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MAINS TEST SERIES 2025

POLITY, GOVERNANCE & IR

Question Paper Specific Instructions

1. There are **TWENTY** Questions printed in **ENGLISH**.
2. All the questions are **compulsory**.
3. The number of marks carried by each question (or part) is indicated against it.
4. Word limit in questions wherever specified should be adhered to.
5. Any page or portion of the page left blank in the Answer booklet must be clearly struck off.

Qn No.	Marks Obtained	Qn No.	Marks Obtained
1		11	
2		12	
3		13	
4		14	
5		15	
6		16	
7		17	
8		18	
9		19	
10		20	
TOTAL			

Time - 3h 5m

Name

KIRTIAN BHATT

Roll no

Subject

POLITY, GOV, IR

Date

26.06.2025

Questions Attempted

20

EXAMINER REMARKS

GRADE PARAMETERS	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GOOD	BETTER	OUTSTANDING
Understanding of question					
Conceptual clarity					
Structure					
Content					
Presentation & legibility					

Any other remarks:

For IR 10 markers (8,9,10) add few more examples, data, figures etc. enrich the answers.
All the best!



1. The discretionary powers of the Governor reflect the unitary bias of the Indian Constitution and highlight that India is a Union of States rather than a true federation. In this context, examine the Governor's role and discretion in the passage and assent of Bills (10 Marks)

(Don't write anything in this area)

The recent SC judgement prescribing a time limit for Governor to give assent to bills amidst tussles between several states (TN, Punjab, Kerala) and their Governors highlights the controversial role of Governor.

Good Info
(Contextual)

Governor's role & discretion

- ① Art. 163 empowers the Governor to act at his discretion independent of state council of ministers, unlike the President (Art. 74).
- ② As per Art. 200, the Governor can reserve a state bill for Presidential assent at his own discretion.
- ③ This has led to stalling of state bills.



by the Governor & the President.

- ④ The Governor also enjoys a pocket veto as the constitution prescribes no time limit for the Governor to assent to state bills.

Impact on federalism

- 1) Paralyses the state legislature's functioning
- 2) Central encroachment in the state list indirectly, disrupting federal balance
- 3) Governor acting as a Centre's agent instead of constitutional head

Way forward

- 1) Reform in appointment process as recommended by Sarkaria commission
- 2) Constitutional amendment to set time limit for Governor's assent.

→ CM's consultation & concurrence



2. The Indian Constitution adopts a system of separation of powers that is distinct in both form and practice from other constitutional democracies. In this context, compare the Indian model of separation of powers with that of the United States and the United Kingdom (10 Marks)

Indian model of separation of power is based on principle of checks & balances rather than a strict separation as seen in the USA.

Comparison with USA

USA

→ The executive is not a part of legislature and is not responsible to the congress.

→ The cabinet is appointed by the President and is not a part of the Congress.

INDIA

→ The executive (COM) is collectively resp-
onsible to the lower house (Art. 75(3))

→ The COM & cabinet must be elected to the Parliament.

(Don't write anything in this area)



→ Executive orders are

passed ~~independently~~
of the ~~Congress~~ &

Congress laws are passed
independently of the
President.

→ Every law must
either be passed
by the ~~Parliament~~

or approved by
it (ordinances)

(Don't
write
anything
in this
area)

→ Judiciary - judges app-
ointed by the President

→ Also appointed by
President but advice
of Writium binding.

Comparison with UK

→ Both follow Westminster model, but some
differences are:

↳ Ministers must be a part of lower house
in UK. (unlike India)

↳ Judiciary in UK cannot strike down
primary laws (in India judicial review)

↳ Like ~~India~~, judges are appointed by an
independent judicial commission.



3. The Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025 aims to improve transparency and inclusiveness in the governance of Waqf properties. Discuss its key features and examine the criticisms surrounding its impact on minority rights and institutional autonomy. (10 Marks)

(Don't write anything in this area)

Recently, Waqf Amendment Act was passed by the Indian Parliament to better regulate Waqf properties and align the act with constitutional values of secularism.

Better
"What is waqf?"

Key features

↳ Non-muslims can be appointed to the Waqf board.

↳ The District Magistrate empowered to regulate registration of Waqf properties.

women, all muslim communities

↳ Waqf tribunal awards no more binding and appealable in courts.

"Waqf by user" abolished

↳ "Oral waqfs" can be seized by the government if lacking documentation.



Criticisms

- Appointment of non-Muslims violative of Art. 26 ⇒ right of religious institutions to administer property.
- Violative of essential practices doctrine as defined by SC in Shirur Mutt case.
- As per SC, religious institutions have fundamental right to property.

