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The Hindu *Analysis*

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In This Edition

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★ HOW TO USE THIS DIGEST

- ▶ Each topic pairs the **original Hindu clipping** with crisp analysis, static linkage and a syllabus tag.
- ▶ Blue-dot notes carry the **core content**; gold ★ boxes hold high-yield facts for revision.
- ▶ End the day with **2 Mains** practice questions and **10 Prelims MCQs** with an answer key.

01 Over 100 Killed as Powerful Earthquake Strikes Colombia

GS 1

The Hindu • Page 1 • GS 1: Geography (Geophysical Phenomena)

WHY IN NEWS

A **7.4 magnitude earthquake** struck Colombia, killing at least 111 people and injuring 87, flattening hundreds of buildings and prompting a large search-and-rescue operation.

Over 100 killed as powerful earthquake strikes Colombia

Associated Press

BOGOTA

At least 111 people were killed and 87 injured in Colombia on Monday when a 7.4 magnitude earthquake struck the Latin American country, leaving several cities ravaged and trapping residents under debris of hundreds of collapsed buildings while their loved ones and rescue workers searched through the rubble.

The “highest magnitude earthquake in Colombia in the last decade” was followed by two aftershocks of magnitudes 2.8 and 4.8, the Colombian Geological Service said. The U.S. Geological Survey reported the



A rescue worker searching for survivors in a collapsed building in Cali, Colombia. AP

tremor's epicentre in San Jose Del Palmar, about 400 kilometres west of capital Bogota. The tremors were felt in neighbouring Ecuador and Panama, though minimal damage was reported there.

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The Hindu, Page 1 • Associated Press, Bogota

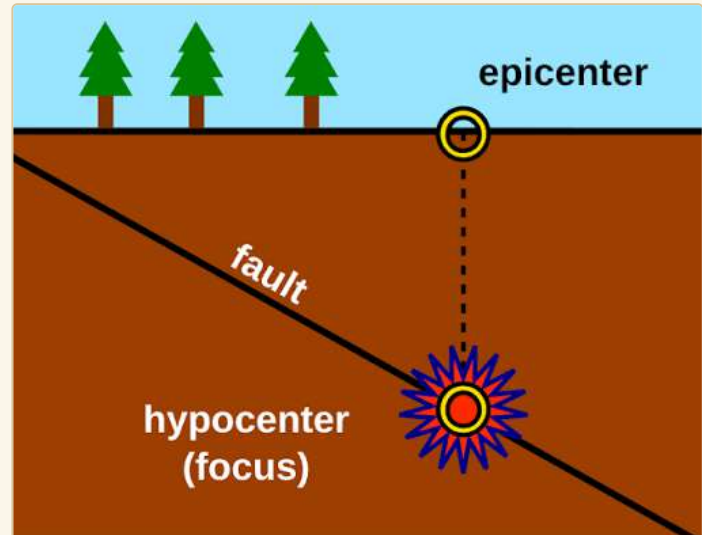
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- Described as the **"highest magnitude earthquake in Colombia in the last decade"**, it was followed by two aftershocks of magnitudes 2.8 and 4.8, the Colombian Geological Service said.
- The **U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)** reported the tremor's epicentre in **San Jose Del Palmar**, about 400 km west of the capital Bogota.
- Tremors were felt in neighbouring **Ecuador and Panama**, though only minimal damage was reported there.



Colombia on the Pacific "Ring of Fire" belt



Focus (hypocentre) vs. epicentre

Static Concept — What is an Earthquake?

- An earthquake is the **shaking of the earth** — a natural event caused by the release of energy, which generates **seismic waves** that travel in all directions.
- These vibrations are recorded on instruments called **seismographs**.
- The location **below the surface** where the earthquake starts is the **hypocenter (focus)**; the point **directly above it** on the surface is the **epicenter**.

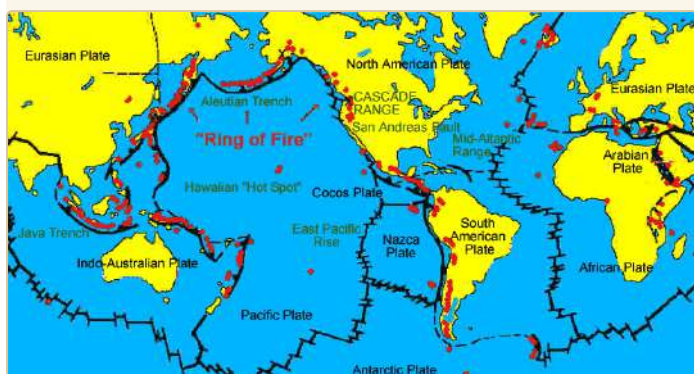
★ DEPTH CLASSIFICATION OF EARTHQUAKES

- ▶ **Shallow:** focus 0–70 km deep.
- ▶ **Intermediate:** focus 70–300 km deep.
- ▶ **Deep:** focus 300–700 km deep (full range: 0–700 km).

Seismic Waves — Body Waves vs. Surface Waves

- **Body waves** are generated at the focus and move through the body of the earth. There are two types — **P-waves and S-waves**.
- **P-waves (primary)** are the fastest and arrive first; similar to sound waves, they travel through **gaseous, liquid and solid** materials.
- **S-waves (secondary)** arrive with a time lag and can travel **only through solids** — a key fact used to prove the earth's outer core is liquid.

- **Surface waves** are generated when body waves interact with surface rocks; they are the **last to arrive** but the **most destructive**, causing displacement of rocks and building collapse.

