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QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the Geopolitics of India's Refugee Policy
2. Do you think that accepting the recommendations of previous Commissions would strengthen the independence of the Election Commission?.
3. What are personality rights and how do they differ from publicity and trademark rights? Can indiscriminate use of a person's name on the internet be a violation of personality rights?
4. What is Wassenaar Arrangement? Discuss the significance of India assuming chairmanship of the plenary of the Wassenaar Arrangement on January 1, 2023 for a year.
5. How will RBI's CBDC Digital Rupee work, how is it different from digital money? What would be the Implications of "Digital Rupee"?
6. Examine the need to address the maladies that poor micronutrient nutrition can inflict on the masses in India.
7. Discuss the significance of India's relations with the Gulf Countries.
8. What were the major outcomes of recently held "India-Central Asia NSA meet"?.
9. How will I2U2 (India, Israel, UAE and USA) grouping transform India's position in global politics? (Mains 2022 General Studies Paper 2)
10. What is a "civil society organization"?. What is the role of Civil Society?. How are "civil society organizations" regulated in India for better transparency and accountability?
11. Examine the need to revamp Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana.
12. Identify the major challenges related to India Heritage sites. How can climate action be linked with Heritage Conservation?
13. Examine the fineness and flaws of Indian fertilizer subsidy policy regime.
14. Why the Big Tech Monopoly needs to be broken?. How is India's regulating authority countering this?.
15. Wisdom lies in knowing what to reckon with and what to overlook. An officer being engrossed with the periphery, ignoring the core issues before him, is no rare in the bureaucracy. Do you agree that such preoccupation of an administrator leads to travesty of justice to the cause of effective service delivery and good governance? Critically evaluate. [MAINS 2022 - General Studies 4 - Ethics, Integrity & Aptitude]
16. Do you think Indian cities must become 'sponge cities'?.
17. Do you favour individualism in public health?.
18. Elucidate the background and significance of "Qissa Khawani Bazaar massacre" in Indian History
19. Discuss the role of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in rural development.
20. Identify the challenges in the solar energy sector in India and suggest few measures to cope with them.
21. What is mRNA vaccine?. Are mRNA vaccines "gene therapies"?

1. Discuss the Geopolitics of India's Refugee Policy

Refugees Protected in India

- India ensures that refugees can access protection services that are on a par with their **fellow Indian hosts.**
- For those refugees registered directly by the Government such as those from Sri Lanka, they are entitled to Aadhaar cards and PAN cards to enable their economic and financial inclusion.
  - They can have access to national welfare schemes and contribute effectively to the Indian economy.
- However, for those registered with **UNHCR, such as refugees from Afghanistan, Myanmar and other countries,** while they have access to protection and limited assistance services, they do not possess government-issued documentation.

  - Thus, they are unable to open bank accounts and don't get benefit from all government welfare schemes, and are thus inadvertently left behind.

India's Refugee Policy

- India **lacks specific legislation to address the problem of refugees**, in spite of their increasing inflow.
- India is not a party to **the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol,** the key legal documents pertaining to refugee protection.
  - **However, India has had a stellar record** on the issue of refugee protection. India has a moral tradition for assimilating foreign people and culture.
- Moreover, the **Foreigners Act, 1946, fails to address the peculiar problems** faced by refugees as a class.
  - It also gives unbridled power to the Central government to deport any foreign citizen.
- Further, the constitution of India also respects the life, liberty, and dignity of human beings.
  - The Supreme Court in the National Human Rights Commission vs. State of Arunachal Pradesh (1996) held that "while all rights are available to citizens, persons including foreign citizens are entitled to the right to equality and the right to life, among others."
- Further, **Article 21 of the Constitution encompasses the right of non-refoulement.**

  - Non-refoulement is the principle under international law which states that a person fleeing persecution from his own country should not be forced to return to his own country.

Status of Refugees in India

- Since its independence, **India has accepted various groups of refugees from neighbouring countries, including:**
  - **Partition refugees from Pakistan** in 1947.
  - **Tibetan refugees** that arrived in 1959.

- **Chakma and Hajong**from present day Bangladesh in early 1960s.
    - Other Bangladeshi refugees in 1965 and 1971.
  - **Sri Lankan Tamil refugees**from the 1980s.

  - Most recently **Rohingya refugees**from Myanmar, 2022.

India hasn't Framed a Law on Refugees Yet

- **Refugees vs Immigrants**: In the recent past, many people from neighboring countries tend to illegally immigrate to India, not because of state persecution but in search of better economic opportunities in India.
    - While the reality is that much of the debate in the country is about **illegal immigrants, not refugees,**the two categories tend to get bunched together.
- **Open Scope of Maneuver:**Absence of legislation has allowed India to keep its options open on the question of refugees. The government can declare any set of refugees as illegal immigrants.

    - This was the case that has **happened with Rohingya**(they are stateless, Indo-Aryan ethnic group who reside in Rakhine State, Myanmar), despite the UNHCR verification, the government decided to deal with them as trespassers under the Foreigners Act or the Indian Passport Act.

Current Legislative Framework to Handle Refugees

- **Foreigners Act of 1946:**Under Section 3, the Central government is empowered to detect, detain and deport illegal foreign nationals.
- **Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920 :**Under Section 5, authorities can remove an illegal foreigner by force under Article 258(1) of the Constitution of India.
- **Registration of Foreigners Act of 1939:**Under this, there is a mandatory requirement under which all foreign nationals (excluding overseas citizens of India) visiting India on a long-term visa (more than 180 days) is required to register themselves with a Registration Officer within 14 days of arriving in India.
- **Citizenship Act, 1955:**It provided provisions for renunciation, termination, and deprivation of citizenship.

- Further, **Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019 (CAA)**seeks to provide citizenship only to Hindu, Christian, Jain, Parsi, Sikh, and Buddhist immigrants persecuted in Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.

Looking ahead

1. Model laws on asylum and refugees that were drafted by the **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)**decades ago but not implemented by the government **could be revised by an expert committee.**
    a. If such laws are enacted, it would give legal sanctity and uniformity, ensuring the protection of human rights.
2. If India had domestic legislation regarding refugees, **it could have deterred any oppressive government in the neighborhood to persecute their population**and make them flee to India.

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3. Protection of women and child refugees from violence and harassment by authorities or local residents in consonance **with Fundamental Duty enshrined in our Constitution.**
4. Article 51A (e) enjoins upon every citizen to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.

2. Do you think that accepting the recommendations of previous Commissions would strengthen the independence of the Election Commission?.

- **Election Commission** has earned **public trust** due to independent and neutral authority that organises elections.
- However, in backdrop of independence of the Election Commission, questions are raised about the process through which election commissioner is appointed.
    - This is mainly due to potential bias as well as scope for personal whimsy in the election procedure.
- There is uncertainty over the elevation of an **Election Commissioner** to the post of **Chief election commission**.
    - It makes them **vulnerable** to government pressure.
- **Election commission of India** formed with the **consent** of both the government and the Opposition has better chance of convincing the nation of its **neutrality** and **impartiality**.

Appointment of ECs and CEC

- **Article 324** of the Constitution provides for **appointment** of **election commissioners**.
    - Election Commission shall **consist** of - Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners decided by **President**.
    - **Appointment** of CEC and other ECs shall be done in accordance with provisions of law made by Parliament and ratified by President.
    - It did **not** provide **exact procedure** for appointments.
    - Existing system is based on **convention**.

Salary, tenure and powers of Election commission

- **Election Commission** (Conditions of Service of Election Commissioners and Transaction of Business**) Act, 1991**-ensured **independence** in **salary** and **tenure** to the ECs.
- CEC and ECs are appointed for a tenure of **six years** or up to the age of **65 years**, whichever is earlier.
- They enjoy the same status, salary and perks as **judges** of **Supreme Court of India**.
- Constitution does **not fix** the **size** of the Election Commission.

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- **Impeachment process** of CEC-
  - **Two-thirds** of the **Lok Sabha** and the **Rajya Sabha** need to **present** and **vote** against him.
  - It should be initiated by the **order of president**.
  - It can be initiated in **case** of-disorderly conduct or improper actions.

  - **Removal by impeachment** is not given to **ECs**.

Supreme Court in its judgment in T.N. Seshan vs Union of India case 1995-

- Conferred equal **powers** on **ECs** as those enjoyed by the **CEC.**
  - referred Chief Election Commissioner as **primus inter pares**- **first among equals.**
- Offered **majority power** where any two **ECs** can overrule the CEC.

- It did **not** provide ECs **constitutional protection** (of removal by **impeachment**) given to **Chief Election Commissioner**.

Current issue raised against the functioning of Election Commission

- Present appointment process for election commissioners is **not transparent.**
  - Election commissioners are appointed by the president.
  - But since president is bound by the advice of the prime minister and council of ministers, the appointment is a **solely executive decision.**
  - This gives ample room for the ruling party to **choose someone who is loyal to their party.**
- As per Article 324, appointment of election commissioners can be regulated by a law made by Parliament.
  - However, **no such law has been made** for appointments yet.
- There are **no legal safeguards against** the arbitrary removal of the two election commissioners as provided for the chief election commissioner.

  - However, it **did not** give Election Commissioners the same constitutional protection (of removal by impeachment) as is accorded to the Chief Election Commissioner.

Suggestions and recommendations by different committees

- Handle misuse of **muscle** and **money** power during **elections** which violates **Model Code of Conduct**.

Dinesh Goswami Committee in 1950 suggestions-

- **Chief Election Commissioner** should be appointed by **President** in consultation with the **Chief Justice of India** and the **Leader of the Opposition**.
  - If **Leader of the Opposition** is **not** available, then consult the leader of the **largest opposition group** in the **Lok Sabha**.
- This process should be a **statutory** rule.
- Same criteria should be applied in appointment of **Election Commissioners**.

○ Consultation of **Chief Election Commissioner** should also be considered.

National Commission to review the working of the Constitution

● **Chief Election Commissioner** and other **Election Commissioners** should be appointed by a body consisting of-
  ○ **Prime Minister**.
  ○ **Leaders of the Opposition** in the **Lok Sabha** and the **Rajya Sabha**.
  ○ **Speaker** of the Lok Sabha.

  ○ **Deputy Chairman** of the Rajya Sabha.

The 255th Report of the Law Commission –

● Appointment of all Election Commissioners should be made by **President** in consultation with a **three-member collegium** of-
  ○ **Prime Minister**.
  ○ **Leader of the Opposition** of the Lok Sabha (or the leader of the largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha).
  ○ **Chief Justice of India**.
● It suggested **measures** to safeguard **Election Commissioners** from arbitrary removal similar to **Chief election commisioner**. In its absence-

  ○ They may hesitate to **act independently** and may side with CEC and government often.

For India to **resonate** with its status as a **largest democracy** it is crucial that it strengthens the very structure on which it is built- **free and fair elections**. **Independence** of Election Commissions is important in this regard to continue the **democratic tradition** of India and to continue the legacy of Constitution as envisioned by its **makers**. Without independence the Election Commission of India cannot function as a **robust triumvirate**.

3. What are personality rights and how do they differ from publicity and trademark rights? Can indiscriminate use of a person's name on the internet be a violation of personality rights?

Recently, the Delhi High Court recently passed an interim order **to prevent the unlawful use of a Bollywood star's name, image and voice.**

● The court, through its order, restrained persons at large from infringing the **personality rights of the actor.**

Personality Rights

● Personality rights refer to the**right of a person to protect his/her personality** under the right to privacy or property.

- These rights are **important to celebrities as their names, photographs or even voices can easily be misused** in various advertisements by different companies to boost their sales.
- Therefore, it is **necessary for renowned personalities/celebrities to register their names to save their personality rights.**

- A large list of unique personal attributes contribute to the making of a celebrity. All of these attributes need to be protected, such as name, nickname, stage name, picture, likeness, image and any identifiable personal property, such as a distinctive race car.

Publicity Rights and Personality Rights

- Personality rights **consist of two types of rights:**
  - **First:** The right of publicity, or the right to keep one's image and likeness from being commercially exploited without permission or contractual compensation, which is similar (but not identical) to the use of a trademark.
  - **Second:** The right to privacy or the right to not have one's personality represented publicly without permission.
- However, under common law jurisdictions, **publicity rights fall into the realm of the 'tort of passing off'.**
  - **Passing off takes place when someone intentionally or unintentionally passes off their goods or services** as those belonging to another party.

  - Often, this **type of misrepresentation damages the goodwill of a person or business,** resulting in financial or reputational damage.

Personality Rights in India

- The closest statute to protect personality rights is **Article 21 of the Constitution of India under rights to privacy and publicity.**
- Other statutory provisions protecting personality rights include the **Copyright Act, 1957.**
  - According to the Act, **moral rights are only granted to authors and performers**, including actors, singers, musicians, and dancers.
  - The provisions of the Act mandate that the Authors or the Performers have the right to be given credit or claim authorship of their work and also have a right to restrain others from causing any kind of damage to their work.
- **The Indian Trademarks Act, 1999** also protects personal rights under Section 14, which restricts the use of personal names and representations.
- Further, the Delhi High Court in its judgment in **Arun Jaitley vs Network Solutions Private Limited and Ors Case (2011)** observed that the popularity or fame of an individual will be no different on the internet than in reality.

  - The court had also **stated that the name also falls in the category** wherein besides it being a personal name it has also attained distinctive indicia of its own.

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Consumer Rights

1. It has been documented that celebrities" names and personalities are protected from commercial misuse, but **false advertisements and endorsements by celebrities can also mislead consumers.**
2. Due to such cases, the**Ministry of Consumer Affairs has made a notification in 2022 to keep a check on misleading adverts and endorsements of consumer products by imposing a penalty on the endorser.**

4. What is Wassenaar Arrangement? Discuss the significance of India assuming chairmanship of the plenary of the Wassenaar Arrangement on January 1, 2023 for a year.

Recently, on 26th annual plenary of the **Wassenaar Arrangement in Vienna,** Ireland handed over the chairmanship to India and India will officially assume the chairmanship from 1st January, 2023.

Wassenaar Arrangement

- The Wassenaar Arrangement is a voluntary export control regime. The Arrangement, **formally established in July 1996,**has 42 members who exchange information on transfers of conventional weapons and dual-use goods and technologies.
    - **Dual-use**refers to the ability of a **good or technology to be used for multiple purposes** - usually peaceful and military.
- Wassenaar Arrangement's **Secretariat is in Vienna, Austria.**
- **Members:**
    - It has 42 member states **comprising mostly NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and EU states.**
        - Participating States are required to report their arms transfers and transfers/denials of certain dual-use goods and technologies to destinations outside the Arrangement on a six-monthly basis.
    - India became **a member of the Arrangement in 2017.**
- **Objectives:**
    - The group works by **regularly exchanging information in respect of technology,**both conventional and nuclear-capable, that is sold to, or denied to countries outside the grouping.
    - This is done through**maintenance and updating of detailed lists of chemicals,** technologies, processes and products that are considered militarily significant.
    - It aims at **controlling the movement of technology, material or components to countries or entities which undermine international security**and stability.
- **Wassenaar Arrangement Plenary:**It is the decision-making body of the Arrangement.

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- It is composed of**representatives of all Participating States** and normally meets once a year, usually in December.
- The position of**Plenary Chair is subject to annual rotation** among Participating States.
- In 2018 the Plenary Chair was held by the United Kingdom, and in 2019 the Chair is held by Greece.

- All Plenary decisions are taken by consensus.

Chairmanship Significant for India

- **Can Bolster Anti-Terrorism Efforts:**
  - The timing of India's WA chairmanship coincides with a **recent increase in country's anti-terrorism position**in international bodies.
  - India is also actively engaging**global stakeholders in curbing terrorist financing.**
    - Indian home minister is presently the chair of the **No Money for Terrorism (NMFT)**ministerial initiative.
  - **Prevent Arms Diversion to Terrorists:**
    - As a chair of the plenary, India would be in a **position to steer discussions of the group to further strengthen the export controls**to prevent arms diversion to terrorists or to sovereign nations supporting terrorism.
  - **Strong Anti-Proliferation Framework:**
    - The worsening economic crisis in India's western neighbour coupled with rapid radicalization of **historically moderate sects in communities in the country poses a peculiar set of challenges to India.**
    - Strengthening the licensing and enforcement practices under the WA and adoption of new export controls in areas like**flight technology, interception technology and digital investigation tools will pave the way for the creation of a strong anti-proliferation framework** for South Asia.
  - **Democratization of space and Defense Technologies:**
    - India can play a significant role in**democratising access to technologies and processes that can serve as crucial building blocks** for the newly emerging defence and space manufacturing sectors in India.

