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CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout

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Regulating conduct on Social Media



CONTEXT: Supreme Court asks Union government to consider guidelines to regulate conduct on social media with 'effective consequences'

What the SC Said:

- **Background:** The court was hearing a case **against social media comedians, including Samay Raina**, for "abusing freedom of speech and expression" by making *insensitive jokes about persons with disabilities*.
- **Asked the Union government to work on guidelines to regulate conduct** on social media, including online shows like podcasts, in consultation with the National Broadcasters and Digital Association.
- The court directed the comedians to **communicate their unconditional apology** through their shows.
- Samay Raina **removes all 'India's Got Latent' episodes**, says will cooperate with agencies

Need to regulate:

- **Balance freedom of Speech with human dignity:**
 - proposed guidelines to draw a line between free speech and hurtful speech.
- **Shaping societal norms:**
 - **Results of Comprehensive Modular Survey: Telecom, 2025:**
 - **86.3%** households in India have access to internet within the household premises.
 - "what influencers say matters. It influences an entire generation".
- **Protecting vulnerable groups:** Children, women & Minorities
 - E.g., the 2021 "Bulli Bai" app incident, where images of women were auctioned online
- **JS Mill's Harm Principle**

- **Communal Tensions:** E.g., The Indian government blocked 1,093 Facebook, X (Twitter), Instagram, and YouTube accounts for spreading fake news, manipulated videos, and hate speech to incite violence in Murshidabad, West Bengal.
- **Mindless Consumption:** contradicting Gandhian ethics of self-restraint.

Regulatory framework:

- **Central Consumer Protection Authority**
 - violation of rights of consumers, unfair trade practices and false or misleading advertisements.
- **Securities and Exchange Board of India:** Banned partnerships between regulated financial entities and unregistered influencers.
- **Advertising Standards Council of India:** clearly label paid promotions on digital platforms.
- **Department of Consumer Affairs:** Published 'Endorsement Know-hows'
- **India Influencer Governing Council:** a self-regulatory body for Influencer
 - introduced a **Code of Standards** and **weekly influencer ratings**

Challenges:

- **Regulatory Overlap:**
 - MeitY (which frames IT Rules) and the MIB (which oversees content)
- **Subjectivity in definitions:** Eg, obscenity can be interpreted differently
- **Technological challenges:**
 - *end-to-end encryption* and privacy features
 - Social media algorithms trap users in a *feedback loop*
 - *Virtual private networks* - enable users to bypass regulatory oversight
- **Can stifle creative freedom**



Regulating conduct on Social Media



CONTEXT: Supreme Court asks Union government to consider guidelines to regulate conduct on social media with 'effective consequences'

Way Forward:

- **Setting clear responsibility**
- **Use of Technology:** AI-powered content analyses may be utilised by OTT platforms.
- **Strengthening Self-Regulation**
- **Media Literacy**
- **Responsible Content Creation**

Mains Practise Question:

"With the growing impact of digital platforms, social media influencers have emerged as key players shaping public opinion and consumer choices. Critically examine the need to regulate the conduct of social media influencers in India. Suggest suitable measures for ensuring accountability without stifling creativity."



Before Legislation become Litigation



CONTEXT: The power to strike down laws was meant to be sparing but has now become the norm

Sovereignty of Parliament: (U.K v/s India):

- **Parliamentary Sovereignty is a cardinal feature of British parliament:**
 - Parliament can make, amend, substitute or repeal any law.
 - No difference b/w constituent and ordinary legislation powers.
 - Parliamentary law cannot be declared invalid by judiciary.
- **Indian Parliament Sovereignty is limited:**
 - **Written nature of Constitution:** Difference b/w constituent authority v/s legislative authority, Supremacy of constitution.
 - **Federal system of Government:** Seventh schedule (UK - Unitary system)
 - **Fundamental Rights: Article 13** - Laws inconsistent with or in derogation of the fundamental right.
 - **System of Judicial Review:**
 - Contravene any provision of Constitution
 - Our constitutional courts, by practice, have been elevated to the status of a **parallel legislator**.
- **Data:** Union Law Minister said in a written reply in Rajya Sabha in **2022** that 35 cases challenging central legislation and Constitution (Amendment) Acts were pending before the Supreme Court since 2016

Why Legislations are clogging Indian courts?

