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Institute for IAS, IPS, IFS and TNPSC Exams

No. 5, AKS Nagar, Near Gandhi Park, Coimbatore - 641 001

GS Paper I – Indian Heritage

Date: 04.05.26

A countdown to International Day of Yoga

At a time when the world is navigating conflict, uncertainty, and rising psychological strain, the idea of peace demands renewed attention. Traditionally approached through diplomacy and policy, peace is often framed as an external goal, negotiated across borders and institutions. Yet, despite these efforts, societies remain increasingly unsettled, suggesting that peace cannot be secured externally alone. It must also be cultivated within. Yoga facilitates this journey.

The global community recognised this potential when the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted a resolution in 2014, leading to the declaration of June 21 as the International Day of Yoga. The proposal itself was visionary, first articulated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his address to the 69th Session of the UNGA, where he described yoga as an invaluable gift of India's ancient tradition – one that embodies the unity of mind and body, thought and action. The first observance in 2015, under the theme “Yoga for Harmony and Peace,” reflected a shared aspiration to build more balanced and cohesive societies. This vision was further reinforced in 2018 with the theme “Yoga for Peace,” underlining the role of Yoga as a unifying force in an increasingly fragmented world.

Importantly, this emphasis has not been confined to individual years. Across successive International Day of Yoga observances, the ideas of balance, interconnectedness, and collective well-being have remained central. These themes are not merely symbolic – they represent a sustained global effort to position yoga as a practice that connects individuals across cultures, geographies, and ideologies, reinforcing peace as a shared and participatory process.

This growing global recognition was further strengthened in 2016, when yoga was inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of



Prataprao Jadhav

Union Minister of State (IC) for Ayush and Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare

the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. While deeply rooted in India's civilisational ethos, Yoga today belongs to the world. Its universality lies in its simplicity – it requires no elaborate infrastructure, no exclusive access, and transcends cultural boundaries.

It is in this spirit that the Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga, Ministry of Ayush, Government of India organised the ‘Yoga Mahotsav 2026’ on May 2, at the Kanha Shanti Vanam.

Bridging the gap

Yoga offers a way to bridge the gap between inner imbalance and external discord by strengthening the individual's capacity for awareness, balance, and restraint. Rooted in India's traditional knowledge systems, Yoga is not merely a physical routine but a discipline that harmonises the body, mind, and breath.

Through this integration, it enables individuals to respond to situations with clarity rather than impulse.

This distinction is critical. Much of the conflict witnessed today, whether in personal interactions or public discourse, does not arise solely from deep divisions but from the inability to regulate response. Yoga, through practices such as breath control and meditation, develops precisely this capacity. It creates space between stimulus and reaction – where reflection replaces reaction, and understanding tempers instinct. It is through this shift in individual behaviour that Yoga begins to shape peace at a broader, societal level. In a world reacting faster than it reflects, Yoga restores the discipline of pause.

In this context, Yoga has also emerged as one of India's most significant instruments of soft power. Unlike conventional forms of influence that rely on assertion, yoga operates through participation and shared experience. It creates moments of collective stillness in an otherwise fragmented world, fostering trust,

mutual respect, and a sense of global unity – values that are essential for lasting peace.

The relevance of Yoga becomes even more pronounced in the present global landscape. Rapid urbanisation, digital overstimulation, and shifting social dynamics have contributed to rising stress levels, shrinking attention spans, and increasingly reactive forms of communication. In such conditions, the absence of inner equilibrium often translates into external friction. Yoga addresses this challenge at its root. By encouraging mindfulness and emotional regulation, it equips individuals with the ability to manage stress and respond thoughtfully. When adopted widely, this shift in behaviour has the potential to influence collective outcomes, strengthening social cohesion and fostering more resilient communities.

