



FORTUNE WEEKLY DIGEST



› Emissions Gap Report

› India Tackles Trachoma & Kala Azar

› Cyber Fraud

20th OCTOBER - 26th OCTOBER, 2024

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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 gauge 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.

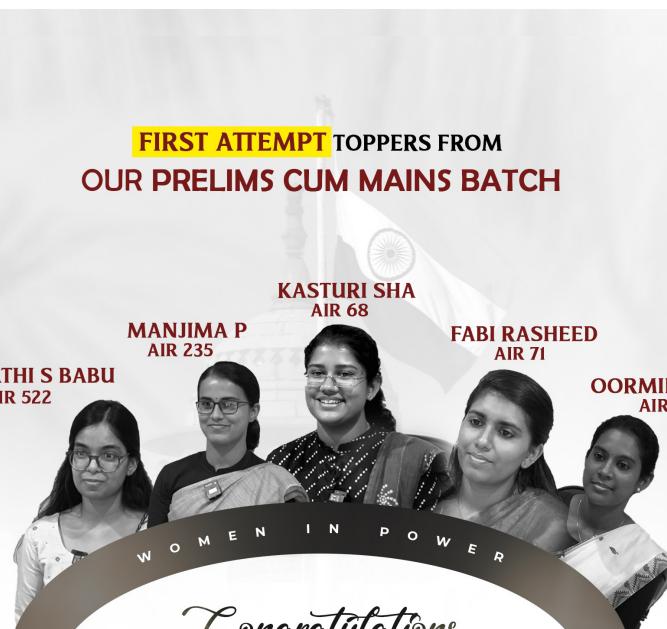
This magazine is a work in progress and your feedback will be appreciated.

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

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**FIRST ATTEMPT TOPPERS FROM
OUR PRELIMS CUM MAINS BATCH**



CONGRATULATIONS

EMPOWERED BY



EMISSIONS GAP REPORT 2024

Syllabus: GS III - Environmental Pollution & Degradation; Climate Change

PYQ MAPPING

Q) Describe the major outcomes of the 26th 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)

Q) Discuss global warming and mention its effects on the global climate. Explain the control measures to bring down the level of greenhouse gases which cause global warming, in the light of the Kyoto Protocol, 1997. **(2022)**

WHY IN NEWS

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) recently published the Emissions Gap Report 2024 in preparation for the upcoming COP 29 of the UNFCCC meeting in Baku, Azerbaijan.

INTRODUCTION

The annual **Emissions Gap Report by the UN Environment Programme** has cautioned that the goal of limiting global temperature rise to **1.5 degrees Celsius**, as set by the Paris Agreement, **could be out of reach within a few years**.

SHORT TAKES

➤ United Nations Environment Program (UNEP)

- o It is the leading environmental authority in the United Nations system established in 1972.
- o The UN Environment Assembly is the policy-making organ of UNEP.
- o **Headquarter:** Nairobi, Kenya.
- o **Major Reports:** Global Environment Outlook, The Rise of Environmental Crime Report, Actions on Air Quality,

Frontiers Report, Adaptation Gap Report

► GtCO₂e is an abbreviation for greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions

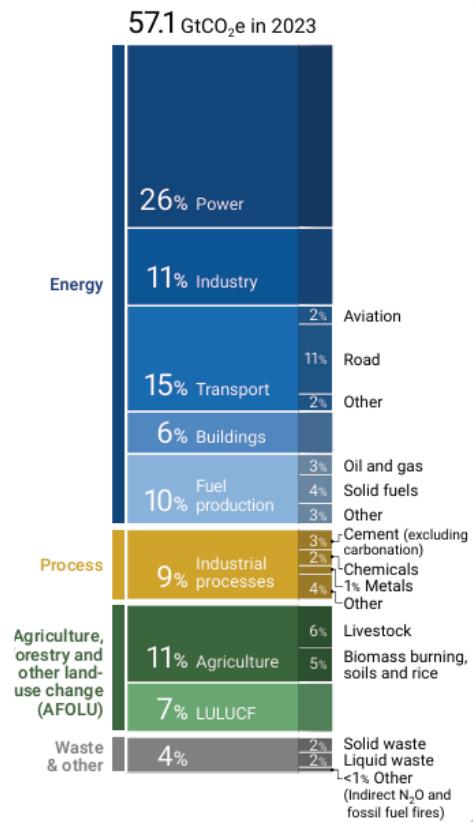
- o Total greenhouse gas emissions rose by 1.3% from 2022 levels, surpassing the pre-COVID decade's average growth rate of 0.8% per year.
- o **Emission from Sources:**
 - Total emission set a new record of **57.1 Gigatonnes of Carbon dioxide equivalent (GtCO2e)** in 2023
 - In 2023 the **power sector (i.e. electricity production)** continued to be the largest global contributor to emissions at 15.1 GtCO2e, followed by **transport** (8.4 GtCO2e), **agriculture** (6.5 GtCO2e) and **industry** (6.5 GtCO2e).

→ Large disparities

- o In 2023, G20 nations contributed 77% of global GHG emissions, which rose to 82% with African Union countries included. The top six emitters alone made up 63%, while least developed countries contributed just 3%.

→ Paris Agreement target is at risk

- o Full Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) implementation would still result in 2.6°C warming. To limit warming to 1.5°C, emissions must peak by 2025 and drop 43% by 2030.



- The G20 is projected to miss 2030 NDC targets, with current policies exceeding these goals by 1 GtCO₂e.

➡ Essential Emissions Cuts

- To keep the 1.5°C target achievable, emissions must drop by at least 7.5% annually until 2035.

➡ Bridging Cost

- Reaching net-zero by 2050 demands \$900 billion to \$2.1 trillion per year, around 1% of global GDP.

	Total GHG emissions in 2023	Change in total GHG emissions, 2022–2023	Per capita GHG emissions in 2023	Historical CO ₂ emissions, 1850–2022
	MtCO ₂ e (% of total)	%	tCO ₂ e/capita	GtCO ₂ (% of total)
China	16,000 (30)	+5.2	11	300 (12)
United States of America	5,970 (11)	-1.4	18	527 (20)
India	4,140 (8)	+6.1	2.9	83 (3)
European Union (27 countries)	3,230 (6)	-7.5	7.3	301 (12)
Russian Federation	2,660 (5)	+2	19	180 (7)
Brazil	1,300 (2)	+0.1	6.0	119 (5)
African Union (55 countries)	3,190 (6)	+0.7	2.2	174 (7)
Least developed countries (47 countries)	1,730 (3)	+1.2	1.5	115 (4)
G20 (excl. African Union)	40,900 (77)	+1.8	8.3	1,990 (77)

INDIA'S SCENARIO

- India's emissions grew by 6.1% while overall global emissions rose by 1.3% in 2023 compared to 2022
- India's per capita GHG emissions in 2022 were 2.9 tCO₂e, significantly lower than China (11 tCO₂e) and the US (18 tCO₂e).

Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)

- An NDC is a country's **Climate Action Plan under the Paris Agreement**, which outlines its goal to reduce emissions and adapt to climate change. Each country must update its NDC every 5 years.
- Pledges made within an NDC are **considered voluntary**, with countries facing **no legal penalty if they fail to meet their goals**. However, they are obligated under the Paris Agreement to monitor progress and report on any failures.
- Some countries like Britain and Chile have incorporated their NDCs into national law, making their climate commitments legally binding at the national level.

India's NDC

- Emission Reduction:** India aims to reduce the emissions intensity of its GDP by 45% by 2030, compared to 2005 levels.
- The updated NDC marks an important step towards achieving India's long-term goal of reaching net-zero emissions by 2070
- Renewable Energy:** The country seeks to achieve 50% of its energy needs from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030, with a target of installing 500 GW of renewable energy capacity.
- Carbon Sink:** India plans to create an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent through afforestation and reforestation efforts.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO REDUCE EMISSION

☀ Boost Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency:

- Scaling solar and wind energy can achieve 27% of needed emissions cuts by 2030.
- Prioritise efficiency upgrades in buildings, transport, and industry for further reductions.

or trading systems to drive low-carbon transitions.

☀ Promote Sustainable Agriculture and Land Conservation:

- Forest conservation and restoration** could account for around **20%** of reductions

☀ Strengthen National Commitments:

- Nations, especially G20 members, must raise the ambition of their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to align with the 1.5°C goal.

