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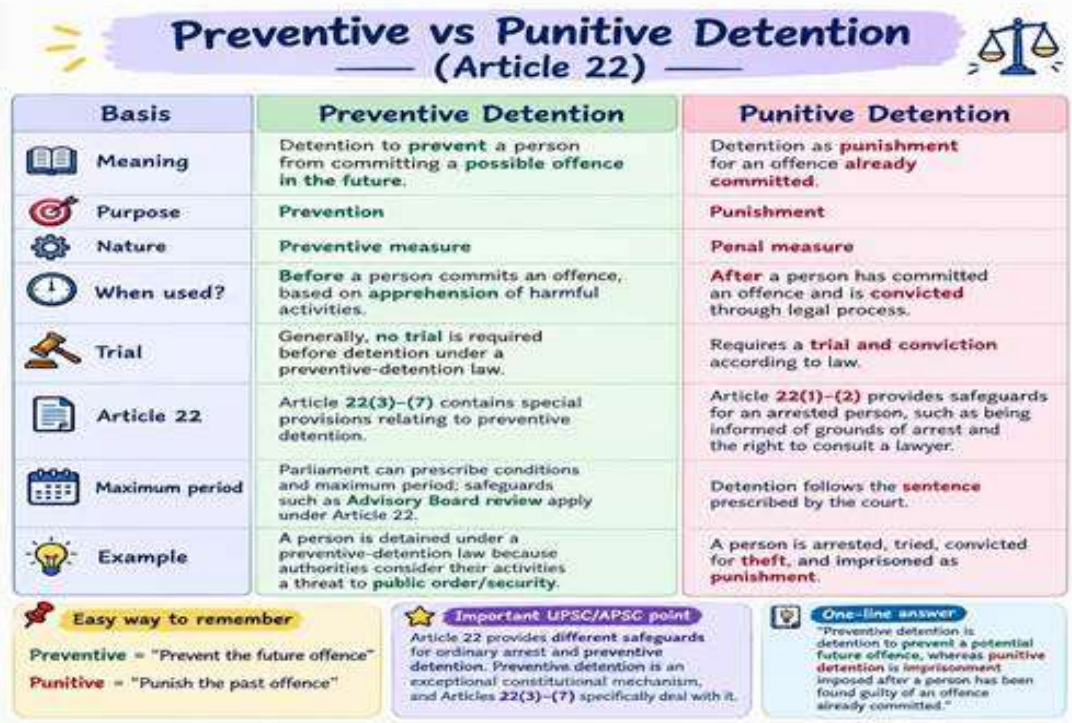
1. Indian Polity (GS Paper 2)

Rights of Arrested Persons under Article 22

Article 22: The Indian Constitution provides fundamental safeguards for individuals who are arrested and detained.

It guarantees the right to be informed of the grounds for arrest, consult a legal practitioner, and be produced before a magistrate within 24 hours.

- **Article 22(1):** An arrested person has the right to know the **grounds of arrest** and consult a **lawyer of choice**.
- SC: These are **fundamental rights** and cannot be breached.
- **Violation → immediate release** if the arrest itself becomes unconstitutional.
- Applies to arrests under **IPC/special laws**, including terrorism & money-laundering cases.
- **Article 22(2):** Arrested person must be produced before a **Magistrate within 24 hours**.
- **Important:** No blanket immunity from **future arrest** after release for violation of Article 22.



2. ENVIRONMENT AND Biodiversity (GS 3)

New Wild Cat Species Discovered in Bolivia

Why in News?

Scientists have formally described a new species of wild cat from Bolivia's **Yungas cloud forests**. Named ***Leopardus tilcayo***, it is the first new living feline species formally described in more than a century.



IMPORTANT HIGHLIGHTS

Scientific name: *Leopardus tilcayo*

- **Scientific name:** *Leopardus tilcayo*
- **Common/local name: Tilcayo**
- **Location: Yungas cloud forests, Bolivia**
- **Family: Felidae**
- **Genus:** *Leopardus*
- **Group:** Tiger cats
- **Size:** Around **46 cm** long
- **Weight:** Around **1.4 kg**
- **Distinctive feature:** Light-brown coat with irregular rosette-like markings.
- Genetic evidence indicates that the Tilcayo lineage diverged from other tiger cats roughly **1.4 million years ago**.

How was it discovered?

- Researchers analysed **complete genomes from 38** *Leopardus individuals*, including **8 museum specimens**. The genomic study showed that what was previously treated largely as the tiger-cat complex actually contains **five genetically distinct species**.
- It occurs in the **Peruvian Yungas**.

Why is this important for UPSC?

1. Cryptic species

Tiger cats are examples of **cryptic species**—species that can look very similar externally but are genetically distinct.

2. Importance of genetic tools in taxonomy

Modern **genome sequencing + museum DNA ("museomics")** can reveal previously unrecognised biodiversity.

3. Conservation implications

If several apparently widespread populations are actually separate species, their **individual population sizes and extinction risks may have been underestimated**. The research provides a basis for more targeted conservation assessments.

