

(GS PAPER 3 – INDIAN ECONOMY | GS PAPER 2 – SKILL DEVELOPMENT, HUMAN RESOURCES)
Unleashing India's Entrepreneurial Spirit

India's demographic dividend—with nearly 65% of its population under 35—offers immense potential for economic growth. To truly harness this advantage, India must move beyond job creation and foster a culture of *mass entrepreneurship*, in line with the Draft National Skill Policy 2025, thereby converting its youth bulge into an engine for inclusive and resilient growth.

Present State of India's Entrepreneurship Ecosystem

India is now the **world's 3rd largest startup ecosystem**, with 1.57 lakh DPIIT-recognised startups (2024). Tier-II and III cities contribute over 51% of this expansion. Sectors like **fintech** (87% adoption) and **AI-led innovation** are driving growth, while agripreneurs (DeHaat, KisanKonnnect) and the creator economy (2–2.5 million digital creators) showcase diversification beyond tech. State-level policies—like Delhi's ₹400 crore VC fund—are fostering “startup-ready” governance.

Key Challenges

- **Inadequate job creation:** India needs 90 million non-farm jobs by 2030 (McKinsey). Over 220 million NEET youth risk underutilisation.
- **Limited access to capital:** Marginalised groups, especially women, face collateral and credit history constraints. (79% of women Mudra loans are in Shishu category).
- **Infrastructure & digital divide:** Only 24% rural households have internet access (NSSO 2024).
- **Weak rural entrepreneurial support:** Ecosystems remain concentrated in urban hubs.
- **Low female labour participation:** LFPR at 31.7%, with only 15.9% in salaried jobs.
- **Shallow innovation-commercialisation linkages:** Despite patent growth (17x since 2014), utilisation remains low.
- **Cultural preference for secure jobs:** Entrepreneurship is still not socially embedded as a desirable career.

Key Government Initiatives

- **Startup India, SISFS, Fund of Funds for Startups (FFS), Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), SAMRIDH Scheme, MAARG Portal, BHASKAR Registry, Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP).**

Way Forward

- **National Entrepreneurship Mission:** Integrate Skill India & AIM with district-level presence linked to Aspirational District Programme.
- **'Entrepreneurship for Bharat':** Strengthen rural digital infra, ONDC, UPI-based commerce, and localised funding.
- **Targeted skilling:** AI-enabled multilingual training (BHASHINI), mentorship for PwDs, NEET youth.
- **Women-focused entrepreneurship:** Expand WEP, gender-specific skilling modules, showcase role models like Falguni Nayar.
- **Entrepreneurial curriculum:** Integrate practical training in universities; promote initiatives like *Jagriti Yatra*.
- **Exit & re-entry reforms:** Streamline insolvency and de-stigmatise failure.
- **Procurement policy reform:** Mandate startup participation in govt sourcing, especially in health and rural sectors.

Conclusion

India's path to *Viksit Bharat* hinges on transforming job seekers into job creators. By embedding entrepreneurship at the grassroots and empowering underserved groups, India can unleash an “Entrepreneurial Jan Andolan,” turning its demographic dividend into a driver of inclusive, innovation-led growth.

(GS PAPER 2 – GOVERNANCE | GS PAPER 3 – INTERNAL SECURITY)
Maharashtra Special Public Security Bill, 2024

The Maharashtra Legislature passed the **Maharashtra Special Public Security Bill, 2024**, aimed at countering ‘urban Naxalism’. The government argues that **over 60 Naxal frontal organisations operate in the State**, using urban safe houses to support Maoist cadres. Civil rights activists, however, allege the law is politically motivated and intended to suppress dissent.

Key Provisions

- **Targeting 'Urban Naxalism':** Seeks to curb support networks for Left Wing Extremists in cities.
- **Ban on Organisations:** Empowers govt. to declare organisations ‘illegal’ and extend bans indefinitely.
- **Suppression of Facts:** Allows withholding information in ‘public interest’.
- **Criminalisation of Expression:** Section 2(f) penalises speech, writings, gestures or signs which ‘interfere with public order’ or ‘cause concern’.
- **Exclusion of Lower Courts:** Jurisdiction removed from lower courts, restricting judicial remedies.
- **Protection for Officials:** Grants immunity to State officials acting in ‘good faith’.

Legislative Journey

- **First introduced:** July 2024 (Mahayuti govt.) in the monsoon session.
- **Reintroduced:** December 2024 (BJP-led govt.).
- **Scrutiny:** Joint committee received **12,500+ suggestions**, but only three ‘minor’ amendments made.
- **Passed:** July 2025 by voice vote; only **CPI(M)** opposed it formally.

