



**NAMAN SHARMA**  
IAS ACADEMY

# Daily

# **CURRENT AFFAIRS**

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# 1. SC asks the government. to consider a plea to treat ‘racial slur’ as a hate crime

## Why in the News?

The Supreme Court of India has asked the Union government to consider a plea seeking recognition of “racial slur” as a separate category of hate crime.

The Bench, led by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, expressed reservations about classifying crimes solely based on race or regional identity, cautioning that such categorisation could deepen social polarisation.

## Background

**The Incident:** The case arose after Anjel Chakma was allegedly attacked by a group of men in Uttarakhand after resisting heckling while shopping with his brother. He later succumbed to injuries.

### The petition highlighted his words:

“We are Indians. What certificate should we show to prove that?”  
Constitutional Framework

## India’s Constitution guarantees:

- Constitution of India – Article 14: Equality before law
- Article 15: Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth
- Article 21: Protection of life and personal liberty

However, India does not have a standalone statutory definition of “hate crime” based on race or ethnicity.

## Criminal Law Context

- The petitioner argued that the recently enacted Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, does not adequately address hate crimes or racial discrimination.

Currently, offences involving hate speech or communal disharmony are covered under provisions related to:

- Promoting enmity between groups
- Outraging religious feelings
- Unlawful assembly and assault

But there is no specific legal recognition of “racial slur” as a distinct offence category.

## Features

### Supreme Court’s Observations

- The Court disagreed with “pigeonholing” crime based on race or region.
- It emphasised that crime, irrespective of identity, must be dealt with firmly.
- Concern that identity-based categorisation could divide society.

The Court asked the Attorney-General to refer the plea to an appropriate authority for consideration.

## Issue of Hate Crimes in India

Citizens from northeastern States often report:

- Racial slurs related to physical appearance
- Stereotyping and exclusion
- Targeted violence

Unlike countries such as the United States or the United Kingdom, India does not have a codified hate crime statute that enhances punishment based on bias motivation.

## **Legal vs Social Approach**

The Court's concern suggests:

- Over-fragmentation of criminal categories may:
  - Politicise identity
  - Increase regional fault lines
- Instead, strict enforcement of general criminal law may suffice.

**This reflects a tension between:**

- Universal equality before the law vs
- Targeted legal protection for vulnerable groups.

## **Challenges**

### **Absence of Clear Definition**

- "Hate crime" lacks a statutory definition in India.
- Enforcement agencies may struggle to classify bias-motivated crimes.

### **Underreporting**

- Victims may hesitate to report racial discrimination.
- Social stigma and fear of retaliation.

### **Balancing Unity and Recognition**

- Recognising hate crimes could:
  - Provide targeted protection.
  - But may also:
  - Reinforce identity-based divisions.

### **Implementation Gaps**

- Police sensitisation remains inadequate.
- Need for better data collection on bias crimes.

## **Way Forward**

### **Legislative Review**

- Parliament may consider:
  - Introducing bias-based sentencing enhancements.
  - Defining hate crime in the BNS.

### **Police & Judicial Sensitisation**

- Training on racial profiling and discrimination.
- Standard operating procedures for hate-based offences.

### **Data Collection Mechanism**

- NCRB to create a dedicated category for:
  - Racially motivated violence
  - Regional discrimination

### **Public Awareness & Education**

- National campaigns promoting unity in diversity.
- Anti-racism sensitisation in schools and universities.

### **Strengthening Article 15 Enforcement**

- Clearer enforcement guidelines for discrimination cases.

### **Conclusion**

The Supreme Court's remarks reflect a delicate constitutional balance: ensuring equality before the law while avoiding identity-based fragmentation of criminal jurisprudence. The tragic death of Anjel Chakma highlights that racial prejudice remains a lived reality for many citizens. Whether through separate categorisation or stronger enforcement of existing laws, India must ensure that constitutional guarantees of dignity and equality are not merely aspirational but operational.

## **2. Bengaluru firm unveils two AI language models**

### **Why in the News?**

Sarvam AI, a Bengaluru-based artificial intelligence startup, has unveiled two large language models (LLMs) named Vikram at the AI Impact Summit in New Delhi. The launch comes months after the Union government announced plans to develop an indigenous LLM under the IndiaAI Mission, positioning this development as a milestone in India's AI self-reliance journey. The models-35-billion parameter and 105-billion parameter versions are open source and claim to outperform comparable global models on industry benchmarks. However, they are not yet publicly available.

