

# CA COMPASS — UPSC Daily

## CURRENT AFFAIRS NOTES

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*The Hindu + Indian Express*



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## GS2: Polity & Governance

### 1. Census 2027: Earliest Data by 2027, Fewer Villages, Caste Enumeration Methodology Pending

*Source: The Hindu | Subject: Polity / Governance / Statistics*

**Context:** Registrar General and Census Commissioner Mritunjay Kumar Narayan announced Census 2027 details. First phase (House Listing Operations): April 1 – September 30 for all states. Self-enumeration portal live from April 1–15 in select areas (Andaman & Nicobar, Goa, Karnataka, Sikkim, Odisha, Mizoram, Lakshadweep, NDMC, Delhi Cantonment) — available 15 days before first phase begins in each area, in 16 languages. Second phase (population enumeration — religion, caste, etc.): February 2027. Data publication: 2027. This is India's first digital Census and first to enumerate caste (methodology still being finalised). Key data: villages decreased by 1,030 (from 6,40,932 to 6,39,902 since 2011). States/UTs increased by 1 (to 36). Districts: 640 → 784 (+144). Sub-districts: 5,990 → 7,092. Statutory towns: 4,041 → 5,128 (+1,087). Census towns: 3,892 → 4,580 (+688). West Bengal is the only state that hasn't notified the Census process. Census data is confidential under Census Act 1948 — cannot be shared with states, judiciary, or used for reservation. Not under RTI.

#### EXAMINER'S LENS

- \* Prelims: Census 2027; Registrar General Mritunjay Kumar Narayan; first digital Census; first caste enumeration; Phase 1: April 1–Sep 30 (House Listing); Phase 2: Feb 2027 (population); self-enumeration in 16 languages; villages -1,030; districts +144; Census Act 1948; West Bengal not notified.
- \* Mains: GS2 (Polity/Governance). Census as governance tool. Caste enumeration debate. Digital census. Administrative unit changes. Data confidentiality. Census delay (2021 → 2027).
- \* GS4/Interview: Should caste data from the Census be used for policy-making, or does enumeration risk deepening caste identity?

#### Key Points:

- First digital Census: Self-enumeration option via mobile/laptop in 16 languages. Data verified by enumerators during door-to-door visits. Available only for residents living in India.

- First caste enumeration: Methodology still being finalised. Multiple suggestions being studied. This is politically and socially the most sensitive aspect — will provide the first comprehensive caste data since 1931.
- Village decline: 1,030 fewer villages since 2011 (6,40,932 → 6,39,902). Urbanisation driving conversion to statutory towns (+1,087) and census towns (+688). Districts increased by 144 (640 → 784).
- Confidentiality: Census Act 1948 makes data confidential. Cannot be shared with states or judiciary. Not under RTI. Only aggregate data released. Individual data cannot be used for reservation benefits.
- West Bengal: Only state not to have notified Census process. Has time till September 30. Political tensions between state and Centre on Census/NRC have been ongoing.

## STATIC CONNECT

### ► Census Framework

- \* Census: Conducted under Census Act 1948. Decennial (every 10 years). 2011 was last. 2021 postponed (COVID, then further delayed).
- \* Registrar General of India: Under Home Ministry. Conducts Census + Civil Registration.
- \* Caste Census: Last full caste enumeration in 1931. SECC 2011 (Socio-Economic and Caste Census) was flawed and data never fully released.
- \* Delimitation: Based on Census data. 84th Amendment froze seats till first Census after 2026. Census 2027 data will trigger Delimitation Commission.
- \* NPR: National Population Register. Updated alongside Census. Controversial due to NRC linkage concerns.

## 3-2-1 RAPID REVISION

### 3 Prelims:

- \* Census 2027: Phase 1 (House Listing) April–Sep. Phase 2 (population) Feb 2027. Data by 2027. First digital. First caste enumeration. Self-enumeration in 16 languages.
- \* Villages -1,030 since 2011. Districts +144 (784). Statutory towns +1,087. Census towns +688. Urbanisation transforming administrative map.
- \* Caste methodology pending. Census Act: data confidential, not under RTI, can't be used for reservation. West Bengal hasn't notified. Census delayed 6 years (2021 → 2027).


### 2 Mains:

\* The Census 2027 is arguably the most consequential Census in independent India's history. It will provide the first caste data in nearly a century, trigger the first delimitation exercise since 1971 (based on population), and reveal the true extent of urbanisation. Every major policy debate — reservation, delimitation, resource allocation, welfare targeting — depends on this data.

\* The 6-year delay (2021 → 2027) has had real policy costs: the GDP misestimation debate (using 2011 data for extrapolation), welfare targeting gaps, outdated population estimates for planning, and the continued use of stale data for resource allocation. The Census is not just a counting exercise — it is the foundation on which governance rests.

