

The Hindu Important News Articles & Editorial For UPSC CSE

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Edition: International Table of Contents

<p>Page 01 Syllabus : GS 2 & 3 : International Relations & Indian Economy</p>	<p>Indian, global shares slide amid trade war fears</p>
<p>Page 10 Syllabus : GS 2 : Indian Polity</p>	<p>A case for a fair seat allocation</p>
<p>Page 11 Syllabus : Prelims fact</p>	<p>The magic of a mirror: how is it able to show your reflection?</p>
<p>Page 15 Syllabus : Prelims fact</p>	<p>Japan emperor visits Iwo Jima to honour war dead</p>
<p>In News</p>	<p>Mount Kanlaon</p>
<p>Page 08 : Editorial Analysis: Syllabus : GS 3 : Indian Economy</p>	<p>Shaping a future-ready workforce</p>

Global stock markets witnessed sharp declines on April 7, 2025, following renewed trade tensions between the United States and China. The Indian equity markets mirrored the global sentiment, registering significant intraday losses.

Indian, global shares slide amid trade war fears

Market opens over 5% down from close on Friday amid concerns over looming recession, recovers gradually to close at 3% loss; U.S. President threatens China with additional tariffs of 50% over its plans for retaliation, welcomes countries wishing to negotiate; the mood on Dalal Street was also reflected in Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong and China

Lalendu Mishra
MUMBAI

Not since the historic lows of the COVID-19 crashes have global markets witnessed such drastic falls. Indian stock markets plunged on Monday anticipating uncertainties that could emerge from the trade war between the U.S. and China, two of the world's largest economies, and the fear of a looming recession.

Influenced by global cues, the markets which opened over 5% down from the previous close on Friday gradually recovered during the day with front-line indices closing with a loss of 3% led by falls across the board. Small and midcap stocks witnessed more losses compared with blue-chip stocks.

The S&P BSE Sensex

closed with a loss of 2,227 points, or 2.95%, at 73,138 points, led by Tata Steel which fell 7.73%, and L&T 5.78%. Tata Motors fell 5.54% after news came in that its subsidiary Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) has halted exports to the U.S.

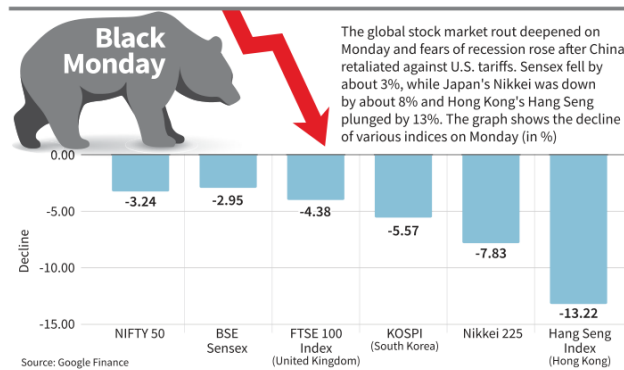
Kotak Mahindra Bank was down 4.33% and M&M fell 4.11%, while Infosys was down 3.75%.

The NSE Nifty-50 index (Nifty), which recovered during the day, closed at 22,162, down 743 points or 3.24%.

Hints negotiations

Meanwhile, U.S. President Donald Trump threatened additional tariffs on imports from China if Beijing did not withdraw its retaliation plans, adding Washington would begin negotiations with other countries if they wish to.

"If China does not withdraw its 34% increase



above their already long term trading abuses by tomorrow, April 8th, 2025, the United States will impose ADDITIONAL Tariffs on China of 50%, effective April 9th," Mr. Trump said in a Truth Social post.

The sombre mood on Dalal Street was also re-

flected among its peers in Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong and China.

Japan's Nikkei 225 declined as much as 8.8% plummeting to a near one-and-half year low at 30,792.94 during trade on Monday. This was before it managed to pare some

losses to close 7.8% lower at 31,136.58.

To put Monday's fall in perspective, this is not among the top five falls seen in the Indian stock market.

Devarsh Vakil, head, Prime Research, HDFC Securities said "The bench-

mark Nifty index experienced exceptional volatility on Monday, opening with a dramatic 5% gap down due to negative global cues -marking the steepest opening decline since March 23, 2020."

Seoul's benchmark KOSPI index too found itself at a 17-month low during the day closing 5.57% lower at 2,328.20. In fact, the two indices briefly halted trading in stock futures by inducing circuit breakers to stabilise persisting volatility.

Hong Kong's benchmark Hang Seng Index registered its steepest single day decline since the Asian financial crisis of 1997. It closed 13.22% lower at 19,828.30.

Meanwhile, China which has been the first major economy to impose retaliatory sanctions, also found its markets mired in uncertainty. Shanghai

Composite Index also closed 7.34% lower at 3,096.58. This marks its worst day in five years.

Early hours in the U.S.

