



TATHASTU
Institute Of Civil Services

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

7th May 2025



TATHASTU
Institute Of Civil Services



9560300770



www.tathastuics.com



support@tathastuics.com

HEAD OFFICE: 53/1, UPPER GROUND FLOOR, BADA BAZAR ROAD,
OLD RAJINDER NAGAR, NEW DELHI-110060



(Delhi Edition – 7th May 2025)

- **India, UK conclude landmark trade deal (Mains - GS 2)**
- **Powers & Pitfalls of digital influence (Mains - GS 2)**
- **Food vs fuel: Surge in ethanol blending & its impacts (Mains – GS 3)**
- **Maharani Ahilyabai Holkar (Prelims)**
- **HDI Report (Prelims)**

India, UK conclude landmark trade deal

Why in News?

- India – UK trade deal

Syllabus

- **GS Paper 3 – Indian Economy**

India, U.K. conclude landmark trade deal

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan

NEW DELHI

India and the United Kingdom have concluded a historic Free Trade Agreement (FTA) that will see 99% of Indian exports to the U.K. benefiting from zero duties, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer announced on Tuesday.

"In a historic milestone, India and the U.K. have successfully concluded an ambitious and mutually beneficial Free Trade Agreement, along with a Double Contribution Convention," Mr. Modi said on X, following a phone conversation with Mr. Starmer.

According to the Commerce and Industry Ministry, the FTA ensures comprehensive market access

Breaking barriers

The deal is expected to double bilateral trade by 2030

- **99% Indian exports to benefit from zero duty** in U.K. market

- Britain to benefit from reduction in tariffs on whisky, gin and automotive imports

- Reduced import duties for cosmetics, aerospace and medical devices, lamb, salmon, electrical machinery, chocolates and biscuits to benefit Indian consumers



in the U.K. for Indian goods, covering all of India's export interests.

CONTINUED ON

» **PAGE 12**

RELATED REPORTS

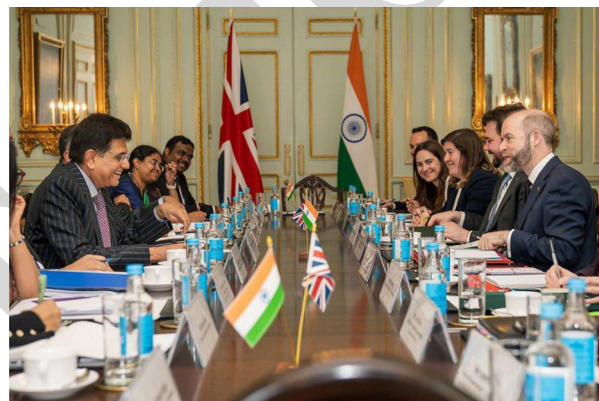
» **PAGES 14 & 15**





Important Points from Article

- **Historic Trade Deal:** India and the U.K. have concluded a **Free Trade Agreement (FTA)**, which will offer zero tariffs on 99% of Indian exports to the U.K.
- **Market Access:**
 - ◆ The FTA includes comprehensive market access for Indian goods in the U.K.
 - ◆ India will gain from **tariff elimination** on about 99% of the tariff lines, covering almost 100% of the trade value.
- **Whisky and Gin Tariffs:**
 - ◆ Whisky and gin tariffs will be reduced from **150% to 75%** and eventually to **40%** in ten years.
- **Automobile and Other Goods:**
 - ◆ Automotive tariffs will drop from over **100% to 10%** under a quota system.
 - ◆ Other goods benefiting from reduced tariffs include cosmetics, aerospace, medical devices, salmon, soft drinks, and more.
- **Double Contribution Convention:**
 - ◆ Indian workers and their employers will be **exempt** from paying social security contributions in the U.K. for three years.
- **Boost to Sectors:**
 - ◆ Key sectors benefiting from the deal include **textiles and apparel, leather and footwear, gems and jewellery, pharma, and agriculture.**
- **Economic Target:**
 - ◆ The **ambitious target** for bilateral trade between India and the U.K. is set to reach **USD 100 billion by 2030.**
 - ◆ India's **textile sector**, especially in **garment exports**, is expected to see a significant increase, particularly to the U.K., where nearly **9% of Indian knitwear exports** currently go.



