



OAS HUB

IDEAL FOR
UPSC, OPSC and Other
Competitive Examinations

English

DAILY CHRONICLE CURRENT AFFAIRS

NEWS CREDIT

PIB/ PTI/ News On Air/ The Hindu/ IANS/ Business Standard/ Times Of India/ Deccan Herald/ Hindustan Times/ BBC News/ Aljazeera/ Mirror.Uk/ Times Now/ Economic Times/ Financial Express/ Indian Express...

NEWS COVERED

Business News, financial news, economy news, company news, politics news, India news, breaking news, Indian economy, International News, Sports News, and many more topics...



Friday, July 31, 2026



TABLE OF CONTENT

- **Western Ghats Eco-Sensitive Area Draft Notification Reissued for the Seventh Time Amid Continuing Centre–State Deadlock:**
Environment Conservation / Eco-Sensitive Areas / Federalism / Biodiversity Conservation / Environmental Governance (GS-III, GS-II)
- **India Launches SHANTI Campaign for 2028–2029 UNSC Seat While Reinforcing Long-Term Push for Permanent Membership:**
United Nations Reforms / UNSC Membership / India's Foreign Policy / Multilateral Diplomacy / Global Governance (GS-II)
- **World Hepatitis Day 2026 Highlights India's Fight Against Viral Hepatitis and the Goal of Disease Elimination by 2030:**
Public Health / Disease Elimination / Preventive Healthcare / Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) / Health Policy (GS-II)
- **Contemporary International Relations Increasingly Integrate National Interest with Ethics, Identity, Emotions and Moral Legitimacy in Foreign Policy:**
International Relations / National Interest / Foreign Policy / Ethics in International Relations / Global Politics (GS-II, GS-IV)
- **Recurring Zoonotic Outbreaks Highlight Global Gaps in Surveillance, Vaccines, One Health Preparedness and Pandemic Response:**
One Health / Zoonotic Diseases / Pandemic Preparedness / Global Health Governance / Public Health (GS-II, GS-III)

IMPORTANT INSIGHTS

Western Ghats Eco-Sensitive Area Draft Notification Reissued for the Seventh Time Amid Continuing Centre–State Deadlock

Recent Developments:

- The **Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** has issued the **seventh draft notification** proposing an **Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA)** in the **Western Ghats** after the previous draft lapsed without final notification.
- The latest draft retains the proposed **56,825.7 sq. km** ESA across **Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu** and invites **public objections for 60 days** before finalisation.

About the Western Ghats:

Geographical Features:

- The **Western Ghats** are a **1,500–1,600 km** long mountain chain running parallel to the western coast of Peninsular India.
- The mountain range extends across **Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu**.
- The **Palghat Gap** is the most prominent natural break separating the northern and southern Western Ghats.
- The **Western and Eastern Ghats** converge at the **Nilgiri Hills**.

Ecological Importance:

- The **Western Ghats** are recognised as one of the **world's eight hottest biodiversity hotspots**.
- The region was designated a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** in **2012** under **Criteria (ix) and (x)** for its exceptional ecological and biological value.
- The mountain system is **geologically older than the Himalayas**.
- The ecosystem supports a very high level of **endemism** in plants, amphibians, reptiles, fishes and mammals.
- The region contains unique ecosystems such as **Shola forests, Myristica swamps** and montane grasslands.
- The Western Ghats strongly influence the **South-West Monsoon** by intercepting moisture-laden winds.
- The range forms the catchment of major peninsular rivers including the **Godavari, Krishna, Cauvery, Tungabhadra and Periyar**.
- The UNESCO property comprises **39 protected components** grouped into **7 sub-clusters**, including national parks, wildlife sanctuaries and reserved forests.

Flagship Species:

- The Western Ghats provide habitat to **Lion-tailed Macaque, Nilgiri Tahr, Nilgiri Langur, Asian Elephant, Tiger, Gaur** and numerous endemic amphibians.

Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA):

Meaning and Legal Basis:

- An **Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA)** is a region notified under the **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986** to regulate environmentally harmful developmental activities.
- The objective of ESA notification is to balance **ecological conservation** with **sustainable development** rather than imposing a complete prohibition on human activities.

Major Objectives:

- To conserve fragile ecosystems and biodiversity.
- To regulate high-impact developmental activities.
- To reduce ecological degradation and disaster vulnerability.
- To ensure sustainable livelihood opportunities for local communities.

Gadgil Committee (Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel), 2011:

Background:

- The **Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP)** chaired by **Madhav Gadgil** submitted the first comprehensive conservation framework for the Western Ghats in **2011**.

Major Recommendations:

- The **entire Western Ghats** should be declared an **Ecologically Sensitive Area**.
- The region should be classified into **ESZ-1, ESZ-2 and ESZ-3** according to ecological sensitivity.
- **Mining, quarrying and highly polluting industries** should be prohibited in **ESZ-1**.
- Existing polluting industries should be phased out from ecologically sensitive regions.
- Sustainable agriculture and **organic farming** should be promoted.
- Conservation should follow a **bottom-up governance model** with active participation of **Gram Sabhas** and local communities.

Concerns Raised by States:

- States argued that the recommendations imposed excessive restrictions on agriculture, plantations and infrastructure development.
- The report was criticised for insufficient consideration of regional socio-economic conditions.
- Several state governments viewed the recommendations as excessively restrictive for development.

Kasturirangan Committee (High Level Working Group), 2012:

Background:

- The **High Level Working Group (HLWG)** chaired by **K. Kasturirangan** was constituted to review the Gadgil recommendations and evolve a more balanced framework.

Major Recommendations:

- Only about **37%** of the Western Ghats should be notified as an **Ecologically Sensitive Area**.
- **Mining, quarrying, sand mining and thermal power plants** should be prohibited within the notified ESA.
- Highly polluting industries should remain under strict regulation.
- **Human settlements and agricultural plantations** should generally remain outside the notified ESA.
- Hydroelectric projects and major construction activities should be regulated instead of being universally prohibited.
- Conservation and economic development should proceed simultaneously through sustainable development.

