



Quick Glance

- **India–EAEU Free Trade Agreement: Terms of Reference Signed**
- **Constitution (130th Amendment) Bill, 2025**
- **Bio-fencing Initiative in Palamu Tiger Reserve (PTR)**



International Relations

India–EAEU Free Trade Agreement: Terms of Reference Signed

Context

India and the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)—comprising Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan—have signed the Terms of Reference (ToR) in Moscow to initiate formal FTA negotiations. This strategic move aims to diversify India's trade amidst rising U.S. tariffs.

Key Details

- ◆ The ToR provides the foundational framework to launch and guide FTA talks.
- ◆ India–EAEU bilateral trade stood at USD 69 billion in 2024, up 7% from the previous year.
- ◆ The agreement covers a combined GDP of USD 6.5 trillion, indicating large-scale economic potential.
- ◆ The FTA is expected to enhance:
 - ✓ **Market access** for Indian exporters,
 - ✓ **Diversification** into new sectors and geographies

Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)

Members: Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan

GDP: ~ USD 6.5 trillion

Strategic importance: Energy resources (oil, gas, uranium), metals, fertilizers, and transit corridor between Europe & Asia.

Strategic Value for India

- Diversification of trade amid Western tariffs and China's dominance.
- Energy security: Easier access to Russian oil & Kazakh uranium.
- Fertilizer imports: EAEU major supplier of potash, critical for Indian agriculture.
- Connectivity push: Synergy with International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) and Chabahar port.



- ✓ **Competitiveness** against non-market economies
- ✓ Benefits for MSMEs through expanded trade opportunities.
- ◆ Both parties have reaffirmed their commitment to early conclusion of the agreement and establishing long-term institutional cooperation.

Significance

- ◆ Provides a trade buffer for India amid Western tariff pressures.
- ◆ Signals proactive outreach to strategic markets in Eurasia.
- ◆ Opens avenues for Indian MSMEs and exporters to expand into new regions.

Challenges

- ◆ Harmonizing regulatory standards across multiple jurisdictions.
- ◆ Managing negotiations amid volatile India–Russia geopolitical dynamics.
- ◆ Ensuring smaller EAEU economies' concerns are addressed alongside Russia's dominance.

Way Forward

- ◆ Establish negotiation structures and timelines under the ToR.
- ◆ Prioritise reduction of **non-tariff barriers** and aligned standards.
- ◆ Ensure institutional mechanisms, such as joint commissions or advisory boards, guide the process.



SYLLABUS

Syllabus Mapping:

- GS Paper II – International Relations - Trade diplomacy, economic partnerships
- GS Paper III – Economy - Export diversification, FTA mechanisms, trade resilience



Polity & Governance

Constitution (130th Amendment) Bill, 2025

Context

Introduced in Lok Sabha by Union Home Minister Amit Shah on August 20, 2025, the 130th Amendment Bill seeks to add a new provision for the removal of top elected leaders under specific circumstances.



Key Provisions

- ♦ **Automatic Removal:** The Prime Minister, Union Ministers, Chief Ministers, and State Ministers will be automatically removed from office if they are **arrested and detained for 30 consecutive days** on serious criminal charges—offenses carrying a minimum imprisonment of five years.
- ♦ **Constitutional Amendments:** This will **modify Articles 75 (Union), 164 (States), and 239AA (Delhi)**.
- ♦ **Reappointment Permitted:** Those removed can be reinstated after release.
- ♦ **Procedure:** Removal is triggered by the concerned constitutional authority (**President, Governor, or Lt. Governor**) if the advice to remove is not tendered within the stipulated period.
- ♦ **Parliamentary Action:** The Bill, along with related amendments for Union Territories and Jammu & Kashmir, has been referred to a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) for detailed examination.

Significance

- ♦ Aims to enhance accountability and curb criminalisation of politics by ensuring leaders under serious allegations don't hold office.
- ♦ Fills a constitutional gap where ministers accused—but not convicted—can continue in power indefinitely.



Concerns

- ◆ Undermines the presumption of innocence, as removal is based on arrest, not conviction.
- ◆ Risks being weaponised politically, enabling the destabilisation of opposition-led governments through misuse of investigative powers.
- ◆ Likely to trigger federal tensions and constitutional challenges, possibly invoking the “basic structure” doctrine.

Way Forward

- ◆ Parliamentary scrutiny via JPC must ensure safeguards against misuse.
- ◆ Clear guidelines needed to prevent arbitrary application—ensuring that rule of law and due process are not compromised.
- ◆ Judicial review is expected; outcome will be critical for the balance between governance ethics and democratic rights.



SYLLABUS

Syllabus Mapping:

- GS Paper II – Polity - Constitutional amendments, separation of powers, presumption of innocence
- GS Paper II – Governance - Centre–State relations, misuse of agencies



Environment

Bio-fencing Initiative in Palamu Tiger Reserve (PTR)

Context

In a first-of-its-kind initiative, officials of the Palamu Tiger Reserve (PTR) in Jharkhand have initiated bio-fencing around villages to mitigate man-elephant



conflict. The initiative aligns with principles of community-based conservation, combining ecological, social, and economic benefits.