Power and pitfalls of digital influence

Why in News?

- ◆ Global Risks report by WEF

Syllabus

- ◆ GS Paper 2 – Social Justice





Power and pitfalls of digital influence

As digital connectivity grows, India faces a complex battle against misinformation and de-influencing. While social media enables vital communication, it also amplifies unchecked content. De-influencing – where influencers discourage purchases – can promote mindful consumption, but often relies on sensationalism and clickbait for engagement.

Despite expert advice being essential, digital platforms often become the go-to place, enabling the rapid spread of misinformation. To counter this, strict regulations are needed.

Experts consulted for the World Economic Forum's 2024 Global Risks Report identify India as one of the nations most vulnerable to misinformation and disinformation. This is largely driven by the rise of AI-generated content and the influence of social media platforms. Despite the Ministry of Consumer Affairs' "Endorsement Know-hows" and ASCI/SEBI guidelines, misleading health advice and weight loss reels blur the line between organic and paid content. Influencers often use shock tactics, clickbait, and half-truths to go viral, rapidly fuelling misinformation.

Legal landscape

While Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution guarantees freedom of speech, it is subject to reasonable restrictions under Article 19(2), including defamation, public order, and morality. The Supreme Court has upheld that free speech does not protect spreading misinformation or harmful content.

The Consumer Protection Act, 2019, bans misleading advertisements, holds influencers accountable for deceptive promotions. Digital regulations under the IT Act (Sections 66 & 67), the Intermediary Guidelines, 2021, and defamation and e-commerce laws penalise harmful content and ensure accurate endorsements.

Though not legally binding,



Gopal Jain
Senior Advocate,
Supreme Court of
India

ASCI guidelines set ethical standards, with non-compliance leading to blacklisting and public reprimands.

With stricter enforcement, influencers must prioritise transparency and credibility, making ethical content creation essential in the evolving digital landscape.

An influencer's intent is key when critiquing brands. Honest reviews aid consumers, but exaggerated negativity for clicks or sponsorships is a commercial tactic. Indian defamation laws protect against misleading content, highlighting the need for authenticity. While influencers operate across many fields, health-related content is held to a higher pedestal. There are norms in place, but something more critical is required in the health sector to ensure that advice is reliable and responsible.

Influencer content blurs the line between fact and manipulation with selective data, ambiguous language, and cherry-picked events. Misinterpreted studies and emotional appeals create misleading narratives that prioritise engagement over accuracy.

We have all fallen for clickbait, especially when it promises to teach us "how to avoid cancer" or "how to make liver detox water." These trends highlight influencers' role in shaping narratives and public discourse. Viral content often outpaces fact-checked information, making critical thinking, source verification, and expert consultation crucial.

Evolving regulation

Regulations for social media influencers are tightening, with a focus on accountability and responsible content. SEBI recently imposed strict rules on "influencers," restricting real-time stock data in educational content to prevent influencers from influencing financial decisions without proper expertise or authorisation.

Legal scrutiny now extends to

misleading advertisements. In *Indian Medical Association vs Union of India*, the Court held influencers accountable for false

endorsements, and the Delhi High Court stressed claim verification, especially in health content. With non-experts gaining visibility on unregulated platforms, health advice must come from qualified professionals. Strong ethical norms and legal oversight are crucial to curb misinformation.

In a landmark ruling, the Delhi High Court restrained an influencer from disparaging a brand, emphasising that freedom of speech under Article 19(1)(a) is not absolute. It upheld restrictions to prevent defamation and ruled that health content must be backed by qualified professionals with disclosed credentials.

While influencers gain trust, exploiting it for personal gain damages credibility. As trust erodes, influencers and brands risk losing their authenticity.

