



**UPSC
Mentorship**
A Unit of Mentorship India

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

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SOURCES



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GS II

1. Is it time for Proportional Representation?

Source: The Hindu, Page 10

Prelims: First Past the Post System (FPTP), Proportional Representation (PR) System

Mains: Salient features of the Representation of People's Act.

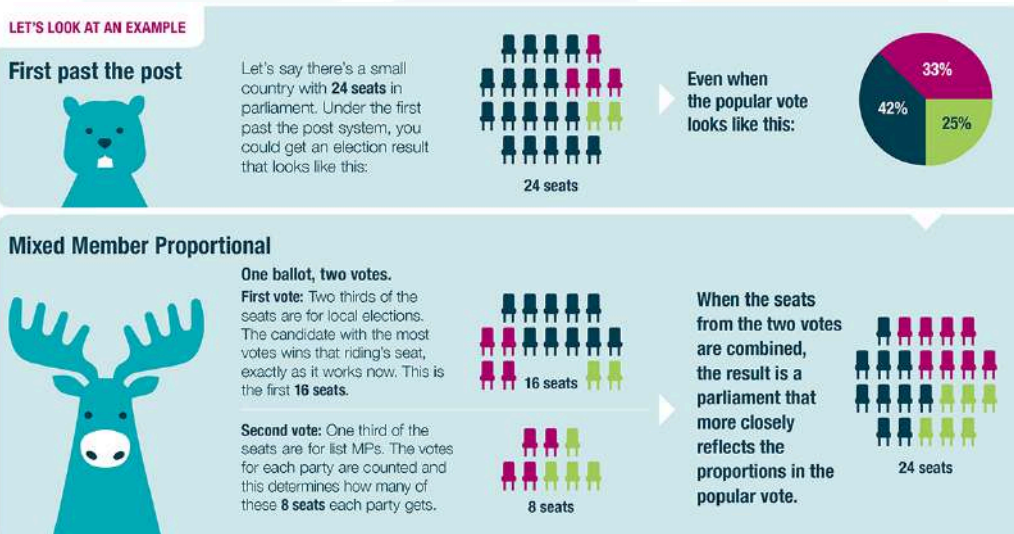
Context: Recently, Lok Sabha Election Results were announced. Winning Alliance got 293 seats with a 43.3% vote share, while the second largest alliance secured 234 seats with a 41.6% vote share. There is a representation Discrepancy as other regional parties and independents, with around 15% vote share, only won 16 seats.

First Past the Post System (FPTP)

- **Definition:** FPTP elects the candidate with the most votes in a constituency.
- **Advantages:** Simple, Feasible for large countries like India, and provides stability as the ruling party can have a majority without a majority vote share.
- **Disadvantages:** May result in over or underrepresentation of parties compared to their vote share.

Proportional Representation (PR) System

- **Definition:** PR ensures parties gain seats in proportion to their vote share. The most commonly used PR system is the 'Party list PR' where voters vote for the party (and not individual candidates) and then the parties get seats in proportion to their vote share.
- **Example:** Under PR, in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh, the INDIA bloc would have won 23 seats instead of 2.
- **Criticism:** Potential instability in forming government, and proliferation of parties based on regional or communal lines.



International Practices

- **Brazil and Argentina:** Uses party list PR system.
- **Parliamentary Democracies:** South Africa, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Spain use PR.
- **Germany (MMPR System):** Bundestag seats are filled 50% by FPTP and 50% by PR based on 5% vote share threshold.
- **New Zealand (MMPR System):** 60% seats by FPTP, 40% by PR with a 5% vote share threshold.

Way Forward

- **Mixed Member Proportional Representation (MMPR):** In order to maintain balance between stability and proportionate representation, the system of Mixed Member Proportional Representation (MMPR) can be considered. Under this system, there is one candidate who is elected through the FPTP system from each territorial constituency. There are also additional seats that are filled based on various parties' percentage of votes.
- **Law Commission Recommendation:** 170th report suggests introducing MMPR on an experimental basis with 25% of seats through PR.
- **Delimitation Exercise Post-2026 Census:** Increasing Lok Sabha seats based on population may affect federal principles.
- **MMPR for Incremental Seats:** Consider MMPR for additional seats to balance representation and address regional apprehensions.



GS III

2. Agnipath scheme: Why it was Introduced, the Opposition to it

Source: IE, Page 16

Prelims: Agnipath Scheme

Mains: Various Security forces and agencies and their mandate.