4. Yungas ecosystem under pressure

The Bolivian Yungas faces pressures including **deforestation, agriculture, fires and mining**, making habitat protection important for newly recognised species.

3. Science & Technology (GS Paper 3)

ISRO RADAR FACILITY IN ASSAM

CM Himanta Biswa Sarma laid the foundation stone of the ISTRAC Advance Rader Research Facility (IARRF) at Chandrapur.



*** IARRF** = ISTRAC Advanced Radar Research Facility.

* It is being established by ISRO at Chandrapur, Assam**.**

***** It is part of Project **NETRA.**

*** Main purpose:** To track satellites, space debris and other objects in space.

Why is it important?

- It helps protect India's satellites and other space assets from possible collisions and threats**.**
- It will use advanced radar and optical telescopes**.**
- **Assam benefit:** More opportunities for space research, innovation and student skill development**.**

4. International Relations (GS Paper 2)

India–New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA)

Context: The **India–New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** is set to come into effect on **October 20, 2026**, with the objective of significantly expanding bilateral trade and investment while protecting India's sensitive agricultural sectors.

About India–New Zealand FTA

What is it?

- A **Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** is a trade pact between countries aimed at reducing or eliminating tariffs and other barriers to cross-border trade.
- The India–New Zealand FTA seeks to deepen economic integration through:
  - Preferential market access
  - Lower tariffs
  - Investment

    - Greater services and business opportunities.

Key Features

- **Effective from: 20 October 2026**
- **Trade Target:** Doubling bilateral trade to around **₹35,000 crore** within **4–5 years**.
- **New Zealand's Commitment:** Elimination of import levies on **all Indian goods**.
- **India's Market Access:** Around **95% of New Zealand's exports** to India will receive either zero or substantially reduced tariffs.
- **FDI Commitment:** New Zealand has committed **$20 billion in FDI** into India.
- **Sensitive Sectors:** India has retained protection for sensitive sectors such as:
    - Dairy
    - Selected agricultural products.

Current India–New Zealand Economic Relations

- Bilateral trade stood at around **$1.3 billion in FY 2024–25**.
- India is **New Zealand's ninth-largest export market**.
- The FTA seeks to substantially increase the relatively low level of existing bilateral trade.
- New Zealand offers expertise in:
    - Engineering technology
    - Kiwi cultivation
    - Apiculture
    - Agricultural technologies.

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Potential Benefits for India

1. Export Opportunities

Greater market access can benefit Indian exports such as:

- Textiles
- Apparel
- Pharmaceuticals
- Engineering goods
- Agricultural products
- Handicrafts.

2. MSME Growth

- Lower tariffs can improve the competitiveness of Indian **MSMEs** in the New Zealand market.
- Greater integration into global value chains can create opportunities for small producers.

3. Farmers and Rural Economy

- Improved access to New Zealand's market can benefit Indian farmers and agri-based enterprises.
- Cooperation in **kiwi farming, apiculture and agricultural technology** can improve productivity and diversification.

4. Handloom and Handicrafts

- Preferential market access can expand opportunities for Indian:
    - Handloom artisans
    - Weavers
    - Craft producers.

5. FDI & Technology Transfer

The proposed **$20 billion FDI commitment** could support:

- Manufacturing
- Infrastructure
- Technology
- Agriculture
- Food processing.

6. Supply-Chain Diversification

The agreement can help India diversify economic partnerships amid increasing global protectionism and trade disruptions.

Why Protect Dairy & Agriculture?

India has retained protection for sensitive sectors because:

- Indian dairy is dominated by **small and marginal producers**.
- Sudden import competition could affect farmer incomes.
- Agriculture has significant **livelihood and food-security implications**.
- Tariff liberalisation needs to account for differences in production costs and scale.

Thus, the FTA reflects the principle of **"liberalisation with safeguards."**

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Strategic Significance

1. Indo-Pacific Economic Engagement

The agreement strengthens India's economic engagement with the **Indo-Pacific region**.

2. Countering Global Protectionism

At a time of:

- Rising tariffs
- Trade wars
- Supply-chain disruptions
- Geoeconomic fragmentation

FTAs provide India with greater opportunities for market diversification.

3. Export-Led Growth

The agreement supports India's objective of:

Manufacturing → Exports → Investment → Employment → Economic Growth

4. Broader FTA Strategy

The India–New Zealand agreement forms part of India's wider effort to expand its network of trade agreements and deepen integration with global markets.

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Challenges

- India's relatively limited export basket to New Zealand.
- Standards and non-tariff barriers may continue to restrict market access.
- Indian MSMEs may lack awareness and capacity to exploit FTA benefits.
- Greater imports could create competitive pressure on vulnerable domestic industries.
- FDI commitments need to translate into **actual investment and productive capacity**.

Way Ahead

- Create greater awareness among **MSMEs, farmers and exporters** about FTA benefits.
- Strengthen quality, certification and international standards.
- Develop export-oriented infrastructure and logistics.
- Establish effective safeguards against sudden import surges.

- Ensure the **$20-billion FDI commitment** translates into technology transfer, jobs and domestic value addition.
- Promote Indian participation in **global value chains**.
- Regularly review the agreement to address emerging trade imbalances.

