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FORTUNE WEEKLY DIGEST

EDITOR'S NOTE

As UPSC aspirants, it is essential to stay updated on current affairs to excel in the examination. This **Fortune Weekly Digest (ForWarD)** brings you the latest news and developments from around the world, carefully curated and analyzed to help you prepare for the Civil Services (Main) Examination.

We understand that time is precious, and we have made sure to present the information in a concise and easy-to-understand manner.

The magazine is divided into different sections. Mains relevant topics have been covered in detail with a UPSC previous year question perspective. The jot downs are examples and interesting facts to enrich your answer writing. Cherrypicks has some key words from the week, helpful again in answer writing and essay. We have also included essay topics and sample questions to help you guage your preparation.

We have designed this magazine to best supplement the daily current affairs notes we have launched by the name of **FIND (Fortune IAS News Daily)** and **FINDER (Fortune IAS News Daily Explainer)** and the **Fortune Prelims Precise** monthly compilation. This magazine will be explained in detail and your queries addressed in a live class we conduct.

At a time when there is no dearth of current affairs materials, our hope is help you get a one-stop solution for all your current affairs needs.

This magazine is a work in progress and your feedback will be appreciated.

We hope that this magazine will serve as a valuable resource for your exam preparation and contribute to your success in the UPSC examination.

INDEX

FIRST ATTEMPT TOPPERS FROM
OUR PRELIMS CUM MAINS BATCH

KASTURI SHA
AIR 68

MANJIMA P
AIR 235

FABI RASHEED
AIR 71

SWATHI S BABU
AIR 522

OORMILA J S
AIR 561

WOMEN IN POWER

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ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH REGULATORY AGENCY FOR INDIA

Syllabus: GS III - Environmental Pollution and Degradation

PYQ MAPPING

Q) *What are the key features of the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) initiated by the Government of India?* **(2020)**

Q) *Describe the key points of the revised Global Air Quality Guidelines (AQGs) recently released by the World Health Organisation (WHO). How are these different from its last update in 2005? What changes in India's National Clean Air Programme are required to achieve these revised standards?* **(2021)**

Q) *Describe the major outcomes of the 2 6th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). What are the commitments made by India in this conference?* **(2021)**

WHY IN NEWS

A recent article in *The Hindu* reported on the conclusion of the **2024 Conference of Parties (COP 29) in Baku, Azerbaijan,** where India advocated for stronger climate mitigation financing from developed nations.The article also highlighted the **UN Emissions Gap Report 2024, showing a 6% rise in India's greenhouse gas emissions**, signaling urgent environmental and health concerns.

INTRODUCTION

As India's economy grows rapidly, the links between climate, environment, public health, and economic development become clearer. However, the capacity to address these challenges holistically is limited. Establishing an **Environmental Health Regulatory Agency (EHRA)** would provide a **unified approach to managing pollution and health risks**, ensuring more effective environmental governance.

SHORT TAKES

➤ **Air Quality Index (AQI):** AQI in India measures air quality based on eight key pollutants as per the guidelines of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) which includes ground-level ozone, particle pollution (PM2.5/PM10), carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, ammonia and lead with higher values indicating greater pollution and health risks.

➤ **Health Impact Assessment (HIA):** A systematic process used to evaluate the potential health effects of a policy, programme, or project on a population, considering both positive and negative outcomes.

➤ **Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)**: A group of human-made chemicals that are persistent in the environment and human body, often referred to as "forever chemicals."

➤ **New European Bauhaus (NEB)**: A European Commission (executive arm of European Union) initiative aimed at transforming construction methods and urban spaces to achieve climate-neutrality and environmental sustainability.

DETERIORATING AQI IN INDIA

→ **High AQI Levels in Northern India**: Air quality in regions like Delhi-NCR has been recently categorized in **'very poor, severe and severe plus categories'** with AQI levels ranging from 300-500, owing to the winter months and festive seasons.

Table 3.11 Breakpoints for AQI Scale 0-500 (units: $\mu g/m^3$ unless mentioned otherwise)

AQI Category (Range)	PM$_{10}$ 24-hr	PM$_{2.5}$ 24-hr	NO$_2$ 24-hr	O$_3$ 8-hr	CO 8-hr (mg/m^3)	SO$_2$ 24-hr	NH$_3$ 24-hr	Pb 24-hr
Good (0-50)	0-50	0-30	0-40	0-50	0-1.0	0-40	0-200	0-0.5
Satisfactory (51-100)	51-100	31-60	41-80	51-100	1.1-2.0	41-80	201-400	0.6 -1.0
Moderate (101-200)	101-250	61-90	81-180	101-168	2.1- 10	81-380	401-800	1.1-2.0
Poor (201-300)	251-350	91-120	181-280	169-208	10.1-17	381-800	801-1200	2.1-3.0
Very poor (301-400)	351-430	121-250	281-400	209-748*	17.1-34	801-1600	1201-1800	3.1-3.5
Severe (401-500)	430 +	250+	400+	748+*	34+	1600+	1800+	3.5+

One hourly monitoring (for mathematical calculation only)

Image credit: National Air Quality Index Report by Central Pollution Control Board

- **Health Impacts**: There has been a sharp **rise in respiratory and cardiovascular diseases,** with an increase in asthma and other pollution-related health issues, especially among vulnerable groups like children, the elderly, and pregnant women.

- **Sources of Pollution**: Key sources include vehicular emissions, industrial activities, stubble burning, and household combustion (wood, coal, and biomass).

- **Government Measures**: The Union Health Ministry has issued advisories urging people to **limit outdoor activities** and for state health departments to prepare for the health impacts of rising pollution levels, along with **public awareness campaigns** in regional languages.

- **Need for Regulation**: The fluctuating air quality in Delhi highlights the ongoing public health risks posed by environmental pollution, underscoring the urgent need for a **comprehensive regulatory framework**.

NEED FOR AN ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH REGULATORY AGENCY (EHRA)

- **Rising Environmental Health Challenges:** Exposure to pollutants in air, water, and soil is linked to a range of **non-communicable diseases**, including respiratory, cardiovascular, and mental health disorders.

  o **Example**: Air pollution, particularly **PM2.5,** has been shown to affect pregnancy outcomes and child development.

- **Fragmented Governance:** India's current environmental governance, led by bodies like the CPCB, MoEFCC, and MoHFW, lacks coordination, resulting in disconnected efforts to monitor and address environmental health.

- **Addressing Local and National Challenges:** Environmental health issues in India are region-specific, requiring tailored interventions.

  o **Example:** Urban areas like Delhi face severe air pollution, while rural areas deal with water contamination and vector-borne diseases, necessitating localized solutions.

- **Evidence-Based Policy Making:** India's environmental health challenges require a science-driven regulatory framework based on reliable data, such as the effects of air quality and climate change.

- **Alignment with Global Commitments:** As a signatory to the **Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals**, India needs an EHRA to align national policies with global standards, ensuring progress towards international climate and health targets.

BENEFITS OF ESTABLISHING AN EHRA

- **Unified Response to Pollution:** An EHRA can integrate environmental health and pollution control efforts, leading to a more coordinated and comprehensive response to air, water, and soil pollution.

- **Improved Public Health Outcomes:** By focusing on **Health Impact Assessments(HIA) and integrating them into development projects**, an EHRA can prevent the escalation of health risks associated with environmental pollutants.

- **Economic Resilience through Sustainable Practices:** Contrary to fears that environmental regulation may hinder economic growth, an EHRA can promote sustainable practices that drive innovation, create green jobs, and foster long-term economic resilience.

- **Enhanced Governance and Accountability:** A centralised agency can ensure the development of clear frameworks for inter-ministerial coordination, measurable objectives, and cross-sectoral cooperation.

- **Facilitating Public and Citizen Involvement:** By educating citizens and empowering communities, an EHRA can build public support for environmental health policies, fostering grassroots initiatives.

- **Integration of Data for Effective Action:** An EHRA could integrate environmental and health data, enabling evidence-based policy making and more effective regulation

CHALLENGES OF ESTABLISHING EHRA

- **Bureaucratic Resistance:** Institutional inertia and reluctance to adopt new regulatory frameworks could delay the establishment of an EHRA.

  o **Example:** Resistance from industries accustomed to less stringent environmental controls could be a significant barrier.

- **Coordination Among Ministries:** Effective functioning of an EHRA requires seamless coordination between multiple ministries, which may prove challenging due to differing priorities and agendas.

- **Industry Pushback:** Industries may resist stricter regulations due to perceived economic costs,

potentially hindering the adoption of comprehensive environmental health policies.

