

VAJIRAM & RAVI

SURE SHOT MAINS TEST SERIES SENIORS 2025

General Studies SECTIONAL TEST 1 GS 2 (Polity +IR) Test Code - VR1222301	Evaluator Code: Date of Assignment: CQ:
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NAME:	GAUMYA MEHRA	Time allowed: 3 Hours
STUDENT ID:		Email:
UPSC ROLL NO:	0805131	Submission Date:
MOBILE NO:		24 th June 2025

QUESTION PAPER SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS

Please read each of the following instructions carefully before attempting questions:

There are TWENTY questions printed in ENGLISH. All the questions are compulsory.

The number of marks carried by a question/ part is indicated against it. Word limit in questions, wherever specified, should be adhered to. Any page or portion of the page left blank in the Question-cum-Answer Booklet must be clearly struck off.

Q No.	Marks	Q No.	Marks	Q No.	Marks
Q1	/10	Q8	/10	Q15	/15
Q2	/10	Q9	/10	Q16	/15
Q3	/10	Q10	/10	Q17	/15
Q4	/10	Q11	/15	Q18	/15
Q5	/10	Q12	/15	Q19	/15
Q6	/10	Q13	/15	Q20	/15
Q7	/10	Q14	/15	Total	/250

Instructions:-

- Legible Scanning:** Exercise due diligence in scanning your scripts for clear legibility
- Submissions** marred by poor scanning, notably those with illegible sections or blackened pages due to improper scanning, risk being excluded from the evaluation process.
- Non-Adherence Consequences:** Failure to comply with the aforementioned instructions may lead to the disqualification of your submission.

For Student Only

Start Time - 3:10 PM	End Time - 6:45 PM
Mode of Examination	Online <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Offline
Receiving date -	Dispatch date -

Parameters		Good	Average	Needs Improvement
Conceptual Understanding				
Understanding Demand of Question				
Structure	Introduction			
	Body			
	Conclusion			
Presentation-Illustrations, flowcharts, diagrams, etc.				
Language and Handwriting				
No. of Questions Attempted				
Adherence to Word Limit: Yes/No				

Mentor's Feedback

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Evaluator/Reviewer Suggestions



👍 😊 All the Best 😊 👍

Evaluator/Reviewer Suggestions



👍 😊 All the Best 😊 👍

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(Answer questions in NOT MORE than the word limit specified for each in the parenthesis. Content of the answer is more important than its length.)

1. "The Indian Constitution is not merely a borrowed document but a blend of global ideas and Indian realities." Discuss this statement in light of the criticisms directed at the Constitution. (10 marks, 150 words)

The Indian Constitution has been inspired from the constitutions of various countries such as US, UK, Australia, Japan, USSR (former Russia) etc. in order to painstakingly create a blend of global ideas and Indian realities, the successful adoption of which is celebrated every year on 26th January.

Indian Constitution as a blend of global ideas and Indian realities :

① Inspiration from global ideas -

① Fundamental Rights from USA to reflect and give reference to an already Indian conception of fundamental rights in the Nehru Report of 1928 (11 fundamental rights)

② Ideals of liberty, equality & fraternity from the French constitution which reflects our Indian reality of sovereignty and freedom from foreign rule

② Inspiration from Indian realities :

① The govt. of India Act-1935 was a colonial act that still makes up large portion of the Indian Constitution (federalism, Parliament etc)

Criticisms directed at the Constitution -

- ① Bulky nature of Constitution
↳ With ~~3~~ 420 Articles, 12 schedules and 25 parts, one of the bulkiest due to so many parts adopted from other countries.
- ② Some aspects in direct contravention with democratic nature of our country
↳ The emergency provision of Weimar Constitution criticized as India one of the very few ^{democracies} countries to have that.
- ③ Colonial colour in the Indian Constitution.
↳ Govt Act 1935 makes up bulk of the Constitution
- ④ Criticised as being a mere copy of the constitutions of other country.

However, there are some merits to it too;

- ① Conscious attempt at picking up only those aspects relevant to the Indian nation.
eg → election of Governor, Quasi Federalism from Canada.
- ② Liberal ~~ideation~~ ideals that make India a vibrant democracy.
eg → French Republic ideals, Fundamental Rights etc.

The Indian Constitution ~~has~~ finds inspiration from a variety of constitutions however its credibility lies in being contextually relevant to the Indian nation.

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2. How does judicial reasoning around Article 21 reconcile the tension between individual liberty and the state's interest in security and order? Substantiate with relevant case laws. (10 marks, 150 words)

Article 21, that guarantees right to life and personal liberty is touted as one of the most crucial fundamental rights bestowed by the constitution. Likewise, it has observed many relevant interpretative case laws.

Reconciliation in judicial reasoning around Article 21 case laws

① AK Gopalan Case 1950 →

→ This case law favours state's interest in security and order by upholding procedure established by law.

→ It is considered to be a narrow reading of Article 21.

② Maneka Gandhi Case 1978 —

→ This case upholds due process of law and upholds individual liberty

→ widens the scope of article 21.

③ Puttaswamy case

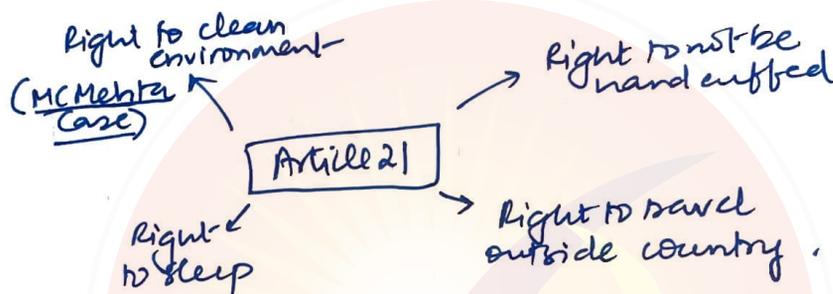
→ here the supreme court again favours individual liberty and grants

→ grants Right to Privacy under Article 21.

