



**Mains Marathon**  
**Compilation**

**April, 2024**

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**Discuss the socio-economic consequences of water events in India on marginalized communities and suggest comprehensive policy measures to mitigate the crisis.**

**Introduction:** Give a brief introduction

**Body:** Highlight the socio-economic consequences of the water crisis and measures to deal with it.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The recent water crisis which is being witnessed in South India has a disproportionate impact on marginalized communities, exacerbating existing vulnerabilities. According to data from the Central Water Commission data, there is only enough water to fill 23% of the holding capacity in all of South India's reservoirs which shows the continuous worsening of the situation.

**Socio-Economic Consequences of Water Events on Marginalized Communities in India**

- **Loss of livelihood:** Communities on the margins frequently depend on daily wage labor, fishing, and agriculture—all industries that are negatively impacted by water-related disasters. Droughts reduce the amount of water available for farming and fishing, floods harm infrastructure and crops, and unpredictable monsoons cause schedule disruptions.
- **Health risks:** Floods contaminate water sources, which makes them susceptible to typhoid, cholera, and diarrhea. Standing water gives mosquitoes a place to nest, which leads to the spread of dengue and malaria. A lack of access to potable water exacerbates health problems.
- **Displacement and housing:** Floods inundate homes, displacing families and destroying their meager belongings. Droughts can force migration in search of water and livelihood opportunities. Rebuilding after these events is a huge financial burden.

**Comprehensive Policy Measures for Mitigation**

- **Early Warning Systems:** Communities can have valuable time to prepare for floods and droughts by investing in reliable weather forecasts and early warning systems. This includes using reachable channels to distribute information in regional languages.
- **Disaster preparedness:** Communities can drastically lower the number of fatalities and property damage by receiving training in evacuation exercises, first aid, and safe water storage techniques.
- **Infrastructure resistant to climate change:** Water occurrences can be mitigated by constructing embankments, flood shelters, and drought-resistant agricultural cultivars. During dry spells, a reliable supply of water can be guaranteed by making investments in water storage and rainwater collecting equipment.
- **Focus on equity:** Policymakers must ensure that all water management initiatives prioritize the needs of marginalized communities. This includes involving them in decision-making processes and ensuring equitable distribution of resources.

**Conclusion**

India can reduce the severe socioeconomic effects of water disasters and increase the resilience of underprivileged populations by putting these comprehensive policy initiatives into practice. A lasting solution must take a multifaceted strategy that covers social safety nets, infrastructure, financial inclusion, and readiness.

**How does the prioritization of technology over human-centric solutions affect the objectives of Social welfare schemes? Propose a balanced approach that harmonizes technological advancements with the scheme's core objectives of social security and inclusion.**

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Effect on objectives of welfare schemes through prioritization of technology

**Conclusion:** Way forward



The prioritization of technology over human-centric solutions in social welfare schemes can have several implications for the objectives of social welfare schemes like MGNREGS. Research shows that there are more than 26 crore workers registered with MGNREGS. Of them, as many as 5.2 crore workers were deleted from the database in 2022-23.

### Prioritizing Technology in Social Welfare

- **Loss of Human Connection:** Relying too much on technology may cause services to become less personalized and effective. This is because it may result in a loss of human connection.
- **Marginalized Group Exclusion:** Technology-driven solutions may unintentionally leave out marginalized groups that are unable to use or do not have access to them. This may exacerbate current disparities and defeat the objective of social inclusion.
- **Digital Divide:** Giving technology priority may make it worse, benefiting wealthy and urban populations disproportionately at the expense of marginalized and rural areas. The equal distribution of social welfare benefits is hampered by this.
- **Data security and privacy concerns:** To implement technology-driven solutions, personal data must frequently be collected and processed. This raises privacy and data security concerns, particularly for vulnerable populations that could be the target of exploitation or spying.

### Finding a Balanced Approach

- **Technology as a Tool:** Rather than taking the role of human connection and service delivery, technology should be seen as an enhancement to both. Give priority to multilingual support, offline access choices, and user-friendly interfaces.
- **Human Expertise at the Core:** For individualized care, handling complicated needs, and fostering beneficiary trust, social workers, case managers, and community outreach programs continue to be essential.
- **Technology for Accessibility:** By utilizing technology, accessibility can be increased. Make use of resources designed with those with impairments in mind, like screen readers, voice commands, and translated content.
- **Information with Security Measures:** Establish strict guidelines for data protection and make sure that data is collected and used transparently. Give beneficiaries the power to manage their data and give informed consent a top priority.

### Conclusion

We can use technology to close rather than expand the divide by taking a human-in-the-loop approach. In the end, technology should improve user experience and empower social workers, resulting in a social safety net that is more inclusive and effective.

## Examine the historical context of the Katchatheevu Island dispute and its impact on the fishermen's rights and bilateral relations between India and Sri Lanka.

**Introduction:** Brief contextual introduction

**Body:** Highlight the historical context of the island, its impact on fishermen, and bilateral relations.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

Katchatheevu, a small, uninhabited island in the Palk Strait between India and Sri Lanka, has been a source of contention for decades.

### Historical Context

- **Pre-colonial Period:** Fishing communities on both sides traditionally used the island and surrounding waters.

- **Colonial Era (1920s):** Dispute arose between British India and Ceylon (Sri Lanka) over ownership. India claimed it belonged to a local landlord, while Sri Lanka cited historical ties to the Jaffna region.
- **1974 Agreement:** A maritime boundary agreement between Prime Ministers Indira Gandhi (India) and Sirimavo Bandaranaike (Sri Lanka) recognized Katchatheevu as Sri Lankan territory. However, it allowed Indian fishermen fishing rights in the surrounding waters.

### Impact on fishermen's rights

- Indian fishermen claim traditional fishing rights in the waters surrounding Katchatheevu, which they have been using for generations. However, the agreement between India and Sri Lanka restricts their access to these waters.
- Sri Lankan authorities have occasionally arrested Indian fishermen who crossed into Sri Lankan waters, leading to tensions and sometimes diplomatic incidents between the two countries.
- The issue has impacted the livelihood of fishermen and has led to frequent tension between India and Sri Lanka over control of marine resources.

### Bilateral Relations

- **Strained Relations:** The Katchatheevu issue remains a sensitive topic, impacting relations between the two countries.
- **Tamil Nadu Politics:** The issue is particularly sensitive in India's Tamil Nadu state, home to many affected fishermen. Politicians often use it to gain political mileage.
- **Dialogue Attempts:** Despite tensions, both countries have engaged in dialogue to find solutions for fishermen's rights and ensure peaceful co-existence.

### Conclusion

Finally, the Katchatheevu Island dispute has endured as a longstanding issue between India and Sri Lanka, primarily revolving around fishing rights and sovereignty. Despite ongoing efforts to tackle the matter through bilateral agreements and dialogue, tensions persist, affecting the livelihoods of fishermen and occasionally straining the bilateral relationship. The quest for a sustainable resolution to the dispute continues to pose a significant challenge for both nations.

### Discuss the challenges in balancing the stringent provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002 with the principles of justice and fairness, considering its impact on personal liberty and the presumption of innocence.

**Introduction:** Give a brief description of the PMLA Act.

**Body:** Highlight the challenges in balancing stringent provisions of PMLA.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) is a criminal statute designed to thwart money laundering activities and facilitate the forfeiture of assets obtained through or associated with money laundering activities. It constitutes the central component of India's legal infrastructure established to counteract money laundering and its associated activities & was enacted in response to India's global commitment to combat the menace of money laundering.

### Challenges

- **Reversal of Burden of Proof:** PMLA places the burden of proof on the accused to explain the source of their wealth if it appears to be disproportionate to their known sources of income. This flips the traditional principle of innocent until proven guilty.
- **Detention without Trial:** PMLA allows authorities to detain suspects for extended periods without trial. This raises concerns about personal liberty and can be misused to pressure suspects.

- **Discretionary Powers:** The Act grants broad powers to enforcement agencies for search, seizure, and arrest. This can be necessary for investigations, but the lack of clear guidelines can lead to potential misuse and violation of individual rights.
- **Lack of Clear Standards:** The Act may lack clear definitions of certain offenses, particularly regarding "possession of unexplained wealth." This ambiguity can lead to arbitrary application of the law.
- **Inadequate Legal Aid:** Accused individuals, especially those with limited resources, may not have access to adequate legal representation to challenge PMLA charges. This can create an uneven playing field and hinder their ability to defend themselves.
- **Impact on Personal Liberty and Presumption of Innocence:** These challenges can lead to situations where individuals are deprived of their liberty for extended periods without a fair trial. This undermines the presumption of innocence, a cornerstone of a just legal system.

### Conclusion

The present judicial approach to the issue of bail in *Vijay Madanlal Choudhary vs Union of India (2022)* appears to be very technical in PMLA cases. The value of personal liberty, which is compromised when bail is denied, holds immense significance in our constitutional framework as acknowledged under Article 21. The authority of the judiciary to restrict it is a solemn responsibility, not to be exercised lightly but with a profound consideration for its implications on both the individual and the community.

### Discuss the importance of integrating climate change action plans into political campaigns in India.

**Introduction:** Give a brief context to the question.

**Body:** Highlight the importance of integrating climate change action plans into political campaigns.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The recent release of the State of the Global Climate report by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) of the United Nations has sparked concern. According to the report, 2023 has officially been identified as the hottest year on record in the history of the planet.

### Importance of integrating climate change action plans into political campaign

- **Raise awareness:** By incorporating climate change action plans into political campaigns, political leaders can raise awareness among voters about the gravity of the issue and the imperative for decisive action. This can help shift public discourse towards prioritizing climate action and foster a sense of urgency among policymakers and the public alike.
- **Global Commitments:** Integrating climate change into political campaigns provides an opportunity for political parties to demonstrate their commitment to sustainable development and global leadership.
- **Mitigate climate change:** India must demonstrate its commitment to cutting greenhouse gas emissions and moving toward renewable energy sources as countries work to reach the goals outlined in the Paris Agreement. Political parties can address climate change and its effects by outlining specific policies and actions in their platforms.
- **Accountability:** Furthermore, the election season in India presents a unique opportunity to elevate the discussion on climate change and hold political parties accountable for their stance on environmental issues.
- **Mainstreaming of environmental issues:** Voters anticipate that political leaders will give sustainable solutions a top priority in their policy agendas as their concerns about climate change grow. Political campaigns can interact with people on important environmental concerns and show their commitment to resolving them by incorporating climate change action plans.



## Conclusion

As India seeks to assert its rightful place on the global stage and emerge as a formidable world power in the "Amrit Kaal," the effectiveness of its leadership in addressing climate change will be under close observation. Across the political spectrum, parties are prioritizing initiatives aimed at advancing India's economic prosperity and improving the well-being of its populace. However, any comprehensive agenda for national progress would be inadequate without a concerted effort to tackle the central challenge of climate change through actionable plans.

## Reflect on the challenges and opportunities for India in maximizing its demographic dividend in the context of job creation and economic expansion.

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Highlight challenges and opportunities in the context of job creation and economic expansion

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The South Asian area, which includes India, is not fully reaping the benefits of its demographic dividend, according to the World Bank, since the rate of job creation in the region is not keeping up with the increase in the working-age population. Despite these worries, the **World Bank's "Jobs for Resilience"** South Asia regional update projects a strong growth rate of 6.0–6.1% for the region between 2024 and 2025.

## Challenges

- **Skills Mismatch:** India's workforce has a hard time matching up with what employers are looking for. The skills that businesses want and the talents that the workforce possesses are frequently out of sync, which results in underemployment or unemployment.
- **Dominance of the Informal Sector:** A sizable section of India's labor force is employed in the unorganized sector, which offers no social benefits, job security, or opportunities for skill development. This keeps up a vicious cycle of low production and irregular income.
- **Technological Disruption:** The swift progress of technology presents a hurdle since automation and artificial intelligence (AI) have the potential to supplant conventional jobs, especially in industries like manufacturing and services.
- **Rural-Urban Divide:** There exists a substantial rural-urban divide in terms of job opportunities and access to education and skill development. Rural areas often lack adequate infrastructure and industries, leading to migration to urban centers in search of employment.

## Opportunities

- **Labor-Intensive Industries:** By emphasizing labor-intensive industries like textiles, agro-processing, and electronics assembly, India has the potential to develop into a manufacturing hub. Millions of new employment may result from this, and the agriculture industry's excess workforce could be absorbed.
- **Growth of the Service Sector:** Opportunities for employment generation and economic expansion are presented by India's service sector, which includes business process outsourcing (BPO) and IT. India can enhance its market share in the global services sector by utilizing technology and relying on its proficient labor force.
- **Demographic Dividend:** India possesses a substantial demographic dividend due to its sizable and young population. Through investments in education, skill enhancement, and entrepreneurial initiatives, India can harness the potential of its youthful workforce to propel economic growth and foster innovation.
- **Entrepreneurship and Innovation:** Encouraging entrepreneurship and fostering innovation can spur job creation and economic growth. Initiatives such as Startup India and Make in India aim to support aspiring entrepreneurs and promote indigenous manufacturing, thereby creating employment opportunities.

## Conclusion

The demographic dividend in India is a fleeting window of opportunity. India can capitalize on its youthful population and achieve long-term economic growth by encouraging job creation, investing in education, and empowering all societal groups. To build a future where every young Indian has the opportunity to succeed, cooperation between the public and private sectors as well as educational institutions will be necessary.

**Critically examine the Supreme Court's guidelines on living wills in India. Discuss the challenges in implementing these guidelines and suggest measures to streamline the process for the benefit of terminally ill patients.**

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Analyse SC guidelines on living wills and challenges and measures for the benefit of patients.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

A living will is a document in written form that enables individuals to provide clear instructions in advance regarding the medical treatments they wish to receive if they become terminally ill or incapacitated and are unable to communicate their consent. In 2018, the Supreme Court of India recognized the right to die with dignity by allowing terminally ill patients to create living wills, also known as Advance Medical Directives (AMD).

