PadhAI

# Daily PIB
# Summary

20th February

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## 1.PRESIDENT OF ESTONIA MEETS THE PRESIDENT



The bilateral meeting focused on:

- Expanding cooperation in **digital public infrastructure (DPI)**
- Strengthening collaboration in **cybersecurity and e-governance**
- Promoting partnerships in **startups, innovation, and AI**
- Enhancing engagement within the **India–European Union framework**

Estonia is globally recognised for its advanced **digital governance architecture**, including e-residency and digital identity systems. India seeks to deepen collaboration in secure digital ecosystems and technology-led governance models.

# BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

## 1 India–Estonia Relations

- Diplomatic relations established in 1991 after Estonia regained independence.
- Cooperation in IT, education, and trade.
- Estonia supports deeper India–EU strategic engagement.

## 2.Estonia's Digital Model

Estonia is known for:

- Universal digital identity system
- e-Governance infrastructure
- e-Residency programme
- Secure digital public services

India's Digital Public Infrastructure model (Aadhaar, UPI, DigiLocker) offers complementarities in digital governance collaboration.

# KEY HIGHLIGHTS

• **Digital Cooperation:** Exchange of best practices in e-governance and digital identity frameworks.
• **Cybersecurity Partnership:** Strengthening resilience against cyber threats.
• **Innovation & Startups:** Collaboration in emerging technologies and fintech.
• **AI & Technology Diplomacy:** Alignment in responsible AI discussions.
• **Multilateral Coordination:** Cooperation within EU–India platforms.
• **Strategic Significance:** Deepening ties with Baltic and Nordic region.

# PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

• **Capital of Estonia:** Tallinn
• **Region:** Baltic Region (Northern Europe)
• **EU Membership:** Since 2004
• **NATO Membership:** Since 2004
• **Currency:** Euro
• **Digital Governance Model:** Advanced e-identity and e-residency system
• **India–EU Trade Talks:** Ongoing Free Trade Agreement negotiations

**Static Linkage:**

- India–EU Relations
- Cybersecurity Frameworks
- Digital Sovereignty

# PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding Estonia:

1. Estonia is a member of both the European Union and NATO.
2. Estonia is globally recognised for its advanced digital governance system.
3. Estonia is located in the Scandinavian Peninsula.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

**Answer:** (b)

(Statement 3 is incorrect — Estonia is a Baltic country, not part of the Scandinavian Peninsula.)

## 2.CCRAS–CARI INDUCTS AMBULANCE SPONSORED BY NBCFDC





The induction of the ambulance is aimed at:

- Improving emergency and referral services at CARI
- Enhancing access to Ayurvedic treatment
- Supporting outreach health camps
- Strengthening healthcare infrastructure for underserved communities

NBCFDC's support reflects convergence between **social justice initiatives and traditional healthcare systems**.

This collaboration integrates **AYUSH healthcare services with inclusive development objectives.**

# BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

### 1 CCRAS & CARI

The Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences operates under the Ministry of AYUSH and focuses on research, education, and standardization in Ayurveda.

Central Ayurveda Research Institute (CARI) is one of its premier institutes providing:

- Clinical services

- Research in Ayurvedic therapeutics
- Public health outreach programmes

## 2 NBCFDC

The National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation works under the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment.

Its mandate includes:

- Financial assistance for economic upliftment of backward classes
- Support for skill development and infrastructure initiatives
- Promoting inclusive growth and social equity

The sponsorship of the ambulance reflects inter-ministerial collaboration for community welfare.

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS

• **Healthcare Accessibility:** Improved emergency response and patient transport services.
• **AYUSH Strengthening:** Boost to Ayurvedic healthcare infrastructure.
• **Inclusive Development:** NBCFDC's support aligns with social justice objectives.
• **Outreach Expansion:** Enables mobile medical camps and rural healthcare delivery.
• **Institutional Convergence:** Collaboration between AYUSH and Social Justice ministries.
• **Public Health Impact:** Enhances service delivery efficiency.

## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

• **CCRAS:** Autonomous body under Ministry of AYUSH.
• **Ministry of AYUSH:** Established in 2014 (separate ministry).
• **NBCFDC:** PSU under Ministry of Social

Justice & Empowerment.
• **AYUSH Systems:** Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, Homoeopathy.
• **Article 46:** Promotion of educational and economic interests of weaker sections.
• **Public Health:** State subject (Entry 6, State List – Seventh Schedule).

