THE DAILY UPSC BRIEF

HIGH-YIELD DAILY SOURCES & ANALYSIS | 21 SEPTEMBER 2026

TODAY'S COVERAGE

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HOW TO READ THIS BRIEF

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GS PAPER 1: Indian Society & Diversity

A Musician's Killing in Delhi Revives an Old, Unresolved Question on Northeast Safety

Why in news: The killing of a 54-year-old Manipuri musician in a Delhi neighbourhood has revived long-standing complaints from Northeast residents of racial slurs and harassment elsewhere in India — and renewed scrutiny of a 2014 committee's recommendations that were never fully implemented.

Key Details:

- **The immediate trigger:** Residents from the Northeast in the neighbourhood say they have faced racial slurs, stereotyping and harassment for years, leaving them feeling like outsiders despite living and working there for decades.
- **Not a new complaint:** Similar concerns followed the 2014 killing of Arunachal Pradesh student Nido Tania in Delhi, after which the Home Ministry set up the Bezbaruah Committee to recommend safeguards.
- **What that committee proposed:** Its July 2014 report recommended nodal police stations, a dedicated helpline and legal aid, and — most significantly — new criminal provisions to specifically punish racial discrimination and racial insults.
- **What actually happened:** Delhi Police did set up a dedicated Special Police Unit for the North East Region with a helpline; the proposed criminal-law amendment was repeatedly promised but never enacted.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **A law that came and went unused:** The Bezbaruah Committee's proposed provisions were still 'under examination' as late as 2017, and were omitted entirely when the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita replaced the Indian Penal Code in 2023-24.
- **Scale of migration this affects:** Several residents from the Northeast in the affected neighbourhood have lived and worked there for over two decades, similar to migration patterns to other Indian metros for education and jobs.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use the Bezbaruah Committee's unimplemented criminal-law recommendation (never carried into the BNS) as a concrete example of the gap between a policy committee's recommendations and legislative follow-through.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. Discrimination faced by people from India's Northeast in other parts of the country has been documented by official committees for over a decade. Examine why such recommendations often see partial implementation, using a specific example. (250 words)

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** BNS: Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita | IPC: Indian Penal Code

GS PAPER 2: Polity, Governance & International Relations

Karnataka Grants Tulu 'Additional Official Language' Status — But a Cabinet Decision Isn't Enough

Why in news: Karnataka's Cabinet has decided to accord Tulu 'additional official (administrative) language' status in Dakshina Kannada and Udupi districts, but the decision needs a legislative amendment before it takes legal effect.

Key Details:

- **What was decided:** Official government work in the two districts can now use Tulu; ₹82 lakh a year has been allocated for translation, training and language-usage purposes.
- **Why it isn't final yet:** Karnataka's own Official Language Act, 1963 currently names only Kannada; the Act must be amended and notified by the Governor before Tulu's new status takes legal effect.
- **The precedent followed:** A government committee studied how Andhra Pradesh and Telangana used the same mechanism — amending their own State Official Language Acts — to give Urdu second-official-language status in parts of those States.
- **Not the same as Eighth Schedule status:** Tulu is recognised as an independent language by the Census Commissioner but remains outside the Constitution's Eighth Schedule — a separate, higher bar.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **The constitutional basis:** Article 345 lets a State Legislature adopt by law any language(s) in use in the State (or Hindi) for official work, subject to Articles 346-347 — this is the provision Karnataka must now use.
- **A long queue of pending claims:** The Eighth Schedule has held exactly 22 languages since 2004; 38 languages, including Tulu, Rajasthani and Bhojpuri, currently have pending demands for inclusion, with no agreed objective criteria to evaluate them.

Adding a Language to Administration — Two Different Bars

Route	Legal Basis	Example
State 'additional official language'	Article 345 + amending the State's own Official Language Act	Telangana/AP: Urdu; Karnataka: Tulu (pending amendment)
Eighth Schedule inclusion	Constitutional amendment by Parliament	71st Amendment (1992): Konkani, Manipuri, Nepali

How to use in UPSC Mains: Keep Article 345's state-level 'official language' route distinct from Eighth Schedule inclusion, which requires a constitutional amendment — a common Prelims trap is treating the two as the same threshold.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ

Q. With reference to the official language provisions of the Constitution, consider the following statements:
1. Article 345 empowers a State Legislature to adopt any language in use in the State, or Hindi, for official purposes.
2. Inclusion of a language in the Eighth Schedule requires an amendment to the Constitution.
3. A language must first be included in the Eighth Schedule before a State can adopt it as an official language under Article 345.
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) 1 and 2 only

Explanation: Article 345 lets a State adopt any language in use in the State (or Hindi) for official work — this is a State-level legislative act, not a constitutional one (statement 1 correct). Adding a language to the Eighth Schedule does require a constitutional amendment (statement 2 correct). However, Eighth Schedule inclusion is not a precondition for Article 345 — States have granted official-language status to languages outside the Eighth Schedule, as Karnataka is now doing with Tulu (statement 3 false).