Prelims Quick Revision

Parameter	Key Fact
Agreement	India–New Zealand FTA
Effective date	**20 October 2026**
Bilateral trade, FY 2024–25	**$1.3 billion**
Target	Double trade to **₹35,000 crore**
Target period	**4–5 years**
NZ tariff commitment	Zero tariffs on **Indian goods**
India's tariff liberalisation	**~95% of NZ exports**
FDI commitment	**$20 billion**
Sensitive sectors protected	**Dairy & selected agriculture**
India’s position in NZ exports	**9th-largest export market**

Conclusion

The India–New Zealand FTA represents India's attempt to combine **greater trade liberalisation with protection of vulnerable domestic sectors**. Its success will depend not merely on tariff reduction but on India's ability to enhance export competitiveness, integrate MSMEs into global value chains and convert FDI commitments into productive investment and employment.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Consider the following statements regarding the India–New Zealand FTA:

1. New Zealand has agreed to eliminate import levies on Indian goods.
2. India has provided complete tariff-free access to all New Zealand agricultural products.
3. New Zealand has committed $20 billion in FDI into India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: B

UPSC Mains Practice Question

"India's recent FTAs reflect a shift towards guarded trade liberalisation rather than unconditional free trade." Discuss with reference to the India–New Zealand FTA. *(150 words)*

5. **International Relations (GS Paper 2)**

The Malacca–Singapore Model for Resolving the Strait of Hormuz

Context: The continuing geopolitical tensions and security concerns around the **Strait of Hormuz** have renewed debate over how to ensure freedom of navigation while respecting the sovereignty and security concerns of littoral states. The cooperative framework developed for the **Malacca–Singapore Straits** offers a possible model.

About the Malacca–Singapore Model

What is the model?

- The **Strait of Malacca and Strait of Singapore** constitute a major maritime corridor connecting the **Andaman Sea with the South China Sea**.
- They are strategically important for:
    - Global trade
    - Energy transportation
    - East Asian supply chains.
- The littoral states are:
    - **Indonesia**
    - **Malaysia**
    - **Singapore**

Historical Background

- In **1971**, Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore jointly asserted **12-nautical-mile territorial seas** over the straits.
- This challenged their earlier characterisation as purely international waterways.
- The dispute highlighted the need to balance:
    - **Coastal-state sovereignty**
    - **Freedom of navigation**
    - **Interests of user states**.

UNCLOS & Passage Through International Straits

1. Territorial Sea

- Extends up to **12 nautical miles** from the coastal baseline.
- The coastal state enjoys sovereignty over these waters, subject to certain navigational rights.

2. Innocent Passage

- Foreign vessels can pass through territorial waters provided their passage is **not prejudicial to the peace, good order or security** of the coastal state.
- The right may be subject to restrictions in certain circumstances.
- It does not provide the same freedom as transit passage.

3. Transit Passage

Under **UNCLOS**, transit passage applies to straits used for international navigation connecting:

High Seas/EEZ → High Seas/EEZ

It allows:

- Continuous and expeditious passage.
- Passage of **warships**.
- Passage of **submarines in their normal mode**.
- Overflight by aircraft.

Thus, **transit passage is broader than innocent passage**.

Malacca–Singapore Cooperative Mechanism

Established in 2007

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A cooperative mechanism was established involving:

- **Littoral states**
- **User states**
- Shipping and maritime stakeholders.

Objectives

- Navigation safety
- Environmental protection
- Maintenance of maritime infrastructure
- Search and rescue
- Capacity building.

Aids to Navigation Fund

- Supports maintenance of navigation infrastructure.
- Receives **voluntary contributions from user states and industry**.
- Provides a mechanism through which major beneficiaries of the waterway can share its maintenance burden.

Role of Japan

Japan played an important role in promoting cooperation among the littoral states through the **Malacca Strait Council**.

Application to the Strait of Hormuz

Strategic Importance

The Strait of Hormuz connects the:

Persian Gulf → Gulf of Oman → Arabian Sea → Indian Ocean

It is one of the world's most important energy chokepoints.

Littoral States

- **Iran**
- **Oman**

Their territorial waters overlap/intersect in the strategic waterway.

Central Dispute

The key challenge is balancing:

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Iran's security concerns

with

Freedom of navigation and international shipping

particularly for:

- Commercial vessels
- Energy shipments
- Foreign naval vessels.

Why is Hormuz More Difficult?

Malacca–Singapore	Hormuz
Indonesia, Malaysia & Singapore	Iran & Oman
Primary concern: navigation safety	Primary concern: security & geopolitics
Cooperative mechanism established	Cooperation remains contested
Strong multilateral participation	Major-power rivalry is significant
UNCLOS-based framework	Iran has not ratified UNCLOS
User-state contributions	Security concerns dominate

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Iran's Position

- Iran has historically maintained that foreign warships require authorisation to pass through its territorial waters.
- Iran's **1993 law** requiring authorisation for foreign warships remains contentious.
- Iran is **not a party to UNCLOS**, although many UNCLOS provisions are considered reflective of customary international law.