(Don't write anything in this area)

Impact on minority rights

- Minority groups have criticized the act as violative of secular ethos of the constitution.

However, constitution allows state interference in secular matters of a religion. SC has directed the Centre to reconsider the provision of non-Muslims in Waqf Board.

Good Conclusion



4. E-governance is not merely about digitizing services; it also aims to democratize decision-making and empower citizen voices. In this context, evaluate the role of the "e-Advocacy Model" in promoting participatory governance and policy responsiveness. (10 Marks)

(Don't write anything in this area)

E-governance refers to the use of ICT for public service delivery, making governance more accessible, effective, responsive

Aims to democratize decision-making

→ "Citizen to government" model of e-governance empowers citizens to give feedback (e.g. my gov. in)

→ It accelerates grievance redressal.

→ AI chatbots can help citizens better navigate platforms (e.g. Kisan GPT)

Role of e-Advocacy model



① It empowers citizens to raise issues and send constructive criticism.

(e.g.) Public scrutiny of Parliamentary Bills online.

② Citizen report cards help in fine tuning policies to citizen needs.

③ It makes governance Inclusive & equitable by enabling last mile access.

Challenges & way forward

① Digital divide - rural-urban, gender divide
⇒ PMGDISHA and Bharat Net for last mile connectivity.

② Language barriers - lack of vernacular language in e-governance.

⇒ Using AI Bhashini

Thus, e-governance can truly realize the Gandhian vision of Sarvodaya

(Don't write anything in this area)

examples are not directly pointing on e-advocacy

but still manageable 3 1/2



5. Explain the role of Lokayuktas in promoting accountability in public administration. Why is the absence of uniformity in their structure and powers across states seen as a challenge to effective governance? (10 Marks)

Inspired by the institution of Swedish Ombudsman, Lokpal. A Lokayukta act heralded an era of transparency & accountability in administration.

Role of Lokayuktas

- ↳ 1) Complaint redressal - cognizance of corruption cases by state officials, including C.M.
- ↳ 2) Coordinate with Lokpal in investigation.
- ↳ 3) Direct state agencies and AEB in investigation.
- ↳ 4) Recommend action - suspension, disciplinary action, termination, etc.

(Don't write anything in this area)



Absence of uniformity - challenge

- ① Lack of a uniform codified procedure for investigation leads to tokenism and ineffective investigation.
- ② No established mechanism to coordinate with the lokpal & CBI, ACB, etc.
- ③ Many states have not appointed lok-ayuktas at all.
- ④ Political interference in appointment, service conditions, etc.

Way forward

4

- ① Standard operating procedure across all states.
- ② Security of tenure & independent appointment
- ③ Oversight by lokpal.

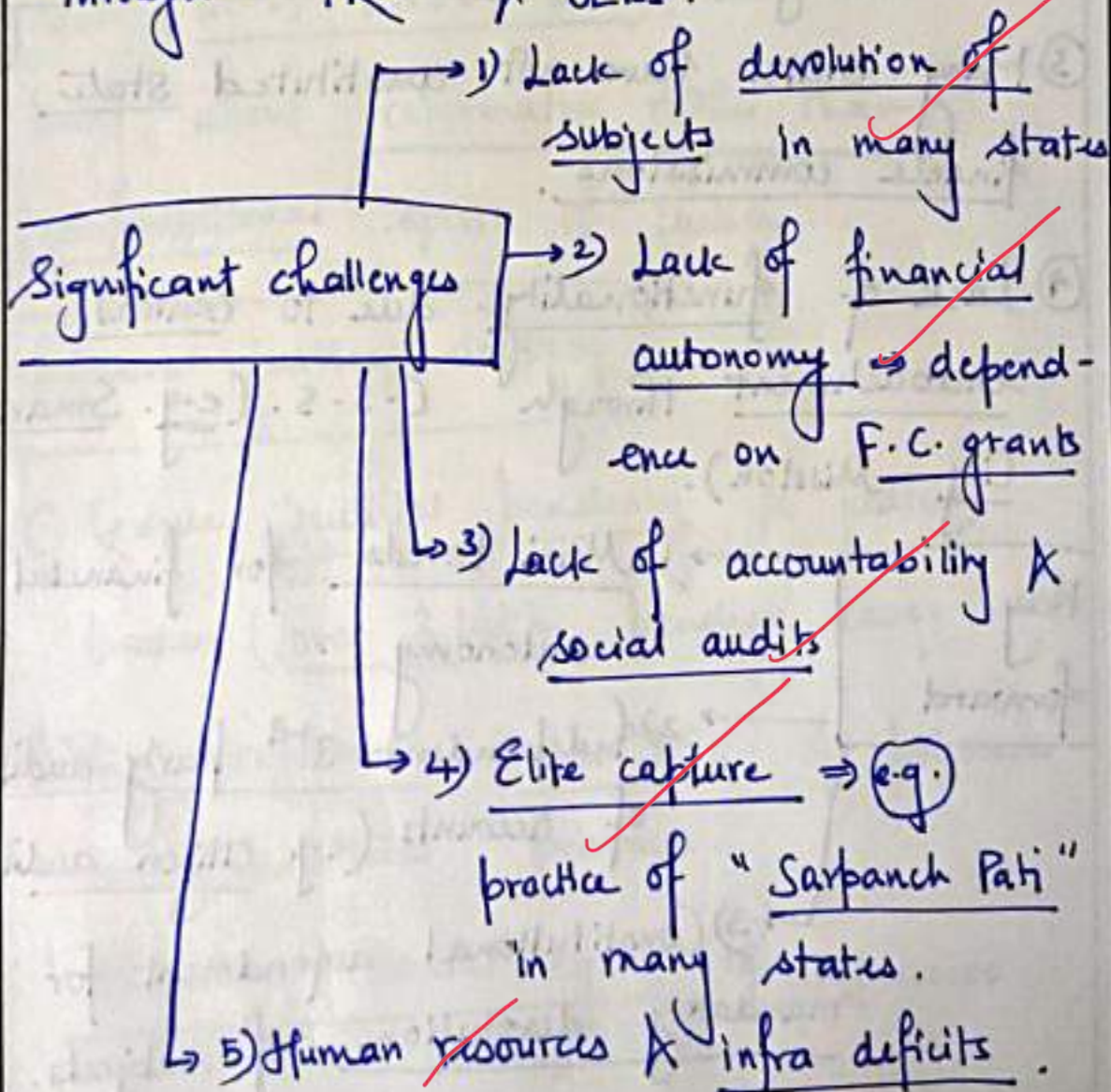
(Don't write anything in this area)



