



India's Power Sector in 2030: Shift to Renewables and Coal's Decline

For Prelims: Central Electricity Authority (CEA), [Paris Agreement](#), Targets of Renewable Energy, [climate commitments](#)

For Mains: [India's energy transition](#) and future power generation mix, challenges faced in the adoption of renewable energy sources, progress of India in achieving its renewable energy targets

Why in News?

Recently, the [Central Electricity Authority \(CEA\)](#) (Ministry of Power) released a new publication titled **Report on Optimal Generation Mix 2030 Version 2.0**.

- This is an **updated version of the report published in 2020** titled **Report on Optimal Generation Capacity Mix for 2029-30**.
- The report highlights the changes expected in India's energy mix, with a **decline in coal's share and a rise in renewable energy (RE) sources**.
- Earlier, the [CEA released the latest draft of the National Electricity Plan \(NEP\) 2022-27](#).

What are the Key Highlights?

- **Coal Share in Power Mix:**
 - Coal's share in the power mix is projected to **decline from 73% in 2022-23 to 55% in 2030**.
 - **Impact on Coal Usage:**
 - Although the share of coal in power generation is set to reduce, in absolute terms, **coal power capacity and generation will increase between 2023 and 2030**.
 - Coal capacity is projected to **rise by 19%**, and generation is expected to **increase by 13%** during this period.
- **Solar Energy Contribution:**
 - [Solar energy](#) is expected to play a significant role in the power mix, lifting the overall load.
 - Projections indicate a **quadrupling of solar capacity** from 109 GW to 392 GW by 2030.
 - Solar generation is expected to increase from 173 BU to 761 BU in the same period.

Note:

- **Power capacity differs from generation.** Capacity is the maximum power a plant can produce and is expressed in watts (or gigawatts or megawatts).
- Generation is the actual amount of power produced in one hour, expressed in **watt-hours or billion units (BU)**.
- **Contribution of Other RE Sources:**

- Projections for large [hydropower](#) and [wind energy](#) remain **modest in the future power mix**.
 - Large hydro generation is expected to **increase from 8% to 9% by 2030**.
 - **Wind generation**, on the other hand, is **projected to decrease to 9%** in the updated version (from **12% in the previous report**).
- Renewable sources, including small hydro, pumped hydro, solar, wind, and biomass, are expected to account for **31% of the power mix in 2030, compared to the current 12%**.
- **Role of Natural Gas in the Power Generation Mix:**
 - Despite aspirations to increase the share of [natural gas](#), its contribution to power generation remains small.
 - The report estimates the likely retirement of 2,121.5 MW of coal plants by 2030, with 304 MW set to be retired during 2022-23.
- **Greenhouse Gas Emissions:**
 - The **power sector contributes approximately 40%** of India's total [greenhouse gas emissions](#).
 - Power sector emissions are projected to **rise by 11%, reaching 1.114 Gt CO2 in 2030**, accounting for 10% of global power sector emissions.
- **Climate Commitments**
 - **In terms of [climate commitments](#)**, CEA's projections indicate that India is likely to **over-achieve on its pledge to the [Paris Agreement](#)** - to have 50% of installed power capacity from non-fossil sources by 2030.
 - As per the report, India's share of capacity from non-fossil sources will be 62% by 2030. The share will be 64% if [nuclear power](#) is considered.

What are India's Targets of Renewable Energy Power Generation?

- **India's Renewable Energy Targets:**
 - **175 GW Renewable Energy Capacity by 2022:**
 - 100 GW of Solar Power.
 - 60 GW of Wind Power.
 - 10 GW of Biomass Power.
 - 5 GW of Small Hydro Power.
 - **500 GW Non-Fossil Fuel Based Energy by 2030:**
 - Announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at COP26 summit.
 - **50% Electricity from Non-Fossil Fuel Sources by 2030:**
 - Pledged in India's [Nationally Determined Contributions \(NDCs\)](#) under the **Paris Agreement**.
- **India's Global Ranking:**
 - The 4th largest installed capacity of solar and wind power in the world.
 - The 4th most attractive renewable energy market in the world.

What is CEA?

