

UPSC CURRENT AFFAIRS NOTES 05-12-2024

Reshaped By AI: How AI Is Changing What Sovereignty Means

The year 2023 has seen and left behind an uncertain global landscape marked by conflicts, environmental concerns, and technological advancements.



Therefore, to address such issues, AI governance in particular, a significant effort is underway to shape the ethical use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and related frontier technologies.

The United Nations (UN) has taken an important role in this endeavor, exemplified by the joint session of the High-Level Committee on Programmes and the High-Level Committee on Management in October 2023.

Key Features of the UN's Commitment to an Ethical Framework

Represents a Cornerstone in Ethical Use of AI

The UN commitment to an ethical framework for AI governance represents a cornerstone in shaping the responsible and human-centric development of emerging technologies.



Rooted in the principles laid out in the UNESCO declaration, this ethical framework provides a comprehensive guide for the use and governance of AI within the UN system.

Respect for Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms

The foundation of the ethical framework is the unequivocal commitment to respecting, protecting, and promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The acknowledgment of the inherent dignity of individuals serves as a guiding principle to ensure that AI technologies do not infringe upon basic human rights.

Promotes Diversity and Inclusiveness

To counteract biases and discriminatory practices, the framework underscores the importance of diversity and inclusiveness.

It advocates for AI systems that are designed to be inclusive, considering a diverse range of perspectives, cultural contexts, and individual experiences to prevent the perpetuation of societal inequalities.

Good Governance and Just Development

The ethical framework extends its reach to the broader aspects of governance and development.

Emphasizing good governance principles, it calls for transparent, accountable, and participatory decision-making processes in the development and deployment of AI.

Additionally, it advocates for AI to contribute to just and equitable development, ensuring that the benefits of technological advancements are shared across all segments of society.

Transformation of Territorial Sovereignty into Digital Sovereignty and its Implications

Transformation of Territorial Sovereignty

There has been a subtle yet profound transformation in the principle of territorial sovereignty.

As nations navigate the digital age, control over information and data becomes a central aspect of sovereignty.



The traditional understanding of territorial boundaries expands to encompass control over digital mediums.

Efforts to Accumulate Classified Data

Digital sovereignty also involves the accumulation and control of classified data.

There are potential risks associated with this data accumulation, raising concerns about privacy, security, and the potential misuse of sensitive information.

In diplomacy, the control over classified data becomes a form of soft power, shaping nations' ability to influence global narratives and secure their interests in the digital domain.

Disinformation and Diplomatic Challenge

In recent times there has been a prevalence of disinformation, misleading information, and hate speech in the digital realm.

In diplomacy, these challenges pose significant hurdles in maintaining transparent and constructive international relations.

Manipulation of Democratic Processes

Karl Manheim and Lyric Kaplan's article emphasizes the growing threat of AI tools in manipulating the preconditions and levers of democracy.

As AI becomes more prevalent in political processes, there is a risk that it may be employed to manipulate public opinion, influence elections, and undermine the democratic principles that govern transparent and fair governance.

This manipulation poses a fundamental threat to the democratic fabric of societies worldwide.

Threats to Decisional and Informational Privacy

The deployment of AI, particularly in the context of Big Data Analytics and the Internet of Things, poses threats to both decisional and informational privacy.

AI's principal function, at present, is to capture personal information and create detailed behavioral profiles.



This jeopardizes individuals' autonomy and privacy, as decisions and actions become subject to surveillance and analysis, potentially leading to the erosion of personal freedoms.

The ongoing digital conflicts between the US and China underscore the existence of three distinct "digital empires."

The Ongoing Conflict Among Major Digital Empires

Anu Bradford's analysis suggests that the US, with its techno-optimistic model emphasising freedom for the AI industry, contrasts with China's state-driven regulatory model, characterized by surveillance and control.

The global rise of China's model raises concerns about its normative and descriptive influence, particularly in authoritarian countries.

The European Union's model, prioritising a human rights-based approach, offers an alternative that aligns with a more equitable and human-centric digital economy.

Consequence of the Ongoing Conflict Among Digital Empires

Techno-Optimism Could be Dangerous

While there are potential benefits of AI, an overly optimistic approach may lead to the neglect of ethical considerations, resulting in the unchecked growth of industries that prioritize profit over principles.

This techno-optimism run wild could lead to a future where privacy and democracy become relics of the past.

Points to an Uncertain Future

As the world grapples with divergent models of AI governance, Bradford prompts reflection on the uncertain future of the technopolitical landscape.

The competition between surveillance capitalism, digital authoritarianism, and liberal democratic values remains unresolved.

It raises the question as to which foundation will underpin human engagement and societal development in the digital era.

Ways Ahead to Prevent These Challenges

Establishment of Transborder Governance of AI



There is a need for the **centrality of transborder governance** in the regulation of AI technologies.

As AI transcends geographical boundaries, it becomes imperative to establish international frameworks that govern its ethical development and use.