### 1 Essay:

*“A nation that governs 1.4 billion people using data from 2011 is not governing by evidence — it is governing by assumption. The Census is not a formality; it is the foundation of every policy decision that claims to be data-driven.”*

 **Mains Q:** *Census 2027 will be India's first digital Census and first to enumerate caste. Discuss its significance for governance, the implications of the 6-year delay, and the challenges of caste enumeration. (15M)*

## 2. Ensuring Federalism Within Delimitation — The DemPer Principle

*Source: The Hindu (Op-Ed by Santosh Mehrotra, JNU) | Subject: Polity / Federalism / Delimitation*

**Context:** Op-ed by Santosh Mehrotra (Former Professor, JNU) proposes a 'Demographic Performance' (DemPer) principle for the upcoming delimitation exercise. Context: Art 81 requires seats to be distributed based on population. 84th Amendment (2002) froze seats at 543 till first Census after 2026. Census 2027 will trigger Delimitation Commission. The concern: states that achieved population stabilisation (TFR  $\leq$  2.1) — mainly southern states (Tamil Nadu, Kerala, AP/Telangana, Karnataka, Goa) + some northern (Punjab, Himachal, Delhi) — will lose seat share to high-fertility states (Bihar, UP, Jharkhand, Meghalaya, Manipur) if seats are allocated purely on population. By NFHS-3 (2005-06), 9 states had achieved TFR  $\leq$  2.1. By NFHS-5 (2019-21), most major states had, except 5. But states that achieved early should not be penalised. Proposal: keep existing 543 seats; apply DemPer only to ADDITIONAL seats (if Lok Sabha is expanded); weight early achievement (pre-2005) at 10% and rate of decline (2005-2021) at 90%; cap Lok Sabha at 700 maximum. This approach 'balances democratic equality with federal fairness' and doesn't penalise states that achieved population control.

## 🎯 EXAMINER'S LENS

- \* Prelims: Art 81; 84th Amendment 2002; Delimitation Commission; 543 seats frozen; TFR 2.1 (replacement level); NFHS-5; DemPer (Demographic Performance) principle; Finance Commission model; Lok Sabha cap 700; Census 2027 trigger.
- \* Mains: GS2 (Polity/Federalism). Delimitation and representation. Population vs federal equity. North-south divide. Art 81. 84th Amendment. TFR-based seat allocation. Cooperative federalism.
- \* GS4/Interview: Should states be rewarded for controlling population by protecting their seat share, even if it means unequal representation per capita?

## Key Points:

- The delimitation dilemma: Art 81 requires population-based seat distribution. But pure population allocation would transfer seats from states that controlled population (south, some north) to states that didn't (UP, Bihar, Jharkhand). This punishes success and rewards failure.
- 84th Amendment freeze: Seats frozen at 543 since 2002 'as a motivational measure' for population stabilisation. Freeze expires with first Census after 2026 — Census 2027 triggers Delimitation Commission.
- DemPer proposal: (a) No change to existing 543 seats; (b) DemPer applies only to additional seats if Lok Sabha expands; (c) Weight: early achievement (TFR  $\leq$  2.1 before 2005) = 10%; rate of decline (2005-2021) = 90%; (d) Lok Sabha cap: 700 maximum.
- Finance Commission parallel: FC uses population (50% weight) plus other criteria (demographic performance, forest cover, fiscal discipline) for devolution. Delimitation could adopt similar multi-criteria approach instead of pure population.
- North-south divide: Not just geographic — Punjab, Haryana, Himachal, Goa also achieved TFR targets. The issue is fair federalism across all states that invested in population stabilisation vs those that didn't.

## 📄 STATIC CONNECT

### ▶ Delimitation Framework

\* Art 81: Seats 'distributed among States so that ratio between number and population is same for all States.'

\* 84th Amendment (2002): Froze seats till first Census after 2026. Purpose: not penalise states for population control.

- \* Delimitation Commission: Art 82. Constituted after each Census. Last: 2002 (based on 2001 Census, for Assembly seats).
- \* TFR: Total Fertility Rate. Replacement level = 2.1. National TFR (NFHS-5): 2.0. But wide state-level variation.
- \* Finance Commission: 16th FC due. Uses population + other criteria for tax devolution. Model for multi-criteria seat allocation.

### 3-2-1 RAPID REVISION

#### 3 Prelims:


- \* Delimitation triggered by Census 2027. Art 81: population-based. But pure population allocation penalises states that controlled population. 84th Amendment freeze expires.
- \* DemPer proposal: existing 543 unchanged. Additional seats via Demographic Performance. Early achievement 10%, rate of decline 90%. Cap: 700. Balances democracy with federalism.
- \* North-south divide: not just geographic. Punjab, Himachal, Goa also at risk. Finance Commission model: multi-criteria, not just population. 'Democracy is about fair voice, not just raw numbers.'

