



NAMAN SHARMA
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CURRENT AFFAIRS

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1. PM unveils ₹6,957-cr. elevated corridor project in Kaziranga

Why in the News?

Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of the ₹6,957-crore Kaziranga Elevated Corridor Project in Assam's Kaliabor and virtually flagged off Amrit Bharat trains. The event also saw strong political messaging ahead of the Assam Assembly elections, with the Prime Minister citing recent electoral victories of the Bharatiya Janata Party and criticising the Indian National Congress over governance and encroachment issues in Kaziranga.



Background

- Kaziranga National Park in Assam is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and home to over two-thirds of the world's one-horned rhinoceros.

- National Highway-37 (now NH-715) passes through Kaziranga's eco-sensitive zone and has long been associated with:
 - Frequent road accidents involving wildlife
 - Seasonal flooding and traffic congestion
 - Rising human–animal conflict
- Conservationists and courts have repeatedly flagged the need for wildlife-friendly infrastructure to balance development and ecological protection.

Features

- **Length:** 86 km total corridor
- **Elevated Section:** ~35 km passing through Kaziranga National Park
- **Configuration:** Four-lane National Highway
- **Estimated Cost:** ₹6,957 crore

Major Objectives:

- Uninterrupted movement of wildlife across habitats
- Reduction in animal roadkill and human–wildlife conflict
- Improved road safety and reduced travel time
- All-weather connectivity in flood-prone areas
- Complementary Development: Flagging off of Amrit Bharat Express trains to improve regional rail connectivity.

Political and Governance Context

The Prime Minister credited the Assam government for:

- Controlling rhino poaching
- Clearing encroachments from the forest and cultural sites
- Tackling illegal infiltration

He cited recent election outcomes in Bihar, Maharashtra municipal bodies, and Thiruvananthapuram to claim a nationwide preference for development-oriented governance. Congress was accused of neglecting Kaziranga and enabling land encroachment during its earlier rule.

Challenges

Ecological Risks

- Construction activities may disturb animal movement if mitigation measures are weak.
- Noise, light pollution, and altered drainage patterns pose risks.

Implementation Complexity

- Building elevated infrastructure in a floodplain ecosystem is technically demanding.
- High maintenance costs over the long term.

Community Concerns

- Land acquisition and livelihood impacts on local communities.

- Need for inclusive consultation with indigenous and fringe-area populations.

Precedent for Other Protected Areas

- Risk of replicating infrastructure-heavy models in sensitive zones without adequate safeguards.

Way Forward

- **Strict Environmental Monitoring:** Continuous wildlife movement studies and independent ecological audits.
- **Adaptive Infrastructure Design:** Animal underpasses, sound barriers, and dark zones to reduce disturbance.
- **Community Participation:** Involving residents in planning, compensation, and eco-tourism opportunities.
- **Integrated Conservation Strategy:** Aligning transport projects with Assam's broader biodiversity and climate-resilience goals.
- **Policy Replication with Caution:** Using Kaziranga as a model only after outcome-based evaluation.

Conclusion

The Kaziranga Elevated Corridor represents an ambitious attempt to reconcile infrastructure expansion with wildlife conservation. If executed with scientific rigour and ecological sensitivity, it could emerge as a national benchmark for development in ecologically sensitive regions. However, its success will ultimately depend not on political messaging, but on long-term environmental outcomes, institutional accountability,

and community trust-core concerns for sustainable governance in India.

2. Trump's tariff threat over Greenland may imperil EU trade deal

Why in the news?

European Union leaders have warned that Donald Trump's threat to impose tariffs on European countries, linked to his demand to acquire Greenland, could derail the recently negotiated EU-U.S. trade deal. The warning followed Trump's announcement of tariffs of up to 25% on several European nations and protests by Greenlanders in Nuuk against U.S. policy.



