

Nobel-winning team spots merging neutron stars

For the first time, a cosmic event has been observed with gravitational waves and also light waves.

The LIGO-VIRGO collaboration, three members of which won this year's physics Nobel Prize, strikes again, this time, to detect the merger of two neutron stars – extremely dense, massive but tiny, objects. What is more striking is that gamma rays bursting from the event were observed by nearly 70 ground and space-based observatories.

This is the very first time that a cosmic event has been observed with gravitational waves as well as the light emanating from it. Earlier observations made by LIGO have been of black hole mergers, and as no light can escape from a black hole, there was no such light counterpart to the measurements.

According to a press release circulated by the collaboration, “On August 17, LIGO's real-time data analysis software caught a strong signal of gravitational waves from space in one of the two LIGO detectors. At nearly the same time, the Gamma-ray Burst Monitor on NASA's Fermi space telescope had detected a burst of gamma rays.”

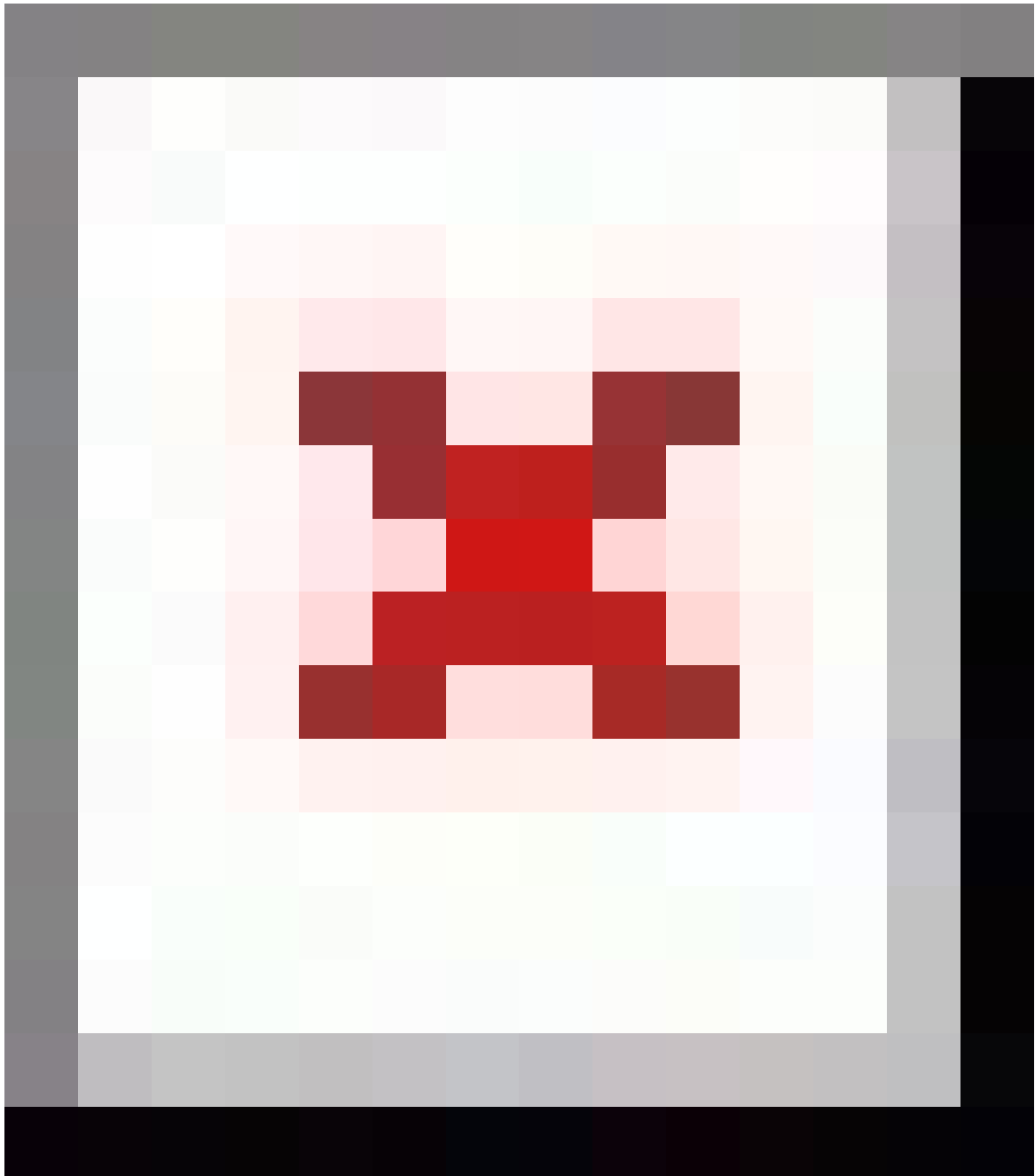
Last Dance of Neutron Star Pair

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“The fact that these two signals [the gravitational waves and the gamma ray bursts, which are essentially light waves] arrived at nearly the same time tell us that the speed of gravitational waves is extremely close to the speed of light. This was predicted by Einstein, but it is the first time we are making a direct measurement,” says P. Ajith, of International Centre for Theoretical Sciences, Bengaluru. Dr.

Ajith is one of the leading contributors to the theoretical studies on gravitational waves. In all, the LIGO-VIRGO collaboration includes about 1,500 scientists and of this about 40 are Indians.

The neutron stars of the signal detected on August 17 were located about 130 million light years away. As these neutron stars spiraled together, they emitted gravitational waves that were detectable for about 100 seconds. When they collided, a flash of light in the form of gamma rays was emitted. This "gamma ray burst" was seen on Earth about two seconds after the gravitational waves were observed. As a result, the gravitational wave detectors caught the signal which is the longest "chirp" heard so far – it lasted 100 seconds.



Neutron stars are the smallest, densest stars known to exist. These could be about 20 kilometres in diameter and have masses much greater than the Sun. A teaspoonful of neutron star material could hold a mass of a billion tonnes. They are formed when massive stars explode in supernovae.

“From informing detailed models of the inner workings of neutron stars and the emissions they produce, to more fundamental [physics](#) such as general relativity, this event is just so rich. It is a gift that will keep on giving,” David

Shoemaker, spokesperson of the LIGO collaboration, is quoted as saying in the press release.

Source: xaam.in

[Supreme Court to hear plea against linking Aadhaar to bank accounts, phones](#)

Move violates fundamental right, equates citizens with money launderers, the petition states.

The Supreme Court will hear a petition challenging the government move to link bank accounts and mobile phones with Aadhaar numbers, saying it violates the fundamental right to privacy and equates citizens, including the elderly, women and students, with money launderers.

The petition filed by activist Dr. Kalyani Menon Sen has challenged Rule 2(b) of the Prevention of Money-laundering (Maintenance of Records) Second Amendment Rules, 2017 for mandatory submission of Aadhaar number for individual clients, companies, partnership firms and trusts for opening of bank accounts, maintaining existing bank accounts, making financial transactions of and above ₹50,000 and crediting foreign remittance into 'small accounts'. Existing bank account holders have been directed to furnish Aadhaar numbers by December 31, 2017.

Non-compliance would render the bank accounts concerned "in-operational indefinitely" subject to submission of the Aadhaar Number and the Permanent Account Number (PAN).

“Non-compliance incurs the same liability as Section 5 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (for involvement in money laundering), that is rendering the concerned bank account in-operational. Present and potential bank account holders, who do not wish to part with their biometric information, are therefore treated on par with alleged offenders under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA),” Ms. Menon, represented by advocate Vipin Nair, submitted.

The petition challenges the Department of Telecom on March 23, 2017 making it mandatory for all mobile phone holders to link their mobile phone numbers with Aadhaar.