① Right to be forgotten →

↳ also a triumph of individual liberty
↳ onus on state to erase precious data of individuals for their sake.

⊛ Some other interpretations of Article 21
in granting individual liberty.



→ However, in some cases Supreme Court also ruled in favour of state's interest:

Eg → Recently, overruled right to Marriage under Article 21. Onus on state to put restrictions

Article 21 has been instrumental in championing individual liberty of people for most of the times, however, the Supreme Court has also been cognizant of maintaining balance by keeping state's interest in security in hand

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3. Peri-urban areas often fall into a governance vacuum between rural and urban administrative structures. Analyze the implications of this for local development and service delivery. (10 marks, 150 words)

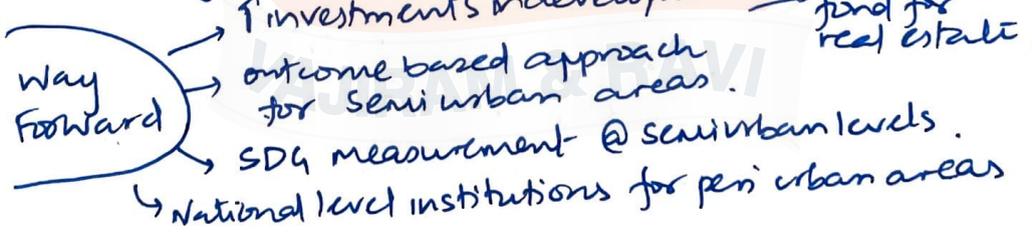
Peri-urban areas are cities that are just developing to become tier I cities and urban centres. This necessitates proper governance and administrative structures.

Governance vacuum between Rural and Urban structures -

- ① No separate codified law for peri urban areas.
 - ↳ 73rd and 74th amendment acts for rural and urban districts.
 - ↳ laws like PESA Act etc for villages
- ② No well defined roles amongst governance structures
 - ↳ Government staff often either accountable to Panchayati Raj institutions or Urban State government at large.
 - ↳ No dedicated staff for peri urban areas.
- ③ Lack of dedicated institutions -
 - ↳ eg NDMA, SDMA, DDMA @ national, state & district level but not peri urban level.
- ④ often ignored during fund devolution
 - ↳ grants either go to VLBs or PRIs or @ state level.

Implications for local development and service delivery

- ① leads to stalled development / stagnant development.
Eg → Stalled development projects like metros, apartments etc.
- ② Delay in service delivery and grievance redressal.
↳ No dedicated staff for this.
↳ No accountability since outcomes not measured @ semi-urban level.
- ③ Rise in pollution, unsustainable environments
↳ unchecked development, lack of control measures leads to this.
↳ more susceptible to disasters: urban floods, cyclones etc
- ④ Very few beneficiaries that qualify for schemes w/ socio economic development.
eg → "Missing middle" not included in PM Aayushman Bharat.



Peri urban areas are fast growing but require timely governance for them to actually grow and become ~~the~~ urban cities envisioned in the Smart-Cities scheme.

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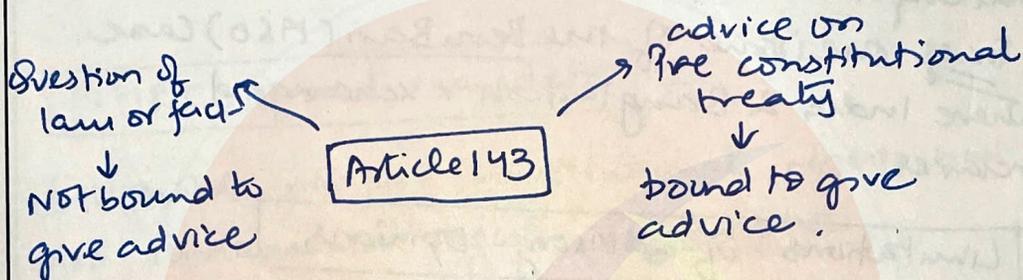
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4. Article 143 acts as a bridge between legal uncertainty and constitutional clarity. Evaluate the significance and limitations of advisory opinions by the Supreme Court under it, with suitable examples. (10 marks, 150 words)

Article 143 grants advisory jurisdiction to the supreme court wherein they can give advise to President on question of law or fact of public importance.



Bridge between legal uncertainty & constitutional clarity

- ① SC acts as an advisor to clarify laws and parts of constitution.
- ② helps President in better performing their executive, legislative, financial, judicial etc functions.

Significance of advisory opinions

- ① helps President gain legal expertise in performing their functions.
- ② & SC lends an unbiased advice to the President (due to separation of judiciary and executive).

③ Helps in clarifying position on controversial issues *in pa* that are important to the public

For eg.: SC helped clarify the Ayodhya Temple issue when President sought advice.

④ Clarifying/give solutions to completely new challenges not spelled out under Constitution

For eg. the issue of the Beni Bari (1960) case where India & Bangladesh exchanged enclaves.

Limitations of advisory opinions -

- ① Not judicially binding
↳ only advisory in nature
↳ discretion of President to follow or not.
- ② Might be criticized as crossing the boundary between judiciary and executive which goes against DPSP Article 52.

The President has time and again sought advice from Supreme Court over many pressing issues which has helped clarify a lot of grey areas in our legal treatise which has helped in governance

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5. Despite being a statutory body with a broad mandate, the NHRC lacks both teeth and independence. Examine the structural reforms needed to make it more effective. (10 marks, 150 words)

NHRC was created as a statutory body to align with the global principles of UNHRC, India being a founding member of it.

