



Mains Marathon
Compilation

2nd Week September, 2024

INDEX

Discuss the challenges faced by India in reducing dependency on Chinese smartphone manufacturers while promoting indigenous production under the 'Make in India' initiative. How can India balance domestic capacity building with foreign investments?2

Analyze the importance of interoperability and inclusivity in Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI). How can countries avoid monopolistic tendencies while fostering both public and private innovation in the digital sector?2

The UAE-India Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) has been termed a game-changer in bilateral trade. Discuss the key areas of cooperation under CEPA and its potential impact on both economies." (250 words)3

In the context of the Ukraine crisis, critically analyze the limitations and opportunities for India's peace diplomacy. How can India contribute to a multilateral approach involving the Global South?" (250 words)4

What steps can the Indian government take to transform India into a "start-up nation" and make entrepreneurship more accessible and sustainable? Analyze the role of educational institutions in fostering entrepreneurship.....5

Analyze the decentralization model in China and its role in the country's economic growth. How does it compare to the Indian federal structure in terms of governance and fiscal responsibilities?6

Discuss the significance of expanding the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) to senior citizens in the context of India's increasing aging population. Analyze the challenges in ensuring quality healthcare for the elderly in the framework of this scheme.....7

Analyze the ethical and privacy concerns in the deployment of AI-powered healthcare systems in India. What safeguards are necessary to protect patient data and ensure trust in AI-driven health services?8

Assess the role of the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan in addressing India's infrastructure challenges, especially in overcoming project delays and cost overruns." (250 words)8

Critically examine the challenges faced by the Indian judiciary in ensuring independence while dealing with politically sensitive cases. How do judgments like those in Arvind Kejriwal's case and Bilkis Bano's case reflect on judicial integrity?9

The traditional dichotomy between rural and urban areas is increasingly blurred in India. Discuss how integrating a rural-urban continuum in governance and infrastructure planning can foster balanced development. Provide relevant examples from current schemes and challenges. (250 words)10

District Mineral Foundations (DMFs) have transformed the landscape of mineral-affected areas through decentralized, community-centric development. Critically evaluate the role of DMFs in promoting inclusive and sustainable development. (250 words)11

Discuss the concept of intergenerational equity in climate justice. How does the recognition of future generations' rights shape current environmental policies and debates? (250 words)12

Examine the ethical and legal dimensions of the Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021, with a focus on the issue of compensation for surrogate mothers. Should surrogates be entitled to financial compensation for their services? (250 words)13

Discuss the challenges faced by India in reducing dependency on Chinese smartphone manufacturers while promoting indigenous production under the 'Make in India' initiative. How can India balance domestic capacity building with foreign investments?

Introduction: Contextual Introduction

Body: Challenges faced by India & how to balance capacity building with foreign investments

Conclusion: Way forward

India's ambition to become a global manufacturing hub under the 'Make in India' initiative is marked by both opportunities and challenges, particularly when it comes to reducing its reliance on Chinese smartphone manufacturers.

Challenges Faced by India

- **Market Dominance of Chinese Smartphone Brands:** Chinese brands like Xiaomi and Vivo dominate India's smartphone market due to affordable phones, strong distribution, and aggressive marketing, making them tough competition for Indian companies.
- **Lack of a Robust Domestic Supply Chain:** India's smartphone manufacturing ecosystem is underdeveloped, with critical components like semiconductors and batteries still being imported.
- **Dependence on Chinese Technology and Investment:** Chinese smartphone companies leverage their well-established supply chains and R&D in China. Despite India's push for 'Indianisation,' Chinese firms are reluctant to share technology, especially without clarity on equity participation.
- **Challenges in Creating a Skilled Workforce and Infrastructure:** India faces a shortage of skilled labor and lacks the necessary infrastructure for advanced manufacturing. Setting up plants requires technical expertise, reliable utilities, and improved working conditions, none of which are currently available at scale.

Balancing Domestic Capacity Building with Foreign Investments

- **Leveraging Foreign Investments for Technology Transfer:** India's strategy of involving foreign players like Apple and Samsung while pushing Chinese companies to localize mirrors China's model for capability building. Collaborating with Taiwanese firms, such as Tata Electronics' acquisitions, can foster local expertise and strengthen the domestic manufacturing ecosystem.
- **Strengthening PLI and Ancillary Industry Development:** The increased budget for the PLI scheme highlights India's commitment to local manufacturing. However, to maximize its impact, India must also build a strong ancillary industry for key components and enhance R&D investments in areas like semiconductors and component design.
- **Creating Incentives for Domestic Manufacturers:** To reduce reliance on Chinese brands, the government can provide extra incentives for Indian manufacturers to meet production and export targets.
- **Strategic Visa and Investment Policies:** Easing visa norms for Chinese technicians and promoting Chinese FDI, while supporting local manufacturers, shows India's balanced approach.