⚡ **Funding and Resources:** Adequate funding and resources are essential to establish and maintain the EHRA's operations, including **research, monitoring, and enforcement activities.**

GLOBAL BEST PRACTICES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH REGULATION

☼ **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):** The EPA regulates air and water quality, waste management, and toxic substances while incorporating health assessments into environmental policies.

  o **Recent Initiative**: The U.S. EPA launched the **Tackling Emerging Contaminants (TEC) initiative** to provide no-cost technical assistance to small and disadvantaged communities in addressing perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and other emerging contaminants in drinking water.

☼ **Germany's Federal Environment Agency-Umweltbundesamt (UBA):** The UBA manages air, water, and waste regulations and supports sustainable energy policies and climate change mitigation.

  o **Recent Initiative:** The AdNEB project, led by the German UBA, aligns with the European Commission's New European Bauhaus initiative to promote **climate-neutral, ecologically sustainable, socially inclusive, and health-promoting urban spaces by 2050**, integrating art, culture, science, and technology.

☼ **Japan's Ministry of the Environment (MOE):** The MOE tackles pollution, chemical safety, and ecosystem protection, collaborating with health agencies to monitor environmental health and enforce pollution controls.

  o **Recent Initiative:** Japan's MOE has launched the **Model Project for Promoting Creation of Zero Food Loss and Waste Areas**, adopting and supporting nine projects from local governments and business operators to prevent food waste.

WAY FORWARD

✳ **Institutionalizing an EHRA:** Establish a dedicated agency with clear objectives, operational independence, and scientific expertise to integrate environmental and health policy.

✳ **Inter-Ministerial Coordination:** Establish clear frameworks for coordination between ministries, including the Ministry of Health, MoEFCC, and Ministry of Finance, to ensure that environmental health is prioritized in national policy.

✳ **Engaging with Industry:** Develop policy incentives for industries to adopt cleaner technologies and sustainable practices, ensuring that environmental health measures are economically viable.

✳ **Localized Solutions:** Work closely with state and local governments to develop and enforce tailored environmental health policies that address regional challenges, from air pollution in urban areas to water contamination in rural regions.

✳ **Public Education and Empowerment:** Implement nationwide campaigns to raise awareness about the links between environmental factors and health, empowering communities to advocate for cleaner air and water.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, establishing an Environmental Health Regulatory Agency (EHRA) in India is crucial for bridging the gap between environmental governance and public health. By adopting a data-driven, interdisciplinary approach, India can create a sustainable framework that benefits both its citizens' health and long-term environmental resilience.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) In the context of rapid economic growth and environmental degradation, how can the establishment of an Environmental Health Regulatory Agency (EHRA) enhance India's public health and environmental policy framework? **(10marks)(150 words)**

TACKLING THE PACKAGED FOOD DILEMMA

Embracing nutrition is no longer an option, but essential for business and for public health
- Global Access to Nutrition Index

Syllabus: GS III - Food processing and related industries in India

PYQ MAPPING

Q) What are the challenges and opportunities of the food processing sector in the country? How can income of the farmers be substantially increased by encouraging food processing? **(2020)**

Q) Elaborate the scope and significance of the food processing industry in India **(2022)**

INTRODUCTION

The growing consumption of processed foods high in sugar, salt, and unhealthy fats is fueling a global health crisis, especially in low- and middle-income countries. Regulatory bodies are advocating for clearer nutritional labels and stricter food laws to promote healthier dietary choices.

WHY IN NEWS

The **Access to Nutrition Initiative (ATNi)** has released the fifth edition of its **Global Access to Nutrition Index,** revealing that leading food and beverage companies sell less healthy products in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) compared to high-income countries (HICs). The report assessed 30 major manufacturers, covering 23% of the global market, on efforts to improve access to nutritious foods.

SHORT TAKES

➢ **Access to Nutrition Initiative (ATNi):** An independent non-profit organization based in the Netherlands that assesses and ranks the world's largest food manufacturers on their nutrition-related commitments, practices, and performance to encourage healthier products and responsible consumer influence.

➢ **Codex Alimentarius Commission:** It is an international organization established by the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** and the **World Health Organization (WHO)** to develop food standards, guidelines, and codes of practice to ensure food safety and fair trade practices globally. As of 2024, it has **189 members**, including **188 member countries** and **1 member organization** (the European Union).

➢ **National Multi-Sectoral Action Plan (NMAP):** Developed by India in 2017, provides a comprehensive roadmap with policy options to guide multi-sectoral efforts towards the prevention and control of common Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs).

IMPORTANT FINDINGS OF GLOBAL ACCESS TO NUTRITION INDEX

➡ **Product Analysis:** The report analysed **52,414 products from major brands** like Nestlé, PepsiCo, Unilever, Coca-Cola, and Hershey using a health star rating system.

➡ **Health Star Rating:** Products are **rated out of 5, with a score above 3.5 considered healthier.**

   o The rating balances risk components (energy, saturated fat, sugars, sodium) against beneficial components (protein, fibre, fruits, vegetables, nuts, legumes).

➡ **Lower Healthiness in LMICs:** Products in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) scored an average of 1.8, compared to 2.3 in high-income countries (HICs), revealing disparities in product healthiness across markets.

➡ **Affordable Pricing Strategy:** Only 30% of companies have strategies to price healthier products affordably for lower-income consumers.

➡ **Micronutrient Data Gaps:** Micronutrient (essential vitamins and minerals needed in small amounts for vital bodily functions) data was less frequently labeled on products in LMICs than in high-income countries, pointing to a lack of transparency in nutritional information..

ISSUES

- 🔴 **High Sugar Content in Baby Food:** Reports indicate that products sold in low- and middle-income countries have higher sugar content compared to those in Europe, leading to concerns about child nutrition.

  - o *Example*: A report by Public Eye and International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) found that **Nestlé's baby food in India, Africa, and Latin America contains more sugar** than the same products in Europe.

  - o NAPi Analysis found pre-packaged foods high in nutrients of concern, advocating for stricter regulations to curb unhealthy food consumption

- 🔴 **Rising Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) Burden**: India faces a significant NCD crisis, with over **10.13 crore diabetes cases** and obesity affecting 24% of women and 23% of men.

  - o *Example*: Unhealthy diets, processed foods, and reduced physical activity, was noted as the cause of NCD burden in the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) report and the Economic Survey 2023-24.

- 🔴 **Undernutrition and Micronutrient Deficiencies**: Despite rising obesity, undernutrition, anaemia, and micronutrient deficiencies remain prevalent.

- 🔴 **Unorganised and Small Producers:** Small-scale food producers, making up 80% of the processed food

market, operate with limited regulatory compliance, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas.

- o **Example:** Products like namkeen (savouries) often lack clear expiry dates or nutritional information, making it difficult for consumers to assess quality.

- 🔴 **Affordability of Healthy Diets**: Over 50% of Indians cannot afford a healthy diet, according to UN data, exacerbating reliance on processed, unhealthy foods.

- 🔴 **Lack of Front-of-Package Labelling (FOPL)**: India lags in implementing FOPL regulations, which could inform consumers about high sugar, fat, and sodium content in packaged foods.

  - o *Example*: Draft Food Safety and Standards (Labelling & Display) Amendment Regulation 2022 has seen little progress in two years.

- 🔴 **Aggressive Marketing of Junk Foods:** Children are exposed to harmful marketing of unhealthy foods, violating World Health Assembly (WHA) resolutions on food marketing to children.

- 🔴 **Consumer Ignorance:** Many consumers are unaware of the unhealthy levels of sugar, fat, and salt in processed foods, often due to misleading marketing and inadequate food labelling.

  - o **Example:** A 2022 survey showed that 55.4% of respondents considered packaged foods healthy, highlighting a gap in consumer education about nutritional content.

RECENT INITIATIVES

- 👁 **Revised Dietary Guidelines for Indians (DGIs):** Developed by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)-National Institute of Nutrition (NIN), Hyderabad.

  - o **Guidelines:**

    - • **Restricted food**s include protein supplements, highly processed items, and those high in sugar, salt, or trans fats.

    - • **Recommendations** emphasize eating fruits, vegetables, pulses, whole grains, and millets while reducing sugar, salt, refined oils, soft drinks, and alcohol.

    - • **Lifestyle changes** suggest limiting screen time, ensuring proper sleep, staying active, and drinking enough water.

    - • **Nutritional and economic concerns** point to iron, folic acid, and macronutrient deficiencies caused by a cereal-heavy diet over costlier pulses and meat.

- 👁 **WHO Guidelines on Packaged Food Labelling**

  - o **Introduction of Front-of-Pack (FOP) Labels:** WHO recommends **easy-to-read nutritional information** on the front of packaged food and drinks to help consumers make **healthier choices**.