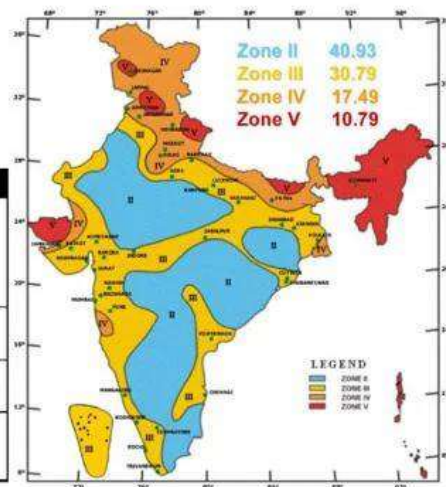


Pacific "Ring of Fire" & global plate boundaries

Seismic Zone Map of India: -2002

About **59 percent** of the land area of India is liable to seismic hazard damage

Zone	Intensity
Zone V	Very High Risk Zone Area liable to shaking Intensity IX (and above)
Zone IV	High Risk Zone Intensity VIII
Zone III	Moderate Risk Zone Intensity VII
Zone II	Low Risk Zone VI (and lower)



Seismic Zone Map of India (IS 1893:2002)

★ INDIA'S SEISMIC ZONES (BIS, 2002)

- ▶ About **59% of India's land area** is liable to seismic-hazard damage.
- ▶ **Zone V** — Very High Risk (Intensity IX+): NE India, J&K, parts of Himachal, Uttarakhand, Kutch — 10.79%.
- ▶ **Zone IV** — High Risk (Intensity VIII): Delhi-NCR, parts of J&K, Bihar — 17.49%.
- ▶ **Zone III** (Moderate, VII) — 30.79%; **Zone II** (Low, VI & below) — 40.93%.

SYLLABUS LINKAGE

Prelims: Types of seismic waves, focus vs. epicentre, Ring of Fire, India's seismic zones. **Mains (GS 1):** Distribution of key natural resources & geophysical phenomena such as earthquakes; disaster-resilient infrastructure.

02 Flying to Freedom: Conserving India's Vultures

GS 3

The Hindu • Page 5 • GS 3: Environment & Biodiversity

WHY IN NEWS

A rescued six-month-old **Indian vulture (*Gyps indicus*)** was released at the Sri Ramadevarabetta Vulture Sanctuary, Ramanagara (Karnataka) — treated by the People for Animals (PfA) Wildlife Hospital with the Forest Department.

Flying to freedom



A six-month-old Indian vulture (*Gyps indicus*) being released at the Sri Ramadevarabetta Vulture Sanctuary in Ramanagara, Karnataka. The vulture had been rescued and treated by the People for Animals (PiA) Wildlife Hospital in coordination with the Forest Department. PTI

The Hindu, Page 5 • PTI

Nine Species of Vultures Found in India

- **Six resident species:** White-rumped, Indian (Long-billed), Slender-billed, Red-headed, Bearded and Egyptian vulture.
- **Three migratory species:** Cinereous, Griffon and Himalayan vulture.

★ CONSERVATION STATUS SNAPSHOT (IUCN)

- ▶ **Critically Endangered (CR):** White-rumped, Indian/Long-billed, Slender-billed, Red-headed.
- ▶ **Endangered (EN):** Egyptian vulture.
- ▶ **Near Threatened (NT):** Bearded, Cinereous, Himalayan Griffon.
- ▶ **Least Concern (LC):** Eurasian Griffon. All nine are **CITES Appendix II & WPA Schedule I**.

WHY VULTURES ARE SO IMPORTANT?

- **Ecosystem Role:** Vultures are vital for ecosystem health, **efficiently disposing** of dead animals and organic waste.
- **Disease Control:** They **help reduce disease spread** among wildlife, livestock, and humans by consuming carcasses.
- **Nutrient Cycling:** As obligate scavengers, each vulture species **contributes uniquely to nutrient cycling**.
- **Absence Consequences:** Without vultures, decomposition times lengthen, raising disease transmission risks such as anthrax, botulism, and rabies.
- **Impact on Health:** Their absence adversely affects wildlife and human health.



Why vultures matter

VULTURE HABITAT AND LIFESTYLE

- Indian vultures are **social and often found in groups**.
- They are **active during the day**, soaring in search of food.
- Non-migratory but can travel up to 100 km daily for food.
- Usually silent, but emit grunts and hisses around carcasses.
- Inhabit open habitats like **savannas, villages, cities, and cultivated areas**.
- Found in wooded areas, ravines, valleys, scrub, and deciduous forests.



GEOGRAPHIC RANGE

- Distribution: Indian vultures are native to **India, Pakistan, and Nepal**.
- Decline: Severe decline of over 97% since the mid-1990s.
- Population Plummet: **Population in Keoladeo National Park** dropped from 816 to 25 birds between 1985 and 1999.
- Current Status: Small populations persist in Ramanagaram Hills, Karnataka, and Nilgiri Forest Division, Tamil Nadu.
- Rarity: Indian vultures are now rare across their former range.
- New Breeding Colony: Recently identified near the **India-Pakistan border in Bikaner District**.



BREEDING

- Nesting: **In colonies** on various elevations.
- Eggs: **One egg** per nesting period.



