



BAJIRAO IAS ACADEMY

THE HINDU ANALYSIS

7 MAY 2025



**INDIA-UK FREE TRADE
AGREEMENT**



JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

How the judiciary maintains accountability

All judicial powers have been vested in the Constitution, and judges are bound to work within that constitutional ambit. Once any of them go beyond it, they may be removed on the grounds of proved misbehaviour, which would include violation of the Constitution

LETTER & SPIRIT

C.B.P. Srivastava

The recent comments by the Vice-President of India on the role of judges has caused much anxiety and is a matter of serious concern that needs to be analysed properly. It is a well-known fact that with power comes responsibility. The position of the Vice-President is second in the order of precedence in India and therefore, anybody holding such a post needs to be extremely cautious before speaking, as his views might send wrong signals to the people. The current Vice-President, Jagdeep Dhankhar, in the context of the Supreme Court setting deadlines for Presidents and Governors to clear Bills approved by the Union/State legislatures, has stated that judges are working as a 'super parliament'; that judges cannot give directions to the President; and that judges are not accountable because the law of the land does not apply to them.

Dissecting the claims

The term 'super parliament' does not have any significance as Parliament is the supreme body constituted by the free will of the people reflecting the icon of popular sovereignty. No agency including the judiciary can go beyond it. It is to be noted that in order to prevent any arbitrary exercise of power by an independent judiciary, the framers of the Constitution had placed all judicial powers in the Constitution itself. This has been reiterated by the Supreme Court in *L. Chandra Kumar versus Union of India* (1997) in which the Court held that although all judicial powers are vested in the Constitution, the independence of the judiciary is fully secured because of the principle of separation of powers. If at any time judges try to exercise their powers arbitrarily, crossing the boundaries of the separation of powers, it shall be a gross violation of Article 50 and



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the government which holds majority in Parliament may initiate a process for a removal of the judge concerned.

On the second issue, that the judiciary cannot give directions to the President, a perusal of his position in India needs to be explained. The President is the head of the State (it is clear when Article 52 is read with Article 1). Hence, he or she is elected according to the provisions contained in Articles 54 and 55 establishing India as a Republic. The President is the head of the Executive, the head of the armed forces and also the head of Parliament under Articles 53(1), 53(2) and 79 respectively. Therefore, he is vested with powers

according to his position. Giving assent to the Bills is the power of the President which is well within the limits of popular sovereignty. The President cannot and shall not go beyond this doctrine of popular sovereignty. In more simpler words, if the assent is delayed indefinitely, it would undermine the people's power which in itself would be undemocratic. Hence, the judiciary setting a time frame for giving assent to Bills is consistent with the requirements of popular sovereignty. It is no way undermines the dignity of the head of the State. Since the people of India abide by the Constitution and believe in its

supremacy, all authorities including the President and Governor shall abide by the provisions of the Constitution.

THE GIST

On accountability

The statement given by the Vice-President that the law of the land does not apply to judges is not at all rational because he himself, as the second highest constitutional authority, questions the rule of law in India. The rule of law flows from the doctrine of the supremacy of the Constitution; questioning its efficacy and limitations would undermine the Constitutional mandate. As mentioned above, all judicial powers have been vested in the Constitution itself, and judges are bound to work within that constitutional ambit. Once any of them go beyond it, he may be removed on the grounds of proved misbehaviour, which would include violation of the Constitution. Moreover, Parliament is empowered to set aside a decision of the Court, if required, by making a new law. This provision also signifies the people's power and popular sovereignty.

Last but not the least, the Constitution of India has given powers to the judiciary to review the actions of the State and its instrumentalities for the purpose of establishing the rule of law to protect the rights of the people. The exercise of the inherent power of the Supreme Court to do complete justice under Article 142 is worth mentioning. When there is no express constitutional provision or parliamentary law on a particular subject or issue at hand, the Supreme Court has been vested with the power to become the custodian and sole interpreter of the Constitution.

Conclusively, whenever the country faces large-scale turbulence in almost all sectors, constitutional authorities and citizens both need to look at the events with a liberal mindset and should not do or speak anything which might ultimately prove detrimental to democratic and constitutional sentiments. C.B.P. Srivastava is President, Centre for Applied Research in Governance, Delhi.