- **Next Step:** Awaiting Governor's assent.

Comparison with Other States

- Maharashtra becomes the **fifth State** after **Chhattisgarh, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha** to enact such a law.
- Govt cites banning of **48 organisations** under similar laws elsewhere.
- Activists argue that these laws predate **UAPA**, questioning the need for duplication, especially as **Maharashtra reduced LWE to 2 districts using existing laws**.

Concerns Raised

- **Ambiguity & Overreach:** Vague definitions risk misuse against dissenters, farmers' bodies, student unions, civil rights groups.
- **Chilling Effect on Speech:** Criminalises criticism without requiring proof of intent or harm.
- **Due Process Violations:** Govt. can unilaterally ban organisations.
- **Judicial Access Curtailment:** Lack of lower court jurisdiction burdens individuals.
- **Political Misuse:** Alleged targeting of groups opposing BJP in 2024 elections.

Government's Stand

- Claims peaceful protests and journalism will remain unaffected.
- Asserts need to curb 'urban dens' aiding Naxals and plug legal gaps.

Way Forward

- **Judicial Review:** Potential court challenges on constitutional grounds (Art. 19 – Free Speech).
- **Balancing Security & Rights:** Safeguards needed to prevent misuse against democratic dissent.
- **Transparency:** Public disclosure of banned organisations to ensure accountability.

Conclusion:

While aimed at strengthening internal security, the Bill's sweeping powers risk undermining civil liberties and democratic opposition, necessitating robust safeguards and judicial scrutiny.

PRELIM FACTS

1. Veer Parivar Sahayata Yojana 2025

The **National Legal Services Authority (NALSA)** launched the **Veer Parivar Sahayata Yojana 2025**, a nationwide legal aid scheme dedicated to **soldiers, veterans, and their dependents**.

- **Objective:** It aims to provide **free legal aid, advice, and support** to **army and paramilitary personnel and their families**, acknowledging their unique service-related constraints.
 - It will enable **online application filing, video consultations, and dispute resolution through e-Lok Adalats and online mediation**.
- **Pan-India Reach:** The scheme is designed to operate **across all Indian states** ensuring **inclusive national coverage**.
- **Constitutional Basis:** It is rooted in **Article 39A** of the Constitution, ensuring **equal justice and legal aid**.
- **Legal Aid Infrastructure:** NALSA will set up **legal aid clinics** at the **district, state, and national levels**.

NALSA

About: NALSA is a statutory body established in **1995** under the **Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987**.

- It **monitors and evaluates legal aid programs**, ensuring **legal services** for eligible groups like **Women, Children, SC, ST, EWS, Industrial Workers, Persons with Disabilities, and Transgender Individuals**, as per **Section 12 of the Act**.

Tiered Structure: Legal Services Institutions have been established at **all levels**, ranging from **Taluk Courts to the Supreme Court**.

2. Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar' (MGMD) Initiative

Over 4.7 lakh villages have been culturally documented under the 'Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar' (MGMD) initiative, as informed by the Ministry of Culture in Parliament.

About Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar (MGMD) Initiative:

- **What it is?**
 - A nationwide cultural mapping project to document the **intangible cultural heritage** of Indian villages.
- **Launched in:** **June 2023**, under the **Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav** celebrations.
- **Aim:** To map, preserve, and digitally archive traditional knowledge systems, rituals, oral traditions, festivals, and local art forms across **6.5 lakh villages**.
- **Features:**
 - Implemented by **IGNCA**.
 - Cultural database of over **4.7 lakh villages** already created.
 - 360° video documentation of **750 villages**.

- Development of **MGMD Web Portal** as the **National Cultural Workplace (NCWP)**.
- Part of National Mission on Cultural Mapping.
- User-editable data, artist registrations, UICs, and link to welfare schemes.

About National Mission on Cultural Mapping (NMCM):

- **What it is?**
 - A flagship mission to **digitally map India's cultural ecosystem** and empower artist communities.
- **Launched in:** By the **Ministry of Culture**, Government of India.
- **Aim:**
 - Identify and promote **cultural assets**.
 - Create a **national database of artists and art forms**.
 - Foster rural development and **self-reliant village economies** via cultural industries.
- **Key Features:**
 - Creation of **National Digital Inventories**.
 - **Virtual Living Museum**, digital badges, and village travel passports.
 - **Cultural event uploads, artist branding**, and ranking via UIC.
 - Integration with **government welfare schemes**.

