

**MAINS MATRIX****TABLE OF CONTENT**

1. India's Invasive Species Present a Dilemma: Document or Conserve
2. A verdict that misses the fine print
3. An Anchor for India-U.K. Ties, Economic Partnership
4. The Danger of an Unchecked Pre-Crime Framework
5. Are workers' rights being eroded?
6. Manipur Data Masks Scale of Crimes Against Women in 2023

**India's Invasive Species Present a Dilemma: Document or Conserve****1. The Core Problem & Dilemma**

- **Problem:** Invasive Alien Species (IAS) are destroying local biodiversity, changing landscapes, and driving native species to extinction.
- **The Dilemma:** Should scientists and policymakers first **document** the full effects of all invasive species before acting, or should **documentation and conservation efforts happen in parallel?**

**2. What are Invasive Alien Species (IAS)?**

- Non-native species introduced by humans—accidentally or intentionally—for purposes like:
  - Ornamental fish and decorative shrubs.
  - Solutions to problems (e.g., revegetating land, controlling soil erosion).

- They eventually "take over," displacing native biodiversity and degrading habitats.

**3. Scale of the Problem**

- **Global:** ~37,000 established alien species, with 200 new ones introduced annually. About 3,500 (10%) have negative impacts.
- **India:** An estimated **139 invasive alien species**, mostly insect crop pests.

**4. Key Examples and Their Impacts****A. Terrestrial Plants:**

- ***Lantana camara*:** Introduced as an ornamental shrub. It is unpalatable to large herbivores (like elephants), degrades habitats, and drives human-animal conflict by forcing animals into farmlands.
- ***Prosopis juliflora*:** Introduced to combat soil salinity and erosion. It is a thirsty plant that outcompetes native grasses and trees for water, leading to increased soil salinity and the

breakdown of traditional pastoralist networks.

### B. Aquatic Weeds:

- **Water Hyacinth:** Listed among the world's worst invasive species, found from paddy fields to critical habitats like Kaziranga National Park.
- **Other aquatic invaders:** Alligator weed, duck weed, and water lettuce.

### C. Animals:

- **Insects:** The invasive yellow crazy ant disrupts ecosystems by reducing native ant populations that control pests.
- **Fish: 62% of India's aquatic species are alien**, introduced via the aquarium trade, aquaculture, and sport fishing. They are a major threat to the country's 1,070 species of threatened freshwater fishes.

### 5. Major Challenge: Poor Documentation

- Most invasive species in India lack recorded invasion histories, maps of invaded regions, or data on the extent of their consequences.
- Freshwater invasion biology is "still in its infancy," with a lack of comprehensive studies on:
  - Micro-level distribution.
  - Interactions with native species.

- Impacts at both species and ecosystem levels.

### 6. Levels of Impact

- **Species Level:** Affect native species' ability to survive and reproduce.
- **Population Level:** Reduce population size and genetic diversity, leading to local extinction.
- **Community Level:** Change the composition and function of multi-species communities.
- **Ecosystem Level:** Alter fundamental processes like nutrient cycling and food webs, potentially transforming an entire ecosystem.

### 7. Proposed Solutions and Recommendations

- **Parallel Approach:** Do not wait for complete documentation. Instead, conduct impact studies **in parallel** with preparing conservation plans, using knowledge from other countries.
- **Standardized Methods:** Develop quantitative methods to map the cumulative effects of IAS to identify high-impact species and priority areas for action.
- **Collaboration:** Scientists must step out of silos and consult with diverse stakeholders when designing prevention and control measures.

- **Citizen Science:** Leverage public participation to help create a database of invasive species distribution.

## HOW TO USE IT

### Primary Relevance: GS Paper III (Environment)

The topic falls under "Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation."

#### 1. Biodiversity and Conservation:

- **How to use:** The article provides a perfect case study on a major, often overlooked, threat to biodiversity.
  - **Threat to Native Species:** Use the specific examples to show how IAS are not just a minor nuisance but a primary driver of extinction. For instance, the threat to India's **1,070 species of threatened freshwater fishes** from invasive aquarium fish is a powerful data point.
  - **Ecosystem-Level Changes:** Move beyond just listing species. Explain the multi-level impact: from the **species level** (Lantana outcompeting native plants) to the **ecosystem level** (Prosopis juliflora altering water tables and

soil chemistry). This shows a deeper understanding.

