

1. The Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Bill, 2025

Syllabus: GS2 – Governance

Context

The Lok Sabha has cleared *The Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Bill, 2025*. The Bill intends to ban online money-based gaming while encouraging and regulating other categories of online games.

Key Provisions

- **Definition of Online Money Games:**
Any online game where participants pay money or equivalent stakes (credits, coins, tokens) in anticipation of monetary or material gains.
This applies whether the game is based on skill, chance, or a combination of both.
- **Ban on Online Money Games:**
Prohibits offering, advertising, or facilitating transactions for such games.
The government is empowered to block access to related online content.
- **Promotion of E-Sports & Social Gaming:**
 - E-sports defined as multiplayer competitive games recognised under the *National Sports Governance Act, 2025*.
 - Outcomes must be based purely on skills such as reflexes, strategy, or mental agility, without any betting element.
 - Government may:
 - Create a registration mechanism for e-sports and social games.
 - Issue rules for hosting e-sports events.
 - Establish training centres and academies.
 - Support e-sports technology platforms and safe gaming initiatives.
- **Online Gaming Authority:**
A central authority may be set up to identify and categorise games, decide whether a game qualifies as an online money game, and oversee registration.
- **Search and Arrest Powers:**
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Authorised officers can enter, search, and seize without a warrant—covering physical spaces, electronic records, and virtual platforms (emails, social media, etc.).
They may also arrest suspects without prior judicial approval.
- **Penalties:**
 - Hosting online money games → imprisonment up to 3 years, fine up to ₹1 crore, or both.
 - Advertising such games → imprisonment up to 2 years, fine up to ₹50 lakh, or both.
 - Facilitating payments → imprisonment up to 3 years, fine up to ₹1 crore, or both.
 - Repeat violations → 3–5 years in jail and fines up to ₹2 crore.

Need for Legislation

- *Regulatory vacuum:* Absence of a clear framework has hampered responsible gaming and structured industry growth.
- *Rising concerns:* The spread of money-based online games has caused social, economic, psychological, and health-related harm.

Significance

- Provides a uniform national regulatory system in the public interest.
- Protects young people from manipulative money-gaming apps.
- Demonstrates the Government's intent to promote a safe, innovation-driven digital ecosystem while safeguarding citizens and ensuring national security.

2. Pakistan, China and Afghanistan Agree to Extend CPEC to Kabul

Syllabus: GS2 – International Relations

Context

The foreign ministers of China, Pakistan, and Afghanistan have agreed to expand cooperation by extending the *China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)* to Afghanistan.

Goals of the Trilateral Dialogue

- **Connectivity & Economy:**
 - Extend CPEC links into Afghanistan for access to Central Asia.
 - Complete railway projects connecting Afghanistan with Pakistan.
 - Facilitate Chinese investments in Afghanistan's mineral sector.
- **Diplomatic & Political Coordination:**
 - Enhance formal diplomatic representation between Kabul and Islamabad.
 - Integrate the Taliban regime into Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects despite lack of international recognition.
- **Security Cooperation:**
 - Pakistan demands Taliban action against the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) operating from Afghan soil.
 - China is worried about the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM), which allegedly uses Afghan territory to target China.

Country-Specific Significance

- **China:**
 - *CPEC and BRI Security:* Ensuring stability for flagship projects threatened by militancy.
 - *Economic Gains:* Access to Central Asian routes and Afghan minerals.

- *Strategic Role:* Positions China as a mediator in South Asia post-US withdrawal.
- **Afghanistan (Taliban regime):**
 - *Legitimacy:* Gains quasi-diplomatic recognition through Chinese-led platforms.
 - *Economic Relief:* Hopes for infrastructure, trade, and investment benefits.
 - *Regional Balancing:* Engagement with both neighbours to reduce isolation.
- **Pakistan:**
 - *Security:* Leverages talks to pressure Taliban against TTP sanctuaries.
 - *CPEC Revival:* Aims to overcome project delays due to domestic instability.
 - *Diplomatic Leverage:* Strengthens its role as a gateway to Central Asia.

Implications for India

- **Sovereignty Issues:** India opposes CPEC as it runs through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Extending it to Afghanistan reinforces projects on disputed land.
- **Strategic Isolation:** The trilateral sidelines India despite its historic role in Afghan development.
- **Security Risks:** Deeper China–Pakistan–Taliban cooperation may embolden extremist elements hostile to India.
- **Connectivity Rivalry:** Beijing’s westward push challenges India’s alternatives such as Chabahar Port and INSTC.

India’s Way Forward

- *Strategic Balance:* Maintain independent engagement with China, US, Russia, EU, and Indo-Pacific partners.
- *Afghan Outreach:* Continue humanitarian and infrastructure efforts while carefully engaging the Taliban without premature recognition.
- *Security Collaboration:* Deepen counterterrorism partnerships with SCO, Central Asia, and cautious Taliban interlocutors.
- *Connectivity Push:* Fast-track Chabahar Port and INSTC to secure alternative routes.