3. Exercise Divya Drishti

The Indian Army successfully conducted Exercise Divya Drishti in East Sikkim to test artificial intelligence (AI)-based battlefield awareness, real-time surveillance, and next-generation warfare technologies under high-altitude operational conditions.

About Exercise Divya Drishti:

- **What is Exercise Divya Drishti?**
 - A high-altitude technology demonstration by the Indian Army, aimed at validating AI-integrated surveillance, real-time decision-making, and sensor-to-shooter systems under realistic battlefield conditions.
- **Launched by:** Indian Army's Trishakti Corps.
- **Objectives:**
 - Test battlefield digitization tools under extreme Himalayan terrain.
 - Integrate AI sensors with communication systems for seamless data flow.
 - Validate UAV-drone-ground synergy in combat scenarios.
 - Advance doctrines on future warfare, aligning with Atmanirbhar Bharat and the Army's Decade of Transformation roadmap.
- **Features:**
 - **Realistic Deployment:** Ground-based platforms, drones, and UAVs simulated operational missions in East Sikkim.
 - **AI-Enabled Sensors:** Used to generate battlefield intelligence, map terrain, and enhance situational awareness in real time.
 - **Sensor-to-Shooter Linkage:** Enabled instant data transmission from surveillance devices to command centres and firepower units.
 - **Secured Communications:** Integrated networked communication channels ensured smooth relay of tactical data.
 - **Future-Ready Technologies:** Aligned with indigenous defence development under the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative.
- **Significance:**
 - **Boosts Tactical Readiness:** Prepares the Army for hybrid warfare across terrains — especially in Himalayan conflict zones.
 - **Supports Self-Reliance:** Promotes Make in India in defence tech, reducing dependency on imports.
 - **Strengthens Decision Speed:** Minimizes command lag through AI-driven situational assessment and instant responses.

4. Environment Protection (Management of Contaminated Sites) Rules, 2025

The Union Environment Ministry has notified the Environment Protection (Management of Contaminated Sites) Rules, 2025, offering India its first legal framework to scientifically identify, assess, and clean up chemically contaminated sites.

About Environment Protection (Management of Contaminated Sites) Rules, 2025:

- **What It Is?**
 - A comprehensive legal framework under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 to manage, assess, and remediate chemically contaminated sites across India.
- **Ministry:** Notified by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).

- **Objective:**
 - To establish a time-bound, legally binding mechanism for the identification, assessment, and remediation of contaminated sites caused by hazardous chemical and waste dumping, in line with the “Polluter Pays” principle and environmental health protection.
- **What is Contaminated Site?**
 - Sites where hazardous or chemical waste was dumped historically, causing long-term pollution of soil, water, or air. These include abandoned landfills, chemical spill zones, illegal waste sites, and defunct industrial areas.
- **Key Provisions:**
 - **Site Identification & Monitoring:**
 - District authorities must submit **biannual reports** on suspected contaminated sites.
 - State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs) or designated bodies must provide a **preliminary assessment within 90 days**.
 - **Final Confirmation & Remediation:**
 - Within **180 days**, sites must be fully evaluated and confirmed for contamination.
 - A **reference organisation** (expert body) prepares a **remediation plan**.
 - **Responsibility & Liability:**
 - SPCBs must identify the **polluter** within 90 days.
 - If untraceable or insolvent, the **Centre and States jointly bear cleanup costs**.
 - **Criminal liability** enforced under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (2023) if human/environmental harm is proven.
 - **Transparency & Enforcement:**
 - Mandatory creation of a **national inventory** of contaminated sites.
 - Public disclosure of cleanup status and annual audits required.
 - **Significance for Environmental Governance:**
 - Fills critical policy vacuum by giving statutory teeth to CPCB’s contaminated site list.
 - Operationalizes “Polluter Pays” principle with strict timelines.
 - Aligns India with UN SDG 6 (clean water), SDG 3 (health), and SDG 12 (responsible consumption & waste).

5. International Tiger Day 2025

India is celebrating International Tiger Day 2025 on July 29, highlighting its achievement of housing 75% of the world’s wild tigers across 58 reserves.

