





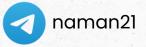
Daily **CURRENT AFFAIRS**

May 17th, 2025









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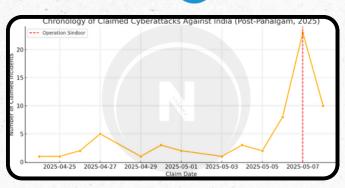


The Expansive 'New Normal': India's Strategic Shift After Pahalgam

Operation Sindoor is suspended, and while the ceasefire did get underway rather precariously on Saturday night (May 10), it appears to be holding. On May 12, the two **Director Generals of Military Operations** (**DGMO**) of India and Pakistan spoke for a second time and talked of further deescalatory steps to draw down troops from the forward areas built up over the past few weeks.



India's reaction after Pahalgam was not merely a matter of retaliating immediately; it was a demonstration of resolve, deterrence, and strategic readjustment. The 88-hour gap between the attack and the subsequent ceasefire was characterised by rapid military action, calibrated diplomacy, and an explicit effort at re-establishing conventional and political deterrence. This article analyses the strategic outlines, regional and international implications, and the characteristics of this new 'new normal'.



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The Timeline and Tactics: A Calibrated Retaliation

In the wake of the Pahalgam attack, New Delhi's decision matrix swiftly pivoted from restraint to response. Measures like suspending bilateral trade, reducing diplomatic engagement, halting the Indus Waters Treaty, and revoking visas were immediate signals of intent. But these, by design, were preparatory steps to support a larger, kinetic response, Operation Sindoor, launched in the early hours of May 7. Nine terror targets in Pakistan were hit with pinpoint accuracy through the use of sophisticated standoff weaponry such as SCALP, BrahMos, and Spice 2000 missiles.

- The targets belonged to Pakistanbased terror organisations Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed, and Hizb-ul-Mujahideen.
- The Indian military explicitly defined the operation's scope: against terrorism, not the Pakistani military or the civilians.
- This was communicated directly to Pakistan's Director General of Military Operations (DGMO), emphasising that escalation would be countered by a proportionate response under India's quid pro quo plus policy.



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Pakistan's Response and Attempted Deterrence

Confronted by the legacy of Operation Sindoor, Pakistan was left in denial and retaliatory compulsion. Admitting to six of the nine attacks, **Pakistan tried to play down the destruction** and instead bragged about shooting down several Indian aircraft, denials firmly rejected by India.



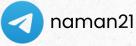
- Pakistan's retaliatory military response was through drone incursions, missile attacks, and airspace provocations testing India's air defence lines at 36 points along the border. India's return response was immediate, attacking Pakistani air bases and air defence installations, but measured so as not to provoke civilian losses and a larger war.
- Pakistan ultimately made its air strikes, destroying 26 Indian targets on May 9-10. India reported minimal damage but replied in sheer force, seeking out strategic military installations well inside Pakistan. The ferocity of this battle called for quick diplomatic action, particularly with the intervention of the United States to push for de-escalation.

Role of the Global Diplomacy

- It was initially shy, but the U.S. government, led by President Donald Trump and Vice President
 J.D. Vance, was inclined towards a non-interventionist approach. But when hints of quick escalation were seen, the U.S. shifted gears.
- The announcement of Pakistan's National Command Authority (NCA) meeting evoked nuclear tensions that necessitated urgent approaches by U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio to Indian as well as Pakistani leadership.
- Significantly, President Trump's public declaration of the ceasefire preceded official comments, suggesting Washington's role behind the scenes. This is in line with a pattern that has repeated itself where America has traditionally played a low-key but pivotal role in diffusing India-Pakistan crises it Kargil in 1999, Operation Parakram in 2001-02, or Balakot in 2019.
- But in line with previous custom, this was not mediation but facilitation, prompted by international interests in regional stability. The moral of the story is clear: the more powerful India's conventional and economic influence, the less it will require outside balancing to deal with Pakistan.

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The Shift in Strategy: From Surgical Strikes to Strategic Communication

- Given that both India and Pakistan emerged as overt nuclear powers in 1998, Pakistan has habitually used the threat of nuclear use early on as a deterrent to dissuade Indian conventional counterattacks.
- For decades, this "nuclear overhang" had successfully limited India's kinetic responses to terrorist acts. But the deterrence calculus has been increasingly changing.
- 2016 Surgical Strikes: Established a tactical cross-border response.
- 2019 Balakot Air Strike: Created greater space for action through aerial power and deep penetration.
- 2025 Operation Sindoor: Further stretched India's operational canvas, striking multiple targets in Pakistan, indicating a disregard for the artificial limitations brought about by nuclear posturing.

Characteristics of the 'New Normal': A Strategic Redefinition

Proactive Deterrence: Instead of waiting for the next strike, India is developing the capacity and political will to proactively deter and, if necessary, retaliate early and with high precision.

Expanded Target Spectrum: India's kinetic actions are no longer geographically limited to the Line of Control (LoC). The whole of Pakistan— Skardu to Jacobabad—is now part of India's strategic thinking.

Network-Centric Warfare:

Employment of manned-unmanned integration, satellite reconnaissance, and stand-off precision-guided munitions marks a shift toward network-centric warfare, facilitating high-impact, low-footprint operations. **Integrated Diplomacy:** India's diplomatic efforts have kept pace with its military reaction. Strategic diplomatic outreach in capitals guaranteed that the global discourse was still in India's interest, even during military escalation.

• **Conventional Superiority:** That India can conduct such operations repeatedly without actual escalation into total war indicates increasing conventional superiority a key factor in countering nuclear blackmail.

Challenges and the Way Forward

Though the 'new normal' has a potent precedent, maintaining it demands institutional and structural improvements:

- Intelligence Reforms: The Pahalgam attack exposed intelligence loopholes. A complete shake-up in domestic intel, HUMINT (human intelligence), and inter-agency coordination is essential.
- Force Modernisation: India needs to invest in air defence suppression, electronic warfare, and AI-based combat platforms to sustain the advantage in future wars.
- Strategic Communications: Public communications, both local and global, need to be coherent, consistent, and credible. The communication post-Sindoor has been tightly scripted as a template for future emergencies.



