



Mains Marathon
Compilation

23rd to 28th January, 2023

Mains Marathon Compilation for the Month of January, (Fourth Week) 2023

- 1. Misinformation and disinformation are serious threats in modern democratic societies, but recently announced draft amendments to Information Technology rules are harmful to modern democratic societies. Critically evaluate.**
- 2. Government policies are creating a growth dilemma for domestic exploration and production of oil and gas. Elaborate.**
- 3. In the light of the draft Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Bill, 2022, what are the issues in India's approach to data protection for minors?**
- 4. The New Zealand PM Jacinda Ardern's recent resignation highlights the challenges faced by women in politics. Discuss.**
- 5. Discuss the significance of Ken-Betwa River link project? What are the challenges to its completion?**
- 6. Discuss the challenges faced by the police force in India. What policy measures can be taken to reform it?**
- 7. India's defence tech indigenization should be via an ecosystem involving companies, universities, and IITs. Discuss**
- 8. Highlight the significance of India Egypt relationship.**

Q.1) Misinformation and disinformation are serious threats in modern democratic societies, but recently announced draft amendments to Information Technology rules are harmful to modern democratic societies. Critically evaluate.

Business Standard , Indian Express

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Write some significance of new amendments to IT Rules. Also write some issues that are harmful to modern democratic societies.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) proposed a draft rule – Rule of the amended version of the **IT (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021**. The proposed rule requires social media platforms to take down content that has been “fact-checked” by the Press Information Bureau’s (PIB) fact-check unit (or any other agency authorised by the Central Government) as false.

Significance:

- **Grievance Appellate Committee:** It will be tasked with dealing with “problematic content” in an expeditious manner. This will lead to the **empowerment of citizens**.
- It **requires intermediaries to respect rights guaranteed to users** under the Constitution of India.
- Government has proposed the requirement by intermediaries to address certain complaints regarding **the removal of content from a platform within 72 hours**.
- It will ensure that social media platforms have to **keep better checks and balances** over their platforms. This will ensure the data is not shared unlawfully. This will ensure **adherence to the rule of law**.
- This will **enhance accountability** and prevent arbitrary actions by digital platforms like the recent one by Twitter.
- **Disinformation (Fake and wrong information) of data** can be controlled. This will reduce instances of fake news, violence, the spread of defamatory content and disruption of public order.
- The imposition of print and electronic code of conduct on digital news media would ensure a level playing field for every media.

Harmful to modern democratic societies:

- **Powers of censorship:** It will allow the government to order digital intermediaries to take down posts it deems fake, without any forum for appeal or redressal. This goes **against the letter and spirit of the freedom of speech and expression** enshrined in Article 19 of the Constitution.
- The PIB is a **government agency**, and it is not the government’s role to play editor.
- The PIB’s record thus far in “flagging” misinformation has been **far from perfect**. There have been several instances that the PIB flagged as “fake news” where it later turned out to be mistaken. If it issues takedown orders under a legal architecture that provides no room for appeal, the same errors become constitutionally untenable.

Way forward:

- They **need to arrive at a balance** between the rights of persons who post and those they offend.
- The industry can establish a **self-regulatory appellate body** to which appeals from all content moderation decisions can be referred.

Q.2) Government policies are creating a growth dilemma for domestic exploration and production of oil and gas. Elaborate.

Business Standard

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Write present conditions of domestic exploration and production of oil and gas. Also write trends in consumption and import of natural gas.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

In the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine crude oil prices have skyrocketed, leaving many countries uncertain of their ability to meet demand in the medium to long term. Govt is encouraging huge investment to push demand but also imposing policies that deter domestic exploration and production.

Conditions of domestic exploration and production of oil and gas:

- The new guidelines have **capped the trading margins on resale of gas** and provided **complex conditions** on prioritising sales to households and transport sectors in the case of similar bids at e-auctions.
- It also requires a **huge amount of paperwork** that gas producers must produce before officials. This policy change was announced without any warnings.
- This has made Reliance Industries and BP to postpone an auction in which it decided to sell 6 million cubic metres (mcm) a day of gas to Indian consumers at half the rates of international liquefied natural gas (LNG).
- The government has also come up with policies that have held back the development of domestic oil and gas resulting in **lower domestic production**. This makes India rely on gas imports with volatile global fuel rates.

