FINDER
27th December 2025
FORTUNE IAS NEWS DAILY EXPLAINER
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Health care does not need the PPP route

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. Background

- **Andhra Pradesh** has 17 government and 19 private medical colleges; plans to add 10 new colleges under **public-private partnerships (PPP)** .
- Project cost **₹4,500 crore** (≈₹450 crore/college) for 6,500+ seats, 150 MBBS seats per college, each linked to a 650-bed district hospital.
- Land (835 acres) already acquired; earlier models used **three-tier fees** (₹15,000 / ₹12 lakh / ₹20 lakh) to ensure sustainability.
- In 2024, KPMG was engaged to assess PPP feasibility as promoted by **NITI Aayog**.

KPMG

- KPMG is a global **professional services firm** and one of the Big Four, providing audit, tax, and advisory services across public and private sectors.
- In India (since 1993), KPMG supports governments and industries with **policy advisory, feasibility studies,** and **technology-driven solutions** across multiple sectors

2. Challenges

- **Privatisation risk**: District hospitals and land leased for 33-year lease, extendable for another 33 years) at ₹100/acre, reducing public control.
- **Unequal risk-sharing**: Government provides land, 25% viability funding, insurance empanelment, clearances, and 70% bed occupancy guarantee.
- **Access and quality concerns:** 70% free beds at Ayushman Bharat rates may incentivise capitation fees, faculty shortages, and denial of care.
- **Equity loss:** Affordable seats and public jobs may decline; private operators need not follow recruitment quotas.
- **System fragmentation**: District-level PPP weakens integration of primary-secondary-tertiary care.
- **Questionable need:** 30% hospitalisation avoidable with **strong primary care**; technology reduces need for uniform 650 beds.
- **Weak state capacity**: Poor enforcement history and failure to implement even the Clinical Establishments Act.
- **Medical education crisis**: Rapid expansion without faculty risks quality collapse, as seen in engineering colleges.

3. Way Forward

- **Evidence-based reassessment** of bed capacity, disease burden, and technology trends.
- Public investment in **subsidised medical education** to build **a rural- and public-service-oriented workforce.**
- Strengthen **integrated public health systems** instead of fragmented PPPs.
- **Avoid long-term PPP in critical health assets** where state regulatory capacity is weak; prioritise quality and equitable access over rapid expansion.

Decoding air pollution concerns in Delhi-NCR

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

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

1.Context

- **Vehicular emissions dominate Delhi NCR's air pollution for PM2.5 and toxic gases like CO, benzene, and NOx, contributing up to 28% of PM2.5 from transport sources** including cars, two-wheelers, and trucks
- **PM2.5 refers to fine particulate matter consisting of microscopic solid or liquid particles with a diameter of 2.5 micrometers or less, capable of penetrating deep into the lungs and entering the bloodstream,** making it highly harmful to health.
- **Stubble burning from Punjab and Haryana adds only 7-10% to NCR PM levels seasonally**, far less than local sources like vehicles and dust, yet receives disproportionate blame from officials and courts.

2. What is the 'Polluter Pays Principle' (PPP) ?

- **Polluter Pays Principle (PPP) requires polluters to bear the cost of environmental damage; recognized as Indian law in Vellore Citizens Welfare Forum vs. Union of India (1996)** and codified in National Green Tribunal (NGT) Act, 2010.
- **PPP Challenges:** Complex to apply with multiple points (e.g., vehicles) and non-point sources (e.g., agriculture); transboundary pollution demands inter-entity cooperation beyond PPP alone.
- **Standley Case (1999):** European Court of Justice ruled UK farmers not solely liable for nitrate pollution under EU Nitrates Directive, as industrial sources contributed; adds proportionality to PPP.
- **Relevance to Stubble Burning:** Seasonal farmer burning cannot bear full liability for air pollution dominated by other local sources like vehicles, mirroring Standley proportionality.
- **Transboundary Pollution Reality:** Air pollution has regional/global impacts, not just local; Trail Smelter case (1941) held Canadian smelters liable for US damage.
- **Evidence and Frameworks**
  - The report of Nature, 2017 shows trade-linked PM2.5 health impacts exceed long-distance transport
  - **Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP, 1979), Gothenburg Protocol (amended in 2012 to include PM2.5), and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution** (2002) address long-range pollutants like PM 2.5.

3. Shift from Polluter Pays to Government Pays

- Indian **courts lack clear methods to measure environmental damage costs,** as seen in Indian Council for Enviro-Legal Action vs. Union of India (1996).
- In 1996 cases like Indian Council, Vellore Citizens, and S. Jagannath, **courts ordered compensation for victims and restoration, not strict Polluter Pays Principle (PPP).**
- This **focuses on corrective justice over making polluters pay directly.**
- In India, **PPP has become a 'Government-Pays Principle', where state agencies fund enforcement, remediation,** and victim relief.
- Key laws include Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974; Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981; Environment (Protection) Act, 1986; plus Articles 48A (Directive to protect environment) and 51A(g) (Fundamental Duty to protect environment), empowering authorities for industry closures and directives

4. Way Forward

- **Strengthen administrative capacities of pollution control authorities to reduce reliance on judicial intervention** and ensure effective PPP enforcement.
- **Balance judicial activism by prioritizing polluter liability alongside government monitoring,** using precise damage valuation methods.
- **Promote public awareness campaigns on individual environmental duties under Article 51A(g)** to complement rights-based approaches.
- **Develop welfare mechanisms enabling collective victim suits against polluters,** reducing government's sole burden and internalizing prevention costs

Gates and windows: On the SIR and single-appeal window

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

Mains: General Studies - 2
Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies. Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies.