#### 2. Environmental Impact Assessment:

- **How to use:** The introduction of species like *Prosopis juliflora* for "solutions" (erosion control) that later became a problem highlights a critical failure in **environmental foresight**.
  - This can be used to argue for stricter **biosecurity protocols** and **pre-introduction impact assessments** for any non-native species, drawing a parallel with the EIA process for projects.

### Secondary Relevance: GS Paper II (Governance) and GS Paper IV (Ethics)

#### GS Paper II: Government Policies & Interventions

- **How to use:** The "proposed solutions" are essentially a governance roadmap.
  - The call for a "parallel approach" (acting while documenting) and "collaboration" between scientists and stakeholders is a key governance lesson for managing complex environmental problems where waiting for perfect data can be catastrophic.

**GS Paper IV: Ethics**

- **How to use:** The dilemma of "Document or Conserve" presents an **ethical conflict**.
  - On one hand, there's an ethical duty to act based on the **precautionary principle** to prevent irreversible harm.
  - On the other, there's an ethical responsibility to ensure actions are **evidence-based** and do not waste public resources. Balancing these requires practical wisdom.

**A verdict that misses the fine print**

**Theme:** Implications of the Supreme Court's ruling against retrospective environmental clearances (ECs) in India.

**Background****The Verdict**

- **Date:** May 16 (Year not specified, but contextually 2024–25).
- **Court:** Supreme Court of India.
- **Ruling:** Declared *post-facto* or *retrospective environmental clearances (ECs)* **illegal**.
- **Key Message:**

- If a project was built without prior environmental clearance, it **cannot later be legalised**.

**Context and Legal History****A Decade in the Making**

- The debate goes back to **2013**, when the **National Green Tribunal (NGT)** (Southern Bench) stayed the Ministry of Environment's practice of granting *prospective clearances* for already-started projects.
- Case Reference: **S.P. Muthuraman v. Union of India (2015)**.
- Later reaffirmed in **Vanshakti v. Union of India (2025)**.
- For **12 years**, India's infrastructure and real estate sectors evolved under the assumption that **post-facto approvals** could be regularised.

**Impact**

- The Supreme Court's ruling **creates legal uncertainty**.
- Thousands of existing buildings, factories, and public infrastructure projects—built without prior EC—now face **risk of demolition**.

- The verdict leaves a **vacuum** in regulatory and decision-making frameworks.

### ! Where the Verdict Falls Short

#### 1. No Guidance on Implementation:

- The Court did not specify what should happen to existing projects already operating without ECs.
- States are left to **interpret independently**, causing inconsistent actions (e.g., demolition drives).

#### 2. Possible Adverse Effects:

- **Demolition drives** targeting buildings, schools, and industrial units may harm the environment more (dust, debris, emissions).
- May **hurt local economies** and **displace communities**.

#### 3. Overlooking Key Principles:

- Misses the **scale and impact** of violations.
- Ignores **sustainable development** under **Article 21** of the Constitution.

### Regulatory Ambiguities

#### 1. Overlap with Other Laws:

- The Court referenced the **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006**, but was **silent on**:

- **Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification, 2011**
- **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986**

- This has led to **legal ambiguity** for **coastal and port projects**.

#### 2. Other Environmental Laws:

- **Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974**
- **Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981**
- Both impose criminal penalties for violations, making post-facto regularisation nearly impossible.

#### 3. Economic Impact:

- Projects without ECs face **closure** or **penalties**.
- **State Pollution Control Boards** may also face scrutiny.

- Could impact thousands of livelihoods.

### Critique of the Verdict

- While **well-intentioned**, the decision:
  - Creates **regulatory confusion** across states.
  - Risks **economic losses** and **social disruption**.
  - May end up **punishing compliance failures** instead of **reforming systems**.
- Experts warn:
  - Blanket demolition and cancellation will **hurt the environment** and **justice**.
  - The verdict treats all violations equally without considering **intent, magnitude, or impact**.

