FINDER
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# Climate risks must prompt international legal reforms

**Prelims:** General Studies Paper - 1
General issues on Environmental ecology, Biodiversity and Climate Change

**Mains:** General Studies - 3
Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment

## 1. Background

- Climate change is increasingly **challenging core principles of international law.**
- These include **permanent sovereignty over natural resources (PSNR)**, statehood requirements, and maritime zones.
- Rising global concern about limiting warming to **1.5°C** and the impacts of **sea-level rise (SLR)** is pushing states to reconsider existing legal frameworks.

## 2. Challenges to Existing International Law

### Permanent Sovereignty over Natural Resources (PSNR):

- PSNR allows states to **extract fossil fuels** within their territory.
- Growing support exists for a **Fossil-Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty** to keep large fossil reserves underground.
- **Developing countries** may accept **limited restrictions** but require finance and **carbon-neutral technology** transfer from developed nations.

### Threat to Statehood of Small Island States:

- Statehood traditionally requires **territory, permanent population, government**, and capacity for international relations.
- **Sea-level rise** threatens the **territorial existence** of small island states.
- The **International Court of Justice** noted that loss of one element may not automatically end statehood.
- In 2023, the **Pacific Islands Forum** asserted that climate change should not lead to **loss of statehood.**

### Climate-Induced Migration:

- People displaced by climate change lack protection under the **1951 Refugee Convention**, which recognises **refugees only in cases of persecution.**
- Scholars propose a new protocol under the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** to recognise and protect climate refugees.

### Unsettling Maritime Zones:

- **Sea-level rise** may shift coastlines and legal baselines.
- This can affect maritime zones such as the **territorial sea, contiguous zone, exclusive economic zone (EEZ), and continental shelf**.
- Some states propose **fixing current baselines permanently,** while existing **UNCLOS rules** allow moving (ambulatory) baselines, creating legal uncertainty.

## 3. Way Forward

- Create a **new protocol under the UNFCCC** to recognise and protect climate refugees.
- Use **UNFCCC and COP platforms** to renegotiate international legal principles using equitable approaches.
- Balance fossil-fuel phase-out obligations with **finance and technology transfer for developing countries.**
- Ensure legal protection for **statehood of vulnerable small island states** despite sea-level rise.
- Develop stable legal approaches to manage **maritime boundaries affected by sea-level rise.**

## Reckless wreckers: on threats to nuclear facilites

**Prelims:** General Studies Paper - 1
Current events of national and international importance

**Mains:** General Studies - 2
Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora.

### 1. Growing Attacks on Nuclear Facilities

- **Nuclear facilities** are increasingly facing **military attacks and security threats**.
- Since its **capture by Russian forces in 2022**, **Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant** has faced repeated shelling and drone strikes.
- **Israel** has attacked **Iran's nuclear facilities** since **2024**, seeing its nuclear programme as an **existential threat**.
- In **2025**, the **United States** struck **Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant**, **Natanz Nuclear Facility**, and **Isfahan Nuclear Technology Center**.
- Although **Donald Trump** claimed the facilities were destroyed, the **International Atomic Energy Agency** reported that **enriched uranium stockpiles remained intact**.
- Nuclear institutions have also faced **cyberattacks**, including a breach of the **National Nuclear Security Administration**.

### 2. Risks of Attacking Nuclear Sites

- The **Geneva Conventions** prohibit attacks on nuclear facilities if they may release **"dangerous forces."**
- Damage to **reactor cores or spent fuel pools** can release **radioactive isotopes such as caesium-137**.
- This could cause:
  - **Severe radiation sickness**
  - **Long-term land contamination**
  - **Spread of radioactive particles by wind, threatening global food security.**
- Strikes may also lead to **loss of control over enriched uranium**, especially in politically unstable conditions.

