

## 1. India Suspends Indus Waters Treaty Amid Rising Tensions With Pakistan



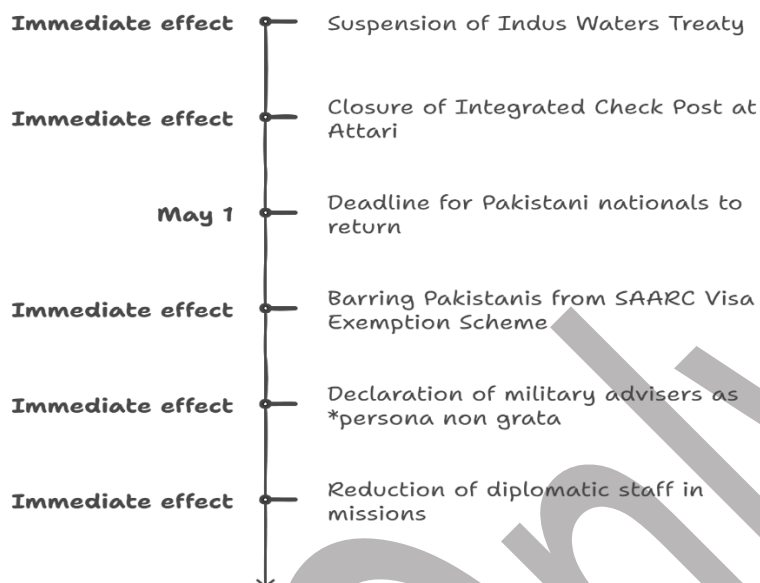
### Description

In response to the terror attack in Pahalgam which killed 26 people, India has taken a historic and strategic step by suspending the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty with Pakistan. This marks a significant shift in India's approach toward cross-border terrorism, with a series of diplomatic and strategic countermeasures.

### Summary

- India suspends the Indus Waters Treaty with Pakistan with immediate effect.
- Decision follows the terror attack in Pahalgam killing 26 civilians.
- Integrated Check Post at Attari closed immediately; Pakistani nationals ordered to return by May 1.
- Pakistanis barred from SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme.
- Military advisers in High Commissions declared *persona non grata*.
- Diplomatic staff in Indian and Pakistani missions to be reduced.
- India vows to bring perpetrators and sponsors of the terror attack to justice.
- All-party meeting called to ensure national consensus on the issue.

## India's Response to Pahalgam Terror Attack



### Context & Background

- The **Indus Waters Treaty (1960)** is a water-distribution treaty between India and Pakistan brokered by the World Bank. It has survived multiple wars and diplomatic stand-offs, making its suspension a major geopolitical move.



### Why It Matters Now

- The recent **Pahalgam terror attack**, killing 26 people, is believed to have cross-border linkages, prompting India to take stringent retaliatory actions. The **Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS)**, chaired by the Prime Minister, formulated a five-point response including the suspension of the treaty.

### Five-Pronged Strategic Response by India

- Suspension of Indus Waters Treaty**: Until Pakistan ends support for cross-border terrorism.



2. **Closure of Attari Check Post:** Immediate suspension of physical entry.
3. **Revocation of SAARC Visa Exemption for Pakistanis:** Visas canceled; 48-hour exit mandate.
4. **Expulsion of Military Advisers:** Mutual withdrawal of military advisers from both high commissions.
5. **Reduction in Diplomatic Strength:** From 55 to 30 staffers in each mission by May 1.



## Diplomatic Fallout

This move aims to:

- Put diplomatic pressure on Pakistan.
- Signal zero tolerance to terror support.
- Unite political forces domestically for a coherent foreign policy stance.

## Internal Political Response

- An all-party meeting has been convened.
- Political leaders including Rahul Gandhi have expressed solidarity.
- Nationalist Congress Party demanded unified action.

