

## Can the ICJ ruling compel wealthy nations to pay for historic emissions?

### Essence of the ICJ Opinion

#### Advisory Status

The ICJ's verdict is not binding but provides authoritative legal clarity on existing international climate responsibilities.

#### Core Affirmations:

- States are under legal duty to cut greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.
- Wealthier nations must assist climate-vulnerable states bearing disproportionate impacts.
- The ruling reaffirms the 1.5°C ceiling from the Paris Agreement as a necessary climate safeguard.

### Relevance: GS Paper 3 – Environment & Ecology

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#### Legal and Scientific Hurdles

##### Causation Complexity:

Pinpointing specific national emissions as the direct cause of a particular climate disaster remains scientifically unfeasible.

While climate change intensifies many events, it rarely serves as their sole trigger, making legal attribution ambiguous.

##### Burden of Proof:

Courts generally require hard evidence that a state's inaction directly caused tangible harm. With global temperatures still hovering around 1–1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, many weather extremes lack a clear anthropogenic fingerprint.

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#### Geopolitical and Enforcement Realities

##### Sovereignty Dominates:

Major emitters like the U.S., China, and India are unlikely to revamp their energy architectures in response to an unenforceable ICJ ruling.

ICJ lacks any enforcement mechanism; coercive action would need backing from the UN Security Council, where geopolitical interests reign.

##### Inconsistent Adherence:

The U.S. previously exited the Paris Agreement and still provides fossil fuel subsidies. Western powers often sidestep liability, while developing nations face tighter compliance under the same legal mechanisms.

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### Reparations and Compensation: Illusions or Opportunities?

#### Realism Check:

Historical experience suggests limited fulfillment of financial pledges, with many climate funds rebranded versions of standard development aid.

Ted Nordhaus critiques the focus on reparations, suggesting it diverts from urgent development needs and energy access in poorer nations.

### **Loss and Damage Fund:**

While symbolically powerful, the fund's actual disbursement remains inadequate.

Both Nordhaus and legal scholar Grover express skepticism about its potential for delivering meaningful compensation.

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## **Domestic Impact and Legal Leverage**

### **National Utility:**

The ICJ's reasoning can bolster climate lawsuits and activism within countries that have ratified relevant treaties.

It is more likely to be weaponized domestically than to launch a wave of global legal battles.

### **Island Advocacy:**

Small Island Developing States (SIDS) could use the ruling to fortify their legal arguments and diplomatic strategies on the world stage.

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## **Changing Global Technology Dynamics**

### **Tech Flows Reversed:**

Clean technology exports are increasingly led by China, with India emerging too—challenging outdated models of north-to-south tech transfer.

### **Framework Misalignment:**

The ICJ's rationale still leans on the old "Common But Differentiated Responsibilities" (CBDR) formula.

There's growing momentum to reform climate frameworks to reflect today's multipolar innovation landscape.

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## **Equity Versus Pragmatism**

### **Ecomodernist Perspective (Nordhaus):**

Attempts to impose equity through global legal systems—such as the Loss and Damage Fund or ICJ rulings—have proven ineffective.

He advocates for domestic, development-led strategies that prioritize energy access.

### **Justice Lens (Grover):**

Recognizes that global legal regimes reflect double standards.

Argues that developing nations should address domestic challenges proactively—citing Delhi's air pollution and fossil fuel lobbying as key examples.

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## **Prospects and Limitations**

### **No Global Legal Avalanche:**

Despite some political fanfare (e.g., U.K.'s opposition figures), the ruling is unlikely to launch widespread international litigation.

**Strategic Asset, Not Game-Changer:**

Better seen as a domestic legal tool rather than a pivot toward global climate accountability.

**Political Reality Check:**

Courts alone cannot compel systemic decarbonization. Real change depends on political will, economic pressures, and shifting power dynamics.

**How not to identify an illegal immigrant**

**Context and Bureaucratic Trigger**

**Winter 2024 Clampdown:**

During Delhi's cold wave, the Lieutenant Governor, Vinai Kumar Saxena, instructed the police to locate "illegal" foreign nationals, particularly following political instability in Bangladesh.

This led to a noticeable increase in detentions of Bengali-speaking residents in urban slums.