- **About:**
 - The **CEA is a statutory organization** that advises the government of India on policy matters and formulates plans for the development of **electricity systems in the country**.
 - It was established in 1951 under the Electricity Supply Act 1948, which has been now superseded by the [Electricity Act 2003](#).
- **Functions:**
 - **Policymaking:**
 - Preparing the **national electricity plan and tariff policy**.
 - **Advising** the central government on matters relating to the **national electricity policy, rural electrification, hydropower development, etc.**
 - **Technical Standards:**

- Specifying the technical standards for construction, operation, and maintenance of electrical plants and electric lines.
- Specifying the **grid standards and safety requirements** for operation and maintenance of transmission lines.
- **Data Collection and Research:**
 - Collecting and recording data on generation, transmission, distribution, and utilization of electricity and promoting r&d in the field of electricity.
- **Implementation Monitoring and Coordination:**
 - Monitoring the implementation of power projects and schemes.
 - Coordinating with state governments, state electricity boards, regional power committees, etc. on matters relating to electricity.

What are India's Initiatives for Power Generation from RE Sources?

- **Solar Power:**
 - [National Solar Mission](#)
 - [International Solar Alliance](#)
 - [PM Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan \(PM-KUSUM\)](#)
- **Wind Power:**
 - [National Wind-Solar Hybrid Policy](#)
 - [National Offshore Wind Energy Policy](#)
- **Hydropower:**
 - [National Hydroelectricity Policy](#)
 - **Renewable Energy Status:** The government has declared large hydropower projects (>25 MW) as renewable energy sources, which will enable them to avail the benefits of renewable energy such as waiver of inter-state transmission charges, renewable purchase obligation, green energy certificates, etc.
- **Hydrogen:**
 - [National Hydrogen Energy Mission](#)
 - [National Green Hydrogen Mission](#)

What are the Challenges in Adopting Renewable Energy?

- **Intermittency and Variability:**
 - RE sources are intermittent and variable due to **weather conditions**.
 - **Matching energy supply** with demand and **maintaining grid stability** becomes challenging.
- **Grid Integration:**
 - Integrating large-scale renewable energy into existing power grids can be complex.
 - Upgrading grid infrastructure and balancing mechanisms is necessary for reliable power supply.
- **Land and Resource Availability:**
 - Scaling up renewable energy installations requires significant land and resource availability.
 - Identifying suitable locations, acquiring land, and addressing environmental concerns can be challenging.
- **Transition from Coal-dependent Economy:**
 - Coal still dominates the power sector in India, as it accounts for about **70% of the electricity generation**.
 - Also, coal sector in India is estimated to provide about **1.2 million** direct jobs and up to **20 million** indirect and dependent jobs.
 - Transition from it can lead to job losses in the coal sector and ensuring a smooth transition for affected communities needs to be addressed.

Prelims

Q. The term 'Intended Nationally Determined Contributions' is sometimes seen in the news in the context of (2016)

- (a) pledges made by the European countries to rehabilitate refugees from the war-affected Middle East
- (b) plan of action outlined by the countries of the world to combat climate change
- (c) capital contributed by the member countries in the establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
- (d) plan of action outlined by the countries of the world regarding Sustainable Development Goals

Ans: (b)

Mains:

Q. Describe the benefits of deriving electric energy from sunlight in contrast to conventional energy generation. What are the initiatives offered by our government for this purpose? (2020)

[Source: DTE](#)

Power Distribution Between Delhi Government and Centre

For Prelims: [Special Provisions for Delhi under Article 239AA](#), [NCT](#), [Schedule VII](#), [Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi \(Amendment\) Act 2021](#).

For Mains: Special Provisions for Delhi under Article 239AA, Administration of UTs.

Why in News?

Recently, the [Supreme Court \(SC\)](#) has ruled in favor of the Delhi government on the issue of who controls the **Bureaucracy in the National Capital** where it ruled that the **Delhi government has legislative and executive powers over services** except for public order, police and land.

What is the Issue About?

- The issue in the case is whether the Government of [NCT \(National Capital Territory\)](#) of Delhi has legislative and executive powers in relation to 'services' under **Schedule VII, List II, and Entry 41** of the Constitution of India and whether the **officers of the various 'services' such as IAS, IPS, DANICS, and DANIPS**, who have been allocated to Delhi by the Union of India, come under the **administrative control of the Government of NCT of Delhi**.
- The Issues of distribution of Power between Delhi government and Centre first arose from a reference made by a **two-judge Bench of the SC in 2019**, which left the question of **who will have control over the administrative services** for consideration by a larger Bench.
- The Delhi government challenged the constitutional validity of the [Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi \(Amendment\) Act 2021](#), which provided that the term "government" referred to in any law made by the Legislative Assembly of Delhi will imply the Lieutenant Governor (L-G).

What is the Verdict of the SC?