    - India is slowly emerging as a**low-cost producer of several items** in the WA's control lists.

Looking ahead

1. Membership to these not only allows greater technology and material access but enhances the**credibility of a nation as a responsible member** of the world order.
2. India is poised to become**a significant player in the world and thus requires a voice** to further its claim as a rising power.

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5. How will RBI's CBDC Digital Rupee work, how is it different from digital money? What would be the Implications of "Digital Rupee"?

1. India launched its **Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC)or digital rupee or e-rupee on December 1, 2022.** It is an **electronic version of cash** and will be primarily meant for **retail transactions.** The pilot will initially cover the four cities of **Mumbai, New Delhi, Bengaluru, and Bhubaneswar.**
2. This makes it important to know what CBDCs are,**how they are different from cryptocurrencies and UPI transactions,** and also about the **safety concerns associated with it.**

CBDC or E-rupee

- It is a legal tender**issued by the RBI in digital form.** It is the same as the **fiat currency and is exchangeable one-to-one with the fiat currency.**
- **E-rupee will be in the form of a digital token representing a claim**on the central bank and will **effectively function as the digital equivalent of a banknote** that can be **transferred electronically from one holder to another.**
- Based on usage and the functions performed by the digital rupee, and considering different levels of accessibility, the**RBI has demarcated the digital rupee into two categories:**
  - **Retail E-rupee:**It is an **electronic version of cash** primarily meant for **retail transactions**, which can potentially be used by almost everyone, and **can provide access to safe money for payment and settlements.**
  - **Wholesale CBDC:**It is designed for **restricted access to select financial institutions.**
    - Financial transactions involving **government securities (G-Sec)**and **interbank transactions could be transformed by this technology.**

    - It also makes the capital market more efficient and secure in terms of operational costs, use of collateral, and liquidity management.

E-rupee Circulation in the Market

- E-rupees will be issued in the **same denominations as paper currency and coins,**and will be **distributed through the intermediaries, that is banks.**
  - Transactions will be through a **digital wallet offered by the participating banks and stored on mobile phones and devices.**
- Transactions can be both **person to person (P2P)**and **person to merchant (P2M).**
  - For P2M transactions (such as shopping), **there will be QR codes at the merchant location.**
- Users will be able to**withdraw digital tokens from banks** in the same way they **can currently withdraw physical cash.**

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○ They will be able to keep their **digital tokens in the wallet,** and spend them online or in person, or **transfer them via an app.**

Difference between Digital rupee and cryptocurrency

● Since the digital rupee is not a physical good or virtual asset, unlike cryptocurrencies, there can be no direct comparison between the CBDC (Central Bank Digital Currency) and them. Cryptocurrency coins are also not quite money.

● Similar to the paper banknotes that central banks like the RBI issue, this digital rupee can be converted into cash. The CBDC, which will perform the same function as banknotes but is not a decentralised asset like cryptocurrencies, will continue to be issued by the RBI.

● A country"s fiat currency is known as its central bank digital currency (CBDC), whereas cryptocurrencies are an alternative payment method with their own proprietary algorithm. The crypto currencies are digital assets in a decentralised network, and the digital currencies can be referred to as the nation"s digital fiat. The value of a crypto currency, on the other hand, is independent of central banking authorities and follows a transparent process from mining to ownership to transfer of assets, in contrast to digital currencies, which are completely regulated by the central bank and the government, who set the currency"s value.

Pros of E-rupee

● **Reducing Dependency on Dollar:** India can establish **Digital Rupee as a superior currency for trade with its strategic partners**, thus reducing reliance on the dollar.
   ○ This occurs at a time when**India is already in talks with Russia**, **UAE and Saudi Arabia to allow settlement of trade in the Indian rupee.**
● **Cutting Cost of Maintaining Physical Currency:** CBDC has the potential to **reduce dependency on cash.** To the extent large cash usage can be replaced by CBDCs, the **cost of printing, transporting, storing and distributing currency can be reduced.**
● **Regulated Intermediation:** Along with reducing operational costs, it will offer the public the same features as any private virtual currency (cryptocurrency) without any risks associated with it.
   ○ Unlike crypto, **E-rupee has regulated intermediation and control arrangements** that plays the crucial role of ensuring **integrity and stability of the monetary and financial ecosystem.**
● **Globalisation of Payment System:** CBDC can also enable a more real-time and **cost-effective globalisation of payment systems.** It could eliminate the **need for an expensive network of correspondent banks to settle cross-border payments.**

   ○ For**Indians working abroad, sending money home will become simpler and cheaper resulting in huge savings for India,** the world's top recipient of remittances.

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Challenges Associated with E-Rupee

- **Privacy and Security Concern:**E-rupee has the capacity to **accumulate sensitive user and payment data on a massive scale.** In the wrong hands, **this data can be easily used to spy on the private transactions of citizens.**
  - If implemented **without proper security protocols,** an E-Rupee could substantially **amplify the scope and scale of many of the security and privacy threats**that already exist in today's financial system.
- **Digital Divide and Financial Illiteracy:**High level of **digital illiteracy** is the biggest challenge and hindrance in the success of E-rupee in India. India had a rank of **73 out of 120 countries for internet literacy (2021).**
  - Also, **digital services are not available in local languages,**which is a major barrier to **financial literacy.**

- **Acceptability Concern:**Traceability of e-rupee transactions could become a deterrent to its uptake in India where **cash transactions are still hugely popular,** largely **because of their anonymity.** According to government data, the **volume of bank notes in circulation rose 5% in fiscal year 2022.**

Looking ahead

1. **Secured Digital Environment:**India's regulatory systems need to catch the **evolving risks of data privacy** and guide banking institutions to place appropriate safeguards and cushions to **avoid any personal data breach.**
2. **Strict KYC Norms:**A digital rupee may well be a boon but **there is a need to enforce strict compliance of Know Your Customer (KYC) norms** to prevent the **digital currency's use for terror financing or money laundering.**
   a. Also, given **India's still-vast digital divide, a protocol for offline use has to be worked out.**

6. Examine the need to address the maladies that poor micronutrient nutrition can inflict on the masses in India.

1. **National Family Health Survey**-5 data reported that every **second** Indian woman has **anaemia**, every **third** child is **stunted** and malnourished and every **fifth** child is **wasted**.
2. According to FAO (**Food and Agriculture Organization**) **Food Security Report** for 2021-
   a. India ranks **101** out of **116** countries in the **Global Hunger Index 2021**.
   b. India has **15.3% undernourished** population.
   c. India has Highest proportion of **stunted** children (**30%**).
   d. India has **Wasted** children (**17.3%**).
3. **Global Nutrition Report 2021** states that **stunting** among children in India is **higher** than **Asian** average of **21.8%.**
4. **World Health Organisation** defines '**hidden hunger**' as a lack of **micronutrients** from regular diet.

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5. In this context, India can address the problem of malnutrition among women and children by **rapidly adopting food fortification strategies.**

Food fortification

- Food fortification is the process of **adding nutrients** to food during its processing.
- For example- **rice** and **wheat** are fortified with **iron**, **folic acid** and **vitamin B 12**.
  - **Salt** is fortified with **iron** and **iodine**.
  - **Vitamin A** is added to cooking **oil** and **sugar**.
- It is a cost-effective complementary strategy to address multiple micronutrient deficiencies.
- Since **1920s**, **developed** and **high-income** countries have successfully tackled **malnutrition** through **food fortification**.
  - **80 countries** have framed laws for **fortification** of **cereal** flour.
  - **130** countries have allowed **iodised** salt.
  - **13** countries have mandated **rice fortification**.

Need for food fortification

- DALYs for a disease or health condition are the sum of the **years** of life lost to due to **premature mortality** (YLLs) and the **years lived with a disability** (YLDs) due to prevalent cases of the disease or health condition in a population.
  - One DALY represents the loss of the equivalent of one year of full health.
- According to the **World Health Organization** (WHO), **Anaemia** caused by iron deficiency is responsible for **3.6%** of **disability-adjusted life years** or DALYs in 2006.
  - It accounted for a loss of **47 million** DALYs.
- According to **NITI Aayog**, rice fortification budget of **₹2,800 crore per year** can save **35% (16.6 million)** per year of the total DALYs with **no** risk of **toxicity**.
- In **India**, **cost** of **one DALY** lost due to iron deficiency anaemia (IDA) is **₹30,000**.
  - Cost of averting an IDA related DALY is **₹1,545**.
    - This is a **cost-benefit** ratio of **1:18**.
- DALYs in India are **lower** for **males** as compared to **females**.
- Rice fortification costs **less than 1%** of food subsidy bill in 2018-19.
  - It has potential to prevent **94.1 million anaemia** cases.
  - This will save **₹8,098 crore** over a **five-year** period.

Food fortification programmes/initiatives in India

- In India, food fortification began in the **1950s** with **vegetable oil** fortification and **salt iodization**.
  - In 2016 **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India** (FSSAI) established standards for fortification of **rice**, **wheat flour**, **edible oil**, **double fortified salt** (DFS) and **milk**.

Rice fortification

- **Pilot projects** on the distribution of **fortified rice** was taken up in **Maharashtra** (**Gadchiroli** district).
    - **Gadchiroli** is an **aspirational district** according to central government.
    - It was part of a targeted **Public Distribution programme** for the masses.
    - The programme prevented cases of **anaemia** — from **58.9%** to **29.5%** in **2 years**.
- After its success, **Central government** have mandated **fortified rice** in all its government schemes.
    - Some of them are- **PDS** (public distribution system), **ICDS** (integrated child development scheme) and **PM-POSHAN** (PM Poshan shakti nirman).

- Rice is a major staple diet of **65%** population and hence **fortified** rice can prove a **cost-effective strategy**.

Midday meal scheme

- It is a **centrally sponsored scheme** that involves provision for **free lunch** on **working days** for students in primary & upper primary classes in **government aided** and local body school.
- It was first launched by **Government of India** in **1995**.
- **Funding pattern**- **Central government** -**75**% and **State government**- **25**%.
- In Gujarat, a study was conducted on **multiple micronutrient fortified rice** of midday meal scheme for schoolchildren (six-12 years) in 2018-2019. It found-
    - **Increased haemoglobin** concentration.
    - 10% **reduction** in **anaemia** prevalence.

    - **Improved** average **cognitive** scores by **11.3%.**

Eat Right India' movement

- It has tagline '**Sahi Bhojan, Behtar Jeevan'**.
- It is aligned with **National Health Policy** 2017.
- It adopts judicious mix of - **regulatory**, **capacity building**, **collaborative** and **empowerment approaches** to ensure that food is good for people and planet.

- Its work is coherent with programmes- **Ayushman Bharat, POSHAN Abhiyaan, Anaemia Mukt Bharat and Swachh Bharat Mission**.

Precautions

- Excess iron overload from fortified rice is **dangerous**.
    - Example- **Jharkhand's** tribal population suffered from **sickle cell anaemia** and **thalassaemia**.
- As per FSSAI standards **fortified rice has:**
    - **Iron levels** from **28 mg** to **42.5 mg**.
    - **Folic acid** from **75 mcg-125 mcg**.
    - **Vitamin B 12** from **0.75 mcg to 1.2 mcg**.
- Considering per capita intake in a **family** of three members with a rice consumption of 60 grams per person, additional intake is **2.45 mg of iron**.

    - This is more than losses of iron from the body which is **1 mg-2 mg per day**.

Challenges to food fortification in India

- **Political momentum**- Central Government is not able to translate its policy on fortification into uniform State action.
- Lack of **policy incentives** for the **private sector** to fortify foods.
- There are **small scale** and **informal producers** in the rice, wheat flour, and milk value chains.
    - This makes dissemination, coordination, capacity building, and tracking challenging.
- **High capital costs** of **blending** machinery with lack of access to affordable finance.
- **Low awareness level** amongst end-consumers.
- Changes in **food tastes** is a barrier for low preference of end consumers.

- There are **misconceptions** about fortified foods that eating fortified foods will result in **overdose** of vitamins and minerals and **harm** their health.

Looking ahead

Food fortification has proven efficacy and is **cost-effective** thus it can help **India** in reducing micronutrient deficiencies and address overall health benefits of its citizens. The intervention should be carried out with precautions so that it can address malnutrition issue which the nation continues to grapple with.

7. Discuss the significance of India's relations with the Gulf Countries.

1. The Gulf region consist of countries that share the border with Persian Gulf. These are the names of the seven Gulf nations: Bahrain, Kuwait, Iraq, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

Significance of Gulf region for India:

- **Potential trade and investment opportunity:**
    - The Gulf countries offers tremendous potential for cooperation in trade, investment, energy, manpower etc. As India has traditional and friendly relation with all Gulf member states.
- Further, Gulf countries have mutually beneficial complementarities with India in the field of investments which has already started from these countries both through FDI and FII.
    - **Influence of Indian Diaspora:**
        - This region hosts nearly 5.5 million Indians who are contributing immensely to the economic development of both India and the countries they reside and work in.
- **Energy security**:

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■ Nearly 40 % of India's crude oil import is met from Gulf countries. Gulf region plays a crucial role in India's energy security and pace of economic growth.

● **Potential market for Indian export:**
   ■ The Gulf countries provide an excellent market potential for India's manufactured goods and services, especially in project services exports.

● **Defense cooperation**:
   ■ The traditional relations with Gulf are presently diversifying into security and defence cooperation, and India today has a strong and growing stake in Gulf stability.

● This includes '**strategic partnerships'** with Gulf countries on issues such as **counter-terrorism, money laundering, cyber security, organised crime, human trafficking and anti-piracy.**

● All the Gulf states are members of the **Indian Navy-conceived Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS).**

● Further, India's most notable (but equally low-key) defence cooperation has been with Oman. India has also played an active role in enhancing the stability and security of the Gulf's Sea lanes through its participation in anti-piracy patrols off the coast of Somalia.

There is a need for adopting an integrated and cohesive approach, backed by institutional support, to develop ties in the diverse areas like — renewables, water conservation, food security, digital technology and skills development.

8. What were the major outcomes of recently held "India-Central Asia NSA meet"?.

The **National Security Advisor (NSA) of India**, for the first time, hosted a special meeting with his counterparts from Central Asian countries - **Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.**

● Earlier in January 2022, the Prime Minister of India hosted the **first India-Central Asia Summit** in virtual format.

Major outcomes

● **30thAnniversary:** This was the **first time that NSAs of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan were in Delhi** for a high-level security meeting.
   ○ The meeting **coincides with the 30thanniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties** between India and the Central Asian countries.
● **Afghanistan the Centre of Talks:**The focus was mainly on the security **situation in Afghanistan** and the **threat of terrorism originating from the country** under the Taliban.
● **Deliberations over Chabahar:**The NSAs **supported India's proposal to include Chabahar port within the framework of the INSTC (International North-South Transport Corridor)** connecting Iran to Russia via Central Asia.

- **Other Deliberations:**Deliberations over the need for **collective and coordinated action** against the **"misuse of new and emerging technologies**, arms and drugs trafficking, **abuse of cyber space** to spread **disinformation** and **unmanned aerial systems".**
- **Institutionalisation of Mechanism:**During the summit, the leaders **agreed to institutionalise the Summit mechanism** by deciding to hold it biannually.

  - An **India-Central Asia Secretariat in New Delhi** would be set up to support the new mechanism.

Looking ahead

- When others engage with Central Asia from their own perspectives; China from economic, Turkey from ethnic, and the Islamic world from religious -**it would be befitting for India to give a cultural and historical perspective to the region** through a summit-level annual meet.
  - A**value-driven cultural policy** can help strengthen India-Central Asia bonds.
- India's growing global visibility and key contributions to multilateral forums like the **SCO**have catapulted India from an observer into a **critical stakeholder in the region.**

  - Central Asia provides India with the **right platform to leverage its political, economic and cultural connections**to play a leading role further in Eurasia.