**Relevance: GS Paper 2 – Governance & Social Issues**

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**Operational Dynamics of the Crackdown**

**Target Group:**

Bengali-speaking individuals residing in informal settlements (jhuggis) became the main focus.

**Indicators Used for Suspicion:**

- Language spoken (various Bangla dialects).
- Anonymous tips citing speech and origin.
- Clothing style (e.g., lungi) and remittance behavior.

**Primary Concern:**

Law enforcement relied on linguistic and cultural profiling rather than verified documentation or established legal protocols.

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**Bias in Linguistic and Cultural Perception**

**Narrow Cultural Lens:**

There's a skewed understanding of what constitutes "Indian" Bengali identity—often shaped by urban Kolkata culture.

**Misconceptions Include:**

- Rural or non-Kolkata dialects being mistaken for foreign speech.
- Common words like "*paani*" (used in ancient Bengali texts like *Charyapada*) wrongly interpreted as foreign.

**Outcome:**

Cultural traits, rather than legal status, were weaponized as evidence of foreign origin.

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## Legal and Institutional Gaps

### Failure to Consider Key Realities:

- No recognition of the 2015 India–Bangladesh land agreement, which offered residents a choice of nationality.
- No nuance in assessing cases involving mixed-status families or legitimate cross-border remittances.

### Case Example:

An Indian citizen was detained solely for sending money to his parents in Bangladesh.

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## Cultural and Ethnic Profiling

### Visible Cultural Symbols Used for Policing:

- Clothing like the *lungi* was flagged as “foreign.”
- Sending money abroad was automatically seen as suspicious.

### Cultural Resistance:

Locals pushed back with protest songs and slogans:

*"Just because I wear a lungi doesn't mean I'm from Bangladesh."*

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## Intersection of Caste, Class, and Identity

### Initial Focus:

The campaign originally targeted Bengali Muslims.

### Expanded Scope:

It soon included lower-caste Bengali Hindus as well.

This exposed how vulnerability was shaped more by class, caste, and speech than actual citizenship.

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## Elite Silence and Public Discourse

### Noticeable Silence:

Bengali intellectuals—writers, academics, and media figures—have largely remained quiet.

### Unanswered Questions:

- Does class detachment explain the silence of urban elites?
  - Are they uncomfortable associating with working-class Bengali identities and attire?
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## Wider Consequences

### Normalization of Xenophobia:

Language and clothing are increasingly equated with illegality, fostering deep social divisions.

### **Weak Institutional Safeguards:**

- Poor documentation processes.
- Lack of access to legal aid.
- No training for officials in linguistic and cultural diversity.

### **Long-Term Risk:**

A growing rift within ethnic, class, and religious lines due to institutional overreach.

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### **Key Insights**

- Cultural assumptions must not override the principles of legal due process.
  - Language, attire, or financial behavior should not substitute lawful methods for determining citizenship.
  - Solutions must include official training, better documentation systems, and community participation to prevent arbitrary targeting.
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### **Why the world needs better green technologies**

#### **Backdrop and Central Dilemma**

##### **Context:**

With climate targets and energy independence driving global action, countries are pushing to expand renewable energy.

##### **Key Question:**

Should silicon-based solar panels remain the dominant solution, or is it time to shift focus to higher-efficiency, next-gen solar technologies?

##### **Relevance: GS Paper 3 – Environment and Ecology**

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### **Overview of Silicon Photovoltaics (Si-PV)**

#### **Invention:**

Developed in 1954 by Bell Labs in the United States.

#### **Performance:**

- Laboratory efficiency: 18–21%.
- Real-world efficiency: 15–18%.

#### **Production Hubs:**

- China supplies about 80% of global Si-PV panels.
  - India's current domestic capacity stands at around 6 GW, with plans to scale up.
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### **Land Use and Efficiency Concerns**



**Efficiency Criticality:**

Improving panel efficiency can significantly reduce land requirements.  
For instance, doubling efficiency effectively cuts land use by half.

**Urban Constraints:**

Urban expansion and environmental restrictions limit availability for large-scale solar installations.

Si-PV's lower efficiency poses a challenge in such settings.

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**Next-Generation Solar Alternatives****Promising Options:**

- **Gallium Arsenide (GaAs) Thin-Film Panels** – up to 47% efficiency.
  - Many emerging PV technologies are lab-proven and ready for commercial scale-up.
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**Energy Demand vs Renewable Supply****India's Progress:**

By the end of 2024, India had installed 4.45 TWh of renewable energy capacity.

