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The Analyst

CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout

10th May 2025

Nutrition: The Foundation of Development

CONTEXT: Despite being a major producer of milk, fruits, vegetables, grains and livestock, India struggles with nutritional issues, which include undernutrition and overnutrition, alongside widespread micronutrient deficiencies.

What is Malnutrition?

- *'deficiencies, excesses or imbalances'* - energy & nutrients

Types of Malnutrition?

- Undernutrition
- Micronutrient-related Malnutrition
- Obesity
- Diet-related NCDs

Prevalence of Anaemia:

- 25.0% in men (15-49 years)
- 57.0% in women (15-49 years)
- 31.1% in adolescent boys (15-19 yrs)
- 59.1% in adolescent girls

Hunger watch

The nutritional status of children in India barely improved in 2019-20 from the levels in 2015-16, the National Family Health Survey-5 data show

(IN %)

Indicator	2019-20	2015-16	2005-06
Children aged six to 59 months who are anaemic	67.1	58.6	69.4
Children under five who are stunted	35.5	38.4	48
Children under five who are wasted	19.3	21	19.8
Children under five who are severely wasted	7.7	7.5	6.4
Children under five who are underweight	32.1	35.8	42.5
Children aged six to 23 months receiving an adequate diet	11.3	9.6	-
Institutional births	88.6	78.9	38.7

Micronutrient FORUM

- Over **three billion people lack all year access to nutrient rich healthy diets**. This indicator leapt upwards in one year (2020) as it did in the preceding five.
- An estimated **two billion people suffer from micro-nutrient deficiencies** prior to the pandemic. This number is rapidly rising.
- Nearly **one in three women** of reproductive age suffer from anemia.
- **One in every three people** is overweight or obese.
- Almost a **quarter of all children under five** are short for their age or stunted.
- A tenth of the global population, around 811 million people, are estimated to be undernourished.

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ABOUT THE GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX SCORES

1/3 Undernourishment + 1/6 Child stunting + 1/6 Child wasting + 1/3 Child mortality = GHI SCORE

The Global Hunger Index (GHI) is a tool for comprehensively measuring and tracking hunger at global, regional, and national levels. GHI scores are based on the values of four component indicators:

Undernourishment: the share of the population with insufficient caloric intake.

Child stunting: the share of children under age five who have low height for their age, reflecting chronic undernutrition.

Child wasting: the share of children under age five who have low weight for their height, reflecting *acute* undernutrition.
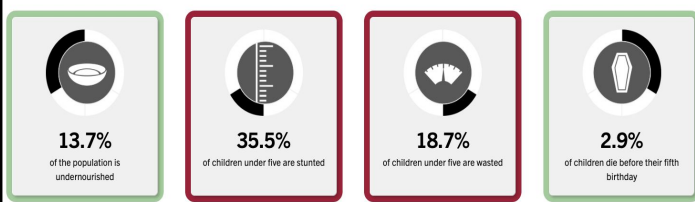
Child mortality: the share of children who die before their fifth birthday, partly reflecting the fatal mix of inadequate nutrition and unhealthy environments.

Based on the values of the four indicators, a GHI score is calculated on a 100-point scale reflecting the severity of hunger, where 0 is the best possible score (no hunger) and 100 is the worst. Each country's GHI score is classified by severity, from *low* to *extremely alarming*.

≤ 9.9 low	10.0–19.9 moderate	20.0–34.9 serious	35.0–49.9 alarming	≥ 50.0 extremely alarming

27.3
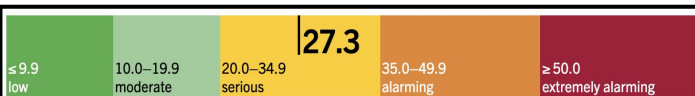
In the 2024 Global Hunger Index, India ranks 105th out of the 127 countries with sufficient data to calculate 2024 GHI scores. With a score of **27.3** in the 2024 Global Hunger Index, India has a level of hunger that is *serious.*

India's GHI Score is based on the values of four component indicators:

| 13.7% of the population is undernourished	35.5% of children under five are stunted	18.7% of children under five are wasted	2.9% of children die before their fifth birthday

DALY

Disability Adjusted Life Year is a measure of overall disease burden, expressed as the cumulative number of years lost due to ill-health, disability or early death = YLD Years Lived with Disability + YLL Years of Life Lost

Healthy life — Disease or Disability — Early death — Expected life years
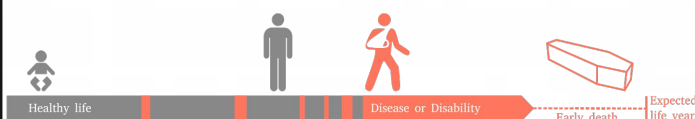
Consequences of Malnutrition in India:

- **Health Implications**: Stunted Growth, Weakened Immune System - infections, Micronutrient Deficiencies, NCDs
- **Educational Consequences**: Cognitive Impairment - learning outcomes; Increased School Dropouts
- **Economic Impact**: Productivity Loss, Increased Healthcare Costs - OOPE
- **Inter-generational Impact**: Maternal and Child Health - cycle of nutritional deficiencies; Long-term Health Effects - health challenges in adulthood
- **Social Consequences**: Increased Vulnerability - marginalised - social inequalities; Stigma & Discrimination - mental well-being
- **National Development**: Reduced Human Capital - socio-economic progress; Healthcare Burden - diversion of resources

Challenges in Handling Malnutrition in India:

- **Widespread Inequality**: Low economic capacity - affordability, food insecurity - disasters, conflicts or price fluctuations; 55.6% (FAO), Rising Costs
- **Climate Change**: Reduced yields, $12 trillion

Nutrition: The Foundation of Development

CONTEXT: Despite being a major producer of milk, fruits, vegetables, grains and livestock, India struggles with nutritional issues, which include undernutrition and overnutrition, alongside widespread micronutrient deficiencies.

