

THE PALA CIVIL TIMES



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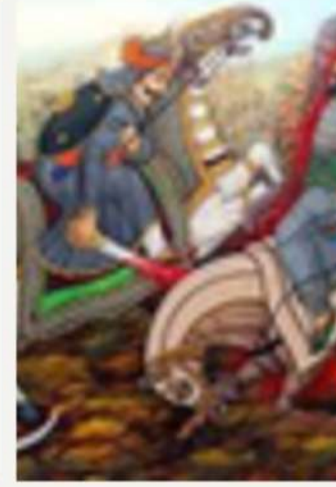
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One Year After the Pahalgam terror attack: Strengthening Kashmir's Security Framework

A year after the deadly attack in Pahalgam that claimed 26 lives, security forces have significantly overhauled the safety architecture across Kashmir Valley. The response has combined immediate corrective actions with long-term structural reforms aimed at preventing recurrence. In the aftermath, a comprehensive security audit led to the temporary closure of several tourist destinations and a calibrated redeployment of troops to vulnerable areas. Enhanced patrolling, especially in higher reaches, along with the establishment of temporary operating bases, enabled forces to expand their operational footprint and improve area domination.

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Non-Cooperation Movement

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Lustre or bluster?

India's economic mettle will be on test as it faces headwinds



Manipur needs healing, not just containment



Labour pangs

Noida stir, a stark reminder of poor work conditions



Livelihood of Mumbai fishers at risk as mangroves make way for road

Mangroves are among the most productive coastal ecosystems, playing a crucial role in sustaining fisheries. They act as nurseries, breeding grounds, and feeding habitats for fish, prawns, and other marine species. The dense root systems reduce predation, enhance juvenile survival, and support biodiversity, directly influencing fish catch volumes. In tropical regions like India, a strong correlation exists between mangrove cover and fish productivity, making them indispensable for small-scale fishing communities. For coastal populations in areas like Versova, Gorai, and Dahisar in Mumbai, mangroves are not just ecological assets but the primary source of livelihood and food security.



Impact of Mangrove Loss on Fishing Communities

The large-scale felling of mangroves for the Versova-Bhayandar Coastal Road threatens this delicate ecological-economic balance. The removal of over 45,000 mangroves disrupts fish breeding cycles, leading to declining fish stocks and reduced incomes for fisherfolk. Given that many in these communities depend exclusively on nearshore fishing, such ecological degradation can force occupational shifts toward unskilled labour, intensifying economic vulnerability. Additionally, mangroves provide coastal protection against storms and erosion, meaning their loss increases long-term environmental risks for already fragile communities.

The Mumbai coastal road case illustrates the fragile intersection of urban development, environmental sustainability, and human livelihoods. Mangroves are not expendable land resources but critical natural infrastructure supporting both ecology and economy. Sustainable progress lies not in choosing between development and conservation, but in aligning them through informed, inclusive, and ecologically sensitive planning.



Planning Gaps and Governance Concerns

The issue reflects deeper shortcomings in urban planning and governance. Despite environmental warnings and existing frameworks, infrastructure projects often proceed with limited stakeholder consultation. Compensation measures, though announced, appear insufficient and poorly communicated, failing to address sustainable livelihood loss. Moreover, compensatory afforestation efforts are criticised for being ecologically mismatched (different species, different locations), reducing their effectiveness. Such approaches highlight a pattern where environmental clearances become procedural rather than substantive.

Balancing Development and Ecology

A balanced approach requires integrating development with ecological sustainability and livelihood protection:

- **Participatory Planning:** Involve local fishing communities in decision-making to ensure their concerns and traditional knowledge shape project design.
- **Livelihood Safeguards:** Move beyond one-time compensation to include long-term income support, skill development, and alternative livelihood options where necessary.
- **Sustainable Infrastructure Design:** Explore alternatives such as elevated corridors or route modifications to minimise mangrove destruction.
- **Strengthened Environmental Governance:** Ensure rigorous environmental impact assessments and continuous monitoring, linking project approvals to measurable ecological outcomes.

Japan opens doors to global arms market in a change of its post-war pacifist policy

In April 2026, under Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, Japan undertook its most decisive policy shift by lifting restrictions on lethal weapons exports. This marks a structural break from decades of cautious liberalisation.