## Strategic Implications

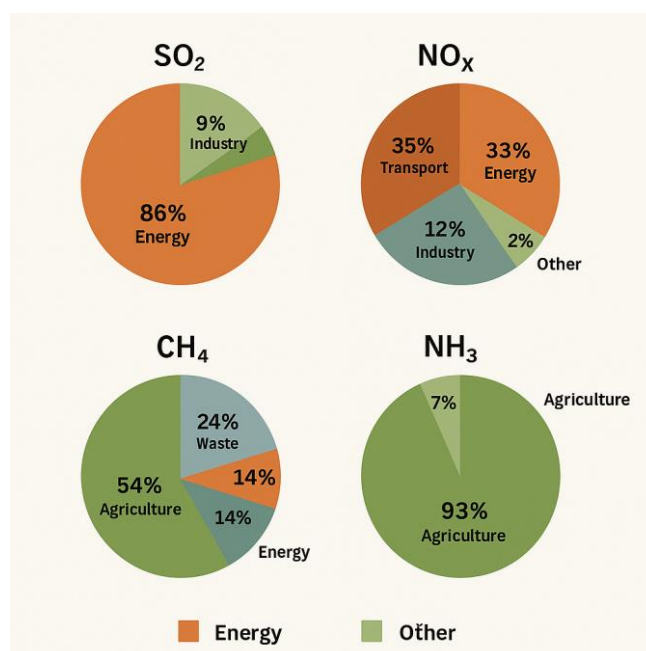
- **Water diplomacy as leverage:** Use of Indus Treaty suspension marks a strategic shift from soft power to coercive diplomacy.
- **Message to international community:** India emphasizes its right to self-defense and counter-terrorism measures.

## Conclusion

The decision to suspend the Indus Waters Treaty is a landmark geopolitical shift in India's foreign policy, signalling its tougher stance on terrorism and diplomatic leverage. For RAS aspirants, this case demonstrates how international treaties, internal security, and foreign policy intersect. Understanding this incident provides

deep insight into India's national security strategy, water diplomacy, and the role of CCS in crisis management.

## 2. Air Pollution in India: A Source-Wise Breakdown and Its Impact



### Description

Air pollution is a major public health and environmental concern in India. Millions die prematurely due to exposure to harmful pollutants, yet the sources are varied and sector-specific. Understanding the origin of pollutants such as SO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub>, black carbon, methane, ammonia, and volatile organic compounds is key to devising targeted solutions.

### Summary

- **Sulphur Dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>)**: Mainly from coal-based power generation.
- **Nitrogen Oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>)**: Primarily from vehicle emissions and coal-based electricity.
- **Black Carbon**: Comes from biomass burning, charcoal cooking, and open waste burning.
- **Methane (CH<sub>4</sub>)**: Released from agriculture and rotting organic waste in landfills.
- **Ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>)**: Almost entirely from agricultural fertilizers and livestock waste.
- **Non-Methane Volatile Organic Compounds (NMVOCs)**: Emanate from solvents, paints, and industrial chemical usage.

### Why this Topic is Relevant

Air pollution is a critical issue for governance, health, sustainable development, and climate policy—all of which are vital themes in the RAS exam. Questions can emerge from both scientific and policy perspectives, especially related to SDG goals, India's energy profile, and environmental health.

### Key Pollutants and Their Sources







### 1. Sulphur Dioxide ( $\text{SO}_2$ )

- **Main Source:** Energy sector, particularly coal-based thermal power plants.
- **Impact:** Causes acid rain, respiratory diseases.
- **RAS Relevance:** Link with India's coal dependency and power sector reforms.

### 2. Nitrogen Oxides ( $\text{NO}_x$ )

- **Main Source:** Transport and energy production.
- **Impact:** Lung inflammation, smog formation.
- **RAS Angle:** Urban transport policy, Bharat Stage Emission Norms.

### 3. Black Carbon

- **Main Source:** Biomass burning, cooking with charcoal, open waste burning.
- **Impact:** Climate warming, cardiovascular and respiratory diseases.
- **Policy Relevance:** Ujjwala Yojana, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

### 4. Methane ( $\text{CH}_4$ )

- **Main Source:** Agriculture (rice paddies, livestock) and waste decomposition.
- **Impact:** Greenhouse gas; contributes to global warming.
- **Related Schemes:** National Bio-Energy Mission, waste-to-energy initiatives.

### 5. Ammonia ( $\text{NH}_3$ )



- **Main Source:** Agriculture — fertilizers and animal waste.
- **Impact:** Forms particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>), leading to premature deaths.
- **Current Affairs Angle:** Soil Health Cards, sustainable agriculture programs.

## 6. Non-Methane Volatile Organic Compounds (NMVOCs)

- **Main Source:** Industrial solvents, paints, and household products.
- **Impact:** Forms ground-level ozone and PMs.
- **Policy Implication:** Need for regulation of VOCs in consumer products.

