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The Analyst

CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout

27th September 2024



27th September 2024

CONTEXT: Union cabinet has accepted the report prepared by High level committee advocating for simultaneous elections in India.

- What is the idea of Simultaneous elections ?
- Is this a new idea for India ?

WITH THE UNION Cabinet accepting the report prepared by the High-Level Committee advocating for simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and state assemblies, the argument over "One Nation One Election" (ONOE) has taken centre stage again. Some have taken the view that simultaneous elections would benefit the citizenry at large, others argue that it would serve as an assault on the basic structure of the Indian Constitution.

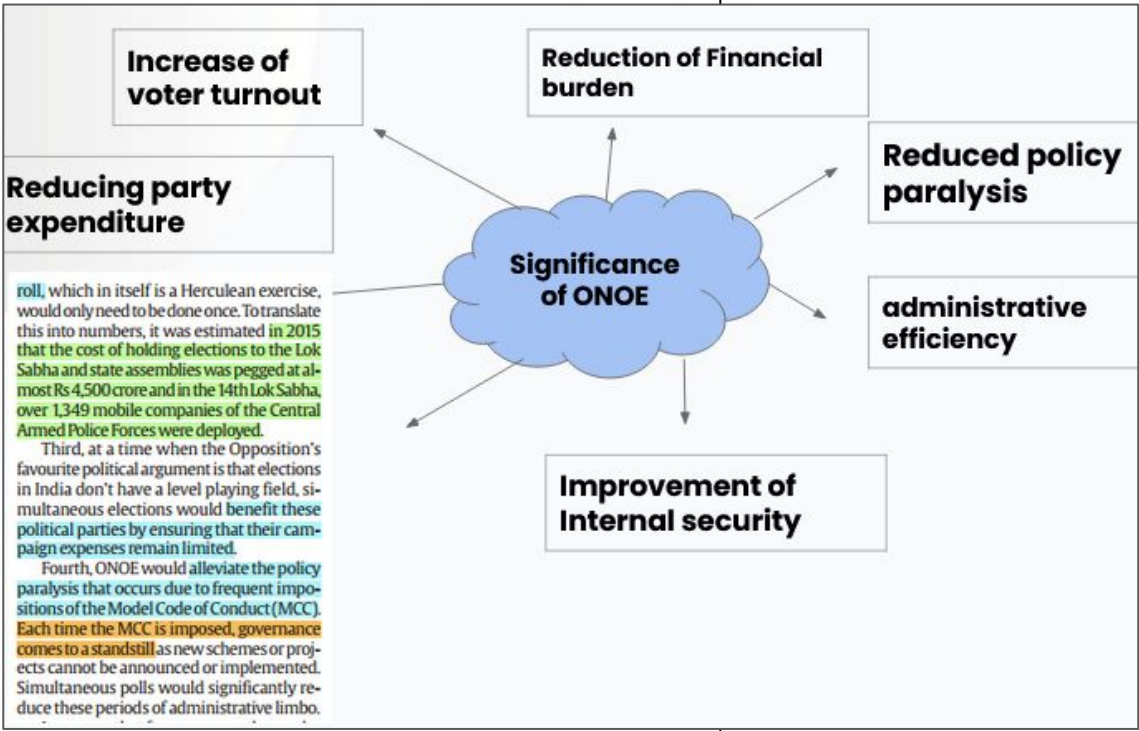
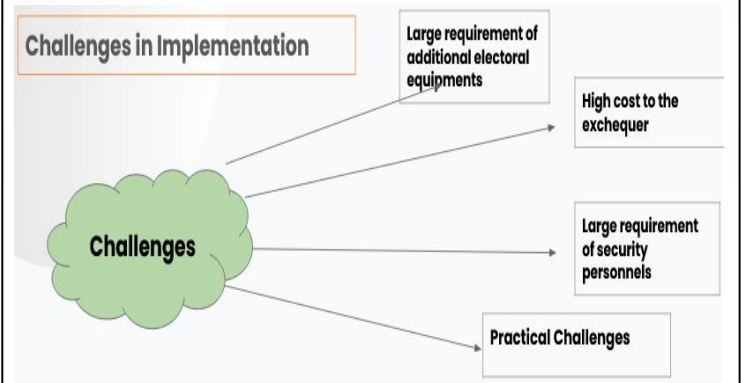
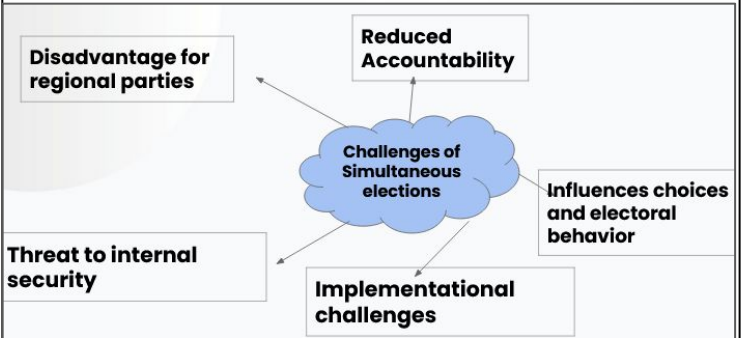
Before we delve into these arguments, it might be beneficial to appreciate that India was never a stranger to holding simultaneous elections. In fact, our democratic journey began with this very idea. The first general election saw us voting simultaneously for both the Lok Sabha and state assemblies. This practice continued in 1957 with the second general elections where in several assemblies (Bihar, Bombay, Madras, Mysore, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal) were dissolved to align with national polls, ensuring synchronicity.