6. Despite constitutional status, local self-governments in India continue to face significant challenges in autonomy and capacity. Comment, with a special focus on issues faced by Urban Local Bodies (ULBs). (10 Marks)

(Don't write anything in this area)

73rd & 74th amendments to the constitution brought about a new era of democratic deepening and participatory governance through PRI & ULBs.





Issues faced by ULBs

(Don't write anything in this area)

- ① Inadequate taxation powers & revenue generation streams.
- ② Nexus between Municipal Commissioners & state government $\Rightarrow$ compromised autonomy.
- ③ Many states have not constituted state finance commissions.
- ④ Lack of functionality due to central encroachment through C.S.S. (e.g. Smart City Mission).

Way forward

- 1) Muni bonds for financial autonomy.
- 2) Independent 3rd party audit of accounts (e.g. Citizen audit).
- 3) Constitutional amendment for mandatory devolution of subjects.



7. India's recent legal reforms, including the Jan Vishwas Act and the new criminal laws, reflect a shift towards reformatory justice and ease of compliance. Elucidate how the decriminalisation of minor regulatory and commercial offences can improve justice delivery and enhance the business environment.

(10 Marks)

(Don't write anything in this area)

Jan Vishwas Act aims to reduce litigations by decriminalising minor regulatory & commercial offences, whereas new criminal laws (BNS, BNSS, BSA) also aim to bring about reformatory rather than confrontational spirit of justice.

Improved justice delivery

- ① Reduce judicial pendency & judicial burden (over 3 lakh pending cases in HCs)
- ② Prison reforms — over 75% of prisoners are undertrial prisoners.
- ③ Shedding colonial legacy of repressive justice.



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④ Make 'justice delivery more accessible .

(e.g.) e-Summons, e-FIR, e-trial .

(Don't write anything in this area)

Enhanced business environment

① Improve ease of doing business through reduced compliance burden .

→ increase in FDI .

② Save cost & time overruns by adoption of electronic justice delivery .

③ Enhance public trust in the policing & justice system, thus improving overall quality of life .

Hence, through such progressive steps, India will be on track to become Viksit Bharat by 2047 .



8. Discuss the strategic significance of India's engagement in the Arctic and its implications for energy, environment, and great power competition. (10 Marks)

(Don't write anything in this area)

Recent melting of glaciers in the Arctic region due to global warming has made it a geopolitical hotspot due to its rich mineral sources & maritime routes.

Significance of India's engagement

- ① Alternative maritime routes due to increased tensions in traditional searoutes.
 - ↳ (e.g.) Houthi's in Red sea;
 - ↳ (e.g.) Blocking of Hormuz strait by Iran.
- ② Potential for Blue Economy.
- ③ Strategic hedge as major powers like Russia, USA, Canada are fighting vying to control the region.

