

INDEX

Sl. no.	TOPIC	Pg. No.
1.	AI needs cultural policies, not just regulation	4
2.	What constitutes Parliamentary Privileges?	7
3.	INS Arighat	14
4.	A verdict on the Money Bill that India awaits	15
5.	Detailed Analysis of the Wayanad Landslide Tragedy	18
6.	The 'Right to be Forgotten' in India	21
7.	Why did courts revisit bar on sub-quotas?	29
8.	ABC of Coastal Erosion	33
9.	The issue of institutional violence, addressing it	38
10.	Judicial Audit of Law	41
11.	Powering up to get to the \$30-trillion economy point	45
12.	A closer look at beefing up Jammu's counter-terror grid	49
13.	What are Xerogels?	53
14.	E-Rupee and its Potential	55
15.	High temp hits flights to Leh. Why?	59

16.	Change in Bangladesh, the challenges for India	62
17.	Refugee rights, the gendered nature of displacement	65
18.	Hidden dangers of irrational use of antibiotics on microbiome	69
19.	Climate change: A gap between public opinion and scientific consensus	73
20.	Disinformation, AI and 'cyber chakravayuh'	78
21.	The shock-effects of South Asian tumult	81
22.	Freedom from dependence, a new era in health care	85
23.	India's future, its youth, face their greatest challenge yet — the climate crisis	88
24.	The essence of India's inflation problem	92
25.	Do doctors need a Central protection Act?	95
26.	New migrant realities in Karnataka's gig sector	98
27.	The 'livery of India's freedom' is under threat	102
28.	A ground plan for sustainable mass employment	106
29.	Moral pressure and human rights compliance	109
30.	Lateral Entry into civil services	112
31.	ABC of Self-Help Groups	119

32.	Building on favourable change in the 2024 waqf Bill	125
33.	All about Hollangapar Gibbon Sanctuary	129
34.	Water Act: Concerns with latest changes indicate need for more comprehensive water governance	131
35.	Justice Hema Committee report says.....	135
36.	Unfolding crisis: Darjeeling's growing floating population poses water, waste challenges	138
37.	New-age gateway devices, the latest health threat	142
38.	The heavy shackles of fear and vigilance	145
39.	Metaverse and AI - Future perfect or imperfect	148
40.	Advancing equity, from COVID-19 to Mpox	155
41.	Wanted: a strategy to turn climate research into disaster management	158
42.	Moving the spotlight to grassroots democracy	161
43.	MOVING TOWARDS A BETTER COALITION CULTURE IN INDIA	165
44.	Indian Democracy and Populism	170
45.	ABC of Public interest Litigation (PIL)	175

1.

AI needs cultural policies, not just regulation

Introduction

- **Balancing Regulation with Data Policies:**
 - **Need for a Dual Approach:** Effective AI governance requires more than just regulatory frameworks. It is crucial to also promote policies that treat high-quality data as a public good.
 - **Objective:** This approach aims to enhance transparency, create equitable opportunities, and build public trust in AI technologies.

Data as the Lifblood of AI

- **Significance of Data in AI Development:**
 - **Neural Scaling Laws:** AI, particularly LLMs, thrives on large datasets. The volume and diversity of data directly influence model performance, with more data typically leading to better results.
 - **Comparison with Other Factors:** While computing power and algorithmic innovations are important, data is often considered the most critical driver of progress in AI.
- **Current State of Training Datasets:**
 - **Massive Datasets:** For example, Meta's Llama 3 is trained on 15 trillion tokens, vastly exceeding the size of the British Library's collection.
 - **Future Concerns:** Studies suggest that data quality issues and potential "peak data"—where data supply cannot meet growing demands—might arise before 2030. There's also the risk of data contamination through feedback loops that exacerbate biases.

Ethical Concerns and Data Practices

- **Ethics of Data Acquisition:**

- **Data Race:** The intense competition for data can lead to ethical lapses. An example is the use of pirated books, known as 'Books3,' which some believe contribute to training leading LLMs.
- **Legal and Ethical Debates:** The legality and fairness of using such data are contested. The lack of clear ethical guidelines exacerbates these concerns.

- **Quality and Bias Issues:**

- **Content Sources:** LLMs are trained on a mix of licensed content, public data, and social media interactions. This training can reflect and reinforce existing biases, particularly in terms of language and cultural representation.
- **Anglophone Bias:** Current datasets are often skewed towards English and contemporary content, which limits the representativeness of AI outputs.

The Absence of Primary Sources

- **Limitations of Existing LLM Training Data:**

- **Secondary vs. Primary Sources:** LLMs primarily rely on secondary sources and may miss out on primary sources such as archival documents, oral traditions, and historical texts.
- **Cultural Biases:** The absence of diverse primary sources means that LLMs lack comprehensive coverage of global cultural and linguistic diversity.

- **Potential of Untapped Data:**

- **Archival Riches:** Examples include Italy's State Archives, which hold extensive historical documents. Such archives, if digitized, could significantly enhance AI's cultural and historical knowledge base.

- **Volume of Data:** The data contained in archives globally could rival or exceed current training datasets, offering a rich resource for improving AI models.

Potential Benefits of Harnessing Cultural Heritage

- **Enrichment of AI:**
 - **Cultural Understanding:** Digitizing and utilizing primary sources would provide AI models with a deeper understanding of human culture and history.
 - **Preservation and Accessibility:** Such data can help preserve cultural heritage and make it more accessible, safeguarding it from threats like war and climate change.
- **Economic and Innovation Benefits:**
 - **Opportunities for Smaller Entities:** Publicly available data would enable start-ups and smaller companies to develop AI applications, fostering innovation and creating a more competitive market.
 - **Global Innovation:** Free and transparent data access can drive global technological advancements and innovation by levelling the playing field against major tech companies.

Examples from Italy and Canada

- **Italy's Digital Library Project:**
 - **Ambitious Goals:** Italy initially invested €500 million in the 'Digital Library' project to digitize its cultural heritage and make it publicly accessible.
 - **Challenges:** The project faced restructuring and reduced priority, reflecting a missed opportunity for leveraging AI and digital humanities.
- **Canada's Official Languages Act:**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Historical Context: Initially criticized as wasteful, Canada's bilingual policy provided valuable datasets for translation technologies. ○ Broader Implications: The success of this policy highlights the benefits of digitizing and promoting diverse languages, including those with fewer resources. <p>Conclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Preserving and Democratizing Knowledge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Digital Transition: As the digital landscape evolves, prioritizing the digitization of cultural heritage is essential for preserving historical knowledge and making it accessible. ○ Inclusive AI Innovation: Harnessing these resources can lead to more inclusive and equitable AI development, ensuring that benefits are distributed globally.
<p>2.</p>	<p>What constitutes Parliamentary Privileges?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parliamentary privileges are the rights and immunities enjoyed by members of Parliament (MPs) in India to enable them to discharge their duties and functions without interference or intimidation. ● Sources: These privileges are derived from the Constitution of India, parliamentary conventions, laws made by the Parliament, rules of Lok sabha and Rajya sabha, and judicial interpretations. ● Constitutional Provisions: Parliamentary privileges are defined in Article 105 of the Indian Constitution. The members of Parliament are exempted from any civil or criminal liability for any statement made or act done in the course of their duties. ● Co-terminus with membership: The privileges are claimed only when

the person is a member of the house. As soon as he ends to be a member, the privileges are said to be called off.

- These privileges are essential so that the proceedings and functions can be made in a **disciplined** and undisturbed manner.
- In India, the privileges of members of Parliament are specified in the Constitution, the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha, and the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Rajya Sabha.
- It is important to note that parliamentary privileges are **not absolute** and are subject to certain limits. For example, MPs are expected to use their privileges responsibly and not abuse them for personal gain.

Constitutional provisions related to parliamentary privileges

According to the Constitution of India, **Articles 105 and 122** outline the privileges of Parliament, while **Articles 194 and 212** pertain to the privileges of state governments.

- **Article 105:** There shall be freedom of speech in Parliament. No member of Parliament shall be liable to any proceedings in any court in respect of anything said or any vote given by him in Parliament or any committee thereof.
- **Article 122:** The validity of any proceedings in Parliament shall not be called in question in court on the ground of any alleged irregularity of procedure.
- **Article 194:** There shall be freedom of speech in the State Legislature. No member of the State Legislature shall be liable to any proceedings in any court in respect of anything said or any vote given by him in the State Legislature or any committee thereof.
- **Article 212:** The validity of any proceedings in the State Legislature shall not be called in question in court on the ground of any alleged

irregularity of procedure.

Classification of parliamentary privileges

Parliamentary privileges are intended to protect the independence and integrity of the legislative process and to allow lawmakers to speak and act freely without fear of reprisal or legal consequences.

- **Individual Privileges:** Individual privileges refer to the rights and immunities enjoyed by members of the Indian Parliament and State Legislature to enable them to perform their duties without fear of interference or prosecution.
- **Collective Privileges:** Collective privileges in India refer to the rights and immunities that are enjoyed by both Houses of the Indian Parliament and State Legislature as a whole, as well as their members and officers.

Individual Privileges

- Members **cannot be arrested** during the session of Parliament 40 days before the beginning and 40 days after the end of a session.
- Members have **freedom of speech** in Parliament, and no member is liable to any proceedings in any court
- They are **exempted from jury service** when Parliament is in

Collective Privileges

- Right to **publish its reports**, debates, and proceedings.
- Right to **exclude strangers** from its proceedings
- Right to **make rules** to regulate its own procedure
- Right to **punish members** as well as

session.

outsiders for breach of its privileges

- The **courts prohibited** inquiring into the proceedings of a House.
- **No person can be arrested** without the permission of the presiding officer.

Significance of Privileges in the Indian Parliament

- Parliamentary privileges are an important aspect of the legislative process, as they help to ensure the **independence and integrity** of the legislative body. These privileges are intended to protect the ability of lawmakers to speak and act freely.
- By providing immunity from arrest and legal process, parliamentary privileges allow members of parliament to carry out their duties and responsibilities **without fear of intimidation or interference**.
- In addition, parliamentary privileges such as the privilege of confidentiality and the privilege of access allow members of parliament to obtain and share information that may be **crucial to their decision-making processes**.
- Overall, parliamentary privileges are an important part of the **checks and balances** that help to safeguard the independence and integrity of democratic institutions and ensure that they can function effectively.

Challenges and issues pertaining to Parliamentary Privileges

There are several challenges associated with parliamentary privileges in India. Some of these challenges include

- **Scope of privileges:** One challenge is determining the scope and limits of parliamentary privileges. While these privileges are intended to protect the independence and integrity of the legislative process, they can also shield lawmakers from accountability and scrutiny.
- **Conflict with constitutional principles:** Parliamentary privileges may sometimes conflict with other constitutional principles, such as equality before the law. For example, the privilege of immunity from arrest and legal process may be seen as giving members of parliament special privileges that are not available to other citizens.
- **Misuse of privileges:** There have been instances where parliamentary privileges have been misused by lawmakers in India. For example, some lawmakers have used their freedom of speech privilege to make inflammatory or offensive comments or false or baseless allegations.
- **Lack of transparency:** The process for claiming and enforcing parliamentary privileges in India can be opaque and lacks transparency. This can make it difficult to hold lawmakers accountable for their actions and undermine public trust in the legislative process.
- **Inadequate oversight:** There is a lack of adequate oversight and mechanisms for enforcing parliamentary privileges in India. This can make it difficult to hold lawmakers accountable for abuses of these privileges and can lead to a lack of confidence in the legislative process.

Breach of Parliamentary Privilege, and when does it occur

A breach of privilege in the Indian Parliament refers to a violation of the rights and immunities of the Parliament or its members.

- Breach of privilege can include impeding the work of parliament, obstructing a member from carrying out their duties, or disclosing confidential information discussed in parliament without authorization.
- Breaches of privilege are considered a serious offense and can result in

disciplinary action being taken against the offending member or members.

When any of rights and immunities such as freedom from arrest or freedom of speech is disregarded or attacked, the **offence is called a breach of privilege** and is punishable under the law of Parliament.

Judgments related to parliamentary privileges

- **No Parliamentary immunity for vandalism:** The Supreme Court recently observed that lawmakers cannot indulge in criminal acts on the Parliament or Assembly floors and then take cover behind the right to free speech.
- **K Anandan Nambiar case 1951:** The Supreme Court of India held that a Member of Parliament could claim no special status higher than that of an ordinary citizen and is as much liable to be arrested, detained, or questioned even during the session.
- **State of Kerala Vs. K. Ajith and Others 2021:** The Supreme Court has observed that “privileges and immunities are not gateways to claim exemptions from the general law of the land, particularly as in this case, the criminal law which governs the action of every citizen.”

How can parliamentary privileges be used effectively?

Parliamentary privileges are an important aspect of the legislative process, as they help to ensure the independence and integrity of the legislative body. To use these privileges appropriately, lawmakers should follow a few best practices:

1. **Use privileges responsibly:** Members of parliament should use their privileges responsibly and should not abuse them for personal or political gain. This means avoiding using privileges to make inflammatory or offensive comments or false or baseless allegations.
2. **Respect the rights of others:** Members of parliament should respect

the rights of others and should not use their privileges to infringe on the rights of others. This includes avoiding using privileges to harass or intimidate others or to engage in discriminatory or exclusionary behavior.

3. **Be transparent:** Members of parliament should be transparent in their use of privileges and should be open and accountable for their actions. This means being open and honest about the reasons for claiming privileges and being willing to justify their use when necessary.
4. **Follow parliamentary procedures:** Members of parliament should follow established parliamentary procedures when claiming and enforcing privileges. This includes respecting the rules and standing orders regulating the procedure of Parliament, and adhering to the principles of impartiality and fairness.

Overall, by following these best practices, members of parliament can use their privileges appropriately and in a way that serves the best interests of the institution and the public. This can help to ensure that the legislative process is independent, transparent, and accountable and that it serves the needs and interests of the community.

How do other countries use parliamentary privileges effectively?

Australia: In Australia, the privileges of members of parliament are codified by Parliamentary Privileges Act 1987, and are subject to review by the courts. This helps to ensure that the privileges are used in a manner that is consistent with the rule of law and that they are not used to restrict the rights of citizens.

New Zealand: In New Zealand, The Parliamentary Privilege Act 2014 affirms and clarifies the nature, scope and extent of the privileges enjoyed by the House which are subject to review and amendment by the House itself. This ensures that the privileges are used in a manner that is consistent with the will of the House and that they are responsive to the changing needs of the legislature.

3.

INS Arighat

1. INS Arighat was commissioned into the Indian Navy on March 10, 2023.
2. INS Arighat is India's second indigenously built nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine (SSBN).
3. The development of INS Arighat, along with its predecessor INS Arihant, is a part of India's effort to establish a credible nuclear triad, which includes land-based, air-based, and sea-based nuclear delivery systems.

The submarine was constructed at the Indian Navy's Ship Building Centre (SBC) in Visakhapatnam.

INS Arighat plays a crucial role in enhancing the nation's capability to launch nuclear missiles from land, air, and sea.

1. INS Arighat has a submerged displacement of around 6,000 tons. The submarine is approximately 111 meters (364 feet) long and 11 meters (36 feet) wide.

2. Propulsion: It is powered by a nuclear reactor which provides it with virtually unlimited range and endurance, allowing it to remain submerged for extended periods.

3. Armament: INS Arighat is equipped with ballistic missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads. The specific missiles include the K-15 Sagarika and potentially the K-4 missile, both designed to enhance the submarine's strategic strike capabilities.

4. The submarine features advanced stealth technology to reduce its detectability by enemy sonar systems. Its design incorporates lessons learned from INS Arihant, improving its operational effectiveness and survivability.

1. Nuclear Deterrence: INS Arighat plays a crucial role in India's nuclear

	<p>triad which ensures a credible second-strike capability. This enhances India's ability to retaliate in the event of a nuclear attack, thereby maintaining a strong and secure deterrent posture.</p> <p>2. Patrols and Deployment: It operates primarily in the Indian Ocean ensuring India's nuclear deterrent is always at sea. Its deployment enhances regional security and contributes to India's strategic influence.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>A verdict on the Money Bill that India awaits</p> <p>Introduction</p> <p>The Supreme Court of India is poised to resolve a critical constitutional question regarding the definition and usage of Money Bills, which will impact India's legislative procedures and the balance of power between the Parliament's two Houses. This issue arose from the Roger Mathew vs South Indian Bank Ltd. case, where the Finance Act, 2017, was challenged for being certified as a Money Bill despite containing provisions that seemingly extend beyond its constitutional definition.</p> <p>Background: The Finance Act, 2017</p> <p>The Finance Act, 2017, was enacted as a Money Bill, allowing it to bypass the Rajya Sabha, the Upper House of Parliament. This Act introduced significant changes to the structure and functioning of various tribunals. Key modifications included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abolition and Merger of Tribunals: The Act dissolved certain tribunals and merged others, restructuring the judicial and quasi-judicial bodies in the country. • Changes in Appointment and Service Conditions: It prescribed

qualifications for the appointment of members to these tribunals and altered their terms of service.

- **Executive Power over Tribunals:** The Act granted the executive branch extensive authority to frame rules governing these tribunals, raising concerns about judicial independence.

Constitutional Framework: Articles 109 and 110

The Indian Constitution mandates that all Bills, except Money Bills, require the approval of both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha. However, **Article 109** provides an exception for Money Bills, which can be passed solely by the Lok Sabha, with the Rajya Sabha limited to making non-binding recommendations.

Article 110(1) specifically **defines** what constitutes a Money Bill. It includes provisions exclusively dealing with:

- Imposition or abolition of taxes.
- Regulation of government borrowing.
- Withdrawal of money from the Consolidated Fund of India.
- Appropriation of money for government expenditure.
- Matters incidental to the aforementioned subjects.

The crucial word "only" indicates that a Bill must exclusively deal with these subjects to qualify as a Money Bill. The Speaker of the Lok Sabha has the final authority to certify a Bill as a Money Bill, a decision that has significant constitutional and political implications.

The Core Issue: Scope and Definition of a Money Bill

The controversy in Rojer Mathew hinges on whether the Finance Act, 2017, which extensively altered the administration of tribunals, legitimately qualified as a Money Bill. The petitioners argued that the Act included numerous provisions unrelated to the subjects specified in **Article 110(1)**. For instance:

- **Jurisdictional Changes and Qualifications:** The Act redefined the

jurisdiction of tribunals and set qualifications for their members, areas typically covered by ordinary legislation rather than financial provisions.

- **Delegated Legislation:** It empowered the executive to make detailed rules, potentially compromising judicial independence by shifting control over tribunals from the judiciary to the executive.
- The petitioners contended that such sweeping changes could not be deemed merely "incidental" to financial matters, as required under Article 110(1).

Judicial Precedents and the Need for Clarification

The Supreme Court's decision in the **K.S. Puttaswamy vs Union of India case (2018)** is particularly relevant. In that case, the **Aadhaar Act** was passed as a Money Bill, despite containing provisions on enrolment, data collection, and the establishment of the **Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)**. The Court upheld the Act's classification as a Money Bill based on certain sections relating to subsidies, benefits, and services funded by the Consolidated Fund of India.

However, the Rojer Mathew Bench noted that the Puttaswamy ruling did not adequately address the significance of the word "only" in Article 110(1), leading to ambiguity in determining the limits of a Money Bill. The current seven-judge Bench must clarify these limits and decide whether the inclusion of extraneous matters in a Bill certified as a Money Bill constitutes a "colourable exercise of power."

Broader Implications: Federal Structure and Legislative Checks

The Supreme Court's ruling will have far-reaching consequences beyond the specific cases at hand. It will affect the legislative process, particularly the role of the Rajya Sabha. Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, in his concurring opinion in *Rojer Mathew*, emphasized the importance of the Rajya Sabha in representing India's federal diversity and acting as a check on the Lok Sabha's legislative

	<p>powers.</p> <p>Bypassing the Rajya Sabha through the misuse of the Money Bill route undermines this bicameral structure and diminishes the role of the Upper House in legislative scrutiny. The Court's decision will, therefore, play a crucial role in upholding the federal principles embedded in the Constitution and preventing potential abuses of legislative procedures.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>The Supreme Court's forthcoming decision on the scope of Money Bills will be a landmark judgment, shaping the future of India's constitutional law and legislative practices. It will clarify the interpretation of Article 110 and ensure that the distinction between Money Bills and other types of legislation is respected. This decision will not only address the immediate concerns of legislative bypass but also reinforce the constitutional checks and balances that safeguard India's democratic and federal structure.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Detailed Analysis of the Wayanad Landslide Tragedy</p> <p>Background and Significance of Wayanad</p> <p>Wayanad, located in the lush Western Ghats of Kerala, is known for its scenic beauty, rich biodiversity, and extensive tea plantations. This district serves as the origin point for significant rivers like the Kabini and Chaliyar and boasts dense forest cover, wildlife sanctuaries, and national parks. The region's ecological importance is underscored by its designation as part of one of the world's eight hottest biodiversity hotspots.</p> <p>Recent Landslide Event</p> <p>In the past few days, Wayanad has experienced a devastating landslide</p>

triggered by a cloudburst. The disaster has led to the deaths of over 300 people, with many others missing. The affected areas, including **Meppadi**, **Mundakkai**, and **Chooralmala**, saw homes destroyed and a crucial bridge collapse, cutting off access to the village of **Attamala** in **Mundakkai**. The landslide has been attributed to unusually heavy rainfall, exacerbated by the warming of the Arabian Sea.

Contributing Factors

1. Climate Change and Environmental Instability

Climate experts have noted that the warming Arabian Sea is causing increased atmospheric instability, leading to heavy, unseasonal rainfall. This phenomenon has been particularly impactful in the Western Ghats, a region prone to landslides and other natural disasters. The shifting climate patterns, including the southward movement of rain-laden clouds, have intensified the region's vulnerability.

2. Historical Context and Ecological Sensitivity

The **Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel**, led by ecologist **Madhav Gadgil**, identified the region as an **Ecologically Sensitive Area** (ESA) in 2011. The panel recommended stringent restrictions on construction, mining, and quarrying activities to protect the fragile ecosystem. However, these recommendations were largely ignored, leading to extensive and often illegal construction activities. The transformation of Wayanad from a predominantly forested area to one dominated by plantations, particularly rubber, has significantly altered the landscape.

3. Impact of Human Activities

The rapid development of Wayanad as a tourist destination has led to an influx of infrastructure projects, including resorts, roads, and tunnels. These developments have often been carried out without proper environmental

assessments, ignoring the region's carrying capacity and ecological sensitivity. Unregulated quarrying has further destabilized the terrain, making it more susceptible to landslides during heavy rains.

Environmental and Social Consequences

1. Depletion of Forest Cover

A 2022 study revealed a drastic reduction in Wayanad's forest cover, which declined from around 85% in the 1950s to significantly lower levels today. The replacement of dense forests with rubber plantations has reduced the soil's ability to retain water, increasing erosion and the likelihood of landslides. Rubber trees, unlike native forests, have shallow root systems that do not hold soil effectively, exacerbating land degradation.

2. Infrastructure and Risk Management

The construction of roads and other infrastructure projects in Wayanad has not adequately accounted for the region's susceptibility to extreme weather events. Many structures have been built based on outdated data, failing to consider the increased frequency and intensity of rainfall. As a result, these infrastructures often fail during heavy rains, leading to flash floods and landslides.

3. Recurring Natural Disasters in Kerala

Kerala has a recent history of devastating natural disasters. In **2018**, the state experienced catastrophic floods that resulted in over 400 fatalities and widespread destruction. Subsequent years have seen similar tragedies, including landslides in **Idukki and Kottayam** districts. These recurring events highlight the increasing risk posed by climate change and unsustainable development practices in the region.

Recommendations and Future Directions

	<p>1. Sustainable Development and Environmental Protection</p> <p>To mitigate future disasters, it is crucial to implement sustainable development practices in Wayanad and other ecologically sensitive areas. This includes enforcing stricter regulations on construction and mining, promoting reforestation, and adopting land management practices that prioritize ecological stability. The focus should be on preserving the natural landscape and maintaining biodiversity, which play a critical role in stabilizing the soil and preventing erosion.</p> <p>2. Climate Resilience and Infrastructure Planning</p> <p>There is an urgent need for climate-resilient infrastructure in Kerala. This involves designing and constructing buildings, roads, and other structures that can withstand the increased rainfall and flooding associated with climate change. Infrastructure projects must incorporate the latest climate data and risk assessments to ensure they do not exacerbate environmental vulnerabilities.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>The Wayanad landslide is a stark reminder of the delicate balance between human activity and environmental sustainability. The tragedy underscores the need for a comprehensive approach to development that respects ecological boundaries and prioritizes the well-being of local communities. By learning from past mistakes and adopting more responsible practices, Kerala can work towards a safer, more resilient future in the face of climate change.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>The 'Right to be Forgotten' in India</p> <p>The Supreme Court of India decided to examine whether the "right to be forgotten," a component of the right to privacy, extends to judicial orders,</p>

which are generally considered public records. The Bench, led by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud, cautioned about the serious implications of removing judgments from the public domain following acquittal in criminal cases.

Genesis

Madras High Court Judgment: The Madras High Court had ordered the legal search portal Indian Kanoon to remove a judgment that acquitted a man in a rape case from its website.

Arguments:

1. **Acquitted Individual:** The individual argued that the public availability of the judgment on the portal led to the denial of his Australian citizenship.
2. **Indian Kanoon:** The portal argued that court records are public documents and cannot be subjected to removal orders based on individual privacy claims. Additionally, Indian Kanoon cited a potential violation of Article 14 (equality before law), as it was the only party involved in the proceedings despite other legal databases hosting the same verdict.

Legal Principle and Precedents:

Right to be Forgotten: This refers to the ability to have one's digital footprint, such as news articles, videos, or photographs, removed or erased from search engine results or databases.

Data Protection Regime in India:

- The current data protection laws in India do not recognize this right.
- The 2018 and 2019 drafts of the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 mentioned the right to be forgotten, but the final version only includes a simpler right to "erasure."

Madras High Court Interpretation: The court considered court records as "personal data" of the litigants, extending the application of the 2023 Act to judicial forums.

