ForumIAS

Mains Marathon

Compilation

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Index

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Evaluate the effectiveness of merging the Railways budget with the main budget. Has it led to better capital expenditure?

Introduction: Give brief context to the merger of Rail budget
Body: How effective has been the merger?
Conclusion: Way forward

The government of India decided to merge the Rail Budget with the Union Budget from the budget year 2017-18 based on the recommendations of the Committee headed by Shri Bibek Debroy. The practice of a separate budget for railways was started in 1924 based on the recommendations of the Acworth Committee. The merger aimed to simplify the budgetary process and improve financial management.

How effectiveness has been the merger?

- **Focus on modernization**: The goal of the merger was to provide funding for the railway network's long-overdue upgrade and safety enhancements. Along with this merger, there is a need to address various factors, including government priorities, bureaucratic hurdles, and operational efficiency to modernize our railway infrastructure.

- **Transparency and accountability**: Combining the budgets made it simpler to monitor the use of railway funding and was viewed as a step toward increased accountability and transparency.

- **Budgetary process simplification**: Combining the budgets made handling several budgets less difficult and streamlined the budgetary process overall. It made it unnecessary for the Railways to give the government dividend payments in exchange for budgetary support, freeing up money for capital expenditures.

- **Allocation of Resources**: The merger allowed the government to allocate resources based on priorities rather than allocating funds to the railways separately. This flexibility in resource allocation can be advantageous.

Has it led to better capital expenditure?

- **Revamp operations**: Capital expenditures for the Indian Railways increased by 14% to ₹2.45 trillion for 2022–2023 from ₹2.15 trillion in the previous fiscal year. The appropriate decision was made to combine the rail and general budget, and as a result, average annual investments, which previously stood at ₹40,000–45,000 crore, have increased to ₹90,000 crore which helps in the modernization of railways.

- **Increased Focus on Capital Expenditure**: The merger was expected to enhance the focus on capital expenditure in the railways by eliminating the need for the payment of a dividend to the government. It was anticipated that more resources would be available for modernization and infrastructure development.

- **Balance between freight and passengers**: Despite the merger the passenger segment has faced losses in comparison to the freight segment which is profitable despite annual growth in freight volume and revenue of the railways in the period April-July 2023 at 1% and 3%. Indian railways' share in freight business has steadily decreased to approx. 27% from upwards of 80% at the time of independence.

Conclusion

The merger of the Railways budget with the main budget in India was a significant reform aimed at simplifying the budgetary process and potentially improving capital expenditure in the railway sector. However, the effectiveness of this reform. depends on factors like efficient allocation of resources, transparency in financial management, and the government's priorities.

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Critically analyze the role of the Speaker in the Indian legislative system. Should the Speaker's powers be limited?

Introduction: Brief introduction about speaker.
Body: Highlight role of speaker and if his powers should be limited or not?
Conclusion: Way forward

India is a parliamentary democracy, with the Speaker of the Lok Sabha presiding over legislative proceedings. In the Indian legislative system, the Speaker has a vital and complex role. In both state legislative assemblies and the Lok Sabha, the lower house of the Indian parliament, the Speaker acts as the presiding officer.

Role of Speaker in the Indian Legislative System

- **Impartiality**: The Speaker should respect democratic values and act impartially. They are not allowed to cast votes or take part in debates unless there is a tie. But in reality, Speakers frequently represent the governing party, which can cast doubt on their objectivity.
- **Order and decorum**: The legislature cannot operate effectively unless the Speaker plays a key role in upholding order during debates and making sure that the norms of procedure are respected. They have the authority to punish members who cause disruptions to meetings.
- **Making Decisions**: The Speaker may set the order in which legislation and motions are discussed and may also choose which members may speak at a debate. They can influence the legislative agenda because of their power.
- **Casting Vote**: The Speaker holds the casting vote in the event of a tie, which may be a huge source of influence, particularly in closely divided houses.
- **Representation**: The Speaker gives the President or Governor the House's opinion. This serves a significant ceremonial and constitutional purpose.

Arguments against limiting the speaker's powers

- **Constitutional Role**: The Speaker of India is endowed with particular powers under the Indian Constitution, and any attempt to curtail these powers would necessitate amending the Constitution. Maintaining the division of powers as envisioned by the Constitution is crucial.
- **Experience and Knowledge**: The Speaker's profound knowledge of parliamentary customs and procedures is essential to the House's efficient operation.
- **Accountability:** The Speaker is accountable to the House, and members can move a motion of no confidence if they believe the Speaker is acting in a biased or partisan manner. This accountability mechanism can mitigate concerns about misuse of power.

Arguments for Limiting the Speaker's Powers

- **Partisanship:** There may be questions regarding the Speaker's impartiality because they frequently belong to the ruling party. To maintain justice, there have been proposals for a neutral Speaker to be selected from outside the ranks of elected members.
- **Abuse of Power:** The Speaker's authority to choose the legislative agenda and to grant members a chance to speak may be abused for political ends. Decisions that are biased in favour of the ruling party may result from this.
- **Impact on Committees:** The Speaker has the authority to designate people to serve on several parliamentary committees. This influence may weaken the system of checks and balances by affecting the government's supervision and examination.

Conclusion

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The Speaker is considered the true guardian of the Indian Parliamentary democracy, holding the complete authority of the Lok Sabha. Thus, the impartiality of the office is very important to make parliamentary democracy work in the true sense.

Evaluate the socio-economic implications of expanding human settlements into flood-prone zones. Discuss the role of governance in mitigating the risks associated with these settlements.

Introduction: Give brief context to the question
Body: Highlight socio economic implications of expanding human settlements in flood prone areas
Conclusion: Way forward

According to a study led by the World Bank and published in Nature India's urban areas have been flooding more and more often, destroying lives and livelihoods. According to studies, expanding human settlements in flood-prone areas poses a significant threat to urban and semi-urban areas in India.

Socio-economic implications of such settlements

- **Enhanced Vulnerability**: Communities located in locations prone to flooding are more vulnerable to floods, which can result in fatalities, property destruction, and forced relocation. This makes the impacted communities more vulnerable.
- **Migration and Displacement**: People who experience frequent flooding may be compelled to leave their houses, which may result in internal displacement. This could occasionally lead to migration into cities, which would strain existing crowded cities.
- **Impact on Agriculture**: Fertile soil is frequently found in flood-prone areas, and for many people in India, agriculture is a major source of income. Crop destruction brought on by flooding can affect income and food security.
- **Infrastructure Damage**: Severe damage can occur to infrastructure, including utilities, roads, and bridges, which would interfere with networks for communication and transportation.
- **Health Risks**: Waterborne illnesses can result from floods contaminating water supplies. Floods may overwhelm the infrastructure and services provided by the health system, affecting public health.

What role does governance play in mitigating such risks

- **Land use planning and zoning**: Strict zoning laws that prohibit or restrict development in regions vulnerable to flooding are essential to good governance. These rules must be strictly enforced.
- **Early Warning Systems**: To give communities at risk timely information that allows them to evacuate and make the appropriate preparations, governments should invest in early warning systems.
- **Risk Reduction Measures**: Implementing flood control measures such as embankments, levees, and drainage systems can mitigate the risk associated with living in flood-prone areas.
- **Insurance and Compensation**: Encourage and facilitate the purchase of flood insurance, as well as provide compensation to affected individuals and communities.
- **Community Awareness and Education**: Governance should focus on raising awareness among communities about flood risks and teaching them how to respond effectively.

Conclusion

Scientific mapping of flood-prone areas with the strengthening of local urban governments can help provide effective governance to mitigate these risks. Additionally, long-term climate change adaptation strategies should be considered to address evolving flood risks.

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Critically assess N.R. Narayana Murthy's suggestion of a 70-hour work week for young Indians. What are the potential drawbacks?

Introduction: Give context to the question
Body: Evaluation of 70-hour work week
Conclusion: Way forward

N.R. Narayana Murthy, the founder of Infosys, recently stated that young Indians need to put in 70 hours a week at work drawing reactions from both sides with some praising the advice while some criticizing the advice as being exploitative and unhealthy.

Potential benefits of 70-hour work week

- **Increased Productivity**: Advocates argue that a longer workweek could potentially result in higher productivity due to more time spent on tasks and projects.
- **Economic Growth**: It might boost economic growth as more work hours could contribute to increased production and innovation.
- **Global Competition**: In a globalized world, longer work hours might help Indian professionals remain competitive in the international job market.

Drawbacks of 70-hour work week

- **Burnout and Mental Health**: Workers who put in 70 hours a week are more prone to experience burnout, higher levels of stress, and mental health problems. Extended work hours may negatively impact an individual's health and work-life equilibrium.
- **Effect on Family Life**: Long work hours can make it more difficult to meet personal and family obligations, strain relationships within the family, and disturb the work-life balance.
- **Diminished Creativity and Innovation**: Overworked People frequently exhibit less creativity and innovation. Tiredness can hinder one's capacity for original thought and problem-solving.
- **Work Quality**: Longer hours do not always translate into better work. Tired employees are more prone to make mistakes and do subpar work.
- **Discouragement of Skill Development**: A seventy-hour workweek may not provide time for learning, developing new skills, or following other hobbies, which could impede one's ability to advance both personally and professionally.
- **Gender Inequality**: Extended work hours may have a disproportionate impact on women, who often shoulder greater caring and home obligations, hence exacerbating gender disparities.
- **Danger of Exploitation**: Employers may take advantage of a culture of extended work hours, which could result in unpaid overtime, subpar working conditions, and abuses of workers' rights.
- **Impact on the Community and Society**: Long work hours can reduce participation in the community and society, which can have an impact on volunteer work and social cohesiveness.
- **Demotivation and Job discontent**: Excessive workloads can result in low morale, significant employee turnover, and job discontent, all of which can be detrimental to businesses.

Conclusion

Finally, while N.R. Narayana Murthy's proposal for a 70-hour workweek for young Indians aims to increase productivity, it should be carefully evaluated in light of the potential negative effects on work quality, burnout, mental health problems, and work-life balance. Writing good employment rules requires striking a balance between the needs of the job and the welfare and personal development of the employee.

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Critically evaluate the financial dependency of local governments in India on their respective State governments. Suggest measures to improve their financial autonomy.

Introduction: Give brief description of local governments in India
Body: Evaluate financial dependency of local governments and measures to improve financial autonomy
Conclusion: Way forward

The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts created the new Local Governance Framework in India, which became operational in April 1993. The Acts focused on enabling democratic decentralization, that devolved a range of powers and responsibilities to local elected bodies and made them accountable to the people for their implementation. The financial dependency of local governments on their respective State governments in India has been a matter of concern for many years.

Evaluation of financial dependency of local government

- **Lack of Fiscal Decentralization**: Fiscal decentralization is the key to local financial autonomy. In India, State governments control most of the revenue sources and budgetary decisions, leaving local bodies with little discretion over their finances. This limits their ability to prioritize and finance local projects effectively.

- **Unequal Resource Distribution**: Budgets from State governments are frequently distributed arbitrarily and unequally to local organizations. The allocation of resources may become uneven as a result of political factors taking precedence over the true needs of local populations.

- **Administrative inefficiencies**: A lot of municipal organizations lack the resources and know-how necessary to effectively collect taxes. Low revenue collection as a result leads to reliance on state transfers.

- **Lack of Accountability**: The lack of financial autonomy can lead to a lack of accountability, as local governments may not feel responsible for their financial decisions when most of their funding comes from the State. This can hinder effective governance and service delivery.

Measures to improve financial autonomy

- **Devolution of Financial Powers**: To give local organizations the autonomy to independently collect and handle taxes, state governments ought to grant them greater financial authority. This covers user fees, municipal taxes, and property taxes.

- **Capacity Building**: To enhance revenue collection and financial management, local governments should make investments in capacity building. This entails supplying the required equipment and technology, as well as training local officials.

- **Strengthen Local Governance**: Strengthen local governance by promoting the participation of local communities in decision-making processes. Empower local governments to make decisions that align with local needs and priorities.

- **Encourage Economic Development**: Local governments should be encouraged to promote economic development within their jurisdictions. This can help them generate additional revenue through increased economic activities and investments.

Conclusion

The provisions of the 73rd/74th Constitutional Amendments should be implemented in true spirit like the formation of State Finance Commissions regularly after 5 years like the Union Finance Commission. The governments should make adequate efforts to devolve funds, functions, and functionaries to local bodies so that they can effectively plan economic development and social justice schemes.

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Analyze the role of the Lok Sabha Ethics Committee in maintaining the ethical conduct of MPs. Do you think the term 'unethical conduct' needs to be defined? Justify your answer.

Introduction: What is ethics committee?
Body: Role of ethics committee in maintaining ethical conduct of MPs
Conclusion: Way forward

The Ethics Committee of the Lok Sabha was set up in 2000, with a mandate to examine every complaint that is related to the unethical conduct of MPs & and recommend action thereafter. It is also tasked with formulating a code of conduct for MPs. The members of the Ethics Committee are appointed by the Speaker for one year.

Role of Ethics Committee in maintaining ethical conduct of MPs

- **Investigation and Decision-Making**: The committee is in charge of looking into complaints or claims that Members of Parliament have acted unethically. It looks into these complaints and makes inquiries to hold MPs responsible for their deeds.
- **Advice and Guidance**: The committee can also help Members of Parliament understand and abide by the code of conduct required of them as elected officials by offering them advice and guidance on ethical issues.
- **Suggestions**: In cases where unethical conduct is established, the committee can recommend appropriate action or sanctions against the erring MPs, including suspension or expulsion from the Lok Sabha.
- **Education and Awareness**: The committee can use a variety of techniques, such as seminars and workshops, to increase MPs' understanding of moral principles and encourage moral behaviour.

Arguments in favour of defining 'unethical conduct'

- **Clarity and Consistency**: MPs would have a better idea of what is expected of them if there was a comprehensive and explicit definition of unethical conduct. This may result in the ethical standards being upheld more consistently.
- **Avoid Ambiguity**: Clearly defining unethical behaviour helps avoid confusion and varying opinions about what ethical behaviour is. This can help to avoid arguments and guarantee that each Member of Parliament is held to the same standards.
- **Transparency**: A precise definition improves transparency in the evaluation of ethical conduct, making it simpler for the general public and MPs to determine whether a given action falls under the category of unethical behaviour.

Arguments against defining 'unethical conduct'

- **Flexibility:** Ethical standards can evolve, and a rigid definition may limit the ability to adapt to changing norms and expectations.
- **Subjectivity**: What is considered unethical can vary based on cultural, societal, and individual perspectives. A detailed definition might still leave room for interpretation and disagreement.
- **Complexity**: Trying to list every possible unethical behaviour in a definition could lead to a cumbersome document.

Conclusion

The committee's role in interpreting and applying ethical standards, while taking into account the evolving nature of ethics, is crucial to maintaining the integrity of parliamentary proceedings and the conduct of MPs.

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Analyze the challenges of horizontal sharing of the divisible tax pool in India, with a focus on the emerging economic divide between the northern and southern states. How can the principles of equity and efficiency be balanced in this context?

> **Introduction:** What is tax devolution?
> **Body:** Highlight challenges arising from horizontal sharing of tax pool between northern and southern states.
> **Conclusion:** Way forward

Tax devolution is the process by which tax revenues are allocated between the union government and the state governments. It is a system set up by the Constitution to fairly and equally divide the revenue from specific taxes between the Union and the states. In India, the horizontal distribution of the divisible revenue pool presents several difficult and divisive issues, particularly in light of the growing economic gap between the northern and southern states.