- Ruling in Delhi govt's favour, the SC held that the Lt. Governor **shall be bound by the decision of Delhi government over services**, apart from public order, police and land.
- Disagreeing with the Centre which argued that the Constitution is a federal Constitution with a strong unitary bias as far as UTs are concerned, the **SC said, it is not unitary.**
 - "The **principles of democracy and federalism are essential features of our Constitution and form a part of the basic structure**," it said.
 - Federalism "is a means to reconcile the desire of commonality along with the desire for autonomy and accommodate diverse needs in a pluralistic society".
- The SC stated that **Article 239AA establishes a legislative assembly** for NCT of Delhi. Members of the **legislative assembly are elected by the Delhi electorate.**
 - If a democratically elected government is **not given the power to control the officers**, the principle of **triple chain of accountability will be redundant.**
 - The principle of **collective responsibility extends to the responsibility of officers**, who in turn report to the ministers. If the officers stop reporting to the ministers or do not abide by their directions, the entire principle of collective responsibility is affected.
- The Delhi government, much like other States, **represents the representative form of government** and any further expansion of the Union's power will be **contrary to the Constitutional scheme.**

What is Article 239AA of the Constitution?

- Article 239 AA was inserted in the Constitution by **The Constitution (69th Amendment) Act, 1991** to give **Special Status to Delhi** following the recommendations of the S Balakrishnan Committee that was set up to look into demands for statehood for Delhi.
 - It says that the NCT of Delhi will have an **Administrator and a Legislative Assembly.**
 - Subject to the provisions of the Constitution, the Legislative Assembly "shall have power to make laws for the whole or any part of the NCT with respect to any of the **matters in the State List or Concurrent List** in so far as any such matter is applicable to Union territories" except on the subject of **police, public order, and land.**
- Further, the Article 239AA also notes that **L-G has to either act on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers**, or he is bound to implement the decision taken by the President on a reference being made by him.
- Also, **Article 239AA, empowers the L-G to refer a difference of opinion** on 'any matter' with the Council of Ministers to the President.
- Thus, this dual control between L-G and the elected government leads to a power tussle.

How are the UTs Administered in India?

- **About:**
 - Part VIII (Articles 239 to 241) of the Constitution deals with the Union Territories.
 - UTs in India are administered by the **President through an administrator appointed** by him/her. The administrator is not elected but rather a **representative of the President.**
 - In some UTs, such as Delhi and Puducherry, the administrator holds significant powers, including the ability to make laws and regulations for the UT.
 - In other UTs, such as Lakshadweep and Dadra and Nagar Haveli, the administrator's powers are limited to providing advice to the elected government.
 - The judiciary in UTs is also governed by the Constitution and the laws made by the Parliament. However, in some **UTs, such as Delhi, the High Court has wider powers than** in other UTs, such as Lakshadweep.
- **Special Provisions for Delhi and Puducherry:**
 - The Union Territories of **Puducherry (in 1963), Delhi (in 1992) and Jammu and Kashmir in 2019** (yet to be constituted) are provided with a **legislative assembly and a Council of Ministers** headed by a Chief Minister.
 - The Legislative assembly of the UT of Puducherry may make laws with respect to matters **enumerated in List II or List III in the Seventh Schedule of the**

Constitution in so far as these matters are applicable in relation to the Union Territory.

- The legislative assembly of National Capital Territory of Delhi also has these powers with the exception that **Entries 1, 2 and 18 of the List II are not within the legislative competence** of the legislative assembly.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Q. Whether the Supreme Court Judgment (July 2018) can settle the political tussle between the Lt. Governor and elected government of Delhi? Examine. **(2018)**

[Source: IE](#)

Climate Change Resilience Deficit in Asia-Pacific Countries

For Prelims: [Net-zero emissions](#), [Greenhouse gas emission](#), [Global climate crisis](#)

For Mains: Impact of climate-induced disasters on vulnerable groups in the Asia-Pacific region, economic costs associated with climate change

Why in News?

A recent study, "**The Race to Net Zero: Accelerating Climate Action in Asia and the Pacific**," by the [United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific \(UNESCAP\)](#) has revealed that most countries in **Asia and the Pacific** are **inadequately equipped to manage the growing threats** posed by extreme weather events and natural disasters.

- The study emphasizes the **lack of necessary data and resources to support adaptation and mitigation efforts** in the region.

What are the Key Highlights?

