



THE  HINDU

DAILY NEWSPAPER ANALYSIS



22 / 12 / 2025

Today's topics

- 1. Winter is behind – Pg.No.10 GS 2**
- 2. Beyond the optics – P.no.10 GS 2**
- 3. Unlocking the potential of India-Africa economic ties P10 GS 2**
- 4. Lessons from China on tackling pollution – P.No.11 GS 3**

Winter is behind

A less acrimonious session is an opportunity to build upon

The winter session of Parliament, which had 15 sittings, witnessed significant and controversial legislative business, along with political grandstanding by the government to mark the 150th anniversary of the national song, *Vande Mataram*. Ten Bills were introduced and eight were passed by both Houses. Notable Bills that won parliamentary approval include one repealing or amending dozens of outdated laws; another allowing 100% FDI in the insurance sector; one facilitating private sector investment in nuclear power by reducing the liability of suppliers, and, importantly, major changes to the rural employment guarantee scheme, a flagship welfare programme started by the UPA government in 2005. The titles of several Bills, which were in Hindi, caused consternation among Members of Parliament from non-Hindi regions. They pointed to constitutional provisions that require legislation to be drafted in English, with translations made available as required. The insurance Bill is titled *Sabka Bima Sabki Raksha*, while the rural employment guarantee Bill is called *Viksit Bharat - Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin)*, or *VB-G RAM G*, which became an Act on December 21 with the assent of the President. In the discussion on *Vande Mataram*, Members spent over 11 hours in the Lok Sabha, with 65 participants, and nearly 13 hours in the Rajya Sabha, with 81 participants. Parliament could instead have passed a unanimous resolution commemorating the song rather than using it as yet another occasion to question the patriotic credentials of political opponents.

A heated debate on electoral reforms went on for nearly 13 hours with 62 speakers in the Lok Sabha and for nearly 11 hours with 57 speakers in the Rajya Sabha. This too was a missed opportunity for an open-minded discussion beyond party lines to address the crisis of credibility in Indian elections. The closed-minded approaches of the BJP and the Congress towards questions of election integrity are not helping India's parliamentary democracy. The Opposition sought a discussion on air pollution in Delhi, a massive public health crisis, but the government did not allow it. Bills were rushed through, and the role of parliamentary committees in shaping legislation remains limited, though Question Hour and Zero Hour were more productive. This winter session was far less acrimonious than in the recent past, a fact acknowledged by Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge. As a result, Congress representatives accepted the customary invitation for tea by the Lok Sabha Speaker and the Rajya Sabha Chairman at the end of the session. These meetings also led to pleasant exchanges between the government and the Opposition. This practice is worth continuing and building upon.

Context

A calmer Winter Session showed promise, but Parliament must move from political symbolism to meaningful democratic deliberation.

அமைதியான குளிர்காலக் கூட்டத்தொடர் நம்பிக்கைக்குரியதாக இருந்தது, ஆனால் நாடாளுமன்றம் அரசியல் அடையாளத்திலிருந்து அர்த்தமுள்ள ஜனநாயக விவாதத்திற்கு நகர வேண்டும்.

UPSC CSE Syllabus GS Paper 2 : Indian Polity

The Hindu – Newspaper 22/12/2025

Keystone IAS Academy, Anna Nagar West, Chennai – 40. Mobile : 7305777541 / 9894996777



Overview of the Session

Winter Session had **15 sittings**

10 Bills introduced, 8 Bills passed

Session was **less confrontational** compared to previous ones

Opportunity for **constructive parliamentary functioning**, but not fully utilised

The Hindu – Newspaper 22/12/2025

Keystone IAS Academy, Anna Nagar West, Chennai – 40. Mobile : 7305777541 / 9894996777



Important Bills Passed

Repeal of obsolete laws → removal/amendment of outdated colonial-era laws

Insurance Amendment Bill → allows **100% FDI in insurance sector**

Nuclear energy reform Bill → reduces supplier liability to attract **private investment**

Rural Employment Guarantee reform

Major changes to **MGNREGA**

New Act named **Viksit Bharat – Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin)**

Seen as controversial due to dilution of welfare guarantees

The Hindu – Newspaper 22/12/2025

Keystone IAS Academy, Anna Nagar West, Chennai – 40. Mobile : 7305777541 / 9894996777