The current Vice-President, Jagdeep Dhankhar, in the context of the Supreme Court setting deadlines for Presidents and Governors to clear Bills approved by the Union/State legislatures, has stated that judges are working as a 'super parliament'.

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Context

- Recent comments by Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar have stirred a constitutional and political debate regarding the **role and powers of the judiciary vis-à-vis the executive.**
- Concerns arise from his remarks calling judges a **"super parliament"**, questioning their power to direct the President, and asserting **judges are not accountable** under the law.

Separation of powers

1. The doctrine of separation of powers is a **cornerstone** of the Indian Constitution.
2. It ensures that the **three organs** - Legislature, Executive, and Judiciary - **function independently**.
3. **Any overreach** by one organ into another's domain **undermines constitutional governance**.
4. Even the **independence of the judiciary** is fully secured because of the principle of separation of powers [L. Chandra Kumar versus Union of India (1997)].
5. If at any time judges try to exercise their powers arbitrarily, it shall be a gross violation of **Article 50 of DPSP**, and the government may initiate a process for a removal of the judge concerned.

Supremacy of the Constitution

1. **The rule of law** and the supremacy of the Constitution are **foundational doctrines**.
2. Even the President, Governors, and judiciary are bound by constitutional provisions.
3. **No authority is beyond scrutiny** if it violates constitutional boundaries.

Vice-President's Remarks

- Parliament, as a body elected by the people, holds legislative power - but this **does not mean that the judiciary's constitutional review** powers **encroach** upon Parliament's supremacy.
- The judiciary acts as a **guardian of the Constitution**, ensuring no law violates constitutional limits.

Judiciary's role regarding Presidential assent:

- The President of India, under **Article 52**, is the constitutional head and must act on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers (**Articles 74, 78**).
- S/he is elected according to the provisions contained in **Articles 54 and 55** establishing **India as a Republic**.
- If there is **undue delay** in granting assent to a bill, the **judiciary can intervene** to protect **popular sovereignty**.

On the clock

SC sets time frame for Governors, saying the phrase 'as soon as possible' permeates Article 200 with a sense of expediency

■ A Governor has a maximum of **one month** to withhold assent on the aid and advice of the State Cabinet

■ A maximum of **three months** is given to return the Bill with a message specifying reasons if the Governor withholds assent contrary to the Cabinet's advice

■ The Governor has **three months** to reserve a Bill for the President's consideration against the advice of the Cabinet

■ The Governor 'must' grant assent to a Bill re-passed by the State Legislature under Article 200 within a **maximum of one month**



Interplay Between Judicial Independence, Popular Sovereignty, and Judicial Activism

Judicial independence

- ❑ Vital for upholding the **basic structure doctrine**.
- ❑ **Shielded from arbitrary** executive or legislative interference.

Popular sovereignty: The judiciary's actions, such as setting deadlines for the President or Governor to assent bills, aim to **uphold public interest and constitutional compliance**.

Article 142 and judicial activism:

- ❑ Empowers the Supreme Court to pass orders for **complete justice**.
- ❑ Such provisions underscore the Court's role in **filling legislative or executive voids** when constitutional mechanisms are silent.

Article 200:

- Article 200 of the Indian Constitution outlines the process for a Bill passed by the Legislative Assembly of a State to be presented to the Governor for assent, who may either **assent, withhold assent or reserve the Bill for consideration** by the President.
- The Governor may also return the Bill with a message **requesting reconsideration by the House** or Houses.

Article 201:

- It states that when a **Bill is reserved for the consideration** of the President, the President may assent to or withhold assent from the Bill.

JUDICIAL REVIEW

Power of the judiciary to examine the constitutionality of legislative enactments and executive orders of both the Central and State governments.

Example: Striking down of the Section 66A of the IT Act as it was against the Fundamental rights guaranteed by the constitution

JUDICIAL ACTIVISM

Denotes proactive role played by the judiciary in the protection of the rights of citizens and the promotion of justice in society.

Example: Invented mechanisms which have no constitutional backing (Eg: Suo moto (on its own) cases, PIL, new doctrines etc).

