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LEGENDARY IAS MENTOR



CURRENT
AFFAIRS
CLASS NOTES
DECEMBER 2024

TOP 20

TOPICS FOR PRELIMS AND MAINS

POLITY, GOVERNANCE, ENVIRONMENT, ECONOMICS, SUPPLY
CHAIN, AGRICULTURE, SCIENCE AND TECH, SOCIETY, CULTURE

To Learn With Us:



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1. THE ONE NATION, ONE ELECTION

(ONOE) BILL

1. The One Nation, One Election (ONOE) Bill, passed in the Lok Sabha, proposes simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies to streamline India's electoral process. Here are some key points regarding the bill for a PPT presentation:

ONOE Bill 2024 Overview

- The Bill proposes simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies.
- It aims to streamline India's electoral process, reduce expenses, and minimize disruption to governance.
- The initiative includes two bills: the Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Ninth Amendment) Bill, 2024, and a bill to amend the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

Key Features of the Bill

- **Simultaneous Elections:** Aligns Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections, but excludes municipal elections.
- **Mid-Term Elections:** In case of early dissolution, elections will be held for the remaining term. New Lok Sabha or Assembly won't continue the previous body's business.
- **Constitutional Amendments:** Requires a special majority and ratification by at least half the states.
 - This will require amending Articles 83, 85, 172, 174, and 324 to synchronize election cycles and expand the Election Commission's role.

Arguments in Favor of the ONOE Bill

- **Reduced Election Costs:** Holding simultaneous elections is expected to significantly reduce the financial burden on the government and political parties.
- **Enhanced Governance Efficiency:** Frequent elections disrupt governance and policy implementation. Simultaneous elections could provide a stable environment for policy execution.
- **Curbing Populist Measures:** The Model Code of Conduct, enforced during elections, often restricts governments from announcing new schemes or making major policy changes. ONOE could reduce the frequency of such restrictions, allowing for more consistent governance.
- **Increased Voter Turnout:** Holding fewer elections might reduce voter fatigue and potentially increase voter participation.
- **Focus on Development:** With fewer elections, governments can dedicate more time and resources to development initiatives and long-term planning.
- **Level Playing Field for Smaller Parties:** Simultaneous elections can reduce the financial advantage of larger parties, allowing smaller and regional parties to compete more effectively.
- **Resource Optimization:** Decreased need for frequent election-related deployments would free up personnel, particularly security forces and government officials, for their primary responsibilities.

Challenges and Concerns

- **Synchronization Challenges:** Coordinating elections across diverse regions with varying political timelines would be complex.
- **Federalism and Constitutional Concerns:** Aligning state and national elections might require significant constitutional amendments, potentially impacting India's federal structure.

- **Voter Confusion:** Simultaneous elections could lead to voters confusing national and state-level issues, impacting their decision-making.
- **Impact on Regional Parties:** ONOE may benefit national parties and overshadow regional issues, potentially reducing the influence of state-specific concerns.
- **Logistical Complexity:** Organizing simultaneous elections would demand significant resources, including a vast number of voting machines and trained personnel.
- **Financial and Administrative Burden:** Transitioning to ONOE requires substantial initial investments in infrastructure, training, and capacity building for electoral bodies.

Current Status

- The Bill is now set for further scrutiny by a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC).
- JPCs, formed by Parliament, scrutinize specific subjects or bills. Though their recommendations are persuasive, they are not binding on the government.

ELECTION REFORMS AND COMMITTEES

Several committees in India have been formed over the years to study and recommend election reforms to ensure free, fair, and transparent elections

1. Tarkunde Committee (1975)

- Established by: Citizens for Democracy (a non-governmental initiative).
- Focus: Proposals for electoral reforms, including a more representative electoral system.
- Recommendations: Proportional representation, state funding of elections, and a stricter code of conduct for political parties

2. Dinesh Goswami Committee (1990)

- Established by: Government of India.
- Focus: Electoral reforms in the context of increasing criminalization in politics.
- Key Recommendations:
 - Curbing misuse of official machinery.
 - Reducing the influence of money and muscle power in elections.
 - State funding for candidates from recognized political parties.

3. Indrajit Gupta Committee (1998)

- Established by: Government of India.
- Focus: State funding of elections.
- Key Recommendations:
 - Partial state funding of elections to create a level playing field.
 - Funding limited to candidates of recognized political parties.

4. Law Commission Reports

- **170th Report (1999):** Focused on reforms to strengthen the anti-defection law, internal democracy within parties, and the role of the Election Commission.
- **255th Report (2015):** Comprehensive review of electoral laws. Key recommendations included:
 - Regulation of political funding.
 - Stronger mechanisms to curb paid news and bribery.
 - Transparency in the appointment process of the Election Commissioners.

5. National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (NCRWC) (2000-2002)

- Headed by: Justice M.N. Venkatachaliah.
- Focus: Strengthening democratic processes, including electoral reforms.
- Recommendations:
 - Model Code of Conduct to be given statutory backing.
 - Steps to eliminate criminal elements in politics.

6. Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2005-2009)

- Chairperson: Veerappa Moily.
- Focus: Governance reforms, including electoral processes.
- Recommendations:
 - Electoral funding reforms.
 - Effective regulation of political party activities.

7. Justice J.S. Verma Committee (2013)

- Focus: Governance issues in the aftermath of the Delhi gang rape case but also touched upon electoral reforms.
- Recommendations:
 - Decriminalization of politics.
 - Barring candidates with serious criminal charges from contesting elections.

Key Themes Across Recommendations:

- **Decriminalization of Politics:** Ensuring that candidates with criminal charges do not contest elections.
- **Regulation of Political Funding:** Transparency in donations and limiting corporate funding.
- **Electoral Technology:** Adoption of EVMs and VVPATs.
- **Internal Party Democracy:** Promoting intra-party elections and reducing the influence of high-command culture.
- **State Funding of Elections:** Reducing dependence on private and corporate donors.

2. India-Kuwait Elevate Ties to Strategic Partnership

India-Kuwait Relations: UPSC CSE Mains GS2 Perspective

Historical and Cultural Context

- India and Kuwait share deep historical ties, with cultural and trade linkages dating back centuries through maritime routes in the Indian Ocean.
- The Indian diaspora in Kuwait, numbering over 1 million, plays a vital role in fostering bilateral ties and supporting Kuwait's economy, particularly in sectors like healthcare, construction, and services.

Key Highlights of Recent Developments

Prime Minister Modi's Visit (December 2024):

- First visit by an Indian Prime Minister in 43 years, marking a significant diplomatic milestone.
- Elevated the relationship to a strategic partnership, signaling enhanced collaboration in diverse areas.

People-to-People Connections:

- The Indian diaspora contributes significantly to Kuwait's development and remits a substantial portion of earnings back to India, supporting its economy.
- Initiatives to ensure the welfare and rights of Indian workers, especially in labor reforms, were discussed.

Trade and Economic Ties:

- Bilateral trade in 2023-24 reached \$10.47 billion, with India being a significant importer of Kuwaiti crude oil and LPG.
- India invited Kuwait's Sovereign Wealth Fund (Kuwaiti Investment Authority) to invest in key sectors such as:
 - Energy (including renewable energy),
 - Pharmaceuticals,

- Food processing,
- Infrastructure and logistics.
- Negotiations to accelerate the India-GCC Free Trade Agreement (FTA) were also emphasized.

Defense Cooperation:

- A Comprehensive Defense Agreement was signed to enhance:
 - Military training and capacity-building initiatives,
 - Joint military exercises and personnel exchange,
 - Collaboration in defense technology and equipment supply.
- This reflects India's increasing focus on securing its interests in the Gulf region.

Energy Security and Renewable Energy:

- Kuwait remains a key energy supplier to India, fulfilling a significant portion of its crude oil and LPG needs.
- An MoU on solar energy collaboration was signed, underlining a shared commitment to renewable energy transitions and sustainability goals.

Strategic Alignment:

- Both nations share a vision for regional stability in West Asia, aligning their approaches to issues such as counter-terrorism and maritime security.
- Expanded cooperation in IT, FinTech, and pharmaceuticals highlights the diversification of economic engagement.

Implications of Enhanced India-Kuwait Partnership**1. Regional Stability and Security:**

- Strengthened bilateral ties contribute to stability in the Gulf, a region critical for India's energy and economic security.
- Enhanced defense collaboration underpins maritime security in the Arabian Sea and the Gulf, ensuring safe trade routes.

2. Economic Growth and Employment:

- Deepened trade and investment ties create new opportunities for businesses and generate jobs in both nations.

- Kuwaiti investments in Indian infrastructure and green energy sectors can stimulate innovation and sustainable growth.

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3. Energy Security and Transition:

- Continued energy imports from Kuwait ensure steady supplies for India's growing energy needs.
- Collaboration in renewable energy diversifies India's energy mix and supports its climate goals.

4. Strengthened Multilateralism:

- Joint efforts to conclude the India-GCC FTA highlight India's proactive engagement with multilateral institutions.
- Enhanced cooperation bolsters India's diplomatic influence in West Asia and positions it as a key player in Gulf geopolitics.

5. People-Centric Diplomacy:

- Welfare measures for the Indian diaspora, including improved labor rights and protections, reinforce India's commitment to its overseas citizens.
- Cultural exchanges and diaspora-driven goodwill strengthen bilateral soft power.

Conclusion

Prime Minister Modi's historic visit to Kuwait and the elevation of ties to a strategic partnership signify a new era in bilateral relations. By expanding cooperation across trade, energy, defense, and multilateral platforms, India and Kuwait are not only strengthening their bilateral relationship but also contributing to regional stability and global prosperity.