Moreover, establishing a registration system or database for influencers disseminating public health information is essential.

Such a system would function as a continuous monitoring tool, ensuring transparent accountability for the content produced. This approach would help curb the unchecked spread of misinformation and empower consumers to make well-informed, objective assessments, especially given the significant safety and perception challenges associated with health-related content.

Recognising the ethical dimensions inherent in public health communication, robust ethical practices must complement legal measures to safeguard public interests.

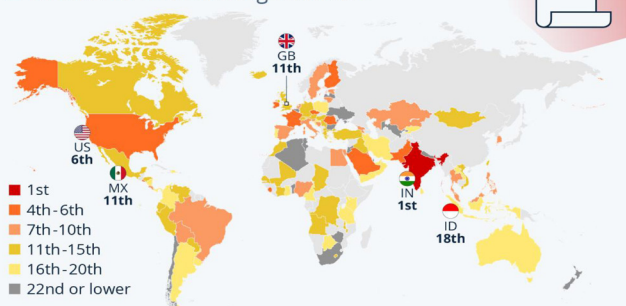
Brands must invest in consumer education, while regulators and platforms should enforce strict guidelines against misinformation. It is critical to enforce stringent guidelines to hold influencers accountable for their content and unchecked promotional activities, thereby safeguarding consumer interests.

Important Points from Article

- **Digital Misinformation in India:**
 - ◆ India is identified as one of the **most vulnerable countries** to misinformation, as highlighted by the **World Economic Forum's 2024 Global Risks Report**.
 - ◆ The growth of **AI-generated content** and **social media platforms** is a key factor in the proliferation of **misleading information**.
- **De-influencing** — a phenomenon where influencers discourage purchases — is increasingly relying on **sensationalism** and **clickbait** for engagement.

Where False Information Is Posing the Biggest Threat

Rank of "misinformation/disinformation" among 34 risks for the following countries



Based on 1,490 expert opinions across academia, business, government, the international community and civil society collected Sep. 4-Oct. 9, 2023
Source: World Economic Forum



statista



- **Regulatory Landscape:**

- ◆ The **Consumer Protection Act, 2019**, which bans misleading advertisements and holds influencers accountable.
- ◆ The **IT Act and Intermediary Guidelines, 2021**, which penalize harmful content.
- ◆ The **SEBI guidelines** that regulate “finfluencers” (financial influencers), especially those providing stock market advice.

- The **ASCI guidelines** set ethical standards for digital content creators, with consequences for noncompliance.

- **Legal Precedents:**

- ◆ **Supreme Court** has upheld that **freedom of speech** under Article 19(1)(a) is not absolute and **does not protect misinformation**.
- ◆ Delhi High Court emphasized that influencers should be held accountable for false endorsements, especially in health content, and that such content must be backed by **qualified professionals**.