Additional Information

India's Relations with Central Asia

- **Historic Ties:**Central Asia is undoubtedly a **zone of India's civilisational influence**; the **Ferghana Valley** was India's crossing-point of the **Great Silk Road.**
  - **Buddhism also found inroads in several Central Asian cities**in the form of Stupas and Monasteries.
  - **Men of prominence**such as **Amir Khusrau, Dehlawi, Al-Biruni** having Central Asian roots came and made their name in India.
- **Diplomatic Ties:**India considers the Central Asian countries as the **"heart of Asia"** and they are also members of the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).**
  - Central Asian countries are**"aware" of Pakistan's support to cross-border terrorism** and its links to various terror groups.
- **Like-Mindedness in Combatting Terrorism:**India and the Central Asian nations have **similarities in approach in countering terrorism** and the threat of radicalisation.
  - The latest meeting called for the early adoption of the **UN Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism,**which India

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had first proposed in 1996, but has been held up for decades, **primarily over differences on the definition of terrorism.**

- **India's Role in Afghanistan Situation:**India and the Central Asian countries have shared concerns over terrorism emanating from Afghanistan and its implications for regional security. **India has been a strong proponent for re-establishing peace in Afghanistan.**
    - In November 2021, India had hosted a**regional dialogue on the situation in Afghanistan**, which was attended by NSAs of Russia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.
- **Stand on Chabahar Port:**India has registered significant progress recently through **renovation of Chabahar port.** It is also a member of the **Ashgabat Agreement.**
    - The port played an important role during the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan by delivering humanitarian goods to the Afghan people by international organisations.

        - Prior to the fall of Kabul to the Taliban, India delivered 100,000 tonnes of wheat and medicines to Afghanistan via the port's **Shahid Beheshti terminal developed by India.**

Challenges in Robust India-Central Asia Ties

- There are**obstructions of physical connectivity** due to Pakistan's hostility and Afghan instability.
- **Politically, Central Asian countries are highly fragile**and prone to threats like **terrorism & Islamic fundamentalism** making the region a volatile and unstable market.
- **Involvement of China**in the region by the **Belt and Road Initiative** has significantly undermined India's influence in the region.

- **Porous border and unbridled corruption**along with the proximity with regions of soaring opium production **(Golden Crescent and Golden Triangle)** makes the region a **powerhouse for drug and money trafficking.**

National Security Advisor in India

1. The National Security Advisor (NSA) is the**primary advisor to the Prime Minister of India.** He also **presides over the National Security Council (NSC)**. The current NSA is **Ajit Doval.**
2. The NSC of India is a three-tiered organisation that**oversees political, economic, energy and security issues of strategic concern.**
    a. It was formed in 1998, where all aspects of national security are deliberated upon.
    b. NSC **operates within the executive office of the PM,**liaising between the government's executive branch and the intelligence services.
    c. The **Ministers of Home Affairs, Defence, External Affairs and Finance are its members.**

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9. How will I2U2 (India, Israel, UAE and USA) grouping transform India's position in global politics? (Mains 2022 General Studies Paper 2)

<u>I2U2</u>

● **I2U2 stands for India, Israel, the UAE, and the US**, and was also referred to as the 'West Asian Quad'.
● First mooted as the "International Forum for Economic Cooperation" during the foreign ministers' meet of the four countries held in October 2021.
● Its stated aim is to discuss common areas of mutual interest, to strengthen the economic partnership in trade and investment in our respective regions and beyond.
● It is aimed to encourage joint investments in six mutually identified areas such as water, energy, transportation, space, health, and food security.
● It intends to mobilize private sector capital and expertise to help modernize the infrastructure, low carbon development pathways for our industries, improve public health, and promote the development of critical emerging and green technologies.

● Thus, I2U2 is not a new formation, but rather a formalisation of the already existing strategic cooperation between the countries, which is aimed at developing a framework that allows both regions to serve each other's economic security more effectively.

<u>West ASIAN QUAD</u>

● The I2U2 has been referred to as the 'West Asian Quad' on the lines of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) which has Australia, India, Japan and the US as members.
● The newly formed alliance will boost US efforts to contain Chinese influence in Asia and the Middle East.
● However, the parallels drawn are questionable given the differing foreign policy stances witnessed with respect to Russia.

● Barring the US, no other country in the I2U2 — Israel, India, or the UAE — has followed the Western lead of imposing sanctions on Russia. Furthermore, while the Indo-Pacific Quad was primarily focused on defence and security, the West Asia Quad seems to focus more on economic cooperation, and not security cooperation

<u>Significance for India</u>

● The I2U2 Summit's first high-level meeting is a significant development in which India's partnership can prove to be a "game changer".
● **United States can play an important role** in deepening Israel's integration into the region, India has a role to play as well.
● Since India is a massive market and a producer of high-tech and highly sought-after goods as well, the four countries can work together on several areas, including technology, trade, climate, and Covid-19.

- Since India enjoys friendly relations with the countries in the region, as well as deep cultural and historical links and vibrant economic ties, it can be called a 'natural partner' for the US in its efforts to revitalise its alliances in the region.
- India has a decent presence in the region as it is a major buyer of energy from the region, and also a major supplier of many consumer goods and human resources to the West Asian region.
- For the UAE, apart from being an oil importer, India, owing to its massive IT industries, is a source of diversification and modernization.
- Indo-Israeli relations are flourishing currently with defence relations being the underpinning of this growing strategic convergence.

- India is a crucial player in the grouping, it's imperative we discuss what India stands to gain from this newly formed alliance.

Summing up

1. The I2U2, both on paper and in practice, makes a lot of sense. **For India, it leverages its good relations with Israel, the Gulf, and the US** alike to build economic exchanges that are mutually beneficial with next to no downsides on the horizon.
2. However, geoeconomics and economic linkages cannot be seen as separate from geopolitics, and Middle East's geopolitics remains volatile despite the Abraham Accords, with the Iran crisis looking to get even more complicated with chances of a JCPOA 2.0 remaining bleak.
3. Since the turn of the millennium, Gulf countries and India have witnessed an extraordinary turnaround in their relationship. Because of India's diaspora presence and its "Look West" policy of intensifying already flourishing relations with major powers in the Middle East, New Delhi holds a deep strategic relationship with the region.

10. What is a "civil society organization"?. What is the role of Civil Society?. How are "civil society organizations" regulated in India for better transparency and accountability?

- **According to the World Bank:** "Civil society refers to a wide array of organizations: community groups, non-governmental organizations [NGOs], labour unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, and foundations."
- **When mobilized, civil society** - sometimes called the "third sector" (after government and commerce) - has the power to influence the actions of elected policy-makers and businesses.

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- **But the nature of civil society** - what it is and what it does - is evolving, in response to both technological developments and more nuanced changes within societies.

Role of civil societies

- **Watchdog:** holding public institutions to account, promoting transparency and accountability
- **Advocacy:** raising awareness of societal issues and challenges and advocating for change.
- **Service:** delivering welfare services to meet societal needs such as education, health, food, and security; implementing disaster management, preparedness, and emergency responses.
- **Domain Expert:** bringing unique knowledge and experience to shape policy and strategy, and identifying and building solutions.
- **Capacity builder:** providing education, training, skills, and other capacity building.
- **Incubator:** developing solutions that may require a long gestation or payback period.
- **Representative:** giving power to the voice of the marginalized or underrepresented.
- **Citizens' champion:** encouraging citizens' engagement and supporting citizens' rights.
- **Solidarity adherent:** promoting fundamental and universal values.

- **Definer of standards:** creating norms that shape social, economic, and state activity

Regulation of civil societies

- Even though civil society organizations have contributed to the constitutional frame, they undoubtedly need to be regulated for defending constitutional values.
- Regulation is needed that established minimum public transparency and accountability requirements while aiming at improving the quality of the public sphere.

- **The Foreign Contributions (Regulation) Act (FCRA)** and the **Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA)** are used in conjunction with a range of other measures, such as the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), for civil society regulation.

FCRA

- The FCRA was enacted during the Emergency in 1976 amid apprehensions that foreign powers were interfering in India's affairs by pumping money into the country through independent organizations.
- The law sought to regulate **foreign donations to individuals and associations** so that they functioned "in a manner consistent with the values of a sovereign democratic republic".

- An amended FCRA was enacted in 2010 to **"consolidate the law"** on the utilization of foreign funds, and "to prohibit" their use for "any activities detrimental to the national interest".
- The law was amended again by the current government in 2020, giving the government tighter control and scrutiny over the receipt and utilization of foreign funds by NGOs.
- Broadly, the FCRA requires every person or NGO seeking to receive foreign donations to be:
    1. registered under the Act,
    2. to open a bank account for the receipt of foreign funds in the State Bank of India, Delhi, and
    3. to utilize those funds only for the purpose for which they have been received and as stipulated in the Act.
- **The Act prohibits the receipt of foreign funds by**
    1. candidates for elections.
    2. journalists or newspaper and media broadcast companies.

    3. judges and government servants, members of the legislature and political parties or their office-bearers, and organizations of a political nature.

For how long is the approval granted?

- Once granted, FCRA registration is valid for five years. NGOs are expected to apply for renewal within six months of the date of expiry of registration.

- In case of failure to apply for renewal, the registration is deemed to have expired, and the NGO is no longer entitled to receive foreign funds or utilize its existing funds without permission from the ministry.

Cancellation under FCRA:

- The calculations suggest that of the **20,679 civil society organizations** that lost their registration between 2011 and May 2022, 3,987 were denied the same from 2011 to 2014.

- Of the 16,692 NGOs that lost their licenses between 2015 and 2022, 16,679 were denied the right between 2015 and 2019 before the Act was amended in 2020.

On what basis is approval cancelled?

- The government reserves the right to cancel the **FCRA registration of any NGO:**
    - If it finds it to be in violation of the Act.
    - If an inquiry finds a **false statement in the application;**
    - If the NGO is found to have **violated any of the terms and conditions of the certificate or renewal;**
    - If it has not been engaged in any reasonable activity in its chosen field for the benefit of society for two consecutive years; or
    - If it has become defunct.

- It can also be cancelled if **"in the opinion of the Central Government,** it is necessary for the public interest to cancel the certificate," the FCRA says.
- Registrations are also cancelled when an audit finds irregularities in the finances of an NGO in terms of **misutilisation of foreign funds.**
- According to FCRA, no order of cancellation of the certificate can be made unless the person or NGO concerned has been given a reasonable opportunity of being heard. Once the registration of an NGO is cancelled, it is not eligible for re-registration for three years.
- The ministry also has the power to suspend an **NGO's registration for 180 days** pending inquiry and can freeze its funds.

- All orders of the government can be **challenged in the High Court.**

Summing up

- Civil society has a particularly powerful role to play in this process as an enabler and constructive challenger, creating the political and social space for collaborations that are based on the core values of trust, service, and the collective good.
- Both **government and civil society** urgently need to work together to build institutional relationships based on mutual trust and a shared vision.

- The government needs to ensure that the regulations do not create hurdles for civil society organizations in their functioning and receiving funding.

11. Examine the need to revamp Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana.

PM Fasal Bima Yojana

- The Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana is the **world's largest crop insurance scheme** in terms of farmer registrations.
- In 2022-23, the scheme has been allocated **Rs 15,500 crore.**
  - This scheme was launched in February **2016.**

  - Under the scheme, **all farmers including sharecroppers and tenant farmers growing "notified crops" in the "notified areas" are eligible for coverage.**

Features

  - Under the provisions of PMFBY, farmers pay a **premium of 2% of the sum insured for all food grains and oilseeds crops of Kharif; 1.5% for all food grains and oilseeds crops of Rabi; and 5% for all horticultural crops.**
  - In the initial scheme, the difference between actuarial premium rate and the rate of insurance premium payable by farmers, which is called the **rate of normal premium subsidy,** was to be shared equally between the Centre and states.

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- In February 2020, the Centre decided to **restrict its premium subsidy to 30% for unirrigated areas and 25% for irrigated areas..**
  - Initially, the scheme was compulsory for loanee farmers; in February 2020, the Centre revised it to make it optional for all farmers.

  - **Immediate intimation (within 72 hours)** by the insured farmer to Insurance Company through "Crop Insurance App" or any available channel of reporting.

Performance of PMFBY

- Six years after its launch and post multiple overhauls, Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) has **largely failed to deliver on its objectives.**
- An expert **committee steered by Ashok Dalwai** recently submitted a report showing that, between 2016 and 2021, PMFBY saw a decline in participating farmers (362 lakh to 248 lakh) and States (22 to 19), with shrinking coverage (474 to 387 lakh hectares), despite a sharp rise in premiums.
- According to official data, the **claim ratio in 2020-21 stood at 62.3 percent of the gross premium.**

- According to a September 2022 report prepared by National Rainfed Area Authority, the government, in its own words, admits that **several gaps have been identified in the implementation of the scheme and that the scheme failed to reach the targeted insured area coverage to 50% by 2020.**

Issues related to PMFBY

- Delays in settlement
  - **The Standing Committee (2021)** recognised delays in settlement of insurance claims as one of the biggest challenges in implementation of the scheme.
    - It recommended **implementing a timeline for settlement of claims** by insurance companies.
    - In cases where delays are caused by failure of the state governments to pay subsidies, it suggested returning the premium with interest to farmers within a fixed time frame.
- Uneven Distribution
  - The main grouse that States have with PMFBY is that **while premiums are distributed evenly across participants, claims are cornered by a few.**
    - The expert committee has found some truth in this complaint. While the average claims realization ratio (claims-to-premium) of all States participating in PMFBY was just 12 per cent, a fifth of the districts realized claims of over 100 per cent.
    - To resolve this, the committee suggests **setting differential premiums based on actual yield variations across districts and crops.**
- Assessment of losses

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- ○ The **Standing Committee on Agriculture (2017)** observed that states are not readily accepting and adopting the technologies used for assessing yield loss.
- ○ The Standing Committee (2021) observed that **yield-related disputes and delayed transmission of yield data are now a major reason for delays in settlement of claims.**
    - ■ It recommended the adoption of smart sampling techniques by all states to address this.
- Grievance redressal
    - ○ The **Standing Committee on Agriculture (2019)** observed that farmers are facing issues in lodging complaints with the insurance companies due to the absence of local offices of the companies at the district and block-level.
        - ■ Under the revised scheme guidelines, states have to constitute grievance redressal committees at the district and state levels.
        - ■ However, in 2021, the Standing Committee on Agriculture noted that **only 15 states and union territories have notified Grievance Redressal Committees at both the state and district level.**
    - ○ It recommended ensuring the formulation of these Committees in all other states.
- Lack of Monitoring:
    - ○ The PMFBY is implemented by empanelled general insurance companies but since the onset of the scheme many farmers have leveled **allegations against the government for not monitoring the implementation of the scheme and not taking action against the insurance companies who fraudulently pocket money** from the farmers.
    - ○ Over the past five years, both the central government and the state governments have contributed almost Rs. 1.265 lakh crores to the scheme to benefit our farmers.
        - ■ It is shocking that, as per the available reports, **only 87,320 crores have been paid to the farmers.** This staggering data throws light on the handling of the funds of the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana.
        - ■ While public sector insurance companies settled 90 percent of farmers' claims, private sector companies pocketed enormous profits of nearly Rs 39,201 crores without paying farmers their rightful dues.
        - ■ This is a scam of a wider magnitude heralded by the corporates.

Looking ahead

- A **CAG audit must be initiated** on this issue.
    - ○ All the defaulting private insurance companies must be blacklisted, and the government must ensure that the implementation of the PMFBY must be entrusted to public sector companies.
- **Rationalizing all other agriculture related schemes** such as subsidy and loan waivers etc and utilizing the savings to fund premiums for a crop

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insurance scheme run by a State-owned agency such as AIC, may make the PMFBY simpler and workable.

● It is very important to ensure that this **scheme is pro-farmer and not pro-corporates.**
● **Union of agri-tech and rural insurance** can be the magic formula for financial inclusion, enabling a trust in the scheme.
● State governments **need to avoid inordinate delays in premium payments** which hold up claims.

● The Centre may also **need to re-assess the need for private participation** in the scheme.

Therefore, there is a **need to make "pro-farmer changes" to the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana** to meet the issues related to its implementation and growing challenges of climate change and rapid technological advancement.

