



## **DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 26-01-2026**

### **Mapping Perspective**

1. Muna Island

### **Prelims Perspective**

2. Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)
3. Liberalised Remittances Scheme (LRS)

### **Mains Perspective**

4. Delimitation after 2027, redrawing power in India
5. Antimicrobial Resistance

## **Muna Island**

**Syllabus: Prelims (World Geography - Mapping); GS-I (Ancient History & Human Evolution)**

### **Context**

Rock art dated to **at least 67,800 years ago** has been discovered on **Muna Island, Indonesia**, making it the **oldest known cave art in the world**.



### **About Muna Island**

#### **What is Muna Island?**

- A large island in **Southeast Sulawesi Province, Indonesia**.

- Known for:
  - Extensive **limestone (karst) landscapes**
  - Rich **archaeological remains**
  - Strong **Austronesian cultural heritage**
- Administratively divided into:
  - **Muna Regency**
  - **West Muna Regency**
  - **Central Buton Regency**

### Location



- Located:
  - **South-east of Sulawesi**
  - **West of Buton Island**
- Lies in the **Flores Sea**
- Forms part of the **Wallacea biogeographical zone**, a transitional region between:
  - **Sunda** (mainland Asia)
  - **Sahul** (Australia–New Guinea)

### Key Geological Features

- Dominated by **limestone karst formations** with:
  - Caves and rock shelters
- Presence of **speleothems** (calcium carbonate cave deposits):

- Enabled **Uranium-series (U-series) dating**
- Terrain:
  - Predominantly **hilly**
  - Elevations up to **~445 metres**

### Discovery of Ancient Rock Art

- Site: **Liang Metanduno Cave**
- Findings:
  - **Hand stencil rock art**
  - Some stencils display **intentionally modified fingers**
- Dating Technique:
  - **Laser-ablation U-series dating**
  - Based on **calcite layers overlying the pigment**
- Age:
  - Minimum age of **~67.8 thousand years**
  - Older than cave art from:
    - Europe
    - Western Indonesia

### Significance

#### Archaeological Significance

- Establishes **Muna Island** as the **oldest known cave art site globally**
- Redefines the chronology of prehistoric art

#### Human Evolution

- Demonstrates **advanced symbolic and artistic abilities** of early *Homo sapiens*
- Indicates cognitive sophistication during early dispersal

#### Migration Studies

- Provides strong evidence for the **northern maritime migration route**
- Supports human movement from **Southeast Asia to Sahul** around **65,000 years ago**

## **Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)**

### **Syllabus: GS-2; International Relations**

#### **Context**

**Spain has joined the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)**, strengthening multilateral maritime cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.

#### **About IPOI**

- Launched by **India in November 2019**
- Announced at the **East Asia Summit (EAS), Bangkok**
- **Nature:**
  - Non-treaty based
  - Voluntary and cooperative framework
- **Objective:**
  - Promote a **free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific**
  - Strengthen a **rules-based maritime order**
- Anchored to the **ASEAN-led EAS mechanism**

#### **Key Features**

- Focus on **shared maritime interests**
- Countries may **voluntarily lead or join** specific pillars
- Encourages **coordination, capacity building, and integration**

#### **Seven Pillars of IPOI**

1. **Maritime Security:** India & United Kingdom
2. **Maritime Ecology:** Australia & Thailand
3. **Maritime Resources:** France & Indonesia
4. **Capacity Building & Resource Sharing:** Germany
5. **Disaster Risk Reduction & Management:** India & Bangladesh
6. **Science, Technology & Academic Cooperation:** Italy & Singapore
7. **Trade, Connectivity & Maritime Transport:** Japan & United States

## **Liberalised Remittances Scheme (LRS)**

**Syllabus: GS-3; Indian Economy, External Sector**

### **Context**

Outward remittances under the **RBI's Liberalised Remittances Scheme (LRS)** declined to a **two-year low of USD 1.94 billion in November 2025**, mainly due to reduced expenditure on **foreign education**.

