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'Innovate today, nourish tomorrow' for food security

Prelims: General Studies Paper - 1

Current events of national and international importance

Mains: General Studies - 3

Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

Why in Focus?

- **World Food Day 2026** was observed on **October 16** with the theme "Innovate today, nourish tomorrow".
- The theme highlights the **urgent need for innovation in agriculture to combat hunger** affecting **645 million people** globally.

Key Highlights:

- **India** is a major producer of **foodgrains, milk, pulses, fruits, and vegetables**, transforming into a food-surplus nation due to the **Green Revolution**.

Green Revolution: A period of agricultural transformation with high-yielding crop varieties and modern techniques.

- The **National Food Security Act, 2013** provides legal entitlement to subsidised foodgrains for up to 75% of rural and 50% of

urban populations.

- **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana** provides free foodgrains since **January 2024**, extended until **2028**.
- **Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)**, the **International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)** and the **World Food Programme (WFP)** support India's food security with digital agriculture, financing, and distribution innovations.
- **FAO supports digital agriculture** by developing advisory road maps, training extension workers and providing tools such as the Clean Milk Scorecard.
- **FAO works to reduce food loss** by measuring losses, assessing environmental impacts and promoting composting, bioenergy and recycling.
- **IFAD supports farmers through its "financing plus" approach**, covering production, market access, finance and small-scale infrastructure while attracting private investment.
- **WFP improves the efficiency of India's public food distribution system** through innovations such as Grain ATMs and supply-chain optimisation.
- WFP also **promotes nutrition and dietary diversity**, including the use of millets and other nutri-cereals, especially for children and pregnant women.

Implications:

- **Innovation in agriculture** is crucial due to



climate-related risks, economic shocks, and conflicts impacting food security.

- India's **food security measures, supported by technological and financial innovations**, serve as a model for the **Global South**.
- **Climate-related risks** reduce yields and disrupt growing seasons, affecting agricultural cycles.
- Economic shocks and food-price inflation **erode purchasing power, increasing living costs**.
- **Conflict disrupts supply chains and displaces farmers**, destroying infrastructure and creating instability.

Way Forward:

- Focus on **climate-resilient and biofortified crops**, and nutritionally diverse diets.
- Strengthen the **Targeted Public Distribution System** with digitised ration cards and **One Nation One Ration Card** scheme.

Targeted Public Distribution System: Distributes subsidised food and non-food items to the poor in India.

- Enhance **investment in food systems through public-private partnerships**, leveraging IFAD's "financing plus" approach.
- Promote scalable innovations that are **pro-smallholder and pro-woman, integrating traditional knowledge with scientific advances**.

Mains Question:

Discuss how innovation can strengthen India's food security and nutrition amid climate change, economic shocks and conflicts. Examine its relevance for the Global South and suggest measures to build resilient food systems. (250 words)

Shifting global focus towards inclusive assessment of threats to health

Prelims: General Studies Paper - 1

Current events of national and international importance

Mains: General Studies - 3

Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

Why in Focus?

- The **World Health Summit** in Berlin launched a report identifying **17 interlinked catastrophic threats to global health**.
- The **Lancet Commission** emphasizes the need for a **holistic approach to health threats**, viewing them as interconnected economic, environmental, and national security challenges.

Key Highlights:

- The report identifies threats such as **pandemics, antimicrobial resistance, obesity, nuclear conflict, and artificial intelligence**.
- **Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs)** are used to measure potential health losses from these threats.

Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs): A measure of overall disease burden, expressed as the number of years lost due to ill-health, disability, or early death.

- The Commission analyzed risks across **204 countries and territories**, categorizing threats into a pyramid of severity.
- **Nuclear conflict** and malicious AI are highlighted as having **extinction potential**.
- **Obesity** is identified as the **largest single potential health loss**, with 23.1 billion DALYs preventable.
- The report predicts **high-income nations** will **face health losses from non-communicable risks** like obesity and poor mental health.
- **Low-income regions** will suffer from **childhood malnutrition and reduced international aid**.
- Meeting **climate targets** could save an estimated **1.89 billion DALYs**.

Implications:

- The **interconnected nature of threats** like climate change, air pollution, and antimicrobial resistance necessitates a holistic approach.
- Viewing health threats as interconnected challenges can lead to **more effective policy**



interventions and better health outcomes.

- The report is **criticized for not addressing current geopolitical crises and the collapse of international collaboration.**
- The **lack of a fixed ranking of threats may be seen as lacking concrete guidance** for policymakers.
- **Withdrawal of international aid could significantly impact sub-Saharan Africa,** causing 1.5 billion DALYs.