This partnership aligns with India's broader foreign policy objectives, including energy security, economic growth, and a greater role in West Asian geopolitics.

3. ISFR-2023

India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2023:

Analysis for UPSC CSE Prelims and Mains (GS3)

Key Highlights (Prelims Focus)

- **Published by:** Forest Survey of India (FSI) under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change.
- **Publication Frequency:** Biennial.
- **First Report:** Published in 1987.
- **2023 Milestone:** India's green cover surpassed 25% for the first time.
- **Forest and Tree Cover in 2023:**
 - **Forest Cover Gain:** Marginal increase of 156 sq km since 2021.
 - **Tree Cover Gain:** Significant increase of 1,289 sq km since 2021.
- **Separate Measurement:** Since 2001, tree patches smaller than 1 hectare have been measured as tree cover.

Major Findings (Mains Focus)

1. Tree Cover Growth vs. Forest Cover Growth:

- **Tree Cover:** Increased from 2.91% in 2021 to 3.41% in 2023, marking a 0.5 percentage point increase in two years.
- **Forest Cover:** Growth slowed to just 0.05 percentage points since 2021.

2. Dense Forest Loss:

- **Overall Loss:** 24,651 sq km (6.3%) since 2003, with losses accelerating in recent years:
 - **2021-2023:** 3,913 sq km lost.
 - **2013-2023:** 17,500 sq km lost.
 - **2003-2013:** 7,151 sq km lost.

3. Plantation Gains Offsetting Losses:

- **Transformations:** Over 15,530 sq km of non-forested or scantily forested land converted into dense forests through plantations in the last two decades.
- **4. Data Revisions and Paper Gains:**
- **Official Dense Forest Cover Increase:** 21,601 sq km (6%) between 2003-2023.
- **Revisions:** 20,232 sq km of this growth attributed to data corrections in previous ISFR reports.

Concerns and Challenges

1. Ecological Impact of Plantations:

- **Monocultures vs. Natural Forests:** Plantations often consist of monocultures, offering limited biodiversity and lower carbon sequestration compared to natural forests.
- **Short-Term Carbon Benefits:** Premature harvesting undermines plantations' climate mitigation potential.

2. Loss of Natural Forests:

- Continued decline in dense natural forests adversely affects biodiversity, water cycles, and ecosystem services.

3. Data Accuracy and Transparency:

- Over-reliance on revisions and plantation-based gains raises concerns about the reliability of official data.

Way Forward (Mains Analysis)

1. Prioritize Natural Forest Conservation:

- **Natural Regeneration:** Promote regeneration to enhance biodiversity and carbon storage.
- **Protection:** Strengthen measures to prevent degradation and deforestation of dense forests.

2. Implement Sustainable Forest Management (SFM):

- Enhance forest density and ecological health through sustainable practices.

- Involve local communities in participatory forest management initiatives like **Joint Forest Management (JFM)**.

3. Enhance Climate Change Mitigation Efforts:

- Strengthen policies under **India's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)** for long-term forest conservation.
- Increase the lifespan of plantations to maximize their carbon storage potential.

4. Improve Data Accuracy and Monitoring:

- Employ advanced technologies like **LiDAR, satellite imagery**, and AI for precise and transparent forest cover monitoring.

5. Policy Recommendations:

- Strengthen legal frameworks to prevent deforestation.
- Promote afforestation with mixed-species plantations to support biodiversity.
- Address urban forest loss through targeted urban afforestation initiatives.

Conclusion

The ISFR 2023 presents a nuanced picture of India's forest resources. Surpassing the 25% green cover milestone is a significant achievement, but reliance on plantations and the ongoing loss of natural dense forests highlight ecological concerns. A balanced approach focusing on natural forest conservation, sustainable management practices, and accurate data collection is vital for maintaining the ecological integrity and long-term sustainability of India's forest ecosystems.

4. Baltic Sea

Baltic Sea: Strategic and Geopolitical Implications

The deliberate cutting of undersea cables in the Baltic Sea has exacerbated geopolitical tensions, particularly in the context of the Ukraine conflict. These events highlight the region's critical importance in global trade, energy security, and military strategy, making it a focal point of international attention.

Geographical Significance

The Baltic Sea is an extension of the North Atlantic Ocean, located in Northern Europe. It serves as a natural divide between the Scandinavian Peninsula and mainland Europe. This enclosed sea functions as a key maritime corridor for economic and strategic activities.

Countries Bordering the Baltic Sea

The Baltic Sea is bordered by the following nine nations, each with distinct geopolitical stakes in the region:

1. **Denmark**
2. **Germany**
3. **Poland**
4. **Lithuania**
5. **Latvia**
6. **Estonia**
7. **Russia**
8. **Finland**
9. **Sweden**

Strategic Importance

1. Trade and Economic Role:

- The Baltic Sea serves as a major trade route for Northern Europe, supporting the transport of goods, raw materials, and energy resources. Its ports are crucial hubs for both regional and global commerce.

2. Energy and Communications Infrastructure:

- The seabed is home to vital energy infrastructure, including natural gas pipelines and undersea communication cables. Disruptions to these systems pose significant risks to economic stability and energy supply chains.

3. Military and Security Dynamics:

- The region's proximity to NATO member states and Russia has made it a hotspot for military activities. Naval exercises, troop movements, and surveillance operations underscore its strategic military relevance.

Emerging Challenges

- **Vulnerabilities in Critical Infrastructure:** The cutting of undersea cables demonstrates how easily vital systems can be targeted, raising concerns over the security of energy and communication networks.
- **Heightened Regional Tensions:** The Ukraine war has amplified distrust and competition among regional powers, further complicating cooperation in ensuring the Baltic Sea's security.

Conclusion

The Baltic Sea's strategic importance extends far beyond its geographical boundaries. As a critical hub for trade, energy, and military activities, it remains central to the stability of Northern Europe and the broader international order. Addressing the vulnerabilities in its infrastructure and mitigating regional tensions are essential for maintaining security and fostering collaboration in this highly contested region.



5. Salar de Uyuni: The World's Largest Salt Flat

Salar de Uyuni: The World's Largest Salt Flat and Its Strategic Role

Salar de Uyuni, situated in southwest Bolivia near the crest of the Andes, is the world's largest salt flat and a cornerstone of the global energy transition due to its vast lithium reserves. Spanning over 10,582 square kilometers, this geographical marvel is a vital part of the “lithium triangle”—a region encompassing Chile, Argentina, and Bolivia that holds more than 50% of the world's known lithium resources.

Key Features and Strategic Importance

1. **World's Largest Salt Flat:**

- Covering an area of over 10,000 square kilometers, Salar de Uyuni is a natural wonder and a popular tourist destination, attracting visitors with its stunning reflective surface during the wet season.

2. **Lithium Reserves:**

- Containing an estimated 7 million metric tons of lithium, Salar de Uyuni is critical for producing lithium-ion batteries, which power electric vehicles, renewable energy systems, and consumer electronics.
- Bolivia's vast lithium potential positions it as a significant player in the global shift toward renewable energy and electric mobility.

3. **Economic and Geopolitical Significance:**

- Often referred to as “white gold,” lithium's value in the clean energy economy places Bolivia at the center of global discussions on resource sovereignty and sustainable mining practices.
- The reserves at Salar de Uyuni are pivotal in shaping the global supply chain for critical minerals.

4. Location and Accessibility:

- Located at an altitude of approximately 3,656 meters above sea level, the region's unique geography presents both logistical challenges and opportunities for infrastructure development.

Implications for Bolivia and the Global Energy Sector**• Economic Development for Bolivia:**

- Utilizing lithium reserves can significantly bolster Bolivia's economy. However, this must be balanced with sustainable extraction practices to protect the environment and local communities.

• Global Energy Transition:

- As demand for lithium surges with the adoption of renewable energy technologies, Salar de Uyuni is poised to play a critical role in meeting global energy needs and facilitating a low-carbon future.

• Sustainable Mining Practices:

- Ensuring responsible extraction methods that minimize environmental impact and respect local populations is essential for long-term resource management and equitable benefits.

Conclusion

Salar de Uyuni stands at the nexus of natural beauty and strategic resource significance. Its immense lithium reserves are indispensable for the global energy transition, but they also present challenges in achieving sustainable and inclusive development. For Bolivia, the salt flat represents both an economic opportunity and a responsibility to ensure that its resources contribute to a cleaner, more sustainable future while preserving its unique ecological and cultural heritage.

6. Migration Trends in India

Migration Trends in India: Insights and Analysis

Migration in India reflects the dynamic socio-economic landscape of the country. A recent working paper by the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM), titled "400 Million Dreams!", provides insights into the evolving migration patterns. This analysis is complemented by earlier studies such as the Economic Survey 2016-17, which highlighted similar trends. The data sheds light on interstate, intrastate, and urban migration, offering a nuanced understanding of demographic shifts and economic transformations.

Key Migration Trends

Top Migrant Destinations:

- Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh remain prominent destinations for migrants.
- West Bengal and Rajasthan have emerged as new destinations, replacing Andhra Pradesh and Bihar.
- States with the highest growth in incoming migrants include West Bengal, Rajasthan, and Karnataka.

Decline in Overall Migration:

- An 11.78% decline in migration has been observed since the 2011 Census.
- Improved economic opportunities in smaller cities and semi-urban areas have reduced the need for long-distance migration.

Major Migration Routes (2023):

- Interstate:
 - Uttar Pradesh to Delhi
 - Gujarat to Maharashtra
 - Telangana to Andhra Pradesh
 - Bihar to Delhi
 - Bihar to West Bengal
- Intrastate: The Murshidabad-Kolkata route is the most frequently traveled path.

