



VAJIRAM & RAVI
Institute for IAS Examination

SMART

Current Affairs Program 2026 for Prelims and Mains



AIR
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Shakti Dubey

**A Catalyst
to
Top Ranks!**

Date of Commencement

17th January 2026

Mode: Offline / Online



AIR
06

Komal Punia



AIR
97

Aditi Chhaparia



AIR
68

Saichaitanya Jadhav



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123

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SMART Current Affairs Program 2026

Embark on an empowering journey to the top ranks of the UPSC Civil Services exam with our SMART Current Affairs Program. **Current affairs form an integral part of the UPSC syllabus.** With more than **60% of the questions** related to current events appearing in both the Preliminary and Main Examinations directly or indirectly. Therefore, staying updated about current events is essential to score well in these exams.

S.M.A.R.T. Current Affairs Program by Vajiram & Ravi is a comprehensive program that aims to provide aspirants with a **Simple** yet **Strategic**, **Multi-dimensional**, **Advanced** and **Adaptive**, **Resourceful**, and **Targeted** approach to their Current Affairs preparation.

One Expert is Never Enough for UPSC Current Affairs!
That's why we're giving you three.



Dr. Jayant Parikshit
(IIM Lucknow, DSE)

Macro analysis and
economic perspectives



Srivatsan
(Ex-IRS)

Insights from governance
and public service



Abhinav Srivastav
(IIT Roorkee)

Analytical and data-driven
approach

SMART

Current Affairs Programme 2024



50+ Selections

Phases of the SMART Current Affairs Programme



Phase I



Phase II

Phase I

Targeted Prelims-Oriented Current Affairs (January to April)

- **Coverage of current affairs** – important for the Prelims Examination.
- **PYQ based** focus on the conceptual and factual aspects of current issues.
- **SMART Question Solving Skills:** Live in-class strategies to tackle tricky MCQs.
- **Regular tests** to assess the aspirants' preparation.

Phase II

Targeted Mains-Oriented Current Affairs (June to August – depending on Mains exam schedule)

- **Coverage of current affairs** – important for the mains Examination.
- **Integration** of the factual and analytical aspects of current issues with the UPSC static syllabus.
- **Learn and use** current affairs in the Mains answers in the form of examples, case studies and explanations.
- **PYQ Analysis** and Live in-class Mains answer writing practice of possible Mains Questions.

Features of the SMART Current Affairs Program

SMART Current Affairs Program has been meticulously curated to redefine UPSC CSE preparation for aspirants. Thoughtfully created, it has the following distinguishing features:

CLASSES

RESOURCES

PRELIMS AND MAINS READY



Classes

- **Comprehensive Coverage** of multiple reliable sources like The Hindu, Indian Express, Economic Times, PIB, etc. (including Economic Survey, Budget, Schemes and Indices)
- **Interlinkages** of Current Affairs with static concepts.
- **Understanding the Examiner's Mindset** to gauge the kind of questions that might appear in exam.

Resources

- **Handouts** to support learning, revision and active recall during the exam. No additional study material required.
- **Value Addition** through **comprehensive diagrams, dimensions, data points, examples, and case studies**—ready to use in your answers.

Prelims and Mains ready

- **Prelims problem solving** skills based on PYQs to understand the examiner's mindset.
- **Mains Answer-Writing** and **Answer-Generation Skills** to seamlessly integrate current affairs into your arguments and elevate your Mains score.

Dynamic Assessment & Feedback

1

Prelims Phase (Phase I)

- **Live MCQ Quiz:** Engage in regular, formative assessments through in-class live MCQ Quiz.
- **Fortnightly test:** To help the students with regular revision and assessment of their progress.
- **Full-length tests:** Comprehensive full-length tests for ultimate exam readiness.

2

Mains Phase (Phase II)

- **Live Answer writing:** Engage in regular answer writing practice in each class to learn the art of writing high quality arguments and examples directly from the Faculties of the program.
- **Full-length tests:** Comprehensive full-length tests for ultimate exam readiness.