Controversy over Hindi Titles

Several Bills were titled in **Hindi**, e.g.:

Sabka Bima Sabki Raksha

VB-G RAM G

MPs from non-Hindi States objected

Constitutional issue:

Laws must be drafted in **English**

Translations can be provided later

Raised concerns about **linguistic inclusivity & federalism**

The Hindu – Newspaper 22/12/2025

Keystone IAS Academy, Anna Nagar West, Chennai – 40. Mobile : 7305777541 / 9894996777



Vande Mataram Debate

Marked **150 years of Vande Mataram**

Long discussions:

Lok Sabha: **11+ hours**

Rajya Sabha: **13 hours**

Criticism:

Parliament could have passed a **unanimous resolution**

Instead, debate became **politically polarised**

Used to question opponents' **patriotism**

The Hindu – Newspaper 22/12/2025

Keystone IAS Academy, Anna Nagar West, Chennai – 40. Mobile : 7305777541 / 9894996777



Debate on Electoral Reforms

Long debate in both Houses

Highlighted **crisis of trust in elections**

However:

BJP and Congress stuck to **party positions**

Missed chance for **consensus-based reform**

Weakens credibility of **parliamentary democracy**

The Hindu – Newspaper 22/12/2025

Keystone IAS Academy, Anna Nagar West, Chennai – 40. Mobile : 7305777541 / 9894996777



Missed Discussions

Opposition demanded debate on **Delhi air pollution**

Government **did not allow discussion**

Important public health issue ignored

Parliamentary Functioning

Bills rushed through

Standing Committees underused

Positives:

Question Hour & Zero Hour were productive

Less disruption than earlier sessions

The Hindu – Newspaper 22/12/2025

Keystone IAS Academy, Anna Nagar West, Chennai – 40. Mobile : 7305777541 / 9894996777



Overall Assessment

Session showed **improvement in atmosphere**

But:

- Missed chances for consensus-building

- Important issues sidelined

Future sessions should:

- Strengthen committee scrutiny

- Encourage bipartisan dialogue

- Focus on public-interest debates

Mains Practice Questions

GS Paper 2 – Indian Polity

“Recent parliamentary sessions show a decline in deliberative law-making and committee scrutiny.” Examine this statement in the context of the Winter Session of Parliament.

The Hindu – Newspaper 22/12/2025

Keystone IAS Academy, Anna Nagar West, Chennai – 40. Mobile : 7305777541 / 9894996777



Beyond the optics

India must push its vision for a shared global order across regions

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's three-nation tour to Jordan, Ethiopia and Oman, last week, had some common and connecting threads. The visit was primarily an attempt to draw closer bilateral ties with each country in a world that is turning increasingly transactional. Beyond that, however, all three countries belong to the Global South that India seeks leadership of and each is an important development partner in their respective regions. Mr. Modi's talks with Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tariq saw the signing of the Cooperation Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA). Oman-India trade has doubled to \$10 billion in recent years. CEPA is expected to smooth the path for free trade agreement talks between India and the Gulf Cooperation Council. In Jordan, Mr. Modi met with King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein, with the two sides launching cooperation agreements on renewable energy and water management. Mr. Modi's visit to Addis Ababa saw the launch of a strategic partnership. In the meet with Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali, the talks were on strengthening trade and knowledge and technology exchanges. The discussions were also key in terms of scheduling the much-delayed Africa-India summit, to be held in India. Ethiopia is not just the headquarters of the African Union, it is a new member of BRICS, and with India taking over the Chairmanship in 2026, it will be an important partner in setting out development and economic relations within both groupings.

In Amman, India and Jordan had less significant bilateral agreements but the talks were understood to be important in terms of the West Asian conflict and the Gaza Peace proposal. The tensions between Israel and its Arab neighbours have now imperilled the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor which is meant to traverse through Jordan. The Joint Statement in Amman had no mention of the corridor. Mr. Modi's presence in Jordan and a reiteration of India's traditional support for the Palestinian cause at a time when External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar was in Israel to meet Netanyahu government leaders was possibly meant to reassure the Arab leadership and those in the Global South strongly opposed to Israel's actions, that India's principled stand has not changed. The joint statement with Oman underlined the need for a resolution in Gaza including the establishment of a "sovereign and independent Palestinian state". However, unless that message is reiterated with India's Israeli interlocutors, especially Prime Minister Netanyahu who is expected to visit India in the new year, the import of visits such as the one by Mr. Modi would fail to build on the optics of bonhomie for a shared vision of the global order.

