

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (30 August 2024)

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- 3. Shun exotic trees, plant local species, says advisory from A.P. Forest Department (GS Paper-III: Environment)**
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Ration shops in the Nilgiris fortified to keep elephants and bears at bay (30 August)

- Wild elephants and sloth bears in the Nilgiris have been raiding fair price shops, stealing food.
- These animals, similar to the rice-loving elephant Arikomban in Kerala, have caused damage to the shops.
- Authorities are implementing a three-layer security system to protect the granaries and godowns.
- In Masinagudi, the fair price shop has been targeted multiple times by elephants. It now has an electric fence, steel barriers, and a reinforced rolling shutter to deter them.
- Warning signs are placed to prevent accidental electrocution of locals.
- Plans are in place to upgrade other shops in the Nilgiris forest division and buffer zones, including those in Vazhaithottam.
- Sloth bears are also breaking into shops in Sholada, Halakkarai, and Emerald. New rolling shutters will help prevent these break-ins.
- The Forest Department supports these measures as they will reduce negative interactions between wildlife and humans.

Bonda tribe student set to pursue MBBS programme in Odisha (30 August)

‘I was first-generation learner from a family which relies on food from the forest. I never imagined that I could earn a livelihood through education’

- Mangala Muduli, a 19-year-old from the Bonda tribe in Odisha, traveled 420 kilometers to study medicine at MKCG Medical College in Berhampur.
- He is the first Bonda, a tribe that was once isolated, to enter medical school.
- Mangala passed the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) and is set to start his MBBS program on August 30.
- He grew up in a family that relied on forest produce and was the first in his family to pursue education beyond the basics.
- Mangala began his education at Mudulipada Residential School and would walk five kilometers between his village and school.
- After scoring 50% in his matriculation exam, he moved to a school 25 kilometers away, an achievement as many from his tribe drop out after Class 10.
- His science teacher, Utkal Keshari Das, recognized his potential, mentored him, and helped him join a coaching center in Balasore.
- Mangala cycled 8 kilometers daily to prepare for NEET, scoring 348 marks and ranking 261 among tribal reserved seats.
- His achievement marks a historic moment for the Bonda tribe, symbolizing a significant leap in their collective history.

Shun exotic trees, plant local species, says advisory from A.P. Forest Department (30 August)

- The Andhra Pradesh Forest Department is working to increase the state's green cover to over 33% of its area.
- They have advised District Collectors, Municipal Commissioners, and Zilla Parishad CEOs to plant trees from a list of 25 indigenous species.
- They have instructed against planting three exotic species due to their negative effects on the environment and health.
- One of the banned species, *Conocarpus erectus* (Buttonwood Mangrove), is being debated in a High Court petition.
- The petition argues that there is no evidence these trees deplete groundwater or cause health issues, despite concerns about their impact on soil and health.
- The other two banned species are *Alstonia scholaris* (Devil's Tree), which can cause gastrointestinal problems, and *Terminalia mantaly* (Umbrella Tree), which is susceptible to cyclone damage.
- The Forest Department recommends planting indigenous species like neem, tamarind, mango, *Pongamia pinnata*, *Mimusops elengi*, and various *Ficus* species instead.

India, China hold 31st WMCC meeting to iron out issues (30 August)

- India and China had a meeting in Beijing to discuss issues along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).
- This was the 31st meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation & Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC).
- The meeting aimed to address differences and find an early resolution to border issues.
- The discussions followed guidance from recent meetings of the Foreign Ministers in Astana and Vientiane.
- The Indian delegation was led by Gourangalal Das from the Ministry of External Affairs, while the Chinese delegation was led by Hong Liang from the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- Both sides agreed to maintain peace and follow existing agreements and protocols.
- They emphasized that restoring peace and respecting the LAC are crucial for normalizing relations between the two countries.

Diplomatic efforts

- Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met twice in the last two months.
- Their meetings were at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit in Kazakhstan in July and again in Vientiane, Laos.
- They stressed the need to resolve the four-year-long military standoff at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with urgency.
- Both countries are holding Corps Commander-level and Working Mechanism for Consultation & Coordination (WMCC) talks to address the standoff in eastern Ladakh.

