



FORTUNE WEEKLY DIGEST



> North East Monsoon

> Censorship in India

> Welfare Economy

29th SEPTEMBER - 05th 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**

KASTURI SHA
AIR 68

MANJIMA P
AIR 235

FABI RASHEED
AIR 71

SWATHI S BABU
AIR 522

OORMILA J S
AIR 561

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CENSORSHIP IN INDIA

Syllabus: GS II - Government policies and interventions

PYQ MAPPING

Q) What do you understand by the concept “freedom of speech and expression”? Does it cover hate speech also? Why do the films in India stand on a slightly different plane from other forms of expression? Discuss (2014)

SHORT TAKES

Over-the-top (OTT): Refers to streaming media services that deliver content directly to viewers via the internet, bypassing traditional cable or satellite television platforms. Examples of popular OTT platforms include Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and Disney+, which offer on-demand access to a wide range of movies, shows, and original programming.

WHY IN NEWS

The Bombay High Court disposed of Zee Entertainment's petition after the producers of the film **Emergency** and the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) reached an agreement regarding the film's certification. The **CBFC suggested 13 changes**, including excisions and modifications, before issuing a U/A certificate. The film, starring Kangana Ranaut as Indira Gandhi, **faced protests from Sikh groups**, which allegedly led to CBFC's decision.

INTRODUCTION

Censorship in India is regulated by a combination of constitutional provisions and specific laws that restrict speech and expression in cases of national security, public order, and morality. Although intended to maintain public order, security, and morality, these regulations often lead to debates over the restriction of free speech and individual rights, with cases frequently challenged in courts.

CENTRAL BOARD OF FILM CERTIFICATION (CBFC)

- ➔ **Statutory Body:** CBFC is a statutory body under the **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting**, responsible for regulating public exhibition of films in India under the **Cinematograph Act, 1952**.
- ➔ **Certification Requirement:** Films can be publicly exhibited in India only after being certified by CBFC.
- ➔ **Composition:** The Board consists of non-official members and a Chairman, all appointed by the Central Government.
- ➔ **Headquarters & Regional Offices:** CBFC headquarters are located in **Mumbai**, with nine regional offices in Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bangalore, Thiruvananthapuram, Hyderabad, New Delhi, Cuttack, and Guwahati.
- ➔ **Advisory Panels:** Regional offices are assisted by Advisory Panels whose members are drawn from various walks of life and nominated by the Central Government for a two-year period.
- ➔ **Legal Framework:** The certification process follows the **Cinematograph Act, 1952**, **Cinematograph (Certification) Rules, 1983**, and the guidelines issued by the Central Government under Section 5(B) of the Act

SHYAM BENEGAL COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE CENTRAL BUREAU OF FILM CERTIFICATION (CBFC)

- ✦ **Committee Formation:** The Shyam Benegal Committee was established on January 1, 2016, to create a framework for film certification, balancing global best practices with artistic freedom.
 - The committee submitted its recommendations on April 29, 2016, focusing on improving film certification processes
- ✦ **Issuing Certification:** The CBFC's primary role should be to certify films based on their content, not to censor them. The committee emphasises a shift towards categorising films rather than cutting scenes.
- ✦ **Grounds for Cancelling Certification:** Certification can be revoked under two circumstances
 - **Section 5B (1) of the Cinematograph Act, 1952:** If the film violates this section, which deals with films that affect public order, decency, or morality.

- **Exceeding Certification Category:** If the content surpasses the restrictions of the highest permissible category, the certificate can be cancelled.
- ✦ **Applicant's Responsibility:** The applicant must specify the category of certification being sought and the target audience.
- ✦ **Objectives:** These guidelines aim to
 - **Protect Children and Adults:** Shield viewers from potentially harmful or unsuitable content.
 - **Informed Decision-Making:** Provide audiences with enough information to make educated viewing choices.
 - **Maintain Artistic Freedom:** Ensure that while protecting the public, filmmakers' creative expression is preserved.
- ✦ **Board Composition:** The committee recommends a smaller, more efficient Board with a **total of nine members with one member from each Regional Office plus the Chairman.**
 - The chairman should only play the role of a guiding mechanism and not involve himself/herself in day to day activities of CFBC.

ISSUES

- ▼ **Lack of Clear Guidelines:** Many regulatory frameworks lack specific criteria for content assessment, leading to confusion.
 - For instance, the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) often faces criticism for its vague and inconsistent standards when certifying films.
- ▼ **Political Pressure:** There are instances where censorship is used as a tool for political control, suppressing dissent and critical viewpoints against the government or ruling parties.
- ▼ **Impact on Creative Freedom:** Censorship can stifle creativity, limiting artists and filmmakers from exploring diverse themes and narratives, which may lead to homogenised content.
- ▼ **Impact on OTT Platforms:** With the rise of over-the-top (OTT) content, there are debates about the need for regulation, raising concerns about censorship affecting the relatively freer space provided by these platforms.
- ▼ **Lack of Accountability:** Orders for content takedowns and blocking, lack transparency, leaving little recourse for public accountability.
 - **Blocking of BBC Documentary:** The Indian government's censorship of the BBC documentary, *India: The Modi Question*, illustrates arbitrary application of emergency IT Rules to suppress content critical of the government.
- ▼ **Children's Exposure:** The lack of strict age classifications can lead to inappropriate content being accessible to minors. Films and series often do not carry adequate warnings, raising alarms about the exposure of children to violence and explicit material.
- ▼ **Digital Content Regulation:** The rapid growth of digital media has led to challenges in regulating online content, with questions about the feasibility of censoring the vast amount of information available.
- ▼ **Public Accountability:** There is often little transparency in the censorship process, making it difficult for the public to understand the reasoning behind content bans or modifications.

IS CENSORSHIP ALLOWED?

- ♣ **Constitutional Limitations:** Article 19(1)(a) of the Indian Constitution guarantees freedom of speech and expression, but this **freedom is not absolute.**
 - **Article 19(2)** allows the government to impose "**reasonable restrictions**" on this freedom in the interest of national security, public order, decency, morality, or in cases of defamation, contempt of court, and incitement to an offence.
 - In **K.A. Abbas v. Union of India (1970)** SC ruled freedom of speech is fundamental and any censorship must be reasonable. "Public order" as a restriction should not be interpreted to suppress legitimate expression. Censorship should not be arbitrary and should follow clear guidelines.
- ♣ **Government Censorship Tools:**
 - The **Cinematograph Act, 1952** empowers the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) to regulate films.

- o The **Information Technology Act, 2000** enables takedown notices for online content.
- o The **Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021**, further broaden the government's powers to regulate digital content.

♣ Recent Examples

- o The **release of Dev Patel's *Monkey Man* in India has been stalled** by the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC), which has avoided scheduling a screening of the film, despite Universal Studios making significant cuts, including removing scenes depicting the nexus between religion and politics.
- o **Kangana Ranaut's film *Emergency*** was delayed due to certification issues with the CBFC, which required cuts and factual references for controversial historical statements. Despite agreeing to most changes, the film's certification was stalled, prompting the filmmakers to approach the Bombay High Court for resolution.

GLOBAL EXAMPLES

- ☀ **China:** China's Great Firewall is a leading example of **state-controlled censorship**, blocking foreign websites, filtering content, and monitoring internet usage to suppress dissent.
- ☀ **Russia:** During the invasion of Ukraine, Russia **blocked access to independent news outlets** and restricted social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter, using Roskomnadzor to control narratives.
- ☀ **Turkey:** Under President Erdoğan, Turkey has extensively used laws to control social media, frequently blocking websites, and limiting access to content that criticises the government.
- ☀ **North Korea:** Kim Jong Un leads a **tightly controlled media environment**, with content focusing on state leadership. Foreign journalists face restrictions, and citizens rely on smuggled information. Internet access is limited to the elite.
- ☀ **China:** President Xi Jinping leads a sophisticated censorship regime. Foreign news is heavily restricted, VPNs are banned, and the media must follow Communist Party directives. Xinjiang is under extreme censorship and surveillance.