**Static Linkage:**

- Social Justice Schemes
- Traditional Medicine Systems
- Constitutional Directive Principles

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

Consider the following statements:

1. CCRAS functions under the Ministry of AYUSH.
2. NBCFDC works under the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment.
3. Public health is listed under the Union List of the Constitution.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

**Answer:** (b)

(Statement 3 is incorrect — Public health is under the State List.)

# 3.DEEPFAKES AND MISINFORMATION POSE SERIOUS THREATS TO DEMOCRACY: LOK SABHA SPEAKER



- The Lok Sabha Speaker cautioned against the growing misuse of Artificial Intelligence tools such as deepfakes in spreading misinformation.
- Deepfakes can manipulate audio and video content, potentially misleading voters and distorting democratic discourse.
- The issue raises concerns about electoral integrity, institutional credibility, and public trust in governance.
- Unchecked misinformation can undermine informed decision-making and democratic accountability.
- The statement underscores the need for regulatory frameworks, digital literacy, and ethical AI deployment.
- It reflects the broader global debate on balancing technological innovation with democratic safeguards.

- From a governance perspective, it links digital regulation with constitutional values of free and fair elections.

# BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

## What are Deepfakes?

- AI-generated synthetic media that realistically alters audio, video, or images.
- Created using machine learning techniques such as Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs).
- Can impersonate public figures or fabricate events.

## Democratic Concerns

- Threat to electoral processes through manipulated campaign content.
- Erosion of public trust in institutions and media.
- Difficulty in distinguishing authentic information from fabricated content.

## Legal & Regulatory Framework in India

- **Information Technology Act, 2000** – Governs digital content and cyber offences.
- **Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021** – Due diligence obligations for intermediaries.
- **Indian Penal Code provisions** – Defamation, forgery, impersonation.
- Proposed Digital India Act (under discussion) to address emerging digital risks.

## Global Context

- Countries are exploring AI regulations and platform accountability measures.
- Concerns also linked to data protection and algorithmic transparency.

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Technological Risk:** Deepfakes enable realistic manipulation of digital content.
- **Democratic Impact:** Potential distortion of electoral processes and public opinion.
- **Institutional Credibility:** Risk of eroding trust in Parliament and constitutional offices.
- **Regulatory Need:** Strengthening legal frameworks for digital accountability.
- **Digital Literacy:** Importance of citizen awareness to counter misinformation.
- **Platform Responsibility:** Greater due diligence by social media intermediaries.
- **Way Forward:** Ethical AI standards, fact-checking ecosystems, and robust cyber laws.

## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **Deepfake Technology:** Uses AI techniques such as GANs (Generative Adversarial Networks).
- **IT Act, 2000:** Primary law governing cyber activities in India.
- **IT Rules, 2021:** Mandate grievance redressal and due diligence for intermediaries.
- **Article 19(1)(a):** Freedom of speech and expression.
- **Article 19(2):** Reasonable restrictions on free speech.

- **Election Commission of India:** Constitutional body under Article 324.
- **Model Code of Conduct:** Regulates political campaign conduct during elections.

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

Consider the following statements:

1. Deepfakes are created using Artificial Intelligence techniques to manipulate digital media.
2. Article 19(2) of the Constitution allows reasonable restrictions on freedom of speech.
3. The Information Technology Act, 2000 exclusively deals with artificial intelligence regulation.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

**Answer: (a)**

## 4.DGCIS REVISES BASE YEAR OF MERCHANDISE TRADE INDICES TO FY 2022–23

- DGCIS has updated the base year of India's Merchandise Trade Indices from the earlier base to FY 2022–23.
- Base year revision ensures that indices reflect contemporary trade baskets, commodity weights, and price movements.
- India's export-import composition has significantly evolved with growth in

- electronics, petroleum products, pharmaceuticals, and engineering goods.
- The revision improves comparability, statistical robustness, and policy relevance of trade data.
- It aids better formulation of trade policy, tariff decisions, and export promotion strategies.
- The move aligns India's statistical practices with international best standards.
- From a governance perspective, it strengthens evidence-based economic policy making.

# BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

## What is DGCIS?

The **Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics** functions under the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.