Some of these challenges are

- **Political Factors**: Due to their large population, northern states have a political sway that might lead to an unequal distribution of resources. Southern states with comparatively lower populations and stronger fiscal restraint may view this as unfair.
- **Historical reasons**: Economic disparities have been caused by historical reasons such as differences in state policy and economic development. States that have made long-term investments in infrastructure, healthcare, and education typically do better than others.
- **Regional Economic Disparities**: Southern states like Kerala, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu have higher per capita income and better human development indicators compared to northern states like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh. This economic divide makes it difficult to achieve equity in the distribution of resources.
- **Fiscal Imbalances**: Northern states often receive a larger share of central funds due to factors like population and poverty levels, which can create fiscal imbalances. However, this may not always align with their actual fiscal needs or economic potential, contributing to inefficiency in resource allocation.

Balancing Equity and Efficiency

- **Needs-Based Allocation**: A needs-based formula that considers the unique developmental requirements of every state, including population, poverty levels, gaps in infrastructure, and social indicators, can be developed. This would guarantee a more fair allocation of resources.
- **Performance-Based Incentives**: To encourage states to strengthen their budgetary restraint and allocate funds for human development, implement performance-based incentives. States may receive more funding if they demonstrate advancements in infrastructure, healthcare, and education.
- **Fiscal Responsibility and Accountability**: Encouraging states to take actions that strengthen their budgets, such as cutting back on unnecessary spending and debt loads, to promote fiscal responsibility and accountability.
- **Cooperation among states**: Encourage interstate collaboration on regional development initiatives to alleviate inequities. This can involve working together on infrastructure and industrial development projects as well as exchanging best practices.

Conclusion

To establish a just and efficient fiscal transfer system that promotes economic growth and lessens regional disparities, India must carefully consider how to strike a balance between efficiency and justice in the horizontal sharing of the divisible tax pool.

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Evaluate the effectiveness of initiatives like 'plastic checkpoints' in biosphere reserves. How can such innovative local solutions be integrated into national policies to combat the issue of plastic pollution?

Introduction: Give context to the question
Body: How effective is 'plastic checkpoint' initiative and how can it be integrated into national programs.
Conclusion: Way forward

The Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve Trust has established the idea of "plastic checkpoints," which was recently acknowledged with the UNESCO Michel Batisse Award for Biosphere Reserve Management 2023. Residents of the community inspect all cars and visitors for plastic waste, which is gathered, repurposed, and used to build roadways.

Effectiveness of such initiatives

- **Local Involvement**: By bringing attention to the issue of plastic waste, these programs frequently include local communities. They motivate individuals to take an active role in gathering and disposing of plastic debris. This local effort may result in less plastic pollution and less of an adverse effect on the environment.
- **Micro-Level Impact**: Within the particular biosphere reserve where they are installed, "plastic checkpoints" can significantly reduce plastic pollution on a micro level. They can support the preservation of regional animals, habitats, and waterways.
- **Educational Value**: These programs act as teaching instruments, informing the public about the dangers of plastic pollution and the significance of proper garbage disposal. They have the power to alter people's conduct by instilling a sense of accountability.

Integration into National Policies

- **Data Collection**: Promote the establishment of "plastic checkpoints" to keep track of the kinds and quantities of plastic waste that is gathered. National officials may find this data useful in understanding regional differences in plastic pollution and developing evidence-driven strategies.
- **Standardization**: Create national guidelines for recycling, garbage segregation, and collection. By adhering to these criteria, local programs such as "plastic checkpoints" can be made to adhere to best practices and complement the larger national waste management framework.
- **Motivations**: Create regulations that encourage corporations, organizations, and local communities to take an active role in managing plastic garbage. This can take the form of cash rewards, tax exemptions, or praise for exceptional work.
- **Education and Awareness**: Educational initiatives on waste management and plastic pollution should be a part of national strategies. These campaigns can use neighbourhood projects such as "plastic checkpoints" as models for effective community involvement.

Conclusion

Locally, programs like "plastic checkpoints" in biosphere reserves can be beneficial because they include the community and cut down on plastic pollution. A concerted effort involving data collecting, standardization, incentives, education, legislation, and international collaboration is needed to incorporate these projects into national policies. By doing this, local communities' creativity and commitment to combating plastic pollution can be incorporated into national programs.

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Analyze the role of self-regulation among digital platforms in India. Discuss the challenges and opportunities associated with self-regulation.

Introduction: Why self-regulation is essential?
Body: Role of self-regulation among digital platforms and challenges and opportunities associated with it.
Conclusion: Way forward

In India, digital platform self-regulation is essential for promoting morality and responsibility, controlling content, and keeping users' online safety.

Role of self-regulation among digital platforms in India

- **Content moderation**: To prevent harmful and unlawful content, like as hate speech, fake news, and explicit material, from appearing on Indian digital platforms, self-regulation is required. They must establish a secure environment for users, particularly young people and others who are more vulnerable.
- **Privacy and Data Protection**: Platforms can set rules for consent, transparency, and data protection with the use of self-regulation. They have to protect user data and follow data privacy rules.
- **Compliance with Local Laws**: The Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, among other laws and regulations, are obeyed by platforms that practice self-regulation. Platforms must abide by these guidelines to stay out of legal hot water.
- **User Experience:** Reducing cybercrime, harassment, and bullying online is another way that self-regulation helps to preserve a great user experience. Increased user trust and engagement may result from this.

Challenges with self-regulation

- **Accountability**: Users bear the responsibility for reporting and flagging objectionable content since platforms may not always accept accountability for the content they contain. A gap in responsibility may result from this.
- **Issues with Censorship**: When platforms are under pressure to remove or restrict content that governments or interest groups deem undesirable, self-regulation can be viewed as a kind of censorship. It might be difficult to strike a balance between responsible content filtering and free speech.

Opportunities with self-regulation

- **Flexibility**: Self-regulation enables platforms to change with the times and respond to new risks and the evolving digital communication environment. It can assist platforms in staying ahead of changing difficulties.
- **Innovation**: Free from the shackles of strict government restrictions, platforms can innovate in content moderation methods, data security, and user experience. This encourages flexibility and inventiveness.
- **User Empowerment**: By offering users the means to report and manage their online experiences, self-regulation can empower users and give them a say in what constitutes appropriate content.

Conclusion

In India, digital platforms' self-regulation is essential to preserving a responsible and secure online environment. Finding a balance in India's dynamic digital world between government control and self-regulation is still a major concern.

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Critically analyze the report by UNFPA on India's population dynamics. Suggest policy measures to address the challenges posed by demographic changes.

Introduction: Brief description of the report.
Body: Evaluate its suggestions and suggest policy measures to address the challenges.
Conclusion: Way forward

The India Ageing Report 2023, released by UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund) India and the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), highlights the country's rapidly aging population.

Evaluation of the report

- **High Life expectancy of women**: The report highlights that women have a higher life expectancy at ages 60 and 80 compared to men, with variations across states and territories. For eg, women in Kerala & Himachal Pradesh have a higher life expectancy than women in other states.
- **Regional variations:** The number of elderly people and their growth rates vary significantly amongst States with the elder population share greater in most southern states and a few northern states like Himachal Pradesh and Punjab than in the national average.
- **Low Knowledge of Social Security Programmes:** In India, the aged are not well-informed about the different social security programs that are available to them. A little over half of the elderly (55%) know about the Annapurna system, 44% about the widow pension system (IGNWPS), and 12% about the old-age pension program (IGNOAPS).
- **Poverty:** Older women are more likely to be widowed, live alone, have no income, possess fewer assets, and be completely dependent on their families for support, all of which negatively impact their quality of life and use of healthcare. As a result, poverty in old age is essentially gendered.

Policy measures that can address these challenges

- **Social Security and Old-Age Support:** Create extensive pension and social security programs to be ready for the aging population. Promote retirement savings and investments and bring all Old Age Homes under regulatory purview.
- **Data collection and research:** To help with informed policymaking, address the absence of reliable data on a variety of topics about the elderly by incorporating pertinent questions in data collection exercises like the National Sample Survey, the National Family Health Survey, and the Census of India.
- **Women empowerment:** The goal is to encourage women who have entered the professional workforce to have children through a mix of reproductive freedom, quality healthcare, work-life balance, adequate childcare, maternity leave, and teaching male partners about sharing household tasks to reverse the trend of declining fertility rates in developing nations.
- **Better care of old people:** The need is to emphasize the importance of elderly people living in multigenerational households & framing policies that facilitate and support this living arrangement. Short-term facilities like creches or day-care facilities can help elderly people receive better care when living with their respective families.

Conclusion

According to the report, India will have 347 million older people overall by 2050, when their percentage will have doubled to 20.8%. This unprecedented rise in the aging population will have significant implications for health, economy, and society in India. The need is to address these challenges and involve various stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society, and international organizations, in the development and implementation of policies to ensure their effectiveness.

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Critically analyze India's action plan on antimicrobial resistance. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current approach?

Introduction: Give a brief description of AMR.
Body: What are the strengths and weaknesses of NAP-AMR
Conclusion: Way forward

India has taken a major step in addressing the issue of antimicrobial resistance (AMR), which is becoming an increasing worldwide concern, by implementing the National Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance (NAP-AMR) introduced in 2017. According to 2021 Lancet research that included data from 204 countries, 1.27 million deaths were directly linked to bacterial AMR, and 4.95 million deaths were anticipated to be related to the disease highest in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

Strength of the current program

- **Data Collection and Surveillance**: The strategy places a strong emphasis on gathering data and conducting surveillance, which includes keeping an eye on how antibiotics are used in agriculture, human health, and animals. India can emulate best practices from Indonesia's surveillance programs.
- **Awareness and Education**: The plan encourages healthcare workers, the general public, and the veterinary and agricultural industries to become more knowledgeable about AMR. This is essential for promoting responsible behaviour and lowering antibiotic abuse.
- **Multi-Sectoral Approach**: The multi-sectoral approach of India's NAP-AMR is one of its outstanding features. The recognition that AMR is not just a problem for human health but also a result of antibiotic abuse in veterinary and environmental settings involves multiple ministries, including Health, Animal Husbandry, Agriculture, and Environment.

Weakness of the program

- **Challenges with Implementation**: Although the NAP-AMR is extensive, there are several obstacles to its successful use. Because of administrative obstacles and resource limitations, the plan's success depends on the cooperation and dedication of multiple ministries, which might be difficult.
- **Restricted Access to Good Healthcare**: Throughout India, there exist regional differences in the availability of high-quality healthcare. The issue of AMR can be made worse by inadequate healthcare infrastructure, particularly in rural regions where it might result in the improper use of antibiotics.
- **Difficulties in Changing Behaviour**: It can be difficult to influence the public's and healthcare practitioners' antibiotic-using behaviour. The approach places a strong emphasis on awareness and education, but it can take time and effort to change deeply set habits and attitudes.

Conclusion

The G20 countries ought to work together to develop regional AMR programs and think about creating a global financing source specifically for AMR R&D. To encourage innovation and guarantee the affordability of new antibiotics, efforts should be made to support patent reforms. AMR containment measures should be strengthened by government programs like Free Diagnostic Services and Kayakalp, which follow strict guidelines set forth by Indian Public Health Standards. Lastly, academic institutions and civil society organizations (CSOs) must participate in these initiatives to raise awareness and advocate for policy changes.

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Assess the need for a comprehensive national security strategy in India. How would it enhance India's response to both conventional and non-conventional threats?

> **Introduction:** What is a national security strategy?
> **Body:** What is the need for the strategy and how will it enhance India's response to threats?
> **Conclusion:** Way forward

National security strategy guides the military as well as critical defence and security reforms with strategic implications, providing a holistic view of the overall national security, the threats, and the roadmap to address them. The National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) is in the process of framing such a strategy and placing the strategy before the cabinet for final approval.

Need for National Security Strategy in India

- **Nuclear-armed Neighbours**: Pakistan and China are India's two nuclear-armed adversaries. Both take a hostile stance toward India and hostility from either side could trigger a nuclear exchange. Possessing a National Security Strategy will help lessen the threat that nuclear weapons represent.
- **Numerous Threats**: India's lengthy, porous borders with several of its neighbours are used as a point of sale for drugs, weapons, and people trafficking. Both externally sponsored state terrorism and domestically radicalized individuals pose a threat to India. Developing a comprehensive security strategy will aid in resolving these issues.
- **Resource Allocation**: Strategic and effective resource allocation is made possible by a national security plan. By enabling the government to allocate limited funds for military, intelligence, and other security-related projects according to priority, it makes sure that the most urgent threats are taken care of first.

How does it enhance India's response to threats?

- **Non-Conventional Threats**: Things like cyberattacks, chemical warfare, and climate change have become more well-known in recent years. Capabilities and policies to counter these risks can be developed under the direction of a comprehensive strategy. It can discuss the effects of climate change on national security and provide guidelines for handling cyberattacks.
- **Joint theatre command**: A national security strategy can serve as a roadmap for achieving armed forces integration and coordination while preventing inter-service conflict. To prevent mismanagement of resources, close gaps, and guarantee a coordinated response to threats, such coordination is essential.
- **Developing Deterrence**: India can develop deterrence in non-conventional domains as well as conventional military ones with the aid of a national security plan. A clear understanding of India's security goals and capabilities can deter possible enemies from taking aggressive action.

Conclusion

It is the right time for India to stand alongside nations like the UK, USA, and Russia in framing a comprehensive national security strategy that caters to the threats of the 21st century faced by India. This will require strong political will, coordination among civilian and military bureaucracy, and military reforms suggested by the Kargil Review Committee report (2000), and the Report of the Naresh Chandra Task Force on Security (2012).

Critically analyze the impact of social media on the mental health of adolescents. In light of recent lawsuits against Meta, discuss the ethical responsibilities of social media companies towards their younger user base.

> **Introduction:** Give a brief description of the issue of mental health
> **Body:** What is its impact on mental health and the ethical responsibilities of companies towards its users?
> **Conclusion:** Way forward

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Adolescent mental health and social media use is a complicated and multidimensional topic that has generated a lot of discussion and study in recent years. While social media has many advantages, including making new friends and getting information, it also has serious drawbacks that might harm young users' mental health. Recent legal actions against Meta (previously Facebook) make it clear that social media corporations have moral obligations, especially to their younger user base.

Impact of social media on mental health

- **Cyberbullying**: Teenagers are especially susceptible to this widespread problem on social media. Mental health issues and emotional pain can result from online abuse and harassment.
- **Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)**: Teenagers who compare their lives to carefully manicured online depictions of others on social media sometimes suffer from FOMO. Anxiety, envy, and feelings of inadequacy may result from this.
- **Low self-esteem and social comparison**: Continuous exposure to filtered and idealized portrayals of other people can have a detrimental effect on one's sense of value and self-esteem, which can result in depressive and insecure sentiments.
- **Privacy worries**: Social media firms' frequent acquisition of users' personal information without their knowledge or consent can give rise to privacy worries as well as emotions of fear and worry.

Ethical responsibilities of social media

- **User Safety and Privacy**: Social media businesses have an ethical duty to safeguard users' privacy and safety, particularly those of minors. To stop harmful content and cyberbullying, they should make significant investments in content control and safety measures.
- **Transparency**: Social media businesses should be open and honest about how they gather and utilize user data. Users need to be informed clearly about privacy settings and data-sharing procedures, especially younger users.
- **Age limitations**: Protecting younger users from potentially hazardous information and interactions can be achieved by enforcing age limitations and confirming the ages of users. These limitations should be carefully considered by social media firms.
- **Support for Mental Health**: Social media firms ought to offer tools and assistance to users who are experiencing mental health problems. They can link people to services for assistance and raise awareness of mental health issues.

Conclusion

Finally, companies should invest in research to better understand the impact of their platforms on users' mental health, be more accountable, and take responsibility for addressing any negative consequences.

Analyze the concept of net neutrality in the context of the evolving digital landscape in India. How does it impact consumer welfare and market competition?