- **Lack of Constitutional Precision:**
 - vague definitions, incoherent clauses, cross-references that go nowhere
 - **E.g. Section 18(d) of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019** - maximum punishment of two years imprisonment and a fine for sexual abuse of a transgender person v/s **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023** - abuse of a woman can attract up to seven years or life imprisonment.
- **Not following Parliamentary Procedures:**
 - *Manual of Parliamentary Procedure outlines clear processes to be followed for the introduction of legislation.*
 - **Issue:** Bills are introduced without adequate notice, committees are bypassed
 - **Declining role of Parliamentary Committee:** 17th LS - only 16% of Bills
- **Lack of Research Support:**
 - Unlike the U.S. Congressional Research Service or the U.K. Parliamentary Research Service.
 - **Article 88:** rarely invoked
- **Anti-Defection Law:** legislators toe the party line and their involvement is reduced to quips, whips, and rote rhetoric.

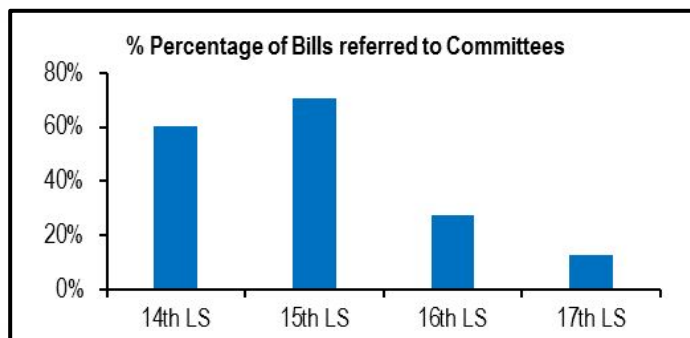


Before Legislation become Litigation



CONTEXT: The power to strike down laws was meant to be sparing but has now become the norm

- **Frequent Disruptions:**
 - **Erosion of Budget Scrutiny: 2023 – over 75% of Demand for Grants** were passed without discussion.
 - **Decline in Parliamentary Debate:** 17th Lok Sabha
 - 58% of bills **within two weeks** of their introduction
 - 35% were passed with **less than an hour of discussion** in Lok Sabha
 - **Frequent resorting to Guillotine closure motion**



Way forward:

- **Increase sitting days: NCRWC (2002)** – at least 100 days annually
- **Strengthen Parliamentary committee**
- **Attorney-General for India act as legal guide under article 88:**
 - AG can expertly **flag and seek amendment of legal inconsistencies** and constitutional infirmities **during parliamentary debate**.
 - lawmakers would have the benefit of relying on the counsel of a **non-partisan constitutional functionary** while casting their vote.
- **Establish a Parliamentary Budget Office:** U.S. Congressional Budget Office, would provide MPs with independent analysis of fiscal policies.
- **Reform Anti-Defection Law:**
 - **Law Commission 170th Report:** Limit anti-defection to confidence and money bills.
- **Concept of opposition days**



SYLLABUS : Prelims: Polity

Newspaper: Indian Express Page Number: 1

PM's degree personal information, DU need not disclose, says HC

SOHINI GHOSH

NEW DELHI, AUGUST 25

THE DELHI High Court on Monday set aside a 2016 order by the Central Information Commission (CIC) that had directed Delhi University (DU) to disclose details of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's bachelor's degree in response to an RTI application.

Noting that there lies a "special relationship of trust and con-

fidence" between a student and a university, which is fiduciary in nature, the court held that information pertaining to an individual's educational qualifications — including degrees and marks — falls within the ambit of "personal information" under provisions of the RTI Act.

In a plea moved before the High Court in 2017, DU had challenged the CIC order, which had directed inspection of records of students who passed the BA

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

The court underlined that "disclosure of academic details sans any overriding public interest would amount to an intrusion into the personal sphere", which is otherwise protected under right to privacy.