  - o **Focus on Interpretive Labels:** WHO advises governments to adopt **"interpretive" labels** like **NutriScore**, which rank products based on their nutritional value (A to E), providing clarity on **healthiness**.

- 👁 **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) Initiatives**

  - o **Approval of Nutritional Labelling Changes:** FSSAI has approved a proposal to display **total sugar, salt, and saturated fat** in **bold letters** and larger font sizes on **packaged food labels**, aiming to improve consumer awareness and help make healthier choices.

o **Prevention of Misleading Claims**: FSSAI asked all Food Business Operators (FBOs) to remove any **claim of '100% fruit juices'** from the labels and advertisements of reconstituted fruit juices.

👁 **Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) Guidelines**

o **Revisions to the Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling :** New nutrient reference values (NRVs-R) for **children aged 6 to 36 months** were adopted to guide the development of science-based nutritional labeling for this age group.

o **Pre-Packaged Foods via E-Commerce**: New guidelines ensure that pre-packaged food sold online provides consumers with **necessary product information** on e-commerce platforms.

o **Use of Technology in Food Labelling**: Codex has adopted guidelines encouraging the use of technology to enhance food labeling, especially through electronic formats for safety and nutritional information.

SOLUTIONS

☀ **Mandatory Front-of-Package Labelling (FOPL)**: Implement clear warning labels on foods with high sugar, fat, and sodium content.

o **Example**: Chile & Mexico successfully reduced sugary beverage consumption through mandatory FOPL.

☀ **National Multisectoral Action Plan (NMAP):** Strengthen and expand the NMAP to address food labelling and regulate junk food marketing to children effectively.

☀ **Address Industry Concerns:** Governments can engage with industry stakeholders to develop balanced solutions that ensure public health without demonising specific products.

o Providing tax incentives for companies offering healthier options could ease industry resistance and promote voluntary compliance.

☀ **Regulatory Enforcement**: Introduce and enforce mandatory food labelling policies instead of relying on voluntary efforts by companies, which have proven insufficient.

☀ **Support for Small Producers:** Encouraging smaller producers to comply with food safety standards by providing training and resources, particularly in the informal sector.

o **Example:** The **"Clean Street Food" project,** which trained 20,000 street vendors, should be expanded to include more small producers of packaged snacks.

☀ **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Conduct campaigns to educate consumers about the health risks associated with processed foods and the benefits of reading food labels.

o **Example**: Campaigns like **"Eat Right India"** could be expanded to educate consumers on how to spot harmful ingredients and make healthier choices.

☀ **Price Regulation of Healthier Foods:** Develop strategies to make healthier food options affordable for lower-income groups, ensuring better access to nutritious foods.

☀ **Monitoring and Research:** Continuously assess food composition and marketing trends to ensure regulatory measures are effective and adapt them based on emerging health data.

CONCLUSION

To address the growing health challenges posed by packaged foods, effective food labelling and consumer education are essential. By implementing mandatory front-of-package labels and promoting healthier food options, governments can empower consumers to make informed choices and improve public health outcomes.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) What are the health implications of highly processed packaged foods, and how can labeling policies help mitigate these risks? **(10marks)(150 words)**

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Syllabus: GS II - Issues relating to development and management of Human Resources

PYQ MAPPING

Q) *India's proximity to two of the world's biggest illicit opium-growing states has enhanced her internal security concerns. Explain the linkages between drug trafficking and other illicit activities such as gunrunning, money laundering and human trafficking. What counter-measures should be taken to prevent the same?* **(2018)**

SHORT TAKES

➢ **Repatriation**: In this case refers to the return of trafficked individuals to their country of origin, ensuring their safety, rights, and dignity are respected throughout the process.

➢ **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC):** Established in 1997, it works globally to combat illicit drugs, international crime, and terrorism. Headquartered in Vienna, it operates 20 field offices worldwide.

INTRODUCTION

Human trafficking remains a grave global human rights issue, exploiting vulnerable individuals for forced labour, sexual exploitation, and other forms of abuse. Despite international and national efforts, the crime continues to thrive, demanding stronger preventative and rehabilitative measures.
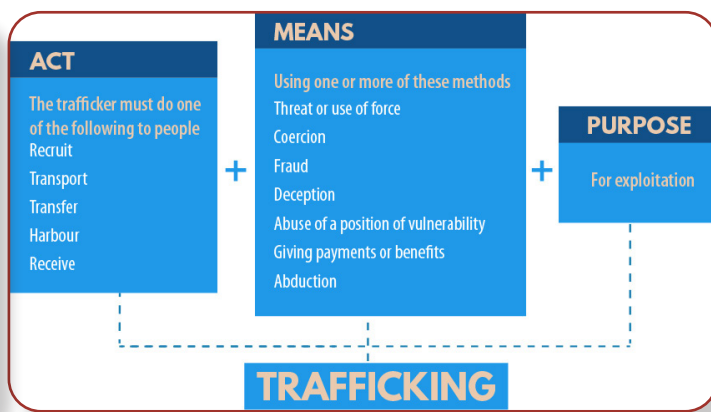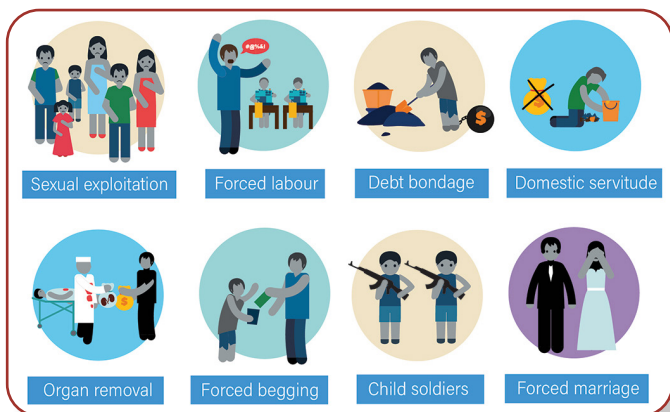
WHY IN NEWS

The Supreme Court bench led by Justice P.B. Pardiwala highlighted that the government has not implemented its 2015 direction to establish the **"Organised Crime Investigative Agency" (OCIA)** for investigating sex trafficking. The Court had originally set a deadline for the agency to be operational by December 1, 2016, but it remains unformed.
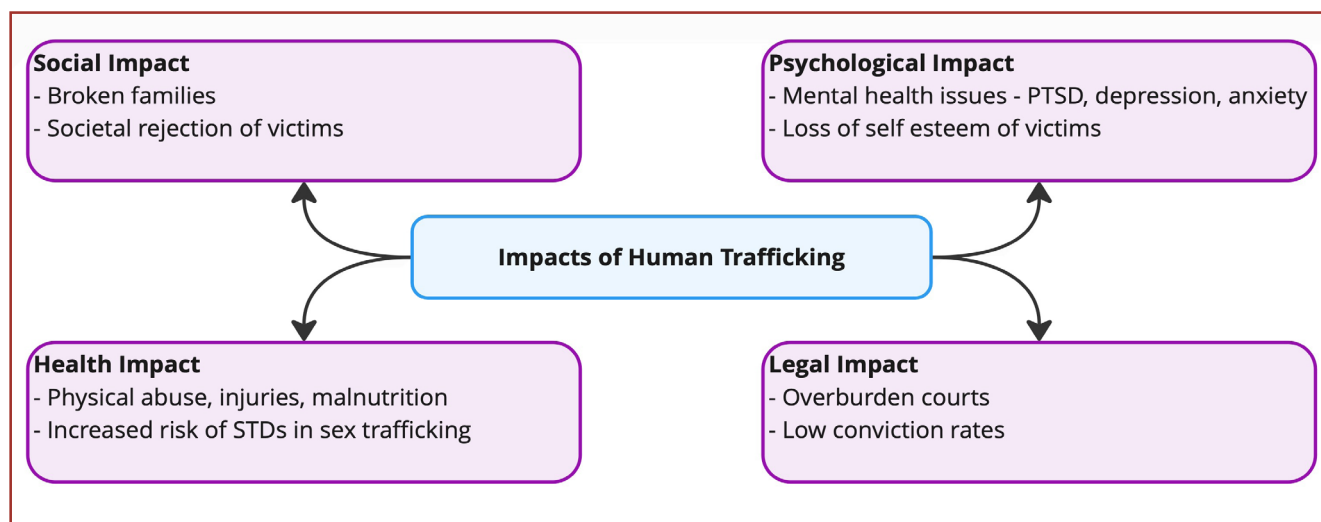
WHAT IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

- **Definition**: Human trafficking involves the recruitment, transportation, transfer, or harbouring of individuals through force, fraud, or deception, with the intent to exploit them for profit.