### **About LRS**

- Operates under the **Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), 1999**
- Introduced on **4 February 2004**
- Enables outward remittance by **resident individuals**

### **Key Features**

- **Annual limit:**
  - **USD 250,000 per financial year (April–March)**
- **Eligible persons:**
  - Resident individuals, including **minors**
- **Excluded entities:**
  - Corporates, firms, HUFs, trusts
- **Frequency:**
  - No restriction on number of transactions
  - Total remittance must remain within the annual limit
- **RBI approval:**
  - Required if the prescribed limit is exceeded

### **Permitted Transactions**

- Opening foreign bank accounts
- Purchase of immovable property abroad
- Overseas Direct and Portfolio Investments
- Loans to NRIs (relatives)
- Foreign travel, education, and medical treatment
- Maintenance of relatives abroad

### **Prohibited Transactions**

- Lottery and prohibited items
- Margin trading abroad
- Foreign exchange trading overseas
- Investment in FCCBs in overseas secondary markets
- Remittances to terrorism-linked entities
- Transfers to **FATF non-cooperative countries**

### Taxation under LRS

- **TCS applicable** on remittances above **₹7 lakh per year**
- **General TCS rate:** 20% (varies by purpose)
- Income earned abroad is **taxable in India**

## **Delimitation after 2027, redrawing power in India**

**Syllabus: GS-2: Indian Polity –Federalism and Delimitation.**

### Context:

On paper, it is a routine constitutional adjustment. In reality, the next delimitation exercise — due after Census 2027 — will be the most consequential redrawing of political power since Independence.

### Background and Constitutional Context

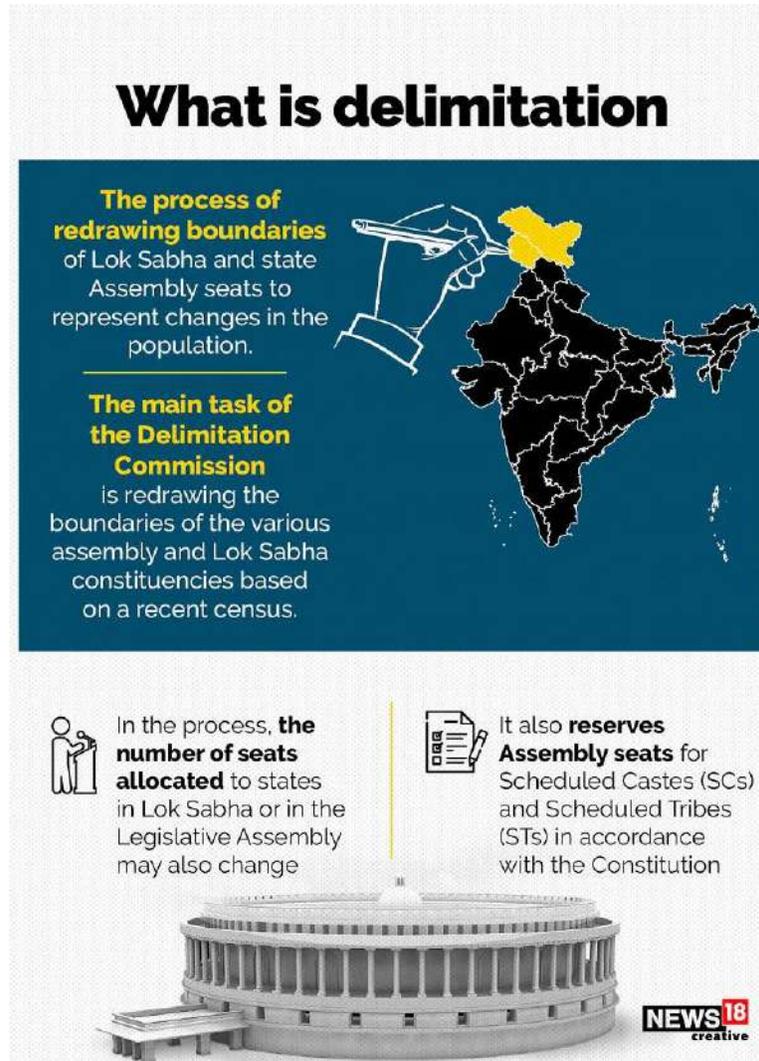
- **Delimitation:** Process of redrawing constituency boundaries and reallocating seats based on population.
- Mandated after every Census under the Constitution.
- **Freeze on inter-State seat redistribution** since 1976 (based on 1971 Census) to avoid penalising States controlling population.
- **84th Constitutional Amendment (2001):** Freeze continues till “first Census after 2026” → effectively ends with Census 2027.
- Present representation reflects **1971 population (≈548 million)** vs current **≈1.47 billion**.

