

**PRESS
FREEDOM**



VEDHIK
DAILY NEWS ANALYSIS

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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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India slips to 150 in press freedom index

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Press Club of India (PCI) and the Indian Women Press Corps (IWPC) on Tuesday said attacks on press freedoms had seen an exponential rise and that India did not fare too well in this regard, ranking 150 out of 180 countries in the World Press Freedom Index compiled by the Reporters Sans Frontières.

On World Press Freedom Day, the PCI said journalists had been incarcerated under draconian laws for flimsy reasons, and on some occasions, faced threat to their lives as well from "self-styled" custodians of law in the social media space.

"The freedom of the press is integral to the functioning of a vibrant democracy. The media has to come together to reclaim its role towards realisation of this objective," they said in a joint statement.

India, Denmark to strengthen green strategic partnership

Focus to be on green hydrogen, renewable energy

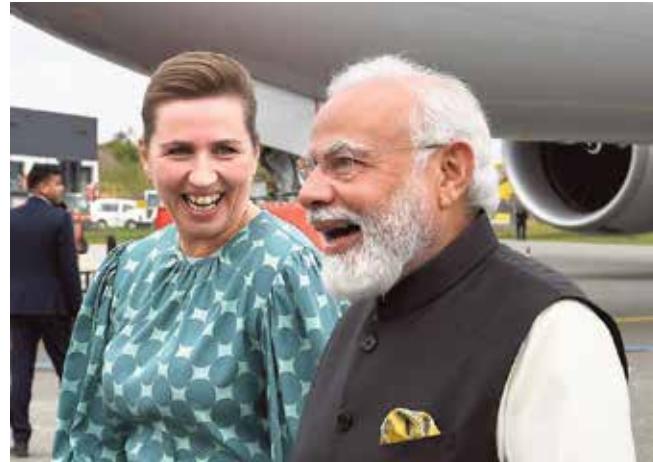
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
COPENHAGEN

India and Denmark on Tuesday agreed to further strengthen the Green Strategic Partnership with a focus on green hydrogen, renewable energy and wastewater management.

“During our discussions, we reviewed the joint work plan for the Green Strategic Partnership. I am happy that significant progress has been made in various fields, especially in the areas of renewable energy, health, ports, shipping, circular economy and water management,” Prime Minister Narendra Modi told reporters here after talks with his Danish counterpart, Mette Frederiksen.

A number of agreements covering sectors such as green shipping, animal husbandry and dairying, water management, energy, cultural exchange were inked after the bilateral talks.

In a joint statement issued



Good start: Narendra Modi is greeted by Mette Frederiksen upon his arrival in Copenhagen on Tuesday. ■ PTI

here, the two Prime Ministers welcomed the intention of both countries to expand the existing cooperation in the field of water management to meet present and future demand through a holistic approach.

Diaspora meet

Later, in an interaction with Indians living in Denmark, Mr. Modi stated that India had no role in exploiting the planet, but was at the forefront in the efforts to save it.

“India has been able to fulfil its climate actions be-

cause, unlike others who put all the responsibility of saving the planet on multilateral organisations, we see it as a responsibility of each citizen to do their bit to save the world,” Mr. Modi said.

India and Denmark also confirmed their continued collaboration in the field of antimicrobial resistance. India conveyed its acceptance of the Danish invitation to join the International Center for Antimicrobial Resistance Solutions (ICARS) as Mission Partner, the joint statement said.

Bill assent, a delay and the Governor's options

With its provision for definite choices, the Constitution makes it obligatory for the Governor to act without a wait



P.D.T. ACHARY

The State of Tamil Nadu has been witnessing a confrontation between the elected government and the State Governor on the question of giving assent to the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) Bill (linked to an all India pre-medical entrance test) passed by the State Assembly. Giving assent to a Bill passed by the legislature is a normal constitutional act performed by the Governor. But of late, even such normal acts have become a source of confrontation between State governments and the Governors. The conduct of Governors in certain States follows a definite pattern which causes a great deal of disquiet to elected governments as well as to those who have faith in the constitutional order.

