



**UPSC
Mentorship**
A Unit of Mentorship India

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

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SOURCES



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GS I

1. From Ashokan times to now, Sanchi to Europe, story of the Great Stupa

Source: The Indian Express, Page-15

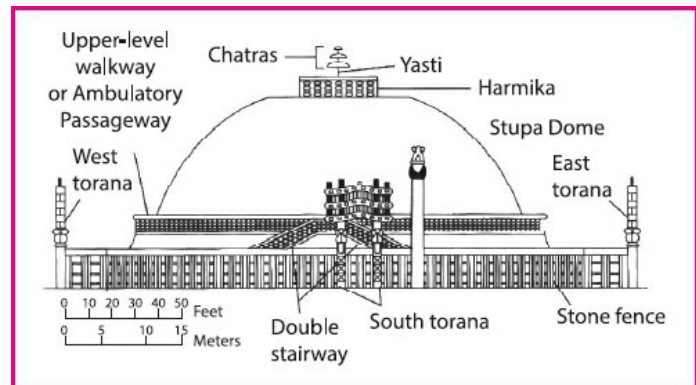
Prelims: Buddhist Monuments, Historical Replicas

Mains: Conservation of Cultural Heritage, International Exhibitions

Context: External Affairs Minister recently visited a remarkable replica of the East Gate of Sanchi's Great Stupa at the Humboldt Forum museum in Berlin.

Historical Significance:

- **The Great Stupa of Sanchi:**
 - The Great Stupa, a quintessential Buddhist monument, dates back to the third century BCE and was commissioned by Emperor Ashoka. Located in Sanchi, Madhya Pradesh.
 - The stupa's construction was supervised by Ashoka's wife Devi and supported by the mercantile community of Vidisha.
- **Architecture and Art:**
 - Stupas are hemispherical structures often containing sacred relics renowned for its architectural grandeur and the ornate gateways, known as toranas.
 - These toranas, constructed in the first century BCE during the Satavahana dynasty, are adorned with intricate bas-reliefs and sculptures depicting scenes from the Buddha's life and Jataka Tales.



Gateways and Their Influence:

- **Distinctive Toranas:**
 - The four toranas of the Great Stupa, aligned with the cardinal directions, feature square pillars, curved architraves, and intricate floral motifs, avoiding Buddha's human depiction as per artistic convention.

Restoration and Modern Reproduction:

- **Historical Context:**
 - In the late 19th century, the Sanchi site was extensively excavated and restored by Alexander Cunningham and John Marshall of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).
 - Restoration efforts, funded by the begums of Bhopal, helped preserve the site.
- **Berlin Replica:**
 - The Humboldt Forum's replica in Berlin is based on original Great Stupas
 - Such as the seven Manushi Buddhas on the upper architrave, the Great Departure scene on the middle architrave, and Emperor Ashoka's visit to the Bodhi tree on the lower architrave.

Cultural Impact:

- **Educational and Artistic Value:**
 - The Great Stupa and its gateways are educational tools that provide insight into Buddhist art and architecture.
- **Legacy and Preservation:**
 - The preservation and reproduction of these ancient structures in Berlin replica stands as a testament to the enduring significance of the Great Stupa of Sanchi and its cultural impact across continents.

Conclusion:

- The Great Stupa of Sanchi, with its majestic architecture and profound artistic detail, continues to inspire and educate people around the world.
- The successful reproduction and display of its East Gate in Berlin not only celebrates this ancient monument but also highlights the importance of preserving and understanding our shared cultural heritage.



GS II

2.75% of Disengagement Problems with China Sorted Out

Source: The Indian Express, Page-01

Prelims: India-China Border Dispute

Mains: Diplomatic Negotiations and Border Management

Context: External Affairs announced that around 75% of disengagement issues in the India-China border standoff have been resolved, following recent diplomatic and security meetings focused on easing tensions along the LAC in eastern Ladakh.

Diplomatic Efforts:

Recent discussions demonstrate sustained diplomatic engagement to resolve the border standoff amid progress in disengagement after four years of negotiations.

Remaining Challenges:

The issue of militarization along the border remains unresolved and the Line of Actual Control (LAC) still requires attention.

Ongoing Negotiations:

Continuous dialogue has been underway since the border standoff began, though achieving complete resolution remains challenging due to evolving issues and past agreements.

