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GENERAL STUDIES 1

1.1. INDIAN SOCIETY

1.1.1. TULU AS AN ADDITIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE LANGUAGE

Context

The decision of the Karnataka Government to accord **Tulu the status of a second additional administrative language in Dakshina Kannada and Udupi districts** highlights the role of language in cultural preservation, public administration and inclusive governance.

Introduction

India's linguistic diversity is a defining feature of its plural society. Recognising regional languages in administration can improve **citizen-state communication, cultural preservation and participatory governance**, while requiring institutional capacity for effective implementation.

Statutory & Constitutional Procedure

- **Constitutional Basis (Article 345):** Empowers the State Legislature to legally declare one or more languages for official state purposes.
- **Legislative Amendment:** Official recognition of Tulu requires a formal amendment to the Karnataka Official Language Act, 1963—a Cabinet decision alone is legally insufficient.
- **Assent & Enactment:** The amendment becomes operational once it passes the State Legislature, receives necessary assent, and is officially notified.

Understanding Tulu

- **Dravidian language:** Tulu belongs to the Dravidian language family, alongside Kannada, Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam.
- **Geographical concentration:** Predominantly spoken in **Dakshina Kannada and Udupi** in Karnataka and parts of northern Kerala.
- **Cultural significance:** Closely associated with traditions such as **Yakshagana and Bhoota Kola**, besides a rich oral and folkloric tradition.
- **Script:** Historically associated with the **Tulu script**, but contemporary Tulu is predominantly written using the **Kannada script**.
- **Speaker base:** Estimates vary because of migration and differences in methods of enumeration; the language has a substantial native-speaking population.

What Does Additional Administrative Language Status Mean?

The recognition enables greater use of Tulu in **district-level government administration**, alongside Kannada.

- **Administrative accessibility:** Citizens can potentially communicate with government institutions in their familiar language.



- **Inclusive governance:** Reduces linguistic barriers in accessing public services.
- **Cultural preservation:** Provides institutional support for a language with a strong oral heritage.
- **Education and public visibility:** Can encourage language learning, signage, publications and cultural activities.
- **Documentation:** Encourages systematic development of dictionaries, translations and official terminology.

Why is Linguistic Recognition Important?

A. Democratic Participation

- Use of familiar languages in administration reduces communication barriers between citizens and the State.
- It enables better access to public services, grievance redressal and participation in local governance.

B. Cultural Continuity

- Recognition supports the preservation of **oral traditions, folklore, literature, performing arts and customary practices** associated with a language.
- It helps prevent cultural knowledge from being lost across generations.

C. Linguistic Diversity

- Recognition strengthens India's tradition of **linguistic pluralism**, consistent with its multilingual constitutional framework.
- It allows regional languages to coexist with wider link languages without cultural homogenisation.

D. Social Inclusion

- Availability of government communication in a familiar language makes public institutions more accessible to linguistic communities.
- It can strengthen their **sense of dignity, participation and belonging** within the larger society.

E. Intergenerational Transmission

- Institutional visibility can motivate younger generations to learn and use the language in education and public life.
- This helps sustain **language proficiency, literature and cultural knowledge** over time.

Key Challenges in Implementation

1. Script and Literacy Gap

- Though Tulu has a historical script, contemporary written usage largely relies on the **Kannada script**.
- Limited familiarity with the traditional script creates challenges in developing a wider written administrative ecosystem.

2. Limited Institutional Capacity

- Effective implementation requires **trained translators, language-proficient officials and adequate translation infrastructure**.
- Government departments also need standardised terminology and digital language resources for regular administrative use.

3. Education Gap

- Limited formal teaching of Tulu restricts the development of a wider **literate and proficient user base**.
- Strengthening language education is therefore important for sustaining administrative use beyond the immediate generation.

4. Standardisation

- Administrative use requires consistency in **terminology, spelling, grammar and translation practices** across government departments.
- Lack of standardised official vocabulary could lead to inconsistencies in notifications and other administrative documents.

