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The Analyst

CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout

3rd April 2025



CONTEXT: Pakistan Army firing and intrusion across LoC.

India-Pak Ties: Timeline

1. Phase of Active Aggression (1947–2001)

- **1947–48 Kashmir War:** Pakistan captures PoK
- **1965 War:** UN-mandated ceasefire; Tashkent Agreement (1966)
- **1971 War:** East Pakistan liberation; Shimla Agreement (1972)
- **Siachen Conflict (1984):** India's Operation Meghdoot
- **1980s–90s:** Pakistan fuels Kashmir insurgency
- **1998:** Both countries nuclear tests
- **1999 Kargil War:** Pakistan infiltrates LoC; India regains territory
- **2001 Parliament Attack:** LeT & JeM strike

2. Phase of Reconciliation (2001–2008)

- **1999 Lahore Declaration:** CBMs e.g., missile test warnings
- **Vajpayee's Doctrine:** *Insaniyat, Jamhooriyat, Kashmiriyat* for peace
- **2004 SAARC Summit:** Pakistan pledges no anti-India terror from its soil
- **2008 TAPI Pipeline:** India joins
- **2008 Mumbai Attacks:** LeT-led strikes

3. Phase of Passive Bilateralism (2008–2015)

- **Post-Mumbai Suspicion:** Dialogue limited; focus on terror accountability
- **2014 "Neighborhood First" Policy:** India prioritizes SAARC engagement
- **Goodwill Gestures:** Fishermen released, Pakistan PM attends Modi's oath (2014)
- **2015 Modi Visit:** First Indian PM visit to Pakistan in a decade

4. Phase of Renewed Aggression (2015–)

- **CPEC Launch (2015):** through PoK
- **Terror Wave (2015–19):** Pathankot, Uri, Pulwama attacks

Indian Responses:

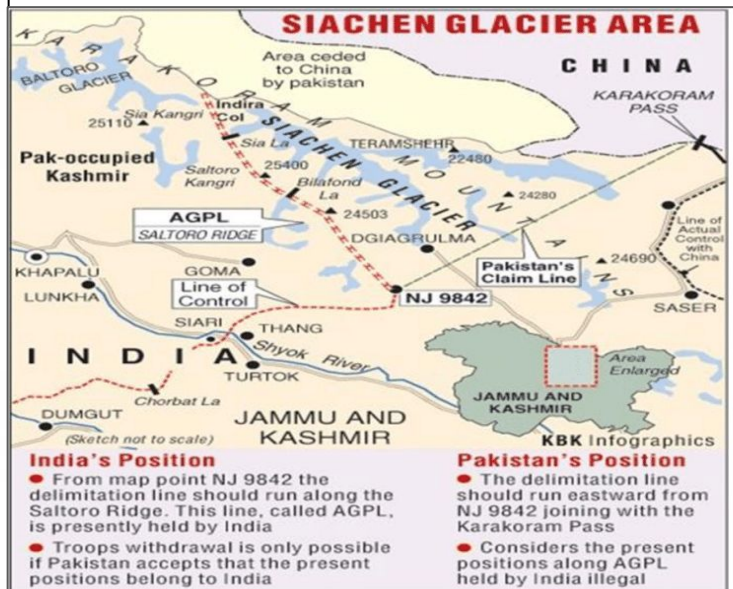
- 2016 Surgical Strikes (post-Uri)
- 2019 Balakot Airstrike (post-Pulwama)
- MFN status revoked

Article 370 Abrogation (2019):