It was unfortunate that this harmonious electoral cycle was short-lived. The first blow came in July 1959, when then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru dismissed the Kerala government led by E M S Nambudiripad. The second blow was struck by former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi as she prematurely dissolved the fourth Lok Sabha and called for general elections 15 months ahead of schedule. Thereafter, the situation further deteriorated as central governments led by Congress unceremoniously utilised Article 356 of the Constitution to topple state assemblies it did not find favour with. On a side note, it was unfortunate that such a course was adopted on at least 50 occasions and all of this struck a blow to simultaneous elections.

The disadvantages of this fragmented approach were apparent to all. For instance, in 1962, the Election Commission of India in its Report on the General Elections emphasised that "it is obviously desirable that the duplication of effort and expense should, if possible, be avoided". This sentiment was echoed by the Commission in its 1983 Annual Report where it stressed the need to conduct simultaneous elections for parliamentary and assembly constituencies. The Law Commission in its 170th Report went a step further as it not only advocated simultaneous elections but also pinned the blame on the misuse of Article 356.

Given this background, the question arises: **What are the benefits of holding simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and state assemblies?** First and foremost, voters will only need to visit polling stations once to elect both their national and state representatives. Second, the logistical burden on authorities would be greatly reduced: Election authorities can deploy polling personnel, build polling stations, divert security forces and make other arrangements only once. Moreover, even the preparation of an electoral

roll, which in itself is a Herculean exercise, would only need to be done once. To translate this into numbers, it was estimated in 2015 that the cost of holding elections to the Lok Sabha and state assemblies was pegged at almost Rs 4,500 crore and in the 14th Lok Sabha, over 1,349 mobile companies of the Central Armed Police Forces were deployed. Third, at a time when the Opposition's favourite political argument is that elections in India don't have a level playing field, simultaneous elections would benefit these political parties by ensuring that their campaign expenses remain limited. Fourth, ONOE would alleviate the policy paralysis that occurs due to frequent impositions of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC). Each time the MCC is imposed, governance comes to a standstill as new schemes or projects cannot be announced or implemented. Simultaneous polls would significantly reduce these periods of administrative limbo.



27th September 2024

CONTEXT: Union cabinet has accepted the report prepared by High level committee advocating for simultaneous elections in India.

Way Forward

- Build All party Consensus :Kovind Panel Report
- 22nd Law Commission Report
- Public awareness through media deliberations.
- India will be the 4th country in the world after Belgium, Sweden and South Africa

Nature of Committee

It appears that for years even those who were amenable to the idea of ONOE dismissed it as a noble but unfeasible reform. However, the report of the **High-Level Committee, which comprised a former President of India, former Leader of Opposition, distinguished bureaucrats and constitutional experts, has provided a concrete roadmap for implementation.** The success of this report not only lies in the manner in which it was prepared but also in the

Constitutional Amendment Recommendations of Kovind Panel Report on Simultaneous Elections

The committee has suggested **15 amendments to the Constitution of India** to be carried out through **two Constitution Amendment Bills**

1. FIRST CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT BILL

This Bill deals with the **transition to a simultaneous election system**, and the **procedure for fresh elections to Lok Sabha or a state Assembly** before the expiration of their stipulated five-year term.

Passage of the Bill- The Bill can be passed by Parliament without the requirement for consultation with state governments or ratification by state Assemblies.

Provisions of the Bill

1. **Insertion of a new article 82A-** Article 82A will **establish the process** by which the country will move to a **system of simultaneous elections** for Lok Sabha and state Assemblies.
2. **Amendment of Art 327-** Power of Parliament under Article 327 should be **expanded to include "conduct of simultaneous elections"** as well
3. **Amendments to Art 83 and 172-** To ensure simultaneous elections when Lok Sabha or state Assembly **is dissolved before 'full term' ends**
4. **Amendment of Laws of UT for Simultaneous Election-** Amendment of the following UT laws for simultaneous elections- a. The Government of Union Territories Act, 1963, b. The Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act, 1991 and c. The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019.

2. SECOND CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT BILL

This bill deals with municipal and panchayat elections, which fall under Entry 5 of the State List titled 'Local government'.

Passage of the Bill- This bill needs to be **ratified by at least half of the state legislatures** in the country before it can be passed by the Parliament.

Provisions of the Bill

1. **Inclusion of a new Article 324A-** Empower the Parliament to make laws to ensure that **municipality and panchayat elections** are held simultaneously with the General Elections (to Lok Sabha and state Assemblies)
2. **Addition of Article 325(2)-** Single Electoral Roll for Lok Sabha, State legislature and local bodies

PYQ 2024

विभिन्न समितियों द्वारा सुझाये गये, एवं "एक राष्ट्र - एक चुनाव" के विशिष्ट सद्म सुधारों की आवश्यकता का परीक्षण करें। (उत्तर 150 शब्दों में लिखिए)

Examine the need for electoral reforms as suggested by various committees with particular reference to "one nation - one election" principle. (Answer in 150 words)

10

विभिन्न समितियों द्वारा सुझाये गये, एवं "एक राष्ट्र - एक चुनाव" के विशिष्ट सद्म सुधारों की आवश्यकता का परीक्षण करें। (उत्तर 150 शब्दों में लिखिए)



Bilkis Bano Case

27th September 2024

CONTEXT: The SC rejected the Gujarat government's plea to review its January 8 verdict, which had canceled the remission granted to 11 men convicted of raping Bilkis Bano and killing of her family members.