Background & Significance:

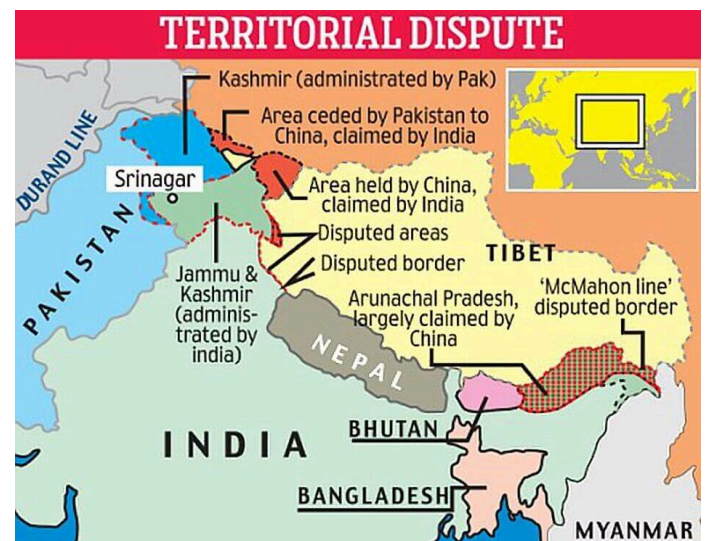
- **Historical Context:**
 - The border standoff, which began in May 2020, escalated with the violent Galwan Valley clashes in June 2020. Diplomatic and military negotiations have been ongoing since.
- **Strategic Importance:**
 - The India-China border issue impacts both bilateral relations and regional stability. Proper management of the LAC is crucial for peace and cooperation between the two nations.

Demands:

- **Accelerated Disengagement:**
 - Recent statements stress the need for faster disengagement along the border to address unresolved issues.
- **Focus on Militarization:**
 - The growing militarization of the LAC remains a critical concern, affecting broader India-China relations and regional security.

Conclusion:

- There is a significant progress in resolving the border standoff, but the militarization of the LAC continues to be a challenge.
- Ongoing diplomatic efforts, including recent high-level meetings, are essential to advancing towards a comprehensive resolution and ensuring stability along the India-China border.



3.A 16-Point Document on Judicial Values Adopted by SC in 1997

Source: The Hindu, Page-04

Prelims: Judicial Ethics and Conduct

Mains: Judicial Independence and Accountability

Context: The controversy between the Executive and Judiciary has brought attention to a 16-point document on judicial values adopted by the Supreme Court in 1997.

Key Highlights:

- **Document Overview:**

- The “Restatement of Values of Judicial Life,” adopted on May 7, 1997, outlines expected conduct for Supreme Court and High Court judges.
- It emphasises that judges must maintain public faith in the impartiality of the judiciary.

- **Key Tenets:**

- The document advises judges to practise a degree of aloofness and maintain dignity.
- It cautions against any actions that might undermine the credibility of the judiciary, stressing that judges should be aware of their public role and avoid unbecoming conduct.

- **Public Reactions:**

- The Campaign for Judicial Accountability and Reforms criticized the visit, emphasizing that the judiciary must remain independent of the Executive.
- Historical perspectives on judicial and executive relationships stress the importance of maintaining a correct, not cordial, relationship.

Background & Significance:

- **Judicial Values:**

- The 1997 document serves as a guide to uphold the integrity and impartiality of the judiciary, reinforcing the need for judges to maintain a clear separation from political and executive influences.

- **Impact on Judiciary:**

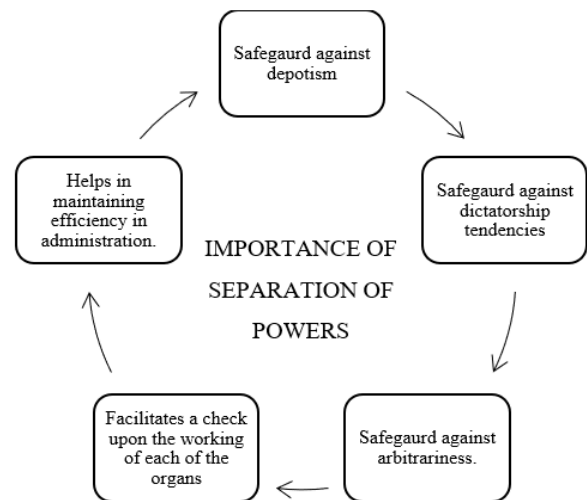
- Public and professional reactions highlight the ongoing debate about maintaining the judiciary’s independence and the implications of high-profile interactions between judicial and executive branches.

Main Demands:

- **Upholding Judicial Independence:**

- There is a call to reaffirm the separation between the judiciary and the executive, ensuring that such interactions do not compromise the judiciary’s perceived impartiality.

- **Maintaining Judicial Conduct:**



- Emphasis is placed on adhering to the principles outlined in the 1997 document to prevent any actions that might erode public confidence in the judiciary.

Conclusion:

- The debate over the Chief Justice's public interactions underscores the critical need to adhere to established judicial values and maintain the separation of powers.
- Ensuring that such practices do not affect public perception of judicial impartiality is essential for upholding the integrity of the judiciary.

4. What does dissolution of SCoS entail?

Source: The Hindu, Page-10

Prelims: Statistics and Census Administration, Steering Committee

Mains: Statistical Data Quality and Census Urgency

Context: The Union Ministry of Statistics replaced the 14-member Standing Committee on Statistics with a new Steering Committee for National Sample Surveys, raising concerns about data quality and the next census's timing.

