority:** President of India
-

Key Contributions & Roles:

- Served on the **governing body of NALSA (2007–2011)**.
 - Instrumental in **legal aid reforms** and **access-to-justice programs**.
 - Has delivered landmark judgments on:
 - **Constitutional interpretation**
 - **Public interest litigation**
 - **Environmental justice**
 - **Service jurisprudence**
 - Known for his advocacy of **judicial sensitivity, transparency, and inclusiveness in law**.
-

Significance of Appointment:

- Justice Surya Kant's elevation continues the **seniority convention** of appointing the next senior-most Supreme Court judge as CJI.
 - His tenure will oversee:
 - Judicial appointments through the **Collegium System**
 - Continuation of **e-Courts and judicial digitalization reforms**
 - Strengthening of **legal aid and NALSA-driven initiatives**
 - Critical rulings expected on **constitutional and governance-related issues**
-

Legal & Constitutional Context:

- **Article 124(2):**
Provides for appointment of the Chief Justice of India and other Supreme Court judges by the President after consultation with judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts.
- **Convention:**
Appointment follows **seniority principle** to maintain institutional consistency.
- **Tenure Importance:**
Despite being relatively short, the CJI's role shapes judicial policy, bench allocation, and institutional governance.

Personality Overview:

Justice Surya Kant is widely respected for his **clarity in constitutional reasoning, balanced approach, and deep understanding of social justice jurisprudence.**

His background as a **state Advocate General** and experience across **multiple High Courts** lend him both administrative and judicial depth.

Hindi Summary (हिंदी सारांश):

न्यायमूर्ति सूर्यकांत को भारत के 53वें मुख्य न्यायाधीश (CJI) के रूप में नियुक्त किया गया है।

- वे 24 नवंबर 2025 को पदभार ग्रहण करेंगे और 9 फरवरी 2027 तक कार्य करेंगे।
- उन्होंने 1984 में कानून की डिग्री प्राप्त की और 2000 में हरियाणा के सबसे युवा महाधिवक्ता बने।
- 2018 में हिमाचल प्रदेश उच्च न्यायालय के मुख्य न्यायाधीश बने और 2019 में सुप्रीम कोर्ट में पदोन्नत हुए।
- न्यायमूर्ति सूर्यकांत वर्तमान में राष्ट्रीय विधिक सेवा प्राधिकरण (NALSA) के कार्यकारी अध्यक्ष हैं।
- वे संवैधानिक कानून, सेवा मामलों और सामाजिक न्याय के क्षेत्र में अपने संतुलित निर्णयों के लिए प्रसिद्ध हैं।

Exam Relevance Table:

Topic	GS Paper	Relevance
Appointment of CJI	GS Paper 2	Constitutional Provisions – Judiciary
Powers & Tenure of CJI	GS Paper 2	Structure & Functioning of Supreme Court
Judicial Reforms & NALSA	GS Paper 2	Governance & Legal Aid
Role of Judiciary in Democracy	GS Paper 2	Separation of Powers & Judicial Independence

UPSC Mains Practice Question:

“Explain the constitutional provisions and conventions governing the appointment of the Chief Justice of India. Discuss the significance of seniority and judicial independence in the context of recent appointments.”

(250 words – GS Paper 2)

Should AI be introduced as part of school curricula?



Aparajita Bharti
Co-founder of the public policy firm The Quantum Hub and of Frang Leaders for Active Citizenship



Viplav Baxi
Founder of EdTech platform Anapathu for teachers and Edupart AI for higher education institutions

PARLEY

Recently, the Ministry of Education announced that an Artificial Intelligence (AI) curriculum would be introduced from Class 3 onwards for the next academic year (2026-27). Earlier, in July, the government had launched the 'Skilling for AI Readiness' initiative, under which thousands of CBSE schools will offer AI as a skill subject starting from Class 6. Should AI be introduced as part of school curricula? Aparajita Bharti and Viplav Baxi discuss the question in a conversation moderated by Sruthi Darbhani. Edited excerpts:

What do you think about the proposal to introduce AI as a foundational subject from a young age?