Related PYQ: UPSC Prelims 2024, GS Paper I: "The Constitution (71st Amendment) Act, 1992 amends the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution to include which of the following languages? 1. Konkani 2. Manipuri 3. Nepali 4. Maithili. Select the correct answer using the code given below." (a) 1, 2 and 3 (b) 1, 2 and 4 (c) 1, 3 and 4 (d) 2, 3 and 4 — Answer: (a). Same core idea as today's story: how a language actually gets added to the Eighth Schedule — the higher constitutional bar Tulu has not yet crossed, distinct from the State-level status it just received.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** AP: Andhra Pradesh

A Delhi Protest Against Caste-Equity Rules Is Called Off — But the Debate Isn't

Why in news: A planned Jantar Mantar 'mahapanchayat' by upper-caste groups demanding a complete rollback of the UGC's stayed 2026 caste-equity draft regulations was called off after Union Ministers met the delegation, even as an IIT Bombay caste-discrimination case keeps the underlying debate alive.

Key Details:

- **What the protesters wanted:** The Kshatriya Karni Sena and 'Savarna' group coalitions demanded a complete rollback of the UGC's January 2026 caste-equity draft regulations, already stayed by the Supreme Court after earlier campus protests.
- **How it was resolved for now:** Union Ministers J.P. Nadda and Jitendra Singh met the delegation the night before; the government agreed to a further meeting in three weeks and a 'detailed study' of the demands.
- **The case keeping this alive:** A Dalit IIT Bombay student's death by suicide, amid allegations of caste-based abuse by a faculty member, has renewed scrutiny of caste discrimination inside premier institutions.
- **The regulatory gap at issue:** Existing 2012 rules already require institutions to set up Equal Opportunity Cells, but the stayed 2026 draft would add enforcement teeth — fixed complaint timelines and sanctions like grant withdrawal.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **What 2012 rules already require:** The UGC (Promotion of Equity in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2012 mandate Equal Opportunity Cells and SC/ST cells in every higher-education institution, but attach no penalties for non-compliance.
- **What the stayed 2026 draft adds:** Mandatory Equal Opportunity Centres, multi-tier equity committees, fixed response timelines for complaints, and direct accountability — including possible grant withdrawal — for heads of institutions.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Contrast the 2012 Regulations' advisory-only design with the 2026 draft's enforcement mechanisms to argue that India's equity-in-education gap is one of enforcement, not of rule-writing.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. Whether National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) can enforce the implementation of constitutional reservation for the Scheduled Castes in the religious minority institutions? Examine. (10 marks)

Related PYQ: UPSC Mains 2018, GS Paper II, Q.2: "Whether National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) can enforce the implementation of constitutional reservation for the Scheduled Castes in the religious minority institutions? Examine." (10 marks). Same core idea as today's story: the enforcement power (or lack of it) of statutory/constitutional bodies overseeing caste-equity safeguards in educational institutions — reused here as the question_block's own theme rather than a separate citation.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** UGC: University Grants Commission

Nepal's New Government Wants a $5-Billion Reset With India After the Bhotekoshi Floods

Why in news: A month after devastating Bhotekoshi floods, Nepal's Finance Minister visited Delhi seeking reconstruction support and pushing to revise a decade-old trade treaty and unlock long-pending overflight rights, as Nepal's new government seeks to move past old bilateral tensions.

