

**POLITY & GOVERNANCE**

**Law is not enough**

**In Context:** The President recently signed the Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Eighth Amendment) Bill, 2023.

It intends to reserve one-third of the total number of seats in the Lok Sabha, state legislative assemblies, and the National Capital Territory of Delhi Legislative Assembly for women. The Women's Reservation Bill, as it was formerly known, has been renamed the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam.

**Historical debate over women's reservation in politics**

- ✓ It has been a long struggle for women in India for the right to equal participation in politics.
- ✓ While there has been near unanimity among women as far as the goal of equal representation in legislative bodies is concerned, there are several differences on the approaches and methods (especially on the issue of reservation for women) for the achievement of these goals.
- ✓ Stalwarts such as Sarojini Naidu, Muthulakshmi Reddy and others in the pre-Independence period had diverging and complex views on the issue of reservation for women in legislative bodies.
- ✓ The Constituent Assembly debates feature some leading women who resisted the idea of reservation for women in any form. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, for instance, was of the opinion that such measures would weaken women's self-esteem and confidence while also threatening the goal of national unity.

**New phase for women's voice after 1980s**

- ✓ The revitalized women's movement of the 1980s, as well as the changing political environment of India in the 1990s, particularly in north India, generated new ideas about quotas for women.
- ✓ While women political activists within political parties and civil society organizations generally agreed on the need for measures to increase women's political participation, there were sharp disagreements about the role of caste-based quotas in the Women's Reservation Bill, which was introduced in Parliament in 1996.
- ✓ The struggles of Dalit, Adivasi, and other marginalized women revealed that women face exclusion owing to a range of discriminatory institutions such as caste, religion, class, age, and aptitude.
- ✓ The inability to reach an agreement on the issue of caste-based quotas within the proposed Women's Reservation Bill in its earlier forms, saw the Bill languish in Parliament until now.

**Significance of the Women's Reservation Bill**

**Gender Equality**

- ✓ **Historical Underrepresentation:** Historically, women have been significantly underrepresented in India's political landscape. This underrepresentation perpetuates gender inequality as it restricts women's ability to influence policies and decisions that affect their lives.
- ✓ **Political Empowerment:** The Women's Reservation Bill is a proactive measure to ensure that women have a fair opportunity to participate in the highest levels of decision-making in the country, promoting gender equality in politics.
- ✓ **Symbolic Importance:** It signifies that Indian society recognizes and values the contributions of women in politics, sending a message that women's voices and perspectives are essential in shaping the nation's future.

**Empowerment**

- ✓ Women's Reservation Bill empowers women by allowing them equal access to the political arena. It dismantles conventional barriers and prejudices that may have previously hindered women from entering politics, such as social norms and a lack of chances.
- ✓ **Improving Political Skills:** As more women enter politics and gain experience, their leadership and governance skills improve. This empowerment extends beyond politics, as women who achieve success in politics can serve as role models for others, spurring increased engagement in a variety of disciplines.
- ✓ **Policy Influence:** Through political participation, women gain the power to influence policies that directly impact their lives and those of their communities. This empowerment translates into tangible changes in areas such as healthcare, education, gender-based violence, and economic opportunities.

**Diverse Perspectives**

- ✓ **Addressing Gender-Specific Issues:** Increased female representation in politics brings attention to gender-specific issues that may have been overlooked in the past. Women often advocate for policies related to maternal health, childcare, gender-based violence, and economic opportunities that directly affect women and families.
- ✓ **Enhancing Decision-Making:** Diverse perspectives lead to more comprehensive and balanced decision-making. When women are actively involved in policymaking, the resulting laws and regulations are more likely to consider the needs and interests of the entire population, not just a segment of it.

- ✓ Social and Cultural Change: Female political leaders can challenge traditional gender roles and norms, inspiring broader social and cultural change. Their presence in politics can help break down stereotypes and create a more inclusive and gender-equal society.

**Concerns have been raised about its implementation after 2026.**

- ✓ The Vajpayee government revised Article 82 (the 84th amendment to the Constitution) in 2001, thus prohibiting any delimitation of constituencies before the 2026 census.
- ✓ This means that the provisions of the Bill under consideration can only be implemented after delimitation (of Lok Sabha constituencies based on population) based on a Census conducted after 2026.
- ✓ Multiple variables and the lack of a clear schedule have raised doubts about the legislation's aims.