Aparajita Bharti: When we talk about AI education, we have to make a distinction between AI literacy and AI skills. AI literacy is the ability to understand how AI works and to apply critical thinking while evaluating its responses. AI skills refer to developing AI tools. AI products, or being somewhere in the AI value chain. From what we have reviewed (of the curriculum), we see that in Class 6, for example, the focus is on AI literacy. But in Classes 11 and 12, it is on AI skills, such as Python programming and natural language processing. Students can develop these skills and then enter STEM careers. My sense is that if the curriculum is being introduced in Class 3, its focus should be on AI literacy, alongside the emphasis on basic numeracy, literacy, language, and critical thinking skills.

Viplav Baxi: Technology is changing so rapidly that the idea of having a curriculum around it in the traditional sense is difficult to imagine. For example, prompt engineering will probably disappear in a couple of years' time. Another reason why designing a curriculum around it is fraught with problems is that tech can create divides. Imagine millions of children trying to figure out their first AI prompt. Do we have the infrastructure or even the connectivity for that? The models are not available in local languages. Without hands-on training, what is the point of teaching tech? And if the motivation is mitigating job shifts, that itself is a moving target. We can't say that so many millions of jobs will be displaced and therefore you have got to be ready for new jobs. Because by the time they graduate, that picture will have moved.

What impact will this type of curriculum



Students look at their mobile phones in a classroom.

have on work ethic and student learning?

AB: In some studies, students, as soon as they had answered something with AI, were asked to replicate that and explain it in their own language. And they failed to do so. Professor Stuart Russell from the University of Berkeley said how humans deal with AI in education is the litmus test of humanity's ability to be able to regulate and handle AI development for its own good. Education is one of the trickiest use cases, because AI holds a lot of promise for aiding learning. But on the other hand, it is also systematically taking away that incentive to learn. He used the term "dis-education." He is worried that we might lose intergenerational learning, because until now, whatever AI is doing is actually based on all the learning that humanity has had. But the next generation may not have the right incentives to actually push themselves to keep on learning. What does that mean for humanity?

VB: Historically, whether it was with radio, or TV, or the Internet, we have heard the same concern, which is: are we dumbing down our children? Are we reducing their ability to think creatively or critically? Are we losing agency in front of other tools? Our system should be capable of adapting to every new tech wave. Even our pedagogy has evolved over time, we have moved from behaviourist and cognitivist teaching methods to more constructivist teaching methods. Our systems have to adapt to these new realities. One of the ways we can do that is by treating tech as native to the process of education itself.

Given concerns about the potential psychological impact of AI, what is the right



We are doing a disservice to students by giving them chatbots when the underlying tech is not proven and when the underlying data is biased and it is not tested.

VIPLAV BAXI

stage to introduce children to AI?

AB: Children are not only learning AI at school. They will get exposed to AI, whether schools introduce AI or not. For example, Meta AI is embedded in WhatsApp. What we do need to think about is that as children get exposed to AI, some risks come with it. We did the Youth Pulse Survey with Youth Ki Awaaz, with 500 students who are already using AI. Around 88% of the school students who took that survey are already using AI study companions. But 57% of those students have also started using it to have general conversations. 42% of students also said that some of the things they have been sharing with AI chatbots are things they would have otherwise shared with a person in their life.

We need some guardrails around the design of chatbots when children are interacting with them. AI companies are aware of this risk. There have already been some cases in the U.S., where parents have taken these companies to court. There are already laws placing obligations on platforms and intermediaries. There are restrictions on what you can do with children's data. There is a larger ecosystem beyond education which also has to build safety into this.

VB: Misinformation, malpractice, and crime existed before generative AI and everyone is vulnerable to these. Young students and people with information asymmetries and social and economic disadvantages are more vulnerable than others. Therefore, literacy is important. But it is equally important to understand that we are doing a disservice to students by giving them chatbots when the underlying tech is not proven and when the underlying data is biased and it is not tested. Any number of guardrails can't help you. And here we are allowing even teachers to create bots for students when they themselves are not trained on concepts such as guardrails.