- **Victim Profile & Tactics**: Traffickers target people of all ages and backgrounds, using violence, fake job offers, and fraudulent promises of education or employment to coerce them.

PURPOSES

Sexual exploitation | Forced labour | Debt bondage | Domestic servitude
Organ removal | Forced begging | Child soldiers | Forced marriage

ACT
The trafficker must do one of the following to people
Recruit
Transport
Transfer
Harbour
Receive

+

MEANS
Using one or more of these methods
Threat or use of force
Coercion
Fraud
Deception
Abuse of a position of vulnerability
Giving payments or benefits
Abduction

+

PURPOSE
For exploitation

TRAFFICKING

CAUSES

➡ **Poverty:** Economic hardships drive individuals to accept risky job offers, making them vulnerable to trafficking.

➡ **Lack of Education and Awareness:** Low literacy levels prevent people from recognising fraudulent job or migration schemes.

➡ **Gender Inequality:** Women and children, especially from marginalised communities, are more vulnerable due to societal discrimination.

➡ **Weak Law Enforcement and Corruption:** Inadequate legal frameworks and corrupt officials enable traffickers to operate with impunity.

➡ **Organised Crime Networks:** Transnational crime syndicates involved in trafficking exploit weak borders and legal loopholes.

➡ **Conflict and Political Instability:** War and displacement increase vulnerability, with refugees often targeted by traffickers.

Impacts of Human Trafficking

Social Impact
- Broken families
- Societal rejection of victims

Psychological Impact
- Mental health issues - PTSD, depression, anxiety
- Loss of self esteem of victims

Health Impact
- Physical abuse, injuries, malnutrition
- Increased risk of STDs in sex trafficking

Legal Impact
- Overburden courts
- Low conviction rates

PROVISIONS RELATED TO TRAFFICKING IN INDIA

⚑ **Constitutional Provision**

o Article 23(1) of the Indian Constitution prohibits human trafficking and forced labour.

⚑ **Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 (ITPA):**

o Primary legislation for preventing trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation.

⚑ **Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013:**

o Sections 370 and 370A IPC addressed trafficking for exploitation, including sexual exploitation, slavery, servitude, and organ removal.

o As per the new Indian Criminal Law, **IPC Section 370** has been replaced by **BNS Section 143**, and **Section 370A** by **BNS Section 144**, effective **1st July 2024**.

  • The term **"minor"** is replaced with **"child"**, and imprisonment limits have been raised: from **7 to 10 years** and **5 to 7 years** under subsection (2).

⚑ **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO)**

Act, 2012:

o Special law protecting children from sexual abuse and exploitation, with clear definitions of offences like penetrative and non-penetrative assault.

⚑ **Other Relevant Legislations:**

o **Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006** – Prevents trafficking through forced child marriages.

o **Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976** – Abolishes bonded labour practices.

o **Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986** – Prevents child exploitation in labour.

o **Transplantation of Human Organs Act, 1994** – Prevents trafficking for illegal organ trade.

o **BNS Sections 98 and 99** – Deal with selling and buying girls for prostitution.

⚑ **State-Specific Legislation:**

o **Punjab Prevention of Human Smuggling Act, 2012** – Targets human smuggling in Punjab.

ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES AND INTERVENTIONS

✎ **Anti-Trafficking Cell (ATC):**

o Set up in the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in 2006 as a focal point for coordinating anti-trafficking efforts across States/UTs.

o Regular coordination meetings are held with Nodal Officers of Anti Human Trafficking Units in all States/UTs.

✎ **Advisories Issued by MHA:**

o MHA has issued comprehensive advisories to States/UTs to combat human trafficking like

  • Advisory on human trafficking as organised

crime (30.4.2012)

  • Advisory on trafficking of foreign nationals (1.5.2012)

  • SOP for handling child labour trafficking (12.8.2013)

✎ **AHTU (Anti-Human Trafficking Unit)**

o A specialized law enforcement unit in India focused on investigating human trafficking crimes, rescuing victims, and prosecuting traffickers

o A total of 696 AHTUs have been established as per the National Crime Records Bureau's "Crime in

India 2020".

✏️ **Ujjawala Scheme:**

o A comprehensive scheme by the **Ministry of Women and Child Development** focused on the prevention of trafficking and the rescue, rehabilitation, reintegration, and repatriation of trafficking victims.

✏️ **Judicial Colloquium**:

o **Judicial colloquiums** are held to sensitize and train trial court judicial officers on human trafficking.

o Eleven colloquiums have been conducted across various states including Chandigarh, Delhi, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, and Odisha

✏️ **NIA Action Against Trafficking Syndicate:**

o On November 28, 2024, the **NIA raided 22 locations across six states**, targeting a **syndicate luring youth abroad with fake job offers and forcing them into cyber fraud call centres**, highlighting efforts to combat trafficking linked to cybercrime.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND INITIATIVES

🤝 **United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime (UNCTOC) Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children**

o **Adoption & Significance:**

• Adopted by the UN in November 2000 and is the first legally binding instrument to define human trafficking internationally.

• India has ratified the protocol in 2011

o **Legal Obligations:**

• Ratifying countries must **criminalise human trafficking and align national laws with the Protocol**, addressing all forms of exploitation.

• Signatories must also ensure **victim protection** and safeguard their rights.

MAP 2.
Status of the Trafficking in Persons Protocol

■ Party to the Protocol
■ Not yet Party to the Protocol

Trafficking in Persons Protocol
Parties: 181   as of 23 Feburary 2023

*Source: Treaties.un.org.
**The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

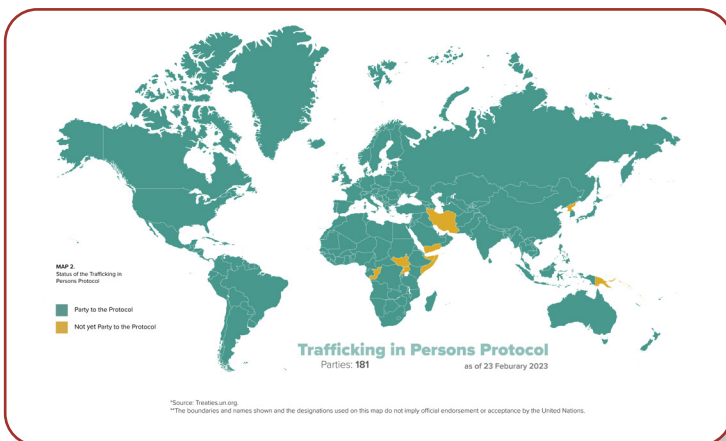🤝 **SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution**

o **Objectives**: Focuses on preventing the use of women and children in international prostitution networks and ensuring the repatriation and rehabilitation of victims, particularly in SAARC-origin, transit, and destination countries.

• Signed by SAARC Member States including India on 5th January, 2002 and came into force on 15th November, 2005 after ratification.

🤝 **Blue Heart Campaign**

o **Aim:** Launched by the **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)** to raise awareness about human trafficking and its devastating effects on individuals and societies.

o **Fundraising for Victims**: All proceeds from the campaign are directed to the **United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking.**

• This fund helps provide vital assistance to survivors, including shelter, legal assistance, and reintegration programs.

🤝 **World Day Against Trafficking in Persons**

o Observed every year on July 30

o **Theme 2024**: "Leave No Child Behind in the Fight Against Human Trafficking"

CHALLENGES

🔻 **Delay in Implementing SC Directions**

o The Supreme Court's 2015 direction to establish the **Organised Crime Investigative Agency (OCIA)** remains unimplemented.

o A committee under the Ministry of Women and Child Development for a comprehensive anti-

trafficking law and victim protection protocol has not made significant progress.

🔻 **Stalled Legislation**

o The **Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Care and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2018,** passed in the Lok Sabha, lapsed as it was not cleared by the Rajya

Sabha before Parliament was dissolved.

▼ Limited Amendments

o The government **expanded the National Investigation Agency's (NIA) jurisdiction in 2019** to include human trafficking, but no dedicated anti-trafficking law has been passed.

▼ Cyber-Enabled Trafficking

o There has been a significant rise in cyber-enabled sex trafficking, with insufficient legal and investigative frameworks to address the issue comprehensively.

▼ Inadequate Shelter and Services for Victims:

o Government-run shelters for trafficking victims are poorly monitored, and victims have limited access to freedom or victim-centered care.

