

**PROMOTING GLOBAL CAPABILITY CENTRES IN INDIA**

CII proposed a **National GCCs Policy** to position India as a global hub for innovation-driven GCCs.

- ⌘ **Priority Sectors:** Prioritize GCCs in Healthcare, Life Sciences & Electronics Design to optimize investment and skills.
- ⌘ **Tax Incentives:** Facilitative **tax policies for high-value functions**, IP creation, digital infrastructure & employment-linked deductions for new hires.
- ⌘ **Recalibrate Safe Harbour:** Lower safe harbour markups & clarify distinctions like Software Development vs. R&D, expanding eligibility for more GCCs.
- ⌘ **Infrastructure & Regulatory Reforms:** Develop Digital Economic Zones (DEZs) with a central authority; GCC growth should align with **Smart Cities & Gati Shakti**.
- ⌘ **Innovation & Sustainability:** Provide incentives for **ESG-led innovation**.

GCCs

- ✍ **About: Offshore units of MNCs** that centralize functions like IT, finance, engineering, R&D, etc. in cost-efficient global locations.
- ✍ **GCCs in India:** India hosts nearly half of the world's GCCs, with numbers expected to **rise from 1,800 to 5,000 by 2030**.
- ✍ **Economic Contribution:** Contributes **~1.8% to India's GDP** and could add USD 470–600 Bn by FY2030.
- ✍ **Employment Generation:** Supports 10.4 Mn jobs in FY25, with potential to create 20–25 Mn jobs by 2030.

Growth Drivers of GCCs

- ✍ India has **1.9 Mn professionals in GCCs** & millions of STEM graduates, offering diverse skills & perspectives.
- ✍ **India's location** provides access to Asian markets, local consumer insights & a growing domestic market.
- ✍ **Geographically diverse operations** and resilience during Covid-19 make Indian GCCs reliable.
- ✍ **India's mature GCC ecosystem** & infra allow rapid scaling of operations.
- ✍ **Strong data protection, privacy laws** & governance frameworks ensure regulatory compliance.

Challenges Faced by GCCs

- India's **digital skills gap** is projected to rise from **25% in 2023 to 29% by 2028**, with only **43% of graduates industry-ready**, requiring heavy reskilling investments.
- GCCs overlap with domestic IT firms**, may weaken IT exports & produce limited high-end projects.
- Most **GCC work** remains **routine and outsourceable**, with limited **IP creation**, restricting India's rise in the **global value chain**.
- High **attrition** in **GCC sector**, particularly in **AI, analytics & digital roles**, makes it hard to retain talent and sustain growth.

Suggestions

- Standardized platforms should offer **certifications in AI, cloud, and data analytics**, with incentives for large-scale upskilling.
- Clear Differentiation Strategy** should position GCCs for **strategic innovation and R&D**.
- Create **special innovation zones** with strong IP protection and mandate **IP leadership** for greater ownership of product development.
- Promote **global assignments & high-impact projects**, offering a **competitive work culture**.

QUALITY CONTROL ORDERS

Rapid increase in **QCOs issued by BIS** in the past **three years** has faced criticism from **MSMEs**, who find these mandatory regulations costly & restrictive.

QCOs

- ⌘ **About:** BIS certification is voluntary but **becomes mandatory for certain products** in the public interest (health, environment, national security, unfair trade practices) through QCOs.

- ✍ BIS has **digitized the certification process**, offering time-bound certification within 30 days for domestic industries, including MSMEs, covering 750+ products.
- ✍ **Jan Sunwai**– portal where anyone can log queries.
- ✍ **Manak Manthan**– Field-level engagement to provide handholding support to MSMEs.

- ⌘ **Objective:** Aligned with **Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Agreement of WTO**; ensure product safety, curb substandard goods, attract investment, protect consumers, and improve quality.
- ⌘ **Legal Provisions:** Issued after consulting BIS, based on BIS Act, 2016; projects under QCOs are **governed by BIS, 2018**; violating QCOs is punishable with imprisonment, fine or both.
- ⌘ **Prohibition Orders:** Products covered by QCOs cannot be manufactured, imported, sold, or handled without a BIS Standard Mark.
- ⌘ **Applicability to Imports:** Domestic rules apply equally to imports; foreign manufacturers must obtain a **Licence/ Certificate of Conformity (CoC)** under Foreign Manufacturers Certification Scheme (FMCS).