☀ Strengthen Climate Finance and Carbon Pricing:

- Mobilise \$900 billion to \$2.1 trillion annually to support global climate initiatives, particularly in developing countries, and implement carbon taxes

☀ Advance Low-Carbon Transportation:

- Invest in electric vehicles, public transit, and sustainable transport infrastructure to reduce dependency on fossil fuels.

☀ Adopt Circular Economy Practices:

- Minimise waste by promoting recycling, reuse, and sustainable production to reduce the overall carbon footprint across industries.

CONCLUSION

Every fraction of fossil fuel emissions pushes us closer to catastrophe. The alarming findings of the Emissions Gap Report highlight the urgent need for action, as political inaction risks locking in irreversible climate damage. Global leaders must strengthen emissions targets, invest in renewable energy, and implement effective climate policies now to secure a sustainable future.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) Discuss the key findings of the Emissions Gap Report 2024 published by UNEP? Also explain the measures needed to reduce greenhouse gas levels that contribute to global warming.

(15marks)(250 words)

CYBER FRAUD

Syllabus: GS III - Cyber Security

PYQ MAPPING

Q) What are the different elements of cyber security? Keeping in view the challenges in cyber security, examine the extent to which India has successfully developed a comprehensive National Cyber Security Strategy **(2022)**

Q) Discuss different types of cyber crimes and measures required to be taken to fight the menace. **(2020)**

WHY IN NEWS

According to a projection made by the **Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)**, Indians are likely to lose over ₹1.2 lakh crore over the next year due to cyber frauds.

INTRODUCTION

Cyber fraud, a type of cybercrime, involves using online methods to steal money or valuable assets. With the rise of internet and online banking, cybercriminals have developed sophisticated schemes, often using identity theft, phishing, and social engineering to achieve their goals.

TYPES

Phishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It uses fake emails or messages that mimic legitimate sources to steal sensitive info, like passwords or credit card numbers Attackers often include malicious links or attachments.
Digital arrest scams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It involves criminals posing as law enforcement to intimidate victims, often keeping them on video calls until demands are met.
Pharming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is a cyberattack where fake websites mimic legitimate ones to collect sensitive data like login and financial details from unsuspecting users.
Ransomware Attacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is a type of malware that encrypts data on a victim's device or network, making it inaccessible until a ransom is paid. These attacks often target companies, hospitals, and government agencies, demanding substantial payments to restore access to critical data.
Social Engineering Attacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These attacks involve manipulating people into disclosing confidential information by exploiting human psychology.
Smishing and Vishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smishing involves fraudulent SMS messages attempting to deceive recipients into revealing personal information or downloading malicious software. Vishing (voice phishing) uses phone calls to impersonate trusted institutions like banks, attempting to trick victims into sharing sensitive details.
Insurance Fraud	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criminals create fake policies or claim false benefits using stolen personal data. This type of fraud can involve health, auto, life, and property insurance, often causing financial damage to insurers and policyholders.
Pig Butchering Scam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is also known as a "sha zhu pan" scam, is a type of online investment fraud that involves scammers creating fake online personas to lure victims into fraudulent investment schemes. The term "pig butchering" comes from the scammers' practice of "fattening up" their victims by building trust over time before "slaughtering" them and stealing their money.

ISSUES HIGHLIGHTED BY CYBER CRIME COORDINATION CENTRE (I4C)

➡ Economic Impact:

- o Cyber fraud is projected to result in losses of 0.7% of GDP, undermining government revenue and public confidence in digital financial systems

➡ Mule Bank Accounts:

- o These accounts, which facilitate illegal transactions and launder money, are substantial contributors to online financial scams.
- o Approximately 4,000 such mule accounts are detected daily in fraud facilitation.

➡ ATM Fraud Hotspots:

- o The Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) has pinpointed 18 ATM hotspots across India where fraudulent withdrawals frequently occur.
- o Some transactions are traced back to overseas ATMs in cities like Dubai, Hong Kong, Bangkok,

and Russia.

➡ Scam Compounds:

- o Call centre-style fraud operations have been identified in Southeast Asia (Cambodia, Myanmar, and Laos) and more recently in Azerbaijan.
 - These centres target individuals in India using Indian phone numbers.

➡ Crypto-linked Money Laundering:

- o From March to May, ₹5.5 crore in cryptocurrency was laundered abroad through international crypto exchanges via over 350 transactions.

➡ Underreporting of Fraud:

- o The reported losses of ₹11,269 crore reflect only logged cases, indicating significant underreporting and challenges in victim awareness and law enforcement confidence.

OTHER CHALLENGES

▼ **Financial Losses:** Victims face irrecoverable financial losses due to untraceable payment methods like cryptocurrency and gift cards.

▼ **Emotional Impact:** Scammers intimidate victims, causing anxiety and stress through threats of serious consequences.

INDIAN GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

🌐 Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C):

- o I4C, part of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs' cyber and information security division, aims to combat rising cybercrime.
- o From January to April 2024, it reported losses of ₹120.30 crore due to digital arrest scams affecting Indians.

🌐 Initiatives and Collaborations:

- o In collaboration with Microsoft, I4C has blocked over 1,000 Skype IDs linked to these scams.

🌐 Interministerial Committee Against Transnational Crime (ICATC):

▼ **AI in Fraud:** The use of AI, such as deep fakes and voice modulation, complicates the detection of digital fraud.

▼ **Tracing Challenges:** Many scams originate overseas, making it hard for law enforcement to trace and prosecute perpetrators.

- o Established by the **Ministry of Home Affairs** in **May 2024**, this committee includes various law enforcement and intelligence agencies.

- o It focuses on addressing the rise in transnational cybercrimes targeting Indians, particularly from Southeast Asian countries like Cambodia.

🌐 Reporting Cybercrime:

- o PM Modi in his Mann Ki Baat address gave people three steps to digital security are — **Stop-Think-Take Action** - to prevent falling prey.
- o Individuals who fall victim to cyber scams can report incidents through the cybercrime helpline at 1930 or online at **cybercrime.gov.in**, and they should also notify their local police.

GLOBAL BEST PRACTICES

☀️ Public Awareness Campaigns:

- o **Example:** The U.S. Department of Homeland Security runs the "**Stop. Think. Connect.**" campaign to educate the public about cybersecurity risks and safe online practices.

☀️ Multi-Agency Collaboration:

- o **Example: Europol's European Cybercrime Centre (EC3)** collaborates with law enforcement agencies across Europe and beyond to tackle cybercrime through information sharing and joint operations.

☀️ Public-Private Partnerships:

- **Example:** The **Cybersecurity Information Sharing Act (CISA)** in the United States encourages collaboration between government agencies and private companies to share information about cyber threats and improve overall cybersecurity.

☀️ Use of Artificial Intelligence:

- **Example:** Companies like **Darktrace** use **AI and machine learning** to detect and respond to cyber threats in real-time, providing automated defence mechanisms against emerging threats.

WAY FORWARD

- ✿ **Stay Composed:** If you receive a suspicious call, take a deep breath and assess the situation calmly.
- ✿ **Confirm Identity:** Avoid sharing any personal information over phone calls or video chats.
- ✿ **Gather Evidence:** Record the conversation or capture screenshots to document the call, as this evidence may be vital for future reporting.

- ✿ **Notify Authorities:** In cases of suspected digital arrest, reach out to your local police or contact national cyber helplines (1930).
- ✿ **Promote Education and Awareness:** Recognizing that digital arrests are scams is crucial; raising awareness can help others avoid becoming victims.

