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Shashank Tyagi

Faculty PSIR Optional, StudyiqIAS
Ex. Consultant, Office of Minister
Social Welfare, GNCTD



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GEOPOLITICS AT GLANCE

INDIA'S G20 SUMMIT 2023: CLIMATE ACTION PROMISES

RELEVANCE

□ Syllabus:

- **PSIR:** Contemporary Global Concerns: Climate Change
- **GS2-**Bilateral, regional and global groupings affecting India's interest.

Context: During the recent G20 summit, an agreement was reached to strive for a threefold increase in the worldwide renewable energy capacity by the year 2030.

INTRODUCTION

The most notable and unequivocal outcome related to climate action from the recent G20 summit was the pledge to collaborate towards a threefold increase in global renewable energy capacity by 2030.

As per a review conducted by the International Energy Agency (IEA) earlier this year, this singular initiative has the potential to avert the release of 7 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions by the year 2030. It comes as no surprise that nations have been persistently encouraged in recent years to embrace this objective.

WHY IS THIS COMMITMENT AN EASILY ATTAINABLE GOAL?

Preventing 7 Billion Tons of CO2 Emissions

- **IEA's Climate Solution:** The International Energy Agency (IEA) identifies a crucial action with the potential to prevent the emission of 7 billion tons of carbon dioxide by 2030.

G20's Pivotal Role

- **Easiest Climate Action:** The G20 countries are uniquely positioned to address climate issues, even though some fossil fuel-producing nations like Russia and Saudi Arabia initially had reservations.

Rapid Adoption of Renewable Energy

- **Global Momentum:** Renewable energy adoption is already experiencing rapid global growth, with annual capacity expansions increasing by around 10% each year.

- **Universal Support:** Developing countries show no opposition to the adoption of renewable energy, indicating a broad consensus on its importance.

Ambitious but Attainable Target

- **IEA's Ambition:** According to the IEA, the ambitious goal of tripling renewable capacity by 2030 is both challenging and feasible, given the current trend of annual capacity growth, which averages around 11%.
- **Meeting the Target:** Slightly increasing the annual growth rate in renewable capacity will enable meeting the targeted 2030 capacity objective.

Challenges in attaining this goal

- The current global installed capacity for renewable energy stands at just under 3,400 GW.
- In 2022, there was an impressive addition of around 295 GW of new renewable energy capacity, representing the largest increase on record.
- To meet the ambitious goal of tripling the overall renewable energy capacity by 2030, approximately 1,000 GW of new capacity would need to be incorporated annually.
- This target aligns with the recommendations of prominent organizations like IRENA and the IEA, as well as the goals advocated by climate activists.

CRITICAL COMPONENTS IN ATTAINING THIS GOAL

1. Mobilizing Financial Resources:

- ❑ Mobilization of adequate financial resources is crucial.
- ❑ Funding is required for infrastructure development, policy support, and skills enhancement in nations lacking access to energy.

2. Focus on Large Developing Countries:

- ❑ The majority of new energy capacity additions are concentrated in a few large developing countries.
- ❑ India and China have collectively contributed over 50% of global capacity additions in the past five years.

3. Emphasis on Rapid Growth in Other Developing Nations:

- ❑ Achieving the goal of tripling energy capacity is dependent on rapid demand growth in other developing nations, with a particular focus on Africa.

4. Investment Requirements for the Energy Transition:

- ❑ According to IRENA, approximately \$5.3 trillion in annual investments will be necessary until 2050.
- ❑ This funding is needed to facilitate the transition towards cleaner energy sources and limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

HOW INTERNATIONAL SOLAR ALLIANCE(ISA) CAN PLAY A KEY ROLE IN ACHIEVING THIS TARGET

- ❑ Solar energy consistently accounts for more than 50% of new renewable energy capacity additions annually, playing a crucial role in the expansion of renewable energy sources.
- ❑ In 2022, out of the total 295 GW of new renewable capacity added, an impressive 191 GW originated from solar energy sources.

- ❑ The establishment of the International Solar Alliance(ISA)was specifically aimed at expediting the global deployment of solar energy.
- ❑ The ISA has collaborated with the G20 Presidency to accelerate development efforts in G-20 countries and combat climate change by promoting the utilization of solar energy.
- ❑ As part of its initiatives, the ISA has launched the Green Hydrogen Innovation Centre, designed to enhance knowledge and capabilities across nations in the production, transportation, and utilization of low and zero-carbon hydrogen.
- ❑ To encourage private sector investments in solar mini-grids, the ISA is providing guarantees to its member countries in Africa.
- ❑ The ISA is actively nurturing entrepreneurs in countries with the potential to become leading suppliers of solar energy across various regions. In this pursuit, it has recently identified and is strengthening 20 solar startups in Africa.

CRITICISM OF RECENT G20 SUMMIT FOR INSUFFICIENT ATTENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

- ❑ The objective of tripling renewable energy capacity by 2030 falls short of achieving the 1.5-degree Celsius temperature goal.
- ❑ Projections for 2030 suggest that greenhouse gas emissions will exceed levels compatible with a 1.5-degree Celsius rise by approximately 24 billion tonnes of CO2 equivalent.
- ❑ Tripling renewable energy capacity would only contribute to avoiding roughly 7 billion tonnes of CO2 equivalent, which is less than one-third of what is needed.
- ❑ During the G20 meeting, key contentious issues like more significant emissions reductions, the gradual phase-out of fossil fuels, and substantial financial resource mobilization were left unaddressed.

INDIA-MIDDLE EAST –EUROPE ECONOMIC CORRIDOR

RELEVANCE

□ Syllabus:

- **PSIR:** India and Global Centre's of Power.
- **GS2:** Bilateral, regional and Global groupings.

Context: During the G20 Summit held in New Delhi, several prominent nations, including India, the United States, Saudi Arabia, the European Union, the United Arab Emirates, France, Germany, and Italy, came together to formalize their commitment to establishing the India – Middle East – Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC).

INTRODUCTION

The IMEC, currently in the conceptual phase, is designed to establish an extensive network of transportation routes, encompassing railways and maritime routes. Its primary objective is to promote economic development by fostering connectivity between Asia, the Arabian Gulf, and Europe.

Although specific project specifics have not been disclosed, it falls under the umbrella of the Partnership for Global Infrastructure Investment (PGII). PGII is a Western-led effort aimed at financing infrastructure ventures on a global scale and is perceived as a response to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).



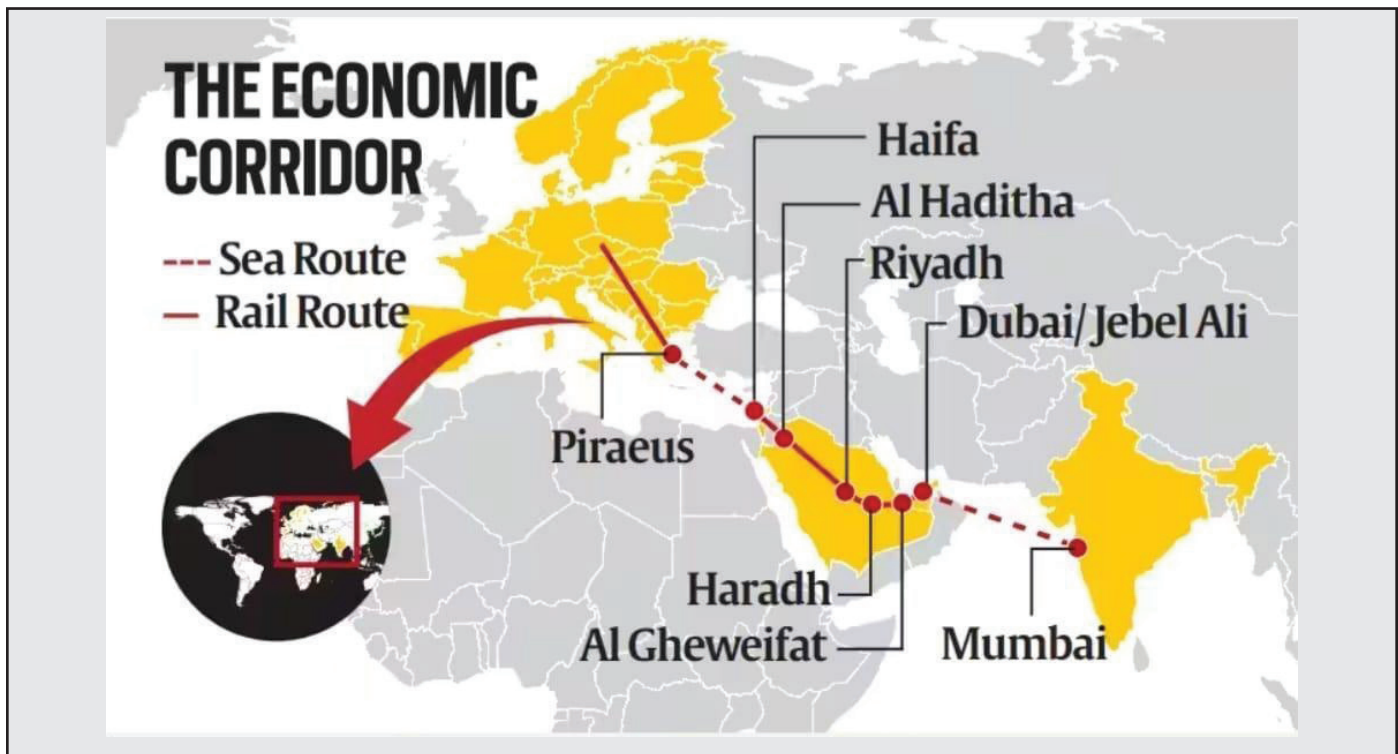
WHAT IS INDIA MIDDLE EAST EUROPE ECONOMIC CORRIDOR (IMEC)?

□ **Project Name:** India Middle East Europe Corridor (IMEEC)

□ **Project Overview:** IMEEC is a network of transport corridors aimed at fostering economic integration between Asia, the Arabian Gulf, and Europe, comprising railway lines and sea lanes.

- Corridor Structure:** IMEEC consists of two primary corridors:
 1. Eastern Corridor: Connects India to the Arabian Gulf.
 2. Northern Corridor: Links the Arabian Gulf to Europe.
- Transportation Route:** The project involves a multi-modal transportation route, including:

- Ship transit between India and Saudi Arabia.
- Subsequent rail connectivity from Saudi Arabia to the UAE.
- Possible extension to Jordan, followed by sea transport to Turkey.
- Further rail connectivity within Europe.



- Infrastructure Components:** IMEEC encompasses various infrastructure components, such as:
- Railway tracks for efficient cargo transportation.
 - Cables for energy and digital connectivity, enhancing communication and power transmission.
 - A pipeline for exporting clean hydrogen, promoting sustainable energy practices.
- Member Countries:** IMEEC is a collaborative effort involving several nations, including:
- India
 - United States (US)
 - United Arab Emirates (UAE)

- Saudi Arabia
 - European Union (EU)
 - Italy
 - France
 - Germany
- Part of PGII:** The project is a key component of the Partnership for Global Infrastructure Investment (PGII), which is a cooperative initiative by G7 nations to finance infrastructure projects in developing countries. PGII serves as the G7's response to China's Belt and Road Initiative and aligns with the G7's broader vision of the Build-Back-Better framework.

Significance of IMEC

Geopolitical Significance	Geo-economic Significance
<p>IMEC as a Counter to BRI: The India Middle East Europe Corridor (IMEC) stands as a robust countermeasure to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which has been criticized for ensnaring countries in debt and compromising their sovereignty. IMEC aims to thwart China's expansionist policies.</p> <p>Countering China's Middle East Influence: China's influence in the Middle East has been steadily growing, with successful mediation between Saudi Arabia and Iran and strengthened ties with traditional U.S. allies like Saudi Arabia and the UAE. IMEC presents an opportunity to push back against China's geopolitical ascendancy in the region.</p> <p>Promoting Geopolitical Stability in the Middle East: IMEC seeks to foster cohesion among Middle Eastern nations, transforming the region from a source of challenges and conflicts into a hub for economic activity, thereby enhancing geopolitical stability.</p> <p>Diplomatic Normalization: IMEC could pave the way for diplomatic normalization in the Middle East, potentially leading to the establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia, both of which are project participants.</p> <p>Reducing Dependence on Suez Canal and Red Sea: In light of congestion issues in the Suez Canal and China's militarization of the Red Sea, including naval bases like the Port of Doraleh, IMEC offers an alternative transportation route, reducing geopolitical reliance on these critical maritime passages.</p> <p>Expanding the G20's Geopolitical Role: IMEC's mission extends beyond economic matters, aiming to bolster the G20's influence in the geopolitical arena. This effort is designed to counterbalance the dominance of leaders like China's Xi Jinping and Russia's Vladimir Putin within the G20 by integrating geo-political concerns into the group's agenda.</p>	<p>Boost in Trade and Employment Opportunities: The proposed corridor project is expected to significantly increase the trade of manufactured goods and facilitate the development of clean energy.</p> <p>It will enhance efficiencies, reduce costs, foster economic cohesion, and generate employment opportunities.</p> <p>This initiative will ultimately lead to a profound integration of Asia, Europe, and the Middle East.</p> <p>Infrastructure Development: The economic corridor project aims to address the infrastructure deficit in lower and middle-income nations.</p> <p>IMEC, envisioned as a green and digital bridge across continents and civilizations, will encompass various essential components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A rail link An electricity cable A hydrogen pipeline A high-speed data cable <p>Promotion of Intra-regional Connectivity: The project's primary objective is to promote intra-regional connectivity.</p> <p>It is poised to enhance trade, foster prosperity, and bolster connectivity within the region.</p>

SIGNIFICANCE OF IMEC FOR INDIA

Indo-US Convergence in Middle East: India and the United States have aligned their interests in the Middle East, following their collaboration in the Indo-Pacific region. This new economic and connectivity project marks the second major collaboration between the two nations in the Middle East, following the I2U2 forum. It has the potential to significantly strengthen the Indo-US relationship.

Strategic Engagement with Arabian Peninsula: Through this connectivity project, the Indian government has a unique opportunity to establish lasting connectivity between India and the Arabian Peninsula. This project will enhance India's role as a key player in shaping regional connectivity in the Middle East.

Breaking Pakistan's Dominance: This initiative breaks Pakistan's longstanding monopoly over India's overland connectivity to the

West. Despite India's efforts since the 1990s to establish trans-regional connectivity with Pakistan, Islamabad consistently refused to grant India access to landlocked Afghanistan and Central Asia.

- ❑ **Reduced Dependence on Iran:** The project also offers India an alternative transport route to Europe, reducing its heavy reliance on the Chabahar Port and the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC).
- ❑ **Opportunity to Join Trans-African Corridor:** The Trans-African corridor is a proposed plan by the US and the EU to create a corridor linking Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Zambia. Successful implementation of the Indian Middle East Europe Corridor project would enhance India's prospects of participating in the Trans-African corridor, expanding its global connectivity.
- ❑ **Increased Trade Competitiveness:** According to a US report, this economic corridor is projected to expedite trade between India and Europe by 40%. This significant improvement in trade efficiency will enhance the competitiveness of Indian exports.

POSSIBLE CHALLENGES FOR IMEC

1. Non-binding MoU:

- ❑ The MoU established by IMEC does not establish any legal rights or obligations under international law.
- ❑ It primarily outlines political commitments among participating nations, and these commitments are not legally binding.

2. Implementation on Ground:

- ❑ Member countries are confronted with the initial challenge of swiftly implementing and constructing the corridor.

- ❑ The MoU stipulates that members plan to convene within the next sixty days to create an action plan with specific timelines.

- ❑ Commencing the project at an early stage is a significant hurdle for the corridor's progress.

3. Financial Challenges:

- ❑ The construction of the Corridor demands substantial financial resources.

- ❑ Securing these funds is challenging, especially in light of the economic recession affecting the United States and other advanced economies.

- ❑ China possesses a larger capacity for investment compared to the G7 nations.

- ❑ Mobilizing private-sector financing remains a significant obstacle.

4. Chinese Resistance:

- ❑ The economic corridor also encounters resistance from China, which has already made substantial investments in its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects.

- ❑ China has been actively investing in Middle Eastern economies such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE, which may complicate the Corridor's development.

Conclusion

The success of the Indian Middle East Europe Corridor (IMEC) has the potential to broaden the choices for nations with infrastructure needs. IMEC's effectiveness in terms of rapid implementation and its capacity to circumvent the financial and environmental sustainability challenges encountered by the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) will be key factors in determining its success.

KNOW ABOUT G20:WHAT IS G20,HOW IT WORKS?

RELEVANCE

☐ Syllabus:

- PSIR: India and Global Centre's of power
- GS2-Bilateral, regional and global groupings affecting India's interest.

Context: The G20 Leaders' Summit held in New Delhi on September 9-10.

INTRODUCTION

The G20 Summit serves as an international governmental forum aimed at fostering global economic cooperation and enhancing the framework for worldwide economic governance. While it initially centered on matters pertaining to global macroeconomics and financial stability, which were the primary reasons behind its establishment, its scope has expanded to encompass a wide array of issues such as trade,

climate change, sustainable development, healthcare, agriculture, energy, the environment, anti-corruption efforts, and more.

The current G20 Presidency presents a distinctive opportunity for India to lead a collaborative approach in tackling various intricate economic challenges facing the world, while also highlighting the aspirations of developing nations on this prominent global stage.



HISTORICAL OF G20 SUMMITS

- ☐ The Group's origins trace back to the Asian Tigers' Financial Crisis in 1997-98.
- ☐ It was formally established in 1999, initially serving as a platform for Central Bank

Governors and Finance Ministers from both industrialized and developing nations to discuss global economic and financial stability.

- ☐ Following the 2008 global financial crisis, its role was elevated to include Heads of State or

Government, recognizing the necessity of high-level political coordination during crises.