▼ Ineffective Repatriation Mechanisms:

o The repatriation process for foreign victims, particularly from neighboring countries like Bangladesh and Nepal, is slow and bureaucratically complex, resulting in extended stays in shelters.

WAY FORWARD

✳ Implementation of Supreme Court Directives

o Expedite the formation of the Organised Crime Investigative Agency (OCIA)

✳ Revive and Pass Pending Legislation

o Reintroduce and fast-track the Trafficking of Persons Bill, ensuring thorough debate and clearance in both houses of Parliament.

✳ Strengthen Legal Frameworks

o Amend existing laws to specifically **address cyber-enabled trafficking** and **enhance coordination** between law enforcement and cybersecurity agencies.

o Anti Human Trafficking Units should be better funded, staffed, and trained, with a clearer mandate to address all forms of trafficking.

✳ Increase Accountability for Officials:

o Investigate and prosecute government officials complicit in trafficking crimes and ensure a zero-tolerance approach to corruption.

✳ Enhanced Victim Rehabilitation Mechanisms

o Regular audits and monitoring of government-run shelters must be conducted to ensure victim-centered, trauma-informed care.

✳ Inter-Agency Collaboration

o Strengthen cooperation between the NIA, state police, and international bodies to tackle cross-border and cyber-enabled trafficking.

✳ Awareness and Capacity Building

o Conduct training for law enforcement and judicial officers on emerging trafficking trends, particularly in digital spaces, to enhance their investigative capabilities.

» **Example**: **Training of Trainers (TOT)** workshops on combating human trafficking for police officers and prosecutors at regional, state, and district levels.

CONCLUSION

Combating human trafficking requires a multifaceted approach involving legal reforms, enhanced enforcement, and victim-centric support systems. By fostering global cooperation and community awareness, we can work towards eradicating this inhumane practice and restoring dignity to countless lives.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) "Human trafficking is both a crime and a human rights violation." Analyse its impact on vulnerable populations and the role of international conventions in combating it.**(10marks)(150 words)**

UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE COP 29

Syllabus: GS III - Economy

SHORT TAKES

➢ **Carbon market**

- o A carbon market is a system where companies or countries can buy and sell carbon credits, which represent the right to emit one ton of carbon dioxide (CO_2).

- o For example, if a government sets a limit (cap) on emissions for an industry, each company receives a certain number of carbon credits.

- o A company that reduces its emissions, say by switching to renewable energy, might have unused credits, while another company that exceeds its limit would need more credits to comply with regulations.

- o The second company can buy credits from the first through the carbon market. This ensures that total emissions remain within the cap while incentivizing eco-friendly practices.

➢ **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)**

- o It is an India-led global partnership aimed at enhancing infrastructure resilience to climate and disaster risks for sustainable development.

- o Launched in 2019 at the UN Climate Action Summit, it is India's second major global initiative after the International Solar Alliance.

WHY IN NEWS

The 29th UN Climate Change Conference (COP29) concluded in Baku, Azerbaijan, emphasizing the need to enhance climate finance, strengthen adaptation efforts, and foster global collaboration to address climate change.

INTRODUCTION

- • **COP29, the 29th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**, took place in Baku, Azerbaijan

- • It saw a gathering of over 65,000 world leaders, decision-makers, private sector organizations and civil society members.

- • At COP29, finance emerged as the key focus, particularly mobilizing and allocating funds for the necessary work.

  Key negotiations aimed to set a **new global climate finance target, strengthen nationally determined contributions**, make significant strides in **adaptation and loss and damage efforts**, and finalise the carbon markets mechanism

COP29 →→→   COP29 Baku Azerbaijan UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

➡ **New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG):**

- o The NCQG refers to a new international climate finance target aimed at addressing the financial needs of developing countries to combat climate change.

- o A $100 billion climate finance pledge was made by developed nations in 2009 during COP15 in Copenhagen, which was only met once in 2022.

- o However, recent studies have shown that the climate financing need is much higher that anticipated.

- • Example, **United Nations Global Policy Model (UN GPM)**, says that developing countries require around $1.1 trillion for climate finance from 2025, rising to around $1.8 trillion by 2030.

o After two weeks of discussions COP29 agreed on a "New Collective Quantified Goal for climate finance".

- Triple finance to developing countries, from the previous goal of $100 billion annually, to $300 billion annually by 2035.

- Secure efforts of all actors to work together to scale up finance to developing countries, from public and private sources, to the amount of $1.3 trillion per year by 2035.

o Both targets can be met through public and private sources.

o Importantly, India, along with several other developing countries like Bolivia and Nigeria, objected. They argued that the proposed funding levels are inadequate to address the climate crisis and do not reflect the needs of the Global South.

o They see the decision as a form of coercion by developed nations.

➡ **Article 6: Establishing a global architecture for carbon markets (explained above)**

o **Article 6.2:**

- Guidelines for authorizing carbon credit transactions, managing tracking registries, and ensuring environmental integrity through transparent technical reviews were clarified.

o **Article 6.4:**

- The centralized carbon crediting mechanism now mandates safeguards for environmental and human rights protection, including Indigenous Peoples' informed consent.

o **Supervisory Body:** An action plan for 2025 was adopted to oversee the mechanism's implementation.

➡ **COP29 Declaration on Reducing Methane:**

o **Global Methane Pledge:**

- Builds on the pledge to reduce global methane emissions by 30% by 2030, targeting emissions from agriculture, waste, and fossil fuels (India not a signatory).

o **Declaration on Reducing Methane from Organic Waste**

- More than 30 countries, including the US, Germany, the UK, and the UAE, have endorsed the COP29 **Declaration on Reducing Methane from Organic Waste, with India not being a signatory.**

o Aims to **reduce methane emissions from the waste sector**, which accounts for **20%** of global methane emissions.

o **Focus areas:** Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), regulation, data, finance, and partnerships.

- Encourages countries to include sectoral methane reduction targets in their NDCs.

➡ **Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities:**

o COP29 reinforced the role of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in climate action.

o Adoption of the **Baku Work Plan** to bridge indigenous knowledge with modern science and enhance their participation in climate dialogues.

o Renewed the mandate of the **Facilitative Working Group (FWG)** under the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform (LCIPP), with progress review in 2027.

➡ **Gender Equality and Climate Change Commitments**

o The **Lima Work Programme on Gender (LWPG),** established in 2014, will be extended for another 10 years.

o This extension reaffirms the commitment to gender equality in climate action and emphasizes the need for a new gender action plan to be adopted at **COP30 in Belém, Brazil.**

- The LWPG aims to promote gender balance and integrate gender considerations into climate policy and action, ensuring a gender-responsive approach under the Convention and the Paris Agreement.

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INDIA's INITIATIVE IN COP 29

Integrating Disaster Resilient Infrastructure into Adaptation Strategies	**Organizers**: Govt. of India (MoEFCC) and Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) **Key Highlights:**Focus on integrating **disaster risk reduction (DRI)** into national adaptation strategies to enhance resilience and sustainable development. • Emphasis on assessing infrastructure vulnerability to climate risks and embedding DRI into long-term goals. • 88% of adaptation costs relate to infrastructure, highlighting the need for resilient, climate-compatible infrastructure. • Benefits: Risk mitigation, sustainable growth, environmental sustainability, and better quality of life.
LeadIT Summit	• India co-hosted the LeadIT Member Meet with Sweden. • The summit focuses on decarbonization of heavy industry.
Unlocking Investments for Climate Resilient and Sustainable Infrastructure in SIDS	• Facilitated discussions on strengthening climate-resilient infrastructure in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) through collective action, multilateral cooperation, and improved access to climate finance.
Solar Energy Leadership	• India, through the International Solar Alliance (ISA), has been actively promoting the adoption of solar energy worldwide. • It aims to achieve a 20-fold increase in global solar energy capacity by 2050.

POSITIVE OUTCOMES

✴ **Tripling Climate Finance for Developing Nations**

o Increase climate finance for developing countries from the existing target of USD 100 billion annually to USD 300 billion by 2035.

✴ **Advancements in Carbon Market Mechanisms**

o After nearly a decade of negotiations, COP29 finalized agreements on the carbon market mechanisms outlined in **Article 6 of the Paris Agreement**.

o These include frameworks for bilateral carbon trading under Article 6.2 and a global crediting mechanism under Article 6.4.

✴ **Support for National Adaptation Plans (NAPs)**

o To bolster climate adaptation efforts in least developed countries (LDCs), COP29 introduced a dedicated support program for the implementation of National Adaptation Plans (NAPs).

☼ **Strengthening Climate Reporting Transparency**

o COP29 emphasized the importance of accountability in climate action by reinforcing commitments to transparent reporting.

o Under the **Enhanced Transparency Framework,** 13 countries submitted Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs), marking progress in tracking climate finance and adaptation measures.