5. Digitalisation

- E-governance requires Tulu-compatible **fonts, Unicode support, digital databases and language-processing tools**.
- Without adequate digital infrastructure, extending language recognition to online public services may remain difficult.

Way Forward

1. Build Institutional Capacity

- Establish dedicated **language and translation cells** and train government personnel in Tulu communication.
- Develop standard administrative terminology for consistent use across departments.

2. Strengthen Language Education

- Introduce Tulu as an **optional language** in educational institutions where sufficient demand exists.
- Invest in teacher training, textbooks and modern learning resources.

3. Preserve the Traditional Script

- Promote research and teaching of the **historical Tulu script** alongside contemporary Kannada-script usage.
- Digitise manuscripts and other historical linguistic resources to ensure their long-term preservation.

4. Document Cultural Heritage

- Systematically document **oral traditions, folklore, literature and performing arts** associated with Tulu.

- Create institutional archives to facilitate research and transmission of cultural knowledge.

5. Leverage Digital Technology

- Develop **digital dictionaries, OCR, translation tools and Unicode-compatible resources** for Tulu.
- Integrate Tulu into relevant e-governance platforms, digital forms and public-service interfaces.

6. Promote Community Participation

- Involve **linguists, educators, writers, cultural organisations and local communities** in implementation.
- A participatory approach can ensure that language promotion remains both **administratively practical and culturally authentic**.

Conclusion

The recognition of Tulu at the district administrative level represents the broader principle that **linguistic diversity can coexist with administrative efficiency**. A balanced approach combining **official accessibility, education, technological development and cultural preservation** can transform linguistic recognition from a symbolic measure into an instrument of **inclusive and citizen-centric governance**.

Q. Discuss the significance and challenges of recognising regional languages in promoting linguistic pluralism and inclusive governance. 15 Marks

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2.1. POLITY & GOVERNANCE

2.1.1. THE CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF THE ELECTION COMMISSION

Context

Recent parliamentary discussions regarding a potential impeachment motion against the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) have brought the constitutional safeguards and internal administrative functioning of the Election Commission of India (ECI) into focus.



Introduction

The Election Commission of India is a vital constitutional body mandated to conduct free and fair elections. To insulate the institution from executive pressure and partisan politics, the Constitution deliberately sets an extraordinarily high bar for the removal of the CEC, granting the office procedural parity with a Judge of the Supreme Court to ensure operational autonomy.

Structure of the Election Commission

- **Composition:** The Commission operates as a multi-member body comprising three members: the Chief Election Commissioner and two Election Commissioners.
- **First Among Equals:** The CEC does not hold a hierarchically superior rank over the other Commissioners; the office functions as "first among equals," possessing equal voting power in all institutional decisions.
- **Consensus-Driven Governance:** Statutory conventions mandate that institutional decisions be taken unanimously as far as possible, making any formal internal dissent administratively significant.

Appointment Process

- **Statutory Baseline:** Appointments are governed under Article 324 of the Constitution and the *CEC and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023*.
- **Selection Architecture:** The President appoints the CEC and ECs upon the binding recommendation of a three-member Selection Committee consisting of the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in the Lok Sabha, and a Union Cabinet Minister.
- **Eligibility & Tenure:** Candidates must be persons of integrity who have previously held Secretary-level positions in the Government. Appointees serve for a fixed term of six years or until reaching 65 years of age, whichever occurs earlier.
- **Judicial Parity in Service:** The CEC enjoys the same monetary compensation and service benefits extended to Supreme Court Judges.

Grounds for Removal

- **Constitutional Parity:** Under Article 324(5) of the Constitution and Section 11(2) of the 2023 Act, the CEC can be removed from office only *"in like manner and on the like grounds as a Judge of the Supreme Court."*
- **Grounds for Removal:** Borrowed directly from Article 124(4), removal can occur exclusively on the grounds of "proved misbehaviour" (corrupt practices, abuse of authority) or "incapacity" (physical or mental inability to perform duties).
- **Asymmetric Protection:** While the CEC enjoys judicial-style protection, other Election Commissioners or Regional Commissioners can be removed by the President solely on the recommendation of the CEC.