Conclusion

A balanced approach that combines domestic capacity building with strategic foreign investments is crucial for achieving self-reliance in the smartphone industry.

Analyze the importance of interoperability and inclusivity in Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI). How can countries avoid monopolistic tendencies while fostering both public and private innovation in the digital sector?

Introduction: Contextual Introduction

Body: Importance of interoperability & inclusivity in DPI & how to avoid monopolistic tendencies

Conclusion: Way forward

Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) plays a crucial role in enabling digital transformation and promoting economic growth. It refers to the underlying digital infrastructure and services that support various sectors of society, such as healthcare, education, and governance.

Importance of Interoperability and Inclusivity in Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)

- **Interoperability:** Interoperability allows different digital systems to work together smoothly, facilitating the exchange of data and services across platforms. This ensures that no individual or institution is confined to using a specific technology provider, thus preventing lock-in by monopolistic companies. A good DPI must promote interoperability, enabling users to interact with different systems without being restricted by competing monopolies. This fosters healthy competition and innovation while ensuring that citizens can freely move between service providers, as exemplified by India's Citizen Stack.
- **Inclusivity:** Inclusivity guarantees that digital infrastructure serves everyone, including marginalized and underserved populations. In India, over 80% of financial inclusion was achieved by creating digital platforms that cater to diverse social and economic groups. Inclusivity also ensures that digital services are accessible in terms of language, affordability, and user experience. DPIs, like those promoted under Citizen Stack, need to safeguard citizen empowerment, ensuring that individuals have control over their data through consent-based systems while maintaining privacy and security.

Avoiding Monopolistic Tendencies

- **Open Standards:** Encouraging the application of open standards guarantees system interoperability and keeps a single player from controlling the whole market.
- **Data sharing:** Promoting data sharing amongst entities in the public and private sectors can boost competition and innovation. Nonetheless, user security and privacy must be safeguarded.
- **Anti-Monopoly Regulations:** Put in place strict anti-monopoly laws to stop big businesses from gaining undue market dominance and inhibiting innovation.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Working with businesses in the private sector can provide resources and experience, but it's crucial to make sure that the interests of the public are safeguarded.
- **Assistance for New Businesses:** In the digital industry, offering assistance to startups and small enterprises can stimulate competition and innovation.

Conclusion

Interoperability and inclusivity are vital for the success of DPIs, ensuring broad access and preventing monopolies. Countries must balance public and private innovation with strong regulations to create secure, scalable digital systems. India's Citizen Stack offers a model for achieving this through open, secure, and inclusive digital infrastructure.

The UAE-India Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) has been termed a game-changer in bilateral trade. Discuss the key areas of cooperation under CEPA and its potential impact on both economies." (250 words)

Introduction: Contextual Introduction

Body: What are key areas of cooperation under CEPA & impact of CEPA on both nations?

Conclusion: Way forward

The UAE-India Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) has been termed a "game-changer" for bilateral trade, highlighting the deep-rooted ties and mutual respect between the two nations. The recent visit of Sheikh Khaled, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, to Delhi, reinforces this relationship, emphasizing both historical connections and modern collaboration.

Key Areas of Cooperation Under CEPA

- **Trade and Investment:** CEPA has significantly boosted bilateral trade, with over a 15% increase in the first year alone. Key sectors include energy, renewable energy, and infrastructure, with billions in additional investment deals already signed.

- **Technological and Educational Collaboration:** The UAE and India are forging deeper ties in education and technology, symbolized by the establishment of the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi Abu Dhabi. This partnership paves the way for advancements in critical areas such as health innovation, nuclear technology, and digital infrastructure.
- **People-to-People Connections:** One of the strongest aspects of UAE-India relations is the presence of 3.5 million Indians in the UAE, the largest expatriate community in the country. This reflects not only the historical ties but also the current strength of cooperation.
- **Civil Nuclear Cooperation:** The partnership between the UAE and India extends into civil nuclear technology, a domestic success story for the UAE rooted in international cooperation.

Potential Impact on Both Economies

- **Increased Bilateral Trade:** CEPA is projected to push bilateral trade towards \$100 billion, leveraging India's strengths in agriculture, manufacturing, and IT, alongside the UAE's prowess in energy and finance.
- **Advances in Green Energy and Technology:** The UAE and India's cooperation in renewable energy and nuclear technology will enable both nations to tackle global challenges like climate change.
- **Cultural and Educational Exchange:** The establishment of IIT Delhi Abu Dhabi underscores a future of increased cultural and educational exchange. This collaboration in academia and research will help both nations build knowledge economies, preparing them for the future through skills development and technological innovation.
- **Strengthening Strategic Partnership:** The UAE-India relationship, founded on respect, trust, and shared values, continues to deepen through CEPA. This partnership will not only boost economic growth but also enhance regional stability, with both nations emerging as influential players in the global economy.