JUDICIAL OVERREACH

When the judiciary oversteps the powers given to it, it may interfere with proper functioning of the legislative or executive organs of government.

Example: The higher judiciary deciding on Diwali fireworks, banning liquor on highways etc.

CHALLENGES FACED BY CIVIL SERVICES

What are the challenges faced by the civil services?

What are the frameworks under which the bureaucracy functions?

Rangarajan, R

The story so far:

On the occasion of Civil Services Day (April 21), Cabinet Secretary T. V. Somanathan IAS, spoke about the importance of civil services in maintaining and strengthening democracy, the need for lateral entrants and greater transparency.

What is merit versus spoils system?

The merit system entails appointments to government posts after a rigorous selection process by an independent authority. In India, this commenced in 1858 when the British introduced the Indian Civil Service to select officers for administering the country. After independence, it is the Union Public Service Commission which conducts such exams. The merit system is aimed at building career bureaucrats who are

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expected to function without any political leanings and provide independent advice to the incumbent political executive. The spoils system works on the adage 'to the victor belong the spoils.' It is a system where the incumbent political executive appoints its supporters to various posts in the government. It has its origins in the U.S., and continued until 1883 when it was replaced largely by the merit system.

What is the role of the civil services?

The civil services have contributed significantly in the administration of our democratic system. As mentioned by the Cabinet Secretary, they have been instrumental in the conduct of free and fair elections, and ensuring smooth transfer of power both at the Centre and States. There have been numerous instances when States have been placed under President's rule, with the civil services ensuring uninterrupted administration during such times.

On the development side, they are a repository of institutional knowledge. They provide advice to ruling governments in policy making and also implement the policies made by the political executive. The administrative tasks of public bureaucracy include executing and monitoring programmes, and laying down laws, rules and regulations. Civil servants have been the fulcrum around which governance activities like delivery of essential services, providing relief operations etc., have been carried out.

What ails the civil services?

But the civil services also suffer from significant challenges. First, neutrality as a trait is fast eroding among bureaucrats, resulting in political bias in discharge of critical functions. It is pertinent to note that both the cause and effect of this phenomenon is the increasing political interference in all aspects of bureaucracy

including postings and transfers. Second, career bureaucrats who are generalists, may lack the expertise needed to address technical challenges. Third, there is also significant corruption at all levels of the bureaucracy that often goes unpunished.

What reforms are required?

Some of the measures that need to be taken are summarised here.

In a democracy, the mandate is with the elected government and it needs to be respected. However, the neutral bureaucracy needs to be insulated from undue political interference to uphold the rule of law and constitutional values. To maintain a harmonious balance between the political and permanent executive, the autonomy of career bureaucrats is essential. This includes reasonable independence with respect to postings, tenures and transfers. Also, there needs to be a shift in the focus of bureaucrats from 'procedure' to 'outcomes.' Monitoring at present in the government is primarily through the measurement of outlays and at best through outputs. There is a need to move towards measurement of 'outcomes.' This reform can be hastened by hiring domain experts as lateral entrants, especially at senior levels. These reforms would uphold the essential traits of an effective civil service.

Rangarajan, R is a former IAS officer and author of 'Courseware on Polity Simplified'. The views expressed are personal.

THE GIST

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❑ On Civil Services Day 2025, **Cabinet Secretary T. V. Somanathan** highlighted the indispensable role of civil services in upholding Indian democracy.

❑ While praising their contributions to governance, elections, and development administration, he also acknowledged the deep-rooted challenges that impede their efficiency and credibility.

❑ In the context of evolving governance needs, civil services in India stand at a critical juncture where reform is not just desirable, but imperative.

Evolution and Role of Civil Services in India

- ❑ **Civil services in India date back to 1858**, when the British established the Indian Civil Service based on a merit system to manage administrative functions.
- ❑ Post-independence, this role was taken over by the **Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)**, which has since remained the cornerstone of merit-based recruitment.

Civil servants have consistently been central to:

- Conducting free and fair elections.
- Ensuring continuity of governance during President's Rule in states.
- Advising political executives in policy formulation.
- Implementing welfare schemes and disaster relief efforts.
- Managing day-to-day administrative functions such as public service delivery and regulation enforcement.