Destination Districts for Migrants:

- **Delhi:** Agra, Patna, Kanpur Nagar, Jhansi, Bareilly; new entrants include Dausa (Rajasthan) and Ludhiana (Punjab).
- **Mumbai:** Valsad, Surat, Nashik, Ratnagiri, Varanasi; Sindhudurg has emerged as a notable new contributor.
- **Bengaluru Urban** and **Howrah** are also significant migrant destinations.

Emerging Origin Districts (2023):

- Villupuram (Tamil Nadu)
- Saharsa (Bihar)
- Moradabad (Uttar Pradesh)
- Murshidabad (West Bengal)

Methodology of the EAC-PM Report

The report utilizes alternative datasets due to delays in the decennial Census:

- **Indian Railways' unreserved ticketing data:** Predominantly used by blue-collar workers for affordable travel options in 2nd-class mail express and ordinary trains.
- **Mobile roaming data:** Provides insights into movement patterns based on mobile connectivity.
- **Banking remittance records:** Highlights economic migration patterns through financial transactions.

Limitations:

- Absence of demographic details (e.g., age, gender, reasons for migration).
- Data represents station-to-station travel, not precise origin-to-destination routes.
- Alternative datasets lack the depth and coverage of the decennial Census but offer more timely insights.

Drivers of Migration

1. **Economic Opportunities:**
 - Migration is predominantly driven by employment opportunities in urban centers such as Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad.
 - The construction sector, manufacturing hubs, and the gig economy are major employment generators.

2. Urbanization:

- Rapid urbanization has resulted in increased migration to tier-1 and tier-2 cities.
- Semi-urban centers are emerging as new hubs due to improved infrastructure and economic activity.

3. Education and Healthcare:

- Access to quality education and healthcare in urban areas attracts migrants, especially from underdeveloped regions.

4. Climate-Induced Migration:

- Environmental degradation and climate change have pushed people from regions affected by drought, floods, and other natural disasters.
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Policy Implications and Recommendations**Policy Implications:****• Urban Infrastructure:**

- Increased migration to urban centers necessitates better urban planning, including housing, sanitation, and transportation.

• Regional Disparities:

- Addressing economic imbalances between states can reduce excessive migration to a few select destinations.

• Social Security for Migrants:

- Ensuring portability of social benefits such as ration cards and health schemes under initiatives like the One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC).

Recommendations:**1. Comprehensive Data Collection:**

- Expedite the decennial Census to provide detailed migration data.

2. Skill Development:

- Upskilling programs for migrants to align with urban job markets.

3. Inclusive Growth:

- Promote balanced regional development to reduce migratory pressures on urban centers.

CENTRE SCRAPS NO-DETENTION POLICY **FOR CLASSES 5 AND 8**

Abolition of the No-Detention Policy for Classes 5 and 8: An In-Depth Analysis

Overview of the No-Detention Policy

- **Implementation Status:**

- Adopted by 18 states and Union Territories (e.g., Delhi, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu) since 2019.
 - Pending adoption in Haryana and Puducherry.
 - Continuation of the policy in states like Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, and Maharashtra.
- **Objective:** To enhance academic standards while ensuring equitable learning opportunities and fostering accountability in education.
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Reasons for Abolishing the No-Detention Policy

1. **Concerns About Academic Standards:**

- Critics argued that the policy led to declining academic rigor and reduced student accountability.
- Schools were often perceived primarily as providers of mid-day meals rather than as centers of academic and holistic development.

2. **Expert and State-Level Advocacy:**

- By 2016, the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) reported widespread state-level support for scrapping the policy.
- The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasized improving learning outcomes without compromising educational access.

3. **Balancing Accountability and Equity:**

- The policy aims to instill seriousness in academics while offering remedial measures to support underperforming students.
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Key Features of the Revised Policy

1. Re-Examination Provisions:

- Students failing annual exams in Classes 5 and 8 will receive remedial teaching and a chance to reappear within two months.
- Continued failure after re-examination may lead to detention.

2. Competency-Based Evaluation:

- Focus shifts to comprehensive assessments that evaluate critical thinking, problem-solving, and overall development instead of rote memorization.

3. Support Mechanisms for Students:

- Teachers and school heads are tasked with identifying learning gaps and providing targeted interventions.

4. Student Safeguards:

- No child will be expelled before completing Class 8.
 - Detailed progress records will be maintained for detained students.
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Reactions to the New Policy

• Proponents:

- **Educators:** Welcome the move for reinstating academic rigor and preparing students for higher education.
- **Parents:** Believe the policy will encourage better academic preparedness and outcomes.

• Opponents:

- Fear increased dropout rates, particularly among vulnerable populations, potentially undermining the Right to Education (RTE) Act.
 - Emphasize the need for integrating Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) to ensure a balanced and inclusive approach. CCE's holistic framework for monitoring both scholastic and co-scholastic progress can identify learning deficiencies early and foster personalized interventions.
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Recommendations for Effective Implementation

1. Proactive Measures:

- Early detection of at-risk students through regular assessments.
- Address learning deficiencies systematically throughout the academic year.

2. Oversight and Monitoring:

- Principals and administrators should ensure consistent support and progress tracking for students.

3. Integration with CCE:

- Incorporate continuous assessments to provide actionable feedback, reduce examination pressure, and mitigate the stigma of failure.

Analysis Through the Lens of UPSC CSE Mains

GS1: Society and Social Issues

- **Impact on Marginalized Communities:** Changes in the policy may disproportionately affect disadvantaged groups, exacerbating social inequalities.
- **Social Consequences:** Higher dropout rates could lead to greater social exclusion. For instance, UNESCO studies have shown that retention policies without adequate support systems often marginalize underprivileged students. Historical data from India also suggest a link between stricter academic policies and increased dropouts in resource-poor regions.

GS2: Governance and Policy Implementation

- **Right to Education Act (RTE):** The amendment aligns with NEP 2020's goals of enhancing learning outcomes but must ensure inclusivity and equity.
- **Policy Coordination:** Effective collaboration between states and the central government is critical to ensure uniform and equitable implementation.

GS3: Education and Human Resource Development

- **Improving Learning Outcomes:**
 - Strengthening remedial programs such as bridge courses and summer learning initiatives.
 - Promoting mentorship and counseling to address personal and academic challenges.
 - **Preventing Dropouts:** Partnerships with NGOs and community-level interventions, coupled with financial support like scholarships, can reduce dropout risks.
 - **Transition to Holistic Assessment:** Moving away from rote-based evaluations towards competency-driven assessments prepares students for real-world challenges.
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7. Impeachment of Judges

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS

1. **Articles 124(4) and 218:**

- Govern the impeachment of Supreme Court (SC) and High Court (HC) judges.
- Grounds for removal: "**Proved misbehavior**" or "**incapacity**".

2. **Judges Inquiry Act, 1968:**

- Specifies the process and procedural details for impeachment.

Impeachment Process

1. **Initiation of Motion:**

- Requires support of:
 - **100 Lok Sabha (LS)** members or
 - **50 Rajya Sabha (RS)** members.

2. **Formation of Inquiry Committee:**

- Constituted by the **Speaker (LS)** or **Chairman (RS)**.
- Comprises:
 - **Chief Justice of India (CJI)** or a **SC Judge**.
 - **Chief Justice of a HC**.
 - **Distinguished jurist** chosen by Speaker/Chairman.

3. **Committee Proceedings:**

- Investigates charges.
- Examines evidence, conducts cross-examinations, and reviews medical tests (if mental incapacity is alleged).

4. **Committee Findings:**

- Submits a report to Speaker/Chairman:
 - **Not Guilty:** Proceedings end.
 - **Guilty:** Report placed before the House where the motion was initiated.

5. Parliamentary Approval:

- Requires passage by both Houses of Parliament with:
 - **Majority of total membership.**
 - **Two-thirds of members present and voting.**
- Both criteria must be fulfilled in the **same session of Parliament.**

6. Presidential Order:

- Upon approval by Parliament, the **President** issues an order to remove the judge.

Significance of Impeachment

- **Maintains Judicial Integrity:** Ensures accountability for misconduct.
- **Balances Independence with Accountability:** Prevents misuse of judicial power while upholding the judiciary's independence.

Previous Impeachment Attempts in India**1. Justice V. Ramaswami (1993):**

- Accused of financial impropriety; motion failed due to lack of parliamentary support.

2. Justice Soumitra Sen (2011):

- Found guilty of corruption; RS passed the motion, but he resigned before LS could act.

3. Justice S. K. Gangele (2015):

- Accused of sexual harassment; cleared by the committee.

4. Justice J. B. Pardiwala (2015):

- Motion dropped after controversial remarks on reservation were expunged.

5. Justice C. V. Nagarjuna (2017):

- Accused of misconduct; motion fell short after MPs withdrew support.

6. Chief Justice Dipak Misra (2018):

- Motion rejected at the preliminary stage by RS Chairman.
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Relevance for Prelims

- Constitutional Articles: **124(4), 218.**
- Judges Inquiry Act, 1968: Key provisions.
- Composition of the Inquiry Committee.
- Grounds for removal: **Proved misbehavior** and **incapacity.**

Relevance for GS2 Mains

- **Judiciary:** Role, powers, and accountability.
- **Judicial Independence vs. Accountability:** Analyzing the stringent impeachment process.
- **Judicial Reforms:** Lessons from previous impeachment cases.

8. No-Confidence Motion Against Vice President

Constitutional Provisions

1. **Article 64:**

- Vice President serves as the **ex officio Chairman** of the Rajya Sabha (RS).

