

VEDHIK

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FOREWORD

We, at Team Vedhik is happy to introduce a new initiative - "Daily Current Affairs_The Hindu" compilations to help you with UPSC Civil Services Examination preparation. We believe this initiative - "Daily Current Affairs_The Hindu" would help students, especially beginners save time and streamline their preparations with regard to Current Affairs. A content page and an Appendix has been added segregating and mapping the content to the syllabus.

It is an appreciable efforts by Vedhik IAS Academy helping aspirants of UPSC Civil Services Examinations. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Babu Sebastian, former VC - MG University in extending all support to this endeavour. Finally I also extend my thanks to thank Ms. Shilpa Sasidharan and Mr. Shahul Hameed for their assistance in the preparing the compilations.

We welcome your valuable comments so that further improvement may be made in the forthcoming material. We look forward to feedback, comments and suggestions on how to improve and add value for students. Every care has been taken to avoid typing errors and if any reader comes across any such error, the authors shall feel obliged if they are informed at their Email ID.

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China, Pakistan hit out at ‘unilateral’ Kashmir moves

Both sides reaffirm support for each other’s ‘core interests’

ANANTH KRISHNAN
HONG KONG

China and Pakistan on Sunday said they opposed “unilateral actions that complicate” the Kashmir issue, as they pledged closer ties following a meeting between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan.

A joint statement released following their meeting in Beijing said “both sides reiterated their support on issues concerning each other’s core interests” and “underscored that stronger defence and security cooperation between Pakistan and China was an important factor of peace and stability in the region.”

Mr. Khan attended the opening of the Winter Olympics on Friday, which India has boycotted following the use of a PLA commander in the torch relay, and also held talks with Premier and second-ranked leader Li Ke-qiang prior to his meeting with Mr. Xi.

The joint statement following Sunday’s talks said Pakistan was committed to a “One-China Policy and support for China on Taiwan, South China Sea, Hong Kong, Xinjiang and Tibet.” China, for its part, “reaffirmed its support for Pakistan in safeguarding its sovereignty, independence and security, as well as promoting its socio-economic development and prosperity.”

“Both sides reiterated that a peaceful and prosperous South Asia is in the common interest of all parties,” the statement said, adding that “they emphasised the im-



Closer ties: Xi Jinping, right, and Imran Khan at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Sunday. ■ AP

portance of pursuit of dialogue and resolution of all outstanding disputes to promote regional cooperation and advance the goals of lasting peace, stability and shared prosperity in the region.”

On Kashmir, the statement said Mr. Khan “briefed the Chinese side on the latest developments on the situation in Jammu & Kashmir, including its concerns, position and pressing issues at the moment.”

China repeated its official stance that the issue “should be properly and peacefully resolved based on the UN Charter, relevant Security Council resolutions and bilateral agreements” and said it “opposes any unilateral actions that complicate the situation”. Beijing had in 2019 voiced opposition to India’s reorganisation of Jammu and Kashmir and creation of Ladakh union territory calling it a “unilateral action”.

A readout from Islamabad on Mr. Khan’s remarks to Mr. Xi, published by the official Associated Press of Pakistan, quoted the Pakistani leader as hitting out at India. He claimed that “the persecution of minorities in India in

advancing the Hindutva mindset of RSS-BJP, was a threat to regional peace and stability” and “that the rapid militarisation of India was undermining regional stability.”

Those comments and references to India were not mentioned in the Chinese readout, which quoted Mr. Xi as saying “the strategic significance of China-Pakistan relations is getting more prominent since the world has entered a period of turbulence and transformation.”

Mr. Xi said China “firmly supports Pakistan in safeguarding national independence, sovereignty, dignity and fighting terrorism” and would continue supporting the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Both sides on Friday signed an agreement to boost industrial cooperation as part of the second phase of CPEC.

The joint statement said the two sides discussed the situation in Afghanistan and the need to expedite humanitarian aid, and said both sides were “ready to discuss with Afghanistan the extension of CPEC to Afghanistan.”

Fishers issue to come up during Peiris's visit

He will hold talks with Jaishankar

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

Sri Lankan Foreign Minister G.L. Peiris will meet External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Monday, in his first visit to India since being appointed last August. Both sides are expected to discuss India's economic support to Sri Lanka, plans for new infrastructure projects and pending issues over fishermen's rights.

Announcing Mr. Peiris' arrival in Delhi on Sunday, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla would call on him on Monday morning, and he would meet Mr. Jaishankar later in the day, and fly out on Tuesday.

BIMSTEC summit

Officials are also expected to discuss Sri Lanka's plans to hold the BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) summit on March 30 as the current Chair of the regional grouping that includes Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, which Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also been invited to attend.

The Foreign Minister arrived just days after the Export Import Bank (EXIM) of India and the Government of Sri Lanka signed a \$500-million Line of Credit agreement which would help Sri Lanka cope with its current fuel shortages. Last month, India announced it would defer Sri Lankan debt repayment of \$500 million by two months, and extended a \$400 million currency swap arrangement, to give its neighbour some breathing space on a currency reserve crunch.

India and Sri Lanka have signed an MoU for the deve-



G.L. Peiris

lopment of oil facilities in Trincomalee, after detailed talks with Sri Lankan Finance Minister Basil Rajapaksa during his visit to Delhi in November. Both governments are in talks for another \$1 billion in assistance from India, which will be reviewed during Mr. Peiris's visit.

However, long-drawn differences over fishermen's rights are expected to be on the agenda for talks, as Sri Lanka demands that Indian fishermen stop "bottom trawling" and overfishing of the Palk Straits. Tensions escalated last month after mid-sea clashes between Indian and Sri Lankan fishermen that led to the death of two Jaffna fishermen. Meanwhile, on January 25, Sri Lanka released more than 50 Indian fishermen who had been detained by the Sri Lankan navy in December. The foreign ministers are expected to discuss ways to defuse tensions over the issue.

Mr. Peiris has met Mr. Jaishankar on two previous occasions in the past few months, including on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York, and an Indian Ocean Region conference in Abu Dhabi in December. He was Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka from 2010-2015 under then-President Mahinda Rajapaksa who is now Prime Minister.