Context: During the recent Lok Sabha elections, Agnipath Scheme became a key campaign issue in various Indian states.

What is Agnipath Scheme?

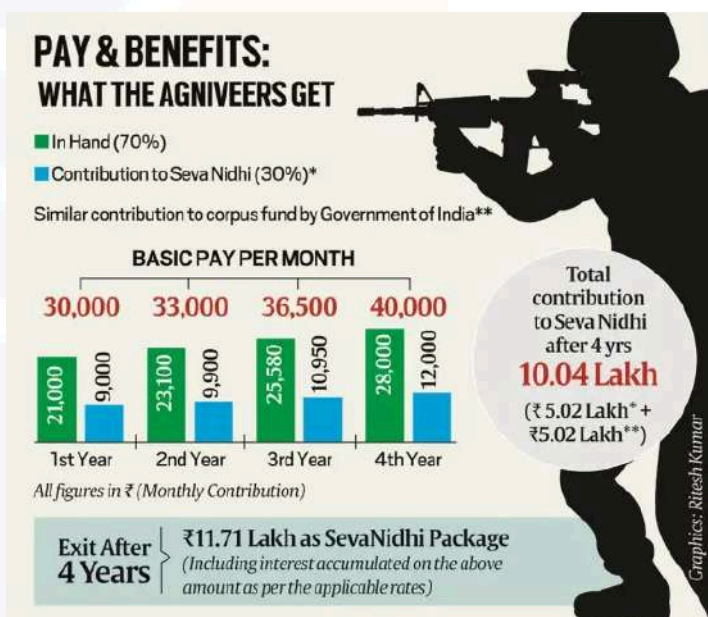
- **Agnipath Scheme:** Aimed at recruiting 'personnel below officer ranks' (soldiers, airmen, sailors) to the Indian Armed Forces for four years.
- **Agniveers:** Recruits under this scheme, with up to 25% eligible for permanent commission (another 15 years) based on merit and organizational needs.
- **Eligibility:** Aspirants aged 17.5 to 23 years.
- **Training:** Multiple batches have completed training across the Army, Navy, and Air Force.

Difference with Permanent Commission

- **Salary and Benefits:** Agniveers earn Rs 30,000-Rs 40,000 per month plus allowances; contribute 30% to Seva Nidhi fund with government matching.
- **Severance Package:** Rs 11.71 lakhs as a tax-exempt lump sum after four years.
- **Death/Disability Compensation:** Rs 1 crore for death on duty; up to Rs 44 lakh for disability.
- **Pension:** Only the 25% absorbed after four years receive pension benefits; initial four years not considered for retirement benefits.

Reasons for Introduction

- **Cost Reduction:** To reduce the Armed Forces' wage and pension bill.
- **Youthful Profile:** Scheme aims to lower the average age of the forces from 32 to 26 years.



- **Skill Development:** Post-service, Agniveers are expected to contribute to civil society with their acquired skills and discipline.
- **Rehabilitation Support:** Government Promises skill certificates and bridge courses for those leaving after four years.

Criticism of Scheme

- **Inequality:** Critics argue the scheme creates a "lesser" cadre of soldiers with fewer benefits and prospects compared to full-commission soldiers.
- **Economic Stability:** Shorter tenure and lesser benefits cause discontent among those seeking long-term military careers for economic stability.
- **Political Opposition:** Multiple political parties (Congress, AAP, RJD, Samajwadi Party) have called for the scheme to be scrapped or reconsidered.

Government's Response

- **Willingness to Modify:** Government indicated potential alterations to the scheme without compromising on maintaining a youthful profile.
- **Internal Assessments:** Armed Forces are assessing the scheme's impact and will recommend changes to the Department of Military Affairs.
- **Ongoing Review:** All three services have submitted their observations to the government for consideration.

3. Highway to Climate Hell

Source: IE, Page 16

Prelims: Climate Change, GreenHouse Gases

Mains: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation

Context: This article discusses the record-breaking global temperatures in recent months and the critical importance of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels to avoid catastrophic climate impacts.

Record-breaking Global Temperatures:

- May 2023 was the warmest May ever recorded.
- The average global temperature in May was 1.5 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial average.
- From June 2023 to May 2024, the average global temperature was 1.63 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.
- The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) reported an 80% chance that a year between 2024 and 2028 will exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.



Paris Agreement and 1.5 Degree Celsius Threshold:

- The Paris Agreement, signed in 2015 by 195 countries, aims to limit global temperatures to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, targeting a safer limit of 1.5 degrees Celsius.
- The pre-industrial reference period is generally considered to be 1850-1900, as it provides reliable near-global measurements.
- Breaching the 1.5 degrees Celsius threshold could lead to high risks for some regions and vulnerable ecosystems over a long period.