2. **Article 67:**

- Governs the **removal of the Vice President**.
- Vice President can be removed by a resolution passed:
 - **Absolute majority** in Rajya Sabha (majority of total members).
 - **Simple majority** in Lok Sabha (majority of members present and voting).
- Requires a **14-day notice** before the resolution is moved.

3. **Article 92:**

- Bars the RS Chairman/Deputy Chairman from:
 - **Presiding** over proceedings during their removal process.
 - **Voting** on the resolution or related matters.
 - However, they are allowed to **participate** in the discussion and present their defence (adhering to the Principle of Natural Justice).
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Removal Process of Vice President

1. **Initiation:**

- A resolution is moved in the **Rajya Sabha** with a 14-day notice.

2. **Discussion and Voting in RS:**

- Requires **absolute majority** (majority of all RS members).

3. **Approval in Lok Sabha:**

- Requires **simple majority** (majority of members present and voting).
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Significance of the 14-Day Notice

- Ensures adequate time for deliberation.
- Prevents arbitrary or hasty decisions.

Differences: Removal of Vice President vs. Impeachment of President

Aspect	Removal of Vice President (Art 67)	Impeachment of President (Art 61)
Grounds for Removal	Violation of the Constitution or other valid reasons.	Only for “violation of the Constitution.”
Initiation Process	Resolution starts in Rajya Sabha.	Can start in either House of Parliament.
Majority Required	Absolute majority in RS, simple majority in LS.	Two-thirds majority in both Houses.
Process	Less rigorous.	Formal impeachment process with stringent conditions.

Relevance for Prelims

1. **Constitutional Articles:** 64, 67, 92.
2. **Notice Requirement:** 14 days.
3. **Majority Needed:**
 - RS: Absolute majority.
 - LS: Simple majority.

Relevance for GS2 Mains

1. **Parliamentary Procedures:** Role of no-confidence and removal resolutions.
2. **Checks and Balances:** Mechanisms to ensure accountability of constitutional authorities.
3. **Natural Justice:** Right to present a defence during removal proceedings.

9. AMRIT GYAN KOSH PORTAL

- **Platform:** The portal is hosted on the **iGOT (Integrated Government Online Training)** platform, developed by the **Capacity Building Commission (CBC)** and **Karmayogi Bharat**.
 - **Capacity Building Commission (CBC):**
 - Established in April 2021 to enhance and standardize civil service capacity-building efforts.
 - Functions as the custodian of civil service reforms in India.
 - **Content:**
 - Acts as a repository of **best practices**, aligning with 15 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
 - Covers key governance areas like health, education, agriculture, and digital services.
 - **Accessibility:**
 - Includes resources in **Hindi and Braille**, ensuring inclusivity and accessibility.
 - **Purpose:**
 - Promotes a **whole-of-government approach** for governance reforms.
 - Addresses India's unique administrative challenges while maintaining alignment with global standards.
 - **Benefits:**
 - Provides curated resources for faculty to align teaching with international best practices.
 - Enhances inclusivity and accessibility in governance training modules.
-

Karmayogi Bharat

- **About:**

- A **Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV)** established under **Mission Karmayogi**.
- Incorporated on **31 January 2022** under **Section 8 of the Companies Act, 2013**.
- Operates as a **100% government-owned, not-for-profit organization**.

- **Purpose:**

- Manages the **iGOT-Karmayogi platform**, facilitating digital training for civil servants.
- Provides **anytime, anywhere, any-device learning** to enhance civil service competencies.

- **Key Functions:**

1. **Platform Management:**

- Operates and enhances the iGOT-Karmayogi platform while managing intellectual property rights (IPR) for its content and software.

2. **Content Development and Validation:**

- Collaborates with authorities to curate, create, and validate platform content.

3. **Assessment and Governance:**

- Provides proctored assessments and analyzes telemetry data to enhance governance outcomes.

4. **Compliance and Oversight:**

- Ensures adherence to government guidelines, quality standards, and grievance redressal mechanisms.

- **International Comparison:** Comparable to the **UK's Civil Service Learning (CSL)** framework, which is an advanced digital training framework for civil servants.
-

Mission Karmayogi

- **Objective:**

- Aims to build a **competent and citizen-centric civil service** aligned with national priorities.
- Enhances ease of living and ease of doing business by improving public service delivery.

- **Vision:**

- Empowers civil servants to perform effectively in challenging situations.
- Strengthens government-citizen interaction through reforms.

- **Key Features:**

1. **Citizen-Centric Approach:**

- Focuses on placing civil servants at the core of public service reforms.
- Includes initiatives like **UMANG**, which unifies access to e-governance services.

2. **Six Pillars:**

- **Policy Framework**
- **Institutional Framework**
- **Competency Framework**
- **Digital Learning Framework (iGOT-Karmayogi)**
- **Electronic HR Management System (eHRMS)**
- **Monitoring and Evaluation Framework**

3. **Coverage:**

- Encompasses all civil servants, including contractual employees, across Union Government departments and ministries.

- **Focus Areas:**

- Develops behavioral, functional, and domain-specific competencies to improve administrative performance.

Relevance for UPSC GS2**1. Governance:**

- Highlights the importance of capacity-building programs for civil servants.
- Demonstrates the role of digital platforms in improving governance efficiency.

2. Inclusion and Accessibility:

- Emphasizes the integration of resources in Hindi and Braille to ensure inclusivity.

3. Government Policies and Interventions:

- Showcases national efforts to align governance training with SDGs.
- Demonstrates the role of SPVs like Karmayogi Bharat in implementing governance reforms.

4. Comparative Analysis:

- Provides international context by comparing with the UK's CSL framework.

5. Public Administration:

- Focuses on competency-based learning and its impact on public administration and service delivery.

6. Ethics in Governance:

- Stresses behavioral competencies to enhance citizen-centric administration.

Key Takeaways for Exam Preparation

- Understand Articles related to governance initiatives and reforms.
- Emphasize the role of digital platforms in modernizing civil services.
- Align governance training with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

10. ANNA CHAKRA PORTAL

Prelims Facts

1. Anna Chakra:

- A **Public Distribution System (PDS) supply chain optimization tool**.
- Developed by:
 - **Department of Food and Public Distribution (DFPD)**.
 - Collaboration with **World Food Programme (WFP)** and **Foundation for Innovation & Technology Transfer (FITT), IIT-Delhi**.
- Coverage:
 - **4.37 lakh Fair Price Shops (FPSs)**.
 - **6700 warehouses** involved in the PDS supply chain.
- Integration:
 - **Freight Operations Information System (FOIS)** via **Unified Logistics Interface Platform (ULIP)**.
 - **PM Gati Shakti platform** to map geolocations of FPSs and warehouses.
- Uses:
 - Advanced algorithms for **route optimization** and **seamless food grain movement** across the supply chain.

2. SCAN Portal (Subsidy Claim Application for NFSA):

- Aims to **modernize the PDS and subsidy claim mechanisms** for states under the **National Food Security Act (NFSA)**.
- Features:
 - **Single window submission** of subsidy claims.
 - Enables **claim scrutiny and approval** by DFPD for faster settlement.
 - Ensures **end-to-end workflow automation** for subsidy release using **rule-based processing**.

3. Benefits:

- **Efficiency and Cost Savings:**
 - Reduction in fuel consumption, time, and logistics costs.
 - Estimated annual savings: **₹250 crore** for 30 states.
 - **Environmental Benefits:**
 - Lower carbon footprint due to reduced transportation-related emissions.
-

GS2 Mains Perspective

Governance:

- **Use of Technology in Governance:**
 - Deployment of advanced algorithms and digital platforms like **Anna Chakra** for optimizing public services.
 - Integration of multiple stakeholders in supply chains for effective implementation.
- **PDS Modernization:**
 - The SCAN Portal and Anna Chakra streamline food subsidy disbursement and enhance efficiency in PDS delivery.

Government Policies and Interventions:

- **Alignment with National Policies:**
 - Strengthening food security under the **National Food Security Act (NFSA)**.
 - Enhancing the effectiveness of **PM Gati Shakti** for logistics optimization.
- **Workflow Automation:**
 - Promotes ease of doing business in subsidy management by leveraging **rule-based processing**.

Environment and Sustainable Development:

- **Environmental Sustainability:**
 - Route optimization reduces fuel consumption and emissions, contributing to climate action goals.

Economic Development:

- **Cost Savings:**
 - ₹250 crore in annual savings can be reallocated to other developmental initiatives.
- **Public Expenditure Management:**
 - Effective management of subsidies minimizes leakage and ensures funds reach intended beneficiaries.

Digital India and Public Service Delivery:

- **Digital Infrastructure:**
 - Anna Chakra and SCAN Portal demonstrate the potential of digital platforms in transforming public service delivery.
- **Data-Driven Decision Making:**
 - Use of geolocations and data analytics for efficient planning and implementation.

Ethics in Governance:

- **Transparency and Accountability:**
 - Single-window subsidy claims and automated workflows enhance trust in governance mechanisms.

Relevance to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

- SDG 2: **Zero Hunger** through improved food distribution.
- SDG 13: **Climate Action** via reduction in transportation-related emissions.
- SDG 16: **Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions** by enhancing transparency in governance.

Key Takeaways for Exam Preparation

- Understand how technology like **Anna Chakra** and **SCAN Portal** improve public service delivery under PDS.
- Focus on the integration of governance mechanisms with environmental sustainability and cost efficiency.
- Link the initiatives to SDGs and national policy objectives.

11. UPI-BASED CREDIT LINES: **TRANSFORMING FINANCIAL** **INCLUSION**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has empowered Small Finance Banks (SFBs) to offer pre-approved credit lines via the Unified Payments Interface (UPI). This initiative marks a pivotal step in enhancing financial inclusion by leveraging digital platforms to provide seamless credit access.