- **Escalating Climate Challenges in Asia-Pacific:**
 - **Increasing temperatures** in the region over the past 60 years have surpassed the **global average**, leading to more frequent and **intense** [extreme weather events](#) and **natural hazards**.
 - [Tropical cyclones](#), [heatwaves](#), [floods](#), and [droughts](#) have resulted in significant loss of life, displacement, health issues, and heightened poverty levels.
 - Out of the top 10 countries most affected by such disasters, **six are located in the Asia-Pacific region**, causing disruptions in food systems, damaging economies, and undermining societies.
- **Disproportionate Impact on Vulnerable Groups:**
 - Climate change and climate-induced disasters disproportionately burden marginalized and vulnerable groups, including **women, children, the elderly, persons with disabilities**,

- **migrants, indigenous populations,** and young people in vulnerable situations.
- The underlying drivers of poverty and societal inequalities are intensified by these challenges, hindering development progress.
- **Region's Contribution to Greenhouse Gas Emissions:**
 - The Asia-Pacific region is responsible for **more than half of the world's [greenhouse gas emissions](#)**.
 - **Rapid development, coupled with a significant population,** places the region at a critical position in the **[global climate crisis](#)**.
 - Many **low-lying cities and vulnerable small island states** are located within the region, exacerbating the risks faced by these areas.
- **Economic Costs of Climate Change:**
 - ESCAP estimates the annual **average losses from natural and biological hazards** in Asia and the Pacific to be around **780 billion USD**.
 - These losses are projected to increase to **1.1 trillion USD** under a **moderate climate change** scenario and **1.4 trillion USD** under the **worst-case scenario**.
 - Current financing for climate action **falls short of meeting the region's needs and limiting global warming to 1.5°C**.
- **Steps Required to Address:**
 - **Closing the Emissions Gap:**
 - **Energy Sector:**
 - Restructuring **national energy systems** and investing in **renewable energy infrastructure**.
 - Transitioning from **fossil fuels to renewable energy sources**.
 - Promoting **cross-border electricity grids** to increase the **share of renewable energy**.
 - Emphasizing **local solutions and decentralized power generation**.
 - **Transport Sector:**
 - **Shifting to low-carbon** transportation pathways.
 - **Reducing transport distance** through integrated land-use planning.
 - Encouraging **sustainable transport modes** with low-carbon or **[net-zero emissions](#)**.
 - Improving **vehicle and fuel efficiency**.
 - **International Trade and Investment:**
 - Integrating **climate considerations into regional trade agreements**.
 - Promoting **climate-smart trade practices**.
 - Encouraging the private sector to **adopt low-carbon pathways and sustainability practices**.
 - Increasing **transparency and accountability** through **sustainability reporting and greenhouse gas accounting**.

What is UNESCAP?

- **About:** The UNESCAP is the **regional development arm of the United Nations for the Asia-Pacific region**.
 - It has **53 Member States and 9 Associate Members** from Asia-Pacific Region including India.
- **Established:** 1947
- **Headquarters:** Bangkok, Thailand
- **Objective:** To overcome some of the region's greatest challenges by providing results-oriented projects, technical assistance and capacity building to member States.

[Source: DTE](#)

Poshan Bhi, Padhai Bhi

For Prelims: [Early Childhood Care and Education \(ECCE\)](#), [New Education Policy](#), [Integrated Child Development Services \(ICDS\)](#), [National Rural Health Mission](#), [Pulse Polio Immunization \(PPI\)](#).

For Mains: Role and Responsibilities of AWW, Issues Related to Anganwadi.

Why in News?

The Union Minister for Women and Child Development introduced the government's flagship program '**Poshan Bhi, Padhai Bhi**', which will focus on **Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)** at [anganwadis](#) across the country.

- ECCE is an important component of [Mission Saksham Anganwadi](#) and [Poshan 2.0](#) (Mission Poshan 2.0) and envisaged under the National Education Policy.

What are the Major Highlights of the Program?

- The Ministry has allocated **Rs 600 crore** for the training of Anganwadi Workers (AWW) to **effectively implement ECCE**.
- The **National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD)** will provide the training for anganwadi workers.
- The objective of the program is to **transform anganwadi centers into not just nutrition hubs but also education-imparting centers**.
 - The ECCE program **will prioritize education in the mother tongue**, aligning with the principles of the [New Education Policy](#).
- Through the changes introduced by the "Poshan bhi, Padhai bhi" ECCE policy, **every child would be provided with at least two hours of high-quality pre-school instruction daily**.

What are the Anganwadis?