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There has to be integrated crossborder efforts backed by robust internal counter-terrorism efforts within Jammu & Kashmir and other affected areas.

Conclusion

 The Operation Sindoor and India's reply to the Pahalgam attack are the beginnings of a new era in which India no longer lets terrorism become a cost-free activity for its enemies. The large 'new normal' is not merely a response doctrine; it is a doctrine of deterrence.

Q. About India's strategic response following the Pahalgam attack in 2025, consider the following statements:

- 1. Operation Sindoor marked the first instance where India used kinetic force across the international border after the Kargil conflict.
- 2. The Indian government officially stated that its strikes targeted both terrorist camps and Pakistani military establishments.
- 3. The strike used precision-guided weapons such as SCALP and BrahMos missiles.
- 4. The response was carried out under India's 'Quid Pro Quo Plus' policy.

Which of the above statements are correct?

A. 1, 2, and 3 B. 1, 3, and 4 C. 2 and 4 only D. 3 and 4 only

Correct Answer: B. 1, 3, and 4



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Explanation:

• Statement 1 is correct: Operation Sindoor is part of the expanding kinetic options India has taken across the LoC and international border post-Balakot.

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- Statement 2 is incorrect: India specifically declared the operation was not targeting the Pakistani military or civilians, only terrorist infrastructure.
- Statements 3 and 4 are correct: Advanced weapons like SCALP, BrahMos, and Spice 2000 were used, and the policy framework was "Quid Pro Quo Plus".

Q. Discuss the strategic implications of Operation Sindoor and the emergence of a 'new normal' in India's counter-terrorism doctrine. In your view, how does this reflect a transformation in India's conventional and diplomatic posture in the subcontinent post-Pahalgam attack?

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Nutrition as Empowerment: The ingredient to turn around nutrition outcomes

Introduction: A Hunger Beyond Food

India's huge free foodgrain program for 800 million people is one of the world's largest food security initiatives. Still, even when we appreciate its scope and intentions, the endurance of hunger and malnutrition, especially among women and girls, is a serious contradiction. Despite a network of continuous economic development and welfare schemes, India's nutrition maps reflect deep inequalities by gender. There is an unpleasant truth at the heart of this challenge: malnutrition in India is

not only a health problem, but a structural and gender injustice. This is the result of uneven power, tangled norms and systemic errors that push women during the nutrition pyramid.



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- Fifty-seven per cent of Indian women (ages 15–forty nine) are anaemic, compared to just 26% of men.
- Nearly 1 in 5 women is underweight. Anaemia in girls has expanded, now not decreased, from 50% to 57% between NFHS-4 and NFHS-5.
- Half of Indian women lack autonomy in spending their earnings, impacting dietary alternatives and health decisions. These data endorse that gender is not a marginal variable's far central to India's vitamins crisis.

POSHAN Abhiyaan

- Launched in 2018, the Prime Minister's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nourishment (POSHAN Abhiyaan) changed into estimated as India's flagship programme to fight malnutrition.
- Focused on pregnant girls, lactating moms, adolescent girls, and youngsters below six, the project aimed to make India "malnutrition-unfastened" using 2022. It has been seen that developed into POSHAN 2.0, combining in advance schemes like ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services) and imparting a budget of ₹24,000 crore in 2022–23.

पोषण अभियान अंतर्गत पोषण वाटिका का निर्माण

बीजाएर (प्रखर)) महिला एवं बाल विकास विभाग द्वारा पोपण अभियाल अन्ततंति सितम्बर माह में राष्ट्रीय पोपण भाह का आयोजन किया जा रहा है। पोपण अभियान को जनअंदोलन कानते के लिए कलेक्टर महोदय के निर्देगन्सार इसे अन्य विभागा के साथ अभिसरण भी किया जा करा है। इस दौरान पूरे सितम्बर माह में अतीदवस अत्पा अलग गतिविधियों का आयोखन उपनिक्ष निभाग द्वारा का आयोखन उपनिक्ष निभाग द्वारा जागनबाडी केन्द्रों म मुंगा, कटहल, एवं सामुदायिक भूमि पर पीछिक सब्जियों एवं फलतरा पीपो करो रोप का तेरिक मागव से किया गया है तिथा राम के अधिकती द्वारा औ रमेश मरकाम द्वारा दवा यो आगंतवाडी केन्द्री म वाहार स्वय भी आगंतवाडी केन्द्री म वाहार स्वय भी आगंतवाडी केन्द्री म वाहार स्वय भी आगंतवाडी केन्द्री म वाहार क्या भी आगंतवाडी केन्द्री म वाहार स्वय भी आगंतवाडी केन्द्री म वाहार स्वय भी आगंतवाडी केन्द्री म वाहार स्वय भी आगंतवाडी केन्द्री म

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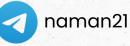


तिर्धायां इन्हों के विवान केन्द्र द्वारा महिला कुएको का है, कृषि सभाव विकास कर्ज्यम का आयोजन या द्वारा भी किया गया है, इस दौरान कृषि सलिव्यां गया कि आस सभी अपने वाडोंयों में करिपे खां देवां से करी का मार्किय्याद्वा का निर्याधत करहरल, बारो मास उत्पादन कर अपिक लाभ द सकते है, इसके लिए हम आपको विभाग समय समय पर सभी अच्छा ने किया जाता स्परकाम जुदि प्रशिक्षण कर ससरव भवता किया जाता है, रौग का मार्ग्री का परीक्षण कर ससरव भवता के यि

ो का समूहों को साग सब्बी का मिनी वि जिवा भी उप्तल्ध कराया गया है। है जि कुर्दा आप अपने बादिवों में लगा सबते वहीं आप अपने पर में दूसका उपयोग का तों में पोषण बुक्त आहार का सेवन किना सिंत सबता है। पोषण अपियान के ता रामता कुप्रोषण बचा है जीर इसे किने पोषि समता कुप्रोषण बचा है जीर इसे किने पोषि समता कुर्दा स्व में बचा की माई एवं कुपेय सम को जड़ से मिटने के लिए सभी रका से को जड़ से मिटने के लिए सभी रका संकलर दिला।







Only 69% of the price range had been utilised by December 2022.