**Atmospheric Trends:**

CO<sub>2</sub> levels have jumped from 350 ppm in 1990 to roughly 425 ppm by 2025.

**Implication:**

Renewable growth is not yet sufficient to outpace rising energy demand.

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**Green Hydrogen – Potential and Pitfalls****Production Method:**

Created through electrolysis using renewable electricity.

**Challenges:**

- Electrolysis remains energy-heavy.
  - Hydrogen is hard to store and transport due to low density and leakage.
  - Energy is lost across multiple stages: from solar input → hydrogen generation → storage → final energy use.
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**Suggested Innovations****Molecular Carriers:**

Convert hydrogen to green ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>) or green methanol (CH<sub>3</sub> OH) for easier transport.

However, converting it back to hydrogen still consumes significant energy.

**Artificial Photosynthesis (APS):**

Laboratory-stage tech that mimics plants to produce fuel directly from water, CO<sub>2</sub> /N<sub>2</sub> , and sunlight.

**CO<sub>2</sub> -to-Fuel Recycling:**

Captures CO<sub>2</sub> and converts it into usable fuels—offering dual benefits of climate mitigation and energy generation.

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**European Strategy: RFNBO****Definition:**

Renewable Fuels of Non-Biological Origin (RFNBOs) are fuels generated from renewable power without biomass input.

**Examples Include:**

Green hydrogen, ammonia, and methanol synthesized directly from air and sunlight.

**Policy Implication for India:**

India is encouraged to adopt RFNBO strategies to cut its 85% dependence on imported energy.

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**India's Strategic Imperatives****Current Vulnerability:**

India relies on imports for 85% of its energy (coal, gas, oil).

This dependence makes it highly sensitive to global price shifts and geopolitical crises.

**Call to Action:**

India must scale up R&D funding and promote collaborative innovation between public institutions and private players.

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**Conclusion and Recommendations****Present Solutions Insufficient:**

Green hydrogen and Si-PV can help but won't meet future demand alone.

**Urgent Needs:**

- Technological leaps to improve energy density.
- Smarter land-use strategies.
- Development of scalable, clean fuel systems.

**Final Thought:**

Investing in breakthrough energy R&D today is far more cost-effective than reacting to future climate disasters.

**Malaria's new frontlines**

**Context:**

Rising temperatures and changing climate patterns are expanding malaria zones, particularly into regions previously considered non-endemic.

**Key Themes & Points:**

- **Shifting Geography of Malaria:**
  - Traditionally tropical, malaria is now moving to **highlands, urban peripheries**, and **non-tropical regions**, including parts of India and Africa.
  - Climate change increases the **habitable range of the Anopheles mosquito** and reduces the seasonal constraints on transmission.
- **Public Health Implications:**
  - Regions with **low immunity** (because malaria was previously rare) are more vulnerable.
  - Health systems in these new frontlines may be unprepared, with **low surveillance capacity** and **delayed responses**.
- **India's Position:**
  - India is a significant contributor to global malaria cases but has **reduced cases drastically** in recent years.
  - However, warming climates threaten **plateau regions** and **northern states** which have been largely malaria-free.

**Mystery of the African Mahogany G20 Sapling**

**Context:**

A planted sapling by world leaders at the G20 summit in Delhi went missing, triggering both political jibes and environmental concerns.

**Key Themes & Points:**

- **Symbolism vs. Reality:**
  - Saplings at international summits are symbolic acts of diplomacy and environmental commitment.
  - The disappearance raises questions about **tokenism vs. genuine commitment**.
- **Environmental Irony:**
  - Even a **symbolic tree was not preserved**, pointing to **neglect in urban greening** and ceremonial actions without follow-through.
  - Reflects how **urban planning and governance** sometimes disregard ecological stewardship.
- **Political and Public Reactions:**
  - Sparked social media satire and **opposition party criticism**.



- Government's vague responses reinforced concerns about **lack of transparency**.

## Language and Division of States

### Context:

India's linguistic reorganization of states post-independence continues to influence **identity politics**, governance, and regional demands.