### **Background**

#### **Rise of Large Language Models (LLMs)**

Large Language Models (LLMs) such as:

- ChatGPT by OpenAI
- DeepSeek R1 by DeepSeek

- Gemini by Google

have transformed the AI landscape by enabling machines to understand and generate human-like text. These models are trained on massive datasets using high-performance Graphics Processing Units (GPUs) in data centres.

Training such models:

- Requires billions of parameters.
- Costs millions of dollars.
- Needs advanced computational infrastructure and skilled human resources.

## India's AI Ambition

The Government of India, through the IndiaAI Mission, aims to:

- Build sovereign AI infrastructure.
- Reduce dependence on foreign AI systems.
- Promote AI innovation tailored to Indian needs.
- Provide subsidised GPU access through a “common compute” facility.

Initially, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) emphasised AI inference capabilities rather than full-scale model training. However, after the global attention around DeepSeek's R1 model, the government signalled its intent to support indigenous LLM training.



## Features

### Model Specifications

- 35-billion parameter model
- 105-billion parameter model

- Open-source framework
- Benchmark claims of outperforming comparable global models

### **The large parameter size indicates improved:**

- Context understanding
- Complex reasoning
- Multilingual generation

### **Focus on Indian Languages**

One of the primary objectives of Vikram is to improve performance in Indian languages, which are underrepresented in global AI training datasets.

### **Why is this important?**

- Most global LLMs are heavily trained on English and Western-language corpora.
- Indian languages suffer from:
  - Limited digitised content
  - Scarcity of annotated datasets
  - Script complexity
  - Code-mixed usage (e.g., Hinglish)

### **Open-Source Approach**

Unlike some proprietary models, Vikram is announced as open source, potentially enabling:

- Academic research
- Startup innovation
- Government applications
- Customised domain-specific AI tools

Open-source AI aligns with India's broader digital public infrastructure philosophy (e.g., UPI, Aadhaar stack).

### **Financial & Institutional Backing**

#### **Sarvam AI received:**

- Over \$50 million from private investors such as Peak XV and Khosla Ventures.
- Subsidised GPU access under the IndiaAI Mission's common compute program.

### **Significance for India**

#### **Strategic Technological Sovereignty**

AI is increasingly viewed as:

- A strategic technology
- A national security asset
- A driver of economic competitiveness

#### **Developing indigenous LLMs reduces:**

- Dependence on foreign platforms
- Risks of data localisation issues
- Exposure to geopolitical tech restrictions

#### **Boost to Startup Ecosystem**

Bengaluru, often called India's Silicon Valley, now adds advanced AI model development to its portfolio. This strengthens:

- Deep-tech innovation

- Venture capital confidence
- Talent retention within India

## **Inclusive Digital Transformation**

### **A strong Indian-language LLM can support:**

- E-governance in vernacular languages
- Digital literacy expansion
- Rural entrepreneurship
- AI-driven agricultural advisories
- Judiciary and health translation tools

This aligns with the vision of “AI for All.”

## **Challenges**

### **Despite the milestone, several structural and operational challenges remain:**

#### **High Computational Costs**

- GPU access remains expensive.
- India is dependent on imported semiconductor hardware.
- Data centre infrastructure must scale significantly.

#### **Data Scarcity in Indian Languages**

- Lack of high-quality, structured datasets.
- Dialect diversity complicates standardisation.
- Ethical concerns around scraping and data usage.

#### **Benchmark Transparency**

##### **Claims of outperforming global models require:**

- Transparent evaluation methodologies.
- Independent validation.
- Standardised benchmarking systems.

#### **Public Availability & Accessibility**

- Models are not yet publicly accessible.
- Real-world performance in diverse use cases remains to be tested.

#### **Regulatory and Ethical Concerns**

- AI bias and misinformation.
- Deepfake risks.
- Privacy and data protection.
- Need for responsible AI governance frameworks.

## **Way Forward**

### **Strengthen IndiaAI Mission**

- Expand subsidised computer access.

