



**Mains Marathon**  
**Compilation**

**17<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 2023**

## **Mains Marathon Compilation for the Month of April, (Third Week) 2023**

- 1. While the tiger population is increasing, the numbers do not reflect great success despite political support, funds, and a strong legal framework. Elaborate.**
- 2. Discuss the criterion and benefits of getting recognized as a national party.**
- 3. What steps can the government take to prepare people for heat conditions? How has Heat Action Plan (HAP) been useful in these conditions?**
- 4. The Media One judgment has underlined the institutional capacity of the court. Examine the statement.**
- 5. Discuss the significance and challenges of separate competition law for digital markets (SCLDM).**
- 6. What Is Government eMarket Place? How far has it been able to transform the process of public procurement of goods?**
- 7. India is set to become the most populous country in the world very soon. In the light of the statement, what steps can the government take to make India a human capital powerhouse?**
- 8. LIGO-India project will add to India's astronomical capabilities and will enable it to offer inputs and feedback not only for itself but for the rest of the world as well. Discuss.**

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### **Q.1) While the tiger population is increasing, the numbers do not reflect great success despite political support, funds, and a strong legal framework. Elaborate.**

Project Tiger is a tiger conservation effort, started by Government of India in 1973. It was launched to improve the dwindling population of Tiger and to restore the grassland ecosystem of India.

The project has been regarded to be one of the most successful conservation projects of the world. The project has been successful in protection, maintaining, and increasing the count of tigers in nature. The tiger census in 1972 revealed the existence of 1827 tigers. However, in 2023, India is the home of 3167 tigers, which is the highest among the 13 Tiger Range Countries in the world.

However, the critics have pointed out that the increase in the population of the tiger since the inception of the project has not been very reassuring. The amount of political effort, funds and legal framework that has gone into this has not given appropriate outcomes.

The limitations of the Tiger Project have been the following:

- The tiger population in certain geographical regions of India still depreciated, despite the major effort to conserve.
- The plan to reintroduce tigers from central Indian Forests to such areas where the population is dwindling, has led to homogeneity in the tiger genetic structure across the country.
- As Cheetal are the major prey for tiger, efforts to provide for prey base in varying ecosystems has majorly resulted in 'Cheetalification' of the tiger reserves.
- All the conservation efforts in Project Tiger are done by the government only. Wildlife Protection Act is very restrictive in nature. This has led to exclusion of the local communities and other sections from the conservation efforts.

However, the efforts by the government to conserve the population of the tiger has borne fruit. Trafficking of Tiger has been effectively controlled, public has become more aware and poaching has been prevented. These efforts have led to increase in the number of the tigers in the country, making Project Tiger a very successful project.

### **Q.2) Discuss the criterion and benefits of getting recognized as a national party.**

Recently, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has been recognised as a national party, while Trinamool Congress (TMC) and Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) have lost their status as national party. These statuses are given by Election Commission of India, based on technical criteria given in Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968.

Criteria of being recognised as a National Party:

- If a party has been recognised in four or more states.
- The party must have polled at least 6 per cent vote share in four or more states in the last Lok Sabha or Assembly elections and having at least 4 MPs.
- The party must have polled at least 2 per cent of the seats in the Lok Sabha, with its candidates having been elected from at least three states.

The benefits of being recognised as a National Party:

- Once the party gets the national party status, the election symbol of the party will remain unchanged across India. Hence, the uniformity of the symbol, provides a greater vision and recognition across the states.
- The party also gets free broadcast/telecast times on Akashvani and Doordarshan during the general election. They can reach the general masses through these channels, free of cost.
- National Party can have a maximum of 40 star campaigners, whose travel expenses will not be counted in the account of the candidates. Star campaigners are the celebrity campaigners who endorse the party and have more vote-fetching ability, but should not share the stage with any candidate.
- These parties need only one proposer to file nomination. For an independent candidate, 10 proposers are required to sign the nomination paper.