WAY FORWARD

- ✳ **Transparent and Proportionate Solutions:** The government must develop less intrusive methods to tackle fake information, such as public education campaigns and partnerships with independent fact-checking entities.
- ✳ **Transparent Process:** Blocking orders and content removals should be transparent, with the reasons made available publicly, to ensure accountability and prevent arbitrary censorship.
- ✳ **Strengthening Independent Fact-Checking:** Independent bodies, rather than government-controlled units, should be tasked with fact-checking, ensuring neutrality in combating misinformation.
- ✳ **Public Consultations:** Any amendments to digital media laws should involve wider consultations with stakeholders, including civil society, media organisations, and the public, to create a balanced framework that safeguards free speech.
- ✳ **Strengthen Intermediary Protections:** Reaffirm the role of intermediaries as neutral platforms that host user content without the undue burden of acting as gatekeepers of free speech.
- ✳ **Adhere to Constitutional Guidelines:** Any effort to regulate speech must strictly adhere to the grounds specified in Article 19(2) and avoid creating broad, vague rules that risk stifling legitimate expression.
- ✳ **Independent Oversight:** Establish independent bodies or tribunals for fact-checking and dispute resolution to avoid conflicts of interest and ensure a balanced approach to regulating online content.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, while censorship in India is intended to protect national security and public order, it raises significant concerns about the erosion of free speech and individual rights. To strike a balance, the government must adopt transparent measures, engage with stakeholders, and ensure independent oversight in the censorship process. By adhering to constitutional guidelines, India can better navigate the complexities of censorship while safeguarding the fundamental right to free expression.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) Discuss the challenges faced by the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) in ensuring responsible content in films while respecting the artistic and creative freedom of filmmakers **(10 marks)(150 words)**

NORTH EAST MONSOON

Syllabus: GS I - Geography; Climatology

PYQ MAPPING

Q) How far do you agree that the behaviour of the Indian monsoon has been changing due to humanising landscapes? Discuss. (2015)

Q) What characteristics can be assigned to the monsoon climate that succeeds in feeding more than 50 percent of the world population residing in Monsoon Asia? (2017)

WHY IN NEWS

The northeast monsoon is likely to make a landing soon as the weather models are indicating a strong start with a low pressure area likely to form in south Bay of Bengal and move towards north Tamil Nadu and South Andhra Pradesh coast.

MECHANISM

→ Apparent Shift of Sun to south

- o As summer ends around September, the **sun's apparent position moves southward**. This causes a drop in temperatures over the Indian subcontinent, particularly in northern regions.

→ Formation of High-Pressure Area Over Northern India

- o By **October**, the **Indian subcontinent begins to cool** as the summer heat fades and the South-West Monsoon starts retreating.
- o **High-pressure systems** form over northern India, the Himalayas, and Central Asia due to cooling temperatures.
- o This high-pressure zone contrasts with the relatively warmer and lower-pressure area over the southern parts of India and the Indian Ocean.

→ Low pressure over Bay of Bengal

- o Land is now cooler but the Ocean is warm as it maintains the heat from summer. This causes development of low pressure over the Bay of Bengal that attracts the monsoon winds from land.

→ Formation of Northwesterly Winds

- o As the retreating monsoon moves southward, the winds begin to flow from land (northwestern direction) toward the Bay of Bengal. These dry winds originate from high-pressure areas over northern India and flow towards the low-pressure

INTRODUCTION

- The northeast monsoon, also referred to as the winter monsoon, retreating monsoon, or reverse monsoon, is a significant and recurring feature of India's climate. Occurring from October to December, it primarily affects the southern states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, and parts of Telangana and Karnataka.
- Unlike the southwest monsoon, which drenches much of India from June to September, the northeast monsoon is characterised by winds that blow from the northeast towards the southwest.

areas over the sea.

→ Coriolis Force Deflection

- o Due to the Earth's rotation, the Coriolis force deflects these winds to the right in the Northern Hemisphere. As a result, instead of flowing directly west to east (northwesterly), the winds get deflected and take on a more north-easterly direction.

→ Northeast Monsoon Formation

- o These now-deflected winds, coming from the northeast, move across the Bay of Bengal, pick up moisture, and bring rainfall to southeastern India, especially Tamil Nadu and parts of Andhra Pradesh. This is what we call the **northeast monsoon**.

→ Shifting of the Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ)

- o The **Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ)** is a zone of low pressure near the equator where trade winds from the Northern and Southern Hemispheres meet.
- o During the winter months, the **ITCZ shifts southwards**, away from the Indian subcontinent, moving closer to the equator. This shift reinforces the flow of the northeast winds towards southern India and the Bay of Bengal.

→ Moisture Pick-Up from the Bay of Bengal

- o As the **northeast winds** travel over the **Bay of**

Bengal, they pick up moisture from the warm waters.

- o The winds, now moisture-laden, move towards the southeastern coast of India, particularly Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and parts of Sri Lanka.

➔ Orographic Lifting and Rainfall

- o When these **moisture-laden winds hit the Eastern Ghats** and coastal regions of southeastern India, they are forced to ascend. As the air rises, it cools and condenses, leading to **rainfall**.
- o The **eastern coast of India** receives the majority of its rain during this period, particularly Tamil Nadu, which gets around **50-60% of its annual rainfall** from the North-East Monsoon.

➔ Cyclonic Activity in the Bay of Bengal

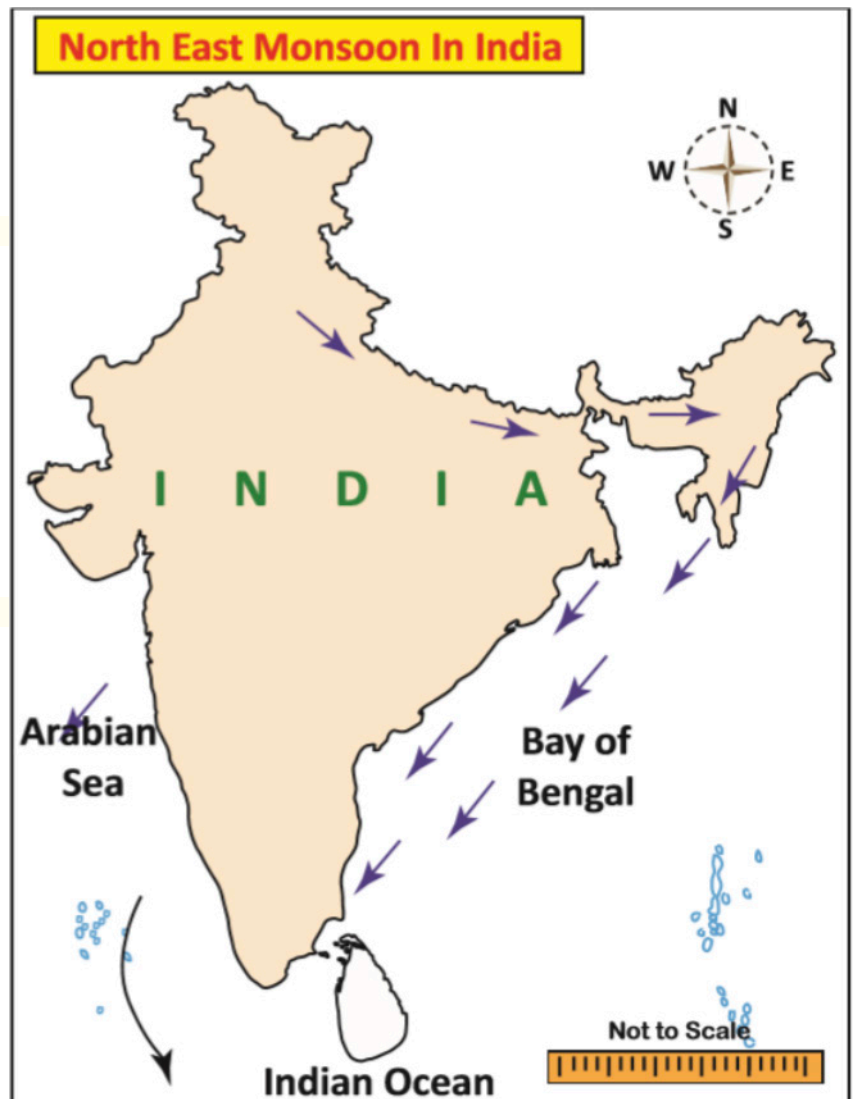
- o During the North-East Monsoon, **tropical cyclones** and depressions frequently form in the **Bay of Bengal**.
- o These cyclones move westward or northwestward towards the eastern coast of India and can intensify the rainfall, sometimes leading to heavy and torrential rains in the coastal regions.

➔ Peak Rainfall (October to December)

- o The monsoon reaches its peak intensity from **October to December**.
- o The coastal regions of **Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh**, and parts of **Sri Lanka** experience consistent rainfall during this time due to the combined effect of moisture-laden winds and cyclonic disturbances.

➔ Decline of Monsoon Activity

- o By the end of **December**, the North-East Monsoon starts to weaken as the **land cools further** and the pressure gradient between northern and southern regions decreases.
- o The cyclonic activity over the Bay of Bengal also reduces as the sea-surface temperatures decline.
- o The rainfall becomes less frequent, and the dry season begins in southeastern India.



FEATURES

⌚ Timing and Duration:

- o Occurs from October to December, following the Southwest Monsoon, marking the shift from the rainy season to winter.

🌀 Wind Direction:

- o Characterised by northeast trade winds blowing

from the northeastern direction towards the Indian subcontinent.

🌀 Rainfall Distribution:

- o Primarily impacts the southeastern coast of India, including Tamil Nadu and parts of Andhra Pradesh. Though rainfall is less compared to the Southwest Monsoon, it can still be substantial in

affected regions.

Impact on Weather:

- o This season brings cooler temperatures, alleviating the heat from the previous summer and replenishing water resources in areas with low rainfall during the Southwest Monsoon.

IMPORTANCE

Vital for Agriculture:

- o **Tamil Nadu:** Around 50% of Tamil Nadu's annual rainfall is received during the Northeast Monsoon (October to December).
- o Crops like rice, pulses, and cotton rely heavily on this rainfall for irrigation..

