



Mains Marathon
Compilation

January, 2023

Mains Marathon Compilation for the Month of January, 2023

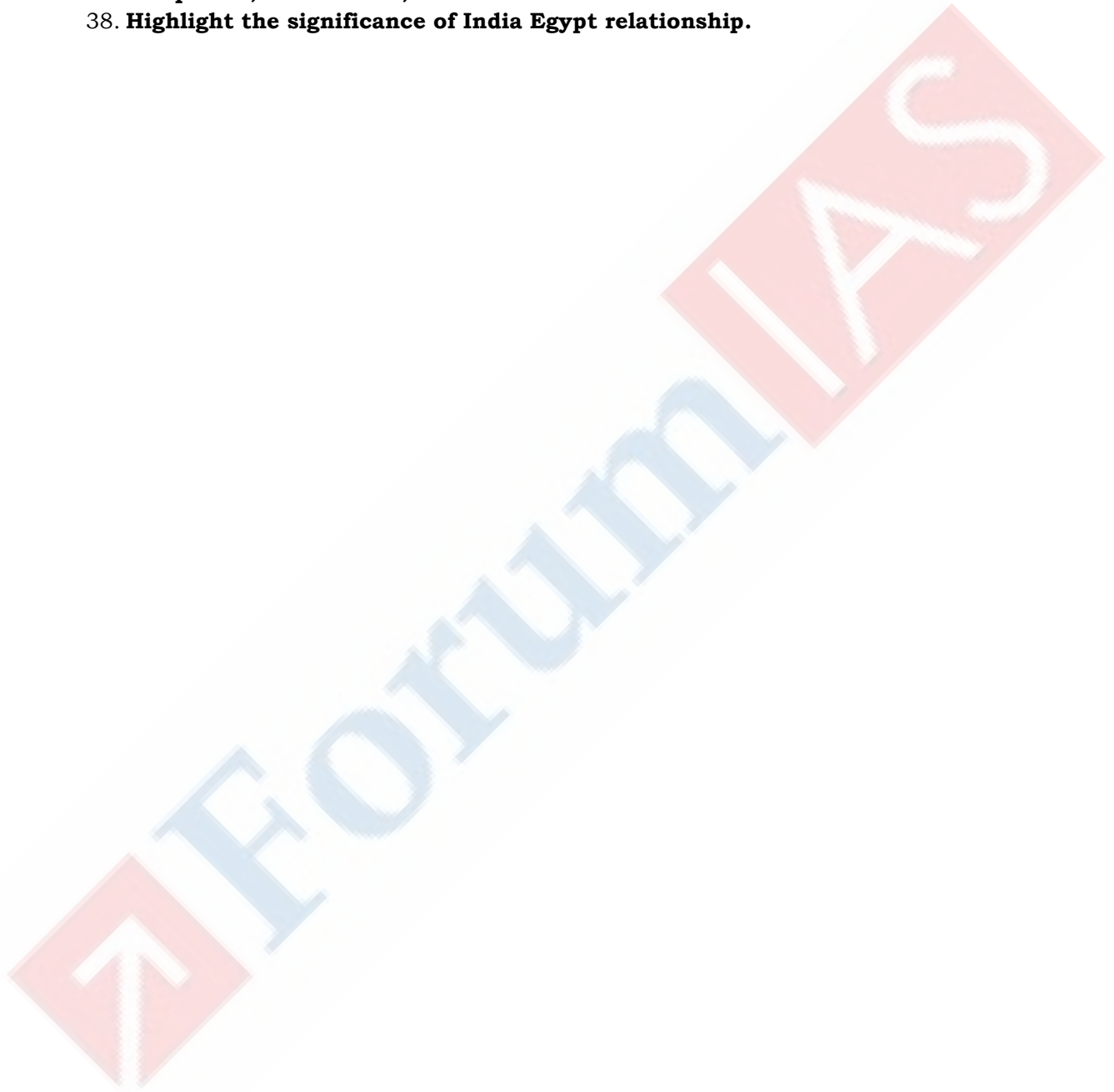
1. **Despite their advantages for consumers, and farmers, millets aren't the first choice. What are the reasons behind it? What should be done to make it more acceptable?**
2. **What are the concerns associated with deepfakes? Suggest solutions to counter the menace of deepfakes.**
3. **Progress is antithetical to setting up prisons, and we must address congestion in prisons in non-carceral ways. Discuss.**
4. **Highlight the hurdles in enhancing energy storage capacity to match renewable power generation capacities.**
5. **Given all the plus points of nano-fertilizers vis-à-vis their conventional counterparts, the need for their promotion cannot be overstressed. In light of the statement, discuss the significance of hi-tech nano-fertilizers.**
6. **While Vietnam is set to become the most attractive destination for MNCs diversifying away from China, India needs to undertake substantial catch-up reforms in all areas to be considered a significant contender in this process. Elaborate.**
7. **Highlight the significance of policy guidelines for uplinking and downlinking of television channels from India.**
8. **In the light of the recent developments, briefly discuss the evolution of the right to free speech**
9. **Fielding nascent technologies like Artificial intelligence enabled weapons without comprehensive testing puts both military personnel and civilians at risk. Do you agree? Give justifications for your arguments.**
10. **Entry of foreign universities is a long step forward for higher education in India. But there will be challenges. Comment.**
11. **Anti-microbial resistance is an impending health catastrophe and requires a multi-disciplinary approach and investment in R&D. Comment.**
12. **The record-setting expansion of the road network is a positive development. But the ecosystem that facilitates safe travel has lagged far behind. Comment.**
13. **The importance of the decennially conducted census cannot be overstated. The undue delay in the Census's commencement will severely affect the availability of vital information on the population. Discuss.**
14. **The shift from a hybrid annuity scheme for infra projects to a low-debt, performance-linked model is encouraging govt and private majors to pivot to the business in a bigger way. Comment.**
15. **Wetlands are nature's shock absorbers. Their degradation in cities is not good for the urban future. Discuss.**
16. **The ozone 'hole', once considered to be the gravest danger to planetary life, is now expected to be completely repaired by 2066. What are the factors that are contributing to its recovery?**

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17. **Is the ASI equipped to protect national monuments, or does it hinder the process? Provide reasons for your arguments.**
18. **Does the governor have the right to delete portions of his address to the legislative assembly? Discuss with various judicial and legal references.**
19. **What is the Doctrine of Basic Structure of the Indian Constitution? What is its significance?**
20. **India has made marked progress in LAC infra development. Highlight the progress in infrastructural development along LAC.**
21. **Despite new finds in Sweden, China will remain the go-to supplier for the foreseeable future for rare earth materials. Comment.**
22. **Discuss the concept of tort law. Also, highlight the significance and reasons behind its non-adoption in India.**
23. **The Amul model has been about both farmer empowerment and valuing professional management in organizations controlled by and working for producers. In light of the statement, discuss the significance of Amul model of cooperatives.**
24. **Highlight the multidimensional benefits associated with the Centre's push for riverine tourism.**
25. **How India can be helpful in promoting human-centric globalization where universal healthcare is a key priority?**
26. **Both the incidence of cancer and mortality continue to rise in the country, whereas it is declining rapidly in the US. What are the reasons behind such inequalities?**
27. **What are the differences between reserve forests, protected areas, community forest resource and ecologically sensitive zones? What were the problems with the implementation of ESZs?**
28. **Discuss the need for a new fertilizer policy in India.**
29. **With policy and implementation focused on the early years in primary school, it is time to rethink strategy for India's schoolchildren who have gone past the foundational stage. Discuss**
30. **There needs to be a review of the way the POCSO Act has been implemented, as there are imperfections despite its impact. Discuss**
31. **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.**
32. **Government policies are creating a growth dilemma for domestic exploration and production of oil and gas. Elaborate.**
33. **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?**
34. **The New Zealand PM Jacinda Ardern's recent resignation highlights the challenges faced by women in politics. Discuss.**

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35. **Discuss the significance of Ken-Betwa River link project? What are the challenges to its completion?**
36. **Discuss the challenges faced by the police force in India. What policy measures can be taken to reform it?**
37. **India's defence tech indigenization should be via an ecosystem involving companies, universities, and IITs. Discuss**
38. **Highlight the significance of India Egypt relationship.**



Q.1) Despite their advantages for consumers, and farmers, millets aren't the first choice. What are the reasons behind it? What should be done to make it more acceptable?

Indian Express

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Explain some reasons why millets aren't the first choice for consumers, and farmers. Also write some solutions to make it more acceptable.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

The term millet is used to describe **small-grained cereals** like sorghum (jowar), bajra, little millet (kutki), finger millet (ragi), etc. Millets score over rice and wheat in terms of minerals, vitamins, and dietary fibre content, as well as amino acid profile. The **year 2023 will be celebrated as the International Year of Millets**.