Background

- Greenland is an autonomous territory of the Kingdom of Denmark, strategically located in the Arctic with growing geopolitical importance due to:
 - Melting ice and new shipping routes
 - Rare earth minerals
 - Military relevance in the North Atlantic
- The U.S. has long shown strategic interest in Greenland, but proposals to “purchase” it have been firmly rejected by Denmark and Greenlandic authorities.
- In July last year, Brussels and Washington reached a tentative EU–U.S. trade arrangement, easing tariff tensions that had persisted since Trump’s earlier presidency.
- Trump’s renewed tariff threats revive fears of a transatlantic trade confrontation.

Features

Tariff Threats

- Proposed 10%–25% tariffs on goods from Denmark, Germany, France, the UK, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, and Finland.
- Tariffs linked explicitly to geopolitical pressure over Greenland.

EU’s Response

- Joint statement by Ursula von der Leyen and Antonio Costa warning of a “dangerous downward spiral”.
- Extraordinary meeting of EU ambassadors convened in Brussels.

- Explicit solidarity with Denmark and the people of Greenland.

Political Fallout

- German MEP Manfred Weber stated that approval of the EU–U.S. trade deal is not possible under coercive threats.
- Demand to put 0% tariff concessions on U.S. products on hold.

Challenges

Erosion of Rules-Based Trade

- Using tariffs as leverage for territorial acquisition undermines WTO norms and international trade law.

Strain on Transatlantic Relations

- Risks reversing years of effort to stabilise EU–U.S. economic ties after previous trade wars.

Geopolitical Instability in the Arctic

- Greenland becoming a flashpoint may intensify great-power competition involving the U.S., the EU, and Russia.

Internal EU Economic Impact

- Export-oriented economies like Germany and the Netherlands are vulnerable to renewed U.S. tariffs.

Precedent Setting

- Coercive economic diplomacy may embolden similar tactics elsewhere globally.

Way Forward

Sustained Diplomatic Engagement

- Continue structured dialogue between the EU, Denmark, Greenland, and the U.S.

EU Unity

- Maintain a coordinated EU stance to prevent bilateral pressure on individual member states.

Trade Safeguards

- Prepare calibrated countermeasures under WTO-compatible frameworks if tariffs are imposed.

Arctic Governance

- Strengthen multilateral Arctic institutions to prevent unilateral geopolitical manoeuvring.

Strategic Autonomy

- Accelerate EU efforts towards trade diversification and reduced dependency on single markets.

Conclusion

Trump's tariff threat over Greenland marks a convergence of geopolitics and trade coercion, posing a serious test to transatlantic relations. While the EU has signalled unity and

restraint, prolonged uncertainty could derail hard-won trade compromises and destabilise Arctic geopolitics. For the EU, the episode reinforces the strategic importance of sovereignty, unity, and rule-based economic order in an increasingly transactional global system.

3. Amid interest burden, Telangana's total revenue receipts at 54.38% at end of Q3

Why in the news?

Telangana has reported total revenue receipts of ₹1.24 lakh crore (54.38%) by the end of the third quarter (Q3) of the financial year, even as interest payments on long-term debt continue to exert pressure on the State's finances, according to provisional data submitted to the Comptroller and Auditor General of India.

Revenue report

- More than half of the revenue receipts was due to borrowings and other liabilities

- Revenue through grants in aid and contributions remain significantly low at ₹3,805 crore

- Sales tax collections at the end of third quarter stood at ₹25,126 crore, 67.07% of ₹37,463 crore



- Excise duties remained relatively low in spite of expectations of a significant rise following hike in licence fee of retail sales outlets

- Expenditure on account of pension payment was on the higher side at ₹15,126 crore

- Expenditure on salaries was ₹35,746 crore, 80.37% of ₹44,478 crore of estimates

Background

- State governments in India rely on a mix of:
 - Own tax revenue (GST, excise, sales tax)
 - Non-tax revenue
 - Grants-in-aid from the Centre
 - Borrowings
- Telangana, since its formation in 2014, has pursued capital-intensive development and welfare schemes, leading to rising public debt.
- Increased borrowing has resulted in a higher interest burden, constraining fiscal flexibility.