Through NSR - engagement with Russia - In align with INSTC

China



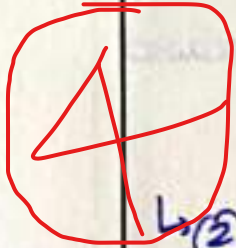
Implications for energy

- ↳ ① Reach source of hydrocarbons Data
- ↳ ② Potential deposits of rare earth minerals.

(Don't write anything in this area)

Implications for environment

- ↳ ① Melting polar caps can disrupt ocean currents and established weather patterns impact on monsoon
⇒ Impact on livelihoods & food security
- ↳ ② Rising sea levels pose a threat to India's coastal cities.



Ref key for more content

Implications for power competition

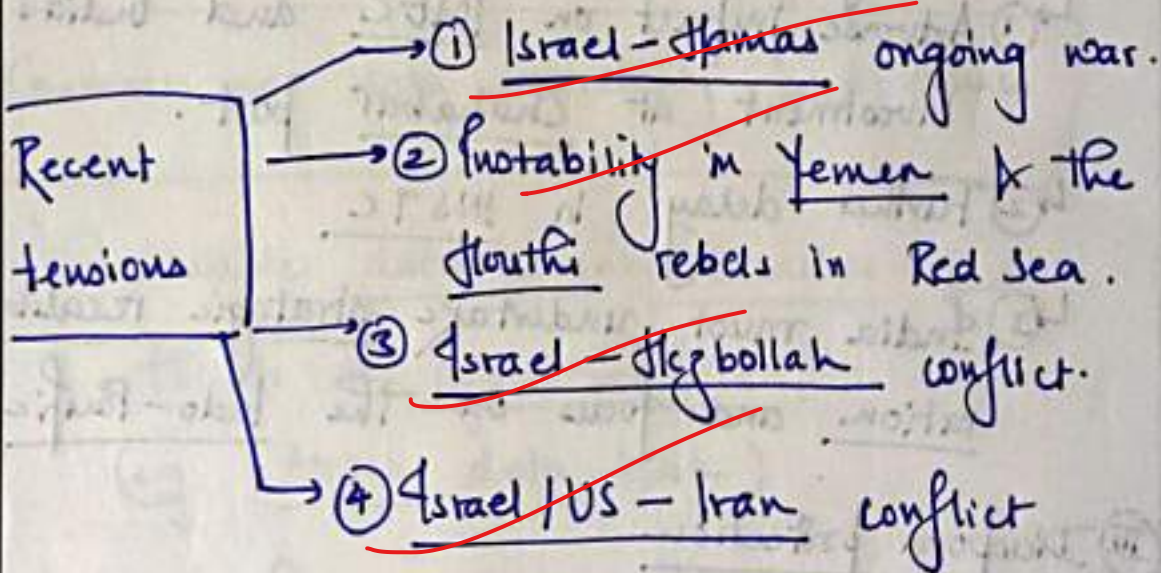
- Possibility of a global conflict as Russia, US, China are trying to control the region.
- India should push for global consensus to treat the Arctic as global commons



9. How are recent geopolitical realignments and escalating tensions in West Asia shaping India's regional strategy, particularly in the domains of energy security, diaspora protection, and connectivity initiatives? (10 Marks)

(Don't write anything in this area)

The recent Israel-Iran conflict and bombing of Iranian nuclear sites by the USA has reaffirmed West Asia's image as a perpetual battlefield.



Impact on India's regional strategy

① Energy security

↳ ① Crude oil - India imports a bulk of it from Iran & Iraq.

not now



↳ I Disruption of natural gas imports from Qatar.

↳ 3 Need to diversify supply chains and attain Atmanirbharta in energy.

II Connectivity

↳ 1 Adverse impact on IMEC and India's investment at Chahabar port.

↳ 2 Further delay in INSTC

↳ 3 India must undertake strategic recalibration and focus on the Indo-Pacific

III Diaspora protection

↳ 1 Over 3 million NRIs in the Gulf

↳ 2 Indian students in Iran and nursing professionals in Israel.

Recent efforts by India to evacuate its citizens have been successful. India must pursue its bridge building diplomacy to ensure regional peace.

(Don't write anything in this area)



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10. Amid rising global concerns over data sovereignty and AI ethics, examine the opportunities and challenges for India in shaping inclusive and equitable norms for global digital governance. (10 Marks)

Recent data breach in Google & Meta servers, possibly the largest ever, raises renewed concerns over data security & AI ethics in an increasingly globalized world.

