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Steel, cement help quicken April core sector growth to 1.7%

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Practice questions

A dedicated section featuring UPSC-style Prelims and Mains practice questions based on the major issues, concepts, and debates discussed in today's newspaper.

EDITORIALS DECODED FOR UPSC



The bail rule

The Andrabi ruling reaffirms liberty over the stringent UAPA bar



Europe's shift to centre of Delhi's frame is welcome



Taking Charge

EV charging stations should be vehicle-agnostic

New Inclusion



**PYQ
COMPASS**
UPSC PREVIOUS YEARS QUESTIONS



Full coverage of mains and prelims dimensions with every topic

**PRELIMS 2026
COUNTDOWN
3 DAYS TO GO**

No new hydel projects can come up in upper Ganga, govt. tells SC

The Union Government informed the Supreme Court that no new hydroelectric projects should be permitted in the upper reaches of the Ganga in Uttarakhand, except seven projects already commissioned or substantially completed. The decision reflects growing concern over seismic fragility, cumulative ecological impacts, flood vulnerability, and riverine ecosystem degradation in the Alaknanda and Bhagirathi basins. The issue highlights the broader challenge of balancing renewable energy development with Himalayan ecological security and disaster resilience.

STATIC CORE LINKAGE

Ganga : Formed at Devprayag by confluence of Bhagirathi and Alaknanda

Bhagirathi : Originates at Gangotri Glacier near Gaumukh; considered source stream of Ganga.

Alaknanda : Originates from Satopanth Glacier near Badrinath

Mandakini : Tributary joining Alaknanda at Rudraprayag

Dhauliganga : Tributary of Alaknanda



Hydroelectric Projects Allowed by Centre

Tehri Pumped Storage(Bhagirathi) : 1000 MW

Tapovan Vishnugad (Dhauliganga) : 520 MW

Vishnugad Pipalkoti (Alaknanda) : 444 MW

Singoli Bhatwari (Mandakini) : 99 MW

Phata Byung (Mandakini) : 76 MW

Madhmaheshwar (Ganga) : 15 MW

Kailganga-II (Kaliganga) : 4.5 MW



Major Committees

Ravi Chopra Committee (2014) : 23 out of 24 projects likely to severely impact ecology

Vinod Tare Committee : Certain projects unsuitable in present form

B.P. Das Committee (2020) ; Allowed several projects with modifications

T V Das (Cabinet Secretary) Committee (2024) : Narrowed to 5 additional projects

PYQ Compass

UPSC questions previously asked from the themes discussed on this page.



Q.) With reference to the Himalayan rivers joining the Ganga downstream of Prayagraj from West to East, which one of the following sequences is correct? (2024)

- Ghaghara – Gomati – Gandak – Kosi
- Gomati – Ghaghara – Gandak – Kosi
- Ghaghara – Gomati – Kosi – Gandak
- Gomati – Ghaghara – Kosi – Gandak

Practice questions

Q.) Consider the following statements regarding Tehri Hydroelectric Project:

- It is located on the Bhagirathi River.
- It is one of India's largest hydropower projects.
- It lies in the upper Ganga basin.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- 1 and 2 only
- 2 and 3 only
- 1 and 3 only
- 1, 2 and 3

RELEVANCE

GS I : Salient features of India's physical geography.

GS III : Disaster and disaster management.

Number of bonded labourers rescued in Telangana rises to 529

Large-scale raids in Telangana's Nizamabad rescued 529 labourers, including 226 minors and infants, from alleged bonded labour-like conditions in brick kilns. The incident highlights the persistence of debt bondage, child labour, and informal-sector exploitation despite constitutional protections and the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976. It also exposes structural vulnerabilities linked to poverty, migration, caste marginalisation, and weak labour regulation.

STATIC CORE LINKAGE

Bonded Labour : Labour extracted as repayment of debt where freedom of movement, wages, or employment choice is restricted.

Begar : Forced labour without payment; prohibited under Article 23.

Forced Labour : Compelling a person to work against their will through physical, legal, or economic coercion.

Human Trafficking : Buying/selling or exploitation of persons for labour, prostitution, slavery, etc.