### Why the Next Delimitation is Consequential

- First inter-State reallocation since 1976.
- Will involve:
  - Reallocation of Lok Sabha seats among States
  - Redrawing all constituencies

- Creating **33% women-reserved constituencies**
- Time-consuming → likely implemented only by **2034 elections** or later.

### Core Problem: Population vs Federal Fairness



### Diverging Fertility Trends

- Southern & western States: below-replacement fertility due to governance investments.
- Northern States (UP, Bihar): higher population growth continues.

### Moral and Federal Paradox

- States rewarded earlier for population control now risk **losing political weight**.
- States with high growth gain **disproportionate power**.

### Projected Impact (Population-based Allocation)

- Expanded Lok Sabha ≈ **888 seats**
- **Uttar Pradesh:** 80 → 151 seats
- **Bihar:** 40 → 82 seats
- Combined share: **>26% of Lok Sabha**
- Southern States:
  - Tamil Nadu: 39 → 53 (share falls 7.2% → 6.0%)
  - Kerala: 20 → 23 (share falls 3.7% → 2.6%)

**Implication:** Absolute numbers rise, but relative influence sharply declines.

### Political and Federal Consequences

- Two States dominating over one-fourth of Lok Sabha alters:
  - Coalition arithmetic
  - Bargaining power of smaller and southern States
  - Regional party relevance
- Home Minister's assurance ("no seat reduction") insufficient as **relative power still erodes.**

### Key Reform Options Suggested

#### Option 1: Extend the Freeze

- **Pros:** Protects federal balance
- **Cons:** Violates equal suffrage, risks Article 14 challenge, unfair to fast-growing States

#### Option 2: Expand Lok Sabha (750–888 seats)

- **Pros:** No State loses seats
- **Cons:** Large States still gain disproportionate influence

#### Option 3: Weighted Formula (Preferred Reform Idea)

- 70–80% population weight
- 20–30% weight for:
  - Literacy
  - Health
  - Fertility control
- Inspired by **Finance Commission composite criteria**

- Rewards governance, not only fertility

#### **Option 4: Strengthen Rajya Sabha as Federal Chamber**

- Restore **domicile requirement** for membership
- Reform seat allocation:
  - Equal or tier-based representation (large/medium/small States)
- Aim: Balance Lok Sabha's population dominance with federal parity

#### **Option 5: Reorganise Uttar Pradesh**

- Split into 3–4 States (Bundelkhand, Purvanchal, etc.)
- Prevents single-State dominance
- Federal and administrative solution

#### **Option 6: Phased Redistribution**

- Half seats in 2034, rest in 2039
- Reduces political shock
- Gradual adjustment

#### **Procedural Safeguards Needed**

- Delimitation Commission to include:
  - Demographers
  - Constitutional experts
  - Federal scholars
  - State representatives
- Ensure:
  - Transparency
  - Public hearings
  - Oversight

#### **SC/ST and Women's Reservation Issues**

- SC/ST seats fixed strictly by population proportion.
- **Concern:** Discretion in location of SC seats → scope for manipulation.
- ST formula should be uniformly applied.
- Women's reservation linked to delimitation → delayed till post-2034 likely.