#### 2 Mains:

- \* The delimitation debate is India's most consequential federal challenge of the decade. Pure population-based reallocation would fundamentally shift political power from southern to northern states — potentially by 30-40 seats. Southern states that invested in education, healthcare, and women's empowerment (which drove fertility decline) would see their political voice diminished. The DemPer principle addresses this by rewarding demographic achievement.
- \* The Finance Commission parallel is the op-ed's strongest argument: India already uses multi-criteria allocation for fiscal resources (population + performance + need). Applying similar logic to political representation — population as the primary but not sole criterion — is constitutionally defensible and federally fair. The question is whether the political system, dominated by states that would gain from pure population allocation, will accept this constraint.

#### 1 Essay:

*"A democracy that punishes states for educating their women and stabilising their populations has confused the purpose of representation — which is not to count people but to give voice to communities that have invested in their own governance."*

 **Mains Q:** *The upcoming delimitation exercise risks penalising states that achieved population stabilisation. Discuss the DemPer principle as an alternative to pure population-based seat allocation and its implications for federalism. (15M)*

### 3. Centre Eyes New Regulation to Cover Social Media Users — I&B Ministry Takedown Notices to Individuals

*Source: Indian Express | Subject: Governance / IT Regulation / Free Speech*

**Context:** The Centre is planning to amend IT Rules 2021 to: (a) allow the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (I&B) to send takedown notices to INDIVIDUAL social media users (currently only to online news platforms); (b) make any MeitY advisory to platforms, if not complied with, affect the platform's 'safe harbour' protection under Section 79 IT Act (making platforms liable for user content). The draft amendment also expands the Inter-Departmental Committee (IDC)'s mandate: originally heard complaints about Code of Ethics violations; now will hear (a) grievances from Level I/II decisions AND (b) 'matters referred to by the Ministry.' Internet Freedom Foundation (IFF) called it a 'massive expansion of unconstitutional censorship and regulatory power.' IFF argues the amendments are designed to 'reconstruct the oversight machinery that the Bombay and Madras High Courts found constitutionally suspect' — evading interim court orders. Government: amendments are 'clarificatory and procedural.' Posts mocking PM Modi and anti-establishment content have been targeted in recent weeks.

#### EXAMINER'S LENS

- \* Prelims: IT Rules 2021 amendment (draft); I&B takedown to individual users; Section 79 safe harbour; IDC expanded mandate; IFF criticism; Bombay HC + Madras HC interim orders; MeitY advisories become binding; 'safe harbour' conditionality.
- \* Mains: GS2 (Governance). Digital censorship architecture. Safe harbour doctrine. Individual vs platform liability. Judicial evasion through rule amendments. Art 19(1)(a). Press freedom. Executive overreach.
- \* GS4/Interview: When the government can send takedown notices directly to individual citizens for their social media posts, has the line between regulation and censorship been crossed?

#### Key Points:

- Individual takedown notices: I&B Ministry will be able to send notices directly to social media users — not just platforms. Currently, only online news platforms can be targeted. This extends state regulatory power to every citizen's social media posts.

- Safe harbour weaponised: If platforms don't comply with MeitY advisories, they lose safe harbour (Section 79 IT Act). Without safe harbour, platforms become liable for ALL user content — an existential threat that ensures compliance. This converts 'advisory' into de facto mandatory.
- IDC expansion: Inter-Departmental Committee originally heard Code of Ethics complaints. Now expanded to hear (a) grievances from lower-level decisions AND (b) matters 'referred to by the Ministry' — giving the executive a direct channel to escalate content issues.
- Judicial evasion: IFF argues the amendments 'reconstruct the oversight machinery that the Bombay and Madras High Courts found constitutionally suspect.' Courts had stayed certain IT Rules provisions; the government is reintroducing them in modified form.
- Chilling effect: Anti-establishment content and posts mocking PM Modi have been targeted. When individual users face government takedown notices, self-censorship becomes rational. The architecture of censorship is being built not through a single law but through incremental rule amendments.

## **STATIC CONNECT**

### ► **Digital Regulation Framework**

- \* Section 79 IT Act: Safe harbour. Intermediaries not liable for user content if they follow due diligence. Losing safe harbour = platform becomes publisher = liable for everything.
- \* IT Rules 2021: Intermediary Guidelines. Grievance officers. Content takedown timelines. Recently amended (Feb 2026): 2-3 hour takedown.
- \* Shreya Singhal v. Uoi (2015): Struck down Section 66A. Established that vague restrictions on online speech are unconstitutional.
- \* Bombay HC + Madras HC: Stayed certain IT Rules 2021 provisions as constitutionally suspect. Government now amending rules to achieve same effect differently.
- \* IFF: Internet Freedom Foundation. Digital rights advocacy. Has challenged multiple IT Rules provisions in courts.