- **Inadequate Dietary Intake And Dietary Shifts**: Processed and sugar-laden alternatives; Cereals > Millets; nutritional deficiency
- **Poor Sanitation**: Inadequate WASH – pathogens - infections - affect the absorption & utilisation of nutrients; NFHS-5 – 69%
- **Lack of Primary Health Infrastructure**: Inadequate access - immunisation, antenatal care - risk of diseases - 0.73 doctors and 1.74 nurses / 1000 people.
- **Delayed and Inconsistent Delivery**: Inefficient PI; Fund delays - nutritional interventions; NFHS-5 – 50.3% – Anganwadi
- **Inadequate Monitoring and Evaluation**: Assessment issues – Ineffective Policy

Initiatives by Government of India:

- Mission Poshan 2.0
- ICDS Scheme
- Rice Fortification
- Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana
- PM POSHAN
- Scheme for Adolescent Girls
- Mother's Absolute Affection
- Poshan Vatikas

Benefits of Millet

Gluten free- good for Celiac disease | Boosts immunity | Easy to digest
Supports brain development | Rich in antioxidant

Way forward to fight Malnutrition:

- **Enhanced Fortification**: Need - economically viable - large-scale implementation; NIDDCP, Climate resilient varieties
- **Focused SBCs**: Diverse diet, Millets, ETC. – IEC – **EDITORIAL – Nutrition-Sensitive Community Planning**
- **Enhance Infrastructure: EDITORIAL** - Robust LDSs - HWCs ,Nutritional Staff; NHP - 1.2% to 2.5% - Focus - Grassroots -PDS, MDMs
- **Monitoring and Evaluation**: Assessment - nutrition interventions - Poshan Tracker
- **Consumption of Locally Nutritious Food**: EDITORIAL – local cuisines- POSHAN Vatikas, Nutri-Pathshala
- **Communication Strategies**: community radio, door-to-door outreach - vernacular languages; **EDITORIAL –** QR Codes, Food Labelling

Mains Practise Question:

"Malnutrition in India is a multidimensional challenge that goes beyond food insecurity to include socio-cultural, economic, and lifestyle factors. Discuss the major causes of malnutrition in India and critically evaluate the effectiveness of government initiatives in addressing this issue. Suggest a holistic approach to tackle malnutrition across all sections of society."
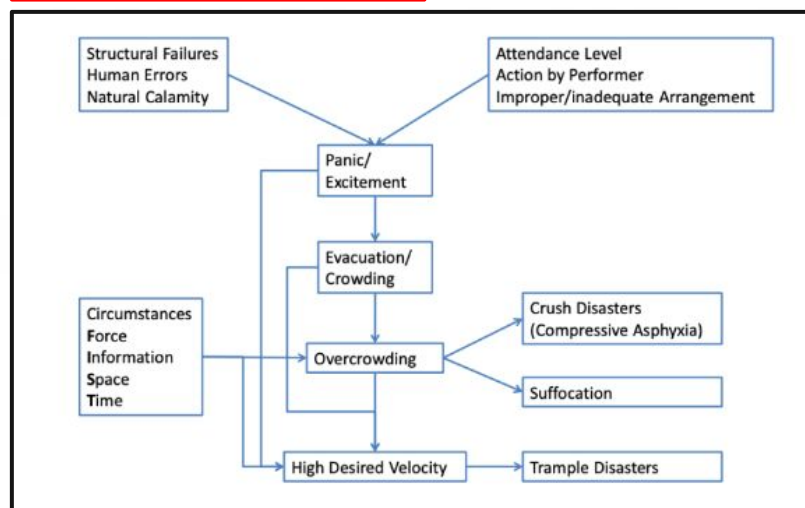
(15 Marks, 250 words)

Crushed by the Crowd: Stampedes in India

CONTEXT: Over a lakh devotees gathered for north Goa's annual Lairai jatra, where a rope barricade was broken. Within a few minutes, six were dead and over 80 injured in a stampede.

What is Stampede?

- Disruption of the orderly movement of crowds - leading to injuries and fatalities
- As a response to a perceived danger, loss of physical space or a will to 'attain something'