Concerns over data sovereignty & AI ethics

↳ ① Multiple data security breaches and threats of cyber warfare.
(e.g. AIMS data leak)

↳ ② Use of deepfakes for propaganda & information warfare.
(e.g. deepfakes of Indian Generals during Op. Sindoor)

↳ ③ Using AI to manipulate electoral outcomes.

(Don't write anything in this area)



Challenges for India

- ① Slow progress on indigenous AI model unlike China's Deepseek.
- ② Low R&D investment (at only 0.7% of GDP).
- ③ Lack of consensus globally and unethical AI governance by China.
(e.g.) USA did not join GPAI.

Opportunities for India

- ① Building on its past success of DPI
(e.g.) GDPIR launched at G20 2023 Summit.
- ② Skilled IT talent and demographic dividend.
- ③ Historical legacy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbkam and voice of Global South.
AI India Mission if leveraged properly can place India as the champion of Inclusive AI.

(Don't write anything in this area)

Ref key for specific content



11. Discuss the scope of the Right to Privacy as laid down in *Justice K.S. Puttaswamy (Retd.) and Anr. v. Union of India and Ors.*, (2017), and critically examine how far the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 protects informational privacy in practice (15 Marks)

(Don't write anything in this area)

The landmark *Justice Puttaswamy* judgement recognized right to ~~privacy~~ as the part of right to life & liberty under Art. 21.

Scope of
right to
privacy

1) Bodily autonomy $\Rightarrow$ source of reproductive rights for women.

2) Informational security $\Rightarrow$ right to data privacy, right to be forgotten

3) Right to sexual orientation
 $\Rightarrow$ reiterated by the SC in NALSA v. UoI 2018.



DPDP Act protects informational privacy

(Don't write anything in this area)

- ① Obligations on data fiduciaries (processors of personal data) to securely store data.
- ② Need for informed consent for data processing.
- ③ Appointment of Data Protection officer (DPO) obligatory for large data fiduciaries.
- ④ Restrictions on cross-border data flow.
- ⑤ Data Minimization requirements $\Rightarrow$ data fiduciaries must only collect minimum data required.

Criticisms

- ① Central government can access personal



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data for national security reasons

⇒ wide discretionary powers vaguely defined.

⇒ possibility of state surveillance.

② No clear definition & standard for data minimization ⇒ data fiduciaries continue to collect large amounts of data.

③ Requirement for informed consent not sufficient due to digital illiteracy.

Though a step in the right direction, DPDP Act needs further safeguards to truly ensure informational security & realize the essence of Art. 21.

→ Cross-border data
→ Data of children
→ Right to be forgotten

(Don't write anything in this area)



12. In light of the arguments of gender justice, secularism, and cultural autonomy, examine the prospects and pitfalls of introducing a nation-wide Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in India. In this context, evaluate whether the experiences of Goa and Uttarakhand provide a viable template for nationwide implementation. (15 Marks)

(Don't write anything in this area)

UCC refers to a single codified set of personal laws (marriage, inheritance, divorce, etc.) across the country, as envisioned by Art. 44 of the constitution.

Prospects of UCC

- ① Implement gender neutral & gender just personal laws.
(e.g.) Parity with men in inheritance.
- ② In line with Art. 14 & 15 ⇒ treating all religions equally. (equality before law).
- ③ In line with UNHRC recommendations



and UN Declaration of Human Rights
Universal

(Don't write anything in this area)

④ Also recommended by the SC in the landmark Shayara Bano judgement

⑤ Prerequisite for true national & cultural integration

Pitfalls of UCC

⑥ Fear of majoritarianism ⇒ "Majoritarian Civil Code" instead of UCC.

⑦ In contradiction to Art. 25 and Art. 29-30 ⇒ can infringe upon cultural & religious autonomy of groups.

⑧ Against tribal & Dalit rights who have distinct customary laws from the mainstream ⇒ violative of "Tribal Panchsheel"

- ⑨ Indian model is that of positive secularism which gives room for diversity.
- ⑩ Fear of social unrest & disharmony

Goa & Uttarakhand - template for UCC

→ Uttarakhand's UCC criticized as violative of privacy of individuals due to mandatory registration of live-in relations.

→ Also, allegations of "Hindu Civil Code" instead of UCC have been made.

→ Goa's UCC has stood the test of time despite its religious diversity.

Instead of a blanket UCC, a gradual codification & reform of personal laws as suggested by Law Commission can be the way forward.

(Don't write anything in this area)



13. What is the presumption of constitutionality in the context of legislative actions? In this backdrop, critically examine whether the increasing use of extraordinary judicial powers and judicial review is undermining legislative intent and leading to judicial overreach (15 Marks)

(Don't write anything in this area)

In India, Parliament enjoys legislative & constituent powers, unless deemed to be unconstitutional by the judiciary under Art. 13, Art. 32 & Art. 226.