Post-War Pacifism and the Original Restrictive Framework

Japan's arms export policy has historically been shaped by its post-World War II pacifist identity. Rooted in Article 9 of the Constitution, the country adopted the Three Principles on Arms Exports (1967) under Eisaku Sato, prohibiting exports to communist countries, nations under UN embargo, and those involved in conflicts. This was further tightened in 1976 under Takeo Miki into a near-total ban, reflecting strong domestic anti-militarist sentiment. Over time, limited exceptions emerged—such as technology transfers to the U.S. in 1983—primarily to support the U.S.-Japan security alliance.

Gradual Relaxation and the 2014 Policy Shift

A significant turning point came under Shinzo Abe in 2014, when Japan replaced its blanket ban with the "Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology." This reform allowed arms exports under strict conditions:

- Exports were permitted only for peaceful purposes, such as UN peacekeeping and maritime security.
- Strict screening and transparency mechanisms were introduced, involving multiple ministries and the National Security Council.
- Third-party transfer restrictions ensured that recipient countries required Japan's consent before re-exporting equipment.

This shift aimed to modernise Japan's defence industry and respond to a deteriorating regional security environment, particularly in East Asia. However, it retained the core pacifist ethos by restricting exports to conflict zones.

Key features of the 2026 policy

- Removal of earlier limitations restricting exports to non-lethal categories like surveillance and rescue equipment.
- Permission to export advanced military hardware, including fighter jets, missiles, warships, and combat drones.
- Exports limited to 17 partner countries with defence cooperation agreements.
- Continued emphasis on strict oversight, with approvals by the National Security Council and monitoring of end-use.
- Retention of a formal commitment to pacifism, though with flexibility, including possible exceptions to the "no exports to conflict zones" principle.



Japan's new arms export policy marks a major shift with wide-ranging implications. On the positive side, it strengthens Japan's role as a key security partner in the Indo-Pacific, boosts its defence industry and innovation, and enhances deterrence through deeper military cooperation. However, it also raises concerns about weakening its long-standing pacifist principles and stretching constitutional limits. There are fears of rising regional tensions, especially with countries like China and South Korea, along with risks of arms misuse or diversion. Domestically, critics worry that Japan may be moving toward a more militarised foreign policy. Overall, while earlier reforms in 2014 reflected cautious change, the 2026 decision signals a clear move toward becoming a more active security player, making it essential for Japan to balance strategic interests with its commitment to peace and responsibility.

The cost of bringing down inflation in India, U.S. and U.K.

The recent surge in crude oil prices above \$120 per barrel due to the West Asia conflict has revived global inflation concerns, placing central banks in a familiar dilemma. After successfully curbing post-pandemic inflation between 2022 and 2025 through aggressive interest rate hikes, authorities now face the risk of another inflationary cycle driven by external supply shocks.