Indian Kanoon's Challenge: The portal argued that the legislation does not apply to personal data made public by a "person" obligated to do so under existing laws, which would exempt High Courts from the Act.

- 2017 Supreme Court Ruling: The Supreme Court recognized the right to privacy as a fundamental right, including "informational privacy." Justice Kaul emphasized the importance of the right to be forgotten in the digital age.
- International Precedents: The right is recognized in the European Union Regulation of 2016 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) of 2018.

Right to Be Forgotten

The right to be forgotten allows individuals to request the removal of their personal data from digital platforms when it is outdated, irrelevant, or harmful to their privacy.

European Context

1. Establishment: The right to be forgotten was established by the Luxembourg-based Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) in 2014.
2. Google Spain Case: This landmark case required Google to remove "inadequate, irrelevant, or no longer relevant" data upon request.
3. CJEU Ruling: The court ruled that search engines must address requests to remove information that is no longer relevant or excessive in light of the time elapsed.
4. General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR): In the EU, the right to be forgotten is enshrined in Article 17 of the GDPR, which emphasizes

informational self-determination and the right to control personal data.

Other Nations

1. Adoption: Countries like Canada, the United Kingdom, Argentina, and Japan have adopted similar laws.
2. Canada: In 2023, a Canadian court upheld the right to demand search blocks on personal data.
3. California:
 - 2015 Online Eraser Law: Allows minors to remove their posted information.
 - 2023 DELETE Act: Extends this right to adults, allowing them to delete personal information collected by data brokers.

Interpretation in India

Current Status: India does not have a specific statutory framework for the right to be forgotten. However, the concept has been referenced in the context of privacy and digital rights.

Judicial Recognition

- 2017 Ruling in Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India: Recognized the right to privacy as a fundamental right under the Constitution, implicitly including the right to be forgotten. Clarified that this right should not be absolute and outlined scenarios where it may not apply, such as for public interest, public health, archiving, research, or legal claims.
- Stated that the recognition of such a right would only mean that an individual should be able to remove their personal data when it is no longer relevant or serves no legitimate interest.

Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023

- Recognizes the right to “erasure,” but the application of these laws to

court records and publicly available data remains unclear, with conflicting interpretations in the courts.

Information Technology Rules, 2021

- Obligates intermediaries to remove or disable access to content violating privacy within 24 hours of a complaint.

Judicial Precedents

- Rajagopal vs. State of Tamil Nadu Case, 1994: Discussed the "right to be let alone" but distinguished it from the publication of public records, such as court decisions, which remain a legitimate subject for public comment.
- Dharamraj Bhanushankar Dave vs. State of Gujarat, 2017: The Gujarat High Court denied a request to remove details of an acquittal from public records, emphasizing that court orders should remain accessible.
- Orissa High Court (2020): Dealing with a criminal case involving "revenge porn," the court emphasized the need for extensive debate on the right to be forgotten. Noted that the implementation of this right presents complex issues requiring clear legal boundaries and redressal mechanisms.
- Delhi High Court (2021): Extended the right to be forgotten in a criminal case, allowing the removal of details from search results to protect the petitioner's social life and career prospects.
- Supreme Court Order (July 2022): Directed its registry to create a mechanism for removing the personal details of a couple involved in a contentious marital dispute from search engines. This expanded the interpretation of the right to be forgotten.
- Kerala High Court (December 2023): Ruled that the right to be forgotten cannot be applied to ongoing court proceedings, citing concerns about open justice and public interest. Suggested that legislative clarity is

needed but acknowledged that the right could be considered depending on specific case details and time elapsed.

- Himachal Pradesh High Court (July 2024): Directed the redaction of names of both the accused and the victim in a rape case, highlighting that once acquitted, an individual should not continue to carry the stigma of the accusations.

Challenges

- Lack of Uniformity: Varied rulings by different High Courts create confusion about the application of the right to be forgotten, leading to inconsistent enforcement and potential legal uncertainty.
- Balancing Privacy and Public Interest: Courts struggle to balance individual privacy rights with the principle of open justice and public access to information, making it difficult to establish clear guidelines.
- Impact on Public Records: The distinction between personal privacy and public records, as discussed in *Rajagopal vs. State of Tamil Nadu, 1994*, poses challenges. Courts must navigate how to protect personal privacy without undermining the accessibility and legitimacy of public court records.
- Need for Legislative Clarity: The absence of a comprehensive legal framework contributes to the inconsistent application of the right, highlighting the need for legislative intervention to define clear standards and procedures.
- Potential for Overreach: Courts' differing approaches may prompt concerns about overreach and the integrity of digital records. There is a risk that private entities might face undue pressure to remove content, potentially affecting the accuracy and completeness of online information.
- Balancing Rights: Courts need to balance the Right to Be Forgotten with

freedom of speech and expression. Additionally, there is a need for clear guidelines to resolve conflicts between the Right to Be Forgotten and the Right to Information Act, 2005.

- Other Challenges: Enforcing the Right to Be Forgotten across digital platforms and jurisdictions is challenging due to compliance issues and technical constraints like data replication. Ensuring compliance from search engines, websites, and other intermediaries requires robust legal and technical mechanisms. Complete removal of information from the internet can be technically difficult. Restriction to journalism could hinder journalists' ability to disclose certain people's histories and past activities, affecting the democratic role of journalism.

"Right to Be Forgotten" Should Be Adopted

- Control Over Personal Information: Individuals should have the right to control their personal information and identity in the digital age. Governments and private entities can significantly interfere with privacy by tracking and recording online activities. Many instances of personal information, such as intimate photos or private details, are shared online without consent. The Right to Be Forgotten addresses this issue by allowing individuals to remove such content from public access.
- Mitigating Digital Damage: The presence of outdated or incorrect information can have long-lasting negative effects on an individual's life, including their personal relationships and professional opportunities. This right helps mitigate such harms by allowing for the removal of outdated or irrelevant data. Individuals should not be continually penalized for their past, especially when they have moved on or changed. The right ensures they are not unjustly judged based on outdated information.
- Right to Privacy: There is no right to access private information that is

unlawfully made public. The Right to Be Forgotten ensures that individuals are not compelled to live with the repercussions of unlawfully disclosed personal information.

Road ahead

- **Legislative Framework:** Enact a comprehensive data protection law with the right to be forgotten, define clear criteria for data erasure, and establish an independent data protection authority. This body would possess expertise in privacy, technology, and law, ensuring consistent and impartial decisions.
- **Overreach:** Prevent misuse of the right to be forgotten through clear definitions, limitations, and oversight mechanisms. Develop clear judicial guidelines for balancing privacy and public interest in right to be forgotten cases, considering factors such as the nature of the information, public interest, and time elapsed since publication.
- **Industry Self-Regulation:** Encourage industry self-regulation to develop responsible data handling practices. Promote data minimization and secure data deletion procedures. Invest in research and development to address technical challenges related to data deletion and anonymization.
- **Public Awareness:** Conduct public awareness campaigns to educate individuals about data privacy rights and responsibilities. Foster a culture of responsible online behavior.

The Right to Be Forgotten is gaining importance in legal and technical domains, reflecting its growing role in privacy protections. In India, the lack of specific legislation means this right is currently addressed through the judiciary, but future legislation is anticipated to provide a clearer framework with ongoing efforts to recognize this right.

The Supreme Court's examination of the "right to be forgotten" in the context

	<p>of judicial records highlights the delicate balance between privacy and public interest. The lack of a comprehensive legal framework and inconsistent precedents underscore the need for clear judicial guidelines to ensure uniform application of this right.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Why did courts revisit bar on sub-quotas?</p> <p>Background of the Issue</p> <p><i>E.V. Chinniah vs State of Andhra Pradesh (2004)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andhra Pradesh introduced a system dividing Scheduled Castes (SCs) into four groups (A, B, C, and D) for reservation purposes. The intent was to address differences in advancement levels among SC communities. • High Court Verdict: The Andhra Pradesh High Court upheld the law, arguing that sub-classification aimed to provide representation to less advanced SC groups. <p>Supreme Court Judgment (2004): A five-judge Constitution Bench ruled against sub-classification. It asserted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 341 of the Constitution: The list of SCs is notified by the President and cannot be modified except by an act of Parliament. • Homogeneity of SCs: The Constitution considers SCs as a single homogeneous class, making state-level sub-classification impermissible. <p>Developments Leading to Larger Bench Consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Punjab Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes (Reservation in

Services) Act, 2006: Provided 25% reservation for SCs, with sub-quota preferences for specific SC groups (e.g., Balmikis and Mazhabi Sikhs).

- **Haryana Government's Notification (2006):** Divided SCs into two blocks, assigning 50% of the SC quota to each block.
- **Tamil Nadu Law (2009):** Enacted to provide a sub-quota for Arunthathiyars, a specific subgroup within the SCs.
- **Legal Challenges:** These laws and notifications faced legal challenges, with High Courts in Punjab, Haryana, and Tamil Nadu questioning their constitutionality based on the 2004 judgment.
- **Supreme Court Review (2020):** A nine-judge Constitution Bench had previously ruled on **Indra Sawhney (1992)**, which allowed sub-classification for Other Backward Classes (OBCs). The 2020 Bench doubted the correctness of the **2004 Chinniah** ruling, prompting a larger Bench to reassess it.

Supreme Court Judgment (2024)

Overruling the 2004 Judgment:

- **Homogeneity Revisited:** The seven-judge Bench, led by Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, found that SCs are **not a homogeneous class** as previously ruled. The earlier judgment's assumption of uniformity among SCs was incorrect.
- **Article 341 Interpretation:** Article 341's role is to identify SCs for general affirmative action, but it does not preclude states from addressing intra-community differences. The states can make special provisions to cater to varying degrees of backwardness within SC communities.
- **Sub-Classification Validity:** Sub-classification is allowed as long as it is based on "intelligible differentia" (a clear and rational distinction) and

serves the purpose of better addressing intra-community disparities. Such classifications must be justified by empirical data and are subject to judicial review.

Impact and Implications

- **Encouragement for Targeted Reservation:** States can now implement sub-quotas to benefit more marginalized sections within SCs. This approach aims to ensure that the most disadvantaged groups receive adequate representation and benefits.
- **Judicial Scrutiny:** Sub-classifications are not absolute and must be defensible in court. States must provide evidence of the rationale behind such classifications.

Detailed Examination of Inter-Community Differences

- **Historical and Empirical Evidence:** Chief Justice Chandrachud's judgment drew on historical and empirical data to show that there are significant differences among SC communities, including instances where some SC groups face discrimination from others within the same category.
- **Adherence to 2004 Doctrine:** Justice Trivedi maintained that sub-classification among SCs was impermissible and akin to altering the President's list under Article 341. She emphasized the importance of maintaining the integrity of the SC list as initially notified.

Creamy Layer Concept

Concept and Current Status

- **Application to OBCs:** The creamy layer concept, which excludes the more advanced members of OBCs from affirmative action benefits, does not currently apply to SCs.
- **Justice B.R. Gavai's Opinion:** Justice Gavai argued that a similar exclusion should be considered for SCs to ensure that more advanced members do not benefit unfairly compared to those in greater need. He highlighted:
- **Differences in Access and Resources:** Noted the disparity between SC individuals from urban versus rural areas and those from elite versus less privileged educational institutions.
- **Equality Principle:** Emphasized that equal treatment of all SC members despite their varying levels of advancement undermines the principle of equality.
- **Implementation:** Despite Justice Gavai's opinion, there is no direct directive to implement the creamy layer concept for SCs in this case. The issue of creamy layer exclusion did not form part of the case's central issues and thus was not mandated for implementation.

Conclusion

The 2024 Supreme Court judgment revises the 2004 stance, allowing states to sub-classify Scheduled Castes and set sub-quotas, aiming to address intra-community disparities more effectively. The ruling emphasizes that while Article 341 identifies SCs, states can differentiate within the SC category to ensure that affirmative action is more precisely targeted. The decision reflects an effort to balance constitutional principles with practical considerations of social equity.

8.

ABC of Coastal Erosion

A recent study revealed that **coastal erosion** is threatening the livelihood of fishers and other inhabitants in **coastal Tamil Nadu**.

- Nearly **43%** of its coast faces **erosion** with a loss of more than **4,450 acres of land**.
- Area under erosion is increasing by **3 metres per year** on the east coast and **2.5 metres per year on the west coast**.
- **Development projects** meant to boost **economic growth** and prevent sea erosion are making things worse by **changing the shoreline**.
- In **Tamil Nadu**, for most of the year (about eight months), the **wind and sea currents** move from south to north, **carrying sand** with them. During the northeast monsoon (about four months), they **flow** in the **opposite direction**.
 - When structures like **ports, breakwaters** or **groynes** are built extending into the sea, they block the natural movement of sand.
 - This causes sand to **pile up** on one side and leads to **erosion** on the other side, where sand is lost.
 - This **imbalance** speeds up coastal erosion, causing **waves** to move further **inland** and **increasing** the **risk** to coastal areas.

Coastal Erosion

Coastal erosion occurs when the **sea wears away the land**, often caused by strong waves **breaking down** the coast. It is the process by which **local sea level rise, strong wave action, and coastal flooding** wear down or carry away rocks, soils, and/or sands along the coast.

- **Process:** There are **four main processes** of coastal erosion. These are **corrasion, abrasion, hydraulic action** and **attrition**.
 - **Corrasion:** It happens when strong waves throw beach material like **pebbles** at the **base of a cliff**, gradually breaking it down and

creating a wave-cut notch (small, curved indent at the base of a cliff).

- **Abrasion:** It happens when waves, carrying **sand** and **larger fragments**, wear away the base of a cliff or headland. It's like a sandpaper effect and is especially common during **powerful storms**.
- **Hydraulic Action:** It occurs when waves hit a cliff, **compressing air** in cracks and joints. When the wave pulls back, the **trapped air rushes out** explosively, causing **chunks** of the cliff to break off. Weathering weakens the cliff further, making this process more effective.
- **Attrition:** It occurs when waves cause **rocks** and **pebbles** to bump into **each other** and break up.

• **Causes:**

- **Groynes** are low-lying **wood** or **concrete structures** designed to trap sediment and dissipate wave energy.
- **Waves:** Powerful waves can **erode coastlines** through abrasion, corrasion, and hydraulic action. E.g. the **cliffs of Dover** in England are being eroded by the constant action of the English Channel's waves.
- **Tides:** High and low tides can affect the amount of erosion, particularly in areas with significant **tidal ranges**. E.g., the **Bay of Fundy** in Canada experiences extreme tides that can erode coastlines significantly.
- **Wind and Sea Currents:** It can cause gradual and **long-term erosion**. E.g., On the Tamil Nadu coast, **for most of the year (eight months)**, wind and sea currents move from south to north, **carrying sand along the coast**. During the northeast monsoon (four months), this direction reverses.

- **Hard Structures:** Ports, breakwaters, and groynes **interfere** with the **natural movement** of sand, causing erosion on the down-current side and sand **accumulation** on the up-current side.
- **Development Projects:** Infrastructure projects aimed at boosting economic growth are exacerbating erosion by **altering** the **shoreline**. E.g., **Land** reclamation in places like Mumbai causes erosion in nearby coastal regions.
- **Port Expansion:** When **ports** and **harbours** are expanded, structures like **breakwaters** and **jetties** block the natural movement of sand and sediment along the coast. This can lead to **sediment accumulation** on one side of the structure and increased erosion on the other side. E.g., **Ennore Port** and the Adani **Kattupalli Port** in Tamil Nadu.

Coastline of India

- India has a coastline of 7516.6 Km [6100 km of mainland+1197 km of islands] touching 13 States and Union Territories (UTs).
- **Gujarat (1214.7 km) has the longest Coastline** among states followed by Andhra Pradesh (973.7 km) and Tamil Nadu (906.9 km).
- **Andaman & Nicobar Islands (1962 km) have the longest Coastline among UTs.**
- **Coromandel coast (Tamil Nadu) is a coast of emergence** while Konkan coast (Maharashtra and Goa Coast) is a coast of submergence.

Impacts of Coastal Erosion

- **Loss of Land:** Erosion can lead to the **loss** of valuable **coastal land**, affecting property and infrastructure. E.g. the loss of land along the **Marina Beach area** in Chennai severely affected property and **public spaces**.
- **Impact on Coastal Ecosystems:** Erosion can destroy habitats such as

mangroves, salt marshes and sand dunes, which are crucial for various species. E.g., In the **Sundarbans region** of West Bengal, erosion has led to the loss of mangrove forests.

- **Flooding Risk:** Erosion can **reduce the natural barriers** that protect coastal areas from **flooding**. E.g., In coastal regions of Kerala, erosion has increased the risk of flooding, affecting low-lying areas and exacerbating the impacts of **heavy rains** and **storms**.
- **Displacement of Communities:** Erosion can force communities to **relocate**, leading to social and economic disruption. E.g., coastal erosion in the **Andaman and Nicobar Islands** has led to the displacement of local communities, particularly on smaller islands where land loss is more pronounced.
- **Salt Water Intrusion:** Coastal erosion can lead to the **salinisation** of agricultural land, **reducing crop yields**.
 - E.g., In Andhra Pradesh, **saltwater intrusion** negatively affected crop yields and reduced the productivity of farmland.
- **Impact on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity:** It can alter ecosystems and **food chains**. E.g., It hampered the health of **marine ecosystems** in the **Lakshadweep Islands**.

Prevent Coastal Erosion

- **Vegetation:** Strategic planting of **seagrass** and other **coastal plants** helps prevent erosion. The roots of these plants help **anchor the sand** and ensure that it is **not washed off** in erosion.
- **Beach Nourishment:** Nature-based or "**green infrastructure**" protection measures enhance the natural ability of shorelines to **absorb** and **dissipate** storm energy without interfering with natural coastal processes.
 - E.g., planting mangroves to serve as a **buffer** against erosion.

- **Coastal Restoration:** It is aimed at restoring habitats such as **wetlands** to benefit marine and coastal species by providing important nursery grounds. It has environmental benefits like **carbon sequestration** and restoration of open spaces.
- **Regulatory Measures: Zoning laws,** building codes, and maintaining minimum distance from the shoreline for new buildings or infrastructure facilities to regulate coastal development.

Initiatives by the Government

- **Shoreline Mapping System:** The **National Centre for Coastal Research (NCCR)** has observed that **33.6%** of the Indian coastline was vulnerable to **erosion**, **26.9%** was under **accretion (growing)** and **39.6%** was in a **stable** state.
- **Hazard Line:** The Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEFCC) has defined the **hazard line** to indicate **shoreline changes** and **sea level rise**.
 - It is used for disaster management, adaptive planning, and mitigation measures in Coastal States/UTs.
- **Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification 2019:** It permits erosion control measures and establishes **No Development Zones (NDZ)** to protect the coastline from encroachment and erosion.
- **Coastal Zone Management Plans (CZMP):** Following a **National Green Tribunal (NGT)** order, States/UTs have been asked to finalise CZMPs, including mapping of **erosion-prone areas** and preparing Shoreline Management Plans.
- **National Strategy for Coastal Protection:** MoEFCC has developed a national strategy and guidelines for **coastal protection** for all Coastal States and UTs.
- **Flood Management Scheme:** Anti-sea erosion schemes are planned

	<p>and executed by State Governments with Union Government assistance in technical, advisory, catalytic, and promotional capacities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coastal Management Information System (CMIS): It collects nearshore coastal data for planning, designing, and maintaining coastal protection structures. An experimental CMIS was set up at three sites each in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Puducherry. <p>Coastal erosion threatens India's coastlines, harming the environment and local communities. Natural and human factors worsen shoreline changes, leading to habitat loss and affecting fishermen. Improved shoreline mapping and government measures, like hazard lines and CRZ Notification 2019, aim to manage and protect coastlines. Ongoing efforts, such as CMIS,</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>The issue of institutional violence, addressing it</p> <p>Introduction</p> <p>India's democratic process is the largest in the world, with 642 million voters participating, more than half of whom were women. However, a significant dichotomy exists as gender-based violence (GBV) remains a pervasive issue, largely unaddressed by political agendas.</p> <p>Electoral Agenda and Women's Safety</p> <p>Despite the high female voter turnout, women's safety was not a prominent issue for the majority of the 2,823 candidates in the elections. Those few who included it in their agenda did so sporadically and failed to address the systemic nature of institutional violence that survivors face daily.</p> <p>Prevalence of Gender-Based Violence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearly 50% of Indian women experience domestic violence. • Two out of three Dalit women face sexual violence in their lifetimes.

- Reports indicate that 90 rapes occur daily in India.
- Despite these figures, the issue does not feature prominently in political or public discourse.

Institutional Violence: A Critical Issue

Institutional violence, which includes the systemic failures and obstacles survivors face, often exacerbates the trauma of the original act of violence.

This includes:

- **Pre-reporting Phase:** Many women are discouraged from reporting due to societal and institutional biases.
- **Police and Judicial System:** A 2019 J-PAL report revealed that 39% of officers in India consider complaints of gender-based violence baseless. The justice system is described as brutal and traumatic, with cases often being dismissed or mishandled, especially for marginalized communities.

Challenges in Rural India

In rural areas, the situation is exacerbated by male and upper-caste dominated panchayats. Divorce is rarely an option, and a significant backlog of 40 million court cases further hinders access to justice. For marginalized communities, these challenges are compounded by caste, literacy, and geographic factors.

Role of Social Impact Organizations

Organizations like **Vanangna** in Bundelkhand and Samarthya have been working to provide trauma-informed training to government officials and law enforcement. They advocate for a national adoption of these practices to create survivor-centric institutions.

	<p><i>The Need for Stronger Implementation</i></p> <p>While India has robust domestic violence laws, implementation remains weak due to the prevalence of societal norms that condone violence. Effective change requires reimagining the justice system, leveraging the experiences of survivors, and integrating trauma-informed approaches.</p> <p><i>The Importance of Data and Public Discourse</i></p> <p>A lack of comprehensive data on the denial of justice to women hinders understanding and action. The recent updates to criminal law procedures, focusing on timeliness and digital access, must be accompanied by gender-sensitive training to ensure that officials handle cases appropriately.</p> <p>Conclusion: The Role of Voters and Politicians</p> <p>The article emphasizes the need for both voters and politicians to prioritize and demand justice for survivors of gender-based violence. Just as there has been a national shift in promoting girls' education, a similar effort is required to ensure that women can access justice without fear. The call to action is clear: voters must demand the right to safety and dignity for all women in India.</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>Judicial Audit of Law</p> <p>Recently, the Supreme Court of India recently upheld the judiciary's authority to direct the government to conduct a "performance audit" of its statutory laws.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This ruling emerged from an appeal regarding an Act for slum area development in Maharashtra, highlighting concerns over the law's

effectiveness in improving conditions for its intended beneficiaries.

Supreme Court's Ruling

- The Supreme Court directed the Bombay High Court to conduct a performance audit of the Maharashtra Slum Areas (Improvement, Clearance and Redevelopment) Act, 1971, due to a significant backlog of over 1,600 pending cases related to the Act.
- The Court highlighted that while the Act aims to provide housing and dignity to marginalised individuals, its implementation has led to extensive litigation, undermining its objectives.
- The Court emphasised that the judiciary has both the power and duty to ensure laws are effective. The Court noted that if a law fails to benefit its intended recipients, a performance audit is warranted.
- Additionally, the Court stressed the importance of "institutional memory" in evaluating legislation's long-term impact.

Implications of this Judgment

- **Judicial Activism:** It marks a shift towards proactive judicial involvement in governance, wherein the judiciary can act as a facilitator of justice, stepping in when bureaucratic delays hinder the enforcement of statutory provisions.
 - This could set a precedent for similar audits of other welfare laws and schemes.
- **Performance Audit:** The performance audit aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the Act and identify systemic issues contributing to litigation.
 - This could lead to necessary reforms in the law, enhancing its efficacy in achieving its intended goals.
 - The fear of a performance audit of the law may compel legislatures to scrutinise laws more thoroughly before and during

their promulgation to eliminate any inconsistencies and shortcomings.

- **Legislature and Executive Accountability:** The ruling reinforces the constitutional duty of the legislature and executive to frame, monitor and assess the impact of legislation. This may lead to increased accountability and responsiveness from government authorities in implementing welfare laws.
- **Focus on Marginalised Communities:** The Court's emphasis on the law's intent to benefit marginalised groups underscores the need for policies that genuinely address their needs. This could stimulate further legal and policy initiatives aimed at protecting vulnerable populations.
 - The Supreme Court's observations on the Act could lead to major reforms, creating a better framework for slum redevelopment and improving living conditions for affected communities.

Previous Rulings of the Supreme Court Related Judicial Activism

- **Anun Dhawan & Ors. vs. Union of India, 2024:**
 - In this, activists filed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) advocating for the establishment of community kitchens to address hunger and malnutrition. The petition highlighted alarming child mortality rates due to these issues and argued that the situation violates fundamental rights, including the right to food and life.
 - **Supreme Court Judgment:** In this, the Supreme Court declined to direct states to implement a specific scheme for community kitchens to combat hunger and malnutrition.
 - The court emphasised the limited scope of judicial review concerning government policy matters, stating that it cannot mandate states to adopt a particular policy simply because an alternative might be considered better.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Instead, it acknowledged the existing frameworks under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) and left it to states and union territories to explore alternative welfare schemes as they saw fit.• Vishaka vs. State of Rajasthan, 1997:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The case is a landmark judgment in India that established crucial guidelines to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace.○ In this, the Supreme Court laid down comprehensive guidelines named Vishakha guidelines, outlining definitions, employer obligations, complaint mechanisms, and the need for training.○ This ruling led to the enactment of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, significantly enhancing workplace safety for women. <p><u>Reasons for the Legislature's Enactment of Ineffective Laws</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complexity of Issues: India's diverse population and interconnected social, economic, and environmental problems make it difficult to draft universally effective laws.• Lack of Research and Data: Many laws are created without sufficient empirical evidence or thorough impact assessments, leading to ineffective solutions.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Example: Lack of scrutiny by the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) on three farm laws passed in Parliament led to limited opportunities for detailed scrutiny and public input.• Political Pressures: Partisan politics and short-term electoral pressures can overshadow public interest, resulting in poorly designed legislation.• Bureaucratic Challenges: Resistance to change and limited resources within the bureaucracy can hinder the implementation and enforcement of new laws.

