

INDIAN POLITY

The Government has appointed Manoj Panda, former director at the Institute of Economic Growth as the full time member of the 16th Finance Commission.

- Research areas: His research areas include monitoring and analysis of macro-economic trends and prospects, evaluation of alternative trade and fiscal policy options from the point of view of growth and distribution.

About Sixteenth Finance Commission (SFC):

- Chairman: Arvind Panagariya.
- Full Time Members: A.N. Jha (Former expenditure secretary and member of the 15th Finance Commission)
- Annie George Mathew (Former special secretary of the department of expenditure).
- Niranjana Rajadhyaksha (executive director of Artha Global Niranjana Rajadhyaksha).
- Part-Time Member: Soumya Kanti Ghosh (State Bank of India's group chief economic adviser).
- Duration: It is tasked with defining the distribution of the Centre's tax revenue to states for five years starting FY27.
- It will make its recommendations available by 31 October 2025, covering an award period of five years beginning 1 April 2026.

Finance Commission:

- The first Finance Commission was set up in 1951.
- Set up under Article 280 of the Constitution, FC is a constitutional body formed by the President of India to give suggestions on center-state financial relations.

Core Responsibility:

- To evaluate the state of finances of the Union and State Governments.
- Recommend the sharing of taxes between them.
- Lay down the principles determining the distribution of these taxes among States.
- Working: It is characterized by consultations with all levels of government, thus strengthening the principle of cooperative federalism.
- Composition: It consists of a chairman and 4 other members to be appointed by the President.
- Nature of Recommendations: Advisory in nature, not binding on the government.
- Qualifications: The Parliament has given the following specifications for appointing the members.
- The chairman must have experience in public affairs while the other four members should be selected from amongst the following criteria:
 - A High Court judge or one qualified to become one;
 - An individual having specialized knowledge of finance and accounts of the government;
 - A person who possesses experience in financial matters and administration;
 - A person who has special knowledge of economics.

SC: Right against adverse Climate Impacts as integral to Right to Life and Equality

- The Supreme Court has for the first time recognized the right against adverse climate impacts as integral to the right to life and equality.
- The recent judgment stemmed from a petition by wildlife activists aiming to safeguard the critically endangered Great Indian Bustard (GIB), found only in Rajasthan and Gujarat.
- In April 2021, the Supreme Court issued an order imposing restrictions on overhead transmission lines within a vast area, proposing their conversion into underground power lines.
- However, the government, citing concerns about hindering India's global commitments to reduce carbon emissions, requested a modification of the directives.
- In March 2024, the Supreme Court revisited the ruling, acknowledging practical challenges such as technical complexities and high costs. Consequently, the court modified its order, emphasizing the importance of balancing GIB conservation with promoting renewable energy and environmental preservation.

Key highlights of the Supreme Court judgment include:

1. Recognition of Constitutional Rights: Articles 14 (Right to Equality) and Article 21 (Right to Life and Personal Liberty) are highlighted as important sources of the right to a clean environment and the right against adverse effects of climate change.

SC emphasized constitutional provisions, including Articles 48A (to protect the environment and to safeguard the forests and wildlife), 51A(g) (to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wildlife, and to have compassion for living creatures)

2. Expansion of Fundamental Rights: The scope of fundamental rights is expanded to include the right against adverse effects of climate change, with failure to ensure a stable, clean environment impacting the right to life, health, and equality.

3. The intersection of Climate Change and Human Rights: The court emphasizes the intersection between climate change and human rights, underscoring the imperative for states to address climate impacts through the lens of rights.

4. Technical Challenges in Implementation: The court pointed out technical challenges in implementing the April 2021 order, including limitations of underground power transmission cables and lack of provisions in the Electricity Act for land acquisition.

5. Formation of Committee: A nine-member committee of experts was formed to assess the feasibility of undergrounding power lines in specific areas, with a deadline to submit a report by July 31, 2024.

6. India's Commitment to Renewable Energy: The court highlighted India's commitment to renewable energy, aiming for 175 GW by 2022 and 450 GW by 2030, viewing the transition to non-fossil fuels as a fundamental necessity for environmental preservation.

7. Benefits of Renewable Energy Promotion: The promotion of renewable energy sources is seen as crucial for promoting social equity, poverty alleviation, enhancing quality of life, and fostering inclusive growth and development.

Referral to important Supreme Court judgments:

1. C. Mehta v. Kamal Nath (1996): Acknowledgment that any disturbance of basic environmental elements is hazardous to "life" within the meaning of Article 21.
2. Virender Gaur v. State of Haryana (1994): Recognition that the right to a clean environment is an integral facet of the right to a healthy life.