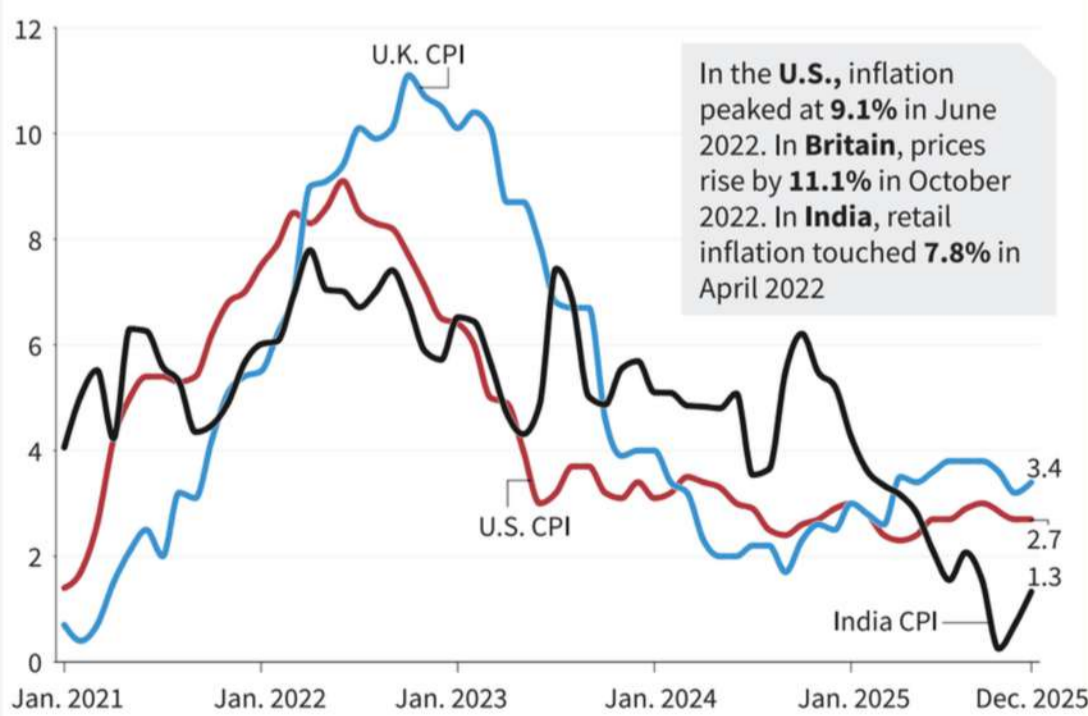
Understanding the Sacrifice Ratio

The sacrifice ratio is a key macroeconomic concept that measures the loss in economic output required to reduce inflation by one percentage point. It reflects the trade-off between inflation control and economic growth, helping assess the efficiency and cost of monetary policy interventions.

Case 1 : United States: Near-Zero Sacrifice with Strong Resilience

The Federal Reserve raised interest rates sharply between 2022 and 2023, reaching **5.25–5.50%**. Despite expectations of a recession, the U.S. economy remained resilient due to easing supply chains, falling energy prices, and robust demand. Inflation declined significantly with minimal output loss, resulting in a near-zero sacrifice ratio, which is an unusually efficient disinflation outcome.

Chart 2: The chart shows inflation in the U.S., the U.K. and India between January 2021 and December 2025 (in %)



The renewed oil shock highlights the limits of monetary policy in addressing supply-driven inflation. Previous experience across these economies demonstrates that the sacrifice ratio is not uniform but contingent on structural conditions, external dependencies, and policy timing. While inflation can be controlled, the economic cost varies widely, reinforcing the need for a balanced approach combining monetary, fiscal, and supply-side interventions.

Case 2 : United Kingdom: High Economic Cost and Persistent Inflation

The Bank of England initiated rate hikes earlier but faced structural constraints such as heavy reliance on imported energy and labour shortages. Despite raising rates to 5.25%, inflation remained above target, and the economy entered a recession in 2023. Rising unemployment and continued inflation indicate a high sacrifice ratio, highlighting the costly nature of disinflation in the U.K.

Case 3 : India: Moderate Trade-off Shaped by Structural Factors

The Reserve Bank of India increased the repo rate from 4% to 6.5% between 2022 and 2023, later easing it to 5.25% by 2026. Inflation declined significantly without an economic contraction, suggesting a relatively low sacrifice ratio. However, India's experience is shaped by structural features—particularly the high weight of food ($\approx 46\%$) in the inflation basket, which limits the effectiveness of monetary policy. Additionally, currency depreciation (rupee weakening) has introduced new inflationary pressures.

Comparative Insights and Structural Differences

The contrasting outcomes underline how domestic economic structures influence policy effectiveness. The U.S. benefited from flexible markets and favourable supply-side adjustments, while the U.K.'s external vulnerabilities amplified costs. India's relatively stable outcome reflects both policy measures and structural peculiarities, including delayed monetary transmission and food-driven inflation dynamics. The current scenario presents a complex policy bind, especially for India - raising rates may curb inflation but slow growth, while cutting rates risks currency depreciation and imported inflation.

The Indian EXPRESS

Manipur needs healing, not just containment

The return of an elected government in Manipur after a period of ethnic violence and President's Rule raised expectations of stability and reconciliation, but unrest continues. Recent killings, protests, shutdowns, and clashes indicate persistent tensions among communities such as Meiteis, Kuki-Zos, and Nagas. These divisions stem from deeper structural issues, including long-standing deficits in employment, education, and healthcare, which have reinforced identity-based grievances and mistrust. Despite outreach efforts by the new leadership, including engagement with different community groups, incidents of violence and calls for political boycotts suggest limited progress in restoring confidence.

The situation highlights the need to move beyond containment towards long-term reconciliation. Continued displacement reflects an ongoing humanitarian crisis alongside political instability. Addressing the issue requires sustained dialogue among stakeholders, stricter control over the circulation of weapons, and a more responsive and impartial administrative approach.

Editorial to Exam - Most probable question from this editorial

"Ethnic conflicts are often rooted in both identity-based tensions and developmental deficits." Examine this statement in the context of the situation in Manipur, and suggest measures for sustainable peace and reconciliation.



Lustre or bluster?