- Encourage indigenous GPU manufacturing.
- Create national AI research clusters.

### **Build Indian Language Data Commons**

- Digitise classical and regional texts.
- Collaborate with universities.
- Incentivise public dataset contributions.
- Create annotated corpora for low-resource languages.

### **Transparent Benchmarking & Evaluation**

- Develop Indian AI benchmark standards.
- Encourage peer-reviewed testing.
- Promote open audits of model performance.

### **Encourage Sector-Specific AI Applications**

#### **Deploy Vikram models in:**

- Agriculture (crop advisory chatbots)
- Education (multilingual tutoring)
- Judiciary (translation & summarisation)
- Healthcare (vernacular telemedicine)

### **Develop a Responsible AI Framework**

- Strengthen AI ethics guidelines.
- Align with global AI governance frameworks.
- Ensure compliance with India's data protection laws.

### **Conclusion**

The unveiling of Sarvam AI's Vikram models marks a significant step in India's journey toward AI self-reliance. While not yet publicly accessible, the models signal India's entry into the elite league of nations capable of building large-scale language models.

## **3. South African cheetah gives birth to three cubs in Kuno**

### **Why in the News?**

Cheetah conservation efforts in India have received a boost as a South African cheetah named Gamini gave birth to three cubs at Kuno National Park.

With this birth, the total cheetah population in India has risen to 38, according to Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav. This marks the ninth successful cheetah litter at Kuno, underlining the progress of India's ambitious cheetah reintroduction programme.

### **Background**

#### **Extinction and Reintroduction**

- The cheetah became extinct in India in 1952 due to:
  - Excessive hunting
  - Habitat loss
  - Decline in prey base

- Under Project Cheetah, India reintroduced African cheetahs in 2022.
- Initial translocations were:
  - 8 cheetahs from Namibia
  - 12 cheetahs from South

**Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh was selected due to:**

- Suitable grassland ecosystem
- Adequate prey base
- Low human disturbance
- Large contiguous habitat



**Recent Developments**

- Earlier this month, five cubs were born to Namibian cheetah Aasha.
- With Gamini’s three cubs:
- Total cheetahs in India = 38
- 27 India-born cubs
- 11 adult translocated cheetahs

Apart from Kuno, three adult cheetahs have been shifted to Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh, marking the beginning of spatial expansion.

**Features**

**First Intercontinental Carnivore Translocation**

Project Cheetah is:

- The world’s first intercontinental large carnivore translocation project.
- A milestone in India’s wildlife management history.

**Ecological Objectives**

- Restore grassland ecosystems.
- Enhance biodiversity.
- Revive prey-predator balance.
- Promote eco-tourism and local livelihood.

Cheetahs are considered a flagship species for open forest and grassland restoration.

## **Growing Population**

### **The increase to 38 cheetahs indicates:**

- Successful adaptation to the Indian habitat.
- Improvement in breeding success.
- Effective monitoring and veterinary care.

Nine successful litters suggest stabilisation of the breeding population.

## **Challenges**

### **Despite progress, several challenges remain:**

#### **Mortality Concerns**

- Some adult cheetahs and cubs died in earlier phases due to:
  - Heat stress
  - Infections
  - Adaptation difficulties

#### **Habitat Limitations**

- Kuno alone may not sustain a long-term viable population.
- Need for additional landscapes and corridors.

#### **Human-Wildlife Interface**

- Risk of livestock predation.
- Potential conflict with local communities.

#### **Genetic Management**

- Limited founding population.
- Need for periodic genetic infusion to prevent inbreeding.

## **Way Forward**

### **Landscape Expansion**

- Develop Gandhi Sagar and other potential sites.
- Create wildlife corridors between habitats.

### **Community Participation**

- Compensation mechanisms for livestock loss.
- Eco-tourism revenue sharing.
- Local employment in conservation efforts.

### **Scientific Monitoring**

- Radio-collaring and satellite tracking.
- Veterinary infrastructure strengthening.

- Climate adaptation planning.

### **Long-Term Genetic Strategy**

- Periodic introduction of unrelated individuals from Africa.
- Collaborative conservation agreements with Namibia and South Africa.