> **Introduction:** Define net neutrality
> **Body:** Impact of net neutrality on welfare and market competition
> **Conclusion:** Way forward

In the context of India's changing digital ecosystem, the idea of net neutrality is an important one with big consequences for market competitiveness and consumer welfare. The idea behind net neutrality is that internet service providers (ISPs) need to handle all data on the network equally, without charging or treating users, content, websites, platforms, or applications differently.

Analysis of net neutrality in India and its impact on Consumers and Competition

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- **Access to Information and Services:** Net neutrality guarantees users an equal and unimpeded path to a variety of online information and services. This implies that consumers in India are free to access websites, apps, and online services without facing any bias, censorship, or intervention from internet service providers. This encourages choice and information freedom.
- **Consumer Welfare:** Because net neutrality forbids ISPs from limiting or preventing access to particular material or services, it is crucial for the welfare of consumers. This guarantees that users are free to select the services and content they want without being subject to arbitrary restrictions.
- **Content restriction**: Internet censorship and content restriction have raised concerns in India. When ISPs promote or prohibit particular kinds of content, it helps prevent discriminatory behaviours. This is made possible by net neutrality. It guarantees that regulatory bodies, not private businesses, will continue to have the authority to control content.
- **Quality of Service**: To provide improved quality of service, such as uninterrupted video streaming, net neutrality enables ISPs to give priority to specific kinds of internet traffic. Achieving a balance between enhancing the quality of services and avoiding prejudice against specific categories of content or services is crucial.
- **Innovation and Startups**: By creating an even playing field for all internet enterprises, existing or emerging, net neutrality promotes innovation. By enabling new players to compete with long-standing firms, this strategy promotes diversity and entrepreneurship in India's digital market.
- **Market Competition**: Net neutrality encourages a healthy level of competition between content producers and online service providers. In the absence of net neutrality, ISPs can give particular services preferential treatment, providing them an unfair advantage and reducing competition. All services will only compete based on their worth and merit to customers, thanks to net neutrality.

Conclusion

TRAI has done a commendable job of upholding norms of net neutrality in India which has ensured that the content over the internet remains accessible to all without any discrimination. Wide consultation must take place between stakeholders like telecos, OTT platforms, Government, and civil society to recognize the importance of net neutrality and foster a conducive environment for innovation, competition, and consumer welfare in India where the Internet is going to be the carrier of all Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI).

Critically examine the legal and economic rationale behind the GST demands on the online gaming industry in India. How does this align with the principle of 'ease of doing business'?

Introduction: Describe GST briefly.
Body: What is the Legal and economic rationale behind GST demand in the online gaming industry?
Conclusion: Way forward

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) is a unified and all-encompassing indirect tax imposed on the entire supply chain, covering the stages from production or service provision to the ultimate consumer. GST serves as a consolidated tax structure that has absorbed multiple previously existing indirect taxes, including excise duty, service tax, value-added tax (VAT), entry tax, and luxury tax, among others. The application of Goods and Services Tax (GST) to the online gaming sector in India has sparked discussions, prompting inquiries into its legal and economic justifications and its conformity with the 'ease of doing business' principle.

Legal and economic rationale behind this demand

- **Interpretation of GST regulations**: India's GST regulations are the foundation for the legal justification for applying GST to online gambling. Under the heading of "online information and database access or retrieval services," online gaming companies provide services that are liable to GST. This interpretation

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is predicated on the idea that internet gaming services are entertainment products and are therefore subject to GST.

- **Level Playing Field**: Levying a GST on the online gaming sector guarantees parity with other entertainment industries and the larger digital services sector. It eliminates unfair competition and tax arbitrage between brick-and-mortar casinos and their virtual counterparts.
- **Revenue Generation**: Taxing the online gaming sector is economically justified due to India's large and expanding market, providing substantial government revenue for public welfare and development.
- **Consumer Protection**: Taxation serves to regulate the industry, discouraging unscrupulous operators, and promoting responsible gaming practices, thus enhancing consumer protection.

How does it align with the Ease of Doing Business principle?

- **Challenges in the Tax Structure**: Critics argue that the intricate GST system can place a heavy burden on businesses, especially small and medium-sized enterprises within the online gaming sector. Meeting various GST rates, registration prerequisites, and reporting procedures may pose difficulties, potentially contradicting the 'ease of doing business' principle.
- **Digital Adaptation**: The imposition of GST on online gaming platforms might necessitate adjustments to their technological and financial systems for compliance. This adaptation can present financial and logistical challenges, particularly for startup companies.

Conclusion

Achieving sustainable growth and regulatory compliance in the online gambling industry requires a careful balance between taxation and business facilitation.

Discuss the principle of 'dualism' and 'monism' in the context of international law and its enforceability in domestic law, with reference to the Supreme Court's stance in the Nestle case.

Introduction: Give brief context to the question
Body: Describe principles of dualism and monism in the context of international law and its enforceability concerning recent judgement.
Conclusion: Way forward

The principles of 'dualism' and 'monism' are important in the context of international law and its relationship with domestic law. These principles determine how international treaties and agreements are incorporated and enforced within a country's legal system. The recent judgment of the Supreme Court in "Assessing Officer Circle (International Taxation) New Delhi Vs. M/s Nestle SA" delves into the intricacies of treaty interpretation within the context of Double Taxation Avoidance Agreements (DTAAs). The case revolves around the interpretation of the "most favoured nation" (MFN) clause in tax treaties and its applicability in India without the need for notification under Section 90 of the Income Tax Act.

Principle of dualism and monism in the context of International law

- **Dualism**: International and domestic law are two different and distinct legal systems in a dualist legal system. They are not inextricably connected, even if they cohabit. Under such a system, an international treaty needs to be specifically enacted into national law or incorporated by the national government for it to be enforceable within the domestic legal system. Until they are enacted into domestic law, international treaties have no immediate legal effect at home.
- **Monism**: Both domestic and international law are regarded as components of a single, cohesive legal system in a monist legal framework. After they are ratified, international treaties instantly become a component of domestic law; no further domestic legislation is required. Under a monist system, citizens

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can utilize international treaties in domestic legal processes and domestic courts can enforce them directly, without the need for domestic legislation to convert them into domestic law.

Enforceability of such principles in domestic law concerning the Nestle case

- **Uncertainty in Taxation**: Foreign investors in India face challenges related to tax uncertainties, not only due to executive decisions but also due to judicial interpretations. This uncertainty complicates the ease of doing business for foreign entities.
- **Most Favoured Nation Status**: The case revolves around the MFN status in Double Taxation Avoidance Agreements (DTAAs) between India and countries like the Netherlands, France, and Switzerland. These agreements require India to provide preferential tax treatment to other countries that are members of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).
- **Interpretation of International Law**: The Court's interpretation follows a dualist approach, suggesting that international law is not enforceable domestically without transformation into municipal law through enabling legislation. This marks a departure from the monist tradition that incorporates international law into the domestic legal system.
- **Potential Consequences**: The judgment allows the executive to potentially avoid international law obligations by not issuing relevant notifications domestically. This could not only violate international law but also expose India to international claims under bilateral investment treaties.

Conclusion

The Court's interpretation provides the executive with the means to negate its international legal obligations by not issuing the necessary domestic notifications. This not only justifies the breach of international law but also exposes India to potential international claims under other international instruments like bilateral investment treaties.

Critically analyze the Law Commission of India's recommendations on e-FIR. Discuss the potential impact of these recommendations on the criminal justice system in India.

Introduction: Describe the concept of e-FIR
Body: Highlight concerns regarding the recommendations of the Law Commission and the impact of these recommendations.
Conclusion: Way forward

The Law Commission of India, in Report No. 282, proposed that for cognizable offenses where the identity of the accused is not known, electronic First Information Reports (e-FIRs) should be permitted. In cases where the accused is identified, e-FIR registration may be allowed initially for cognizable offenses carrying a maximum punishment of up to three years under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and other relevant laws.

Concerns regarding recommendations of the Law Commission

- **Efficiency**: The effectiveness of the system depends on factors like internet access, digital literacy, and the availability of necessary infrastructure, raising concerns about equitable access.
- **Verification Process:** Concerns over potential misuse and security breaches may also be raised by the usage of OTP verification and the demand to submit legitimate ID proof, such as Aadhaar. These developments may give rise to privacy issues.
- **Human Interaction and Investigation:** The e-FIR system, as outlined, may postpone human interaction in the reporting process, potentially delaying immediate actions required in certain cases, such as kidnappings or crimes where timely visits to crime scenes are crucial.
- **Non-uniformity**: The report does not delve into the models adopted by states currently implementing e-FIR, leaving a gap in understanding the practical challenges and successes faced by these states.

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Impact of recommendations of e-FIR

- **Streamlined procedure**: By removing bureaucratic obstacles and improving user friendliness, the e-FIR system seeks to streamline the complaint submission procedure.
- **Better Verification**: By requiring the uploading of legitimate ID proof, like Aadhaar, and utilizing OTP verification, the verification process can be improved and the possibility of baseless or fraudulent complaints can be decreased.
- **Effective Documentation**: Electronic filing guarantees effective complaint documentation, which minimizes paperwork and facilitates information management and organization for law enforcement organizations.
- **Enhanced Accessibility**: People living in rural areas may find the online platform especially helpful since it facilitates the filing of complaints without requiring them to physically visit a police station.
- **Preservation of Complaint Contents**: Electronic filing preserves the contents of the complaint, preventing tampering or alteration, which can be crucial for maintaining the integrity of the information.
- **Reduced Registration Costs**: The e-FIR system may reduce costs associated with traditional paperwork and manual registration processes, contributing to resource efficiency.

Conclusion

A well-considered and well-implemented e-FIR system has the potential to streamline processes and improve overall transparency and effectiveness within the criminal justice system.

Analyze the strategic implications of a naval blockade in the Strait of Malacca for India, considering international law and the potential impact on regional geopolitics.

> **Introduction:** Give brief context to the question
> **Body:** Highlight implications for maritime security, international law, and regional geopolitics.
> **Conclusion:** Way forward

A naval blockade in the Strait of Malacca would have significant strategic implications for India, both in terms of its maritime security and regional geopolitics.

Implication for maritime security

- **Energy Security**: A major chokepoint for the world's supplies of petrol and oil is the Strait of Malacca. Any blockage would impede India's access to energy supplies, posing economic difficulties and possibly resulting in energy shortages.
- **Trade Routes**: India's economic prosperity is largely dependent on maritime trade. A blockade might make it more difficult for commodities to move, which would affect imports and exports. This can cause supply chain disruptions and negatively impact the Indian economy.
- **Naval Presence**: To safeguard its interests and guarantee the safety of its marine commerce routes, India would need to increase its naval presence in the area. It could be necessary to spend more on defence and use diplomacy to win over regional allies.

Impact on international law

- **UNCLOS**: Under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), any blockade would give rise to legality concerns. To make sure that its operations comply with international marine laws and regulations, India will have to carefully assess what it is doing.
- **Diplomatic Repercussions**: Enforcing a blockade may cause diplomatic difficulties with other countries, especially those whose economies depend on the unhindered passage of the Strait. To prevent isolation, India would have to overcome these diplomatic obstacles.

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Impact on regional geopolitics

- **Relationships with Southeast Asian Countries:** India's relations with Southeast Asian countries that have interests in the Strait of Malacca may be strained by a blockade. To manage tensions in the region, cooperation, and collaboration with these nations would be essential.
- **China's Reaction**: Any Indian activity in the Strait of Malacca may be viewed as a challenge given China's growing prominence in the area. India would have to be ready for diplomatic and geopolitical retaliation as well as the possible response from China and its allies.
- **Global Power Dynamics**: In the event of such a momentous occasion, the world community, comprising key global powers, would be closely watching and reacting. To prevent unfavourable consequences, India would have to carefully maintain its reputation internationally.

Conclusion

An Indian naval blockade of the Strait of Malacca would be an intricate and multidimensional strategic move that would need to take geopolitical, diplomatic, and legal considerations very seriously. A successful navigation of such a strategic decision would require striking a balance between national interests, international norms, and regional stability.

Analyze the challenges and opportunities presented by the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme in the semiconductor manufacturing sector in India. Discuss its potential impact on employment and the electronics manufacturing ecosystem in the country.

> **Introduction:** What is the PLI scheme?
> **Body:** Highlight the challenges, and opportunities presented by the scheme and its impact on the electronics industry.
> **Conclusion:** Way forward

The PLI scheme, announced in December 2021, provides different levels of fiscal support to various categories to encourage the development of the semiconductor and display manufacturing ecosystem in India.

Challenges presented by the PLI scheme

- **Dependencies on the worldwide supply network**: The semiconductor industry depends on a complicated worldwide supply network. Any interruption in the supply chain can affect how well the PLI plan is implemented, regardless of whether it is the result of unanticipated occurrences like the COVID-19 pandemic or geopolitical factors.
- **Lack of Skill**: It is essential to cultivate and retain a skilled staff in the semiconductor manufacturing industry. The need for highly specialized skills may prove difficult for India to meet, which could result in a manpower crisis.
- **Global Competition**: Established businesses dominate the semiconductor market, which is characterized by intense competition on a global scale. China, Taiwan, and South Korea are just a few of the nations that compete fiercely with India in the semiconductor manufacturing sector.

Opportunities presented by the PLI scheme

- **Attracting Investments**: To encourage both foreign and domestic investments in semiconductor manufacturing, the PLI plan provides financial incentives. This may result in the construction of semiconductor fabs, or fabrication units, in India, boosting the economy of the nation.
- **Employment Creation**: There is a notable job multiplier effect in the semiconductor business. Opportunities exist in R&D, design, and other supporting services in addition to direct employment in

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manufacturing. Employment opportunities could be created by the PLI scheme for everyone involved in the electronics manufacturing process.

- **Reducing Imports**: India imports a lot of semiconductors. By encouraging home manufacturing, the PLI program seeks to lessen reliance on imports. This can improve the trade balance and increase India's self-reliance in vital technology.

Potential Impact on Employment and Electronics Manufacturing Ecosystem

- **Employment Creation**: Throughout the semiconductor manufacturing value chain, including in research, development, design, and production, the PLI scheme has the potential to generate a sizable number of direct and indirect jobs.
- **Global Competitiveness**: The establishment of a competitive semiconductor manufacturing sector in India would improve the nation's status internationally in the electronics and technology sectors.
- **Technology Development**: The PLI program has the potential to stimulate innovation and technological development in the semiconductor industry, opening doors for breakthroughs in other associated fields.

Conclusion

The successful implementation of the scheme can positively impact employment, foster innovation, and contribute to the growth of the electronics manufacturing ecosystem in the country.

Analyze the effectiveness of India's IT Rules, 2021, in addressing the challenges posed by deepfakes. How does it compare with global approaches to regulating this technology?

> **Introduction:** What is deepfake technology?
> **Body:** Effectiveness of laws to address the challenge of deepfake and comparison with global approaches.
> **Conclusion:** Way forward

Recently, the Indian government instructed "social media intermediaries" to remove morphed videos or deepfakes from their platforms within 24 hours of a complaint being filed, following a requirement outlined in the IT Rules 2021. Videos, audio, or images produced with deep learning—a type of artificial intelligence—are referred to as deepfakes. It uses AI techniques to enable semi-skilled and unskilled people to produce fake material using morphing audio-visual clips and graphics.

How effective are India's IT Rules, 2021 to address deepfakes?

- **Content Regulation**: The IT Rules, 2021 provide the government the authority to prosecute platforms that distribute particular kinds of content. It might not specifically address deepfake technology, but it might solve problems with the dissemination of dangerous deepfakes in an indirect way.
- **Accountability and Traceability**: The regulations place a strong emphasis on content creators' accountability and traceability. Although the regulations might not specifically address deepfake technology, these elements might aid in identifying and reducing deepfake-related content.
- **Lack of Clarity**: Deepfake technology is developing quickly, and it presents special difficulties. It is imperative to establish regulations that target the production, propagation, and identification of deepfakes. The IT Rules, 2021, may be less effective in handling the complexities of deepfake-related challenges if they lack such precision.