### Interlinkages with Government Programs

- **National Clean Air Programme (NCAP):** Focuses on reducing PM levels by 20–30% by 2024 in 102 cities.
- **Ujjwala Yojana:** Addresses black carbon by promoting LPG usage.
- **Fertilizer Subsidy Reform & Precision Farming:** Targets ammonia emissions.



### Conclusion

India's air pollution crisis is a multidimensional issue. It is rooted in energy choices, agricultural practices, industrial behavior, and consumer habits. Understanding the specific origins of pollutants is essential for creating a targeted, multi-sectoral policy approach. For RAS aspirants, this topic serves as a bridge between environmental science, public health, and governance.

## 3. Trans Sceptic Arguments Are Incoherent: A Feminist Rebuttal



### Description

Feminist writer and activist Kavita Krishnan critiques recent rulings and political rhetoric from the UK and US that exclude trans women from legal and social recognition. She identifies how such positions, often disguised as "common sense," align with far-right ideologies and ultimately harm all women by reinforcing patriarchal scrutiny and segregation.

### Summary

- The UK Supreme Court ruling weakens trans women's legal protections under the Equality Act, 2010.
- This ruling aligns with global far-right ideologies, which use fear-mongering under the guise of "protecting women."
- Kavita Krishnan argues that trans-exclusionary narratives are incoherent and regressive.
- Historical comparisons are made to racial segregation and misogynistic policies.
- Scientific evidence increasingly supports gender diversity.
- Language and law must evolve rather than exclude.
- The article ends with a powerful parallel: the belief in strict gender binaries is as flawed as once thinking the Earth was flat.

### Contextual Relevance

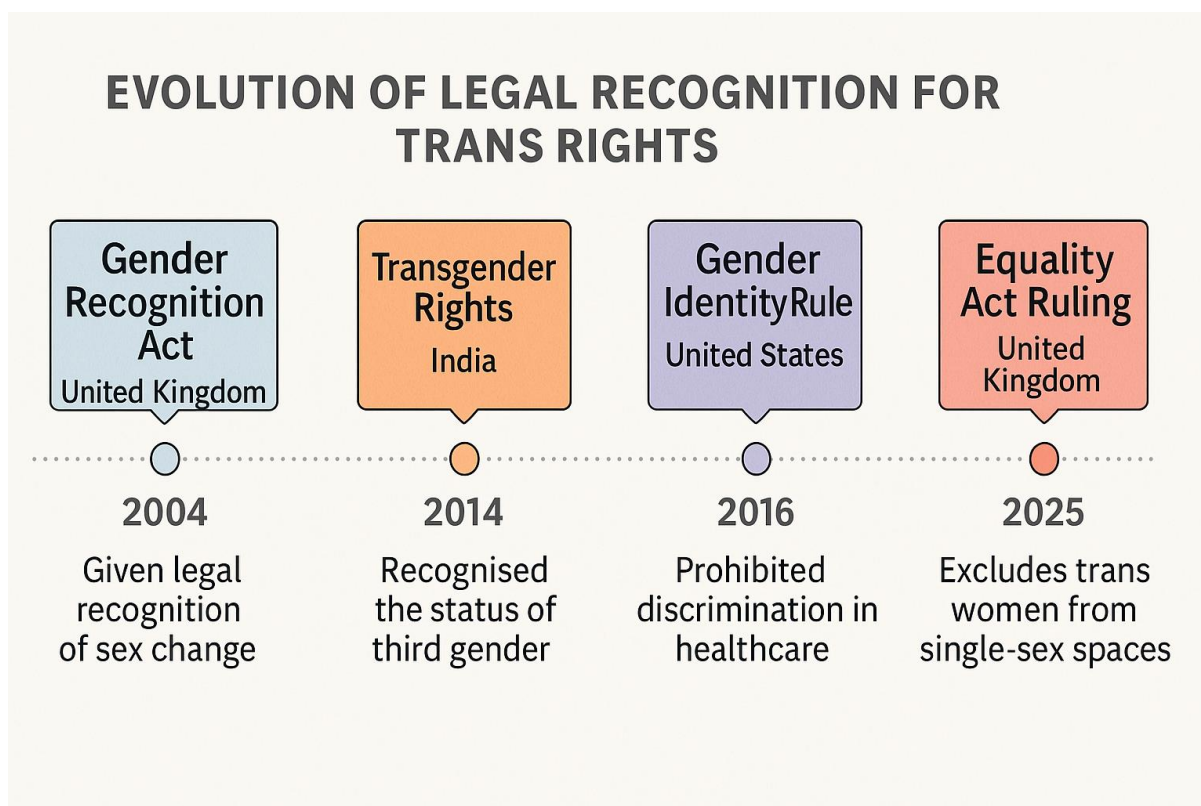
- This article deals with **human rights, gender justice, constitutional morality**, and the **role of judiciary and policy**—all key themes for the **RAS Mains (General Studies Paper II & IV)**.
- It provides a **critical analysis of the intersection between legal rulings, scientific understanding, and social justice movements**.

