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GS 2: POLITY, GOVERNANCE, SOCIAL JUSTICE, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS/INSTITUTIONS

1. Future of mobility belongs to India

Context: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said that the future of mobility belongs to India that saw an unprecedented sale of 2.5 crore vehicles a year and attracted USD 36 billion foreign direct investment in just four years. The Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025, India's largest auto expo, scheduled from January 17-22, will bring the entire value chain of the mobility ecosystem – from automobile manufacturers to components, electronics parts, tyre and energy storage makers, and automotive software firms and material recyclers – under a single umbrella.

Key points

- **Overview:** The Expo will be held from 17-22 January 2025 across three separate venues: Bharat Mandapam & Yashobhoomi in New Delhi and India Expo Centre & Mart, Greater Noida.

- **India's push:** India is currently experiencing a wave of excitement surrounding electric vehicles (EVs), towards a potential future of cleaner transportation. This shift towards EVs promises significant environmental benefits by reducing emissions in our cities.
- **E-Mobility:** Electric mobility (e-mobility) is a method that employs electrical propulsion partially or fully, to power a wide range of vehicles. Examples include cars, buses, and personal devices such as bicycles and scooters. There are two main types of electric mobility: pure electric and hybrid.
- **Current Status of E-Mobility in India:** *EV Sales Growth* - EV registrations in 2021: 330k units, a 168% rise from 2020.

Factors Driving EV Adoption - Rising oil prices and environmental awareness.

Limited charging infrastructure - 1,742 stations (2021), projected 100,000 by 2027.

Investment & Employment - EV industry attracted USD 6 billion in 2021, projected USD 20 billion by 2030.

- **Significance of E-mobility:** The push for electric mobility in India holds significant importance due to its potential to address key economic, environmental, and societal challenges.
 - *Reducing Air Pollution* - According to the 'World Air Quality Report 2023', India was declared as the third-most polluted country in 2023, after Bangladesh and Pakistan.
 - *Energy Security* - India's import dependence soared to 87.7% in 2023-24, up from 87.4%, according to Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC).
 - *Combating Climate Change* - India is committed to reducing its carbon emissions under the Paris Agreement. The transport sector is one of the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Government initiatives:** India has undertaken several key initiatives to push for electric mobility as part of its broader goals for sustainability, pollution control, and reducing dependency on fossil fuels.
 - *Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme* - The PLI Scheme for the Automobile sector with ₹25,938 crore incentivizes up to 18% of sales to boost domestic manufacturing of electric vehicles (EVs) and components.
 - *Tax Reduction* - GST on electric vehicles has been reduced from 12% to 5%, GST on chargers/charging stations for electric vehicles has been reduced from 18% to 5%.
 - *Green License Plates* - Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) announced that battery-operated Vehicles will be given green license plates and be exempted from permit requirement for carrying passengers or goods.
- **Associated challenges:** *Inadequate Charging Infrastructure* - India has a limited network of public charging stations, which hampers long-distance travel and makes EV ownership less convenient.
 - High Upfront Cost of EVs* - The cost of electric vehicles, especially electric cars, remains higher than conventional internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles, primarily due to expensive battery tech.
- **Way Forward:** *Enhancing Infrastructure Development* - Accelerate the rollout of public and private charging stations, including fast chargers and wireless charging facilities, to reduce range anxiety and support long-distance travel.
 - Transitioning to Renewable Energy* - Transitioning to renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power is essential to fully realize the environmental advantages of electric vehicles (EVs).
- **Conclusion:** The push for electric mobility in India is vital for sustainability, reducing pollution, and enhancing energy security, requiring continued investment, policy support, and infrastructure development.

GS 2: POLITY, GOVERNANCE, SOCIAL JUSTICE, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS/INSTITUTIONS

2. Courts must not use abetment of suicide charge mechanically

Context: The Supreme Court on Friday held that the police must not deploy the criminal provision of “abetment of suicide” casually or to assuage the immediate feelings of the distraught family members of the deceased. Section 306 (abetment of suicide) of the erstwhile Indian Penal Code or corresponding Section 108 read with Section 45 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 appeared to be “too readily resorted to by the police”. To bring a case of abetment of suicide the police must carefully examine whether the accused had played an active role in instigating or facilitating the death of a person.