## **3-2-1 RAPID REVISION**

### **3 Prelims:**

- \* I&B can send takedown notices to individual users (not just platforms). MeitY advisories become binding — non-compliance = loss of safe harbour.
- \* IDC mandate expanded: hears Ministry-referred matters. IFF: 'massive expansion of unconstitutional censorship.' Designed to evade Bombay/Madras HC interim orders.

\* Safe harbour weaponised: platforms must comply or face liability for ALL user content. Individual users face direct government notices. Architecture of incremental censorship.


## 2 Mains:

\* The amendment represents a qualitative shift: from regulating platforms (intermediary guidelines) to regulating individual users (direct government notices). When the state can send takedown notices to citizens for their social media posts, the regulatory framework has moved from content moderation to speech control. Combined with the 1-hour takedown window (Feb amendment) and multiple ministries with blocking power, this creates a comprehensive censorship architecture.

\* The safe harbour manipulation is the most consequential provision. Section 79's safe harbour is what allows social media to exist — without it, platforms would be liable for every user post and would either shut down or pre-censor everything. By making safe harbour conditional on compliance with government advisories, the state effectively controls platform behaviour without passing censorship legislation. The form is regulatory; the substance is censorship.

## 1 Essay:

*“A government that can send takedown notices to individual citizens for their social media posts has not regulated the internet — it has colonised it. The architecture of free expression cannot survive when the state has a direct channel to silence every voice it finds inconvenient.”*

 **Mains Q:** *The Centre's draft IT Rules amendment extends takedown notices to individual users and weaponises safe harbour. Discuss the implications for free speech and evaluate whether the amendments circumvent judicial orders. (15M)*

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## 4. Denotified, Nomadic Tribes Have Always Been Ignored — Census Can Fix That

**Source:** *Indian Express (Op-Ed by Yogendra Yadav)* | **Subject:** *Polity / Social Justice / Census*

**Context:** Yogendra Yadav (Swaraj India, Bharat Jodo Abhiyaan) argues Census 2027 must count Denotified Tribes (DNT) and Nomadic/Semi-Nomadic communities. These are India's most invisible populations — estimated 8–14 crore people. Colonial legacy: Criminal Tribes Act, 1871 branded some communities as 'criminal tribes' — repealed 1952 but communities were merely 'denotified,' not rehabilitated. They suffer everything the poor suffer PLUS social distancing as 'mainstream' treats them as outsiders — 'simultaneously invisible and stigmatised.' Some listed as SCs in some states, STs in others, OBCs elsewhere, many find no mention anywhere. 75 years after denotification, the state has

no population data. Three Cs demanded: Cognisance (acknowledge existence), Categorisation (create separate constitutional schedule), Counting (enumerate in Census). Renke Commission (2008): estimated 10.74 crore, offered first population estimate. Idate Commission (2017): identified 1,200 communities from existing SC/ST/OBC lists + 269 unclassified. DNT-NT Federation of India demanded separate Census column. SC recently dismissed a petition from DNT activists seeking Census inclusion — ‘with gratuitous and insensitive remarks.’

### EXAMINER'S LENS

- \* Prelims: Denotified Tribes (DNT); Nomadic/Semi-Nomadic communities; Criminal Tribes Act 1871 (repealed 1952); 8-14 crore population; Renke Commission (2008); Idate Commission (2017); 1,200 communities; 269 unclassified; Census 2027; three Cs: Cognisance, Categorisation, Counting.
- \* Mains: GS2 (Polity/Social Justice). DNT/NT invisibility. Colonial legacy. Census enumeration. Constitutional schedule debate. Intersectional marginalisation. State apathy.
- \* GS4/Interview: Is the continued invisibility of 8-14 crore people in the world's largest democracy a policy failure or a political choice?

### Key Points:

- Colonial legacy: Criminal Tribes Act 1871 branded communities as inherently criminal. Repealed 1952 but communities merely ‘denotified’ — not rehabilitated, compensated, or recognised. The stigma of ‘criminal tribe’ persists 75 years later.
- Invisibility: 8-14 crore people with no population data. Some listed as SC in one state, ST in another, OBC elsewhere, many listed nowhere. The state literally does not know how many they are. Yadav: they are ‘simultaneously invisible to the state and stigmatised by society.’
- Commissions ignored: Renke Commission (2008) estimated 10.74 crore, recommended separate enumeration. Idate Commission (2017) identified 1,200 communities + 269 unclassified. Neither report fully implemented.
- Census opportunity: Census 2027 is the first opportunity to count DNT/NT communities systematically. The demand: create a separate column for DNT/NT — not subsumed under SC/ST/OBC. SC dismissed a petition seeking this — ‘with gratuitous and insensitive remarks.’
- Three Cs: Cognisance (acknowledge their existence), Categorisation (create a new constitutional schedule beyond SC/ST/OBC), Counting (enumerate in Census 2027). Without counting, no targeted policy is possible.