- **Health Misinformation:**

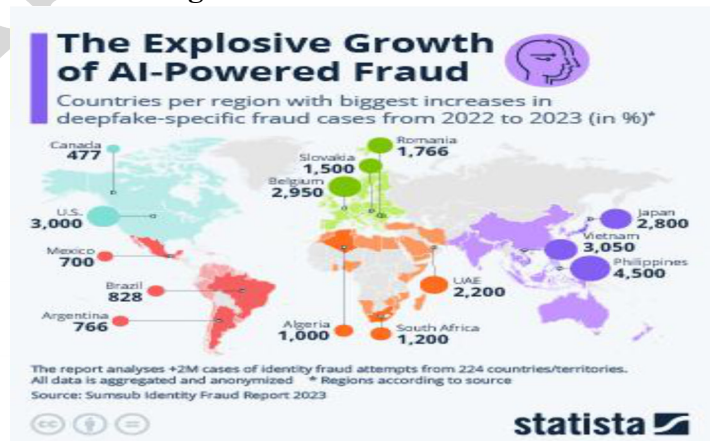
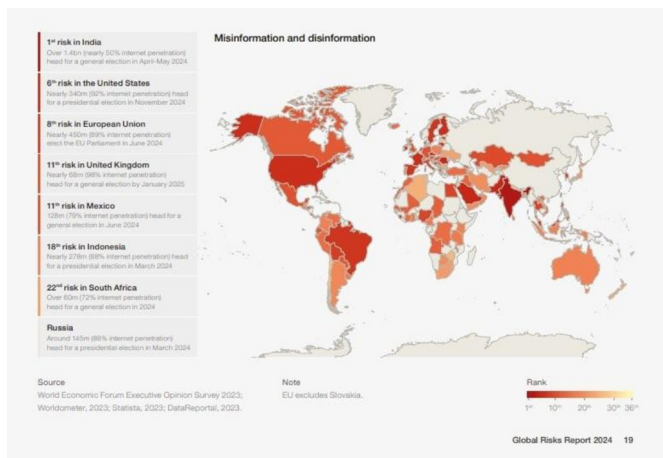
- ◆ Health-related content on social media is especially prone to **misinformation**, with influencers often using **half-truths** and **misleading studies** to create viral content.
- ◆ The editorial calls for stronger **ethics** and **monitoring** in the **health sector** to ensure reliable information is disseminated.

- **Challenges with Influencer Culture:**

- ◆ Influencers often **blur the line** between **fact and manipulation** by using selective data, emotional appeals, and **cherry-picked events** to create misleading narratives.
- ◆ Misleading trends, such as “**how to avoid cancer**” or “**liver detox water**,” showcase how influencers shape narratives to drive engagement, often at the expense of accuracy.

- **Proposed Solutions:**

- ◆ **Stricter Enforcement:** Ensuring that influencers prioritize **transparency** and **accountability** in their content creation.
- ◆ **Consumer Education:** Brands must invest in educating consumers on how to distinguish reliable information from clickbait.
- ◆ **Health Content Regulation:** Creating a **registration system** for influencers disseminating health information to ensure credibility and **qualified endorsements**.





- **Regulating Financial Advice:** The SEBI guidelines on influencers highlight the importance of regulating financial advice to prevent misleading stock recommendations.

Food vs fuel: Surge in ethanol blending & its impacts

Why in News?

- ◆ Ethanol blending & its impacts

Syllabus

- ◆ GS Paper 3 – Environment & Ecology

Food vs fuel: Surge in ethanol blending and its impacts

Will the increased diversion of sugar for ethanol blending reduce its availability for direct consumption?

DATA POINT

Nitika Francis

India is looking to increase the ethanol-blending ratio in petrol to 30% to further cut down on fossil fuel consumption, as it has met its previous target of 20% in 2025, well ahead of schedule. This would require an increase in the diversion of sugar, produced from sugarcane and other sources, for ethanol production. However, sugarcane production has been on the decline since 2022, so much so that on Thursday, the Centre approved a hike in the Fair Remunerative Price for the crop to protect the interests of farmers. Consequently, the price of sugar has risen too, pinching the pockets of consumers.

Will the increased diversion of sugar for ethanol blending further reduce its availability for direct consumption and push prices even higher?

Chart 1 shows the annual sugarcane production in India in the last 10 years. Following a dip in FY17 due to drought conditions in sugar-producing States, production was almost consistently increasing until it peaked at 490 crore tonnes in FY23. It declined in the following year and is estimated to further dip in FY25 as well to 435 crore tonnes.

A slate of components has influenced lower production of sugarcane over the recent years, such as red-rot disease among crops in major sugar-producing States, deficient rains, and problems with the flowering of crops.

This decline in production has predictably impacted the retail sugar prices across the country. Chart 2, which shows the country-wide modal retail price of one kilogram of sugar, depicts prices rising from ₹40 per kg in May 2023 to ₹45 per kg as of May 5, 2025.