**The way forward**

- ✓ The passage of this Bill must be contextualized within the prevalent political rhetoric that strives to "respect, protect, and venerate" (vandan) women while remaining indifferent to the numerous ways in which women are barred from work, exposed to violence (both at home and in public), and subjected to sexual harassment.
- ✓ Women are viewed as passive beneficiaries of state handouts rather as engaged and agential citizens with rights.
- ✓ In such a context, the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam (2023) is a gift rather than the long-denied right of women. It must be viewed in the perspective of a society wrestling with the erosion of basic civility and growing intolerance of differences.

**Conclusion:**

- ✓ However, the strength of democratic forces outside Parliament and the state assemblies would determine whether or not these women are able to set the agenda and bring their issue to the table.
- ✓ Finally, the fond hope is that the women who get to Parliament and other legislative bodies will turn the tables when the opportunity arises.

**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIP**

**Global Dispute Settlement , India and Appellate Review**

**In Context: Among its many commitments, the recently concluded G-20 Declaration reiterated the need to pursue WTO reform to improve all of its functions and conduct proactive discussions "to ensure a fully and well-functioning dispute settlement system accessible to all members by 2024."**

**About**

- ✓ Because the United States has blocked the appointment of appellate body members, the WTO's dispute settlement system, which is designed as a two-tier panel cum appellate body structure, has been inoperable since 2019.
- ✓ The WTO's dispute settlement system, which allows for appellate review and provides means to enforce judgements, has issued over 493 rulings since its inception in 1995.
- ✓ To put this in context, the International Court of Justice has only heard about 190 cases since its inception in 1947.
- ✓ The appellate body has played a critical role in providing consistency and predictability in verdicts, hence restoring trust in the WTO dispute settlement process.
- ✓ While the commitment expressed in the G-20 Declaration is heartening, whether it will have an appellate process or just be a one-stage panel process, given Washington's continued opposition to an appellate review process, remains to be seen.

**On the ISDS**

- ✓ While the future of the WTO's appellate process is unknown, another area of international law in the early stages of an appellate procedure is international investment law through investor-state dispute resolution (ISDS), a common component of Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITs).
- ✓ ISDS is now the primary method for resolving international investment law issues.
- ✓ India's experience with ISDS has been mixed, with five adverse awards, four in favor, and several ongoing claims.

**Benefits of an appellate review**

- ✓ A critical structural facet of the ISDS mechanism is that it operates through ad hoc or one-off arbitration tribunals without any appellate review.
- ✓ In international investment law, hundreds of ISDS tribunals operating under different arbitral institutions have, on several occasions, offered diverging interpretations of the same treaty provision.
- ✓ Likewise, these tribunals have reached opposite conclusions despite interpreting and applying the same treaty to the same facts.
- ✓ The absence of an appellate review mechanism has meant that inconsistent and incoherent decisions and legal reasoning dot the landscape of international investment law.

- ✓ This has caused instability and improbability for states and foreign investors, making the regime chaotic.
- ✓ An appellate review mechanism will allow for rectifying errors of law and harmonising diverging interpretations.
- ✓ It will have the power to uphold, modify, or reverse the decision of a first-tier tribunal and thus bring coherence and consistency, which, in turn, will infuse predictability and certainty into the ISDS system.
- ✓ An appellate mechanism will also be better than existing mechanisms such as the annulment proceedings, which only apply to arbitrations administered by the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes.

#### **India's position**

- ✓ Although India has not made an official comment on the subject, India presumably accepts the concept of an ISDS appellate review because Article 29 of the Indian model BIT mentions it.
- ✓ Given India's worries regarding inconsistency and incoherence in the ISDS system, India will benefit from the establishment of an appellate review mechanism.

#### **The way forward**

- ✓ Since India's goal has always been to construct a rule-based global order, it should support an appellate review that will give governments and investors more trust in international investment law.