THREATS

- Single Greatest Threat: **Diclofenac**, an **anti-inflammatory drug** given to livestock.
- Impact: Vultures feeding on treated carcasses **suffer kidney failure** and die.
- Environmental Poisons: Threaten vultures' survival.
- Carcass Disposal: Changes reduce vultures' food sources.
- Veterinary Drugs: Use of toxic drugs harms vulture populations.

CONSERVATION

- The Ministry for Environment, Forests, and Climate Change introduced a **Vulture Action Plan 2020-25** aimed at conserving vultures in the country.

Habitat, range, threats & conservation

Ecological Importance

- **Ecosystem role:** obligate scavengers that efficiently dispose of dead animals and organic waste.
- **Disease control:** by rapidly consuming carcasses they curb the spread of **anthrax, botulism and rabies** among wildlife, livestock and humans.
- **Absence consequences:** decomposition times lengthen and disease-transmission risk rises — harming both wildlife and human health.

Decline & Threats

- Vulture populations crashed by **over 97% since the mid-1990s**; in Keoladeo National Park numbers fell from **816 to 25 birds** between 1985 and 1999.
- **Single greatest threat: Diclofenac**, an anti-inflammatory drug given to livestock — vultures feeding on treated carcasses suffer **kidney failure** and die.
- Other pressures: environmental poisons, changing carcass-disposal practices and other toxic veterinary drugs.

★ CONSERVATION MEASURES

- ▶ The **Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change** introduced the **Vulture Action Plan 2020-25**.
- ▶ Small populations persist in the **Ramanagaram Hills (Karnataka)** and **Nilgiri Forest Division (Tamil Nadu)**; a new breeding colony was found near the India-Pakistan border in **Bikaner district**.
- ▶ Veterinary **diclofenac was banned** for animal use; safer alternative **meloxicam** is promoted.

SYLLABUS LINKAGE

Prelims: Species & IUCN status, diclofenac, Vulture Action Plan, Keoladeo NP. **Mains (GS 3):** Conservation of biodiversity; keystone/obligate scavengers & ecosystem services.

03 E-Samudra: A Faceless Digital Platform for Maritime Governance

GS 2

The Hindu • GS 2: Governance / e-Governance

WHY IN NEWS

The Union Minister for Ports, Shipping & Waterways launched **E-Samudra**, an integrated digital portal to accelerate the digital transformation of India's maritime administration.



Inauguration of the E-Samudra project

- E-Samudra is a comprehensive, single-window **"Digital-First and Faceless"** portal that digitises and streamlines administrative workflows across the maritime sector.
- It integrates services for **seafarers, shipping companies, recruitment agencies, training institutes and port authorities** under one unified digital framework.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways (MoPSW). **Implementing Agency:** Directorate General of Maritime Administration (DGMA).
- **Strategic context:** aligned with **Maritime India Vision 2030** and **Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047**.
- **Aim:** move governance from a paper-based office model to a transparent, predictable digital ecosystem — enhancing **Ease of Living** for seafarers and **Ease of Doing Business** for maritime firms.

★ KEY FEATURES

- ▶ **Single-Window Governance:** online fee payment, real-time application tracking and digital certificate issuance in one paperless portal.
- ▶ **d-SEA (Digital Seafarers Employment Agreement):** verifiable digital contracts safeguarding wages and labour standards.
- ▶ **Real-Time Tracking Dashboard:** monitors deployment, safety, location and welfare of Indian seafarers worldwide, regardless of vessel flag.
- ▶ **e-NAVIK:** 24×7 integrated grievance redressal linking seafarers to emergency, medical and resolution channels onboard or ashore.
- ▶ **Inclusion & Wellbeing:** complements **Sagar Mein Samman** (women seafarers) and **Sagar Mein Yog** (mental & physical health).

SYLLABUS LINKAGE

Prelims: E-Samudra, DGMA, MoPSW, Maritime Vision 2030/2047, e-NAVIK, d-SEA. **Mains (GS 2):** e-Governance for transparency & accountability; welfare of workers in the blue economy.

04 Do Not Write the Obituary of International Law Yet

GS 2 The Hindu · Page 6 · Editorial (Jyoti Singh) · GS 2: IR

CONTEXT

Conflicts in **Ukraine and Gaza**, instability in West Asia and the paralysis of international institutions have led many to conclude that international law is no longer relevant — a conclusion the author argues is premature.

Do not write the obituary of international law yet

Is international law really dying? The question has become increasingly difficult to ignore. The ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza, instability in West Asia, violence against civilians, and the inability of international institutions to respond effectively, have led many to conclude that international law is no longer relevant.

International law was premised on the idea that relations between states should be governed not merely by power, but by rules and legal principles built on consensus. When wars still take place, the effectiveness of the system is naturally exposed to scrutiny. However, it would be too early to write an obituary for international law.

'It will prevail'

In July 2026, while addressing the International Law Commission recently, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres remarked that "international law is under pressure — but it will prevail". The second half of the statement deserves as much attention as the first. International law undoubtedly faces serious challenges, but it continues to shape the conduct of states and remains the language through which international disputes are contested.

Paradoxically, wars actually demonstrate why international law still matters. Had it become irrelevant, the states concerned would not bother to justify their actions by referring to international law. They invoke the UN Charter, sovereignty, territorial integrity, self-defence and international humanitarian law. Even states accused of violating international law rarely argue that the law itself is meaningless. Rather, they claim that their actions are consistent with it. A legal system under which states continue to justify their conduct cannot simply be described as dead.