- **About:**
 - **Anganwadi is a type of rural child care center** in India. It was established as part of the [Integrated Child Development Services \(ICDS\)](#) program.
 - Anganwadis play **a crucial role in providing basic health care, nutrition, and early childhood education** to children below the age of six.
 - The term "anganwadi" translates to "**courtyard shelter**".
- **Status:**
 - Close to **13.9 lakh operational Anganwadi centres across the country** are providing supplementary nutrition and early care and education to around **8 crore beneficiary children under the age of 6 years**, making it the **largest public provisioning of such services in the world**.
- **Role and Responsibilities of AWW:**
 - To organize **non-formal pre-school activities** in the anganwadi for children in the age group **3-6 years** and to help in **designing and making of toys and play equipment of indigenous origin for use in anganwadi**.
 - They serve as centers for the distribution of supplementary nutrition, such as **take-home rations or hot cooked meals, to children and pregnant/lactating women**. These provisions aim to address [malnutrition](#) and **improve overall health**.
 - **To provide health and nutrition education, and counseling to breastfeeding/ Infant & young feeding practices to mothers**.
 - **AWW**, being close to the locals, are expected to encourage married women to

adopt family planning/birth control measures.

- **AWWs** shall share the information relating to births that took place during the month with the **Panchayat Secretary/Gram Sabha Sewa** whoever has been notified as **Registrar/Sub Registrar of Births & Deaths in her village.**
- To guide **Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA)** engaged under **National Rural Health Mission** in the delivery of health care services and maintenance of records under the ICDS Scheme.
- To identify the disability among children during her home visits and refer the case immediately to the nearest **PHC or District Disability Rehabilitation Centre.**
- To support in organizing **Pulse Polio Immunization (PPI) drives.**

▪ **Issues:**

- **Inadequate Infrastructure:** Many Anganwadi centers lack **proper infrastructure, including basic amenities like toilets, clean water, and sufficient space for children to learn and play.**
 - Also, there is a shortage of trained staff, including anganwadi workers and helpers, in many Anganwadi centers.
- **Low Remuneration:** Anganwadi workers and helpers are often **inadequately compensated for their work.** Low remuneration can lead to demotivation and affect the quality of services provided. **It also hampers the recruitment and retention of skilled personnel.**
- **Limited Outreach:** In some cases, **Anganwadis fail to reach the most marginalized and remote communities,** leaving vulnerable children without access to crucial services. Inadequate transportation facilities and lack of awareness about the benefits of Anganwadis contribute to this issue.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the impact and effectiveness of Anganwadi services are **inadequate or underutilized.**
 - The **lack of robust monitoring can hinder the identification of areas** for improvement and the allocation of resources based on needs.

Way Forward

- **Community-based Learning:** Foster community involvement by organizing local experts, retired teachers, and volunteers to conduct interactive learning sessions.
 - They can share their knowledge and skills with children through **storytelling, art and craft workshops, and practical demonstrations.**
- **Nutritional Gardening:** Promote the **establishment of small vegetable gardens at Anganwadi centers.** Children can actively participate in gardening activities, learning about nutrition and the importance of fresh, locally grown produce.
 - The harvested vegetables can be used in **preparing nutritious meals for the children.**
- **Nutrition-Focused Cooking Demonstrations:** Conduct regular cooking demonstrations for parents and caregivers, **showcasing healthy and affordable recipes using locally available ingredients.**
 - This encourages the adoption of nutritious cooking practices at home and reinforces the link between nutrition and overall development.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Which of the following are the objectives of 'National Nutrition Mission'? (2017)

1. To create awareness relating to malnutrition among pregnant women and lactating mothers.
2. To reduce the incidence of anaemia among young children, adolescent girls and women.
3. To promote the consumption of millets, coarse cereals and unpolished rice.
4. To promote the consumption of poultry eggs.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

(a) 1 and 2 only

- (b) 1, 2 and 3 only
(c) 1, 2 and 4 only
(d) 3 and 4 only

Ans: (a)

Exp:

- **National Nutrition Mission (POSHAN Abhiyaan)** is a flagship programme of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, GoI, which ensures convergence with various programmes like Anganwadi services, National Health Mission, Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, Swachh-Bharat Mission, etc.
- The goals of National Nutrition Mission (NNM) are to achieve improvement in nutritional status of children from 0-6 years, adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers in a time bound manner during the next three years beginning 2017- 18. Hence, 1 is correct.
- NNM targets to reduce stunting, under-nutrition, anaemia (among young children, women and adolescent girls) and reduce low birth weight of babies. Hence, 2 is correct.
- There is no such provision relating to consumption of millets, unpolished rice, coarse cereals and eggs under NNM. **Hence, 3 and 4 are not correct. Therefore, option (a) is the correct answer.**

[Source: IE](#)

Report on Human Rights Defenders & Unfair Business Practices

For Prelims: Human Right, Human Right Defenders, [Judicial harassment](#), UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders

For Mains: Human Rights Defenders & Business in 2022, Businesses and violation of human rights

Why in News?

