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POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

CRIMINALISATION IN POLITICS

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS "CRIMINALISATION IN POLITICS". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "POLITY" SECTION OF GS2 IN THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

In a recent amicus curiae report submitted to the Supreme Court, it was revealed that candidates with criminal backgrounds secured more seats in the 17th Lok Sabha compared to those with clean records. As the country heads into the second phase of polling for the 18th Lok Sabha, the report underscored the crucial necessity for voters to be informed about the individuals they are electing into power.

Senior advocate Vijay Hansaria, serving as the amicus curiae, emphasized that voters have a **fundamental right to information**, which is inherent in their right to free speech and expression. Specifically, he stressed that voters should have access to comprehensive details regarding the criminal history of candidates, including the status of ongoing trials and reasons for any delays.

To facilitate this, the report recommended the **establishment of a dedicated section on the homepages** of State High Courts' websites. This section would offer district-wise information about criminal trials involving legislators, prominently displaying updates on each case and explanations for any procedural delays. Such transparency, the report argued, would empower citizens and voters to make more informed decisions during elections.

HIGHLIGHT OF THE REPORT

- According to the report, the scenario during the 2019 Lok Sabha elections mirrored the current situation. Out of a total of 7,928 candidates in the fray, a staggering 1,500 candidates, constituting 19%, had criminal cases registered against them. Among these, 1,070 candidates, amounting to 13%, faced serious criminal charges.

- However, what stood out was the outcome: despite the significant percentage of candidates with clean records, a substantial 44% of the elected members to the 17th Lok Sabha, spanning the period from 2019 to 2024, had criminal cases against them.

- This stark revelation underscores the trend where candidates with criminal backgrounds tend to secure more seats than those without such records, further emphasizing the need for greater transparency and awareness among voters regarding the criminal antecedents of their elected representatives.

REASONS FOR CRIMINALISATION OF POLITICS

- **Social Factors**: Socio-economic inequalities, lack of access to justice, and widespread corruption can all contribute to the normalization of criminality in politics. In some cases, individuals may enter politics as a means of seeking power and influence in the absence of legitimate opportunities for social mobility.

- **Lack of Internal Democracy within Political Parties**: Many political parties in India lack internal democracy, with decisions often being centralized within a small group of leaders. This can create an environment where individuals with criminal backgrounds can thrive, as they may have the resources or connections to gain favor with party leaders.

- **Dynastic Politics**: India has a long history of dynastic politics, where political power and influence are passed down within families. In such a system, individuals with criminal backgrounds who belong to influential families may find it easier to enter politics and secure nominations from their parties.

- **Money and Muscle Power**: Elections in India often involve significant spending on campaigning and mobilizing support. Individuals with criminal backgrounds may have amassed wealth and influence through illegal means, which they can then use to fund their electoral campaigns and garner support through coercion or intimidation.

- **Weak Legal Enforcement**: Despite laws and regulations aimed at preventing individuals with criminal backgrounds from contesting elections, enforcement mechanisms can be weak or ineffective. Loopholes in the legal system, delays in the judicial process, and lack of coordination between law enforcement agencies can all contribute to the impunity enjoyed by politicians with criminal records.

- **Vote-bank Politics**: Some political parties may see candidates with criminal backgrounds as advantageous for securing votes from certain communities or regions. These candidates may have a reputation for being able to deliver on promises or provide protection to their supporters, leading parties to field them in elections despite their criminal histories.

SUPREME COURT JUDGMENTS

- **Lily Thomas v. Union of India (2013):** In this case, the Supreme Court ruled that lawmakers would be immediately disqualified if they were convicted of a crime and sentenced to a jail term of two years or more. This judgment aimed to prevent individuals with serious criminal records from holding public office.

- **Association for Democratic Reforms v. Union of India (2002):** This case led to the introduction of disclosure requirements for candidates contesting elections. The Supreme Court mandated that candidates must disclose criminal cases pending against them, their educational qualifications, financial assets, and liabilities while filing nomination papers.

- **Public Interest Foundation v. Union of India (2019):** In this case, the Supreme Court directed political parties to publish details of criminal cases against their candidates on their websites and social media platforms. The court emphasized the importance of transparency and accountability in electoral politics.

- **Ramesh Dalal v. Union of India (2005):** The Supreme Court held that voters have a right to know about the criminal antecedents of candidates contesting elections. The court observed that this information is essential for voters to make informed choices and exercise their democratic rights effectively.

- **PUCL v. Union of India (2003):** In this case, the Supreme Court issued guidelines for electoral reforms, including measures to curb the criminalization of politics. The court recommended the establishment of fast-track courts to expedite the trial of cases involving elected representatives and to ensure their timely disposal.

WHAT IS REPRESENTATION OF PEOPLE ACT, 1951

The Representation of the People Act, 1951 (RPA, 1951) is a key legislation in India that governs various aspects of elections, including the conduct of elections, qualifications and disqualifications of candidates, and the registration of political parties. The RPA, 1951, was enacted to ensure free and fair elections in the country and to establish democratic norms and procedures.

Key provisions of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, include:

- **Qualifications and Disqualifications of Candidates:** The Act lays down the qualifications that a person must possess to contest elections to the Parliament and State Legislative Assemblies. It also specifies various grounds for disqualification, including conviction for certain offenses, bankruptcy, and holding an office of profit under the government.

- **Conduct of Elections:** The RPA, 1951, provides detailed provisions regarding the conduct of elections, including the process of nomination, the appointment of election officers, polling procedures, and counting of votes. It also regulates the use of election symbols by political parties and candidates.

- **Election Petitions:** The Act provides for the filing of election petitions challenging the validity of an election on various grounds, such as corrupt practices, illegalities in the conduct of elections, or violations of election laws. These petitions are adjudicated by the High Courts or the Supreme Court, depending on the level of the election.

- **Registration of Political Parties:** The RPA, 1951, prescribes the procedure for the registration and recognition of political parties. Political parties seeking recognition must fulfill certain eligibility criteria, including having a certain minimum number of members and following internal democratic processes.

- **Electoral Offenses and Penalties:** The Act defines various electoral offenses, such as bribery, undue influence, and impersonation, and prescribes penalties for individuals found guilty of such offenses. These offenses are punishable by imprisonment, fines, or both.

PROVISION FOR DISQUALIFICATION UNDER RPA, 1951

- **Conviction for Certain Offenses**: A person convicted of certain offenses by a court of law is disqualified from contesting elections. These offenses include crimes such as bribery, electoral malpractices, corruption, and offenses under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) or any other special laws.

- **Corrupt Practices**: Any individual found guilty of engaging in corrupt practices during elections, such as bribery, undue influence, or impersonation, is disqualified from contesting elections.

- **Undischarged Insolvency**: A person who is declared as an undischarged insolvent by a court is disqualified from contesting elections until the insolvency is discharged.

- **Office of Profit**: Holding an office of profit under the government, whether Central or State, can lead to disqualification from contesting elections. However, certain offices are exempted from this disqualification by law or by the President of India.

- **Unsoundness of Mind:** Individuals who have been declared to be of unsound mind by a competent court and are under guardianship are disqualified from con-

testing elections.

- **Dual Membership of Legislative Bodies**: A person cannot simultaneously be a member of both Houses of Parliament or both Houses of a State Legislature. If a person is elected to more than one such legislative body, they must resign from one within a certain period, failing which they will be disqualified.

- **Government Contracts and Tenders**: Holding government contracts or being involved in government tenders can lead to disqualification from contesting elections, as it may create a conflict of interest.

DEEPFAKING ELECTIONS

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF "**DEEPFAKING ELECTIONS**". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE " **POLITY and GOVERNANCE**" SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

Why in the News?

Bollywood star Ranveer Singh has filed a formal complaint with the Mumbai Police Cyber Crime Cell following the emergence of a deep fake video. This fabricated video portrays the actor expressing political views and endorsing a specific political party during his recent trip to Varanasi.

WHAT IS DEEP FAKE?

- Deepfakes represent sophisticated fabricated videos or audio recordings produced through digital tools, machine learning algorithms, and facial substitution methods. These creations result from artificial intelligence systems manipulating original images, videos, or audio recordings of individuals to generate deceptive content.

- Utilizing **generative adversarial networks (GANs),** the software refines its inputs and outputs, aiming to blur the line between authentic and falsified material, making it challenging for discriminators to distinguish between the two. Deepfakes can be highly convincing and difficult to detect, posing risks for misinformation, fraud, and privacy violations.

How Deep Fakes Can Impact Elections?

Deepfakes can have a significant impact on elections by spreading misinformation, manipulating public opinion, and undermining electoral integrity. Here are some ways deep fakes could impact elections:

- **Misinformation and Manipulation:** Deepfakes can be used to create convincing videos of political candidates saying or doing things they never actually did.

These fabricated videos can spread rapidly on social media platforms, leading to misinformation and manipulation of public opinion.

- **Undermining Trust:** Deepfake videos can erode trust in the electoral process by casting doubt on the authenticity of real videos and statements made by candidates. This can confuse voters and undermine their confidence in the political system.

- **Smear Campaigns:** Deepfakes can be weaponized as part of smear campaigns against political opponents. By creating fake videos depicting candidates engaging in unethical or illegal behaviour, malicious actors can tarnish their reputations and influence voter perception.

