FINDER
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The quiet crisis of adolescent mental health in India

Prelims: General Studies Paper - 1
Economic and Social Development-Sustainable Development, Poverty, Inclusion, Demographics, Social Sector Initiatives, etc.

Mains: General Studies - 2
Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

1. Growing Crisis in Child & Adolescent Mental Health

- India faces a **rising mental health crisis** among **children and adolescents**.
- Conditions like **anxiety, depression, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), behavioural disorders** are appearing at **younger ages (4–5 years)**.
- **Early trauma, neglect, and chronic stress** disrupt emotional development.
- **Comorbidities** (e.g., ADHD + anxiety) are increasing, making early diagnosis crucial.
- Around **7-10% adolescents** and **5-7% school children** have diagnosable mental health conditions.
- There is a **severe shortage of child psychiatrists and psychologists** in India.

2. Impact of the Digital Environment

- Over **800 million Indians** use the Internet; many are **children**.
- The **COVID-19 pandemic** increased screen dependency.
- **Internet addiction** leads to **sleep problems, irritability, withdrawal, poor attention**.
- Excessive screen use does **not cause ADHD or autism**, but **worsens symptoms** and delays diagnosis.
- The **WHO (2019)** warned about harmful effects of excessive screen exposure.
- India's **Economic Survey 2025-26** acknowledged rising mental health concerns among youth.

3.Role of Families, Schools & Community

- Parents are the **first mental health buffer** for children.
- When **parents understand a child's stress or past difficulties** and early **help-seeking improves outcomes.**
- **Parent and peer support groups** strengthen emotional resilience.
- Schools overly focus on **exams and competition**, neglecting **emotional wellbeing**.
- Teachers and paediatricians must **screen early** for emotional and behavioural changes.
- **Stigma** delays treatment until crisis stage.

4. Policy Gaps & Way Forward

- Strengthen **National Mental Health Programme** and **Ayushman Bharat school health services**.
- Introduce **routine school-based mental health screening**.
- Train teachers and frontline workers in **early identification**.
- Develop **clear digital use guidelines in schools**.
- Expand **tele-mental health services**, especially for underserved areas.
- Treat **mental wellbeing as central to child development**, not secondary to academic success.

India's energy shift through the green ammonia route

Prelims: General Studies Paper - 1
Economic and Social Development-Sustainable Development, Poverty, Inclusion, Demographics, Social Sector Initiatives, etc.

Mains: General Studies - 3
Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

1. India's Green Energy Ambition

- At **India Energy Week 2026**, India highlighted **$500 billion investment opportunities** in the energy sector.
- Focus is shifting from **energy security** to **energy independence**.
- **Green ammonia** (made from **green hydrogen + nitrogen**) is emerging as a key clean fuel.
- It is used in **fertilizers, clean energy, and marine fuel**.
- Major regions promoting it include the **EU, India, and South Korea**.

2. India's Green Ammonia Auction (SECI - SIGHT Programme)

- Conducted under the **National Green Hydrogen Mission**.
- Under the **Strategic Interventions for Green Hydrogen Transition (SIGHT) programme**, **Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI)** floated a tender in June 2024 to supply up to **7.24 lakh tonnes of green ammonia per year** to **13 fertilizer plants in India**.
- **15 bidders participated**, 7 companies won contracts.
- Offering **10-year fixed-price agreements**, giving market certainty.
- The final price of green ammonia was fixed between **₹49.75 and ₹64.74 per kilogram** (about **$572–$744 per tonne**).
- Prices are **40-50% lower** than EU's **H2Global** auction rates.
- Production subsidies provided for the first three years.

3. Cost Advantage & Strategic Benefits

- **Grey ammonia** costs around **$515 per tonne** in India.
- With the new lower prices and long-term contracts, the **difference in cost between green and grey ammonia has reduced significantly**.
- Delivery points are mostly **coastal fertilizer plants**, allowing **shipping transport**.
- Covers nearly **30% of India's ammonia imports**, reducing:
  - **Global gas price volatility**
  - **Currency risks**
  - **Geopolitical pressures**
- Enhances **price predictability and energy resilience**.

4. Way Forward & Global Leadership

- India benefits from **low renewable energy costs** and strong **auction design**.
- Can become a **global leader in clean ammonia markets**.
- Needs:
  - Stable **regulations and incentives**
  - Strong **safety and certification standards**
  - **Blended finance and risk mitigation tools**
  - Long-term purchase agreements
- Coordinated efforts will boost **investor confidence** and accelerate scale-up.

On the independence of the EC

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—Ministries and Departments of the Government;.

1. Background

- **Free and fair elections** form part of the **Constitution's Basic Structure** (Indira Gandhi vs Raj Narain, 1975).