### Supreme Court's Guidelines on Living Wills in India

- **Autonomy and Dignity:** The recommendations acknowledge that competent persons have the right, even in the latter stages of their lives, to make decisions regarding their medical treatment. This upholds the dignity of the patient and encourages their autonomy.
- **Transparency:** During difficult times, patients can avoid confusion by using the described approach to express their wishes to family members and healthcare professionals clearly and concisely.

### Challenges in implementing the guidelines

- **Strict Formalities:** According to the standards, a living will must be seen during execution and attested by a gazetted officer or notary public. This can be difficult, particularly for individuals who live far away or have restricted movement.
- **Doctor's Dilemma:** When respecting living wills, physicians may have moral and legal dilemmas because they worry about being sued or accused of carelessness.
- **Family Discord:** Families may disagree, with some members not agreeing with the patient's wishes. Counseling and open communication can assist in reducing this.
- **Awareness:** Public awareness about living wills remains low. Many patients and healthcare professionals are unfamiliar with the process, leading to underutilization.

### Measures to Streamline the Process

- **Public education campaigns:** Disseminating information through media, healthcare facilities, and community outreach can raise awareness about living wills.
- **Simplified Forms:** The process of drafting a living will can be made easier by standardizing and simplifying the forms.
- **Physician Education:** Providing physicians with information regarding living wills and their legal ramifications can promote greater comprehension and application.
- **Online Register System:** By creating a national online register, accessibility and record-keeping for living wills can be enhanced.

- **Ethical Committees:** Hospitals can set up ethical committees to handle issues resulting from living wills and make sure that choices are made fairly and intelligently.

### Conclusion

The Supreme Court's guidelines on living wills are a significant step towards ensuring patient autonomy and dignified death. However, addressing the challenges and implementing the suggested measures can make the process more accessible and beneficial for terminally ill patients in India. By promoting awareness, simplifying procedures, and fostering better communication, the right to die with dignity can be truly realized.

### Evaluate the impact of rural-urban migration patterns on urban poverty, as highlighted by the India Employment Report 2024. Suggest strategies for providing gainful employment and improving the economic conditions of the urban poor.

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Highlight the impact of rural-urban migration patterns on urban poverty and strategies to improve the economic conditions of the poor.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The India Employment Report 2024 by the Institute for Human Development and the International Labour Organization sheds light on the complex relationship between rural-urban migration and urban poverty.

#### Impact of rural-urban migration patterns on Urban Poverty

- **Increased Demand on Resources:** A surge in migrants can strain city infrastructure like housing, sanitation, and healthcare. This can lead to overcrowding, slums, and inadequate services, pushing migrants towards poverty.
- **Informal Sector Growth:** Migrants often find themselves in the informal sector due to a lack of skills or recognition of rural qualifications. This sector offers low wages and limited job security, perpetuating poverty.
- **Strain on Social Safety Nets:** Social safety nets designed for urban residents might not adequately cover new migrants, leaving them more vulnerable.

#### Strategies to Address Urban Poverty

- **Enhancing Skill Development and Recognition:** Initiatives aimed at addressing the specific skill needs of migrants and acknowledging qualifications obtained in rural areas can enhance their employability and facilitate access to formal employment opportunities.
- **Improving Urban Infrastructure:** Investments directed towards developing affordable housing, sanitation facilities, and healthcare infrastructure in urban areas can significantly enhance living standards for migrants and contribute to poverty reduction.
- **Facilitating Livelihood Opportunities:** Implementing programs that encourage micro-entrepreneurship and self-employment among migrants can empower them to establish sustainable sources of income and economic independence.
- **Expanding Social Safety Nets:** Extending social security benefits, such as healthcare coverage and unemployment insurance, to migrants can offer crucial support during periods of hardship and uncertainty.
- **Promoting Migrant Integration in Urban Planning:** Urban planning strategies that prioritize the integration of migrants into urban communities, including ensuring access to essential public services and education, can foster inclusivity and minimize social marginalization.

### Conclusion

India can establish a more welcoming urban environment where migrants can obtain respectable employment and enhance their financial circumstances by putting these tactics into practice and taking into account the insights from IER 2024.

**Discuss the role and efficacy of the Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) in enhancing electoral transparency in India. Also, Critically evaluate the demands for a 100% recount of VVPAT slips.**

**Introduction:** Define the VVPAT system

**Body:** Highlight the role and efficacy of VVPAT & demand for a 100% recount of VVPAT Slips

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) is a standalone system linked to an Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) that enables voters to confirm that their votes are recorded accurately. Upon casting a vote, the VVPAT prints a slip displaying the serial number, name, and symbol of the chosen candidate. This information remains visible to the voter through a transparent window for seven seconds

**Role and efficacy of VVPAT**

- **Voter Verification:** By showing a paper slip containing the information of the selected candidate, the VVPAT enables voters to confirm that their votes are accurately recorded. Voters are empowered by this verification process because it fosters trust in the electronic voting system.
- **Auditing and Accountability:** Post-election audits and investigations are made possible, if needed, by the paper trail produced by VVPAT. With the implementation of VVPAT, one can confirm the veracity of the electronic vote count in the event of disagreements or accusations of electoral fraud.
- **Deterrence against Manipulation:** The presence of a paper trail prevents electronic voting machines (EVMs) from being tampered with or manipulated. Any attempt to tamper with the voting process is discouraged by the knowledge that every vote is physically recorded.
- **Public Trust:** VVPAT helps to increase public trust in the electoral system. Voters' confidence in the fairness and transparency of elections is bolstered when they can physically verify their ballots, which ultimately strengthens the democratic system.

**Demand for 100% recount of VVPAT slips**

- **Practicality and Feasibility:** It might be difficult and time-consuming to conduct a 100% recount of VVPAT slips for every constituency. It can cause a considerable delay in the election results and add to the workload for the election officials.
- **Cost considerations:** Labor, materials, and time would be expensive for a thorough recount of VVPAT slips. These resources might be applied to other crucial electoral processes.
- **Risk of Disruption:** Calls for a 100% recount run the risk of upsetting voters and jeopardizing the integrity of the democratic process. Long-term uncertainty and possible public upheaval could result from it.
- **Belief in Current Mechanisms:** The current post-election verification procedures and random VVPAT audits are intended to protect the electoral process's integrity. Requiring a perfect recount could be a sign of mistrust for these established processes.

**Conclusion**

It is important to assess the viability, practicality, and possible effects on the electoral process of the demand for a 100% recount of VVPAT slips. Maintaining the integrity of the democratic process requires finding a compromise between efficiency and transparency.



**Critically analyze the provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, focusing on its approach towards fatal accidents, organized petty crime, and theft.**

**Introduction:** Give a brief context to the question

**Body:** Analyse provisions of BNS related to accidents, petty crime & theft.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) of 2023 passed in Parliament is set to replace the Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1860 & designed to introduce significant changes to India's criminal justice system.

### Fatal accidents

- **Punishment:** BNS 2023, provides for a maximum of 10 years of imprisonment in the case of a fatal accident if the accused person escapes without reporting to the police or a magistrate. The proposal was put on hold after a strike from truck drivers.
- **Disproportionate punishment:** An increase in the sentence from five to 10 years of imprisonment for just fleeing the scene without reporting to the police or a magistrate soon after the accident seems disproportionate. The only benefit seems that vehicle details are known.
- **Violation of Fundamental Right:** The clause related to fatal accidents Section 106(2) seems to conflict with the fundamental right of prohibition against self-incrimination enshrined under Article 20(3) of the Constitution of India.

### Petty Organised Crime

- **Introduction of Petty Organized Crime:** The BNS introduces a new offense, "petty organized crime," covering theft, cheating, and other similar acts. However, vague language in the law, such as "any other similar criminal acts," lacks clarity on what constitutes an offense, raising interpretational concerns.
- **Ambiguity in Definitions:** Certain offenses lack specific definitions within the BNS, adding to the ambiguity. The inclusion of terms like "unauthorized selling of tickets" without clear parameters further complicates the legal framework, potentially leading to inconsistent application.
- **Legal Challenges:** The absence of maximum sentence limits for offenses labeled as "petty organized crime" raises questions of proportionality and legality. Without clear guidelines, comparisons with existing offenses may highlight discrepancies, potentially inviting legal challenges to the provision's constitutionality and adherence to legal principles.

### Theft

- **Legal and Practical Challenges:** The provision in Section 303 of the BNS, categorizing theft of property under ₹5,000 as non-cognizable, poses issues both legally and practically. While it eases police workload, it leaves financially vulnerable individuals without recourse for justice.
- **Impact on Vulnerable Individuals:** The ₹5,000 threshold may not affect the affluent but significantly impacts those with limited resources, like students or daily wage earners, who cannot afford legal action for stolen property below this value.
- **Legal Ambiguity and Solutions:** The interaction between non-cognizable offenses and potential imprisonment for theft under ₹5,000 creates legal complexities. Addressing this may require redefining theft and considering alternate punishments. Making theft of any value cognizable could ensure police surveillance and access to justice for all victims.

### Conclusion

Any legal framework should uphold principles of justice and fairness and balance the need for security with respect for individual rights and freedoms.



**Evaluate the potential of green hydrogen in transforming India's energy landscape. Discuss the technological, economic, and environmental challenges that need to be addressed to leverage green hydrogen for India's sustainable development.**

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Highlight the benefits and challenges associated with green hydrogen.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

Green hydrogen is hydrogen generated through the process of electrolysis, which involves splitting water into hydrogen and oxygen using an electrolyzer powered by renewable energy sources. This method is widely regarded as an emission-free means of hydrogen production, as it relies on green energy, utilizes water as its input, and produces no carbon emissions when consumed.

### Potential Benefits

- **Decarbonization:** Green hydrogen presents a clean substitute for fossil fuels across critical sectors such as industry, transportation, and power generation. This shift holds the potential to substantially diminish carbon emissions and align with India's objectives for clean energy.
- **Energy Security:** Embracing green hydrogen diminishes dependence on imported fossil fuels, thereby bolstering India's energy security and self-reliance.
- **Economic Growth:** The National Green Hydrogen Mission endeavors to position India as a leading global center for green hydrogen production and export, fostering the emergence of new industries and employment opportunities.
- **Versatility:** Green Hydrogen can be transformed into electricity or synthetic gas and used for commercial, industrial, or mobility purposes.

### Challenges

- **Technology:** Electrolyzers, the apparatus responsible for splitting water into hydrogen using electricity, are still in the developmental stage and come at a high cost. Extensive research and development efforts are imperative to drive down expenses and enhance efficiency.
- **Cost Competitiveness:** Presently, green hydrogen remains more expensive than conventional alternatives. To render it economically viable, governmental incentives combined with technological breakthroughs are imperative.
- **Renewable Energy Integration:** Enabling large-scale green hydrogen production necessitates a significant expansion of India's solar and wind energy capacities. This expansion is fundamental to meeting the energy demands of the process.
- **Storage and Transportation:** It is essential to pioneer efficient and economical techniques for storing and transporting hydrogen to facilitate its widespread adoption.

### Conclusion

The latest efforts by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) to unveil projects worth Rs 496 crore to assess the viability of green hydrogen as a vehicle fuel or to develop necessary infrastructure such as refueling stations is a step in the right direction. Leading Indian commercial vehicle manufacturers are significantly increasing their efforts to develop hydrogen-powered trucks and buses. They are focusing on ramping up research and development and expanding manufacturing capacities to meet this goal.

**Examine the significance of elephant corridors in maintaining ecological balance. Analyze the challenges in reconnecting elephant corridors in India and suggest measures for their effective conservation amidst developmental pressures.**

**Introduction:** What are elephant corridors

**Body:** Describe the significance, challenges, and measures associated with elephant corridors.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

Elephant corridors are essential for preserving ecological balance because they allow elephants to migrate freely between fragmented habitats, guarantee gene flow, and support the preservation of biodiversity.

### Significance of Elephant Corridors

- **Biodiversity Conservation:** By allowing the mobility of other wildlife species in addition to elephants, elephant corridors contribute to genetic diversity and biodiversity conservation.
- **Ecosystem Functioning:** Through their migration patterns and eating habits, elephants shape their environments, acting as ecosystem engineers. By providing them with access to necessary materials, corridors support the resilience and smooth operation of ecosystems.
- **Mitigation of Human-Wildlife Conflict:** Safe passageways for elephants away from populated areas lower the likelihood of conflicts between humans and elephants.

### Challenges

- **Habitat Fragmentation:** Development projects, agriculture, and infrastructure expansion have severely disrupted historical corridors.
- **Encroachment:** Human settlements and activities often block or narrow corridors, hindering elephant movement.
- **Lack of Awareness:** Communities may not understand the importance of corridors and their role in human-elephant coexistence.

### Measures

- **Identification and Protection:** Carry out in-depth scientific research to pinpoint important elephant corridors, and give top priority to safeguarding them by legal designation and implementation.
- **Community Involvement:** Promote local communities' stewardship of elephant routes and habitats by involving them in conservation initiatives through participatory ways.
- **Land Use Planning:** To guarantee that infrastructure developments and human settlements avoid vital elephant habitats, incorporate wildlife corridors into land use planning and development regulations.
- **Mitigation measures:** Put mitigating measures in place alongside highways, such as underpasses, overpasses, and fencing, to allow elephants to move safely and lessen conflicts between people and wildlife.
- **Education and Awareness:** Run educational initiatives and awareness campaigns to increase public understanding of the value of elephant corridors and to win support for their preservation.
- **Economic Incentives:** Providing alternative livelihoods that reduce dependence on encroaching on elephant corridors can incentivize conservation.
- **Inter-State Cooperation:** Collaborate with neighbouring states to ensure the protection and connectivity of transboundary elephant habitats and migration routes.

### Conclusion

By giving precedence to establishing and safeguarding operational corridors, India can realize sustainable development while preserving the majestic presence of these vital species. Balancing infrastructure needs with sound ecological planning is vital for ensuring a future where humans and elephants can thrive together.

