14 May 2024

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National Human Rights Commission   (GS Paper II: Quasi Judicial Bodies)

- NHRC consists of a Chairperson and four members, all of them being full-time members.
- The Chairperson should be a retired Chief Justice of India and members should be serving or retired judges of the Supreme Court, a serving or retired Chief Justice of a High Court and two persons having knowledge or practical experience with respect to human rights.
- Apart from these full-time members, the Commission also has four ex-officio members, the Chairpersons of National Commission for Minorities, National Commission for SCs & STs and National Commission for Women.
- Multi-membership is intended to reinforce independence and impartiality of the Commission.
- The Chairperson and members hold office for a term of five years or until they attain the age of 70 years, whichever is earlier. After their tenure, the Chairperson and members are not eligible for further employment under the Central or a State government.

Stabilising India-Nepal ties in changing times

In Nepal, there is a palpable sense of restlessness, dissatisfaction and uncertainty in the air these days because of the overall political and economic environment. While the transition to a full-fledged democracy underpinned by credible political institutions seems to be an unending one, there is also confusion about the direction in which it is headed.

And, there are a lot of questions. Was it premature for Nepal to have decided through a Constitution (which was rushed through and barely debated) that it should be transformed instantaneously into a secular federal democratic republic? This when as a young democracy it had just battled one upheaval after another, and was in dire need of leaders, experience and institutions capable of handling daunting challenges? Should Nepal, which had a wonderful tradition of being deeply religious but with a secular and tolerant ethos, revert to its Hindu identity which it had lost when political parties were negotiating with the Maoists for an end to their 10-year insurgency? Should the monarchy be restored for want of institutions which could make sure that red lines were respected in the interests of safeguarding democracy? Was a genuine federal setup not an invitation for Nepal's disunity? How can Nepal survive in the post-COVID-19 world when corruption and misgovernance are so rampant?

The new government in New Delhi in June will have its hands full handling its foreign policy priorities. One of them will continue to be China. And for that reason alone, a high level of attention being paid to Nepal is certain, especially in view of recent developments there and the high probability that political certainty will continue there in the months ahead.

Changes under China's shadow

One reason for attention is the recent dramatic change in the coalition partners of the incumbent Prime Minister, Maoist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', which saw the largest party in Parliament, the centrist Nepali Congress (NC), being replaced by the second largest party led by K.P. Sharma Oli, who when Prime Minister in the past, had gained the reputation of being pro-China and anti-India.

The Chinese were the first to officially welcome the renewed alliance between the two major left parties, which they have been urging for long, sometimes publicly, and clumsily.

This time around they managed to avoid public controversy and allow the revival of the partnership to look as if it was a purely internal matter. Yet, they would have relished the readiness of the new left government to ignore Indian sensitivities. Nepal's Foreign Minister departed from convention by making his first

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The new government in India in June this year could consider offering Nepal a new and holistic development road map which would excite public imagination and enable cross-party political consensus

official foreign visit to Beijing rather than New Delhi, and, despite domestic warnings of falling into a Sri Lanka-like debt trap, agreed to revive cooperation on China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

There have also been high-level military visits where new understandings have reportedly been reached. China's intentions are very clear: to expand its influence in Nepal at the cost of India's. Interestingly, the revival of the far left is being accompanied by a strong clamour from forces on the far right, which include calls for the restoration of the institution of monarchy and Nepal's Hindu identity.

Nepal, which was once the world's only Hindu kingdom, was converted by its Parliament into a secular federal republic shortly after the Maoist insurgency ended and the Maoists agreed to be mainstreamed into the country's democratic polity a few years ago.

Both sets of forces have the reputation of being ultra-nationalistic, pro-China and anti-India. Even otherwise, continuing political instability and malgovernance could invite a proliferation of India-directed mischief from Nepal by third countries and their non-official partners – the 'nexus' of smuggling and terrorism in Pakistan that India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar recently described as an 'industry'.

During the last phase of the King Birendra years, political instability accompanied by frequent changes of government (a result of political opportunism), facilitated the spread of a Maoist insurgency within Nepal which later established its headquarters in a jungle hideout in India. In parallel, there was an escalation of the smuggling of drugs, arms and terrorist-related cross-border activities masterminded from Pakistan against India, from Nepalese soil. The latter culminated in the hijacking of flight IC 814 in December 1999.

The redeeming feature then was a stable relationship between India and Nepal under Nepal's 'twin pillar' policy of supporting the king and multi-party democracy, which resulted in India's discreet cooperation and good relations across the political spectrum. It also saw Indian and Nepalese intelligence agencies working to expose Pakistani involvement.

Eventually, the situation quickly developed into a multi-faceted crisis, causing upheavals and transformations in Nepal and new questions about the quality of its bilateral ties with India.

Unlike in the past, China is now proactively working against India in Nepal. No longer does it have a low profile. It would probably be openly supportive of any cross-border instigation of terrorist activities in India – which, for China, would come under the category of "good terrorism". It suits Pakistan to do its bit too as it knows that it can rely on China for support when

needed. Theoretically, India is not alone. It has the Quad (Australia, India, Japan, the United States), Indo-Pacific and other groupings keeping a close watch on China's moves to expand its influence through fair means and foul. However, it would be risky to assume that these would be of help if a Great Game 2.0 begins in a shaky Nepal.

India's stand

India has been playing its cards reasonably well, keeping a low profile and avoiding controversy by staying out of Nepal's internal affairs. However, pressure from some Nepali quarters to give "advice", or the temptation by some in India to give it in at least two important matters can be anticipated. Should Nepal revert to its old identity as a Hindu nation? And, should the calls for restoration of monarchy be encouraged given rising frustration with a democracy without strong institutional underpinnings?

India (whether at the level of central, State or civil society) will have to give careful answers. In Nepal, opinions are often over-interpreted and confusion caused as a result of 'mixed signals' from India. It is for the Nepalese to decide on such issues. India could consider offering a new and holistic development road map which would excite public imagination and attract cross-party political consensus.

For example, there could be a transformative, sustainable development agenda aimed at improving the quality of life of its people. Innovative approaches in sectors such as health, education, food and nutrition, child development, gender and jobs, will ensure that the BRI and other Chinese pet projects are not a priority.

High-level Indian attention could inject a sense of optimism, stimulate investment in key sectors, and promote cross-party consensus on major projects. This will ensure that there is continuity and time-bound results even in the midst of instability, foster new inter-linkages between industries in both countries, address the demographic dividend, respond to the yearning in Nepal for a sense of equality and sovereign space, and build on the foundation of common civilisational assets which make the India-Nepal relationship so unique. India should also never forget that for the big brother-small brother syndrome to be overcome, the onus lies on the big brother – the style of diplomacy matters as much as the substance in relations between the two countries.

With regard to Nepal, the many concerns complicating the India-Nepal relationship need not be an insoluble migraine. The new government in New Delhi in June this year has its work cut out.

The views expressed are personal

Stabilising India-Nepal ties in changing times   (14 May)   (GS Paper II: India-Nepal Relations)

The new government in India in June this year could consider offering Nepal a new and holistic development road map which would excite public imagination and enable cross-party political consensus

- Nepal feels restless due to political and economic issues.
- Transition to democracy was fast, leaving uncertainty.
- Some question the rush to make Nepal secular.
- Debate about bringing back the monarchy for stability.
- Concerns that federal system might divide Nepal.
- Corruption and mismanagement hinder COVID-19 recovery.
- India will closely watch Nepal due to its own foreign policy concerns, especially regarding China.

Changes under China's shadow

- Nepal's Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' formed a new coalition with K.P. Sharma Oli, replacing the Nepali Congress.
- China openly welcomed this alliance, signaling their influence.

