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India's moment to restoring balance to copyright

Prelims: General Studies Paper - 1
Indian Polity and Governance-Constitution, Political System, Panchayati Raj, Public Policy, Rights Issues, etc.

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. Copyright vs Right to Access

- A **visually impaired person** could not legally buy a **Digital Accessible Information System (DAISY) format book** because of **strict copyright laws**.
- A **non-governmental organisation**, along with international **disability rights groups**, worked for many years at the global level to change copyright rules.
- Their efforts led to the **Marrakesh Treaty**, which allows **cross-border sharing of accessible books** and permits visually impaired persons to use technology to **convert books into accessible formats** when publishers do not provide them.
- The **copyright industry opposed** these changes, prioritising monopoly rights over the **"right to read."**
- This shows that **very strict copyright protection** can **prevent people from accessing knowledge**.

2. How Copyright Expanded Over Time

- Art existed long before copyright; first law: **Statute of Anne (1710)**.
- Originally granted a **14-year limited monopoly**, with registration requirements.
- Today, copyright is **automatic**, covers almost every work, and lasts **lifetime + 70 years**.
- Earlier, most works were freely available to the public, but now **long-term copyright protection is the standard rule**.
- This expansion creates **barriers to innovation and knowledge sharing**.

3. AI, Data Mining & Legal Uncertainty

- **AI models and search engines** require copying data for training.
- In many South & Southeast Asian countries, this may be **illegal under copyright law**.
- Countries like **EU, Japan, Singapore** have adopted **text and data mining exceptions**.
- India has only limited exceptions .
- Lack of a **broad, flexible exception** creates **legal uncertainty** for AI development.
- Copyright should not stop **machines from analysing data**, because it was not originally designed to control such technical uses.

4. Reforming Copyright for the 21st Century

- Copyright should **encourage creativity**.
- Technology displaces jobs but also creates **new opportunities**.
- Governments should:
  - Support **open-licensed AI models and datasets**.
  - Create **safe harbour protections** for public datasets.
  - Promote **flexible copyright exceptions**.
- India, as host of the **AI Summit**, should lead reforms to balance **creativity, access, and innovation**.

AI for people, applying technology for social good

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

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Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology and issues relating to intellectual property rights.

1.Context

- India is **hosting the AI Impact Summit in New Delhi,** coinciding with **the World Day of Social Justice (February 20),** highlighting the need for human-centred AI.
- India is emerging as a major AI hub, with AI **expected to create 3 million new jobs and reshape existing 10 million jobs by 2030.**
- India **aims to use AI responsibly to promote inclusive growth and job creation** especially for the Global South.

2. Divided Global Debate and the Need for Inclusive AI Governance

- Global debates on **AI focus on benefits versus job loss concerns.**
- Technology does not determine outcomes, **governance and human choices do.**
- Inclusive institutions and social dialogue are essential.
- The **International Labour Organization, working together with India and partners of the Global Coalition for Social Justice**, supports responsible AI governance.

The **Global Coalition for Social Justice** is an international initiative launched by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2023. It promotes inclusive growth, decent work, and social protection through global cooperation and dialogue.

3. India's Model: Technology for Social Good

- **e-Shram portal helps around 315 million informal workers access social protection.**
- With the technical support of ILO, India's social protection coverage rose from 19% (2015) to 64.3% (2025).
- **AI integration in e-Shram aims to improve job matching, skill access**, and welfare delivery.
- Other Key initiatives: **AI Mission, National Quantum Mission and Anusandhan National Research Fund**
- Union Budget 2026-27 **proposes a High-Powered Education to Employment and Enterprise Standing Committee.**
- It will **assess AI's job impact, promote AI education from school level**, and strengthen AI-based employment matching.

4. Unequal AI Access & Social Responsibility

- **AI access remains uneven across regions**, income levels, genders, and social groups.
- Only **11.5% of jobs in low-income countries are exposed to generative AI**, compared to about one-third in high-income countries.
- It **requires specific policy approaches** rather than one-size-fits-all solutions.
- **Investment in skills, digital infrastructure, and social protection** is essential to ensure inclusion.
- AI must **align with social justice by promoting dignity, inclusion, and equitable opportunities** at work.