NHRC broad mandate -

- ① Upholds not just constitutional rights, but also Fundamental rights, legal rights, customary rights etc.
- ② Grievance redressal ~~for~~ keeping the diversity of India in mind.

How NHRC lacks both teeth & independence

- ① Isnt a legally binding body
↳ judgements not legally binding
- ② Recent SC judgement: NHRC is not a civil court.
- ③ In case of grievance against the state, creates conflict of interest as members of NHRC are appointed by the state.
- ④ ~~to~~ statute of limitation of ^{only} 1 year to bring a case to NHRC.

Case

Structural Reforms

- ① An independent body:
 - ↳ Members to be independent in majority to remove bias.
 - eg members of civil society groups, academic NGOs etc.
- ② Some legally binding force
 - ↳ Should have enforceability in some cases
 - For eg → power to take action in case of heinous crimes like custody etc.
- ③ Remove statute of limitation of one year.
- ④ Legal mandate of going on Parliament to give reasons for non compliance of NHRC's advice upon their Report submitted to Parliament.
- ⑤ Search Committee to also have non government majority.

The recent removal of Dr. NHRC from the UN HRC for the second time on grounds of unfairness of NHRC rings some serious alarm bells for effective structural change in the NHRC.

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6. Compare and contrast the Electoral College system of the United States with India's indirect presidential election. What do these differences reveal about the nature of federalism and democracy in the two countries?

(10 marks, 150 words)

There is a difference in the electoral college of US and India for Presidential elections owing to the fact that US follows a Presidential system while India follows Prime Ministerial.

Electoral college system of US	Electoral college (EC) system of India
① Direct election: all <u>US citizens</u> participate.	① Indirect election: EC consists of <u>elected members of legislative assembly and Parliament</u> .
② US citizens vote for an electoral college which in turn votes for President.	② Similar; but happens in two different elections instance.
③ follows First past the post for electing the EC which then follows proportional representation by single transferable vote.	③ follows proportional representation by single transferable vote throughout.
④ consists of <u>primaries</u> & <u>caucuses</u> .	④ considers <u>proposers</u> and <u>seconders</u> (50 each).

Similarities → proportional representation by single transferable vote.
→ indirect nature at some level.

Nature of federalism & democracy -

① Election of president of US directly lends him a lot of power, which is ~~with~~ not the case with the Indian President.

So, US prez = de facto ⇒ Presidential system
Indian prez = de jure ⇒ prime ministerial system.

② Owing to a pure federal nature of US, the ~~the~~ citizens of each state directly elect the President. India follows a quasi federal approach, so state legislature party elects the Indian President.

③ US President is a "democratic head" in its true sense; Indian President is more of a check on the power of the Prime Minister (de facto head).
~~eg → makes sure can conduct~~ can disqualify govt if in minority govt.

Thus, there are many similarities and differences between the Indian & US President which better helps understand the difference of the government machinery of both the countries.

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7. The First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) system, while simple and stable, fails to reflect the true diversity of voter preferences in India's electoral outcomes. In light of this statement, discuss the implications of shifting from a First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) system to Proportional Representation (PR). (10 marks, 150 words)

First Past the Post system is followed in India for the Prime Ministerial General elections since 1950. Its simplicity & stability makes it a convenient election method in a large and diverse country like India.

Failure to reflect true nature of diversity

- ①. Political Parties representing minority interests can't find their place in this system
- ②. Majority party gets elected despite minority votes.
 - ↳ A party needs votes in majority in relation to its competitors only.
 - ↳ Even if a smaller segment of population votes for a political party, if it gets the highest votes, it wins.
- ③. Ex increase in exercise of NOTA (None of the Above option)
 - ↳ reflects dissatisfaction with the political parties and the political climate.
 - ↳ doesn't truly capture electoral aspirations of people of India.

Implications of shifting from FPTP to PR

↳ Positive implications -

- ① Gives due representation to minority sections of the population in the Parliament.
- ② Reflects "true popularity" of votes of ruling party.
↳ It has to have gotten 50% + 1 votes in order to form government.
- ③ ~~Reflects~~ In consonance with system followed in vibrant democracies eg - Scotland, Ireland.
- ④ Independent candidates also have higher preference of probability of winning

↳ Negative implications -

- ① Very long & arduous process.
↳ for a country like India with 1.44 bn people, it might take a very long time.
- ② Difficult & complex to understand.
↳ Not all sections of society may be able to understand this complex system.
↳ goes against transparent elections.
- ③ huge burden on finances, staff etc.
↳ huge burden on revenue expenditure of the government.

The FPTP may have some disadvantages but it however it had been chosen fit for India despite its large population because it works well for the Indian election climate. ~~Due to this~~
A high ~~of~~ 65.8% of election voters want - lends FPTP some credibility.

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8. "Justice delayed is justice denied" is a common adage. Explain how the Black Coat Syndrome challenges this principle and how Lok Adalats can restore faith in the justice delivery system. (10 marks, 150 words)

Black coat syndrome is caused due to anxiety induced in the general public from approaching legal institutions and due to the many bottlenecks they face. The term had recently been used by the President of India.

"Justice delayed is justice denied" -

① WHY PEOPLE EXPERIENCE BLACK COAT SYNDROME -

①. Complications in legal work -
↳ the need for many documents required, multiple steps involved in simply approaching the court of law adds to anxiety

②. Delay in proceedings & judgements -
↳ may cause apprehensions among people of the final judgement.

Eg → in case of delay in President's clemency powers (or SC's final matter) - causes anxiety to the accused: as noted in the Bachchan case.