Despite their advantages for consumers and farmers, millets are not the first choice due to following reasons:

- **Market and economic barriers:** Unjust pricing and intermediaries have led to farmer distress. Market dynamics don't favour the growth of millets.
- **Barriers to growth:** A rise in incomes and urbanization has led to millets being used for various purposes other than for consumption.
- **Low per-hectare yields:** the national average is below 2 tonnes for millets, as against 3.5 tonnes for wheat and 4 tonnes for paddy. With access to assured irrigation, farmers would tend to switch to rice, wheat, sugarcane, or cotton.
- Due to the **Green Revolution and the National Food Security Act of 2013**, two-thirds of India's population receives up to 5 kg of wheat or rice per person per month at Rs 2 and Rs 3/kg respectively. This goes against millets.
- The **absence of government procurement at minimum support price** would make farmers hesitant to grow this suitable for both post-monsoon kharif and summer cultivation.

What should be done to make it more acceptable?

- **Incentivizing the adoption of inter-cropping and providing crop insurance:** The inter-cropping of millets is beneficial because the fibrous roots of millet plants help in improving soil quality, keep water run-off in check and aid soil conservation in erosion-prone areas.
- Every **schoolchild and anganwadi beneficiary** can be served one daily meal based on locally-sourced bajra, jowar, ragi, etc. It will give a boost to **crop diversification** by creating demand.
- **MSP procurement of millets** should be part of a decentralised nutritional programme specifically targeting tomorrow's citizens.
- Millets could be served in the form of **ready-to-eat foods** such as cookies, laddu, nutrition bars, etc.
- The Centre could **fund any state willing to procure millets** specific to their region exclusively for distribution through schools and anganwadis. E.g. **Odisha** already has a dedicated millets mission.

A combination of **central funding with decentralised procurement** linked to nutrition goals can do for millets what the Food Corporation of India achieved with rice and wheat.

Q.2) What are the concerns associated with deepfakes? Suggest solutions to counter the menace of deepfakes.

The Hindu

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Explain concerns associated with deepfakes. Also suggest solutions to counter the menace of deepfakes.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

Deepfakes are **digital media - video, audio, and images edited and manipulated using Artificial Intelligence**. It is basically **hyper-realistic digital falsification**. Access to commodity cloud computing, public research AI algorithms, and abundant data and availability of vast media have created a perfect storm to democratise the creation and manipulation of media. This synthetic media content is referred to as deepfakes.

Concerns associated with deepfakes:

- Deepfakes can be used to **damage reputation**, fabricate evidence, defraud the public, and **undermine trust in democratic institutions**.
- Pornographic deepfakes reduce women to sexual objects causing **emotional distress**, and in some cases, lead to **financial loss** and collateral consequences like job loss.
- Deepfakes can also cause short-term and long-term social harm and accelerate the already **declining trust in traditional media**.
- Deepfake could act as a powerful tool by a malicious nation-state to **undermine public safety and create uncertainty and chaos** in the target country. Deepfakes can undermine trust in institutions and diplomacy.
- Deepfakes can be **used by non-state actors**, such as insurgent groups and terrorist organisations, to show their adversaries as making inflammatory speeches or engaging in provocative actions **to stir anti-state sentiments** among people.
- **Leaders may weaponise deepfakes** and use fake news and alternative-facts narrative to dismiss an actual piece of media and truth.

Solutions to counter the menace of deepfakes:

- Media literacy efforts must be enhanced to cultivate a discerning public. **Media literacy for consumers** is the most effective tool to combat disinformation and deepfakes.
- We also need **meaningful regulations** with a collaborative discussion with the technology industry, civil society, and policymakers **to develop legislative solutions** to disincentivising the creation and distribution of malicious deepfakes.
- We need **easy-to-use and accessible technology solutions** to detect deepfakes, authenticate media, and amplify authoritative sources.
- Deep Fakes **must be included under hateful manipulated media**, propaganda, and disinformation campaigns.
- Journalists should be provided with tools to examine the authenticity of images, video, and audio recordings. For that, they require **proper training and resources**.
- Policymakers need to understand how deep fakes can threaten polity, society, economy, culture, individuals, and communities.

The best way to deal with this menace is AI-backed technological tools to detect and prevent deep fakes. These tools must be invented by the countries in cooperation as soon as possible because these technologies are even capable of invoking wars among countries, in this information age.

Q.3) Progress is antithetical to setting up prisons, and we must address congestion in prisons in non-carceral ways. Discuss.

The Hindu

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Explain present conditions of prison. Also explain why need to address this.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

Prison is a **State subject** under List-II of the Seventh Schedule in the Constitution. The management and administration of Prisons falls exclusively in the domain of the State Governments, and is governed by the **Prisons Act, 1894** and the Prison Manuals of the respective State Governments.

Present conditions of prison:

- Prisons Act, 1894, a **colonial legislation** which treats prisoners as sub-par citizens, and provides the legal basis for punishment to be retributive, rather than rehabilitative.
- These laws are also **highly casteist**, and remain largely unchanged since they were drafted by the British. For example, some jail manuals continue to focus on purity as prescribed by the caste system, and assign work in prison based on the prisoner's caste identity.
- Furthermore, Dalits and Adivasis are over-represented in Indian prisons. Legislations such as the **Habitual Offenders Act and Beggary Laws** allow the police to target them for reported crimes.
- According to the **National Crime Records Bureau's reports** the capacity of prisons has increased from some 3.32 lakh to 4.25 lakh in the last decade, which is a 27% increase while the number of prisoners has increased from 3.7 lakh to 5.54 lakh in the same period, by 48%.

Need to address this:

- Prisons were considered a place for rehabilitation for prisoners but it has become a place of **despair, hopelessness and helplessness** for prisoners.
- Prisons are **overcrowded** with the high number of **undertrial prisoners** (70 percent) than convicts.
- Deathworthy report on mental health and the death penalty reveals that over 60% of death row prisoners had **mental illness** and they have not been provided treatment.
- Overcrowded jails are a **violation of the human rights** of prisoners guaranteed **under Article 21** of the Constitution.
- Apart from risking the lives of inmates, ignorance of the poor conditions of prisons has also added to the misery of the families of those in jail.

There is a need for reform, rehabilitation or reintegration. These will make prisoners confident in their lives, in their choices and in their ability to take decisions and be responsible and accountable for them. The rehabilitation process should be empathetic and caring instead of violence.

Q.4) Highlight the hurdles in enhancing energy storage capacity to match renewable power generation capacities.

Business Standard

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Explain some hurdles in enhancing energy storage capacity to match renewable power generation capacities.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

Energy storage is not just about integrating intermittent wind and solar output. Battery solutions, which can be deployed rapidly and with pinpoint precision, can be used to make the overall grid more efficient and resilient, regardless of the generation sources.

Hurdles in enhancing energy storage capacity:

- **High Cost:** The costs of either battery storage or energy storage via hydrogen are huge – and even if the costs of batteries can be reduced, big questions about the space, security and safety of such storage installations remain.
- **Grid modernization:** The growth of battery storage goes hand-in-hand with grid modernization efforts, including the transition to smart grids. Batteries help to unlock the full potential of smart technologies, and vice versa.
- **Incomplete definition of energy storage:** Energy storage is having an identity crisis, with stakeholders and policymakers around the world wrestling with how to define fast-acting battery storage.
- The use of fossil fuels means that the power supply can be adjusted instantaneously to meet changing demand. In contrast, **wind and solar energy are variable**, which prevents them from becoming major energy sources in an economy that requires constant, on-demand electricity.
- **Investments in gridlines** are required to transport renewable energy from where it is produced to where it is needed.
- One of the biggest obstacles is **limited supplies of lithium and cobalt**, which currently are essential for making lightweight, powerful batteries. According to some estimates, around 10% of the world's lithium and nearly all of the world's cobalt reserves will be depleted by 2050.
- There are **leakage problems** associated with hydrogen. **Hydrogen is highly inflammable** and requires special containers and pipes to transport safely. Still, some of the gas leaks into the atmosphere causing environmental damage.

As all energy sources have negatives, so the government must keep this in mind that fossil fuel will be needed for the energy generations in the coming decades.

Q.5) Given all the plus points of nano-fertilizers vis-à-vis their conventional counterparts, the need for their promotion cannot be overstressed. In light of the statement, discuss the significance of hi-tech nano-fertilizers.

