

**03rd June DSC**

**Current Affairs 03rd June 2025.**

### **Whose Mountain Is It? NIMAS and Mt. Khangchendzonga**

#### **The Immediate Event**

On May 18, 2025, a team from the National Institute of Mountaineering and Adventure Sports (NIMAS) climbed Mt. Khangchendzonga from the Nepalese side. This triggered protests in Sikkim, where the mountain is sacred and officially off-limits for climbers from the Indian side. The ascent was part of the Indian Army's 'Har Shikhar Tiranga' initiative to hoist the national flag on each state's highest point.

**Relevance:** GS 1 (Geography), GS 2 (Governance)

#### **Cultural Sensitivity vs. State Action**

In Sikkimese indigenous belief, Mt. Khangchendzonga holds deep spiritual significance. The state government had earlier invoked the *Places of Worship Act, 1991*, to prohibit climbs from its territory.

Globally, similar cultural reverence for mountains has led to conflicts:

- **Mauna Kea (Hawaii):** Native resistance stalled telescope installation.
- **Haleakalā (Hawaii):** Indigenous protests against U.S. military installations.
- **Cerro Armazones (Chile):** Atacameño opposition to telescope projects.

#### **Science, Security, and Spirituality: A Growing Clash**

Mountains today are contested zones of scientific inquiry, national security, and cultural heritage. While scientific and defense agencies pursue objectives in these regions, they often ignore the spiritual and cultural rights of indigenous communities, creating friction and resentment.

#### **Marginalization Patterns**

Frequently, local communities are either consulted too late or completely bypassed:

- The India-based Neutrino Observatory (INO) faced backlash over temple access restrictions.
- Heavy police deployment in sacred areas undermines trust. Such state-led efforts can appear dismissive of indigenous rights.

#### **Shifting Legal-Ethical Norms**

International frameworks now emphasize indigenous participation and consent:

- **UNDRIP** (UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples)
- **ILO Convention 169**  
These mandate *free, prior, and informed consent*—even in military contexts.

#### **Changing Power Dynamics**

Youth activism, technology, and climate change have empowered indigenous voices. With increased representation and legal awareness, indigenous communities are asserting cultural and political rights more forcefully.

## Recommendations

- Prior consultation is not just ethical—it prevents backlash.
- National pride should not come at the expense of cultural sanctity.
- NIMAS's action, though symbolic, risks alienating local communities if done without engagement.

## Conclusion

In an era of ecological fragility and cultural assertion, inclusive dialogue and consent are essential. Ethical governance must align national ambitions with local sensitivities.

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## India's GDP Growth vs. Development Reality

### The Headline

India is poised to become the world's 4th largest economy in 2025, surpassing Japan with a projected GDP of \$4.187 trillion. The government has hailed this milestone and aims for 3rd place by 2028.

**Relevance:** GS 3 (Indian Economy)

### But What Lies Beneath?

Despite high GDP, India's per capita income remains significantly low—12 times lower than Japan's and 9 times lower than Poland's. Absolute size doesn't capture living standards or inequality.

### Key Development Gaps:

#### 1. Workforce Structure

- *India:* ~45% still employed in agriculture.
- *Poland/Japan:* <10% in agriculture, indicating higher industrial and service sector integration.

#### 2. Employment Quality

- *Formal jobs:* India (23.9%) vs Japan (91%) and Poland (80.1%)
- This reflects widespread informality and limited social protection.

#### 3. Education

- *Higher education enrolment:* India (32.7%) vs Japan (~65%) and Poland (~75%)
- Affects skill development and social mobility.

#### 4. Health Outcomes

- *Life Expectancy:* India (72) vs Japan (84) and Poland (78.5)
- *Infant Mortality:* India (24.5 per 1000) vs <5 in Japan and Poland
- Reflects underinvestment in public health.

## 5. Human Development Index (HDI)

- India: 0.685 (Medium)
- Japan/Poland: >0.9 (Very High)
- Reveals multidimensional development gaps.

### Conclusion

India's economic ascent masks persistent structural and human development challenges. GDP alone cannot define progress—true development must address inequality, health, education, and job security.

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## Is India Truly the World's 4th Largest Economy?

### Celebrating the Ranking

India's nominal GDP is projected to surpass Japan's in 2025, making it the 4th largest economy. This achievement is being celebrated as proof of policy success.

**Relevance:** GS 3 (Indian Economy)

### Why GDP Isn't Enough

GDP doesn't reflect income inequality, health, education, or informal labour. It overlooks unpaid work and cost-of-living differences.

### Market Exchange Rates vs. Purchasing Power Parity (PPP)

- **MER:** India's rank rises but ignores domestic price variations.
- **PPP:** India is already 3rd since 2009 but inflates economic strength due to lower wages and prices.

### The Big Economy Illusion

Despite high GDP, India's per capita income is just \$2,711—ranking 144th globally. Even nations like Sri Lanka and Vietnam rank higher in per capita terms.

### Misleading Narratives

GDP rankings are politically appealing but economically shallow. Both MER and PPP-based assessments can misrepresent development unless supplemented with social indicators.