### **PRELIM FACTS**

#### **1. Conocarpus plants**

**Context:** The Gujarat government has banned the planting of ornamental Conocarpus trees in forest or non-forest areas, citing their adverse impacts on environment and human health.

##### **About**

- ✓ Conocarpus is a rapidly spreading alien mangrove plant.
- ✓ Conocarpus is a genus of two flowering plants in the Combretaceae family that are native to tropical regions of the world.
- ✓ One of the species is a common mangrove, whereas the other is found only along the southern Red Sea coasts, where it grows alongside seasonal rivers.
- ✓ C. erectus is native to the tropical American shores north of Bermuda.
- ✓ C. lancifolius is native to Somalia and Yemen, and it is grown in eastern and northern Africa, as well as the Arabian Peninsula.

##### **Why is it banned:**

- ✓ Earlier, Telangana too had banned the plant species.
- ✓ Research reports have highlighted adverse impacts/ disadvantages of this species on environment and human health.
- ✓ Trees of this species flower in winter and spread pollen in nearby areas.
- ✓ It is learnt that this is causing diseases like cold, cough, asthma, allergy etc.
- ✓ Roots of this species go deep inside the soil and develop extensively, damaging telecommunication lines, drainage lines and freshwater systems.
- ✓ It also kills off competition.
- ✓ Within a decade, it had taken over the Delhi Ridge, killing the native trees like acacia, dhak, kadamb, amaltas, flame-of-the-forest, etc.
- ✓ Along with the trees disappeared the fauna — birds, butterflies, leopards, porcupines and jackals.
- ✓ The tree also depletes the water table of the area it is planted in.

#### **2. Urban Shift Asia Forum**

**Context:** Recently, the first UrbanShift Forum (Asia) was held in New Delhi.

##### **About**

- ✓ The primary objective was to provide training and capacity-building to regional cities for integrated and sustainable urban development.
- ✓ UrbanShift is a Global Environment Facility(GEF)-funded program within Urban Development and the WRI Ross Center for Sustainable Cities.
- ✓ It is led by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and implemented in partnership with C40 Cities, International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), UNDP, Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank.

#### **3. Noor-3 Satellite**

**Context:** Iran recently launched Noor-3 imaging satellite into space.

##### **About**

##### **Noor-3 Satellite:**

- ✓ Iran has created an imaging satellite.
- ✓ It is a spy satellite with possible surveillance capabilities, bolstering Iran's space capabilities.

- ✓ Its orbit is 450 kilometers (280 miles) above the Earth's surface.
- ✓ The three-stage Qased, or message carrier, launched it.
- ✓ The spacecraft's two predecessors, Noor-1 and Noor-2, launched atop Qased rockets in April 2020 and March 2022, respectively.
- ✓ Noor-1 returned to Earth in April 2022, however Noor-2 remains functioning and may collaborate with Noor 3 when it becomes operational.

**Who carried out the launch?**

- ✓ The launch was carried out by the aerospace arm of Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard.
- ✓ The Guard operates its own space program parallel to Iran's regular armed forces and answers only to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.
- ✓ It launched its first satellite into space in April 2020 (Noor-1).

**4. CALIPSO MISSION**

**Context: The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has announced the termination of the CALIPSO mission, which studied climate, weather, and air quality.**

**About**

- ✓ CALIPSO (Cloud-Aerosol LIDAR and Infrared Pathfinder Satellite Observations) is a mission dedicated to studying how clouds and aerosols impact the Earth's climate.
- ✓ It is a joint project between NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) and CNES (Centre National d'Études Spatiales), the French space agency.
- ✓ Launched in 2006, CALIPSO is a satellite-based observatory.
- ✓ Scientists are using data from CALIPSO to construct 3D models of the atmosphere that improve our ability to predict future climate change.
- ✓ CALIPSO has been part of a constellation of spacecraft called the "A-Train," including Aqua, Aura, and PARASOL spacecraft, dedicated to studying the Earth's weather and environment.