Comparison with global approaches

- **US & EU approach**: The EU has released directives for establishing an autonomous network of fact-checkers aimed at scrutinizing the sources and procedures involved in content creation. Similarly, the U.S. has enacted the bipartisan Deepfake Task Force Act to combat the advancement of deepfake technology.

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- **International Cooperation**: International cooperation is essential because deepfakes frequently cross national borders. The regulations about India might not delineate protocols for cooperating with other nations to tackle worldwide issues brought about by deepfakes.
- **International Comparisons**: In contrast to India's strategy, governments of developed countries have been actively debating and putting policies in place to deal with deepfakes. While some governments concentrate on technology development and research, others have proposed laws demanding the disclosure of deepfake content.

Conclusion

The rapid evolution of deepfake technology poses unique challenges. To prevent instances of humiliation, blackmail, and potential attacks from organizations through the presentation of false evidence, it is imperative to establish regulations that explicitly focus on the creation, dissemination, and detection of deepfakes.

Analyze the effectiveness of India's disaster management communication systems in the context of the recent earthquakes. Discuss the role of both government and private early alert systems in such scenarios.

Introduction: Give brief context to the question
Body: Effectiveness of communication system and role of government and private early alert systems.
Conclusion: Way forward

The recent earthquakes in Nepal & tremors in Delhi have prompted a critical examination of the effectiveness of disaster management communication systems, encompassing both government and private early alert mechanisms.

Effectiveness of India's Disaster Management Communication Systems

- **Early Warning Systems**: To quickly identify seismic activity, India has made progress in putting early warning systems in place. An essential function of the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) is the issuance of alerts.
- **Public Communication Channels:** To swiftly spread information, the government uses a variety of public communication channels, such as radio broadcasts, sirens, and SMS alerts. These channels must be easily accessible, particularly to a wide range of populations. Eg, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)'s Cell Broadcast Alert System (CBAS) has been tested to send out mass alerts when natural disasters strike.
- **Google warning system:** With the help of a new Android Earthquake Early Warning system system, Android users in India can now receive earthquake alerts. Many nations throughout the world have already implemented the system which aids in providing an early warning when seismic activity starts. Google in cooperation with the National Seismology Centre (NSC) and the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), introduced it to India.

Role of both government and private early alert systems in such scenarios

- **Information Sharing and Coordination:** It is essential that various government organizations, including the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), State Disaster Management Authorities (SDMAs), and local administrations, coordinate with one another. Coordinating seamlessly is essential to the effectiveness of information distribution since it guarantees that alerts are swiftly received by the impacted areas.
- **Public Awareness and Education**: The degree of public awareness and education on earthquake preparedness affects the efficacy of communication methods as well. Persistent efforts are required to

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raise awareness of the need for early warnings across a variety of communities, particularly those living in remote places.

- **Community-Based Alert Systems**: These early warning systems, which use technology to deliver timely and targeted alerts in a specific area, were first introduced by private organizations or local communities. These systems are essential, especially when it comes to addressing marginalized areas that may not receive enough coverage from official channels.

Conclusion

India's disaster management communication systems have made significant progress, with both government and private entities contributing to early alert capabilities. Continuous efforts in these areas will enhance the country's ability to mitigate the impact of earthquakes and protect its diverse population.

Discuss the implications of the rapid melting of the West Antarctic ice sheet on global sea levels. How does this phenomenon highlight the broader effects of climate change on polar regions?

Introduction: Give brief context to the question
Body: Implications of rapid melting of ice sheets.
Conclusion: Way forward

According to the study "Unavoidable future increase in West Antarctic ice-shelf melting over the twenty-first century," warm waters would cause West Antarctica's ice sheet to melt rapidly, resulting in the continent's mean sea level rising by 5.3 meters, or 17.4 feet. This could have catastrophic effects on millions of people who live in vulnerable coastal cities around the world, including India.

Implications of rapid melting of ice sheets

- **Rising Sea Levels**: The West Antarctic ice sheet is a massive ice mass covering a vast area. As it melts, it contributes to the rising sea levels globally. If the entire West Antarctic ice sheet were to melt, it has the potential to significantly elevate sea levels, threatening coastal regions and low-lying areas around the world.
- **Impact on Coastal Communities:** Coastal communities are directly threatened by rising sea levels, which raises the possibility of erosion, flooding, and saltwater intrusion into freshwater supplies. Islands with low-lying areas and coastal regions with high population densities are particularly susceptible to the effects of sea level rise.
- **Ecosystem Disruption:** Ecosystems suited to cold climates are impacted by the polar areas' fast changes. Fish, animals, and seabirds can all be negatively impacted by the loss of sea ice, changes to ocean currents, and changes in the availability of food.
- **Effect on the Earth's Climate**: The polar regions control the climate. The equilibrium of the Earth's climate system is upset by changes in ice cover, which affects global weather patterns and temperatures.

How does this phenomenon highlight the effect of climate change on polar regions?

- **Modifications to Ocean Circulation:** Ocean circulation patterns can be affected by melting ice in polar regions. This might have a significant impact on weather patterns and result in more intense and unpredictable weather, with far-reaching implications for global climate systems.
- **Methane Release:** Melting permafrost in the Arctic causes the atmospheric release of methane, a powerful greenhouse gas. This feeds into a positive feedback loop since rising methane concentrations exacerbate global warming.

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- **Risk of Extreme Events Increasing:** Extreme weather occurrences are becoming more commonplace worldwide due to climate change, which is partly caused by ice sheets melting. This includes heat waves, precipitation events, and storms occurring more frequently and intensely.
- **Loss of Sea Ice:** The melting of polar ice contributes to the loss of sea ice, impacting marine life that depends on ice-covered areas for breeding, hunting, and resting. This includes species like polar bears, which rely on sea ice to hunt for seals.

Conclusion

India is susceptible to sea level rise due to its extensive coastline and dense population. People in coastal towns would have to relocate or become refugees if they could not afford to erect walls or take other measures to protect themselves from the rising waves.

Discuss the role of the Rajya Sabha in representing state interests and propose reforms that could enhance federalism in India's political system.

Introduction: Give brief context to the question
Body: Role of Rajya Sabha and reforms to improve political system
Conclusion: Way forward

The Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha are the two houses of the Indian Parliament. The Rajya Sabha is intended to serve as the states' and Union territories' representative, whereas the Lok Sabha represents the people of India. India's federal system of government heavily relies on the Rajya Sabha's ability to reflect state interests.

Role of Rajya Sabha in Representing State Interests

- **Representation of States**: Members of the Rajya Sabha are elected by the elected members of the Legislative Assemblies of States and Union territories. This ensures that states have a direct say in the composition of the Rajya Sabha. Hence, Rajya Sabha maintains the federal equilibrium by protecting the interests of the states against the undue interference of the Centre.
- **Special Powers**: The Rajya Sabha possesses specific powers that are indicative of its function in safeguarding the interests of the state. It can propose changes and postpone payment bills for a maximum of 14 days. If a resolution is approved by a two-thirds majority, the Rajya Sabha can also start legislation on topics included in the State List.
- **Diverse representation**: The Rajya Sabha has been more like a diverse mix of minds from different streams as writers, economists or even poets political leaders, etc. The second chamber enables a second and reflective expression of representative opinion.

Reforms that could enhance federalism

- **Delimitation:** The delimitation exercise should be responsible and not biased towards northern states as it would disturb the balance of federalism. To minimize these effects it is essential that the number of seats in Parliament increase significantly (at least around 848 seats to avoid any State losing seats), which can help to enhance democratic representation ratios. Delimitation should not be driven only by factors based on population. Geographical determinism, economic productivity, linguistic history, and a sense of fairness should also play a part in the exercise.
- **Better representation:** Federalism needs to be promoted and states be given a better voice and a platform to represent their interests. To ensure that every state has an equal number of Rajya Sabha MPs, constitutional reform can be sought. Simultaneously, it is important to encourage direct elections for Rajya Sabha MPs while making sure that a residence requirement is included and strictly followed.

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- **State reorganization:** A New State Reorganisation Commission may be set up to evaluate the socio-economic and administrative viability of carving out new states to enhance administrative efficiency and democratic accountability.

Conclusion

A more successful and balanced federal system in India could be achieved by changing the role and makeup of the Rajya Sabha in addition to other changes, guaranteeing that the interests of the union and the states are fairly represented.

Analyze the challenges in balancing economic development with forest conservation in India, considering the recent amendments and their potential environmental and social impacts.

Introduction: Describe the purpose of the Forest Conservation Act 2023.
Body: What are the challenges in balancing economic development with forest conservation?
Conclusion: Way forward

The Forest (Conservation) Amendment Bill, of 2023 was introduced to make changes to The Forest (Conservation) Act, of 1980. The proposed amendments focus on building carbon stocks in plantations and providing land for compensatory afforestation instead of diverted forest land. The Forest Conservation Amendment Act of 2023 aims to determine how forests can be utilized for economic gain, and how it seeks to achieve this goal is outlined in the legislation.

Challenges in balancing economic development with forest conservation

- **Restricting the definition of forest**: The Bill will impose significant limitations on the application of the landmark Godavarman judgment of 1996, which broadened the scope of the FCA 1980. The proposed amendment now narrows the Act's coverage to only legally notified forests and forests recorded in government records on or after October 25, 1980. States may now be free to allow the destruction of unclassed forests for construction and development.
- **Exclusion of fragile ecosystems**: The Bill leaves out some of India's most vulnerable ecosystems by eliminating the need for forest permits for security-related projects within 100 kilometers of international borders. These include the high-altitude Himalayan forests and meadows, as well as the forests of northeastern India, which are acknowledged as worldwide hotspots for biodiversity.
- **Rights of forest dwellers**: The Bill does not mention the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest-dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006. Consequently, the exclusion of certain forest areas and the simplified diversion process might lead to the removal of the requirement to consult gram sabhas.

Potential environmental and social impacts

- **Easing of the Environmental Clearance Process**: While expediting economic activity, amendments that simplify the environmental clearance procedures for development projects run the risk of undermining thorough environmental assessments.
- **Promotion of Plantation Forestry**: While encouraging plantation forestry may boost the economy, it might not be able to completely replace the ecosystem services and biodiversity that come from natural forests.
- **Neglect on forest governance**: The principle of afforestation as mentioned in the new bill violates the concept of forest governance as it infringes on the rights of forest-dwelling communities. The amendment contradicts the concept of decentralized forest governance as forests in the country fall under the concurrent list and also fails to address the issue of human-animal conflicts in forest areas.

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Conclusion

The Forest (Conservation) Amendment Bill of 2023 jeopardizes forest conservation by prioritizing plantations, restricting the Act's scope, and broadening exemptions. It is crucial to maintain a balance and uphold indigenous rights to safeguard forests and biodiversity.

Analyze how India's implementation of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) has contributed to its socio-economic development. Discuss the role of DPI in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in the context of India's diverse population.

Introduction: Describe DPI briefly
Body: Highlight role of DPI in India's socio-economic development and in achieving SDG
Conclusion: Way forward

Digital public infrastructure (DPI) refers to blocks or platforms such as digital identification, payment infrastructure, and data exchange solutions that help countries deliver essential services. It provides necessary technical and organizational frameworks to ensure that digital services are secure, reliable, and accessible to everyone.

How DPI has contributed to India's socio-economic development?

- **Digital inclusion**: Inclusive Digital Public Infrastructures (DPIs) ensure that all segments of society, particularly underserved and marginalized populations, have access to essential digital services, thereby promoting digital inclusion and empowerment. Enabling people to participate in the digital economy, obtain knowledge, and make use of a variety of online services, promotes digital inclusion.
- **Better Agricultural Practices**: Farmers can receive up-to-date information on weather, market prices, and optimal agricultural techniques from inclusive DPIs. Their ability to make wiser decisions is enhanced, which raises agricultural productivity.
- **Social development**: By filling in the gaps in the delivery of traditional education, digital infrastructure can support online learning and skill development initiatives. Through the use of electronic health records, telemedicine, and online consultations, digital infrastructure can enhance healthcare services in remote locations with limited access to healthcare services.

Role of DPI in achieving SDG in India'

- **Quality education**: DPI can support quality education through online learning platforms and improved access to educational resources which help in achieving SDG Goal 4. Eg, the National Knowledge Network (NKN) is a high-speed network that connects universities, research institutions, libraries, and other knowledge hubs across India & enables the sharing of knowledge and resources, facilitating collaborative research and innovation.
- **No Poverty**: DPI can contribute to poverty reduction by enabling financial inclusion and providing access to government welfare programs. Initiatives like UPI, Digital India, Aadhar & UMANG (Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance) have certainly led to poverty reduction and helped in achieving SDG Goal 1.
- **Health & well-being**: DPI has supported health services through telemedicine, health information systems, and online consultations, improving healthcare accessibility, especially in remote areas. Eg, National Health Stack is a proposed digital infrastructure for the healthcare sector in India, which aims to provide a common platform for health data exchange and interoperability.

Conclusion

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To achieve the aim of a $5 trillion economy, the adoption of DPI will depend on several elements, including infrastructure development, digital literacy, and resolving potential privacy and security concerns.

Analyze the role of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations in the context of the Qatar death row case. How can India leverage international legal frameworks to address such situations?

Introduction: Describe Vienna Convention briefly
Body: Highlight role of Vienna convention in Qatar death row case
Conclusion: Way forward

The Vienna Convention on Consular Relations or VCCR provides the framework for consular relations between sovereign states. The convention has codified the privileges of 'diplomatic immunity'. This has allowed diplomats to carry out their duties without fear of coercion or harassment.

Role of the Vienna convention in the context of Qatar case

- **Consular Access:** The right of detained individuals to get consular assistance is guaranteed by the VCCR. India may use the VCCR's provisions to request an explanation and guarantee that consular access be allowed if there are claims that this right has been infringed.
- **Diplomatic Channels:** A framework for diplomatic communication is provided by the VCCR. India could communicate with Qatari authorities through diplomatic channels to learn more about the case, make sure the person is properly represented by counsel, and resolve any issues with the trial or circumstances of incarceration.
- **ICJ compulsory jurisdiction**: The Vienna Convention on Consular Relations' Article 36, which addresses correspondence and interactions with sending state citizens, is crucial to this case. The ICJ has mandatory jurisdiction over disputes arising from the interpretation or application of the Convention thanks to the Optional Protocol.

How can India leverage the international legal framework to address such situations?

- **Human Rights Frameworks:** To address issues with the death sentence, requirements for fair trials, and prisoner care, India should make use of more general human rights frameworks and treaties in addition to the VCCR. This could entail utilizing international platforms to present the case and interacting with global human rights organizations like Amnesty International.
- **Bilateral Agreements:** International legal frameworks can be strengthened via diplomatic discussions and bilateral agreements. Certain agreements or understandings between Qatar and India might be used to settle consular disputes and defend the rights of their respective nationals. For instance, an agreement about the transfer of inmates serving sentences was made in 2015 between Qatar and India.
- **International Legal Recourse:** India may take the case to international legal forums if consular rights are consistently denied. This could entail taking the matter to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and claiming that the VCCR's guarantees of rights have been infringed.

Conclusion

The Qatar death row case is a difficult diplomatic situation that needs to be carefully considered and handled strategically. International precedents, the larger background of India-Qatar relations, and the ramifications of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations should all be considered in India's response. India can pursue a settlement through diplomatic discussions, political actions, court cases, or a combination of these approaches.

