



OAS HUB



IDEAL FOR
UPSC, OPSC and Other
Competitive Examinations

English

DAILY CHRONICLE CURRENT AFFAIRS

NEWS CREDIT

PIB/ PTI/ News On Air/ The Hindu/ IANS/ Business Standard/ Times Of India/ Deccan Herald/ Hindustan Times/ BBC News/ Aljazeera/ Mirror.Uk/ Times Now/ Economic Times/ Financial Express/ Indian Express...

NEWS COVERED

Business News, financial news, economy news, company news, politics news, India news, breaking news, Indian economy, International News, Sports News, and many more topics...



Thursday, August 13, 2026



TABLE OF CONTENT

- **Tribunals Reforms Bill 2026 Seeks National Tribunals Commission to Strengthen Judicial Independence and Institutional Efficiency:** *Tribunals Reforms / Judicial Independence / Judicial Administration / Institutional Efficiency / Separation of Powers (GS-II)*
- **Mecca Joint Defence Agreement Deepens Saudi Arabia Pakistan and Türkiye Security Cooperation Amid West Asian Strategic Realignment:** *India's Foreign Policy / West Asia / Defence Cooperation / Strategic Realignment / Geopolitics (GS-II)*
- **Quit India Movement of 1942 Represented the Final Nationwide Mass Challenge to British Colonial Authority Before India's Independence:** *Quit India Movement / Indian National Movement / Mass Mobilisation / British Colonialism / Freedom Struggle (GS-I)*
- **Colombia's Major 7.4 Magnitude Earthquake Highlights Seismic Vulnerability of the Pacific Ring of Fire and Andean Region:** *Earthquake / Seismic Vulnerability / Pacific Ring of Fire / Andean Region / Disaster Management (GS-I / GS-III)*
- **India's Responsible Health AI Strategy Seeks to Transform Medical Technology Through Safe, Ethical and Evidence-Based Innovation:** *Artificial Intelligence / Health Technology / Ethical AI / Evidence-Based Innovation / Digital Health (GS-II / GS-III)*

IMPORTANT INSIGHTS

Tribunals Reforms Bill 2026 Seeks National Tribunals Commission to Strengthen Judicial Independence and Institutional Efficiency

Recent Developments:

- The **Tribunals Reforms Bill, 2026** was introduced and passed by the **Lok Sabha on 10 August 2026**. It seeks to repeal the **Tribunals Reforms Act, 2021** and create a **National Tribunals Commission (NTC)** for the institutional administration of tribunals.
- The Bill responds to a long-running constitutional dispute over **executive control, tribunal appointments, tenure and service conditions**, particularly after the Supreme Court repeatedly emphasised **judicial independence and separation of powers** in its tribunal jurisprudence.
- The development follows the Supreme Court's **Madras Bar Association v. Union of India judgment of 19 November 2025**, which struck down provisions of the 2021 framework that substantially reproduced provisions previously invalidated by the Court.
- The proposed **NTC** is intended to centralise selection, performance review, complaints oversight and tribunal-related data management, potentially reducing dependence on individual administrative ministries.

Tribunals in India — Constitutional and Institutional Framework:

Meaning and Purpose of Tribunals:

- A **tribunal** is a specialised adjudicatory body established by legislation to decide disputes requiring **technical expertise, specialised knowledge and relatively expeditious adjudication**.
- Tribunals were developed to supplement the ordinary judicial system by reducing the workload of constitutional courts and providing specialised forums for areas such as **taxation, service matters, company law, environment and financial regulation**.

Constitutional Basis:

- **Part XIV-A** of the Constitution deals with tribunals and was inserted through the **42nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1976**, following recommendations of the **Swaran Singh Committee**.
- **Article 323A** empowers Parliament to establish **Administrative Tribunals** for disputes concerning recruitment and conditions of service of public servants.
- **Article 323B** enables the appropriate legislature to establish tribunals for specified matters such as **taxation, foreign exchange, industrial and labour disputes, land reforms and related subjects**.
- The constitutional scheme does not make tribunals equivalent to the **High Courts or Supreme Court**; tribunals remain statutory adjudicatory institutions subject to constitutional judicial review.

Historical Evolution:

- The **Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT)**, established in 1941, is generally regarded as India's first tribunal.
- The **Administrative Tribunals Act, 1985** was enacted pursuant to Article 323A and led to the establishment of bodies such as the **Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT)**.
- From the 1980s onward, India developed several specialised tribunals and appellate bodies covering taxation, company law, securities, debt recovery, environment and other sectors.

- The **Finance Act, 2017** rationalised the tribunal structure by merging or abolishing several bodies with overlapping jurisdictions, while also introducing a common framework for appointments and service conditions.
- The Supreme Court subsequently scrutinised several aspects of this framework, particularly the **composition of selection committees, tenure, qualifications and executive control**.

Key Provisions of the Tribunals Reforms Bill, 2026:

Repeal of the 2021 Act:

- The Bill seeks to **repeal the Tribunals Reforms Act, 2021** and establish a new framework for tribunal appointments and service conditions in light of the Supreme Court's constitutional directions.
- The objective is to create a more coherent institutional framework while addressing concerns relating to **judicial independence, administrative efficiency and accountability**.

National Tribunals Commission:

- The Bill proposes a **National Tribunals Commission (NTC)** as a central institutional mechanism for administering the tribunal system.
- Its principal functions include **conducting selection processes, reviewing tribunal performance, overseeing complaints against tribunal members and maintaining a National Tribunals Data Grid**.

Composition of the NTC:

- The NTC will comprise a **Chairperson, two Judicial Members and two Technical Members**.
- The Chairperson must have been a **Supreme Court Judge or Chief Justice of a High Court**, while Judicial Members must have been **Chief Justices or Judges of High Courts**.
- Technical Members must possess at least **25 years of relevant experience** in fields including public administration, finance, law, accountancy, banking, management or technology.
- Members will hold office for **five years or until the prescribed age limit, whichever is earlier**; the Bill provides a maximum age of **70 years for the Chairperson and 67 years for other members**.

Appointment to the NTC:

- Appointments to the NTC will be made by the **Central Government**, while the **Chief Justice of India must be consulted** for appointments of the Chairperson and Judicial Members.
- The Commission will have a Secretariat headed by a **Central Government Secretary**, which retains an element of executive involvement in the Commission's administration.

Selection of Tribunal Members:

- The NTC will constitute **Search-cum-Selection Committees** for filling vacancies in tribunals.
- For every vacancy, the Committee will recommend **one name for appointment and one additional name for the waiting list**, while the Central Government must make the appointment within **three months** of receiving the recommendation.
- The proposed framework therefore differs from the 2021 arrangement that required a **panel of two names for each vacancy**, a provision subsequently held unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.

Tenure and Reappointment:

- Tribunal Chairpersons and Members will generally have a **five-year tenure**, subject to the prescribed upper age limit.
- Reappointment may be considered on the basis of **previous performance**, while reappointment of a member also requires consultation with the Chairperson of the concerned tribunal.

Removal and Service Conditions:

- Removal may be permitted on grounds including **insolvency, conviction involving moral turpitude, physical or mental incapacity, abuse of position and prejudicial financial or other interests**.
- Tribunal Chairpersons and Members may additionally face removal for **incompetence, inefficiency or undertaking paid assignments**.
- The Central Government will prescribe rules relating to **qualifications, selection, salaries, allowances, resignation, removal and other service conditions**.

Supreme Court Jurisprudence on Tribunal Independence:***S.P. Sampath Kumar v. Union of India:***

- In **S.P. Sampath Kumar v. Union of India**, the Supreme Court accepted the concept of tribunals as alternative institutional mechanisms but emphasised that they must possess sufficient **effectiveness, competence and judicial character**.
- The judgment highlighted the importance of appropriate judicial representation and adequate tenure for maintaining the credibility and effectiveness of tribunals.

L. Chandra Kumar v. Union of India:

- In **L. Chandra Kumar v. Union of India (1997)**, the Supreme Court held that tribunals cannot completely replace the constitutional role of the **High Courts and Supreme Court**.
- Decisions of tribunals remain subject to scrutiny by High Courts under **Articles 226 and 227**, thereby preserving constitutional **judicial review**.
- The judgment established that judicial review by constitutional courts forms part of the **basic structure of the Constitution**.

Union of India v. R. Gandhi:

- In **Union of India v. R. Gandhi**, concerning the National Company Law Tribunal, the Supreme Court scrutinised provisions relating to the **composition, qualifications and appointment of tribunal members**.
- The Court emphasised that tribunals exercising judicial functions must possess institutional safeguards comparable to the requirements of an independent adjudicatory mechanism.

Rojer Mathew v. South Indian Bank:

- In **Rojer Mathew v. South Indian Bank Ltd. (2019)**, the Supreme Court examined the tribunal framework introduced through the **Finance Act, 2017** and invalidated the associated 2017 Rules on grounds including defects in the selection mechanism and tenure framework.
- The Court directed the formulation of rules consistent with principles of **judicial independence, non-discrimination, uniform service conditions and assured tenure**.

Madras Bar Association Jurisprudence:

- The **Madras Bar Association** litigation represents a continuing constitutional dialogue on the independence and administration of tribunals, with successive judgments addressing **appointments, tenure, qualifications, reappointment and executive control**.
- The Supreme Court's **19 November 2025 judgment** found that the 2021 framework reproduced provisions that had already been judicially invalidated, including the **50-year minimum age, four-year tenure and two-name recommendation mechanism**.
- The Court held that Parliament may cure the constitutional defect identified by judicial review, but it cannot simply **re-enact the same unconstitutional provision without removing the underlying defect**.
- The Court consequently treated such repetition as an **impermissible legislative override** and struck down the impugned provisions for violating **separation of powers and judicial independence**.

Provisions of the 2021 Framework Struck Down by the Supreme Court:

Minimum Age Requirement:

- The **50-year minimum age requirement** was found problematic because it excluded otherwise qualified younger advocates and professionals and conflicted with the objective of attracting competent candidates to tribunals.