Economic data indicate a slowdown in the Indian economy following the West Asia conflict, with the Index of Eight Core Industries contracting by 0.4% in March, the weakest performance in 19 months. Supply disruptions, fuel shortages, and subdued demand have affected multiple sectors, with fertilisers contracting sharply due to constraints in natural gas imports. Slowdowns in steel and cement point to weakened construction activity, while an expected below-normal monsoon linked to El Niño raises concerns for agricultural output and rural demand. Weak performances across coal, crude oil, petroleum products, and electricity further pulled down overall growth.

The slowdown is largely driven by external factors such as global conflict and trade uncertainties, but prolonged disruptions could intensify domestic challenges. Rising inflation, slowing foreign investment, and stagnant household incomes are emerging concerns. Earlier economic gains supported by favourable global conditions are now under strain, highlighting India's vulnerability to external shocks and the need for stronger domestic policy responses to sustain growth.

Editorial to Exam - Most probable question from this editorial

"External shocks can significantly influence domestic economic performance in an interconnected global economy." Discuss this statement and suggest policy measures to enhance economic resilience.

thehindu **businessline.**

TUESDAY - MARCH 31, 2026

Labour pangs

Labour unrest in Noida reflects structural weaknesses in India's wage-setting system and employment practices. The national floor wage, last fixed in 2017 at ₹176 per day, has not kept pace with rising living costs, and the five-year revision cycle under the Code on Wages, 2019 limits responsiveness. Although Variable Dearness Allowance adjusts for inflation, it cannot offset an outdated base wage. Wage revisions are often reactive, driven by protests rather than data-based policy, as seen in recent hikes following unrest in industrial regions.

The issue is compounded by widespread informalisation through contract labour. Many workers lack written agreements and social security benefits, even within the formal sector, as highlighted by the Periodic Labour Force Survey. The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020 improves regulation but excludes smaller establishments and does not mandate universal contracts. Addressing these challenges requires timely wage revisions, stronger enforcement of labour protections, and a shift towards recognising labour as a key stakeholder in economic growth.

Editorial to Exam - Most probable question from this editorial

"Labour unrest in India reflects deeper structural issues in wage policy and employment conditions." Critically examine this statement and suggest reforms to ensure fair wages and improved labour protections.

Understanding Kshatriyaisation and its relevance in contemporary India

The idea of different communities identifying as Kshatriya can be understood through sociological concepts. B. R. Ambedkar highlighted how imitation (*termed as “the infection of imitation”*) plays a role in caste formation, where groups adopt practices of higher-status communities. Building on this, M. N. Srinivas introduced Sanskritization, where lower or intermediate castes adopt the customs and lifestyles of higher castes to gain status.

Historian Hermann Kulke further distinguished “**Kshatriyaisation**” as a political process, often driven “from above” by rulers or elites to legitimise their authority by adopting or granting Kshatriya status. This shows that **caste identity is not fixed but evolves through social, economic, and political interactions**. Scholars like André Béteille and Christophe Jaffrelot also note that modern caste dynamics are shaped by power, class, and political mobilisation, not just ritual hierarchy.



Historical Context and Continuity

Organised efforts to claim Kshatriya status date back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries through caste associations. Communities formed organisations to assert martial and landholding identities, often linking themselves to historical rulers or warriors. These movements reflect long-standing attempts at social mobility within the caste hierarchy.



Contemporary Relevance

In recent times, the celebration of regional warrior figures has contributed to strengthening community identity and pride. Such narratives often connect historical roles with present-day social and political aspirations. This process helps communities consolidate internally and engage more actively in public and political life.

Implications

Positive dimension: Enables communities to build a shared identity, assert dignity, and seek greater representation.

Structural concern: Reinterpretation of history around hierarchical identities may also reinforce existing social stratification.

The process shows that caste continues to evolve through adaptation, reinterpretation, and mobilisation, rather than disappearing.



Conclusion

The emergence of Kshatriya-based identity among diverse communities reflects a complex interaction of history, sociology, and politics. It illustrates how caste identities are continuously reshaped through processes like Sanskritization and Kshatriyaisation, serving both as tools for social mobility and as mechanisms that can sustain hierarchical structures in changing contexts.

CSIP SCHOLARSHIP GUIDE

This is your chance to turn preparation into opportunity—attempt these questions seriously and prepare for exciting scholarships that can support your civil service journey.