Consequences of Breaching the 1.5 Degree Celsius Threshold:

- Breaching this threshold would increase and accelerate climate change impacts like sea level rise, intense floods, droughts, and wildfires.
- Sergey Paltsev from MIT emphasized that the lower the temperature increase target, the lower the risks of climate impacts.
- Recent severe heat waves and coral bleaching events are attributed to rising global temperatures.
- Five major climate tipping points are at risk of being crossed due to warming, causing irreversible damage.

Staying Within the 1.5 Degree Celsius Threshold:

- The only way to stay within the threshold is to drastically reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.
- This requires stopping the burning of fossil fuels like coal, oil, and gas.
- Despite efforts, GHG levels reached historic highs in 2023, with carbon dioxide rising significantly.
- Immediate and radical action is needed to prevent further warming, as emphasized by UN Secretary-General António Guterres.



Editorials, Ideas and Opinions

4. Settling trade disputes through 'litigation'

Source: The Hindu, Page 9

The article discusses the resolution of long-standing trade disputes between India and the U.S. at the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the importance of diplomatic efforts in international trade relations.

The Poultry Dispute

- **Background:** The dispute, initiated by the U.S. in 2012, challenged India's import restrictions on poultry products due to avian influenza concerns.
- **Significance:** It was the oldest of the seven disputes and involved sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures.
- **Resolution:** Both countries reached a mutually agreed solution, avoiding a \$450 million yearly claim against India. India agreed to reduce tariffs on select U.S. products.

Broader Implications and Diplomatic Breakthrough

- **Trade-offs:** The resolution involved India reducing tariffs on products like cranberries, blueberries, frozen turkey, and premium frozen duck meat.
- **Diplomatic Success:** This settlement is considered a significant diplomatic breakthrough despite not being the most economically significant dispute.
- **Precedent:** The resolution of these seven disputes collectively is unprecedented in international trade dispute settlement.

Takeaways from the Outcome

- **Bilateral Solutions:** Bilateral resolutions are encouraged by WTO rules and are effective in the absence of a functional Appellate Body.
- **Diplomatic Channels:** The success of these settlements highlights the importance of using diplomatic channels for resolving trade disputes.
- **Stable Trade Environment:** The resolution of these disputes contributes to fostering a stable international trade environment.



5. The message from rural India

Source: IE, Page 12

The article emphasizes the need for policy reforms to improve rural incomes and suggests strategies for achieving inclusive growth.

Rural Economy and Agricultural Sector

- **Rural Income Levels:** Rural areas have low per capita monthly expenditure (Rs 3,773 in 2022-23) and low income levels, particularly in agricultural households.
- **Government Initiatives:** Schemes like PM-AWAS, Har Ghar Nal Se Jal, and rural electrification have improved infrastructure but not rural incomes.
- **Agricultural Growth:** The agriculture sector grew by just 1.4% in FY24, much lower than the overall GDP growth of 8.2%.

Recommendations for Inclusive Growth

- **Shift to Non-Farm Jobs:** Reduce dependency on agriculture by creating higher productivity non-farm jobs, requiring investments in skill formation and rural infrastructure.
- **Focus on High-Value Agriculture:** Transition from staple crops to high-value agriculture like poultry, fishery, dairy, and horticulture, necessitating improved logistics and value chains.
- **Climate-Smart Agriculture:** Invest in climate-smart agriculture practices, including agrivoltaics, to provide stable income amidst extreme weather events.
- **Leadership in Agriculture:** Appoint experienced leaders to drive agricultural and rural development policies.



InBrief

6. Adjutant loses territory

Source: The Hindu, Sunday Edition

Context: With the wetlands of Assam giving way to rapid urbanisation, the endangered greater adjutant storks are finding their survival to be a daily struggle.

Greater Adjutant

- The Greater Adjutant Stork, locally known as “Hargila” in Assam, is an endangered species of stork primarily found in the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia.
- In shallow lakes, drying lake beds, and rubbish dumps, the larger adjutants are commonly observed individually or in small groups.
- The greater adjutant is omnivorous. They prey on frogs, giant insects, birds, reptiles, and rodents.
- The loss of nesting and feeding habitat due to wetland disappearance, pollution, hunting and egg harvesting in the past have resulted in a dramatic fall in this species’ population.
- In 2008, the global population was believed to be less than 1,000 storks.
- The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species classifies the larger adjutant as ‘Endangered.’