- Inadequate Stakeholder Consultation: Limited engagement with civil society and marginalised groups can lead to laws that fail to address real needs.
 - For Example, the Forest Rights Act (FRA) of 2006 aims to protect the rights of indigenous and tribal communities over forest land and resources. However, its implementation has struggled due to inadequate consultation with the local communities, hindering the effective recognition of their rights.
- Overlapping Jurisdictions: Conflicting laws and jurisdictional disputes can create confusion and inefficiencies in enforcement.
 - For Example, Land acquisition laws at both the central and state levels can create conflicts regarding land use and compensation practices.
- Drafting Quality: Ambiguous language and technical complexity in laws can result in misinterpretation and limited public understanding.
 - For Example: The POCSO Act strictly criminalises the possession and storage of child pornography to protect children from sexual abuse. In contrast, the IPC only addresses the creation and distribution of obscene materials, leaving a gap regarding the possession and storage of child pornography.

Road ahead

- Enhanced Stakeholder Engagement: Involve civil society, experts, and affected communities in the lawmaking process to ensure laws are practical and effective.
 - Example: The UK's Citizen Space platform allows for public consultation on proposed legislation, ensuring that diverse voices are heard.
 - A similar initiative in India could lead to laws that better reflect

	<p>the needs of the people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data-Driven Legislation: Invest in research and data collection to inform policy decisions, ensuring laws address root causes and are based on empirical evidence. • Streamlined Bureaucratic Processes: Reduce bureaucratic delays by simplifying administrative procedures and ensuring timely rule-making to facilitate effective law implementation. • Clear Drafting Standards: Establish guidelines for clear and unambiguous drafting of laws to minimise misinterpretation and ensure consistent enforcement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Example: The Plain Language Commission in the UK promotes clear and concise legal writing. India could benefit from similar guidelines to improve the readability of its laws. • Robust Monitoring and Evaluation: Implement comprehensive mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of laws post-enactment, allowing for necessary adjustments and improvements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Example: Australia's Regulatory Impact Analysis (RIA) system is designed to evaluate the potential costs and benefits of proposed regulations prior to their implementation, ensuring that the regulations are both efficient and effective.
<p>11.</p>	<p>Powering up to get to the \$30-trillion economy point</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GDP Growth Rate: India's GDP growth rate has consistently been above 7%, which is among the highest for major economies globally. This growth trajectory positions India as the fastest-growing large economy.

- **2047 Projection:** The Indian government aims to transform India into a **\$30-trillion economy by 2047**, driven by continued economic growth and development.
- **Comparative Analysis:** Historically, countries such as Brazil, Mexico, and Russia have experienced high growth rates but failed to achieve **sustained development**. India must learn from these examples to avoid stagnation.

Income Inequality and Poverty Alleviation

Impact of Economic Reforms

- **Pre-Reform Poverty:** Before economic liberalization in 1991, India's poverty rate hovered around 50%, despite extensive socialist policies aimed at poverty alleviation.
- **Post-Reform Success:** Economic reforms initiated in 1991 led to significant improvements in poverty reduction. By 2011, the poverty rate had dropped to about 20%, resulting in the upliftment of 350 million people from extreme poverty.

Income Inequality

- **Gini Coefficient:** The Gini coefficient, which measures income inequality, has shown only slight changes over the years. While inequality has increased, it is not drastically different from pre-reform levels.
- **Improved Living Standards:** Despite rising inequality, the overall standard of living for many, especially the poorest, has improved significantly. This is due to the broader economic growth which benefits a larger population segment.

Sectoral Disparities and Labour Market Dynamics

Agricultural Sector

- **Employment:** Agriculture employs 46% of the Indian workforce, a significant proportion.
- **Economic Contribution:** The sector contributes only 18% to the national GDP, highlighting inefficiencies and low productivity compared to other sectors.

Female Labor Force Participation (FLFPR)

- **Current Participation:** The FLFPR stands at 37%, reflecting improvements from 26% in 2019. This increase is partly due to women returning to work in agriculture post-COVID-19.
- **Comparative Rates:** Countries like China, Vietnam, and Japan have FLFPR rates between 60%-70%. This discrepancy indicates a need for policies that support higher female participation in the workforce.

Economic Strategy and Policy Recommendations

Lessons from the 'Asian Tigers'

- **Export-Oriented Growth:** The success of South Korea, Taiwan, Japan, and Vietnam in achieving rapid economic growth was largely due to their focus on low-skilled, export-oriented manufacturing.
- **India's Export Growth:** India's export-to-GDP ratio rose from 7% in 1990 to 25% in 2013. Continuing to leverage this growth through the China+1 strategy will be crucial for future economic development.

Avoiding the Middle-Income Trap

- **Historical Data:** Out of 101 middle-income countries in 1960, only 23 transitioned to high-income status by 2018. This highlights the difficulty of moving beyond middle-income status.
- **India's Position:** India, as a lower-middle-income country, must focus

on advancing to middle-income status and subsequently to high-income status.

Challenges in Transition

- **Sectoral Challenges:** India has struggled to utilize its surplus labor for growth in lower-end sectors. The IT boom provided an alternative but is not sufficient for broader industrial growth.
- **Manufacturing Ecosystem:** Growth in high-value manufacturing requires a foundation of low-tech, high-volume manufacturing. This helps build necessary skills and infrastructure.

Policy Recommendations for Growth

Market-Led Economic Model

- **Government Role:** Adopt a "Minimum Government, Maximum Governance" approach to improve the ease of doing business, reduce regulatory burdens, and foster a competitive business environment.
- **Reform Implementation:** Ensure that reforms aimed at enhancing the business climate continue to progress without significant setbacks.

Infrastructure and Industrial Clusters

- **Infrastructure Development:** Invest in building modern industrial clusters with comprehensive infrastructure including utilities, transportation, and ancillary services.
- **Cost Disadvantages:** Address high costs related to power, logistics, and financing, and reduce compliance burdens that hinder industrial growth.

Focus Areas for Growth

- **Manufacturing Focus:** Emphasize the development of low-skilled, employment-intensive manufacturing sectors such as electronics and

	<p>apparel, which can create numerous job opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urbanization and Migration: Track indicators such as inter-state migration, urbanization rates, FLFPR, and the reduction of agriculture's share in total employment to measure progress. <p>Opportunities and Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity and Challenge Balance: India faces a unique combination of significant opportunities and complex challenges. Effective management and strategic reforms will be crucial for achieving sustained growth. • Strategic Path Forward: To reach the \$30-trillion economy target by 2047, India must overcome current barriers, utilize its strengths, and implement reforms that foster sustainable, inclusive economic development.
<p>12.</p>	<p>A closer look at beefing up Jammu's counter-terror grid</p> <p>Context and Background</p> <p>Security Situation in Jammu</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing Issues: The Jammu region has been increasingly troubled by terrorism, significantly affecting security forces and leading to substantial losses. Recent escalations include attacks by newly infiltrated terrorist cadres, often supported by Pakistan. • Impact of Redeployment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Galwan Incident: In June 2020, following the Galwan clash, troops from Jammu were redeployed to the Line of Actual Control (LAC), leading to a reduced counter-terrorism presence in Jammu. ○ Resulting Challenges: This redeployment weakened the counter-

terrorism grid, necessitating the induction of additional forces to address the security vacuum.

Recent Troop Inductions:

- **Army Troops and Special Forces:**
 - **Deployment Report (July 19, 2024):** Approximately 3,000 Army troops and 500 Special Forces were added to the Jammu region to enhance counter-terror operations.
- **Assam Rifles Deployment:**
 - **News Update (August 1, 2024):** The Assam Rifles are being redeployed to Jammu to strengthen counter-terror operations, with the CRPF replacing Assam Rifles units in Manipur.
 - **Operational Context:** This move underscores the government's commitment to addressing the deteriorating security situation in Jammu, which includes the areas from Kathua to Poonch and the Chenab Valley.

Counter-Terrorism Grid

Concept and Purpose:

- **Grid Definition:** A counter-terrorism grid is a systematic arrangement of units deployed to control and monitor areas prone to terrorist activities. This setup is designed to deny terrorists freedom of movement and operations.
- **Grid Components:**
 - **Deployment Strategy:** Units are positioned based on threat assessments, which include considerations of terrain, vulnerable areas, and the local population's disposition.
 - **Tactical Operations:** Units conduct operations that involve

psychological aspects, such as engaging with the local population to gather intelligence and win support.

Operational Strategy:

- **Local Knowledge and Engagement:**
 - **Terrain Familiarity:** Knowledge of local terrain and community dynamics is crucial for effective operations.
 - **Winning Hearts and Minds:** Gaining the trust of the local population is vital for successful counter-terrorism, as it facilitates intelligence gathering and operational support.

Challenges and Considerations

1. Integrating New Troops:

- **Deployment Issues:**
 - **Acclimatization:** New troops face the challenge of understanding the local terrain and population, which can impact their effectiveness.
 - **Integration:** To mitigate these issues, newly inducted troops should be integrated with existing units rather than deployed in isolation. This approach helps in leveraging the experience and established rapport of current units.
- **Population Dynamics:**
 - **Support and Neutrality:** The local population is divided into:
 - **Supporters of the State:** A minority that supports government actions.
 - **Supporters of Terrorists:** A minority that supports terrorist activities.
 - **Neutral Majority:** The majority, who are generally

indifferent but can be influenced.

- **Operational Focus:** Successful counter-terrorism involves maintaining support from state supporters and winning over the neutral majority, thereby reducing the base of terrorist support.

2. Operational Efficiency:

- **Command and Control:**

- **Historical Lessons:** The effectiveness of counter-terrorism operations can be compromised if command is shifted to higher levels beyond the battalion. The historical success of Assam Rifles units, such as in Operation Dudhi, highlighted the importance of trusted battalion-level leadership.

Historical Context and Lessons

Operation Dudhi (May 1991):

- **Success Story:** Operation Dudhi, led by 7 Assam Rifles, is remembered as a highly successful counter-terror operation in the Chowkibal area. The operation's success was attributed to the effective leadership and operational control maintained by the battalion's commanding officer.
- **Key Lessons:**
 - **Leadership Trust:** Successful operations require trust in and control by the commanding officer at the battalion level.
 - **Integration:** Historical operations demonstrated that integrating new units under established leaders and command structures is more effective than isolated deployments.

Conclusion

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deployment Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Integrated Deployment: New units should be deployed as integrated parts of existing command structures rather than as standalone entities. This integration helps in better acclimatization and operational efficiency. ○ Long-Term Approach: Counter-terrorism efforts require a long-term commitment. Quick fixes or purely numerical increases are unlikely to yield significant results. Sustainable success relies on strategic planning, effective integration of new units, and a comprehensive understanding of the local dynamics.
<p>13.</p>	<p>What are Xerogels?</p> <p>Researchers at the Agharkar Research Institute (ARI) in Pune have developed a highly porous xerogel dressing designed to rapidly clot blood and provide relief from uncontrolled hemorrhage. ARI is an autonomous institute under the Department of Science and Technology (DST). This new dressing, which incorporates silica nanoparticles (SiNPs) and calcium, shows a significant improvement in blood clotting efficiency compared to commercial dressings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Xerogels are solid materials formed by drying a gel, typically at ambient temperature, which removes the liquid from the gel, while preserving its porous network structure. Their high porosity and surface area make them suitable for various applications. • The drying process typically involves evaporation under conditions that prevent the collapse of the gel's porous network, resulting in a highly porous and often lightweight solid. <p>Key Features and Benefits of Xerogel Dressing</p>

1. **Porous Structure:** The xerogel dressing is characterized by its highly porous structure, with pores around 30 μm in size. This design enhances the dressing's absorbance capacity, allowing it to quickly absorb blood and facilitate clotting.
2. **Enhanced Clotting Capacity:** The addition of silica nanoparticles and calcium significantly boosts the clotting capacity of the xerogel. The composite material increases the blood clotting index by 13-fold compared to standard commercial dressings. Which make it a more effective option for controlling severe hemorrhage.
3. **Platelet Activation:** The xerogel dressing promotes enhanced platelet aggregation by facilitating the development of well-formed pseudopodia in activated platelets, which are crucial for the clotting process.
4. The dressing also stimulates calcium release and up regulation of the Protease-Activated Receptor 1 (PAR1) gene on platelet surfaces, further aiding in the rapid formation of blood clots.

Xerogel and Aerogel

Point of differences

Description

Structure and Density	<p>1. Xerogels and aerogels are both highly porous materials, but they differ in how they are produced and their resulting properties.</p> <p>2. Xerogels are denser and more solid structures created by drying a gel at ambient temperature. In contrast, aerogels are lightweight, formed by drying under supercritical conditions to maintain low density.</p>
Absorbance Capacity	While aerogels are known for their lightweight and insulating properties, xerogels are optimized for

	<p>absorbance. Which makes them particularly effective for applications like hemostatic dressings where rapid fluid absorption is critical.</p> <p>Impact on Trauma Care and Surgery</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The development of this xerogel dressing marks a significant advancement in trauma care, particularly in managing uncontrolled hemorrhage, which is a leading cause of traumatic deaths. 2. The dressing's ability to rapidly clot blood, enhance platelet aggregation, and upregulate critical genes involved in the clotting process makes it a potentially life-saving tool in both military and civilian medical scenarios. 3. This innovative approach to hemostatic dressings offers a promising solution to reduce blood loss, disability, and mortality during surgeries and trauma care, addressing a critical need for improved hemostatic materials.
<p>14.</p>	<p>E-Rupee and its Potential</p> <p>In India, major fintech companies like Google Pay, PhonePe, Amazon Pay, Cred, and Mobikwik are looking to integrate the e-rupee, a new digital currency from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), into their payment systems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This move aims to broaden the e-rupee's use beyond just transactions between users at their banks. <p>What is the e-Rupee?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition: The e-rupee, or digital rupee, is a form of digital money issued by the RBI. Unlike traditional banknotes, it exists only in

electronic form and is used for online transactions.

- **Centralization vs. Cryptocurrency:** Unlike decentralized cryptocurrencies that operate on blockchain networks, the e-rupee will be based on a centralized or hybrid system controlled by the RBI. It will use advanced security measures to ensure safe and reliable transactions.

Differences Between e-Rupee and Banknotes

Feature	E-Rupee	Banknotes
Interest	No interest payments	Can earn interest
Conversion	Convertible with bank deposits	Not directly convertible

Launch and Need for Digital Rupee

1. **Pilot Launch:** The e-rupee was introduced in December 2022 as a pilot project. It is initially available through select banks in major cities for both person-to-person (P2P) and person-to-merchant (P2M) transactions.
2. **Purpose:** The e-rupee aims to offer a transparent and cost-effective alternative to cryptocurrencies, reducing the costs of physical money production and providing new functionalities not possible with cash.

E-Rupee vs. Cryptocurrency

Feature	E-Rupee	Cryptocurrency
Nature	Digital version of physical currency	Digital asset based on blockchain

Control	Centrally controlled by RBI	Decentralized, blockchain-based
Legal Status	Legal tender, backed by the government	Uncertain, not legal tender
Value	Stable, linked to the Indian Rupee	Fluctuates based on market demand
Security	Backed by RBI's security measures	Depends on blockchain security
Purpose	Enhancing digital payments, financial inclusion	Speculative investment, peer-to-peer transactions
Why Fintech Companies are Joining the e-Rupee Project		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Market Share: Companies like Google Pay and PhonePe handle a large portion of India's digital payments via UPI (Unified Payments Interface). Adoption: Partnering with the RBI on the e-rupee could help boost its adoption. However, the RBI plans to keep it in the pilot stage for a few more years before a full launch. 		
Analysis/Impact		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Expanding Use Cases: Integrating the e-rupee into fintech platforms offers a new transaction method, potentially increasing user engagement and transaction volumes. It may also enable features not possible with traditional payment methods. Regulatory Compliance: Being part of the e-rupee project aligns fintech companies with regulatory standards, enhancing their credibility. 		
Related Technologies: Unified Payments Interface (UPI)		

1. **Function:** UPI is a real-time payment system that enables easy inter-bank transactions.
2. **Integration:** Connecting e-rupee with UPI can make digital currency transactions smoother and more accessible.

Potential Benefits of E-Rupee

1. **Financial Inclusion:** Easier access to financial services for those without traditional bank accounts.
2. **Faster Transactions:** Digital payments can be quicker than handling cash.
3. **Improved Traceability:** Transactions are traceable, helping to combat financial crimes like tax evasion.
4. **Programmable Payments:** Possibility of complex transactions, such as automated bill payments or loyalty rewards.

Challenges and Risks

1. **Cybersecurity:** Protecting the e-rupee from cyber threats is crucial.
2. **Technical Glitches:** Initial problems could impact user confidence and adoption.
3. **Privacy Concerns:** Safeguarding user data is essential to prevent misuse.
4. **Infrastructure Requirements:** Widespread adoption may need significant upgrades to digital infrastructure.

The e-rupee is a significant development in India's digital currency landscape, offering an alternative to both traditional banknotes and cryptocurrencies. Fintech companies are eager to integrate it to expand their service offerings and comply with regulatory standards. While the e-rupee's adoption is still in its early stages, its potential integration with popular payment platforms could enhance its acceptance and usage. The RBI's ongoing efforts indicate a

	<p>commitment to advancing digital currency technology in India.</p>
<p>15.</p>	<p>High temp hits flights to Leh. Why?</p> <p>Recently, several air operators cancelled their flights to Leh citing high temperature in the region that led to runway restrictions. The mountainous region has seen a rise in temperatures due to climate change in India's cold desert.</p> <p><u>Impact of High Temperatures on Aircraft Operation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced Lift: Less dense air provides diminished support for aircraft wings, necessitating higher speeds and longer runways for takeoff. The lift-to-drag ratio is adversely affected, impacting overall aircraft efficiency. • Engine Performance Deterioration: The combustion process within aircraft engines is compromised due to the decreased oxygen content in thinner air. This results in reduced engine thrust, further exacerbating takeoff challenges. • Extended Landing Distances: The reduced effectiveness of reverse thrust in less dense air prolongs the landing process, requiring greater runway length for deceleration. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A 2023 study revealed that global warming is expected to increase the take-off distance for Boeing 737-800 aircraft by an average of 6% during the period of 2071-2080, compared to 1991-2000. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This change is particularly significant at low-altitude airports, necessitating an additional 113-222 meters for take-offs in future summers. • Operational Constraints: Airports situated at higher altitudes, where

air density is naturally lower, are particularly **vulnerable to temperature-induced flight restrictions. During periods of extreme heat, takeoff weight limits may be imposed**, and flight operations could be suspended altogether.

The global average temperature has risen by at least **1.1 degrees Celsius since 1880**, with India experiencing an increase of approximately **0.7 degrees Celsius** compared to 1900 levels.

Principle of Aircraft Flight Operation

- All flying objects that use wings require air, as moving air generates a lifting force essential for maintaining the flight of kites, airplanes, and balloons.
- **An aircraft experiences 4 basic forces:**
 - **Lift:** The **upward force** acting on the aircraft which helps the airplane to fly.
 - **Drag:** The **backward force** caused by the resistance of air flow.
 - **Thrust:** The **forward force** produced by the engines of the aircraft
 - **Weight:** The **body and cargo weight** of the aircraft acting in a **downward direction.**
- **An aircraft flies when the lift force generated by its wings overcomes its weight.** To achieve this, the aircraft requires sufficient forward speed.
- The **engines** provide **thrust** to propel the aircraft forward. As the aircraft moves, the **airfoil-shaped wings** interact with the air, creating **lift**. This lift is generated due to a **pressure difference** between the upper and lower surfaces of the wing.
- The **curved upper surface** of the airfoil accelerates the air flowing over it, reducing the pressure according to **Bernoulli's principle.**

Simultaneously, the air flowing under the wing is slightly compressed, increasing pressure. This pressure difference creates an **upward force, lifting the aircraft.**

- The **angle of attack**, the angle between the **wing and the oncoming air**, significantly influences lift. A small increase in angle of attack generates more lift, but excessive angles can lead to a **stall.**
- To maintain level flight, the **lift force must equal the aircraft's weight.** Pilots control lift by adjusting the wing's angle of attack and shape using control surfaces.

Causes of High Temperature in Leh-Ladakh Region

- **Altitude:** Leh-Ladakh's high elevation of approximately 3,000 metres **causes thinner atmospheric density.**
 - Further the region's **clear skies, minimal cloud cover, and sparse vegetation** which **increases solar radiation penetration** and results in **higher daytime temperatures** during the summer.
- **Topography:** The **Himalayas** and **Zaskar ranges** create a **rain shadow effect** (form rain shadow desert) by **blocking moisture-laden winds**, resulting in minimal precipitation.
 - This dry air **enhances temperature fluctuations**, causing higher daytime temperatures.
- **Climate Change:** **Global warming** has led to **rising temperatures globally**, affecting cold deserts as well. This phenomenon alters **local weather patterns**, potentially leading to warmer conditions in Leh-Ladakh.
- **Human Activities:** **Urbanisation and infrastructure development in Leh** and surrounding areas create **localised warming effects**, known as the **urban heat island effect.**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "Urban heat islands" occur when cities replace natural land cover with dense concentrations of pavement, buildings, and other surfaces that absorb and retain heat, increasing energy costs, air pollution, and heat-related illness and mortality. ○ Additionally, increased human activity, including tourism and military movement, contributes to rising temperatures.
<p>16.</p>	<p>Change in Bangladesh, the challenges for India</p> <p>Historical Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● February 2009 Crisis: Former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina faced a major challenge within two months of taking office when the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), a paramilitary force, mutinied. The revolt at the BDR headquarters in Dhaka resulted in 74 deaths, including 57 army officers. The unrest spread to 12 towns and cities, posing a significant threat to Hasina's new government. ● Indian Response: Indian Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon was recalled from Colombo to address the crisis. He coordinated with international ambassadors to express India's concerns and seek understanding in case the situation deteriorated further. <p>Current Political and Economic Climate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Elections and Democracy: The 2024 elections in Bangladesh were marred by a boycott from the opposition, reducing inclusivity. This reflects a decline in democratic space, human rights erosion, and economic difficulties.

- **Youth Unemployment:** A significant issue is the high unemployment rate among the youth, a group that had previously benefited from Sheikh Hasina's economic policies.
- **Student Protests:** The Anti-Discrimination Student Movement protests were handled harshly, leading to further discontent and negatively impacting Hasina's political standing.

Military Intervention and Public Opinion

- **Army Chief General Waker-uz-Zaman:** The current army chief faces a different scenario compared to General Moeen U. Ahmed in 2007. Unlike the **2007 coup**, which aimed to restore order and governance, the 2024 military intervention seeks to facilitate the democratic process and respond to public demands.
- **Interim Government:** The army's acceptance of Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus as the head of the interim government reflects its responsiveness to public opinion. **Yunus**, known for his democratic values and criticism of Hasina, is seen as a potential catalyst for launching a new political force.

Challenges for the Interim Government

- **Political Polarization:** The interim government faces challenges from polarized forces, including the **Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)** and the banned Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, which has a history of violence. The ongoing violence, destruction of national symbols, and attacks on minorities, particularly Hindus, add to the complexity.
- **Army's Role:** There is concern that the army's vulnerability and its handling of diverse political forces might weaken its authority and

inadvertently strengthen anti-India sentiments.

India's Position and Strategy

- **Diplomatic Stance:** India has historically raised concerns about religious intolerance and communal violence on international platforms but has been cautious in its direct interventions.
- **Comparative Situations:** The situation in Bangladesh is compared to Myanmar, where military control is weakening after multiple elections, and the Maldives, where Indian support for President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih led to backlash when opposition forces came to power.
- **Development Partnerships:** India's strategy should involve leveraging its strong development partnerships and projects to maintain influence and foster stability. Working closely with the interim government, the army, and the Bangladeshi people is crucial for India's engagement and support.

Conclusion

The evolving situation in Bangladesh presents a complex political and diplomatic landscape. India's best approach involves engaging with both the interim government and the public while leveraging development assistance to strengthen bilateral ties and promote stability.

17.

Refugee rights, the gendered nature of displacement

Rising Numbers of Displaced Persons

- **Causes of Displacement:** Armed conflicts, violence, human rights abuses, and persecution force millions to leave their homes globally. The term "displaced people" includes **refugees, asylum-seekers, and internally displaced persons (IDPs)**.
- **UNHCR Statistics:** By the end of 2023, 11.73 crore people were forcibly displaced globally, a number exacerbated by ongoing conflicts and persecution, including:
 - **Israel-Hamas Conflict:** The recent escalation has increased the number of displaced individuals.
 - **Ukraine-Russia War:** This prolonged conflict continues to contribute to the refugee crisis.
 - **Rohingya Crisis in Myanmar:** Fresh threats have heightened the displacement of Rohingya Muslims, adding to the global refugee count.

India's Role as a Refugee-Receiving Nation

- **India's Refugee History:** India has long been a refuge for displaced people, hosting over 200,000 refugees from diverse groups since independence.
- **Current Statistics:** As of January 31, 2022, 46,000 refugees and asylum-seekers were registered with UNHCR in India, with 46% being women and girls.

Challenges Faced by Refugee Women

- **Gendered Responsibilities:** Refugee women often bear disproportionate

burdens, including:

- Sole accountability for children and family sustenance.
- Last to flee during conflicts, increasing their risk.
- Gendered caregiving roles for both the young and elderly.

- **Impact on Physical and Mental Health:** Displacement severely impacts women's health:

- Refugee women face a higher risk of gender-based violence, including sexual violence and exploitation.
- Stressors include the deaths of family members, hardships of camp life, and altered family dynamics.

- **High Incidence of Mental Health Issues:** Displaced women show higher rates of mental health issues, such as:

- **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD):** Women are twice as likely to exhibit PTSD symptoms compared to men.
- **Depression:** Women are over four times as likely to experience depression.
- **Case Study - Darfur, Sudan:** A study revealed that **72% of displaced women in Darfur suffered from PTSD** and general distress due to their traumatic experiences.

Social and Gender Inequalities

- **Epistemic Injustice:** Women's experiences and testimonies often go unnoticed, leading to their mental health issues being dismissed or stigmatized.
- **Patriarchal Societies:** In patriarchal societies, refugee women's mental health concerns are further marginalized, with families prioritizing the physical health of men over the mental health of women.