The discussions within the United Nations committees exemplify a concerted effort to create a global consensus on the norms and regulations governing AI.

Moreover, it recognises that unilateral approaches are insufficient in addressing the transnational nature of these technologies.

A Shift Towards Digital Diplomacy

The evolving dynamics of digital sovereignty necessitate a re-evaluation of traditional diplomatic practices.

Digital diplomacy becomes a crucial aspect of international relations, encompassing efforts to navigate the challenges posed by digital technologies while leveraging them for diplomatic purposes.

Nations must engage in strategic digital diplomacy to safeguard their interests, project influence, and build alliances in the digital age.

Rules for allocation of symbols to unrecognized political parties

The Election Commission of India introduced new regulations for allocating symbols to Registered Unrecognised Political Parties (RUPPs).

Now, these parties must provide:

Audited accounts from the last three financial years.

Expenditure statements from the last two elections.

The signature of the authorized party official along with their symbol application.

Registered Unrecognised Political Parties (RUPPs)

Registration of political parties

Article 324 of the Indian Constitution grants the ECI the authority to register political parties.



The registration of all political parties is governed by the provisions of **Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951.**

According to the ECI, any party seeking registration must file an application (to the Secretary to the ECI) within 30 days of its formation.

About RUPPs

These parties include:

Newly registered ones, those that haven't gained sufficient votes to be a state/national party, and those that have never participated in elections since their registration. Such parties do not enjoy all the benefits extended to the recognised parties. A recognised political party shall either be a National party or a State party if it meets certain laid down conditions.

Allotment of election symbols to political parties in India

Responsibility of ECI

The Election Commission of India (ECI) is responsible for the allotment of symbols.

This is done under **The Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968.**

This rule is meant to provide for specification, reservation, choice and allotment of symbols at elections in Parliamentary and Assembly Constituencies, for the recognition of political parties.

Symbols can be either reserved, meaning they are exclusive to a recognised political party, or 'free'.

A political party can be recognized as a national or state party if it meets certain criteria.

The EC publishes lists specifying the parties and their symbols through a notification in the Gazette of India.

Unrecognised registered parties and election symbol

Unrecognised registered parties' candidates can choose from free, non-exclusive symbols.



After being selected by parties, in subsequent elections, these symbols are declared free again for others to choose.

Recognised parties and election symbol

Recognised national and state parties get exclusive symbols.

Unregistered parties and election symbol

These are supposed to give the names of ten symbols, in order of preference, out of the list of free symbols notified by the commission.

As per the 1968 order, party may also propose three new symbols of their choice, with the names and clear design and drawings of symbol, in the order of preference.

The Commission, then, may consider these symbols for allotment as its common symbol if there is, in its opinion, no objection in allotting such symbol.

Symbols proposed by the parties should have no resemblance to the existing reserved symbols or free symbols, or any religious or communal connotation, or **depict any bird or animal**.

Split of a recognised political party and the issue of election symbol

Para 15 of the Symbols Order, 1968 empowers EC to decide on the claim of rival factions in case of split.

EC decides on the issue after taking into account all the available facts and circumstances of the case and hearing their representatives.

The decision of the Commission is binding on all such rival sections or groups.

For splits in **registered but unrecognised parties**, the ECI usually advises the warring factions to resolve their differences internally or to approach the court.

The Election Commission of India has brought in new rules for allocation of symbols to Registered Unrecognised Political Parties (RUPPs).

Existing practice

Common symbols are provided to RUPPs based upon an undertaking that they would put up at least 5% of total candidates with regard to said Legislative Assembly election of a State.

Northeast African Cheetah

A group of experts have appealed to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to reclassify the status of the Northeast African Cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus soemmeringii*) to 'endangered' from 'vulnerable'.



About Northeast African Cheetah:

It is found in the Horn of Africa.

It is also known as the **Sudan cheetah**. This subspecies is more closely related to the Southern African cheetah than to Saharan cheetah populations.

The cheetah's long tail helps it keep its balance when changing direction mid-chase. Cheetahs can make even 90-degree turns with ease while sprinting.

Appearance: Like its relative to the south in East Africa, the Northeast African cheetah is fairly large. Physically, it most resembles the East African cheetah.

Distribution: Contemporary records are known in South Sudan and Ethiopia. These animals live in wide open lands, grasslands, semi-arid areas, and other open habitats where prey is abundant such as in the East Sudanian Savanna.