**Discuss the importance of health equity in the context of global health and justice, citing the example of India's diverse socioeconomic landscape. Analyze how health equity can be achieved beyond social justice and legislative changes.**

**Introduction:** What is health equity?

**Body:** Highlight the importance of health equity and how it can be achieved.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

Health equity, ensuring everyone has the opportunity for good health regardless of background, is fundamental to global health and justice. India, with its vast socioeconomic tapestry, exemplifies the urgency of achieving this goal.

### Importance of Health Equity

- **Justice and Fairness:** Regardless of social status, everyone has a right to a healthy life. Disadvantaged populations are denied opportunities and basic rights due to health disparities, which results in a two-tiered system exacerbating inequalities in society.
- **Economic Prosperity:** Healthy populations are more productive, contributing to economic growth and development. Healthcare system resources that could be allocated to other areas are depleted by disease burdens.
- **Social Stability:** Social unrest and dissatisfaction can arise from unfulfilled health demands. A more stable and peaceful society is facilitated by health equity.
- **Multitude factors:** The socioeconomic landscape of India is characterized by glaring disparities, with a sizable segment of the populace living in poverty and without access to essential medical care. Factors like gender inequality, caste-based discrimination, and regional development gaps exacerbate this problem even further.

### Multifaceted Approach Beyond Social Justice and Legislation

- **Health Literacy:** Increasing health literacy is necessary to achieve health fairness. By integrating health education into the National Health Mission, India can empower its citizens to seek equitable care and make informed health decisions, thereby transforming health equality into a shared, community-driven goal.
- **Cooperation from NGO:** To raise awareness of and address local health issues, non-governmental organizations and civic societies actively engage in community outreach. They can customize health efforts that are responsive to the specific cultural demands of the community by working with international and governmental organizations.
- **Community Engagement:** Empowering communities to identify their needs and participate in healthcare delivery can lead to more culturally sensitive and accessible models.
- **Technological Innovation:** Telemedicine and mobile health solutions can bridge geographical gaps and provide healthcare services in remote areas.

### Conclusion

India's health equity issues require a comprehensive approach that goes beyond improvements in healthcare facilities and involves active participation of international institutions, research institutes, academic institutions & grassroots organizations to ensure that health remains a fundamental right enjoyed by all citizens irrespective of socio-economic gaps.

**Discuss the sociocultural factors contributing to the higher incidence of suicide among young girls and women in India. What measures can be taken to address these deeply ingrained issues?**

**Introduction:** Definition of suicide and data related to it.

**Body:** What are sociocultural factors contributing to suicide and what measures to address them?

**Conclusion:** Way forward

Suicide, the deliberate act of ending one's own life, is a concerning issue globally. India holds the unfortunate record of having the highest number of suicides worldwide. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), in 2022 alone, 1.71 lakh individuals died by suicide. Alarming, 41% of these cases involved individuals under the age of 30. Particularly distressing is the fact that suicide stands as the primary cause of mortality among young women in India.

### Sociocultural Factors and Suicides in Young Indian Women

- **Substance Abuse:** Alcohol and substance abuse are recognized as significant risk factors contributing to youth suicides. Over the past two decades, there has been a noticeable rise in internet usage among young individuals.
- **Gender Discrimination:** The societal inclination towards sons results in the neglect of girls' well-being, education, and opportunities, fostering feelings of worthlessness and despair.
- **Restricted Autonomy:** Many young women face limitations on their autonomy, with decisions regarding education or the pressure of competitive exams, careers, and marriage often dictated by their families. This lack of control can lead to feelings of powerlessness and frustration.
- **Domestic Violence:** Instances of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse are widespread, causing significant trauma and mental health issues that heighten the risk of suicide.
- **Stigma Surrounding Mental Health:** Mental health challenges are frequently stigmatized, seen as a sign of weakness, or bringing disgrace to the family. This stigma deters young women from seeking support for conditions like depression and anxiety.

### Measures to address the issue

- **Skill Development for Youth:** Young individuals can benefit greatly from programs aimed at instilling problem-solving, impulse control, and emotional regulation skills, ultimately fostering resilience and coping mechanisms.
- **Promotion of Healthy Lifestyle:** Embracing a healthy lifestyle, including maintaining a nutritious diet, engaging in consistent physical activity, practicing balanced internet usage, fostering supportive social connections, and participating in activities like yoga and meditation, enhances mental well-being and diminishes the likelihood of suicide among young individuals.
- **Improving Family Environment:** Enhancing the family setting through the mitigation of domestic violence and alcohol abuse, coupled with offering financial support to those in need, has demonstrated effectiveness in lowering instances of suicidal behavior.
- **Educational Reforms:** Educating families and communities on topics such as gender equality, fostering healthy relationships, and understanding mental health is paramount. This initiative aids in dismantling detrimental stereotypes and promoting open dialogue.
- **Mental Health Services:** Increasing access to mental health professionals, especially female counselors, and creating a supportive environment where young women feel comfortable seeking help is critical.

### Conclusion

The Ministry of Health formed a task force to develop India's National Suicide Prevention Strategy. Launched to reduce suicides by 10% by 2030, it stresses collaboration among ministries and focuses on leveraging educational institutions and youth organizations. Immediate steps include nationwide dissemination and budget allocations for implementation at all levels.



**Compare and contrast the AI regulatory approaches of the European Union, China, and the United Kingdom with that of India. What lessons can India learn from these countries?**

**Introduction:** Brief introduction to AI

**Body:** Analyse the regulatory approach of different nations

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The Artificial Intelligence (AI) space has seen certain developments crucial to its regulation in recent years, the recent being the United Nations's Resolution on Artificial Intelligence which is a global acknowledgment of the risks associated with AI systems and the urgent need to promote responsible use of AI. The new resolution highlights the impact of AI on the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) & its adverse impact on the workforce.

**Regulatory Approach of Different Nations**

- **European Union:** The EU's AI Act categorizes AI systems based on risk and prohibits applications that threaten citizens' rights. Exceptions are allowed for law enforcement with prior authorization. The Act addresses compliance burdens on businesses and regulates emerging technologies like Generative AI systems such as ChatGPT, underscoring the need for policymakers to keep pace with evolving AI.
- **China:** China's approach to AI regulation prioritizes promoting innovation while mitigating potential risks to national social and economic objectives. The country has introduced a phased regulatory framework addressing content moderation, personal data protection, and algorithmic governance. This framework emphasizes identifying content generated by AI systems, obtaining user consent for data access and processing, and ensuring security and ethical considerations in algorithm development and operation.
- **United Kingdom:** In contrast to the EU's approach, the UK has embraced a principled and context-based strategy for regulating AI systems. This approach involves mandatory consultations with regulatory bodies to enhance technical expertise and address regulatory gaps. The UK favors a decentralized and softer legal approach, prioritizing flexibility over stringent rules in AI regulation.

**Lessons India can learn from these nations**

- Although draft laws like the Personal Data Protection Bill and the National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence have been produced, India has not yet put comprehensive rules about AI into effect.
- With broader talks on AI ethics and governance, India's current regulatory measures center on cybersecurity, data protection, and privacy.
- India's strategy combines government actions, developing legislative frameworks, and industry self-regulation.
- India may benefit from learning how important it is to match AI rules with larger national interests, how to promote innovation while upholding moral standards, and how to use expert advisory groups to help shape policy.

**Conclusion**

India's response to the global trend of AI regulation holds significant importance, given its status as one of the largest consumer markets and labor forces for technology firms. With plans for over 10,000 deep tech startups by 2030, India allocated ₹10,300 crore for the AI mission to enhance public-private partnerships and support startups.



## Analyze the significance of integrating disruptive technologies with traditional military platforms for enhancing the operational capabilities of the Indian Army.

**Introduction:** Give a brief introduction to disruptive technologies

**Body:** Significance of integrating such technologies with traditional military platforms

**Conclusion:** Way forward

In 2024, the Indian Army is dedicating the year to "***Technology Absorption***," highlighting its commitment to adopting technology to stay ahead of adversaries amidst changing warfare dynamics. This initiative aligns with the concept of self-reliance (Atmanirbharta), emphasizing both the means and goals of modernization. Under this initiative, ***the focus will primarily be on absorbing disruptive technologies (DT), including artificial intelligence, autonomous weapon systems like drones, sensors, robotics, space technology, and hypersonic weapon systems.***

### Significance of integrating disruptive technologies with traditional military platforms

- **Enhanced Situational Awareness:** By integrating big data analytics, machine learning, artificial intelligence (AI), and other technologies into military platforms, commanders and ground personnel can benefit from real-time data analysis and predictive capabilities that improve situational awareness. This makes it possible to make better decisions in complex and dynamic combat situations.
- **Enhanced Precision and Effectiveness:** More accurate targeting of enemy assets, a decrease in collateral damage, and an improvement in operational effectiveness are made possible by the integration of disruptive technologies like unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), drones, and precision-guided munitions with conventional platforms.
- **Force Multiplier Effect:** The Indian Army may efficiently quadruple the force's capabilities without greatly boosting personnel numbers by utilizing technology like robotics, autonomous systems, and advanced sensors to supplement its current manpower and resources.
- **Decreased Risk to Personnel:** By using remotely operated vehicles and autonomous systems for operations like logistics, surveillance, and reconnaissance, the risk to human personnel in high-threat areas can be reduced, improving operational safety and lowering casualties.
- **Logistical Efficiency:** By streamlining logistical processes and guaranteeing the prompt delivery of supplies and equipment to frontline units, the integration of technologies such as blockchain for supply chain management and predictive maintenance systems can improve overall operational efficiency.
- **Adaptation to Future Threats:** By embracing disruptive technology, the Indian Army can keep ahead of threats that are always changing, including adversarial asymmetric warfare tactics, electronic warfare, and cyberwarfare.

### Conclusion

Technology absorption will encompass organizational restructuring, human resource management, and the cultivation of specialists at all levels. It will also involve civil-military fusion, ensuring data integrity, and establishing procurement policies for Disruptive Technologies.

**In light of the Supreme Court's recent ruling, do you believe that legal recognition of environmental rights is an effective tool for combating climate change? Justify your answer with examples.**

**Introduction:** Give a brief contextual introduction

**Body:** Effectiveness of legal recognition of environmental rights as a tool to combat climate change

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The Indian Supreme Court made a significant contribution to the cause of sustainable development and a healthy environment when it recognized the right to be free from the negative consequences of climate change as a distinct basic right.

### Potential Effectiveness

- **Public Participation and Awareness:** Legal recognition of environmental rights can promote public participation in environmental protection decision-making processes as well as increase public awareness of environmental challenges.
- **International Precedent and Pressure:** The legalization of environmental rights has the power to influence other nations to enact comparable laws by creating precedents on a global scale.
- **Empowering People and Communities:** Lawsuits against polluters or governments that don't do enough to stop pollution can be filed under the protection of legal rights. This can provide people the capacity to fight for a healthy environment, especially in communities that are disproportionately affected by climate change. For eg, the Bishnoi Community of Rajasthan is known for its environmental commitment, in opposing the "widespread" removal of trees for the construction of solar power facilities in Rajasthan.
- **Preventative Measures:** The application of preventative measures may also result from environmental rights. Governments and corporations may be more likely to implement environmentally friendly practices and policies to avoid lawsuits if they are aware that their activities may be legally challenged. This could entail investing in renewable energy sources, protecting natural habitats, and enforcing stronger pollution rules.
- **Shifting Legal Focus:** Framing environmental protection as a fundamental right places the burden on governments to demonstrate they are upholding this right. This can lead to a more proactive approach to climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies.
- **Access to Justice:** By giving citizens the legal authority to protest actions that endanger the environment, environmental rights can be recognized in legislation. This can entail holding companies responsible for pollution or contesting government decisions to approve projects that harm the environment.

### Conclusion

Legal recognition of environmental rights empowers individuals, strengthens regulations, and shifts the legal focus toward environmental protection. However, effective enforcement and navigating potential conflicts are key to its long-term success.

**Discuss the reasons behind the re-implementation of the ALMM list for solar PV modules and cells and its potential effects on India's solar power capacity and international trade relations.**

**Introduction:** Define the ALMM list.

**Body:** Highlight the reasons behind the implementation of the list and its effect on India's solar power capacity and trade relations.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), in its recent order, has released notification of an 'Approved List of Models and Manufacturers of Solar Photovoltaic [PV] Modules', also called the ALMM list. **This list consists of manufacturers who "are eligible for use in Government Projects/Government assisted projects/ projects under Government schemes & programs including projects set up for sale of electricity to the Central and State Governments.**

**Reasons behind the implementation of the ALMM list**

- **Boosting Domestic Manufacturing:** India is overwhelmingly import-dependent to meet its demand for solar cells and modules — with China and Vietnam being the country's major suppliers. ALMM aims to promote domestic manufacturing by ensuring that only approved domestic modules are used in certain projects. This can create jobs and reduce dependence on imports.
- **Quality Control:** A quality control check for solar modules used in government projects can be performed by the ALMM. It attempts to guarantee long-term durability and project efficiency by establishing minimum performance benchmarks.
- **Consumer Protection:** Through the maintenance of a list of authorized models and manufacturers, the government shields consumers and investors from inferior or counterfeit goods, guaranteeing the expected level of performance and longevity. This cultivates trust in the solar energy sector, fostering increased investment.

**Potential Effects on India's Solar Power Capacity and International Trade Relations**

- **Impact on Solar Power Capacity:** The Government has launched a PLI scheme in the Union Budget to scale domestic manufacturing of the entire solar supply chain — from polysilicon to solar modules. The ALMM might encourage domestic production of solar PV modules and cells by giving qualified domestic manufacturers preference. This might result in higher domestic production capacity and the creation of jobs related to solar energy.
- **International Trade Relations:** Countries that have sold solar modules to India in the past may view the strict application of ALMM as a trade block. This could strain international trade relations and lead to retaliatory measures from affected countries, particularly China & Vietnam. Changes in India's procurement policies and standards for solar PV modules and cells could influence global supply chain dynamics in the solar energy industry.