Background

Previously, only Scheduled Commercial Banks were authorized to provide pre-approved credit lines through UPI. By extending this capability to SFBs, the RBI aims to bridge gaps in financial services, especially for underserved and unbanked communities.

Mechanism

This system allows individuals and small businesses to utilize pre-sanctioned credit lines instantly for transactions. The process requires prior customer consent, ensuring accountability and transparency.

Key Benefits

- **Frictionless Credit Access:** Facilitates easy access to credit, including overdrafts and retail loans, helping small businesses manage working capital and individuals address urgent financial needs.
- **Economic Growth:** Enhances credit availability, driving local and national economic development.
- **Financial Inclusion:** Expands services to "new-to-credit" customers, introducing small, short-term credit products tailored to their needs.

Small Finance Banks (SFBs)

Definition and Purpose

SFBs are specialized financial institutions designed to provide essential banking services to underserved populations, including small businesses, micro industries, and marginal farmers.

Core Features

1. **Regulatory Framework:**
 - Operate under RBI supervision.

- Incorporated as public limited companies under the Companies Act, 2013.

2. **Scope of Operations:**

- Offer deposit collection, loan disbursement, payment services, and financial products such as insurance and mutual funds.
- Dedicate 75% of Adjusted Net Bank Credit (ANBC) to priority sectors like agriculture and small enterprises.
- Ensure at least 50% of their loan portfolio comprises amounts below ₹25 lakhs.

3. **Product Range:**

- Provide mutual funds, insurance, and pension products, leveraging affordable technology to enhance outreach.

UPSC Prelims Relevant Facts

- **RBI Directive:** Authorizes SFBs to offer pre-approved credit lines through UPI.
- **ANBC Mandate:** 75% of ANBC allocated to priority sectors; 50% of loans capped at ₹25 lakhs.
- **Organizational Structure:** Registered as public limited companies under the Companies Act, 2013.
- **Role in Inclusion:** Bridges financial gaps in rural and semi-urban areas.
- **Digital Integration:** Leverages UPI to deliver cost-effective, scalable financial solutions.

GS3 Analysis: Opportunities and Challenges

Opportunities

1. Enhanced Financial Inclusion:

- Provides formal credit to unserved and underserved communities.
- Offers microcredit access for first-time borrowers, particularly in rural areas.

2. Economic Development:

- Supports small businesses and entrepreneurs by offering liquidity.
- Strengthens economic resilience through broader credit access.

3. Technological Leverage:

- Digitizes credit processes, reducing reliance on informal lending channels.
- Promotes transparency and efficiency in credit delivery via UPI.

4. Sectoral Growth:

- Contributes to achieving government targets in agriculture and MSME sectors.

Challenges**1. Operational Risks:**

- Potential misuse of pre-sanctioned credit lines due to inadequate monitoring.
- Higher default risks from borrowers lacking established credit histories.

2. Infrastructure Gaps:

- Insufficient technological infrastructure in rural areas.
- Limited digital literacy among target demographics.

3. Regulatory and Cost Pressures:

- Balancing profitability with compliance to ANBC and low-ticket loan mandates.
- High operational costs associated with small-scale lending.

4. Competitive Landscape:

- Facing competition from commercial banks and fintech firms in the digital lending space.

Recommendations**1. Strengthened Monitoring:**

- Develop robust frameworks for credit assessment and monitoring to minimize defaults.

2. Digital Education:

- Implement campaigns to improve digital literacy and awareness of UPI-based credit.

3. Government Support:

- Offer credit guarantees or risk-sharing mechanisms to incentivize SFBs.

4. Infrastructure Investments:

- Enhance technological infrastructure to ensure efficient credit delivery.

Conclusion

The integration of UPI-based credit lines with Small Finance Banks represents a transformative approach to achieving financial inclusion in India. Despite challenges in implementation and risk management, the initiative holds immense potential to stimulate economic growth, empower marginalized populations, and solidify India's progress toward a more inclusive financial ecosystem.

12. NWR, CREDIT GUARANTEE SCHEME FOR E-NWR BASED PLEDGE FINANCING, AND PLEDGE FINANCING

NWR (Negotiable Warehouse Receipts):

- NWRs are documents issued by accredited warehouses that serve as proof of ownership for deposited commodities.
- They facilitate trade and credit by enabling farmers and traders to use commodities as collateral for loans.
- Managed under the Warehousing Development and Regulatory Authority (WDRA), e-NWRs (electronic NWRs) are a digital version, enhancing transparency and reducing fraud.

Credit Guarantee Scheme for e-NWR Based Pledge Financing (CGS-NPF):

- Launched by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food, and Public Distribution to provide post-harvest finance.
- Key features:
 - **Corpus Fund:** ₹1,000 crore to minimize farmers' distress selling.
 - **Loan Access:** Farmers, especially small and marginal ones, can secure loans using e-NWRs as collateral.
 - **Focus Groups:** Benefits small and marginal farmers, women, SC/ST, and PwD farmers with minimal guarantee fees.
 - **Coverage:** 80-85% for loans up to ₹75 lakh for farmers and up to 75% for MSMEs, FPOs, and traders for loans up to ₹200 lakh.
- **Significance:**
 - Reduces credit and warehouseman risk, enhancing bank trust.
 - Expected to boost post-harvest lending to ₹5.5 lakh crore over 10 years **【51:0†source】** .

Pledge Financing:

- A process where borrowers secure loans by pledging commodities stored in warehouses under an e-NWR system.
 - **Mechanism:**
 - e-NWR balances remain under the client's name but are controlled by the financial institution until loan repayment.
 - Default allows the financial institution to claim ownership of pledged commodities.
 - Ensures liquidity for farmers while maintaining commodity security [51:0†source] .
-

UPSC Prelims Relevant Facts:

1. **NWR Legislation:** Governed by WDRA under the Warehousing Act.
 2. **Target Groups:** Small and marginal farmers, SC/ST communities, MSMEs, and FPOs.
 3. **e-NWR Introduction:** A significant step toward digitization and reducing post-harvest losses.
-

GS3 Analysis: Farmers' Welfare, Inflation, Supply Chain Management Opportunities:

1. **Farmers' Welfare:**
 - Offers immediate post-harvest liquidity, reducing reliance on middlemen.
 - Prevents distress selling, ensuring fair prices.
 2. **Supply Chain Management:**
 - Encourages better storage practices, minimizing wastage.
 - Strengthens commodity markets with enhanced trade confidence.
 3. **Inflation Control:**
 - Proper warehousing and reduced wastage can stabilize commodity prices.
 - Efficient supply chain systems mitigate inflationary pressures.
-

Challenges:**1. Access and Awareness:**

- Limited digital literacy among rural farmers may hinder e-NWR adoption.
- Many farmers remain unaware of warehouse and credit schemes.

2. Infrastructure Gaps:

- Insufficient WDRA-accredited warehouses, especially in remote areas.
- High dependence on physical infrastructure in rural regions.

3. Regulatory and Risk Concerns:

- Managing defaults on pledged commodities.
 - Risks of mismanagement or fraud in warehouse operations.
-

Recommendations:**1. Awareness Campaigns:**

- Educate farmers about e-NWR and pledge financing through FPOs and local bodies.

2. Infrastructure Development:

- Invest in expanding WDRA-accredited warehouses in rural regions.

3. Enhanced Monitoring:

- Use technology like blockchain for transparency in e-NWR management.

4. Policy Support:

- Offer subsidies or incentives for warehouses adopting e-NWR systems.
-

This integrated approach will bolster the agricultural economy, enhance financial inclusion for farmers, and strengthen the supply chain.

13. KEN-BETWA LINK PROJECT (KBLP)

1. Overview

- **Launched Under:** National Perspective Plan (NPP) for interlinking of rivers (1980).
- **Project Type:** River interlinking project transferring water from the Ken River (Madhya Pradesh) to the Betwa River (Uttar Pradesh), tributaries of the Yamuna River.
- **Administrative Body:** Ken-Betwa Link Project Authority (KBLPA), a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV).

2. Components

- **Length of Canal:** 221 km, including a 2-km tunnel.
- **Phases:**
 - **Phase I:** Daudhan Dam complex and its subsidiary units.
 - **Phase II:** Lower Orr Dam, Bina Complex Project, and Kotha Barrage.

3. Financial Aspects

- **Total Cost:** ₹44,605 crore.
- **Funding:** ₹39,317 crore by the Centre (₹36,290 crore as grant, ₹3,027 crore as loan).

4. Benefits

- **Irrigation Potential:** 10.62 lakh hectares (8.11 lakh ha in MP and 2.51 lakh ha in UP).
- **Drinking Water Supply:** For 62 lakh people across MP and UP.
- **Energy Generation:** 103 MW of hydroelectric power and 27 MW of solar power.
- **Employment:** Local agricultural employment due to groundwater recharge and irrigation benefits.
- **SDG Goals:** Addresses water scarcity, food security, and renewable energy generation.

5. Environmental and Social Concerns

- **Deforestation:** Loss of 2-3 million trees in the Panna National Park.

- **Submergence:** Around 98 sq km of Panna National Park, including the tiger reserve, leading to ecological disruption.
- **Biodiversity Impact:**
 - Adverse effects on the breeding of **Critically Endangered Gangetic Gharials** in the Ken Gharial Sanctuary.
 - Impact on vulture nesting sites.
- **Displacement:** Over 6,500 families displaced in Panna and Chhatarpur districts due to submergence and land acquisition.
- **Rainfall Impact:** IIT-Bombay study indicates potential rainfall deficits up to 12% in September due to altered land-atmosphere dynamics.