Conclusion

The UAE-India CEPA is more than just a trade agreement & has the potential to reshape the economic landscape of both countries, ensuring continued prosperity and strategic alignment in the years to come.

In the context of the Ukraine crisis, critically analyze the limitations and opportunities for India's peace diplomacy. How can India contribute to a multilateral approach involving the Global South?" (250 words)

Introduction: Contextual Introduction

Body: Highlight limitations & opportunities of India's peace diplomacy & its multilateral approach.

Conclusion: Way forward

India's role in peace diplomacy concerning the Ukraine crisis is shaped by its strategic interests, historical ties, and evolving geopolitical landscape. The new momentum for peace efforts, with calls for diplomacy from multiple fronts, presents both opportunities and constraints for India as it considers a more active peacemaking role.

Limitations of India's Role

- **Limited Direct Influence Over Conflict Parties:** While India maintains strategic autonomy and is respected by both Russia and the West, its ability to directly influence the course of the war remains constrained.
- **Dependence on US and Russian Relations:** India's geopolitical strategy is heavily tied to its relationships with both Russia (defense and energy) and the West (economic and security partnerships).

Opportunities for India's Peace Diplomacy

- **Advocating for Dialogue and Diplomacy:** Since the start of the invasion in 2022, India has consistently advocated for dialogue and peaceful resolution. Prime Minister Modi's recent

consultations align with the broader global push for renewed peace efforts, echoing sentiments from leaders like Brazil's Lula da Silva, China's Xi Jinping, and Hungary's Viktor Orban.

- **Opportunity to Shape a New Global Order:** India could play a pivotal role in the rearrangement of global geopolitics post-Ukraine war. Given the growing fatigue in Europe over supporting Ukraine unconditionally, India's neutral diplomacy may contribute to a new security architecture that balances the interests of Russia and the West.

India's Contribution to a Multilateral Approach Involving the Global South

- **Geopolitical Leverage in the Global South:** India's position as a leading voice of the Global South gives it a unique advantage in representing the interests of developing nations, many of which are grappling with the economic fallout of the Ukraine war, including energy and food security challenges. By amplifying these concerns, India can play a constructive role in ensuring that any peace framework addresses the broader impacts on the Global South.
- **Leveraging BRICS and G20 Platforms:** India can use its influence in multilateral organizations like BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) and the G20 to propose peace initiatives that reflect the Global South's priorities.

Conclusion

India has an opportunity to leverage its diplomatic weight in the Ukraine peace process by advocating for dialogue and diplomacy that involves the Global South while maintaining its strategic neutrality.

What steps can the Indian government take to transform India into a "start-up nation" and make entrepreneurship more accessible and sustainable? Analyze the role of educational institutions in fostering entrepreneurship.

Introduction: Contextual Introduction

Body: What are several steps to make India a start-up nation & role of HEI in this program?

Conclusion: Way forward

India has witnessed a surge in start-up activity in recent years, but to truly become a "start-up nation," the government needs to implement comprehensive strategies.

Several strategic steps

- **Expansion of Internet Access:** With over 80 crore internet users and 120 crore cell phone users, expanding digital access to rural areas will drive economic inclusion. Connecting farmers, students, and rural citizens to digital platforms offers vast potential for innovation and startups in agri-tech, e-learning, and financial inclusion.
- **Leveraging the Unified Payments Interface (UPI):** Expanding the reach of UPI-based services to include more micro-enterprises and small businesses will enhance financial inclusion and foster entrepreneurship in remote regions.
- **Sustained Capital Expenditure:** The government's push towards increased capital expenditure has enabled the growth of physical and digital infrastructure. Continued investment in sectors like green energy, healthcare, and technology will encourage new startups and boost job creation.
- **Incentivizing Risk-Taking:** Providing financial support, tax incentives, and simplified regulatory frameworks for startups, especially in emerging sectors such as AI, robotics, and clean energy, will spur entrepreneurial ventures that have the potential to drive exponential growth.

Role of educational institutions in fostering entrepreneurship

- **Increasing Student Entrepreneurship:** A significant opportunity lies in encouraging more students to pursue entrepreneurship post-graduation. This could create nearly 5.5 lakh direct jobs and 55 lakh indirect jobs each year, significantly contributing to employment generation and economic growth.
- **Rethinking Higher Education Metrics:** Higher education institutions (HEIs) should be measured not just by job placements but by the number of entrepreneurial ventures they generate.