Features

Revenue Receipts

- Total receipts: ₹1.24 lakh crore
- Share of Budget Estimates (BE): 54.38% of ₹2.24 lakh crore
- Borrowings & liabilities: ₹65,930 crore (more than 50% of receipts)

Tax Revenue Performance

- Total tax revenue: ₹1.13 lakh crore (65.02% of BE)
- Sales tax: ₹25,126 crore (67.07% of BE)
- State excise: ₹17,507 crore (63.38% of BE)

Grants-in-Aid

- Received: ₹3,805 crore
- Achievement: Only 16.7% of the projected ₹22,782 crore
- Indicates weaker-than-expected central transfers

Expenditure Trends

- Pension payments: ₹15,126 crore (on the higher side)
- Salaries and wages: ₹35,746 crore
- 80.37% of the annual Budget Estimates already spent by Q3

Challenges

Rising Interest Burden

- A large share of revenue is diverted towards interest payments, reducing space for development spending.

Dependence on Borrowings

- Over half of the receipts coming from loans and liabilities raises concerns about debt sustainability.

Low Grants-in-Aid

- Underperformance in central transfers affects welfare and capital expenditure planning.

Rigid Revenue Expenditure

- High spending on salaries and pensions limits fiscal manoeuvrability.

Fiscal Slippage Risk

- With only three months left, meeting annual revenue targets appears challenging.

Way Forward

Strengthen Own Tax Base

- Improve GST compliance, rationalise exemptions, and enhance excise efficiency.

Expenditure Rationalisation

- Control growth in revenue expenditure, especially pensions and administrative costs.

Debt Management Strategy

- Shift towards longer-maturity, lower-cost borrowing and limit off-budget liabilities.

Improve Centre–State Coordination

- Ensure timely release of grants and resolve pending devolution issues.

Outcome-Based Budgeting

- Prioritise high-impact capital expenditure over consumption-heavy spending.

Conclusion

Telangana's Q3 fiscal data reveals a structural stress between revenue mobilisation and debt servicing. While tax collections show relative strength, heavy reliance on borrowings and rising interest obligations pose long-term sustainability concerns. Addressing these challenges will require prudent debt management, improved fiscal discipline, and a recalibration of expenditure priorities-issues that are central to India's broader debate on state-level fiscal health.

4. Microscopic crustacean from Kavaratti established as a new genus and species

Why in the news?

A microscopic crustacean discovered in the Kavaratti lagoon of Lakshadweep has been formally established as a new genus and species, named *Indiaphonte bijoyi*. The discovery, published in the journal *Zootaxa*, highlights India's rich but underexplored marine micro-biodiversity.

Background

- Meiofauna are tiny aquatic organisms, less than 1 mm in size, living in sediments of marine and freshwater ecosystems.
- Among them, copepods form a crucial component of benthic food webs.
- The family Laophontidae belongs to the order Harpacticoida under the class Copepoda and is known for:
 - High taxonomic diversity

- Ecological importance in nutrient cycling and sediment health
- Lakshadweep's lagoons are biodiversity-rich but scientifically under-sampled, especially for microscopic fauna.



Features

Taxonomic Significance

- Genus and species: *Indiaphonte bijoyi*
- Family: Laophontidae

- Class: Copepoda
- Status: Entirely new genus due to a unique combination of morphological traits

Morphological Characteristics

- Semi-cylindrical, dorsoventrally depressed body
- Widest at the middle, tapering posteriorly
- Antenna-like appendages at the anterior end
- Sexual dimorphism: Females are slightly larger than males
- Size: 518–772 micrometres (microscopic)

Naming Significance

- Indiaphonte - honours India
- Bijoyi - named after S. Bijoy Nandan, former Vice-Chancellor of Kannur University

Researchers Involved

- Cochin University of Science and Technology (Cusat)
- Collaboration with UNAM University
- Illustrates growing international cooperation in taxonomy

Ecological Importance

- Part of the meiofaunal communities that:
 - Regulate microbial populations
 - Aid in nutrient recycling
 - Serve as food for higher trophic organisms

- Indicators of sediment quality and ecosystem health
- Despite their size, they play a disproportionately large ecological role

Challenges

Taxonomic Neglect

- Microscopic organisms receive far less attention than megafauna.