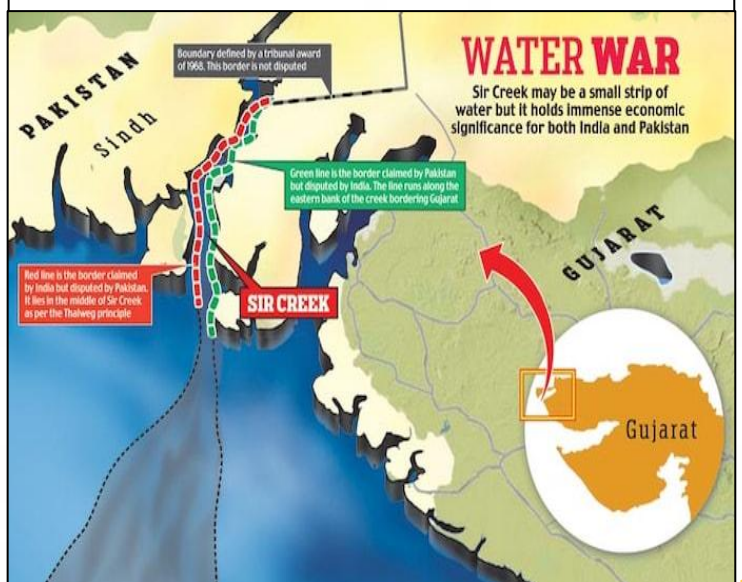
Pakistan downgrades ties

India-Pak Border Disputes

Siachen

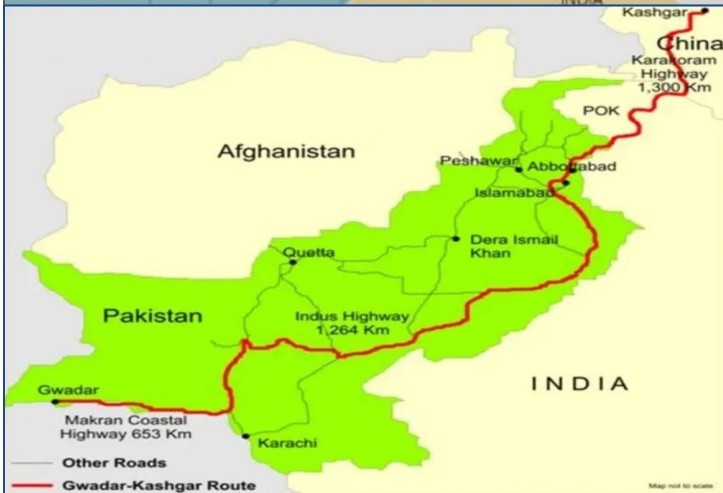


Sir Creek



CONTEXT: Pakistan Army firing and intrusion across LoC.

Gilgit Baltistan



Repercussions of The Tussle

1. Limited Economic Integration

- **Trade**
 - a. Just \$1.2 bn
 - b. WB, 2018: *A Glass Half Full: The Promise of Regional Trade in South Asia*
 - c. Tariff & Non-tariff barriers
- **Terror-impacted trade:** post-Pulwama drop

2. Stalled Regional Integration

- **Intra-regional trade:** 5% in SA vs. 50% in EA
- **SAARC & SAFTA**

3. Costly Arms Race

- **India's defense spending:** \$83 billion (2.4% of GDP) in 2023 – SIPRI
- **Pakistan's military burden:** 3.6% of GDP
- **Nuclear risks**

4. Hinders India's Strategic Interests

- **Blocks regional engagement:** Limits India's influence in CA, Afghan, WA
- **Pakistan's geopolitical leverage:** Key for US (Afghanistan), China (CPEC), Russia (energy routes)

5. Internationalization of Disputes

- **Pakistan's propaganda:** Raises Kashmir in UN, OIC

6. Peripheral but Persistent Issues

- Fishermen arrests
- Drug smuggling: Golden Crescent (Af-Pak-Iran)
- Fake currency

India-Pak Trade

- **Trade**
 - MFN & Negative List
 - Imports through Wagah border
 - Trade Surplus
 - Pause after August 2019
- **Why Pakistan wants to resume trade?**
 - Surging Quietly
 - Economic crisis in Pakistan
 - Approaching IMF and friendly countries for loan
 - Indirect routes via Dubai, Singapore, or Sri Lanka
 - Pakistan's relationships with Afghanistan and Iran
- **Challenges to normalisation of trade**
 - Hardliners
 - Role of Pakistani Army
 - Pakistan's demand on Article 370
 - Terrorism
 - Air space use denial
 - Land route for wheat to Afghanistan



CONTEXT: Pakistan Army firing and intrusion across LoC.