India's 'return' to Central Asia

While the gains from engaging Central Asia may be minimal, non-engagement could be costly



HAPPYMON JACOB

The inaugural India-Central Asia Summit, the India-Central Asia Dialogue, and the Regional Security Dialogue on Afghanistan in New Delhi – all held over the past four months – collectively indicate a renewed enthusiasm in New Delhi to engage the Central Asian region. India has limited economic and other stakes in the region, primarily due to lack of physical access. And yet, the region appears to have gained a great deal of significance in India's strategic thinking over the years, particularly in the recent past. India's mission Central Asia today reflects, and is responsive to, the new geopolitical, if not the geo-economic, realities in the region. More so, India's renewed engagement of Central Asia is in the right direction for the simple reason that while the gains from an engagement of Central Asia may be minimal, the disadvantages of non-engagement could be costly in the longer run.

Great power dynamics

One of the factors driving this engagement and shaping it is the great power dynamics there. The decline of American presence and power in the broader region (due primarily to the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan) has led to a reassertion by China and Russia seeking to fill the power vacuum. While China dominates the geo-economic landscape, Russia is the dominant politico-military power in the region. But in the end, geoeconomics might gain more traction. A somewhat anxious Moscow considers India to be a useful partner in the region: it helps it to not only win back New Delhi, which is moving towards the U.S., but also to subtly checkmate the rising Chinese influence in its backyard.

For the U.S., while growing India-Russia relations is not a welcome development, it recognises the utility of Moscow-New Delhi relations in Central Asia to offset Beijing's ever-growing influence there.

As for China, India's engagement of the region and the growing



warmth in India-Russia relations are not a cause for concern yet, but they could be eventually.

For New Delhi, it's about breaking out of a continental nutcracker situation it finds itself in. In the wake of the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, New Delhi faces a major dilemma in the wider region, not just in the pre-existing theatres like the Line of Control and the Line of Actual Control. There are growing and legitimate concerns within the Indian strategic community that India in the region might get further hemmed in due to the combined efforts by China, Pakistan and Taliban-led Afghanistan. If so, it must ensure that there is no China-led strategic gang up with Pakistan and the Taliban against India in the region, which, if it becomes a reality, would severely damage Indian interests.

Focus on Afghanistan

India's engagement of Central Asia would also help it to consolidate its post-American Afghan policy. U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan has landed India in a major dilemma – it has very limited space to engage Taliban 2.0 despite the current relationship whose future depends on a number of variables. During the Hamid Karzai and Ashraf Ghani governments, given their proximity to India and the presence of the U.S. forces in Afghanistan, India was able to engage Kabul without too much hardship, despite Pakistani resistance. Now that the Taliban have returned to Kabul, New Delhi is forced to devise new ways of engaging Afghanistan. That's where the Central Asian Republics (CARs) and Russia could be helpful. For instance, given its lo-

cation bordering Afghanistan as well as its close geographical proximity to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, Tajikistan holds immense geopolitical significance for India (incidentally, India helps maintain an airbase in the country). One has to wait and see how far India will innovate to engage CARs in pursuit of its interests in Afghanistan. The announcement of a Joint Working Group on Afghanistan during the summit between India and the CARs is surely indicative of such interest.

In India's current vision for a regional security architecture, Russia appears prominent. President Vladimir Putin's meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the earlier meeting between Russian National Security Adviser General Nikolai Patrushev and Mr. Modi are indications of the growing relationship. A cursory glance at the various issues being discussed between the two sides also indicates a new joint thinking on regional security. Of course, New Delhi expects the U.S. to understand that in the wake of the latter's withdrawal from the region leaving India in the lurch, New Delhi has no choice but to work with the Russians.

By courting Russia – its traditional partner, also close to China and getting closer to Pakistan – to help it re-establish its presence in the Central Asian region, India is seeking to work with one of the region's strongest powers and also potentially create a rift between China and Russia, to the extent possible. The two countries recently exchanged a 'non-paper' on how to increase their joint engagement in Central Asia. Both India and the CARs use Russian defence equipment, and the non-paper has report-

edly explored the possibility of joint Indo-Russian defence production in some of the existing Soviet-era defence facilities in the CARs to meet local and Indian demands. The non-paper also reportedly discusses potential trilateral defence exercises among India, Russia and the CARs. In any case, joint defence production by India and Russia has been on the rise and the CARs could play a key role in it. This growing India-Russia partnership also explains India's non-critical stance on the developments in Ukraine and Kazakhstan.

Challenges

That said, India's 'return' to Central Asia is not going to be easy. For one, China, which shares a land border with the region, is already a major investor there. China is the region's most important economic partner, a reality that worries Russia and sharpens India's relative irrelevance in the region.

An even bigger challenge for India may be Iran. India's best shot at reaching the CARs is by using a hybrid model – via sea to Chabahar and then by road/rail through Iran (and Afghanistan) to the CARs. So, for New Delhi, the ongoing re-negotiations on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (or the Iran nuclear deal) are of crucial importance. If there is a deal, it would bring Tehran back into the Western fold and away from China (and Russia), which will be favourable to India. While Iran getting close to the West is not preferred by Russia (but preferred by India), if and when it becomes a reality, India would be able to use it to its advantage and join Russia in engaging the CARs. India's ongoing outreach to Iran and the now-postponed visit of the Iranian foreign minister to New Delhi help repair some of the damage done to the relationship over the years.

But finally, perhaps most importantly, will India walk the talk on its commitments to Central Asia? Does it have the political will, material capability and diplomatic wherewithal to stay the course in the region?

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African Union slams ‘wave’ of coups, dodges Israel vote

Four putsches in a calender year unprecedented: AU chief

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
ADDIS ABABA

The African Union has condemned a recent “wave” of military coups that has seen an unprecedented number of member states suspended from the bloc, a senior official said Sunday, the last day of its annual summit.

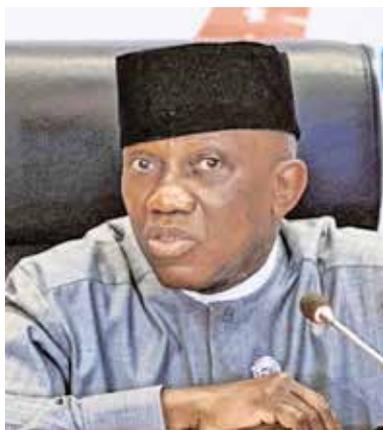
The putsches were among the main issues expected to be discussed at the summit, along with the AU’s ties to Israel and its response to a grinding war in the north of host country Ethiopia.