CONCLUSION

To curb cyber fraud, it is essential to adopt a comprehensive approach with robust legislation, public awareness, and advanced security measures. Collaboration among governments, organisations, and individuals is essential to promote digital literacy and vigilance, ultimately protecting our digital ecosystems.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) What is cyber fraud, and how does it impact individuals, businesses, and the economy? Discuss the measures that can be taken to prevent it. **(10 marks)(150 words)**

OUR 14 TOPPERS FROM PRELIMS CUM MAINS BATCH

5 TOPPERS IN FIRST ATTEMPT



KASTURI SHA
AIR 68



FABI RASHEED
AIR 71



SIDDHANT KUMAR
AIR 114



MANJIMA P
AIR 235



PARVATHY
GOPAKUMAR
AIR 282



SWATHI S BABU
AIR 522



DEVIKRISHNA P
AIR 559



OORMILA J S
AIR 561



MRIDUL DARSEN
AIR 630



SAYANTH K
AIR 701



ANUSHA R CHANDRAN
AIR 791



SWATHY S
AIR 827



SACHIN ANAND
AIR 855



RAVEEN K MANOHARAN
AIR 888

BEST RESULTS FROM CLASSROOM PROGRAM (PCM BATCH) IN KERALA

INDIA-CHINA BORDER AGREEMENT: A HISTORICAL VIEW

Syllabus: GS II - India and its neighbourhood- relations

PYQ MAPPING

Q1 With respect to the South China sea, maritime territorial disputes and rising tension affirm the need for safeguarding maritime security to ensure freedom of navigation and over flight throughout the region. In this context, discuss the bilateral issues between India and China. **(2016)**

Q2 'China is using its economic relations and positive trade surplus as tools to develop potential military power status in Asia'. In the light of this statement, discuss its impact on India as her neighbor. **(2017)**

SHORT TAKES

Salami slicing: A strategy of gradually advancing territorial claims through incremental actions, such as small-scale incursions or building infrastructure, which individually may not provoke strong reactions but collectively shift boundaries over time.

WHY IN NEWS

Indian and Chinese negotiators have agreed on new "patrolling arrangements" along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), facilitating disengagement and addressing tensions from 2020. India announced this following a bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping at the BRICS leaders' summit in Kazan, Russia

INTRODUCTION

The **India-China border dispute** involves historical territorial claims along their 3,488-kilometre boundary, divided into **Western** (Ladakh-Aksai Chin), **Middle** (Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand), and **Eastern** (Arunachal Pradesh) sectors. Key disputes include **Aksai Chin**, controlled by China but claimed by India, and **Arunachal Pradesh**, claimed by China as "South Tibet." The undefined boundary has led to multiple standoffs, including the **1962 war** and recent clashes in **Ladakh** in 2020. Ongoing diplomatic and military efforts aim to resolve these tensions peacefully.

WHOSE 'BOUNDARY' LINE IS IT ANYWAY?

» Johnson Line:

- It was proposed in 1865 by W. H. Johnson, a civil servant in the Survey of India, is a boundary line between India and China that extends up to the Kunlun Mountains and places Aksai Chin within the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir (now Ladakh).
- India regards the Johnson Line as its rightful border with China, but China rejects it, favouring the Macartney-MacDonald Line, proposed in 1899, as the correct border.

» Macartney-MacDonald Line:

- It was a boundary proposal made by the British Raj to China in 1899 through its envoy in China, Sir Claude MacDonald to demarcate the border between the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir and the Chinese-managed territories of Xinjiang and Tibet.
- It aimed to follow the Indus River watershed along the **Karakoram Mountains**, placing most of Aksai Chin on the Chinese side while allocating the **Lingzi Tang** plains to India.
- In exchange, the British sought China's renunciation of its control over Hunza in Gilgit-Baltistan. The Chinese government did not formally respond, leading some to believe it was accepted.

» McMahon Line:

- An 890km boundary line established during the **1914 Simla Conference** that demarcates the border between India and China, specifically in the region of **Arunachal Pradesh**, and is named after British representative Sir Henry McMahon.

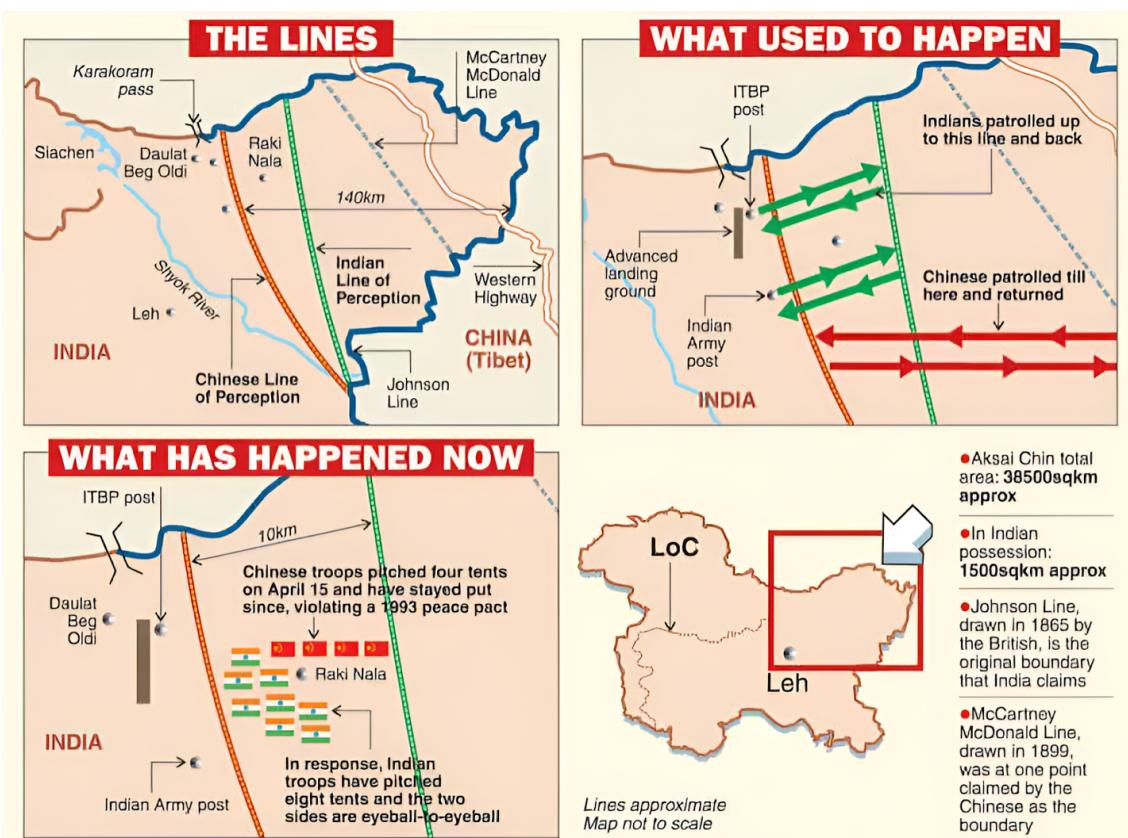
SINO-INDIAN BORDER: CHINESE CLAIM 'LINES' OF 1956 AND 1960 IN THE WESTERN SECTOR



Courtesy-CIA report, The Sino-Indian border dispute, Section III, 1961-62

- India recognizes the line as its official boundary, while China disputes it, claiming the area south of the line as "South Tibet," leading to ongoing territorial tensions between the two countries.

WHAT IS THE 2020 ISSUE?



DETAILS OF THE RECENT INDIA-CHINA BORDER AGREEMENT

Restoration of Patrolling:

- Indian and Chinese troops will resume patrolling in all areas along the LAC where it occurred before May 28, 2020, including the Dapsang Plains and Demchok.
- Indian patrols will cover points 10 to 13 in Dapsang and extend to Charding Nullah in Demchok.
- Patrolling will occur twice monthly, with 14 to 15 personnel per patrol on each side. Patrol schedules will be shared to avoid clashes.

Process of Disengagement, De-escalation, and Demilitarization:

- The agreement is set to launch a phased process involving disengagement, de-escalation, and demilitarisation in regions where both countries

currently maintain around 50,000 to 60,000 troops each.

- This approach prioritises disengagement initially, to be followed by de-escalation and the gradual withdrawal of forces.

Monitoring:

- Regular monitoring and monthly review meetings will help ensure compliance, promoting cooperation between the two armies.

Preventing Future Clashes:

- The agreement seeks to prevent incidents similar to the 2020 Galwan clashes, which led to the deaths of 20 Indian soldiers and at least four Chinese soldiers.