- ❑ In 2009, it was officially designated as the “premier forum for international economic cooperation.”
- ❑ Since then, the G20 Leaders have convened regularly, solidifying the G20’s position as the primary platform for global economic cooperation.

MEMBERS IN G20

1. The G20 consists of 19 member countries namely Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkiye, the United

Kingdom, the United States and the European Union.

2. These member countries collectively represent approximately 85% of the world’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
3. They also account for 75% of the total international trade.
4. The G20 member countries together make up about two-thirds of the global population.
5. In addition to member countries, the G20 invites guest countries and international organizations to participate in its meetings.
6. Some of the international organizations invited to G20 meetings include the United Nations, World Bank, IMF, OECD, and ASEAN.



STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONING OF G20

The G20 functions through a system of annual meetings involving Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors, accompanied by a yearly leaders’ summit. Within this framework, there are two distinct tracks known as the Finance Track and the Sherpa Track. These tracks play pivotal roles

in influencing the host presidency’s agenda and directing the intergovernmental negotiations conducted during the presidency’s tenure. They are responsible for the preparation and subsequent monitoring of the topics and agreements ratified during the Summits.

Track	Function & Structure
Sherpa Track	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sherpas from member countries act as personal emissaries of the Leaders within the G20 framework. 2. They primarily focus on a wide range of socio-economic issues including agriculture, anti-corruption measures, climate change, digital economy, education, employment, energy, environmental concerns, healthcare, tourism, trade, and investment. 3. Sherpas play a pivotal role in overseeing and managing all negotiations that take place throughout the year within the G20 framework. 4. They engage in discussions to shape the agenda for the G20 Summit. 5. Sherpas coordinate and facilitate the substantive work of the G20, ensuring the smooth functioning of the organization.
Finance Track	<p>Leadership: It is led by Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors, convening approximately four times annually, including two meetings coinciding with World Bank and International Monetary Fund gatherings.</p> <p>Key Areas of Emphasis: It's primary focus lies in addressing fiscal and monetary policy matters, encompassing the global economy, infrastructure development, financial regulation, financial inclusion, international financial system design, and reform of international taxation.</p>

APART FROM THIS G20 OPERATES BY FOLLOWING MECHANISM:

- 1. Troika Support:** The G20 operates without a formal charter or secretariat. Instead, its Presidency receives support from a Troika comprising the past, present, and future presiding countries. This Troika arrangement ensures smooth coordination and continuity within the G20.
- 2. Non-Binding Forum:** The decisions made within the G20 are non-binding in a legal sense, meaning that member nations are not obligated to implement them. The forum serves as a platform for dialogue and cooperation, but it lacks the power to enforce its resolutions.
- 3. Agenda Setting:** The G20 Presidency plays a pivotal role in hosting the annual Summit and shaping the agenda for the entire calendar year. The host country directs discussions and priorities during its term.
- 4. Collaboration with International Organizations:** G20 member nations maintain close partnerships with international organizations like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and World Trade Organization (WTO). These collaborations

facilitate global economic and financial cooperation and reforms.

SIGNIFICANCE OF 2023 G20 SUMMIT

- 1. Wider area of cooperation:**
 - The G20 summit in Hangzhou (China), 2016, witnessed US-China convergence on the Paris Agreement.
 - The G20 summit in Argentina, 2018, focused on fair and sustainable development.
 - G20 summit in Germany, 2021, addressed issues like money laundering, international tax havens, and corruption.
 - G20 summit in Bali (Indonesia), 2022, emphasized financial stability, humanitarian crises, poverty, and aid to least developed nations.
- 2. Food Security:**
 - G20 leaders pledged to collaborate on addressing food security issues, praising initiatives like the Black Sea grains initiative.
- 3. Promoting Gender Equality:**
 - Recognizing the importance of gender equality, G20 members commit to increasing women's workforce participation, reducing the gender

pay gap, and improving access to education and healthcare.

4. Global Balance of Power:

- ❑ The G20 seeks to promote a more equitable distribution of power among developed and developing countries, contrasting with earlier blocs like G-7 and P-5 (UNSC).

5. Bringing Adversaries Together:

- ❑ The G20's significance lies in its ability to convene countries with diverse ideologies, political systems, and economic interests to discuss and address global economic issues.

6. Addressing Climate Change:

- ❑ The G20 acknowledges the threat of climate change and has taken initiatives in various areas such as energy efficiency, renewables, clean technologies, resilient infrastructure, and addressing environmental challenges like biodiversity loss through initiatives like the Circular Carbon Economy.

7. Networking and Collaboration:

- ❑ The G20 provides a platform for leaders from different countries to meet, exchange ideas, strengthen relationships, and promote collaboration on economic issues.

8. Global Economic Cooperation:

- ❑ The G20 has played a critical role in responding to economic crises, including the 2008 global financial crisis, the Eurozone debt crisis, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

LIMITATIONS IN G20 GROUPING

The challenges faced by the G20 in reaching consensus and making effective decisions can be attributed to several factors:

1. **Diverse Economic and Political Systems:** The G20 comprises countries with a wide range of economic and political systems, which can create difficulties in finding common ground on crucial issues. For instance, during the 2008 global financial crisis, the G20 struggled

to coordinate a unified response due to these inherent differences.

2. **Contentious Issues such as Climate Change:** Contentious topics like climate change often lead to disagreements within the group. For example, the G20 has experienced friction over climate-related policies, hindering the ability to reach a consensus.
3. **Geopolitical Tensions:** Ongoing geopolitical tensions, such as the Russia-Ukraine crisis, can become contentious issues within the G20, making it challenging to achieve a unified stance. Instances of this friction were observed during summits like Bali G20 and India's G20 presidency.
4. **Lack of Permanent Secretariat:** The absence of a permanent secretariat within the G20 hampers efficient monitoring and coordination, particularly as discussions expand over time. This limitation can hinder the group's ability to follow through on its decisions.
5. **Non-binding Decisions:** Decisions made at G20 meetings are not legally binding, meaning member countries are not obligated to implement them. For example, while G20 countries may agree on guidelines for combating terrorism financing, there is no mechanism to enforce compliance, potentially limiting the effectiveness of such agreements.
6. **Limited Membership:** The G20 includes only 19 individual countries and the European Union, leaving out other significant economies. Expanding the membership could enhance the group's representation of the global economy, making it more inclusive and diverse.

INDIA'S G20 PRESIDENCY

In a historic milestone, India is set to host the G20 Leaders' Summit in September 2023, marking its debut as the host nation and drawing a record-breaking participation of 43 Heads of Delegation in the final New Delhi Summit. Amitabh Kant

assumes the role of India's G20 Sherpa, leading the nation's diplomatic efforts. India's mission revolves around forging a collective global future rooted in a rule-based framework, promoting peace, and fostering equitable growth for all. This vision is being advanced through the Amrit Kaal initiative, symbolizing India's commitment to meaningful reform and international cooperation.

Theme of India's G20 Presidency: "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" or "One Earth - One Family - One Future"

Troika: The Troika during India's G20 presidency consists of Indonesia, India, and Brazil, serving as a collaborative leadership team.

Invitees: In addition to the G20 members and established multilateral institutions, India has extended invitations to nine countries, namely Bangladesh, Netherlands, Oman, Singapore, Nigeria, Spain, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, and Mauritius, to participate in various G20 activities.

African Representation: India's commitment to inclusivity is reflected in its proposal to include the African Union as a full-time member of the G20, recognizing the importance of African perspectives in shaping global policies.

Challenges for India's G20 Presidency: India has faced significant challenges in conducting G20 meetings during its presidency, primarily due to the ongoing Russia-Ukraine tensions.

INDIA'S G20 PRIORITIES

1. Environmental Sustainability and Climate Action: India's commitment to combat climate change is underscored by its focus on climate technology and finance, as well as its dedication to ensuring equitable energy transitions for developing nations through initiatives like "Green Development" and "Climate Finance." Additionally, it places significant emphasis on

promoting sustainable lifestyles through the "Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE)" initiative.

2. Inclusive Economic Growth and Resilience: India's strategy for accelerated, inclusive, and resilient growth centers on structural changes. This includes support for small and medium-sized businesses in international trade, advancements in labor rights and welfare, addressing the global skills gap, and fostering inclusive agricultural value chains and food systems.

3. Achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): India reaffirms its commitment to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and prioritizes efforts to address the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic while striving for progress on the SDGs.

4. Technological Advancement and Digital Infrastructure: India promotes a human-centric approach to technology and seeks to enhance knowledge sharing in critical areas such as financial inclusion, the development of digital public infrastructure, and the integration of technology in sectors like agriculture and education.

5. Reforming Multilateral Institutions: India actively engages in reforming global multilateral institutions to create a more accountable, inclusive, and representative global order capable of effectively addressing the twenty-first-century challenges.

6. Women's Empowerment and Inclusive Development: India places significant emphasis on inclusive growth and development, particularly through the empowerment and representation of women, as a cornerstone of its approach to achieving socio-economic development and the SDGs.

SIGNIFICANCE OF INDIA'S G20 PRESIDENCY

- 1. Economic Influence:** As the world's fastest-growing major economy, India's presidency within the G20 is pivotal. It provides India with a unique opportunity to strengthen its economic partnerships with fellow G20 nations.
- 2. Climate Leadership:** India has emerged as a prominent advocate for climate action. Through its G20 presidency, India can set the global agenda for collaborative efforts to combat climate change.
- 3. Inclusive Growth Focus:** Prioritizing inclusive growth during its presidency, India aims to address crucial issues like infrastructure development, job creation, and the empowerment of women, fostering equitable progress.

- 4. Strategic Importance:** Leading the G20 provides India with a strategic platform to engage with major global powers, including the United States, China, and Russia, to collectively address critical global challenges.
- 5. Voice of the Global South:** By convening meetings of Global South countries alongside the G20, India has become a prominent representative for historically marginalized nations, amplifying their voices on the global stage.
- 6. Healthcare Role:** India has played a significant role in facilitating access to vaccines, financing, and resources for developing and low-income countries during the pandemic. As G20 president, India can work towards ensuring universal, high-quality, and affordable healthcare services worldwide.

REGIONAL, INTERNATIONAL GROUPINGS INVITED AS GUESTS AT 2023 G20 SUMMIT

RELEVANCE

□ Syllabus:

- **PSIR:** India and Global Centre's of Power.
- **GS2:** Bilateral, regional and Global groupings.

Context: India has invited three regional and three international organisations as guests to the G20 summit.

INTRODUCTION

India has extended invitations to three regional and three international organizations to participate as guests. Among the regional organizations are the African Union (AU), the African Union Development Agency-New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA-NEPAD), and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

The international organizations that have received invitations are the International Solar Alliance (ISA), the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure

(CDRI), and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). Below, you'll find essential information about each of these organizations.

LET US HAVE A LOOK AT THESE ORGANIZATIONS.



REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS INVITED TO THE G20 NEW DELHI SUMMIT

Regional Organisation	About the organisation
African Union (AU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The African Union (AU) is an intergovernmental organization consisting of 55 member states from the African continent. <input type="checkbox"/> It was officially established in 2002 with the goal of fostering greater unity and solidarity among African countries and their populations. <input type="checkbox"/> The AU is expected to become the 21st member of the G20 during this year's Leaders' Summit. <input type="checkbox"/> Prime Minister Narendra Modi has emphasized the importance of including the AU in the G20, stating that the success of any global plan requires representation and recognition of all voices.
AUDA-NEPAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The organization was established in June 2018. <input type="checkbox"/> It was created as a transformation of the NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency, which had been founded in 2010. <input type="checkbox"/> The organization's official name is the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD (AUDA-NEPAD). <input type="checkbox"/> Its primary objective is to coordinate and implement key regional and continental projects across Africa. <input type="checkbox"/> These projects aim to realize 'Agenda 2023,' which serves as Africa's strategic plan for transforming the continent into a global powerhouse in the future.
ASEAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> ASEAN was founded on August 8, 1967, and currently comprises 10 member states in Southeast Asia. <input type="checkbox"/> The organization's founding members include Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. <input type="checkbox"/> Over time, ASEAN welcomed additional member states, which include Brunei Darussalam, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, and Cambodia. <input type="checkbox"/> ASEAN is a significant political and economic union in the Southeast Asian region, fostering cooperation and integration among its member nations.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS INVITED AS GUESTS TO THE G20 NEW DELHI SUMMIT

International Organisation	About the Organisation
ISA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The International Solar Alliance (ISA) is an intergovernmental organization established through a treaty in 2016. <input type="checkbox"/> It was launched by Indian Prime Minister Modi and then-French President François Hollande. <input type="checkbox"/> The primary objective of ISA is to create a specialized platform for collaboration among nations abundant in solar resources and the global community to promote the adoption of solar energy. <input type="checkbox"/> As of now, 116 countries have signed the ISA Framework Agreement. <input type="checkbox"/> Among these signatory countries, 94 have completed the necessary ratification procedures, making them full members of the ISA. <input type="checkbox"/> The organization aims to facilitate international cooperation in harnessing solar power for sustainable development and addressing energy challenges.
CDRI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Founded in 2019 CDRI is a coalition comprised of national governments, UN agencies and programs, multilateral development banks, private sector, and educational institutes <input type="checkbox"/> Mission: Promote disaster-resilient infrastructures <input type="checkbox"/> Aims to raise awareness about resilient infrastructures <input type="checkbox"/> Seeks to enhance the availability of technical assistance <input type="checkbox"/> Focuses on improving capacities
ADB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Establishment: ADB (Asian Development Bank) was founded in 1966. <input type="checkbox"/> Mission: ADB's primary mission is to promote economic and social progress in its developing member countries (DMCs) within the Asia Pacific Region. <input type="checkbox"/> Key Instruments: ADB achieves its mission through various means, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Providing loans and equity investments. <input type="checkbox"/> Offering technical assistance for development projects and programs. <input type="checkbox"/> Providing advisory services. <input type="checkbox"/> Offering loan guarantees and grants. <input type="checkbox"/> Engaging in policy dialogues. <input type="checkbox"/> Membership: ADB has 68 member countries. <input type="checkbox"/> Headquarters: The bank's headquarters is located in Manila, Philippines. <input type="checkbox"/> Indian Involvement: India holds 6.317% of shares in ADB, along with 5.347% of voting rights. <input type="checkbox"/> Major Shareholders: The largest shareholders in ADB are Japan and the United States, followed by China and India.

INDIA SAUDI ARABIA RELATIONS

RELEVANCE

❑ Syllabus:

- **PSIR:** Recent Developments in India's Foreign Policy.
- **GS2-**India West Asia Relations.

Context: India and Saudi Arabia have strengthened their relationship significantly following the successful inaugural summit-level meeting of the India-Saudi Arabia Strategic Partnership Council (SPC).

INTRODUCTION

India and Saudi Arabia have reached new heights in their bilateral relations following the inaugural summit of the India-Saudi Arabia Strategic Partnership Council (SPC). This historic event was co-hosted by Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, following the conclusion of the 2023 G-20 summit. The two nations have also solidified their partnership by signing eight agreements, reinforcing their bond and cooperation.



HISTORY OF INDIA SAUDI ARABIA RELATIONS

PHASE 1-Establishment of Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Diplomatic relations between India and Saudi Arabia were established in 1947.❑ Subsequently, there were notable high-level visits from both countries.❑ In 1955, King Saud of Saudi Arabia undertook an official visit to India.❑ In 1956, India's Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, reciprocated by visiting the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
PHASE 2-Cold War cold Phase	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. During the Cold War:<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Saudi Arabia aligned itself with the United States.❑ India pursued a policy of non-alignment.2. This divergence in alignment:<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Initially strained relations between India and Saudi Arabia.3. Additional factors that worsened relations:<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Pakistan's defeat in the 1971 war.❑ The global oil crisis of 1973.❑ The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.

<p>PHASE 3-Normalisation of Ties</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> King Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz’s historic visit to India in January 2006 marked the first by a Saudi monarch in 51 years. <input type="checkbox"/> It also marked the first top-level bilateral visit since Indira Gandhi’s trip to Saudi Arabia in 1982. <input type="checkbox"/> During this visit, the Delhi Declaration 2006 was signed. <input type="checkbox"/> The Delhi Declaration aimed to enhance cooperation between India and Saudi Arabia in various key areas: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Energy 2. Trade 3. Science and technology 4. Education 5. Health 6. Political collaboration on regional and international issues.
<p>Phase 4-Deepening of Ties</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Riyadh Declaration 2010 built upon the Delhi Declaration 2006, emphasizing cooperation in various areas: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Counter-terrorism 2. Combatting money laundering 3. Countering narcotics trade 4. Addressing arms trafficking 5. Combating human trafficking 6. Strengthening defense collaboration 7. Enhancing economic cooperation <input type="checkbox"/> Prime Minister Modi’s diplomatic engagements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 2016: PM Modi visited Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. <input type="checkbox"/> 2018: He met the Saudi Crown Prince during the G-20 summit in Argentina. <p>Recent developments in India-Saudi Arabia relations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Post-G-20 summit, bilateral talks between Saudi Crown Prince and PM Modi. <input type="checkbox"/> Establishment of the Strategic Partnership Council (SPC). <input type="checkbox"/> The strategic relationship between India and Saudi Arabia has been significantly deepened.

OUTCOMES OF RECENT INDIA-SAUDI ARABIA STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL MEETING

1. Enhancement of the Hydrocarbon Energy Partnership into a Comprehensive Energy Partnership encompassing renewables, petroleum, and strategic reserves.
2. Accelerate the Progress of the \$50 billion West Coast Refinery Project to ensure its timely implementation.

