POLITY

Vote From Home

Recently, the Election Commission of India (ECI), has provided the facility of home voting for the elderly and Persons with Disabilities in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

- Voters above 85 years of age and Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) with 40% benchmark disability began casting their votes for phase I and II of polling.
- There are over 81 lahks 85+ aged voters and 90 lakh + PwD voters registered across the country.

Vote From Home for a 'Notified class of Electors' : (A Postal Ballot Voting)

- It is the facility provided by the Election Commission of India to Absentee Voters, which is categorized to vote from home.

Under Rule 27A of the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961 has been amended to provide the optional postal ballot facility to 'Absentee Voters'.

'Absentee voter' has been defined in clause (aa) of Rule-27A of the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961, and includes

1. Persons employed in essential services
2. Senior citizens above 85 years
3. Persons with Disabilities (with 40% benchmark or above disability)
4. COVID-19 suspect or affected persons –

The category of essential services (Those who work in metros, railways and health care)is notified by the ECI under Section 60(C) of the R.P. Act, 1951 in consultation with the Government.

Others eligible to vote through Postal Voting :

- Media persons covering polling activities. They must carry authorisation letters from the Election Commission
- Service workers :
- Personnel of the armed forces posted away from home
- Central Armed Police personnel posted away from home, and those on poll duty
- All persons appointed on election duty who are not able to cast their vote at the polling station where they are enrolled as a voter are entitled to the facility of either an EDC or a postal ballot.
- Electors under preventive detention: Individuals detained under preventive custody orders during the election period.

Voting from home procedure

Significance of Vote from Home:

- Inclusivity: It will ensure equal participation of voters without any discrimination in election process
- Accessibility : Without any barriers, persons with disability & Senior citizens can cast their vote in an accessible manner.
- Reduce Extra burden on Temporary Arrangement at the Polling Station : Like Ramp, Wheel chair, Special Medical facility arrangement etc
- Democratic Reinforcement : As every citizen is equally empowered to cast his/her vote therefore it will create a positive notion towards all the sections of society.
- To Increase in Voter Turnout : Many elderly & PwD voters hesitate to go for voting due to various reasons at the polling station therefore it will help in increasing the voting percentage.

Challenges :

- Logistical challenge: To visit individual houses and collect postal ballots.
- Missed Visit of Polling Team: The unscheduled visit of the polling team did not create awareness in the local area.
- Secrecy of Vote :
- Undue Influence of Peer Groups or vested candidates to vote in their favour.
- Matching of the Document Identification & correction.

Way forward:

- Create a mass awareness campaign for the notified voters in their respective areas.
- Conduct Voting Exercises in the presence of booth-level agents of respective political parties door to door. &
- Verified Identification Card: To ensure that ID proof of the voter is furnished apart from the electoral ID card and that the voter's Aadhaar card is verified.

This initiative marks a significant stride towards ensuring inclusivity and accessibility of the electoral process and bolstering democratic participation.

HEALTH SECTOR

Viral Hepatitis- A Challenge To India's Public Health

India has one of the highest burdens of viral hepatitis in the world, according to the World Health Organization's Global Hepatitis Report 2024. It's tied with tuberculosis (TB) as the second-largest infectious killer globally.

- Description-Hepatitis means inflammation of the liver. The liver is a vital organ that processes nutrients, filters the blood, and fights infections. When the liver is inflamed or damaged, its function can be affected. It is often caused by a virus.
- Types-There are five hepatitis viruses that cause liver disease in humans.They are Hepatitis A, B,C,D and E.
- Transmission– Hepatitis A and E are transmitted through contaminated food and water, and result in week-long symptoms such as fever, abdominal pain, jaundice (yellowing of skin), dark urine, and pale stools.
- WHO report-The recent WHO report pertains to the blood-borne hepatitis B (hep B) and hepatitis C (hep C) viruses. The report does not consider hepatitis D because it only infects people who are already infected with hepatitis B.
- Prevention-Hep B can be prevented by vaccination, while hep C can be cured with medication. Hepatitis D can be prevented by vaccinating against hep B.

Reports finding about India

1. Disease burden-According to the report, India ranks second globally in terms of viral hepatitis cases, representing over 11% of the total burden worldwide.
2. Diagnosis– The diagnosis of viral hepatitis was extremely low. The report shows that only 2.4% of hepatitis B cases and around 28% of hepatitis C cases were diagnosed.

Reason for the increase in viral hepatitis cases in India

Viral hepatitis can be transmitted through contaminated blood transfusions, or through contaminated needles.

1) Hep B-India's hep B cases are driven up by mother-to-child transmission. This is because most blood banks offer safe blood, and the risk of needle-stick transmission among healthcare workers is low because almost everyone is vaccinated.

2) Hep C– According to the WHO report, India is among the ten countries where 80% of infections occur among injection drug users.