- Nepal's Foreign Minister visited Beijing first, showing a shift away from India.
- Nepal agreed to revive cooperation with China's Belt and Road Initiative.
- High-level military visits suggest closer ties with China.
- There's a rise in ultra-nationalistic, pro-China, and anti-India sentiments in Nepal.
- Past instability in Nepal led to Maoist insurgency and cross-border terrorism.
- India previously had good relations across Nepal's political spectrum.
- China is now actively working against India in Nepal.
- China may support cross-border terrorism against India, with Pakistan's involvement.
- India has support from groups like the Quad, but Nepal's instability poses risks.

India's stand

- India has maintained a low profile in Nepal's internal affairs but may face pressure to give advice.
- Decisions like reverting to Hindu identity or restoring the monarchy are for Nepal to make.
- India could offer a development roadmap to excite Nepali consensus and investment.
- High-level Indian attention could bring optimism, stimulate investment, and promote cross-party projects.
- Building on common cultural ties can strengthen the India-Nepal relationship.
- India must handle the "big brother-small brother" dynamic carefully.
- The India-Nepal relationship can be improved with diplomatic finesse and development cooperation.

Adopting a transformative vision for mediation (14 May)   (GS Paper II: Legal System)

Adopting a transformative vision for mediation

In an era dominated by judicial backlog and prolonged litigation, the emphatic directive from the Chief Justice of India, Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, in April 2024, to "mediate, not litigate", echoes with increasing urgency. The Mediation Act, 2023, notified on September 15, 2023, promises a transformative shift towards alternative dispute resolution. This legislation not only formalises mediation but also provides a comprehensive definition that includes pre-litigation and court-annexed mediation, online platforms, and community mediation among its forms, all aimed at facilitating amicable settlements through the intervention of a neutral mediator.

The reflections of the former Supreme Court of India judge, Justice S.K. Kaul, further illuminate the nuanced role of mediation. Speaking at a recent event, he recognised the evolution of mediation from a concept met with scepticism to one that is now warmly embraced by the legal community. Justice Kaul underscored that mediation should not be seen as a replacement for established legal procedures such as the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code ("IBC"), but rather as a synergistic approach.

Echoing the ethos of Mahatma Gandhi, who saw the true role of a lawyer not in litigation but in uniting parties in dispute, mediation reorients the focus from adversarial confrontation to reconciling differences and healing relationships. As peacemakers, mediators foster a democratic space for open dialogue, allowing individuals to express their emotions and grievances freely, thereby paving the way for mutual understanding and the restoration of balance.

This narrative not only showcases the expanding scope of mediation but also emphasises its critical role in streamlining both legal and economic dispute resolutions. It underscores our collective need to integrate mediation more deeply into our dispute resolution framework and, more importantly, cultivate a new generation of mediators.

Barriers to skill development
To ensure the effectiveness of mediation, it is

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There is a need to integrate mediation more deeply into India's dispute resolution framework and also foster a new generation of mediators

critical to recognise certain flaws which may hinder the successful on-ground implementation of the Mediation Act, 2023. While the legislation sets a strong foundation, the true efficacy of mediation relies equally on practical on-ground implementation and further improvements in the legislation.

Under current guidelines, aspiring mediators are required to have 15 years of professional experience in their field before they qualify to practise as mediators. This experience equips mediators with a deep understanding of the nuanced dynamics necessary to effectively guide disputing parties toward resolution.

However, the path from initial basic mediation understanding in law school to becoming a practising mediator involves significant challenges. Law students are typically and specifically trained to advocate strongly from their client's perspective, a necessary skill in litigation but one that contrasts sharply with the mediator's role, which emphasises neutrality, impartiality, and an unbiased commitment to the mediation process rather than to a specific outcome.

This bifurcated approach – where one must unlearn mediation to practise advocacy and then, years later, unlearn advocacy to return to mediation – underscores a deeper disconnect in our legal education and practice. It suggests a need for continuous, integrated learning that allows legal professionals to wear multiple hats, switching from advocate to mediator with fluidity rather than viewing these roles as mutually exclusive stages of their career. Such an integrated approach would not only maintain the mediator's skill set throughout their career but also enhance their overall effectiveness by combining deep legal knowledge with core mediation competencies.

Fostering the next generation of mediators
To elevate the effectiveness of mediation, it is essential to recognise the distinct skill sets required beyond traditional legal expertise. Innovative training methods such as co-mediation and shadow mediation should be incorporated

under the Mediation Act 2023 for young lawyers. Co-mediation pairs novice mediators with experienced counterparts in actual mediation sessions, facilitating a dynamic learning environment where skills can be actively observed and practised. Concurrently, shadow mediation offers novices a chance to observe these sessions without direct involvement, providing them with insights into the subtleties of the mediation process and various conflict resolution strategies. By merging direct participation and observational learning, these training methods equip emerging mediators with a deeper understanding and practical experience, crucial for handling complex disputes effectively and confidently. This dual approach ensures a comprehensive learning experience, paving the way for well-rounded professional development in the field of mediation.

Such practical exposure will ensure that emerging mediators develop the nuanced skills and the confidence necessary for mediating complex disputes effectively.

Additionally, embedding a structured mediation training module within the law school curriculum is vital. Introducing law students early to mediation training can ignite their interest and equip them with critical skills for resolving disputes empathetically and efficiently, setting the stage for a new generation of adept mediators.

Adoption of these strategic enhancements will not only tweak existing frameworks but also spearhead a significant evolution in the legal landscape.

These changes shall promise to transform the Mediation Act, 2023, from statute to a dynamic catalyst for growth and innovation in dispute resolution across India.

By empowering the next generation of mediators with the tools to succeed, we will be setting the stage for a more harmonious, efficient, and just society. Let us seize this opportunity to foster a robust culture of mediation, ensuring that every mediator not only learns the craft but also masters the art of peace making.

- District courts: Hold the majority of pending cases, exceeding 4.5 crore.
- High courts: Have a significant backlog of over 61.7 lakh cases.

- Supreme Court: While a smaller number compared to lower courts, still has over 80,000 pending cases
- Chief Justice of India, Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, urged people to **choose mediation over litigation in April 2024**.
- The Mediation Act, 2023 was enacted on September 15, 2023, to promote alternative dispute resolution.
- The Act covers various forms of mediation including pre-litigation, court-annexed, online platforms, and community mediation.
- Justice S.K. Kaul highlighted the positive shift towards mediation in the legal community.
- Mediation is seen as a way to settle disputes amicably by promoting open dialogue and mutual understanding.
- Mediation complements legal procedures like the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code.
- Mediators strive to unite parties in a dispute, following Mahatma Gandhi's principles of peace and balance.
- Mediation is seen as a way to streamline legal and economic dispute resolutions and calls for a new generation of mediators.

Barriers to skill development

- Mediation Act, 2023 is important for resolving disputes effectively.
- Successful mediation relies on both legislation and practical implementation.
- Aspiring mediators need 15 years of professional experience to qualify.
- Law students are trained to advocate strongly for clients, which contrasts with the mediator's role of neutrality.
- Transitioning from being an advocate to a mediator involves significant challenges.
- Legal education should focus on integrating advocacy and mediation skills.
- Continuous learning is needed for legal professionals to switch between advocacy and mediation roles effectively.

Fostering the next generation of mediators

- Mediation should go beyond legal expertise for better effectiveness.
- Innovative training methods like co-mediation and shadow mediation should be added to the Mediation Act 2023.
- Co-mediation pairs new and experienced mediators for practical learning.
- Shadow mediation allows novices to observe mediation sessions for insights without direct involvement.
- These methods provide hands-on experience and observational learning for handling complex disputes.
- Mediation training should be included in law school curriculums early on.
- These changes will transform the legal landscape and promote growth and innovation in dispute resolution in India.
- By empowering the next generation of mediators with skills, society can become more harmonious and just.

The Mediation Act, 2023 is a legislation in India that aims to promote and facilitate mediation for resolving disputes. Here's a summary of the key points:

Objectives
- Promote institutional mediation, pre-litigation mediation, online mediation, and community mediation.
- Enforce domestic mediated settlement agreements.
- Establish **a regulatory body for registration of mediators and mediation institutions**.