String of suspensions

Less than two weeks before the summit began on Saturday, Burkina Faso became the fourth country to be suspended by the AU after disgruntled soldiers toppled President Roch Marc Christian Kabore.

Guinea, Mali and Sudan are also currently suspended.

“Every African leader in the assembly has con-



Bankole Adeoye

demned unequivocally... the wave of unconstitutional changes of government,” Bankole Adeoye, head of the AU’s Peace and Security Council, told a press conference Sunday.

“Do your research: At no time in the history of the African Union have we had four countries in one calendar year, in 12 months, been suspended,” Mr. Adeoye said.

Addressing African Foreign Ministers ahead of the summit, Moussa Faki Mahamat, chair of the African Un-

ion Commission, denounced a “worrying resurgence” of such military coups.

But the AU has been accused of an inconsistent response, notably by not suspending Chad after a military council took over following the death of long-time President Idriss Deby Itno on the battlefield last April.

And while Mr. Adeoye touted the AU’s use of suspensions to punish coup leaders, analysts say the body must be more proactive to prevent putsches.

“It is only when crisis hits that we say, ‘Gosh, how come this country is falling apart like this so quickly?’” Solomon Dersso, founder of the AU-focused Amani Africa think-tank, said.

Also on Sunday, leaders agreed to suspend debate on Mr. Faki’s controversial decision to accept the accreditation of Israel, postponing a potentially divisive vote.

N. Korea is continuing its nuclear programmes: UN

‘DPRK is seeking material, technology’

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
NEW YORK

North Korea pressed ahead with the development of its nuclear and missile programmes last year despite international sanctions, according to a confidential United Nations report.

Pyongyang is under major sanctions over its weapons programmes, including a ban on exports of coal, iron, lead, textiles, seafood and other products.

While no nuclear tests or launches of intercontinental ballistic missiles were reported last year, North Korea kept developing “its capability for production of nuclear fissile materials,” according to the report, which was compiled by sanctions monitors and shared with the 15 UN Security Council members.

“Maintenance and development of DPRK’s nuclear and ballistic missile infrastructure continued, and DPRK continued to seek material, technology and know-how for these pro-

grammes overseas, including through cyber-means and joint scientific research,” said the report, using the initials of North Korea’s official name.

Cyberattacks

The document also said North Korea resorted to cyberattacks, especially on cryptocurrency assets, as an important source of government revenue.

The UN experts noted a sharp increase in the quality of illicit refined petroleum imports last year, “but at a level much lower than that of previous years.”

While Western countries have steadily pushed for more pressure on Pyongyang, Beijing and Moscow have called for easing sanctions on humanitarian grounds.

Pyongyang conducted an unprecedented seven weapons tests in January, including launching its most powerful missile since 2017 as it hinted it could restart nuclear missile tests.

Russia 70% combat-ready for invasion: U.S.

National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan says Russia could invade Ukraine within days or weeks

REUTERS
WASHINGTON

Russia has in place about 70% of the combat power it believes it would need for a full-scale invasion of Ukraine and is sending more battalion tactical groups to the border with its neighbour, two U.S. officials said on Saturday.

In the last two weeks, the number of battalion tactical groups (BTG) in the border region has risen to 83 from 60 as of Friday and 14 more are in transit, the officials said.

As to the timing of an invasion, the ground is expected to reach peak freeze around February 15, the officials said, allowing for off-road mechanised transit by Rus-



Air dominance: Two Russian bombers during a joint exercise with Belarusian Air Force on Saturday. •REUTERS

sian military units. Such conditions would continue until the end of March.

That timeline and the growing number and capability of Russian forces close

to Ukraine could suggest the window for diplomacy is shutting.

Meanwhile, White House National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan also hinted at a

similar timeline, saying Russia could invade Ukraine within days or weeks but could still opt for a diplomatic path forward.

“We are in the window. Any day now, Russia could take military action against Ukraine, or it could be a couple of weeks from now, or Russia could choose to take the diplomatic path instead,” Mr. Sullivan told Fox News.

Any possible Russian action could include annexing Ukraine’s Donbass region, cyberattacks or a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Mr. Sullivan told ABC, adding that Russia could act as soon as on Monday though it could also be weeks.

As Russia masses more than 1,00,000 troops near

the border, it has said it is not planning an invasion but could take unspecified military action if its security demands are not met. Those include a promise that NATO will never admit Ukraine, a demand the U.S. and NATO have said is unacceptable.

U.S. reinforcement

Meanwhile, a plane carrying U.S. troops landed in Poland on Sunday, as Washington reinforces its NATO allies in Eastern Europe amid a Russian military build-up on Ukraine’s border.

U.S. President Joe Biden on Wednesday ordered nearly 3,000 extra troops to Poland and Romania, as Washington moves to reassure jittery NATO allies.

A new form of untouchability

India lacks a robust politico-legal framework to address the open calls to economically boycott Muslims



ANSHUL TRIVEDI

Recently, a video, purportedly showing villagers from Surguja district of Chhattisgarh taking an oath to implement an economic boycott of Muslims, went viral on social media. This was not a spontaneous reaction of the villagers to a brawl in the village but allegedly orchestrated by a Hindutva outfit.

The Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) is known to distribute pamphlets calling for the economic boycott of those it labels “anti-national, anti-Hindu, love jihadists” – all convenient epithets to convey a communal message. These acts are not merely ‘expressions of hate’; they can be characterised as the emergence of a new form of untouchability guided by the political imperatives of Hindutva rather than the religious dictates of Hinduism. A progressive re-articulation of the concept of untouchability or a re-reading of the anti-discrimination legislation is required to end this abomination.

The hierarchical caste-based Hindu social order was governed by the ideology of purity and pollution. The primary function of the ideology was to maintain ritual hierarchy. Untouchability was a mechanism through which power was exercised over the Dalits and the hierarchy reinforced. One of the most common forms of untouchability was the imposition of social and economic boycott of Dalits if they dared to transgress social norms or exercise their rights. In Ambedkar’s opinion, the method of boycott was more effective than even open violence. Collective discrimination, marginalisation and disempowerment was justified as the right of the individual to choose freely in a marketplace. He argued that the boycott was effective for two reasons - one, the Dalits constituted a minority within the village; and two, they were economically weaker and hence, dependent on the ‘upper’ castes. Therefore, it was of paramount importance to outlaw this ‘tyranny of the majority’ for their uplift.