3. Establish a Collaborative Task Force to Facilitate the Utilization of the \$100 billion Saudi Investment in India.
4. Fast-track Negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between India and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), with Saudi Arabia as a prominent member.
5. Exploration of Opportunities for Trade in Local Currencies, including the Integration of RuPAY Cards in Saudi Arabia to Benefit the Indian Community and Hajj/Umrah Pilgrims.

SIGNIFICANCE OF SAUDI ARABIA FOR INDIA

Geopolitical Significance	<p>Saudi Arabia's Growing Geopolitical Importance</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regional Influence: Saudi Arabia wields significant geopolitical influence in the Middle East, particularly in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. 2. International Partnerships: Saudi Arabia has strategically cultivated relationships with major global powers, including the United States, Russia, China, and the European Union. 3. Impact on India: The increasing geopolitical prominence of Saudi Arabia has prompted India to deepen its engagement with the country in the realm of geopolitics. <p>Deepening of Chinese Geopolitical Relations with Saudi Arabia</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Saudi Arabia-Iran Reconciliation: China has played a pivotal role in initiating efforts to reconcile Saudi Arabia and Iran, a development with far-reaching geopolitical implications. 2. Counterbalancing Chinese Influence: India recognizes the need to bolster its geopolitical engagement with Saudi Arabia to counterbalance the growing influence of China in the region.
Geostrategic Significance	<p>Counter-Terrorism Cooperation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Saudi Arabia's Substantial Influence: Saudi Arabia wields significant influence over Pakistan, which can be harnessed by India to encourage Pakistan to come to the negotiation table for discussions on counter-terrorism efforts. <input type="checkbox"/> Saudi Arabia's Understanding of India's Concerns: It's noteworthy that Saudi Arabia has displayed a willingness to comprehend India's concerns regarding terrorism and has expressed its commitment to collaborating with India in combatting this global menace. <p>Defence Cooperation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Saudi Arabia's Limited Experience: Saudi Arabia has relatively limited experience in countering threats posed by groups such as the Houthi militias. <input type="checkbox"/> Joint Military Exercises: Both nations have conducted joint military exercises designed to address the challenge of terrorism, particularly in the mountainous regions adjacent to Yemen. <input type="checkbox"/> Exploring Joint Development of Defence Equipment: There is an ongoing exploration of opportunities for joint development and production of defense equipment between India and Saudi Arabia. <p>Fighting Piracy and Protecting Oil Routes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Persistent Threat of Piracy: The Gulf of Aden and its adjacent regions continue to face the persistent threat of piracy, particularly affecting the Sea Lines of Communication. <input type="checkbox"/> Naval Cooperation on the Rise: India and Saudi Arabia have seen an upsurge in naval cooperation, exemplified by the bilateral naval exercise known as "Al Mohed al Hindi," which is conducted to safeguard the world's vital oil routes, notably the Strait of Hormuz.
Geo Economic Significance	<p>Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030: Unlocking Opportunities for Indian Businesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Diversifying the Economy: Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 plan aims to reduce its dependence on oil and transform into a global hub for business and culture, opening up significant opportunities for Indian businesses. <input type="checkbox"/> Indian IT Sector: The plan presents a promising avenue for the Indian IT sector to provide technological assistance and expertise in various areas. <input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure Opportunities: Indian infrastructure businesses also stand to benefit from participating in the development projects associated with Vision 2030. <p>Energy Security: Strengthening India-Saudi Arabia Relations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Crucial Energy Supplier: Saudi Arabia plays a pivotal role in India's energy security, supplying over 17% of crude oil and 32% of LPG requirements.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Mitigating Sanctions Impact: Given the U.S. sanctions on Iran, Saudi Arabia's offer of additional crude oil supplies is instrumental in helping India meet its growing energy demands. <p>Investment Opportunities: Saudi Arabia's Sovereign Fund and Indian Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Sovereign Fund Potential: Saudi Arabia possesses one of the world's largest Sovereign Funds, which could be channeled into Indian infrastructure projects, particularly the National Infrastructure and Investment Fund (NIIF). ❑ Major Investments: Notably, Saudi oil giant Aramco and the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company have acquired a 50% stake in the \$44 billion Ratnagiri project in Maharashtra, showcasing the potential for further investments. <p>Burgeoning Trade Relations: India-Saudi Arabia Economic Ties</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Growing Trade Partnership: India stands as Saudi Arabia's second-largest trade partner, and reciprocally, Saudi Arabia ranks as India's fourth-largest trade partner. ❑ Bilateral Trade: In FY2022-23, bilateral trade between the two nations reached a substantial value of \$52.76 billion, with expectations of further growth in the coming decades.
<p>Cultural Significance</p>	<p>Cultural Bond: Saudi Arabia's Role in Facilitating Hajj Pilgrimage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Every year, Saudi Arabia plays a pivotal role in facilitating the Hajj pilgrimage for more than 175,000 Indian citizens. This cultural connection is of immense significance for India, as it deepens the ties between the two nations. <p>Indian Diaspora: A Pillar of Soft Power Diplomacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Saudi Arabia boasts a thriving Indian diaspora, comprising 2.7 million individuals, making it the 'most preferred community' in the country. This community serves as a powerful instrument of soft power diplomacy, bridging the gap between the two nations. <p>Economic Impact: Remittances from Saudi Arabia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ The Indian community in Saudi Arabia contributes significantly to India's economic well-being by sending remittances totaling over US \$11 billion annually. This financial influx has a profound impact on India's economic stability and development.

ISSUES IN INDIA-SAUDI ARABIA RELATIONS

1. Complexity of Middle East Politics:

- ❑ The politics in the Middle East are intricate and multifaceted.
- ❑ Key faultlines include the Saudi Arabia-Iran rivalry and Saudi Arabia-Israel animosity.
- ❑ India faces the challenging task of managing its relationships with these countries without alienating others.

2. Pakistan Factor:

- ❑ Pakistan plays a significant role in shaping India's relationship with Saudi Arabia.
- ❑ Saudi Arabia is a major provider of loans to Pakistan.

- ❑ Pakistan has been accused of allowing its territory to be used for promoting terrorism and anti-India sentiments.

- ❑ This situation creates discomfort in deepening the India-Saudi Arabia relationship, particularly in the context of counter-terrorism efforts.

3. Nitaqat Program of Saudi Arabia:

- ❑ The Nitaqat program, initiated in 2011, aims to boost the employment of Saudi nationals in the private sector.
- ❑ Saudi Arabia's 'Nitaqat' policy has caused concerns among the large expatriate Indian community working in the Kingdom.

WAYFORWARD FOR INDIA SAUDI ARABIA RELATIONS

- ❑ **Enhanced Economic Integration:** Promote greater economic integration by facilitating the relocation of labor-intensive industries from Saudi Arabia to India, which could reduce the Kingdom's expatriate population. This initiative would also negate the necessity for the implementation of Nitaqat Policies.
- ❑ **Space Collaboration:** Foster deeper cooperation in the field of space exploration, leveraging India's burgeoning space capabilities. The recently established Saudi Space Agency should actively engage with the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) to explore joint ventures and projects.
- ❑ **Strengthened Defense Partnerships:** Bolster defense cooperation, with a particular focus on maritime security, to ensure the protection of the global oil supply chain. India and Saudi Arabia should work closely to safeguard this critical global resource.

- ❑ **Diversified Bilateral Engagement:** Broaden the scope of bilateral cooperation by expanding into new sectors such as Indian infrastructure development, agriculture, support for startups, skills development, and information technology. This diversification will usher in the next phase of collaborative endeavors between the two nations.

CONCLUSION

Amid the rapidly evolving geopolitical landscape in the Middle East, India and Saudi Arabia find mutual benefit in fostering a strategic partnership. This collaboration serves to maintain equilibrium in their regional relationships, contributing to the overall peace and stability of West Asia. It is crucial to acknowledge that West Asia is home to a substantial diaspora of over 8 million people of Indian descent, who actively participate in and enhance the region's economic growth and prosperity.

INDIA-CANADA RELATIONS

RELEVANCE

- ❑ **Syllabus:**
 - **PSIR:** Recent developments in Indian Foreign Policy.
 - **GS2:** India-Canada Relations.

Context: India-Canada relations have encountered a significant setback at recent times.

INTRODUCTION

India-Canada relations have taken a significant hit following Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau's allegations that individuals associated with the Indian government were involved in the June 2023 killing of Canadian Khalistani leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar. Trudeau's statement has triggered a series of

actions, including Canada expelling a high-ranking Indian diplomat. In response, India has summoned the Canadian High Commissioner and reciprocated by expelling Canada's intelligence station chief. This diplomatic exchange has escalated tensions between the two nations.



HISTORY OF INDIA-CANADA RELATIONS

1. Diplomatic Relations Establishment (1947):
 - ❑ India and Canada established diplomatic relations in 1947.
 - ❑ The foundation of this relationship was built on shared values of democracy, pluralism, and strong interpersonal connections.
2. Deterioration in Political Domain:
 - ❑ Despite economic engagement, regular high-level interactions, and long-standing people-to-people ties, India-Canada relations experienced a decline in the political arena.
3. Strong Relations During Stephen Harper's Tenure (2006-2015):
 - ❑ The Conservative Party's Stephen Harper served as the Canadian Prime Minister from 2006 to 2015.
 - ❑ This period witnessed a strengthening of ties between Canada and India, marked by 19 high-level visits from Canada to India.
 - ❑ In 2011, both countries jointly celebrated the "Year of India in Canada."
4. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Visit (2015):
 - ❑ Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Canada in 2015 marked a significant milestone.
 - ❑ It was the first bilateral visit by an Indian Prime Minister since 1973.

- ❑ During this visit, India and Canada elevated their relationship from bilateral to a strategic partnership, with hopes of addressing longstanding issues like the Khalistan dispute.
5. Further Deterioration Since 2015:
 - ❑ Unfortunately, India-Canada diplomatic relations have continued to deteriorate since 2015.
 - ❑ The resurgence of Khalistan protests in recent times has been a major factor contributing to this decline.

SIGNIFICANCE OF INDIA-CANADA RELATIONS

Indo-Pacific Cooperation:

- ❑ Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy recognizes India as a critical partner in the region.
- ❑ It identifies China as an increasingly disruptive global power.
- ❑ Emphasizes shared traditions of democracy and pluralism with India.

Trade and Commerce:

- ❑ Bilateral trade between India and Canada amounts to USD 5 billion.
- ❑ Over 400 Canadian companies have established a presence in India.
- ❑ More than 1,000 companies actively pursue business in the Indian market.
- ❑ Canadian pension funds have committed over USD 55 billion in investments.
- ❑ Ongoing negotiations for a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement and a Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (FIPA).

Development Cooperation:

- ❑ Canada invested nearly \$24 million in 2018-2019, supporting 75 projects in India through non-profit organizations like Grand Challenges Canada.

Energy Sector:

- ❑ A Nuclear Cooperation Agreement (NCA) was signed in 2010 between India and Canada.
- ❑ A Joint Committee on Civil Nuclear Cooperation was established.
- ❑ A uranium supply agreement was signed during PM Modi's 2015 visit.

Science and Technology, Space:

- ❑ ISRO and CSA (Canadian Space Agency) signed MOUs for cooperation in outer space exploration and utilization.
- ❑ ANTRIX, the commercial arm of ISRO, launched several Canadian satellites.

Education Sector:

- ❑ Since 2018, India has been the largest source country for international students in Canada.
- ❑ This has enabled Canadian universities and colleges to offer subsidized education to domestic students.

Indian Diaspora:

- ❑ Canada hosts one of the world's largest Indian diasporas, numbering 1.6 million (PIOs and NRIs).
- ❑ They constitute over 3% of Canada's total population.
- ❑ The Indian diaspora has made significant contributions across various sectors, including politics, with 22 Members of Parliament of Indian-origin in the present House of Commons.

ISSUES IN INDIA-CANADA RELATIONS

- 1. Khalistani Separatist Factor:** The prominent issue of Khalistani separatism stands as the most significant challenge in India-Canada relations. Canada's policy of attempting to balance Sikh demands with its ties to India has greatly complicated bilateral relations.
- 2. Attacks on Indian Assets:** Instances of attacks on Indian Consulates, temples, and the Indian Diaspora, particularly those not of Sikh origin,

have intensified tensions between the two countries.

- 3. Trade Hurdles:** Indo-Canadian trade relations face substantial structural obstacles, including complex labor laws, market protectionism, and bureaucratic regulations. Negotiations for key agreements like the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) and Investment Promotion and Protection Agreements (BIPPA) have stagnated, leading to limited progress. Canada even unilaterally suspended trade negotiations with India prior to the G20 summit, further impeding trade.
- 4. Close Canada-China Relationship:** The Canadian federal government's close ties with the Chinese Communist Party's government have also strained India-China relations, adding another layer of complexity to the India-Canada dynamic.

WAYFORWARD

- 1. Engaging with the Sikh Diaspora:** India should proactively build constructive and enduring connections with the Sikh diaspora. This entails countering the misinformation disseminated by Khalistani separatists and highlighting the prevailing sense of contentment in Punjab.
- 2. Revamping Cooperation:** It's essential to establish a fresh framework of cooperation that prioritizes pragmatic and mutually advantageous areas such as trade, energy, infrastructure, and transportation. These sectors should take precedence in the effort to enhance Indo-Canadian relations.
- 3. Detangling Issues:** Both India and Canada need to disentangle their political disputes surrounding the Khalistan issue from their trade and investment ties. This separation is crucial for reinvigorating trade negotiations, particularly in the pursuit of a finalized Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the two nations.

4. Supporting Civil Society and Track II Diplomacy: India and Canada should actively promote civil society organizations and Track II diplomacy initiatives. These initiatives can serve as vehicles for fostering people-to-people connections, facilitating constructive dialogues, and advancing conflict resolution efforts.

5. Enhancing Media and Public Diplomacy: To reinforce the relationship, it's imperative to encourage responsible reporting. This means ensuring that media coverage and public discourse accurately reflect the multifaceted nature of the relationship and the concerted efforts being undertaken to strengthen it.

THREE YEARS AFTER GALWAN: ANALYSING INDIA-CHINA TIES

RELEVANCE

□ Syllabus:

- **PSIR:** India and Global centers of Power.
- **GS2-**India and Neighbourhood relations.

Context: The Galwan clash significantly impacted India-China relations.

INTRODUCTION

The clash that occurred on June 15-16, 2020, in the Galwan Valley, had a significant impact on the relationship between India and China. Prior to this event, tensions were already high due to China's intrusion into several locations in Eastern Ladakh claimed by India in April of the same year. This clash resulted in the unfortunate loss of 20 Indian soldiers' lives. It marked a historic moment as it was the first instance since October 1975, when four members of the Assam Rifles lost their lives in a Chinese ambush at Tulung La in Arunachal Pradesh, that Indian Army personnel had been killed on the Line of Actual Control.

THE GALWAN CLASH

Tensions arose at the Galwan Valley section of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) between India and China when the People's Liberation Army (PLA) set up tents and an observation post on India's side. The situation escalated on the night of June 15, when a dispute regarding the PLA's presence led to a violent clash.



During the incident, Col B Santosh Babu, the commander of 16 Bihar regiment (comprising the majority of troops at Galwan), approached the Chinese to request their departure. However, he was reportedly physically handled by PLA soldiers, triggering a prolonged clash lasting about five hours. This confrontation involved around 600 soldiers from both sides.

An agreement between India and China prohibits the use of firearms in such situations. Instead, the Chinese troops wielded clubs embedded with nails, while the Indian soldiers used fiberglass batons. Additionally, both sides resorted to throwing stones during the skirmish.

Tragically, Col Babu lost his life, apparently succumbing to injuries after falling into the icy Galwan river. Other Indian soldiers also perished as a result of falling into or being pushed into the river during the chaos.

Reports suggest that China might have suffered higher casualties than India. The PLA acknowledged four deaths on its side nearly a year later in March 2021. Notably, an Australian website, Klaxon, claimed that at least 38 PLA soldiers had drowned in February 2022.

Subsequently, ten Indian soldiers, including two Majors, two Captains, and six jawans, were detained by the Chinese for almost three days before being released following several rounds of negotiations.

RELATIONS AFTER GALWAN CLASH

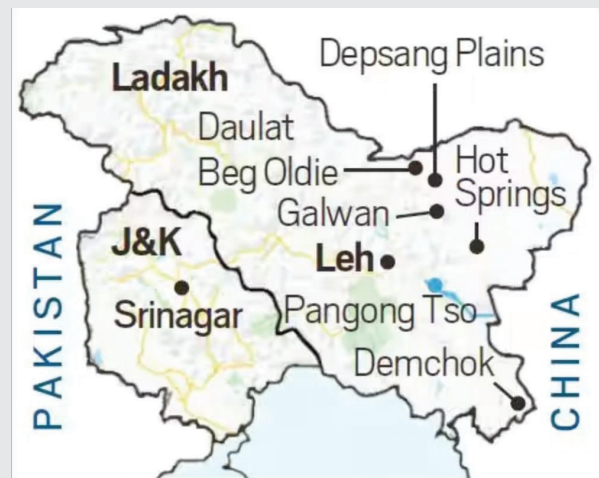
Three years have passed, yet the military tensions persist. India has stationed over 50,000 troops in Eastern Ladakh, maintaining a continuous presence at advanced posts throughout the year.

“We desire favorable relations [with China], but such relations can only thrive in an environment of peace and calm along the border. Any agreements reached must also be upheld,” stated S Jaishankar, the External Affairs Minister, during a recent press conference.

Despite this, he clarified that communication channels between the two countries remain open. In the aftermath of the clash, Jaishankar had a conversation with China’s then Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

“Since that time,” Jaishankar added, “we have sustained engagement. Our military commanders, embassies, and I personally with my counterpart, have been in continuous discussions. During Foreign Minister Qin Gang’s visit to Goa, we held extensive talks. Both of us are tasked with finding a way to disengage, as I am convinced that the ongoing deadlock is not in China’s best interests either.”