Lok Adalats, thus, have been formed by the NALSA Act in providing timely & inexpensive legal aid following a people centric approach.

How Lok Adalats can restore faith -

- ① They often follow principles of natural justice rather than relying on legal texts.
↳ might help un-complicate legal proceedings for people.
- ② Strongly prefers mediation alternative redressal mechanisms like mediation & arbitrations.
↳ helps in people having more agency in resolving issues with Lok Adalats being more of a helping hand.
- ③ helps in taking the load off of higher courts which ^{encourages} ~~helps~~ people approaching Lok Adalats.
- ④ cases ^{judgements} ~~of~~ are binding and final.
↳ no worry of stretching out the issue by going for appeals and waiting out for longer.
- ⑤ staff trained for the purpose of hand holding citizens and making the judicial process easy & comfortable.

Lok Adalats were formed to give force to Article 39A, which puts onus on the government to make legal recourse accessible, free and streamlined for the citizens of our country.

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9. India's strategic autonomy faces a litmus test as NATO increasingly pivots to the Indo-Pacific. Examine how India can balance its historical non-alignment with emerging partnerships with NATO member-states. (10 marks, 150 words)

With the focus of NATO countries to the Indo Pacific, as seen in the formation of QUAD and UK showing interest in the CPTPP (Comprehensive & Progressive agreement for Trans Pacific Partnership), India is caught at a crossroads.

Why the shift towards Indo Pacific?

1. Counter China's presence in the Indo Pacific and dismantle hegemony (String of Pearls theory)
2. Diversifying trade by relying on ASEAN countries. eg CPTPP.

India's position wrt NATO's shift

1. India is not a member of NATO owing to its non aligned policy.
2. however, it can show interest by collaborating with NATO as it can give it an edge in the Indo Pacific.

How India can balance $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{historical non alignment} \\ + \\ \text{emerging partnerships} \end{array} \right. \rightarrow$

- ①. India can stay non aligned with NATO by collaborating with NATO & not being its member.

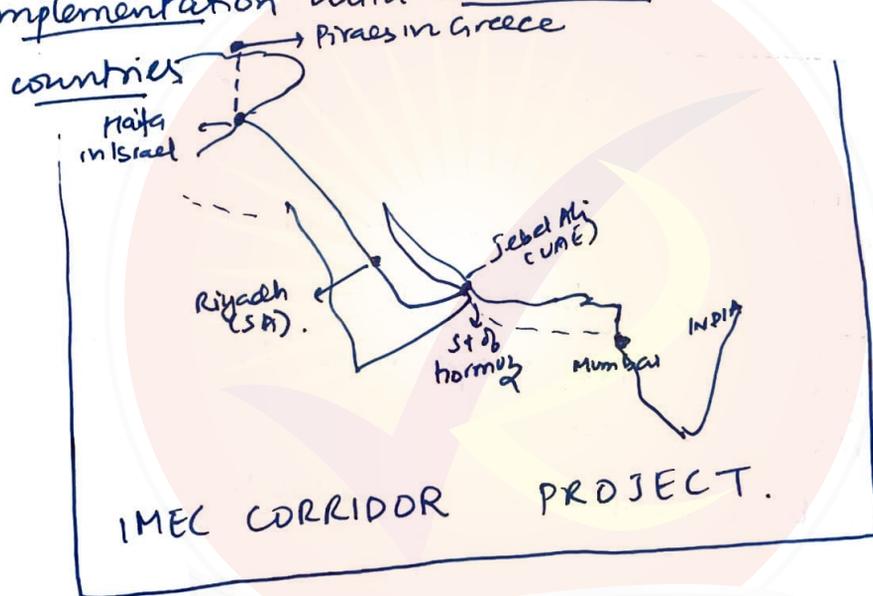
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- ② ~~that~~ ^{all} collaborations with NATO must strictly be non military based.
Eg China cross with the fact that India joined QUAD even though it is not a military organisation.
- ③ Enter into trade based partnerships
 - ↳ helps India form deeper ties with ASEAN countries.
 - ↳ diversify trade (especially important amidst rising tariffs from US, & protectionism by China).
- ④ Learn expertise from NATO nations.
 - ↳ understand governance structures of NATO nations
 - ↳ people to people contacts.
 - ↳ Sherpa meets.
- ⑤ Form QUAD like organisations with selected NATO states to increase presence in Indo Pacific.
- ⑥ Military drills & ^{maritime} exercises with NATO states in Indo Pacific

NATO partnerships can help India leverage itself in Indo Pacific but care must be taken to strictly align with our non alignment foreign policy -

10. "Corridor-based diplomacy marks a new phase in global connectivity politics." Examine the strategic implications of India's participation in the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC). How will it transform India's position in global politics? (10 marks, 150 words)

"Corridor based diplomacy" aims to strengthen real time, physical connections beyond borders amongst countries. Smart-diplomacy in the IMEC can help in its seamless implementation with collaborative stakeholders



Implication of India's participation

- ① ~~Independence~~ ↓ Reliance on nations like Iran (due to India's often troubled relations with Iran & stoppages of the Chabahar project, IMEC can be an alternative route).
- ② Can serve as a ^{message} ~~symbol~~ of countering China's presence in the region in the form of Belt & Road Initiative.

- ③. Can reduce logistics cost of trade & help reduce import bill too.
- ④. Help in forming future FTAs with European nations owing to better connectivity with them.
- ⑤. Help in formation of future economic unions with the countries involved.
- ⑥. Bypass problematic pathways such as golden triangle (Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran) that are known for ~~the~~ illicit drugs & money laundering nexus.
- ⑦. Give impetus to India as an important stakeholder in regional & global politics
↳ Eg might help with the permanent seat proposal at UNSC as well.
- ⑧. Contribute to India becoming 30 trillion economy in 2047.