Recently, **Business & Human Rights Resource Centre (BHRRC)** has released a report titled **“Human rights defenders & business in 2022: People challenging corporate power to protect our planet”**, seeking to underscore the number of attacks against activists seeking to protect their “Communities, Environments, and Livelihood” from the impact of Irresponsible Business Practice.

- BHRRC is a UK-based center, which is dedicated to **advancing human rights in business** and eradicating abuse.

What are the Findings of the Report?

- **Global:**
 - **Total Attacks:**
 - Globally, there are 4,700 attacks on [Human Rights](#) defenders raising concerns about harmful business practice from **January 2015-March 2023**.
 - Of them, 555 were in 2022, “revealing that **on average more than 10 defenders were attacked every single week** for raising legitimate concerns about

irresponsible business activity.

- **Mining Sector:**
 - **Mining** has remained the **most dangerous sector for defenders**, with 30% of all the attacks in 2022 being linked to it.
 - The sector is even more dangerous for **Indigenous defenders** — **41%** of attacks against Indigenous peoples in 2022 related to mining.
- **Non-Lethal Attacks Uninvestigated:**
 - The people fighting against human rights violations and environmental crimes by corporations faced a multitude of attacks, with **86% of them being non-lethal**. However, these are often precursors to lethal violence.
 - Non-lethal attacks are generally **left uninvestigated and unpunished**, which can have a chilling effect on the work of defenders and promote impunity that feeds further violence where defenders persist in their critical work.
- **Major Attacks:**
 - **Judicial harassment**, which includes **arbitrary arrest, unfair trial and strategic lawsuits** against public participation, **was the most common form of attack** against protesters across the world.
 - Around half the cases of attacks tracked by the organisation were of this nature.
 - Judicial harassment causes significant distress and **harm to defenders and diverts time away from their human rights work** while draining their resources.
 - It can have a chilling effect, deterring others from speaking out against abuse.
- **Attacks on Women:**
 - Nearly a **quarter of the attacks were against women** who challenged “both corporate power and patriarchal gender norms”.
 - Many of these attacks were online threats and smear campaigns that caused them immense long-term psychological harm.
 - These tactics are meant to stigmatise, isolate and silence women defenders.
- **India:**
 - India recorded the 2nd highest number of attacks on **defenders protesting harmful business practices** in 2022. India saw 54 such incidents of attacks (affecting one or more individuals).
 - The **only country to perform worse than India was Brazil**, with 63 such incidents.
 - **Mexico, Cambodia, and the Philippines** followed with **44, 40, and 32** attacks, respectively.
 - India also had the **greatest number of companies linked to attacks**.
- **Recommendations:**
 - States should “pass and implement **legislation recognising the right to defend rights and the vital role of defenders**, both individual and collective, in **promoting human rights, sustainable development**, and a healthy environment and committing to zero-tolerance for attacks.
 - Collect and report data on non-lethal and lethal attacks to inform **more effective protection mechanisms and passing anti-SLAPP (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation) legislation** to prevent companies silencing defenders.
 - Ensure **effective remedy for violations** when they occur, including by strengthening judicial systems to **hold businesses accountable for acts of retaliation against defenders and actively participating in investigation** and prosecution of those responsible for attacks.
 - Move towards supporting the adoption of a binding **UN Treaty on business and human rights** and ensure that it explicitly recognises the risks defenders face and their right to defend human rights.

How do Businesses Violate Human Rights?

- **Labor Rights Violations:** Businesses may violate the rights of their workers by **engaging in practices such as Forced Labor, Child Labor**, gender-based discrimination, and **violations of**

freedom of association and collective bargaining rights.

- **Environmental Impacts:** Businesses may contribute to environmental harm through [Pollution](#), [Deforestation](#), and other activities that can harm local communities and their rights to clean air, water, and a healthy environment.
- **Human Rights Abuses in Supply Chains:** Companies may source their products or services from **suppliers that violate human rights**, such as those that engage in human trafficking, or other forms of exploitation.
- **Land Rights Violations:** Businesses may be involved in **land acquisition or development projects** that **displace local communities, infringe on their land rights**, or harm their livelihoods.
- **Corruption:** Businesses may engage in corrupt practices such as **bribery, extortion, or [money laundering](#)** that can undermine the rule of law and the rights of citizens.

What are the Efforts to Safeguard Human Rights Defenders?