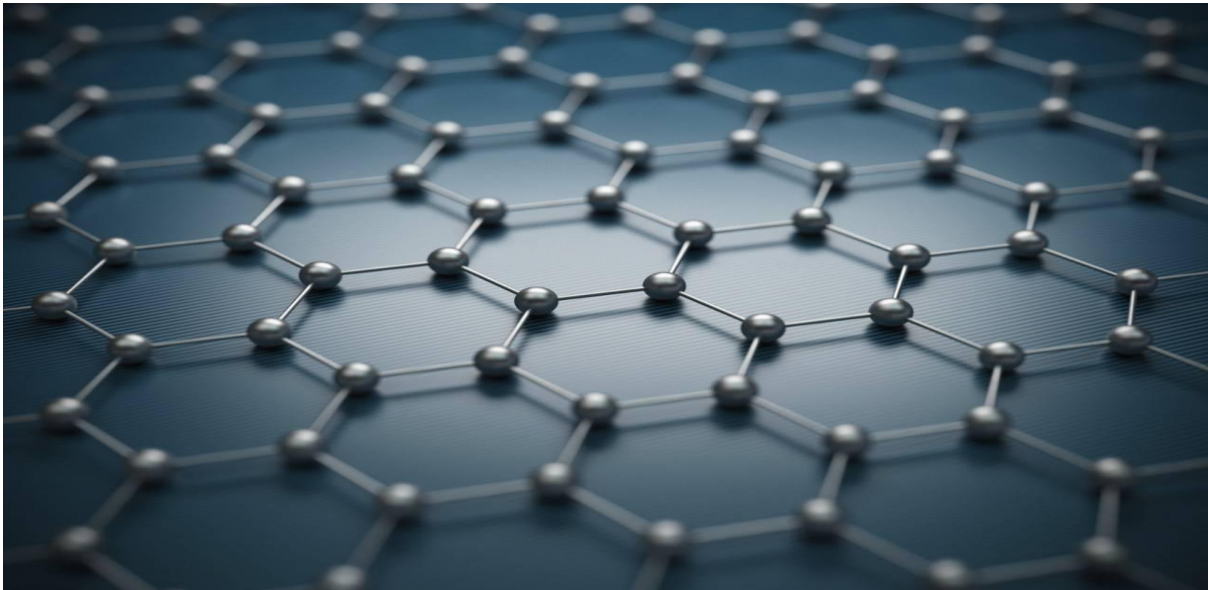
Threat: The subspecies' cubs are being heavily trafficked across the Red Sea to Arab countries like Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

Conservation status

IUCN: Vulnerable

Graphene

Researchers recently created the world's first functional semiconductor made from graphene.



Graphene is a one-atom-thick layer of carbon atoms arranged in a hexagonal lattice.

It is the building-block of Graphite (which is used, among other things, in pencil tips).

It was first isolated in 2004.

Properties:

Graphene is the world's thinnest material; it is only one atom thick, one million times thinner than human hair.

However, it is very strong, stronger than steel and diamond.

It is an excellent conductor of heat and electricity. It conducts electricity better than copper.

It is almost perfectly transparent, as it absorbs only 2% of light.

It is impermeable to gases, even those as light as hydrogen and helium.



Applications:

Mechanical strength: It can be used to enhance the strength of other materials.

Thermal applications:

It is a great material for making heat-spreading solutions, such as heat sinks or heat dissipation films.

This could be useful in both microelectronics (for example, to make LED lighting more efficient and longer-lasting) and in larger applications, for example, thermal foils for mobile devices.

Energy storage:

Since graphene is the world's thinnest material, it also has an extremely high surface-area-to-volume ratio. This makes graphene a very promising material for use in batteries and supercapacitors.

Graphene may enable batteries and supercapacitors (and even fuel cells) that can store more energy and charge faster, too.

It has a lot of promise for additional applications: anti-corrosion coatings and paints, efficient and precise sensors, faster and more efficient electronics, flexible displays, efficient solar panels, faster DNA sequencing, drug delivery, and more.

WARLI TRIBE

The mention of leopard sightings may strike terror in the hearts of most people. But for the Warlis living near Sanjay Gandhi National Park in Maharashtra, the **Waghoba or leopard deity** is worshipped and revered, not feared.

They are an indigenous adivasi group that inhabits the bordering, hilly, and coastal areas of Gujarat and Maharashtra.

The word "**Warla,**" which meaning "**piece of land,**" is the root of the term "Warli."

Language: Varli, sometimes known as Warli, is an Indo-Aryan language spoken by the Warli people. Although the language is commonly categorised as Marathi, it is also referred to as Bhil or Konkani.



Culture: They have embraced many Hindu ideas and have their own animistic beliefs, way of life, rituals, and traditions.

The idea of Mother Nature is central to Warli culture, and natural objects are often shown as main points in Warli paintings.

Fashion and attire: The ladies of the Warli Tribe often don a one-yard sari called a Lugden, which is worn until the knee.

The sari was influenced by the rural areas of Maharashtra. The drape is knee length and has a Maharashtrian saree draping feel to it.

Celebration: The Warli tribes celebrate Bohada, a three-day mask celebration. The proprietors of these masks don them and give multiple performances during this festivity.

Tarpa dance and music are performed by the Warli Tribes, who also play Tarpa instruments.

Typically, they give group performances. With a **Tarpa instrument** in hand, one person begins to play music, and the others surround him or her, dancing as they dance.