



**NAMAN SHARMA**  
IAS ACADEMY

# Daily

# **CURRENT AFFAIRS**

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 **Offline Centre Location:**  
SCO 173-174, Sector 17C, Chandigarh

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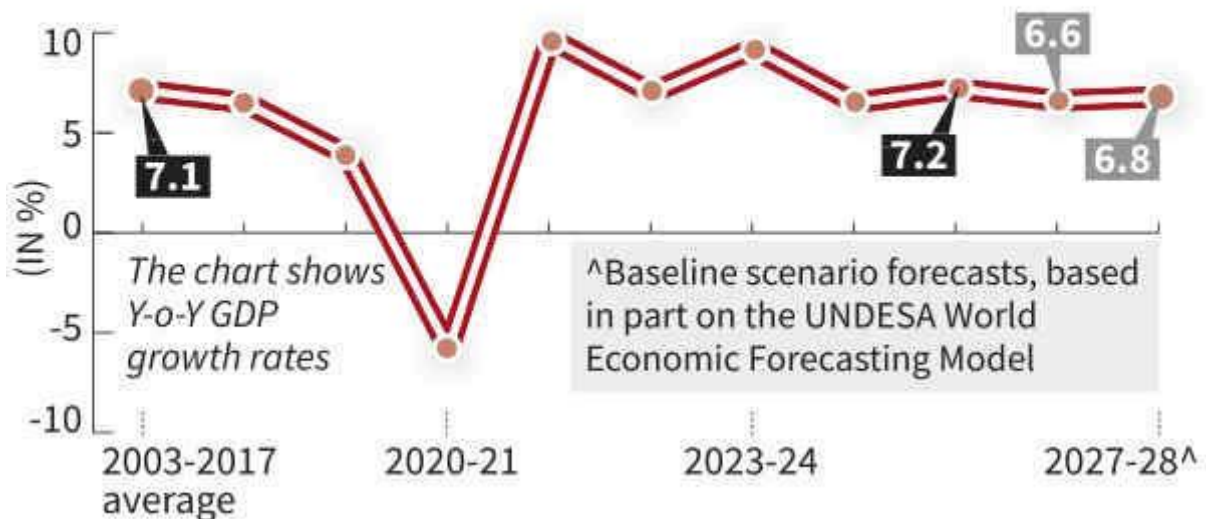
# 1. UN body pegs India's growth at 7.2% this fiscal

## Why in the News?

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) has projected India's economic growth at 7.2% for FY 2025–26, slightly lower than the 7.4% growth estimate by the Union Government, as highlighted in The Hindu. The projection is part of UN DESA's flagship report World Economic Situation and Prospects 2026, which assesses global and national economic trends.

## Varying forecasts

UNDESA estimates India to grow by 7.2% in FY26, slightly lower than the 7.4% estimated by the Indian government



SOURCE: UNDESA REPORT

## Background

- India has been among the fastest-growing major economies in recent years, driven by:
- Robust domestic consumption
- High public capital expenditure
- Expansion in manufacturing and services

## The global economic environment remains uncertain due to:

- Trade protectionism, especially tariffs imposed by the U.S.
- Weak recovery in some major economies, notably China
- Around 18% of India's exports are destined for the U.S., making India moderately vulnerable to tariff-related shocks.

## Feature

### Growth Outlook

- FY 2025–26: 7.2%
- Calendar Year 2025: 7.4%
- Medium-term forecast:
  - 2026–27: 6.6%
  - 2027–28: 6.7–6.8%

### Drivers of Growth

- Resilient private consumption
- Strong public investment, particularly in:
  - Physical infrastructure
  - Digital infrastructure
  - Defence
  - Renewable energy
- Continued expansion of the manufacturing and services sectors

### Trade and Tariff Impact

- U.S. tariffs may affect select export categories.
- Electronics and smartphones are expected to remain largely exempt.
- Strong demand from Europe and West Asia is likely to cushion export shocks.

### Global Comparison

- India: Strong gross fixed capital formation led by public spending.
- China: Contraction in fixed asset investment due to persistent property sector stress.
- Gulf region: The Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) continues large-scale investments under diversification strategies.

## Challenges

### Trade Vulnerability

- High exposure to the U.S. market (18% of exports).
- Prolonged tariffs could dampen export-led growth.