Encouraging student-led startups, especially in collaboration with industry, would accelerate the innovation ecosystem and lead to sustained economic growth.

- **Entrepreneurial Ecosystems in Tier-II/III Cities:** Promoting entrepreneurship beyond the major urban centers by building innovation hubs and incubators in Tier-II and Tier-III cities will lead to a more geographically inclusive startup ecosystem. This can also address the challenge of rising job-seekers in these areas by providing alternative career opportunities.

Conclusion

India must integrate **education, entrepreneurship, and employment (3E)** to achieve exponential growth by 2047. Encouraging graduate entrepreneurship, strengthening industry-academia ties, expanding infrastructure, and fostering innovation are key to sustaining momentum and becoming a global leader.

Analyze the decentralization model in China and its role in the country's economic growth. How does it compare to the Indian federal structure in terms of governance and fiscal responsibilities?

Introduction: Contextual Introduction

Body: Impact of decentralization model in China's economic growth & comparison with India's federal structure.

Conclusion: Way forward

China's decentralized governance model played a crucial role in its economic miracle, especially during the period of rapid industrialization and export-led growth. Local governments were given broad fiscal and administrative powers, enabling them to compete for investment and promote regional growth.

Economic Growth through Decentralization

- **Local Autonomy and Growth:** Local governments had a mandate to spur economic growth, using tools like land rights to attract investors. Offering industrial land at low costs, they prioritized industrial output, aiming for increased regional growth and future tax revenues.
- **Structural Overcapacity:** Local governments, focused on short-term growth, overinvested in industrial projects, resulting in wasteful investments, excess production, and loss-making entities.
- **Centralized Corrections:** Under Xi Jinping, the central government sought to address the excesses of decentralization by strengthening central control and directing investments more strategically, especially in sectors like semiconductors. However, this led to inefficiencies as local governments continued indiscriminate investments, resulting in numerous firms being unproductive, with around 30% of industrial firms making losses by mid-2024.
- **International Perceptions:** China's international image, particularly its behavior in the global economy and geopolitical arena, has further complicated its decentralization model. Overcapacity in industries like telecom and electric vehicles is now seen as a national security threat by other countries, while initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) have not succeeded in creating sustainable demand in participating countries.

Comparison of China and India

- **Central Control:** China's decentralization model is more centrally controlled than India's federal structure. The central government in China retains significant authority over local governments.
- **Fiscal Federalism:** Both countries have adopted fiscal federalism, but the division of revenue and expenditure responsibilities differs. China's local governments have more autonomy in revenue generation and expenditure.
- **Economic Decentralization:** China has been more aggressive in promoting economic decentralization through SEZs and other special zones. India has also implemented regional development policies, but its approach has been less centralized.

Conclusion

China's decentralized model, which once fueled its rapid economic growth, has now reached a point of diminishing returns due to overcapacity, inefficiency, and excessive competition among local governments. India, with its federal structure, can avoid the pitfalls of extreme decentralization by ensuring that state-level competition for investment is fiscally responsible and strategically aligned with long-term national goals.

Discuss the significance of expanding the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) to senior citizens in the context of India's increasing aging population. Analyze the challenges in ensuring quality healthcare for the elderly in the framework of this scheme.

Introduction: Contextual Introduction

Body: Significance of AB-PMJAY for senior citizens & challenges in this new program.

Conclusion: Way forward

The government's decision to extend the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) to senior citizens above the age of 70 marks a significant step toward universalizing healthcare in India.

Significance of Expanding AB-PMJAY to Senior Citizens

- **Enhanced Healthcare Coverage:** Currently, only 20% of the elderly are covered by existing safety nets like the CGHS, Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana, and employer-funded schemes. The extension of AB-PMJAY will address this gap by covering a large number of senior citizens who are not otherwise insured, promoting financial security and access to medical care for this vulnerable age group.
- **Addressing Out-of-Pocket Expenditure (OOPE):** India's high OOPE on health, which constitutes 50% of all health expenses, is a key driver of poverty, particularly among senior citizens who often face chronic health conditions. By reducing their financial burden, AB-PMJAY can protect elderly individuals and their families from the economic shock associated with healthcare costs, thereby contributing to poverty alleviation.
- **Longevity and Growing Healthcare Needs:** With rising lifespans, the elderly population will demand more healthcare services in the future. Expanding AB-PMJAY offers a foundation for long-term healthcare planning for an aging population, particularly for age-related diseases like diabetes, cancer, and cardiovascular issues.