The Ministry of Ayush has been committed to advancing this vision by integrating Yoga into public health, education, and community initiatives. The objective is not periodic participation, but sustained behavioural transformation that supports both individual well-being and societal harmony. Events like the ‘Yoga Mahotsav 2026’ are not merely commemorative – they are catalytic, bringing people together in a shared experience of awareness, balance, and collective intent. Peace, ultimately, is not a singular milestone but a continuous process, shaped by how individuals think, act, and engage with one another. Yoga, in its depth and universality, offers a practical means to nurture this process.

As the world moves toward the International Day of Yoga 2026, the message is both simple and profound: lasting peace will not be negotiated only across tables, but also cultivated within individuals. Yoga, in this sense, is not merely a practice – it is a quiet, enduring architecture of peace.

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GS Paper II – Polity

Parties brace for verdict; EC promises transparency

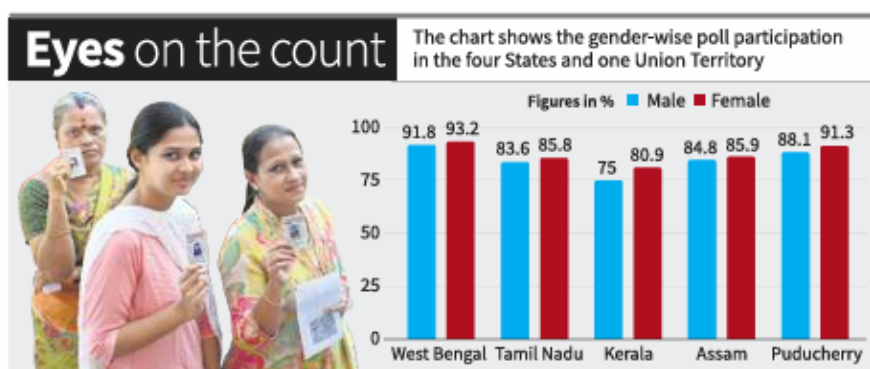
Heavy security as counting of votes polled for elections to the Assemblies of Assam, Kerala, T.N., West Bengal, Puducherry, and bypolls to seven Assembly seats in five States will be taken up today

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission on Sunday said it would uphold the “highest standards of transparency, security and efficiency” when votes polled in the elections to the Assemblies of Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, and Puducherry and the bypolls in seven Assembly constituencies in five States are counted on Monday.

For West Bengal, the EC had deployed 165 additional counting observers to assist counting observers and 77 police observers to conduct “a secure, peaceful, intimidation-free, and transparent environment”.

Exuding confidence, the political parties and fronts are watching the counting



preparations closely.

In Assam, the Congress-led front of six parties hopes to shed the Opposition tag by preventing the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) from scoring a hat-trick of wins. Both the alliances are confident about bagging at least 64 seats, the majority mark in the 126-member Assembly. While the Chief

Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma-helmed BJP has predicted close to 100 seats for the NDA, the Gaurav Gogoi-steered Congress is confident of a similar number for the Asom Sommilito Morcha to return to power after 10 years.

With just hours left for the counting of votes polled in the April 9 election, Kerala's voter turnout

was updated provisionally to 79.7% on Sunday as election officials factored in 20,028 postal ballots of service voters polled till May 1. The leaderships of all three fronts were confident about the results.

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GS Paper II – Polity

Tackling takedowns

Online censorship is a threat to the fundamental right to free expression

The Union government's enthusiastic misuse of its spurious powers to censor lawful speech online is an alarming and exponentially growing threat to India's democracy. With amendments to the IT Rules, 2021 – which are themselves on shaky constitutional ground – the government has successfully pressured Meta and X to take down content within three-hour timelines that leave little time to push back, lest they lose “safe harbour” protections and be dragged into court or, worse, have their employees face personal criminal liability. Under the cover of fighting AI-generated content, all speech is being subjected to a despotic regime where the state can silence speech at will, destroying the promise of the Internet, which has emerged as an important alternative voice to express everyday concerns. Visceral, hard-hitting expressions of independent voices are an integral part of a society led by free ideals and representative democracy. Weaponising Sections 69A and 79(3)(b) of the IT Act, 2000 to take down such content, and accounts wholesale, distorts the public conversation in a way that benefits the ruling party, with scant regard for the freedoms of audiences and the livelihoods of creators. Often, entire accounts of the Opposition are deleted. Since this infrastructure of censorship has been built brick by brick without any moral compunctions on the path down which they lead, takedowns of independent media outlets and critical commentators have grown. Some have been reversed, at the cost of revealing their identity. The government continues to enjoy these powers under a veil of secrecy, publishing no meaningful data on how its hold on online discourse has tightened.