Challenges in Accessing Mental Health Services

- **Stigma and Isolation:** Refugee women face stigma surrounding mental health issues, leading to isolation and a lack of support.
- **Limited Financial Resources:** Financial constraints often force refugee families to neglect mental health care.
- **Inadequate Mental Health Services:**
 - Government hospitals are overwhelmed with long wait times.
 - Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) provide unregulated support services, often sought only when issues escalate severely.
- **Communication Barriers:** Language and cultural differences further restrict access to necessary services.

International Conventions and India's Legal Framework:

- **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD):** Recognizes the rights of individuals with long-term mental or intellectual impairments (psychosocial disabilities) to participate fully in society.
 - Article 6 emphasizes the rights of women and girls with disabilities to enjoy full and equal human rights.
- **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (RPWDA):**
 - **Defines "mental illness"** as a substantial disorder that impairs judgment, behavior, and capacity to meet life's demands.
 - Guarantees rights to persons with disabilities, including free and priority access to health care (Section 25).
 - Mandates equal rights for women with disabilities (Section 4).

Exclusion of Refugee Women

- **Legal and Administrative Gaps:** Refugee women with psychosocial disabilities are excluded from these guarantees due to:
 - Legal frameworks that overlook non-nationals in the distribution of rights and services.
 - Social stigma, lack of awareness, and financial constraints.

Judicial Interventions

- **Supreme Court of India:** Affirmed the inherent right to life under **Article 21**, which includes the right to health for refugees.
- **Access to Health Services:** Refugees primarily rely on government hospitals, as they are excluded from most public health programs available to citizens, and private care is prohibitively expensive.
- **Gap in Implementation:** The absence of explicit guarantees extending RPWDA to refugees results in the violation of their right to health and life.

Need for a Uniform Refugee Policy in India

- **India's Non-Signatory Status:** India is **not a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention or its 1967 Protocol**, leading to a lack of specific domestic legislation for refugees.
- **Codified Refugee Policy:** The need for a uniform, codified framework that aligns with India's international commitments, such as the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, is critical.
- **Policy Integration:** Refugees with disabilities must be integrated into relevant policies and programs in an accessible manner.
- **Disaggregated Data:** Effective policymaking requires the collection of disaggregated data on refugee health conditions, necessitating

	<p>systematic identification and registration processes.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call to Action: The article stresses the urgency of addressing the structural gaps in India's refugee policy, particularly for displaced women with psychosocial disabilities. • Future Prospects: The pressing question remains whether these vulnerable groups will continue to suffer or if timely and effective measures will be taken to protect their rights and well-being.
<p>18.</p>	<p>Hidden dangers of irrational use of antibiotics on microbiome</p> <p>Introduction:</p> <p>Antibiotics are often lauded as modern miracles, responsible for curing infections that were once considered fatal and saving countless lives. However, their overuse and misuse in humans, animals, and agriculture have far-reaching consequences. While antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is widely recognized as a critical issue, a deeper, insidious danger is the significant disruption antibiotics cause to the human microbiome. This disruption has extensive, often overlooked repercussions on overall health.</p> <p>The Human Microbiome:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition and Composition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The human microbiome is a complex community of microorganisms including bacteria, fungi, and viruses. Our bodies host approximately 38 trillion microbial cells, surpassing the 30 trillion human cells.

- This extensive microbial population plays crucial roles in maintaining health and well-being.

- **Roles of the Microbiome:**

- **Gut Microbiome:**

- **Digestion:** Aids in breaking down complex carbohydrates and synthesizing essential nutrients.
- **Immune Support:** Helps regulate the immune system, fostering a balanced immune response and protecting against pathogens.
- **Nutrient Production:** Produces vital nutrients such as **vitamin K** and certain B vitamins.
- **Pathogen Protection:** Shields the gut and body from potentially harmful microorganisms by competing for resources and space.

- **Other Microbiomes:**

- **Skin Microbiome:** Protects against harmful microorganisms and supports skin health by maintaining the skin barrier and immune responses.
- **Respiratory Microbiome:** Defends against respiratory infections and contributes to respiratory health.
- **Genitourinary Microbiome:** Includes the vaginal and urinary microbiomes, which prevent infections and maintain reproductive and urinary health.

Effects of Antibiotics on the Microbiome:

- **Mechanism of Disruption:**

- Antibiotics, especially **broad-spectrum** ones, target a wide range of bacteria, not just the harmful pathogens. This indiscriminate

action leads to a reduction in both harmful and beneficial bacteria.

- The resulting condition, known as **dysbiosis**, is marked by an imbalance in microbial communities, which can have severe and prolonged effects.

- **Consequences of Dysbiosis:**

- **Gut Health:**

- **Diseases:** Dysbiosis can contribute to the development of **inflammatory bowel disease (IBD)** and irritable bowel syndrome (IBS).
- **Immune Function:** A disrupted microbiome impairs immune responses, making the body more susceptible to infections and autoimmune diseases.

- **Metabolism:**

- **Energy Harvesting:** Affects the body's ability to extract energy from food, potentially leading to metabolic disorders.
- **Glucose and Lipid Metabolism:** Disruptions can contribute to obesity, diabetes, and metabolic syndrome.

- **Gut-Brain Axis:**

- **Mood and Cognition:** Dysbiosis can influence neurotransmitter levels and brain chemistry, affecting mood, cognition, and mental health conditions like anxiety and depression.

- **Gut-Liver Axis:**

- **Toxin Transport:** Increases gut permeability ("leaky gut"), allowing more toxins to reach the liver, which can exacerbate liver conditions such as non-alcoholic fatty liver disease.

- **Gut-Skin Axis:**

- **Skin Conditions:** Dysbiosis can worsen skin conditions like acne, eczema, and psoriasis by altering immune responses and skin barrier function.

Broader Implications:

- **Colonisation Resistance:**

- **Concept:** Refers to the microbiome's ability to prevent pathogenic microorganisms from establishing themselves in the gut.
- **Impact of Antibiotics:** Antibiotic use can diminish this resistance by reducing the population of beneficial bacteria that compete with pathogens for resources and adhesion sites.

- **Impact on Non-Gut Microbiomes:**

- **Skin Microbiome:** Disruption can lead to imbalances that affect skin health and increase susceptibility to skin infections.
- **Respiratory Microbiome:** Potentially contributes to respiratory conditions like asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).
- **Genitourinary Microbiome:** Disruptions can cause conditions such as bacterial vaginosis and urinary tract infections (UTIs).

Conclusion and Recommendations:

- **Judicious Use of Antibiotics:**

- Given the significant impact of antibiotics on the microbiome, it is crucial to use these drugs carefully and only when necessary to minimize adverse effects.

- **Alternative Practices:**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hygiene: Improved hygiene practices can reduce the need for antibiotics by preventing infections. ○ Vaccination: Vaccines can prevent infections and reduce the reliance on antibiotics. ○ Bacteriophages: Utilization of bacteriophages, which target specific bacteria, could offer alternatives to broad-spectrum antibiotics. ● Medicine-Poison Paradox: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Concept: While antibiotics can save lives when used appropriately, misuse can turn them into harmful agents, exemplifying the paradox of medicine as both a cure and a potential poison.
<p>19.</p>	<p>Climate change: A gap between public opinion and scientific consensus</p> <p>Climate change: Why is there still a gap between public opinion and scientific consensus, and how can we close it?</p> <p>1. Scientific Consensus vs. Public Perception</p> <p>Scientific Consensus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Agreement Level: Approximately 97% of climate scientists agree that human activities, such as burning fossil fuels and deforestation, are major contributors to global warming. ● Implications: This consensus reflects a robust understanding of climate science, supported by extensive research and evidence. It indicates a high level of confidence in the human impact on climate change.

Public Awareness and Perception

- **Variation by Region:** Awareness and acceptance of climate change science vary globally. In Europe, there is generally stronger public consensus on climate change compared to the United States.
- **In the United States:** Only 12% of Americans are aware of the scientific community's near-total agreement on climate change. This is influenced by several factors, including:
 - **Disinformation:** Misinformation campaigns that cast doubt on scientific findings.
 - **Media Portrayal:** Media often presents climate change as a contentious issue, giving undue weight to fringe opinions.
 - **Cognitive Biases:** Psychological tendencies, such as confirmation bias, can affect how people perceive and accept climate science.

Ideological Divides

- **Political Affiliations:** In the U.S., there's a significant political divide:
 - **Democratic Voters:** About 82% believe in the substantial role of human activities in climate change.
 - **Republican Voters:** Only 38% share this belief.
- **Impact on Policy:** These divisions affect climate policy support and implementation, leading to polarized responses to climate action.

2. Challenges in International Response

Global Commitments

- **Paris Agreement:** The 2015 Paris Agreement aims to limit global warming to well below 2°C, with efforts to cap it at 1.5°C. However, key issues persist:
 - **Non-Binding Commitments:** The agreement's targets are not legally binding, leading to varying levels of commitment and

implementation.

- **Lack of Enforcement:** There are no strong enforcement mechanisms to ensure countries meet their targets.

Implementation Issues

- **Free-Riders:** Some countries benefit from global emission reductions while not contributing equally to the costs of mitigation.
- **Inconsistent Efforts:** Implementation of climate policies is uneven, with some countries and sectors lagging significantly behind in their efforts.

3. Emissions and Progress

Current Emissions Trends

- **Projections:** Emissions were expected to rise by 16% by 2030 under pre-Paris Agreement policies. Current projections suggest a 3% increase, but this still falls short of the reductions needed to meet global temperature targets.
- **Challenges:** Reductions required are substantial:
 - **To stay within 2°C:** Emissions need to fall by 28%.
 - **To stay within 1.5°C:** Emissions need to fall by 42%.

Case Study: China

- **Emissions Increase:** In 2023, China's energy sector saw a **5.2% increase in emissions**.
- **Required Reductions:** To meet global targets, an unprecedented reduction of 4-6% in 2025 is needed.

4. Complexity of Climate Change Solutions

Fossil Fuel Dependency

- **Demand Trends:** Global demand for fossil fuels has not yet peaked. It is

anticipated to peak by 2030 if certain conditions are met, such as:

- **Increased Electric Vehicle Uptake:** Accelerated adoption of electric vehicles.
- **Slow Economic Growth in China:** Slower growth combined with increased investments in renewable energy.

Investment Dynamics

- **Fossil Fuels vs. Clean Energy:** Investments in oil and gas averaged \$0.75 trillion annually from 2016 to 2023, while clean energy investments reached \$1.8 trillion in 2023. This indicates a shift towards cleaner energy but still shows significant ongoing investment in fossil fuels.
- **Rebound Effects:** Long-term rebound effects can counteract reductions in resource use. For instance, improved efficiency in one area may lead to increased overall consumption.

5. Local Costs vs. Global Benefits

Disparity in Costs and Benefits

- **Global vs. Local Impact:** The benefits of reducing carbon emissions are global and long-term, while the costs are often immediate and local. This creates a challenge for justifying climate action on a local level.
- **Development Practices:** In developing countries, such as India, reliance on coal and less environmentally friendly practices continue despite evidence of long-term benefits from emission reductions.

6. Behavioural and Economic Perspectives

Classical Economics vs. Bounded Rationality

- **Classical Economics:** Assumes that individuals will act rationally to maximize their well-being given adequate information and resources.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bounded Rationality: Herbert Simon’s concept suggests that human decision-making is limited by cognitive capacities, available information, and time constraints. This results in simplified decision-making processes. <p>Cultural and Societal Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liquid Modernity: Zygmunt Bauman’s concept describes a transition from stable, solid modernity to a more fluid and unstable form, leading to less consistent behaviors and values. • Individualism and Hedonism: Gilles Lipovetsky’s ideas highlight a culture focused on immediate gratification and individual desires, which can conflict with the long-term commitment needed for effective climate action. <p>7. Reconciling Climate Action with Human Behaviour</p> <p>Understanding Decision-Making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complexity: Recognizing the complexity of human decision-making and the impact of cognitive biases is crucial in designing effective climate policies. • Ethical Considerations: Addressing climate change requires balancing immediate personal desires with long-term ethical commitments and societal goals. This involves acknowledging and addressing biases and inconsistencies in both individual and collective behaviors.
<p>20.</p>	<p>Disinformation, AI and ‘cyber chakravayuh’</p> <p>Emergence of New Security Threats in 2024</p>

- **Global Concerns:** 2024 began with widespread fears of new security challenges, particularly due to advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its various forms like Generative AI and Artificial General Intelligence (AGI).
- **Disinformation and Cyber Threats:** The increasing capabilities of AI have made disinformation and cyber threats more prevalent, creating a sense of looming danger across the world.

Security Challenges for the Paris 2024 Olympics

- **High-Risk Target:** The 33rd Summer Olympic Games in France (July-August 2024) were anticipated to be a major target for digital and cyberattacks.
- **Preventive Vigilance:** Despite no major incidents occurring, experts stress the importance of maintaining vigilance as new types of digital threats continue to emerge.

Early Indications of a Threatening Year

- **Taiwan Elections:** The year 2024 saw significant disinformation campaigns during Taiwan's January elections, with fake posts and videos causing widespread confusion. This was largely attributed to AI-driven efforts, potentially linked to Chinese influence.
- **Role of AI in Disinformation:** AI has made it easier to create and disseminate disinformation, leading to a miasma of confusion and mistrust, especially during politically sensitive periods.

AI-Enabled Disinformation and Its Consequences

- **Deepfakes:** AI-generated deepfakes, which involve digitally manipulated videos, audio, or images, have become a major tool for spreading

disinformation.

- **Delayed Truth Revelation:** Often, the truth behind these deepfakes is uncovered only after the damage has been done, highlighting the challenge of countering such disinformation.
- **National Security Risks:** The spread of AI-enabled disinformation poses a significant threat to national security, as seen in ongoing conflicts like Ukraine, where both sides have used such tactics to disrupt critical infrastructure.

The CrowdStrike Outage: A Preview of Potential Cyber Disruptions

- **Global Impact:** In 2024, a software glitch in a Microsoft Windows update caused a massive outage that affected various sectors, including flight operations, air traffic, and stock exchanges across multiple countries.
- **Not a Cyberattack, But a Warning:** While this incident was not a cyberattack, it served as a stark reminder of the potential disruptions that a large-scale cyberattack could cause.

Historical Context of Major Cyberattacks

- **WannaCry Ransomware (2017):** The WannaCry attack infected over 230,000 computers in 150 countries, causing billions of dollars in damage.
- **Shamoon Virus (2017):** Targeted oil companies like Saudi Aramco and RasGas, labeled as the “biggest hack in history” at the time.
- **Petya Malware (2017):** Severely affected banks, power grids, and institutions across Europe, the UK, the US, and Australia.
- **Stuxnet Attack (2010):** A malicious worm targeting Iran’s nuclear

program, Stuxnet highlighted the potential of state-sponsored cyber warfare. Its design could be adapted to target other modern systems.

Growing Cyber Threats to Individuals and Businesses

- **Daily Cyber Threats:** Cyber fraud, hacking, and identity theft have seen exponential growth, threatening the daily lives of individuals.
- **Common Cyber Frauds:**
 - **Phishing:** Involves stealing personal information like customer IDs, credit/debit card numbers, and PINs.
 - **Spamming:** Sending unsolicited commercial messages.
 - **Identity Theft:** A serious and widespread danger, often resulting in significant personal and financial loss.

Response from Governments and Industry

- **Government Measures:** Democratic governments are increasingly trying to implement systems to combat digital threats.
- **Industry Vulnerability:** Despite government efforts, private institutions and businesses are lagging in preparedness, making them vulnerable to attacks.
- **Need for Chief Information Security Officers (CISOs):** Most companies lack adequate leadership to handle digital threats, making the role of CISOs crucial for advising and protecting businesses.

Necessity for Increased Awareness and Preparedness

- **Growing Danger of Digital Threats:** Awareness about the increasing digital threats, including unauthorized use of Generative AI content, is the first step toward combating them.
- **Need for Coordinated Action:** The struggle against digital threats

	<p>requires coordinated efforts across governments, businesses, and society.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting Democracies: Democracies, in particular, need to be vigilant against digital surveillance, disinformation, bullying, and manipulation, as these new threats target the core of democratic systems.
<p>21.</p>	<p>The shock-effects of South Asian tumult</p> <p>India has faced a series of significant geopolitical challenges in its neighbourhood over the past few years, highlighting the need for a more nuanced and proactive approach in its foreign policy. These events, ranging from political upheavals to shifts in diplomatic relations, underscore the lessons India must learn to effectively navigate the complexities of South Asia.</p> <p>Understanding the Series of Shocks in India's Neighbourhood</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2021: Myanmar experienced a military coup, and the Taliban regained control over Afghanistan, significantly altering the regional power dynamics. • 2022: Political instability continued with the ousting of Prime Minister Imran Khan in Pakistan and the forced exile of Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa following mass protests. These events reflect the fragility and unpredictability of political systems in South Asia. • Recent Developments: The Maldives saw a dramatic electoral shift that replaced the India-friendly Solih government, while in Nepal, political coalitions collapsed, resulting in the return of the less India-friendly Oli government. In Bangladesh, the sudden departure of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who was a key ally of India, posed a significant

challenge for New Delhi.

Lesson 1: Avoid Complacency and Strengthen Engagement

- **Failure to Anticipate Political Shifts:** Despite India's significant diplomatic presence in Bangladesh, including multiple consulates and the High Commission in Dhaka, it failed to recognize the growing discontent against Sheikh Hasina's increasingly authoritarian regime. The Awami League's transformation into a near one-party rule, coupled with the repression of opposition and civil society, was not adequately acknowledged by India.
- **Neglecting Opposition Engagement:** India's decision to align closely with the Hasina government led to a lack of engagement with the main opposition party, the BNP. This one-sided approach was exemplified by incidents such as denying BNP leaders permission to visit India and even deporting a British lawyer associated with the BNP at the Hasina government's request. This narrow focus could have been mitigated by maintaining broader diplomatic contacts across the political spectrum in Bangladesh.

Lesson 2: Embrace Pragmatism in Diplomatic Relations

- **Engaging with Adversaries:** India's diplomatic approach has had to adapt to dealing with less favorable entities, such as engaging with the Taliban despite their hostile actions against Indian missions in Afghanistan, and interacting with Sri Lanka's Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), a party with a history of anti-Indian sentiment.
- **Adjusting to Changing Political Landscapes:** In the Maldives, India's strong support for President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih backfired when his government lost the election, and India had to quickly recalibrate its approach to engage with the new Muizzu government, which had previously been cast as anti-India. This highlights the importance of

flexibility and pragmatism in foreign policy.

Lesson 3: Avoiding the Communal Lens

- **Complex Religious Dynamics:** India's relationships with its neighbors cannot be simplified along religious lines. For instance, India's difficult relations with Hindu-majority Nepal contrast with its strong ties with Buddhist-majority Bhutan and Muslim-majority Maldives.
- **Impact of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA):** The CAA, which fast-tracks citizenship for non-Muslims from Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, has generated significant backlash across South Asia. This policy, seen as discriminatory, has not only strained relations with the mentioned countries but also with other regional players who view it as an example of India's overreach.
- **Internal Consistency:** India's concerns for the safety of minorities in Bangladesh, particularly in the wake of Sheikh Hasina's departure, must be balanced with actions that demonstrate a commitment to protecting minorities within India. This approach would lend credibility to India's regional policies and concerns.

Lesson 4: Reasserting Regional Leadership and Addressing External Influences

- **Countering China's Influence:** China's increasing presence in South Asia, through trade, investment, and strategic alliances, poses a challenge to India's traditional leadership in the region. The U.S. has also played a role in influencing regional dynamics, as seen in its stance on Bangladesh, which conflicted with India's interests.
- **Reviving Regional Mechanisms:** India must work towards reviving and strengthening regional organizations such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), which has been sidelined due to bilateral issues with Pakistan. Additionally, India should ensure

	<p>that mechanisms like the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) remain viable even as relationships with key countries like Bangladesh evolve.</p> <p>Conclusion: Addressing Regional Challenges with Long-Term Vision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic and Democratic Stability: The recent political upheavals in South Asia are often fueled by economic dissatisfaction and democratic backsliding. India and its neighbors must address issues like joblessness and unequal growth, which are contributing to social unrest. • Sustaining Democratic Values: Economic progress cannot substitute for democratic governance. Ensuring political plurality, freedom of expression, and the protection of civil liberties will be essential for long-term stability in the region. • Forward-Looking Foreign Policy: India's foreign policy must evolve to incorporate these lessons, aiming to build resilient relationships across the political spectrum, counter external influences without alienating neighbors, and support democratic principles both within its borders and in the region at large.
<p>22.</p>	<p>Freedom from dependence, a new era in health care</p> <p>India's Independence Day, celebrated on August 15, serves as a moment for reflecting on the nation's progress across various sectors, particularly the healthcare sector. The journey from reliance on foreign medical services to becoming a global healthcare hub illustrates India's remarkable transformation in this field.</p> <p>The Evolution of Indian Healthcare-</p>

Past Dependence on Foreign Medical Services

- Until the 1980s, affluent Indians often traveled abroad, particularly to Western countries, for advanced medical treatments.
- This trend not only drained India's financial resources but also highlighted significant gaps in the domestic healthcare system.

Transformation to a Global Healthcare Hub

- Over the years, India has made significant strides in healthcare, transitioning from medical tourism to becoming a preferred global destination for medical treatments.
- The country is now recognized for its world-class medical services, attracting patients from over 147 countries.

Economic Impact and Global Recognition-

Economic Benefits of Healthcare Advancements

- India's progress in healthcare has significant economic implications, including saving billions in foreign exchange annually as fewer Indians seek medical treatments abroad.
- The cost of medical treatment in India is significantly lower than in Western countries, with comparable or superior quality of care. This has helped retain valuable foreign exchange and position India as a cost-effective healthcare destination.

Revenue Generation through Medical Tourism

- The influx of international patients is estimated to generate over \$9 billion annually, contributing to the economy and creating jobs in related sectors such as hospitality, transportation, and

pharmaceuticals.

"Heal in India" Initiative

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Vision

- The "Heal in India" initiative, championed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, aims to position India as a global healthcare leader.
- India's state-of-the-art hospitals, skilled medical professionals, and cost-effective treatments have made the country a preferred destination for medical tourists.

Holistic Care Approach

- India's healthcare system is renowned not just for treating ailments but for providing holistic care that addresses the physical, emotional, and psychological needs of patients.
- Healthcare professionals in India are seen as compassionate healers who embody dedication and a relentless pursuit of excellence.

Challenges and Opportunities:

Reliance on Imported Medical Devices

- Despite the progress, India continues to import a significant portion of its medical devices, impacting the cost of treatments and self-reliance.
- In 2021-22, India imported medical devices worth over \$6.24 billion, highlighting the need for greater domestic production.

"Make in India" Initiative

- The “Make in India” initiative is gaining momentum, with increasing investments in the domestic production of medical devices, aiming to reduce dependency on imports and enhance the affordability and accessibility of medical care.

Encouraging Youth Participation in Healthcare

- The ongoing journey towards self-reliance in healthcare offers opportunities for young innovators and entrepreneurs to contribute to advancements in the sector.
- Inspiring Indian youth to consider careers in healthcare is crucial, as the sector offers a unique blend of science, technology, and compassion to create a lasting impact on society.

Conclusion: A Vision for the Future

Celebrating Independence with a Focus on Healthcare

- As India celebrates its Independence Day, it is essential to acknowledge the significant strides made in healthcare, transitioning from dependence on foreign medical treatments to becoming a global healthcare destination.
- The journey of healthcare in India mirrors the broader path to self-reliance and excellence, embodying the spirit of innovation, resilience, and service that defines the nation.

Commitment to a Global Healthcare Leader

- India’s healthcare system should aim to be inclusive, innovative, and inspiring, serving as a source of pride for every Indian and a beacon of hope for the world.
- As the nation continues to build on its achievements, the vision is to

	<p>create a healthcare system that not only heals India but also the world.</p>
<p>23.</p>	<p>India's future, its youth, face their greatest challenge yet — the climate crisis</p> <p><i>Introduction: Nationalism and Climate Concerns</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nationalism Across Party Lines: Nationalism is a widely accepted ideology in India, transcending political affiliations. • Youth and the Question of Indianness: The article encourages Indian youth to reflect on what unites them as a nation, suggesting that territory and shared ecological concerns are central. • Climate Change as a National Concern: The author proposes that ecology and climate should be unifying national issues, though they currently lack widespread attention. <p><i>Climate Change: A Neglected Crisis in India</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of Popular Concern: Climate change, despite its severity, has not gained traction as a major issue in India. • Impact on Vulnerable Groups: Women, Dalits, and other marginalized groups, who are most affected by climate change, have not prioritized the issue. • Scientific Warnings Ignored: For decades, scientists have warned about the catastrophic effects of climate change, including melting glaciers and extreme weather patterns, yet these warnings have not spurred significant action in India. • Urgency of the Crisis: The article highlights the pressing need for large-

scale remedial action to avoid disaster by mid-century (2050-2070).

Economic Survey 2023-24: A Shift in India's Climate Policy:

- **Presentation of the Economic Survey:** On July 22, 2024, the Government of India presented the Economic Survey 2023-24, which contains a significant shift in the country's climate policy.
- **Chapter 5: Future Roadmap:** This chapter outlines India's future development goals and strategies, setting the context for the climate discussion.
- **Chapter 13: A Bold Departure:**
 - **Rejection of Global Climate Efforts:** Chapter 13 dismisses global initiatives to limit temperature rise, relying on a controversial paper by a single British scientist.
 - **Ideological Shift:** The chapter introduces an ideological perspective that aligns with far-right global narratives, marking a departure from traditional climate policies.
 - **Focus on India's Historical Context:** The government argues that Western nations have achieved prosperity through environmentally harmful practices and contends that India should not be restricted in its growth and emissions.

Chapter 13: Critical Components

- **Comprehensive Coverage:** Chapter 13 addresses a wide range of issues, including:
 - **Thematic Nitpicking:** The chapter selectively critiques various aspects of global climate policies.
 - **Empirical Data and Disputes:** It calls for more empirical data while engaging in disputes over existing data.