International law scholars Abram Chayes and Antonia Handler Chayes argued that states often comply with international law not because they are threatened with sanctions, but because they



Jyoti Singh

Advocate based in Delhi and a former legal consultant to the Legal and Treaties Division, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India

are influenced by the dynamics created within the treaty regimes to which they belong. It is a pertinent observation even today. The significance of international law cannot be determined only by instances of violation; it also lies in providing a framework through which state conduct is assessed, disputes are addressed and cooperation is sustained. The difficulty is that compliance goes unnoticed whereas violations dominate headlines.

The quiet power of international law

The quiet accomplishments of international law are visible every day. Aircraft fly across international boundaries because states comply with international aviation regulations. Ships sail across seas because of international maritime law. Diplomacy functions because governments observe established legal norms. International trade, communications and travel continue because states honour thousands of international obligations. Even as armed conflicts continue to dominate headlines, states still negotiate multilateral legal agreements. Recent endeavours such as the High Seas Treaty, international efforts towards pandemic preparedness, and the United Nations Convention against Cybercrime demonstrate that states continue to rely on international law. International law also affects individuals. The moment a person crosses an international border, international law begins to matter. The recognition of passports, consular assistance, international air travel and the protection of refugees all depend upon international legal rules. We often notice international law only when it fails, but millions of people rely on it every day.

The continued relevance of international law is perhaps most evident in the way states seek peace, which is built through negotiations, commitments and legal arrangements. Whether these are described as peace agreements, ceasefire arrangements, diplomatic understandings or negotiated settlements, even

adversarial states recognise the need for legal commitments that establish expectations and obligations for the future. India provides a good example in this respect. India's experience with the Indus Waters Treaty demonstrates that even during periods of political discord, legal frameworks continue to provide a basis for engagement between states. That is precisely why international law remains indispensable for India and the wider Global South. The problems of climate change, pandemics, cyber-attacks, and economic instability cannot be addressed unilaterally by any state. They require cooperation, which in turn depends on agreed rules of conduct. A rules-based international order provides an opportunity to developing states to protect and advance their interests through negotiations rather than power alone.

There are imperfections

The reality is that international law has never been perfect. It has always coexisted with political realities and has frequently been condemned for reflecting unequal power structures. Recent conflicts have reinforced these criticisms, revealing the structural limitations within the UN Security Council and the broader international legal order. However, these are not reasons enough for the abandonment of the system altogether. No legal system can guarantee perfect compliance. Its significance lies in establishing the standards against which conduct can be judged. History suggests that crises have rarely marked the end of international law. More often, they have prompted its adaptation and renewal.

International law is under pressure, but it is far from dead. The greater danger is the growing belief that its violations prove its irrelevance, a conclusion that serves only those who prefer a world in which might makes right. As long as states continue to invoke, interpret and rely on international law, its obituary is being written far too soon.

International law remains relevant in a troubled world

The Hindu, Page 6 · Editorial page

- International law rests on the idea that relations between states should be governed **not merely by power, but by rules and legal principles built on consensus**. Wars expose the system to scrutiny, yet it is too early to write its obituary.
- **Paradoxically, wars show why the law still matters:** had it become irrelevant, states would not bother to justify their actions by invoking the **UN Charter, sovereignty, territorial integrity, self-defence and international humanitarian law**.
- In July 2026 UN Secretary-General **António Guterres** told the International Law Commission that "**international law is under pressure — but it will prevail.**"

The Quiet Power of International Law

- Aircraft cross boundaries under **aviation regulations**; ships sail under **maritime law**; diplomacy and trade rest on thousands of honoured obligations.

- Even amid conflict, states keep negotiating multilateral agreements — the **High Seas Treaty**, pandemic-preparedness efforts and the **UN Convention against Cybercrime**.
- India's experience with the **Indus Waters Treaty** shows that even during political discord, legal frameworks sustain engagement between states.

★ IMPERFECTIONS — AND WHY IT ENDURES

- ▶ International law has **never been perfect**; it coexists with political realities and often mirrors unequal power structures.
- ▶ Recent conflicts expose **structural limits of the UN Security Council** and the wider legal order.
- ▶ Yet these are not grounds for abandonment: its value lies in **setting standards against which conduct can be judged**. Crises have usually prompted **adaptation and renewal**, not collapse.

SYLLABUS LINKAGE

Mains (GS 2): Important international institutions; effect of international treaties on India's interests; a rules-based order for the Global South.

05 The Case for Consensus on Delimitation

GS 2

The Hindu · Page 6 · Editorial · GS 2: Polity

CONTEXT

The monsoon session of Parliament ended without substantive deliberation — at its core the controversial **FCRA amendments** and the **opacity around the government's delimitation proposals**.

Case for consensus

The government needs to build a consensus on delimitation

The monsoon session of Parliament is in its last week without any substantive deliberations or legislative outcomes. There may be several reasons for the stalemate, but at its core are the controversial FCRA amendments and the opacity around the government's delimitation proposals. Overall, it is as if the government views Parliament as an obstacle to be circumvented rather than a forum for deliberation and consensus-building on national issues. That is the attitude that offers no resolution to any question, while it may create winners and losers on some. But in the absence of good-faith conversations and consensus, what may appear to be a victory for the government or the Opposition at one moment could turn out to be a net loss for parliamentary democracy and the nation. A parliamentary majority is a necessary technicality, but democracy is not limited to that. The effort must always be to expand consensus and reduce conflict across the spectrum of opinion on any given issue. India, being as diverse as it is, naturally has multiple views, not only between the government and the Opposition but also within each side. Unfortunately, expressing and reconciling those opinions is given far less priority than marshalling the numbers to support any given move.