Criticism:

- States alleged that the remote sensing-based demarcation included several villages having plantations rather than natural forests.
- Environmental experts argued that some ecologically important regions were excluded from ESA.
- Kerala constituted the **Oommen V. Oommen Committee**, which recommended further exclusion of plantations and inhabited regions.

Seventh Draft ESA Notification (2026):***Major Features:***

- The proposed ESA continues to cover **56,825.7 sq. km** across six states.
- The notified area, village list and regulatory framework remain substantially unchanged from the **2024 draft**.
- The draft introduces flexibility by permitting **phased implementation**, either **state-wise** or through a **single combined notification**.
- The final notified area will consider recommendations of states, stakeholders and the expert committee.

Prohibited Activities:

- **Mining, quarrying and sand mining.**
- Establishment of new **thermal power plants.**
- Establishment of specified **highly polluting industries.**
- Large-scale construction projects beyond prescribed limits.

Regulated Activities:

- **Hydroelectric power projects.**
- Major infrastructure and construction activities.
- Agriculture and plantation activities continue without fresh restrictions under the present draft.

Major Issues in the Western Ghats Debate:***Conservation, Development:***

- Environmental experts emphasise that strict ecological protection is essential to prevent biodiversity loss, landslides and long-term water insecurity.
- States and local communities seek greater flexibility to protect livelihoods, agriculture and regional development.

Scientific Demarcation, Political Acceptability:

- The **Gadgil Committee** offered stronger ecological protection but lacked political acceptance.
- The **Kasturirangan Committee** improved political acceptability but attracted criticism regarding scientific demarcation.
- The absence of broad consensus has delayed final ESA notification for more than a decade.

Federal Governance:

- The Union Government seeks a common conservation framework across the Western Ghats.
- States demand greater autonomy to determine local conservation priorities based on regional conditions.

Increasing Disaster Risk:

- Recurrent landslides and extreme rainfall events in regions such as **Wayanad** have strengthened calls for stricter ecological regulation.
- Scientists associate increasing disaster vulnerability with **deforestation, unplanned construction, quarrying and climate change.**

Significance for India:***Environmental Importance:***

- Conserves globally significant biodiversity and endemic species.
- Maintains ecological stability and climate regulation across Peninsular India.
- Supports long-term water security through perennial river systems.

Economic Importance:

- Sustains agriculture, plantations, fisheries, hydropower and eco-tourism.
- Provides ecosystem services supporting millions of livelihoods.

Strategic Importance:

- Enhances India's commitments under the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** and the **Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.**
- Contributes to achieving **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** related to biodiversity, climate action and sustainable ecosystems.

Way Forward:***Balanced Conservation Framework:***

- Conservation policies should integrate ecological science with local socio-economic realities.
- Village-level participatory governance should strengthen long-term environmental stewardship.
- Scientific mapping should combine satellite-based assessment with detailed field verification.
- Sustainable agriculture, eco-tourism and nature-based livelihoods should receive policy support.
- Cooperative federalism should guide the final ESA notification through continuous Centre–State consultation.

Value Addition for UPSC:

Important Facts for Prelims:

- **UNESCO World Heritage Site: 2012.**
- **Global Status:** One of the **Eight Hottest Biodiversity Hotspots.**
- **Legal Basis of ESA:** **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.**
- **WGEEP (Gadgil Committee): 2011.**
- **HLWG (Kasturirangan Committee): 2012.**
- **UNESCO Criteria:** (ix) – Ecological and biological processes, (x) – Biodiversity conservation.
- **Important Map Locations:** **Palghat Gap, Nilgiri Hills, Anaimalai Hills, Cardamom Hills, Agasthyamalai Hills, Doddabetta Peak.**

India Launches SHANTI Campaign for 2028–2029 UNSC Seat While Reinforcing Long-Term Push for Permanent Membership

Recent Developments:

- **External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar** officially launched **SHANTI (Securing Holistic Advancement through Norms, Trust and Integrity)** as India's campaign for a **non-permanent seat** in the **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)** for the **2028–2029 term.**
- The campaign reflects India's vision of **reformed multilateralism**, a stronger **Voice of the Global South**, future-ready peacekeeping, maritime security, responsible **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** governance and counter-terrorism, while simultaneously reiterating India's long-standing demand for **permanent membership** of the **UNSC.**

SHANTI Campaign:

About SHANTI:

- **SHANTI** stands for **Securing Holistic Advancement through Norms, Trust and Integrity.**
- The campaign serves as India's diplomatic framework for securing election to the **UNSC** for the **2028–2029 term.**
- The initiative projects India as a responsible stakeholder committed to a **rules-based international order**, inclusive multilateralism and peaceful conflict resolution.
- India will contest the **sole Asia-Pacific Group seat** against **Tajikistan** in the **2027 elections** for the **2028–2029 term.**

Major Priorities under SHANTI:

- Promoting **reformed multilateralism** and comprehensive **UN reforms.**
- Strengthening the **Voice of the Global South** in global governance.
- Enhancing **UN Peacekeeping** through technology-driven and future-ready approaches.
- Advancing **maritime security** and protection of global commons.
- Promoting **human-centric Artificial Intelligence governance.**
- Strengthening international cooperation against **terrorism** and **terror financing.**

India's Quest for Permanent UNSC Membership:

Meaning and Objective:

- India's demand for **permanent membership** seeks to reform the post-1945 global governance architecture to reflect present-day geopolitical, demographic and economic realities.
- Permanent membership would enable India to participate continuously in decisions relating to **international peace and security, sanctions, peacekeeping mandates** and the **authorisation of military action**.
- India considers permanent representation essential for making the **UNSC** more representative, credible and effective.

United Nations Security Council (UNSC):

Composition:

- The **UNSC** is one of the six principal organs of the **United Nations** entrusted with maintaining international peace and security.
- The Council presently consists of **15 members**, including **5 Permanent Members (P5)** and **10 Non-Permanent Members** elected for **two-year terms**.
- The **Permanent Members (P5)** are **China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States**.
- Each **Permanent Member** possesses the **Veto Power**, enabling it to block any substantive resolution irrespective of majority support.