TIMELINE OF RECRUITMENT		
IAS	Before 1854	Civil servants were nominated by directors of East India Company
	1855	Civil Service Commission conducted first competitive exam
	1864	Satyendranath Tagore, brother of Rabindranath Tagore, became first Indian to clear the exam, held in London
	1922	Indian civil services exams started to be held in India, too
IPS	1893	First competitive exam held in England and top-10 candidates appointed as probationary assistant SPs
	1920	Decision taken to open service for Indians
	1921	Simultaneous exams held in India, England
IFS	1864	Imperial forest dept established
	1867	Imperial forest service constituted. From 1867 to 1885, officers were trained in France and Germany
	1920	Direct recruitment in both India and England started

Major Challenges Facing Indian Civil Services

Erosion of Neutrality

- ❑ A foundational trait of civil services, neutrality is fast declining. Bureaucrats are increasingly seen aligning with political interests, which compromises the integrity and impartiality expected of them.

Political Interference:

- ❑ Frequent and arbitrary transfers, especially of upright officers, discourage independent functioning.
- ❑ Administrative decisions are often influenced by political calculations rather than public interest.

Generalist Bias and Lack of Domain Expertise:

- ❑ The generalist model of the Indian bureaucracy, where officers rotate across sectors, limits their capacity to address increasingly technical and specialized challenges.
- ❑ This results in **sub-optimal policy design** and implementation.

Endemic Corruption:

- ❑ Corruption exists at multiple levels of the bureaucracy. Despite the existence of vigilance mechanisms, many cases go unpunished, eroding public trust in civil servants.

Reforms for a Future-Ready Civil Service

Insulation from Political Pressure:

- ❑ To ensure the rule of law and constitutional governance, civil servants must be granted a **reasonable degree of autonomy** in postings, tenures, and transfers.

Shift from Procedures to Outcomes:

- ❑ Currently, bureaucratic performance is judged by inputs (expenditure) or outputs (activities).
- ❑ There is a need to **transition to outcome-based monitoring** to align public service with actual societal impact.

Lateral Entry of Domain Experts:

- ❑ Introducing professionals from outside the service at senior levels can bring fresh perspectives and technical proficiency.
- ❑ This **complements the institutional knowledge** of career bureaucrats and enhances governance quality.

Strengthening Accountability and Transparency:

- ❑ Internal performance audits, independent vigilance mechanisms, and a digital record of administrative decisions can strengthen accountability within the system.

FOUNDATIONAL VALUES FOR CIVIL SERVICES

The foundational values for civil services represent the fundamental principles and ethics that guide the conduct and responsibilities of civil servants.



Integrity

- ➔ Integrity refers to the soundness of moral principles, uncorrupted character, uprightness, honesty and sincerity.

Types:

- ➔ Moral Integrity
- ➔ Intellectual Integrity
- ➔ Professional Integrity
- ➔ **Example:** Satyendra Dubey (IES officer) – one of the first whistleblowers of India – exposed corruption in the Golden Quadrilateral Highway Construction Project.

Impartiality

- ➔ The quality of being fair, or not being biased or partial towards anything or anyone and acting solely according to the merits of the case.
- ➔ **Example:** An officer should distribute funds based on the needs of the communities rather than showing bias towards their own interests.

Non-Partisanship

- ➔ Non-disposition towards any political party, i.e., to exhibit political neutrality.
- ➔ **Example:** T.N. Seshan, as Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) from 1990–96, brought changes to ensure non-partisanship in the

Objectivity

- ➔ Following facts rather than personal opinions to achieve equality.
- ➔ **Example:** When designing social welfare programs, the focus should be on the needs of the underprivileged populations, rather than favouring the wealthy/politically influential groups.