### Key Arguments & Their Implications

#### 1. Legal Backtracking and Far-Right Influence

- The **UK Supreme Court's ruling** limits trans rights, reversing previous progressive policies.

- Kavita Krishnan shows how **far-right ideologies** (supported by figures like Donald Trump, Putin, and influencers like J.K. Rowling) manipulate public fear under the pretext of “safety” and “common sense”.












## 2. Incoherence of Trans-Exclusionary Logic

- Critics argue that trans women are a threat in women’s spaces without data or scientific basis.
- The analogy with **racial segregation** ("separate but equal") highlights how inclusion policies masked under equality can still perpetuate **discrimination**.

## 3. Misuse of Science

- While many invoke “biology” to deny trans identities, **modern science recognizes gender and sex as spectrums**, not binaries.
- This includes variations in **chromosomes, hormones, brain structures, and intersex identities**.



GENDER BINARY	GENDER SPECTRUM
Biological Sex <div>   </div> Male Female XX chromosomes	Hormonal / chromosomal variations 
Gender Identity <div>   </div> Man Woman	Nonbinary 
Sexual Orientation <div>   </div> Attracted to women attracted to men	Attracted to all / none 

#### 4. Misapplication of Language

- The critique of gender-neutral pronouns like “they” ignores linguistic history (used since Chaucer’s time).
- Language evolves, and just as terms like “chairperson” replaced “chairman”, so must pronouns and legal definitions reflect inclusivity.

#### 5. Feminist Solidarity

- True **feminism is inclusive**, rejecting the policing of bodies based on appearance or conformity to traditional gender roles.
- Policing gender opens the door to **misogynistic surveillance** of all women, not just trans individuals.

#### Conclusion

Kavita Krishnan’s article dismantles the “common sense” rhetoric of trans exclusion through a feminist, scientific, and historical lens. For RAS aspirants, it offers a **nuanced understanding of gender justice, policy-making, constitutional values, and democratic inclusion**. As Rajasthan and India move toward



inclusive governance, understanding such social issues becomes key for ethical leadership and policy formulation.

#### 4. India's Strategic Response to the Pahalgam Terror Attack: A Call for Credible Deterrence



##### Description

The recent terror attack in Pahalgam, Jammu & Kashmir, is not only a humanitarian tragedy but also a strategic provocation, meant to challenge India's internal stability and foreign policy posture. In this thought-provoking piece, Amitabh Mattoo advocates a comprehensive and sustained framework of **strategic deterrence** and **internal reconciliation**, stressing the need for institutional memory, diplomatic assertiveness, and social inclusion.

##### Summary

- The Pahalgam attack is a deliberate strategic act, not a random terror strike.
- Signals renewed activity by Pakistan's military-intelligence complex, particularly ISI-backed groups like The Resistance Front.
- The attack symbolizes a hit on Kashmir's tourism and emerging normalcy.
- India's intelligence failure, though not as severe as Kargil, has significant consequences.

- General Asim Munir of Pakistan appears to be reviving the doctrine of "managed escalation".
- India's response must go beyond outrage and include credible, visible, and cumulative costs.
- A framework of **escalatory credibility** should be adopted — diplomatic, economic, and covert measures must be leveraged.
- Internal policy must separate **terrorists from Kashmiris**, investing in youth, education, and integration.
- The visit of U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance presents an opportunity for global diplomatic messaging.

