

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Context: The nature of climate justice in India as it warms

The G20 summit that was held in Delhi in September 2023 agreed on tripling renewable energy capacity and a voluntary doubling of the rate of energy efficiency improvement by 2030. However the most divisive topic, the phase-out of fossil fuels, which is the primary cause of the global catastrophe, was not resolved by consensus in the Delhi Declaration on the climate issue

➤ **Energy transition**

- It frequently happens that those who contribute to climate change do not experience its effects. Consequently, any attempt at mitigation must reverse this carbon unfairness by placing the financial burden of the energy transition on the wealthier nations or regions within a nation.
- Although these two concepts are stated on a global scale, there is no discussion of how such politics and policies impact the home front

➤ **Position of India**

- India's foreign policy approach to common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR) in international negotiations, which permits developing nations in the global south to prioritise economic growth and development over climate mitigation, has largely shaped the country's position on the issue.
- The nation's traditionally lower emissions have meant that prioritising economic expansion above climate concerns has made sense. This strategy avoids talking about climate justice in India, especially when it comes to how it affects inequality by caste, class, and geography.

➤ **Inequality Index**

- The impoverished are disproportionately impacted by climate change and the energy transition, as is now widely documented worldwide. Droughts and other climate-related issues have made the agrarian crisis and related economic activity worse.
- Rainfall, temperature, and significant weather variations all have a direct impact on agricultural productivity, which exacerbates farmers' income losses. Fishing villages are suffering as a result of the nation's fish stocks being squeezed by rising ocean temperatures.
- Even if there is a complicated relationship between inequality and carbon emissions, it is obvious that equitable and sustainable development requires tackling socioeconomic and environmental imbalances at the same time.

- It is now clear that societies with lower levels of equity typically produce more emissions per unit of economic activity. India is slipping into that trap because of its incredibly unequal economic structure.

- Experience from around the world indicates that more uneven environments hinder the kinds of societal responses required to address climate change, like public action and state capacity. In these kinds of situations, the social cost of carbon emissions increases dramatically.

- Acknowledging and reducing the obstacles these inequality matrices pose to efficient climate action is essential to building a more equitable and sustainable future.



INDIA'S PANCHAMRUT

PM SHRI NARENDRA MODI LAYS DOWN INDIA'S COMMITMENT TOWARDS CLIMATE ACTION.

1. Develop **non-fossil energy capacity** to reach 500 GW by 2030.
2. Meet **50% of the country's energy requirements** using renewable energy by 2030.
3. Reduce the total projected **carbon emission by one billion tonnes** between now and 2030.
4. Reduce the **carbon intensity of the economy** to less than 45% by 2030.
5. Achieve **net zero emissions** by 2070.

➤ **Developing sustainably**

- India's energy transition initiatives, while important, will impact the poor and deepen class, caste, and regional divides if climate change exacerbates already existing imbalances.
- India's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) seek to guarantee that clean energy accounts for 40% of installed power production capacity. By 2070, the nation aims to attain net-zero emissions. An ambitious goal like this requires careful consideration of its consequences.

➤ **Transition to Renewable**

- Adoption of renewable energy is important, but it shouldn't make inequality worse already. For example, areas with a high reliance on coal production encounter particular difficulties. These areas frequently experience poverty, poor employment quality, and pollution.
- It necessitates a purposeful effort on preserving livelihoods, providing substitute employment options, and making sure that groups that are already disadvantaged are not negatively affected. "Taking into account the imperatives of a just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs per nationally defined development priorities" is the focus of the 2015 Paris Agreement.
- The employment creation and skill sets needed in the renewable energy sector vary greatly from those of the fossil fuel industry per unit of output.
- Many fossil fuel companies operate in the public sector and play a vital role in providing Dalits and other members of India's lower castes with employment possibilities.
- The transition to renewable energy may put an end to the generational mobility that these marginalized populations have managed to achieve.
- Strategies aimed at reducing inequality and investing in green projects must be implemented concurrently to guarantee a fair and sustainable transition.

➤ **Encouraging federalism**

- Similarly, areas that depend significantly on coal production can lose their means of subsistence. There is a correlation between the energy source split in India and the geographical differences in economic inequality.
- In the less developed regions of eastern and central India, coal is the most cost-effective energy source; however, in the wealthier regions of southern and western India, renewable energy hubs powered by solar and wind photovoltaics (PV) technology can be found.

➤ **Federal agreement**

- The federal governance structure of India suggests that sub national administrations are heavily involved in tackling climate-related issues.
- Their priorities, meanwhile, can diverge greatly from those of the Union administration. Analyzing sub national reactions shows how important State entities are to addressing the problem of mitigating climate disparity.
- It has been observed that state governments carry out policies that frequently conflict with the states' goals for development, including those outlined by the federal government regarding climate justice, climate adaptation, and disaster management.

