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MAKING THE ELIGIBLE ENTITLED

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## Current Affairs - 11 October 2024

### WHAT IS MYOPIA?



- Myopia, also known as **nearsightedness**, is an eye condition that **causes blurry distance vision**.
- People who are nearsighted have **more trouble seeing things that are far away** (such as when driving) than things that are close up (such as when reading or using a computer).

### What causes Myopia?

- For normal vision, light passes through the clear cornea at the front of the eye and is focused by the lens onto the surface of the retina, which is the lining of the back of the eye that contains light-sensing cells.
- **Nearsighted People typically have eyeballs that are too long from front to back.**
- As a result, **light entering the eye is focused too far forward, in front of the retina** instead of on its surface.
- It is this change that **causes distant objects to appear blurry.**
- The **longer the eyeball is, the farther forward light rays will be focused** and the more **severely nearsighted a person** will be.
- Eye experts are still unsure of the exact cause of myopia, but believe it to be a mix of hereditary and environmental factors.
- Nearsightedness usually begins in childhood or adolescence.
- It tends to **worsen with age until adulthood**, when it may **stop getting worse (stabilize)**. In some people, nearsightedness improves in later adulthood.
- **Symptoms:** Nearsightedness can lead to **squinting, eyestrain, headaches,** and significant **visual impairment**

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### Treatment:

- **Glasses or contact lenses** can correct myopia in children and adults.
  - For adults only (with rare exceptions for children), several types of **refractive surgeries** can also correct myopia.
  - **Negative (minus) powered lenses** are used to correct nearsightedness.
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### WHAT IS HUMSAFAR POLICY?



- It is a comprehensive initiative aimed at **enhancing facilities along India's national highways**.
  - The policy seeks to improve the **convenience, safety, and comfort of highway travelers** by providing a wide **range of services at key locations** along the road network.
  - Rest stops equipped with essential amenities like clean washrooms, food courts, parking spaces, and first-aid services will be developed across major highways.
  - **Dedicated rooms for baby care**, equipped with changing tables and other essentials, will be provided for families travelling with young children.
  - It includes provisions for creating **multi-utility spaces at regular intervals** to cater to the diverse needs of travelers.
    - These spaces will **feature fuel stations, Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points**, convenience stores, and other roadside services that are expected to reduce driver fatigue and improve overall road safety.
  - **Dormitories** will be introduced at **fuel stations** to provide **short-term accommodation** for truck drivers, travellers, and those requiring a rest break during long-distance travel. Accessibility will be a key focus, with **wheelchair provisions** made available for differently-abled travellers.
  - The initiative also aims to promote sustainability by **incorporating green technologies**, such as solar-powered facilities and EV infrastructure, contributing to India's environmental goals.
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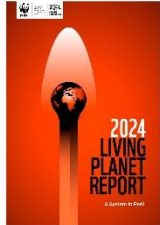


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### LIVING PLANET REPORT



Living Planet Report is published biennially by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

- It is a comprehensive study of trends in **global biodiversity and the health of the planet**.
- The Living Planet Report 2024 is the 15th edition of the report.
- The WWF uses the **Living Planet Index (LPI)**, which tracks the **average trends in wildlife** populations rather than focusing on increases or declines in individual species numbers.
- By monitoring changes in species population sizes over time, the LPI serves as an early warning indicator of extinction risk and helps assess ecosystem efficiency.

### Highlights of the Living Planet Report 2024

- The **sharpest decline** is reported in **freshwater ecosystems** at 85%, followed by **terrestrial ecosystems** at 69% and marine ecosystems at 56%.
  - Major threats to wildlife include **Habitat loss, overexploitation, climate change, pollution, invasive species, and diseases**, which were the dominant drivers of the decline of wildlife.
  - Habitat loss was driven by unsustainable agriculture, fragmentation, logging, mining, to name a few causes.
  - Ongoing mass **coral reef bleaching**, affecting over 75 per cent of the world's reefs, the Amazon rainforest, the collapse of the subpolar gyre and the melting of the Greenland and West Antarctic ice sheets are all **nearing critical tipping points**.
  - More than half of the **United Nations-mandated Sustainable Development Goals** for 2030 are **unlikely to meet their targets**, with 30 per cent of them either already missed or worse off than their 2015 baseline.
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### CLIMATE RISK INFORMATION SYSTEM



Climate Risk Information System will bridge the gap in climate-related data that is currently available in a fragmented manner.