Challenges in Ensuring Quality Healthcare for the Elderly

- **Access and Infrastructure Gaps:** Ease of access and quality of care are critical for senior citizens, but a shortage of healthcare facilities and geriatric specialists hampers effective service delivery.
- **Misuse and Inefficiency:** Reports have shown instances of doctor malpractice and misinformation of patients, where hospitals bypass AB-PMJAY benefits or make it difficult for patients to claim them. There is also evidence that overburdened hospital staff often fail to facilitate the insurance process, causing delays and frustration for already stressed families.
- **Doctor-Patient Asymmetry:** The asymmetry in doctor-patient relations adds complexity to the smooth implementation of AB-PMJAY. Many patients and families are misinformed about the scheme, which exacerbates delays in accessing benefits. While some hospitals employ arogyamitras to counsel patients, their role is often limited to registering claims.

Conclusion

The expansion of AB-PMJAY to senior citizens is a crucial step in providing universal healthcare in India. However, to address the challenges of a rapidly aging population, the government must focus not only on financial coverage but also on improving healthcare infrastructure, ensuring accountability, and empowering support staff to better assist elderly patients.

Analyze the ethical and privacy concerns in the deployment of AI-powered healthcare systems in India. What safeguards are necessary to protect patient data and ensure trust in AI-driven health services?

Introduction: Contextual Introduction

Body: What are ethical, privacy concerns regarding AI & safeguards necessary in health services?

Conclusion: Way forward

The possibility of a "free AI-powered primary-care physician for every Indian, available 24/7" raises significant questions about the feasibility, sustainability, and readiness of India's healthcare system to adopt such technology.

Ethical and privacy concerns

- **Data Privacy:** AI systems require access to sensitive patient data, including medical records, genetic information, and personal details. There is a risk of data breaches, unauthorized access, and misuse of this information.
- **Algorithmic Bias:** AI algorithms can perpetuate existing biases present in the data they are trained on. This can lead to discriminatory outcomes, particularly for marginalized populations.
- **Lack of Transparency:** AI systems often operate as black boxes, making it difficult to understand how they arrive at their decisions. This lack of transparency can hinder accountability and trust.
- **Autonomy and Agency:** Overreliance on AI systems can erode patient autonomy and agency. Patients may feel pressured to accept AI-generated recommendations without fully understanding the risks and benefits.

Safeguards and Steps for Effective AI Deployment

- **Comprehensive Regulation and Governance:** India must develop a comprehensive regulatory framework, similar to the European Union's Artificial Intelligence Act, to govern the use of AI in healthcare. This should address issues like data protection, algorithmic transparency, and accountability.
- **Ensuring Patient Autonomy and Informed Consent:** Patients must be fully informed about how AI-powered systems will use their data, and their consent should be obtained before any data is collected or used.
- **Addressing Bias and Inequity:** AI models should be trained on diverse datasets that reflect India's socio-economic, regional, and cultural diversity to avoid biases that may lead to discriminatory outcomes. Regular audits should be conducted to ensure fairness and inclusivity in AI-generated health recommendations.
- **Investment in Infrastructure and Workforce Training:** Significant investments in data infrastructure are necessary to create systems that can securely capture, store, and process patient data. Data standardization across healthcare systems will be essential to ensuring that AI models can work effectively on a national scale.

Conclusion

India must ensure that AI systems are transparent, inclusive, and human-centric to enhance the healthcare system without undermining the critical role of human empathy and judgement in medicine.

Assess the role of the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan in addressing India's infrastructure challenges, especially in overcoming project delays and cost overruns." (250 words)

Introduction: Contextual Introduction

Body: Role of PM Gati Shakti in addressing India's infrastructure challenges.

Conclusion: Way forward

The PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan (NMP) addresses India's infrastructure challenges by integrating modern project management techniques and facilitating real-time, data-driven monitoring of projects.

Key Challenges in Infrastructure Development

- **Time Delays and Cost Overruns:** According to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, 431 infrastructure projects suffered a cost overrun of ₹4.82 lakh crore by December 2023, with many projects delayed by several years. Such delays not only inflate costs but also hinder economic growth. Delays are often attributed to fragmented decision-making, bureaucratic hurdles, and inadequate planning, particularly in urban infrastructure projects.
- **Lack of Comprehensive Project Management:** Many infrastructure projects in India lack proper project planning, especially at the urban local body level, resulting in poor execution and increased costs. Traditional project management practices are outdated and fail to incorporate real-time data and modern tools.
- **Quality Control Issues:** The frequent collapse of under-construction infrastructure, such as bridges, highlights the lack of quality assurance during implementation. These failures point to the need for better oversight, stricter adherence to construction standards, and accountability.

