

2024

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS





ACS
Dibrugarh

Daily Current Affairs from *The Hindu*, *The Indian Express* & *The Assam Tribune*

30th Jan 2025

CONTENT LIST

GS 2: POLITY, GOVERNANCE, SOCIAL JUSTICE, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS/INSTITUTIONS

	Topics	Syllabus	Page No:
1	Bridge the milk divide for a nutritionally secure India	Health (TH)	8
2	Partners in innovation	International relations (IE)	10
3	A much-needed thaw	International relations (IE)	10

GS 3: ECONOMY, ECOLOGY, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY, DEFENCE, SECURITY AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT

	Topics	Syllabus	Page No:
4	Deepseek: Can do a Mangalyan in AI	Science & technology (IE)	1
5	30 dead, 60 hurt in Maha Kumbh stampede	Security & DM (AT)	1
6	Broken promises in a warming world	Environment & ecology (TH)	8

GS 2: POLITY, GOVERNANCE, SOCIAL JUSTICE, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS/INSTITUTIONS

1. Bridge the milk divides for a nutritionally secure India

Context: Milk, a vital source of protein, calcium, and other micronutrients, is integral to plant-heavy Indian diets. Research links milk consumption to lower odds of stunting, underweight, and anthropometric failure in Indian children aged between six months and five years. However, milk consumption remains highly inequitable across socio-economic groups and regions. As the Union Budget 2025-26 approaches, addressing these disparities is essential to improved health outcomes for all. The White Revolution that was initiated by Verghese Kurien propelled India to become the world's largest milk producer. It is now time to bring focus to demand and ensure that milk reaches the most vulnerable.

Key points

- **Overview:** The article highlights India's milk consumption disparities, emphasizing the need for equitable access to milk for vulnerable groups to address malnutrition and overnutrition.
- **India's Milk Revolution and Current Challenges:** India's White Revolution, led by Verghese Kurien, made it the world's largest milk producer. Despite this, milk consumption is highly unequal across income groups, regions, and social categories. Addressing these gaps is crucial for better health outcomes.
- **Inequities in Milk Consumption:** According to the latest Household Consumer Expenditure Surveys (HCES) by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO)-
 - The top 10% of income groups consume 3-4 times more milk per person than the poorest 10%.
 - The poorest 30% of households consume only 18% of India's milk.
 - Urban households consume 30% more milk than rural ones, even though most milk is produced in rural areas.
 - Scheduled Tribe households consume 4 litres less milk per person than general category households.
 - States like Rajasthan, Punjab, and Haryana consume 333-421 grams of milk per person daily, while eastern states like Chhattisgarh, Odisha, and West Bengal consume only 75-171 grams.
- **Affordability and Overconsumption Issues:** Meeting the recommended 300 grams of milk daily would require 70% of households to spend 10-30% of their monthly income on milk. Affluent urban households often consume more than double the recommended amount, including unhealthy products like ice cream and sweets, leading to overnutrition and obesity.
- **Focus on Vulnerable Groups:** Prioritizing milk access for children, pregnant women, lactating mothers, and the elderly in low-income areas is essential. Strengthen milk provision through schemes like POSHAN and Integrated Child Development Services. States like Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, and Karnataka already provide milk, but quantities are insufficient. Explore innovative financing, such as social bonds, corporate social responsibility funds, and taxes on unhealthy foods. Use milk coupons in areas with strong dairy networks to improve access and support local markets.
- **Awareness and Healthy Consumption:** Promote the nutritional benefits of milk through campaigns targeting women via Anganwadi centres, self-help groups, and civil society organizations. States like Maharashtra and Bihar are already leading such efforts. Encourage moderation in milk consumption among affluent groups to reduce overnutrition and make milk more affordable for the vulnerable. Learn from the U.K.'s Change4Life Sugar Swaps campaign, which successfully reduced sugar and fat consumption.
- **Conclusion:** Milk is vital for India's nutrition security. Ensuring equitable access for the vulnerable while curbing overconsumption among the affluent will fulfil Verghese Kurien's vision of a nutritionally secure India. This will make the benefits of the milk revolution accessible to all.

Q. Analyse the factors contributing to inequitable milk consumption in India. Propose policy interventions to bridge the gap and ensure nutritional security for vulnerable populations. (ভাৰতত অসম গাখীৰ ব্যৱহাৰত অৰিহণা যোগোৱা কাৰকবোৰ বিশ্লেষণ কৰক। দুৰ্বল জনসংখ্যাৰ বাবে পুষ্টিগত সুৰক্ষা নিশ্চিত কৰিবলৈ আৰু ব্যৱধান দূৰ কৰিবলৈ নীতিগত হস্তক্ষেপৰ প্ৰস্তাৱ দিয়ক)

2. Partners in innovation

Context: As a leader in green innovation and regulation, the UK can become India's energy transition partner, providing green technology solutions and access to finance through the city of London. India can boost market access for British businesses through sustained government platforms that spark partnerships with Indian industry. India can also expand priority-sector lending to include EVs and EV-supporting infrastructure alongside renewable energy to help reach its goals.