12. Identify the major challenges related to India Heritage sites. How can climate action be linked with Heritage Conservation?

● India has a **rich heritage**that is a storehouse of **archaeological assets and mind-blowing monuments.** They represent a unique legacy of civilization and therefore the **conservation of built heritage** is generally perceived to be in the **long-term interest of society.**
● But the majority of India's architectural heritage and sites remain **unidentified and largely**unprotected, and even those that are protected are facing challenges related to climate change and **unsustainable tourism practices.** Therefore, the **issues related to Indian Heritage** must be carefully identified and solved in a comprehensive manner.

Challenges Associated

● **Pollution and Climate Change:Pollution is another problem faced by our heritage sites** and India is still struggling to save its wonder, **Taj Mahal** from the pollution.
● Of late, India is seeing a spate**of floods due to climate change in various parts of the country** including in those locations where heritage sites are located.
● **Puri in Odishaand Hampi in Karnataka** are some of the latest examples of **heritage sites getting damaged due to natural calamities** which in turn is said to be the **result of global warming.**
● **Heritage Encroachments:**Many ancient monuments have been encroached upon by **local residents, shopkeepers, and souvenir sellers.**
  ○ There is **no harmony between these structures and the architectural style of monuments**or the surroundings.
  ○ For instance, according to the**Comptroller and Auditor-General of India (CAG) Report, 2013,** there was encroachment on the **Taj Mahal"s premises near Khan-i-Alam"s Bagh.**

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- **Exploitation over Excavation:**Development activities have exploited many archaeological sites in India with rich deposits of artefacts.
  - Also, there is **no provision for Cultural Resource Management**before developmental projects, which adds to the problem.
- **Lack of Database for Heritage Sites:**There is no comprehensive national database with state-by-state distribution of heritage structures in India.
  - **Indian National Trust for Art & Cultural Heritage (INTACH)**has inventoried about **60,000 buildings in around 150 cities,** but that"s still just the tip of the iceberg since there are estimated to be over **4000 heritage towns and cities throughout the country.**

- **Lack of Human Resource:**Lack of adequate numbers of qualified and competent **human resources** to look after the monuments and **carry out conservation activities** is the biggest problem faced by **agencies like ASI.**

Looking ahead

1. **Reimaging Excavation and Conservation Policy:**In light of the **changing scenarios with the advancement in technology,** ASI needs to update its Excavation Policy.
   a. Using new technology such as **Photogrammetry & 3D Laser scanning, LiDAR and satellite remote sensing surveys**should be used for documentation, surveys, excavation and conservation.
2. **Smart City, Smart Heritage:**It is necessary to consider the **Heritage Impact Assessment** for all large infrastructure projects.
   a. The **Heritage Identification and Conservation Projects**need to be adjoined to the city master plans and **integrate with the Smart City Initiative.**
3. **Innovative Strategies for Increasing Engagement:**The **use of monuments that do not attract a large number of visitors** and not have cultural/religious sensitivity can serve as **venues for cultural and wedding programmes** that can fulfil twin objective:
   a. The **promotion of the associated intangible heritage.**
   b. **Increasing visitor numbers**to such sites.
4. **Corporate Heritage Responsibility:**Companies should be encouraged to take on restoration and preservation of monuments as part of their **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) obligations.**
5. **Linking Heritage Conservation with Climate Action:**Heritage sites can serve as **opportunities for climate communication and education**, and **research on historic sites** and practices to understand past responses to changing climate conditions can help **adaptation and mitigation planners develop strategies that integrate natural science and cultural heritage.**

   a. For example, **coastal and river communities such as the island of Majuli in India**have been living **with and adapting to changing water levels** for centuries.

13. Examine the fineness and flaws of Indian fertilizer subsidy policy regime.

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Fertiliser Subsidy

Farmers buy fertilisers at MRPs (maximum retail price) below their normal supply-and-demand-based market rates or what it costs to produce/import them. The MRP of neem-coated urea, for instance, is fixed by the government at Rs 5,922.22 per tonne, whereas its average cost-plus price payable to domestic manufacturers and importers comes to around Rs 17,000 and Rs 23,000 per tonne, respectively. The difference, which varies according to plant-wise production cost and import price, is footed by the Centre as subsidy.

- **Subsidy on Urea:**
  - In India, **urea is the most produced, imported, consumed and physically regulated fertiliser**of all. It is subsidised only for agricultural uses.
  - The Centre**pays a subsidy** on urea to fertiliser manufacturers on the basis of cost of production at each plant and the units are required to sell the fertiliser at the government-set Maximum Retail Price (MRP).
    - The **MRP** of urea is currently **fixed at Rs 5,628 per tonne.**
  - **Subsidy on Non-Urea Fertilisers:**
    - The MRPs of **non-urea fertilisers are decontrolled or fixed by the companies.**
    - But the government has, in **recent times**, and especially with the **global price surge post the Russia-Ukraine war, brought these fertilisers under the control regime.**
    - All Non-Urea based fertilisers are regulated under **Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS) Scheme.**
    - **Examples of non-urea fertilisers**- DAP and MOP.

    - Companies **do not sell DAP at more than Rs 27,000 per tonne.**

Initiatives for Fertilisers

- **Neem Coating of Urea:**
  - The Department of Fertilizers (DoF) has **made it mandatory for all the domestic producers**to produce 100% urea as **Neem Coated Urea (NCU).**
- **New Urea Policy (NUP) 2015:**
  - Objectives of the policy are-
    - To maximize indigenous urea production.
    - To promote energy efficiency in the urea units.
    - To rationalize the subsidy burden on the Government of India.
  - **Policy on Promotion of City Compost:**
    - Approved a policy on promotion of City Compost, notified by the Department of Fertilizers (DoF) in 2016 granting Market Development Assistance of Rs. 1500/- for scaling up production and consumption of city compost.
    - **To increase sales volumes, compost manufacturers**willing to market city compost were allowed to sell city compost in bulk directly to farmers.

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- ■ Fertilizer companies marketing city compost are covered under the **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)** for Fertilizers.
  - ○ **Use of Space Technology in Fertilizer Sector:**

    - ■ DoF commissioned a **three-year Pilot Study on** "Resource Mapping of Rock Phosphate using Reflectance Spectroscopy and Earth Observations Data" by National Remote Sensing Centre under **ISRO,** in collaboration with Geological Survey of India (GSI) and the Atomic Mineral Directorate (AMD).

Issues Related to Fertiliser Subsidy

- ● **Imbalance in Price of Fertilisers:**
  - ○ The high subsidy on urea and DAP makes them much **cheaper for farmers relative to other fertilisers.**
  - ○ While **urea is retailing at a fourth of the price of packed common salt, DAP** has also become **far cheaper than other fertilizers.**
  - ○ The **prices of the other fertilizers which were decontrolled have gone up** which has led the farmers to **use more urea and DAP than before.**
- ● **Nutrient Imbalance:**
  - ○ The **use of N, P and K in the country** has over the last few years sharply **deviated from the ideal NPK use ratio of 4:2:1.**
  - ○ Urea and DAP contain **more than 30% of any single nutrient.**
    - ■ **Urea has 46% N**, while **DAP has 46% P** and also **18% N.**
  - ○ The resulting **nutrient imbalance** owing to their **use, disproportionate to other, more expensive fertilisers,** could have implications for **soil health, ultimately affecting crop yields.**
- ● **Damage to Fiscal Health:**
  - ○ Fertiliser subsidies are damaging the fiscal health of the economy.
  - ○ **Subsidized** urea is getting **diverted to bulk buyers/traders** or even non-agricultural users such as plywood and animal feed makers.

    - ■ It is being **smuggled** to neighbouring countries like **Bangladesh** and

Looking ahead

- ● Considering that all three nutrients namely N (nitrogen), P (phosphorus) and K (potassium) are critical to increasing crop yields and quality of produce, the government must necessarily go for a **uniform policy for all fertilisers.**
- ● In the long run, **NBS itself should be replaced by a flat per-acre cash subsidy** that could be used to purchase any fertiliser.

    a. This subsidy must **include value-added and customised products** containing not just other nutrients but delivering even nitrogen more efficiently than urea.

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14. Why the Big Tech Monopoly needs to be broken?. How is India's regulating authority countering this?.

- The Indian antitrust body, the **Competition Commission of India (CCI)**'s move to impose a **penalty of ₹1,337.76 crore on Google** for abusing its dominant position in the android mobile device ecosystem, has forced us to **rethink the market power of Big Tech companies.**
- Big Tech companies are **celebrated for their innovative products** and services which bring tremendous benefits to **consumers, businesses, and governments.** But they are also **criticised for market monopolisation** and undermining democratic processes.

- Therefore it's high time for India to **update its competition law** and make amendments to ensure a **free, fair, and justified competitive market.**

Challenges Associated with Big Tech

- **Unrestricted Flow of Sensitive Data:** While the **data economy has evolved,** we have not dealt with its **regulation as effectively.** There is **sensitive data stored on these platforms** (financial records, phone location, and medical history).
  - Big corporations have asserted ownership of the right to use or transfer this data **without restriction.**
- **Monopolising Internet:** Tech giants acquire competitors to gain monopolies in **different spheres of business instead of earning consumers'' loyalty.** They lock in consumers into their ecosystem and make them bound to use their platforms.
  - It is also possible for them to **swing elections** and **change the political mood of a nation** with their combined power.
- **Regulatory Vacuum:** As Big Tech firms innovate rapidly, the **regulators are only able to react, not prepare.** These platforms maintain that they are o**nly intermediaries** and therefore **cannot be held responsible for the content they generate.**
- **Discretionary Pricing:** In the **non-digital arena, price determination happens through market forces.** However, in the digital space, **rules are largely dictated by the large platforms.** Consumers are themselves products on these platforms.

  - Concepts like **network effects and winner-takes-all coupled with gatekeeping by Big Tech firms** exacerbate the problem.

India''s Approach to Regulate Big Tech

- In India, antitrust issues are governed by the **Competition Act, 2002**, and the Competition Commission of India **checks upon monopolistic practices.**
  - For instance, the **Competition Commission of India** has **recently raised concerns over Google''s commercial flight search option,** making it a dominant position in the online search market.

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■ Google was also found guilty in 2019 of **misusing its dominant position in the mobile Android market**to impose unfair conditions on device manufacturers.

○ In addition, the government has proposed amendments to the competition law in the **Competition Amendment Bill, 2022.**

Looking ahead

- **Regulating Digital Marketplace:**With India now on the cusp of a **digital transformation**, it is essential that the country has a level-playing field to ensure a fair opportunity for **new-age start-ups and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.**
  - The**Competition Act of 2000** was largely constituted to deal with the physical marketplace. There is an urgent need to **contextualise the law to the digital marketplace.**
  - The EU has already noted this need through the**European Union Digital Services Act** . It is time that **similar legislation is adopted in India.**
- **Price Monitoring: Pricing plays a fundamental role in defining the position of any digital platform**in the marketplace. It is essential to establish an **ex-ante framework** for pricing to **ensure a level playing field for local sellers.**
  - The Government's**Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) platform** is a reliable option for these small players.
- **Ensuring Neutrality, Interoperability and Accountability:**Platform Neutrality should be made a mandatory norm so that **Big Tech platforms cannot unfairly discriminate against other businesses** using their platform.
  - **Interoperability,**to enable consumer choice and reduce the weight of AI based algorithms.
  - **Algorithmic Accountability,**to identify, assess and penalise harmful algorithmic amplification.
- **Providing Cushion to Consumers:**For consumers, there is a need to establish harmony of the **Competition law with the new Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020 .**
  - There is a need to devise a mechanism to ensure **fair compensation for consumers who face the brunt of the anti-competitive practices**of the Big Techs.
- **Data Privacy and Security:**Governments around the globe have implemented **stringent laws to protect users'' right to privacy** by requiring tech companies to adhere to certain basic and essential measures for **data security and privacy.**

  - In this context, the **dedicated data protection norms should be devised for all digital market players**that will also monitor cross border flow to ensure that transfer of data outside India **does not inhibit domestic innovation, law enforcement or other services.**

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15. Wisdom lies in knowing what to reckon with and what to overlook. An officer being engrossed with the periphery, ignoring the core issues before him, is no rare in the bureaucracy. Do you agree that such preoccupation of an administrator leads to travesty of justice to the cause of effective service delivery and good governance? Critically evaluate. [MAINS 2022 - General Studies 4 - Ethics, Integrity & Aptitude]

1. According to Aristotle Wisdom is the highest form of knowledge. That means Wisdom is about having adequate knowledge and understanding of any situation along with the application of this knowledge. For bureaucrats, wisdom helps to focus on core issues and to deliver effective service delivery and good governance.

Bureaucrats are disincentivized for applying the wisdom in the culture of bona fide error and onus to prove their innocence in the process or investigation. This leads to a lack of innovation and active participation in dealing with the core issues.

● For instance, an 11-year-old girl in one of the Jharkhand districts died of starvation because her ration card was not linked with the Aadhar. Here if the document being the periphery was engrossed by the bureaucrat then malnutrition is the core issue. This leads to inefficient service delivery with a lack of humanism. This is the best example of a travesty of justice with the preoccupation of administration on peripheral issues.

However, for an administrator to bring effective service delivery and good governance in the administration, he/she has to follow the right means and the right ends. To achieve this one should never compromise core values of good governance like transparency, accountability, empathy, and compassion.

● For instance – Civil servants bridging loopholes in healthcare and ensuring that the benefits of schemes, and health insurance schemes reach beneficiaries.

In today's world, the administrator requires innovative approaches and adaptability to counter emerging issues like cybercrime, and the spread of hate speech via social media. This adaptability of the bureaucrats should become part of the government such that while focusing upon core issues, peripheral issues don't get adequate attention and justice to be delivered to every citizen.

● However, Buddha's "Madhyamgram" could be the path that could be adopted while dealing with peripheral issues and core issues to achieve ultimate justice for society.

16. Do you think Indian cities must become 'sponge cities'?.

● Sponge cities are urban areas with **abundant natural areas** such as trees, lakes and parks – or other good designs intended to absorb rain and prevent flooding.
● Reduces **urban heat island** effect and improve ecological environment and biodiversity.
● It absorbs and captures rain water and utilizes it to reduce floods.
● **Rain water harvested** can be reused for **irrigation** and **home use**.

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- **Requirements for sponge city**-
    a. **Bioswales** are channels designed to allow passage for **stormwater runoff** while removing **debris** and **pollution**.
    b. **Continuous** open green spaces, interconnected waterways, channels and ponds across different regions.
    c. Green roofs that can **retain rainwater** and naturally **filters** it before being recycled or released into the ground.
    d. Construction of **bio-swales** and bio-retention systems, **porous** roads and pavements, drainage systems to allow passing water into ground.

In India, there is a need of Sponge cities because,

1. Urban flooding has become recurring phenomenon in Indian metros.
2. India's Land policy has not been effective in managing or controlling the recurrence of major floods in urban areas.
3. Urban cities lack proper drainage network.
4. Concrete structures in urban cities are causing water wastage.

Sponge Cities Mission can be delivered along with:

- AMRUT (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation).
- HRIDAY (National Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojna)
- Smart Cities Mission

Some advantages of Sponge Cities Mission in India are as follows:

1. Every inch of rainwater can be captured, absorbed, and reused.
2. Urban farms and gardens can be recharged with the help of rainwater.
3. Water saved by sponge cities can replace drinking water.
4. Open green spaces and interconnected waterways can be developed in urban areas.
5. Waterways, channels, and ponds across a sponge city can automatically absorb rainwater. The Sponge Cities Mission in India will eliminate floods in urban areas.

17. Do you favour individualism in public health?.

- The public health policy in India prioritises **individual-oriented interventions** instead of societal oriented **population-based approaches**.
- **Evaluation** of **publicly-funded** insurance schemes shows that **low proportion** of population **benefited** from such schemes.
    ○ **Example**: Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) and COVID-19 vaccination focused on individualism rather the focusing on population-based interventions.

Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PJAY)

- It was launched by **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** under **Ayushman Bharat scheme**.
- It is **centrally sponsored scheme** funded both by **State government** and **Central government**.
- It is **largest health insurance** scheme in country.
- It covers **hospitalisation (**pre- and **post) expenses** for a family of **₹5 lakh** a year.
- **Goal**- to ensure **free** health services for all kind of **hospitalisation** to reduce **financial burden** on beneficiary.