Replenishment of Water Resources:

- o **Chennai** city's water supply largely depends on reservoirs like **Poondi** and **Chembarambakkam**, which get replenished during the Northeast Monsoon.
- o During 2019, a weak monsoon led to severe water shortages, highlighting the reliance on this season.

Urban and Rural Water Supply:

- o **Andhra Pradesh:** Cities like **Chittoor** and **Tirupati** receive a significant portion of their rainfall during the Northeast Monsoon, crucial for maintaining drinking water supplies, as they receive less during the Southwest Monsoon.

Offsetting the Dry Season:

- o **Tamil Nadu (rain shadow region):** Due to its location on the leeward side of the Western Ghats, Tamil Nadu receives only around 35% of its rainfall from the Southwest Monsoon.
- o The remaining comes during the Northeast

Rain Shadow Effect:

- o The eastern coast, especially Tamil Nadu, receives significant rainfall, while regions to the west may experience dry conditions.

Seasonal Variability:

- o Rainfall can vary, with some years experiencing heavy rains and others receiving less.

Monsoon, ensuring that the region remains agriculturally productive.

Temperature Regulation:

- o **Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu:** The Northeast Monsoon brings cooler temperatures and relief from the post-monsoon heat.
- o Cities like **Madurai** and **Tiruchirapalli** experience milder climates during this season, offering respite from the high temperatures of the preceding months.

Economic Impact:

- o **Rice production in Tamil Nadu:** A good Northeast Monsoon boosts rice production, one of the state's staple crops. During a strong monsoon season, **Puducherry and delta districts** like **Thanjavur** see bumper harvests. On the other hand, a poor monsoon can severely affect food production, leading to economic distress for farmers.

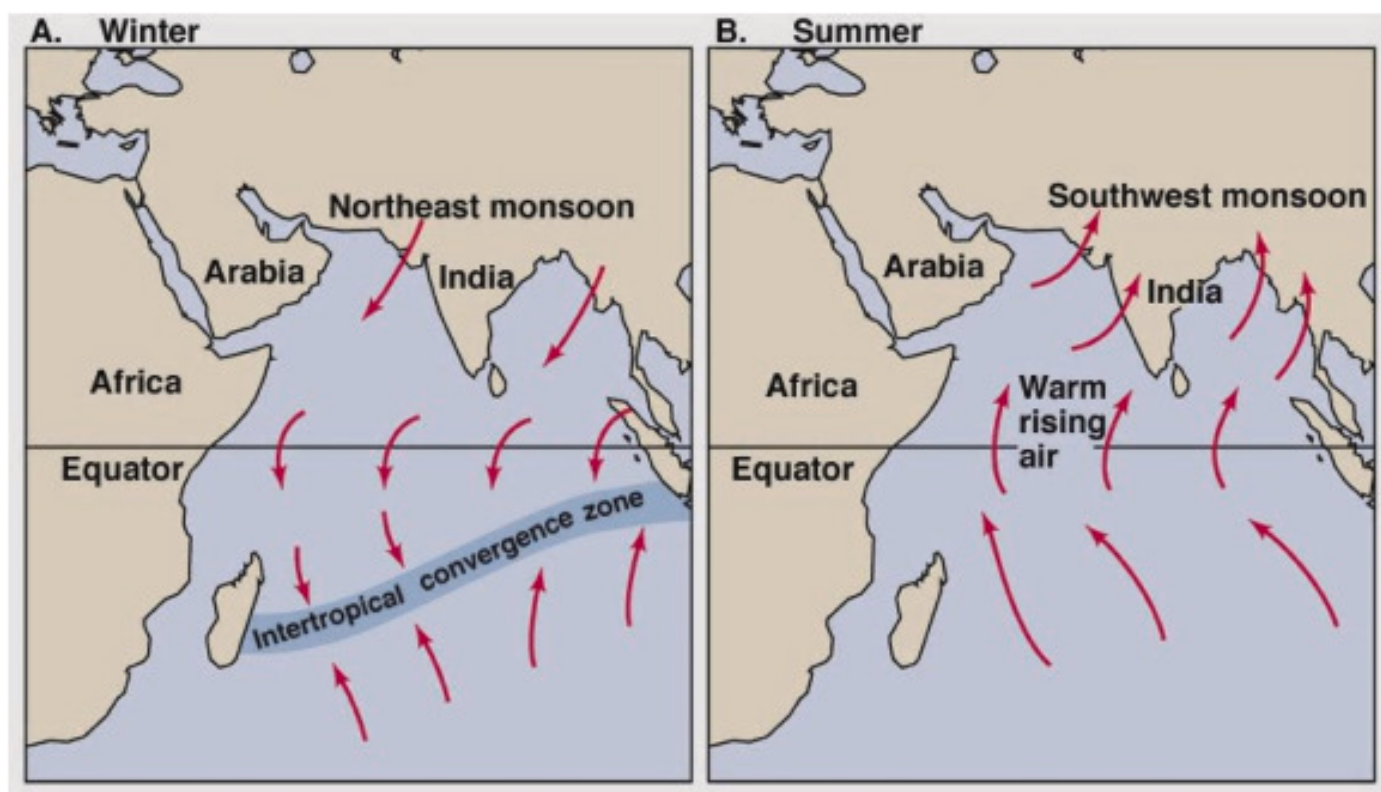
Climate Impact:

- o The Northeast Monsoon season also coincides with the **cyclone season** in the Bay of Bengal. Cyclones like **Cyclone Nivar (2020)** caused widespread rainfall and damage.
- o These cyclones contribute to significant rainfall during the season but can also lead to floods and infrastructure damage.

COMPARISON WITH SOUTH WEST MONSOON

Feature	Northeast Monsoon	Southwest Monsoon
Timing	October to December	June to September
Wind Direction	Winds blow from the northeast (northeast trade winds)	Winds blow from the southwest (southwest trade winds)
Regions Affected	Southeastern coast of India (Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh)	Most of India, especially the Western Ghats, central, and northern regions
Percentage of Annual Rainfall	Provides about 50% of Tamil Nadu's rainfall; lower for other regions	Provides about 75-80% of India's total annual rainfall

Rainfall Intensity	Less intense but can cause heavy rain in certain areas	More intense and widespread throughout the country
Rainfall Distribution	Localised, primarily affecting the southeastern coast	Widespread, covering the entire subcontinent
Temperature Effect	Cooler temperatures, marking the onset of winter	Brings relief from summer heat, followed by a hot and humid climate
Associated Weather Phenomena	Cyclones are common in the Bay of Bengal during this period	Formation of monsoon depressions and occasional cyclones
Source of Moisture	Bay of Bengal	Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal
Economic Importance	Vital for agriculture in southeastern India, especially Tamil Nadu	Crucial for the agricultural cycle across most of India



CONCLUSION

The Northeast Monsoon, occurring between October and December, plays a critical role in southeastern India by delivering essential rainfall and cooler temperatures. It helps restore water resources but also brings variability, with the potential for cyclonic depressions and heavy rainfall. Grasping the dynamics of this monsoon is vital for efficient management and preparedness, especially in areas prone to its unpredictable patterns.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) Explain the mechanism of the Northeast Monsoon, and discuss how its variability, including the possibility of cyclonic depressions and heavy rainfall, affects water resource management and disaster preparedness in southeastern India. (15 marks)(250 words)

WELFARE ECONOMY

Syllabus: GS III - Indian Economy; Inclusive Growth

PYQ MAPPING

Q) Explain intragenerational and intergenerational issues of equity from the perspective of inclusive growth and sustainable development. **(2020)**