**Conclusion**

India's desire to increase solar power is primarily due to the government's ambitious objective of 500 GW of installed capacity from non-fossil sources by 2030. According to **the IEA, India will grow its electricity demand at the quickest rate among large nations through 2026.** This is a result of both robust economic growth and rising demand for goods designed to avert catastrophic weather.

**Evaluate the environmental and socio-economic impacts of rapid infrastructure development in ecologically sensitive areas like Ladakh. Discuss the balance between development and ecological conservation in the context of national security and strategic importance.**

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Highlight the environmental and socio-economic impact of infrastructure in Ladakh and how to maintain the balance between development and conservation.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

Recent fast of Ramon Magsaysay award winner and climate activist Sonam Wangchuk has addressed the concerns surrounding the region particularly Ladakh which faces the damaging effects of climate change through floods, drought, landslides, greenhouse gases, and other pollutants.

### Environmental Impacts

- **Fragile Ecosystems:** Ladakh's cold desert and high-altitude ecosystems are highly vulnerable. Rapid construction disrupts delicate habitats, leading to soil erosion, loss of biodiversity, and potential desertification.
- **Water Scarcity:** Infrastructure projects can disrupt natural water flow and increase demand. This can strain scarce water resources, impacting both human populations and wildlife.
- **Climate Change:** Construction activities contribute to greenhouse gas emissions, further exacerbating the challenges Ladakh faces due to climate change, like glacial retreat and increased flooding.

### Socio-economic Impacts

- **Booming Tourism:** By attracting tourists, infrastructure improvements can bring in money and create jobs. Uncontrolled tourism, however, has the potential to deplete resources, pollute the environment, and ruin traditional ways of life.
- **Livelihood Disruption:** Construction projects have the potential to uproot local communities and cause havoc with long-standing lifestyles that rely on the environment.
- **Unequal Benefits:** Development may bring about an unequal distribution of benefits, which could exacerbate the wealth divide.

### Balance between Development and Ecological Conservation in the context of national security and strategic importance

- **Sustainable Practices:** Green infrastructure solutions, the use of renewable energy sources, and the reduction of waste creation are examples of sustainable practices that should be followed in infrastructure projects.
- **Community Involvement:** To guarantee that their issues are taken seriously and that the advantages are shared fairly, local communities must be actively involved in the decision-making process.
- **Biodiversity conservation:** Through initiatives like wildlife corridors, conservation easements, and habitat restoration, efforts should be made to preserve and restore biodiversity.
- **Strategic Infrastructure:** Infrastructure development in regions like Ladakh can enhance national security by improving connectivity to remote areas, facilitating military access, and bolstering border management.

### Conclusion

Achieving sustainable development in Ladakh means seizing opportunities while addressing challenges. Prioritizing sustainability, involving communities, and strategic planning are key. This balance is essential for preserving the region's ecology, and culture, and ensuring long-term social stability and national security.



**Discuss the strategic importance of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands in the context of India's national security and its stance in the Indo-Pacific region. How have historical events shaped India's policy towards these islands?**

**Introduction:** Describe briefly about Andaman & Nicobar Islands

**Body:** Highlight the strategic importance of islands and historical events that shaped India's policy

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands (ANI) hold significant strategic value as they are situated along one of the busiest sea lanes globally. This allows India to keep an eye on the movement of people and goods across the Strait of Malacca, which is crucial for trade and oil shipments throughout the Indo-Pacific region, from the South China Sea (Pacific Ocean) to the Andaman Sea (Indian Ocean).

### Strategic Importance

- **Military Significance:** The islands allow the Indian military to quickly deploy forces and conduct surveillance throughout the Indian Ocean region by acting as a forward operating base.
- **Natural Resources:** The islands are rich in natural resources, such as stocks of gas and oil, which support India's energy security.
- **Marine Domain Awareness:** Because of its location, India can monitor marine traffic, improve maritime domain awareness, and combat illegal activities like smuggling and piracy.
- **Regional Connectivity:** The islands are essential to India's "Act East" policy, which aims to improve connectivity and fortify relations with countries in Southeast Asia.

### India's Indo-Pacific Stance

- **Countering China:** The islands act as a counterbalance to China's growing influence in the region. Their development strengthens India's position in the strategic competition.
- **Security Cooperation:** The ANI can be a hub for regional cooperation on maritime security issues like piracy and disaster relief, fostering stronger ties with Southeast Asian nations.

### Historical Context

- **Colonial Legacy:** The Andaman and Nicobar Islands were under British colonial rule until India gained independence in 1947. During World War II, the islands witnessed significant military activity and served as a crucial outpost against Japanese advances.
- **Strategic Significance during the Cold War:** The islands gained further strategic importance during the Cold War, with India establishing military installations to counter perceived threats from hostile powers in the region.
- **Tsunami Disaster:** The devastating Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004 highlighted the vulnerability of the islands and underscored the need for enhanced disaster preparedness and infrastructure development.

### Conclusion

A key component of India's Indo-Pacific strategy and national security is the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. India has the potential to guarantee a stable and safe marine environment in the Indo-Pacific by capitalizing on their strategic location and promoting regional collaboration.



**Critically examine the differences between wildlife 'capture' and 'rescue' in India. Discuss the implications of these practices on conservation efforts and animal welfare.**

**Introduction:** Give a brief introduction.

**Body:** Highlight the differences between "capture" and "rescue".

**Conclusion:** Way forward

It can be difficult to distinguish between "wildlife capture" and "rescue" in India, but doing so is necessary for efficient conservation and the welfare of the animals. The goal of both capture and rescue operations is to resolve conflicts between humans and wildlife, but they differ greatly in their approaches, goals, and results, which has a big impact on both human populations and wildlife populations.

**Capture vs. Rescue: What's the Difference?**

- **Animal Welfare:** Depending on the methods used, wildlife capture can potentially cause stress, injury, or even death to the captured animals. It is crucial to ensure that capture techniques are humane and minimize harm to the individuals involved. The primary focus of wildlife rescue is to alleviate suffering and promote the well-being of individual animals. This involves providing medical care, proper nutrition, and a suitable environment for recovery and rehabilitation.
- **Purpose:** Wildlife capture typically involves capturing animals for various purposes such as scientific research, relocation, rehabilitation, or captivity (zoos, wildlife sanctuaries, etc.). Wildlife rescue primarily aims to save individual animals in distress or danger, such as those injured, orphaned, trapped, or affected by human activities (e.g., poaching, habitat destruction).

**Implications of these practices on conservation efforts**

- **Conservation Impact:** The indiscriminate capture of wildlife can undermine conservation efforts by disrupting ecosystems and exacerbating conflicts. In contrast, targeted rescue operations that prioritize non-lethal solutions and habitat restoration contribute to sustainable conservation practices.
- **Animal Welfare:** Proper handling and care are essential in both capture and rescue operations to minimize stress and injury to animals. Wildlife rescue efforts should prioritize the well-being of individual animals, ensuring their safe return to their natural habitats whenever possible.
- **Unfamiliarity:** It can be harmful to release captured animals into new territory, especially if they have been transported a great distance. Their inability to obtain food, water, and shelter may make them more susceptible to starvation or predators.
- **Stress and Trauma:** Even for healthy animals, the act of being captured can be upsetting and harmful. Eg, for leopards, elephants & snakes.

**Conclusion**

The resolution of human-wildlife conflicts in India requires proactive, ethical measures prioritizing the welfare of animals and people. Promising approaches, such as early warning systems and public education, are being tested by the Karnataka Forest Department, but more resources and research are needed for effective implementation.

**Analyze the foundational learning outcomes for adolescents as highlighted in the ASER 2023 report. Discuss the implications for educational policies in India, focusing on rural districts.**

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Highlight key outcomes of the report and its implications

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The ASER 2023 report sheds light on a critical concern in Indian education: significant gaps in foundational learning skills among adolescents (14-18 years old) in rural areas.

## Key Outcomes

- **Foundational Learning Trajectories:** The ASER 2023 report reveals that 26% of 14-18-year-olds in rural districts cannot read a standard two-level text in their regional language. It emphasizes that the lack of foundational skills in primary grades significantly impacts learning outcomes in later grades, making it difficult for adolescents to catch up without focused interventions.
- **Education Enrollment and Attendance:** A significant proportion of adolescents lacking basic reading skills are either enrolled in standard 10 or below (57%) or are not enrolled in any educational institution (28%).
- **Career Aspirations:** The ASER 2023 report provides insights into the career aspirations of 14-18-year-olds, with a majority expressing a desire to obtain at least a college education. However, many adolescents lack exposure to diverse career options and do not have access to mentorship or guidance in pursuing their aspirations.

## Implications for Educational Policies in India Particularly Rural Districts

- **Focus on Foundational Skills:** The curriculum needs a stronger emphasis on mastering foundational reading and mathematics in early grades.
- **Improved Teacher Training:** Teachers, especially in rural areas, require better training on effective methods for teaching foundational skills.
- **Technology Use:** The increasing access of youth to smartphones presents an opportunity to leverage digital technology for educational purposes. The policies must focus on highlighting the need to align technology use with their motivations and aspirations.
- **Perceptions of Vocational Education:** Vocational education is perceived differently across districts. On-the-job training, certification, and information on career prospects are crucial in shaping positive perceptions of vocational education.
- **Reading Habits and Resources:** The availability of reading materials and books in rural households is limited, hindering the development of reading habits among adolescents. Community libraries are identified as potential solutions, but their effectiveness depends on proper management and promotion to encourage reading among children and youth.
- **Early Identification and Intervention:** Early identification of students with learning difficulties is crucial. Implementing robust screening mechanisms and providing remedial support can prevent these gaps from widening.

## Conclusion

The findings of ASER 2023 demand that basic education in rural India be strengthened through a multifaceted strategy. Prioritizing these abilities, enhancing teacher preparation, and tackling issues unique to rural areas can enable educational policies to provide adolescents with the means to thrive and make significant contributions to society.

**Discuss the strategic implications of India's increased engagement in the Arctic region in light of global geopolitical shifts. Analyze how India's Arctic policy could balance its interests with environmental concerns and international cooperation.**

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Strategic implications of India's engagement in the Arctic and how to balance its interests.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

India's increased engagement in the Arctic region reflects its growing recognition of the strategic significance of the area amid shifting global geopolitics.

## Strategic Implications

- **Reduce Cost:** New Delhi is aware of the potential benefits of utilizing Arctic Sea routes, particularly the Northern Sea Route, for Indian trade. This could lead to cost savings for shipping companies by reducing time, fuel, and security expenses associated with transporting goods.
- **Geopolitical Positioning:** As the Arctic garners increased global attention, competition among major powers such as the US, Russia, and China intensifies. India's presence in the region enables it to participate in shaping governance and development policies, ensuring its voice is heard amidst this competition.
- **Scientific Research:** Himadri, India's research station in the International Arctic Research Base at Svalbard in Norway serves multiple purposes. It enhances India's scientific capabilities, contributes to global knowledge about climate change and its impacts, and provides valuable insights into the region's environmental dynamics.

### Balancing Interests

- **Environmental Concerns:** India's Arctic policy needs to strike a balance between environmental and economic goals. The loss of ice in the Arctic presents serious ecological problems, making the region extremely vulnerable to climate change. To reduce its ecological imprint in the area, India should place a high priority on environmental conservation and sustainable development methods. This could entail funding conservation initiatives, encouraging ethical resource extraction methods, and investing in sustainable energy technologies.
- **International collaboration:** India's strategy is to cooperate with Arctic nations on green energy and sustainable industries to enhance its responsible stakeholder image. Collaborations with Denmark and Finland focus on waste management, pollution control, renewable energy, and green technology. Partnering with Norway could offer significant benefits, facilitating greater involvement in Arctic Council working groups tackling issues like the blue economy and responsible resource development. Despite interest in Arctic resource exploitation, India must support sustainable extraction practices unequivocally.

### Conclusion

A partnership with Norway is expected to emphasize scientific research and climate/environmental protection, aligning with two pillars of India's Arctic Policy. Economic opportunities in the Arctic remain of interest to India, and collaboration with Norway could aid in crafting a sustainable policy balancing scientific endeavors and industry needs.

### Analyze the potential conflicts between personal data protection and the public interest in the context of journalism. What balance should be struck to protect individual privacy while ensuring transparency and accountability in governance?

**Introduction:** What is the DPDP Act?

**Body:** Highlight potential conflicts that could arise in journalism and how to strike a balance.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

India introduced its inaugural comprehensive data protection legislation, the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act of 2023 which relies on user consent for personal data processing. The law grants fundamental rights like data access and deletion, imposes duties on corporations, and institutes a complaints mechanism for dispute resolution. Nonetheless, the legislation could potentially exert a subtle influence on journalistic freedom of expression.

### Potential Conflicts

- **Journalists Depend on Personal Information:** Research frequently entails gathering and utilizing people's personal information, sometimes without their permission. This might include phone calls and bank records. Eg, It would be difficult for journalists to use data about MPs to publish the story as they will have to get MP's consent.

- **Privacy Concerns:** Unrestricted data collecting can result in threats, harassment, and harm to one's reputation. People are entitled to be in charge of their data. DPDP Act empowers the government to call for information from any data processor in India, this may impact the confidentiality that journalists must maintain for their sources and research documents
- **Chilling Effect:** Investigative journalism may be challenging due to stringent data privacy rules. Because of the possibility of legal consequences, journalists may be reluctant to pursue stories.