- **Psychological Warfare:** Deep fakes could be employed as psychological warfare tactics designed to trigger fear or anxiety among certain demographics, affecting voter behaviour negatively. For instance, fake news stories portraying violence or civil unrest could deter people from participating in elections.

- **Polarization and Divisiveness:** The proliferation of deepfake content can exacerbate political polarization and divisiveness by amplifying false narratives and reinforcing existing biases. This can further deepen societal rifts and hinder constructive dialogue during election campaigns.

- **Damage to Reputations:** Deepfakes can tarnish the reputations of political candidates by portraying them in compromising situations or making them appear to hold controversial views. Even if the content is later proven to be false, the damage to the candidate's image may already be done.

- **Challenges for Fact-Checking:** Deepfakes pose significant challenges for fact-checking organizations and journalists tasked with verifying the accuracy of political content. The rapid spread of deep fake videos can outpace efforts to debunk false information, allowing misinformation to gain traction before it can be effectively addressed.
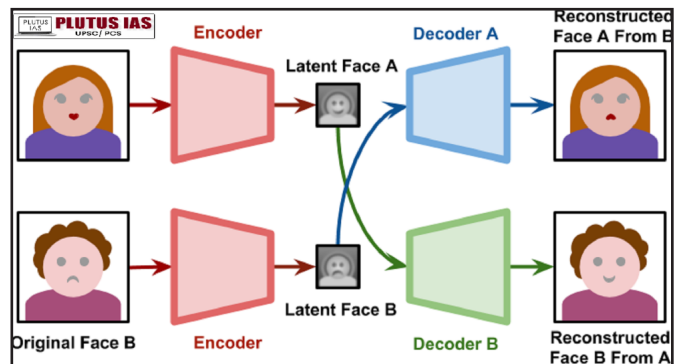
Initiatives Taken By India to Counter Deep Fakes in Elections

The Indian government has taken steps to address the challenges posed by deep fakes and misinformation in several ways:

- **Regulations and advisories:** The government has issued advisories to social media platforms and tech companies, urging compliance with regulations concerning deepfakes and misinformation. For example, the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** issued an advisory in December 2023, directing social media platforms to adhere to the **Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021**, particularly regarding deceptive, misleading, or impersonating content.

- **Legislation:** Recognizing the necessity for a comprehensive legal framework to tackle deep fakes and misinformation, the government plans to develop appropriate legislation following the elections. This may involve amending existing laws or enacting new ones specifically targeting deepfakes and misinformation.

- Collaboration with tech companies: The Indian government has collaborated with major technology companies, including Meta, Amazon, Google, Microsoft, OpenAI, and Anthropic, to combat harmful and deceptive AI-generated content that could disrupt electoral processes. **For example, Google has formed a partnership with the Election Commission of India (ECI) to combat** the dissemination of misinformation during the general elections.

- **Awareness and education:** Efforts are underway to raise awareness about the risks associated with deep fakes and misinformation. The government and various organizations emphasise the importance of fact-checking and fostering critical thinking skills among the public.

- Fact-checking initiatives: Several fact-checking organizations, such as **Alt News, Boom Live, and Fact Crescendo**, are actively engaged in debunking deep fakes and misinformation related to elections.

- **Technological solutions:** Researchers and tech companies are developing AI-powered tools to detect deepfakes effectively. These tools could help identify and remove manipulated content from social media platforms and other digital channels.

International efforts to counter deep fakes

- **Tech Industry Accord:** Major players in the technology sector are joining forces to address the issue of deceptive AI-generated election content through the proposed Tech Accord. This collaborative agreement aims to develop tools such as watermarks and detection techniques to identify, label, and refute deep fake AI-manipulated images and audio recordings of public figures.

- **Funding for Forensic Techniques:** Governments are being encouraged to allocate resources towards the advancement of media forensic techniques designed to detect deep fakes. Initiatives like the **Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) in the United States** investing in forensic detection techniques highlight the critical need for ongoing funding to stay abreast of evolving deep fake algorithms.

- **EU Strategy:** The European Union has taken proactive measures to address the issue of disinformation, including deep fakes, by issuing guidelines for defending against various forms of intentional disinformation. These guidelines stress the significance of public engagement and the implementation of measures to assist individuals in discerning the authenticity of content.

- **International Organizations:** Several international organizations promote awareness about deep fakes' threats, encourage international collaboration, provide guidance on best practices, and coordinate responses to emerging challenges. One example is the **United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC)**, which coordinates global initiatives to fight cybercrime and online exploitation.

STAR CAMPAIGNERS IN ELECTIONS

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF "STAR CAMPAIGNERS IN ELECTIONS". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "POLITY AND GOVERNANCE" SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

WHY IN THE NEWS?

Sunita Kejriwal, spouse of Arvind Kejriwal, the Chief Minister of Delhi, has been designated as a 'star campaigner' by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) to lead its campaign efforts in Gujarat.

KEY POINTS ABOUT STAR CAMPAIGNING

LEGAL PROVISIONS

- The legal framework governing star campaigners is **outlined in Section 77 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 (RP Act).** This section pertains to the expenditure incurred by individuals designated as "leaders of a political party," commonly referred to as "star campaigners."

- Typically, these star campaigners are **prominent figures within a political party, although they may also include celebrities.** The key requirement is that these individuals must be members of the political party that appoints them.

- As per the RP Act, a **recognized political party**, either nationally or at the state level, can designate a **maximum of 40 star campaigners**. Conversely, a registered but **unrecognized party can nominate up to 20.**

- The **names** of these star campaigners **must be communicated to the Election Commission (EC) and the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO)** of the respective states within seven days from the date of the election notification.

- In the case of **multi-phase elections**, political parties have the option to submit separate lists of star campaigners for each phase.

- When the **Prime Minister or a former Prime Minister** acts as a star campaigner, according to the MCC guidelines, the government **covers the expenses for security**, including those for bullet-proof vehicles. These expenses are not added to the election expenses of the party or the individual candidate. However, if **another campaigner** accompanies the Prime Minister, the individual candidate is **responsible for bearing 50% of the expenditure on security arrangements.**

RULES REGARDING EXEMPTIONS FOR THE STAR CAMPAIGNERS

- According to the RP Act, expenses related to travel by air or any other mode of transportation incurred by the 'leaders of a political party' for campaigning on behalf of their party are not considered part of the election expenditure of candidates from that party.

- In larger States, candidates' election spending is capped at ₹95 lakh per Lok Sabha constituency, while in smaller States, it's ₹75 lakh. Therefore, these star campaigners can rally support for candidates fielded by their respective parties without impacting their expenditure limit.

Conditions for Exemption:

- The exemption applies only if the star campaigners confine themselves to general campaigning for the party. However, if during any rally or meeting, the star campaigner solicits votes for the contesting candidate(s) or shares the platform with them, the expenses incurred for such events will be counted towards the election expenditure of those candidate(s).

- Additionally, if the star campaigner bears boarding and lodging expenses while campaigning for any candidate(s), these costs will be included in the expenditure record of such candidate(s), regardless of whether they are paid by the candidate(s).

- Moreover, if any candidate(s) accompany the star campaigner during travel, then 50% of the travel expenses of the star campaigner will also be attributed to those candidate(s).

CONCERNS RELATED TO STAR CAMPAIGNERS

- **Influence Peddling:** Star campaigners, often prominent figures in politics or celebrities, may wield significant influence over voters. There's a concern that their involvement could sway voter opinions unduly, potentially undermining the democratic principle of free and fair elections.

- **Polarisation:** Star campaigners often represent specific political parties or ideologies, contributing to partisan polarisation. Their involvement may exacerbate divisions within society, making it harder to foster consensus and cooperation across party lines.

- **Disproportionate Resources:** Star campaigners often have access to considerable resources, including funding, media coverage, and logistical support. This could create an uneven playing field, where candidates with star campaigners enjoy advantages over others, raising concerns about fairness and equality in elections.

- **Expenditures Regulations:** The involvement of star campaigners can complicate expenditure regulations. Expenses incurred by star campaigners, such as travel, security, and event arrangements, may not always be properly accounted for or attributed to individual candidates, potentially leading to violations of election finance laws.

- **Misusing Official Position:** If star campaigners hold public office or government positions, there's a risk of them using their official authority or resources for campaign purposes. This could blur the lines between government work and political campaigning, eroding public trust in institutions and violating ethical standards.

- **Diversion from real Issues:** The focus on star campaigners and their personalities may divert attention from substantive issues and policy debates during election campaigns. Instead of discussing relevant issues, campaigns might become centred around personalities and celebrity endorsements, detracting from the democratic process's purpose of informed decision-making.

WAY FORWARD

- **Reforms in Legal Framework:** Review and update the legal framework governing star campaigners to ensure transparency, accountability, and fairness in their appointment and functioning. This may involve amendments to the Representation of the People Act of 1951 to address loopholes and ambiguities.

- **Enhanced Oversight:** Strengthen oversight mechanisms to monitor the activities and expenditures of star campaigners. The Election Commission should enforce regulations strictly, ensuring that expenses are properly accounted for and attributed to the respective candidates or parties.