Key points

- **Overview:** The article highlights the growing UK-India technology and economic partnership.
- **The Role of India's Global Capability Centres in UK Technology:** Many UK consumers unknowingly rely on technology developed in India's Global Capability Centres (GCCs) when using online banking, connected cars, or even flying long-haul. These GCCs are hubs of innovation where India's scientific talent collaborates with foreign firms, including UK companies, to create and refine cutting-edge technologies.
- **UK-India Collaboration in Technology and Investment:** The UK is a global leader in technology, ranking third in venture capital investment behind the USA and China in 2024. London's tech ecosystem, the largest in Europe, offers opportunities for collaboration with India, which has established itself as a technology superpower. The UK India Business Council (UKIBC) has been actively promoting this collaboration, publishing reports and highlighting success stories to encourage further engagement between businesses and universities in both countries.
- **Financial Services and Green Innovation Partnerships:** The UK's financial sector is deeply invested in India, with British banks leading the way in deploying fintech solutions across different segments. By aligning regulatory standards and best practices, India can attract more UK-based fintech firms, boosting financial inclusion and SME lending. In the energy sector, the UK's expertise in green innovation positions it as a crucial partner in India's transition to sustainable energy.
- **Defence, Advanced Manufacturing, and Supply Chains:** The UK and India are co-developing advanced manufacturing and defence technologies, with India offering scale and cost-effective production. UK companies can integrate Indian firms into their supply chains, benefiting from India's manufacturing capabilities. The UKIBC's aerospace and defence group, representing 22 UK firms with global revenues of \$60 billion, is pushing for refinements in India's defence acquisition policies.
- **Expanding Economic and Educational Cooperation:** The UK-India economic partnership is strong but has room for expansion. At the Technology Futures Conference, India's Commerce and Industry Minister, Piyush Goyal, proposed joint efforts in AI, virtual reality, and telemedicine, which could transform education and healthcare accessibility in both countries. To support such initiatives, a government-backed investment fund could accelerate collaboration between UK and Indian start-ups in emerging technologies.
- **Conclusion:** Beyond financial investment, skilled talent is essential for turning ideas into reality. The future could see thousands of British students studying in India, benefiting from affordable AI courses and gaining insights into India's business culture. With determination and creativity, the UK and India can unlock extraordinary possibilities in their economic and technological partnership.

3. A much-needed thaw

Context: From 1988 onwards, India-China relations came to rest on four pillars that undergirded a fair degree of military and diplomatic stability: Summitry, border negotiations, confidence building measures (CBMs), and people to people (P2P) ties including trade. Since the two militaries could clash at the border, they had worked out a series of CBMs to reduce the risk of serious escalation. Delhi and Beijing have encouraged tourism, cultural and academic links, and trade to anchor ties at the societal level as well.

Key points

- **Overview:** The article examines the recent thaw in India-China relations, analysing whether it signals a lasting return to diplomatic normalcy or remains a temporary pause in their ongoing geopolitical tensions.
- **The Return to Normal Diplomacy in India-China Relations:** While the complexities of India-China ties make any resolution uncertain, signs indicate a return to the diplomatic framework that has shaped their relations for over three decades. Since Rajiv Gandhi's visit to Beijing in 1988, the two nations have relied on summit diplomacy, border negotiations, confidence-building measures (CBMs), and people-to-people (P2P) exchanges to maintain stability.
- **The Structural Foundations of India-China Engagement:** From 1988 until the Galwan clashes, India-China relations were built on four key pillars-
 - First, regular summits between top leaders helped in crisis management and setting the diplomatic agenda.
 - Second, continuous border negotiations—despite their slow progress—ensured that territorial disputes remained contained.
 - Third, military CBMs, such as protocols to prevent escalation, maintained relative stability along the border.
 - Fourth, P2P exchanges, including trade and educational ties, fostered societal-level engagement.
- **Significance of Stable Relations with China:**
 - Enhanced Border Stability* - De-escalation would prevent future clashes & allow resources to be diverted to developmental priorities.
 - Economic Interests* - A stable relationship is crucial as China is India's largest trading partner and 3rd largest export market. 2/3rd of India's total Active Pharma Ingredients is sourced from China.
 - Energy Security* - Cooperation with China is necessary to receive hydrological information of transborder rivers (Brahmaputra) to secure India's Hydroelectric potential.
 - Geopolitical Leverage* - China's support is necessary for India's Nuclear Suppliers Group membership. India and China can challenge Western hegemony, pushing for reforms in WTO, IMF, and UN. It could promote balance of power within Asia and deter aggressive policies by the West.
- **Conclusion:** While a full-scale resolution of India-China disputes remains unlikely soon, structural factors such as economic interdependence, military pragmatism, and shared geopolitical concerns are driving a gradual normalization of relations. The return to summit diplomacy, border talks, and economic engagement suggests that both sides recognize the benefits of stability.