### Larger Constitutional Tension

- **Conflict:**
  - Democracy principle → “one person, one vote”
  - Federal principle → protect regional balance
- Delimitation tests:
  - Fairness
  - Federalism
  - Stability

### Conclusion:

- Delimitation will reshape representation, coalition politics and federal balance for decades.
- A purely population-based model risks **penalising good governance** and weakening federal trust.
- Need for:
  - Balanced formula
  - Strengthened Rajya Sabha
  - Phased and consultative approach

### Practice Qs:

Q. “The proposed delimitation exercise after Census 2027 raises a fundamental tension between the democratic principle of equal representation and the federal principle of regional balance.” Discuss the constitutional basis, likely political consequences, and the possible reforms to ensure fairness and federal harmony. (250 words, 15 marks)

## **Antimicrobial Resistance**

**Syllabus: GS-3: General Science – Health Science.**

### Context:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and Health Minister JP Nadda have recently raised awareness about Anti-Microbial Resistance (AMR) stemming from antibiotic overuse, highlighting how India is facing a silent public health crisis.

### Introduction

- AMR refers to the ability of microorganisms to resist antimicrobial drugs.
- Emerging as a “**silent pandemic**” threatening modern medicine.
- In India (2021): **2.67 lakh deaths linked to AMR**.
- Nearly **83% Indians carry drug-resistant bacteria** → alarming public health risk.

### Scale and Significance in India

- India accounts for **~18% of world population** → ~1/5 of global infections.
- High resistance in:
  - Typhoid
  - Diarrhoea
  - Pneumonia
  - UTIs

**Key Concern:** Routine infections becoming difficult and expensive to treat.

### Causes of AMR in India

#### (a) Behavioural Misuse

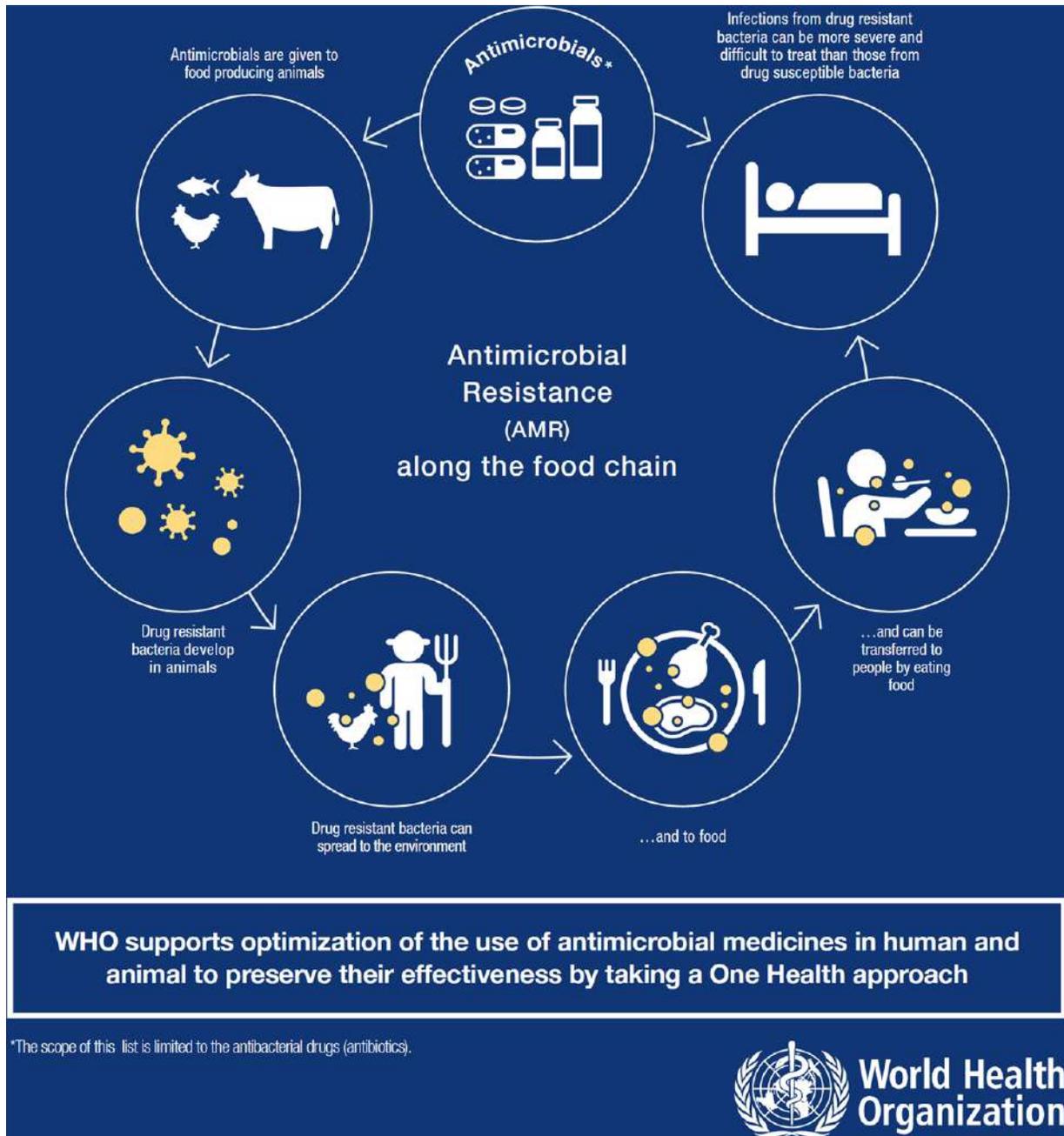
- Self-medication for viral illnesses (cough, cold, diarrhoea).
- OTC antibiotic sales.
- Prophylactic over-prescription by doctors.