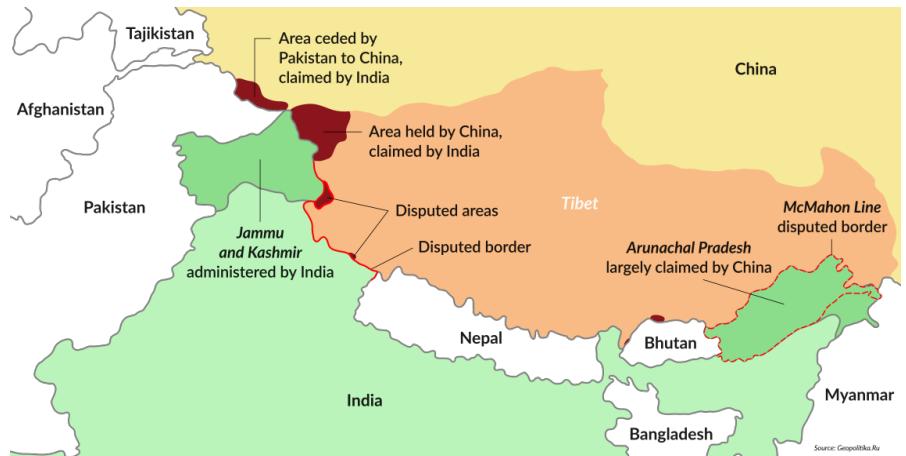
HISTORY

- Origins:** India-China border along the Himalayas is mostly an undefined border where shifting terrain frequently brings Indian and Chinese troops into close contact, leading to confrontations.
- 1950s:** China's early 1950s maps included Aksai Chin and Arunachal Pradesh as Chinese, while India's 1954 map claimed both regions. In 1957-58, China constructed a road through Aksai Chin, escalating tensions.

- **1960 Talks:** Diplomatic talks in 1960 between Jawaharlal Nehru and Zhou Enlai attempted to resolve these differences, but both sides maintained their claims, leading to a breakdown in negotiations.
- **Sino-Indian War of 1962:** The unresolved boundary dispute escalated into the 1962 war, in which China gained control of Aksai Chin and temporarily advanced in Arunachal Pradesh before withdrawing.
- **1975:** A skirmish at **Tulung La** in Arunachal Pradesh led to the deaths of four Indian soldiers in an ambush by Chinese forces.
- **1993: Border Peace and Tranquility Agreement** between India and China aimed to maintain peace along the **Line of Actual Control** by reducing troops, respecting the LAC, and improving military and diplomatic communication. It was this agreement that recognised **LAC**.
- **1996 CBM:** Agreement on Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs) in the Military Field banned use of firearms along the LAC, promoted transparency, and encouraged a reduction of military forces.
- **1999:** Kargil conflict saw China supporting Pakistan and this heightened possibility of a two-front war on India.
- **2014 Chumar standoff:** Chinese troops were stopped by Indian forces in Ladakh, even as Chinese President Xi Jinping was on official visit to India. Issue was eventually resolved through diplomatic channels.
- **2017 Doklam standstill:** This 73-day standoff at the Doklam plateau involved Indian troops preventing Chinese construction activities in territory claimed by Bhutan. It ended with both sides withdrawing their troops.
- **2020 Galwan Valley Clash:** Infrastructure developments, particularly India's road to a high-altitude air base, intensified tensions, culminating in the 2020 Galwan clash, first such since 1975, with casualties on both sides.
- **Protocol on Firearms and the 2021 Incident:** A 1996 agreement between India and China banned the use of firearms near the border.
 - However, **accusations of firing shots from both sides** in 2021 marked a breach of this protocol, highlighting heightened tensions and the fragility of agreements.
- **Persistent Mistrust:** Despite efforts to de-escalate, skirmishes along the border have continued, including a significant clash **at Yangtse in the Tawang sector of Arunachal Pradesh in 2022** when Indian troops stopped Chinese from crossing LAC.
- **Modern-Day Power Dynamics:** Assertive policies under Xi Jinping and Narendra Modi have aligned India closer to the U.S., with initiatives like the Quad aimed at counterbalancing China's regional influence.

CAUSES

- ⌚ **Infrastructure Competition:** Both nations have intensified infrastructure building, with China creating dual-use "well-off villages" along the border in Tibet and Xinjiang, and India constructing the Arunachal Frontier Highway and military bases, each side seeking strategic advantages.
- ⌚ **Military Buildup:** India and China have strengthened military presence and capabilities along the LAC. The Indian military reoriented resources, including the 17 Mountain Strike Corps, to the LAC, while China has doubled air bases, heliports, and defence sites since 2017.



- ⌚ **China's Salami Slicing Strategy:** Through incremental incursions, known as "salami slicing," China has reportedly moved the LAC inward to claim Indian patrolling points, resulting in India losing access to 26 of its 65 designated patrolling points.
- ⌚ **Sino-Pakistan Relations:** China's alliance with Pakistan, India's long-time rival, adds pressure to India, creating strategic complications in addressing its northern border security while managing the western threat from Pakistan.

IMPORTANT AREAS MENTIONED IN CURRENT AGREEMENT

Depsang:

- o The Depsang Plains issue began in 2013 when China carried out an 18-km incursion in the area.
- o Depsang plains are critical for India due to their strategic access to the Daulat Beg Oldie (DBO) airstrip and the Darbuk-Shyok DBO road.
- o Control over Depsang prevents Chinese forces from threatening these vital logistics lines, making it essential for India's northern border defence and military mobility.



Demchok:

- o Strategically important due to its proximity to critical positions in the southern part of eastern Ladakh, making coordinated patrols as it is in Charding Ninglung Nullah (CNN) junction, essential for regional stability.

OTHER AREAS OF CONTENTION

Pangong:

- o Around 50% of Pangong Lake lies in Tibet under Chinese control, 40% in Ladakh, and 10% remains disputed. Differing views on the LAC contribute to standoffs, buffer zones, and ongoing strategic construction by both nations.

- China's claim to Arunachal Pradesh, especially Tawang, is driven by historical ties to Tibet, strategic positioning near Bhutan.
- China's support for insurgent groups in northeast India further heightens India's security concerns.

Hot Springs:

- o Located near Gogra Post, the strategically important Hot Springs area strengthens India's defence by enabling surveillance over the LAC and monitoring movements in Aksai Chin, crucial for border security.

Doklam Dispute:

- It started when India (Indian Army) objected to road construction by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China in the Doklam plateau which China claims to be a part of its Donglang region. However, India and Bhutan recognize it as Doklam, a Bhutan territory.
- Doklam, at the tri-junction of India, China, and Bhutan, is strategically critical.
- China's control here could endanger India's Siliguri Corridor, isolate the northeast, and threaten Bhutan's sovereignty, undermining regional stability.



WAY FORWARD

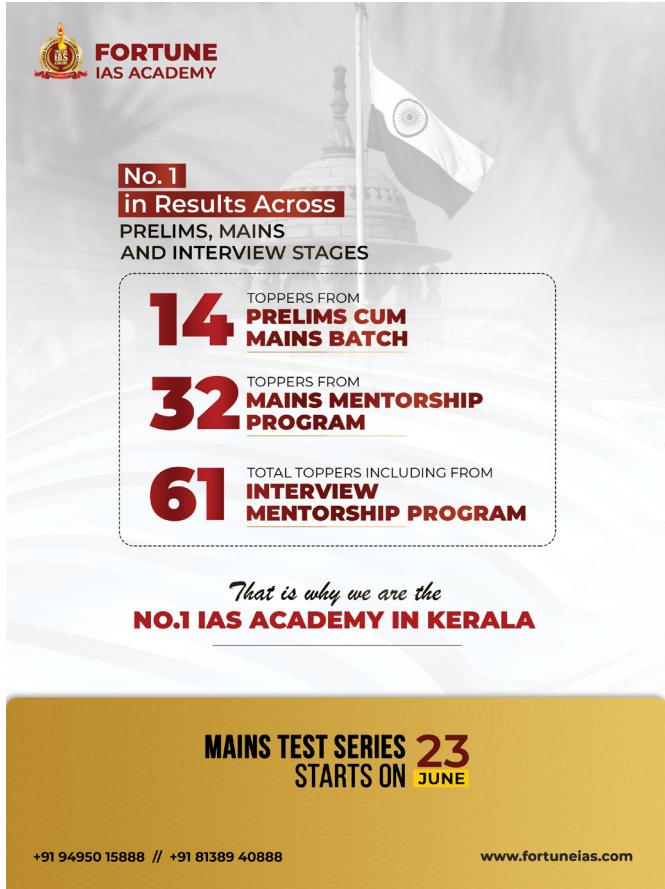
- ✿ **Diplomatic Engagement:** Continued diplomatic talks and military-level dialogue are essential, as evidenced by the **periodic disengagement agreements** that have managed to prevent major escalations despite recurring confrontations.
- ✿ **Confidence-Building Measures:** Implementing and enforcing more robust confidence-building measures, including **transparent infrastructure development policies**, could help manage flashpoints along the LAC.
- ✿ **International Mediation:** Some observers suggest that a **neutral third-party mediator** could help bridge the trust deficit and facilitate sustainable agreements on specific sectors of the LAC.
- ✿ **Economic Cooperation:** Given China's role as a significant trade partner, strengthening **economic ties could act as a buffer**, providing both countries with incentives to resolve issues peacefully.
- ✿ **LAC Clarification and Demarcation:** Clearly delineating the LAC through a mutually acceptable agreement could reduce border uncertainty, though complex given both sides' firm territorial claim.
- ✿ **Strategic Patience:** As nuclear powers, India and China stand to lose significantly from any military escalation, making long-term, peaceful coexistence through strategic patience and ongoing dialogue a practical path forward.

