

Mains Topics

AI and Personality Rights

Context

Actors Abhishek Bachchan and Aishwarya Rai Bachchan have filed a lawsuit against Google and YouTube in the Delhi High Court. They allege that AI-generated deepfake videos portraying them in fabricated and explicit scenarios violate their personality rights, causing reputational and financial harm.

What are Personality Rights

- It refers to an individual's legal right to control the use of their name, image, likeness, voice, and other identifiable attributes of their identity, protecting them from unauthorised commercial or non-commercial exploitation.

Supreme Court Stance on Personality Rights

- **Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017):** The Supreme Court ruled that the right to privacy is a fundamental right under Article 21, which includes control over one's identity, image, and personal data.
- **Subramanian Swamy v. Union of India (2016):** The Court held that the right to reputation is a component of Article 21, making any unauthorised or defamatory use of a person's identity unconstitutional.
- **DM Entertainment v. Baby Gift House (2010) (Delhi HC, later relied upon by SC):** The ruling recognised that celebrities have a protectable commercial interest in their personality, preventing unauthorised use of their name or likeness.
- **ICC Development v. Arvee Enterprises (2003):** The Court clarified that publicity rights protect an individual's persona and cannot be commercially exploited without explicit consent.
- **Titan Industries v. Ramkumar Jewellers (2012) (Delhi HC, cited in SC jurisprudence):** The Court held that unauthorised use of a celebrity's image in advertising violates both personality rights and the right to privacy.

International Approaches

- **United States – Property-Based Model:** Personality rights known as **Right of Publicity**, treated as **transferable property**.
 - Recognised in *Haelan Laboratories v. Topps Chewing Gum (1953)*.
 - Several states are passing AI-specific laws:
 - **Tennessee ELVIS Act (2024):** bans unauthorised AI cloning of voice/likeness.
 - Lawsuits against **Character.AI** show rising accountability for harms caused by AI personas.
- **European Union – Dignity-Based Model**
 - **GDPR (2016):** Requires **explicit consent** to process personal or biometric data.

- EU AI Act (2024): Labels **deepfakes as high-risk AI**.
 - Mandates **labelling, transparency, and safeguards**.
- **China:** Beijing Internet Court (2024): Held that **synthetic voices must not deceive consumers**. It recognised voice as an integral part of personality rights.
 - Stricter obligations on platform accountability and AI transparency.
- **UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of AI (2021):** Rights-based, human-centric framework.
 - Stresses **non-exploitation of identity** and ethical AI development.
- Scholarly proposals (Guido Westkamp et al., 2025): Advocate expanding personality rights to include **style and personal appropriation** by AI.

Challenges

- AI enables effortless cloning of faces, voices, and likenesses, making identity theft and impersonation far easier than existing laws can handle.
- Deepfakes blur the distinction between authentic and fabricated content, causing reputational harm and eroding public trust.
- India lacks a codified statute on personality rights, resulting in fragmented enforcement across privacy, IP, and IT laws.
- Rapid, cross-border spread of AI-generated content undermines jurisdictional control and makes takedown mechanisms ineffective.
- Platforms often evade responsibility due to safe-harbour protections and anonymity of users, weakening accountability.
- Absence of mandatory AI watermarking and transparency requirements makes it difficult to trace the source of manipulated content.
- Ethical dilemmas arise around posthumous digital recreations, consent, and commercial exploitation of identity without authorisation.

Way Forward

- India should enact a dedicated Personality Rights Act that clearly defines identity rights, consent requirements, and remedies against misuse.
- AI-specific regulation must classify deepfakes as high-risk systems and mandate watermarking, disclosure labels, and traceability.
- Intermediary liability rules should be strengthened to ensure faster takedowns and impose penalties for hosting harmful AI content.
- Platforms must implement robust identity-verification, deepfake detection, and proactive monitoring tools.
- Cross-border cooperation mechanisms are needed to address the global circulation of AI-generated content and standardise safeguards.
- Public digital literacy campaigns should be expanded to help users recognise manipulated media and avoid misuse.

- Policy design must balance strong protections with space for responsible AI innovation, research, and creative expression.

Source: [The Hindu](#)



Today's Prelims Topics

Cyclone Ditwah

Context

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued orange and red alerts for north Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, and south Andhra Pradesh as Cyclone Ditwah intensifies.