On the advice of Ministers

The position of a Governor in the constitutional setup in India needs to be clearly understood in order to grasp the significance of the actions as well as responses of Governors in the politico-administrative contexts emerging from time to time in States. The Governor is an appointee of the President, which means the Union government. Although Article 154(i) of the Constitution vests in the Governor the executive power of the State, he is required to exercise that power in accordance with the Constitution. In other words, the Governor can act only on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers. Though there is not much deviation from the language used in the Government of India Act of 1935 in the context of the powers of the British-era Governors, it is a settled constitutional position that the

Governor is only a constitutional head and the executive power of the State is exercised by the Council of Ministers. In *Shamsher Singh vs State of Punjab* (1974), the Supreme Court had clearly affirmed this position in the following words: "We declare the law of this branch of our Constitution to be that the President and Governor, custodians of all executives and other powers under various Articles, shall, by virtue of these provisions, exercise their formal constitutional powers only upon and in accordance with the advice of their Ministers save in a few well known exceptional situations".

Dr. Ambedkar explained the position of the Governor in the Constituent Assembly as follows: "The Governor under the Constitution has no functions which he can discharge by himself: no functions at all." The Sarkaria Commission restates this position in its report, "it is a well-recognized principle that so long as the council of ministers enjoys [the] confidence of the Assembly its advice in these matters, unless patently unconstitutional, must be deemed as binding on the governor". In 2016, a five-judge constitution Bench of the Supreme Court (the Nabam Rebia case) reaffirmed the above position on the governors' powers in our constitutional setup.

The pathways available

It may be stated here that this analysis of the Governor's powers is meant to enable readers to have a perspective on the issue of the Governor of Tamil Nadu not deciding on the request for assent to the NEET Bill passed by the Assembly even after the passage of more than two months. What exactly are the options before the Governor in the matter of giving assent to a Bill passed by the Assembly?

Article 200 of the Constitution provides for four alternative courses of action for a Governor when a Bill after being passed by the legislature is presented to him for his



ARUNANGSU ROYCHOWDHURY

assent. Assent of the Governor or the President is necessary for a Bill to become law. The Governor can give his assent straightforwardly or withhold his assent. He may also reserve it for the consideration of the President, in which case the assent is given or withheld by the President. The fourth option is to return the Bill to the legislature with the request that it may reconsider the Bill or any particular provision of the Bill. The Governor can also suggest any new amendment to the Bill. When such a message is received from the Governor, the legislature is required to reconsider his recommendations quickly. However, if the legislature again passes the Bill without accepting any of the amendments suggested by the Governor he is constitutionally bound to give assent to the Bill.

The Governor of Tamil Nadu returned the NEET Bill to the Assembly for reconsideration of the Bill. Accordingly, the Assembly held a special session in the first week of February and passed it again and presented it to the Governor for his assent. He has not assented to the Bill so far.

A wrong view

In the meantime, some sources in the Raj Bhavan have reportedly said that the Constitution has not fixed any time line within which to act. This, then, is the crux of the issue. The point that is made by these sources is that since the Constitution has not fixed any time

frame, the Governor can postpone a decision indefinitely. Needless to say, it is a very wrong view.

While it is true that Article 200 does not lay down any time frame for the Governor to take action under this Article, it is imperative on the part of the Governor to exercise one of the options contained therein. A constitutional authority cannot circumvent a provision of the Constitution by taking advantage of an omission. The option mentioned in Article 200 is meant to be exercised by the Governor without delay. The context of Article 200 needs to be understood to be able to take the correct decision. After a Bill is passed by the legislature, it is sent to the Governor immediately. Although Article 200 does not say by what time the Governor should take the next step, it clearly and unambiguously states the options for him to exercise. It is obvious that if the Governor does not exercise any of those options he will not be acting in conformity with the Constitution because non-action is not an option contained in Article 200.