Limits of anti-boycott laws

During the freedom struggle, the struggle to eradicate untouchability gained momentum. This struggle found its highest expression in the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution under Articles 14, 15 and 17.

However, although untouchability was abolished, its definition remained vague. Even during the Constituent Assembly debates, it was argued that the scope of un-

touchability should be restricted to practices related to religion and caste, lest it be left open to unwarranted tinkering; however, the Assembly voted against such a circumscribed definition. Therefore, the limits of untouchability under Article 17 have been contested. While the conservatives restrict it to caste-based discrimination, the progressives argue that it includes other forms of untouchability as well. However, there is a consensus that only those acts which are motivated by the ideology of purity and pollution are considered within the ambit of untouchability. These include social and economic boycotts.

In India, mere provision of rights has proved to be insufficient to prevent marginalisation owing to the practice of untouchability and hence, the legislature and the judiciary have had to make and interpret special laws to that effect. Two laws which explicitly make social and economic boycotts punishable are The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, and Maharashtra Protection of People from Social Boycott (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2016. However, the scope of both is restricted to criminalising caste-based discrimination and boycotts.

An ineffective approach

The tethering of anti-boycott or untouchability laws to the tenets of purity and pollution and restricting their scope to caste-centric boycotts makes them ineffective to counter the calls of economic boycott of Muslims. Hindutva is using pre-constitutional methods to disempower a community. It is not driven by the motive of maintaining ritual hierarchy but by the political imperatives of exclusion. Its ultimate objective is to ethnise the Hindu identity. Such public calls for boycotts are means of constructing such an identity. The act of collectively resolving to boycott Muslims reinforces their ‘othering’ and re-emphasises the VHP’s idea of ‘Hinduness’; reconstituting Hinduism, based on caste hierarchy, into a unified, ethnic whole, where the figure of the Dalit is replaced by the Muslim as the significant ‘other’.

These grave new developments need to be taken into cognisance and an urgent politico-legal response to such public calls for Muslim economic boycott is required as they militate against the principle of fraternity enshrined in the Constitution. This can be done by a progressive redefinition of untouchability or by expanding the scope of the anti-boycott laws to include discrimination against religious communities.

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The interpretative answer to the hijab row

The courts will be called upon to protect an essential religious practice



SANJAY HEGDE

A number of Muslim girl students in my home town of Udupi, Karnataka, have been refused entry into their college. The administration objects to them covering their heads with a hijab. The girls invoke the protection of the Indian Constitution, whose preceptor Dr. B.R. Ambedkar once wrote, “the world owes much to rebels who would dare to argue in the face of the pontiff and insist that he is not infallible”.

Udupi has a proud tradition of having rebels who have challenged established norms that have not stood the test of reason. In the 16th century, priests at the Krishna temple in Udupi prevented a lower caste devotee, Kanakadasa, from entering it. He refused to go away and began composing and singing *kirtans* from the courtyard outside, while waiting to secure a sight of the deity. Even after many days, the priests did not relent but a miracle intervened. The idol of the deity which until then faced eastwards, miraculously turned 180 degrees to face west, and then broke open a rear wall to create a window through which Kanakadasa could have his darshan. Even today all devotees have their first sight of the lord through Kanakadasa's window.

A focal point

Thus, it was only historically apt that one of the first great religious cases interpreted by the new Supreme Court, under the new Constitution, came from Udupi. In the Commissioner, Hindu Religious Endowments, Madras vs Sri Lakshmindra Thirtha Swamiar of Sri Shirur Mutt case, or *Shirur Mutt*, of

1954, the Court ruled, “...what constitutes the essential part of a religion is primarily to be ascertained with reference to the doctrines of that religion itself.” Ever thereafter, the judgment in *Shirur Mutt* has remained the focal point of constitutional discussion on religious freedoms. The “essential religious practices” test appeased traditionalists by ‘assuring them that the Court would be sympathetic to their respective religious faiths. It also supported state-sponsored reform by leaving one agency of the state – the judiciary – with the power to determine and pronounce upon (perhaps, transform) religious practice and belief’.

‘Religious practice’

Since it was first propounded, the “essential religious practice” test has been problematic. How is the Court to determine what an ‘essential practice’ is? Should it ‘rely on religious leaders’? Should it ‘call for evidence’? Should judges ‘pursue these questions on the basis of their own research’? Justice D.Y. Chandrachud in the *Sabarimala* case, bemoaned, “... compulsions nonetheless have led the court to don a theological mantle. The enquiry has moved from deciding what is essentially religious to what is an essential religious practice. Donning such a role is not an easy task when the Court is called upon to decide whether a practice does nor does not form an essential part of a religious belief. Scriptures and customs merge with bewildering complexity into superstition and dogma. Separating the grain from the chaff involves a complex adjudicatory function. Decisions of the Court have attempted to bring in a measure of objectivity by holding that the Court has been called upon to decide on the basis of the tenets of the religion itself. But even that is not a consistent norm.”

In the case of the hijab, there is



GETTY IMAGES

no doubt that an observant Muslim woman might insist that the following verses from the Koran mandate her to keep her head covered. Chapter 33, Verse 59 says “O Prophet! Enjoin your wives, your daughters, and the wives of true believers that they should cast their outer garments over their persons (when abroad): That is most convenient, that they may be distinguished and not be harassed.” Chapter 24, verse 31 is more explicit in decreeing, “And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze...; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their *khimār* ... and not display their beauty except to their husband, their fathers, their husband's fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women...”

A possible fallout

Questions of uniforms never troubled my five years of college in Udupi in the early 1980s. There was no requirement of uniforms. Subsequent administrators, in the 1990s, may have decreed uniforms to prevent competition amongst fashion-conscious teenagers. Today, there is no one uniform code which is mandated throughout the State. Individual colleges do decree uniforms, but not necessarily the manner of wearing them. An unfortunate side-effect of the cur-

rent controversy may well be a State administrative order decreeing uniforms for all college students throughout the State of Karnataka. That to my mind would be a killjoy response of an administration that prioritises uniformity over diversity.