Business Standard

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Explain significance of nano-fertilizers.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

India is the **2nd largest consumer and 3rd largest producer of fertilizers** in the world. India depends heavily on imports for its fertilizer requirements. In 2021-22, in value terms, imports of all fertilisers touched an all-time high of \$12.77 billion. A nano fertilizer is any product that is **made with nano particles or uses nanotechnology** to improve nutrient efficiency.

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Significance of nano-fertilizers:

- **Higher Shelf Life:** Liquid nano urea has a shelf life of a year and farmers need not be worried about “caking” when it comes in contact with moisture.
- These innovative and indigenously developed liquid fertilisers can prove a game-changer by **reducing the dependence on imports and government subsidies** due to the spike in the international prices of plant nutrients in the aftermath of the Ukraine-Russia conflict.
- Their ultra-small particle size is **favourable to easier absorption** by the plants than with bulk fertilisers, translating into **higher nitrogen use efficiency**. E.g. While conventional urea has an efficiency of about 25%, the efficiency of liquid nano urea can be as high as 85-90%.
- Nutrients, are bound to nano-dimensional adsorbents, which release nutrients very slowly as compared to conventional fertilizers. This approach also **minimizes nutrient leaching** into ground water.
- Comparatively **higher solubility and diffusion** impart superiority to nanofertilizers over conventional synthetic fertilizers.
- They **increase soil fertility**, yield, and quality parameters of the crop, they are **non-toxic** and less harmful to environment and humans.

Indian fertilizer sector needs a revolution to address the challenges posed by the present fertilizer usage and supply chain. Use of Nano Urea is promoted through different activities such as awareness camps, webinars, field demonstrations, kisan sammelans and films in regional languages etc.

Q.6) While Vietnam is set to become the most attractive destination for MNCs diversifying away from China, India needs to undertake substantial catch-up reforms in all areas to be considered a significant contender in this process. Elaborate.

Business Standard

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Explain why Vietnam is becoming the most attractive destination for MNCs. Also explain why India is lagging behind.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

After Covid-19, China is facing a unique global withdrawal of MNCs. Amidst this, Vietnam has emerged as the preferred choice of electronics and mobile phone companies, trying to move out of China.

Why Vietnam is becoming the most attractive destination for MNCs?

- Vietnam has invested billions of dollars in **investments to set up research and education centers**, attracting major chipmakers to shop there.
- Vietnam has evolved as an **attractive destination for FDI**, as it is increasingly providing **cheap labour** whilst offering a friendly environment and **reduction in taxes** to foreign enterprises. E.g. out of 56 companies that have moved out of China since its trade war with US, only eight have invested in India, while 26 shifted bases to Vietnam.
- Vietnam has been swift in offering **attractive corporate tax rates** for large firms wanting to relocate.
- Vietnam's total **merchandise exports grew** at an annualised average rate of 18 per cent in the last 10 years till 2019, as compared with India's 5 per cent.

India needs to undertake substantial catch-up reforms due to following reasons:

- **Complex labour laws:** Large-scale exclusions of workers from labour law, violence and arrests are the reasons for India's poor performance.

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- **Land acquisition difficulty:** Stringent land acquisition laws and inflexible labour regulations make it difficult for India to attract investors in the manufacturing sector.
- Enterprises continue to face **domestic policy challenges**. The most difficult obstacles to efforts in scaling up production in India include **complex tax policies and procedures**, the **substandard quality of infrastructure**, and **uncertainty in trade policy**.
- Indian Firms also face problems in meeting **quality standards, lack institutional support, and inadequate information**. All this impedes their integration into GVCs.
- India's top exports comprised **largely low-tech manufacturing products** like mineral fuels, pearls, machinery, organic chemicals etc. Hi-tech exports as a percentage of manufacturing in Vietnam stands at 40 per cent, whereas in the case of India it stands abysmally low, at 9 per cent in 2018.
- 90 percent of Vietnam's merchandise trade is through **seaports**. In the case of India, despite its coastline being almost double that of Vietnam, it has not been successful in using it to its benefit.

India is soon going to be the most populous country with the largest workforce in the world. India should update and implement Labour Rules as well as take steps to ensure clarity on data protection rules that may impact investment decisions for digital infrastructure.

Q.7) Highlight the significance of policy guidelines for uplinking and downlinking of television channels from India.

The Hindu

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Explain the significance of policy guidelines for uplinking and downlinking of television channels from India.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

While an uplink refers to the link from a ground station up to a satellite, a downlink is the link from a satellite down to one or more ground stations or receivers. Under these policy guidelines, the channels would have to mandatorily broadcast content on themes of national importance and socially relevant issues for at least 30 minutes every day.

Significance:

- **Ease of compliance for the permission holder:** Requirement for seeking permission for live telecast of events has been done away with; only prior registration of events to be telecast live would be necessary.
- **Ease of Doing Business:** as it provides **specific timelines** for grant for permission. A channel can be uplinked by using facilities of more than one teleport/ satellite (previously one teleport/satellite).
- **Simplification and Rationalization:** One **composite set of Guidelines** has replaced two separate Guidelines and the structure has been synthesized to avoid duplication. It also contains a **penalty clause** for different types of contraventions (uniform penalty at present).
- **Making India a Teleport-hub:** The move is expected to allow television channels of Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal to uplink from India, instead of Singapore. This would create **employment opportunities** and make India a Teleport-hub for other countries.
- The amended Cable Television Network Rules bring in a **strong institutional system for redressing grievances** and make broadcasters and their self-regulating bodies accountable and responsible.

The new policy guidelines are a significant step and it needs to be celebrated in India's 'Azadi Ka Amrit Kaal'.

Q.8) In the light of the recent developments, briefly discuss the evolution of the right to free speech

Times of India

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Explain the evolution of the right to free speech.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

Article 19(1)(a) gives citizens the right to freedom of speech and expression. Article 19(2) enlists certain grounds on the basis of which the state, through a law, can impose **reasonable restrictions** on this right. These grounds are the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the state, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, decency or morality, contempt of court, defamation and incitement to an offence.

Evolution of the right to free speech:

- The **Constitution of India Bill, 1895** is the first document that contains such provision. It gave citizens a right to free speech but made citizens 'answerable for abuses, which they may commit in the exercise of this right, in cases and in the mode the Parliament to determine'.
- Through a series of judgments delivered in the 1960s-80s, SC has read the **freedom of the press** into Article 19(1) (a). This includes the right to **freely publish** and circulate information, opinions, as well as advertisements. It has also **recognised the right to know** as a part of free speech by holding that voters are entitled to receive information about the criminal antecedents of candidates.
- In *Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India*, Court held that reasonable restrictions should be such that **others' rights should not be hindered or affected** by the acts of one man. Any speech that can harm a large group of people and their rights need restriction by state.
- Recently the Supreme Court ruled that **no further curbs** could be imposed on the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression, holding that the existing eight "reasonable" restrictions under Article 19(2) of the Constitution are "exhaustive".

It can be easily concluded that right to freedom of speech and expression is one of the most important fundamental rights.

Q.9) Fielding nascent technologies like Artificial intelligence enabled weapons without comprehensive testing puts both military personnel and civilians at risk. Do you agree? Give justifications for your arguments.

Indian Express

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Explain some benefits of AI enabled weapons. Also write some concerns.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

Artificial intelligence describes the **action of machines accomplishing tasks that have historically required human intelligence**. It includes technologies like machine learning, pattern recognition, big data, neural networks, self algorithms etc. AI powered by deep learning, data analytics, and cloud computing, is poised to alter the maritime battlefield, potentially triggering a revolution in military affairs in India.

Benefits of AI enabled weapons:

- **Logistics and supply chain management:** AI-backed systems could go a long way in increasing efficiencies, reducing wastage and overall costs in the military's logistics management.

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- **Cyber-operations:** As cyber warfare becomes faster, more sophisticated and more dangerous, it becomes necessary to develop both offensive and defensive cyber-war capabilities both to **protect the military's own assets and communication links**, and to attack similar assets of opposing militaries.
- **Intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR):** Such "intelligent" unmanned systems could be used for **patrolling in harsh terrains and weather conditions**, providing harbour protection, and allowing the deploying force to scout the battlefield or conflict zone with no danger to human soldiers.
- These weapons can **save soldiers' lives** if wars are fought by machines. Also, in the hands of a responsible military, they can help soldiers target only combatants and **avoid inadvertently killing** friendly forces, children, and civilians.