Ethanol blending adds to the price pressure by diverting a portion of the sugar. Government data

show a rapid increase in the amount of sugarcane-based ethanol supplied for blending over the past decade, going from about 40 crore litres in FY14 to nearly 670 crore litres in FY24 (Chart 3). The practice is lauded for its sustainability-related benefits as well as its potential to reduce India's dependence on oil imports.

The Centre has been implementing a long-term Ethanol Blending Programme (EBP) since the start of the 2000s, which allowed for a stagnant, then gradually increasing supply of ethanol. Initially, as a means of ensuring adequate availability of sugar for domestic consumption, the government banned the use of sugarcane juice, sugar syrup, and B-heavy molasses for ethanol production. This ban was lifted later, which explains the surge in supply in recent years.

A commensurate increase can be seen in the rate at which ethanol was blended with petrol over the years. Chart 4 shows the ethanol blending ratio over the last 10 years. From just over 1.5% in FY14, the rate of ethanol blending has surged to 20% in FY25. The ethanol blending ratio surged due to a combination of a consistent increase in sugar diverted for ethanol production and a drastic reduction in the goods and services tax imposed on ethanol meant for the EBP.

At the time of its inception, the EBP had set the target of 20% blending to be achieved by 2030. However, upon seeing the progress attained through lifting caps and taxes, standing at 15% blended ethanol in 2024, it was decided to advance the 20% target to 2025. The ratio was reached in March this year, leading to talks of a 30% target for the coming years.

With the availability of sugarcane impacted this year, reports show that the government is looking at grains to make up for the shortfall. Moreover, with sugar prices rising, the choice between food and fuel looms.

Bittersweet blend

The data were sourced from Lok Sabha Questions and Answers, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, and the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy



Chart 1: The chart shows the annual sugarcane production in India over the last ten years (in crore tonnes)

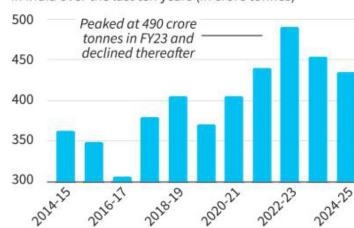


Chart 3: The chart shows the amount of sugarcane-based ethanol supplied for blending (in crore litres)

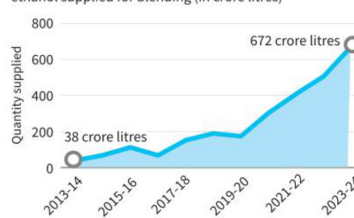
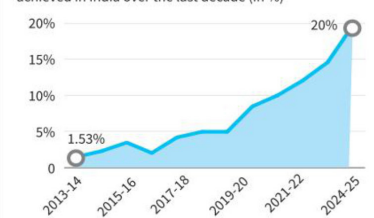


Chart 2: The country-wide modal retail price of 1 kg of sugar between May 2022 and May 2025 (in ₹ per kg)



Chart 4: The chart shows the ethanol blending ratio achieved in India over the last decade (in %)



