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POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

INTERIM BAIL GRANTED TO DELHI CM BY SUPREME COURT

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF "INTERIM BAIL GRANTED TO DELHI CM BY SUPREME COURT". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "POLITY AND GOVERNANCE" SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

WHY IN THE NEWS?

Lately, the Supreme Court provided temporary bail to Arvind Kejriwal, the Chief Minister of Delhi, regarding a money laundering accusation related to the purported scam involving the Delhi excise policy.

MORE ABOUT THE CASE

- Termed as the new liquor policy, the Delhi Excise Policy 2021-22 came into effect on November 17, 2021, altering the dynamics of liquor sales in the city by privatising the operation of liquor shops, thus withdrawing government involvement.

- Subsequently, investigations were launched alleging that the Delhi government and its officials received kickbacks from alcohol business owners and operators in exchange for favourable treatment.

- These kickbacks were purportedly utilised to influence the outcomes of the Assembly elections in Punjab and Goa held in early 2022.

- The Delhi Chief Minister failed to respond to nine summonses issued by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) regarding the excise policy case. The ED asserted that the Chief Minister played a central role as the main orchestrator and key conspirator in the Delhi excise scandal. The ED arrested him on 21 March.

- Following the rejection of the petition challenging the arrest of the Delhi CM by the Delhi High Court, he sought relief from the Supreme Court (SC).On May 10, the SC Bench decided to grant interim bail to Kejriwal until June 1, coinciding with the closing day of voting for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

ABOUT INTERIM BILL

Interim bail, a fundamental aspect regulated chiefly by the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (CrPC), offers a crucial legal avenue for individuals accused and awaiting trial. This comprehensive examination delves into the fundamental aspects, including provisions, grounds, judicial discretion, conditions, duration, revocation, and avenues for appeal associated with interim bail in the Indian legal framework.

**Key Provisions in the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) regarding Interim Bill**

- Enshrined in Section 437 and Section 439 of the CrPC, provisions outline the framework for granting bail, encompassing interim bail, to accused individuals.

- Section 437 empowers both sessions and magisterial courts to extend bail to those accused of non-bailable offences, laying down specific conditions under which bail can be granted.

- Section 439 confers special authority upon the High Court and Court of Sessions regarding bail, enabling them to grant bail to individuals under arrest in cases pending before them or in other legal proceedings.

Grounds for Provisioning Interim Bail: In the case of Parminder Singh and Ors. v. The State of Punjab (2001), the esteemed Delhi High Court outlined the circumstances under which interim bail should be granted as follows:

1. When there is minimal risk of the accused fleeing prosecution.

2. When there is minimal risk of the defendant tampering with the evidence.

3. When there is no legitimate justification for conducting a custodial interrogation.

4. When the hearing on the anticipatory bail plea needs to be deferred.

Judicial Discretion: The decision to grant interim bail rests upon judicial discretion, with courts meticulously weighing the facts and circumstances of each case. Factors considered include the pursuit of justice, the rights of the accused, and the imperative of maintaining public safety and order.

- **Guidelines Attached to Interim Bail:** These guidelines are established in accordance with Section 438(2) of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

  - The court possesses the authority to impose restrictions on an individual's interactions with witnesses, whether done directly or indirectly.
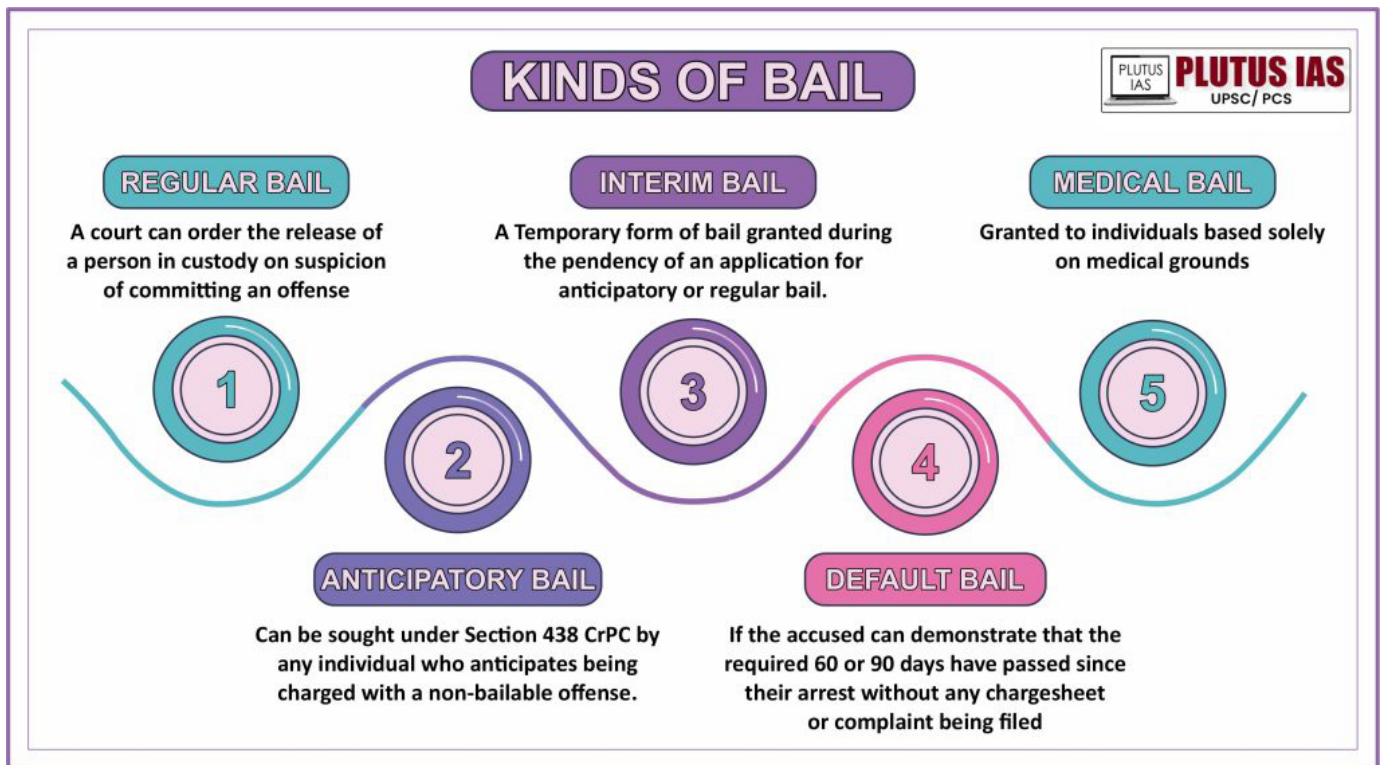
○ Furthermore, the individual must comply with the requirement to appear in person for police interrogation.

○ Additionally, the individual is prohibited from intimidating or attempting to influence anyone knowledgeable about the facts, whether through direct or indirect means.

○ Moreover, leaving the country or the jurisdiction of the court without the court's permission is not permitted.

○ In cases where bail is granted on special grounds such as health, marriage, or the passing of a loved one, additional specific conditions may be imposed.

● **Duration of Interim Bail:** Typically, interim bail is granted for a specified period, often until the subsequent scheduled court hearing or until a particular milestone in the legal process, such as the conclusion of investigations or trials. Courts retain the authority to extend the duration of interim bail if deemed necessary based on the progress of the case.

● **Revocation of Interim Bail:** Interim bail may be revoked in instances where the accused breaches any of the conditions set forth by the court or if new circumstances arise warranting revocation, such as the emergence of additional incriminating evidence against the accused.

● **Appellate and Review Mechanisms:** Individuals aggrieved by decisions pertaining to the grant or denial of interim bail retain the option to appeal to higher courts or seek a review of the decision through appropriate legal channels.

SUPREME COURT CURBS POWER OF ED

THIS ARTICLE COVERS "DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS" AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF "SUPREME COURT CURBS POWER OF ED" THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "POLITY AND GOVERNANCE" SECTION OF THE UPSC- CSE EXAM.

Why in the news?

Supreme Court has upheld the Right to Personal Liberty in cases related to which a person summoned by a designated special court under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), is not supposed to be in custody and apply for bail Under the stringent provisions of the anti-money laundering legislation.

DIRECTIONS GIVEN BY THE COURT :

● If the accused person appears before the special court on the summons, then it cannot be treated as custody, and no need to apply for bail for the accused.

● This judgement limits the power of the Directorate of Enforcement after a special court take a cognisance of the case.

- The special court directed the accused to provide bonds in terms of Section 88 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. An order accepting bond under Section 88 does not amount to a grant of bail, and hence, the twin conditions of Section 45 of the PMLA are not applicable to it,

- The ED has to apply separately for the custody of a person once he or she appears in court by giving specific reasons.

- The accused should be able to convince the judge he would not commit any offence while on bail. The burden of proof is entirely on the incarcerated accused.

- When the ED wants to conduct a further investigation concerning the same offence, it may arrest a person not shown as an accused in the complaint led under Section 44(1)(b) of the PMLA, provided the requirements of Section 19 (procedures of arrest) under the Act were fulfilled.

- When a person applies for bail under the regular provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure, then the person has to satisfy the twin conditions imposed by Section 45 of the PMLA.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE JUDGEMENT ON PERSONAL LIBERTY

PROTECTION OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS:

1. Article 21 of the Constitution: The due process of law is crucial in upholding Article 21, it guarantees the right to life and personal liberty. It ensures that no person is deprived of these rights except according to procedures established by law.

2. Judicial Safeguards: Due process provides a legal framework that protects individuals from arbitrary actions by the state, ensuring fairness and justice in legal proceedings.

JUDICIAL REVIEW AND INDEPENDENCE:

1. **Checks and Balances**: It strengthens the judiciary to review and strike down laws and actions of the executive and legislature that violate fundamental rights.

2. **Judicial Activism**: Indian courts, particularly the Supreme Court, have used due process to interpret laws broadly, enhancing the protection of civil liberties and leading to landmark judgments expanding the scope of fundamental rights.

FAIR LEGAL PROCEDURES:

1. **Right to a Fair Trial**: Due process ensures that individuals receive a fair trial with impartial procedures, proper notice, and a chance to be heard.

2. **Equality Before Law**: It upholds the principle that all individuals are treated equally under the law, preventing discrimination and ensuring justice for all, including marginalised groups.

PROTECTION AGAINST ARBITRARY ACTIONS:

1. **Preventive Detention**: Due process is essential in cases of preventive detention, ensuring that such measures are not misused and that detainees have access to legal remedies.

2. **Property Rights**: It protects individuals from unlawful deprivation of property, ensuring compensation and legal recourse if property is taken by the state.

ABOUT ED:

- The Directorate of Enforcement (ED) is a multi-disciplinary organisation responsible for investigating economic crimes and violations of foreign exchange laws.

- Its origins date back to May 1, 1956, when an 'Enforcement Unit' was established within the Department of Economic Affairs to address infringement of the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act 1947.

- With the starting of economic liberalization, the regulatory FERA, 1973 was repealed and replaced by the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA).

- With the rise of cases of economic offenders seeking refuge in foreign countries, the government enacted the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018 (FEOA), with the ED tasked with its enforcement.

ED DERIVED POWER FROM:

- The Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA):

- The ED is authorised to enforce the PMLA by investigating and tracing assets obtained through criminal activities, provisionally attaching these properties, and ensuring the prosecution of offenders and confiscation of the assets by the Special Court.