### Way Forward / Suggestions



#### Balanced Approach Needed

- Adopt a **hybrid compliance model** that:
  1. Upholds the **Court's intent** of enforcing environmental norms.
  2. Incorporates **socio-economic realities**.

3. Promotes **regularisation** under **eco-sensitive** and **time-bound** conditions.

### Policy Recommendations

- Enforce **mandatory environmental assessments** for existing projects.
- Impose **finances and restoration duties**.
- Promote **prevention and reform**, not just **punishment**.
- Strengthen **self-reporting, transparent monitoring, and scientific governance**.

### Conclusion

- The verdict highlights judicial commitment to environmental rule of law but **misses nuanced implementation needs**.
- India requires:
  - **Smarter compliance systems**.
  - **Science-based policy**.
  - **Integrated environmental and economic planning**.

### Key Quote (Sidebar Highlight)

“Though well-intentioned, the Supreme Court verdict declaring post-facto or retrospective environmental clearances illegal has left behind a trail of confusion across States.”

**HOW TO USE IT****Primary Relevance: GS Paper III  
(Environment & Ecology)**

This is the most direct and important fit. The topic falls under "Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment."

**1. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA):**

- **How to use:** The verdict is a landmark judgment on the very soul of the EIA process.
  - **The Principle of Prior Approval:** The Supreme Court's ruling reinforces the **precautionary principle**, which is the foundation of the EIA process. The core idea is to assess environmental damage *before* it occurs, not to regularize it after the fact.
  - **Critique of Post-Facto Approval:** You can use the article to argue that the previous practice of granting post-facto clearances had made the EIA process a mere "**rubber stamp**," encouraging a culture of violation where projects were built first and permissions were sought later.

- **Potential Question:** \*"The Supreme Court's verdict against retrospective environmental clearances reinforces the 'precautionary principle' but poses significant implementation challenges." Discuss."

**2. Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation:**

- **How to use:** The article highlights a critical dilemma in environmental governance.
  - **Unintended Environmental Consequences:** The expert's view that demolition could cause more environmental harm (dust, debris) is a crucial point. It shows that a rigid, one-size-fits-all judicial approach can sometimes be counterproductive to the very environmental goals it seeks to achieve.

**Strong Relevance: GS Paper II  
(Governance, Polity)**

This issue is a classic case study of judicial overreach, policy gaps, and implementation challenges.

**1. Judiciary: Structure, Organization, and Functioning:**

- **How to use:** The verdict demonstrates both the strength

and the limitation of judicial intervention.

- **Judicial Activism:** The Court stepped in to correct a long-standing malpractice by the executive (the Environment Ministry), upholding the rule of law. This is a positive example of judicial activism.
- **Limitations of Judiciary:** The article's core critique is that the Court *only* stated *what* should be done (no post-facto clearance) but not *how* to deal with the existing mess. This lack of a remedial framework creates a **policy vacuum** and **regulatory confusion**, which are governance failures.

## 2. Government Policies and Interventions:

- **How to use:** The "Way Forward" section is a ready-made policy prescription.
  - The call for a "**hybrid compliance model**" that includes fines, restoration duties, and time-bound regularisation is a sophisticated solution that balances environmental integrity

with socio-economic realities.

## An Anchor for India-U.K. Ties, Economic Partnership

### 1. Core Event and Significance

- **Event:** Visit of British Prime Minister Keir Starmer to Mumbai to meet with the Indian Prime Minister.
- **Significance:** The visit aims to anchor and scale up bilateral relations during a period of global geopolitical and economic shifts. It signals a deep commitment from both sides to become "true partners in progress."

### 2. Foundational Agreements

- **CETA (Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement):** Signed in July 2025 (awaiting ratification). Positioned as the strategic foundation for the relationship, it is expected to **double bilateral commerce by 2030**.
- **DCC (Double Contributions Convention):** Exempts employers of Indian professionals in the U.K. from double social security contributions for up to three years, easing skilled worker mobility.

- **Bilateral Investment**

**Treaty:** Negotiations are ongoing, promising to boost U.K. investments in India.

### 3. Key Economic Benefits and Opportunities

- **For India:**

- Lower tariffs on exports (textiles, agricultural goods, pharmaceuticals).
- Access to technology partnerships and global standards.
- Easier access to European markets.
- Increased Foreign Direct Investment (U.K. is India's 6th largest investor).