Course Details

Phase I

- Course Start date: 17th Jan 2026
- Classes will be conducted 3 times a week.
- Mode: both Online and Offline
- Class duration will be 2.5-3 hours
- Class Handouts and Factsheets for Quick revision
- Live MCQ and PYQ sessions - For interactive learning, every class features MCQs to reinforce concepts and encourage active participation.
- Includes fortnightly tests to track progress and 2 comprehensive full-length tests for exam readiness.

Phase II

- Course Start time: will be announced later (Tentative June 2026)
- Classes will be conducted ~3 times a week
- Class/video duration will be 2.5-3 hours
- Class Handouts and Value Addition material for high scoring.
- Includes regular Live in-class Answer Writing sessions to track progress for exam readiness.
- 4 comprehensive Full-length tests will be provided (in Phase III)

Holistic Preparation: Our program combines the structured rigor of learning with the flexibility of an adaptive environment, ensuring comprehensive preparation and equipping you to face the challenges of the exam with confidence.

Why choose SMART Current Affairs Program?

As a renowned coaching institute for UPSC CSE, Vajiram & Ravi recognizes that despite a solid understanding of the static syllabus, certain aspirants encounter challenges in effectively incorporating and correlating current affairs. Their struggle lies in seamlessly applying this knowledge during both the Prelims and Main Examination stages, hindering their ability to answer questions and discern how a current issue might be framed as a question.



Prelims Reflections

38 Direct Questions

Reflected from SMART Current Affairs Classes - in Prelims 2025

International Relations

2. (20) India is one of the founding members of the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), a multimodal transportation corridor, which will connect
- India to Central Asia to Europe via Iran
 - India to Central Asia via China
 - India to South-East Asia through Bangladesh and Myanmar
 - India to Europe through Azerbaijan

International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)

Recent context: For the first time, in June 2024, Russia sent two trains laden with coal to India via INSTC.



About INSTC

- First mooted in 2000.
- A multimodal transportation route linking the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea via land and connected to southern Europe via St. Petersburg.
- Russia, India, and Iran signed preliminary agreements to develop the 2,200-km-long international INSTC in 2002.
- Now the agreement was eventually ratified by 13 countries: India, Russia, Iran, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Oman.

Polity

4. Consider the following statements :
- On the dissolution of the House of the People, the Speaker shall not vacate his/her office until immediately before the first meeting of the House of the People after the dissolution.
 - According to the provisions of the Constitution of India, a Member of the House of the People on being elected as Speaker shall resign from his/her political party immediately.
 - The Speaker of the House of the People may be removed from his/her office by a resolution of the House of the People passed by a majority of all the then Members of the House, provided that no resolution shall be moved unless at least fourteen days' notice has been given of the intention to move the resolution.
- Which of the statements given above are correct?
- I and II only
 - II and III only
 - I and III only
 - I, II and III

Speaker of the Lok Sabha

Recent Context: A Parliamentary Delegation from Madagascar recently met Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla.

About Speaker of Lok Sabha:

- Each House of Parliament has its own presiding officer.
- The Speaker of the Lok Sabha is the presiding officer of the Lok Sabha, the lower house of the Parliament of India.

Election and Tenure of the Speaker

- Article 93: The Speaker is elected by the Lok Sabha from amongst its members (as soon as may be, after its first sitting).
- When the office of the Speaker falls vacant, the Lok Sabha elects another member to fill the vacancy.
- The date of election of the Speaker is fixed by the President.

Duration and Tenure of the Speaker

- Article 93: The Speaker remains in office during the life of the Lok Sabha.

Article 94: The Speaker vacates the office earlier in any of the following three cases:

- If he/she ceases to be a member of the Lok Sabha;
- If he/she resigns by writing to the Deputy Speaker;
- If he/she is removed by a resolution passed by a majority of all the members of the Lok Sabha.

Article 95: A resolution can be moved only after giving 14 days' advance notice.

Article 96: When a resolution for the removal of the Speaker is under consideration of the House, he cannot preside at the sitting of the House, though he may be present.