Process of a Stampede

Managing Crowd at Events and Venues of Mass Gathering

A Guide for State Government, Local Authorities, Administrators and Organizers
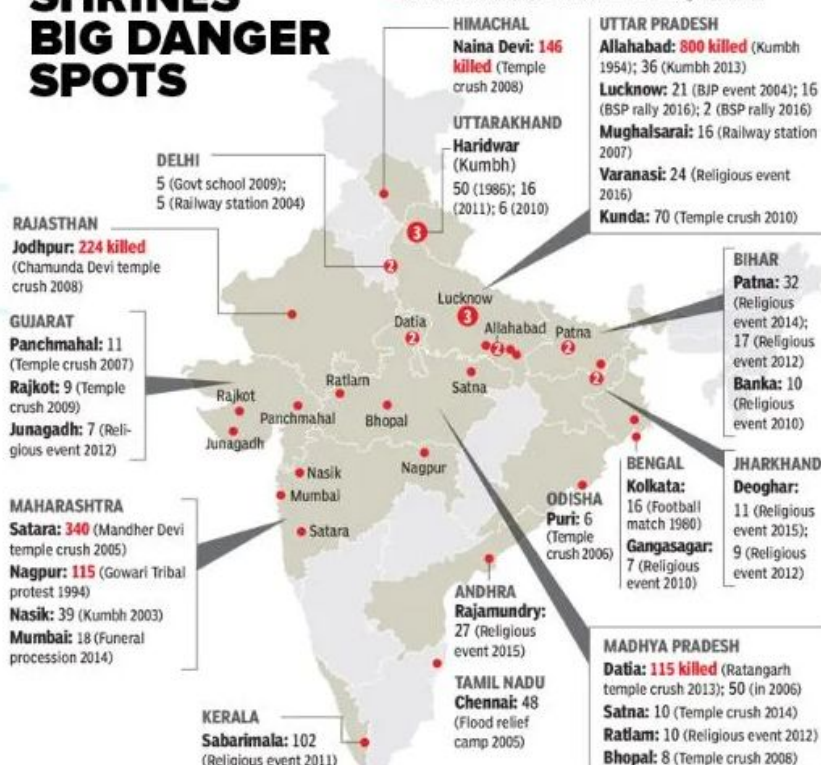
2014

NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY (NDMA)

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

STATIONS, SHRINES BIG DANGER SPOTS

● Number of incidents; No number indicates single incident

HIMACHAL
Naina Devi: 146 killed (Temple crush 2008)

UTTARAKHAND
Haridwar (Kumbh) 50 (1986); 16 (2011); 6 (2010)

UTTAR PRADESH
Allahabad: 800 killed (Kumbh 1954); 36 (Kumbh 2013)
Lucknow: 21 (BJP event 2004); 16 (BSP rally 2016); 2 (BSP rally 2016)
Mughalsarai: 16 (Railway station 2007)
Varanasi: 24 (Religious event 2016)
Kunda: 70 (Temple crush 2010)

DELHI
5 (Govt school 2009); 5 (Railway station 2004)

RAJASTHAN
Jodhpur: 224 killed (Chamunda Devi temple crush 2008)

GUJARAT
Panchmahal: 11 (Temple crush 2007)
Rajkot: 9 (Temple crush 2009)
Junagadh: 7 (Religious event 2012)

BIHAR
Patna: 32 (Religious event 2014); 17 (Religious event 2012)
Banka: 10 (Religious event 2010)

JHARKHAND
Deoghar: 11 (Religious event 2015); 9 (Religious event 2012)

MAHARASHTRA
Satara: 340 (Mandher Devi temple crush 2005)
Nagpur: 115 (Gowari Tribal protest 1994)
Nasik: 39 (Kumbh 2003)
Mumbai: 18 (Funeral procession 2014)

BENGAL
Kolkata: 16 (Football match 1980)
Gangasagar: 7 (Religious event 2010)

ODISHA
Puri: 6 (Temple crush 2005)

ANDHRA
Rajamundry: 27 (Religious event 2015)

MADHYA PRADESH
Datia: 115 killed (Ratangarh temple crush 2013); 50 (in 2006)
Satna: 10 (Temple crush 2014)
Ratlam: 10 (Religious event 2012)
Bhopal: 8 (Temple crush 2008)

TAMIL NADU
Chennai: 48 (Flood relief camp 2005)

KERALA
Sabarimala: 102 (Religious event 2011)

Crushed by the Crowd: Stampedes in India

CONTEXT: .Over a lakh devotees gathered for north Goa's annual Lairai jatra, where a rope barricade was broken. Within a few minutes, six were dead and over 80 injured in a stampede.

What are the major causes of Stampedes in India?

- **Structural Causes** - Structural collapse; Improper and unauthorised built structures; Difficult terrain; Narrow streets; Absence of emergency exits
- **Fire/Electricity causes** - Fire in a makeshift facility; Non-availability of fire extinguishers; Building and fire code violations; Illegal electric connections & faulty electric equipment
- **Crowd Behaviour** - 'Craze'; Crowds forcing to entrance/exits; anxious and competitive crowd
- **Security Issues** - Under deployment; Lack of adequate scientific planning; Lack of adequate surveillance
- **Lack of Coordination between Stakeholders** - Coordination gap between agencies; Inadequate water, medical assistance, etc.; Communication delays

What are the Impact of these Stampedes?

- **Trauma and Loss** - resultant deaths & injuries ;stampede killing 121 people in Hathras.
- **Economic Hardships** - majority of victims - lower socioeconomic backgrounds; poverty
- **Erosion of Trust** - undermine faith in governance
- **Loss of Social and Human Capital** - Mostly - children and women are the victims

What Should be the Way Forward?

- **Legislation, Rules and Regulations for Stampedes**- SC - need for a comprehensive legislation - liability
- **Specialisation and Professionalism** - communication, specialized personnel training, safety insurance, etc.
- **Use of technology** - CCTV surveillance, VMS, mobile control room, drones, face recognition, etc.
- **Capacity Evaluation** - Of location or structure before holding mass gatherings
- **Crowd Behaviour Management** - Stopping rumours; calm panicking crowds, systematic exits, etc.
- **Penalties** - Stricter penalties, revocation of licenses; random checks and inspections.
- **Learning from Global Best Practices** - For ex- Crowd management during Haj Pilgrimage in Makkah.

Mains Practice Question:

""Stampedes in India have frequently led to significant loss of life, particularly during religious, cultural, and public gatherings. Analyze the key reasons for recurring crowd management failures in India. Suggest measures to enhance crowd management systems to mitigate such disasters in the future."