Constitutional Provisions

Right Against Exploitation (Articles 23–24)

Article 23 : Prohibits trafficking, begar, bonded labour, and forced labour – It protects both citizens and non-citizens against State and private exploitation

Article 24 : Prohibits employment of children below 14 years in factories, mines, and hazardous occupations – It safeguards child welfare and dignity

Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976 : Abolishes bonded labour system; extinguishes bonded debts

Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 : Prohibits child labour in hazardous occupations

Minimum Wages Act, 1948 : Ensures minimum wage protection

Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970 : Regulates contract labour employment

Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 : Ensures equal wages irrespective of gender

Commissions for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005 : Establishes child rights commissions and special courts.

PYQ Compass

UPSC questions previously asked from the themes discussed on this page.



Q.) Which of the following are envisaged by the Right against Exploitation in the Constitution of India? (2017)

1. Prohibition of traffic in human beings and forced labour
2. Abolition of untouchability
3. Protection of the interests of minorities
4. Prohibition of employment of children in factories and mines

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1, 2 and 4 only
- (b) 2, 3 and 4 only
- (c) 1 and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Practice questions

Q.) With reference to Article 23 of the Indian Constitution, consider the following statements:

1. It prohibits trafficking in human beings and forced labour.
2. It is enforceable only against the State.
3. Economic compulsion leading to labour below minimum wages may amount to forced labour.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

RELEVANCE

GS II : Indian Constitution— significant provisions and basic structure.



The bail rule

In *Syed Iftikhar Andrabi vs National Investigation Agency*, the Supreme Court of India granted bail to an accused who had spent nearly six years in pre-trial custody under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967. The judgment reaffirmed that prolonged incarceration without timely trial violates personal liberty and speedy trial guarantees under the Constitution, even under stringent anti-terror laws. The ruling revisits the balance between national security and fundamental rights.

STATIC CORE LINKAGE

Pre-trial Incarceration : Period spent in custody before conclusion of trial

Presumption of Innocence : Criminal law principle that accused is innocent until proven guilty

Speedy Trial : Right against unreasonable delay in criminal proceedings

Bail : Temporary release of an accused pending trial, subject to conditions

Prima Facie Case : Existence of sufficient preliminary evidence to proceed against an accused

Preventive Detention : Detention without trial to prevent possible future offences; precautionary in nature

Punitive Detention : Detention after trial and conviction as punishment for an offence

Constitutional Provisions:

Article 21 : Protects life and personal liberty; basis of due process and speedy trial jurisprudence

Article 22 : Protection Against Arrest and Detention

Article 22(1) : Right to be informed of grounds of arrest

Article 22(1) : Right to consult and be defended by legal practitioner

Article 22(2) : Production before magistrate within 24 hours

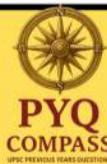
Article 22(2) : No detention beyond 24 hours without magistrate's approval

Judicial Doctrine : "Bail is the rule, jail the exception" in criminal jurisprudence



PYQ Compass

UPSC questions previously asked from the themes discussed on this page.



Q.) With reference to India, consider the following statements : (2021)

1. When a prisoner makes out a sufficient case, parole cannot be denied to such prisoner because it becomes a matter of his/her right.

2. State Governments have their own Prisoners Release on Parole Rules.

Which of the statements given above is / are correct?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Practice questions

Q.) With reference to the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, consider the following statements:

1. It is a preventive detention law under the Constitution of India.

2. Section 43-D(5) imposes stringent conditions for grant of bail.

3. The Act has been amended multiple times after 2004.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

RELEVANCE

GS II : Indian Constitution

Europe's shift to centre of Delhi's frame is welcome

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Netherlands, Sweden, Norway and Italy highlights the growing strategic importance of Europe in India's foreign policy. The deepening engagement follows the India-EU FTA and the India-EFTA agreement, with cooperation expanding in semiconductors, defence diversification, green energy, trade, technology and skilled mobility. The shift reflects changing global geopolitics, weakening traditional alignments, and mutual efforts by India and Europe to reduce strategic dependencies.

STATIC CORE LINKAGE

Free Trade Agreement (FTA) : Agreement reducing tariffs and trade barriers between countries

India-European Union FTA : concluded in 2026. It reflects growing economic convergence between the world's fourth-largest economy and the EU, which together account for nearly 25% of global GDP.