Trend in consumption and import of natural gas:

- Overall consumption of natural gas **rose 22 percent** between 2015-16 but the growth rate of LNG imports surged 58 percent a day during this period.
- This led to **imports growing at 53 per cent in 2019-20 from 41 percent in 2015-16** because domestic production failed to catch up with demand.
- The dependency on overseas suppliers for **cooking gas rose to 62 per cent from 47 per cent** in 2017-18, after which the government decided to offer subsidised connections under PMUY.
- This import dependency will also **affect India to reach the target of 15 percent natural gas** in the energy mix by 2030 which currently stands at 6 per cent.
- Moreover, natural gas demand from the city gas distribution sector for domestic cooking fuel and transport is expected to grow 15-17 per cent over fiscal 2022-2027.
- This rapid growth in city gas use will **make India more dependent on foreign fuel** due to limited domestic production.

Policies such as interfering with fuel prices and arbitrarily capping margins of traders have discouraged foreign explorers from coming to India. India needs to adopt such policies which build a trust of foreign companies in India and make India more dependent on domestic production.

Q.3) In the light of the draft Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Bill, 2022, what are the issues in India's approach to data protection for minors?

The Hindu

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Write some issues in India's approach to data protection for minors.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

The draft Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Bill, 2022 currently provides for mandatory parental consent for all data processing activities by children, defined as any person aged under 18 years.

Issues in India's approach to data protection for minors:

- Mandating parental consent will curtail children's access to services and **limit their ability** to self-explore. In a country with low digital literacy, where parents in fact often rely on their children to help them navigate the Internet, this is an ineffective approach to keep children safe online.
- It does not take into account the **"best interests of the child"**, a standard originating in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989, to which India is a signatory.
- Each platform will have to obtain 'verifiable parental consent' in the case of minors. Whatever form verifiability takes, all platforms will have to **now manage significantly more personal data than before**, and citizens will be at greater risk of harms such as data breaches, identity thefts, etc.
- The Bill does not factor in how teenagers use various Internet platforms for self-expression and personal development and how central it is to the experience of adolescents these days.
- Moreover, the popular demand by several activists to reduce the upper **age limit** used to define a child from 18 years to 16 years or 13 years has also been ignored. A 17-year-old would have to ask for their parents' consent just like a 5-year-old for sharing their personal data if the government does not prescribe any remedies.
- The tough compliance burdens may also **disincentivise businesses and other organisations** from offering useful services to children, like career counselling and mental and physical health awareness.

We must design a policy in India that balances the safety and the agency of children online. We should not put the onus of keeping our young safe only on parents, but instead it should make it a society-wide obligation.

Q.4) The New Zealand PM Jacinda Ardern's recent resignation highlights the challenges faced by women in politics. Discuss.

Indian Express

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Write some challenges faced by women in politics.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

According to a report of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU, 2020), India ranks 143th globally in terms of representation of women in Parliament. Despite a woman Prime Minister, a President, and a relatively higher percentage of women parliamentarians when compared to some of the other mature democracies in the past, they are underrepresented in our political system in proportion to their numbers.

Challenges faced by women in politics:

- **Lack of Resources:** Because of their low proportion in the inner political party structure of India, women fail to gather resources and support for nurturing their political

Mains Marathon Compilation for the Month of January, (Fourth Week) 2023

constituencies. Women do not get adequate financial support from the political parties to contest the elections.

- **Political obstacles:** Absence of party support, such as **restricted financial assistance** for female candidates, restricted access to political connections, and more stringent standards and credentials applied to women.
- **Political parties' environment** too is not women-friendly. They have to struggle hard and face multi-dimensional issues to create space for them in the party. Some of the MeToo allegations are examples of such environment.
- The **choices** for women are often seen in **binary terms**, between their personal lives and professional aspirations.
- Despite several pieces of legislation, **women-friendly reforms**, such as maternity leave, continue to be viewed by enterprises as a hindrance or financial burden.
- Women candidates **receive fewer tickets** from political parties because it is still largely believed in the political community that they have a **lower chance of winning elections** than men do.
- When women secure high political office, it is often considered the result of a pathway laid by fathers, husbands or other male figures in the family.