India-Pak: How to get back on Track?

• **Suggestions**

- Build a "security community" in SA
- Dialogue, CBMs like prisoner exchanges, sporting visas, religious pilgrimage
- Bajwa doctrine - peace, reconcile with neighbours, economic growth, trade, rebuild ties with US
- Backchannel diplomacy
- Soft power diplomacy

Mains Practice Question

India-Pakistan relations have witnessed a complex evolution since 1947, marked by conflicts, diplomatic initiatives, and moments of cooperation. Analyze the key phases in the evolution of these relations, the fallout of major conflicts, and suggest ways to improve bilateral ties.



3rd April 2025

CONTEXT: SC is not powerless if a Speaker chooses to remain “indecisive” on Anti Defection Petitions.

- **91st Amendment, 2003**
 - No exemption for Split by 1/3rd (Defection by $\frac{1}{3} \neq$ merger)
 - Only Merger by 2/3rd
 - Size of CoM
 - i. Article 75(1A) - 15%
 - ii. Article 164(1A) - 12 to 15% (Minimum 7 in smaller states)
 - No appointment to CoM until elected again

Definition:

Anti Defection Law is contained in the 10th Schedule of the Constitution and was introduced through the 52 amendment.

Conditions for disqualification:

• If a member of a house voluntarily gives up membership of his political party. If a member votes or does not vote in accordance with the whip.

• Member won't be disqualified if prior permission is taken or is condoned by the party within 15 days from such voting or abstention.

• If an independent joins a political party after the election.

• If a nominated member joins a party 6 months after he or she becomes a member of the legislature.

Power to disqualify:

1. Decision to disqualify is taken by the Speaker of the House

2. If complaint is against the Speaker, then member of the House elected by the House will decide.

Exception:

A member shall not be disqualified if his party merges with another. He and other members of the old party become members of the new party or he and other members do not accept the merger and opt to function as a separate group.

The exception would come into force only if not less than two-thirds of the members of the party in the House have agreed to the merger.

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Issues

- Emphasis upon stability not accountability
- Separation of Powers - Legis & Execu
- MPs' freedom of conscience
- No Time Limit for decision making
- Bias of Speaker
- Incumbent head start in bye elections

Case Laws

- **Kihoto Hollohan v. Zachilhu, 1992**
 - No curtailment of A19(1)(a) or democratic rights of MPs
 - Para 7 barring jurisdiction of courts - need ratification by states
 - Speaker/Chairman decision final but JR
- **Dr. Kashinath v. Speaker, Goa LA, 1993**
 - Speaker can not review decision
- **G. Viswanathan v. Speaker, TN LA, 1996**
 - Expelled => Unattached but Member of Old party u/10th schedule
- **Ravi S Naik v. Uoi, 1994**
 - Procedural irregularity is immune from JR
 - Broader meaning of “Voluntarily giving up membership” - conduct
- **Rajendra Singh Rana v. Swami Prasad Maurya, 2007**
 - Speaker ignoring petition for disqualification = violation of constitutional duties
 - Giving letter to another party to form govt = “voluntary give up”
- **Keisham Meghachandra Singh v. Hon'ble Speaker, Manipur LA, 2020**
 - Reasonable period to decide - facts
 - 3 months unless exceptional circumstances
- **Bharat Rashtra Samithi Case, 2025**
 - Indecision defeats objective of 10th schedule
- **Dinesh Goswami Committee**
 - Decision by Prez/Gov on advice of EC



CONTEXT: SC is not powerless if a Speaker chooses to remain “indecisive” on Anti Defection Petitions.

- **Halim Committee**
 - Define ‘voluntarily giving up membership of a political party’
- **Law Commission, 170th report**
 - limit issuance of whips - govt in danger
 - Delete exemption for splits and mergers
- **NCRWC (Venkatachaliah)**
 - Votes by defector - invalid
 - barred from holding public office
- **Supreme Court**
 - Permanent Tribunal - ret'd. SC judge/ CJ HC

Mains Practice Question

The Anti-Defection Law promotes political stability and discourages unethical defections, however it has faced criticism for limiting legislative freedom. Discuss the key issues related to the Anti-Defection Law, examine relevant case laws, and provide suggestions for its reform.