### 3. Strategic and Political Consequences

- Military strikes **do not solve the nuclear issue** and may push Iran to **expand secret nuclear facilities**.
- Attacks also weaken **diplomatic and monitoring frameworks** needed for nuclear safety.
- **Negotiations and sanctions relief** in exchange for **IAEA monitoring** could be a safer path.
- Iran has strengthened ties with **Russia** and **China**, receiving **air defence and navigation systems**.
- Continued conflict could trigger:
  - **Large refugee flows** from Iran's **93-million population**
  - Retaliatory attacks on U.S. bases in the Gulf
  - A potential **nuclear disaster** affecting the wider region.

## What sparked the DoD-Anthropic clash?

**Prelims:** General Studies Paper - 1
General Science.

**Mains:** General Studies - 3
Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology and issues relating to intellectual property rights.

### 1. Background of the Dispute

- The **U.S. Department of Defence (DoD)**, under the **Trump administration**, entered into a dispute with **Anthropic**, the company behind the **Claude AI chatbot**.
- The DoD threatened to label Anthropic a **"supply chain risk"**, which would discourage government contractors from using its products.
- Meanwhile, **OpenAI** negotiated a **separate agreement** with the DoD that reportedly addressed similar concerns.

### 2. What is Claude AI?

- **Claude** is an **AI chatbot** developed by **Anthropic** that assists users in **writing and modifying computer code**.
- Its tool **Claude Code** uses **powerful Large Language Models (LLMs)** and can help build and edit software tools.

- It is attractive to defence agencies because it can **accelerate development of complex defence technologies and weapons systems**.
- By assisting programmers, it can **reduce development time**, especially in projects that require **high security clearances**.

## 3. Reason for the Conflict

- Anthropic joined a **$200 million contract with the DoD (2025)** to provide Claude services through **Amazon Web Services (AWS)** infrastructure.
- A **DoD memorandum** titled **"Accelerating America's Military AI Dominance"** called for removing barriers to faster military AI development.
- Anthropic's **AI rules** restricts uses such as:
  - **Mass domestic surveillance**
  - **Weapons that operate fully on their own without human control.**
- The **company was asked to give the DoD full access to its AI models**, but it **refused and offered to help the DoD find another provider**.
- The DoD then labeled Anthropic a **"supply chain risk."**

## 4. OpenAI's Agreement with the DoD

- **OpenAI** reached a deal allowing the DoD to use its **AI systems for lawful purposes**.
- The **AI system will not control autonomous weapons on its own** where **law or policy requires human control**.
- OpenAI argued its safeguards are effective because the system:
  - Runs **only in secure cloud infrastructure**
  - Maintains **safety monitoring systems**
  - **Keeps authorised OpenAI staff involved.**

# What will Nepal's landmark general election decide?

**Prelims:** General Studies Paper - 1
Current events of national and international importance

**Mains:** General Studies - 2
India and its neighborhood- relations.

## 1.Context

- Nepal will **hold a landmark general election on 5 March 2026** seeking political change.
- It **follows youth-led protests in September 2025 against corruption** and misgovernance.

## 2. Why is Nepal's 2026 Election Different?

- The election is **being held two years ahead of schedule after the Gen Z protests** in September 2025.
- The two-day protests led to 77 deaths, including 19 people killed in police firing on September 8.
- The **election is seen as a chance to break Nepal's long-standing cycle of unstable** politics.
- It aims to **address youth demands for accountability, clean governance**, and economic reforms.

## 3. What will this election decide?

- Voters will **elect a new House of Representatives** (Pratinidhi Sabha) with 275 members.
- **165 members are elected through the First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) system** and **110 through Proportional Representation (PR).**
- Voters cast two ballots: **one for a candidate under FPTP and another for a party under PR.**
- Under PR, **seats are allocated using the Sainte-Laguë method**

The Sainte-Laguë method is a system used to share seats in proportion to the votes each party receives. It divides a party's votes by odd numbers (1, 3, 5, 7, etc.) to decide how many seats each party gets.