- **For the U.K.:**

- Reduced duties on exports (Scotch whisky, automobiles).
- Leverage India as a hub for production and global exports.
- Access to a vast and growing market, with opportunities in green finance and digital innovation.

### 4. Strategic Cooperation Roadmaps

- **Vision 2025 Roadmap:** A framework for deeper cooperation in:

- **Defence:** Emphasis on the Defence Industrial Roadmap for joint development and co-production of advanced platforms.
- **Technology:** Collaboration in AI, quantum computing, semiconductors, critical minerals, and advanced materials.
- **Other Areas:** Climate action, education, and mobility.

- **Technology Security Initiative (TSI):** Launched in 2024, it brings together the National Security Advisers of both countries to drive collaboration in sensitive technologies.

### 5. Global Context and Broader Vision

- **Context:** The visit occurs against the backdrop of a fragmenting world economy and restructuring global value chains.
- **Broader Vision:** The partnership aims to combine:
  - Trade liberalisation with joint investments in sustainability.
  - Tariff reductions with mobility frameworks for talent.
  - Defence procurement with co-development of critical technologies.

- **Sectors for Synergy:** Renewables, electric mobility, digital finance, aerospace, and higher education.

## 6. Conclusion

The leaders aim to build a **next-generation partnership**, positioning India and the U.K. not just as economic partners but as **co-architects of a more resilient, open, and technology-driven global order**.

### HOW TO USE IT

#### Primary Relevance: GS Paper II (International Relations)

The topic falls under "India and its relations with other countries" and "Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests."

#### 1. India and its International Relations:

- **How to use:** This partnership is a model of a modern, comprehensive strategic relationship.
  - **Beyond Historical Ties:** While the historical Commonwealth connection is a backdrop, the article shows the relationship has been repurposed for the 21st century, focusing on **trade, technology, and strategic autonomy**.

- **A Template for Relations with the West:** The India-UK model can be contrasted with India's relations with the US (more strategic, often complex) and the EU (slower-moving). It shows India's ability to craft deep, specific partnerships with key Western nations.

#### 2. Bilateral Groupings & Agreements:

- **How to use:** The specific agreements mentioned are concrete examples of how diplomacy translates into tangible outcomes.
  - **CETA (Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement):** Use this as a prime example of India's new-generation trade agreements, focusing on **doubling bilateral commerce** and integrating value chains. This moves beyond generic statements about "boosting trade."
  - **Defence Industrial Roadmap:** This is a significant step up from a simple buyer-seller defence relationship. It exemplifies the goal of **"Atmanirbhar Bharat" (Self-Reliant India)** in defence through joint

development and co-production, reducing import dependency.

## Secondary Relevance: GS Paper III (Economy & Security)

### 1. Indian Economy:

- **How to use:** The economic benefits are clearly outlined.
  - **Boosting Exports:** Lower tariffs for Indian textiles, pharmaceuticals, and agricultural goods.
  - **Attracting Investment:** The U.K. as the 6th largest investor, with a Bilateral Investment Treaty in the works.
  - **Skilled Mobility:** The **Double Contributions Convention (DCC)** is a specific policy that directly benefits Indian professionals and the IT sector, a key source of remittances.

### 2. Security:

- **How to use:** The **Technology Security Initiative (TSI)** is a critical, high-level forum.
  - Bringing National Security Advisers together for collaboration in sensitive tech (AI, quantum,

semiconductors) indicates a very high level of **strategic trust**. This is about securing future technological ecosystems and is a key component of national security in the digital age.

## The Danger of an Unchecked Pre-Crime Framework

### 1. Core Argument & Central Metaphor

- **Argument:** India's preventive detention laws create a "pre-crime framework" that operates outside normal constitutional safeguards, severely undermining fundamental rights like liberty, equality, and due process.
- **Central Metaphor:** Article 22(3)-(7) of the Constitution is described as a "**Bermuda Triangle**" or a "**Devil's Island**," where fundamental rights vanish, isolating individuals from the protective "**Golden Triangle**" of Articles 14, 19, and 21.