Table 1: Protecting Parties with Anti-Defection Provisions in the Constitution

<p>Belize, Article 59. Tenure of Office of Members</p> <p>(1) Every member of the House of Representatives shall vacate his seat in the House at the next dissolution of the National Assembly after his election.</p> <p>(2) A member of the House of Representatives shall also vacate his seat in the House—</p> <p>(e) if, having been a candidate of a political party and elected to the House of Representatives as a candidate of that political party, he resigns from that political party or crosses the floor.</p> <p>Namibia, Article 48. Vacation of Seats</p> <p>(1) Members of the National Assembly shall vacate their seats:</p> <p>(b) if the political party which nominated them to sit in the National Assembly informs the Speaker that such members are no longer members of such political party.</p> <p>Nepal, Article 49. Vacation of Seats</p> <p>(1) The seat of a member of Parliament shall become vacant in the following circumstances:</p> <p>(f) if the party of which he was a member when elected provides notification in the manner set forth by law that he has abandoned the party.</p> <p>Nigeria, Article 68. Tenure of Seat of Members</p> <p>(g) being a person whose election to the House was sponsored by a political party, he becomes a member of another political party before the expiration of the period for which that House was elected;</p> <p>Seychelles, Article 31. Vacation of Seats</p> <p>(1) A person ceases to be a member of the National Assembly and the seat occupied by that person in the Assembly shall become vacant—</p> <p>27(h) if, in the case of a proportionally elected member—</p> <p>(i) the political party which nominated the person as member nominates another person as member in place of the first-mentioned person and notifies the Speaker in writing of the new nomination;</p> <p>(ii) the person ceases to be a member of the political party of which that person was a member at the time of the election;</p> <p>Sierra Leone, Article 77. Tenure of Seats of Members of Parliament</p> <p>(1) A Member of Parliament shall vacate his seat in Parliament—</p> <p>(k) if he ceases to be a member of the political party of which he was a member at the time of his election to Parliament and he so informs the Speaker, or the Speaker is so informed by the Leader of that political party;</p> <p>Singapore, Article 46</p> <p>(2) The seat of a Member of Parliament shall become vacant—</p> <p>(b) if he ceases to be a member of, or is expelled or resigns from, the political party for which he stood in the election;</p> <p>Zimbabwe, Article 41. Tenure of Seats of Members</p>



Syllabus: GS Paper 3: Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation
Newspaper : The Indian Express, **Page No. 12**

GW Contamination: Fluoride

NRSC Study: Fluoride Contamination

Regional Distribution

- Western India (Arid/Dry Regions):
 - Rajasthan: Highest fluoride levels in pre-monsoon (1.41 mg/l) and post-monsoon (1.44 mg/l)
- Southern India:
 - Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Jharkhand: Post-monsoon levels
- Eastern India:
 - Jharkhand, Bihar, Chhattisgarh

Seasonal Variation in Contamination

- Pre-monsoon (March-May):
 - Highest contamination

Health Risks of Fluoride Contamination

- **Skeletal Fluorosis:**
 - Caused by just 2% fluoride concentration
 - Leads to weakened bones
- **Dental Decay:**
 - Risk increases if levels reach 40%

Factors Influencing Fluoride Contamination

- **Geology:** Rock and soil composition affects fluoride leaching
- **Climate:**
 - Arid regions (e.g., Western India) more prone
- **Seasonal Impact:**
 - Higher levels in dry (pre-monsoon) months due to reduced dilution

GW Contamination: Nitrate

CGWB Assessment: Nitrate Contamination

Increase in Nitrate-Contaminated Districts

- **2017:** 359 districts
- **2023:** 440 districts (56% of India)
- **Excessive nitrate level:** >45 mg/l