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- These parties get two sets of electoral roll free of cost at the time of the revision of rolls. Their candidates get one copy free of cost during the general elections.
- They get the privilege of consultation with Election Commission in setting of election dates.
- Top slots on the voting machine usually stay reserved for the national parties.

However, if the parties fall short of the votes for two consecutive elections, then they may lose their status. In past, RJD lost its status as national party by failing to get 6% vote share, by a very small margin.

### **Q 3) What steps can the government take to prepare people for heat conditions? How has Heat Action Plan (HAP) been useful in these conditions?**

Recently, in a government organised event held in Navi Mumbai, 12 people died of heatstroke due to inadequate provision for appropriate drinking water which led to dehydration. In the coming years, heat stroke is going to rise, especially for India, as per Global Climate Risk Index.

Steps that can be taken by the government to prepare people for heat conditions:

- 1) Effective preparation of Heat Action Plan (HAP), which is a policy document outlining preparatory, adaptive and responsive measures for government department to tackle the heat and its impacts. Delhi is yet to come out with a HAP, while HAP has proven to be effective in several regions across India.
- 2) Spreading awareness about climate literacy, so that climate-appropriate decisions are taken by individuals. Most importantly, the vulnerable section such as residents of urban slums, people with chronic health problems, and workers working in small, enclosed space.
- 3) Installation of local meteorology offices, so that timely heat alerts based on the local conditions are issued well in advance.
- 4) Specialised training for health care professionals to deal with heat stroke related issues. Strengthening of medical infrastructure for heat related conditions.
- 5) Installation of roofs made of cooling materials, such as coconut husks and paper waste, so that the buildings remain cold despite heat conditions.

National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) gave guidelines to enable states to prepare HAP. HAP have been useful in dealing with the heat related conditions.

- 1) The early warning system established under HAP has been helpful for forecast and inter-agency coordination against heat wave. Telangana has an app to disseminate village level weather condition in real time.
- 2) Identification of hotspots in the cities has helped in developing coping mechanisms and emergency response to heat related conditions. Odisha has taken special initiative to outline such hotspots in Bhubaneswar.
- 3) Dissemination of public awareness through print media and electronic media has helped reduce exposure to heat and promote adaptive measures.
- 4) Collaboration with non-government and civil society organisations has helped improve sheds and shelter at public places such as market, bus stations. Water delivery has improved in public areas.
- 5) In long term, improving of forest coverage, green areas and shelter belts have helped reduce the ill impacts of heat waves.

However, there are still certain limitations in HAP, such as the definition of heat hazard does not consider humidity, exposure durations etc. Most of HAP are poor at identifying the vulnerable sections and the heat hotspots. Another issue relates to the funding of the HAP, which is facing serious funding constraint.

Heat is still not identified as a disaster, which is eligible for mitigation and relief under National and State disaster risk management funds. An expert committee should be constituted to review the decision, review the HAPs and share the best practices based on experiences of different states.

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### Q 4) The Media One judgment has underlined the institutional capacity of the court. Examine the statement.

Supreme Court (SC) has recently set aside the ban by Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on MediaOne channel, a Malayalam news channel critical of government policies. Supreme Court has delivered a landmark judgement preserving the right to freedom of speech for media.

The MediaOne case has highlighted the capacity of the Supreme Court to go against political forces reaffirming its institutional capacity. The judgment has also touched upon a few issues which are important for a democracy.

- 1) **Sealed Cover Jurisprudence:** a practise to accept affidavits by the government in form of sealed envelope, so that only the concerned judge reads the content. This practice goes against natural justice, where a party has a right to know the evidence presented against them. Supreme Court has taken a note of the habit to accept sealed cover by High court and has asked to reduce the practice.
- 2) **Government is not equal to nation:** SC has underlined that government is not equal to nation, hence criticism of the government policies is not criticism of the nation. Therefore, this cannot be a ground for citing national security.
- 3) **Admonishing the state against misuse of national security rhetoric:** SC has commented that allowing the state to raise the national security ground to curb rights without any checks can lead to dangerous consequences.