- The Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA):

- The ED is tasked with investigating suspected violations of foreign exchange laws and regulations, adjudicating these cases, and imposing penalties on those found to have breached the law.

- The Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018 (FEOA):

- Under this law, the Directorate is authorised to seize the properties of fugitive economic offenders who have fled India to avoid arrest and facilitate the confiscation of their properties by the Central Government.

PMLA (AMENDMENT) ACT, 2012:

- Introduces the concept of a 'reporting entity,' encompassing banking companies, financial institutions, intermediaries, and similar entities.

- While PMLA 2002 imposed a fine of up to Rs 5 lakh, the amendment has eliminated this upper limit.

- It allows for the provisional attachment and confiscation of property belonging to individuals involved in such activities.

PRELIMS QUESTION

Q1. Consider the following questions.

1. The directorate of enforcement has the authority to arrest without permission of the court.

2. The ED has to apply separately for the custody of a person once he or she appears in court by giving specific reasons.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

(a). 1 Only

(b). 2 Only

(c) Both 1 and 2

(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q2. What is the primary difference between interim bail, regular bail, and anticipatory bail?

(a) Interim bail is granted during trial, regular bail after trial, and anticipatory bail before arrest.

(b) Interim bail is granted before trial, regular bail during trial, and anticipatory bail before arrest.

(c) Interim bail is granted after conviction, regular bail before trial, and anticipatory bail after trial.

(d) Interim bail is granted after arrest, regular bail before arrest, and anticipatory bail during trial.

Answer: B

Q3.In which situation might a Zero FIR be particularly useful?

(a) In cases where the victim is not aware of the location of the crime

(b) In cases where the victim is hesitant to report the crime to the police

(c) In cases where the crime involves multiple jurisdictions

(d) In cases where the victim prefers not to involve the police

ANSWERS

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

MAINS QUESTION

**Q1. Why are safeguards necessary to prevent the misuse of ED's power?**

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

ROLE OF SOCIO ECONOMIC FACTORS FOR HIGH FERTILITY RATE

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

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The recent working paper authored by Shamika Ravi, a member of the Economic Advisory Council (EAC) to the Prime Minister, along with two collaborators, has ignited intense political debates.
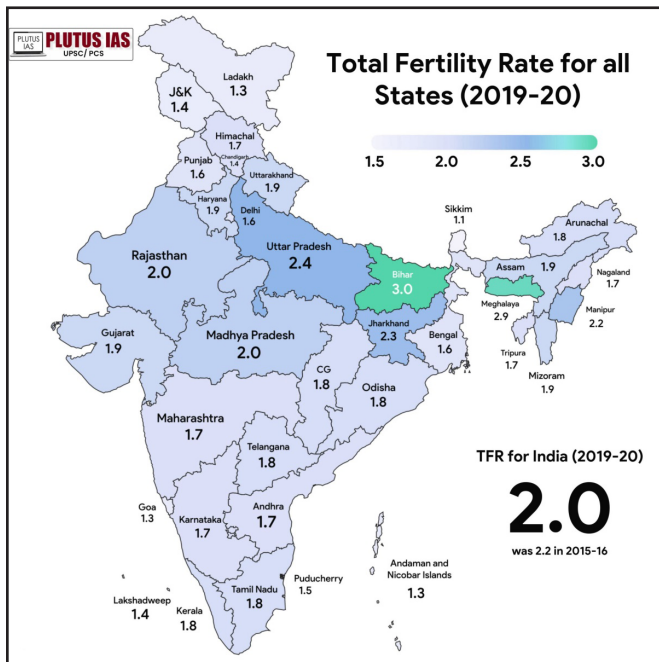
MORE ABOUT THE NEWS

The paper has resurfaced concerns about a perceived decline in the proportion of Hindus within India's population, stirring up familiar anxieties. Accessible to all, the paper relies on the Religious Characteristics of States Dataset, 2017 (RCS-Dem), meticulously compiled by two researchers affiliated with the United States. This dataset offers a comprehensive examination of religio-demographic shifts across 167 countries. By utilizing official census data to define 'majority' and 'minority' religions, the RCS-Dem provides valuable insights into population changes concerning a country's predominant faith.

The conclusion drawn by the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council (PM-EAC) report is succinct: "All is well with the religious minorities in India." However, this statement has reignited discussions surrounding the growth of the Muslim population. While the report aims to reassure that India's minorities, including Muslims, are secure and free from discrimination or persecution, its findings have stirred controversy. Despite its well-intentioned nature, the report has sparked a debate that underscores the complexities of religious dynamics within India.

Socio-economic factors for high fertility rate in India

The decision regarding the number of children a family chooses to have is heavily influenced by socio-economic factors rather than religious beliefs, as supported by data. Government statistics indicate that empowering girls through education, discouraging early marriage, raising awareness about family planning, and ensuring access to contraceptive measures are effective strategies for reducing fertility rates.

The fertility rates among Muslim women vary significantly depending on the region. For instance, in 2019-21, the fertility rate among Muslim women in Bihar was 3.6, considerably higher than the rate of 2.0 in Maharashtra. Similarly, in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, the fertility rates were 1.9 and 2.0, respectively, notably lower than the rates of 2.7 in Jharkhand and 2.4 in Rajasthan. This variation underscores the influence of a state's development, both economically and socially, on fertility levels among Muslim women.

Several socio-economic factors contribute to high fertility rates in India:

1. **Education:** Women's educational attainment is inversely related to fertility rates. In India, where gender disparities in education persist, women with lower levels of education tend to have higher fertility rates. Limited access to education can result in early marriage and childbearing, as well as a lack of awareness about family planning methods.

2. **Economic Status:** Socio-economic status influences fertility decisions. In low-income households, children may be seen as additional labor or economic assets, particularly in rural areas where agriculture is a primary livelihood. Additionally, lack of access to economic opportunities and social safety nets can discourage families from having fewer children.

3. **Employment Opportunities:** In regions with limited employment opportunities, particularly in rural areas,

families may rely on children for agricultural work or other forms of labor. This reliance on child labor can contribute to higher fertility rates as families perceive a need for more children to support household income.

4. **Urbanization:** Rapid urbanization in India has led to increased demand for labor-intensive jobs, resulting in a migration of families from rural to urban areas. However, urban areas often lack adequate infrastructure and social services, including healthcare and education. In urban slums, where living conditions are often poor, fertility rates may remain high due to limited access to family planning services and cultural norms.

5. **Healthcare Access:** Access to healthcare, particularly reproductive healthcare and family planning services, significantly affects fertility rates. In rural areas and underserved communities, access to healthcare facilities and trained medical professionals may be limited, leading to higher fertility rates due to a lack of contraceptive use and maternal health services.

6. **Cultural and Religious Factors:** Cultural norms and religious beliefs can influence fertility preferences and behaviors. In some communities, larger families are culturally valued and considered a source of social status or support in old age. Religious beliefs may also play a role in shaping attitudes towards family size and contraception.

7. **Women's Empowerment:** Gender inequality and lack of women's empowerment contribute to high fertility rates. In patriarchal societies, where women have limited decision-making power regarding reproductive choices, fertility rates tend to be higher. Empowering women through education, economic opportunities, and reproductive rights can lead to lower fertility rates as women gain more control over their own bodies and family planning decisions.

8. **Child Marriage:** Despite legal restrictions, child marriage persists in many parts of India, particularly in rural and economically disadvantaged communities. Early marriage often leads to early childbearing, as young brides may have limited access to education and healthcare, and may be under pressure to start families at a young age. This contributes to higher fertility rates and increases the risk of maternal and child health complications.

9. **Social Norms and Expectations:** Societal norms and expectations regarding family size and gender roles play a significant role in shaping fertility behaviors. In some communities, particularly in rural areas, there is a strong cultural preference for large families, especially sons, which can lead to higher fertility rates as

families strive to fulfill these expectations.

10. **Access to Contraception:** Limited access to contraception and family planning services is a barrier to reducing fertility rates in India. Despite government efforts to promote family planning and provide subsidized contraceptives, access remains uneven, particularly in rural and remote areas. Cultural taboos, lack of awareness, and misconceptions about contraception also contribute to low usage rates.

WHY THERE IS A NEED OF SPECIAL FOCUS ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

1. **Education:** Empowering women through education enables them to make informed decisions about their reproductive health and family planning. Educated women are more likely to delay marriage and childbirth, pursue higher education and careers, and have fewer children overall. By investing in girls' education and literacy programs, India can empower women to take control of their reproductive choices and contribute to lower fertility rates.

2. **Access to Healthcare:** Women's empowerment includes ensuring access to quality healthcare services, including reproductive healthcare and family planning services. Empowering women to make decisions about their reproductive health, including access to contraception and maternal healthcare, can help them plan and space their pregnancies, leading to smaller and healthier families.

3. **Economic Opportunities:** Providing women with economic opportunities and financial independence can influence fertility decisions. Women who have access to employment opportunities and income-generating activities may choose to have fewer children as they prioritize their careers and economic stability. Additionally, economic empowerment can enable women to invest in their children's education and healthcare, leading to improved overall well-being and lower fertility rates.

4. **Legal Rights and Empowerment:** Ensuring that women have equal rights under the law, including property rights, inheritance rights, and legal protections against discrimination and violence, is essential for their empowerment. Empowered women are better able to assert their reproductive rights and make decisions about their bodies and families. Legal reforms that promote gender equality and protect women's rights can contribute to lower fertility rates by empowering women to make choices that align with their own aspirations and well-being.

5. **Changing Social Norms:** Women's empowerment can also challenge and change traditional gender norms and

expectations surrounding family size and women's roles in society. By promoting gender equality and challenging stereotypes that limit women's autonomy and agency, society can create an environment where women are empowered to make decisions about their reproductive lives free from social pressure and stigma.

Addressing high fertility rates in India requires a multi-faceted approach that addresses socio-economic disparities, improves access to education and healthcare, empowers women, promotes gender equality, and provides comprehensive family planning services. Efforts to enhance economic opportunities, particularly for women, and to strengthen social safety nets can also contribute to reducing fertility rates over time.

DEEPFAKES AND INFORMATION OVERLOAD

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

WHY IN THE NEWS?

Recently, the use of deep fakes has proliferated in Indian elections. Many political parties have used this technology to gain political leverage. However, there are certain fault lines in the deep fake technology which is supplemented by the Information overload in the age of the internet and the AI algorithms which flood the information to manipulate humans.

WHAT IS DEEPFAKE TECHNOLOGY?

Deepfake technology involves the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning algorithms to create or manipulate audio and video content, often in a way that appears convincingly real. The term "deepfake" is a combination of "deep learning" and "fake."

In deep fake videos, faces can be swapped, expressions altered, and even entirely fabricated events can be depicted. Initially, deepfake technology gained notoriety for its use in creating fake celebrity pornographic videos, but its ap-

plications have since expanded to include various forms of misinformation, fraud, and even entertainment.

Deepfake technology typically involves training algorithms on large datasets of images and videos to learn patterns and features that enable realistic manipulation of visual and auditory content. While it has legitimate uses in areas like film production and special effects, its potential for misuse, particularly in spreading disinformation or creating misleading content, has raised significant ethical and societal concerns.

In the age of the internet, deepfake technology poses several potential risks and forms of misuse:

POTENTIAL MISUSE OF DEEPFAKE TECHNOLOGY

1. **Misinformation and Fake News**: Deepfakes can be used to create realistic-looking videos or audio recordings of public figures saying or doing things they never actually did. This can be exploited to spread false information, manipulate public opinion, or incite unrest.