India, at its 2023 G20 meet, had an ambitious but doable goal of IMEC. It can help leverage India's position in the global sphere.

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11. The ambiguous nature of the Governor's discretionary powers contributes to the perception of the office as a 'super-constitutional' entity. Examine the statement and suggest if there should be clearer constitutional limitations?

(15 marks, 250 words)

~~There~~ Many judicial interpretations have made it clear that ~~to wherever~~ ~~the~~ advice of ~~the~~ Council of Ministers is not mentioned, Governor is to have discretionary powers.

Instances of ambiguity of Governor's discretionary nature → super constitutional entity.

①. Governor, it is said holds more power than the President insofar as power with Council of Ministers is concerned.

②. In Article 74(2); the President can reject ~~the~~ ^{second instance} ~~advice~~ ^{however, no such} Governor can reject the advice of C.M.s which is final & binding.

③. Discretion in summoning & proroguing the State legislature.
↳ has led to bypass of ~~no~~ ^{no} confidence motions on minority ruling parties.

④ Can recommend what laws to save for President's consideration.
↳ while Constitution outlines the nature of these laws, Governor's discretionary powers are often exercised.

⑤. Does discretion when given additional charge of UTs

⑥. With regards to developmental & administrative aspects

↳ establishing separate development boards (eg Vidharba etc)

↳ admin of tribal areas in Assam.

Why need of clear constitutional limitations

1. Since there is similarity in office of Governor & President. Discretionary powers to the Governor challenges that notion & makes it unfair.
2. To counter interference with working of state legislature. (Summoning / Proroguing need advise of CMs).
3. To keep in line with federal nature & uphold state autonomy.

7. To preserve popular majority government & not replace with ruling party.

However, discretion is important too —

1. Owing to quasi-judicial nature of our country
2. To administer UTs with no ~~govt~~ LG, administrator.
3. To keep check of state legislature's law making power.
4. To work towards good governance of certain areas of the country (tribal areas, subordinated areas etc).
5. To keep check of constitutional machinery of the state as per Article 355 & Article 356.

The governor's powers have been carefully defined to keep in mind the unique quasi-federal nature of the ~~the~~ country.

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12. "Personal liberty, dissent, and justice are not merely abstract ideals but operational pillars of Indian democracy." In this reference, discuss the implications of Section 152 of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) on free speech and democratic dissent. (15 marks, 250 words)

The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita Act replaces the Indian Penal Code (1960) to reflect ~~the~~ ~~new~~ ideals of a free independent, modern India.

Implications of Sec 152 of BNS -

- ① Removal of "sedition" as a crime
- ② Introduction of "organized crime" as committed by multiple people for a single goal.

Positive implications of Sec 152 BNS -

- ①. While the subject matter of sedition is still there in BNS - to not ~~also~~ call it sedition goes in line with the Kedarnath case where sedition is to be applied conservatively as a principle.

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②. It helps in asserting personal liberty as under Article 21 by not communalizing people merely ~~exerci~~ criticising the government.

③. Gives impetus to a healthy vibrant-democracy.

↳ can help in climbing up ranks in the democracy index

④. Helps takes constructive approach to government criticism.

↳ Govt. can internalise its criticisms and ~~take~~ work on it as a method of grievance redressal.

⑤. helps give justice to many, especially those under trial due to sedition charges

⑥. helps in clearly understanding valid forms of govt. ~~criticism~~ ^{hatred} which may harm the sovereignty & integrity of the country & differentiate with mere criticism.

Negative impact -

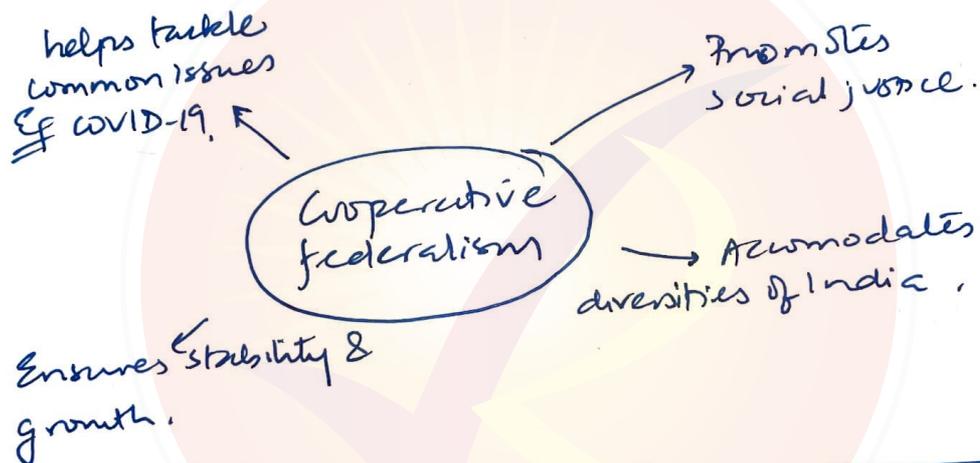
- ①. harms sovereignty, integrity of the nation.
- ② Might dilute ~~provisions of~~ or implementation of UAPA etc which helps in controlling fringe ideologies in the country.
- ③. In the ^{light of} recent volatile geopolitical climate, a stricter take on sedition might help govt. to be privy of anti national sentiments.
- ④. Reasonable restrictions on personal liberty is mandated in the constitution.

personal liberty, dissent & justice are pillars of Indian democracy which need to be granted to citizens, the BNS does just that, keeping in line with the current times.