### 2. The Legal and Constitutional Problem

- **Preventive Detention Defined:** The power to detain individuals to *prevent* them from committing a crime in the future, based on suspicion, not proof of a committed act.

- **Key Legal Distinction:** The Supreme Court has repeatedly emphasized the vital difference between:
  - **"Public Order":** A broader threat to the community, which *may* justify preventive detention.
  - **"Law and Order":** An individual, isolated crime, which should be handled through regular criminal prosecution and **should not** justify preventive detention.
- **Current Issue:** Laws like the Kerala Anti-Social Activities (Prevention) Act (KAAPA) are criticized for having overly broad definitions, allowing them to be misused for routine "law and order" issues, thus circumventing the bail process and criminal trial.

### 3. Historical Context: A Colonial Relic

- **Origin:** Preventive detention laws date back to the **Bengal Regulations of 1818**, used by the British to maintain colonial control.
- **Continuation:** Despite Britain using such measures only in wartime, independent India retained this "colonial relic" and embedded it into the Constitution due to the context of Partition and unrest.

- **Constituent Assembly Debates:** The provision was fiercely debated, with warnings that it could create a **"Police-Constable Constitution."**

### 4. Key Judicial Precedents: A Mixed Legacy

- **Restrictive Precedents (Limiting Rights):**
  - **A.K. Gopalan vs State of Madras (1950):** Established that preventive detention is an exception to Article 21 and is governed solely by the procedures in **Article 22**, effectively insulating it from challenges based on other fundamental rights.
  - **A.K. Roy vs Union of India (1982):** Reinforced the *Gopalan* position, ruling that preventive detention laws cannot be challenged for violating Articles 14, 19, or 21, and are not subject to the proportionality test.
- **Protective Precedents (Upholding Rights):**
  - **Maneka Gandhi vs Union of India (1973):** Established that "procedure established by law" under Article 21 must be fair, just, and reasonable, and that fundamental rights should

be read together.  
However, this principle was not applied to preventive detention in *A.K. Roy*.

- ***Dhanyu M. vs State of Kerala (2025), Rekha vs State of Tamil Nadu, etc.***: Recent judgments reiterate that preventive detention is an "**exceptional measure**" to be used **sparingly** and must not be a substitute for ordinary criminal prosecution.

### 5. The "Minority Report" Parallel

- The article uses the film *Minority Report* as a metaphor for the dangers of preventive detention.
- **Parallels:**
  - **Punishment for Future Acts:** Individuals are detained for crimes they have not yet committed.
  - **Bypass of Justice:** Denial of fair trial, presumption of innocence, and the right to be heard (*audi alteram partem*).
  - **Fallible Predictors:** The "subjective satisfaction" of detaining authorities is likened to the film's fallible "Precogs," prone to error and misuse,

especially against dissenters and political opponents.

### 6. Dangers and Consequences

- **Erosion of Fundamental Rights:** Creates a zone where liberty can be curtailed without due process.
- **Executive Overreach:** Becomes a "seductive" and routine tool for the executive, leading to atrophy in proper police investigation and prosecutorial skills.
- **Tool for Silencing Dissent:** Susceptible to misuse against political opposition, protesters, and dissenters.

### 7. Conclusion and Call for Reform

- **Urgent Need:** To re-examine the constitutional validity of the precedents set by *A.K. Gopalan* and *A.K. Roy*.
- **Recommendations:**
  1. Confine preventive detention strictly to grave threats like terrorism and transnational drug cartels.
  2. Stop its use as a routine administrative tool.
- **Final Warning:** Without reform, this "pre-crime framework" will continue to undermine the very constitutional values it is supposed to protect.

### HOW TO USE IT

## Primary Relevance: GS Paper II (Governance, Constitution, Polity)

The topic falls under "Indian Constitution—Historical Underpinnings, Evolution, Features" and "Separation of Powers."