"It is unambiguously clear that the 'marks obtained', grades, and answer sheets etc., are in the nature of personal information and protected under Section 8(1)(j) of the RTI Act, subject to an assessment of overriding public interest... This court cannot be oblivious to the reality that what

About RTI Act 2005 :

- **Background:** The RTI movement by **Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan**, and judicial emphasis on RTI (i.e. **State of U.P. v Raj Narain, 1975**), compelled the Parliament to enact the **Right to Information Act in 2005**.
- **Aim:** providing citizens the right to secure access to information under control of Public Authorities .
- **Article 19:** Right To Information is **derived from the fundamental right of freedom of speech and expression** under Article 19 of the Constitution.
- **Coordinating agency:** Department of Personnel and Training under Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions.
- **Institutional framework:**
 - **Central and State Information Commissions:** to oversee its implementation and address appeals regarding non-disclosure of information.
 - **Central Public Information Officers (PIO) or State PIO:** in every public authority to provide information to persons requesting for the information under this Act.
- **Applicability:** Public Authorities, including all authorities:
 - **established under the Constitution**
 - **any other law** made by the **Parliament or a State Legislature**
 - It also includes **bodies owned, controlled or substantially financed** by the Central/State Government.



SYLLABUS : Prelims: Polity

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- **non-Government organisations** substantially financed (directly/indirectly) by the Central/State Government also fall within the definition of public authority.
- **Time Frame for Providing Information:** Within 30 days of the request; for matters concerning life or liberty, it must be provided within 48 hours.
- **Appeals:** Citizens can appeal against decisions of PIOs if their requests are denied or inadequately addressed.
- **Exemption from disclosure of information (Section 8):**
 - **If the disclosure of which would prejudicially affect:**
 - sovereignty and integrity of India, the security, strategic, scientific or economic interests of the State, relation with foreign State or lead to incitement of an offence.
 - information which has **been expressly forbidden to be published by any Court of law or tribunal** or the disclosure of which may constitute contempt of Court;
 - information, the disclosure of which would **cause a breach of privilege of Parliament or the State Legislature;**
 - information including **commercial confidence, trade secrets or intellectual property**, the disclosure of which would harm the competitive position of a third party.
 - information received in confidence from **foreign Government**.
 - information, the **disclosure of which would endanger the life or physical safety of any person** or identify the source of information or assistance given in confidence for law enforcement or security purposes;
 - information which would **impede the process of investigation** or apprehension or prosecution of offenders.
 - information which **relates to personal information** the disclosure of which has **no relationship to any public activity or interest**, or which would cause unwarranted invasion of the privacy of the individual.
- **Section 8 (2):** Notwithstanding anything in the Official Secrets Act, 1923 nor any of the exemptions permissible in accordance with subsection (1), a public authority may allow access to information, **if public interest in disclosure outweighs the harm to the protected interests.**



PM's Degree Row



SYLLABUS : Prelims: *Polity*

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- **Key Provisions of the RTI Act include –**

- **Sec. 4** of the Act imposes an obligation on public authorities to maintain its records duly catalogued and indexed in a manner and form which facilitates the right to information under the Act.
- **Sec. 6** of the Act entitles a person desirous of obtaining any information under the Act, to make a request in writing to the Central or State Public Information Officer specifying the particulars of the information sought by him.
- **Sec. 7** of the Act requires the Public Information Officer to either provide the information or reject the request for any of the reasons specified in Secs. 8 and 9 **within 30 days of receipt of the request.**
- Under **Sec. 19**, if a person does not receive a decision within 30 days or is aggrieved by a decision of the Public Information Officer, he may prefer an appeal to an Officer who is senior in rank to the Public Information Officer in that Public Authority.



The dangerous wiring together of a "Conspiracy"



SYLLABUS : G.S. 2: Government policies and issues
Newspaper: The Hindu **Page Number:** 6

is now playing out, though in an intangible form. We are witnessing the murder of press freedom, a right recognised by a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court, in 1950, in the case of Romesh Thappar. Ironically, his relative, Karan Thapar, is one of the most recent victims. Journalist Siddharth Varadarajan is another such victim. They stand accused of a conspiracy, of "provoking unrest, undermining national security, and spreading narratives aligned with hostile interests". That is quite a mouthful.

The accusation against them lies in a First Information Report (FIR) lodged with the Crime Branch in Guwahati, Assam, on May 9, 2025. The FIR is based on allegedly offensive video interviews and articles published by The Wire. It is not necessary to delve into the details of the FIR except to say that the complainant is educated and writes quite well but strains really hard to make out a case of national security being undermined.

The FIR does not make out a case of any offence under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and deserves to be quashed. It is nothing but an expression of the complainant's opinion. Unfortunately, based on that opinion, the police in Assam have summoned the two journalists for questioning (everybody knows what that means) on charges of undermining national security. The Supreme Court of India has directed that no coercive action be taken against them. For the time being that is good enough, but I would like the readers of this daily to consider the long-term collateral damage.