Four-Year Tenure:

- The **four-year tenure** was found inconsistent with the requirement of institutional stability and judicial independence, particularly because short tenures can increase dependence on the executive for reappointment.
- The Court's jurisprudence has emphasised the importance of **adequate tenure and continuity** for attracting competent candidates and preserving adjudicatory independence.

Two Names per Vacancy:

- The requirement that the Search-cum-Selection Committee recommend a **panel of two names** increased executive discretion in choosing the final appointee.
- The Supreme Court had previously directed a **single-name recommendation mechanism**, making the two-name arrangement constitutionally problematic.

Re-enactment of Invalidated Provisions:

- The Court clarified that Parliament can legislate again after a judicial decision if it **removes or cures the constitutional defect**, but merely reproducing the invalidated provision under a new statutory form is impermissible.
- This principle reflects the distinction between **legislative overruling by curing defects**, which can be constitutionally permissible, and **legislative override of judicial decisions**, which is impermissible.

Major Challenges Facing Tribunals in India:

Executive Dominance:

- Excessive executive control over **appointments, tenure, salaries, service conditions and removal** can compromise tribunal independence because the government is itself a major litigant before many tribunals.

- Concentration of administrative authority within parent ministries can create a structural **conflict of interest** between administrative control and adjudicatory independence.

Vacancies and Pendency:

- Persistent vacancies among **Chairpersons, Judicial Members and Technical Members** reduce tribunal capacity and contribute to case accumulation.
- Delayed appointments can undermine the central objective of tribunals, namely **speedy and specialised justice**.

Short Tenures and Reappointment:

- Short tenures may discourage experienced professionals from joining tribunals and can reduce institutional memory.
- Reappointment controlled substantially by the executive may create a perception of **institutional dependence**, particularly where members are required to decide cases involving the government.

Administrative and Financial Dependence:

- Dependence on parent ministries for **budgetary resources, infrastructure, staffing and administrative support** can weaken functional autonomy.
- An independent institutional mechanism for tribunal administration can therefore strengthen both **accountability and independence**.

Multiple Layers of Litigation:

- Tribunal decisions remain subject to **constitutional judicial review by High Courts**, which is essential for preserving constitutional supremacy but can also create additional stages of litigation.
- The challenge is therefore to maintain judicial review while ensuring that tribunals themselves deliver **high-quality first-instance adjudication**.

Infrastructure and Digital Deficiencies:

- Inadequate **courtrooms, digital infrastructure, registry support, research facilities and administrative staff** can reduce disposal efficiency.
- A unified **National Tribunals Data Grid**, as proposed under the Bill, could improve monitoring of vacancies, pendency, disposal rates and institutional performance.

Significance of the National Tribunals Commission:

Institutional Independence:

- A dedicated NTC can reduce the fragmentation caused by different ministries administering different tribunals and can provide a more uniform institutional framework.
- The proposal is particularly significant because the Supreme Court has repeatedly linked **administrative independence** with the credibility of adjudicatory institutions.

Professionalised Administration:

- A specialised commission can develop common standards for **appointments, performance monitoring, infrastructure, human resources and data management.**

Transparency and Accountability:

- A **National Tribunals Data Grid** can enable evidence-based assessment of tribunal performance through indicators such as **vacancies, pendency, disposal rates and case duration.**

Reduction of Executive Discretion:

- A structured selection process with greater institutional involvement can reduce arbitrary executive discretion in tribunal appointments.
- However, the continued role of the **Central Government in appointments and administration** means that the effectiveness of the NTC will ultimately depend on the degree of functional autonomy provided to it.

Critical Concerns with the Proposed Framework:***Continuing Executive Role:***

- Although the Bill creates an NTC, appointments to the Commission remain with the **Central Government**, while its Secretariat is headed by a Central Government Secretary.
- This may limit the extent to which the NTC can function as a genuinely **independent administrative authority.**

Rule-Making Power of the Executive:

- Important matters such as **qualifications, salaries, allowances and other service conditions** are proposed to be prescribed through Central Government Rules.
- Excessive delegation in matters affecting adjudicatory independence can recreate the very concerns that generated repeated constitutional litigation.

Reappointment and Independence:

- Reappointment based partly on performance can improve accountability, but it must be designed carefully so that members do not perceive favourable adjudication as relevant to their continuation in office.

Financial Autonomy:

- Institutional independence requires more than an independent appointment mechanism; it also requires adequate **financial, administrative and infrastructural autonomy.**
- Without predictable and independent resource allocation, tribunals may continue to depend indirectly on executive departments.

Reforms Required for Independent and Efficient Tribunals:

Establish Genuine Institutional Autonomy:

- The NTC should have **functional, administrative and financial autonomy**, with transparent budgetary allocations and safeguards against control by ministries that frequently appear before tribunals.

Strengthen Judicial Participation:

- Judicial participation in appointments should remain substantial enough to protect **adjudicatory independence**, while technical expertise should be retained for specialised regulatory disputes.

Ensure Secure and Adequate Tenure:

- Tribunal members should receive a tenure long enough to develop **institutional expertise, independence and continuity**, while reappointment should not become an instrument of executive influence.

Introduce Judicial Impact Assessment:

- **Judicial Impact Assessment** should precede the creation, expansion or restructuring of tribunals to estimate the required number of members, infrastructure, finances and support staff.

Improve Tribunal Data Governance:

- The **National Tribunals Data Grid** should provide standardised and publicly accessible information on **vacancies, pendency, disposal rates, case age and adjournments**, subject to appropriate privacy safeguards.

Strengthen Capacity Building:

- Judicial members can receive domain-specific training, while technical members can receive training in **judicial procedure, constitutional principles, evidence and natural justice**.

Rationalise the Appellate Structure:

- Tribunal jurisdictions should be designed to minimise unnecessary layers of appeal while preserving the constitutional role of **High Courts under Articles 226 and 227**.

Improve Infrastructure:

- Tribunals require adequate **courtrooms, registries, research support, digital filing, video-conferencing and case-management systems** to deliver specialised justice efficiently.

Way Forward:

Balance Expertise with Independence:

- Tribunals should combine **judicial competence and technical expertise** without allowing technical specialisation to dilute constitutional standards of independence and procedural fairness.

Separate Adjudication from Administrative Control:

- Administrative and financial functions should be progressively separated from **litigating parent ministries**, thereby reducing institutional conflicts of interest.

Adopt Data-Driven Case Management:

- Digital dashboards, automated case tracking and performance indicators should support **evidence-based management** without reducing judicial quality to disposal numbers.

Preserve Constitutional Judicial Review:

- Tribunal reform should strengthen specialised adjudication while preserving the **constitutional supervisory jurisdiction of High Courts and the Supreme Court**.

Implement Supreme Court Directions in Substance:

- Future legislation should not merely reproduce judicially invalidated provisions in a different statutory form; it must **address the constitutional defects identified by the Court**.

UPSC Perspective — GS-II Linkages:

- **Constitution and Polity:** Part XIV-A, Articles **323A and 323B**, separation of powers, judicial independence and judicial review.
- **Governance:** Institutional accountability, specialised adjudication, administrative efficiency and citizen-centric justice delivery.
- **Judiciary:** Articles **226, 227 and 32**, basic structure doctrine and constitutional review of tribunal frameworks.
- **Federalism:** Administrative tribunals and the distinction between **Parliamentary and State legislative competence** in tribunal creation.
- **Accountability:** Transparent appointments, performance monitoring, data-based governance and safeguards against executive dominance.
- **Reform Dimension:** Balancing **specialisation, speed, independence and accountability** within the justice-delivery system.

Conclusion:

- Tribunals were created to provide **specialised and expeditious justice**, but their effectiveness depends on institutional independence, competent personnel and adequate administrative capacity.
- The **Tribunals Reforms Bill, 2026** represents an important attempt to create a unified institutional architecture through the **National Tribunals Commission**.
- Its long-term success will depend not merely on creating the NTC but on ensuring **genuine functional autonomy, transparent appointments, secure tenure, financial independence, adequate infrastructure and effective judicial oversight**.
- A constitutionally sound tribunal system should therefore function as a **specialised extension of the justice-delivery framework**, rather than as an administrative arm of the executive.

Value Addition for UPSC:

Prelims Quick Facts:

- **Part XIV-A: Tribunals.**
- **Article 323A: Administrative Tribunals.**
- **Article 323B: Tribunals for specified subjects.**
- **42nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1976: Inserted Part XIV-A.**
- **First tribunal: Income Tax Appellate Tribunal, established in 1941.**
- **Key case: *L. Chandra Kumar v. Union of India* — tribunal decisions remain subject to High Court judicial review.**
- **2026 Bill: Proposes the National Tribunals Commission.**
- **NTC composition: Chairperson, two Judicial Members and two Technical Members.**
- **Technical Members: At least 25 years of relevant experience.**
- **Tribunal tenure under Bill: Five years, subject to age limits.**
- **Selection: One recommended name plus one waiting-list name for each vacancy.**
- **Appointment timeline: Central Government to act within three months.**

Mecca Joint Defence Agreement Deepens Saudi Arabia Pakistan and Türkiye Security Cooperation Amid West Asian Strategic Realignment

Recent Developments:

- **Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Türkiye signed the Mecca Joint Defence Agreement in Mecca on 7 August 2026**, establishing a trilateral framework for enhanced defence cooperation amid heightened instability in West Asia.
- The agreement provides that an **armed attack against any one of the three countries will be regarded as an attack against all three**, creating a collective-deterrence commitment similar in broad principle to mutual-defence arrangements.
- The agreement was signed against the backdrop of escalating regional tensions involving **Iran, Israel, Yemen and the Gulf**, and reflects growing efforts by regional powers to develop security mechanisms with greater autonomy from dependence on the United States.
- India's **Ministry of External Affairs** has stated that New Delhi is examining the agreement's implications for **national security and regional stability**, indicating its relevance to India's extended neighbourhood.

