

9 PM Current Affairs Weekly Compilation

For UPSC CSE mains examination



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Features :

Arranged as per syllabus Topics
Most complete coverage of major
News Papers editorials

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Panchayati Raj is declining despite grassroots success

Source: The post Panchayati Raj is declining despite grassroots success has been created, based on the article “The panchayati raj movement is in distress” published in “The Hindu” on 17th February 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein.

Context: The article discusses the decline of panchayati raj in India despite its success in grassroots democracy. It highlights issues like reduced autonomy, urbanization, and reliance on cash transfers. It suggests reforms to revive panchayats for rural development and governance.

For detailed information on **Panchayat Raj Institution(PRI) in India** [read this article here](#)

Why is the Panchayati Raj system important?

- 1. Decentralized Governance:** Established by the **73rd Amendment (1992)**, it created a **three-tier system** at **village, block, and district levels** for better local governance.
- 2. Women's Leadership:** **50% reservation** for **women, SCs, and STs** has led to **14 lakh women representatives**, strengthening grassroots democracy.
- 3. Social Sector Implementation:** Panchayats help execute key programs like **MGNREGA** and **PM Awas Yojana**, ensuring local development.
- 4. Large Rural Population:** **94 crore Indians** still live in villages, with **45% engaged in agriculture**, making local governance crucial.

What are the major challenges faced by Panchayats?

Despite early success, Panchayati Raj is facing a decline due to multiple factors:

1. Limited Administrative Power:

- States have not fully transferred administrative control.
- Only **20% of states** have given all **29 subjects** listed in the **Eleventh Schedule** to panchayats.

2. Reduction in Financial Autonomy:

- Central transfers increased from **₹1.45 lakh crore (2010-15)** to **₹2.36 lakh crore (2021-26)**.
- **Untied grants** have decreased from **85% (Thirteenth Finance Commission)** to **60% (Fifteenth • Finance Commission)**, limiting local decision-making.

3. Decline in Local Accountability

- Direct benefit transfers (DBT) through **Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile (JAM) platform** bypass panchayats.
- Schemes like **PM-KISAN** (₹6,000 per year to farmers) are executed without panchayat involvement.

4. Impact of Urbanization

- In **1990**, **75%** of Indians lived in villages; now, only **60%** do.

- The focus has shifted to urban governance and municipal reforms.

For detailed information on **Issues with Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)** [read this article here](#)

How can the Panchayati Raj system be revived?

To strengthen panchayats, reforms are needed in various areas:

- 1. Improve Citizen Engagement:** Technology can help in **local planning, decision-making, and transparency**.
- 2. Support Migration Management:** Panchayats can assist migrants and their families to reduce distress migration.
- 3. Enhance Environmental Roles:**
 - Panchayats can lead **water conservation and renewable energy** initiatives.
 - They can help manage **common property resources** with **scientific and traditional knowledge**.
- 4. Disaster Risk Management** Panchayats can implement **early warning systems, disaster-resistant infrastructure, and community preparedness programs**.

What is the way forward?

Panchayats should not be treated as **mere delivery agencies for government schemes**. Rural governance must be revived to support **94 crore people** still living in villages. A **new vision for panchayati raj** is needed to balance rural and urban development.

Question for practice:

Examine the factors contributing to the decline of the Panchayati Raj system in India and suggest reforms to strengthen it.

Marital rape ruling raises legal and social concerns

Source: The post Marital rape ruling raises legal and social concerns has been created, based on the article "**Sex and violence: Marriage should not provide immunity for sexual violence**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 17th February 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Governance-mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

Context: The article discusses a Chhattisgarh High Court ruling that acquitted a man accused of forcing sex on his wife, leading to her death. It highlights the issue of marital rape, lack of legal protection, and the need for stronger laws and societal change.

For detailed information on **Issues with Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)** [read this article here](#)

What Was the High Court's Ruling?

1. The Chhattisgarh High Court ruled that a husband forcing unnatural sex on his wife is not a crime.

2. The court relied on **Exception II of Section 375** of the IPC, which states that **marital rape is not an offense unless the wife is under 18**.

3. This decision **overturned a sessions court verdict**, which had sentenced the husband to **10 years in prison** after his wife died following forced physical relations.

For detailed information on **The case regarding the marital rape exception (MRE)** [read this article here](#)

What Is the Main Concern in This Case?

1. The case highlights the issue of **consent in marriage**.
2. The High Court presumed that **a wife always consents to sex** within marriage.
3. However, **consent must be given freely** in every situation.
4. When force leads to **physical harm or death**, it should not be excused under marriage laws.

Why Is Marital Rape Still Not a Crime in India?

1. India is **one of the few countries** where marital rape is **not a criminal offense**.
2. The **Supreme Court deferred hearings** on this issue in **October 2024**.
3. The **Union government argues** that criminalizing marital rape could **“undermine the institution of marriage”**.
4. The courts have also stated that **lawmakers should decide** on this matter.

What Does Data Say About Spousal Violence?

The **National Family Health Survey-5 (2019-2021)** shows that **32% of ever-married women (ages 18-49) in India** have faced **physical, sexual, or emotional spousal violence**. However, **very few seek help** due to fear, social pressure, and lack of legal protection.

What Needs to Change?

Laws exist to protect women, but **a shift in societal mindset is necessary**. Marriage **should not give immunity for violence**. The government, judiciary, and society **must ensure that women live free from fear and violence**.

Question for practice:

Discuss the legal and societal implications of the Chhattisgarh High Court’s ruling on marital rape in India.

Bangladesh is changing its foreign relations now

Source: The post Bangladesh is changing its foreign relations now has been created, based on the article **“Interpreting the recent Bangladesh-Pakistan thaw”** published in **“The Hindu”** on 17th February 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- International Relations-India and its neighbourhood- relations.

Context: The article discusses Bangladesh's changing foreign relations after Sheikh Hasina's removal. The new government is engaging more with Pakistan while India watches closely. Bangladesh depends on India economically, but India must address security concerns and maintain strong ties with Dhaka.

For detailed information on **India-Bangladesh Relations** [read this article here](#)

Why are Bangladesh-Pakistan relations changing?

1. **Political Shift:** After Sheikh Hasina's removal in August 2024, Bangladesh's new leadership under Muhammad Yunus is engaging more with Pakistan.
2. **High-Level Engagement:** Yunus has met Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif multiple times but has not met India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
3. **Military Cooperation:** A Pakistani military delegation visited Rangpur, near India's Siliguri Corridor. Bangladesh's Army second-in-command visited Pakistan's military chiefs.
4. **Economic and Strategic Moves:** Bangladesh resumed direct flights to Islamabad and participated in Pakistan's Aman 2025 naval exercises, sending a warship for the first time in a decade.

What challenges does Bangladesh face in changing its foreign policy?