PRESENT SITUATION ON GROUND



In April, Jaishankar made remarks expressing concern over the delicate and challenging state of affairs with China. He emphasized that normal relations with China would be contingent on respecting border agreements.

Subsequently, after 18 rounds of discussions at the military level, India and China have disengaged at five contentious points known as “friction points.” These locations include Galwan, Pangong Tso’s north and south banks, Patrolling Point 17 in the Gogra-Hot Springs area, and PP15. Buffer zones devoid of military presence have been established at these sites.

Remaining Chinese intrusions at Depsang Plain and Demchok are referred to as “legacy issues,” predating the standoff that began in April 2020. In the Depsang Plain region, Chinese forces obstructed Indian soldiers’ access to patrolling points beyond Y nallah or Bottleneck junction. Similarly, south of Demchok, Chinese soldiers prevented herders from entering areas within India’s claimed territory.

In a paper presented at the Intelligence Bureau’s annual DGPs’ Conference in January, Leh’s Superintendent of Police P D Nitya highlighted that India had forfeited access to 26 out of 65 patrolling points in Eastern Ladakh due to limitations or lack of patrolling by Indian security forces.

Nitya also noted that the establishment of demilitarized buffer zones as part of the disengagement process effectively leads to a shift in India's controlled border, ultimately resulting in relinquishing control over those areas.

The People's Liberation Army (PLA) capitalized on these buffer areas during de-escalation talks by installing advanced cameras on prominent peaks, allowing them to monitor the movements of Indian forces. This surveillance was evident at various locations like Black Top, Helmet Top mountains in the Kailash range, Chushul, Demchok, Kakjung, Gogra Hills in Hot Springs, and Depsang Plains near Chip Chap River.

Experts within India's strategic community, including active and retired military personnel and China specialists, concur that buffer zones represent a territorial loss for India. They stress the need for New Delhi to communicate to Beijing that these zones don't resolve the underlying issue but serve to avert unintended consequences. The extent of land converted into buffer zones during the disengagement process remains unclear.

Both China and India are enhancing their infrastructures in the region. China is constructing bridges on its side of Pangong Lake to facilitate movement between its northern and southern banks, alongside developing roads and accommodations. India is similarly rapidly improving infrastructure on its side, encompassing the construction of roads, bridges, tunnels, helipads, and troop housing.

WHAT LIES AHEAD

In spite of ongoing discussions at various levels, there exists a significant disparity in how the two sides perceive the issue.

The situation was exacerbated by a nocturnal incursion attempt by the Chinese People's

Liberation Army (PLA) on a front post in Tawang, located in Arunachal Pradesh, last December. This incident heightened tensions. In a meeting held at the end of April, India's Defence Minister Rajnath Singh conveyed a strongly-worded message to the Chinese Defense Minister Li Shangfu. Singh emphasized that all matters concerning the Line of Actual Control (LAC) must be resolved according to established bilateral agreements and commitments. He highlighted that the breach of these agreements has undermined the fundamental foundation of the two countries' bilateral relations.

Li's response was centered on the notion that both parties should adopt a long-term perspective. He suggested that the border issue should be appropriately positioned within the context of their overall bilateral relations. He proposed a shift towards a normalized management of the border situation, implying that the LAC issues have already been resolved and should no longer hinder progress.

Recently, India's External Affairs Minister, Jaishankar, commented that any anticipation of returning to normalcy while the border situation remains unresolved lacks a solid basis.

In the midst of these discussions, trade between the two countries has continued to flourish. However, it is noteworthy that India's imports from China have significantly exceeded its exports.

CONCLUSION

In spite of numerous attempts at negotiation and communication across various tiers, the military tensions persist. India has asserted that any possibility of restoring regular relations is contingent upon China's adherence to the agreements regarding border issues. Both nations are actively constructing infrastructure in the region.

BRICS EXPANSION :SIGNIFICANCE AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR INDIA

RELEVANCE

□ Syllabus:

- **PSIR:** India and Global South
- **GS2:** Bilateral, regional and Global groupings.

Context: BRICS gets six new members.

INTRODUCTION

On Thursday, August 24th, the BRICS alliance, comprised of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, extended invitations to six additional countries to join their ranks. This strategic move has the potential to bolster their positioning as a prominent 'Global South' consortium. However, it has also sparked concerns regarding

China's growing influence. The BRICS summit in Johannesburg, South Africa, where the discussions took place, marked the occasion for inviting Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Argentina, Egypt, and Ethiopia to become part of the alliance. These new members are set to officially join in January, marking a significant expansion of the alliance's reach.



SIGNIFICANCE OF BRICS EXPANSION

The expansion of BRICS by incorporating new members contributes to enhancing the group's influence as a representative body for the developing world. Currently, BRICS already encompasses approximately 40% of the global

population and over 25% of the world's GDP. With the inclusion of new members, this representation would increase to nearly half of the world's population, encompassing significant players such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Iran – three of the world's largest oil producers.

Rajiv Bhatia, a former Indian diplomat and a Distinguished Fellow at the think tank Gateway House, previously highlighted two key driving forces behind the growing interest in BRICS. Firstly, there exists a notable undercurrent of anti-US sentiment globally, prompting these nations to seek a platform where this sentiment can be harnessed for collective strength. Secondly, there's a growing appetite for multipolarity, where countries from the Global South can unite and express their solidarity.

The establishment of BRICS back in 2009 was rooted in the vision that the emerging markets of Brazil, Russia, India, and China would evolve into significant global economic powerhouses. South Africa was later incorporated into the group in 2010.

Although BRICS has experienced varied economic performances, recent events such as the conflict in Ukraine have led to the convergence of Western nations while simultaneously bolstering the partnership between China and Russia. As a result, BRICS is aspiring to become a united bloc capable of challenging the dominant Western geopolitical perspective. This evolution positions BRICS as a potential counterbalance to Western-led forums such as the Group of 7 and the World Bank.

NEW MEMBERS OF BRICS

The BRICS alliance operates on a consensus-based decision-making model, requiring unanimous agreement among its original members—Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. Notably, Russia confronts a united Western bloc, while China-US relations have significantly deteriorated. However, Brazil, South Africa, and India maintain important partnerships with both the US and Europe.

China is the driving force behind the group's expansion. A recent meeting of BRICS officials emphasized that enlarging the membership has become a central agenda item.

The inclusion of Iran, which has strained relations with the West, is notably influenced by China and Russia. It is remarkable that regional rivals Saudi Arabia and Iran are brought together within the same forum. China, being a major consumer of Saudi oil, played a role in mediating a peace agreement between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Although Saudi Arabia traditionally aligned with the US, it has been increasingly asserting its independence, which aligns with its BRICS membership.

For Iran and Russia, this new affiliation sends a message to the West that they possess global allies.

Egypt and Ethiopia, despite their strong ties with the US, also join the BRICS fold.

Argentina, currently grappling with a challenging economic crisis, aims to secure financial assistance from BRICS.

WHAT BRICS EXPANSION MEANS FOR INDIA

While India's participation in the recent G7 summit held in Hiroshima, where Prime Minister Narendra Modi engaged in an informal Quad summit, may have been interpreted as a signal of India aligning more closely with the United States, it is important to note that India still places significant importance on its involvement in the "anti-West" BRICS alliance.

Bhatia, emphasized that India maintains membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and maintains relationships with both Russia and China, despite existing challenges. While China may envision BRICS as a platform with an anti-Western stance, India's perspective is to keep BRICS as a "non-Western" entity and maintain its distinct identity in that regard.

Regarding the new members within BRICS, India views these partnerships as valuable opportunities

for development. However, there are concerns that the group might incline towards a more pro-China orientation, potentially sidelining India's voice and interests within the alliance.

CONCLUSION

The potential enlargement of BRICS has the dual effect of bolstering its assertion as a representative entity for the Global South, while simultaneously giving rise to apprehensions regarding China's growing predominance within the group.

GREAT POWER POLITICS IN WEST ASIA

RELEVANCE

❑ Syllabus:

- **PSIR:** India and Global Centres of power
- **GS2-** Effect of Policies and Politics of Developed and Developing Countries on India's interests.

Context: At the G20 summit in New Delhi, US President Joe Biden and others unveiled a United States backed infrastructure project to connect India, West Asia and Europe with shipping lanes, rail networks, pipelines and data cables.

INTRODUCTION

The United States initially shifted its focus away from West Asia by deprioritizing its security commitments in the region in favor of Eastern Europe and East Asia. However, several factors have compelled the U.S. to re-engage in the region.

REASONS BEHIND THE SHIFTS IN U.S. STRATEGY FOR WEST ASIA

- ❑ **China's Growing Interest:** China's increasing reliance on West Asian oil imports and its expanding economic engagement in the region have prompted the U.S. to take notice.
- ❑ China has become the largest trading partner for America's Gulf Arab allies and a significant investor in West Asia, indicating its desire to play a larger role in promoting peace, as evidenced by its involvement in the Iran-Saudi reconciliation agreement.
- ❑ **The Risk of Chinese Dominance:** To prevent China from filling the regional power vacuum, the U.S. cannot simply withdraw from West Asia.



CHALLENGES U.S. FACES IN RE-ENGAGING WITH WEST ASIA

- ❑ **Independent Foreign Policies:** The U.S. 's earlier deprioritization of the region has diminished its influence over its allies, leading to a security vacuum and encouraging regional powers to pursue more independent foreign policies.
- ❑ Examples include the Saudi-UAE détente with Iran, the end of the Saudi-led blockade of Qatar, and Arab reconciliation with Syria's Bashar al-Assad.
- ❑ Saudi Arabia and the UAE are no longer entirely dependent on U.S. objectives and have taken

steps to chart their own course, including joining the BRICS grouping.

- ❑ **Diminished Significance of the Iran Factor:** While the rivalry between Iran and Israel remains a central geopolitical tension in West Asia, Gulf Arab nations are increasingly unwilling to become entangled in this rivalry, fearing further regional instability.

INDIA'S IMPORTANCE IN THE U.S. WEST ASIA POLICY

For India, the competition between the U.S. and China in West Asia presents new opportunities for engagement. India is eager to participate as a stable partner in shaping new rules for economic engagement and integration. India's willingness to embrace this role is evident through its participation in the Abraham Accords, the announcement of the

India-Middle East-Europe Corridor at the G20, and its involvement in the I2U2 minilateral.

WHAT SHOULD BE INDIA'S POLICY TOWARD WEST ASIA

India should seize this opportunity without framing it as another Cold War-like scenario. Instead, India's policy toward the region should prioritize multifaceted engagement over appeasement or containment of major powers.

This approach would help India avoid repeating the mistakes of its Afghanistan policy. India is already a part of the International North-South Transport Corridor, and a potential "Middle East Corridor" could offer additional economic prospects. India should aim to play a significant geopolitical role in West Asia and its broader neighborhood while maintaining its traditional balance.

THE GREAT GAME IN INDO-PACIFIC

RELEVANCE

- ❑ **Syllabus:**
 - **PSIR:** Recent developments in Indian Foreign Policy
 - **GS2:** India and its Neighborhood

INTRODUCTION

As per Mahan, whoever controls the Indian ocean, controls the world. Hence, the importance of Indo-pacific has become the centre of gravity in world politics.

INCREASING U.S. PRESENCE IN INDO-PACIFIC

- ❑ **Ties with Vietnam:** During President Biden's visit to Hanoi, the U.S. and Vietnam elevated their Comprehensive Partnership to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. This move strengthens ties between the two countries, especially in light of China's territorial claims in the South China Sea.

- ❑ **Ties with the Philippines:** The Philippines has enhanced its military alliance with the United States, granting the U.S. access to key bases in the country. New guidelines outline specific commitments by the U.S. to address security threats to the Philippines, including joint patrols in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).
- ❑ **Trilateral Security Framework:** The United States, Japan, and South Korea have established a trilateral security framework known as the Camp David Principles. This framework includes annual summits, a hotline among leaders, intelligence sharing, and joint military exercises, reflecting shared concerns about regional stability, including in the Taiwan Strait.

❑ **Multi-Tiered Security Framework:** The Indo-Pacific region features a multi-tiered security framework. It includes partnerships with countries like Vietnam, Singapore, and Thailand at the lowest level. The next tier comprises the Quad (India, U.S., Japan, and Australia). The trilateral alliance between the U.S., Japan, and South Korea represents another level. At the apex is AUKUS, an enhanced military alliance between the U.S., the UK, and Australia, focusing on naval capabilities and regional security.



ASEAN'S APPROACH TOWARDS INDO-PACIFIC

ASEAN nations have varying approaches to the Indo-Pacific. Some, like Laos and Cambodia, align closely with China, while others are more cautious.

However, there are signs of a potential shift, as ASEAN nations conduct naval exercises in disputed areas like the Natuna Islands, signaling resistance to China's territorial claims.

INDIAN APPROACH TOWARDS INDO-PACIFIC

India is increasingly embracing its role within the evolving U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy. It has finalized foundational agreements with the U.S. to enhance military interoperability.

India has also secured master ship repair agreements, allowing American naval vessels to use Indian ports for repairs and refitment. This opens the possibility of extending these facilities to other members of the Quad (U.S., India, Japan, and Australia), strengthening security cooperation in the region.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the U.S. strategy in the Indo-Pacific involves strengthening alliances, partnerships, and security frameworks to maintain regional stability and counterbalance China's influence in the region.

INDIAN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS(IGP)

REVISITING OPERATION POLO

RELEVANCE

Syllabus:

- ❑ GS2-Indian Constitution: Historical underpinnings

Context: 75th anniversary of Operation Polo and 'Police Action' in Hyderabad

INTRODUCTION

Wednesday (13th September) commemorates the 75th anniversary of Operation Polo, a military campaign initiated by the Indian Army on September 13, 1948, aimed at integrating the princely state of Hyderabad. The Nizam of

Hyderabad had been indecisive about joining India since Independence on August 15, 1947. This military operation in Hyderabad was referred to as the 'Police Action' by the then Home Minister, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, and the Nizam's forces capitulated to the Indian Army by September 18.



BACKGROUND OF OPERATION POLO

- ❑ The Nizam of Hyderabad, Mir Osman Ali Shah, aimed to maintain the independence of his state following India's independence and did not opt to join either India or Pakistan.
- ❑ His decision was facilitated by the distraction of the Indian government due to the Kashmir

conflict shortly after gaining independence, which diverted their attention and resources away from Hyderabad.

- ❑ To establish a temporary arrangement, the Nizam entered into a standstill agreement with India in November 1947.

- ❑ This agreement essentially stipulated that the existing situation between the Indian dominion and Hyderabad state would be maintained, without any change, while a resolution to the situation was sought.
- ❑ The standstill agreement had a duration of one year, during which the Indian government refrained from exercising any authority over Hyderabad, and the conditions prevailing at the time of signing were to be upheld.

REASONS FOR LAUNCHING OPERATION POLO ON SEPTEMBER 13, 1948

- ❑ Hyderabad, located in the Deccan region, was one of India's most populous and wealthiest states.
- ❑ It comprised 17 districts, including Aurangabad (now in Maharashtra) and Gulbarga (now in Karnataka).
- ❑ Despite having a predominantly Hindu population, the state administration was largely controlled by Muslim rulers.
- ❑ The Nizam of Hyderabad expressed his desire for friendly relations with Pakistan, despite not sharing a common border with the country.
- ❑ Hyderabad's administration used the standstill agreement with India to expand its irregular force known as the Razakars, led by Maj Gen SA El Edroos.
- ❑ The Razakars committed excesses against the primarily Hindu population of the state, engaged in hostile activities along the state's borders with cross-border raids, and sought to establish an independent country within India.

- ❑ These actions and intentions prompted the Indian government to take action against Hyderabad and eliminate the threat of secession.

OPERATION POLO ON THE GROUND

- ❑ Maj Gen Chaudhuri's division spearheaded the main offensive against the Hyderabad state forces, with additional coordinated advances from the north, south, and east.
- ❑ The primary attack, carried out by the 1 Armoured Division from the western front, featured 1 Horse (minus one squadron) and 9 Dogra (minus one company). This assault force also included a specialized Smash Force consisting of 3 Cavalry, 17 Horse (minus one squadron), and one company from 9 Dogra.

SURRENDER BY NIZAM'S FORCES

On September 17, the Nizam of Hyderabad declared a ceasefire. The very next day, on September 18, Major General Chaudhuri and his forces entered Hyderabad city, leading to the surrender of Major General El Edroos. Following this event, Major General Chaudhuri was appointed as the Military Governor of Hyderabad.

In recognition of his bravery and sacrifice during Operation Polo, Havildar Bachhitar Singh of 2 Sikh was posthumously awarded the first Ashoka Chakra of Independent India. He gave his life on September 13, 1948, while advancing towards Naldurg, which was then part of Hyderabad state but is now situated in Maharashtra.

PETITION IN SUPREME COURT FOR COUNTING ALL VVPAT SLIPS DURING ELECTIONS

RELEVANCE

Syllabus:

❑ GS2-Salient Features of Representation of People's Act.

Context: The Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) has submitted a petition to the Supreme Court, requesting a full 100% recount of Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) slips.

INTRODUCTION

The Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) has filed a petition requesting that 100% of Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) slips be counted during elections. In response, the Election Commission (EC) informed the Supreme Court on September 4 that if they were to implement 100% VVPAT slip counting in every election, it would essentially revert the country to the era of manual

polling. The EC argued that this approach would indirectly reintroduce paper ballots.

Currently, the Election Commission mandates the counting of all VVPAT slips in five randomly selected polling stations for each Assembly constituency or segment. With the 2024 Lok Sabha elections just months away, the ADR's petition and the EC's lengthy response have sparked significant debate.

WHAT IS VVPAT?



❑ VVPAT (Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail) is a component integrated with Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) in the electoral process.