(15 Marks, 250 words)

Protecting Workers from Heat

In the first week of April 2025, Delhi crossed a dangerous threshold: the temperature soared above 41°C, and nights offered little relief. These extreme conditions are no longer outliers but part of a new, deadly normal. With climate change intensifying year after year, Indian cities have become the epicentre of a growing crisis.

And while heatwaves affect everyone, it is India's millions of urban informal workers who are bearing the brunt of this slow-moving disaster. The Reserve Bank of India has pointed out, in 2024, that extreme heat threatens the health and livelihoods of occupationally exposed people, potentially causing a projected 4.5% loss to India's GDP. Despite their considerable contribution, essential roles and sheer numbers, they are consistently excluded from the planning and implementation of urban heat response strategies. This exclusion has deadly consequences.

The Ministries of Labour, Environment, Urban Affairs and Health operate independently in the absence of guidelines at the central level, resulting in disjointed and inconsistent protections for workers. Moreover, city HAPs often remain short term, immediate for summer months, crisis-oriented documents. City heat actions rarely integrate long-term strategies such as urban cooling, heat-resilient infrastructure, working conditions, flexible work norms, or worker-focused social protection

Globally, cities are adopting worker protections against rising heat. In the U.S., California and Oregon mandate employers to provide water, shade, rest breaks, and heat safety training. France's "Plan Canicule" requires work adjustments, hydration during heat alerts, and opened public buildings and spaces to the public for cooling off. In Qatar and Australia, outdoor work is restricted during peak heat, and employers are obligated to assess and mitigate heat risks. India, too, offers examples. Ahmedabad's HAP introduced adjusted working hours and shaded rest areas. Odisha mandates a halt to outdoor work during peak hours. These good practices and innovations do offer replicable, worker-centric models for adapting urban livelihoods to extreme heat.

Key challenges in current Heat Action Plans

Many Indian cities now have Heat Action Plans (HAPs), inspired by pioneering efforts as in Ahmedabad. These plans, guided by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), are meant to prepare cities for increasingly frequent and intense heatwaves. Yet, more than a decade later, most HAPs remain perfunctory, underfunded and poorly coordinated.

A review of HAPs across India reveals a consistent worrying pattern: informal workers are largely invisible. Worse, most treat heatwaves as temporary – short-term disasters instead of the symptoms of a deeper climate crisis that demands long-term, structural responses. The NDMA's 2019 heat wave guidelines do not mention informal workers explicitly, but generally, under the category of outdoor workers and vulnerable groups. At the State level, most HAPs lack protocols for occupational safety, hydration, cooling spaces, shade provision or even a mention of compensation for lost work. City-level plans take a generalised public health and awareness approach, neglecting livelihood impacts. HAPs in India also suffer from fragmented governance and institutional silos.

Towards a worker-centric response

We urgently need a new kind of urban heat response: one that is worker-centred, just, and grounded in lived realities.

First, the NDMA's 2019 Heat Guidelines must be updated to explicitly include informal workers. A revised framework must map occupational vulnerabilities distinctly for varied workers –whether it is for construction workers, street vendors, waste pickers, gig workers or rickshaw pullers – and provide actionable protocols for city and State governments that may use them contextually. This includes defining safe working hours, mandatory rest breaks, access to water, and emergency response mechanisms.

Second, is the mandate for worker participation in the creation of city and State HAPs. These cannot remain top-down exercises. Every municipal body must engage worker collectives, unions, and worker welfare boards in co-creating occupation-specific plans. Constituting civil society and community coordination groups at the city level is key. Local wisdom and the involvement of workers' associations in co-producing solutions makes policies more realistic, responsive, and respected.

Protecting Workers from Heat

Third, informal workers deserve the right to shade, rest, and cooling. We need to establish shaded rest zones, hydration points and community cooling centres in key locations – markets, transport hubs, public spaces, labour

chowks, construction sites. Open public buildings, malls and open spaces as cooling centres. These must be accessible, gender-sensitive, and co-maintained by workers and the local community. It is time to develop norms, guidelines, institutionalise protections and allocate dedicated budgets for this.
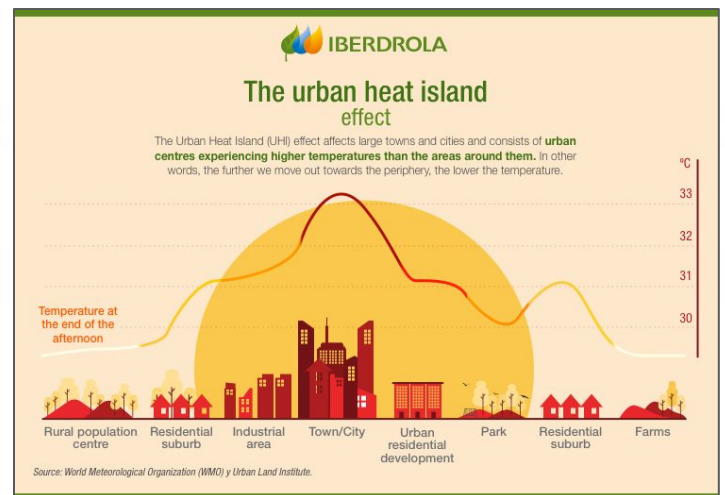
Fourth, innovative financing – through corporate social responsibility, or dedicated city development budgets –must support local solutions as adaptations. Health insurance must be expanded to cover heat-related illnesses, especially for those in informal occupations who are typically excluded from mainstream schemes. And yes, community-neighbourhood contribution and involvement are a must and should be woven in action plans. Cool roofs, shaded walkways and passive ventilation must become standard practices, not just pilots.