1. **Public Opinion on 1971 War:** Many Bangladeshis still see separation from Pakistan as central to their identity. Pakistan does not acknowledge the war as a separatist movement.
2. **Limited Economic Gains:** Trade with Pakistan is difficult as India separates both countries. India exported \$11.25 billion to Bangladesh in 2023.
3. **Security Concerns:** Pakistan's growing ties with Bangladesh may unsettle India. Bangladesh hosted a Pakistani military delegation near India's Siliguri Corridor.
4. **Geopolitical Risks:** Balancing relations with India, China, and Pakistan is challenging. The Maldives and Nepal are also aligning more with China, increasing regional uncertainty.

What is India's response to these changes?

1. **Monitoring Bangladesh-Pakistan ties:** India is observing Bangladesh's engagement with Pakistan, including military cooperation, resumed flights, and naval drills.
2. **Economic dependence:** India remains Bangladesh's top trading partner, exporting **\$11.25 billion** to Bangladesh in 2023, while Bangladesh exported **\$2 billion** to India.
3. **Security concerns:** India must set clear boundaries on **terrorism, weapons trade, joint military drills, and maritime security**.
4. **Strategic balancing:** India is **engaging with the Taliban**, as seen in **Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri's meeting with Afghanistan's Foreign Minister** in January 2025.
5. **Soft diplomacy:** India must strengthen **people-to-people contacts, cultural exchanges, and development projects** to maintain influence.

Question for practice:

Examine the factors influencing Bangladesh's shifting foreign policy towards Pakistan and its implications for India.

States producing thermal power bear pollution while consuming States gain benefits

Source: The post States producing thermal power bear pollution while consuming States gain benefits has been created, based on the article "Lighten the pollution burden of thermal power States" published in "The Hindu" on 18th February 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Infrastructures- Energy

Context: The article discusses how States producing thermal power bear pollution burdens while consuming States benefit. It suggests compensating these States through taxes or Finance Commission transfers. It highlights India's electricity distribution, pollution impact, and the need for fair environmental burden-sharing.

For detailed information on **New thermal plants: A reality check** [read this article here](#)

What is the current status of electricity produce in India?

1. **Total Installed Capacity:** India's total electricity generation capacity stands at **4,56,757 MW**.

2. Sector-wise Distribution:

- **Private sector:** Leads with **53.4%** share.
- **State sector:** Holds **23.7%**.
- **Central sector:** Accounts for **22.9%**.

3. **Thermal Power Share:** Represents a significant portion with **2,37,268.91 MW** out of the total capacity.

- **Private sector:** **85,899.095 MW (36.20%)**.
- **State sector:** **75,991.905 MW (32.03%)**.
- **Central sector:** **75,377.91 MW (31.77%)**.

4. **Heavy Reliance on Coal:** About **59.12%** of India's energy supply is from coal, with thermal power being a major contributor to carbon emissions.

5. State Dynamics:

a. Key Producing States:

- **Maharashtra:** **31,510.08 MW** (highest non-renewable capacity).
- **Uttar Pradesh:** **26,729.374 MW**
- **Gujarat:** **26,073.41 MW**

b. **Key Renewable Energy State:** Rajasthan: **22,398.05 MW** (highest renewable capacity).

c. Electricity Trade:

- **Chhattisgarh**: Largest net seller (535.29 MW).

- **Gujarat**: Largest net importer (528.17 MW).

6. **Pollution Burden**: Producing States bear pollution, but consuming States benefit.

Do Producing States Receive Any Compensation?

1. **No direct compensation** is given to States that generate electricity from central sector thermal power plants.

2. **Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and Odisha** produce the most thermal power but have **lower per capita electricity consumption**.

3. **Coal-rich States** bear pollution, while **consuming States benefit** from clean electricity.

4. **Electricity production is tax-free**, and **GST is not imposed** on transmission or distribution.

5. **The Finance Commissions** have recommended environmental grants, but no specific compensation exists.

6. **A new mechanism** is needed to share environmental costs fairly.

What Should Be Done?

1. Imposing a Tax on Thermal Power Generation

- Producing States can levy a tax on thermal power generation.
- The Union government can collect this tax and transfer it to them.

2. Compensation Through Finance Commission

- The **Sixteenth Finance Commission** can allocate funds based on environmental damage.
- The last three Finance Commissions have provided environmental grants.

3. Recognizing Negative Externalities

- **Chhattisgarh (535.29 MW) and Odisha (95.40 MW)** sell electricity but bear pollution.
- **Gujarat (528.17 MW) and Maharashtra (187.50 MW)** benefit without pollution costs.

4. Ensuring Fair Sharing of Environmental Costs

- **A new policy** must ensure **all States share pollution burdens fairly**.
- Electricity-importing States must **compensate producing States** for pollution.

Question for practice:

Examine how the current electricity distribution system in India impacts the environmental burden on producing States and the benefits received by consuming States.

Post-Soviet colour revolutions and Georgia's geopolitical struggle

Source: The post Post-Soviet colour revolutions and Georgia's geopolitical struggle has been created, based on the article "**Georgia and the resurrection of the colour revolutions**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 18th February 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2-International Relations-Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Context: The article discusses post-Soviet "colour revolutions" that aimed to replace pro-Russian governments with pro-Western ones. These movements, though peaceful, were seen by Russia as Western interference. Georgia's recent protests reflect ongoing geopolitical struggles between Russia and the West.

What Are Colour Revolutions?

1. **Definition:** Colour revolutions were peaceful uprisings in post-Soviet states to replace pro-Russian governments with pro-Western ones.

2. Key Examples:

- **Georgia (2003) – Rose Revolution:** Eduard Shevardnadze was replaced by Mikheil Saakashvili.

- **Ukraine (2004) – Orange Revolution:** Protested against election fraud.

- **Kyrgyzstan (2005) – Tulip Revolution:** Led to leadership change.

3. **Western Influence:** Western groups, like the **National Endowment for Democracy (NED)**, provided financial and logistical support. The goal was to promote democracy but was seen as external interference.

4. **Russia's View:** Russia saw these revolutions as Western attempts to weaken its influence. It feared similar movements inside its borders.

5. **Long-term Impact:** The initial promise of democracy soon faded. Corruption remained, and leaders backed by the West often acted undemocratically. Public frustration grew as real change did not happen.

What Is Happening in Georgia Now?

1. The **Georgian Dream Party** secured a decisive victory in recent elections.

2. **Mikheil Kavelashvili**, a former footballer, became the new President.

3. Former President **Salome Zourabichvili** initially refused to vacate office.

4. She called herself the "**only legitimate President**" and joined protests.

5. She claimed the elections were **marred by electoral malpractices and corruption**.

6. The ruling party accused **Western-backed NGOs** of organizing the protests.

7. Protests in Georgia reflect a long-standing geopolitical battle between **Russia and the West**.

What Is the Global Context of These Events?