Impeachment Steps

- **Notice of Motion:** A motion alleging proved misbehaviour or incapacity must be formally submitted, requiring the signatures of at least 100 MPs in the Lok Sabha or 50 MPs in the Rajya Sabha.
- **Presiding Officer's Discretion:** The Speaker of the Lok Sabha or the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha evaluates the motion and holds absolute discretion to either admit or reject the notice.
- **Statutory Investigation:** Upon admission, a three-member inquiry committee is constituted to investigate the charges and formulate an evidentiary report.
- **Parliamentary Special Majority:** If the committee establishes misbehaviour or incapacity, the motion must be passed in each House by a two-thirds majority of members present and voting, along with a majority of the total membership.
- **Mandatory Presidential Order:** Once passed by Parliament, the President formally issues the removal order.

Historical Precedent

- **Historical Precedent:** No Chief Election Commissioner has ever been impeached or removed from office in India's constitutional history.
- **Previous Attempts:** Past parliamentary motions aiming to initiate the removal process have historically been rejected at the admission stage by the respective Presiding Officers.

The Strategic Significance of Constitutional Removal Safeguards

- **Insulation from Political Pressures:** The rigorous removal procedure prevents incumbent governments from using the threat of arbitrary dismissal to compromise electoral neutrality.
- **Preservation of Electoral Integrity:** Security of tenure enables the CEC to make unbiased decisions during high-stakes elections without fear of executive retribution.
- **Equivalence to Judicial Stature:** Aligning the removal threshold with that of the higher judiciary underlines that free and fair elections are an essential part of the Constitution's basic structure.
- **Safeguard Against Partisan Majorities:** The requirement for special majorities across both Houses prevents a simple legislative majority from removing an inconvenient constitutional regulator.
- **Institutional Stability:** A near-insurmountable removal barrier shields the election machinery from frequent disruptions, maintaining institutional continuity.

Key Challenges Confronting the Impeachment Framework

- **Absolute Discretion of Presiding Officers:** The ability of Speakers and Chairpersons to reject impeachment motions without stating formal reasons can preempt legitimate parliamentary debate.
- **Insurmountable Voting Threshold:** The requirement of a special two-thirds majority makes actual removal nearly impossible in politically fractured legislatures.
- **Definitional Ambiguity:** The Constitution leaves terms like "proved misbehaviour" uncoded, creating room for subjective, politically driven interpretations.
- **Intra-Commission Asymmetry:** Denying the other two Election Commissioners the same constitutional removal safeguards leaves them more vulnerable to external influence.
- **Risk of Politicization:** Impeachment motions run the risk of being utilized primarily for partisan posturing, which can erode public confidence in the electoral system.

Strategic Way Forward for Institutional Reform

- **Codify Presiding Officers' Discretion:** Introduce statutory guidelines that require Presiding Officers to state objective, recorded reasons when deciding on impeachment notices.
- **Equalize Constitutional Protections:** Amend Article 324(5) to extend judicial-style removal protections to all Election Commissioners, ensuring the entire multi-member bench operates fearlessly.
- **Institutionalize Internal Dissent Protocols:** Formulate clear procedural rules for multi-member deliberations, establishing transparent mechanisms to record and resolve internal administrative differences.
- **Codify 'Proved Misbehaviour':** Enact precise statutory rules defining specific ethical violations and administrative abuses that constitute "proved misbehaviour."
- **Establish Transparent Inquiry Timelines:** Mandate fixed timeframes for inquiry committees to prevent removal notices from lingering unresolved during active election cycles.
- **Depoliticized Accountability:** Position parliamentary impeachment strictly as an extraordinary measure of last resort, utilizing independent administrative reviews to address operational disputes.

Conclusion

The constitutional mechanism for removing a Chief Election Commissioner is deliberately arduous, serving as a critical safeguard for democratic stability. Balancing this highly stringent threshold with transparent, consensus-driven internal governance remains essential for preserving public faith in the neutrality and unimpeachable credibility of India's electoral machinery.