6. Criticism

- **Violation of Wildlife Norms:** Construction approved within the core area of Panna Tiger Reserve, setting a controversial precedent.
- **Protests:** Displacement issues, inadequate compensation, and minimal benefits for affected families in Panna district.

Analysis from GS3 Perspective

1. Significance

- **Agriculture and Water Management:** Enhances irrigation, increases food production, and supports water-scarce regions.
- **Renewable Energy:** Contributes to India's clean energy goals.
- **Development Goals:** Addresses SDGs such as clean water, zero hunger, and affordable clean energy.

2. Challenges

- **Ecological Sustainability:** Large-scale deforestation and impact on biodiversity challenge environmental conservation principles.
- **Social Issues:** Displacement and inadequate rehabilitation spark human rights concerns.
- **Hydrological Impact:** Potential adverse effects on local rainfall patterns and aquatic ecosystems.

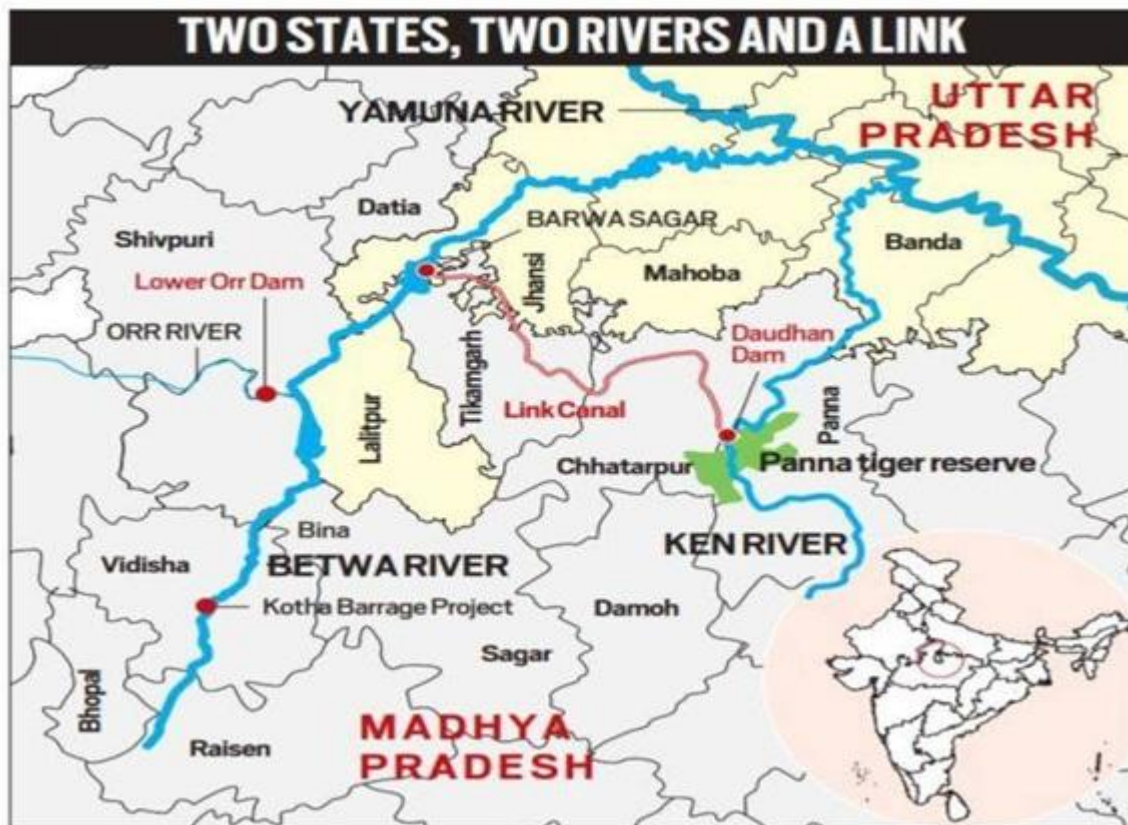
3. Balancing Development and Conservation

- **Policy Implications:** Need for transparent Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and inclusive decision-making.

- **Mitigation Measures:** Strengthening biodiversity offset programs, ensuring fair compensation, and leveraging eco-friendly technology.

Way Forward

- **Sustainable Development:** Incorporate green engineering practices to minimize ecological harm.
- **Community Involvement:** Address local concerns through stakeholder participation and fair compensation.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establish independent bodies to track environmental and social impacts over the project lifecycle.



14. JALVAHAK SCHEME:

- Purpose: To incentivize long-haul cargo movement via inland waterways (NW1, NW2, NW16).
 - Implementation: Jointly by IWAI and ICSL (Shipping Corporation of India subsidiary).
 - Incentive: Up to 35% reimbursement on operating costs for cargo transported over 300 km.
 - Duration: Three years.
 - Target: 800 million tonne-kilometers modal shift by 2027 (approx. 17% of current cargo).
 - Fixed-day sailing routes: Kolkata-Patna-Varanasi (NW1) and Kolkata-Pandu (Guwahati) via IBPR (NW2).
 - Encourages hiring vessels owned/operated by government entities.
- **Inland Waterways:**
 - Total navigable length: 20,236 km (17,980 km rivers, 2,256 km canals).
 - Cargo volume growth: From 18.07 million tonnes (2013-14) to 132.89 million tonnes (2023-24) (over 700% growth).
 - Targets: 200 million tonnes by 2030, 500 million tonnes by 2047.
 - **IWAI:**
 - Established: 1986 under the Inland Waterways Authority of India Act, 1985.
 - Role: Regulation, development, and maintenance of National Waterways.

GS3 Perspective Analysis:

- **Infrastructure:**
 - **Multi-Modal Transport:** The Jalvahak Scheme directly promotes multi-modal transport by shifting cargo from roads and railways to waterways. This is crucial for optimizing logistics and reducing congestion. The fixed-day sailing schedules enhance predictability and reliability, making waterways a more viable option for businesses.

- **Inland Waterway Development:** The scheme incentivizes the use of existing waterways, driving demand and justifying further investment in infrastructure (dredging, terminals, navigation aids). The focus on NW1, NW2, and NW16 highlights strategic prioritization of key waterways.
- **Connectivity and Trade:** The use of the Indo-Bangladesh Protocol Route (IBPR) on NW2 demonstrates the potential for regional connectivity and trade facilitation through waterways.
- **Economy:**
 - **Logistics Cost Reduction:** The 35% operating cost reimbursement directly addresses the issue of high logistics costs, making water transport more competitive. This can boost exports and domestic trade.
 - **Economic Growth and Employment:** Increased utilization of waterways can stimulate economic activity in regions along the rivers, creating employment opportunities in shipping, logistics, and related industries.
 - **Investment and Private Sector Participation:** While the scheme encourages the use of government-owned vessels, its success will also depend on attracting private sector investment in vessel operations and related infrastructure.
- **Environment:**
 - **Sustainable Transportation:** Inland water transport is generally considered more fuel-efficient and less polluting than road transport, contributing to reduced greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution. Shifting cargo to waterways aligns with India's climate change commitments.
- **Challenges and Concerns:**
 - **Infrastructure Gaps:** Despite growth, significant infrastructure gaps remain in terms of navigability, terminal facilities, and connectivity to other modes of transport.
 - **Seasonal Variations:** River water levels can fluctuate significantly, affecting navigability, especially during dry seasons.
 - **Environmental Impacts:** Dredging, increased vessel traffic, and potential spills can have negative impacts on river ecosystems. Careful environmental management is crucial.

- **Coordination and Implementation:** Effective coordination between IWAI, ICSL, other government agencies, and private sector stakeholders is essential for successful implementation.
- **Limited Coverage:** The scheme currently focuses on three national waterways. Expanding its scope to other waterways will be important for maximizing its impact.

Connecting to other Government Initiatives:

- **Sagarmala:** The Jalvahak Scheme complements Sagarmala by focusing on inland waterways, which act as feeders to ports.
- **PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan:** The scheme aligns with the Gati Shakti plan's objective of integrated infrastructure development and multi-modal connectivity.

By understanding these facts and their implications from a GS3 perspective, aspirants can effectively address questions related to inland waterways, logistics, and sustainable development in the UPSC exam.

15. China to Build World's Largest Hydropower Dam in Tibet

China is set to construct the world's largest hydropower dam on the Yarlung Tsangpo River (Brahmaputra) in Tibet. This region holds significant geopolitical importance due to its proximity to India and the potential downstream effects on neighboring countries.

The dam aims to generate 300 billion kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity annually—a figure that triples the capacity of the Three Gorges Dam. While the Three Gorges Dam faced criticism for environmental destruction and mass displacement, the Brahmaputra dam is expected to bring similar concerns regarding biodiversity and downstream water security.

Project Overview

Located in Medog County, Tibet, the project capitalizes on a 2,000-meter drop in the river, creating ideal hydropower conditions. It is a cornerstone of China's 14th Five-Year Plan (2021–2025) and aligns with the nation's goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2060.

- **Cost and Development:** With an estimated cost of \$137 billion, the project aims to stimulate economic growth in Tibet.
- **Capacity:** The dam is projected to generate 60 gigawatts of power, far surpassing the output of the Three Gorges Dam.

Implications

- **Clean Energy Contributions:** Producing 300 billion kWh annually, the dam will significantly bolster China's renewable energy capacity and reduce reliance on fossil fuels.
- **Economic Impact:** The project is expected to generate 20 billion yuan (\$3 billion) annually, providing a major boost to Tibet's regional economy.
- **Geopolitical Concerns:** The dam's impact on water availability for downstream countries, particularly India and Bangladesh, raises critical international issues regarding resource sharing and water security.