- It is umbrella scheme of **Health and wellness Centres** and **National Health Protection Scheme**.

How PMJAY promotes 'individualism' in public health?

- **Every individual** is assured that this scheme will cover expenses of **hospitalisation**.
    - This is **individualistic** response to **problem** of **hospitalisation expenditure** faced by populations.
- According to **National Sample Survey Organisation** (75th round)- only **3%** of total population in India suffered **hospitalisation** in a year.
    - It varies for **1%** for **Assam**, **4%** for **Goa** and **10%** for **Kerala** depending on **function of availability**.
    - This describes **ineffectiveness of PMJAY**.
- **PMJAY** scheme does **not** mention actual need for hospitalization services for any **population**.

- The assurance of a hospitalization service remains an unfulfilled promise when more than 90% of those who were given the promise do not need hospitalisation in the near future.

How COVID-19 vaccine efforts focused on 'individualism' in public health?

- **COVID-19 vaccine** drive has showed that **COVID-19 vaccine cannot prevent** people from getting disease.
    - It only reduces **hospitalisation** and **deaths** in when contracting COVID-19.
    - Around **20%** of **total COVID-19** positive cases needed **medical attention**, **5%** needed **hospitalisation** and **1%-2%** needed **intensive care** (ICU) or **ventilator support**.
- Most of **deaths** in **COVID-19** were due to **failure** in offering **ventilator** and **ICU support services** to the needed person and not due to a person missing **COVID-19 vaccination.**
- **Public health experts mistake** in judging a population's characteristics based on i**ndividual experiences**.

    - **This is** known as **atomistic fallacy** in public health.

Reason for dominance of individualism (instead of population-based approaches) in public health

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- There is **misconception** regarding **public health** that what is done at **individual level** when done at **population level**, becomes **public health**.
- **Health effects** are **more convincing** at individual level.

- Due to influence of market's role and the effect of consumerism in public health practice Government tries to include **maximum population as target beneficiaries** for a particular scheme, **even if the beneficiaries don't need the benefits** provided by the scheme.

Suggestions

- To overcome the undernutrition problem government **should focus on population-based approaches** such as a strengthening of Public Distribution System, supplementary nutrition programmes.
  - There should be **less emphasis on individualist solutions** such as micronutrient supplementation and food fortification.
- For **chronic disease control**, government should not focus much on early **diagnosis** and **treatment**.
  - **population-based approaches** such as **modifying health behaviours**- through organised community action should be adopted.
- For **population-based health-care planning**, Government must ensure **health-care facilities** to **only those who need it.**
  - **For example**: Government needs to ensure health-care facilities to only 3%-5% of the population of a state to cover all the hospitalisation needs of a population.
- To effectively manage upcoming **pandemic**, focus on **population-based approach by improving primary**, **secondary** and **tertiary** health-care facilities to **manage** cases.
- Curative care services should be planed based on **population-level planning.**
  - This is because curative care provisioning is never planned at an individual level as epidemiologically, every individual will not necessarily need curative care every time
  - **Morbidity profile** of a population across different age groups can be used to **plan curative care** needs of a population.
- **Improvements** at population level should be done after **population-level analysis**.
  - This requires **expertise** and **orientation** about society.

    - It is a **skill** required for **public health practitioners**.

Propagating individualism is a characteristic feature of a **consumerist society** as every individual can be a **potential customer** during risk and susceptibility. Such forms of **individualistic approaches** in **public health** should be resisted to **safeguard** its original principles of practice which are **population, prevention, and social justice**.

18. Elucidate the background and significance of "Qissa Khawani Bazaar massacre" in Indian History

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- Qissa Khwani bazar was the site of a massacre perpetrated by British soldiers against **non-violent protesters of the Khudai Khidmatgar movement on April 23, 1930.**

Khudai Khidmatgar Movement

- The Khudai Khidmatgar was a **non-violent movement**against British occupation of the Indian subcontinent led by **Abdul Ghaffar Khan, a Pashtun freedom fighter, in the North-West Frontier Province.**
- Over time, the movement turned **political,**leading to the British taking notice of its growing prominence in the region.
- Following the arrest of Khan and other leaders in 1929, the movement formally joined the **Indian National Congress**after they failed to receive support from the All-India Muslim League.
- Members of the Khudai Khidmatgar were organised and the men stood out because of the bright **red shirts they wore as uniforms,**while the **women wore black garments.**

- The Khudai Khidtmatgar opposed Partition, a stance that many interpreted as the movement not being in favour of the**creation of the independent nation of Pakistan.**

Reasons for Qissa Khwani Bazaar massacre:

- **Abdul Ghaffar Khan and other leaders of the Khudai Khidmatgar were arrested on April 23, 1930**by British police after he gave a speech at a gathering in the town of Utmanzai in the North-West Frontier Province.
- Protests spilled into the **Qissa Khwani Bazaar in Peshawar**on the day of Khan's arrest.

- **British soldiers entered the market area** to disperse crowds that had refused to leave and the British army vehicles drove into the crowds, killing several protesters and bystanders.

Significance

- In Peshawar and surrounding areas, the Khudai Khidmatgar experienced some of the most extreme crackdowns against India''s freedom struggle. Later, Ghaffar Khan wrote that this was because the British government thought a non-violent Pashtun was even more dangerous than a violent one, claiming that this led them to repeatedly provoke the movement into becoming fierce, with little effect. The massacre created various instances of unrest throughout British India. This resulted in King George VI (Emperor of India) launching a legal investigation. The British Commission brought the case forward to Chief Justice Naimatullah Chaudhry, a distinguished Judge of the Lucknow protectorate. Subsequently, King George VI knighted Naimatullah Chaudhry, who surveyed the area of massacre personally and published a 200-page report

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criticising the actions of the British Indian Army. Anuncios **The Khudai Khidtmatgar opposed the partition of India.**

Additional Info
Abdul Ghaffar Khan

- Abdul Ghaffar Khan (1890-1988), the foremost 20th-century leader of the Pashtuns (a Muslim ethnic group of Pakistan and Afghanistan) was a follower of Mahatma Gandhi and was**called the "Frontier Gandhi".**
- **Ghaffar Khan met Gandhi and entered politics in 1919**during agitation over the Rowlatt Acts, which allowed the confinement of political dissidents without trial.
- In 1920 he**joined the Khilafat movement,** which sought to strengthen the spiritual ties of Indian Muslims to the Turkish sultan
- In 1921 he was **elected president of a district Khilafat committee**in his native North-West Frontier Province.
- Soon after attending an Indian National Congress (Congress Party) gathering in 1929, **Ghaffar Khan founded the Red Shirt movement (Khudai Khitmatgar)**among the Pashtuns.
- In **1987 he was awarded the Bharat Ratna Prize,**the highest Indian honour that can be given to civilians. He was the **first non-Indian to receive this honour.**
  - Another non-Indian to receive Bharat Ratna is**Nelson Mandela (1990).**

  - **Mother Teresa, in 1980,**became the first and only naturalised citizen to be awarded the Bharat Ratna.

19. Discuss the role of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in rural development.

- In developing economies like India, **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)**is seen as part of **corporate philanthropy** in which **corporations augment the social development** to support the initiatives of the government.
- And in keeping with the Indian tradition, it was believed that **every company has a moral responsibility to play an active role in discharging the social obligations.**
- In the early 90's**Mahatma Gandhi** introduced the **concept of trusteeship helping socio-economic growth.**
- **India**became the **first country to legislate the need to undertake CSR activities** and mandatorily report CSR initiatives under **Section 135 of the Companies Act, 2013**. But current CSR frameworks have some flaws, such as transparency, lack of community participation in CSR activities, and lack of timely audits.

- In order to achieve sustainable development,**India should streamline its CSR framework** and focus on **collective betterment through shared responsibility.**

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Companies Fall Under the Purview of Corporate Social Responsibility

- A company whose turnover is at least **1,000 crores,**net worth is at least **500 crores**, or net profit is at least **5 crores** falls under the CSR provisions of the **Companies Act, 2013.**
- Under the Act, companies must set up a**Corporate Social Responsibility Committee** that recommends a Corporate Social Responsibility Policy to the Board and monitors the same.

- The Act also encourages companies to **spend 2% of their average net profit in the previous three years**on CSR activities.

Activities Included under CSR Category

- Specified under **Schedule VII of the Companies Act 2013,**some major activities include:
  - **Eradicating hunger, poverty and malnutrition**, promoting health care including preventive healthcare and sanitation including contribution to the Swach Bharat Kosh set-up by the Central Government for the promotion of sanitation and making available safe drinking water.
  - Promoting education, including special education and**employment enhancing vocational skills**especially among children, women, elderly and the differently abled and livelihood enhancement projects.
  - Promoting **gender equality**, **empowering women, setting up homes**and hostels for women and orphans; setting up old age homes, day care centres and such other facilities for**senior citizens and measures for reducing inequalities faced by socially and economically backward groups.**

  - Ensuring **environmental sustainability**,**ecological balance, protection of flora and fauna,**animal welfare, **agroforestry**, **conservation of natural resources** and maintaining quality of soil, air and water including contribution to the **Clean Ganga Fund** set-up by the Central Government for rejuvenation of river Ganga.

Challenges Related to CSR Activities in India

- **Shrinking Role of Government**: Governments used to deliver**social and environmental objectives in businesses through legislation** and regulation.
  - Due to **shrinking government resources and distrust of regulations,**voluntary and non-regulatory initiatives are getting explored.
- **Absence of Clear CSR Guidelines:**There are **no clear principles and directions about the CSR in India** and because of **lack of clear-cut statutory guidelines, t**he level of CSR depends upon the size of organisations, which means bigger the organisation, bigger the CSR programs.
  - This is also a **barrier for the small organisations**that want to contribute to this field.
- **Duplication of CSR Activities:**There is a lack of consensus amongst local agencies regarding CSR projects.

- This **lack of** consensus **often results in duplication of activities**by corporate houses in areas of their intervention and **results in a competitive spirit between local implementing agencies**rather than building collaborative approaches on issue
- **Unavailability of Well-Organized NGOs:**Due to the lack of recognition of many **Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs)** in India, corporations have **limited options and benefits,** and they often partially fund **NGOs** in order to gain **visibility and brand recognition, not realising that CSR serves a more important purpose.**
  - Also, the**lack of well-organised NGOs**in remote and rural areas makes it **difficult to identify real needs of the community** and ensure successful CSR implementation.
- **Lack of Time Bound Audits:**The **lack of time-bound audits** causes many Indian companies to **not disclose information about CSR activities** they take part in, including funds used for the projects.

  - Also, as a result,**these companies fail to create a sense of belonging**and connect with society.

Looking ahead

- **Regular CSR Compliance:**Companies should **conduct regular reviews of CSR compliance** and put in place **measures for a more professional approach.** They should also set clear objectives and align all stakeholders with them.
  - It is equally **important to let their NGO partners know of their business needs.**
- **Proactive Role of Government:**Governments should also **address the issue of non-availability of NGOs** and raise awareness about the importance **of CSR in society.**
  - **Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning**tools can be used by the government to mine data from mandated reports in order to maintain regular audits.
- **Linking CSR with Research Institutions**: From **Designing sustainable construction materials that are affordable and recyclable,**to developing **India-centric greening options** like novel heat and power management systems.
  - Projects such as these can be enabled through CSR funding and led by higher education institutions that would accelerate the**transition from laboratory to actualisation and serve communities in innovative ways.**
- **SDG with CSR:**With India prioritising and achieving **Sustainable Development Goals, NITI Aayog** has made this mainstream to the national agenda, and **now is the time to tie CSR and SDGs together.**
  - In this way,**India can improve accountability of CSR**at the same time moving towards green and sustainable growth.
- **Integrated CSR Interface:**A national platform, centralised by the **Ministry of Corporate Affairs,** is needed where all states can list their possible **CSR-admissible projects** so that companies can determine where their CSR funds would have the most impact.

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- ○ **Corporate Social Responsibility Projects Repository on the India Investment Grid (IIG)**can serve as a guide for such efforts.
- ● **Replacing End of Life Concept with CSR:**Corporate social responsibility should replace **end-of-life concepts** for products with **technologies and regulations that facilitate recycling and reusing.**
  - a. In this way, the**life cycle of products can be extended, wastage can be minimised, and pollution reduced.**In line, India can transition towards a **circular economy.**

  - b. This can be an**attempt to realise the vision of a just, humane and equitable society where every action,**however small, is **driven by this larger sustainable vision.**

20. Identify the challenges in the solar energy sector in India and suggest few measures to cope with them.

- ● India's need to increase energy provision for its population and fast growing economy poses a formidable challenge which is perceived as both a **great opportunity as well as a necessity for the country**to increase the **share of renewables in the overall energy mix.**
- ● **Solar energy**is **driving India towards the adoption of cleaner energy** generation technologies. From less than **10 MW in 2010,** India has added significant solar capacity over the past decade, **achieving over 50 GW by 2022.**
- ● Based on a commitment to address the global climate crisis, **India has promised to source nearly half its energy from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030**and, in the shorter term, source at least **60% of its renewable energy from solar power.**

- ● In order to meet these targets, it is **essential to look towards self-sufficiency in solar energy production**as well as its **affordability and accessibility.**

Challenges

- ● **Insufficient Contribution to Power Sector:**Despite significant growth in the installed solar capacity, the **contribution of solar energy to the country's power generation has not grown at the same pace.**
  - ○ In 2019-20, for instance, **solar power contributed only 3.6% (50 billion units)**of India's total power generation of **1390 BU.**
  - ○ Also, while India has achieved record **low tariffs for solar power generation**in the utility-scale segment, this has not **translated into cheaper power for end-consumers.**
- ● **High Import Dependence:**India's current solar module manufacturing capacity is limited to **~15 GW per year.** Also, India has **no manufacturing capacity for solar wafers and polysilicon ingots,** and currently **imports 100% of silicon wafers and around 80% of cells even at the current deployment levels.**

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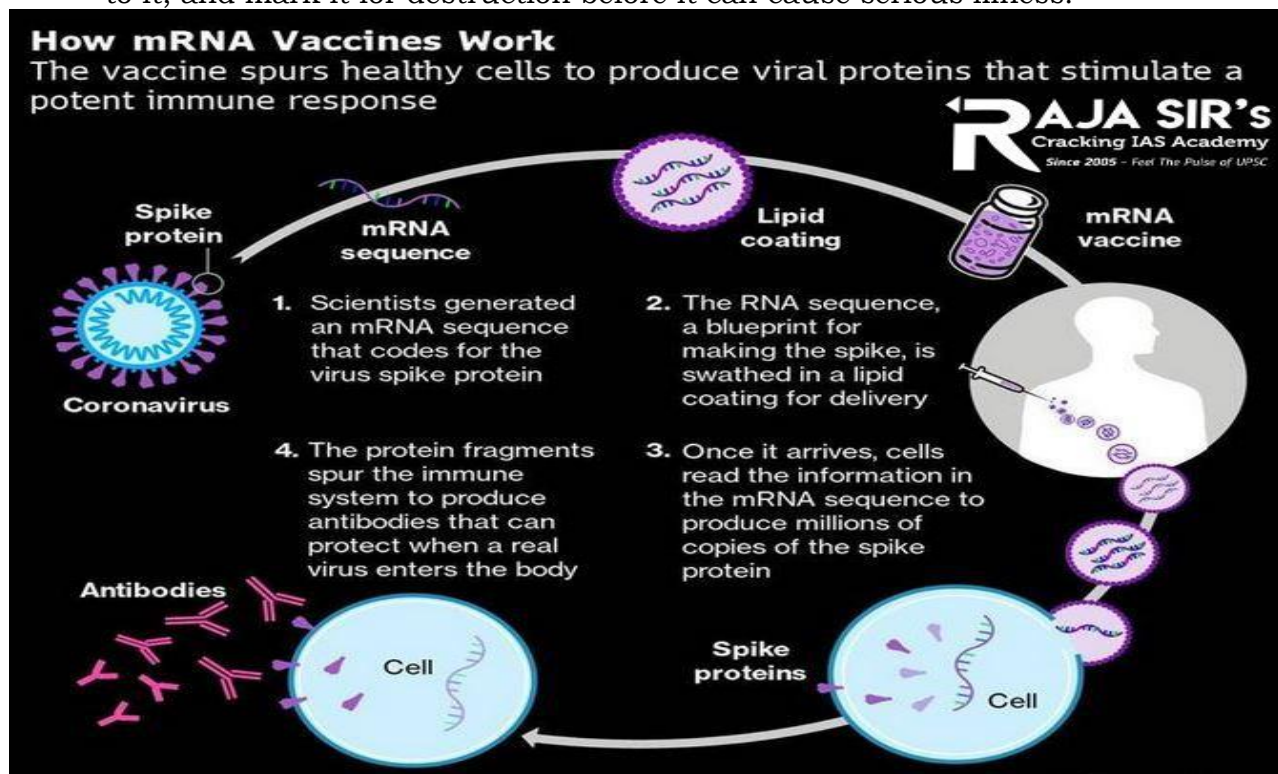Cracking IAS Academy
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- ○ **Risk of Weaponization of Supply Chain:**Silicon wafer especially, the most expensive raw material, is not manufactured in India. Since **>90% of the world's solar wafer manufacturing currently happens in China**, the current geopolitical tensions between India and China could lead to the weaponization of the supply chain in future.
- **Space Scarcity: Ground-mounted solar projects**require a lot of space to install, and **land availability is low in India.**
  - ○ For a small piece of land, solar cells near substations may have to compete with other land-based necessities, resulting in **conflict with local communities.**
- **Solar Waste:**India's solar waste has been predicted to grow by **8 million tonnes by 2050.** Currently, India's **e-waste rules are not mandatory on solar cell manufacturers** which leads to a **large generation of solar waste every year.**
- **Losses in Cost and T&D (Transmission and Distribution):**Solar energy is also having problems with **cost competitiveness** and competing with other sources of energy.