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13. The success of cooperative federalism in India depends on the effective functioning of constitutional and non-constitutional bodies. Do you agree? Discuss with examples. (15 marks, 250 words)

Cooperative federalism refers to the collaboration of states & the centre which gives impetus to the federal nature of the country.



Why cooperative federalism depends on constitutional & non-const bodies

①. ~~Proper~~ Proper cognizance of overwater disputes if resolved timely by Tribunals made by Parliament under Article 262 reflect a spirit of cooperative federalism.

②. Similarly, interstate councils under Article 263, too can help with that.

③ The Inter State Councils (Const. bodies) need to meet every year to foster coop federalism.

So far, they have met very rarely.

④ Similarly, non const bodies like zonal councils help in understanding region specific needs of states

A revival of these is very important.

⑤. LST Council has clearly spelled out voter share of states at $\frac{2}{3}$ rd of the total.

↳ This helps in coming up with decisions widely acceptable with states.

⑥. Collaboration on centrally sponsored schemes amongst states also helps.

⑦. Rajya Sabha, a constitutional body, represents the states.

↳ states ~~can~~ request R can always make laws in state list keeping favour of states in mind.

Factors hindering coop federalism

- ①. Multiple bodies
↳ Like zonal councils & Interstate councils might create confusion.
- ②. Interstate Council only recommendatory in nature.
- ③. Unequal distribution of financial resources between states & centre.

④. Way Forward

- Sarkaria Commission: Interstate Council decisions to be binding.
- Prevent misuse of President's veto in legislation.
- ↳ Give binding powers to other bodies.

Thus, following these 4 steps may better be able to create a federal cooperative federal system that is strengthened by strengthened ~~by~~ bodies.

Introduction

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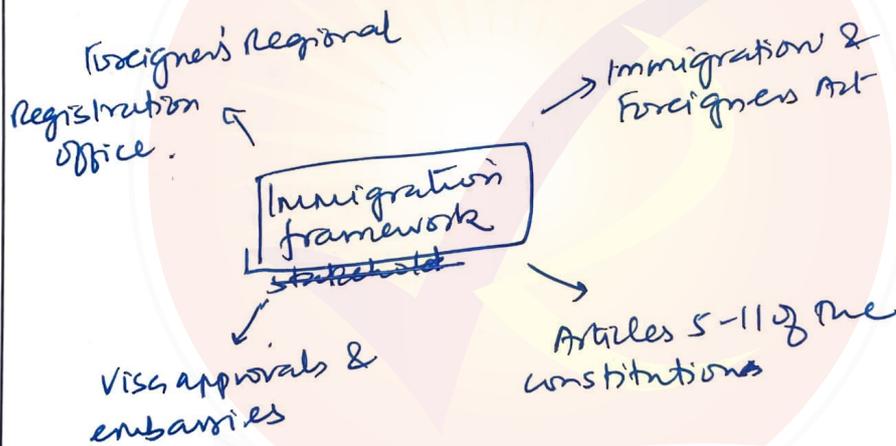
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14. India's immigration framework has long lacked a comprehensive and modern legal foundation. In this context, critically assess the significance of the Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025. (15 marks, 250 words)

India's immigration framework is largely assessed by the Immigration & Foreigners Act 2025. This act helps in streamlining immigration processes.



lack of comprehensive & modern legal foundation.

- ①. lack of a single act governing all VISA, immigration processes (Passport Act, Registration of Foreigners Act).
- ②. untimely & arduous processes that take a long time.

- ③. Lax behaviour on ~~the~~ violations by people on laws.
- ④. ~~No ~~provis~~~~ Lax provisions wrt sovereignty & security of the nation.
- ⑤. Lack of proper monitoring of foreigners entering the country.

Significance of Immigration & Foreigner's Act-2025

- ① Streamlines & consolidates various migration laws.
Eg. Passport Act, Registration of Foreigners Act etc.
- ② Increases penalties for immigration crimes
- ③ Includes clause on national "threat to national security".
- ④. Strengthens all the existing rules for visitors.
- ⑤. Burden of proof on whether person is a foreigner lies on individual.
- ⑥. Every Indian institution (hospitals, schools etc) admitting foreigners to comply with legal provisions.

Immigration & Foreigners Bill 2025

- Pros.
- ① Single Act that governs immigration
 - ② Stricter check of immigr. rants.
 - ③ Hold Indian institutions liable too.
 - ④ Burden of proof on immigr. rants \Rightarrow \downarrow user load on FRROs

- Cons.
- ①. Might dismaude some foreigners.
 - ② Implementation issues - especially when it comes to modernizing & consolidating data.

Thus, for the first time in 2025 our immigration process has been streamlined in such a manner. This will help ~~the~~ government entities and reduce much significant load on them.

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15. "A judiciary that is immune from accountability risks becoming opaque and unresponsive." Critically analyze this statement in the context of recent developments concerning the Indian judiciary. (15 marks, 250 words)

The Indian Judiciary is an independent body as enshrined in the Constitution. However, with no checks & balances it runs the risk of being opaque & unresponsive.

Recent developments concerning Judiciary

- ① Rise in Judicial ~~Activism~~ Activism.
Eg → TN Coventions. Case.
↳ Some critics even call it Judicial Overreach.
- ②. Prevalent practice of "Uncle Judges"
↳ nepotism being prevalent in Indian Judiciary.
- ③. Increase in operational issues.
↳ too many absences of staff

↳ increasing no. of transfers,

Consequences of opacity of Indian Judiciary

- ① Violation of Article 50
↳ violation of strict separation of Judiciary & Executive
- ②. Increase of nepotism, decline of merit
- ③. Incr in number of ~~cases~~ pending cases.
- ④ Decline ^{in implementation} of constitutional ideals, like fundamental rights, DPSPs etc.
- ⑤. Prevents ~~it~~ sound & wise judicial judgements in line with current times.
Eg recent SC case: judge asked a victim to marry her rapist.