GS2: International Relations:

- **Transboundary Water Disputes:** The dam project exemplifies the complex challenges of managing transboundary water resources. It highlights the potential for conflict between upstream and downstream riparian states due to competing development needs and concerns over water security. This is a classic case study for understanding international water law, treaties, and cooperation mechanisms.
- **Trust Deficit and Hydropolitics:** China's lack of transparency regarding the dam's design, operation, and environmental impact assessment exacerbates the trust deficit with India. The withholding of hydrological data during the Doklam standoff underscores the potential for "water weaponization" as a tool of coercive diplomacy. This raises concerns about regional stability and the need for robust confidence-building measures.
- **India-China Relations:** The dam issue adds another layer of complexity to the already strained India-China relationship. It necessitates continuous dialogue and cooperation to prevent escalation and ensure equitable sharing of water resources. The issue also highlights the limitations of existing bilateral mechanisms like the Expert Level Mechanism (ELM).
- **Regional Security Implications:** The project's potential impact on downstream countries like Bangladesh also has regional security implications. It can create new points of friction and instability in the South Asian region.
- **Relevant Keywords:** *Transboundary water resources, riparian rights, water security, hydro-diplomacy, water weaponization, trust deficit, regional stability, India-China relations, Expert Level Mechanism (ELM), downstream impacts.*

GS3: Internal Security:

- **Border Security and Geopolitical Leverage:** China's control over the Brahmaputra's flow gives it significant geopolitical leverage over India, particularly in the northeastern states. This can be exploited during times of conflict or tension, potentially destabilizing the region.
- **Impact on Northeast India:** The potential for reduced water flow, increased flooding, and altered silt deposition could have severe socio-economic consequences for the northeastern states, leading to internal displacement, livelihood insecurity, and potential social unrest. This could further strain Centre-State relations and create internal security challenges.

- **Data Security and Information Warfare:** The withholding of hydrological data can be seen as a form of information warfare, hindering India's ability to prepare for floods and manage water resources effectively. This highlights the importance of data sharing and transparency in transboundary water management.
- **Relevant Keywords:** *Border security, geopolitical leverage, water as a strategic resource, internal displacement, livelihood security, Centre-State relations, information warfare, data security, disaster preparedness.*

GS3: Environment and Disaster Management:

- **Ecological Impacts:** The dam's construction and operation can have significant ecological consequences, including:
 - **Habitat Destruction:** Loss of biodiversity, particularly of endangered species in the fragile Himalayan ecosystem.
 - **Altered River Flow:** Changes in water flow patterns affecting aquatic life and downstream ecosystems.
 - **Siltation and Soil Fertility:** Reduced silt deposition impacting agricultural productivity in downstream areas.
- **Disaster Risk:** The dam's location in a seismically active zone poses a significant disaster risk. A dam failure could lead to catastrophic floods with devastating consequences for downstream populations and infrastructure.
- **Climate Change Vulnerability:** The combined effects of the dam and climate change can exacerbate existing vulnerabilities, such as increased frequency and intensity of floods and droughts.
- **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA):** The lack of transparency regarding the EIA conducted by China raises concerns about the adequacy of environmental safeguards and the potential for transboundary environmental impacts.
- **Relevant Keywords:** Himalayan ecosystem, biodiversity loss, habitat destruction, altered river flow, siltation, soil fertility, seismic vulnerability, dam safety, disaster risk reduction, climate change impacts, transboundary environmental impacts, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

India's Response (Analysis):

- **Diplomatic Engagement:** Emphasizing dialogue and urging China to consider downstream interests is crucial but has had limited success so far.
- **Counterbalancing Projects (Dibang Dam):** While strategically important, India's own hydropower projects should be developed with careful consideration of environmental and social impacts.
- **Strengthening Data Sharing Mechanisms:** Improving the effectiveness of the ELM and exploring new avenues for data sharing and joint monitoring are essential.
- **International Cooperation:** Engaging with other downstream countries like Bangladesh and raising the issue in international forums can increase pressure on China to act responsibly.

16. India, France Sign Pact For Grand Museum in North, South Blocks

- India and France have signed an agreement for the "adaptive reuse" of the North and South Blocks as part of the Central Vista Redevelopment Project, aimed at creating the world's largest national museum.
- The museum, covering 1.55 lakh square meters, will surpass the Louvre in Paris and is set to be implemented in two phases.
- 1st phase involves retrofitting the North Block into a museum, with a target completion date of June 2026.
- France's expertise in museum development, including the Grand Louvre, will guide the project.

(GS 1 – ART AND CULTURAL PRESERVATION)

(GS 2 – INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIONS)

17. PROTECTED AREA PERMIT (PAP)

Protected Area Permit (PAP)

The **Protected Area Permit (PAP)** is a special permit foreign nationals must obtain to visit certain **sensitive areas** in India, particularly those located near international borders. This system aims to safeguard **national security**, **protect indigenous cultures**, and **preserve fragile ecosystems**.

Key Facts for Prelims

- **Legal Basis:**
 - Governed under the **Foreigners (Protected Areas) Order, 1958**.
- **Purpose:**
 - To **regulate foreigner entry** into sensitive regions near international borders.
- **PAP Duration:**
 - Generally valid for **10 days** with an option for extension.

- **Issuing Authorities:**
 - Union Ministry of Home Affairs or the concerned **state government authorities**.
 - **Areas Covered:**
 - Entire states: **Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram**.
 - **Parts of Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, and Sikkim**.
 - **Related Regulations:**
 - **Foreigners (Restricted Areas) Order, 1963** requires a **Restricted Area Permit (RAP)** for areas like the **Andaman & Nicobar Islands** and **parts of Sikkim**.
 - **Exemptions:**
 - Citizens of **Bhutan** are typically **exempt from PAP requirements**.
-

GS3 Internal Security Analysis

1. **National Security Concerns**
 - **Cross-Border Infiltration:** The reinstatement of PAP in **Manipur, Nagaland, and Mizoram** highlights **security threats due to unauthorized entry** from neighboring countries like **Myanmar**.
 - **Regulation of Foreign Presence:** PAP helps **monitor and limit foreigner activities** in border areas, crucial in regions affected by **insurgency** and ethnic conflicts.
2. **Insurgency and Smuggling Risks**
 - These northeastern states have a history of **insurgent movements** linked to cross-border ethnic ties and arms smuggling. PAP reinstatement strengthens control over **foreign interactions** in these sensitive zones.
3. **Illegal Migration and Demographic Impact**
 - **Manipur's conflict in 2023-24** and **border tensions** underscore concerns over **illegal migration from Myanmar**, impacting **demographics** and social stability. PAP acts as a barrier against this influx, preventing further destabilization.

4. Indigenous Community and Cultural Protection

- PAP supports the preservation of the **unique tribal heritage** and **customary laws** in states under the **Sixth Schedule**, ensuring minimal foreign influence that could disrupt traditional societies.

5. Environmental and Disaster Management

- Regulating tourist influx in ecologically fragile zones like the **Eastern Himalayas** aligns with **sustainable tourism** practices, reducing the risk of **environmental degradation** and enhancing **disaster preparedness**.

Conclusion

The reinstatement of the **Protected Area Permit (PAP)** in **Manipur, Nagaland, and Mizoram** reinforces India's **internal security framework**. It addresses cross-border security threats, supports **indigenous cultural preservation**, and promotes **ecological balance**. Strengthened surveillance and cooperative mechanisms remain essential to complement the PAP regime in managing border security and regional stability.

18. CRIME AND CRIMINAL TRACKING NETWORK AND SYSTEMS (CCTNS)

Explanation and Prelims-Relevant Facts

1. Introduction:

- The **Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS)** is a centralised online system launched by the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** in **2009**.
- It aims to create a comprehensive and integrated platform for **efficient policing and law enforcement**.

2. Objectives:

- **Centralised Database:** Establish a **national-level crime and criminal database** for seamless data access.
- **Digitised Police Records:** Facilitate **electronic filing** and management of **FIRs, chargesheets, and case files**.
- **Real-Time Data Sharing:** Provide police and other law enforcement agencies with **instant access to crime data**.

3. Key Features:

- **Comprehensive Crime Records:** Maintains records of **accused persons, convicts, habitual offenders, stolen vehicles, missing persons, and unidentified bodies**.
- **Online Filing of Reports:** Allows **e-filing of FIRs** and other investigative documents.
- **Data Analytics and Reporting:** Generates **crime trend analysis and reports** for strategic planning.
- **Search and Query Tools:** Enables searches related to **criminal profiles, crime patterns, and stolen property**.

4. Coverage:

- As of **2024**, all **17,130 police stations** across India are now connected through CCTNS.
- The last mile deployment was completed in **Manipur, Nagaland, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Lakshadweep, and Odisha**.

5. Role in the Criminal Justice System:

- Part of the broader **Integrated Criminal Justice System (ICJS)**, linking CCTNS with **courts, prisons, prosecution, forensics, and fingerprint systems**.

- Facilitates **better coordination between law enforcement agencies and the judiciary.**

6. **Technological and Operational Support:**

- **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)** is responsible for the **implementation and technical support.**
- Promotes **transparency, accountability, and efficiency** in police operations.

Analysis from UPSC CSE GS2 and GS3 Perspectives

GS2 - Governance and Transparency

1. Improved Public Service Delivery:

- Citizens can **file complaints and track FIRs online**, promoting transparency in **police-citizen interactions.**
- Reduces manual processes, enhancing **police accountability** and **reducing delays** in investigations.