In the absence of a statutory uniform code, a court may well ask whether a head covering mandated by some religions, when worn in addition to the uniform, violates any legal tenet. Would the same standards that banish a female hijab apply to a turban worn by a male Sikh student? Can government colleges deny education to students who are seen to be violating a uniform code? Is the hijab or even a full covering in any manner violative of the process of imparting education? Can a government committed to female education deny education to those it deems improperly dressed? Should implementation of a dress code be prioritised over imparting education to all that seek it? These and other like questions will probably soon engage the attention of a constitutional court. That court may do well to heed Justice R.F. Nariman's dictum in the *Sabarimala* review which says, “... After all, in India's tryst with destiny, we have chosen to be wedded to the rule of law as laid down by the Constitution of India. Let every person remember that the “holy book” is the Constitution of India...”

Competing rights

The interpretative answer to the hijab row, from the “holy book”, might lie in another case from Udupi district. Three years after *Shirur Mutt*, in 1957, the Supreme Court, in *Sri Venkataramana Devaru vs State of Mysore*, had to examine whether the exclusion of a person from entering into a temple for worship is a matter of religion according to Hindu ceremonial law. The Court held “... that the right of a denomination to

wholly exclude members of the public from worshipping in the temple, though comprised in Art. 26(b), must yield to the overriding right declared by Art. 25(2)(b) in favour of the public to enter into a temple for worship. But where the right claimed is not one of general and total exclusion of the public from worship in the temple at all times but of exclusion from certain religious services, they being limited by the rules of the foundation to the members of the denomination, then the question is not whether Art. 25(2)(b) overrides that right so as to extinguish it, but whether it is possible-so to regulate the rights of the persons protected by Art. 25(2)(b) as to give effect to both the rights” *Venkataramana Devaru* points to the Court's endeavour to harmonise competing rights in a way that both were given effect to. In the hijab case, the courts will be called upon to protect an essential religious practice, in a manner consistent with imparting education in an orderly fashion.

It is not the domain of this article to prophesy the ultimate outcome of the ensuing legal battle. The protesting girls may, however, take heart from another Kanakadasa-like episode from the late 1970s. Jon Higgins, an American scholar of music, was so proficient in Carnatic music that he was called Higgins Bhagvathar. When he visited the Udupi Shri Krishna temple, he was denied entry because of his white skin. He stood at the gate and sang in chaste Kannada the *Vyasatirtha* composition, ‘*Krishna nee begane baro*’. He was permitted entry immediately, possibly to avert another intervention from the deity. The moral I take from this episode is that unthinking enforcers of any kind of dogma will have to ultimately yield to a harmonious faith in a “holy book”.

Sanjay Hegde is a Senior Advocate designated by the Supreme Court of India

SC to weigh between 'national security', judicial scrutiny

The court will take a call on whether the Centre can expect a free pass on matters pertaining to national security

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The question whether the state can use 'national security' as a ground to limit judicial scrutiny has come up for scrutiny again in the *MediaOne* TV channel case barely weeks after the Supreme Court, in its Pegasus case order, observed that the Centre cannot expect a 'free pass' from the courts as soon as it raises the 'spectre of national security'.

The government has cited national security reasons in the Kerala High Court for cancelling telecast permission to the Malayalam news channel.

"It is a settled position of law that in matters pertaining to national security, the

scope of judicial review is limited. However, this does not mean that the state gets a free pass every time the spectre of 'national security' is raised. National security cannot be the bugbear that the judiciary shies away from, by virtue of its mere mentioning. Although this court should be circumspect in encroaching upon the domain of national security, no omnibus prohibition can be called for against judicial review... The mere invocation of national security by the state does not render the court a mute spectator," a three-judge Bench led by Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana observed in the Pegasus case order in October 2021.

Although this court should be circumspect in encroaching upon the domain of national security, no omnibus prohibition can be called for against judicial review... The mere invocation of national security by the state does not render the court a mute spectator

SUPREME COURT



The order is a significant one considering the oft-repeated refrain of the government, while banning or curtailing rights of citizens, that it is being done for the sake of 'national security'.

One of the major concerns raised by citizens recently is the "chilling effect" such state actions endure to have on free speech, espe-

cially in the media. The principle of 'chilling effect' is based on comparative harm.

"One possible test of chilling effect is comparative harm. In this framework, the court is required to see whether the restrictions, due to their broad based nature, have had a restrictive effect on similarly placed individuals during the period,"

the Supreme Court explained in the Anuradha Bhasin case, which concerned Internet restrictions in Jammu and Kashmir in the backdrop of the abrogation of Article 370. In short, the test is whether action of the state on one entity freezes others in their footsteps or deters them from following the same course.

Order backed by reasons

Any order of the state which restricts the fundamental rights of speech or expression should be backed by reasons. The courts should be convinced that the state acted in a responsible manner and did not take away rights in an "implied fashion or a casual or cavalier man-

ner", the Supreme Court has said in its 130-page judgment in the Anuradha Bhasin case.

"Democracy entails free flow of information," the Supreme Court had declared.

"There is no dispute that freedom of speech and expression includes the right to disseminate information to as wide a section of the population as is possible. The wider range of circulation of information or its greater impact cannot restrict the content of the right nor can it justify its denial," the Supreme Court has observed in judgments like Secretary, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting Government of India v. Cricket Association of Bengal and Shreya Singhal v. Union of India.

Panel redraws all five J&K LS seats

Commission proposes to change complexion of most of the 90 Assembly seats

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

The J&K Delimitation Commission has changed the complexion of most of the 90 Assembly seats, while reconfiguring and renaming 28 new Assembly constituencies and deleting 19 Assembly segments in its interim report. Besides, it has proposed to redraw all the five Lok Sabha seats.

The interim report, shared with the associate members two days ago, suggested that the Kashmir division will get an additional seat in Kupwara, while the Jammu division will have one additional seat in Kathua district, one in Samba, one in Doda, one in Rajouri, one in Udhampur and one in Kishtwar. Of the six seats,

three Assembly segments are from the Muslim-majority Chenab Valley and Pir Panjal valleys, while three are in the Hindu Jammu-Samba-Kathua belt.

Seventeen constituencies have been redrawn in the Jammu province while 11 have been reconfigured in the Kashmir division. Similarly, nine names of Assembly constituencies in the Jammu division have vanished due to the reconfiguration and 10 names disappear from the Kashmir division.