But sitting on the Bill after the Assembly has passed it again and sent it to him is impermissible under the Constitution. Article 200 (proviso) clearly says that when the Assembly reconsiders the Bill on the recommendations of the Governor and presents it to him, he shall not withhold assent. The Constitution makers could never have intended that the Governor could sit on a Bill passed by the legislature for as long as he wants and take advantage of the absence of any specific time frame.

In fact, the words used in Article 200 "... it shall be presented to the governor and the governor shall declare..." indicates that the Constitution requires the Governor to act without delay upon the presentation of the Bill. The reason is obvious. The legislature passes a Bill because there is an urgency about it. But if the Governor does not act, the will of the legisla-

ture is frustrated. It is not the constitutional policy to frustrate the legislative will as expressed through the Bill. Therefore, in view of the mandatory provision in the proviso to Article 200, it is clear that the Constitution does not permit the Governor to sit on a Bill after the Assembly re-submits it to him after reconsideration.

An undemocratic option

Giving assent to a Bill passed by the legislature is a part of the legislative process and not of the executive power. But the Constitution has by providing for definite options made it obligatory for the Governor to exercise any of those options without delay. Withholding of assent, though an option, is not normally exercised by Governors because it will be an extremely unpopular step. Besides, withholding assent to a Bill by the Governor, an appointee of the President, neutralises the entire legislative exercise by an elected legislature enjoying the support of the people. In the opinion of this writer, this option is undemocratic and essentially against federalism. In the United Kingdom it is unconstitutional for the monarch to refuse to assent to a Bill passed by Parliament. Similarly, in Australia, refusal of assent to a Bill by the crown is considered repugnant to the federal system.

In our constitutional system, the Governor or the President is not personally responsible for their acts. It is the elected government that is responsible. Under Article 361, the President or a Governor is not answerable to any court for anything done in the exercise and performance of their powers and duties. But when a Governor does not take any decision on a Bill which is put up for his assent, he is not acting in exercise and performance of the duties cast upon him.

P.D.T. Achary is former Secretary General, Lok Sabha

The court's burden

A national body may be better placed to plan upgradation of judicial infrastructure

It is unfortunate that the proposal by the Chief Justice of India (CJI) for a national judicial infrastructure corporation with corresponding bodies at the State level, did not find favour with many Chief Ministers at the recent joint conference of Chief Justices and Chief Ministers. A special purpose vehicle, vested with statutory powers to plan and implement infrastructure projects for the judiciary, would have been immensely helpful in augmenting facilities for the judiciary, given the inadequacies in court complexes across the country. However, it is a matter of relief that there was agreement on the idea of State-level bodies for the same purpose, with representation to the Chief Ministers so that they are fully involved in the implementation. The CJI, N.V. Ramana, who had mooted the proposal some months ago, sought to dispel the impression that a national body would usurp the powers of the executive, and underscored that it could have adequate representation of the Union/States. He had flagged the gulf between the available infrastructure and the justice needs of the people. If his proposal had been accepted, the available funding as a centrally sponsored scheme, with the Centre and States sharing the burden on a 60:40 ratio, could have been gone to the national authority, which would allocate the funds through high courts based on need. It is likely that Chief Ministers did not favour the idea as they wanted a greater say in the matter.

Given the experience of allocated funds for judicial infrastructure going unspent in many States, it remains to be seen how far the proposed State-level bodies would be successful in identifying needs and speeding up implementation. It will naturally require greater coordination between States and the respective High Courts. Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju has promised assistance from the Centre to the States for creating the required infrastructure, especially for the lower judiciary. While it is a welcome sign that the focus is on infrastructure, unmitigated pendency, chronic shortage of judges and the burgeoning docket size remain major challenges. CJI Ramana flagged some aspects of the Government's contribution to the burden of the judiciary – the failure or unwillingness to implement court orders, leaving crucial questions to be decided by the courts and the absence of forethought and broad-based consultation before passing legislation. While this may be unpalatable to the executive, it is quite true that litigation spawned by government action or inaction constitutes a huge part of the courts' case burden. The conversation between the judiciary and the executive at the level of Chief Justices and Chief Ministers may help bring about an atmosphere of cooperation so that judicial appointments, infrastructure upgradation and downsizing pendency are seen as common concerns.