Key Features
- **Application:** The Act applies to commercial and non-commercial disputes.
- **Mediation Agreement:** A written agreement between parties to submit to mediation is required. This can be a clause in a contract or a separate agreement.
- **Pre-Litigation Mediation:** Encourages parties to mediate before going to court.
- **Confidentiality:** Maintains confidentiality of mediation proceedings.
- **Mediator Appointment:** Parties can appoint a mediator themselves or through a mediation service provider.
- **Mediation Council of India:** Established to regulate mediators and mediation institutions.

Benefits
- Faster and more cost-effective dispute resolution compared to litigation.
- Parties have more control over the outcome of the dispute.
- Confidentiality is maintained throughout the process.

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (IBC) is a law enacted by the Indian Parliament in 2016.

- **Consolidated Framework:** It establishes a unified framework for dealing with insolvency and bankruptcy for various entities, including companies, partnership firms, and individuals.
- **Time-Bound Process:** It aims to **resolve insolvency proceedings within a specific timeframe, typically 180-330 days,** with the possibility of extensions under certain conditions.
- The IBC prioritizes maximizing the value of the debtor's assets for the benefit of all stakeholders, including creditors, employees, and the company itself.
- **Promotes Entrepreneurship:** By providing a mechanism for **reviving businesses, the IBC aims to encourage a healthy entrepreneurial ecosystem**.
- **Credit Availability:** A more efficient insolvency system fosters trust in the financial markets, leading to easier access to credit for businesses.
- **Stakeholder Balance:** The IBC strives to balance the interests of all stakeholders involved in the insolvency process.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

Question: With examples, discuss the significance of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms in light of costly and time-consuming litigation process in India.

Approach:
- Introduce with a brief explanation about the costly and time-consuming nature of litigation process in India.
- Then define alternative dispute resolution mechanisms.
- Further discuss its significance.
- Conclude accordingly.

Answer:
Litigation process in India is currently marred by high cost and time delays due to various reasons like poor judge to population ratio which is further aggravated on account of unfilled vacancies in courts, several unavoidable reasons and procedure for delay like multiple rounds of appeals and revision, dependency on lawyers due to complex techniques of a court of law and high fees charged by lawyers and courts.

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) provides an alternative approach to traditional process of dispute resolution through litigation. It provides accessible, useful, informal, voluntary, speedy and inexpensive justice to contesting parties. ADR mechanisms in India inter-alia include arbitration, mediation/ conciliation, Lok Adalats and Consumer Dispute Redressal system.

Significance of ADR mechanisms
- It facilitates speedier justice and the parties involved have control over the eventual outcome. This results in quick implementation of the decisions taken, Mediation can play a very useful role in amicable resolution of matrimonial and family matters.
- Most ADR processes are based on integrative approach. They are more corporative and less competitive than the usual method of litigation.
- It makes justice more accessible through counseling or arbitration centers.
- The proceedings in ADR are informal and do not involve the formalities and complexities as involved in a Court of law like hiring a lawyer.
- Disputes amongst the government departments and agencies can be best resolved through out of court mediation rather than litigation.
- It can be used any time, even when a case is pending before a court of law.
- ADR is often less stressful than expensive and lengthy process of litigation; most people have reported high degree of satisfaction with ADR.
- As pointed out by **Malimath Committee,** ADR plays an important role in doing away with delays and congestions in court proceedings.

ADR mechanisms are being incorporated in developing countries in order to strengthen the judicial system. Adoption and popularizing ADR in India is a major step for achieving the much cherished goal of achieving justice for all in India.

Towards the endgame: on the fourth phase of the general election (14 May)

Opposition parties are getting better with their tactics

- In the fourth phase of Lok Sabha elections 2024, 96 constituencies voted, totaling 379 so far.
- This phase included all seats in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, alongside Assembly elections in Andhra Pradesh and Odisha.
- BJP, YSR Congress, and BJD are in contention in Andhra Pradesh and Odisha.
- BJP won 42 seats in this phase in 2019; YSR Congress won 22, and BRS won nine.
- The campaign lacks a defining theme; parties focus on slogans to rally voters.
- Election Commission of India (ECI) faced criticism from Congress over voter turnout data delay.
- BJP and Congress mobilize voters around religious and caste identities.
- BJP used demographic trends to insinuate about Muslims for polarization.
- Congress faced criticism for racist language used by one of its advisers.
- Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal returned to campaign trail after interim bail.
- Kejriwal positioned himself as a central figure in the Opposition, presenting nationwide welfare guarantees.

Murder and motive: on the Narendra Dabholkar murder case (14 May)

Dabholkar's killers get life term, but failure to unearth whole plot is concerning

- Two men sentenced to life imprisonment for murdering rationalist Narendra Dabholkar.
- It took over 10 years for justice, with the main conspirator acquitted due to lack of proof.
- Maharashtra and Karnataka investigators suspected right-wing group Sanatan Sanstha's involvement.
- Virendrasinh Tawde associated with Sanstha acquitted of conspiracy charge.
- Court criticized failure to identify masterminds behind Dabholkar's murder.
- Defense lawyers attempted to discredit Dabholkar's anti-superstition activism.
- Motive alone insufficient to prove conspiracy; direct evidence required.
- Sanstha linked to other murders including Pansare, Kalburgi, and Lankesh.
- Ballistics analysis tied weapon used in Lankesh's murder to Kalburgi's.
- Common features suggest single syndicate targeting independent thinkers.
- Governments urged to show political will, expedite trials, and combat extremism.

Declining poverty ratio: a continuing trend (14 May)   (GS Paper II: Poverty, Hunger)

Thus, there has been a decline in poverty. The inequality in consumption expenditure has come down a bit.

The National Statistical Office (NSO)
- Conducts large-scale sample surveys in India on various socio-economic aspects.
- **Established:** May 23rd, 2019 (merger of NSSO and CSO)

What the NSO Does
The NSO carries on the legacy of the NSSO by collecting data on a wide range of topics through sample surveys. This data is crucial for:
- Formulating government policies
- Monitoring progress on social and economic development goals
- Understanding various socio-economic trends
- Providing insights for researchers and policymakers

Some Examples of Surveys Conducted by the NSO
- Employment and unemployment rates
- Literacy and educational levels
- Consumer expenditure patterns
- Health and family welfare
- Housing conditions
- Land ownership

- The National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) released the Household Consumption Expenditure Survey for 2022-23 (HCES).
- Researchers used this data to estimate poverty and inequality trends.
- Some studies discussed comparability of data and measurement issues.

Trends in poverty, inequality

- However, poverty estimates based on the fact sheet data may not differ significantly from unit-level data.
- Poverty ratios declined significantly from 2011-12 to 2022-23, though at a slower rate than in the previous period.
- Inequality also declined between 2011-12 and 2022-23, especially in urban areas.
- Estimates depend on the reference or recall period of data collection, which has varied over time.
- Different reference periods yield different estimates, affecting comparability over time.
- Changes in methodology over time may improve estimates but pose challenges for comparability.

The Tendulkar Committee, officially called the **Expert Group to Review the Methodology for Estimation of Poverty,** was established in 2005 by the Planning Commission of India. They were tasked with reviewing the way poverty was measured in the country.

Key Points:
- **Main recommendation:** Introduced a "uniform poverty line basket" with different consumption levels for rural and urban areas.

Poverty Lines:
- The committee defined poverty lines based on the minimum calorie intake required for basic survival (2,400 calories in rural areas and 2,100 calories in urban areas).
- They factored in clothing, housing, and other essential items besides food.
- For 2004-05 (the year they based their calculations on), the all-India poverty line was:
  - ₹446.68 per capita per month in rural areas
  - ₹578.80 per capita per month in urban areas

Updated Poverty Lines
The Tendulkar Committee's methodology is still used by the Government of India to estimate poverty, but the poverty lines themselves are updated every few years to account for inflation.