- **Ethical Guidelines:** Develop and enforce ethical guidelines for star campaigners to prevent the misuse of official positions, influence peddling, and diversion from substantive issues. Star campaigners should be encouraged to focus on policy debates rather than personality-centric narratives.

- **Collaboration and Dialogue:** Foster collaboration and dialogue among political parties to mitigate concerns related to partisan polarisation. Parties should prioritise consensus-building and cooperation across party lines, enhancing the inclusivity and integrity of the democratic process.

PRELIMS QUESTIONS

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Star campaigners must be affiliated with the political party that selects them.

2. For any given election, a recognised political party has the authority to designate up to 40 star campaigners.

3. The costs associated with the travel of star campaigners during campaigning are considered part of the election expenses of the candidate they are endorsing.

How many of the above statements are correct?

(a) Only one

(b) Only two

(c) All three

(d) None

Q2. Which of the following Fintech companies launched India's First indigenously developed AI platform?

(a) Uber

(b) PayTM

(c) Ola

(d) Phonepe

ANSWERS

S. No.	Answers
1.	A
2.	C

MAINS QUESTION

Q1. Analyse the implications of star campaigners using their celebrity status to sway public opinion during elections from an ethical standpoint.

Q2.What are the potential implications of deep fakes on electoral processes, and how might they impact voter perceptions and decisions? What specific measures has the Indian government implemented to address the challenges posed by deep fakes in elections?

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

ARTEMIS ACCORD

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF "ARTEMIS ACCORD". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY" SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

WHY IN THE NEWS?

Most recently, Slovenia and Sweden joined the ranks of nations signing the Artemis Accords, becoming the 39th and 38th countries, respectively, to do so.

WHAT IS ARTEMIS' ACCORD?

- The Artemis Accords, **initiated by the U.S. State Department and NASA** along with seven other founding nations – Australia, Canada, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, the United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom – in 2020, **aim to establish universal principles governing the peaceful exploration and utilisation of outer space, including the moon, Mars, comets, and asteroids.**

- These accords are based on the framework provided by the Outer Space Treaty of 1967, a foundational document in international space law established under the United Nations.

- The treaty underscores the notion of space as a shared resource for humanity, **prohibits the national appropriation of celestial bodies**, and promotes the peaceful exploration and utilisation of space.

KEY PRINCIPLES OF ARTEMIS ACCORD

- **Transparency in Space Activities:** The Accords call for signatories to register their space objects with the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs. This promotes transparency in space activities and reduces the risk of collisions between spacecraft or debris in orbit. Maintaining a clear picture of objects in space is crucial for ensuring the safety of space exploration endeavours.

- **Transparency and Knowledge Sharing:** The Accords advocate for open communication between signatories. This includes sharing scientific data and best practices, fostering collaboration and accelerating scientific progress. By openly sharing information, participating nations can learn from each other's experiences, leading to more efficient and successful missions.

- **Peaceful Purposes:** The Accords prioritise the use of space exploration for peaceful objectives only. This aligns with the Outer Space Treaty of 1967, a foundational document in space law, which prohibits military activities on celestial bodies. The Artemis Accords reinforce this commitment, fostering a spirit of cooperation in space.

- **Interoperability:** To ensure seamless collaboration on future space projects, the Accords call for the development of compatible systems and standards. This could involve establishing common protocols for communication, docking procedures, and data exchange between space agencies. By working towards interoperability, signatories can avoid technical hurdles and work together more effectively.

- **Responsible Resource Utilisation:** As space exploration expands, the potential to extract resources from celestial bodies becomes more relevant. The Artemis Accords acknowledge this by establishing a framework for the responsible utilisation of these resources. This ensures that resource extraction is conducted sustainably and equitably, preventing conflicts and safeguarding the long-term future of space exploration.

- **Mutual Assistance:** The Accords emphasise the importance of rendering aid to astronauts in need, upholding a longstanding tradition of spacefaring nations supporting each other. This principle ensures the safety and well-being of astronauts venturing into the unknown depths of space.

ABOUT OUTER SPACE TREATY

- The **Outer Space Treaty**, adopted by the United Nations in 1967, **primarily focuses on ensuring the peaceful use of outer space and prohibits the placement of nuclear weapons in space.** It also includes provisions related to managing space debris and ensuring the return of space objects to Earth, as well as addressing damage caused by space objects to other space assets or on Earth.

- The Rescue and Return Agreement of 1968, previously known as the **'Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space' (ARRA),** outlines the responsibilities of states to assist and rescue astronauts in distress and promptly return them to their launching State. It also addresses the recovery of space objects.

- The **Liability Convention of 1972, formally titled the Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects, counts most space-faring countries as signatories.** This convention serves as one of several international agreements complementing the Outer Space Treaty, providing a framework for countries' behaviour in space.

- Furthermore, the Registration Convention of 1975, known as the Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space, aims to establish means and procedures for identifying objects launched into outer space (space objects) and facilitating their registration.

NEED FOR ARTEMIS ACCORD.

- **Global Cooperation:** Space exploration has evolved from a competition among superpowers to a collaborative effort involving multiple nations and private entities. The Artemis Accords provide a platform for nations to cooperate and coordinate their activities in space, ensuring mutual benefit and advancing scientific knowledge for all humanity.

- **Peaceful Exploration:** With the increasing interest in lunar and planetary exploration, it's crucial to establish clear guidelines for peaceful coexistence and cooperation in space. The Artemis Accords emphasise the peaceful use of outer space, mitigating the risk of conflict and promoting a shared vision for exploration.

- **Regulatory Framework:** As space activities become more diverse and complex, there's a growing need for a regulatory framework to address issues such as resource utilisation, environmental protection, and space traffic management. The Artemis Accords lay down principles and guidelines to govern these activities, promoting responsible behaviour and sustainability in space.

- **Protection of Heritage:** The Artemis Accords recognise the importance of preserving sites and artefacts of historical or cultural significance in space, such as lunar landing sites. By protecting these heritage sites, the accords ensure that future generations can study and appreciate humanity's achievements in space exploration.

- **Transparency and Accountability:** Transparency and openness are essential for building trust among space-faring nations and promoting collaboration. The Artemis Accords encourage nations to share information openly about their space activities, fostering transparency and accountability in the international space community.

- **Legal Certainty:** By adhering to the principles outlined

in the Artemis Accords, nations can benefit from legal certainty and predictability in their space activities. Clear guidelines help prevent misunderstandings and conflicts, allowing nations to pursue their exploration goals with confidence.

ORGAN TRANSPLANTATIONS RULES IN INDIA

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF "**ORGAN TRANSPLANTATIONS RULES IN INDIA**". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE " **POLITY and GOVERNANCE**" SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM

Why in the News?

Recently, the central government has issued a set of instructions to the states regarding NOTTO (National Organ and Tissue Transplantation Organisation).

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare amended the national guidelines for organ transplantation to permit individuals aged 65 and above to register for receiving an organ for transplantation from deceased donors.

ABOUT THE RECENT GUIDELINES ISSUED BY THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

- The updated guidelines have eliminated the age restriction of 65 years for patients seeking organs from deceased donors. Additionally, there has never been an age limit for living donor transplants, where family members donate organs such as kidneys and livers.

- **NOTTO ID Generation:** The instructions aim to ensure the generation of a NOTTO(National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organization) ID for both the donor and recipient in both living-donor and deceased-donor transplant scenarios.

- **Compulsory Swift Identification:** While a NOTTO ID is obligatory for the allocation of organs in deceased-donor transplants, it should also be promptly generated within a maximum of 48 hours after the transplant surgery for living-donor transplants.

- **Inquiry and Oversight:** The Union Ministry of Health has directed state authorities to investigate instances of organ commercialization and take appropriate actions against any violations found. State governments are tasked with devising a system for regularly inspecting all transplant and retrieval centres.

- **Addressing the Emergence of Commercial Trading:** Organs from deceased donors are allocated anonymously to individuals awaiting transplants, whereas organs from living donors can only be donated if there

is a close familial or emotional bond between the donor and recipient and if the donation is purely altruistic. The commercial trading of organs is strictly prohibited under Indian laws.

ABOUT NATIONAL ORGAN AND TISSUE TRANSPLANT ORGANIZATION

- **The National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organization (NOTTO)** is established at the national level under the Directorate General of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

- It serves as the primary centre for coordinating and networking nationwide activities related to the procurement and distribution of organs and tissues, as well as maintaining a registry of organ and tissue donation and transplantation across the country.

ORGAN TRANSPLANTATION STATISTICS IN INDIA

According to the **National Organ Transplant Coordination Centre (NOTCC),** from 2010-2020, India witnessed 11096 total organ transplants out of which 7927 were kidney transplants, 3065 were liver transplants, 1438 lung transplants, 365 heart transplants, 232 pancreas transplants, 99 cornea transplants, 56 bone marrow transplants, 9 intestinal transplants, and 41 spleen transplants.

India ranks 7th worldwide regarding the number of living organ donors per million population. Between 2000-2020, the rate of increase in deceased donor organ transplants was 101%, whereas the rate of increase in living donor transplants during the same period was 93%.

The leading five states—Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Karnataka—comprise over 85% of the total organ transplantations.