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⑥ ~~There is~~ No recourse of right to information in case of ~~any~~ any corrupt activity -
↳ SC. exempted from RTI.

Way Forward →

- ①. Legislative proposals/laws that keep check on judiciary without undermining powers.
- ②. Discussions around Judiciary in public spaces, social media
- ③. Move to include SC in RTI Act.
- ④. Crackdown on nepotism + unneeded transfers.

The SC is the protector & guardian of our fundamental rights. In light of the above it's important to remember a Latin phrase that has judicial relevance - quis custodiet ipsos custodes ("who will guard the guards").

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16. Discuss how the concept of 'asymmetric federalism' has been employed in the Indian Constitution to address regional disparities and identity concerns. Critically evaluate its implications for cooperative governance. (15 marks, 250 words)

Asymmetric federalism

takes cognizance of the fact that - no two ~~two~~ regions/states in India are the same, hence require a case by case approach on looking at its government- structure & functions.

fostering similar type of cooperative governance in ~~these~~ similar states

Asymmetric federalism

Preference to sovereign economically poorer states.
eg. Eastern states (Bihar etc).

higher cognizance of newly formed states & UTs
eg. J&K, Ladakh.

recognizing special needs of certain states
eg- tribal nature of NE states.

Now it has been employed in Indian Constitution -

①. Special provisions in Part 6 of constitution for several states.

2. Inclusion of ~~5th~~ & ~~6th~~ 5th & 6th schedule
↳ Tribal Areas & scheduled areas.
↳ autonomous ^{councils} ~~districts~~ which carry out implementation of customary laws

3. Governor's functions towards certain areas of the country.
↳ development board for Marathwada, Vidharbha in Maharashtra.
↳ determining compensation in mining areas for certain district.

4. Special officer for linguistic minorities for certain states.

Implications for cooperative governance →

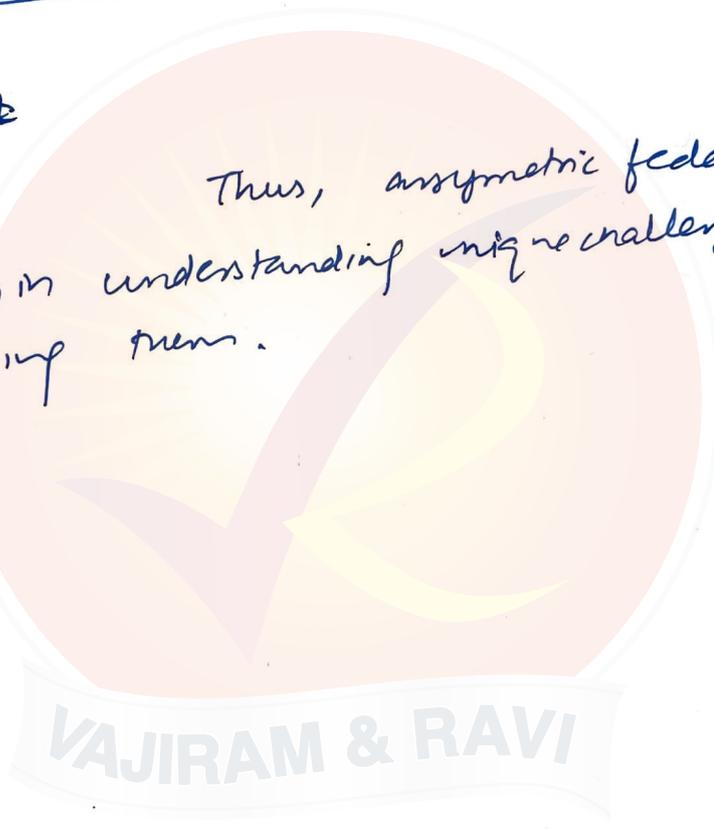
- ①. Says no to one size fit all approach
- ②. Recognizes unique challenges & features of diversity of India.
- ③. helps in preserving culture, heritage, mother tongue of various regions.
- ④. Formation of UTs - ~~for~~ helps in greater oversight of Centre over them.

⑤ Protects regional groups ~~from~~ insofar as their own customary laws is concerned
↳ lets them retain their own land (Forest Rights Act).

⑥. higher for Discretionary grants to underdeveloped regions.

~~Implication~~

Thus, asymmetric federalism helps in understanding unique challenges & addressing them.



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17. The Election Commission of India has stood as a resilient institution for over 75 years, yet recently India was classified as a "flawed democracy." In this context, critically analyze the role and limitations of the ECI and suggest key reforms to enhance its credibility and effectiveness. (15 marks, 250 words)

ECI ~~is~~ is a constitutional body that ensures free & fair elections in India. It has been conducting elections in India since 1950.

ECI as resilient institution -

1. Gained success in conducting FPTP direct elections in 1950 despite of ^a large & unaware/illiterate population which other nations said would be a "gamble".
2. Introduced various methods to streamline elections & keep a check.
 - ↳ ~~to~~ C-VIIL app
 - ↳ SVEEP.
 - ↳ Model Code of Conduct.

③ helped in digitising elections all across the country
↳ Electronic voter machines.

④. Conducts elections not just @ national but state level as well.

⑤ helped gain 65% voter turnout in 2024 general elections.

Role of ECI -

1. Conduct nationwide + statewide elections.
2. Ensure free & fair elections.

Why India's classified as electoral flawed democracy. -

①. lack of integrity & transparency in various state finance commissions.

②. ^{Parties} Taking advantage of vulnerable groups.