Way Forward:

- Global leaders should adopt an **interconnected view of health threats** to implement effective policies.
- **Strengthening local healthcare infrastructure** is crucial to mitigate the downstream health fallout of climate change.
- Improving global access to **education** could **avert 16.1 billion DALYs.**
- Addressing the **income gap** could **reduce health burdens** equivalent to 25 COVID-19 pandemics.
- Nations should plan for unmodeled threats like **mass displacement, geopolitical instability, and drought.**

Mains Question:

Discuss the importance of an inclusive approach to global health threats, as highlighted by the recent Lancet Commission report. Suggest measures to address these interconnected threats while considering economic, environmental and national security concerns. (250 words)

The debate over immunity to CEC, ECs

Prelims: General Studies Paper - 1

Indian Polity and Governance-Constitution, Political System, Panchayati Raj, Public Policy, Rights Issues, etc.

Mains: General Studies - 2

Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Why in Focus?

- The **Supreme Court** issued a notice to the Centre on a plea challenging **Section 16** of the **Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Terms of Office) Act, 2023.**
- The provision grants **CEC and ECs** lifelong immunity for actions taken in discharge of official duties, sparking a debate on its justification.

Key Highlights:

- **Section 16** provides lifelong immunity to CEC and ECs, which is more expansive than the immunities provided to the **President** and **Governors** under **Article 361.**
- The provision was **added as an amendment** on the day the Bill was passed in the **Rajya Sabha** and later cleared by the **Lok Sabha.**
- **Article 14** guarantees equality before the law, which is a fundamental right ensuring absence of special privileges.
- The **Union Law Minister** argued that the amendment was **necessary to enable CEC and ECs to function independently.**
- Other constitutional authorities like **judges and the Comptroller and Auditor General do not enjoy lifelong immunity** for their official actions.
- The **Vienna Convention** provides **diplomats immunity from civil and criminal jurisdiction,** based on functional necessity and reciprocity.

Vienna Convention: An international treaty providing diplomats and ambassadors immunity from civil and criminal jurisdiction.

Implications:

- Granting lifelong immunity to CEC and ECs may violate **Article 14,** as it **creates an arbitrary classification without reasonable justification.**
- **Independence of CEC and ECs is essential,** but it must be **balanced with accountability and equality before the law.**
- The immunity provision **could set a precedent for other constitutional authorities demanding similar privileges,** affecting governance and accountability.



Way Forward:

- **Reassess the necessity of lifelong immunity for CEC and ECs**, ensuring it aligns with constitutional principles of equality and accountability.
- Consider **limiting immunity to the duration of their term, similar to the President and Governors**, to maintain a balance between independence and accountability.
- **Enhance transparency in the legislative process**, ensuring amendments are thoroughly debated and justified.
- **Strengthen institutional frameworks to support the independent functioning of CEC and ECs** without compromising on accountability.

Mains Question:

Critically examine the implications of lifelong immunity for the Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners, focusing on equality before law, accountability, and the balance between independence and oversight. (250 words)

A contested UNSC seat poses a test for India

Prelims: General Studies Paper - 1

Current events of national and international importance

Mains: General Studies - 2

Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Why in Focus?

- India is competing against **Tajikistan** for a non-permanent seat on the **UN Security Council (UNSC)**.
- The contest poses **strategic choices** and **potential diplomatic repercussions for India**.

Key Highlights:

- India needs to win more than **129 votes** to secure the UNSC seat.
- **India has three options: battle it out** against Tajikistan, **convince** Tajikistan to withdraw, or **withdraw** its own candidature.

- A past option of **dividing the two-year term** between candidates has been used when countries are evenly matched.
- Tajikistan has the endorsement of **Central Asia** and the **Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)**.

UN Security Council (UNSC): A principal organ of the United Nations responsible for maintaining international peace and security.

- India is confident of votes from the **Global North, ASEAN, ** Caribbean nations** represented by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM)**, and ****Pacific island countries****.
- The battleground for votes is the **Global South** - Africa, South America, and South Asia.
- India's **strategic autonomy may help**, but its **ties with Israel could raise questions**.

Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC): An international organization founded in 1969, consisting of 57 member states.

- Meetings between **Prime Minister Modi** and **Tajik President Emomali Rahmon** have not led to Tajikistan withdrawing its candidature.
- **India could step aside for Tajikistan**, acknowledging its strategic relationship, including hosting an Indian Air Force base at **Ayni** and a medical base at **Farkhor**.
- The Modi government announced its candidature with fanfare and is **not considering backing down**.