Alleged audio clips of calls from hospital to victim's parents out (30 August)

- Audio recordings of phone calls from R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata were leaked on social media.
- The recordings include conversations between hospital officials and the parents of a doctor who was raped and murdered.
- In the first two clips, hospital officials inform the parents that their daughter is very ill and ask them to come to the hospital immediately.
- In the third clip, a hospital assistant superintendent suggests that the doctor might have died by suicide or passed away, and urges the parents to come quickly.
- The authenticity of the audio clips has not been independently verified.
- Neither the victim's parents nor the hospital authorities have confirmed the clips as fake.
- Kolkata Police stated that the audio clips show the police did not claim the death was a suicide.

She-Box portal launched for women (30 August)

- The Union Ministry of Women and Child Development has launched a new portal called SHeBox.
- SHeBox is a central platform for registering and tracking complaints of sexual harassment at work.
- It includes information about Internal Committees (ICs) and Local Committees (LCs) in both government and private sectors.
- The portal allows people to file complaints, monitor their status, and ensures that complaints are processed within a set timeframe.
- It aims to provide efficient, secure handling of sexual harassment complaints at workplaces.
- Women and Child Development Minister Annapurna Devi called it a significant improvement for managing such complaints.

'Muslim marriage registration is compulsory' (30 August)

- The Assam Assembly passed a Bill requiring the registration of Muslim marriages and divorces with the government.
- The new Bill, called the Assam Compulsory Registration of Muslim Marriages and Divorces Bill, 2024, will replace the old 1935 Act.
- Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma called the Bill historic and said it aims to end the Qazi system and prevent child marriage among Muslims.
- The Bill mandates that all marriages be registered with the government, enforcing the legal marriage age of 18 for girls and 21 for boys.
- It is designed to deter teenage pregnancy and promote the overall development of girls.

A fearless author and lawyer who spoke truth to power (30 August)

- Abdul Ghafoor Noorani, a highly respected Constitutional expert, lawyer, and political analyst, has passed away at the age of 94.
- He was buried in Mumbai after Isha prayers.
- Noorani was working on a new book about the Supreme Court's Babri Masjid verdict at the time of his death.
- He started his writing career in the early 1960s and was known for his fearless and honest critique of political figures.
- Noorani compared Narendra Modi's Central Vista project to Tughlaq's rule and equated Indira Gandhi's Emergency actions with those of Adolf Hitler.
- His book, "The RSS: A Menace to India," included a quote from Jawaharlal Nehru criticizing the RSS's objectives.
- He was an authority on Kashmir and wrote extensively on the Ayodhya mosque-temple dispute.
- Noorani had an exceptional knowledge of the Indian Constitution and often compared it with other countries' constitutions.
- Although not a trained historian, his factual accuracy was rarely disputed, and his interpretations sparked debate.
- He was known for his no-nonsense attitude and respected for his literary and legal expertise.
- Noorani wrote columns for publications like The Statesman, The Indian Express, Dawn, and Frontline.
- His columns, often lengthy, reflected India's ongoing historical and political issues.
- Noorani wrote his columns with a pen, which were then typed by a stenographer and faxed to the magazine's office.
- His house was filled with books and a library of newspaper clippings that he meticulously organized by subject.
- He never used a writing table and wrote while sitting on his cot surrounded by books and cushions.
- For decades, he did not use a computer and relied on extensive reading for his work.

- A devout Muslim, he did not entertain visitors during prayer times and was known for his humility and occasional temper.
- He was a member of the Gymkhana Club in Mumbai and the India International Centre in New Delhi, where he preferred staying in room number 38.
- Noorani had eccentricities, such as declaring his food preference as “Anti-veg” and was passionate about food.
- He enjoyed exploring old Delhi’s eateries, like gola kababs and qorma, and often traveled by cycle rickshaw for this purpose.
- Born in Bombay, he spent most of his life there, earning respect for his wit, intellect, and deep knowledge of Constitutional matters from both the public and political leaders.

Submarine Arighaat set to add ballast to nuclear triad (30 August)

It is India’s second nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine; ‘technological advancements undertaken indigenously make it significantly more advanced than its predecessor, Arihant

- [INS Arighaat, India’s second nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine](#), was commissioned in Visakhapatnam.
- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh presided over the commissioning ceremony.
- INS Arighaat will strengthen India's nuclear deterrence and strategic balance, joining INS Arihant, commissioned in 2016.
- INS Arighaat has advanced technology compared to [INS Arihant](#) but uses the same reactor and size.
- The submarine features indigenous systems and equipment developed by Indian scientists and industry.
- The nuclear triad was completed in November 2018 when INS Arihant returned from its first deterrence patrol.
- The **development of nuclear-powered submarines began in the 1980s, with INS Arihant launched in 2009 and commissioned in 2016.**
- A third, more advanced submarine is under construction.
- **INS Arihant carries a 750-km-range K-15 Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile (SLBM) and a 3,500-km-range K-4 SLBM** is being developed.
- The K-4 SLBM, tested in 2020, will enhance India’s undersea nuclear deterrence capability.