Challenges Related to QCOs	Suggestions
High Compliance Costs: QCOs make BIS certification mandatory, increasing costs and impacting smaller enterprises more than larger ones.	Promote cluster-based testing facilities to reduce costs. Provide technical assistance and training for smoother compliance.
Non-Tariff Barrier Effect: QCOs can restrict imports, limiting access to cheaper raw materials and complicating trade negotiations.	Pursue mutual recognition agreements (MRAs) to streamline compliance for exports and improve market access.
Limited Coverage & Industry Pushback: Only 187 BIS standards have QCOs out of over 23,000, mainly in steel and electronics, leading to enforcement challenges.	Expand coverage of QCOs to include more industries beyond steel and electronics.
Implementation Challenges: Delays in obtaining BIS certification can disrupt production and sales.	Establish market linkages and export support. Use accredited certification bodies to reduce BIS workload. Create a feedback mechanism for MSMEs to report issues.

SC’S INTERIM ORDER ON THE WAQF (AMENDMENT) ACT, 2025

SC has stayed certain provisions of the **Waqf (Amendment) Act 2025**, citing concerns over violations of **Article 26**, excessive administrative powers, non-Muslim representation on Waqf Boards & potential impacts on Waqf properties and philanthropy.

Provisions Upheld by SC	Provisions Stayed by SC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicability of the Limitation Act: 1995 Waqf Act excluded the Limitation Act, allowing Waqfs to act against encroachments without a time limit. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ 2025 Amendment removes this exemption. SC upheld this, correcting earlier discrimination. • Abolition of “Waqf by Use”: 2025 Amendment removed this concept, which previously allowed land used for religious/charitable purposes to be deemed Waqf without registration. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ SC upheld this, citing misuse for encroaching govt. lands. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five-Year Rule for Practising Muslims: SC stayed the provision due to lack of a mechanism to verify religious practice. • Powers of District Collectors (Sec 3C): SC stayed this provision, calling it arbitrary and a violation of separation of powers. As per the SC, Waqf properties cannot be dispossessed during inquiry. • Non-Muslim Representation in Waqf Boards: SC capped non-Muslim representation, Central Waqf Council (4 non-Muslims) & State Waqf Boards (3 non-Muslims).

Judicial Pronouncements Regarding Religious Freedom
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↪ Bijoe Emmanuel v. State of Kerala, 1987: SC held students cannot be compelled to sing the National Anthem if it violates their religious beliefs, as long as it does not disrupt public order. ↪ Shayara Bano v. Union of India, 2017: SC struck down instant triple talaq as unconstitutional, violating Article 14 and gender justice principles, and held it’s not an essential religious practice under Article 25. ↪ Dr. Mahesh Vijay Bedekar v. Maharashtra, 2016: SC ruled using loudspeakers is not an essential religious practice and cannot be claimed as a fundamental right under Article 25 or Article 19(1)(a).

UNIFIED PENSION SCHEME

Govt. has given the **central govt. employees until Sept 30, 2025, to switch to UPS**, but only 40,000 out of 23.94 lakh eligible employees have opted so far.

- ⌘ **About:** UPS is an optional pension scheme for Central Govt. employees under NPS, effective from 1st April 2025; provides assured, inflation-indexed retirement benefits.
- ⌘ **Recommended by:** T.V. Somanathan committee (2023) & announced in 2024
- ⌘ **Regulated by:** PFRDA
- ⌘ **Contributions:**
 - ❖ **Employee:** 10% of Basic Pay + DA
 - ❖ **Government:** Matching 10% of Basic Pay + DA + additional 8.5% to ensure payouts
 - ❖ **PRAN (Permanent Retirement Account Number):** All contributions are recorded under the employee’s PRAN account