In the early hours across the Atlantic however, it nearly appeared that grim mood would not be replicated. This was after media reports held the Trump administration was considering a ninety-day tariff pause. The downturn resumed after White House denied the story. At 11:20 a.m. ET, the tech-heavy NASDAQ Composite Index had lost 310.03 points to find itself 1.99% lower at 15,277.76 while the Dow Jones Industrial Average had slipped 2.70% to 37,279.25. The S&P 500 was down 0.31% at 5,058.37 after having shed 15.71 points.

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» PAGE 12, 13

Key Highlights:

- **Market Reaction:**
 - Indian indices opened 5% lower but recovered slightly by the end of the day. The BSE Sensex closed nearly 3% down; NSE Nifty dropped 3.24%.
 - Tata Steel (-7.73%), L&T (-5.78%), and Tata Motors (-5.54%) were among the top losers.
 - Midcap and small-cap indices underperformed compared to bluechip stocks.
- **Global Impact:**
 - Japan's Nikkei 225 fell nearly 8.8%, Hong Kong's Hang Seng declined 13.22%, and China's Shanghai Composite dropped 7.34%.
 - The KOSPI (South Korea) fell to a 17-month low.
 - In the U.S., the NASDAQ and Dow Jones slipped as well, amid early conflicting signals from the White House.
- **Trigger:**

- U.S. President Trump threatened 50% additional tariffs on Chinese imports if China proceeded with its 34% tariff hike.
- A false media report about a possible 90-day tariff pause initially calmed markets before being denied by the White House.

Analytical Perspective:

Economic Implications:

- **1. Impact on Indian Economy:**
 - The market crash reflects India's integration with global financial systems.
 - Uncertainty in global trade can affect exports, foreign investment, and rupee stability.
 - Import-dependent sectors may face supply chain disruptions and input cost pressures.
- **2. Investor Sentiment:**
 - The episode reveals the vulnerability of emerging markets to external geopolitical shocks.
 - Possibility of capital flight from equity markets to safer assets like gold and government securities.
- **3. Recession Concerns:**
 - A prolonged trade war between the world's two largest economies may push the global economy toward a recession.
 - Demand contraction could follow due to reduced consumer and business confidence.

International Relations Angle:

- **Geopolitical Realignment:**
 - The U.S.'s aggressive posturing may push China closer to other economic blocs like BRICS or RCEP.
 - Other nations, including India, may leverage the situation to reorient trade partnerships.
- **Opportunity for India:**
 - India could emerge as a neutral trading partner and attract investment diversion from China.
 - However, it must manage its own vulnerabilities and enhance its trade competitiveness.

Way Forward:

- India needs to strengthen its economic fundamentals and boost investor confidence through structural reforms.
- Enhancing domestic manufacturing, diversifying export markets, and ensuring macroeconomic stability are essential.

- At the diplomatic level, India should engage in multi-lateral platforms to promote rule-based trade and prevent unilateralism.

Conclusion:

- The recent market crash is a stark reminder of how geo-economic tensions can ripple across global markets. For India, the crisis presents both a challenge and an opportunity to recalibrate its trade, economic, and strategic posture in a volatile world order.

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Ques :"The renewed US-China trade tensions and subsequent global market volatility highlight the fragility of global economic interdependence. In this context, critically examine the implications for the Indian economy and suggest policy measures to safeguard against such external shocks." **(250 words)**

The article by P.D.T. Achary addresses the politically sensitive and constitutionally significant issue of readjustment of Lok Sabha seats based on post-2026 Census data, emphasizing the challenge of ensuring equity among States, especially between northern and southern India.

A case for a fair seat allocation

Article 1 of the Constitution proclaims that India shall be a Union of States. The term Union implies that the arrangement or rearrangement of the component units should be on the basis of equity. There are serious apprehensions in the south on the question of readjustment of seats in the Lok Sabha

FULL CONTEXT

P.D.T. Achary

The issue of readjustment of Lok Sabha seats in the context of the new Census is being hotly debated in the country. In fact, it is being wrongly referred to as delimitation in all public debates. Delimitation is the act of fixing or refixing the boundaries of constituencies. This is done by the Delimitation Commission only after the Census is taken. Under Article 82 of the Constitution, on the completion of each Census, the seats in the Lok Sabha are required to be readjusted so as to reflect the increased population in the number of seats. The present strength of the Lok Sabha was fixed on the basis of the decennial Census figures of 1971. The total population of India in 1971 was around 54.79 crore which is estimated to have gone up to 141 crore as of March 2025. Thus, during the past 50 years there has been a phenomenal increase in India's population. This has not reflected in the strength of the Lok Sabha, as the number of seats have been frozen at the population level of 1971 till 2026, through an amendment of the Constitution.

Various formulae

The most important point to remember is that much of the increase in the population of the country was due to the failure of some of the major States in the north, such as Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, in implementing the national policy on population control. The result is an abnormal increase in the population of these States. For example, the population of Uttar Pradesh in 1971, was a little over 8.38 crore which is estimated to have gone up to 24.1 crore in 2025. Similarly, the population of Bihar was 4.21 crore in 1971, which has probably reached 13.1 crore in 2025. The idea behind not raising the strength of the Lok Sabha till 2026 was to give time to the States, which were registering huge increases in population, to stabilise it so that the readjustment of seats would not create a serious imbalance between States in southern and northern India.