- However, he can speak and take part in the proceedings of the House at such a time and vote in the first instance, though not in the case of a vote of confidence.

Article 97: When the Lok Sabha is dissolved, the Speaker continues to hold office until the new Lok Sabha is constituted.

Science & Technology

3. Consider the following statements :
- It is expected that Majorana 1 chip will enable quantum computing.
 - Majorana 1 chip has been introduced by Amazon Web Services (AWS).
 - Deep learning is a subset of machine learning.
- Which of the statements given above are correct?
- I and II only
 - II and III only
 - I and III only
 - I, II and III

Artificial Intelligence

Recent context: US President Donald Trump Announces StarGate, A \$500 Billion Artificial Intelligence Initiative.

About Artificial Intelligence (AI):

- AI is the simulation of human intelligence processes by machines, especially computer systems.
- Digital assistants, autonomous vehicles, and generative AI tools (like OpenAI's ChatGPT) are just a few examples of AI in our daily lives.

Top AI Techniques:

- Machine Learning
- Natural Language Processing
- Computer Vision
- Deep Learning

AI Initiatives:

- India AI Mission, BharatGen, India AI

Environment

3. Consider the following statements :
- Statement I : Article 6 of the Paris Agreement on climate change is frequently discussed in global discussions on sustainable development and climate change.
- Statement II : Article 6 of the Paris Agreement on climate change sets out the principles of carbon markets.
- Statement III : Article 6 of the Paris Agreement on climate change intends to promote inter-country non-market strategies to reach their climate targets.
- Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?
- Both Statement I and Statement III are correct and both of them explain Statement II.
 - Both Statement II and Statement III are correct but only one of them explains Statement I.
 - Only one of the Statements II and III is correct and that explains Statement I.
 - Neither Statement II nor Statement III is correct.

Global Carbon Markets

Recent Context: COP29 aims to finalise global carbon market rules under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.

Global Carbon Markets Mechanisms:

- The concept of a market-based mechanism to reduce emissions was first agreed upon in the 1997 Kyoto Protocol.

The Kyoto Protocol established a Clean Development Mechanism (CDM).

- Paris Agreement: Article 6 establishes a framework for international cooperation in achieving National Determined Contributions (NDCs) through both carbon markets (Article 6.2 and 6.4) and non-market approaches (Article 6.8).

International Carbon Action Partnership (ICAP):

- It brings together countries and regions with mandatory cap-and-trade systems.

United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) Multi-Partner Trust Fund:

- A fund to support programmes implemented by participating UN organisations.

Paris Agreement Developments:

- Operationalisation of Article 6.4: This will allow countries to trade carbon credits and issue Article 6.4ER units.

Guidance on Article 6.2, 6.4, and 6.8: This includes guidance on authorisation, first

Mains Reflections

22 Direct Questions



Reflected from Vajiram and Ravi SMART Current Affairs in Mains 2025

GS3 - Q9. Terrorism is a global scourge. How has it manifested in India? Elaborate with contemporary examples. What are the counter measures adopted by the State? Explain.