### Why This News Is Important for RAS Mains

This issue touches upon:

- **Internal Security Challenges** (GS III)
- **India-Pakistan Relations & Border Management**
- **Role of Intelligence Agencies**
- **Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism Strategies**
- **Ethical Governance and Social Cohesion** (GS IV)

### Key Themes Explained

#### 1. Strategic Significance of the Pahalgam Attack

- Location: Baisaran — a tourist destination near Amarnath Yatra route.
- **Objective:** Undermine the image of normalcy in Kashmir and trigger a chain reaction of communal and political anxiety.
- **Message:** Pakistan remains an active disruptor of peace in the region.

#### 2. Cross-Border Linkage & The ISI Connection

- The attack was claimed by *The Resistance Front*, a front for Lashkar-e-Taiba.
- It mirrors the long-standing Pakistani strategy of **asymmetric warfare**, keeping terror deniable but effective.
- Intelligence failures exposed gaps in surveillance and counter-terror preparedness.

#### 3. Doctrine of Managed Escalation

- General Asim Munir's aggressive posture is part of a broader risk strategy under the nuclear threshold.
- Kashmir continues to be the focal theatre of Pakistan's internal-military politics.



## MAJOR PAKISTAN-BACKED TERROR ATTACKS ON INDIAN SOIL



### Kargil conflict

**1999** Pakistani forces militants infiltrate into Ladakh



### Parliament attack

**13 Dec** Jaish militants storm the New Dehi Indian Parliament complex



### Mumbai attack

**26 Nov** Terrorists target multiple Mumbai locations across the city



### Uri attack

**18 Sept** Lashkar-e-Taiba militants strike an Army camp



### Terror attack

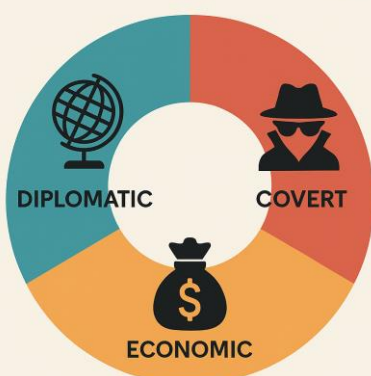
**April 2025** Lashkar affiliates ambush tourists at Baisaran

## 4. India's Path Forward: Strategic Deterrence

Mattoo suggests a **three-pronged deterrence policy**:

1. **Diplomatic**: Isolate Pakistan in global forums and build pressure via allies.
2. **Economic/Legal**: Reassess trade, water treaties like the Indus Waters Treaty (already suspended).
3. **Covert Operations**: Disrupt terror camps across LoC using intelligence-based methods.

### Three-Pronged Deterrence Strategy



### Major-Pronged Deterrence Strategy

## 5. Internal Response: Integration, Not Alienation

- Separate the terrorist from the Kashmiri citizen.





- Focus on youth, jobs, education, and civic harmony.
- Reject narratives that stereotype Kashmiris — crucial for inclusive nationalism.



## 6. International Dynamics and U.S. Engagement

- Leverage diplomatic momentum created by J.D. Vance's visit.
- Urge global partners to act **proactively**, not just offer condolences post-attacks.

### Conclusion

The Pahalgam attack marks a renewed chapter in Pakistan-backed proxy warfare. For India, this is the moment to craft a strategic doctrine of credible deterrence. It must adopt long-term vigilance, institutional continuity, and internal healing. For RAS aspirants, this case is a model of how external threats, domestic unity, and diplomacy intersect in national security policy.

## 5. World Bank Lowers India's FY26 Growth Forecast to 6.3%: Key Insights and RAS Relevance

### Description

In a cautious signal to policymakers and markets, the World Bank has downgraded India's GDP growth forecast for FY2025-26 from 6.7% to 6.3%, citing global economic headwinds and policy uncertainties. This comes amid already slowed private investment and underperformance in public capital expenditure targets.