- Presently the available climate-related data is characterised by various gaps such as fragmented and varied sources, differing formats, frequencies and units.

It will comprise of **two parts**

- The first part will be a **web-based directory**, listing various data sources, (meteorological, geospatial, etc.) which will be publicly accessible on the RBI website.
  - The **second part** will be a data portal comprising of datasets (processed data in standardised formats).
  - The RBI plans a **phased launch** of RB-CRIS starting with the web-based directory, followed by a gradual introduction of the data portal for regulated entities to ensure smooth adaptation.
  - It is crucial for regulated entities **to undertake climate risk assessments** to ensure stability of their balance sheets and that of the financial system.
  - On February 28, 2024, RBI issued draft guidelines for a 'Disclosure Framework on Climate-Related Financial Risks,' requiring Regulated Entities (REs) to disclose information across four key areas: governance, strategy, risk management and metrics and targets.
  - The framework aims to inform stakeholders—such as regulators, investors, and customers—about the climate-related risks faced by REs and their strategies for addressing these issues.
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### NATIONAL AGRICULTURE CODE BEING FORMULATED BY BUREAU OF INDIAN STANDARDS

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has begun the process of formulating a National Agriculture Code (NAC), on the lines of the existing National Building Code and National Electrical Code.

#### **Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)**

- BIS is the national standards body of India that sets standards for products and services, and certifies products.
- The BIS is a statutory organization that operates under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.
  - It was established under the Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 2016.
- **HQ** – New Delhi
- **Activities:** The activities of BIS can be broadly grouped under the following heads:
  - **Standards formulation** - formulates Indian Standards in line with the national priorities for various sectors
  - **International activities** – India, through BIS, is represented at various international institutions such as International Organization for Standardization (ISO), International Electro-technical Commission (IEC) etc.
    - It is also actively involved in the Regional and Bi-lateral Co-operation Programmes pertaining to standardization, testing, certification, training etc.
    - **World Trade Organisation – Technical Barriers to Trade (WTO-TBT) Matters** -BIS is the National Enquiry Point for WTO -TBT.
  - **Product Certification** - Presence of BIS standard mark (popularly known as ISI mark) on a product indicates conformity to the relevant Indian Standard.



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- **Hallmarking** - Hallmarking of Gold Jewellery was started by BIS in April 2000 to provide third party assurance to consumers on the purity of gold jewellery or its fineness.
- **Laboratory services**
- **Training services** - National Institute of Training for Standardisation
- **Consumer Affairs and Publicity**

### National Agriculture Code (NAC)

- The BIS sets standards for products across economic sectors, including agricultural machinery and inputs like fertilizers and pesticides.
  - However, significant areas like agricultural practices, micro-irrigation, and water use remain uncovered by BIS standards.
  - Policymakers have long felt the need for a comprehensive standards framework, which is now being developed by the BIS.
- **Objective of NAC**
    - To develop a national code for agricultural practices that considers agroclimatic zones, crop types, socio-economic diversity, and the entire agri-food value chain.
    - To promote a quality culture in Indian agriculture by providing a reference for policymakers, agricultural departments, and regulators to incorporate NAC provisions into their schemes, policies, or regulations.
    - To serve as a comprehensive guide for farmers for informed decision-making in agricultural practices.
    - To integrate relevant Indian Standards with agricultural recommendations.
    - To address broader aspects such as SMART farming, sustainability, traceability, and documentation.
    - To support capacity-building programs organized by agricultural extension services and civil society organizations.