Reframing segments

The Commission has also proposed reframing of Lok Sabha constituencies, with J&K earlier having five which included three seats from Kashmir and two from Jam-

mu. It has suggested to distribute 18 Assembly segments among the five Lok Sabha constituencies.

The Commission has advocated a Lok Sabha seat, disjointed geographically, by merging three districts (Kulgam, Anantnag, Shopian) of south Kashmir in the Valley and two districts of Rajouri and Poonch in the Pir Panjal valley in the Jammu province. It will be named Anantnag-Rajouri seat, which will comprise a significant population of non-Kashmiri speaking Scheduled Tribes.

The newly carved Lok Sabha seat will have six of the nine Assembly segments reserved for the STs. The Srinagar Lok Sabha seat will now comprise Assembly seg-

ments spread over five districts against the earlier three. North Kashmir's Baramulla Lok Sabha seat will be spread over four districts. The Udhampur Lok Sabha constituency is spread over five districts.

Reserved seats

The seats reserved for the Scheduled Tribes included Darhal, Thannamandi in Rajouri district; Surankote, Mendhar and Poonch Haveli in Poonch district; and Mahore in Reasi district in the Jammu province's Pir Panjal Valley. Larnoo in Anantnag, Kangan in Ganderbal, and Gurez are ST seats in the Kashmir province. The Commission has reserved nine seats for the STs and seven for the SCs.

Weighing in on a health data retention plan

A privacy-centric process is needed to determine what data to retain and for how long

RISHAB BAILEY, HARLEEN KAUR,
BRINDA LASHKARI &
AMEYA ASHOK NAIK

In a welcome development, the National Health Authority (NHA) – the body responsible for administering the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) – has initiated a consultation process on the retention of health data by health-care providers in India (<https://bit.ly/3uK9buH>). The consultation paper asks for feedback on what data is to be retained, and for how long.

A simple classification system, as suggested in the consultation paper, exposes individuals to harms arising from over-collection and retention of unnecessary data. At the same time, this kind of one-size-fits-all system can also lead to under-retention of data that is genuinely required for research or public policy needs. Instead, we should seek to classify data based on its use. In this system, health data not required for an identified purpose would be anonymised, or deleted.

The need for such a policy

Whether the state should mandate a retention period at all is an open question. Currently, service providers can compete on how they handle the data of individuals or health records; in theory, each of us can choose a provider whose data policies we are comfortable with. Given the landscape of

health-care access in India, including through informal providers, many patients may not think about this factor in practice. Nonetheless, the decision to take choice out of the individual's hands should not be taken lightly.

The Supreme Court of India has clarified that privacy is a fundamental right, and any interference into the right must pass a four-part test: legality; legitimate aim; proportionality, and appropriate safeguards. The mandatory retention of health data is one such form of interference with the right to privacy.

In this context, the question of legality becomes a question about the legal standing and authority of the NHA. For instance, the consultation paper asks whether the health data retention policy should be made applicable only to health-care providers who are participating in the ABDM ecosystem, or to all health-care providers in general. We believe the answer can only be the former; since the NHA is not a sector-wide regulator, it has no legal basis for formulating guidelines for health-care providers in general.

Balancing benefits and risks

The aim of data retention is described in terms of benefits to the individual and the public at large. Individuals benefit through greater convenience and choice, created through portability of health records. The broader public benefits



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through research and innovation, driven by the availability of more and better data to analyse.

While these are important benefits, they do have to be weighed against the risks. Globally, legal systems consider health data particularly sensitive, and recognise that improper disclosure of this data can expose a person to a range of significant harms. These could include harms that would be very difficult to make whole, so it is not enough to have penalties for such breaches; every effort must be made to minimise the extent of data collected, and to hold it only for the amount of time needed so as to reduce the likelihood of any breach in the first place.

In particular, privacy risks should make us very hesitant about retaining an individual's entire health or medical record on the grounds that they might be useful for research someday. As per Indian law, if an individual's rights are to be curtailed due to anticipated benefits, such benefits cannot be potential or speculative: they must be clearly defined and identifiable.

This is the difference between saying that data on patients with heart conditions will help us better understand cardiac health – a vague explanation – and being able to identify a specific study which will include data from that patient. It would further mean demonstrating that the study requires personally identifiable information, rather than just an anonymous record – the latter flowing from the principle of proportionality, which requires choosing the least intrusive option available.

In fact, standards for anonymisation are still developing. In a world of big data, the research community is still to arrive at consensus on what constitutes adequate anonymisation, or what might be considered best practices or methods for achieving it. We are not yet able to rule out the possibility of anonymised data still being linked back to specific individuals. In other words, even anonymisation may not be the least intrusive solution to safeguarding patients' rights in all scenarios.

Possible safeguards

Ultimately, the test for retaining data should be that a clear and specific case has been identified for such retention, following a rigorous process run by suitable authorities. A second safeguard would be to anonymise data that is being retained for research pur-

poses – again, unless a specific case is made for keeping personally identifiable information. If neither of these is true, the data should be deleted.

An alternate basis for retaining data can be the express and informed consent of the individual in question. However, there are limits to how consent can apply in the context of health care in India: in general, health care is a field where patients rely on the expertise and advice of doctors, making the idea of informed consent complicated. Further, if consent is made necessary for accessing state-provided services, many people may agree simply because they lack any other way to access that care.

Finally, health-care service providers – and everyone else – will have to comply with the data protection law, once it is adopted by Parliament. The current Bill already requires purpose limitation for collecting, processing, sharing, or retaining data; a use-based classification process would thus bring the ABDM ecosystem actors in compliance with this law as well.

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Green bonds to have long tenure, says Centre

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Asserting that the issuance of sovereign green bonds is part of the government's overall borrowing programme, Economic Affairs Secretary Ajay Seth has said these rupee-denominated papers will have long tenure to suit the requirement of green infrastructure projects.

Finance Minister Nirmala

Sitharaman in her Budget speech announced that the government proposes to issue sovereign green bonds to mobilise resources for green infrastructure. "The proceeds will be deployed in public sector projects which help in reducing the carbon intensity of the economy," she said. Mr. Seth said this was part of the overall borrowing for the next financial year.