Limited Expertise

- Shortage of trained taxonomists in India, especially in marine meiofauna.

Threats to Habitat

- Climate change, coral bleaching, and lagoon pollution threaten fragile ecosystems.

Conservation Blind Spots

- Microscopic biodiversity is rarely factored into environmental impact assessments.

Way Forward

Strengthen Taxonomic Research

- Invest in microscopy, molecular taxonomy, and training programmes.

Marine Biodiversity Mapping

- Expand systematic surveys of lagoons and sediments in island ecosystems.

Integrate Meiofauna into Policy

- Include microscopic biodiversity in coastal regulation and conservation frameworks.

Promote International Collaboration

- Encourage joint research with global institutions to address expertise gaps.

Public Awareness

- Highlight the ecological value of invisible biodiversity alongside flagship species.

Conclusion

The identification of *Indiaphonte bijoyi* from Lakshadweep underscores the hidden richness of India's marine ecosystems and the importance of foundational taxonomic science. In an era of accelerating ecological change, understanding and conserving even the smallest life forms is essential for sustaining ecosystem resilience. The discovery is not merely a taxonomic milestone but a reminder that biodiversity conservation begins at the microscopic level.

5. India Invited to Join Gaza Peace Board

Why in the News?

The United States President Donald Trump has invited India to join the proposed Board of Peace for Gaza, a multilateral body envisaged under his peace plan for post-war Gaza. A formal invitation was conveyed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, though New Delhi has not yet responded. The Board is expected to oversee governance and funding for Gaza's redevelopment until the Palestinian Authority completes a reform programme.



Background

- The Gaza conflict, following Israel– Hamas hostilities, created a governance vacuum and a humanitarian catastrophe in the Gaza Strip.

- The Trump peace plan, first articulated during talks with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in September 2025, seeks to:
 - Remove Hamas from governance.
 - Establish a temporary transitional governance run by a technocratic, apolitical Palestinian committee.
- This transitional setup will function under the supervision of the proposed Board of Peace, led by Mr Trump and including other heads of state and figures such as Tony Blair.
- The Board would also manage international funding for Gaza's reconstruction until the Palestinian Authority completes internal reforms.
- A separate International Stabilisation Force (ISF) is planned, though India has clarified it will not participate as it is not a UN-mandated peacekeeping mission.

Features

Governance Framework:

- Temporary technocratic Palestinian administration.
- Oversight by the Board of Peace, comprising select countries and leaders.

Reconstruction & Funding:

- Board to coordinate and channel funds for Gaza's redevelopment.

Security Arrangement:

- Deployment of an ISF with troops from willing countries (outside UN peacekeeping).

Diplomatic Outreach:

- Invitations reportedly extended to India, Jordan, Greece, Cyprus, and Pakistan

India's Position So Far:

- India has welcomed the first phase of the peace plan diplomatically but remains non-committal on joining the Board.

Challenges

Strategic Ambiguity for India

- Joining a U.S.-led, non-UN mechanism may constrain India's strategic autonomy and balanced West Asia policy.

Legitimacy Concerns

- The absence of UN authorisation could raise questions about international legitimacy and neutrality.

Regional Sensitivities

- Arab public opinion, internal Palestinian politics, and reactions from Iran-aligned groups could complicate outcomes.

Governance Viability

- Ensuring that a technocratic Palestinian body functions effectively without grassroots legitimacy is uncertain.