### Global Economic Uncertainty

- Geopolitical tensions and supply chain disruptions.
- Slower growth in major economies is affecting external demand.

### Medium-term Growth Moderation

- Gradual decline in growth rates beyond FY26 suggests limits to public-investment-led expansion.

## Structural Constraints

- Employment elasticity of growth remains low.
- Manufacturing competitiveness is still uneven across sectors.

## Way Forward

### Diversification of Export Markets

- Deepen trade ties with Europe, West Asia, Africa, and ASEAN.
- Reduce overdependence on the U.S. market.

### Boost Private Investment

#### Complement public capex with:

- Stable tax regime
- Faster dispute resolution
- Credit support for MSMEs

### Monetary and Fiscal Coordination

- Calibrated monetary easing to support growth without fuelling inflation.
- Continued focus on quality public expenditure rather than mere expansion.

### Structural Reforms

- Labour and logistics reforms to enhance manufacturing competitiveness.
- Skill development aligned with emerging sectors like electronics and renewables.

### Export Value Upgradation

- Move up the value chain in electronics, pharmaceuticals, and green technologies.

## Conclusion

The UN DESA projection of 7.2% growth for India in FY 2025–26 underscores the resilience of India's domestic demand and public investment-led growth model, even amid global trade headwinds. However, sustaining high growth over the medium term will require a shift from reliance on public spending to private investment, export diversification, and deep structural reforms. For India, the challenge is no longer achieving high growth, but making it broad-based, employment-generating, and globally resilient.

## 2. Trump clears Bill that will slap up to 500% tariffs on nations buying Russian oil

### Why in the News?

The U.S. President, Donald Trump, has “greenlit” or backed a bipartisan Russia Sanctions Bill (Sanctioning Russia Act of 2025) that - if passed by Congress, could authorise tariffs of up to 500% on countries that continue to import Russian oil, uranium, gas, or related exports. This development has raised significant concern in New Delhi because India remains one of the world’s largest buyers of Russian crude, a source crucial for its energy security.

### Tariff target

The Bill gives the U.S. President discretion to choose tariff figures over and above the 25% penalty tariffs already imposed on India

- The Bill, introduced in the Senate in April 2025, has enough co-sponsors from Republican and Democratic parties to suggest a smooth passage once brought to vote
- 84 co-sponsors in Senate out of a total of 100 members
- 151 co-sponsors in the House of Representatives



They [India] must stop buying Russian oil... The President has only imposed a 25% tariff [thus far]

**SERGIO GOR**  
U.S. Ambassador-designate



### Background

#### The Sanctioning Russia Act of 2025

- A bipartisan bill introduced in the 119th U.S. Congress by Senators Lindsey Graham (R-SC) and Richard Blumenthal (D-CT).
- It aims to impose sanctions on Russia and on countries trading with Moscow, especially those that buy Russian energy products such as oil and uranium.

#### Rising U.S.–India Trade Tensions

- In 2025, the Trump administration first imposed a 25% tariff on Indian exports, later doubled to 50% as a penalty for India’s Russian oil purchases.
- The new sanctions framework could push tariffs even higher, targeting countries that knowingly purchase Russian energy.

### India’s Energy Strategy

- India has relied on discounted Russian crude to fuel its energy needs, balancing affordability with national energy security.
- This has repeatedly put New Delhi at odds with Washington's strategy of economically isolating Russia over the Ukraine conflict.

## Features

- 500% Tariff Authority: The bill would grant the U.S. President discretion to impose tariffs up to 500% on imports from nations that purchase Russian oil or related exports.
- This is intended as a "sledgehammer" sanction to deter continued purchases from Russia.
- It would go significantly beyond existing tariffs.

## Target Countries:

- Primary targets would include India, China, and Brazil—major buyers of Russian crude.
- India faces the most immediate risk due to its strategic energy imports.

## Trade and Diplomatic Pressure:

- The Greenlighting follows persistent U.S. pressure on India to reduce or eliminate Russian oil imports.
- The U.S. Ambassador-designate to India has already signalled this issue as a 'top priority'.

## Industry Reaction:

- Some Indian oil and industry leaders view the move as a geopolitical pressure tactic rather than a certain outcome.