Conclusion:

To understand how policy alignment and collaboration may be achieved across the levels of government, we need to explore the complex relationships between fiscal federalism and climate mitigation.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

CONTEXT: China Pakistan Economic Corridor and its implications on India

China's ambitious **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)** is celebrating its 10th anniversary. This colossal project, in 2013, aims to reshape global trade and infrastructure development.

What is the Belt and Road Initiative?

- The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a comprehensive development plan designed to improve international collaboration and connectivity.
- It was introduced in 2013 with the goal of creating a network of land and marine routes that would connect Southeast Asia, Central Asia, the Gulf area, Africa, and Europe.
- Originally intended to be called "One Belt, One Road," the project was renamed as the "BRI" to reflect a more inclusive and open approach rather than one that was dominated by China.

➤ **BRI Routes:**

- The two primary components of the plan are the Silk Road Economic Belt and the Maritime Silk Road.
- **Silk Road Economic Belt:** This BRI component aims to enhance trade, infrastructure, and connectivity throughout Eurasia by means of an overland transportation network.
- **Maritime Silk Road:** This element stresses maritime cooperation and connections through ports, shipping routes, and projects involving maritime infrastructure; it starts via the South China Sea and travels through Indo-China and South-East Asia before circling the Indian Ocean to reach Africa and Europe.

➤ **Objective**

- The principal aim of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is to increase global connectivity through the improvement of commerce, infrastructure, and economic cooperation.
- Numerous projects are included in the programme, including as ports, motorways, railroads, and energy infrastructure.

➤ **Geographical Corridors:**

- Six important growth routes are envisioned for the land-based Silk Road Economic Belt:

✓ Economic Corridor between China and Pakistan (CPEC).

✓ New Economic Corridor for the Eurasian Land Bridge.

✓ The Indo-Chinese Peninsula-China Economic Corridor.

✓ Economic Corridor: China, Mongolia, Russia.

✓ Economic Corridor: China, Central Asia, West Asia.

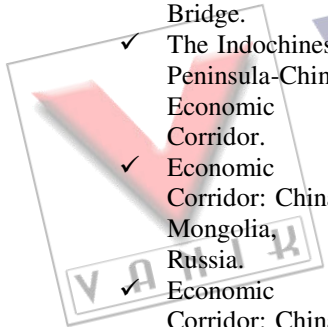
✓ Economic Corridor between China and Myanmar

- Initially The Bangladesh-China –India-Myanmar (BCIM) Economic Corridor was part of the BRI.
- Later, after expressing its opposition to the CPEC, which stretches from Xinjiang in western china through Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) to the Arabian Sea port of Gwadar, India decided not to join the BRI.
- The BCIM corridor has also stagnated as a result of India's exclusion, and the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor has now been established in its stead.

Economic Impact:

- As a result of increased commerce and investment with China, participant countries in the Belt and Road Initiative have benefited from preferential treatment and favorable policies.
- Between 2013 and 2022, trade with BRI partners grew at a 6.4% annual rate, reaching USD 19.1 trillion.

➤ **India's stance on Belt and Road Initiative (BRI):**



- India opposes the proposal due of concerns about transparency and sovereignty. India has not approved the BRI joint statements released by the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and has skipped the BRI summits hosted by China in 2017 and 2019.
- The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which crosses through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), a region that India claims as its own, is the primary reason for India's opposition to the BRI.
- Additionally, India contends that the BRI projects shouldn't put the host nations in danger of debt traps or other financial difficulties, and instead should uphold international conventions, the rule of law, and financial viability.
- Alternatively, India has supported other programmes related to connectivity, like the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII) a G7 programme to provide funding for infrastructure development in underdeveloped nations.
- **Issues concerned with BRI:**
 - Debt Burden: The BRI projects' sustainability and transparency with regard to debt, particularly in those with poor credit ratings, significant levels of corruption, and weak governments.
 - China has been accused by some opponents of practicing "debt-trap diplomacy," whereby it lends money to nations like Zambia and Sri Lanka that they eventually can't pay back and then seizes their strategic assets or demands political concessions in exchange.
- **Multinational Governance:**
 - The Belt and Road undertaking (BRI) is mostly a collection of bilateral projects rather than a multinational undertaking.
 - The BRI lacks a centralized governing framework, which makes it challenging to resolve concerns collectively, unlike programmes like the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).
 - This Decentralized strategy can lead to coordination and governance challenges.
- **Political Tensions:**
 - The execution of BRI projects has been impacted in some areas by geopolitical rivalry and disputes, such as the border issue between China and India.
 - The advancement of the effort may be hampered by these political issues.
- **Environmental and Social Concerns:**
 - The possible effects that BRI infrastructure development projects may have on the environment and society have drawn criticism.
 - It is difficult to make sure that BRI projects take local residents' welfare and the environment into account.
- **Geopolitical Concerns:**
 - The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has sparked worries about China's expanding power and control over vital infrastructure in partner nations.
 - Some nations have reconsidered their involvement in the effort as a result of these worries.