- Recent controversies over **alleged vote theft** and **Special Intensive Revision (SIR**) of electoral rolls have raised concerns about the **Election Commission's (EC) independence.**
- Around **65 lakh voters were deleted during the Bihar SIR,** leading to Supreme Court challenges and an Opposition move to seek **removal of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC).**

2. Key Concerns and Challenges

- Allegations that SIR exercises **selectively targeted minority and Opposition-supporting voters,** undermining **Article 326 (adult franchise).**
- The **Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners Act, 2023** altered the appointment process by **excluding the Chief Justice of India** from the **selection committee.**
- This change runs contrary to the Supreme Court's ruling in **Anoop Baranwal vs Union of India (2023)..**
- The new law is under challenge in **Jaya Thakur vs Union of India (2024**), with the next hearing in March 2026.
- Perceived **executive dominance** risks **eroding public trust** in the EC's neutrality.

3. Constitutional Safeguards for EC Independence

- **Article 324** establishes a permanent EC with powers of superintendence, direction, and control of elections.
- The CEC enjoys strong protection: **removal** only through a Parliamentary process **similar to Supreme Court judges** (Articles 324(5) and 124(4)).
- **Conditions of service** of the CEC **cannot be altered to their disadvantage** during tenure.
- Removal involves **high thresholds, judicial inquiry,** and adherence to **natural justice**, ensuring insulation from arbitrary executive action.
- A **multi-member EC**, upheld in **T.N. Seshan vs Union of India (1995),** balances leadership with **collective decision-making**.

4. Way Forward

- Constitutional bodies must be respected by both the government and the Opposition to preserve **democratic legitimacy.**
- While dissent is legitimate, **politicisation of constitutional institutions** risks weakening electoral fairness.
- **Safeguards for EC independenc**e must be preserved to maintain balance between state authority and citizen liberty.
- **Strengthening trust in electoral institutions** is essential for sustaining India's **democratic framework.**

The explosive rise and inherent risks of prediction markets

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

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. What Are Prediction Markets?

- Prediction markets are online platforms where people bet on the **outcomes of real-world events**, not just sports or casino games.
- Users speculate on **wars, elections, court cases, financial markets (like gold prices), cultural events (Oscars),** and even unusual or speculative events.
- Well-known platforms include **Kalshi and Polymarket.**

2. How Do Prediction Markets Work?

- **People buy "Yes" or "No" shares** based on what they think will happen.
- The **price shows the chances of the event happening** (for example, 19 cents means a 19% chance).
- If the event happens as predicted, the share earns you money. **If not, the share becomes worthless.**
- Users can **add money through crypto, debit/credit cards, or bank transfers.** Some platforms may charge fees.

3. Why Are Prediction Markets Growing?

- They are **easy to use**
- They allow **betting on familiar real-world topics**
- They **spread rapidly via social media**

- Supporters **believe money-backed predictions are more accurate than polls or media reports**

4. Key Criticisms and Ethical Concerns

- It **promotes risky betting,** even on serious issues like wars and politics.
- Betting on violence or conflicts **may make serious events look like games**.
- Some platforms have **shared false or misleading information in the past.**
- People **with secret or special information could use it to make unfair profits.**
- **Involvement of political figures** (like Donald Trump Jr in Kalshi) raises fears of market manipulation and misuse of information.

5. Regulatory Status: A Legal Grey Area

- Prediction markets are **regulated in some countries but banned in others.**
- They are restricted in 33 countries, including the U.S., Germany, the U.K., and Singapore.
- Many Indians are questioning its legality and exploring ways to participate.
- Overall, **prediction markets operate in a legal grey area** and need clearer regulations worldwide.

KEYWORDS

'PRAHAAR'

- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) recently unveiled **'PRAHAAR', India's first comprehensive national counter-terror policy and strategy.**
- It follows an intelligence-led, multi-layered approach with inter-agency coordination and zero tolerance for terrorism.
- The doctrine is built around **seven pillars, including prevention of terror attacks, response and capacity building, human-rights compliance, countering radicalisation, international cooperation, and societal resilience.**
- It acknowledges modern terror threats such as cross-border militancy, cyber attacks, drone-enabled operations, and organised terror networks.
- It promotes a **whole-of-government and whole-of-society strategy** with emphasis on rule of law and global cooperation.

Removal of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC)

- The removal of the CEC is a **quasi-judicial parliamentary process**, similar to the removal of a **Supreme Court Judge.**
- Under **Article 324(5)** read with **Article 124(4)**, the CEC can be removed only **on grounds of proved misbehaviour or incapacity.**
- The procedure is prescribed under **Section 11 of the CEC and Other ECs (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023**, following the **Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968.**
- A removal motion requires **100 MPs in the Lok Sabha or 50 MPs in the Rajya Sabha**, subject to admission by the Speaker or Chairman.
- An **inquiry committee** is constituted comprising a **Supreme Court Judge, a High Court Chief Justice,** and a **distinguished jurist.**
- Definite charges are framed, and the CEC is given a **fair opportunity to defend,** ensuring natural justice.
- In cases of **alleged incapacity**, a **medical examination** by a designated medical board is required.
- Other **Election Commissioners** can be removed **only on the recommendation of the CEC**