Major Functions:

- Maintaining international peace and security.
- Authorising **peacekeeping operations** and military interventions.
- Imposing economic and diplomatic sanctions.
- Recommending the appointment of the **Secretary-General of the United Nations**.
- Recommending admission of new member states to the **United Nations**.

Evolution of UNSC Reform:

Important Milestones:

- **1945:** The **United Nations Security Council** was established under the **United Nations Charter**, with permanent seats reserved for the victorious powers of the Second World War.
- **1965:** The number of **Non-Permanent Members** increased from **6 to 10**, raising the total Council membership to **15**, while the permanent membership remained unchanged.
- **1993:** The **United Nations General Assembly** established the **Open-ended Working Group** to examine proposals for **UNSC reform**.
- **2005:** **India, Brazil, Germany and Japan** formed the **G4** grouping to jointly advocate expansion of permanent membership.
- **2008:** **Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN)** commenced in the **United Nations General Assembly** to discuss comprehensive **UNSC reforms**.
- Despite decades of negotiations, no amendment to the composition of the **Permanent Members** has yet been adopted.

India's Strengths for Permanent Membership:

Demographic, Economic and Strategic Credentials:

- India represents the **world's most populous country**, accounting for over **18%** of the global population.
- India has emerged as the **world's fourth-largest economy** with sustained long-term growth prospects.
- India possesses significant strategic capabilities as a **nuclear weapon state**, major maritime power and leading Indo-Pacific stakeholder.
- India maintains one of the world's largest diplomatic networks and actively contributes to multilateral institutions.

Peacekeeping and Diplomatic Contributions:

- India has deployed nearly **300,000 peacekeepers** across around **50 UN Peacekeeping Missions** since **1948**, making it one of the largest cumulative troop contributors.
- India has served **eight terms** as an elected **Non-Permanent Member** of the **UNSC**, most recently during **2021–2022**.
- India has consistently promoted dialogue, consensus-building and peaceful dispute settlement in multilateral forums.

Leadership of the Global South:

- India actively articulates the concerns of developing countries in international institutions.
- India's foreign policy philosophy of **Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam** supports inclusive, equitable and cooperative global governance.
- India's leadership in platforms such as the **G20**, **BRICS**, **Quad** and the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)** has strengthened its global diplomatic influence.

Major Challenges to India's Permanent Membership:

Institutional Constraints:

- Amendment of **Article 108** of the **United Nations Charter** requires approval by a **two-thirds majority** in the **United Nations General Assembly** and subsequent ratification by all **Permanent Members**, allowing any **P5** country to block reform.

Geopolitical Challenges:

- **China** continues to oppose India's permanent membership, limiting regional consensus within Asia.
- The **Uniting for Consensus (Coffee Club)** group opposes the creation of additional permanent seats and instead favours expansion only in the non-permanent category.
- Existing **Permanent Members** remain reluctant to dilute their exclusive privileges or extend **Veto Power** to new entrants.
- Differences among regional groups regarding suitable representatives from **Asia**, **Africa** and **Latin America** continue to delay consensus.

Way Forward:

Strengthening India's Diplomatic Strategy:

- India should utilise campaigns such as **SHANTI** to build broad-based support across the **United Nations General Assembly**.
- India should continue advocating **text-based Intergovernmental Negotiations** to accelerate institutional reforms.
- Coordination between the **G4** and the **African Union's Ezulwini Consensus** should be strengthened to secure wider political support.
- India may consider a phased model of **permanent membership without immediate veto powers** as an interim compromise.
- Continued engagement through plurilateral platforms such as the **Quad, BRICS, G20** and the **International Solar Alliance** can further enhance India's diplomatic leverage.

Conclusion:

Need for Comprehensive UNSC Reform:

- India's demographic weight, economic strength, peacekeeping record and responsible global engagement make it a strong candidate for **permanent membership** of the UNSC.
- A **United Nations Security Council** that excludes a substantial proportion of the world's population cannot fully reflect contemporary global realities.
- Comprehensive reform of the UNSC remains essential for strengthening the legitimacy, representativeness and effectiveness of the multilateral system.

Value Addition for UPSC:

Important Facts for Prelims and Mains:

- **Current UNSC Composition:** 5 Permanent Members + 10 Non-Permanent Members = 15 Members.
- **Permanent Members (P5):** China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, United States.
- **Article Governing Charter Amendment:** Article 108 of the United Nations Charter.
- **Election of Non-Permanent Members:** Conducted by the United Nations General Assembly for two-year terms.
- **India's Previous UNSC Terms:** 1950–51, 1967–68, 1972–73, 1977–78, 1984–85, 1991–92, 2011–12, 2021–22.
- **G4 Members:** India, Brazil, Germany and Japan.
- **Coffee Club (Uniting for Consensus):** Led by Italy and supported by countries including Pakistan, opposing the expansion of permanent membership.
- **Ezulwini Consensus (2005):** The African Union's common position demanding at least two permanent seats with veto powers and five non-permanent seats for Africa in a reformed UNSC.
- **India's Constitutional Principle in Global Governance:** Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam and commitment to reformed multilateralism remain central pillars of India's foreign policy.

World Hepatitis Day 2026 Highlights India's Fight Against Viral Hepatitis and the Goal of Disease Elimination by 2030

Recent Developments:

- The world observed **World Hepatitis Day** on **28 July 2026** to raise awareness about **viral hepatitis**, one of the leading causes of infectious disease-related deaths globally.
- The **World Health Organization (WHO)** announced the **2026 theme**, "**Hepatitis: Let's Break It Down**", emphasising the removal of financial, social and systemic barriers to hepatitis prevention, testing, treatment and care. This year's campaign highlights the need for equitable access to hepatitis services to achieve elimination targets by **2030**.

About Hepatitis:

Meaning and Nature:

- **Hepatitis** refers to inflammation of the **liver**, primarily caused by viral infections, although alcohol abuse, certain medicines, toxins and autoimmune disorders can also lead to liver inflammation.
- The disease may be **acute** or **chronic**, depending upon the duration of infection and the extent of liver damage.
- Chronic liver inflammation can progressively lead to **cirrhosis**, **liver failure** and **hepatocellular carcinoma (liver cancer)**.