Background: From Bilateral Defence Cooperation to Trilateral Security Framework:

Saudi Arabia–Pakistan Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement:

- The Mecca Agreement builds upon the **Saudi Arabia–Pakistan Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement**, signed on **17 September 2025**, under which aggression against either country was to be treated as aggression against both.
- The earlier agreement formalised decades of Saudi-Pakistani military cooperation involving **training, military deployments, exercises and security coordination**, thereby providing an institutional foundation for the newer trilateral arrangement.

Expansion to Türkiye:

- The inclusion of **Türkiye** adds a major regional military power with **NATO experience**, a **substantial defence-industrial base** and **growing military cooperation with Saudi Arabia and Pakistan**.
- The resulting arrangement brings together three distinct strategic capabilities, namely **Saudi financial and geographic advantages**, **Turkish military-industrial capabilities**, and **Pakistani military manpower and nuclear-armed status**.
- The agreement therefore represents more than an extension of bilateral Saudi-Pakistani cooperation and can be viewed as an attempt to develop a broader **regional security architecture**.

What the Mecca Joint Defence Agreement Signifies:

Collective Defence Principle:

- The central political and strategic feature is the principle that an **armed attack on one member will be considered an attack on all three members**.
- The provision creates a deterrence mechanism by increasing the potential cost of aggression against any individual member.

Defensive Character:

- The signatories have presented the agreement as **defensive in nature** and have not publicly characterised it as an alliance directed against a particular country.
- The agreement should therefore not automatically be interpreted as a formal military bloc directed exclusively against **Iran or Israel**, even though regional threat perceptions clearly form an important part of its strategic context.

Defence Cooperation:

- The agreement is expected to deepen cooperation in areas such as **military coordination, training, exercises, intelligence and defence capabilities**, building upon existing bilateral relationships.
- Existing defence cooperation gives the arrangement practical foundations, including **Pakistani military support to Saudi Arabia** and Turkish defence-industrial cooperation with Riyadh.

Limits of the Agreement:

- The available public information does not establish the creation of a **permanent integrated command, standing joint force or automatic military intervention mechanism** comparable to NATO.
- Consequently, the agreement should currently be understood primarily as a **collective-deterrence and defence-cooperation framework**, rather than as a fully integrated military alliance.

Why the Agreement Has Emerged Now:

Evolving West Asian Security Environment:

- The agreement has emerged amid intensified conflict and instability involving **Iran, Israel, Yemen and Gulf states**, which has increased the security concerns of Saudi Arabia and other regional powers.
- Repeated missile and drone threats against Gulf infrastructure have highlighted the vulnerability of regional states and the importance of **air defence, intelligence cooperation and military preparedness**.

Diversification of Security Partnerships:

- Saudi Arabia has increasingly sought to diversify its security relationships rather than depend exclusively on a single external security provider.
- The agreement therefore reflects a broader movement towards **regional strategic autonomy**, particularly amid uncertainty regarding the future role of the United States in West Asian security.

Convergence of Strategic Interests:

- Saudi Arabia seeks greater **territorial security and strategic autonomy**, Türkiye seeks greater regional influence and defence-industrial reach, while Pakistan seeks stronger strategic partnerships and enhanced diplomatic relevance.
- These interests overlap sufficiently to support greater trilateral cooperation despite differences in the three countries' foreign-policy priorities.

Strategic Strengths of the Three Countries:

Saudi Arabia:

- Saudi Arabia contributes substantial **financial resources, energy significance and strategic geography**, including proximity to major maritime chokepoints such as the **Strait of Hormuz and Bab-el-Mandeb**.
- Its geographical position gives it considerable importance for **global energy security, maritime trade and West Asian geopolitics**.

Türkiye:

- Türkiye contributes a large military, **NATO interoperability and an expanding indigenous defence-industrial base**.
- Its growing capabilities in **unmanned aerial systems, naval platforms and combat-aircraft development** provide an important technological dimension to the partnership.

Pakistan:

- Pakistan contributes substantial **military manpower, operational experience and strategic deterrence capability**.
- Pakistan is also geographically significant because it connects the **Gulf region with South Asia** and shares a long border with Iran.
- Its longstanding defence relationship with Saudi Arabia provides the trilateral framework with an existing operational foundation.

Why It Is Not Yet a “NATO of the East”:

Institutional Differences:

- **NATO** possesses a permanent institutional structure, integrated military command, established defence planning mechanisms and decades of operational experience.
- The Mecca arrangement currently lacks comparable evidence of a **standing integrated command structure, permanent joint force or common defence bureaucracy**.

Difference in Collective-Defence Mechanism:

- NATO's **Article 5** establishes a collective-defence obligation within the treaty's defined framework, although each member determines the action it considers necessary.
- The Mecca Agreement's publicly known language establishes a political commitment to regard an armed attack on one member as an attack on all, but the **precise operational response mechanisms remain unclear**.

Divergent Threat Perceptions:

- The three countries do not face identical strategic threats because **Pakistan's principal security concerns are centred on South Asia, Türkiye faces security challenges around its wider neighbourhood, and Saudi Arabia is primarily concerned with Gulf and West Asian security**.
- These divergent threat perceptions may constrain the development of a fully integrated military alliance.

Regional Geopolitical Implications:

Iran:

- The agreement increases Iran's strategic concern because it brings together three states with significant military capabilities and regional influence.
- However, the signatories have described the pact as **defensive rather than explicitly directed against Iran**, making it premature to characterise the arrangement as an anti-Iran alliance.

Israel:

- The agreement also has implications for Israel because Türkiye has increasingly adopted a critical position towards Israeli policies and because the wider regional security environment remains deeply influenced by the **Israel-Palestine conflict**.
- Nevertheless, the publicly available information does not establish the agreement as an explicitly anti-Israel military arrangement.

United States:

- The agreement indicates a possible movement towards **greater regional burden-sharing and strategic autonomy** as West Asian states reassess the reliability and sustainability of external security guarantees.
- It does not necessarily imply an immediate strategic break with Washington because Saudi Arabia and Türkiye continue to maintain important relationships with the United States and its wider security architecture.

China:

- China could benefit indirectly from greater regional stability because the Gulf remains critical to **energy supplies, trade routes and infrastructure connectivity**.
- The arrangement may also contribute to a broader trend towards **multipolar security arrangements**, reducing exclusive dependence on Western-led security structures.

Implications for India:

Strategic Concerns:

- The agreement deserves close attention because **Pakistan and Türkiye have developed increasingly close defence and diplomatic relations**, while Saudi Arabia remains an important Indian strategic and economic partner.
- A deeper trilateral security relationship could provide Pakistan with additional **diplomatic leverage in the Gulf and wider Muslim-majority states**.

India–Saudi Arabia Relations:

- India should avoid viewing the agreement as automatically incompatible with its relationship with Saudi Arabia because **New Delhi and Riyadh have developed substantial cooperation in energy, trade, investment, counterterrorism, technology and defence**.
- India's objective should therefore be to preserve the independent strategic logic of **India–Saudi Arabia relations** rather than allow Pakistan's participation to determine the entire bilateral relationship.

India–Türkiye Relations:

- Türkiye's participation is particularly relevant because India and Türkiye have experienced differences over **Kashmir and Pakistan-related diplomatic positions**.
- At the same time, India's relationship with Türkiye also contains economic, commercial and people-to-people dimensions, requiring a calibrated rather than purely confrontational approach.

Maritime Security:

- The strategic geography of Saudi Arabia, the **Strait of Hormuz, Bab-el-Mandeb, Red Sea and Arabian Sea** directly affects India's energy security and maritime trade.
- India therefore has a strong interest in preserving **freedom of navigation, secure sea lanes and uninterrupted energy flows** across the region.

Defence Diplomacy:

- India can strengthen defence cooperation with **Gulf partners, Israel and other regional states** while maintaining its independent strategic partnerships.
- Greater naval cooperation, maritime domain awareness, intelligence-sharing and capacity-building can enhance India's ability to respond to instability in the western Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea.

Broader Significance for India's Foreign Policy:

Extended Neighbourhood:

- West Asia constitutes an important component of India's **extended neighbourhood** because developments there directly affect India's energy security, diaspora, trade, maritime routes and counterterrorism interests.

Energy Security:

- Instability around **Hormuz and Bab-el-Mandeb** can affect oil and gas supplies, shipping costs and India's external-sector stability.

- India should therefore diversify energy sources, strengthen strategic reserves and maintain multiple maritime supply routes.

Indian Diaspora:

- Millions of Indians live and work across the Gulf region, making regional stability directly relevant to **Indian citizens, remittances and expatriate welfare**.

Connectivity:

- The security of the Red Sea and Arabian Sea affects India's connectivity with **Europe, West Asia and Africa**.
- Disruptions in these maritime corridors can increase freight costs and undermine major connectivity initiatives.

Challenges to the Mecca Security Framework:

Divergent National Interests:

- The three countries have different strategic priorities, which could make consensus difficult during an actual military crisis.

Unclear Response Mechanism:

- The publicly available details do not establish a fully automatic military response mechanism, leaving considerable uncertainty regarding **when and how collective defence would be activated**.

Regional Rivalries:

- Existing tensions involving **Iran, Israel, Yemen and other regional actors** could place pressure on the members to define the geographical and political limits of their commitments.

NATO Membership of Türkiye: Best Institute for OAS/IAS

- Türkiye's membership in **NATO** adds an additional strategic layer because its obligations within NATO coexist with its commitments under the Mecca arrangement.
- This could create complex decision-making requirements if a future crisis simultaneously involves Türkiye's NATO commitments and its obligations under the trilateral framework.

Sustainability:

- A durable security arrangement requires not only political declarations but also **joint exercises, interoperable systems, institutional mechanisms, financial commitments and sustained strategic coordination**.