Context

India's outreach to the Global South must move beyond symbolism and be backed by consistent diplomacy to shape a shared global order.

உலகளாவிய தெற்கிற்கான இந்தியாவின் தொடர்பு குறியீட்டுக்கு அப்பால் நகர்ந்து, பகிரப்பட்ட உலகளாவிய ஒழுங்கை வடிவமைக்க நிலையான ராஜதந்திரத்தால் ஆதரிக்கப்பட வேண்டும்.

UPSC CSE Syllabus

GS Paper 2: International Relations

The Hindu – Newspaper 22/12/2025

Keystone IAS Academy, Anna Nagar West, Chennai – 40. Mobile : 7305777541 / 9894996777



Context

PM Modi undertook a **three-nation tour** to:

Jordan

Ethiopia

Oman

Visit aimed at strengthening **bilateral ties** in a world becoming more **transactional**

All three countries are part of the **Global South**, where India seeks leadership

The Hindu – Newspaper 22/12/2025

Keystone IAS Academy, Anna Nagar West, Chennai – 40. Mobile : 7305777541 / 9894996777



Key Outcomes of the Tour

Oman

Signing of **CEPA (Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement)**

India–Oman trade doubled to **\$10 billion**

CEPA may act as a **stepping stone for India–GCC FTA**

Joint statement:

Supported **Gaza ceasefire**

Backed creation of a **sovereign Palestinian state**

Jordan

Cooperation agreements in:

Renewable energy

Water management

The Hindu – Newspaper 22/12/2025

Keystone IAS Academy, Anna Nagar West, Chennai – 40. Mobile : 7305777541 / 9894996777



Talks important for:

West Asia conflict

Gaza peace proposal

No mention of **India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)** due to regional instability

Ethiopia

Launch of **India–Ethiopia Strategic Partnership**

Focus on: Trade, Technology & knowledge exchange

Ethiopia's importance:

Headquarters of **African Union**

Member of **BRICS**

Discussions on holding the delayed **Africa–India Summit**

Important as India will chair **BRICS in 2026**

The Hindu – Newspaper 22/12/2025

Keystone IAS Academy, Anna Nagar West, Chennai – 40. Mobile : 7305777541 / 9894996777



Key Concern Highlighted by the Article

India's diplomacy risks remaining **symbolic** (“optics”)

For real impact:

India must **consistently convey its principled stand**

Same message should be shared with **Israel**, especially PM Netanyahu

Without consistency, India cannot shape a **shared global order**

Mains Practice Questions

GS Paper 2 – International Relations

India's recent visits to Jordan, Ethiopia and Oman reflect a renewed focus on the Global South. Discuss.

The Hindu – Newspaper 22/12/2025

Keystone IAS Academy, Anna Nagar West, Chennai – 40. Mobile : 7305777541 / 9894996777



Unlocking the potential of India-Africa economic ties

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visits to Namibia and Ghana, as part of a five-nation tour (including Trinidad and Tobago, Argentina and Brazil) in July 2025, focused the spotlight again on India-Africa economic relations – just as his recent visit to Ethiopia (December 16-17, 2025) did. The recent decade has witnessed a fresh momentum in India's relations with various African countries. A testament to this is the entry of the African Union as a full-time member of the G-20 during India's presidency term in 2023. India and Africa share a long history of cultural affinity and political solidarity, but their relationship has increasingly been shaped by economics in recent decades.

Uncertainties in western markets

In FY24, India's exports to the United States and the European Union constituted around 40% of its total exports. Given the rising unpredictability of these markets and the threat of a potential slowdown, it is essential that India looks to other markets, particularly African economies.