❑ Its primary function is to generate a printed paper slip confirming a voter's choice when they cast their vote using the EVM.

- ❑ When a voter presses the button on the EVM, the VVPAT machine prints a slip containing the candidate's name and party symbol chosen by the voter.
- ❑ This printed slip is visible through a transparent window on the VVPAT machine for approximately 7 seconds.
- ❑ After this brief display period, the printed slip is securely deposited into a sealed box within the VVPAT machine.
- ❑ VVPAT serves as a critical tool for voters to independently verify that their vote has been accurately recorded for their chosen candidate and party.

USE OF VVPAT SO FAR

- ❑ VVPAT (Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail) introduction timeline:
 1. 2013: VVPATs were first used in all 21 polling stations of the Noksen Assembly constituency in Nagaland.
 2. Phased Implementation: Following the successful trial in Nagaland, the Election Commission (EC) decided to introduce VVPATs gradually.
- ❑ June 2017: Significant Milestone:
 1. **Starting from June 2017, VVPATs were incorporated into the electoral process, marking a pivotal moment in their adoption.**
 2. **This** marked a transition toward increased transparency and accountability in the election process.
- ❑ 2019 Lok Sabha Elections:
 1. The 2019 Lok Sabha elections marked a historic moment in Indian democracy as it became the first general election to witness the deployment of VVPATs alongside Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs).

2. Notably, 100% of EVMs in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections were linked with VVPATs, ensuring a paper trail for every vote cast.

PERCENTAGE OF VVPAT SLIPS COUNTED AS OF NOW

In 2018, the Election Commission (EC) initially required the counting of Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) slips from a single randomly chosen polling station within each Assembly constituency.

Subsequently, in 2019, the Supreme Court issued a judgment that led to a modification in the process. The revised directive mandated the counting of VVPAT slips from five polling stations per Assembly seat.

THE DEMAND OF PETITIONERS

- ❑ ADR (Association for Democratic Reforms) has submitted a petition to the court.
- ❑ The petition seeks the declaration of the fundamental right for every voter to ensure the accuracy of their vote.
- ❑ ADR contends that the current practice of displaying the VVPAT slip for only seven seconds does not ensure this right.
- ❑ They are advocating for a 100% counting of VVPAT slips.
- ❑ The basis for this request lies in the Supreme Court's 2013 judgment in Subramanian Swamy vs. Election Commission of India, where it emphasized the vital role of VVPAT in maintaining free and fair elections.

THE RESPONSE OF ED

- ❑ The Election Commission (EC) emphasized that the Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) serves as an "audit trail" for voters to verify their votes instantly.
- ❑ However, in compliance with Supreme Court directives, VVPAT slips are currently counted on a "statistically robust basis."

❑ Implementing 100% counting of VVPAT slips in every election would resemble a return to manual polling, effectively reintroducing paper ballots indirectly.

❑ This approach poses challenges, as preparations for the upcoming General Election to the Lok Sabha have already commenced.

❑ Any last-minute changes to the verification process would entail significant technical and logistical complications.

THE KASHMIR ISSUE: WHY INDIA WENT TO THE UN, AND WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THAT

RELEVANCE

Syllabus:

❑ **GS2-Indian Constitution: Historical underpinnings**

Context: The Supreme Court is currently reviewing a series of petitions challenging the decision to revoke Article 370 of the Constitution. This article had granted special status to the state of Jammu and Kashmir within the Union of India.

INTRODUCTION

The origins and reasons behind the 'special status' have sparked persistent controversy and violence in India, as well as strained relations with neighboring Pakistan. Though the fundamental elements of the Kashmir narrative are familiar — Maharaja Hari Singh's ill-fated choice to remain independent following Partition, the incursion into Kashmir by Pakistani tribesmen, Hari Singh's eventual accession to India due to pressure, and India's deployment of troops to expel the invaders — the exact details are clouded by conspiracy theories and unclear political discourse.



How did Hari Singh's accession to India come about? Why was the division of Gurdaspur by the Radcliffe Boundary Commission significant? Why did the Kashmir issue end up at the UN? What was the role played by Jawaharlal Nehru and Vallabhbhai Patel? Here's what verifiable historical facts say.

EARLY HISTORY OF KASHMIR

In March 1846, following the first Anglo-Sikh War, the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir was established through the Treaty of Amritsar. The British sold Kashmir to Gulab Singh, the Dogra jagirdar of Jammu, for 7.5 million Nanakshahee rupees.

Maharaja Hari Singh, a descendant of Gulab Singh, was ruling the state when India gained independence. During the British withdrawal and the partition of India, princely states were given the choice to join India, Pakistan, or remain independent. Despite the impracticality of independence, Hari Singh aspired to make Kashmir a neutral and independent entity, often comparing it to Switzerland.

In June 1947, Viceroy Lord Louis Mountbatten visited Srinagar and advised Hari Singh's prime minister to decide between India and Pakistan for accession. However, the state's preference was to remain independent. Mountbatten's attempt to meet the king was thwarted due to Singh's reported illness.

An important decision by the Boundary Commission regarding the district of Gurdaspur played a pivotal role. The commission's choice to award certain tehsils (administrative subdivisions) to India ensured land connectivity between Kashmir and the rest of India. This option became crucial for Hari Singh's decision-making process.

Despite approaching independence on August 15, 1947, Hari Singh delayed the accession decision. He proposed "standstill agreements" with both India and Pakistan, which would maintain trade and communication in his region similar to the British era. Pakistan agreed, but India chose to wait.

Consequently, Jammu and Kashmir technically became independent alongside India and Pakistan. However, by mid-September, tensions arose as Pakistan halted essential supplies bound for Jammu and Kashmir at its border. This move was interpreted as an attempt by Pakistan to exert pressure on the state to accede to it.

HARI SINGH'S ACCESSION TO INDIA



On September 27, 1947, in his book "India after Gandhi," Ramachandra Guha mentions that Nehru wrote to Patel expressing concern about the deteriorating situation in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). Nehru believed that Pakistan might attempt to infiltrate the region and take significant action once the area was isolated due to the upcoming winter. This anticipation proved accurate when infiltrators crossed over from the North-West Frontier Province on October 22, less than a month later. However, there is still a disagreement between India and Pakistan about who sent these infiltrators and their motives. India argues that the tribesmen were backed by the Pakistani establishment, citing evidence like advanced weapons and trucks. Pakistan, on the other hand, claims that the infiltrators were acting independently to seek revenge for the violence against Muslims in India and points to a rebellion in Poonch as evidence.

Regarding Muhammad Ali Jinnah's involvement, while some sources, including George Cunningham based on information from Iskander Mirza, suggest that Jinnah was unaware of the plan until around 15 days before, others believe he was aware from the start.

The infiltrators quickly gained ground, taking Muzaffarabad and defeating the forces under Maharaja Hari Singh at Uri. The Poonch rebels declared their independence as the State of Azad (Free) Kashmir on October 24, and the infiltrators, now referred to as the Azad Kashmir Army, progressed towards the Mahuta power station before moving to Baramulla. This advance was accompanied by violence and looting targeting various religious groups.

Hari Singh appealed to the Indian government for military aid as his forces were unable to defend the state. VP Menon, a top diplomat, flew to Srinagar on October 25, advising Hari Singh to relocate to Jammu for safety. A meeting of the Defence Committee on October 26, chaired by

Governor-General Mountbatten, concluded that India should intervene militarily after Hari Singh's accession. Menon returned to Jammu, securing Hari Singh's Instrument of Accession, which was a formal agreement to join the Dominion of India.

With Indian troops securing Srinagar and pushing out the invaders, the situation began to stabilize. This marked the initial phase of the conflict over Kashmir in 1947-48.



THE QUESTION OF PLEBISCITE IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Mountbatten responded to Hari Singh by stating that in accordance with the policy for disputed states, the decision on accession should align with the wishes of the people. He expressed the desire that once normalcy returned to Kashmir and the invader was ousted, the issue of the state's accession should be resolved through a popular vote.

Indian leaders, in agreement with the Raja's accession, committed to holding a plebiscite after restoring peace in Kashmir. Nehru conveyed to Pakistan's Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan on October 31, 1947, that Kashmir's integration with India was based on the request of the Maharaja's government and the endorsement of a major representative group in the state, Sheikh Abdullah's National Conference, which was predominantly Muslim. This acceptance was contingent on reclaiming Kashmir from the invaders and reestablishing law and order, after

which the people would determine the accession matter.

Prominent Indian figures, including Nehru and Patel, considered a plebiscite crucial to definitively address the Jammu and Kashmir issue. If the Kashmiri population chose India, it would also counter Pakistan's assertion that all Muslim-majority regions sought separation from India.

A pertinent precedent was the plebiscite that resolved the Junagadh issue, a Hindu-majority territory ruled by a Muslim ruler, in favor of India in February 1948.

Nevertheless, the prerequisite of achieving peace prior to conducting a plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir remained unrealized.

KASHMIR ISSUE AT THE UN

The conflict in Kashmir during that period saw significant military advancements by Indian forces, reclaiming strategic areas like Dras, Kargil, and the Poonch hills. Despite these gains, hostilities persisted, sparking concerns of the conflict spilling beyond Kashmir into Punjab.

Lord Mountbatten recommended seeking the involvement of the United Nations due to his skepticism about the feasibility of India and Pakistan finding a resolution through negotiations. His meeting with Jinnah in Lahore in November did little to bolster hopes of a bilateral solution.

In a letter to Jawaharlal Nehru, the British Prime Minister Clement Attlee cautioned against any Indian military incursions into Pakistan. Attlee's words, quoted by Alex von Tunzelmann in her book "Indian Summer," conveyed his concern about India's legal standing in international law regarding its actions.

On January 1, 1948, India decided to bring the Kashmir issue before the UN, a move that some perceive as a betrayal by the British. India's argument centered on the presence of Pakistani infiltrators in territories of Jammu and Kashmir

that had legally acceded to India, asserting that these infiltrators should withdraw. Pakistan, on the other hand, framed the matter within the broader context of the Partition, portraying the infiltrators as aiding their fellow Muslims in distress.

During the UN sessions in January and February 1948, India faced a symbolic setback when the Security Council changed the agenda item from the “Jammu and Kashmir question” to the “India-Pakistan question.” This shift lent weight to Pakistan’s claims. The support from the US and England for Pakistan’s stance was partly influenced by their view of Pakistan as a more viable anti-Soviet ally than India. Additionally, the emergence of Israel played a role, with Attlee apprehensive that opposing Muslim interests in Pakistan could lead to a unified Islamic stance against Britain, given the ongoing Palestine situation.

The unfavorable outcome at the UN left Nehru disheartened, leading him to regret involving the international body in the first place.

CONCLUSION

In brief, India and Pakistan initially agreed on the idea of a plebiscite for Kashmir. However, Pakistan had concerns about conducting a fair plebiscite in a region where India’s influence was strong due to leaders like Sheikh Abdullah. On the other hand, India insisted on removing infiltrators before any plebiscite. As time went on, Pakistan’s alignment with the US and a military pact shifted India’s stance against a plebiscite. Despite this, Jammu and Kashmir continued to participate in India’s democratic processes, including the drafting of the Constitution. Article 370, granting special status to J&K within the Indian Union, was incorporated into the Constitution on October 17, 1949.

HOW ARTICLE 370 WAS NEGOTIATED, DEBATED: ROLE OF SHEIKH ABDULLAH, AYYANGAR, SARDAR PATEL

RELEVANCE

Syllabus:

- ❑ **GS2: Indian Constitution: Historical underpinnings**
- ❑ **PSIR: Salient features of Indian Constitution.**

Context: Ongoing case in Supreme Court over Article 370

BACKGROUND:

- ❑ In July 1949, Sheikh Abdullah and three others were nominated by the ruler of Jammu & Kashmir to the Constituent Assembly in Delhi.
- ❑ Negotiations took place between N Gopaldaswami Ayyangar and Sheikh Abdullah, leading to the adoption of Article 370.
- ❑ Article 370, originally known as Article 306A, was debated in the Constituent Assembly.

NEGOTIATIONS AND MEETINGS:

- ❑ Negotiations started in May 1949 at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel’s residence with PM Jawaharlal Nehru present.
- ❑ Ayyangar drafted a letter from Nehru to Abdullah summarizing the understanding reached, awaiting Patel’s approval.
- ❑ First meetings held during May 15-16, 1949 with Nehru and Patel present.

ARTICLE 370 DRAFTING AND CONTENT:

- ❑ Ayyangar drafted Article 370, which reflected the agreements reached between the negotiators.
- ❑ Ayyangar explained that the will of the people through the Constituent Assembly would determine J&K's Constitution and the Union's jurisdiction.

SPECIAL PROVISIONS:

- ❑ Article 370 aimed to grant special status to Jammu & Kashmir.
- ❑ Abdullah insisted on not extending Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles to J&K, leaving the decision to the state's Constituent Assembly.

INTERNAL DEBATES AND RESPONSES:

- ❑ Patel initially disagreed with not extending Fundamental Rights but eventually allowed Ayyangar to proceed.

- ❑ Nehru intervened to prevent Abdullah's resignation from the Constituent Assembly.
- ❑ Nehru defended Article 370's provisions, comparing it to restrictions in other parts of India.

INTEGRATION AND SPECIAL STATUS:

- ❑ Former MP Karan Singh highlighted that J&K's special status should be cherished due to its unique historical context and political development.
- ❑ Singh compared the situation to different governing systems in England and emphasized the importance of embracing the special nature of J&K's integration into India.

WOMEN RESERVATION BILL

RELEVANCE

Syllabus:

- ❑ **GS2-Indian Constitution: Amendments ,legislations ,provisions.**

Context: The government on Tuesday(19th September2023) brought The Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-eighth Amendment) Bill, 2023 to provide 33 per cent reservation to women in Lok Sabha and state Legislative Assemblies.

INTRODUCTION

The "Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam 2023," also known as the Women Reservation Bill, has been introduced in the Lok Sabha. This proposed

legislation aims to allocate one-third of the total seats in both the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies for women.



KEY PROVISIONS OF THE “NARI SHAKTI VANDAN ADHINIYAM 2023,”

Reservation for Women:

- One-third of all seats reserved for women in Lok Sabha, state legislative assemblies, and the Legislative Assembly of the National Capital Territory of Delhi.
- This reservation also applies to seats reserved for SCs (Scheduled Castes) and STs (Scheduled Tribes) in Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies.

Commencement of Reservation:

- Reservation becomes effective after the publication of the census conducted following the Bill’s commencement.

- Delimitation of seats for women will occur based on this census.

Period of Reservation:

- Reservation in effect for 15 years.
- Continuation beyond 15 years is subject to determination by a law passed by Parliament.

Rotation of Seats:

- Seats reserved for women will be rotated following each delimitation.
- The rotation process is defined by a law passed by Parliament.

HISTORY OF WOMEN RESERVATION BILL

Efforts Made/Time line	Outcome
National Movement’s role	In 1931, a letter was jointly sent by three women’s organizations to the British Prime Minister, advocating for political representation for women.

Efforts Made/Time line	Outcome
Constituent Assembly	The question of women's reservation was raised during the Constituent Assembly debates. Nevertheless, it was declined with the argument that a democratic system should ensure representation for all segments of society.
The Committee of the Status of Women in India 1971 and The National Perspective Plan for Women in 1988	Both of these committees recommended the reservation of women in local bodies, which eventually led to the 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Indian Constitution. These amendments mandate that all state governments reformulate their laws to ensure the reservation of seats for women in rural and urban local bodies, respectively. This reservation system was introduced to promote women's participation in grassroots governance and enhance their representation in decision-making processes at the local level.
1996	The Women Reservation Bill, initially presented as the 81st Constitutional Amendment Bill during the Deve Gowda government in 1996, faced challenges in its progression. The bill was sent to a parliamentary select committee led by Geeta Mukherjee for further examination. Regrettably, due to a lack of consensus, particularly concerning reservations for OBC (Other Backward Classes) women, the bill eventually lapsed with the dissolution of the Lok Sabha.
1999	The NDA government reintroduced the bill in the 13th Lok Sabha and attempted to pass it in the year 2003. However, despite being introduced twice, the bills were unable to secure passage and consequently expired.
2004	The UPA government incorporated the reservation bill into its Common Minimum Programme and introduced it in the Rajya Sabha to prevent it from experiencing another lapse.
2010	The Women's Reservation Bill, also known as the 108th Constitutional Amendment Bill of 2008, successfully passed in the Rajya Sabha but ultimately lapsed in the Lok Sabha. Its staunchest opponents included political parties like the RJD, JD(U), and the SP, who advocated for a sub-quota of 33% within the proposed 33% reservation for women, specifically targeting backward groups.