Facts of the Case

- **Beginning of the case :**
 - Godhra riots in Gujarat in 2002
 - case taken up by the National Human Rights Commission + Supreme Court,
 - trial was moved out of Gujarat to Mumbai
 - **January 2008, a special CBI court in Mumbai had sentenced the 11 accused to life imprisonment.**
- **Release of these convicts**
 - moved to the SC for early release.
 - May 2022, the SC passed this case to the Gujarat government(state's 1992 remission policy)
 - On **August 15, 2022:** government **released all 11 convicts**
- **Review petition by Bilkis Bano**
 - **January 8 judgement** of Supreme
 - **overturned** the Gujarat government's decision
 - not the **"appropriate government"** to pass the remission order
 - **Adverse remarks :**
 - **SC order** of May 13, 2022 was obtained by **fraud**
 - accused Gujarat of being **complicit with one of the convicts**, Radheshyam Bhagwandas Shah,
 - criticized Gujarat **for not filing a review** against the 2022 order sooner

Remission

- **Constitutional Provisions**
 - Article 72
 - Article 161

- **Statutory power of remission**
 - Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC)
 - remission of **prison** sentences by 'appropriate government'
 - **Section 432** : suspend or remit a sentence, in whole or in part, with or without conditions.
 - **Section 433** :commuted to a lesser one
- **Guidelines to be followed while granting Remission**
 - **'Laxman Naskar v. Union of India' (2000) case,**
 - five grounds
 - seek remission after serving a minimum of 14 years in prison.



Question : 2020:

"The power of the executive to grant remission of sentence has been a subject of debate. Critically examine the constitutional provisions and the Supreme Court's position on this issue."

(15 Marks, 250 words)



27th September 2024

Syllabus: GS 3: Environment and Ecology

NIKHIL GHANEKAR
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

PROJECT CHEETAH, which saw the introduction of the African sub-species of the big cat in India, completed two years on September 17.

The ambitious project has **two overarching objectives**. First, to establish a stable, breeding population of cheetahs in central India. Two, to use cheetahs as an **umbrella species** to restore open natural ecosystems such as scrubs, savannahs, grasslands, and degraded forests.

Two years on, Project Cheetah has seen **marginal success**. Many **challenges** remain, as well as questions regarding its long-term outlook.

24 cheetahs survive

The project began with the intercontinental translocation of African cheetahs from **Namibia and South Africa** to the **Kuno National Park** in Madhya Pradesh. The

translocation took place in two batches of eight and 12 cheetahs.

These cheetahs were initially kept in soft-release **bomas** — small enclosures inside the **national park** to get them adapted to the local environment. Although confined to an area of roughly **1 sq km**, the cheetahs hunted live prey inside these bomas. While some cheetahs were subsequently released in the wild, they were eventually brought back into the enclosures. **Mating within the translocated cohort of cheetahs led to the birth of 17 cubs.**

Of the 20 translocated cheetahs, eight have died due to a variety of reasons, from attacks during mating to septicaemia caused by tick infestation under the cheetahs' radio collars. Of the 17 cubs, five have perished. Currently, 24 cheetahs (12 adults and 12 cubs) survive.

The next batch of **6-8 African cheetahs are supposed to be translocated to the Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary**, also in Madhya Pradesh.

EXPLAINED CONSERVATION



Cheetah with her cubs in Kuno National Park. Project Cheetah Annual Report 2023-24

Cheetahs still not in wild

The project has seen **marginal success**, mainly on two fronts. First, with respect to the **successful breeding of the African cheetahs in a new climate and ecology** and the

survival of 12 out of the 17 cubs born. Second, **Pawan and Veera, who were released into the wild last December, spent a considerable amount of time in a free range, and travelled far north of Kuno, even entering Rajasthan.**

However, the project faced a significant setback in August this year when **Pawan was found dead due to suspected drowning** (the autopsy report has not yet been made public). After this incident, all 24 surviving cheetahs were put in enclosures. This has raised questions about the cheetahs' capabilities to establish their own habitat in the wild. Authorities say more cheetahs will be released after the monsoon.

Conservation scientists, however, have **criticised the delay in releasing the cheetahs into the wild** and questioned the lack of transparency in the matter. Ravi Chellam, a Bengaluru-based wildlife biologist and conservation scientist, cited a Namibian policy which states that **large wild carnivores should not be kept in captivity for more than three months**. Beyond this period, the carnivore should either be euthanised or **held in**

Reasons for death :

- Infections due to collar tags
- Habitat adaptation
- Lack of prey base

captivity permanently.

Barring Veera, who is now in an enclosure, and the now-dead Pawan, **all the other cheetahs have been in enclosures for more than a year now.** This is contrary to the **government's own plan which said the cheetahs would be released in the wild after a 4-5 week quarantine period**, followed by a 1-2 month acclimatisation period, according to Chellam.

fects poorly on the project management, given that in 2022, **Kuno was specifically chosen due to its prey density.** He said, "What has happened to drastically change the ground situation in such a short period of time?"