- **UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders:**
 - The Declaration on human rights defenders was **adopted by consensus by the [UN General Assembly](#) in 1998**.
 - It says, Human rights defenders are people or groups **who peacefully work to promote and protect human rights and freedoms**. They play a vital role in making sure that these rights are respected and upheld around the world, as outlined in international human rights agreements.
 - The Declaration is formally called the "**Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms**".
 - It is **not a legally binding instrument**, but it contains principles and rights that are based on human rights standards enshrined in other legally binding international instruments that are legally binding.
- **Note: India does not have a specific law** to provide protection to Human Rights Defenders. The [National Human Rights Commission](#) works with human rights defenders to serve its mandate of promotion and protection of human rights in the country in the letter and spirit.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims:

Q. Other than the Fundamental Rights, which of the following parts of the Constitution of India reflect/reflects the principles and provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)? (2020)

1. Preamble
2. Directive Principles of State Policy
3. Fundamental Duties

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (d)

Q. Amnesty International is (2015)

- (a) an agency of the United Nations to help refugees of civil wars
- (b) a global Human Rights Movement
- (c) a non-governmental voluntary organization to help very poor people
- (d) an inter-governmental agency to cater to medical emergencies in war-ravaged regions

Ans: (b)

Mains:

Q. Though the Human Rights Commissions have contributed immensely to the protection of human rights in India, yet they have failed to assert themselves against the mighty and powerful. Analysing their structural and practical limitations, suggest remedial measures. **(2021)**

[Source: DTE](#)

Bypolls in India

Why in News?

Recently, **Bypolls** were conducted for **one Lok Sabha constituency in Punjab** and **four Assembly seats in Uttar Pradesh, Meghalaya, and Odisha**.

What are Bypolls?

▪ About:

- Bypolls, also known as **bye-elections or special elections**, refer to [elections](#) held to **fill vacant seats in the legislative bodies of India**.
- It serves as a **vital component within the broader electoral cycle** and complements regular elections by **addressing unforeseen vacancies**.

▪ Purpose:

- The primary objective of bypolls is to ensure **the timely filling of vacant seats, enabling the representation of the affected constituency** or district in the legislative body.

▪ Occurrence:

- Bypolls are conducted when a seat in the legislature becomes vacant due to reasons such as the **death, resignation, disqualification, or expulsion of a sitting member**.

▪ Timeframe:

- Section 151A of the **Representation of the People Act, 1951** mandates the Election Commission to fill the casual vacancies in the Houses of Parliament and State Legislatures through **bye elections within six months from the date of occurrence of the vacancy**, provided that the **remainder of the term of a member in relation to a vacancy is one year or more**.

- Hence, there is **no need to hold bye elections if the remaining term of the Lok Sabha is less than one year** from the date of occurrence of vacancies.

▪ Impact:

- **Impact on Political Landscape:** Bye-elections often serve as a **litmus test for political**

[parties](#) and their popularity.

- They provide an opportunity for parties to **gauge public sentiment and assess their support base.**
- **Impact on Government Majority:** Bye-election outcomes can affect the majority of the ruling government.
 - If the **ruling party loses a significant number of by-poll seats, it may lead to a loss of majority in the legislative body**, which can impact the government's stability and decision-making.
- **Testing the Electoral Strategies:** Bye-elections provide an avenue for political parties to test their **electoral strategies and fine-tune their campaign approaches.**
 - Parties may experiment with **candidate selection, campaign themes, and messaging during by-polls**, which can influence their strategies in subsequent elections.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question:

Q. Consider the following statements: (2017)

1. The Election Commission of India is a five-member body.
2. Union Ministry of Home Affairs decides the election schedule for the conduct of both general elections and bye-elections.
3. The Election Commission resolves the disputes relating to splits/mergers of recognised political parties.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 3 only

Ans: (d)

[Source: TH](#)

SAKSHAM- LMIS

Why in News?

The **Union Health Ministry** has introduced the **SAKSHAM** (Stimulating Advanced Knowledge for Sustainable Health Management), a **Learning Management Information System (LMIS)** of the [Ministry of Health and Family Welfare](#).

What is SAKSHAM?

- **About:**
 - SAKSHAM serves as a **comprehensive [digital learning](#) platform for offering online training and medical education** to all healthcare professionals across the country.
- **Developed By:**
 - [National Institute of Health & Family Welfare \(NIHFW\)](#).

- **Objective:**
 - The platform aims to ensure **inclusive capacity building among health professionals**, ranging from those **working in rural and remote [primary health centers](#)** to those in **metropolitan cities' tertiary care** and corporate hospitals.
- **Coverage:**
 - Currently, SAKSHAM: LMIS hosts over **200 public health and 100 clinical courses**, accessible through online mode.
- **Prospects:**
 - Saksham will be developed as a **centralized resource repository for training and teaching material**.
 - It will also act as a **central database of trained healthcare professionals** in the country.

What is the National Institute of Health & Family Welfare?