Concerns:

- **Ethical paradox:** AI **compromises the control, safety, and accountability** of weapon systems; it also enhances the risk of shared liability between networked systems, particularly when weapon algorithms are sourced from abroad.
- **Challenging for policy making:** because military doctrine is premised on a traditional understanding of conflict. E.g. It is not yet clear if unmanned maritime systems enjoy the status of "ships" under the UN convention of the laws of the sea;
- **Capacity limitation:** a large gap still exists in the development of critical technologies, which are system engineering, airborne and underwater sensors, weapon systems, and hi-tech components.
- AI is characterised by a predisposition to certain kinds of data. This may **affect rational decision-making, undermining confidence** in automated combat solutions. E.g. AI seemingly automates weapon systems in ways that are inconsistent with the laws of war. To fully exploit their potential, however, the Indian military needs to build a close working relationship with the vibrant private technology sector in India, and especially with start-ups doing exciting work in the AI space.

Q.10) Entry of foreign universities is a long step forward for higher education in India. But there will be challenges. Comment.

Indian Express

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Explain why entry of foreign universities is a step forward for higher education in India. Also write some challenges.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

Internationalisation of Indian higher education is a salient **feature of National Education Policy 2020**. The draft regulations of the UGC on Setting up and Operation of Campuses of Foreign Higher Educational Institutions in India 2023 pave the way for the entry of foreign universities into the groves of higher education in the country.

Why entry of foreign universities is a step forward for higher education in India?

- **Encourage competition:** This step would encourage competition mainly between existing private universities and foreign branch institutions.
- **Promotes new ideas:** about curriculum, pedagogy, and governance to Indian higher education.
- **Opportunity to learn business:** Foreign countries and universities will be providing opportunities for home campus students to learn about Indian business, society, and culture to participate in growing trade and other relations.
- **It would be helpful in addressing skill requirements and providing examples of different approaches to higher education.**

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- The number of Indian students opting for higher education overseas grows annually and their abroad spending is set to grow from current annual \$28 billion to \$80 billion by 2024. Subsequently, it will help retain the best of Indian talent by **controlling the problem of brain drain**.

Challenges:

- It will **not be easy to attract** foreign universities to India and even more difficult to create the conditions for them to flourish.
- There is also an issue of **dilution of standards of teaching** and delivery in a foreign campus. There is a lot of investment in training local staff to adhere to standards and without a strong legal and financial structure it becomes a risky plan.
- A big challenge will be India's "well-known" bureaucracy, especially the **multiple regulators**.
- It would be difficult to ensure that the degrees offered by the foreign branch campuses would be accepted by the employers in the home countries of the campuses.
- The opaque salary structure of private higher education institutions remains a cause of concern to many and, in the **absence of tangible recruitment rules**, the gap would further widen once foreign branch campuses are operational in India.
- The challenge lies with **Humanities and Social Sciences** where multiple interpretations are popular, pushing the boundaries of knowledge. The foreign faculty members may find it difficult to balance state policies, sensibilities and laissez-faire intellectual standpoint.

Education can be an important source of soft power if it is pursued in the right direction. Lessons can be learnt from our **Yoga culture** which has gained tremendous recognition worldwide.

Q.11) Anti-microbial resistance is an impending health catastrophe and requires a multi-disciplinary approach and investment in R&D. Comment.

Indian Express

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Explain some challenges posed by Anti-microbial resistance. Also write some measures to tackle it.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) occurs when microbes like bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites change over time and no longer respond to medicines making infections harder to treat and increasing the risk of disease spread, severe illness and death. The WHO has declared it as one of the top 10 health threats facing humanity.

Challenges posed by Anti-microbial resistance:

- **Threat to the health care system:** Antimicrobials prevent infections post a routine surgery or cancer treatment. Their ineffectiveness would impair the modern health system. The problem is more serious for low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) of Asia and Africa where cheap antimicrobials have significantly reduced the mortality rates.
- **Loss of Human Lives:** It is responsible for upto 7 lakh deaths a year. E.coli and MRSA (Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus) are among the drug-resistant bacteria that led to most deaths. It is estimated that 10 million annual deaths would be caused by it post 2050.
- **Economic Brunt:** Abundant capital would be required to manage the AMR crisis in future. As per an estimate it may cost up to US\$ 100 trillion by 2050.
- **Possibility of Next Pandemic:** Scientists are worried that the next global pandemic might be caused by a superbug e.g., in 2021 researchers found a superbug (C. Auris) on remote sandy beaches of Andaman Islands that was multi-drug resistant.

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Measures:

- **Disease prevention and wellness:** We need to spearhead sanitation drives, ensure a clean water supply and support hospital-driven infection-control programmes.
- **Coordination** across the animal industry and environmental sectors to prevent the unnecessary use of antibiotics in farms is necessary.
- Development of **robust surveillance systems** that allow us to detect resistant pathogens of all kinds in the environment and hospitals that would eventually allow containment.
- The baseline **information on the antibiotic type**, the extent of usage, tracking agricultural practices that promote resistance needs to be generated. This will aid in better decision making and improve follow up actions.
- A novel approach, such as **'One Health'**, is required **to better understand** the environmental dimensions of AMR and take science-based decisions and actions.
- There is a need for robust **investment in research and development of new antibiotics**, rapid and affordable diagnostics, strengthening infection control etc. to swiftly tackle the AMR crisis.

While the scientific community looks for solutions, governments must raise the standard of living for citizens, provide them accessible and affordable quality health care, besides regulating the sale and use of antibiotics.

Q.12) The record-setting expansion of the road network is a positive development. But the ecosystem that facilitates safe travel has lagged far behind. Comment.

Times of India

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Explain some issues with road safety. Also write some measures.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

According to the **National Crimes Records Bureau (NCRB)** data, over 1.55 lakh lives were lost in road crashes across India in 2021 or 18 deaths every single hour. States of Tamil Nadu (57,000), Madhya Pradesh (49,500), Uttar Pradesh (36,500), Kerala (33,000) and Maharashtra (30,000) reported high number of accidents.

Issues with road safety:

- **Human Factors:** According to the NCRB report, most of the accidents and fatalities are attributable to human factors. These include **over-speeding**, **careless driving**, neglecting safety measures like not wearing helmets or seat belts etc.
- **Road Design:** Many roads have multiple **black spots** e.g., sharp corners in a straight road, a hidden junction on the fast road, etc. There are no separate lanes for 2-wheelers or very heavy vehicles. Urban areas lack separate lanes for pedestrians.
- There is **administrative and political apathy** toward road safety. Road users are lacking the understanding of the basic traffic rules and road signage.
- There is **easier access to driving licences** without a meaningful ground scrutiny of skills.
- At the macro level, various institutions of road safety are engaged in **routine paperwork** and lack **accountability**.

Measures for safer travel:

- There is a need to **enhance vehicle safety features** in India. e.g., The **European Union's General Safety Regulation** requires new vehicles to incorporate advanced emergency braking technology that launches automatically when a collision is imminent and intelligent speed assistance to reduce speed.
- The Government can implement the important recommendations of the **KS Radhakrishnan panel on Road Safety-** State Governments to perform a compulsory **Audit on road safety** to ensure adequate safety standards in the design,

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construction, and maintenance of roads; **Creating awareness among people** on road safety rules, insurance policies, etc.;

- There is a need for **regular and professional enforcement of rules. Swift and innovative solutions** by the administration could help in evolving a healthy safe-road culture.
- Parts of major roads and highways should be set up as **“ideal” road safety zones**. These zones will promote locally suitable, comprehensive safe road practices.
- There is a need to review the **design of rural and urban roads** and bring them into consonance with international best practices. E.g. separate lanes for 2-wheelers and heavy vehicles.

From policing to courts to transport department to public works to healthcare, a ‘whole of government’ approach can make citizens safer. Such improvements will represent the next generation of governance reforms that India must target.

Q.13) The importance of the decennially conducted census cannot be overstated. The undue delay in the Census’s commencement will severely affect the availability of vital information on the population. Discuss.

The Hindu

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Explain importance of census. Also write some implications of the delay in census.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

The census provides information on size, distribution demographic, socio-economic and other characteristics of the country’s population. Since 1949 the census has been conducted by the **Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India** under the Ministry of Home Affairs. India’s last census was carried out in 2011 when the country’s population stood at 121 crore.

Importance of census:

- **Essential for state governance:** The Census is the **basic building block of many instruments of state policy** that are essential for ensuring a fair and just division of expenditure across regions and target groups.
- **Supreme over other surveys:** Surveys on households, jobs and other items can only complement the Census, not replace it.
- **Important for welfare state:** For instance, a recent directive from the Supreme Court regarding the distribution of benefits under the National Food Security Act underlines the centrality of the Census to India’s welfare mechanisms.
- The Census alone can provide **population data for every village and town** in the country. Sample surveys can also provide reliable data on social and demographic indicators but only at higher geographic levels.
- The Census data are **used to determine the number of seats to be reserved for SCs and STs** in Parliament, State legislatures, local bodies, and government services. In the case of panchayats and municipal bodies.