When physics merged with biology to revolutionise ophthalmology (30 August)

Ophthalmologists, deeply familiar with the intricate workings of the eye, do not typically have the leisure time to spend in a physicist’s lab studying theories behind laser; yet these two seemingly disparate fields combined to modernise vision correction in refractive errors and cataract surgeries

- I had femtosecond laser surgery to correct my vision, which worked incredibly well.
- I wondered how physicists, who aren't eye experts, developed such crucial technology for eye surgery.
- Ophthalmologists understand the eye's anatomy but don’t usually study lasers.
- Lasers, or Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation, are based on physics concepts.
- Albert Einstein first proposed the concept of stimulated emission in 1917, where electrons release energy as photons.
- This process can amplify light when photons stimulate other excited electrons.
- Theodore Maiman built the first working laser in 1960 using a ruby crystal.
- This ruby laser produced a concentrated red light beam with special properties: coherence, monochromaticity, and focusability.

Chirped Pulse Amplification

- In the 1980s, **Chirped Pulse Amplification (CPA) was developed, transforming laser physics.**
- Gérard Mourou and Donna Strickland created CPA to amplify ultrashort laser pulses safely, earning them the Nobel Prize in Physics in 2018.
- Physicists initially had little knowledge of eye anatomy but made a crucial discovery by accident.
- **A lab assistant was accidentally struck by a laser, and the ophthalmologist who treated him became interested in the laser’s precise effects on the retina.**
- **This curiosity led to exploring the laser’s medical uses, resulting in femtosecond ophthalmology.**
- CPA allowed lasers to produce extremely short pulses of light, leading to innovations in medical procedures.
- CPA-based lasers are now used in eye surgeries like femtosurgery, offering high precision with minimal damage to surrounding tissues.
- These lasers emit pulses lasting only a few quadrillionths of a second, improving surgical outcomes and recovery times.
- Laser-Assisted Cataract Surgery: Uses femtosecond lasers to make precise incisions and soften the lens, improving accuracy and safety compared to traditional methods.

- **Femtosecond Lasers:** Emit infrared light at 1053 nm, with pulses lasting femtoseconds (10^{-15} seconds), which is much shorter than the Nd laser's nanoseconds (10^{-9} seconds). This reduces damage to surrounding tissues.
- **Benefits:** Femtosecond lasers cause much less collateral damage, allowing for very precise surgeries. Over 10 million femtolaser surgeries have been performed worldwide.
- **Lasers in Cancer Therapy:** High-intensity lasers are being researched for targeting and destroying cancer cells with precision, potentially leading to non-invasive treatments.
- **Future of Lasers:** The ongoing developments in laser technology show promise for more advanced medical procedures and therapies.

Why the Union govt. banned 156 'irrational' fixed dose combinations (30 August)

The move, according to the Centre, is aimed at safe guarding the public, ensuring that resistance to certain drugs do not develop in large numbers due to irrational use, and to also curb misuse of drug administration where not warranted

- **Ban on Fixed Dose Combinations (FDCs):** The Union Health Ministry has banned 156 FDC medicines including antibiotics, painkillers, and multivitamins due to health risks.
- **Definition:** FDCs are drugs that combine two or more active ingredients into a single pill, capsule, or injection.
- **Reason for Ban:** Many of these FDCs were approved by state authorities but lacked research or trials proving their safety. The new rules require FDCs to be approved by the central drug regulator.
- **Purpose:** The ban aims to protect public health by preventing drug resistance and misuse. Safer alternatives are available, according to the expert committee's recommendations.
- **Example Drugs Banned:** Includes combinations like Mefenamic acid + Paracetamol injection and Cetirizine HCl + Paracetamol + Phenylephrine HCl.
- **Expert Opinion:** Anil Bansal from the Delhi Medical Association noted that irrational combination drugs can pose health risks, especially when sold over-the-counter without proper research and trials.