By opening up the so-called Sahyog portal to police officials around the country, requests under Section 79(3)(b) have been supercharged as a censorial rubber stamp that the IT Act simply does not give them. The clear Supreme Court precedent outlining what “actual knowledge” of illegality online constitutes for takedown orders has been reduced to a mockery. The Karnataka High Court has even brushed aside binding Court precedent under *Shreya Singhal vs Union of India*, even as the government has not dared to formalise the powers that it is exercising by passing a law in Parliament. Social media platforms have failed miserably in acting as a check in this ongoing rampage for power over online speech and have instead chosen the peace of mind that comes with automatically processing takedown notices. X continues to resist the Sahyog portal, but faces pressure from proceedings in the Karnataka and Delhi High Courts. The political elite must ponder the consequences of its campaign against online speech. Opposition-ruled States have quickly leapt to leverage the Sahyog portal's powers. A future government run by today's Opposition will likely play by the same sordid rules.



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GS Paper II – Governance

Govt. issues guidelines on childhood diabetes care

New framework provides for universal screening, district-level diagnosis and free lifelong care, including insulin, regular monitoring, and emergency response under public health system

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

Integrating childhood diabetes care into the public health system, the Union Health Ministry has, for the first time, introduced a structured and standardised national framework for the screening, diagnosis, treatment and long-term management of diabetes in children.

Releasing the *Guidance Document on Diabetes Mellitus in Children* recently, the Ministry said this aims to ensure universal diabetes screening of all children in India from birth to 18 years of age.

"Suspected cases will undergo immediate blood glucose testing, followed by timely referral to district-level health facilities for confirmatory diagnosis and treatment," a senior Health Ministry official said.

He added that a key feature of the framework is the provision of a comprehensive, free-of-cost care package at public health facilities. This includes screening, diagnostic services, lifelong insulin therapy, monitoring devices such as glucometers and test strips, and regular follow-up care. The approach is designed to reduce fi-

Early intervention

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■ Integration of childhood diabetes care in the public health system aims to ensure universal diabetes screening of all children from birth to 18 years of age



■ It provides for a comprehensive, free-of-cost care package at public health facilities

■ It aims to reduce financial burden and ensure uninterrupted treatment for children diagnosed with diabetes



■ The guidance document emphasises family and caregiver empowerment, providing structured training on insulin administration, blood glucose monitoring, emergency response, and daily disease management

financial burden and ensure uninterrupted treatment for children diagnosed with diabetes.

Integrated care

While the initiative positions India among a select group of countries that have integrated childhood diabetes care into the public health system, the document also introduces an integrated continuum of care, linking community-level screening with district hospital-based management and advanced care at medical colleges.

"This convergence ensures that no child is lost in

the system and that care continues seamlessly from detection to long-term follow-up," the Health Ministry noted in a release issued on Sunday.

According to the World Health Organization, diabetes is a chronic disease that occurs either when the pancreas does not produce enough insulin or when the body cannot effectively use the insulin it produces. Insulin is a hormone that regulates blood sugar. Hyperglycaemia, or raised blood sugar, is a common effect of uncontrolled diabetes and over time leads to serious dam-

age to many of the body's systems, especially the nerves and blood vessels.

"4Ts" framework

The initiative seeks to support early detection and promote the "4Ts" awareness framework – Toilet, Thirsty, Tired, and Thinner – enabling parents, teachers and caregivers to recognise early warning signs of Type 1 diabetes.