Potential Hormuz Solution

A Malacca–Singapore-inspired mechanism could include:

1. Littoral-State Dialogue

Iran and Oman could establish a permanent mechanism for:

- Maritime security
- Navigation
- Search and rescue
- Environmental protection.

2. User-State Participation

Major users of the waterway could participate in:

- Navigation safety
- Maritime infrastructure
- Emergency response
- Capacity building.

3. Shared Funding

A mechanism similar to the **Aids to Navigation Fund** could finance:

- Navigation systems
- Maritime surveillance
- Safety infrastructure
- Environmental protection.

4. Legal Clarity

Greater clarity regarding:

- Innocent passage
- Transit passage
- Rights of commercial vessels
- Rights and obligations of naval vessels.

5. De-escalation Mechanism

Establish direct communication channels among:

Iran + Oman + major maritime users

to prevent incidents from escalating into wider conflict.

Challenges

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- Iran–US strategic rivalry.
- Disagreement over the legal status of foreign warships.
- Iran's non-ratification of UNCLOS.
- Regional geopolitical tensions.
- Presence of external naval powers.
- Different perceptions of **freedom of navigation** and **national security**.

Therefore, the Malacca–Singapore model cannot simply be copied; it needs **regional adaptation**.

Significance for India

Energy Security

India imports a significant share of its crude oil and energy resources through maritime routes connected to the Persian Gulf.

Trade Security

Disruption in Hormuz can:

- Increase freight costs.
- Raise insurance premiums.
- Disrupt energy supplies.
- Affect India's current account and inflation.

Strategic Autonomy

India needs to maintain constructive relations with:

- Iran
- Gulf countries
- United States
- Other maritime stakeholders.

Maritime Security

A stable Hormuz contributes to security in the:

Persian Gulf → Arabian Sea → Indian Ocean

maritime chain.

Way Ahead

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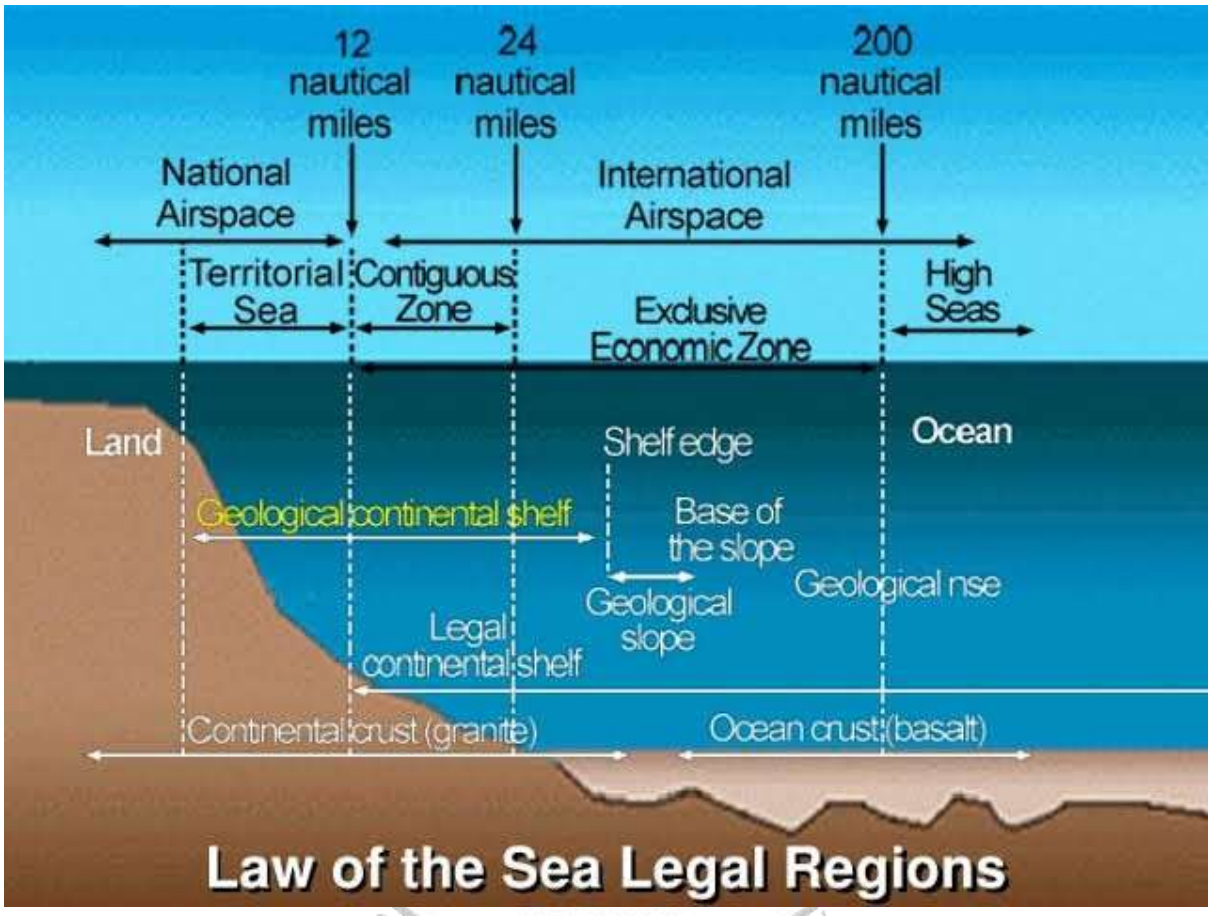
- Promote an **Iran–Oman-led cooperative maritime mechanism**.
- Separate **navigation safety** from wider geopolitical disputes wherever possible.
- Establish hotlines and maritime incident-prevention mechanisms.
- Encourage participation of major **user states** without undermining littoral-state sovereignty.
- Develop shared funding for navigational and environmental infrastructure.
- Use **UNCLOS principles** as the normative foundation while accommodating the concerns of non-party states.
- Encourage confidence-building measures rather than militarisation of the waterway.