Reason for Dissolution:

- The dissolution of the Standing Committee On Statistics(SCoS) was attributed to its overlapping functions with the Steering Committee for National Sample Surveys

Key Responsibilities of the SCoS:

- The SCoS advised on survey methodologies, including sampling design and survey instruments.
- It finalised tabulation plans, reviewed frameworks, and addressed methodological issues.
- The SCoS also guided pilot surveys, explored administrative statistics, and provided technical support to Central and State agencies.

Role of the New Steering Committee:

- The 17-member Steering Committee, which includes four former SCoS members, will continue similar responsibilities.
- Its Terms of Reference include reviewing survey results, methodologies, and advising on survey methodologies and tabulation plans.
- The new committee has a higher proportion of official members compared to the SCoS.

Pressure for a New Census:

- The 2021 Census was delayed due to COVID-19, and there is significant pressure to conduct the next census to provide updated data.
- The lack of recent data affects the implementation of schemes such as the National Food Security Act and raises questions about employment and other socio-economic indicators.

Flaws in Administrative Data:

- Administrative data, such as that from EPFO and RBI's KLEMS database, has been criticised for being threshold-based and potentially biased.
- These data sets may reflect policy intentions rather than actual conditions and are limited in analytical rigour.
- In contrast, census data offers universal coverage and the ability to provide detailed state and district-level insights.

Urgency of the Next Census:

- The decennial census has been a cornerstone of data collection since the 1870s, with the last census conducted in 2011.
- Economists and policymakers argue that relying on outdated data negatively impacts decision-making, highlighting the need for prompt conduction of the next census.



GS III

5. A Herd from Nilgiris Takes Over New York, Throws Spotlight on a Jumbo Problem

Source: The Indian Express, Page-09

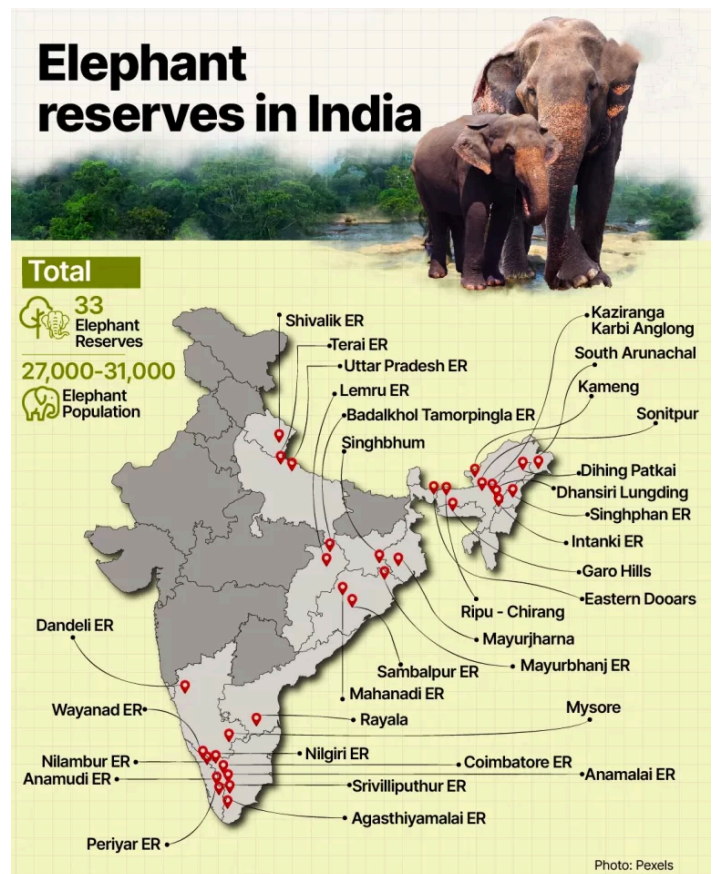
Prelims: Human-Wildlife Coexistence, Invasive Species

Mains: Conservation Efforts, Public Art Installations

Context: In the public art installation The Great Elephant Migration, 100 life-size elephant statues made from invasive Lantana travelled from Tamil Nadu's Nilgiri hills to New York, highlighting the issue of human-wildlife conflict worsened by invasive species.

Highlight regarding the case:

- **Art Installation and Its Impact:**
 - The installation features elephants sculpted from boiled Lantana, an invasive plant disrupting forest ecosystems and pushing elephants into urban areas.
 - Displayed in New York's Meatpacking District, the installation create issue of human-wildlife coexistence and raise awareness about Asian elephant protection.
- **Craftsmanship and Collaboration:**
 - The statues were created by The Real Elephant Collective (TREC), a Gudalur-based group comprising 200 tribal artisans from the Nilgiris.
 - The process involved boiling and sculpting Lantana, a plant that has severely impacted local wildlife by displacing native vegetation and causing habitat loss.
- **Conservation and Community Efforts:**
 - Challenges of promoting coexistence which often fail to address the broader ecological issues caused by invasive species.
 - The collective's work emphasises the need for integrated conservation strategies that involve local communities.