Key points

- **Abetment of Suicide:** Abetment of suicide is an offence under Section 306 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) Section 108 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). The punishment for this crime is up to 10 years of imprisonment and a fine. Section 45 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) defines abetment as when a person either instigates someone to commit an act, conspires with others to do something (leading to an illegal act or omission), or intentionally aids in its execution.
- **SC’s Interpretation:** The offence requires “direct and alarming encouragement or incitement” that leaves no option but fatal step. The court laid down following guidelines to determine whether a situation involved unbearable harassment or emotional exploitation that drove the deceased to suicide-
 - The accused created unbearable harassment or torture, leading the victim to view suicide as the only escape.
 - The accused exploited the victim's emotional vulnerability, making them feel worthless or undeserving of life.
 - The accused threatened harm to the victim's family or caused financial ruin.
 - The accused made false allegations that damaged the victim's reputation, leading to public humiliation and loss of dignity.
- **Related Cases:** *M Mohan v The State, 2011* - The SC ruled that proving abetment of suicide under Section 306 IPC requires a direct act with intent, leaving the victim no option but suicide. *Ude Singh v State of Haryana, 2019* - The SC held that proving abetment of suicide depends on case specifics, requiring direct or indirect incitement that leaves the victim no choice but suicide.
- **Statistics Related to Suicide in India:** The data compiled by the NCRB is based on police-recorded first information reports (FIRs).
 - *Surge in Student Suicides* - Student suicides in India have surged by 4% annually, outpacing the overall suicide rate increase of 2%, despite a likely "under reporting" of student suicide cases.
 - *Gender Disparity* - In 2022, male students constituted 53% of total student suicides. While male suicides decreased by 6% from 2021, female student suicides saw a 7% rise.
 - *Decade Trend* - Over the past decade, despite a slight decrease in the 0-24 age group population, student suicides rose significantly from 6,654 to 13,044.
- **Legal Norms Related to Suicide:** Section 115 of Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 (MHCA) states that attempted suicide is to be considered the result of severe stress, and the individual is not to be prosecuted. BNS removes the Section of attempt to commit suicide from the statute books, it doesn't entirely decriminalize the offence of attempting to die by suicide.

3. Why space weather is key to the successful docking of satellites

Context: Favourable space weather was necessary for the success of the Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISROs) first ever "docking mission" on Thursday. The Space Docking Experiment (SpaDeX) made India only the fourth country to achieve the technological challenging feat of bringing together two fast-moving satellites in space. Precision docking is very challenging, even under normal circumstances. During severe space weather, when the space environment is disturbed, the task becomes even more difficult. Enhanced high radiation associated with strong flares from the Sun can blind sensors and interfere with electronic control systems.

Key points

- **Space weather:** Space weather refers to the varying conditions within the solar system produced by the Sun's activity. It's analogous to the terrestrial weather on Earth, but with differences in its components (radiation and particles instead of water, temperature, and air) and effects on different technologies.
- **Types of space weather:**
 - Solar wind* - The Sun's continuous stream of charged particles, impacting Earth's magnetic field and atmosphere.
 - Solar flares* - Powerful bursts of radiation originating from the Sun, causing auroras, radio disruptions, and damage to electronic devices.
 - Coronal mass ejections (CMEs)* - Large, intense bursts of plasma and magnetic field expelled by the Sun, affecting Earth's magnetic field and triggering geomagnetic storms.
 - Geomagnetic storms* - Strong disturbances in Earth's magnetic field caused by CME impacts, affecting navigation, power grids, and other technologies.
- **Protection from space weather:** Earth has an area of magnetic force activity, called a magnetic field, protects from most of the solar wind blast. Most of the charged particles crash into Earth's shield and flow around it. Sometimes charged particles sneak past Earth's shield. When these particles hit the atmosphere, we are treated to glowing light shows known as **auroras**.
- **Affect of space weather:**
 - Impacts satellites and communication systems* - High-energy particles from solar flares and CMEs can damage satellite antennas and disrupt radio communication.
 - Causes power grid disruptions* - Geomagnetic storms can cause abnormal electrical currents, compromising power grids and impacting energy supply.
- **Prediction & monitoring:** The National Space Weather Service (NSS) at NOAA monitors space weather and provides information to various agencies and industries. Space weather observatories around the globe collect data on the Sun's activities and the solar wind.
- **Future of space weather research:** Understanding the mechanisms of space weather and its complex interactions with Earth is a significant challenge. Developing robust forecasting and prediction systems for extreme space weather events remains a complex task. Researchers are also exploring ways to mitigate the effects of space weather on critical infrastructure and technologies.
- **Ways to mitigate:** Organizations are developing emergency plans and protocols to protect critical infrastructure during and after space weather events. Individuals can minimize exposure to space weather by staying indoors during major storms and minimizing reliance on electronic devices. Staying informed about space weather conditions through reliable sources can help individuals take precautions and protect themselves.