### 1. Fundamental Rights:

- **How to use:** The article provides a sharp critique of a constitutional provision that creates an exception to Fundamental Rights.
  - **The "Bermuda Triangle" Metaphor:** This is a powerful way to describe how **Articles 14 (Equality), 19 (Freedom of Speech), and 21 (Life and Liberty)** are rendered ineffective for a person under preventive detention, as per the *A.K. Gopalan* and *A.K. Roy* judgments. This shows a deep understanding of the hierarchy and interplay of fundamental rights.
  - **Judicial Interpretation:** The conflict between the restrictive interpretation in *A.K. Gopalan* (preventive detention is a separate code) and the expansive interpretation in *Maneka*

*Gandhi* (fundamental rights are interconnected) is a classic legal debate. The article argues that the Court has failed to apply the "**golden triangle**" framework from *Maneka Gandhi* to preventive detention.

### 2. Indian Constitution—Historical Underpinnings:

- **How to use:** The origin of these laws is a critical point.
  - **Colonial Legacy:** Highlighting that preventive detention is a "**colonial relic**" from the Bengal Regulations of 1818, retained due to the circumstances of Partition, adds a powerful historical dimension to the critique. It frames the issue as one of continuing a tool of state control from the colonial era.

### Strong Relevance: GS Paper IV (Ethics, Integrity and Aptitude)

The entire issue is riddled with ethical dilemmas for a public servant.

#### 1. Ethics in Governance:

- **How to use:** The misuse of laws like KAAPA for routine "law and order" issues raises serious ethical questions.

- **Probity and Impartiality:** A District Magistrate or Police Commissioner using preventive detention to bypass the cumbersome process of a criminal trial lacks **probity**. It is an abuse of power for administrative convenience.
- **Conscience vs. Law:** A civil servant might face a conflict between their legal duty to enforce such laws and their ethical conscience, which recognizes the violation of fundamental rights. This tests their **moral reasoning**.

## 2. Emotional Intelligence:

- **How to use:** Applying such a harsh law without empathy for the individual's liberty and the principle of "**innocent until proven guilty**" shows a lack of emotional intelligence and compassion in governance.

### Are workers' rights being eroded?

## 1. Recent Industrial Accidents (Case Studies)

- **Sigachi Industries, Telangana (June 30):**
  - A chemical reactor burst, killing 40 workers and injuring many others.

- The reactor was operating at twice the permissible temperature.
- No alarms sounded, and no safety officer intervened.
- Machinery was outdated, maintenance was ignored, and worker complaints were dismissed.
- Post-accident, there was no on-site ambulance, and unregistered workers were likely present.

- **Goldreich Fireworks, Sivakasi (July 1):**

- An explosion killed 8 workers.

- **Bomare Thermal Power Station, Chennai (September 30):**

- A 10-meter-high coal-handling plant collapsed, killing 9 workers.
- The cause was likely faulty design, poor scaffolding, or inadequate anchoring.

- **Statistical Context:**

- The British Safety Council estimates **one in four fatal workplace accidents worldwide occur in India**.
- This is considered a conservative figure due to widespread

underreporting, especially among contract and informal workers.

## 2. Causes of Workplace Accidents

- **Primary Cause:** Employer failure to prevent accidents, not inevitability.
- **Prevention Means:** Eliminating hazards through proper design, maintenance, safety systems, protective procedures, and training.
- **Root Causes (ILO Confirmation):**
  - Management cutting costs on safety to maximize profit.
  - Underlying employer practices like long hours, inadequate rest, excessive work pressure, and low wages forcing workers to take double shifts.
  - Accidents are rarely random; "human error" often stems from these poor practices.

## 3. Laws Protecting Workers in India

- **Historical:** The first Factories Act was enacted in 1881. The **Factories Act, 1948** became the cornerstone of worker protection post-Independence.
- **Current Problem:**

- The legal framework is outdated and designed for a manufacturing-based economy, not the current reality of informal and contract labor.
- **Laws do not hold employers criminally accountable.**
- Compensation often comes as *ex gratia* payments from public funds, which absolves employers of responsibility and turns compensation into charity.

## 4. The Current Situation: Erosion of Rights

- Since the 1990s, labour protections have been systematically dismantled.
- **Employer Demands:** "Flexibility" to hire, fire, and extract work without oversight.
- **Government Actions:**
  - Weakening inspections and diluting laws.
  - Branding safety regulations as "obstacles to business."
  - Examples: Maharashtra's (2015) attempt at "self-certification" and the "Ease of Doing Business" campaign pushing states to weaken protections.