## Challenges

### Economic Impact on India

- Tariff shock: A 500% tariff would make Indian goods prohibitively expensive in the U.S. market, potentially collapsing trade — especially in services and exports — with the U.S., one of India's largest export destinations.
- Investment deterrence: Escalating trade tensions could stall U.S. firms' investment decisions in India.

### Diplomatic Strain

- The move could deepen the 2025–26 U.S.–India diplomatic and trade crisis, exacerbating mistrust and complicating strategic cooperation on defence, tech, and regional security.

### Global Energy and Geopolitical Balance

- India's reliance on Russian oil is tied to global price volatility and supply considerations - an abrupt pivot could strain domestic energy markets and fiscal stability.

## Way Forward

### Strategic Diplomacy

- India could leverage multilateral forums (G20, BRICS, Quad) to articulate its energy security concerns and seek balanced approaches to sanctions.

### Diversify Energy Sources

- Accelerate import diversification from the Middle East, Africa, and renewable energy to reduce dependence on Russian crude.

### Trade Negotiations

- Engage in high-level economic diplomacy with the U.S. to discuss mutual interests and negotiate phased or calibrated tariff adjustments.

### Strengthen Domestic Value Chains

- Deepen India's export competitiveness in sectors less vulnerable to tariff barriers through policy support and innovation.

## Conclusion

The U.S. move to support a bill that could slap up to 500% tariffs on countries importing Russian energy marks a dramatic escalation in trade-economic tools aimed at influencing global geopolitics, especially around the Russia–Ukraine war. For India, the development poses a complex policy challenge, balancing energy security, economic interests, and strategic diplomacy in the face of intensifying U.S. pressure.

## 3. Satellite tagging of sea turtles aims to aid conservation

### Why in the News?

In a first-of-its-kind initiative in Tamil Nadu, two Olive Ridley sea turtles were satellite-tagged and released after nesting on Chennai's coast. The initiative marks the launch of a radio telemetry study (2025–2027) aimed at strengthening sea turtle conservation through real-time movement tracking.

### Background

- Olive Ridley turtles are among the most abundant sea turtles globally, yet face serious threats from:
  - Bycatch in fishing gear
  - Coastal development
  - Light pollution and habitat loss
- India's east coast, particularly Tamil Nadu and Odisha, forms an important nesting and migratory corridor.

- Chennai's urban beaches, including Besant Nagar, are known but high-risk nesting sites due to dense human activity.
- Until now, turtle conservation largely relied on manual nest protection and flipper tagging, offering limited insight into offshore behaviour.

## Features

### Scope of the Study

- Duration: 2025–2027
- Geographical coverage:
  - Chennai coast
  - Cauvery delta
- Focus on near-shore waters during the nesting season (November–April)

### Technology Used

#### Satellite tags

- Transmit location data every hour
- Track real-time movement, migration routes, and foraging grounds

#### Flipper tags

- Enable long-term monitoring of individual turtles
- Help study nest-site fidelity and repeat nesting



### Institutional Collaboration

- Jointly implemented by:
- Wildlife Institute of India

- Advanced Institute for Wildlife Conservation

## **Notable Observations**

### **One tagged turtle:**

- First-time nester
- ~40 kg in weight
- Laid 130+ eggs
- Estimated age: 25–30 years

### **Second turtle:**

- Had a fishing hook lodged in its mouth
- Successfully treated by veterinarians from Arignar Anna Zoological Park

## **Challenges**

### **Fishing-related Mortality**

- Accidental capture in trawl nets and longlines remains the single biggest threat.

### **Urban Coastal Pressure**

- Artificial lighting, beach traffic, and tourism disrupt nesting behaviour.

### **Data Deficiency**

- **Lack of precise information on:**
  - Migration corridors
  - Foraging hotspots
  - Seasonal interaction with fisheries

### **Climate Change**

- Rising sand temperatures skew hatchling sex ratios.
- Sea-level rise threatens nesting beaches.

## **Way Forward**

### **Science-Based Policy Making**

- Use satellite data to identify critical habitats and declare seasonal no-fishing zones.

### **Fisheries Management**

- Promote Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs) in trawl nets.
- Sensitise fishing communities using telemetry-based evidence.

