

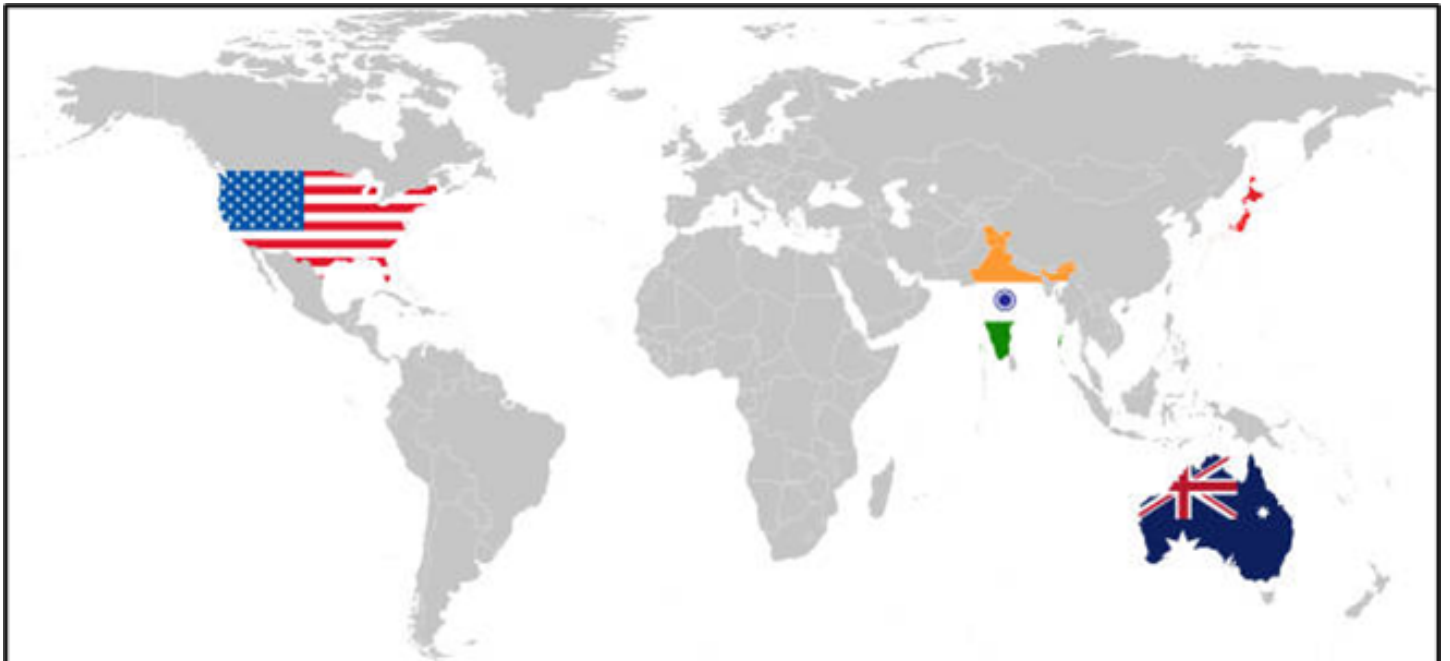


## Date: (22-06-2026)

### 1. India-U.S. Interim Trade Deal (GS Paper-2: India & International Relations)

#### Context:

- The U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer is on a high-level visit to India, aiming to finalize an interim trade framework. Both nations are in the final stages of giving "last touches" to the deal, which focuses on expanding market access and reducing tariffs. This marks a crucial step in advancing bilateral trade ties.



#### I. Key Developments:

- **Trade Framework:** India and the United States are in the process of finalizing an interim agreement aimed at enhancing mutually beneficial bilateral trade.
- **Tariff Leverage:** India is adamant about obtaining a distinct competitive edge through reduced tariffs in comparison to competing manufacturing countries.
- **Section 301 Probe:** In March 2026, the United States commenced a Section 301 investigation involving 60 nations, including India.



- **Forced Labour Tariffs:** The U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) has suggested a 12.5% tariff, claiming that these countries have not effectively prohibited imports produced with forced labor.
- **India's Stand:** India has provided a legal response, anticipating that the comprehensive trade agreement will address the Section 301 issue.

## II. Significance for India:

- **Strategic Growth:** Reinforces the wider economic and strategic alliance between India and the United States.
- **Export Expansion:** Ensures preferential access to markets, thereby directly increasing Indian exports in crucial sectors.
- **Supply Chain Integration:** Improves India's role in international supply chains, drawing in foreign manufacturing investments.

## III. Challenges

- **Policy Volatility:** The imminent risk of abrupt U.S. tariffs (as stipulated in Section 301) generates an unstable trade landscape.
- **Stringent Standards:** Adhering to rigorous U.S. labor, sustainability, and environmental regulations imposes a significant compliance challenge.
- **Domestic Protection:** Striking a balance between reciprocal market-access obligations to the U.S. and safeguarding at-risk domestic sectors.