Important Points from Article

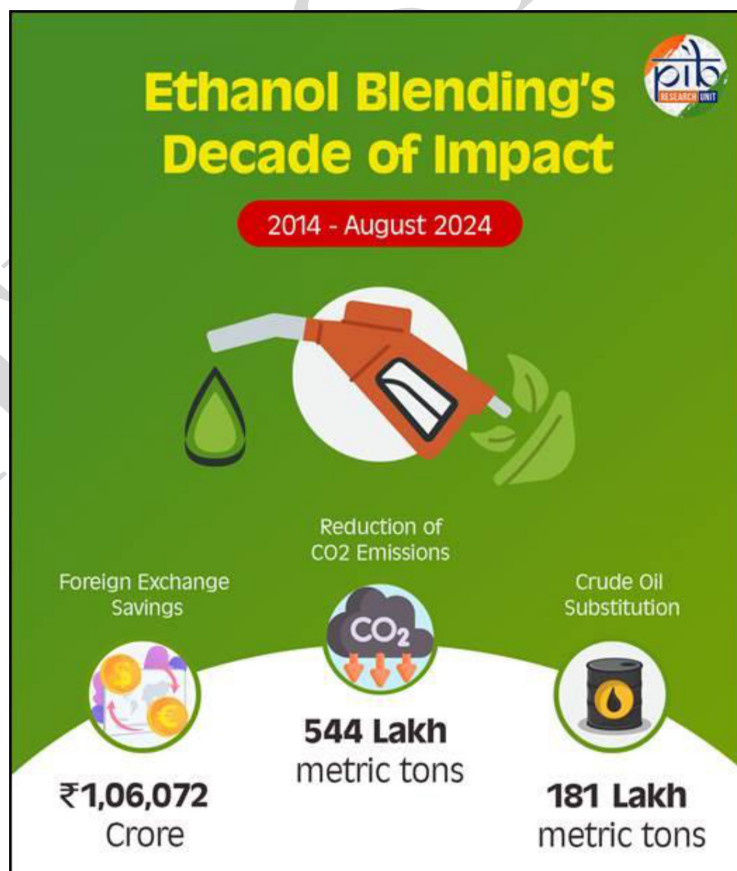
- **Ethanol Blending Programme (EBP):**

- ◆ India's **ethanol-blending target** is set to increase to **30%**, up from the **20% target** achieved ahead of schedule in **2025**.
- ◆ The program aims to reduce **India's dependence on fossil fuels** and cut oil imports.
- ◆ **Ethanol production from sugarcane** has surged from **40 crore litres in FY14** to **670 crore litres in FY24**.
- ◆ The rapid increase in ethanol production follows the **lifting of caps and taxes** that had previously constrained ethanol blending.



- **Sugarcane Production Decline:**

- ◆ **Sugarcane production** has been declining since **2022**, with estimates showing a further dip in **FY25** (projected at **435 crore tonnes** from a peak of **490 crore tonnes** in **FY23**).
- ◆ Factors influencing the decline include **red-rot disease**, **deficient rains**, and **flowering issues** with crops.





- **Impact on Sugar Prices:**

- ◆ The decline in sugarcane production has resulted in **rising sugar prices** across the country, from **₹40 per kg in May 2023** to **₹45 per kg in May 2025**.
- ◆ This price surge is compounded by the **diversion of sugar for ethanol blending**, increasing the cost of sugar for direct consumption.



- **Government's Response:**

- ◆ The **Centre** has approved an increase in the **Fair Remunerative Price (FRP)** for sugarcane to protect farmers' interests.
- ◆ To address the sugar shortfall, the government is considering **alternative sources** such as **grains** for ethanol production.

Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas
Government of India

75 Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

World Biofuel Day
(Biofuels towards a Carbon Neutral World)

A CLEANER ENVIRONMENT AND PROSPEROUS FARMERS. BIOFUEL MAKES IT POSSIBLE!

Our government's primary goal is to increase the income of farmers, to prepare alternatives for petrol, diesel and gas, and to save the environment.

- Narendra Modi

↔ Dedication to the Nation of IndianOil's ↔

2G Ethanol Plant at Panipat Refinery

Project Highlights

- Production of clean energy from agricultural residues
- Increase in the income of farmers
- Direct benefit to 1 Lakh farmers
- No need to burn the leftover crop
- New employment opportunities
- Reduction in CO₂ emissions of about 3 million tonnes annually
- Production of 100 kilolitres of ethanol per day
- Investment of ₹900 Crores

by
Shri Narendra Modi
Prime Minister
(through Video Conference)

In the august presence of
Shri Bandaru Dattatraya
Governor, Haryana

Shri Narendra Singh Tomar
Minister of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare
Govt. of India

Shri Hardeep Singh Puri
Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Housing and Urban Affairs, Govt. of India

Shri Parshottam Rupala
Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Govt. of India

Shri Rameswar Teli
Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas & Labour and Employment, Govt. of India