Major Types of Viral Hepatitis:

- The five principal hepatitis viruses are **Hepatitis A (HAV)**, **Hepatitis B (HBV)**, **Hepatitis C (HCV)**, **Hepatitis D (HDV)** and **Hepatitis E (HEV)**.
- **Hepatitis B** and **Hepatitis C** together account for more than **90%** of deaths and long-term disability associated with viral hepatitis.
- **Hepatitis D** occurs only in individuals already infected with **Hepatitis B**, making **HBV vaccination** the most effective preventive strategy against both infections.

Global and Indian Burden of Hepatitis:

Global Scenario:

- **Viral hepatitis** causes nearly **1.3 million deaths** and approximately **2 million new infections** every year worldwide.
- Around **287 million** people are living with chronic **Hepatitis B** or **Hepatitis C**, while a majority remain undiagnosed because of the absence of early symptoms.
- The **WHO Global Health Sector Strategy 2022–2030** aims to eliminate viral hepatitis as a public health threat by **2030**.

India's Disease Burden:

- India has nearly **29 million** people living with chronic **Hepatitis B** and about **5.5 million** people with chronic **Hepatitis C**, making it one of the countries with the highest hepatitis burden globally.
- India contributes nearly **10–15%** of the global **Hepatitis B** carrier population.
- According to **India HIV Sentinel Surveillance 2021**, **Hepatitis B** seroprevalence is approximately **0.85%**, whereas **Hepatitis C** seroprevalence is around **0.29%**.

Meaning of Seroprevalence:

- **Seroprevalence** refers to the proportion of individuals in a surveyed population who test positive for disease-specific antibodies or antigens, indicating present or past infection.

Clinical Features and Public Health Challenges:

Common Symptoms:

- Most infected individuals remain asymptomatic during the early stages of infection.
- Clinical manifestations may include **persistent fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, abdominal discomfort, dark-coloured urine and jaundice.**

Diagnosis and Vaccination Gaps:

- India's **Hepatitis B** diagnosis rate remains close to **2.4%**, indicating that most infected individuals have never undergone testing.
- The **birth-dose Hepatitis B vaccine** presently reaches only around **63%** of newborns, although completion of the childhood vaccination schedule is significantly higher.
- Delay in administering the birth dose substantially increases the risk of **mother-to-child transmission.**

Major Barriers:

- Low public awareness and widespread misinformation delay timely diagnosis.
- Social stigma discourages individuals from seeking testing and treatment.
- Weak integration of hepatitis services into primary healthcare reduces accessibility.
- High treatment costs continue to affect equitable healthcare utilisation.

Transmission, Prevention and Management of Different Types of Hepatitis:

Hepatitis A and Hepatitis E:

- **Cause,** Infection with **HAV** or **HEV.**
- **Transmission,** Contaminated food or water through the **faecal-oral route**, poor sanitation and unsafe drinking water.
- **Prevention,** Safe drinking water, improved sanitation, personal hygiene and **Hepatitis A vaccination.**
- **Treatment,** Supportive care including adequate hydration and nutrition, as no specific antiviral therapy is generally required.

Hepatitis B:

- **Cause,** Infection with **HBV.**
- **Transmission,** Mother-to-child transmission during childbirth, infected blood, blood products and body fluids.
- **Prevention,** Universal **Hepatitis B vaccination**, birth dose within **24 hours**, subsequent doses at **6, 10 and 14 weeks**, safe injection practices and screened blood transfusion.
- **Treatment,** Eligible chronic patients receive antiviral medicines according to national treatment guidelines.

Hepatitis C:

- **Cause,** Infection with **HCV**.
- **Transmission,** Exposure to infected blood through unsafe injections, contaminated medical procedures, shared needles and infected blood products.
- **Prevention,** Safe injections, screened blood transfusion and harm-reduction measures such as needle-exchange programmes, while no vaccine is currently available.
- **Treatment,** Nearly all patients can be cured within **12–24 weeks** using **pan-genotypic Direct-Acting Antiviral (DAA)** medicines.

Hepatitis D:

- **Cause,** Infection with **HDV**, occurring only among individuals already infected with **HBV**.
- **Transmission,** Contact with infected blood, blood products and body fluids.
- **Prevention,** **Hepatitis B vaccination** effectively prevents **Hepatitis D** infection.
- **Treatment,** Management primarily focuses on specialist care and effective treatment of the underlying **Hepatitis B** infection.

Government Initiatives for Hepatitis Control:

National Viral Hepatitis Control Programme (NVHCP):

- The **National Viral Hepatitis Control Programme** was launched in **2018** to provide integrated screening, diagnosis, treatment and long-term management of viral hepatitis.
- The programme supports the achievement of the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** relating to communicable disease elimination by **2030**.
- The programme covers **Hepatitis A, B, C, D and E** through preventive, promotive and curative interventions.
- **Hepatitis A** and **Hepatitis E** outbreaks are monitored through the **Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP)**.
- Free diagnostic services and medicines are provided for eligible **Hepatitis B** and **Hepatitis C** patients.
- The programme utilises the **NVHCP Management Information System (MIS)** for digital patient registration, treatment monitoring and programme management.

Other Supporting National Health Programmes:

Integrated National Efforts:

- The **Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, Adolescent Health and Nutrition (RMNCAH+N)** strategy provides universal screening of pregnant women for **Hepatitis B**.
- The **Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP)** ensures administration of the **Hepatitis B birth dose**, while newborns of infected mothers also receive **Hepatitis B Immunoglobulin (HBIG)** within **24 hours** of birth.
- The **National AIDS Control Programme (NACP)** supports screening of high-risk groups and provides **Hepatitis B vaccination** to healthcare workers and eligible vulnerable populations.
- Existing molecular diagnostic platforms under the **National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP)** are utilised for hepatitis diagnosis wherever feasible.
- **Blood Transfusion Services** ensure linkage of hepatitis-positive blood donors with appropriate healthcare facilities.
- The toll-free **1800-11-6666** helpline provides information regarding hepatitis prevention, diagnosis, treatment and service availability across India.