Impact of Climate Change on Human Rights:

Right to Life: Cyclones, floods, and heatwaves cause casualties. Spread of diseases like dengue and malaria due to changing climate.

Right to Health: Poor air quality in cities like Delhi affects respiratory health. Erratic rainfall affects agricultural productivity and food security.

Right to Water: Rising sea levels contaminate freshwater sources with saltwater intrusion. Water scarcity in regions dependent on monsoon rains.

Right to Livelihood: Farmers face crop failures and income loss due to droughts or floods. Fisherfolk losing access to fishing grounds due to sea level rise.

Right to Shelter: Communities in low-lying coastal areas face displacement due to sea level rise and storm surges. Urban slum dwellers are at risk of losing homes during floods.

Right to Security: Climate change threatens human security by causing resource scarcity, livelihood disruption, cultural erosion, displacement, and migration

Effects of Mitigation and Adaptation Measures on Human Rights:

1. Mitigation:

- Hydroelectric projects can displace local communities, destroy ecosystems, and harm downstream populations.
- Biofuel policies may lead to food shortages, water scarcity, deforestation, and displacement of indigenous peoples and farmers.

2. Adaptation:

- Some adaptation measures may benefit certain groups while disadvantaging others, such as coastal fortifications.
- Relocation and resettlement programs can pose risks of human rights violations for affected communities.

Measures Taken by India and the World to Protect Human Rights Against Climate Change:

India:

- Implementation of the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC), which includes various missions targeting climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Adoption of renewable energy initiatives like the National Solar Mission and promotion of clean energy sources.

- Integration of climate change considerations into national policies and programs, including water resource management and disaster preparedness.
- Promotion of sustainable agriculture practices to enhance resilience to climate change impacts.
- Implementation of the Afforestation and Reforestation programs to combat deforestation and enhance carbon sequestration.

World:

- The United Nations (through a resolution in 2022) declared access to a clean, healthy environment as a universal human right.
- Establishment of frameworks for climate finance, such as the Green Climate Fund, to support developing countries in their climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts.
- Promotion of climate-resilient infrastructure and urban planning to enhance resilience to extreme weather events and sea-level rise.
- Support for capacity-building initiatives to enhance the ability of vulnerable communities to adapt to climate change impacts.

UNEP recommendations:

1. International Cooperation: Recognize the link between climate change and human rights in the Paris Agreement.
2. Ensure climate funds' safeguards fully consider human rights.
3. Increase financial assistance to developing countries, especially for adaptation measures.
4. Pursue domestic GHG reductions and align adaptation objectives with human rights.
5. Incorporate human rights norms into domestic legal frameworks, including climate change laws.
6. Local Governments and Private Actors: Local governments should reduce GHG emissions and pursue adaptation objectives. Private actors should adopt policies in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

Climate change and its responses will significantly impact human rights worldwide, affecting both individuals and ecosystems. States must fulfil their obligations to mitigate GHG emissions, protect citizens from climate change, and ensure responses do not violate human rights. More ambitious actions and global cooperation are needed to safeguard human rights effectively.

PRELIM FACT**1. Traditional New Year Festivals in India**

- The President of India greeted fellow citizens on the eve of Chaitra Sukladi, Ugadi, Gudi Padwa, Cheti Chand, Navreh and Sajibu Cheiraoba.
- These festivals are celebrated in different parts of the country and spread the message of peace, harmony and tolerance to welcome the spring season and Indian New Year.

a. Chaitra Sukladi

- It marks the beginning of the new year day according to the Hindu calendar (Vikram Samvat) in parts of North India.
- It falls on the first day of the Chaitra month, the first month of the Hindu calendar.
- Vikram Samvat: It is based on the day when the emperor Vikramaditya defeated Sakas, invaded Ujjain and called for a new era. Under his supervision, astronomers formed a new calendar based on the luni-solar system.
 - It is still followed in the northern regions of India.
 - It is the first day during the waxing phase (in which the visible side of the moon is getting bigger every night) of the moon in the Chaitra (first month of Hindu calendar).

b. Ugadi

- It is celebrated by the peoples of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka and Maharashtra, marking the beginning of a new lunar year.
- It derives its name from the Sanskrit words "yuga" (age) and "adi" (beginning).
- Ugadi is celebrated with the preparation of a special dish called "Ugadi Pachadi," which is a distinctive blend of neem flowers, jaggery, tamarind, raw mango, and chilli.
 - Additionally, cultural events, traditional rites, and social gatherings mark the festivities, which bring together families and strengthen communal bonds.
- For Ugadi, doors in homes are adorned with mango leaf decorations called toranalu or Torana in Kannada.