Q. Examine the recent thaw in India-China relations. Do you think this normalization is sustainable, or is it a temporary phase in their long-standing strategic rivalry? (ভাৰত-চীনৰ সম্পৰ্কৰ শেহতীয়া অৱনতি পৰীক্ষা কৰক। আপুনি ভাবেনে যে এই স্বাভাৱিককৰণ স্থায়ী, নে ই তেওঁলোকৰ দীৰ্ঘদিনীয়া কৌশলগত প্ৰতিদ্বন্দিতাৰ এক অস্থায়ী পৰ্যায়?)

4. Deepseek: Can do a Mangalyan in AI

Context: Chinese Artificial Intelligence (AI) start-up DeepSeek R1 model, which has disrupted the tech sector, holds lessons for India to develop the critical technology in cost-effective ways and without massive computation resources. The launch of the DeepSeek Janus-Pro-7B model aims to make a significant leap in AI capabilities. However, concerns around security, data privacy, and potential biases in its outputs highlight the need for India to develop its own AI model.

Key points

- **DeepSeek AI:** DeepSeek AI is an advanced Chinese artificial intelligence platform designed to offer a range of AI-driven services, like tools like ChatGPT. It was developed by a Chinese AI startup based in Hangzhou, founded by Liang Wenfeng.
- **Features of DeepSeek AI:** DeepSeek is a Chinese AI app that has gained attention for its impressive capabilities and rapid development. Here are some of the key features of this AI model-
 - *Open-Source* - DeepSeek AI is open-source and licensed under the MIT license, making it highly customizable for both personal and professional use.
 - *Cost-Effective* - Developed with an investment of just \$6 million, DeepSeek AI is much more affordable than competitors like ChatGPT, which cost hundreds of millions to develop.
 - *Performance* - DeepSeek AI, especially the R1 model, performs competitively in reasoning tasks, achieving high accuracy in benchmarks compared to well-established models like ChatGPT.
 - *Service Delivery* - The platform is flexible, offering options for local hosting and automated support. It can also generate content for various applications, such as eCommerce, boosting operational efficiency.
- **India's need for own AI model:** India's dependence on foreign AI models, such as ChatGPT, Gemini, and now DeepSeek raises several concerns highlighting the need to develop its own AI platform-
 - *Sovereignty Over Information* - If India continues to rely on foreign AI systems, there's a risk that its population could be influenced by political biases embedded in those platforms.
 - *Data Privacy and Security* - Using foreign AI models raises questions about data privacy. If an Indian user's data is processed through servers in other countries, there's the risk that sensitive data could be accessed or misused.
 - *Technological Independence* - With rapid advancements in AI, India needs to invest in homegrown solutions to ensure it doesn't lag technologically.
 - *Geopolitical Leverage* - As AI becomes more central to global competition, countries that control AI technologies will have increased geopolitical leverage.
- **The AI Race a Strategic Moment for India:** PM Modi's upcoming participation in the AI summit in Paris highlights India's need to carefully assess the implications of the escalating AI competition between the US and China, especially following the release of DeepSeek R1.
- **India's Strategic Role in Global AI Governance:** India must avoid past mistakes, such as being sidelined in the global nuclear governance framework, by clearly defining its AI strategy. Delhi can shape global AI governance rather than remain a passive participant.
- **Conclusion:** The AI race presents both challenges and opportunities for India. By leveraging partnerships, investing in innovation, and ensuring strategic clarity, India can play a pivotal role in the evolving AI landscape.

5. 30 dead, 60 hurt in Maha Kumbh stampede

Context: Almost 30 people were killed and 60 others got injured in a stampede that broke out at the Maha Kumbh mela on Wednesday. The stampede occurred at the Sangam area where millions of pilgrims jostled for space to take a holy dip on Mauni Amavasya, considered one of the most auspicious days during the mela. The incident took place between 1-2 am due to the pressure of crowd. The crowds' broke barricades and jumped to the other side, crushing those waiting there.