WHO Elimination Targets for 2030:

Global Targets:

- Achieve a **90% reduction** in new **Hepatitis B** infections.
- Achieve a **65% reduction** in hepatitis-related mortality.
- Ensure **90% diagnosis coverage** among infected individuals.
- Expand access to affordable testing, vaccination and antiviral treatment under **Universal Health Coverage (UHC)**.

Way Forward:

Priority Interventions:

- Expand awareness campaigns to improve early diagnosis and reduce stigma.
- Strengthen integration of hepatitis services within primary healthcare systems.
- Improve universal birth-dose vaccination coverage and timely immunisation.
- Increase affordable access to diagnostics, antiviral medicines and long-term follow-up services.
- Strengthen disease surveillance, digital monitoring and community-level screening for high-risk populations.

Value Addition for UPSC:

Important Facts for Prelims and Mains:

- **World Hepatitis Day: 28 July** every year, commemorating the birth anniversary of **Dr. Baruch Samuel Blumberg**, discoverer of the **Hepatitis B virus**, developer of the first **Hepatitis B vaccine** and recipient of the 1976 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine.
- **2026 Theme: "Hepatitis: Let's Break It Down."**
- **Target Organ: Liver.**
- **Only Vaccine-Preventable Major Viral Hepatitis: Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B.**
- **No Licensed Vaccine Available: Hepatitis C.**
- **Hepatitis D Dependency:** Infection occurs only in individuals already infected with **Hepatitis B**.
- **National Programme: National Viral Hepatitis Control Programme (2018).**
- **WHO Elimination Goal:** Eliminate viral hepatitis as a public health threat by **2030**.
- **Most Common Causes of Hepatitis-Related Deaths: Cirrhosis and Hepatocellular Carcinoma (Liver Cancer).**

Contemporary International Relations Increasingly Integrate National Interest with Ethics, Identity, Emotions and Moral Legitimacy in Foreign Policy

Recent Developments:

- Recent geopolitical developments, including the **West Asia conflict**, the **Israel–Hamas conflict**, debates over **India's strategic autonomy**, and growing scrutiny of humanitarian crises have revived discussions on



whether **International Relations (IR)** should be guided solely by national interest or also by ethics, emotions and moral legitimacy.

- The growing influence of **real-time digital media**, **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**, social media and global public opinion has increased demands for ethical accountability in diplomacy while challenging traditional **Realist** approaches to foreign policy.

International Relations Beyond National Interest:

Meaning of International Relations:

- **International Relations (IR)** is the study of interactions among sovereign states, international organisations and non-state actors concerning politics, security, economics, diplomacy and global governance.
- Traditionally, **International Relations** has focused primarily on **power**, **security**, **national interest** and the pursuit of strategic objectives by sovereign states.
- Contemporary global politics demonstrates that foreign policy is increasingly influenced by **ethics**, **identity**, **public opinion**, **emotions** and **moral legitimacy**, alongside strategic considerations.

Traditional Approach to International Relations:

- Classical diplomacy emphasises concepts such as **deterrence**, **balance of power**, **strategic autonomy**, **national security** and **realpolitik**.
- The **Realist School** considers states as rational actors seeking survival and maximisation of power under conditions of international anarchy.
- According to **Hans J. Morgenthau**, foreign policy is fundamentally driven by **national interest defined in terms of power**.

Evolution of International Relations:

Historical Development:

- Modern **International Relations** emerged primarily after the **Second World War**, with significant intellectual contributions from Western academic institutions.
- **Stanley Hoffmann** described **International Relations** as "**An American Social Science**", highlighting the dominant influence of American scholarship on the discipline.
- Modern diplomatic institutions, international norms and theoretical frameworks evolved under the influence of European colonial expansion and later American global leadership.
- The emergence of multipolarity and the rise of the **Global South** have expanded debates on more inclusive and representative approaches to global governance.

Important Concepts in International Relations:

Core Concepts:

- **Realism**, State behaviour is primarily driven by power and national interest.
- **Anarchy**, The international system lacks a central sovereign authority capable of enforcing global laws.
- **National Interest**, The foremost objective guiding a state's foreign policy and strategic decisions.
- **Moral Legitimacy**, Acceptance of state actions based on ethical principles and internationally recognised norms.
- **Strategic Autonomy**, The ability of a country to pursue an independent foreign policy without permanent alignment with competing power blocs.

- **Soft Power**, The ability to influence international behaviour through culture, values, diplomacy and international credibility.

Growing Importance of Ethics and Emotions:

Meaning of Ethics and Emotions:

- **Ethics** refers to moral principles that guide the conduct of states, political leaders and international institutions in global affairs.
- **Emotions** include empathy, fear, pride, anger, grief and compassion that influence perceptions, political judgement and foreign policy choices.
- Contemporary scholarship increasingly argues that **reason** and **emotion** should complement rather than oppose each other in international decision-making.

Scholarly Perspectives:

- **Neta Crawford** argues that emotions such as fear, grief, empathy, pride and embarrassment significantly influence political decision-making and perceptions of national security.
- Emotional responses contribute to shaping national identity, threat perception, public mobilisation and support for military or diplomatic actions.
- **Brent Sasley** argues that state leaders operate within social and political environments where identity and collective emotions significantly shape foreign policy behaviour.

Why Ethics and Emotions Matter in International Relations:

Influence on Foreign Policy:

- Ethical values have historically influenced diplomatic conduct, alliance formation, conflict resolution and international cooperation.
- During the **Cold War**, the **United States** projected itself as the defender of democracy, human rights and individual liberty, while the **Soviet Union** promoted an alternative ideological model.

Influence on Public Opinion:

- Public emotions such as anger, sympathy, fear and national pride increasingly shape governmental responses to international crises.
- Real-time information flows enable citizens to influence foreign policy through democratic pressure and public discourse.