Parameter	NPS	UPS
Nature	Mandatory for new employees (post-2004)	Voluntary for eligible employees
Contribution	10% (Employee) + 14% (Govt.)	10% (Employee) + 10% (Govt.) + 8.5% (Pool Corpus)
Assured Payout	No	Yes (subject to conditions)
Minimum Pension	No	₹10,000/month
Dearness Relief	No	Yes
Final Withdrawal	Up to 60%	Up to 60%
Family Benefits	Depends on annuity	60% of subscriber's payout
Partial Withdrawal	Yes	Yes

SWASTH NARI, SASHAKT PARIVAR ABHIYAAN (SNSPA)

PM launched **SNSPA** and **8th Rashtriya Poshan Maah**.

SNSPA

⌘ **Health initiative** by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare & Ministry of Women and Child Development.

⌘ **Features:**

- ❖ **1 lakh+ health camps at Ayushman Arogya Mandirs** & Community Health Centres for screenings on anaemia, hypertension, diabetes & cancer.
- ❖ **SASHAKT portal** tracks progress in real-time for transparency & efficiency.
- ❖ Community participation via **Nikshay Mitras** and volunteers; promotes awareness on menstrual hygiene, nutrition & wellness through Anganwadis.



Rashtriya Poshan Maah

- ⌘ Launched in 2018, celebrated every Sept as part of a Jan Andolan to **promote nutrition literacy, healthy practices, and behavior change**.
 - ❖ 7+ editions of Poshan Maah & Poshan Pakhwada, **130 cr+ nutrition-centric activities**.
- ⌘ 8th edition focuses on **Anaemia prevention, Growth Monitoring, Complementary Feeding, "Poshan Bhi Padhai Bhi", Technology for Better Governance, and the environmental initiative "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam"**.

ALUMINIUM-ION BATTERY

Centre for Nano and Soft Matter Sciences, Bengaluru, has developed a flexible aqueous **aluminum-ion battery as a sustainable alternative to lithium-ion batteries**.

- ⌘ **Material Used:** Aluminum (**one of the most abundant & eco-friendly metals**) & water-based electrolyte - making it cheap, non-explosive, and environmentally safe.
- ⌘ **Components:** **Copper hexacyanoferrate (CuHCF)** cathode & **molybdenum trioxide (MoO₃)** anode.
- ⌘ **Performance:** Works after **150 charge-discharge cycles**, flexible, bends/folds without losing performance.
- ⌘ **Applications:** Potential for flexible smartphones, wearables & safer EVs.
- ⌘ **Challenges:** Slow **Al³⁺ ion diffusion**, potential structural collapse of materials (graphite) limits cycle stability & aluminum anode corrosion affects longevity.

Lithium-ion Battery

- ⌘ **Rechargeable battery** where lithium **ions move b/w graphite & Li transitional metal oxides** via a non-aqueous electrolyte.
- ⌘ Stores more energy in a compact form, **offers longer cycles b/w charges**.
- ⌘ **Lighter and uses less toxic Li & carbon electrodes** compared to lead-acid batteries.

MORAN COMMUNITY

Moran community in Assam's Tinsukia district, rich in oil, coal, and tea, has **launched an economic blockade to demand ST status**.

- ⌘ An **indigenous tribe of Assam** with a history of an independent kingdom before the Ahom rule.
- ⌘ **Converted to Vaishnavism in the 17th century** by Aniruddhadeva, part of the Moamoria sect– a **small population resides in Arunachal Pradesh (Namsai district)**.
- ⌘ In March 2025, Assam govt. decided to issue **Permanent Residence Certificates (PRCs) to Moran members in Arunachal Pradesh**.

21ST EDITION OF EXERCISE YUDH ABHYAS 2025

Held at **Fort Wainwright, Alaska**, aiming to enhance cooperation b/w **Indian & US armies**.

- ⌘ Started in **2004**; part of **US-India Major Defense Partnership**.
- ⌘ Other India-US Exercises– **Vajra Prahar** (Special Forces), **SALVEX** (Navy), **Cope India** (Air Force), **Malabar** (Quadrilateral naval).