Implications of the delay:

- The **Finance Commission allocates funds to States** on the basis of Census figures and any delay could put them at a disadvantage.
- Outdated Census information often becomes **unreliable and affects** those who do and do not receive the benefits of welfare schemes. E.g. According to the 2011 Census, PDS beneficiaries were approximately 80 crore (67% of the country’s population) but in 2020’s projected population of 137 crore, it should have increased to around 92 crore people.

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- **Other sample surveys** use the Census data as a list from which a representative sample of the population is selected for surveys. E.g. **National Family Health Survey (NFHS)**.
- The Census is crucial to determine the population of migrants and **migration patterns**. The pandemic saw a sea of migrants.
- **Delimitation** of parliamentary and Assembly constituencies would also continue to be based on the 2001 Census till data from a Census after 2026 are published.

The government should fast-forward the census collection. This is because the upcoming elections and delimitation of constituencies in 2027 will further delay the census work.

Q.14) The shift from a hybrid annuity scheme for infra projects to a low-debt, performance-linked model is encouraging govt and private majors to pivot to the business in a bigger way. Comment.

Business Standard

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Explain some issues with hybrid annuity scheme. Also write some measures.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

Infrastructure development involves huge investments, procedural delays and returns spread over a long period of time. HAM is a mix of the Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) and Build, Operate, Transfer (BOT) models. HAM **combines 40% EPC and 60% BOT-Annuity**. Hybrid annuity means that payment is made in a fixed amount for a considerable period and then in a variable amount in the remaining period.

Issues with hybrid annuity scheme:

- It does not take care of the cost and **time overruns** due to issues of administrative efficiency etc.
- The major risk for HAM is the **prevailing low bank rates** adversely affecting the overall project viability and returns. Such interest receipts account for around 45% of total inflows.
- The other problem is related to **delayed and inadequate interest rate transmission**—there is a transmission lag for the project loan (linked to MCLR of banks).
- With the increasing number of HAM projects, funding can be an important issue because in long term it could be **challenging for the government to allot funds** to all the projects in short span of time.

The following measures are required to pivot to the business in a bigger way:

- Due to rising NPAs and owing to Covid-19, banks have developed cold feet with regard to financing various projects. Therefore, the government needs to either come up with a bond guarantee or **enhance credit funds** for the projects so that the bond market is rejuvenated to fulfil the financing requirements of the sector.
- **Technologies** such as augmented reality (AR), UAV and drones, 3D printing, Internet of Things (IoT) and Building Information Modelling (BIM) come in handy when **fast-tracking construction projects**.
- There is a need for a **better regulatory environment and consistency in the tendering process**. Lack of consistency and policy coherence across different government departments should be addressed as a priority.
- **User charges** are crucial because in many areas, partly because of zero or very low user charges, there is over-use and wastage of the precious resources (for instance, groundwater).
- The model can be made better with steps such as **efficient dispute redressal mechanism**, faster environmental clearances etc.

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The development of India's infrastructure presents a huge task as well as a huge opportunity. The newly established **Infrastructure Finance Secretariat** is a step in the right direction.

Q.15) Wetlands are nature's shock absorbers. Their degradation in cities is not good for the urban future. Discuss.

Times of India

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Explain why degradation of wetlands is not good for the urban future.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

Wetlands include mangroves, peatlands and marshes, rivers and lakes, deltas, floodplains and flooded forests, rice-fields, and even coral reefs. According to estimates by **Wetlands International (WI)**, nearly two of every five wetlands in India have lost their natural existence in the last 30 years.

Why its degradation is not good for the urban future?

- **Tsunami prevention:** Mangroves absorb and disperse tidal surges associated with these events a mangrove can reduce the destructive force of a tsunami by up to 90%.
- **Flood prevention:** Wetlands act as nature's shock absorbers. In the river basins, they act as **natural sponges**, absorbing rainfall, creating wide surface pools and reduce the impact of flooding in rivers.
- **Natural water filters:** Wetlands are the world's water filters which trap pollutants such as phosphorus and heavy metals in their soils, transform dissolved nitrogen into nitrogen gas, and break down suspended solids to neutralize harmful bacteria.
- **Regulation of stream flow:** Wetlands are often compared to sponges, in their ability to absorb water in wet periods, and release it during dry periods. E.g. encroachment and construction on urban wetlands like the Pallikaranai marsh in Chennai have made cities susceptible to flooding.
- **Sediment trapping:** Wetlands reduce runoff velocity, and wetland vegetation is effective in trapping and retaining sediment.
- **Phosphate and nitrate assimilation:** Wetland removes the phosphates and nitrates carried by runoff water through its vegetation and the action of anaerobic bacteria.
- **Erosion control:** Wetlands can limit the extent of erosion, predominantly through the protection provided by vegetation, and through their ability to reduce stream flow velocity.
- **Industrial benefits:** Wetlands also provide important benefits for industry. For example, they form nurseries for fish and other freshwater and marine life and are critical to **commercial and recreational fishing industries**.
- Wetlands not only support **high concentrations of biodiversity**, but also offer a wide range of important resources and **ecosystem services** like food, water, fiber, groundwater recharge, water purification, carbon storage and climate regulation.

Unless greater awareness is created about the benefits of wetland conservation and urban planning actively incorporates preservation of these bodies – Delhi Master Plan 2041 is a good start – the situation will worsen. A multi-pronged approach that brings together various stakeholders is the need of the hour.

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Q.16) The ozone 'hole', once considered to be the gravest danger to planetary life, is now expected to be completely repaired by 2066. What are the factors that are contributing to its recovery?

Indian Express

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Explain some factors that are contributing to the recovery of ozone hole.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

Ozone (O₃) is found mainly in the stratosphere, between 10 and 50 km from the Earth's surface. It **absorbs ultraviolet rays** coming from the Sun. The latest scientific assessment has said that if current policies continued to be implemented, the ozone layer was expected to recover to 1980 values by 2066 over Antarctica, by 2045 over the Arctic, and by 2040 for the rest of the world.

The following factors are contributing to the recovery of ozone hole:

- **Montreal Protocol:** It **banned man-made gases** that damage the fragile high-altitude ozone layer, found long-term decreases in the atmospheric abundance of controlled **ozone-depleting substances** and the ongoing recovery of stratospheric ozone. It's the only UN treaty that has been **ratified by all 198 UN member states**.
- This progress over the past three decades was achieved by **international compliance** with controls on production and trade of ozone-depleting substances.
- In 2019, the protocol was strengthened with the ratification of the **Kigali Agreement** which limits the production of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), ozone safe compounds that are potent greenhouse gases.
- The assessment has reported that nearly 99 per cent of the substances banned by the Montreal Protocol have now been eliminated from use. The **elimination of ozone-depleting substances** has an important climate change co-benefit as well.

The Montreal Protocol has done much more than shrink the ozone hole; it has shown how environmental governance can respond to science, and how countries can come together to address a shared vulnerability. The same spirit of common cause and greater leadership to implement the Paris Agreement on climate change is the need of the hour.

Q.17) Is the ASI equipped to protect national monuments, or does it hinder the process? Provide reasons for your arguments.

Indian Express

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Explain significance of ASI. Also write some issues with its functioning.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

The **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)**, under the Ministry of Culture, is the premier organization for the archaeological researches and protection of the cultural heritage of the nation.

ASI is the successor of The Asiatic Society of India. It was founded in its current form in 1861 by Sir Alexander Cunningham with the help of the then Viceroy Canning.

Significance of ASI:

- It **regulates all the archaeological activities** in the country as per the provisions of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958 (**AMASR Act**).
- The iconic monuments in India, Taj Mahal, Ajanta Caves, The Great Stupa at Sanchi and the Sun Temple of Konark, among others are designated as "ancient monuments of national importance" and protected under the AMASR Act.

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- It also **regulates Antiquities and Art Treasure Act, 1972**. For the maintenance of ancient monuments and archaeological sites and remains of national importance the entire country is divided into 24 circles.

Issues:

- CAG in its 2013 Report on 'Performance Audit of Preservation and Conservation of Monuments and Antiquities', had reported that 92 monuments are missing.
- The ASI lacks in **enforcement powers** such as in the Forest Act which could empower it to act against those encroaching at protested sites.
- **Encroachments and illegal construction** close to the monuments were happening on a large-scale and ASI has to depend on law enforcement authorities to remove encroachments.
- Not **clear distinction** between the prohibited and regulated areas. There are many public works and development projects which are stopped due to the AMASR Act's blanket ban on constructions.
- The ASI budget for exploration and excavations is less than 1 percent of the total budget.
- ASI, in many cases, has been working in **violation of the provisions of the Monuments (AMASR) Act**. At Humayun's tomb, a CAG inspection revealed commercial construction being undertaken in the prohibited area.
- The poor state of conservation at ASI-protected sites and the **lack of follow-up**.