Role of PM Gati Shakti in Addressing These Challenges

- **Integrated Planning and Execution:** The NMP aims to break the silos between government ministries and departments by creating a unified platform. This allows for better coordination, resource allocation, and real-time monitoring of projects. The GIS-based ERP portal introduced under PM Gati Shakti ensures that project progress is tracked, reducing the risk of delays and cost escalations.
- **Focus on Real-Time Data and Transparency:** By utilizing geospatial data and real-time progress tracking, the NMP fosters greater transparency in project implementation. This helps in identifying bottlenecks early, ensuring timely interventions, and preventing cost overruns.
- **Holistic Programme Management Approach:** The emphasis is on the need for a “Program Management Approach” to coordinate complex, resource-intensive projects. This was successfully applied in projects like the Shendra-Bidkin industrial corridor, where multiple projects were integrated and executed simultaneously.

Conclusion

The PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan addresses India’s infrastructure challenges through integrated planning, transparency, and real-time project management. However, to maximize its impact, India must adopt a program management approach, enhance workforce skills, and enforce strict quality control. This will help prevent delays and cost overruns, driving infrastructure development towards the nation’s goal of becoming a developed economy by 2047.

Critically examine the challenges faced by the Indian judiciary in ensuring independence while dealing with politically sensitive cases. How do judgments like those in Arvind Kejriwal’s case and Bilkis Bano’s case reflect on judicial integrity?

Introduction: Contextual Introduction

Body: Highlight challenges in ensuring judicial independence and how politically sensitive cases reflect on judicial integrity.

Conclusion: Way forward

The Indian judiciary is tasked with upholding independence, especially in politically sensitive cases, but it faces multiple challenges. Recent judgments, such as in the Arvind Kejriwal excise policy case and the Bilkis Bano case, highlight these tensions.

Challenges in Ensuring Judicial Independence

- **Executive Influence:** In politically charged cases, the judiciary often faces subtle or overt pressure from the executive. This can manifest in the form of controversial judicial appointments, transfers, or political backlash when rulings go against government interests.

- **Use of Procedure as Punishment:** Investigating agencies often weaponize legal procedures to punish individuals without securing a conviction. The practice of prolonging detention for "non-cooperation" during interrogation is often employed as a pretext for incarceration, even when substantive evidence may be lacking. This practice undermines the right against self-incrimination enshrined in Article 20(3) of the Constitution.
- **Bail Denials and Personal Liberty:** There is an increasing trend of lower courts automatically denying bail in politically sensitive cases, regardless of whether the legal grounds justify such denials. Both Justice Bhuyan and Justice B.R. Gavai have highlighted this issue, noting that trial courts and High Courts often fail to safeguard personal liberty, particularly in high-profile cases.

Judicial Integrity in Politically Sensitive Cases

- **Arvind Kejriwal Case:** Justice Bhuyan's critique of Kejriwal's arrest reflects a refusal to accept vague justifications such as "evasive replies" or "lack of cooperation" as grounds for prolonged detention. His judgment called out the CBI for using procedural delays to deny liberty, stressing that such actions violate the spirit of constitutional protections. This stands in contrast to the view of Justice Surya Kant, who accepted the CBI's rationale without deep scrutiny. Bhuyan's detailed examination underscores the need for vigilance in upholding personal freedoms.
- **Bilkis Bano Case:** The release of the convicts in the Bilkis Bano case, despite their convictions for heinous crimes, similarly raises concerns about political influence on judicial outcomes. This case exemplifies how post-conviction relief can be manipulated through remission laws, often at the cost of justice for victims of politically motivated violence.

Conclusion

While the judiciary strives to maintain independence, politically sensitive cases expose cracks in its armor. The Arvind Kejriwal and Bilkis Bano cases underscore the challenges of judicial integrity, particularly when confronted with executive pressure and procedural manipulation. To safeguard its independence, the judiciary must resist external pressures and uphold its duty to protect personal liberty, especially in the face of politically charged circumstances.

The traditional dichotomy between rural and urban areas is increasingly blurred in India. Discuss how integrating a rural-urban continuum in governance and infrastructure planning can foster balanced development. Provide relevant examples from current schemes and challenges. (250 words)

Introduction: Contextual Introduction

Body: Highlight challenges in policy framework and how to integrate the rural-urban continuum.

Conclusion: Way forward

India is transitioning from a rural to an increasingly urban nation, especially in Tier II and Tier III cities and the peripheries of urban centers.