Conclusion:

India should leverage its strategic location and further work with like minded countries to participate in multilateral initiatives to have its strategic benefits to counter china

PRELIM FACTS

1. Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry (APAAR) to be rolled out across the nation

Context : Union Education Ministry has directed states to begin implementing the APAAR, also known as "One Nation, One Student ID."

- It is consistent with the National Digital Education Architecture (NDEAR), which was established in 2021 and serves as a catalyst for the New Education Policy (NEP) 2020.
- APAAR serves as a registry for institutions, students and faculty by creating lifelong credentials, and Academic Bank of Credits (ABC).
- ABC is an online repository of academic data that facilitates students' mobility among higher educational institutions.
- Each student (from pre-primary to higher education) will be assigned a unique identification number.
- **Significance**
 - Streamlining admissions for students transferring from high schools and colleges across the country.

- Tracking their academic progress and achievements in real time.
- Will also assist government authorities in tracking dropouts.
- Transparency and efficiency in the educational system are promoted.
- **Challenges in implementation**
 - The digital gap may limit access for pupils in remote locations.
 - Curriculum variations may result in non-uniform data collecting.
 - It creates privacy issues because access to students' personal information, among other things, would be necessary.

2. Regional Rapid Transit System - NaMo Bharat

Context: India's first indigenous mass rapid system, RRTS covering Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut section was inaugurated recently.

- Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) - The Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) is a new rail-based, semi-high-speed, high-frequency commuter transit system dedicated to regional connectivity.
- The RRTS, now known as NaMo Bharat, was meant to travel at 180 kmph.
- It is modeled after systems such as the RER in Paris, Germany, Austria, and the United States.
- Aim - To promote balanced and sustainable urban growth throughout the National Capital Region (NCR) by improving connectivity.
- Coverage - In the NCR, 8 RRTS corridors have been identified for development.
- Phase - I - Out of 8, 3 corridors have been prioritised to be implemented in Phase-I
 - Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut Corridor
 - Delhi-Gurugram-SNB-Alwar Corridor
 - Delhi-Panipat Corridor
- Construction & Implementation - National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC), a joint venture of the Union government and the governments of Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh.
 - NCRTC comes under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs

3. Minimum Support Price (MSP)

Context: Recently, government had increased the MSP for wheat by 7% (to Rs 2,275 per quintal for 2024-25), the highest in 9 years.

About:

MSP is the price at which the government is committed to buy produce from farmers if the market price falls below this threshold.

- The concept of MSPs was first proposed by the Government of India in the 1960s as a market intervention to protect agricultural producers against abrupt drops in farm prices.
- 22 crops are included (Kharif, Rabi, and commercial crops).
- It includes cereals (7), pulses (5), oilseeds (7), raw cotton, raw jute and copra.
- **Announcement** – At the beginning of the sowing season.
- **Price value** – On the basis of the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP).
- **Approving authority** – Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)
- **Factors considered before fixing the price**
 - Demand and supply of a commodity
 - Cost of production
 - Market price trends (both domestic and international)
 - Inter-crop price parity
 - Terms of trade between agriculture and non-agriculture (ratio of prices of farm inputs and farm outputs)
 - A minimum of 50% as the margin over the cost of production
 - Likely implications of an MSP on consumers
- **Cost provided** - The MS Swaminathan Commission had recommended C2+50% but the government is providing A2+50%.
- Calculation of Cost of Production
 - **A2** – Actual cost of farming including seeds, fertilisers and hired labour.
 - **A2+FL** – Includes value of unpaid labour of family workers in addition to A2

- C2 – Includes the cost of land rentals or interest on invested capital in addition to A2+FL
- Government announces Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) for sugarcane.

4.Kati Bihu

Context:

Recently, the Prime Minister of India extended best wishes on the auspicious occasion of Kati Bihu to the people of Assam.