The need for diversity in the judiciary

Prelims: General Studies Paper - 1
Indian Polity and Governance - Constitution, Political System, Panchayati Raj, Public Policy, Rights Issues

Mains: General Studies - 2
Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary

1. Background

- P. Wilson, Rajya Sabha MP, introduced a **private member Bill** to amend the Constitution.
- The Bill seeks to **ensure diversity in judicial appointments** and **create regional benches** of the Supreme Court.

2. Constitutional Provisions

- **Article 124**: Supreme Court judges are appointed by the **President** after consulting the **Chief Justice of India (CJI).**
- **Article 217:** High Court judges are appointed by the **President** after consulting the CJI, the **Chief Justice of the High Court**, and the State Governor.
- **Article 130:** The Supreme Court shall sit in **Delhi or any other place**, as decided by the CJI with Central Government approval

3. Collegium System

- **Until the 1980s**, judges were appointed by the government after **consultation** with the judiciary.
- In the **First Judges case (1981)**, the Supreme Court **upheld the primacy of the executive in appointments.**
- To protect **judicial independence**, the Supreme Court created the **collegium system** in the **Second Judges case (1993).**
- The system was reaffirmed in the **Third Judges case (1998).**
- The collegium comprises the **CJI and four senior Supreme Court judges** for SC appointments, and the **CJI and two senior judges** for High Court appointments.
- The collegium recommends names to the **Central government**, which may return them for reconsideration.

4. Issues with the Existing System

- The collegium system protects judicial independence, but suffers from **lack of transparency and accountability.**
- Allegations of **nepotism** have weakened **public trust**.
- Between 2018 and 2024, only around **20% of higher judiciary appointees** were from **SC, ST, and OBC communities.**
- **Women constitute less than 15%**, and religious minorities less than **5%** of appointees.
- **Access to justice is limited** as the Supreme Court sits only in Delhi, with over **90,000 pending cases (January 2026).**

5. Key Provisions of the Bill

- Mandates **proportionate representation** of SC, ST, OBC, religious minorities, and women in judicial appointments.
- Fixes a **90-day timeline for the Centre** to notify collegium recommendations.
- **Proposes regional benches** of the Supreme Court in **Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, and Chennai.**
- Regional benches will have **full jurisdiction, except constitutional cases**, which remain with the Constitution Bench in Delhi.

6. Way Forward

- The **collegium must ensure social diversity** in judicial appointments.
- The private member Bill can provide a **constitutional mandate** for this objective.
- In the long term, **revive the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC)** with a broader composition, including the **legislature, Bar, and academia**, as in **South Africa and the U.K.**
- Ensure **adequate representation of SC, ST, OBC**, minorities, and women in judicial appointments.
- Set up **regional Supreme Court benches** under existing provisions, starting with one and expanding gradually.

National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC)

- The NJAC was established through the **99th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2014** to recommend judicial appointments.
- It consisted of the **Chief Justice of India**, **two senior Supreme Court judges**, the **Union Law Minister**, and two eminent persons.
- In **2015**, the Supreme Court **struck down the NJAC,** holding that it violated the **basic structure**, particularly the independence of the judiciary.
- Consequently, the **collegium system continues** to govern judicial appointments

Are Indian firms intent on moving to Venezuelan oil?

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

Mains: General Studies - 3
Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

1.Context

- **Indian refiners are cautious about Venezuelan oil re-entering global markets** after recent U.S. actions involving President Nicolás Maduro.
- U.S. President Donald Trump **stated that India may increase crude purchases from the U.S., possibly including Venezuelan oil.**
- The official **India-U.S. joint statement did not mention any such commitment.**
- India's position on Venezuelan imports remains uncertain.

2. Concerns Regarding Venezuelan Crude

- Venezuelan **crude is bottom-heavy and difficult to process.**
- It has **high viscosity**, leading to resistance in flow.
- It has **a high acid number, increasing corrosion risks.**
- It **contains high metal and nitrogen content.**
- It **must be blended (10-15%) with lighter crude** before refining.

3. Refinery & Operational Challenges

- **Refinery equipment is designed for specific crude viscosity**; higher viscosity causes process complications and pressure build-up.
- **High acidity in crude can corrode pipes**, valves, and refinery infrastructure.
- Refineries use **crude-specific catalysts and chemicals, which cannot be easily changed.**
- **Only complex refineries, like Jamnagar**, can efficiently process heavy and extra-heavy crude.