In addition to clinical protocols, the document emphasises family and caregiver empowerment, providing structured training on insulin administration, blood glucose monitoring, emergency response and daily disease management. It also outlines evidence-based treatment guidelines, regular monitoring schedules, and protocols for preventing complications.

The initiative is expected to deliver public health benefits, including reduced mortality due to early detection, prevention of complications, and improved quality of life for affected children. Over the long term, it will contribute to lowering health-care costs and strengthening health system capacity for managing non-communicable diseases among children.



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GS Paper III – Environment

Keeping India's carbon money at home

On January 1, 2026, the European Union (EU)'s Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) came into effect, and is fully in force. Europe calls it fairness: European producers pay a carbon price, so imports should too. On paper, it sounds equitable; in practice, the door to fair competition is only half-open for India.

European steel, aluminium and cement producers enjoy large decarbonisation subsidies and subsidised public finance. They also continue receiving free allowances under the EU Emissions Trading System, which will be phased out gradually from 2026 to 2034, lowering their effective carbon costs even as CBAM phases in. Indian exporters, by contrast, face the full weight of CBAM charges without equivalent state support.

This tilt sits uneasily with the spirit of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) Article III, which bars deploying internal charges to shield domestic producers from fair competition.

What the deeper issue is about

The new India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA), whose negotiations concluded on January 27, 2026, provides no exemption from CBAM for India. The EU held firm: no country gets country-specific flexibility. The FTA's Annex on Carbon Border Measures (Annex 14-A) does, however, establish a formal technical dialogue on CBAM implementation – including how any effective carbon price paid in India can be taken into account at the EU border, and a most-favoured-nation commitment that any flexibility extended to other countries will automatically extend to India. That narrow opening matters enormously.

The deeper issue is climate justice and sovereignty. CBAM shifts part of Europe's



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When Europe sets carbon rules, India must not remain the price taker

decarbonisation burden onto developing-country exporters while keeping the resulting revenue in European hands. A country that cannot shape the carbon price on its exports, or direct the associated revenues, risks becoming a rule-taker rather than a rule-maker in the green transition.

India is not starting from zero. The Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS), notified in 2023, establishes a domestic carbon price through tradable certificates, and will, over time, cover key industrial sectors including steel. Under CBAM Regulation Article 9, European importers may deduct embedded emissions that have already borne a carbon price in the country of origin. That is the legal hook for recognising India's carbon price as an offset to CBAM. The principle, and the legal mechanism, are sound.

Crediting CCTS under Article 9 is both legally defensible and environmentally coherent. CCTS is a compliance-grade market: installations must hold carbon credits against measured emissions, carrying a rupee-denominated value per tonne. Crediting that effective price against CBAM obligations – subject to robust monitoring, transparent exchange-rate conversion, and guarantees that no export rebates neutralise the burden – would prevent double-pricing while preserving CBAM's stated aim of levelling the playing field.

As a counter adjustment

India's next move should be a counter adjustment: an India Border Adjustment Mechanism (IBAM). Rather than accepting CBAM as an inescapable external levy, India could impose its own carbon-based charge on CBAM-covered exports, collected at the point of export. But IBAM must not be rushed or announced unilaterally. It should be developed only through Annex 14-A, so that its design is clearly recognised in advance as a "carbon price

paid in the country of origin" for purposes of CBAM Article 9. If India sequences this carefully – using Annex 14-A to lock in how CCTS payments and any IBAM charges will be credited – Indian exporters need not face any higher overall carbon cost than CBAM alone would impose. What they would otherwise pay implicitly as a levy retained in Europe, they would instead pay explicitly through domestic obligations, fully offset at the EU border. The net carbon burden on exporters would be capped at the CBAM level in any event.

Make IBAM a constructive offer

The crucial difference is where the money goes. IBAM revenues would stay in India. Every rupee raised should be ring-fenced in a dedicated, transparently governed fund restricted to verifiable green projects: modernising blast furnaces, expanding low-carbon electricity, scaling hydrogen and scrap-based steelmaking, supporting affected workers – all subject to strict measurable, reportable and verifiable standards, independently audited and publicly disclosed.