CONCLUSION

The recent disengagement agreement between India and China marks a step towards de-escalating border tensions and restoring stability along the LAC after years of standoff. While significant progress has been made, unresolved issues in key areas suggest the need for continued dialogue to ensure lasting peace and prevent future confrontations.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) In light of the recent border disengagement agreement, assess India's approach to managing territorial disputes with China. How can India leverage diplomatic and strategic tools to maintain a stable and secure border? **(10 marks)(150 words)**



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INDIA TACKLES TRACHOMA AND KALA AZAR

Syllabus: GS II - Health

PYQ MAPPING

Q1 Identify the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that are related to health. Discuss the success of the actions taken by the Government for achieving the same. **(2013)**

Q2 Public health system has limitations in providing universal health coverage. Do you think that the private sector could help in bridging the gap? What other viable alternatives would you suggest? **(2015)**

Q3 Appropriate local community-level healthcare intervention is a prerequisite to achieve 'Health for All' in India. Explain. **(2018)**

WHY IN NEWS

India has successfully eliminated bacterial eye infection Trachoma as a public health issue and is on the verge of eliminating Kala Azar as a public health issue, aiming for WHO certification.

INTRODUCTION

The **World Health Organization (WHO)** has announced that India has successfully eliminated **trachoma** as a **public health issue**. India is also on track to eliminating **kala-azar**, with cases reduced to fewer than one in 10,000 as **it seeks WHO certification**.

SHORT TAKES

➤ Neglected Tropical Diseases

- **NTDs** are a group of infectious diseases that primarily affect people in tropical and subtropical regions, especially in areas with limited access to healthcare, clean water, and sanitation.
- These diseases are called "neglected" because they have historically **received less attention and funding** compared to other infectious diseases, despite affecting millions of people and causing significant health and economic burdens.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) currently recognizes over **20 diseases** as **Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs)** which keeps evolving.
 - **NTDs include:** Buruli ulcer; Chagas disease; Dengue and Chikungunya; Dracunculiasis (Guinea Worm Disease); Echinococcosis; Foodborne Trematodiases; Human African Trypanosomiasis (Sleeping Sickness); Leishmaniasis; Leprosy (Hansen's Disease); Lymphatic Filariasis (Elephantiasis); Mycetoma, Chromoblastomycosis and other deep mycoses; Noma; Onchocerciasis (River Blindness); Rabies; Scabies and other Ectoparasites; Schistosomiasis (Bilharzia); Soil-Transmitted Helminthiases (Intestinal Worms); Snakebite Envenoming; Taeniasis/Cysticercosis; Trachoma; and Yaws (Endemic Treponematoses).

WHAT IS MEANT BY ELIMINATION AS A PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM?

- The **World Health Organization (WHO)** definition of "elimination as a public health problem" does not mean that a disease has been entirely eradicated or eliminated from a country.
- It signifies that the disease's spread or burden has been controlled to such low levels that it is no longer a major health concern for the general population. However, sporadic cases may still occur.

Jordan became the first country to receive World Health Organization (WHO) verification for eliminating leprosy

- Jordan has not reported any local cases of leprosy in over 20 years, highlighting its strong political commitment and successful public health efforts to eradicate the disease.
- In response to the Ministry of Health's initiative to confirm leprosy elimination, WHO appointed an independent team to assess the situation.
- After a thorough review, the team recommended that WHO officially recognize Jordan as leprosy-free **on September 19, 2024**

KALA-AZAR



- ♣ Also known as **visceral leishmaniasis**, the term "kala-azar" originates from late 19th-century India, meaning "black disease" due to the skin discoloration during infection (from Hindi "kala" for black and Persian "azar" for disease).
- ♣ **Caused by:** the protozoan parasite ***Leishmania donovani*** in India.
- ♣ **Infection Target:** The parasite primarily infects the reticuloendothelial system, especially the bone marrow, spleen, and liver.
- ♣ **Post Kala-azar Dermal Leishmaniasis (PKDL):** PKDL occurs when *Leishmania donovani* invades skin cells, causing dermal lesions; it can appear years after kala-azar treatment or even independently of visceral symptoms.

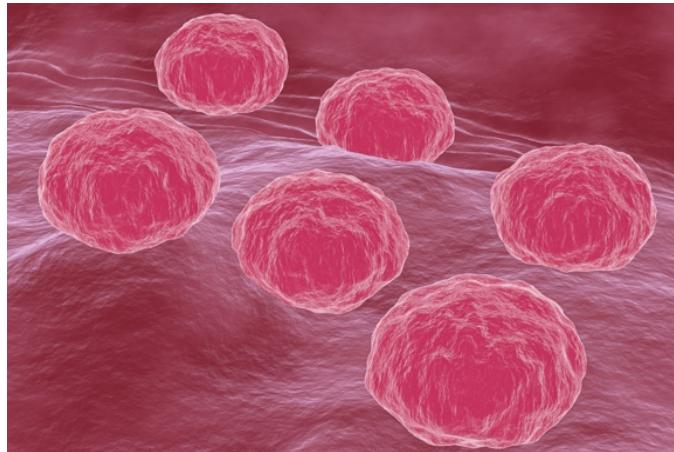
ACHIEVEMENTS IN DISEASE CONTROL

- ② India has made notable strides in eliminating kala-azar and trachoma as public health issues.
- ② Kala-azar cases have remained below one in 10,000 for two consecutive years.
 - In 2023, India recorded 595 kala-azar cases and four deaths; in 2024, this dropped to 339 cases with one death.
 - To obtain WHO certification for kala-azar

HOW INDIA ACHIEVED?

1. **TRACHOMA**
 - **National Trachoma Control Programme (1963):** Introduced surgical treatments, antibiotics, WASH initiatives, and health education for trachoma prevention.
 - **Integrated Efforts:** Trachoma control was merged with India's National Programme for Control of Blindness and Visual Impairment.
 - **WHO SAFE Strategy:**

TRACHOMA



- ♣ Trachoma is an **eye disease** caused by infection with the bacterium ***Chlamydia trachomatis***.
- ♣ It remains a public health issue in 38 countries, causing blindness or visual impairment in approximately 1.9 million people.
- ♣ Blindness resulting from trachoma is **permanent**.
- ♣ **Transmission:** Infection spreads through personal contact (hands, clothes, bedding, hard surfaces) and by flies that come in contact with discharge from the eyes or nose of infected individuals.
- ♣ As of April 2024, around 103 million people live in trachoma-endemic areas and are at risk of blindness.

elimination, India must sustain these low numbers for another year.

- ② Trachoma, which contributed to 5% of blindness cases in the 1970s, has come down to less than 1%.

② Other diseases eliminated by India:

- Smallpox (1980), Polio (2014), Plague, Rinderpest (the Cattle Plague), Yaws and Maternal And Neonatal Tetanus (2015)
 - **Surgery** to treat the blinding stage (trachomatous trichiasis)
 - **Antibiotics:** Mass drug administration of azithromycin.
 - **Facial Cleanliness:** Promote hygiene practices.
 - **Environmental Improvement:** Enhance water and sanitation access.
- **Conditions set by WHO to give elimination certificate**

- **Trachomatous Trichiasis:** Prevalence of <0.2% in adults aged ≥15 (1 in 1,000 people).
- **Trachomatous Inflammation in Children:** Prevalence under 5% in ages 1–9, maintained for two years without mass antibiotic treatment.
- **Management System:** A system to identify and manage new trachomatous trichiasis cases with adequate financial support.
- The National Trachomatous Trichiasis (TT only) Survey was conducted across 200 endemic districts from 2021-24 under **National Programme for Control of Blindness & Visual Impairment** (NPCBVI), as mandated by WHO for trachoma elimination certification.
- A Regional Dossier Review Group reviewed India's data and recommended WHO validate trachoma elimination as a public health issue in India.