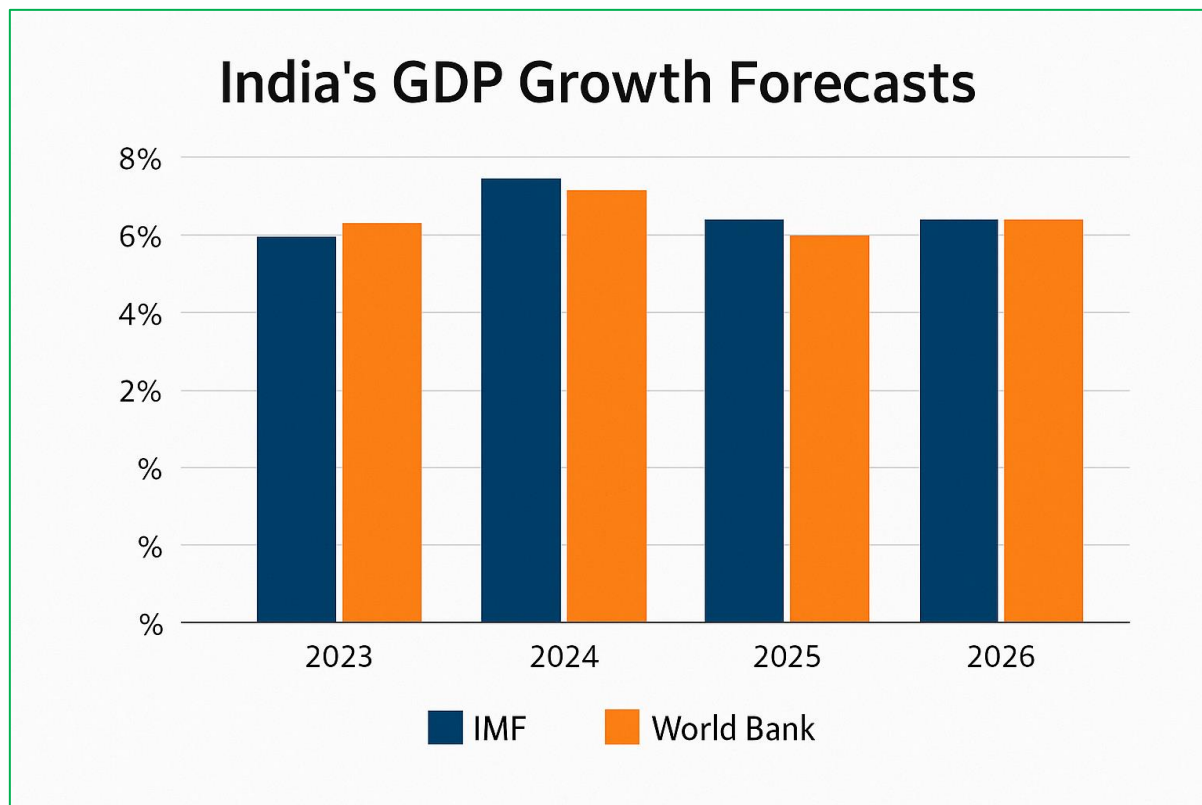
### Summary

- **Growth Forecast Revision:** World Bank revised India's FY26 GDP growth projection from **6.7% to 6.3%**.
- **Key Reasons:**
  - Slower-than-expected growth in private investment.
  - Public capital expenditure did not meet government targets.



➤ Global economic weakness and policy uncertainty.

- **Monetary & Regulatory Reforms:** While India has implemented monetary easing and streamlined regulations, their benefits are being neutralized by external factors.
- **IMF Also Lowers Forecast:** IMF revised India's growth to **6.2% for FY26**, down from 6.5%.



#### Relevance in the RAS Mains Exam

This news connects directly to the **Economy section (GS Paper III)**, especially in topics like:

- Growth and development
- Fiscal policy and public expenditure
- International economic institutions (World Bank, IMF)
- Private investment trends
- Impact of global economic cycles