Security Risks

- Without durable ceasefire arrangements, reconstruction and governance may remain vulnerable.

Way Forward

- **Calibrated Diplomacy:** India can seek clarity on mandate, duration, decision-making powers, and exit clauses before responding.
- **UN-Centric Approach:** Advocate alignment with UN resolutions and humanitarian principles to enhance legitimacy.
- **Development-Focused Role:** If involved, India could limit participation to reconstruction, capacity-building, and humanitarian assistance rather than security.
- **Stakeholder Consultation:** Engage with Arab partners, Israel, and Palestinian representatives to maintain balance.
- **Normative Consistency:** Uphold India's long-standing support for a two-state solution and Palestinian self-determination.

Conclusion

India's invitation to the Gaza Peace Board reflects its rising global diplomatic profile and credibility as a responsible stakeholder. However, participation involves complex geopolitical, legal, and ethical considerations. A cautious, principle-based response, anchored in multilateralism, humanitarian priorities, and strategic

autonomy, will allow India to contribute constructively without undermining its long-standing West Asia policy or global standing.

6. India's Power Distribution Utilities Turn Profitable

Why in the News?

India's power distribution utilities - including State-run distribution companies (DISCOMs) and power departments- posted a net profit of ₹2,701 crore in FY 2024–25, reversing decades of persistent losses. This turnaround follows a sharp reduction in losses by State DISCOMs and coincides with the government's intent to table the Electricity Amendment Bill, 2026, which officials believe will further consolidate financial sustainability in the sector.

Background

- Power distribution has historically been the weakest link in India's electricity value chain.
- After the unbundling and corporatisation of State Electricity Boards (SEBs) in the early 2000s, DISCOMs continued to suffer from:
 - High Aggregate Technical & Commercial (AT&C) losses
 - Tariff distortions and delayed subsidies
 - Power theft, billing inefficiencies, and mounting dues to generators
- Losses peaked at ₹67,692 crore in FY 2013–14 and remained substantial at ₹25,553 crore in FY 2023–24.

- A series of structural, financial, and regulatory reforms over the past decade has gradually altered this trajectory.



Features

Sharp Reduction in Losses

- State DISCOMs reduced their after-tax losses by around 80% between FY 2023 and FY 2025.
- This was the primary driver behind the sector's net profitability.

Improved Efficiency Indicators

- AT&C losses declined from 22.62% (FY 2013–14) to 15.04% (FY 2024–25).
- Reflects improvements in metering, billing, collection efficiency, and reduced theft.

Narrowing Cost–Revenue Gap

- The ACS–ARR gap reduced from ₹0.78/unit (FY 2013–14) to ₹0.06/unit (FY 2024–25).
- Indicates that DISCOMs are close to recovering their full cost of supply.

Discipline in Payments

- The Electricity (Late Payment Surcharge) Rules led to a 96% reduction in outstanding dues to power generators.
- Dues declined from ₹1.35 lakh crore (2022) to ₹4,927 crore (Jan 2025).
- Payment cycles improved from 178 days (FY 2020–21) to 113 days (FY 2024–25).

Policy Push

- According to Union Power Minister Manohar Lal, the sector's improved performance reflects sustained corrective measures.
- The Ministry of Power expects the proposed Electricity Amendment Bill to accelerate reforms.

Challenges

Structural Fragility

- Profitability remains thin and vulnerable to tariff freezes and delayed subsidy payments by States.

Political Economy of Tariffs

- Free or subsidised power to agriculture and households continues to strain finances.

Regional Disparities

- Financial health varies widely across States; gains are uneven.

Energy Transition Pressures

- Integration of renewables and decentralised generation may increase grid management costs.

Dependence on Government Support

- Long-term sustainability without repeated bailout packages remains uncertain.

Way Forward

Legislative Reform

- Passage of the Electricity Amendment Bill, 2026, to enhance competition, consumer choice, and accountability.

