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MCQs

THE HINDU

Kashmir as India's gateway to Eurasian opportunity

Prelims : General Studies Paper I

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

Mains: General Studies 2

Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Why in Focus?

- India has a large **young population**, but it will become a genuine demographic dividend only if youth get **education, skills, jobs and opportunities**.
- For **Jammu and Kashmir**, better connectivity and economic opportunities could help address youth unemployment and expand growth.

Key Highlights

- The **smartphone revolution** has increased young people's aspirations, but real opportunities have not grown at the same pace.
- Higher education has expanded, but a **college degree does not guarantee employment**, creating frustration among youth.
- Youth protests often relate to **unemployment, recruitment problems, exam irregularities and paper leaks**.

- Kashmiri youth face additional challenges due to **conflict, political uncertainty and economic isolation**.
- Jammu and Kashmir has significant **hydropower, mineral and tourism potential**, but its geographic location is also a major strategic asset.
- Historically, Kashmir was a **trade and cultural crossroads**, connecting South Asia with Central Asia, Tibet and other regions.
- India could gradually develop **modern economic corridors** linking Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh with Central Asia, where security and diplomatic conditions permit.
- Such connectivity could create jobs in **transport, tourism, logistics, manufacturing, agriculture and services**.
- The approach would require both an **infrastructure roadmap and a diplomatic roadmap**, along with strong security arrangements.

Implications

- Better connectivity could create **new jobs and investment opportunities** for youth.
- Economic corridors can **spread development** across a **wider region** rather than concentrating it in a few cities.
- Greater economic connectivity could increase **regional trade and integration**.
- Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh could become a **gateway to Central Asian markets**.



- India's demographic advantage may weaken if young people do not get **productive economic opportunities**.

Way Forward

- Develop **phased connectivity projects** based on security and diplomatic conditions.
- Identify suitable **historical trade routes** for pilot economic corridors.
- Improve **skills, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities** for local youth.
- Combine connectivity with **security and confidence-building measures**.
- Promote Jammu and Kashmir as a centre for **trade, tourism and regional economic integration**.

Mains Question

India's demographic dividend can be realised only by creating adequate opportunities for its young population. Discuss the challenges and measures needed to harness India's demographic potential. (250 words)

The paradox of de-Sinification in global production

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.

Why in Focus?

- Global companies are **attempting to reduce dependence on China, but deeply embedded supplier networks, skills, technology and production capabilities make it difficult** to completely shift manufacturing ecosystems.

Key Highlights

- De-Sinification** refers to efforts by firms and countries to reduce dependence on Chinese

manufacturing and supply chains.

- The **shift goes beyond relocating final assembly; companies must also replace suppliers**, technology, skills and logistics networks embedded deep within production chains.
- China's industrial ecosystem is difficult to replicate because it is built on dense networks of suppliers**, specialised skills, tooling, logistics and accumulated production knowledge.
- Chinese firms expanding abroad face the reverse challenge**: they must recreate or relocate the ecosystem that supports their competitiveness within China.
- India is gaining opportunities through the China+1 strategy**, with companies such as TDK and Murata Manufacturing expanding manufacturing activities in India.

Implications for India

- Attracting factories without developing domestic supplier networks** may limit value addition.
- Shortages of skilled workers and specialised manufacturing capabilities** can restrict industrial expansion.
- Weak logistics and infrastructure** can increase production costs.
- Dependence on imported intermediate goods can limit** genuine localisation.

Way Forward

- Build competitive domestic supplier networks for intermediate goods** and components.
- Strengthen logistics, industrial infrastructure** and reliable power supply.
- Invest in advanced technical skills** and manufacturing capabilities.
- Promote R&D, technology transfer** and domestic value addition.
- Integrate Indian firms into global value chains** through targeted industrial policies.
- Evaluate investments based on the depth of local supplier linkages and capability creation**, not merely factory location.

Mains Question

“De-Sinification of global production presents an opportunity for India, but relocating factories alone cannot create a competitive manufacturing ecosystem.” Discuss. (250 words)

COP31 hosts Australia and Türkiye face the fossil-fuel question

Prelims: General 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?

- **COP31** will be held in **Antalya, Türkiye, in November 2026**.
- It is important because the conference comes at a time when countries are debating **fossil fuel transition, climate finance, adaptation and loss and damage**.

COP31 stands for the **31st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**. It is the annual global climate conference where countries negotiate and coordinate action on **climate change, emission reduction, adaptation and climate finance**.

Key Highlights

- **Türkiye will host COP31**, with its Environment Minister **Murat Kurum** serving as the COP31 President. **Australia** will manage the negotiation process, with Climate Change and Energy Minister **Chris Bowen** serving as Vice-President.
- This is an **unusual arrangement** because both Türkiye and Australia wanted to host COP31. Therefore, they agreed to share responsibilities.
- A **pre-COP meeting** will be held in **Fiji from October 5-8, 2026**. Pacific Island countries and Australia will discuss preparations and major issues for COP31.