Way Forward for India:

Maintain Strategic Autonomy:

- India should avoid entering a binary regional alignment and instead preserve its **strategic autonomy and issue-based partnerships**.

Deepen Gulf Engagement:

- India should intensify engagement with **Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Oman and other Gulf partners** across defence, energy, technology, trade and maritime security.

Strengthen Maritime Presence:

- India should enhance its **Indian Ocean naval presence, maritime domain awareness and anti-piracy capabilities** to protect vital sea lanes.

Expand Defence Diplomacy:

- India should increase **joint exercises, defence exchanges, intelligence cooperation and capacity-building** with compatible regional partners.

Insulate Bilateral Relations:

- India's relationships with Gulf countries should be developed on their own strategic merits so that **India-Pakistan tensions do not automatically spill over into India's Gulf diplomacy**.

Promote Regional Stability:

- India should support **dialogue, de-escalation, freedom of navigation and respect for sovereignty**, while avoiding unnecessary involvement in regional power rivalries.

Value Addition for UPSC: Best Institute for OAS/IAS

Key Concept:

- Regional Security Complex:** Security concerns in one state can become closely interconnected with the security concerns of neighbouring states, producing regional patterns of cooperation and rivalry.

IR Concepts:

- Collective Defence:** An attack against one member is treated as a security concern for all members.
- Collective Security:** States cooperate against aggression irrespective of the identity of the aggressor.
- Strategic Autonomy:** A state seeks sufficient freedom of action to pursue its interests without excessive dependence on any single power.
- Hedging:** States maintain relationships with multiple competing powers to reduce strategic vulnerability.
- Multipolarity:** Power and influence are distributed among several major and regional actors rather than concentrated in a single dominant power.

Prelims Quick Facts:

- **Agreement:** Mecca Joint Defence Agreement.
- **Date:** 7 August 2026.
- **Signatories:** Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Türkiye.
- **Location:** Mecca, Saudi Arabia.
- **Core principle:** An armed attack against one member is regarded as an attack against all.
- **Earlier bilateral framework:** Saudi Arabia–Pakistan Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement, 17 September 2025.
- **Strategic geography:** Strait of Hormuz, Bab-el-Mandeb, Red Sea and Arabian Sea.
- **Türkiye:** Member of NATO.
- **India's official position:** India is examining the agreement's implications for **national security and regional stability**.

Quit India Movement of 1942 Represented the Final Nationwide Mass Challenge to British Colonial Authority Before India's Independence

Recent Developments:

- **9 August 2026** marked the **84th anniversary** of the Quit India Movement, which remains one of the most important mass movements of the Indian national movement.
- The **Quit India Movement** continues to receive official commemoration as a decisive phase of the freedom struggle. In **2025**, the Prime Minister paid tribute to the freedom fighters who participated in the movement and recalled their contribution under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership.
- The movement was formally initiated through the **Quit India Resolution** adopted by the **All India Congress Committee** at Bombay on **8 August 1942**, while the widespread mass uprising intensified from **9 August 1942** after the arrest of the Congress leadership.

Background and Causes:***Second World War and Changing Geopolitical Context:***

- The outbreak of the **Second World War in 1939** transformed India's political situation because the British government declared India a participant in the war without consulting Indian political leadership.
- The rapid Japanese advance through Southeast Asia and the fall of **Burma in 1942** brought the war directly to India's eastern frontier and exposed British military vulnerability.
- The deteriorating Allied position created a perception that British imperial power was no longer invincible and increased the urgency of demanding Indian self-government.

Failure of the Cripps Mission:

- The British Government sent **Sir Stafford Cripps** to India in **March 1942** to secure Indian political cooperation for the war effort.
- The Cripps proposals offered **Dominion Status after the war** rather than immediate independence and allowed provinces to choose not to join the proposed Indian Union.
- Congress rejected the proposals because they did not provide **immediate transfer of effective power** and contained provisions that could facilitate the political fragmentation of India.

- Mahatma Gandhi described the Cripps proposal as a “**post-dated cheque on a failing bank**”, reflecting the Congress assessment that Britain was unwilling to transfer real political authority.

Wartime Economic Hardships:

- The war caused **inflation, shortages, disruption of supplies and economic distress**, increasing public dissatisfaction with colonial rule.
- Wartime requisitioning and administrative measures imposed additional burdens on ordinary people and strengthened anti-colonial sentiment.

Perception of British Vulnerability:

- British military setbacks in Asia weakened the image of imperial invincibility and encouraged the belief that the colonial government could be challenged.
- The political failure of the Cripps Mission further convinced Congress leaders that constitutional negotiations alone were unlikely to secure immediate independence.

Quit India Resolution and Objectives:

Adoption of the Resolution:

- The **All India Congress Committee** adopted the Quit India Resolution in Bombay on **8 August 1942**, demanding an end to British rule in India.
- Mahatma Gandhi delivered his historic “**Do or Die**” call at the **Gowalia Tank Maidan**, now known as **August Kranti Maidan**, in Bombay.

Major Objectives:

- The movement demanded **immediate British withdrawal from India**, establishment of a government responsible to the Indian people, and complete independence.
- Gandhi called for **mass civil disobedience and non-cooperation** against colonial authority while maintaining the principle of non-violence as the official programme.
- The movement sought to mobilise **ordinary citizens, students, workers, peasants and other sections of society** against colonial rule.

Nature of the Movement:

Mass Civil Disobedience:

- The Quit India Movement was conceived as a **mass non-violent struggle**, but the immediate arrest of national leaders transformed it into a largely decentralised and spontaneous uprising.
- The absence of central leadership allowed local groups to determine their own methods of resistance, resulting in significant regional variation.

Leaderless Character:

- On **9 August 1942**, Mahatma Gandhi and almost the entire Congress leadership were arrested before they could direct the movement.
- The leadership vacuum did not end the movement; instead, it encouraged **local leadership, underground networks and spontaneous popular mobilisation**.

Escalation and Sabotage:

- Although the official Congress programme emphasised non-violence, several local protests involved **attacks on government buildings, disruption of railway and telegraph networks, arson and other forms of sabotage.**
- Such actions reflected the increasingly militant character of sections of the movement after the British repression and mass arrests.

Spread and Regional Centres:

Maharashtra:

- **Maharashtra** became one of the major centres of the movement, with widespread protests, underground activity and resistance to colonial institutions.
- The **Ashti-Chimur** episode demonstrated the intensity of popular resistance and the severe repression employed by the colonial authorities.

Eastern Uttar Pradesh:

- **Ballia** witnessed the temporary overthrow of colonial district administration and the establishment of a parallel authority before British control was restored.
- The movement also spread to areas such as **Ghazipur and Azamgarh**, where students, workers, peasants and local political activists participated in protests.

Bengal:

- **Tamluk and Contai** in Midnapore became important centres of resistance, where local activists established a parallel administration.
- Rural participation in Bengal was strengthened by resentment over **wartime taxation, forced rice procurement and economic hardship.**

Other Regions:

- Significant activity also occurred in **Bihar, Gujarat, Karnataka, Odisha, Punjab and other parts of the country**, demonstrating the geographically extensive character of the movement.

Underground Movement:

Need for Underground Organisation:

- The arrest of Congress leaders forced activists to develop **secret networks** to continue mobilisation and communication.
- Underground activists circulated political literature, organised protests and attempted to maintain coordination despite colonial censorship and repression.

Congress Radio:

- **Usha Mehta** and her associates operated the clandestine **Congress Radio** in Bombay during the movement.
- The radio disseminated uncensored information and nationalist messages when the colonial government controlled conventional communication channels.

- Congress Radio demonstrated the importance of **alternative communication networks** in sustaining political mobilisation under conditions of repression.

Parallel Governments:

Satara:

- The **Prati Sarkar** emerged in **Satara, Maharashtra**, as one of the most prominent examples of parallel administration during the movement.
- It challenged colonial authority by developing alternative mechanisms of local administration, justice and political mobilisation.

Tamluk:

- A parallel government emerged in **Tamluk in Midnapore, Bengal**, reflecting the capacity of local movements to create alternative structures of authority.
- These parallel governments demonstrated that the movement was not limited to protests but could also challenge the **legitimacy and functioning of colonial administration**.

Ballia:

- **Ballia in eastern Uttar Pradesh** witnessed a brief collapse of colonial administrative authority, after which local activists released prisoners and attempted to establish independent administration.

Participation of Women:

Role of Women:

- Women played an important role in maintaining underground networks, organising demonstrations, distributing literature and facing colonial repression.
- **Aruna Asaf Ali** became one of the prominent symbols of the movement after she hoisted the national flag at Gowalia Tank Maidan on **9 August 1942**, despite the arrest of senior Congress leaders.
- Women in regions such as **Punjab and Maharashtra** participated in processions, protests, underground activities and political mobilisation.

Significance:

- Women's participation demonstrated that the final phase of the national movement had developed beyond elite political leadership into a broader **mass-based struggle**.

Role of Students, Workers and Peasants:

Students:

- Students participated in **strikes, demonstrations, underground communication and distribution of nationalist literature**.
- Educational institutions became important centres of political mobilisation after the arrest of Congress leaders.

Workers:

- Workers participated through **strikes, demonstrations and disruption of colonial economic and administrative activity.**
- Industrial centres became important sites of urban mobilisation during the movement.

Peasants:

- Peasant participation was particularly significant in several rural regions where wartime taxation, economic hardship and colonial administrative practices generated local grievances.
- Rural participation helped transform the movement from an urban political campaign into a **wider popular uprising.**

British Response and Repression:***Immediate Arrests:***

- The colonial government responded rapidly by arresting **Mahatma Gandhi and the principal Congress leadership** immediately after the resolution and call for action.
- The government used the **Defence of India Rules, censorship, arrests, police action and military force** to suppress the movement.

Use of Force:

- Protesters faced **lathi charges, firing, arrests, collective fines and other coercive measures.**
- In several areas, government forces were deployed to restore administrative control and suppress local uprisings.