- **The OSH Code, 2020:**

- Seeks to replace the Factories Act.
- Would shift health and safety from a **statutory right** to an **executive discretion** (from a right to a government generosity).

- **Other Setbacks:**

- Extension of working hours (a practice started during COVID) made permanent in Karnataka in 2023, increasing daily limits and reducing rest periods.

## 5. Conclusion & Author's Argument

- **Author:** Gautam Mody, General Secretary of the New Trade Union Initiative.
- **Key Argument:** While safe workplaces enhance productivity and profits, India's business culture focuses on extracting maximum from labour with minimal responsibility.
- **Required Solutions:**
  1. The state must restore workplace safety as a non-negotiable right.
  2. Reinstate inspection as a form of enforcement.
  3. Hold employers **criminally liable** for preventable deaths.

## How to use it

### Primary Relevance: GS Paper II (Governance, Social Justice)

This is the strongest fit, as the issue revolves around the government's duty to protect its citizens and implement laws effectively.

### 1. Government Policies and Interventions for Development in various sectors:

- **How to use:** The article provides a sharp critique of recent government policy shifts.
  - **Policy Dilution:** The move from the **Factories Act, 1948** to the **Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions (OSH) Code, 2020** is a key example. The argument that it shifts safety from a "statutory right to an executive discretion" is a powerful critique of policy dilution in the name of ease of doing business.
  - **Evaluation of "Ease of Doing Business":** You can use this to argue that a myopic focus on deregulation, as seen in Maharashtra's "self-certification" model, can have severe human costs, undermining the social justice objectives of the state.

## 2. Welfare Schemes for Vulnerable Sections of the population:

- **How to use:** Industrial workers, especially in the informal and contract sector, are a "vulnerable section."
  - The article highlights the failure of the state to protect this group. The practice of **ex gratia payments** from public funds, instead of holding employers criminally liable, is a failure of the accountability mechanism.

### Primary Relevance: GS Paper III (Economy & Disaster Management)

#### 1. Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment:

- **How to use:** This issue is at the heart of the debate on India's development model.
  - **Quality of Employment:** The push for "flexibility" (hiring, firing, long hours) reflects a model that prioritizes cost-cutting over the creation of **decent work and quality employment**. This has long-term negative consequences

for human capital and sustainable growth.

- **Informalization:** The high number of accidents among contract and informal workers points to the perils of the increasing **informalization of the workforce**, which remains largely outside the protective umbrella of labour laws.

#### 2. Disaster and Disaster Management:

- **How to use:** Industrial accidents are **man-made disasters**.
  - The article states that these are not "accidents" but predictable outcomes of employer negligence. This frames them as a **failure of disaster risk reduction** and a lack of **preparedness** (e.g., no on-site ambulance at Sigachi). Proper enforcement of safety laws is the most critical form of **disaster prevention** in the industrial sector.

### Manipur Data Masks Scale of Crimes Against Women in 2023

#### 1. Core Argument / Anomaly

The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data for 2023 shows a massive surge in overall criminal activity in

Manipur due to the ethnic conflict, but it reports a **significant decline in crimes against women**, which contradicts documented evidence and reports of widespread sexual violence.

## 2. Context: The Manipur Ethnic Conflict

- **Parties Involved:** Meitei community (Imphal Valley) vs. Kuki tribe (hill districts).
- **Timeline:** Broke out in May 2023 and was ongoing at the time of writing.
- **Impact:** Hundreds killed and nearly 70,000 people displaced.
- **Supreme Court Observation:** Noted "systemic" and "unprecedented magnitude" of sexual violence against women in July 2023.