ARGUMENTS ON THE BILL

Arguments in Favour	Arguments Against
<p>Increase in the Political Representation of Women:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> According to the 2021 Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) 'Women in Parliament' Report, India ranks lower than 140 other nations in terms of women's representation in national legislatures. <input type="checkbox"/> India's Lok Sabha has seen an increase in women's representation post-independence (approximately 16% in the 17th Lok Sabha). <input type="checkbox"/> India lags behind several African and South Asian countries like Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka in terms of women's political representation. <p>Ability of Women Leadership in Bringing Change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> A 2003 study on the effect of women's reservation in panchayats found that women elected under reservation policies tend to invest more in public goods related to women's concerns. <input type="checkbox"/> Notably, an ex-Woman Sarpanch in Haryana established a training center for women and ensured school attendance for every village child. 	<p>No Separate OBC Reservation:</p> <p>The Bill offers separate reservation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes women within the current one-third seat quota. However, it does not extend this provision to OBC women, who make up 60% of the female population.</p> <p>No Reservation in Rajya Sabha and Legislative Councils:</p> <p>The Bill does not include provisions for reserving seats for women in the Rajya Sabha and legislative councils.</p> <p>Enactment Challenges:</p> <p>The implementation of women's reservation in Parliament hinges on census data and delimitation processes. Delays in the census and potential political sensitivities in delimitation, especially in regions with slower population growth like southern India, pose challenges.</p>

Arguments in Favour	Arguments Against
<p>Step towards Decriminalization of Politics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Reserved seats for women could contribute to the decriminalization of Indian politics, as a significant number of MPs in the present Lok Sabha have declared serious criminal cases against them. <p>Addressing Crimes Against Women:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The Women Reservation Bill is seen as a potential tool to address crimes against women in society, with the expectation that rape and domestic abuse cases may decrease with increased women's representation. <p>Increasing Seats Commensurate with Vote Share:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Despite women voting at a similar rate to men, their representation in politics remains disproportionately low. <input type="checkbox"/> Reserved seats would align better with women's voting share and their representation in parliament/assemblies. <p>Breaking the Patriarchal Mold of Indian Politics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Indian politics has traditionally been patriarchal, with men occupying top party positions and positions of power. <input type="checkbox"/> The Women Reservation Bill aims to disrupt this patriarchal nature by increasing women's representation in key political roles. <p>Changing Stereotypes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Increased women politicians can help challenge stereotypes of women as solely homemakers and promote the acceptance of women as lawmakers. <p>Improvement of Economic Performance and Infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> According to the UN University, women legislators have been found to improve the economic performance of their constituencies by 1.8% more than their male counterparts. <input type="checkbox"/> An evaluation of the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana reveals that female-led constituencies have significantly fewer incomplete road projects, highlighting their potential for improving infrastructure. 	<p>Use of Women as Proxies:</p> <p>The phenomenon of 'Panchayat Patis' using their wives as proxy candidates for reserved seats has emerged in local elections. Concerns exist that a similar trend might develop with 'MP and MLA Patis' if women's reservation in Parliament is extended.</p> <p>Constitutional Equality Concerns:</p> <p>Opponents argue that women's reservation contradicts the principle of equality enshrined in the Constitution, potentially perpetuating the perception that women do not compete on merit.</p> <p>1. Diversity Among Women: Women do not constitute a homogenous group, unlike caste communities. Therefore, the same rationale used for caste-based reservations cannot be applied to women. Women's interests are intertwined with various social, economic, and political factors.</p> <p>2. Restriction of Voter Choice:</p> <p>Critics of the Bill contend that reserving seats for women would limit voter choices. They suggest alternative approaches, such as women's reservation within political parties or the adoption of dual-member constituencies where one member must be a woman.</p>

WAY FORWARD

1. Electoral Reforms:

- Combat criminalization of politics and the influence of black money.
- Ensure the effectiveness of women's reservation through broader electoral reforms.

2. Intra-Party Democracy:

- Institutionalize intra-party democracy to encourage a wider pool of women candidates.

3. Strengthen Panchayat Level Participation:

- Empower women through self-help groups at the panchayat level.
- Develop a pipeline of capable women candidates for MP/MLA elections.

4. Women's Agencies and Organizations:

- Reinforce women's agencies and organizations.
- Foster a progressive society with equal opportunities for all citizens.

5. Promote Campus Political Participation:

- ❑ Encourage girls' involvement in college/university student political parties.

- ❑ Enhance their political skills and awareness for future leadership.

ELECTION COMMISSIONERS (APPOINTMENT, CONDITIONS OF SERVICE AND TERM OF OFFICE) BILL, 2023

RELEVANCE

Syllabus:

- ❑ **GS2-Indian Constitution: Amendments, legislations, provisions.**

Context: The Rajya Sabha recently saw the introduction of the “Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service, and Term of Office) Bill, 2023.”

INTRODUCTION

The Rajya Sabha recently saw introduction of the Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Bill, 2023. This bill seeks to replace the Election Commission (Conditions of Service of Election Commissioners and Transaction of Business) Act, 1991. One significant change

proposed in the legislation is the exclusion of the Chief Justice of India (CJI) from the committee responsible for appointing the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and Election Commissioners (ECs). This particular provision has sparked discussions regarding its potential implications on the independence of the appointment process.



REASONS FOR BRINGING THE BILL

- ❑ In March, a unanimous decision by a five-judge bench of the Supreme Court established new procedures for appointing the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and Election Commissioners (ECs).
- ❑ This ruling emerged from a 2015 public interest litigation challenging the constitutionality of the previous practice, in which members of the Election Commission were appointed by the central government.
- ❑ In 2018, the case was referred to a larger bench because it required a thorough examination of Article 324 of the Constitution.
- ❑ Article 324(2) outlines the composition of the Election Commission, specifying the Chief Election Commissioner and any additional Election Commissioners, as determined by the President.
- ❑ It further states that their appointment should follow the provisions of a law made by Parliament.
- ❑ However, as Parliament had not enacted a specific law as required by the Constitution, the Supreme Court intervened to address this “constitutional vacuum.”
- ❑ The Bill currently under consideration aims to address this void by establishing a legislative framework for the appointment process of the Election Commission.

CURRENT PROCESS OF APPOINTING ELECTION COMMISSIONERS

1. The authority to appoint members to the Election Commission currently rests with the central government.
2. When there is no specific law in place, individuals for the positions of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and Election Commissioners (EC) are chosen from the pool of retired or serving civil service officers.

3. This pool consists of individuals who have held the position of Secretary to the Government of India or Chief Secretaries during their careers.
4. The Minister of Law and Justice is responsible for proposing a panel of candidates to both the Prime Minister and the President. These candidates are selected from the aforementioned database.
5. The President ultimately makes the appointment, acting on the advice of the Prime Minister.

IMPORTANT PROVISIONS OF THE BILL

Appointment Process:

- ❑ The Bill outlines the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and other Election Commissioners (ECs) by the President, based on the recommendations of a Selection Committee.
- ❑ The Selection Committee comprises:
 1. **Chairperson:** The Prime Minister
 2. **Member:** The Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha; if not recognized, the leader of the largest opposition party in Lok Sabha assumes this role.
 3. **Member:** A Union Cabinet Minister nominated by the Prime Minister.

Validity of Appointments:

- ❑ Importantly, the Bill ensures that the appointment of the CEC and ECs remains legally valid even in the presence of vacancies or defects in the constitution of the Selection Committee.

Search Committee

- ❑ A Search Committee is responsible for creating a panel of five potential candidates for the Selection Committee’s consideration.

Composition of Search Committee:

- ❑ The Search Committee is chaired by the Cabinet Secretary.

- ❑ Additionally, it includes two other members, both holding a rank not lower than that of Secretary to the central government, possessing expertise and experience in election-related matters.

- ❑ The Selection Committee also retains the authority to evaluate candidates who are not part of the panel prepared by the Search Committee.

Qualifications of CEC and ECs

- ❑ Eligibility for the position of CEC and ECs is extended to individuals currently holding or previously having held positions equivalent to the rank of Secretary to the central government.
- ❑ A prerequisite for candidates is a demonstrated expertise in the management and execution of election-related matters.

Salary and Allowances

- ❑ The Bill amends the 1991 Act by aligning the salary, allowances, and service conditions of the CEC and other ECs with those of the Cabinet Secretary.

- ❑ Previously, the 1991 Act stated that the salary of ECs would be on par with that of a Supreme Court judge.

Ineligibility for Re-appointment: The Bill clearly specifies that under its provisions, the CEC and other ECs are not eligible for re-appointment.

Decision-Making Process:

- ❑ All activities conducted within the Election Commission necessitate unanimous agreement among its members.
- ❑ In instances where a divergence of opinions arises between the CEC and other ECs on any matter, the resolution will be determined through a majority vote.

ARGUMENTS ON THE BILL

Arguments in favour	Arguments against the Bill
<p>1. Search Committee Improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ The Bill proposes the establishment of a search committee, with the Cabinet Secretary at its helm, responsible for compiling a list of potential candidates. This marks an enhancement over the existing method, which grants the government unrestricted discretion in selection. <p>2. Qualification Standardization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Previously, there were no defined qualifications for the roles of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and Election Commissioners (ECs). The bill introduces clear qualification criteria, giving preference to individuals with a background in civil service and electoral experience. <p>3. Inclusion of Opposition Influence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Unlike the previous approach where decision-making authority solely rested with the government, the inclusion of the leader of the opposition signifies a positive shift. This alteration allows for broader perspectives and the potential for consensus, ensuring a more balanced decision-making process. 	<p>Opaque Selection Committee Process: The Bill allows the selection committee to govern its own process with transparency, but this might result in undisclosed methods being employed. This lack of transparency raises concerns about how the committee operates.</p> <p>Expanded Authority of the Selection Committee: The Selection Committee retains the power to evaluate individuals beyond those initially recommended by the Search Committee. This grants the Selection Committee complete authority in determining the Election Commissioners, potentially undermining the role of the search committee.</p> <p>Executive Control: The Constituent Assembly intended to keep the election machinery independent of the executive government. While the Supreme Court aimed for this in its judgment, the composition of the Selection Committee in the Bill raises questions about its independence. With the Prime Minister and a Cabinet Minister nominated by the Prime Minister included in the three-member panel, the influence of the Leader of the Opposition is diminished from the outset.</p> <p>Status Downgrade: The Bill downgrades the status of election commissioners and the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) from being on par with Supreme Court judges to that of a cabinet secretary, who operates directly under the government. Granting election commissioners an equivalent status to Supreme Court judges gives them greater influence when interacting with the political class. However, this status is reduced under the Bill.</p>

CONCLUSION

To bolster the integrity of the appointment process, it is advisable to include a requirement for a unanimous decision by the selection committee within the Bill.

The Election Commission of India has earned international recognition as a symbol of democracy. To preserve and strengthen this esteemed reputation, it is imperative to institute robust safeguards that leave no room for doubts concerning its credibility.

SIMULTANEOUS ELECTIONS: WHAT IS THE IDEA, AND THE ARGUMENTS AROUND IT?

RELEVANCE

Syllabus:

- ❑ GS2-Parliament and State Legislature.

Context: Government has formed a committee on simultaneous elections.

INTRODUCTION

The government has established a committee led by former Indian President Ram Nath Kovind to investigate the feasibility of implementing a “one nation, one election” system, as reported

by sources to the news agency PTI on Friday. This development occurred shortly after the government announced a special session of Parliament scheduled for September 18 to 22, with the specific agenda yet to be disclosed.



HOW INDIAN ELECTIONS DRIFTED FROM SIMULTANEOUS ELECTIONS?

- ❑ In 1952 and 1957, Lok Sabha and state legislatures in India held elections simultaneously, with the Congress party enjoying widespread support across the country.

- ❑ The synchronized election cycle was disrupted in Kerala in July 1959 when Article 356 of the Constitution was invoked by the Centre to dismiss the Communist Party-led ministry headed by E M S Namboodiripad, which had come to power after the April 1957 elections.

- ❑ Following this, state elections were held in February 1960.
- ❑ The popularity of the Congress party declined, leading to significant electoral setbacks in several states, including Bihar, UP, Rajasthan, Punjab, West Bengal, Orissa, Madras, and Kerala in the 1967 elections.
- ❑ As a result, Samyukta Vidhayak Dal governments, composed of various parties such as the Bharatiya Kranti Dal, SSP, PSP, Swatantra Party, Jana Sangh, and Congress defectors, came to power.
- ❑ The prevalence of defections and counter-defections eventually led to the dissolution of state assemblies, which separated the election cycles of many states from the central elections.
- ❑ Currently, Assembly elections in Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Arunachal Pradesh, and Sikkim are held concurrently with Lok Sabha polls.

PAST INSTANCES WHEN IDEA OF SIMULTANEOUS ELECTION WAS EXPLORED

- ❑ In 1983, the Election Commission proposed the idea of holding simultaneous elections for Lok Sabha and all Legislative Assemblies.
- ❑ The Law Commission, led by Justice B P Jeevan Reddy, recommended this in its 170th Report in May 1999, emphasizing the need to hold all elections together.

- ❑ In 2003, then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee discussed this idea with Congress president Sonia Gandhi, but it didn't progress further.
- ❑ In 2010, BJP leader LK Advani met with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and wrote in his blog about their receptiveness to the concept of fixed-term legislatures and simultaneous Lok Sabha and Assembly polls.
- ❑ Advani highlighted that the frequent "mini-general elections" every alternate year were not beneficial for the country's governance.
- ❑ In 2019, Sunil Arora, the Chief Election Commissioner, expressed support for the idea of simultaneous elections, emphasizing the importance of aligning the terms of state Assemblies with that of the Parliament for its implementation.
- ❑ In a 2017 discussion paper titled 'Analysis of Simultaneous Elections: The "What," "Why," and "How,"' authored by Bibek Debroy and Kishore Desai from NITI Aayog, it was highlighted that the 2009 elections had incurred an expenditure of approximately Rs 1,115 crore from the government's coffers, while the 2014 elections had cost around Rs 3,870 crore. When considering the overall election expenses, including those borne by political parties and candidates, the total amount spent was significantly higher.

ARGUMENT IN FAVOUR AND AGAINST OF SIMULTANEOUS ELECTIONS

Arguments in favour	Arguments against
<p>1. Cost Reduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Financial Burden: Holding multiple elections at different times imposes a substantial financial burden on the government due to expenses related to logistics, manpower, and administrative resources. ❑ Resource Drain: Conducting elections requires diverting state machinery, including security personnel, which could otherwise be utilized for more critical tasks. 	<p>Constitutional Concerns and Anti-Federal Consequences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Concerns about simultaneous elections revolve around potential constitutional issues and anti-federal consequences. ❑ Some argue that this approach could influence voters' choices and require significant resources such as manpower and voting machinery (EVMs and VVPATs) on a large scale.

Arguments in favour	Arguments against
<p>2. Voter Turnout Boost</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Simultaneous Elections: Simultaneous polls have the potential to increase voter turnout by streamlining the electoral process and reducing voter fatigue. <p>3. Efficient Use of Security Forces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Optimal Deployment: Frequent elections scatter security forces, hindering their effective deployment for other crucial internal security purposes. <p>4. Social Fabric Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Polarizing Events: Frequent elections exacerbate social divisions based on caste, religion, and communal factors, as they tend to amplify issues of identity politics. ❑ Corruption Concerns: The polarization during elections often leads to increased corruption in the electoral process. <p>5. Governance Focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Short-Term Focus: Frequent elections compel politicians to prioritize immediate electoral gains over long-term policy and governance initiatives. ❑ Populist Measures: The need for electoral appeasement may divert attention from essential policy-making and governance tasks. <p>6. Hindrance to Essential Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Service Disruption: Regular elections disrupt the delivery of essential services as public servants, including teachers, are engaged in the electoral process. <p>7. Democracy and Equity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Unequal Competition: Frequent elections favor larger political parties with greater financial resources, disadvantaging smaller parties and undermining the principles of equity and equality in a democratic system. ❑ Level Playing Field: Simultaneous elections can level the playing field by reducing election expenses, promoting fairness, and enabling a more equitable competition among political parties. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Opposition parties have contended that such changes could negatively impact the federal character of the Indian political system, as national and state issues differ in nature and implementation. <p>Domination of National Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ With simultaneous elections, there is a worry that national issues may overshadow state-specific concerns in both national and state-level elections. ❑ The dominance of national interests in these elections could affect the focus on local issues, which are crucial for effective governance at the state level. <p>Accountability and Autocratic Tendencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Regular elections impose accountability on the government, as they must respond to the will of the people to avoid electoral defeat. ❑ However, a fixed tenure without the threat of recall might lead to autocratic tendencies, with officials potentially acting arbitrarily initially and using political welfare measures closer to the end of their term to sway voters. <p>Challenges in Maintaining Synchronization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Maintaining simultaneous elections in a democratic system is challenging, even if achieved initially. ❑ Altering the tenures of the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies to align elections could be logistically complex and might become unstable when governments lose confidence in their assemblies, disrupting the synchronized election cycle. <p>Tampering with Democratic Will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ The current election system was deliberately chosen to uphold the democratic will by allowing regular elections, ensuring people's right to express their preferences through voting. ❑ Changing this system could be seen as interfering with people's power to express their democratic will, which has been a fundamental aspect of Indian democracy.

EFFORTS MADE TO ADDRESS THE CONCERNS THAT WOULD ARISE BY SIMULTANEOUS ELECTIONS

In a preliminary report issued on August 30, 2018, the Law Commission, under the leadership of Justice B S Chauhan, concluded that conducting simultaneous elections within the existing

constitutional framework was not feasible. To achieve this synchronization, the Commission suggested that it would require amendments to the Constitution, the Representation of the People Act 1951, and the Rules of Procedure governing the Lok Sabha and state Assemblies.

The Commission proposed that for such constitutional amendments to take effect, a minimum of 50% of the states should ratify them. Furthermore, the report recommended a significant change in the electoral process by advocating for the consolidation of all elections scheduled in a given calendar year. This would mean that various elections would be held concurrently.

To address potential disruptions caused by no-confidence motions, the Law Commission proposed the replacement of the traditional “no-confidence motion” with a “constructive vote of no-confidence.” Under this system, a government could only be removed if there was a vote of confidence in an alternative government, ensuring a more stable transition of power.

WAY FORWARD

1. Simultaneous elections are gaining momentum and deserve thorough discussion due to

their impact on the federal structure of the Constitution.

2. To address concerns from regional parties, it is crucial to engage in extensive political spectrum discussions and debates.
3. Proper debates and discussions will pave the way for smoother implementation of the ‘one nation, one election’ concept in India.
4. Ideally, this system should lead to significant time, energy, and resource savings in the conduct of elections.
5. Shorter election cycles would provide political parties with more time to focus on national issues and improve governance.
6. The recommendations of the Law Commission suggest that restoring the ‘one nation, one election’ concept, as it existed during the first two decades of India’s independence, is a feasible option.