### **Urban Coastal Planning**

- Regulate lighting and beach activities during nesting season.
- Integrate turtle corridors into coastal zone management plans.

### **Scaling Up Telemetry**

- Expand tagging to other species and coastal States.
- Create a national sea turtle movement database.

## Community Participation

- Strengthen local hatchery networks and volunteer patrols.

## Conclusion

The satellite tagging of Olive Ridley turtles on Chennai's coast marks a paradigm shift from protection-only conservation to data-driven marine wildlife management.

By revealing where turtles travel, feed, and face threats, the telemetry study can bridge the gap between scientific research and practical conservation policy, making India's marine conservation efforts more targeted, adaptive, and effective-a crucial step for safeguarding vulnerable species in increasingly urbanised coastal ecosystems.

## 4. Govt. seeks feedback on draft Bill to regulate pesticides, promote 'safe and effective' use.

### Why in the News?

The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has invited public feedback on the draft Pesticides Management Bill, which seeks to repeal and replace the Insecticides Act, 1968. The proposed law aims to ensure the safe, effective, and environmentally sound use of pesticides, while encouraging biological and traditional alternatives.

### Background

- India's pesticide regulation is currently governed by the Insecticides Act, 1968, enacted over five decades ago.

### Since then:

- New chemical formulations, biopesticides, and integrated pest management (IPM) practices have emerged.
- Concerns have grown over:
  - Pesticide residues in food
  - Farmer health and accidental poisoning
  - Environmental contamination and biodiversity loss
- The need for a modern, risk-based regulatory framework aligned with scientific advances and global best practices has been repeatedly highlighted by experts and parliamentary committees.

### Features

#### Expanded and Updated Definition

- Defines "pesticide" to include:
  - Chemical and biological substances
  - Plant growth regulators, defoliants, and desiccants
  - Post-harvest chemicals used during storage and transport

Covers agriculture, public health, industry, and household use.

## **Comprehensive Regulatory Coverage**

### **The Bill regulates:**

- Manufacture and import
- Packaging, labelling, and advertising
- Storage, transport, sale, distribution
- Use and disposal of pesticides

## **Institutional Mechanisms**

- Central Pesticides Board
- Advises Union and State governments on scientific and technical matters
- Frames standards for:
  - Good manufacturing practices
  - Pest control operations
  - Recall and disposal of pesticides
  - Advertisement norms

## **Registration Committee**

- Grants, reviews, amends, or cancels pesticide registrations
- Periodically evaluates safety and efficacy
- Maintains a digital National Register of Pesticides

## **Emphasis on Safety and Sustainability**

### **Explicit objective to:**

- Minimise risks to humans, animals, non-target organisms, and the environment

### **Encourages:**

- Biological pesticides



- Pesticides based on traditional knowledge

## **Stringent Penalties**

- **For offences causing death or grievous hurt:**
  - Imprisonment up to 5 years
  - Fine ranging from ₹10 lakh to ₹50 lakh
  - Or both

## **Challenges and Concerns**

### **Implementation Capacity**

- Effective enforcement requires well-equipped labs, trained inspectors, and coordination with States.

### **Industry Compliance**

- Stricter norms may raise compliance costs, especially for small manufacturers.

### **Biopesticide Transition**

- Biological alternatives often have:
  - Shorter shelf life
  - Lower immediate efficacy
- Requires research, subsidies, and extension support.

### **Centre–State Coordination**

- Agriculture, being a State subject, uniform enforcement could be challenging.

## **Way Forward**

### **Strengthen Regulatory Infrastructure**

- Upgrade testing laboratories and digital monitoring systems.

### **Farmer-Centric Outreach**

- Expand training through Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) on safe pesticide use and alternatives.

### **Promote Integrated Pest Management (IPM)**

- Incentivise reduced chemical dependency through policy and pricing support.

### **Support Biopesticides**

- Encourage R&D, faster approvals, and market access for eco-friendly products.

## Transparent Public Consultation

- Incorporate feedback from farmers, scientists, industry, and civil society before finalising the Bill.

## Conclusion

The draft Pesticides Management Bill represents a major shift from a control-oriented to a safety- and sustainability-focused regulatory framework. If effectively implemented, it can protect farmers' health, consumer safety, and the environment, while modernising India's pesticide governance. However, its success will depend on robust enforcement, farmer education, and a balanced transition towards safer alternatives, ensuring agricultural productivity without compromising ecological and public health.