Key points

- **Stampede:** A stampede is a sudden, uncontrolled rush of a large crowd of people or animals, typically triggered by panic, fear, or excitement. It occurs in crowded areas where high density of people restricts movement, causing chaos and potential casualties.
 - *Cause of Death* - During a stampede, crushing pressure on the chest restricts the ability of the diaphragm (base of lungs) to contract and expand properly. The body cannot take in enough air or expel carbon dioxide.
- **Human Factors:** *Panic or Fear* - Sudden fear (e.g., of a fire, explosion, or perceived threat) can trigger mass hysteria (uncontrollable fear or anxiety).
Excitement or Euphoria - Overwhelming enthusiasm, such as during concerts or celebrations, may lead to loss of control.
- **Poor Infrastructure:** *Overcrowding* - Insufficient space increases the risk of crushing and trampling.
Insufficient Facilities - Narrow paths, blocked exits, or lack of barriers create bottlenecks.
- **Organizational Factors:** *Inadequate Crowd Management* - Lack of trained personnel to control or direct crowds.
Insufficient Planning - Poor venue design, limited entry/exit points, or inadequate emergency planning.
- **Some Deadly Stampedes in India:** *Hathras (2024)* - At least 121 people, mostly women and children, were killed in a stampede during a religious event in Hathras, Uttar Pradesh.
Mumbai Pedestrian Bridge (2017) - 22 died in a stampede during rush hour.
Naina Devi Temple (2008) - Around 145 Hindu pilgrims were killed in a stampede at the Naina Devi temple in Himachal Pradesh, triggered by rumours of a landslide.
- **NDMA Guidelines to Control Stampedes:** *Infrastructure Development* - Ensuring venues and access routes can handle large crowds, especially in disaster-prone areas like hilly terrain and narrow pathways.
Crowd Control - The NDMA advocates a community-based approach to crowd control, focusing on clear communication and understanding rather than relying solely on force.
Fire Safety - NDMA highlights precautions such as safe electrical wiring, monitoring LPG cylinder usage, and caution with fireworks to prevent fires.
- **Way Forward:** *Live Crowd Tracking* - Deploy thermal and LiDAR sensors to track crowd density, feeding data into AI models to predict surges and trigger early warnings.
Communication Tools - Install interactive displays showing wait times, evacuation routes, and information in multiple languages.
Lighting and Pathway Systems - Implement crowd-responsive lighting that adjusts brightness and colour based on density to guide movement or calm situations.

6. Broken promises in a warming world

Context: There can be no doubt that U.S. President Trump's decision to pull the United States out of the Paris Agreement, which will legally come into effect in a year, is a major blow to global efforts to combat the threat posed by anthropogenic global warming. Under the principles and terms of the United Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), to which the U.S. is a signatory, it is also supposed to take the lead in climate action while providing the financial and technological means to developing countries to do the same.

Key points

- **Overview:** The U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement under Trump highlights its inconsistent climate commitments – shifting burdens onto developing nations and undermining global climate action.
- **Impact of U.S. Withdrawal from the Paris Agreement:** U.S. President Trump's decision to pull the country out of the Paris Agreement is a major setback in the fight against global warming. Historically, the U.S. has contributed over a fifth of total carbon dioxide emissions since the pre-industrial era.
- **The U.S.'s Weak Commitment to Climate Action:** Regardless of the ruling party, the U.S. has consistently failed to fulfil its global climate responsibilities. From 1992 to 2005, U.S. emissions steadily increased, and the country stayed out of the Kyoto Protocol due to bipartisan opposition in Congress.
- **Biden Administration's Climate Actions:** Despite efforts at climate action, the U.S. became the world's largest crude oil producer under President Biden. The minimal \$300 billion annual climate finance target at COP29 (Baku) resulted from resistance by the U.S. and its developed allies.
- **Pattern of U.S. Climate Policy:** U.S. climate action has followed a frustrating cycle: weak commitments under Democratic administrations followed by withdrawal under Republican governments. This has forced large emerging economies to take on increasing climate burdens.
- **Global Reaction to the U.S. Withdrawal:** The dominant belief, influenced by the U.S., is that markets can drive climate action through private sector investments. However, over 80% of U.S. and 70% of EU energy still comes from fossil fuels, showing that market-driven solutions have failed. A 2024 University of Colorado Law School paper highlights that most U.S. states have weak or no emissions reduction policies.
- **Advice for Developing Nations:** Developing countries should not attempt to compensate for the U.S.'s withdrawal. Other developed nations are likely to offer only rhetorical support rather than substantive action. Despite withdrawing, the U.S. continues to claim global climate leadership.
- **Maintaining Multilateralism and Development Goals:** Developing nations must continue engaging in global climate discussions, as climate change is a global challenge. India and other Global South nations should balance climate action with addressing their development needs.
- **Conclusion:** Just and effective climate action requires strong political will from all nations. Other countries must push the U.S. to rejoin meaningful international cooperation on climate change.

Q. Discuss global warming and mention its effects on the global climate. Explain the control measures to bring down the level of greenhouse gases which cause global warming, in the light of the Kyoto Protocol, 1997.