Sitharaman to discuss aviation fuel's inclusion in GST regime

'Keeping a close watch on U.S. Fed's decisions and global inflationary pressures'

VIKAS DHOOT
NEW DELHI

The government will take up the inclusion of Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) in the Goods and Services Tax (GST) system before the GST Council, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Sunday, noting that high global fuel prices are a cause for concern.

Ms. Sitharaman was responding to a plea from Spicejet chairman Ajay Singh to lower the excise duty on fuel at least temporarily, as global crude oil prices are hovering around \$90 a barrel, and pursue the inclusion of ATF in the GST regime.

"Of course, just not for airlines, but the global price of fuel is now a concern for all



New measures: Nirmala Sitharaman said she will discuss the aviation sector's concerns with banks. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

of us. More so for airlines because it [the sector] has not yet picked up from the pandemic," the Minister said in a post-Budget interaction hosted by industry body Assocham.

The decision to include ATF in GST, she pointed out,

was not hers alone to make. "It is for the GST Council [to decide]. The next time we meet at the Council, I will put it on the table for them to discuss it," she said, adding that she will also discuss the aviation sector's concerns with banks.

"The revival of the economy is very clear... it may not be equal everywhere across the board, but yet it is observable. I would call upon Indian industry to ensure that we don't miss the bus this time," the Minister said at an interaction with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).

"We will be able to confidently say that we are fairly watchful of what is happening as regards the global strategic developments, the U.S. Fed's decisions and also the global inflationary pressures. And I can assure the leadership here that we shall not allow the Indian economy to suffer for want of preparations," she asserted.

Fixing frequencies first

Policymakers must make sure that the 5G economic payoff will outweigh the high cost

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's Budget announcement that the Government proposes to conduct the "required spectrum auctions" in 2022 to facilitate the roll-out of 5G mobile phone services in fiscal 2022-23 has understandably triggered speculation including about the feasibility of the timeline. The Government's keenness to expedite the roll-out was framed by Ms. Sitharaman as being propelled by an appreciation of the latest generation telecommunication technology's ability to serve as an enabler of economic growth and job creation. Commenting on the Budget announcement, Communications Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said TRAI was expected to submit its recommendations on the spectrum to be set aside for 5G by March, adding that the auction for the airwaves would be held soon after. While last week's flurry of announcements have raised the possibility that the next auction of telecom spectrum may be held within the next few months, there is little clarity on the approach the Government plans to take with regard to the crucial issues surrounding the introduction of 5G services. Foremost are questions around the particular frequencies the regulator is likely to recommend, the Government's plans on pricing the spectrum, and most crucially, the very viability of the new technology, both for the telecom companies and the economy as a whole. With the financially stressed private telecom service provider industry now reduced to a near duopoly, as Vodafone Idea continues to bleed losses and subscribers and even plans to convert some of its outstanding interest dues to the DoT into an equity stake that will make the Union government the largest shareholder, the sector's appetite for the highly capital intensive 5G technology is unlikely to be substantial at the moment.

That 5G represents an exponential leap in technology is beyond doubt. However, most countries that have commercialised 5G so far largely find the technology still predominantly deployed as an upgraded replacement for 4G in terms of end use, with the industrial and public utility applications envisaged still at least a few years away. Also, for the new technology to work at its optimum potential the Government would need to not only offer the key operational frequencies including the below 1 GHz, the C-Band frequencies around 3.5 GHz, and the higher 26 GHz but also crucially enable the transport or backhaul of signals between the base stations and telecom operator's core network by offering no- to low-cost E-Band airwaves. With the COVID-19 pandemic having shown up the existing mobile networks' inadequacies in terms of reach, especially in enabling the delivery of education to remote and rural students, it may make the most sense to delay the introduction of 5G until policymakers are sure its economic payoff will outweigh the high cost.

Death of a terrorist

Geopolitical and sectarian faultlines in Iraq and Syria enhance the threat from the IS

The death of Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi, the leader of the Islamic State (IS), has come at a time when the terrorist outfit has been trying to revive its fortunes in Iraq and Syria, its core region. A few weeks earlier, IS militants had carried out an ambitious attack – their largest since the death of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, IS founder, in 2019 – on a prison in north-eastern Syria's Hasakah, to free thousands of jihadists. But it was a failure as American soldiers joined the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), a Kurdish militia, to push back the militants. Qurayshi blew himself up along with his family, like his predecessor did three years ago, when U.S. special forces approached his hideout in Idlib, the province controlled by jihadists linked with al Qaeda. When he became the IS chief, the entity had transformed itself from a 'Caliphate', with control over some key cities in Iraq and Syria, into an underground insurgency with global branches. Under Qurayshi, the IS continued to operate like a loose confederation of autonomous networks. Its Afghan and West African branches expanded operations, while in Iraq and Syria, it staged occasional attacks – a reminder that it is only the physical Caliphate that has been destroyed.

It is more than a coincidence that both Baghdadi and Qurayshi were hiding in Syria's Idlib. The Syrian government's efforts to recapture the territory have not been successful as there is strong regional opposition, especially from Turkey which fears another refugee influx. The province is controlled by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, a globally designated terrorist outfit that was formerly known as Jabhat al-Nusra, the Syrian branch of al Qaeda. Idlib is now run by Abu Mohammad al-Joulani, the al Qaeda militant who was sent to Syria by Baghdadi in 2013, in the early stages of the civil war, to open a branch of his outfit. If a lasting solution to the jihadist control of Idlib is not found, the future Baghdadis and Qurayshis would also take refuge in this region. Another important lesson the IS's recent attacks provides is that the Syrian Kurds remain a key ally in the fight against the IS, as the Hasakah incident has shown. The U.S. should not throw them at the mercy of Turkey – like the Trump administration once did – once the IS threat is minimised. They should be incorporated into a larger regional counter-terror strategy. Lastly, the IS has learned how to survive these occasional setbacks. It has lost its Caliphate and its top commanders but there are thousands of foot soldiers spread across Iraq and Syria, waiting to strike. The still open wounds of the civil war in Syria and the lingering sectarian sentiments in Iraq have let them survive so far. As long as these geopolitical and sectarian faultlines remain in Iraq and Syria, the IS threat will not vanish.