THE BENCH STRENGTH: INDIAN JUDICIARY

RELEVANCE

Syllabus:

- ❑ **GS2: Functioning of the Judiciary**
- ❑ **PSIR: Principal Organ of the Union Government: Judiciary**

INTRODUCTION

Chief Justice of India Chandrachud has proposed the establishment of permanent constitution benches with varying strengths in the Supreme Court. This reform has been needed for a long time and should be prioritized.

REASONS AND NEED OF THE REFORM

- ❑ **Efficient Handling of Constitutional Cases:** Article 145(3) mandates that significant constitutional questions must be heard by panels of at least five judges. Permanent constitution benches would streamline the

process of hearing such cases, ensuring that they are addressed promptly.

- ❑ **Reducing Case Backlog:** The backlog of cases in the Supreme Court is substantial, with a large number of cases awaiting decisions from five-judge and nine-judge benches. Establishing permanent constitution benches can help expedite the resolution of these cases.
- ❑ **Preserving Legal Precedent:** Larger benches, like the 13-judge bench in the Kesavananda Bharati case, have been instrumental in establishing important legal doctrines, such as the “basic structure” doctrine. Permanent

constitution benches would facilitate the continuation of such impactful legal decisions.



CHALLENGES TO THE REFORM

- ❑ **High Caseload:** The Supreme Court of India deals with a vast caseload, including a diverse range of cases beyond constitutional matters. This extensive caseload makes it challenging to allocate resources, including judges, for permanent constitution benches.
- ❑ **Balancing Priorities:** The court must balance addressing everyday legal concerns, often seen as the “people’s court,” with constitutional matters. Allocating a significant portion of the court’s judges to nine-judge benches for constitutional cases can disrupt this balance.

HOW TO FURTHER REDUCE THE BURDEN ON THE SUPREME COURT

- ❑ **Empower Subordinate Courts:** Subordinate courts in India should be encouraged and empowered to handle a larger share of the caseload, especially cases involving bail. This would alleviate some of the pressure on the Supreme Court and expedite the resolution of cases.
- ❑ **Expansion of Fundamental Rights:** Expanding the scope of fundamental rights for Indian citizens may necessitate the establishment of additional constitution benches in the Supreme Court. This would ensure that constitutional matters related to expanded rights are heard promptly and effectively.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the establishment of permanent constitution benches is a significant step towards enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Indian judiciary in addressing constitutional matters and reducing case backlog. However, careful consideration and coordination are needed to strike a balance between constitutional cases and the diverse range of legal issues the court handles.

RIVER WATER SHARING: A CONSTANT BATTLE

RELEVANCE

Syllabus:

- ❑ **GS2:** Issues and Challenges Pertaining to the Federal Structure
- ❑ **PSIR:** Inter-state disputes

INTRODUCTION

The recent developments in the Supreme Court in ongoing water-sharing dispute between Karnataka

and Tamil Nadu regarding the Cauvery River necessitate a distress-sharing formula and the role of the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) and other relevant bodies.



CAUVERY RIVER WATER DISPUTE

THE MAIN ISSUES WITH CAUVERY RIVER WATER SHARING

- ❑ **Historical Dispute:** The sharing of Cauvery River water has been a contentious issue since the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal's 1991 interim order, leading to ongoing tensions between the involved states.
- ❑ **Lack of Clear Guidelines:** There is a lack of detailed distress-sharing formula in both the 2007 Tribunal order and the 2018 Supreme Court judgment. While they mention pro-rata sharing during distress times, specific guidelines are absent.
- ❑ **State Perspectives:** Tamil Nadu factors in the deficit in inflows to four Karnataka reservoirs and the rainfall pattern in three Cauvery catchment groups, while Karnataka argues that water sharing should consider both the southwest and northeast monsoons.
- ❑ **Unclear Reservoir Status:** The status of the Karnataka reservoirs has faced significant shortfalls in inflows during certain periods,

which further complicates the water-sharing issue.

- ❑ **Authority's Stance:** The disputing parties and the Cauvery Water Management Authority have not opposed the concept of distress sharing but disagree on the specifics of the formula.

THE STANCE OF JUDICIAL BODIES

- ❑ **Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (CWDT) 2007 Order:** The Tribunal's final order did not provide clear guidelines for distress sharing but suggested that during consecutive bad years of rain, the monthly water release schedule should be relaxed to minimize harsh effects.
- ❑ **Supreme Court Judgment 2018:** The Supreme Court also did not offer a precise formula for distress sharing but referred to the principle of pro-rata sharing during distress.

In the current scenario, both the states involved in the dispute and the Cauvery Water Management Authority have not opposed the concept of distress sharing but are in disagreement over the specifics of the formula.

ADDRESSING THE ISSUES

- ❑ **Transparency is Essential:** The Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) and Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC) should make their meeting proceedings available online to dispel misconceptions and increase transparency.
- ❑ **Proactive Approach:** The CWMA should make significant progress in addressing the issue, leveraging the opportunity at hand.

- ❑ **Objective Decision Making:** The Authority, composed of officials and technical experts, should use their expertise to create a rational and objective distress-sharing formula.
- ❑ **Judicious Water Use:** Tamil Nadu should focus on efficient and judicious water use, regardless of the Supreme Court's decision on water quotas, to ensure sustainable water management in the region.



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MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

Q) Examine the current obstacles faced by the Election Commission of India.

Former Chief Election Commissioner S.Y. Quraishi has emphasized the intrinsic and unbreakable connection between democracy and elections. The framework for ensuring free and fair elections in India is enshrined in Part XV (Articles 324-329) of the constitution. The Election Commission of India (ECI) is a constitutional authority with autonomy, responsible for managing the electoral processes at both the national and state levels. The ECI derives its authority from Article 324 of the Constitution and subsequent legislation, such as the Representation of the People Acts of 1950 and 1951. Indian elections are often hailed as a global model, with Hillary Clinton even describing the Indian election system as the “gold standard.” The pivotal role played by the ECI in this process cannot be overstated. However, the ECI faces several significant challenges, which place an extraordinary burden on the electoral machinery to conduct elections that are both free and fair.

1. Alistair Mcmillan has observed that there is a tension between the EC and political parties, particularly concerning illegal funding. According to Yogendra Yadav, money has long played a dominant role in Indian elections, but its significance has grown substantially since the economic reforms of 1991. Even recent initiatives like Electoral Bonds have failed to address the issue of money misuse in elections and have been criticized for lacking transparency. In an extraordinary step, the ECI had to cancel a by-poll to a Tamil Nadu assembly seat in 2017 due to the excessive use of money power.
2. The involvement of criminal elements in politics presents another significant challenge. As noted by Rajni Kothari, the criminalization of politics and its impact on the electoral process have burdened the work of the ECI.
3. The menace of paid news has created new challenges, leading to an uneven playing field for participating political parties in elections.
4. Allegations regarding the trustworthiness of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) in recent years have sowed confusion among Indian voters.
5. Managing an electorate with more than 90 crore eligible voters remains an ongoing challenge. Continuous efforts are required to ensure that people are not omitted from the electoral rolls. Currently, only 63.75 percent of all eligible voters are enrolled. For example, in at least 21 states, the enrollment of the 18-19 age group is less than 30 percent.
6. Ensuring strict enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) is crucial, as ruling parties may violate it and misuse their resources and advantages. Observers like Yogendra Yadav have argued that at times, the EC has failed to appear impartial.
7. The use of hate speech and undemocratic language during election campaigns has disrupted the functioning of the ECI. Recently, the ECI banned a star campaigner from a major political party during Madhya Pradesh assembly by-polls.
8. Unforeseen circumstances like the COVID-19 pandemic have made the situation immensely challenging for the ECI.

9. The EC lacks the authority to de-register political parties, even in cases of the gravest violations, despite being the registering authority under Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

10. The rise of social media has coincided with the spread of disinformation, presenting a new challenge that requires clearer strategies. In this context, the ECI's Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) program aimed to engage all eligible citizens in the electoral process.

Former Election Commissioner O.P. Rawat cautioned against a "creeping new normal of political morality" that prioritizes winning at all costs over ethical considerations, leading to events such as the poaching of legislators being hailed as smart political management. Consequently, there has been an increase in by-polls, further burdening the ECI. Addressing the challenges the EC faces will necessitate both administrative and legislative changes. Suggestions from committees like the Tarkunde Committee in 1975 and the Goswami Committee in 1990 could serve as starting points. However, the transformation of political culture is equally vital, with informed citizens capable of holding political parties accountable playing a key role.

Q) Explain the decision of Government of India with respect to the special status of J & K and discuss its implication for the future of federalism in India.

Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) held a unique position under Article 370 of the Indian constitution, which was designated as a temporary provision and could be made ineffective through a presidential notification, contingent upon the prior recommendation of the constituent Assembly of the state of J & K.

In a strategic move, the central government introduced two legal resolutions. The first suggested that the president issue a notification to render Article 370 inoperative, while the second accepted the J & K Reorganization Bill, 2019. This bill aimed to transform J & K into a Union Territory with a legislature and to establish Ladakh as a separate Union Territory without a legislature.

This sequence of events led to the issuance of 'The Constitution (Application to J & K) Order, 2019,' which replaced the 1954 order pertaining to Article 370. Although the 2019 order did not abolish Article 370, it was employed to revoke J & K's special status. By virtue of this presidential order, all provisions of the Indian constitution, including the section on Fundamental Rights (Part III), were extended to the state of J & K. Furthermore, the cessation of the 1954 order also brought an end to the applicability of Article 35A (introduced through the order), resulting in the discontinuation of J & K's special status.

Implications on future Federalism in India

Article 3 of the Indian constitution grants the Parliament the authority to alter state boundaries and create new states. However, such changes necessitate a Bill to be presented to the respective state legislature by the President to gather its input.

The decision to designate the state of Jammu & Kashmir as a Union Territory with a legislative Assembly, done without consulting the state legislature, has raised concerns about infringing upon the foundational aspect of federalism enshrined in the constitution.

The manner in which this decision was executed is especially worrying. By equating or substituting the erstwhile Constitution Assembly of Jammu & Kashmir (which was dissolved in 1959) with the present legislative Assembly, and with the central government appropriating the latter's powers due to the state being under President's rule, the central government has unilaterally restructured Jammu & Kashmir, undermining the federal spirit.

Additionally, a significant concern arises from the legal precedent. The Supreme Court, in the case of *State of West Bengal vs. Union of India* (1962), emphasized the significance of inter-state agreements in upholding federalism. The same principle was recognized in the case of *SBI* (2016), where the apex court acknowledged the presence of such an agreement in the context of Jammu & Kashmir. Consequently, Article 370 played a crucial role in India's federal structure as it governed the Union's relationship with Jammu & Kashmir. However, the revocation of Article 370 without consulting the views of the people of Jammu & Kashmir clearly contradicts the principles of federalism.

Q)Discuss the role of women in Panchayat's in India?

Introduction-Briefly tell about 73rd Constitutional Amendment in India

Mahatma Gandhi championed the idea of Panchayati Raj as the cornerstone of India's political framework, advocating for a decentralized form of government in which each village would manage its own affairs. In contemporary India, Panchayati Raj serves as a governance system where gram panchayats are the fundamental units of local administration. This system was officially established in 1992 through the 73rd amendment to the Indian Constitution. As per Article 243 (d) (2) and (3), a minimum of one-third of seats designated for direct election at each Panchayat level must be reserved for women.

Body-Discuss the performance of women in Panchayati Raj

According to the Ministry of Panchayati Raj's mid-term assessment of the 'State of the Panchayats 2006-07', over 10 lakh women actively participate in our Panchayati Raj institutions, constituting 37 percent of all elected members, and reaching as high as 54 percent in Bihar, which implements 50 percent reservation for women. States such as Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, and Tripura have also adopted 50% reservation for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). The presence of women in Gram Sabha meetings increases significantly when the Pradhan (village head) is a woman. Women-led panchayats excel in tasks like road construction, managing drinking water facilities, and administering government loan schemes. However, their performance in ensuring irrigation facilities is less effective. Women-led panchayats tend to prioritize addressing social issues such as child marriage, the indiscriminate sale of alcohol, witch-hunting, and similar problems.

Nevertheless, studies conducted by scholars like Rohini Pande point to various constraints that continue to limit women's roles in Panchayats. These constraints include the lack of security for women members, hindering their ability to visit remote areas during odd hours or attend meetings in distant locations. Additionally, limited information and knowledge about government programs, especially those related to women and child development, pose challenges. The scarcity of formal education results in an information gap and dependency on second-hand knowledge, while language barriers impede performance since many official correspondences, rules, and regulations are in English. Moreover, women often cannot sustain their involvement in politics due to rotational reservation policies, and women candidates are rarely nominated from unreserved seats.

Conclusion

While the ideals of equality enshrined in the constitution are laudable, the full potential of the 73rd amendment is yet to be realized. It is a significant step towards achieving gender equality, but it should be seen as a means to an end. The ultimate goal is to ensure proper and adequate representation of women not only in Panchayats but also in the national parliament. Many international organizations

gauge a country's commitment to women's development and empowerment by the number of female representatives in parliament, an area where India still has room for improvement.

Q) Examine the desirability and viability of holding simultaneous elections in India.

Simultaneous elections entail restructuring India's electoral cycle so that elections for both the Lok Sabha and state Assemblies are held on the same day. It's important to note that this doesn't imply that every vote must be cast on a single day. This concept was practiced in India until 1967 but was disrupted due to premature Assembly dissolutions.

Historical Background

The idea of simultaneous elections resurfaced in the First Annual Report of the Election Commission of India in 1983. Subsequently, it gained momentum through the Law Commission's Report in 1999 and the 79th report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee in 2015. In 2017, NITI Aayog released a paper discussing the relevance of this idea.

The Need for Simultaneous Elections

Model Code of Conduct (MCC) Impact: Frequent elections result in the imposition of the Model Code of Conduct for prolonged periods, causing policy paralysis and governance deficits, including suspended development programs and welfare schemes.

Financial Burden: Elections lead to substantial expenditures by various stakeholders, such as political parties and individual candidates. Overspending to secure victory is considered a key driver of corruption and black money. The 2014 Lok Sabha polls alone were estimated to have incurred an undeclared Rs 30,000 crore in expenses. The Election Commission estimated the cost of simultaneous elections at Rs 4,500 crore.

Administrative Costs: Conducting elections demands a significant administrative machinery. Frequent elections result in high event management administrative costs and resource utilization.

Criticism of Simultaneous Elections

Undermining Federalism: Synchronizing election terms could entail arbitrarily altering the term lengths of existing legislatures to align with Lok Sabha election dates. This could undermine federalism and representative democracy, as each state in India has its directly elected government.

Dominance of National Issues: Simultaneous elections may prioritize national issues over local or state-specific concerns, potentially overlooking the country's diversity.

Constitutional Amendments Required: Implementing simultaneous elections would necessitate numerous constitutional amendments, including fixing the terms of the Lok Sabha and state assemblies. It might also require the President or Governor to run the government until the next predetermined election date in the event of a dissolved House, contradicting the Westminster democratic model.

Accountability and Frequent Elections: Frequent elections ensure politicians remain in touch with the public and maintain accountability. Election results serve as a feedback mechanism, prompting necessary course corrections by the government.

Conclusion

The idea of simultaneous elections in India is a complex and contentious issue. While it aims to streamline the electoral process, reduce costs, and minimize governance disruptions, it also faces criticism for

potentially infringing on federalism and representative democracy. Striking the right balance between these concerns is crucial in determining the feasibility and desirability of 'one nation, one election' in the Indian political landscape.

Q) What do you mean by the term “economic globalization”? What are the advantages and disadvantages associated with it ?

Economic globalization refers to the process by which national economies become interconnected and integrated into a global economy. It involves the internationalization of production, the free flow of financial capital across borders, and the emergence of a global marketplace for production, distribution, and consumption.

Proponents of economic globalization highlight several benefits:

Increased prosperity and economic opportunity: Economic liberals argue that globalization expands market economics, leading to wider prosperity that can benefit people in all countries.

Poverty reduction: Globalization allows countries to specialize in areas where they have a comparative advantage, leading to increased trade and employment opportunities, particularly in developing countries. Transnational companies play a crucial role in providing employment and introducing modern technology.

However, there are also drawbacks to economic globalization:

Inequality and neocolonialism: Critics argue that globalization has led to the emergence of new and entrenched patterns of inequality. Transnational companies and economically advanced countries often benefit the most, while developing nations with lower wages and weaker regulations tend to be disadvantaged. This has led to concerns of economic globalization resembling neocolonialism.

Diminished national government influence: Economic globalization can reduce the influence of national governments, leading to limited public accountability. In an effort to attract foreign investment, states may prioritize policies such as tax reform, deregulation, and reduction of social welfare programs.

Overall, economic globalization is a complex and contested phenomenon, with both positive and negative implications for different countries and stakeholders.

SCHOLARS DIGEST: KNOW YOUR SCHOLAR

IMMANUEL WALLERSTEIN



INTRODUCTION

Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein (September 28, 1930 – August 31, 2019) was an American sociologist and economic historian, renowned for pioneering the world-systems approach within sociology.

WORLD SYSTEM THEORY

World-systems theory, developed by American sociologist and historian Immanuel Wallerstein (1930–2019) in his 1974 work “The Modern World System,” presents a contrasting perspective to modernization theory. While modernization theory posits that economic development will eventually spread globally, Wallerstein’s theory argues that economically powerful regions primarily benefit themselves at the expense of peripheral areas. This concept can be traced back to a notion proposed by Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (1870–1924), the leader of the Bolshevik Revolution (1917), who suggested that class struggles in capitalist Europe had, to some extent, shifted into the international

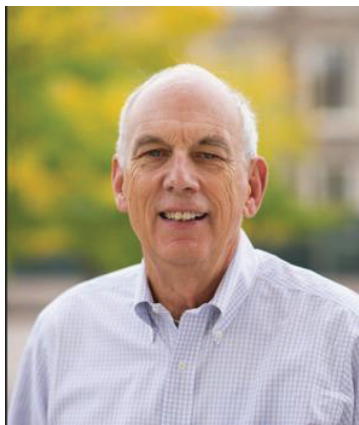
economic arena, with Russia and China representing proletarian countries. Wallerstein’s focus was on the period when European capitalism first expanded into Africa and the Americas, but he also emphasized that world-systems theory could be applied to earlier systems where Europeans did not hold dominance.