Promotion of Peace and Cooperation:

- Ethical diplomacy strengthens respect for **human rights**, **human dignity**, **international law** and peaceful dispute settlement.
- Empathy, mutual trust and moral responsibility encourage international solidarity in addressing common global challenges.

Influence of Ethics and Emotions on World Politics:

Major Dimensions:

- **Decision-making**, Ethical beliefs and emotional responses influence leadership decisions during wars, negotiations and humanitarian emergencies.
- **Conflict and cooperation**, Fear, hatred and insecurity may intensify conflicts, whereas empathy, dialogue and reconciliation facilitate peaceful outcomes.
- **Global norms**, Ethical principles contribute to the development of international treaties, humanitarian law, climate justice frameworks and the doctrine of **Responsibility to Protect (R2P)**.
- **Soft power**, Humanitarian assistance, democratic values, non-violence and cultural diplomacy enhance a country's international image and influence.

Ethical Perspective on Globalisation:

Achievements and Limitations:

- **Globalisation** has promoted international trade, technological progress, investment flows and poverty reduction in many regions.
- Significant inequalities continue to exist between the **Global North** and the **Global South**, limiting equitable distribution of developmental benefits.
- Persistent developmental disparities have raised ethical concerns regarding fairness, inclusion and distributive justice within the global economic order.

Ethics in the Digital Age:

Emerging Dimensions:

- **Artificial Intelligence**, social media, digital journalism, citizen reporting and transnational activism have transformed the conduct of diplomacy.
- Civilian suffering during conflicts has become immediately visible through digital communication platforms, increasing demands for humanitarian accountability.
- Governments increasingly face international scrutiny regarding compliance with **international humanitarian law** and ethical standards during armed conflicts.

Contemporary Challenges in International Relations:

Emerging Issues:

- **National interest versus ethics**, States frequently struggle to balance strategic objectives with humanitarian obligations and international law.
- **Strategic autonomy and global expectations**, Countries such as **India** seek independent foreign policies while responding to competing geopolitical pressures.
- **Humanitarian crises and public opinion**, Conflicts in **West Asia** and **Ukraine** increasingly shape international diplomacy through continuous media coverage.
- **Major power rivalry**, Intensifying competition among major powers has reduced opportunities for effective multilateral cooperation.
- **Technology and information warfare**, **Artificial Intelligence**, cyberattacks, misinformation and digital surveillance have fundamentally altered diplomatic engagement and national security.

- **Global governance reforms**, Institutions such as the **United Nations** and the **World Trade Organization (WTO)** face increasing demands for reforms that better represent the **Global South**.
- **Non-traditional security threats**, Climate change, pandemics, terrorism, cyber threats and energy insecurity require cooperative global responses beyond conventional military approaches.

India's Perspective on International Relations:

Guiding Principles of Indian Foreign Policy:

- India's foreign policy emphasises **Strategic Autonomy**, **Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**, democratic values, pluralism and an anti-colonial worldview.
- India seeks to balance national interest with responsible global engagement through dialogue, multilateralism and peaceful coexistence.
- India supports a **rules-based international order** while preserving independent decision-making in external affairs.

Role of the Non-Aligned Movement:

- The **Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)** represented sovereign equality, peaceful coexistence, strategic independence and opposition to military bloc politics during the **Cold War**.
- The foundational principles of **NAM** continue to influence India's contemporary doctrine of **Strategic Autonomy**.

India's Moral Capital:

- India's international credibility is strengthened by its constitutional values, democratic institutions, cultural diversity, peaceful coexistence and commitment to the rule of law.
- India's humanitarian assistance, development partnerships and leadership of the **Global South** reinforce its global **Soft Power**.

Constitutional Link:

Article 51 of the Constitution:

Best Institute for OAS/IAS

- **Article 51** under the **Directive Principles of State Policy** directs the State to promote international peace, security, just and honourable relations among nations and respect for international law.
- The constitutional vision encourages peaceful settlement of international disputes through arbitration and diplomatic engagement.

Illustrative Global Examples:

Ethics in Practice:

- **Mahatma Gandhi's** philosophy of **Non-Violence (Ahimsa)** inspired numerous global civil rights and decolonisation movements.
- **Nelson Mandela's** reconciliation process demonstrated the role of forgiveness and empathy in post-conflict nation-building.
- The collective memory of the **Holocaust** contributed significantly to the development of modern international human rights norms and genocide prevention.

- The global **Climate Justice** movement demonstrates how ethical responsibility and collective emotions influence international environmental negotiations.

Way Forward:

Priority Measures:

- Balance **Realist** national interest with ethical diplomacy and humanitarian commitments.
- Strengthen India's **Soft Power** through democratic governance, inclusive development and cultural diplomacy.
- Preserve **Strategic Autonomy** while actively supporting international humanitarian values and international law.
- Promote equitable, rules-based and representative global governance through stronger leadership of the **Global South**.
- Support comprehensive reforms of international institutions to improve legitimacy, inclusiveness and effectiveness.

Value Addition for UPSC:

Important Facts for Prelims and Mains:

- **Father of Classical Realism:** Hans J. Morgenthau.
- **International Relations as "An American Social Science":** Stanley Hoffmann.
- **Core Realist Assumption:** States primarily pursue **power, security and national interest**.
- **Soft Power Concept:** Popularised by Joseph S. Nye Jr.
- **Indian Constitutional Provision:** Article 51, Directive Principles of State Policy, promotes international peace, security and respect for international law.
- **Foundational Principle of Indian Foreign Policy:** Strategic Autonomy, evolved from **Non-Alignment** to contemporary **Multi-Alignment**.
- **Major Ethical Global Norms:** Human Rights, Responsibility to Protect (R2P), Climate Justice, International Humanitarian Law.
- **Major Non-Traditional Security Challenges:** Climate Change, Pandemics, Cyber Security, Energy Security, Food Security and Artificial Intelligence Governance.