3) Underutilization of existing facilities– People aren't taking advantage of the free diagnostics and treatment available to them.

4) Disparity in treatment– While viral hepatitis causes almost as many deaths as tuberculosis, it doesn't receive as much attention in India. As per the report, none of the diagnosed patients received treatment for hepatitis B, and only 21% received treatment for hepatitis C. In contrast, 95% of diagnosed TB patients in India were given therapy.

Challenges that India faces in handling viral hepatitis

❖ **Hep B**-There are 3 things that are required to be controlled such as-
1. All newborns need to be fully vaccinated against hepatitis B.
2. Adults who haven't been immunized should also get the shot.
3. Additionally, everyone diagnosed with the infection should receive treatment.

❖ **Low coverage**- The hepatitis B vaccine was introduced for children in 2007-08 as part of the government's universal immunization program. However, a 2019 study revealed that its coverage ranged from 41% to 62%.

Lack of universal care-The parameters mentioned in the international guideline for initiating treatment exclude 7 to 8 of the 10 people who are diagnosed with the infection. Thus, there is a need to adopt a 'treat all' or universal approach like HIV.

PRELIM FACT

1.Doxxing

Recently, there has been a rise in cases of doxxing.
1. Doxxing is a form of online harassment where someone's private details are publicly disclosed.
2. This includes sensitive data such as phone numbers, private emails, medical records, government ID numbers, live locations, insurance details, and confidential employment information.

3. Doxxing also involves the release of private or semi-private content without the consent of the individual, who did not intend for it to be shared publicly.
4. This information is often acquired through unlawful means, including hacking and theft.

Measures to prevent doxxing:

a) It is recommended to create strong passwords that vary between platforms, incorporating a mix of letters, numbers, and symbols.
b) One should add an extra layer of security by setting up multi-factor authentication on your accounts whenever it's available.
c) One should avoid sharing images that could reveal sensitive information like your home location, house keys, or identifiable landmarks near you.
d) Use resources such as the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal to report any suspicious or malicious cyber activities.

2.Man Portable Anti-tank Guided Missile (MPATGM) Weapon System

- Recently, DRDO & Indian Army conducted successful trials of indigenous Man Portable Anti-tank Guided Missile Weapon System. About Man Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile Weapon System
- The MPATGM (Man Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile) Weapon System is a portable missile launcher to engage and destroy enemy tanks and armoured vehicles.
- It was indigenously designed and developed by Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO).
- MPATGM, Launcher, Target Acquisition System, and the Fire Control Unit

Features   :

1. It is lightweight and portable. Its design allows it to be easily carried and operated by a single soldier. This enhances the mobility of infantry units.
2. The MPATGM system can effectively hit armored targets from a considerable distance, providing infantry with crucial anti-tank functionality on the battlefield.
3. It has versatility and equipped with day/night and top-attack capabilities which enhances its effectiveness across a wide range of operational scenarios.
4. It has dual mode seeker functionality which is a great value addition to the missile capability for tank warfare.

Note: The dual-mode seeker combines imaging IR and SAL capabilities into a single system.

3.Fort Emmanuel

Historians are exploring measures to preserve the laterite-brick remains of Fort Emmanuel, which the Portuguese constructed along the beachfront in 1503.

1. Fort Emmanuel was built in 1503 by the Portuguese. It is one of the earliest European forts built in India.
2. It is a ruined fort located at Fort Kochi Beach in Kochi, Kerala.
3. Fort Emmanuel was a large structure that enclosed an entire township, strengthening Portuguese control in the area.
4. It remained under Portuguese rule until 1683 when it was captured by Dutch colonial forces, who destroyed Portuguese institutions.
5. The Dutch held the fort until 1795, when the British took over and by 1806, had demolished most of its walls and bastions.
6. It was a symbol of the strategic alliance between the Maharajah of Kochi and the Monarch of Portugal, after whom it was named.
7. Foreign control of Fort Kochi ceased in 1947 when India gained independence.

Portuguese strategy of building forts in coastal colonies

1. The Portuguese strategy of building forts in coastal colonies such as Fort Kochi, Goa, Kollam, Kozhikode, and Kodungalloor which were crucial for their defense.
2. These forts not only secured their colonies but also supported their naval capabilities.
3. This fortification was essential for protecting the lucrative trade in spices such as pepper, which the Portuguese exported from Kerala back to Europe.

4. Kuchipudi

- Kuchipudi, a traditional dance-drama performance, has evolved from being male-dominated to a classical dance form with the prominence of female dancers across India.