***Q.** Examine the constitutional safeguards and statutory provisions governing the independence and removal of the Chief Election Commissioner. Discuss the delicate balance between institutional autonomy and accountability in India's electoral governance. 15 Marks*

3.1. ECONOMY

3.1.1. INDIA–EU FTA: COPYRIGHT PROVISIONS AND INDIA’S DIGITAL POLICY FLEXIBILITY

Context

The EU has moved towards formalising the India–EU FTA after negotiations concluded in January 2026. Its IP chapter has raised concerns that stronger copyright enforcement could narrow India’s existing digital copyright exceptions.

Introduction

The India–EU FTA brings intellectual property to the centre of trade diplomacy. The challenge is to strengthen protection for creators and investors while preserving India’s copyright flexibilities for education, research, digital innovation and public access to knowledge.



Significance of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)

1. Promotes Innovation and Creativity

- **Incentivises innovation:** IPR grants creators and innovators legally enforceable rights, enabling them to derive economic returns from their inventions and creative works.
- **Encourages R&D:** Patents and other IPR mechanisms provide incentives for investment in **research and development**, particularly in technology-intensive sectors.

2. Supports Economic Growth

- **Creates economic value:** IPR enables the commercialisation of knowledge and converts innovation into **products, services, enterprises and employment opportunities**.
- **Strengthens knowledge economy:** Strong IPR frameworks support high-value sectors such as **IT, pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, electronics and creative industries**.

3. Facilitates Foreign Investment and Trade

- **Improves investor confidence:** Predictable IPR protection provides greater certainty to foreign investors regarding ownership and commercial exploitation of innovations.
- **Facilitates technology transfer:** Well-defined IPR regimes can encourage **licensing, joint ventures and technology partnerships** across countries.

4. Protects Consumers and Businesses

- **Prevents counterfeiting:** Trademarks and other IPR mechanisms help distinguish genuine products from counterfeit goods.
- **Protects brand identity:** Trademark protection enables businesses to establish and maintain consumer trust in their products and services.

5. Promotes Technological Development

- **Encourages technological advancement:** Patent protection enables innovators to invest in developing new technologies by providing temporary exclusive rights.
- **Supports software innovation:** Copyright protection provides legal protection to computer programmes and digital creations.

What is the Issue?

1. **Copyright provisions in the FTA:** The draft IP Chapter contains detailed obligations concerning copyright, enforcement, technological protection measures and rights-management information, thereby potentially affecting India's existing copyright framework.
2. **WCT and National Treatment:** The article highlights the concern that the WIPO Copyright Treaty (WCT) is omitted from the National Treatment clause even while certain WCT-related enforcement obligations remain relevant.
3. **Potential legislative implications:** According to the article's assessment, this asymmetry could require changes to the **Copyright Act, 1957**, particularly provisions protecting lawful digital uses.
4. **Current status:** The European Commission has published the negotiated FTA texts, but has explicitly stated that they may still undergo legal revision and become binding only after completion of the required internal procedures.

Why is the WIPO Copyright Treaty Important?

1. **Digital-era copyright:** The WCT was developed to address copyright protection in the digital environment, particularly for software, databases and digitally transmitted works.
2. **Balance between rights and exceptions:** The treaty framework recognises that copyright protection must coexist with limitations and exceptions serving legitimate public interests.
3. **Indian legal connection:** India amended its Copyright Act in 2012 partly to bring it into conformity with the WCT and WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty (WPPT).
4. **National Treatment principle:** National Treatment generally requires protected works from another contracting country to receive treatment comparable to that provided to domestic works.

Importance of India's Existing Copyright Flexibilities

1. Education and Research

- **Fair dealing:** Section 52 provides exceptions for specified legitimate uses, helping educational institutions and researchers use copyrighted material within statutory boundaries.
- **Software research:** Sections 52(1)(ab) and (ac), as highlighted in the article, provide space for lawful activities involving software interoperability and security-related research.

2. Technological Protection Measures

- **Section 65A:** India regulates circumvention of technological protection measures while recognising specified exceptions.
- **Policy significance:** The provision attempts to balance protection against digital piracy with legitimate activities such as research and other legally permitted uses.