Mass Detention:

- Large numbers of people were arrested during the suppression of the movement, although estimates vary across sources and periods of counting.
- The repression prevented the movement from developing into a sustained centrally coordinated national campaign but failed to restore the legitimacy of British rule among large sections of the population.

Why the Movement Could Not Achieve Immediate Independence:***Severe Colonial Repression:***

- The arrest of the national leadership at the beginning of the movement prevented Congress from maintaining a unified national strategy.

Lack of Central Coordination:

- The decentralised nature of the movement produced regional variations and weakened its ability to sustain coordinated action across India.

Wartime Conditions:

- The British government retained substantial military and administrative resources because India was strategically important to the Allied war effort.

Political Divisions:

- The **Muslim League did not support the Quit India Movement**, while several other political groups and princely states also remained outside the Congress-led mobilisation.
- These political divisions prevented the movement from becoming an entirely unified national front.

Significance of the Quit India Movement:***Final Mass Challenge to British Rule:***

- The movement represented the **last major nationwide mass uprising led by the Indian National Congress** before independence.
- It demonstrated that British rule could no longer depend solely on political cooperation and administrative authority to maintain legitimacy.

Transformation of Popular Politics:

- The movement demonstrated the capacity of **ordinary people to sustain resistance even after the arrest of national leaders**.
- The participation of students, workers, peasants and women strengthened the mass character of the freedom struggle.

Declining Legitimacy of Colonial Rule:

- Although the movement was suppressed militarily, the British government faced increasing difficulty in restoring the political legitimacy of colonial rule.
- The experience of 1942 reinforced the perception that governing India without substantial Indian consent would become increasingly difficult after the war.

Psychological Impact:

- The movement strengthened the belief among Indians that **independence was achievable and non-negotiable**.
- It created a political environment in which post-war constitutional negotiations increasingly had to address the inevitability of Indian independence.

Limitations of the Movement:***Absence of Central Leadership:***

- The immediate arrest of Congress leaders prevented sustained central coordination and weakened strategic planning.

Uneven Regional Participation:

- The intensity of the movement varied significantly across regions because local social, economic and political conditions shaped participation.

Political Exclusion:

- The absence of support from the **Muslim League and several other political organisations** limited the movement's ability to represent an entirely unified political consensus.

Violent Incidents:

- Sabotage and violent incidents in several regions created a gap between the official **Gandhian principle of non-violence** and some forms of popular action.

Limited International Support:

- Britain's wartime importance to the Allied coalition reduced the possibility of immediate international pressure forcing Britain to concede independence.

Quit India Movement and Other Major Movements:***Non-Cooperation Movement:***

- The **Non-Cooperation Movement of 1920–22** sought to weaken colonial rule through withdrawal of cooperation, whereas the Quit India Movement demanded **immediate British withdrawal**.

Civil Disobedience Movement:

- The **Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930–34** focused on violating specific colonial laws and challenging unjust taxation, whereas the Quit India Movement directly demanded the termination of British rule.

Quit India Movement:

Best Institute for OAS/IAS

- The Quit India Movement represented the culmination of the Congress-led mass mobilisation strategy and adopted the most direct political demand for **complete independence and British withdrawal**.

Key Personalities:***Mahatma Gandhi:***

- Gandhi provided the central political leadership and gave the historic **“Do or Die”** call, while advocating mass resistance against British rule.

Aruna Asaf Ali:

- Aruna Asaf Ali became a prominent symbol of resistance after **hoisting the national flag at Gowalia Tank Maidan** following the arrest of Congress leaders.

Usha Mehta:

- Usha Mehta played a major role in the underground movement through **Congress Radio**, which challenged colonial censorship and disseminated nationalist information.

Ram Manohar Lohia:

- Ram Manohar Lohia became an important figure in the **underground resistance** and helped sustain political communication after the arrest of Congress leaders.

Jayaprakash Narayan:

- Jayaprakash Narayan was an important socialist leader associated with the **underground phase** of the Quit India Movement.

Yusuf Meherally:

- **Yusuf Meherally** popularised the slogan “**Quit India**” and had earlier coined the slogan “**Simon Go Back**” during the anti-Simon Commission movement.

Do You Know?:

- The **Gowalia Tank Maidan** in Bombay, where Gandhi delivered his historic call, was later renamed **August Kranti Maidan**.
- **9 August 1942** is particularly associated with the mass phase of the movement because the arrest of the Congress leadership triggered widespread protests across India.
- **Aruna Asaf Ali** hoisted the national flag at Gowalia Tank Maidan on 9 August 1942 despite the arrest of senior Congress leaders.
- The movement witnessed the emergence of **parallel governments** in places such as Satara and Tamluk, demonstrating the challenge posed to colonial administrative authority.
- The underground movement used **secret publications, clandestine networks and Congress Radio** to bypass colonial censorship.
- **Usha Mehta's Congress Radio** became an important channel for disseminating nationalist messages during the period of repression.
- **Yusuf Meherally** is associated with the slogans “**Quit India**” and “**Simon Go Back**”.
- The official programme of the movement was based on **non-violent mass resistance**, although several local uprisings subsequently involved sabotage and violence.

Value Addition for UPSC:***Key Concept:***

- **Mass Nationalism:** The Quit India Movement demonstrated that the demand for independence had moved beyond organised political elites and had become a widespread popular aspiration.

Analytical Framework:

- **Leadership Arrest → Decentralisation → Underground Resistance → Regional Uprisings → Parallel Governments → Colonial Repression → Declining Legitimacy of British Rule**

Prelims Quick Facts:

- **Movement:** Quit India Movement, also known as the **August Movement**.
- **Year:** 1942.
- **Quit India Resolution:** Adopted on **8 August 1942**.
- **Mass uprising:** Intensified from **9 August 1942** following the arrest of Congress leaders.
- **Place:** **Gowalia Tank Maidan, Bombay**, now August Kranti Maidan.
- **Principal leader:** **Mahatma Gandhi**.
- **Historic call:** **"Do or Die"**.
- **Slogan "Quit India":** Associated with **Yusuf Meherally**.
- **Underground radio:** **Congress Radio**, associated with **Usha Mehta**.
- **Parallel government:** **Prati Sarkar, Satara**.
- **Other important parallel government:** **Tamluk, Midnapore**.
- **Important regional centre:** **Ballia, Uttar Pradesh**.
- **Core demand:** **Immediate British withdrawal from India**.
- **Official method:** **Mass civil disobedience and non-violent resistance**.
- **Major characteristic:** **Leaderless mass mobilisation after the arrest of Congress leadership**.

Colombia's Major 7.4 Magnitude Earthquake Highlights Seismic Vulnerability of the Pacific Ring of Fire and Andean Region

Recent Developments:

- On **10 August 2026**, a **magnitude 7.4 earthquake** struck western Colombia, with the epicentral area near **San José del Palmar in Chocó Department**.
- Colombian authorities declared a **national state of emergency** following widespread casualties, injuries and structural damage. By **11 August 2026**, reported fatalities had crossed **100**, with hundreds of people injured and rescue operations continuing.
- The earthquake occurred at a depth of roughly **96–107 km**, placing it in the **intermediate-depth earthquake** category according to the standard classification of earthquake focal depths.
- The **Colombian Geological Service** described the event as the strongest earthquake recorded in the country during the **21st century**, highlighting Colombia's significant seismic vulnerability.
- The earthquake affected western and central parts of the country, with strong shaking and damage reported in areas including **Chocó, Risaralda, Valle del Cauca, Caldas and Quindío**.

Why is Colombia Highly Prone to Earthquakes?:***Nazca–South American Plate Convergence:***

- Along Colombia's Pacific margin, the oceanic **Nazca Plate** moves beneath the **South American Plate**, generating intense tectonic deformation and seismic activity.
- This **subduction process** causes accumulation and periodic release of tectonic stress, producing earthquakes of varying magnitudes and depths.

Complex Tectonic Setting:

- Colombia lies within a highly deformed region influenced by the interaction of the **Nazca, South American and Caribbean Plates**, together with smaller tectonic blocks such as the Panama and Coiba blocks.
- This complex configuration produces several types of seismicity, including **subduction-related, crustal and intermediate-depth earthquakes**.

Pacific Ring of Fire:

- Colombia lies along the **Pacific margin of South America**, which forms part of the broader **Circum-Pacific seismic and volcanic belt**, commonly known as the **Pacific Ring of Fire**.
- The region is characterised by frequent earthquakes and volcanic activity because of widespread **plate convergence and subduction**.

Andean Tectonic Activity:

- Continued convergence between tectonic plates has contributed to the **uplift, folding and deformation of the Andes**, producing numerous faults and zones of accumulated crustal stress.
- Western and central Colombia therefore contain several active or potentially active seismic structures associated with the broader Andean tectonic system.

Intermediate-Depth Earthquakes:

- The recent earthquake occurred at approximately **96–107 km depth**, placing it within the **70–300 km intermediate-depth category**.
- Intermediate-depth seismicity is commonly associated with descending slabs in **subduction zones**, where oceanic lithosphere penetrates into the mantle.
- Earthquake depth provides important information about the geometry and behaviour of a subducting plate and the broader tectonic setting.

High Urban and Infrastructure Exposure:

- Major Colombian cities such as **Cali, Bogotá, Medellín, Pereira and Manizales** lie within or near seismically active Andean regions.
- Earthquake risk depends not only on seismic hazard but also on **population exposure, building vulnerability, infrastructure quality and disaster preparedness**.

Stress Transfer Between Faults:

- Movement along one fault can **redistribute stress** within surrounding rocks and potentially alter the likelihood of movement on nearby faults.
- However, a direct causal relationship between separate earthquakes requires detailed **seismological and geophysical analysis** rather than simple geographic association.

Earthquake Hazard, Risk and Vulnerability:

Hazard:

- **Earthquake hazard** refers to the probability of experiencing potentially damaging ground shaking and associated geological effects in a particular area.