About International Tiger Day 2025:

- **What is it?**
 - A global awareness day observed annually on **July 29**, aiming to raise awareness about tiger protection and habitat conservation.
- **Established in: 2010**, during the *Petersburg Tiger Summit* in Russia, with participation from **13 tiger-range countries**, including India.
- **Key Features**
 - Platform to highlight threats like habitat loss, poaching, and human-wildlife conflict.
 - Monitors progress on the **Tx2 Goal**—to double wild tiger populations by 2022.
 - Celebrates efforts made by countries in increasing tiger numbers and protecting forests.
- **India’s Tiger Conservation Journey:**
 - **Project Tiger (Launched in 1973):**
 - Started with **9 reserves**, expanded to **58 tiger reserves**.
 - Governed by the **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)**.
 - Reserves now cover **2% of India’s land area**.
- **Major Achievements**
 - **Doubled tiger population:** From ~1,400 in 2006 to **3,682 in 2024**.
 - Achieved the global **Tx2 target** ahead of schedule.
 - Tigers occupy **138,200 sq. km** of forest shared with ~60 million people.
- **Ecological Significance:**
 - Tigers regulate herbivore populations, preserving forest balance.
 - Healthy tiger habitats support biodiversity, improve **climate resilience**, and act as **carbon sinks**.
 - Forests act as water catchments, helping nearby agriculture and communities.
- **India’s Role in Global Conservation**
 - Contributes **75% of world’s tiger population**, while holding only **18% of global tiger habitat**.

- India's model, combining scientific management, legal protection, and community participation, is **emulated by other tiger-range nations**.

ANSWER WRITING

Q. The recently signed India–UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA) marks a turning point in India's trade diplomacy. Examine its potential economic benefits for India and how it reflects the country's evolving trade posture for future FTAs? (10 Marks, 150 words)

The India–UK FTA signals a decisive shift in India's trade playbook from defensive multilateralism to assertive, interest-linked bilateralism. The deal secures tariff-free entry for 99% of Indian exports, ring-fences politically sensitive agriculture, and hardwires mobility and services gains showcasing a template India is likely to take to forthcoming negotiations with the U.S., EU and others.

Potential economic benefits for India

- **Access to the UK market:** Indian firms gain a clear tariff edge over competitors such as China and Vietnam.
Eg: Analysts expect a **30–40% rise in exports in five years**, especially benefiting MSMEs in **Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra**.
- **Sectoral approach:** Labour-intensive and tech-forward sectors can deepen market share.
Eg: Textiles, jewellery, EVs, marine products, generics get immediate tariff advantages.
- **Services & mobility gains:** Easing professional movement and lowering friction costs directly support India's services-led growth.
Eg: Short-term visas for yoga teachers, chefs, tech workers are simplified; Indian professionals get social-security payment exemptions.
- **MSME competitiveness and supply-chain anchoring:** Preferential tariffs plus predictable rules make it easier to integrate into UK/EU supply chains.
Eg: Industry estimates point to MSMEs as the biggest winners, translating directly into on-ground job creation.
- **A 'living document' structure:** The FTA's design allows iterative tariff revisions and sectoral additions as capacities rise.
Eg: The agreement is "**cautious, layered, incremental**", built to **expand and revise** over time.

How the FTA reflects India's evolving trade posture for future FTAs

- **Clear red lines on agriculture:** India will liberalise where it is competitive, and shield politically sensitive sectors.
Eg: **Agriculture was declared non-negotiable** and kept out "**open on industry, cautious on food**" is the new template.
- **Issue-linked bargaining:** India trades market access for mobility, services, and strategic safeguards.
Eg: The UK deal eases visas & social security norms while respecting India's farmer protection stance.
- **Assertive sovereignty over digital and strategic sectors:** India won't concede easily on data, digital markets, or critical supply chains.
- **Geopolitical leverage:** India uses timing, partner compulsions, and its own market power to negotiate from strength.
- **From aid-seeking to rule-setting:** India frames FTAs as mutual-interest instruments, not ideological commitments to "free trade".
- **Template signaling to other partners:** India is open to phased, modular deals but will walk away if core interests are threatened.
- **Perimeter-building over bloc-following:** India is constructing bespoke bilateral pathways that protect sovereignty while expanding market access.
Eg: Even as the **U.S. signs deals with Vietnam, Japan, Indonesia**, India **charts its own path** anchored in strategic autonomy.

Conclusion

The India–UK FTA is **more than tariff arithmetic**, it is a **strategic assertion of India's new trade doctrine: targeted openness, sectoral pragmatism, mobility gains, and firm red lines on food and digital sovereignty**. As India turns this approach towards the U.S., EU, and ASEAN, the deal stands as both **a lever for economic expansion** and **a statement of negotiating confidence** on the global trade stage.