Why disconnecting from work is important for mental health

- **Changing Attitudes:** Working long hours and being always available was once seen as a badge of honor, but now many employees and health professionals are pushing back against this norm.
- **New Trend:** Employees now value having time off without work intruding, and the idea of being constantly available is increasingly frowned upon.
- **Australia's New Law:** Australia has introduced a "right to disconnect" law, allowing workers to ignore work-related communications outside of their working hours, unless it's unreasonable.
- **Prime Minister's Statement:** Australian PM Anthony Albanese emphasized that people should not have to work 24/7 and highlighted the importance of mental health and work-life balance.
- **Contrast with India:** In India, long working hours are still common, with many CEOs promoting the idea of working more hours and less emphasis on work-life balance.
- **Work Hours in India:** India ranks among the top 10 countries for the number of hours worked per week, averaging 47.7 hours, which is significantly more than Germany's average of 34.3 hours.
- **Impact on Mental Health:** Long work hours, along with other factors, can negatively affect mental health. Factors include individual roles, responsibilities, and workplace conditions, as noted by Paulomi Sudhir from NIMHANS.

The need to switch of

- **Overworking Issues:** Working too much can reduce productivity and lead to burnout. Not being able to disconnect from work can cause exhaustion and mental health problems.
- **Importance of Switching Off:** It's crucial to switch off from work to maintain mental well-being. If you can't disconnect, it may affect your sleep, eating habits, and overall mental health.
- **Need for Breaks:** Regular breaks are important for mental health. Studies show that in high-stress jobs, not having time off increases stress levels.
- **Cultural Constraints in India:** In India, cultural expectations often require long working hours. The need to respond quickly to work-related messages persists even after the pandemic.
- **Impact on Women:** Women are especially affected as they are often primary caregivers at home. They spend about five more hours per day on unpaid household work compared to men, which can lead to mental health issues.
- **Four-Day Work Weeks:** Some countries are adopting four-day work weeks, recognizing the benefits of having time away from work. This approach improves productivity and mental health.

Moving the spotlight to grassroots democracy (30 August)

- **Election Commission of India (ECI):** Known for conducting fair and timely elections for Parliament and State legislatures, the ECI is a respected institution.
- **State Election Commissions (SECs):** There are 34 SECs responsible for local elections, but they face significant issues.
- **Constitutional Basis:** SECs were established by Articles 243K and 243ZA of the Constitution (from 1993 amendments) to oversee elections for local governments.
- **Problems with SECs:** SECs often face disempowerment and conflicts with State governments. For example, the Karnataka SEC had to file a contempt petition due to delays by the state government.
- **Supreme Court Cases:** The Andhra Pradesh SEC had to challenge an ordinance that blocked local elections, with the Supreme Court eventually ruling against the ordinance.
- **Audit Findings:** A report showed that 70% of urban local governments did not have elected councils, partly due to SEC disempowerment.
- **Janaagraha Survey:** Only 11 out of 34 States and Union Territories have empowered SECs to handle ward delimitation. These 11 regions cover only 35% of India's population.
- **Electoral reforms to strengthen third tier**
- **Importance of Local Elections:** Local government elections are crucial for effective grassroots democracy and must be held on time, just like national elections.
- **Need for SEC Empowerment:** State Election Commissions (SECs) should be as independent and transparent as the Election Commission of India. This includes having a three-member SEC appointed by a committee including the Chief Minister, Leader of the Opposition, and Chief Justice of the High Court.
- **Reforms Needed:**
- **SEC Independence:** SECs should be made independent with transparent appointments, not just appointed by state governments.
- **Regular Delimitation:** Ward boundaries and seat reservations should be updated at fixed intervals, like every 10 years, to avoid delays and arbitrary actions by state governments.
- **Powers to SECs:** SECs should handle the delimitation and reservation of seats for local governments and positions like mayors and presidents. They should also oversee the reservation roster to avoid delays.
- **Addressing Malpractices:** SECs should manage the elections of key positions like mayors and presidents to prevent issues seen in recent cases, such as the Chandigarh Municipal Corporation Council election in 2024.

By another name (30 August)

Courts should act against fake medicine, not just control advertising

- **Supreme Court Case:** The Supreme Court of India has recently dealt with misleading advertisements for ayurveda, siddha, and unani products.
- **Previous Actions:** Earlier, the Court had acted against Patanjali Ayurved for making unproven medicinal claims. Patanjali was ordered to apologize publicly, but regulatory responses were still developing.
- **Regulatory Challenges:** The Ministry of AYUSH has complicated matters by allowing various products to be labeled as “Ayurvedic” and attempting to bypass quality rules to benefit businesses.
- **Current Issue:** The Ministry’s attempt to avoid enforcing Rule 170, which penalizes misleading ads, has frustrated the Court. The Ministry's actions have weakened medicine quality protections.
- **Court's Possible Solutions:** The Court might focus on improving past declarations and strengthening the quality-control system. This includes protecting it from political influence and ensuring alternative medicines are properly regulated.