- Colombia's hazard is elevated because of its location near **active plate boundaries, subduction zones and crustal faults**.

Exposure:

- Exposure** refers to the people, buildings, infrastructure and economic assets located in hazard-prone areas.
- Rapid urbanisation and the concentration of population and infrastructure in seismically active regions can increase potential losses.

Vulnerability:

- Vulnerability** depends on the quality of buildings, enforcement of seismic building codes, poverty levels, infrastructure resilience and emergency preparedness.
- Therefore, a high-magnitude earthquake does not automatically produce a high-disaster outcome; the final impact depends strongly on **exposure and vulnerability**.

Disaster Risk:

- Disaster risk can be broadly understood through the interaction of **hazard, exposure and vulnerability**, making risk reduction dependent on both geological knowledge and human preparedness.

Pacific Ring of Fire:

About:

- The **Pacific Ring of Fire**, also known as the **Circum-Pacific Belt**, is a horseshoe-shaped zone surrounding the Pacific Ocean that is characterised by frequent **earthquakes and volcanic eruptions**.
- It is one of the world's most active tectonic regions because it contains numerous **convergent plate boundaries and subduction zones**.

Geographical Extent:

- The Ring of Fire extends around the margins of the **Pacific Ocean**, from the western coasts of South and North America through Alaska and the Aleutians to East Asia, Southeast Asia and New Zealand.
- It broadly follows the boundaries of several major tectonic plates surrounding the Pacific Basin.

Global Seismic Significance:

- The **U.S. Geological Survey** estimates that approximately **90% of the world's earthquakes** occur within the broader Ring of Fire region.
- The belt is therefore one of the most important global zones for studying **earthquakes, volcanism, subduction and plate interactions**.

Major Plates:

- Major plates associated with the Ring of Fire include the **Pacific, Nazca, Cocos, Juan de Fuca, North American, Philippine and Australian Plates**, along with several smaller tectonic plates and blocks.

Spatial Distribution:

- The belt extends along the **western margins of North and South America**, through Alaska and the Aleutian Islands, and across East and Southeast Asia towards **New Zealand**.

Major Countries:

- Countries associated with the Ring of Fire include **Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Mexico, the United States, Canada, Russia, Japan, the Philippines, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and New Zealand**.

Cause of Volcanism:

- In many parts of the Ring of Fire, one tectonic plate is **subducted beneath another**, causing the descending slab to interact with the mantle and contribute to magma generation.
- The resulting magma can rise through the crust and produce **volcanic arcs and eruptions**.

Cause of Earthquakes:

- Continuous **plate convergence, subduction, fault movement and tectonic deformation** cause stress to accumulate within the crust.
- Sudden release of this accumulated stress produces seismic waves and earthquakes.

Why the Ring of Fire is Important for UPSC:

- The Ring of Fire illustrates the relationship between **plate tectonics, subduction, earthquakes, volcanism, mountain building and tsunami generation**.
- It provides a useful geographical framework for understanding major seismic events in **South America, Japan, Indonesia, Alaska and the western Pacific**.

Types of Earthquakes by Focal Depth:

Shallow-Focus Earthquakes:

- Earthquakes occurring between the surface and approximately **70 km depth** are classified as **shallow-focus earthquakes**.
- They can produce intense surface shaking because their seismic energy originates relatively close to the surface.

Intermediate-Focus Earthquakes:

- Earthquakes occurring between approximately **70 and 300 km depth** are classified as **intermediate-focus earthquakes**.
- The recent Colombian earthquake falls within this category.

Deep-Focus Earthquakes:

- Earthquakes occurring between approximately **300 and 700 km depth** are classified as **deep-focus earthquakes**.
- Such earthquakes are strongly associated with **subducting lithospheric slabs**.

Key Concepts in Earthquake Geography:

Focus or Hypocentre:

- The **focus**, also called the **hypocentre**, is the point beneath the Earth's surface where the earthquake rupture begins.

Epicentre:

- The **epicentre** is the point on the Earth's surface located directly above the earthquake's focus.

Magnitude:

- **Magnitude** measures the size or energy released by an earthquake at its source.
- The magnitude scale is logarithmic, so an increase of one whole magnitude represents approximately **10 times greater wave amplitude and about 31 times more energy release**.

Intensity:

- **Intensity** describes the observed effects of an earthquake at a particular location and can vary substantially from one place to another.
- Unlike magnitude, intensity depends on factors such as **distance from the epicentre, depth, local geology, building quality and ground conditions**.

Earthquake-Related Secondary Hazards:

Landslides:

- Strong ground shaking can destabilise slopes, particularly in mountainous regions such as the **Andes**, causing landslides and rockfalls.

Liquefaction:

- Intense shaking can cause **water-saturated unconsolidated sediments** to temporarily lose strength, producing liquefaction and structural instability.

Tsunami:

- Large undersea earthquakes can displace seawater and generate **tsunamis**, particularly when significant vertical movement of the seabed occurs.
- However, not every earthquake produces a tsunami because generation depends on factors such as **earthquake location, magnitude, depth and seafloor displacement**.

Infrastructure Failure:

- Earthquakes can damage **roads, bridges, hospitals, schools, electricity networks, water systems and communication infrastructure**, complicating rescue and relief operations.

Colombia:

Geographical Location:

- **Colombia** is located in northwestern South America and has coastlines along both the **Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea**.
- Its location gives the country strategic access to both the Pacific and Caribbean maritime regions.

Major Physical Regions:

- The **Andes** extend through western and central Colombia and strongly influence its relief, climate, population distribution and seismic environment.
- The eastern tropical grasslands known as **Los Llanos** form part of the wider **Orinoco Basin**.
- The country also contains important **Amazonian forests, Caribbean lowlands, Pacific rainforests and Andean ecosystems**.

Biodiversity:

- Colombia is recognised as one of the world's **megadiverse countries** and contains exceptionally high species diversity across its varied ecosystems.
- Its biodiversity is supported by the combination of **Andean mountains, tropical forests, Pacific ecosystems, Caribbean environments and Amazonian landscapes**.

Economy and Strategic Importance:

- Colombia has major resources and economic activities including **oil, coal, coffee, agriculture, mining and manufacturing**.
- Its geographical position connects the Caribbean, Central America and South America and gives it strategic importance in regional trade and maritime connectivity.

Coca Cultivation and Cocaine Production:

- Colombia has historically been one of the world's major centres of **coca cultivation and cocaine production**.
- This issue has significant implications for **organised crime, rural development, public security, environmental degradation and international drug-control policy**.

Disaster Management Lessons from the Colombian Earthquake:

Strengthen Seismic Building Codes:

- Earthquake-prone countries require **strict seismic building standards**, effective enforcement and regular safety audits of vulnerable structures.

Risk-Sensitive Urban Planning:

- Urban development should incorporate **seismic hazard maps, fault-zone information, slope stability and local geological conditions**.

Critical Infrastructure Resilience:

- Hospitals, schools, bridges, transport networks, power systems and communication facilities should be designed or retrofitted to remain functional after major earthquakes.

Community Preparedness:

- Regular **earthquake drills, public awareness programmes, emergency kits and evacuation planning** can reduce casualties and improve community resilience.

Early Warning and Monitoring:

- Seismological networks can rapidly detect earthquakes and issue **earthquake early warnings** where sufficient monitoring infrastructure and warning time exist.
- Earthquake early warning does not predict earthquakes in advance; it detects an earthquake after rupture begins and can provide limited warning before stronger shaking reaches distant locations.

Search and Rescue:

- Rapid deployment of **trained search-and-rescue teams, medical units, communication systems and emergency logistics** is essential during the first hours after a major earthquake.

Relevance for India:***Himalayan Seismic Risk:***

- India faces significant earthquake risk because the **Indian Plate converges with the Eurasian Plate**, producing active deformation along the Himalayas.
- The Himalayan region is capable of generating major earthquakes because tectonic strain continues to accumulate along active faults and thrust systems.

Northeastern India:

- Northeast India is another major seismic region because of complex interactions involving the **Indian, Eurasian and Burmese tectonic systems**.

Andaman and Nicobar Islands:

- The **Andaman and Nicobar region** lies near active plate boundaries and subduction zones, creating earthquake and tsunami hazards.

Lessons for Indian Urban Planning:

- The Colombian experience reinforces the need for **strict implementation of seismic building codes, earthquake-resistant infrastructure, microzonation, public preparedness and resilient critical services** in Indian cities.

Value Addition for UPSC:

Key Concept:

- **Subduction Zone:** A tectonic setting in which one lithospheric plate descends beneath another, producing earthquakes, volcanic activity and crustal deformation.

Analytical Framework:

- Plate Convergence → Subduction → Tectonic Stress → Fault Rupture → Seismic Waves → Ground Shaking → Secondary Hazards → Human and Infrastructure Losses

Disaster Risk Framework:

- **Risk = Hazard × Exposure × Vulnerability**
- Reducing disaster losses therefore requires simultaneous action on **hazard assessment, exposure reduction, structural resilience and community preparedness.**

Prelims Quick Facts:

- **Country:** Colombia.
- **Recent earthquake:** Magnitude 7.4.
- **Date:** 10 August 2026.
- **Location:** Near San José del Palmar, Chocó.
- **Focal depth:** Approximately 96–107 km.
- **Depth category:** Intermediate-focus earthquake.
- **Major tectonic plates:** Nazca, South American and Caribbean Plates.
- **Major tectonic process:** Subduction and plate convergence.
- **Major mountain system:** Andes.
- **Relevant seismic belt:** Pacific Ring of Fire.
- **Other name:** Circum-Pacific Belt.
- **Approximate share of global earthquakes in the Ring of Fire:** 90%.
- **Colombia's western coast:** Pacific Ocean.
- **Colombia's northern coast:** Caribbean Sea.
- **Eastern grasslands:** Los Llanos.
- **Major basin associated with Los Llanos:** Orinoco Basin.
- **UPSC linkage:** Plate tectonics, earthquakes, subduction, Ring of Fire, disaster management and seismic resilience.