## 5. Voice for people-driven conservation

### Why in the News?

Eminent ecologist and people's conservationist Madhav Gadgil passed away in Pune at the age of 83. Widely regarded as a pioneer of people-driven conservation in India, Gadgil fundamentally reshaped environmental thinking by placing human rights, local communities, and ecological justice at the centre of conservation policy. He is best known for heading the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP).



### Background

- Early in his career, Gadgil subscribed to the urban, fortress-style conservation model, which prioritised wildlife protection through national parks and sanctuaries, often at the cost of displacing local communities.

- From the 1980s onwards, he underwent a profound intellectual shift, recognising forest dwellers, farmers, and indigenous communities as “constituents of the ecosystem” rather than threats.
- A globally trained scholar (Harvard), Gadgil chose to focus on India’s ecological fragilities and the social consequences of conservation laws.
- His thinking was deeply influenced by India’s constitutional values of social justice, equity, and human dignity.

## Features

### Paradigm Shift in Conservation

- Challenged exclusionary wildlife-centric conservation.
- Advocated community-based, participatory conservation, giving primacy to livelihoods and rights.
- Criticised the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, for being used to criminalise forest-dependent communities.

### Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (2011)

- Recommended:
  - Declaration of most of the Western Ghats as Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESAs).
- Strict regulation of polluting industries, mining, and large infrastructure.
- Creation of a Western Ghats Ecology Authority.
- Emphasised bottom-up governance, involving:
  - Gram sabhas
  - Panchayats
  - Local communities

### Environmental Movements

- Played a key role in:
  - Save Silent Valley Movement (Kerala)
  - Conservation campaigns in Bastar forests
- Bridged academic ecology and grassroots activism.

### Intellectual Legacy

- Authored influential works, including *A Walk Up the Hill: Living with People and Nature* (2023).
- Collaborated with scholars like Ramachandra Guha.
- Praised by M. S. Swaminathan for combining ecological science with service to humanity.

## Challenges

### Development vs Conservation Conflict

- Infrastructure expansion, mining, and industrialisation in fragile ecosystems.

### Marginalisation of Local Communities

- Displacement and loss of traditional livelihoods.

### **Policy Resistance**

- Strong pushback from vested economic and political interests.
- Dilution of WGEEP recommendations through the later Kasturirangan Committee.

### **Weak Implementation**

- Even reduced protection measures were not fully accepted or enforced.

### Way Forward

#### **Adopt People-Centric Conservation**

- Recognise community stewardship and traditional ecological knowledge.

#### **Strengthen Democratic Environmental Governance**

- Empower gram sabhas under the Panchayati Raj framework.

#### **Balance Development with Ecological Limits**

- Apply precautionary and polluter-pays principles.

#### **Institutional Reforms**

- Independent ecological authorities are insulated from political pressure.

#### **Integrate Social Justice with Environmental Policy**

- Align conservation laws with constitutional values and human rights.

### **Conclusion**

Madhav Gadgil's legacy marks a decisive shift in India's environmental thought from exclusionary protectionism to inclusive, democratic conservation. At a time when climate change, biodiversity loss, and developmental pressures are intensifying, his insistence that nature cannot be protected without protecting people remains profoundly relevant. For future policymakers and environmentalists, Gadgil's life offers a vital lesson: sustainable conservation must be ecological, ethical, and social at the same time.

## 6. GSDP share as criterion for central-State transfers

### Why in the News?

With the recommendations of the Sixteenth Finance Commission yet to be tabled in Parliament, debates around fairness in Centre–State fiscal transfers have intensified. An opinion piece by K.R. Shanmugam argues for using Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) share as a key criterion for determining central transfers, to better reflect States’ actual contribution to national tax revenues.