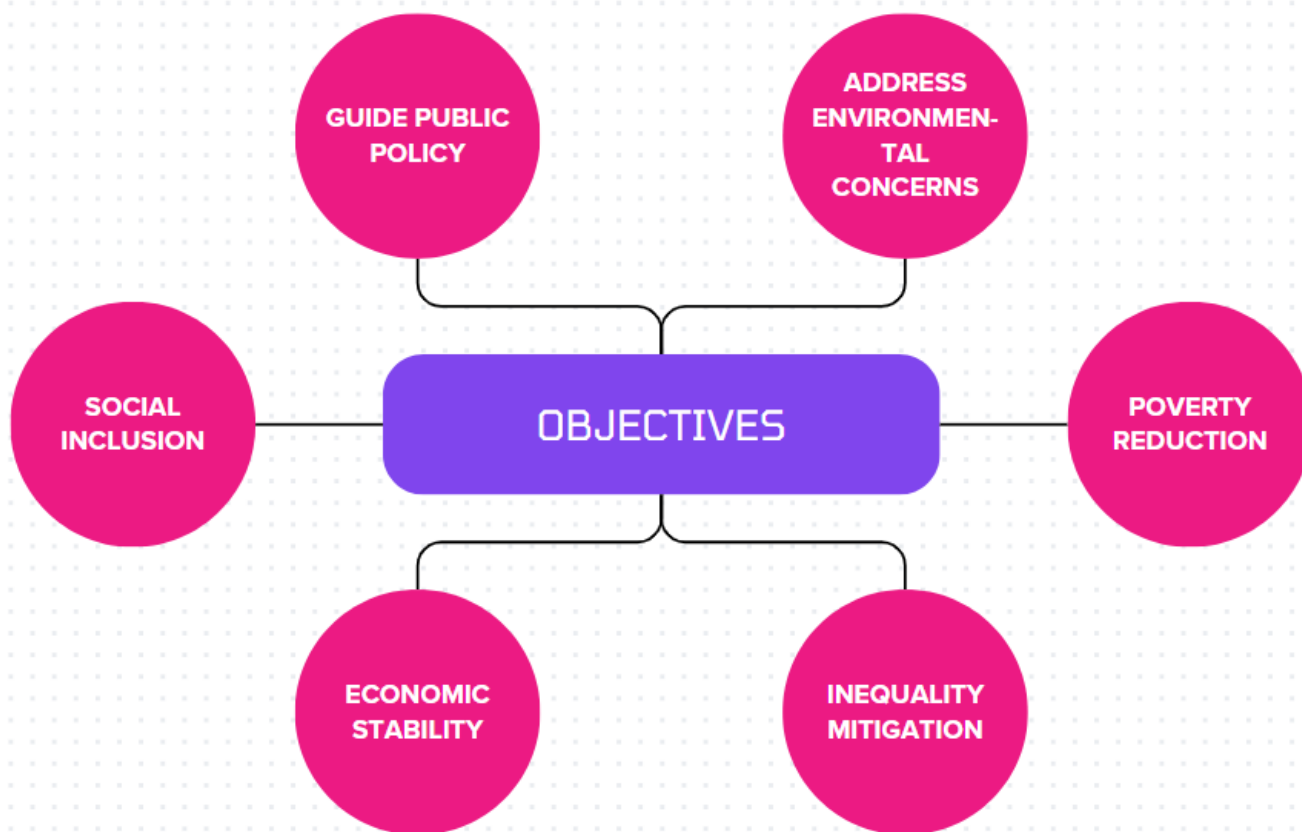
Q) Is inclusive growth possible under market economy? State the significance of financial inclusion in achieving economic growth in India. **(2022)**

INTRODUCTION

A **welfare economy** refers to an economic system in which the government plays a key role in ensuring the well-being of its citizens through various social welfare programs. It aims to balance market efficiency with social equity, promoting economic stability while providing support for individuals in need.

WHY IN NEWS

Welfare economics is vital in India today as policies like the PM Vishwakarma scheme and food security programs aim to reduce poverty and inequality. Amid inflation and uneven growth, it guides decisions on subsidies and social welfare, ensuring support for vulnerable groups while promoting equitable growth and financial stability.



IMPORTANCE OF WELFARE ECONOMY FOR INDIA

➔ Poverty alleviation

- Welfare schemes help reduce poverty by providing financial assistance, employment opportunities, and access to essential services.
- Nearly **3.44 crore people are living in extreme population in 2024.**
- In 2021, India's rank in the Global Multidimensional

Poverty Index (MPI) was ranked 66 out of 109 countries.

➔ Social equity

- Welfare schemes help reduce economic and social inequalities by providing targeted assistance to disadvantaged groups.
- According to the **World Inequality Report 2022,**

India is among the most unequal countries in the world, with the top 10% and top 1% of the population holding 57% and 22% of the total national income respectively.

→ Human development

- o India attained an HDI score of 0.644 in 2022, positioning it at 134 out of 193 countries in the UN's 2023-24 report.
- o More human development means more purchasing power and more demand for products. More products mean more industries,

employment, supply of currency, healthy people, and education.

→ Education Improvement

- o Literacy Rate: As of 2021, India's literacy rate is around 77.7%, with significant disparities between urban and rural areas.

→ Crisis management

- o Welfare schemes provide relief and support to affected individuals and communities during economic downturns, natural disasters, or other crises.

HOW INDIA CAN ACHIEVE WELFARE ECONOMY

→ Strengthen Healthcare system:

- o **Investment in Public Health Infrastructure:** Expanding access to quality healthcare through government-funded hospitals and clinics. Strengthening schemes like Ayushman Bharat, which aims to provide healthcare insurance to the poorest.
- o **Preventive Healthcare:** Focus on public health campaigns, vaccination drives, sanitation, and nutrition programs to reduce disease burden.

→ Free and Quality Education:

- o India should continue to work on improving the Right to Education Act by focusing on both primary and higher education access. Investment in teacher training, infrastructure, and digital education tools is key.
- o **Vocational and Skill Development:** Align education with employability by promoting vocational training, apprenticeships, and technical education, especially in rural areas.

→ Social Security and Pensions

- o **Universal Basic Income (UBI):** India could explore implementing UBI for vulnerable sections of the population to ensure a minimum standard of living, particularly during economic downturns.
- o **Expansion of Pension Systems:** Strengthening pension systems for unorganised workers, who often lack access to retirement benefits.

→ Rural Development and Agricultural Reforms

- o **Strengthening Rural Infrastructure:** Improved road networks, electricity, clean water, and internet access can enhance rural living standards and economic opportunities.
- o **Agricultural Support:** Fair pricing mechanisms, better access to credit, crop insurance schemes, and modernization of farming techniques can protect farmers and boost productivity.
- o **Example: The European Union's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)** provides subsidies and market stabilisation for farmers, ensuring food security and farmer welfare.

→ Housing for All:

- o Expanding schemes like the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana to ensure affordable housing for the urban and rural poor. Slum rehabilitation, improved sanitation, and infrastructure can drastically improve living conditions.

→ Food Security and Nutrition Programs

- o Public Distribution System (PDS): Strengthening PDS with better targeting through the use of technology and eliminating leakages can ensure that subsidised food reaches the most vulnerable.
- o Mid-Day Meal Schemes: Expanding programs that provide nutritious meals to school children to tackle malnutrition and improve educational outcomes.

GLOBAL EXAMPLES

- 👉 **Scandinavian Model (Denmark, Sweden, Norway):** These countries are often cited as prime examples of successful welfare economies. They offer comprehensive social benefits, including free healthcare, education, and strong unemployment protections. The model is based on high taxes but ensures a high standard of living and low poverty rates.
- 👉 **France:** France offers extensive social services, including universal healthcare, family support, unemployment insurance, and pensions.
- 👉 **Canada:** Known for its publicly funded healthcare system, Canada offers a mix of welfare benefits, including unemployment insurance, family benefits, and pension plans. The government plays a significant role in supporting citizens through social programs.

CONCLUSION

As **Nobel Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen emphasises**, the future lies in an economy with a social face, where welfare and equitable growth are prioritised. Countries that adopt a welfare economy can achieve long-term stability and prosperity, even emerging as global superpowers. For India, the path to a brighter future rests not in pure capitalism, but in a social welfare economy that ensures inclusive development and reduces inequality. By investing in the well-being of its citizens, India can build a strong, just society, and secure its place on the global stage.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) How crucial is a welfare economy for a country like India, and can India achieve global superpower status by focusing on social welfare over a purely capitalist model **(10 marks)(150 words)**

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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 DARSAN AIR 630
SAYANTH K AIR 701	ANUSHA R CHANDRAN AIR 791	SWATHY S AIR 827	SACHIN ANAND AIR 855	RAVEEN K MANOHARAN AIR 888

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ELECTION COMMISSION AND INTERNAL DEMOCRACY IN POLITICAL PARTIES

Syllabus: GS II - Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies

PYQ MAPPING

Q) To enhance the quality of democracy in India the Election Commission of India has proposed electoral reforms in 2016. What are the suggested reforms and how far are they significant to make democracy successful? **(2017)**

Q) Discuss the role of the Election Commission of India in light of the evolution of the Model Code of Conduct **(2022)**

SHORT TAKES

➤ Election Commission of India (ECI):

- A constitutional authority responsible for overseeing the conduct of free and fair elections in the country.
- Established on January 25, 1950, the ECI consists of a Chief Election Commissioner and two Election Commissioners, all appointed by the President, and operates with a comprehensive Secretariat.
- Its primary role includes supervising elections to Parliament, state legislatures, and the offices of the President and Vice-President.

INTRODUCTION

Internal democracy in political parties is vital for accountability, transparency, and inclusiveness within a multi-party democracy. It allows party members to participate in decision-making, fostering more representative leadership and public trust. However, many parties prioritise individual charisma over democratic principles, prompting questions about the effectiveness of internal governance and the role of the Election Commission in promoting genuine democratic practices.

WHY IN NEWS

The issue of internal democracy in political parties has gained attention in light of discussions led by former Chief Election Commissioner O.P. Rawat and PRS Legislative Research president M.R. Madhavan. They emphasise that India's multi-party system often prioritises individual charisma over democratic processes within parties. Their debate on the Election Commission's role in ensuring internal democracy was highlighted in a recent *The Hindu* podcast.