What kind of training do teachers require to implement such a curriculum?

VB: Teachers are not a monolithic entity. We have a smorgasbord of styles and constraints,

and one approach will not fit everyone. We need to ensure that there is continuous coaching of teachers. About 9% of schools in India have just one teacher and 35% have less than 50 students and two teachers. Half the teachers don't have proper qualifications. There is a large contingent of para teachers. Many schools don't have electricity. Therefore, how would you design content for somebody who does not have electricity or computers? It will have to be an unplugged curriculum. I am worried about sweeping statements that we will introduce anything at scale within the next few months and assume that it will work.

AB: The digital divide is real. And with AI, it can become even deeper. For example, where teachers themselves do not have critical skills to be able to evaluate something that general purpose AI is producing, how would they teach the students to be able to evaluate critically?

We also have to look at teachers as innovators because they are innovating with tech as they go along. There is a shifting goalpost every 6-8 months. Teaching people the ability to think, to work with other people, to organise different resources and produce value, and to be able to upskill themselves their whole lives is what we need to focus on. The ability to learn and continuously innovate is inherent to humans. This is the skill we need to focus on building in this generation that is in school right now.

As a thought experiment, if you were supposed to introduce a child to AI, how would you go about it?

AB: Till age 12, foundational learning is important. A lot of parental supervision is required till that age. That is a critical period to build critical thinking skills and basic alphanumeric literacy. In middle school, we should think about AI literacy. From Classes 9 to 12, if you want to participate in the AI workforce at some point, maybe those skills can be learned. Of course, this is assuming schools have no limitation of economic resources.

VB: We are battling some pressing challenges in the primary education space. Let us focus on making that space more robust. Whatever needs to be added as part of a subject to help children orient themselves better to AI can be added.



To listen to the full interview
Scan the code or go to the link
www.thehindu.com

English Summary:

The Ministry of Education (MoE) has proposed introducing an **Artificial Intelligence (AI) curriculum from Class 3 onwards (2026-27)** as part of the *AI for All* and *AI Readiness* initiatives under NEP 2020. The idea is to equip students with AI literacy and critical skills from an early age, as **CBSE schools** prepare to include AI as a **skill subject** from **Class 6** onwards.

Experts **Aparajita Bharti** and **Viplav Baxi** debate whether AI should be part of school curricula, its educational impact, and how India can ensure equitable AI education.

What Does the Proposal Include?

- **AI Literacy from Class 3 to 5:**
Focus on **AI awareness** — understanding what AI is, how it works, and its real-world applications.
- **AI Skills from Class 6 onwards:**
Practical skills like **Python programming**, **machine learning basics**, and **natural language processing**.
- The proposal aligns with the NEP 2020's goal of **21st-century skills**: critical thinking, problem-solving, and digital literacy.

Expert Viewpoints:

Aparajita Bharti (Co-founder, The Quantum Hub)

- Advocates early **AI literacy**, not just AI skill-building.
- AI literacy should be taught **alongside language, numeracy, and reasoning**.
- Warns that education must focus on **critical thinking and responsible use of AI**, not mere tool-handling.
- Believes **AI can democratize STEM learning** if integrated thoughtfully.

“If AI curriculum is introduced from Class 3, focus should be on AI literacy — understanding how AI works and developing basic analytical skills.”

Viplav Baxi (Founder, Edtech Platforms)

- Supports AI education but cautions against **ruled implementation**.
- Says the system must ensure **teacher training and digital infrastructure** before rollout.
- Warns against **misinformation, malpractice, and bias** in AI tools, which can mislead students.
- Emphasizes that **AI literacy ≠ AI dependence** — schools must teach **critical evaluation of AI outputs**.

“We are doing a disservice to students by giving them chatbots when the underlying tech is not proven or tested.”