Background and Significance:

- **Invasive Species Problem:**
 - Lantana camara, brought to India in the 1800s,
 - Rapid growth created dense mats that prevent the growth of native plants, thereby reducing food sources for elephants and other wildlife.
- **Tribal Perspectives:**
 - Tribes like the Betta Kurumba have experienced increased human-wildlife conflicts due to the spread of Lantana.



- **Plea's Main Demands:**
 - **Policy Reform and Awareness:** To manage invasive species and improve forest management.

Conclusion:

- The Great Elephant Migration highlights the complex ties between humans, wildlife, and the environment.
- Through art, it sparks dialogue on invasive species and coexistence, advocating for a holistic conservation approach that includes indigenous knowledge, supports communities, and addresses ecological disruption.

6. Climate Change Mitigation Needs Funding

Source: The Indian Express, Page-09

Prelims: Climate Change and Urban Development

Mains: Climate Financing and Municipal Management

Context: CITIES series, panellists discussed how municipal bodies can utilise capital markets to tackle climate change challenges.

Highlight regarding the case:

- **Funding Challenges:**
 - SEBI noted that municipal revenues should ideally be 3-4% of GDP but currently stand at 0.9-1%.
 - To bridge this gap, increasing property taxes and introducing consumption-linked taxes like octroi is critical for effective climate action at the urban level.
- **Infrastructure and Investments:**
 - Their need for investment in disaster-resilient infrastructure and green projects (e.g., riverfront development, electric buses).
 - Municipal bonds are vital for funding such initiatives.
- **Role of Capital Markets:**
 - Municipal bonds can provide immediate funding for climate projects, ensuring quicker implementation and financial discipline through key performance indicators (KPIs).



Background & Significance:

- **Climate Vulnerabilities:**
 - Indian cities face significant climate risks such as pollution and extreme weather events.
 - Municipalities are at the forefront of climate solutions and infrastructure management.
- **Historical Funding Trends:**
 - Municipal funding has been insufficient for urban development and climate adaptation. Leveraging capital markets aims to address this gap.

Main Demands:

- **Increased Funding & Efficiency:** A call for better funding mechanisms, such as municipal bonds, is crucial for climate projects. Efficient fund management is necessary to implement climate strategies.



- **Improved Financial Practices:** Municipalities must adopt better accounting systems to attract investment and improve transparency.

Conclusion:

- The discussion highlights the urgent need for municipalities to increase funding, invest strategically, and leverage capital markets to address climate change.
- Effective collaboration between the public and private sectors is essential for achieving urban climate resilience and sustainable development.

7. Retail inflation stays under 4%, but vegetable prices up again

Source: The Hindu, Page-01

Prelims: Inflation Trends and Economic Indicators

Mains: Inflation Dynamics and Regional Economic Disparities

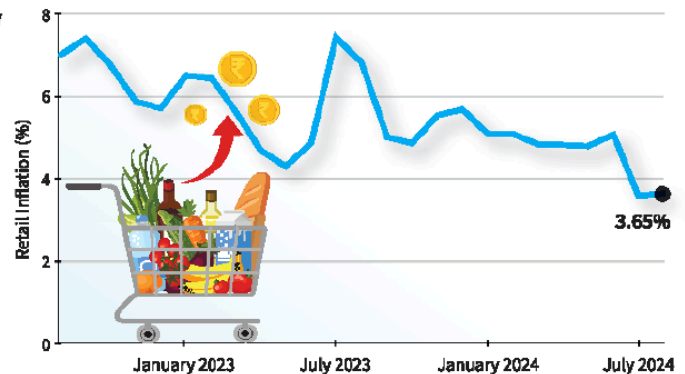
Context: India's retail inflation stayed below the RBI's 4% target in August 2024, rising to 3.65% from 3.6% in July. Rural food inflation exceeded 6%, with expectations of an increase in overall inflation as the base effect fades.

Key Highlights:

- **Inflation Trends:**
 - Retail inflation in August was 3.65%, the second-lowest in five years, aided by a high base effect from last year's 6.8% inflation in August.
 - However, food inflation increased to 5.7%, with rural inflation surpassing 6%, compared to urban inflation at 3.14%.
- **Vegetable Prices:**
 - Vegetable inflation surged to 10.7% from 6.8% in July. Pulses inflation remained high at 13.6% for the 15th consecutive month.
- **Economic Forecast:**
 - Economists predict a rise in inflation as base effects fade, with projections suggesting a sharp increase to around 4.8% in September.
 - The Consumer Price Index (CPI) was flat in August, while rural food prices declined by 0.25% and urban food prices by 0.9%.

Marginally faster

India's retail inflation quickened slightly to 3.65% in August from a revised 3.6% in July. It stayed under the Reserve Bank of India's target of 4% for the second consecutive month



Source: CMIE

Background & Significance:

- **Inflation Dynamics:**
 - The inflation pace is expected to pick up due to the fading base effect, with economists anticipating a potential rise to 6% in the current month.
 - A change in monetary policy might be considered depending on inflation trends.
- **Regional Disparities:**
 - Among 22 states, Bihar experienced the highest inflation at 6.62%, with other states like Odisha and Assam also reporting higher inflation rates compared to the national average of 3.65%.

