Mains Marathon

Compilation

3rd to 8th July, 2023

Mains Marathon Compilation for the Month of July, (First Week) 2023

1. Analyze the impact of the criminalization of politics in India. Discuss its implications for democratic governance and suggest measures to address this issue.
2. Critically analyze the role of master plans as an instrument of governance for urban local bodies in India.

3. Evaluate the effectiveness of warnings and disclaimers in curbing tobacco consumption. How can the government address broader triggers and influencers of tobacco use?
4. Analyze the importance of Emergency Use Authorisation (EUA) in the context of essential antibiotics.

5. Critically evaluate India's engagement with the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) since its full membership in 2017. How has this engagement influenced India's strategic autonomy and its position in regional security and economic matters?
6. Analyze the role of a collaborative model promoting the cultural economy in addressing the challenges faced by Indian artists and artisans. How can such a model contribute to the preservation of traditional art forms and the promotion of contemporary artists as brands?

7. Analyze the potential impact of the implementation of a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) on the customary laws and practices of tribal communities in India. Discuss the concerns raised by tribal communities.
8. Discuss the short-term and medium-term measures proposed by the Inter-Departmental Group constituted by the Reserve Bank of India for boosting the Rupee's usage in international transactions. Discuss the potential benefits and challenges of the internationalization of the Indian Rupee.

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1. **Analyze the impact of the criminalization of politics in India. Discuss its implications for democratic governance and suggest measures to address this issue.**

> **Introduction:** Briefly explain the criminalization of politics in India.
> **Body:** What are its impact and measures to deal with the issue?
> **Conclusion:** Way forward.

The criminalization of politics is a situation where there is a sizeable presence of criminals in the politics itself. The criminalization of politics leads to a large no of criminals participating in and contesting elections of parliament and state assemblies. When criminals turn into elected representatives and become lawmakers, they pose a serious threat to the functioning of a democratic system. According to data from the ADR, the number of candidates with criminal charges elected to Parliament in India has been on the rise since 2004. In 2004, **24% of parliamentarians had pending criminal cases**, which rose to **43% in 2019.** In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, **159 MPs had declared serious criminal cases against them**, including those of rape, murder, attempt to murder, kidnapping, and crimes against women.

Impact on the democratic structure of India:

- **Against free and fair election**: The growing nexus between criminals and politicians leads to intimidation of voters using fear and violence. Criminals resort to illegitimate expenditure to buy votes and promote a freebies culture.
- **Adverse impact on governance**: Criminal politicians use their influence in posting and transfer of bureaucrats and thereby impact the governance of the state.
- **Create division in society**: They take advantage of division in society based on caste, class, and religion and portray themselves as protector of their communities. Thus they harm the social fabric of the nation.
- **Frequent disruption of Parliament**: Criminals as politicians are not trained parliamentarians and often resort to unparliamentary practices to create disruption in the parliament and state assembly which impacts the functioning of the representative institution.
- **Huge pendency of cases**: Since politicians with criminal pasts become ministers, and lawmakers it becomes difficult for state agencies to prosecute them which leads to high pendency of criminal cases in the judiciary.

Suggestions to address this issue:

- **State funding of elections:** It would help curb money and muscle power and help serious candidates to contest in elections.
- **Election Commission:** It is time to strengthen the role of the EC in the regulation of the electoral process and to establish a framework to disqualify candidates with criminal records.
- **Responsible role of Parliament**: Parliament should establish a strong legal framework that mandates all political parties to revoke the membership of persons against whom charges were framed in heinous and grievous offenses and not to set up such persons in elections for Parliament as also State Assemblies.
- **Voter awareness:** Voters should be aware of the misuse of money and muscle power in elections. They should refrain from accepting gifts, inducements, and freebies and should utilize the option of NOTA to express resentment against the candidate.

Conclusion

To protect the integrity of democratic systems and advance moral and responsible political leadership, combating the criminalization of politics necessitates a multifaceted strategy encompassing legal, institutional, and societal measures.

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2. **Critically analyze the role of master plans as an instrument of governance for urban local bodies in India.**

> **Introduction:** What is the meaning of a Master Plan?
> **Body:** What role does it play in the governance of ULB?
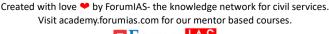> **Conclusion:** Way forward.

Recently, at the G20 meeting, there was a discussion around the role of master plans as an instrument of governance for urban local bodies in India. A master plan is an instrument of urban local bodies (ULBs) governance recommended by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs for the improved governance of cities.

Does the master plan play a crucial role in the governance of ULB?