As a part of city design and governance
Fifth, this leads to a bigger shift: embedding heat resilience and worker safety into how we design and govern our cities. Heat adaptation and worker inclusion must be legally written into master plans, building bye-laws, and infrastructure codes. Cities must promote natural shade through urban forests and tree corridors, while also planning blue networks such as water bodies and public resting spaces. Informal workspaces such as vendor markets, waste depots and labour *chowks* must be retrofitted with materials and design strategies that ensure thermal comfort.

Sixth, at the national level, we need an inter-ministerial task force on climate and work, bringing together the Ministries of Labour and Employment, Housing and Urban Affairs, Environment, Forest and Climate Change and Health, with of course NDMA, and State Disaster Management Authorities. This task force must develop an integrated road map linking climate resilience with worker protection and labour codes. It must guide cities, coordinate efforts, and ensure accountability. Every city and district must appoint a dedicated heat officer – someone empowered to manage and monitor heat response measures and work across departments.

For informal workers, the climate crisis is not a distant threat. It is a present and daily struggle. The cost of inaction is no longer measured only in degrees – it is measured in lives, in lost livelihood and poor health, and, in burdened futures.
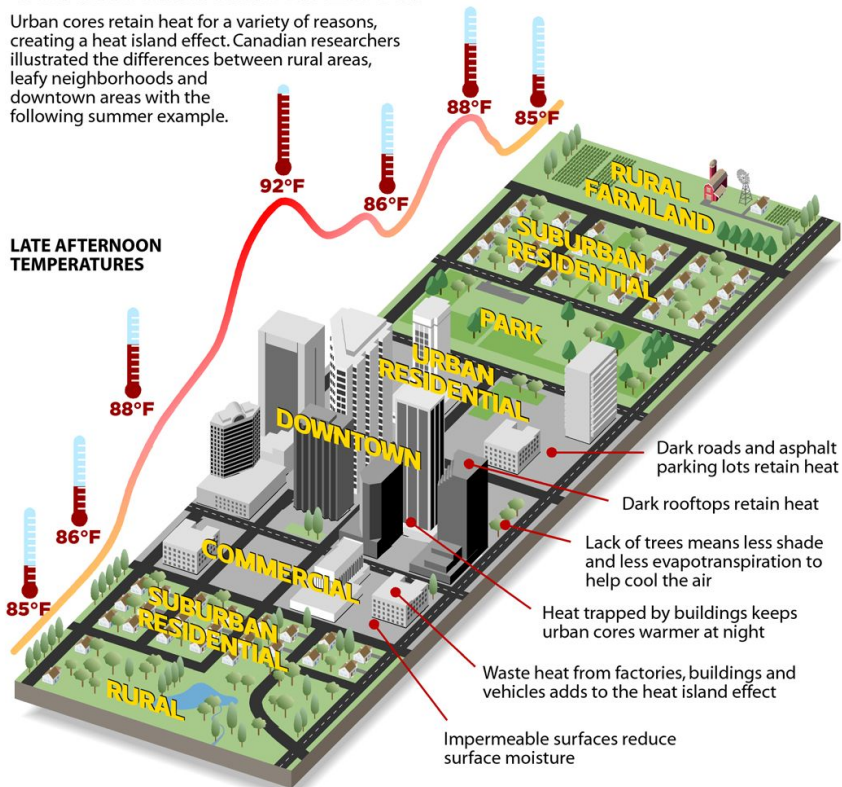

IBERDROLA

The urban heat island effect

The Urban Heat Island (UHI) effect affects large towns and cities and consists of **urban centres experiencing higher temperatures than the areas around them.** In other words, the further we move out towards the periphery, the lower the temperature.

Temperature at the end of the afternoon

Rural population centre | Residential suburb | Industrial area | Town/City | Urban residential development | Park | Residential suburb | Farms

Source: World Meteorological Organization (WMO) y Urban Land Institute.

Protecting Workers from Heat

Urban Heat Island Effect

Urban cores retain heat for a variety of reasons, creating a heat island effect. Canadian researchers illustrated the differences between rural areas, leafy neighborhoods and downtown areas with the following summer example.

LATE AFTERNOON TEMPERATURES

88°F 85°F
92°F 86°F

RURAL FARMLAND
SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL
PARK
URBAN RESIDENTIAL
DOWNTOWN
COMMERCIAL
SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL
RURAL

88°F
86°F
85°F

Dark roads and asphalt parking lots retain heat

Dark rooftops retain heat

Lack of trees means less shade and less evapotranspiration to help cool the air

Heat trapped by buildings keeps urban cores warmer at night

Waste heat from factories, buildings and vehicles adds to the heat island effect

Impermeable surfaces reduce surface moisture

SOURCE: D.S. Lemmen and F.J. Warren, Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation   PAUL HORN / InsideClimate News

NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

A Heat Wave is a period of abnormally high temperatures, more than the normal maximum temperature that occurs during the summer season in the North-Western parts of India. Heat Waves typically occur between March and June, and in some rare cases even extend till July. The extreme temperatures and resultant atmospheric conditions adversely affect people living in these regions as they cause physiological stress, sometimes resulting in death.