Key Details:

- **The scale of damage:** Nepal's disaster authority estimates $1.8 billion in direct damages and $900 million in losses at replacement value; actual reconstruction needs are put at $4.7-5 billion over 3-5 years since Nepal wants to 'build back better', not simply replace.
- **What Nepal is asking India for:** Grant-based assistance for public infrastructure (roads, bridges, housing) and concessional credit for hydropower and transmission lines, alongside support from the AIIB, IMF and World Bank.
- **Two long-pending asks revived:** Nepal wants overflight rights for its Pokhara and Bhairahawa airports — denied for a decade citing security concerns near a nearby Indian airbase — and a revision of the 2009 bilateral Trade Treaty.
- **The diplomatic framing:** Nepal's Finance Minister said the 'old era of jingoism' equating Nepali nationalism with anti-Indianism is over, ahead of PM Balen Shah's first bilateral visit abroad, expected in India before year-end.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **The 2015 earthquake precedent:** After the 2015 earthquake, India gave Nepal about $250 million in grant assistance and a $750 million line of credit — the benchmark Nepal is measuring today's ask against.
- **A boundary dispute still unresolved:** Nepal's 2020 constitutional map claiming the Kalapani-Lipulekh-Limpiyadhura area (about 335 sq km) remains disputed; India rejects it as an unsupported 'artificial enlargement' of claims, and no Boundary Working Group talks have been held since 2014.

Nepal's Bhotekoshi Reconstruction Ask, at a Glance

Metric	Estimate
Direct damages	$1.8 billion
Additional losses	$900 million
Reconstruction needs (3-5 yrs, resilience-focused)	$4.7-5 billion
India's 2015 earthquake assistance (for comparison)	$250 million grant + $750 million line of credit

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use the unresolved Kalapani-Lipulekh dispute as the necessary counterweight to any 'reset in ties' narrative — bilateral warmth on reconstruction and connectivity coexists with an unresolved boundary question that Boundary Working Group talks haven't touched since 2014.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. India's disaster and reconstruction assistance to neighbouring countries is often described as an instrument of its 'neighbourhood-first' policy. Discuss, with reference to India's assistance to Nepal after a recent natural disaster. (250 words)

Related PYQ: UPSC Mains 2020, Political Science & International Relations (Optional), Paper II, Q.5(d): "Discuss the future prospects of Indo-Nepal relations in the context of the recent publication of new Nepalese map wrongly claiming Indian territory." (10 marks). Same core idea as today's story: the Kalapani-Lipulekh boundary dispute remains the structural strain on India-Nepal ties even as both sides pursue reconstruction cooperation and a "reset" in the relationship.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** AIIB: Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank | IMF: International Monetary Fund

GS PAPER 3: Economy, Trade, S&T & Governance

India's Draft EU Trade Deal Could Quietly Rewrite Its Copyright Law

Why in news: Two IP-law academics warn that the draft copyright chapter of the proposed India-EU Free Trade Agreement could force India to weaken long-standing copyright exceptions for students, libraries and Internet service providers.

Key Details:

- **The technical trap:** The draft FTA imports the WIPO Copyright Treaty's enforcement mandates on anti-circumvention and rights-management as binding obligations, but excludes the WCT from the FTA's own 'National Treatment' clause — dropping the treaty's built-in public-interest exceptions.
- **Who this could hit first:** Engineering students and security researchers currently allowed to bypass digital locks for lawful interoperability or vulnerability testing (Section 65A) could face civil and criminal liability instead.
- **A second exposure:** Internet Service Providers' safe-harbour protection for temporary copies made during routine data routing (Sections 52(1)(b)/(c)) could also be undermined, exposing them to rightsholder litigation.
- **Libraries and archives too:** Format-shifting exceptions letting libraries preserve fragile or out-of-print works digitally could be overridden by digital-rights-management controls under a strict anti-circumvention regime.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **The precedent at risk:** The 2016 'DU Photocopy Case' held that reproducing course-pack extracts for instruction is protected under Section 52(1)(i) as long as it is 'justified by the purpose' of teaching — a fair-dealing principle the draft FTA's rigid enforcement mandate could squeeze out.
- **The negotiators' recommended fix:** IP experts want India's negotiators to insist on re-inserting the WCT into the FTA's National Treatment clause, preserving India's existing statutory flexibilities.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use this as a live example of how an FTA's IP chapter can functionally override domestic law even without a formal legislative amendment — same mechanism as TRIPS-driven changes to India's Patents Act after 1995.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. Examine the implications of Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) on Indian Economy. (15 marks)

Related PYQ: UPSC Mains 2016, Economics Optional, Paper II, Section A, Q.3(c): "Examine the implications of Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) on Indian Economy." (15 marks). Same core idea as today's story: a binding international IP framework reshaping India's domestic legal regime — reused here as the question_block's own theme rather than a separate citation.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** WCT: WIPO Copyright Treaty | TRIPS: Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights | ISP: Internet Service Provider

India's 'Assembly Trap': Manufacturing Success Still Runs on Chinese Supply Chains

Why in news: A new trade analysis finds India's manufacturing and export growth remains deeply dependent on China-centric, import-heavy supply chains, coining the term 'assembly trap' for a self-reliance push that hasn't yet built deep domestic component ecosystems.