Prelims Quick Revision

Concept	Key Fact
Malacca–Singapore Straits	Connect **Andaman Sea and South China Sea**
Littoral states	Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore
Territorial sea	**12 nautical miles**
EEZ	Up to **200 nautical miles**
Innocent passage	Passage not prejudicial to coastal state's peace, good order or security
Transit passage	Continuous and expeditious passage through international straits
Hormuz littoral states	**Iran and Oman**
Strait of Hormuz connects	Persian Gulf with Gulf of Oman/Arabian Sea
Cooperative Mechanism	**2007**
Aids to Navigation Fund	Voluntary contributions from user states/industry

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Iran & UNCLOS	**Not a party to UNCLOS**
Iran's relevant law	**1993 law** on foreign warship authorisation



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Conclusion

The **Malacca–Singapore model demonstrates that sovereignty and freedom of navigation need not be mutually exclusive**. A cooperative framework involving littoral states, user states and international stakeholders could provide a pragmatic pathway for Hormuz. However, given the deeper geopolitical rivalry surrounding the region, its success would require **confidence-building, legal clarity and sustained regional dialogue** rather than simple replication of the Malacca model.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Consider the following statements:

1. Transit passage under UNCLOS is applicable to international straits connecting two parts of the high seas or EEZs.
2. Transit passage permits continuous and expeditious navigation through such straits.
3. Innocent passage and transit passage provide identical rights to foreign vessels.

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

Answer: A

UPSC Mains Practice Question

"The Malacca–Singapore Straits demonstrate how sovereignty concerns and freedom of navigation can be reconciled through cooperative maritime governance." Examine its applicability to the Strait of Hormuz. *(150 words)*

7. Environment & Ecology (GS Paper 3)

India's Transition to Alternative Fuels

Context: India witnessed a significant shift in its passenger vehicle market in **August 2026**, with vehicles using alternative fuels accounting for a larger share of new registrations than petrol vehicles for the first time. However, the transition remains uneven across vehicle categories.

About India's Alternative Fuel Transition

What are Alternative Fuels?

- Alternative fuels are energy sources used in transportation as alternatives to conventional **petrol and diesel**.
- Major alternatives include:
    - **CNG**
    - **LPG**
    - **Electricity**
    - **Hybrid powertrains**
    - Other emerging low-carbon fuels.

Key Findings

1. Historic Fuel Crossover

- According to **FADA** data, **August 2026** witnessed a major shift in India's passenger vehicle market.
- Alternative-fuel vehicles accounted for **41.95%** of new passenger vehicle registrations.
- Petrol vehicles accounted for **40.85%**.
- Thus, alternative fuels surpassed petrol for the **first time** in this segment.

2. Conventional Fuels Still Dominate Overall

- Despite the shift, petrol and diesel together accounted for around **83.5% of registrations during January–March 2026**.
- Their combined share has declined from around **95% in 2021**.

This indicates that India's transition is **gradual rather than complete**.

Vehicle-wise Transition

Two-Wheelers

- Two-wheelers constitute **over 70% of new vehicle registrations**.
- EV penetration increased from:
  - **6.4% in 2025**
  - to **9.1% in 2026**.
- Rising EV adoption in this segment is an important driver of India's overall alternative-fuel transition.

Three-Wheelers

- Three-wheelers have witnessed the **fastest electrification**.
- Around **60.5% of new three-wheeler registrations** were electric by August 2026.
- Lower operating costs and high daily utilisation make EVs economically attractive for commercial three-wheelers.

Passenger Cars

- EV penetration remains relatively limited.
- The shift away from petrol/diesel cars is primarily due to:
  - **CNG**
  - **LPG**
  - **Hybrid vehicles**

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- Petrol and diesel cars' combined share declined from around **86% in 2021 to 61.6% in 2026**.

Why is EV Adoption Higher in Two- and Three-Wheelers?

Economic Factors

- Lower upfront and operating costs.
- Lower fuel expenditure.
- High utilisation of commercial three-wheelers makes savings more significant.

Technical Factors

- Smaller battery requirements.
- Lower vehicle weight.
- Easier charging requirements.