2. **Fraud and Scams:** Criminals could use deepfakes to impersonate individuals in video calls or audio recordings to deceive people into providing sensitive information or carrying out fraudulent transactions.

3. **Political Manipulation:** Deepfakes could be used to create convincing videos of political leaders or candidates making controversial statements or engaging in inappropriate behavior, which could influence elections or sow discord.

4. **Reputation Damage:** Individuals could be targeted with deepfake content aimed at tarnishing their reputation or credibility, potentially causing personal or professional harm.

5. **Privacy Violations:** Deepfake technology can be used to create fabricated intimate or compromising content featuring individuals without their consent, leading to privacy violations and emotional distress.

6. **Undermining Trust:** The proliferation of deepfake content could erode trust in media and undermine the credibility of authentic video and audio recordings, making it more difficult for people to discern truth from fiction.

7. **Cybersecurity Threats:** Deepfake technology could be weaponized to bypass authentication systems or manipulate evidence in legal proceedings, posing cybersecurity risks and challenges for law enforcement and legal professionals.

HOW THE INFORMATION OVERLOAD EFFECTS PRESENT DAY YOUTH

1. **Difficulty in Processing Information:** With the vast amount of information available online, young people

may struggle to sift through and process it effectively. This can lead to feelings of overwhelm, confusion, and an inability to discern credible sources from misinformation.

2. **Shortened Attention Spans:** Constant exposure to a barrage of information from various sources, such as social media, news websites, and entertainment platforms, can contribute to shorter attention spans among youth. They may find it challenging to concentrate on tasks for extended periods without distraction.

3. **Impact on Mental Health:** Information overload can contribute to stress, anxiety, and feelings of inadequacy, as young people compare themselves to others or feel pressured to keep up with the influx of content. Social media, in particular, can exacerbate these issues by promoting unrealistic standards and fostering a fear of missing out (FOMO).

4. **Reduced Critical Thinking Skills:** When inundated with information, youth may rely on surface-level understanding or quick judgments rather than engaging in critical thinking and analysis. This can hinder their ability to evaluate information critically, form independent opinions, and engage in meaningful discourse.

5. **Difficulty in Establishing Identity:** The constant exposure to curated versions of others' lives on social media platforms can make it challenging for young people to develop a strong sense of self. They may compare themselves unfavorably to others or feel pressure to conform to unrealistic standards of beauty, success, or popularity.

6. **Impact on Social Relationships:** Information overload can lead to a phenomenon known as "social media fatigue," where young people feel overwhelmed by the constant stream of updates, notifications, and online interactions. This can detract from the quality of face-to-face interactions and contribute to feelings of isolation or loneliness.

7. **Risk of Disinformation and Radicalization:** Exposure to a wide range of online content, including misinformation, conspiracy theories, and extremist ideologies, can influence youth's beliefs and behaviors. Without critical media literacy skills, they may be more susceptible to falling prey to false narratives or becoming radicalized.

HOW TO AUTHENTICATE INFORMATION

Authenticating information and protecting ourselves from deepfakes require a combination of technological solutions, critical thinking skills, and proactive measures. Here are some strategies:

1. **Verify Sources:** Always verify the credibility of the sources providing information. Look for reputable news outlets, official statements from organizations or individuals

involved, and cross-reference information with multiple reliable sources before accepting it as true.

2. **Check for Consistency:** Pay attention to inconsistencies in the content, such as discrepancies in dates, locations, or key details. Deepfakes may lack consistency or contain subtle errors that reveal their falseness upon closer examination.

3. **Scrutinize Media Content:** Examine media content closely for signs of manipulation or alteration. Look for unnatural facial movements, mismatched lip-syncing, unusual lighting or shadows, and other anomalies that may indicate a deepfake.

4. **Be Skeptical of Unverified Content:** Exercise caution when encountering content that seems sensational or too good to be true, especially on social media platforms where misinformation spreads rapidly. Avoid sharing unverified content until its authenticity can be confirmed.

5. **Utilize Technology:** Technology tools and platforms are being developed to detect and combat deepfakes. Stay informed about advancements in deepfake detection software, browser extensions, and media forensics tools that can help identify manipulated content.

6. **Promote Media Literacy:** Educate yourself and others about the phenomenon of deepfakes and the importance of critical media literacy skills. Teach young people how to evaluate information critically, spot manipulation techniques, and navigate the digital landscape responsibly.

7. **Support Legislation and Regulation:** Advocate for policies and regulations that address the proliferation of deepfakes and promote transparency, accountability, and ethical standards in the creation and dissemination of digital content.

8. **Report Suspected Deepfakes:** If you encounter suspected deepfake content, report it to the appropriate authorities, social media platforms, or fact-checking organizations. By flagging and reporting misinformation, you can help prevent its spread and protect others from being misled.

9. **Encourage Transparency:** Encourage content creators and platforms to be transparent about the use of AI and editing techniques in producing media content. Promote ethical standards and responsible practices in the creation and distribution of digital media.

By combining these approaches and fostering a culture of skepticism, critical thinking, and responsible digital citizenship, we can work together to authenticate information and mitigate the risks posed by deepfakes.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

ACCREDITATION OF NHRC BY GANHRI POSTPONED

THIS ARTICLE COVERS "DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS", AND THE TOPIC DETAILS "ACCREDITATION OF NHRC BY GANHRI POSTPONED". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS" SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The accreditation of the National Human Rights Commission, India (NHRC-India) by the U.N.-recognized Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) has been postponed for a second time within the span of a decade. This delay stems from concerns raised regarding issues such as political influence in appointments, the inclusion of law enforcement in investigations related to human rights abuses, and inadequate collaboration with civil society.

REASONS BEHIND THE POSTPONE

- **Limited Representation and Inclusivity:** The GANHRI identified a lack of diversity within the NHRC's staff and leadership. This homogeneity, they argue, hinders the commission's ability to understand and address the specific needs of all communities within India.

- **Insufficient Protections for Vulnerable Groups:** The GANHRI expressed concerns about the NHRC's response to human rights violations targeting marginalised communities, religious minorities, and human rights defenders. These groups often face unique challenges and require tailored protections.

- **Conflict of Interest in Investigations:** The GANHRI flagged the NHRC's practice of involving the police in investigations of alleged human rights abuses by the police itself. This creates a conflict of interest, raising questions about the impartiality of such investigations.

- **Restricted Collaboration with Civil Society:** The GANHRI feels the NHRC doesn't collaborate effectively with civil society organisations working on human rights issues. Civil society groups often play a crucial role in documenting human rights violations and advocating for reform. By limiting cooperation with these organisations, the NHRC might be missing valuable insights and opportunities to address human rights concerns.

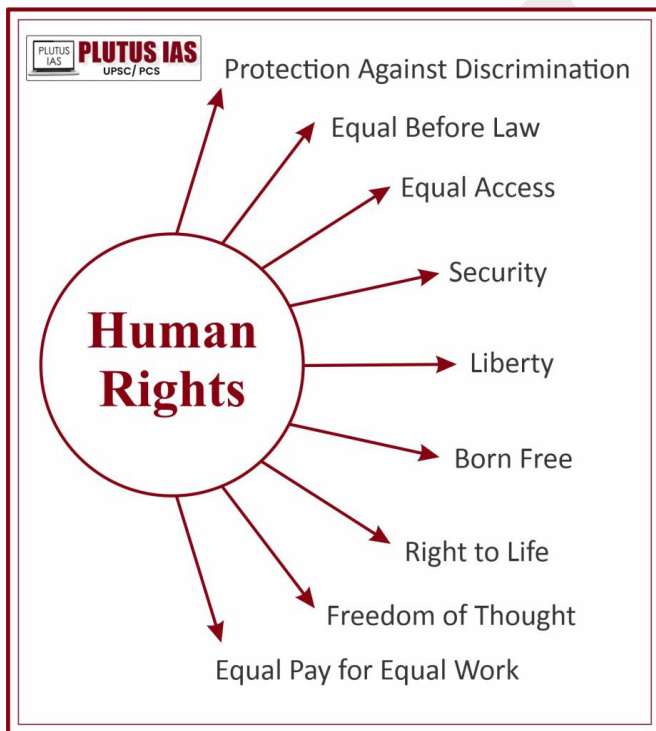## PARIS PRINCIPLE AND THE "A" STATUS GIVEN BY GANHRI

- The Paris Principles, established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1993, set out the essential criteria that National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) must meet to be considered credible and impactful.

- The Paris Principles, established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1993, delineate six primary criteria that National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) must meet to be considered legitimate and effective guardians of human rights.

  - **Mandate and Competence:** NHRIs should possess a clear and comprehensive mandate that empowers them to promote and protect human rights effectively. This mandate should encompass various aspects of human rights, including civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights.

  - **Autonomy from Government:** NHRIs must operate independently from the government and other state actors to ensure impartiality and effectiveness in addressing human rights issues. This autonomy includes financial independence and freedom from undue government influence in decision-making processes.

  - **Independence Guaranteed by Law:** The independence of NHRIs should be legally guaranteed through statutes or constitutional provisions to shield them from political interference and ensure their ability to fulfil their mandate without fear of reprisal.

  - **Pluralism:** NHRIs should reflect the diversity of society and be composed of members representing various sectors, including civil society, academia, and marginalized communities. This diversity fosters inclusivity and enhances the institution's credibility and legitimacy.

  - **Adequate Resources:** NHRIs must be allocated sufficient resources, including financial, human, and technical resources, to effectively carry out their functions. Inadequate resources can impede their ability to investigate human rights violations, provide assistance to victims, and advocate for systemic reforms.

  - **Adequate Powers of Investigation:** NHRIs should possess the authority to conduct impartial and thorough investigations into alleged human rights

violations. This includes the power to subpoena witnesses, access relevant information and documents, and make recommendations for remedial action to address violations.

- NHRIs are expected to fulfil requirements including a broad mandate, autonomy from government influence, legally guaranteed independence, pluralistic representation, sufficient resources, and investigative authority. **GANHRI**, the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, evaluates NHRIs based on these principles, **classifying them as 'A' status (fully compliant), 'B' status (partially compliant), or lacking status.**

- An 'A' status indicates complete alignment with the Paris Principles and grants NHRIs specific privileges within international and regional human rights frameworks. NHRIs holding 'A' status enjoy speaking rights at the UN Human Rights Council, participation in UN treaty bodies, and leadership roles in NHRI networks such as ENNHRI and GANHRI.

- This status empowers them to actively contribute to international discourse and decision-making processes concerning human rights issues. Achieving 'A' status is a prestigious acknowledgement of an NHRI's credibility, autonomy, and effectiveness in advancing and safeguarding human rights, as articulated in the Paris Principles.

ABOUT GANHRI

- The Global Alliance for National Human Rights Institu-

tions (GANHRI) is an organization associated with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. Serving as a global network, it brings together national human rights institutions (NHRIs) from various countries with the aim of advancing the cause of human rights protection and promotion.

- GANHRI boasts a membership of 120 NHRIs worldwide. Its core mission revolves around unifying, advocating for, and enhancing the capabilities of NHRIs to align with the UN Paris Principles, which serve as fundamental standards for the effective functioning of NHRIs.

- Established in 1993, GANHRI serves as a platform for collaboration, capacity-building, and advocacy among National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) worldwide.