#### (b) Hospital Factors

- High antibiotic pressure in tertiary hospitals.
- Hospital-acquired resistant infections.
- Gene transfer among bacteria in hospital environments.

#### (c) Weak Regulation & Awareness

- Inadequate enforcement of prescription rules.
- Low public understanding.



### Drying Antibiotic Pipeline

- Few new antibiotics in recent decades.
- Almost **no new drug classes or mechanisms**.
- Risk of exhausting existing “last-resort” drugs.

**Implication:** Collapse of:

- Surgery safety

- Cancer chemotherapy
- Transplant medicine

### Treatment Challenges

- Rising resistance in:
  - **Salmonella typhi** → fluoroquinolones
  - Overuse of **ceftriaxone & azithromycin**
- Dependence on last-resort antibiotics.

### Positive Insight:

- Resistance can reverse if drugs are withdrawn (old typhoid drugs regaining efficacy).

### Antibiotic Stewardship

#### Meaning:

- Rational prescribing and responsible patient use.

#### Best Practice Example - Kerala

- Launched stewardship in **2015**.
- Focused on:
  - Doctor training
  - Awareness
- OTC ban introduced **after a decade** → sustainable compliance.

#### Lesson:

- Behaviour change + awareness > sudden bans.

### One Health Dimensions

#### Humans

- Major driver of resistance.

#### Livestock

- Limited role in India (ICMR studies).

#### Environment

- Antibiotic residues in food & gut microbiome → resistance reservoir.
- Overlap of resistance genes between:
  - Humans

- Hospital environments

### Data and Surveillance Gaps

- Data mainly from **25 ICMR tertiary hospitals**.
- Bias towards severe, hospitalised cases.
- Lack of nationwide representation.

### Need:

- Wider surveillance network like **Japan (2,000 hospitals)**.

### Emerging Alternatives

#### (a) Phage Therapy

- Bacteria-eating viruses.
- Useful for UTIs.
- Requires precise matching.
- Resistance possible.

#### (b) Monoclonal Antibodies

- Early-stage research.
- High cost, limited availability.

### Government & Policy Framework

- National Action Plan on AMR (2017–2021; extended).
- ICMR AMR Surveillance Network.
- Schedule H1 regulation for antibiotics.

### Challenges

- OTC antibiotic culture.
- Weak enforcement.
- Inadequate diagnostics.
- Low R&D incentives.
- Poor public awareness.

### Way Forward

- **Strengthen Antibiotic Stewardship** nationwide.
- Enforce prescription-only sales.

- Expand AMR surveillance network.
- Promote rapid diagnostics.
- Incentivise pharmaceutical R&D.
- Integrate **One Health approach**.
- Mass awareness campaigns.

**Practice Qs:**

Q. "Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is emerging as a silent pandemic threatening the foundations of modern medicine in India." Discuss the causes, challenge and suggest a comprehensive strategy to tackle AMR in India. (250 words, 15 marks)