SHORTCOMINGS

🌀 **Inadequate Financing**

o The commitment by developed nations to provide **$300 billion annually by 2035** is deemed insufficient and delayed, especially when compared to the estimated **$1.3 trillion required annually** by developing countries to address climate change effectively.

🌀 **Overreliance on Loans over Grants**

o The financial package heavily depends on loans rather than grants, raising concerns about worsening the **debt burden of developing nations**

already grappling with economic challenges.

🌀 **Lack of Commitment to Fossil Fuel Phase-Out**

o COP29 failed to advance the **fossil fuel phase-out** commitments emphasized in COP28. The mitigation outcomes lacked a clear roadmap for transitioning away from fossil fuels.

🌀 **Insufficient Action on Emission Reduction Goals**

o Pledges made at COP29 fell short of achieving the **1.5°C target**, especially as global emissions continued to rise in 2023, as highlighted by the IPCC.

🌀 Controversial Choice of Host Nation

o The decision to host COP29 in **Azerbaijan**, an oil-rich nation with authoritarian governance, drew criticism for contradicting the conference's objective of reducing fossil fuel reliance and promoting inclusive climate governance.

WHAT's NEXT IN GLOBAL CLIMATE ACTION?

♣ Road to Davos

o The **World Economic Forum (WEF)** in **Davos** (Switzerland) will be the first major public-private meeting after COP29.

o It will focus on turning COP29 outcomes into actionable initiatives and strengthening collaborations between governments, businesses, and civil society.

♣ Looking Toward COP30

o **COP30** in **Belém, Brazil** will build on the progress and unresolved issues from COP29.

o Brazil, representing **emerging markets and developing countries**, will push for stronger climate action.

o The next host for **COP31** in **2026** may be decided, with **Australia** and **Turkey** as leading contenders.

WAY FORWARD

✳ Scale Up Climate Financing

o Develop a robust framework to mobilize funds closer to the estimated $1.3 trillion annually needed by developing countries.

o **Focus**: Shift towards grants and concessional financing rather than loans to reduce the debt burden on vulnerable nations.

✳ Commit to a Fossil Fuel Phase-Out Timeline

o Establish clear, time-bound commitments for phasing out fossil fuels.

o **Focus**: Support developing countries with technology and resources to transition to renewable energy.

✳ Strengthen Global Mitigation Efforts

o Urgently revise and enhance Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to align with

the **1.5°C target**.

o **Focus**: Prioritize immediate and substantial emission reductions by high-emission countries.

✳ Enhance Climate Governance and Inclusivity

o Ensure that future host nations reflect the values of inclusivity and climate justice.

o **Focus**: Promote transparency and equity in decision-making processes to strengthen trust among stakeholders.

✳ Build Adaptive Capacity in Vulnerable Nations

o Expand support for adaptation initiatives, such as National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and capacity-building programs.

o **Focus**: Enable least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS) to build resilience to climate impacts.

CONCLUSION

COP29 marked essential progress in enhancing climate finance, implementing carbon markets, and advancing adaptation and transparency measures. Despite these achievements, challenges persist, highlighting the need for intensified global action at **COP30** and in the future.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) "The outcomes of COP29 have set a significant agenda for future climate action. However, the climate process requires urgent reforms to address global challenges effectively." Discuss the key outcomes of COP29 and critically analyze the need for reform in the COP process to enhance global climate governance. **(15marks) (250 words)**

THE ADANI IMBROGLIO

> *Syllabus: GS III - Economy*

PYQ MAPPING

Q) *Do you think India will meet 50 percent of its energy needs from renewable energy by 2030 ? Justify your answer. How will the shift of subsidies from fossil fuels to renewables help achieve the above objective? Explain.* *(2022)*

WHY IN NEWS

Recently a US court indictment alleges Gautam Adani, Sagar Adani, and 6 others bribed Indian officials to secure **Power Supply Agreements (PSAs)** under SECI's 2019 manufacturing-linked solar tender.

INTRODUCTION

US prosecutors have charged billionaire Gautam Adani and others for allegedly orchestrating a $265 million bribery scheme involving a 2019 Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) tender to enhance their solar energy business.

SHORT TAKES

➢ **Power Supply Agreement (PSA)**
A PSA is a contract between two parties:

- o **Power Generator (GenCo)**: The entity that produces electricity, typically from renewable sources such as solar, wind, or hydro power.

- o **Distribution Utility (DU)**: The entity responsible for delivering electricity to consumers.

  The PSA ensures a stable and reliable supply of electricity to consumers. It outlines the terms and conditions of the power purchase, safeguarding the interests of both the generator and the distributor.

➢ **Power Purchase Agreement (PPA)**

- o PPAs are signed with developers before PSAs with distribution companies (discoms). The PPA outlines the terms and conditions for the generation and supply of electricity by the power developers.

➢ **Wire fraud**

- o Wire fraud is a criminal offense involving the use of electronic communications or interstate wire transmissions (such as phone calls, emails, or the internet) to defraud someone of money or property.

  It typically includes activities like misrepresentation, deception, or fraudulent schemes conducted through these electronic means to gain financial benefits illegally.

SOLAR BID IN INDIA

♣ In India, solar bidding (the process by which companies secure government solar projects) primarily happens through a competitive, tariff-based auction process managed by the **Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI).**

♣ Power developers submit bids for solar power projects at the lowest possible price, with SECI acting as the intermediary between **developers** and **distribution companies (Discoms)** to procure power and facilitate **Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs)** on behalf of the government

♣ **About Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI)**

- o SECI, is the leading **Central Public Sector Undertaking (CPSU)** under the **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE),** was established in 2011 as a not-for-profit entity and converted to a **commercial company in 2015.**

- o It aims to expand renewable energy capacity, support India's National Solar Mission, and fulfill its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

- o **Key Roles and Responsibilities of SECI**

  - • **Renewable Energy Projects:** Develops solar, wind, and hybrid energy projects, managing 65.3 GW of awarded capacity (40 GW solar, 16.3 GW wind, 9 GW hybrid).

  - • **Energy Trading:** Procures renewable energy through competitive bidding and sells it to DISCOMs via long-term **Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs)** and **Power Supply Agreements (PSAs)**.

  - • It holds a power trading license and actively trades renewable energy.

  - • Innovates to boost renewable energy development, supporting India's National Solar Mission and renewable energy goals.

ALLEGATIONS

- In 2019, the **Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) introduced a tender** to link renewable energy producers with state DISCOMs, aiming to help India meet its climate goals.

- However, SECI struggled to secure Power Supply Agreements (PSAs) with DISCOMs due to high energy prices.

- In **2020, SECI awarded a 25-year, 8 GW Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) to Adani Green Energy (AGE) and Azure Power,** valued at $6 billion.

- Delays in signing PPAs were linked to DISCOMs' reluctance to buy at high rates.

- Reports suggested SECI inflated costs to help AGE and Azure achieve higher returns.

- To resolve this, the U.S. Department of Justice alleges that **Adani and associates offered $265 million in bribes to Indian officials to secure PSAs.**

- Bribes were allegedly paid in Andhra Pradesh, Odisha,

Chhattisgarh, and Tamil Nadu to expedite PSAs with SECI, enabling AGE to sell its power.

- **The U.S. Justice Department claims Gautam Adani personally met officials to offer bribes and secure approvals.**

- **AGE also raised $175 million from U.S. investors in 2021.**

- This g**ives U.S. authorities jurisdiction** over any fraud linked to these investments.

- The U.S. indictment accuses Adani and his associates of violating the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) by using U.S. funds to bribe Indian officials.

- The **U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has filed civil cases** against Adani for securities fraud and wire fraud conspiracy.

- SEC alleges that AGE raised money from U.S. investors through false statements, while hiding its involvement in bribery and misrepresenting its financial integrity.

PUNISHMENTS FOR ALLEGATIONS

- Under the **Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA)**, corporations may face fines up to **$2 million** (₹16.8 crore) for bribery, while individuals face fines up to **$100 thousand** (₹84 lakh) and **5 years in prison**.

- For accounting violations, corporations may be fined

up to **$25 million** (₹200 crore), and individuals up to **$5 million** (₹40 crore) with **20 years imprisonment**.

- Under the **Alternative Fines Act**, fines can double the offender's gains (e.g., up to **$4 billion** for Adani since the expected profits amount to $2 billion).

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

- U.S. prosecutors have **requested the forfeiture of properties or proceeds** directly or indirectly obtained from the offenses.