## STATIC CONNECT

### ► DNT/NT Framework

- \* Criminal Tribes Act 1871: Colonial law. Branded communities as 'born criminals.' Required registration, restricted movement. Repealed 1952.
- \* Habitual Offenders Act: Replaced Criminal Tribes Act in many states. Continues to target the same communities under different legal framework.
- \* Renke Commission (2008): First systematic study. Estimated 10.74 crore. Recommended enumeration and welfare measures.
- \* Idate Commission (2017): National Commission for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes. Identified 1,200 communities. Recommended Census enumeration.
- \* Art 342 (SC)/342A (OBC): Constitutional provisions for listing communities. No equivalent for DNT/NT as a separate category.

## 3-2-1 RAPID REVISION

### 3 Prelims:


- \* DNT/NT: 8-14 crore people. Criminal Tribes Act 1871 (repealed 1952). No population data. Some SC, some ST, some OBC, many nowhere. 'Invisible to state, stigmatised by society.'
- \* Renke (2008): 10.74 crore. Idate (2017): 1,200 communities + 269 unclassified. Neither fully implemented. SC dismissed Census inclusion petition.
- \* Census 2027 = opportunity. Three Cs: Cognisance, Categorisation, Counting. Demand: separate Census column for DNT/NT. Without counting, no policy possible.

### 2 Mains:

- \* The DNT/NT story is India's most extreme case of administrative invisibility: a population larger than most European countries has no official count, no dedicated constitutional category, and no systematic welfare architecture. This is not an oversight — it is the continuation of colonial-era marginalisation through post-colonial administrative apathy.
- \* Census 2027's caste enumeration makes DNT/NT counting both possible and urgent. If the Census can enumerate caste for the first time since 1931, it can certainly count communities that two government commissions have already identified. The political question is whether the state has the will to acknowledge people it has ignored for 75 years.

### 1 Essay:

*"A democracy that counts its tigers with more precision than its denotified tribes has revealed its priorities. The Census is not just about counting people — it is about acknowledging that they exist."*

 **Mains Q:** *Yogendra Yadav argues Census 2027 must count DNT/NT communities (8-14 crore). Discuss the colonial legacy of the Criminal Tribes Act, the commissions' recommendations, and the case for a separate Census enumeration. (15M)*

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## GS3: Economy

### 5. IIP Grows 5.2% in February — Manufacturing Leads, Consumer Durables Contract

*Source: The Hindu + Indian Express | Subject: Economy / Industry*

**Context:** Index of Industrial Production (IIP) grew 5.2% in February 2026 (from 2.7% in Feb 2025). Manufacturing growth accelerated to 6% (from 5.3% in Jan, 2.8% in Feb 2025). Capital goods surged to 12.5% (9-month high, from 4.1% in Jan). BUT: consumer durables contracted 2.1% — worst in 27 months. Consumer non-durables also contracted 0.6% (2nd consecutive month). Mining slowed to 3.1% (from 4.3% in Jan). Electricity growth slowed to 2.3% (from 5.1% in Jan). The data is PRE-WAR (February — war began Feb 28). Brickwork Ratings: 'growth is investment-led, with basic metals, automobiles, machinery, and double-digit gains in capital goods pointing to a capex and infrastructure-driven upcycle, though uneven demand means fundamentals are still evolving.' January IIP revised upward from 4.8% to 5.1%.

#### EXAMINER'S LENS

- \* Prelims: IIP Feb 2026: 5.2%; manufacturing 6%; capital goods 12.5% (9-month high); consumer durables -2.1% (27-month worst); consumer non-durables -0.6%; mining 3.1%; electricity 2.3%; pre-war data; January revised to 5.1%.
- \* Mains: GS3 (Economy). Industrial production trends. Investment-led vs consumption-led growth. Capital goods vs consumer goods divergence. Pre-war baseline. Demand weakness in consumer segment.
- \* GS4/Interview: When investment grows but consumption contracts, is the economy strong or is it growing for the few while stagnating for the many?

#### Key Points:

- **Headline:** IIP 5.2% — solid on paper. Manufacturing at 6%. Capital goods at 12.5% (9-month high). These indicate strong investment and infrastructure activity — consistent with the government's capex-led growth strategy.