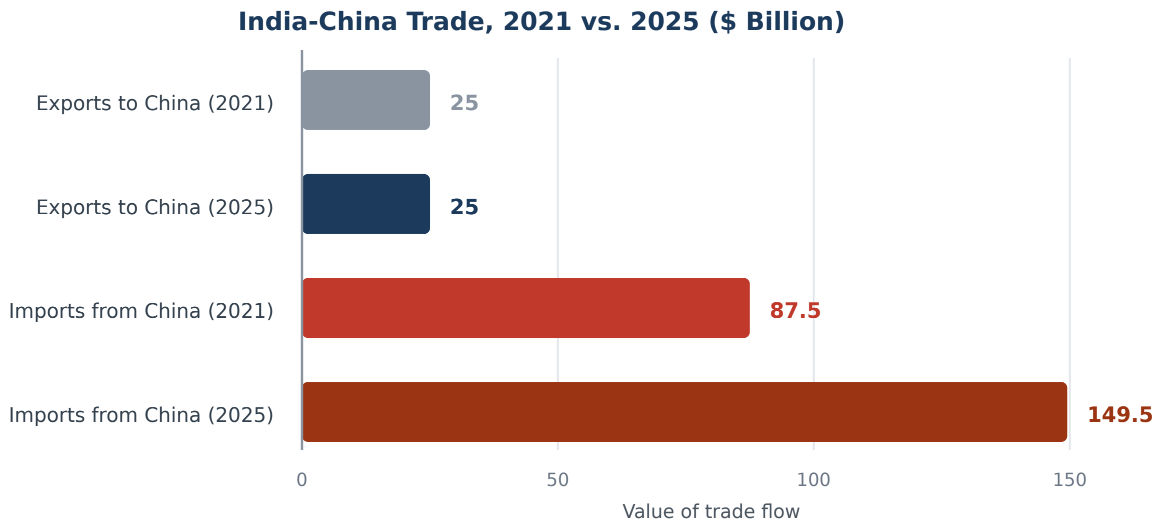
Key Details:

- **The trade imbalance:** Bilateral trade touched \$167.6 billion in 2025, but exports to China stayed roughly flat 2021-2025 while imports rose about 71%, from \$87.5 billion to \$149.5 billion.

- **What India is actually importing:** Nearly 70% of India's imports from China are intermediate goods and another 22% are capital goods — not finished consumer products, pointing to structural dependence, not just consumer demand.
- **The mobile-phone paradox:** India has become a major mobile-phone assembly hub, yet the share of imported parts and components in that basket rose sharply from 3.3% (2022) to 10.1% (2025) — assembly success built on imported inputs.
- **The suggested fix:** The analysis calls for calibrated tariffs on components (not blanket restrictions) designed to nurture domestic manufacturing segments, alongside continued access to global value chains.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Import concentration deepening:** The top-5 import categories from China rose from $19 billion (2021) to $34.6 billion (2025) — nearly a quarter of all Chinese imports, concentrated in electronics-related categories like telecom equipment, laptops and integrated circuits.
- **The PLI scheme's scale:** India's Production-Linked Incentive scheme has a total approved outlay of about ₹1.97 lakh crore across 14 sectors, with investment realised rising past ₹2.4 lakh crore and 14.15 lakh jobs generated by 2026.



How to use in UPSC Mains: Use the mobile-phone assembly paradox (rising imported-component share despite export success) as concrete evidence that PLI has driven assembly, not yet deep component manufacturing — a nuanced, examiner-friendly critique rather than dismissing PLI outright.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ

Q. With reference to India's trade with China, consider the following statements:
1. India's exports to China have grown at a faster pace than its imports from China between 2021 and 2025.
2. A majority of India's imports from China consist of intermediate and capital goods rather than finished consumer goods.
3. The share of imported components in India's mobile-phone manufacturing has declined since 2022.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 2 only (b) 1 and 3 only (c) 2 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a) 2 only

Explanation: India's exports to China stayed roughly flat while imports rose sharply — the opposite of statement 1. Nearly 70% of imports from China are intermediate goods and another 22% capital goods, together the bulk of the import basket (statement 2 correct). The imported-component share in mobile-phone manufacturing actually rose from 3.3% to 10.1% between 2022 and 2025, not declined (statement 3 false).