- **Establishment:** NIHFV was established on **9th March 1977**, under the autonomous Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.
- **Mandate:** NIHFV's primary mandate is to act as a **[think tank](#)** for the **promotion of health and family welfare programs in the country**.
 - It is also the premier organization for capacity building through training of health professionals, frontline health workers such as **[Accredited Social Health Activists \(ASHAs\)](#)** and **[Auxiliary Nurse Midwife \(ANMs\)](#)** and other central and state officers & healthcare staff.

[Source: PIB](#)

Rapid Fire Current Affairs

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Startup Forum 2023

India's Department of **Promotion for Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce** recently organized the first-ever physical **[Shanghai Cooperation Organization \(SCO\)](#)** Startup Forum in New Delhi. This event marked the third edition of the **[Startup India initiative](#)** aimed at expanding **startup interactions amongst the SCO Member States**, promoting **innovation, generating employment**, and encouraging young talent to develop innovative solutions. The event focused on promoting **collaboration and entrepreneurship, creating common platforms**, and sharing best **practices among SCO nations**. The workshop on the '**Role of Bilateral and Multilateral Engagements in developing a startup ecosystem**' aimed to build closer ties between these nations and boost the startup ecosystem.

The SCO is a permanent **intergovernmental international organization** established in **2001**. It aims to maintain **peace, security, and stability in the Eurasian region**. The SCO consists of nine member states and is seen as a **counterweight to [NATO](#)**. Its official languages are **Russian and Chinese**. The SCO's origins can be traced back to the **Shanghai Five**, formed in 1996 with **Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan**. After Uzbekistan joined in 2001, it became the SCO. **India and Pakistan joined in 2017**, and **Iran is set to become a permanent member in 2023**.

Read more: [Shanghai Cooperation Organization \(SCO\)](#) , [India & Startup](#)

Ministry of Ayush and ICMR collaborate for Integrative Health Research

The **Ministry of Ayush** and the [Indian Council of Medical Research \(ICMR\)](#) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to promote and collaborate on **integrative health research in India**. The MoU aims to generate evidence using **modern scientific methods** and focus on areas of national importance in **healthcare**. The cooperation will strengthen research capacity through training programs for **Ayush researchers**. The integration of **traditional and modern medicine** is a priority for the government, and this collaboration is seen as a significant step in that direction.

The MoU will facilitate the establishment of **Ayush-ICMR Centers** for Advanced Research in Integrative Health at all AIIMS with co-funding. Additionally, the parties will explore possibilities for public health research, addressing diseases of national importance, and conducting high-quality clinical trials in identified areas. A joint working group will be established to explore further areas of collaboration and ensure the implementation of joint research projects. The MoU signifies the commitment to evidence-based research and the integration of Ayush practices into the national healthcare system.

Ganga Expressway

The Uttar Pradesh government aims to complete the **594-km Ganga Expressway (NH-334)**, one of **India's largest expressway projects**, by December 2024, a year ahead of schedule. The early completion is intended to ensure that the expressway is open to the public before the next [Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj](#), scheduled for January 2025.

The Ganga Expressway is a significant expressway project in Uttar Pradesh, India. The construction is being carried out on a [public-private partnership \(PPP\)](#) model, with **Adani Enterprises and IRB Infrastructure Developers** as the project developers. The expressway, divided into four sections, will connect **Meerut to Prayagraj**, passing through 12 districts. It is estimated to cost Rs 36,000 crore. **Financial incentives** are provided to the developers for completing the project ahead of schedule. The Ganga Expressway project is crucial for improving connectivity and facilitating transportation in the region.

Men's World Boxing Championships

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Prime Minister of India has conveyed his heartfelt congratulations to **Deepak Bhorla, Hussamuddin, and Nishant Dev** for their remarkable achievement in the **Men's World Boxing Championships held in Tashkent**. They have created history by ensuring India's best-ever haul of three medals at the prestigious tournament. **Deepak Bhorla (51kg) won silver, Hussamuddin (57kg) and Nishant Dev (71kg) won bronze medals** in the semifinals.

The Men's World Boxing Championships, taking place from April 30 to May 14, 2023, in **Uzbekistan**, is a prominent event that brings together more than 400 boxers from across the globe, competing in 13 weight categories to claim victory and honor. Organized by the **International Boxing Association (IBA)** and the **Boxing Federation of Uzbekistan**, with the support of the **Government of Uzbekistan**, the tournament not only showcases top-notch boxing skills but also serves as a platform to celebrate the **vibrant culture and warm hospitality of Uzbekistan**.

Read more: [World Women's Boxing Championships](#)

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