### **Conclusion**

The birth of three cubs to Gamini at Kuno National Park marks another encouraging step in India's cheetah reintroduction journey. From being declared extinct in 1952 to reaching a population of 38 today, the cheetah's return represents ecological restoration, scientific ambition, and conservation resilience. However, sustained success will depend on habitat expansion, scientific management, and community engagement. If effectively implemented, Project Cheetah could become a global model for species reintroduction and grassland ecosystem revival.

## **4. India's moment to restore balance to copyright**

### **Why in the News?**

The article "India's moment to restore balance to copyright" by Pranesh Prakash has gained relevance in the context of the India AI Impact Summit 2026 held in New Delhi.

The author argues that India must reform its copyright regime to address emerging challenges posed by Artificial Intelligence (AI), particularly in relation to AI training, web crawling, and text and data mining (TDM)

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### **Background**

#### **Historical Evolution of Copyright**

- Copyright law was originally intended to:
- Encourage creativity.
- Provide limited monopoly rights to authors.
- Eventually, enrich the public domain.

#### **Key milestones:**

- Statute of Anne (1710, Britain) – First copyright law; 14-year limited monopoly with renewal.
- Copyright was introduced in India in 1847 by the British.
- India's current Copyright Act, 1957.
- Today, copyright protection lasts for the author's lifetime + 70 years.

#### **Over time, copyright has shifted from:**

- A limited incentive mechanism to
- A near-automatic, long-lasting monopoly regime.

## The Marrakesh Treaty Experience

The author narrates how copyright restrictions prevented visually impaired persons from accessing books in accessible formats such as DAISY (Digital Accessible Information System).

This led to international advocacy culminating in the Marrakesh Treaty, which:

- Enables cross-border exchange of accessible-format books.
- Allows copyright exceptions for visually impaired persons

## Features

### AI and Copyright Conflict

Generative AI models:

- Require massive datasets.
- Depend on web crawling (copying publicly available content).
- Use copyrighted works for statistical training.

**However:**

- In many countries, web crawling and AI training may violate copyright law.
- According to a LIRNEasia study, in 4 out of 7 South and Southeast Asian countries, AI training is effectively illegal due to copyright restrictions.

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**India provides a limited exception for:**

- “Transient or incidental storage” for providing electronic links (2012 amendment).

But lacks:

- A broad, flexible text and data mining (TDM) exception

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## International Comparisons

**Countries adopting flexible copyright approaches:**

- European Union – TDM exceptions.
- Japan – Allows data analysis use not intended for enjoying creative expression.
- Singapore – Flexible, open-ended exception.
- United States – Fair use doctrine

## Copyright’s Expanding Scope

**Under current law:**

- Protection is automatic.
- Covers all forms of creative expression.
- Lasts for decades beyond the author’s death.

**The author argues this undermines:**

- Innovation
  - Access to knowledge
  - Technological progress
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## Distinguishing AI Training from Creativity

**AI systems:**

- Do not “enjoy” creative works.
- Process them as statistical data.
- Use them for pattern recognition.

**Thus, AI training should not be equated with:**

- Human reading.
- Commercial reproduction.

## **Challenges**

### **Legal Uncertainty in India**

- Absence of a broad TDM exception.
- No flexible “fair use” model.
- Ambiguity discourages AI research and investment.

### **Tension Between Creators and Technology Firms**

- Concerns about generative AI replacing creative labour.
- Fear of economic displacement in arts and culture.

### **Risk of Copyright Weaponisation**

#### **Past examples include:**

- Blocking assistive technologies (e.g., Kindle’s Read Aloud feature).
- Restricting accessible book formats.

#### **Rigid enforcement may:**

- Slow technological adoption.
- Harm public interest.

### **Weak Public Domain**

#### **With extended copyright duration:**

- The public domain shrinks.
- Commons-based innovation declines.
- Access barriers increase.

## **Way Forward**

### **Introduce Broad Text and Data Mining (TDM) Exception**

#### **India should:**

- Explicitly allow AI training on publicly available content.
- Clarify that machine-based uses are exempt.
- Reduce legal ambiguity.

### **Adopt a Flexible, Open-Ended Fair Use Provision**

#### **A general exception (like in the US or Singapore) would:**

- Future-proof copyright law.
- Accommodate emerging technologies.
- Prevent repeated legislative amendments.