Back in sheep's clothing:

- draconian offence of sedition has been removed from the penal law of India. The **BNS does not recognise sedition as a penal offence.**
- However, **Section 152 of the BNS** creates an offence of endangering the sovereignty, the unity and the integrity of India.

- In the normal course, the **expression of views, however radical they may be, cannot be construed as endangering the sovereignty and the integrity of India.** Something much more is required, in the nature of secession or armed rebellion or subversive or separatist activity.
- It is for this **reason that the punishment for an offence** under Section 152 of the BNS provides also for life imprisonment.

→ **Consequences of the police summons:**

◆ **First, a freezing effect:**

- If a journalist is critical of government policy then somebody can misinterpret it and bring national security into play, and the police can take cognisance and summon the alleged offender.
- *Freedom of speech can be bulldozed.*

◆ **Second, financial inconvenience:**

- expensive when approaching the Court against a frivolous complaint.
- **Expenses like** - lawyer's fee, the printing of paper books sundry expenses, & travel expenses, boarding and lodging (if one does not reside in Delhi).



The dangerous wiring together of a "Conspiracy"



SYLLABUS : G.S. 2: Government policies and issues

Newspaper: The Hindu **Page Number:** 6

- **Accountability jurisprudence is sorely missing in the country:**
 - there is no guarantee that the questioning will be over in one day. Maybe the investigating officer may require their presence again, and again.

physically present, at great expense and inconvenience, when they can answer questions over a video call? There is another advantage in questioning by electronic mode. The questions and the answers can be recorded to enable those concerned to know what was asked. Sometimes the questions are inane. This avoids a common allegation made by the investigating agency that the accused 'did not cooperate'.

A few days ago, the Lieutenant-Governor of Delhi (L-G) passed an order enabling the cross-examination of police officers in a criminal trial through video conferencing. Lawyers in Delhi have objected to this procedure but the L-G has stuck to his guns. If police officers can be cross-examined over a video call in a criminal trial, there is no reason why journalists cannot be questioned the same way in respect of an accusation.

In my view, a police officer investigating a crime should travel to the city or the town where the accused is ordinarily resident. The officer is acting for and on behalf of the state. Therefore, the state should bear the expenses rather than a citizen who is presumed to be innocent.

Have the police in Assam explored the possibility of questioning these journalists using video conferencing? Why do they have to be

Goes against Court Judgements:

- **Youth Bar Association of India (2016)** – accused be given a copy of the FIR.
 - ◆ Both the accused tried unsuccessfully for a week to get a copy of the FIR.
- **Karnataka High Court "Sri Tavaragi Rajashekhar Shiva Prasad" (2024):** A copy of the FIR is required to be filed with the jurisdictional Magistrate.
 - ◆ So, Mr. Thapar and Mr. Varadarajan approached the Magistrate for a copy of the FIR that had been lodged in May 2025 **but were informed that it was not there.**
- **Common sense dictates** that if an accused is asked to answer allegations against him, he *should know what the allegations are.*
- **Finally, in theory, the investigation can gradually rope in other persons** involved in the video interviews and articles. The galaxy of accused persons will then include the former Chief of the Research and Analysis Wing, senior journalists, and defence analysts

Finally, there are three questions that need to be asked. Should Section 152 of the BNS remain on the statute book? Regardless of whether it is constitutional or not, should not the mandate of the law be followed by the police? And, should not the state be made accountable in appropriate cases?



SC's Salwa Judum Judgement



SYLLABUS : Prelims: Polity

Newspaper: Indian Express **Page Number:** 12

UNION HOME Minister Amit Shah last week accused Justice B Sudershan Reddy, the opposition alliance's candidate for Vice President, of "supporting Naxalism".

Justice Reddy, a retired judge of the Supreme Court, headed the Bench that in 2011 delivered the landmark ruling in *Nandini Sundar v State of Chhattisgarh*, which ended Salwa Judum, the practice of using tribal youth as Special Police Officers (SPOs) to counter the Maoist insurgency in Chhattisgarh.

Shah said in Kerala on Friday that had Justice Reddy not delivered the Salwa Judum judgment, "the Naxal terrorism would have ended by 2020". The remarks have been criticised by the legal fraternity, who have said that a judicial ruling cannot be equated with the personal views of a judge.