- The case will proceed to the **"arraignment" stage**, where the judge will formally communicate the charges to the defendants and decide on bail.

- The defendants will then need to enter a **plea of**

either guilty or not guilty.

- If the plea is not guilty, the case will move to a jury trial.

- There is also a **possibility that a deal may be negotiated between the Indian tycoon and U.S. authorities,** which could lead to the dismissal of the indictment.

POTENTIAL REPURCUSSIONS

- **Eroding Investor Confidence**: Foreign investors may hesitate, fearing systemic corruption.

- **Tightened Oversight**: Regulatory scrutiny could lead to stricter rules for project bids and contracts.

- **Contract Uncertainty**: DISCOMs might reassess solar deals, fearing legal or reputational fallout.

- **Policy Reforms**: Transparency and accountability measures may reshape future renewable energy tenders.

IMPACT ON INDIAN ECONOMY

The alleged corruption distorts fair competition and market pricing and has multi-faceted repercussions.

- **Impact on Consumers:**
  - **Higher electricity bills** for consumers:
    - Increased costs due to overpriced solar energy

lead to **higher household expenses**.

    - Consumers bear the financial burden, **reducing disposable income**.

- **Impact on Factories and Businesses:**
  - **Factories face higher production costs** due to

inflated energy prices:

- Many businesses might **shut down** due to unsustainable operations.
- Others **pass the costs to customers**, further inflating prices of goods and services.

👁 **State Government Financial Strain:**

o State governments, often financially constrained, might **absorb these inflated costs**:

- Resources that could be used for **infrastructure, education, or healthcare** are diverted to **overpriced energy projects.**
- This misallocation of funds slows down socio-economic development.

👁 **Long-term Effects on India's Future:**

o **Air Pollution Crisis**:

- Corruption in the energy sector delays the **transition to clean energy sources** such as solar and wind.This perpetuates reliance on polluting energy sources, aggravating environmental issues.
  - ◦ India's reliance on coal-powered plants continues to

👁 **Global Investor Confidence:**

o Perceived **corruption in India's energy sector** discourages global investors:

- Investors may refrain from funding or investing in India's **renewable energy projects** which could potentially hamper growth in renewable energy infrastructure.

OTHER CHALLENGES FACED BY RENEWABLE ENERGY SECTOR

🔻 **Low tariff in new bids and PPA Challenges**:

o Newer bids often result in lower tariffs, making older agreements less attractive to DISCOMs.

- For instance, PPAs at ₹2.5/unit become undesirable when newer tariffs drop to ₹2/unit.

🔻 **DISCOM Reluctance**:

o Many DISCOMs delay signing PPAs due to already meeting renewable purchase obligations or expecting further tariff reductions.

🔻 **High Costs**:

o Developers face difficulties managing manufacturing and generation simultaneously due to conflicting financial requirements.

🔻 **SECI's Challenges**:

o Struggles to secure buyers for discovered tariffs and also faces difficulty aligning state DISCOMs with federal renewable energy goals.

o **Corruption**: Allegations of bribery in PSA approvals underscore governance and regulatory flaws in tendering and agreements.

GLOBAL BEST PRACTICES

South Korea's **Block chain system**	» Seoul implemented a **blockchain-based proposal evaluation system** to enhance transparency in **public tenders.** » The system ensures fairness by preventing data falsification, promoting trust in bidding processes.
Germany's **Energiewende" policy**	» It actively encourages the development of solar and wind energy with significant public involvement, often facilitated by **local cooperatives owning renewable energy projects** » It aims to minimize corruption and promote **community participation** in the transition to renewable sources.
United Kingdom's **Contracts for Difference (CfD)**	» **Contracts for Difference (CfD)s** enable new renewable generation projects to avoid the volatility of wholesale electricity markets and to achieve a **stable long-term revenue profile** over the term of the contract. » A **two-way Contract for Difference (CfD)** is an agreement between an electricity generator and the State that sets a fixed price (strike price) for electricity. • If the **market price** is **below the strike price**, the State pays the generator the difference. • If the **market price** is **above the strike price**, the generator pays the State the difference. » This ensures stable revenue for the generator while limiting excess profits when market prices are high.

WAY FORWARD

* **Strengthening Governance**:
  o Implement independent audits and stricter anti-corruption measures to improve transparency and accountability.
* **Tariff Rationalization**:
  o Create flexible pricing models to reconcile discrepancies between old and new tariffs, ensuring DISCOMs honor PPAs while protecting developers' interests.

* **Boosting Buyer Confidence**:
  o Offer financial incentives or subsidies to encourage DISCOMs to prioritize renewable energy procurement.
* **Unbundling Functions**:
  o Separate manufacturing and generation components in tenders to ease financial and operational challenges, fostering better project execution and participation.

CONCLUSION

The government must engage with international stakeholders, ensuring corrective actions and fostering a business-friendly environment through improved governance. Strengthening regulatory frameworks with transparency, anti-corruption measures, and clear guidelines will help enhance trust and attract investment in renewable energy projects.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) Discuss the challenges faced by Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) in renewable energy procurement and project implementation. What steps should India take to address these governance issues and improve transparency in the sector? **(10marks)(150 words)**

ETHICS - CASE STUDY

Q) A recent Comptroller and Auditor General's report reveals that social security pensions intended for the needy are being claimed by ineligible and affluent individuals, undermining the rights of the poor. It has been noted that many panchayat officials are being bribed by ineligible individuals to add their names for social security benefits. As the Collector of the district with the highest number of such cases

a. What will be your course of action?

b. What will be options available for you to prevent future negligence?

ETHICS - EXAMPLES

1. **Civil Society in Governance:** Aadiwasi Janjagruti, founded in 2016 in Dhadgaon, Maharashtra, empowers tribal communities through videos and documentaries to address local issues and engage with the government. The initiative has grown to cover 170 villages, training 47 community members as journalists and advocates, driving significant changes like completed infrastructure projects and improved government access.

2. **Innovation/Environmental Ethics:** Zomato's new *Food Rescue* feature allows nearby users to purchase cancelled orders at a discounted rate, reducing food waste and compensating both delivery workers and restaurant partners. The feature excludes items sensitive to distances or temperature and offers a limited window for claiming orders to maintain food freshness.

3. **Lack of Human Rights:** Anil Methaniya, an 18-year-old first-year medical student at GMERS Medical College, Dharpur, died after allegedly being ragged by seniors and he was reportedly forced to stand for 3 hours..

4. **Ethics in Arts:** Maurizio Cattelan's controversial artwork, *Comedian*—a banana duct-taped to a wall—sold for $6.2 million at an auction, significantly exceeding its pre-sale estimate.The piece critiques art's commodification, using the banana to explore how context and market forces shape the value of contemporary art.

5. **Crisis Management:** Delhi schools shifted to online classes due to "severe plus" air quality, with teachers using creative methods like roleplay and poetry, such as rhymes explaining CO_2's role in pollution. These interactive strategies aim to keep students engaged while addressing health risks.

6. **Censorship**: China's government has intensified its crackdown on independent bookstores and arresting owners for selling "illegal publications." This has driven booksellers to reopen abroad where censorship concerns are absent fostering cultural autonomy and free expression.

7. **Privacy and Data Protection:** The Competition Commission of India (CCI) imposed a ₹213.14 crore penalty on Meta for abusing its dominance through WhatsApp's 2021 privacy policy, which made data sharing with Meta mandatory. It directed Meta to stop anti-competitive practices and offer users an opt-out for non-WhatsApp data sharing.

8. **Gender Equality:** The Magic Circle, a prestigious magician society, is seeking to make amends with Raymond Lloyd, a woman who, in 1991, infiltrated the male-only club by pretending to be a man and was later ousted. The society now wants to apologize and recognize her contributions to breaking barriers for women in magic.

9. **Social Justice:** Kianoosh Sanjari, a journalist and human rights activist, died after jumping from a building in Tehran following a protest demanding the release of political prisoners, with his death highlighting the lack of support for activists facing government-inflicted trauma and mental health struggles in Iran.

10. **Values in Personal and Professional Life**: Cambridge Dictionary's 2024 word of the year, "manifest," reflects Generation Z's shift towards using visualization and affirmation to cope with global uncertainty, embodying hope and resilience in a time of crisis.

MODEL ESSAY

"Joy is not in things; it is in us"

Introduction

- Quote by German composer and theatre director Richard Wagner

- Highlight the misconception that material possessions or external achievements bring lasting happiness.

- Explore how true joy arises from within, influenced by mindset and self-awareness.

Factors Contributing to Inner Joy

- **Gratitude**: Focusing on what we have rather than what we lack.

- **Self-acceptance**: Embracing imperfections and finding peace with oneself.