The petition said the provision regarding bank accounts and mobile phones both separately create an “impermissible artificial distinction” between those who have parted with their private, biometric information and those who have not. They both compel the latter category of the population to part with their biometrics for opening and maintaining bank accounts or for a mobile phone connection.

The mobile phone circular is violative of Article 300A of the Constitution which protects a person’s right to not be deprived of property. “A bank account and mobile phone connection is the personal property of an individual,” Mr. Nair represented in court.

Besides, both the provision and the circular are violative of the Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act, 2016 (hereinafter, “Aadhaar Act”) which limits the purpose of the Aadhaar number to receipt of a public subsidy, benefit or a service, the petition said.

The Aadhaar number may even compromise the efficacy of the KYC procedures and the customer database. Compelling citizens to part with their biometric details compromises India’s international law obligations. It goes against the very

concept of the expression 'limited government', which means the State cannot act against the spirit and the assurance of the Constitution.

"There are numerous, less invasive and less disruptive methods of verifying the identity of account holders," the petition submitted.

Source: xaam.in

What is the ban on fireworks sale about?

What is it?

The Supreme Court on Monday reimposed the ban on the sale of fireworks in the Delhi-National Capital Region (NCR) till November 1. The direction, according to the court, is an outcome of "direct evidence of deterioration of air quality" every year during Deepavali on account of bursting of fire crackers. Deepavali falls on October 18 and 19 this year. A Bench of Justices A.K. Sikri, A.M. Sapre and Ashok Bhushan reverted to its November 2016 decision to suspend the sale of firecrackers "to test itself to find out whether there would be a positive effect of this suspension, particularly during Deepavali period."

How did it come about?

This isn't a new case and the Supreme Court's November 11, 2016 order came on a petition by three children, Arjun Gopal, Aarav Bhandari and Zoya Rao Bhasin. On September 12, 2017, a Bench of Justices Madan B. Lokur and Deepak Gupta modified the 2016 order and allowed temporary licences for sale of crackers in Delhi-NCR. This was on a plea by firecracker manufacturers.

Why does it matter?

Burning of firecrackers during Deepavali in 2016 pushed up the particulate matter in the air by three times. Each year, the seasonal festivities make the air in and around Delhi and surrounding areas thick with smog and suspended particulate matter, leading to residents and children feeling breathless and vulnerable to asthmatic attacks.

The Supreme Court itself observed that “the air quality deteriorates abysmally and alarmingly and the city chokes thereby, leading to closure of schools in view of the health emergency situation.”

Crackers are made of highly toxic heavy metals such as copper, cadmium, lead, manganese, zinc, sodium and potassium.

These metals, if present in the air, can trigger an asthma attack, causing severe headache and respiratory problems, apart from chronic cough.

Even now the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), which monitors pollution daily, found the Air Quality Index at 190 (moderate level) till October 3; it rose to 219 (poor) on October 4. The Air Quality Index grades air on the basis of pollutants such as PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀, categorising it as Good (0-50), Satisfactory (51-100), Moderate (101-200), Poor (201-300), Very Poor (301-400) and Severe (>401).

Last year, according to realtime ambient air quality data of the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC), PM₁₀ readings went up by over 42 times after Deepavali at R.K. Puram (a densely populated area), touching the alarming high level.

The permissible level of PM_{2.5} is 60 g/m³ while PM₁₀ is 100 g/m³. Levels beyond that can cause harm to the respiratory system as the ultra fine particulates can embed themselves deep into the lungs and enter the bloodstream.

In its observation, the Supreme Court noted that the direct

and immediate cause of the spike in air pollution during this time is because of burning of crackers for Deepavali.

What next?

On Wednesday, a group of traders moved the Supreme Court, seeking a modification of the October 9 order that banned the sale of firecrackers in Delhi-NCR.

The traders told the court that their licences were revived in pursuance of the court's September 12 order and they procured firecrackers for sale during Deepavali.

A Bench, comprising Justices Ranjan Gogoi, A.M. Sapre and Navin Sinha, assured counsel for the traders that it would consult the judge concerned, who passed the order, for placing their interim application.

Lawyer Deepak Chauhan, representing trader Rajesh Kalia and several others, said they had invested a huge amount of money after their licences were revived, and the recent order of the court would cause them huge losses.

Hearing the petition by firecracker manufacturers, the Supreme Court on Friday refused to lift the suspension. It said the situation would be monitored for further course of action after Deepavali.

Source: xaam.in

Civil Services Mains 2017 and

2018: Subject wise preparation strategy, sources and booklist

The Civil Services (Preliminary) Examination is more of factual in nature, while on the other hand, the main examination requires deep analysis and comprehensive evaluation of questions, as answers written by a candidate in the examination represents the overall personality of a candidate.

In the recent years, Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) has made comprehensive changes in the pattern of the mains. In light of these changes, a robust strategy is required to score high in mains.

Every year, a large number of candidates fail to clear mains due to poor preparation or lack of right strategy. As there are 20-25 questions in each of four papers of GS, a student has to answer within a time limit, and therefore, answer writing practice is important along with coverage of the syllabus of each subject of CSE Mains.

For candidates, who are going to appear in Mains 2017, the focus should be entirely on revision, solving previous years' question papers and answer writing practice at this moment. Students, who are planning to appear in CSE Mains 2018, will get ample amount of time to reconcile and recollect information relevant to the UPSC, to utilise the existing skills and acquire relevant knowledge, in-depth understanding of each subject along with clarity of thoughts and expressions.

Strategy to crack CSE Mains

- * Stay updated with current issues (read the news in last one year with a focus on current major issues). One can buy Hindu news compilation which is released every third month
- * Practice answer writing with coherency of ideas which are connected with dynamic issues
- * Prepare well for your optional subject. Go through the previous years' question papers and cross-check the issues which are still in news

- * Essay writing practice (write one essay weekly). Essay topics are generally related to poverty, unemployment, crony capitalism, health and such other issues
- * Identify your mistakes in previous year's attempt and rectify them in the next
- * Try to cover your mains optional subject while preparing for GS

Lastly, if you are targeting UPSC 2017, revision is the key to success in mains examination.

Paper wise GS Mains books and sources for civil services preparation

GS Paper-1

Indian heritage and culture, history and geography of the world and society

Sources:

India's Struggle for Independence by Bipin Chandra

Facets of Indian Culture – Spectrum

Modern Indian History by BL Grover

India since Independence by Bipin Chandra

Certificate Physical and Human Geography by GC Leong

Class 11 and 12 NCERT books

GS Paper-2

Major topics

Federal structure of union and state, separation of power between centre and state

Comparison between Indian constitutions with other various constitutions of other countries

Non-Government Organisation (NGO) and Self Help Group (SHG) basic functions. Question mostly asked from current affairs

Note: In GS paper 2, questions are from current affairs, majorly covering issues which were in the news in past year

Sources

Laxmikant for basics

Any standard magazine for dynamic issues

For government policies, read India yearbook, Yojana of last one year and Kurukshetra. Also, focus on Comptroller Auditor General (CAG) report on government schemes.

GS paper-3

Major topics

Agricultural issues related to minimum support price, subsidies, irrigation facilities

Macroeconomic issues that are in the news which included issues like infrastructure like ports, railway and waterways Issues relating to RBI monetary policy, RBI's role in economy, 25 years of LPG subsidy, civil aviation policy

Read Budget and Economic survey (Twin Balance sheet problem and bad bank loan) to cover the above topics

Other sources

For science and tech, read The Hindu (science portion)

For environment, read climate part of Economic Survey and India year book on environment

For disaster management, read Tata Mcgraw Hill

For internal security, read Tata Mcgraw Hill along with any standard magazine

GS Paper-4

Major topics

Case studies: Go through the previous year questions and analyse the mindset of question framers and see what kind of topics are generally asked for case studies part. Try to solve as much case studies as possible

Ethics: Questions are mostly asked from corporate governance, civil service, ethical issues, private and public affairs of the civil servants

Sources for Ethics: lexicon for ethics, second ARC recommendation

Once you are done with basic of polity, geography, history and economy with the help of NCERT books and above recommendations, try to spend most of your time analysing the previous years' question papers and start solving them. It will help you assess yourself and then improvise on the areas lacking.