- **The master plan is time specific:** Master plan as a concept originally came in the 1950s as the basis for town planning. While the plan served as providing a framework for urban development it neglected issues of environmental protection. Governments think of master plans as one-step solutions to urban problems while master plans regularly need improvements and upgradation.
- **Inconvenience:** Cities based on master plan development in India like Delhi suffer multiple difficulties like flooding, pollution, traffic, and so forth.
- **Absence of master plans:** A recent report by NITI Ayog titled *Reforms in Urban Planning Capability in India* claims that master plans are absent in 65 percent of the 7,933 recognized urban entities.
- **Spatial Plan:** Since master plans are spatial plans with excessive focus on maps, byelaws, and development control regulations the new project demands are being imposed on bureaucrats as there is a shortage of qualified urban planners.
- **The ideology of the ruling party:** Development in India is a long-term strategy that involves political continuity & is significantly influenced by the dominant political party. Each political party has its ideology and set of guiding ideas. Any time the government changes, the attitude, programs, policies, and plans for urban development also change.

Way Forward:

- **Qualified experts:** Highly professional urban planners and professionals with academics in urban planning must be hired to spot shortfalls in Urban Governance and suggest remedies.
- **National Spatial Planning Act:** India should be prepared to go for scientific land use planning particularly in Urban Settlements according to the new National Spatial Planning Act.
- **Cooperative federalism:** There is a need for cooperation between states and Central Government in policy-making related to urban governance and innovative new ideas according to practices prevailing in Indian cities. The Central Government must work with states on schemes like Gati Shakti and Model Rural Transformation Acts for reimaging the spatial planning framework in India.
- **NITI Aayog:** NITI Aayog should spearhead the mission of transforming urban governance with a special focus on the spatial (town) planning profession and education.

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3. **Evaluate the effectiveness of warnings and disclaimers in curbing tobacco consumption. How can the government address broader triggers and influencers of tobacco use?**

> **Introduction:** Briefly explain recent guidelines to curb tobacco use.
> **Body:** How effective are these procedures and what more can government do to address this issue?
> **Conclusion:** Way forward.

Recently Health Ministry issued advisories making it mandatory for OTT platforms to display tobacco-related health warnings at the beginning and in the middle of streamed content. The _Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply, and Distribution) Rules, 2004,_ were amended to include the requirement. Since 2004, these Rules have been updated to include warning messages on cigarette packaging, limit tobacco product advertising, restrict tobacco retail near educational facilities, and require the display of anti-tobacco warnings in theatres and on television, mediums that have largely complied with the regulations.

How effective is this process to curb tobacco consumption?

- **Treating symptoms, not root cause:** Rather than going for a blanket ban on the production & sale of tobacco products Government has gone for piecemeal measures which are viewed as mere tokenism.
- **Vague guidelines**: The guidelines seem to be vague and difficult to implement due to the nature of the web series divided into episodes, multiple languages, and the discretion of consumers to skip the part or watch it later.
- **Compliance burden:** Review of a large amount of web content for use or representation of tobacco use would put immense pressure on finances and would be time-consuming.
- **International Report:** Lancet Global Health Research Review on Global Impact of Tobacco Control Policies on Smokeless Tobacco Use found India's efforts to curb smokeless tobacco use "exemplary". These measures align with the _WHO FCTC (Framework Convention on Tobacco Control)_ and include taxation, regulation of contents, labelling and packaging, education campaigns, cessation services, restrictions on sale to and by minors, and a ban on the sale and manufacture of products such as gutkha.

How can government address triggers and influences of tobacco use?

- **Public Health campaigns:** The government in collaboration with WHO should launch health campaigns in colleges and schools to address issues of peer pressure and mental stress which are responsible for tobacco consumption.
- **Stringent measures:** The government has taken measures such as bans on advertisements, spitting in public places, prohibition of the use of plastic sachets for packaging, and tobacco use in public places to further discourage consumption.
- **Multidirectional approach:** The approach requires limiting the production of tobacco by encouraging tobacco farmers to shift to growing food crops that would provide them and their families with a better life, supporting national economies and ensuring food security.

Conclusion:

The government should work with all stakeholders especially industry in formulating a strategy to limit the production as well as consumption of tobacco. Health Minister has rightly suggested and mooted the idea to start a Lok Bhagidari campaign in mission mode

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through Jan Abhiyaan to create wide awareness among youth and the nation regarding the seriously debilitating and harmful effects of tobacco consumption.