Related PYQ: UPSC Mains 2025, GS Paper III, Q.12: "Discuss the rationale of the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme. What are its achievements? In what way can the functioning and outcomes of the scheme be improved?" (15 marks/250 words). Same core idea as today's story: the PLI scheme's real achievements and gaps are exactly what the "assembly trap" analysis is critiquing with fresh 2025 trade data.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** PLI: Production-Linked Incentive | PMP: Phased Manufacturing Programme

India Doesn't Know Where Its Magnet Dependence on China Actually Lies

Why in news: A policy analysis argues India lacks a systematic way to track its dependence on China across the permanent-magnet value chain, warning that the real vulnerability is missing processing and manufacturing capability, not a shortage of raw minerals.

Key Details:

- **Why magnets matter:** High-performance permanent magnets, especially Neodymium-Iron-Boron (NdFeB) magnets, are essential components in EV motors, wind turbines and precision manufacturing — described as the 'silent operating system' of industrial acceleration.
- **The trigger:** China imposed tight export controls on rare-earth magnets and materials in April 2025, exposing not just India's supply-chain dependence but also gaps in India's own understanding of that dependence.
- **The data gap:** India's Annual Survey of Industries estimates the domestic permanent-magnet market at only about ₹750 crore, yet international trade statistics suggest actual import value is several times larger — a gap the analysis blames on India's industrial-statistics system, not the magnets themselves.
- **What India has done so far:** Initiatives include the National Critical Mineral Mission, overseas mineral acquisitions, expanded geological exploration and PLI schemes — but none map where in the value chain India's capability gaps actually sit.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Where China's dominance really bites:** China accounts for about 69% of global rare-earth mining, but a much sharper 91% of global rare-earth separation/refining capacity and roughly 94% of global NdFeB magnet manufacturing — the chokepoint is downstream processing, not upstream mining.
- **The proposed fix:** An 'Integrated Techno-Economic Mapping' framework, combining engineering and economic-measurement data, is proposed to show exactly where India's magnet economy is invisible in official statistics and where investment would yield the greatest strategic return.

China's Grip Tightens Downstream, Not Upstream

Value-Chain Stage	China's Global Share
Rare-earth mining	~69%
Rare-earth separation/refining	~91%
NdFeB magnet manufacturing	~94%

How to use in UPSC Mains: Distinguish 'resource availability' from 'processing capability' explicitly — India's critical-minerals strategy debate is often framed as a mining/reserves question, but this analysis shows the real chokepoint is refining and magnet-making capacity.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ

Q. Recently, there has been a concern over the short supply of a group of elements called 'rare earth metals'. Why?
1. China, which is the largest producer of these elements, has imposed some restrictions on their export.
2. Other than China, Australia, Canada and Chile, these elements are not found in any country.
3. Rare earth metals are essential for the manufacture of various kinds of electronic items and there is a growing demand for these elements.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (c) 1 and 3 only

Explanation: China's export restrictions on rare earths, and their essential role in electronics manufacturing amid rising demand, are both correct (statements 1 and 3). Statement 2 is false — rare earths occur in many more countries, including India, which holds a significant share of global reserves even if it lacks refining capacity.

Related PYQ: UPSC Prelims 2012, GS Paper I, Q.11: "Recently, there has been a concern over the short supply of a group of elements called 'rare earth metals'. Why? 1. China...has imposed some restrictions on their export. 2. Other than China, Australia, Canada and Chile, these elements are not found in any country. 3. Rare earth metals are essential for the manufacture of various kinds of electronic items..." Answer: (c) 1 and 3 only. Same core idea as today's story: reused here as the question_block itself rather than a separate citation, since it is the closest verified genuine PYQ on this exact theme.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** NdFeB: Neodymium-Iron-Boron | PLI: Production-Linked Incentive

India's Real Interest Rate Is Sliding Toward Zero — And the RBI Is Running Out of Cushion