Road ahead

Experience from the project so far has shown that the **free-ranging cheetahs** often ventured far and wide, crossing state boundaries or entering human habitats. This has brought **interstate landscape conservation plans** under the spotlight.

Authorities aim to conserve the **interstate Kuno-Gandhi Sagar landscape**, which includes several forest patches outside sanctuaries, parks and tiger reserves, spread over parts of **Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.** The step has been spelt out as the way forward to establish a population of 60-70 cheetahs in the region.

However, this landscape's conservation would be a Herculean task as it would involve **restoring the habitats adequately** and **minimising the risks to cheetahs** before they can populate the space.

Problem of inadequate prey

A deficit in the prey base is one of the biggest challenges faced by the project. The project's latest annual report has found that the density of **chital**, the primary prey for cheetahs (and leopards), has declined from 23.43 animals per sq km in 2021 to 17.5 animals per sq km in 2024. The current population of **chital** in Kuno National Park is about 6,700.

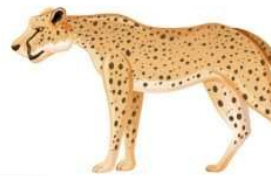
This is far less than the numbers required to sustain the **91 leopards and 12 adult cheetahs** in the park. The leopard population would need about **23,600 prey animals** and cheetahs about **3,120 prey animals** annually. According to Chellam, the lack of prey re-

African Cheetah :

- Speed : 80-120kmph
- Diurnal
- Gestation periods – about 3 months
- Lowest man wildlife conflict cases
- Territorial : 750 sq kms home range

The Indian EXPRESS

THE CHEETAHS ARE COMING



HOW MANY?

20

8 from Nambia + 12 from SA



WHERE?

Kuno National Park, Madhya Pradesh

(Kuno National Park will have a 600-hectare fenced enclosure to house the Cheetahs)

What is the carrying capacity of Kuno?

21
Cheetahs

What is the long-term population size expected?
36 (max)

Are there similar relocation programmes? South Africa to Malawi, Mozambique

Could it share its space? Yes, with Asiatic lions

Are there threats? Yes, with Kuno's existing leopard population

Question : Consider the following: (2012)

1. Black-necked crane
2. Cheetah
3. Flying squirrel
4. Snow leopard

Which of the above are naturally found in India?

- (a) 1, 2 and 3 only
- (b) 1, 3 and 4 only
- (c) 2 and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4



27th September 2024

Syllabus: GS 4 : Ethics – Thinkers and philosophers

YASHEE

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

WEDNESDAY MARKED the 108th birth anniversary of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya (1916-1968), whose philosophy is among the most important guiding principles of the BJP.

Upadhyaya was a *pracharak* of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), and a founder leader of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS), a party that existed from 1951 to 1977, when it merged with the Janata Party. In 1980, former members of the BJS left Janata and formed the BJP.

Upadhyaya, who was fondly referred to as "Panditji" by his associates and followers, was among the tallest thinkers of India's right wing. In 1964-65, Upadhyaya propounded his main political and social idea, Integral Humanism, which, according to the BJP's constitution, is the party's "basic philosophy".

The doctrine of Integral Humanism was born from Upadhyaya's desire to have "uniquely Indian" ideas guide the journey

of the newly independent nation, as opposed to the many Western 'isms'.

Upadhyaya's philosophy

At its core, Integral Humanism is about unity and harmony among the various components that make up an individual, and among individuals and society as a whole. Integral Humanism sees an individual as made up of body, mind, intelligence, and soul, and considers the development and fulfillment of each as important.

A cornerstone of Integral Humanism is the concept of the *four purusharthas*, or areas of human effort — *dharmā, artha, kama,* and *moksha*. "It is important to note that Panditji always emphasised that he did not invent these concepts; he drew upon the wisdom of ancient Indian philosophy to formulate his doctrine," BJP leader Dr Sanjay Paswan, who served as Minister in the government of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, told *The Indian Express*.

Context of philosophy

Western political philosophies.

On April 22, 1965, Upadhyaya said in a lecture in Mumbai (then Bombay): "Among the various isms that affected the West, the principal ones were nationalism, democracy, and socialism... Every now and then, apart from these, the ideals of world peace and world unity were also advocated. All these are good ideals... But by itself, each stands opposed to the rest in practice. Nationalism poses a threat to world peace. Democracy and capitalism join hands to give a free reign to exploitation. Socialism replaced capitalism and brought with it an end to democracy and individual freedom."

Thus, these ideals were far from perfect, and Bharat, with its rich history of political thought, should not ape them blindly, he said.

The four purusharthas

Upadhyaya described the difference in Indian and Western ways of thinking thus: "The first characteristic of Bharatiya culture is that it looks upon life as an integrated whole... The confusion in the West arises

primarily from its tendency to think of life in sections and then to attempt to put them together by patchwork."

While many believe that Indian philosophy is overtly focused on the soul, the Bharatiya way of thought gives equal importance to the body, mind, intelligence, and the soul — and at the level of the individual, all four must be nourished for a truly meaningful life, he said.

In terms of policymaking and public life, he spoke of the four *purusharthas*: *dharmā, artha, kama,* and *moksha*.

"*Purushartha* means effort which befit a man. The longings for *dharmā, artha, kama,* and *moksha* are inborn in man, and the satisfaction of these gives him joy (*ananda*). Of these four efforts too, we have thought in an integrated way.