Main Demands:



- **Monitoring Inflation:**
 - Enhanced monitoring of inflation trends is needed to manage economic stability, especially in light of potential increases in food prices and overall inflation rates.
- **Policy Adjustments:**
 - Economists are divided on the timing of potential policy changes by the central bank. Some suggest adjustments may occur as early as October, while others anticipate a possible shift only by December.

Conclusion:

- Retail inflation remains controlled, but food prices, especially vegetables, are rising sharply.
- With expectations of increased inflation in the coming months, close monitoring and potential policy adjustments will be crucial for economic stability.

8. Panic in the time of cholera: issues critical to managing a resurgence

Source: The Hindu, Page-07

Prelims: Public Health and Disease Management

Mains: Cholera Control and Climate Impact

Context: The resurgence of cholera highlights critical gaps in managing public health crises exacerbated by climate change.

Disease Overview:

- Cholera is an acute diarrhoeal disease caused by the ingestion of water or food contaminated with *Vibrio cholerae*.
- Symptoms include severe diarrhoea, vomiting, leg cramps, and weakness. High-risk groups include malnourished children and individuals with HIV/AIDS.

Current Situation:

- Cholera deaths increased by 17% and cases by 13% in the past year.
- The WHO reported many cases in South-East Asia from January to July 2024 that are attributed to factors like conflict, climate change, and poor sanitation.

Vaccination Challenges:

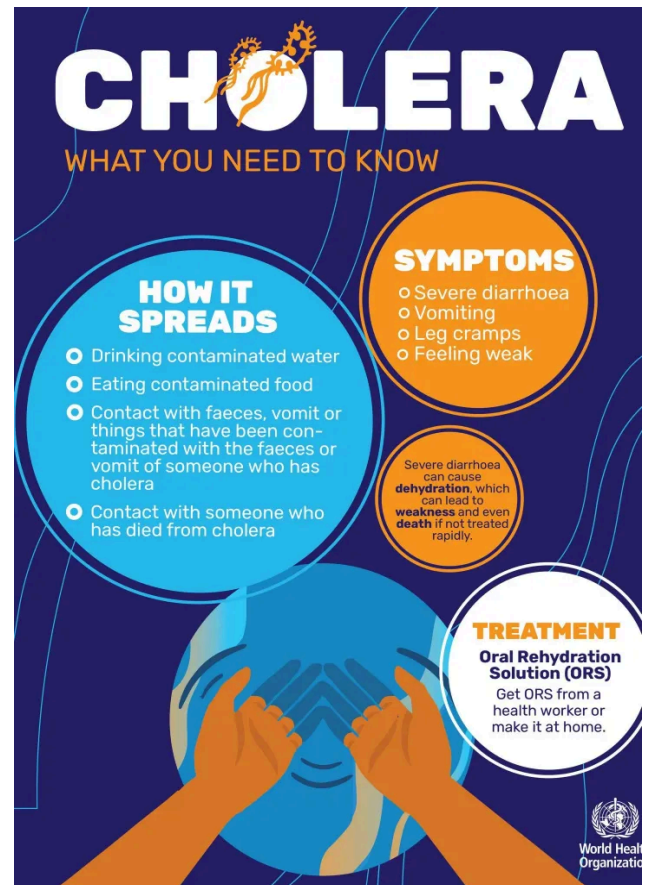
- A global shortage of cholera vaccines has led to a shift from a two-dose to a single-dose regimen.
- Only one manufacturer is currently producing vaccines, prompting calls for increased production and affordable pricing.

Climate Change Connection:

- Climate-related factors, such as floods and droughts, exacerbate cholera outbreaks by contaminating water sources and increasing bacterial concentration.
- This links cholera to broader climate issues and underscores the need for integrated solutions.

Background & Significance:

- **Infrastructure Deficits:**
 - Global population lacks access to safe drinking water and sanitation, contributing to the persistence and spread of cholera.



- UNICEF data highlights that 2 billion people lack safe drinking water, and 3.6 billion lack proper sanitation.
- **Global Response:**
 - The Global Task Force for Cholera Control (GTFCC) has developed a "Global Roadmap for Ending Cholera by 2030," emphasizing multi-sectoral interventions, improved sanitation, disease surveillance, and local vaccine production.
 - A recent meeting at the World Health Assembly emphasized the need for sustainable funding and collective action.

Main Demands:

- **Enhanced Investment:**
 - There is a critical need for increased investment in water, sanitation, and hygiene services. Effective funding and support are essential for managing cholera and preventing future outbreaks.
- **Climate Change Mitigation:**
 - Addressing climate change impacts is crucial for controlling cholera.
 - Governments must recognize the connection between climate factors and disease spread, taking proactive measures to mitigate these effects.

Conclusion:

- The resurgence of cholera underscores the need for a multi-faceted approach to public health that includes improved infrastructure, climate change mitigation, and effective disease management strategies.
- Global and local efforts must be bolstered to address the underlying causes and prevent future outbreaks.