The southern States could implement the population program successfully and arrest the growth in population. In 1971, the ratio between the number of Lok Sabha seats allotted to a State and its population was almost the same for all the States. Thus, in all major States the population base was 10 lakh for a Lok Sabha constituency. However, the picture has now changed drastically. If the formula contained in Article 81 is followed now, it will create a huge divergence in the number of seats between the northern States and southern States. For example, for a population of 24 crore, Uttar Pradesh will be entitled to 240 seats which will be a threefold increase from the present 80 seats. Whereas a State like Kerala, will only get 36 seats in place of the 20 seats at present as its population is estimated to have increased by only 68% over the past 50 years. If on the other hand, the population to seat ratio is changed to 15 lakh per constituency, Uttar Pradesh will get 160 seats in place of 80, whereas Kerala may get only a few seats more than the present 20 seats.

Incidentally, Kerala is being cited as an example because it has registered the lowest growth in population among all major States.

There is another calculation which produces interesting results. The population of the country in 1952, was 372



Putting up a fight: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin addresses the Joint Action Committee meeting for Fair Delimitation, in Chennai on March 22. ANI

million (37.2 crore) and the total number of Lok Sabha seats was 489. This works out to an average of 76 lakh people in a parliamentary constituency. In 1971, the population was 54.8 crore and the total number of Lok Sabha seats was raised to 543 which works out to one million (10 lakh) people in a constituency. The readjustment of seats was done as per the mandate of Article 82 of the Constitution which will have to be repeated after 2026. Assuming that the strength of the Lok Sabha is going to be raised from the present 543 to 800 (the capacity of the Lok Sabha chamber in the new Parliament is reported to be above 800), the average population of a parliamentary constituency will be nearly 18 lakh. If this figure is taken as the population base of a constituency for readjustment, then Kerala may retain the same number of seats, Tamil Nadu will gain a mere four seats where as Uttar Pradesh will gain as much as 54 seats.

Rewarding incompetence

There are serious apprehensions in the south on the question of readjustment of seats in the Lok Sabha. Although the Union Government has remained silent on it so far, unofficial discussions on certain formulae are reportedly being held in some quarters. The State of Tamil Nadu, under the leadership of Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, has powerfully articulated the fears of the States in the southern region about losing political importance in the event of a readjustment of seats in the Lok Sabha. The recent

conclave of southern Chief Ministers and other political leaders, including the Chief Minister of Punjab, held in Chennai is a pointer to the possibility of this issue becoming a major rallying point for southern States. Therefore, there is an urgent need to devise a rational formula for the readjustment of seats in Lok Sabha.

Articles 81 and 82 clearly show that readjustment of seats is done solely on the basis of population. So, a solution to this vexed problem can be found on the basis of what population base can be accepted for readjusting seats. The problem has arisen because of the huge increase of population in a large number of States due to the non-implementation of family planning programs. Equity demands that States which failed to implement population control programs not be rewarded with an increase of seats which give them great political advantage.

Ideal solution

In these circumstances, a fair formula for readjustment of seats would be to take the State which has registered the lowest increase in population as the template. Figures show that Kerala is the State in the south which has registered the lowest growth in population since 1971. The population of Kerala was 2.14 crore in 1971, which is estimated to have gone up to 3.6 crore in 2025 which is an increase of 68%. This can be considered a reasonable growth in population for the last 50 years. So a 68% step-up in the number of seats in all States can be a

reasonable basis for readjustment. This will, on the one hand, maintain the present equation among the States in terms of seats and on the other obviate the need to abnormally raise the number of seats in the States which are remiss in controlling the population. So, under this formula, Uttar Pradesh will get 134 seats, Kerala 34 and Tamil Nadu around 66 seats. This way the present equation among States in terms of seats will remain unchanged. A 68% step-up in seats will raise the total number of seats in the Lok Sabha to 912.

Of course, this formula will make Article 81(2)(a), which says that the ratio between the number of seats and the population of a State shall be the same for all the States, irrelevant. In fact, it had become irrelevant long back – a formula that was laid down in 1950 will cause serious injustice in 2026. The allocation of seats in the Lok Sabha is not a political issue – it needs to be done on the basis of the constitutional principle of equity. It is bound with the bargaining power of the federating units or groups of such units situated in various geographical regions. A sensitive approach is necessary to deal with this issue. Article 1 of the Constitution proclaims that India shall be a Union of States. The term Union implies that the arrangement of the component units should be on the basis of equity in terms of its share in Parliament. We should try to live up to the implications of this constitutional scheme.

P.D.T. Achary is Former Secretary General of the Lok Sabha.

THE GIST

Delimitation is the act of fixing or refixing the boundaries of constituencies. This is done by the Delimitation Commission only after the Census is taken.