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Analyze the arguments for and against the abolition of the death penalty in the context of the Indian judicial system. Discuss the implications of retaining the death penalty in the proposed Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

Introduction: Describe briefly the controversy around the death penalty.
Body: Highlight arguments in favour abolishing of the death penalty.
Conclusion: Way forward

The newly proposed Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) which will replace the IPC, has not made a recommendation to abolish the death penalty & instead will continue with the punishment as it falls under "rarest of rare" cases despite strong opposition from social scientists who contend that the penalty has no deterrent effect and that global opinion was in favour of its abolition.

Arguments in favour of the death penalty

- **Maintaining Deterrence**: The fundamental justification offered for the death sentence is the degree of deterrence it maintains in society as people are more likely to refrain from perpetrating the crime from fear of punishment.
- **National Security**: The integrity of our system of national security is undermined by certain actions, such as terrorism and fighting the war against the State. Such actions put the nation and its citizens' very survival in jeopardy.
- **Safety of Citizens**: Advocates of the death penalty contend that some criminals—such as those charged with the most heinous crimes are beyond reformation. They don't express regret or contrition and the person deserves to be executed for the protection of the public.

Arguments in favour of the abolition of the death penalty

- **Mental Stress**: Before being put to death, prisoners frequently serve lengthy prison sentences. According to Project 39A's "Deathworthy" report, mental illness is a result of the isolated, alienated, and stigmatized experiences of spending more time on death row.
- **Irreversible in Nature**: Courts frequently award compensation to people who have been wrongfully convicted and have served a significant amount of time in prison as a result of a State error. But no amount of money can make up for the mistake and bring back a person who has been wrongfully hanged.

Implications of Retaining the Death Penalty in Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita

- **Stringent safeguards**: The recently suggested Bhartiya Dand Samhita needs to provide strong protections against erroneous convictions, enhance the effectiveness of the legal system, and take into account substitute punishments that are consistent with human rights ideals.
- **Transparency:** Transparency, equity, and uniformity in the execution of death penalty cases should be the goals of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. Concerns about the death penalty's arbitrary or discriminatory application can be allayed with clear guidelines about when it can be applied and with a comprehensive review mechanism.

Conclusion

The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita must carefully weigh the needs of society for punishment with the principles of justice and human rights before deciding whether to abolish or keep the death sentence.

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Analyze the dichotomy in Indian public policy towards alcohol consumption, focusing on the balance between individual choice, public health, and revenue generation.

> **Introduction:** Give context to the question
> **Body:** Highlight the dichotomy in public policy towards alcohol consumption
> **Conclusion:** Way forward

Recent record sale of alcohol during the festive season exposes hypocrisy around liquor and ambivalence around public policy to ban or use liquor as a source of revenue.

Dichotomy in public policy toward alcohol consumption

- **Individual choice:** Encouraging people to make their own decisions, including whether or not to drink, is regarded as a crucial component of personal autonomy. Strong alcohol laws are opposed because adults should be free to make life decisions for themselves and excessive government control over human preferences is inappropriate.
- **Cultural significance**: Alcohol use has religious or traditional significance and is firmly ingrained in certain cultural contexts. Limiting alcohol use may be perceived as a violation of personal liberties and cultural customs, raising questions about diversity and cultural autonomy.
- **Social issues**: Domestic violence, family strife, and unstable economies are just a few of the socioeconomic problems that underlie alcohol dependence. With an emphasis on harm reduction and public benefit, policymakers may enact rules to address the effects of alcohol misuse on society.
- **Health risks**: Abuse of alcohol presents serious health hazards, such as addiction, liver problems, and a higher chance of aggression and accidents. Policymakers are taking steps to lower general alcohol use because they are worried about the public health burden associated with alcohol-related illnesses and injuries.
- **Revenue generation**: Through taxes, licensing, and other fees, the alcohol sector provides the government with a sizable amount of income. Because of the possible financial losses as well as the effects on associated businesses and jobs, policymakers might be reluctant to impose restrictive restrictions.

Conclusion

Debates over liquor policy should address the fallacious dichotomy between traditionalism and modernism, the purported importance of religion, and the trade-offs between income generating and mitigating health effects. Limiting access (licensing and age bars on sale), increasing taxes, banning marketing, and increasing knowledge are all important steps in a public health strategy to reduce alcohol consumption. The Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) in the Constitution, which state that "the State shall endeavour to bring about prohibition of the consumption of intoxicating drinks and drugs which are injurious to health," should also guide public policy.

Evaluate the effectiveness of India's legal framework in protecting domestic violence survivors. Discuss the challenges faced by these survivors when seeking justice.

> **Introduction:** Give brief context to the problem of domestic abuse
> **Body:** Highlight the effectiveness of the legal framework to address this and the challenges faced.
> **Conclusion:** Way forward

India has made efforts to address the issue of domestic violence through legislative measures, with the most significant being ***the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA) enacted in 2005***. According to the latest ***National Family Health Survey 5 (2019-20), 30 percent of women between the ages of 18 and 49 experienced physical violence from the age of 15, while six percent experienced sexual violence in their lifetime.***

Effectiveness of India's legal framework in protecting domestic violence survivors:

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- **Criminal offense**: In 1983, section 498-A was added to the Indian Penal Code, designating domestic abuse as a distinct criminal offense. The abuse of a married woman by a husband or his family is covered in this section.
- **Dowry Prohibition Act 1961**: The Act forbids the payment or receipt of dowries. This is to guarantee a shift in India's dowry culture and related violence.
- **Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005**: The 2005 Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act mandates that incidents of domestic abuse against women be reported to a Protection Officer. The purpose of the Act was to provide access to justice for women who might not always want to pursue criminal charges and would rather maintain the possibility of reconciliation.

Challenges faced by survivors when seeking justice

- **Lack of Police Sensitization:** Law enforcement officials frequently show hostility to survivors, possibly due to insufficient training on how to handle cases involving domestic abuse. Police staff must participate in sensitization sessions to guarantee a more encouraging response.
- **Judicial Delays:** The backlog of cases in the Indian legal system causes delays in the administration of justice. It is crucial to resolve cases quickly to provide survivors with timely assistance.
- **Lack of Shelter houses**: Survivors' ability to leave abusive circumstances is hampered by the lack of shelter houses and rehabilitation centres.
- **Underreporting:** Due to societal stigma, fear of reprisals, economic dependence, and ignorance of legal remedies, domestic violence instances are often underreported, which presents a serious difficulty.
- **Inadequate Implementation:** The PWDVA has been inconsistently implemented, despite its existence. Due to insufficient knowledge and bureaucratic delays, certain survivors encounter difficulties obtaining protection orders and other forms of assistance.

Conclusion

The protection of Article 21, which guarantees women the right to live with dignity, requires a concerted effort on the part of society and the government. To raise awareness, increase law enforcement's sensitivity, shorten courtroom delays, and offer survivors complete support services, ongoing efforts are required. Monitoring and addressing these issues is crucial if we are to improve the efficacy of India's legislative protections for victims of domestic abuse.

Examine the challenges in ensuring the quality of generic medicines in India. How does this impact public health?

Introduction: What is a generic drug?
Body: Highlight challenges in ensuring the quality of generic medicines and their impact on public health.
Conclusion: Way forward

A generic drug is a pharmaceutical drug that is equivalent to a brand-name product in dosage, strength, route of administration, quality, performance, and intended use. Recently, the National Medical Council (NMC) directed all doctors to prescribe only generic names and not brand names to improve access to affordable medicines as part of their ethical commitment to patients.

Challenges in ensuring the quality of generic medicines

- **Weak Enforcement**: Failure to consistently enforce quality standards and regulations can result in gaps in the oversight and management of generic medicine manufacture and distribution. This is particularly valid for small, unregistered manufacturers.

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- **Lack of Infrastructure:** It's possible that some pharmaceutical production facilities, especially the smaller ones, do not have the technology and infrastructure required for quality control. The quality of generic medications may vary as a result of this.
- **Problems with the Supply Chain**: The pharmaceutical supply chain is frequently complicated, involving several middlemen. Subpar or counterfeit medications may find their way onto the market as a result of inadequate monitoring at every level.
- **Restricted Resources**: Some smaller pharmaceutical companies may lack the funding necessary to devote to R&D or to upholding standards for high-quality manufacturing. This can have an impact on their items' quality.

Impacts on Public Health

- **Ineffectiveness of Treatment**: Medicines that are subpar or counterfeit may not have the right amount of active components, which makes treatment ineffective. Drug-resistant disease strains may spread as a result, and illness may last longer and cost more to treat.
- **Deteriorating Health diseases**: If patients are using generic medications for long-term illnesses, their diseases could get worse if the medications are of poor quality or don't adhere to regulations.
- **Loss of Faith in the Healthcare System**: Events involving subpar medications have the potential to reduce public confidence in the healthcare system, which may discourage people from seeking medical attention or from following the recommended course of treatment.
- **High expenditure on health**: Ineffective therapies might result in the need for further medical procedures, hospital stays, and higher healthcare expenses for both the patient and the healthcare system.

Conclusion

Over 90% of all necessary medications must be readily available. Free diagnostics and medications are acceptable policies to guarantee accessible, inexpensive medications for all under Universal Health Care, but their execution must be closely watched. Expanding the Janaushadhi Kendra network is necessary to guarantee the availability of less expensive medications.

Analyze the potential economic impacts of the proposed India-UK Free Trade Agreement on India's economy. Discuss the sectors that are likely to benefit and those that might face challenges.

Introduction: Give context to the question
Body: Impact of FTA and challenges that might arise from it.
Conclusion: Way forward

Recently there has been a discussion between India's External Affairs Minister and the UK's Foreign Secretary about signing India-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

Potential Economic Impact of FTA

- **Trade Expansion:** By removing or lowering tariffs and other trade barriers, a free trade agreement between India and the UK may result in a rise in bilateral trade. This might accelerate economic growth and provide Indian exporters with new markets. A study by the UK's Department of International Trade said that the India-UK FTA could increase India's bilateral exports to the UK by £10.6 bn, and that of the UK by £16.7 bn.
- **Investment Flows:** Because there are fewer regulatory barriers for enterprises in both India and the UK to invest in each other's markets, FTA may lead to a rise in foreign direct investment (FDI) between the two nations.

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- **Employment Creation:** Trade and investment growth have the potential to create jobs across several industries, particularly those that see a spike in demand as a result of higher exports.

Sectors which are likely to benefit

- **Information technology and services:** India has a robust IT industry, and more IT services could be exported to the UK as a result of an FTA.
- **Textiles and clothing:** Lower tariffs could help India's labour intensive sectors like the textile and clothing sector get better access to the UK market.
- **Automobiles and Engineering:** Lower trade barriers could result in more Indian engineering and automobile exports to the UK.
- **Pharmaceuticals:** A significant participant in the pharmaceutical sector in India. Increased shipments of generic medications to the UK could result from an FTA.

Challenges that might be faced by these sectors

- **Carbon Tax**: Similar to the European Union, the United Kingdom is considering implementing a carbon border adjustment mechanism (CBAM) on metal imports, tying them to carbon emissions. The adoption of such a mechanism by the UK, akin to the EU's approach, could adversely impact India's exports to the UK, even if India secures substantial tariff reductions.
- **Non-Tariff barriers:** NTBs, which commonly manifest as regulations, standards, testing, certification, or pre-shipment inspections, are a significant concern in the ongoing negotiations. Vegetable and fruit exporters, for instance, frequently encounter stringent limitations imposed by European economies concerning pesticides and other contaminants in agricultural imports.

Conclusion

Before proceeding with the negotiations, India should weigh the economic advantages and disadvantages of the India-UK Free Trade Agreement, paying particular attention to the sections about digital trade, labour, the environment, and intellectual property rights.

Assess the socio-economic challenges faced by opium farmers in India, especially in the context of the government's policy changes allowing private players in opium production and processing.

Introduction: Briefly describe opium production in India.
Body: Highlight socio-economic challenges faced by opium farmers
Conclusion: Way forward

Opium is an addictive substance that can cause mental clouding and hallucinations, its production is highly regulated in India across 22 districts in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh. Mandsaur, Neemuch, and Chittorgarh districts produce 80% of India's opium. However, in the 2021-22 crop year, the Union government changed its opium policy, allowing private players to produce concentrate of poppy straw (CPS) from the opium poppy to boost the yield of alkaloids.

Socio-economic challenges faced by farmers

- **New CPS method**: CPS is a mechanized system under which the entire harvest will be cut by machine and transferred to government factories. This will help in increasing the yield of the crop but the method is less labour intensive and farmers fear the loss of income from the new method.
- **Dependency on Global Prices**: Conditions in the global market have an impact on the price of opium. Changes in the availability and demand of opium worldwide may affect opium farmers' earnings.

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- **Health Risks**: Growing opium exposes growers to health hazards from handling and processing opium poppy seeds. The well-being of farmers may be impacted by a lack of safety precautions.
- **Restricted Crop Options**: In some areas, growing opium is a customary practice, therefore farmers have few options when it comes to income crops. Diversification is frequently difficult in these 22 districts where production is concentrated.

Impact of policy changes

- **Less transparency**: Farmers contend that the new CPS mechanism is less transparent and more favourable to big private companies as they will try to maximize profits.
- **Smuggling**: Farmer unions believe that the entry of private players will lead to an increase in the smuggling of opium as middlemen, private players will target poor farmers often in distress situations which will lead to law enforcement issues for poor farmers.
- **Safety and security**: The production of alkaloids by the private sector will make opium production costly leading to a surge in prices of medicines used for treatment. It will indirectly impact farmers' health and safety. It can also lead to the illegal production of opium and the smuggling of drugs into the Indian market.
- **Income Inequality**: There is a risk of increased income inequality between large-scale, commercially oriented opium producers and small-scale, traditional farmers who might struggle to adapt to market-oriented changes.

Conclusion

While the entry of private players brings benefits like enhanced market access, competition & technology adoption it also brings multifaceted challenges all of which require support from the government in the form of support to farmers to diversify crop production, with community development programs that can address broader socio-economic challenges, providing holistic support to opium-dependent communities.

Analyze the constitutional provisions related to the discretionary powers of a Governor in the context of assenting to Bills passed by the State Legislature. Discuss with reference to the recommendations of the Sarkaria and Punchhi Commissions.

Introduction: Give brief context to the question
Body: Highlight provisions related to assent to Bills and suggestions of Commissions.
Conclusion: Way forward

Recently, the Tamil Nadu Governor 'withheld' assent for certain Bills passed by the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly' raising concern regarding the discretionary powers of a Governor in the context of assenting to Bills passed by the State Legislature.

Constitutional provisions related to the powers of a Governor in the context of assenting to Bills

- **Article 200:** According to this article, the Governor can give his assent to a bill, withhold his assent to a bill, or reserve the bill for the consideration of the President. The Governor's discretionary powers in this regard are important for maintaining the balance between the executive and legislative branches of the state government.
- **Article 201:** This article grants the Governor the power to reserve certain bills for the President's consideration. The President may either give his assent to the bill or withhold his assent, and the Governor must act accordingly.
- **Article 202:** This article gives the Governor the power to return a bill (other than a money bill) for reconsideration by the state legislature, along with a request for the reconsideration of the bill. If the legislature passes the bill again with or without modifications, the Governor is obligated to assent to it.

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Recommendations of Centre-State Relations Commission

- **Sarkaria Commission**: The Sarkaria Commission emphasized that the Governor's discretionary power is primarily limited to the reservation of bills for the consideration of the President, and this authority should be invoked only in rare cases of unconstitutionality. In all other instances, the Governor is expected to exercise functions under Article 200 following the advice of the ministers. The commission recommended that the President should promptly dispose of such reserved bills within a maximum period of six months. Additionally, if the President decides to withhold assent, reasons for such a decision should be communicated to the State Government whenever feasible.
- **Punchhi Commission**: It recommended that it is necessary to prescribe a time limit of six months within which the Governor should decide whether to grant assent or to reserve it for consideration of the President.