- Anaemia and undernutrition remain stubbornly excessive, mainly among women.
- Clearly, the issue isn't always pretty much investment, but about execution, cultural norms, and structural inequalities.

Limited Reach, Good Intentions

- While the POSHAN framework has made people aware, several structural issues cap its potential: The anganwadis suffer from underfunding, understaffing, and a lack of community interaction.
- Nutrition activities tend to be passively received rather than being actively linked with livelihood or empowerment programs.
- Behaviour change communication (BCC) is insufficient if women lack the means to buy or access nutritious food.

Structural and Social Barriers

- In many Indian households, girls and ladies eat last and least. This isn't simply symbolic, it's far structural. Cultural Norms and Household Dynamic.
- In patriarchal families, girls' wishes are deprioritised. Food distribution reflects electricity: elders and guys devour first; women and girls frequently get leftovers.

- Lack of Decision-Making Power; NFHS-5 data suggests 49 % of women lack manipulate over spending their earnings. Financial dependence reduces their capability to demand or get right of entry to nutritious food.
- Invisibility of Women's Labour: Women regularly work in the unpaid or casual sectors. Their financial contribution is undervalued, reinforcing the belief that they may be less deserving of family support.

Empowerment as a nutrition policy

 Globally and in India, research continuously indicates that women's empowerment is directly correlated with better nutrition results for themselves and their families.

Evidence-based insight: Work on Nobel Prize winner Esther Duflo proves that the income in women's income is spent more on health and nutrition.

 A region's study of low-income Indian families found that women controlled finances low. Thus, economic empowerment is not a priority - it is fundamental to nutrition results.

Labour, Income, and the Power to Choose

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• While India's lady labour force participation (FLFP) rose from 23% (2017-18) to 33% (2021-22), the exceptional of employment remains a problem: 95% of working women are in casual, irregular, or unpaid work. Only 5% preserve salaried jobs.



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• Self-employed women earn fiftythree % much less than men in comparable roles. This suggests a form of "operating poverty" where girls can be hired but continue to be economically disempowered, with little impact on over family choices or nutrients.



Recommendations: Alignment with Livelihood

Programmes: Nutrition initiatives need to harmonise with skill development and job schemes such as the NRLM (National Rural Livelihoods Mission). Anganwadis can be "nutrition and empowerment centres" providing hot meals, medical check-ups, and financial awareness classes under one roof.

Gender-Responsive Budgeting:

Dedicate funds for women's nutrition and empowerment in the union and state budgets. Ensure improved utilisation of funds through decentralised planning and community accountability measures.

Highlight

 POSHAN Abhiyaan India's 2018 flagship nutrition mission; now merged as POSHAN 2.0. Emphasis on women, children, and adolescent girls.

- NFHS-5 Data 57% of women (15–49 yrs) are anaemic; 1 in 5 are underweight; 49% don't have control over expenditures. Funding Issue ₹24,000 crore funds allocated in 2022-23, but used only 69%. Implementation gap persists.
- FLFP: Increased to 33% (2021–22), but only 5% in formal salaried employment. Most earn much less than their male counterparts.
- **Policy Convergence:** Nutrition has to converge with employment schemes (NRLM), financial inclusion, and health services.
- **Anganwadi Reform:** Must be strengthened as convergence centres providing nutrition, training, and financial literacy.
- Recommendations: Empowermentoriented monitoring targets, gender budgeting, digital technologies, and women-led selfhelp groups.



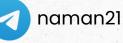
Conclusion

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India will not solve malnutrition merely by handing out more food. The struggle has to target the invisible hunger of disempowerment.



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Women are not only victims of malnutrition, but also its solution. When the woman is empowered, well-nourished, and respected, not only does she do well herself, but she acts as a pillar to her children, community, and country. Nutrition, thus, needs to be reframed not as a food security issue, but as a gender justice imperative.

Q. Which of the following best captures the central argument of the article "Nutrition as Empowerment: The ingredient to turn around nutrition outcomes"?

A. Nutritional inequality in India stems primarily from poor infrastructure and underfunded welfare schemes that fail to provide enough food.

B. The persistence of malnutrition in India, especially among women, is largely due to poverty and lack of food availability in rural areas.

C. India's battle against malnutrition requires a shift from calorie-based food distribution to a genderempowerment-based approach, where nutrition policy is integrated with women's economic and social agency.

D. Malnutrition can be eliminated through behavioural change, communication and targeted supplementation programmes under schemes like POSHAN Abhiyaan.

Correct Answer: C Explanation:

• Option A: Incorrect: The article acknowledges underfunding and implementation issues but argues these are not the primary cause; it highlights structural and gendered inequalities. • **Option B: Incorrect:** Poverty is a factor, but the article emphasises disempowerment, not scarcity of food alone.

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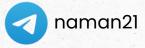
- Option C: Correct: This captures the core thesis: that nutrition must be reframed as a gender justice issue, and empowerment (income, decision-making power, autonomy) is integral to improving nutritional outcomes.
- **Option D: Incorrect:** While behaviour change and POSHAN are mentioned, the article criticises their limited effectiveness without empowerment and structural reform.

Q."Nutrition in India is not just a matter of food security, but a deeper issue of gender justice." In the context of POSHAN Abhiyaan and NFHS-5 findings, critically examine the link between women's empowerment and nutritional outcomes. Suggest policy measures to make India's nutrition strategy more gender-responsive.

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India's Forest Rights Act stands apart from exclusionary laws globally

Throughout the world, forest conservation has, in many cases, been at the expense of the very humans who have cared for forests for centuries, native groups. In sharp contrast, India's Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional **Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 c**olloquially referred to as the **Forest Rights Act (FRA)** has turned out to be a progressive criminal model that acknowledges the rights of such groups and empowers them to protect and regulate wooded land ecosystems.