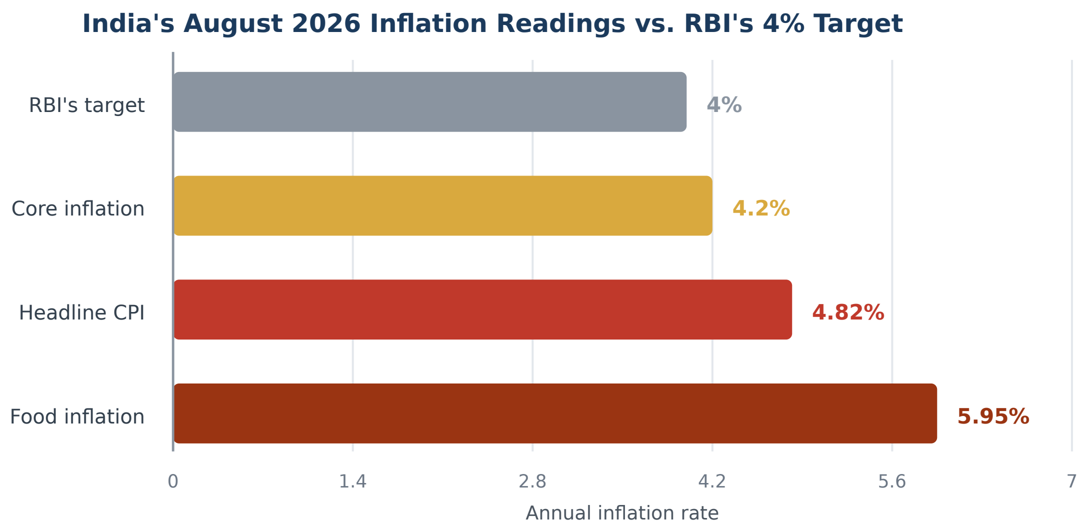
Why in news: With inflation rising for a third straight month and the RBI holding its repo rate steady, India's real policy interest rate is approaching zero, raising the risk that temporary inflation becomes embedded in expectations, wages and credit.

Key Details:

- **The inflation trend:** CPI inflation rose to 4.82% in August 2026 from 4.45% in July — a third consecutive month above the RBI's 4% target; food inflation is 5.95% and core inflation has risen to about 4.2%.
- **The real-rate squeeze:** With the repo rate at 5.25% and inflation expectations drifting toward that level, the ex-ante real policy rate is approaching zero — a much less restrictive stance than the nominal rate suggests.
- **Demand is not the problem:** Bank credit growth stands at a strong 19.1% year-on-year and deposit growth at 17.8% (the fastest pace in a decade) — showing this isn't a case of weak demand needing further stimulus.
- **The external shock:** Renewed West Asia conflict has disrupted Strait of Hormuz shipping and pushed Brent crude above $100 a barrel, adding an oil-price channel to domestic price pressure.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **The institutional backdrop:** India's flexible inflation targeting framework was created by amending the RBI Act, 1934 through the Finance Act, 2016, setting a 4% CPI target with a +/-2% tolerance band, effective from August 2016 and renewed in five-year terms since.
- **A market signal worth noting:** The one-year OIS (Overnight Indexed Swap) rate is around 6%, signalling markets already expect some future policy tightening rather than a pause.



How to use in UPSC Mains: Use the real-vs-nominal interest rate distinction precisely — a repo rate that looks restrictive in nominal terms can offer little real restraint once inflation expectations are netted out, which is exactly the RBI's current dilemma.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ

Q. An increase in the Bank Rate generally indicates that the—

(a) market rate of interest is likely to fall (b) Central Bank is no longer making loans to commercial banks

(c) Central Bank is following an easy money policy (d) Central Bank is following a tight money policy

Answer: (d) Central Bank is following a tight money policy

Explanation: A higher Bank Rate (or repo rate) raises the cost of borrowing for commercial banks, which they pass on to customers — a classic signal of monetary tightening, the same logic behind arguments that the RBI's current stance offers less real restraint than it appears.

Related PYQ: UPSC Prelims 2013, GS Paper I: "An increase in the Bank Rate generally indicates that the—" (a) market rate of interest is likely to fall (b) Central Bank is no longer making loans to commercial banks (c) Central Bank is following an easy money policy (d) Central Bank is following a tight money policy — Answer: (d). Same core idea as today's story: reused here as the question_block itself, since it is the closest verified genuine PYQ testing the tightening/loosening signal at the heart of today's real-rate debate.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** RBI: Reserve Bank of India | CPI: Consumer Price Index | OIS: Overnight Indexed Swap

Delhi's Bus Drivers Have Been on Strike for Six Days — Over Wages Frozen for 15 Years

Why in news: Contractual DTC bus drivers have struck for six days demanding higher wages and basic protections, spotlighting how India's new Labour Codes have not yet reached workers on the ground despite coming fully into force in late 2025.

Key Details:

- **The core demand:** Drivers want a 'basic plus dearness allowance' structure like government employees, raising daily wages to ₹2,000, plus medical insurance, accident compensation and paid leave.
- **The scale of underpayment:** Some drivers report earning as little as ₹862 for an officially 8-hour shift that often stretches to 16 hours unpaid — a rate one driver said has not risen in 15 years despite rising living costs.
- **The friction point:** 12 drivers were arrested for allegedly damaging bus windows during the strike; the drivers' union blames poor bus maintenance and breakdowns instead, disputing the vandalism charge.