### Central tax collections, transfers and GSDP GSDP, reflecting accrual of central taxes, strikes a balance between efficiency and equity in tax devolution

State-wise direct tax and gross GST collections, central transfers and GSDP from 2020-21 to 2024-25

States	Direct tax and GST collection		Central transfers		FC devolution	GSDP		Transfers using GSDP share	Loss or gain
	(₹ lakh crore)	% share	(₹ lakh crore)	% share	% share	(₹ lakh crore)	% share	(₹ lakh crore)	(₹ lakh crore)
Andhra Pradesh	3.32	2.97	3.23	4.30	4.07	64.35	4.97	3.74	0.51
Assam	0.75	0.67	2.93	3.90	3.13	24.48	1.89	1.42	-1.51
Bihar	0.76	0.68	6.5	8.65	10.06	38.48	2.97	2.23	-4.27
Chhattisgarh	1.68	1.50	2.36	3.14	3.41	23.03	1.78	1.34	-1.02
Gujarat	7.69	6.88	2.55	3.39	3.48	108.38	8.37	6.29	3.74
Haryana	6.02	5.39	0.83	1.10	1.09	48.82	3.77	2.83	2.00
Himachal Pradesh	0.48	0.43	1.19	1.58	0.83	9.58	0.74	0.56	-0.63
Jharkhand	1.58	1.41	2.22	2.96	3.31	20.69	1.60	1.20	-1.02
Karnataka	14.14	12.65	2.93	3.90	3.65	113.94	8.80	6.61	3.68
Kerala	1.81	1.62	2.03	2.70	1.93	51.19	3.96	2.97	0.94
Madhya Pradesh	2.17	1.94	5.56	7.40	7.85	61.26	4.73	3.56	-2.00
Maharashtra	40.3	36.06	4.99	6.64	6.32	179.83	13.90	10.44	5.45
Odisha	2.61	2.34	3.32	4.42	4.53	36.40	2.81	2.11	-1.21
Punjab	1.47	1.32	1.57	2.09	1.81	34.71	2.68	2.02	0.45
Rajasthan	2.83	2.53	4.57	6.08	6.03	67.96	5.25	3.94	-0.63
Tamil Nadu	8.5	7.61	3.5	4.66	4.08	120.41	9.30	6.99	3.49
Telangana	4.32	3.87	1.84	2.45	2.10	64.81	5.01	3.76	1.92
Uttar Pradesh	5.14	4.60	11.88	15.81	17.94	116.28	8.98	6.75	-5.13
Uttarakhand	0.9	0.81	1.24	1.65	1.12	14.84	1.15	0.86	-0.38
West Bengal	4.46	3.99	5.23	6.96	7.52	74.64	5.77	4.33	-0.90
8 small States	0.82	0.73	4.63	6.16	5.79	20.07	1.55	1.17	-3.46
<b>Total</b>	<b>111.75</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>75.12</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.02</b>	<b>1294.15</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>75.12</b>	<b>0.00</b>

### Background

#### Under Article 280 of the Constitution, Finance Commissions recommend:

- The share of States in central taxes
- The formula for inter-State distribution

#### Over time, central transfers occur through:

- Tax devolution
- Grants-in-aid
- Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS)

#### Post-GST, States have raised concerns over:

- Loss of fiscal autonomy
- Revenue erosion due to GST rate cuts
- Rising cesses and surcharges are not shareable with States
- Declining shares for economically high-performing States

**Traditionally, Finance Commissions have prioritised equity using criteria such as:**

- Income distance
- Population
- Area often at the cost of efficiency and contribution recognition.

## **Features**

### **Tax Contribution vs Tax Collection**

- Direct tax data is based on the place of collection, not the place of income generation.

### **Due to:**

- Multi-State firms
- Centralised registered offices
- Labour migration direct tax figures misrepresent the state-wise contribution.

### **GSDP as a Proxy**

- GSDP reflects the economic base from which taxes arise.
- If tax administration efficiency is broadly uniform:
  - A State's share in national GSDP  $\approx$  its contribution to central taxes.
- GST, being destination-based, is already better aligned with consumption geography.

## **Empirical Evidence**

### **Correlation (2023–24 data):**

- GSDP & Direct taxes: 0.75
- GSDP & GST: 0.91

### **Over 2020–25:**

- Devolution shares correlate strongly with transfers (0.99),
- But weakly with tax contribution (0.24).

### **GSDP shows:**

- High correlation with tax contribution (0.81)
- Moderate correlation with devolution (0.58).

## **Equity–Efficiency Balance**

- GSDP shares differ less sharply than tax collection shares.
- This makes redistribution less disruptive, while improving fairness.