Implications:

- India's quest for a UNSC seat is **complicated by Tajikistan's candidacy**, presenting strategic choices.
- The desire for India to secure a UNSC seat is traded off against the potential **diplomatic fallout with Tajikistan and other Global South countries**.
- India's **ties with Israel could be a liability**, as the **Global South has been critical of Israel**.
- **Persuading Tajikistan to withdraw could send a negative message** to the Global South, appearing as prioritizing India's interests over smaller countries' opportunities.
- India's strategic autonomy leads to **potential support from the Global North, aligning with**

their geopolitical interests.

Way Forward:

- India could **step aside for Tajikistan to avoid a costly victory** and protect its long-term strategic interests.
- **Strengthening diplomatic ties with Global South** countries to enhance India's influence in future UNSC elections.
- **Balancing strategic autonomy with sensitivity to Global South concerns**, particularly regarding Israel.
- Continuing to **advocate for a permanent UNSC seat** to represent the aspirations of the Global South.

Mains Question:

Critically examine the strategic implications of India's contested bid for a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Discuss its impact on India's global standing and Global South relations, and suggest measures to strengthen its diplomatic influence. (250 Words)

KEYWORDS

Lancet Commission Report on Global Health Threats

- In the news: The Lancet Commission released a report at the World Health Summit in Berlin, identifying 17 interlinked catastrophic threats to global health.
- The report emphasizes the interconnected nature of these threats, urging global leaders to address them as economic, environmental, and national security challenges rather than in isolation.
- The Commission comprises 37 experts in health, economics, security, and technology, using a foresight-driven, health-focused approach to identify priority threats.
- It categorizes threats into a pyramid of severity, with nuclear conflict and malicious use of AI at the top with extinction potential.

- Major threats include pandemics, antimicrobial resistance, obesity, climate change, air pollution, and income inequality.
- The analysis covers 204 countries and territories, estimating that these threats could account for at least 1 billion DALYs (Disability-Adjusted Life Years) by 2100.
- The report highlights the potential to save 1.89 billion DALYs by meeting climate targets and stresses the importance of addressing interconnected threats like climate change and childhood malnutrition.

National Commission for Women (NCW)

- In the news: The National Commission for Women (NCW) held a consultation on women's right to property and their access to social and economic justice.
- The **National Commission for Women (NCW)** is a statutory body established in **1992** under the **National Commission for Women Act, 1990**.
- It **reviews constitutional and legal safeguards** for women, recommends legislative measures, and addresses grievances.
- The **Committee on the Status of Women in India (CSWI)** recommended a **National Commission** for Women to address grievances and promote women's socio-economic development.
- The consultation highlighted the need to prioritize **distributive justice** over compensatory justice to achieve sustainable inclusive growth and women's empowerment, as outlined in the **Directive Principles of State Policy** under **Articles 38 and 39** of the Indian Constitution.
- The **Supreme Court** in **Air India Statutory Corporation v. United Labour Union (1996)** identified distributive justice as a foundational constitutional goal.



Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)

- In the news: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will represent India at the upcoming SCO Council of Government (Prime Ministers) meeting in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, on October 19 and 20, 2026.
- The **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)** is a Eurasian political, economic, and security alliance, founded in **2001** in Shanghai, China.
- It includes **ten member states: China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Belarus, Iran and Uzbekistan.**
- The SCO focuses on **regional security, counter-terrorism, and promoting cooperation in political, security, economic, and cultural fields.**
- The **Council of Government (Prime Ministers)** is a **key decision-making body** responsible for economic and trade cooperation strategies.
- The **SCO chairmanship** for 2026-27 was transferred from **Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan.**

- **Protecting tiger habitats benefits other species in the same ecosystems**, as these areas are surveyed and evaluated across nearly **four lakh square kilometres** in India.
- **Active interventions like reintroductions are necessary** in regions with historically low tiger numbers, such as parts of the Northeast, to establish self-sustaining populations.



Species In News

Tiger (Panthera tigris)

- In the news: A three-year-old tigress was released into the Buxa Tiger Reserve in West Bengal, marking the start of a phased programme to reintroduce tigers in the reserve.
- The **tiger (Panthera tigris)** is listed as **Endangered** on the IUCN Red List and is protected under **Schedule I** of the **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972** in India.
- It is the **national animal of India and serves as a flagship species** for conservation efforts.
- India hosts over **70% of the global tiger population**, with significant populations in reserves such as **Kaziranga, Dudhwa, and Valmiki.**
- The **Project Tiger** initiative, launched in **1973**, aims to ensure a viable population of tigers in their natural habitats.