- **Positive relationships:** The importance of connections based on love and support.

- **Inner peace and mindfulness:** Increases present-moment awareness, reducing stress.

- **Meaning and Purpose:** Provides direction and motivation in life- sense of achievement.

Benefits of Cultivating Inner Joy

- **Emotional resilience**: How inner joy helps cope with difficult times and bounce back from setbacks.

- **Long-term happiness**: Sustainable contentment comes from within, not from external validation.

- **Enhanced well-being**: Inner joy contributes to mental, emotional, and physical health.

- **Better Relationships:** Encourages empathy and compassion, deepening connections

- **Increased Productivity:** Boosts focus and creativity by reducing mental clutter- enhances problem-solving abilities4

Barriers to Inner Joy

- **Consumerism and Materialism:** The constant pursuit of possessions leads to fleeting satisfaction rather than lasting joy.

- **Comparison Culture:** Comparing oneself to others, especially through social media, fosters envy and dissatisfaction.

- **Negative Self-Talk and Self-Criticism:** Harsh self-judgment diminishes self-worth, preventing self-acceptance and joy.

- **Unrealistic Expectations:** Setting overly high standards for oneself or others leads to disappointment and frustration.

Way Forward

- **Power of perspective:** Viewing challenges as opportunities for growth. **Eg:** Nelson Mandela's ability to maintain a positive outlook during his 27 years in prison

- **Adaptability in Adversity:** Resilience grows by accepting and adjusting to new realities. **Eg**: Helen Keller, who despite being deaf and blind, found joy in writing and helping others

- **Focus on Internal Strength:** Inner strength sustains joy beyond external situations. **Eg:** Viktor Frankl, in concentration camps, found meaning in suffering

Conclusion

- Emphasize the importance of cultivating an internal sense of joy for a fulfilling life.

- Final reflection: Joy is a mindset and a choice, not a result of material success.

Sample Quotes

- *Genius is the ability to reduce the complicated to the simple. – C.W. Ceram*

- *Doubt is the origin of wisdom - Rene Descartes*

- *In the long run, the sharpest weapon of all is a kind and gentle spirit - Anne Frank*

MAINS JOT DOWN

GS- I - *ART AND CULTURE*

➡ The **Ministry of Culture's Global Engagement Scheme** promotes India's cultural heritage globally.

➡ Formerly known as the "**Scheme for Promotion of International Cultural Relations,**" it has three components:

» **Festival of India (FoI)**: Organized abroad to strengthen people-to-people ties and cultural diplomacy.

» **Grant-in-aid to Indo-Foreign Friendship Cultural Societies:** Provides financial support for cultural exchange.

» **Contribution Grant:** Supports India's membership in international organizations like UNESCO, ICROM, and the World Heritage Fund, and aids in hosting global cultural events.

GS- II - *SOCIAL JUSTICE*

➡ The **"Nayi Chetna – Pahal Badlaav Ki" campaign**, launched by the Union **Minister of Rural Development and Agriculture**, aims to combat gender-based violence through grassroots awareness and action.

» **Organized by:** Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), Ministry of Rural Development.

» **Key initiative:** Inauguration of 227 new Gender Resource Centers across 13 states.

» Slogan: **"Ek Saath, Ek Awaaz, Hinsa Ke Khilaaf"** (Together, with One Voice, Against Violence).

GS- III - *ENERGY*

➡ India's first modern, **self-sufficient gaushala with a state-of-the-art Compressed Biogas (CBG) plant** launched in **Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh.**

» Here, biogas will be prepared from cattle dung and garbage.

GS- II - *GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND INTERVENTIONS*

➡ The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) approved the **PAN 2.0 Project by the Income Tax (IT) Department.**

» **Objective**: To revamp taxpayer registration services through technology, upgrading the current PAN/TAN 1.0 system.

→ PAN: A unique ten-digit alphanumeric number issued by the IT Department for tracking tax transactions.

» **Benefits**: It will serve as a common identifier across government digital systems, ensuring data consistency and acting as a single source of truth.

➡ The **Department of Consumer Affairs** has announced the nationwide rollout of the **E-Daakhil portal**.

» **Launched by**: National Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission (NCDRC) in 2020.

» **Purpose**: Simplifies the consumer grievance process by allowing consumers to file complaints and track cases online, eliminating the need for physical presence.

» **Significance**: Promotes consumer rights and ensures timely justice.

GS- III - *ECONOMY*

➡ The Commerce Secretary recently visited Norway to discuss the **India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA),** signed in March 2024.

» EFTA: An intergovernmental organization of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland, established in 1960 to promote free trade.

➡ **TEPA Objective:** To attract $100 billion in FDI and create 1 million jobs in India over the next 15 years.

» The agreement focuses on market access, trade facilitation, rules of origin, intellectual property rights, and more.

GS- III - *INTERNAL SECURITY*

➔ The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has set up a **permanent National Security Guard (NSG) hub in Jammu City** to combat major terror threats.

➔ **About NSG**

» Established: Under the National Security Guard Act, 1986

» Role: A federal, world-class force designed for anti-terror operations.

» Function: Deployed in exceptional cases to prevent major terrorist acts.

» Control: Operates under the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.

GS- III - *DEFENCE*

➔ India successfully tested the **K-4 nuclear-capable ballistic missile** from the INS Arighaat submarine.

» **Type:** Submarine-launched nuclear missile (SLBM)

» **Range:** 3,500 km

» **Developed by:** DRDO (Defence Research and Development Organisation)

➔ **Significance**: With this test, India joins a select group of nations with a nuclear triad capability, enabling nuclear strikes from land, air, and sea. INS Arighaat is India's second SSBN (Ship Submersible Ballistic Nuclear) submarine, following the Arihant.

➔ The **fourth edition of Sea Vigil 24**, a major coastal defense exercise, was recently concluded.

» **Conducted by**: Indian Navy

» **Objective**: To enhance **maritime security**, **air defense**, **naval cooperation**, and **community engagement**.

» **Coverage**: India's **11,098 km coastline** and **2.4 million sq. km Exclusive Economic Zone**.

» **Focus Areas**: Securing critical maritime assets like **oil rigs**, **cable landing stations**, **non-major ports**, and **nuclear installations**, while improving **inter-agency coordination**.

GS- III - *AGRICULTURE*

➔ The **Government of Odisha and ICRISAT** launched the **Compendium of Regenerative Agriculture** to promote sustainable farming practices.

➔ **Regenerative Agriculture (RA)** focuses on improving soil health through key practices like:

» Minimizing soil disturbance (limited ploughing) and enhancing CO_2 storage.

» Maximizing crop diversity and promoting biodiversity.

» Maintaining soil cover and keeping living roots year-round, along with integrating livestock.

➔ **Significance**: RA boosts crop yields, improves water retention, reduces soil erosion, and lowers greenhouse gas emissions.

CHERRYPICKS OF THE WEEK

NANOZYMES

- Nanozymes are nanoparticles with enzyme-like properties, offering advantages like high stability, low cost, and easy mass production.
- **Applications**:Used in biomedical (biosensing, drug delivery, diagnostics) and environmental remediation (water and air purification).

KICKBACK

- It is an illegal payment intended as compensation for preferential treatment or any other type of improper service received.
- The kickback may be money, a gift, credit, or anything of value.
- Paying or receiving kickbacks is a corrupt practice that interferes with an employee's or a public official's ability to make unbiased decisions.

ATLANTIFICATION

- It occurs when warmer, saltier water from the Atlantic Ocean flows into the Arctic, increasing its temperature and salinity.
- This occurs when warm water from the Atlantic Ocean is advected into the Arctic Ocean in increasing amounts.
- The Barents Sea is a marginal water body in the Arctic Ocean that is starting to resemble the Atlantic Ocean.
- The top of the Arctic Ocean is covered by sea ice, but below this layer, freshwater and a deeper layer of warmer, saltier water are delivered to the Arctic from the Atlantic Ocean.
- This process is primarily driven by the Arctic Dipole.

SHELF CLOUD

- These clouds form with powerful storm systems and are linked to downdrafts from cumulonimbus clouds.
- As cold air spreads along the ground, it forces warm, moist air upward, creating dense, towering clouds that can lead to heavy rain.
- Rising air condenses water vapor into the characteristic patterns of shelf clouds.

BLUE HOLE

- It is a large underwater sinkhole that's open to the surface and is formed in a carbonate bedrock island or bank.
- Blue holes are home to a variety of marine life, including sharks, sea turtles, mollusks, sponges, and corals.
- The water in blue holes is a unique combination of fresh, marine, or mixed chemistry.