Before a month of the examination, try to remain calm and do not fret about any topics you have not covered. For better memorisation of facts, you must go through UNESCO websites, Ramsar sites, national parks and government websites and keep enrolling yourself in mock test papers which are helpful for gaining a sense of the exam.

Source: xaam.in

Sociology Notes By Kshitij Tyagi

[Download](#)

Join Our Online Test Series For Prelims 2018

: http://imojo.in/Prelims_2018_TestSeries

Source: xaam.in

Geography Powerpoint Lecture BY Rajtanil Solanki Rank 367 IRS

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: http://imojo.in/Prelims_2018_TestSeries

Source: xaam.in

Full Length Mock UPSC Mains

GS2: Set1 with model

Answerkey (Mrunal)

All Questions are Compulsory. Answer each of them in not more than 200 words x 12.5 marks = 250 marks

Time limit: 3 hours.

1. "Right to privacy is a fundamental right but not an absolute right (अपूर्ण अधिकार) in India." Discuss.
2. US Constitution & US supreme court judgments provide that "individuals have right to possess a firearm & use it for self-defense." Given the frequent news about the atrocities against women, scheduled castes & minorities in India, should we incorporate this in our constitution?
3. What is Article 35A of the Indian constitution? Critically examine the demand for its removal in context of conflict with Article 14.
4. Discuss 2017 guidelines of SC to prevent the misuse of 498A of IPC. Will they reduce the legal protection available to the dowry victims? Examine critically.
5. What is fake news (झूठे खबरें/वैकृतिक खबरें)? How is it different from paid news? Discuss the existing & suggested mechanisms to prevent fake news in India.
6. Outline the constitutional provisions related to election & nomination of Rajya Sabha members. Why have these mechanisms been in controversy in recent years?
7. Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra & Karnataka legislative councils have exclusive constituencies in which only teachers & graduates respectively are eligible to vote. Economic Survey 2016-17 highlighted that after independence, USA economy grew at a rapid rate because initially they didn't give voting rights to all. In the light of these facts, should there be a minimum

educational or economic qualification to vote in elections?

8. "RBI governor is not an ordinary bureaucrat but a technocrat with the responsibility for the nation's economic risk management." Elaborate.
9. Law commission has solicited views about making cricket betting a legalized business activity for better oversight, regulation & tax-revenue, like in Spain & Sweden. Discuss your views.
10. In recent years, there has been a proliferation of higher education institutes without adequate number of well-paying private sector jobs to absorb those graduates. How is this affecting the economic & political discourse in India? Examine critically.
11. Economic survey 2016-17 vol2. has identified 3 main culprits behind adolescent school dropouts: (1) lack of money (2) lack of interest in studies (3) girls required to help in domestic work. Suggest remedies in the existing schemes in this regard.
12. Outline the existing framework for the content regulation & certification of TV shows in India. Noted film producer Shoojit Sircar has written to the government that "Kids reality TV shows such as Indian Idol Junior, Super Dancer, Junior Masterchef India etc. should be banned since they are destroying the innocence & purity of children." Discuss your stand on his petition.
13. Explain the meaning & significance of corporate governance. Given the controversial board battles in Tata Sons, Infosys & the problem of non-performing assets among top Indian companies, what is your stand on the criticism that "corporate governance framework in India is weak".
14. In July 2017, PMO asked DoPT to prepare a draft on lateral entry (लैटरल एंट्री) in civil services. Critically examine the benefits & challenges of such proposal.

15. Given the Rs.880 crore Srijan NGO scam in Bihar, should the NGOs be removed from the 'operational' part of developmental schemes? Examine in the light of PPP, JAM & DBT.
16. After the referendum (referendum) in Sep-Oct 2017, both Catalonia & Kurdistan have declared themselves independent from Spain & Iraq respectively. But the parent nations have declared these referendums as illegal & unconstitutional. Should India recognize them as new nations? Examine critically with historical precedents in Indian diplomacy.
17. In 2017, India-US strategic relationship has been raised to a new level of interaction called "2+2 format at ministerial level". Explain this mechanism & its benefits.
18. Discuss the factors responsible for the rise of conservatism, protectionism, nationalism & anti-globalization in the domestic politics of the developed nations in the recent years. In what ways is India affected by these developments?
19. In 2017, both India & Pakistan became full time members of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). What will India gain from joining this club? Will Pakistan's membership act as an obstacle in fully realizing these gains? Explain with reference to the past experience in SAARC.
20. Explain the term "rogue state" [rogue state / outcast state] with examples. What threats do they pose to the global order in general & India in particular? Enumerate the options available to UN in this regard.

Model Answerskey

Due to paucity of time and engagement in other projects, it's not possible to create all model answers. Beside if I spoon-feed you everything- it'll stop your intellectual growth

necessary for writing the descriptive answers. This is not a board exam. Let's start:

Q1: Right to privacy

Ans. This answer you should know. All the newspapers, complete magazines and e-learnings have dissected this in and out!

Introduction: Origin type. Why this case / controversy started
Body:

- care should be taken not to spend too much words on beef, LGBT and other peripheral issues. Read the question – you've to stick your points around "Fundamental right vs absolute right".
- SC itself said there needs to be a "careful and sensitive balance between individual interests and legitimate concerns of the state" such as "preventing and investigating crime, encouraging innovation and the spread of knowledge, and preventing the dissipation of social welfare benefits (=leakage) ". Hence it can't be 'absolute'.
- Magnify further on crime (including black money and money laundering) and subsidy angle.

Conclusion: question says "discuss" so summarize, why there can be no "absolute rights" in any constitution.

Q2: Right to guns

In news, because of the Las Vegas shooting. Introduction: (Origin type) The right to arms provided in US Constitution by the second amendment in 1791. (we can't remember absolute years so let's keep it in 18th century). At that time, the new country was still a fledgling state. Second amendment was necessary on following grounds:

1. From the earliest years of English settlement in USA, colonists had depended on local groups of part-time citizen soldiers to defend themselves from the Indians,

armed bandits, cattle robbers and attacks by wild animals.

2. During American war for independence, these militia fought against the British.
3. After independence, colonies feared that Federal army will 'disarm' the militia and this will raise their vulnerability. Hence, second amendment specifically reads, "A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed."
4. So it was justified in that time,

Body#2: why not necessary in India:

- Our struggle for independence was not won by the armed private militia.
- At the time of independence, the British and DESHI princes had wiped out most of the wild animals and all the robbers and bandits had joined politics, so ordinary citizens need not bear weapons against them.
- At the time of independence, we already had a proper structure and hierarchy district police under DM, and judiciary in place. Law and order is their responsibility. Over the years, we've created new institutions for maintenance of law and order (RPF, CRPF etc) as well as rights bodies (national commissions).
- Those who fear for the safety of their life or property can apply for gun license or seek police protection.
- Women, scheduled castes & minorities victims usually belong to poor household. Guns are expensive.
- Even if such right is given, only the rich, elite will bear arms further intimidating their poor victims. Danger that it'll encourage Vigilantism, Salva-Judums, Ranveer Sena and secessionism.
- Plus, whatever other reverent points and reasons you can muster to fill the answer space.

DONOT digress too much towards peripheral or trivial topics

e.g. – People will get bogus aadhar cards, stonepelters and naxalites will use these arms. – We'll have to encourage Gun mfg. under make in India so the poor victims can afford. But since we've jumped directly from agriculture to service sector so gun mfg. poses challenge. And if we import too many guns it'll adversely affect BoP. – Unable to get many gold medals in shooting competition because we don't have this right

The question here is "bear arms in context of the violence against women, SC and minorities." Remember the quality of the points is more important than length of the answer.