Issues related to Organ transplantation in India

- **False NoCs Allegations:** The allegations of fake NoCs (Non-Compensation Certificates) issued by Indian authorities to Bangladeshi citizens involved in organ transplantation raise serious concerns regarding regulation compliance. It implies that people might be motivated to donate organs illegally or under duress due to monetary incentives offered abroad, thereby compromising ethics and safety standards.

- **Kidney Donation Scams:** Reports of impoverished individuals from Myanmar who were allegedly compensated for donating kidneys in Delhi highlight another aspect of organ transplant fraud. This indicates that vulnerable populations may fall prey to illegal international kidney trade networks.

- **Lack of Transparency:** Inadequate transparency around organ donation and transplantation activities often leads to confusion and mistrust among donors, recipients, and society.

Legal and Ethical Challenges:

- Organ trafficking and commercialization: Despite strict laws against organ trafficking, instances of illegal organ trade still occur, driven by poverty, lack of awareness, and demand-supply gaps.

- Inadequate regulation: Enforcement of regulations governing organ transplantation, including donor screening, consent procedures, and transplant center accreditation, is inconsistent across states, leading to potential exploitation and malpractice.

Donor Shortage

- Lack of awareness: Many people are unaware of the importance of organ donation, and cultural or religious beliefs may discourage donation.

- Reluctance among families: Even if individuals are willing to donate, their families may oppose the decision due to misconceptions or emotional barriers.

- Limited deceased donation infrastructure: India has a low rate of deceased organ donation due to insufficient infrastructure, including a shortage of trained transplant coordinators, inadequate organ retrieval facilities, and logistical challenges in transporting organs.

Infrastructure and Resources constraints:

- Regional disparities: Access to transplant centres and organ procurement facilities varies greatly across regions, with urban areas having better infrastructure than rural areas.

- High costs: Organ transplantation is expensive, making it inaccessible to many due to a lack of insurance coverage or financial resources.

- **Lack of Public Awareness and Education:** There is a need for comprehensive public awareness campaigns to dispel myths and misconceptions surrounding organ donation and transplantation.

Initiatives taken by India

Legislation:

- 1994 the Indian government enacted **The Transplantation of Human Organs Act (THOA).**

- **The Transplantation of Human Organs Rules** followed in 1995 and underwent the last amendment in 2014, expanding the scope of donation to include tissues for transplantation. This act criminalized organ commercialization and legalized the concept of brain death in India, enabling deceased donation by procuring organs from brain stem-dead individuals.

Institution:

- **The National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organization (NOTTO)** is established at the national level under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. In addition to formulating policy guidelines and protocols for various functions, NOTTO coordinates all activities related to organ donation at the national level.

Way forward for India

- **Strengthen Legislation:** Establishing robust legislation and implementation frameworks governing organ donation and transplantation practice could mitigate many existing loopholes allowing illegal organ trading.

- **Raise Awareness:** Conduct continuous educational drives targeting communities, especially disadvantaged sections of society, explaining the advantages of organ donation. Encourage media outlets to participate actively in spreading awareness using different platforms and modes, making sure everyone knows what is acceptable when it comes to organ donation and transplantation practices

- **Robust Medical Facilities and Training Programs:** Building quality medical facilities equipped with state-of-the-art technologies and training skilled doctors and nurses dealing specifically with organ transplant surgeries could significantly reduce mortality rates and complications associated with organ transplant surgery.

- **Financial Assistance Mechanisms:** Develop comprehensive financial assistance programs catering specifically to the poor segments of society who want to undergo critical medical treatment, including organ transplant operations.

- **International Collaboration:** Sharing best practices and technological advancements with countries known for their successful organ transplant management systems can prove beneficial. India ought to consider implementing the **Spanish "presumed consent"** model, wherein individuals are presumed to consent to organ donation upon death unless they have explicitly opted out during their lifetime.

PRELIMS QUESTION

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The primary goal of the Artemis Accords is to limit access to space resources.
2. It was initiated by NASA and the European Space Agency
3. The Artemis Accords is built upon the Outer Space Treaty of 1967

How many of the statements above are correct?

(a) Only one

(b) Only two

(c) All three

(d) None

Q2. What is the primary purpose of the Liability Convention of 1972?

(a) Establishing guidelines for space debris management

(b) Ensuring the peaceful use of outer space

(c) Addressing liability for damage caused by space objects

(d) Promoting global cooperation in space exploration

Q3. Consider the following statements:

1. Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Karnataka—comprise over 85% of the total organ transplantations.
2. Spain is the biggest country in terms of organ transplantations.

Choose the correct answer using the codes given below:

1. 1 Only

2. 2 Only

3. Both 1 and 2

4. Neither 1 nor 2

ANSWERS

S. No.	Answers
1.	C
2.	C
3.	C

MAINS PRACTISE QUESTION

Q1. In what ways do the Artemis Accords promote the peaceful use of outer space, and how do they align with existing international treaties like the Outer Space Treaty of 1967?

Q0.How have legislative measures such as The Transplantation of Human Organs Act (THOA) and the establishment of institutions like the National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organization (NOTTO) impacted India's organ donation and transplantation practices?

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

JAPAN'S MILITARY BUILD UP AND ITS GEO-POLITICAL IMPACTS

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS "JAPAN'S MILITARY BUILD UP AND ITS GEOPOLITICAL IMPACTS". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS" SECTION OF GS2 IN THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The recent address by Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida to the United States Congress, alongside the outcomes of his summit with President Joe Biden, heralds the emergence of a more assertive Japan on the global stage. These events underscore a significant transformation underway in Japan and highlight its growing importance on the international scene.

Japan's abandonment of its post-War pacifism marks a significant shift in its stance towards military power. This decision holds the potential to reshape not only the dynamics of Asia but also the global geopolitical landscape. Japan's newfound determination and military strength align with India's vision of fostering a multipolar Asia within a multipolar world.

BACKGROUND

Following World War II, Japan, humbled by defeat, embraced a **policy of pacifism**. This involved refraining from significant military buildup, limiting defense spending, and abstaining from involvement in military conflicts globally. This commitment to pacifism stemmed from Japan's desire to atone for its pre-war militarism and imperialism.

To compensate for its pacifist stance, Japan forged a robust bilateral military alliance with the United States. Under the protection of the US in Asia, Japan redirected its efforts toward economic recovery and emerged as a formidable commercial and technological force by the late 1960s. By the early 1970s, Japan had ascended to become the world's second-largest economy, trailing only the United States.

Starting in the mid-2000s, Japan began advocating for a new security framework in Asia, notably through the **concept of the Indo-Pacific**, a pivotal geopolitical idea of the 21st century. This notion, emphasizing the strategic unity of the Indian and Pacific Oceans, was initially articulated by the late Prime Minister Shinzo Abe during his 2007 visit to India. Japan has since dedicated substantial diplomatic, political, and financial efforts to promote this concept, leading to its adoption by key regional players like Australia, Indonesia, India, and the United States.

In the current phase of transition, Japan is not only advancing strategic concepts but also bolstering its military capabilities and demonstrating the political resolve to actively reshape the regional security landscape. Prime Minister Kishida's recent visit to Washington DC effectively symbolized the emergence of a new geopolitical Japan.

REASON FOR THE CHANGE IN POLICY

For years, the United States has urged Japan to play a more active role in ensuring security within Asia. However, Japan, content with its focus on commerce, had been hesitant to embrace this suggestion. In the 21st century, a combination of internal and external factors has prompted a significant reevaluation of Japan's security posture.

Externally, several key factors have converged to catalyze Japan's shift: **the assertive military stance of China**, particularly concerning territorial disputes with Japan; the **strengthening military ties between Beijing and Moscow,** along with their coordinated policies in Northeast Asia; the **increasing military capabilities of North Korea**; and concerns sparked by the Trump Administration regarding the potential withdrawal of US security assurances for Japan and other Asian allies. These elements collectively have reshaped Japan's regional security landscape, compelling a reassessment of its strategic approach

IMPACT ON JAPAN'S MILITARY BUILDUP ON ASIAN GEO-POLITICS

Japan's military buildup carries significant implications for Asian geopolitics, catalyzing shifts in regional power dynamics and security arrangements:

1. Balance of Power: Japan's enhanced military capabilities introduce a new element to the balance of power in Asia. As Japan strengthens its defense forces, it potentially offsets the military dominance of other regional powers, influencing their strategic calculations and interactions.

2. Regional Security: The buildup of Japan's military capabilities contributes to the evolving security architecture in Asia. It may prompt neighboring countries to reassess their defense postures and alliances, potentially leading to adjustments in regional security arrangements.

3. Deterrence and Stability: A militarily stronger Japan could serve as a deterrence against potential aggression or instability in the region. This may contribute to maintaining peace and stability by dissuading aggressive actions from adversaries and fostering a more predictable security environment.

4. Alliance Dynamics: Japan's military buildup could impact its alliances and partnerships in Asia. It may strengthen ties with like-minded countries sharing security concerns, while potentially causing apprehension or prompting responses from others who view Japan's military expansion with suspicion.

5. Territorial Disputes: Japan's military capabilities may have implications for ongoing territorial disputes in the region, particularly in the East China Sea and the South China Sea. A stronger Japanese defense posture could influence the dynamics of these disputes and affect the strategies of other claimant states.