SC not to decide on deferred political entry of officials

Petition seeks direction to legislature to frame law imposing a cooling-off period

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Legislators, not judges, have to determine whether a cooling-off period is required for government officials before they join politics and contest elections after retirement.

This was stated by a Bench of Justices Indira Banerjee and A.S. Bopanna while replying to a writ petition seeking a direction to the legislature to frame a law imposing a cooling-off period for retired bureaucrats with political ambitions.

The petitioner, Vivek Krishna, said the need to give time to cool off after retirement was necessary owing to a high probability that civil servants, while in service, may do favours for certain parties with an eye on a political future or a high position.

The Bench, in a recent

 There can be no doubt that civil servants should maintain the highest ethical standards of integrity and honesty, political neutrality, fairness and impartiality in the discharge of duties

SUPREME COURT



four-page order, categorically said that civil servants would be liable for stringent action in case of any such breach in ethical standards under the All India Services (Conduct) Rules of 1968.

Work ethic

"There can be no doubt that civil servants should maintain the highest ethical standards of integrity and honesty, political neutrality, fairness and impartiality in the discharge of duties," the court observed.

It said that for civil ser-

vants, "courtesy, accountability and transparency, integrity, impartiality, neutrality, transparency and honesty are non-negotiable".

However, the Bench stated that the court could not make a law to introduce a cooling-off period for civil servants. The question whether to make such a law or not was best left to the legislature.

Dismissing the petition, the court observed that the allegations made in it of bureaucrats deviating from

strict norms of political neutrality with a view to obtaining party ticket to contest elections were "vague, devoid of particulars and unsupported by any materials which could justify intervention of this court".

No solid data

"No particulars have been given of the number and/or percentage of erstwhile bureaucrats, who have contested elections on the ticket of a political party, not to speak of any act on their part, prior to their retirement, in deviation of the standards required of bureaucrats," it noted.

The court refused to intervene in the petition, saying it was for the appropriate authorities to decide whether there should be any rules/guidelines for bureaucrats contesting polls.

April exports cross \$38 bn, deficit widens

Outbound shipments slip 9.5% from March 2022 levels

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

India exported merchandise estimated at \$38.19 billion in April 2022, a 24.2% increase from a year earlier but 9.5% lower than the record \$42.2 billion shipped out in March, official estimates released on Tuesday show.

The trade deficit, however, expanded to \$20.07 billion from \$18.5 billion in March, as imports grew at a faster 26.6% pace to \$58.26 billion. Sequentially, goods imports declined 4.1% last month from March's level.

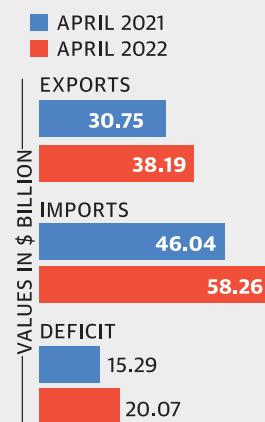
Gold imports fell by a sharp 73% year-on-year to just \$1.7 billion, even as coal imports more than doubled to over \$4.7 billion from \$2 billion a year earlier. Petroleum imports comprising crude and products surged 81.2% to exceed \$19.5 billion, and made up a third of the total imports in the month.

"India's goods trade deficit has crossed \$200 billion for a 12-month period for the first time in April 2022," said Richard Rossow, Wadhwani chair in U.S.-India Policy Studies at the Washington-based security think tank, CSIS. Petroleum imports alone had accounted for \$172 billion during this period, he pointed out.