The judgment has highlighted the resolve of the SC to protect the right of expression for the citizen and media. National Security forms part of the reasonable restrictions contained in Article 19(2). Yet, SC sought a deeper inspection of the issue and concluded that the government cannot raise national security without any substantial evidence.

However, the judgement falls short as it has not evolved a set of guidelines, to help determine which practices can be covered under national security, and hence be used to restrict the freedom of speech.

SC observed that claiming national security cannot be used to deprive court of judicial review powers. Therefore, a bold verdict has been given by SC to strengthen the fundamental rights in country, while reclaiming the eroding power and prestige of the judiciary.

### Q.5) Discuss the significance and challenges of separate competition law for digital markets (SCLDM).

Standing Committee on Finance recommended a Digital Competition bill in late 2022 to ensure a fair, transparent and contestable digital ecosystem in India. Thereafter a committee was formed by the government in 2023 to examine the need for a separate competition law for digital market.

What is Separate Competition Law for Digital Markets (SCLDM)?

- 1) The existing Competition Act and Competition Commission of India (CCI) come into picture after the event has taken place, and monopolized the market. Proposed SCLDM aims to provide regulation before markets end up monopolized (ex-ante).
- 2) Significant entities like Alphabet (google), Amazon and Facebook (Whatsapp) have monopolised various sectors like app stores, e-commerce and instant messaging. SCLDM aims to allow new players to enter by reducing entry barriers.

Significance of the Proposed SCLDM :

- 1) It will regulate the unintended data collected by these companies either as a part of their operation or by-product of it. This data otherwise may be compromised, sold or misused due to absence of data protection act in the country. The proposed act will ensure consumer protection in India.
- 2) The high scale of return for significant companies (Google, Amazon etc) due to large user base provides an unfair advantage. This advantage restricts the entry of new players through abusive practices and hindering innovation. For example- Google Play Store ruling by CCI. The proposed act will address innovation and entry barriers as well.

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- 3) The emerging digital challenges such as deep discounting and pricing, platform neutrality, search and ranking preferencing, advertising policies, market crowding and digital dominance, which leads to abuse of market, were hitherto unregulated. The proposed act will regulate these upcoming challenges in digital sector.
- 4) The proposed regulation will only cover big companies that have significant presence in the market. Thus, only the Systemically Important Digital Intermediaries will come under ex-ante law, while new players will not be covered under the law. This marks an exit from the sector agnostic approach of CCI and Competition Law.

However, there are certain challenges that may come with enactment of SCLDM:

- 1) With different regulations within same sector, distortions in choices made by consumer may arise, leading to market failure in future. Big players may take innovative route to bypass the regulations, leading to poorer protection for the consumers.
- 2) Digital markets are not much different from physical markets, and both have one foot in the other type of market. It will be very difficult to demarcate which market will SCLDM apply to.
- 3) With rapidly growing innovation, law making can never match the pace of technological advancements. Emerging areas like metaverse markets and Non Fungible Tokens (NFT) markets will need a different regulation, since they are fundamentally different from the current digital market.
- 4) Special regulation for only one part (online sector), while both online and physical market face the same challenges such as increasing returns to scale, will hamper the uniformity in regulatory environment.
- 5) Abuse of the dominance is the problem, which is only ex-post, and not ex-ante. Hence, creating an ex-ante law will suppress dominance, which may not be bad, and might be the result of efficiency and technology improvement, such as JIO telecom.

Therefore, before finalising a digital market law, effort to digitalise all the reporting, compliance and audit is important. Reporting will itself reduce the need for an ex-ante law, and the field will become more welcoming for new players that bring innovation into the sector.

### **Q.6) What Is Government eMarket Place? How far has it been able to transform the process of public procurement of goods?**

Government eMarket Place (GeM) is a national procurement portal dedicated to efficiency, transparency and speed in procurement. The portal has facilitated procurement of Rs. 2 lakh crore in a single financial year 2022-23.

