

## 1. Why the Government Wants QR Codes on Rural Roads

### Introduction

To improve road quality and ensure accountability, the Centre has asked states to install QR codes on display boards along roads built under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY). This will allow citizens to give feedback on road conditions.



### What is PMGSY?

- Launched: December 25, 2000
- Objective: Provide rural road connectivity

### Key Facts:

- Over 8.36 lakh km of roads sanctioned
- 7.81 lakh km completed
- Target (2024–29): 62,500 km at ₹70,125 crore
- Funding: 60:40 split between Centre and states (90:10 for NE/Himalayan states)

### How Is Road Maintenance Managed Now?

- 5-year maintenance by the contractor after road completion
- System used: e-MARG (mobile/web platform)
- Monitoring:
  - Contractors submit maintenance bills on e-MARG
  - Field engineers conduct Routine Inspections (RI)
  - Geo-tagged photos required for assessment
  - State governments are responsible as rural roads are a state subject

### What's the Problem with the Current System?

- Substandard work has been reported in the past
- Lack of citizen feedback: No direct way for locals to report poor road quality
- Monitoring was limited to internal inspections and official reports

### How Will the QR Code System Work?

- QR code will be placed on roadside display boards
- Public can scan the code using mobile phones
- Access:
  - Road details
  - Option to upload photos
  - Submit maintenance complaints
- Instructions will be available in English and local languages

### What Happens After Citizens Submit Feedback?

- Photos submitted by users will be linked to the official inspection records

- AI/ML tools will analyse photos to assess road quality
- Engineering teams will use this data to assign performance scores
- Ensures a transparent and real-time feedback system

### Why This Matters

This initiative allows citizen participation in ensuring road quality, improves transparency, and enhances the government's ability to track and evaluate road maintenance effectively.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Governance

Source: Indian Express

## 2. India's Coastline Now Measures 11,098 km — But Why the Sudden Jump?

### Introduction

India's coastline, previously measured at 7,516 km, has now been recalculated to be 11,098 km — a sharp increase of 3,582 km or nearly 48%. This rise is not due to any territorial expansion, but due to more accurate, high-resolution measurement techniques.

Length of India's coastline along states	
State/UT	Coastline length (in km)
Gujarat	2,340.62
Maharashtra	877.97
Goa	193.95
Karnataka	343.3
Kerala	600.15
Tamil Nadu	1,068.69
Andhra Pradesh	1,053.07
Odisha	574.71
West Bengal	721.02
Daman and Diu	54.38
Pondicherry	42.65
Lakshadweep	144.8
Andaman and Nicobar	3,083.50
Source: Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways	

### Why the Length Has Increased

- Old data (1970s): Measured using low-resolution maps (scale of 1:4,500,000)

- New data: Measured with higher-resolution maps (scale of 1:250,000) using modern GIS software
- Higher resolution captures bends, curves, and irregularities in the coast more accurately
- Many offshore islands were also newly included, which had been missed earlier due to data limitations

### **Understanding the Coastline Paradox**

- Coastlines are irregular and don't have a fixed length — they appear longer as you measure them in greater detail
- This is known as the "coastline paradox" — the smaller the scale or measuring unit, the longer the measured length
- The same problem applies to rivers and mountain ranges

Conclusion: Coastline length is not absolute. It depends on how precisely it is measured.

### **Island Count Also Revised**

- Previous counts - 1,382 islands (Survey of India, 2016)
- After reconciling definitions, the new count is 1,389 islands:
  - 1,298 offshore islands
  - 91 inshore islands
  - (River islands not included in this count)

### **Why These Changes Matter**

Though the actual ground situation remains the same, these updated numbers carry administrative and strategic value:

- May affect Coastal Zone Regulation (CRZ) areas
- Useful for coastal protection and erosion control projects
- Impacts infrastructure and tourism planning in coastal areas
- Strengthens understanding for climate resilience and national security

### **Recalculation to Happen Every 10 Years**

Given the importance of precise data, India has decided to repeat this coastline and island reassessment every decade, just as many other countries already do. This helps account for:

- Natural changes like erosion or deposition
- Human activity like land reclamation

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper I; Geography

Source: Indian Express

## **3. China's Response to the Iran-Israel Conflict**

### **What Happened?**

Israel launched a major military strike on Iran under Operation Rising Lion, targeting nuclear facilities and killing military generals. Over 600 Iranians and 24 Israelis have died.

### **China's Stand**

China has condemned Israel's actions and called for immediate de-escalation, urging all parties—especially Israel—to act responsibly. It reiterated support for Iran's sovereignty and security.

### Why China Is Involved

- China imports 90% of Iranian oil
- It is Israel's second-largest trade partner
- Previously brokered peace between Saudi Arabia and Iran (2023)
- Hosted Palestinian factions, including Hamas, in 2024 for unity talks

### Cautious Engagement

While China shows growing interest in Middle East diplomacy, it remains militarily non-interventionist. Its focus remains on stability for economic interests, not conflict.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Issues

Source: The Hindu

## 4. Labubu Dolls Take Over Global Pop Culture

### What Is Labubu?

Labubu is a viral toy doll made by Beijing-based brand Pop Mart in collaboration with artist Kasing Lung. It's part of a series called "The Monsters", featuring quirky, mischievous characters.

### Global Craze

- Endorsed by stars like Rihanna, Lisa (BLACKPINK), and Ananya Panday
- Huge queues reported in Australia and the UAE
- Sold in blind boxes, where the toy is a surprise

### Economic Impact

- Pop Mart's market value hit \$40 trillion
- Its stock surged 6x in one year due to "Labubu fever"

### Media Messaging

Chinese state media covered the success heavily, linking it to:

- Cultural globalisation
- Pro-consumption policies
- But also flagged concerns about overconsumption

Relevance: GS Prelims; Miscellaneous

Source: Indian Express



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