- **Geopolitical Blame Games:** The chapter shifts blame onto global powers, especially Western nations, for the current climate crisis.
- **Policy Wizardry:** It presents complex policy discussions that appear sophisticated and well-reasoned.
- **Philosophical Musings:** The chapter includes philosophical reflections on India's role in the global climate debate.
- **Challenges for Critics:** The article suggests that the chapter is so well-crafted that it would be difficult for left-leaning intellectuals to counter its arguments effectively.

The Role of Tribal Communities in India's Sustainability:

- **Tribal Communities vs. Aryan Traditions:** The author argues that India's sustainability achievements are primarily due to the practices of tribal communities, rather than the Aryan traditions often promoted by the government.
- **Scrutiny of the Bharatiya Model:** While the government seeks to develop a unique Bharatiya model for sustainability, the author insists it must be scrutinized to ensure it genuinely benefits marginalized populations.

Public Participation and the Need for Critical Examination

- **Beyond Voting:** The article emphasizes that public participation in a democracy should extend beyond electoral processes, urging citizens to engage more deeply with government policies.
- **Call to Read Chapter 13:** The Chief Economic Advisor's call for all Indians to read and understand Chapter 13 is highlighted as essential for informed public discourse.

• **Analysis of Key Sectors:**

- **Housing and Construction:** The article questions the utility of large infrastructure projects and the issues surrounding over one crore unoccupied housing units.
- **Food Processing vs. Healthy Eating:** The government's push for food processing is contrasted with its minimal efforts to promote healthy eating habits, such as millet consumption.
- **Electricity and Energy Consumption:** Although India has set ambitious renewable energy targets, the focus remains on inflating false average consumption estimates rather than prioritizing sustainable energy use.
- **Tourism and Resource Allocation:** The boom in tourism strains natural resources and diverts attention from making local neighborhoods sustainable.
- **Transport and Mobility:** The focus on luxury travel and car-centric development neglects critical issues like neighborhood mobility and road safety.

India's Youth: The Future of Climate Action

- **Demographic Dividend:** India, as the most populous nation, has a significant youth population that could shape the future of global climate action.
- **Engagement with Climate Discourse:** The article emphasizes the importance of youth engagement in climate issues, given their potential to influence the country's and the world's future.
- **Intellectual Potential of Youth:** Despite criticisms of political ignorance among Indian youth, the article highlights the belief among parents that today's youth are the smartest generation yet.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call to Action: The article concludes with a call for Indian youth to actively participate in the climate debate, particularly by engaging with the contents of Chapter 13 as a starting point for broader discussions.
<p>24.</p>	<p>The essence of India's inflation problem</p> <p>1. Proposal Overview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Survey Suggestion: The Economic Survey proposes that food prices be excluded from the inflation target managed by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). This would involve focusing on 'core' inflation, which excludes food and fuel prices, rather than 'headline' inflation that includes all components. • Current Practice: Presently, RBI targets headline inflation, which includes food prices, as part of its mandate to control inflation. <p>2. Food Price Inflation Trends</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical Context: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recent Inflation Rates:As of June, food price inflation was around 10%, reflecting a significant increase compared to historical averages. ○ Persistent High Rates: Food price inflation has been high since 2019, and this trend predates both the COVID-19 pandemic and the Ukraine war, indicating domestic factors are at play. • Consumer Price Index (CPI) Impact: Food constitutes a significant portion of the CPI in India (about 50%), leading to a considerable impact on overall inflation rates.

3. Inflation Targeting by RBI

- **RBI's Mandate:** Since 2016, the RBI has been tasked with controlling inflation through monetary policy, primarily by adjusting interest rates.
- **Target Achievement:** The RBI has failed to meet its 4% inflation target in each of the last five years. This performance aligns with global trends where central banks have also struggled with inflation targets.
- **Global Comparison:**
 - **Bank of England:** Has had inconsistent success with inflation targeting.
 - **Federal Reserve (US):** Aimed for 2% inflation but faced over 8% in 2022 before returning to near-target levels.

4. Arguments for Excluding Food Prices

- **High Food Expenditure:**
 - **Indian Context:** Food accounts for approximately 50% of household expenditure in India, a high proportion compared to other countries like the US (less than 10%).
 - **Economic Implication:** Ignoring food prices may overlook the impact on a significant portion of the population, affecting their cost of living and economic well-being.
- **Transitory Nature of Food Prices:** The argument that food price fluctuations are temporary and self-correcting does not hold in the Indian context, where food price inflation has been consistently high over the years.

5. Effectiveness of Targeting Core Inflation

- **Historical Performance:**
 - **Core Inflation Trends:** Core inflation (excluding food and fuel) has only been within the target range in one out of the past 13

years.

- **Monetary Policy Effects:** Raising interest rates, intended to control inflation, often leads to increased costs for firms, potentially raising prices and exacerbating core inflation.
- **Food Prices as a Determinant:** Food prices influence core inflation through their effects on wages and production costs, making it challenging to control core inflation independently of food prices.

6. Ideological and Policy Considerations

- **Global Policy Shifts:**
 - **Post-Soviet Economic Models:** The global shift towards market-driven production and central bank-managed inflation control arose after the collapse of the Soviet Union. This model may not be fully appropriate for the Indian economic context.
 - **Indian Policy Practices:** India's adherence to global inflation targeting practices might be less suited to its unique economic conditions, particularly the high weight of food in CPI.
- **Policy Relevance:** The proposal to exclude food prices from inflation targets could be seen as adopting practices that may not address the specific inflationary challenges faced by India.

7. Recommended Policy Focus

- **Supply-Side Measures:**
 - **Agricultural Productivity:** The key to managing food price inflation lies in improving agricultural yields and controlling production costs.
 - **Strategic Approaches: Addressing** issues in agriculture through comprehensive strategies could stabilize food prices and, by extension, overall inflation.
- **Income Transfers:**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Budget Constraints: While income transfers might help mitigate some of the adverse effects of rising food prices, they could strain the Budget if food prices continue to rise faster than overall inflation. ○ Public Goods Impact: Increased spending on transfers could reduce funds available for public goods and infrastructure. <p>Conclusion</p> <p>The Economic Survey's suggestion to exclude food prices from inflation targeting reflects a broader debate on effective inflation control. Given the high weight of food prices in India's CPI and their impact on core inflation, a more viable solution involves focusing on improving agricultural productivity and directly managing food price inflation. Altering inflation targeting frameworks without addressing underlying supply-side issues could leave India vulnerable to persistent inflationary pressures.</p>
<p>25.</p>	<p>Do doctors need a Central protection Act?</p> <p>Background</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Incident Trigger: The strike was initiated after the rape and murder of a young resident doctor at R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata on August 9, 2024. The doctor's body was discovered in the seminar room of the emergency building. ● Protests: Following the incident, resident doctors across India began protests, demanding legal protections and safety measures while on duty.

Ground Reality

- **Constitutional Provisions:** Health and law and order are State subjects, making it the responsibility of State governments or Union Territory administrations to prevent violence against healthcare workers.
- **Lack of Central Data:** The Union government admitted that there is no central database for tracking fatalities of medical professionals due to violence by patients or their families.

History of Violence Against Healthcare Workers

- **Notable Incident:** In 1973, **Aruna Ramchandra Shanbaug**, a junior nurse at King Edward Memorial Hospital in Mumbai, was sexually assaulted by a hospital sweeper, leading to her spending over 41 years in a vegetative state.
- **Ongoing Issue:** Despite the long history of violence, healthcare workers still face risks, including poor lighting, inadequate security, and unsafe working conditions in many hospitals.

Current Demands of Doctors

- **Improved Security Measures:** Doctors are demanding better lighting, increased security presence, and installation of properly monitored security cameras in hospitals.
- **Enhanced Safety Protocols:** The Indian Medical Association (IMA) has called for:
 1. Security protocols at hospitals to be comparable to airport security.
 2. Healthcare centers to be declared safe zones with mandatory security entitlements, including CCTV installations and deployment of security personnel.

3. Improved working conditions for resident doctors, who often work long shifts without safe spaces for rest.

Global Comparisons and Recommendations:

- **United Kingdom (NHS):** Enforces a zero-tolerance policy on violence against healthcare workers, supported by a dedicated security team and a comprehensive reporting system.
- **United States:** Some states classify assaults on healthcare workers as felonies, acting as a strong deterrent.
- **Australia:** Hospitals have introduced safety measures like security personnel, panic buttons, and mandatory de-escalation training.
- **Indian Demand:** Healthcare workers in India are pushing for a similar Central protection Act and implementation of these global best practices.

Recent Government Actions:

- **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare:** On August 16, 2024, issued an order mandating that any violence against healthcare workers be reported through an institutional FIR within six hours.

National Medical Commission (NMC):

1. Directed all medical colleges to develop policies for a safe work environment on their campuses.
2. Required prompt investigation and FIR lodging for any incident of violence against medical students.
3. Stipulated that a detailed action report on such incidents must be sent to the NMC within 48 hours.

	<p>Conclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing Struggle: The protests underscore the urgent need for better safety and security measures for healthcare workers in India. • Call for Reforms: While the government has taken some steps, doctors continue to demand comprehensive systemic reforms, including a Central protection Act, to prevent such incidents and ensure a safer working environment for all healthcare professionals.
<p>26.</p>	<p>New migrant realities in Karnataka's gig sector</p> <p><i>Context and Background</i></p> <p>Bengaluru's Gig Economy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bengaluru, known as the Silicon Valley of India, is home to a large gig workforce, including food delivery personnel, home service providers, and app-based drivers. • Key gig platforms include Uber, Ola, Swiggy, Zomato, and Dunzo, which together employ around 200,000 gig workers in the city. <p>Padma's Experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Padma, who migrated from Sikkim to Visakhapatnam and later to Bengaluru, works as a beauty services provider. • She appreciates the flexibility and frequent cash payments provided by her employer, despite a 30% commission charged by the company. • Her personal situation, including her husband's accident, underscores the economic pressures and reliance on gig work for financial stability. <p>Demographic and Geographic Distribution of Migrant Workers</p>

- **Types of Migrant Workers:**

- **Delivery Personnel:** Includes food delivery workers and home service providers. A significant portion are migrants due to the low entry barriers and flexibility offered by gig jobs.
- **Drivers:** Although fewer inter-state migrants are involved in driving jobs compared to delivery personnel, schemes that allow drivers to rent vehicles attract more migrants.

- **Geographic Distribution:**

- **High-Migrant Areas:** Locations such as M.G. Road, Koramangala, and HSR Layout have higher concentrations of Hindi-speaking migrants.
- **Variable Migrant Presence:** Rajajinagar has fewer migrants compared to other areas, while Electronics City features a mix of workers from within Karnataka and distant states like Andhra Pradesh.
- **Local Variations:** Migrants also come from nearby Karnataka regions like Tumakuru and Ramanagara, alongside more distant areas.

Challenges Faced by Migrant Workers

- **Economic Pressures and Exploitation:**

- Migrant workers face economic instability and exploitation due to their lack of local support networks and unfamiliarity with the city's job market.
- They are often reluctant to challenge unfair practices due to fear of losing their jobs and lacking knowledge of local labor rights.

- **Risks and Vulnerabilities:**

- **Risky Work Conditions:** Gig work, particularly in delivery

services, involves risks such as traffic accidents and health hazards.

- **Low Pay and Unstable Income:** Many migrants accept low-paying jobs with unstable incomes due to limited alternatives.

- **Contrast with Local Workers:**

- Local workers often have access to more stable job options and social networks, which provide them with better opportunities and support.

Impact of the 'Quota-for-Local' Bill

- **Legislation Overview:**

- The Karnataka government proposed a 'quota-for-local' Bill to prioritize local residents for certain job opportunities.
- The Bill faced significant opposition from corporates and has been shelved for now.

- **Potential Impacts on Migrants:**

- **Indirect Effects on Gig Workers:** Since gig workers are independent contractors rather than formal employees, the Bill may not directly affect them but could impact their overall job market.
- **Reduced Opportunities:** If implemented, the Bill could reduce job opportunities for migrants in the formal sector, pushing more of them into the gig economy.
- **Increased Competition:** With locals potentially filling more formal sector positions, migrants might face increased competition and difficulty securing stable work.

- **Potential Worsening of Migrant Conditions:**

- **Increased Precarity:** The Bill could exacerbate the precarious

nature of migrant work by restricting their access to formal employment and potentially increasing their reliance on gig work.

- **Economic Impact:** Migrants might face reduced income and job security, further compounding their economic challenges.

Broader Implications and Considerations

- **Focus on Systemic Issues:**

- The Bill may divert attention from broader issues of worker exploitation and inadequate social security.
- Migrants will continue to move to cities like Bengaluru in search of better economic opportunities regardless of local reservation policies.

- **Need for Comprehensive Solutions:**

- Addressing the exploitation and precarious conditions of gig workers requires systemic changes, including improved working conditions, better protections, and expanded social security.
- Policies should focus on creating fair work environments and protecting all workers, rather than creating divisions between local and migrant workers.

- **Social Security and Labor Rights:**

- Social security schemes and labor rights protections should be inclusive of migrant workers and acknowledge their unique challenges and contributions.
- Ensuring fair work practices and protections is crucial for improving the overall labor landscape for both local and migrant workers.

	<p>Conclusion</p> <p>The migration dynamics in Bengaluru’s gig economy highlight significant challenges faced by migrant workers, including economic instability, exploitation, and limited access to fair employment conditions. The proposed ‘quota-for-local’ Bill, while aiming to prioritize local residents, may inadvertently worsen the vulnerabilities of migrant workers. Addressing these issues requires a focus on improving labor conditions and expanding protections for all workers, rather than implementing divisive policies that may exacerbate existing inequalities.</p>
<p>27.</p>	<p>The ‘livery of India’s freedom’ is under threat</p> <p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prime Minister’s Campaign: The "Har Ghar Tiranga" campaign aims to promote the display of the national flag in every household in the week leading up to Independence Day (August 9-15). • Concerns Raised: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Prime Minister’s moral duplicity is noted, as he supports an organization indifferent to the flag’s values. ○ There is criticism of the widespread use of machine-made polyester flags, which undermines the traditional khadi fabric. <p>Historical and Symbolic Importance of Khadi</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Khadi’s Legacy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fabric Description: Khadi is a hand-spun and hand-woven fabric made from wool, cotton, or silk. ○ Symbolic Value: Khadi is a symbol of India's independence and

self-sufficiency, introduced by Mahatma Gandhi during the independence movement.

- **Historical Use:** The Indian flag originally featured a **charkha (spinning wheel)** in its center and mandated the use of khadi, reflecting its significance in the national struggle.

Changes to the Flag Code

- **Amendment in 2022:**
 - **Flag Code Modification:** The Flag Code of India was amended to include "machine-made polyester bunting" alongside khadi.
 - **Tax Exemption:** Polyester flags were exempted from GST, placing them on the same tax footing as khadi flags, which traditionally enjoyed tax benefits due to their symbolic importance.

Impact on the Khadi Industry

- **Khadi Manufacturing:**
 - **Strike:** The **Karnataka Khadi Gramodyoga Samyukta Sangha (KKGSS)**, the only BIS-accredited flag manufacturing unit, went on strike to protest against the government's shift towards polyester.
 - **Economic Impact:** The switch to polyester has negatively affected the khadi industry, historically a symbol of India's economic and cultural values.

Government Policies and Their Effects

- **Support for Big Corporates:**
 - **Economic Policies:** Since 2014, the government has favored big corporate interests and undermined the micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSME) sector, which includes handloom

industries.

- **Impact of Demonetisation and GST:** Demonetisation and the GST regime have strained handloom workers, leading to a decline in traditional industries.

- **GST Burden:**

- **Taxation:** GST applies to both handloom products and raw materials such as yarns, dyes, and chemicals, increasing costs for handloom workers.
- **Worker Strain:** Rising costs, particularly for electricity and cotton fiber, have squeezed handloom workers financially.

Current Challenges Faced by the Khadi Sector

- **Vishwakarma Yojana:**

- **Exclusion:** The recently launched Vishwakarma Yojana, aimed at supporting traditional craftspeople, excludes handloom spinners and weavers, further neglecting this sector.

- **Khadi Procurement:**

- **Government Procurement:** There has been a decline in government procurement of khadi, with departments often ignoring mandates that require them to use khadi.
- **Market Regulation:** The market is flooded with semi-mechanized khadi, which dilutes the authenticity and value of traditionally hand-spun khadi. This practice negatively affects the wages and working conditions of khadi spinners, who earn between ₹200-₹250 a day.

- **Global Promotion:**

- **Missed Opportunities:** India has failed to build a global audience for its handlooms. As global consumers increasingly value

sustainable and fair-trade products, the lack of promotion has diminished the international standing of Indian khadi.

Call for Restoration and Reform

- **Restoration of Khadi:**

- **Symbolic Significance:** The article calls for the restoration of khadi as the exclusive fabric for the national flag to honor its historical and symbolic value.
- **Economic and Cultural Value:** Emphasizes that khadi, described by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru as “the livery of India’s freedom,” should regain its place as a symbol of national pride and identity.

- **Reimagining the Handloom Sector:**

- **Support and Empowerment:** There is a need to reimagine and revitalize India’s handloom traditions, including forming cooperatives and marketing their products more effectively.
- **Market Regulation:** Urges the government to regulate the market to ensure that only authentic hand-spun khadi is sold and to provide better support to handloom workers.

Conclusion

- **Restoration and Support:** The article concludes with a call to restore khadi’s role in representing the national flag and to support handloom workers and traditional industries.
- **Historical Duty:** Emphasizes the need to honor India’s historical

	<p>traditions and support the economic and cultural significance of khadi.</p>
<p>28.</p>	<p>A ground plan for sustainable mass employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The government has unveiled five major employment-related schemes with an ambitious outlay of ₹2 lakh crore over five years. These schemes aim to create jobs, facilitate skill development, and provide opportunities for 4.1 crore youth. The Economic Survey emphasizes the need for private sector job creation, leveraging the benefits of lower taxes and higher post-pandemic profits. The Prime Minister's package must be viewed in conjunction with other initiatives aimed at human well-being. <p>Challenges in Creating Mass Employment with Dignity:</p> <p>A sustainable road map for mass employment must address the challenge of low wages, especially when there is an abundance of unskilled labor. The 2019-20 Periodic Labour Force Survey highlighted that earning ₹25,000 per month places a wage earner in the top 10%. However, short-duration skill programs have struggled with long-term placements due to insufficient wages for a dignified life, particularly in urban areas.</p> <p>Importance of Education and Skills Continuum:</p> <p>States with high per capita consumption like Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Goa, and Sikkim also have better human development indicators. In contrast, states like Odisha, despite pushing for short-term skilling, suffer from low per capita consumption due to the lack of robust secondary and higher vocational education opportunities.</p>

Role of the State in Wage Determination and Public Goods:

The state has a crucial role in setting minimum wages and ensuring the availability of high-quality public goods. Evidence suggests that public employment in India is significantly lower per capita compared to developed countries. Therefore, state intervention is necessary for creating sustainable mass employment with dignity.

Key Policy Initiatives for Sustainable Employment

1. Decentralized Community Action for Skilling Needs

- Start from the grassroots level by involving communities in identifying skilling needs.
- Engage local government bodies like gram sabhas or basti samitis to take ownership of state programs.
- Professionals at the cluster level should help create individualized plans for youth, ensuring effective skill provision and employment outcomes.

2. Converge Education, Health, and Employment Initiatives

- Integrate education, health, skills, nutrition, livelihoods, and employment initiatives at the local government level.
- Focus on women's collectives to ensure accountability and quality outcomes.
- Decentralized community action and untied funds can transform public goods delivery and improve human development indicators.

3. Vocational Courses with Undergraduate Programs

- Introduce vocational courses alongside traditional undergraduate programs in all colleges.
- Provide resources for colleges to experiment with new courses that

improve employability, such as tourism, counseling, and more.

4. Standardize Nursing and Healthcare Courses

- Align nursing and allied health professional courses with international benchmarks.
- Standardization of curriculum and duration is crucial to meet the global demand for healthcare workers.

5. Create Community Cadres of Care-Givers

- Develop community cadres of trained crèche care-givers to enable women to work without concerns for childcare.
- Expand services beyond the current anganwadi model, providing universal care through community management.

6. Invest in ITIs and Polytechnics

- Enhance the quality and infrastructure of Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs), polytechnics, and **Rural Self Employment Training Institutes (RSETIs)**.
- These institutions should serve as hubs for feeder schools and develop an equivalence framework for vocational and academic inputs.

7. Introduce Enterprise Skills in High Schools

- Incorporate enterprise and start-up skills into the high school curriculum, focusing on technology and business processes.
- Professional visits to schools can provide students with essential finishing skills, improving their employment prospects.

8. Co-Sharing Model for Apprenticeships

- Establish a co-sharing model for apprenticeships with industry, particularly in the manufacturing and services sectors.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skilling costs should be shared with employers to ensure successful apprenticeship outcomes and job placements. <p>9. Streamline Working Capital Loans for Enterprises</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate access to working capital loans for women-led and first-generation enterprises to help them scale up. • Use technology and innovative approaches to improve credit histories and lending confidence for scaling enterprises. <p>10. MGNREGA Focus on High-Deprivation Blocks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct 70% of MGNREGA funds to water-scarce and high-deprivation blocks, focusing on livelihood security through income-generating initiatives. • Enhance the productivity of MGNREGA wage earners by providing better skills and wage rates. <p>Conclusion: Toward a Higher Order Economy</p> <p>The goal is to create a higher order economy characterized by increased productivity and improved quality of life for workers. A multi-faceted approach involving community action, state intervention, education, and industry collaboration is essential for achieving sustainable mass employment with dignity.</p>
<p>29.</p>	<p>Moral pressure and human rights compliance</p> <p>The article discusses two primary methods of enforcing human rights norms: economic sanctions or military intervention, and moral pressure through forceful condemnation. While powerful nations may use the former, the latter</p>

is accessible to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and smaller

nations. Despite the challenge posed by state sovereignty, moral pressure can sometimes compel governments to adhere to human rights standards.

The Role of Moral Pressure

Moral pressure, particularly through "naming and shaming," can be a potent tool for enforcing human rights norms. However, authoritarian regimes, such as those in **Russia, China, and North Korea**, often ignore such condemnations. Moreover, some nations that advocate for human rights may do so with ulterior political or economic motives, which can undermine the credibility of their stance.

Impact of Naming and Shaming

The article highlights the work of **Rochelle Terman**, a scholar on human rights, who has explored the effectiveness of naming and shaming in her study, **"The Geopolitics of Shaming: When Human Rights Pressure Works — and When It Backfires"** (Princeton 2024). **Terman's research** suggests that naming and shaming can be effective in certain contexts, leading to tangible improvements in human rights. The article provides examples of how such campaigns have led to policy changes, the release of political prisoners, and the prosecution of dictators.

The Limitations of Naming and Shaming

Despite its successes, naming and shaming is not always effective. Some governments may resist or deny the allegations, or make only superficial changes. The article cites Israel as an example where global condemnation has had little impact on its leadership. However, the persistence of such campaigns can lead to increased international scrutiny and pressure for reform.

The Conundrum in International Law

The article raises a critical question: Is naming and shaming an effective strategy? While it can put violators in the spotlight, the efficacy of moral sanctions is debatable, especially when more forceful measures like economic sanctions or military intervention fail. The article argues that human rights must emerge from within a nation's social and democratic institutions, rather than being imposed externally.

The Role of the State in Upholding Human Rights

The state has a crucial role in upholding human rights. The article emphasizes the need for states to view the protection of human rights as a **binding and sacred duty**. It also suggests that when the state fails to protect human rights, resistance movements gain legitimacy. A repression-free state that respects human rights is essential for ensuring equal treatment and justice.

Achieving Human Rights in Liberal Modernity

The article concludes by discussing the challenges and successes of implementing human rights in the context of liberal modernity. It argues that human rights can only be truly upheld when they are central to the political ideology of the ruling parties. This requires the establishment of strong institutions that align with democratic norms and the protection of basic human rights.

Conclusion

The article underscores the importance of establishing the centrality of human rights in an increasingly volatile world. This is particularly crucial in **liberal systems**, where human rights are essential for stability and public welfare. The

	<p>success of such efforts depends on the mobilization of political coalitions, institutional arrangements, and political ideologies that prioritize human rights. However, in authoritarian regimes, the focus remains on maintaining power, often at the expense of human rights.</p>
<p>30.</p>	<p>Lateral Entry into civil services</p> <p>The Second Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC), which was founded in 2005, firmly supported the notion of lateral entrance when it was originally presented under the 2004–09 law. Later, in 2017, NITI Aayog suggested bringing in knowledge and new viewpoints. The induction of middle and senior management personnel in the central government was proposed by the Sectoral Group of Secretaries (SGoS) on Governance and NITI Aayog in their 3-year Action Agenda of 2017.</p> <p>Eligibility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Those with experience in the appropriate domains and domain knowledge from the commercial sector, state governments, autonomous bodies, or public sector initiatives are welcome to apply for these roles.• The selection criteria usually prioritise subject matter expertise and professional accomplishment. <p>Reservation in Lateral Entry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The “13-point roster” guideline has prevented Lateral entries from being included in the reservation system.• A candidate’s placement on a list of job opportunities is determined by applying the “13-point roster” policy, which uses a fraction of one hundred to calculate the candidate’s group quota percentage (SC, ST,

OBC, and EWS).

- Since every lateral entry position is regarded as a “Single Post,” these appointments can be made without according to reservation standards because the reservation system does not apply to them.
- For each department, 45 positions have been separately posted in the current recruitment round. Reservations would be in place, with special allocations for SC, ST, OBC, and EWS candidates if they were to be viewed as a single category.

Process of Lateral Entry Recruitment

- Selection process – by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).
- The UPSC is requested by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) to handle the lateral entrance selection procedure.
- UPSC invites online applications
- Submission of application- the UPSC conducts interviews of the shortlisted candidates.
- Recommendation of the list of selected candidates to the DoPT.
- The government then appoints the suggested candidates, usually for a term of three to five years.