- A party **needs 138 seats (simple majority) to form the government**; otherwise, the largest party forms a coalition government.

## 4. Key Political Forces in Nepal's Election

- **Nepali Congress (NC) and Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist–Leninist) (CPN-UML)** have long dominated Nepali politics.
- The **Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre),** led by Pushpa Kamal Dahal, became a major force after the Maoist insurgency ended.

- The **Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) is a new moderate party** gaining strong public support.
- The **Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) advocates restoring the monarchy** and Nepal as a Hindu state.
- The **Ujyalo Nepal Party, founded by Kulman Ghising,** focuses on better governance and development.

## 5. Results and Possible Outcomes of Nepal's Election

- **Vote counting is slow and done manually** because of the complex ballot system.
- Around 67 parties and 3,405 candidates are contesting the election.
- **FPTP results come earlier, but PR votes must be counted nationwide**, so final results may take up to a month.
- No single party is likely to get a majority, so a coalition government is expected.
- The **Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) may gain support due to youth voters** and public dissatisfaction with old parties.

## KEYWORDS

### dBA (A-weighted decibels)

- Decibel (dB) is a **unit used to measure the intensity or loudness of sound.**
- dBA (A-weighted decibels) measures **sound in a way that matches how the human ear hears noise**.
- It is commonly used to measure environmental noise and workplace sound levels.
- **Normal dB measures raw sound intensity,** while **dBA adjusts the measurement to human hearing.**
- It reduces the effect of very low and very high frequencies that humans hear less clearly.
- **Sound above 85 dBA can damage hearing** if exposure is long.

### United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)

- UNCLOS is a global treaty that establishes the **legal framework** for the use and governance of oceans and seas.
- It was negotiated during the **Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea (1973-1982)** under the United Nations.
- The Convention was opened for signature on **10 December 1982** at Montego Bay, Jamaica and **entered into force on 16 November 1994**.
- UNCLOS defines rules related to **maritime boundaries, navigation rights,** exploitation of marine resources, and protection of the marine environment.
- It codifies many principles of customary international maritime law and builds upon earlier agreements such as the **1958 Geneva Conventions on the Law of the Sea.**
- The Convention established the **International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS)** to settle disputes related to the interpretation and application of the treaty.
- **168 parties have ratified UNCLOS**, including 167 states and the European Union.
- **India is a signatory and ratified UNCLOS in 1995**, and follows its provisions in maritime governance.
- Some countries, including the **United States, have signed but not ratified the Convention.**
- Important related agreements include
  - 1994 Agreement on the implementation of Part XI (**deep seabed mining**)
  - 1995 **UN Fish Stocks Agreement** on conservation and management of migratory fish stocks

### International Atomic Energy Agency

- The **International Atomic Energy Agency** was **established in 1957** due to global **concerns and expectations about nuclear technology**.

- Its creation was inspired by **Dwight D. Eisenhower's "Atoms for Peace" speech** delivered at the **United Nations General Assembly** on **8 December 1953**.
- The Agency was established within the **United Nations** system as the **global "Atoms for Peace" organization**.
- From the beginning, its mandate has been to **promote the peaceful, safe, and secure use of nuclear technology** in cooperation with **member states and international partners**.
- Thus, the IAEA has a **dual mission**: **to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy** and **to ensure that nuclear technology is not used for military purposes**.

## Places In News

### Strait of Hormuz

- The Strait of Hormuz is a **narrow international strait situated between Iran to the north and Oman** (specifically the Musandam Peninsula) to the south.
- The **strait connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea.**
- The strait is about 33 km wide at its narrowest point, though shipping lanes are much narrower
- It is **officially recognized as the world's most important oil transit chokepoint due to the high volume of oil** that can only exit the Persian Gulf through this route.
- Around **20-21% of global petroleum consumption and seaborne oil trade** passes through the strait daily.