1. These events occur amid **global tensions over the U.S.'s role in the world, especially under President Donald Trump.**
2. Russia continues to **try to maintain its influence over its neighboring countries.**
3. The effectiveness of **Western soft power strategies like promoting democracy appears to be waning.**

Question for practice:

Discuss how the recent protests in Georgia reflect the broader geopolitical struggle between Russia and the West.

Indian courts interpret laws using constitutional morality

Source: The post Indian courts interpret laws using constitutional morality has been created, based on the article "**Constitutional morality: the origins and nuances of the concept**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 18th February 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2-Constitution of India —historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.

Context: The article discusses how Indian courts use "constitutional morality" to interpret laws. It traces its origin to George Grote and Dr. Ambedkar. It emphasizes respecting constitutional rules while allowing critique, ensuring democracy functions with stability, fairness, and self-restraint.

For detailed information on **Courts must be guided by constitutional morality** [read this article here](#)

What is Constitutional Morality?

1. Constitutional morality is a concept used by Indian courts to interpret laws. It ensures that legal decisions follow constitutional principles rather than changing public opinions.
2. The Supreme Court used it in cases like *Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India (2018)* and *Joseph Shine v. Union of India (2018)*.
3. It is seen as a safeguard against changing public morality but also criticized as a powerful tool that may override majority opinion.

For detailed information on **Constitutional morality** [read this article here](#)

Where Did the Concept Come From?

1. The concept of constitutional morality was introduced by British historian **George Grote** in his book *A History of Greece*.
2. He used it to explain why **Athenian democracy** succeeded.
3. Grote defined it as a **deep respect for constitutional rules and procedures.**
4. He argued that **strong rules alone are not enough**; people must also trust and follow the system.

How Did Dr. Ambedkar Interpret Constitutional Morality?

1. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar used the concept while drafting the Indian Constitution.
2. In his speech *The Draft Constitution* (November 4, 1948), he said constitutional morality is not natural in society. It must be taught and spread.
3. He warned that the Constitution could be misused if government actions do not match its spirit. 4. He emphasized self-restraint in governance to protect democracy.

How Should Constitutional Morality Work in Practice?

1. Constitutional morality means following rules even when they do not benefit a particular group.
2. It ensures that people respect constitutional processes while allowing reforms.
3. It helps in handling differences through agreed procedures, not emotions.
4. Unlike Jürgen Habermas' *constitutional patriotism*, which links democracy to shared national values, constitutional morality focuses on following legal procedures.

Why Is Constitutional Morality Important Today?

1. In modern debates, constitutional morality helps balance stability and change.
2. It prevents extreme views from controlling democracy.
3. The Indian Constitution was created to provide a stable system.
4. Following constitutional morality ensures respect for rules while allowing improvements when needed.

Question for practice:

Discuss how Indian courts use the concept of constitutional morality to interpret laws and maintain democratic stability.

Why Reservations Are Not the Best Solution for Muslims

Source: The post Why Reservations Are Not the Best Solution for Muslims has been created, based on the article "Yogendra Yadav writes: Social Justice for Muslims should not be about reservations" published in "Indian Express" on 18th February 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Governance-mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

Context: The article discusses how Muslims in India face economic and educational disadvantages. It argues that reservations for all Muslims are not the best solution. Instead, it suggests policies like better OBC inclusion, anti-discrimination laws, targeted development, and support for Muslim-dominated industries.

For detailed information on **Religion and Reservations in India** [read this article here](#)

Why Do Muslims Need Affirmative Action?

1. Muslims in India face economic and educational disadvantages.

2. The **Sachar Committee Report (SCR)** found that their education levels are similar to **SCs and STs** and their income levels are like **OBCs**.

3. Many Muslim children do not enter higher education. Even when family income and parental education are the same, **upper-caste Hindus are twice as likely** to enter private colleges and professional courses.

Why Is Reservation Not Suitable for Muslims?

1. **Legal Issue** – The Constitution does not allow reservation based on religion. Courts have rejected this idea.
2. **Sociological Issue** – Muslims are diverse. They belong to different **biradaris** (communities) with different levels of education and wealth.
3. **Political Issue** – A separate Muslim quota could lead to **opposition and conflict**, making things worse for the community.

What Is the Alternative to Reservation?

1. **Expand OBC List for Muslims:** Currently, only **50% of Muslims** are included as OBCs. But **75% of them** meet the criteria. More backward Muslim groups should be added, like in **Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and West Bengal**.
2. **Divide OBCs into Two Groups:** Instead of one OBC category, create “**extremely backward**” and “**backward**” lists.
3. **SC Status for Dalit Muslims and Christians:** The current rule **excludes Dalit Muslims and Christians** from SC benefits. This should change.
4. **Anti-Discrimination Law:** A strong law is needed to stop discrimination based on religion. An **Equal Opportunity Commission** should monitor its implementation.

How Else Can Muslims Be Helped?

1. The report also suggests **non-quota-based policies** to improve Muslims' conditions.
2. **Improve Infrastructure in Muslim Areas:** Government programs after the **Sachar Report** focused on **Minority Concentration Districts (MCDs)**. This should now cover **blocks, villages, and localities**. The government should ensure Muslims actually benefit.
3. **Support Muslim-Dominated Businesses:** Many Muslims work in **weaving, brass work, carpet making, perfume industry, and meat processing**. The government should provide financial and technical support to these industries.
4. **Encourage Private Sector Participation:** A direct **quota in private jobs may fail**, but the government can set **diversity conditions** for companies receiving government contracts and subsidies.
5. **Promote NGOs and Self-Help Groups:** Community organizations should focus on **education, skill training, and job opportunities** for Muslims.

Question for practice:

Examine why reservations for all Muslims may not be the most suitable solution for addressing their economic and educational disadvantages in India.

Earthquake dangers in Türkiye Syria and Himalayas

Source: The post Earthquake dangers in Türkiye Syria and Himalayas has been created, based on the article “Quakes may well sharpen India’s seismic readiness” published in “**The Hindu**” on 19th February 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper1-Important Geophysical phenomena such as earthquakes and GS paper3- Disaster and disaster management.

Context: The article discusses the danger of earthquakes in Türkiye, Syria, and the Himalayan region. It warns about potential disasters in India due to tectonic activity. It calls for urgent government action, better infrastructure planning, and disaster preparedness to reduce damage and save lives.

For detailed information on **Earthquakes in Himalayas Threaten Lives and Infrastructure** read this article [here](#)

Why Are Earthquakes Dangerous?