6. Regional Influence: Japan's increased military capacity could enhance its influence and leadership role in regional security initiatives and multilateral forums. It may seek to play a more proactive role in shaping security policies and responses to common challenges in collaboration with other Asian nations.

Overall, Japan's military buildup adds a new dimension to the complex tapestry of Asian geopolitics, impacting regional dynamics and shaping the strategic landscape in ways that require careful observation and analysis by stakeholders both within and beyond the region.

ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT

FOURTH GLOBAL MASS CORAL BLEACHING EVENT

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS "CORAL BLEACHING". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "ENVIRONMENT" SECTION OF GS3 IN THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration(NOAA) has noted that the fourth global mass coral bleaching event has been triggered by extraordinary ocean temperatures.

The great barrier reef in Australia, the largest in the world is most affected by severe bleaching.

ABOUT CORAL REEFS

- Coral reefs are underwater structures formed by calcium carbonate secreted by corals. Corals are tiny, soft-bodied organisms related to sea anemones and jellyfish. They live in colonies and form hard exoskeletons as they grow. These exoskeletons accumulate over time, creating the complex structures we know as coral reefs.

- Coral reefs are referred to as the "**rainforests of the sea"** due to their high biodiversity and the crucial role they play in supporting marine ecosystems. They provide habitats for a vast array of marine life, including fish, crustaceans, mollusks, and many other organisms. Additionally, coral reefs protect coastlines from erosion by acting as natural barriers against waves and storms.

- However, coral reefs are highly sensitive to environmental changes, such as rising sea temperatures, pollution, and ocean acidification. These factors often lead to coral bleaching, a phenomenon where corals expel the algae living in their tissues, causing them to turn white and potentially die. Protecting coral reefs is essential for maintaining marine biodiversity and the health of our oceans.

WHAT IS CORAL BLEACHING?

Coral bleaching is a phenomenon in which corals lose their vibrant colors due to the expulsion of symbiotic algae living within their tissues. These algae, called zooxanthellae, provide corals with energy through photosynthesis and contribute to their vibrant colors. When corals are stressed by environmental factors such as high water temperatures, pollution, or changes in water chemistry, they expel the algae, causing them to turn white or pale.

Several factors can trigger coral bleaching:

- **High Water Temperatures**: Elevated sea temperatures, particularly during periods of prolonged heat stress, can cause corals to bleach. Warmer temperatures stress the corals, leading them to expel the zooxanthellae.

- **Pollution**: Pollution from sources such as agricultural runoff, sewage, and coastal development can degrade water quality and stress corals, making them more susceptible to bleaching.

- **Ocean Acidification**: Increasing levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere can lead to ocean acidification, which can weaken coral skeletons and make corals more vulnerable to bleaching.

- **Physical Damage:** Physical damage from factors such as boat anchors, fishing gear, and coastal construction

can stress corals and increase their susceptibility to bleaching.

When corals bleach, they are not necessarily dead, but they are under increased stress and more vulnerable to mortality. If the stressful conditions persist, bleached corals may eventually die. Mass bleaching events, where large numbers of corals bleach simultaneously across extensive reef systems, can have devastating consequences for coral reef ecosystems, leading to widespread coral mortality and ecosystem decline.

Coral bleaching is a significant concern for coral reef conservation, as it is increasingly occurring at higher frequencies and severities due to climate change and human activities. Mitigating climate change, reducing pollution, and implementing sustainable management practices are essential for protecting coral reefs and preventing further bleaching events.

OTHER CHALLENGES POSED TO CORALS

- **Ocean Acidification**: Increasing levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere lead to ocean acidification, which can weaken coral skeletons and hinder coral growth and reproduction.

- **Overfishing**: Overfishing of key reef species, such as herbivorous fish and invertebrates, can disrupt ecological balance and degrade coral reef health. Removing herbivores can lead to overgrowth of algae, which can smother corals and inhibit their growth.

- **Invasive Species:** Invasive species, such as crown-of-thorns starfish, can prey on corals and contribute to reef degradation by causing outbreaks that lead to widespread coral mortality.

- **Sedimentation**: Excessive sediment runoff from coastal development, deforestation, and erosion can smother corals, reduce light penetration, and hinder coral growth and reproduction.

- **Climate Change**: Climate change exacerbates many of the threats facing coral reefs, including coral bleaching, ocean acidification, and more frequent and severe storms. Rising sea temperatures disrupt the symbiotic relationship between corals and zooxanthellae, leading to bleaching events.

- **Illegal Trade:** Illegal collection of coral for the aquarium trade and for use in jewelry and decorative items can deplete coral populations and disrupt reef ecosystems.

WAY FORWARD

The way forward to protect and conserve coral reefs involves a multi-faceted approach that addresses the various threats facing these ecosystems. Here are some key strategies:

- **Mitigating Climate Change**: Addressing the root cause of coral bleaching and ocean acidification requires global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This includes transitioning to renewable energy sources, improving energy efficiency, and implementing policies to limit carbon emissions.

- **Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)**: Establishing and effectively managing marine protected areas can help conserve coral reef ecosystems by reducing fishing pressure, protecting critical habitats, and enhancing ecosystem resilience. MPAs should be designed based on scientific evidence and involve stakeholders in their management.

- **Sustainable Fisheries Management:** Implementing sustainable fishing practices, such as regulating fishing quotas, protecting spawning grounds, and promoting selective fishing methods, can help maintain fish populations and preserve the ecological balance of coral reef ecosystems.

- **Pollution Reduction:** Implementing measures to reduce pollution from land-based sources, such as improving sewage treatment, regulating agricultural runoff, and reducing plastic pollution, can improve water quality and reduce stress on coral reefs.

- **Integrated Coastal Zone Management:** Adopting integrated coastal zone management approaches that consider the interactions between land and sea can help minimize coastal development impacts, reduce sedimentation, and protect coral reef habitats.

- **Community Engagement and Education**: Engaging local communities in coral reef conservation efforts through education, awareness campaigns, and participatory management approaches can foster stewardship and support sustainable resource use practices.

- **Research and Monitoring:** Continued research and monitoring of coral reef ecosystems are essential for understanding the drivers of coral reef decline, identifying priority conservation areas, and evaluating the effectiveness of conservation measures.

- International Cooperation: Collaboration among governments, non-governmental organizations, researchers, and local communities is crucial for addressing transboundary issues, sharing knowledge and best practices, and mobilizing resources for coral reef conservation.

By implementing these strategies in a coordinated and holistic manner, we can work towards safeguarding coral reef

ecosystems for future generations and ensuring their eco-logical, economic, and cultural value persists.

HEAVY RAINFALL AND FLOOD IN UAE

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF "HEAVY RAINFALL AND FLOOD IN UAE". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "ENVIRONMENT" SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

WHY IN THE NEWS?

In a recent event, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) experienced one of its most significant rainfall occurrences as a result of a severe thunderstorm impacting the region leading to flooding in Urban areas.

REASONS BEHIND EXTREME RAINFALL IN UAE

CLIMATE'S ROLE

Our climate is constantly evolving, and natural variations like El Niño and La Niña can influence extreme rainfall events. Additionally, long-term climate change, driven by factors like greenhouse gas emissions, is impacting global weather patterns. This can lead to conditions that favour intense precipitation.

WARMING AND THE MOISTURE CONNECTION

As global temperatures rise, more water evaporates from land surfaces, oceans, and other bodies of water. This warmer air acts like a sponge, holding more moisture. Studies suggest that for every degree Celsius increase, the atmosphere can hold around 7% more moisture. When storms develop, this extra moisture translates to heavier precipitation. This can intensify storms by increasing the amount of rain that falls (greater volume), the duration of the downpour (lasting longer), or the frequency of storms in a particular region (occurring more often).

CLOUD SEEDING

A Targeted Approach: In some regions struggling with water scarcity, cloud seeding is used as a technique to induce rainfall. This method involves introducing materials like silver iodide crystals into clouds. These crystals act as condensation nuclei, around which water vapour condenses more readily, promoting precipitation. Places like the United Arab Emirates, known for its hot and dry climate, have been actively using cloud seeding to increase rainfall.

UNDERSTANDING THUNDERSTORMS

Thunderstorms are intense weather events characterised by heavy rain, lightning, and thunder. These form due to atmospheric imbalances and turbulence. Warm, unstable

air rises rapidly in the atmosphere, encountering enough moisture to form clouds and rain. Upward air currents also play a crucial role. These currents can be triggered by colliding cold and warm fronts, sea breezes blowing from the ocean towards land, or mountains forcing air upwards. As the rising air cools, condensation occurs, leading to the formation of rain clouds and, eventually, heavy precipitation.

ABOUT URBAN FLOODING

Urban flooding occurs when excessive rainfall or other factors overwhelm the drainage systems and infrastructure of urban areas, leading to water accumulation on streets, roads, and other urban spaces. This phenomenon poses significant challenges to cities worldwide, impacting infrastructure, property, livelihoods, and public safety.

Causes of Urban Flooding:

Drainage struggles: Outdated drainage systems and clogged pathways can't handle the water surge.

Pavements: Concrete jungles prevent rainwater from soaking in, increasing runoff.