In an era when global conservation policy increasingly ignores exclusionary "citadel" styles, India's approach, based on democratic decentralisation and social justice, represents an inclusive, environmentally responsible alternative. This article examines the history, structure, meaning, and implications of the FRA, comparing it with global trends in conservation law, specifically those which disalienate indigenous peoples and **locality-based groups (IPLCs).**

History

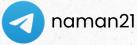
- Conservation science, formed via colonial and Eurocentric paradigms, historically viewed nature as a pristine realm break away human habitation. This angle gave upward push to the castle conservation model, in which huge tracts of biodiversity-rich land had been declared blanketed regions beneath state control, frequently by means of displacing IPLCs who had lived sustainably in those areas for generations.
- From Africa to South America, the results were intense. Researchers estimate that 10–20 million humans worldwide have been displaced within the call of conservation. Communities such as the Masai and Ogiek in Kenya, the Batwa in Uganda, and the Ashaninka in Peru have lost get right of entry to to ancestral lands, livelihoods, and cultural continuity.
- Despite the growing
- acknowledgement of IPLCs' roles in maintaining biodiversity, many modern-day conservation techniques along with the "30 through 30" intention beneath the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) preserve to prioritise land safety over people's rights, posing widespread threats to indigenous autonomy and welfare.

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India's Legal Response: Conservation with Community at the Centre

- India, domestic to one of the world's largest indigenous populations (around 104 million Adivasis as per the 2011 Census), has experienced similar historical injustices under colonial and post-colonial conservation regimes.
- The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 and projects like Project Tiger (1973) institutionalised the included location model, resulting in mass displacements. As of 2025, India has over 1, a hundred blanketed regions and fifty-eight tiger reserves, with specialists estimating over 600,000 people displaced by such efforts.



The passage of the Forest Rights Act in 2006 marked a paradigm shift. For the first time, forest governance became legally related to the recognition of customary rights and the decentralised control of natural resources via gram sabhas (village assemblies).

International Recognition and Frameworks

- Since the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 1992, global our bodies have slowly begun acknowledging the significance of IPLCs. Article 8(j) of the CBD requires the protection of indigenous knowledge and practices relevant to biodiversity.
- The UN Declaration at the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) in addition affirms the rights of indigenous communities to cultural autonomy and land.
- India, though no longer officially the usage of the time "indigenous" in domestic legislation, has included key ideas of these contraptions via its Constitution and legal guidelines, just like the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA) and the FRA.
- Importantly, throughout the CBD's COP-sixteen summit in 2024, a permanent subsidiary body for IPLCs was established, signalling a stronger institutional push for inclusive conservation. However, the on-floor implementation of these international beliefs remains inconsistent, specifically in nations where State and company pastimes hold to dominate resource governance.



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The FRA: A Legal Milestone in Conservation

- The FRA recognises thirteen categories of rights for woodlandliving groups, of which stand out within the context of biodiversity conservation: Right to protect, regenerate, or manipulate community woodland assets traditionally conserved for sustainable use.
- Right of get right of entry to biodiversity and community intellectual property, encompassing conventional understanding systems and cultural practices. These rights are not simply symbolic; they are enforceable and are network-degree institutions at the heart of decisionmaking, without delay through the dominant top-down conservation models.
- Additionally, the Act addresses

 ancient injustices" devoted towards
 wooded area dwellers. The FRA thus
 inverts the dominant narrative: in
 preference to seeing groups as
 threats to biodiversity, it views them
 as crucial partners in conservation.

International Recognition and Frameworks

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The Way Forward: Harmonising Legal Frameworks

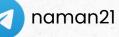
• India is at a crossroads. With visionary laws like the FRA and worldwide momentum towards inclusive conservation, it has a unique opportunity to redefine biodiversity governance globally.

To recognise this imaginative and prescient, FRA need to become the principal pillar of India's biodiversity coverage, no longer a supplementary framework.

- All conservation measures (BDA, NBSAPs, OECMs) need to be aligned with FRA provisions, specifically regarding gram sabha consent and rights recognition.
- Capacity-building and legal literacy amongst woodland-living communities ought to be prioritised to ensure powerful participation.
- Integrated institutional mechanisms concerning MoEFCC, MoTA, State Forest Departments, and neighborhood bodies need to be created to avoid fragmented governance.
- Monitoring and complaint redressal systems should be strengthened to guard communities from rights violations and exploitative practices.

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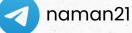
Conclusion

India's Forest Rights Act is not just a domestic statute; it is a global statement. It affirms that conservation and community are not opposites, but allies. It breaks the mould of fortress conservation by grounding forest protection in justice, democracy, and indigenous knowledge.

Q. India's Forest Rights Act, 2006, stands in contrast to exclusionary global conservation models by placing communities at the heart of biodiversity governance." Discuss the significance of the FRA in the context of global conservation trends and highlight the challenges in its implementation.

Q. Consider the following statements regarding India's Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006 and its distinction from exclusionary global conservation laws:

- 1. The FRA uniquely establishes gram sabhas as the sole statutory authority for approving biodiversity conservation plans, overriding all other forest-related legislation, including the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
- 2. Unlike the "fortress conservation model" globally, the FRA incorporates the principle of prior informed consent from local communities before any biodiversity heritage site or conservation area is declared.
- 3. India's recognition of forest dwellers' rights under the FRA aligns domestically with international mandates under Article 8(j) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), despite not recognising the term "indigenous" in legal parlance.
- 4. The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) endorses the FRA model explicitly as a best practice in implementing the '30 by 30' target.



Which of the above statements is/are correct?

A. 1 and 2 only B. 2 and 3 only C. 3 only D. 1, 2, and 4 only

Answer: B. 2 and 3 only

Explanation:

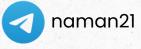
- Statement 1 is incorrect: While the FRA does empower gram sabhas significantly, it does not override all other forest-related legislation, especially not the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. There is legal tension between the FRA and other conservation laws, and harmonisation is still a work in progress.
- Statement 2 is correct: The principle of prior informed consent before declaring biodiversity heritage sites is advocated under FRA implementation, as reiterated by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
- **Statement 3 is correct:** India does not use the term "indigenous" in its laws but aligns with the spirit of Article 8(j) of the CBD through the FRA and constitutional provisions like PESA.
- Statement 4 is incorrect: The KMGBF does not explicitly endorse the FRA model. While it emphasises the inclusion of IPLCs and traditional knowledge, it does not refer to specific national laws like the FRA.