Conclusion: Question is "should we adopt gun freedom?", so finding should be "Yes or No". Ofcourse it should be "no", because if you've so much distrust in police and 'prashashan' (administration), then you should not apply in the UPSC in the first place!

(Type#1) Atrocities against women and minorities are matter of concern but citizens need not bear arms. It's responsibility of the state. Even within USA the lax gun control has resulted into growing incidents of crime and mass shootings in schools and public places.

(Type#2) American anthem mentions "rockets glare, the bombs bursting in air,...(USA is the) land of the free and the home of the brave." It cherishes the weapons and violence in ensuring a free country, but we don't. Right to guns is not in the spirit of our preamble which mentions "fraternity and unity" or our national pledge which says "all Indians are my brothers and sisters".

Q3: Article 35A vs Article 14

Adequate maal available in article of [TimesofIndia URL](#). Use it and some fodder about development, national integration etc and you can easily fillup 200 words answersheet. Further PHD unnecessary, unless political science is your optional.

Q4: Section 498-A of IPC.

First be careful in the choice of words- Constitution has "article", laws have "sections". So don't write Article 498-A of IPC. Introduction (Origin)

- 1961: Dowry Prohibition Act enacted. But, its provisions lacked teeth to prevent torture and death of young brides. So, in...
- 1983: Section 498A introduced in the Indian Penal Code (IPC), to address the lacunas of Dowry Prohibition Act. [not necessary to remember years, I wrote only for info.]
- It provides that husband and his side of relatives can be fined and jailed upto three years for inflicting cruelty to women. The offense shall be treated as cognizable, non-compoundable and non-bailable.

Body#1: how misused and what SC guideline

- In some instances, women invoke Section 498-A, to harass and intimidate their husbands and in-laws. Sometimes cases are filed to exact revenge on men or their families for their perceived misdeeds. e.g. husband's inability to guarantee a certain lifestyle for his wife or any other sore points / trivial points.
- 2014: SC found that power to arrest under 498A was lucrative source of police corruption, so it laid guidelines that arrests should only be made after the police can satisfy a magistrate.
- 2017: Rajesh Sharma and Ors v State of UP and Anr case, the Supreme Court has sought to address "misuse" of Section 498A with following guidelines:
 1. State to setup 3 member Committee @district level. They'll be the first to look @498-A complaint.
 2. These members will be given honorarium (money) and basic minimum training by the Legal Services Authority from

time to time..

3. This "civil society" committee will have para legal volunteers/social workers/retired persons/wives of working officers/other citizens
4. They will first look at the case, present a report to the police within one month and only after that can the police proceed. Till report of the committee is received, no arrest should normally be effected.
5. For NRIs, passport impounding and red-corner notice should not be sent as a 'routine' process, but only in cases involving grave danger and physical harm.
6. Often multiple cases and counter cases filed in matrimonial dispute. So, District Judge given power to club all connected cases so that a holistic view is taken.
7. Trial court ought to grant exemption from personal appearance or permit appearance to husband's family members.
8. Above guidelines shall not apply to cases involving tangible physical injuries or death.
9. This is a provisional ruling. National Legal Services Authority will file report about ground implementation and need for any changes in SC directions. Next hearing listed in April 2018.

Body#2: Criticism / Apprehensions

1. "Civil society" committee members could be biased, bribed to give a ruling in favor of the perpetrators.
2. One month inquiry time is too long. In the meantime, victim lady could be coerced into taking back her complaint.
3. Why presume women's complaints are not genuine and need an additional filter? Already Magistrate has oversight, as per the 2014 guidelines to prevent misuse of 498-A.

Conclusion

Question is "Examine critically" so conclusion should be

“Finding type”- whether new guidelines will – reduce victim protection? Finding should be yes or no.

- No, it'll not reduce because of point 8 and 9. SC routinely throws out frivolous PILs and cases. The learned judges wouldn't have applied their mind in these guidelines, if they did not believe that misuse of Section 498-A has become a rampant problem requiring their attention. OR
- Yes, it'll reduce because I'm more intelligent than SC judges. (if applying for the post of columnist at __.)

Q5. Fake News

Question itself easy but biggest danger is misinterpretation. Because you could misunderstand the context:

- This is not about Donald Trump claiming mainstream media as 'fake news'
- This is not about those parody sites that create spoofs around real news related to Modi, Rahul Gandhi and Baba Ramdev.

So, first understand context of the question with some examples:

- In late 2015, Mohammad Akhlaq, a farm worker, was murdered by a mob in his village in Uttar Pradesh after some villagers claimed to have seen photos on WhatsApp of Akhlaq eating beef of a slaughtered cow. The reality was Akhlaq's family had stored mutton and not beef.
- In May 2017, another WhatsApp message went gone viral in Jharkhand, urging people to be careful of strangers as they most likely belonged to a “child lifting gang”. As the message passed on, hysteria increased. Villagers armed themselves and began attacking anyone they did not recognise, resulting in death of 7 innocent travelers.
- In July, 2017, on Facebook, a man called Bhabatosh Chatterjee claimed that Hindu women were getting

molested by Muslims in Baduria, West Bengal. He accompanied his post with a photo of man pulling the sari off a woman surrounded by a crowd of men. Except the image is actually a still from a Bhojpuri film. Nonetheless, it led to riots and destructions of public property.

- Thus fake news Is no longer confined to creating parodies and MEMEs around Modi, Rahul Gandhi and unemployed or lowly paid engineers' world views. It has taken shape of something more evil and nefarious. With that in mind, let's begin:

Fake News	Paid News
<p>Introduction (Definition) Fake News is a news that intentionally fabricates information, disseminate deceptive content, or grossly distort actual news reports.</p>	<p>Introduction (Definition) Paid news refers to the systematic engagement of mainstream media outlets in publishing favorable articles in exchange for payment for political parties or corporates.</p>
<p>Sinister purposes that extend beyond vote-banking. e.g. hoax about child lifting gang or</p>	<p>Main purpose is to influence voters.</p>
<p>Tone is generally negative and inciting violence against opposition party, religion, caste etc.</p>	<p>Tone is generally 'positive' in favour of the party who is paying money to the mediahouse.</p>
	<p>EC guidelines available for paid news (read my article here) but not for fake news.</p>

Existing mechanisms against Fake news?

1. Indian Penal Code (IPC) has provisions against forgery- this extends to electronic forgery also e.g.
2. IPC has provisions against hate speech and disrupting

public order.

3. Defamation Act 1992.
4. Complaint to Broadcasting Content Complain Council, ministry of I&B, Press Council of India etc.
5. A UP court has order that any information that is factually incorrect or misleading that is posted on a social media group could result in a report by the police against the group administrator.

Existing mechanisms are inadequate because:

- Information Technology Act doesn't have direct provisions against people spreading fake news.
- Unlike in western countries, most of India's fake news spreads via WhatsApp and mobile phone messages. For majority of rural Indians, first exposure to the internet is via their phone. They are unable to distinguish what is real from what is not. They tend to believe whatever is sent to them and forward it to others. ~~These "anpadh, jaahil, gawaar" people don't have the time or desktop browser to patiently open 50 tabs in google search to cross-verify the claims unlike some overenthusiastic UPSC aspirants.~~
- Individual people have opened sites to expose and debunk the fake news and hoaxes. But this model may not sustain for long, for the lack of ad-revenue (and no one is going to buy PDF material/magazine from them, unlike in competitive exam). Government itself should create such site.
- GSM4 angle- that both who create fake news and those who 'forward' it lack the ethical framework. Parents, teachers, society are to be blamed. So accordingly do bolbochchan about reforms at individual and institutional level.