Biotech enigma (30 August)

Biotechnology initiatives need long-term capital investments

- **New Policy:** The Cabinet approved a proposal called BioE3 to enhance biotechnology manufacturing in India. The budget for this has not been specified.
- **Past Achievements:** Since 1986, India’s biotechnology department has made progress, especially in vaccine development and diagnostics.
- **Current Limitations:** Despite advancements, India's biotech sector has not achieved the scale of the IT sector. Reliance on imports for biotech ingredients and devices limits global competitiveness.
- **BioE3 Objectives:** The policy aims to boost biotechnology manufacturing through public-private partnerships, focusing on six areas:
 - Bio-based chemicals and enzymes
 - Functional foods and smart proteins
 - Precision biotherapeutics
 - Climate-resilient agriculture
 - Carbon capture

- Marine and space research
- **Future Focus:** The policy aims to transition from fossil fuels to biotechnology for sustainable products and solutions.
- **Implementation Challenges:** Effective implementation requires long-term capital investment and collaboration between the Centre and States. The policy needs sustained financial and infrastructural support to succeed.

Should lateral entry in the civil services be encouraged? (30 August)

- **UPSC Controversy:** The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) withdrew a recent advertisement for 45 lateral entry positions (10 Joint Secretary, 35 Director/Deputy Secretary) due to backlash from Opposition parties.
- **Accusations:** Opposition parties claimed the move aimed to bypass reservation policies and take jobs from OBCs, SCs, and STs.
- **Need for Lateral Entry:**
 - **Ashok Vardhan Shetty:**
 - Objects to hiring experts for administrative posts like Deputy Secretary, Director, and Joint Secretary.
 - Believes these posts should be filled by those who have passed the rigorous civil services exam and have extensive experience.
 - **Harsh Shrivastava:**
 - Supports lateral entry for specialized fields like disaster management, semiconductors, and emerging tech.
 - Differentiates between policymaking (which requires specialized expertise) and implementation (better handled by IAS officers).
- **Policy vs. Implementation:**
 - **Ashok Vardhan Shetty:** Argues that policymaking and implementation are interconnected; effective policies need implementation experience.
 - **Harsh Shrivastava:** Believes experts can contribute to policymaking while IAS officers are better suited for implementation roles.
- **Historical Context:**
 - In 1972, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in Pakistan advocated for lateral entry into civil services, claiming it would bring needed specialization.
 - Bhutto's successors, including General Zia Haq, also used lateral entry, often appointing political loyalists and military personnel.
- **Current Concerns:**
 - Lateral entry can lead to a "spoils system," where political connections rather than expertise determine appointments.
 - Risks include the growth of cronyism, nepotism, and corruption over time.
- **Safeguards Against Cronyism:**
 - **Ashok Vardhan Shetty:** Suggests that lateral entry should involve a tough written test and rigorous interview to ensure merit-based selection.
 - **Harsh Shrivastava:** Argues that similar scrutiny should apply to the IAS selection process to prevent ideological bias and ensure competence.
 - Modern tools like LinkedIn and social media can provide transparency and accountability in the selection process.
- **Limitations of Interviews:**
 - Interviews alone are not reliable for assessing expertise. An example is Puja Khedkar, who excelled in her interview but was later found to have faked her identity.
- **Suitable Levels for Lateral Entry:**
 - **Ashok Vardhan Shetty:**
 - Lateral entry should be at the Secretary level where expertise is well-established, or entry-level positions through competitive exams.
 - Mid-level appointments (like Director, Deputy Secretary) are more questionable in terms of expertise.
 - **Harsh Shrivastava:**
 - Lateral entry is suitable at the Joint Secretary level, where experience can help in policymaking and management.
 - Outsiders with high-level experience can bring new working styles and efficiency.
- **Opposition's Concerns:**
 - The Opposition argues that the government's lateral entry policy might bypass reservation requirements.
 - This backlash led to the rollback of the policy.
- **Harsh Shrivastava's View:**
 - The additional lateral entry posts do not reduce existing positions.
 - The government could have included preferences for women or SC/ST candidates in these new positions.
- **Ashok Vardhan Shetty's View:**
 - The new lateral entry posts are taken from existing positions, affecting promotion prospects for current career bureaucrats.
 - Previous recommendations suggested earmarking 10% of posts for lateral entry, but it was never implemented.
 - Reservations for SCs, STs, OBCs, and EWS should apply to these posts, but the UPSC treated them as standalone posts to avoid applying reservations.
 - The Minister for Personnel has requested a review of this policy to ensure fair application of reservations.