### **Promote Open-Licensed AI Models**

#### **Encourage:**

- Open-source AI datasets.
- Publicly funded commons-based AI resources.
- Government-curated datasets for social good.

Safe harbour provisions should protect:

### **Address Creative Labour Concerns Separately Instead of tightening copyright:**

- Provide government grants for arts and culture.
- Consider taxation of large AI firms.
- Strengthen cooperative and collective rights models.

### **Restore Balance Between Monopoly and Commons Copyright should:**

- Encourage contributions to the commons.
- Facilitate innovation.
- Protect genuine commercial exploitation.
- Avoid blanket prohibitions on machine learning uses.

### **Conclusion**

The AI era presents a historic inflexion point for copyright reform. The article argues that India, by hosting the AI Impact Summit, has a unique opportunity to lead globally in restoring balance to copyright law.

## **5. At the last frontier of thought: will AI kill creativity? Why in the News?**

The article “At the last frontier of thought: will AI kill creativity?” by Shelley Walia has gained relevance amid the rapid integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into education, research, and public discourse. The piece interrogates whether the growing reliance on generative AI tools is eroding creativity, critical thinking, scholarly integrity, and democratic culture. With AI tools now widely used by students, researchers, and professionals, the debate has shifted from technological capability to cognitive and ethical consequences.

### **Background**

#### **Education and the Cultivation of Thought**

The author recalls an earlier pedagogical model where:

- Essay writing required sustained engagement.
- Reading novels and plays fostered interpretative imagination.
- Research demanded independent inquiry in physical libraries.

#### **This model emphasised:**

- Intellectual discipline
- Curiosity
- Original thought

#### **In contrast, AI-enabled environments prioritise:**

- Speed
- Efficiency
- Output metrics over reflection

## AI and the “Product” Fallacy

### The article critiques the assumption that:

Writing is a product rather than an existential act of human understanding.

AI systems generate text rapidly, but this:

- Encourages outsourcing cognitive labour.
- Creates an illusion of knowledge.
- Replaces engagement with retrieval

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## Features

### Cognitive Atrophy and Intellectual Regression

#### The author argues that:

- Earlier generations wrestled with difficult questions.
- Research involved discovery, not instant search.
- Intellectual growth emerged from effort and uncertainty.

#### Overreliance on AI risks:

- Reduced independent thinking.
- Diminished curiosity.
- Cognitive atrophy

### Scholarly Erosion in Research

#### The article raises serious concerns about:

- AI-generated academic papers.

- “Phantom citations.”
- Fabricated or misattributed references.
- Overburdened peer-review systems.

### **AI-generated content may:**

- Slip through editorial checks.
- Enter research databases.
- Amplify misinformation.

### **This undermines:**

- Verification norms.
- Scholarly credibility.
- Ethical research standards

### **AI Hallucination vs Human Imagination**

A central philosophical argument:

- AI “hallucinations” are statistical predictions.
- Human imagination is shaped by lived experience, memory, and emotion.

### **Reducing imagination to probability:**

- Shrinks the meaning of humanity.
- Mechanises creativity

### **Democracy, Language, and the Humanities**

#### **The article draws a powerful link:**

The death of language is the death of democracy.

AI-driven propaganda, deepfakes, and targeted messaging can:

- Manipulate emotions.
- Spread misinformation.
- Weaken critical resistance.

### **Simultaneously, universities are:**

- Prioritising STEM.
- Marginalising the humanities.
- Becoming “corporate skills factories.”

### **The humanities are presented as:**

- The bedrock of conscience.
  - Guardians of interpretative reasoning.
  - Defenders of democratic discourse
- Pasted text

## **Challenges**

### **Overdependence on AI in Education**

- Students bypass reflective learning.
- Writing becomes outsourced.
- Deep reading declines.

## Research Integrity Crisis

- Peer review systems are strained.
- Fabricated citations proliferate.
- Academic inflation distorts merit.

## Democratic Vulnerability

- AI-powered misinformation.
- Emotional micro-targeting.
- Deepfake manipulation.

## Marginalisation of Humanities

- Budget cuts to arts and literature.
- Market-centric university models.
- Decline of language-based disciplines.