- Consumer weakness: Durables -2.1% (worst in 27 months). Non-durables -0.6% (2nd consecutive contraction). This signals weak household demand — people are not buying refrigerators, ACs, or even basic consumer goods.
- Investment-consumption split: Growth is being driven by capital goods (government infrastructure spending) not by consumer demand (household purchasing). This echoes the GDP misestimation debate — headline growth masks household distress.
- Pre-war data: February data captures the economy BEFORE the war's impact. The consumer weakness visible here will likely worsen as energy prices, inflation, and supply disruptions hit household budgets in March and beyond.
- Mining and electricity: Both slowing. Mining 3.1% (from 4.3%). Electricity 2.3% (from 5.1%). These are lead indicators — their deceleration suggests the investment-led growth may also moderate.

## STATIC CONNECT

### ► IIP & Industrial Framework

- \* IIP: Index of Industrial Production. Base year 2011-12. Published by MoSPI. Covers mining, manufacturing, electricity.
- \* Capital goods: Machinery, equipment used to produce other goods. Proxy for investment activity.
- \* Consumer durables: Refrigerators, vehicles, electronics. Proxy for household purchasing power.
- \* Consumer non-durables: FMCG, food products. Basic consumption. Contraction here signals distress at the bottom of the income pyramid.
- \* Capex: Government capital expenditure has been the primary growth driver since 2021-22. ₹11.1 lakh crore budgeted FY26.

## 3-2-1 RAPID REVISION

### 3 Prelims:

- \* IIP 5.2% (Feb). Manufacturing 6%. Capital goods 12.5% (9-month high). Investment-led growth. Capex + infrastructure driving.
- \* Consumer durables -2.1% (27-month worst). Non-durables -0.6% (2nd month contraction). Household demand weak. Mining and electricity slowing.
- \* Pre-war data: consumer weakness preceded the crisis. War impact (energy prices, inflation, supply disruption) will worsen this in March+ data.


### 2 Mains:

\* The investment-consumption divergence is the most important signal: India's economy is growing through government capex (capital goods +12.5%) while household consumption weakens (durables -2.1%). This creates a two-speed economy where infrastructure builds but households struggle — exactly the pattern the GDP misestimation study flagged.

\* This is pre-war data. The consumer weakness visible in February will almost certainly intensify as the war drives up energy prices (oil \$112), LPG costs, food inflation, and supply disruptions. If consumer demand was already contracting before the war, the March-April data could show the most severe consumption decline in years. The CEA's call for fiscal re-prioritisation toward 'those hit hardest' is directly supported by this data.

**1 Essay:**

*"An economy where factories that make machines are booming while factories that make what people buy are contracting is not growing for its people — it is growing past them."*

 **Mains Q:** IIP data shows capital goods surging while consumer durables contracted to a 27-month low. Discuss the investment-consumption divergence and its implications for inclusive growth, especially in the context of the West Asia crisis. (15M)

## GS3: Environment / Climate

### 6. Is Global Warming Being Measured Comprehensively? — RFA vs GWP100 Framework

Source: Indian Express (Experts Explain) | Subject: Environment / Climate Science

**Context:** New study in Environmental Research Letters proposes Radiative Forcing-based Accounting (RFA) as an alternative to the standard GWP100 (Global Warming Potential over 100 years) metric for comparing greenhouse gases. The problem: GWP100 uses a fixed multiplier over 100 years, but methane and CO<sub>2</sub> behave very differently. Methane (GWP100 = 28) is powerful but short-lived (~12 years). CO<sub>2</sub> is less intense per tonne but persists for centuries. GWP100 averages methane's impact over 100 years, diluting its short-term warming effect. This undervalues methane cuts as a fast way to slow warming. RFA measures radiative forcing — the actual energy imbalance a gas causes — and accounts for how long each gas stays in the atmosphere. It better captures the physical reality of warming. The study (Institute for Governance and Sustainable Development + Cornell University) found that applying RFA to real methane mitigation projects (landfill gas in Guangzhou, waste diversion in Chandigarh, wastewater in Tamil Nadu) credited them 36-40% more than GWP100. Implications: current carbon accounting may be 'skewing carbon markets' and 'undervaluing some of the quickest ways to slow warming today.'

#### 🎯 EXAMINER'S LENS

- \* Prelims: GWP100 (Global Warming Potential, 100-year); RFA (Radiative Forcing-based Accounting); methane GWP = 28; methane lifespan ~12 years; CO<sub>2</sub> persists centuries; radiative forcing; carbon accounting; CDM (Clean Development Mechanism); carbon markets.
- \* Mains: GS3 (Environment/Climate). Climate measurement. Methane vs CO<sub>2</sub> accounting. Carbon market implications. Short-lived climate pollutants. Paris Agreement accounting.
- \* GS4/Interview: If our measurement tool undervalues the fastest way to slow warming, are we fighting climate change with a broken compass?