### Key Themes & Points:

- **Linguistic States Formation:**
  - Based on recommendations from the **States Reorganisation Commission (1956)**.
  - Intended to align state boundaries with **linguistic and cultural identities**, easing governance and communication.
- **Contemporary Relevance:**
  - Language remains a **strong marker of identity** — seen in demands for **new states** (e.g., Gorkhaland, Tulu Nadu).
  - Language-based exclusions (like in jobs, education) stir **sub-nationalism**.
- **Challenges:**
  - Balancing **regional aspirations** with **national unity**.
  - **Migration and urbanization** have made many cities multilingual — challenging the **mono-linguistic character** of many state policies.
- **Policy Outlook:**
  - Debate over **three-language formula**, **Hindi imposition**, and **preservation of endangered languages** continues.

02<sup>nd</sup> August 2025: Daily MCQs

### 1. Question

With reference to the recent ICJ advisory opinion on climate change obligations, consider the following statements:

1. It is legally binding on all signatories to the Paris Agreement.
2. It reiterated the legal responsibility of nations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
3. It was endorsed by the UN Security Council, giving it automatic enforcement.

**How many of the above statement is/are correct?**

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) All three

d) None

**Correct Answer: a) Only one**

**Explanation:**

- **Statement 1 is incorrect** because ICJ advisory opinions carry moral and legal weight but **are not enforceable** by law.
- **Statement 2 is correct.** The opinion reinforced the notion that states are **legally obligated** to act on emissions reduction.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect. No endorsement** came from the UN Security Council, meaning **there's no binding enforcement mechanism** behind the opinion.

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## 2. Question

**Assertion (A):** Discriminatory profiling based on attire (like lungi), spoken dialect, or remittance behavior is unconstitutional in India.

**Reason (R):** Article 19 ensures equal protection under the law for all individuals.

**Choose the correct option:**

- a) A is true, R is false
- b) A is false, R is true
- c) A is true, R is true, but R is not the correct explanation of A
- d) A is true, R is the correct explanation of A

**Correct Answer: a) A is true, R is false**

**Explanation:**

- **Assertion is true:** Profiling based on cultural markers like language or clothing violates **Article 14 (equality before the law)** and **Article 21 (right to life and personal liberty)**.
- **Reason is false:** **Article 19** protects freedoms like speech, movement, and association—not equal legal treatment. **Equality before law is enshrined in Article 14**, not 19.

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## 3. Question

**Which of the following best explains why doubling photovoltaic efficiency is critical for India's clean energy transition?**

- a) It enhances panel recyclability
- b) It eliminates the need for energy storage
- c) It decreases the amount of land required for solar farms
- d) It improves silicon wafer durability

**Correct Answer: c) It decreases the amount of land required for solar farms**

**Explanation:**

Raising PV efficiency means more electricity is generated per square metre. This

significantly reduces land use—a **major concern in densely populated or urban areas like India**, where space for solar farms is limited.

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#### 4. Question

Which of the following statements correctly explain why *P. vivax* remains a major challenge in India?

1. It has a dormant stage in the liver that causes relapses.
2. India doesn't yet have a licensed vaccine targeting it.
3. Indian labs actively use the monkey parasite *P. cynomolgi* in vaccine trials.

Select the correct answer using the code below:

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) All three
- d) None

**Correct Answer: b) Only two**

**Explanation:**

- **Statement 1** is true: *P. vivax* can hide in the liver (hypnozoites) and cause **relapses months later**.
  - **Statement 2** is true: India has **no approved vaccine** yet for *P. vivax*.
  - **Statement 3** is false: Although *P. cynomolgi* has similarities to *P. vivax*, **it remains underused** in Indian research despite its potential benefits.
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#### 5. Question

Which of the following are correctly matched in terms of the tree and country representation at the G20 Nehru Park ceremony?

1. China – Camphor Laurel
2. Turkey – Olive Tree
3. Egypt – Date Palm
4. Indonesia – Sausage Tree

Select the correct answer using the code below:

- a) 1 and 4 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1, 2, and 3 only
- d) All four

Correct Answer: c) 1, 2, and 3 only

Explanation:

- **China, Turkey, and Egypt** correctly matched their representative trees.
- **Indonesia**, however, planted a **Frangipani**, not a Sausage Tree. The **African Union** planted the Sausage Tree.