The European Free Trade Association (EFTA) : It is the intergovernmental organisation of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland, set up for the promotion of free trade and economic cooperation between its members, within Europe and globally. India signed agreement with EFTA in 2024.

De-risking : Reducing excessive dependence on a single country or supply chain

Strategic Autonomy : Independent foreign policy decision-making without alignment to major power blocs

Indo-Mediterranean : Emerging geopolitical and connectivity space linking the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean

Semiconductor Lithography : Advanced chip-manufacturing process used to create integrated circuits

ASML : mass chip-making company of Netherlands. It is the world's sole producer of advanced Extreme Ultraviolet (EUV) lithography machines used for manufacturing cutting-edge semiconductors. Tata Electronics has partnered with ASML to support the development of a semiconductor fabrication ecosystem at **Dholera** in **Gujarat**.

To remember : *India's expanding engagement with Europe reflects a shift from limited transactional ties to a multidimensional strategic partnership shaped by technology, geopolitics, supply-chain resilience and multipolar diplomacy.*

PYQ Compass



Q.) 'Broad-based Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA)' is sometimes seen in the news in the context of negotiations held between India and :

- European Union
- Gulf Cooperation Council
- Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
- Shanghai Cooperation Organization

Practice questions

Q.) Which of the following best explains the significance of semiconductor lithography machines?

- They are primarily used in uranium enrichment.
- They help manufacture advanced semiconductor chips.
- They are used for satellite launch propulsion systems.
- They are exclusively designed for quantum communication.

RELEVANCE

GS II : Global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

BI Taking charge

The Union Government recently approved proposals for installing more than 1,200 EV charging stations in Karnataka under the PM E-DRIVE Scheme, whose tenure has been extended beyond March 2026. The development highlights India's accelerating push toward electric mobility amid concerns over crude oil dependence, energy security, and climate commitments. The broader issue involves the need for interoperable, accessible, and standardized EV charging infrastructure to support large-scale EV adoption across India.

STATIC CORE LINKAGE

Fast Charging : High-capacity charging technology that significantly reduces charging time using DC power.

Interoperability : Ability of EVs, chargers, software platforms, and payment systems to function seamlessly across networks.

CCS-2 Standard : Combined Charging System-2; globally used charging standard for four-wheel EV fast charging.

OEM : Original Equipment Manufacturer involved in EV production and technology deployment.

PM E-DRIVE Scheme

Objective : Promote adoption of electric mobility and supporting infrastructure

Coverage : e-2Ws, e-3Ws, e-ambulances, e-trucks, and e-buses

Incentive Mechanism : Upfront subsidies to buyers reimbursed to OEMs by Government

EV Support Target : More than 28 lakh EVs

EV Sales Achieved : 22.12 lakh EVs sold under scheme

Charging Infrastructure Allocation : ₹2,000 crore for EV Public Charging Stations

E-Bus Allocation : ₹4,391 crore for deployment of 14,028 e-buses

Ministry of Heavy Industries : Nodal ministry implementing PM E-DRIVE Scheme

India EV Share (in 2026) : Passenger EV sales crossed **5%**; two-wheelers nearing **6.5%**



PYQ Compass



Q.) In the context of electric vehicle batteries, consider the following elements: (2025)

- Cobalt
- Graphite
- Lithium
- Nickel

How many of the above usually make up battery cathodes?

- Only one
- Only two
- Only three
- All the four

Practice questions

Q.) The term "interoperability" in the context of EV charging infrastructure refers to:

- Use of only renewable energy in charging stations
- Ability of different EVs and charging systems to function seamlessly together
- Restricting EV charging to public sector companies
- Manufacturing EV batteries domestically only

RELEVANCE

GS III : Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.

India, Italy seal defence pact, boost ties to 'special strategic partnership'

During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Italy, India and Italy upgraded bilateral relations to a "Special Strategic Partnership" and expanded cooperation in defence, trade, critical minerals, agriculture, mobility, clean energy, and Africa-focused development initiatives. The visit is significant because it deepens India's engagement with Europe amid global geopolitical tensions, supply-chain disruptions, and efforts to diversify strategic partnerships beyond traditional alliances.

STATIC CORE LINKAGE

Special Strategic Partnership : Enhanced bilateral framework involving cooperation in defence, economy, technology, geopolitics, and long-term strategic coordination.