Conclusion

The China–Pakistan–Afghanistan cooperation reflects Beijing’s effort to protect its investments and influence in South Asia. For India, the challenge lies in safeguarding sovereignty and security while countering China’s connectivity projects through strategic diplomacy and alternative frameworks.

3. India–Russia Partnership Deepens Amid US Tariffs

Syllabus: GS2 – International Relations

Context

India’s External Affairs Minister (EAM) visited Moscow for the 26th session of the *India–*

Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation (IRIGC-TEC).

The visit comes at a time when India's relations with the US face stress due to new tariffs on Indian exports. Discussions also coincide with a likely Modi–Putin meeting during the SCO Summit in Tianjin, and a possible Russian presidential visit to India later in the year.

Agenda and Proposals

- **Trade balance:** Address the \$58.9 billion deficit, largely from oil imports.
- **Barriers:** Push for removal of tariff and non-tariff restrictions.
- **Connectivity projects:** Strengthen INSTC, Northern Sea Route, Chennai–Vladivostok corridor.
- **Diversification:** Expedite India–Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) FTA and payment reforms.
- **Business engagement:** Enhance B2B ties, encourage Russian investments in *Make in India*.
- **Strategic target:** \$100 billion bilateral trade by 2030; reinforce *Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership*.

India's Concerns

- **Trade imbalance:** Bilateral trade jumped from \$3 billion (2021) to \$68 billion (2024–25), but deficit widened drastically.
- **Export pressures:** US tariffs risk shrinking one of India's key export markets.
- **Energy vulnerability:** US penalties on Russian oil could push India to pricier alternatives, raising inflation and CAD stress.
- **Strains in US ties:** Could affect QUAD, defence co-production, and tech collaborations.
- **Risk of escalation:** Counter-tariffs may spiral into trade conflicts, undermining India's global trade credibility.

How Russia Helps India Counter US Pressure

- **Energy cushion:** Discounted Russian oil mitigates higher global prices and keeps inflation under check.
- **Alternative markets:** EAEU FTA and Eurasian linkages reduce reliance on US.
- **Logistics advantage:** INSTC and Chennai–Vladivostok reduce shipping costs, restoring competitiveness.
- **De-dollarisation:** Rupee–ruble settlements shield trade from US sanctions.
- **Defence/tech:** Russia remains a critical supplier in defence, nuclear, and hi-tech areas.
- **Industrial collaboration:** Russian resources + Indian manufacturing = joint ventures under *Make in India*.

- **Strategic autonomy:** Deeper Moscow ties show Washington that India has alternatives, strengthening bargaining power.

Conclusion

Amid tariff tensions with the US, India's partnership with Russia secures energy needs, offers new markets, and preserves strategic independence. By leveraging Moscow's role, India can balance global pressures while advancing its \$100 billion trade goal by 2030.

4. India's Need for a National Space Law

Syllabus: GS3 – Space

In News

Experts have underlined the necessity for a comprehensive *National Space Law* to support India's growing space ambitions, private sector participation, and international obligations.

Background

- The *Outer Space Treaty* (1967) bans national appropriation of space and makes states liable for activities of private actors.
- However, these treaties lack self-enforcement. UNOOSA stresses that national laws are essential for clarity, liability, and growth.
- Countries like the US, Luxembourg, and Japan already have laws covering licensing, liability, and commercial use.

India's Approach So Far

- India has taken incremental steps: *Catalogue of Indian Standards for Space*, *Indian Space Policy* (2023), and IN-SPACe guidelines.
- These cover authorisation of private space ventures but fall short of a full-fledged legislative framework.
- India has ratified core UN treaties but has yet to enact a comprehensive domestic law.

Why a Space Law is Essential

- **Private sector regulation & security:** Clear rules on licensing, liability, dispute settlement, and tech protection.
- **International compliance:** Enforces obligations under the Outer Space Treaty and Liability Convention.
- **Commercial boost:** Legal certainty encourages FDI, insurance coverage, and innovation.
- **Sustainability:** Rules on debris, congestion, and responsible use to prevent militarisation and misuse.

Industry Concerns

- Grant statutory authority to IN-SPACe.

- Simplify FDI norms, licensing, liability, and insurance processes.
- Protect intellectual property.
- Enforce rules on debris/accidents with appellate mechanisms.
- Improve inter-ministerial coordination for faster decisions.

Way Ahead

India's ambitious plans—human spaceflight, lunar exploration, space station—need a robust legal base. A National Space Law is vital to safeguard national security, boost industry confidence, and secure India's future as a major space power.