7. What is the National Health Claim Exchange?

Source: The Hindu, Sunday Edition

Context: The Health Ministry and IRDAI are launching the National Health Claim Exchange (NHCE), a digital platform which will bring together insurance companies, healthcare sector service providers and government insurance scheme administrators.

National Health Claim Exchange (NHCE)

- The Health Claim Exchange Specification is a communication protocol that facilitates the exchange of health claim information between payers, providers, beneficiaries, and other relevant entities.
- The NHCE will serve as a gateway for exchanging claims-related information among various stakeholders in the healthcare and health insurance ecosystem.
- The integration with NHCE is expected to enable seamless interoperability of health claims processing, enhancing efficiency and transparency in the insurance industry, benefiting policyholders and patients.



8. SECI issues RfS for selection of Green Ammonia Producers under NGHM

Source: PIB

Context: Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) has issued a Request for Selection (RfS) for Selection of Green Ammonia Producers under Strategic Interventions for Green Hydrogen Transition (SIGHT) Programme of the National Green Hydrogen Mission being implemented.

Green Ammonia

- It is produced by using hydrogen from water electrolysis and nitrogen separated from the air.
- These are then fed into the Haber process (also known as Haber-Bosch) which is powered by sustainable electricity.
- In the Haber process, hydrogen and nitrogen are reacted together at high temperatures and pressures to produce ammonia, NH_3 .
- **Uses:**
 - Fuel for engines such as locomotives and shipping, replacing diesel and marine fuel oil
 - Fuel source for electricity and power generation
 - Building block to make fertilisers for use in agriculture
 - Feedstock for industrial and manufacturing applications ranging from water purification through to pharmaceuticals



Daily Quiz

1. Consider the following statements regarding the First Past the Post (FPTP) system from the Proportional Representation (PR) system?

1. In the FPTP system, the candidate with the most votes in a constituency wins, regardless of whether they have an absolute majority.
2. The PR system aims to allocate seats in the legislature in proportion to the total votes each party receives.

Which of the following statements given above is/are correct?

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

2. Consider the following statements regarding the Agnipath scheme:

1. The Agnipath scheme aims to recruit young individuals into the Indian Armed Forces for a fixed tenure.
2. Recruits under this scheme will be known as Agniveers.
3. The scheme provides an option for permanent commission after the completion of the fixed tenure.
4. The scheme is designed to reduce the average age profile of the armed forces.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- A. 1, 2, and 4 only
- B. 1 and 3 only
- C. 2 and 4 only
- D. 1, 2, 3, and 4

3. Consider the following gases:

1. Carbon dioxide (CO₂)
2. Methane (CH₄)
3. Nitrous oxide (N₂O)
4. Oxygen (O₂)

How many of the above gases contribute to Greenhouse Gas emissions?

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2
- C. Only 3
- D. All of the above

4. Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures, as defined by the World Trade Organization (WTO), are primarily concerned with:

- A. Reducing tariffs and other trade barriers on agricultural and food products.
- B. Protecting human, animal, and plant health from risks associated with international trade.
- C. Promoting fair competition between domestic and imported goods in the marketplace.
- D. Ensuring the quality and safety standards of manufactured goods for international trade.

5. Agrivoltaics is an emerging land-use strategy that involves:

- A. Genetically modifying crops to improve their efficiency in converting sunlight into energy.
- B. Co-locating solar panels and agricultural production on the same land area.
- C. Using agricultural waste products to generate biofuels for electricity production.
- D. Developing vertical farming techniques to maximize crop yield in urban environments.



6. Which of the following statements correctly describes the Greater Adjutant stork?

1. The Greater Adjutant is classified as a Critically Endangered species by the IUCN.
2. Its primary habitats include wetlands, marshes, and agricultural fields.
3. The largest breeding population of the Greater Adjutant is found in Assam, India.
4. It is known for its distinctive large bill and prominent neck pouch used for storing food.

Select the correct option using the code given below:

- A. 1 and 3 only
- B. 2 and 4 only
- C. 2, 3, and 4 only
- D. 1, 2, 3, and 4

7. The National Health Claim Exchange (NHCE) is a digital platform launched by the Government of India to:

- A. Provide cashless health insurance coverage to all citizens under Ayushman Bharat.
- B. Facilitate the exchange of medical records between patients and healthcare providers.
- C. Standardize and streamline the processing of health insurance claims across different providers.
- D. Enable online appointment booking and telemedicine consultations for public healthcare facilities.