- GANHRI's primary objective is to strengthen the capacity and effectiveness of NHRIs in fulfilling their mandates to promote and protect human rights within their respective countries. It provides a forum for NHRIs to exchange best practices, share experiences, and address common challenges related to human rights promotion and protection.

- One of GANHRI's key roles is to accredit NHRIs based on adherence to the Paris Principles, a set of international standards that outline the fundamental criteria NHRIs must meet to be considered credible and effective. Accreditation by GANHRI signifies recognition of an NHRI's compliance with these principles and grants them access to various privileges and opportunities for engagement at the international level.

WHAT IS NHRC AND ITS COMPOSITION?

NHRC, established on October 12, 1993, under the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993, amended in 2006, is an independent statutory body in India. It functions as a watchdog for human rights in the country, safeguarding rights such as life, liberty, equality, and dignity, as guaranteed by the Indian Constitution and international agreements enforceable within India's courts. Its formation adheres to the Paris Principles, adopted in Paris in October 1991 and endorsed later that year.

Composition:

- NHRC comprises multiple members, including a chairperson, five full-time members, and seven deemed members. Eligibility for chairmanship extends to individuals who have served as Chief Justice of India or judges of the Supreme Court.

- Appointments are made by the President upon the

recommendation of a six-member committee headed by the Prime Minister. The term of office for the chairperson and members is three years or until they reach the age of 70, whichever comes earlier.

- The President retains the authority to remove the chairperson or any member under specific circumstances, subject to an inquiry by a Supreme Court Judge.

Divisions:

The commission operates through five specialized divisions: Law, Investigation, Policy Research & Programmes, Training, and Administration.

CHALLENGES RELATED TO NHRC

- **Mechanism of Investigation:** NHRC lacks a dedicated investigative mechanism, relying on Central and State Governments to probe human rights violations.

- **Time Limit for Complaints:** Complaints filed with NHRC beyond one year from the incident are not entertained, resulting in numerous grievances remaining unaddressed.

- **Decision Enforcing Power:** NHRC can only issue recommendations and lacks the authority to enforce its decisions or ensure compliance.

- **Underestimation of Funds:** NHRC is sometimes perceived as a post-retirement avenue for judges and bureaucrats with political affiliations. Insufficient funding further impedes its efficacy.

- **Limitations of Powers:** State human rights commissions lack the authority to demand information from the national government, hindering investigations into human rights violations by armed forces under national jurisdiction. NHRC's jurisdiction over human rights violations by armed forces is notably limited.

PRELIMS QUESTION

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Paris principles were adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1993.

2. GANHRI provides financial assistance to the nations to help them maintain their Human Rights.

3. In the 2023 resolution, GANHRI has included Climate Change in its charter as a factor that impacts Human Rights.

How many of the above statements are correct?

(a) Only one

(b) Only two

(c) All three

(d) None

ANSWERS

S. No.	Answers
1.	B

MAINS QUESTION

Q1. In what ways does the involvement of law enforcement in investigations of alleged human rights abuses by the police create a conflict of interest within the NHRC's practices?

ECONOMICS

BITTER SUGARCANE SUBSIDY

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF **"BITTER SUGARCANE SUBSIDY".** THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE " **ECONOMICS**" SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

Why in the News?

The WTO is examining India's policies on sugarcane subsidies following accusations that the country is offering domestic support and export subsidies beyond the allowed limits. Countries such as Brazil, Australia, and Guatemala have filed disputes, arguing that India's support measures surpass its commitment levels and breach WTO regulations under the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA).

ABOUT AGREEMENT ON AGRICULTURE(AOA)

The Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) is a crucial WTO treaty designed to curtail agricultural support and subsidies given to domestic producers by various countries.

- This agreement, negotiated during the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and ratified in 1994, targets **three primary areas: market access, domestic support, and export subsidies.**

DOMESTIC SUPPORT:

- The agreement mandates reducing domestic subsidies that distort free trade and fair pricing. Developed countries are required to decrease their Aggregate Measure of Support (AMS) by 20% over six years while developing countries must reduce theirs by 13% over ten years.

- Subsidies under this provision are classified into three categories: **Blue Box, Green Box, and Amber Box subsidies.**

MARKET ACCESS:

- This provision necessitates that countries progressively lower fixed tariffs, such as customs duties, to facilitate free trade and convert non-tariff barriers into tariff duties.

EXPORT SUBSIDY:

- Export subsidies include financial assistance for agricultural inputs, making exports cheaper, or other export incentives like import duty remission. These subsidies can lead to the dumping of heavily subsidised, low-cost products in foreign markets, potentially harming the domestic agriculture sectors of those countries.

OBJECTIVES OF AOA

- The AoA mandates that developing countries meet

Types of subsidies as per WTO

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

1 GREEN BOX
Subsidies that do not distort trade or cause only minimal distortion... No Limit

2 AMBER BOX
Subsidies that distort international trade... Limited to 5% of agricultural production (10% for developing countries)

3 BLUE BOX
Subsidies similar to AMBER BOX subsidies but aim to restrict production.... No Limit...
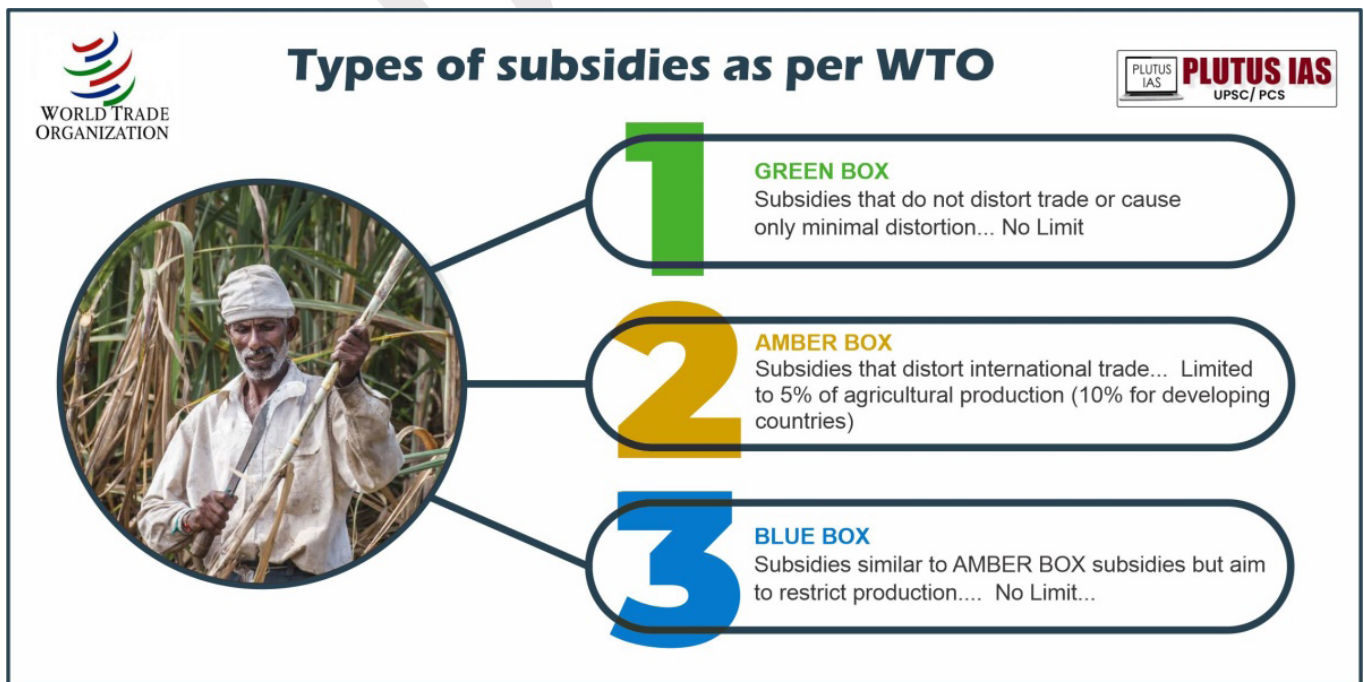
reduction commitments by setting deadlines, aiming to create a fairer trading system that boosts market access and enhances farmers' livelihoods worldwide.

- The AoA tackles issues such as tariff reduction and access opportunities, aiming to improve market access by removing trade barriers.

- The AoA seeks to create a fair and market-driven agricultural trade system.

WHAT ARE THE ACCUSATIONS AGAINST INDIA'S SUGARCANE SUBSIDY?

- In 2019, Brazil, Australia, and Guatemala complained to India at the WTO, asserting that India's sugar subsidies violate international trade regulations. Subsequently, in 2021, a WTO panel upheld these allegations.

- However, India contested the findings, preventing the panel's report from being endorsed by the WTO's Dispute Settlement Body.

- The United States and Australia have alleged that India's domestic support measures do not comply with several provisions of the WTO's Agreement on Agriculture. From 2018 to 2022, **India's Market Price Support consistently exceeded 90% of the value of sugar production** each year, surpassing the permitted limit of 10% stipulated by the WTO's AoA.

- The panel concluded that India's sugar export subsidies did not align with WTO agreements. It also emphasised India's failure to report its domestic support measures and export subsidies, raising concerns about India's compliance with its WTO commitments.

INDIA'S DOMESTIC SUGARCANE SUBSIDY

- **Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP):** This is a fixed rate established by the government, acting as the minimum price obligated for sugar mills to compensate farmers for their sugarcane. FRP guarantees that farmers receive equitable and satisfactory compensation for their produce.

- **State-Advised Prices (SAPs):** In certain regions, farmers receive supplementary payments alongside the FRP to encourage enhanced production efficiency. In specific states, sugar mills offer additional payments to farmers through state-specific support mechanisms known as State-Advised Prices (SAPs).

SUBSIDY CALCULATION:

- The report employs a methodology endorsed by a WTO panel, which previously found fault with Indian sugar subsidies from 2014-15 to 2018-19. This approach carefully considers India's Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) for sugarcane, which serves as a baseline for sugar mill payments and the State-Advised Prices (SAPs) in certain areas.

MARKET PRICE SUPPORT (MPS) DATA:

- India's MPS for sugarcane during the years 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21, and 2021-22 amounted to $15.9 billion, $14.6 billion, $16.5 billion, and $17.6 billion. These figures consistently exceeded 90% of the sugar production value annually, significantly surpassing the allowed threshold of 10%.

INDIA'S STAND

- India disputed the WTO panel's categorisation of FRP and SAPs as market price support under the AoA.

- The assessment includes all sugarcane production in India for subsidy computation, regardless of whether the sugarcane was ultimately delivered to sugar mills for processing.

IMPORTANCE OF SUGARCANE SUBSIDY

- **Support for Sugarcane Producers:** This subsidy offers financial assistance to sugarcane producers, ensuring they maintain a steady income and encouraging ongoing sugarcane cultivation.

- **Domestic Sugar Industry**: This subsidy plays a crucial role in India's domestic sugar industry, influencing both production levels and pricing dynamics. The government's Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) acts as a baseline for sugar mill payments to farmers, guaranteeing them a minimum income.

- **Farmers' Livelihoods:** Directly impacting the livelihoods of sugarcane farmers, this subsidy affects the prices they receive for their crops. The FRP and State-Advised Prices (SAPs) are pivotal in determining these farmers' earnings.