5. Renewable Consumption Obligation (RCO) Framework

Syllabus: GS3 – Energy

Context

The Ministry of Power has issued a draft notification introducing the *Renewable Consumption Obligation (RCO)* under the *Energy Conservation Act (2001)*.

This shifts the focus from *procurement-based Renewable Purchase Obligation (RPO)* to actual renewable consumption targets.

What is RCO?

- **Binding targets:** By 2030, discoms, open access consumers, and captive power users must source **29.9%–43.3%** energy from renewables.
- **Sources included:** Rooftop/distributed solar, wind, hydro (domestic & approved foreign projects), biomass, waste-to-energy.
- **Differentiation:** Hilly & Northeastern states have reduced distributed renewable targets.
- **Compliance:** Direct renewable use, purchase of Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs), or buyout payments fixed by CERC.

Significance

- **Shift in focus:** Ensures real renewable consumption, not just paper compliance.
- **Distributed energy push:** Rooftop and small-scale renewables to grow from 1.5% (2024–25) to 4.5% (2029–30).
- **Investment certainty:** Creates predictable demand for investors.
- **Climate alignment:** Supports India's 2030 target of 50% non-fossil electricity.
- **Broad coverage:** Includes over 100 discoms and thousands of industrial users.

Challenges

- **Weak enforcement history:** Penalties rarely imposed under earlier RPOs.
- **CERC's unclear role:** Energy Conservation Act doesn't empower CERC for buyout pricing.

- **Overlapping regulators:** BEE, SDAs, and state authorities may cause duplication.
- **Reporting gaps:** No strict deadlines/penalties for late compliance reports.
- **Buyout loophole:** Risk of permanent “pay-to-pollute” option undermining actual renewable uptake.

Way Forward

- Amend laws to clearly empower CERC or issue joint notifications with the Electricity Act.
- Designate a single nodal enforcement authority.
- Impose strict penalties for delay or non-compliance.
- Enhance support for rooftop and local renewable projects through financing and incentives.
- Publish compliance data annually to ensure transparency and accountability.

Vice-President of India

Syllabus: GS2/Polity and Governance

Context

The ruling NDA and the Opposition have declared their candidates for the Vice-President's election.

About

- **Article 66:** Election of Vice-President, conducted by the Election Commission.
- **Electoral College:** Consists of members of both Houses of Parliament (including nominated members); state legislatures not involved.
- **Voting System:**
 - Conducted by secret ballot.
 - Uses *Single Transferable Vote (STV)* system of proportional representation.
 - MPs rank candidates by preference; elimination and vote transfer continue until a majority is achieved.
- **Term (Article 67):** 5 years; re-election allowed; continues until successor assumes charge.

Pseudomonas Aeruginosa

Syllabus: GS2/Health

Context

German researchers discovered *bistable expression* of the **glpD gene** in *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*.

About the Bacterium

- Widely found in soil and water.
- *P. aeruginosa*: Gram-negative, aerobic rod-shaped pathogen.
- Causes infections in lungs (pneumonia), blood, urinary tract, and post-surgery complications.

Key Findings

- Shows **bistable gene expression**, meaning genetically identical cells behave differently.
- Impacts infection severity (tested in moth larvae & mouse immune cells).
- Targeting this variability could offer new treatments, especially against hospital-acquired infections.

National Supercomputing Mission (NSM)

Syllabus: GS3/Science and Technology

Context

Under NSM, India has deployed **37 supercomputers with 40 Petaflops computing power**.

About NSM

- Launched in 2015 with ₹4,500 crore budget.
- Implemented by **MeitY & DST** through **C-DAC Pune** and **IISc Bengaluru**.
- Objective: Self-reliance and leadership in high-performance computing (HPC).

Indigenous Achievements

- **PARAM Rudra**: First indigenously designed HPC servers.
- **Trinetra Network**: High-speed interconnect (40–100 Gbps).
- **PARAM Shavak**: Compact desktop supercomputer for academia.
- Strengthens Atmanirbhar Bharat in advanced electronics.

International Solar Alliance (ISA)

Syllabus: GS3/Environment

Context

ISA to establish **17 Centres of Excellence worldwide** and a **Global Capability Centre in India** by 2025, envisioned as a “Silicon Valley for solar.”

About ISA

- Joint initiative of India & France, launched at COP21 (2015).
- HQ: Gurugram, India.
- Membership: 123 countries.

- Focus: Affordable solar deployment, esp. in LDCs & SIDS.

Objectives

- Achieve global solar adoption by 2030.
- Cut costs of tech & finance.
- Promote solar use in agriculture, health, transport, and power.
- Support policies, standardisation, investment, and training.

Agni-5 Ballistic Missile

Syllabus: GS3/Defence

Context

India successfully test-fired the **Agni-5 missile** under the Strategic Forces Command.