## IV. Key Trade-Related Concepts:

- The U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) is responsible for formulating and coordinating the international trade policy of the United States, as well as addressing and resolving trade disputes.
- Section 301 of the U.S. Trade Act of 1974 empowers the United States to conduct investigations and impose sanctions on foreign nations that engage in "unfair" trade practices.
- A Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) refers to a pact between two countries aimed at lowering tariffs and facilitating trade, often serving as a preliminary step towards a Free Trade Agreement (FTA).
- Non-Tariff Barriers encompass trade limitations such as quotas, embargoes, or stringent labor regulations that do not manifest as direct taxation.





### **Way forward:**

- **Stable Framework:** Both nations should finalize a mutually beneficial, rules-based pact that reduces trade frictions and deepens cooperation.

## **2. India's Maritime Sector: Engine of Growth and Strategic Power (GS-3: Economy)**

### **Context:**

- Prime Minister Modi recently commissioned three indigenous naval ships—INS Dunagiri, INS Sanshodhak, and INS Agray. He underscored that robust maritime capabilities are vital for India's rise as a major global power. This commissioning reflects India's strategic vision for strengthening naval strength.

### **I. Key Highlights:**

- **Economic Linkage:** A nation's maritime strength directly correlates with its economic prosperity and strategic global influence.
- **Defence Indigenisation:** India aims to shift from being a defense buyer to a self-reliant producer and decisive global manufacturer.
- **Fleet Expansion:** Over 40 indigenously built warships and submarines have been inducted into the Navy over the past few years.
- **Policy Push:** A new shipbuilding vision includes a ₹70,000 crore incentive package for maritime future and industrial expansion.
- **Coastal Development:** Initiatives like Sagarmala reduce logistics costs, accelerate industrial growth, and create coastal jobs.





## II. Significance:

- Naval Preparedness: Enhances India's anti-submarine, stealth, and survey capabilities for robust maritime security.
- Aatmanirbhar Bharat: Showcases India's growing domestic defense manufacturing and self-reliance in shipbuilding.
- Blue Economy: Boosts port-led development, generating new employment opportunities and driving economic growth.
- Strategic Influence: Supports India's Indo-Pacific ambitions and ensures secure global trade connectivity.

## III. Key Terminologies:

- Blue Economy: Sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and ocean ecosystem health.
- Sagarmala Programme: A flagship initiative to promote port-led development, modernize ports, and enhance coastal connectivity.
- Maritime India Vision 2030: A blueprint to overhaul the maritime sector, focusing on infrastructure, shipping, and logistics.
- Defence Indigenisation: The process of developing and manufacturing defense equipment within the country to reduce import dependency.
- Port-led Development: Leveraging port infrastructure to drive industrialization and economic growth in coastal areas.
- Indo-Pacific Strategy: A geopolitical framework aimed at ensuring a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific region.

## IV. Way Forward:

- Integrated Approach: India must align maritime infrastructure, indigenous shipbuilding, and innovation to become a leading maritime power.





## 3. Strait of Hormuz: Lessons for India's Energy Security (GS-2: International Relations)

### Context:

- Recent conflicts involving Iran have highlighted the fragility of global energy supply chains. In response, Iran has announced the creation of a new "Persian Gulf Strait Authority" to exclusively manage transits through the Strait of Hormuz. This move signals a major geopolitical disruption in maritime energy routes.



### I. Strategic and Economic Implications of the Strait of Hormuz

- Critical Chokepoint:** The Strait of Hormuz is a vital global artery for crude oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) trade.
- Strategic Leverage:** Iran's control over the waterway demonstrated that maritime dominance can be as potent as economic sanctions.
- Transit Mandates:** Shipping companies must now account for Iran as a decisive stakeholder, potentially paying tolls or reporting transits.





- **India's Dependency:** India relies heavily on this route for energy imports, supported by a limited fleet and tight supply chains.
- **Global Shift:** Countries like the UAE are actively pursuing "zero Hormuz dependency" by building alternative infrastructure.

## ***II. Implications for India:***

- **Vulnerability Exposed:** The disruption highlighted India's lack of credible contingency plans and limited long-term storage capacity.
- **Economic Impact:** Threats to this chokepoint directly endanger India's energy security and drive up logistics and insurance costs.
- **Geostrategic Weakness:** A weak domestic shipping sector limits India's ability to navigate geopolitical maritime crises effectively.
- **Missed Opportunities:** Stalled or abandoned projects like Chabahar Port limit India's alternative land and maritime corridors.