"A judgment is always open for critical analysis, but motives cannot be attached to a judge who has authored the judgment. The judge adjudicates...based on the Constitution and not his personal philosophy or political leaning. To find motive or personal interest of a judge in a given judgment is certainly scandalous and is not permissible," Justice Govind Mathur, former Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court, told *The Indian Express*.

What was the Salwa Judum in Chhattisgarh?

- In the **first decade of the 2000s**, (between 2005 and 2011) - **Chhattisgarh was among the worst affected**, and witnessed extreme violence.
- **In response** the government of Chhattisgarh sponsored a vigilante movement known as Salwa Judum ('peace march' in Gondi), and mobilised local villagers into armed groups of SPOs, also known as **Koya Commandos**.
- These groups **largely comprised tribal youth of the particular areas** in which they were active, some of whom were as young as 18 years old, and **often had limited education**.

- **Chhattisgarh Police Act, 2007 v/s Indian Police Act, 1861:**
 - **approval of a magistrate** is required for the appointment of SPOs, the **Chhattisgarh Act gave the superintendent of police** wide discretionary powers.
- SPOs were given firearms for self defence & honorarium of Rs 3,000 per month.
- **Benefit:** to increase manpower on the side of the state in areas where regular forces found it difficult to operate.

And what was the case before the SC?

- In 2007, sociologist **Nandini Sundar**, historian **Ramachandra Guha**, and former IAS officer **EAS Sarma** filed a petition before the Supreme Court **challenging the practice of Salwa Judum**.
- **Petitioners alleged:**
 - unconstitutional, violated fundamental rights, and had led to widespread human rights abuses.
 - It **blurred the line between civilians and combatants**, left poorly trained youth exposed to violent retaliation.

What was the argument of the state?

- Both the central government and the state government **defended the policy**.
- **Union argued that** "its role [was] limited to the **approval of upper limit of the number of SPOs for each state for the purpose of reimbursement of the honorarium under the SRE (security-related expenditure) scheme**", and that the **"appointment, training, deployment, role and responsibility"** of the SPOs were determined by the state governments concerned.



SC's Salwa Judum Judgement



SYLLABUS : Prelims: Polity

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State of Chhattisgarh: (detailed affidavits):

- recruitment was on a *voluntary basis*.
- The applicants had to be *at least 18 years of age*, undergo character verification, and should have preferably *studied up to the fifth standard*.
- preference was given to those **who had suffered at the hands of Maoists** and wanted to resist them.
- SPOs were *trained in the use of weapons, as well as in law and human rights*.
- They were *equipped with firearms for self defence*, and **were taught to assist police and security forces** by providing intelligence and guidance in unfamiliar terrain.
- **It's effectiveness:** SPOs have been able to thwart more than a dozen Maoist attacks on relief camps and have also been instrumental in saving lives of regular troops.
- **Welfare Objective:** appointment of SPOs provided livelihoods in areas with limited employment opportunities.

And what did the court rule?

- **Examined whether it was** – consistent with constitutional provisions under **Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution**, which guarantee the fundamental right to equality and the right to life with dignity.
- **Issues:**
 - **Chhattisgarh Police Act gave very wide discretion to the executive** to appoint SPOs without clear conditions or safeguards.
 - The court found that some of those who had been recruited and armed **had not even studied up to Class 5**. (lack appropriate skills to be engaged in counter-insurgency movements against the Maoists)
- **Not possess the analytical and cognitive skills** to read and understand the complex socio-legal dimensions that inform the **"concept of self-defence"**

• **Violated Article 14:**

- expecting poorly trained and underpaid SPOs to perform the same functions as regular police officers was discriminatory.

• **Violation of Article 21:**

- exposing them to **life-threatening risks without adequate training**, protection, or long-term security violated their right to life.

• **Welfare objectives:**

- placing vulnerable youth in situations of extreme danger could not be treated as employment.

The SC said that the state was effectively using citizens as expendable instruments in counterinsurgency ops, which was "revelatory of disrespect for the lives of the tribal youth, and defiling of their human dignity".

It ordered that the practice of appointing SPOs for counterinsurgency operations should be stopped. Salwa Judum was disbanded, and the court directed that only properly trained police or paramilitary forces should carry out operations against Maoists.