Shri Sanjay Bhatia
Member of Parliament

Wednesday, 10th August 2022, 4.30 pm

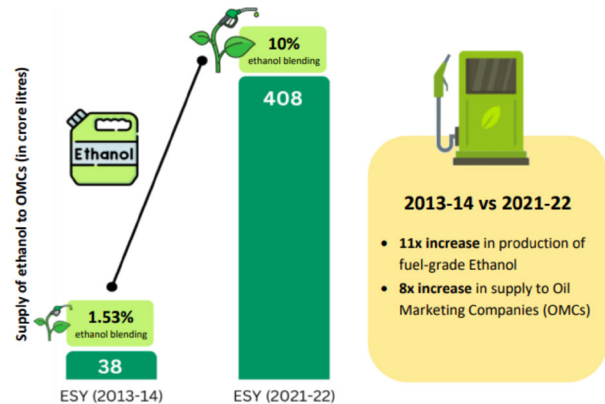
To watch the live webcast please log in to
<https://pmindiawebcast.nic.in/>

The above program's live telecast can be watched on 'DD News channel'



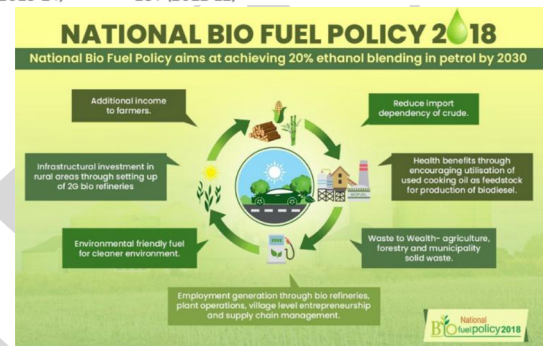
• Long-term Ethanol Strategy:

- ♦ The **Ethanol Blending Programme** has been running since the early 2000s, with significant policy shifts in recent years, including the lifting of bans on using **sugarcane juice, syrup, and B-heavy molasses** for ethanol.
- ♦ The original target for **20% ethanol blending** was set for **2030**, but it was advanced to **2025** due to the progress made in ethanol production and blending rates.



• Way Forward

- ♦ The government is now eyeing **30% ethanol blending** as the next target, which will require increased **sugar diversion** to ethanol production.
- ♦ The **conflict between food (sugar) and fuel (ethanol)** could intensify, potentially impacting **consumer prices and food security**.



Maharani Ahilyabai Holkar

- ♦ **Maharani Ahilyabai Holkar** (31 May 1725 – 13 August 1795) was the **Holkar Queen** of the Maratha Malwa kingdom in India.
- ♦ Under her rule, the kingdom experienced relative **peace, prosperity, and stability**, and **Maheshwar**, her capital, became a hub of **literary, artistic, and industrial pursuits**.

In its maiden sitting outside Mumbai, State Cabinet honours Ahilyabai, woos Dhangars

Snehal Mutha
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra Cabinet on Tuesday, in its maiden sitting outside capital Mumbai, announced a bunch of decisions including ₹5,503 crore for the development of temples across the State, steps towards the Nashik Kumbh in 2027, and several initiatives for the Dhangar community.

The meeting was held in Chondi to mark the 300th birth anniversary of Indore queen Ahilyabai Holkar and her legacy. Chondi is the birthplace of the medieval queen. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said that a sum of ₹681 crore has been sanctioned for the preservation of Ahilyabai's memorial in Chondi and a medical college, to be named Punyashlok Ahilyadevi Holkar Government Medical College, and an Industrial Training Institute for girls will be set up in



Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis with Deputy Chief Ministers Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar at a function to honour Ahilyabai Holkar at Chondi village in Ahilyanagar district on Tuesday. x

Ahilyanagar district.

The Cabinet also decided to make a feature film and release a special postal ticket and logo on Ahilyabai.

Kumbh Mela authority

Among other decisions, the Cabinet approved the framing of a law to set up an authority for the Nashik-Trimbakeshwar Kumbh Mela 2025. The Kumbh Mela Authority, which will be

responsible for planning the mega congregation in Nashik district in 2027, will be formed on the lines of one in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh.