  - ○ The**cost of T&D losses** is approximately **40%,** making generation through solar energy sources highly

Looking ahead

- **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) in Solar Sector:**India could look at developing appropriate guidelines around **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR),** which means holding **manufacturers accountable for the entire life cycle of solar products** and **creating standards for waste recycling.**
  - ○ This could give**domestic manufacturers a competitive edge** and go a long way in addressing **waste management and supply side constraints.**
- **Self-reliance in Solar Energy:**As part of **Atmanirbhar Bharat"s** vision, **India must cultivate a strong domestic solar energy market.** The best way to **promote solar PV manufacturing is to directly support upstream startups,** such as through **incentives for Design and Production.**
  - ○ India can also explore the use of **bio solar cells by generating electricity from microbial photosynthetic**and respiration processes.
- **Localised Solar Power Generation: Mini-grids and community rooftop solar installations**can facilitate the solar shift in India, while **localised solar energy production and utilisation, implemented by panchayats and municipalities** can be the cornerstone of the **net-zero India we envision by 2070.**

- **Solar Diplomacy:**International Solar Alliance (ISA) established by India and France at **Conference of the Parties (COP-21) in 2015**, can be a platform to bring countries **together to facilitate collaboration on issues such as mobilising investments,** capacity building, **diversification of supply chain** and **advocacy of solar energy for global good.**

21.What is mRNA vaccine?. Are mRNA vaccines "gene therapies"?

- Vaccines help prevent infection by preparing the body to fight foreign invaders (such as bacteria, viruses, or other pathogens). All vaccines introduce into the body a harmless piece of a particular bacteria or virus, triggering an immune response. Most vaccines contain a weakened or dead bacteria or virus. However, scientists have developed a new type of vaccine that uses a molecule called messenger RNA (mRNA) rather than part of an actual bacteria or virus. Messenger RNA is a type of RNA that is necessary for protein production. Once cells finish making a protein, they quickly break down the mRNA. mRNA from vaccines does not enter the nucleus and does not alter DNA.

- mRNA vaccines work by introducing a piece of mRNA that corresponds to a viral protein, usually a small piece of a protein found on the virus's outer membrane. (Individuals who get an mRNA vaccine are not exposed to the virus, nor can they become infected with the virus by the vaccine.) By using this mRNA, cells can produce the viral protein. As part of a normal immune response, the immune system recognizes that the protein is foreign and produces specialized proteins called antibodies. Antibodies help protect the body against infection by recognizing individual viruses or other pathogens, attaching to them, and marking the pathogens for destruction. Once produced, antibodies remain in the body, even after the body has rid itself of the pathogen, so that the immune system can quickly respond if exposed again. If a person is exposed to a virus after receiving mRNA vaccination for it, antibodies can quickly recognize it, attach to it, and mark it for destruction before it can cause serious illness.

How mRNA Vaccines Work
The vaccine spurs healthy cells to produce viral proteins that stimulate a potent immune response

1. Scientists generated an mRNA sequence that codes for the virus spike protein
2. The RNA sequence, a blueprint for making the spike, is swathed in a lipid coating for delivery
3. Once it arrives, cells read the information in the mRNA sequence to produce millions of copies of the spike protein
4. The protein fragments spur the immune system to produce antibodies that can protect when a real virus enters the body

Significance of mRNA vaccines

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There are two parts to our immune system: **innate** (the defences we're born with) and **acquired** (which we develop as we come into contact with pathogens).

- **Classical vaccine molecules** usually only work with the acquired immune system and the innate immune system is activated by another ingredient, called an **adjuvant**.

- Interestingly, **mRNA in vaccines could also trigger the innate immune system,** providing an extra layer of defence without the need to add adjuvants.

mRNA vaccines aren't gene therapies

- Gene therapies involve making deliberate changes to a patient's DNA in order to cure or alleviate a genetic condition. This can be by adding a functional copy of a gene, disabling a gene that makes a faulty product or changing gene activation.
- The mRNA from the vaccines does not enter the cell nucleus or interact with the DNA at all, so it does not constitute gene therapy.

- Gene therapies can have long-lasting effects because they permanently change the cell's DNA, with these changes being inherited by any daughter cells that result if the cell divides. In contrast, mRNAs are always transitory and are not inherited by daughter cells, making them ideal for use in vaccines.

22. Compare Appropriation vs. Finance vs. Money Bills. Explain the Procedure to be followed to introduce Appropriation Bills. Hence define Vote on account.
    - A Finance Bill, also known as a Money Bill under **Article 110 of the Indian Constitution**, is a bill that is tabled in the Parliament each year to give effect to the government's financial recommendations for the following fiscal year. A Finance Bill is primarily concerned with tax and levy changes. Once a year, during the presentation of the Budget, a Finance Bill is normally introduced. This means if the finance minister proposes some changes to income tax slabs during the budget speech, then that proposal will be introduced in the Parliament as a Finance Bill and will have to be passed by both the houses to come into effect.
    - The Appropriation Bill, also known as a Money Bill or the Finance Bill, permits the government to take money from the Consolidated Fund of India to cover expenses that may arise during a fiscal year. After presenting the Union Budget to Parliament, the government introduces the Appropriation Bill. This is because the Budget includes intentions to spend money on social programmes to help people from all walks of life. The government needs funds to carry out these programmes, which it obtains from the Consolidated Fund of India. As per **Article 114 of the Constitution**, the government can withdraw money from the Consolidated Fund only after receiving approval from Parliament. The amount withdrawn is used to meet the current expenditure during the financial year.
    - One of the most fundamental differences between the two bills is that the Appropriation Bill deals with the budget's spending side, whilst the Finance Bill works with the budget's income (or taxes and levies) side.

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- Another significant distinction between the two Bills is that in the Finance Law, the Houses of Parliament can seek adjustments to the amounts listed in the Bill (such as tax reductions or rejections), whereas in the Appropriation Bill, no amendments can be introduced or enacted.

Procedure Followed for an Appropriation Bill

- The Appropriation Bill is **introduced in the Lok Sabha**after discussions on Budget proposals and Voting on Demand for Grants.
  - The defeat of an Appropriation Bill in a parliamentary vote would lead to the resignation of a government or a general election.
- Once it is passed by the Lok Sabha it is sent to the Rajya Sabha.
  - **Rajya Sabha**has the **power to recommend any amendments in this Bill.** However, it is the prerogative of the Lok Sabha to either accept or reject the recommendations made by the Rajya Sabha.
- After the bill receives assent from the president it becomes an Appropriation act.
  - The unique feature of the Appropriation Bill is its automatic repeal clause, whereby the Act gets repealed by itself after it meets its statutory purpose.
- The government **cannot withdraw money from the Consolidated Fund of India till the enactment of the appropriation bill.**However, this takes time and the government needs money to carry on its normal activities. To meet the immediate expenses the **Constitution has authorised the Lok Sabha to make any grant in advance for a part of the financial year.** This provision is known as the
- **Amendment:**

  - No amendment can be proposed to an Appropriation Bill which will have the effect of varying the amount or altering the destination of any grant so made or of varying the amount of any expenditure charged on the Consolidated Fund of India, and the decision of the**Lok Sabha Speaker** as to whether such an amendment is admissible is final.

Vote on account

- According to the Constitution, the government can only take money from the Consolidated Fund of India if it has been appropriated by legislation. During the budget process, an appropriation Bill is passed for this purpose. The appropriation Bill, on the other hand, may take some time to pass through Parliament and become law. Meanwhile, starting April 1, the government will need approval to spend even a single dime.
- A vote on account, as described by Article 116 of the Indian Constitution, is a grant in advance from the Consolidated Fund of India to the federal government to satisfy short-term expenditure demands, usually for a few months until the new financial year begins.

- In contrast to a full Budget, which is a detailed financial statement of expenditures and receipts that includes changes in taxes and government policies, a vote on account is only a temporary licence to spend money. Because it is not fair to deny the government the ability to construct its own Budget for

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the remainder of the year if it changes after elections, the administration prefers to seek a vote on account rather than submitting a full Budget.

23. Do you consider "Cultural Norms" Make Actions Right and Wrong?

- The Cross-Cultural Relationship is the idea that people from different cultures can have relationships that acknowledge, respect and begin to understand each other's diverse lives. People with different backgrounds can help each other see possibilities that they never thought were there because of limitations, or cultural proscriptions, posed by their own traditions. Traditional practices in certain cultures can restrict opportunity because they are "wrong" according to one specific culture. Becoming aware of these new possibilities will ultimately change the people that are exposed to the new ideas. This cross-cultural relationship provides hope that new opportunities will be discovered but at the same time it is threatening. The threat is that once the relationship occurs, one can no longer claim that any single culture is the absolute truth.

- Cultural relativism is the ability to understand a culture on its own terms and not to make judgments using the standards of one's own culture. Using the perspective of cultural relativism leads to the view that no one culture is superior than another culture when compared to systems of morality, law, politics, etc. It is a concept that cultural norms and values derive their meaning within a specific social context. This is also based on the idea that there is no absolute standard of good or evil, therefore every decision and judgment of what is right and wrong is individually decided in each society. The concept of cultural relativism also means that any opinion on ethics is subject to the perspective of each person within their particular culture. Overall, there is no right or wrong ethical system. In a holistic understanding of the term cultural relativism, it tries to promote the understanding of cultural practices that are unfamiliar to other cultures such as eating insects, genocides or genital cutting.

There are two different categories of **cultural relativism**:

1. **Absolute**: Everything that happens within a culture must and should not be questioned by outsiders. The extreme example of absolute cultural relativism would be the Nazi party's point of view justifying the Holocaust.

2. **Critical**: Creates questions about cultural practices in terms of who is accepting them and why. Critical cultural relativism also recognizes power relationships.

Cultural Relativism vs Ethnocentrism

- Ethnocentrism is the tendency to look at the world largely from the perspective of one''s own culture. This may be motivated, for example, by the belief that one''s own race, ethnic, or cultural group is the most important or that some or all aspects of its culture are superior to those of other groups.

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- Ethnocentrism can often lead to incorrect assumptions about others'' behavior based on one''s own norms, values, and beliefs.
- Cultural relativism, meanwhile, is principled on regarding and valuing the practices of a culture from the point of view of that culture, and to avoid making judgments stemming from one''s own assumptions.
- Cultural relativism attempts to counter ethnocentrism by promoting the understanding of cultural practices unfamiliar to other cultures. For example, it is a common practice for friends of the same-sex in India to hold hands while walking in public.
- In the United Kingdom, holding hands is largely limited to couples who are romantically involved, and often suggests a sexual relationship.

- Someone holding an extreme ethnocentrist view may see their own understanding of hand-holding as superior and consider the foreign practice to be immoral.

Criticisms on Cultural Relativism

- Cultural Relativism has been criticized for numerous reasons, both theoretical and practical.
- Cultural relativism attempts to integrate knowledge between one''s own, culture-bound, reality. The premise that cultural relativism is based on, that all cultures are valid in their customs, is, vague.
- Cultural relativism from a theoretical perspective for having contradictory logic, asserting that cultural relativism often asserts that social facts are true and untrue, depending on the culture that one is situated in.
- Nonetheless, cultural relativism also has several advantages. Firstly, it is a system that promotes cooperation. Each individual has a different perspective that is based on their upbringing, experiences, and personal thoughts; and, by embracing the many differences that people have, cooperation creates the potential for a stronger society.
- Each individual definition of success allows people to pursue stronger bonds with one another and potentially achieve more because there are no limitations on a group level about what can or cannot be accomplished.
- Secondly, cultural relativism envisions a society where equality across cultures is possible. Cultural relativism does so by allowing individuals to define their moral code without defining that of others. As each person can set their own standards of success and behavior, cultural relativism creates equality.
- Additionally, Cultural relativism can preserve cultures and allow people to create personal moral codes based on societal standards without precisely consulting what is "right" or "wrong."
- However, it can do so while also excluding moral relativism. This means that the moral code of a culture can be defined and an expectation implemented that people follow it, even as people devise goals and values that are particularly relevant to them.
- Lastly, cultural relativism has been praised for stopping cultural conditions — the adoption for people to adapt their attitudes, thoughts, and beliefs to the people they are with on a regular basis.
- Despite these advantages, cultural relativism has been criticized for creating a system fuelled by personal bias. As people tend to prefer to be with others who

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have similar thoughts, feelings, and ideas, they tend to separate themselves into neighbourhoods, communities, and social groups that share specific perspectives.

- When people are given the power to define their own moral code, they do so based on personal bias, causing some people to follow their own code at the expense of others.
- Nonetheless, cultural relativism promotes understanding of cultures outside of one's own, enabling people to build relationships with other cultures that acknowledge and respect each other's' diverse lives.

- With cultural relativism comes an ability to understand a culture on its own terms without making judgments based on one's own cultural standards. In this way, sociologists and anthropologists can draw more accurate conclusions about outside cultures.

24. **"Fraternity is only another name for democracy". (Dr.B.R.Ambedkar). Discuss.**

- In *Annihilation of Caste*, Dr B R Ambedkar has written: "An ideal society should be mobile, should be full of channels for conveying a change taking place in one part to other parts. In an ideal society there should be many interests consciously communicated and shared. There should be varied and free points of contact with other modes of association. In other words there should be social endosmosis. This is fraternity, which is only another name for democracy. Democracy is not merely a form of Government. It is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience. It is essentially an attitude of respect and reverence towards fellowmen."
- In its most literal sense, fraternity refers to a feeling of friendship and mutual support that exists between members of a group. In the context of Dr Ambedkar's writings, it also refers to individuals in Indian society breaking free of the caste system and practising social harmony and contact in a freer and more inclusive way.
- "An ideal society should be mobile" is a direct indictment of the caste system, wherein people are restricted to a certain position in society by virtue of the family they are born into. Dr Ambedkar adds that there should be "channels for conveying a change taking place" and "varied and free points of contact with other modes of association". The caste system involves stringent rules regarding contact and communication between different castes and sub-castes. For Ambedkar, a democratic nation meant the removal of such hierarchies.
- This vision was encapsulated in the phrase "social endosmosis", or the freedom to move about and through different groups in society, which Dr Ambedkar likened to the idea of fraternity. He envisioned a society where there was social

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contact independent of the caste hierarchy, with individuals free to form associations which would not be negatively impacted by their 'birth' position.

- The Preamble to the Constitution says that the Indian republic aims to promote fraternity, "assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation". So, even though the Preamble is not a legally enforceable document, fraternity has been enshrined as a core Constitutional value.