1. **High Death Toll:** The February 6, 2023 earthquake in Türkiye and Syria had a magnitude of 7.8 and resulted in at least 17,000 deaths.
2. **Destruction of Infrastructure:** A second quake occurred nine hours later, causing further destruction to buildings and infrastructure.
3. **Geological Instability:** Earthquakes are caused by movements along fault lines between tectonic plates, which can remain dormant for years before suddenly shifting.
4. **Widespread Impact:** The January 7, 2025, earthquake in Tibet, with a magnitude of 7.1, affected regions across national borders, impacting Nepal and Northern India and causing up to 400 deaths.

Where Do Earthquakes Come From?

1. Earthquakes happen due to movements along **fault lines** between tectonic plates.
2. The **Earth’s crust** sits on **15 major tectonic plates** that are tightly locked.
3. These plates can stay still for **decades or centuries** but suddenly move, causing earthquakes.
4. The **Indian Plate** is pushing against the **Eurasian Plate**, creating pressure under the **Himalayas**.
5. Fault lines are unpredictable and cause **mass destruction** when they shift.

Is India at Risk of a Major Earthquake?

1. **Tectonic Pressure Build-Up:** The Indian Plate is pushing against the Eurasian Plate. Scientists warn that built-up pressure may cause a massive earthquake.
2. **Recent Earthquakes:** A **7.1 magnitude** earthquake hit Tibet on **January 7, 2025**, killing up to **400 people** and affecting Nepal and North India.
3. **Past Disasters:** The **7.8 magnitude** Türkiye-Syria earthquake on **February 6, 2023**, killed at least **17,000 people**.
4. **Delhi and Bihar Tremors:** On **February 17, 2025**, strong tremors were felt in Delhi and Bihar.

5. **Infrastructure Risks:** Weak buildings, dams, and roads in seismic zones increase danger.
6. **Urgent Action Needed:** Scientists and media warn of risks. India must prepare before disaster strikes.

What Should Be Done?

1. **Stop Harmful Construction** – Engineering projects that weaken rocky terrain in **seismic risk zones (II, III, IV)** should be rolled back.
2. **Strengthen Infrastructure** – Existing **seismic zonation maps** must be updated to assess and reinforce **high-risk structures like hydropower projects and atomic reactors (e.g., Narora in Zone IV)**.
3. **Earthquake Insurance** – A **seismic building insurance scheme** should be introduced to encourage protection against structural collapse.
4. **Improve Disaster Response** – Costs for **rescue, shelter, and rehabilitation** should be assessed and planned **zone-wise**.
5. **Use Advanced Technology** – Collaboration with **global experts** on **earthquake anticipation sensors and architecture solutions** should be fast-tracked.

Conclusion

Earthquakes cannot be stopped or predicted accurately, but their damage can be reduced. India must act now to prevent a future disaster. The government, scientists, and citizens must work together for safety and preparedness.

Question for practice:

Examine the risks and preparedness measures for major earthquakes in India based on tectonic activity and past disasters.

India Tightens Digital Censorship Amid Legal Debates

Source: The post India Tightens Digital Censorship Amid Legal Debates has been created, based on the article “The danger of a digital censor board” published in “The Hindu” on 19th February 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- **Security**- Role of Media and Social Networking Sites in Internal Security Challenges etc.

Context: The article discusses the controversy over *India's Got Latent* and comments by YouTuber Ranveer Allahabadi. It highlights legal issues around vulgarity, censorship laws, and growing government control over digital media. It connects this to broader political and technological changes in India.

What Does the Law Say About Vulgarity?

1. **Supreme Court's View:** In *Apoorva Arora v. Govt. of NCT of Delhi (2024)*, the Supreme Court ruled that foul language alone is not a crime. Only content that arouses sexual or lustful thoughts is considered obscene.
2. **Ranveer Allahabadi's Case:** His remarks were crude but do not meet the legal definition of obscenity. The Supreme Court called his mind “very dirty,” but that does not make his words criminal.

3. **Blocking Websites:** Despite the legal position that "decency and morality" are not grounds for blocking websites under Section 69A of the Information Technology Act, the government has increased censorship through the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021.

4. **Past Example:** In 2021, *Tandav* faced criminal cases for hurting religious sentiments, forcing creators to edit scenes. The government later introduced stricter IT Rules, increasing digital censorship.

For detailed information on **Control over media- old censorship on a new medium** [read this article here](#)

How Has the Government Responded?

1. **Condemnation from High Authorities:** Chief Ministers and the Supreme Court criticized the remarks made by Ranveer Allahabadi on *India's Got Latent*, with the Supreme Court labeling his mind as "dirty."

2. **Push for Broadcasting Bill:** The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting proposed a Broadcasting Bill to regulate digital creators like traditional media. A Parliamentary Committee, led by BJP MP Nishikant Dubey, is pushing for stricter laws. Public outcry had slowed the bill, but recent events have revived it.

For detailed information on **Social and Digital media regulations in India** [read this article here](#)

What is the bigger picture behind digital censorship?

1. The government's approach reflects a shift in India's political economy.
2. Yamini Aiyar and Neelanjan Sircar describe this as *techno-patrimonialism*, where technology enables direct benefit transfers as political rewards.
3. Digital censorship aligns with this trend, restricting content that challenges power.

Question for practice:

Examine how the legal framework in India distinguishes between vulgarity and obscenity in digital media.

India's Death Penalty Criteria Under Question

Source: The post India's Death Penalty Criteria Under Question has been created, based on the article "**What is the 'rarest of rare' doctrine?**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 19th February 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2 – Governance – Criminal Justice System in India

Context: The article discusses two murder cases with different punishments, raising questions about India's death penalty criteria. It explains the 'rarest of rare' doctrine, its origins, and legal developments. It highlights ongoing debates on judicial discretion and the need for clear guidelines.

For detailed information on **Challenges in Death Penalty and Sentencing Decisions** [read this article here](#)

How Did Two Murder Cases Get Different Punishments?

On January 22, 2024, two murder cases had different verdicts. One case led to a life sentence, while the other resulted in the death penalty. This raised questions about how courts apply the 'rarest of rare' doctrine.

1. **Kolkata Case:** A female postgraduate doctor was raped and murdered in a hospital. The accused, Sanjay Roy, was convicted based on forensic evidence. The judge ruled that this case did not meet the 'rarest of rare' criteria. Roy was sentenced to life imprisonment with a fine.

2. **Kerala Case:** Sharon Raj, a 23-year-old student, was poisoned by his partner, Greeshma. He died 11 days later due to multiple organ failures. The Neyyattinkara court ruled it was a 'rarest of rare' case and sentenced Greeshma to death.

What Is the 'Rarest of Rare' Doctrine?

The death penalty in India follows the 'rarest of rare' principle. It decides when a crime is severe enough to deserve capital punishment.

1. **1972 – Jagmohan Singh Case:** The Supreme Court upheld the death penalty as constitutional. The petitioner argued that it violated Article 14 and 19. The court ruled that judges consider all facts before sentencing.