Additional Notes:
- The Tendulkar Committee's poverty lines were criticized for being too low by some economists.
- A subsequent committee, the Rangarajan Committee, proposed higher poverty lines, but these were not adopted by the government.

The Lakdawala Committee, officially called the Expert Group on Estimation of Proportion and Number of Poor, was constituted in 1993 by the Planning Commission of India. It was chaired by Professor D.T. Lakdawala. The committee's primary objective was to review the methodology for estimating poverty in India.
- **Poverty Line Based on Calorie Consumption:** The committee recommended continuing the existing approach of defining poverty based on the minimum calorie intake required for survival. This meant a household was considered poor if its consumption expenditure couldn't afford the minimum recommended calories (2400 in rural and 2100 in urban areas).
- **State-Specific Poverty Lines:** The committee suggested creating poverty lines specific to each state in India, reflecting the variations in living costs across regions.
- **Updating Poverty Lines:** The committee recommended using the Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (CPI-IW) in urban areas and the Consumer Price Index for

Agricultural Laborers (CPI-AL) in rural areas to update the poverty lines regularly, accounting for inflation and changes in consumption patterns.
- **Data Reliance:** The committee emphasized using data solely from the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) for poverty estimation, discontinuing the practice of scaling estimates based on National Accounts Statistics.

The Lakdawala Committee's recommendations were largely accepted by the Indian government in 1997, with some minor modifications. These recommendations formed the basis for official poverty estimates in India for several years.

The Lakdawala Committee's methodology was later superseded by the Tendulkar Committee Report in 2009, which introduced a multidimensional approach to poverty estimation.

The Rangarajan Committee, officially known as the Committee on Financial Inclusion, was established in 2007 by the Reserve Bank of India to examine the status of financial inclusion in the country and suggest measures to enhance it. The committee was chaired by former RBI Governor, C. Rangarajan, and consisted of various experts in the field of finance and banking.
   Objective: To review and develop methodologies for measurement of poverty
   Recommendations: Focused on redefining the poverty line and recalibrating the basket of goods.

Measurement issues

- There's debate on using calorie norms for poverty lines, with Tendulkar Committee indirectly adopting them.
- Rangarajan Committee suggested a new poverty basket, not just updating old ones.
- Poverty line is based on private consumption, but public expenditure affects household well-being.
- HCES 2022-23 imputed values for some public expenditure items but didn't capture all.
- Poverty declined, and consumption inequality decreased slightly.
- Income inequality is usually higher than consumption inequality.
- There's no single way to measure poverty; higher cut-offs mean more people are considered poor.

The Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES) is a large-scale survey conducted by the National Sample Office (NSO) under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).

The HCES is designed to collect detailed information on the consumption of various goods and services by households across India. This data is crucial for understanding spending patterns, estimating poverty levels, calculating the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and monitoring inflation (Consumer Price Index).

How often is it conducted?
The HCES is typically carried out every 5 years. The latest survey, HCES 2022-23, was conducted between August 2022 and July 2023.
Key findings from HCES 2022-23
- The average monthly per capita consumption expenditure (MPCE) increased significantly in both rural and urban areas compared to 2011-12. Urban MPCE rose by 33.5% to ₹3,510, while rural MPCE went up by 40.42% to ₹2,008 [2].
- Food items still constitute a major spending category, accounting for 46% of expenditure in rural households and 39% in urban households.

A case of selective outrage (14 May)

Women's safety seems to take centre stage only when it serves a political purpose

- In Kumbaragadige village, a 16-year-old girl passed her Class 10 exams and got engaged to a 33-year-old man.
- The District Child Protection Unit intervened to delay the marriage, but the groom killed her in anger and fled with her head.
- In Hubballi, Neha Hiremath, a Masters student, was killed by her former classmate Fayaz Khondunaik.
- In Bengaluru, a man stabbed his colleague to death after she broke off their relationship; her mother killed him in defense.
- Toxic masculinity is evident in all cases, where men couldn't accept rejection.
- Neha's murder drew political controversy, with BJP labeling it as "love jihad" despite no evidence.
- Pressure on the Muslim community increased, leading to a voluntary bandh condemning the murder.
- However, there was less outcry for the beheading incident or the murder in Bengaluru.
- Political parties often prioritize other identities like religion or class over women's safety during elections.

Measles

- It is usually given in combination with mumps and rubella vaccines (MMR).
- The vaccine is typically given in two doses, the first dose at around 12-15 months of age and the second dose at 4-6 years of age.
- Some countries may have different vaccination schedules, so it's best to check with a healthcare provider.

An overview of the Smart Cities Mission

How are smart cities defined by the government? What are the two major aspects of the Smart Cities Mission? Why is the mission considered to be exclusionary to many? Did the SCM override the 74th Constitutional Amendment?

EXPLAINER

Tikender Panwar

The story so far:

The Smart Cities Mission (SCM), a flagship programme of the NDA-1 government, has taken a back seat in this year's list of poll promises and achievements.

What are smart cities?

The term 'Smart City' has been used widely ever since 2009, after the great financial crash. Smart cities were defined by urban practitioners as new Silicon Valleys built with a strong integration of a network of airports, highways, and other types of communications, a so-called intellectual city with advanced ICT.

The NDA-1 government wanted to adapt to these global changes, already happening through the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM). It went ahead with a major flagship programme and thus, the SCM was announced in June 2015. Hundred cities were selected for five years under the mission. However, the mission did not clearly define a smart city. It stated, "there is no universally accepted definition of a Smart City.... The conceptualisation of Smart City... varies from city to city and country to country, depending on the level of development, willingness to change and reform, resources and aspirations of the city residents. A Smart City would have a different connotation in India than, say, Europe. Even in India, there is no one way of defining a Smart City."

What was the SCM?

The SCM had two main aspects: area-based development consisting of three components – redevelopment (city renewal), retrofitting (city improvement), and green field projects (city extension); and pan-city solutions based on ICT. These further comprised some six categories that would include

e-governance, waste management, water management, energy management, urban mobility, and skill development. Around ₹2 lakh crore was kept aside for the mission, with public-private partnerships (PPP) an important driver of the same.

The mission that was to be completed in 2020, was given two extensions till June 2024. Additionally, to make the mission effective, a business model of governance was adopted bypassing the existing models of city governance in the country. An SPV (special purpose vehicle) led by a bureaucrat or a representative of an MNC, and other major stakeholders was created and registered under the Companies Act. The elected council, thus, had little role in the governance structure.

What is the status of the SCM?

The Urban Ministry's dashboard as of

April 26, exhibits that 8,033 projects sanctioned under the SCM have seen a fall in the total outlay from the expected ₹2 lakh crore to ₹1,67,875 crore, which is 16% less than the projected capital flow in 100 cities. The dashboard also states that the SCM grant funded 5,533 projects worth ₹65,063 crore that have been completed, while 921 projects worth ₹21,000 crore are still ongoing.

As many as 400 projects being undertaken by about 10 cities under the Mission are unlikely to meet the extended deadline of June 2024.

Interestingly, the funding pattern shows that not more than 5% has come through the PPP route.

Where did the SCM falter?

The selection of 100 cities on a competitive basis was flawed due to the

diversity in existing urban realities. The scheme was divorced from the ground realities of urban India – the urbanisation here is dynamic and not static like the West.

The SCM became an exclusionary scheme wherein not more than 1% of a city's geographical area was selected for development. For example, Chandigarh which received ₹196 crore in the first tranche under the SCM spent it on smart water meters, a Wi-Fi zone, and solid waste management programmes all ploughed into one pocket-sector 43.

According to two major reports by McKinsey, to make Indian cities liveable, a capital expenditure of $1.2 trillion is required by 2030. In this context, ₹1,67,875 crore is less than $20 billion in nine years. This comes to around 0.027 % of the total requirement in urban India. Hence, there was little traction for this scheme.