ICRA chief economist Adi-

Trade tango

India's merchandise exports rose by 24% (year-on-year) to \$38 billion in April, while imports outpaced them by increasing 27% to \$58 billion



Most exported commodities	Growth (%)
Petroleum products	113.21
Engineering goods	15.38
Gems and Jewellery	-2.11
Most imported commodities	Growth (%)
Coal and coke	136.39
Petroleum and crude	81.21
Electronic goods	28.63

ti Nayar also noted that higher oil imports were entirely responsible for the trade deficit's rise from \$15.3 billion in April 2021.

"Unless commodity prices recede appreciably, we expect the merchandise trade deficit to print above \$20 billion in a majority of the months of 2022-23," she warned.

Ukraine war fallout

India's goods exports hit a record \$420 billion in 2021-22, while imports also hit an all-time high of about \$612 billion, leading to a \$192 billion deficit in the last financial year.

"Although the non-oil trade deficit remained stable in April, there was a shift in its composition, with a plunge in gold imports being offset by a rise in non-oil, non-gold imports such as coal and chemicals, an unsavoury yet expected fallout of the higher commodity prices engendered by the Russia-Ukraine conflict," Ms. Nayar observed.

Among India's top 10 export commodities, gems and jewellery exports dipped by a marginal 2.1% in April, while rice exports fell 14.24%.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

April exports cross \$38 billion, deficit widens

Engineering goods continued to see an healthy up-tick in exports, with outbound shipments up 15.4% to touch \$9.2 billion.

Readymade garments exports jumped 16.4% from April 2021 to hit \$1.5 billion, but were 13.2% lower than March 2022. Similarly, organic chemicals exports were up 26.7% year-on-year, but fell 8.1% month-on-month to a little over \$2.5 billion.

Drugs and pharmaceuticals, now India's fifth-largest exporting sector, saw a far sharper sequential decline in exports of 17.8% to \$1.96 billion, from \$2.39 billion in March 2022. On a year-on-year basis too, the sector's growth rate eased to 3.93%, from March's 4.2% pace.

Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal, who is steering the process to set a higher export target for this fiscal, had said last month that the Ministry was working on in-

cluding the pharma sector into the Remission of Duties and Taxes on Export Products (RoDTEP) export incentive scheme. Exports of chemicals and iron and steel, have also been left out of the scheme introduced last year.

While the signing of free trade pacts with the UAE and Australia is expected to offer new opportunities even as global trade growth is expected to slow down in the wake of the conflict in Europe, exporters have sought government attention to resolve critical operational concerns.

"High logistics costs and the unprecedented surge in raw material prices are hurting all sectors," pointed out Engineering Exports Promotion Council chief Mahesh Desai. "The government is well aware of the issues facing the sector and we hope policy actions would be taken to minimise the impact," he added.

Indigenous artillery gun passes validation trials

It met the needs of the Army: official

DINAKAR PERI

NEW DELHI

The indigenous Advanced Towed Artillery Gun System (ATAGS) developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) jointly with the private industry crossed a milestone this week by successfully completing the validation trials towards meeting the specifications of the Army.

The week-long Preliminary Service Quality Requirements (PSQR) validation re-trials were conducted at the Pokhran field firing ranges from April 26 to May 2.

Stating that there are very stringent specifications for accuracy consistency, the officials said the performance during trials were well within the specifications. “Guns of both companies performed well. The successful re-validation

trials pave the way for induction of the ATAGS into service,” the official said.

Most accurate gun

The ATAGS is a 155mm, 52-calibre heavy artillery gun jointly developed by Arma-ment Research and Deve-lopment Establishment (ARDE), the Pune-based laboratory of DRDO, in partner-ship with Bharat Forge and Tata Group.

In August 2018, the De-fence Acquisition Council had accorded approval for the purchase of 150 of these guns at an approximate cost of ₹3,365 crore which would be split between the two companies. The Army has a requirement of 1,580 artil-ler-y guns in this category.

The ATAGS has demon-strated a range of over 45 km, and an official termed it as the “most consistent and accurate gun in the world”.

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-drawal 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.