2. **1980 – Bachan Singh Case:** The Supreme Court established the 'rarest of rare' doctrine. It ruled that the death penalty should be used only in extreme cases.

3. **1983 – Machhi Singh Case:** The court gave five conditions to determine 'rarest of rare' cases:

- **Brutality** – when the murder is committed in an extremely brutal and dastardly manner so as to arouse extreme indignation within the community.
- **Motive** – when the murder is committed for a motive which reveals total depravity.
- **Social Impact** – when a murder occurs of someone belonging to a minority community and is committed not for personal reasons but in circumstances which arouse social wrath.
- **Magnitude** – Crime affecting many people.
- **Victim's Condition** – when the victim of murder is a child, a helpless woman, a person rendered helpless by old age or infirmity etc..

4. **1983 – Mithu Case:** The Supreme Court removed the mandatory death penalty for prisoners committing murder. The court ruled this violated Articles 14 and 21.

5. **2022 – Supreme Court Review:** The court started reviewing how to ensure fair hearings in death penalty cases. It may set new guidelines on mitigating circumstances.

What Is the Main Debate?

The death penalty remains controversial in India. The 'rarest of rare' principle is not clearly defined. Judges have wide discretion, leading to different punishments for similar crimes. Experts suggest that clear guidelines are needed to ensure fairness.

Question for practice:

Evaluate the application of the 'rarest of rare' doctrine in the Kolkata and Kerala murder cases and its impact on the verdicts.

India's Chief Election Commissioner Appointment and Concerns

Source: The post India's Chief Election Commissioner Appointment and Concerns has been created, based on the article “**New CEC, under new law**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 19th February 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Polity-Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies.

Context: The article explains how the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of India was appointed before and after a new law in 2023. It discusses the role of the selection committee, Rahul Gandhi's objection, and the Supreme Court case challenging the new appointment process.

For detailed information on **Changes in the Election Commission of India's selection process** [read this article here](#)

How were Chief Election Commissioners appointed earlier?

1. The Election Commission (EC) has three members: one Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and two Election Commissioners (ECs).
2. The President appointed them based on the Prime Minister's advice.
3. Traditionally, the senior-most EC became the next CEC.
4. Seniority was decided by appointment order. Example: Gyanesh Kumar was considered senior because his name appeared first in the appointment notification.

How was the new Chief Election Commissioner appointed this time?

1. The **Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service, and Term of Office) Act, 2023** changed the process.
2. A **Search Committee** led by the Law Minister shortlisted five names.
3. A **Selection Committee** with the Prime Minister, the Leader of Opposition, and a Cabinet Minister chose the final candidate.
4. On February 17, 2025, the committee met, and Gyanesh Kumar was appointed CEC.
5. Rahul Gandhi submitted a **dissent note** and asked for a delay until the Supreme Court's decision.

For detailed information on **Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners Act, 2023** [read this article here](#)

What are the eligibility conditions under the new Act?

1. The CEC and ECs must have held a **Secretary-level post** in the Government of India.
2. They must have experience in **election management**.
3. No reappointment is allowed.
4. A person can serve a maximum of **six years** as EC and CEC combined.

Why was the appointment process changed?

1. Supreme Court judgments between **2015 and 2022** questioned the government's exclusive power to appoint ECs.
2. On **March 2, 2023**, the Supreme Court ruled that a **panel with the Prime Minister, Leader of Opposition, and the Chief Justice of India (CJI)** should select the CEC.
3. Before this ruling could be implemented, Parliament passed the **2023 Act** in December, replacing the CJI with a Cabinet Minister.
4. This change gave the **government more control** over the appointment.

What are the issues with this appointment?

1. New Selection Process Gives Government More Control:

The **2023 Act** replaced the **Chief Justice of India (CJI)** in the Selection Committee with a Cabinet Minister, allowing the **government to dominate** decisions.

2. Supreme Court's Pending Review:

- Petitions challenge the **removal of the CJI** from the selection process.
- The **Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR)** has filed a case.
- The Supreme Court's hearing is on **February 19, 2025**.

Question for practice:

Examine how the appointment process of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) in India changed after the enactment of the 2023 law and the concerns raised regarding this change.

Manipur faces President's Rule amid political and ethnic turmoil

Source: The post Manipur faces President's Rule amid political and ethnic turmoil has been created, based on the article "**Manipur is in need of 'greater common good' politics**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 20th February 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2-Polity-issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure

Context: The article discusses the imposition of President's Rule in Manipur on February 13, 2025. It explains political struggles, ethnic tensions, and missed Assembly deadlines. It highlights different types of populism and urges sensitive governance to resolve conflicts and restore stability.

For detailed information on **Manipur Crisis: Constitutional Breakdown, Judicial Delays, and Government Inaction** [read this article here](#)

Why was President's Rule imposed in Manipur?

1. **Constitutional Breakdown:** Article **174** mandates that the gap between two Assembly sessions cannot exceed **six months**. This deadline expired on **February 12, 2025**.

2. **Political Instability:** Chief Minister **N. Biren Singh** resigned on **February 9**, leading to a leadership crisis. The BJP faced internal conflicts over his replacement.

3. **Ethnic Unrest: 20 months of lawlessness** since **May 3, 2023**, made governance difficult.

What political struggles led to this crisis?

1. **BJP's Internal Conflict:** Dissident MLAs wanted to remove **Chief Minister N. Biren Singh**. The BJP's central leadership likely forced his resignation on **February 9, 2025**.

2. **No-Confidence Motion:** The **Congress** planned to move a **no-confidence motion**. Rebel BJP MLAs were ready to support it, even at the risk of disqualification.

3. **Assembly Crisis:** **Article 174** mandates that two sessions cannot be more than **six months apart**. The skipped winter session forced a **February 10 Budget session**, which was canceled.

4. **Governor's Role:** Governor **Ajay Kumar Bhalla** declared the session **"null and void"** on **February 9**, worsening the crisis.

5. **Result:** Without a Chief Minister or Assembly session, **President's Rule** was imposed on **February 13, 2025**.

How has President's Rule been used in Manipur before?

1. **Manipur has experienced President's Rule 11 times**, including the latest on **February 13, 2025**.

2. According to a **2016 RTI reply**, it had **President's Rule 10 times** before.

3. This makes Manipur **one of the most politically unstable States** in India.

4. **Ethnic diversity** contributes to instability, with **33 Scheduled Tribes**, mainly **Nagas and Kuki-Zos**, alongside **Meiteis, Pangals, and non-tribal groups**.

5. Frequent **political conflicts and governance failures** have led to repeated **constitutional breakdowns**.

6. The latest crisis arose from **missed Assembly deadlines, BJP infighting, and ethnic unrest**.

How did populism fuel ethnic tensions?

1. **Types of Populism:** The book *Righteous Demagogues (2024)* defines three populism types – **Reordering, Additive, and Quotidian**.