In an outreach to the Dhangar community, the Cabinet approved a plan to enrol more Dhangar students in reputed residential schools. "Around 31,300 students have been enrolled in 162 schools between 2021-22 and 2024-25

under the Raje Yashwantrao Holkar Mahamash Yojana. We look forward to enrolling over 10,000 students," said Mr. Fadnavis.

For years now, the Dhangar community has been demanding reservations under Scheduled Tribes category, which provides 7% quota, while they are currently receiving 3.5% reservation in education and jobs under the Nomadic Tribes category.

HDI Index

- India moved up **three spots** to **130th** among **193 countries** in the **Human Development Index** for 2023.
- India's HDI value increased from **0.676** in **2022** to **0.685** in **2023**, still within the **medium human development** category.
- **GNI per capita** increased to **\$9,046.76** in **2023** from **\$2,167.22** in **1990**, marking a **fourfold increase** in over three decades.
- **135 million people** escaped **multidimensional poverty** between **2015-16** and **2019-21**.

India up three spots to 130 among 193 nations in HDI, but inequality persists

Bindu Shajan Perappadan

NEW DELHI

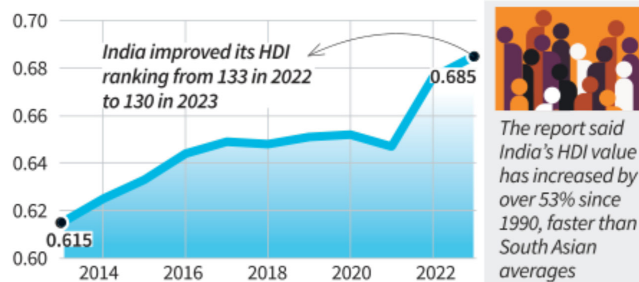
India moved up three spots in the Human Development Index, ranking 130 out of 193 countries in 2023, shows the Human Development Report, 2025, released on Tuesday by the United Nations Development Programme.

With the HDI value improving to 0.685 in 2023 from 0.676 in 2022, India remained in the medium human development category, moving closer to the high human development threshold of 0.700.

The Gross National Income per capita rose over four times to \$9,046.76 in 2023 from \$2,167.22 in 1990, while 135 million In-

Steady progress

According to the latest UNDP report, India's Human Development Index(HDI) score improved from 0.676 in 2022 to 0.685 in 2023



dians escaped multidimensional poverty between 2015-16 and 2019-21.

However, challenges persist, with inequality reducing India's HDI by 30.7%, one of the highest losses in the region, the report said. "While health and education inequality

have improved, income and gender disparities remain significant. Female labour force participation and political representation lag, though recent steps – such as the constitutional amendment reserving one-third of legislative seats for women –

offer promise for transformative change," it added.

Life expectancy in India rose to 72 in 2023 from 58.6 in 1990, the highest since the inception of the index, indicating a strong recovery from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Global slowdown

Underscoring a broader global slowdown in human development the report revealed that the current pace of progress is the slowest since 1990, and India is no exception.

The inequality between low and very high HDI countries had increased for the fourth consecutive year, reversing long-standing progress, the report said.

- **Inequality in HDI:**
 - ♦ **Inequality reduced India's HDI by 30.7%**, one of the highest losses in the region.
 - ♦ Income inequality and gender disparities remain significant, even though health and education inequality have improved.
 - ♦ **Female labour force participation** and **political representation** lag behind, though there have been positive changes, such as the **constitutional amendment reserving one-third of legislative seats for women**.



Prelims PYQs (2012)

Q. The Multi-dimensional Poverty Index developed by 'Oxford Poverty and Human Development initiative with UNDP support covers which of the following? (2012)

1. Deprivation of education, health, assets, and services at the household level.
2. Purchasing power parity at the national level.
3. Extent of budget deficit and GDP growth rate at the national level.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

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

TATHASTUICS