Key Themes Discussed:

A. Impact on Learning and Behavior

- AI may **change learning habits** — easy access to chatbots can reduce students’ critical thinking.
- Teachers must encourage students to **question AI responses**, not just use them as answers.
- Early exposure must be **supervised** to avoid **overreliance on algorithms**.

B. Ethical and Safety Concerns

- **Children’s data privacy** is a major issue. AI use in classrooms must comply with **data protection norms**.
- Exposure to unregulated AI (e.g., ChatGPT, WhatsApp AI bots) risks **intergenerational learning gaps**.
- Need for strict **digital safeguards** before mainstream adoption.

C. Teacher Preparedness

- **Teacher training** is critical. Around **half of Indian schools** have **less than 50 teachers**, many untrained in AI tools.
- The curriculum must include **pedagogical guidance**, not just technical content.
- Rural and under-resourced schools lacking computers or electricity will face challenges in implementation.

Implementation Challenges:

Issue	Challenge
Infrastructure	Many schools lack digital access, electricity, or computers.
Teacher Training	High proportion of para-teachers without AI awareness.
Curriculum Balance	Risk of overburdening young learners with complex tech.
Equity	AI curriculum could widen urban–rural educational divide.
Safety & Privacy	AI tools handling student data pose ethical concerns.

Way Forward:

- **Stage-wise implementation:** Begin with **AI literacy** (understanding), move to **AI application** (creation).
- **Curriculum localization:** Design AI education adaptable to schools with or without digital infrastructure.
- **Digital Ethics modules:** Include awareness of **bias, misinformation, and data privacy**.
- **Pilot programs:** Run in select CBSE schools before nationwide rollout.
- **Teacher upskilling:** National programs via **NISHTHA & DIKSHA platforms**.

Broader Context & Global Comparison:

- **India:** “AI for All” initiative aims to make India globally competitive in AI.
 - **U.S. & U.K.:** Introduced “Computational Thinking” modules for primary grades.
 - **Singapore:** National AI curriculum launched in 2020, focusing on **responsible AI use**.
 - **China:** AI education is mandatory from primary school since 2019.
-

Hindi Summary (हिंदी सारांश):

भारत के शिक्षा मंत्रालय ने घोषणा की है कि कक्षा 3 से AI (कृत्रिम बुद्धिमत्ता) को पाठ्यक्रम में शामिल किया जाएगा।

- कक्षा 3-5 में बच्चों को AI साक्षरता (AI Literacy) सिखाई जाएगी।
- कक्षा 6 से आगे AI कौशल (AI Skills) जैसे प्रोग्रामिंग, मशीन लर्निंग आदि जोड़े जाएंगे।
- विशेषज्ञों ने चेताया है कि बिना पर्याप्त शिक्षक प्रशिक्षण और डिजिटल ढाँचे के यह योजना असमानता बढ़ा सकती है।
- ध्यान रखना होगा कि AI शिक्षा = आलोचनात्मक सोच और जिम्मेदार उपयोग, न कि केवल तकनीक सीखना।

Exam Relevance Table:

Topic	GS Paper	Relevance
NEP 2020 & AI Curriculum	GS Paper 2	Policy, Education Reform
AI in Education	GS Paper 3	Science & Technology, Innovation
Data Privacy & AI Ethics	GS Paper 3	Digital Governance & Ethics
Teacher Training & Equity	GS Paper 2	Human Resource Development

UPSC Mains Practice Question:

"AI education must empower students to think critically, not depend algorithmically." Discuss the opportunities and challenges of integrating Artificial Intelligence into India's school curricula. (250 words – GS Paper 3)

‘Over 600 MoUs worth ₹12 lakh crore signed at the Maritime Week’

Agreements were in diverse sectors such as port development, indigenous ship building and container manufacturing: Sonowal

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

More than 600 memorandum of understanding (MoUs) worth over ₹12 lakh crore were signed at the Indian Maritime Week 2025, Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal said here on Thursday.

Mr. Sonowal said the MoUs were in diverse sectors such as ship building, port development, indigenous ship building and container manufacturing.