"*Artha* includes what are known as political and economic policies. According to the ancients, it used to include Justice and Punishment as well as Economics. *Kama* relates to the satisfaction of various natural desires. *Dharma* includes all those rules,

fundamental principles and ethical codes, in accordance with which all the activities in respect of *Artha* and *Kama* are to be carried out, and all the goals thereof to be achieved. This alone will ensure progress in an integrated and harmonious manner, and lead ultimately to *Moksha*," Upadhyaya said in Mumbai on April 23, 1965.

Deendayal and BJP

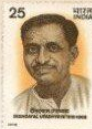
The BJP says on its website that "all these Indian thoughts should not be issues of sermons but of politics. The policies of the country should be made on their basis."

Dr Paswan said that for India to truly become a Vishwa Guru, it has to take the lead in the sphere of thoughts and ideas — where Upadhyaya's contributions are especially important. "Bharat may survive on vote bank politics but will thrive only through thought bank politics. Hence, we need to make sure that our institutions are guided by the basis of the wisdom contained in our ancient texts, which Pandit Upadhyaya so ably distilled."



NEHRUVIAN SOCIALISM

- Tight state controls on business; state as entrepreneur dominating production of capital and intermediate goods
- Emphasis on mega-projects like big dams, power, industry
- In agriculture, stress on cooperative farming with heavy doses of modern science; mechanization
- Foreign policy idealistic and interventionist: mediatory role for Non-Aligned Movement to promote world peace. Internationalization of Kashmir issue, yielding to China on Tibet
- Special consideration for minorities, no uniform civil code, etc



DEEN DAYAL UPADHYAY'S INTEGRAL HUMANISM

- Limited intervention of state in business; encouragement of private investment and entrepreneurship, equal incentives for all
- Multiplicity of small projects: production by the masses for the masses, decentralized economy
- Individual land ownership, not cooperatives; technology welcome but mechanisation shouldn't displace livelihoods
- Principles of peace and non-violence to be tempered independent foreign policy, assertive dealing with Pakistan and China, keeping away from wrangles of the world, aka "aligning to itself"
- Secular (not theocratic) state, with no distinction between majority and minority whether linguistic, religious, racial, political, etc



27th September 2024

Syllabus: GS 2 : International groupings and agreements and their impact on India's interest

With the United Nations (UN) approaching its 80th anniversary next year, the Group of Four (G4) countries – India, Brazil, Germany and Japan – seeking permanent membership and reform of the UN Security Council (UNSC) on Thursday called for urgent reform of the world body. Other plurilateral groupings, such as the L69 and C-10 also echoed these calls.

Reforms demanded:

- Methods of working of General Assembly
- Membership of United Nations Security Council (UNSC)
- Veto Power

Different Groupings

- G4 group
- Coffee club
- L 69
- African Union : 55 member states, Ezulwini Consensus
- S5 : Small Five nations consist of Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore, and Switzerland
- NAM : India and 35 other Non-Aligned states

THE G4 CASE

<p>By 1992, India, Brazil, Germany, and Japan staked their claims demanding inclusion as permanent members</p>	<p>India has been part of UN since inception, has the world's second-largest population, is the world's largest democracy and has contributed maximum peacekeepers to UN</p>
<p>Brazil is the largest country in Latin America (unrepresented continent) and fifth largest in the world</p>	<p>Besides G4 countries, South Africa (largest economy in African continent) is also a claimant, as the continent remains unrepresented on high table of permanent members</p>
<p>Japan and Germany are one of the largest financial donors to the UN</p>	<p>The roadblock is that Articles 108 and 109 of the United Nations Charter grant P5 veto over any amendments to the Charter, requiring them to approve of any modifications to the UNSC veto power, that they themselves hold</p>
<p>So even if one member of P5 doesn't agree to any reform, the UNSC cannot be reformed</p>	



27th September 2024

Syllabus: GS 2 : International groupings and agreements and their impact on India's interest

The story so far:

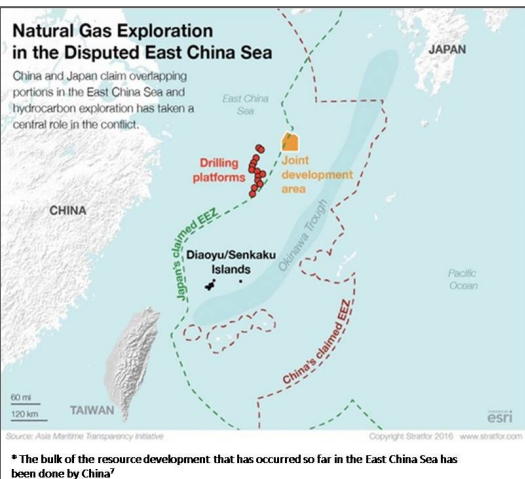
In the last few years, maritime East Asia has become an arena for intensified power politics. The East China Sea borders China, Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea. China asserts that the Senkaku/ Diaoyu islands, located in the East China Sea and under Japanese control, belong to Beijing. There have been multiple crises over these islands in the past. The South China Sea lies between China, Taiwan and five Southeast Asian countries – Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, the Philippines, and Indonesia – and has emerged as one of the most important flashpoints in the Indo-Pacific. China has been aggressively pushing its claims in the South China Sea.

Why are the seas important to China?