2. Kala Azar

- **Kala-azar Elimination Programme in India**
 - India initiated a centrally sponsored Kala-azar Control Programme in 1990-91.
 - The Central Government covers 100% operational costs for spray wages, transportation, and provides anti-kala-azar medicines, drugs, and insecticides since December 2003.
 - The National Health Policy (2002) envisaged kala-azar Elimination by 2010 which was

CHALLENGES AHEAD

- ▼ **Vector-Borne Diseases:** Ongoing threats from diseases like malaria, dengue, and chikungunya due to changing climate and urbanisation.
- ▼ **Tuberculosis (TB):** High burden of TB, requiring improved diagnosis, treatment, and prevention efforts.
- ▼ **Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs):** Rising rates of diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and cancers necessitate enhanced healthcare infrastructure.

WHY INDIA ATTRACTING MANY DISEASES

1. Population Dynamics:

- Rapid population growth and urban migration lead to overcrowding, poor housing, and reduced immunity, overwhelming immunisation efforts.
- **Foodborne Diseases:** Significant outbreaks linked to food handlers and sewage-contaminated food

revised later to 2015 and then to 2023.

- Importantly, the WHO's goal for the Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD) Roadmap has a 2030 target and India has reached the target by 2024 and is now seeking WHO certification.
- **The Elimination strategy:**
 - Early diagnosis & complete case management
 - Integrated Vector Management and Vector Surveillance
 - Supervision, monitoring, surveillance and evaluation
 - Strengthening capacity of human resource in health
 - Advocacy, communication and social mobilisation for behavioural impact and inter-sectoral convergence
 - Programme management
- **Conditions set by WHO to give elimination certificate**
 - **Fewer than one case per 10,000 people:** Maintain less than one case of kala-azar per 10,000 people in the population at the sub-district level for three years in a row
 - **Interrupted transmission:** Demonstrate that local transmission of kala-azar has been stopped for a set period of time
 - **Disease prevention:** Have a system in place to prevent the disease from re-emerging

▼ **Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR):** Increasing AMR threatens effective treatment of infections, highlighting the need for better antibiotic stewardship.

▼ **Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs):** Continued focus on other NTDs, such as lymphatic filariasis and schistosomiasis, which require sustained control efforts.

▼ **Mental Health Issues:** Growing mental health challenges require improved support systems and integration into primary healthcare services.

are on the rise.

2. Environmental Disruption:

- Human activities disrupt ecosystems, and deforestation increases contact with wildlife, facilitating disease transmission. Climate change further influences pathogen habitats.

Socio-Economic Challenges:

- o Inadequate healthcare infrastructure and poor sanitation, including lack of safe water and sewage disposal, heighten disease transmission risks.

Viral Epidemic Risks:

- o Rapid viral evolution and India's tropical climate

support the spread of infectious diseases, complicating containment efforts.

Antibiotic Resistance:

- o The emergence of antibiotic-resistant pathogens and frequent human-livestock interactions raise the potential for widespread outbreaks.

WAY FORWARD

- ✿ **Strengthen Healthcare Infrastructure:** Invest in healthcare facilities in rural and urban areas to improve access to medical services, such as through the **Ayushman Bharat scheme**.
- ✿ **Improve Sanitation and Water Supply:** Enhance sanitation and hygiene practices via initiatives like **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan** to reduce waterborne disease transmission.
- ✿ **Promote Vaccination and Public Health Education:** Increase vaccination coverage and public awareness programs, similar to **Mission Indradhanush**, to prevent vaccine-preventable diseases.
- ✿ **Enhance Surveillance and Response Systems:** Develop robust disease surveillance systems like the **Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP)** for early detection and response to outbreaks.
- ✿ **Adopt the One Health Approach:** Foster collaboration between human and animal health sectors to monitor and control zoonotic diseases, integrating efforts for better public health outcomes.

CONCLUSION

India's elimination of kala-azar and trachoma is a major public health achievement. However, ongoing efforts are essential to tackle other health challenges and neglected tropical diseases. Strengthening healthcare, improving sanitation, and enhancing surveillance remain crucial for comprehensive health.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) Discuss strategies can India implement to sustain the elimination of kala-azar and trachoma while addressing other public health challenges? **(10 marks)(150 words)**

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Registration



Meera K IAS
Sub Collector (SDM)
Ernakulam



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UN PEACE KEEPING FORCE

Syllabus: GS II - Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

WHY IN NEWS

On October 14, 2024, the U.N. Security Council expressed "strong concern" over Israeli attacks on U.N. peacekeepers in southern Lebanon, which injured personnel from the U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). This incident, amid rising conflict, has drawn international condemnation and underscores UNIFIL's role in regional stability.

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Peacekeeping Force aids countries in transitioning from conflict to peace by integrating military, police, and civilian personnel to promote security and stability. Guided by principles of consent, impartiality, and limited use of force, peacekeepers operate in challenging environments to protect civilians and foster lasting peace.

SHORT TAKES

- **United Nations Security Council (UNSC):** One of the six principal organs of the United Nations. It has 15 members, including five permanent members with veto power (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States), and is authorised to establish peacekeeping missions, enforce sanctions, and mandate military action.

ABOUT UN PEACE KEEPING FORCE

- **Role and Purpose:** UN Peacekeeping **helps conflict-affected countries transition towards lasting peace** by providing security, political support, and peacebuilding efforts essential for early post-conflict recovery.
- **Core Principles:** UN Peacekeeping is guided by three basic principles:
 - Consent of the parties
 - Impartiality
 - Non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate.
- **Operations:** UN peacekeeping missions are created by the UN Security Council (UNSC), which authorises and mandates specific operations.
- **Funds:** UN peacekeeping funds come from assessed contributions managed by the UN General Assembly (UNGA), with each member state contributing based on economic capacity.
- **Multidimensional Mandate:** Modern peacekeeping goes beyond maintaining peace, involving **civilian protection, political process facilitation, human rights promotion, disarmament, election support, and rule of law restoration**.
- **Global Partnership and Legitimacy:** Peacekeeping operates as a collaborative effort involving the UN General Assembly, Security Council, Secretariat, and contributing countries, upholding UN Charter values and pooling global resources.
- **Adaptability and Achievements:** Peacekeeping has evolved to address complex environments, achieving notable successes and adaptability.
 - **Example:** The **Nobel Peace Prize 1988** was awarded to the UN Peacekeeping Forces, recognising the contributions of over 500,000 personnel from 53 countries, who provided crucial monitoring, buffer zones, and humanitarian aid in global conflict zones from 1948 to 1988.

SUCCESSES OF UN PEACE KEEPING FORCE

- ♣ **Establishing Peace in Conflict Zones:** The UN successfully restored peace in regions like **Cambodia, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Angola, Timor Leste, Liberia, and Kosovo**, demonstrating effective intervention and conflict resolution.
- ♣ **Ceasefire Maintenance:** Peacekeeping operations have successfully monitored and preserved ceasefires in regions like southern Lebanon and Cyprus, contributing to regional stability.
- ♣ **Evolving Civilian Protection:** Learning from past failures, the UN made civilian protection a priority in missions such as Sierra Leone (UNSMIL), Timor Leste (UNMIT), Darfur (UNAMID), South Sudan (UNMISS), and the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO).

UNITED NATIONS INTERIM FORCE IN LEBANON (UNIFIL) AND BLUE LINE

- The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) was established in 1978 following Israel's invasion of southern Lebanon, aimed at confirming Israeli withdrawal, restoring peace, and supporting Lebanese authority.
- Despite the establishment of UNIFIL, Israel invaded Lebanon again in 1982, leading to the rise of Hezbollah, a Shia militant group opposed to Israeli presence.
- Israel withdrew only in 2000 after international pressure, and the UN delineated the "Blue Line" as a practical border, though it is not recognized as an international boundary.
- After the 2006 conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, UNIFIL's mandate expanded to support the Lebanese army and prevent unauthorised armed groups in southern Lebanon.
- India is the second-largest contributor to UNIFIL, which has faced attacks from both Hezbollah and Israeli forces in the ongoing regional conflict.



CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF UN PEACE KEEPING FORCES

- **Limited Contributions from Major Powers:** While wealthier countries fund a significant portion, they often contribute fewer troops, leaving the bulk of personnel contributions to developing countries. This **imbalance leads to concerns that major powers avoid frontline risks.** For instance, in 2023, Bangladesh contributed about 7,000 troops, while the U.S. contributed fewer than 100 personnel despite funding nearly 28% of the UNPKF budget.
- **Operational Constraints:** UNPKF operates under mandates that may restrict force usage, even in volatile areas, which sometimes limits effectiveness and the protection of civilians. Example, in **South Sudan** (UNMISS mission), peacekeepers were criticised for not intervening during the 2016 Juba hotel assault on civilians and aid workers due to unclear operational rules
- **Failure to Act in Rwanda and Bosnia:** The UN faced severe criticism for its inaction during the **Rwandan genocide (1994)** and **Srebrenica massacre in Bosnia (1995)**, where it could not protect vulnerable civilians despite being on the ground.

- **Allegations of Misconduct:** Numerous allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation by peacekeepers have tarnished the UN's reputation and raised concerns about accountability and oversight. Example, in the **Central African Republic (MINUSCA mission)**, peacekeepers from several countries faced allegations of abuse, leading to significant reputational damage and strained relations with local populations,
- **Inability to Intervene Decisively in Recent Conflicts:** The UN has remained a bystander in current crises, including the conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza, where it has failed to deploy resources or take a firm stance on

INDIA'S CONTRIBUTION TO UN PEACEKEEPING FORCE

- **Historical Contribution:** India is one of the largest contributors to UN Peacekeeping, with around **287,000 troops deployed** in various missions over the years.
- **Current Deployment:** Indian Armed Forces are **actively serving in nine countries**, including UNDOF, UNIFIL, UNTSO, UNFICYP, MONUSCO, UNMISS, UNIFSA, MINUSCA, and MINURSO
- **Capacity Building and Training:** The **Centre for UN Peacekeeping (CUNPK) in New Delhi** trains over 12,000 troops annually, providing courses for peacekeepers and deploying Mobile Training Teams to friendly nations.
- **Technological Contributions:** India supplies **state-of-the-art equipment and vehicles**, manufactured domestically, to ensure operational efficiency in

- **civilian protection.**
- **Divided International Community:** The UNSC permanent members, particularly the U.S., Russia, and China, often veto resolutions that do not align with their interests
- **Underutilisation of Peacekeeping Resources:** Despite having 1,00,000 UN forces, including infantry battalions and a logistics hub in Brindisi, Italy, the UN has not effectively deployed these resources to mitigate violence in conflict zones like Ukraine and Gaza.

challenging terrains and conditions.

- **Gender Parity Initiatives:** Supporting the UN's gender parity goals, India has deployed **Female Engagement Teams in Congo and Abyei**, along with women military police in **Golan Heights** and women officers in various missions.
 - **Notable Recognition:** Major Radhika Sen was selected for the "**Military Gender Advocate of the Year 2023**" by the UN, highlighting the significant impact of Indian women in peacekeeping.
- **Commitments for Future:** At the UN Peacekeeping Ministerial in Ghana (December 2023), India pledged an **Infantry Battalion Group, sub-groups, and Pre-Deployment and Military Observers Training** for the next two years.

WAY FORWARD

- **Security Council Reforms:** Include India and South Africa as permanent members to represent the Global South and Africa, ensuring fairer global representation in the Council.
- **Reform Veto Power:** Replace individual vetoes with a voting system within an expanded Security Council (P7), requiring a majority to decide on peacekeeping interventions, preventing single-member blocks.
- **Empower UN Command on Ground:** Grant UN military and police commanders full executive powers under Chapters VII and VIII of the UN Charter for quick and effective peace enforcement.
- **Enable Flexible Deployment of UN Troops:** Allow rapid deployment of UN standing troops or reallocations between missions for immediate action in critical conflict zones.
- **Incorporating Gender Perspectives:** Promote the recruitment and deployment of women in peacekeeping roles to enhance operational effectiveness and address specific needs of women and children in conflict zones.
- **Adapting to Modern Threats:** Develop strategies to **combat disinformation** and address the **impact of transnational crimes and climate change on security**, ensuring peacekeepers are equipped to handle evolving threats.
 - » **Example:** As of 2022, women represented 7.9% of military, police, justice, and corrections personnel in UN peacekeeping field missions, up from just 1% in 1993, highlighting significant progress in gender representation

CONCLUSION

UN Peacekeeping forces play a vital role in fostering stability and peace in conflict-affected regions, operating under a **framework of impartiality and respect for sovereignty**. While they encounter significant obstacles, their ongoing evolution and dedication to protecting human rights illustrate their importance in addressing contemporary global challenges.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) Evaluate the successes and failures of UN Peacekeeping missions over the last six decades. What reforms are necessary to enhance their effectiveness in contemporary conflicts? **(10 marks)(150 words)**

ETHICS - CASE STUDY

Q) You are the head of the Municipality of the locality where a factory producing lots of toxic waste is running. The factory employs many workers, including a significant number of local youth. But the environment ministry is of the opinion that the factory should be closed as it is causing air pollution leading to rampant respiratory infections in the area. However, the final decision has been left to you.

- Explain the ethical issues involved in the case?
- What action would you take to restore the environment as well as save the livelihood of the affected employees, if the factory is closed?

ETHICS - EXAMPLES

- Medical Ethics:** The Union Health Ministry is contemplating an "opt-out" approach for cornea donation, whereby deceased patients in hospitals would be presumed donors unless they or their families express dissent. This strategy aims to tackle India's cornea shortage and would necessitate legal amendments, enabling hospitals to prioritise local needs and create a national registry for improved allocation.
- Human Rights:** Hideko Hakamada, at 91, dedicated her life to advocating for her brother, Iwao Hakamada, who was wrongfully imprisoned on death row for nearly 50 years before being acquitted. Throughout this ordeal, she supported his legal battles, maintained public awareness of his case, and worked to restore his civil rights, highlighting the ethical implications of wrongful convictions.
- Inclusivity:** Delhi's Social Welfare Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj announced a monthly financial assistance of Rs 5,000 for around 10,000 individuals with over 60 per cent disability requiring special care, positioning Delhi as the first state in India to provide such substantial support following a Cabinet decision.
- Perseverance:** Bini Muduli, the first from the Bonda community—a particularly vulnerable tribal group in Odisha—to clear the Odisha Civil Services Examination, achieved a 596th rank after preparing through YouTube videos and online mock tests due to her family's financial constraints.
- Public Health Ethics:** One person has died and ten have been hospitalised in the US due to an E.coli infection linked to McDonald's burgers, prompting the fast-food chain to stop serving quarter pound patties and slivered onions in several states.
- Censorship:** Call of Duty: Black Ops 6, scheduled for global release on October 25, has been banned in Kuwait, likely due to its setting during the 1990 Gulf War. Activision confirmed that the game will not be available in the region, leading to the cancellation of pre-orders and refunds for customers.
- AI Ethics:** The Union government plans to launch an AI-powered chatbot on the Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) to assist users in lodging complaints and appeals, as part of efforts to streamline the grievance process. Currently, the government receives lakhs of grievances annually, with over 19.45 lakh recorded last year, and aims to enhance user experience and efficiency in grievance handling.
- Innovation:** Prakruthi Rao and Akshara Mehta, co-founders of Juhu Beach Studio, are transforming textile waste into sustainable, handcrafted fashion items with an all-women team, fostering a culture of upcycling and responsible production practices. Their approach fosters a supportive workspace while challenging traditional perceptions of waste materials in fashion.
- Environmental Ethics:** The hatching of a great Indian bustard chick via artificial insemination at the Sudasari Breeding Centre in Rajasthan marks a crucial step in conserving this critically endangered species, which has fewer than 150 individuals left in India.



MODEL ESSAY

"The function of freedom is to free someone else"

Introduction

- Quote by African American writer Toni Morrison
- Overview of the concept that true freedom involves the liberation of others- collective freedom
- **Meaning:** Freedom is not merely an individual pursuit; it inherently includes the responsibility to uplift and liberate others.