#### Key Points:

- GWP100 limitation: Converts all greenhouse gases to CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent using a fixed 100-year multiplier. Methane = 28x CO<sub>2</sub> over 100 years. But methane's actual warming effect is much

higher in the short term (~80x over 20 years) and it disappears within ~12 years. GWP100 dilutes this.

- RFA approach: Measures radiative forcing — the actual energy imbalance (difference between incoming solar radiation and outgoing heat). Accounts for each gas's atmospheric lifetime and warming profile over time. More physically accurate.
- Methane matters: Cutting methane is the fastest way to slow near-term warming because it's short-lived. But GWP100 makes methane cuts look less valuable than they are, potentially disincentivising the quickest climate action.
- Carbon market impact: If RFA credits methane projects 36-40% more than GWP100, current carbon accounting is systematically undervaluing methane mitigation in carbon markets. Projects that reduce methane get less financial credit than they deserve.
- India relevance: India has significant methane sources (rice paddies, livestock, landfills, coal mines). Better accounting of methane reductions could enhance India's climate credit and incentivise methane mitigation projects.

## STATIC CONNECT

### ► Climate Measurement Framework

\* GWP100: Standard metric since Kyoto Protocol (1997). Converts all GHGs to CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent over 100 years. Used in NDCs, carbon markets, IPCC reporting.

\* Radiative forcing: Energy imbalance in Earth's climate system. Measured in W/m<sup>2</sup>. Positive = warming. CO<sub>2</sub>, methane, N<sub>2</sub>O all contribute.

\* Methane: CH<sub>4</sub>. GWP100 = 28. GWP20 = 80. Atmospheric lifetime ~12 years. Sources: agriculture (rice, livestock), fossil fuels, waste.

\* Global Methane Pledge (COP26): 150+ countries pledged to reduce methane 30% by 2030. India did NOT sign — due to agricultural methane concerns.

\* CDM: Clean Development Mechanism under Kyoto Protocol. Credits emission reduction projects. Uses GWP100 for accounting.

## 3-2-1 RAPID REVISION

### 3 Prelims:

\* GWP100: standard metric but dilutes methane's short-term impact (28x over 100 yrs vs 80x over 20 yrs). Methane is short-lived (~12 yrs) but potent. CO<sub>2</sub> persists centuries.

\* RFA: measures actual radiative forcing + atmospheric lifetime. More physically accurate. Credits methane projects 36-40% more than GWP100.

\* Implications: carbon markets may be undervaluing methane cuts. India has large methane sources (rice, livestock, landfills). Better accounting = better incentives for fastest climate action.


## 2 Mains:

\* The GWP100 vs RFA debate is technically niche but strategically consequential. If the world's primary climate accounting tool undervalues methane reduction, it systematically directs climate investment toward slower-acting CO<sub>2</sub> reduction and away from the fastest available warming mitigation. For Mains, this connects to the broader question of whether climate frameworks are designed to address the problem optimally or to serve the interests of those who designed them.

\* For India, the implications are significant: India did not sign the Global Methane Pledge (COP26) due to agricultural methane concerns. But if RFA better credits methane reduction, India could pursue selective methane mitigation (landfill gas capture, coal mine methane, wastewater treatment) while protecting agricultural methane. Better accounting could align India's climate interests with its climate obligations.

## 1 Essay:

*"A compass that points roughly north is better than none — but when the destination is 1.5°C and every fraction of a degree matters, a compass that systematically undervalues the fastest route is not guiding us but misleading us."*

 **Mains Q:** A new study proposes Radiative Forcing-based Accounting (RFA) to replace GWP100 for climate measurement. Discuss how the current framework undervalues methane reduction and the implications for carbon markets and India's climate strategy. (15M)

## GS2: Ethics / Polity

### 7. On the Implications of Euthanasia — Harish Rana Judgment Analysis

*Source: The Hindu | Subject: Ethics / Polity / Judiciary*

**Context:** Analysis of the Harish Rana v. Union of India (2026) judgment on passive euthanasia. The SC reaffirmed that the right to die with dignity is integral to Art 21 (right to life), building on Common Cause v. UoI (2018) and Aruna Shanbaug (2011). Key developments: (a) Court allowed withdrawal of Clinically Assisted Nutrition and Hydration (CANH) for the first time; (b) Simplified the process: changed requirement from two medical boards (hospital + district) to streamlined process, removed mandatory immediate judicial oversight in every case; (c) Emphasised patient autonomy through advance directives/living wills; (d) Court said ‘passive euthanasia is an obsolete and incorrect term — should not be used in common usage or legal writing.’ Ethical analysis through four principles: autonomy (patient’s right to decide), beneficence (doctor’s duty to act in patient’s interest), non-maleficence (withdrawal should not cause harm — Theory of Double Effect by St. Thomas Aquinas: if decision taken without malice and one effect is beneficial, it is ethical), justice (no injustice to patient). Social concerns: possible misuse with elderly, disabled, poor; decisions driven by financial constraints rather than compassion; disguised abandonment. Palliative and end-of-life care must continue for these patients.