### Finding Balance

- **Public Interest Test:** Data protection laws should include provisions for a "public interest" test, enabling journalists to utilize personal data when their reporting uncovers misconduct or serves the public good.
- **Robust Ethical Codes:** Journalistic organizations ought to have unambiguous ethical standards for gathering and using data. This guarantees ethical behaviour and safeguards the sources.
- **Informed Consent:** Whenever possible, journalists should seek the informed consent of individuals before publishing personal information about them. This allows individuals to understand how their data will be used and to express any objections.
- **Relevance and Proportionality:** Personal information should only be gathered and shared by journalists when it is directly related to the narrative and well-balanced in terms of importance. Sensationalism and needless prying into people's personal lives should be avoided.

### Conclusion

In the end, careful evaluation of ethical, legal, and professional norms is necessary to strike a balance between the protection of personal data and the public interest. Journalists are essential to maintaining accountability and openness in government, but they have a responsibility to do so responsibly, upholding people's right to privacy while carrying out their public informational mandate.

### Examine the challenges faced by consumers with disabilities in accessing goods and services in India. What legal and policy measures are necessary to address these challenges effectively?

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction

**Body:** Highlight the challenges faced by consumers and legal, and policy measures to address them.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

Consumers with disabilities in India often face significant challenges in accessing goods and services, primarily due to physical, infrastructural, and attitudinal barriers.

### Challenges Faced by Consumers with Disabilities in India

- Physical barriers such as the absence of ramps, elevators, and accessible restrooms in buildings, stores, and public transportation systems hinder the independent movement and navigation of individuals with disabilities.
- Attitudinal barriers stemming from a lack of awareness and misconceptions about disabilities can result in discriminatory treatment by businesses. Insufficient training of staff members in interacting sensitively with customers with disabilities exacerbates this issue.
- Inaccessible information, including websites, product packaging, and signage, poses challenges for individuals with visual or cognitive impairments in understanding product details, navigating online platforms, and making informed decisions.
- Although the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (RPWD Act) mandates accessibility standards, the lack of robust enforcement mechanisms often leads to businesses neglecting to implement necessary accessibility features.

### Legal and policy measures to address these challenges



- **Accessible Information and Communication:** Ensuring that information about goods and services is available in accessible formats such as Braille, large print, and accessible digital formats, and providing sign language interpretation and other communication support services where needed. For eg, the recent FSSAI policy to all food business operators to incorporate QR codes containing product information on all food products.
- **Safeguard rights of the disabled:** The primary legislation **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (RPWDA), 2016**, is crucial in this regard. The violation of rights particularly about accessibility and equality can be resolved through complaint with the Disability Commissions established under the Act.
- **Strong enforcement and compliance mechanisms:** The **Consumer Protection Act (CPA), 2019** empowers consumers and provides for setting up Consumer Commissions to impose penalties and award compensation against consumer complaints.
- **Awareness campaign:** There is an urgent need to raise awareness about the existing rights and resources available to consumers with disabilities particularly for programs like **Jago Grahak Jago Campaign & World Consumer Rights Day on March 15.**

## Conclusion

It's crucial to establish a partnership between businesses and the government, underpinned by a strong legal framework, to ensure the effective protection of the rights of consumers with disabilities. This collaboration is essential to provide them with equal opportunities to engage in the marketplace and society.

## Assess the strategic significance of allowing Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) to invest in Sovereign Green Bonds (SGrBs) in terms of advancing India's green economy objectives.

**Introduction:** What are Sovereign Green Bonds?

**Body:** Highlight the significance of these bonds in advancing India's green economy objectives.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

SGrBs are a kind of government debt that specifically funds projects attempting to accelerate India's transition to a low-carbon economy. Recently, RBI greenlighted investments in the country's Sovereign Green Bonds (SGrBs) by Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) — investors such as insurance companies, pension funds, and nation-states' sovereign wealth funds.

### Strategic Significance of FIIs in India's Sovereign Green Bonds (SGrBs)

- **Reduce Carbon footprint:** Enabling Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) to invest in India's green projects expands the capital base available to support the country's ambitious 2070 net zero goals, aiming to achieve 50% of India's energy from non-fossil fuel sources and reduce the carbon intensity of the nation's economy by 45%, as committed by India at COP26 in Glasgow 2021.
- **Global Recognition:** Participation of FIIs in SGrBs raises India's profile as a leader in the green bond market. This can attract further investments from environmentally conscious investors, showcasing India's commitment to a sustainable future.
- **Benchmarking & Standards:** Engaging internationally can promote the adoption of best practices in green bond issuance, with Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) potentially requiring compliance with global environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards. This could result in a stronger green bond framework in India.
- **Increasing Green Investments:** FII participation in SGrBs can spur increased green investment in several areas, such as waste management, sustainable agriculture, clean transportation, and renewable energy. This capital inflow has the potential to quicken India's economic transformation to one that is robust and sustainable.

- **Technology Transfer and Expertise:** FIIs frequently provide knowledge and experience in sustainable investments and green financing. By taking part in SGrBs, FIIs may promote best practices, knowledge sharing, and technology transfer, all of which can improve the efficacy and efficiency of green projects in India.
- **Market Deepening and Liquidity:** FII participation can increase the overall size and liquidity of the Indian green bond market. This can attract other domestic and international investors, creating a more vibrant market for green financing.

### Conclusion

The recently released India's first SGrB Framework detailing the kind of projects that would receive funding through this class of G-Secs & government's decision to issue SGrBs to accelerate funding government projects such as harnessing offshore wind, grid-scale solar power production, or encouraging the transition to battery operated Electric Vehicles (EVs) are a step in the right direction.

### Analyze the role of Centre-State relations in the effective implementation of national health projects like the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY).

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Highlight the role of the Centre-State in the effective implementation of PMSSY

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY) was introduced in 2003 by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. It aimed to address regional disparities in the accessibility of affordable and dependable tertiary healthcare services while also enhancing infrastructure for high-quality medical education nationwide.

### Role of Centre-State relations in the effective implementation of PMSSY

- **Policy Formulation and Planning:** The central government spearheads the formulation of policies and planning for national health projects like PMSSY. However, successful implementation necessitates collaboration and input from state governments to ensure alignment with local healthcare needs and priorities. Centre-State coordination plays a crucial role in the initial stages of designing projects that address regional disparities and caters to diverse healthcare requirements across states.
- **Resource Allocation and Funding:** While the central government provides substantial funding for national health projects, including PMSSY, state governments also contribute through budget allocations. Centre-State cooperation is essential to ensure the equitable distribution of resources and optimal utilization of funds. Clear communication and mutual agreement on resource allocation help prevent disparities in healthcare infrastructure and services between states.
- **Infrastructure Development:** PMSSY aims to bolster healthcare infrastructure by establishing new medical colleges, upgrading existing institutions, and enhancing tertiary care facilities. Collaboration between the Centre and states is vital in identifying suitable locations for new institutions, acquiring land, and coordinating construction activities. Effective Centre-State relations facilitate the timely completion of infrastructure projects, ensuring that healthcare services reach underserved areas.
- **Human Resource Management:** Training and deploying healthcare professionals are pivotal to the success of PMSSY and other national health initiatives. While the central government oversees policy frameworks and guidelines for human resource management, state governments are responsible for the recruitment, training, and deployment of healthcare personnel. Collaboration between the Centre and states is crucial to address staffing shortages, improve workforce skills, and ensure adequate staffing levels at healthcare facilities.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Regular monitoring and evaluation are indispensable to assess the impact and effectiveness of PMSSY in improving healthcare delivery. Centre-State cooperation is necessary for data collection, reporting, and performance evaluation. Collaborative efforts help identify challenges, address bottlenecks, and make necessary adjustments to project implementation strategies.

### Conclusion

The effectiveness of PMSSY hinges on a robust collaboration between the Centre and States. Clear communication, delineated responsibilities, and a focus on sustainable outcomes are pivotal for realizing the project's goal of enhancing nationwide access to high-quality healthcare.

### Critically assess the implementation of heat action plans in India, with a focus on their limitations and the inconsistencies in vulnerability assessments across different regions. Suggest measures for more effective planning and execution.

**Introduction:** Define heatwave.

**Body:** Highlight challenges in the implementation of HAPs and measures to improve them.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

As per the IMD, a heatwave is declared if temperatures hit 40°C or higher in the plains, 37°C or higher on the coast, and 30°C or higher in the hills. With heatwaves becoming more frequent and severe, governments at all levels have developed heat action plans (HAPs) to prepare for and mitigate their impact.

### Limitations and Inconsistencies in Implementation

- **Vulnerable Population:** While all HAPs prioritize safeguarding vulnerable populations like low-income communities, children, and the elderly, there's a lack of tailored interventions considering local social and demographic factors. Over 90% of India's economy is informal, evident in occupations like pushcart vendors, chaiwalas, household help, and sanitation workers.
- **Limited Finance:** Successful implementation of HAP is further constrained due to priorities based on the preferences of local authorities and the resources at their disposal. HAPs are often underfunded, hindering public awareness campaigns, the establishment of cooling centers, and infrastructure upgrades.
- **Lack of Local Context:** Most plans rely on national heatwave thresholds, neglecting regional variations in vulnerability. Dry heat isn't the only concern - plans often miss threats from humid heat and warm nights.
- **Flawed Vulnerability Assessments:** Many HAPs poorly identify vulnerable populations like outdoor workers, the elderly, and those in informal settlements. This leads to inadequate targeted interventions.

### Measures for more effective planning and execution

- **Localized Definitions:** Develop localized definitions of heatwaves, accounting for factors such as urban heat islands, humidity levels, and community vulnerability. This ensures that thresholds are tailored to the specific climate and demographic characteristics of each region.
- **Standardized Assessments:** Implement standardized climate risk assessments and hotspot mapping techniques across all HAPs. This enables consistent identification of high-risk areas and populations, facilitating targeted interventions and resource allocation.
- **Targeted Interventions:** Design targeted interventions that address the unique needs of vulnerable populations, including low-income communities, children, and the elderly. Consideration should be given to the socio-economic factors that influence vulnerability, such as access to cooling shelters and healthcare services.

- **Budget Allocation:** Allocate dedicated funding for HAPs at the state and local levels to ensure sustained implementation and effective response during heat waves. Additionally, establish mechanisms for financial support to informal workers, enabling them to seek refuge indoors without risking loss of income.
- **Integration with Resilience Plans:** Integrate HAPs into broader urban resilience plans to leverage existing resources and infrastructure. This promotes synergy between climate adaptation efforts and heatwave preparedness, enhancing overall community resilience to extreme weather events.
- **Nature-based Solutions:** Prioritize the integration of nature-based solutions, such as green and blue spaces, into HAPs. These solutions help mitigate heat stress by providing cooling effects and improving air quality, thereby enhancing the resilience of urban areas to heat waves.

### Conclusion

Addressing these challenges and implementing the proposed measures will bolster India's Heat Action Plans, enhancing their efficacy in safeguarding lives and public health during episodes of extreme heat.

### Examine how India's demographic dividend can be a pivotal factor in its economic transformation. Discuss the challenges posed by the current employment landscape for the youth.

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Importance of demographic dividend and challenges posed by current employment landscape.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

India possesses a distinctive demographic advantage: a significant and youthful working-age population. Termed the demographic dividend, this phenomenon offers a golden opportunity for the nation's economic metamorphosis.

#### India's Demographic Dividend: A Potential Engine for Economic Growth

- **Large Workforce:** Young people make up a sizable share of India's enormous workforce. Economic growth can be stimulated by this demographic profile through increased labour supply, productivity, and innovation.
- **Growth in spending:** Due to the huge number of young people, there is an increase in spending, particularly in the retail, technology, and entertainment industries. As a result, there is a demand for goods and services, which boosts the economy and promotes industry expansion.
- **Innovation and Entrepreneurship:** Higher levels of innovation and entrepreneurship are frequently associated with younger generations. With the right education and skills, India's youth can lead innovation and start new companies, which will increase economic diversity and make the country competitive internationally.
- **Global Workforce:** Given the increasing need for Indian specialists in fields like information technology, the country's youthful population can likewise act as a global workforce. This can generate foreign exchange profits and support growth in the economy.

#### Challenges in Employment Landscape

- **Mismatch in Skills:** Academic credentials frequently don't match industry demands. Due to a lack of specialized skills, many graduates experience underemployment and unemployment.
- **Informal Sector:** With poor pay and little job security, the informal sector employs a sizable section of India's labour force. This restricts the population bulge's capacity for total economic growth.
- **Limited Job Creation:** To accommodate the expanding youth population, the Indian economy must generate a sufficient number of jobs. Failing to do so can impede economic growth and cause social instability.



- **Gender Parity:** A notable underutilization of human resources is the low rate of female labour force participation. Lack of infrastructure and cultural norms can deter women from entering the workforce.

### Conclusion

The demographic dividend in India is a potent instrument for changing the country's economy. But to fully take advantage of this chance, the public and private sectors must work together to close skill gaps, encourage workforce formalization, and establish an atmosphere that attracts investment and creates jobs.

### Evaluate the effectiveness of India's counter-insurgency strategies against Maoist rebels. Discuss the role of military tactics and welfare measures in mitigating the influence of Maoist ideology among tribal populations.

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Role of military tactics, welfare measures, and mitigating factors to curb Maoist influence.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

India has faced a longstanding challenge with Maoist insurgency, particularly in regions with significant tribal populations like Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Odisha. The government employs a multi-pronged approach with varying degrees of effectiveness.

#### Military Tactics

- To counter Maoist militants, India has used a range of military strategies, including massive paramilitary operations such as Operation Green Hunt and tactical deployments of central armed police units such as the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). The objectives of these operations have been to cut off the Maoist leadership's supplies, seize government authority over the impacted regions, and neutralize their leadership.
- Military operations against Maoist rebels have had some success in eliminating key leaders and disrupting their networks. However, they've drawn criticism for collateral damage, human rights abuses, and alienating locals, potentially driving them closer to the Maoists if they see government forces as oppressors.

#### Welfare Measures

- Initiatives such as "**SAMADHAN**" focus on enhancing infrastructure, healthcare, and education in regions impacted by Maoist insurgency, aiming to alleviate the feelings of marginalization that contribute to the conflict.
- Offering incentives for Maoist fighters to lay down arms can weaken their ranks and disrupt their operations.
- Corruption and bureaucratic hurdles can hinder the reach and effectiveness of welfare programs.