China views the East and South China Seas through the prism of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and national security. China's Defence White paper, issued in 2019, declares, "South China Sea islands and Diaoyu Islands are inalienable parts of the Chinese territory." In responding to the criticism regarding China's activities, it asserts that "China exercises its national sovereignty to build infrastructure and deploy necessary defensive capabilities on the islands and reefs in the South China Sea, and to conduct patrols in the waters of Diaoyu Islands in the East China Sea." What China perceives as its defensive actions are considered offensive and provocative by the regional countries surrounding the East and South China Seas.

What is the significance of the seas?

The key maritime trade routes in East Asia pass through these two seas. Taiwan Strait is a critical maritime choke point. The region is home to undersea cables that are important for the global digital economy. As per the U.S. Energy Information Administration, in 2023, 10 billion barrels of petroleum and petroleum products and 6.7 trillion cubic feet of liquefied natural gas passed through the South China Sea. It is also home to vast reserves of untapped oil and natural gas.



27th September 2024

Syllabus: GS 2 : International groupings and agreements and their impact on India's interest

What is China doing in the region?

China has been aggressively pushing its territorial claims in both seas in two ways: by **building defence-related infrastructure** such as ports, military installations, airstrips, and artificial islands and by **pushing back against the claims of regional countries**. In the East China Sea, China vehemently contested Japanese claims and, both countries found themselves embroiled in multiple crises, the most notable being the arrest of a Chinese captain of a fishing boat in 2010 and Japan's nationalisation of the Senkaku islands in 2012. These crises saw both countries taking maximalist positions. China had imposed a ban on the export of rare earth minerals to Japan. In the last few years, there has been a slight easing of tensions over the issue regarding the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands. As per the Japan Coast Guard data, 2023 saw the highest level of activity by the Chinese Coast Guard in the contiguous zone of the Senkakus. **Owing to China's assertive foreign policy, its relationship with South Korea, Taiwan and Japan has deteriorated rapidly.**

Meanwhile, the South China Sea has become a major theatre of Chinese belligerence. The power asymmetry between China and the South China Sea claimant countries is large and is



Sources: Bloomberg, Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative © GRAPHIC NEWS

growing continuously. **China's navy is also the largest naval force in the world by numbers.** Therefore, the South China Sea is seeing the ever-growing projection of Chinese power. **For asserting its claims, China has deployed a Coast Guard and maritime militia.** The tactics include dangerous and aggressive manoeuvres at sea, harassing resupply missions, ramming vessels, collisions, and using water cannons and military-grade lasers, etc. **These tactics are known as 'grey zone' operations, which fall short of war but are designed to alter the status quo.**

China has been actively pushing its claims in the **Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of the Philippines**. Since 2022, tensions between China and the Philippines have been rising due to a significant increase in the frequency of such incidents. In June-July 2024, multiple incidents of clashes occurred. The Second Thomas Shoal and Sabina Shoal have been the focus of China's recent assertiveness. The Philippines' resupply missions to the grounded ship, *BRP Sierra Madre*, have been repeatedly disrupted by China and have become a point of

contention. China aims to drive a wedge between the U.S. and its treaty partners in East Asia. Chinese Coast Guard ships are considerably heavier and larger in terms of tonnage compared with Coast Guard vessels of other countries. For example, the Chinese vessel CCG 5901 (541 feet long and displaces 12,000 tons) is three times larger than the main ships of the U.S. Coast Guard. Hence, **China's frequent ramming of the Philippines' vessels is miscalculation.**

In July, China conducted naval exercises with Russia in the South China Sea to demonstrate the support that it enjoys over it while projecting its claims. **China's claims in the South China Sea lack a legal basis, according to a permanent court of arbitration ruling in 2016.** However, China has rejected that ruling.

What has been the response from regional countries?

The regional countries have responded in three ways: First, they are building their defence capabilities. Defence spending has increased across the Indo-Pacific with

What has been the response from regional countries?

The regional countries have responded in three ways: **First, they are building their defence capabilities.** Defence spending has increased across the Indo-Pacific with

regional countries trying to catch up with China. For example, **by 2027, Japan wants to double its defence expenditure.** The Philippines too is ramping up its defence capabilities and, among others, **has acquired the anti-ship, BrahMos missiles from India.**

Second, regional countries are responding to China's activities at sea. From 2016 to 2022, Under President Rodrigo Duterte, the Philippines sought to minimise the friction between Manila and Beijing. Since 2022, the Philippines has been pushing back and publicising these incidents. The change in policy was crafted by the new President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. As a result, the frequency of incidents has gone up. Regional countries are engaged in a **battle of narratives** as well. They are deploying tools such as public diplomacy. **The Philippines has been filming the behaviour of Chinese vessels and is releasing it through social media.** The Philippines has also taken **international journalists along with its resupply missions in the West Philippine Sea.** The shaping of perceptions has become a key battleground.

Third, the Philippines, Japan and South Korea are treaty allies of the U.S. and are strengthening their defence relationship with it. The U.S. and the Philippines have enhanced their cooperation in the South China Sea to "historic levels" and expanded cooperation in domains such as base access, training and joint exercises. **They are working with Australia and Japan in "a complex multilateral maritime cooperative activity."** It is dubbed as the 'Squad'. According to U.S. Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin, the U.S.' commitment to the security of Japan is "ironclad" and includes the Senkaku islands as well. **The U.S., Japan, and South Korea are deepening their trilateral cooperation.** For the first time in history, the Defence Ministers of the three countries met in Japan in July 2024. In view of aggressive Chinese maritime activities, the press statement noted that these three countries "strongly oppose any unilateral attempts to change the status quo in the waters of the Indo-Pacific." They also "stressed the importance of fully respecting international law including the freedom of navigation and overflight."