Location: Low-lying areas and those near water bodies are naturally flood-prone.

Climate Change: More intense storms due to climate change push drainage systems to their limits.

Urban heat: Cities trap heat, fueling storms and worsening downpours.

CLIMATIC PATTERN OF UAE

- The United Arab Emirates (UAE) boasts a desert climate marked by scorching temperatures and minimal rainfall. Situated within the Arabian Peninsula, its location exposes it to extreme heat, especially during the summer months when temperatures often exceed 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit).

- The country experiences two distinct seasons: a hot season from May to September and a milder period from October to April. Despite the relatively cooler temperatures in winter, daytime temperatures remain warm, offering a pleasant climate for outdoor activities.

- Rainfall is sparse and irregular, typically occurring between November and April, with most areas receiving less than 100 millimetres annually. The UAE is also prone to dust and sandstorms, particularly during the summer, caused by winds like the Shamal and Khamsin.

- Overall, the UAE's climatic pattern is characterised by its arid desert conditions, making it a challenging yet intriguing environment shaped by its geographical location and seasonal variations.

SUPREME COURT VERDICT ON HUMAN-ANIMAL CONFLICT

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The Supreme Court issued awarning on Wednesday, highlighting the critical threat posed by human-wildlife conflicts to the preservation of forests and wildlife. Justice B.R. Gavai emphasized the urgent need for striking a delicate balance that safeguards the rights of both humans and animals.

In a pivotal case involving the delineation of boundaries for Assam's Pobitora wildlife sanctuary and the resolution of rights for marginalized communities residing within its confines, the court underscored the imperative of resolving conflicts between humans and animals. It stressed that failure to address these conflicts could lead to the extinction of forests and wildlife.

The court's remarks underscored the pressing need for sustainable solutions that uphold the rights of all stakeholders while ensuring the preservation of precious ecosystems and biodiversity.

DIFFERENT DIMENSIONS OF HUMAN-ANIMAL CONFLICT

ECOLOGICAL DIMENSION:

Habitat Loss and Fragmentation:

One of the primary drivers of human-animal conflict is the loss and fragmentation in the natural habitats. Rapid urbanization, agricultural expansion, and industrial development have encroached upon wildlife habitats, shrinking the available space for animals. Fragmentation disrupts ecological connectivity, isolating populations and increasing their vulnerability to human activities.

Altered Ecological Dynamics:

Human disturbances alter ecological dynamics, leading to shifts in species distribution and behavior. Species like elephants, tigers, and leopards, which require large territories, are particularly affected. Reduced habitat availability forces animals to venture into human settlements for search of food and water, escalating conflicts.

Human-Induced Stress:

Anthropogenic activities such as deforestation, air pollution, and climate change impose stress on wildlife populations. This stress can manifest in altered feeding patterns, increased aggression, and heightened vulnerability to diseases, exacerbating conflict situations.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DIMENSION:

Livelihood Dependence:

Many communities in rural areas depend on agriculture and livestock rearing for their livelihoods. Crop raiding by wildlife poses a direct threat to their sustenance, leading to resentment and retaliatory killings. Loss of crops or livestock can push already marginalized communities into poverty, perpetuating the cycle of conflict.

Infrastructure Development:

Infrastructure projects like roads, railways, and dams often penetrate wildlife habitats, exacerbating fragmentation. These developments not only directly displace animals but also facilitate human encroachment into previously undisturbed areas, intensifying conflicts.

Urbanization and Land Use Change:

Rapid urbanization leads to the conversion of natural landscapes into urban sprawls and agricultural lands. This transformation not only reduces habitat availability for

wildlife but also brings humans and animals into closer proximity, increasing the frequency of encounters and conflicts.

CULTURAL DIMENSION:

Traditional Beliefs and Practices:

In many cultures, animals hold significant cultural and religious value. However, conflicts arise when these revered animals, such as elephants in India, pose threats to human lives and livelihoods. Balancing cultural reverence with practical solutions to mitigate conflicts presents a unique challenge.

Conflict Perception and Attitudes:

Attitudes toward wildlife vary among different communities. While some may view animals as pests or threats, others may hold more positive attitudes and advocate for their conservation. These diverse perceptions influence conflict mitigation strategies and community participation in conservation efforts.

POLICY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK:

- Wildlife Protection Acts: The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, provides legal protection to endangered species and regulates activities related to wildlife conservation, hunting, and trade. Amendments to the act have been made over the years to strengthen wildlife protection measures.

- Forest Rights Act: The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, recognizes the rights of forest-dwelling communities over traditional forest lands and empowers them to participate in conservation and management activities.

- Compensation Schemes: State governments have implemented compensation schemes to provide financial relief to farmers and communities affected by crop raiding, livestock depredation, and human injuries or fatalities caused by wildlife.

CONSERVATION INITIATIVES:

- Project Tiger: Launched in 1973, Project Tiger aims to conserve the tiger population and its habitat. It includes measures such as habitat protection, anti-poaching efforts, and community participation in tiger conservation.

- Project Elephant: Initiated in 1992, Project Elephant focuses on the conservation and management of elephant populations and their habitats. It addresses issues such as habitat fragmentation, human-elephant conflict, and elephant corridors.

- Eco-sensitive Zones: The establishment of eco-sensitive zones around protected areas helps to regulate developmental activities and minimize human disturbances in critical wildlife habitats.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

- Joint Forest Management: Collaborative forest management initiatives involve local communities in the protection and sustainable use of forest resources. These partnerships promote coexistence between humans and wildlife while improving livelihood opportunities for local communities.

- Awareness and Education: Government agencies, NGOs, and conservation organizations conduct awareness campaigns and educational programs to sensitise communities about wildlife conservation, HAC mitigation measures, and the importance of coexistence.

TECHNOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS:

- Electric Fencing: Electric fencing is used to deter crop raiding by wildlife in agricultural areas. It helps in reducing human-wildlife conflicts by creating physical barriers without causing harm to animals.

- Early Warning Systems: Deploying early warning systems, such as camera traps and sensor-based devices, helps in monitoring wildlife movements and alerting communities about the presence of wildlife in their vicinity, enabling them to take preventive measures.

RESEARCH AND MONITORING:

- Scientific Research: Government agencies, research institutions, and conservation NGOs conduct research on wildlife ecology, behavior, and habitat use to develop evidence-based strategies for HAC mitigation.

- Monitoring Programs: Regular monitoring of wildlife populations, habitat status, and conflict incidents helps in assessing the effectiveness of conservation measures and identifying areas for intervention.

CONCLUSION:

The Government of India has recognized the importance of addressing the human-animal conflict and has taken several steps to mitigate its impacts through policy interventions, conservation initiatives, community engagement, and technological solutions. However, the challenge remains dynamic and complex, requiring continuous efforts and collaboration between government agencies, local communities, NGOs, and other stakeholders to achieve sustainable coexistence between humans and wildlife.

PRELIMS PRACTISE QUESTION

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the difference between La Nina and El Nino:

1. La Niña is defined by abnormally cold ocean temperatures in the equatorial Indian Ocean, while El Niño is marked by unusually warm ocean temperatures in the equatorial Pacific Ocean.

2. El Niño negatively impacts the southwest monsoon of India, whereas La Niña does not influence the monsoon climate.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

(a) 1 only

(b) 2 only

(c) Both 1 and 2

(d) Neither 1 nor 2

ANSWER: D

ANSWERS

S. No.	Answers
1.	S

MAINS QUESTION

Q1. In your opinion, should governments invest more in researching cloud seeding technology, considering its potential drawbacks and uncertainties?

SOCIAL ISSUES

CHANGING DIETARY HABITS IN INDIA

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS "CHANGING DIETARY HABITS IN INDIA". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "SOCIAL JUSTICE" SECTION OF GS2 IN THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

WHY IN THE NEWS?

- India, like many nations worldwide, is experiencing a significant "nutrition transition." This transition is marked by rapid changes in dietary habits, with a noticeable departure from traditional, fiber-rich diets towards more Westernized eating patterns. Urbanization and economic growth have spurred this shift, leading to a surge in the consumption of packaged and processed foods, commonly known as "junk foods."

- These processed foods are often nutritionally deficient, lacking essential vitamins, minerals, and fiber while being high in calories, fats, salt, and sugar. Classified as High in Fats, Salts, and Sugars (HFSS) foods, scientific research highlights the adverse health effects associated with their consumption. From weakening the body's immune defenses against infections to increasing blood pressure, spiking blood sugar levels, causing weight gain, and even elevating the risk of cancer, the detrimental impacts of junk food on health are well-documented.

According to a study conducted by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and published in 2023, the burden of metabolic disorders in India is alarmingly significant. The study reveals that:

- Approximately 11% of the population in India is affected by diabetes.

- Hypertension, or high blood pressure, affects around 35% of the population.

- Nearly 40% of individuals are grappling with abdominal obesity.

These findings underscore the pervasive nature of metabolic disorders in India, highlighting the urgent need for effective strategies to address these health challenges.

GOVERNMENT EFFORTS

- In 2013, the **Supreme Court of India delivered a landmark ruling**, asserting that any food item posing a hazard to public health infringes upon the fundamental right to life guaranteed under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution. This ruling laid a solid constitutional foundation for protecting consumers from unhealthy foods.