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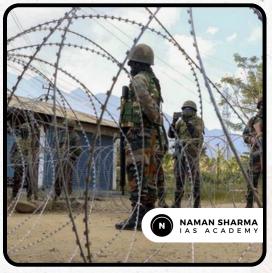






The Paradox of the Approach to the Manipur Issue

Manipur, a northeastern kingdom in India, has been embroiled in ethnic violence on account that May 3, 2023. The battle frequently involves the Meitei community, predominantly dwelling in the Imphal Valley, and the Kuki-Zo tribal groups from the surrounding hills.



The instant cause turned into a legal circulate to furnish Scheduled Tribe status to the Meitei community, which brought about substantial protests and subsequent clashes.

- Over time, the violence has escalated, resulting in significant loss of life, great displacement, and a humanitarian disaster that has largely been overlooked by the government.
- Despite over two years of escalating violence in Manipur, resulting in more than 250 deaths and the displacement of over 60,000 individuals, the government's reaction remains insufficient and largely symbolic.

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 This disparity in disaster control underscores a troubling hierarchy in India's countrywide protection priorities.

Historical and strategic disruption

- The roots of this neglect lie in the historical approach northeast of New Delhi; A security-first mentality and an undercurrent of geopolitically indifferent dominance dominated.
- Unlike Kashmir, which is strategically important due to its closeness with both Pakistan and China, Manipur is not an immediate threat to India's regional sovereignty.
- This has given rise to a superficial association characterised by episodic interventions rather than continuous political involvement.
- While the former rebels received foreign support in the northeast, such a link has weakened over time, with the national security lens as the primary commitment.

Government Response

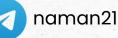
- The critical authorities's response to the Manipur crisis has been characterised by indifference and a loss of urgency. In stark contrast to the speedy and decisive actions taken in reaction to different safetyrelated incidents, consisting of crossborder terrorism in Kashmir, the authorities' approach to Manipur has been tepid and largely symbolic.
- This selective urgency exposes a vast hole between humanitarian want and political will, revealing a troubling hierarchy in India's disaster management priorities.



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Security Narratives and the Manufacture of Threat

- In the absence of authentic safety threats, political and civil actors within Manipur have sought to fabricate or increase risks to advantage political leverage.
- This consists of exaggerated intelligence claims, together with the alleged threat of over 900 armed militants poised to attack Meitei villages from Myanmar, a narrative later found out to be a greater strategic posturing than grounded intelligence.
- The resulting military movements disproportionately centred Kuki-Zomi-Hmar villages, deepening ethnic fault lines and reinforcing majoritarian insecurities as opposed to addressing the underlying reasons of the struggle.
- Law and order duties have informally been outsourced to those militias, destabilising the fragile buffer sector that demarcates the warring ethnic territories and undermining formal governance systems.

Misguided Security Measures and Obsolete Strategies

- The Indian government's emphasis on fencing the 1,643 km India-Myanmar border, specifically the 398 km stretch adjoining Manipur, displays a previous and misdirected protection paradigm.
- Costing over ₹31,000 crore, this initiative has met resistance from Naga and Mizo communities whose cross-border ethnic affiliations project such rigid geopolitical demarcations.



• These moves, catering greater to valley-based political narratives and pork-barrel hobbies than strategic common sense, neither enhance protection nor promote India's Act East Policy aimed at nearby integration and cooperation.

Political Optics on Political Substances

- The implementation of the president's board in February 2025 was not in response to administrative failure or human urge, but as a mechanism to ignore the internal rebellion of the reigning BJP.
- Until the reluctance of the central government decisively intervened in his political dominance at stake, the internal security crises reflected the widespread trend of treating the crisis as an opportunity for governance.
- Instead of long-lasting harmony or institutional improvement, it is seen rather than the optics, surrender of weapons, border fence and common defects.

Conclusion

The Manipur conflict underscores a stark paradox in India's internal security approach, where symbolism and political optics overshadow genuine crisis management.



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The state's persistent neglect of the Northeast reflects a deeper issue of unequal national integration. A sustainable resolution demands inclusive governance, institutional rebuilding, and a shift from reactive politics to proactive, empathetic statecraft.

Regarding the ongoing conflict in Manipur and the government's approach, consider the following statements:

- 1. The central government has fully recovered all the weapons looted from state armouries since the onset of the Manipur conflict in May 2023.
- 2. The fencing of the India–Myanmar border has been widely accepted by all ethnic communities in Manipur.
- 3. The conflict in Manipur primarily involves the Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities over issues of ethnic identity and land rights.
- 4. The imposition of President's Rule in Manipur in 2025 was primarily in response to administrative collapse and humanitarian urgency.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

A. 1 and 2 only B. 3 only C. 3 and 4 only D. 2 and 3 only

Answer: B. 3 only

Explanation:

• **Statement 1 Incorrect:** As of March 2025, only about 4,000 of 6,000+ looted weapons have been recovered. Most were crude and ineffective.

• **Statement 2 Incorrect:** The fencing has faced resistance from Naga and Mizo communities due to their crossborder ethnic ties.

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- Statement 3 Correct: The core conflict is between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo groups, rooted in issues of identity, land rights, and political representation.
- Statement 4 Incorrect: The imposition of President's Rule was more about managing internal BJP dissent than addressing humanitarian urgency.

Critically examine the Union Government's approach to the ongoing conflict in Manipur in the context of national security, political prioritisation, and Centre-State relations. In what ways does it reflect a paradox in India's internal security strategy?

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The yearly 'thank you' to nurses is not enough

Nurses' Leadership in Healthcare: A Necessary Evolution for India's Future.

Every 12 months, May 12 marks International Nurses Day, a time whilst the world pauses to renowned the tireless contributions of nurses and midwives. These professionals are frequently the unsung heroes of the healthcare machine, quietly ensuring the well-being of sufferers..