Counter Terrorism & Operation Sindoor

Recent Context	Messaging & Goal
Trigger → Pulwama Attack (Apr 22, 2023) Pakistan-backed (LUF/JeM) cross-border terror strike at J&K → high-profile → public outrage → pressure on India's defence.	Goal: From revenge narrative → to global strategic signalling & pre-emptive deterrence.
Response → Operation Sindoor (May 7-10) air strikes on terror camps using drones, fighter jets, satellites, Indian Air Force → no ground troops, no civilian harm → new doctrine: tech-led, external, surgical retaliation.	Ownership & Capability From imported systems → to indigenous (Udair, Nagendra etc.) + joint tri-service ops.
The Strategic Shift in India's Approach	Strategic Goals of Op. Sindoor
Doctrinal Shift → Internalisation vs Externalisation	1. Military Objective → Destroying terror infrastructure, precision strikes, non-contact warfare, zero casualties, deep strikes from Indian airspace (within the cost of terror)
Old Approach → Internalisation Focused on counter-insurgency within Kashmir using ground forces, covert ops, and arrests.	2. Psychological Objective → Break nuclear shield assumption, restore deterrence, shatter Pakistan overconfidence, target sensitive military sites (joint retaliation)
New Approach → Externalisation Targets terror roots in DfK and regional using drones, airstrikes, satellites → visible, tech-led, deterrence-oriented.	3. Political Objective → Show strong leadership, assert national security doctrine, responsible escalation control, hybrid deterrence via economic pressure (RATT)
Key Examples → Evolution Path: 2016 Surgical Strikes (LUF, 2019 Balakot (Pulwama), 2023 Sindoor (Pulwama)) → rising precision, deeper targeting.	4. Narrative & Diplomatic Objective → Global pre-briefing, media control, restore moral high ground, isolate Pakistan diplomatically
Strategic Shift → Sindoor vs Earlier Ops	Key characteristics of Op. Sindoor
Force & Mode From Army-ground ops → to IAF-led zero-casualty airstrikes.	Nuclear Deterrence Doctrine Shift → Pakistan's nuclear shield challenged, Stability-instability Paradox broken, counterforce strikes under nuclear umbrella demonstrated, deterrence now includes limited conventional retaliation
Tech & Tools From manual raids → to AI-driven, C4I, jamming, ISR, satellite-based	Full-Spectrum Deterrence → Multi-domain capability across air, land, sea, cyber, space, information, nuclear posture maintained but not relied on, precision + escalation control + strategic messaging integrated

GS3 - Q10. The Government of India recently stated that Left Wing Extremism (LWE) will be eliminated by 2026. What do you understand by LWE and how are the people affected by it? What measures have been taken by the government to eliminate LWE?

LWE - Achievements and Assessment

Achievements	Revised Strategy
Geographic Shrinkage → Red Corridor Broken LWE-affected districts down from 126 (2019) → Q2 2023 "Most affected" districts reduced: 12 → 6 (Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra) Major influence area: 16,000 sq. km → 9,200 sq. km Inference: Corridor now split into isolated pockets → no mass mobilisation	Security Dimension
Violence Plummeted → Lowest in Decades Civilian: ~800, Forces: ~750, before attacks: 365 → 25 Casualties: ~100 for first time in 30 yrs (2022) Inference: State now dominating the battlefield	Strategic Vision → Total Elimination, Not Management New: Maoism declared as India's gravest internal threat with a clear goal of elimination by March 31, 2026 Earlier: Viewed as a socio-economic issue; goal was containment, not elimination
Top Leadership Wiped Out → Psychological Blow Banswara (CPI-M Gen Secy killed May 2023) → first time in 30 yrs Other key leaders: Sukumar, Bhaskar, Uday → all neutralised Total 155+ Maoists killed in Bihar in 18 months Inference: Leadership vacuum, internal demoralisation	Political LWE → Mission-Mode National Leadership New: Centralised, proactive leadership; sustained political momentum Earlier: Inconsistent Centre-State approach; weak follow-through and diluted focus
Organisational Collapse → Cadre & Command Eroded Pushpura: 12 → 3 members Cadres in Gadchiroli: 24 left, confined to 2 talukas Internal Maoists: 1,500 → 1,300 (last 2 years) Inference: Hollowed out chain of command, supply collapse	Leadership Targeting → Decapitation as Core Doctrine New: Systematic targeting of top Maoist leadership (e.g., Banswara, Sukumar) disrupts ideological base Earlier: Lacked prioritised targeting, leadership structure remained intact for decades
State Reclaims Red Zones → Development + Domination Roads, BSNL towers, 140% mobile coverage, schools, PHCs Rajghat launched, camps established Safe corridors lost: Bihar, Gadchiroli, Lakhur now under watch Inference: "Jungle Republic" replaced by Republic of India	Security Infrastructure → Fortified, Penetrative Grid New: 612 fortified police stations (up from 44-2019), 280+ new camps, helipads for deep-area access Earlier: Sparse camps, weak forward deployment; security vacuum in Red Corridor interiors
Mass Surrenders & Rehabilitation → Break from Violence 10,000+ surrenders since 2019 (1,000+ last 18 months)	Force Deployment → Elite Forces + Tribal Integration New: COBRA, Genghosh, and local Bihar Fighters dominate counter-insurgency Earlier: Generic CPMI deployments with little specialisation or community representation
	Local Recruitment → Community-Backed Policing