Best Institute for OAS/IAS

Recurring Zoonotic Outbreaks Highlight Global Gaps in Surveillance, Vaccines, One Health Preparedness and Pandemic Response

Recent Developments:

- Recent outbreaks involving **Ebola Virus Disease**, **Hantavirus** and **Nipah Virus** demonstrate that **zoonotic diseases** are emerging with increasing frequency at the interface of humans, animals and ecosystems, posing significant global public health challenges.
- Recent **Nipah Virus** events in **India** and **Bangladesh**, together with international concern over **Ebola** and **Hantavirus**, have reinforced the need for stronger **One Health**, genomic surveillance, equitable vaccine access and coordinated global preparedness.

Understanding Zoonotic Diseases:

What are Zoonotic Diseases?

- **Zoonotic diseases (Zoonoses)** are infectious diseases that naturally spread between vertebrate animals and humans through direct contact, contaminated food or water, vectors or environmental exposure.
- More than **60%** of known human infectious diseases and nearly **75%** of emerging infectious diseases originate from animals, making zoonotic spillover a major global health concern.
- Rapid urbanisation, deforestation, climate change, wildlife trade and increased human-animal interaction have accelerated the emergence of zoonotic pathogens worldwide.

Major Zoonotic Viruses of Concern:

Ebola Virus Disease:

- **Ebola Virus Disease (EVD)** is a severe viral haemorrhagic fever with an average **case-fatality rate** of nearly **50%**, although mortality varies across outbreaks.
- Human-to-human transmission occurs through direct contact with infected blood, body fluids or contaminated materials.
- Recent outbreaks in **Central Africa** demonstrate that armed conflict, population displacement, weak health systems, unsafe burial practices and community mistrust significantly hinder outbreak containment.
- Licensed vaccines are available only against the **Zaire ebolavirus** species, while vaccines for other Ebola species remain under development.

Hantavirus:

- **Hantavirus** is primarily transmitted through exposure to infected rodent urine, saliva or droppings and is named after the **Hantaan River** region of **South Korea**.
- Infection may cause **Haemorrhagic Fever with Renal Syndrome (HFRS)** or **Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome (HPS)**, both of which can rapidly progress to life-threatening complications.
- Most hantaviruses do not spread between humans; however, the **Andes Hantavirus** strain is capable of limited person-to-person transmission.
- The **MV Hondius** outbreak illustrated how international travel and enclosed environments can transform a local outbreak into a multinational public health event requiring extensive contact tracing.

Nipah Virus:

- **Nipah Virus (NiV)** is a highly fatal zoonotic disease naturally carried by **fruit bats (Pteropus species)** and can cause severe respiratory illness and acute encephalitis.
- The estimated **case-fatality rate** ranges from **40% to 75%**, depending on outbreak circumstances and healthcare capacity.
- Transmission occurs through infected animals, contaminated food products such as raw date palm sap and close human-to-human contact, particularly in healthcare settings.
- Recurrent outbreaks in **India** and **Bangladesh** indicate that the virus remains an important regional public health threat with epidemic potential.
- No licensed vaccine or specific antiviral therapy is currently available for human use against **Nipah Virus**.

Vaccine Preparedness and Research Pipeline:

Current Vaccine Status:

- A licensed vaccine is currently available only for one major species of the **Ebola Virus**, while **Nipah Virus**, **Hantavirus** and several Ebola species still lack approved human vaccines.
- The absence of reliable curative therapies makes early diagnosis, rapid isolation, infection prevention and supportive clinical care essential during outbreaks.

Stages of Vaccine Development:

- **Basic research**, Publicly funded universities and research laboratories identify pathogen biology, immune responses and potential vaccine targets.
- **Industrial translation**, Pharmaceutical manufacturers convert laboratory discoveries into vaccines through formulation, clinical trials, quality assurance, regulatory approval, large-scale production and cold-chain distribution.
- **Advanced technologies, Artificial Intelligence (AI), mRNA platforms**, viral vector vaccines and recombinant protein technologies have significantly accelerated vaccine design, although biological validation and regulatory evaluation remain indispensable.

Why Vaccine Development Remains Challenging:

Major Constraints:

- **Unpredictable outbreaks**, Sporadic disease occurrence limits the feasibility of conventional large-scale clinical trials and often requires adaptive or emergency trial designs.
- **Technology barriers**, Advanced vaccine platforms remain protected by patents, specialised manufacturing expertise and proprietary technologies that are not universally accessible.
- **Limited commercial incentives**, Pharmaceutical companies may invest less in diseases affecting smaller populations or low-income regions despite their significant public health impact.
- **Regulatory complexity**, Vaccine development requires extensive safety evaluation, ethical approval and post-marketing surveillance before widespread deployment.

Factors Increasing Zoonotic Spillover Risk:

Emerging Drivers:

- **Deforestation**, habitat fragmentation and biodiversity loss increase contact between wildlife, livestock and humans.
- **Climate change** alters the geographical distribution of disease vectors and wildlife reservoirs, facilitating pathogen emergence.
- **Wildlife trade**, intensive livestock farming and expanding urbanisation create new opportunities for cross-species transmission.
- Increased global travel and trade enable infectious diseases to spread rapidly across international borders within short periods.

One Health Approach to Zoonotic Diseases:

Concept and Significance:

- **One Health** recognises that human health, animal health and environmental health are closely interconnected and require integrated policy responses.
- Effective zoonotic disease control requires collaboration among public health authorities, veterinary services, wildlife experts, environmental agencies and research institutions.
- Strengthening **One Health** surveillance improves early detection of spillover events and enhances pandemic preparedness.

Building Future Preparedness:

Priority Measures:

- **Academia-industry partnerships**, Universities should provide scientific research while industry should support vaccine manufacturing, quality assurance and large-scale distribution.
- **Shared-risk financing**, Governments, multilateral organisations and private partners should jointly finance epidemic vaccine development through advance purchase commitments, technology transfer and regional manufacturing hubs.
- **Strengthening surveillance**, Integrated genomic surveillance, laboratory capacity and cross-border disease reporting systems should be expanded.
- **Addressing vaccine hesitancy**, Transparent risk communication, community engagement and trusted local leadership should be strengthened before public health emergencies arise.
- **Strengthening international cooperation**, Equitable access to diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines should become a core objective of global-health governance.