**Instrumentation:**

- ✓ It carries CALIOP, a two-wavelength, polarization-sensitive lidar, along with two passive sensors operating in the visible and thermal infrared spectral regions.
- ✓ The lidar emitted pulses of laser light and measured the amount of light that was scattered back by clouds and aerosols. This information was used to create vertical profiles of cloud and aerosol properties, such as their height, thickness, and optical depth.
- ✓ CALIOP is the first lidar to provide long-term atmospheric measurements from Earth's orbit.
- ✓ This information helps scientists create three-dimensional profiles of cloud and aerosol distributions.
- ✓ The mission recorded more than 10 billion LIDAR measurements and helped create thousands of scientific reports over its 17 years of operation. The researchers used a unique technique called 'circDR-Seq' to successfully extract circRNAs from HIV-1 infected T-cells (white blood cells) and identified a specific circRNA called ciTRAN, which plays a crucial role in viral replication.
- ✓ HIV-1 viral protein R (VpR) is a multifunctional protein that plays distinct roles in many stages of the HIV-1 viral life cycle and influences immune cell anti-HIV capabilities.
- ✓ It was also shown that HIV-1 infection increases ciTRAN expression in a Vpr-dependent manner, and that ciTRAN interacts with SRSF1, a protein known to suppress HIV-1 transcription."

**5. Antimatter**

**Context: Recent CERN experiments have shown that antimatter falls, confirming yet another component of the general theory.**

**About**

- ✓ Antimatter is the same as ordinary matter except that it has the opposite electric charge.
- ✓ It is also known as "mirror" matter.
- ✓ For instance, an electron, which has a negative charge, has an antimatter partner known as a positron. A positron is a particle with the same mass as an electron but a positive charge.
- ✓ The antimatter particles corresponding to electrons, protons, and neutrons are called positrons, antiprotons, and antineutrons; collectively they are referred to as antiparticles.
- ✓ These anti-particles can combine to form anti-atoms and, in principle, could even form anti-matter regions of our universe.
- ✓ Matter and antimatter cannot coexist at close range for more than a small fraction of a second because they collide with and annihilate each other, releasing large quantities of energy in the form of gamma rays or elementary particles.
- ✓ Antimatter was created along with matter after the Big Bang.
- ✓ Humans have created antimatter particles using ultra-high-speed collisions at huge particle accelerators such as the Large Hadron Collider, which is located outside Geneva and operated by CERN (the European Organization for Nuclear Research).

- ✓ There are also naturally produced antiparticles made sporadically throughout the universe.

**ANSWER WRITING**

**GS 4- ETHICS CASE STUDIES**

**Q. You are the District Collector of a drought-prone area. The government has announced a relief package for the farmers, which includes waiving off their loans and providing them with free seeds and fertilizers. However, you find out that some of the local politicians and officials are misusing the funds and diverting the resources for their personal gain. They are also threatening the farmers who complain or refuse to cooperate with them. As a responsible officer, how will you deal with this situation? Explain the ethical issues involved and the course of action you will take.**

**Introduction:** The situation described in the case study is a clear example of corruption, nepotism and abuse of power by the local politicians and officials. It is also a violation of the rights and interests of the farmers, who are already suffering from the adverse effects of drought. As the District Collector, I have a duty to ensure that the relief package reaches the intended beneficiaries and that the public funds are utilized properly and transparently.

**The Ethical Issues Involved in this situation are:**

- ✓ **Honesty and Integrity:** As a civil servant, I have to uphold the values of honesty and integrity in my work, expose and prevent any malpractices or irregularities in the implementation of the relief package and resist any pressure or temptation to compromise with the corrupt elements or to overlook their wrongdoings.
- ✓ **Accountability and Transparency:** As a public servant, I have to be accountable and transparent to the people and the government, to ensure that the relief package is distributed fairly and equitably among the eligible farmers and maintain proper records and documentation of the funds and resources allocated and utilized and report any deviations or discrepancies to the higher authorities and take corrective measures.
- ✓ **Empathy and Compassion:** As individuals, it is essential to empathize and sympathize with the challenges faced by farmers, who are experiencing hardship and distress as a result of drought. One must demonstrate compassion and sensitivity towards their needs and concerns, actively listen to their problems, and ensure they receive timely and sufficient assistance and support.
- ✓ **Justice and Fairness:** As a leader, I have to ensure that justice and fairness are done to all the stakeholders involved in this situation, protect the rights and interests of the farmers from any exploitation or discrimination by the local politicians and officials and also take strict action against those who are involved in corruption or misappropriation of funds or resources.