Additionally, the SPV model designed for smart cities was not aligned with the 74th Constitutional Amendment, which led to many cities objecting to the governance structure. The design, according to critics, was too top-bottom. A hilly town that had an annual budget of less than ₹100 crore claimed projects worth more than ₹2,500 crore. This was incongruent to the demands of the residents of the town.

Urban India, according to the World Bank has more than 49% of the population living in slums. In the name of executing smart city projects, there was displacement of people living in poorer localities. Street vendors, for example, were displaced and urban commons were disrupted.

Another major consequence of the SCM has been enhanced urban flooding. Some of the towns which have historically never been flooded were made vulnerable because of infrastructure development projects that spoiled or dismantled the water channels and contours.

Tikender Singh Panwar is former Deputy Mayor, Shimla, and Member, Kerala Urban Commission.

Still in the dark: The Cochin Smart Mission Limited has installed LED lights on the Katrikadavu Bridge and on the Kaloor-Kadavanthra Road, in Kochi. H. VIBHU

THE GIST

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Smart cities were defined by urban practitioners as new Silicon Valleys built with a strong integration of a network of airports, highways, and other types of communications, a so-called intellectual city with advanced ICT.

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The Urban Ministry's dashboard as of April 26, exhibits that 8,033 projects sanctioned under the SCM have seen a fall in the total outlay from the expected ₹2 lakh crore to ₹1,67,875 crore, which is 16% less than the projected capital flow in 100 cities.

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The SCM became an exclusionary scheme wherein not more than 1% of a city's geographical area was selected for development. The scheme was divorced from ground realities of urban India.

How are smart cities defined by the government? What are the two major aspects of the Smart Cities Mission? Why is the mission considered to be exclusionary to many? Did the SCM override the 74th Constitutional Amendment?

- The Smart Cities Mission (SCM) was a major program under the previous NDA-1 government.
- However, it hasn't been highlighted much in this year's list of election promises and achievements.

What are smart cities?

- The term "Smart City" became popular after the 2009 financial crash.
- It refers to cities designed with advanced technology and infrastructure integration.
- The NDA-1 government aimed to adapt to global changes through urban renewal programs like JNNURM.
- The Smart Cities Mission (SCM) was launched in June 2015 as a flagship program.
- Under the SCM, 100 cities were selected for development over five years.
- However, the mission didn't clearly define what makes a city "smart."
- It acknowledged that there's no universal definition and varies depending on factors like development level and resident aspirations.
- Different cities and countries have different interpretations of what makes a city "smart."

What was the SCM?

- The Smart Cities Mission (SCM) had two main aspects: area-based development and pan-city solutions.

- Area-based development included redevelopment, retrofitting, and greenfield projects.
- Pan-city solutions focused on ICT and included e-governance, waste management, water management, energy management, urban mobility, and skill development.
- Around ₹2 lakh crore was allocated for the mission, with public-private partnerships (PPP) being important.
- Originally scheduled to be completed in 2020, the mission was extended twice until June 2024.
- A new governance model was adopted for the mission, bypassing existing city governance models.
- An SPV (special purpose vehicle) led by a bureaucrat or representative of an MNC was created under the Companies Act.
- The elected council had a limited role in the governance structure.

What is the status of the SCM?

- According to the Urban Ministry's dashboard, there's been a decrease in the total outlay of projects sanctioned under the Smart Cities Mission (SCM).
- The expected outlay was ₹2 lakh crore, but it has fallen to ₹1,67,875 crore, which is 16% less.
- The SCM grant has funded 5,533 completed projects worth ₹65,063 crore, while 921 projects worth ₹21,000 crore are still ongoing.
- Around 400 projects undertaken by 10 cities are unlikely to meet the extended deadline of June 2024.
- Only a small portion, less than 5%, of funding has come through the public-private partnership (PPP) route.

Where did the SCM falter?

- The selection of 100 cities for the Smart Cities Mission (SCM) was flawed due to diverse urban realities.
- The scheme didn't consider the dynamic nature of urbanization in India, unlike static urban environments in the West.
- The SCM became exclusionary, with only 1% of a city's area selected for development.
- Example: Chandigarh spent its SCM funds on various projects in one area, neglecting other parts of the city.
- Reports by McKinsey suggest that $1.2 trillion is needed for Indian cities to be livable by 2030.
- The allocated ₹1,67,875 crore for SCM is insufficient, amounting to less than $20 billion over nine years.
- This represents only 0.027% of the total urban development requirement in India.
- The Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) model for smart cities wasn't aligned with the 74th Constitutional Amendment, leading to governance structure objections.
- Critics argue the design was too top-down, with towns receiving disproportionate project funding.
- Urban India has over 49% of its population living in slums, and SCM projects led to displacement and disruption of urban commons.
- SCM projects have also contributed to increased urban flooding by disrupting water channels and contours in some towns.

What is the legal position on live-in relationships? (14 May)   (GS Paper I: Society, GS Paper II: Constitutional Morality)

What is the legal position on live-in relationships?

What did the Allahabad High Court state with respect to Muslims and live-in relationships?

Ziya Us Salam

The story so far:

The Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court stated earlier this month that a Muslim cannot claim rights in a live-in relationship when he or she has a living spouse. A two judge Bench of Justices A.R. Masoodi and A.K. Srivastava called such a relationship against the tenets of Islam while hearing a writ petition by Sneha Devi and Mohammed Shadab Khan. Ms. Devi and Mr. Khan had sought protection from police action after the woman's parents filed a kidnapping case against Mr. Khan.

What happened?
The couple had told the court they were adults in a live-in relationship and that they sought protection under Article 21 of the Constitution (protection of life and personal liberty). The judges, however, stated, "Islamic tenets do not permit live-in relationships during the subsisting marriage. The position may be different if the two persons are unmarried and the parties being major choose to lead their lives in a way of their own." Incidentally, Mr. Khan was married to one Farida Khatoon since 2020.

"The constitutional morality may come to the rescue of such a couple and the social morality settled through the customs and usages over ages may give way to the constitutional morality and protection under Article 21 of the Constitution of India may step in to protect the cause. The case before us is, however, different," the court said, adding, "The constitutional protection under Article 21 of the Constitution of India would not lend an un-canalised support to such a right."

What have been previous orders?
Live-in relationships with variables of marital status of the partners, their possibly different faiths, birth of children and even separation have occupied the attention of the judiciary at various levels in recent years. If in the case of Ms. Devi and Mr. Khan, only the latter was married, in another case last year, both partners were married but involved in a live-in relationship away from wedlock.

In November last year, the Supreme Court stayed orders passed by lower courts and the Gujarat High Court awarding maintenance to a woman from the man she had been living with. The top court order came after a Surat-based man challenged the High Court order arguing that their relationship could not be termed a domestic relationship as they were both married to other people at the time of cohabitation. While their respective marriages subsisted, they lived together in 2012 and had a daughter too a couple of years later. The woman had approached the judiciary as the live-in relationship did not work out, and sought relief under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005. She sought maintenance too.

Interestingly in the same month, the Punjab and Haryana High Court stated that a couple living together without obtaining a divorce from their previous spouse cannot be classified as being in a "live-in relationship" or being in a union similar to marriage. The court even felt that such an arrangement would amount to the offence of bigamy under Sections 494/495 of the Indian Penal Code. In this case, the man was already married. The court refused to provide protection to the couple, stating, "The male partner is engaging in a lustful and adulterous life with the female partner without obtaining a valid divorce from his previous spouse."

What have the Courts said about live-in relationships?
India does not have any laws that directly address a live-in partnership. As per the top Court, for a man and a woman to live together is part of 'the right to life'; therefore, a live-in relationship is no longer an offence. The Supreme Court in its various judgments has stated that a man and a woman living like a husband and a wife in a long-term relationship, and even have children, the judiciary will presume that the two were married and that the same laws would be applicable to them and their relationship. The concept of a live-in relationship was recognised in *Payal Sharma versus Nari Niketan* by the Allahabad High Court, where the judges felt, "A man and a woman, even without getting married, can live together if they wish to. This may be regarded as immoral by society, but it is not illegal. There is a difference between law and morality."