The State of Tamil Nadu, under the leadership of Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, has powerfully articulated the fears of the States in the southern region about losing political importance in the event of a readjustment of seats in the Lok Sabha.

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Key Constitutional Provisions:

Daily News Analysis

- Article 81: Deals with the composition of the Lok Sabha and specifies that the ratio between the number of seats and population in each State shall be the same.
- Article 82: Mandates the readjustment of seats in Lok Sabha after every decennial Census, through a Delimitation Commission.
- 42nd Amendment (1976) & 84th Amendment (2001): Froze the number of Lok Sabha seats till the first Census after 2026 (i.e., 2031), to incentivize States' compliance with population control policies.

Current Scenario:

- Lok Sabha seats are still based on the 1971 Census (population: 54.8 crore).
- India's estimated population in 2025 is around 141 crore.
- Population growth disparity: Southern States like Kerala and Tamil Nadu have shown successful population control, while northern States like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar have seen significant increases.
- Example:
 - UP: From 8.38 crore (1971) to 24.1 crore (2025)
 - Kerala: From 2.14 crore to 3.6 crore

Concerns Raised:

- Disproportionate Political Power: States with higher population growth (mostly in the North) would get more seats, potentially marginalizing southern States politically.
- Equity vs Equality Dilemma: Article 81's mandate for equal population-seat ratio may be unfair in light of differing development and demographic achievements.
- Fear of "Rewarding Incompetence": States that failed in population control might get greater representation, which goes against the spirit of cooperative federalism.

Proposed Formula (Kerala Template):

- Use Kerala's population growth rate (68%) as the benchmark.
- Apply a uniform 68% increase in seats for all States.
 - UP: From 80 - 134 seats (instead of 240 under population-based formula)
 - Tamil Nadu: - 66 seats
 - Kerala: -34 seats
 - Total Lok Sabha strength would increase to 912.
- Ensures balance of power while acknowledging population control efforts.

Arguments in Favor:

- Promotes federal equity, as envisioned in Article 1 ("Union of States").

- Upholds incentivization of good governance (population control).
- Avoids a North-South political divide and potential alienation of southern States.

Counterarguments & Challenges:

- Goes against the literal interpretation of Article 81.
- May be perceived as undemocratic, as it dilutes representation based on population.
- Might require a constitutional amendment, leading to political resistance.

Way Forward:

- National Consensus: A political dialogue involving all States to ensure consensus on a fair and sustainable model.
- Amend Article 81 if necessary, to reflect the new demographic and governance realities.
- Ensure that Delimitation Commission works transparently and equitably.
- Recognize that representation is not just about numbers, but also about ensuring balanced regional development and unity.

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Ques :“The readjustment of Lok Sabha seats based solely on population would undermine the spirit of cooperative federalism.” Discuss in light of the concerns raised by southern States. **(250 words)**

The article by Adhip Agarwala explains the working of mirrors from the perspective of material science and physics, highlighting how electrons interact with light, and introduces the concept of topological materials, which has significant relevance in cutting-edge technologies like quantum computing.

BUILDING BLOCKS



GETTY IMAGES

The magic of a mirror: how is it able to show your reflection?

Materials that behave differently on the surface and inside, such as a metal outside and an insulator inside, are called topological materials. Such materials were discovered in the second half of the 20th century and some of its discoverers won the Nobel Prize for physics in 2016

Adhip Agarwala

Dressing up is probably one of the most annoying things. You stand in front of a mirror and try to find the right combination of clothes of various colours hoping you look more tolerable to people. This is probably one trait that distinguishes us from other animals: we spend a few good minutes every morning staring at a mirror.

Have you ever wondered, though, when we stare at a mirror, what we're really staring at?

What is a mirror?

Most mirrors feel like glass. They are heavy and break easily. But then if you stare at a glass, say your window, and you stare at a mirror, what you see are very different things.

On a bright day, glasses are transparent, and you can see the outside world through a glass window. At night, if you look at your window and if you are in a well-lit room, you will now see yourself. In a mirror, on the other hand, you always see yourself irrespective of whether it is day or night (and as long as it is not dark). To understand the difference between a mirror and window glass, we need to learn about metals and insulators.

What are metals and insulators?

Metals are shiny things, like your steel cups and plates, the aluminium pressure cooker, and coins in your purse. Metallic objects are usually hard, not easy to break, and have a silvery shine. They also get hot and cold quite easily and can conduct current. It's one reason why we never touch a live socket using a spoon. Insulator objects on the other hand are made of glass, wood, and plastics. The things that usually don't conduct current also often don't look silvery.

An electric current is conducted by

electrons. Atoms have both positively charged protons and negatively charged electrons. In a metal, electrons are like unruly, fun-loving kids: they leave their parent atoms and move around between different atoms, forming a big soup of electrons. On the other hand, in an insulator, every electron in an atom is a bit shy and stays close to the parent atom. Therefore when we put in a battery and try to push the electrons, they will move freely in a metal, since they are unruly, but in an insulator they won't. Therefore metals conduct current, insulators don't. But the fact of how electrons behave towards batteries also decides how they behave when light falls on them.