- **Who actually employs them:** About 6,000 of Delhi's bus drivers are contractual, hired through private agencies rather than directly by the DTC — a structure at the centre of the dispute.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **The law already in force:** All four Labour Codes — including the Code on Wages, 2019 and the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020 — came into force nationally on November 21, 2025, less than a year before this strike.
- **What that law actually requires:** The OSH Code caps normal working hours at 8 hours/day and 48 hours/week and mandates double-wage overtime pay beyond that; the Code on Wages makes minimum-wage protection universal to all employees, not just those in listed 'scheduled employments' as before.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use this strike as a live test of Labour Code implementation — the legal protections a Mains answer might cite as 'reformed' are, on the ground, barely ten months old and evidently not yet enforced for contract workers.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. Discuss the merits and demerits of the four 'Labour Codes' in the context of labour market reforms in India. What has been the progress so far in this regard? (250 words)

Related PYQ: UPSC Mains 2024, GS Paper III, Q.11: "Discuss the merits and demerits of the four 'Labour Codes' in the context of labour market reforms in India. What has been the progress so far in this regard?" (15 marks/250 words). Same core idea as today's story: reused here as the question_block itself, since the DTC strike is a direct, concrete test case of exactly this question's "progress so far" prompt.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** DTC: Delhi Transport Corporation | OSH Code: Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code

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How India Made Modern Diabetes Drugs Cheaper — A Model Other Countries Are Now Studying

Why in news: A Chennai-led study published in Diabetes Care documents how India kept new, expensive diabetes medicines affordable through patent safeguards and domestic manufacturing incentives, offering lessons for other low- and middle-income countries.

Key Details:

- **The scale of the problem:** Of 589 million adults worldwide with diabetes, 80% live in low- and middle-income countries, where newer drug classes remain costly despite better cardiovascular and kidney outcomes.
- **India's legislative safeguard:** Strict patent-law provisions preventing 'evergreening' — extending monopoly protection through minor reformulations — allowed generic manufacture once original patents lapsed, sharply lowering prices.
- **The manufacturing push:** A government incentive scheme promoting domestic production of active pharmaceutical raw materials had, by 2025, brought manufacturing onshore for 26 molecules that were previously imported.
- **Where affordability still falls short:** Newer classes like GLP-1 receptor agonists and SGLT2 inhibitors are not yet on India's National List of Essential Medicines, and urban-rural distribution gaps persist.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **A concrete price example:** The price of semaglutide in India fell considerably following competitive entry by multiple domestic generic manufacturers, driving a sharp increase in sales.
- **The legal foundation:** The Supreme Court's 2013 ruling in Novartis AG v. Union of India upheld Section 3(d) of the Patents Act, rejecting Novartis's patent claim on Glivec (imatinib) for failing to show genuinely enhanced efficacy over the known compound — the precedent that keeps 'evergreening' in check.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Cite Novartis v. Union of India (2013) by name whenever a question asks about balancing patent protection with public health access — it is the concrete legal anchor for India's entire generic-affordability model described here.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. Bring out the circumstances in 2005 which forced amendment to Section 3(d) in the Indian Patent Law, 1970. Discuss how it has been utilized by the Supreme Court in its judgment rejecting Novartis' patent application for 'Glivec'. Discuss briefly the pros and cons of the decision. (10 marks)

Related PYQ: UPSC Mains 2013, GS Paper III, Q.13: "Bring out the circumstances in 2005 which forced amendment to Section 3(d) in the Indian Patent Law, 1970. Discuss how it has been utilized by the Supreme Court in its judgment rejecting Novartis' patent application for 'Glivec'. Discuss briefly the pros and cons of the decision." (10 marks). Same core idea as today's story: reused here as the question_block itself, since it is the exact legal mechanism the Diabetes Care study credits for India's affordable-medicines success.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** NLEM: National List of Essential Medicines | GLP-1: Glucagon-Like Peptide-1 | SGLT2: Sodium-Glucose Cotransporter-2

Aadhaar Authentication Becomes Mandatory for Subsidised LPG From October 1

Why in news: The government has made biometric Aadhaar authentication compulsory for subsidised domestic LPG refills from October 1, 2026, with nearly 90% of consumers already compliant ahead of the deadline.