Urban Mobility

- Two- and three-wheelers are particularly suited to short-distance urban mobility.

Why is EV Adoption in Cars Slower?

1. High Upfront Cost

EV cars remain relatively expensive compared with conventional vehicles.

2. Charging Infrastructure

- Uneven availability of public charging stations.
- Range anxiety remains a concern.

3. Battery Costs

Battery packs constitute a significant portion of an EV's cost.

4. Consumer Preferences

Long-distance travel and concerns over charging time continue to favour conventional or hybrid vehicles.

5. CNG & Hybrid Competition

Consumers increasingly have intermediate options such as:

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Petrol → CNG/Hybrid → EV

rather than shifting directly from internal combustion engines to EVs.

Significance for India

1. Energy Security

Greater adoption of alternative fuels can reduce dependence on imported crude oil.

2. Environmental Benefits

EVs produce **zero tailpipe emissions**, while CNG and hybrids can reduce emissions compared with conventional petrol/diesel vehicles, though their overall environmental impact depends on the energy source and lifecycle.

3. Urban Air Quality

Electrification of high-use vehicles can reduce local air pollution in cities.

4. Industrial Transformation

The transition creates opportunities in:

- Battery manufacturing
- Charging infrastructure
- Power electronics
- Semiconductors
- Recycling
- Renewable energy integration.

5. Green Mobility

Electrification can support India's broader **decarbonisation and net-zero objectives**.

Challenges

- Insufficient charging infrastructure.
- Battery raw-material dependence.
- Limited domestic battery recycling capacity.
- Grid capacity requirements.
- High upfront EV costs.
- Regional disparities in charging infrastructure.
- Continued dependence on fossil fuels for electricity generation.
- Need for skilled manpower and technological capabilities.

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Way Ahead

1. Expand Charging Infrastructure

Develop:

- Fast-charging networks
- Highway charging corridors
- Urban charging hubs
- Battery-swapping facilities where appropriate.

2. Promote Public Transport Electrification

Prioritise:

- Electric buses
- Commercial three-wheelers
- Fleet vehicles.

3. Strengthen Domestic Manufacturing

Develop integrated domestic ecosystems for:

- Batteries
- Motors
- Power electronics
- Critical components.

4. Battery Recycling

Promote a **circular economy** through battery recovery, recycling and second-life applications.

5. Renewable Energy Integration

Greater use of renewable electricity can improve the overall climate benefits of EVs.

6. Technology-Neutral Transition

India should pursue a diversified pathway involving:

EVs + Hybrids + CNG + Biofuels + Green Hydrogen

based on vehicle category, geography and technological feasibility.

Prelims Quick Revision

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Parameter	Key Fact
Historic crossover	**August 2026**
Alternative-fuel share	**41.95%**
Petrol share	**40.85%**
Petrol + diesel, Jan–Mar 2026	**83.5%**
Petrol + diesel cars, 2021	**86%**
Petrol + diesel cars, 2026	**61.6%**
EV share in 2-wheelers	**9.1%**
EV share in 3-wheelers	**60.5%**
Two-wheelers' share of registrations	**>70%**
Data source	**FADA / Vahan portal**

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Conclusion

India's alternative-fuel transition is entering a new phase, but the shift is **category-specific rather than uniform**. Two- and three-wheelers are leading electrification, while passenger cars are transitioning through a combination of **CNG, hybrids and EVs**. India therefore needs a technology-neutral and infrastructure-led approach that combines electrification with domestic manufacturing, renewable energy and circular battery ecosystems.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Consider the following statements regarding India's transition to alternative fuels:

1. Three-wheelers have recorded a higher EV penetration than two-wheelers.
2. The shift towards alternative-fuel passenger cars is driven exclusively by electric vehicles.
3. Two-wheelers constitute more than 70% of new vehicle registrations.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: A

UPSC Mains Practice Question

"India's transition towards alternative fuels is being driven more by economic viability and vehicle characteristics than by uniform electrification." Examine the emerging trends, challenges and policy measures required for sustainable mobility in India. *(150 words)*

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7. Polity & Governance | Judiciary

Why Did the Supreme Court Reject Maharashtra's Methanol Rules?



Context: The Supreme Court struck down **Rules 18A and 18B of the Maharashtra Poisons Rules, 1972**, holding that the restrictions on methanol were **disproportionate** and lacked a sufficient nexus with preventing hooch tragedies.

About the Case:

What happened?

- Maharashtra introduced stricter methanol controls following the **1991 Mumbai hooch tragedy**, which caused **93 deaths**.
- **Rule 18A:** Required verification of licences and denaturing of methanol with **colourant and bitterant** before sale to non-drug manufacturers.
- **Rule 18B:** Allowed confiscation of methanol possessed without the prescribed licence.
- Industrial users argued that such additives could contaminate products used in **paints, pharmaceuticals, resins and catalysts**.

Why did the Supreme Court strike down the Rules?