How do light and electrons interact?

Light is an electromagnetic wave. A wave is any disturbance that moves periodically in time and can go from one point to another. For instance, when you drop a stone in a pond, you generate waves of water. When you speak, you generate waves of air, or sound waves.

When light falls on us – that's an electromagnetic wave, a periodic wave of electric and magnetic fields. Electric fields create forces that make electrons move, such as in your watch. Magnetic forces are the ones that keep your refrigerator magnets stuck on the door. But these forces don't change with time. When they start changing periodically in time they generate light, an electromagnetic wave.

Electrons behave very differently when light falls on them. Just like we move periodically when someone pushes us on a swing, when light falls on electrons, these electrons start moving periodically in time, as if they are dancing.

But the way they dance in metal and insulators are different. Since in a metal, all electrons are in a soup, they dance in a group like a flash mob. But in an insulator, every electron just dances individually on its own, inside its atomic home.

The type of electron dance decides whether light can go through a material. When light falls on a metal, all these electrons team up and start dancing together. This obstructs the light so much that it can't go through the metal and just bounces back. On the other hand, in an insulator, since every shy electron just dances a bit in its atomic home, most of the light goes through.

This is why insulators such as glass let some light go through while metals usually don't.

This is also the reason why you can see your face very clearly on a steel plate or spoon. The light from your face is reflected fully by the plate and enters your eye. But on a day when you just look at a window, most of the light from your face just goes through the glass to the other side, making it hard to see yourself. Moreover there is light from the outside that enters the glass into your eye, making you see the outside world. In the night, however, there is little ambient light, so just the light from your well-lit room reflects a bit from the glass and you can see yourself.

How does a mirror work?

So how is it then that a mirror, which feels like glass, an insulator, reflects like a steel plate? This is because the mirror is not just a glass: it has a secret. While it is in fact made of glass, there is a thin layer of metal placed on its back side. The front side is glass that lets the light through but the back side is a metal, where the electrons dance to reflect the light.

This is what makes you see yourself every time you stare into a mirror. A mirror is thus not one material but two. Both the glass (of shy electrons) and metal (of unruly electrons) conspire to make a long-lasting mirror on your almirah or in the washroom.

We just learnt that the back surface of the mirror has a metal layer. Now imagine

a block of glass where you put layers of silver on all its surfaces. This would be very strange: from the outside it will look like a metal but it won't be able to conduct current on the inside. We can create such an object using two different materials – glass and silver, say – but can these properties occur in an object made of a single material? Such a material would have to behave differently on the surface and inside, such as a metal outside and an insulator inside.

Such materials were discovered in the second half of the 20th century and are called topological materials. Some of their discoverers won the Nobel Prize for physics in 2016. More recently, Microsoft released a quantum-computing chip that is made of such topological materials.

To understand why all of this really works, one needs quantum mechanics, one of the most beautiful subjects known to us. In fact, the UN has declared 2025 to be the International Year of Quantum Science and Technology. We are currently celebrating 100 years since scientists discovered its foundational principles.

Dance of electrons

While you may have understood a bit about mirrors, if you want to really understand why some electrons are unruly and some are shy or how electrons behave when light falls on them, consider learning quantum mechanics, a subject you can enjoy if you take a course in physics, for example here in IIT Kanpur where some of us teach.

In the meantime, when you next stare at a mirror, don't just look for yourself: also appreciate the dance of electrons, both in the glass and in the shiny metal layer at the back, which is sending your light back to you.

Adhip Agarwala is an assistant professor of physics at IIT Kanpur.

Understanding the Mirror – A Composite Structure

- **Everyday Observation:** A mirror reflects light, allowing us to see ourselves. But unlike transparent glass, a mirror always gives a reflection.
- **Composition:** A typical mirror is made of two parts:
 - **Front Layer:** Glass (an insulator) that allows light to pass.
 - **Back Layer:** A thin metallic coating (commonly silver or aluminium) that reflects the light back due to free electrons on the surface.

Science Behind Reflection: Light-Electron Interaction

- **Light as an Electromagnetic Wave:** It exerts forces on electrons.
- **Electrons in Metals vs Insulators:**
 - **Metals:** Electrons are delocalized and move freely, allowing them to collectively respond to light and reflect it—strong reflection.
 - **Insulators:** Electrons are tightly bound to atoms, absorbing or allowing light to pass through—transparency.
 - **Reflection Mechanism:** In mirrors, light passes through the glass, hits the metal layer, and is reflected back to your eyes, forming a clear image.

Topological Materials - The Next Frontier

- **Definition:** Materials that behave like metals on the surface and insulators inside.
- **Properties:**
 - Conduct electricity only at the surface.
 - Exhibit exotic electron behaviors governed by quantum mechanics.
- **Applications:**
 - **Quantum Computing:** Microsoft's quantum chip uses topological materials.
 - Spintronics, low-energy electronics, and fault-tolerant quantum systems.
 - **Recognition:** Nobel Prize in Physics 2016 was awarded to scientists studying topological phases of matter.

