



INSIGHTSIAS

SIMPLIFYING IAS EXAM PREPARATION



***INSIGHTS
DAILY
CURRENT
AFFAIRS + PIB
SUMMARY***

25 MARCH 2024

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WATER CRISES THREATEN WORLD PEACE (REPORT)

Syllabus: Environment Conservation/ Geography

Context: The United Nations World Water Development Report 2024, published by UNESCO on behalf of UN-Water on World Water Day

- World Water Day, observed annually on March 22, is a global initiative supported by the United Nations, dating back to 1993. This year’s theme is “Leveraging water for peace”

Key Highlights of the Report:

1. **Current Status of Water Resources:** Agriculture consumes 70% of freshwater withdrawals in the world. Lake Chad has shrunk by 90% in the past 60 years.
2. **Groundwater depleting:** Cooperation over shared surface water is increasing, but groundwater resources are often neglected.
3. **Water’s Linkage to Peace and Prosperity:**
 - i. **Water and Peace:** Water scarcity can escalate local disputes, as observed in the Sahel region. Migration due to water scarcity can heighten tensions in settlement areas and exacerbate food insecurity.
 - ii. **Water and Prosperity:** Water sustains environmental integrity. In low and lower-middle-income countries, 70-80% of jobs depend on water. Water is crucial for inclusivity, as it affects girls and women’s education, economic participation, and safety.
 - iii. **Water and Food Production:** Regions like Northwest India and North China are among the top three areas worldwide with high water-related risks to food production.
4. **Challenges in Achieving SDG 6:** Half of the global population faces severe water scarcity at some point each year.
5. **Water-Prosperity Paradox:** Developed water infrastructure can drive growth and prosperity, but only the wealthiest countries can afford such investments.

Key recommendations of the report:

1. **Emphasize sustainable management** of water resources
2. **Advocate for increased private investment** to achieve universal access to water by 2030
3. **Encourage industries to decouple water usage** from production e.g., Tata Chemicals cut the use of groundwater by over 99% within a year through recycling and water management
4. **Boost international cooperation and transboundary agreements** to address water-related tensions and maintain peace.
5. **Safeguard water resources and enhance global cooperation** to mitigate water stress and conflicts.
6. Prioritize achieving access to safely managed drinking water and sanitation for all by 2030.
7. **Address inequalities in water access**, particularly among vulnerable populations like girls and women.
8. **Highlight successful cooperation models:** E.g., Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin: It aims to establish a multilateral agreement for sustainable water management among Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, and Slovenia.
9. **Encourage states to enact policies ensuring fair and equitable access** to water resources with support from the United Nations system.

Terms related to water:

Terms used	Definition
Water scarcity	Lack of sufficient available water resources to meet water usage demands within a region
Water stress	The difficulty of obtaining fresh water sources during a period of time may lead to further depletion and deterioration of available water
Water shortage/deficits	Shortages of water caused by climate change, pollution, increased human demand, and over-use of water
Water crisis	A situation where the available potable, unpolluted water within a region is less than that region’s demand

Steps taken for Water Conservation:

Global:

1. **UN 2023 Water Conference: First global 'Action Plan'** recognizing that “all peoples have the right to have access to drinking water in quantities and of a quality equal to their basic needs.”
2. **Private: IBM Sustainability Accelerator** focused on water management
3. **Data and models:** World Meteorological Organisation's **Hydrological Status and Outlook System**, offered data analysis tools.
4. **Knowledge sharing: W12+ Blueprint**, a UNESCO platform that hosts city profiles and case studies of programs (for cross cities learning)
5. **Capacity building: Making Rights Real** initiative offered to help marginalised communities and women understand how to exercise their rights. **'Water for Women Fund'** offered support mechanisms for more effective and sustainable water, sanitation, and hygiene outcomes for women.
6. **NGOs:** World Vision is committed to raising and investing \$2 billion by 2030 to extend the impact of transformative **water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services** across 50 countries in six regions.
7. **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Goal 6** includes a specific goal on water and sanitation (Goal 6)
8. **Dublin Principles** water was established as an “economic good”

India:

1. \$50-billion commitment to improving rural drinking water services under its [Jal Jeevan Mission](#).
2. [Jal Kranti Abhiyan](#)
3. [National Water Mission](#)
4. National Rural Drinking Water Programme
5. [NITI Aayog Composite Water Management Index](#)
6. [Jal Shakti Abhiyan](#)
7. [Atal Bhujal Yojana](#)

About UN-Water

It is an interagency mechanism, that was **formed in 2003 and serves as the coordinating body for United Nations** entities and international organizations working on water and sanitation issues. With over 30 UN organizations and 47 international partners, it ensures a unified response to water challenges. **Headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland**, UN-Water facilitates coordinated action at global, regional, and country levels to address freshwater-related matters, including sanitation

Insta Links:

- [UN World Water Development Report 2023](#)
- [U.N. water conference](#)

Prelims Link:

Q. With reference to 'Water Credit', consider the following statements: (UPSC 2021)

It puts microfinance tools to work in the water and sanitation sector.

It is a global initiative launched under the aegis of the World Health Organisation and the World Bank.