1. Purpose of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR)

- The **Election Commission of India** started the SIR to **clean electoral rolls**.
- The aim is to **remove duplicate names**, **update addresses**, and **delete entries of deceased or migrated persons**.
- This goal is reasonable because Indian electoral rolls often contain such errors.
- However, the **current design of the SIR**, based on the Bihar model, has **serious flaws** that are being repeated in many States.

2. Problems in the Process and Technology

- The revision is being done **too fast**, increasing the risk of mistakes.
- The **burden of proving eligibility** has shifted from the State to the **individual voter**.
- Old electoral data (2002–2005) is **not machine-readable**, making verification difficult.
- Even **small mismatches** in details are leading to **deletions**.
- Large-scale exclusions seen in draft rolls show that **many eligible voters may be wrongly removed**.
- A single round of appeals is **not enough** to correct these large errors.

3. Impact on Voters and Democratic Fairness

- The appeals process helps only those who have **time, education, internet access, and confidence** to deal with officials.
- Poor, migrant, elderly, and marginalised voters may not even **know their names were deleted**.
- Lack of **transparent data** (reasons for deletion, gender-wise or local patterns) prevents public scrutiny.
- Field staff are **overburdened and rushed**, leading to careless work.
- Overall, the SIR acts like **administrative gatekeeping**, dividing voters into:
  - Those who can repeatedly prove their identity, and
  - Those who cannot and are silently excluded.
- A single appeal window **cannot fix this**, because it is itself part of the exclusion process.

KEYWORDS

Gothenburg Protocol

- The **Gothenburg Protocol was adopted on 30 November 1999 in Gothenburg, Sweden, under the Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP)** and entered into force on 17 May 2005.
- It **was amended in 2012 to include PM2.5 (Particulate Matter 2.5) emission reductions**, with the revised protocol entering force in 2019.
- It is the **first multi-effect protocol that uniquely addresses acidification, eutrophication, and ground-level ozone simultaneously** through national emission ceilings for Sulphur Dioxide (SO_2), Nitrogen Oxides (NOx), Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), and Ammonia (NH_3).
- The **protocol sets binding reduction targets, such as the EU's 59% cut in SO_2, 42% in NOx, and 22% in PM2.5 from 2005 levels by 2020,** while promoting Best Available Techniques (BAT).
- It **integrates air quality, health, and ecosystem protection, with monitoring through the European Monitoring and Evaluation Programme (EMEP)** and 31 parties to the amended version.

Wolbachia method

- The **Wolbachia** method **prevents Aedes aegypti mosquito**, the **primary vector** for **dengue** from **replicating and spreading viruses** like **dengue, Zika, and chikungunya** to humans.
- In this method, **a bacteria called Wolbachia is injected into the mosquito, which will suppress the viruses inside the mosquito** and hence stop the spread of diseases.
- This **programme is being run by a non-profit organisation named the World Mosquito Programme (WMP).** The trials conducted by the WMP are showing promising results and could be replicated all around the world.

H5N1

- H5N1 is a highly **pathogenic avian influenza A virus** that causes severe respiratory disease in birds and has also infected mammals, including humans.
- In humans, H5N1 infection ranges from mild illness to severe and **sometimes fatal disease.**
- Some infections have been detected in exposed individuals **without any symptoms**.
- The virus was **first identified in 1996 (Guangdong strain)** and has caused repeated outbreaks in birds since then.
- Since 2020, newer variants have led to unprecedented deaths among wild birds and poultry across **Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas**.
- **From 2022**, increasing outbreaks have been reported among **mammals**, affecting both **land and marine species** such as seals, sea lions, cats, dogs, cattle, and other wildlife.
- Most human cases are linked to **close contact with infected birds** or contaminated environments like live bird markets.
- **Limited mammal-to-human transmission** has occurred, but sustained **human-to-human spread has not been observed.**
- The **World Health Organization (WHO**), in coordination with the **World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH**) and the **Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)**, monitors H5N1 risks.
- It supports global surveillance through the **Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS)** and strengthens pandemic preparedness.

Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE)

- The **ICFRE** was established in **1986** as an **umbrella organisation** to address the country's **forestry research, education, and extension** requirements.
- Subsequently, on **1 June 1991**, ICFRE was accorded the status of an **autonomous council** under the **then Ministry of Environment and Forests** and was **registered as a society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860**.
- With its **headquarters at Dehradun**, ICFRE functions as the **apex institution** in India's **national forestry research system**, responsible for **promoting and undertaking need-based forestry research and extension activities**.
- ICFRE has a **pan-India presence**, operating through **9 Regional Research Institutes** and **5 Centres** located across different **bio-geographical regions** of the country.
- **Mission:**
  - To **generate, advance, and disseminate scientific knowledge and technologies** for ensuring **ecological security** and **enhancing forest productivity**.
  - It also aims at **improving livelihoods** and **promoting the sustainable use of forest resources** through **forestry research and education**.