Health Concerns

- **Methemoglobinemia ("Blue Baby Syndrome"):**
 - Reduces oxygen-carrying capacity of blood
 - infants and vulnerable groups

Environmental Impact

- **Algal blooms:**
 - Deplete oxygen in water bodies
 - Harm aquatic biodiversity

Sources of Nitrate Contamination

- **Agricultural runoff:**
 - Fertilizers (ammonium nitrate, calcium nitrate, urea, diammonium hydrogen phosphate)
- **Forms of dissolved nitrogen in groundwater:**
 - Nitrate (NO_3^-), Ammonium (NH_4^+), Ammonia (NH_3), Nitrite (NO_2^-), Nitrogen gas (N_2), Nitrous oxide (N_2O), Organic nitrogen



Syllabus: GS Paper 3: Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation
Newspaper : The Indian Express, **Page No. 12**

Regional Analysis

States with Highest Contamination

- **Rajasthan:** 49% samples exceeded limits
- **Karnataka:** 48% contaminated
- **Tamil Nadu:** 37% affected

Emerging Concerns in Central & Southern India

- Maharashtra: 35.74% contaminated
- Telangana: 27.48%
- Andhra Pradesh: 23.5%
- Madhya Pradesh: 22.58%

Other Major Chemical Contaminants in GW

- **Arsenic, Iron, Fluoride, Uranium**
- **Uranium Contamination**
 - a. **Safe limit:** 30 ppb
 - b. High-risk states: Rajasthan, Punjab (many samples >100 ppb)

Cause

- **Overexploited groundwater** (extraction > replenishment)

Ashwani Kumar says, "Fluorosis is not fatal. In the elderly, it can cause joint pain, stiffness, bone deformities, mobility issues, muscle weakness and fatigue. In children, the most common sign is yellow stains on the teeth."

The issue of excess fluoride in Sonbhadra's groundwater was



Syllabus: GS Paper 2: Effect of Policies and Politics of Developed and Developing Countries on India's interests
Newspaper : TheHindu, Page No. 6



Escalation of Conflict

- **March 7, 2025:** Trump letter to Iran's Supreme Leader
- **March 15:** U.S. launches "pre-emptive" airstrikes against Houthis
- **March 17:** Israel resumes bombing Gaza
- **March 22:** Israel heaviest airstrikes in Lebanon since November ceasefire, targeting Hezbollah
- U.S. deploys additional fighter jets and a second aircraft carrier to West Asia



The Failed Nuclear Deal (JCPOA)

- **2015 JCPOA:** Limited Iran's nuclear program but left ballistic missile capabilities and regional alliances intact
- **2018:** Trump withdraws U.S. from JCPOA, reimposes sanctions
- Iran response: "**maximum resistance**," expanding nuclear program and regional support (e.g., Houthis).
- Post-October 7, 2023 (Hamas attack), Israel escalates against Iran's allies (Gaza, Lebanon, Syria)
- **IAEA reports:** Iran now has enough 60% enriched uranium for six nuclear bombs if further enriched



Syllabus: GS Paper 2: Effect of Policies and Politics of Developed and Developing Countries on India's interests

Newspaper : TheHindu, **Page No. 6**

Changing Regional Dynamics favoring Israel

- **November 2024**
 1. **Trump's re-election:** support for Israel's military policies
 2. **Fall of Assad in Syria:** Disrupts Iran's supply route to Hezbollah via Iraq/Syria
- Israel troops in Lebanon/Gaza despite ceasefires
- Trump's strikes on Houthis ~ Israel's "mini-regional war"

Shrinking Strategic Space for Iran

- **U.S./Israel demands:**
 - Abandon nuclear program
 - Limit conventional military capabilities
 - Sever ties with regional allies (Hezbollah, Houthis, etc.)
- **Iran's stance:** Open only to indirect talks on nuclear program (2015 framework)
- Risk of large-scale war as:
 - Iran's encirclement by hostile forces
 - Israel's growing aggression
 - Diplomatic deadlock between Trump and Tehran