4. QS future skills report frames the Indian challenge

Context: India was ranked second in terms of preparedness for jobs of the future including artificial intelligence (AI) and green skills, only behind the United States, as per the QS World Future Skills Index 2025. But in terms of economic transformation, India was 40th and 37th in terms of the workforce having the desired skills for future jobs, as per the index. Overall, India ranked 25th across all indicators, which also include the alignment between skills and employer's needs, academic readiness, and economic transformation. India's youth population, start-up ecosystem, and digital transformations are its strengths

Key points

- **Understanding the QS Index:** The QS World Future Skills Index, developed by London-based Quacquarelli Symonds (QS)—renowned for its university rankings—aims to assess how prepared countries are to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving global job market.
- **Challenges in Skill Development:** *Low Employability Standards* - According to the World Economic Forum, only 25% of management professionals, 20% of engineers, and 10% of graduates meet employability benchmarks.
Limited Access to Higher Education - India's vast youth population faces challenges in accessing tertiary education, especially in skills-intensive fields.
- **Opportunities for Growth:** *Harnessing Demographics* - With a large and youthful population, India has the potential to emerge as a global leader in skill-based industries, while many nations grapple with ageing workforces.
Technological Integration - Leveraging advancements in digital learning and AI to align academic curricula with industry demands.
- **Recommendations for Improvement:** *Align Academia with Industry Needs* - Universities and training institutions must focus on delivering skills in AI, green technologies, and digital sectors to meet employer demands.
Enhance R&D and Innovation - Increasing R&D investment is critical to fostering forward-looking innovation and sustainable practices.
- **Conclusion:** India's performance in the QS World Future Skills Index showcases its potential to lead in the global job market for emerging skills. By addressing the challenges, India can ensure sustainable growth and establish itself as a global leader in future-ready skills.

Key Highlights from the QS Index

- **Rank and Classification:** India is ranked 25th overall and categorized as a "contender" in the index, reflecting its ongoing progress in future skills readiness.
- **Strengths:** *Future of Work* - Scored 99.1, the second highest globally, demonstrating its preparedness to recruit talent for high-demand digital roles.
Youth Advantage - India's large youth population and robust start-up ecosystem position it uniquely for sustained economic growth.
- **Weaknesses** - *Future-Oriented Innovation* - Scored low on metrics for sustainability and forward-looking solutions.
Misalignment in Academia and Industry - Gaps in equipping graduates with AI, green, and digital skills remain significant.

5. India's real growth rate and the forecast

Context: The First Advance Estimates (FAE) of National Accounts for 2024-25 show a real GDP growth of 6.4% and a nominal GDP growth of 9.7%. These numbers have fallen short of the Reserve Bank of India's revised growth estimate of 6.6% for real GDP, as in its December 2024 monetary policy statement and 10.5% for nominal GDP growth as in the 2024-25 Union Budget presented in July 2024. The Gross Fixed Capital Formation rate at constant prices has ranged between 33.3% and 33.5% during 2021-22 to 2024-25. Thus, it appears to have stabilised around 33.4%. It is expected to continue at this level in 2025-26.

Key points

- **Overview:** The National Statistics Office (NSO) has released the First Advance Estimates of Gross domestic product (GDP) for FY 2024-25.
- **First Advance Estimates of Annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP):** The Advance Estimates of GDP are indicator-based and compiled using the benchmark-indicator method. Sector-wise estimates are compiled using indicators like Index of Industrial Production (IIP), financial performance of listed companies, agricultural and horticultural crop estimates, production targets of livestock, fish production, and several other production and consumption indicators.
- **Highlights of the report:** Real GDP is estimated to grow by 6.4% in FY 2024-25, compared to 8.2% in FY 2023-24. Nominal GDP growth rate is 9.7% in FY 2024-25, compared to 9.6% in FY 2023-24. Real Gross Value Added (GVA) has grown by 6.4% in FY 2024-25, compared to 7.2% in FY 2023-24. Nominal GVA growth rate is 9.3% in FY 2024-25, compared to 8.5% in FY 2023-24.
- **Components of GDP Growth:** Private Consumption Expenditure (PFCE) Accounts for around 60% of GDP.
 - Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE) Growth rate is 7.3% in FY 2024-25, compared to 4.0% in FY 2023-24.
 - *Government Spending (GFCE)* - Accounts for 10% of GDP, but growth has been slow, but growth rate is 4.1% in FY 2024-25, compared to 2.5% in FY 2023-24.
 - *Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF)* - This investment engine accounts for about 30% of GDP. It has seen a growth of 6.3% this year but a slower 5.3% annual growth since 2014.
 - *Net Exports* - India has a trade deficit (more imports than exports), but the gap has reduced recently.
- **GDP Growth Limitations:** Sluggish private consumption growth is holding back GDP growth. Investment in the economy has been tapering off, with businesses hesitant to expand due to low consumption. India's real GDP growth is below 5% annually, far lower than the ideal growth needed to become a developed economy by 2047.
- **Conclusion and Way Forward:** The First Advance Estimates of GDP for FY 2024-25 indicate a moderate but steady economic growth amidst various global and domestic challenges. These estimates provide crucial insights for policymakers and stakeholders to navigate the economic landscape and make informed decisions to foster sustainable growth and development.