- **Domestic Policy**: The sugarcane subsidy is a matter of domestic policy, with the Indian government determining the extent of support for sugarcane farmers. This decision carries implications for the broader agricultural sector and the overall economy.

- **High Export:** Through subsidies, including export subsidies, India has been able to export substantial amounts of sugar in recent times. This has assisted in diminishing surplus stocks and enhancing the financial liquidity of sugar mills.

Way Forward

- **Transparency in data:** India must improve transpar-

ency in reporting sugarcane subsidies to the WTO. Ensuring adherence to global trade regulations is vital to prevent disputes and maintain credibility in international trade.

- **Policy Reforms:** The Indian government might consider revising its sugarcane subsidy policies to align with WTO standards. This could entail adjusting the Fair and Remunerative Prices (FRP) and State-Advised Prices (SAPs) to ensure compliance with international trade agreements.

- **Dialogue and Diplomacy**: Engaging in constructive dialogues with nations like the US and Australia can address concerns over sugarcane subsidies. Negotiating mutually agreeable solutions can prevent prolonged disputes and foster improved trade relations.

- **Diversification and Innovation**: Encouraging agricultural diversification and fostering innovation within the sugar industry can decrease reliance on subsidies. Investments in research and development for sustainable practices can enhance competitiveness in the global market.

- **Capacity building of farmers:** Strengthening the capacity of sugarcane farmers to adopt modern agricultural techniques, enhance productivity, and improve quality can make the sector more resilient to market fluctuations. Training initiatives and technology access can enhance efficiency and competitiveness.

- **Sustainability Planning**: Formulating a roadmap for the long-term sustainability of the sugarcane sector is essential. Balancing the interests of farmers, industry, and trade commitments while ensuring environmental sustainability can establish a resilient and competitive sugar industry.

ASEAN-INDIA TRADE IN GOODS AGREEMENT

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF "ASEAN-INDIA TRADE IN GOODS AGREEMENT". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE " ECONOMICS" SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

Why in the News?

The fourth Joint Committee gathering, which aimed to reassess the **ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA)**, took place in Putrajaya, Malaysia. Participants engaged in discussions focused on enhancing AITIGA to facilitate trade better and bring greater benefits to businesses throughout the region.

ABOUT THE ASEAN-INDIA TRADE IN GOODS AGREEMENT

The ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA) is a trade pact between the ten ASEAN member states and India. It was ratified during the 7th ASEAN Economic Ministers-India Consultations held in Bangkok, Thailand, in 2009 and took effect in 2010.

- **AITIGA is also known as the ASEAN-India Free Trade Agreement and primarily focuses on trade in tangible goods and merchandise**. Its main objectives are the reduction or elimination of customs tariffs and non-tariff barriers to facilitate trade among the participating nations.

KEY FEATURES OF AITIGA

- It includes its coverage limited to the exchange of physical goods, excluding services. It establishes one of the world's largest free trade areas, spanning nearly 1.8 billion individuals.

- The agreement mandates ASEAN and India to gradually abolish duties on a significant portion of goods and liberalise tariffs. It incorporates varying tariff rates based on the economic development stages of the ASEAN member countries.

- AITIGA contains provisions for lowering tariffs on sensitive products and instituting transparent, predictable trade practices to mitigate non-tariff barriers. The agreement's overarching goal is to enhance trade efficiency, stimulate trade growth, and address trade imbalances between ASEAN and India.

ELEMENTS OF AIFTA(ASEAN-INDIA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT):

- **Trade in Goods Agreement:** This agreement, which came into effect on January 1, 2010, aims to gradually diminish and eradicate tariffs on 76.4% of goods exchanged between ASEAN member states and India.

- **Trade in Services Agreement:** Established in November 2014, this agreement encompasses clauses concerning transparency, domestic regulations, recognition, market access, national treatment, and dispute resolution.

- **Investment Agreement:** Also ratified in November 2014, this agreement guarantees equitable and impartial treatment for investors, non-preferential treatment in cases of expropriation or nationalisation, and just compensation.

ADVANTAGES OF AITIGA FOR BUSINESSES IN INDIA AND ASEAN

The ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA) pres-

ents notable advantages for enterprises in India and ASE-AN by fostering trade facilitation, strengthening economic collaboration, and encouraging mutual prosperity. Here are the principal benefits of AITIGA:

- **Trade Expansion:** AITIGA endeavours to facilitate the continued expansion of trade between India and ASEAN in an equitable and sustainable manner. The agreement establishes a framework for diminishing or eradicating tariffs and non-tariff barriers, facilitating smoother trade interactions, and creating an enabling environment for heightened trade volumes.

- **Increased Market Access**: AITIGA amplifies market access for businesses in India and ASEAN by furnishing a platform for simplified entry into each other's markets. This expanded access unlocks fresh opportunities for enterprises to explore and broaden their market presence, potentially fostering growth and diversification of trade endeavours.

- **Mutually Beneficial Trade**: The agreement is crafted to be mutually beneficial for both India and ASEAN nations. By nurturing a more conducive trade environment, AITIGA aims to tackle trade imbalances, improve trade efficiency, and foster an equitable and balanced trade relationship among the participating entities.

- **Tariff Reduction**: AITIGA commits ASEAN and India to progressively eliminate duties on a substantial portion of goods, resulting in diminished tariffs and rendering trade more economically viable for enterprises. This tariff reduction has the potential to lower the cost of imported goods, enhancing their competitiveness in the market and benefiting consumers alike.

- **Increased Collaboration:** The agreement encourages collaboration between India and ASEAN nations across various domains, including technical regulations, standards, and conformity assessment procedures. By aligning these practices, AITIGA seeks to streamline trade processes, mitigate barriers, and facilitate smoother trade flows between the regions.

CHALLENGES IN INDIA AND ASEAN DURING AITIGA IMPLEMENTATION

Some prominent challenges include:

- **Tariff Discrepancies:** Instances of inverted duty structures have emerged, wherein import duties on raw materials or inputs surpass those imposed on finished goods. This discrepancy disadvantages domestic manufacturers and discourages value addition within the country.

- **Diverse Tariff Reduction Commitments**: AITIGA exhibits a varied duty structure due to the differing rates of tariff elimination committed by various ASEAN countries. While Singapore pledged complete tariff elimination, other nations, like Vietnam, agreed to a lower percentage of tariff negotiation.

- **Non-Tariff Barriers:** Businesses have grappled with navigating non-tariff barriers, including intricate rules of origin, standards, technical regulations, and conformity assessment procedures. Simplifying these processes is vital for facilitating smoother trade flows.

- **Trade Imbalances:** Over time, the trade balance has tilted increasingly in favour of ASEAN countries. India endeavours to rectify this imbalance and ensure that the agreement yields mutual benefits for both parties.

- **Rules of Origin Concerns:** There are apprehensions that non-ASEAN nations might reroute exports through ASEAN countries to capitalise on the tariff benefits under AITIGA. Strengthening the provisions regarding rules of origin is imperative to prevent trade diversion.

- **Lack of Awareness**: Certain enterprises, particularly small and medium-sized ones, may lack awareness of AITIGA's advantages and stipulations. Augmenting awareness and providing assistance to businesses can enhance their ability to leverage the agreement more effectively.

INDIA AND ASEAN TRADE DYNAMICS

Over recent decades, India and ASEAN have been dedicated to fortifying their trade and economic collaboration. Here are notable facets of India-ASEAN trade relations:

- In 2009, India and ASEAN inked the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA), which has been operational since 2010. The agreement aims to progressively eliminate tariffs on 76.4% of traded goods.

- During the fiscal year 2017-18, bilateral trade between India and ASEAN surged by nearly 14%, reaching US$81.3 billion. India's imports from ASEAN amounted to US$47.13 billion, while exports to ASEAN totalled US$34.2 billion.

- **In 2022-23, bilateral trade between India and ASEAN reached US$131.5 billion**, with ASEAN contributing 11.3% to India's global trade during that period.

- **India experiences a trade deficit with six out of ten ASEAN countries**, notably Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. The highest deficits are recorded in Indonesia and Singapore.

- **Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam rank as India's top three export destinations within ASEAN,** while Singapore, Indonesia, and Malaysia are the primary sources of imports.

WAY FORWARD FOR INDO-ASEAN TRADE RELATIONS

- **Evaluation of Trade Agreements**: India and ASEAN are set to reassess the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) concerning goods to fortify production connections, enhance market entry in strategic trade sectors, and broaden export prospects. Resolving non-tariff barriers and bolstering digital and physical connectivity is pivotal in attaining greater trade parity and bolstering merchandise exports to ASEAN.

- **Product-Centric Approach:** India should undertake a comprehensive examination at the product level to devise a trading strategy focused on securing enhanced market penetration in ASEAN and beyond. Prioritising products with both forward and backward linkages and those where India possesses a comparative advantage can propel export expansion and fortify trade alliances.

- **Integration into Value Chains:** India must address the hurdles posed by extant trade pacts and large-scale Regional Trade Agreements (RTAs) facilitating ASEAN's involvement in Global Value Chains (GVCs). Initiatives to integrate into the Asian value chain, comply with agreements like the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), and enhance trade efficacy are pivotal for India's integration into value chains and regional trade dynamics.

- **Enhanced People to People relations:** India and ASEAN have been coordinating a range of initiatives to enhance interpersonal engagement. These efforts encompass endeavors such as the **Students Exchange Programme, a Special Training Course designed for ASEAN diplomats, Exchange of Parliamentarians, and involvement in forums like the ASEAN-India Network of Think Tanks** and ASEAN-India Eminent Persons Lecture Series.

There are apprehensions in India regarding the potential negative impacts of AITIGA on sectors such as plantation, manufacturing, and marine products, attributable to heightened competition from ASEAN exports.

PRELIMS QUESTION

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Indo-ASEAN trade relations:

1. India experiences a trade surplus with most ASEAN member countries.

2. ASEAN is India's fourth-largest trading partner.

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

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding WTO:

1. The majority takes all the decisions in the WTO.
2. WTO was established through the Marrakesh agreement.

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
2.	B

MAINS QUESTION

Q1.Analyze the obstacles India faces due to its subsidy concerns under WTO's Agreement on Agriculture (AoA), and discuss the necessity of finalizing the Doha Round negotiations. Explore how India can steer towards a long lasting resolution to tackle its food security worries while protecting the welfare of its farmers.

Q2. What are the major challenges faced by businesses in India and ASEAN during the implementation of AITIGA? Discuss the implications of these challenges on trade dynamics between the two regions.

SOCIAL ISSUE

WHERE THERE IS NO VISION, THE PEOPLE PERISH

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF "THE ILL EFFECTS OF EDUCATION SYSTEM ". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "SOCIETY " SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

CONTEXT

This article appeared in the Hindu which is highlighting the **ill effects of our education system** which only focuses on rote learning and the rat race. This is being reflected in the Increasing number of suicides which are happening in Kota city. The reasons behind these suicides are increasing familial and peer pressure which forces a child to take such a step when not able to handle the pressure.

MORE ABOUT THE ARTICLE

In recent times, the corridors of Kota, Rajasthan, echoed with tragic tales of despair as two young souls chose to end their lives, succumbing to the immense pressure of competitive examinations. These distressing incidents shine a harsh light on the **relentless burden our youth face**, a burden that often proves unbearable. Every year, across the expanse of India, similar tragedies unfold, each one a poignant reminder of the silent suffering endured by countless young minds.