**The course of action I will take in this situation are:**

- ✓ **Conduct an Inquiry:** I will conduct an inquiry into the allegations of corruption and mismanagement in the implementation of the relief package and will collect evidence and testimonies from various sources, such as farmers, officials, NGOs, media, etc. I will verify the facts and figures related to the funds and resources allocated and utilized. I will identify the culprits and quantify their extent of involvement.
- ✓ **Take Action:** Based on the findings of the inquiry, I will take appropriate action against those who are found guilty of corruption or misappropriation of funds or resources. I will initiate disciplinary or legal proceedings against them as per the rules and regulations. I will also recover the money or assets that they have siphoned off from the public exchequer.
- ✓ **Redress Grievances:** I will redress the grievances of the farmers who have been cheated or deprived of their rightful share of the relief package. I will ensure that they receive their due benefits as soon as possible and will also provide them with alternative sources of income or livelihood, such as employment generation schemes, skill development programs, etc.
- ✓ **Improve Governance:** I will improve the governance and administration of the relief package by introducing reforms and innovations. I will adopt measures such as online registration, verification, monitoring, auditing, etc., to ensure efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability. I will also involve civil society organizations, media, etc., to create awareness, participation and feedback among the farmers.

**Conclusion:**

- ✓ The case study presents a challenging situation for me as a District Collector. However, by applying ethical principles and values, I can overcome this challenge successfully. By doing so, I can not only fulfill my professional obligations but also serve my personal convictions.

**MCQs**

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| 1. Consider the following statements regarding African Union (AU). | 1. Less than half of the countries in Africa are part of African Union (AU). |
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2. Sirte Declaration called for the establishment of the African Union.
3. Recently African Union was admitted as a member to the G20.
- How many of the above statements is/are correct?
- a) Only one  
**b) Only two**  
c) All three  
d) None
2. Consider the following statements regarding the provisions of E-Waste (Management) Rules 2022.
1. Producers of electronic goods have to ensure that some percentage of their electronic waste is collected and recycled.
2. The Central Pollution Control Board shall conduct testing of all electrical and electronic equipment to verify the compliance of reduction of hazardous substances provisions.
- How many of the above statements is/are incorrect?
- a) 1 only  
**b) 2 only**  
c) Both 1 and 2  
d) Neither 1 nor 2
3. Antimatter is different from ordinary matter as:
- a) Antimatter has a different atomic structure  
**b) Antimatter has an opposite electric charge**  
c) Antimatter has a different mass  
d) Antimatter has a different strength
4. Consider the following statements regarding the CALIPSO Mission, recently seen in the news:
1. It is a mission dedicated to exploring the outer planets of the solar system.
2. It is a joint project between the European Space Agency and ISRO.
- 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 statements regarding the Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP):
1. It aims at enhancing governance and improving the quality of life across all the districts in India.
2. It will be attained by converging existing schemes, defining outcomes and monitoring them on a constant basis.
- 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
6. Which of the following countries created the Nour-3 imaging satellite, which was recently in the news?
- a) Azerbaijan  
b) Saudi Arabia  
**c) Iran**  
d) UAE
7. Consider the following statements regarding the e-cabinet system:
1. It is a software site that allows state governments to hold Cabinet meetings online.
2. The National Informatics Centre (NIC) created it.
- 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. The CRIIO 4 GOOD Initiative, which was recently featured in the news, is a:
- a) **life skills learning module**  
b) banking awareness program  
c) strategy to modify people's food habits  
d) program to reduce carbon dioxide emissions
9. With reference to Pink bollworm (PBW) consider the following statements:
1. It is a pest that attacks cotton.
2. It has been recorded in practically all cotton-growing countries throughout the world.
- 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
10. Consider the following statements, with respect to Law Commission of India
1. It is a non-statutory body which is constituted by a notification of the Government of India
2. Recently, Government has constituted the 22nd Law Commission of India for a period of three year
- 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