The GeM portal has been able to change the old procurement process and add value along with efficiency to the process of public procurement. The benefits have been the following:

- 1) The portal allows registration of new sellers without any human interface. The induced competition has allowed better price discovery and larger savings for the government. Saved money been spent in welfare programs without compromising on the fiscal health.
- 2) The transparency in government procurements has made an opaque, time consuming, cumbersome procurement process into efficient, honest and accessible process.
- 3) Payment to the vendor, which got delayed earlier, has become paperless and automated now. Hence, the vendor payments are timely, helping the vendors grow.
- 4) 56% of the order value processed through the portal has been delivered through Micro, Small and Medium sized Enterprises (MSME). The portal has allowed MSME and small business access to the highly sought after government orders.
- 5) The portal is a shining example of use of technology to ease governance. The portal uses technology and live tracking to book orders, deliver orders timely and release payments to the vendors.
- 6) The participation of government agency is diversified, and Central/State governments, central/state PSUs have been procuring from GeM.

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- 7) The portal allows the online marketplace to aggregate demands from multiple entities for similar products, and build in the preference provided by State Governments to small enterprises. This allows discovery, variety and neutrality in placing orders for government procurement.

However, there has been certain drawbacks in the implementation of GeM:

- 1) Only 10% of the government procurement value (about Rs. 20 Lakh Crore) is processed by GeM portal. A lot of progress is remaining.
  - 2) States from south have not participated well, since they have their own portal and these states (Tamil Nadu and Karnataka) feel that opening door to GeM would be detrimental to the sellers in the state.
  - 3) Language has been a big barrier in inter-state trade and large distance procurement.
- More than 2.36 crore flags worth over Rs 60 Crore was procured by different government departments on GeM portal from over 4100 sellers in Har Ghar Tiranga campaign. Within a short span of time, GeM has reached fourth rank globally in terms of value of transaction. Many other milestones are yet to come in the future.

### **Q.7) India is set to become the most populous country in the world very soon. In the light of the statement, what steps can the government take to make India a human capital powerhouse?**

As per UNFPA estimates, India has surpassed China to become the most populous country of the world. With the youth bulge and low dependency ratio, India will have the largest size of working population soon. Government needs to make sure that this opportunity is well utilised to reap the demographic dividend.

Human Capital is the productive capacity generated by an individual due to better education and health. Human Capital Index 2020 by World Bank ranked India at 116 out of 180 countries, with an expectation that an average worker in India can only reach about half her full potential during her lifetime. India's Human Capital formation has worsened since then, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Investment in human capital is needed for technological growth, improving productivity, creating social innovations, etc so that the country can develop at fast pace. Steps needed to make India a human capital powerhouse are:

- 1) **Health:** 47% of Indians are below the age of 25 years. India needs to work on improving the quality of primary healthcare, so that the young adolescents have access to healthcare, and do not develop life-threatening diseases, which reduces their human capital. Ayushman Bharat Yojna is a step in that direction.
- 2) **Nutrition:** High proportion of malnutrition persists in India (close to 30% as per NFHS-5). Various government initiatives like Mission Poshan 2.0, Mid-Day Meal Scheme and Anaemia Mukta Bharat Abhiyan are steps in this direction.
- 3) **Education:** Quality of education directly influences the human capital formation. Only about 74% Indians are literate. New Education Policy, Samagra Siksha Abhiyan, National Digital Literacy Mission and Eklavya Model Residential schools for Tribals are important steps in this direction.
- 4) **Skill Development:** India Skills Report 2022 suggests that only 48.7% of India's educated youth are employable. Participation of private sector in skilling sector, will ensure that skill development is demand driven and addresses the needs of the market. Maharashtra Govt Skill University, aligned with NEP will be a major step in developing job ready human capital.
- 5) **Entrepreneurship:** India is booming into the startup sector, ranking third in the world now. Focus on startups will lead to job creation in the economy. These startups contribute to youth development significantly.
- 6) **Financial Inclusion:** Combined with improved purchasing power, financial inclusion will make India a formal market. Such formal inclusion will ease access to credit and provide a social safety net, leading to better human capital.