- Both host countries depend heavily on **fossil fuels**. Coal, oil and gas provide around **90% of Australia's** and **80% of Türkiye's** energy needs. Australia is also the world's **third-largest fossil fuel exporter**.
- A major focus of COP31 is **electrification**. The aim is to increase the share of electricity in final energy demand from just over **20% today to 35% by 2035**, especially in **transport, buildings and industry**.
- Other priorities include **oceans and seas, electric vehicles (EVs), zero waste, circular economy, recycling and methane reduction**.
- However, the COP31 priorities do not directly mention a **transition away from fossil fuels** or **loss and damage financing**. This could become an important issue during negotiations.

Implications

- Heavy dependence on fossil fuels in the host countries may create questions about the **pace of global energy transition**.
- Developing countries continue to demand greater **climate finance** for adaptation, mitigation and addressing **loss and damage** caused by climate change.
- Countries have different levels of **development, energy needs and historical responsibility**. Therefore, a single energy transition pathway may not be suitable for all countries.
- There is a growing **implementation gap** because countries may announce ambitious climate targets but lack sufficient **finance, technology and capacity** to implement them.
- Climate-vulnerable countries, particularly **Small Island Developing States (SIDS)**, face greater risks from extreme weather events and therefore seek stronger action on **adaptation and loss and damage**.
- Achieving consensus among countries with different economic interests remains a major challenge in **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** negotiations.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is an international environmental treaty adopted in **1992** to address climate change by stabilising **greenhouse gas concentrations** in the atmosphere.



Way Forward

- COP31 should give balanced attention to **mitigation, adaptation, climate finance and loss and damage**.
- The transition towards clean energy should be based on **Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC)**, while considering different national circumstances.
- Countries should accelerate **renewable energy, electrification, energy efficiency and clean technologies**.
- Developed countries should strengthen the availability of **predictable and accessible climate finance** for developing countries.
- Negotiations should remain **inclusive and consensus-based**, giving adequate importance to the concerns of climate-vulnerable countries.

Mains Question

Q. COP31 is being held at a time when the world faces the twin challenges of reducing fossil fuel dependence and ensuring adequate climate finance for developing countries. Discuss. (15 marks, 250 words)

Should voting be a fundamental right?

Prelims: General Paper 1

Current events of national and international importance.

Mains: General studies

Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies.

Why in Focus

- A recent report has highlighted differences within the **Election Commission of India (ECI)** over changes in electoral roll management and the use of the centralised **ECINet** system.
- The issue has brought attention to the **right to vote, accurate voter lists and the role of technology in elections**.

ECINet is a **centralised digital platform of the Election Commission of India (ECI)** designed to integrate and manage election-related data, services and processes through a common technological system.

Key Highlights

- The Election Commission of India (ECI) has three members. **Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi reportedly raised 14 objections over 10 months against decisions taken under Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar**, concerning electoral rolls, voter additions and deletions, and access to voter data.
- In **Goa, 97 eligible voters** were reportedly removed from the electoral roll. The problem was that the **ECINet software did not allow Electoral Registration Officers (EROs-ground-level officers)** to reverse the deletions.
- This shows that a **technical problem in an electoral system can directly affect a citizen's ability to vote**.
- Electoral rolls are important because they determine who can participate in elections. Errors such as **wrongful deletion, duplicate names and inclusion of ineligible persons** can affect the principle of **one person, one vote**.
- **Article 326** of the Constitution provides for elections based on **universal adult suffrage**, meaning every eligible adult citizen can vote without discrimination based on **gender, caste, religion, education or property**.
- The **Representation of the People Act (RPA), 1950** provides the legal framework for preparing and revising electoral rolls. The **RPA, 1951** deals mainly with the conduct of elections and electoral offences.
- In **Kuldip Nayar v. Union of India (2006)**, the Supreme Court held that the **right to elect is a statutory right**, and not a fundamental right. However, free and fair elections and democracy are important constitutional principles.

Implications

- **Wrongful exclusion** can prevent an eligible citizen from voting and weaken **democratic participation**.
- **Centralised technology** can make the electoral

process faster, but errors can become difficult to correct if local officials do not have sufficient control.

- **Lack of correction mechanisms** can turn a simple software or administrative mistake into a serious electoral problem.
- The ECI needs to maintain a balance between **removing ineligible voters** and ensuring that genuine voters are not removed.
- Electoral roll errors can reduce **public confidence** in the election process, particularly when corrections are delayed.
- Increasing use of technology makes **transparency, accountability and human oversight** important in electoral administration.

Way Forward

- Give Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) effective powers to **correct genuine errors and restore wrongly deleted names**.
- Ensure that voters receive **proper notice and an opportunity to raise objections** before their names are removed.
- Conduct regular **technical audits and independent checks** of digital electoral systems.
- Maintain clear **records and audit trails** so that every addition, deletion or correction can be tracked.
- Combine **digital systems with human verification** to ensure that technology supports, rather than weakens, the **right to vote and electoral integrity**.
- **Strengthen the legal protection of the right to vote** by considering its elevation from a **statutory right to a fundamental right**. This would subject decisions affecting voter inclusion to **greater judicial scrutiny** while allowing the ECI to continue correcting electoral rolls.