4. **Analyze the importance of Emergency Use Authorisation (EUA) in the context of essential antibiotics.**

> **Introduction:** Briefly describe what is EUA process.
> **Body:** What is its importance in the context of antibiotics?
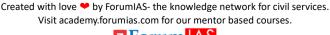> **Conclusion:** Way forward

EUA or Emergency Use Authorisation as the name suggests is a regulatory mechanism used by many countries to allow the use of medical products or treatments during public health emergencies, such as pandemics or natural disasters, before they receive full approval. The traditional process to approve new drugs or vaccines is subject to a long clinical process which is very long and it takes years for such products to receive commercial approval. It's crucial to understand that EUA does not equate to full approval. It opens a door for the quick use of medical devices in times of need, but the maker must still submit further information and apply for full clearance later. Recent notable examples of EUA include approval of _AstraZeneca's COVISHIELD, Pfizer, and Moderna COVID vaccine_.

What is its importance in the context of essential antibiotics?

- **Access to Life-saving vaccines/drugs**: As seen during COVID and other life-threatening diseases like Cancer, EUA proved to be a life-saving intervention that made products easily accessible bypassing the lengthy process. Eg, AstraZeneca's COVISHIELD and antibiotic, cefepime/zidebactam to combat drug-resistant gram-negative pathogens including _Pseudomonas aeruginosa._
- **Efficacy and Safety not compromised**: Due diligence is maintained before granting EUA approval in terms of reviewing data and analysing the risks and benefits associated with the drugs. Scientific reports have suggested that the potential benefits of EUA outweigh the known potential risks.
- **Limiting the spread of pathogens**: Experience of COVID shows that the EUA process was responsible to limit or slow the spread of the virus particularly in developing nations. This led to a reduced fatality in the later stage when vaccines were available.
- **Medical Ethics**: EUA helps to bring a framework where regulatory agencies have to establish a balance between the need for timely access to interventions during public health emergencies with the imperative of protecting public health and safety by way of giving quick approval to drugs.
- **Post-Authorization Monitoring**: There are proper safeguards regarding post-authorization monitoring and surveillance of programs receiving EUA approval. The data of authorized products are collected and used to improve the safety, and efficiency of the product and publish their findings to make people aware of the performance of such drugs/vaccines.

Conclusion:

India must frame a law dealing explicitly with EUA to deal with the use and regulation of drugs during public health emergencies. EUA process must follow regular scrutiny, issues of safety and efficacy adequately addressed, and complete transparency and accountability of regulatory agencies be maintained concerning the whole process.

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5. **Critically evaluate India's engagement with the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) since its full membership in 2017. How has this engagement influenced India's strategic autonomy and its position in regional security and economic matters?**

> **Introduction:** What is SCO grouping?
> **Body:** How has SCO engagement influenced India's position on security and economic issues?
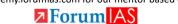> **Conclusion:** Way forward

SCO is a **Eurasian political, economic, and military organization.** Having begun as the Shanghai Five in 1996 by the leaders of China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, it was rechristened as the SCO in 2001. **The SCO entered into force on 19 September 2003**. The SCO has 8 members as of September 2022. These are India, China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan. **India and Pakistan joined in 2017.**

How has this engagement with SCO helped India?

- **Access to energy-rich areas**: India's engagement with SCO has given India access to resource-rich Central Asian countries and Russia. SCO framework could help in advancing projects like TAPI pipelines which are important to India's natural gas needs.
- **Connect Central Asia policy**: SCO membership will further deepen economic ties between India and Central Asia in areas like IT, telecommunications, banking, finance, and pharmaceutical industries.
- **Contain China's influence**: India's membership in SCO can help check the influence of China in Eurasia and India's extended neighborhood in Asia. India also aims to propose an alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative by mobilizing support for the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC).
- **Counter-terrorism:** Membership in SCO has helped India in gathering intelligence from RATS which has helped in curbing activities of terror outfits, drug trafficking, and cyber crimes in the region.

How has this engagement influenced India's strategic autonomy in security and economic issues?

- **The dominance of Russia & China**: SCO functioning is dominated by Russia and China as is seen during the Ukraine-Russia war. India is forced to play a minor role in the grouping and focus only on its South Asian region.
- **China-Pak Economic Corridor**: Despite raising objections regarding the CPEC corridor which passes through PoK, India didn't receive support from other nations of the SCO & BRI project continues violating India's territorial integrity and sovereignty.
- **Counterterrorism strategy:** India's definition of terrorism differs from that of other SCO members which define terrorism as regime destabilization while for India it is state-sponsored or non-state actors-sponsored violence against a sovereign nation. Outfits like Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammad, Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, Afghan Taliban, and Haqqani Network do not come under the ambit of the SCO anti-terror structure.
- **Economic Development Strategy 2030:** Government didn't endorse the strategy as it felt that the policy was heavily inclined to benefit China in terms of trade and investment. The government was also unable to receive support from major nations regarding making English a formal language of SCO.