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The Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court stated earlier this month that a Muslim cannot claim rights in a live-in relationship when they have a living spouse.

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The Punjab and Haryana High Court stated that a couple living together without obtaining a divorce from their previous spouse cannot be classified as being in a "live-in relationship" or being in a union similar to marriage.

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India does not have any laws that directly address a live-in partnership.

What did the Allahabad High Court state with respect to Muslims and live-in relationships?

- The Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court made a statement earlier this month.

- The statement says that a Muslim person cannot claim rights in a live-in relationship if they already have a living spouse.
- Justices A.R. Masoodi and A.K. Srivastava made this statement while hearing a writ petition by Sneha Devi and Mohammed Shadab Khan.
- Sneha Devi and Mohammed Shadab Khan sought protection from police action after the woman's parents filed a kidnapping case against Mr. Khan.
- The court called such a relationship against the tenets of Islam.

What happened?

- The couple claimed to be adults in a live-in relationship and sought protection under Article 21 of the Constitution, which guarantees the protection of life and personal liberty.
- However, the judges stated that Islamic tenets do not allow live-in relationships while a marriage is still valid.
- The judges mentioned that if the couple were unmarried and adults, they could choose to live together.
- Mohammed Shadab Khan, one of the individuals in the relationship, was married to Farida Khatoon since 2020.
- The court mentioned that while constitutional morality might protect such couples, in this case, it did not apply.
- The court concluded that Article 21 of the Constitution does not provide unrestricted support to such rights.

What have been previous orders?

- Recent years have seen cases regarding live-in relationships scrutinized by the judiciary, considering factors like marital status, faith differences, birth of children, and separation.
- In one case involving Ms. Devi and Mr. Khan, only Mr. Khan was married, while Ms. Devi was not.
- Another case from last year involved a couple who were both married but engaged in a live-in relationship outside of marriage.
- The Supreme Court intervened in a case where a woman sought maintenance from a man she lived with, even though they were both married to other people at the time.
- The woman invoked the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, seeking relief after their relationship ended.
- Similarly, the Punjab and Haryana High Court ruled that couples living together without divorcing their previous spouses cannot be considered in a "live-in relationship."
- The court considered such arrangements as potentially constituting the offense of bigamy under Sections 494/495 of the Indian Penal Code.
- In this case, the man was already married, and the court refused to provide protection to the couple, accusing the male partner of engaging in an adulterous life.

What have the Courts said about live-in relationships?

- In India, there are no specific laws addressing live-in partnerships directly.
- The Supreme Court has ruled that living together is part of the "right to life," making a live-in relationship legal and not considered an offense.
- According to Supreme Court judgments, if a man and a woman live together in a manner similar to husband and wife, even without formal marriage but in a long-term relationship with children, the judiciary will presume them to be married.
- In such cases, the same legal rights and obligations that apply to married couples would also apply to their relationship.
- The concept of a live-in relationship was recognized by the Allahabad High Court in the case of Payal Sharma versus Nari Niketan.
- The court stated that although society may view unmarried couples living together as immoral, it is not illegal according to the law, emphasizing the difference between legality and morality.

Question: 'Constitutional Morality' is rooted in the Constitution itself and is founded on its essential facets. Explain the doctrine of 'Constitutional Morality' with the help of relevant judicial decisions.   (150 words/10 Marks) (UPSC 2021)

An independent population health research organization(IHME) based at the University of Washington School of Medicine, the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) works with collaborators around the world to develop timely, relevant, and scientifically valid evidence that illuminates the state of health everywhere. In making our research available and approachable, we aim to inform health policy and practice in pursuit of our vision: All people living long lives in full health.
- Type: Public health agency and research institute
- Focus: Global health statistics and impact evaluation
- Location: University of Washington, Seattle
- Founder: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- Founded: July 2007

The National Family Health Survey (NFHS) is a large-scale, multi-round survey conducted in India to provide state and national information on various aspects of population, health, and nutrition.
Here's a quick summary of the NFHS based on official sources:

- **Conducted by:** The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), Government of India.
- **Nodal Agency:** International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), Mumbai.
- **Rounds Conducted:** Five rounds since its inception in 1992-93.
- **Latest Round:** NFHS-5 conducted in two phases between 2019 and 2021.
- **Data Available:** Information on population, health, and nutrition for India, each state/union territory (UT), and for districts.
- **Key Areas Covered:** Fertility, infant and child mortality, family planning practices, maternal and child health, reproductive health, nutrition, anemia, utilization of health services.

The NFHS plays a crucial role in informing India's demographic and health policies and programs. The data collected helps assess progress, identify areas needing improvement, and design effective interventions for a healthier India.

National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER)

India's Oldest and Largest Economic Policy Research Think Tank: NCAER was started in 1956 as a public-private partnership, both catering to and supported by government and industry. NCAER is a non-profit organization with a rich history of providing independent analysis on critical economic issues, under the Ministry of Earth Sciences.

Mission: Founded with the vision of Prime Minister Nehru, NCAER acts as a sounding board for the government and private sector by conducting research and offering policy recommendations.

Public-Private Partnership: Uniquely started in 1956 as a collaboration between the public and private sectors, NCAER receives funding from both government and private industries.

Leadership: Currently, NCAER is headed by Director General Poonam Gupta and President Nandan M. Nilekani.

Headquarters: Located in New Delhi, India.

At $101.74 billion, China remained top import partner for India in FY2024 (14 May)

- China remained India's top import partner in the fiscal year 2023-24.
- India's imports from China increased by 3.29% year-on-year, totaling $101.74 billion.
- This increase in imports from China contrasted with an overall 5.66% decline in India's total imports.
- High-tech items such as telecom and smartphone parts, laptops, PCs, as well as industrial inputs like plastic, iron, steel, and chemicals, significantly contributed to these imports.
- The significant imports across essential and strategic sectors like electronics, pharmaceuticals, and renewable energy highlight India's dependence on China.
- The situation emphasizes the potential risks of disruptions in the supply chain and the importance of strategically reassessing to diversify sources and enhance domestic production capabilities, as stated by the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI).

Russia at No.2 (14 May)

- Russia rose to become the second-largest source of imports for India in the fiscal year 2023-24.
- Imports from Russia increased by 34% to reach $61.44 billion during the fiscal year.
- The majority of these imports from Russia consisted of oil.

Andrey Removich Belousov (Born 17 March 1959) is a Russian economist and politician, serving as the Minister of Defence since May 2024. Belousov previously served as First Deputy Prime Minister of Russia from January 2020 to May 2024.Previously, he was an Economic Assistant to the President of Russia on 24 June 2013 and Minister of Economic Development. He was succeeded Sergei Shoigu.

Hongcun south lake in eastern China's Anhui province:
- Built in 1607 during the Ming Dynasty
- **Location:** South of Hongcun village, China
  (This ancient village was added to the UNESCO World Heritage Site list in 2000.)
- **Design:** The lake is shaped like an archer's bow and has a long stone bridge crossing it. The design was inspired by West Lake in Hangzhou.
- **Significance:** The South Lake is one of the many waterways that flow throughout Hongcun village. These waterways are a key part of the village's design, which is based on feng shui principles. The South Lake itself served as a reservoir for the village.
- **Current Status:** The South Lake is a popular tourist destination and is considered to be one of the most beautiful parts of Hongcun village

55 Cancri e, also known as Janssen, is a rocky exoplanet orbiting the Sun-like star 55 Cancri A, located about 41 light-years away in the constellation Cancer:

- **Size and Mass:**
    - About eight times the mass of Earth.
    - Diameter roughly twice that of Earth.
- **Classification:**
  Classified as a "super-Earth" – larger than Earth but smaller than Neptune.
- **Composition:** Likely similar in composition to the rocky planets in our solar system, but the extreme environment makes the exact makeup uncertain.
- **Orbit:**
    - Extremely close to its star, orbiting at a distance of only about 1.4 million miles (one-twenty-fifth the distance between Mercury and the Sun).
    - Completes a full orbit in less than 18 hours.
    - Likely tidally locked, meaning one side always faces the star and experiences scorching heat, while the other side is in perpetual darkness.
- **Atmosphere:** Recent observations by the James Webb Space Telescope suggest the presence of a thin atmosphere, but its composition is yet unknown.