Editorial, Ideas and Opinions

9. Health care using AI is bold, but much caution first

Source: The Hindu, Page-08

Prelims: Artificial Intelligence in HealthCare

Mains: Health Care Innovations and Ethical Considerations

Context: The plan to offer a "free AI-powered primary-care physician for every Indian, 24/7" within five years prompts a critical evaluation of its feasibility, sustainability, and India's preparedness.

Role of AI in Healthcare:

- AI can process and automate repetitive tasks but lacks the nuanced understanding required in medicine.
- AI's impersonal nature risks undermining the human-centric approach of Primary Health Care (PHC), which emphasises community engagement and individual empowerment.

Limitations of AI:

- AI lacks human characteristics such as understanding the physical world, complex reasoning, and moral judgement.
- The challenge of training AI with health care data is compounded by issues such as incomplete and inaccessible data, raising concerns about privacy and ethical use.

Data and Ethical Concerns:

- AI development in health care necessitates extensive data collection, which raises privacy issues. Historical models, like Naegele's rule in obstetrics, highlight the difficulties in creating accurate predictive models using outdated or incomplete data.

AI's Utility in Specific Tasks:

- **Narrow Intelligence Applications:** AI can effectively manage specific tasks such as hospital supply predictions, biomedical waste management, and drug procurement optimization.
- **Advanced Models:** Diffusion models and **Large Language Models (LLMs)** are promising for medical education and research, simulating patient interactions and providing personalised training experiences.

Challenges and Risks:

- **"Black Box" Problem:** The opaque nature of AI decision-making in healthcare can erode trust and pose risks. Transparency is crucial to ensure understanding of AI recommendations and prevent potential harm.
- **Ethical Considerations:** Ethical concerns, including worker exploitation in AI training and the privacy of data subjects, highlight the need for AI tools to adhere to medical ethics, such as "Do No Harm."

AI Governance and Regulation:

- **Regulatory Gaps:** India lacks comprehensive AI regulations, unlike the European Union's Artificial Intelligence Act.
- **Investment Needs:** Implementing AI in healthcare requires significant investments in research, data infrastructure, and ongoing updates.

Conclusion:

- While AI in health care offers significant potential, it is essential to approach its implementation with caution.
- Addressing ethical concerns, ensuring data privacy, and investing in necessary infrastructure are critical steps.
- A balanced and measured approach is needed to harness AI's benefits while maintaining the integrity of health care delivery.



In Brief

10. Is it time for India to introduce a Universal Basic Income?

Source: The Hindu, Page-09

Prelims: Economic Policies and Social Welfare

Mains: Universal Basic Income (UBI) and Employment Issues

Context: The concept of Universal Basic Income (UBI) is gaining traction due to jobless growth and rising inequality linked to automation and AI released by the ILO's report.

Current Situation:

- India already has forms of basic income support (e.g., cash transfers for farmers and unemployed youth) but lacks a comprehensive UBI.

Arguments for UBI:

- UBI could address unemployment and stimulate market demand, counteracting the limitations of current economic systems that fail to generate sufficient employment.

Challenges:

- India's existing welfare programs and economic constraints make a pure UBI challenging. There is a need for better-targeted social safety nets rather than a full UBI.

Recommendations:

- Advocates for increasing direct taxes to fund UBI and address income inequality.
- Suggests improving existing social safety nets and focusing on employment-generating policies.

Summary:

- India faces significant unemployment and inequality issues. While UBI is debated as a potential solution, experts recommend enhancing current welfare systems and increasing direct taxes to address these challenges effectively.

THE PROS & CONS OF UBI	
FOR	AGAINST
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Poverty and vulnerability reduction ■ More choice to citizens on spending ■ Better targeting of aid ■ Insurance against shocks ■ Boost to financial inclusion ■ Psychological aid to people ■ More administrative efficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Gender disparity induced by cash ■ Fiscal cost given political economy of exit ■ Conspicuous spending ■ Could put stress on banking system ■ Political opposition to transfers to rich people ■ Exposure to market risks (cash vs food) ■ Reduction in labour supply



Daily Quiz

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the Great Stupa of Sanchi and its replica in Berlin:

1. The Great Stupa of Sanchi was commissioned by Emperor Ashoka in the third century BCE and was constructed under the supervision of his wife Devi.
2. The ornate gateways, or toranas, of the Great Stupa, built during the first century BCE, are renowned for depicting scenes from the Buddha's life and Jataka Tales.
3. The Humboldt Forum museum in Berlin houses a replica of the East Gate of the Great Stupa, including details such as the seven Manushi Buddhas and Emperor Ashoka's visit to the Bodhi tree.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding the India-China border standoff:

Statement 1: Recent reports indicate that approximately 75% of the disengagement issues along the India-China border have been resolved, following extensive diplomatic and security discussions.

Statement 2: Despite the progress in disengagement, the issue of militarization along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) remains a significant challenge and continues to impact bilateral relations and regional stability.

Which of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- A. Both statements are correct, and Statement 2 is the correct explanation of Statement 1.
- B. Both statements are correct, but Statement 2 is not the correct explanation of Statement 1.