Conclusion

While the governor's position is vital to maintaining the integrity and unity of a country, federalism must also be strengthened by making sure the governor does not infringe upon the authority of elected governments. The Punchhi Commission recommended that the State Legislature impeach governors and that the Chief Ministers be consulted before governor nomination.

Analyze the policy challenges posed by tax havens like Cyprus in the global financial system, with a focus on the implications for tax justice and economic inequality.

Introduction: Give a brief context to the question
Body: Highlight policy challenges posed by tax havens
Conclusion: Way forward

Nations like Cyprus known as *"tax havens"* exempt individuals and corporations from paying taxes on their funds held in banks within their borders. Politically and economically, these countries frequently enjoy stability. They offer several tax benefits that could be misused as devious tax avoidance techniques.

Analysis of the key issues

- **Erosion of Tax Bases**: By enabling people and businesses to transfer assets and profits to countries with low or no tax rates, tax havens aid in tax evasion and avoidance. By eroding other nations' tax bases, this strategy lowers the amount of money available for public services.
- **Lack of Transparency**: Because tax havens frequently maintain high levels of financial secrecy, it can be challenging for tax authorities to efficiently track and tax income. International efforts to combat tax evasion and enforce tax rules are hampered by the lack of openness.
- **Inequality Exacerbation**: By allowing the wealthy and companies to evade paying their fair share of taxes, the usage of tax havens exacerbates economic inequality. Because public services and social programs are disproportionately funded by middle-class and lower-class people, this widens the wealth divide.
- **Competition Between Jurisdictions**: To draw in companies and individuals looking for advantageous tax treatment, countries may participate in a race to the bottom by lowering their tax rates. Governments may face pressure to lower corporate tax rates as a result of this competition, which would make it more difficult for them to pay for public services.
- **Impact on Developing Nations**: Tax havens tend to have a more negative impact on developing nations because they may not have the infrastructure and resources necessary to effectively tackle tax evasion. The reduction in income may make it more difficult for them to make investments in infrastructure, healthcare, and education.

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- **Double Taxation Treaties**: Companies and individuals can make use of legislative frameworks that allow them to take advantage of loopholes and lower their total tax burden by entering into double taxation treaties with other nations. Such agreements may exacerbate the unequal distribution of tax liabilities.
- **Global Cooperation Challenges**: International cooperation is necessary to address the problems that tax havens present. However, reaching an agreement among countries with disparate economic agendas and policy preferences can be difficult, which makes it more difficult to create efficient international structures to combat tax cheating.

Conclusion

According to the _**State of Tax Justice 2023, by Tax Justice Network**_, countries the world over are on course to lose $4.8 trillion to tax havens over the next 10 years. Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts at both the national and international levels to create a fair and transparent tax environment.

Evaluate the role of state-run fact-checking units in combating misinformation and fake news. Discuss the ethical considerations and challenges faced by democracies in regulating content on social media platforms.

Introduction: Give context to the question
Body: What role do fact-checking units play in combating misinformation?
Conclusion: Way forward

Recently, the Tamil Nadu Government issued an order to set up a Fact Check Unit with the intent of checking across all media platforms the authenticity of information related to the announcements, policies, schemes, guidelines, and initiatives of the Government.

Role of state-run fact-checking units

- Credibility and Accountability: Because they are seen as unbiased organizations, state-run fact-checking units are a good way to increase credibility. To preserve trust, they must remain independent of political influence.
- Quick Reaction: These teams can react quickly to new disinformation, preventing it from spreading too far in advance. Fact-checking promptly and accurately is crucial in this day of rapid information transmission.
- Public Awareness: By engaging in fact-checking, states can increase public awareness of the value of information verification. This can help people become more media literate and enable them to separate false information from credible sources.
- Legal Support: To offer an additional degree of enforcement, state-run entities may be able to use legal means to force platforms to remove or label misleading information.

Ethical Considerations

- **Independence:** It is essential to guarantee the fact-checking units' independence from political interference. The legitimacy and efficacy of these entities may be jeopardized by political intervention.
- **Freedom of Expression:** Finding a middle ground between stifling false information and upholding the right to free speech is difficult. A bit too much fact-checking could unintentionally stifle reasonable criticism or other viewpoints.
- **Openness:** Being open and honest throughout the fact-checking process is crucial. Building trust with the public is facilitated by open communication regarding the criteria applied, the sources consulted, and the decision-making process.
- **Fairness:** Fact-checking organizations must avoid taking sides in social or political disputes by being impartial and fair in their evaluations.

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Challenges in Regulating Content on Social Media Platforms

- **Global Operation of Social-Media:** Certain governments find it difficult to adequately regulate content due to the global nature of social media platforms. It is often necessary to coordinate global operations.
- **Content Volume:** It is challenging to monitor and regulate social media platforms effectively due to the overwhelming amount of content on them. When it comes to correctly identifying context and intent, automated content filtering tools have limits.
- **Misinformation's Dynamic Nature:** It's difficult for regulatory agencies to stay on top of the constant evolution of misinformation strategies. Because they conflate fact and fiction, deepfakes, for instance, provide a special kind of difficulty.

Conclusion

A comprehensive and ethical approach involves a combination of regulatory measures, consultation with stakeholders including the public and intermediaries like Google and Facebook, technological solutions, and media literacy campaigns.

Critically examine the role of local governance and community participation in enhancing the resilience of WASH services against climate-induced challenges. Suggest measures to improve the effectiveness of existing policies and programs in India.

Introduction: What is the WASH initiative?
Body: Highlight the role of local governance in WASH and measures to improve effectiveness
Conclusion: Way forward

The term "WASH in health care facilities" refers to the provision of water, sanitation, health care waste management, hygiene and environmental cleaning infrastructure, and services across all parts of a facility.

Role of Governance in enhancing the resilience of WASH services

- **Decentralized Decision-Making**: Decisions can be made locally with greater responsiveness and context. When it comes to Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) services, local government officials are better able to comprehend the unique problems that communities confront and design solutions that address those needs.
- **Community Ownership**: A sense of ownership is fostered when communities are involved in the design, execution, and upkeep of WASH services. If communities actively contribute to the development of these services, there is a greater chance that they will be preserved and protected.
- **Timely Response**: Local authorities can respond more promptly to emerging challenges, such as extreme weather events or changing precipitation patterns. This agility is crucial for maintaining the functionality of WASH services during and after climate-induced shocks.
- **Customization of Solutions**: Local governance allows for the customization of WASH solutions based on local knowledge, cultural practices, and environmental conditions. This ensures that interventions are contextually appropriate and more likely to succeed.

Measures to Improve Effectiveness

- **Community Education and Awareness:** Run initiatives to inform locals about how climate change is affecting WASH services. Give them the know-how and abilities they need to adjust to these changes and maintain their infrastructure for water and sanitation.
- **Participatory Planning:** Make sure local communities are actively involved in WASH planning processes. This entails determining community needs, carrying out vulnerability assessments, and working together to create WASH programs that are climate resilient.

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- **Technology Integration:** Investigate how using suitable and sustainable technologies might improve the WASH services' resilience. Rainwater harvesting systems, decentralized wastewater treatment, and climate-resilient water sources are a few examples of this.
- **Integration with Disaster Risk Reduction:** At the local level, incorporate WASH resilience initiatives into more comprehensive disaster risk reduction plans. This guarantees a comprehensive strategy to increase resilience against obstacles brought on by climate change.

Conclusion

Governments can further strengthen people's initiatives by strengthening their capacity to sustain safe sanitation and incentivizing them to revive alternative water sources, store water to cope with supply irregularities, and conduct regular water testing for a resilient and sustainable future.

Evaluate the role of developed and developing countries in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. How can international cooperation be enhanced to meet the targets of limiting global temperature rise?

Introduction: Give brief context to the question
Body: Highlight the role of countries in reducing GHG emissions and how international cooperation can help in this.
Conclusion: Way forward

The role of both developed and developing countries in reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions is crucial for addressing climate change. Recently, a report published by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), showed that economically developed countries fell short of their promise to jointly mobilize $100 billion towards climate mitigation and adaptation needs of developing countries.

Role of countries in reducing GHG emissions

- **Sustainable Development**: Developing nations must strike a balance between environmental sustainability and economic growth. This entails introducing sustainable land-use practices, supporting renewable energy sources, and embracing cleaner technology.
- **Adaptation Measures**: Developing countries should concentrate on putting adaptation measures into place to increase resilience in areas like infrastructure, agriculture, and water resources because they are frequently more susceptible to the effects of climate change.
- **Financial Support:** Developed nations can give developing countries financial support so they can put climate mitigation and adaptation plans into place. This could involve providing funds for infrastructure that is climate resilient, capacity-building, and renewable energy initiatives.
- **Historical Responsibility:** Developed countries bear historical responsibility for the majority of cumulative greenhouse gas emissions. They have a moral obligation to take the lead in reducing emissions and supporting developing nations in their efforts.

How international cooperation help to meet targets of reducing GHG emissions

- **Financial institutions:** Encouraging the Green Climate Fund and other financial institutions can assist in directing funds toward climate-related projects in underdeveloped nations. It is imperative to maintain accountability and transparency in the administration of funds.
- **Climate Agreements:** It is imperative to take part in international climate agreements, including the Paris Agreement. Together, nations should establish and meet goals for reducing emissions, evaluate their progress frequently, and revise their pledges in light of new scientific findings.
- **Capacity Building:** Developing nations must be better equipped to analyze, organize, and carry out climate action. Training, institutional capacity building, and knowledge sharing are all part of this.

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- **Role of the private sector:** The OECD report suggested de-risking with government intervention and called on Multilateral Development Banks to integrate private finance mobilization strategies as part of their core objective.

Conclusion

The industrialized and developing worlds must work together to combat climate change. Meeting global climate targets and containing the rise in global temperatures require international cooperation based on shared responsibility and mutual support.

Analyze the economic and social implications of providing reservation in private sector jobs for local candidates. How does it affect interstate migration and national integration?

Introduction: Give context to the question
Body: Highlight economic and social implications of reservation in private sector and its affect on migration and national integration.
Conclusion: Way forward

Recently, the Punjab and Haryana High Court has done the right thing by quashing the Haryana State Employment of Local Candidates Act, 2020 which provides for 75% reservation to State domiciles in the private sector in jobs that provide a monthly salary of less than ₹30,000 on the grounds of violation of equality guaranteed under Article 14 and freedom under Article 19 of the Constitution.

Economic and social implications of reservation in the private sector

- **Delaying Economic Recovery**: The pandemic scenario has made it imperative for states to focus on fast and effective economic recovery. However, the compulsion of companies to employ locals might compromise quality and delay the recovery phase.
- **Discourage Investment**: Compulsions to employ decrease the competitiveness of companies. Apart from that, such measures directly discourage investment potential in a state.
- **Threat to unity and integrity**: Reservation in the private sector would create friction among locals and non-locals in the implementing states. This will shake the fundamental of Indian democracy (Unity in Diversity) in the long run.
- **Not feasible**: The shortage of qualified workers in a state may impact the implementation of reservations in the private sector forcing the private sector to ask permission from authorities regarding employment which is akin to the situation during Inspector Raj.

Effect on interstate migration and national integration

- **Reduction in migration:** Reservations for local candidates may lead to a reduction in interstate migration as individuals may find more opportunities within their home state and discourage skilled individuals from seeking better opportunities in different regions.
- **Local job market:** It may create a closed job market, limiting exposure to diverse perspectives and hindering the overall growth potential of the local economy.
- **National Integration:** Reservation in the private sector could potentially lead to a fragmentation of the national workforce, reinforcing regional identities at the expense of a more unified national identity.
- **Parochialism:** There is a risk that policies like these might deepen divisions between states and communities, leading to a narrow parochial outlook.

Conclusion

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For equitable and sustainable economic growth, it is imperative to strike a balance between responding to local issues and upholding an open and meritocratic labour market. The possible trade-offs and unforeseen repercussions of such actions must be carefully considered by policymakers.

Critically analyze the functioning of the Collegium system in the context of judicial transfers in India. Discuss the implications of such transfers on the independence and integrity of the judiciary.

Introduction: What is the collegium system?
Body: Analyse the functioning of the collegium system and its implications on the integrity of the judiciary.
Conclusion: Way forward

The Collegium system, which involves the Chief Justice of India and a group of senior judges, plays a pivotal role in the appointment and transfer of judges in the Indian judiciary. The Collegium System has evolved through a series of judgments of the Supreme Court namely *Gupta & Others v. Union of India, 1981 (First Judges Case), Supreme Court Advocates on Record Association Vs. Union of India, 1993 (Second Judges Case) and the In re Special Reference 1 of 1998 (Third Judges Case).*

Functioning of the Collegium system

- **Lack of Transparency**: The Collegium lacks an official selection procedure or a documented manual for its operations. The criteria used for the selection or rejection of candidates are not publicly disclosed.
- **Absence of Accountability**: The practice of Judges selecting other Judges is perceived as undemocratic, as there is no mechanism for judicial accountability to the public or other branches of the State, such as the Legislature or the Executive. This absence of accountability introduces an element of potential arbitrariness in the decision-making process.
- **Judicial Criticism**: Numerous retired Judges have expressed criticism regarding the functioning of the Collegium, particularly highlighting the issue of transparency & certain controversial appointments that have raised concerns within the legal community.

Implications of such transfers on the independence and integrity of the judiciary

- **Nepotism:** Decisions made by the Collegium may encourage nepotism since judges may prefer appointments or transfers based on personal ties, undermining the merit-based system and raising questions about the judiciary's objectivity.
- **Erosion of Judicial Independence**: The absence of a participatory and transparent procedure could result in executive intervention since the Collegium system lacks an organized external oversight mechanism compromising the independence of the judiciary.
- **Impact on morale**: Arbitrary transfers without clear reasons can impact the morale of judges, affecting their performance and commitment to their roles which results in a decline in the quality of judicial decisions and overall efficiency.
- **Erosion of public trust**: Lack of transparency and accountability can result in a negative public perception of the judiciary and undermine its role as a pillar of democracy.

Conclusion

It is urgently necessary to make improvements to the judicial appointment system to ensure the efficient functioning of the judiciary which is possible through collaboration between the government, parliament, and judiciary.

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Examine the current legal framework in India regarding cybercrimes, with a focus on deepfakes. Suggest measures to strengthen legal provisions and enforcement mechanisms to combat the misuse of AI in creating deepfakes.

Introduction: Describe deepfakes.
Body: Highlight the legal framework to address the issue of deepfakes and measures to deal with it.
Conclusion: Way forward

Deepfakes are digital media – video, audio, and images edited and manipulated using Artificial Intelligence. It is hyper-realistic digital falsification. Access to commodity cloud computing, public research AI algorithms, abundant data, and the availability of vast media have created a perfect storm to democratize the creation and manipulation of media. This synthetic media content is referred to as deepfakes.

Current legal framework to address the issue of deep fakes

- **Information Technology Act, 2000**: Information Technology Act, of 2000, is the primary legislation governing cybercrimes in India. It includes sections on unauthorized access, data theft, and offenses related to computer systems
- **Cyber Appellate Tribunal**: The Cyber Appellate Tribunal handles appeals against orders issued by the Adjudicating Officer under the IT Act.
- **National Cyber Security Policy, 2013**: The policy focuses on creating a secure cyberspace environment, promoting research and development, and enhancing the legal framework.
- **Information Technology (Amendment) Act, 2008**: The 2008 amendment introduced offenses like identity theft, cyberterrorism, and the publication/transmission of sexually explicit material without consent.