Mains Question

Q. Accurate electoral rolls are essential for free and fair elections. Discuss how digitalisation of electoral roll management can improve the electoral process while also creating new challenges. (15 marks, 250 words)

KEYWORDS

United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

- The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is **one of the principal organs of the United Nations and has the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security**.
- The **UNSC consists of 15 members: five permanent members with veto power and ten non-permanent members** elected by the UN General Assembly for two-year terms.
- Under Article 25 of the UN Charter, all **UN Member States agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council** in accordance with the Charter.
- The **UNSC can determine threats to international peace, recommend methods for settling disputes, impose sanctions, and authorise military action** in certain circumstances
- The **headquarters of the UNSC is located at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City, United States**.

Places in News

Himlung Peak

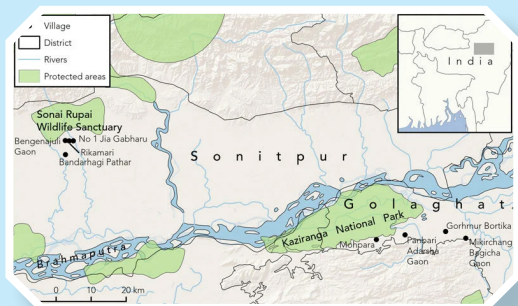


- **Himlung Peak** is currently in the news because a **severe avalanche** recently hit its base camp, leaving at least **10 local climbers and guides missing** amid ongoing weather-related disasters in the region.



- It is located in the remote **Nar Phu Valley** of the **Manaslu region** in **western Nepal**, close to the **Tibetan border**.
- The mountain stands at an elevation of **7,126 metres (23,379 feet)** in the **Himalayas**.
- Geographically and ecologically, it falls within the **Manaslu Conservation Area**, a protected Himalayan zone known for its **distinct biodiversity and high-altitude terrain**.
- It is classified as a **semi-technical mountain** and is popular among mountaineers as a **preparatory and acclimatisation peak** for extreme **8,000-metre expeditions**, including **Mount Everest**.

Sonai Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary



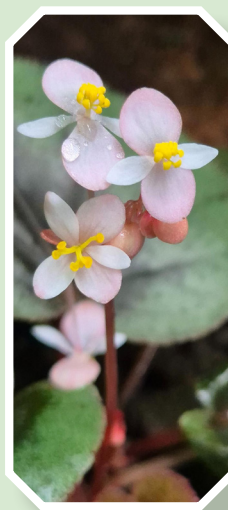
- **Sonai Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary** was in the news after PM Modi highlighted its elephant conservation efforts in Mann Ki Baat.
- Sonai Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary is **located in the northwestern part of Sonitpur district, Assam**, and extends along the foothills of the Himalayan range.
- The **sanctuary covers an area of about 220 sq. km**, of which **approximately 175 sq. km** constitutes the core area.
- The **Burhidihing River** flows through the sanctuary, while the **Namchang River**, originating in Arunachal Pradesh, enters the sanctuary and joins the Burhidihing River.

- The vegetation of the sanctuary is **predominantly evergreen forest**, with **grasslands** also occurring in the region.
- The **sanctuary supports species such as Asian elephants, Indian gaur, one-horned rhinoceros, leopard and tiger**, while its avifauna includes the **White-winged Wood Duck**.

Species In News

Begonia rajvikramanii

- **Begonia rajvikramanii** is a **new species of flowering plant** discovered in the **Western Ghats of Kollam district, Kerala**.
- It was identified by researchers from **JNTBGRI, Thiruvananthapuram**, during an exploration in the **evergreen forests of Rosemala**.
- The species grows on **wet rocky cliffs and road-cut walls** at elevations of about **200-350 metres**.
- It is currently known only from its **type locality at Rosemala**, with around **200 mature individuals** occupying less than **5 km²**.
- It has been assessed as **Data Deficient (DD)** under the **IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria (2024)**.
- The species was named after **R. Raj Vikraman**, a former Head of the Garden Management Division at **Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute (JNTBGRI)**.



Whimbrel

- **Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*)** is a **large migratory shorebird** and one of the widest-ranging curlews.
- A **curlew** is a **medium-sized or large shorebird** of the genus *Numenius*, known for its **long, downward-curved bill**.
- It breeds in **Arctic regions of North America and Eurasia**, including northern **Canada and Alaska**.
- It is a **long-distance migrant**, travelling thousands of kilometres to its non-breeding grounds, which extend as far south as **Bolivia**.
- During migration, they often use **dry upland areas**, feeding mainly on **insects and seeds**.
- In winter, they inhabit **marshes and coastal mudflats**, where they probe the ground for **worms and crabs**.
- Some individuals can make **non-stop flights of about 2,500 miles over open ocean**.
- **IUCN Red List status: Least Concern (LC)**.