India- Japan ties - old patterns, New priorities

SYLLABUS : G.S. 2: India and its neighborhood- relations
Newspaper: The Hindu **Page Number:** 06

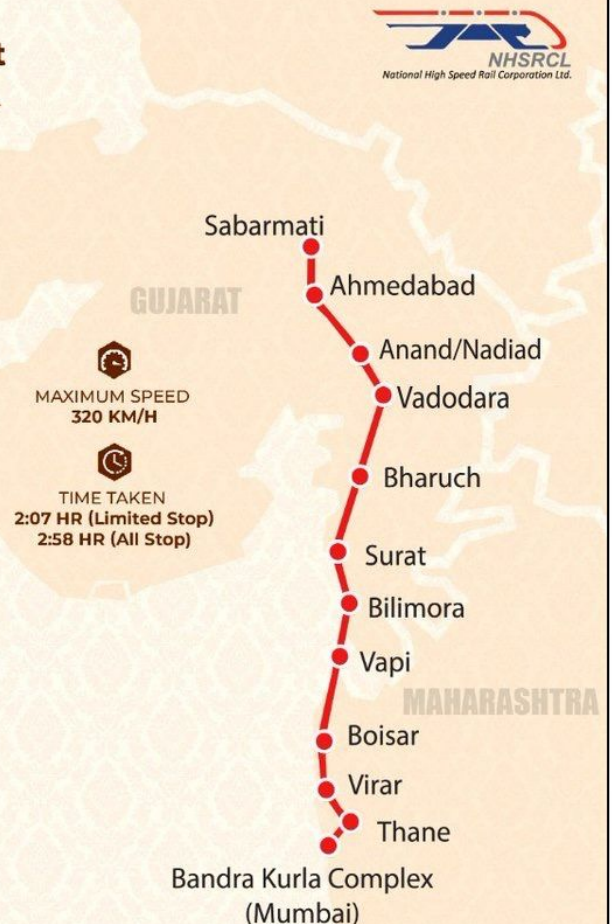
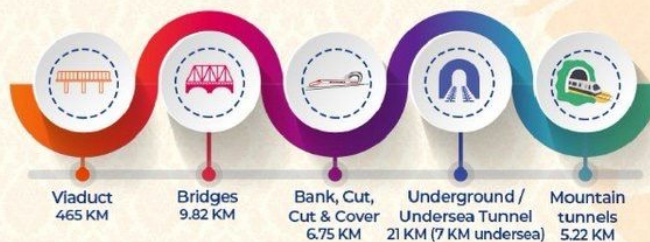
P rime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Japan and China, that begins from August 29, comes at a time of flux in global geopolitics. While there is a tentative easing of tensions between India and China after years of strain, there is also growing uncertainty about New Delhi's ties with Washington as the Trump administration seems to be doing everything in its power to push India away. Thus, Mr. Modi's engagement in Tokyo carries weight well beyond the bilateral.

Japan's major investment plan:

- Japan's announcement of a ¥10 trillion (**about \$68 billion**) **investment plan** in India to be spread **over the next decade**.
 - to boost the infrastructure, manufacturing, clean energy, and technology partnership.
 - It **signals Japan's long-term stake in India's growth story** at a time when many global investors remain cautious about China.
- **Next-generation E10 series Shinkansen for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad high-speed rail corridor:**
 - reflects economic collaboration alongside Tokyo's *willingness to transfer cutting-edge technology* to India.

Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail Project

← Total Length: 508 KM →



India- Japan ties - old patterns, New priorities



SYLLABUS : G.S. 2: India and its neighborhood- relations
Newspaper: The Hindu **Page Number: 06**

- **What is E10 Shinkansen Bullet Train?**
 - is Japan's next-generation high-speed bullet train.
 - Designed by East Japan Railway Company (JR East) in partnership with UK-based design firm Tangerine.
 - **Key Features:**
 - L-shaped guides to prevent derailment during earthquakes.
 - Lateral dampers and advanced brakes to reduce shaking and shorten stopping distances.
 - Blowerless induction motor to reduce maintenance and enhance energy efficiency.
 - Autonomous-ready design, with flexible space for cargo transport in future.
 - Spacious two-seat-per-row configuration for comfort.
 - India to be the **first country outside Japan** to adopt E10 Shinkansen.
- Japan is not just diversifying its economic footprint but is also **reinforcing the idea that dedicated long-term cooperation can deliver tangible outcomes.**
- **Expected to revise the 2008 Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation:**
 - reorienting their security and defence partnership in accordance with contemporary realities.
- **Proposed Economic Security Initiative:**
 - covers semiconductors, critical minerals, pharmaceuticals, and clean energy.
 - anchors Japan more firmly within India's quest for **diversified supply chains.**
- **Upgrade of their digital partnership:**
 - expected to cover artificial intelligence and startup ecosystems.