India is Africa's fourth-largest trading partner, with bilateral trade reaching nearly \$100 billion. In FY24, India exported goods worth \$38.17 billion to African countries – the key destinations included Nigeria, South Africa and Tanzania. Petroleum products, engineering goods, pharmaceuticals, rice and textiles were some of the major goods exported. In 2024, Africa's imports from India were around 6% of its total imports. To put this in perspective, in addition to being one of the largest investors, China is also Africa's largest trading partner, with bilateral trade exceeding \$200 billion. Around 21% of imports to Africa in 2024 came from China. Interestingly around 33% of imports from China fell under the HSN 84 and 85 product categories, demonstrating China's industrial prowess. These product categories comprise machinery, boilers, electrical machinery, and semiconductor devices.

Recognising the need to catch up, India has already set a target of doubling its trade with



Amal Krishnan

is Assistant Professor at Christ University, Bengaluru



Badri Narayanan

is Fellow, NITI Aayog

India's engagement with the continent must move towards developing long-term and sustainable partnerships

Africa by 2030. Here is a five-point strategy that may enable India to fulfil its target.

The first strategic pillar should focus on removing trade barriers and engaging in negotiations for preferential trade agreements and comprehensive economic partnership agreements with regional economic communities and the major African economies.

The second pillar should aim to move from low-value commodity exports to two-way value-added and cross-border joint venture manufacturing. Currently, Indian firms lag in utilising the incentives offered by multiple African governments to enable firms to set up manufacturing units. For Indian enterprises, setting up manufacturing facilities across Africa presents a strategic dual advantage. It enables them to maintain preferential access to the U.S. market through favourable tariff regimes, while simultaneously capitalising on Africa's growing consumer base and industrial demand. Moving beyond petroleum and traditional exports is critical in transitioning to a new phase of India's ties with African economies. Deepening engagement with African regional groupings such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) can open greater opportunities for Indian exporters.

An opportunity for MSMEs

The third pillar must prioritise the scaling-up of the Lines of Credit and improve accessibility to trade finance. The African market offers a great opportunity for the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) segment, unlike the European and American markets where MSMEs find it difficult to gain a foothold. There is a considerable lack of policy attention in enabling MSMEs to gain access to the African markets.

Ensuring easy access to trade finance is critical in achieving a sustainable trade relationship with the continent. Other measures may include adopting trade in local currencies, and forming a joint insurance pool to cover political and

commercial risks for medium-term projects which may reduce the perceived risk for small and medium enterprises and banks.

The fourth strategic pillar should focus on lowering freight and logistics costs by investing in port modernisation, hinterland connectivity and in developing India-Africa maritime corridors.

The final strategic pillar involves the scaling up of services, digital trade, and people-to-people links. It is essential that India leverages its strength in Information Technology, health care, professional services and skill development to boost services exports and stimulate goods trade. Services enable high-value exports and facilitate greater two-way trade. Current policy measures fall short in enabling services trade with African economies. There needs to be a considerable improvement in this regard.

A role for the Indian public sector

Strengthening investments by Indian firms in African manufacturing, agro-processing, infrastructure, renewable energy and critical and emerging technologies may lend further strength to India's relations with African economies. Currently, India's investments in Africa are inflated by investments in Mauritius which are often done with an intent to evade taxes. Multiple factors, including bureaucratic hurdles, political instability and financing costs act as barriers for Indian firms to invest in Africa. Indian firms, particularly the public sector units must take the lead in investing in the African continent, particularly in mining and mineral exploration.

Ultimately, India's engagement with Africa must go beyond transactional trade and move towards building long-term, sustainable partnerships. As global supply chains undergo restructuring and the world shifts towards a multipolar economic order, Africa will remain central to India's aspirations of becoming a global economic power. The time is ripe for India to recalibrate, innovate, and deepen its economic footprint across the African continent.

Context

Africa is central to India's trade diversification strategy, and deeper economic engagement is vital for India's long-term global ambitions.

இந்தியாவின் வர்த்தக பன்முகப்படுத்தல் உத்தியில் ஆப்பிரிக்கா மையமாக உள்ளது, மேலும் இந்தியாவின் நீண்டகால உலகளாவிய லட்சியங்களுக்கு ஆழமான பொருளாதார ஈடுபாடு மிக முக்கியமானது.