Yet, in India, even as nurses are celebrated yearly, their voices and roles in decision-making remain in large part sidelined. Despite constituting almost half of the United States of America's healthcare personnel, nurses are nonetheless no longer located as leaders within the healthcare industry

The Traditional Trap: Nurses as Assistants, Not Leaders

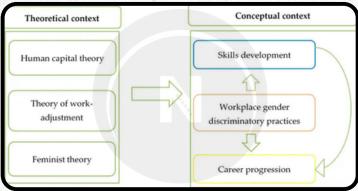
- In India, the role of nurses has traditionally been seen as subordinate to doctors, with nursing in large part taken into consideration as a support feature. Nurses, who form about 47% of the healthcare body of workers, are frequently expected to perform recurring tasks, with minimal involvement in decision-making methods or leadership roles.
- This attitude isn't always just an issue of outdated perceptions; it is a systemic flaw in the manner the healthcare sector operates.
- In many nations, however, the function of nurses has developed substantially. Countries like the United States, the UK, Australia, and Thailand have incorporated Nurse Practitioners (NPs) into their healthcare systems.
- NPs, superior exercise registered nurses with specialised education, independently diagnose, treat, prescribe remedies, and provide primary care. This evolution permits for better get right of entry to to healthcare, particularly in underserved regions.
- India has made tentative steps toward embracing the NP version, inclusive of provisions within the National Health Policy (2017) and the Indian Nursing Council's tasks such as Nurse Practitioner in Critical Care (NPCC) and Nurse Practitioner in Primary Health Care (NPPHC). However, these projects have struggled with implementation, in large part because of a lack of clarity, systemic guide, and criminal backing.





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Systemic Barriers: Legal **Ambiguity, Professional Resistance, and Gender Bias**



Lack of Legal Framework:

- One of the greatest barriers to the empowerment of nurses in India is the absence of a complete criminal framework that defines their roles, rights, and responsibilities.
- While initiatives like NPCC and NPPHC exist, there is no clear felony structure outlining the scope of practice, prescriptive authority, or integration of Nurse Practitioners into the healthcare system.
- This legal vacuum leaves nurses in limbo, unable to completely work out their abilities.

Professional Resistance:

- Another barrier is the resistance from the scientific fraternity. This competition frequently arises from hierarchical, patriarchal systems in healthcare structures.
- The clinical community's reluctance to accept nurse-led care is not totally based on issues about patient safety but additionally on fears of losing authority and manipulation.

 Many physicians continue to be sceptical approximately the potential of nurses to characteristic independently, which hampers the growth of a collaborative healthcare model.

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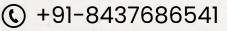
- Gender Biases: Nurses, the bulk of whom are girls, are often subjected to gendered views that devalue their abilities and contributions. Cultural stereotypes understand nursing as "ladies' work," leading to underappreciation of the career and a reluctance to recognise nurses as capable leaders.
- This gender bias exacerbates the marginalisation of nurses, hindering their expert growth and management ability.
- Absence of Quality Education: The state of nursing training in India is every other sizable undertakings.
- The United States of America faces a crisis of great crisis, with many nursing schools laid low by insufficient laws and terrible requirements.
- While the National Nursing and Midwifery Commission Act (2023) promises reforms, the act

Global Lessons: The Success of Australia's Nurse **Practitioner Model**

- India can look to other countries for ideas on a way to empower nurses and raise their roles in healthcare. Australia's adventure with Nurse Practitioners gives valuable lessons.
- The United States' NP model, which started in the late 20th century, was designed to address gaps in primary healthcare get entry to, in particular in rural and remote regions.



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- The success of the NP model in Australia was pushed through a mixture of strong policy help, political will, and the active involvement of nursing leaders in policy dialogues.
- In Australia, the NP name is legally covered, licensure is formalised, and professional ladders for nurses have been created.
- Nurse-led clinics and walk-in centres have shown that outstanding, costeffective care can be provided without usually requiring a medical doctor's oversight. This approach has not only accelerated get entry to to healthcare but has also modified public perceptions of nurses as leaders in the healthcare system.

Q.. "The yearly 'thank you' to nurses is no substitute for structural empowerment." In the context of India's healthcare system, critically examine the systemic challenges preventing nurses from assuming leadership roles. Suggest a comprehensive roadmap to integrate Nurse Practitioners into mainstream healthcare delivery.

Q. About the challenges faced by Nurse Practitioners (NPs) in India, consider the following statements:

- 1. India has a well-defined legal framework that grants Nurse Practitioners independent prescriptive authority.
- 2. The majority of nurses in India are women, and cultural biases contribute to their limited leadership roles.
- 3. The National Nursing and Midwifery Commission Act, 2023, aims to reform nursing education in India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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A. 1 and 2 only B. 2 and 3 only C. 1 and 3 only D. 1, 2 and 3

Correct Answer: B. 2 and 3 only

Explanation:

- Statement 1: Incorrect: India does not yet have a comprehensive legal framework that clearly defines the roles, responsibilities, and prescriptive authority of Nurse Practitioners. The absence of such a framework is a major barrier to their empowerment.
- Statement 2: Correct: Most nurses in India are women, and deep-rooted gender biases often marginalise their roles, preventing them from advancing into leadership or decision-making positions.
- Statement 3: Correct: The National Nursing and Midwifery Commission Act, 2023, has been introduced to improve standards in nursing education, strengthen regulation, and address the issue of substandard institutions.

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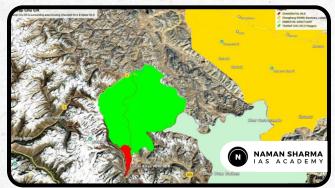
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Tsarap Chu: India's largest conservation reserve comes up in Spiti Valley

Recently, the Himachal Pradesh government notified the Tsarap Chu Conservation Reserve.