Seen this way, IBAM is not a spoiler but a constructive offer. If the EU is serious that CBAM is about preventing carbon leakage rather than protecting revenue, it should recognise credible Indian carbon pricing under Article 9 and treat those payments as genuine offsets. European consumers would still see a carbon-priced product. Indian producers would face no higher net carbon cost.

Most importantly, India would keep its carbon revenues and use them to finance a green transition designed, at least in part, on its own terms.

India should "IBAM the CBAM" – treating FTA Annex 14-A and CBAM's Article 9 not as footnotes, but as levers to keep carbon money at home while engaging seriously with a carbon-priced world.



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GS Paper III – Environment

Sustainable mining: oxymoron?

Vasudevan Mukunth

Humans are trying to build a low-carbon future. Ironically, this future won't be possible without mining today. This is because wind turbines, solar panels, and electric batteries all require lithium, cobalt, copper, and rare-earth elements.

Mining doesn't leave the earth intact. Instead, it extracts finite, non-renewable resources. The processes of mining also often pollute the environment, permanently change landscapes, and destroy biodiversity. So in a commonsensical way, mining is not sustainable. No amount of money or technologies can bring back, say, a pristine rainforest.

However, some people, including the UN and the International Energy Agency, have floated an idea called 'weak sustainability' with regards to mining. They argue that mines can be 'sustainable' if the extracted resources create greater value, like human capital — like education and infrastructure — that outlasts the mine. They have also said that green technologies of the future make mining inescapable today.

There is a related concept called 'sustainable mining'. The minerals we



Mining is not sustainable in a commonsensical reading of the word. ABDUL BASIT/UNSPLASH

remove from the ground don't grow back. But once we start using them, we need to recycle them almost indefinitely. The problem is that the current recycling rate for critical minerals is at best 5%.

Industries have also adopted a framework called 'responsible mining', where the focus is on using green hydrogen as fuel for trucks, solar and wind power for mining equipment, and seeking the permission of local communities to operate and sharing profits with them, among others.



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GS Paper III – Science & Technology

How dual-use satellites are blurring the lines of modern space war

The Outer Space Treaty of 1967 and international humanitarian law require warring parties to differentiate between civilian objects and military targets; however, modern satellites are dual-use by default as civilian GPS networks, broadband constellations routinely support intelligence gathering and drone targeting

Shrawani Shagun

When we imagine space warfare, we picture shattered satellites and orbital debris. The reality is quieter but also more dangerous. The markers of modern orbital conflict are signal loss, deliberate misdirection, and sudden system failures.

In the initial hours of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, a cyber-attack crippled Viasat's KA-SAT network, severing vital communications across Europe. GPS spoofing incidents have similarly misled civilian aircraft and maritime vessels, luring ships into hazardous shoals or corrupting flight computers to trigger false terrain alerts effectively weaponising a platform's own safety logic against its operators.

The next conflict in space will begin with silence, with jammed signals, altered coordinates, and compromised systems. Space is today critical infrastructure and vulnerabilities related to space are often tantamount to vulnerabilities in human society.

This vulnerability is built into the architecture of space systems. Interference leaves no physical trace yet it can be devastating. It operates using three tools: jamming (or blocking signals), spoofing (sending false data), and ground station hacking (taking control of satellite systems).

As a result, no physical destruction is needed to paralyse an adversary – which is an important shift in the way conflict plays out in orbit. As financial, energy, and communication networks depend on satellites, such intrusions can also trigger cascading failures on the earth.

Legal blindspot

This change exposes a deeper legal problem. As the Prussian military theorist Carl von Clausewitz observed, war is defined by its effects. If cyber operations can disable satellites that support power grids, financial systems or emergency communications, their consequences are indistinguishable from a physical strike. However, the United Nations Charter does not clearly address cyber operations within its Article 2(4) prohibition on the "use of force".