Analysing the Gender Budget of 2024-25 (30 August)

What are the different components of the Gender Budget Statement? Have instances of missing allocations been reported by experts with respect to the Gender Budget? How should these anomalies be rectified by the government?

- **Increase in Pro-Women Budget:**
 - The gender budget share reached 1% of GDP in 2024-25, totaling over ₹3 lakh crore.
 - This is higher than the usual 5% of total budgetary allocations, now at approximately 6.8%.
- **Reasons for Increase:**
 - **Part C Addition:** Includes schemes with less than 30% women's allocation (e.g., PM Kisan with ₹15,000 crore).
 - **Part A Increase:** Includes schemes with 100% women's allocation. For example, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) was moved to Part A, significantly increasing its reported share.
- **Reporting Issues:**
 - **Over-Reporting:** PM Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) showed ₹920 crore as 40% of its total without clear explanation.
 - **Missing Allocations:** National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) was correctly reported in Part A this year but only 50% previously. Some women entrepreneur schemes were missed.
- **Anomalies:**
 - **MGNREGS:** Reported as 33.6% for women's allocations despite women making up 59.3% of its workforce.
 - Need for better explanations and accurate reporting in the Gender Budget Statement (GBS).
- **Future Steps:**
 - Improve accuracy and transparency by including detailed explanations in GBS.
 - Ensure actual spending reflects the reported allocations for women's development.
 - Aim for better gender-responsive budgeting to address gender gaps effectively.

On the controversy over lateral entry into the civil services (30 August)

Why did the Prime Minister's Office intervene and withdraw the advertisement regarding lateral entry for different positions in government? What is a spoils system and how does it work?

- **UPSC Withdraws Advertisement:**
 - UPSC withdrew its ad for 45 lateral recruitment posts (Joint Secretaries, Directors, Deputy Secretaries) after objections from coalition partners, the Opposition, and intervention by the PMO regarding the need for reservation.
- **Merit System vs. Spoils System:**
 - **Merit System:** Appointments are based on a rigorous selection process by an independent authority, aimed at creating career bureaucrats who provide unbiased advice. It began in 1858 with the ICS and continues with the UPSC exams for central services.
 - **Spoils System:** Involves appointing supporters of the political executive to government posts. Originating in the U.S., it was largely replaced by merit systems after 1883.
- **Lateral Entry:**
 - **Definition:** Involves appointing individuals from private sector, public sector undertakings, and academia to senior and middle management positions in the government.
 - **Examples:** Notable lateral entrants include former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, economist Montek Singh Ahluwalia, and agriculture scientist M.S. Swaminathan.
 - **Recommendations:** The Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2005) and NITI Aayog (2017) recommended lateral entry to bring specialized skills into governance.
- **Pros of Lateral Entry:**
 - Specialization: Brings expertise in niche areas like emerging technologies, cyber security, and climate change.
 - Fresh Ideas: Introduces new perspectives and approaches to governance.
 - Increased Responsiveness: Can make career bureaucrats more adaptable and improve efficiency.
- **Cons of Lateral Entry:**
 - Limited Domain Expertise: Outside experts may lack the field experience of IAS officers.
 - Coordination Issues: Potential for friction between lateral entrants and career bureaucrats.
 - Openness and Conflicts of Interest: Risks of transparency issues and conflicts when hiring from the private sector.
- **Way Forward:**
 - High-Level Appointments: Lateral entrants are more suitable at higher levels like Secretary, where they can influence policy and are subject to more scrutiny.
 - Balance: Appointments should combine technical expertise with considerations of reservation and social justice.
 - Broader Issues: Focusing solely on lateral entrants won't fix all systemic problems. Career bureaucrats face challenges like red tape, inefficiency, and political interference.

- **Autonomy:** Career bureaucrats need autonomy in postings and transfers to function effectively. Civil Service Boards should be strengthened as per the 2013 Supreme Court judgment in the T.S.R. Subramanian case.