Women's engagement in politics is critical for successful governance. Guidance and training programs help women prepare for political positions and improve their political abilities. It is also suggested that political party members get gender awareness training, as well as leadership training for future female leaders.

Q.5) Discuss the significance of Ken-Betwa River link project? What are the challenges to its completion?

The Hindu

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Write some significance of Ken-Betwa River link project. Also write some challenges to its completion.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

Ken-Betwa Link Project is the first project under the National Perspective Plan for **the interlinking of rivers**. This project aims to **transfer surplus water** from the Ken river in MP to Betwa in UP. It will provide water to irrigate the drought-prone Bundelkhand area, which is spread across two states' districts.

Significance of Ken-Betwa River link project:

- **Irrigation:** The project will provide sustainable means of irrigation water to the Bundelkhand region in U.P. and M.P. It will **reduce excessive dependence on groundwater**. The to-be-built Daudhan dam will irrigate nearly 6,00,000 hectares in four districts in M.P. and 2,51,000 hectares in four districts in U.P.
- **Disaster mitigation:** The river linking project will be a solution to recurring **droughts** in the Bundelkhand region.
- **Electricity Production:** The project will generate 103 MW of hydropower and provide drinking water to 62 lakh people.
- It is critical for the **water security and socio-economic development** of Bundelkhand region.

Challenges to its completion:

- The **12,500 hectares of land will submerge** by the project. The project would **harm Panna tiger reserve**. It will cause irreversible damage to around 40% of the tiger reserve's area. Approximately 7.2 lakh trees will cut down. This will have an **impact on the rainfall** of the region.

Mains Marathon Compilation for the Month of January, (Fourth Week) 2023

- The project is **not economically viable**. In the past few years, the river did not always flow in a steady stream. There is a significant financial expense associated with project implementation and maintenance. It is increasing as a result of **project delays**.
- The Ken River flows 60-70 feet lower than the Betwa River. It requires **at least 30% of the 103 MW** produced power to pump the water up.
- The Supreme Court's Central Empowered Committee, which had raised questions about the Ken-Betwa project, did **not issue a clearance**.

Government should consider multiple water-harvesting and water-conservation methods. It could adequately store and efficiently make use of rainfall the region receives annually, without the need for building a reservoir and dam.

Q.6) Discuss the challenges faced by the police force in India. What policy measures can be taken to reform it?

Indian Express

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Write some challenges faced by the police force in India. Also write some policy measures can be taken to reform it.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

Police come under the **state list of schedule 7 of the Indian constitution**. The **center is also allowed to maintain its own police forces** to assist the states with law and order maintenance. Therefore, it maintains **seven central police forces** and some other police organizations for specialized tasks. Expenditure on police accounts for about 3% of the central and state government budgets.

Challenges faced by the police force in India:

- **Increased political control:** The **Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2007)** has noted that the **excessive power in the hands of police has been abused in the past by the political executive**.
- **Understaffed and overburdened:** As per the United Nations recommended standard, India should have 222 police per lakh persons. But, the actual strength was 137 police.
- **Abysmal Training:** the training institutions have not kept pace with the changing paradigm on the law or crime front and are manned generally by unwanted, demotivated officers.
- **Infrastructural Issues:** The **CAG audits** have found shortages in weaponry with state police forces. On the other hand, **funds dedicated to the modernisation of infrastructure** are typically **not utilised fully**.
- **Low incentive to work:** 86% of the state police comprise the constabulary. Constables are typically promoted once during their service. This weakens the incentive for them to perform well.

Measures:

- The government has to implement **recommendations** like **separating the investigation and law and order functions** of the police, establishing **Police Establishment Board (PEB)** to decide transfers, etc.
- **Bringing the police under the "concurrent list"** of the Constitution. This will also help in creating uniform standards in policing.
- There is a **need to fully utilise the finances sanctioned by the government**. The funds can be utilised to **update the IT infrastructure** and provide **technology training for police personnel**. Adopting future technologies in police will help to fulfil grassroots policing requirements and will help in faster functioning of the police.