About Agni-5

- **Type:** Nuclear-capable, surface-to-surface ballistic missile.
- **Range:** >5,000 km (Intermediate-Range Ballistic Missile).
- **Propulsion:** Three-stage solid-fuel.
- **Developer:** DRDO, under IGMDP.
- **Special Feature:** *MIRV capability*—can deliver multiple warheads to separate targets.
- Positions India among elite nations (US, Russia, China, France) with such technology.

Exercise Samanvay Shakti 2025

Syllabus: GS3/Defence

Context

The Indian Army launched **Exercise Samanvay Shakti 2025** in Tinsukia, Assam.

About the Exercise

- **Nature:** 10-day military-civil integration drill.
- **Aim:** Enhance synergy between armed forces, civil administration, and institutions to tackle regional challenges jointly.
- **Participants:** Army, IAF, state govts (Assam & Manipur), police, intelligence, NDRF, SDRF, BRO, Railways, PSUs (OIL, IOCL, Coal India), and local media.

Rugby-Centric Bronco Test

Syllabus: Miscellaneous

Context

BCCI has adopted the **Bronco fitness test** alongside the Yo-Yo test and 2 km time trial for cricketers.

About the Test

- **Bronco Test:** Shuttle runs of 20m, 40m, 60m repeated; target completion in under 6 minutes.
- **Yo-Yo Test:** Interval recovery test with 20m shuttles; minimum score 17.1.
- **2 km Time Trial:** Fast bowlers must complete in 8 min 15 sec.
- Together, they comprehensively assess **aerobic endurance, stamina, and agility**.

22nd August 2025: Daily MCQs

1. Question

Civil Liability for Nuclear Damages Act, 2010 (CLNDA):

1. It uniquely holds suppliers of nuclear equipment liable, apart from the operator (NPCIL).
2. It was enacted before India signed the Civil Nuclear Agreement with the U.S. (2005–08).
3. Its provisions discouraged foreign suppliers from entering India's nuclear market.

Options:

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) All three (d) None

Answer: (b) Only two

Explanation:

- Statement 1: Correct → CLNDA Section 17(b) allows the operator (NPCIL) to seek recourse against suppliers. Unusual provision globally.
- Statement 2: Incorrect → The U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Agreement was signed in 2008; CLNDA was enacted later in 2010.
- Statement 3: Correct → Suppliers like GE, Westinghouse, and French Areva hesitated due to liability risks.

2. Question

Companion treaties to OST widely ratified by major spacefaring nations, including India:

1. Rescue Agreement (1968)
2. Liability Convention (1972)
3. Moon Agreement (1979)

Options:

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) All three (d) None

Answer: (b) Only two

Explanation:

- Rescue Agreement (1968): Widely ratified, including by India.
- Liability Convention (1972): Widely ratified, India is a party.
- Moon Agreement (1979): Rarely ratified; not by India, U.S., Russia, or China.

3. Question

Features of machine-readable electoral rolls:

1. Stored in Unicode format
2. Available in PDF image files
3. Allows automated analysis
4. Ensures greater transparency
5. Enables easy updation

Options:

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

Incorrect

Answer: (c) Only four

Explanation:

- Correct: (1) Unicode format → yes, machine-readable.
- Correct: (3) Automated analysis possible.
- Correct: (4) Transparency → improves detection of duplicates.
- Correct: (5) Easy updation → quicker corrections.
- Incorrect: (2) Image-PDFs are NOT machine-readable; current rolls are in that form, which is the problem.

4. Question

With reference to Agni-5 missile, consider the following statements:

1. It has a range of over 5,000 km.
2. It uses a three-stage solid propulsion system.
3. It is operated by the Indian Navy.

Options:

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

Answer: (b) 1 and 2 only

Explanation:

- Statement 1: Correct → Range ~5,000–5,500 km.
- Statement 2: Correct → Uses three-stage solid propulsion.
- Statement 3: Incorrect → Operated by Strategic Forces Command (SFC), not Navy.

5. Question

Which of the following commissions/reports supported disqualification of individuals facing serious criminal charges (≥ 5 years punishment)?

1. Law Commission 170th Report (1999)
2. Law Commission 244th Report (2014)
3. Election Commission of India
4. Sarkaria Commission Report

Options:

- (a) 1 and 2 only (b) 1, 2 and 3 only (c) 2, 3 and 4 only (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer: (b) 1, 2 and 3 only

Explanation:

- Law Commission 170th Report (1999): Recommended disqualification of candidates against whom charges have been framed for serious offences.
- Law Commission 244th Report (2014): Strongly supported disqualification at the stage of framing charges for offences punishable by 5 years or more.
- Election Commission of India (ECI): Consistently demanded this reform for cleaner politics.
- Sarkaria Commission (1988): Concerned with Centre-State relations; did not deal with criminalisation of politics.