#### EXAMINER'S LENS

- \* Prelims: Harish Rana v. UoI (2026); CANH withdrawal (first time); Common Cause (2018); Aruna Shanbaug (2011); Art 21; advance directives/living wills; ‘passive euthanasia’ term rejected; Theory of Double Effect (Aquinas); four ethical principles: autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, justice.
- \* Mains: GS4 (Ethics) / GS2 (Polity). Right to die with dignity. Medical ethics. Passive euthanasia jurisprudence. Advance directives. Ethical frameworks for end-of-life decisions. Social inequality in medical decisions.
- \* GS4/Interview: When the right to die with dignity depends on the ability to access courts, is it a right or a privilege?

#### Key Points:

- CANH withdrawal: First time SC allowed withdrawal of clinically-assisted nutrition and hydration — legally and ethically distinct from withdrawing ventilator support. Extends the jurisprudence from Common Cause (2018).
- Process simplified: Removed requirement of two medical boards + mandatory judicial oversight in every case. Makes the process accessible without requiring SC intervention each time. Critical for families who cannot afford prolonged litigation.
- Terminology: Court said 'passive euthanasia' is 'obsolete and incorrect' — the debate cannot be divided into 'acts' and 'omissions.' This linguistic shift reflects evolving understanding of end-of-life care as a continuum rather than a binary.
- Four ethical principles: (1) Autonomy — patient/family's right to decide; (2) Beneficence — acting in patient's best interest; (3) Non-maleficence — decision should not cause harm (Theory of Double Effect); (4) Justice — no injustice to the patient.
- Social concerns: Risk of misuse with vulnerable populations (elderly, disabled, poor). Decisions may be driven by financial constraints rather than genuine compassion. Court addressed this: palliative and end-of-life care must continue. Patient is 'not abandoned' by withdrawing or withholding treatment.

## STATIC CONNECT

### ▶ Right to Die with Dignity — Legal Evolution

- \* Aruna Shanbaug v. UoI (2011): First allowed passive euthanasia in exceptional cases. Set guidelines.
- \* Common Cause v. UoI (2018): 5-judge bench. Recognised living wills/advance directives. Right to die with dignity = Art 21.
- \* Common Cause v. UoI (2023): Simplified living will procedure. Reduced bureaucratic requirements.
- \* Harish Rana v. UoI (2026): Allowed CANH withdrawal. Simplified process further. Rejected 'passive euthanasia' terminology.
- \* Active euthanasia: Remains illegal in India. Section 309 IPC (attempt to suicide) effectively decriminalised (Mental Healthcare Act 2017).

## 3-2-1 RAPID REVISION

### 3 Prelims:

- \* Harish Rana (2026): SC allowed CANH withdrawal (first time). Simplified process — no mandatory judicial oversight each time. 'Passive euthanasia' = 'obsolete and incorrect.'

\* Four ethical principles: autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence (Theory of Double Effect — Aquinas), justice. Art 21: right to die with dignity.

\* Social concerns: misuse with elderly/disabled/poor. Financial pressure vs compassion. Court: palliative care must continue. Patient 'not abandoned.' Advance directives critical.

## 2 Mains:


\* The Harish Rana judgment advances India's end-of-life jurisprudence in three ways: substantively (CANH withdrawal), procedurally (simplified process), and linguistically (rejecting 'passive euthanasia'). The procedural simplification is the most practically significant — families caring for permanently vegetative patients should not need to reach the Supreme Court for each case.

Accessible pathways through medical boards and lower courts are essential.

\* The social inequality dimension is the judgment's blind spot: the right to die with dignity is meaningful only if accessible to all. When the process requires medical expertise, legal knowledge, and institutional access, it becomes a privilege of the educated and affluent. The court's simplification helps, but India needs a broader framework — including palliative care infrastructure, patient advocacy services, and community awareness — to make this right real for ordinary families.

## 1 Essay:

*"The measure of a compassionate society is not only how it fights to preserve life but how it allows life to end — with dignity, with autonomy, and with the assurance that mercy is not a privilege of those who can afford a lawyer."*

 **Mains Q:** *The Harish Rana judgment extends the right to die with dignity by allowing CANH withdrawal and simplifying the process. Discuss the ethical principles involved and evaluate concerns about social inequality in access to end-of-life decisions. (15M)*