22 Direct Questions



Reflected from Vajiram and Ravi SMART Current Affairs in Mains 2025

GS2 - Q2. Comment on the need of administrative tribunals as compared to the court system. Assess the impact of the recent tribunal reforms through rationalization of tribunals made in 2021.

Lok Adalat	Administrative tribunals
<ul style="list-style-type: none">One of the alternative dispute redressal mechanisms.NALSA, along with other Legal Services Institutions, conducts Lok Adalats.Forum where disputes/cases pending in the court of law or at the pre-litigation stage are settled/compromised	<p>Administrative tribunals are constituted with the 42nd Constitutional Amendment to Articles 323A and 323B of the Indian Constitution. However, the Administrative Tribunal is a substitute to the High Court. These tribunals are quasi-judicial in nature but are assigned to adjudicate the matters referred before them. It is a sign of a welfare state. As many tribunals are working today, a regulatory mechanism is very much needed.</p>
Waaf Amendment Act - 2025	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Art - 323A: Civil Service disputesArt - 323B: Other TribunalsArt - 323C: Income Tax Tribunal, NCLT, SEBI Tribunal, NCLAT, IRDA, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Clearly define "waaf" as waaf by any person practicing Islam for at least five years and having ownership of such property.Ensuring that the creation of waaf-al-awal does not lead to the denial of inheritance rights to women.Providing the functions of the Survey Commissioner to the Collector or any other officer not below the rank of Deputy Collector, duly nominated by the Collector.Providing for a broad-based composition of the Central Waaf Council and the State Waaf Boards and ensuring the representation of Muslim women and non-Muslims.Providing for the establishment of a separate Board of Waaf for Boharas and Aghakhans.Providing for the representation of Shia, Sunni, Bohra, Aghakhani, and other backward classes among Muslim.

GS2 - Q14. Examine the evolving pattern of Centre-State financial relations in the context of planned development in India. How far have the recent reforms impacted the fiscal federalism in India?

Fiscal Federalism	ROYALTY IS NOT A TAX
<ul style="list-style-type: none">U/A - 26A: Duties levied by the Union but collected & appropriated by States, e.g. Stamp duties & duties of excise on medicinal & toilet preparations mentioned in the Union list.Article 268A: Service Tax added by 88th CAA - 2003 & repealed by 101st CAA - 2016.U/A - 26A: Taxes levied & collected by Union but assigned to the States, e.g. Taxes on sales or purchase of Goods in course of inter-state trade or commerce. Terminal Taxes on Goods or Passengers carried by Rail, Road, Air or Ship.U/A - 26A: Levy and collection of goods and services tax in course of inter-State trade or commerce (IGST) such tax shall be apportioned between the Union & the States on the recommendations of the Goods and Services Tax Council.U/A - 270: Taxes levied & distributed between Union & States. It is on the recommendation of the Finance Commission.U/A - 271: Surcharge on certain duties & taxes for the purposes of the Union.U/A - 273: Grants in lieu of export duty on jute & jute products (Assam, Bihar, Odisha & West Bengal)U/A - 275: Grants from the Union to certain States for raising levels of administration of Scheduled areas & promotion of welfare of Scheduled Tribes (Schedule V & VI States)Union can make grants for any public purposes, even if it	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Supreme Court Nine Judge Constitution Bench of Dr. DY Chandrachud, CJI, held that royalty paid by mining operators to the Central government is not a tax and that States have the power to levy cesses on mining and mineral-use activities.Royalty is a contractual consideration paid by the mining lessee to the lessor for enjoyment of mineral rights.M. P. V. Sundaraman & Co. v. State of Andhra Pradesh (1968). The legislative power to tax mineral rights vests with the State legislatures. Parliament does not have the legislative competence to tax mineral rights.
	Background
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Regulation of mines and mineral development is enumerated under both the Union List and the State list.Parliament enacted the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 (MMDR Act) provides that the holder of a mining lease shall pay royalty in respect of any mineral removed or consumed from the leased area at the specified rates.In the India Cement case, a seven-Judge Bench of this Court held that royalty is tax, and the State legislatures lack competence to levy taxes on mineral rights because the subject-matter is covered by the MMDR Act.Later in time, in State of West Bengal v. Kesoram Industries Ltd (2004), a Constitution Bench of this Court held that the decision in India Cement (supra) stemmed from the fact that the royalty was a tax and not a contractual consideration.