Conclusion

- This article beautifully connects a daily-life object (mirror) with advanced material science and quantum physics, making it an excellent example of how basic science underpins future technologies.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Ques : Which of the following correctly explains why metals reflect light effectively?

- A. Metals have tightly bound electrons that absorb light energy.
- B. Metals have free electrons that oscillate collectively when light falls on them.
- C. Metals are transparent to electromagnetic radiation.
- D. Metals contain only protons which repel light waves.

Ans : B)



On the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Iwo Jima (1945), Japanese Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako made a rare visit to the island to honor the war dead. This symbolic gesture underscores Japan's continued efforts at wartime remembrance and reconciliation.

Geographical and Historical Significance of Iwo Jima:

- **Location:** Volcanic island - 1,250 km south of Tokyo, part of the Ogasawara Islands.
- **Historical Event:**
 - Battle of Iwo Jima (Feb–Mar 1945) during World War II between Japan and the U.S.
 - One of the bloodiest battles in the Pacific theatre.
- **Casualties:**
 - Japan: ~21,000 soldiers killed.
 - U.S.: ~6,800 dead, 19,000 wounded.
 - Iconic image: U.S. Marines raising the flag on Mount Suribachi – became a powerful symbol of American victory and resolve.

Symbolism and Diplomacy:

- **Royal Visit:**
 - First visit to Iwo Jima by Emperor Naruhito; second by any Japanese Emperor (after his father in 1994).
 - Rituals: Offering flowers and water in rain – sign of deep mourning and respect.
- **Soft Diplomacy:**
 - Reinforces Japan's pacifist stance under Article 9 of its Constitution.
 - Serves as a reminder of the cost of war and the importance of peace, particularly in current global contexts of military conflicts.
- **International Engagement:**
 - Previous joint visit by Japan's PM and U.S. Defense Secretary indicates continuing efforts for bilateral reconciliation and shared historical acknowledgement.



Japanese Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako bow to Iwo Jima war veterans monument in Japan on Monday. AP

Japan emperor visits Iwo Jima to honour war dead

Associated Press
IWO JIMA

Japan's Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako on Monday made a rare visit to the tiny Pacific island of Iwo Jima to mark the 80th anniversary of the end of Second World War.

The Japanese island, around 1,250 km south of Tokyo, was the scene of a five-week battle between wartime enemies Japan and the United States in 1945. Nearly all of Japan's 21,000 soldiers on the island were killed during the fight, while the U.S. side saw more than 6,800 fatalities and 19,000 wounded.

The royal couple bowed deeply as they offered flowers and ritually poured water at a memorial for the war dead as rain fell on the island, which is known in Japan as Iwo-To.

Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba and U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth visited the island together last month for a ceremony to mark 80 years since the Battle of Iwo Jima.

The battle inspired movies and books but is perhaps best associated with one of the most famous photos of Second World War – showing a group of U.S. Marines raising the American flag on the rubble-covered surface of Mount Suribachi.

Today, the island is off-limits for civilians and decayed warship parts litter its brown beaches, while rust-covered abandoned tanks sit in lush greenery. Efforts to find the remains of the war dead continue on the remote volcanic island, where an *AFP* journalist said on Monday that a smell of sulphur permeates the air.

Naruhito's parents, Emperor-emeritus Akihito and his wife Michiko, visited the island in 1994.

Key Takeaways:

- **Remembrance Diplomacy:** Honoring the dead is a tool for both internal reflection and external reconciliation.
- **Soft Power Projection:** Japan continues to shape its international identity as a peaceful and responsible global actor.
- **War and Memory:** Preserving the memory of tragedies like Iwo Jima is crucial to avoid repeating past mistakes.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