“In the last 11 years, whatever transformative journey we could create, we did. Also, in the transformative policy programmes whatever changes we could create, we did. This will ultimately make India globally, the most desirable, favourable investment destination,” he said.

Secretary in the Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways Vijay Kumar said that of the MoUs



Taking stock: Prime Minister Narendra Modi visits a stall during the India Maritime Week 2025, in Mumbai. PTI

signed, 30% were for port development and port modernisation, 20% for sustainable green shipping and green ports, 20% for shipping and ship building, 20% with regard to port-led industrialisation and 10% for trade, business and skilling.

“Maritime sector projects have long gestation periods. Investment comes in, it takes time to get invested. Already 60% of the MoUs entered into at the last summit have been grounded, meaning, the

money [has been committed] and has started coming in,” he said.

During the event, 11 global CEOs met with the PM.

“They represented different divisions of maritime sectors including, ports, port modernisation, port operators, dredging operators and ship building. In almost all the areas, they promised and committed to invest,” Mr. Kumar said.

The event witnessed the participation of about one lakh people and delegates from 85 countries.

English Summary:

At the **Indian Maritime Week 2025** held in **Mumbai**, over **600 Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs)** worth **₹12 lakh crore** were signed, marking a major milestone in India’s maritime and port sector reforms.

The announcement was made by **Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal**, in the presence of **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**.

These MoUs span a wide range of sectors including **port development, indigenous shipbuilding, container manufacturing, green shipping, and port-led industrialisation** — reinforcing India’s ambition to become a **global maritime hub**.

Key Highlights:

Parameter	Details
Event	Indian Maritime Week 2025
Venue	Mumbai
MoUs Signed	Over 600
Total Investment Value	₹12 lakh crore
Organised By	Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways
Key Dignitaries	PM Narendra Modi, Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, Secretary T.K. Vijay Kumar

Sectoral Distribution of MoUs:

Sector	Share of Total MoUs	Focus Areas
Port Development & Modernisation	30%	Expansion, smart port infrastructure, logistics digitalisation
Sustainable Green Shipping & Green Ports	20%	Renewable energy use, carbon-neutral operations, electric vessels
Shipping & Shipbuilding	20%	Indigenous ship design, naval architecture, shipyard capacity
Port-led Industrialisation	20%	Coastal manufacturing, container hubs, SEZ development
Trade, Business & Skilling	10%	Maritime skill training, international collaboration, logistics efficiency

Economic & Strategic Significance:

- The MoUs are expected to:
 - Boost **employment** and **skill development** in coastal states.
 - Strengthen India’s position in **global maritime trade**.
 - Enhance **supply chain resilience** under the **PM Gati Shakti Master Plan**.
 - Encourage **Make in India** in shipbuilding and logistics manufacturing.

Quote:

“This will ultimately make India globally the most desirable, favourable investment destination,”
— *Sarbananda Sonowal, Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways*

Implementation Progress:

- **60% of the MoUs** signed at the previous Maritime Summit have already been executed or are under implementation.
- Of the current agreements:
 - Many have already **secured funding and commenced work**.
 - Several involve **public-private partnerships (PPP)** for long-term port projects.

Participation Overview:

- **Delegates:** 8,000+
- **Countries Represented:** 85
- **Global CEOs:** 11, representing divisions of maritime sectors such as:
 - Port operators
 - Dredging companies
 - Shipbuilding firms
 - Logistics and trade facilitators

Broader Vision – Maritime India Vision 2030 & Blue Economy:

- The MoUs align with India's **Maritime India Vision 2030** and the **Sagarmala Programme**.
- Key goals include:
 - Developing **modern port infrastructure**.
 - Promoting **coastal shipping and inland waterways**.
 - Reducing logistics costs by **25%** by 2030.
 - Achieving **carbon neutrality** in port operations.