About:

- In the northeastern state of Assam, Kati Bihu is observed.
- The name "Kati" means "to cut," and this celebration commemorates the time when rice saplings are relocated in the fields.
- It is also known as Kongali Bihu, where "Kongali" means "poor."
- In Assam, three Bihu festivals are observed: Bhogali or Magh Bihu in January, Rongali or Bohag Bihu in April, and Kati Bihu in May.

Significance:

- Kati Bihu falls during a month with few food resources.
- People ignite clay lamps or candles to illuminate their homes to celebrate.
- Lighting diyas near the Tulsi plant, which is venerated on this auspicious day, is an important part of the event.
- Furthermore, people plant a special lamp known as "Akash Banti" (Sky candle) on their paddy fields.
- These lamps are powered by mustard oil and sit on bamboo poles.
- It is believed that these lighted lamps will direct their forefathers to heaven.

5.Contempt Of Court

Context:

Recently, the Supreme Court (SC) has started Contempt of Court Proceedings against two members of the NCLAT (National Company Law Appellate Tribunal).

About:

Contempt of court, as a notion that tries to protect judicial institutions from malicious attacks and unjustified criticism, and as a legal instrument to penalize those who undermine its authority, has resurfaced in India.

How did the concept of contempt emerge?

- The concept of contempt of court dates back several centuries.
- It is a common law principle in England that tries to protect the king's judicial power, which was initially exercised by himself and then by a panel of judges acting in his name.
- Violations of the judges' orders were regarded as an insult to the king himself.

What are the legal grounds for contempt of court?

- Prior to independence, India had contempt laws.
- Contempt of court was included to the list of prohibitions on free speech and expression when the Constitution was written.
- The Supreme Court has the authority to penalize itself under Article 129 of the Constitution.
- Article 215 gave the High Courts an equivalent power.
- The theory is backed up by the Contempt of Courts Act of 1971.

What are the kinds of contempt of court?

- The law codifying contempt classifies it as civil and criminal.
- **Civil Contempt** – when someone wilfully disobeys a court order, or wilfully breaches an undertaking given to court.
- **Criminal Contempt** – consists of three forms
 - words, written or spoken, signs and actions that “scandalise” or “tend to scandalise” or “lower” or “tends to lower” the authority of any court
 - prejudices or interferes with any judicial proceeding and
 - interferes with or obstructs the administration of justice.
- Making allegations against the judiciary or individual judges, attributing motives to judgments and judicial functioning, and any scurrilous attack on the conduct of judges are normally considered matters that scandalize the judiciary.
- The rationale for this provision is that courts must be protected from tendentious attacks that lower its authority, defame its public image, and cause the public to lose faith in its impartiality.

- Contempt of court is punishable by simple imprisonment for a term of up to six months and/or a fine of up to RS. 2,000.

What is not contempt of court?

- Fair and truthful coverage of judicial proceedings does not constitute contempt of court.
- There is no reasonable criticism on the merits of a judicial order after a matter has been heard and decided.
- Truth as a defense to a contempt accusation: For many years, truth was rarely considered a defense to a contempt charge. There was an idea that the judiciary tended to conceal any misconduct among its individual members in order to safeguard the institution's image. The Act was revised in 2006 to include truth as a legitimate defense provided it was in the public interest and was used in good faith.

ANSWER WRITING

Q. Describe the differences between political parties and pressure groups. Examine how pressure organisations have contributed to the nation's democratic process.

Introduction

A pressure group is a collection of individuals who are formally organized to advance and safeguard their shared values. Interest groups or vested groups are other names for the pressure groups. Its actions are limited to protecting and advancing the interests of its members through lobbying the government. They are focused on particular programmes and topics. A political party, on the other hand, is characterized as an organized organisation of individuals with shared political goals and viewpoints that strive to influence public policy by electing its candidates to public office.

➤ The distinction between political parties and pressure groups

- The majority of pressure organisations are unofficial, arrogant, and underappreciated groups whereas Political parties are recognised, official, and transparent organisations.
- Political parties embrace the entire nation and its followers know no bounds of geography, class occupation. Pressure group on the other hand typically emphasizes certain areas of interest, providing sharper and more concrete manifestations that can be done by Political parties.
- Political parties implement the intended change using constitutional means in an effort to influence their views whereas pressure groups place a great deal of pressure on the legislature, Executive and the judiciary.
- Political parties help the government's Executive, Legislative and Judiciary work more effectively whereas members of pressure group are limited to those who share their values, beliefs and social standing.