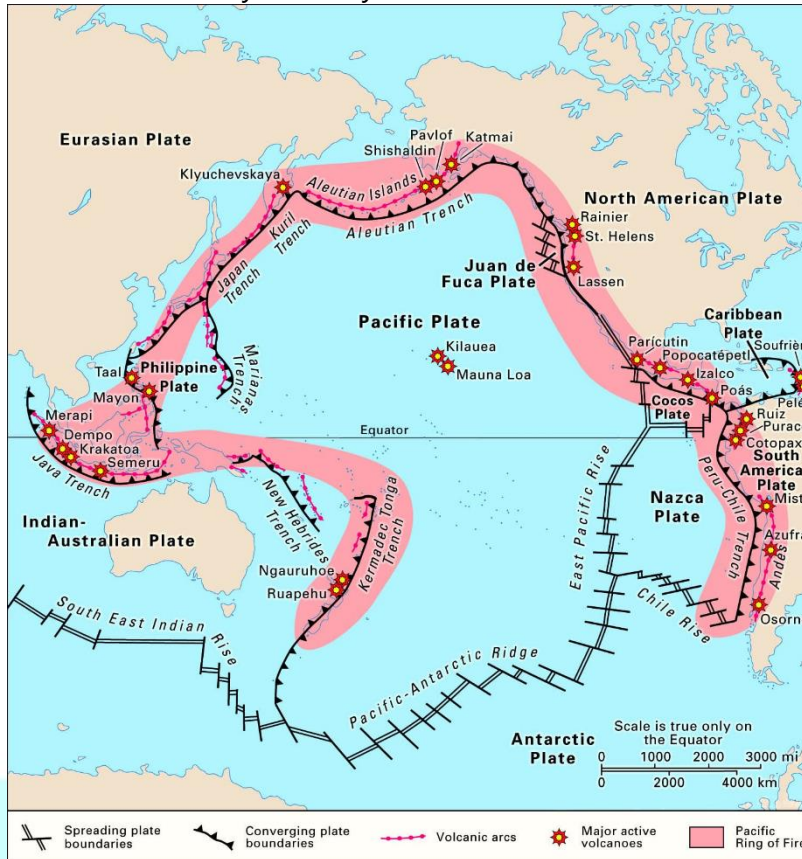
Ques : The island of Iwo Jima, recently seen in the news, is associated with which of the following events?

- A. A major naval battle during World War I
- B. The atomic bombing of Japan
- C. A key battle in the Pacific theater during World War II
- D. Japan's surrender to the Allied Forces.

Ans : C)

In News : Mount Kanlaon

A dramatic eruption of Mount Kanlaon, one of the Philippines' most active volcanoes, sent a towering ash plume 4,000 meters (2.5 miles) into the sky recently.



About Mount Kanlaon

- It is a stratovolcano in the north-central part of the island of Negros., Philippines.
- It is the highest mountain on the island of Negros and the 42nd tallest peak on an island in the world.
- It is one of the active volcanoes in the Philippines and part of the Pacific Ring of Fire.
- The volcano comprises a number of pyroclastic cones and craters.
- The summit of Canlaon contains a broad, elongated northern caldera with a crater lake and a smaller, but higher, historically active crater to the south.
- The base of Kanlaon covers an area of 30 km x 14 km.
- It is underlain by tropical volcanic materials composed of sheeted lava flows, lahar deposits, airfall tephra, and apron pyroclastic materials.
- It is biologically diverse; and home to a number of species of flora and fauna.
- The slopes are also headwater catchments of major river systems on the entire Negros Island.
- Historical eruptions, recorded since 1866, have typically consisted of phreatic explosions of small-to-moderate size that produce minor ashfalls near the volcano.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Ques :Consider the following statements regarding Mount Kanlaon:

- 1.It is located on the island of Mindanao in the Philippines.
2. It is part of the Pacific Ring of Fire.
- 3.It is known for frequent phreatic eruptions.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Ans : b)

Shaping a future-ready workforce

The World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report 2025 and QS's World Future Skills Index contain critical insights into the state of India's workforce and its preparedness for the future. They offer a roadmap for the government and universities to address the pressing challenges and opportunities in shaping a future-ready workforce. Their findings accentuate the urgency of aligning educational strategies with the rapidly evolving demands of the global economy.

The findings

The Future of Jobs Report highlights the significant forces driving global labour market changes by 2030. Among these, technological advancements, demographic shifts, geo-economic fragmentation, economic uncertainties, and the green transition stand out. Technological change and digital access are anticipated to play a crucial role, with 60% of employers identifying them as major drivers. At the same time, 50% of employers expect economic factors, such as job displacement, to reshape industries. Climate change mitigation is seen as a dual force, both creating jobs in renewable energy and environmental fields and requiring adaptations to business models due to geopolitical tensions. These trends point to a dynamic labour market characterised by job creation (170 million new jobs are projected) and job displacement (92 million roles could become obsolete).

In response to these shifts, employers have prioritised workforce training, wage increases, and employee well-being. Notably, 59 out of every 100 workers will require training in crucial skills such as analytical thinking, resilience, and technological literacy. Emerging roles such as Big Data specialists and AI engineers are expected to see substantial growth, highlighting the need for a workforce equipped with



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The findings of the World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report 2025 and the QS's World Future Skills Index underline the urgency of aligning educational strategies with the evolving demands of the global economy

advanced technical and cognitive skills. The emphasis on upskilling indicates that educational institutions must proactively prepare students for a competitive job market. Equally important is the integration of soft skills, such as emotional intelligence, adaptability, and leadership, into professional development programmes. Employers are increasingly valuing these attributes as critical for navigating dynamic work environments.

The QS World Future Skills Index complements these findings. Ranking second globally in terms of preparedness for AI and green skills, India demonstrates considerable potential. However, the report reveals stark gaps in workforce skills, particularly on supply-side indicators. While India excels in its ability to identify and recruit for future-focused skills, as evidenced by its 99.1 score in the 'Future of Work' parameter, its performance in 'Skills Fit' – the ability of the workforce to meet these demands – lags significantly, with the country scoring just 59.1. The report also identifies deficiencies in fostering entrepreneurial and innovative mindsets, with India's overall ranking in 'Academic Readiness' placing it at a modest 26th position. Further, India's performance in future-oriented innovation and sustainability is alarmingly low, a mere 15.6 out of 100. Additionally, India's limited investment in research and development further worsens the issue, hindering its ability to compete globally in areas such as renewable energy technologies and climate-friendly innovations.