In alignment with this principle and recognizing the paramount importance of promoting public health, the **Government of India has undertaken various initiatives** to encourage healthier dietary habits and active lifestyles. Key among these initiatives are Eat Right India, the Fit India Movement, and the Prime Minister's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nutrition (Poshan) 2.0.

Acknowledging the vulnerability of children to the advertising of unhealthy foods, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) introduced the Food Safety and Standards (Safe food and balanced diets for children in school) Regulations in 2020. These regulations impose restrictions on the sale of High Fat, Salt, and Sugar (HFSS) foods in school canteens, mess premises, hostel kitchens, or within a 50-meter radius of school campuses.

Furthermore, the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights has recently taken action against a leading health drink company, issuing notices to evaluate and withdraw misleading advertisements, packaging, and labels that falsely portray the product as a "health drink." The commission cited concerns over the product's high sugar content and its potential adverse impact on children's health.

NEGATIVE IMPACT OF HFSS FOOD

- **Obesity**: HFSS foods are typically calorie-dense and low in nutrients, which can contribute to weight gain

and obesity when consumed regularly.

- **Cardiovascular Disease:** The high levels of fats, salt, and sugar in these foods can increase the risk of cardiovascular diseases such as hypertension, heart disease, and stroke.

- **Type 2 Diabetes**: Regular consumption of HFSS foods can lead to insulin resistance and an increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes due to elevated blood sugar levels.

- **Dental Health Issues:** Sugary snacks and drinks contribute to tooth decay and cavities, leading to poor dental health.

- **Nutritional Deficiencies:** HFSS foods often lack essential vitamins, minerals, and fiber, leading to nutritional deficiencies and poor overall health.

- **Digestive Problems**: Processed foods with high levels of fats and preservatives can disrupt digestion and lead to gastrointestinal issues such as bloating, constipation, and diarrhea.

- **Weakened Immune System**: The consumption of HFSS foods has been linked to a weakened immune system, making individuals more susceptible to infections and illnesses.

- **Mental Health Impacts**: Studies have suggested a link between the consumption of HFSS foods and mental health issues such as depression and anxiety.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

- **Definition of HFSS Foods**: The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) should expedite the process of defining High Fat, Salt, and Sugar (HFSS) foods specifically tailored to the Indian context. This clear definition will facilitate effective regulation and enforcement of restrictions on the sale and consumption of such foods.

- **Front-of-Pack Labeling (FOPL):** Implementing FOPL on food packaging can empower consumers to make informed choices about their dietary intake. Clear and easily understandable labels highlighting key nutritional information, such as fat, sugar, and salt content, should be prominently displayed on the front of food packages.

- **Stricter Compliance Monitoring**: Regulatory bodies like the FSSAI and the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights should enhance monitoring mechanisms to ensure strict compliance with food safety regulations, especially in school environments. Regular inspections and penalties for non-compliance can deter the sale and promotion of unhealthy foods

to children.

- **Educational Campaigns:** Launching public awareness campaigns to educate consumers, especially parents and children, about the health risks associated with HFSS foods can foster healthier dietary habits. These campaigns can emphasize the importance of choosing nutritious foods and the long-term benefits of a balanced diet.

- **Promotion of Healthy Alternatives**: Encouraging the availability and promotion of healthier food options, such as fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, can steer consumers away from HFSS foods. This can be done through subsidies, incentives for food producers, and partnerships with the food industry to develop and market healthier alternatives.

- **Collaboration with Stakeholders:** Collaboration between government agencies, healthcare professionals, educators, food manufacturers, and civil society organizations is essential for implementing comprehensive strategies to tackle the issue of unhealthy foods effectively. Working together can leverage diverse expertise and resources to create sustainable solutions.

By implementing these measures collectively, policymakers can create an environment conducive to healthier dietary choices and mitigate the adverse effects of HFSS foods on public health, particularly among children.

ECONOMY

NEW GUIDELINES FOR ASSET RECONSTRUCTION COMPANIES

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF "**New guidelines for Asset Reconstruction Companies**". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "**ECONOMY**" SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

Why in the News?

Recently, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) released directives detailing revised instructions for **Asset Reconstruction Companies (ARCs)**. These guidelines are applicable to all Asset Reconstruction Companies (ARCs) registered with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) under **section 3 of the SARFAESI Act, 2002.** They encompass regulations concerning ARC registration, the necessity of maintaining a minimum net-owned fund, the operational scope of ARCs, and the prescribed guidelines for their activities.

MORE ABOUT THE RECENT GUIDELINES

Increase in Minimum Net owned Fund requirements:

● The minimum capital requirement for ARCs has been raised to Rs 300 crore, marking a notable increase from the previous threshold of Rs 100 crore.

● Existing ARCs are given a transition period to meet the new minimum Net Owned Fund (NOF) requirement of Rs 300 crore by 31st March 2026.

● As part of the transition process toward the heightened capital requirement, ARCs must ensure a minimum capital of Rs 200 crore by 31st March 2024.

Corporate governance regulations:

● It mandates that ARCs maintain a board comprising a minimum of 50% independent directors, with the chairman being an independent director as well.

● Additionally, ARCs are obligated to establish audit, nomination, and remuneration committees.

Investment Opportunities:

● ARCs are permitted to allocate funds into government securities and deposits within scheduled commercial banks, as well as institutions such as the Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI), National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), or other entities designated by the central bank period-

ically.

● Furthermore, ARCs have the option to invest in short-term instruments like money market mutual funds, certificates of deposit, and corporate bonds/commercial papers rated AA- or higher by a recognized credit rating agency. However, there exists a restriction wherein the maximum investment in such short-term instruments is limited to 10% of the Net Owned Fund (NOF).

Enhanced Disclosure Requirements:

● ARCs are obligated to provide financial data covering the previous 5 years and a track record detailing returns and recoveries for all security receipt schemes over the past 8 years.

● Additionally, they must disclose their interactions with rating agencies.

Limitations on Management Fees:

● ARCs are now prohibited from levying management fees that are not tied to the asset recovery process.

WHAT ARE ASSET RECONSTRUCTION COMPANIES?

● Asset Reconstruction Companies (ARCs) are entities that specialize in acquiring non-performing assets (NPAs) or distressed assets from banks and financial institutions. These companies work to resolve these assets by either restructuring them, recovering dues through various means, or selling them to other investors.

● Asset Reconstruction Companies (ARCs) are entities established under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act in India.

How do ARCs function in India?

● **Acquisition of Distressed Assets:** ARCs acquire distressed assets from banks and financial institutions, primarily non-performing loans (NPLs). These assets are purchased at discounted prices, allowing the selling institutions to offload non-performing or stressed assets from their balance sheets.

● **Resolution and Recovery:** ARCs undertake various strategies to resolve and recover the distressed assets once acquired. This may include debt restructuring, where the terms of the loan are renegotiated to

make it easier for the borrower to repay, or asset sales, where the underlying collateral securing the loan is sold to recover funds.

- **Legal Proceedings:** In cases where debt restructuring or asset sales are not feasible, ARCs may resort to legal action to recover dues from defaulting borrowers. This could involve initiating recovery proceedings through the Debt Recovery Tribunal (DRT) or filing cases in civil courts.

- **Debt Restructuring and Rehabilitation:** ARCs may work with borrowers to restructure their debt obligations, providing them with more manageable repayment terms to facilitate the revival of their businesses. This may involve extending the repayment period, reducing the interest rate, or converting debt into equity.

- **Asset Management:** ARCs actively manage the acquired assets to maximize their value. This includes monitoring the performance of the underlying assets, identifying opportunities for value enhancement, and implementing strategies to optimize returns.

- **Securitization and Reconstruction:** ARCs may securitize the acquired assets by bundling them together and issuing security receipts (SRs) to investors. These SRs represent an undivided interest in the underlying pool of assets and provide investors with a share in the proceeds recovered from the assets.
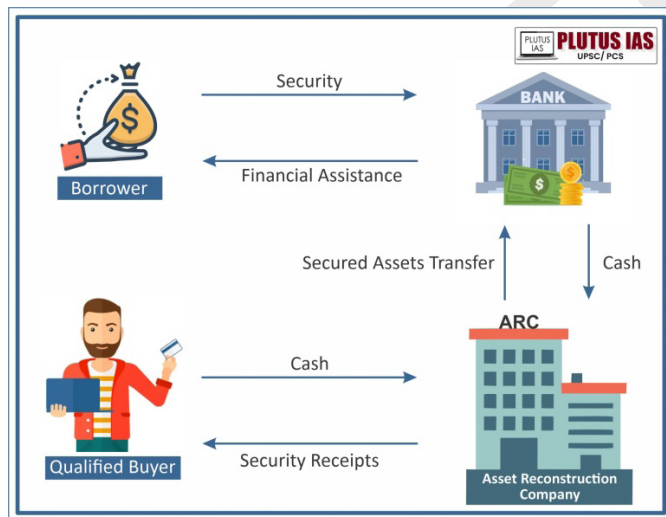
How ARCs Helped India in Controlling NPAs?