2. **Biren Singh's Policies:** His government targeted **Kuki-Zo tribes** through **crackdowns on forest encroachment, poppy cultivation, and illegal migration**.

3. **Ethnic Polarization:** His actions were **harsh and humiliating**, increasing hostility.

4. **Political Rivalry:** Opponents **exploited ethnic fears** to strengthen their base.

What are the challenges ahead?

President's Rule may not last long, and BJP might return to power soon. However, **several challenges remain:**

- **Cross-border movement** must be controlled but managed carefully.

- **Poppy eradication and forest conservation** should continue but with sensitivity.
- **Ethnic hostilities must end**, and governance should focus on **common welfare** rather than ethnic populism.

Manipur became a full-fledged State in **1972** and has had diverse leadership in the past. The future should focus on **inclusive governance**, where leaders emerge based on merit rather than ethnic loyalty.

Question for practice:

Examine how political instability and ethnic tensions contributed to the imposition of President's Rule in Manipur on February 13, 2025.

Trump's policies create divisions between US and Europe

Source: The post Trump's policies create divisions between US and Europe has been created, based on the article "**C Raja Mohan writes: Has Trumpism broken the Collective West?**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 20th February 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- International Relations-Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Context: The article discusses growing divisions between the U.S. and Europe after Trump's return. It explains how Trump's policies on security, trade, and politics challenge Western unity. Russia and China benefit from this split. India remains cautious and focuses on its own interests.

For detailed information on **Trump's Second Term Reshapes America and World** [read this article](#) [hear](#)

What Are the Recent Shifts in U.S. and European Relations?

1. **Trump's Peace Talks with Russia:** U.S. President Trump initiated direct negotiations with Russia over Ukraine, bypassing Kyiv and Brussels.
2. **Shock in Europe:** Vice President JD Vance strongly criticized European mainstream parties at the Munich Security Conference, leaving some allies in tears.
3. **Security Commitments:** Trump wants to reduce America's security role in Europe, raising concerns among NATO allies.
4. **Trade Policies:** Trump argues that the existing global trade system no longer benefits American workers and promotes bilateral trade deals.
5. **Political Divide:** Trump-backed conservatives are challenging liberal policies in the West, with figures like Elon Musk supporting right-wing parties in Europe.

How Has Russia Responded to the Western Divide?

1. Russia has promoted the idea of a "Collective West" to unite its people against Europe and the U.S.
2. The ongoing peace talks with the U.S. are viewed by Russia as a chance to regain its significant position in Europe, a status it held post-World War II but lost after the Soviet Union collapsed.
3. Russia sees the division within the West as an opportunity to restore its influence in the European regional order.

4. The expected summit between Putin and Trump could further Russia's goal to reintegrate into Western economic and security structures.

What Role Does China Play in the Situation?

1. **Exploiting Divisions:** China benefits from the growing divide between the U.S. and its European allies, which weakens the "Collective West."
2. **Strategic Probing:** China, like Russia, repeatedly tests the gaps in U.S. alliances, especially in Asia.
3. **Potential Gains:** An American withdrawal from Europe and Asia aligns with China's strategic interests.
4. **Negotiating with the U.S.:** Despite criticizing the "Collective West," China, like Russia, is eager to strike deals with Washington when beneficial.

How Is India Positioning Itself Amid These Changes?

1. **India's Cautious Approach:** India no longer follows past anti-Western propaganda from Russia and China. It now critically assesses their rhetoric.
2. **Engaging with Western Powers:** India does not fully align with either side but actively seeks strategic agreements with Western nations.
3. **Understanding the West's Internal Conflict:** India recognizes the growing divide between the U.S. and Europe and sees opportunities in these changes.
4. **Seeking a Grand Bargain:** Like Moscow and Beijing, India is ready to negotiate favorable deals with Western powers to protect its national interests.

Question for practice:

Evaluate how the growing divisions between the U.S. and Europe under Trump's leadership impact global power dynamics, particularly in relation to Russia, China, and India.

Indian rupee keeps losing value

Source: The post Indian rupee keeps losing value has been created, based on the article "RBI's rupee challenge" published in "Indian Express" on 20th February 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Economy

Context: The article discusses the depreciation of the Indian rupee and the RBI's role in managing it. It explains how market forces, inflation, trade deficits, and capital flows influence the rupee's value. It warns of risks like currency crises due to volatile capital movements.

For detailed information on **Rupee's Fall Driven by Stronger US Dollar** [read this article](#) [hear](#)

What is the status of Indian Rupee?

1. The Indian rupee has been depreciating steadily over the years. In 2010-11, the exchange rate was ₹45.56 per USD, but by 2023-24, it reached ₹82.78 per USD.

2. The rupee has weakened every year except **2017-18**. Since **September 2024**, its monthly average value has also declined.

What Causes the Rupee to Depreciate?

1. **Higher Inflation in India:** Inflation in India is generally higher than in international markets. This reduces the purchasing power of the rupee faster than the US dollar. Higher inflation also increases import costs, such as oil, which further weakens the rupee.

2. **Trade and Current Account Deficits:** India imports more goods and services than it exports. Even large **remittances from Indians abroad** cannot fill this gap. This forces India to rely on foreign capital inflows to cover deficits and build foreign exchange reserves.

Why Can't Market-Driven Exchange Rates Stop Depreciation?

1. The rupee's value depends on capital inflows and outflows. Since India opened its capital account in the 1990s, portfolio investments have been volatile.

2., Unlike **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** or **commercial bank lending**, portfolio investments enter and exit quickly, making the rupee unstable.

What Are the Risks of Letting the Rupee Depreciate?

1. **Capital Flight:** If investors expect the rupee to fall, they may withdraw funds, worsening the depreciation.

2. **Foreign Exchange Reserve Drain:** The **RBI intervenes** to control volatility using forex reserves. However, excessive intervention can weaken reserves and investor confidence.

3. **Risk of Currency Crisis:** Some countries have faced **sharp currency collapses** in recent decades. India has avoided this, but the risk remains due to the rupee's history of sudden declines.

What Role Does the RBI Play?

1. The RBI intervenes in the forex market to prevent sudden and significant fluctuations in the rupee's value.

2. However, its actions can sometimes spur capital outflows if investors expect the rupee to fall sharply, complicating the RBI's efforts.

3. India's persistent trade deficits and reliance on volatile capital flows make the economy vulnerable to currency crises.

4. Despite the RBI's efforts to stabilize the rupee, India's structural economic issues, such as a lack of competitive exports and dependence on foreign capital, pose ongoing challenges to maintaining a stable exchange rate.

Question for practice:

Examine the factors contributing to the depreciation of the Indian rupee and the risks associated with it.