Interesting Facts:

- Discovered in 2004, 55 Cancri e was the first confirmed super-Earth orbiting a main sequence star.
- Due to its extremely close proximity to its host star, the surface of 55 Cancri e is likely molten – a scorching inferno unsuitable for life as we know it.

Additional Notes:

- While the planet itself might not be habitable, the discovery of an atmosphere around a super-Earth is a significant development in the search for potentially life-supporting exoplanets.
- Further research using telescopes like James Webb may reveal more details about the atmosphere and the overall conditions on 55 Cancri e.

PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTIONS:

Question 1: Who appoints the Chairperson and members of the NHRC? A) Prime Minister of India B) President of India C) Supreme Court of India D) Parliament of India	Answer: B) President of India Explanation: The Chairperson and members of the NHRC are appointed by the President of India. Headquaters of NHRC is New Delhi, India.
Question 2: Which of the following statements about NHRC is incorrect? A) NHRC is a constitutional body B) It was established under the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993	Answer: A) NHRC is a constitutional body Explanation: NHRC is not a constitutional body; it is a statutory body established under the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993.

C) It can inquire into violations of human rights by public servants D) NHRC can only make recommendations and does not have the power to enforce its decisions	Option B) is correct as NHRC was indeed established under the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993. Option C) is correct as NHRC has the power to inquire into violations of human rights by public servants. Option D) is correct as NHRC can make recommendations to the concerned authorities but does not have the power to enforce its decisions.
What is the jurisdiction of NHRC? A) Only in cases of human rights violations by government officials B) Only in cases of human rights violations by private individuals C) In cases of human rights violations by both government officials and private individuals D) Only in cases of human rights violations by foreign nationals	**Answer: C)** In cases of human rights violations by both government officials and private individuals **Explanation:** NHRC has jurisdiction in cases of human rights violations by both government officials and private individuals, as well as cases related to the violation of human rights by armed forces personnel. Option A) is incorrect because NHRC's jurisdiction is not limited to government officials only. Option B) is incorrect because NHRC's jurisdiction is not limited to private individuals only. Option D) is incorrect because NHRC's jurisdiction is not limited to human rights violations by foreign nationals only
Question 3: Which article of the Indian Constitution deals with the establishment of the NHRC? A) Article 19 B) Article 21 C) Article 32 D) Article 51A	**Answer: D)** Article 51A **Explanation:** Article 51A of the Indian Constitution deals with the fundamental duties of citizens, but it does not specifically mention the establishment of NHRC. The NHRC was established under the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993. Therefore, option D is incorrect.
Question 4: When was the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) established? A) 1993 B) 2000 C) 2009 D) 2014	**Answer: C)** 2009 **Explanation:** The Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) was established in 2009. Therefore, option C is correct.
Question 5: What is the main function of GANHRI? A) To provide financial aid to human rights organizations B) To monitor human rights violations worldwide C) To strengthen and support national human rights institutions D) To promote international trade agreements	**Answer: C)** To strengthen and support national human rights institutions **Explanation:** The main function of GANHRI is to strengthen and support national human rights institutions (NHRIs) around the world. Therefore, option C is correct. Options A, B, and D are incorrect because GANHRI's main function is not to provide financial aid, monitor violations worldwide, or promote international trade agreements.
Question 6: Where is the headquarters of GANHRI located? A) Geneva, Switzerland B) New York, USA C) Vienna, Austria D) Paris, France	**Answer: A)** Geneva, Switzerland **Explanation:** The headquarters of GANHRI is located in Geneva, Switzerland. Therefore, option A is correct.
Question 7: What is the name of the exoplanet known as a "super-Earth" located in the constellation Cancer? A) 51 Pegasi b B) 55 Cancri e C) Kepler-186f D) Proxima Centauri b	**Answer: B)** 55 Cancri e **Explanation:** 55 Cancri e is the name of the exoplanet referred to as a "super-Earth." 55 Cancri e is approximately 8 times more massive than Earth. Therefore, option B is correct.
Question 8: How far is 55 Cancri e from Earth? A) 4 light-years B) 20 light-years C) 41 light-years D) 100 light-years	**Answer: C)** 41 light-years **Explanation:** 55 Cancri e is approximately 41 light-years away from Earth. Therefore, option C is correct. Options A, B, and D are incorrect because they provide distances that do not match the actual distance of 55 Cancri e from Earth.

Question 9: Which regulatory body oversees the implementation of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code ("IBC") in India? A) Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) B) Reserve Bank of India (RBI) C) Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) D) Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI)	**Answer: D)** Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) **Explanation:** The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) oversees the implementation of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code ("IBC") in India. Therefore, option D is correct. Options A, B, and C are incorrect because they describe regulatory bodies that are not responsible for overseeing the IBC.
Question 10: What is the time limit prescribed for completing the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code ("IBC")? A) 90 days, extendable by another 90 days B) 180 days, extendable by another 90 days C) 365 days, extendable by another 180 days D) 730 days, extendable by another 365 days	**Answer: B)** 180 days, extendable by another 90 days **Explanation:** The time limit prescribed for completing the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code ("IBC") is 180 days, extendable by another 90 days. Therefore, option B is correct.
Question 11: Statement: The poverty line defined by the Rangarajan Committee is solely based on household income. **Choose the correct option:** A) True B) False	**Answer: B)** False **Explanation:** The poverty line defined by the Rangarajan Committee is based on multiple factors, including household income and expenditure, access to basic amenities, and minimum nutritional requirements. Therefore, the statement is false
Question 12: What percentage of the Indian population is considered below the poverty line according to the Rangarajan Committee's recommendations? A) 22% B) 29.5% C) 37% D) 45.5%	**Answer: B)** 29.5% **Explanation:** According to the Rangarajan Committee's recommendations, approximately 29.5% of the Indian population is considered below the poverty line. Therefore, option B is correct. Options A, C, and D are incorrect because they provide percentages that do not align with the poverty line as determined by the Rangarajan Committee.
Question 13: Which of the following statements about the Rangarajan Committee's poverty lines is correct? A) The poverty lines are determined solely based on household income. B) The poverty lines are uniform across rural and urban areas. C) The poverty lines are primarily based on access to basic amenities. D) The poverty lines were recommended for the entire Indian population without any regional variations.	**Answer: C)** The poverty lines are primarily based on access to basic amenities. **Explanation:** The Rangarajan Committee's poverty lines are primarily based on minimum nutritional requirements rather than household income alone. Therefore, option C is correct. Options A, B, and D are incorrect because the poverty lines are determined based on various factors including access to basic amenities, and they differ for rural and urban areas and may have regional variations.
Question 14: How are the poverty lines defined by the Rangarajan Committee different from those defined by previous committees? A) They are solely based on household income. B) They are uniform across rural and urban areas. C) They consider minimum nutritional requirements. D) They do not take into account regional variations.	**Answer: C)** They consider minimum nutritional requirements. **Explanation:** Unlike previous committees, the Rangarajan Committee's poverty lines consider minimum nutritional requirements as a primary factor. Therefore, option C is correct. Options A, B, and D are incorrect because the poverty lines are not solely based on household income, are not uniform across rural and urban areas, and do consider regional variations.
Question 15: Which of the following statements about the Tendulkar Committee's poverty lines is correct? A) The poverty lines are determined solely based on household income. B) The poverty lines are uniform across rural and urban areas C) The poverty lines are primarily based on access to basic amenities. D) The poverty lines were recommended for the entire Indian population without any regional variations.	**Answer: A)** The poverty lines are determined solely based on household income. **Explanation:** The Tendulkar Committee's poverty lines are primarily based on household income rather than considering other factors like access to basic amenities. Therefore, option A is correct. Options B, C, and D are incorrect because the poverty lines are not uniform across rural and urban areas, are not primarily based on access to basic amenities, and may have regional variations.