REASONS FOR RISING SUICIDES

The increasing rate of student suicides in India can be attributed to a multitude of factors:

1. **Academic Pressure:** The intense pressure to excel academically, particularly in a highly **competitive educational environment** like India, can lead to immense stress among students. The emphasis on scoring high marks to **secure admission in prestigious institutions or to meet parental expectations** can become overwhelming.

2. **High Expectations:** Expectations from family, teachers, and society to perform exceptionally well academically can create a sense of failure and hopelessness in students if they are unable to meet these expectations.

3. **Lack of Mental Health Support:** There's still a stigma surrounding mental health in many parts of India, and students might hesitate to seek help due to fear of judgment or lack of awareness about available support services.

4. **Isolation and Loneliness:** The competitive environment and focus on academic achievement can sometimes isolate students, leading to feelings of loneliness and alienation, which can exacerbate mental health issues.

5. **Financial Stress:** Financial constraints can also contribute to stress among students, especially those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, who may face additional pressure to perform well academically to secure scholarships or financial aid.

6. **Relationship Issues:** Relationship problems, whether with family members, friends, or romantic partners, can significantly impact a student's mental well-being and contribute to feelings of despair.

7. **Poor Coping Mechanisms:** Some students may lack effective coping mechanisms to deal with stress and adversity, leading them to resort to extreme measures like suicide when faced with overwhelming challenges.

8. **Social Media and Cyberbullying**: The rise of social media has introduced new challenges for students, including cyberbullying, which can have devastating effects on mental health and self-esteem.

PROBLEM IN THE COMPETITIVE NATURE OF SYSTEM

Coaching institutes in India can contribute to an erosion of the learning process in several ways, which can ultimately increase the chances of student suicides:

1. **Focus on Rote Learning:** Many coaching institutes prioritize rote memorization and **exam-specific strategies over deep understanding and critical thinking**. This approach can **undermine genuine learning and**

intellectual development, as students may prioritize short-term memorization of facts and formulas. This **shallow approach to learning can lead to feelings of frustration, inadequacy**, and hopelessness, especially if students struggle to keep up with the pace or fail to achieve desired results despite their efforts.

2. **Pressure to Perform:** The intense competition and emphasis on exam results in coaching institutes can create an environment of extreme pressure and stress for students. The **constant pressure to perform well in exams, coupled with the fear of failure and disappointment from family and peers,** can take a significant toll on students' mental health. This **pressure cooker environment** can lead to feelings of anxiety, depression, and despair, ultimately increasing the risk of suicidal ideation and behavior among students who feel overwhelmed and hopeless about their academic prospects.

3. **Limited Personal Growth:** Coaching institutes often prioritize **exam-centric learning at the expense of holistic personal growth** and development. Students may find themselves trapped in a cycle of relentless studying, with little time or opportunity to pursue interests outside of their academic pursuits. The **lack of balance and fulfillment in students' lives** can contribute to feelings of emptiness and disillusionment, further exacerbating mental health issues and increasing the risk of suicidal behavior.

4. **Failure to Meet Expectations:** Despite their best efforts, not all students are able to achieve the desired results in coaching institute exams or entrance exams. The discrepancy between students' aspirations and their actual performance can lead to f**eelings of inadequacy, worthlessness, and self-doubt.** Students may **internalize these feelings of failure and perceive suicide** as a way to escape the overwhelming sense of disappointment and shame associated with not meeting societal or familial expectations.

5. **Lack of social skills:** the proliferation of coaching institutes and their adoption of often draconian methods have proven overwhelming for many young individuals. Those who do manage to succeed in these fiercely competitive exams often do so at the cost of a normal adolescence or teenage experience. These "successful" candidates often emerge as **mere automatons**, **lacking essential social skills** and the ability to engage in meaningful communication beyond the confines of their exam-focused subjects.

TOWARDS A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Addressing the challenges posed by the proliferation of coaching institutes and their detrimental effects on stu-

dents' well-being requires a multi-pronged approach:

1. **Reforming the Education System:** There needs to be a fundamental reevaluation of the education system to reduce the reliance on high-stakes entrance exams as the sole determinant of academic success. This could involve exploring alternative methods of assessment that focus on holistic development rather than rote memorization.

2. **Strengthening School Education:** Emphasize the importance of quality school education by improving teaching standards, updating curricula to promote critical thinking and creativity, and providing adequate resources and support for both students and teachers.

3. **Regulating Coaching Institutes:** Implement regulations to ensure that coaching institutes adhere to certain standards of quality, transparency, and ethical practices. This could include measures such as mandatory accreditation, regular inspections, and penalties for institutes found to be exploiting students or engaging in unethical behavior.

4. **Promoting Mental Health Awareness:** Increase awareness about mental health issues among students, parents, and educators, and provide access to mental health support services within schools and communities. This could involve integrating mental health education into school curricula, training teachers to recognize signs of distress, and establishing counseling centers in educational institutions.

5. **Encouraging Balanced Lifestyles:** Encourage students to pursue a balanced lifestyle that includes not only academic pursuits but also extracurricular activities, hobbies, and social interactions. Schools can play a role in promoting a healthy work-life balance by offering a variety of activities and resources outside of academics.

6. **Parental Education and Support:** Provide parents with resources and support to help them understand the importance of a balanced approach to education and the potential harms of excessive academic pressure. Encourage parents to prioritize their children's overall well-being and development rather than solely focusing on academic achievement.

7. **Promoting Alternative Pathways:** Encourage students to explore alternative pathways to success beyond traditional academic routes. This could include vocational training, entrepreneurship programs, or opportunities for apprenticeships and hands-on learning experiences.

8. **Advocacy and Policy Change:** Advocate for policy changes at the national and state levels to address the

root causes of the coaching institute culture, including issues related to education inequality, societal pressures, and the commercialization of education.

By implementing these strategies in a coordinated manner, we can work towards creating a more balanced and supportive educational environment that prioritizes the well-being and holistic development of students.

FREEBIES DEBATE IN INDIA

WHY IN THE NEWS?

Recently, the Congress party has promised to increase the free ration scheme to 10 kg/person from 5 kg. Though, this step can put a heavy burden on the exchequer but these kinds of freebies have a significant impact on the mind of the voters. It also shows deep fault lines in the Indian political economy.

These kinds of measures are quite common in Indian politics as they entail direct and fast gratification for the citizens. On the other hand, the expenditure on education, health (the foundations for building capabilities) takes time to yield results.

We will also try to understand the thin line between the freebies and the Direct benefit transfer(DBT) and how on the one hand freebies can be a negative thing for the economy, on the other side the DBT is a positive thing which empowers people in real ways.

THE FREEBIES DEBATE

1. **Election Promises:** Freebies are frequently used by political parties as election promises **to attract voters for vote bank politics**. Parties may promise these benefits in their manifestos with the aim of garnering support from various demographic groups, especially those in need or marginalized communities.

2. **Poverty Alleviation vs. Vote Buying:** Advocates of freebies argue that they play a crucial role in poverty alleviation and improving the standard of living for dis-

advantaged sections of society. However, critics often view these offers as vote-buying tactics, where parties use public resources to secure electoral support without addressing long-term developmental issues.

3. **Fiscal Sustainability:** One of the major concerns surrounding the freebies debate is the fiscal sustainability of such policies. Implementing freebies can strain government finances, leading to budget deficits and increased public debt. Critics argue that these populist measures may undermine fiscal discipline and long-term economic growth.

4. **Distortion of Incentives:** Providing free goods and services can distort market incentives and discourage productive behavior. For example, free electricity or water may lead to wasteful consumption, while cash transfers without conditions may disincentivize workforce participation or investment in education and skills development.

5. **Selective Targeting:** Another criticism of freebies is their often selective targeting, which **may exclude certain vulnerable groups** or regions from benefiting equitably. This can exacerbate existing social and economic inequalities and create resentment among those left out of the distribution scheme.

6. **Alternatives to Freebies:** Proponents of development-oriented policies advocate for alternatives to freebies, such as targeted welfare programs, investment in infrastructure and human capital, and policy reforms aimed at promoting inclusive growth and employment generation.

7. **Electoral Dynamics:** The prevalence of freebies in Indian politics is also influenced by electoral dynamics, including the competitive nature of elections, fragmented party systems, and the role of identity politics. Parties may resort to populism and short-term giveaways to gain electoral advantage in a highly contested environment.

BENEFITS OF DIRECT BENEFIT TRANSFERS

1. **Reduced Leakages and Corruption:** By directly transferring benefits such as subsidies, pensions, scholarships, and welfare payments to beneficiaries' bank accounts, DBT schemes minimize the scope for middlemen and corruption. This ensures that the intended beneficiaries receive the full amount without any siphoning off by intermediaries.

2. **Financial Inclusion:** DBT schemes promote financial inclusion by encouraging the use of bank accounts among marginalized and low-income groups. Opening bank accounts for beneficiaries enables them to access formal financial services, build savings, and par-

ticipate in the formal economy, thereby empowering them economically.

3. **Targeted Delivery:** DBT schemes allow for more targeted delivery of benefits to specific groups based on eligibility criteria. This ensures that resources are directed to those who need them the most, reducing wastage and improving the effectiveness of welfare programs.

4. **Transparency and Accountability:** DBT schemes enhance transparency and accountability in the delivery of government benefits. Since transactions are recorded electronically, there is greater visibility into the flow of funds, making it easier to track disbursements and monitor the utilization of funds.

5. **Efficiency and Cost Savings:** DBT schemes streamline the administration and disbursement processes, leading to greater efficiency and cost savings for the government. By eliminating manual handling of cash and paper-based transactions, DBT reduces administrative overheads and operational inefficiencies associated with traditional delivery mechanisms.

6. **Empowerment of Women and Marginalized Groups:** DBT schemes can empower women and marginalized groups by giving them direct control over financial resources. Directly transferring benefits to women's bank accounts, for instance, enhances their decision-making power within households and facilitates their economic independence.

7. **Facilitation of Reforms and Rationalization:** DBT schemes facilitate the reform and rationalization of subsidy regimes by enabling the phased reduction or elimination of subsidies that are inefficient or prone to misuse. This allows the government to redirect resources towards more productive investments in areas such as infrastructure, healthcare, and education.

8. **Stimulating Economic Growth:** By putting money directly into the hands of beneficiaries, DBT schemes stimulate demand for goods and services, thereby contributing to economic growth and poverty reduction. Increased purchasing power among the poor can lead to higher consumption levels and stimulate economic activity in rural and urban areas.

THE WAY FORWARD

1. **Focus on Development-Oriented Policies:** Shift the focus from short-term populist measures to development-oriented policies aimed at addressing structural issues such as poverty, unemployment, education, and healthcare. Invest in infrastructure, skill development, and social welfare programs that promote sustainable and inclusive growth.

2. **Targeted Welfare Programs:** Implement targeted welfare programs that provide assistance to those who need it the most, based on objective criteria such as income levels, socio-economic status, and vulnerability indicators. This ensures that resources are directed towards the most deserving beneficiaries, reducing wastage and leakage. EG. PM KISAN yojana

3. **Fiscal Discipline and Budgetary Planning:** Prioritize fiscal discipline and prudent budgetary planning to ensure that government resources are utilized efficiently and sustainably. Avoid overburdening the exchequer with unsustainable subsidy regimes and prioritize expenditures based on developmental priorities and long-term sustainability.