#### Mitigating the influencing of Maoist ideology

- **Efficient Welfare Measures:** The Maoist narrative of state indifference can be challenged by well-executed initiatives that enhance the lives of indigenous tribes.
- **Emphasis on Education:** Education can fight the Maoist philosophy and empower tribal youth. Additionally, it can give them the tools they need to locate greater possibilities outside of the insurgency.
- **Taking Care of Land Issues:** One of the main grievances that Maoists exploit is historical land dispossession. Regaining support and trust can be aided by addressing land rights.

### Conclusion

India's counter-insurgency strategy requires a delicate balance between security measures and social development. While military tactics are necessary to contain the violence, long-term success hinges on addressing the root causes of the insurgency, efforts of civil society and peace activists to initiate ceasefire talks between the Maoists and the security forces, and offering a better alternative to the Maoist ideology.

**Evaluate the potential impacts of the 'Aadharshila' curriculum on the holistic development of children in the early childhood phase in anganwadis. Discuss the curriculum's alignment with the National Education Policy 2020 and its potential to address foundational literacy and numeracy gaps.**

**Introduction:** Describe the newly named "Aadharshila" curriculum.

**Body:** Impact of curriculum on development of children and its alignment with NEP.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) has unveiled the National Curriculum for Early Childhood Care and Education 2024, named 'Aadharshila', following the guidelines of the National Education Policy 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework. Aadharshila, which translates to 'foundation stone', is a comprehensive curriculum spanning 48 weeks, designed for children aged three to six years attending anganwadis.

### Impacts on Holistic Development

- **Play-based Learning:** Aadharshila underscores the significance of learning through play, which is pivotal for fostering cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development during early childhood.
- **Holistic Approach:** By incorporating physical activities, artistic expression, and socio-emotional learning, Aadharshila has the potential to cultivate individuals with well-rounded development.
- **Foundational Development:** The curriculum aims to introduce children to fundamental language, numeracy, and life skills, laying a robust groundwork for future learning endeavors.

### Alignment with NEP 2020

- **Emphasis on Play:** Aadharshila's adoption of a play-based approach is in accordance with NEP 2020's stress on learning through hands-on activities and exploration.
- **Mother Tongue Instruction:** NEP 2020 advocates for instruction in the mother tongue. Aadharshila can be customized to integrate local languages, enhancing comprehension and engagement among learners.
- **Teacher Training:** Successful execution necessitates adequately trained anganwadi workers. NEP 2020 underscores the importance of teacher training, which is instrumental for the effective implementation of Aadharshila.

### Addressing Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Gaps

- **Early Exposure:** Aadharshila's emphasis on language and numeracy within a playful context can serve to narrow foundational literacy and numeracy gaps by acquainting children with these concepts prior to formal schooling.
- **Engaging Learning Activities:** Through activities such as counting games and rhymes, Aadharshila fosters enjoyable and interactive learning experiences, enhancing retention and alleviating anxieties associated with foundational literacy and numeracy.
- **Enhanced Parental Engagement:** The curriculum can promote increased parental involvement in their children's learning at home, thereby reinforcing foundational literacy and numeracy skills.

### Conclusion

For the first time, the Union government has introduced such curriculum recommended for children aged three to six, boosting pre-school education in India's 14 lakh anganwadis. These anganwadis, will serve as vital centers in villages, catering to the health and nutrition requirements of pregnant mothers and children.

**Discuss the strategic significance of increasing government expenditure on research and development to at least 4% of GDP, as envisaged by the scientific community. Analyze the potential impacts of such an increase on India's innovation ecosystem.**

**Introduction:** Context introduction

**Body:** Highlight significance of increasing government expenditure and impact of such increase.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The scientific community's call for increasing government expenditure on Research and Development (R&D) to 4% of GDP holds significant strategic importance for India.

### Strategic Significance

- **Economic Growth:** Elevated R&D expenditure often triggers technological breakthroughs, propelling innovation and economic expansion. These advancements can spawn new industries, enhance existing ones, and elevate overall productivity.
- **National Security:** Robust R&D capabilities are indispensable for crafting cutting-edge defense technologies, safeguarding national security amidst evolving global complexities.
- **Global Competitiveness:** Heightened investment can bolster India's competitiveness vis-à-vis nations with substantial R&D allocations. This is particularly critical in domains like artificial intelligence, renewable energy, and biotechnology.
- **Public Health:** R&D plays a pivotal role in developing novel pharmaceuticals, medical devices, and healthcare solutions, thereby ameliorating public health outcomes.
- **Social Development:** R&D investments hold the key to pioneering innovations in sectors such as agriculture, water management, and sanitation, crucial for addressing pressing societal challenges.

### Potential Impacts on India's Innovation Ecosystem

- **Increased Innovation:** Augmented R&D funding can catalyze innovation by financing research endeavors, attracting skilled talent, and fostering a conducive environment for startups and entrepreneurs.
- **Enhanced Research Infrastructure:** Expanded funds can be earmarked for modernizing research facilities, laboratories, and academic institutions, cultivating a world-class research infrastructure.
- **Improved Collaboration:** Heightened funding can facilitate collaborations among universities, research institutions, and private enterprises, expediting the pace of innovation.
- **Development of Skilled Workforce:** R&D investments can usher in new employment prospects for scientists, engineers, and other skilled professionals, fortifying the talent pool within the innovation ecosystem.
- **Global Recognition:** Elevated R&D outputs can bolster India's standing as a premier global innovation center, enticing foreign investments and fostering international partnerships.

### Conclusion

Increasing government R&D investment to 4% of GDP could be a game-changer for India, driving economic growth, technological leadership, and social advancement. However, careful planning, efficient allocation, and focus on translational research are crucial for maximizing impact.

**Evaluate the social and environmental impacts of large-scale solar parks in India. Discuss with reference to specific examples from Bhadla in Rajasthan and Pavagada in Karnataka.**

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Highlight social and environmental impacts of large-scale solar parks in India.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

Large-scale solar parks in India are a powerful tool in the fight against climate change, offering clean energy and reducing dependence on fossil fuels. However, their social and environmental impacts require careful consideration.

### Social Impacts

- **Employment Creation:** Both during the building and operation phases, large-scale solar installations generate job possibilities. Employment benefits local communities, even though many professions demand specialized skills that may not be easily obtained locally.
- **Economic Development:** By driving up local expenditure on products and services, the investment in these areas can boost their local economies.
- **Land Acquisition:** When land is acquired for solar parks, it may give rise to issues with neighboring communities, particularly if those populations depend on the property for their livelihoods or if there are title disputes.
- **Community Development:** CSR initiatives related to solar installations frequently support local infrastructure development, healthcare, education, and other welfare programs.

### Environmental Impact

- **Decreased Carbon Emissions:** Because solar energy is clean and renewable, it helps to mitigate the effects of climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Land Use:** The extensive land area needed for large-scale solar parks may result in habitat fragmentation, biodiversity loss, and the displacement of native plants and animals.
- **Water Consumption:** In desert places like Rajasthan, some solar technologies, such as concentrated solar power (CSP), can put a burden on local water supplies because they need water for cooling.
- **Degradation of Soil:** Poor land management during development and maintenance can cause soil erosion and degradation, which can have an impact on the health and productivity of agriculture.

### Specific Examples

- **Bhadla Solar Park:** Located in Rajasthan's Thar Desert, Bhadla is one of India's largest solar parks. While it has created jobs, concerns remain about the impact on grazing land for pastoral communities and long-term water usage.
- **Pavagada Solar Park:** Situated in Karnataka, Pavagada is another large-scale solar park. Land acquisition from local communities and water use in a drought-prone region are significant challenges here.

### Conclusion

By adopting sustainable practices, India can harness the power of solar energy while ensuring a just and environmentally conscious transition.



**Assess the preparedness of India in dealing with the predicted hotter summers and longer heat waves in terms of water stress management.**

**Introduction:** Brief context to the question

**Body:** Highlight various factors which assess the preparedness of India in dealing with water stress.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

India's preparedness for dealing with predicted hotter summers and longer heat waves in terms of water stress management is multifaceted, involving policy, governance, and financial considerations.

### Water Use Efficiency

- **Targets for Water Efficiency:** Initiatives like the National Water Mission and AMRUT 2.0 set targets for increasing water use efficiency and reducing non-revenue water. However, these targets lack baseline data and water accounting principles, making it challenging to quantify progress effectively.
- **Efficient Water Reuse:** There's a need to focus on efficient reuse of water resources, including urban wastewater, to alleviate water stress. However, this requires robust data on water usage and clear incentives for investments in treated wastewater reuse.

### Current Initiatives

- **Water Conservation Programs:** Government campaigns promote rainwater harvesting, drip irrigation, and efficient water use in agriculture and industries.
- **Water Infrastructure Development:** Projects aim to improve water storage capacity through dams and reservoirs, and enhance water distribution networks.
- **Groundwater Regulation:** The government is attempting to regulate groundwater extraction to prevent overexploitation.

### Areas for Improvement

- **Strengthening Water Management Institutions:** Local Water User Associations need more power and resources to manage water efficiently and equitably.
- **Public Awareness and Behaviour Change:** Encouraging water conservation practices at the household and community level is crucial.
- **Improving Water Pricing:** Subsidies often distort water usage patterns. Implementing fair water pricing structures can incentivize conservation.
- **Climate-resilient Agriculture:** Promoting drought-resistant crops and adopting water-saving agricultural practices can significantly reduce water demand.

### Conclusion

India faces significant challenges in managing water stress exacerbated by hotter summers and longer heat waves. While there's recognition of the importance of integrated water management, existing policies often lack coherence and fail to address the complex interdependencies between water, food, and energy systems. Efforts to improve water use efficiency and promote efficient water reuse are hindered by a lack of baseline data and financial investments. However, initiatives like the Green Credit Programme offer promising avenues for mobilizing funds for climate adaptation in the water sector. Overall, enhancing preparedness requires greater coherence in policy, better data-driven decision-making, and increased financial support for adaptation efforts.

**Discuss the challenges and potential effects of implementing the Clinical Establishment Act of 2010 in regulating private healthcare costs in India. Evaluate the resistance from the private sector and state governments towards this act.**

**Introduction:** Brief context to the question

**Body:** Highlight potential effects and challenges in the implementation of CEA 2010.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The Clinical Establishments (Registration and Regulation) Act of 2010 aims to oversee the operations of all clinical facilities across India. Mandating registration for all clinical establishments, the Act also outlines standardized treatment protocols for prevalent diseases and conditions.

**Potential Effects:**

- **Transparency in Pricing:** The Act mandates displaying service charges, which empowers patients to compare costs and make informed decisions.
- **Standardized Treatment:** The Act encourages adherence to standard treatment protocols, potentially reducing unnecessary procedures and associated expenses.
- **Improved Quality:** The Act sets minimum standards for facilities and services, potentially leading to better patient care and reduced complications requiring additional treatment.

**Challenges:**

- **Limited Scope:** The Act doesn't directly regulate prices, but rather focuses on standards. Setting price caps might require further legislation.
- **Enforcement Issues:** Enforcing the Act across a vast country with limited resources can be difficult.
- **Data Collection:** Creating and maintaining a comprehensive national database of healthcare costs is a complex task.

**Resistance from the Private Sector and State Governments:**

- **Financial Concerns:** Private healthcare providers may oppose the Act due to concerns about increased regulatory compliance costs, which could potentially affect their profitability. Resistance from the private sector may stem from fears of reduced autonomy and financial implications associated with meeting regulatory requirements.
- **State Autonomy:** Healthcare is a state subject in India, and state governments have significant discretion in formulating healthcare policies and regulations. Some states may resist the implementation of the Act, citing concerns about encroachment on state autonomy and the one-size-fits-all approach of central regulations.
- **Lack of Consultation:** The Act's formulation and implementation may have lacked adequate consultation with stakeholders, including private healthcare providers and state governments. Perceived lack of stakeholder engagement and consultation can lead to resentment and resistance from affected parties, hindering the smooth implementation of the Act.

**Conclusion**

While the Clinical Establishments Act (CEA) represents a positive stride in regulating private healthcare costs, its successful execution hinges on tackling the aforementioned obstacles and engaging in collaborative efforts with stakeholders.

**Discuss the broader implications of India's approach to renegotiating its tax treaties on the global tax landscape. Consider the role of the OECD's Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) initiative and the global minimum tax proposal in shaping these reforms.**

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Implications of international tax treaties on global taxation

**Conclusion:** Way forward

India's approach to renegotiating its tax treaties has significant implications for the global tax landscape, particularly in the context of ongoing international efforts to address tax avoidance and profit shifting. Base erosion and profit shifting (BEPS) is the strategy used by numerous multinational corporations to transfer their profits to jurisdictions with lower or non-existent tax rates, thereby engaging in tax evasion.