ARC Recommendations

- First Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) (1966): It was founded with the goal of professionalizing and overhauling personnel management and training within the public services, and Morarji Desai served as its chairman. Even while it did not openly support lateral entry, it set the stage for addressing the demand for specialized knowledge in the bureaucracy.
- Second Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) (2005): It suggested changes to increase the efficiency, openness, and citizen-friendliness of

the Indian administrative system.

- The ARC highlighted the necessity of lateral access into higher government positions in its 10th Report, as it can facilitate the introduction of specialized knowledge and abilities that may not always be found in regular civil services.
- It suggested hiring experts from the business world, academic institutions, and government projects to build a talent pool for contract or temporary positions.

The ARC also emphasized integrating lateral entrants while maintaining public service integrity and suggested a transparent, merit-based selection process.

Rationale

- *Need for specialists and fresh talent-* The inclusion of professionals from diverse backgrounds can help in invigorating the bureaucracy with new ideas and innovative approaches. **For ex-**The generalist civil servants often lack domain specific knowledge and fail to incorporate the views of other stakeholders such as private sector, NGO's etc.
- *Meeting the shortage of Personnel at the centre-* The Baswan Committee (2016) had pointed to the unwillingness of large states like Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan in sponsoring officers for central deputation, due to deficit of officers in their states. The lateral entry of officers can help in addressing the shortage of staff at the central level.
- *Strengthening of participatory Governance-*The lateral entry also aims to strengthen participatory governance, by providing the private sector and NGOs an opportunity to participate in the governance process.
- *Improvement of Governance efficiency-*The recruitment of private individuals as consultants, officers on special duty by Central

government ministries has given fruitful results in the past. **For ex-** Appointment of Montek Singh Ahluwalia (Planning Commission), Vijay Kelkar (Ministry of Finance) and Parmeshwaran Iyer (Swacch Bharat Mission).

Thus, there is a need for encouraging private participation at middle-level positions to improve efficiency.

- *Fixing the flaw in public service recruitment*-There are many potential and good administrators who do not participate in examinations conducted by the government during their young age. Lateral entry provides an opportunity for them, to be part of the governance machinery and contribute to nation building.
- *Promotion of Healthy competitive spirit*-Lateral entry aims to promote a sense of healthy competition in bureaucracy. It induces generalist civil servants to develop expertise in areas of their choice.
- *Bridging Public-Private Gap*-After the economic reforms in 1991, the Indian government has taken up the role of a facilitator of public services. Private sector has assumed a greater responsibility for capital expenditure, investment, and development. Lateral entry provides a platform for greater collaboration between the government and private sector. It allows stakeholders like industry experts and non-profits to participate more directly in the governance process.
- *Inline with Global best practices*- Countries like United States, Belgium, the UK, Australia and New Zealand have institutionalized the practice of lateral entry, as a permanent part of their system. In countries like the United Kingdom and Ireland, the selection of officers is on the criteria of work experience in the civil as well as the private sector.

Pros

1. *Active government:* In the modern era, the government is evolving into a multi-actor, participatory endeavour. By means of lateral entry, stakeholders like non-profits and the corporate sector can get involved in the governance process.
2. *Bringing about a Change in Work Culture:* It will assist in changing the government sector's work culture, which is criticized for its rule-book bureaucracy, status quo, and red tape.
3. *Closing the Gap:* Data from the Department of Personnel and Training indicate that there is a 1500 IAS officer shortage. Lateral entry may be useful in bridging this gap.
4. *Innovation and Reforms:* By contributing their rich expertise from the private sector, non-governmental organizations, or other organizations, lateral recruiters can assist improve and changing administrative procedures and governance.
5. *Specialized experience and Expertise:* As governance grows more complicated, lateral entry enables the government to hire specialists with experience in fields like technology, management, and finance, filling in knowledge gaps that generalist civil servants might not have.

Cons

1. *Short Tenure:* The three-year term that the Central government has established for joint secretaries is insufficient for newcomers to completely adjust to the intricate governance structures and make significant contributions.
2. *Preserving Objectivity and Neutrality:* Including people from different backgrounds may make it more difficult to remain impartial and objective because of possible conflicts of interest and questions about impartiality, particularly if new hires have ties to interest groups or private businesses.

3. *Effect on the Morale of Permanent Officers:* The growing number of lateral hires may cause a gulf between them and permanent staff members, which could be detrimental to career bureaucrats' morale.
4. *Possible Dilution of Merit-Based Recruiting:* The civil services' foundational merit-based recruiting system may be weakened by lateral entry. It could give the impression that the selection process is biased or nepotistic if it is not carried out transparently.
5. *Outsider Syndrome:* Because they are apprehensive about upsetting the status quo and causing chaos, traditional bureaucrats may be hostile to lateral entrants and see them as outsiders.
6. *Experience Requirement for Senior Positions:* Under the permanent system, IAS officers who have served for 17 years—typically at an age of 45—are promoted to the joint secretary level, where they stay for 10 years. The best prospects may be discouraged from joining if lateral entrants are subject to similar experience criteria since they often reach their professional zenith in the private sector at that age.
7. *Potential Conflict of Interest-* There are concerns regarding potential conflict of interest arising in policy formulation. Private people may be focused on profit maximization, while government officials aspire to public service.

Lateral entry in other countries

- Several countries, including the US, UK, Australia, New Zealand, and Belgium, have implemented lateral entry systems, allowing movement between government and private sector roles.
- This “revolving door” model, while offering benefits like specialized expertise, faces criticism for potential conflicts of interest and undue influence, especially in industries like pharmaceuticals, energy, and

defense.

- Concerns about this practice extend to various countries, with a particular focus on the energy and fossil fuel sector.

Road ahead

Like competition in any area, lateral entry has its advantages, but to guarantee that it leads to positive change, entry requirements, job roles, staffing levels, and training must be carefully considered. In addition, extensive administrative improvements require changes to the conventional seniority-based structure.

- *Maintenance of balance-* The government needs to maintain a fine balance between the career civil servants and the lateral entrants. The number of lateral entrants should be kept optimal and minimal.
- *Phased Implementation-* The lateral entry program should be implemented in a phased manner by taking feedback and outcomes from initial recruitments. This will ensure that the integration of private sector professionals is smooth and effective.
- *Implementation of reservation policy-* The lateral entry system should aim to implement the '13 point roster system' which provides for reservation. This will address the concerns of the SC, ST and OBC communities, regarding their perceived marginalisation.
- *Clearly defined recruitment rules and procedures-* The recruitment and service rules for lateral entry posts need to be clearly defined and made incentive-compatible. For ex- A entry-level test to check the analytical skills, judgement capabilities, and personality traits.
- *Steps for assimilation with bureaucratic structure-* A greater weightage can be provided for 'prior consultation work' with the government, as these people will face less difficulty in assimilation with the bureaucratic

	<p>structure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Exploration of Allocation of cadres-</i> The option of allocating cadres for lateral entrants can be explored. These lateral entrants can be put for at least one year under State governments, for field level training and exposure. • <i>Restriction to few technical sectors-</i> The appointment should be restricted to sectors of finance, economy and infrastructure, which are technical in nature. It should not be extended to Home, Defence, Personnel etc. <p>The performance of the Indian bureaucratic structure can definitely be complemented with the lateral entry process. Lateral entrants can complement the regular government officials by bringing in new outside talents, pushing the government officials to work more for public welfare, etc. But a definite policy is the need of the hour to make the system of lateral entry more inclusive, transparent and effective.</p>
<p>31.</p>	<p>ABC of Self-Help Groups</p> <p>Self-Help Groups (SHGs) have been a significant tool in empowering women across India. These groups aim to enhance the economic and livelihood security of women, particularly in rural areas. The concept of SHGs was initiated by organizations like the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) and has since evolved to become a strategic intervention for financial inclusion and socio-economic development.</p> <p><u>Significance</u></p> <p>Economic Empowerment</p>

• *Income and Savings:* Membership in SHGs has led to increased income and savings among women. Members often participate in small businesses, agricultural activities, and other income-generating ventures, which significantly improve their financial status.

• *Loans and Credit Access:* SHGs provide access to credit, allowing women to take loans for various purposes, including business investments and personal needs. This reduces their dependency on traditional moneylenders who often charge exorbitant interest rates.

Social and Political Empowerment

• *Decision-Making:* Women in SHGs report enhanced participation in household and community decision-making processes. Their involvement in SHGs boosts their confidence and leadership skills, enabling them to voice their opinions and take on leadership roles within their communities.

• *Public Speaking and Awareness:* SHG members gain confidence in public speaking and participate more actively in community meetings and local governance. Increased awareness about health, education, and legal rights is also observed.

Health and Education

• *Health Awareness:* SHGs play a crucial role in spreading health awareness among women, leading to better health practices and access to healthcare facilities. Programs often include training on nutrition, sanitation, and disease prevention.

• *Educational Attainment:* Membership in SHGs encourages educational pursuits among women and their children. Many SHGs emphasize the

importance of education, resulting in higher enrollment rates in schools and literacy programs.

Social Status and Mobility

- *Social Recognition:* Women in SHGs often gain social recognition and respect in their communities. Their involvement in economic activities and community service elevates their social status.

- *Reduced Vulnerability:* Participation in SHGs reduces the vulnerability of women to social evils such as domestic violence and gender discrimination. Empowered women are more likely to resist such issues and seek support when needed.

Challenges and Areas for Improvement

1. *Sustainability of SHGs:* Ensuring the long-term sustainability of SHGs remains a challenge. Continuous training and support are essential for maintaining the momentum and effectiveness of these groups.

2. *Financial Inclusion:* While SHGs provide access to credit, there is a need for more comprehensive financial inclusion measures, such as linking SHGs with formal banking institutions for better financial products and services.

3. *Skill Development:* Enhancing the skill set of SHG members through targeted training programs can lead to better economic outcomes. Focus areas include advanced agricultural techniques, business management, and digital literacy.

4. *Market Linkages:* Improving market access for products made by SHG members can significantly boost their income. Establishing better supply chain

networks and facilitating direct market linkages are critical steps.

Models of SHGs

SHG-Bank Linkage Model

The Self Help Group-Bank Linkage Programme (SBLP) was started in 1992 at the initiative of NABARD. The basic idea of the SBLP is to link the unorganized sector of our population to the formal banking sector.

SHG-Corporate Model

- They have played a major role in promoting women empowerment through SHG. For eg. ITC, Hindustan Unilever Limited, Amul, Tata Group, ICICI Bank, etc.
- ICICI Bank, India's largest private sector bank, recently crossed a milestone of supporting one million women beneficiaries through its programme for Self Help Groups (SHG) which aims at empowering less privileged women to become self-reliant.

SHG NGO Model

- The NGO regularly conducts skills training programs for SHGs to encourage leadership abilities and income-generating activities. These types of training carry SHGs, for their creation and work, close to NGOs.
- Technical expertise, skills training, and marketing strategies offer to women to help develop a sustainable business.

Shortcomings of SHGs:

1] *Mostly engaged in Agricultural Activities:* SHGs in rural areas should be introduced to non-agricultural businesses too and should be provided with state-of-the art machinery.

2] *Credit Mobilization:* A study has shown that about 48% of the members had to borrow from local money lenders, relatives and neighbors because they were

getting inadequate loans from groups. In the absence of any documentary proof, this class of people do not have access to organized financial services.

3] Self-Help Groups are *Developed in Rural Area only*.

4] *Poor Infrastructure*: Most of these SHGs are situated in rural and far-reaching areas that lack connectivity via road or railways. Access to electricity remains an issue.

5] *Politicization*: Political affiliation and interference has become a serious problem with SHGs. Political affiliation is also a major reason for group conflicts.

6] *Lack of Technology*: Most of the SHGs work with rudimentary or no technology.

7] *Access to market*: Also the goods produced by SHGs do not have access to larger market places.

Success Story

Kudumbashree in Kerala:

- It was launched in Kerala in 1998 to wipe out absolute poverty through community action.
 - It is the largest women empowering project in the country. It has three components i.e., microcredit, entrepreneurship and empowerment.
 - Kudumbashree training courses are also quite comprehensive, and include women's rights knowledge of constitutional and legal provisions training in banking practices training in skills to set up micro-enterprises.
 - It has thus made a huge contribution in socially empowering the women of Kerala.
8. Other famous SHGs: Lijjat papad from Maharashtra; Mahila Arthik Vikas Mahamandal (MAVIM) in Maharashtra, "BHAU BHAUNI, Odisha; Social Saheli - Uttar Pradesh, etc.

Measures Taken by the Government to Promote the SHGs:

- 1] On the recommendations of **SK Kalia Committee**, the SHG-Bank linkage programme was started at the initiative of NABARD in 1992 to link the unorganized sector with the formal banking sector.
- 2] Banks were allowed to open savings accounts for Self-Help Groups (SHGs). Banks provided loans to the SHGs.
- 3] GOI has included SHG as a priority sector lending group to mandate and enhance banks focus on them.
- 4] SHG, have been allowed to run grain banks to secure food security in food & care regions.
- 5] **Priyadarshini scheme:** With NABARD as the nodal agency, it has aimed at women empowerment and livelihood enhancement through SHGs.
- 6] **Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana:** In order to promote agro-ecological practices that increase women farmers' income and reduce their input costs and risks, the DAY-NRLM Mission has been implementing the Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP).As of March 2018, more than 33 lakh women farmers were being supported under this scheme.

Suggestions to Improve the Working of SHGs:

- 1] Simplify the process of giving loans - ease the access to credit.
- 2] An integrated approach is required for meeting the backward linkages with technology and forward linkages with processing and marketing organizations.
- 3] The delivery system has to be proactive and should respond to the financial needs of the farmers.
- 4] Training programmes relating to management of finances, maintaining accounts, production and marketing activities etc. should be given.
- 5] Provide gender sensitization training to bank staff so that they are sensitized

	<p>to the needs of rural clients especially women.</p> <p>6] Adequate insurance coverage should be provided to the business units promoted by SHG against the financial losses to safeguard the interest of the entrepreneurs.</p> <p>SHGs have had a profound impact on the socio-economic status of women in India, providing them with opportunities to improve their financial standing, gain social recognition, and participate actively in community life. Despite challenges, the positive outcomes of SHGs underscore their importance as a development strategy for empowering women and promoting inclusive growth.</p>
<p>32.</p>	<p>Building on favourable change in the 2024 waqf Bill</p> <p>Introduction</p> <p>The Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024, has been referred to a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) due to opposition from the Narendra Modi government's allies and criticisms from opposition parties. The bill proposes amendments to the Waqf Act, 1995, with a focus on addressing issues related to family waqfs and their impact on inheritance laws.</p> <p>Rationale for Family Waqf</p> <p>Concept of Waqf:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition: Waqf is an Islamic endowment system where a person dedicates a property or asset for charitable, religious, or social purposes. The property itself is not sold or transferred, but its benefits are used for the intended cause. • Koranic Basis: While the Koran does not explicitly mention "waqf," it encourages charity through various verses, such as those promoting

giving to family members and the poor (e.g., Koran 2:215, 3:92).

Types of Waqfs:

1. **Waqf Khari:** Public waqf dedicated to community welfare and charitable activities.
2. **Waqf Al-Ahli/Waqf Alal-Aulad:** Family waqf, intended to benefit the donor's family members.
3. **Waqf Al-Mushtarak:** A combination of public and family waqf, aiming to benefit both the family and the wider society.

Historical Practice:

- **Theological Basis:** The concept of family waqf is supported by Islamic teachings that prioritize charity to family members. The Prophet Muhammad endorsed this practice, as reflected in **hadiths** encouraging spending on one's family (e.g., "The greatest reward is what you spend on your family").
- **Early Examples:** Prominent figures, including the Prophet's companions, established family waqfs to support their families and protect property. For example, Abu Bakr and Omar endowed properties to their families.

Purpose of Family Waqf:

- **Protection of Property:** Family waqfs were used to **prevent property fragmentation** and manage agrarian assets effectively. This system aimed to preserve wealth within the family and eventually contribute to public welfare.

Colonial and Post-Colonial Developments

Colonial Response:

- **Privy Council Decision (1894):** The British Privy Council initially

invalidated family waqf, arguing that its benefits to the public were too indirect.

- **Reversal (1913):** This decision was overturned by the British government, acknowledging the validity of family waqfs. However, colonial influences led to various restrictions.

Global Trends:

- **Restrictions and Abolitions:** Several Muslim-majority countries introduced restrictions or abolished family waqfs due to colonial influences and land reform laws.

For example:

1. **Egypt:** Restricted family waqfs to two generations in 1946 and abolished them in 1951.
2. **Syria:** Abolished family waqfs in 1949.
3. **Kuwait:** Restricted them to two generations in 1951.
4. **Iraq, Tunisia, Libya, UAE:** Various restrictions and abolitions occurred in the mid-20th century.

Current Practices:

- **Countries Permitting Family Waqfs:** In countries like India, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia, family waqfs are allowed but face limited statutory support and tax privileges. *They are not included in waqf surveys or entitled to exemptions from taxes like capital gains or estate duty.*

Current Legal Framework in India

Existing Legislation:

- **Waqf Act, 1995:** Defines family waqfs but lacks comprehensive regulatory oversight. Family waqfs are subject to different rules compared to charitable waqfs.
- **Income-Tax Act, 1961:** Family waqfs are taxed on their income even when used for charitable purposes. **Estate duty applies to property transfers, contrary to waqf principles.**

Challenges Faced:

- **Taxation Issues:** Family waqfs do not receive the same tax relief as charitable waqfs, impacting their financial sustainability.
- **Land Reform Laws:** Agrarian family waqfs have been affected by government land reform policies, often acquired at nominal prices.

Proposed Reforms in the 2024 Bill

Key Amendments:

- **Section 3A(2):** Introduces a significant reform stating that **family waqfs cannot deny inheritance rights to heirs, including women.** The provision allows Muslims to create a family waqf for up to **one-third** of their property, ensuring that female heirs receive at least a token benefit.

Potential Problems:

- **Token Benefits:** The bill's provision allows family waqfs to remain valid even if female heirs receive less than their entitlement under Islamic inheritance laws, which could undermine the intent of providing fair inheritance.
- **Uniformity in Testamentary Laws:** The bill raises the issue of whether similar restrictions should apply to non-Muslim testamentary practices.

	<p>For example, under the Hindu Succession Act, 1956, a Hindu can allocate property to a son to the exclusion of other heirs, including women.</p> <p><i>Recommendations for Improvement</i></p> <p>Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration into UCC: To address disparities, the JPC should consider how the proposed reforms align with broader legal principles and whether they should be integrated into a Uniform Civil Code or Secular Civil Code. • Ensuring Fairness: The bill should be adjusted to ensure that inheritance laws are equitable across all communities and provide consistent rights and protections for all heirs, regardless of religious background. <p>Conclusion</p> <p>The Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024, seeks to address critical issues related to family waqfs and inheritance rights. While it proposes notable reforms, it also presents challenges that require careful consideration. The JPC's review and potential modifications could help ensure that the bill promotes fairness and consistency in inheritance laws and aligns with broader legal principles.</p>
<p>33.</p>	<p>All about Hollangapar Gibbon Sanctuary</p> <p>The Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) plans to construct canopy bridges in</p>

Assam's Hollangapar Gibbon Sanctuary to help India's only ape, the hoolock gibbon, safely cross railway tracks dividing its habitat.

The sanctuary, **home to about 125 gibbons**, faces fragmentation due to a railway track. These bridges, designed by the **Wildlife Institute of India (WII) and NFR**, will facilitate the arboreal species' movement. Safety measures, including nets, will be implemented to prevent accidents.

Gibbons

Gibbons, the **smallest and fastest of all apes**, inhabit tropical and subtropical forests in Southeast Asia. They have high intelligence, distinct personalities, and strong family bonds. They are one of the 20 gibbon species found worldwide.apes

The current population of hoolock gibbons is around 12,000. They are found in **Northeast India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Southern China**.

Two distinct species in India's northeast: the **eastern hoolock gibbon (Hoolock leuconedys)** and the **western hoolock gibbon (Hoolock hoolock)**.

All 20 gibbon species, including hoolock gibbons, are at high risk of extinction due to conservation challenges. Significant population and habitat decline due to deforestation for infrastructure projects in India.

International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List: Western Hoolock Gibbon: **Endangered**; Eastern Hoolock Gibbon: **Vulnerable**. Both species are listed on Schedule 1 of the **Indian (Wildlife) Protection Act 1972**.

The **Global Gibbon Network (GGN)** recently convened its inaugural meeting in Haikou, China's Hainan province, to address its critical situation. The GGN was initiated at the **International Gibbon Day 2020 event**, with representatives from 20 gibbon conservation organizations.

	<p>The Hollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary, formerly known as the Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary or Hollongapar Reserved Forest, is an isolated evergreen forest in Assam, India. Established in 1997, the sanctuary was initially set aside in 1881, with its forests once extending to the Patkai mountain foothills. It is home to India's only ape and gibbon species, the hoolock gibbons, and the Bengal slow loris, Northeastern India's only nocturnal primate. The forest's upper canopy is dominated by hollong trees, the middle by nahar trees, and the lower by evergreen shrubs and herbs.</p> <p>PYQ-</p> <p>Consider the following pairs: (UPSC 2010)</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">Protected area</td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">Well-known for</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1. Bhitarkanika, Orissa</td> <td>Salt Water Crocodile</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Desert National Park, Rajasthan</td> <td>Great Indian Bustard</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Eravikulam, Kerala</td> <td>Hoolock Gibbon</td> </tr> </table> <p>Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?</p> <p>(a) 1 only (b) 1 and 2 only (c) 2 only (d) 1, 2 and 3</p>	Protected area	Well-known for	1. Bhitarkanika, Orissa	Salt Water Crocodile	2. Desert National Park, Rajasthan	Great Indian Bustard	3. Eravikulam, Kerala	Hoolock Gibbon
Protected area	Well-known for								
1. Bhitarkanika, Orissa	Salt Water Crocodile								
2. Desert National Park, Rajasthan	Great Indian Bustard								
3. Eravikulam, Kerala	Hoolock Gibbon								
<p>34.</p>	<p>Water Act: Concerns with latest changes indicate need for more comprehensive water governance</p> <p>India's Water Act Amendments and Challenges</p>								

Historical Perspective

- **Origins and Enactment:** The Water Act of 1974 was a response to the growing concerns about water pollution during a period marked by heightened global environmental awareness, particularly after the **1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment**.
- **Initial Objectives:** The Act aimed to centralize water pollution control by establishing the **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs)** with powers to enforce compliance, including the authority to issue closure orders for non-compliant industries.
- **Challenges:** Despite its forward-looking design, the Act's effectiveness was limited by a lack of practical implementation mechanisms and the inability to keep pace with the rapid industrialization and urbanization that intensified water pollution.

Challenges and Need for Reform

- **Inconsistent Board Formations:** JS Kamyotra emphasized that the effectiveness of the Pollution Control Boards was hampered by inconsistent formations and frequent changes in leadership, which undermined policy continuity and enforcement.
- **Judicial and Technical Limitations:**
 - **Judicial Issues:** Environmental cases often encountered judicial unfamiliarity and inefficiencies, which complicated the enforcement of water pollution laws.
 - **Technical Expertise:** There was a gap in the technical capacity needed to implement and oversee pollution control measures effectively. This gap affected the operational efficiency of pollution

control boards.

- **Funding Constraints:** Variable and often inadequate funding sources for pollution control efforts were a major obstacle, impacting the ability to maintain and expand pollution control infrastructure.

Case Study: Rajasthan

- **Water Deficiency:**
 - **Groundwater Dependence:** Rajasthan heavily relies on groundwater, which is increasingly polluted by various small-scale industries, especially in the textile sector.
 - **Common Effluent Treatment Plants:** Although common effluent treatment plants were established to address pollution, they have largely failed due to poor management and lack of technical expertise.
- **Sewage Treatment Infrastructure:**
 - **Inadequate Facilities:** Many sewage treatment plants in Rajasthan fail to meet required standards, leading to untreated sewage contaminating groundwater sources.
 - **Management Issues:** Political interference and lack of autonomy in managing pollution control boards further exacerbate the challenges in ensuring effective sewage treatment.

2024 Amendments: Opportunities and Concerns

- **Key Changes Introduced:**
 - **Penalties:** The amendments introduced caps on penalties for environmental violations, which some critics argue might reduce the financial deterrent for industries.

- **Adjudication Shift:** The responsibility for adjudicating environmental violations was transferred from pollution control boards to designated officers, which could limit the boards' enforcement powers.

- **Impact on Enforcement:**

- **Potential Weakening of Enforcement:** Critics, including Vijai Singhal, worry that the amendments might weaken the enforcement capabilities of the pollution control boards, reducing their ability to hold polluters accountable effectively.
- **Role of the National Green Tribunal (NGT):** Established in 2010, the NGT has played a significant role in resolving environmental disputes. However, its role in broader environmental policy and enforcement remains complex and sometimes controversial.

Way Forward

- **Enhancing Implementation:**

- **Uniform Guidelines:** There is a need for uniform guidelines to ensure consistent application of the Water Act across different states.
- **Environmental Compensation Funds:** Clear mechanisms are required to effectively utilize funds collected for environmental compensation to improve pollution control efforts.
- **Leadership and Expertise:** Strengthening the technical expertise and leadership within pollution control boards is essential for effective implementation of pollution control measures.

- **Strengthening Autonomy and Participation:**

- **Financial and Operational Autonomy:** Increasing the financial

	<p>and operational autonomy of state pollution control boards is crucial for improving their effectiveness and responsiveness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Public Participation: Integrating public participation into the pollution control framework can enhance transparency and accountability, improving monitoring and enforcement of pollution control measures. • Adopting a Holistic Approach: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sustainable Development: There is a need for a shift from end-of-pipe solutions to a holistic environmental management approach that emphasizes sustainable development and resource efficiency. ○ Comprehensive Pollution Control: Adopting a more comprehensive pollution control strategy that integrates various aspects of water governance, including pollution prevention, resource management, and community involvement, is essential for addressing India's water crisis effectively.
<p>35.</p>	<p>Justice Hema Committee report says.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recently, the Hema committee report on the Malayalam film industry was released. It has revealed alarming instances of sexual abuse, gender discrimination, and inhuman treatment of women in the Malayalam film industry. • It was led by retired Kerala High Court judge Justice K Hema, with members including veteran actor Sharada and retired IAS officer K B Valsala Kumari. <p><u>Reasons for Delay in the Release of the Report</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of Legal Basis: The state government delayed the report's release

for three years, claiming the commission was not established under the Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1952.