4. **Enhanced Governance and Transparency:** Strengthen governance mechanisms and promote transparency and accountability in the delivery of government benefits. Implement measures such as digitization, biometric authentication, and real-time monitoring to prevent leakages, corruption, and diversion of funds.

5. **Public Awareness and Civic Engagemen**t: Raise public awareness about the implications of freebies on fiscal sustainability, economic growth, and long-term welfare. Encourage civic engagement and public participation in policy debates and decision-making processes to foster a culture of responsible citizenship and accountability.

6. **Promotion of Entrepreneurship and Employment:** Create an enabling environment for entrepreneurship, innovation, and job creation through supportive policies, regulatory reforms, and investment in infrastructure and human capital. Empower individuals to become self-reliant and economically independent, reducing dependence on government handouts.

7. **Inclusive Growth and Social Justice**: Prioritize inclusive growth and social justice by addressing disparities based on gender, caste, religion, and region. Implement affirmative action programs and targeted interventions to uplift marginalized and disadvantaged communities, ensuring equitable access to opportunities and resources.

8. **Political and Electoral Reforms**: Introduce political and electoral reforms to reduce the influence of money power, vote-bank politics, and populism in elections. Strengthen institutions such as the Election Commission and enact legislation to regulate campaign finance, promote transparency, and enhance accountability in the political process.

9. **Long-Term Vision and Leadership:** Adopt a long-term vision and leadership commitment to overcome the freebie challenge and achieve sustainable develop-

ment goals. Invest in human capital development, innovation, and institutional capacity building to build a resilient and inclusive society that can withstand short-term populist pressures.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

THIS ARTICLE COVERS "DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS", AND THE TOPIC DETAILS "CIVIL SOCIETY". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "SOCIETY AND POLITY" SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

CONTEXT

This is the election season in India, the biggest exercise in democratic franchise. Almost 97 crores people are eligible for this year's election which is the largest electorate in any democracy till date. Western political theorists had argued that **'In a democracy the society gets a government it deserves'**. That's Why India's elections provide it an opportunity to elect the best government for its aspirational population and for the future course of the country.

Plato, a Greek philosopher warned **'One of the penalties for refusing to participate in politics is that you end up being ruled by your inferiors'**. That's why it is important to make a calculated and wise choice in this general election. This can only happen if people will engage in the political discourse actively. At the same time, we also have to rise above our identity markers which plays a significant role in Indian politics. So in this article we are going to delve into the concepts related to political participation such as civil society, active citizenry, the fault lines in Indian voting behavior.

CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil society refers to the collective sphere of voluntary organizations, institutions, and associations that exist outside of the government and the market, where individuals come together to pursue common interests, advocate for specific causes, and address societal issues. It encompasses a wide range of groups, including **non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations,** religious groups, trade unions, professional associations, advocacy groups, and grassroots movements.

THE KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF CIVIL SOCIETY INCLUDE:

1. **Voluntary Association**: Participation in civil society is voluntary and based on individuals' and groups' free will to organize around shared interests, values, or goals.

2. **Pluralism:** Civil society is characterized by diversity, allowing for the representation of various viewpoints, interests, and identities within society.

3. **Autonomy:** Civil society organizations operate independently from the government and the market, allowing them to pursue their missions and objectives without undue influence or control.

4. **Civic Engagement:** Civil society fosters civic engagement by providing avenues for individuals to participate in public affairs, advocate for their rights, and contribute to social change.

5. **Public Good Orientation:** Civil society organizations often work towards promoting the public good, addressing social injustices, and advancing the well-being of communities and society as a whole.

CIVIL SOCIETY PLAYS SEVERAL IMPORTANT ROLES IN DEMOCRATIC SOCIETIES:

1. **Advocacy and Activism:** Civil society organizations advocate for policy changes, raise awareness about societal issues, and mobilize collective action to address challenges such as poverty, human rights abuses, environmental degradation, and inequality.

2. **Service Delivery:** Many civil society organizations provide essential services, such as education, healthcare, humanitarian aid, and community development, often filling gaps left by governments or complementing public services.

3. **Watchdog Function:** Civil society acts as a watchdog by monitoring government actions, promoting transparency and accountability, and holding public officials accountable for their decisions and actions.

4. **Social Integration:** Civil society fosters social cohesion and solidarity by providing spaces for dialogue, cooperation, and collaboration among diverse groups within society, helping to bridge social divides and build trust and mutual understanding.

5. **Promoting Democracy:** Civil society organizations provide avenues for citizen participation and engagement in public affairs, which are essential for the functioning of democracy. They facilitate the expression of diverse

viewpoints, hold governments accountable, and contribute to the democratic decision-making process.

6. **Advocating for Rights and Social Justice:** Civil society plays a crucial role in advocating for human rights, social justice, and equality. By raising awareness about injustices, mobilizing public support, and lobbying for policy changes, civil society organizations help address systemic issues such as discrimination, inequality, and marginalization.

7. **Fostering Social Cohesion:** Civil society organizations promote social cohesion by bringing together individuals and groups from different backgrounds to work towards common goals. They provide spaces for dialogue, collaboration, and mutual understanding, helping to bridge social divides and build inclusive communities.

CERTAIN FAULT LINES IN INDIAN VOTING BEHAVIOR

Electoral behavior in India is influenced by a variety of faultlines, reflecting the country's diverse social, economic, cultural, and political landscape. Some of the prominent fault lines include:

1. **Caste:** Caste-based politics is a significant factor in Indian electoral behavior. India's caste system, although officially abolished, continues to play a crucial role in shaping political identities and voting patterns. Political parties often align themselves with particular castes or caste-based interest groups to mobilize support during elections.

2. **Religion:** Religious identity is another important faultline in Indian electoral behavior. India is a religiously diverse country, with Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, and others comprising significant portions of the population. Communal tensions and religious polarization sometimes influence voting choices, with parties seeking to consolidate support among specific religious communities.

3. **Regionalism:** India is characterized by significant regional diversity, with each state or region having its own distinct political dynamics, issues, and identities. Regional parties often dominate politics in their respective states, advocating for regional interests and challenging the influence of national parties.

4. **Language:** Language is a crucial faultline in Indian electoral politics, particularly in multilingual states where language serves as a marker of identity and cultural pride. Language-based movements and identity politics often shape electoral outcomes, with parties seeking to appeal to linguistic communities through language-based policies and rhetoric.

5. **Socio-economic Status:** Socio-economic factors such as income, education, occupation, and urban-rural divide also influence electoral behavior in India. Economic grievances, aspirations for development, and perceptions of government performance can sway voting decisions, particularly among marginalized or economically disadvantaged communities.

6. **Urban-Rural Divide**: The urban-rural divide is another faultline that influences electoral behavior in India. Urban voters often have different priorities and concerns compared to their rural counterparts, reflecting distinct socio-economic realities and developmental needs. Political parties must navigate these differences to appeal to diverse voter bases effectively.

HOW TO INCREASE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Increasing political participation in India requires a multifaceted approach that addresses various barriers to engagement and encourages active involvement in the democratic process. Here are some strategies to enhance political participation:

1. **Civic Education and Awareness Campaigns:** Implement comprehensive civic education programs to raise awareness about the importance of political participation, democratic values, and the rights and responsibilities of citizens. These programs can be conducted in schools, colleges, communities, and through mass media channels to reach a wide audience.

2. **Electoral Reforms:** Introduce electoral reforms aimed at making the electoral process more accessible, transparent, and inclusive. **This could include measures such as electoral registration drives, simplification of voter registration procedures, implementation of online voter registration systems**, and enhancement of voter education initiatives.

3. **Youth Engagement:** Encourage youth participation in politics by creating platforms for their voices to be heard, such as youth parliaments, forums, and advisory bodies. Foster political awareness and leadership skills among young people through youth-focused civic education programs, internships, and mentorship opportunities.

4. **Women's Empowerment:** Promote gender equality and women's empowerment in politics by implementing affirmative action measures, such as reservation of seats for women in local government bodies (Panchayats and Municipalities). Provide support and resources to women candidates and encourage women's participation in political parties and electoral processes.

5. **Community Mobilization:** Empower local communities to participate in decision-making processes and

civic activities through community organizing, grass-roots campaigns, and participatory governance mechanisms. Strengthen community-based organizations and civil society groups that work on issues related to governance, accountability, and social justice.

6. **Technology and Social Media:** Harness the power of technology and social media platforms to engage citizens in political discussions, disseminate information about elections and political issues, and facilitate online voter registration and participation. Use digital tools for voter education campaigns, online debates, and interactive forums to reach a broader audience, especially among young people.

7. **Political Transparency and Accountability:** Promote political transparency and accountability by ensuring that elected representatives are accessible to their constituents, transparent in their decision-making processes, and accountable for their actions. Strengthen mechanisms for citizen feedback, grievance redressal, and monitoring of elected officials' performance.

8. **Inclusive Governance:** Foster inclusive governance by ensuring representation and participation of marginalized and vulnerable groups, including minorities, indigenous communities, persons with disabilities, and LGBTQ+ individuals. Create opportunities for these groups to have a meaningful voice in decision-making processes and policy development.

9. **Incentives for Political Participation:** Provide incentives for political participation, such as recognition, awards, and rewards for active citizens, community leaders, and organizations that contribute to civic engagement and public service. Recognize and celebrate exemplary instances of civic participation to inspire others to get involved.

10. **Promote Political Culture:** Foster a culture of political engagement, dialogue, and debate by encouraging open-mindedness, tolerance, and respect for diverse viewpoints. Promote civil discourse, constructive criticism, and peaceful means of political expression to create an environment conducive to active citizenship and democratic participation.

MAINS QUESTION

1. **Identity markers have an important role in Indian elections. Highlight how identity consciousness shapes the electoral behavior in India.**

ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT

DELHI WASTE MANAGEMENT PROBLEM

THIS ARTICLE COVERS "DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS", AND THE TOPIC DETAILS "DELHI WASTE MANAGEMENT PROBLEM". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "ENVIRONMENT" SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The recent scrutiny by the Supreme Court regarding solid waste management (SWM) in New Delhi brings to light a pressing concern. The national capital grapples with over 3,800 tonnes of untreated solid waste, posing a significant risk to both public health and the environment as it accumulates in landfills.

MORE ABOUT THE NEWS?

In 2011, New Delhi's population stood at approximately 1.7 crore. Fast forward to 2024, it's estimated to have surged to around 2.32 crore. This population boom has led to a substantial increase in waste generation. Calculations suggest the city now produces a staggering 13,000 tonnes per day (TPD) of waste, equivalent to roughly 1,400 truckloads, totaling about 42 lakh tonnes annually.

Looking ahead to 2031, with the population projected to

reach 2.85 crore, waste generation could soar to 17,000 TPD. The lion's share of this waste, around 90%, is managed by the three main municipal bodies: the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), Delhi Cantonment Board, and the New Delhi Municipal Corporation.

Typically, waste in Indian cities comprises 50-55% biodegradable wet waste, 35% non-biodegradable wet waste, and 10% inert materials. Translated to New Delhi's context, this breakdown means approximately 7,000 TPD of wet waste, 4,800 TPD of dry waste, and 2,000 TPD of inert waste.

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT IN DELHI

New Delhi boasts waste-processing facilities at multiple locations, including Okhla, Bhalswa, Narela, Bawana, Tehkhand, SMA Industrial Area, Nilothi, and Ghazipur. These facilities collectively have a designed capacity of approximately 9,200 TPD. Among them, composting units handle around 900-1,000 TPD, while waste-to-energy projects manage the bulk, processing 8,200 TPD.