The impact of the forthcoming delimitation is going to be far-reaching; it must be preceded by as wide a consensus as possible. The country's representative system is on the cusp of a revision, but the government that is anxious to modify its timeline and terms also wants to be extremely secretive about it. Passing legislation with very little prior deliberation or parliamentary debate has become routine in recent years. Delimitation is a topic about which there is a great deal of misunderstanding and serious concern. A large segment of even the political class may be oblivious to its scope and implications. Rather than trying to change the laws regarding delimitation and the size of the Lok Sabha by somehow aggregating the required number of votes behind it, the government should circulate its proposals and receive feedback from all stakeholders. An all-party meeting, as demanded by the Opposition, can be a good start to the deliberations that should take place in the polity at large and inside Parliament. Anything that is technically legitimised through subterfuge will be seen by the public as such. It must be recalled that in 1976 and in 2001, under a Congress government and a BJP government, respectively, decisions with regard to delimitation were taken unanimously. The government and the BJP should once again take the initiative to build a consensus on delimitation for the sake of the nation's unity and progress.

The Hindu, Page 6 · Editorial: "Case for consensus"

- The editorial warns the government appears to view Parliament as **an obstacle to be circumvented** rather than a forum for deliberation and consensus-building.
- A **parliamentary majority is a necessary technicality, but democracy is not limited to it** — the effort must be to expand consensus and reduce conflict across the spectrum of opinion.
- In a diverse India, expressing and reconciling multiple views is given **far less priority than marshalling numbers** for any given move.
- The impact of the forthcoming delimitation will be **far-reaching** and must be preceded by as wide a consensus as possible; the representative system is "on the cusp of a revision," yet the process remains **secretive**.
- Rather than changing delimitation laws by aggregating votes, the government should **circulate proposals and seek stakeholder feedback**; an **all-party meeting** can be a good start.
- It recalls that in **1976 and 2001**, under Congress and BJP governments respectively, delimitation decisions were **taken unanimously**.

★ **STATIC: DELIMITATION BASICS**

- ▶ **Delimitation** = redrawing boundaries of Lok Sabha & Assembly constituencies based on the latest Census.
- ▶ Carried out by an independent **Delimitation Commission** (Articles **82 & 170**); its orders have force of law and cannot be questioned in court.
- ▶ The **42nd Amendment (1976)** froze seat numbers using the **1971 Census**; the **84th Amendment** extended the freeze until the first Census after **2026**.
- ▶ Core concern: states that controlled population growth fear **loss of parliamentary weight** relative to more populous states.

SYLLABUS LINKAGE

Prelims: Delimitation Commission, Articles 82/170, 42nd & 84th Amendments. **Mains (GS 2):** Parliament & state legislatures — structure, functioning; federalism & equitable representation.

06 English in India: A Language That Has Earned Its Place

GS 1

The Hindu · Page 6 · Editorial (Y.L. Srinivas) · GS 1: Society

CONTEXT

A recent Supreme Court observation has revived the debate over whether **English can be considered an indigenous language of India** — often wrongly framed as a contest between English and Indian languages.

- The strongest objection is that English **arrived with British colonialism**, introduced to serve administration, commerce, missionary activity and the "civilising mission." Yet languages are **not permanently imprisoned by the circumstances of their arrival**.
- Once English entered India, Indians **appropriated, transformed and made it serve Indian aspirations** rather than colonial objectives.

A Language Transformed by Indians

- By the early 19th century English had become an instrument of Indian political & intellectual expression: in **1823 Raja Ram Mohan Roy** petitioned in English defending press freedom in Calcutta.
- **Dadabhai Naoroji** marshalled his "Drain Theory" in English; **Swami Vivekananda** addressed India through his 1897 Madras lecture; **Mahatma Gandhi** himself translated *Hind Swaraj* into English.
- To deny English a place in India overlooks generations of Indians who used it to articulate **nationalism, social reform and cultural renaissance**.

Constitutional Status & Creativity

- The Constituent Assembly adopted a balanced resolution: moved by **K.M. Munshi and N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar**, it recognised **Hindi as the Official Language** and retained **English for official purposes**.

- The **Sahitya Akademi** treats English as one of the languages of Indian literature; writers from **R.K. Narayan and Mulk Raj Anand to Amitav Ghosh and Vikram Seth** express Indian experience with authenticity.

English in India, a language that has earned its place

What makes a language Indian? A recent observation by the Supreme Court of India has revived the debate over whether English can be considered an indigenous language of India. The debate over the place of English in India has often been framed as a contest between English and Indian languages. Such a binary is both historically misleading and politically unhelpful. The promotion of Indian languages such as Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Odia, Kannada, or Marathi need not – and should not – be predicated upon denying recognition or patronage to English. The future of India's linguistic diversity lies not in choosing one language over another but in nurturing multilingualism. English may not be an indigenous language in the same historical sense as Sanskrit or Tamil, yet, over two centuries, has acquired a legitimate claim to belong to India.

A language transformed

The strongest objection to treating English as an Indian language is that it arrived with British colonialism. It was introduced to facilitate administration, commerce, missionary activity, and what the colonial rulers described as their civilising mission. In its early history, English undoubtedly served the interests of the Empire. Yet, languages cannot be permanently imprisoned by the circumstances of their arrival. Their identities are continually reshaped by the people who speak them. Once English entered India, Indians appropriated it, transformed it, and made it serve Indian aspirations rather than colonial objectives.