India's Responsible Health AI Strategy Seeks to Transform Medical Technology Through Safe, Ethical and Evidence-Based Innovation

Recent Developments:

- The Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare **Jagat Prakash Nadda** highlighted India's growing focus on **Artificial Intelligence in healthcare** and the development of responsible AI-enabled medical technologies.
- On **17 February 2026**, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare launched the **Strategy for Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare for India (SAHI)** and the **Benchmarking Open Data Platform for Health AI (BODH)** at the **India AI Impact Summit 2026**.
- SAHI provides a **recommendatory national framework** for the safe, ethical, evidence-based and inclusive adoption of AI across India's healthcare system, while BODH provides a mechanism for systematic testing and validation of Health AI solutions before large-scale deployment.
- The policy approach recognises that AI can strengthen **diagnostics, disease surveillance, clinical research, hospital management and healthcare delivery**, but its benefits depend on trustworthy data, appropriate regulation, clinical validation and human oversight.

Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare:

Meaning and Scope:

- **Artificial Intelligence in healthcare** refers to the application of computational systems capable of analysing data, identifying patterns, generating predictions or supporting decisions across clinical and public-health settings.
- AI can assist healthcare professionals in **diagnosis, disease prediction, clinical decision support, medical imaging, drug discovery, hospital administration and health research**.

Medical Technology and AI:

- AI-enabled **Medical Technology**, or **MedTech**, combines medical devices, software, data analytics and intelligent algorithms to improve diagnosis, monitoring, treatment and healthcare delivery.
- AI can increasingly transform medical devices from passive instruments into **data-driven and decision-support systems**, provided that their clinical performance and safety are adequately validated.

Why AI is Important for India's Healthcare System:

Improving Diagnostic Accuracy:

- AI can analyse large medical datasets and medical images rapidly, helping healthcare professionals identify **diseases and abnormalities at an earlier stage**.
- AI-assisted diagnosis can support clinicians in areas such as **radiology, pathology, ophthalmology and screening**, particularly where specialist capacity is limited.

Improving Efficiency:

- AI can automate repetitive administrative and documentation tasks, allowing healthcare professionals to devote greater time to **patient care and clinical decision-making**.

Supporting Personalised Healthcare:

- AI can combine **medical history, genetic information, clinical observations and lifestyle-related information** to support more individualised treatment decisions.
- Personalised healthcare can improve treatment selection when AI systems are trained and validated on sufficiently diverse and representative datasets.

Early Disease Prediction and Prevention:

- AI models can identify patterns in health data that may indicate a higher probability of disease, supporting **early intervention and preventive healthcare**.
- Predictive systems can also support **disease surveillance and outbreak detection** by analysing large and rapidly changing datasets.

Accelerating Drug Discovery:

- AI can analyse complex biological and chemical datasets to identify potential **drug candidates, molecular targets and disease mechanisms**.
- This can reduce the time and cost associated with selected stages of **drug discovery and clinical research**, although clinical validation remains essential.

Expanding Healthcare Accessibility:

- AI-enabled **telemedicine, remote diagnostics and virtual health-support systems** can extend healthcare services to underserved and geographically remote populations.
- Such applications can complement existing digital-health platforms and help reduce geographical disparities in access to care.

Strengthening Public Health Management:

- Governments can use AI to analyse large datasets for **disease surveillance, outbreak prediction, health-resource planning and policy formulation**.
- AI can therefore support a shift from predominantly reactive healthcare towards **predictive, preventive and population-based healthcare**.

Strategy for Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare for India:

About SAHI:

- The **Strategy for Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare for India (SAHI)** is a national, recommendatory framework designed to guide the responsible integration of AI into India's healthcare system.
- SAHI is not a standalone statute; it provides strategic direction for **governance, data stewardship, validation, deployment, workforce development and responsible adoption** of healthcare AI.

Five Strategic Pillars of SAHI:

- SAHI is organised around **five core pillars** covering the complete lifecycle of healthcare AI.
 - **Governance, Regulation and Trust:** Establishes risk-based governance, accountability, safety safeguards, transparency and continuous oversight for AI systems.

- **Health Data and Digital Infrastructure:** Focuses on data quality, representativeness, privacy, lifecycle governance, interoperability and standards-based digital infrastructure.
- **Workforce, Institutional Capacity and Change Management:** Seeks to develop AI literacy, institutional capacity and workforce readiness among healthcare professionals and public institutions.
- **Research, Innovation and Evidence Generation:** Promotes responsible research, collaborative innovation, evidence generation, validation, performance assurance and translation of research into real-world healthcare applications.
- **Ecosystem Enablement and Global Leadership:** Supports industry participation, pilot-to-scale pathways, ecosystem learning, global cooperation and India's emergence as a responsible Health AI leader.

Core Principles of SAHI:

- SAHI emphasises **public interest, trust, equity, safety, transparency and long-term health-system resilience** as foundations for AI adoption.
- AI systems should be subjected to **risk-proportionate governance**, meaning higher-risk applications should face stronger safeguards and oversight.
- Training and validation datasets should be **diverse and representative** of the populations and healthcare settings in which AI systems are intended to operate.
- AI adoption should retain **human oversight and accountability**, particularly when AI outputs can influence diagnosis, treatment or other high-stakes clinical decisions.

BODH: Benchmarking Open Data Platform for Health AI:

About BODH:

- **BODH**, or **Benchmarking Open Data Platform for Health AI**, was developed by the **Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur** in collaboration with the **National Health Authority**.
- It provides a structured environment for evaluating AI models against **diverse and anonymised real-world health datasets** before large-scale deployment.

Key Functions:

- BODH enables systematic assessment of AI systems for **performance, robustness, bias and generalisability**.
- The platform seeks to improve the **reliability, clinical relevance and quality assurance** of healthcare AI solutions.
- Its privacy-preserving architecture allows AI development and testing without requiring developers to directly access sensitive underlying patient datasets.
- BODH is aligned with the broader **Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission** ecosystem and seeks to strengthen trust in AI-enabled healthcare through structured benchmarking and validation.

Significance of BODH:

- BODH addresses a major challenge in Health AI, namely the need to evaluate whether an AI model performs reliably across **different populations, clinical settings and datasets** before deployment.
- It can help reduce the risk of deploying models that perform well in controlled datasets but poorly in real-world healthcare environments.

Role of ICMR in AI and Health:

Four Major Priorities:

- The **Indian Council of Medical Research** has emphasised strengthening the foundations required for responsible AI adoption in healthcare.
- Key priorities include **collating high-quality data across research institutions, developing private-sector partnerships, generating real-world evidence through the ICMR institutional network and integrating healthcare professionals into the AI workforce pipeline.**

Importance:

- High-quality and representative health data are essential because AI systems can reproduce or amplify biases present in their training datasets.
- Collaboration among **research institutions, clinicians, technology companies and policymakers** can improve the clinical relevance and scalability of Health AI solutions.
- Healthcare professionals need AI literacy so that they can **interpret, supervise, validate and appropriately challenge AI-generated outputs** rather than treating AI systems as autonomous substitutes for clinical judgment.

Major Benefits of AI in Healthcare:

Clinical Benefits:

- AI can support **early diagnosis, clinical decision-making, disease prediction and continuous patient monitoring**, potentially improving the timeliness and quality of care.

Administrative Benefits:

- AI can automate **documentation, scheduling, coding, data management and workflow optimisation**, reducing administrative burdens on healthcare workers.

Research Benefits:

- AI can accelerate **drug discovery, biomedical research, medical-image analysis and evidence synthesis** by processing complex datasets at high speed.

Public Health Benefits:

- AI can support **surveillance, outbreak prediction, resource allocation and population-health planning**, strengthening evidence-based public-health administration.

Economic Benefits:

- Responsible Health AI can improve **productivity, reduce avoidable costs, create high-value technology markets and strengthen India's MedTech manufacturing ecosystem.**

Equity Benefits:

- AI-enabled remote care and diagnostic support can potentially extend specialist capabilities to **rural, remote and underserved areas**, provided that digital infrastructure and affordability gaps are addressed.

Major Concerns Associated with AI in Healthcare:***Data Privacy and Leakage:***

- Healthcare workers may unintentionally enter **patient-identifiable information** into generative AI tools or upload confidential documents, creating risks of unauthorised exposure.
- Sensitive health information requires strong safeguards because medical data can have serious consequences if misused or disclosed without authorisation.

Cybersecurity Risks:

- Increasing digitalisation creates a larger **cyber-attack surface** for hospitals, laboratories, health platforms and medical devices.
- AI-enabled systems can introduce additional vulnerabilities through connected devices, software dependencies, data pipelines and automated interfaces.

Algorithmic Bias:

- AI systems trained on **non-representative datasets** may perform differently across demographic, geographical or socioeconomic groups.
- Bias in healthcare AI can worsen existing health inequalities if systems are deployed without adequate validation across diverse populations.

Lack of Awareness and Training:

- Healthcare professionals may lack sufficient **AI literacy, data-security awareness and technical understanding**, increasing the risk of inappropriate use or misinterpretation of AI outputs.

Explainability:

- Some advanced AI systems can operate as **black-box models**, making it difficult for clinicians and regulators to understand why a particular output was generated.
- Limited explainability can become especially problematic when AI recommendations influence **high-stakes medical decisions**.

Accountability and Liability:

- AI-assisted medical decisions can create uncertainty regarding responsibility when an AI system produces an incorrect or harmful output.
- Effective governance therefore requires clearly defined **roles, responsibilities, liability and accountability** among developers, healthcare institutions and users.

Model Drift:

- AI performance can decline when the population, disease patterns, clinical practices or data environment changes after deployment.
- Healthcare AI therefore requires **continuous monitoring, periodic validation and appropriate model updating** throughout its operational lifecycle.