c. Gudi Padwa

- It is a Hindu festival that marks the beginning of the new year according to the lunisolar Hindu calendar.
- The word Gudi Padwa is made of two words – Gudi refers to the flag (garlanded with flowers, mango, and neem leaves, topped with upturned silver or copper vessel) and padwa or padava or padavo comes from the Sanskrit word pratipada which refers to the first day of a lunar fortnight.
- It is celebrated in the states of Maharashtra, Goa, and parts of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.
- It is celebrated with colorful floor decorations called rangoli, a special Gudi flag, street processions, dancing, and festive foods.
- Mythological & Historical Significance:
 - It is believed to be the day when Lord Brahma created the universe.
 - It also marks the day when Lord Rama returned to Ayodhya after defeating Ravana.
 - It is also believed to be the day when Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was crowned as the king of the Maratha Empire.

d. Cheti Chand

- Cheti Chand is celebrated as Jhulelal Jayanti by the Sindhi community to commemorate the birth anniversary of Uderolal/Jhulelal, the patron saint of Sindhis.
- This marks the beginning of the Sindhi New Year. As per the Hindu calendar, it is primarily observed on the second day of Chaitra Shukla Paksha. Chaitra month is called 'Chet' in Sindhi.
- Significance: The day is significant for Sindhis since it is believed that Varun Dev emerged as Jhulelal on this day to save the Sindhi community from a king who wanted to destroy Sindhi culture.

e. Navreh

- Navreh is derived from Nav-varsh of Sanskrit. It is the lunar new year that is celebrated in Kashmir.
- It falls on the first day of the Chaitra Navratri.
- The day is dedicated to their Goddess Sharika and they pay homage to her on that day.
- On this day, Kashmiri pandits look at a bowl of rice which is considered as a symbol of riches and fertility.
- The festival is associated with the onset of spring and the blossoming of flowers.

f. Sajibu Cheiraoba

- It is the Manipuri New Year festival of Meiteis (an ethnic group in Manipur) which is observed on the first day of Manipur lunar month Shajibu.
- On the day of the festival, people arrange a joint family feast in which traditional cuisines are offered to local deities at the entrance gates of the houses.
- The festival marks the beginning of a new agricultural cycle.
- It is celebrated with the preparation of a special dish called "Chak-Hao," made from fermented soybean.
- People also perform traditional dances and offer prayers to the deities for a prosperous year ahead.

2. Southern Ocean

The Southern Ocean is known for having the cleanest air on Earth, a fact previously attributed mainly to minimal human activity.

However, recent research has unveiled that clouds and rain play a significant role in keeping the air pristine.

Role of clouds:

The Southern Ocean experiences unique cloud patterns, particularly honeycomb-shaped clouds, which regulate climate by reflecting or allowing sunlight.

These clouds generate sporadic but intense rain showers, effectively washing aerosol particles out of the air.

About Southern Ocean:

The Southern Ocean is the body of water that surrounds Antarctica and is bounded by the continents of Antarctica, South America, Africa, and Australia.

It is the southernmost ocean on Earth and is characterized by its vast expanse of open water, strong currents, and harsh climate conditions.

The Southern Ocean plays a critical role in regulating global climate and ocean circulation patterns.

3 .ESZ around Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary

- The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has issued a draft notification demarcating an eco-sensitive zone (ESZ) around the Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary on the Haryana side.
- Rejecting Haryana’s proposal for only a 1,000-meter ESZ, the draft delineates an area of 1 km up to 2.035 km around Haryana’s side of the sanctuary. The sanctuary is ecologically sensitive and home to several endangered species. The draft seeks objections from stakeholders within 60 days.

About ESZ:

Ecologically Sensitive Zones (ESZ) are vital areas surrounding protected regions, designated by the central government under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. These zones categorize activities into prohibited (e.g., commercial mining), regulated (e.g., felling of trees), and permitted (e.g., local agriculture) to safeguard the fragile ecosystem.

About the Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary:

It is situated in the Chandigarh Union Territory and encompasses the Shivalik Hills’ Sukhna Lake catchment area. It hosts diverse fauna including Sambar deer, Barking deer, and wild boar, alongside various bird, reptile, and amphibian species. The sanctuary features a blend of forests, grasslands, and wetlands, with Sukhna Lake playing a vital role in its ecosystem.

ANSWER WRITING

Q. Explain How can the alteration of attitude and behaviour significantly contribute to resolving the issue of food wastage in India?

India’s battle against food wastage is not just an environmental concern but also a critical factor in its quest for food security and nutritional well-being. Addressing this requires a transformative approach towards individual and collective attitudes and behaviors regarding food consumption and wastage.