By the early 19th century, English had already become an instrument of Indian political and intellectual expression. In 1823, Raja Ram Mohan Roy and his associates submitted one of the earliest petitions in English defending the freedom of the Indian-language press in Calcutta. Later in the century, Dadabhai Naoroji marshalled his famous "Drain Theory" in English to expose the economic exploitation of India under British rule. Swami Vivekananda addressed educated India in English through his celebrated lecture, "My Plan of Campaign", delivered in Madras in 1897. Mahatma Gandhi himself translated *Hind Swaraj* into English, recognising that the language could carry Indian ideas to both national and international audiences. To deny English a place in India is, in some measure, to overlook the contributions of generations of Indians who employed the language to articulate Indian nationalism, social reform, and cultural renaissance.

After Independence, India indeed found a place for English. The Constituent Assembly debates on the language question adopted a



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balanced resolution. Moved by K.M. Munshi and N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar, it recognised Hindi as the Official Language of the Union and retained English for official purposes. Over the subsequent decades, English has evolved into one of the principal languages of Indian academic and administrative domains, including but not limited to the legislature, the executive and the judiciary.

India has also recognised English as a language of Indian creativity. The Sahitya Akademi has treated English as one of the languages of Indian literature, conferring annual awards. Indian Writing in English has developed into one of the richest literary traditions in the postcolonial world. From R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand to Amitav Ghosh and Vikram Seth, Indian writers have demonstrated that English can express Indian experiences with authenticity, subtlety, and artistic distinction.

Reach and scale

It is often argued that only a small section of Indians speak English. This is not exactly the case. The Census of 2011 reports that nearly 129 million Indians chose English as a first, second or third language. These numbers make India one of the largest English-speaking countries in the world. Nearly 2,60,000 people reported English to be their mother tongue. A whopping 83 million identified it as their second language. About 46 million spoke it as their third language. Scholars observe that the number of Indians who possess at least a functional knowledge of English may well have further increased to the range of 180 million to 250 million given the rapid expansion of English-medium education over the last decade. These statistics suggest that English has become the language of aspiration for a large segment of the Indian society.

As an aspirational people, Indians invest considerable effort and money in education. Nearly 31,000 schools affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) impart education primarily through English. So do the 3,000 schools which are affiliated to comparable boards such as the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations. Let us not forget that English is also the principal medium of education in all premier higher educational institutions of India.

In a wide range of professional fields that produce wealth and service, English has become the language through which India engages with the world. This is an advantage that India presently possesses over several other competing nations, and it would be wise for it to continue to invest its resources in further expanding the English language skills of Indians.

It also needs to be pointed out that India has Indianised English. Raja Rao spoke about it in the

well-known Foreword to his novel *Kanthapura* way back in 1938. Just as Canada and Australia had fashioned their own versions of English, Rao felt, so would India. That prediction has been fully realised. Indian English today possesses its own pronunciation, vocabulary, idioms, and rhetorical conventions. It reflects Indian social realities and cultural sensibilities while remaining part of the larger global family of Englishes.

Taking root

This process of linguistic naturalisation is captured in V.K. Gokak's poem 'English Words': "O winged seeds! You crossed the furrowed seas/To nestle in the warm and silent earth./...You ripened into nectar in fruit-jars/That hung like clustered stars." Gokak's metaphor is striking. English words arrive as seeds from distant shores, but they do not remain foreign. They take root in Indian soil, acquire new life, and bear fruit that belongs as much to India as to anywhere else. A similar sensibility informs A.K. Ramanujan's 'Prayers to Lord Murugan', where an Indian poet employs English not as a borrowed medium but as a natural vehicle for expressing Indian mythology, philosophy, and devotion. Such works demonstrate that languages are ultimately shaped not by their origins but by the communities that inhabit them.

Ironically, many of the strongest advocates of Indian languages have themselves turned to English when addressing a pan-Indian or international audience. Kannada scholar and Jnanpith awardee V.K. Gokak argued for the unity of Indian literature through English in works such as *The Concept of Indian Literature and Pathways to the Unity of Indian Literature*.

Monolingualism has never been the historical reality of Indian society. India has always deeply cherished languages that Indians speak in their homes and among kith and kin. At the same time, they have spoken in other languages with considerable facility and comfort. English is not in competition with Hindi or Tamil. Rather it is a language that provides Indians with an already historically familiar bridge to connect with other language-speaking communities both within and beyond India.

It is not an important question, therefore, whether English is an indigenous language. It is not. More important is the realisation that through history and literature, constitutional practice and governance, and through everyday usage, English has earned the right to be regarded as one of modern India's own languages. It is useful to remember that English has long ceased to be the language of colonial rulers. It has evolved into one of the several languages in which Indians imagine themselves. Indian English belongs to India.

The Hindu, Page 6 • Editorial (Y.L. Srinivas)

★ REACH & SCALE (CENSUS 2011)

- ▶ Nearly **129 million Indians** chose English as a first, second or third language — making India one of the largest English-speaking countries.
- ▶ About **2,60,000** reported it as mother tongue; **83 million** as second language; **46 million** as third.
- ▶ With the spread of English-medium education, functional knowledge may now span **180-250 million** — English as a language of **aspiration**.

SYLLABUS LINKAGE

Mains (GS 1): Salient features of Indian society & diversity; role of language in social integration and cultural change; effects of globalisation.