MCQ

- Which of the following statements about the **Veer Parivar Sahayata Yojana 2025** is/are correct?
 - It is launched by the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) to provide free legal aid to armed forces personnel, veterans, and their families.
 - It is implemented under Article 39A of the Constitution, which ensures equal justice and legal aid.
- It enables online dispute resolution through e-Lok Adalats and video consultations.
Select the correct answer using the code given below:
 - 1 and 2 only
 - 2 and 3 only
 - 1 and 3 only
 - 1, 2 and 3

2. The Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar (MGMD) Initiative, recently seen in news, is primarily aimed at:
 - (a) Providing rural employment and skill development in artisan communities.
 - (b) Mapping and digitally archiving the cultural heritage of Indian villages.**
 - (c) Promoting rural tourism under the Ministry of Tourism.
 - (d) Documenting agricultural practices and rural livelihoods for research.
3. Which of the following are features of the National Mission on Cultural Mapping (NMCM)?
 1. Creation of a digital inventory of cultural assets.
 2. Development of a Virtual Living Museum.
 3. Integration of cultural data with welfare schemes for artists.
 Select the correct answer using the code given below:
 - (a) 1 only
 - (b) 1 and 2 only**
 - (c) 2 and 3 only
 - (d) 1, 2 and 3
4. In the context of the Indian Army, **Exercise Divya Drishti** recently conducted in East Sikkim focused on:
 - (a) High-altitude infantry combat and survival training.
 - (b) Testing AI-enabled battlefield awareness and sensor-to-shooter systems.**
 - (c) Mountain engineering and infrastructure building in border areas.
 - (d) Joint Indo-Nepal defence cooperation in Himalayan terrain.
5. Under the Environment Protection (Management of Contaminated Sites) Rules, 2025, which of the following provisions are correct?
 1. State Pollution Control Boards must identify and confirm contaminated sites within 180 days.
 2. If the polluter is untraceable, the Centre and States jointly bear cleanup costs.
 3. Criminal liability is enforced under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (2023) if harm is proven.
 Select the correct answer using the code below:
 - (a) 1 only
 - (b) 1 and 2 only
 - (c) 2 and 3 only
 - (d) 1, 2 and 3**
6. Consider the following statements about India's Tiger Conservation Efforts:
 1. Project Tiger was launched in 1973 with 9 reserves and is governed by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA).
 2. India achieved the Tx2 goal of doubling tiger numbers ahead of the 2022 deadline.
 3. Tiger reserves cover over 10% of India's land area.
 Which of the above is/are correct?
 - (a) 1 and 2 only**
 - (b) 2 and 3 only
 - (c) 1 only
 - (d) 1, 2 and 3
7. Consider the following statements about India's entrepreneurial ecosystem:
 1. India is the world's 3rd largest startup ecosystem, with over 1.5 lakh DPIIT-recognised startups.
 2. Over 70% of Indian startups are concentrated in Tier-I cities.
 3. The Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) is an initiative under the Atal Innovation Mission (AIM).
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - A. 1 only
 - B. 1 and 2 only
 - C. 1 and 3 only**
 - D. 2 and 3 only
8. The Draft National Skill Policy 2025 primarily focuses on:
 - A. Establishing new ITIs and polytechnic colleges in each district
 - B. Promoting an entrepreneurship-driven economy and mass skilling**
 - C. Introducing a universal employment guarantee programme
 - D. Reserving 50% of startup funds for rural entrepreneurs
9. With reference to the Maharashtra Special Public Security Bill, 2024, consider the following provisions:
 1. It empowers the State Government to declare organisations 'illegal' and extend bans indefinitely.
 2. It removes the jurisdiction of lower courts in hearing related cases.
 3. It criminalises expressions (speech, writings, gestures) that are deemed to interfere with public order.
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - A. 1 and 2 only
 - B. 2 only
 - C. 1, 2 and 3**
 - D. 1 and 3 only
10. Which of the following States, apart from Maharashtra, have enacted laws targeting 'urban Naxalism'?
 1. Telangana
 2. Andhra Pradesh
 3. Chhattisgarh
 4. Jharkhand
 5. Odisha
 - A. 1, 2 and 3 only
 - B. 1, 2, 3 and 5 only**
 - C. 2, 3, 4 and 5 only
 - D. 1, 2, 4 and 5 only