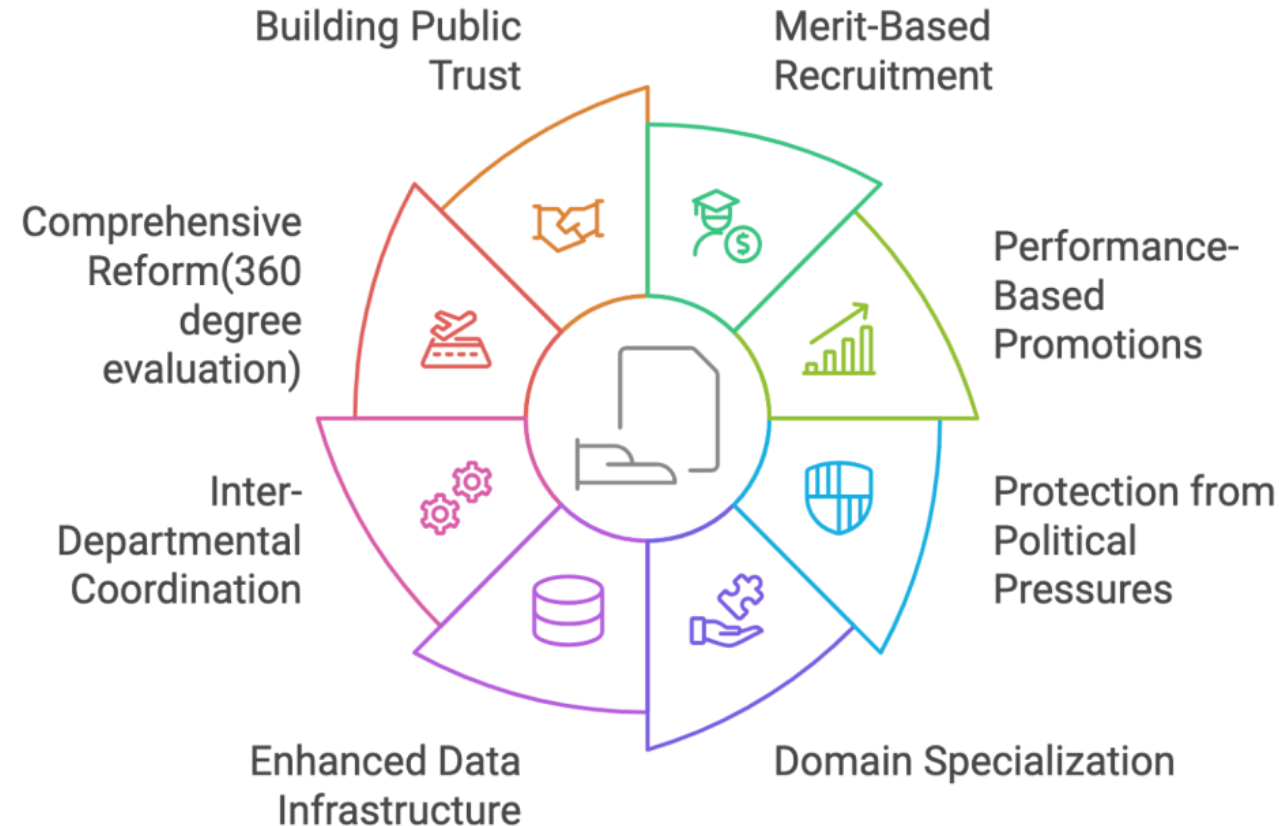
Tolerance

- ➔ Respect, acceptance and appreciation of the opinions, practices, race, religion etc. different from one's own.
- ➔ **Example:** Ashoka's Dhamma (religious tolerance and discouraged religious persecution)

Dedication to Public Service

- ➔ Being committed, responsive, and putting the public interest first.
- ➔ **Example:** Ashok Khemka (IAS officer) known for his stance against corruption.

Enhancing Bureaucratic Efficiency



INDIA – UK FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

UK-India Free Trade Agreement 2025

- ❑ India and the UK signed a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) after nearly three years of negotiations.
- ❑ The agreement reduces tariffs on 90% of goods.
- ❑ The deal aims to **boost trade, investment, job creation, and innovation**. It comes at a time of global trade uncertainty and marks a major economic collaboration between the world's fifth and sixth largest economies.