In line with Wallerstein’s perspective, German-born American economist André Gunder Frank (1929–2005) argued for the existence of an ancient world system, indicating an early tension between core and periphery. He further extended the application of world-systems theory to the 20th century, asserting that “underdevelopment” wasn’t just a matter of falling behind but resulted from the exploitative economic power wielded by industrialized nations. This idea, often referred to as the “development of underdevelopment” or “dependency theory,” offered an alternative narrative for world history, one that lacked a positive outcome for the majority of humanity.

Similar to modernization theory, world-systems theory has faced criticism for its Eurocentric perspective. Additionally, many economists have questioned the empirical evidence supporting it.

While the theory has been productive in raising important questions, its proposed answers have generated significant controversy.

ROBERT O. KEOHANE



INTRODUCTION

Robert Owen Keohane, born on October 3, 1941, in Chicago, Illinois, USA, is a prominent American political scientist, educator, and scholar in the field of international relations. He is renowned for his contributions to neoliberal institutionalism, a perspective in international relations that highlights how states employ international organizations to advance their interests through collaborative efforts.

MAJOR WORKS

Keohane rose to prominence following the release of “Power and Interdependence” (1977), a collaborative effort with Harvard’s political scholar Joseph S. Nye. This publication significantly contributed to the establishment of international political economy (IPE) as a specialized field within the realm of international relations.

CONCEPT OF INTERDEPENDENCE

Keohane placed a strong emphasis on the concepts of interdependence and collaboration within global politics. He offered a critical perspective on

the neorealist approach to international relations, which posits that interactions between nations are primarily marked by suspicion and rivalry. Unlike the neorealist viewpoint, Keohane argued that states don’t consistently view each other’s successes with alarm; rather, they often seek to foster cooperation for mutual gain. He contested the neorealist notion that international relations are a zero-sum game, asserting that collaboration can lead to shared benefits rather than a one-sided win or loss.

In addition to addressing security concerns, Keohane highlighted that states actively engage in endeavors that are advantageous to all parties involved, such as trade partnerships and environmental conservation efforts. Notably, he broadened the scope of analysis beyond just state actors, recognizing the significance of transnational entities like multinational corporations and international trade unions. By acknowledging these factors, Keohane challenged the conventional focus on nation-states in the realm of international relations, particularly in light of the complex processes of globalization.

In his most renowned work, "After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy" (1984), Keohane embraced the core idea of neorealism that states act as rational egoists. However, he put forth the notion that self-interest can actually pave the way for cooperation. Challenging the neorealist perspective that cooperation between countries necessitates a dominant military power or hegemon to enforce it, Keohane contended that this stance was not entirely supported by historical evidence. He pointed out that international cooperation persisted even after the waning of U.S. hegemony in the 1970s.

Keohane attributed this continuity of international cooperation to the establishment of what he termed "international regimes," exemplified by institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). These international regimes, in Keohane's view, encompass a collection of implicit or explicit norms, institutions, and decision-making mechanisms that enable states to calibrate their expectations and uphold avenues of collaboration. Keohane's argument was that states subscribed to these regimes due to their ability to mitigate the risks and expenses associated with cooperation, while simultaneously safeguarding the benefits achieved through collective negotiation.

ANDRE GUNDER FRANK



INTRODUCTION

Andre Gunder Frank, born on February 24, 1929, and passing away on April 25, 2005, was a prominent figure in the fields of sociology and economic history. Andre Gunder Frank, a German national, was a prominent left-wing economist and political activist. His extensive body of work spanned various domains, including economics, social and political history, development studies, and international relations. His most enduring legacy lies in his exploration of concepts such as the 'development of underdevelopment' and 'dependency theory.' Furthermore, he offered critical insights into the 'world system' of the 1970s

and 1980s, shedding light on how it perpetuated global inequality.

DEPENDENCY THEORY

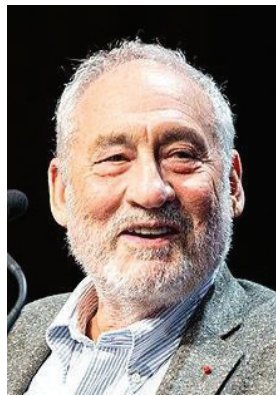
Frank's central argument revolved around the idea that in our interconnected and globalized world, some countries thrive while others suffer. According to dependency theory, the citizens of less-developed countries should not be held responsible for the lack of progress in their societies. Instead, Frank posited that Western nations actively hindered the development of these countries. He contended that historically, the "core" nations like the USA and UK, forming the privileged "metropolis," exploited the

“peripheral” nations by keeping them in a state of dependency and underdevelopment. Developed nations accumulated wealth by exploiting the poorest nations, utilizing them as sources of cheap raw materials and labor.

Frank asserted that this exploitative relationship had persisted throughout history, evident in

practices like slavery and Western colonization of various regions. Moreover, he argued that this pattern continued into the twentieth century, facilitated by Western countries’ domination of international trade, the rise of large multinational corporations, and the reliance of less-developed nations on Western aid.

JOSEPH STIGLITZ



INTRODUCTION

Joseph Eugene Stiglitz, born on February 9, 1943, in Gary, Indiana, USA, is an American economist renowned for his pioneering work on the theory of markets characterized by unequal access to information. Alongside A. Michael Spence and George A. Akerlof, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Economics in 2001 for his contributions to this field.

CONCEPT OF INFORMATION ASYMMETRY

Joseph Stiglitz is renowned for his significant contributions to the field of information economics, a sub-discipline of microeconomics that explores the impact of information and information systems on economic dynamics and decision-making. His groundbreaking work on information asymmetry

played a pivotal role in securing him the Nobel Prize in Economics in 2001.

Information asymmetry refers to an unequal distribution of information between participants in an economic exchange. In such situations, one party involved in the transaction may possess more comprehensive information compared to the other party. For instance, a buyer might be better informed than a seller, or a borrower could have greater insights into their ability to repay a loan compared to the lender.

One of Joseph Stiglitz’s notable contributions is the development of the screening technique, a method designed to bridge the information gap necessary for optimizing economic transactions in markets. Stiglitz’s screening technique has found widespread application, particularly in industries such as insurance and lending.

JACQUES DERRIDA: DECONSTRUCTION AND THE CRITIQUE OF BINARY THINKING



INTRODUCTION

Jacques Derrida, a prominent figure in 20th-century philosophy, revolutionised the field with his **concept of deconstruction**. Through his critical approach to language, meaning, and interpretation, Derrida challenged traditional notions of truth, presence, and fixed meanings. This article explores Derrida's main ideas, including **deconstruction, différance, and the critique of binary oppositions**, and their lasting impact on philosophy, literary theory, and cultural studies.

DECONSTRUCTION AND THE UNRAVELLING OF BINARY THINKING

At the heart of Derrida's philosophy is the **concept of deconstruction**, which seeks to expose and disrupt the underlying assumptions and **hierarchical structures** within texts and discourses. Deconstruction challenges the notion of fixed meanings and binary oppositions by revealing the inherent instability and fluidity of language. Derrida argues that language is inherently fragmented, and meaning is constructed through a web of interconnected signs, rather than fixed definitions.

DIFFÉRANCE AND THE PLAY OF SIGNIFIERS

A key concept in Derrida's work is **différance**, a term he coined to emphasize the dual nature of **language**. Différance denotes the simultaneous deferral and difference inherent in signification. According to Derrida, **meaning is deferred in language**, as signs continually refer to other signs, creating an infinite chain of signifiers. This deferral undermines the notion of fixed meanings and invites a constant play of interpretation and reinterpretation.

CRITIQUE OF BINARY OPPOSITIONS AND LOGOCENTRISM

Derrida critiques the traditional Western philosophical tradition, which relies heavily on binary oppositions such as good/evil, presence/absence, and male/female. He argues that these dichotomies are not fixed and stable, but rather constructed through hierarchical and exclusionary processes. Derrida exposes the inherent biases and power dynamics embedded within binary thinking, challenging the privileging of one term over the other.

DECONSTRUCTION AND TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Derrida's deconstructive approach extends beyond philosophy and infiltrates literary theory and cultural studies. Deconstruction offers a method for analyzing texts by uncovering the multiple meanings, contradictions, and tensions within them. It highlights the interplay between the explicit and implicit, the intended and unintended, and the conscious and unconscious aspects of a text, revealing the complexity and indeterminacy of meaning.

LEGACY AND CRITICISMS

Derrida's ideas have had a profound impact on various fields, including philosophy, literary theory, and cultural studies. His emphasis on the decentering of meaning, the critique of binary oppositions, and the play of signifiers has

opened up new avenues of inquiry and challenged established paradigms. However, Derrida's work has **faced criticism for its perceived obscurity and its potential to undermine foundational concepts of truth and knowledge**. Critics argue that deconstruction's emphasis on the indeterminacy of meaning can lead to a nihilistic stance and a rejection of objective understanding.

CONCLUSION

Jacques Derrida's concept of deconstruction has reshaped our understanding of language, interpretation, and meaning. Through his critique of binary thinking and the play of signifiers, Derrida invites us to question fixed meanings and embrace the inherent complexity and ambiguity of texts. His legacy continues to inspire critical thinking and challenge established paradigms in philosophy and cultural studies.

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ENRICH YOUR ANSWER

Q → Analyse the role of Election Commission towards electoral reforms.

Approach of Answer

(Intro): Briefly write about Election Commission

(Body)

Write about positive role played by ECI towards electoral reforms.

- eg → Introduction of EVM's.
- Launch of website for information sharing
- Computerisation of Electoral rolls 1998
- Introduction of VVPAT.
- Introduction of NOTA in 2014
- Recently launched SVEEP for voter's education.

What more can be done

- ECI be given rule making power under RPA
- ECI be given more power's West Model Code of Conduct.

Conclusion

Election reforms are mother of all reforms and should be given prime importance.

Q: "India should reconsider its stated position of shared interest with China in view of China's repeated rebuffs in international fora" - Comment.

Approach

Intro

Talk about India - China relationship & India's stated position.

Body

Tell about repeated rebuffs of China in International fora for India.

→ Issues w.r.t NSG membership

→ Issues with respect to India's UNSC membership.

→ Issues with respect to Pakistan.

Analyse whether India should reconsider its position vis-a-vis China and its strategy

Conclusion

Suggest some strategies and foreign policy ideas to tackle China.

Q: Discuss the features of Asymmetrical federalism
Approach

(Intro): Define federalism and Asymmetrical federalism.

(Body) Give features of Asymmetrical federalism

→ Article 371 to 371J in Part XXI of Constitution contain special provisions for eleven states.

→ Special responsibility of Governor for the development of certain areas of particular states.

→ Presence of Union Territories in India.

→ Unequal representation of States in Rajya Sabha (eg UP 31 seats, Goa-1 seat)

→ Presence of 5th and 6th schedule to accommodate scheduled and tribal areas.

(Conclusion): Give justification of Asymmetrical federalism.

eg: to protect diversity without sacrificing unity or imposing uniformity.

Q: How the government's philosophy of 'maximum governance and minimum government' coincide with the idea of competitive and cooperative federalism? Give reasons?

Ans

Approach

Intro

→ Define 'maximum governance and minimum government'.

Body

→ Elaborate on idea of competitive and cooperative federalism.

→ Give steps taken by Government based on this principle

eg * NITI Aayog replaced Planning Comm.

* Enhanced financial devolution to states

* Rationalisation of centrally sponsored schemes.

Conclusion: give some suggestions.

eg Reform 7th schedule list in the direction of empowerment of states

Q) What do you mean by offensive and defensive realism? (15) (UPSC MAINS 2023)

Intro → Start by explaining realism as hegemonic school of IR and give its basic idea → anarchy

Body

→ Explain defensive realism

- Kenneth Waltz
- Security maximisation
- power as means

→ Explain offensive realism

- Mearsheimer, Kautilya
- Power as ends and means
- Hegemony aspiration

conclude

- Criticism by liberals, social constructivists
- Relevance - ex. China in South China Sea.

(d) Securing living wage and human conditions of work to workers

9. Consider the following statements:

With reference to the Constitution of India, the Directive Principles of State Policy constitute **limitations** upon

1. legislative function.
2. executive function.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

10. Consider the following statements :

1. The Parliament of India can place a particular law in the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution of India.
2. The validity of a law placed in the Ninth Schedule cannot be examined by any court and no judgement can be made on it.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

11. In the federation established by The Government of India Act of 1935. Residuary Power were given to the

- (a) Federal Legislature (b) Governor General (c) Provincial Legislature (d) Provincial Governors

12. With reference to the "G20 Common Framework", consider the following statements

1. It is an initiative endorsed by the G20 together with the Paris Club.
2. It is an initiative to support Low Income Countries with unsustainable debt.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

13. In which one of the following groups are all four countries members of G20?

- (a) Argentina, Mexico, South Africa and Turkey (b) Australia, Canada, Malaysia and New Zealand
(c) Brazil, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Vietnam (d) Indonesia, Japan, Singapore and South Korea

14. The Parliament of India acquires the power to legislate on any item in the State List in the national interest if a resolution to that effect is passed by the

- (a) Lok Sabha by a simple majority of its total membership
(b) Lok Sabha by a majority of not less than two-thirds of its total membership
(c) Rajya Sabha by a simple majority of its total membership
(d) Rajya Sabha by a majority of not less than two-thirds of its members present and voting

15. Which one of the following objectives is not embodied in the Preamble to the Constitution of India?

- (a) Liberty of thought (b) Economic liberty (c) Liberty of expression (d) Liberty of belief

ANSWERS

1. (c)
2. (c) New NCERT, Std. 11, Political Theory Chapter 5: Rights, Page 72. Through these rights, people make demands upon the state. So, "C" is most fitting answer.
3. (a) Rights and duties are correlative and inseparable, hence A is the answer.
4. (d) The Supreme Court of India is the apex court in India. As stated by the Indian Constitution, the function of the Supreme Court of India is that of the custodian of the Constitution.

5. (d) The idea behind incorporation of fundamental duties was to remind the citizens of the country that they have certain obligations towards the country and society. The recommendations of the Swaran Singh Committee. There were ten fundamental duties at the time of incorporation but the eleventh was inserted by the 86th Amendment in 2002. To uphold and protect the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India is one of the fundamental duty mentioned in the constitution.
6. (b) A welfare state is a concept of the government in which the state plays a key role in the protection and promotion of the economic and social well-being of its citizens. The Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) provides guidelines to the central and the state governments of India, to be kept in mind while framing laws and policies. The concepts behind DPSP is to establish a "Welfare State" rather than a "Police State" Such as of colonial era. In other words, motive behind inclusion of DPSP is to establish social and economic democracy rather than political democracy.
7. (c) Socio-economic democracy is spelt out because it provides for the idea of a welfare state. For e.g. consider Article 39 (b) and (c) which provide for minimizing inequalities in income and wealth; and ensuring that the wealth is not concentrated in the hands of few. While other article provide for the health of children, rights of working women etc. DPSP is not enforceable by courts. Only fundamental rights can be enforced by the courts.
8. (b) The 42nd Amendment Act of 1976 introduced four additional Directive Principles to the existing ones, mandating the State to:
1. Ensure the well-being and healthy growth of children (Article 39).
 2. Foster equal access to justice and offer free legal assistance to the underprivileged (Article 39 A).
 3. Facilitate the involvement of workers in the administration of industries (Article 43 A).
 4. Preserve and enhance the environment while safeguarding forests and wildlife (Article 48 A).
9. (d) The term 'Directive Principles of State Policy' refers to the guiding principles that the State should consider when creating policies and passing laws. These principles serve as constitutional directives or recommendations to the State in legislative, executive, and administrative affairs. Prominent constitutional scholar Granville Austin characterizes DPSP as the "affirmative duties" of the state. Contrary to the initial statements, the correct answer is (d).
10. (a) The first statement correctly states that the 1st Amendment to the Constitution in 1951 introduced new Articles 31A and 31B along with the Ninth Schedule, which aimed to secure the constitutional validity of zamindari abolition laws and similar legislation. These provisions specified that such laws could not be challenged on the grounds of violating Fundamental Rights. Subsequent governments have also added other progressive laws to the Ninth Schedule through parliamentary action, thus confirming the accuracy of the first statement. However, the second statement is incorrect. In the I.R. Coelho case of 2007, the Supreme Court did indeed rule that there cannot be a blanket immunity from judicial review for laws included in the Ninth Schedule. Therefore, the second statement is inaccurate.
11. (b) Residuary powers were in the hands of Governor General.
12. (c)
13. (a)
14. (d) If the Rajya Sabha declares that it is necessary in the national interest that Parliament should make laws on a matter in the State List, then the Parliament becomes competent to make laws on that matter. Such a resolution must be passed by the Rajya Sabha by a majority of not less than two-third of its members present and voting.
15. (b) Read the preamble given in any school textbook: "We, the people of India,....LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship..."So, "B" is the answer.

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Contributors:

- 1-Azeem Ahmad
- 2-Sajal Tiwari
- 3-Shreya Bose

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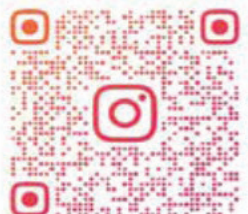


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