8. Consider the following statements regarding Green Ammonia:

1. Green ammonia is produced using renewable energy sources like wind and solar.
2. It is considered an essential component for the decarbonization of the agriculture sector.
3. Green ammonia can be used as a fuel in internal combustion engines without any modifications.
4. The production of green ammonia involves the electrolysis of water to produce hydrogen.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- A. 1, 2, and 4 only
- B. 1 and 3 only
- C. 2 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2, 3, and 4



Solutions

Answer 1: C

Solution:

- Statement 1 is correct: In the First Past the Post (FPTP) system, the candidate who receives the most votes in a constituency wins, regardless of whether they achieve an absolute majority of the votes.
- Statement 2 is correct: The Proportional Representation (PR) system aims to allocate seats in the legislature in proportion to the total votes each party receives, ensuring that parties gain seats corresponding to their share of the vote.

Hence, Option C is correct.

Answer 2: A

Solution:

- Statement 1 is correct: The Agnipath scheme is designed to recruit young individuals into the Indian Armed Forces for a fixed tenure.
- Statement 2 is correct: Recruits under this scheme will be known as Agniveers.
- Statement 3 is incorrect: The scheme does not necessarily provide an option for permanent commission after the completion of the fixed tenure; only a certain percentage of recruits may be absorbed into the regular cadre based on performance and organizational requirements.
- Statement 4 is correct: One of the objectives of the Agnipath scheme is to reduce the average age profile of the armed forces, thereby ensuring a younger and more agile military force.

Hence, Option A is correct.

Answer 3: C

Solution:

- Statement 1 is correct: Carbon dioxide (CO₂) is a major greenhouse gas released through various human activities, such as burning fossil fuels and deforestation.
- Statement 2 is correct: Methane (CH₄) is a potent greenhouse gas with a much higher heat-trapping capability per molecule compared to CO₂, and it is released from sources like livestock, landfills, and natural gas systems.
- Statement 3 is correct: Nitrous oxide (N₂O) is another significant greenhouse gas, produced by agricultural and industrial activities, as well as during the combustion of fossil fuels and solid waste.
- Statement 4 is incorrect: Oxygen (O₂) is not a greenhouse gas; it is a vital component of the atmosphere but does not contribute to the greenhouse effect.

Hence, Option C is correct.

Answer 4: B

Solution:

- The Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement) is an international agreement under the WTO framework.
- Its primary focus is to ensure that countries can take measures to protect human, animal, or plant health from risks posed by pests, diseases, or contaminants in food, animals, and plants entering their territory through international trade.

Hence, Option B is correct.



Answer 5: B

Solution:

- Agrivoltaics is an innovative approach that combines agriculture and solar energy production.
- The concept involves strategically placing solar panels on farmland, allowing for:
 - Simultaneous production of crops and electricity.
 - More efficient utilization of land space.

Hence, Option B is correct.

Answer 6: C

Solution:

- Statement 1 is incorrect: The Greater Adjutant is classified as Endangered, not Critically Endangered, by the IUCN.
- Statement 2 is correct: The primary habitats of the Greater Adjutant include wetlands, marshes, and agricultural fields, where they search for food.
- Statement 3 is correct: The largest breeding population of the Greater Adjutant is indeed found in Assam, India.
- Statement 4 is correct: The Greater Adjutant is known for its distinctive large bill and prominent neck pouch, which is used for storing food.

Hence, Option C is correct.

Answer 7: C

Solution: The National Health Claim Exchange (NHCX) is a digital platform aimed at:

- Standardizing the format and exchange of health insurance claims data between various insurance providers, hospitals, and other stakeholders.
- Streamlining the claims processing workflow, potentially reducing processing time and costs.
- Improving transparency and efficiency in the health insurance ecosystem.

Hence, Option C is correct.

Answer 8: A

Solution:

- Statement 1 is correct: Green ammonia is produced using renewable energy sources like wind, solar, and hydropower.
- Statement 2 is correct: Green ammonia is considered essential for the decarbonization of the agriculture sector, particularly as a sustainable fertilizer.
- Statement 3 is incorrect: Green ammonia is not typically used as a fuel in internal combustion engines without modifications; it requires specific technologies and infrastructure for safe use as a fuel.
- Statement 4 is correct: The production of green ammonia involves the electrolysis of water to produce hydrogen, which is then combined with nitrogen to form ammonia through the Haber-Bosch process using renewable energy.

Hence, Option A is correct.





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