RECENT ISSUES

- 🔍 **Case of the YSR Congress Party:** The Election Commission of India (ECI) rejected the concept of a "permanent president" for the YSRCP, advocating for regular internal elections to maintain democratic practices within parties.
- 🔍 **Shiv Sena Issues:**
 - The split in the Shiv Sena led to the recognition of one faction (Eknath Shinde's) as the "real" party without disqualification, emphasising a lack of adherence to formal internal democratic processes
 - The 2018 Shiv Sena amendments gave the Paksha Pramukh unilateral power to appoint key members, bypassing democratic processes. This concentration of authority weakened internal democracy within the party.
- 🔍 **Marginalisation of Grassroots Leaders:** In regional parties, grassroots leaders often lack a voice in significant party decisions, reinforcing the dominance of family-based leadership. This marginalisation can lead to discontent and eventual splintering, as seen in the dynamics of the Samajwadi Party (SP).

NEED FOR INTERNAL PARTY DEMOCRACY

- 👉 **Promoting Accountability:** Regular elections within parties ensure leaders are held accountable to their members, fostering trust and responsibility.
- 👉 **Enhancing Party Functioning:** Structured internal elections can lead to better decision-making processes, as leadership is chosen based on merit rather than entitlement.
- 👉 **Preventing Dynastic Politics:** Internal democracy can mitigate the influence of dynasticism by providing opportunities for diverse leadership and representation
- 👉 **Strengthening Democratic Values:** Political parties that uphold internal democracy reflect the democratic principles they advocate in the public sphere, thus enhancing overall political culture.

- ☛ **Encouraging Participation:** Internal democratic processes invite broader participation from party members, allowing for a diversity of voices and ideas in party policy and direction.
- ☛ **Responding to Public Expectations:** With increasing public scrutiny on political practices, parties need

to align with the expectations of transparency and fairness in their operations.

- ☛ **Fostering Unity and Cohesion:** Genuine elections and debates within parties can lead to stronger consensus-building, reducing factionalism and promoting unity.

REASONS FOR LACK OF INTERNAL DEMOCRACY

- ☛ **Dominance of Charismatic Leaders:** Many parties are led by charismatic individuals whose personalities overshadow collective decision-making, leading to a lack of internal contestation.
- ☛ **Fear of Fragmentation:** Political parties often avoid internal elections due to the belief that it may lead to disunity or conflict, opting for consensus or nomination instead.
- ☛ **Centralised Control:** The financing structures of many parties necessitate centralised control, often vested in a single leader or family, discouraging the decentralisation of power.
- ☛ **Absence of Statutory Enforcement:** The ECI lacks the statutory authority to enforce internal democratic processes, resulting in parties adhering to guidelines in a mechanical manner without genuine commitment.
- ☛ **Limited Contestation in Elections:** Even when internal elections occur, they often lack genuine competition, serving mainly to reaffirm the dominance of established leaders.
- ☛ **Structural Variations Among Parties:** The diversity in party structures—ranging from cadre-based to loosely organised—creates different challenges for internal democracy, affecting their governance styles.
- ☛ **Public Apathy:** A general public apathy towards internal party dynamics allows parties to operate without scrutiny, thus perpetuating undemocratic practices.

DECODING THE ALLOTMENT OF PARTY SYMBOLS

How a Party Symbol is Decided?

➔ **Allotment by Election Commission:**

- The Election Commission of India (ECI) allots election symbols under **The Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968**. The process is meant to reserve, specify, and allot symbols for elections in parliamentary and assembly constituencies.

➔ **Categories:**

- **Reserved Symbol:** Recognized national and state parties get exclusive symbols, which cannot be used by other parties.
 - **Example:** BJP's lotus or the Congress's hand are reserved symbols.
- **Free Symbol:** They are available to unrecognised or newly registered parties and can choose from a list of free symbols published by the ECI.
 - Parties submit **10 symbols** in order of preference from the free symbols list. They may also propose up to **three new symbols** if they prefer, subject to EC's approval, as long as they don't resemble any existing symbols or have religious/communal connotations.

- ➔ **Process of Notification:** The Election Commission publishes a notification listing political parties and their respective symbols in the **Gazette of India**. This ensures formal recognition and exclusivity of symbols for recognized parties.

How a Party Symbol is Decided in Case of a Split?

➔ **Decision by the Election Commission:**

- In case of a party split, the **Election Commission decides** which faction of the party retains the original symbol and the decision is **final and binding** on all factions.

- o The Election Commission of India (ECI) relies on **Para 15** of the **Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968**.

- o The EC reviews all facts, circumstances, and the representatives of both factions before making a decision.

➔ **Assessment of Factions:**

- o In **Sadiq Ali v. Election Commission of India (1972)**, the Supreme Court affirmed the Election Commission's authority to resolve disputes over party symbols and leadership.
- o As a result, the Election Commission applies a **four-fold test to determine the rightful successor** to a party and the entitlement to its symbol.
- o This test includes assessing which faction adheres to the party's constitution, its by-laws, along with determining the majority support from the parties' elected representatives, and the party's organisational structure.

➔ **Proposals for New Symbols:**

- o Both factions in a split may propose new symbols, but the EC ensures that the proposed symbols are **free from religious or communal associations** and **do not resemble existing symbols**.

➔ **Freezing the Symbol:** In some cases, the ECI may choose to freeze the party symbol temporarily and assign **interim symbols** to both factions.

- o **Example:** The symbol of Shiv Sena was frozen in 2022, and new interim names and symbols were assigned until a final decision was made.

➔ **Recognition of the Other Group:** The group that does not get the parent party's name and symbol can still be recognized as a separate political entity.

- o The losing faction is usually required to register as a separate party and can claim **state or national party status based on its performance** in future elections.

➔ **Final Allotment:**

- o The EC ultimately assigns symbols to the factions, ensuring that symbols are distinct and in compliance with the legal and constitutional guidelines.

➔ **Examples**

o **Indian National Congress Split (1969):**

- After the split in the Congress, **Congress (O)** led by **K Kamaraj** retained the symbol of a **pair of bullocks** with a yoke.
- The breakaway faction led by **Indira Gandhi** was given the symbol of a **cow with a calf**.

o **Shiv Sena Split (2022):**

- The **Eknath Shinde** faction of the Shiv Sena retained the party's name and symbol of **bow and arrow**.
- The **Uddhav Thackeray** faction was allotted the interim name **Shiv Sena UBT** and the symbol of a **flaming torch**.

SHOULD ECI INTERVENE OR NOT?

Arguments for ECI intervention

- ☀ **Monitoring Compliance:** The Election Commission (EC) is the **registering authority for political parties** and can monitor their adherence to their constitutions and by-laws, ensuring regular elections for office bearers.
- ☀ **Democratic Integrity:** The EC's involvement would uphold the integrity of the political system, **fostering democratic principles within parties** and **promoting accountability** among party leaders.
 - o **Example:** The rejection of YSRCP's proposal to make Jagan Mohan Reddy a permanent president highlights the EC's role in upholding democratic principles within party structures.
- ☀ **Public Trust:** Enhanced oversight by the EC can increase public trust in political parties, as **voters would be assured that parties are functioning democratically** and representing their constituents effectively.

- ☀ **Protection Against Centralization:** Regulating internal democracy helps prevent the concentration of power within a single leader, promoting a more democratic environment within parties.

Arguments against ECI intervention

- ✧ **Limitations of Authority:** The EC's authority does not extend to intervening in the internal structures of political parties unless there is a clear violation of registration rules.
 - In **Swami Chakrapani v. Election Commission of India (2021)**, the court held that the Election Commission cannot regulate the internal functioning of political parties, including candidate selection or organisational structure, as these matters fall outside its jurisdiction.
- ✧ **Risk of Political Influence:** Involvement of the EC in internal party affairs could **politicise the Commission and make it susceptible to political pressures**, undermining its impartiality and independence.
- ✧ **Electoral Discipline:** Political discipline should stem from the electorate; if voters desire democratic parties, they can choose not to support those that lack internal democracy, thus **holding parties accountable through electoral choices** rather than regulatory interventions.
 - In **Indian National Congress (I) vs Institute of Social Welfare & Ors (2002)**, the Supreme Court ruled that the Election Commission can only verify compliance with legal requirements when registering political parties under Section 29A. It cannot deregister a party after registration, even for legal violations, thereby limiting its powers and preventing arbitrary actions.
- ✧ **Reality vs. Regulation:** Even if the EC intervenes, parties can still hold elections with unopposed candidates, rendering the process merely procedural without genuine democratic engagement.
- ✧ **Focus on Credibility:** The EC's credibility stems from its ability to operate independently without political entanglements. Hence, the EC should refrain from regulating internal party elections, allowing voters to determine party viability based on perceived democratic practices.