Conclusion: Express apprehension and say that aforementioned reforms / measures need to be taken on war footing to prevent the loss of life and property as it had happened in the past because of fake news.

Q6: Rajya Sabha Election

Provisions about election and nomination of the RS members, you'll find in [M.Laxmikanth's chapter on Parliament](#).

Controversies:

1. Nominated members selected on populism, but remain frequently absent from proceedings. and some of them enjoy such god & sacred holy cows status that we can't even criticize them.
2. Mallya bringing shame upon RS by becoming wilful defaulter and getting charge sheeted by ED.(him we can easily criticize.)
3. Allegations that corporates use moneypower to get elected.
4. Non-domicile people gaining entry to continue as Ministers (or Prime Minister, as the case may be!)
5. The latest horse-trading in Amit Shah vs. Ahmed Patel.

Conclusion: Write why makers of the Constitution provided for this august house, comma, the aforementioned controversies are therefore a matter of concern and regret.

Q7: Right to Vote for educated tax payers only!?

Introduction (origin) Begin with the virtues and merits of democracy and voting rights to all: this you'll find from NCERT social science and political science textbook. After all, the Right to vote is Constitutional right (!)

Body:

- Explain why Legislative council need not give voting right to all, because it'll raise the cost of election vs. utility of this house is limited in enhancing the democracy (otherwise why didnot makers provide for vidhan-parishad compulsory for all states!). Refer to [M.Laxmikanth page33.11](#) and [DD Basu Page 256 & 263](#) to express this in a refined manner.

- Give rough figures about poverty and illiteracy and if min. education or economic qualification are prescribed for voters who it'll affect.

Conclusion:

- Economic survey's interpretation of don't give voting rights so you can develop @faster rate, is in context of economic growth.
- But our preamble has committed to not just economic justice but social and political justice as well.
- Hence it's ill-advised and ill-thought suggestion to curtail voting rights on educational or economic qualifications.

Besides, even if it's a well thought and well planned advice, is any political party capable of implementing it, when they're winning election mainly because of those poor and illiterates!?

Q8: RBI governor is a "boss" like that

Indian fiat money: who issues what?
Government: Coinage Act 1906
 • All coins upto Rs.1k
 • Rs. 1 Note by Fin.Secy
 • 1 rupee = 16 anna, 1 anna = 12 paise
 • Amended '55-decimal system

RBI under RBI Act 1934
 • 1938: First Rs. 5...max Rs.10,000

RBI: 8 functions of
 All banks have "Current Account" With RBI, E-Kuber CBS

Banker to two things

- Controller of Money Supply (MPC, RBI Act)
- Controller of Foreign Exchange (FERA, FEMA) More under 3rd Pillar
- Banker to Gov, Public Debt Mgmt
- Banker's Bank, Lender of Last resort

Regulator of two things

- Regulator of all "BANKS" (BR Act 49), Payment Systems '07
- Regulator of "AIFI", NBFC-D' & others.
- Customer protection, Fin. Inclusion "Promotional Roles"
- Data, Publication, Intl. Coop (BASEL, IMF)

हर भारतीय का बैंक

Mrunal.org

If you need help even in this answer, then I've failed you as

Master Shifu failed his snow leopard student Tai Lung in the KungFu panda#1. Nonetheless, Here is [my lecture link](#) for the newcomers.

Q9: Legalize Cricket Betting

- Explain the benefits and demerits of such move.
- (Conclusion: against) DPSP prescribes the state to ban intoxicating liquor – because such habit leads to ruination of not just man but his family as well. On the same logic, betting and gambling needs to be prohibited, even if the arguments for tax revenue justify their legalization.

Q10: Unemployed graduates

- Avoid MISTAKE: Don't waste words on diagnosing the problem because it's already given in the question itself – proliferation of engineering, pharmacy and PTC colleges. your job is to write about its impact on:...
- (#1): Economy: We are deprived of qualified plumbers and electricians. Corporates exploit such unemployed graduates with low paying informal job contracts. Concentration of wealth and resultant problems. Overqualified people applying for manual labour jobs such as railway trackmen, and then not doing the work and seeking deskjob-transfers, which resulted into [Utkal railway derailment](#).
- (#2): Politics: demands for reservation and ousting migrants, Easy to recruit as kashmiri stone-pelters, secessionism and so forth.

Conclusion: demographic dividend will not last forever, hence cognizance of this problems to prevent further academic inflation.

Q11: School dropout

By the time you reach to this answer, you'll realize that half of the paper is over, but you've spent more than half of the available time! So now don't waste words on flowery introduction. You may just start with opening line: "To reduce the school dropout rate in India, following measures are required" 1, 2, 3, 4...

Economic Survey 2016-17 (Vol2, Page 264, Box.2) itself has given traffic light approach to reforms:

- Red light (Avoid): Increasing number of teachers, providing stationery, computers and building. Because they create leakage and don't improve learning outcomes.
- Amber/Yellow (Promising): remedial classes, DBT for scholarship, DBT for sending girl child to school etc.
- Green light (Definitely do): merit based scholarship. Mid-Day Meal. Biometric Attendance.

Conclusion: don't write "demographic dividend" again, since we've used that ammunition in just in the previous answer. so, SDG -peepudi jindaabaad: "SDG goal #4 requires nations to ensure inclusion, equitable and quality education, and goal#5 requires gender equality and empowerment to girl- for both quality education is necessary hence aforementioned reforms need to be implemented on urgent basis.

Q12: kids' reality shows

Although this question is more suited towards GSM4 Ethics and case studies, but I've put it here since UPSC examiner does have habit of asking such □□□□□□ (crazy) questions in GSM2 in Past e.g. should we give cash incentives to athletes or not, because they're playing for the country and not for money! (CSM-2014).

Introduction (Origin): With the growing number of television owners and TV channels across India, there has been a surge of reality shows, including kids reality shows in the recent years. Here the prime objective of the producer is to milk the

TRP and ad revenue from children's talent. It leads to following problems:

- Kids are made to sing and dance on the songs that are not appropriate for their age. Often costumes and jokes are also vulgar.
- They are encouraged highlight the 'poverty, physical disability or death of parents' to get more audience sympathy votes. This reduces their self-esteem in the long run.
- They are also encouraged to demand votes from regional audience by speaking in the native language "Will you not vote your daughter >insert surname< from this region / caste". While producers may get TRPs and SMS income, but this is hurting in the large picture of national integration and clean politics.
- Weekly elimination rounds in the show means excessive exposure to competition at a tender age.
- Some shows don't have elimination rounds but they continue to air the show until it'll become too stale for TRP. In such shows, the children forced to live in dingy hotels of Mumbai, faraway from their family, school for months- it hinders their growth.
- Despite the legal provision that says children cannot shoot for more than five and a half hours for TV serials or films, the parents and dance teachers force them to practice and shoot for 16-18 hours because they've to churn new episodes for every weekend.
- Acrobatic moves that may lead to injury in the long term.
- Lure of money may be motivating some poor parents to force children into singing and dancing to participate in reality shows. Because, even if they don't win, the national fame helps in finding work in local events. But, they can't survive on for the rest of their life, with the lack of proper education at the appropriate age. Always a danger such girls falling into

prostitution and boys into alcoholism/drugs.

- Caution: Question is about Innocent and purity. don't drag other angles like "it provides tax revenue to government or we can't setup new regulatory body as it'd increase fiscal deficit on account of new salary Expenditure and so on.."

Conclusion:

The importance of extracurricular and artistic activities in a child's growth is undisputed, but such programs should be confined to school, community and district level only and with a format of talent "expression and appreciation" rather than "Competition". Allowing Reality TV shows in this space leads to aforementioned issues, which can't be prevented due to the economic reasons associated with TRP, SMS & ad Revenue. Hence they need to be banned.