About Cyclone Ditwah

- It is a tropical cyclone formed in the **Bay of Bengal region**, characterised by **strong winds, heavy rainfall, thunderstorms, and lightning**.
- Formed **over coastal Sri Lanka**.
- It is the **third post-monsoon cyclone (Oct–Nov season)** in the Bay of Bengal.

Source: [NDTV](#)

UN ESCAP Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2025

Context

A new UN ESCAP Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2025 has been released.

Key Highlights of the Report

- **Asian megacities** face an **additional 2–7°C rise** due to the urban heat island effect, pushing temperatures far beyond global warming projections.
- South and Southwest Asia, including India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, may endure **300+ days of severe or extreme heat** each year.
- **Extreme heat** has become the **fastest-growing climate hazard**, surpassing traditional threats like cyclones and droughts.
- **Vulnerable groups**—urban poor, outdoor workers, children, and elderly—face

disproportionate exposure due to dense, low-income neighbourhoods lacking cooling infrastructure.

- Rising heat and worsening air pollution create a **dangerous feedback loop**, intensifying climate and health risks.
- Heat-related mortality could **double by 2050** due to cardiovascular, respiratory, and heatstroke-related impacts.
- Labour-intensive sectors will see **sharp increases in lost working hours**, reducing productivity and deepening economic inequality.
- Annual disaster losses are projected to rise from **\$418 billion to nearly \$500 billion**, especially under high-emission pathways.
- **Existing weather services remain inadequate**, with only 54% issuing warnings for extreme heat events.

Recommendations

- Countries must make **extreme heat central to multi-hazard disaster planning**, integrating heat risks into national resilience strategies.
- Governments should expand **heat-health early warning systems** using interoperable alerts, common metrics, and reliable last-mile communication.
- Cities need to reduce exposure through **urban redesign**, including green spaces, reflective surfaces, and heat-resilient infrastructure.
- Targeted protection measures should be provided for vulnerable populations, especially **urban poor and outdoor workers**.
- Investment in **cooling access, clean water, and healthcare** is essential to minimise heat-related mortality and morbidity.

Source: [DTE](#)

Sirpur Archeological Site

Context

Chhattisgarh is stepping up efforts to secure UNESCO World Heritage status for the Sirpur Archaeological Site.

About Sirpur Archeological Site

- Sirpur, also known as **Shripur/Sripura**, was a major **multi-religious urban centre**.
- First documented in **1882** by **Alexander Cunningham**, the first Director-General of ASI.
- Excavations resumed in phases in the **1950s**, **1990s**, and **2003**.
- Located along the **Mahanadi River**, forming a **riverine cultural landscape** with ghats and temple clusters.
- Served as the **capital of Dakshina Kosala** under the **Panduvanshi** and later **Somavamshi** kings.
- Excavations uncovered **22 Shiva temples**, **5 Vishnu temples**, **10 Buddhist viharas**, and **3 Jain viharas**.
- Earliest monuments date back to the **5th Century AD**.
 - **Major Monuments:**
 - **Lakshmana Temple** (7th Century): One of India's finest early brick temples dedicated to Vishnu.
 - **Surang Tila Complex**: Dramatic structure built on a high terrace with **37-step staircase**, featuring **panchayatana-style** shrines.
 - **Tivaradeva Mahavihara**: Buddhist monastery housing a significant Buddha image.
 - **6th Century marketplace** found, showing Sirpur's role as a commercial hub.

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Entrepreneur-in-Residence (EIR) Programme

Context

The EIR Programme was highlighted by Union minister as a key driver of India's biotechnology innovation at the BRIC Annual Meeting.

About EIR Programme

- is an initiative designed to **support early-stage innovators, researchers, and young entrepreneurs** in converting high-potential ideas into viable startups.
- It provides a **structured, mentored environment** within research institutions or incubators to bridge the gap between **scientific research and market-ready innovation**.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Fellowship / Stipend** support for 9–18 months (varies by scheme such as NIDHI-EIR, BIRAC EIR).
 - Access to **labs, research facilities, incubators, mentors, and investor networks**.
 - Guidance on **business development, IP filing, regulatory pathways, fundraising, and product validation**.

Source: [PIB](#)

Bnei Menashe Community

Context

The Israeli government approved a plan to relocate the remaining 5,800 Bnei Menashe from Northeast India within 5 years, aiming to complete their Aliyah by 2030.