- C. Statement 1 is correct, and Statement 2 is incorrect.
- D. Statement 2 is correct, and Statement 1 is incorrect.

Q3. Which of the following statements about the 16-Point Document on Judicial Values adopted by the Supreme Court in 1997 is NOT accurate?

- A. The "Restatement of Values of Judicial Life" document was adopted on May 7, 1997, to guide the conduct of Supreme Court and High Court judges.
- B. The document advocates that judges should avoid any actions that may undermine their credibility and maintain a degree of aloofness.
- C. The Campaign for Judicial Accountability and Reforms has praised the document for enhancing the independence of the judiciary and promoting executive-judiciary interactions.
- D. Public and professional reactions highlight the debate on maintaining judicial independence and the implications of interactions between the judiciary and the executive.

Q4. What does the dissolution of the Standing Committee on Statistics (SCoS) entail?

1. The SCoS was dissolved due to its overlapping functions with the newly formed Steering Committee for National Sample Surveys.
2. The SCoS was responsible for advising on survey methodologies, finalizing tabulation plans, and providing technical support to Central and State agencies.
3. The new Steering Committee will focus primarily on the implementation of the next census and will not review survey methodologies.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only



- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1 and 2 and 3

Q5. Consider the following statements regarding "The Great Elephant Migration" art installation:

Statement 1: The installation features 100 life-size elephant statues sculpted from invasive Lantana, created to highlight human-wildlife conflict exacerbated by invasive species, and was displayed in New York's Meatpacking District.

Statement 2: The statues, made by The Real Elephant Collective (TREC) from Gudalur, were crafted from Lantana, a plant that has severely disrupted local ecosystems, thereby intensifying human-wildlife conflicts and emphasizing the need for integrated conservation strategies.

Which of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- A. Both statements are correct, and Statement 2 is the correct explanation of Statement 1.
- B. Both statements are correct, but Statement 2 is not the correct explanation of Statement 1.
- C. Statement 1 is correct, and Statement 2 is incorrect.
- D. Statement 2 is correct, and Statement 1 is incorrect.

Q6. Which of the following statements about funding climate change mitigation in municipalities is NOT accurate?

- A. SEBI has observed that municipal revenues are currently at 0.9-1% of GDP, which is significantly below the ideal 3-4% level, indicating a funding gap for climate action.
- B. Municipal bonds are seen as unnecessary for funding disaster-resilient infrastructure and green projects, as these can be financed through regular budgetary allocations alone.
- C. Increasing property taxes and introducing consumption-linked taxes, such as octroi, are considered critical measures to

improve municipal funding for climate projects.

- D. Capital markets can provide immediate funding for climate projects through municipal bonds, which can ensure quicker implementation and financial discipline via key performance indicators (KPIs).

Q7. What does the recent trend in retail inflation and vegetable prices indicate?

1. Retail inflation in August 2024 was recorded at 3.65%, which is below the RBI's 4% target and is the second-lowest in five years.
2. Vegetable inflation surged to 10.7% from 6.8% in July, while pulses inflation remained high at 13.6% for the 15th consecutive month.
3. Economists predict a decrease in overall inflation as base effects from the previous year fade, with no significant increase expected in the near future.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Q8. What does the resurgence of cholera reveal about the challenges in managing the disease?

1. Cholera cases increased by 13% and deaths by 17% in the past year, with a significant number of cases reported in South-East Asia due to conflict, climate change, and poor sanitation.
2. A global shortage of cholera vaccines has led to a shift from a two-dose to a single-dose regimen, with only one manufacturer currently producing the vaccines.
3. Climate-related factors, such as floods and droughts, have exacerbated cholera outbreaks by contaminating water sources and increasing bacterial concentration.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?



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

Q9. Consider the following statements regarding the implementation of AI in healthcare:

Statement 1: The plan to provide a "free AI-powered primary-care physician for every Indian, 24/7" within five years is feasible and fully supported by existing data and regulations.

Statement 2: AI can effectively automate specific healthcare tasks and support medical education, but its limitations and ethical concerns, such as data privacy and the "black box" problem, highlight the need for careful and regulated implementation.

Which of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- A. Statement 1 is correct, and Statement 2 is incorrect.
- B. Statement 1 is incorrect, and Statement 2 is correct.

- C. Both statements are correct.
- D. Both statements are incorrect.

Q10. Which of the following statements about the debate on Universal Basic Income (UBI) in India is NOT accurate?

- A. India currently implements forms of basic income support, such as cash transfers for farmers and unemployed youth, but does not have a comprehensive UBI system in place.
- B. UBI is argued to be a potential solution to unemployment and market demand stimulation, countering limitations in current economic systems.
- C. Implementing a pure UBI in India is seen as feasible without major adjustments to existing welfare programs and economic constraints.
- D. Recommendations include increasing direct taxes to fund UBI and improving existing social safety nets while focusing on employment-generating policies.