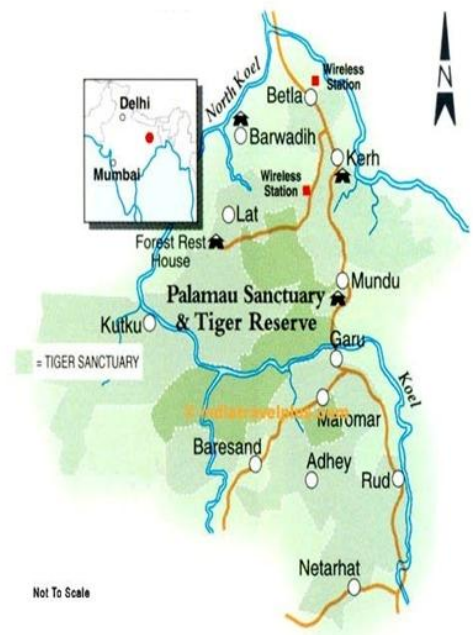
What is Bio - fencing

Bio-fencing is a nature-based solution that uses live plant species to create a barrier between wildlife habitats and human settlements, thereby reducing conflict. Unlike electric or concrete fencing, it is:

- Environmentally friendly
- Low maintenance
- Self-regenerating
- Economically beneficial for local communities

Three-Tiered Plant Barrier in PTR

The bio-fencing in PTR uses a three-layered strategy to deter elephants:



Layer	Plant Used	Purpose
1st	Sisal	Thorny, tough structure—natural physical deterrent
2nd	Lemongrass	Emits volatile oils—irritates elephants' olfactory sensors
3rd	Lemon plant	Thorny + pungent citrus smell—psychological & sensory repellent

Together, these create a strong physical and psychological barrier.

Significance

- ◆ Eco-sensitive Solution : Avoids harming wildlife while offering effective deterrence.



- ◆ Livelihood Opportunities : Sisal (fiber), lemongrass (essential oils), and lemon (fruit) have market value.
- ◆ Community Participation: Local communities are likely to engage more when solutions provide economic returns.
- ◆ Climate Co-benefits: Vegetative barriers contribute to carbon sequestration and microclimate regulation.

Challenges

- ◆ Initial plantation efforts and monitoring require support.
- ◆ Requires awareness-building among locals for maintenance.
- ◆ Effectiveness may vary seasonally based on plant growth.

Way Forward

- ◆ Replication in other elephant corridors and conflict zones.
- ◆ Integration with Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) policies.
- ◆ Support through CAMPA funds and forest management programs.



SYLLABUS

Syllabus Mapping:

- GS Paper III – Environment
 - Conservation
 - Environmental pollution and degradation
 - Disaster and conflict mitigation strategies



Practice Corner

1. With reference to the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), consider the following statements:

1. It is an economic bloc led by Russia and includes Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan.



2. The EAEU has its headquarters in Moscow.
3. It aims to ensure free movement of goods, services, capital, and labor among member states.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

2. Which of the following benefits is India expecting from an FTA with the EAEU?

1. Improved market access for Indian exporters
2. Diversification of trade into new regions
3. Reducing dependence on Western markets amid tariff pressures
4. Protection of Indian agriculture from foreign competition

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

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

3. Consider the following regional economic blocs:

1. EAEU
2. ASEAN

3. MERCOSUR

Which of the above have formal trade arrangements or negotiations with India?

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

4. Which of the following correctly explains the objectives of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)?

1. Establishing a single market for goods, services, capital, and labor.
2. Coordinating macroeconomic policies among member states.
3. Acting as a military alliance under the CSTO framework.

Select the correct answer:

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

5. The 130th Constitutional Amendment Bill, 2025 seeks to provide for:

1. Automatic removal of top elected leaders if arrested and detained for 30 consecutive days on serious criminal charges.



2. Amendments to Articles 75, 164, and 239AA of the Constitution.
3. Permanent disqualification of such leaders from holding public office.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

6. With reference to bio-fencing as introduced in Palamu Tiger Reserve (PTR), consider the following statements:
 1. It involves the use of live plants to act as barriers between wildlife habitats and human settlements.
 2. It is self-regenerating, eco-friendly, and provides livelihood opportunities.
 3. It is similar to electric fencing in terms of structure and impact on wildlife.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

7. Which of the following are potential co-benefits of bio-

fencing initiatives like that in PTR?

1. Carbon sequestration and microclimate regulation
2. Additional income from fiber, oils, and fruits
3. Avoidance of harm to wildlife compared to electric/concrete fencing

Select the correct code:

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

8. Which of the following is a challenge in implementing bio-fencing in elephant conflict zones?
 - (a) Lack of government funds for CAMPA projects
 - (b) Seasonal variations in plant growth affecting effectiveness
 - (c) High costs of electric fencing installation
 - (d) Non-availability of lemon plants in India

9. Which of the following Tiger Reserves is/are located in the Western Ghats?

1. Bandipur
2. Periyar
3. Nagarhole
4. Simlipal

Select the correct code:



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

10. Consider the following Tiger Reserves:

1. Palamu Tiger Reserve
2. Nagarjunsagar-Srisaillam Tiger Reserve

3. Pakke Tiger Reserve

Arrange them from north to south:

- (a) 1 – 2 – 3
- (b) 1 – 3 – 2
- (c) 3 – 1 – 2
- (d) 2 – 3 – 1

Answer Key (20th August 2025)

1	B	5	A	9	B
2	C	6	B		
3	A	7	A		
4	A	8	A		