Despite the efforts at bolstering the U.S.' alliances in the Indo-Pacific, concerns remain about American credibility and the impact of the U.S.' domestic politics on its external security commitments. **There is also a debate about whether the U.S. engagement in East Asia balances the Chinese power or fuels conflict.**



27th September 2024

Syllabus: GS 2: International relations, Places in news

Kallol Bhattacharjee

NEW DELHI

India has "strongly advised" its nationals to leave Lebanon. An advisory issued by the Embassy of India in Beirut has advised Indian citizens not to travel to Lebanon, which has been targeted by Israeli bombing raids over the past three days.

Official sources have said the Union government is contemplating naval evacuation of Indian nationals from Lebanon in view of the deteriorating security situation there.

Lebanon hosts around 3,000 Indians at present, sources said.

"All Indian nationals in Lebanon are strongly advised to leave Lebanon. Those who remain for any reason are advised to exercise extreme caution, restrict their movements and



Reduced to rubble: The destruction in Saksakiyeh, a town in Lebanon, after the Israeli air strikes on Wednesday night. AFP

remain in contact with Embassy of India in Beirut through our email ID: cons.beirut@mea.gov.in or the emergency phone number +96176860128," the Embassy of India said in a public notification.

This is the first advisory by India since the pager attacks targeted Hezbollah,

the armed Lebanese group, a week earlier. Subsequently, Israel carried out bombing raids in southern Lebanon and capital Beirut.

CONTINUED ON

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NO CEASEFIRE: ISRAEL

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- Capital
- Borders
- 1943 : Lebanon achieved independence
- Features :
 - Lebanon Mountains
 - Anti-Lebanon Mountains
 - Bekaa Valley.
 - Litani



27th September 2024

Prelims: Diseases and its prevention

RABIES: THE FACTS World Health Organization

VIRUS TRANSMISSION
Saliva of infected animals
99% of human cases are caused by dog bites

The virus attacks the brain
Rabies is **fatal** once symptoms appear

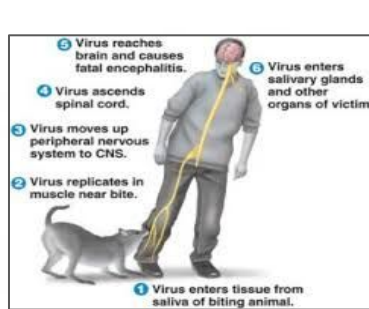
FATALITIES
Rabies affects **poor rural communities** mostly in Asia and Africa

TREATMENT
Thorough washing of the wound with soap, and, vaccine injections can avoid symptoms and **save lives**.
Seek immediate medical care if bitten.

HOW TO PREVENT RABIES TRANSMISSION FROM DOGS?
Learn **dog body language**
Raise public awareness
NO DOG BITE = NO RABIES

VACCINATING DOGS SAVES HUMAN LIVES
Rabies is **100% preventable**
Vaccinating **70%** of dogs **breaks rabies transmission cycle** in an area at risk
Every dog owner is concerned

One death every: 10 mins
40% of the victims are children younger than 15



Weird theories
Historically, rabies has been surrounded by superstitions and misguided theories. **One ancient remedy was consuming dog hair to cure rabies.** Another 19th-century idea from Italian Monsignor Storti was to **set up brothels for dogs—to counteract what he believed was canine sexual frustration.** Such theories did nothing to stop the disease's spread. Rabies, known for over 4,000 years, was first noted in ancient Mesopotamia and India, where early texts like the **Susruta Samhita** described its symptoms. However, understanding and treatment remained limited for centuries, with many misconceptions persisting. Despite this ancient awareness, progress in understanding and treating rabies stagnated for centuries.

One Health Approach

The **"One Health"** approach, recognises the interconnection between people, animals, plants, and their shared environment. This strategy emphasises collaboration among veterinary, medical, and environmental sectors to effectively manage rabies at the human-animal-environment interface. **Local bodies play a vital role in animal control efforts**, such as stray dog population management, vaccination drives, and public education campaigns, which are critical to preventing rabies outbreaks. **To achieve the dream of zero rabies deaths by 2030, India needs to establish a robust surveillance mechanism, including GIS-enabled tracking, and ensure successful coordination among key institutions such as wildlife, urban and rural ministries, animal husbandry, the Ministry of Environment and Forests, the Ministry of Panchayat Raj, and the Health Ministry.**

Effective collaboration among these stakeholders is crucial, as operating in isolation will lead to little to no success in eradicating this preventable disease.



27th September 2024

Prelims: Government policies and interventions, Defence sector

Backed by the ₹1 lakh crore corpus for promoting transformative potential of research, announced in the Interim Budget, the Defence and Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is set to unveil a first-of-its-kind initiative that will remodel its research programme into emerging technologies for military usage.

India's premier government defence research agency is funding five high-value deep tech innovation projects, with each having been allotted a maximum of ₹50 crore to promote indigenisation of defence products having long-term positive impact on national security.