### Implications

- **Impact on International Taxation Norms:** India's efforts to renegotiate tax treaties reflect a broader trend toward strengthening international tax norms to prevent tax avoidance and profit shifting by multinational corporations (MNCs). By renegotiating treaties to incorporate provisions aligned with BEPS recommendations, India is signaling its commitment to combating tax evasion and ensuring that MNCs pay their fair share of taxes in the countries where they operate.
- **Alignment with BEPS Recommendations:** The OECD's BEPS initiative aims to address gaps and mismatches in international tax rules that allow MNCs to artificially shift profits to low-tax jurisdictions. India's renegotiation of tax treaties to incorporate BEPS recommendations, such as the introduction of anti-abuse clauses, transfer pricing rules, and measures to prevent treaty abuse, aligns its tax regime with international best practices and fosters greater transparency in cross-border transactions.
- **Impact on Investment and Economic Growth:** India's renegotiation of tax treaties may impact cross-border investment and economic growth by influencing the tax treatment of foreign investors and MNCs operating in the country. While stricter tax provisions may increase tax revenues for India and level the playing field for domestic businesses, they could also potentially deter foreign investment if perceived as overly burdensome or complex.
- **Interaction with Global Minimum Tax Proposal:** The global minimum tax proposal, spearheaded by the OECD and endorsed by many countries, including India, seeks to establish a minimum effective tax rate for MNCs to prevent profit shifting to low-tax jurisdictions. India's renegotiation of tax treaties in line with BEPS recommendations and the global minimum tax proposal reinforces its commitment to combating tax avoidance and supporting international efforts to create a more equitable and sustainable tax framework.
- **Deterrence of Treaty Shopping:** Treaty shopping, wherein MNCs exploit tax treaties between countries to minimize their tax liabilities, has been a significant concern for tax authorities worldwide. By renegotiating tax treaties to include anti-avoidance measures and limiting treaty benefits to genuine taxpayers, India seeks to deter treaty shopping and prevent the misuse of tax treaties for tax avoidance purposes.

### Conclusion

Recent amendments to the India- Mauritius treaty show that serious revenue reforms are under consideration to reform International tax law. Rules like the **global minimum tax and subject-to-tax rule (STTR)** show that countries are serious about making changes to the BEPS program.

**Evaluate the impact of the recent policy approved by the Union government to promote India as a manufacturing hub for electric vehicles (EVs). Discuss the potential benefits and drawbacks of reducing import duties as a strategy to attract foreign investment in EV manufacturing. [250 words] [15 Marks]**

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Impact of new policy and benefits and drawbacks associated with it.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

Recently, the Union Government approved a policy to promote India as a manufacturing hub for Electric Vehicles (EVs) with an investment set at ₹4,150 crore. The central goal of this policy is to enable transitioning to localized production in a commercially viable manner and plan as per local market conditions and demand.

### Impact of recent policy

- **Attracting Foreign Investment:** Established EV manufacturers like Tesla may find India more alluring as a location if import duties on EV components are lowered. This would provide much-needed resources and experience.
- **Knowledge Transfer:** Foreign investment has the potential to result in knowledge transfer, which enables Indian businesses to grow their own EV capacities and establish a strong local EV ecosystem.
- **Economies of Scale:** Increased production volume due to a larger manufacturing base can lead to economies of scale, driving down production costs and making EVs more affordable for Indian consumers.

### Benefits

- **Reduced Reliance on Oil Imports:** Increased EV adoption will decrease India's dependence on imported oil, boosting energy security and reducing the trade deficit.
- **Environmental Benefits:** Widespread EV adoption will lead to cleaner air, especially in urban areas, positively impacting public health.
- **Jobs:** A flourishing electric vehicle (EV) sector has the potential to add new jobs at every stage of the supply chain, from production of batteries and parts to servicing and upkeep.

### Drawbacks

- **Impact on Domestic Industry:** Lower import taxes on completed electric vehicles (EVs) may make it more difficult for current Indian EV producers to compete on pricing with more established firms.
- **Quality Issues:** If import restrictions are too lenient, a flood of inexpensive, subpar EVs may arrive, eroding consumer faith in the home EV market.
- **Focus on Assembly, Not Manufacturing:** Instead of establishing full-fledged manufacturing facilities, reduced taxes may encourage international companies to just assemble electric vehicles (EVs) in India using imported components. This restricts the possibility of job development and technological transfer.

### Conclusion

The government must ensure that Foreign manufacturers must consider local circumstances, like the environment, lack of charging infrastructure, range anxiety, and limited number of products in the affordable range, roads, and usage conditions before availing benefits from the recent EV policy.



**Discuss the role of child care leave policies in enhancing women's participation in the workforce. Evaluate how the recent Supreme Court ruling on child care leave as a constitutional right could transform employment dynamics in India.**

**Introduction:** Define Child care leave

**Body:** Role of Child care leave in women's participation in the workforce and impact of SC ruling on employment.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

Child care leave policies are pivotal in boosting women's engagement in the workforce by offering vital assistance in managing both work and caregiving duties. These policies, often permitting employees, especially mothers, to take time off without jeopardizing their jobs or financial stability, foster work-life balance.

**Role of CCL in enhancing women's participation in the workforce**

- **Minimized Career Interruption:** Child care leave (CCL) enables women to care for infants or young children without risking their employment, thereby lessening career interruptions and preserving skill development and professional advancement.
- **Enhanced Flexibility:** CCL schemes offering flexible arrangements such as part-time employment or gradual return options empower women to balance child care duties with their careers.
- **Financial Stability:** Paid CCL ensures financial stability during a critical phase, facilitating smoother re-entry into the workforce post-childbirth.
- **Alleviated Stigma:** Well-structured CCL policies normalize the concept of taking time off for child-rearing responsibilities, diminishing societal stigma surrounding employed mothers.

**Impact of Supreme Court Ruling on CCL**

- **Increased Female Workforce Engagement:** The mandate for guaranteed CCL removes a significant obstacle for women contemplating employment, potentially resulting in a notable uptick in female labour force participation.
- **Ensured Equality:** Recognizing CCL as a right ensures uniformity and guards against discriminatory practices targeting mothers in the workplace, fostering a fairer environment for women.
- **Employer Policy Review:** The ruling may necessitate companies to reassess their parental leave frameworks to align with the mandate. This could prompt the implementation of more comprehensive and equitable leave options for both mothers and fathers.
- **Redistribution of Caregiving Duties:** The ruling has the potential to instigate a cultural shift regarding childcare responsibilities, potentially encouraging a more equitable distribution where fathers also avail themselves of leave options.

**Conclusion**

To adapt to demographic shifts and promote gender equality, beyond legislation, investments in accessible child and elder care infrastructure are crucial. Extending gender-neutral child care leave to all employees is essential for dismantling stereotypes and accommodating evolving family structures.

**Analyze the challenges faced by Indian seafarers in the context of global maritime security. Discuss the role of international cooperation in addressing these challenges.**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction

**Body:** Highlight challenges faced by Indian seafarers and the role of international cooperation.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The recent submissions by India to the 111th Session of the International Maritime Organization's Legal Committee (IMO LEG) highlight the multifaceted nature of the challenges confronting Indian seafarers.

### Challenges

- **Piracy Resurgence:** Recent attacks off the coast of Somalia signal a resurgence of piracy, posing significant threats to Indian seafarers and global maritime security.
- **Maritime Terrorism:** The risk of terrorist attacks targeting ships and seafarers further exacerbates safety concerns, necessitating proactive measures and international cooperation.
- **Unlawful Recruitment Practices:** Indian seafarers face exploitation due to unlawful recruitment practices, highlighting the need for coordinated efforts to uphold seafarers' rights under the Maritime Labour Convention, of 2006.
- **Human Rights Violations:** Cases of seafarers being held in foreign jails and subjected to illegal detentions underscore the importance of protecting seafarers' human rights in the maritime industry.
- **Vulnerabilities and Exploitation:** Despite representing a significant portion of the global seafaring population, Indian seafarers often face vulnerabilities and exploitation, necessitating enhanced protection measures and international cooperation.

### Role of International Cooperation

- **Combatting Piracy:** Collaborative efforts among nations are essential to combat piracy and ensure the safety of seafarers navigating piracy-prone waters, following international frameworks like UNCLOS.
- **Protecting Human Rights:** Initiatives such as the "human rights at sea" initiative underscore the importance of proactive cooperation among stakeholders to protect seafarers' human rights and address violations effectively.
- **Enhancing Maritime Security:** By promoting information sharing, joint patrols, and capacity building, international cooperation strengthens maritime security efforts and fosters a conducive environment for sustainable growth in the maritime industry.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the challenges faced by Indian seafarers in the context of global maritime security underscore the critical importance of international cooperation. Addressing piracy resurgence, combating maritime terrorism, tackling unlawful recruitment practices, and protecting seafarers' human rights require concerted efforts and collaborative initiatives on a global scale. By advocating for improved contractual conditions, combatting piracy, and promoting human rights at sea, India emphasizes the need for collective action to safeguard seafarers and secure the maritime domain for uninterrupted navigation and sustainable growth.

**Evaluate the effectiveness of the Swachh Bharat Mission in achieving its goals of sanitation and waste management across urban and rural India. Discuss the challenges faced in its implementation.**

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Highlight achievements and challenges faced in the implementation of SBM.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) has been a significant initiative in India, aiming for a clean and open defecation-free (ODF) India.

### Achievements

- **Rural Sanitation Coverage:** The Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) has achieved remarkable success in rural areas, with reported toilet access skyrocketing from under 40% in 2014 to nearly 100% in 2020. This monumental effort has resulted in the construction of millions of toilets, effectively reducing open defecation rates.
- **Improved Health Outcomes:** Studies have indicated a positive correlation between the SBM and improved public health outcomes. Reduced incidences of diarrhea, malaria, and child mortality underscore the significant impact of the mission on community well-being.
- **Behavioral Change:** The SBM has successfully initiated a cultural shift towards cleanliness through extensive public awareness campaigns. These efforts have fostered a heightened sense of hygiene consciousness within many communities.

### Challenges

- **Sustainability of Toilets:** Despite the massive infrastructure development, concerns have arisen regarding the quality and maintenance of constructed toilets. Without adequate upkeep, there's a risk that these facilities may deteriorate and become unusable over time.
- **Urban Sanitation:** While progress in rural areas is notable, urban sanitation efforts have faced challenges, particularly in slums and peri-urban areas where access to adequate public toilet facilities remains limited.
- **Waste Management:** The SBM primarily focused on toilet construction, overshadowing the need for proper waste disposal infrastructure, especially in rural areas. As a result, effective waste management practices remain lacking in many regions.
- **Social Issues:** Deep-rooted social stigmas and cultural practices continue to perpetuate open defecation in certain pockets, hindering efforts towards behavioral change. Overcoming these barriers requires sustained and targeted interventions.
- **Financial Sustainability:** The long-term maintenance of sanitation infrastructure necessitates consistent funding. Ensuring proper budgetary allocation and financial sustainability is imperative for the continued success of sanitation initiatives under the SBM.

### Conclusion

The Swachh Bharat Mission has undoubtedly made significant strides towards a cleaner India. However, addressing the challenges and focusing on waste management, urban sanitation, and toilet maintenance is crucial for long-term success.

**Evaluate the implications of candidates being elected unopposed within the democratic process in India. Discuss how this phenomenon might affect the principles of representative democracy and suggest measures to ensure more competitive electoral contests.**

**Introduction:** Brief context to the question

**Body:** Implications of candidates winning unopposed and effect on democracy and measures to improve competitiveness in electoral contests.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The recent case of candidates being elected unopposed in Surat and Arunachal Pradesh within the democratic process calls for debate where an election is made to seem 'free and fair' despite people not having cast a single vote.

### Implications

- **Lack of Choice and Accountability:** Uncontested elections diminish the fundamental principle of democracy by depriving voters of meaningful choices. Elected representatives may feel less accountable without electoral competition.
- **NOTA Option and Voter Empowerment:** The absence of the "None of the Above" (NOTA) option in uncontested elections raises questions about voter empowerment and the effectiveness of electoral reforms.

### Affect on Principles of Representative Democracy

- **Concentration of Power:** When candidates are elected unopposed, it can contribute to the concentration of power in the hands of a few individuals or parties.
- **Decreased Participation and Voter Apathy:** Uncontested elections can lead to voter apathy and decreased participation, as voters may feel disengaged from the democratic process when they perceive that their vote won't make a difference.

### Measures to Ensure Competitive Electoral Contests

- **Electoral reforms:** Measures such as electoral reforms, strengthening political parties, and promoting voter education can address this issue by encouraging a wider range of candidates and enhancing accountability.
- **Legislative Reforms:** Measures such as amending electoral laws & Representation of the People Act (RPA) to introduce a minimum percentage of votes for winning candidates or transferring uncontested seats to the nominated category can be considered to promote competitive electoral contests.
- **Strengthening NOTA:** There is a need to review and revise the role of NOTA in the electoral process and considering reforms to strengthen its significance.
- **Campaign Finance:** Reforming campaign finance is crucial to creating a fairer electoral landscape by addressing disparities in funding among candidates and parties. These measures promote equitable competition and curb the disproportionate influence of financial resources on political outcomes.

### Conclusion

By implementing these measures, India can strengthen its democratic institutions, foster political competition, and ensure that the principles of representative democracy are upheld for the benefit of its citizens.



**Critically assess the potential of the Green Credit Programme as a tool for environmental conservation in India. Analyze its possible impacts on forest conservation efforts and discuss the challenges associated with implementing such market-based incentive mechanisms.**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction

**Body:** Highlight benefits, challenges & impact of GCP on forest conservation.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The Green Credit Programme (GCP), unveiled by the Environment Ministry in October 2023, is a market-driven initiative allowing individuals and businesses to obtain incentives, known as 'green credits,' for their efforts in supporting environmental and ecological restoration.

### Potential Benefits for Forest Conservation

- **Incentivizes Afforestation:** The GCP prioritizes voluntary tree plantation on degraded lands. This could create new forests, improve biodiversity, and combat soil erosion.
- **Increased Resources:** By allowing trading of green credits, the program could generate revenue for forest departments, potentially leading to more resources for conservation efforts.
- **Awareness & Participation:** The program can raise public awareness about environmental issues and encourage individuals and organizations to participate in conservation activities.

### Possible Impacts on Forest Conservation

- **Focus Beyond Carbon:** Diverging from carbon-centric approaches, green credits encompass a wider array of environmental benefits, potentially catalyzing more holistic conservation strategies.
- **Improved Management:** Emphasizing responsible plantation management, the program has the potential to foster healthier and more sustainable forests.
- **Community Involvement:** Through the GCP, there's an opportunity to stimulate local community engagement in forest conservation efforts, nurturing a sense of ownership and stewardship.