Maritime Sector Challenges & Future Outlook:

Challenge	Solution under Maritime Vision
High logistics cost	Port automation and multimodal connectivity
Dependence on foreign vessels	Indigenous shipbuilding promotion
Port congestion	Container manufacturing and digital logistics
Environmental concerns	Green shipping and renewable port energy use

Hindi Summary (हिंदी सारांश):

भारतीय समुद्री सप्ताह 2025 (Indian Maritime Week 2025) में मुंबई में ₹12 लाख करोड़ से अधिक के 600 से अधिक समझौता ज्ञापन (MoUs) पर हस्ताक्षर किए गए।

- ये समझौते **पोर्ट विकास, हरित जहाजरानी, कंटेनर निर्माण और स्वदेशी जहाज निर्माण** जैसे क्षेत्रों में हुए।
- **60% पिछले समझौते पहले ही लागू किए जा चुके हैं।**
- यह भारत को **वैश्विक समुद्री व्यापार केंद्र** के रूप में स्थापित करने की दिशा में बड़ा कदम है।
- **प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी और केंद्रीय मंत्री सर्बानंद सोनोवाल** की उपस्थिति में कार्यक्रम हुआ।

Exam Relevance Table:

Topic	GS Paper	Relevance
Maritime Infrastructure	GS Paper 3	Port Development, Infrastructure, Blue Economy
Sagarmala Programme	GS Paper 3	Government Policy, Economic Growth
Green Shipping & Port Modernisation	GS Paper 3	Sustainable Development
Public-Private Partnerships (PPP)	GS Paper 2/3	Governance and Economic Reforms

UPSC Mains Practice Question:

"Discuss the significance of India's Maritime Vision 2030 in strengthening the country's blue economy and global trade competitiveness."
(250 words – GS Paper 3)



Roof gone: A house damaged by the hurricane in Crane Road, Black River, Jamaica, on Thursday. REUTERS

Powerful Hurricane Melissa upends life for Jamaicans

Agence France-Presse
ST. ANN

In the north coast parish of St. Ann, almost all residents are without power - and many of them woke up without a roof over their heads after Hurricane Melissa tore through Jamaica, downing trees, utility poles and anything in its path.

Fisherman George "Larry" Brown of the community of Priory said the morning was quiet on the day of the storm. "Just a little rain," the 68-year-old recalled.

But by 5 p.m. on Tuesday, the rain and wind gusts grew heavy and soon, he said, his roof peeled away. "I just heard a sound, and it just started to tear off," Mr. Brown recalled. He described Melissa as the worst he's ever experienced.

Hurricane Melissa smashed into Jamaica as a ferocious top-level storm, with sustained winds peaking at 185 miles (nearly 300 km) per hour while drenching the nation with torrential rain.

In fact, Hurricane Melissa tied the 1935 record for the most intense storm ever to make landfall, according to an AFP analysis of meteorological data - on par with the Labor Day Hurricane that devastated the Florida Keys 90 years ago.

Brown's neighbor Kayan Davis, a mother of three who said her roof lifted off sometime after 11 p.m., said she has been left temporarily homeless.

Marvin Thomas, another resident of Priory, suffered the same fate when a tree fell on his home around 8 p.m.

English Summary:

Hurricane Melissa, a **Category 5 tropical cyclone**, struck **Jamaica’s north coast**, particularly the **parish of St. Ann**, causing **widespread devastation**. The hurricane **knocked out power lines**, **uprooted trees**, **damaged homes**, and left many residents **homeless**.

With **sustained wind speeds of 185 miles per hour (nearly 300 km/h)**, it became **one of the most powerful storms in Jamaica’s history**, tying the record set in **1935** for the most intense storm to make landfall in the region.