## ***III. Key terminologies:***

- **Strait of Hormuz:** A narrow waterway linking the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea.
- **Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs):** Primary maritime routes used for trade, logistics, and naval forces.
- **Maritime Chokepoints:** Narrow channels along widely used global sea routes that are critical for energy security.
- **Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR):** Emergency stockpiles of crude oil maintained to deal with severe supply disruptions.
- **Chabahar Port:** A seaport in southeastern Iran, envisioned as a key transit hub for India to bypass Pakistan and access Central Asia.

## ***IV. Way Forward:***

- **Diversification:** India must urgently strengthen strategic reserves, diversify energy sources, and develop alternative trade corridors.





## 4. DNA Testing, Privacy, and the Right to Justice (GS-2: Polity & Governance)

### **Context:**

- In CP vs AP (2026), the Supreme Court upheld a trial court's order for a DNA test in a paternity dispute. The ruling highlights the balance between scientific evidence, bodily privacy rights, and the pursuit of justice. It reinforces the judiciary's role in carefully navigating sensitive personal rights with legal necessity.

### **I. Key Legal Framework:**

- Burden of Proof: Under the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023, the burden of disproving paternity lies on the party denying it.
- Core Objective: This legal presumption is designed to protect children from the social stigma of illegitimacy.

### **II. Evolution of Judicial Stance:**

- Initial Restraint: Goutam Kundu (1993) and Banarsi Dass (2005) ruled that DNA tests cannot be ordered routinely without a strong prima facie case.
- Science Over Fiction: Nandlal Wasudeo Badwaik (2014) established that reliable scientific proof prevails over legal fiction in the interest of justice.
- Adverse Inference: Dipanwita Roy (2014) acknowledged that refusing a court-ordered DNA test can lead to adverse legal presumptions.
- The Privacy Constraint: Post-Puttaswamy (2017), courts must apply the three-fold test: legality, legitimate aim, and proportionality.
- Measure of Last Resort: Aparna Ajinkya Firodia (2023) and CP vs AP (2026) mandate DNA testing only when existing records cannot resolve the dispute.





### III. Significance:

- **Bodily Autonomy:** Categorizes genetic information as deeply sensitive personal data protected from unwarranted disclosure.
- **Fair Adjudication:** Ensures that the pursuit of scientific truth does not bulldoze over an individual's fundamental rights.
- **Judicial Clarity:** Provides a clear framework where DNA testing is restricted to absolute necessity rather than forensic curiosity.

### IV. Key constitutional and legal dimensions:

- **Article 21:** Guarantees Protection of Life and Personal Liberty.
- **Right to Privacy:** Declared a fundamental right in the landmark K.S. Puttaswamy (2017) judgment.
- **Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam, 2023:** The new criminal law replacing the Indian Evidence Act of 1872.
- **Proportionality Principle:** Legal doctrine ensuring that the infringement of a right is the least restrictive method to achieve a legitimate state aim.
- **Adverse Inference:** A legal conclusion drawn by a judge when a party fails to produce relevant evidence or refuses a legitimate test.

## 5. Brexit at 10: Lessons on Globalisation, Migration and Governance (GS-2: International Relations)

### Context:

- *June 2026 marks a decade since the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union. This milestone has triggered a critical reassessment of Brexit's far-reaching economic, political, and social consequences. The anniversary serves as a moment of reflection on its enduring impact.*





## ***I. Key Highlights:***

- **Protest Vote:** Brexit morphed into a broader public protest against austerity, stagnation, and the 2008 financial crisis.
- **Imperial Illusion:** The goal of swapping the €18 trillion EU economy for Commonwealth trade ties proved unrealistic.
- **Economic Drag:** Losing unfettered EU access significantly curtailed productivity, trade, and financial services growth.
- **Immigration Irony:** Despite promises to cut numbers, non-EU migration surged to fill critical labor shortages in sectors like healthcare.
- **Political Churn:** The decade saw extreme instability, yielding six Prime Ministers, ten Home Secretaries, and eight Chancellors.

## ***II. Significance:***

- **Sovereignty vs. Economy:** Exposes the severe economic trade-offs of prioritizing absolute national sovereignty over regional integration.
- **Populist Governance:** Demonstrates how anti-immigrant rhetoric can hijack public policy and fracture social cohesion.
- **Labor Dynamics:** Highlights that domestic labor shortages inevitably necessitate immigration, regardless of political borders.





### III. Key terminologies:

- **Brexit:** The U.K.'s historic withdrawal from the EU, initiated by the June 2016 referendum (52% to 48%).
- **European Union (EU):** A political and economic union of European states featuring a single market and free movement of people.
- **Globalisation:** The growing interdependence of the world's economies, cultures, and populations through cross-border trade.
- **Populism:** A political approach striving to appeal to ordinary people who feel their concerns are disregarded by elite groups.
- **Economic Nationalism:** Policies emphasizing domestic control of the economy, labor, and capital formation over global integration.

### IV. Way Forward:

- **Evidence-Based Policy:** Nations must bridge deep societal divides through honest, non-populist assessments of economic and migration realities.



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