About the Community

- The **Menashe or Bnei Menashe** community originates from **Manipur and Mizoram** in Northeast India.
- They are primarily associated with the **Chin, Kuki, Mizo, and Zo** ethnic groups.
- The community believes it is descended from the **biblical Tribe of Menashe**, one of the **Ten Lost Tribes of Israel** exiled around **2,700 years ago** by the Assyrian Empire.
- Though originally **Christian**, many have since **embraced Judaism** and practice Jewish customs and festivals such as **Sukkot**.
- Over recent decades, they have increasingly adopted **Jewish religious identity and rituals**.
- In **2005**, they were formally acknowledged by Israel as “**Zera Yisrael**” (people of Israelite descent), enabling immigration rights.

Source: [The Hindu](#)

International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance

Context

India's Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) will take over as **Chairperson of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA)** in 2026.

About International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance

- It is an inter-governmental organization created in **1995** with the mandate to strengthen and support **sustainable democracy** worldwide.
- The organisation holds **UN observer status**, and its headquarters is located in **Stockholm, Sweden**.
- Its mission is to **advance, promote, and safeguard** sustainable democracies, guided by a

vision of inclusive and resilient democratic societies for all.

- International IDEA carries out its work through **knowledge generation, capacity-building, advocacy, and dialogue facilitation**.
- Its activities are structured around **six core thematic workstreams**.
- The organisation has **35 member countries**, with **Japan and the United States** serving as observers, and **India is among its founding members**.

Source: [PIB](#)

Commonwealth Games

Context

Ahmedabad will host the 2030 Commonwealth Games.

About Commonwealth Games

- **First Conducted in:** 1930, Hamilton (Canada)
- Originally called the **British Empire Games**; later renamed: *British Empire and Commonwealth Games* (1954–66), *British Commonwealth Games* (1970–74), *Commonwealth Games* (from 1978)
- Governed by the **Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF)**.
- **Participants include:**
 - Commonwealth sovereign nations (e.g., India, UK, Canada, Australia)
 - British Overseas Territories (e.g., Bermuda)
 - Crown Dependencies (e.g., Jersey, Guernsey)
- **India First Participated** in 1934.
 - **Hosted Once:** 2010 New Delhi.

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) Bill, 2025

likely to remain with the government, not with HECI.

Context

The Central Government is set to table the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) Bill 2025 in the upcoming Winter Session of Parliament.

More in News

- This comes five years after NEP 2020 recommended a single apex regulator for higher education (excluding medical and legal education).

2018 HECI Bill

It proposed repealing the UGC Act, 1956 and creating a new HECI to replace only the UGC, structured with a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, 12 Centre-appointed members (including heads of AICTE and NCTE without merging them), while leaving all funding powers with the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

Source: [Indian Express](#)

About HECI Bill 2025

- HECI is envisaged as a single, overarching regulator for India's higher education sector (except medical and legal education).
- **Key Features:**
 - It replaces: UGC – higher education regulator, AICTE – technical and management education regulator, NCTE – teacher education regulator
 - **Four Independent Vertical Bodies (as per NEP 2020):** The Bill is expected to follow the NEP model with four verticals under HECI:
 - **National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC):** Regulates all higher education institutions except medical and legal fields
 - **National Accreditation Council (NAC):** Becomes the national accreditor
 - **General Education Council (GEC):** Frames National Higher Education Qualifications Framework (NHEQF)
 - **Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC):** Handles funding frameworks but final fund disbursal

Species in News

Hawfinch



News? A Hawfinch was seen in Corbett Tiger Reserve's Dhela zone.

About Hawfinch

- **Distribution:** Native to **Europe** and **temperate Asia**, including **Mongolia** and **Kazakhstan**.
 - Rarely seen in South Asia; considered a vagrant bird when spotted far outside its normal range.
- **Key Features:**
 - Northern populations migrate south during winter.
 - Single birds may appear in unexpected locations due to **storm displacement, navigation errors, or separation from flocks**.
 - Known for a **large, powerful beak** that can crack hard seeds, nuts, and berries.
 - Both sexes look similar; males have slightly darker plumage.
- **Conservation Status:**
 - **IUCN:** Least Concern

Source: [Hindustan Times](#)