### What Should We Measure Instead?

- Health, education, job quality
- Income distribution and social progress
- Human Development Index and similar metrics

### Conclusion

Nominal GDP rank is only part of the story. A more holistic approach using multidimensional indicators is needed to assess India's true development level.

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## Opening the Legal Gates: Foreign Law Firms in India

### Historical Backdrop

Since 2000, Indian lawyers have opposed the entry of foreign legal firms, fearing harm to domestic legal practice. The 2018 Supreme Court ruling barred foreign firms from practicing—even in advisory roles.

**Relevance:** GS 2 (Governance)

### What's New?

The Bar Council of India (BCI) in May 2025 allowed foreign firms to offer non-litigious and international law services on a **reciprocal** basis—reviving a 2023 notification.

### Supporters' Viewpoint

Legal professionals like Lalit Bhasin now support the move, citing potential for mutual learning and global integration. It could modernize Indian legal practice and boost competitiveness.

### Critics' Concerns

- **Legal Conflict:** BCI may have overstepped the *Advocates Act, 1961* and the SC ruling.
- **No Parliamentary Amendment:** The law remains unchanged despite the policy shift.
- **Reciprocity Doubts:** Indian lawyers still face regulatory barriers abroad.
- **Protection of Small Firms:** Fear of foreign dominance and marginalization of domestic players.

### Conclusion

While the policy indicates India's intent to globalize legal services, it risks creating legal ambiguity and professional inequality unless backed by legislative and reciprocal clarity.

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## India's Increasing Heat: Have We Forgotten How to Adapt?

### Rising Heatwaves

India is experiencing more severe, frequent, and prolonged heatwaves—a 200% rise in extreme heat days between 2010 and 2024.

**Relevance:** GS 1 (Geography), GS 3 (Disaster Management)

### Undercounted Deaths

Official tolls (20,615 from 2000–2020) vastly underreport reality. Independent estimates suggest over 1.5 lakh deaths in 2021 alone. Many deaths go undocumented, especially in rural or informal sectors.

### Economic Fallout

- 2022 heatwaves slashed wheat yields by up to 15% in some areas.
- Record energy demand led to blackouts.
- Outdoor workers suffered major productivity losses.
- Potential GDP loss: 2.5–4.5% by 2030 (McKinsey).

### Loss of Traditional Wisdom

Traditional Indian practices once offered natural cooling:

- Mud houses, stepwells, jaalis (ventilation screens), and seasonal routines like *Navtapa*. These have been replaced by energy-intensive, concrete-based urban development.

### Governance Gaps

Despite rising risks, India lacks:

- Heat action plans in many districts
- Standardized surveillance systems
- Public awareness of adaptive behaviours

### Conclusion

As climate risks escalate, adaptation requires reviving local wisdom, improving governance, and investing in resilient infrastructure. Ignoring heat-related impacts will deepen social, health, and economic inequalities.

### 03<sup>rd</sup> June 2025: Static MCQS

1. Consider the following statements:

- I. India has joined the Minerals Security Partnership as a member.
- II. India is a resource-rich country in all the 30 critical minerals that it has identified.
- III. The Parliament in 2023 has amended the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 empowering the Central Government to exclusively auction mining lease and composite license for certain critical minerals.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a. I and II only
- b. II and III only
- c. I and III only
- d. I, II and III

Correct Option: (c)

2. Consider the following statements:

Statements I:

As regards returns from an investment in a company, generally, bondholders are considered to be relatively at lower risk than stockholders.

Statement II:

Bondholders are lenders to a company whereas stockholders are its owners.

Statement III:

For repayment purpose, bondholders are prioritized over stockholders by a company.



Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- a. Both Statement II and Statement III are correct and both of them explain Statement I
- b. Both Statement I and Statement II are correct and Statement I explains Statement II
- c. Only one of the Statements II and III is correct and that explains Statement I
- d. Neither Statement II nor Statement III is correct

Correct Option: (a)

3. Consider the following statements:

- I. India accounts for a very large portion of all equity option contracts traded globally thus exhibiting a great boom.
- II. India's stock market has grown rapidly in the recent past even overtaking Hong Kong's at some point of time.
- III. There is no regulatory body either to warn the small investors about the risks of options trading or to act on unregistered financial advisors in this regard.

Which of the statements give above are correct?

- a. I and II only
- b. II and III only
- c. I and III only
- d. I, II and III

Correct Option: (a)

4. Consider the following statements:

Statement I:

Circular economy reduces the emissions of greenhouse gases.

Statement II:

Circular economy reduces the use of raw materials as inputs.

Statement III:

Circular economy reduces wastage in the production process.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- a. Both Statement II and Statement III are correct and both of them explain Statement I
- b. Both Statement I and Statement II are correct and Statement I explains Statement II
- c. Only one of the Statements II and III is correct and that explains Statement I
- d. Neither Statement II nor Statement III is correct

Correct Option: (a)

5. Consider the following statements:

- I. Capital receipts create a liability or cause a reduction in the assets of the Government.
- II. Borrowings and disinvestment are capital receipts.
- III. Interest received on loans creates a liability of the Government.

Which of the statements give above are correct?

- a. I and II only
- b. II and III only
- c. I and III only
- d. I, II and III

Correct Option: (a)