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### 21ST ASEAN - INDIA SUMMIT

The 21st ASEAN-India Summit, held on 10 October 2024 in Vientiane, Lao PDR, marked a decade of India's Act East Policy. PM Modi participated for the 11th time, joining ASEAN leaders to assess the **ASEAN-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership** and to shape future cooperation.

#### ASEAN

- The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a regional grouping that aims to promote economic and security cooperation among its ten members:
  - Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.
    - Timor-Leste joined the ASEAN in 2022 as an Observer. ASEAN has agreed in principle to accept **Timor-Leste as its 11th member**.
  - ASEAN countries have a total population of 662 million people and a combined gross domestic product (GDP) of \$3.6 trillion as of 2022.
  - ASEAN has an anthem, a flag and biannual summits (twice a year) with a rotating chairmanship.
- **Establishment:**
  - It was established on 8 August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand, with the signing of the ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration) by the founding fathers of ASEAN: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.
- **Aim:** The motto of ASEAN is “One Vision, One Identity, One Community”.
- **Secretariat:** Jakarta, Indonesia.

#### India's relationship with ASEAN

- **ASEAN and Act East Policy**
  - ASEAN is central to India's Act East policy, which focuses on the extended neighbourhood in the Asia-Pacific region.

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- **India among the dialogue partners**
    - India is part of the ASEAN Plus Six grouping, which includes China, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand and Australia as well.
  - **Trade and Investment**
    - In 2010, India-ASEAN FTA in goods were signed. FTA in services were signed in 2014.
    - India and ASEAN are important trading partners, with ASEAN accounting for 11% of India's global trade.
    - India and ASEAN registered a bilateral trade of **USD 131.5 billion** in 2022-23.
    - In 2023-24, bilateral trade between the two sides was **\$122.67 billion**.
  - **Institutional cooperation**
    - India – ASEAN summit-level partnership in 2002;
      - The year 2022 marked 30 years of ASEAN-India relations and it was designated as **ASEAN-India Friendship Year**.
    - India and ASEAN have strengthened defence cooperation by the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM+).
    - The first ASEAN-India Maritime Exercise (AIME) was held in 2023.
  - **Promoting Tourism and People-to-People Ties**
    - 2025 designated as ASEAN-India Year of Tourism to boost socio-economic development.
    - Implementation of ASEAN-India Tourism Cooperation Work Plan 2023-2027.
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### CAN INDIA ESCAPE THE MIDDLE-INCOME TRAP?

- The middle-income trap refers to the stagnation of per capita income growth when economies reach around **11% of the U.S. per capita income**.
- **Global Scenario:** Over the last 34 years, only **34 middle-income economies** have successfully transitioned to high-income levels, emphasizing the difficulty of escaping this trap.



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### Challenges for India:

- **Stagnation in the Manufacturing Sector:**
  - Despite India's push for industrial growth, the **manufacturing sector** has struggled to become a robust engine of economic expansion.
- **Income Disparity and Low Wage Growth:**
  - While India's GDP growth has been estimated at **around 7%** recently, this growth is not reflected in **real wage increases**.
- **Challenges of Democracy:**
  - Unlike South Korea and Chile, whose export-driven growth models were facilitated by **authoritarian regimes**, India operates within a **democratic framework**. This makes it crucial to balance **state intervention** with **democratic principles**, such as labor rights and freedom of expression.

### Strategies for India's Transition:

- **Leveraging Investment and Innovation:**
- **Encouraging Responsible Business Practices:**
- **Strengthening the Service Sector:**
- **Inclusive Economic Growth:**

### Conclusion:

- India's journey towards escaping the **middle-income trap** is fraught with challenges, from **global economic shifts** to **domestic structural issues**.
- However, by adopting a balanced approach that combines **state intervention**, **investment in innovation**, and adherence to **democratic values**, India can chart a path towards sustainable high-income status.
- Examples of countries like **South Korea** and **Chile** offer valuable lessons, but India must tailor these lessons to suit its unique economic and political context.