- **Acquisition of Non-Performing Assets (NPAs):** ARCs procure NPAs from banks and financial institutions through bilateral agreements or auctions. This process aids banks in cleansing their balance sheets, enabling them to concentrate on their primary lending functions.

- **Resolution of Non-Performing Assets (NPAs):** Upon

acquiring NPAs, ARCs develop resolution strategies within a six-month timeframe to recover outstanding dues. They employ various approaches such as debt restructuring, enforcement of security interests, settlement of liabilities, asset possession, and business divestment.

- **Enhanced Recovery Rates:** ARCs have exhibited higher recovery rates compared to banks. As per Reserve Bank of India (RBI) statistics, **ARCs acquired 9.7% of the previous fiscal year's gross NPAs in FY2023, a significant increase from 3.2% in FY2022.** This trend underscores the escalating significance of ARCs in NPA resolution efforts.

- **Liberating Bank Capital:** Through NPA acquisition, ARCs release capital for banks, allowing them to channel resources towards new lending activities and bolstering their financial stability.

- **Securitization and Fundraising:** ARCs raise capital by issuing security receipts (SRs) to accredited institutional investors. This mechanism furnishes them with financial means to procure and resolve distressed assets effectively.

What more can be done by RBI to strengthen ARCs?

- **Implement stricter regulatory framework:** The RBI should implement stronger regulation and compliance measures for ARCs to ensure transparency and accountability. This includes regular audits, increased disclosure requirements, and enforcing strict adherence to capital adequacy rules.

- **Diversify Funding Channels for ARCs:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) might consider permitting ARCs to tap into alternative funding streams like **external commercial borrowings or bond issuance** to complement their capital needs. This measure would furnish ARCs with additional financial resources, enabling them to acquire and address distressed assets more effectively.

- **Encourage collaboration between banks and ARCs:** Banks must collaborate closely with ARCs to facilitate faster resolution of NPAs. Standardized processes for data sharing, joint assessment of stressed assets, and coordinated decision-making will enhance efficiency and speed up resolution timelines.

- **Promote Consolidation and Expertise:** The RBI could encourage the merging of smaller ARCs to form larger, specialized entities adept at handling and resolving intricate distressed assets more effectively. This initiative might entail easing specific regulatory conditions governing mergers and acquisitions involving ARCs.

IMPORTANCE OF FEMALE LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF "IMPORTANCE OF FEMALE LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "SOCIETY" SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

WHY IN THE NEWS?

In a significant ruling on Monday, the Supreme Court, led by Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud, emphasized the fundamental importance of women's participation in the workforce. The bench underscored that this participation is not merely a privilege but a constitutional right safeguarded by Article 15 of the Constitution.

The case pertained to a plea by an assistant professor at Government College, Nalagarh, who was denied childcare leave (CCL) to care for her child with a genetic condition. Despite provisions entitling women government employees to two years of CCL per child until they turn 18, the employer contended that adoption of such policies was at the discretion of the state.

 However, the judgment emphasized that Article 15 not only prohibits gender-based discrimination but also empowers states to enact special provisions for women. This ruling underscores the state's obligation as a model employer to address the unique concerns of women in the workforce.

IMPORTANT HIGHLIGHTS

At a juncture where discussions about the subdued involvement of women in the job market are widespread, the ruling emerges as a timely response. It arrives amidst growing recognition from both state and central administrations regarding the imperative role of childcare provisions in bolstering women's engagement in formal employment.

In a societal landscape where caregiving duties are pre-

dominantly seen as women's responsibilities, the verdict underscores a crucial shift in perspective. It elucidates that both the government and employers bear the onus of facilitating an environment conducive for women to enter and sustain their careers.

In India, women shoulder a disproportionate burden of managing household chores, caregiving responsibilities, and paid employment, often with little support. According to the Time Use Survey of India (2019), women spend significantly more time than men on unpaid domestic and care work, highlighting the unequal distribution of labor within households. This burden is even heavier for socially and economically marginalized women.

Furthermore, working women often encounter obstacles such as "marriage penalties" and "motherhood penalties," which can force them to temporarily withdraw from the workforce due to marital obligations or pregnancy. Consequently, it's not surprising that female workforce participation in India remains low, standing at a mere 37 percent according to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) of 2022.

Moreover, the employment landscape for women in India is characterized by a high proportion of self-employment, with 60 percent of women being self-employed. However, a significant portion of these self-employed women—53 percent—work as unpaid family helpers, reflecting the challenges they face in accessing formal employment opportunities. Many women opt for flexible employment options close to home to juggle their multiple responsibilities, further perpetuating the cycle of limited workforce participation.

These intertwined outcomes stem from both a lack of opportunities in the labor market and the necessity for women to seek flexible employment arrangements that allow them to balance their domestic and professional duties. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive policy interventions aimed at creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for women in the workforce.

REASONS FOR LOW FEMALE LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES

The low participation of women in the labor force in India can be attributed to various factors, each of which impacts women's employment opportunities and their ability to engage in economic activities. Here are some explanations with examples:

- **Social and Cultural Norms**: Deep-rooted societal expectations often confine women to domestic roles, limiting their participation in the workforce. For instance, in many Indian households, women are expected to prioritize caregiving and household duties over pursuing a career. This expectation is reinforced by cultural beliefs that view a woman's primary role

as that of a homemaker. As a result, women face pressure to conform to these norms, which can deter them from seeking employment outside the home.

- **Lack of Education and Skills**: Limited access to education and vocational training opportunities disproportionately affects women in India. In rural areas, where educational infrastructure is often lacking, girls may have lower enrollment rates and higher dropout rates compared to boys. Without adequate education and skills training, women are less likely to qualify for well-paying jobs or positions in sectors that require specialized expertise. For example, in regions with poor access to schools and training facilities, women may be unable to pursue careers in fields such as technology or healthcare.

- **Occupational Segregation**: Women in India are often concentrated in low-paying and informal sectors such as agriculture, domestic work, and cottage industries. This occupational segregation limits their access to higher-paying jobs in sectors traditionally dominated by men. For instance, while men may dominate roles in engineering or manufacturing, women are more likely to be employed in roles such as garment workers or domestic helpers, where wages are lower and job security is precarious.

- **Gender Wage Gap**: Women in India frequently encounter wage discrimination, receiving lower wages than their male counterparts for similar work. This wage gap persists across various sectors and occupations, exacerbating economic inequalities between men and women. For example, studies have shown that women in the agricultural sector earn significantly less than men for performing similar tasks, despite making substantial contributions to agricultural production.

- **Unpaid Care Work**: Women in India often bear the burden of unpaid care work, including household chores, childcare, and eldercare. The expectation that women will assume these responsibilities can limit their ability to pursue paid employment outside the home. For example, in rural areas where access to childcare facilities is limited, women may have to forego employment opportunities to care for their children, further reducing their participation in the labor force.

STEPS TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT

The Government of India has implemented several policy measures aimed at increasing women's participation in the labor force and addressing gender disparities in the workforce. Some of these policy initiatives include:

- **Maternity Benefit Act (2017)**: The Maternity Benefit Act mandates paid maternity leave of 26 weeks for women working in the organized sector, with provisions for extended leave in certain cases. This policy aims to support women's participation in the workforce by providing them with adequate maternity benefits and job security during pregnancy and childbirth.

- **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana** (PMMVY): PMMVY is a maternity benefit scheme that provides financial assistance to pregnant and lactating women for their first live birth. Under this scheme, eligible women receive cash incentives for maternity-related expenses, aiming to improve maternal health outcomes and support women's employment.

- **National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (2015)**: This policy framework emphasizes skill development initiatives tailored to the needs of women, including training programs in non-traditional sectors and entrepreneurship development. By enhancing women's skills and entrepreneurial capabilities, the government aims to promote their economic empowerment and increase their participation in the labor force.

- **National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM):** NRLM includes provisions for promoting women's self-help groups (SHGs) and livelihood opportunities in rural areas. Through NRLM, women are provided with access to financial services, training, and support for income-generating activities, aiming to enhance their economic independence and participation in productive employment.

- **Stand-Up India Scheme**: Stand-Up India is a government scheme aimed at promoting entrepreneurship among women, Scheduled Castes (SCs), and Scheduled Tribes (STs) by providing them with access to bank loans for starting new ventures. By facilitating access to credit and entrepreneurial support, the scheme aims to empower women entrepreneurs and promote their participation in the formal economy.

- **Gender Budgeting:** The Government of India has adopted gender budgeting as a strategy to mainstream gender concerns in the budgetary process. Gender budgeting entails analyzing government budgets to assess their impact on women and allocating resources to address gender disparities. By prioritizing investments in areas such as education, healthcare, and social protection, gender budgeting aims to promote women's welfare and economic inclusion.

PRELIMS QUESTION

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The functioning of ARCs is governed by the Insolvency

and Bankruptcy Code of 2016.

2.   RBI oversees the functioning of ARCs.

Choose the correct answer using the codes given below:

(a). 1 Only

(b). 2 Only

(c). Both 1 and 2

(d). Neither 1 nor 2

ANSWERS

S. No.	Answers
1.	B

MAINS QUESTION

Q1.Analyze the role of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in strengthening Asset Reconstruction Companies (ARCs). Discuss potential measures that the RBI could implement to enhance the regulatory framework for ARCs.