Digital Divide:

- AI-enabled healthcare can deepen existing inequalities if rural and low-income populations lack **internet connectivity, digital literacy, devices or access to digitally enabled health facilities**.

Data Governance for Health AI:***Need for High-Quality Data:***

- AI systems require large volumes of **accurate, relevant, diverse and representative data** to produce reliable outputs.
- Poor-quality or incomplete datasets can produce unreliable predictions and undermine clinical safety.

Data Representativeness:

- Health datasets should reflect India's **regional, linguistic, demographic, socioeconomic and epidemiological diversity**.
- Greater representativeness can reduce algorithmic bias and improve the generalisability of AI models.

Privacy-Preserving Technologies:

- Technologies such as **federated learning** can enable model development across distributed datasets without requiring all raw patient data to be centrally transferred.
- Privacy-preserving approaches can help reconcile the competing objectives of **data utility and patient confidentiality**.

Interoperability:

- Interoperable digital-health systems allow information to move between different healthcare institutions and platforms using common standards.
- Interoperability is essential for creating a connected digital-health ecosystem in which AI systems can access appropriate and reliable information.

India's Digital Health Ecosystem and AI:***Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission:***

- The **Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission** provides a major digital-health foundation for interoperable healthcare services and digital health records.
- Its digital infrastructure can support the development of AI applications by facilitating standardised and consent-oriented health-data ecosystems.

National Digital Health Blueprint:

- The **National Digital Health Blueprint** provided an important architectural foundation for India's interoperable digital-health ecosystem.

National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence:

- The **National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence**, released by **NITI Aayog in 2018**, identified healthcare among the priority sectors for AI applications under the **AI for All** approach.
- SAHI represents a sector-specific evolution of India's broader AI policy approach by focusing specifically on healthcare governance and adoption.

eSanjeevani:

- **eSanjeevani** demonstrates how digital technologies can expand access to medical consultations and provides an important foundation for integrating AI-enabled tools into remote healthcare delivery.

Regulatory and Ethical Framework for Health AI:***Risk-Based Regulation:***

- AI applications should be regulated according to their **potential risk to patients**, with stronger requirements for systems capable of directly influencing high-stakes clinical decisions.

Lifecycle-Based Oversight:

- Regulation should cover the entire AI lifecycle, including **development, training, validation, deployment, monitoring, updating and retirement**.

Human Oversight:

- High-risk clinical AI should operate with meaningful **human oversight**, ensuring that healthcare professionals remain capable of reviewing and overriding AI recommendations.

Evidence-Based Deployment:

- AI systems should demonstrate **clinical validity, safety, performance and real-world effectiveness** before being deployed at population scale.

Transparency and Trust:

- Patients and healthcare professionals should receive appropriate information about the **role, limitations and risks of AI systems** used in healthcare.

India's Opportunity to Become a Global Health AI Leader:

Digital Public Infrastructure:

- India's large-scale **digital public infrastructure** can provide a foundation for interoperable and population-scale Health AI applications.

Large and Diverse Population:

- India's demographic and epidemiological diversity provides an opportunity to generate **real-world evidence** across different disease burdens and healthcare settings.

Software and Engineering Capabilities:

- India's strong **software, information-technology and engineering ecosystem** can support the development of indigenous Health AI technologies.

Growing MedTech Manufacturing:

- The expansion of India's **medical-device and MedTech manufacturing ecosystem** can enable integration of AI into diagnostic equipment, monitoring systems and other medical technologies.

Global South Potential:

- Affordable and scalable AI solutions developed for India's resource-constrained settings can potentially be adapted for other **low- and middle-income countries** facing similar healthcare challenges.

Way Forward:

Build Trustworthy Health Data:

- India should strengthen **data quality, representativeness, interoperability, privacy and secure data-sharing mechanisms** across the healthcare ecosystem.

Strengthen Clinical Validation:

- AI tools should undergo rigorous **clinical validation and real-world performance assessment** before large-scale deployment.
- Platforms such as BODH can support systematic benchmarking and reduce dependence on isolated or proprietary validation processes.

Adopt Risk-Proportionate Regulation:

- India should establish **risk-based and lifecycle-oriented governance** so that innovation is encouraged while high-risk healthcare applications receive stronger safeguards.

Invest in AI Workforce:

- Medical professionals, nurses, technicians, administrators and policymakers should receive appropriate **AI literacy and digital-health training**.

Promote Public–Private Collaboration:

- Partnerships among **government, academia, healthcare institutions, startups and MedTech companies** can accelerate responsible innovation and technology transfer.

Ensure Equity:

- AI deployment should prioritise **rural areas, underserved populations and low-resource healthcare settings**, rather than concentrating benefits only in technologically advanced urban centres.

Maintain Human-Centred Healthcare:

- AI should primarily function as a **clinical support and system-strengthening tool**, while human dignity, patient autonomy and professional accountability remain central.

Value Addition for UPSC:***Key Concept:***

- **Health AI:** The application of artificial intelligence to clinical care, public health, medical research and healthcare-system management.

Prelims Quick Facts:

- **SAHI:** Strategy for Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare for India.
- **Nature of SAHI:** Recommendatory national framework.
- **Launched:** 17 February 2026.
- **Launched at:** India AI Impact Summit 2026.
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- **BODH:** Benchmarking Open Data Platform for Health AI.
- **BODH developers:** Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur and National Health Authority.
- **BODH purpose:** Benchmarking and validation of Health AI systems.
- **SAHI pillars:** 5.
- **Major pillars:** Governance and regulation; health data and digital infrastructure; workforce and institutional capacity; research and evidence generation; ecosystem enablement and global leadership.
- **Core concern:** Bias arising from inadequate or non-representative health datasets.
- **Major privacy approach:** Privacy-preserving and federated approaches to AI development.
- **Key digital-health foundation:** Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission.
- **Broader AI policy foundation:** National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence, 2018 by NITI Aayog.

QUESTIONS

1. With reference to the National Tribunals Commission (NTC) as proposed in the Tribunals Reforms Bill, 2026, consider the following statements:

- (1) The NTC is composed of a Chairperson, two Judicial Members, and two Technical Members.
- (2) Technical Members of the NTC are required to possess a minimum of 25 years of relevant domain experience.
- (3) The tenure for both the Chairperson and Members is set at five years, with an upper age limit of 70 years for the Chairperson and 67 years for Members.
- (4) The administrative Secretariat of the NTC is headed by a retired Judge of the Supreme Court to maintain separation of powers.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (A) 1, 2, and 3 only
- (B) 2, 3, and 4 only
- (C) 1, 3, and 4 only
- (D) 1, 2, 3, and 4

2. The geopolitical rationale behind the 2026 Mecca Agreement highlights critical maritime chokepoints and regional security zones. Arrange the following strategic bodies of water and maritime passages in order from West to East:

- (1) Bab el-Mandeb Strait
- (2) Red Sea
- (3) Strait of Hormuz
- (4) Persian Gulf

Select the correct sequence:

- (A) 1 -> 2 -> 4 -> 3
- (B) 2 -> 1 -> 4 -> 3
- (C) 1 -> 2 -> 3 -> 4
- (D) 2 -> 1 -> 3 -> 4

3. Which of the following was the most significant direct political consequence of the failure of the Cripps Mission in April 1942?

- (1) Immediate acceptance of Dominion Status as a permanent governance arrangement by all major nationalist political factions across British India.
- (2) The realization among nationalist leadership that the imperial power had no genuine intent to transfer real control, necessitating direct mass action.
- (3) The peaceful establishment of an all-party national executive council possessing full constitutional accountability to the central legislative assembly.
- (4) The immediate total repeal of all wartime economic levies, agricultural requisitions, and price administration orders by the colonial administration.

Options:

- (A) 1 only
- (B) 2 only
- (C) 3 and 4 only
- (D) 1, 2, and 4 only

4. With reference to seismic mechanisms and focal depth classifications of earthquakes, consider the following statements:

- (1) Earthquakes occurring at a focal depth of 107 km fall under the intermediate-focus category.
- (2) Shallow-focus earthquakes are defined as those occurring between 70 km and 300 km in depth.
- (3) Tectonic stress redistribution following movement along an active fault line can potentially influence activity on neighboring fault structures.
- (4) Major urban centers such as Bogotá, Medellín, and Cali are completely immune to seismic hazards due to their location away from active Andean fault zones.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (A) 1 and 3 only
- (B) 1, 2, and 3 only
- (C) 2 and 4 only
- (D) 1, 3, and 4 only

5. Consider the following specific priorities identified by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) for integrating Artificial Intelligence into healthcare:

- (1) Collating high-quality data across research institutions
- (2) Forging strategic private sector partnerships
- (3) Generating real-world evidence through ICMR's network of institutes
- (4) Urgently integrating health and medical professionals into the AI workforce pipeline

How many of the above priorities are explicitly set by ICMR?

- (A) Only one
- (B) Only two
- (C) Only three
- (D) All four

ANSWER KEY

1 – Answer (A), 2 – Answer (D), 3 – Answer (B), 4 – Answer (A), 5 – Answer (D)



OAS HUB

DAILY CHRONICLE CURRENT AFFAIRS

In today's fast-changing world, staying updated with current affairs is essential for both academic success and professional growth. Awareness of national and international events not only broadens general knowledge but also sharpens critical and analytical thinking skills. It enables individuals to form well-informed opinions, which are crucial for competitive examinations, group discussions, interviews, and impactful essay writing.

Being well-informed reflects adaptability, awareness, and intellectual curiosity—qualities that are highly valued in a competitive environment. A strong grasp of contemporary issues enhances confidence, widens perspective, and prepares individuals to tackle real-world challenges effectively, ultimately opening the door to better opportunities and long-term personal and career advancement.

-  oashub19
-  oashub19
-  OASHUB22
-  oashub19@gmail.com
-  M5/17, Acharya Vihar Bhubaneswar 751022