Question 16: What factors contribute to the determination of poverty lines according to the Tendulkar Committee's recommendations A) Household income and expenditure only. B) Access to basic amenities and minimum nutritional requirements. C) Cost of living and employment status. D) Urbanization and infrastructure development.	**Answer: A)** Household income and expenditure only. **Explanation:** The Tendulkar Committee's poverty lines are primarily determined based on household income and expenditure without considering other factors like access to basic amenities or minimum nutritional requirements. Therefore, option A is correct. Options B, C, and D are incorrect because they do not accurately describe the factors considered by the Tendulkar Committee.
Question 17: When was the Tendulkar Committee established to determine poverty lines in India? A) 2005 B) 2010 C) 2013 D) 2017	**Answer: B)** 2010 **Explanation:** The Tendulkar Committee was established in 2010 by the Government of India to revisit the methodology for estimating poverty and updating the poverty lines
Question 18: Which ministry or department was responsible for constituting the Tendulkar Committee? A) Ministry of Finance B) Ministry of Rural Development C) Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation D) NITI Aayog	**Answer: C)** Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation **Explanation:** The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation was responsible for constituting the Tendulkar Committee to review and update the methodology for estimating poverty lines in India.
Question 19: What is the Lakdawala Committee? a) A committee formed to investigate corruption in the Indian banking sector b) A committee established to examine the issue of poverty estimation in India c) A committee tasked with assessing the impact of climate change on Indian agriculture d) A committee appointed to study the implementation of rural development schemes in India	**Answer:b)** A committee established to examine the issue of poverty estimation in India **Explanation:** The Lakdawala Committee, officially known as the Expert Group on Estimation of Proportion and Number of Poor, was constituted by the Government of India in 1993. Its primary objective was to review and revise the methodology for poverty estimation in India. Therefore, option b) is correct. **Option Analysis:** a) Incorrect. The Lakdawala Committee was not formed to investigate corruption in the banking sector. There have been other committees and commissions for such purposes, like the Janakiraman Committee. c) Incorrect. Although climate change impacts on agriculture are significant, the Lakdawala Committee specifically focused on poverty estimation, not climate change. d) Incorrect. The committee was not appointed to study rural development schemes but rather to address issues related to poverty estimation. There have been other committees and commissions focusing on rural development, such as the National Commission on Farmers (Swaminathan Commission).
Question 20: What methodology did the Lakdawala Committee recommend for poverty estimation? a) Income-based b) Consumption-based c) Asset-based d) Expenditure-based	**Answer: d)** Expenditure-based **Explanation:** The Lakdawala Committee recommended an expenditure-based method for estimating poverty, focusing on consumption expenditure to determine the poverty line. Option a) is incorrect because the committee's methodology wasn't primarily income-based. Option b) is incorrect because while consumption is involved, the committee specifically recommended an expenditure-based approach. Option c) is incorrect because asset-based methodologies were not the focus of the Lakdawala Committee.
Question 21: Which year was the Lakdawala Committee formed?	**Answer: b)** 1993

a) 1980 b) 1993 c) 2005 d) 2010	**Explanation:** The Lakdawala Committee was constituted by the Government of India in 1993 to estimate poverty in India. Option a) is incorrect because the committee was formed in 1993, not 1980. Option c) is incorrect because 2005 is after the Lakdawala Committee was already in operation. Option d) is incorrect because 2010 is also after the formation of the Lakdawala Committee.
Question 22: What was the main objective of the Lakdawala Committee? a) Investigate corruption in the banking sector b) Assess the impact of climate change on Indian agriculture c) Review and revise the methodology for poverty estimation d) Study the implementation of rural development schemes	**Answer:c)** Review and revise the methodology for poverty estimation **Explanation:** The primary objective of the Lakdawala Committee was to review and revise the methodology for poverty estimation in India. Hence, option c) is correct. Option Analysis: a) Incorrect. The Lakdawala Committee was not formed to investigate corruption in the banking sector. b) Incorrect. While climate change impacts on agriculture are significant, the Lakdawala Committee focused on poverty estimation, not climate change. d) Incorrect. The Lakdawala Committee was not appointed to study rural development schemes but rather to address issues related to poverty estimation.
Question 23: Which type of vaccine is commonly used for measles vaccination? a) Oral vaccine b) Inactivated vaccine c) Subunit vaccine d) Live attenuated vaccine	**Answer: d)** Live attenuated vaccine **Explanation:** Measles vaccination is commonly administered using a live attenuated vaccine, which contains weakened measles virus that stimulates the immune system without causing the disease. Option a) is incorrect because there isn't an oral measles vaccine available; it's typically administered via injection. Option b) is incorrect because inactivated vaccines contain killed pathogens, not weakened ones like live attenuated vaccines. Option c) is incorrect because subunit vaccines contain only specific antigens of the pathogen, not the whole weakened virus.
Question 24: What is the typical schedule for measles vaccination in most countries? a) At birth and 2 months b) At 6 weeks and 10 weeks c) At 9 months and 15 months d) At 12 months and 18 months	**Answer: c)** At 9 months and 15 months **Explanation:** In most countries, measles vaccination is administered around 9 months of age for the first dose, followed by a second dose around 15 months of age to ensure adequate protection. Option a) is incorrect because measles vaccination isn't typically given at birth; maternal antibodies provide protection during the first few months. Option b) is incorrect because this schedule doesn't align with the usual timing for measles vaccination. Option d) is incorrect because delaying the first dose until 12 months would leave infants susceptible to measles for a longer period.
Question 25: Where is Hongcun South Lake located? a) Beijing b) Shanghai c) Anhui Province d) Guangdong Province	**Answer: c)** Anhui Province **Explanation:** Hongcun South Lake is located in Anhui Province, China. This is a famous Chinese ancient village. Option a) is incorrect because Beijing is the capital city of China and not where Hongcun South Lake is located. Option b) is incorrect because Shanghai is a major city in China, but it is not where Hongcun South Lake is situated.

	Option d) is incorrect because Guangdong Province is located in southern China, far from the location of Hongcun South Lake.
Question 26: What is the significance of Hongcun South Lake in traditional Chinese culture? a) It is a sacred site for religious ceremonies b) It serves as a source of drinking water for nearby villages c) It is a symbol of harmony between humans and nature d) It is a strategic military outpost	**Answer: c)** It is a symbol of harmony between humans and nature **Explanation:** Hongcun South Lake is often regarded as a symbol of harmony between humans and nature due to its scenic beauty and tranquil surroundings. Option a) is incorrect because there is no evidence to suggest that Hongcun South Lake is a sacred site for religious ceremonies. Option b) is incorrect because while lakes may serve as sources of drinking water, it is not the primary significance of Hongcun South Lake. Option d) is incorrect because Hongcun South Lake does not have a history of being a strategic military outpost.
Question 27: Which dynasty is associated with the founding of Hongcun South Lake? a) Tang Dynasty b) Song Dynasty c) Ming Dynasty d) Qing Dynasty	**Answer: c)** Ming Dynasty **Explanation:** Hongcun South Lake was founded during the Ming Dynasty, and much of its architecture dates back to this period. Option a) is incorrect because the Tang Dynasty predates the founding of Hongcun South Lake. Option b) is incorrect because the Song Dynasty also predates the founding of Hongcun South Lake. Option d) is incorrect because while the Qing Dynasty succeeded the Ming Dynasty, it was not associated with the founding of Hongcun South Lake.