Some interview coaching "Sirs" shove it down the throat of the aspirants that you must never say "ban it"...just parrot the line that "it should be regulated"...but if you've strong enough points you can take the extreme stand. Besides if alcohol, betting, drugs, prostitution, pornography and competitive exam coaching is banned it could occur underground also. so there you could find some ground for saying 'Allow with regulation because they'll exist nonetheless. however, in case of kids reality TV shows – if Government bans- they can't run! [Yes, such shows could be hosted on underground on web (called "Deepweb") or direct sell bootlegged DVDs but difficult to milk revenue from that.]

Q13: Corporate governance

I've covered this issue fully in my [lecture here](#).

Conclusion: Actions, mischiefs, controversies and difference of opinion among individuals in the corporate sector itself doesn't mean corporate framework itself is weak. But the appearance of such controversies on frontpages of the newspapers hints that board and independent directors have not fully played the role assigned to them. Corporate Affairs ministry, SEBI and NCLT have been monitoring these

developments and will amend the framework, as they've done in the past.

Q14: Lateral entry in civil services

salient features of the proposed draft [given here on Indianexpress](#)

Benefits

1. Fresh energy and ideas into stagnant bureaucracy. Professionals with experience in private sector- can bring best practices to improve efficiency in governance, and help in faster improvements in the ease of doing biz ranking.
2. Present Secretariat setup at union and states is mostly headed by generalist IAS. We can benefit from specialists in commerce, finance, agriculture etc.
3. Their IT skills can help in big data analytics of the CSO-NSSO data for further improvement in the policies and schemes.
4. Past experience has been successful- as seen in the lateral entry of Nandan Nilekani, Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Vijay Kelkar, Arvind Subramanian and Raghuram Rajan.
5. Further create competition, as career officers too will have to reinvent and prove their mettle to reach higher posts, rather than automatic promotions because of seniority.

Challenges

1. If "Lateral Entry" means engaging eminent persons for 3-5 years contracts at an apex level (as in the case of CEA, RBI Governor etc.) it's well and good, tried and tested. But if we aim to recruit them at the middle level bureaucracy, first problem is- we can't expect same level of loyalty like a career officer UNLESS these new entrants are also given job security till retirement age.

2. How to identify meritorious person? Because difficult to expect a 40-45 year old person to resume mugging up Laxmikanth for an entrance exam. If you have a search cum selection panel like for PSUs/Regulatory bodies- there could be charges of nepotism or "saffornization". It runs the risk of degenerating into an uncontrollable "spoils" system.
3. USA is a land of prestigious universities and plenty of opportunities. So, there is large pool of individuals available for lateral recruitment. In India, the danger being all such lateral jobs will be cornered by "English Medium" walla working professionals from IIT/IIMs only. Because their CV/biodata/work-ex will be better than those from ordinary colleges who didnot get the right launchpad to rise high within private sector.
4. Difficult to train these middle-aged entrants to work in the conservative environment. Vishal Sikka was a 'hot-shot' who didnot like Narayan Murthi's 'conservative ways' in running the company. Their ultimate dispute ruined image of infosys and he had to resign. Such unfortunate events have more likelihood of occurring in public sector where seniority, conservatism and "protocol" is more.
5. Those will 'attractive' biodata would be usually from corporate HQs. They may not have field experience unlike IAS with district training. And difficult to send middle-aged guy from private sector to remote job- because of his family responsibility might show absenteeism.
6. Elitism of the 'direct' IAS within their internal cadre. They even don't treat the 'promotee' IAS at par, and systematically prevent such 'promotee' IAS from getting important assignments and duties within department. So what's the chance they'll treat 'outside lateral guy' as their equal!
7. Similarly, direct recruit state service or group "B" officers may be demotivated if 'cherry-picked' private

professionals are 'parachuted' on top of them.

Conclusion (Finding type):

- Against: There are already precedents for lateral entry of professionals into the higher echelons of policymaking. But to involve them in the Administrative capacity is fraught with aforementioned challenges therefore it should be avoided.
- Favour: should be encourage to prevent the stagnation of ideas and to benefit from the talented personnel from private sector, provided that aforementioned challenges are addressed.

Q15: Srijan NGO Scam = ban them all

Role of NGOs and civil services given [in my lecture here](#). you can write benefits, challenges and other fodder from there.

Introduction (Origin)

Most Government schemes are centered around following three mechanisms:

1. Entitlement- which can be given with JAM-DBT. No intermediary is necessary. Economic Survey found that food and kerosene subsidies are better delivered through kind rather than cash. But for that already we've PDS infrastructure.
2. Empowerment- through skill, awareness etc. which can be done by incorporated private agencies.
3. Establishment- of infrastructure to impart "1" or "2". which can also be done by private agencies / PPP.

NGOs are often accused of malpractices in the government schemes implementation in following manner:

1. Only one or two villages or SHGs are developed in best manner and brandished as case study. In the remaining projects, money is siphoned off by sub-standard work.
2. Creation of duplicate and ghost beneficiaries in training and skill development programs.

3. Sub-contracting of the project to third entity and milking funds without doing any work by itself.
4. Using Government funded infrastructure to run private activities.

Should we ban NGOs from scheme implementation?

- Bank-mitra (banking correspondence agent) is not an 'NGO' but a commissioned agent who helps in financial inclusion.
- PDS shop owner is not an 'NGO' but a shopkeeper with profit motive who helps in food security.
- Commercial entities run Common Services Centers (CSCs) for commission, but help in giving 'identity' to individuals via aadhar card.
- But like NGOs, these commercial elements too have been involved in irregularities and scams.
- If NGOs are banned, they may re-brand and re-register themselves as individual properties or registered companies to enter that scheme implementation business again.

Conclusion:

Given the shortage of manpower and the vast geography of India, it's not possible for the government to deliver all schemes and benefits by its own personnel. Therefore, it has to engage individual agents, proprietors, agencies, companies and NGOs. An unscrupulous element will engage malpractices by wearing any hat necessary. Need of the hour is effective monitoring over the implementation by these entities, rather than banning any of these entities from engaging in implementation.

Side note: Under the earlier Government norms, only "non-profit bodies" were allowed to open medical colleges. But they were profiteering by capitation fees and donations. Therefore, health ministry is write to Medical Council of India to allow "commercial entities" to open colleges as well. But it didnot ask MCI to "BAN" non-profit colleges per se.

Q16: Referendum of Catalonia and Kurdistan:

Merit, Demerits and outcome of past Brexit, Scotland & Columbia Referendums given in [my lecture HERE](#).

My own reading on these two latest developments (Catalonia and Kurdistan) is limited so difficult to premium quality model answer keypoints but nonetheless...

Points to consider:

- We helped in liberation East Pakistan and creation of Bangladesh.
- We fought against China in 1961, and still have boundary dispute. Though we provide asylum to “Tibetian Government in exile” at Dharamsala, we don’t recognize Tibet as a separate nation and maintain that Tibet is an integral part of China.
- We didnot recognize ‘Tamil Eelam’ in SriLanka.
- India giving such recognition will boost secessionist elements within our country to raise their demands in international forums.
- We recognize Israel as a sovereign country despite the fact that our ‘friends’ Iraq, Afghanistan and Bangladesh donot recognize Israel as a nation! There are reports Israel might recognize Kurdistan to annoy Iraq. But India has to maintain good relations with Iraq also for exports and to prevent backlash against our diaspora residing there.

Conclusion: Spain and Iraq are our diplomatic partners, who’ve not antagonized our interests in the international forums. And Even those who continue to antagonize us (China), we respect their territorial integrity. Therefore, we should not make haste in recognizing these new entities.

Q17: India US 2+2

Introduction:

- (Definition) In diplomatic lexicon, 2+2 format means

direct interaction between foreign (External affairs) and defense ministers / secretaries of two states.