Presumption of constitutionality means that laws are assumed to be constitutionally valid unless held otherwise by the judiciary.

Increasing use of extrajudicial powers —
undermining legislative intent

① SC has repeatedly invoked the basic structure doctrine introduced in the



Keshavananda Bharati case to strike down
Parliamentary laws.

→ allegations of "tyranny of the unelected"

⇒ (e.g.) striking down 99th C.A.A (NJAC
act)

(Don't
write
anything
in this
area)

② Use of extraordinary powers under Art. 142
to impart "complete justice".

→ (e.g.) recent SC judgement holding the
President accountable to the judiciary.

③ "Judicial legislations" violate the principle
of separation of powers as per Art. 50.

(e.g.) Vishaka guidelines by the SC.

④ It also violates the principle of checks & balances as the judiciary is not answer-
-able for its judgements.



Judicial review & activism necessary

(Don't write anything in this area)

① Judicial activism is required to combat legislative complacency → (e.g.) Vishaka guidelines leading to passing of POSH Act.

② It upholds the fundamental rights of citizens against arbitrary legislation.

(e.g.) ADK v. UOI (Electoral Bonds case)
⇒ upheld the right to information.

③ Maintain the federal structure of the Indian polity → (e.g.) SC judgement putting deadline to Governor's assent to state bills

④ Enables transformative constitutionalism to adapt to evolving societal needs (expanding scope of Art. 21)

Thus, judiciary as the custodian of constitution enjoys extensive powers, but they must be exercised with constitutional spirit.



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14. Discuss the role and significance of Joint Parliamentary Committees (JPCs) in the Indian parliamentary system. Do you think their functioning and recommendations are effective in ensuring executive accountability and upholding democratic values? (15 Marks)

(Don't write anything in this area)

Borrowed from the British system, Joint Parliamentary Committees are potent tools for executive accountability and deliberative democracy.

Role & significance

↳ ① Legislative scrutiny → act as a revising chamber for hasty legislations.

(e.g.) Waqf Bill

↳ ② Federal spirit is upheld as council of states' members are involved.

↳ ③ Professional input and domain expertise can be involved in legislative process.



④ Scope for citizen scrutiny and feedback on bills.

⑤ Consensus-based atmosphere without political pressure $\Rightarrow$ bypassing whips and Anti-Defection Law.

⑥ Continuity and stability in legislative process as the Parliament only sits for 60 days on average per year.

Whether they are effective

① Non-binding nature of recommendations $\Rightarrow$ lack of enforcement.

② Absenteeism $\Rightarrow$ only 50% attendance on average in 17th Lok Sabha.

③ Ad hoc nature $\Rightarrow$ rarely utilized to its full potential.

(Don't write anything in this area)



④ Political appointments undermining profession
- alism and democratic spirit.

(Don't write anything in this area)

⑤ Only 16% Bills during 17th Lok Sabha sent to committees.

⑥ Use of guillotines by the executive to cut short discussion on committee reports.

Way forward

↳ ① Australian model - mandatory discussion of committee reports.

↳ ② Longer tenure to enhance continuity

↳ ③ Merit-based appointments.

↳ ④ Mandatory referral of substantive bills. (2nd ARC)

OECD report suggests that democracies with strong committee ecosystem have better developmental indicators.



15. In India's federal setup, the states face a growing mismatch between their expanding developmental responsibilities and their limited fiscal autonomy. In this context, examine the key challenges in achieving balanced fiscal federalism. Critically analyse the role of the judiciary in protecting the fiscal rights of states (15 marks)

(Don't write anything in this area)

As per K.C. Wheare, Indian polity has a quasi-federal nature with a strong unitary bias.

Growing mismatch

- ① Increasing share of Central Sector Schemes put a fiscal burden on the states.
(e.g.) ADP, Smart City Mission, etc.
- ② Subjects in state & concurrent list like health & education require the largest portion of developmental expenditure.
- ③ Need for devolution of finances to PRIs & ULBs for grassroots development.



Key Challenges

- ① Reduced vertical devolution to states by the 15th F.C. $\Rightarrow$ only 41% $\Rightarrow$ inadequate for developmental responsibilities.
- ② Tied grants by the Centre leading to critically vested transfer of grants.
 $\Rightarrow$ (e.g.) recent petition by Kerala in the S.C.
- ③ Increasing share of cess & surcharges that are not devoluted to states.
- ④ Revenue shortfall due to GST regime.
- ⑤ Population Income distance criteria for devolution by the F.C. $\Rightarrow$ impacts states with good governance adversely.