Mains Marathon Compilation for the Month of January, (Fourth Week) 2023

- Police should be made more **gender-sensitive**. 33% reservation for women in the police should be implemented to achieve that.
- The police station must be reinforced with **adequate staff and its infrastructure upgraded** with better transport, communication and forensic facilities.

There is a need of the **SMART Police** — a force which would be strict and sensitive, modern and mobile, alert and accountable, reliable and responsive, techno-savvy and trained.

Q.7) India's defence tech indigenization should be via an ecosystem involving companies, universities, and IITs. Discuss

Times of India

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Explain how India's defence tech should be indigenized.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

India's defence manufacturing sector has been witnessing a CAGR of 3.9% between 2016 and 2020. The Government of India has set the defence production target at US\$ 25 billion by 2025 (including US\$ 5 billion from exports by 2025).

The following measures are needed for the indigenization of India's defence tech:

- Government must help **create a network of big companies** that can manufacture weapon systems and components, technology entrepreneurs who will experiment with new tech and IITs and the better universities that can provide talented young researchers and scientists.
- Government should gradually **expand the positive indigenization list** so that greater support is provided to domestic manufacturers.
- The proposed SPV in budget 2022-23 should be duly established to **enable better private sector participation** in defense manufacturing.
- The success of the Made in India brand necessitates rigorous testing and trials of Indian products as per international standards. An **independent nodal umbrella body** should be created for meeting "the wide-ranging requirements of trial, testing and certification.
- A **monitoring mechanism** under DG-Acquisition should be created to monitor the budget earmarked, specifically for **private industry and start-ups**. It should have representatives from all the three services.
- **Joint projects with a commitment of technology transfer** should be encouraged as done in case of Brahmos Missile with Russia. This would augment independent and indigenous production in future.

iDEX is the right step for the modernization of defence industry as it empowers a culture of technology co-creation and co-innovation in the sector and boost innovation among the start-ups and encourage them to be a part of the ecosystem.

Q.8) Highlight the significance of India Egypt relationship.

Indian Express 1, Indian Express 2

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Explain significance of India-Egypt relationship.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

The history of contacts between India and Egypt, two of the world's oldest civilisations, can be traced back to at least the time of Emperor Asoka. Recently, India and Egypt agreed to elevate their **bilateral ties to a 'strategic partnership'** that covers political, security, defence, energy and economic linkages.

Significance of India- Egypt relationship:

Mains Marathon Compilation for the Month of January, (Fourth Week) 2023

- **Countering terrorism:** India and Egypt are unanimous that terrorism is the “most serious security threat” to humanity. The two countries agreed that “concerted action is necessary to end cross-border terrorism.
- **Investments in infrastructure:** India has invested in Metro projects in Cairo and Alexandria, a Suez Canal economic zone, and a new administrative capital in a Cairo suburb. More than 50 Indian companies have invested more than \$3.15 billion in Egypt.
- **Crucial geo-strategic location:** Egypt is the most populous country in West Asia. 12% of global trade passes through the **Suez Canal**. It is a major market for India and can **act as a gateway to both Europe and Africa**. It also has bilateral trade pacts with important West Asian and African nations.
- **Defence:** With defence manufacturing a new priority sector for India, and Egypt a big weapons consumer, the two sides discussed “**co-manufacturing**”. Egypt is interested in procuring defence equipment from India, which includes LCA Tejas, missiles like Akash, DRDO’s Smart Anti-Airfield Weapon, and radars.
- **Education sector:** Indian higher educational institutions can set up campuses in Egypt; a proposal for establishing an IIT in Egypt is in the works.
- In a region where **China** has been building up a presence with infrastructure and agriculture, India would also like to see **trade with Egypt as an opening to the North African region**.
- India is keen to further expand ties with Egypt, a key player in the politics of both the Arab world as well as Africa.

More than six decades ago, the two countries founded the NAM. They now have an opportunity to forge a new path ahead, not just for their strategic and economic interests, but as the voice of the Global South.