Measures to strengthen the mechanism to curb the issue of deep fake

- **Responsibility of social media intermediaries**- Social media intermediaries have to develop technology to detect and report deepfakes on their sites like watermarking AI-generated content. For Ex- Microsoft's video authenticator is a new anti-deep fake technology to fight misinformation.
- **Blockchain-based Deepfake Verification**- The use of blockchain technology for media creation will allow individuals to trace the origin and modification history of media. This will discourage the creation and dissemination of malicious deepfakes.
- **Digital India Act**- The forthcoming Digital India Act must have penal provisions in case of malicious deepfakes. India must take lessons from China's comprehensive regulations on deepfakes.
- **Public awareness and responsibility**- Social awareness about the menace of malicious fake videos must be promoted. The public must be made aware of the 'Pause, think, and share' principle for social media.
- **Implementing the principles of the Bletchley Declaration**- The declaration calls to address risks and responsibilities associated with frontier AI like deepfakes. India, which is among the signatories must take the lead in finalizing the global AI regulatory framework, following the declaration principles.

Conclusion

Strengthening the legal framework to combat deepfakes requires a comprehensive approach that includes specific legislation, capacity building, awareness programs, and enhanced collaboration between various stakeholders. The evolving nature of technology necessitates a proactive and adaptive legal response to effectively address the challenges posed by deepfake threats in cyberspace.

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Analyze the role of migrant workers in India's infrastructure development and discuss the challenges they face, as highlighted by the Uttarakhand tunnel collapse incident.

Introduction: Briefly describe the incident.
Body: What is role of migrant workers in infrastructure development and challenges faced by them?
Conclusion: Way forward

The recent collapse of the Silkyara Tunnel, an under-construction structure along the Yamunotri National Highway in Uttarakhand's Uttarkashi district, has resulted in the entrapment of 40 workers. This tunnel forms a crucial component of the Char-Dham all-weather road project.

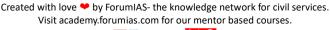**Role of Migrant Workers in India's Infrastructure Development**

- **Labour Force Contribution:** A large percentage of the labour force engaged in building projects is made up of migrants, who are essential to India's infrastructure development. They frequently take on manual labour-intensive jobs like road construction, construction, and other physically taxing jobs.
- **Economic Contribution**: By accepting employment across the nation, frequently in areas where there is a need for labour, migrant workers make a substantial economic contribution.
- **Flexibility in Workforce**: Industries can expand their workforce in response to project demands thanks to the flexibility that migrant labour offers. This adaptability is especially important in the construction industry because projects can be spread out over different regions.
- **Social and Cultural Diversity:** By fostering the interchange of ideas and practices, migrant workers contribute to the cultural diversity of the areas in which they operate.

Challenges Faced by Migrant Workers

- **Bad Living Conditions:** In temporary communities close to building projects, migrant labourers frequently experience subpar living conditions. Health problems can result from inadequate housing, sanitary conditions, and access to medical care.
- **Low salaries and Exploitation:** Low salaries and unfavourable working conditions are two instances of exploitation that affect migrant workers. They do not know that they have rights, or they might be afraid of losing their jobs if they ask for better terms.
- **Absence of Social Security:** Many migrant workers are uninsured against disease, accidents, and downturns in the economy since they do not have access to social security benefits.
- **Unsafe Working Conditions:** The nature of infrastructure projects often exposes migrant workers to hazardous working conditions. Lack of safety measures and training can lead to accidents and injuries.
- **Limited Legal Protections:** Migrant workers may not be adequately protected by labour laws, and their legal status might be ambiguous, making it difficult for them to seek legal recourse in case of disputes.

Conclusion

To address these issues and protect the rights and welfare of migrant workers engaged in India's infrastructure development, a comprehensive strategy combining industry practises, social initiatives, and government legislation is needed.

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Examine the impact of climate change on agricultural productivity in India and the necessity of adopting climate-smart agriculture (CSA) practices.

Introduction: What is CSA?
Body: Highlight impact of climate change on agriculture productivity and necessity of CSA.
Conclusion: Way forward

Climate-smart agriculture (CSA) is a strategic approach aimed at directing efforts to shift agri-food systems toward practices that are both environmentally sustainable and resilient to climate change. The primary objectives of CSA include enhancing agricultural productivity and incomes sustainably, fostering adaptation to and building resilience against climate change impacts, and minimizing or eliminating greenhouse gas emissions wherever feasible

Impact of climate change on agricultural productivity

- **Variability in Rainfall Patterns**: The impacts of climate change are evident in the irregular and unpredictable patterns of rainfall, disrupting the timing and distribution of precipitation. This variability has consequences for crop growth stages, ultimately resulting in diminished yields.
- **Temperature Extremes**: Escalating temperatures, particularly during heatwaves, exert adverse effects on crop development, leading to decreased yields. Certain crops are sensitive to temperature fluctuations, and prolonged exposure to high temperatures can induce heat stress.
- **Water Scarcity and Droughts**: Alterations in precipitation patterns contribute to instances of water scarcity and droughts. Given the heavy reliance on monsoon rains for agriculture in many regions of India, any disruption in this pattern can lead to water shortages, adversely affecting crop cultivation.
- **Rise in Pests and Diseases**: Warmer temperatures and shifts in climate conditions create an environment conducive to the proliferation of pests and diseases. This presents a threat to crops, heightening their vulnerability and necessitating more intensive pest management practices.

Necessity of Adopting CSA Practices

- **Enhancing Livelihood Resilience**: The primary goal of CSA is to fortify the resilience of farming communities against climate-related shocks and pressures. To enhance farmers' adaptive capacity, CSA emphasizes the diversification of revenue sources, the promotion of alternative livelihood options, and the establishment of social safety nets.
- **Greenhouse Gas Emission Mitigation**: CSA is dedicated to curbing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions stemming from agricultural activities. It promotes the adoption of practices that enhance carbon storage in soils, decrease emissions from animals, and optimize fertilizer use to reduce nitrous oxide emissions.
- **Adaptation to Climate Change**: CSA directs its efforts toward enhancing the resilience of agricultural systems in the face of climate change impacts. This involves implementing techniques and practices that support crops, livestock, and farmers in adjusting to evolving climatic conditions, including challenges such as droughts, floods, and heatwaves
- **Conservation and Restoration of Ecosystems**: Recognizing the imperative of safeguarding and rejuvenating ecosystems for sustained agricultural viability, CSA encourages the protection of biodiversity, the restoration of degraded areas, and the integration of trees and vegetation into farming systems to enhance ecosystem processes.

Conclusion

Implementing strategies like CSA is crucial for building resilience, ensuring food security, and sustaining the livelihoods of farmers in the face of a changing climate.

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Analyze the potential of fleet electrification in reducing urban pollution in India. What are the challenges and opportunities in transitioning to electric vehicles, particularly in the trucking sector?

> **Introduction:** Give a brief context to the question
> **Body:** Highlight benefits and challenges of fleet electrification in India
> **Conclusion:** Way forward

According to the latest study by Urban Emission (2015) and the TERI study (2018) transport and construction sector is a significant contributor to urban smog is PM2.5 and PM10 pollution. India transports more than 2 trillion tonne-kilometers of freight via trucks every year. These trucks account for over one-fourth of the country's total oil imports and are responsible for more than 90% of carbon dioxide emissions from road transport. Fleet electrification has the potential to significantly reduce urban pollution in India, especially in the context of the trucking sector.

Benefits of fleet electrification

- **Environmental Benefits**: Because electric vehicles emit fewer emissions than diesel trucks do, the quality of the air and the amount of pollution in metropolitan areas are both enhanced.
- **Decreased Dependency on Fossil Fuels**: By reducing reliance on imported fossil fuels, electric vehicles can improve energy security and lessen the effects of changes in fuel prices.
- **Government Initiatives**: By offering a range of financial aid packages, tax breaks, and legislative measures, the Indian government has been encouraging the use of electric vehicles and fostering the development of a fleet electrification environment.
- **Cost Savings**: Fleet owners may be able to save money on electric vehicles despite their high initial cost since throughout their lifetime, operating costs, such as fuel and maintenance, are often lower.

Challenges in transitioning to electric vehicles

- **High Initial Costs**: For fleet managers, the initial cost of electric trucks—especially for heavy-duty vehicles—remains a major obstacle. Subsidies and financial incentives could aid in resolving this issue.
- **The lack of a strong infrastructure for charging is a significant obstacle:** The creation of a vast and effective charging infrastructure is essential for the widespread use of electric trucks, particularly on long-distance drives.
- **Range Anxiety**: Issues with the restricted range of electric trucks must be addressed, particularly when it comes to long-distance driving. Technological developments in batteries are necessary to increase the range of electric trucks.
- **Battery Technology**: While progress is being made, more developments are required to improve energy density, shorten charging periods, and bring down the cost of batteries as a whole.

Conclusion

The major steps towards achieving a significant advancement in the electrification of trucks in India may include designating specific expressways and national highways as green freight corridors, introducing innovative financial tools, encouraging the development of charging infrastructure through incentives, supporting entrepreneurial initiatives, and creating a supportive regulatory environment in the country.

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Critically analyze the role and effectiveness of Environmental Impact Assessments in guiding infrastructure projects in ecologically sensitive areas like the Himalayas. How can EIAs be improved to better protect the environment?

Introduction: What is EIA?

Body: Highlight role of EIA In guiding infrastructure projects in Himalayan Region.

Conclusion: Way forward

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) serves as a tool for recognizing the environmental, social, and economic consequences of a project prior to decision-making. Its objective is to forecast environmental impacts during the initial phases of project planning and design, devise strategies to mitigate adverse effects, tailor projects to align with the local environment, and present both predictions and potential options to decision-makers. Recent, tunnel collapse incident in Uttarakhand has brought issue of EIA into focus in the Indian Himalayan Region (IHR).

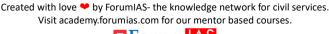**Role of EIA in guiding infrastructure projects in IHR**

- **Impact Identification:** In environmentally sensitive locations, environmental impact assessments (EIAs) are essential for determining the possible environmental effects of infrastructure developments. This entails evaluating the consequences for local residents, soil stability, biodiversity, and water resources.
- **Making Informed Decisions:** By balancing the project's socioeconomic advantages against its environmental effects, they give decision-makers important information to help them make well-informed decisions.
- **Public Participation:** Public consultations are a common part of environmental impact assessments (EIAs), whereby local populations are given a voice in the decision-making process and their concerns are duly considered.
- **Mitigation strategies:** To lessen or completely eradicate negative environmental effects, effective EIAs provide mitigation strategies. The implementation and monitoring of these procedures both during and after the project are critical to their effectiveness.

Improvements for Better Environmental Protection

- **Building Capacity**: Increase the ability of nearby communities to take an active role in the EIA procedure. This entails giving them the knowledge, instruction, and tools they need to participate successfully.
- **Adaptive Management:** Use an adaptive management strategy that enables flexibility in responding to unanticipated changes in the environment by allowing the project's management plan to be modified based on monitoring data.
- **Thorough Assessment:** Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) ought to be thorough, including all possible environmental consequences, including cumulative and indirect effects. In ecologically sensitive places, where even minor changes can have major effects, this is especially crucial.
- **Independent Review:** To guarantee impartial evaluations and increase trustworthiness, independent reviews of EIAs conducted by professionals unaffiliated with the project or the regulatory agency are recommended.

Conclusion

It is imperative to conduct a specialized Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) tailored specifically for the Indian Himalayan Region, taking into consideration its distinctive environmental, cultural, and geographical attributes. This customized approach is vital to guarantee that development in the region is not only sustainable but also prioritizes the preservation of its delicate ecosystems and the welfare of its diverse communities.

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Discuss the pros and cons of creating an All-India Judicial Service (AIJS) in the context of diversifying the judiciary and ensuring merit-based selection.

Introduction: What is AIJS?
Body: Highlight the pros and cons of AIJS
Conclusion: Way forward

Recently, the President emphasized the creation of All India All-India Judicial Service (AIJS) to diversify India's social fabric in the context of the judiciary. Article 312 of the Constitution, as amended by the 42nd Amendment, provides for the creation of an AIJS, and requires a resolution adopted by the Council of States with a two-thirds majority, and a parliamentary law.

Pros of creating AIJS

- **Merit-based Selection**: AIJS can provide a uniform, merit-based hiring procedure for entry-level court jobs throughout the nation. This would make it easier to nominate judges based more on their legal expertise and knowledge than on geographical or political factors.
- **Geographic Diversity**: By hiring judges from different states, AIJS may contribute to a more diverse judiciary by improving the representation of various communities and areas.
- **Gender and Social Diversity:** By enacting inclusive policies and supporting candidates from a variety of backgrounds, centralized recruiting may offer a chance to redress gender and social inequalities in the judiciary.
- **Recruiting Process Simplified**: Compared to the present decentralized approach, a centralized recruitment process may be quicker and more effective. To ensure that justice is delivered on time, it can shorten the time it takes to fill judicial vacancies.

Cons of creating AIJS

- **Lack of Local Knowledge**: Judges hired through AIJS may not be as knowledgeable about the regional dialects, customs, or state-specific legal issues, which could have an impact on the standard of justice provided.
- **Federalism Concerns**: State governments may oppose the recruitment process's centralization, claiming that it violates state autonomy and federalism principles.
- **Administrative Complexities**: Implementing and overseeing a national centralized hiring process may present administrative difficulties, such as coordinating with state governments, handling logistics, and requiring a strong infrastructure.
- **Possibility of Elitism:** Candidates from elite legal schools and large cities may benefit from centralized recruiting, which could limit chances for people from less fortunate homes and smaller communities.

Conclusion

A careful balance must be struck while establishing an All-India Judicial Service between the advantages of efficiency, diversity, and standardization and the possible disadvantages of bureaucratic obstacles, the risk of centralization, and an awareness of the local environment. To guarantee that judges are selected based on merit and that the independence and diversity of the judiciary are maintained, policymakers must carefully weigh these issues.

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Discuss the role of smaller states like the Maldives in the India-China geopolitical rivalry. How have these states used the rivalry to their advantage in internal politics?

Introduction: Briefly describe context of the question
Body: Role of smaller states in geopolitical rivalry and how they use it to their advantage?
Conclusion: Way forward

Smaller nations, such as the Maldives, are important players in the greater geopolitical struggle between China and India, though their position is complex. These two Asian superpowers are now engaged in a strategic rivalry centred around the Indian Ocean region, which includes the Maldives.
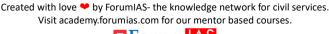
Role in Geopolitical Rivalry

- **Strategic Location**: Because of their location, smaller states—such as island republics like the Maldives—have greater strategic significance. Due to its strategic location along important sea lanes, the Maldives is attractive to China and India in terms of trade, energy security, and naval might. Through this region passes more than 97% of India's total international trade by volume and 75% by value.
- **Economic Dependency**: When it comes to investments, development initiatives, and financial assistance, these smaller governments frequently rely on China and India. Both countries provide economic help to these governments to gain influence, resulting in a complicated web of economic linkages.
- **Security Implications**: The dynamics of security between China and India have an impact on the Maldives and other smaller states. To make sure their security issues are taken care of without offending anyone, they strike a careful balance.
- **Indian Diaspora**: There is a sizeable population of people descended from India living in Maldives. There are numerous Indians employed in the Maldives' education and medical care systems, as well as in the tourism and hospitality sectors.

Utilizing Rivalry for Internal Politics

- **Bargaining Power**: Smaller governments use the China-India rivalry to their advantage in negotiations. By pitting one power against the other, they can get advantageous terms in business agreements, infrastructure development projects, and diplomatic ties.
- **Diversification of relationships:** Diversifying diplomatic and economic relationships is a common goal for smaller powers. Through active engagement with both China and India, they ensure a wider base of support for their national objectives and avoid being dependent on a single state.
- **Infrastructure Development:** Smaller states could leverage the competition to draw in infrastructure funding. By strategically allying with one or both of these countries, governments can gain from enhanced connectivity and economic development as India and China frequently fight to fund and construct important infrastructure projects.
- **Diplomatic Manipulation:** Smaller nations use diplomacy to pressure China and India into providing assistance and concessions. They can obtain resources, technology, and diplomatic support without fully committing to one side by deftly managing ties.