- Moreover, the Preamble also specifies that the nation will secure not just political and economic justice for its citizens, but also social. This is significant, keeping in mind the context of deep divisions in Indian society. It is clear here that he saw the development of fraternity amongst Indians as the only way to move past not just the caste aggressions, but also communalisation and polarisation, which had already seeped into the fabric of Indian society when the Constitution was written.

- Our Constitution makers aspired for a social revolution along with a political revolution — to build a society with a secure foundation that was constantly evolving, one which was democratic in every sense of the word. This has not translated into a sustained change in many individuals' and communities' lived experiences, with rampant discrimination present at almost every stage of society.

25. India's demographic dividend is for real, but it needs to be discounted heavily"
Comment.

- India entered the **demographic dividend opportunity window in 2005-06** and will remain there till **2055-56.** According to **Economic Survey 2018-19,** India's Demographic Dividend will peak around 2041, when the share of working-age, i.e. **20-59 years, population is expected to hit 59%. which offers great potential for India's economic growth**.

- But a potential does not mean that it will be automatically achieved. It is an opportunity, which can be harnessed if the **right conditions are there or created.** These conditions are **a healthy population, especially women and children, educated young people, especially girls, a skilled workforce, a high-performing economy** that is generating required high-quality jobs, and people in gainful employment.

- It is time for India to **harness the demographic potential of its population** and look toward enabling the environment to achieve real economic growth.

Significance of India's Demographic Dividend

- There is a perception that a larger young population means greater**human capital,** greater economic growth, and better living standards.

- Better economic growth is brought about by increased economic activities due to higher working age population and**lower dependent population.**
- In the last seven decades, the **share of the working age population has grown from 50% to 65%,**resulting in a remarkable decline in the dependency ratio (number of children and elderly persons per working age population).
  - As per the **World Population Prospects 2022,**India will have one of the largest workforces globally.

- In the next 25 years, **one in five working-age group persons will be living in India.**

Challenges Associated with India's Demographic Dividend

- **Low Female Labour Force Participation:**India's labour force is constrained by the absence of women from the workforce. According to the **Periodic Labour Force Survey, 2018-19,** the female labour force participation rates (LFPR) among women aged above 15 years are as **low as 26.4% in rural areas and 20.4% in urban areas in India.**
- **High Dropout Rate:**While over 95% of India's children attend primary school, the **National Family Health Surveys** confirm that **poor infrastructure in government schools, malnutrition, and scarcity of trained teachers** have resulted in **poor learning outcomes and high dropout ratios.**
- **Disparity in Demographic Dividend Window:**Due to the heterogeneity of India''s population, the window of demographic dividend is different in different states. **Kerala''s population is already ageing, while Bihar''s workforce is projected to continue to grow until 2051.**
  - As a result, **11 of the 22 major states will have a smaller working age**population by 2031.
- **Jobless Growth**: In light of **deindustrialization**, **deglobalization, and the industrial revolution 4.0,**there is growing concern that future growth will result in joblessness.
  - The**Economic Survey 2019** highlights the gap between the projected annual increase in working age population and the available number of jobs.

  - The**informal nature of the economy** in India is another hurdle in reaping the benefits of demographic transition in India.

Looking ahead

- **Raising Education Standards:**In both rural and urban settings, the **public school system must ensure that every child completes high school** and goes on to skilling, training, and vocational education.
  - The modernization of school curricula along with the implementation of **Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCS)**and the establishment of open digital universities will further contribute to India's qualified workforce.
- **Meeting Health-Related Requirements:**There is a need to increase funds for health as well as upgrade health facilities based on **modern technologies** and to provide reproductive healthcare rights-based access.
  - There is also a need to recognize that the **health of people is closely connected to the health of animals and our shared environment**,

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therefore India must follow the **One Health Approach**in order to reap its democratic dividends to the fullest extent possible.

- **Investing in Emerging Technologies:**The expansion of research and development and **incentivising Startups** in the field of **Quantum Technology** , **Blockchain**, **Internet of things** can help India to take **advantage of emerging technologies** to its advantage and provide Indian youth with the experience and skills to become global role models.

- **Federal Approach for Demographic Governance:**For policy coordination between states on emerging population issues such as **migration, ageing and urbanisation,** a new **federal approach to governance reforms** for the demographic dividend is required.
  - A key element of this governance arrangement should be inter-ministerial coordination for**strategic planning, investment, monitoring, and course correction.**

- **Gender Budgeting:**There is a need to **rectify gender inequities and ensure women have access to equal socio-economic status as men. Gender responsive budgets and policies** can contribute to achieving the objectives of **gender equality, human development and economic efficiency.**

26. Police reforms has been on the agenda of Governments almost since independence but even after more than 70 years, there is a cry for police reforms. . Examine the need of Police Reforms in India to effectively deal with the new forms of crime and criminals, uphold human rights and safeguard the legitimate interests of one and all.

In India, **state police forces are responsible for maintaining law and order** and investigating crimes, **central forces assist them with intelligence and internal security** challenges (e.g., **insurgencies**). Expenditure on police accounts for about **3% of the central and state government budgets.**

The legal and institutional framework governing police matters in India was inherited from the British. **The current legal framework, comprising the Police Act 1861 and other state specific laws, is deficient in establishing an accountable police** force. While multiple reform proposals have been recognised by the **Government of India** and the **Supreme Court,** such reform has not been achieved or implemented to the desired extent. Therefore, India needs to revise the **legal and institutional framework** to move towards **smart policing.**

Police in Indian Democracy

- The **primary role of police forces is to uphold and enforce laws, investigate crimes and ensure security**for people in the country.
  - In a large and populous country like India, **police forces need to be well-equipped, in terms of personnel, weaponry, forensic, communication**and transport support, to perform their role well.
- Further, they need to have the operational freedom to carry out their responsibilities **professionally, and satisfactory working conditions**(e.g., regulated working hours and promotion opportunities), while being **held accountable for poor performance or misuse of power.**

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- ○ **Police reforms**are also necessary periodically, since crimes and insurgencies are changing and becoming more sophisticated.

Challenges Related to Policing in India

- ● **Low Police-Population Ratio: State police forces had 24% vacancies**(about 5.5 lakh vacancies) in January 2016. Hence, while the sanctioned police strength was **181 police per lakh persons in 2016, the actual strength was 137 police.** Note that the **United Nations recommended 222 policemen per lakh population.**
    - ○ **As a result of understaffing, policemen are overburdened with work**, which not only **reduces their effectiveness and efficiency**(resulting in poor investigations), but also leads to **psychological distress** and leads to **pendencies of cases.**
- ● **Political Superimposition:**According to police laws, both the **Central and State police forces are under the control of political executives.** Police priorities are frequently changed by political leaders according to the political mood of the state.
    - ○ The**Second Administrative Reforms Commission** noted in 2007 that **politicians unduly influenced police personnel for personal or political reasons.**
- ● **Colonial Legacy:**To streamline the country''s police administration after the revolt of 1857, the British enacted the **Police Act of 1861.** This **act does not correspond with the democratic aspirations of the population** after 75 years of Republic India.
- ● **Public Perception:**The **Second ARC** has noted that **police-public relations are unsatisfactory in India** because people view the police as **corrupt, inefficient, and unresponsive**, and often hesitate to contact them.
- ● **Infrastructural Deficit:**Today''s police forces require strong communication support, modern weapons, and high mobility. **CAG audits for 2015-16 have found shortages in weapons among state police forces.**
    - ○ Also, the **Bureau of Police Research and Development**has also noted a **5% deficiency in stock of required vehicles** with the state forces.
- ● **Changing Technology, Challenging Policing:**In the next decade, **digitalization**, **hyperconnectivity, and exponential growth of data** are expected to accelerate.

    - ○ There is a threat to effective policing from the convergence of different domains like **bioweapons and cyberattacks.**

Looking ahead

- ● **Making the Police a SMART Force:**There is a need for making Indian police **Strict and Sensitive, Modern and Mobile, Alert and Accountable, Reliable and Responsive, Tech Savvy and Trained.**
    - ○ Various studies indicate that when **police officers treat citizens with dignity, allow them an equal voice in interactions**and are guided by considerations of transparency and accountability, it **strengthens people's compliance with laws,** ameliorating conditions for commission of crimes.

- **Promoting Community Policing:**Increasing **community policing** makes sense because it **involves police and community members working together to solve crime and crime-related issues** and also improves people-police relations.
- **Setting up Police Complaints Authority:**According to the Supreme Court, an **independent complaints authority is needed to investigate complaints** of police misconduct.
    - In accordance with the**Model Police Act, 2006,** each state must establish an authority **made up of retired High Court judges, civil society members, retired police officers, and public administrators** from another state.
- **Strengthening Cyber-Policing to Combat Cyber-crime:**As crime becomes more sophisticated, complex, and transnational, new digital investigative and data management capabilities along with innovative AI-enhanced tools are critical.
    - For example, **criminal statistics**will have to be updated to adequately capture cybercrime across the country.
- **Transparency in Appointments:**Police reforms are crucial to **hold the structure of the criminal justice system together.** The 1861 Act must be amended, in accordance with the **Supreme Court's directives.**
    - Since the **appointment of the director general of police,**e The chief of the police in a state is**pivotal to the police's administration,** there is a need to devise a **transparent and merit based procedure** for such appointments.

- **Addressing Women Under-Representation:**Parliamentary Standing **Committee** advised states and Union Territories to **create a road map for ensuring 33% representation of women** in police. It also **recommended at least one all-women police station in each district.**

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SUPREME COURT DIRECTIVES ON POLICE REFORM IN

PRAKASH SINGH & OTHERS VS. UNION OF INDIA AND OTHERS 2006 (8) SCC 1

WHAT ARE THE SEVEN DIRECTIVES ?

STATE SECURITY COMMISSIONS: Every State should have a State Security Commission to lay down the broad policy guideline for policing in the State and ensure that the State police is not under unwarranted influence or pressure by the State Government.

TENURE AND SELECTION OF THE DGP: The Director General of Police (DGP) of the State shall be selected by the State Government from amongst the three senior-most officers shortlisted by the Union Public Service Commission based on objective criteria. Once selected for the job, the DGP should have a minimum tenure of at least two years and not be arbitrarily

MINIMUM TENURE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE (IGP) AND OTHER OFFICER: Police officers in leading field positions - the IG Police in charge of a Zone, DIG Police in-charge of a Range, SP in-charge of a district and SHO in-charge of a Police Station - shall have a fixed minimum tenure of two years and not be arbitrarily removed.

SEPARATION OF INVESTIGATION AND LAW AND ORDER FUNCTIONS: The work of 1) crime investigation, and 2) attending to law and order, will be separated at the police station level, with dedicated staff for each, to ensure speedier investigation and deeper expertise.

POLICE ESTABLISHMENT BOARD: A Police Establishment Board, made up of the DG Police and four other senior police officers, will oversee police service related matters in every state, with the powers to recommend transfers, postings, and promotions for officers of the rank of SP and above, and decide for officers of and below the rank of DySP.

POLICE COMPLAINTS AUTHORITY: There shall be an independent complaints body called the Police Complaints Authority at the state level headed by a retired Judge of the High Court/Supreme Court, and in every district headed by a retired District Judge. The Authority can inquire into complaints by the public of serious misconduct by the police involving death, grievous hurt or rape in police custody.

NATIONAL SECURITY COMMISSION: The Central Government shall set up a National Security Commission at the Union level, headed by the Union Home Minister to prepare a panel for being placed before the appropriate Appointing Authority, for selection and placement of Chiefs of the Central Police Organisations (CPO).

27. How have Indian states fared in banning alcohol? Do you consider banning liquor would stop the drinking?. Examine the constitutionality and rationality of alcohol ban.
- In India, **attempts at prohibition have been influenced by the thinking of Mahatma Gandhi**, who viewed alcohol consumption more as a disease than a vice.
- Following India's independence, **Gandhians continued to push for a liquor ban.**
  - These efforts led to the inclusion of **Article 47 in the Constitution.**
- Several Indian states have enacted bans on alcoholic beverages.
  - For example, **Haryana made several attempts at prohibition but was forced to abandon the policy** due to the inability to control illicit distillation and bootlegging, which also resulted in many deaths.

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- **Prohibition has been in effect in Gujarat since 1stMay 1960,** but the liquor trade persists through the black market.
- Bihar's prohibition, imposed in April 2016, which initially appeared to succeed and yield certain social gains.
  - However, following several deaths from consuming illicit liquor, the policy is increasingly coming under attack.

- Currently, there are**five states (Bihar, Gujarat, Lakshadweep, Nagaland, and Mizoram) with total prohibition** and some more with partial prohibition.

Constitutionality

- **Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP)(Article 47):**
  - It mentions that "in particular, the State shall endeavour to bring about prohibition of the consumption except for medicinal purposes of intoxicating drinks and of drugs which are injurious to health."
  - **While DPSPs are not in themselves legally enforceable**, they set goals that the state should aspire towards to establish conditions under which citizens can lead a good life.
  - Thus, **alcohol is seen by the Constitution and by extension**, the Indian state, as an undesirable evil that needs to be regulated.
- **Seventh Schedule:**
  - According to the **Seventh Schedule of the Constitution**, alcohol is a state subject, i.e., state legislatures have the right and responsibility to draft laws regarding it, including "the production, manufacture, possession, transport, purchase and sale of intoxicating liquors."

  - Thus, laws regarding alcohol differ from state to state, falling in the whole spectrum between prohibition and private sale.

Not all States have Banned Alcohol

- While the Constitution sets prohibition on alcohol as a goal, for most states, it is very difficult to declare a ban on alcohol.
- This is primarily because**liquor revenues are not easy to ignore and have consistently contributed a large share of state governments' revenue.**

  - For instance, in Maharashtra, state liquor revenues amounted to Rs 11,000 crore in April 2020 (during the nationwide Covid lockdown), compared with Rs 17,000 crore in March.

Pros and Cons of Prohibition

- **Pros:**
  - Various studies have provided **evidence linking alcohol with domestic abuse or domestic violence.**
    - Case of Bihar: Crimes against women have **clearly declined both in terms of rate**(per 100,000 female population) and incidence (absolute numbers).
  - **Cons:**
    - **Strengthen Organised Crime Groups:**

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- Prohibitio**n creates opportunities for a thriving underground economy**that distributes liquor, outside the regulatory framework of the state.
    - This **creates its own problems, from strengthening organised crime groups (or mafias)**to the distribution of spurious liquor.
    - In the case of Bihar, it was reported that a year after prohibition was enforced, **there was a spike in substance abuse.**
    - While the government made liquor more inaccessible, it is impossible to take it out of circulation completely.
  - **Affects Poorer Sections of Society:**
    - Prohibition**disproportionately affects poorer sections of society with upper classes still being able to procure expensive** (and safe) alcohol.
      - In Bihar, most of the cases registered under its prohibition laws are related to **illicit or low-quality liquor consumption.**
  - **Burden on Judiciary:**
    - Bihar introduced complete prohibition in April 2016. While it certainly has led to reduction in alcohol consumption, the related social, economic, and administrative costs have been far too much to justify gains. Prohibition crippled the judicial administration.

      - The former NV CJI Ramana had stated that decisions like the liquor ban in Bihar put a huge burden on courts. As of 2021, there are three lakh cases pending in the courts related to liquor ban.

Looking ahead

- **A Nuanced Approach is Needed:**
  - There is a **need for a nuanced approach that integrates the regulation of alcohol production and sale**without compromising the requirements of public health.
  - The goal of an **effective and sustainable alcohol policy can only be achieved through coordinated action between multiple stakeholders,**such as women's groups and vendors.
- **Regulating Liquor:**
  - On the regulation side,**the rules on drunken driving and liquor advertisements can be tightened,** and compulsory labelling on the dangers of excessive drinking can be mandated.

    - On the advisory side, developed nations have adopted behavioural counselling, educating their people on the consequences of

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excessive liquor intake. Such campaigns help people make educated choices about their lifestyles.

28. Constitutional silences were meant to allow Governors to act in accordance with constitutional morality to further democracy. Discuss w.r.t. the Office of the Governor of a state in Indian Polity.