ASI has to adopt more innovative investigative, interrogative and conservation methods. It has to decentralise its activities and work with local bodies – academic, governmental, etc. – to protect monuments better and, equally importantly, increase awareness at the grassroots.

Q.18) Does the governor have the right to delete portions of his address to the legislative assembly? Discuss with various judicial and legal references.

Indian Express

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Explain some judicial and legal references about governor's right to delete portions of his address to the legislative assembly.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

Governor is the **Constitutional head of the state**. The Governor has to exercise his powers and functions with the **aid and advice of the council of ministers** headed by the chief minister. He has an important constitutional role to play in the governance of the state and in strengthening federalism. **Article 176** has provisions of **Special address by the Governor**. The following judicial and legal references explain whether governor has the right to delete portions of his address to the legislative assembly or not:

- According to the **constitutional convention**, the President or the Governor should not depart from the text, as it is nothing but a statement of policy of the elected government.
- The Constitution gives **no discretion** to governors in the matter of convening the session of the assembly. **Parliamentary democracy being the basic structure** of our Constitution, though Article 174 does say that the governor from time to time summons the assembly to meet at such time and place "he thinks fit". Governors have **no business to question the purpose** of convening the sessions of the House.
- The **Supreme Court in Nabam Rebia (2016)** had observed that the Governor had **no discretion in convening the assembly session**.
- It was subsequently held by Justice B N Banerjee of the Calcutta High Court in **Andul Gafoor Habibullah v. Speaker, West Bengal Assembly (1966)** that the governor cannot **decline to deliver his address** and refuse to fulfil his constitutional duty. However, when

the governor fails to deliver his address under Article 176 and walks out of the House, it cannot be questioned under Article 212.

- The Calcutta HC held the governor has the **right to delete or not read** irrelevant portions or portions **which do not deal with the policy** of the government. Governor can exercise his discretion in leaving out of his address the irrelevant matter.

The governor is a key intermediary in the Centre-state relationship. He reigns but does not rule. All governors too must remain true to their oath of “preserving, protecting and defending the Constitution

Q.19) What is the Doctrine of Basic Structure of the Indian Constitution? What is its significance?

Indian Express

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Explain Doctrine of Basic Structure of the Indian Constitution. Also write its significance.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

The “Basic Structure” doctrine is a doctrine made from judicial innovation specific to Indian context. The doctrine prescribes that certain features of the constitution are beyond the **limits of the amending powers of the Parliament**. The word “Basic Structure” is **not mentioned in the Constitution of India**.

Doctrine of Basic Structure:

- The doctrine was evolved by the Supreme Court in the 1973 landmark ruling in **Kesavananda Bharati v State of Kerala**. A 13-judge Constitution Bench ruled that the ‘basic structure’ of the Constitution is inviolable, and could **not be amended by Parliament**.
- If a law is found to “damage or destroy” the “basic features of the Constitution”, the Court declares it unconstitutional.
- The test is applied to constitutional amendments to ensure the amendment **does not dilute the fundamentals of the Constitutional itself**.
- The test is widely regarded as **a check on majoritarian impulses of the Parliament** since it places substantive limits on the power to amend the Constitution.
- In the *Kesavananda* ruling, the Supreme Court cited several aspects of the Constitution that could be identified as “basic features” of the document. For example, judicial review, rule of law, federalism, and democratic republic structure are identified as basic features.

Significance of Basic Structure:

- The basic structure doctrine **grants the fine balance between flexibility and rigidity** that should be present in the amending powers of any Constitution.
- The basic structure doctrine is a testimony to the theory of Constitutionalism **to prevent the damage to essence of COI** by brute majority of the ruling majority.
- The basic doctrine **saved the Indian democracy** as it acts as a limitation of constituent power or else unlimited power of parliament might have turned India into a totalitarian.
- It **strengthens our democracy** by delineating a true separation of power where Judiciary is independent of other two organs. It has also given immense untold unbridled power to Supreme Court and made it the most powerful court in the world.
- By restraining the amending powers of legislative organ of State, it **provides basic Rights to Citizens** which no organ of State can overrule.
- Being dynamic in nature, it is **more progressive and open to changes** in time unlike the rigid nature of earlier judgements.

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The basic structure doctrine though subject to intense debate from the date of its inception and lack of textual basis of the same still continues to hold forte to hold up delicate constitutional balance of powers.

Q.20) India has made marked progress in LAC infra development. Highlight the progress in infrastructural development along LAC.

The Hindu

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Explain some infrastructural developments along LAC.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

At present, Line of Actual Control (LAC) is the line separating Indian areas of Ladakh from Aksai Chin. It is concurrent with the Chinese Aksai Chin claim line. There are several disputed areas along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), including in Himachal, Uttarakhand and Sikkim.

Infrastructural development along LAC:

- In the past five years, the Border Roads Organisation has constructed close to **6,000 km of roads**; of this, 2,100 km has been along the northern borders.
- The frontier road, which runs a total of 1,800 km, will connect various valleys in Arunachal Pradesh. The plan has been re-energised and funding has been assigned. Some work on it is already underway.
- **Atal tunnel:** Atal tunnel has been inaugurated and Shinku la tunnel along the Nemu-Padam-Daricha road is in the final stages of approval. The tunnel is the **world's longest highway tunnel above the altitude of 10,000 feet** (3000 metres). This pass may be considered as an entry point to Lughak Valley in Zaskar.
- **Zojila tunnel:** The Zojila tunnel and the Z-Morh tunnel, which will link the valley to Ladakh and will be operationalised by the end of the year. The tunnel will **connect Baltal in Kashmir with Minamarg in Ladakh**. This will reduce travel time by two-and-a-half hours.
- **Sela tunnel:** The Sela tunnel will be the **longest twin-lane tunnel above 13,000 feet** in the world and will provide all-weather connectivity to Tawang. Moreover, the project will also allow **faster deployment of weapons and soldiers** to forward areas in the Tawang sector.

The creation of infrastructure would help integrate these areas with the hinterland, create a positive perception of care by the country and encourage people to stay on in the border areas leading to safe and secure borders.

Q.21) Despite new finds in Sweden, China will remain the go-to supplier for the foreseeable future for rare earth materials. Comment.

Business Standard

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Explain why China will remain the go-to supplier for the foreseeable future, despite new finds in Sweden.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

Recently Sweden has discovered more than one million tonnes of **rare earth oxides in the northern area** of the country. This is the **largest known deposit in Europe**. Currently, no rare earths are mined in Europe and 98 percent of rare earths used by the European Union were sent by China. These elements are important in technologies of consumer electronics, computers and networks, clean energy, advanced transportation among others.

Due to following reasons China will remain the go-to supplier for the foreseeable future:

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- According to data from the US Geological Survey, China accounted for **more than 60 per cent of all rare earths production**.
- Experts suggest that it can take **years to start operations** at the Kiruna mine in Sweden, where the deposits have been found.
- In Europe, there are **heavy regulatory barriers to the mining and production** of critical raw materials and it does not currently mine raw earths.
- Sweden still needs **a lot of drilling, testing**, and they don't have the full information about what quality the ore grade is.
- It would take between 10 and 15 years to **develop a mine**, which is in line with the company's own estimates.
- Once they have the mining, they also need to **establish the processing industry** as isolating and refining rare earths are complex and hugely energy intensive processes.

Rare earths are used in small quantities but have qualities that make them essential. The multifarious uses of rare earth elements in new age technologies show that their demand is going to rise in future.

Q.22) Discuss the concept of tort law. Also, highlight the significance and reasons behind its non-adoption in India.

Times of India

Introduction: Explain tort law.

Body: Explain its significance and reasons behind its non-adoption in India.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

The word tort is derived from the Latin word tortum which means wrong. Tort law is the body of laws that enables people to seek **compensation for wrongs committed against them**. When someone's actions cause some type of harm to another, whether it be **physical harm** to another person, or harm to someone's **property or reputation**, harmed or injured person or entity may seek damages through the court. Generally the compensations are **monetary awards** ordered by the court to be paid to an injured party, by the party at fault.