The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has given the following criteria for Heat Waves :

- Heat Wave need not be considered till maximum temperature of a station reaches atleast 40°C for Plains and atleast 30°C for Hilly regions
- When normal maximum temperature of a station is less than or equal to 40°C Heat Wave Departure from normal is 5°C to 6°C Severe Heat Wave Departure from normal is 7°C or more
- When normal maximum temperature of a station is more than 40°C Heat Wave Departure from normal is 4°C to 5°C Severe Heat Wave Departure from normal is 6°C or more
- When actual maximum temperature remains 45°C or more irrespective of normal maximum temperature, heat waves should be declared. Higher daily peak temperatures and longer, more intense heat waves are becomingly increasingly frequent globally due to climate change. India too is feeling the impact of climate change in terms of increased instances of heat waves which are more intense in nature with each passing year, and have a devastating impact on human health thereby increasing the number of heat wave casualties.

Health Impacts of Heat Waves

The health impacts of Heat Waves typically involve dehydration, heat cramps, heat exhaustion and/or heat stroke. The signs and symptoms are as follows:

- Heat Cramps: Ederna (swelling) and Syncope (Fainting) generally accompanied by fever below 39°C i.e.102°F.
- Heat Exhaustion: Fatigue, weakness, dizziness, headache, nausea, vomiting, muscle cramps and sweating.
- Heat Stoke: Body temperatures of 40°C i.e. 104°F or more along with delirium, seizures or coma. This is a potential fatal condition

IMF Bails Out Pakistan

AANCHAL MAGAZINE
NEW DELHI, MAY 9

THE INTERNATIONAL Monetary Fund (IMF) cleared a $1-billion tranche for Pakistan as part of its $7-billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF) lending program and $1.3 billion tranche under the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF) in its board meeting held Friday. India abstained from voting in the meeting as it raised concerns over the efficacy of IMF programmes for Pakistan given its "poor track record" and also on the possibility of "misuse of debt financing funds for state-sponsored cross-border terrorism", an official release by the Ministry of Finance, Government of India said.

India conveyed its "strong dissent" as the IMF reviewed the EFF lending program and also considered a fresh Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF) lending programme ($1.3 billion) for Pakistan. *Reuters* quoted the Pakistan government's statement to say that the IMF has freed $1 billion in cash after the first review of the $7 billion programme for Pakistan. The review approval brings disbursements to $2 billion within the $7 billion programme. The concern that fungible inflows from international financial institutions, like IMF, could be misused for military and state-sponsored cross-border

File

terrorist purposes resonated with several member countries, the statement said.

Opposition parties, however, questioned India's abstention from voting in the IMF board meeting. Congress MP Jairam Ramesh said the party on April 29 demanded India should vote against the IMF loan to Pakistan in the board meeting. "India has only abstained from the vote. The Modi Government has chickened out. A strong NO would have sent a powerful signal," he said.

Government of India sources, however, said that the IMF rules do not permit a formal "no" vote, with the IMF typically resorting to consensus for decisions. Each country of the 25-member IMF board has a vote but it is linked to the country's economic size.

"Directors can either vote in favour or abstain. There is no provision to vote against a loan or proposal... by abstaining, India conveyed its strong dissent within the constraints of the IMF's voting system and used the opportunity to formally record its objections," a government source said.

India opposed the frequent bailouts to Pakistan in the IMF board meeting, pointing out that such a track record calls into question either the effectiveness of the IMF programme designs for Pakistan or their monitoring or their implementation by Pakistan. "As an active and responsible member country, India raised concerns over the efficacy of IMF programmes in case of Pakistan given its poor track record, and also on the possibility of misuse of debt financing funds for state sponsored cross border terrorism. Pakistan has been a prolonged borrower from the IMF, with a very poor track record of implementation and of adherence to the IMF's program conditions," the Ministry's statement said.

The government also underlined that Pakistan has received disbursements from the IMF in 28 years out of the 35 years since 1989, with four IMF programmes in the last five years since 2019. "Had the previous programmes succeeded in putting in place a sound macroeconomic policy environment, Pakistan would not have approached the Fund for yet another bailout programme. India pointed out that such a track record calls into question either the effectiveness of the IMF program designs in case of Pakistan or their monitoring or their implementation by Pakistan," it said.

When was the IMF founded?

The IMF was conceived in July 1944 at the United Nations Bretton Woods Conference. The 44 countries in attendance sought to build a framework for international economic cooperation and avoid repeating the competitive currency devaluations that contributed to the Great Depression of the 1930s.

What kind of financial assistance does the IMF offer?

Unlike development banks, the IMF does not lend for specific projects. Instead, the IMF provides financial support to countries hit by crises to create breathing room as they implement policies that restore economic stability and growth. It also provides precautionary financing to help prevent crises. IMF lending is continuously refined to meet countries' changing needs.

IMF Bails Out Pakistan

SYLLABUS : GS 3: Economy
Newspaper : Indian Express **Page Number : 13**

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) works to achieve sustainable growth and prosperity for all of its 191 member countries. It does so by supporting economic policies that promote financial stability and monetary cooperation, which are essential to increase productivity, job creation, and economic well-being. The IMF is governed by and accountable to its member countries.

The IMF has three critical missions: furthering international monetary cooperation, encouraging the expansion of trade and economic growth, and discouraging policies that would harm prosperity. To fulfill these missions, IMF member countries work collaboratively with each other and with other international bodies.

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Who runs the IMF?

The IMF is accountable to its member country governments. At the top of the organizational structure is the Board of Governors, consisting of one governor and one alternate governor from each member country, usually the top officials from the central bank or finance ministry. The Board of Governors meets once a year at the IMF–World Bank Annual Meetings. Twenty-five of the governors serve on the International Monetary and Financial Committee, or IMFC, which advises the IMF's Executive Board.