## Way Forward

### Rebalance AI Use in Education

- Encourage handwritten essays.
- Promote device-free learning hours.
- Restore deep reading culture.
- Redesign assessments to test critical thinking.

### Strengthen Research Governance

- AI-detection tools for journals.
- Stricter citation verification.
- Clear ethical guidelines on AI-assisted research.

### Protect Humanities as Democratic Safeguards

- Increase funding for arts and literature.
- Integrate the humanities with STEM.
- Promote interdisciplinary curricula.

### Develop Ethical AI Governance

- Regulate AI-driven misinformation.
- Promote transparency in algorithmic design.
- Encourage public-interest AI deployment.

### Promote AI as an Adjunct, Not a Substitute

#### AI should:

- Eliminate drudgery.
- Enhance creativity.
- Expand access to knowledge.

#### But it must not:

- Replace the human act of thinking.
- Undermine linguistic agency.

- Erode imaginative labour

## Conclusion

The article frames the crisis not as a technological inevitability, but as a moral and intellectual choice. AI does not inherently destroy creativity; rather, creativity declines when humans surrender the labour of thought to machines.

Civilisation has historically advanced through:

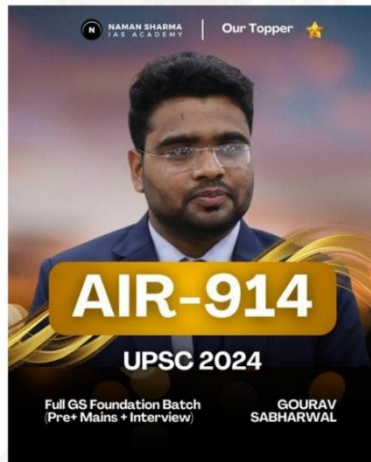
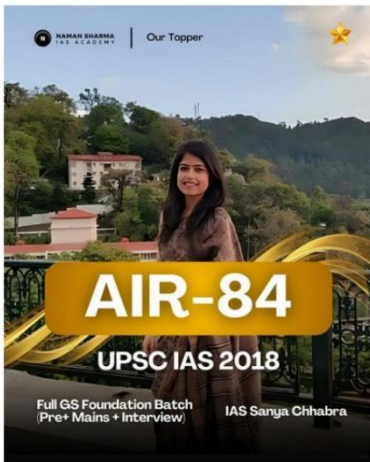
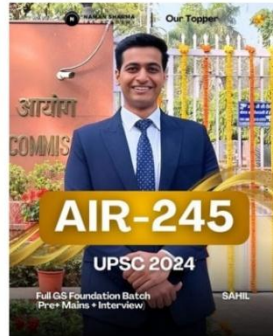
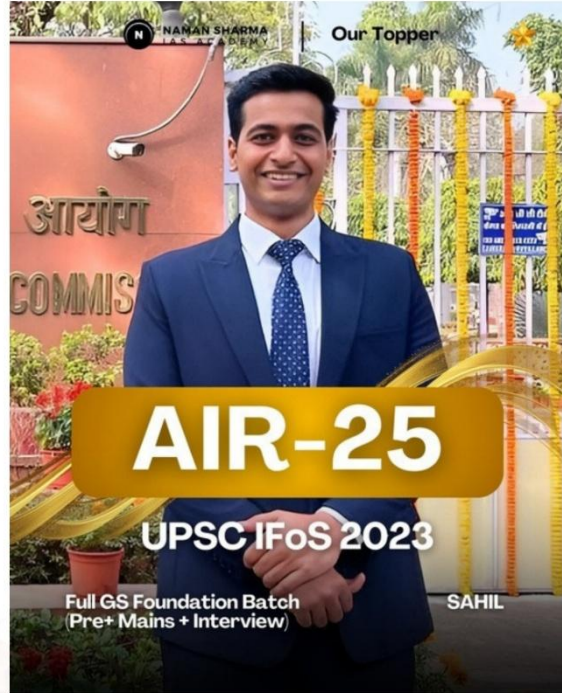
- Rigour over expediency.
- Reflection on speed.
- Creation over replication.

If AI is to complement humanity, it must be governed in ways that preserve language, imagination, and democratic integrity. The real frontier is not technological sophistication, but the preservation of the human capacity to think, write, dissent, and create meaning independently



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