Magnitude of Food Wastage:

- India’s food wastage issue is profound, with **the economic value of post-harvest losses estimated at INR 926.51 billion (USD 15.19 billion) in 2014.** Despite this, research on the social, economic, and environmental aspects of food loss and waste remains limited.

Strategies for Behavioral Change:

- **Awareness and Education:** Initiatives like public campaigns and educational programs can significantly alter public perceptions and habits concerning food wastage.
- **Community Engagement:** Community-led programs that promote the sharing of excess food or composting can serve as practical models for reducing food wastage at the local level.

Implementing Solutions:

- **Adoption of Global Standards:** Utilizing the Food Loss and Waste Accounting and Reporting Standard can help create reliable data for framing policies and interventions.
- **Research and Policy Advocacy:** Comprehensive research agendas that delve into the national estimation of food waste, along with its broader impacts, can guide effective policy development.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Collaborations between the government, NGOs, and the private sector can drive innovation and scale solutions to reduce food wastage.

Case Studies and Examples:

- **The “No Food Waste” initiative in India,** which uses technology to distribute surplus food from restaurants and weddings to the needy, showcases how technology and community participation can address food wastage.

Tackling food wastage in India demands an integrated approach, emphasizing both behavioral change and systemic solutions. By fostering awareness, adopting best practices, and encouraging innovation, India can not only reduce food wastage but also take a significant step towards achieving its sustainability and food security goals. This collaborative effort, encompassing all sectors of society, has the potential to create a resilient and sustainable food system.

MCQs

- Which of the following statements best describes the impacts of Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFPR)?
 - (a) **Increased FLFPR often leads to higher economic growth and productivity due to a larger workforce contributing to the economy.**
 - (b) Decreased FLFPR results in reduced gender inequality as women have more time to focus on household responsibilities and caregiving.
 - (c) A higher FLFPR typically leads to lower fertility rates as women prioritize their careers over starting families.

- (d) Countries with low FLFPR tend to have higher rates of poverty and income inequality due to underutilization of female talent and potential.
2. Which one of the following statements accurately describes the term 'Polar Vortex'?
- (a) A phenomenon caused by the Earth's tilt on its axis, leading to extreme cold temperatures in polar regions.
 (b) A high-pressure system that forms over the North and South Poles, causing a rapid decrease in temperature.
(c) A large-scale circulation pattern that typically forms during winter, trapping cold air within the Arctic region.
 (d) An atmospheric disturbance characterized by a sudden shift in wind direction, leading to unpredictable weather patterns
3. Which of the following statements about the 'Southern Ocean' is accurate?
- (a) It is the smallest of the Earth's five oceans.
 (b) The Southern Ocean is located entirely within the Antarctic Circle.
(c) It was officially recognized as a distinct ocean by the International Hydrographic Organization in 2000.
 (d) The Southern Ocean is characterized by its warm waters and tropical climate.
4. Consider the following statements about the Suidha portal:
1. This portal was developed by the Reserve Bank of India.
 2. It caters to permissions for foreign direct investments in India.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only
 (b) 2 only
 (c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
5. Consider the following nations:
1. Bahrain
 2. Kuwait
 3. Oman
 4. Qatar
 5. Iran
 6. Iraq
- How many of the above nations are part of the Gulf Cooperation Council?
- (a) Only three **(b) Only four**
 (c) Only five (d) All six
6. Consider the following statements about the 'Pre- and Polyfluoroalkyl substances'(PFAS):
1. PFAS are naturally occurring compounds found in soil and water.
 2. PFAS have been widely used in nonstick cookware, stain-resistant fabrics, and firefighting foams.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
 (c) Both 1 and 2
 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
7. Consider the following statements about the Spotted Deer:
1. It is a deer species native to the Indian subcontinent.
 2. It is listed as Endangered in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only**
 (b) 2 only
 (c) Both 1 and 2
 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
8. Consider the following statements:
1. Under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, translocation of animal species can be carried out for the purpose of scientific management.
 2. Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species, 1979 recognizes invasive alien species as a major threat to the environment.
 3. By Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, 2022, Countries have committed to reduce the rate of introduction and establishment of invasive alien species by at least 50% by 2030.
- Select the correct answer using the codes given below:
- (a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3
9. In which of the following States/UTs is Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary located?
- (a) Ladakh (b) Odisha
 (c) Rajasthan **(d) Chandigarh**
10. In which one of the following agricultural practices are trees integrated with agricultural crops to improve soil health, water management, and biodiversity, particularly in areas with limited rainfall?
- (a) No-till farming
 (b) Slash-and-burn agriculture
(c) Dryland agroforestry
 (d) Hydroponics