3. Libraries and Archives

- Digital preservation increasingly requires libraries and archives to reproduce or format-shift material protected by **Digital Rights Management (DRM)**.
- Excessively restrictive anti-circumvention rules could therefore make legitimate preservation activities legally difficult.

4. Internet Service Providers

- The article highlights concerns regarding temporary copies created in **RAM, caches and routine electronic transmission**.
- If such transient technical copies receive broader copyright liability, intermediaries could face increased litigation and compliance costs.

Broader Significance for India

1. Digital Sovereignty

- Copyright rules increasingly determine who can access, reproduce, modify and transmit digital knowledge, making them an important component of **digital sovereignty**.

2. Innovation Ecosystem

- Start-ups, software developers, cybersecurity researchers and academic institutions depend upon reasonable exceptions for experimentation and interoperability.

3. Knowledge Economy

- Excessively restrictive copyright rules can increase the cost of accessing educational and research material, particularly for developing economies.

4. Trade and Investment

- Stronger IP protection can improve investor confidence and facilitate trade in innovative and creative goods and services; the EU itself identifies IP protection as a significant component of the FTA.

5. India–EU Strategic Partnership

- The issue illustrates the broader challenge of deepening economic integration with the EU while preserving India's regulatory autonomy in areas involving **education, technology and public interest**.

Key Challenges

1. Protection–Access Imbalance

- Excessive emphasis on enforcement may strengthen rightsholders while weakening legitimate exceptions required for education, research and preservation.

2. DRM versus Statutory Exceptions

- Digital locks can potentially prevent users from exercising rights that domestic copyright law otherwise permits, creating tension between **technological control and legal exceptions**.

3. Chilling Effect on Research

- Students and cybersecurity researchers may become more cautious about legitimate software testing if anti-circumvention rules are interpreted broadly.

4. Burden on Digital Intermediaries

- Expanded liability for temporary copies could increase compliance costs and litigation exposure for ISPs and other intermediaries.

5. Parliamentary Policy Space

- If international commitments require amendments to domestic copyright law, India must ensure that negotiated obligations do not unintentionally reduce the policy choices already enacted by Parliament.

Constitutional and Governance Dimensions

1. Right to Education and Knowledge

- Copyright policy intersects with broader public objectives of **access to education, research and knowledge**, requiring a balance between private intellectual property and societal interests.

2. Freedom of Expression

- Copyright exceptions can facilitate criticism, research, scholarship and transformative uses, thereby indirectly supporting a democratic knowledge ecosystem.

3. Legislative Sovereignty

- International trade commitments should remain consistent with Parliament's authority to determine the domestic balance between copyright protection and public-interest exceptions.

4. Good Governance

- Major trade commitments affecting domestic legislation require **transparency, stakeholder consultation and parliamentary scrutiny**.

Way Forward

1. Recalibrate the National Treatment Provision

- India should seek clarity and, where necessary, targeted revision so that the WCT's relevant limitations and exceptions are not unintentionally excluded.

2. Preserve Section 52 Flexibilities

- The FTA should explicitly protect legitimate exceptions relating to **education, research, libraries, archives, software interoperability and technological processes**.

3. Safeguard Section 65A

- Anti-circumvention obligations should contain adequate safeguards so that lawful research and other statutory exceptions remain meaningful.

4. Protect Transient Network Copies

- The treatment of temporary copies generated during routine digital transmission should be clearly defined to prevent disproportionate liability for ISPs.

5. Conduct Regulatory Impact Assessment

- Before final ratification, India should assess the consequences for **students, universities, libraries, start-ups, researchers, ISPs and digital platforms.**

Conclusion

India's objective should be neither unrestricted copyright enforcement nor weakened IPR protection. The India–EU FTA should establish a balanced framework that rewards creators, facilitates digital commerce and innovation, while preserving essential exceptions for education, research and public access.