- (Origin): 2+2 format was started by Japan in 2010. It means >insert definition< ..(□□ □□□ definition □□ □□ □□□□ □□□□ □□!)

Sidenote: don't confuse 2+2 with "track 1 and track 2 diplomacy".

1. First-track diplomatic meetings consist of gatherings of leading officials to discuss security measures,
2. Second-track meetings consist of scholars, government individuals not acting in their official capacity, private think tanks, and other individuals and organizations (NGOs).

Benefits of India US 2+2:

1. More interaction of our External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharam and their American counterparts Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Defence Secretary James Mattis. *[not necessary to remember American names, here given only for information.]*
2. Better strategic coordination between New Delhi and Washington on the issues related to Afghanistan, China, Asia Pacific and Middle East.
3. Sitharaman can explore further synergy in defense production, and Swaraj can use the platform to highlight issues related to Indian diaspora in USA.
4. We already have dialogue mechanisms for trade and commerce. Now external affairs and defense = overall synergy in bilateral relationship.
5. We already have such 2+2 mechanism with Japan. In the longer run, we could explore 2+2+2 for deeper cooperation and coordination between India-Japan-US, especially with respect to China.

Conclusion:

by the time you reach this far in the paper and look at your wrist-watch- you'll realize not sufficient time available to brainstorm a meaningful conclusion. so better leave without conclusion OR use the point number 5 as conclusion!

Q18: anti-globalization

This is an essayish question. dozens of points can be written.
Introduction: Origin / Factor responsible

- Subprime Crisis, Global slowdown and resultant jobloss has encouraged alt-right movement in 1st world countries. [More about Alt-right and right wing vigilantism [given in my lecture here.](#)]
- Such groups' world view is xenophobic and more conservative than mainstream parties.
- Some of these groups have attained political power directly or they have made the mainstream parties toe their line for populism. Hence the rise of conservatism, protectionism, nationalism & anti-globalization in the domestic politics of developed countries.

How does this affects India:

- Economic: Anti-outsourcing measures by their government. Protectionist policies, tariff and non-tariff barriers decrease our exports. But, economic survey observed that such protectionist measures by first world countries will harm China more than India, as US/EU have lost more jobs in mfg. than in service sector.
- Diaspora: Such alt-right groups preach hate crime against all immigrants. Affects our diaspora esp. Sikh. Their domestic views begin to reflect in their international views- means more instability and warmongering in Middle East, which has repercussion on our diaspora situation there as well.

Conclusion: Foundations of Indian economy is strong enough to sustain the economic repercussion but the threats posed to our diaspora is a matter of concern and needs to be monitored and

highlighted at the appropriate platforms.

if you spend more time, you can come up with even better points. but time is a luxury we don't have in GS Mains papers.

Q19: SCO entry of India + Pak

SCO structure, function, How it'll benefit India? I've covered in this lecture [LINK](#)

SAARC experience with Pakistan

- Negative: SAARC is prone to obstructionism by individual member states. SAARC projects transport, integration and connectivity, have been stalled because Pak. often not showing up for necessary meetings. 2016: SAARC summit was to be held @Islamabad, but we and other SAARC members boycotted it to protest against Uri terror attack.
- Positive: Intra-SAARC trade has grown significantly. 2017: We launched SAARC satellite to provide telecom, Television, Direct-to-Home (DTH), Very Small Aperture Terminals (VSATs), Tele-education, Telemedicine and Disaster Management Support. It will boost consumption of such services in all members except Pakistan. This will further pave way for our companies to export relevant goods and services to those states. In SCO, too we can do it to tap the Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan's market.

How till India benefit from SCO?

- Import: Energy cooperation in the region TAPI strategic link in its extended neighborhood and South Asia. Our fertilizer and mfg. industry to benefit.
- Export: Indian interest in International North-South Transport Corridor to connect Mumbai with Abbas port in Iran. This route is shorter than the existing Suez Canal and the Mediterranean Sea. Rising middle class in

aforementioned countries.

- Strategic: SCO provides an alternative regional platform to discuss the Afghan issue. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is passing through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). We can highlight this. We also get to humiliate Pak. just like in UNGA.

How Pak.membership can reduce these SCO benefits?

- SCO charter mandates that hostility between bilateral relations should not be brought to the organisation. So, Pak wouldn't be able to make false claims about PoK or alleged atrocities by Indian army.
- Pakistan may create obstacle by sitting in the lap of China like bunny, who may pamper it like Hugh Hefner and block our efforts in getting [Jaish Chief Masood Azhar declared as a terrorist](#)
- Pak. may continue to create obstacles those energy pipelines and trade corridors, as it does with transport projects in SAARC.

Conclusion: Primary objective of SCO is Mutual cooperation to fight against terrorism, separatism and extremism in Central Asia. In the recent months, Pak. has been EXPOSED in at global level for utilizing terrorism as a state policy. It's in our interest to keep the pressure on by either engaging with them or exposing them at every available global and regional organization possible, including SCO.

Q20: Rogue State

Introduction (Definition):

- Rogue state is a state that conducts its policy in a dangerously unpredictable way, disregarding international law or diplomacy.
- Rogue state doctrine was started in the Bush-Clinton era. The term is mostly used by United Nations to denote N.Korea, Iran, Syria, Sudan and Venezuela. (and formerly Afghanistan, Cuba, Iraq, Libya etc also.)

- ~~Even India and Pakistan also call each other rogue states.~~

Dangers posed by Rogue states:

Presently we have cordial diplomatic relations with all those 'labelled' as rogue states by the USA, except N.Korea. [In May 2017, we banned all trade with N.Korea (Except food and medicine.)]

1. Rogue states have usually an unstable economy and poor tax resources. Therefore such regimes often indulge in illegal activities such as drugs, weapons, tax havens and money laundering to sustain themselves. All such activities pose threat to global order.
2. Rogue states' atrocities against their own citizens create refugee crisis for other nations. (Syria and EU)
3. Rogue states usually have internal civil war. Indian diaspora residing there may face trouble. (2011: Op.Homecoming to rescue 18,000 Indians stranded in Libya.)
4. Rogue states have technological ability to develop long-range missile. Dr.A.Q.Khan, the father of Pakistan's atomic bomb program had confessed selling nuclear technology to Iran, Libya and North Korea. Such arms / technology could fall in the hands of non-state actors including ISIS, who may use it to launch nuclear strikes across world including India.
5. 2015: India signed Special Strategic Partnership with S.Korea. Kim Jong-un's warmongering ways pose threat to our ally South Korea, therefore have indirect implications on India, because of Chinese patronage available to N.Korea. [Because if we are "ASLI" (=real) strategic partner, we should be ready to send troops and supplies to help S.Korea, should third world war erupt!]

What can UN do against rogue states?

1. UN's International Court of Justice can try to settle the dispute submitted by other states against the rogue

state.

2. UN can ask IAEA – International Atomic Energy Agency to investigate misuse of nuclear technology / material. (Though IAEA not a formal organ of UN but they've such working agreement.)
3. UN's UNMOVIC – UN Monitoring, Verification, and Inspection Commission can try to prevent countries from building chemical and biological weapons.
4. UN can impose trade sanctions and/OR ask UNSC to send peacekeeping force on reports of 2 or 3 or by suo-moto.

Conclusion

Rogue states and totalitarian regimes pose danger to world peace and security. It's in the interest of all nations, to promote democracy in such states and encourage them to join and abide by the international institutions such as UN.

Source: xaam.in

U.S. pulls out of UNESCO accusing it of 'anti-Israel bias'

The U.S. earlier had once withdrawn from the UNESCO, in 1984, accusing it of favoring the Soviet Union, and rejoined the U.N. body in 2002.