Critical Minerals : Minerals essential for electronics, batteries, renewable energy, semiconductors, and defence industries.

Supply Chain Resilience : Reducing dependence on vulnerable global supply networks through diversification and strategic partnerships.

Joint Strategic Action Plan 2025–2029 : Framework for cooperation in economy, defence, technology, mobility, energy, and innovation.

Defence Industrial Road Map : Promotes co-production and co-development in helicopters, naval systems, marine armaments, and electronic warfare.

Enforcement Directorate : Investigates financial crimes and money laundering cases in India.

Guardia di Finanza : Italian law enforcement agency dealing with financial crimes and smuggling.

Bilateral Trade Goal : India and Italy aim to expand bilateral trade to €20 billion by 2029.

Italian Investment in India : More than 800 Italian companies operate in India across sectors.

Skilled Mobility : Partnership includes safe and regulated movement of skilled and non-skilled workers.

Mattei Plan : Italy's Africa Strategy



PYQ Compass



Q.) Consider the following countries :

1. Italy
2. Japan
3. Nigeria
4. South Korea
5. South Africa

Which of the above countries are frequently mentioned in the media for their low birth rates, aging population or declining population ?

- a) 1, 2 and 4
- b) 1, 3 and 5
- c) 2 and 4 only
- d) 3 and 5 only

Practice questions

Q.) Consider the following areas of cooperation discussed between India and Italy:

1. Critical minerals
2. Defence industrial cooperation
3. Agricultural research
4. Artificial Intelligence

Which of the above were part of the bilateral cooperation agenda?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 1, 2 and 3 only
- C. 2, 3 and 4 only
- D. 1, 2, 3 and 4

Q.) The "Mattei Plan" mentioned in the India-Italy discussions is associated with:

- A. Italy's Africa engagement strategy
- B. European climate policy
- C. NATO maritime doctrine
- D. UN food security framework

RELEVANCE

GS I : Salient aspects of Art Forms, literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times.

Steel, cement help quicken April core sector growth to 1.7%

India's eight core industries registered a growth of 1.7% in April, slightly higher than 1.2% in March after revision. Growth was mainly driven by strong performance in steel, cement, and electricity, indicating revival in construction and infrastructure activity. However, contraction in crude oil, natural gas, coal, fertilizers, and refinery products reflects persistent structural weaknesses in the energy sector and rising import dependence. The data is significant because core industries form the backbone of industrial production and act as a leading indicator of overall economic activity.

STATIC CORE LINKAGE

Index of Core Industries (ICI) Definition : Production volume index measuring performance of eight core industries

Base Year : 2011–12

Compiled by : Office of Economic Adviser (OEA) under Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce & Industry

Frequency : Monthly (Released one month after reference month)

Importance : Acts as a lead indicator for Index of Industrial Production (IIP) and economic growth

Eight Core Industries under ICI : Coal, Crude Oil, Natural Gas, Refinery Products, Fertilizers, Steel, Cement, and Electricity.

ICI comprise 40.27% of the weight of items in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).

Strong ICI growth generally signals higher industrial and GDP growth.

Positive Indicators

- Steel growth (6.2%) → Reflects infrastructure and construction demand.
- Cement growth (9.4%) → Suggests revival in real estate and public capital expenditure.
- Electricity growth (4.1%) → Indicates improving industrial and commercial activity.

Negative Indicators

- Crude oil contraction for eight consecutive months → declining domestic hydrocarbon production.
- Natural gas contraction → increased dependence on imported LNG.
- Coal contraction → concerns regarding fuel availability and mining efficiency.
- Fertilizer contraction → linked to rising imported gas prices.
- Refinery slowdown → reflects global energy volatility (due to West Asian conflict)

PYQ Compass



Q.) In the 'Index of Eight Core Industries', which one of the following is given the highest Weight? (2015)

- Coal production
- Electricity generation
- Fertilizer production
- Steel production

Practice Questions

Q.) With reference to the Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI), consider the following statements:

1. It is a production volume index.
2. It is compiled by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).
3. The eight core industries together constitute more than 40% weight in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- 1 and 2 only
- 1 and 3 only
- 2 and 3 only
- 1, 2 and 3

RELEVANCE

GS III : Indian Economy - planning, mobilization of resources, growth and development