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- However, in the village of Kuchipudi in Krishna district, Andhra Pradesh, the art form faces challenges, including a lack of interest among the younger generation and insufficient government support.
- Kuchipudi is a classical dance form.It is a dance drama that combines nritta (pure dance),nritya(expressional dance) and natya (drama).
- The dance is characterized byits intricate footwork,graceful movements and subtle facial expressions.
- It is also known for its faster tempo and requires dancers to sing and lip sync the lyrics while dancing

5. Mudumalai Tiger Reserve

In Mudumalai Tiger Reserve, Asiatic wild dogs are affected by mange disease, likely spread by feral dogs.

About Mange Disease

It is a skin disease caused by mite infestations, leading to inflammation, itching, and hair loss. It can be severe, caused by Sarcoptes scabiei mites, which also cause human scabies. It affects various domestic animals and spreads through direct contact or contaminated objects. Treatment is available in most forms.

About Asiatic wild dogs

It is also called Indian wild dogs, and are found in forests across central, south, and southeast Asia. They're known by various names like red wolf or mountain wolf. They're clustered in India's Western and Eastern Ghats, central Indian landscape, and North East India. They're endangered according to the IUCN Red List, protected under the Wildlife Protection Act 1972, and listed under CITES Appendix II.

About Mudumalai Tiger Reserve

Mudumalai Tiger Reserve is located in the Nilgiris District of Tamil Nadu state at the tri-junction of three states, viz, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. It is a part of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve (1st Biosphere Reserve in India). The Reserve has tall grasses, commonly referred to as 'Elephant Grass'

ANSWER WRITTING

Q. "The greatness of humanity is not in being human, but in being humane," said Mahatma Gandhi.
Mahatma Gandhi's quote, "The greatness of humanity is not in being human, but in being humane," draws a distinction between merely existing as a human and embodying the qualities of compassion, empathy, and kindness that define humanity at its best. Being human is a biological fact, whereas being humane is a moral choice, reflecting the higher values and virtues of human society.

Limitations of "Being Human"

- Inherent Selfishness:Humans are biologically wired for survival, which can lead to selfish behaviour. Historical examples like colonialism, where European powers exploited other nations for their own gain, demonstrate this inherent selfishness.
- Cognitive Biases: Being human involves cognitive biases that can cloud judgement. The confirmation bias, for instance, leads to reinforcing one's existing beliefs, as seen in the spread of misinformation and propaganda through social media.
- Emotional Reactivity: Humans often react emotionally rather than rationally, leading to impulsive decisions. Eg: Communal riots like Delhi riots 2020 in India are often fueled by emotional reactions rather than reasoned dialogue.
- Limited Rationality: Humans have limited rationality, affecting decision-making. Eg: global financial crisis of 2008, partly caused by irrational financial behaviours and decisions, highlights this limitation.
- Susceptibility to Corruption: Being human includes a susceptibility to corruption and unethical behaviour. Eg: Infamous 2G spectrum scandal in India, involving government officials and corporate executives, showcases this vulnerability.
- Prejudice and Discrimination: Humans are prone to prejudice and discrimination. Eg: caste system in India, leading to social discrimination and inequality, is a manifestation of this human limitation.
- Aggression and Violence: Humans have a propensity for aggression and violence. Eg: The two World Wars, resulting from nationalistic and territorial aggression, are stark reminders of this aspect of human nature.
- Fear of Change: Humans often fear change, preferring the status quo. Resistance to social reforms, like the initial opposition to the abolition of Sati in India, illustrates this fear of change.

- Short-sightedness: Humans can be short-sighted, focusing on immediate gains rather than long-term consequences. Eg: Environmental degradation due to industrialization, with little regard for long-term ecological impact, is an example of this limitation.
- Ego and Pride: Human nature includes ego and pride, which can hinder personal growth and understanding. Eg: Historical refusal of leaders like Hitler to acknowledge their mistakes, driven by ego and pride, led to catastrophic consequences.

Ways to build a more humane society:

- Encouraging Ethical Education: Integrate ethics and moral philosophy into the education system. Eg: By incorporating a dedicated ethics curriculum into schools and helping students learn to critically evaluate moral issues, understand different perspectives, and develop their own ethical framework.
- Cultivating Compassion: Foster compassion in communities by organizing events and workshops that focus on helping others. Eg: Create a national "Compassion Day" where citizens engage in acts of kindness, volunteering, and community service.
- Promoting Inclusivity: Encourage inclusivity in all spheres of society, including workplaces, schools, and communities. Eg: Establish 'Inclusivity Labs' in organizations where employees can learn about and practice inclusive behaviours.
- Encourage Sustainable Living: Advocating sustainable and environmentally friendly practices is the need of the hour to build humane society. Eg: Promoting the adoption of renewable energy sources like solar power in residential areas and motivating communities to create their own sustainable projects, like community gardens or recycling initiatives.
- Promoting Social Justice: Advocating for social justice ensures equitable treatment of all individuals. Eg: Lessons can be learned from Martin Luther King Jr.'s leadership during the Civil Rights Movement in the USA exemplifying the fight for social justice and equality.
- Supporting Mental Health: Addressing mental health issues with empathy and understanding is vital. Eg: Strengthening bodies like the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) in India to ensure citizen's mental health can contribute to building a humane society.
- Promoting Non-Violent Communication: Encouraging non-violent communication can reduce conflicts and misunderstandings. Eg: Peace talks led by Dalai Lama, advocating for non-violence and dialogue, are a testament to the effectiveness of peaceful communication.
- Implementing Fair Policies: Fair and just policies by governments can create a more equitable society. Eg: Implementation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations is a right step towards ensuring fairness and human dignity globally.
- Cultivating Humane Leadership: Leaders who demonstrate compassion and understanding can inspire others. Eg: Jacinda Ardern's empathetic leadership during the Christchurch mosque shootings in New Zealand set a powerful example of compassionate governance.
- Supporting Social Entrepreneurship: Encourage businesses that solve social problems and contribute to society. Eg: The microfinance institution Grameen Bank, founded by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus in Bangladesh, provides small loans to impoverished individuals, particularly women, to start their own businesses and lift themselves out of poverty.

In striving towards a more humane society, we must embrace the virtues of empathy, compassion, and inclusivity, transcending the limitations of being merely human. Thus, the journey towards humanity's greatness lies in our collective efforts to build a society where humanity is celebrated not just for its existence but for its capacity to nurture, care for, and create a world grounded in kindness and understanding.

MCQs

1. Consider the following statements regarding kuchipudi dance
   1. Kuchipudi is a classical dance form.It is a dance drama that combines nritta (pure dance),nritya(expressional dance) and natya (drama).
   2. The dance is characterized byits intricate footwork,graceful movements and subtle facial expressions.
   3. It is also known for its faster tempo and requires dancers to sing and lip sync the lyrics while dancing

   Which of the above statements about kuchipudi isre correct?
   (a) Only 1
   (b) 1 and 2 only
   (c) 1, 2 and 3
   (d) None

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2. With reference to Hydrocarbons, consider the following statements:
   1. The primary source of hydrocarbons in the rocky underground reservoirs is the kerogen.
   2. Hydrocarbons exist in subterranean rock formations in the form of coal and crude oil.
   3. Only a rock with low porosity can help in the easier draining of hydrocarbons.
   How many of the above statements are incorrect?
   (a) Only one
   (b) Only two
   (c) All three
   (d) None

3. Consider the following pairs [Volcano's Name: Location]
   1. Mount Etna: Italy
   2. Mauna Loa: Indonesia
   3. Mount Vesuvius: Philippine
   How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?
   (a) Only one
   (b) Only two
   (c) All three
   (d) None

4. Which of the following statements about vortex rings is true?
   (a) Vortex rings are two-dimensional structures.
   (b) Vortex rings move in a straight line without changing shape.
   (c) Vortex rings are formed when a fluid is ejected into another fluid with a different density.
   (d) Vortex rings are only observed in liquids and not in gases.

5. For the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the Election Commission of India (ECI) has unveiled a revolutionary plan that offers the choice of "home voting," which is accessible for
   (a) For all elderly citizens
   (b) For all Persons with Disabilities (PwDs)
   (c) Both (a) and (b)
   (d) None of the above

6. Which of the following statements about hydrogels is correct?

(a) Hydrogels are primarily composed of lipids and are hydrophobic in nature.
(b) Hydrogels are rigid and do not change their shape when exposed to external stimuli.
(c) Hydrogels are three-dimensional networks that can absorb and retain large amounts of water or biological fluids.
(d) Hydrogels are mainly used as electrical conductors in electronic devices.

7. How are gravitational waves detected on Earth?
   (a) By using radio telescopes.
   (b) By measuring changes in the distance between mirrors in interferometers.
   (c) By studying the polarization of light from distant stars.
   (d) By analyzing the temperature fluctuations in the cosmic microwave background.

8. Consider the following statements about Plankton, Aerosol, Cloud, ocean Ecosystem (PACE) satellite:
   1. PACE is a mission solely focused on studying clouds.
   2. PACE aims to study the ocean's ecosystems but not aerosols or clouds.
   3. PACE is primarily designed to monitor urban pollution and air quality.
   How many of the above statements is/correct?
   (a) Only one
   (b) Only two
   (c) All three
   (d) None

9. What is the primary purpose of 'doxxing'?
   (a) To promote a product or service
   (b) To expose someone's personal information without their consent
   (c) To conduct online surveys
   (d) To raise awareness about social issues

10. Which one of the following tiger reserves is located at the tri-junction of three states?
    (a) Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve
    (b) Dholpur – Karauli Tiger Reserve
    (c) Mudumalai Tiger Reserve
    (d) Amrabad Tiger Reserve