WAY FORWARD

- ✧ **Regular Organisational Elections:** Mandate political parties to hold regular internal elections at specified intervals (e.g., every three years) to promote accountability and democratic practices.
- ✧ **Notification of Changes:** Require political parties to inform the ECI promptly about changes in their office bearers, party addresses, and other critical organisational details to maintain transparency.
- ✧ **Strengthening Election Commission Powers:**
 - Empower the EC with the authority to monitor internal elections and impose penalties for non-compliance with democratic practices.
 - Grant the EC the authority to investigate allegations of non-compliance with internal election provisions, enhancing its role as a regulatory body.
- ✧ **Awareness and Education:**
 - Conduct awareness campaigns to educate party members and the electorate about the importance of internal democracy.
 - Promote civic education programs to encourage active participation in party affairs and electoral processes.
- ✧ **Capacity Building:** Organise workshops and training programs for party leaders and members on democratic practices and governance.
- ✧ **Utilising technology:** Leverage social media and digital platforms to engage voters and party members in discussions about internal party democracy.
- ✧ **Public Accountability Mechanisms:** Implement mechanisms for public accountability, allowing voters and party members to report grievances related to internal democratic processes.
- ✧ **Create External Oversight:** Establish independent bodies or coalitions to monitor internal party processes and ensure compliance with democratic principles, reducing the potential for power consolidation by entrenched interests.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, fostering internal democracy within political parties is essential for the health of India's multi-party system. It not only enhances accountability and representation but also strengthens public trust in democratic institutions. As the political landscape evolves, it is crucial for parties to prioritise democratic principles and for the Election Commission to play a proactive role in ensuring compliance, ultimately contributing to a more vibrant and resilient democracy.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) Discuss the significance of internal democracy within political parties in India and evaluate the role of the Election Commission in promoting democratic practices among these parties **(10 marks)(150 words)**

SWACHH BHARAT MISSION

Syllabus: GS II - Government policies and Interventions

PYQ MAPPING

Q) 'To ensure effective implementation of policies addressing water, sanitation and hygiene needs, the identification of beneficiary segments is to be synchronized with the anticipated outcomes' Examine the statement in the context of the WASH scheme. **(2017)**

SHORT TAKES

➤ Legacy waste

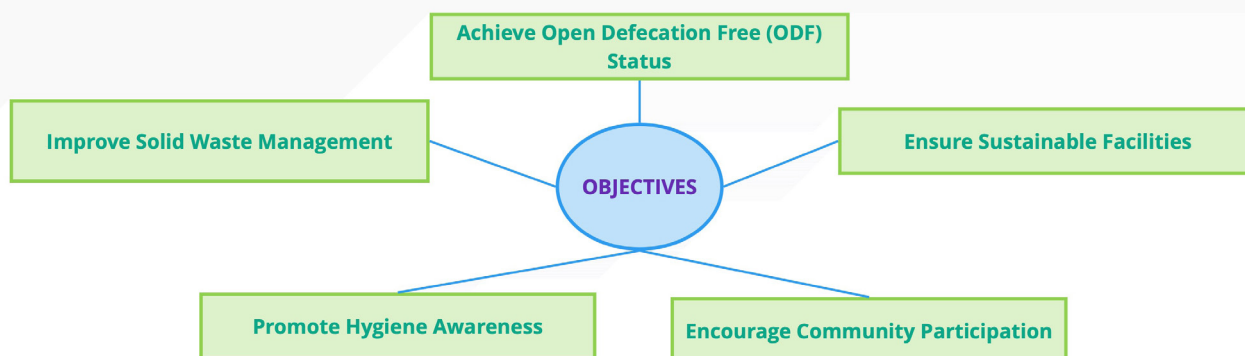
- Legacy waste refers to improperly collected and stored waste that has accumulated in landfills, abandoned mines, and industrial sites over the years. It poses challenges such as radiological risks, safety hazards, leachate management, and fire control.
- Legacy waste can be categorised into four types: containment and storage, buried garbage, soil and groundwater contamination, and waste from contaminated construction materials.

INTRODUCTION

- The **Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM)** is a nationwide cleanliness campaign launched by the Government of India on **October 2, 2014**. The mission aims to eliminate open defecation, improve solid waste management, and promote hygiene and sanitation practices across India. It was launched in honour of **Mahatma Gandhi's** vision of a clean and hygienic India.
- The urban component of the mission will be implemented by the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs**, and the rural component by the **Ministry of Jal Shakti**.

WHY IN NEWS

The Swachh Bharat Mission marked its 10th anniversary of implementation on October 2, 2024. This year's theme, **'Swabhav Swachhata, Sanskaar Swachhata'**, highlights the significance of cleanliness and environmental health.



Components of SBM

Open Defecation Free Status

- o **ODF:** An area can be notified or declared as ODF if at any point of the day, not even a single person is found defecating in the open.
- o **ODF+:** This status is given if at any point of the day, not a single person is found defecating and/or urinating in the open, and all community and public toilets are functional and well maintained.
- o **ODF++:**
 - Protocol that helps cities and towns improve sanitation sustainability.
 - This status is given if the area is already ODF+ and the faecal sludge/septage and sewage are safely managed and treated, with no discharging or dumping of untreated faecal sludge and sewage into the open drains, water bodies or areas.

Swachh Vidyalaya Abhiyan:

- o The Ministry of Education launched the Swachh Vidyalaya Programme under SBM to ensure all government schools have separate toilets for boys and girls within one year.
- o The initiative focuses on essential interventions for both technical and human development in Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) programs.
- o The Ministry provides financial support to States and Union Territories to facilitate the construction of toilets for boys and girls in schools through the **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA).**

Rashtriya Swachhata Kosh:

- o The Swachh Bharat Kosh (SBK) has been established to channel individual philanthropic contributions and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds towards achieving a Clean India (Swachh Bharat). It aims to enhance cleanliness in both rural and urban areas, including schools, and will supplement departmental resources for these efforts. To encourage contributions, tax rebate options are being explored for individuals and corporations.

GOBAR-DHAN:

- o Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources Scheme (GOBAR-DHAN) scheme was launched by the Ministry of Jal Shakti in 2018 and aims to augment income of farmers by converting biodegradable waste into compressed biogas (CBG).

ACHIEVEMENTS

Open Defecation-Free (ODF) Achievement:

- o On October 2, 2019, Prime Minister Modi announced that over 6 lakh villages had become open defecation-free (ODF) after more than 10 crore toilets were built across India.
- o By December 2019, urban areas of India, excluding cities in West Bengal, were also declared ODF by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

Exceeding Toilet Construction Targets:

- o The government aimed to build 59 lakh individual toilets but exceeded the target, constructing 66 lakh toilets in total.

ODF+ Status:

- o As of 2020-21, 5.54 lakh villages and 3,913 cities were declared ODF+.

Legacy Landfill Clearance:

- o There are 2,400 old landfills in Indian cities, and the goal is to clear all of them by 2025-2026.
- o So far, 30% of the target area has been cleared, and 41% of the waste has been treated or remediated.

Waste Management Progress:

- o According to official data, 97% of municipal wards now provide door-to-door waste collection services.
- o Out of those, 90% have achieved 100% segregation of waste at the source, meaning households and businesses separate their waste into categories like wet and dry waste before it's collected.

✓ Enhanced Safety for Women:

- o A UNICEF report indicates that 93% of women feel safer after installing toilets in their homes.

✓ Recognition for Sanitation Efforts:

- o Cities and towns across the nation are awarded titles of '**Swachh Cities**' based on their sanitation and cleanliness achievements.

IMPACTS

The Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin (SBM-G) has significantly improved public health in India by reducing deaths associated with unsafe sanitation.

♣ Averted Deaths:

- o The WHO estimated that from 2014 to October 2019, SBM-G helped avert around **300,000 deaths** from diarrhoea and malnutrition, with unsafe sanitation previously causing **199 million diarrhoea cases** annually. Universal access to safe sanitation was projected to nearly eliminate these cases.

♣ Infant Mortality Reduction:

- o A study published in **Nature** found that the mission may have resulted in **60,000 to 70,000 fewer infant deaths** each year from 2014 to 2020. Although infant mortality declined from **2003 to 2020**, the decrease was more significant after 2015, aligning with SBM's implementation.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

SWACHH BHARAT MISSION - PHASE 1

🌀 URBAN

- o The **Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban)** aims to eliminate open defecation, convert unsanitary toilets to pour-flush toilets, eradicate manual scavenging, and manage solid waste.
- o It targets **1.04 crore households**, **2.5 lakh community toilets**, **2.6 lakh public toilets**, and solid waste facilities for each town.
- o Community toilets will be built where household toilets are unfeasible, and public toilets will be placed in key locations like markets and stations.
- o The program, covering **4,401 towns** over five years, offers financial assistance: the **Central Government** will contribute up to **40%** of community toilet construction costs, with **States/UTs adding 13.33%**.
- o For North-East and special category states, the contribution is **4%**, with urban local bodies managing the rest. Estimated cost per toilet seat is **Rs.65,000**.