Significance:

- Once the concept of tort is well established, it can be applied to damages caused to a person's health and safety, his environment, his property, his economic interests, or his reputation.
- With these broad guidelines in place, the application of tort is a matter of common sense – not every action that a plaintiff alleges has caused damage can be automatically seen as grounds for receiving compensation.
- Every case where damage is alleged need not be treated as a criminal matter, especially when criminal intent is difficult or impossible to prove.

In India the law of torts has not been totally codified. There are following reasons behind its non-adoption in India:

- **Uncertainty of law:** There is **no uniformity** and certainty in its rules and doctrines. There are law of torts are available in England on many points, those cannot be applied in Indian situations.
- **Lack of political consciousness:** Most of the people in India are **unaware of their rights** because of their illiteracy.
- **Illiteracy:** Indian literacy rate has grown to 79.31% (2011 census). An old 1990 study estimated that it would take until 2060 for India to achieve universal literacy at then-current rate of progress.

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- **Poverty:** Despite being one of the fastest-growing economies in the world, India has a significant problem of poverty. So most of the people are not capable of meeting high costs of litigation for enforcement of their legal rights.
- **Expensive and dilatory judicial system:** the judicial system in India is very expensive and it is dilatory. Court fee and Advocates' fee is very high. Therefore, the poor people are ready to suffer their violation rights instead of going to court.

In numerous cases, Indian courts have ruled that the country's law of tort is crucial to the progress of Indian society. By reducing court-fee, and by adopting simple procedure to dispose of tort based cases, there is very chance to protect the civil rights of the people of India.

Q.23) The Amul model has been about both farmer empowerment and valuing professional management in organizations controlled by and working for producers. In light of the statement, discuss the significance of Amul model of cooperatives.

Indian Express

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Explain significance of Amul model of cooperatives.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

Cooperatives are organisations **owned by members**. They could be **producers or consumers**. These members may own shares. But, they value the cooperative mainly for the services provided by them. Amul was established to streamline the dairy farming in cooperative sector and protect the dairy farmers from the manipulative middlemen.

Significance of Amul model of cooperatives:

- **Three-tiered structure:** with the dairy cooperative societies at the village level federated under a milk union at the district level and a federation of member unions at the state level. So, a dairy farmer in a village in Gujarat with a herd size of two cows gets the opportunity to sell the milk in Delhi or Kolkata market.
- **Professional management:** The Amul organisational model, from the time of Verghese Kurien has been based on an **elected board of directors** operating through a chief executive and his team, which include marketing and finance professionals, project engineers, veterinarians, agronomists and nutritionists. So, their boards or managers are **accountable to farmers**.
- We need to implement this cooperative model **to uplift sectors** like agriculture and animal husbandry. The cooperative model will prove **crucial in making agriculture self-reliant**.
- The cooperative sector's **contribution in creating a \$5-trillion economy** will be immense as shown by the success of Amul, the world's largest milk cooperative.
- Today, many farmers have turned to organic farming but they do not have any platform to sell the produce in India and the world. Amul model can be **useful beyond milk and dairy sectors**.

Amul's success with the cooperative model is definitely something the government can take notes from, especially as it embarks on laying a larger focus on cooperatives and its newly-formed ministry works to provide a policy framework to strengthen the cooperative movement in India.

Q.24) Highlight the multidimensional benefits associated with the Centre's push for riverine tourism.

Indian Express

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Explain some multidimensional benefits associated with the Centre's push for riverine tourism.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

Recently the Prime Minister has launched the **MV Ganga Vilas** from Varanasi. The luxury 51-day cruise will be operated in partnership with private players by the Inland Waterways Authority. It will traverse several states, two countries and make stops at about 50 tourist and heritage sites along the Ganga and Brahmaputra river systems.

Multidimensional benefits of riverine tourism:

- The tourism sector is **labour-intensive** and can provide some of the **formal jobs** and job diversification that a transitioning Indian economy so desperately needs.
- The **global River cruise market has grown** at ~5% over the last few years and is expected to constitute ~37% of the cruise market by 2027.
- Promotion of river tourism can help in **preservation of natural environment and cultural heritage** of the region.
- Its various contributions in terms of **conservation of the river** and its surrounding environment as well as creating opportunities for **sustainable livelihood** of the river-based community.
- Rivers constitute a major tourism resource, providing spectacular settings, **recreation facilities**, a means of transport, a sense of heritage and adventure, and links with the environment and natural world.
- The river cruise is expected to expand further with systematic forward and backward linkage for the economy, particularly across river banks, as capital expenditure is pumped to **build capacity in inland waterways**.
- Various activities like river cruises, water sports like sailing and rafting and the riverbank landscape contributes to the **development of places along its banks**.

The Ganga cruise, though, should be just a beginning in tapping the unrealised potential of India's numerous and diverse river systems for tourism. It must take into account the best practices from around India and the world, while ensuring local communities and the environment are not given short shrift.

Q.25) How India can be helpful in promoting human-centric globalization where universal healthcare is a key priority?

Times of India

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Explain how India can be helpful in promoting human-centric globalization where universal healthcare is a key priority.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

India's vision of a healthier globe emanates from the philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam that translates into One Earth, One Family, One Future. As part of **India's G20 presidency**, policymakers from member countries and experts from the medical fraternity create a framework of a **Global Health Architecture (GHA)**.

India can be helpful in promoting human-centric globalization with universal healthcare in following manner:

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- GHA envisages equipping countries to face the next health emergency with **robust healthcare systems**.
- GHA helps in strengthening national capacities to prevent, prepare for and respond to major outbreaks. The agenda will **include a One Health approach to antimicrobial resistance (AMR)**.
- **Partnering with multiple organisations** like WHO, World Bank, G7, Access to Covid-19 Tools Accelerator, this effort will attempt to synergise existing strengths and identify bottlenecks in the system.
- **G20 India Health Track** aims to facilitate seamless interweaving towards a global health emergency architecture.
- G20 aims to **strengthen cooperation in the pharmaceutical sector** in order to improve equitable access to quality vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics.
- Indian generics are valued across the world. India continues to provide **affordable HIV drugs and anti-TB generics** to several LMICs.
- With the aim to strengthen the pharma sector, the government has introduced production-linked incentive schemes, **Bulk Drug Parks and Medical Device Parks**. Building common facilities will reduce the costs of production and enhance availability and affordability of medical devices.
- Providing **digital health innovations** and solutions to aid universal health coverage. The digital technologies can help in remote data capture, medical diagnosis and virtual care. CoWin has been shared with several countries as a digital public health good.
- India plans to draw a framework for the **Global Initiative on Digital Health** and harness the potential of artificial intelligence in building more resilient infrastructure.

Enriched with this experience, the G20 presidency provides us the mandate to assume a leadership position for the Global South and propose a fresh vision of a healthier world order.

Q.26) Both the incidence of cancer and mortality continue to rise in the country, whereas it is declining rapidly in the US. What are the reasons behind such inequalities?

Indian Express

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Write some reasons behind inequalities in cancer incidence and mortality of India and USA.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

According to a report, deaths due to cancer have declined by 33% in the United States since 1991. This has translated into 3.8 million fewer deaths. In India, deaths due to cancer increased to an estimated 8.08 lakh in 2022 from 7.9 lakh in 2021 and 7.7 lakh in 2020. According to ICMR, India's cancer burden to rise to 29.8 million in 2025.

Reasons behind such inequalities:

- **Tobacco intake:** Drinking, smoking and tobacco intake both in rural and urban areas is a major cause of cancer among men in India. Further, passive smoking also endangers others' health.
- **Accessibility:** Unreachability of hospitals and **poor diagnosis tools** increases the cancer spreading to higher stages where it becomes difficult to treat.
- **Poor public healthcare:** Public healthcare is inadequate so people go to private hospitals for treatment. According to estimates, there are only 2,000 cancer specialists in India for 10 million patients.
- **Fertilisers:** Indiscriminate use of fertilizers in agriculture is one of the causes of cancer. Punjab to Rajasthan carry large number of such cancer patients.

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- **Cancer care facilities:** We have one comprehensive cancer care centre for every 5 crore population. The WHO says there should be 1 radiotherapy machine per million populations in developing countries, so we need 1,400 machines, and we have only 700.
- There is an increase in rates of breast cancer, especially in urban centres because of **later age of marriage**, having the first child at a later age, not breastfeeding, and a high protein diet.
- Unlike cervical cancer, which can be prevented with HPV vaccination, there is **no specific intervention** for breast cancers other than screening because what causes it is unknown.
- The **high treatment cost** has seriously impacted survival rates. In the case of breast cancer, the five-year survival rate in India is estimated to be 65%. In high-income countries, it is nearly 90%.

India needs to prepare better. Better screening and treatment centres, and more comprehensive linkages between screening centres and hospitals are essential to reduce cancer mortality in the country.