07 Russia's Share in India's Oil Imports Jumps to 48% in June

WHY IN NEWS

As the U.S. moves to impose tariffs of up to **100%** on India for its Russian oil purchases, latest data show **Russia's share in India's oil imports rose to an all-time high of 48% in June 2026.**

Russia's share in India's oil imports jumps to 48% in June

The U.S. Senate has passed a bill that will see tariffs of up to 100% being levied on top 5 countries importing Russian oil and gas; the Bill now awaits passage in the House of Representatives

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

At a time when the U.S. looks all set to enact legislation to impose a tariff of up to 100% on India for its Russian oil imports, an analysis of the latest data shows Russia's share in India's oil imports rose to an all-time high of 48% in June 2026.

The U.S. Senate last week passed the bipartisan Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026 which seeks to levy tariffs of up to 100% on countries that continue to buy Russian oil and gas, and that were the largest purchasers of these products from Russia over the previous year. India qualifies for tariffs under these criteria. The Bill still requires to be passed by the U.S. House of Representatives before it becomes law.

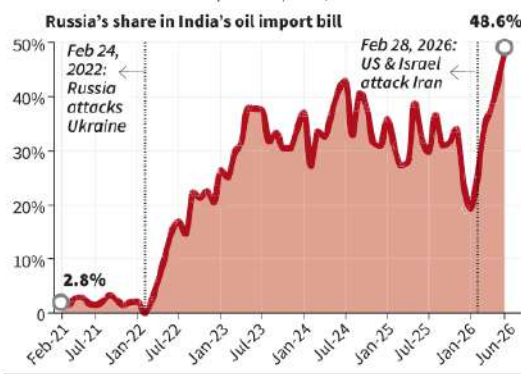
An analysis by *The Hindu* of the latest data from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry shows that India significantly lowered its total crude oil imports in June 2026. In terms of volume, June crude oil imports at 18.2 million metric tonnes (MMT) were down 16.5% compared with May 2026, and were 13% lower than in June last year.

However, elevated crude oil prices this year have meant that the oil import bill, while 22% lower in June 2026 than in May, was still 40% higher than in June of last year.

While India drastically

War relations

Each time a recent war has spiked oil prices, India has turned to Russia



Source: Ministry of Commerce and Industry

cut down on overall oil imports, its purchases from Russia bucked this trend. That is, India imported 8.7 MMT of Russian oil in June 2026, just 1% lower than in May, and 25% higher than in June of last year.

As a result of this strategy, Russia's share in India's crude oil imports jumped to 48% in terms of quantity and 48.6% in terms of the value. Russia's share has been rising consistently every month since March and the outbreak of the war in West Asia.

According to the U.S. Bill, the tariffs would apply on a country that was among the five largest importers of crude oil or natural gas from Russia during the 12 months preceding the date of the enactment of the Act, and that then continues to import oil or gas from Russia after 30 days of the enactment.

China and India are the top two importers of Russian oil and India's rising dependence on Russian oil shows it cannot quickly cut back on this source at a time when supplies through the Strait of Hormuz are still constrained.

The premium Russia has charged India for its oil has been steadily declining, data shows, from \$77.7 per tonne in April 2026 to \$10.6 per tonne in June. Russia had been providing India a discount until as recently as February 2026.

Sanctions exposure

The Bill also specifies that tariffs could be imposed on countries that have helped Russia evade sanctions. The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG) told *The Hindu* that India has specifically taken measures to pre-empt any sanctions exposure.

"It [sanctions exposure] was pre-empted through ship-to-ship transfer operations in international waters via the Red Sea route through Yanbu and Fujairah precisely so that a single choke point, or a single sanctions regime, could not halt India-bound cargo," MoPNG said in a clarificatory note it had sent *The Hindu* in late July.

It is unclear as of now whether India's actions would entail helping Russia evade sanctions.

Apart from Russia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) too saw its share in India's oil imports rise to historic highs. India sourced 17.5% of its oil imports by volume from the UAE in June 2026 and 18% by value, the highest share for both so far.

Taken together, this means that Russia and the UAE together accounted for nearly two-thirds of India's oil imports in June 2026, the highest-ever combined share enjoyed by any two countries. The MoPNG, however, said that such concentration was not a matter of concern given Indian oil marketing companies stand ready to diversify quickly.

"Indian refineries had spent a decade acquiring the logistical flexibility to switch between crude grades and shipping routes the moment disruption struck, which is the definition of a diversification strategy, not its absence," the note said.

The Hindu, Page 13 • T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan

- The U.S. Senate passed the bipartisan **Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026**, seeking tariffs up to 100% on countries that keep buying Russian oil & gas and were the largest such purchasers in the previous year — criteria India meets. The Bill still needs to clear the **House of Representatives**.
- India **sharply lowered total crude imports** in June 2026: at **18.2 MMT**, volumes were down 16.5% from May and 13% lower year-on-year.
- Still, high prices meant the **oil import bill was 40% higher** than June last year (though 22% lower than May 2026).
- The tariff would apply to a country among the **five largest importers** of Russian crude/gas in the preceding 12 months that continues to import **30 days after enactment**.
- **China and India** are the top two importers of Russian oil; rising dependence shows India cannot quickly cut back while supplies via the **Strait of Hormuz** remain constrained.
- The premium Russia charges India has fallen steadily — from **\$77.7 per tonne in April** to **\$10.6 in June 2026** — eroding the earlier discount advantage.