4. What Next?

- Venezuela **earlier accounted for 10-13% of India's crude imports** before sanctions.
- After partial resumption, **it now forms only 1-2% of India's crude basket.**
- India **remains open to commercially viable options.**
- Importing Venezuelan crude **could reduce India's fuel bill by up to $3 billion if discounted.**
- However, **sanctions, political uncertainty, and refinery readiness remain key concerns.**

KEYWORDS

Vikram Chatbot

- **Sarvam AI,** an Indian artificial intelligence startup, **launched its chatbot Vikram** at the India AI Impact Summit 2026.
- Vikram can **converse fluently in multiple Indian languages, including mixed-language usage.**
- It is designed to understand colloquial and everyday speech patterns common in India.
- The model is **named in honour of Vikram Sarabhai.**
- **Sarvam AI also introduced Sarvam 30B and Sarvam 105B LLMs**, focused on Indian language tools and affordability.

World Day of Social Justice

- World Day of Social Justice is **observed annually on February 20.**
- It was **established by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 2007** and **first celebrated in 2009.**
- It **recognizes that social development and social justice** are essential for peace and security within and among nations.
- The **2026 theme is "Empowering Inclusion: Bridging Gaps for Social Justice."**
- The day promotes decent work, fair wages, social protection, and efforts to reduce inequalities worldwide.

Marrakesh Treaty

- The **World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)-administered Marrakesh Treaty** makes it easier to **produce and share specially adapted books** for people who are **blind or visually impaired**.
- It does this by creating specific **limitations and exceptions to traditional copyright law**.
- The Treaty was **adopted on June 27, 2013**, and came into force on **September 30, 2016**.
- Its main goal is to tackle the **"book famine"**, the serious shortage of books available in **accessible formats**, especially in **developing countries**.
- This shortage exists because strong **exclusive copyright rights** have limited access.
- The Treaty has two main features:
  - It allows people with **print disabilities**, or organisations that support them, to **create accessible-format copies** of books.
  - It permits the **sharing of these copies across borders**, enabling international exchange of accessible books.

World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

- The **World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)** is a **United Nations agency**, established in **1967**, that supports the world's **innovators and creators**.
- It helps ensure that their **ideas and inventions** move safely into the market and contribute to improving lives globally.
- WIPO provides services that allow **creators, innovators, and entrepreneurs** to **protect and promote their intellectual property (IP)** across borders.
- It also serves as an international **forum for discussing emerging and complex IP issues**.
- Through its **intellectual property data and research**, WIPO assists **policymakers and decision-makers worldwide**.
- Additionally, its **technical assistance programmes and impact-driven projects** aim to ensure that **intellectual property benefits people everywhere**.

Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH)

- MIDH is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** for the holistic development of the **horticulture sector.**
- It covers **fruits, vegetables, root and tuber crops, mushrooms, spices, flowers**, medicinal and aromatic plants, coconut, cashew, cocoa, bamboo, and other horticulture crops.
- Funding pattern:
  - **60:40** between the Government of India and States;
  - **90:10** for North Eastern and Himalayan States;
  - **100%** central funding for **National Horticulture Board (NHB)**, **Coconut Development Board (CDB)**, **Central Institute for Horticulture (CIH)**, National Level Agencies, and Union Territories without legislature.
- The mission promotes **area-based and region-specific strategies** covering research, technology dissemination, post-harvest management, processing, and marketing.
- It encourages a **cluster-based approach, farmer participation**, and convergence with schemes like **Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY).**
- It aims to **increase productivity, farmers' income, and nutritional security**, while promoting **micro-irrigation**, cold-chain infrastructure, rural employment, and import reduction.

Species in news

Loggerhead Sea Turtle (Caretta caretta)

- The loggerhead sea turtle is a **large marine turtle** named for its distinctively **large head and powerful jaws.**
- It inhabits coastal bays, estuaries, continental shelves, and nearshore habitats of the **Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans.**
- Loggerheads are **primarily carnivorous,** feeding on bottom-dwelling shellfish such as crabs, clams, and molluscs.
- **Females nest every 2-4 years**, laying 3-6 nests per season with about **100-126 eggs per nest.**
- Major threats include **loss of nesting beaches, coastal development**, artificial lighting, fisheries bycatch, and pollution.
- The species is listed as **Vulnerable by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**.
- Recent studies show that **climate change** is causing **earlier nesting, fewer eggs, reduced breeding frequency**, and smaller body size in loggerhead turtles