Q. Discuss the implications of the proposed India–EU FTA copyright provisions for India's digital copyright flexibilities. *10 marks*

3.2. ENVIRONMENT

3.2.1. HIMALAYAN MONAL: CLIMATE CHANGE, NOISE POLLUTION AND HABITAT CONNECTIVITY

Introduction

The **Himalayan Monal** (*Lophophorus impejanus*), a high-altitude pheasant and the **state bird of Uttarakhand**, inhabits temperate, sub-alpine and alpine ecosystems of the Himalayas. Although globally classified as **Least Concern**, emerging research highlights how **climate change, anthropogenic noise and habitat fragmentation** can undermine its ecological security.



Ecological Significance of the Himalayan Monal

- **Indicator species:** Its dependence on high-altitude habitats makes it an indicator of the health of fragile montane ecosystems.
- **Ecosystem functions:** Ground-foraging and digging help in **soil aeration, nutrient cycling and seed-bank regeneration.**
- **Biodiversity value:** It represents the rich galliform diversity of the Himalayan ecosystem.
- **Cultural significance:** It is the **state bird of Uttarakhand** and is known as *Danphe* in Nepal.

Emerging Threats

A. Anthropogenic Noise & Behavioural Change

- **Noise exposure:** Roads, vehicles, tourism and pilgrimage increase acoustic disturbance.
- **Behavioural shift:** Monals in noisier areas show **higher-frequency and greater-amplitude calls.**
- **Acoustic masking:** Human noise can interfere with natural communication.

- **Reproductive concern:** Masked mating calls may affect **male–female communication**.
- **Social behaviour:** Altered vocalisation may also influence territorial and social interactions.
- **Research limitation:** Impact on actual **breeding success remains unestablished**.
- **New conservation dimension:** Habitat degradation includes **acoustic disturbance**, not just physical habitat loss.

B. Climate Change & Shifting Habitat

- **Seasonal migration:** Monals move **upward in summer** and descend during heavy winter snowfall.
- **Climate impact:** Warming can alter temperature, snowfall, vegetation and habitat suitability.
- **Habitat redistribution:** Existing suitable areas may decline while **new suitable habitats emerge elsewhere**.
- **Connectivity challenge:** New habitats are useful only if monals can **reach them**.
- **Fragmentation risk:** Roads and infrastructure can block **altitudinal movement**.
- **Adaptation barrier:** Fragmentation can prevent species from **tracking shifting climatic niches**.
- **Conservation principle:** Protect **habitat connectivity**, not merely individual habitat patches.

C. Infrastructure & Tourism Pressure

- **Road expansion:** Improves regional connectivity but fragments sensitive habitats.
- **Pilgrimage pressure:** Seasonal footfall increases disturbance in fragile ecosystems.
- **Vehicular traffic:** Adds **noise pollution and behavioural disturbance**.
- **Habitat fragmentation:** Roads can isolate previously connected populations.
- **Ecological trade-off:** Developmental connectivity can undermine **ecological connectivity**.
- **Governance need:** Infrastructure planning must incorporate **wildlife corridors and noise-sensitive zones**.

D. Other Landscape-Level Pressures

- **Alpine overgrazing:** Degrades meadows and potential nesting habitats.
- **Habitat fragmentation:** Isolates populations and restricts movement.
- **Historical poaching:** Male monals were targeted for their ornamental crest feathers.
- **Tourism infrastructure:** Increases human presence and habitat disturbance.
- **Cumulative pressure:** Multiple stressors can interact, increasing ecological vulnerability.
- **Conservation implication:** Requires **landscape-level management**, rather than species protection alone.

Existing Framework / Protection Measures

- **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972:** Himalayan Monal is listed under **Schedule I**, providing the highest level of statutory protection against hunting and trade.

- **CITES Protection:** Listed under **Appendix I**, restricting international commercial trade in wild-caught specimens and derivatives.
- **Protected-Area Framework:** Its habitat includes protected landscapes such as **Kedarnath Musk Deer Sanctuary**, providing in-situ conservation and habitat protection.
- **Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) Regulation:** Activities around protected areas are regulated through the **ESZ framework**, providing scope to manage infrastructure, tourism and vehicular pressures.