Positive role of judiciary

(Don't write anything in this area)

→ Recently, SC directed the Centre to transfer the stalled grants to Kerala & Tamil Nadu.

(Don't write anything in this area)

→ SC also urged the centre to consider extension of GST compensation act during the pandemic.

new cos
one para
see the Venn

Challenges remain

① No judicial oversight on the recommendations of the F-C. that are favouring the Centre.

② Judiciary should take cognizance of increasing cess & surcharge share by the Centre.

Way forward

3) Fiscal Federalism
Council for
cooperative fiscal
federalism.

→ 1) Untie grants to ensure equitable & merit-based transfer of funds.

→ 2) Larger devolution share to states → at least 50%



16. In light of recent allegations concerning judicial corruption and misconduct, analyse the need for greater judicial accountability in India. What are the key challenges in achieving this, and what reforms can be introduced to enhance transparency in the judiciary? (15 marks)

(Don't write anything in this area)

Recent allegations of corruption on Justice Verma of Delhi HC have raised questions over judicial integrity in India.

Need for greater judicial accountability

- ① Judiciary as the guardian of constitution must uphold utmost integrity.
- ② Such cases & allegations erode public trust in the judiciary.
- ③ Judiciary must not devolve into a "tyranny of the unelected".

Key challenges



(Don't write anything in this area)

- ① Opaque appointment system through collegium
⇒ allegations of favouritism & nepotism.
⇒ India only democratic country where judges appoint judges.
- ② Art. 121 & 211 ⇒ conduct of judges cannot be discussed in the Parliament (except during impeachment).
- ③ Complex removal procedure as per Art. 124.
- ④ SC's own in-house procedure to investigate into malpractices lacks transparency.
- ⑤ SC order for disclosure of assets by judges online is not mandatory.
- ⑥ Resignation loophole - judge under investigation can resign without consequences.



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Reforms to enhance transparency

(Don't write anything in this area)

- ① Checks & balances in appointment process
→ (e.g.) UK Model of independent judicial commission.
- ② Publication of collegium minutes mandatory.
- ③ Transparent in-house procedure ⇒ publication of reports & actions taken.
- ④ Empower Parliament to sanction judges for proven corruption with a simple majority resolution.

Judicial Independence is not a privilege
or a license, but a responsibility towards
citizens & the Constitution, to act in line
with constitutional morality.



17. What factors have led to the transformation of India's civil servants from rule-bound administrators to dynamic public managers? In this context, discuss the emerging expectations from civil services and suggest measures to strengthen their accountability in a complex governance ecosystem. (15 Marks)

(Don't write anything in this area)

Emerging global transformations like globalization, Climate Change, AI, IoT, cyber warfare, etc. have necessitated a shift from rule-based to rule-based nature of civil services.

Factors leading to transformation

↳ ① Increasingly globalized & connected world.

⇒ need to manage unexpected crisis like COVID-19.

↳ ② Dominance of e-governance needing tech adaptation.

⇒ Flourishing tech startup ecosystem.

↳ ③ Increasing social media scrutiny



- ↳ ④ Global challenges like Climate Change
⇒ need to respond dynamically to disasters.
- ↳ ⑤ Sumrise tech like solar & wind energy, electromobility, autonomous cars, AI, ML.

(Don't write anything in this area)

Emerging expectations

- ① Enhanced responsiveness due to media scrutiny.
⇒ Redtapism will be shunned in today's rapid era.
- ② Professionalism & expertise to handle emerging technologies.
⇒ (e.g.) formulating AI Policy that is human-centric, inclusive, equitable.
- ③ Accountability towards citizens due to



e-governance.

(e.g.) e-RTI, myGov, CPGRAMS.

④ Integrity - corruption cases get exposed easily due to social media.

(e.g.) recent Puja Khedkar case.

(Don't write anything in this area)

Reforms needed

① Training specialists rather than generalists to tackle complex evolving issues.

② Lateral entry to infuse fresh perspective.

③ Deputation to private sector to experience agile work culture.

④ Strict performance-based incentives and not time-based.

In order to further remain India's Steel Frame, civil servants must enhance their image of red tapism to "red carpetism".



18. Delimitation is not a mere administrative exercise; it is a political recalibration that can redefine representation." In this light, explain the pressing need for delimitation. Also analyse the associated challenges and suggest a balanced roadmap for ensuring fair and inclusive representation in India. (15 marks)

(Don't write anything in this area)

Article 54 of Indian constitution empowers the Parliament to constitute a Delimitation Commission for periodic fixing & review of constituency boundaries, in line with the principle of "one person, one vote, one value".