Potential Military Scenarios

1. **Targeted Airstrikes:**
 - U.S.-Israel joint strikes on nuclear/military sites
 - Limited effectiveness due to underground facilities; may accelerate Iran's nuclear ambitions
2. **Regime Change War:**
 - Iraq-style invasion unlikely—Iran is more formidable (geography, ideology, control of Strait of Hormuz)
 - No organized opposition inside Iran to facilitate coup



Syllabus: GS Paper 3: Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment

Newspaper : The Hindu, **Page No. 13**

Govt Initiatives for steel industry

- **Promotion of 'Made in India' steel and expanding investments:**
 - Implementation of Domestically Manufactured Iron & Steel Products (DMI&SP) Policy for 'Made in India' steel for Govt procurement
 - PLI Scheme for Specialty Steel
- **Raw material availability and cost:**
 - Basic Customs Duty on Ferro Nickel from 2.5 % to 0
 - Extension of duty exemption on ferrous scrap upto 31st March 2026
 - Notification of Steel Scrap Recycling Policy
- **Import monitoring and quality control:**
 - Revamping of Steel Import Monitoring System (SIMS)
 - Introduction of steel Quality Control Orders banning sub-standard/defective steel products

Steely resolve

The Centre has directed all ministries and departments to prioritise iron and steel products manufactured within the country



- Revised policy covers items such as flat-rolled steel, bars, rods, and railway materials

- Materials must comply with the 'Melt & Pour' norm, wherein the steel must be melted and solidified in India

- Capital goods used in alloy production like furnaces, rolling mills must achieve at least 50% domestic value addition

India has revamped its procurement policy – Domestically Manufactured Iron & Steel Products Policy - 2025 – and in the process, has cracked down on surging steel imports that have hit domestic market stability and are threatening the survival of primary mills.

The new policy's stringent procurement rules mandate a clear preference for indigenously produced steel for government contracts, shutting out foreign competition.

A reciprocal clause bans suppliers from nations that

bar Indian firms from their government tenders.

Bar on enquiries

The new policy explicitly prohibits Global Tender Enquiries (GTE) for iron and steel products and limits such enquiries for capital goods valued up to ₹200 crore unless approved by the Department of Expenditure.



Syllabus: GS Paper I: Modern Indian History – significant events, personalities
Newspaper : The Hindu, Page No. 9

Prelims-ADD ON

- founder of the Maratha Empire in western India
- carved out an enclave from the declining Adilshahi sultanate of Bijapur
- Father of Indian Navy
- Secular ruler – Muslim soldiers in his army
- Supporter of women and their honour
- Council of ministers (Asht Pradhan) to advise him
- 'Mountain Rat'
- Seized Raigad Fort – one of the strongest-ever fortresses of the Deccan Plateau, 'Gibraltar of the East'



Shivaji was religious, and from all accounts seems to have been proud of being a Hindu. He awarded large gifts to temples as well as priests. However, his pride in his religion does not seem to have been grounded in hatred for other religions. Even in those medieval times, his faith seems pragmatic, if not outrightly rational.

Khafi Khan's *Muntakhabu-l Lubab* notes, "Shivaji had made a strict rule that wherever his soldiers went they were not to harm mosques, the Quran or women. If he found a volume of the Quran, he would show respect to it and hand it over to a Muslim servant. If any helpless Hindu or Muslim were found, Shivaji would personally look after them until their relatives came to take them." Likewise,

In contrast, Aurangzeb had imposed the 'jizya', a mandatory tax intended for non-Muslims living under Islamic rule, in 1679. As the contemporaneous *fatwa* declares, this amount was to be paid "regardless of whether they agree or disagree, consent to it or not".

Shivaji's response to this was bold and clear. Contending that Hinduism and Islam, while different from each other, are equal creations of God, he wrote in a letter to Aurangzeb: "They are different hues used by the true Divine Painter for blending the colours and filling in the outlines of His [God's] picture of the entire human race."