- **Confidentiality Concerns:** Despite requests from the Women in Cinema Collective (WCC) and other organizations, the government refused to release the report, citing concerns about violating the confidentiality of respondents.

Issues

- **Prevalence of Sexual Harassment:** The report reveals a pervasive culture of sexual harassment in the Malayalam film industry, including the existence of the casting couch, vulgar comments, and instances where male co-actors would force themselves into the rooms of female colleagues.
- **Fear of Retribution:** Many women in the industry do not report sexual harassment due to fear of retribution. The report notes that this fear is well-founded, with women also facing cyber harassment from fan clubs as a form of intimidation.
- **Influence of a Male-Dominated Mafia:** The report highlights the existence of an all-male “mafia” of influential actors and producers who control the industry, wielding their power with impunity and suppressing any opposition.
- **Lack of Basic Facilities for Women:** The report points out the inadequate facilities for women on film sets, such as the lack of proper toilets and changing rooms, which exposes women to health risks like urinary tract infections.
- **Gender Pay Disparity:** The report attributes the gender pay gap in the industry to the absence of written contracts, which disproportionately affects women.

Legal Framework to Address Sexual Exploitation in the Film Industry

- **Indian Penal Code, 1860 (now replaced as Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita): Sections 354** (assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty), **354A** (sexual harassment) and **509** (word, gesture, or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman) deal with sexual offences.
- **Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013:** This law mandates the establishment of **Internal Complaints Committees (ICC)** in workplaces to address complaints of sexual harassment.
- **Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000: IT Act** addresses the publication and transmission of **obscene material** in electronic form, which can include digital content in films.
- **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012:** This act specifically **protects children** from sexual exploitation and abuse, including in the context of films.
- **Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 (ITPA):** This act aims to prevent trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation.

Recommendations of the Report

- **Internal Complaints Committee (ICC):** It proposed the mandatory establishment of the **Internal Complaints Committee (ICC)** under the **Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013.**
 - It should include members from **Film Employees Federation of Kerala (FEFKA)** and **Association of Malayalam Movie Artists (AMMA).**
- **Independent Tribunal Proposal:** Some members advocated for an **independent tribunal** to handle cases of **harassment** and

	<p>discrimination in the cinema industry.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The report also advocated in-camera proceedings at the tribunal to ensure complete privacy, with names being withheld from media reports. ● Written Contracts: Signing written contracts to protect the interest of all those who work in cinema should be made mandatory for all categories of employees including coordinators of junior artists. ● Gender Awareness Training Program: It should be made mandatory that all cast and crew attend a basic gender awareness training program before starting the production work. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Training materials could be made in both Malayalam and English and can be made available online. ● Women in Producer Role: There should be adequate and timely budgetary support to incentivize movies that are predicated on gender justice both thematically and in the production process. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A single-window system should be established to provide loans at nominal interest rates for movies produced by women (not by proxies of men) and to streamline permissions for shooting. This will simplify production and encourage more women to enter the film industry.
<p>36.</p>	<p>Unfolding crisis: Darjeeling's growing floating population poses water, waste challenges</p> <p>1. Introduction</p> <p>Darjeeling, a picturesque hill town in the Eastern Himalayas, is renowned for its scenic beauty, including tea plantations, timber, and tourist attractions. Originally a British sanatorium, Darjeeling, known as the "Queen of Hills," now faces significant challenges in water and sanitation services due to a</p>

dramatic increase in its population and tourism.

2. Historical Context and Population Growth

- **Historical Infrastructure:** Darjeeling's water supply system, established by the British between 1910 and 1915, was designed for 10,000 residents. The current population of approximately 118,805 (as of the 2011 Census) has outgrown this infrastructure.
- **Population Pressure:** The rapid growth in population and tourism has strained the city's municipal services, especially water and sewage systems.

3. Infrastructure and Environmental Challenges

- **Terrain and Access:** The city's uneven landscape results in homes being accessed via stacked stairs and narrow paths, complicating infrastructure development.
- **Integrated Utilities:** Electric wires and water pipelines are often intertwined, demonstrating the city's struggle to balance utility services amidst challenging conditions.
- **Waste Management Issues:** Improper disposal of household waste into stormwater drains (**jhoras**) exacerbates the problem, impacting both waste management and environmental health.

4. Sanitation and Waste Management Problems

- **Public Toilets:** Many community and public toilets lack essential facilities such as clean seats, septic tanks, and reliable water supply, leading to waste entering open drains and downstream water bodies.
- **Waste Accumulation:** The mismanagement of solid waste has resulted

in significant waste accumulation, particularly impacting scenic locations like **RockVille Garden**.

5. Current Water Supply and Management

- **Water Sources:** The city relies on natural springs and rainwater, but the aging British-era water supply systems are insufficient to meet current demands.
- **Tourism Impact:** The influx of tourists has further stressed the existing infrastructure, causing severe traffic congestion and putting additional pressure on water and sanitation systems.

6. Government Initiatives and Potential Solutions

- **Central Schemes:** Programs such as the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (**AMRUT**) and Swachh Bharat Mission are aimed at improving water supply and sanitation practices.
- **Community-Based Solutions:** Initiatives like "**Jal Dharo-Jal Bharo**" promote rainwater harvesting, and organizations like Samaj facilitate community-driven water management and maintenance.

7. Recommendations for Improvement

- **Governance and Policy Alignment:** Align local, state, and central policies to encourage stakeholder participation and effective governance practices.
- **Innovative Financing:** Explore innovative financing options, including Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), incentive-based funding, and leveraging funds from the 15th Finance Commission for infrastructure development.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology and Innovation: Invest in state-of-the-art monitoring tools, adopt innovative technologies, and scale existing solutions to improve service delivery and sustainability. • Planning and Evaluation: Develop metrics and feedback mechanisms to guide policy planning, enhance resilience, and prevent corruption. • Research and Capacity Building: Focus on human resource development through continuous training, gender considerations, knowledge sharing, and public education campaigns to promote safe sanitation practices. <p>8. Conclusion</p> <p>Darjeeling faces significant challenges in managing its water supply and sanitation services due to historical infrastructure limitations and rapid urban growth. By implementing the recommended strategies and leveraging both government initiatives and community efforts, the city can address these challenges and enhance its resilience and sustainability for the future.</p>
<p>37.</p>	<p>New-age gateway devices, the latest health threat</p> <p>Introduction:</p> <p>New-age gateway devices such as e-cigarettes, vaping pens, Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS), and heated tobacco products (HTPs) were initially marketed as safer alternatives to traditional smoking. These devices were intended to help users quit smoking by providing a less harmful option. However, they have instead contributed to a public health crisis, especially among youth, with significant physical and mental health implications.</p>

Youth Vaping Epidemic:

1. Surge in Usage Among Youth :

- **Statistics:** According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in 2023, e-cigarettes were the most commonly used tobacco product among U.S. middle and high school students, with 2.1 million students using them. This includes 550,000 middle school students, highlighting the widespread adoption among adolescents.
- **Marketing Tactics:** Manufacturers have used appealing flavors such as strawberry, cotton candy, and lemonade to attract young users. These flavors, coupled with colorful and attractive packaging, are designed to make vaping seem fun and harmless.

2. Psychological Factors:

- **Increased Vulnerability:** Children and adolescents are particularly vulnerable to the allure of vaping. The age group most at risk is between 10 and 20 years old. This demographic is targeted through enticing advertising and appealing product designs.
- **Social and Psychological Influence:** The pressure to fit in with peers, combined with the desire for social status and acceptance, drives many young people to experiment with and become addicted to vaping. Those who vape often experience higher levels of loneliness and social isolation compared to their non-vaping peers.

Physical and Mental Health Risks:

1. Physical Health Risks:

- **Lung Damage:** E-cigarettes and vaping devices are linked to

severe lung conditions, including **e-cigarette or vaping use-associated lung injury (EVALI)**. This condition involves symptoms such as shortness of breath, chest pain, and in severe cases, respiratory failure.

- **Chemical Exposure:** The inhalation of harmful chemicals found in e-cigarette aerosols, such as **formaldehyde and acrolein**, can cause damage to the respiratory system and overall health.

2. Mental Health Risks:

- **Addiction and Mental Health Issues:** Nicotine is a highly addictive substance, and its use can lead to significant mental health problems. Adolescents who use e-cigarettes are more likely to experience depressive symptoms, anxiety, perceived stress, and suicidal behaviors. The addiction process can also increase the likelihood of developing other substance use disorders later in life.
- **Developmental Impact:** The adolescent brain is particularly susceptible to addiction. Nicotine can alter brain development, affecting cognitive function, mood regulation, and behavior.

Mechanisms of Addiction:

1. Enhanced Nicotine Delivery:

- **Engineering and Composition:** Modern e-cigarettes are engineered to deliver nicotine more efficiently than traditional cigarettes. The addition of **benzoic acid** to the nicotine e-liquid creates **protonated nicotine**, which allows for deeper and more efficient inhalation. This results in higher levels of nicotine absorption and a stronger addiction potential.
- **Addictive Potential:** Users of newer e-cigarette models are

	<p>exposed to higher concentrations of nicotine, increasing their risk of developing a strong dependency.</p> <p>2. Substance Experimentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gateway Effect: E-cigarettes are sometimes used to experiment with other substances, including cannabis, cocaine, and heroin. This misuse contributes to a broader substance abuse problem and challenges the misconception that vaping is a harmless activity. <p>Conclusion:</p> <p>The initial promise of new-age gateway devices as safer alternatives to smoking has been overshadowed by their harmful effects. These devices have led to increased nicotine addiction among youth, posing serious risks to both physical and mental health. The widespread appeal and targeted marketing of these products to adolescents have created a new public health challenge, emphasizing the need for comprehensive regulation and education to address the crisis effectively.</p>
<p>38.</p>	<p>The heavy shackles of fear and vigilance</p> <p>Context of Recent Violence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Incident: The brutal rape and murder of a woman doctor in Kolkata has sparked a renewed national conversation about women's safety in India. ● Scope of Violence: Women in India face various forms of violence, including sexual harassment, dowry-related deaths, rape, and domestic violence. While physical violence is often highlighted, the psychological impact is less visible and frequently overlooked.

Psychological and Behavioral Impact

- **State of Constant Vigilance:** Due to insufficient structural protection, women in India are compelled to maintain a constant state of alertness. This heightened awareness of potential threats in both public and private spaces becomes a deeply ingrained, yet exhausting, part of daily life.
- **Impact on Freedom and Growth:** This perpetual vigilance restricts women's freedom to explore, take risks, and enjoy simple pleasures. It affects career choices, personal relationships, and overall psychological well-being. Women often decline opportunities or modify behaviors to avoid risks, limiting their personal and professional growth.
- **Intergenerational Effects:** The burden of vigilance is often passed from mother to daughter, reinforcing the idea that women are solely responsible for their safety. This perpetuates a cycle of restricted mobility and personal freedom, which is seen as a necessary adjustment rather than a societal failure.

Duality of Empowerment and Safety

- **Personal Conflict:** Women experience a duality between advocating for empowerment and adapting their behavior for safety. For example, a woman may encourage her students to challenge patriarchal limitations but find herself constrained by safety concerns in her own life.
- **Adaptation to Risk:** This conflict creates a dissonance between the desired freedom and the reality of constant vigilance. Women often navigate this complex balance, highlighting the broader issue of systemic inadequacies in ensuring safety.

Impact on Marginalized Groups

- **Intersectional Discrimination:** Caste, class, and religion further complicate the safety issues faced by women. Marginalized women face heightened discrimination and violence, often lacking the institutional support available to those from privileged backgrounds.
- **Increased Vulnerabilities:** Women from disadvantaged groups encounter more immediate threats and exploitation, revealing the systemic neglect of their safety and the greater societal challenges they face.

Societal Implications

- **Limitation of Experiences:** The constant focus on safety over exploration limits women's experiences and contributions to society. This pervasive vigilance restricts their ability to fully engage with the world, depriving society of their potential innovations and contributions.
- **Need for Broad Recognition:** Addressing the psychological and emotional strain women endure is crucial for creating an equitable society. Recognizing these less visible forms of violence is essential for holistic change.

Path Forward

- **Shift in Perspective:** To build a more equitable society, it is necessary to broaden the understanding of violence against women to include psychological and emotional impacts. This requires acknowledging that the burden of perpetual vigilance is itself a form of violence.
- **Unlocking Potential:** The goal is not just to alleviate fear but to unlock

	<p>the full potential of women by removing the constraints imposed by constant vigilance. Effective societal and state measures should focus on ensuring safety without further restricting women's freedom.</p>
<p>39.</p>	<p>Metaverse and AI - Future perfect or imperfect</p> <p>The metaverse is a virtual world where people interact using avatars, usually in 3D. It's a digital universe that combines physical and digital reality, and is expected to be the next evolution of social connection.</p> <p>Metaverse can</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socialize: Meet friends and family, or build virtual communities • Work: Collaborate with others in virtual offices • Learn: Participate in activities and attend events • Play: Dive into gaming worlds, sports, and multiplayer contests • Shop: Interact with content created by others • Experience films: Watch films in a new way, or catch live events from anywhere in the world <p>As the Metaverse continues to gain popularity, it is important to consider the challenges posed by the rise of this technology and AI. The following are some of the major challenges posed by them are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Societal and Economic impacts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ AI and the Metaverse have the potential to disrupt traditional industries and change the way people work and interact, which could lead to job loss and income inequality. • Ethical concerns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ AI systems and the Metaverse raise questions about bias, transparency, and accountability. There is also a risk that these technologies could be used to perpetuate or amplify societal problems such as discrimination and inequality.

- **Dependence on technology:**
 - As people increasingly rely on AI and the Metaverse for daily activities, there is a risk of people becoming too dependent on technology, which could lead to a loss of important life skills.
- **Governance:**
 - The Metaverse and AI are global and borderless, which makes it difficult to govern and regulate them. This may lead to lack of oversight and accountability.
- **Psychological and emotional effects:**
 - Spending excessive time in the Metaverse and interacting with AI systems may have negative effects on people's mental and emotional well-being.
- **Technical challenges:**
 - Building and maintaining the Metaverse and AI systems requires significant technical expertise and resources, which can be a challenge for both developers and users.
- **Impact on physical health and well-being:**
 - As the Metaverse becomes more immersive, there is a risk that users will spend increasing amounts of time in virtual worlds, potentially at the expense of their physical health and well-being.
- **Data privacy and security:**
 - With the increasing amount of personal data being shared within the Metaverse, there is a risk of data breaches and other security threats.

Further, to curb the challenges posed by metaverse and AI we need to implement the following measures like:

- **Reduce Digital Divide:** Governance mechanisms for virtual worlds

would need to be supported with strengthening and scaling efforts to promote digital literacy, safety and wellbeing so that participants can engage meaningfully in online communities while consciously navigating harmful content and behaviors.

- **Policy Backing:** It is the right time for the government to create the right policy background for its operation and leverage the metaverse for public services.
 - The government needs to focus on information accessibility, information utilization and information receptiveness.
- **Promote Safe and Secure Metaverse Ecosystem:** There is a strong need to develop and regulate effective ecosystems to address the distinct elements of safety, privacy, and security within the DNA of this technology.
 - Building a citizen-friendly meta-governance infrastructure will need a collaboration by experts from various disciplines, including designers, business model experts and lawyers, to mitigate any potential legal hurdles. Private sector intervention may be required as well.
- **Meta Help Desk:** In e-governance, essential information is released to a targeted audience through ICT. Meta-help desks or meta-divisions in a particular ministry/ other government agency can help in providing the critical data required.
- **Transparent and Consent-based Applications:** Technology companies will need to be more responsible and transparent in their data processing and safety practices.
 - Fostering an informed consent-based model while collecting personal data and abiding by the principles of data minimization and purpose limitation will be critical to prevent unchecked data processing and collection for commercial gains.

- **Global Cooperation:** As the metaverse continues to develop, we are seeing a glimpse of a more digitally advanced borderless world that is full of promise.
 - While this new world continues to expand, we have to be aware of the set of challenges it brings with every new development and to look forward towards uniform regulations across the globe.

Future Challenges and Opportunities of Meta-AI

- **More Pervasive AI:**
 - **ChatGPT** has shown the world that **conversational artificial intelligence is an idea whose time has come.**
 - The ChatGPT can answer “follow-up questions”, and can also “admit its mistakes, challenge incorrect premises, and reject inappropriate requests.” but most such AI elements are now in standalone products, which is more play than work.
 - In 2023, this intelligence will be seen coming into **more products that we use every day** —for instance Gmail that will not just auto-suggest but also write next mail to the boss.
- **Beyond Social Media:**
 - Twitter and **Facebook are struggling to remain relevant amid** an increasingly younger and digital native audience. Their concepts of social engagement are very **different, often sans text and notice-board behaviors.**
 - Meta, for instance, knows that it will have to **think beyond its present social media platforms** and wants to be the social link when users move to the Metaverse, if at all.
 - But that might not be something that will shift soon. Till then, there seems to be a vacuum emerging in the social media space,

for now plugged by users sticking to short videos. But that fad too shall pass and not all platforms are good in that segment.

- **More Regional, Darker Social Bubbles:**

- As the Internet spreads to new users, especially in countries like India, it is also becoming more localized and multilingual.
- Across the world, the English language internet seems to have plateaued, making platforms like **Google focus more on opportunities to serve smaller, regional languages.**
- This is a tech challenge in more ways than one, but also **presents an opportunity to test out new technologies that can convert the content of the internet for these new users** without much human intervention.

- **Future of Metaverse:**

- As hybrid workforces become the norm and with travel still not as easy as earlier, **extended reality (XR)** could become the answer to collaborate and communicate virtually.
 - XR is an emerging umbrella term **for all the immersive technologies, including augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and mixed reality (MR)** plus those that are still to be created.
 - All immersive technologies extend the reality we experience by either blending the virtual and “real” worlds or by creating a fully immersive experience.
- Since the headsets and other paraphernalia to facilitate these virtual interactions are still very expensive, it **might be up to companies to make these available to their employees for regular XR meetings.** The first experience of this could end up looking like an upgraded version of video conferencing, but with the ability to interact with objects in the virtual space.

- A few more commercial versions of the Metaverse is expected to be accessible to regular users during the year. However, the **challenge will be with the hardware that lets people access these virtual worlds without making people bankrupt in the real world.** The big disruptor could be an affordable device that logs users into the Metaverse easily — maybe it will just be a smartphone.

Ethical Concerns related to AI

- The legal and ethical issues **that confront society due to AI include privacy and surveillance**, bias or discrimination, and potentially the philosophical challenge is the role of human judgment. Concerns about newer digital technologies becoming a new source of inaccuracy and data breaches have arisen as a result of its use.
- The other side of this technological revolution is a growing apprehension on the **socio-political and economic implications of AI**, specifically, the concerns about co-existence of these emerging technologies and core principles of modern democracies.
- Consequently, **AI ethics and the safe and responsible application of AI** are becoming front and centre of the technology revolution.
- **Constitutional morality was envisioned as the cornerstone for AI ethics' principles** in India, thus, propelling our constitutional rights and ethos to the paramount consideration for deploying AI in a responsible manner.

Principles of a Responsible AI

- **Safety and Reliability:** AI systems must ensure **reliability regarding**

their intended functions and must have **built-in safeguards** to ensure the **safety of stakeholders**.

- **Equality:** AI systems must be built keeping in mind that **similar people in similar circumstances are treated equally**.
- **Inclusivity and Non-Discrimination:** AI systems must be developed to be inclusive of all stakeholders, and must not discriminate through bias between stakeholders on **religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth or residence in matters of education, employment, access to public spaces etc.**
- **Privacy and Security:** AI systems must ensure that the **personal data of data subjects must be safe** and secure, such that **only authorised persons must access personal data** for specified and necessary purposes, within a framework of sufficient safeguards to ensure this process.
- **Principle of Transparency:** The design and training of AI systems is key for its functioning. The **system must be audited and be capable of external scrutiny** to ensure that the **deployment of the AI system is impartial**, accountable and free from bias or inaccuracies.
- **Principle of Accountability:** Since there are various actors in the process of developing, deploying and operationalizing an AI system, the **accountability structures for any effects, harms or damages** by the AI system **must be clearly set out in a publicly accessible and understandable manner**.
- **Protection and Reinforcement of Positive Human Values:** This principle focuses on the **possible deleterious effects of AI systems** through collection of personal data for profiling, the **use of AI systems in manners contrary to fundamental rights** guaranteed by the Constitution of India.

Road ahead

- **Reducing the Digital Divide:** In order for participants to engage meaningfully in online communities while consciously navigating harmful content and behaviors, governance mechanisms for virtual worlds would need to be supported with strengthening and scaling efforts to promote digital literacy, safety, and wellbeing.
- **Policy Support:** The government should now develop the best possible policy framework to support its operations and use the metaverse to provide public services.
- **Information accessibility,** information use, and information receptivity must be the government's main concerns.
- **Secure and Safe Metaverse Ecosystem:** To handle the unique features of safety, privacy, and security inside the DNA of this technology, effective ecosystems must be developed and regulated.
 - To overcome any potential legal obstacles, the development of a citizen-friendly meta-governance infrastructure will require the cooperation of specialists from diverse fields, including designers, business model experts, and attorneys. It can also be necessary to include the private sector.
- **Global Cooperation:** We are catching a glimpse of a more technologically advanced, borderless society full of promise as the metaverse continues to grow.
 - While this new world is still expanding, we need to be mindful of the issues it poses with each new development and anticipate universally enforceable laws.
 - ICT is used in e-governance to distribute critical information to a specific audience. The necessary vital data can be supplied by meta-help desks or meta-divisions within a certain ministry or by other government organizations.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications with open and informed consent: The data processing and safety practices used by technology corporations will need to be more accountable and open. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To avoid unregulated data processing and collection for commercial advantage, it will be crucial to promote an informed consent-based approach while collecting personal data and adhere to the principles of data minimization and purpose limitation. <p>The Metaverse and AI are emerging concepts in technology that presents a new way for people to interact and engage in a virtual world. However, this technology also poses a number of challenges but with proper set of governance and regulation, this technology could help humanity in unimaginable ways.</p>
<p>40.</p>	<p>Advancing equity, from COVID-19 to Mpox</p> <p>Emerging Global Health Crisis: Mpox Outbreak</p> <p>Less than five years after the COVID-19 pandemic, the world faces another global health crisis. The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared mpox (formerly known as monkeypox) a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC), following an outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and its subsequent spread to over a dozen African countries. This outbreak has also prompted the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) to declare a Public Health Emergency of Continental Security (PHECS), marking the first instance where both regional and global health emergencies have been declared for the same disease.</p> <p>Global Spread of Mpox</p> <p>Following the PHEIC declaration, mpox cases were identified in Sweden,</p>

Pakistan, and the Philippines, indicating the virus's potential spread beyond the African continent.

Significance of WHO's PHEIC Declaration

The WHO's declaration is significant as it is the first PHEIC since the May 2024 amendments to the **International Health Regulations (IHR)**. A key amendment includes equity as a core principle, emphasizing the need for a global response grounded in fairness and equal access to resources. Although these amendments will not take effect until 2025, the global response to mpox must adhere to these principles from the outset. The PHEIC declaration is intended to foster international cooperation, prompting countries, international organizations, and NGOs to collaborate, share information, and provide mutual assistance. This should lead to the rapid mobilization of financial and technical resources, including emergency funding, deployment of trained healthcare workers, and provision of medical supplies.

Lessons from the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the inadequacy of vaccine manufacturing capabilities in the Global South, worsened by the lack of technology transfers. The response to the mpox outbreak appears to be following a similar trajectory, but with one significant difference: the availability of a vaccine. The **Modified Vaccinia Ankara-Bavarian Nordic (MVA-BN)**, also known as **Jynneos**, is already in production by Danish manufacturer **Bavarian Nordic**. Regulatory authorities in several countries have approved this vaccine, which presents an opportunity to apply lessons from COVID-19 by increasing vaccine production in the Global South and ensuring equitable access.

India's Role in Vaccine Production-

India, with its significant vaccine manufacturing capabilities, is well-positioned

to play a critical role in ensuring equitable access to the MVA-BN vaccine. Indian manufacturers, particularly the Serum Institute of India, Bharat Biotech, and Zydus Cadila, have experience in producing vaccines using primary **chick embryo fibroblast (CEF)** cells, which are used in MVA-BN production. These manufacturers could scale up production quickly, leveraging existing supply chains and reducing vaccine costs, making doses more accessible.

The Importance of Technology Transfers

To meet the growing demand for the mpox vaccine, comprehensive technology transfers are crucial. This includes sharing biological resources, know-how, and patents. The article emphasizes that the transfer of knowledge, rather than just vaccine doses, is essential for achieving global justice rather than mere charity. India should collaborate with international organizations and negotiate with Bavarian Nordic for the transfer of technology, ensuring that low-cost vaccine production can be scaled up, curbing the epidemic and preventing further outbreaks.

India's Regulatory Response

In a significant move on August 7, India's drug regulatory agency, the **Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO)**, waived the requirement for clinical trials in India for drugs approved in several other countries. This waiver, which includes new drugs used in pandemic situations, will expedite the availability of critical vaccines like MVA-BN in India.

Conclusion: The Need for Immediate Action

The global community has a critical opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to equitable healthcare by ensuring widespread access to the

	<p>mplex vaccine. By fostering international cooperation, prioritizing technology transfers, and leveraging the manufacturing capabilities of countries like India, the world can address the current crisis and strengthen preparedness for future public health emergencies. The time to act is now to prevent history from repeating itself.</p>
<p>41.</p>	<p>Wanted: a strategy to turn climate research into disaster management</p> <p>Introduction: India's Evolving Risk Landscape</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple Natural Hazards: India faces various location-specific natural hazards with a rapidly evolving risk landscape. • Components of Risk: Risks arise from a combination of weather events, local population vulnerabilities, and exposure levels. • Response Management: Effective risk management requires well-planned responses, with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) playing a crucial role, despite facing knowledge gaps and operational barriers. <p>India's Weather Extremes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing Weather Extremes: Different regions in India are experiencing extreme weather events throughout the year, including heatwaves, wildfires, heavy rains, landslides, droughts, and cyclones. • Role of IMD: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) is improving weather forecasts, but these predictions often lack the local scale required for effective disaster response. • Advances in Academia and Research: Academic institutions and government research facilities are key in improving the process and

predictive understanding of weather patterns, and are working on downscaling global forecasts to hyperlocal levels.