An opportunity

The findings emphasise a transformative opportunity for India to align its education system with global trends and workforce demands. To bridge the skill gaps identified, educational institutions and governments must adopt a multi-pronged approach that addresses curriculum innovation, faculty capacity, infrastructure,

and equitable access while fostering robust collaboration among academia, industry, and policymakers. The emphasis on creativity, critical thinking, resilience, problem-solving, and entrepreneurial skills must become central to higher education. Universities must embed these competencies into the curriculum through interdisciplinary courses, experiential learning modules, and problem-based learning approaches. Initiatives such as hackathons, startup incubators, and design-thinking workshops should become integral to the academic framework to nurture innovation and adaptability.

A green curriculum is imperative. Institutions could establish specialised centres for sustainability research, offer courses on green technologies and practices, and encourage student-led community initiatives that address local environmental issues. Collaboration with the private sector is critical for bridging the education-industry gap. Higher education institutions need to form robust partnerships with industries to co-create curricula, offer internships, and ensure that students graduate with job-ready skills. Industry players can contribute by funding skill development centres, mentoring students, and providing real-time insights into market needs.

Faculty development is another area for reform. Universities must implement comprehensive training programmes that include workshops, certifications, and global exchange opportunities.

The government must spearhead systemic reforms by increasing skill development, research, and innovation investments. A specific focus on building digital infrastructure in rural and semi-urban areas will reduce the urban-rural divide.

India's higher education system must undergo a paradigm shift to remain agile and future-focused, while the government must foster an enabling policy environment.

Paper 03: Indian Economy

UPSC Mains Practice Question: "Collaboration between academia, industry, and government is essential to bridge the education-employment divide in India."

Critically analyze with suitable examples. (250 words).

Context :

- The article by P. John J. Kennedy examines India's workforce preparedness in light of the World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report (2025) and the QS World Future Skills Index. It highlights India's opportunities and challenges in aligning its education system and skill development with the rapidly evolving global job market.

Key Insights:

1. Drivers of Global Labour Market Transformation:

- Technological Advancements & Digital Access – Cited by 60% of employers as major future job market drivers.
- Economic Uncertainties & Job Displacement – 50% of employers expect economic pressures to impact employment structures.
- Green Transition & Climate Change – Acts both as a job creator (renewables, sustainability) and disruptor (new business models).
- Projected Trends:
 - 170 million jobs to be created globally.
 - 92 million jobs may become obsolete due to automation and structural changes.

2. Workforce Readiness Gaps in India:

- High Future-Focus, Low Skills Fit:
 - India scores 99.1 in the 'Future of Work' parameter.
 - But scores only 59.1 in 'Skills Fit', indicating a gap between market demands and available skills.
- Innovation & Sustainability Lag:
 - Alarmingly low score (15.6/100) in future-oriented innovation and sustainability.
 - India ranks only 26th in 'Academic Readiness'.
 - Low R&D investment is a critical limiting factor.

Implications for India:

1. Economic & Employment Dimensions (GS Paper III):

- Employability Crisis: Large youth population, yet lacking job-ready skills.

- Risk of Demographic Dividend turning into Liability: If workforce training doesn't match demand.
- Green Economy Challenge: Need to skill workers in renewable energy, climate adaptation, etc.
- Opportunity in AI and Digital Economy: India is well-placed but must scale quality training.

2. Educational Reforms & Governance (GS Paper II):

- Curriculum Innovation:
 - Promote interdisciplinary and experiential learning.
 - Integrate entrepreneurship, problem-solving, design thinking, and green skills.
- Collaboration with Industry:
 - Co-create curricula with industry.
 - Expand internships, hackathons, and skill incubators.
- Faculty Development:
 - Introduce global exchange, certifications, and training to upskill educators.
- Infrastructure & Equity:
 - Focus on digital inclusion in rural/semi-urban areas.
 - Reduce the urban-rural divide in education quality and access.

Way Forward:

- Government's Role:
 - Increase investment in skill development, research, and digital infrastructure.
 - Create an enabling policy ecosystem to support education-industry linkages.
 - Ensure NEP 2020 implementation with focus on multidisciplinary education.
- University & Institutional Reforms:
 - Establish centres for sustainability, green tech courses, and community-based innovations.
 - Embed soft skills such as emotional intelligence, leadership, and adaptability.

Conclusion:

India stands at a critical juncture. While it possesses the potential to be a global skill hub, systemic gaps in educational quality, innovation, and sustainability preparedness threaten this possibility. A coordinated effort between the government, academia, and industry is essential to ensure that India's demographic advantage translates into a productive and future-ready workforce.