UPSC CSE Syllabus

GS Paper 2: International Relations

The Hindu – Newspaper 22/12/2025

Keystone IAS Academy, Anna Nagar West, Chennai – 40. Mobile : 7305777541 / 9894996777



Context

PM Modi's visits to **Namibia, Ghana (July 2025)** and **Ethiopia (Dec 2025)** highlight renewed focus on **India–Africa economic relations**

Africa's importance rose with:

African Union becoming a permanent G20 member (2023) during India's presidency

India–Africa ties are shifting from **historical solidarity** to **economic partnership**

Why Africa Matters to India

India's exports to **US & EU** = **~40% of total exports**

Western markets are **uncertain and slowing**

Africa offers:

- Growing population & consumer base

- Emerging industrial demand

- Strategic diversification of export markets

The Hindu – Newspaper 22/12/2025

Keystone IAS Academy, Anna Nagar West, Chennai – 40. Mobile : 7305777541 / 9894996777



Current India–Africa Trade Snapshot

India is **Africa's 4th largest trading partner**

Bilateral trade: **~\$100 billion**

India's exports to Africa (FY24): **\$38.17 billion**

Major exports: Petroleum products, Engineering goods, Pharmaceuticals
Rice & textiles

Key African partners:

Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania

✦ Comparison with China

China–Africa trade: **>\$200 billion**

21% of Africa's imports from China

One-third of Chinese exports are **machinery & electronics (HSN 84 & 85)** →
shows China's industrial strength

The Hindu – Newspaper 22/12/2025

Keystone IAS Academy, Anna Nagar West, Chennai – 40. Mobile : 7305777541 / 9894996777



India's Target : Double India–Africa trade by 2030

Five-Pillar Strategy Proposed

Trade Agreements

Remove trade barriers

Negotiate:

- Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs)

- Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreements (CEPAs)

Engage with:

- African regional blocs

- Major African economies

The Hindu – Newspaper 22/12/2025

Keystone IAS Academy, Anna Nagar West, Chennai – 40. Mobile : 7305777541 / 9894996777



Shift to Value-Added Manufacturing

Move beyond: Petroleum & low-value exports

Promote: Joint ventures, Manufacturing units in Africa

Benefits:

- Preferential access to US markets

- Access to Africa's growing demand

Deepen engagement with: **African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)**

Opportunity for MSMEs

Africa easier market for **Indian MSMEs** than US/EU

Need to: Expand **Lines of Credit**, Improve **trade finance access**

Suggested measures:

- Trade in local currencies

- Joint insurance pool for political & commercial risk

The Hindu – Newspaper 22/12/2025

Keystone IAS Academy, Anna Nagar West, Chennai – 40. Mobile : 7305777541 / 9894996777



Reduce Logistics Costs

Invest in:

- Port modernisation

- Hinterland connectivity

- India–Africa maritime corridors

Lower freight costs → more competitive exports

Services & People-to-People Links

Leverage India's strength in: IT & digital services, Healthcare, Skill development

- Professional services

Services trade:

- High-value

- Boosts overall trade

Current policies insufficient → need reform

The Hindu – Newspaper 22/12/2025

Keystone IAS Academy, Anna Nagar West, Chennai – 40. Mobile : 7305777541 / 9894996777



Way Forward

Move beyond **transactional trade**

Build **long-term, sustainable partnerships**

Africa crucial in:

- Multipolar world

- Global supply chain restructuring

Deepening Africa ties is key to India's **global economic power ambition**

The Hindu – Newspaper 22/12/2025

Keystone IAS Academy, Anna Nagar West, Chennai – 40. Mobile : 7305777541 / 9894996777



Mains Practice Questions

GS Paper 2 – International Relations

Evaluate the current status of India–Africa trade relations. What are the key challenges and opportunities?

The Hindu – Newspaper 22/12/2025

Keystone IAS Academy, Anna Nagar West, Chennai – 40. Mobile : 7305777541 / 9894996777



Lessons from China on tackling pollution

China and India have long grappled with severe air pollution. Yet their trajectories over the past decade have diverged sharply. Once a global symbol of smog, Beijing managed to cut its annual PM2.5 levels by more than 50% between 2013 and 2021, while Delhi continues to rank among the world's most polluted cities. How is Beijing breathing easier?