Solutions

1. Correct Answer is D

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 : Correct.** The Great Stupa of Sanchi, a significant Buddhist monument, was indeed commissioned by Emperor Ashoka around the third century BCE, and its construction was overseen by Ashoka's wife Devi, with support from the local mercantile community of Vidisha.
- **Statement 2 : Correct.** The toranas of the Great Stupa, constructed in the first century BCE, are known for their intricate bas-reliefs that depict scenes from the Buddha's life and Jataka Tales, illustrating the artistic and religious significance of the monument.
- **Statement 3 : Correct.** The Humboldt Forum museum in Berlin features a replica of the East Gate of the Great Stupa, accurately reproducing details such as the seven Manushi Buddhas and Emperor Ashoka's visit to the Bodhi tree, highlighting the stupa's global cultural impact and the importance of preserving historical heritage.

2. Correct Answer is A

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 accurately** reflects the reported progress, stating that around 75% of disengagement issues have been addressed through recent diplomatic efforts.
- **Statement 2 complements** this by explaining that, although significant progress has been made, the issue of militarization along the LAC continues to pose a challenge, affecting both the ongoing resolution efforts and broader bilateral relations.
- Thus, **Statement 2 correctly** elaborates on the implications of the progress noted in Statement 1.

3. Correct Answer is C

Explanation:

- The Campaign for Judicial Accountability and Reforms has actually criticised interactions

between the judiciary and the executive, stressing that the judiciary must remain independent.

- The 16-Point Document emphasizes the need for judges to avoid actions that may compromise their impartiality and maintain a clear separation from political and executive influences.

4. Correct Answer is A

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 : Correct.** The dissolution of the SCoS was indeed due to its overlapping functions with the new Steering Committee for National Sample Surveys, aimed at consolidating roles and addressing data quality concerns.
- **Statement 2 : Correct.** The SCoS was responsible for advising on survey methodologies, finalizing tabulation plans, and providing technical support to Central and State agencies, which highlights its comprehensive role in the data collection process.
- **Statement 3 : Incorrect.** The new Steering Committee will continue to review survey methodologies and results, similar to the SCoS. Its role is not limited to the implementation of the next census but also includes ongoing oversight of survey methodologies and results.

5. Correct Answer is A

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 accurately** describes the art installation "The Great Elephant Migration," which features elephant statues made from Lantana and highlights the issue of human-wildlife conflict.
- **Statement 2 explains** that these statues were made by The Real Elephant Collective (TREC) and addresses the broader ecological issue caused by Lantana, emphasising the need for comprehensive conservation strategies. Thus, **Statement 2** provides the context and rationale



behind the installation described in Statement 1, making it the correct explanation.

6. Correct Answer is B

Explanation:

- Municipal bonds are actually deemed crucial for funding disaster-resilient infrastructure and green projects, as they provide a mechanism for immediate and dedicated funding.
- The other statements accurately reflect the challenges and solutions discussed regarding municipal funding for climate change, emphasizing the need for improved financial mechanisms and the role of capital markets.

7. Correct Answer is A

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 : Correct.** Retail inflation in August 2024 was indeed 3.65%, which is below the RBI's 4% target and is the second-lowest in five years, reflecting controlled inflation levels despite a slight increase from July.
- **Statement 2 : Correct.** Vegetable inflation surged to 10.7% from 6.8% in July, and pulses inflation remained high at 13.6% for the 15th consecutive month. This indicates a significant rise in food prices, particularly for vegetables and pulses.
- **Statement 3 : Incorrect.** Economists actually predict a rise in inflation as the base effects fade, with projections suggesting an increase to around 4.8% in September. This statement does not accurately reflect the anticipated trend in inflation.

8. Correct Answer is B

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 : Incorrect.** While cholera cases did increase and there were significant impacts reported, the focus on specific percentages and causes may be less precise. However, it is correct that increased cholera cases and deaths have been attributed to

factors such as conflict, climate change, and poor sanitation.

- **Statement 2 : Correct.** The global shortage of cholera vaccines has indeed led to a shift from a two-dose to a single-dose regimen. With only one manufacturer currently producing the vaccines, there are concerns about production capacity and pricing.
- **Statement 3 : Correct.** Climate-related factors, including floods and droughts, do exacerbate cholera outbreaks by contaminating water sources and increasing the bacterial concentration. This connection highlights the broader impact of climate issues on cholera management.

9. Correct Answer is B

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is incorrect** because the plan to offer a "free AI-powered primary-care physician for every Indian, 24/7" faces significant challenges related to feasibility, sustainability, and regulatory gaps, which are not fully addressed by current data and regulations.
- **Statement 2 is correct** as it accurately reflects AI's potential to automate specific tasks and its limitations, including ethical and data privacy concerns, which necessitate a cautious and well-regulated approach.

10. Correct Answer is C

Explanation:

- The feasibility of implementing a pure UBI in India is challenged by existing welfare programs and economic constraints, making it a complex issue.
- The other statements accurately reflect the current situation, arguments, and recommendations regarding UBI, highlighting the need for adjustments and enhancements in welfare systems and tax policies.





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