It is responsible for:

- Compilation and dissemination of India's merchandise trade statistics
- Trade data analytics
- Publication of trade indices and reports

## Merchandise Trade Indices

These indices measure:

- Export and import values
- Volume changes
- Price changes
- Terms of trade

They are crucial for understanding:

- Trade competitiveness
- External sector performance
- Impact of global price fluctuations

## Base Year Revision: Why Important?

A base year:

- Serves as the benchmark year for index comparison
- Updates commodity weights according to current trade structure
- Reflects structural changes in the economy

India periodically revises base years for:

- GDP
- IIP (Index of Industrial Production)
- CPI/WPI
- Trade Indices

## Global Context

With shifts in global supply chains, digital trade expansion, and geopolitical disruptions, updating trade indices ensures better alignment with current realities.

# KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Statistical Update:** Base year shifted to FY 2022–23.
- **Structural Relevance:** Reflects new trade basket and commodity weights.
- **Policy Utility:** Improves accuracy in export-import policy decisions.
- **Global Alignment:** Brings India's trade statistics in line with international best practices.
- **Data Governance:** Enhances transparency and credibility of official trade data.
- **Economic Impact:** Supports evidence-based decision-making in external sector management.
- **Way Forward:** Regular statistical revisions to maintain data reliability.

# PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **DGCIS:** Apex body for India's merchandise trade statistics.
- **Administrative Ministry:** Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- **Merchandise Trade:** Refers to trade in physical goods (not services).
- **Terms of Trade (ToT):** Ratio of export prices to import prices.
- **IIP Base Year:** 2011–12 (latest official).
- **GDP Base Year:** 2011–12 (current series).
- **Balance of Trade:** Exports minus imports.
- **Current Account:** Includes trade balance, services, income, transfers.

# PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

Consider the following statements:

1. The Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics functions under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
2. Revision of base year in trade indices helps reflect changes in commodity weights and trade composition.
3. Merchandise trade includes trade in both goods and services.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

**Answer: (a)**

## 5.CASH PAYMENTS AT NATIONAL HIGHWAY FEE PLAZAS LIKELY TO BE DISCONTINUED FROM 1ST APRIL 2026



The proposed discontinuation of cash payments aims to:

- Promote **100% electronic toll collection (ETC)**
- Reduce congestion and waiting time at toll plazas
- Improve revenue transparency and compliance
- Strengthen Digital Public Infrastructure in transport

Currently, toll collection is largely facilitated through **FASTag**, a prepaid RFID-based system linked to bank accounts or wallets.

The shift aligns with India's broader push toward **digital payments and cashless governance mechanisms.**

# BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

## 1 FASTag System

FASTag is an electronic toll collection system:

- Based on **Radio Frequency Identification (RFID)** technology
- Affixed on vehicle windshields

- Enables automatic deduction of toll charges

It is managed under the National Electronic Toll Collection (NETC) programme.

## 2 Digital Transport Reforms

NHAI has undertaken several initiatives:

- Dedicated FASTag lanes
- Interoperability across toll plazas
- Plans for GPS-based tolling in the future

The objective is to transition toward **barrier-less and seamless highway travel.**

# KEY HIGHLIGHTS

• **Cashless Tolling:** Full transition to electronic toll collection.
• **Efficiency Gains:** Reduced congestion and fuel wastage.
• **Revenue Transparency:** Minimises leakages and manual handling errors.
• **Digital Governance:** Supports fintech integration and digital payments ecosystem.
• **Environmental Impact:** Lower idling time reduces emissions.
• **Future Roadmap:** Potential shift to GPS-based tolling mechanisms.

# PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

• **NHAI:** Statutory body under National Highways Authority of India Act, 1988.
• **FASTag:** RFID-based electronic toll collection system.
• **NETC:** National Electronic Toll Collection programme.
• **RFID:** Uses radio waves to identify tagged objects.
• **Digital Payments Push:** Linked to JAM Trinity (Jan Dhan–Aadhaar–Mobile).

• **GPS-based Tolling:** Satellite-based distance toll collection (proposed).
• **Entry 23, Union List:** Highways declared as national highways.

**Static Linkage:**

- Digital India
- Infrastructure Governance
- E-Governance Reforms

# PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

Consider the following statements:

1. FASTag is based on RFID technology for electronic toll collection.
2. NHAI functions under the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways.
3. National Highways fall under the State List of the Constitution.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

**Answer:** (b)

(Statement 3 is incorrect — National Highways fall under the Union List.)