"If it be a mosque, the call to prayer is chanted in remembrance of Him. If it be a temple, the bell is rung in yearning for Him only. To show bigotry for any man's own creed and practices is equivalent to

altering the words of the Holy Book. To draw new lines on a picture is equivalent to finding fault with the painter," he

In his *Travels in the Mogul Empire: AD 1656-1668*, French traveller Francois Bernier testifies to Shivaji's conciliatory attitude towards Catholic clergymen he encountered. "I forgot to mention that



Syllabus: GS Paper 3: Environment: Climate Change
Newspaper : Indian Express, Page 14

Key Predictions

- Above-normal heatwave days across northern, central, and eastern India
- **Exempted regions:** Extreme south, Northeast, J&K, HP
- **2024 comparison:**
 - **Rajasthan:** 23-29 heatwave days (vs. normal 8-12)
 - **UP:** 32 days (vs. normal 10-12)
- **2024 record:**
 - **554 heatwave days** nationwide (highest in 15 years)
 - **Kerala** recorded 6 heatwave days (rare occurrence)

Trend Analysis

- **Increasing frequency:**
 - 3 more heatwave days per decade since 2000 (NW, central, SE India)
 - SE coastal regions (Odisha, Andhra, Telangana, Chhattisgarh) show sharper rise
- **Long-duration heatwaves (7+ days):**
 - Growing in NW, central, and SE India
- **Off-season heatwaves:**
 - Observed in February 2023

Health & Economic Impacts

- **Vulnerable groups:** Poor, outdoor workers, elderly at highest risk
- **Health effects:** Heatstroke, dehydration, worsened chronic illnesses
- **Economic losses:** Reduced productivity, income loss for daily wage earners

Heat Action Plans: Gaps in Implementation

Current Measures

- **Short-term interventions:**
 - Drinking water kiosks, shaded shelters, ORS distribution
 - Adjusted school/office timings
- **Forecast:** IMD provides 5-7 days' advance warning

Critical Shortcomings

- **Neglected long-term solutions:**
 - Urban greening, water body revival, open spaces
- **Reactive approach:**
 - Plans activated only during heatwaves, not integrated into development policies
- **Study by Sustainable Futures Collaborative:**
 - Govts prioritize immediate relief over sustainable cooling strategies

Way Forward

- **Proactive integration:** Embed heat resilience in urban planning
- **Focus on long-term measures:**
 - Tree plantation, cool roofs, water conservation
- **Policy shift:** Treat heat action as **climate adaptation**, not just disaster response



Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Sir Creek:

1. Sir Creek is a tidal estuary between India and Pakistan in the Rann of Kutch.
2. The dispute over Sir Creek primarily arises due to differing interpretations of the 1914 Bombay Government Resolution.
3. India claims that the boundary lies in the middle of the creek, while Pakistan claims that it lies along the eastern bank of the creek.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: d

Q2. Regarding the Tenth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, consider the following statements:

1. The Tenth Schedule was added by the 52nd Constitutional Amendment Act of 1985.
2. It provides for the disqualification of members of Parliament and State Legislatures on the grounds of defection.
3. The power to decide on disqualification under the Tenth Schedule lies exclusively with the Election Commission of India.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) Only One
- b) Only Two
- c) All Three
- d) None

Answer: b

Q3. Which of the following statements regarding fluoride contamination are correct?

1. Excessive fluoride in drinking water can cause dental and skeletal fluorosis.
2. Fluoride contamination in groundwater is primarily due to industrial pollution.

3. The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has set the permissible limit of fluoride in drinking water at 1.5 mg/L.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below.

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

Answer: b

Q4. Regarding the physiography of Iran, consider the following statements:

1. Iran is bordered by the Caspian Sea to the north and the Persian Gulf to the south.
2. The Zagros Mountains run along the eastern border of Iran.
3. The Dasht-e Kavir and Dasht-e Lut are two major deserts in Iran.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) Only One
- b) Only Two
- c) All Three
- d) None

Answer: b

Q5. Regarding Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, consider the following statements:

1. He introduced the Ryotwari system in revenue administration.
2. He established the Ashtapradhan council to assist in administration.
3. He was coronated at Raigad Fort in 1674.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: b





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