Q.27) What are the differences between reserve forests, protected areas, community forest resource and ecologically sensitive zones? What were the problems with the implementation of ESZs?

The Hindu

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Explain the differences between reserve forests, protected areas, community forest resource and ecologically sensitive zones. Also write some problems with the implementation of ESZs.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

Protected areas cover 5.26% of India's land area as 108 national parks and 564 wildlife sanctuaries. Surrounding protected areas is a region of more than 3.4% percent of the country's land, which falls under the ESZ regime. **Forest Rights Act, 2006 (FRA)** recognises the rights of forest-dwelling tribal communities (FDST) and other traditional forest dwellers (OTFD) to forest resources.

There are following differences between reserve forests, protected areas, community forest resource and ecologically sensitive zones:

- Reserve forests are the **most restricted forests** and are constituted by India Forest Act or the State Forest Acts on any forest land or wasteland. In reserved forests, **local people are prohibited**, unless specifically allowed.
- Protected areas are **notified under the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972**. Protected areas do away with even those activities permitted in 'reserve forests', unless specifically allowed.
- The community forest resource area is the **common forest land** that has been traditionally protected for sustainable use by a particular community. It may include forest of any category-revenue forest, classified & unclassified forest, deemed forest, reserve forest, protected forest, sanctuary and national parks etc.
- Ecologically sensitive zones (ESZ) are intended **to safeguard 'protected areas'** by transitioning from an area of lower protection to an area of higher protection. The purpose of the ESZ was to provide more protection to the parks by **acting as a shock absorber**.

Problems with the implementation of ESZs:

- Significantly, parts of the ESZs in ten States **fall within the Scheduled Areas** notified under the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution. They are mostly populated by Scheduled Tribe groups.

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- The Provisions of the PESA Act, 1996 apply in these areas. The **PESA recognises gram sabhas competence** to safeguard and preserve community resources on forest and revenue lands in Scheduled Areas.
- The MoEFCC has shown no inclination to amend the Indian Forest Act 1927, the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and the Environment (Protection) Act 1986 to comply with the PESA and FRA.
- The protected areas are based on the core and buffer model of management. Many argue that if the parks already have buffer zones then why do we need ESZs.

There is a need for rethinking on the impacts of the environmental policies at the local level, the type and prospects of local participation and most importantly the prospects of alternate income generating opportunities for successful conservation initiatives.

Q.28) Discuss the need for a new fertilizer policy in India.

Live mint

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Explain the need for a new fertilizer policy in India.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

India is the **2nd largest consumer and 3rd largest producer** of fertilizers in the world. The new policy could propose lower duty on imported phosphoric acid to raise the competitiveness of local fertilizer manufacturers and an incentive for promoting organic fertilizers.

Need for a new fertilizer policy:

- **Heavy subsidies:** The subsidies have enabled the **over utilisation** of fertilizers on agricultural lands. Over use of fertilizers also **pollutes groundwater**. Infants who drink water with high levels of nitrate (or eat foods made with nitrate-contaminated water) may develop the **blue baby syndrome**. Also, with the subsidy being released directly to companies, technology-inefficient companies are being protected.
- **Costlier raw material:** Rock phosphate is the key raw material for DAP (diammonium phosphate) and NPK fertilisers and India is 90 percent dependent on imports for them.
- **Heavy imports:** India depends heavily on imports for its fertilizer requirements. In 2021-22, in value terms, imports of all fertilisers touched an all-time high of \$12.77 billion. The total value of fertiliser imports by India, inclusive of inputs used in domestic production, was a huge \$24.3 billion in 2021-22.
- **Lack of natural resources:** In case of urea, primary feedstock is natural gas which is not enough available in the country. As per the petroleum ministry's data, the fertiliser sector's share in the consumption of re-gasified LNG was over 41 per cent.
- To promote the **efficient use** of fertilizers through the balanced use of N, P, and K (nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium).
- The Ukraine war spiked the government's spending on food, fertilizer and fuel subsidies by nearly 70%. For 2023-24, the fertilizer ministry might seek budgetary support of ₹2.5 trillion subsidy – outgo for FY23 has already crossed ₹2 trillion.

One Nation, One Fertilizer plan is a significant step. India should also pay attention to improving fertilizer efficiency through need-based use and increase investment in new fertilizer plants.

Q.29) With policy and implementation focused on the early years in primary school, it is time to rethink strategy for India's schoolchildren who have gone past the foundational stage. Discuss

The Hindu

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Write some policies for early education. Also write some issues with the education of middle school children.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

Article 45 in Directive Principles of State Policy stated that the government should provide free and compulsory education to all until the age of 14 within 10 years from the commencement of the Constitution. **Article 21A** made elementary education a fundamental right rather than a directive principle.

Policies for early education:

- **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan:** It was started in 2001, to achieve the Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE).
- **Mid Day Meal:** Mid Day Meal Scheme was launched in 1995 with provisions to **provide free meal** to about 12 crore children studying in primary and upper-primary classes. The objective behind the scheme is to address the hunger and education, improve the nutrient status and increase the attendance and retention rates among the children.
- **Operation Blackboard:** The purpose of the scheme is to provide the **requisite institutional equipment and educational material** for students studying in primary organizations to improve their education.
- **NIPUN Bharat Scheme:** To create an enabling environment to ensure universal acquisition of **foundational literacy and numeracy**, so that every child achieves the desired learning competencies in reading, writing and numeracy by the end of Grade 3, by 2026-27.

Issues with the education of middle school children:

- ASER evidence suggests that **basic learning levels** of middle schoolchildren have remained **low and stagnant** for over a decade. The “value” add of each year of middle school is small.
- Many children are reaching standard eight without being sufficiently equipped with foundational literacy and numeracy skills.
- ASER data shows that an “**overambitious**” **curriculum** and the linear age-grade organisational structure of Indian schools result in a vast majority of children getting “left behind” early in their school career.
- In the **absence of in-school mechanisms for “catch up”**, children fall further and further behind academically. With this comes low motivation to learn and a lack of self-confidence.
- Academic content transacted in schools implicitly assumes that students are **being prepared for college**. However, the reality is that a college degree is neither relevant nor possible for most students who finish secondary school.

Much of the country's efforts in school education today are focused on ensuring strong foundations for children in the early years. But it is critical that we remember that middle schoolchildren also urgently need support for learning recovery and “catch up”.

Q.30) There needs to be a review of the way the POCSO Act has been implemented, as there are imperfections despite its impact. Discuss

The Hindu

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Explain some imperfections of POCSO Act. Also write its significance.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

The aim of Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO Act), 2012 is to address offences of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, which were either not specifically defined or in adequately penalised.

Imperfections of POCSO Act:

- **Issue of age determination:** Age estimation based on medical opinion is generally so wide in scope that in most cases minors are proved to be major.
- **At the Trial Stage:** The challenges at this stage include: **(a)** Lack of Special Courts in all districts; **(b)** Lack of Special Public Prosecutors for Special Courts; **(c)** Non-compliance with the timelines prescribed by the Act.
- **Inadequate Training of Various Stakeholders:** e.g. Private medical practitioners are usually the first point of contact for child victims but no mandatory training is provided.
- The POCSO Act provides for recording the statement by a woman sub-inspector. But it is practically impossible when the **number of women in the police force** is just 10%.
- In the **absence of proper infrastructure** to ensure the integrity of electronic evidence, the admissibility of evidence recorded using any audio-video means will always remain a challenge.
- There are instances where the banned two-finger test is still in use.
- There have been **no attempts to upgrade the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL)** in States. Many cases have a charge sheet without an accompanying FSL report, which is then decided by courts.

Significance of POCSO Act:

- The Act provides **for immediate relief at the filing of the case.** The compensation amount can change, based on the need of the victim. For example, the Act does not define the outer limit. The Judges can include Child's educational need, medical needs including trauma compensation while deciding the compensation amount.
- The Act is **Gender-neutral and Child friendly.** The Act defines Child as any person below 18 years of age. Apart from that, the Act includes various safeguards for the child, like protecting the identity, avoiding victimization etc.
- The Act has led to increased number of cases filed, and also translated to an increase in the higher rate of conviction.

The recommendations provided by the Vidhi Centre are worthwhile which, if implemented, can go a long way in addressing the issues with the functioning of the POCSO Act.

Q.31) 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.

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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.32) 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*.

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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.33) 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**

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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.34) 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 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

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also suggested that political party members get gender awareness training, as well as leadership training for future female leaders.

Q.35) 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.
- 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.36) 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.

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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.
- 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.37) 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

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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.38) 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:

- **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**.

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- 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.