🌀 RURAL

- o The **Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan** was restructured into the **Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) [SBM(G)]**, launched on **October 2, 2014**, to make rural India **Open Defecation Free (ODF)** within five years.
- o It focuses on improving cleanliness in villages through **Solid and Liquid Waste Management** and ensuring all **Gram Panchayats** are ODF, clean,

and sanitised.

o Key Features:

- **Incentives for Toilet Construction:** Financial support was provided for building **Individual Household Latrines (IHHL)**, aimed at **Below Poverty Line (BPL)** households and certain **Above Poverty Line (APL)** groups (SCs/STs, small farmers, landless labourers, etc.).
- **Amount:** Each eligible household received up to **Rs.12,000** for building a toilet, which included water availability for handwashing and cleaning.

o Funding Split:

- The Central Government covered **75%** (₹9,000) and States contributed **25%** (₹3,000).
- For **North Eastern** and **Special category states**, the central share was **90%** (₹10,800) and the state share **10%** (₹1,200).

- o Beneficiaries were encouraged to contribute to their toilets' construction to promote a sense of **ownership**.

SWACHH BHARAT MISSION - 2.0

🌀 URBAN

- o Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0, launched by the Prime Minister on 1st October 2022 with the overall vision of creating '**Garbage Free Cities**',
- o **Objective:** Achieve 'Garbage Free' cities and effective grey and black water management.

o **Key Targets:**

- Make all urban local bodies ODF+ and those with populations under 1 lakh ODF++.
- Promote safe sanitation in urban areas.

o **Focus Areas:**

- Source segregation of solid waste.
- Implementation of the 3Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle).
- Scientific processing of municipal solid waste.
- Remediation of legacy dumpsites.

o **Funding:** ₹1.41 lakh crore allocated for 2021-22 to 2025-26.

o **Components:**

- Sustainable sanitation (toilet construction).
- Wastewater treatment and faecal sludge management for ULBs with less than 1 lakh population.
- Solid Waste Management.
- Information, Education, and Communication.

- Capacity building.

🌀 **RURAL**

- o The Centre has launched the second phase of the Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) - SBM(G) Phase-II on 4 March 2020
- o The initiative focuses on sustaining the achievements of Phase I while ensuring sufficient facilities for Solid, Liquid, and Plastic Waste Management (SLWM) in rural India.
- o It will be implemented in a mission mode from 2020-21 to 2024-25, with a total allocation of ₹1,40,881 crores. ‘
- o The SLWM component of ODF Plus will be monitored based on output-outcome indicators in four key areas:
 - Plastic waste management
 - Biodegradable solid waste management (including animal waste management)
 - Greywater (household wastewater) management
 - Faecal sludge management

CHALLENGES

- **Awareness Deficit:** Many communities are unaware of proper hygiene practices and the significance of sanitation.
- **Behavioural Change:** It is challenging to alter deep-rooted habits and cultural norms related to sanitation.
- **Infrastructure Issues:** Insufficient infrastructure, particularly in rural regions, obstructs effective implementation.
- **Maintenance and Longevity:** Ensuring the ongoing maintenance of constructed toilets and facilities is vital for sustainability.
- **Funding Challenges:** Although government support

is available, there is a need for consistent funding to sustain initiatives, maintenance, and educational programs.

- **Waste Management Deficiencies:** Many areas lack effective waste management systems, resulting in littering and pollution.
- **Need for Region-Specific Strategies:** India's diverse geography necessitates tailored solutions, as strategies effective in one region may not work in another.
- **Monitoring Difficulties:** Consistently monitoring progress and assessing impact is crucial but can be challenging to implement effectively.



WAY FORWARD

- * **Increase Awareness:** Implement comprehensive education campaigns to enhance community understanding of hygiene and sanitation practices.
 - o The “Darwaza Band” campaign and community-level awareness programs have promoted positive sanitation norms.
 - o **Promote Behavioural Change:** Develop targeted interventions to shift long-standing habits and cultural practices regarding sanitation.
- * **Enhance Infrastructure:** Invest in building and upgrading sanitation facilities, particularly in underserved rural areas.
- * **Secure Consistent Funding:** Advocate for sustainable funding sources to support ongoing initiatives, maintenance, and educational programs.
- * **Improve Waste Management:** Develop efficient waste management systems to reduce littering and pollution in communities.
- * **Adopt Localised Strategies:** Create tailored approaches that address the unique needs and challenges of different regions across the country.
 - o Programs like the “Nirmal Gram Puraskar” foster community involvement and awareness in achieving open-defecation-free villages.
- * **Strengthen Monitoring:** Implement robust monitoring frameworks to track progress and measure the impact of sanitation initiatives effectively.

CONCLUSION

The Swachh Bharat Mission serves as a catalyst for societal transformation in India, enhancing human capital and driving economic growth. Ongoing government funding and support are crucial to maintaining progress and preventing a regression to previous practices.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) Discuss the impact of the Swachh Bharat Mission on public health and sanitation in India. How has the initiative contributed to societal transformation and economic growth? Provide specific examples of its achievements and challenges faced during implementation **(15 marks)(250 words)**



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ETHICS - CASE STUDY

Q) You are the District magistrate of an important urban area of your state. Recently, your jurisdiction has experienced significant growth in illegal slums. These slums supply low-wage labourers and affordable vendors for essential goods like vegetables and eggs to middle-class households. They also diminish the city's aesthetics, create unsanitary conditions, and harbour criminal activity. A public interest litigation has been filed against these unauthorised slums, resulting in a court order to demolish all illegal encroachments on public land. However, with the rainy season upon us, evicting residents may incite public backlash

- a. Identify the ethical dilemmas.
- b. What are the options available to you and what will be your course of action?

ETHICS - EXAMPLES

1. **Governance:** The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change received 32 applications for registering exotic species on the Parivesh 2.0 portal, which facilitates environmental, wildlife, and forest clearances. Officials attributed the low response, compared to 1,800 applications on Parivesh 1.0, to lack of awareness and concerns about legal consequences.
2. **Consumer Rights:** A passenger on an Air India flight from Delhi to New York reported finding a cockroach in her meal, leading to food poisoning for her and her two-year-old child. Air India has expressed concern and initiated an investigation with its caterer to prevent such incidents in the future.
3. **Environmental Ethics:** The new Pusa-2090 paddy variety, bred from a cross between Pusa-44 and a Japonica rice line, matures in 120-125 days, yields 34-35 quintals per acre, and provides a more environmentally friendly alternative to the longer-maturing Pusa-44 by requiring less irrigation and reducing stubble burning issues.
4. **Euthanasia:** Switzerland police recently arrested four individuals linked to the death of a 64-year-old American woman who used a 'suicide pod' designed by Dr. Philip Nitschke. This incident has raised ethical concerns regarding assisted dying and euthanasia, particularly about the legality of the Sarco pod under Swiss laws and the definition of "external assistance" in suicide cases.
5. **Women Empowerment:** Surgeon Vice Admiral Arti Sarin, the first woman to serve as Director General of the Armed Forces Medical Services advocates for women's participation in the Armed Forces. With a distinguished 38-year career and numerous accolades, she is also appointed to a Supreme Court National Task Force to improve working conditions for medical professionals.
6. **Medical Ethics:** A study by Tata Institute of Fundamental Research shows that the psychedelic drug 2,5-dimethoxy-4-iodoamphetamine (DOI) reduces anxiety by targeting specific neurons in the ventral hippocampus. This research helps develop anxiety treatments without psychedelic effects and guides clinical studies on psychedelics' impact on the brain.
7. **Workplace Ethics:** The Karnataka High Court has directed ANI Technologies (Ola's parent company) to pay Rs 5.5 lakh in compensation to a woman sexually harassed by a driver, affirming that the driver qualifies as an employee under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013, and criticized Ola's Internal Complaints Committee for its inadequate response to the incident.
8. **Women Empowerment:** After her daughter failed a cricket selection trial, K M Elsamma, a physical education teacher from Wayanad, started a women's cricket team in the district, which previously had none. This initiative has produced two national players, Minnu Mani and Sajana Sajeevan, showcasing the potential of sports to empower women in a region with limited opportunities.
9. **Inclusivity:** Paramount Pictures UK has launched an initiative allowing deaf and hard-of-hearing audiences to see captioned films a day before their general release, starting with Transformers One, and is also providing deaf awareness training for cinema staff.

MODEL ESSAY

"More is Lost by Indecision than Wrong Decision"

Introduction

- o Quote by Roman philosopher Cicero
- o Introduce the concept of decision-making in life, emphasising the importance of timely choices.
- o Define
 - **Indecision:** Inability to make a choice or take action due to uncertainty, fear of consequences.
 - **Wrong decisions:** Choices made that lead to unfavourable outcomes or results, often due to a lack of information, poor judgement.
- o **Meaning:** While wrong decisions may result in failures, indecision often leads to missed opportunities, stagnation, and regret, ultimately causing greater loss.

Consequences of Indecision

- o **Missed Opportunities:** Inaction can lead to the loss of chances that may not come again.
- o **Paralysis by Analysis:** Overthinking prevents progress, leading to stagnation.
- o **Emotional Stress:** Indecision creates mental strain, increasing stress and reducing well-being.
- o **Impact on Relationships and Teamwork:** Delays in decision-making can erode trust and efficiency in personal and professional relationships.