It aims to enable poor people to meet their water needs without depending on subsidies.

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

Ans: C

Mains Link:

Q. What are the salient features of the Jal Shakti Abhiyan launched by the Government of India for water conservation and water security? (UPSC 2020)

USHA MEHTA

Who was Usha Mehta?

She was a prominent figure in **India's freedom struggle**, known for her role in establishing **Congress Radio during the Quit India Movement in 1942**. A **law student in Bombay** at the time, Mehta was deeply inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's call for civil disobedience. She played a pivotal role in **setting up Congress Radio** as an underground radio station to counter British censorship and provide uncensored news and information to the Indian public.

Despite challenges, they succeeded in providing a vital voice for India's freedom struggle, amplifying the call for independence and inspiring generations. When Mehta was released from **Pune's Yerawada Jail in March 1946**, she was hailed in the nationalist media as "**Radio-ben**". Conferred the **Padma Vibhushan in 1998**, Mehta died after a brief illness in 2000.

Usha Mehta's story exemplifies ethical values such as:

1. **Commitment to Justice**
2. **Courage**: Mehta demonstrated courage in the face of adversity, refusing to bow down to British authorities and continuing to broadcast nationalist messages even when faced with the threat of arrest.
3. **Integrity**: Despite the risks involved, she remained true to her principles and refused to compromise on the ideals of freedom and democracy.
4. **Sacrifice**: Mehta made personal sacrifices, including risking her safety and freedom, for the greater good of the nation and its people.
5. **Leadership**: She showed leadership by taking the initiative and organizing the establishment of Congress Radio, rallying others to join the resistance against British colonial rule.

Facts for Prelims (FFP)

GULAAL GOTA

Context: The **Jaipur tradition of "Gulaal Gota"** involves small **lac balls filled with dry Gulaal (coloured powder)** thrown during **Holi celebrations**.

About Gulaal Gota:

- These balls are made by **Muslim artisans known as Manihaars in Jaipur**, with lac sourced from **Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand**.
- The tradition dates **back around 400 years and is unique to Jaipur**.
- Originally, the **Manihaars settled in Bagru, near Jaipur, and learned lac-making from Hindu lac makers**.
- The city's founder, **Sawai Jai Singh II, dedicated a lane to the Manihaar community**, where they continue to sell lac bangles, jewellery, and Gulaal Gotas.

The artisans face challenges from cheaper, **chemical-based bangles flooding the market**.

Holi is a **popular Hindu festival**. It is also known as the "**Festival of Colors**" or the "**Festival of Love**." Holi usually takes **place in March, marking the arrival of spring and the end of winter**.

The festival is **celebrated over two days**. The first day, known as **Holika Dahan or Chhoti Holi**, involves **lighting bonfires to signify the victory of good over evil**.

The second day is called **Rangwali Holi**, during which **people gather in public spaces and streets to play with colours**.

POSTAL BALLOTS

Context: The [Election Commission of India](#) has announced the **provision of postal ballots** for **absentee voters from essential services in Tamil Nadu**.

Workers from various sectors including **Mercantile Marine, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited, Chennai Metro Rail Limited, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Food Corporation of India, Zonal Office (South), and the media industry** are eligible.

Currently, the following voters are also allowed to cast their votes through postal ballot:

1. Service voters (armed forces, the armed police force of a state and government servants posted abroad)
2. Voters on election duty
3. Voters above 80 years of age or Persons with Disabilities (PwD)
4. Voters under preventive detention

Procedure for Postal Ballots:

According to EC instructions, the **facilitation centre in charge of handling postal ballots is required to open the drop box daily** in the presence of party and candidate representatives. Each constituency's ballots are placed in a large envelope and then sent to the **Returning Officer (RO)** at the end of each voting day. The RO assumes custody of these bags, storing them securely in a designated **"special strong room"**

Procedure for Absentee Voters:

For absentee voters, Booth Level Officers (BLOs) deliver ballot forms to homes and collect filled forms within five days. Essential services personnel can vote at special centres for three days before polling. Postal ballots are sent to the **Returning Officer (RO) daily**. To ensure secure handling, postal ballots are transferred to a strong room at the counting centre before counting.

About Postal ballots:

It refers to a **method of voting where eligible voters receive their ballots by mail**, rather than **casting their votes in person at a polling station**. This allows voters who are unable to physically attend a polling station, such as those living abroad, military personnel, or individuals with disabilities, to participate in elections.

BIMA SUGAM

Context: The [Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India \(IRDAI\)](#) has approved the establishment of **Bima Sugam**, an **online insurance marketplace**, aimed at simplifying the process of **buying, selling, and servicing insurance policies**, as well as **settling claims**.

Features of Bima Sugam:

- Bima Sugam functions as an **e-commerce platform** where insurance companies can offer their **products, providing customers with an end-to-end digital journey**.
- It **eliminates paperwork by offering policies in electronic format** and **allows customers to access all their policies** - life, health, and non-life insurance - in one application or window.
- Bima Sugam is expected to **make insurance policies more affordable** by reducing commissions paid to intermediaries, potentially leading to lower premiums for policyholders.
- Additionally, it **offers a unified platform for policy issuance, claim settlement, and service requests**, contributing to **transparency and collaboration in the insurance sector**.