Targeted Subsidies

- Shift from blanket subsidies to Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) of electricity subsidies.

Technology Adoption

- Accelerate smart metering, prepaid meters, and AI-based loss detection.

Strengthening Regulation

- Empower State Electricity Regulatory Commissions (SERCs) to enforce cost-reflective tariffs.

Federal Coordination

- Align State-level political incentives with long-term sectoral viability.

Conclusion

The posting of net profits by India's power distribution utilities in FY 2024–25 marks a structural inflexion point rather than a mere accounting milestone. Sustained efficiency gains, regulatory discipline, and policy continuity have begun to correct a historically loss-making segment.

7. India–Germany Ties Can Only Soar Higher

Why in the News?

Germany's Ambassador to India, Philipp Ackermann, highlighted the deepening India–Germany strategic partnership following German Chancellor Friedrich Merz's visit to India. The visit - marked symbolically by kite-flying with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Ahmedabad - underscored growing convergence on trade, global order, migration, and long-term strategic cooperation.

The visit also comes ahead of 75 years of diplomatic relations in 2026.

Background

- India and Germany established diplomatic relations in 1951.
- Over the decades, ties have evolved from trade-centric engagement to a comprehensive strategic partnership, covering:
 - Trade and investment
 - Climate action and energy transition
 - Science, education, and innovation
 - Skilled migration and mobility

- Defence and global governance
- Both countries are stakeholders in a rules-based international order, currently under strain due to trade disruptions, geopolitical conflicts, and weakening multilateral institutions.



Features

Economic Convergence

- India and Germany are the 4th and 3rd largest economies globally (in nominal terms).
- India is projected to overtake Germany in the coming years — a shift Germany publicly welcomes.
- Germany views India as:
 - A growing market for high-end manufacturing and technology
 - A reliable partner amid global supply-chain reconfiguration

Push for the EU–India Free Trade Agreement

- Chancellor Merz strongly advocated a European Union–India Free Trade Agreement.

The FTA is seen as critical to:

- Enhancing economic resilience
- Countering protectionism and trade wars
- Diversifying supply chains

Migration and Mobility Partnership

- Germany continues to welcome skilled Indian professionals and students.
- The migration partnership is based on:
 - Safe, legal, and predictable migration
 - Language training and skill certification
- This aligns with India's demographic dividend and Germany's ageing workforce.

Strategic and Defence Cooperation

Growing interest in:

- Defence industrial collaboration
- Maritime security
- Technology sharing
- Germany sees India as a stabilising force in the Indo-Pacific.

People-to-People and Cultural Ties

- Education, language learning, academic exchanges, and innovation ecosystems form the social foundation of bilateral ties.
- The kite-flying imagery symbolised trust, adaptability, and partnership under global headwinds.

Challenges

- Delay in EU–India FTA negotiations, due to regulatory, labour, and environmental standards.
- Geopolitical pressures, including differing approaches within Europe on China and Russia.
- Migration management, balancing domestic political sensitivities with economic needs.
- Asymmetry in awareness, as India remains less visible in German public discourse compared to transatlantic partners.

Way Forward

- Conclude the EU–India Free Trade Agreement to unlock trade and investment potential.
- Deepen defence and security cooperation, especially in high-technology and joint manufacturing.
- Expand skilled mobility pathways, including mutual recognition of qualifications.
- Strengthen innovation partnerships in green hydrogen, AI, Industry 4.0, and climate technologies.
- Leverage multilateral platforms (G20, UN reforms, climate negotiations) for joint global leadership.

- Use the 2026 Platinum Jubilee as a launchpad for a long-term strategic roadmap.

Conclusion

India–Germany relations are entering a phase of strategic maturity, shaped not by temporary global shocks but by deliberate long-term alignment. As two economic heavyweights committed to openness, innovation, and rule-based order, their partnership is well-positioned to shape the future of global growth and governance.

8. How should India tackle child trafficking?

Why in the News?