## 3. NCRB Data Analysis: Conflicting Trends

### A. Surge in General Crime (2022 vs. 2023)

The data shows a dramatic escalation in most crime categories, confirming the intensity of the conflict:

- **Violent & Destructive Crimes:**
  - Arson: 27 → 6,208 (+22,874%)
  - Rioting: 84 → 5,421 (+6,353%)
  - Murder: 47 → 151 (+221.3%)

- Attempt to Murder: 153 → 818 (+434.6%)

- **Property Crimes:**

- Dacoity: 1 → 1,215 (+121,200%)
- Robbery: 7 → 330 (+4,614.3%)
- Burglary: 39 → 183 (+369.2%)

- **Other Crimes:**

- Promoting Enmity: 15 → 473 (+3,053.3%)

### B. Reported Decline in Crimes Against Women

Despite the overall surge, key categories of crimes against women showed a decrease:

- **Overall:** 30% decline in cognisable crimes against women.
- **Rape:** 42 → 27 cases (-35.7%)
- **Assault to Outrage Modesty:** 67 → 66 cases (-1.5%)
- **Sexual Harassment:** 5 → 1 case (-80%)
- **Rape of Minor Girls (POCSO):** 44 → 43 cases (-2.3%)

## 4. Contradictory Evidence of Violence Against Women

Multiple sources document numerous incidents that contradict the NCRB's reported decline:

- **Kuki-Zo Legislators (July 2023):** Statement mentioned at

least four incidents of rape or murder of women from their community since May 2023.

- **Specific FIRs:** A reported incident of a mob of 100-200 people torturing women at a car wash in Imphal East (May 2023).
- **Appeals to NCW:** The National Commission for Women was apprised of multiple incidents, including harassment at Manipur University and a nursing institute, and the alleged rape and murder of four women in Imphal.

### 5. Conclusion: The Data Discrepancy Explained

- The juxtaposition of a surge in general crime with a decline in reported crimes against women points to **massive underreporting**.
- While underreporting is a nationwide issue due to social stigma, the conflict in Manipur has **accentuated this problem starkly**, meaning the official data does not reflect the true scale of the violence suffered by women during the conflict.

### How to use it

#### Primary Relevance: GS Paper I (Indian Society)

This is the most direct fit, as it deals with the **role of women** and the **social impact of conflict**.

#### 1. Role of Women and Women's Organization:

- **How to use:** The data discrepancy is a stark example of how women become the "invisible" victims in conflict zones.

- **Underreporting of Sexual Violence:** The core argument is that crimes against women are massively underreported, especially during ethnic conflicts, due to stigma, fear, and the breakdown of law and order. This highlights the **vulnerability of women** and the failure of systems to protect them or record their suffering.

- **Weaponization of Sexual Violence:** In conflicts, sexual violence is often used as a weapon against the "enemy" community. The Supreme Court's observation of "systemic" and "unprecedented" violence points to this, making it a critical dimension of the conflict beyond just numbers.

- **Potential Question:** "In conflict situations, women often bear the brunt of the violence, yet their suffering remains largely unrecorded." Discuss with a recent example."

#### Primary Relevance: GS Paper II (Governance & Social Justice)

This issue is a critical test of governance, institutional integrity, and the delivery of justice.

### 1. Governance:

- **How to use:** The NCRB data controversy reveals a **governance and transparency failure**.
  - **Data as a Tool for Accountability:** Reliable data is the bedrock of sound policy. The contradiction between the NCRB's numbers and ground reports (from the Supreme Court, legislators, FIRs) shows how data can be manipulated or rendered unreliable, preventing accountability and effective state response.
  - **Failure of Institutions:** The breakdown is multi-layered: local police (recording), state government (reporting), and national agencies (compiling). This case study can be used to discuss the challenges of governance during internal strife.
- **Potential Question:** \*"The quality of governance is often reflected in the reliability of its

data." Critically examine this statement in the Indian context."

### 2. Welfare Schemes for Vulnerable Sections:

- **How to use:** Women in a conflict zone are a supremely vulnerable section. The state's apparent inability to even accurately record the crimes against them indicates a catastrophic failure in its protective and welfare functions.

#### Secondary Relevance: GS Paper III (Internal Security)

The Manipur conflict itself is a major internal security challenge.

#### 1. Challenges to Internal Security:

- **How to use:** The surge in arson, rioting, and murder is a direct indicator of a **severe breakdown of internal security**.
  - The data on **+22,874% in Arson** and **+6,353% in Rioting** provides quantitative evidence of the scale of the conflict, which can be used to analyze the causes and consequences of such ethnic strife.