About IRDAI:

IRDAI (HQ: Hyderabad; est 1999), safeguards insurance customers' interests as **a statutory body under the IRDA Act 1999**. It operates under the **Ministry of Finance**, overseeing and developing the insurance industry. Its powers and functions are defined by the IRDAI Act, 1999 and the Insurance Act, 1938

IRDAI's "Vision Insurance for All" initiative aims for comprehensive coverage by 2047, allocating states and union territories to insurers for increased penetration. In 2023, IRDAI launched **"Bima Trinity" - Bima Sugam, Bima Vistar, Bima Vaahaks** - with insurers to streamline insurance activities.

About the Insurance Sector in India:

India has a **low insurance penetration at 4.2%** and an **insurance density of \$91 in 2021 (from USD 11 in 2001)**. India's insurance market is forecasted to become **one of the fastest-growing globally** in the next decade, as per the Economic Survey. In 2023, India ranked as the **10th largest insurance market** globally and is projected to climb to the **6th position** by 2032

FINANCING AGROCHEMICAL REDUCTION AND MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME – OR FARM

Context: Seven countries - **Ecuador, India, Kenya, Laos, Philippines, Uruguay, and Vietnam** - have initiated a program called the **Financing Agrochemical Reduction and Management Programme (FARM)** to address pollution **from pesticides and plastics in agriculture.**

- This initiative aims to **combat the release of toxic persistent organic pollutants (POPs)** into the environment caused by the **use of harmful chemicals in farming**

FARM, led by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) with support from the **Global Environment Facility (GEF)**, intends to shift **financial incentives towards farmers to adopt low- and non-chemical alternatives**, promoting **sustainable practices.**

By phasing out hazardous pesticides and Agri-plastics and encouraging better management standards, the program **aims to prevent the release of over 51,000 tons of hazardous pesticides and 20,000 tons of plastic waste**, while also **reducing carbon dioxide emissions and protecting over 3 million hectares of land.**

'SHIVA' AND 'SHAKTI,' EARLIEST BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE MILKY WAY

Context: Astronomers have discovered **two ancient streams of stars, named Shakti and Shiva**, which are among the **earliest building blocks of the Milky Way galaxy.**

- These streams, identified using data from the **European Space Agency's Gaia telescope**, are believed to have **merged with the Milky Way around 12 billion years ago.**
- Each structure contains stars with similar chemical compositions, **formed approximately 12-13 billion years ago and with a mass about 10 million times greater than our sun.**

Gaia, launched in 2013, has been instrumental in **mapping the Milky Way's three-dimensional structure**, aiding astronomers in detecting structures like Shakti and Shiva. Further studies, including future Gaia surveys, are expected to provide additional insights into the formation and evolution of the Milky Way galaxy.

In Hinduism, the **union between Shiva and Shakti gave rise to the cosmos**. Identifying the Shakti and Shiva structures has helped to bring the **Milky Way's turbulent earliest stages into focus.**

RESOLUTION ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Context: The UN General Assembly adopted a significant resolution focused on **promoting safe, secure, and trustworthy artificial intelligence (AI) systems** that align with **sustainable development goals.**

- The resolution emphasizes **respect for human rights throughout the AI life cycle** and acknowledges AI's potential to **advance the Sustainable Development Goals.**
- It is the **first time the Assembly has addressed regulation in this emerging field.**
- The resolution calls for **refraining from AI systems that violate human rights and advocates for regulatory frameworks to ensure safe AI use.**

The resolution is a U.S.-led resolution promoting safe, secure, and trustworthy AI systems, backed by over 120 Member States.

INDIA MOZAMBIQUE TANZANIA (IMT) MARITIME TRILATERAL EXERCISE

Context: INS Sujata and INS Tir have entered **the harbour phase of the India-Mozambique Tanzania (IMT) maritime trilateral exercise.**

Phases:

1. **Harbour Phase (March 21st to March 24th, 2024):** Activities include a Planning Conference, joint harbour training sessions on various aspects like Damage Control, Fire Fighting, Visit Board Search and Seizure procedures, Medical Lectures, Casualty Evacuation, and Diving operations.
2. **Sea Phase:** Focuses on practical exercises such as countering asymmetric threats, Visit Board Search and Seizure procedures, boat handling, manoeuvres, firing exercises, and joint **Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) surveillance.**

These exercises demonstrate India’s and the Indian Navy’s dedication to bolstering maritime security and cooperation with neighbouring countries in the Indian Ocean Region while advancing **SAGAR (Safety and Growth for All in the Region).**

Mozambique and Tanzania

Mozambique is a country in **southeast Africa bordered by the Indian Ocean to the east, Tanzania to the north, Malawi and Zambia** to the northwest, Zimbabwe to the west, and Eswatini and South Africa to the southwest. The capital and largest city is **Maputo**.

Tanzania is a country in East Africa within the African Great Lakes region. It borders Uganda to the north; Kenya to the northeast; the Indian Ocean to the east; Mozambique and Malawi to the south; Zambia to the southwest; and Rwanda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the west