India's Preparedness Against Zoonotic Diseases:

Major Initiatives:

- **Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP)** strengthens early detection and reporting of infectious disease outbreaks.
- **National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC)** coordinates epidemiological surveillance and outbreak response across the country.
- **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** supports laboratory diagnosis, pathogen research and development of indigenous diagnostic technologies.
- India has strengthened **One Health** coordination involving the health, animal husbandry, wildlife and environmental sectors to improve preparedness against emerging zoonotic diseases.

Way Forward:

Strategic Priorities:

- Strengthen **One Health** governance by integrating human, animal and environmental surveillance systems.
- Expand regional vaccine manufacturing capacity and encourage equitable technology transfer.
- Improve genomic surveillance, rapid diagnostics and emergency response infrastructure for emerging pathogens.
- Promote international collaboration in vaccine research, pathogen surveillance and equitable access to medical countermeasures.

- Build resilient public health systems capable of responding rapidly to future zoonotic outbreaks while maintaining public trust.

Value Addition for UPSC:

Important Facts for Prelims and Mains:

- **Zoonosis:** Disease naturally transmitted between animals and humans.
- **Natural Reservoir of Nipah Virus: Fruit Bats (Pteropus species).**
- **Only Hantavirus with Human-to-Human Transmission: Andes Hantavirus** (limited transmission).
- **Licensed Human Vaccine Available:** Only for **Zaire Ebola Virus**.
- **No Licensed Human Vaccine: Nipah Virus, Hantavirus** and several non-Zaire Ebola species.
- **WHO Priority Pathogens: Nipah Virus** is included due to its epidemic potential and absence of licensed vaccines or specific treatment.
- **One Health:** Integrated approach recognising the interdependence of **human, animal** and **environmental** health.
- **Major Drivers of Zoonotic Spillover: Deforestation, Climate Change, Wildlife Trade, Urbanisation, Global Travel** and **Biodiversity Loss**.



QUESTIONS

1. Consider the following geographic and ecological attributes:

- (1) UNESCO World Heritage Site designation
- (2) Geologically younger than the Himalayan range
- (3) Origin source of major peninsular rivers like Godavari, Krishna, and Cauvery
- (4) Spans across a continuous stretch of six Indian states

How many of the above attributes correctly describe the Western Ghats mountain range?

- (A) Only one
- (B) Only two
- (C) Only three
- (D) All four

2. With reference to the historical evolution and structural changes of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), consider the following statements:

- (1) Since 1945, the permanent membership (P5) and their veto powers have been expanded twice to reflect emerging economic powers.
- (2) The single historical expansion of the UNSC occurred in 1965, increasing the non-permanent member seats from six to ten.
- (3) While non-permanent membership increased total Council strength to 15 in 1965, the P5 permanence and veto structure remained entirely unaltered.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (A) 1 and 2 only
- (B) 2 and 3 only
- (C) 3 only
- (D) 1, 2, and 3

3. Based on the modes of transmission and causative agents of the five main Hepatitis viruses (A, B, C, D, and E), consider the following pairs:

- (1) Hepatitis A & E — Transmitted via the faecal–oral route through contaminated food and water.
- (2) Hepatitis B — Transmitted via contact with infected blood, body fluids, and mother-to-child at birth.
- (3) Hepatitis C — Transmitted primarily through exposure to infected blood, unsafe medical procedures, and needle sharing.
- (4) Hepatitis D — Causes infection independently without requiring any co-existing viral strain.

How many of the above transmission pathways are correctly matched?

- (A) Only one
- (B) Only two
- (C) Only three
- (D) All four

4. Match List-I (Thinkers / Diplomatic Figures) with List-II (Core Ethical & Geopolitical Doctrines) and select the correct answer using the code given below:

List-I (Thinkers / Figures)	List-II (Doctrines / Philosophical Foundations)
A. Thucydides	1. Perpetual Peace framework advocating a universal federation of free states bound by moral hospitality
B. Kautilya	2. Political expediency and Mandala theory prioritizing national interest over rigid moral idealism
C. Immanuel Kant	3. Moral critique of aggressive territorial nation-state nationalism in favor of universal human fellowship
D. Rabindranath Tagore	4. Amoral Realism asserting that 'the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must'

Codes:

- A B C D
- (A) 4 2 1 3
- (B) 2 4 1 3
- (C) 4 1 2 3
- (D) 2 1 4 3

5. Consider the following statements regarding the biological characteristics and transmission dynamics of key zoonotic pathogens:

- (1) Fruit bats (Pteropodidae family) serve as the primary natural reservoir for the Nipah virus.
- (2) Hantaviruses are primarily vector-borne pathogens transmitted to humans via the bite of infected Anopheles mosquitoes.
- (3) The Andes hantavirus strain is unique among hantaviruses for exhibiting limited person-to-person transmission capability.
- (4) Ebola virus disease exhibits an average case-fatality rate of approximately 50% and spreads through direct contact with infected bodily fluids.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (A) Only one
- (B) Only two
- (C) Only three
- (D) All four

ANSWER KEY

1 – Answer (C), 2 – Answer (B), 3 – Answer (C), 4 – Answer (A), 5 – Answer (C)



OAS HUB

DAILY CHRONICLE CURRENT AFFAIRS



In today's fast-changing world, staying updated with current affairs is essential for both academic success and professional growth. Awareness of national and international events not only broadens general knowledge but also sharpens critical and analytical thinking skills. It enables individuals to form well-informed opinions, which are crucial for competitive examinations, group discussions, interviews, and impactful essay writing.

Being well-informed reflects adaptability, awareness, and intellectual curiosity—qualities that are highly valued in a competitive environment. A strong grasp of contemporary issues enhances confidence, widens perspective, and prepares individuals to tackle real-world challenges effectively, ultimately opening the door to better opportunities and long-term personal and career advancement.

-  oashub19  oashub19
 OASHUB22  oashub19@gmail.com
 M5/17, Acharya Vihar Bhubaneswar 751022