The day-to-day work of the IMF is overseen by its 25-member Executive Board, which represents the entire membership and is supported by IMF staff. The Managing Director is the head of the IMF staff and Chair of the Executive Board and is assisted by four Deputy Managing Directors.

The World Bank publishes several important reports focusing on various aspects of global development. Key reports include the World Development Report (WDR), Global Economic Prospects, and the Poverty and Shared Prosperity series. Additionally, the World Bank releases the Doing Business report, which ranks countries based on the ease of doing business.

THE EXTENDED FUND FACILITY (EFF)

ENGLISH ∨

The Extended Fund Facility (EFF) provides financial assistance to countries facing serious medium-term balance of payments problems because of structural weaknesses that require time to address. To help countries implement medium-term structural reforms, the EFF offers longer program engagement and a longer repayment period.

THE RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABILITY FACILITY (RSF)

ENGLISH ∨

The Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF) provides affordable longer-term financing to support low-income and vulnerable middle-income countries undertaking macro-critical reforms to reduce risks to prospective balance of payments (BoP) stability, including those related to climate change and pandemic preparedness.

Eroding Press Freedom

VAJIRAM & RAVI

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Indian media "has been shackled and subjected to a systemic strategy to cripple it", according to the 23rd Annual South Asia Press Freedom Report 2024-25. The report, titled "Frontline Democracy: Media and Political Churn", flags several concerning trends, including a "growing trust deficit in media outlets", "choking of independent websites" and the extreme precarity of gig workers who are also having to contend with the challenges posed by Artificial Intelligence (AI).

The report reviews the state of press freedom in India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Maldives. Noting that Pakistan is "for all intents and purposes an authoritarian regime operating under the guise of democracy", the study pointed out that it witnessed the "most violent year for journalists in the country in two decades with eight journalists killed in the period under review." Highlighting that most governments in South Asia have failed to reverse the "ever increasing levels of impunity for crimes against journalists", the report reveals details of the "horrific murder of Mukesh Chandrakar in Bastar", who was abducted, murdered and buried in a septic tank.

In a section titled "India: Propaganda and the Press", the report flagged the proliferation of hate speech and disinformation with the "IT cells" of political parties playing a big role.

Every authoritarian effort is being made to crush those who seek to hold power to account – crackdowns on media houses; surveillance, intimidation and harassment of journalists, filing of police cases; arbitrary detentions; and the unleashing of raids by the Income Tax Department, and the Enforcement Directorate that oversees financial crimes

23RD ANNUAL SOUTH ASIA PRESS FREEDOM REPORT 2024-25

Self-censorship issues

Noting that "the legal environment for the press has become increasingly hostile in recent years", the report pointed to the use of "defamation laws, sedition charges, the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA)" to curb media freedom. "Journalists and media houses have faced legal challenges for publishing reports critical of the government, which has led to self-censorship within the industry, following a chilling effect," it said.

"Every authoritarian effort is being made to crush those who seek to hold power to account – crackdowns on media houses; surveillance, intimidation and harassment of journalists, filing of police cases; arbitrary detentions; and the unleashing of raids by the Income Tax Department, and the Enforcement Directorate that oversees financial crimes," the report stated, adding that "withholding government advertisements are routine avenues to harass media houses." Further, the "ongoing mauling of freedom of speech and expression is being done on grounds of national security, maintaining public order, or preventing misinformation," the report said.

It referenced the Global Risks Report 2024, which has found "manipulated and falsified information" to be the "most severe short-term risk the world faces".

The report also dwells on other challenges facing the media, in India specifically and South Asia in general. These include the media workforce reeling under a "shrunken job market", the "growing use of AI for content creation", decline in advertisement revenue, new labour codes encouraging contract work, restructuring of corporate media houses because of mergers and acquisitions, and the worsening precarity of freelance journalism.

On the flip side, the report noted that the media's digital transition has also presented new opportunities, especially for "growing alternative media as a counterbalance to the stagnating legacy media".

- World Economic Forum (WEF) produces a series of annual reports such as:
    - **Global Competitiveness Report.**
    - **Global Information Technology Report.**
    - Global Gender Gap Report
    - Global Risks Report
    - Global Travel and Tourism Report
    - **Financial Development Report.**
    - Global Enabling Trade Report.
- The **International Debt Report** is published by the **World Bank.**

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FREEDOM OF THE PRESS WORLDWIDE 2025

Pollution menace in Himalayas

Rahul Karmakar
GUWAHATI

Single-use food and beverage packaging forms more than 84% of the plastic waste in the eco-sensitive Himalayan region, an anti-waste collective of NGOs has found.

According to the Zero Waste Himalaya Alliance, about 70% of the plastics collected from across the Himalayan belt from Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh is non-recyclable.

The gravity of the environmental reality came to light at the Zero Waste Himalaya Network Meet held in Himachal Pradesh's Bir in April.

The alliance was initiated by the Zero Waste Himalaya, an organisation based in Sikkim's Gangtok, and the Integrated Mountain Initiative based in Uttarakhand's Dehradun. The two organisations have been spearheading The Himalayan Cleanup (THC), one

According to a Collective, about 70% of the plastics collected from across the Himalayan belt is non-recyclable. FILE PHOTO

of the biggest movements against plastic pollution in the Indian Himalayan region, since 2018.

A statement issued by the alliance on Thursday said, "Over the past six years, the data has indicated that the Himalayan waste crisis is fundamentally a production and systems issue rather than a post-consumer waste management flaw. While the role of individual behavioural change was acknowledged and emphasised, the need for systemic, policy-level interventions and a paradigm shift away from centralised, extractive waste systems was seen as critical."