Key Facts:

Parameter	Details
Name	Hurricane Melissa
Category	Category 5 (Top-level)
Location Affected	Jamaica (St. Ann, Priory, Black River, etc.)
Wind Speed	185 mph (~300 km/h)
Rainfall	Torrential rain; widespread flooding
Damage	Homes destroyed, power outages, trees uprooted, roofs blown off
Casualties/Displacement	Several families homeless; extent of fatalities unconfirmed
Historical Comparison	Matched 1935 Labor Day Hurricane (Florida Keys) intensity
Source	Agence France-Presse (AFP) report

Description of Events:

- **Early Calm:** The morning of the storm began quietly, with light rain reported.
- **Rapid Intensification:** By **5 p.m.**, wind speeds and rain escalated sharply. Roofs were torn off, trees uprooted, and homes destroyed.
- **Eyewitness Accounts:**
 - *Fisherman George “Larry” Brown* described the hurricane as the worst he’d ever seen.
 - *Kayan Davis*, a mother of three, was rendered **homeless** after her roof was blown off at night.
 - *Marvin Thomas*, another resident, was injured when a **tree fell** on his home.

Meteorological Context:

- **Hurricane Melissa** formed over the **Atlantic Ocean**, fueled by **warm sea surface temperatures** and **low vertical wind shear**—ideal conditions for cyclone intensification.
- It made **landfall in northern Jamaica**, releasing **massive rainfall** and wind damage before moving northwest.
- The storm’s characteristics were consistent with **climate-change-driven superstorms**, which are **gaining frequency and intensity** due to global warming.

Impact Summary:

Sector	Impact
Energy	Widespread power outages across St. Ann and adjoining parishes
Housing	Hundreds of homes destroyed or damaged
Transportation	Roads blocked due to fallen trees and debris
Livelihoods	Fishing and coastal communities severely hit
Emergency Services	Disaster response ongoing; rescue operations delayed due to road blockages

Environmental & Climatic Significance:

- **Link to Climate Change:**
Warmer ocean temperatures provide **more energy for cyclones**, increasing their **frequency and destructive capacity**.

- **Comparison with Past Storms:**
Similar to **Hurricane Gilbert (1988)** and **Labor Day Hurricane (1935)** — both Category 5 storms.
- **Future Risk:**
The **Caribbean** is becoming increasingly vulnerable to **superstorms** due to **rising sea temperatures** and **climate variability**.

Global Context:

- **Caribbean Vulnerability:**
The region faces annual risks from **Atlantic hurricane season (June–November)**.
- **Economic Losses:**
Jamaica's GDP faces repeated setbacks due to infrastructure and agricultural damage.
- **International Assistance Expected:**
UN agencies and Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) likely to coordinate relief efforts.

Disaster Management & Mitigation Learnings (UPSC Context):

Aspect	Learning
Early Warning Systems	Need for real-time satellite-based tracking and public alert systems.
Infrastructure Resilience	Build hurricane-proof shelters, underground power grids, and resilient housing.
Community Preparedness	Training in evacuation and disaster response.
Climate Adaptation	Strengthen policies under <i>Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR)</i> and <i>Paris Agreement</i> .

Hindi Summary (हिंदी सारांश):

हुरिकेन मेलिसा ने जमैका में भारी तबाही मचाई।

- इसकी रफ्तार **185 मील प्रति घंटा (लगभग 300 किमी/घं)** थी।
- **सेंट एग्न क्षेत्र** में हजारों लोग बिजली और घरों से वंचित हो गए।
- कई मकानों की छतें उड़ गईं और पेड़ उखड़ गए।
- यह तूफ़ान **1935 के सबसे शक्तिशाली तूफ़ान** की बराबरी करता है।
- यह घटना जलवायु परिवर्तन से बढ़ते **सुपरस्टॉर्म्स** का उदाहरण है।

Exam Relevance Table:

Topic	GS Paper	Relevance
Hurricanes / Tropical Cyclones	GS Paper 1	Climatology & Physical Geography
Disaster Management	GS Paper 3	Disaster Preparedness & Response
Climate Change Impact	GS Paper 3	Environmental Challenges
International Cooperation	GS Paper 2	Disaster Relief & Global Climate Frameworks

UPSC Mains Practice Question:

"The intensification of tropical cyclones like Hurricane Melissa highlights the growing threat of climate-induced disasters in the Caribbean. Examine the role of global warming in altering cyclone behavior and discuss policy measures needed for climate resilience."

(250 words – GS Paper 3)