2. Digital Governance and e-Governance Initiatives:

- CCTNS aligns with **Digital India** and **Good Governance** initiatives by digitising core policing processes.
- Enhances accessibility and **inter-state cooperation** through a **centralised crime database.**

3. Integration with Judicial Processes:

- Supports the **National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG)** and court integration, reducing pendency and ensuring faster trials.

GS3 - Internal Security

1. Enhanced Crime Prevention and Detection:

- Facilitates **real-time sharing of information on crimes and criminals**, critical for **national security** and **border policing.**
- Analytical tools assist in **predictive policing** by identifying **crime patterns and trends.**

2. Countering Organized Crime and Terrorism:

- Provides data to track **terrorist networks, smuggling activities**, and **habitual offenders**, enhancing internal security.

3. Inter-Agency Coordination:

- CCTNS strengthens collaboration between **police, intelligence agencies, and forensic departments**, contributing to a more **integrated security framework**.

4. Challenges and Recommendations:

- **Data Privacy and Security:** Protecting sensitive crime data from breaches is essential.
- **Infrastructure Gaps:** Continuous investment in **IT infrastructure and capacity-building** for police personnel is required.

Conclusion

CCTNS is a transformative initiative for modernising India's policing system, enhancing **efficiency, transparency, and security**. It plays a pivotal role in **internal security management** and supports the **rule of law** through improved data integration and real-time analytics. Strengthening its implementation will further solidify India's digital policing capabilities.

19. 60TH RAISING DAY OF BSF

OPERATIONAL MANDATE OF BSF

The **Border Security Force (BSF)**, established in **1965**, functions under the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**. It is the **largest border guarding force** in India, responsible for securing **India's borders with Pakistan and Bangladesh**. Its primary duties include:

- **Border Surveillance and Security:** Preventing **infiltration, cross-border smuggling, and trans-border crimes**.
- **Anti-Terror Operations:** Responding to terrorism and insurgency in border areas.
- **Peace-Time Responsibilities:** Detecting and curbing **illegal migration, and smuggling of narcotics, weapons, and counterfeit currency**.
- **Support to Internal Security:** Assisting state governments during **communal riots and law and order disturbances**.

Challenges in Border Management

1. Drone Threats:

- **Increased Drone Incursions:** The use of **drones for smuggling arms, ammunition, and narcotics** from Pakistan has become a major concern, especially along the **Punjab border**.
- **Technological Superiority of Drones:** Sophisticated drones evade detection by conventional radar systems, requiring advanced anti-drone measures.

2. Difficult Terrain:

- **Riverine, Hilly, and Swampy Areas:** Borders in **Assam, Jammu & Kashmir, and the Rann of Kutch** present **terrain-related challenges** that hinder surveillance and patrolling.

3. Infiltration and Cross-Border Terrorism:

- **Terrorist Infiltration** from Pakistan remains a persistent issue, particularly along the **Line of Control (LoC)** in Jammu & Kashmir.

4. Porous Borders:

- The **India-Bangladesh border**, with its length and riverine stretches, is highly susceptible to **illegal migration, cattle smuggling**, and human trafficking.

5. Limited Resources and Manpower:

- Despite being the largest border force, **resource constraints and fatigue** among personnel reduce operational efficiency.

6. Recruitment, Pay, and Allowances:

- Challenges in attracting and retaining **highly motivated personnel** due to **lower pay scales, limited risk allowances**, and demanding service conditions.

7. Housing and Welfare:

- Inadequate **housing facilities and welfare amenities** for BSF personnel affect morale and job satisfaction.

8. Training and Technological Adaptation:

- Need for **continuous upskilling** in emerging technologies and **modern surveillance equipment**.

9. Constant Deployment and Fatigue:

- Continuous deployment in high-risk areas without **sufficient rest and rotation** leads to **fatigue and stress**.

Measures Taken to Strengthen Border Security**1. Anti-Drone Technology:**

- The **laser-equipped anti-drone gun mount system**, developed in collaboration with multiple government agencies, has improved **drone neutralization rates from 3% to 55%** along the Punjab border.
- Plans for establishing a **dedicated anti-drone unit** are underway.

2. Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS):

- Incorporates **smart sensors, cameras, thermal imagers, and drones** to monitor borders in **real-time**.

- **Pilot tested in Assam**, with plans for expansion along **Pakistan and Bangladesh borders**.
3. **Infrastructure Development:**
- Construction of **smart fences, all-weather roads, and floodlights** to enhance border surveillance.
4. **Use of Technology:**
- Deployment of **radar systems, satellite imagery, and ground sensors** for better situational awareness.
5. **International Cooperation and Data Sharing:**
- Enhanced **coordination with Bangladesh and Pakistan** on border management.
-

Way Forward

1. **Adopting Advanced Anti-Drone Systems:**
- Strengthen the anti-drone infrastructure with **AI-based detection, jamming systems, and real-time interception**.
2. **Technology-Driven Border Surveillance:**
- Full-scale implementation of **CIBMS** across all vulnerable stretches to improve **situational awareness and rapid response**.
3. **Boosting Manpower and Resources:**
- Recruit additional personnel and ensure **adequate training in modern surveillance technologies**.
4. **Border Area Development:**
- Invest in **infrastructure and amenities** for border guards to reduce attrition and improve morale.
5. **Enhanced Intelligence Sharing and Cooperation:**
- Strengthen ties with neighboring countries for **timely information exchange** to prevent infiltration.
-

Conclusion

The BSF plays a critical role in securing India's borders, facing multifaceted challenges from **drone incursions, difficult terrain, and cross-border terrorism**. Technological upgrades like **CIBMS** and anti-drone units, coupled with infrastructural improvements and international cooperation, are vital to enhancing **India's internal security and border management**. A proactive, tech-driven approach will bolster the BSF's ability to safeguard the nation effectively.

20. NAFITHROMYCIN

India has formally launched its first indigenous antibiotic, **Nafithromycin**, marking a significant step in the fight against **Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)**. AMR occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites no longer respond to antimicrobial medicines, including antibiotics, antivirals, antifungals, and antiparasitics.

About Nafithromycin (Marketed as "Miqnaf")

- **Purpose:** Developed to combat drug-resistant bacteria, particularly those causing **Community-Acquired Bacterial Pneumonia (CABP)**.
- **Significance of CABP:** One of the most common infectious diseases globally, it is a major cause of **mortality and morbidity**.
- **Developer:** Created by **Wockhardt** with support from the **Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC)** under the **Department of Biotechnology**.

Key Features of Nafithromycin

- **Enhanced Efficacy:** Demonstrates significantly higher potency than existing antibiotics like azithromycin, providing **10 times greater efficacy** and **8 times higher lung exposure** with **minimal side effects**.
- **Shorter Treatment Duration:** Requires a **treatment course of just 3 days**, compared to longer regimens with traditional antibiotics.

This innovation is expected to play a crucial role in addressing **antimicrobial resistance** and improving outcomes for patients with bacterial infections.

21. CARBON-14 DIAMOND BATTERY

FEATURES & WORKING

1. **Radioactive Decay Utilization:** The Carbon-14 Diamond Battery generates electricity through the radioactive decay of carbon-14 (C-14) isotopes.
2. **Carbon-14 Properties:** C-14 has a half-life of approximately 5,700 years, ensuring a prolonged energy source.
3. **Diamond Encapsulation:** Encasing C-14 in a diamond structure prevents radiation leakage and increases durability.
4. **Nuclear Waste Recycling:** The battery uses C-14 extracted from graphite blocks in nuclear reactors, providing an innovative solution for radioactive waste management.
5. **Safety:** Encapsulation in diamond ensures no radiation leakage, making the battery safe for various applications.

Key Advantages

1. **Long Lifespan:** The half-life of C-14 allows the battery to last thousands of years.
2. **Compact and Durable:** The diamond casing makes it robust and suitable for extreme environments.
3. **Versatile Applications:**
 - **Space Exploration:** Ideal for powering spacecraft, satellites, and rovers, especially in missions requiring minimal maintenance (e.g., Mars rovers, deep-space probes).
 - **Medical Devices:** Suitable for small devices like pacemakers due to its long lifespan and reliability.
 - **Defense and Remote Sensing:** Powers sensors, drones, and equipment in inaccessible or hazardous locations.

Limitations

1. **Low Power Output:** While ideal for small devices, the battery cannot replace conventional batteries for high-energy applications.

GS3 Perspective (Science and Technology, Environment, and Energy)

1. Science and Technology:

- **Innovative Energy Solutions:** The development of the Carbon-14 Diamond Battery represents cutting-edge technology, advancing the use of radioactive isotopes in energy generation.
- **Space Technology Applications:** The battery's use in space missions aligns with India's ambitions in space exploration, such as Gaganyaan and Chandrayaan programs.

2. Environmental Sustainability:

- **Nuclear Waste Management:** Productive utilization of radioactive waste supports environmental sustainability by reducing nuclear waste hazards.
- **Low Carbon Footprint:** The battery's long lifespan and minimal maintenance contribute to cleaner energy practices.

3. Energy Security:

- **Decentralized Energy Source:** Offers energy solutions for remote and extreme environments where conventional energy sources are impractical.
- **Strategic Importance:** Potential applications in defense and disaster management underscore its significance for national security.

4. Challenges and Considerations:

- **Economic Viability:** Cost of production and scalability remain critical factors.
- **Ethical and Regulatory Oversight:** Safe handling and deployment of radioactive materials necessitate stringent regulatory frameworks.

Conclusion

The Carbon-14 Diamond Battery exemplifies a transformative advancement in energy technology, addressing issues of sustainability, energy security, and innovative application. However, its widespread adoption will depend on overcoming challenges related to cost, scalability, and regulatory measures.

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