- Constitutional morality requires filling in constitutional silences to enhance and complete the spirit of the Constitution. A Constitution can establish a structure of government, but how these structures work rests upon the fulcrum of constitutional values. Constitutional morality purports to stop the past from tearing the soul of the nation apart by acting as a guiding basis to settle constitutional disputes:

"Of necessity, constitutions are unfinished. What is explicit in the text rests on implicit understandings; what is stated rests on what is unstated."

- Constitutional morality provides a principled understanding for unfolding the work of governance. It is a compass to hold in troubled waters. It specifies norms for institutions to survive and an expectation of behaviour that will meet not just the text but the soul of the Constitution. Our expectations may be well ahead of reality. But a sense of constitutional morality, drawn from the values of that document, enables us to hold to account our institutions and those who preside over their destinies. Constitutional interpretation, therefore, must flow from constitutional morality.

Issue related to Article 164(1)

- Under the Constitutional scheme, the Governor appoints the Chief Minister who, in turn, advises the Governor to appoint the Council of Ministers. According to Article 164(1) of the Constitution, the Chief Minister shall be appointed by the Governor and the other Ministers shall be appointed by the Governor on the advice of the Chief Minister, and the Ministers shall hold office during the pleasure of the Governor. However, the problem arises from the fact that the Constitution does not provide any guidelines as to how the Governor should function in case no party or alliance wins a clear majority during the election. There, therefore, exists constitutional silence. Further, there exist no guidelines from other sources to resolve the issue in case of a fractured mandate.

Issue related to Article 200
No Time Limit

- **Article 200** does not provide any time limit for governor for granting the assent or withholding his assent or reserving it for the assent of the President.
Purshothaman v. State of Kerala (1962)

○ Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court clarified that the Constitution **does not impose any time limit** within which the Governor should provide assent to Bills.

■ However, Governor must honour the **will of the Legislature** and that the President or a Governor can act only in harmony with their Council of Ministers.

Hoechst Pharmaceuticals v. State of Bihar (1983)

○ Supreme Court said that the Governor's power to reserve for the consideration of the President **cannot be questioned in court**.

Provisions of Article 201 of Constitution

● Where a Bill is **reserved by a Governor** for the consideration of the President, the President shall declare either that he **assents** to the Bill or that he **withholds** assent therefrom.
● President is also empowered to direct the Governor **to return the Bill to the House** when the bill is **not money bill**.
  ○ House or Houses shall reconsider it accordingly within a period of **six months** from the date.
  ○ If it is again passed by the House **with or without amendment**, it shall be presented again to the President for his consideration.

Issues in Article 201

● It does not provide any time limit for president to give, withhold or return the bill.
● President is **not acting swiftly** to grant assent to the Bills reserved by the Governor for the consideration of the President cannot be missed.
  ○ **Example:** National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET)-exemption Bill passed by the Tamil Nadu Assembly.

Constitutional silences

● Modern jurisprudence on constitutional interpretation posits that constitutions are characterised by silences and abeyances as an inherent part. Constitutional silences posit that silences are indispensable, deliberate and implicit – these are incorporated though not mentioned in the text per se.   Historically, most of the modern constitutions were framed in the backdrop of revolutions and upheavals. Settling chaos and establishing an orderly society was the primary aim of the framers of the constitutions, rather than discussing contentious issues which could lead to a complete breakdown of society and polity. Thus, these constitutions are the result of trade-offs and it is clear that silences were also imposed upon the constitutions by the context in which they were framed.

● The Indian Constitution is no different in this respect. It was framed in the backdrop of Partition and consequently, the framers of the Constitution were very much concerned with the unity and integrity of the nation.

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Governor's post

- In this context, the framers of the Constitution felt that there was a dearth of competent legislators in the states and a certain amount of centralisation of power was necessary for nascent India. Therefore, silence as to the procedure to be by the Governor for the formation of the government was deliberate. It was expected by the members of the Constituent Assembly that Governors would act in a manner befitting their office and would be guided by constitutional morality. It was a move to protect Indian states from secessionist tendencies.
- The concept of constitutional morality has been further elaborated by the Supreme Court in its various judgements, in which the court has, most importantly, held that the value enshrined in the text when a holistic approach is adopted to the same is the essence of constitutional morality. In fact, constitutional morality is that fulcrum which acts as an essential check upon the functionaries as experience has shown that unbridled power, without any checks and balances, would result in a despotic situation, which is antithetical to the very idea of democracy.

- However, the concern of Babasaheb Ambedkar seems to be taking the shape of reality: "Constitutional morality is not a natural sentiment. It has to be cultivated. We must realize that our people are yet to learn it. Democracy in India is only a top-dressing on an Indian soil, which is essentially undemocratic."

Looking ahead

- Given that Governors have belied the hope of the framers of the Constitution that they would be guided by constitutional morality and would act in the interest of democracy, it is high time that the problem is resolved, because problems due to the office of the Governor are both continuing and real. One may argue that the problem is a case-to-case issue and the courts are adequately suited to deal with the issues. However, the mockery of democracy that is made every time cannot be resolved by the courts and the case-to-case basis approach cannot be the way out. Either a detailed guideline as to the procedure that the Governor should follow should be enacted or the power should be entrusted to the Chief Justice of India or Chief Justice of the concerned High Court.

29. What are western disturbances? How do they originate?. How do they influence climate in India?. (150 words)

Western Disturbances are low-pressure systems (temperate cyclones) embedded in the Westerlies, the planetary winds that flow from west to east between 30o - 60o latitude. These generally originate in the Mediterranean region and travel over Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan to enter India loaded with moisture. The frequency of these systems reaching India increases during winter with the southward shift of pressure belts (with the apparent movement of sun towards the tropic of cancer).

- **Origin:** During winters, a high-pressure system develops in the regions around Ukraine which causes the cold air from polar regions to collide with the relatively warm and moist air at lower/temperate latitudes.
    - The warm air mass is usually a part of the westerlies and carries a lot of moisture. When the two air masses at different temperatures meet, a front is formed.
- **Eastward movement towards India:** The formation of a front leads to cloud formation and heavy rainfall in areas coming under the influence of the frontal activity. This leads to formation of temperate cyclones in the upper atmosphere.
    - At such heights, these cyclones come into contact with the subtropical westerly jet stream which carries them eastwards.
- In the course of its travel, the cyclone gathers moisture from the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf. It enters India mainly through the states of J&K, Punjab, Haryana, and Rajasthan.
    - **Impact of Western Disturbance (WD):**
        - **Indian Climate:**
            - A Western Disturbance is associated with rainfall, snowfall and fog in northern India. It arrives with rain and snow in Pakistan and northern India.
- The moisture which WDs carry with them comes from the Mediterranean Sea and/or from the Atlantic Ocean.
- WD brings winter and pre-monsoon rain and is important for the development of the Rabi crop in the Northern subcontinent.
- The WDs are not always the harbingers of good weather. Sometimes WDs can cause extreme weather events like floods, flash floods, landslides, dust storms, hailstorms and cold waves killing people, destroying infrastructure and impacting livelihoods.
- During the summer months of April and May, they move across North India and at times help in the activation of monsoon in certain parts of northwest India.
- During the monsoon season, western disturbances may occasionally cause dense clouding and heavy precipitation.
- Weak western disturbances are associated with crop failure and water problems across north India.
- Strong western disturbances can help residents, farmers and governments avoid many of the problems associated with water scarcity.
    - **Agriculture:**
        - An average of 4-5 western disturbances form during the winter season and the rainfall distribution varies in every western disturbance.
- Precipitation during the winter season has great importance in agriculture particularly for **rabi crops** including wheat, which is one of the most important Indian crops.
- The rainfall brought about by western disturbances have a direct impact on economies of wheat producing states like Haryana and Punjab.
- Weak western disturbances are even associated with crop failure and water problems across north India.
- Strong western disturbances can help residents, farmers and governments avoid many of the problems associated with water scarcity.
    - **Potential risk of Disaster:**

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- ■ Unseasonable rainfall and hail brought about by western disturbances damages the crops in the North Indian states like Haryana, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.
- ● These storms also bring about lightning in areas affected by it. Recently, in Rajasthan, a number of casualties have been caused by lightning brought about by western disturbances.
- ● Natural disasters like cloudburst in Leh (2010), the Kashmir floods in 2014 and even 2013 floods in Uttarakhand were caused by the Western Disturbances.

- ● These calamities killed thousands of people and caused a lot of destruction in towns and cities situated on the bank of flooded rivers.

Western Disturbances is a complex weather phenomenon and has profound impact on climate and agriculture of India. It is also a source of a number of natural disasters that occur every year in India causing huge loss of lives and property.

Thus, western disturbances need to be studied in much more detail. Like tropical cyclones or monsoon, there needs to be an end-to-end tracking of western disturbances to make it less hazardous.

30. Discuss "Stubble burning as a problem for the environment, agriculture and humans". Suggest few alternatives to Stubble Burning.

- ● Stubble burning is a process of setting on fire the **straw stubble**, left after the harvesting of grains, like**paddy, wheat,**
- ● In India, stubble (parali) burning is practised to **remove paddy crop residues**from fields to sow wheat, which occurs **around the end of September** and beginning of

  - ○ The practice is prevalent especially in **Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh in October and November.**

Effects of Stubble Burning

- ● **Damage to the Environment:**Burning stubble emits toxic gases such as **Carbon Monoxide (CO), Methane (CH4), Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAH), and Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC).**
  - ○ A thick blanket of smog is formed from these pollutants dispersing into the surrounding area,**ultimately affecting air quality and health.** This is one of the **primary causes of Delhi"s air pollution.**
- ● **Impact on Soil Properties:**Heat from burning residues **elevates soil temperature** causing death of beneficial soil organisms.
  - ○ **Frequent residue burning leads to complete loss of microbial population**and reduces levels of **Nitrogen and Carbon** in the soil, which is important for crop root development.

- **Impacts on Human Health:**There have been several health effects caused by the resultant air pollution, **ranging from skin irritation to severe neurological, cardiovascular, and respiratory problems.**
    - Research shows that pollution exposure also has an adverse effect on mortality rates - the**life expectancy of Delhi residents has decreased by about 6.4 years as a result of high pollution levels.**
- **Insufficient Stubble Management Infrastructure**: Farmers burned almost 15.4 million metric tons (out of 19.7 MMT) in open fields due to the lack of stubble management infrastructure **(Punjab government 2017).**
    - Also, it is preferred by farmers because it is **cheaper and faster,**helping them to **clear the land in time for the next cropping season.**

- **Negative Effects of Subsidies for Agriculture: Subsidies for electricity and fertilisers**, along with easier**access to credit in agriculture,** have led to substantial increases in **crop yields and agricultural productivity** in subsequent decades, which has in turn **exacerbated stubble burning.**

Alternatives to Stubble Burning

- **Bio Enzyme-PUSA**: A **bio-enzyme called PUSA**has been developed by the **Indian Agriculture Research Institute** as a solution to stubble burning.
    - As soon as it is sprayed, this enzyme starts decomposing the stubble in 20-25 days, turning it into manure, which further improves the soil.
        - It also Increases organic carbon and soil health while reducing fertiliser expenses for the **next cropping cycle.**
    - **Palletisation:**Paddy straw can be dried and converted into **pellets can be mixed along with coal** which can be used in thermal power plants and industries as fuel. This can **save coal as well as reduce carbon emissions.**
    - **Happy Seeder:**Instead of burning the stubble, a tractor-mounted machine called the **Happy Seeder can be used that "cuts and lifts rice straw**, sows wheat into the bare soil, and deposits the straw over the sown area as mulch.
    - **Chhattisgarh Innovative Model:**It is an innovative experiment that has been undertaken by the Chhattisgarh government which involves the setting up of
        - Gauthans are **five-acre plots owned by each village where unused stubble or parali is collected**through parali daan (people"s donations) and turned into **organic fertiliser by mixing cow dung with natural enzymes.**

    - **Additional Alternative Uses:**Stubbles can be used in various ways; cattle feed, compost manure, roofing in rural areas, for packing materials, for preparation of papers and for preparation of **bioethanol as well.**

Looking ahead

- **Revitalising Stubble Management:**Similar schemes like the **MGNREGA should be replicated for harvesting and composting stubble burning,** as well as regulating post-harvest management at the ground level.
    - **Incentives can also be offered to farmers**who reuse and recycle their stubble.
- **New and Improved seed varieties:**Recent studies has pointed out that the use of new and improved varieties of rice and wheat crop particularly short duration crop varieties like **Pusa Basmati-1509 and PR-126**, could be seen as a measure to **overcome the problem of stubble burning** as they mature quickly and also improve the quality of the soil.

- **Farmer Awareness:**Behavioural change is also needed to achieve this goal. Farmers need to be **educated and informed about how stubble burning poses a threat to human life** as well as the fertility of the soil and should be encouraged to adopt **eco-friendly technologies.**

31. Examine the need for "Uniform Civil Code as a unifying force in India".

- The Uniform Civil Code isn't merely a political agenda. It caters to India's unification with a structural change in society to facilitate gender equality. The UCC can be regarded as being against the idea of divisive politics, which has always been the prime agenda of colonial design. It would be correct to assess the UCC as the final chapter in the history of India's freedom struggle, because its implementation could correct the wrong bargains made by the sovereign after the Partition. The UCC is a step towards integrating and strengthening secular ideals of India.
- The UCC will ensure empowerment of women in true sense by ending the practice of polygamy, which is currently permitted under Islamic law and is highly unfair and discriminatory to women.
- Dr B.R. Ambedkar had pioneered the cause of gender equality, which led him to create the UCC in the 1950s. He was always a staunch and ardent supporter of the UCC. Followed by stiff opposition from religious conservatives, he had to retreat and re-strategise the bill. A highly politicised issue, when the Delhi High court asked the Centre to take steps towards bringing a uniform civil code, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) mentioned in its manifesto that the party's goal was to champion the cause of gender equality across religions. But the highly alluring grandeur of gender equality still remains a distant dream for Indian women.

- While the makers of our Constitution brainstormed on how the document could be all-inclusive of values like justice, equality and pluralism, the UCC was on the agenda from the onset. Patriarchy once again manoeuvred the nation's politics under the garb of religious sentiments. The UCC was added to Article 44 of the Directive Principles of State Policy.

A turning point

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- Drawing upon the best traditions and harmonising them with modern times, the UCC is sure to be a turning point in the history of Indian legislation. Owing to India's diversity, it becomes difficult to overlook how the laws of each religion evolve separately and sporadically. A common, uniform, and evolved set of regulations of civil issues plaguing the society will have far-reaching impact. Ambedkar ensured the introduction of the Hindu Code Bill in the 1950s preceding huge reforms in marriage, guardianship, divorce, and inheritance despite protests from different chambers in the legislature. Even the effort of the Supreme Court to bring some parity in the status of Muslim women (Shah Bano case) was blocked by the myopic view of the Rajiv Gandhi government which believed that personal law fell in the domain of religious commune.

- The UCC is moulded and worded in such a way that it promotes fundamental rights of women across all religions, castes and classes of society and gives them an equal right to inheritance, decision in marriage, divorce, adoption, etc. While several attempts have been made to codify the Hindu law with the Hindu Code Bill that was introduced in 1948, the current government's agenda is clear — to unify all personal laws for all religions and castes alike. The central government's stance on the UCC shows it believes that *real progress of a country means progress not only on the political plane, not only on the economic plane, but also on the social plane.*

- There has been a lot of debate in favour and against the UCC. But one of the most important voices to be considered is that of the Supreme Court's, which has amplified its support for the UCC in various judgments, calling it "an unaddressed constitutional expectation" and had "hoped and expected that the State shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a Uniform Civil Code throughout the territories of India".

- The critics of the UCC must think again. Perhaps a perspective of the western world would elucidate the impending need of a set of laws that would be applied on everyone in the same manner, without malice, fear, favour, or discrimination. The concept of civil law can be traced back to the Romans or even the code of Ur-Nammu of Mesopotamia. In Europe, the first country that codified civil laws in a methodical manner was France. Even countries like the UK, China, US, Russia, etc. have codified civil laws. In fact, there are very few countries where common civil laws do not exist, evidence that it facilitates dispensing justice in a fair and neutral manner.

- India's complex diversity makes the execution and applicability of the UCC difficult. However if we are to live in a truly unified and harmonious society, where each person is treated equally, accepting and enforcing a UCC is the need of the hour.