WILL ENHANCE BILATERAL TRADE, RAISE LIVING STANDARDS

Deal's done: India-UK Free Trade

India, UK see more investment, jobs;
to catalyse economies: Modi, Starmer

RAVI DUTTA MISHRA
NEW DELHI, MAY 6

INDIA AND THE United Kingdom ironed out major differences during the latest round of talks in April end at London and announced Tuesday the conclusion of the long-awaited Free Trade Agreement.
Prime Minister Narendra

Modi described the deal as a "historic milestone" and UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer termed it a "landmark trade deal". Both said it would create jobs, enhance bilateral trade, and bring investment into their countries.

Amid fears of potential fresh tariffs under US President Donald Trump and a renewed global push for deal-making, the UK
CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

'HISTORIC... LANDMARK'	
Mutually beneficial, will deepen partnership PM MODI	Fantastic, delivering on our Plan for Change PM STARMER
	
WHAT INDIA GETS	WHAT U.K. GETS
UK to end tariffs on footwear, textiles, automobile components, electrical machinery, minerals and more	India to cut tariffs on whiskey, gin, automotives, cosmetics, lamb, salmon, chocolate, biscuits and more

From "Diwali Deadline" to Final Agreement

- ❑ The FTA was first targeted for completion by Diwali 2022 during British PM Boris Johnson's India visit, where he called Modi his “khaas dost.”
- ❑ Despite missing the initial deadline, the agreement was finally achieved in 2025, marking a major milestone.

UK First Among Western Trade Partners

- ❑ The UK beat the US and EU in sealing an FTA with India — a strategic win for both nations.
- ❑ This puts India in a stronger position for ongoing trade talks with Washington and Brussels, as the UK deal becomes a benchmark for future agreements.

PRODUCTS ON WHICH DUTY WILL BECOME ZERO		
AGRI AND PROCESSED FOODS		
SECTOR	DUTY RANGE	UNDER FTA
Animal products	Upto 20%	99.3% *
Vegetable/Oil products	Upto 20%	99.8% *
Processed food	Upto 70%	99.7% *
*Tariff Lines at Zero duty		
INDUSTRIAL GOODS		
SECTOR	DUTY RANGE	UNDER FTA
Minerals	Upto 8%	Zero Duty
Chemicals	Upto 8%	Zero Duty
Plastic/Rubber	Upto 6%	Zero Duty
Leather/Footwear	Upto 16%	Zero Duty
Wood/Paper	Upto 10%	Zero Duty
Textile/Clothing	Upto 12%	Zero Duty
Headgear/Glass/Ceramic	Upto 12%	Zero Duty
Gems & Jewellery	Upto 4%	Zero Duty
Base Metals	Upto 10%	Zero Duty
Mechanical Machinery	Upto 8%	Zero Duty
Electrical Machinery	Upto 14%	Zero Duty
Transport/Auto	Upto 18%	Zero Duty
Instruments/Clocks	Upto 6%	Zero Duty
Arms/Ammunition	Upto 2%	Zero Duty
Furniture/Sports goods	Upto 4%	Zero Duty
Works of art	0%	Zero Duty

Key Highlights of the UK-India Trade Deal

- ❑ In 2024, UK-India trade stood at £42.6 billion, with UK exports at £17.1 billion and imports from India at £25.5 billion.
- ❑ India ranked as the UK's 11th-largest trading partner in 2024.

Tariff Reductions and Market Access

- ❑ 99% of Indian exports to the UK will enjoy zero-duty access.
- ❑ **Boost for labour-intensive sectors:** textiles, marine products, leather, footwear, sports goods, toys, gems & jewellery, engineering goods, auto parts, and organic chemicals.

UK's Gains:

- ❑ India to slash duties on 90% of tariff lines, with 85% becoming fully tariff-free within 10 years.
- ❑ Lower Indian tariffs on whisky, medical devices, advanced machinery, and lamb to make UK exports more competitive.

Services and Workforce Mobility

- ❑ The deal includes increased quotas for Indian workers to take up employment in specific sectors in the UK, enhancing labour mobility and service trade cooperation.
- ❑ Indian workers in the UK will receive a three-year exemption from social security payments, reducing financial burden and improving mobility opportunities.