Clean-air transformation

Beijing's transformation was neither accidental nor incremental. It stemmed from a multifaceted approach enabled by two major policy drives: the Air Pollution Prevention and Control Action Plan and the Blue Sky Protection Campaign. These measures focussed on sweeping, top-down interventions across energy, transport, and industry. Beijing's strategy was anchored in three features: coherent policy, strict enforcement, and regional coordination. The government expanded electric mobility, shut down or relocated hundreds of polluting industries, replaced thousands of coal-fired boilers with natural gas, imposed stringent China VI vehicular emission standards, built one of the world's densest PM2.5 real-time air quality monitoring systems, and imposed substantial penalties for non-compliance. Most importantly, Beijing didn't act alone. Its coordination with the neighbouring Tianjin-Hebei provinces through a unified 'airshed' strategy ensured regulation of transboundary air pollution. The turnaround was remarkable – PM2.5 levels dropped from the average 102 µg/m³ in 2013 to 31 µg/m³ in 2024.

India does not lack environmental laws, but from the shortage of coherence in implementing them. A strong statutory framework – the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act of 1981, the Environment Protection Act, 1986, and rules governing waste, construction, and emissions –



Amrita Nambiar

PhD Candidate,
Macquarie Law
School, Macquarie
University, Australia

India need not emulate China's political system to achieve a turnaround, but it can draw on the principles that made China's progress possible

exists alongside courts, tribunals, and pollution-control boards. Indirectly, various laws such as the Factories Act, 1948 and the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 also shape air-quality outcomes. Yet regulatory fragmentation undermines their impact. Over the years, India has rolled out many initiatives: the National Clean Air Programme, the Graded Response Action Plan, odd-even rationing, construction bans, dust-control rules, crop-residue measures, work-from-home advisories, and Delhi's Air Pollution Mitigation Plan 2025. The Centre has also established the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM). These interventions, however, are largely reactive and activated during pollution peaks rather than embedded in long-term planning; and agencies function in silos.

The core difference between the two approaches lies in governance, enforcement, and coordination. China's Environmental Vertical Reform created a clear hierarchy for realising local governments' environmental protection responsibilities. This top-down structure ensured uniform actions, strict enforcement, and rapid implementation. Delhi, however, operates within a fragmented governance system involving the Union government, the Delhi government, pollution control boards, and multiple municipal bodies. As a result, decision-making becomes slower, enforcement weaker, and accountability more diffused. Beijing's regulatory agencies also possess sweeping authority and substantial resources. On the other hand, India's pollution control boards remain chronically understaffed and underfunded. Also, Beijing modelled inter-provincial alignment through the airshed strategy whereas the CAQM's directives to address stubble burning from adjoining States remain unauthoritative.

China has made large sustained investments in clean energy, electric mobility, and industrial

relocation. Delhi's own industrial relocation attempts, such as the Bawana project, have faltered due to inadequate infrastructure and poor service delivery. Even 'sustainable' alternatives such as waste-to-energy plants have failed to meet air-quality norms. Delhi's pollution load is further intensified by industrial and vehicular emissions, corrupted Pollution Under Control (PUC) checks, construction dust, open waste burning, and meteorological inversions that trap winter pollutants. Public transport expansion has lagged behind the city's growth. Odd-even rationing has shown negligible long-term impact. Behavioural change too, has been slower in India.

What India can borrow

India need not emulate China's political system to achieve a turnaround, but it can draw on the principles that made China's progress possible. First, governance must shift from episodic responses to a long-term sustained, mission-oriented strategy and treat air pollution as a national public health emergency. Second, India must accelerate its transition to clean energy. Beijing's move away from coal drove major PM2.5 reductions; Delhi similarly needs to expand and adopt energy-efficient standards suitable for all sectors. Third, transport reforms must be enforced, not merely announced. BS-VI norms require credible PUC systems, modern testing centres, a robust vehicle-scrappage policy, and congestion management. Expanding EV charging infrastructure, incentivising electric mobility, and dramatically strengthening public transport are essential. Fourth, industrial policy must shift from relocation on paper to functional industrial zones with full utilities, transport access, and real-time emissions monitoring. Finally, air pollution must be governed as a regional problem. A Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei style airshed model should guide Delhi-NCR.

Context

China's success against air pollution shows that strong governance, strict enforcement, and regional coordination matter more than the number of laws.