### Challenges of Market-Based Mechanisms

- **Monitoring & Verification:** Reliable monitoring and verification methods are necessary to guarantee the success of environmental projects and the legitimacy of green certificates.
- **Equity Issues:** Big businesses might be able to obtain green credits more easily than smaller organisations, which could put them at a disadvantage compared to local communities.
- **Additionality:** The programme needs to make sure that, rather than just for scheduled activities, green credits are only given out for projects that result in additional environmental advantages.
- **Leakage:** Benefits to the environment in one place could be offset by increasing harm to the environment in another (growing trees, for example, could result in less water being available in other regions).

### Conclusion

India's Green Credit Programme may prove to be a useful instrument for protecting its forests. Its success, though, depends on overcoming the aforementioned difficulties. Transparent governance, strong monitoring systems, and protections to guarantee fair participation and real environmental benefits are necessary for effective implementation.

**Examine the impact of freedom of speech in academic environments in light of recent crackdowns on university campuses regarding political issues such as the Israel-Palestine conflict. Discuss with reference to the situation in American universities.**

**Introduction:** Brief contextual introduction

**Body:** Impact of crackdown on freedom of speech in Universities.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The centrality of freedom of speech in academia cannot be overstated, as it cultivates an environment where the exchange of ideas thrives, propelling intellectual advancement. Yet, the recent clampdowns on discourse regarding the Israel-Palestine conflict in American university settings prompt inquiries into the limits of this freedom.

**Impact of Freedom of Speech in Academic Environments in Light of Recent Crackdown**

- **Crisis of Liberal Democracy:** The protests signify a crisis in liberal democracy as it reflect a sense of political disenchantment among young people, driven by perceived inaction or indifference from the American political system towards the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.
- **Extreme polarization:** The protests exacerbate the deep polarization within the United States, with reactions and political maneuvering further dividing society.
- **Integrity of University:** The university system is in crisis of its own, turning into a political hotbed. The institution's neutrality and integrity are in danger due to rising politicisation and scrutiny.
- **Impartiality and lack of trust:** Under pressure from powerful funders and outside political forces, university administrations run the risk of compromising fundamental standards and values like academic freedom and impartiality. Additionally, confidence in the administration's commitment to justice is damaged by the selective implementation of protest regulations.
- **Crisis for the Protests:** The demonstrations face obstacles that could lessen their influence and moral clarity. Although students have mostly behaved peacefully, the administration's harsh measures and polarising language serve to reinforce a story of struggle between many factions instead of a moral opposition to the war. Furthermore, by making university administrations and policies the focus of protest, attention is diverted from the Gaza War, which is the primary reason, and wider political concerns take precedence over humanitarian ones.

**Conclusion**

The Israel-Palestine conflict highlights the complexities of balancing free speech with inclusivity in academic environments. Universities need to develop nuanced approaches that encourage open discourse while ensuring a safe and respectful learning environment for all.

**Evaluate the impact of the Supreme Court's exercise of curative jurisdiction on the perception of judicial finality and stability. How does this practice affect the legal and business environment in India?**

**Introduction:** What is curative jurisdiction?

**Body:** Impact of SC exercise on legal and business environment.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The Supreme Court of India's curative jurisdiction, the power to revisit its own final judgments, presents a complex issue. While intended to address grave injustices, it can undermine the concept of judicial finality, impacting the legal and business environment. The recent case of *Delhi Metro Rail Corporation Ltd. ("DMRC") vs Delhi Airport Metro Express Pvt Ltd ("DAMEPL")* demonstrates that curative jurisdiction raises concern about SC power.

**Impact on Judicial Finality and Stability**

- **Erosion of Finality:** Reopening final judgements creates uncertainty and weakens the concept of finality, a cornerstone of a robust legal system.
- **Litigation Delays:** The possibility of curative petitions can lead to prolonged litigation, hindering business activities that rely on swift legal resolution.
- **Unpredictability:** Businesses require a predictable legal environment to make informed decisions. Curative jurisdiction can introduce uncertainty into judicial outcomes.
- **Strained Judicial Resources:** Curative petitions add to the already overburdened Supreme Court, delaying other cases.

### Effects on the Legal and Business Environment

- **Legal Environment:** The process of filing and adjudicating curative petitions adds complexity to legal proceedings, potentially delaying the resolution of disputes and increasing litigation costs. Moreover, the subjective nature of curative jurisdiction raises concerns about consistency and predictability in judicial decision-making, which can impact legal certainty.
- **Business Environment:** In the business context, the uncertainty introduced by curative jurisdiction can have implications for investment decisions and commercial transactions. Businesses rely on the stability and predictability of legal frameworks to assess risks and make informed choices. The possibility of revisiting final judgments through curative petitions introduces a level of unpredictability that may deter investment and undermine confidence in the Indian legal system. Furthermore, prolonged legal disputes resulting from curative petitions can disrupt business operations, leading to financial losses and reputational damage.

### Conclusion

Curative jurisdiction presents a dilemma for the Indian judicial system. While it serves the purpose of correcting grave injustices, it can come at the cost of judicial finality and stability, impacting the legal and business environment. Finding a balance through stricter criteria, time limits, and promoting alternative dispute resolution mechanisms is crucial for a robust and predictable legal system that fosters business activity.

### Discuss the implications of integrating agricultural policy with environmental conservation efforts as reflected in recent international agreements like COP 28.

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Highlight implications of integrating agricultural policy with environmental conservation

**Conclusion:** Way forward

Recent international agreements, like COP 28 held in Dubai, are increasingly recognizing the need to integrate agricultural policy with environmental conservation efforts. For the first time, the agreement incorporated agriculture, yet India abstained from signing it, unlike many G20 nations such as the US and China. India's decision stemmed from concerns that the agreement would necessitate substantial alterations in agricultural policies and farming techniques.

### Positive Implications

- **Sustainable Food Systems:** We can develop more sustainable food systems by fusing yield-boosting agricultural techniques with preservation measures for biodiversity, water resources, and soil health. This minimizes the impact on the environment while ensuring long-term food security.
- **Lower Emissions:** Reducing tillage and using cover crops are two conservation techniques that can greatly lower greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture. To mitigate climate change, this is essential.

- **Increased Resilience:** Using sustainable farming methods can increase a farm's resistance to natural disasters like floods and droughts. Farmers' livelihoods and agricultural productivity are both safeguarded by this.
- **Benefits to Biodiversity:** Agricultural policies that prioritize conservation can encourage methods that establish habitats for pollinators and other helpful insects. This promotes biodiversity, which is necessary for ecosystems to be healthy.

### Challenges

- **Balancing Interests:** It can be challenging to find a balance between protecting the environment and increasing agricultural productivity. If farmers believe new procedures would lower yields or profitability, they may be reluctant to use them.
- **Financial Support:** Making the switch to more environmentally friendly practices frequently necessitates an initial investment in new infrastructure or technologies. Programs and incentives for financial support are essential to promoting farmer engagement.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** For successful integration, farmers must be informed about the advantages of conservation-oriented practices and given the tools they need to succeed.
- **Monitoring and Enforcement:** To make sure that laws are obeyed and environmental objectives are fulfilled, there must be strong monitoring and enforcement systems in place.

### Conclusion

COP 28 and comparable agreements possess the potential to be instrumental in catalyzing a worldwide transition towards amalgamated agricultural and environmental policies. By tackling challenges and fostering a conducive atmosphere, these agreements can advocate for a future in which food production harmonizes with environmental well-being.

### Analyze the challenges and prospects of a global treaty on plastic pollution as discussed in international forums. What mechanisms could enhance its effectiveness?

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Highlight the challenges and prospects of the treaty on plastic pollution.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

Recently, representatives from 175 nations began talks in Canada regarding the very first global treaty to curb plastics pollution. Plastic production increased from just 2 million tonnes in 1950 to more than 450 million tonnes in 2019. If left unchecked, the production is slated to double by 2050, and triple by 2060.

### Challenges

- **National Interests:** It might be difficult to strike a balance between environmental preservation and economic interests. A strong plastics industry may make a country resistant to laws that could hurt its economy.
- **Different Priorities:** The priorities of developed and developing countries are frequently different. While underdeveloped countries might give priority to waste management facilities, developed ones might advocate for more stringent production rules.
- **Mechanisms for Enforcement:** It is essential to have strong enforcement procedures to guarantee that nations abide by the pact. International collaboration is necessary for this, as are possible penalties for noncompliance.

### Prospects

- **Standardized Regulations:** Production, usage, and disposal of plastics might all be governed by uniform rules established by an international convention. This would simplify compliance and level the playing field for businesses.



- **Public Awareness:** A worldwide agreement may promote responsible plastic usage and increase public awareness of the plastic pollution challenge.
- **Financial Support:** The deal may open the door to greater international funding for developing nations to upgrade their waste management infrastructure and make the switch to more environmentally friendly practices.

#### Mechanisms for Effectiveness

- **Ambitious but Achievable Goals:** Setting ambitious yet achievable goals with clear timelines is crucial. The treaty should be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect advancements in technology and scientific understanding.
- **Differentiated Responsibilities:** The treaty should acknowledge the different circumstances of countries and assign responsibilities accordingly. Developed nations might contribute more financially and technologically.
- **Stakeholder Involvement:** Meaningful participation from governments, businesses, NGOs, and civil society is essential for effective implementation and ongoing support.
- **Transparency and Monitoring:** Robust monitoring mechanisms and transparent reporting systems are needed to track progress and identify areas where additional support is required.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Collaboration between governments and the private sector is crucial for developing and deploying innovative solutions for plastic pollution.

#### Conclusion

A new global treaty can usher in a new era of responsible plastic production, consumption, and disposal, safeguarding our environment for future generations.

### Discuss the environmental and legal challenges posed by the poultry industry in India, emphasizing the need for stringent regulatory oversight.

**Introduction:** Context to the question

**Body:** Highlight environmental, legal concerns of poultry industry.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

India's poultry industry is a booming sector, but its rapid growth comes with a hefty environmental and legal price tag with the recent H5N1 outbreak.

#### Environmental Concerns

- **Waste Management:** Extensive chicken raising generates a lot of manure, which is frequently mishandled when it comes to storage and disposal. As a result, ammonia emissions and nitrate leaching pollute the air and water, respectively.
- **Antibiotic Resistance:** An enormous risk to public health is posed by the abuse of antibiotics in chicken farming, which is done in an attempt to contain disease outbreaks.
- **Biodiversity Loss:** Habitat degradation and deforestation brought on by large chicken farms can have an adverse effect on regional ecosystems.

#### Legal Issues

- **Animal Welfare:** There are concerns regarding the use of growth hormones in chicken farming, crowded living circumstances, and beak clipping, all of which may constitute violations of animal welfare laws. Moreover, the intensive confinement of animals in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions violates animal welfare laws, including the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act.
- **Biosecurity:** Inadequate biosecurity protocols may allow diseases such as avian influenza to proliferate, affecting not only the populations of wild birds but also poultry farms.

- **Labour Violations:** The chicken business frequently uses migrant labour, and there have been complaints about unfavourable working conditions, low pay, and a lack of safety precautions.

### Need for Stringent Regulations

- **Animal Welfare Standards:** The 269th Law Commission of India Report in 2017 emphasized that improving living conditions to be more open, cleaner, and ventilated could reduce the need for continuous antibiotic use in animals, thus enhancing the safety of their eggs and meat for consumption.
- **Environmental Regulations:** It is imperative that the current environmental regulations pertaining to antibiotic usage and waste management be strictly enforced. It is essential to invest in sustainable manure management techniques and greener technologies.
- **Labour Laws:** It is possible to safeguard workers' rights and guarantee fair treatment by strengthening the implementation of current labour regulations and closely observing working conditions in chicken farms.

### Conclusion

India's poultry industry is crucial for food security, yet its current methods are not sustainable. It requires strict regulations that prioritize environmental protection, animal welfare, biosecurity, and fair labour practices. By embracing a more responsible approach like One Health principle, the industry can secure its future while reducing its adverse effects on the environment and society.

### Discuss the potential benefits and challenges of implementing Standard Treatment Guidelines (STGs) in the Indian healthcare system as suggested by recent judicial interventions.

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction

**Body:** Benefits and challenges of STGs.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

During a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) hearing this year, the Supreme Court of India instructed the central government to explore methods for controlling the charges of medical procedures in private hospitals. Standard treatment guidelines, or STGs, can help establish relevant clinical needs, the nature and extent of care, and the costs of total inputs required.

### Potential Benefits of STGs

- **Better Patient Outcomes:** Evidence-based medicine-based STGs have the potential to improve patient outcomes by promoting standardised, efficient treatment techniques.
- **Decreased Medical Errors:** By minimising variability in treatment methods, standardised protocols can lower the chance of medical errors and increase patient safety.
- **Cost-Effectiveness:** STGs have the potential to lower healthcare expenditures for patients and the system by promoting the use of economical treatment alternatives.
- **Accountability and Transparency:** Standardised procedures can make decision-making more transparent and hold healthcare professionals responsible for following recommended practices.

### Challenges of Implementing STGs

- **Limited Resources:** Implementing STGs effectively requires well-trained healthcare professionals and adequate infrastructure, resources that might be limited in some parts of India.
- **Flexibility for Specific Cases:** STGs must be adaptable enough to take into account the needs of each unique patient as well as differences in the way diseases present. Personalised medicine may be hampered by strict adherence.

- **Over-Standardization:** Over-standardization may hinder innovation and make it more difficult for medical personnel to modify their care in response to unique situations.
- **Accessibility and Awareness:** For effective implementation, STGs must be widely disseminated and healthcare practitioners at all levels must have access to and knowledge of them.

### Conclusion

The Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana and the Department of Health Research have made strides in developing STGs and a comprehensive costing framework. Efforts are ongoing to create an Indian version of Diagnostics-Related Groups (DRGs). Recent judicial interventions presents an opportunity to devise feasible rate standardization policies following established practices. Future efforts should build on past reforms and ensure broader stakeholder engagement.