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Conclusion:

SCO is necessary for India to facilitate its relations with Central Asian countries to boost economic and connectivity ties with them. SCO also provides a rare platform to engage with Pakistan and prevent border conflicts. Geopolitics often comes with a price and India has to maintain its presence in the grouping even if it is incompatible with its global ambitions.

6. **Analyze the role of a collaborative model promoting the cultural economy in addressing the challenges faced by Indian artists and artisans. How can such a model contribute to the preservation of traditional art forms and the promotion of contemporary artists as brands?**

> **Introduction:** Describe collaborative model promoting cultural economy.
> **Body:** What are challenges faced by the artists and what are suggestions to resolve them?
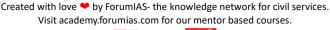> **Conclusion:** Way forward

A collaborative cultural model is a model that helps in promoting culture by creating an ecosystem of innovative technology-based start-ups, providing guidance, technical support, infrastructure, access to investors, and networking opportunities. A collaborative culture model can help attain the goals set up during the **_UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development (MONDIACULT 2022)_** to leverage the transformative power of culture for sustainable development.

What are the challenges faced by artists?

- **Financial assistance**: The challenges for artisans in promoting the culture lies in the lack of access to finance. They must rely on government support, and cultural institutions to support their initiatives which sometimes is not enough to extend their market reach.
- **Lack of transparency**: The selection procedure for the selection of art form is not fully transparent and is found to be biased against the people of rural areas. Such traditional art forms are unable to find sponsors which limits their market reach and business facilitation.
- **Art Crimes**: Crimes related to art like art theft, copyright infringement, forgery, fraud, and illicit trafficking pose significant challenges to the artists and the government. The lack of institutional infrastructure, expertise, and technology to verify the original art form compounds the problem.
- **Lack of training programs**: Insufficient guidance and training from support groups, the government also affects the cultural heritage as artisans are often exploited through the dissemination of disinformation of cultural history through various sources without verifying the authenticity.

How can a collaborative model help to preserve traditional art forms?

- **Tackling art crimes:** Various art crimes need to be handled by addressing increased security measures, international cooperation, public awareness, and advanced technology for authentication and tracking of the artwork.
- **Capacity building:** Measures to develop capacity building of its artists should be the prime focus for the government and various cultural groups. This can be developed by taking help from the private sector and creating an ecosystem of innovative technology-based start-ups in the arts and crafts sector, providing guidance, technical support, infrastructure, access to investors, and networking opportunities.

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- **Institutional support:** Institutional support in terms of providing guidance, training, professional development, material support, and access to markets will help those living outside the city to ensure equal representation with those who live in metro cities.
- **Leverage modern technologies:** A facilitation centre supported by Government and industry efforts can help in knowledge sharing, economic empowerment, leveraging data and ICT to enhance their participation in the business ecosystem.

Conclusion:

The growth and development of artists and enhancing their sustainable livelihood depend on promoting a collaborative model promoting a cultural economy and building India's soft power by promoting the economic and cultural significance of art and culture of India.

7. **Analyze the potential impact of the implementation of a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) on the customary laws and practices of tribal communities in India. Discuss the concerns raised by tribal communities.**

> **Introduction:** Describe UCC.
> **Body:** What is its impact on tribal social & cultural practices?
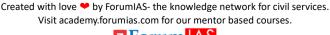> **Conclusion:** Way forward.

The Uniform Civil Code (UCC), envisioned **by Article 44 of the Indian Constitution**, proposes a common legal framework for personal laws for all Indian citizens, irrespective of religion. The goal is to achieve national integration, ensure gender equality, and uphold constitutional values. Common law is envisioned by the UCC for all country residents, regardless of faith. There is a good chance that a uniform code will cover personal laws as well as laws about marriage, inheritance, adoption, child custody, alimony, polygamy, and succession.

What could be the impact of UCC on the practices of tribals in India?