Why Existing Protection Alone Is Insufficient

1. **Legal Protection is Not Sufficient:** Statutory protection regulates hunting and trade but does not necessarily address **habitat degradation, ecological disturbance and loss of breeding grounds**.
2. **Need for Landscape-Level Conservation:** Effective conservation requires protection of the **species along with its habitat, movement corridors, food resources and ecological processes**.
3. **Global Status May Mask Local Decline:** A **Least Concern** global classification may overlook **local population declines and habitat stress** in specific regions.
4. **From Species Protection to Ecosystem Security:** Conservation efforts must assess not only the **status of the species** but also the security of its **local populations, habitats and ecological processes**.

Governance Challenges

1. **Physical-Habitat Bias in EIAs:** Conventional EIAs emphasise **land-use and habitat impacts**, while acoustic disturbance and behavioural changes remain relatively under-assessed.
2. **Weak Regulation during Peak Tourism:** Seasonal surges in **pilgrimage, tourism and vehicular movement** can intensify noise and ecological stress in sensitive habitats.
3. **Fragmented Conservation Planning:** Protected areas may safeguard individual habitats but fail to ensure **ecological connectivity across altitudinal gradients and movement corridors**.
4. **Gaps in Local-Level Data:** Limited monitoring of local populations and behaviour may prevent timely detection of **population stress, habitat shifts and ecological disturbances**.
5. **Balancing Development and Conservation:** Mountain infrastructure supports **livelihoods, tourism and pilgrimage**, requiring regulated and ecologically sensitive development rather than blanket exclusion.

Way Forward

1. **Adopt Soundscape-Sensitive Conservation:** Integrate **noise pollution and acoustic disturbance** into ecological assessments and establish quiet zones near ecologically sensitive habitats.
2. **Promote Regulated and Sustainable Tourism:** Adopt **carrying-capacity-based tourism, seasonal traffic management and low-impact pilgrimage infrastructure** to minimise ecological stress.
3. **Protect Altitudinal Ecological Corridors:** Maintain **vertical habitat connectivity** and integrate wildlife corridors into infrastructure planning to enable species to adapt to shifting climatic conditions.

4. **Strengthen Scientific Monitoring:** Use **passive acoustic monitoring, GIS, species-distribution models and climate projections** to track population trends and behavioural changes.
5. **Promote Community-Based Conservation:** Involve local communities in **habitat protection, ecological monitoring and sustainable tourism**, while linking conservation with livelihood opportunities.
6. **Adopt a Landscape-Level Approach:** Integrate **species protection, habitat conservation, connectivity, soundscape management and climate adaptation** into a unified conservation framework.

Conclusion

For Himalayan biodiversity, the objective should not merely be to preserve where species live today, but to preserve where they may need to live tomorrow and their ability to reach it.

Q. *Climate change and anthropogenic disturbances are altering both the habitat and behaviour of Himalayan species. Discuss 15 Marks*

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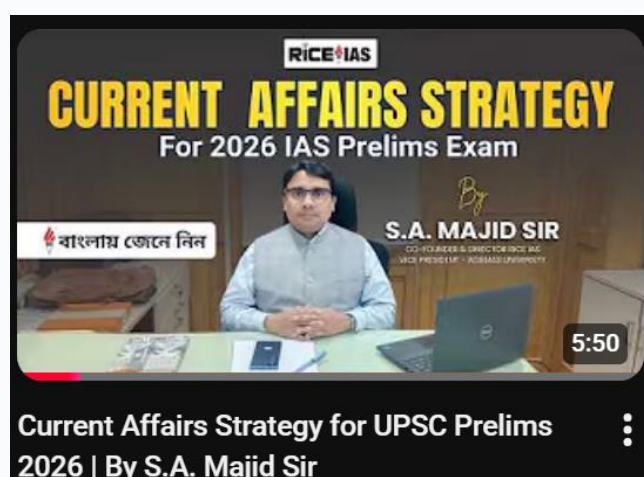
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