Conclusion

The Maldives' strategic location in the Indian Ocean makes it essential to India's interests. However, since China's growing dominance in the Indian Ocean region, the partnership has faced new difficulties. While taking into account the Maldives' sensitivities, India must vigorously promote its ties with the country.

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Analyze the multi-agency coordination and innovative strategies employed in the Silkyara tunnel rescue operation in Uttarakhand. Discuss how such approaches can be standardized for future disaster response scenarios in India.

Introduction: Briefly describe the rescue operation
Body: Strategies involved in operations and future response scenarios
Conclusion: Way forward

After 17 days of relentless effort, the successful rescue of 41 trapped laborers in an under-construction tunnel at Silkyara in Uttarkashi district on November 28, 2023, marks Operation Zindagi in Silkyara as the longest-ever rescue operation in the country for evacuating workers from a tunnel or mine.

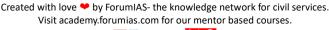**Coordination and innovative strategies employed in operations**

- **Unified Command System**: NDRF, SDRF, BRO, RVNL, SJVNL, ONGC, ITBP, NHAIDCL, THDC, Uttarakhand State Government, District Administration, Army, Air Force, workers played an important role in the rescue work in Mission Silkyara. This unified command system ensures that all involved organizations work together under a single, coordinated effort.
- **Technological Innovation**: The use of auger technology involved the use of rotating metal shafts with blades to scrape or cut debris and carving paths for rescuers. Drift technology was employed for the creation of horizontal passages or tunnels in a mountain, hill, or underground structure.
- **Rat hole mining technique**: Using the side-cutting technique, these "rat miners" excavate little tunnels on hill slopes that miners enter to access the coal seam. The last 15 meters of the collapsed tunnel at Silkyara were dug by hand to build the evacuation channel, which is when this technology came in handy.
- **Community Engagement**: Rescue operation included involving nearby communities in disaster preparedness and response activities. Communities can offer important information about the local terrain and conditions, and they frequently play a crucial role in early reaction.

How such approaches can be standardized for future operations

- **Clear Communication Protocols**: It's critical to put in place efficient communication protocols. To prevent misunderstandings, this entails creating uniform channels of communication, outlining roles and duties, and using consistent language.
- **Training & Exercises**: Coordinating efforts between several agencies might be improved with regular joint training exercises. These exercises aid in detecting deficiencies in reaction plans, communication channels, and resource distribution.
- **Technological Integration**: Using tools like GIS mapping, drone surveillance, and communication to share information in real time can greatly enhance situational awareness and decision-making.
- **Public-Private Partnerships**: Collaboration between government agencies and private organizations can enhance the overall capacity for disaster response. Private entities often possess unique resources and expertise that can complement government efforts.

Conclusion

It's crucial to take into account the region's particular difficulties and features, include relevant parties, and customize plans to the particulars of each disaster situation. Improving and standardizing disaster response activities requires constant learning, adaptability, and teamwork.

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Discuss the role of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code in empowering operational creditors, especially small and medium enterprises (SMEs), in recovering their dues. How can the IBC be made more effective for the benefit of SMEs?

Introduction: Define IBC briefly
Body: Highlight its role in empowering SMEs and how can it be made more effective
Conclusion: Way forward

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code was enacted in 2016, and it replaced all the existing laws with a uniform procedure to resolve insolvency and bankruptcy disputes. The code aims to address the issue of Non-performing Assets (NPAs) and debt defaults.

Role of IBC in empowering creditors, especially SMEs

- **Level Playing Field**: The IBC offers operational creditors, such as SMEs, a legal framework that guarantees a level playing field. It enables them to file for bankruptcy on behalf of noncompliant debtors.
- **Time-Bound Resolution**: To cut down on the time and resources needed by creditors to collect their debts, the IBC requires time-bound resolution procedures. This is especially helpful for SMEs, as they do not have the resources to fight protracted legal battles.
- **Professionals in Insolvency**: Hiring insolvency specialists guarantees a clear and methodical approach to the settlement procedure. For SMEs who might not have the necessary experience to handle complicated bankruptcy procedures, this can be helpful.
- **Maximization of Asset Value**: IBC aims to maximize the value of the debtor's assets, ensuring that creditors, including operational creditors, receive a fair share during the resolution process.

Improving IBC for the Benefit of SMEs:

- **Simplified Processes**: Introduce simplified and cost-effective processes specifically tailored to the needs and capacities of SMEs. This can include reducing procedural complexities and lowering associated costs.
- **Capacity Building**: Invest in capacity building for SMEs to enhance their understanding of the IBC processes. This can involve conducting awareness programs, workshops, and providing accessible information on insolvency procedures.
- **Fast-Track Mechanism**: Establish a fast-track mechanism within the IBC for smaller cases involving SMEs. This can expedite the resolution process, ensuring quicker recovery of dues.
- **Debt Recovery Tribunals (DRTs)**: Strengthen Debt Recovery Tribunals to handle smaller cases efficiently. This can provide a more accessible and specialized forum for SMEs to resolve their insolvency-related issues.

Conclusion

In conclusion, even while the IBC has greatly improved the standing of operational creditors, particularly SMEs, continued improvements and focused initiatives can increase its efficacy in addressing the unique difficulties encountered by smaller businesses.

Discuss the challenges in establishing the correctness of EVMs and the implications for election security. How can India balance technological advancements with electoral transparency?

Introduction: Describe EVM briefly
Body: Highlight challenges before EVM and measures to improve its effectiveness
Conclusion: Way forward

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Electronic voting machines, or EVMs, are used in state and general elections in India to allow voters to cast ballots without disclosing their identities. In India, it has taken the place of paper ballots in municipal, state, and national (parliamentary) elections. The Election Commission of India only purchases EVMs from these two central government undertakings, Bharat Electronics Limited and Electronics Corporation of India Limited.

Challenges in establishing the correctness of EVMs and the implications for election security

- **Absence of voter verifiability**: Electronic voting machines do not provide a paper trail that enables voters to independently confirm their ballots. Election results can be difficult to audit or validate without a paper trail, which casts doubt on the validity and integrity of the voting process.
- **Hacking susceptibility**: EVMs are vulnerable to manipulation and hacking. The legitimacy of the results is compromised if malevolent individuals can tamper with the voting machines, undermining the electoral process as a whole.
- **Limited Transparency**: EVM source code is frequently confidential and not available for public inspection. It is challenging for individuals and independent specialists to evaluate the security and dependability of EVMs due to a lack of transparency in their design and operation.
- **Inadequate Security Measures**: EVMs may be susceptible to cyber and physical attacks if they lack strong security measures. The voting process may be compromised by unauthorized access, physical manipulation, or cyberattacks, which could produce unreliable results.

Measures that can be considered to balance technological advancements with electoral transparency

- **Make VVPAT more reliable:** The appropriate VVPAT protocol entails enabling voters to review and approve the VVPAT slip before their vote is officially cast. Additionally, it should offer an option for voters to cancel their vote if they observe any discrepancies.
- **Open-Source Code Review**: Promote openness by allowing the general public to see the source code of EVMs. This makes it possible for impartial specialists to evaluate the technology's accuracy and security.
- **Risk-Limiting Audit (RLA):** These audits can be carried out for cross-checking the electronic tally with VVPAT counts. This proactive approach helps in maintaining the integrity of the voting process.
- **Public Awareness and Education**: Educate the public on EVM technology, security measures, and steps for a transparent electoral process to build crucial confidence in electronic voting systems.

Conclusion

The ECI is well known throughout the world for its flawless track record of holding large-scale, free, and fair elections. To make the election process in India error-free and foolproof, the ECI has spearheaded novel inventions such as voting IDs and EVMs. All political parties and citizens must be persuaded of the process's integrity and transparency.

Analyze the evolution of India's foreign policy towards the Israel-Palestine conflict. How has India's stance impacted its international relations, particularly with the countries in the Global South?

> **Introduction:** Brief context to the question
> **Body:** Explain evolution of India's foreign policy and how it has impacted its relations with Global South
> **Conclusion:** Way forward

India's foreign policy towards the Israel-Palestine conflict has evolved over the years, reflecting a nuanced approach. Traditionally, India maintained a pro-Palestinian stance during the Cold War era. However, in recent decades, there has been a noticeable shift towards a more balanced and pragmatic position.

Evolution of India's Foreign Policy

- **Historical Support for Palestine:** India emphasized sympathy with the Palestinian people's quest for self-determination and supported the Palestinian cause vigorously during the Cold War. India historically

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supported the Palestinian cause, opposing the partition of Palestine in 1947. It was the first non-Arab state to recognize the PLO and one of the earliest to acknowledge the State of Palestine in 1988.

- **Normalization of Relations**: India's relations with Israel started to improve in the 1990s, and in 1992, full diplomatic connections were established. Economic and geopolitical factors drove this change.
- **Balanced Approach:** Since then, India has retained a neutral position, encouraging robust military, economic, and scientific connections with Israel while concurrently endorsing the establishment of an autonomous and sovereign state for the Palestinian people.
- **Multifaceted Engagement:** India maintains a multifaceted relationship with both Israel and Palestine, focusing on defense cooperation, agriculture, technology, and counterterrorism. India has invested heavily in financial aid, sports, healthcare, education, and capacity building, as well as material and diplomatic support to Palestine.

Impact

- **Global South Relations:** India has been able to interact with nations all around the Global South thanks to its impartial stance. India stays neutral toward other countries that might have different opinions about the conflict by keeping relations with both Israel and Palestine.
- **Diversification of Partnerships:** India's ties with Arab and Islamic countries have not been hampered by its involvement with Israel. India's standing in international fora has been enhanced by its capacity to negotiate a variety of geopolitical environments.
- **Economic and Technological Gains:** India has benefited economically and technologically from closer ties with Israel. In sectors like agriculture, water management, and defense technologies, Israel is a crucial partner.
- **Collaboration in the fight against terrorism:** India and Israel are both subject to similar terrorist threats. India's standing in the international world has improved and bilateral relations have been strengthened via cooperation in counterterrorism operations.

Conclusion

India has adopted a pragmatist and impartial stance in its growing foreign policy regarding the Israel-Palestine conflict. India's diplomatic flexibility and good engagement with countries in the Global South have been facilitated by this approach, which has allowed India to retain diplomatic contacts with both parties. India's standing on the international scene has been strengthened by its capacity to handle challenging geopolitical situations.

Critically evaluate the arguments for a bigger versus smaller role of the state in inclusive development. Discuss the impact of the Indian state being 'people-thin' but 'process-thick' on policy implementation and the delivery of public services.

> **Introduction:** Give brief context to the question
> **Body:** Highlight arguments for and against the bigger role of the State and its impact on policy implementation.
> **Conclusion:** Way forward

The Indian state is often labelled as a paradox of too big and yet too small. This fact can be gauged from the excessive legal requirement or bureaucratic process to do business in India while on the other hand, the country has the smallest number of civil servants per capita among the G20 nations. On the economic front, the Indian state is relatively small on metrics, such as the tax-GDP ratio and public expenditure-GDP ratio. 'People-thin' suggests a shortage of personnel for efficient governance, while 'process-thick' implies a bureaucratic system with intricate procedures.

Arguments for a Bigger Role of the State

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- **Equitable Resource Distribution:** Advocates contend that a larger state is more capable of ensuring the equitable distribution of opportunities, money, and resources. As it contributes to closing the wealth gap, this is especially crucial for inclusive growth.
- **Social Welfare Programmes:** A larger state can establish and oversee extensive social welfare initiatives that tackle challenges such as homelessness, housing, healthcare, and education. These initiatives promote inclusive development by directly affecting vulnerable and marginalized populations.

Arguments for a Smaller Role of the State

- **Decreased Bureaucracy:** It is anticipated that a smaller state will have less bureaucracy, which will lead to quicker decision-making and more responsive governance. Faster policy implementation and a more flexible response to shifting needs may result from this.
- **Budgetary Responsibilities:** Those who favour a reduced state size stress the value of budgetary responsibilities. They contend that a leaner government is more suited to preserve economic stability, which is essential for inclusive growth over the long run and is less prone to accrue excessive debt.

Impact of the Indian State Being 'People-Thin' but 'Process-Thick'

- **Policy Implementation Challenges:** Limited personnel in a 'people-thin' state can cause delays and corruption, hindering inclusive development.
- **Barriers to Service Delivery:** A 'process-thick' state with complex procedures may discourage access to crucial services, affecting marginalized communities.
- **Corruption and Accountability Issues:** A large bureaucracy and intricate processes can foster corruption, compromising transparency and hindering inclusive development.
- **Inequality and Regional Disparities:** A 'people-thin' state may struggle to address diverse needs, leading to unequal development and impeding inclusivity.

Conclusion

To truly achieve inclusive development in India, it is imperative to tackle the "people-thin" and "process-thick" components of the state to overcome implementation barriers and guarantee that public services are provided to all sections of the populace.

Analyze the challenges faced by India in balancing its development priorities with its environmental commitments, especially in the context of its reliance on coal for energy needs. How does India's position on coal at the international level reflect its domestic economic and energy realities?

> **Introduction:** Give brief context to the question
> **Body:** What are the challenges in balancing development goals and environmental commitments?
> **Conclusion:** Way forward

Recently, on the sidelines of COP 28 In Dubai, India has reaffirmed its commitment to mitigating global warming while highlighting the fundamental tenets of its climate diplomacy: equity and justice. India has been unequivocal about the role of coal in the country's economy and will not buckle under international pressure at the cost of national development.

Challenges in Balancing Development Priorities and Environmental Commitments

- **Energy Demand vs. Environmental Sustainability**: India must balance its burgeoning energy needs to support economic growth with its obligations under international environmental agreements. It is difficult to strike a balance between the requirement for energy security and ecological practices.
- **Dependency on Coal:** India's energy demands are primarily met by coal, which presents a serious environmental risk because of carbon emissions, air pollution, and its role in climate change. This dependence makes achieving environmental goals more difficult.

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- **Renewable Energy Transition:** Infrastructure development and significant expenditures are needed to make the switch from coal to renewable energy sources. India must quickly change its energy mix without sacrificing its current rate of economic expansion.
- **Air Quality and Public Health**: The utilization of coal leads to air pollution, which has an impact on public health. An important problem facing India is striking a balance between economic progress and the health and well-being of its people.

India's Position on Coal at the International Level

- **Internal Economic Realities:** India's internal economic priorities are reflected in its international attitude on coal. Because of its accessibility and affordability, coal continues to be an essential part of India's energy mix, especially for the country's vast population with a variety of energy needs.
- **Poverty Alleviation and Energy Access**: India highlights its commitment to ensuring that all of its residents, particularly those living in distant locations, have access to energy. Because it is a reasonably priced energy source, coal is essential for reducing energy poverty and promoting economic growth.
- **Financial and technology Barriers:** India is investing in renewable energy, but the shift is being impeded by funding and technology issues. India needs international financing and technology transfer to speed its move away from coal.
- **Developmental Aspirations:** India emphasizes the need for economic growth to pull millions out of poverty when arguing in international forums for the idea of "common but differentiated responsibilities." This position asks for understanding from the international community on its continued use of coal while going through a transition.

Conclusion

India faces the difficult challenge of reconciling its environmental obligations with its socioeconomic goals, especially in light of its coal-dependent economy. The nation's foreign policy is a reflection of its realistic approach, which emphasizes the need to address domestic economic and energy realities while understanding the difficulties of switching to greener energy sources. To promote sustainable development and make a significant contribution to global environmental goals, India must strike a balance between these interests.

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