Strengthening telecom networks ensures resilience during disasters

Source: The post Strengthening telecom networks ensures resilience during disasters has been created, based on the article "**On building resilient telecom infrastructure**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 20th February 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Disaster Management

Context: The article discusses how disasters impact telecom networks and how to protect them. It highlights power failures, damaged cables, and high-speed winds as major risks. It suggests solutions like stronger infrastructure, better planning, underground cables, and financial support to ensure telecom resilience during disasters.

Why Are Telecom Networks Important During Disasters?

1. The Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) released a report on improving telecom networks in disasters.
2. The report, initiated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2019, addresses the vulnerabilities of telecom infrastructure during calamities like cyclones and earthquakes.
3. Telecom networks help disaster management authorities communicate quickly. This is crucial when lives and property are at risk.
4. They connect local municipalities with State and Union governments. A working telecom system ensures faster coordination and response.

For detailed information on **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure** [read this article here](#)

How Do Disasters Impact Telecom Networks?

1. **Damage to Towers:** High-speed winds can break towers.
2. **Cable Breakage:** Overland cables can snap, disrupting communication.
3. **Undersea Cable Issues:** Coastal regions are vulnerable because they connect India to the global internet. Damaged landing stations can cause major disruptions.
4. **Power Failures:** Most disruptions happen due to electricity loss. Data analysis since 2016 shows power issues are the main reason for telecom failures.

What Immediate Steps Can Be Taken to Reduce Disruptions?

1. **Ensure Power Supply:** Power failures are the main cause of outages, so restoring electricity is crucial.
2. **Provide Emergency Fuel:** Odisha officials give 50 litres of fuel to telecom operators to keep networks running.
3. **Use Real-Time Monitoring:** The Department of Telecommunications tracks outages and directs resources quickly.
4. **Raise Generator Placement:** Keeping diesel generators above flood levels prevents failures.

How Can Networks Be Strengthened for Long-Term Resilience?

1. **Build Stronger Towers:** Coastal towers should withstand high wind speeds to reduce damage.
2. **Implement Underground Cables:** The "dig-once" policy protects telecom infrastructure from surface-level damage.

3. **Use Disaster Risk Modelling:** Telecom planning should include hazard vulnerability assessments.
4. **Adopt Parametric Insurance:** Financial protection ensures quick recovery and better disaster-proofing.
5. **Stronger Coordination:** Sharing real-time damage reports helps in faster repairs.

Conclusion

Disaster-proof telecom networks need strong infrastructure, smart planning, and financial support. Small but effective changes can prevent major failures. Investing in resilience will help India's telecom networks stay operational during emergencies.

Question for practice:

Discuss the impact of disasters on telecom networks and the measures to enhance their resilience.

Mediation helps reduce India's massive case backlog

Source: The post Mediation helps reduce India's massive case backlog has been created, based on the article "Converting court case backlogs into treasure troves" published in "The Hindu" on 22nd February 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2-Polity-Dispute Redressal Mechanisms and Institutions.

Context: The article discusses India's massive judicial backlog and suggests mediation as a solution. Mediation is faster, cheaper, and helps resolve disputes amicably. It proposes identifying cases suited for mediation, assigning trained mediators, and encouraging wider adoption to ease the court's burden.

For detailed information on **Mediation Act 2023** [read this article here](#)

How serious is the backlog in India's legal system?

The Indian legal system has a massive backlog of cases.

1. The **Supreme Court** has **82,000 cases** pending.
2. The **High Courts** have **over 62 lakh cases**.
3. **Lower courts** have **close to five crore cases**.
4. **Nearly 50 lakh cases** have been pending for more than **10 years**.
5. This backlog creates delays in justice, affecting millions of people.

What causes this backlog?

1. **Low Judge-to-Population Ratio:** India has **21 judges per million people**, leading to case delays.
2. **Adversarial Legal System:** Multiple **interim applications and appeals** prolong litigation.
3. **Government as a Major Litigant:** The **government is involved in nearly half** of all disputes, increasing case numbers.

4. Infrastructure and Resource Shortages: Courts lack physical infrastructure, financial resources, and human capacity to manage cases.

5. High Litigation Culture: People approach courts for all types of disputes (e.g., with neighbors, suppliers, and government), increasing the burden.

How can mediation help solve this problem?

1. **Efficiency:** Mediation typically resolves cases faster than formal litigation, reducing the caseload.
2. **Cost-effective:** It is cheaper for all parties compared to the expenses of prolonged court cases.
3. **Amicable solutions:** Promotes mutual agreements, often preserving relationships better than adversarial outcomes.
4. **Reduction in backlog:** Can expediently process the millions of pending cases, especially the **50 lakh cases pending for over 10 years**.
5. **Adoption by the judiciary:** Since 2005, mediation has been recognized and promoted by Indian courts as a viable solution for various disputes.

What needs to be done to make mediation successful?

1. **Identify cases suitable for mediation** – Courts should classify pending cases that mediators can handle.
2. **Assign trained mediators** – Cases should be given to **experienced mediators**, either chosen by parties or assigned.
3. **Ensure reasonable fees** – Mediators should be paid fairly to encourage professional participation.
4. **Encourage businesses, government, and individuals** – The **government is a party in nearly half of all disputes**, so reducing its litigation can ease backlog.
5. **Promote mediation in courts** – Judges already **support mediation** and should push for its wider adoption.
6. **Highlight mediation's benefits** – It is **cheaper, faster, and restores relationships** compared to litigation.

What are the benefits of mediation?

1. **Saves time** (most cases need only a few sessions).
2. **Reduces costs** for both parties and the legal system.
3. **Restores relationships** by promoting fair settlements.
4. **Less burden** on courts, allowing judges to focus on serious cases.
5. Encourages a **more efficient and accessible** justice system.

For detailed information on **Significance of Mediation for Dispute Resolution** [read this article here](#)

Question for practice:

Examine how mediation can help reduce India's judicial backlog and improve the efficiency of the legal system.

Can the Lokpal investigate High Court judges

Source: The post Can the Lokpal investigate High Court judges has been created, based on the article “**Judges’ dilemma: Accountability and independence ought to be equally important for judges**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 22nd February 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Judiciary

Context: The article discusses whether High Court judges fall under the Lokpal’s jurisdiction. The Supreme Court stayed the Lokpal’s ruling. It highlights concerns about judicial independence and accountability, suggesting the need for a better mechanism to handle corruption charges against judges.

For detailed information on **Lokpal of India** [read this article here](#)

Can the Lokpal Investigate High Court Judges?

1. The **Lokpal ruled** that High Court judges are under its jurisdiction as "public servants" under the **Prevention of Corruption Act**.
2. The **Supreme Court stayed** this ruling on its own motion, raising concerns about judicial independence.
3. Earlier, the **Lokpal rejected a complaint** against a former **Chief Justice of India (CJI)**, stating that the **Lokpal Act, 2013**, does not cover Supreme Court judges.
4. It justified its ruling on High Court judges by stating that High Courts are **statutory bodies**, unlike the Supreme Court, which is a **constitutional body**.