## **Challenges in the Existing System**

### **Perceived Injustice**

- States like Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu argue they receive less than their contribution.

## **Over-reliance on Redistributive Criteria**

- Income, distance, and population may disincentivise growth.

## **Regional Disparities**

- Wide variation in fiscal capacity and expenditure needs.

## **Trust Deficit**

- Declining credibility of inter-governmental fiscal arrangements.

## **Way Forward**

### **Introduce GSDP as a Formal Criterion**

- Assign a significant weight to GSDP in the devolution formula.

### **Balanced Formula Design**

- Combine:
  - GSDP (efficiency & contribution)
  - Income distance (equity)
  - Demographic and geographic needs

### **Rationalise CSS**

- Increase untied transfers to restore State flexibility.

### **Transparency in Tax Attribution**

- Improve data on inter-State value creation and income generation.

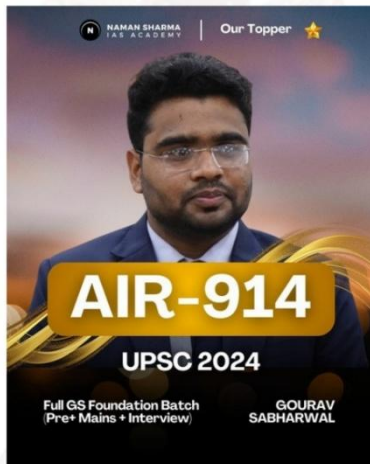
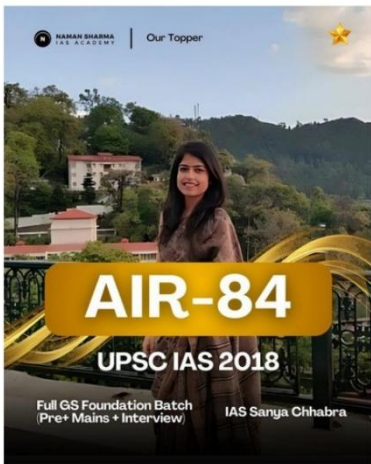
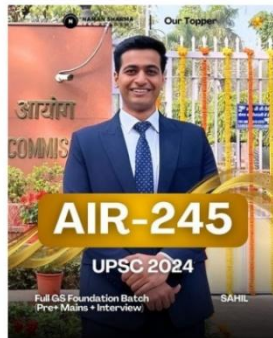
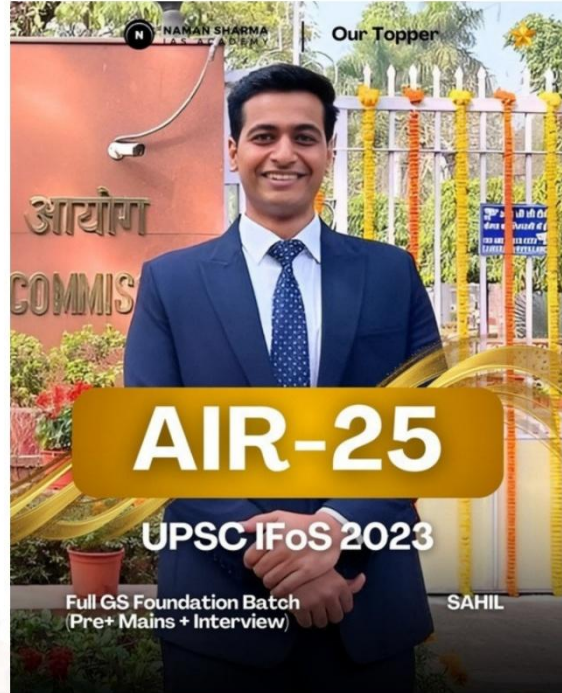
### **Rebuild Cooperative Federalism**

- Ensure high-performing States feel rewarded, not penalised.

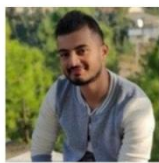
## **Conclusion**

Using GSDP share as a criterion for central transfers offers a pragmatic middle path between equity and efficiency. It better reflects the economic contribution of States, improves perceptions of fairness, and strengthens the credibility of India's fiscal federal architecture. As India aspires to sustain high growth, rewarding economic performance while protecting redistribution goals will be crucial for cooperative and competitive federalism alike.

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