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→ Rise of dissent on the citizens.

④.

Key reforms -

1. Diversity & enlarge Selection Committee to the EC (Sarkaria Commission, SC).
2. EC expenditure to be charged on CFI.
3. ↑ Accountability of state Finance Commissions.
4. Debar offices for post retirement for all EC members.

ECI has won many laurels for conducting steady elections in our country however key reforms are still needed to transform India into a vibrant democracy.

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18. "India's China policy today reflects a model of competitive coexistence rather than confrontation or appeasement." Critically evaluate this approach in light of India's strategic autonomy and regional interests. (15 marks, 250 words)

India & China waves of late, in the past seen clashes at borders which has led to ~~passive~~ competitive coexistence rather than either confrontation/appeasement.

Instances of competitive coexistence -

- ①. India trying to bridge the trade with China
 - ↳ relying on western partners like US,
 - ↳ Atmanirbhar Bharat.
- ②. Encouraging FDIs from ~~more~~ other countries like UK, Japan etc.
- ③. Pause on diplomatic relations stall on pressing issues.

- ④ Abstaining from china related matters in international organisations like SCO.
- ⑤. No effort in developing trade talks to ease import bill, create FTAs etc.

Why this should continue -

- ① India will still benefit by choosing alternative trade partners.
 - ↳ recent FTA with UK.
 - ↳ might even lead to Bilateral Investment Treaty.
- ②. Can also strengthen control over Indo Pacific by strengthening relations with ASEAN, CPTPP.
- ③. Diplomatic talks often lead to breakdown/ deadlock.
- ④. Can help India focus on constructivist-geopolitical ~~work~~ work.
 - ↳ focus on IMEZ.

✍

Why India should confront China.

- ① On the other hand India should try to have diplomatic talks with China to resolve border issue.
- ② Competitive coexistence just a "temporary bandage" & not a sustainable solution.
- ③ helps in restoring regional security.
- ④ May even help gain positive feedback from neighbouring states (Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh etc).

Thus, India should keep focus on both ~~cooper~~ competition but at the same time develop a robust diplomatic force capable of ^{either} confrontation or appeasement to bring about resolution to a long standing issue.

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19. Despite advocating a 'Neighbourhood First' policy, India continues to face challenges in maintaining harmonious relations with its immediate neighbours. Analyze the reasons behind this gap and propose steps to enhance the effectiveness of India's neighbourhood diplomacy. (15 marks, 250 words)

India's Neighbourhood First Policy helps India in maintaining regional autonomy & stable relations with neighbouring states.

Challenges in maintaining Neighbourhood 1st Policy

①. Growing closeness of neighbours with China:

↳ Pakistan & China on Belt & Road Initiative.

↳ Sri Lanka relying on China for ports.

②. Border skirmishes & control -

↳ China claiming Arunachal Pradesh

↳ Nepal claiming parts of Uttarakhand.

↳ ~~India~~ ~~China~~ Galwan valley confrontation in 2020.

- ③ Strict nexus between government institution & terrorism. For ex. Pakistan \Rightarrow heightened attention to borders.
- ④ India, walling off countries criticising it.
Ex - recent closure of Indian ports to imported Bangladeshi goods.

Why this is happening -

- ①. China's hegemony over neighbouring countries + leverage by building development projects for them.
- ②. Border issues & controversies.
- ③. SAARC being functionally defunct since 2016.
- ④. India's focus on other regions. (Act-East Policy, Far East Policy, IMEC etc).

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Steps to enhance effectiveness of policy. -

- ① Open informal dialogue
→ people to people contact.
↳ private persons ~~etc~~ talks (e.g. businessmen etc).
- ② Strengthen trade + offer incentives.
- ③ Revive SAARC.
- ④ Resolve border disputes with Nepal
- ⑤ Arrive at ~~later~~ resolution with China wrt trade and then later @ a geopolitical front.

Gujral Doctrine might help in the nascent stage but government to government talks are needed to truly strengthen this policy.

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20. Evaluate the strategic rationale and challenges for India in promoting a unified regional security architecture in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), in light of the multiple competing forums. How can India overcome this institutional fragmentation? (15 marks, 250 words)

India has of late increased its presence in the IOR for largely security reasons. IOR region has direct bearing on our maritime security.

Rationale -

- ① Direct bearing on maritime security
- ② Growing presence of China in IOR.
cf port development in Sri Lanka.
- ③ Pirates & illegal activities from the Gulf of Aden near Somalia.
- ④ To counter effect of multiple competing forums & countries.
cf US vessels in IOR, China's presence etc.

Challenges -

- ① Competing for IOR maritime resources of Polymetallic nodules in southern IOR.
- ② China's growing hegemony of string of Pearls theory.
- ③ Maritime Terrorism → threat to India directly.
Eg → Mumbai Attack 2008.
- ④ Piracy & Smuggling from important choke points like Gulf of Aden, Strait of Hormuz etc.
- ⑤ Illegal migration which is often unchecked eg → Myanmar's Rohingyas, Sri Lanka etc.

How to overcome this institutional fragmentation -

- ① Strengthen maritime institutions → Indian Navy - continuous patrols.
ICG - ass patrols + assist customs dept.
- ② Cooperative stance with regional countries & help formulate common institutions eg → IORA etc.

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③. Support freedom of navigation & keep check on China.
↳ coordinate with QUAD to continue China ~~of~~ MALABAR exercise.

④. Deploy Marine Police Force for patrolling & surveillance to check on int illegal migration

⑤ Thus, taking such measures is in line with India's call for free & open Indo Pacific which also extends to the IOR region. With an institution which is robust; IOR can be made a ~~free~~ region free of hegemony & control.

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