Different Dimensions of Freedom

- **Political Freedom:** The right to participate in political processes, including voting, expression, and association, allowing individuals to influence governance.
- **Economic Freedom:** Right to own property, start businesses, and pursue livelihoods without undue interference.
- **Social Freedom:** The capacity to live without discrimination based on race, gender, sexuality, or religion, ensuring equal treatment in society.
- **Personal Freedom:** The autonomy to make choices about one's life, including personal relationships, lifestyle, and self-identity, free from coercion.
- **Psychological Freedom:** The state of mental liberation from oppressive thoughts and societal expectations, fostering personal growth and self-actualisation.

Responsibilities Accompanying Freedom

- **Respect for Others' Rights:** By avoiding infringing on others personal freedoms.
- **Active Civic Participation:** Such as voting, community service, and staying informed.
- **Upholding Justice and Fairness:** Ensuring fair treatment and advocating against discrimination.
- **Environmental Stewardship:** Responsibly managing resources and reducing harm to the environment for future generations.

Consequences of ignoring freedom

- **Social Fragmentation:** Ignoring collective freedom can lead to social isolation and distrust among communities, undermining cohesion.
- **Perpetuation of Inequality:** A focus on individual freedom often neglects systemic inequalities- allowing oppressive structures to persist.
- **Escalation of Conflict:** Prioritising one group's freedoms can escalate tensions, resulting in violence and civil unrest.
- **Erosion of Democratic Values:** Undermine democracy, allowing majority voices to silence minority rights.

Case Studies

- The **mass protests led by Anna Hazare** highlighted the need for transparency and accountability in governance.
- The **farmers' agitation** against the controversial farm laws.
- The movement led by leaders like B.R. Ambedkar sought to end **caste-based discrimination**, advocating for social, political, and economic freedoms for Dalits

Conclusion

- Emphasise the importance of recognizing that true freedom is a collective endeavour
- Conclude with the need for continuous vigilance and adaptation to address emerging issues that threaten collective freedom.

Sample Quotes

- *Justice without force is powerless; force without justice is tyrannical- Blaise Pascal*
- *The greatest enemy of knowledge is not ignorance, it is the illusion of knowledge- Daniel J. Boorstin*
- *The price of greatness is responsibility- Winston Churchill*

MAINS JOT DOWN



GS- I - ART AND CULTURE

- During the BRICS summit in Kazan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi gifted a **Sohrai painting** to President Vladimir Putin.
- » This traditional mural art from **Jharkhand's Hazaribagh** district is created by tribal women during the Sohrai festival.
- » Known for its natural pigments and simple tools like twigs and rice straw, it features animals, birds, and nature, reflecting agrarian life and wildlife reverence.
- » Sohrai-Khovar Paintings hold a GI tag.



GS- II - GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND INTERVENTION

- The Union Home Minister launched the **Civil Registration System (CRS)** mobile application, developed by the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India, **to streamline the registration process**.
- CRS is a unified system for the mandatory documentation of vital events like births, deaths, and stillbirths, as mandated by the **Registration of Births and Deaths Act of 1969**.
- It operates under the authority of the **Registrar General**.



GS- II - HEALTH

- The Prime Minister launched the **U-WIN portal to track vaccination** events for pregnant women and children under the Universal Immunization Programme (UIP).
- Part of the National Health Mission, it ensures timely vaccination against **12 preventable diseases for children (from birth to 16 years) and pregnant women**.



GS- III - AGRICULTURE AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

- The Ministry of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries recently released the **Standard Veterinary Treatment Guidelines (SVTG)**, which outline best practices for veterinary care.
- The guidelines aim to enhance animal health and productivity, support the national action plan against antimicrobial resistance, **promote Ayurveda, and regulate antibiotic use in veterinary treatments**.



GS- III - SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

- India's first Biomanufacturing Institute, **BRIC-NABI**, was recently inaugurated in **Mohali, Punjab**.
- Formed by merging **National Agri-Food Biotechnology Institute (NABI) and the Centre of Innovative and Applied Bioprocessing (CIAB)**, and funded by the Department of Biotechnology
- BRIC-NABI aims to advance research in genetic manipulation and metabolic pathways while addressing India's biomanufacturing needs through large-scale production facilities and support for startups.



GS- III - CLIMATE CHANGE

- The 2024 Lancet Countdown Report on Health and Climate Change has been released.
- **Key Findings:**
 - » **Temperature Rise:** The annual mean surface temperature reached 1.45°C above pre-industrial levels in 2023, nearing the critical 1.5°C limit established by the Paris Agreement.
 - » **Health Impacts:** Heat-related mortality among individuals over 65 has increased by 167% since the 1990s, impacting physical activity and sleep quality.



GS- III -ENVIRONMENT CONSERVATION

- ➡ A dense forest created at 8,000 ft in Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand, using the **Miyawaki method** has achieved a 93% success rate.
- ➡ Developed by Japanese botanist **Akira Miyawaki**, this reforestation technique involves planting diverse native trees closely together to regenerate forests.
- ➡ Benefits include high tree density, pollution reduction, carbon sequestration, and land restoration. However, it can be resource-intensive, offer limited genetic diversity, and may not suit all locations.

- ➡ The Prime Minister highlighted that over **60,000 Amrit Sarovars were constructed nationwide**.
- ➡ Launched in 2022 as part of "**Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav**," Mission Amrit Sarovar aims to build or rejuvenate 75 water bodies per district, each covering at least 1 acre.
- ➡ Focus areas include water conservation, community involvement, and effective soil use, with no separate financial allocation.

- ➡ Experts highlighted the urgent **need to focus on the world's Northern forests** during COP16 at the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** at Cali, Colombia.
- ➡ Northern forests, particularly **boreal and temperate ecosystems**, in Europe, North America, and Russia, account for 30% of global forest cover and yet only 10% are protected



GS- II - SOCIAL JUSTICE

- ➡ Indian Railways, along with the Ministry of Women & Child Development, launched a revised **Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)** for safeguarding vulnerable children.
 - » This comprehensive SOP outlines a robust framework for safeguarding children who come into contact with Indian Railways.
- ➡ **Other Key initiatives of Indian Railway include:**
 - » **Operation AAHT:** A nationwide anti-human trafficking drive, rescuing over 2,300 children and arresting 674 traffickers since 2022.
 - » **Operation Nanhe Farishte:** Focused on rescuing children in need across railway zones.
 - » S4* has around 75% indigenous content and is armed with K-4 ballistic missiles, boasting a 3,500 km range. SSBNs are critical assets for nuclear deterrence, operated by only a few nations: the U.S., Russia, China, UK, France, and India.

CHERRYPICKS OF THE WEEK

USUFRUCT

- It is a legal right granted to a person or party which grants a temporary right to use/derive income/benefit from the property of another individual.
- It is a real limited right that can be found in many jurisdictions of mixed and civil law.
- **Usus** refers to the right to utilise something directly without damaging or modifying it.
- **Fructus** refers to the right to enjoy the fruits of a property being utilised, i.e. to take advantage of the property by leasing it, selling the crops it creates, paying admission to it, or the like.

HYDROGELS

- These are crosslinked polymer chains with three-dimensional (3D) network structures, which can absorb relatively large amounts of fluid.
- These are known to be suitable for drug delivery because of their swelling behaviour, mechanical strength and biocompatibility.
- These materials could revolutionise tissue engineering, potentially aiding in organ regeneration.

DOCTRINE OF COVERTURE

- Legal doctrine under English common law, that places a married woman under the cover of her husband treating them as a single entity.
- It suspends the very being or legal existence of a woman after marriage. In theory, it seeks to pass on her property to the husband, restricting her ability to hold property, enter into contract, etc.

TRANSFER OF RISK

- It refers to a business agreement, where one party pays money to another party to mitigate specific losses that may or may not occur.
- Risks can be transferred between individuals, from individuals to insurance companies, or from insurers to reinsurers.

UNDERPRICING

- It is the practice of listing an initial public offering (IPO) at a price below its real value in the stock market.
- When a new stock closes its first day of trading above the set IPO price, the stock is considered to have been underpriced.
- Underpricing is short-lived because investor demand will drive the price upwards to its market value.

MULE ACCOUNT

- A mule account refers to a bank account that is used to facilitate illegal activities such as money laundering and fraudulent transactions.
- Cybercriminals remotely control these accounts, often rented from individuals or shell companies, to conceal transaction trails.
- They use mule accounts to process funds for illegal platforms like fake investment and gambling websites