Key Challenges faced by aspirants in current affairs preparation are

- **Identifying important current affairs** for UPSC CSE Prelims and Main Examination.
- Avoiding the **deluge of current affairs material** and focusing on quality over quantity.
- **Understanding the UPSC current affairs question pattern** and the difference between news and issues. (News talks about an incident while Issues focus on ideas)
- **Analyzing and establishing connections** between the forward and backward linkages of a current affairs topic.
- **Covering and connecting** current affairs with the static syllabus.
- **Adopting an active and engaging approach** rather than a passive and superficial one

How will our SMART Current Affairs Program help you?

We understand that students face difficulties in recalling or remembering current affairs/news that they regularly watch on YouTube channels and other such sources. The SMART Current Affairs Program by Vajiram & Ravi offers the solution to this problem. The program follows a multi-dimensional approach towards current affairs, which means that it covers all aspects of current affairs, including political, economic, and social events. This comprehensive approach ensures that you receive multi-level guidance that covers all aspects of your preparation, including time management and exam strategy.

1 Structured Approach

Divided into separate phases, our Current affairs program provides a structured and organised approach to cover the diverse range of Current Affairs for Prelims, Mains and Interview stages of examination.

2 Focused Coverage

The program focuses on the specific requirements of the UPSC exam, covering current affairs topics related to politics, economics, science, technology, environment, international relations, and more.

3 Time Efficiency

Scouring multiple newspapers, magazines, and online sources for current affairs information can be time-consuming. Our dedicated Current Affairs program streamlines this process, saves time and ensures comprehensive coverage of current affairs under one single program.

4 Integration with Syllabus

The program adopts an integrated approach, correlating current affairs with the static portions of the UPSC syllabus. This helps aspirants understand the interconnections between current events and broader subjects.

5 Improve MCQ solving skills

The regular MCQ tests within class hours will help aspirants assess their retention and knowledge of current affairs.

6 Improve Main Answer Writing Skills

Our Current Affairs program has been designed to impart the skill of seamlessly incorporating current affairs into the static syllabus when writing your answers in the UPSC Main Examination for GS Paper-I, II, III, and IV.

7 Boosts Essay and Interview Preparation

Being well-versed in current affairs is essential for essay writing and interview rounds. Our program aims to help aspirants develop the depth of knowledge needed to tackle these stages effectively.

8 Confidence and Clarity

Regularly attending our current affairs classes will boost confidence in one's knowledge of current events and provide clarity on complex issues. This confidence is advantageous for all stages of the UPSC CSE Examination.

9 Suitable for all Aspirants

Tailored for both fresher and senior aspirants, our program is uniquely structured. It not only enhances understanding for freshers but also equips seniors with the skills to integrate current affairs seamlessly into problem-solving during exams. Therefore, ensures a comprehensive approach for all, addressing the specific needs of each aspirant.



Fee: Rs 18,000/-

Scan to Watch

How Our SMART Mains Current Affairs Programme

Helped UPSC Toppers 2024

Real Stories. Real Ranks. Real Results.



Shakti Dubey
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Priyanshu Agrawal
AIR 123



Akshat Koolwal
AIR 352