The primary focus of DRDO's programme is to propel research in futuristic and disruptive technologies in the sphere, including quantum, blockchain and artificial intelligence.

Futuristic and disruptive technologies are innovations that significantly alter or revolutionise existing industries, markets or societal norms by introducing new approaches, products or services.

TOWARDS INDIGENISATION

Year of import embargo and name of weapon platform/ equipment

DECEMBER 2021

- ▶ Single-engine light helicopter (land variant)
- ▶ Next-generation corvette
- ▶ Mission system for airborne early warning and control system
- ▶ Armoured or mine-protected infantry vehicles
- ▶ Helicopter-launched anti-tank guided missile (ATGM)
- ▶ Multi-functional displays for indigenously produced aircraft
- ▶ Warship-grade steel DMR 24/9A
- ▶ Armoured Engineer Recce Vehicle (AERV)
- ▶ Armoured Repair and Recovery Vehicle (ARRV)
- ▶ Land Based MRSAM Weapon System

DECEMBER 2022

- ▶ Thermal Imaging (TI) sight for small arms
- ▶ Armoured bulldozer
- ▶ Data network for ships
- ▶ Trawl assembly for tanks
- ▶ Software Defined Radio (manpack version)

DECEMBER 2023

- ▶ Software Defined Radio (hand held)
- ▶ Mountain Weapon Locating Radar (AESA based)



- ▶ Smart Anti Airfield Weapon (SAAW)
- ▶ Upgraded 76 mm naval super-rapid gun mount (SRGM)
- ▶ Video processing card for Sukhoi-30 fighter

DECEMBER 2024

- ▶ Long range glide bomb (250 kg and 450 kg)
- ▶ Onboard Oxygen Generation System (OBOGS) for fighters
- ▶ Medium Power Radar (MPR) for mountains
- ▶ Fuel drop tanks for Jaguar and Mirage fighter aircraft
- ▶ General purpose bomb (1.25 kg and 500 kg) for fighters

DECEMBER 2025

- ▶ Anti-material rifle (AMR) 14.5 millimetre
- ▶ 14.5 mm Armour Piercing Incendiary (API) ammo for (AMR)
- ▶ 1000 Horse Power engine for Tank (T-72)
- ▶ Auxiliary Power Unit (APU) for T-72 and T-90 tanks
- ▶ Air data computer for trainer aircraft

Futuristic Disruptive Technologies

- Artificial General Intelligence (AGI)
- Quantum Computing
- Brain-Computer Interfaces (BCIs)

Cutting-Edge Technology

- 5G Networks
- CRISPR Gene Editing
- Autonomous Vehicles

Deep Technology

- Nuclear Fusion Energy
- Artificial Intelligence (AI)

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Global instances

There are global instances of such programmes being helmed by state defence research organisations like the U.S. Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) on the lines of which the DRDO is attempting to fashion its deep tech initiative.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has given the nod to the investment in

the deep tech projects that would be undertaken through the DRDO's Technology Development Fund (TDF), which has been engaging the private industry, mainly MSMEs and start-ups, for R&D in military hardware and software that armed forces require, sources in the organisation told *businessline*. Three broad contours have been identified for inviting proposals from the industry for deep tech projects in five areas. They are in the categories of indigenisation, futuristic and disruptive technology and cutting edge technology.

Reducing imports

While through indigenisation, the DRDO will seek to reduce dependence on imports of systems, sub-systems and components sought by the tri-services, by way of futuristic and disruptive technologies it will attempt at solutions to concepts that do not exist in India or even abroad, DRDO sources said.

The DRDO sought market inputs and had sessions with other stakeholders to

decide on the five deep tech topics, informed sources. The details of projects, for which funding will be rolled out in five tranches, will be published soon inviting bids from the industry. The successful bidder may get 90% funding of the project cost.

Depending on the quality of response, the DRDO is open to providing opportunities to more than one successful participant, allowing them to come up with innovations that may require a long gestation period.

20% grant

Though volume of funding would be project-specific, DRDO officials stated that normally a maximum of 20% grant would be released in the first instalment, and the remaining would follow on the basis of appraisals by an integrated team that will house, among others internal experts, outside experts, user experts, certifying agencies and qualifying experts.

(The writer is with The Hindu businessline)



27th September 2024

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the concept of "One Nation, One Election":

1. India would be the fifth country in the world to implement this.
2. The 22nd Law Commission Report discussed the feasibility of implementing simultaneous elections in India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: b

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding the remission of sentences in India:

1. Article 72 of the Constitution gives the President the power of remission.
2. Under Section 432 of the CrPC, a sentence can be suspended or remitted in part or full.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: c

Q3. Consider the following statements regarding the African Cheetah:

1. The African Cheetah is capable of reaching speeds between 80-120 km/h.
2. It is mostly active during the night, making it a nocturnal predator.
3. African Cheetahs have one of the lowest rates of human-wildlife conflict compared to other big cats.

How many of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) Only One
- b) Only Two
- c) All Three
- d) None

Answer: b

Q4. Which of the following countries share a land border with Lebanon?

1. Syria
2. Israel
3. Jordan

Select the correct answer using the codes given below.

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2, and 3

Answer: a

Q5. Which of the following regions are involved in the territorial disputes in the South China Sea between China and its neighbouring countries?

1. Spratly Island
2. Paracel Island
3. Scarborough Shoal

Select the correct answer using the codes given below.

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2, and 3

Answer: d





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