9 Days to go - 9 model questions

1. The “Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve” is located in which state?
2. The “Lake Baikal,” the deepest freshwater lake in the world, is located in which country?
3. The “El Niño” phenomenon is associated with which ocean?
4. The Chilika Lake, a brackish water lagoon, is located in which state?
5. The book “Poverty and Un-British Rule in India” was written by whom?
6. The “Green Revolution” in India is primarily associated with the increase in production of which crop?
7. The Indian National Army (INA) was reorganised under the leadership of which freedom fighter?
8. The concept of “Public Interest Litigation (PIL)” in India was introduced in which decade?
9. The “Treaty of Seringapatam” (1792) was signed after which Anglo-Mysore War?

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Answers to the Previous Day's Questions

1. North Andaman Island
2. Lord Dalhousie
3. Krishna River and Godavari River
4. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay
5. Fisheries (Aquaculture sector)
6. United States
7. 1960s
8. Rajasthan
9. First Anglo-Maratha War
10. Karnataka

Scholarship exam countdown

9 days to go

PRELIMS CORNER :

1) Consider the following subjects with regard to Non-Cooperation Programme:

- I. Boycott of law-courts and foreign cloth
- II. Observance of strict non-violence
- III. Retention of titles and honours without using them in public
- IV. Establishment of Panchayats for settling disputes

How many of the above were parts of Non-Cooperation Programme?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All the four

2) Consider the following statements in respect of the Non-Cooperation Movement:

- I. The Congress declared the attainment of 'Swaraj' by all legitimate and peaceful means to be its objective.
- II. It was to be implemented in stages with civil disobedience and non-payment of taxes for the next stage only if 'Swaraj' did not come within a year and the Government resorted to repression.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) I only
- (b) II only
- (c) Both I and II
- (d) Neither I nor II

One Year After the Pahalgam terror attack: Strengthening Kashmir's Security Framework



(Continued from page 1)

Over time, the focus has shifted towards proactive prevention. The infiltration grid along the Line of Control has been strengthened using advanced surveillance technologies, including drones, night-vision devices, and improved fencing. Likely infiltration routes into the hinterland are now closely monitored through a combination of technology and intensified ground patrols. Simultaneously, better coordination among the Army, police, and paramilitary forces—supported by clearly demarcated responsibilities and real-time communication—has significantly reduced response time during potential threats.

A key evolution in the security framework has been the increased reliance on technology-driven solutions. The deployment of surveillance and combat-capable drones, counter-drone systems, and all-terrain vehicles has enhanced both monitoring and rapid response capabilities. Integrated Command and Control Systems, supported by AI-enabled surveillance, are being developed to create a more seamless and anticipatory security network. Coupled with improved human intelligence and targeted “seek and destroy” operations, these measures reflect a shift towards a more agile, layered, and resilient security strategy in the region.

Prelims Corner: Explanations

1) Answer is option C

The Non-Cooperation Movement, launched under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi in 1920, was built around a clear programme of non-violent resistance and mass participation. Its core idea was to withdraw cooperation from British institutions and promote indigenous alternatives. As part of this, the boycott of law courts and foreign cloth was actively encouraged, making Statement I correct. Similarly, strict adherence to non-violence formed the moral foundation of the movement, so Statement II is also correct.



However, the movement called for the surrender of titles and honours, not their retention, making Statement III incorrect. At the same time, efforts were made to establish alternative institutions such as panchayats to settle disputes outside the colonial legal system, making Statement IV correct.

Thus, three statements (I, II, and IV) are correct. → (c) Only three



2) Answer is option C

The Non-Cooperation Movement, formally adopted at the Nagpur Session of Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, marked a decisive shift in the Indian national movement towards mass-based, non-violent resistance. At this stage, the Congress clearly articulated its objective as the attainment of Swaraj through all legitimate and peaceful means, making Statement I correct. This reflected a strategic commitment to non-violence and constitutional methods, even while mobilising large sections of society.

The movement was also designed to be implemented in phases. Initially, it focused on non-cooperation measures such as boycott of institutions, surrender of titles, and promotion of swadeshi. Gandhi proposed that if Swaraj was not achieved within a year, or if the government resorted to repression, the movement would escalate to civil disobedience, including non-payment of taxes, thereby making Statement II correct.

Thus, both statements accurately capture the objectives and phased strategy of the movement.

Programmes of the Movement

- Surrender of titles and honours;
- Resignation from local bodies;
- Boycott of elections under the 1919 Act;
- Boycott of courts, government schools, colleges, and official functions;
- Rejection of foreign goods.

Significance of the Movement

The movement marked the first true mass mobilisation under the Congress, drawing participation from peasants, workers, students, and women. It expanded the reach of nationalism to rural and remote regions.