EXPLAINING TRADE DEALS

Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA)

Two or more partner countries agree on preferential import tariffs on certain products. Each country has a mutually accepted positive list of tariff lines (products) eligible for low or zero duties. Eg: India-Afghanistan PTA

Free Trade Agreement (FTA)

FTAs are bigger in scope as partner countries offer preferential trade terms

and tariff concessions to each other for a much wider set of products and services. Both sides maintain a negative list of products and services that are excluded. Eg: India-Sri Lanka FTA.

Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA)

CECA is more comprehensive than FTA as it generally covers negotiation on trade tariffs and tariff rate quotas that allow mutually agreed concessional import rate up to a certain quantity. Eg: India-

Malaysia CECA

Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) & Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA)

The most comprehensive of all, CEPA or ECTA, covers negotiation on trade in services and investment and other areas of economic partnership like trade facilitation, customs cooperation, competition, IPR, etc. It can cover regulatory aspects of trade too. Eg: India-Japan CEPA

MAJOR TRADE AGREEMENTS OF INDIA

Free Trade Agreement (FTA) With Neighbouring Countries

- India-Sri Lanka FTA
- India-Nepal Treaty of Trade
- India-Bhutan Agreement on Trade, Commerce, and Transit

A free trade agreement is a comprehensive deal between countries, offering preferential trade terms and tariff concessions, with a negative list excluding specific products and services.

Regional FTA's of India

- **India ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (11):** 10 ASEAN countries + India
- **South Asia Free Trade Agreement (7):** India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and the Maldives
- **Global System of Trade Preferences** (41 countries + India)

India's CECA's and CEPAs

CECA/CEPA is broader than FTAs, addressing regulatory, trade, and economic aspects comprehensively, with CEPA having the widest scope including services, investment, etc while CECA mainly focuses on tariff and TQR rates negotiation.

- CEPA with **UAE, South Korea, Japan**
- CECA with **Singapore, Malaysia**

Others:

- India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA)
- India-Thailand Early Harvest Scheme (EHS)
- India-Mauritius Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA)

An EHS precedes an FTA/CECA/CEPA, where negotiating countries select products for tariff liberalisation, paving way for broader trade agreements and fostering confidence.

Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs)

Partners in a PTA grant preferential access to specific products by lowering duties on agreed tariff lines, maintaining a positive list of products eligible for reduced or zero tariffs.

- **Asia Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA):** Bangladesh, China, India, S. Korea, Lao PDR, Sri Lanka, and Mongolia
- **SAARC Preferential Trading Agreement (SAPTA):** Same as SAFTA
- **India-MERCOSUR PTA:** Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and India
- India's PTA with **Chile, Afghanistan**

FTA

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX

India up three spots to 130 among 193 nations in HDI, but inequality persists

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

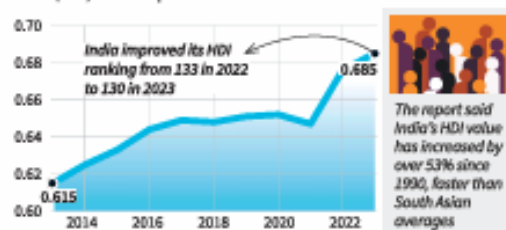
India moved up three spots in the Human Development Index, ranking 130 out of 193 countries in 2023, shows the Human Development Report, 2025, released on Tuesday by the United Nations Development Programme.

With the HDI value improving to 0.685 in 2023 from 0.676 in 2022, India remained in the medium human development category, moving closer to the high human development threshold of 0.700.

The Gross National Income per capita rose over four times to \$9,046.76 in 2023 from \$2,167.22 in 1990, while 135 million In-

Steady progress

According to the latest UNDP report, India's Human Development Index(HDI) score improved from 0.676 in 2022 to 0.685 in 2023



dians escaped multidimensional poverty between 2015-16 and 2019-21.

However, challenges persist, with inequality reducing India's HDI by 30.7%, one of the highest losses in the region, the report said. "While health and education inequality

have improved, income and gender disparities remain significant. Female labour force participation and political representation lag, though recent steps – such as the constitutional amendment reserving one-third of legislative seats for women –

offer promise for transformative change," it added.

Life expectancy in India rose to 72 in 2023 from 58.6 in 1990, the highest since the inception of the index, indicating a strong recovery from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Global slowdown

Underscoring a broader global slowdown in human development the report revealed that the current pace of progress is the slowest since 1990, and India is no exception.