#### Key Economic Takeaways

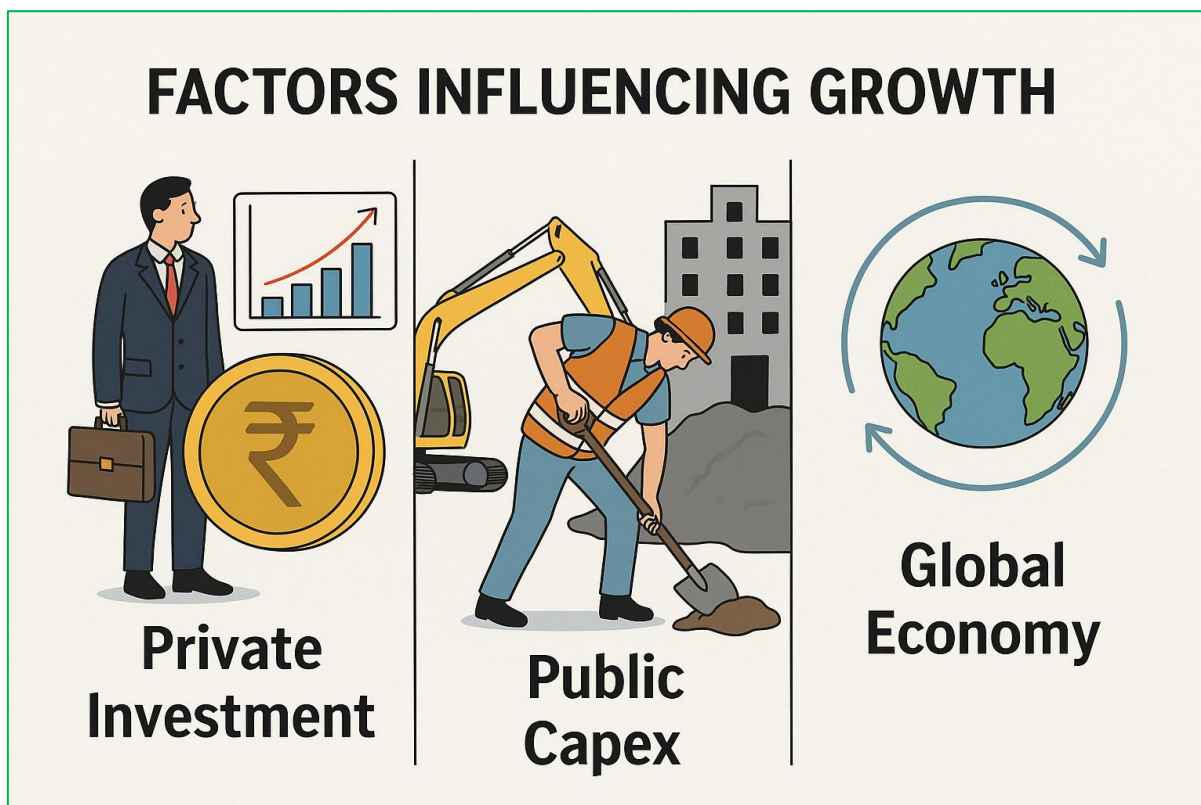
##### 1. GDP Forecast Explained

- The **GDP forecast** is a measure of the expected growth rate of the economy in real terms.
- A reduction from **6.7% to 6.3%** implies lower-than-expected economic performance, affecting **employment, consumption, and fiscal health**.

##### 2. Why the Slowdown?



- **Private Investment Sluggish:** Despite regulatory easing, investor confidence remains weak, partly due to global uncertainty and rising geopolitical tensions.
- **Public Capital Expenditure Lag:** Government projects haven't met their timelines or disbursement targets, reducing expected multiplier effects.
- **Global Economic Weakness:** Trade slowdown, high interest rates in Western economies, and China's recovery challenges all dampen external demand.



### 3. Mixed Signals from Domestic Reforms

- **Monetary Easing:** The RBI has made credit more accessible, which should boost investment.
- **Regulatory Streamlining:** Initiatives like ease of doing business and PLI schemes aim to attract investment.
- But these **positive steps are overshadowed by external macroeconomic headwinds.**





## Implications for India

### Policy-Level Implications

- Need to **revive public capital expenditure** through efficient fund utilization and timely project execution.
- Strengthen **private sector participation** through tax incentives, infrastructure support, and credit access.
- Maintain **macro-economic stability** to shield against global volatility.

### Sectoral Impact

- **Manufacturing & Infrastructure:** Most affected due to capex slowdown.
- **Exports:** Struggling under global trade weakness.
- **Services:** May continue to support growth, especially in IT and digital.



### For RAS Answer Writing

Frame your answers on “**Challenges to India’s Economic Growth**” with structured reasoning:

- Internal issues (investment, policy delays)
- External shocks (wars, interest rate hikes)
- Institutional assessments (World Bank, IMF)
- Balanced conclusion on way forward (reforms + resilience)

### Conclusion

India’s downgraded growth forecast reflects the fragile balance between domestic reforms and global disruptions. For RAS aspirants, this scenario emphasizes the importance of understanding how **external economic trends interact with internal policy** and why **public capital expenditure and private investment** are crucial engines of growth.