காற்று மாசுபாட்டிற்கு எதிரான சீனாவின் வெற்றி, வலுவான நிர்வாகம், கடுமையான அமலாக்கம் மற்றும் பிராந்திய ஒருங்கிணைப்பு ஆகியவை சட்டங்களின் எண்ணிக்கையை விட முக்கியம் என்பதைக் காட்டுகிறது.

UPSC CSE Syllabus

GS Paper 3: Environment & Ecology



The Hindu – Newspaper 22/12/2025

Keystone IAS Academy, Anna Nagar West, Chennai – 40. Mobile : 7305777541 / 9894996777

Context

Both **India and China** suffer from severe air pollution

Beijing reduced PM2.5 by **over 50% (2013–2021)**

Delhi remains among the world's most polluted cities

Question: *Why did China succeed while India struggles?*

The Hindu – Newspaper 22/12/2025

Keystone IAS Academy, Anna Nagar West, Chennai – 40. Mobile : 7305777541 / 9894996777



China's Clean Air Transformation

China's success was **planned, strict, and coordinated**, not accidental.

Key Policy Initiatives

Air Pollution Prevention and Control Action Plan

Blue Sky Protection Campaign

Core Features of China's Approach

Coherent policy – clear goals and timelines

Strict enforcement – heavy penalties for violations

Regional coordination – air treated as a shared problem

The Hindu – Newspaper 22/12/2025

Keystone IAS Academy, Anna Nagar West, Chennai – 40. Mobile : 7305777541 / 9894996777



Major Measures Taken by Beijing

Shut down or relocated **polluting industries**

Replaced **coal-fired boilers** with natural gas

Expanded **electric mobility**

Enforced **China VI emission standards**

Built dense **real-time PM2.5 monitoring systems**

Coordinated with **Tianjin–Hebei** using an “**airshed**” approach

Result

PM2.5 levels fell from **102 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (2013)** to **31 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (2024)**

India's Situation: Laws Without Impact

Existing Legal Framework

Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981

Environment Protection Act, 1986

Waste, construction and emission rules

Supporting laws: Factories Act, Motor Vehicles Act

Key Programmes

National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)

Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)

Odd-even scheme

CAQM (Commission for Air Quality Management)

The Hindu – Newspaper 22/12/2025

Keystone IAS Academy, Anna Nagar West, Chennai – 40. Mobile : 7305777541 / 9894996777



Why India Is Falling Short

Fragmented governance: Centre, States, municipal bodies overlap

Reactive measures: activated only during pollution peaks

Weak enforcement and low accountability

Understaffed and underfunded pollution control boards

CAQM lacks authority over neighbouring States

Poor implementation of:

- Industrial relocation

- Waste-to-energy plants

- Public transport expansion

Corruption in **PUC checks**

Slow **behavioural change**

The Hindu – Newspaper 22/12/2025

Keystone IAS Academy, Anna Nagar West, Chennai – 40. Mobile : 7305777541 / 9894996777



What India Can Learn from China

Treat air pollution as a public health emergency

Shift from episodic action to **long-term mission mode**

Accelerate clean energy transition

Reduce coal dependence

Improve energy efficiency standards

Enforce transport reforms

Strong PUC systems

Vehicle scrappage policy

Congestion management

Expand EV infrastructure

Strengthen public transport

The Hindu – Newspaper 22/12/2025

Keystone IAS Academy, Anna Nagar West, Chennai – 40. Mobile : 7305777541 / 9894996777



Fix industrial policy

Create **functional industrial zones**

Ensure utilities, transport, and emissions monitoring

Adopt regional airshed governance

Delhi–NCR needs a **Beijing–Tianjin–Hebei style model**

Pollution does not respect State boundaries

Conclusion / Way Forward

India does **not** need China's political system

But it must adopt:

- Policy coherence

- Strong enforcement

- Regional coordination

- Long-term investment

Without governance reform, laws alone cannot clean the air

The Hindu – Newspaper 22/12/2025

Keystone IAS Academy, Anna Nagar West, Chennai – 40. Mobile : 7305777541 / 9894996777



Mains Practice Questions

GS Paper 3 – Environment & Ecology

Beijing's success in reducing air pollution was driven more by governance reforms than technology. Discuss.

The Hindu – Newspaper 22/12/2025

Keystone IAS Academy, Anna Nagar West, Chennai – 40. Mobile : 7305777541 / 9894996777