Impacts of Wrong Decisions

- o **Learning from Failure:** Wrong decisions provide valuable lessons that lead to growth and improvement.
- o **Adaptability:** Wrong decisions encourage resilience and the ability to find alternative solutions.
- o **Temporary Setbacks:** Wrong decisions might lead to setbacks, but they are often recoverable with future actions.

- o **Encouraging Innovation:** Mistakes can lead to unexpected innovations and creative solutions.
- o **Fostering Accountability:** Ownership of wrong decisions builds accountability and strengthens relationships.

Way Forward

- o **Embrace Imperfection:** Understanding that no decision is perfect and that mistakes are part of the process.
- o **Decisive Action:** Taking prompt action can result in better outcomes in both personal and professional life.
- o **Use of Decision-Making Frameworks:** Techniques like pros and cons lists, risk analysis, or gut instinct to help overcome indecision.
- o **Leverage Expertise:** Consult experts or mentors when faced with challenging decisions to gain insights and minimise the chances of making a wrong choice.
- o **Focus on Core Values:** Ground decisions in core values and principles to ensure that even wrong decisions align with long-term personal or organisational goals

Conclusion

- o Reinforce the idea that action, even if it leads to a mistake, is better than inaction, which leads to nothing.
- o The path to success involves decisive action and learning from both right and wrong decisions.

Sample Quotes

- o *The kite rises highest against the wind, not with it. – Winston Churchill*
- o *The unexamined life is not worth living - Socrates*
- o *A smooth sea never made a skilled sailor– Franklin D. Roosevelt*

MAINS JOT DOWN



GS- I - IMPORTANT PERSONALITIES

- ➔ **Queen Rani Durgavati of the Gond kingdom** of Garha-Katanga was commemorated on her **500th birth anniversary on October 5**.
- ➔ A descendant of the Chandela dynasty of Mahoba, she was a **contemporary of Mughal emperor Akbar**.
- ➔ **Key Contributions:**
 - » Took control of the Gond kingdom after her husband's death.
 - » Successfully repelled an attack by Baz Bahadur, the ruler of Malwa, as noted in the Tarikh-i-Firishta.
 - » A patron of learning, she supported **Acharya Bithalnath in establishing a seat of the Pushtimarg Cult at Garha**.
 - » Constructed reservoirs, including Ranital, Cherital, and Adhartal.
 - » Fought valiantly against Mughal Subedar Abul Mazid Khan, ultimately defending her kingdom until her death.
 - » Her encounters with the Mughals were documented by Abul Fazl, Akbar's chronicler, and other Persian writers.



GS- III - POLLUTION

- ➔ The study, published in the **journal Atmospheric Pollution Research**, found that India's reliance on kerosene-based lamps as a secondary lighting source leads to release of 12.5 milligrams (Gg) per year of **Black Carbon**.
- ➔ **Eastern India contributed 7.5 Gg or 60 per cent of India's black carbon** emissions from secondary light sources.



GS- III - ECONOMY

- ➔ **India's foreign exchange reserves crossed \$700 billion** for the first time on record, after climbing for seven straight weeks, on valuation gains and the central bank's dollar purchases.
- ➔ India is only the fourth economy in the world to cross \$700 billion in reserves after China, Japan, and Switzerland.



GS- III - ENVIRONMENT & CONSERVATION

- ➔ The **Reserve Bank of India has proposed the establishment of the Reserve Bank – Climate Risk Information System (RB-CRIS)**. This data repository will consist of two components:
 - » A web-based directory listing various data sources (meteorological, geospatial, etc.).
 - » A data portal, accessible only to regulated entities, containing standardised datasets.
- ➔ The RB-CRIS **aims to address gaps in climate-related data, such as fragmented sources and inconsistent formats**, enabling regulated entities to conduct climate risk assessments and ensure the stability of their balance sheets and the overall financial system.



GS- III - AGRICULTURE

- ➔ The Prime Minister has launched the **'Unified Genomic Chip' and indigenous sex-sorted technology**. This new sex-sorted technology aims to provide farmers with more access to sex-sorted semen at a lower cost, enabling them to produce only female calves.
- ➔ **About the Chip:**
 - » Objective: To assist farmers in early identification of high-quality cattle and improve the efficiency of dairy farming in India.
 - » Developer: Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying.
 - » Versions: There are two variants available: the 'Gau Chip' for cattle and the 'Mahish Chip' for buffalo.



GS- III - DEFENCE

- The DRDO has successfully conducted flight tests of the 4th Generation, advanced miniaturised **Very Short Range Air Defence System (VSHORADS)** at the Pokhran Range in Rajasthan.
- The trials demonstrated the system's consistent hit-to-kill capability.
- **About VSHORADS:**
 - » **Type:** Indigenously developed man-portable air defence system (MANPAD).
 - » **Development:** Created by the Research Centre Imarat (RCI) in collaboration with various DRDO laboratories and Development cum Production Partners (DcPPs).
 - » **Purpose:** Designed to neutralise low-altitude aerial threats at short ranges.
 - » **Features:** Utilises a dual thrust solid motor and a modern uncooled imaging infrared seeker.



GS- III - INFRASTRUCTURE

- The Union Minister of Road Transport & Highways has launched the **Humsafar Policy**.
 - » To establish a comprehensive framework that ensures commuters have access to standardised, well-maintained, and hygienic facilities along National Highways and Expressways.



GS- II - INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

- The Prime Minister of India held bilateral talks with the President of the Maldives in New Delhi, resulting in several key outcomes:
- **Key Outcomes:**
 - » **Comprehensive Partnership:** Both nations adopted a vision for an extensive economic and maritime security partnership.
 - » **Development Cooperation:** They agreed to expedite the completion of the Greater Malé Connectivity Project.
 - » **Trade and Economic Cooperation:** Discussions were initiated on a Bilateral Free Trade Agreement, and both countries agreed to settle trade transactions in local currencies to reduce



GS- III - GOVERNMENT POLICIES & INTERVENTIONS

- The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has released the **Draft National Sports Policy (NSP) 2024**.
- This new policy builds on previous initiatives, including the NSP 2001, Khelo India Scheme, and the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS).
- **Key Features:**
 - » The existing NSP was established over two decades ago. It is essential to create a new, comprehensive NSP that reflects the latest developments in sports and outlines a roadmap to tackle current and future challenges.
 - » **Vision: "Sports for Nation Building – Harness the Power of Sports for the Nation's Holistic Development,"** aligning with the principles of 'Viksit Bharat.'
- The **Atal Pension Yojana (APY) has surpassed 7 crore enrollments** since its launch by the Ministry of Finance in 2015, with the objective of establishing a universal social security system for all Indians, particularly targeting underprivileged individuals and workers in the unorganised sector.
- It guarantees a monthly pension of Rs. 1,000, 2,000, 3,000, 4,000, or 5,000 based on subscriber contributions, **which will begin after the subscriber turns 60**.
- The scheme is open to any Indian citizen aged 18 to 40 with a savings bank or post office savings account.
- It is administered by the **Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)**.

reliance on foreign currencies.

- » **Digital and Financial Initiatives:** The launch of the RuPay card in the Maldives will facilitate easier payments for Indian tourists.
- » **Health Cooperation:** They committed to the recognition of the Indian pharmacopoeia by the Maldives and the establishment of **India-Maldives Jan Aushadhi Kendras**.
- » **Currency Swap Agreement:** A Currency Swap Agreement (CSA) of USD 400 million and INR 30 billion was signed to assist the Maldives in managing its foreign exchange reserves, under the SAARC Currency Swap Framework for 2024-27.

CHERRYPICKS OF THE WEEK

DRY PORTS

- Also known as an **inland port**, it is an inland terminal that is meant to provide connectivity to a sea port by rail or road.
- It includes Inland Container Depots (ICDs), Container Freight Stations (CFSs), and Air Freight Stations (AFSs), etc.
- **Telangana** is planning to develop more dry port facilities to boost exports, as it is a more efficient and cost-effective gateway to international trade for landlocked states.

BIODIVERSITY CREDITS

- An economic instrument that allows private companies to finance activities, such as forest conservation or restoration.
- Objective is to have a net-positive impact on nature and biodiversity.
- Stakeholders that have a goal to conserve or restore land generate a supply of credits, or certificates.
- Private companies then purchase these credits to meet their biodiversity- or nature-based commitments.

DIGITAL ARREST

- New method of cyber fraud, where fraudsters make audio or video calls posing as law enforcement officers, confining a victim under digital arrest citing their involvement in an illegal activity.
- Intention is to scare victims into transferring money, divulging personal and financial information, etc.

EVERGREENING OF LOANS

- A practice where banks give new loans to borrowers who are unable to repay existing loans, often to avoid classifying previous loans as non-performing assets (NPAs).
- It is done by restructuring existing loans by modifying repayment terms, interest rates, or tenures to delay or avoid recognizing a loan as bad.

ANACONDA STRATEGY

- This refers to a military strategy put forward by Union General Winfield Scott during the early phases of the American Civil War.
- Its main goal was to economically and militarily suffocate the Confederacy, much like an anaconda snake encircles and suffocates its prey.