Despite these resources, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) is still grappling with disposing of 3,800 TPD of untreated waste in designated landfills like Gazipur, Bhalswa, and Okhla. The unchecked accumulation of both wet and dry waste in these landfills not only generates methane gasses and leachates but also poses a constant risk of landfill fires, severely impacting the nearby environment.

The situation is dire, with an alarming 2.58 crore tonnes of legacy waste sprawled across 200 acres of land in these landfills. While the MCD initiated biomining efforts in 2019 to mitigate this issue, the progress was impeded by the COVID-19 pandemic. Originally slated for completion by 2024, the task is now expected to take an additional two to three years.

Until fresh waste is systematically processed, the environmental repercussions will persist. With the current influx of 3,800 TPD of untreated waste, the landfills are destined to grow both in size and height, exacerbating the existing challenges.

EFFECTS OF BAD WASTE MANAGEMENT

The waste management problem in Delhi is concerning for several reasons:

1. **Public Health Risks:** Accumulated untreated waste poses significant health hazards. Landfills become breeding grounds for disease vectors such as mosqui-

toes and rodents, increasing the risk of vector-borne diseases like dengue and malaria. The decomposition of organic waste also releases harmful gases and leachates, contaminating groundwater and soil.

2. **Environmental Degradation**: Landfills emit methane, a potent greenhouse gas that contributes to climate change. Additionally, the leachates produced can seep into water bodies, polluting them and disrupting ecosystems. Landfill fires, which are common due to the buildup of combustible materials, release toxic fumes and pose a threat to air quality.

3. **Aesthetic and Social Impact:** Large, unsightly landfills are not only an eyesore but also negatively impact the quality of life for nearby residents. The foul odor and presence of scavengers can make living conditions intolerable, leading to social unrest and community dissatisfaction.

4. **Waste of Resources:** Inefficient waste management represents a loss of valuable resources. Organic waste, for example, could be composted and used to enrich soil, while recyclable materials could be repurposed, reducing the demand for virgin resources and cutting down on energy consumption.

5. **Legal and Regulatory Concerns:** The inability to effectively manage waste violates environmental regulations and exposes municipal authorities to legal liabilities. Continued negligence may lead to punitive actions by regulatory bodies, tarnishing the city's reputation and leading to financial penalties.

HOW THIS PROBLEM CAN BE SOLVED

Addressing the waste management problem in Delhi requires a multi-faceted approach involving various stakeholders and strategies:

1. **Waste Reduction and Segregation:** Encourage waste reduction at the source through awareness campaigns and incentives for businesses and households to minimize waste generation. Implement effective waste segregation practices to separate recyclable, organic, and inert waste at the point of generation.

2. **Investment in Infrastructure:** Increase investment in waste management infrastructure, including waste processing plants, composting facilities, recycling centers, and waste-to-energy plants. Upgrade existing facilities and build new ones to meet the growing demand for waste management services.

3. **Promotion of Circular Economy:** Foster a circular economy approach by promoting the reuse, recycling, and recovery of materials from waste streams. Support initiatives that encourage the development of

markets for recycled materials and products to create economic incentives for waste diversion.

4. **Public Awareness and Participation:** Educate the public about the importance of proper waste management practices and the benefits of recycling and composting. Engage communities through outreach programs, workshops, and educational campaigns to encourage active participation in waste reduction and segregation efforts.

5. **Policy and Regulation:** Strengthen waste management policies and regulations to enforce compliance with waste segregation and disposal standards. Implement stringent penalties for illegal dumping and non-compliance with waste management regulations to deter offenders and ensure accountability.

6. **Technological Innovation:** Embrace innovative technologies for waste management, such as advanced sorting and recycling technologies, bioremediation techniques, and waste-to-energy processes. Invest in research and development to identify and deploy cutting-edge solutions for sustainable waste management.

7. **Collaboration and Partnerships:** Foster collaboration between government agencies, private sector organizations, non-profit organizations, and community groups to leverage expertise, resources, and networks for effective waste management initiatives. Form public-private partnerships to finance, operate, and maintain waste management infrastructure and services.

8. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establish robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track progress, measure performance, and identify areas for improvement in waste management efforts. Use data-driven insights to inform decision-making, allocate resources effectively, and optimize waste management strategies over time.

SECURITY

IGLA-S (VERY SHORT-RANGE AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF' **IGLA-S(VERY SHORT-RANGE AIR DEFENCE SYSTEM)'.** THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE " **SECURITY**" SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

Why in the News?

The Indian Army will soon be equipped with **Russian Igla-S very short-range air defence systems and Israeli Hermes-900 UAVs**, assembled by ADSTL (Adani System Defense and Technology Limited) in Hyderabad. These procurements are integral to India's efforts to bolster its air defence capabilities and advanced defence technology through collaborative partnerships and technology exchange.

ABOUT IGLA S AIR DEFENCE SYSTEM

- The Igla-S air defence system, developed by Russia, is a highly effective **man-portable air defence system (MANPADS)**.

- This system can target a variety of visible fixed-wing and rotary-wing aircraft, as well as small air targets like cruise missiles and drones.

- The Igla-S includes the 9M342 missile, the 9P522 launching mechanism, the 9V866-2 mobile test station, and the 9F719-2 test set, offering a robust air defence solution.

- It has an effective range of up to 6 km and can destroy targets at altitudes of up to 3.5 km.

- The system features a more powerful warhead for enhanced damage and uses contact and timed fuzes to increase attack range.

- Designed for operation by either an individual or a crew, the Igla-S provides versatile defence against low-flying aircraft, cruise missiles, and drones, making it a vital element of India's air defence strategy.

HOW IS IGLA S ADVANTAGEOUS OVER OTHER MAN-PORTABLE AIR DEFENCE SYSTEMS?

- **Compactness and Mobility:** The Igla-S system is designed to be compact and mobile, ensuring ease of deployment and flexibility in combat scenarios.

- **"Fire-and-Forget" Capability:** Utilizing the "fire-and-forget" principle, the Igla-S enhances operator survivability and stealth by allowing effective target engagement without maintaining line of sight.

- **Versatile Launching Options:** This system supports high launch versatility, enabling missile deployment through various methods such as launching mechanisms, support launchers, equipment sets, turret installations, and combat vehicles, offering operational flexibility.

- **Comprehensive Air Defense:** It includes advanced components like the 9M342 missile, 9P522 launching mechanism, 9V866-2 mobile test station, and 9F719-2 test set, providing a thorough air defence solution suitable for various operational needs.

- **High Hit Probability**: According to the manufacturer, the Igla-S system achieves a high hit probability, ranging from 0.8 to 0.9, ensuring effective target engagement and destruction.

- **Reliable Operational Performance:** Despite facing some challenges and controversies under specific conditions, the Igla-S system has proven effective across different environments, making it a dependable choice for air defence.

Igla–S Air Defense System

- 500 to 6,000 m — Firing range
- 10 to 3,500 m — target altitude
- no more than 12 s. — mobile-to-combat position transition time
- no more than 5 s. — ready to start time from activation
- Target speed: up to 400 m/s on collision courses; up to 320 m/s on catch-up courses
- Homing head type: tracking • passive • thermal • bispectral

SIGNIFICANCE OF VERY SHORT-RANGE AIR DEFENCE SYSTEM FOR INDIA

- **Regional Security:** Deploying advanced air defence systems like VSHORADS enhances regional security by strengthening India's defence capabilities. It demonstrates India's commitment to effectively protecting its airspace and maintaining regional stability. India faces regional security challenges from both sides of the border; therefore, it is important to integrate very short-range air defence systems into defence capabilities.

- **Geopolitical Significance:** India's development and acquisition of advanced defence systems like VSHORADS boost its defence capabilities and impact future geopolitical alignments and defence collaborations, establishing India as a more autonomous and strategically influential player in the region.

- **Strategic Autonomy**: Investing in indigenous defence projects like VSHORADS underscores India's commitment to self-reliance in defence technology. This reduces reliance on imports, enhances security infrastructure, and positions India as a significant player in the global defence sector.

- **Modernization and Replacement:** Introducing VSHORADS marks a crucial shift in India's air defence strategy. It aims to replace outdated systems, such as the Igla missile system acquired in the 1980s. This modernisation effort is vital to counter modern threats and strengthen India's defence capabilities.

- **Technological Advancement**s: The VSHORADS, developed by DRDO, signifies a significant technological advancement for India's defence capabilities. It features modern technologies such as a miniaturised Reaction Control System (RCS) and integrated avionics, boosting its effectiveness against low-altitude aerial threats at short ranges.

- **Enhanced Air Defense:** The VSHORADS system equips the Indian Army with essential short-range air defence capabilities, crucial for protecting ground forces and vital assets from aerial threats like helicopters, low-flying aircraft, and cruise missiles.

INDIGENOUS DEVELOPMENT OF VERY SHORT-RANGE AIR DEFENCE SYSTEM

- **VSHORADS(Very short-range air defence system)** is a man-portable air defence system (MANPADS) created by the **Research Centre Imarat (RCI)**, a division of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), in partnership with other DRDO labs and Indian industry partners. **Adani Defence and Aerospace serves as the Development-cum-Production Partner**

(DcPP) for the manufacturing of the VSHORAD system.

- DRDO successfully conducted two flight tests of VSHORADS missiles using a ground-based portable launcher at the Integrated Test Range in Chandipur, off Odisha's coast. The missiles effectively intercepted and destroyed high-speed unmanned aerial targets in various scenarios, achieving all mission objectives.

INDIA'S AIR DEFENSE NETWORK

India has established a robust, multi-layered air defence network with various systems to counter aerial threats at different ranges. Key air defence systems in India's arsenal include:

Long-Range Systems:

- **S-400 Triumf**: An advanced long-range surface-to-air missile system from Russia, capable of engaging targets up to 400 km away.

- **Indo-Israeli MRSAM:** A medium-range surface-to-air missile system developed jointly by India and Israel.

Intermediate-Range Systems:

- **Akash SAM:** An indigenous medium-range surface-to-air missile system capable of engaging multiple aerial targets.

- **Pechora SAM:** A Soviet-origin surface-to-air missile system that has been a mainstay of the Indian Air Force's air defense for decades.

Short-Range Systems:

- **Spyder SAM:** A quick-reaction surface-to-air missile system from Israel.

- **Barak-8 SAM**: A surface-to-air missile system jointly developed by India and Israel, primarily for naval use.

Very Short-Range Systems:

- **Igla-S MANPADS:** A man-portable air defence system from Russia enhancing the Indian Army's short-range air defence, especially in mountainous regions along the northern borders.

- **SAMAR SAM:** An indigenous surface-to-air missile system developed by the Indian Air Force's 7 Base Repair Depot, utilizing old Russian-origin air-to-air missile systems.

Indigenous Development:

- **DRDO's VSHORADS**: An indigenous very short-range air defence system developed by the DRDO to counter low-altitude aerial threats at short ranges.

- **Project Kusha:** An ongoing initiative to develop an indigenous long-range surface-to-air missile system with a range of up to 350 km.

PRELIMS QUESTION

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Igla S is an Israel-made, Very short-range air defence system.

2. A very short-range air defence system is primarily used to intercept intercontinental ballistic missiles.

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.	D

MAINS QUESTION

Q1. How the integration of Very short-range air defense system can bolster India's defence preparedness to face any regional security challenges?