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- 7) **Gender Inclusion:** Gender gaps in the early years are closing, but inequalities persist in adulthood. Female participation in politics, workforce and higher management should be nurtured.

However, there are challenges that needs to be addressed:

- 1) Baby boom in states like UP and Bihar, coupled with ageing population in the South Indian States, will be a challenge for policy makers. Ability to handle demography effectively is challenging at central level.
- 2) With the increasing older population (about 10% of the population soon), the significant challenges will include social security, access to geriatric healthcare, and post-retirement employment. UN study shows that ageing population has a higher proportion of poverty, with them being dependent on others for sustenance. Present government schemes lack meaningful impact, being of tokenistic financial support.
- 3) By 2050 more people will live in urban areas than in villages. The cities lack adequate basic amenities such as housing, water, transportation and sanitation. Urban planning to support the high population becomes challenging when the cities are already overpopulated.
- 4) India spends just 4% of its GDP as public expenditure on human capital. This small budget can be better utilised if there is decentralisation, so that principle of subsidiarity is followed.

Therefore, policies with gender equality and rights, parental leave programs, child tax credits and workforce gender equality policies should be introduced so that the population does not become gendered and continues to support a balanced demographic dividend for years to come.

### **Q.8) LIGO-India project will add to India's astronomical capabilities and will enable it to offer inputs and feedback not only for itself but for the rest of the world as well. Discuss.**

The LIGO-India project will be in Maharashtra and will help Indian Scientists measure gravitational waves in space which are created by various space events such as mergers of black holes. It will be the fifth node on the international network of gravitational wave observatories.

- 1) Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO) is cutting-edge research to identify gravitational waves generated by cosmic events which pass through the earth.
- 2) These waves when passing through earth tend to affect the shape of earth, and a precise measurement of these changes allows perceiving a gravitational wave. LIGO has exceptionally high accuracy to measure these very tiny changes.
- 3) These gravitational waves prove the special theory of relativity by Einstein. Which explains gravity and space-time, and answers about the origin of the gravity forces.

#### **How LIGO adds to Indian astronomical capabilities?**

- 1) Collaboration in the LIGO project demonstrates India's eagerness to contribute to the global knowledge body in Astronomy.
  - Previous projects like Chandrayaan 2, Aditya L1 Solar Telescope, AstroSat, Square Kilometre Array Radio Telescope, Indian Astronomical Observatory at Hanle and Thirty Metre Telescope (TMT) adds to the reputation of India.
- 2) The standard of innovative science at LIGO on Indian soil will help improve the standards of astronomy in India through exposure for researchers from IITs and IISERs.
- 3) Such projects also inculcate invaluable elements of work ethics in the Indian Astronomy and Astrophysics community. Large-scale participation and proactive planning have enabled Indian researchers to get entrenched in an emerging frontier before it matures.



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- 4) The expertise gained with LIGO lasers will help in the Quantum Technology for India, which will have various applications in future.
- 5) Indian manufacturing reputation will improve if India is able to manufacture and commission this complex equipment domestically. This reputation will become a source of commercial contracts and partnerships in future.

The experience with LIGO will be invaluable for India, as well as other countries. It will demonstrate the possibilities when the education system and geography meet to unravel the frontiers of basic science with skilled experts. As a result, the whole world can use the knowledge for advancement of the humanity.

Healthy expenditure on Science and Technology will be able to empower, enrich the nation, and help achieve the status of world leader, in various dimensions. Indian Neutrino Observatory (INO), another ambitious scientific project, has been delayed due to environmental concerns. We need to ensure that LIGO does not meet the same fate.