The U.S. factor, a case of strategic balancing:

- **Timing of the visit is important:**
 - After the Tokyo meeting, Mr. Modi is scheduled to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit in Tianjin, China.
- **Tentative signs of stabilisation after 2020 Galwan clash:**
 - resumption of direct flights, visa relaxations, and trade facilitation efforts.

Reflects a strategic balancing in many ways:

- **First,** it underscores India's ability to engage with a trusted strategic partner and a neighbouring competitor without allowing one relationship to dictate the other.
- **Second, it signals that India can compartmentalise:**
 - **With Tokyo,** the focus is on *advancing economic security, defence cooperation, and Indo-Pacific stability.*
 - **With Beijing,** the emphasis will likely be on *managing tensions, exploring limited confidence-building measures, and keeping communication lines open*



India- Japan ties - old patterns, New priorities



SYLLABUS : G.S. 2: India and its neighborhood- relations
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The message

The Tokyo visit is thus less about short-term diplomatic outcomes and more about signalling steady strategic intent – that India is willing to keep channels with Beijing open, prepared to navigate U.S. unpredictability, and determined to deepen enduring partnerships with like-minded powers in the region. Japan's commitments also reinforce India as one of its most reliable partners in navigating the challenges of the Indo-Pacific, from economic resilience to maritime security.

The visit will highlight one of the most enduring features of Indian diplomacy in recent years: flexibility without losing strategic clarity. In a phase of protracted geopolitical uncertainty, it is Japan that emerges as India's anchor partner.

Washington's commitment is wavering under Trump's short-sightedness, while Beijing remains a competitor whose gestures of normalisation cannot yet ease underlying mistrust. Tokyo offers consistency, resources and a shared strategic outlook rooted in democratic values and a free and open Indo-Pacific. Therefore, the visit to Japan is not just about consolidating an old partnership. It is about recognising where India's most dependable ballast lies.



Israel made Tragedy



SYLLABUS : Prelims: Important International institutions
Newspaper: Indian Express **Page Number: 10**

Declaration of famine by a UN agency is a rare event. In the 20-year history of the UN-backed Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), there have been only four: Somalia in 2011, South Sudan in 2017 and 2020, and Sudan in 2024. It was already framed by the stark visuals of emaciated children and reports of malnutrition and starvation deaths caused by Israel's war, but Gaza has now made it to the list. "As this famine is entirely man-made, it can be halted and reversed," says the IPC report published on August 22. For months, the IPC had held back from a formal declaration. In July, it warned that a "famine scenario" was unfolding in parts of Gaza, yet the conditions for a declaration had not been satisfied due to difficulties in gathering reliable data. Now that famine has been confirmed in the Gaza Governorate and is projected to spread, the emphasis on it being man-made underscores the horrific ground reality in a place where Israel's bombing campaign has already killed more than 60,000 people.

The IPC declaration adds to the mounting international pressure on PM Benjamin Netanyahu in recent weeks. Yet, consistent with Israel's past dismissal of global criticism, the government has rejected the report's findings, with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs calling them " Hamas lies". The IPC report, however, is not an isolated warning. Last month, a letter signed by 100-plus aid groups including Doctors Without Borders, Oxfam, and Amnesty International accused Israel of deliberately obstructing the flow of aid. Health officials in Gaza estimate that more than 200 have died because of hunger since the conflict began, while more than 1,300 Palestinians have reportedly been killed at aid distribution sites. The evidence is overwhelming, and Israel's blanket rejection of every report as " Hamas propaganda" is unlikely to persuade the international community.

But so far, global outrage is hardly acting as a deterrent. Over the weekend, planes and tanks pounded Gaza City as Israel expanded its war — ostensibly to destroy Hamas and rescue the remaining hostages. Even though the world's attention remains fixed on Gaza, Israel announced last week the approval of 3,400 new settler homes in the occupied West Bank, a move condemned by 26 countries and the EU. Hamas has no presence in the West Bank, and Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits an occupying power from transferring its civilian population into occupied territory. Yet such legal obligations appear to do little to restrain the Netanyahu government. Nor have the announcements by France, the UK, Canada, and Australia that they will recognise a State of Palestine in September. The United States is the only power with leverage over Israel. But with Washington remaining silent on the famine declaration and even hinting at support for the settler plans, no end is in sight for this continuing tragedy.