- **Polygamy**: Polygamy is practiced among Naga tribes, the Gonds, the Baiga, and the Lushai among others, while polyandry is prevalent in the Himalayan region stretching from Kashmir to Assam. These practices would be abrogated following the enactment of UCC.
- **Divorce and marriage ceremony:** Many tribal groups have objected to procedures of marriage ad divorce under UCC. The tribals feel that their practices have allowed divorce and marriage ceremonies to be much simpler and do not require complex legal procedures which are cumbersome and inaccessible.
- **Protection under the Constitution**: Northeastern states fear that UCC enactment would withdraw the guarantee of protection of their socio, cultural religious practice as guaranteed under Articles 371A, 371B, 371C, 371G, 371H.

Concerns raised by tribals:

- **Minimum age of marriage**: The tribals are concerned about the change in the legal age for marriage. They fear that minimum age criteria will infringe on their cultural practices.
- **Customary dispute resolution practices**: Tribals of Northeast and Jharkhand fear that village bodies like *akhada*, (highest decision-making body) and empowered by the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act 1996, for disputes related to land, family, and marriage, will be under threat if UCC is enacted.

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- **Inheritance & Succession**: Various Law Commission reports have pointed out that tribes in Assam, Jharkhand, and Odisha adhere to ancient customary laws of succession. States like Nagaland, Meghalaya, and Mizoram are concerned that UCC would come in conflict with safeguards regarding inheritance guaranteed under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

Conclusion:

There have been suggestions from parliamentarians to keep tribals out of the purview of UCC but this may be tantamount to defeat the purpose of UCC. There should be wide consultation involving all stakeholders, state government, tribal groups, and the common public before taking any major step to implement UCC.

8. **Discuss the short-term and medium-term measures proposed by the Inter-Departmental Group constituted by the Reserve Bank of India for boosting the Rupee's usage in international transactions. Discuss the potential benefits and challenges of the internationalization of the Indian Rupee**.

> **Introduction:** Describe the context of the internationalization of the Indian Rupee.
> **Body:** What measures are proposed by the group and what are the benefits and challenges of the Internationalization of the rupee?
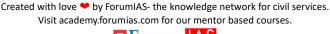> **Conclusion**: Way forward.

Recently, RBI constituted the Inter-Departmental Group to frame a road map for the internationalization of the Indian rupee. The need for the internationalization of the rupee comes in the backdrop of the Russia-Ukraine war, the subsequent imposition of sanctions, and the weaponization of the financial system which has led to apprehensions over excessive reliance on the dollar.

What measures are proposed by the group?

- **Uniform approach:** The group suggested that there should be a coherent and standardized approach to dealing with trade arrangements regarding invoicing, settlement, and payment in the rupee and local currencies. The group suggested incentives to exporters for rupee trade settlement.
- **Taxation reforms:** It also suggested reviewing tax on Masala bonds and harmonizing taxation issues in the financial markets of India with global its global counterparts. It suggested strengthening the financial market by fostering a global 24×5 rupee market and recalibration of the FPI (foreign portfolio investor) regime.
- **Banking reforms:** it suggested the need to provide seamless cross-border transactions, international use of RTGS for cross-border transactions, and allow banking services in rupees outside India through offshore branches of Indian banks.
- **IMF reforms**: The panel has also suggested that India should use its economic clout and diplomacy for currency's inclusion in International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Special Drawing Rights (SDR) basket. The Indian rupee can also be used as an additional settlement currency in institutions like Asian Clearing Union (ACU).

What are the benefits and challenges of the internationalization of the Indian Rupee?

- **Mitigates currency risk**: the biggest beneficiaries are the business sector as they are guarded against exchange rate risk and provide a cushion against currency volatility enabling business growth and expanding business globally.

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- **Reduce the need for FOREX:** Reserves have an impact on the economy even though they help control exchange rate volatility and project external stability. The requirement for maintaining foreign exchange reserves decreases with the internationalization of the rupee. India will be less susceptible to outside shocks if its reliance on foreign money is reduced.
- **Partial convertibility of Rupee:** A major challenge is the currency's partial convertibility. Advanced economies currencies are fully convertible and the exchange rate is left to market factors without any regulatory intervention which is not the case with India.
- **Share in global exports**: Various countries have expressed reservations about the use of Indian currency as India is still not considered a major exporter on the world stage with only a 2% global share of exports.
- **Global influence**: With the internationalization of the rupee there will be a significant uptick in Indian business with more presence of India's exports on the world stage and an increase in influence of India Inc. This will add to India's global status and respect.

Conclusion:

Recently, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar called for the promotion of "economic decentralization that is so essential to political decentralization", which suggests that the time is ripe for RBI to take strong steps and conscious efforts for pushing internationalization of the rupee in the global economic system.

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