Impact of Climate Change

- **Local Climate Manifestations:** Climate change in India manifests as cooler and warmer temperature trends in different regions, alongside more unpredictable rainfall patterns.
- **Exacerbation of Weather Extremes:** Changes in climate patterns have led to increased landslides and wildfires.

Vulnerability and Development

- **Human-Induced Vulnerability:** Rapid population growth and economic development have led to the establishment of unsafe housing in vulnerable areas like unstable slopes and flood-prone regions.
- **Tourism and Infrastructure:** The influx of tourists into exotic locations has prompted infrastructure development, which sometimes exacerbates vulnerabilities, as evidenced by recent landslides in Wayanad.
- **Combination of Factors:** Vulnerability in India is a mix of poverty, population density, unsafe development, and potentially risky insurance policies that may encourage greater exposure to climate risks.

Challenges in Translating Climate Research

- **Investment in Climate Research:** India is heavily investing in climate research and services, but the practical application of this knowledge is limited.
- **Low Uptake of Climate Services:** The low adoption of climate services is due to the lack of location-specific and sector-specific information, as

well as a shortage of skilled personnel to utilize the data.

- **Role of Academia and Private Ventures:** These entities are pushing the boundaries in translating IMD's forecasts into hyperlocal scales, but operational challenges remain.

Case Studies: Irrigation and Urban Flood Predictions

- **Irrigation Advisories:** Weather forecasts are being used to manage farm-scale irrigation, as demonstrated by a tool developed for grape farmers in Nashik. This tool showed a potential 30% water savings without yield loss.
- **Challenges in Large-Scale Implementation:** The scaling of such tools requires collaboration with local governments, NGOs, and farmer organizations, but there is a lack of extension agencies to facilitate this.
- **Urban Flood Predictions:** For effective flood control, predictions need to be downscaled to street-level, with flood managers using these forecasts to plan infrastructure operations.
- **Institutional Gaps:** Current academic and urban government structures are inadequate to fully translate downscaled forecasts into practical urban flood management.

From Research to Operations

- **Siloed Climate Research:** Climate research in India is currently too isolated, focusing more on academic achievements rather than practical applications.
- **Need for Sector-Specific Extension Agents:** There is a clear need for trained professionals who can bridge the gap between research and operations, particularly in disaster management and risk mitigation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hyperlocal Weather-Readiness: India's weather-readiness and climate resilience must be hyperlocal, with sustained financing and capacity-building to ensure effective disaster management across all regions. <p>Conclusion: Ensuring Sustainable Development-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity-Building: Training sector-specific extension agents who can communicate in local languages and navigate cultural nuances is essential. • Sustainable Development: Achieving weather-readiness and climate resilience is crucial for India's sustainable development and the safety and security of all its citizens.
<p>42.</p>	<p>Moving the spotlight to grassroots democracy</p> <p><i>Current Status of State Election Commissions (SECs)</i></p> <p>Background and Constitutional Framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitutional Provisions: The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments of 1993 established the framework for local self-governance by creating SECs for panchayats and urban local bodies (ULBs). These amendments aimed to enhance democratic processes at the grassroots level by empowering local institutions and ensuring regular elections. • Responsibilities of SECs: SECs are tasked with the preparation of electoral rolls, the supervision of elections to panchayats and ULBs, and ensuring that these elections are conducted impartially and in a timely

manner.

Challenges Faced by SECs

- **Disempowerment and Operational Issues:**
 - **Litigation with State Governments:** SECs often find themselves in legal disputes with state governments over issues related to election processes and timelines. For instance, in Karnataka, the SEC had to file a contempt petition against the state government for failing to publish delimitation details and reservations, which led to election delays.
 - **Interference and Delays:** The Andhra Pradesh SEC faced obstacles due to an ordinance that delayed panchayat elections, which was later struck down by the Supreme Court.
- **Performance Audit Findings:**
 - **CAG Audit:** The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India's performance audits revealed that a significant proportion (70%) of urban local governments did not have elected councils at the time of the audit. This highlights the inefficiencies and delays in the electoral process at the local level.
 - **Janaagraha's ASICS 2023:** According to the Annual Survey of India's City Systems (ASICS) 2023, only 11 states and Union Territories have given SECs the authority to conduct ward delimitation. This limitation affects 35% of India's population, indicating uneven empowerment across the country.

Need for Electoral Reforms

Importance of Local Elections

- **Grass-Roots Democracy:** Effective local governance is crucial for ensuring that democratic processes reach the grassroots level. Regular elections enable local governments to function efficiently and address community needs promptly.
- **Constitutional Mandate:** The Constitution mandates that elections to local governments should occur before the end of their five-year term. This principle is essential for maintaining democratic integrity and ensuring timely representation at the local level.

Proposed Reforms

1. Empowerment and Independence of SECs

- **Appointment Process:**
 - **Current Issues:** SECs are currently appointed by the state government, which can lead to conflicts of interest and reduced independence.
 - **Proposed Change:** SECs should be appointed by a high-level committee that includes the Chief Minister, Leader of Opposition, and Chief Justice of the High Court. This would ensure greater impartiality and transparency in their appointment, similar to the process for the Election Commission of India (ECI).
 - **Legislative Amendments:** The Union government needs to amend the 74th Constitutional (Amendment) Act to institutionalize these changes and ensure that SECs operate with the same level of independence and authority as the ECI.

2. Delimitation and Reservation of Seats

- **Fixed Intervals:**

- **Current Practice:** Delimitation and reservation processes are often subject to state government discretion, leading to delays and potential manipulation.
- **Proposed Change:** Mandate the delimitation of wards and reservation of seats at fixed intervals (e.g., every 10 years). This would standardize the process and reduce opportunities for delay and manipulation.
- **SEC Authority:**
 - **Current Practice:** State governments often control the process, leading to inconsistent practices and delays.
 - **Proposed Change:** Empower SECs with the authority to handle ward delimitation and seat reservations, including those for key positions such as mayors or presidents. This would streamline the process and ensure timely and fair elections.

3. Electoral Processes and Malpractices

- **Handling Elections:**
 - **Current Issues:** State government-appointed officials sometimes engage in malpractices, as seen in the 2024 Chandigarh Municipal Corporation election where issues were reported with the appointment of presiding officers.
 - **Proposed Change:** SECs should be given responsibility for conducting elections for mayors, presidents, chairpersons, and standing committees to avoid malpractices and ensure the integrity of the electoral process.

Conclusion

- **Strengthening SECs:** For effective local governance and the

	<p>preservation of democratic principles, SECs must be fully empowered and operate independently. Implementing the proposed reforms would enhance their functionality, reduce delays and disputes, and ensure that local elections are conducted fairly and in a timely manner.</p>
<p>43.</p>	<p>MOVING TOWARDS A BETTER COALITION CULTURE IN INDIA</p> <p>1. Introduction to Coalition Politics in India</p> <p>Role of the Constitution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Indian Constitution has dual roles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Limiting Majoritarian Power: It places constraints on the potential abuse of power by ensuring that decisions affecting minority rights are carefully regulated. ○ Facilitating Effective Governance: It establishes mechanisms for policy formulation and implementation through various institutions. • Historical Examples of Majoritarian Abuse: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jawaharlal Nehru's Use of Article 356: Nehru's dismissal of the democratically elected communist government in Kerala highlighted how absolute majorities can undermine federal principles. ○ Indira Gandhi's Emergency: The misuse of Article 352 to declare a national emergency was a significant example of majoritarian overreach.

2. Current Trends in Coalition Politics

- **Pro-Majoritarian Legislation Under Modi Era:**
 - **Triple Talaq Legislation:** Penalized the practice of instant divorce among Muslims, seen as aligning with pro-majoritarian policies.
 - **Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA):** Provided a pathway to citizenship for non-Muslim refugees from neighboring countries, which critics argue was discriminatory.
- **Recent Positive Changes:**
 - **Wakf Bill:** The bill was referred to a joint parliamentary committee after coalition partners raised concerns, showing a shift towards collaborative decision-making.
 - **Broadcast Bill:** The draft bill was kept in abeyance, reflecting a cautious approach to potentially controversial reforms.
 - **Recruitment Notification:** The withdrawal of notifications for certain posts aimed at lateral entry, which lacked adherence to communal reservations, indicates responsiveness to coalition dynamics.
 - **Budget Adjustments:** Revisions to budget announcements, such as changes in indexation, demonstrate adaptability.

3. Constitutional Provisions on Executive Responsibility

Article 75:

- **Collective Responsibility:**
 - **Cabinet Responsibility:** Article 75 mandates that the council of ministers is collectively responsible to the Lok Sabha (House of the People), ensuring that the entire cabinet is accountable for executive actions.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Supreme Court Ruling:The State of Karnataka vs Union of India (1977) affirmed that the collective responsibility principle means that all ministers share accountability for government decisions.● Implications for Coalition Governments:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Pluralistic Nature:Coalition cabinets, composed of representatives from multiple parties, naturally embody diverse perspectives and policies, aligning with the constitutional goal of avoiding autocratic governance. <p>4. Coalition Governments at the State Level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Autocratic Tendencies:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ West Bengal Government: Recent events, such as the handling of the murder of a medical trainee, illustrate potential autocratic behavior even within state governments.● Article 164: State Cabinet Responsibility:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Plurality in States: Article 164 provides for collective responsibility at the state level as well, although single-party majorities can undermine this principle.● Historical Context: In states with coalition governments, decision-making tends to be more inclusive and less prone to autocratic tendencies. <p>5. Comparative Models of Democracy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Arend Lijphart's Democracy Models:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Majoritarian Model: Concentrates executive power in single-party majority cabinets, leading to dominance over the legislature and a unitary system.
--

- **Consensus Model:** Features executive power sharing in multi-party coalitions, promoting federalism and inclusive decision-making.

- **Western European Context:**

- **Proportional Representation:** Facilitates stable coalition governments, contrasting with India's first-past-the-post system, which often results in **coalition politics by necessity** rather than choice.

6. Historical Performance of Coalition Governments

- **UPA Era (1999-2009):**

- **Economic Growth:** Coalition governments during this period, particularly under Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh, achieved rapid economic growth and improved center-state relations.
- **Progressive Legislation:** Introduced key statutes such as the Right to Information Act, Right to Education Act, and Food Security Act, which had a significant impact on social welfare.
- **Common Minimum Programme (CMP):** Enabled effective governance by ensuring that coalition partners agreed on key policy goals.

7. Recent Developments and Future Prospects

- **Revival of Pension Scheme:**

- **Policy Shift:** The decision to reinstate 50% of the last drawn pay as pension reversed the unpopular National Pension Scheme, illustrating the potential for coalition governments to address longstanding issues.

- **Judicial Independence:**

- **Autonomy of Institutions:** Coalition governments historically support the independence of key institutions like the judiciary, Election Commission, and Comptroller and Auditor General, contributing to a balanced power structure.

8. Challenges and Recommendations for Coalition Politics

- **Consensus and Accountability:**

- **Need for Dialogue:** Coalition governments require ongoing dialogue and consensus to function effectively and prevent autocratic behavior.
- **Anti-Corruption Measures:** Implementing systems to combat corruption and ensure durable governance models is essential for maintaining effective coalitions.

- **Future Engagement:**

- **Lack of Schemes:** The 2024 elections did not feature significant proposals for revitalizing coalition politics or enhancing public engagement. Both major political blocs failed to address these aspects comprehensively.

9. Conclusion

- **Egalitarian Politics:** Emphasizing consensus and collaboration is vital for countering majoritarianism and ensuring that governance serves the interests of all citizens. Future coalitions should build on past experiences to create effective and inclusive governance frameworks.

44.

Indian Democracy and Populism

Populism refers to a range of political philosophies that emphasise the idea of the people and against the privileged elites. When important concerns of the people are not addressed by the elites, the populist movements form to challenge the establishment.

Giving Voice to Marginalized Groups:

Populist politics amplifies the concerns and grievances of marginalized groups: for e.g

The rise of backward politics in India

Raises awareness of their needs and challenges.

Pushes for inclusive policies to address their unique circumstances.

The **Black Lives Matter movement** in the United States emerged as a response to systemic racism and police brutality against Black individuals, amplifying their concerns and advocating for social justice.

Addressing Socioeconomic Inequality:

- Populist movements emphasize reducing socioeconomic disparities.
- Implementation of welfare programs and social security measures.
- Uplifts disadvantaged communities and bridges the gap between the rich and the poor.
- The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in India provides employment opportunities and wage security to rural households, particularly benefiting disadvantaged sections of society and reducing socioeconomic disparities.

Fostering Economic Nationalism:

- Populist politics advocates for prioritizing domestic industries.
- Protecting national interests and promoting self-sufficiency.

- Creates opportunities for domestic businesses and workers.
 - The “Make in India” campaign launched by the Indian government focuses on promoting domestic manufacturing and attracting investments to boost economic growth and create job opportunities within the country.

Empowering Local Communities:

- Populist movements promote decentralization and devolution of power.
- Empowers grassroots organizations and local governance bodies.
- Strengthens citizen participation and ensures local needs are considered.

Advocating for Social Justice:

- Populist politics brings attention to social justice issues.
- Highlights discrimination, exploitation, and unequal access to resources.
- Pushes for policy changes, safeguards, and legal reforms to promote equality and protect vulnerable groups.
 - FOR e.g. The reservation policy in India, implemented to promote social justice, reserves seats in educational institutions and government jobs for historically marginalized communities, ensuring equal opportunities and representation.

Influence of Populist Politics on the Democratic Fabric of India from a Societal Perspective

- **Increased Social Fragmentation:** Populist rhetoric, often along religious, caste, and ethnic lines, has intensified societal divisions in India. This heightened fragmentation impacts the communal harmony, which is the bedrock of India’s diverse democratic fabric.

- **Rise in Majoritarianism:** The popularity of populist politics has fostered majoritarian sentiments. The majority community, feeling emboldened, might inadvertently marginalize minority communities, undermining the principles of inclusive democracy.
- **Erosion of Social Trust:** The polarizing nature of populist politics can lead to the erosion of social trust, as seen in many instances of communal violence in India. This erosion of trust can hinder the democratic process, as it encourages identity-based politics over consensus building.
- **Threat to Freedom of Expression:** The populist narrative often suppresses dissenting voices, labelling them as “anti-national” or “enemies of the state”. This narrative endangers the freedom of expression in India, a critical element of democratic societies.
- **Reduced Civic Engagement:** Populist politics might lead to disillusionment and political apathy among citizens who feel unheard or misrepresented. This reduction in civic engagement is detrimental to the functioning of democracy.
- **Increased Hate Speech and Intolerance:** Populist leaders often use provocative rhetoric to mobilize support, which can increase instances of hate speech and intolerance in society. This negatively impacts societal harmony and democratic discourse.
- **Displacement of Marginalized Groups:** Populist politics can exacerbate discrimination against marginalized groups, leading to their further displacement in society. For example, populist rhetoric around nationalism has adversely affected the status of refugees and immigrants in India.
- **Reinforcement of Gender Stereotypes:** Populist politics often leverage traditional norms and gender stereotypes to appeal to conservative sectors of society, potentially hindering the progress of gender equality in

India.

- **Economic Disparity:** The promises of economic benefits to a specific section of society, a common populist strategy, may exacerbate economic disparities and fuel social discontent, undermining democratic stability.
- **Impact on Education:** The infiltration of populist politics into education, such as revision of textbooks to reflect a particular narrative, can influence younger generations and limit their critical thinking abilities – a prerequisite for an active democratic citizenry.

Shaping of India's Policy Landscape by Populist Politics

- **Welfare Populism:** Populist leaders often promise and implement welfare schemes to attract votes. In India, schemes like the PM-KISAN, which provides income support to farmers, and Ayushman Bharat, a health insurance scheme, are examples of welfare populism. However, in long run it can be probalamatic for eg. MSP
- **Economic Nationalism:** Economic policies have seen a populist tilt with initiatives promoting domestic industries and protectionism, as evidenced by the “Make in India” and “Atmanirbhar Bharat” campaigns.
- **Education Policy:** Populist politics has shaped education policy in India with changes that reflect a particular ideological narrative. For example, alterations in historical narratives in textbooks have been noted.
- **Decentralization:** There's a tendency to centralize power to fulfil populist promises quickly. This has shaped India's policy landscape, moving away from the earlier trend of decentralization.
- **Environmental Policy:** Populist pressures can often sideline environmental concerns. Infrastructure projects like highways, dams, and mines have been fast-tracked at the expense of environmental and tribal rights.
- **Immigration Policy:** Populist politics has influenced India's stance on

immigration. The controversial Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) is an example where religion-based populism played a key role.

Tackling populism

- Social media should be regulated and held accountable for damaging a pluralistic, fact-based and hate-free political debate, in the same way as traditional media.
- Civil society organisations defending human rights and equality against populism should agree on a common agenda and strategy across identity politics divides.
- Participatory and deliberative platforms and initiatives (citizens' assemblies, forums) should be embedded into the decision-making processes to balance the oligarchic tendencies of electoral democracy.
- Political parties (established and emerging) should seek to propose inclusive visions and programs that deliver benefits for all citizens, not only for a part of the voters.
- There is no doubt that division in the face of an organised populist threat is problematic. Only rational thinking rather than impulsive feelings and anger can solve the problems of our times. Democracies work best when we remember that there is no one person or party or politician has a monopoly on knowing what the people want.
- For India to maintain its rich democratic heritage, it is imperative to balance populist tendencies with the tenets of inclusive democracy, preserving its societal harmony and institutional integrity. The future of India's democracy hinges on the ability to navigate the complexities of populist politics in a manner that upholds democratic values while addressing the needs of the populace.

45.

ABC of Public interest Litigation (PIL)

- The expression 'Public Interest Litigation' has been borrowed from American jurisprudence, where it was designed to provide legal representation to previously unrepresented groups like the poor, the racial minorities, unorganised consumers, citizens who were passionate about the environmental issues, etc. **Public interest Litigation (PIL)** means litigation filed in a court of law, for the protection of "Public Interest", such as Pollution, Terrorism, Road safety, Constructional hazards etc. Any matter where the interest of public at large is affected can be redressed by filing a Public Interest Litigation in a court of law.

Public interest litigation is not defined in any statute or in any act. It has been interpreted by judges to consider the intent of public at large.

Public interest litigation is the power given to the public by courts through judicial activism. However, the person filing the petition must prove to the satisfaction of the court that the petition is being filed for a public interest and not just as a frivolous litigation by a busy body.

The court can itself take cognizance of the matter and proceed suo motu or cases can commence on the petition of any public spirited individual.

Some of the matters which are entertained under PIL are:

1. Bonded Labour matters
2. Neglected Children
3. Non-payment of minimum wages to workers and exploitation of casual workers
4. Atrocities on women

5. Environmental pollution and disturbance of ecological balance
6. Food adulteration
7. Maintenance of heritage and culture

Genesis and Evolution of PIL in India: Some Landmark Judgements

- The seeds of the concept of public interest litigation were initially sown in India by **Justice Krishna Iyer**, in 1976 in **Mumbai Kamagar Sabha vs. Abdul Thai**.
- The first reported case of PIL was **Hussainara Khatoon vs. State of Bihar** (1979) that focused on the inhuman conditions of prisons and under trial prisoners that led to the release of more than 40,000 under trial prisoners.
 - **Right to speedy justice emerged as a basic fundamental right** which had been denied to these prisoners. The same set pattern was adopted in subsequent cases.
- A new era of the PIL movement was heralded by **Justice P.N. Bhagawati in the case of S.P. Gupta vs. Union of India**.
 - In this case it was held that “any member of the public or social action group acting bonafide” can invoke the Writ Jurisdiction of the High Courts (under article 226) or the Supreme Court (under Article 32) seeking redressal against violation of legal or constitutional rights of persons who due to social or economic or any other disability cannot approach the Court.
 - By this judgment PIL became a potent weapon for the enforcement of “public duties” where executive action or misdeed resulted in

public injury. And as a result any citizen of India or any consumer groups or social action groups can now approach the apex court of the country seeking legal remedies in all cases where the interests of general public or a section of the public are at stake.

- Justice Bhagwati did a lot to ensure that the concept of PILs was clearly enunciated. He did not insist on the observance of procedural technicalities and even treated ordinary letters from public-minded individuals as writ petitions.

- The Supreme Court in **Indian Banks' Association, Bombay & Ors. vs. M/s Devkala Consultancy Service and Ors** held :- “In an appropriate case, where the petitioner might have moved a court in her private interest and for redressal of the personal grievance, the court in furtherance of Public Interest may treat it a necessity to enquire into the state of affairs of the subject of litigation in the interest of justice.” **Thus, a private interest case can also be treated as public interest case.**
- **M.C Mehta vs. Union of India:** In a Public Interest Litigation brought against Ganga water pollution so as to prevent any further pollution of Ganga water. Supreme Court held that petitioner although not a riparian owner is entitled to move the court for the enforcement of statutory provisions, as he is the person interested in protecting the lives of the people who make use of Ganga water.
- **Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan:** The judgement of the case recognized sexual harassment as a violation of the fundamental constitutional rights of **Article 14, Article 15 and Article 21**. The guidelines also directed for the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013.

Factors Responsible for the Growth of PIL in India

- **The character of the Indian Constitution.** India has a written constitution which through Part III (Fundamental Rights) and Part IV (Directive Principles of State Policy) provides a framework for regulating relations between the state and its citizens and between citizens inter-se.
- India has some of the most **progressive social legislations** to be found anywhere in the world whether it be relating to bonded labor, minimum wages, land ceiling, environmental protection, etc. This has made it easier for the courts to haul up the executive when it is not performing its duties in ensuring the rights of the poor as per the law of the land.
- The **liberal interpretation of locus standi** where any person can apply to the court on behalf of those who are economically or physically unable to come before it has helped. Judges themselves have in some cases initiated suo moto action based on newspaper articles or letters received.
- Although social and economic rights given in the Indian Constitution under Part IV are not legally enforceable, courts have creatively read these into fundamental rights thereby making them judicially enforceable. For instance the "right to life" in Article 21 has been expanded to include right to free legal aid, right to live with dignity, right to education, right to work, freedom from torture, bar fetters and hand cuffing in prisons, etc.
- **Judicial innovations to help the poor and marginalised:** For instance, in the **Bandhua Mukti Morcha**, the Supreme Court put the burden of proof on the respondent stating it would treat every case of forced labor as a case of bonded labor unless proven otherwise by the employer. Similarly in the **Asiad Workers judgment case**, Justice P.N. Bhagwati held that anyone getting less than the minimum wage can approach the Supreme Court directly without going through the labor commissioner and lower courts.

- In PIL cases where the petitioner is not in a position to provide all the necessary evidence, either because it is voluminous or because the parties are weak socially or economically, courts have appointed commissions to collect information on facts and present it before the bench.

Who Can File a PIL and Against Whom?

Any citizen can file a public case by filing a petition:

Under Art 32 of the Indian Constitution, in the Supreme Court.

Under Art 226 of the Indian Constitution, in the High Court.

Under sec. 133 of the Criminal Procedure Code, in the Court of Magistrate.

However, the court must be satisfied that the Writ petition fulfils some basic needs for PIL as the letter is addressed by the aggrieved person, public spirited individual and a social action group for the enforcement of legal or Constitutional rights to any person who are not able to approach the court for redress.

A Public Interest Litigation can be filed **against a State/ Central Govt., Municipal Authorities, and not any private party.** The definition of State is the same as given under Article 12 of the Constitution and this includes the Governmental and Parliament of India and the Government and the Legislature of each of the States and all local or other authorities within the territory of India or under the control of the Government of India.

Significance of PIL

The aim of PIL is to give to the common people access to the courts to obtain legal redress.

PIL is an important **instrument of social change** and for maintaining the Rule

of law and accelerating the balance between law and justice.

The original purpose of PILs have been **to make justice accessible to the poor and the marginalised.**

It is an important tool to make human rights reach those who have been denied rights.

It **democratises the access of justice** to all. Any citizen or organisation who is capable can file petitions on behalf of those who cannot or do not have the means to do so.

It helps in judicial monitoring of state institutions like prisons, asylums, protective homes, etc.

It is an important tool for implementing the concept of judicial review.

Enhanced public participation in judicial review of administrative action is assured by the inception of PILs.

Weaknesses of PIL

PIL actions may sometimes give rise to the **problem of competing rights.** For instance, when a court orders the closure of a polluting industry, the interests of the workmen and their families who are deprived of their livelihood may not be taken into account by the court.

It could lead to overburdening of courts with **frivolous PILs by parties with vested interests.** PILs today has been appropriated for corporate, political and personal gains. Today the PIL is no more limited to problems of the poor and the oppressed.

Cases of **Judicial Overreach** by the Judiciary in the process of solving socio-economic or environmental problems can take place through the PILs.

PIL matters concerning the exploited and disadvantaged groups are pending for many years. **Inordinate delays in the disposal of PIL cases** may render many leading judgments merely of academic value.

Public Interest Litigation has produced astonishing results which were unthinkable three decades ago. Degraded bonded labourers, tortured under trials and women prisoners, humiliated inmates of protective women's home, blinded prisoners, exploited children, beggars, and many others have been given relief through judicial intervention. The greatest contribution of PIL has been to enhance the accountability of the governments towards the human rights of the poor. The PIL develops a new jurisprudence of the accountability of the state for constitutional and legal violations adversely affecting the interests of the weaker elements in the community. However, the Judiciary should be cautious enough in the application of PILs to avoid Judicial Overreach that are violative of the principle of Separation of Power. Besides, the frivolous PILs with vested interests must be discouraged to keep its workload manageable.