SYLLABUS : Prelims: Important International institutions
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About Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC):

- **Aim:** Sound the alarm early to prevent famine and guide humanitarian response.
 - It is the main global system for **assessing hunger crises**.
- **Genesis:**
 - **Developed in 2004** by the *Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit*, managed by the *Food and Agriculture Organization* of the United Nations (FAO) in Somalia.
 - It is an *innovative 21-partner initiative* – made up of UN agencies and international NGOs.
- **Funding:** It is independent organisation but *funded by Western countries*.
- It is **overseen by 19 major humanitarian organisations and regional bodies**. It typically *partners with national governments* to analyse data.
- **Data collection method:** IPC relies on **UN World Food Programme**, other relief organisations and government agencies.
- **Preferred measurement of malnutrition:** Children's weight and height and if not possible, mid-upper arm circumference is used.

How is Famine Determined?

- IPC classifies acute food insecurity on a **five-phase scale**.
- **Phase 5 is the highest:** Catastrophe (individual household level) and Famine (wider area level).

- If the **IPC or one of its partners** finds that **at least one area is in famine**, a famine review committee, led by up to six experts, is activated.
- **For an area to be classified as in famine:**
 - **at least 20% of people** must be suffering extreme food shortages
 - with **one in three children** acutely malnourished and
 - **two people out of every 10,000 dying daily** from starvation or malnutrition and disease.
- IPC does not formally "declare" famine but provides analysis for governments and agencies

About Geneva Conventions 1949 :

- Are a **set of international treaties** that establish **legal standards for humanitarian treatment during war**.
- They form the *core of international humanitarian law* and **aim to limit the suffering of people who are not or no longer participating in hostilities**, such as civilians, wounded soldiers, and prisoners of war.
- It was **formalised in 1949 by the United Nations**, after World War II, to address the horrors of the war and provide comprehensive protection in armed conflicts.

List of conventions:

- **The First Geneva Convention:**
 - It protects **wounded and sick soldiers on land** during war.
 - It is also applicable on medical and religious personnel, medical units and medical transports.
- **The Second Geneva Convention:**
 - It protects **wounded, sick and shipwrecked military personnel at sea** during war.
 - This Convention replaced the Hague Convention of 1907 for the Adaptation to Maritime Warfare of the Principles of the Geneva Convention.
- **The Third Geneva Convention**
 - It applies to **prisoners of war**.
 - The Convention establishes the principle that prisoners of war shall be released and repatriated without delay after the cessation of active hostilities.
- **The Fourth Geneva Convention**
 - It protects **civilians, including those in occupied territory**.
 - It contains a short section concerning the general protection of populations against certain consequences of war, without addressing the conduct of hostilities.

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the Geneva Conventions of 1949:

1. The first Geneva Convention applies to the prisoner of war.
2. The second Geneva Convention protects wounded & sick military personnel at sea during war.
3. The third Geneva Convention protects wounded & sick soldiers on land during war.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: a

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding the E-10 Shinkansen Bullet Train:

1. It is Japan's next-generation high-speed bullet train.
2. It has been designed by East Japan Railway Company in partnership with Integral Coach Factory of India.
3. India is going to be the first country outside Japan to adopt the E-10 Shinkansen.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: b

Q3. Consider the following statements regarding Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita(BNS):

1. The BNS does not recognise sedition as a penal offence.
2. Section 152 of the BNS creates an offence of endangering the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India
3. Section 152 clearly defines the "events that can endanger the sovereignty of the Nation"

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) All of the above

Answer: a

Q4. Consider the following statements regarding the Right to Information Act 2005:

1. The Right to Information is derived from the Fundamental Right of "Freedom of Speech & Expression" under Article 18 of the Constitution.
2. It includes under its ambit all the public authorities established under the Constitution without any exceptions.

Which of the above given statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: d

Q5. The "Salwa Judum" case often seen in the news is associated with which of the following issues:

- a) Left Wing Extremism
- b) Non - criminalisation of Homosexuality
- c) Rights of Transgender people
- d) Practice of witch-hunting

Answer: a





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