The inequality between low and very high HDI countries had increased for the fourth consecutive year, reversing long-standing progress, the report said.

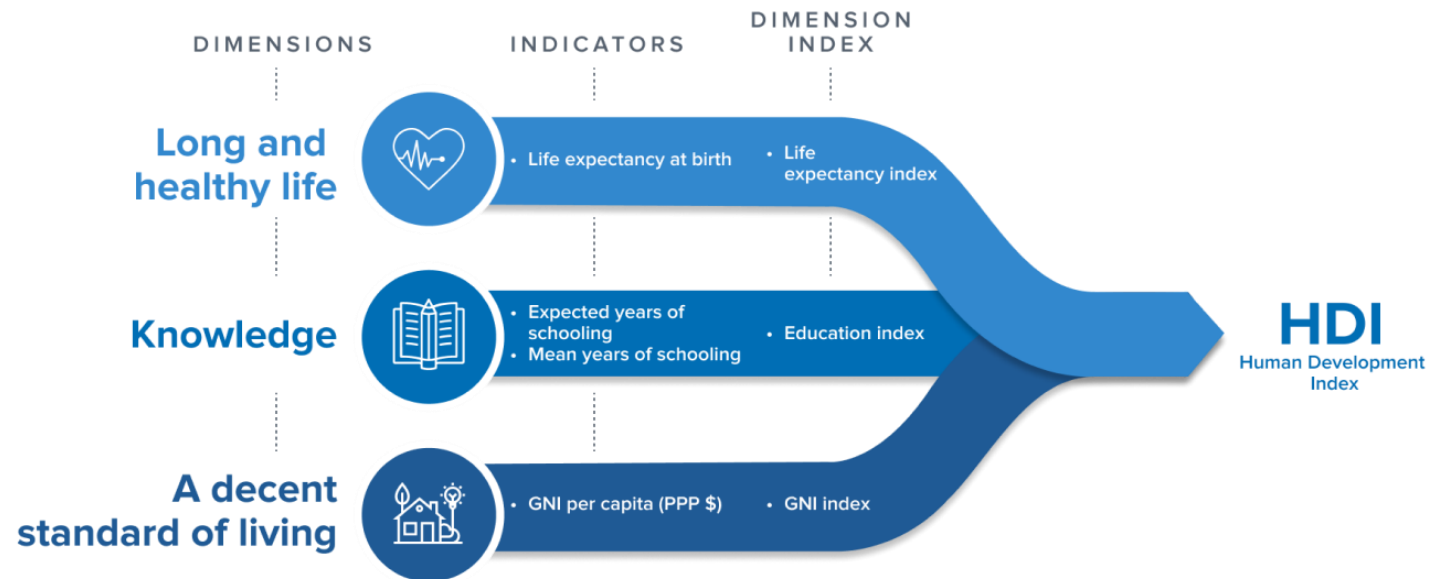
Context

- ❑ India has climbed three positions to **rank 130 out of 193 countries** in the 2023 Human Development Index (HDI), according to the 2025 Human Development Report by the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**.

What is Human Development Index (HDI)?

The Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite statistical measure that assesses a country's average achievements in three key dimensions:

1. Health – Measured by life expectancy at birth
2. Education – Measured by mean years of schooling and expected years of schooling
3. Standard of Living – Measured by Gross National Income (GNI) per capita (PPP adjusted)



Key Highlights of Human Development Report 2025

India-Specific Insights

- ❑ India's 2023 HDI Rank: **130 out of 193** (up from 133 in 2022)
- ❑ **HDI Value (2023):** 0.685 (up from 0.676 in 2022)
- ❑ Category: Still under Medium Human Development; nearing the High Development threshold (0.700)
- ❑ Comparison: Same HDI value as Bangladesh, but with differing indicators;
- ❑ India ahead of Pakistan (168th, 0.544) and Nepal (145th, 0.622).

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT (HDR)

HDR Office releases the following Indices each year -

- Human Development Index
- Planetary-Pressures Adjusted HDI
- Inequality-Adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI)
- Gender Development Index (GDI)
- **Gender Inequality Index (GII)**
- **Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)**





Thank you

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