Challenges in Current Policy Framework:

- **Over-centralization of Finances:** Financial decentralization has weakened, with tied grants limiting local autonomy. The absence of a link between property tax and State Goods and Services Tax (SGST) risks towns losing vital funds, stalling development in the rural-urban continuum.
- **Compartmentalization of Flagship Schemes:** Programs like Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) and AMRUT often overlook peri-urban areas. For instance, AMRUT focuses on statutory towns, leaving census towns and urban villages without critical infrastructure.
- **Fragmented Waste Management:** Separate rural and urban waste management under SBM-Rural and SBM-Urban leads to inefficiency.

Integrating a Rural-Urban Continuum:

- **Strengthening District Planning Committees:** The 73rd and 74th Amendments provide a framework for coordination between rural and urban areas, but District Planning Committees (DPCs) need to be strengthened to plan more effectively across regions.
- **Kerala's Governance Model:** Kerala's unified governance model, where rural and urban local bodies fall under the same ministry, enables faster decision-making and better collaboration, as seen in its waste management approach.
- **Collaborative Infrastructure Planning:** Designing infrastructure like sewage treatment and solid waste management at the district level can optimize resource use across both urban and rural areas, reducing duplication and inefficiency.

Way Forward

- **Integrated Funding Mechanisms:** Restructuring funding to reflect the rural-urban continuum can ensure coordinated infrastructure development across contiguous areas, particularly in peri-urban regions.
- **Decentralized and Flexible Governance:** Local bodies need more autonomy, with a shift towards untied grants and greater local revenue generation, enabling them to address unique regional needs.
- **Reimagining Governance Models:** Updated governance structures, including regional authorities for peri-urban areas, will better address the infrastructure and governance needs along the rural-urban continuum.

Conclusion:

India's rural-urban divide is increasingly blurred, necessitating integrated governance and infrastructure planning. Strengthening local governance, creating integrated funding, and designing collaborative solutions are key to fostering balanced development across the nation.

District Mineral Foundations (DMFs) have transformed the landscape of mineral-affected areas through decentralized, community-centric development. Critically evaluate the role of DMFs in promoting inclusive and sustainable development. (250 words)

Introduction: Contextual Introduction

Body: Role of DMFs in promoting inclusive & sustainable development.

Conclusion: Way forward

District Mineral Foundations (DMFs) were instituted under the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2015 to work toward the benefit of communities affected by mining operations. DMFs aim to promote inclusive and sustainable development by addressing the social, economic, and environmental impacts of mining.

Role of DMFs in Promoting Inclusive and Sustainable Development

- **Decentralized, Community-Centric Approach:** DMFs enable decentralized planning by involving local communities in decision-making processes. The funds are directed towards improving infrastructure, healthcare, education, and livelihood opportunities for mining-affected populations.
- **Focus on Welfare and Livelihoods:** DMF funds are often allocated to sectors such as healthcare, sanitation, education, and livelihood generation, ensuring that basic needs are met in mining-affected areas.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Mining activities significantly disrupt local ecosystems. DMFs are intended to mitigate environmental degradation through afforestation, soil conservation, and water management projects.
- **Flexibility in Fund Utilization:** DMFs have the flexibility to address region-specific challenges, such as building healthcare infrastructure in areas with high disease prevalence due to mining activities.

Challenges in Implementation

- **Poor Fund Utilization:** A significant challenge has been the underutilization of funds. Many districts have accumulated large unspent balances, delaying critical development projects. This inefficiency undermines the potential of DMFs to drive rapid, tangible change.
- **Lack of Transparency and Accountability:** The management of DMF funds is often marred by a lack of transparency, with minimal public participation in planning. Instances of misallocation and diversion of funds have been reported, reducing the effectiveness of community-led development efforts.
- **Top-Down Governance:** Despite their decentralized framework, DMFs often function under a top-down approach, with local bureaucracies exerting more control than communities. This limits the empowerment of marginalized groups, making it difficult to address their specific needs effectively.
- **Neglect of Environmental Concerns:** While DMFs are expected to address the environmental degradation caused by mining, the focus on long-term ecological restoration has often been insufficient. Environmental projects, such as reforestation and water conservation, tend to receive less priority compared to social infrastructure, delaying efforts toward sustainable environmental management.

Conclusion

DMFs have the potential to drive inclusive and sustainable development in mineral-affected areas by decentralizing decision-making and focusing on community welfare. Strengthening local participation, improving governance, and ensuring efficient use of resources is essential to realize the full potential of DMFs in promoting holistic development.

Discuss the concept of intergenerational equity in climate justice. How does the recognition of future generations' rights shape current environmental policies and debates? (250 words)

Introduction: Contextual Introduction

Body: Highlight the concept of intergenerational equity & how future generation rights shape policies & debates.