A functional, effects-based test is therefore essential to interpret "use of force" in the orbital domain. As of 2026, several states have moved to the position that a cyber operation does not require physical 'smoke and fire' to violate Article 2(4). Instead, if a digital intrusion functionally disables a satellite, effectively bricking it, the strategic and economic consequences are identical to a kinetic strike. In this context, loss of functionality is the new shattered glass.

However, it also comes with a challenge, called the attribution gap. Under the International Law Commission framework on state responsibility, legal



Conflict in orbit no longer requires satellites to be physically destroyed in order to paralyse an adversary. IMAGE CREATED WITH CHATGPT

liability is contingent on identifying the perpetrator with high evidentiary certainty. In the digital domain, operations routed through proxy networks and spoofed identities create a layer of strategic anonymity that complicates traditional deterrence.

This is less a technical flaw and more a structural tension: as long as evidentiary standards are based on visible, physical proof, the invisible nature of cyber-disruption will continue to offer a significant strategic advantage to aggressors. In other words, existing international law recognises force by its consequences – yet it remains in a reactive posture as both the act and the actor remain obscured.

Collapse of civilian-military divide

The legal protections designed to safeguard non-combatants are deteriorating in the face of modern technology. The Outer Space Treaty and international humanitarian law rely heavily on the principle of distinction, requiring warring parties to differentiate between civilian objects and military targets.

However, modern satellites are dual-use by default. Civilian GPS networks, commercial broadband constellations, and financial timestamping systems now routinely support intelligence gathering and drone targeting. Because militaries piggyback on commercial infrastructure, these assets often lose their protected civilian status under international humanitarian law.

That said, in practice, the 'civilian satellite' is becoming a legal fiction. When commercial constellations provide 'space

States must move from advisory norms to enforceable 'secure-by-design' standards, clarify when cyber operations in space constitute a use of force, and strengthen cooperative attribution mechanisms. Without this, ambiguity will continue to favour the attacker

as a service' for military kill-chains – also known as the Starlink Precedent – they dissolve the distinction entirely. In this environment, an entire network can become a legitimate grey-zone target, even if it simultaneously serves schools or hospitals.

Former British army officer and author Emile Simpson has distinguished between traditional Clausewitzian war and contemporary conflict: the former seeks a definitive military decision while the latter functions as a direct instrument of political communication aimed at fragmented audiences.

In space, cyber operations enable ambiguous, deniable attacks that are designed to shape perceptions of state power rather than to secure territorial gains. Because they avoid the debris and visibility of kinetic strikes, they incentivise constant, low-level disruption. This creates a persistent state of friction that never crosses the threshold of war but continuously undermines the political legitimacy of the targeted state.

For India, the 2026 CERT-In/SIA-India Guidelines institutionalised a "secure-by-design" doctrine for space systems. They embed cybersecurity into

every stage of the satellite lifecycle, from design and launch to in-orbit operations and decommissioning. They also identify threats such as signal jamming, spoofing, and unauthorised command access, and recommend layered safeguards across space, ground, and communication segments. However, an enforcement gap remains: India is expanding its presence in orbit faster than it is building the ability to detect and trace cyberattacks in real time.

Objective of disruption

The response cannot remain reactive. States must move from advisory norms to enforceable "secure-by-design" standards, clarify when cyber operations in space constitute a use of force, and strengthen cooperative attribution mechanisms. Without this, ambiguity will continue to favour the attacker. In a digital battlefield, if an attacker cannot be identified within minutes, they cannot be deterred at all.

For the Global South, this digital battlefield poses the unique threat of orbital dependency. When the digital backbones of developing economies are hosted on third-party commercial constellations, a silent strike can blind a military and, more importantly, effectively paralyse a state's ability to govern, disenfranchising a nation in a single digital stroke.

In this new era, the objective is no longer to destroy a satellite but to disrupt the society that depends on it.

Shrawani Shagun is a researcher focusing on environmental sustainability and space governance. shrawani.shagun@gmail.com

THE GIST

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