Child trafficking has returned to national focus after the Supreme Court of India, in *K.P. Kiran Kumar vs State*, issued stringent guidelines to prevent trafficking and categorically held that child trafficking amounts to a gross violation of the fundamental right to life under Article 21.

Recent data highlights the scale of the problem:

- 3,098 children rescued in 2022 (NCRB)
- Over 53,000 children rescued (April 2024–March 2025) from child labour, trafficking and kidnapping
- Conviction rate (2018–2022): only 4.8%

This sharp gap between rescue and conviction has raised concerns about enforcement, deterrence, and institutional coordination.



Background: What is Child Trafficking?

Palermo Protocol (International Framework)

The UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (2000), commonly known as the Palermo Protocol, defines child trafficking as: Recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for exploitation. A crucial principle is that consent of the child is irrelevant, recognising children's inherent vulnerability.

Legal Framework in India

Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023

- Section 143 defines trafficking as recruitment, transportation, harbouring or receipt of persons for exploitation using coercion, fraud, deception, abuse of power or inducement.

Exploitation includes:

- Physical and sexual exploitation
- Slavery, servitude, forced labour
- Forced removal of organs
- Consent is immaterial, especially in cases involving minors.

Additionally:

- Sections 98 & 99 criminalise the selling and buying of minors.

Constitutional Protection of Children

The Constitution provides multi-layered safeguards:

- Article 23: Prohibits human trafficking, forced labour and begar
- Article 24: Prohibits employment of children in hazardous industries
- Article 39(e): Protection of children from abuse
- Article 39(f): Ensures development with dignity and protection from exploitation

- Article 21: Right to life with dignity, now explicitly linked to freedom from trafficking by judicial interpretation

These provisions impose a positive obligation on the State, not merely a negative restraint.

Supporting Statutory Framework

- Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 – Sexual exploitation
- Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 – Care, rehabilitation, reintegration

POCSO Act, 2012

- Gender-neutral
- Stringent punishments (including life imprisonment, death penalty in rare cases)
- ~400 Fast Track POCSO Courts with disposal targets
- Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013 – Expanded trafficking definition, consent irrelevant

Judicial Approach So Far

The judiciary has consistently adopted a preventive and rights-based approach:

- Vishal Jeet vs Union of India (1990): Recognised trafficking and child prostitution as socio-economic evils requiring humanistic intervention
- M.C. Mehta vs State of Tamil Nadu (1996): Prohibited child labour in hazardous industries

- Bachpan Bachao Andolan vs Union of India (2011): Issued comprehensive directions on rescue, rehabilitation and prevention
- K.P. Kiran Kumar vs State (2024–25): Linked trafficking directly to violation of Article 21

Challenges

Socio-economic Vulnerability

- Poverty, unemployment, migration, and disasters
- Breakdown of family support systems
- Disproportionate impact on marginalised communities

Low Conviction Rates

- Poor investigation quality
- Weak inter-State coordination
- Witness hostility and delayed trials

Digital and Online Recruitment

- Social media traps via fake job, modelling and entertainment offers

Fragmented Governance

- Law and order is a State subject, while trafficking networks operate inter-State and transnationally

Way Forward

Strengthen Social Protection

- Universal access to education, nutrition, and healthcare
- Focus on migrant, urban poor and disaster-affected families

Improve Investigation & Conviction

- Specialised anti-trafficking units
- Victim-centric investigation and witness protection
- Fast-tracking trafficking cases beyond POCSO

Regulate Digital Spaces

- Monitoring online recruitment platforms
- Stronger cyber-policing and awareness campaigns

Centre–State Cooperation (Why It Matters)

- Trafficking routes cut across States

Central agencies can:

- Share intelligence
- Standardise SOPs
- Fund capacity building
- States ensure ground-level enforcement. A cooperative federal response is essential for dismantling trafficking networks.