About Tsarap Chu Conservation Reserve

- It is located in the Lahaul-Spiti region of Himachal Pradesh.
- The total area of this conservation reserve is 1585 sq.km. It is India's largest conservation reserve.
- It is bounded by the Union Territory of Ladakh to the north, the Kibber Wildlife Sanctuary extending up to Malang Nala and Lungar Lungpa to the east, Kabjima Nala to the south, and Chandratal Wildlife Sanctuary to the west.
- It is also the location for the confluence of the Unam River and Charap Nala.
- It is the catchment area of the Charap Nallah and serves as a critical wildlife corridor, linking the Kibber and Chandra Taal wildlife sanctuaries. It will be managed through a Conservation Reserve Management Committee, which will also include representatives from local Panchayats.

The committee will manage the area while balancing the needs of local communities and wildlife conservation priorities.

Biodiversity:

- It falls among the high-density habitats of snow leopards within Himachal Pradesh.
- Tibetan wolf, bharal (blue sheep), Himalayan ibex, kiang (wild ass), and the Tibetan argali are also found in the region.
- Rare bird species such as Rose Finch, Tibetan Raven, and Yellow-billed Chough enrich the ecology of the region.

Q. Regarding the Tsarap Chu Conservation Reserve, recently notified in Himachal Pradesh, consider the following statements:

- 1. It is the largest conservation reserve in India in terms of area.
- 2. It serves as a wildlife corridor connecting the Kibber and Chandra Taal wildlife sanctuaries.
- 3. It lies entirely within the Union Territory of Ladakh.
- 4. It includes high-density habitats of snow leopards and is home to species like the Tibetan wolf and the Himalayan ibex.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

A. 1, 2 and 4 only B. 1 and 3 only C. 2 and 4 only D. 1, 2, 3 and 4

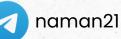
Correct Answer: A. 1, 2 and 4 only

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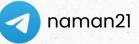
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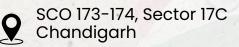






Explanation:

- **Statement 1 Correct:** With an area of 1585 sq. km, Tsarap Chu is now the largest conservation reserve in India.
- **Statement 2 Correct:** It acts as a critical wildlife corridor, linking Kibber Wildlife Sanctuary and Chandratal Wildlife Sanctuary.
- **Statement Incorrect:** The reserve is located in the Lahaul-Spiti district of Himachal Pradesh, not entirely within the Union Territory of Ladakh. It is bounded by Ladakh to the north.
- Statement 4 Correct : The reserve is part of a high-density snow leopard habitat and hosts other species such as Tibetan wolf, Himalayan ibex, bharal, kiang, and rare birds like Rose Finch and Tibetan Raven.

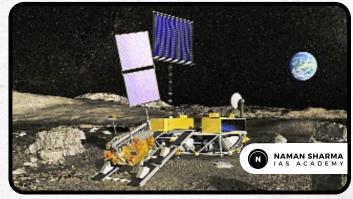




Chandrayaan-5 mission: India, Japan to enter design

phase

India and Japan have begun the preliminary design phase of the Chandrayaan-5 mission, also known as LUPEX (Lunar Polar Exploration).



About Chandrayaan-5/LUPEX Mission:

- It is a collaborative mission between ISRO and JAXA.
- Approval: Cabinet approval for the mission was granted on March 10, 2025.
- Launch: It will carry a 6.5-tonne payload and launch aboard Japan's H3 rocket in 2027–28.
- Collaboration: The lander is being developed by ISRO, and the 350-kg rover by JAXA.
- Duration: The mission is expected to last 100 days, with a possible extension of one year.

Mission Goals and Objectives:

- Explore water and regolith in the lunar south pole's Permanently Shadowed Regions (PSRs).
- 9

SCO 173-174, Sector 17C Chandigarh • Drill into the Moon's surface, analyse soil samples, and perform in-situ experiments.Assess water content, quality, and analyse surface volatiles using advanced instrumentation.

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Exploration of the far side of the Moon.

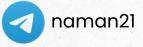
- Scientific Collaboration and Instruments:
- A total of 7 scientific instruments will be onboard the mission.
- **ISRO's Contribution:** Development of the lander; creation of one sensor in a major four-sensor instrument.
- JAXA's Contribution: Development of the rover and three sensors in the same instrument; the Rover is designed to climb 25° inclines and operate on a complex battery charging protocol.
- ESA (European Space Agency): Developing a mass spectrometer.
- NASA: Contributing neutron spectrometers.

Chandrayaan Missions

- Chandrayaan-1 (2008): First mission, focused on mineral and chemical mapping.
- **Chandrayaan-2 (2019):** Orbiter mission with 98% success.
- **Chandrayaan-3 (2023):** Achieved a historic soft landing on the Moon's south pole.
- Chandrayaan-4 (Upcoming, 2027):
- It is a planned lunar sample return mission by ISRO, expected to launch around 2027, with the landing site near Statio Shiv Shakti at the lunar south pole.
- The mission involves five modules launched on two LVM-3 rockets, later docked in Earth orbit to form an integrated spacecraft.







Question [UPSC 2009] In the context of space technology, what is Bhuvan, recently in the news?

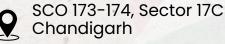
Options:

(a) A mini-satellite launched by ISRO for promoting distance education in India
(b) The name given to the next Moon Impact Probe, for Chandrayaan-II
(c) A geoportal of ISRO with 3D imaging capabilities of India

(d) A space telescope developed by India

The correct answer is (c)

Explanation: Bhuvan is a digital platform developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) that provides access to geospatial data, satellite imagery, and 3D mapping of India, essentially functioning like a "Google Earth" for the country.



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NAMAN SHARMA IAS ACADEMY

Trial run for cargo movement from Kolkata to the

northeast

India is planning a new highway from Shillong (Meghalaya) to Silchar (Assam) as part of a broader multi-modal transport project connecting Myanmar, which will create a sea route to Kolkata that bypasses Bangladesh. This move is seen as a strategic response to Bangladesh's interim leader Muhammad Yunus, who recently claimed that Northeast India is "landlocked" and relies on Dhaka as its only ocean gateway.



Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit **Transport Project (KMTTP)**

• The KMTTP is a strategic infrastructure initiative undertaken by India, aimed at enhancing connectivity between the eastern Indian seaport of Kolkata and the landlocked North-Eastern states via Myanmar, bypassing Bangladesh.

The project is jointly developed by India and Myanmar and is a key component of India's Act East Policy.

Different Legs of the Project

- Sea Leq
- From Kolkata Port (India) to Sittwe Port (Myanmar) via the Bay of Bengal.
- Distance: ~539 km by sea.
- Sittwe Port has been constructed by India.

Inland Waterway Leg

- From Sittwe to Paletwa via the Kaladan River in Myanmar.
- Distance: ~158 km.

Road Leg

- From Paletwa to Zorinpui (on the India-Myanmar border in Mizoram).
- Distance: ~110 km.
- Indian Leg (Planned Extension) A 166.8-km four-lane high-speed highway is being constructed from Mawlyngkhung (near Shillong) to Panchgram (near Silchar) along NH-6.
- It is the first high-speed corridor in the North-East and the first such project in a hilly region, to be completed by 2030.
- The project is implemented by NHIDCL for MoRTH and was approved by the Union Cabinet at a cost of Rs 22,864 crore.

Benefits

- Bypasses Bangladesh: Reduces dependency on access through Bangladesh for North-East connectivity.
- Improves Connectivity: Offers an alternative route to the Siliguri Corridor (Chicken's Neck), the narrow strip that connects North-East India with the rest of the country.
- Boosts Trade & Commerce: Enhances trade flow between India and South-East Asia.



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- Strategic Significance: Strengthens India's presence in the Bay of Bengal and deepens ties with Myanmar.
- **Economic Development: Spurs** infrastructure development and economic activities in India's underdeveloped North-Eastern region.
- Part of the Act East Policy: A critical step in India's efforts to improve connectivity with ASEAN countries.

Significance

- The highway will reduce travel time between Shillong and Silchar from 8.5 hours to 5 hours.
- It will connect Silchar a key entry point to Mizoram, Tripura, Manipur, and the Barak Valley — and act as a major regional link.
- It supports India's Act East Policy by enhancing connectivity to Myanmar and beyond.
- The project is expected to reduce dependence on the Siliguri Corridor (Chicken's Neck) and bypass Bangladesh, offering an alternative route via the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transport Project.

Infrastructure Details

- The project will be executed in Hybrid C) To bypass Bangladesh and enhance Annuity Mode (HAM) under the PPP model. HAM is a project delivery model used in India, particularly for national highway development.
- It combines elements of both the Engineering, Procurement, and Construction (EPC) and the Build, Operate, and Transfer (BOT) models. It involves the government providing a portion of the project cost (40%) as construction support, while the remaining 60% is financed by the private developer through a pre-fixed annuity payment.

CONCLUSION

The trial cargo movement marks a critical milestone in India's long-term plan to integrate its North-Eastern region more seamlessly with the rest of the country and with South-East Asia.

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By operationalising the Kaladan route and constructing the Shillong-Silchar high-speed corridor, India is not only reducing reliance on Bangladesh but also asserting strategic autonomy in regional connectivity.

What is the primary strategic objective behind India's trial cargo movement from Kolkata to the Northeast via the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transport Project (KMTTP)?

A) To establish a trade corridor exclusively with Bangladesh B) To boost domestic tourism in Northeast India C) To bypass Bangladesh and enhance

direct connectivity to the Northeast through Myanmar

D) To replace the Siliguri Corridor as the only link to the Northeast

Correct Answer:

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direct connectivity to the Northeast through Myanmar

Discuss the significance of the trial run for cargo movement from Kolkata to the Northeast under the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transport Project (KMTTP). In your answer, highlight the key components of the project, its strategic implications, and how it addresses regional connectivity challenges, particularly in light of recent geopolitical statements by Bangladesh's interim leadership.



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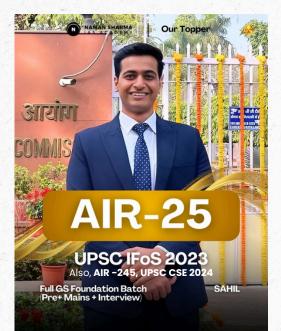
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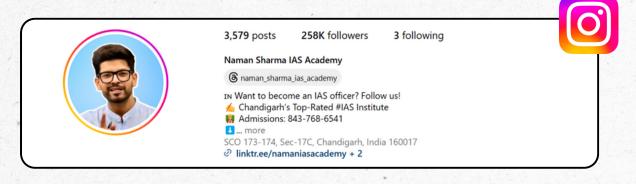
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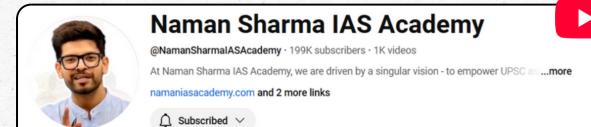


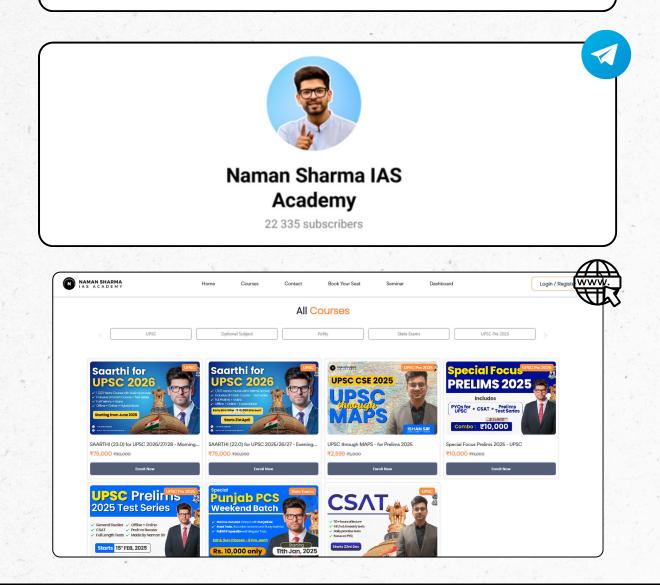
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