- **Violation of Article 14:** Restrictions were considered **arbitrary and disproportionate**.
- **Violation of Article 19(1)(g):** Excessive restrictions interfered with the legitimate right to carry on trade and business.
- **Lack of Nexus:** Adding colourant/bitterant did not have a sufficiently direct connection with preventing methanol diversion into illicit liquor.
- **Disproportionate restriction:** Rule 18A imposed significant costs and operational difficulties on legitimate industrial users without adequately addressing the targeted misuse.
- **Redundancy of Rule 18B:** Its confiscation provision could conflict with lawful possession under other valid permits.

Proportionality Test:

The Court relied on the **proportionality principle** associated with *K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017)*:

Legitimate Aim → Suitability → Necessity → Balancing

- **Legitimate aim:** Prevent methanol misuse and hooch deaths.
- **Suitability:** Measure must have a rational connection with the objective.
- **Necessity:** Less restrictive alternatives should be considered.
- **Balancing:** Public interest must be weighed against the burden imposed on fundamental rights.

Supreme Court's Suggested Approach:

- Regular **review and verification of licences**.
- Maintain detailed **stock and consumption records**.
- Dedicated and **sealed transportation** of methanol.
- Better **inter-departmental coordination**.
- Strengthen existing regulatory mechanisms.
- Expand **de-addiction facilities**.

Key Constitutional Significance:

- **Article 14:** Protection against arbitrary and unequal state action.
- **Article 19(1)(g):** Right to practise a profession and carry on trade/business.
- **Proportionality:** State restrictions on fundamental rights must be **reasonable, necessary and proportionate**.
- **Regulatory Balance:** Public safety cannot automatically justify restrictions that impose excessive burdens on legitimate economic activity.

Key Concepts:

- **Methanol:** Highly toxic alcohol widely used as an industrial raw material.
- **Hooch Tragedy:** Mass poisoning caused by consumption of illicit/adulterated liquor.
- **Poisons Act, 1919:** Provides the legal framework for regulating possession and sale of poisons.
- **Proportionality Test:** Judicial tool to examine whether restrictions on fundamental rights are justified and not excessive.

UPSC Relevance:

- **GS-II:** Fundamental Rights, judicial review, proportionality, regulatory governance.
- **GS-III:** Industrial regulation, public health and chemical safety.
- **Essay:** Balancing public interest with individual liberty and economic freedom.

Conclusion:

The judgment reinforces that **legitimate public-safety objectives must be pursued through evidence-based and proportionate regulation**. The State must prevent methanol misuse while avoiding unnecessary restrictions on lawful industrial activity.

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8. *Polity & Governance*

Article 371A to J & Proposed Article 371K for Ladakh

Context: The Centre has proposed a new **Article 371K** to provide special constitutional safeguards for Ladakh and establish a stronger elected UT-level institution with legislative, executive and financial powers.



About Article 371 Series:

What is it?

- **Article 371–371J** provides **special constitutional provisions** for specific States/regions based on their distinct historical, cultural, tribal and developmental circumstances.
- These provisions aim to balance **national integration with regional autonomy and protection of local interests**.

Key Articles 371A–J

Article	State/Region	Major Provision
371	Maharashtra & Gujarat	Equitable development of specified regions such as Vidarbha, Marathwada, Saurashtra & Kutch
371A	Nagaland	Protects Naga **religious/social practices, customary law, land & resources**
371B	Assam	Assembly committee for **tribal areas** under Sixth Schedule
371C	Manipur	Special committee for **Hill Areas**; Governor reports to President
371D	Andhra Pradesh & Telangana	Equitable opportunities in **education & public employment**
371F	Sikkim	Special provisions for **integration of Sikkim into India**
371G	Mizoram	Protects **Mizo customs, religious practices, customary law & land**
371H	Arunachal Pradesh	Governor has special responsibility for **law & order**
371I	Goa	Legislative Assembly must have **at least 30 members**
371J	Kalyana Karnataka	**Development Board + reservation** in education & employment

Proposed Article 371K – Ladakh

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- **Special Constitutional Status:** Proposed to provide constitutional safeguards for Ladakh's **land, culture, language, environment and natural resources**.
- **Directly Elected UT Body:** Creation of an elected **Union Territory-level institution**.
- **Legislative Powers:** Proposed authority over areas such as **land, forests, culture, language and environment**.
- **Executive & Financial Powers:** Greater control over **administration, planning and finances**.
- **Local Protection:** Intended to safeguard **customary practices and local interests**.
- **Democratic Representation:** Seeks to address concerns arising from Ladakh being a **Union Territory without a legislature**.
- **Sui Generis Model:** Could create a **unique constitutional governance arrangement** for a UT.

Why is Article 371K Significant?

- **Protects fragile Himalayan ecology** from unregulated development.
- Safeguards **tribal identity, culture and customary practices**.
- Provides greater **democratic participation** in local governance.
- Enables locally tailored **development planning**.
- Addresses concerns over **land and employment opportunities** for local residents.
- Could strengthen **cooperative federalism and decentralisation**.

Ladakh's Major Demands

- Constitutional protection for **land and cultural identity**.
- Greater control over **law and order**.
- Protection of **customary practices**.
- Stronger democratic and financial autonomy.
- Safeguards comparable in spirit to **Articles 371A and 371G**.