A report released by THC said the 2018 waste collection exercise was conducted at more than 250 sites.

Among the nine Himalayan States targeted in 2025, Sikkim generated the most trash items. This was followed by West Bengal's Darjeeling with 36,180 items audited across 37 sites.

THE MENACE OF SINGLE-USE PLASTICS IN INDIA

STATUS

- India generates approximately **15 million tonnes** of plastic waste annually, with single-use plastics (SUPs) comprising a significant portion.
- India ranks 8rd globally in SUP waste **generation**, contributing 5,5 million tonne annually.
- Despite high total generation, **india's per capita** SUP waste is **4 kg/year**, placing it 94th globally.
- In July 2022, India implemented a bon on 19 **identificd** SUP items, including plastic cutlery, straws, and polystyrene products.

CHALLENGES

- Approximately 85% of plastic waste in india is misinanaged, leading to environmental **degradation**.
- Around 5,8 million tonnes of plastic waste are openly burned annually, contibuting **to air pollution** and health hatards.
- About 50% of plastic waste is handled by the informal sector, lacking proper regulation and support.
- The current ban addresses only 11% of SUP waste, leaving out items like multilayered packagingg, which are challenging to recycle

ENVIRONMENTAL AND HEALTH IMPACTS

- Plastic constitutes approximately 80%--of marine litter along india's coastlines, affecting
- Clogged urban drainage systems due to plastic waste lead to increased flooding risks in cities
- Open burning of plastics releases toxic pollutants, posing serious health risks to nearby communities

WAY FORWARD

- Enhance enforcement of existing bans and expand the list of prohibited SUP items
- Invest in research and development of afforadable and sustainable alternatives to SUPs
- Integrate informal waste warkers into the formal economy through training and support

Central Consumer Protection Authority

New Delhi: Government watchdog CCPA has issued notices to 13 e-commerce players like Amazon and Flipkart for illegal sale of walkie-talkie devices on their platforms, which could raise security concerns at a time of military conflict between India and Pakistan. In an official statement on Friday, the government said the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has issued 13 notices to leading digital marketplaces against the illegal listing and sale of walkie-talkies on e-commerce platforms.

These platforms are: Amazon, Flipkart, Meesho, OLX, TradeIndia, Facebook, Indiamart, VardaanMart, Jiomart, Krishnamart, Chimiya, Talk Pro Walie Talkie and MaskMan toys.

The crackdown focuses on the sale of walkie-talkies without proper frequency disclosure, licensing information, or Equipment Type Approval (ETA), constituting a violation of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.

Earlier, Union Food and Consumer Minister Pralhad Joshi said: "The sale of non-compliant wireless devices not only breaches statutory obligations but may also pose significant risks to national security operations." These violations contravene multiple legal frameworks, including the Consumer Protection Act, Indian Telegraph Act, and Wireless Telegraphy Act, he said. **PTI**

भारत सरकार
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

उपभोक्ता मामले, खाद्य और सार्वजनिक वितरण मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION

उपभोक्ता मामले विभाग
DEPARTMENT OF
CONSUMER AFFAIRS

सत्यमेव जयते

THE CENTRAL CONSUMER PROTECTION AUTHORITY (CCPA)

The CCPA has been established under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 and has come in to force w.e.f 24th July 2020 to regulate matters relating to violation of rights of consumers, unfair trade practices and false or misleading advertisements which are prejudicial to the interests of consumers as class and public at large.

POWERS OF CENTRAL CONSUMER PROTECTION AUTHORITY (CCPA) -

➔ protect, promote and enforce the rights of consumers as a class, and prevent violation of consumers rights under this Act;

➔ prevent unfair trade practices and ensure that no person engages himself in unfair trade practices;

➔ ensure that no false or misleading advertisement is made of any goods or services which contravenes the provisions of this Act or the rules or regulations made thereunder;

➔ ensure that no person takes part in the publication of any advertisement which is false or misleading.

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding "Global Hunger Index":

1. It is released by Concern Worldwide and Welt Hunger Hilfe.
2. The GHI score is calculated using six component indicators.
3. In the 2024 edition, India ranks 105th out of 127 countries and is classified under the "serious" hunger category.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a) Only One
b) Only two
c) All Three
d) None of the Above

Answer: b

Q2. Which of the following best describes the Urban Heat Island effect?

a) Sharp drop in temperatures across metropolitan areas during night.
b) Increased rainfall in urban areas compared to nearby rural regions.
c) Urban areas experiencing significantly higher temperatures than nearby rural regions.
d) Formation of heatwaves in coastal regions caused by ocean currents.

Answer: c

Q3. Which of the following is the correct criterion for declaring a heatwave in India, as per the India Meteorological Department (IMD)?

a) When the maximum temperature in plains reaches 50°C or more.
b) When the maximum temperature in coastal areas reaches 30°C or more.
c) c) When the maximum temperature in hilly regions reaches 25°C or more.
d) d) When the maximum temperature is at least 4.5°C above the normal for two consecutive days.

Answer: d

Q4. Which of the following organizations publishes the annual World Press Freedom Index?

a) Amnesty International
b) Reporters Without Borders
c) Human Rights Watch
d) International Federation of Journalists

Answer: b

Q5. Consider the following statements regarding Consumer protection Authority:

1. It was established under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.
2. It functions under Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution.
3. The CCPA is headed by a Chief Commissioner and includes two Commissioners—one for goods-related issues and another for service-related complaints.

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

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