The United States on October 12 announced its withdrawal from the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), accusing it of "continuing anti-Israel bias". UNESCO is the first U.N. agency that has admitted Palestine as a full member, in 2011. As required by law, the U.S. has stopped funding the UNESCO since then. The U.S. withdrawal will take

effect on December 31, 2018 and until then it will remain a full member of the body.

U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson notified UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova on the morning of October 12 of the U.S. decision. "This is a loss to UNESCO. This is a loss to the United Nations family. This is a loss for multilateralism," Ms. Bokova said in a statement.

U.S. State Department spokesperson Heather Nauert said the U.S. would seek to establish a permanent observer mission to UNESCO. "This decision was not taken lightly, and reflects U.S. concerns with mounting arrears at UNESCO, the need for fundamental reform in the organisation, and continuing anti-Israel bias at UNESCO," she said in a statement. "The United States indicated to the Director-General its desire to remain engaged with UNESCO as a non-member observer state in order to contribute U.S. views, perspectives and expertise on some of the important issues undertaken by the organisation, including the protection of world heritage, advocating for press freedoms, and promoting scientific collaboration and education," she said.

U.S. laws bar funding to any U.N. agency that recognises the Palestinian state. Ms. Bokova said, "Despite the withholding of funding, since 2011, we have deepened the partnership between the United States and UNESCO, which has never been so meaningful." In a lengthy statement exceeding more than 1,000 words, the UNESCO chief underscored that the mission of the body is consonance with the "values of the people of America", and listed a series of initiatives it has taken to combat anti-semitism. "Together, we have worked to protect humanity's shared cultural heritage in the face of terrorist attacks and to prevent violent extremism through education and media literacy... This is why I regret the withdrawal of the United States," she said.

The U.S. had earlier once withdrawn from the UNESCO, in 1984,

under President Ronald Regan who accused it of favoring the Soviet Union. Under President George W. Bush, Washington rejoined the organisation in 2002.

Israel and UNESCO have a contentious relationship, and Israel recalled its ambassador to UNESCO in 2016, accusing it of ignoring Jewish views of the heritage of the region. In a stinging attack on the world body in September, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu explained to the U.N. General Assembly the Israeli view on a recent UNESCO decision that triggered the U.S. withdrawal from it. "So is there no limit to the U.N.'s absurdities when it comes to Israel? Well, apparently not. Because in July, UNESCO declared the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron a Palestinian World Heritage Site. That's worse than fake news; that's fake history. Mind you, it's true that Abraham, the father of both Ishmael and Isaac, is buried there, but so, too, are Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca – Sarah's a Jewish name, by the way – and Leah, who just happened to be patriarchs and matriarchs of the Jewish people. Well, you won't read about that in the latest UNESCO report, but if you want to, you can read about it in a somewhat weightier publication. It's called 'the Bible'. I highly recommend it. I hear it even got four and a half out of five stars on Amazon. And it's a great read. I read it every week," he had said.

Source: xaam.in

India 100th on global hunger index, trails North Korea,

Bangladesh

India stood at 97th position in last year's rankings. India has a "serious" hunger problem and ranks 100th out of 119 countries on the global hunger index – behind North Korea, Bangladesh and Iraq but ahead of Pakistan, according to a report.

The country's serious hunger level is driven by high child malnutrition and underlines need for stronger commitment to the social sector, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) said in its report.

India stood at 97th position in last year's rankings.

"India is ranked 100th out of 119 countries, and has the third highest score in all of Asia – only Afghanistan and Pakistan are ranked worse," IFPRI said in a statement.

"At 31.4, India's 2017 GHI (Global Hunger Index) score is at the high end of the 'serious' category, and is one of the main factors pushing South Asia to the category of worst performing region on the GHI this year, followed closely by Africa South of the Sahara," it added.

As per the report, India ranks below many of its neighbouring countries such as China (29th rank), Nepal (72), Myanmar (77), Sri Lank (84) and Bangladesh (88). It is ahead of Pakistan (106) and Afghanistan (107).

North Korea ranks 93rd while Iraq is at 78th position.

The GHI, now in its 12th year, ranks countries based on four key indicators – undernourishment, child mortality, child wasting and child stunting.

The report ranked 119 countries in the developing world, nearly half of which have 'extremely alarming,' 'alarming' or 'serious' hunger levels.

“India’s high ranking on the Global Hunger Index [GHI] again this year brings to the fore the disturbing reality of the country’s stubbornly high proportions of malnourished children,” the statement said.

IFPRI pointed out that more than one-fifth of Indian children under five weigh too little for their height and over a third are too short for their age.

“Even with the massive scale up of national nutrition-focused programmes in India, drought and structural deficiencies have left large number of poor in India at risk of malnourishment in 2017,” said P.K. Joshi, IFPRI Director for South Asia.

However, he said that the on-going efforts are expected to make significant changes in improving the existing situation.

Mr. Joshi appreciated that India has developed and launched an action plan on ‘undernourishment free India’ by 2022. The plan shows stronger commitment and greater investments in tackling malnutrition in the coming years.

“As of 2015-16, more than a fifth [21%] of children in India suffer from wasting [low weight for height] – up from 20% in 2005-2006,” IFPRI said.

Only three other countries in this year’s GHI – Djibouti, Sri Lanka and South Sudan – show child wasting above 20%. India’s child wasting rate has not shown any substantial improvement over the past 25 years.

However, India has made considerable improvement in reducing its child stunting rate, down 29% since 2000, but even that progress leaves India with a relatively high stunting rate of 38.4.

Source: xaam.in

SC BANS FIRECRACKER DURING DIWALI

SC BANS FIRECRACKER DURING DIWALI

According to Wikipedia, India celebrates 151 festivals in a year. That's a huge number. This means that for almost half of the year we are celebrating something. Diwali is the most famous and largely celebrated holiday in India as it marks the Hindu New Year. It signifies the victory of good over evil.

But for certain years, we are doing more harm than good on this very auspicious day. We are harming the current generation of life as well as the future generation that is yet to come. There something wrong with the way we celebrate it that not only makes us suffer but also our future children.

Due to large scale of bursting firecrackers during this festival it releases harmful gases and toxic substances into the atmosphere, loud noises from loudspeakers and firecrackers, dry waste but now comes a great news of the ban on the most harmful element" crackers".

SC ORDER

- The Supreme Court on Monday banned the sale of firecrackers in the Delhi-National Capital Region during the upcoming festive season of Diwali, according to several media reports. The ban on sale of firecrackers will apply till 1 November
- In order to bring this into effect, a bench headed by justice A.K. Sikri also held that any temporary licenses issued by the police to firecracker manufacturers would remain suspended for the same time period.
- The court passed this order re imposing its earlier order of 11 November 2016 suspending sale of firecrackers so as to test the suspension order and ascertain

its positive effect on the air quality of the NCR region, particularly during the Diwali period.

WHY THE BAN?

- One of the major concerns of a developing nation like us is environmental pollution. On Diwali, pollution just shoots up like a rocket (it goes up by 30%). It is estimated that for every hour of fireworks display, the compound 'strontium' increases by 120 times (in small amounts it is harmless but in larger amounts it causes damage to bones and can cause blood clotting disorders) in the air.
- Not only that, but magnesium also increases by 22 times, barium by 12 times, potassium by 11 times and copper by six times. Firecrackers also contain traces of heavy metals that are toxic to the human body.
- Additionally, at this time when issues of climate change and global warming are being presented with a sense of urgency, we need to be concerned about the number of greenhouse gases fireworks produce, which includes Carbon dioxide (CO₂) and ozone.
- It'd take the entire lifetime of 5,000 trees to offset the 60,000 tons of carbon emissions produced in this one day!

This will play a crucial role in regulating air pollution in the region and reduce the impact on human health. The ban will ensure that the levels of air pollutants do not reach as high as they did last year around Diwali.

Source: xaam.in