➤ The function of pressure organizations in bolstering the nation's democratic process:

- **Accountability and transparency:** Pressure organizations work to increase accountability and transparency by closely examining laws and policies of the government and making recommendations for required reforms.
- **Give the public's interests a tangible form:** pressure groups act as a go-between for the public and the government. The general public does not have organized interests. Pressure organizations help to give people's interests a tangible form. Pressure groups play an important role in the establishment and aggregation of interests.
- **Prevent the concentration of power:** The effective operation of democracy depends on the existence of pressure organizations. They are important institutions that act as a middleman between the community and the government, distributing political power and providing important checks and balance to concentration of power.
- **Serving as a safety valve:** Pressure organizations give people a forum to air their complaints and serve as such. This facilitates the process of social assimilation.
- **Democratic rights and political participation:** Pressure groups advocate for ways for citizens to participate in politics without having to formally join a party. Additionally, they support the preservation of the democratic rights to free speech, assembly, and association.
- **A force for change:** By bringing the government's attention to the socioeconomic concerns of a varied segment of society, pressure organisations can act as forces for change.
- For instance: The Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan's (MKSS) campaign resulted in the enactment of the Right to Information Act (RTI). Similarly, the Backward and Minority Communities Employees Federation, or BAMCEF, is a body that opposes caste discrimination and is primarily composed of government workers.

Conclusion: Therefore, political parties and pressure organizations are extra-constitutional organizations that are vital to the political system. The pressure organizations offer aid by educating the parties about the interests of their members, encouraging the exchange of ideas among members, and providing personnel. In contrast, one of the main roles of political parties is to satisfy their needs. Despite their differences, their connection is obviously close.

MCQs

1. With reference to 'Niemann-Pick Disease' consider the following statements
 1. It is a rare genetic disorder in which sphingomyelin accumulates in lysosomes inside cells.
 2. This disease can affect the brain, nerves, liver, spleen, bone marrow and, in severe cases, lungs
 3. It is notified as the ailment under the National Policy for Rare Diseases.
 How many statement(s) given above are correct?
 (a) Only one (b) **Only two**
 (c) All three (d) None
2. 'TV-D1 Mission' which was recently in news is related to
 (a) Chandrayaan 3 (b) **Gaganyaan**
 (c) Aditya L1 mission (d) Shukrayaan
3. The consumption of insects as food is known as?
 (a) Ichthyology (b) Gerontophagy
 (c) **Entomophagy** (d) Pedogophagy
4. With reference to Tamil Bhakti Tradition, consider the following statements:
 1. The Alvars were a group of twelve Shaiva saint-poets.
 2. The Nayanars were a group of sixty-three Vaishnava saint-poets.
 3. Odhuvars were the high priests in Tamil Nadu's Hindu temples.
 How many of the statements given above are correct?
 (a) Only one (b) Only two
 (c) All three (d) **None**
5. With reference to Sinai Peninsula, consider the following statements:
 1. The Sinai Peninsula is a triangle-shaped peninsula in Israel.
 2. The peninsula includes the Suez Canal, which is a man-made waterway that connects the Mediterranean Sea to the Persian Sea.
 Which of the statements given above is/are incorrect?
 (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
 (c) **Both 1 and 2** (d) Neither 1 nor 2
6. With reference to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), consider the following statements:
 1. It aims to link Southeast Asia, Central Asia, the Gulf region, Africa and Europe with a network of land and sea routes.
 2. Silk Road Economic Belt is dedicated to improving connectivity, infrastructure, and trade links across Eurasia through a network of overland transportation routes.
 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. Which among the following Committees established in India can be associated with Police Reforms:
 1. Padmanabhaiah Committee (2000)
 2. Malimath Committee (2000)
 3. Justice JS Verma Committee (2012)
 Select the correct answer using the code given below:
 (a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 only
 (c) 2 and 3 only (d) **1, 2 and 3**
8. With reference to Over The Top (OTT) platforms, consider the following statements:
 1. OTT platforms, originally content hosts, expanded to produce and stream various media like short films, feature movies, documentaries, and web series.
 2. They are governed by the Information Technology Rules, 2021.
 3. They come under the jurisdiction of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI).
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 (a) **1 and 2 only** (b) 2 and 3 only
 (c) 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3 only
9. With reference to the Ganga River Dolphins, consider the following statements:
 1. They hunt by emitting ultrasonic sounds, which bounces off of fish and other prey, enabling them to "see" an image in their mind.
 2. They can only live in freshwater and is essentially blind.
 3. It is the National aquatic animal of India and state aquatic animal of Assam.
 How many of the above statements are correct?
 (a) Only one (b) Only two
 (c) **All three** (d) None
10. Consider the following countries:
 1. United kingdom
 2. India
 3. Turkey
 4. Sweden
 How many of the above have conducted a successful uterine transplantation?
 (a) Only one (b) Only two
 (c) Only three (d) **All of the above**