Sixth Schedule vs Article 371K

- **Sixth Schedule:** Provides **Autonomous District Councils** in tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.
- **Article 371K:** Proposed specifically for **Ladakh**, potentially combining constitutional safeguards with a directly elected UT-level governing body.
- Thus, 371K could represent a **distinct institutional model rather than simply extending the Sixth Schedule**.

Key Constitutional Facts

TAKSHASHEELA

- **Article 244:** Provides for administration of Scheduled and Tribal Areas.
- **Sixth Schedule:** Autonomous Councils in **Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram**.
- **Article 371A:** Nagaland — strongest protection for **customary law, religious/social practices and land/resources**.
- **Article 371G:** Mizoram — similar protection for **customs, religious practices and land**.
- **Article 371J:** Kalyana Karnataka — addresses **regional backwardness**.

Conclusion:
The proposed **Article 371K** could provide Ladakh with a constitutionally protected framework that combines **local democracy, cultural safeguards and development autonomy**. Its success would depend on ensuring meaningful powers while maintaining national security and environmental sustainability.

9. ***Art & Culture*** **(GS Paper 1)**

72nd National Film Awards 2026 & Dadasaheb Phalke Award

Context: The **72nd National Film Awards** will be presented on **22 September 2026 at Ekta Nagar, Gujarat**, recognising outstanding contributions to Indian cinema.

About the National Film Awards:

What are they?

- The **National Film Awards** were instituted in **1954** by the Government of India.
- They recognise excellence in **Feature Films, Non-Feature Films and Writing on Cinema**.
- The awards cover diverse **Indian languages, regions and cinematic traditions**.
- The **President of India** presents the awards.

Key Highlights – 72nd National Film Awards

- **Year honoured:** Indian cinema for **2024**.
- **Venue: Ekta Nagar (Kevadia), Gujarat**.
- **Best Feature Film:** *Article 370*
- **Best Non-Feature Film:** *Bhangaar*
- **Best Documentary:** *Ram-Nami*
- **Best Actor: Mammootty & Kartik Aaryan**

- **Best Actress: Yami Gautam**
- **Best Debut Director: Randeep Hooda**

Dadasaheb Phalke Award

- **Recipient: Anant Nag**
- Awarded for his **outstanding contribution to Indian cinema**.
- Recognises his **five-decade-long career**, particularly his contribution to **Kannada cinema** and Indian cinema.
- It is regarded as **India's highest honour in cinema**.

Significance of Hosting the Awards in Gujarat

- **First time outside New Delhi:** Marks a departure from the traditional venue.
- **Cultural decentralisation:** Plans to take the national celebration of cinema to different parts of India.
- **Promotes regional diversity:** Highlights India's **multilingual and multicultural cinematic traditions**.
- **Cultural diplomacy:** Strengthens the role of cinema in showcasing India's **soft power and cultural diversity**.

Key Facts

- **National Film Awards:** Instituted — **1954**
- **Dadasaheb Phalke Award:** Highest Indian cinematic honour.
- **Administered by: Ministry of Information & Broadcasting**
- **Dadasaheb Phalke:** Pioneer of Indian cinema; directed *Raja Harishchandra* (1913), widely regarded as India's first full-length Indian feature film.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS-I:** Indian Art & Culture, cinema, regional cultural traditions.
- **Essay:** Cinema as an instrument of **cultural integration and soft power**.
- **Current Affairs:** Important national awards and personalities.

Conclusion:

The 72nd National Film Awards combine recognition of **cinematic excellence with cultural diversity**. Hosting the ceremony beyond the national capital also reflects an effort to make national cultural institutions more **regionally inclusive and representative**.

72nd National Film Awards 2026 & Dadasaheb Phalke Award

Art & Culture

Celebrating Indian Cinema, Celebrating India



Context

The 72nd National Film Awards will be presented on **22 September 2026** at **Ekta Nagar, Gujarat**, recognising outstanding contributions to Indian cinema.

"Good cinema reflects society, preserves culture and builds a better tomorrow."

About the National Film Awards

What are they?

- Instituted in **1954** by the Government of India.
- Recognise excellence in Feature Films, Non-Feature Films and **Writing on Cinema**.
- Cover diverse Indian languages, regions and cinematic traditions.
- Presented by the **President of India**.



Dadasaheb Phalke Award



Anant Nag

- Recipient: **Anant Nag**
- Awarded for his outstanding contribution to Indian cinema.
- Recognises his five-decade-long career, particularly his contribution to Kannada cinema and Indian cinema.
- Regarded as **India's highest honour** in cinema.

"A lifetime of stories, a legacy for generations"

Key Highlights – 72nd National Film Awards

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Venue	**Ekta Nagar (Kevadia), Gujarat**
Best Feature Film	**Article 370**
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Conclusion

The 72nd National Film Awards combine recognition of cinematic excellence with cultural diversity. Hosting the ceremony beyond the national capital also reflects an effort to make national cultural institutions more regionally inclusive and representative.

"Indian cinema — a bridge across languages, regions and generations."

Art Transcends Boundaries
Cinema Unites India

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