★ KEY FIGURES AT A GLANCE

- ▶ Russia's share in India's oil imports: **2.8% (early 2022) → 48.6% (June 2026)**.
- ▶ The **UAE** also rose: 17.5% of imports by volume, 18% by value in June 2026.
- ▶ Together **Russia + UAE ~ two-thirds** of India's June imports — the highest-ever combined share by any two countries.
- ▶ MoPNG note: refiners have built **logistical flexibility** to switch grades/routes — a diversification strategy, "not its absence."

SYLLABUS LINKAGE

Mains (GS 3): Indian economy & energy security; effects of external sanctions/tariffs on trade; GS 2 — India-U.S. & India-Russia relations.

Mains Practice Questions

ANSWER-WRITING · REFRAMED FROM TODAY'S ISSUES

Question 1

15 MARKS · 250 WORDS

"Earthquakes are not merely geological events but tests of governance and preparedness." In the light of the recent Colombia earthquake, examine the causes and distribution of seismicity, and discuss the measures needed to build disaster-resilient infrastructure in India's high-risk seismic zones.

*Directive: **Examine & discuss** · Link plate tectonics/Ring of Fire → India's Zone IV-V → NDMA guidelines, retrofitting, early-warning & building codes.*

Question 2

10 MARKS · 150 WORDS

"Its violations are often cited as proof of its irrelevance; in reality they demonstrate its enduring pull." Critically analyse this statement with reference to the contemporary relevance of international law for a developing country like India.

*Directive: **Critically analyse** · Use UN Charter/IHL invocation in conflicts, quiet functioning (aviation, maritime, trade), Indus Waters Treaty, and UNSC structural limits.*

★ VALUE-ADDITION KEYWORDS

- ▶ **Geography:** hypocentre, P/S/surface waves, Ring of Fire, BIS seismic zoning, meloxicam vs. diclofenac.
- ▶ **Polity/IR:** Delimitation Commission (Art. 82/170), 84th Amendment freeze, rules-based order, High Seas Treaty.
- ▶ **Economy:** energy-security diversification, Strait of Hormuz, secondary sanctions, import-basket resilience.

Prelims Practice — 10 MCQs

UPSC-PATTERN · BASED ON TODAY'S EDITION

Q1. With reference to earthquakes, consider the following statements:

The point within the earth where an earthquake originates is called the epicentre.
P-waves can travel through solids, liquids and gases, whereas S-waves travel only through solids.
Surface waves are the last to be recorded but cause the greatest destruction.

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| (a) Only 1 and 2 | (b) 2 and 3 only |
| (c) 1 and 3 only | (d) 1, 2 and 3 |

Q2. The 'Ring of Fire', frequently in news due to earthquakes and volcanoes, is chiefly associated with the margins of which ocean?

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| (a) Atlantic Ocean | (b) Indian Ocean |
| (c) Pacific Ocean | (d) Arctic Ocean |

Q3. Regarding the seismic zoning of India (IS 1893:2002), which is correct?

- | | |
|---|--|
| (a) Zone II is the highest-risk zone | (b) Zone V covers the largest share of India's land area |
| (c) About 59% of India's land area is prone to seismic hazard | (d) The Deccan Plateau lies entirely in Zone V |

Q4. Consider the following about vulture conservation in India:

The veterinary drug diclofenac is the single greatest cause of the population crash.
All resident vulture species of India are listed in Appendix I of CITES.
The Vulture Action Plan 2020-25 was launched by the Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change.

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| (a) 1 and 2 only | (b) 2 and 3 only |
| (c) 1 and 3 only | (d) 1, 2 and 3 |

Q5. The Indian vulture (*Gyps indicus*) recently released at a sanctuary is native to which region and what is its IUCN status?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| (a) Africa; Least Concern | (b) India, Pakistan and Nepal; Critically Endangered |
| (c) Central Asia; Near Threatened | (d) Europe; Endangered |

Q6. The 'E-Samudra' portal, recently launched, is an initiative of which Union Ministry?

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| (a) Ministry of Defence | (b) Ministry of Earth Sciences |
| (c) Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways | (d) Ministry of External Affairs |

Q7. With reference to E-Samudra, consider the following:

It is implemented by the Directorate General of Maritime Administration (DGMA).

'd-SEA' refers to a Digital Seafarers Employment Agreement.

It is aligned with Maritime India Vision 2030 and Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047.

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 2 and 3 only

(c) 1 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

Q8. Delimitation of constituencies in India is carried out under which constitutional provisions, and its orders:

(a) Articles 82 and 170; can be challenged in any High Court

(b) Articles 82 and 170; have the force of law and cannot be questioned before courts

(c) Articles 80 and 171; are advisory in nature

(d) Articles 330 and 332; require Rajya Sabha ratification

Q9. The Constituent Assembly's resolution on language, associated with K.M. Munshi and N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar:

(a) Made English the sole official language of the Union

(b) Recognised Hindi as the Official Language and retained English for official purposes

(c) Abolished all official use of English immediately

(d) Declared Sanskrit the link language of India

Q10. With reference to India's crude oil imports in June 2026, consider the following:

Russia's share in India's oil imports reached an all-time high of about 48%.

Russia and the UAE together accounted for roughly two-thirds of India's imports that month.

The per-tonne premium charged by Russia rose sharply from April to June 2026.

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 2 and 3 only

(c) 1 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

ANSWER KEY

Q1
(b)

Q2
(c)

Q3
(c)

Q4
(c)

Q5
(b)

Q6
(c)

Q7
(d)

Q8
(b)

Q9
(b)

Q10
(a)