Rare insect sighted in Seshachalam

A Tirupati photographer has clicked black percher, a dragon fly species, recently

A.D. RANGARAJAN
TIRUPATI

Black percher or black ground skimmer (*Diplacodes lefebvreii*), a species of dragon fly, was sighted for the first time in the Seshachalam Hill ranges recently. It belongs to the phylum arthropoda, class insecta and order odonata.

Keen interest

O. Inesh Siddhartha, a Tirupati-based wildlife photographer, clicked the species in the forest area abutting the city recently. The B.Sc. Microbiology graduate from Sree Vidyanikethan group started photography as a hobby, developed a keen interest towards macro photography and moved into the woods for an occasional click.



Up close: The dragonfly 'Black percher' sighted for the first time in the Seshachalam hill ranges. ■ O. INESH SIDDHARTHA

"I have seen many insects in the forest, but chose this black dragonfly as I somehow felt it was rare. It took four and a half hours for me to get a close view," Mr. Siddhartha told *The Hindu*.

According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) Red List of threatened species, Black Ground Skimmer was labelled in 2016 as of 'least

concern' in view of its wide prevalence in southern Eurasia and the whole of Africa.

The insect has been sighted in forest locations of Karnataka and coastal Andhra Pradesh, but this appears to be its maiden appearance in the Seshachalam ranges. It is known to move near forest streams.

Merit certificate

Mr. Siddhartha has received a merit certificate during the recent Republic Day celebrations in Chittoor for having scored first in the wildlife photography in the district by capturing the image of a red dragonfly in the past.

Though the black percher is not a rarity, he feels this documentation will go a long way in aiding further research on the species.

General Studies Paper I	
A	History of Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of art forms, literature and architecture from ancient to modern times;
B	Modern Indian history from about the middle of the eighteenth century until the present-significant events, personalities, issues;
C	Freedom struggle-its various stages and important contributors / contributions from different parts of the country;
D	Post-independence consolidation and reorganization within the country;
E	History of the world will include events from 18 th century such as industrial revolution, world wars, re-drawing of national boundaries, colonization, decolonization,
F	Political philosophies like communism, capitalism, socialism etc.-their forms and effect on the society
G	Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India;
H	Effects of globalization on Indian society;
I	Role of women and women's organization;
J	Social empowerment, communalism, regionalism & secularism
K	Salient features of world's physical geography;
L	Geographical features and their location- changes in critical geographical features (including water bodies and ice-caps) and in flora and fauna and the effects of such changes;
M	Important Geophysical phenomena such as earthquakes, Tsunami, Volcanic activity, cyclone etc.
N	Distribution of key natural resources across the world (including South Asia and the Indian subcontinent);
O	Factors responsible for the location of primary, secondary, and tertiary sector industries in various parts of the world (including India);
P	Population and associated issues;
Q	Urbanization, their problems and their remedies
General Studies Paper II	
A	India and its neighbourhood- relations;
B	Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate;
C	Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests;
D	Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.
E	Indian Constitution, historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure;
F	Comparison of the Indian Constitutional scheme with other countries;
G	Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein; Inclusive growth and issues arising from it;
H	Parliament and State Legislatures - structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these;
I	Structure, organization and functioning of the executive and the judiciary, Ministries and Departments;

J	Separation of powers between various organs dispute redressal mechanisms and institutions;
K	Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional bodies;
L	Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies;
M	Mechanisms, laws, institutions and bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections;
N	Salient features of the Representation of People's Act;
O	Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance- applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential;
P	Citizens charters, transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures;
Q	Issues relating to poverty and hunger,
R	Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States, Performance of these schemes;
S	Issues relating to development and management of social sector / services relating to education and human resources;
T	Issues relating to development and management of social sector / services relating to health
General Studies Paper III	
A	Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment;
B	Effects of liberalization on the economy, changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth;
C	Inclusive growth and issues arising from it;
D	Infrastructure Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc. Government budgeting;
E	Land reforms in India
F	Major crops, cropping patterns in various parts of the country, different types of irrigation and irrigation systems;
G	Storage, transport and marketing of agricultural produce and issues and related constraints;
H	e-technology in the aid of farmers; Technology Missions; Economics of Animal-Rearing.
I	Issues of buffer stocks and food security, Public Distribution System- objectives, functioning, limitations, revamping;
J	Food processing and related industries in India – scope and significance, location, upstream and downstream requirements, supply chain management;
K	Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices
L	Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology;
M	Indigenization of technology and developing new technology;
N	Developments and their applications and effects in everyday life;
O	Issues relating to intellectual property rights
P	Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment
Q	Disaster and disaster management
R	Challenges to internal security through communication networks, role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges, basics of cyber security;
S	Money-laundering and its prevention;

T	Various forces and their mandate;
U	Security challenges and their management in border areas;
V	Linkages of organized crime with terrorism;
W	Role of external state and non-state actors in creating challenges to internal security;
X	Linkages between development and spread of extremism.
General Studies Paper IV	
A	Ethics and Human Interface: Essence, determinants and consequences of Ethics in human actions;
B	Dimensions of ethics;
C	Ethics in private and public relationships. Human Values - lessons from the lives and teachings of great leaders, reformers and administrators;
D	Role of family, society and educational institutions in inculcating values.
E	Attitude: Content, structure, function; its influence and relation with thought and behaviour;
F	Moral and political attitudes;
G	Social influence and persuasion.
H	Aptitude and foundational values for Civil Service , integrity, impartiality and non-partisanship, objectivity, dedication to public service, empathy, tolerance and compassion towards the weaker sections.
I	Emotional intelligence-concepts, and their utilities and application in administration and governance.
J	Contributions of moral thinkers and philosophers from India and world.
K	Public/Civil service values and Ethics in Public administration: Status and problems;
L	Ethical concerns and dilemmas in government and private institutions;
M	Laws, rules, regulations and conscience as
N	sources of ethical guidance;
O	Accountability and ethical governance; strengthening of ethical and moral values in governance; ethical issues in international relations and funding;
P	Corporate governance.
Q	Probity in Governance: Concept of public service;
R	Philosophical basis of governance and probity;
S	Information sharing and transparency in government, Right to Information, Codes of Ethics, Codes of Conduct, Citizen's Charters, Work culture, Quality of service delivery, Utilization of public funds, challenges of corruption.
T	Case Studies on above issues.