Conclusion: Way forward

Intergenerational equity is a core principle of climate justice, which emphasizes the responsibility of present generations to ensure that future generations inherit a healthy and sustainable planet.

Concept of Intergenerational Equity in Climate Justice

- **Fairness across generations:** It ensures that future generations have access to the same environmental resources and opportunities as the present generation.
- **Sustainability of natural resources:** It mandates the responsible management of natural resources to prevent depletion and environmental degradation that could harm future **generations**.

How Future Generations' Rights Shape Environmental Policies?

- **Climate Change Jurisprudence:** Courts worldwide have increasingly acknowledged the rights of future generations in their rulings on environmental matters. Some notable cases include:
 - **Colombia:** A landmark ruling required the government to create an intergenerational pact to protect the Amazon rainforest, ensuring its preservation for future generations.
 - **India:** The National Green Tribunal (NGT) upheld the principle of intergenerational equity, affirming the right to a healthy environment for both present and future generations.
- **Maastricht Principles:** The Maastricht Principles link climate justice and sustainable development with the rights of future generations. These principles obligate public and private actors to avoid actions that pose significant risks to future generations.

- **Influence on Global Environmental Governance:** Intergenerational equity is a central theme in multilateral discussions, such as the Summit of the Future (2024), which aims to address major global threats like climate change, pandemics, and inequality.
- **Balancing Short-term Development vs. Long-term Sustainability:** The debate on intergenerational equity contrasts critics like Stephen Humphreys, who argue it diverts focus from present needs, with proponents like Wawerinke-Singh, who see it as fostering justice and honoring Indigenous traditions of protecting future generations.
- **Planetary Overshoot and Urgency for Action:** The planetary overshoot day—the point when humanity exceeds Earth’s capacity to renew its resources—has moved from December 30 1970 to August 1, 2024. This demonstrates the environmental crisis that threatens future generations and stresses the need for immediate, effective climate policies.

Conclusion

The recognition of future generations' rights is essential for achieving climate justice. By incorporating intergenerational equity into environmental policies and debates, we can ensure that our actions today contribute to a sustainable and equitable future for all.

Examine the ethical and legal dimensions of the Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021, with a focus on the issue of compensation for surrogate mothers. Should surrogates be entitled to financial compensation for their services? (250 words)

Introduction: Contextual Introduction

Body: Highlight ethical dimensions and legal dimensions of the Act & should surrogates be entitled to financial compensation.

Conclusion: Way forward

The Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021 prohibits commercial surrogacy and allows only altruistic surrogacy, limiting compensation to medical expenses and insurance for surrogate mothers.

Ethical Dimensions & Legal Dimensions

- **Fair Compensation:** Surrogacy involves physical and emotional labor for nine months, yet under the Act, surrogates receive only medical expenses and insurance. Ethically, this is unfair as all other stakeholders are compensated except the surrogate.
- **Exploitation Concerns:** The Act aims to prevent the exploitation of poor women. However, banning compensation entirely may push surrogacy underground, risking further exploitation rather than addressing it.
- **Constitutional Challenges:** The Act’s provisions, including the ban on commercial surrogacy, face legal challenges for violating surrogate rights. Intending parents also struggle to find willing surrogates.
- **Parliamentary Recommendations:** The 102nd Parliamentary Committee recommended “reasonable compensation,” including covering lost wages, medical care, and post-delivery support, to ensure fair treatment.

Should Surrogates Be Entitled to Financial Compensation?

- **Recognition of Labour:** Pregnancy is a form of labor, and surrogates should be fairly compensated for their time, effort, and the physical risks involved. Denying them financial compensation perpetuates the notion that their work is not valued, which contradicts basic labor rights principles. Compensation, if regulated properly, ensures that surrogates are not exploited but are adequately rewarded for their services.
- **Regulated Compensation as a Middle Ground:** A fully altruistic model may not be realistic or fair in many cases. A regulated compensation framework, as suggested by the ART Bills, which proposed a payment schedule during pregnancy, could ensure that surrogates are paid for their

labor while safeguarding against exploitation. This middle ground acknowledges the service they provide without commodifying the child or the surrogates.

Conclusion

The Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021 addresses concerns about the exploitation of surrogate mothers by banning commercial surrogacy but leaves critical ethical and legal questions unresolved. Denying surrogates compensation for their labor overlooks the physical and emotional toll of pregnancy. A regulated compensation model could strike a balance between protecting surrogates from exploitation and ensuring fair recognition of their labor. The Supreme Court's future rulings on these constitutional challenges may determine whether the current altruistic model stands or if compensation will be deemed necessary.