Rehabilitation & Reintegration

- Long-term psychosocial support
- Skill development and education

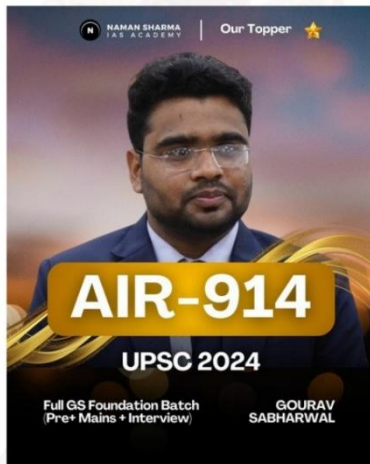
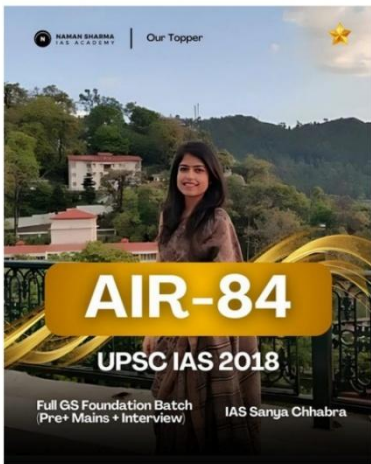
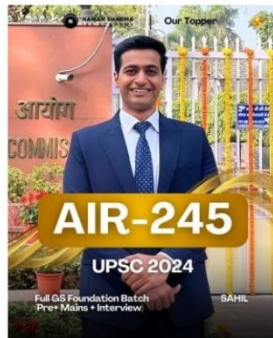
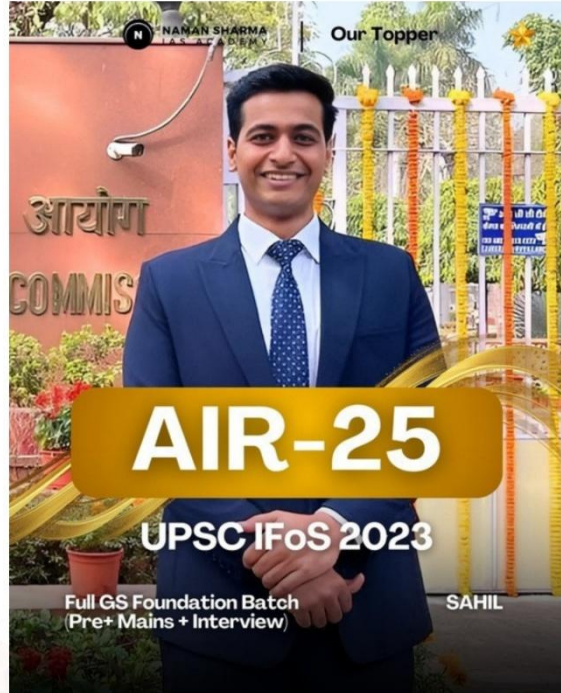
- Community-based reintegration to prevent re-trafficking

Conclusion

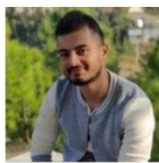
Child trafficking is not merely a criminal offence but a constitutional failure. The recent Supreme Court guidelines reaffirm that children's dignity, liberty and development lie at the heart of Article 21. While India has a robust legal framework, implementation, conviction and coordination remain weak links.



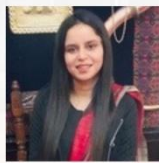
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AIR-4, HPAS 2022



Anshul Shandil
AIR-7, HPPCS 2019



Arshiya Sharma
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- Mode: Offline/Hybrid/Online
- Medium: Hinglish (Notes in English)
- Timings:

Morning: 9 AM - 1 PM

Evening: 4 PM - 8 PM

Enrollment Process:

- Visit Our Website: **Naman IAS Academy**
- Call us at **+91-843-768-6541**
for Free Seminar

Free UPSC seminar

Saturday, 4PM



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