How Does This Affect Judicial Independence and Accountability?

1. Many believe this ruling **undermines judicial independence**, as judges would be answerable to the Lokpal.
2. The **Supreme Court, government law officers, and senior advocates** found the Lokpal’s decision **disturbing** for this reason.
3. In **K. Veeraswami vs Union of India (1991)**, the Court ruled that a case **cannot be filed against a judge** without consulting the **CJI**, but it also recognized that judges are **public servants** under the **Prevention of Corruption Act**.

What Is the Current Process for Handling Corruption Complaints Against Judges?

1. Complaints must be sent to the **CJI, Chief Justice of a High Court, or the President**.
2. If found credible, actions include **asking the judge to resign, denying judicial work, or recommending removal through Parliament**.
3. Some judges are **transferred**, but the reason is **not disclosed**.
4. The Supreme Court may review whether **independent prosecution under court supervision** is needed.

Does the Judiciary Need a Stronger Accountability Mechanism?

1. The Supreme Court may **review the Lokpal ruling**, raising the need for better **accountability mechanisms**.

2. The judiciary should consider if the **current process is sufficient** or if **independent prosecution under court supervision** is necessary.

3. **Both accountability and independence** should be given equal importance.

Question for practice:

Discuss how the Lokpal's jurisdiction over High Court judges impacts judicial independence and accountability.

Interfaith couples face risks under marriage law

Source: The post Interfaith couples face risks under marriage law has been created, based on the article "**A LAW, WEAPONISED: The no-objection provision defeats the purpose of the Special Marriage Act**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 22nd February 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper1-Society – Salient Features

Context: The article discusses an interfaith couple in Bhopal who faced violence for legally registering their marriage under the Special Marriage Act. It criticizes the Act's notice period, which compromises privacy and enables interference, and highlights concerns about religious intolerance and privacy violations.

For detailed information on **Contradictory approach of the Madhya Pradesh High Court on inter-faith marriage** [read this article here](#)

Why was the couple attacked for registering their marriage?

1. A Muslim man and a Hindu woman in Bhopal tried to register their marriage under the **Special Marriage Act, 1954**.
2. A group of vigilantes attacked the man inside the court complex. **CCTV footage** of the attack went viral on social media.
3. The couple had followed legal procedures, yet their right to marry was denied through violence.

How does the Special Marriage Act put interfaith couples at risk?

1. **Mandatory Public Notice:** The Act requires couples to give notice **one month before marriage**. This compromises their **privacy and safety**.
2. **Privacy Violation:** In the **Bhopal case**, a **leak from the marriage registrar's office** led to an attack on the couple.
3. **Misuse of Objection Clause:** **Section 7** allows **anyone** to object, even for **personal vendetta, vested interest, or social bias**.
4. **Failure to Protect Couples:** The **male partner was beaten inside a court**, proving that even **legal institutions do not ensure safety**.

Why are interfaith marriages facing increasing resistance?

Religious Bias and "Love Jihad" Narrative: Many Hindu-Muslim marriages are wrongly labeled as "**love jihad**", implying forced religious conversion. This leads to opposition from **moral policing groups**.

2. **Judicial Contradiction:** The **K.S. Puttaswamy case (2017)** declared privacy a fundamental right, yet the law exposes interfaith couples to harm.

3. The couple's case shows that even **legal protection and court premises** do not ensure safety.

What needs to change in the law?

1. Section **7 of the Special Marriage Act** allows public objections, but it is often misused.
2. Privacy violations and religious bias make interfaith marriages difficult.
3. The government must reform this law to protect couples from **harassment and violence**.

Question for practice:

Examine how the provisions of the Special Marriage Act, 1954, compromise the privacy and safety of interfaith couples in India.

India's Growth Challenges and the Middle-Income Trap

Source: The post India's Growth Challenges and the Middle-Income Trap has been created, based on the article **"India's transition to a high-income country is riddled with unknowns"** published in **"Indian Express"** on 22nd February 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Economy

Context: The article discusses India's economic growth and the challenge of moving from a lower-middle-income to a high-income country. It highlights regional income disparities, the need for better policies, and the risk of getting stuck in the middle-income trap without strong governance.

For detailed information on **Strategies to escape the middle-income trap** [read this article here](#)

Why is India still a lower middle-income country?

1. India became a lower middle-income country in 2007 and remains in this category.
2. Its per capita income has risen from **\$1,022 to \$2,700** in 18 years.
3. To reach **upper middle-income status**, India needs a per capita income of **\$4,516**.
4. The **IMF predicts** India's per capita income will be **\$4,195 by 2029**, making the transition possible in the next decade.

What is the income status of Indian states?

1. **Upper middle-income state:** Delhi (**\$5,579**).
2. **States nearing upper middle-income:** Telangana (**\$4,306**), Karnataka (**\$4,021**), Haryana (**\$3,934**), Tamil Nadu (**\$3,807**).
3. **Lower middle-income states:** Chhattisgarh (**\$1,780**), West Bengal (**\$1,861**), Odisha (**\$1,970**).

4. **Low-income state:** Bihar (\$729), far below the national average (\$2,700).

5. **Economic divide:** Western and southern states have strong industries (IT, chip design, manufacturing), while poorer states lack industrial bases.

6. **Future challenge:** Ensuring all states grow rapidly and avoid stagnation.

What are the India's developmental challenges?

1. **Income Disparity:** Western and southern states like Telangana (\$4,306), Karnataka (\$4,021), and Delhi (\$5,579) have higher incomes compared to states like Bihar (\$729), indicating significant regional income disparities.

2. **Middle-Income Trap:** With a per capita income growth from \$1,022 to \$2,700 in 18 years, India risks staying in the lower middle-income category without reaching the \$4,516 needed for upper middle-income status.

3. **Lack of Diverse Industries:** Poorer states lack robust manufacturing and modern services sectors, essential for economic growth.

What are the risks of a middle-income trap?

1. India must avoid stagnation, which has affected many countries.

2. Even **China** has not yet become a high-income economy despite rapid growth.

3. Western and southern states need to **advance in technology** and high-value industries.

4. Factors like **labour migration, skill development, and capital access** will shape their success.

What policies can help India grow faster?

1. India needs **clear economic policies** to sustain high growth.

2. The government must decide between **free trade and protectionism**.

3. Supporting **many industries** instead of focusing on a few national champions is crucial.

4. Strong **institutions and governance** are necessary for sustained development.

5. Achieving **high-income status** requires an **8% growth rate**, which is much higher than the current 6%.

Question for practice:

Discuss the challenges India faces in transitioning from a lower middle-income to a high-income country.