Key Details:

- **What changes on October 1:** Consumers who have not completed Aadhaar authentication will still be able to buy LPG cylinders, but only at the full, non-subsidised market rate.
- **Compliance so far:** About 27.43 crore active LPG consumers — roughly 89.9% of the total — had completed authentication as of September 19, 2026, via oil-company apps or distributor showrooms.
- **The subsidy at stake:** Government compensation to oil marketing companies for the LPG subsidy is budgeted at ₹30,000 crore for both FY2025-26 and FY2026-27, up from ₹22,000 crore in FY2022-23.
- **The outreach effort:** Over 12 crore SMS/WhatsApp reminders have been sent since October 2023, alongside dedicated authentication camps in high-traffic and rural areas.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **The policy lineage:** This builds on the direct-benefit-transfer architecture first used for LPG subsidies under the PAHAL (DBTL) scheme, itself an early flagship of the JAM (Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile) trinity approach to welfare delivery.
- **The trade-off to watch:** Biometric authentication mandates for essential subsidies carry a documented risk of genuine beneficiaries being excluded due to authentication failures, poverty-line residency gaps, or connectivity issues — a recurring theme in DBT scheme audits.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use the LPG Aadhaar mandate as a fresh, concrete example in any answer on the JAM trinity's benefits (leakage reduction, targeting) versus its risks (exclusion errors) — cite the ~10% still-unauthenticated consumers as the population most exposed to that risk.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. The JAM (Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile) trinity has been central to India's direct benefit transfer architecture. Discuss its benefits and the exclusion-error risks associated with biometric authentication mandates for welfare subsidies. (250 words)

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** LPG: Liquefied Petroleum Gas | DBT: Direct Benefit Transfer | JAM: Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile

GS PAPER 4: Ethics, Integrity and Aptitude

The Supreme Court Flags a Probity Gap in Its Own House — Crores Sit in Court Deposits With No Uniform Rules

Why in news: The Supreme Court found no uniform rules on how courts invest, pay interest on, or release the crores litigants deposit during pending cases — and rather than leave the gap for the next litigant to discover, it proactively referred the issue to the Law Commission, the RBI and two Ministries for systemic fixing.

Key Details:

- **The gap identified:** Courts routinely direct litigants to deposit money to get a stay while an appeal is heard, but there are no uniform rules on how that money is invested or what interest rate applies once the case ends.
- **Why this is a GS4 story, not only a GS2 one:** This is a textbook instance of probity in governance — one of UPSC's own eight named GS Paper 4 dimensions — since it concerns transparent, accountable handling of public/litigant funds held by a state institution.
- **The self-correcting step taken:** Instead of leaving the blind spot unaddressed, the Bench forwarded its own judgment to the Law Commission of India, the RBI Governor, and the Finance and Law Ministries, asking them to examine the issue and comparable foreign laws.
- **The suggested model:** It pointed to the United States' Court Registry Investment System — a common platform pooling court-deposited funds into the most beneficial financial instrument — as a template worth studying.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Who the Law Commission is:** The 23rd Law Commission of India (2024-2027 term), chaired by former Supreme Court judge Justice Dinesh Maheshwari, is a non-statutory body reconstituted periodically by government resolution — its recommendations are advisory, not binding on Parliament.
- **The values this engages:** Probity in governance covers exactly this territory: transparency and information-sharing, accountability, and utilisation of public funds — an institution flagging and referring its own accountability gap is that principle in action, not merely a legal technicality.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use this as a GS4 illustration of probity in governance — an institution identifying its own public-fund accountability gap and referring it for systemic correction, rather than leaving each litigant to discover it case by case. Pair it with GS2's judicial-reform theme if the question calls for both angles.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. Probity in governance requires transparency and accountability in the utilisation of public funds. Discuss this principle with reference to the Supreme Court's recent call for uniform rules on court-held litigant deposits, and suggest measures to strengthen accountability in public-fund handling by judicial and quasi-judicial bodies. (250 words)

Related PYQ: UPSC Prelims 2023, GS Paper I: "Consider the following organizations/bodies in India: 1. The National Commission for Backward Classes 2. The National Human Rights Commission 3. The National Law Commission 4. The National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission. How many of the above are constitutional bodies?" (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) Only three (d) All four — Answer: (a). Same core idea as today's story: only the National Commission for Backward Classes has constitutional status; the Law Commission — the very body the Supreme Court has now approached — is not, a useful companion fact to the probity theme above.

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** RBI: Reserve Bank of India