Pressing need for delimitation

- ① To reflect ground realities and growing population of India.
⇒ Number of representatives need to be almost doubled.
- ② Social justice - increased share of representation to SC & STs.



- ③ Gender justice — to enable the practical realization of Nari Shakti Vandana Adhiniyam
- ④ Ensure a level playing field for all political parties and enable impartial elections.

(Don't write anything in this area)

Challenges

- ① Concern of southern states — fear of disincentivization for population control policies.
⇒ can worsen North-South divide and fuel regionalism.
- ② Delayed Census due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ③ Hindi heartland will gain most constituencies thus disadvantaging regional parties.



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Roadmap ahead

① Mixed-criteria for limitation that considers not only population but also good governance, fiscal reform, etc.

⇒ Similar to Finance Commission criteria.

② Hybrid-census approach that combined 1971 & 2025 census such that southern states are not disadvantaged.

③ Judicial oversight to ensure a level-playing field.

In order to uphold national integration and harmony, an equitable & consensus-based delimitation process is essential.

(Don't write anything in this area)



19. "Water remains a key yet underappreciated dimension of India's neighbourhood diplomacy." Analyse how transboundary rivers influence India's relations with its neighbours and examine the strategic, environmental, and developmental implications. (15 Marks)

(Don't write anything in this area)

The recent withdrawal by India from the Indus Water Treaty in the wake of Pahalgam attacks highlights the importance of water in neighbourhood diplomacy.

How trans boundary rivers influence relations

① Rivers can be weaponised by nations to weaken the neighbour.

⇒ (e.g.) China's building dams on Brahmaputra and refusal to share hydrological data.

② Water can also enable bridge building diplomacy.



→ (e.g.) Progress on Teesta river dispute with Bangladesh during Sheikh Hasina's regime.

(Don't write anything in this area)

③ They can exacerbate boundary disputes

→ (e.g.) boundary dispute with Nepal due to shifting of Kali & Gandak.

④ Act as a deterrence to terrorism, as reiterated by PM Modi after suspending INT:

"blood & water can't flow together".

Strategic significance

↳ ① Send international message of deterrence.

↳ ② Reiterate India's sovereignty & strategic autonomy.



autonomy

please avoid writing like this

(Don't write anything in this area)

Environmental significance

↳ ① Joint efforts to combat floods & droughts amidst climate change.

⇒ (e.g.) river data sharing agreement with Nepal.

↳ ② Ensure water security & livelihoods.

↳ ③ Maintain balance in ecologically sensitive zones.

7/2

Developmental significance

↳ ① Inland waterways enhance connectivity.

⇒ (e.g.) Access to Bay of Bengal to Nepal.

↳ ② Electricity generation using hydrology.

⇒ (e.g.) power sharing agreement with Nepal.

gone

Thus, water remains central in 21st century for India's Neighbourhood First Policy.



20. "The Indo-Pacific has emerged as the epicentre of 21st-century geopolitical contestation." In this context, assess how India's engagements aim to counterbalance China's maritime assertiveness and promote a rules-based regional order. (15 Marks)

(Don't write anything in this area)

Indo Pacific Construct remains central to India's diplomacy due to its trade geo-strategic, geo-economic & geoecological importance.

Epicentre of 21st century geopolitical contestation

① Rising Chinese footprint

⇒ militarization of South China Sea

⇒ String of Pearls strategy to contain India.

② Geopolitical battlefield ⇒ USA, Australia, Japan, India through Quad position themselves for a free, open, rules-based Indo-Pacific.



③ Vital for trade routes due to disruption of Suez route due to Middle East instability.

(Don't write anything in this area)

④ Rich oil & gas reserves and critical mineral deposits.

→ (e.g.) Nickel reserves in Indonesia.

Good

India's engagements

① Act East Policy to engage with the South East Asian countries.

→ (e.g.) India is a member of ASEAN +.

② Strategic balancing by leveraging Quad

⇒ (e.g.) MALABAR naval exercise.

③ Necklace of diamonds strategy to counter China's strategic encirclement.

→ (e.g.) Sittoung port in Myanmar.



④ "Kautilya Niti" — supporting Philippines against China.

Brahmos to Philippines

(Don't write anything in this area)

→ support for PCA's verdict against China.

⑤ Strategic symbolism through withdrawal from RCEP to protest against Chinese assertiveness.

Challenges

↳ ① Russia-China-Pak nexus undermining India's efforts.

↳ ② Pro-China tilt in countries like Sri Lanka & Maldives.

↳ ③ Unreliability of US after recent actions of Trump administration.

Despite challenges, India continues to pursue multi-alignment and issue-based alignments to counter China in Indo-Pacific.

good answer