

## 11 Feb 2022: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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## Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### 1. Creating a sun in a lab

*Syllabus: Developments and their Applications and Effects in Everyday Life*

*Prelims: Tokamak; ITER*

*Mains: Challenges in harnessing thermonuclear energy*

#### Recent achievements made in thermonuclear fusion technologies:

- China's Experimental Advanced Superconducting Tokamak (EAST) sustained the plasma at 70 million degrees Celsius for 1,056 seconds in January 2022.
- Recently, the **Joint European Torus (JET) fusion experiment** in Oxfordshire, U.K., produced 59 megajoules (MJ) of energy from thermonuclear fusion.

For related information refer to the following article:

[UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis of 10th Feb 2022](#)

#### Thermonuclear fusion:

- In a thermonuclear fusion reaction, **lighter atoms like those of hydrogen fuse to produce slightly heavier atoms like helium**. The difference in masses is converted into pure energy by way of **Einstein's formula  $E=mc^2$** . The heat is harnessed to produce steam which in turn runs a turbine to generate electricity.
- The main focus has been on the use of isotopes of hydrogen called deuterium and tritium for nuclear fusion.
  - Deuterium, also called heavy hydrogen, has a neutron and a proton in its nucleus. Tritium, another isotope of hydrogen, has two neutrons and one proton.

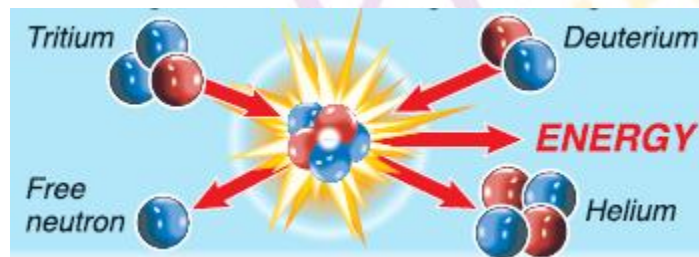


Image Source: The Hindu

#### Significance of Nuclear Fusion Energy:

- Unlike in nuclear fission, the **fuel for nuclear fusion is abundantly available and almost inexhaustible**.
  - Deuterium hydrogen ions can be easily derived from water, while tritium hydrogen ions can be produced from lithium.
- **Nuclear fusion is considered safer than nuclear fission**. Nuclear fission power plants have the disadvantage of generating unstable nuclei; some of these are radioactive for millions of years. Fusion on the other hand does not create any long-lived radioactive nuclear waste. A fusion reactor produces **helium, which is an inert gas**. Also, the **small quantity of radioactive waste** will be safe to handle for periods within 50-100 years.

- Also, **fusion energy production is not based on a chain reaction**, as is fission. Plasma must be kept at very high temperatures with the support of external heating systems and confined by an external magnetic field. Every shift or change of the working configuration in the reactor causes the cooling of plasma or the loss of its containment; in such a case, the **reactor would automatically come to a halt within a few seconds**, since the process of energy production is arrested, with no effects taking place on the outside. For this reason, fusion reactors are considered to be inherently safe.

#### Challenges in harnessing nuclear fusion energy:

##### **Need for plasma state like condition to initiate nuclear fusion:**

- Ordinarily, the atoms cannot fuse. The like charges of the electron clouds surrounding the atoms would repulse and keep them from coming too close. As observed in stars, at very high temperatures, all the electrons are ripped away, forming what is known as plasma.
- For nuclear fusion to occur there is the **need for very high temperatures and pressures**. If fusion has to occur, the first step has to be the **creation of hot plasma**.

##### **Sustaining plasma-like condition:**

- While heating hydrogen to millions of degrees and generating plasma is not that hard given the advancements made in laser technologies, sustaining the plasma at high temperatures for a long time remains a big challenge if commercial energy has to be obtained.
- One of the critical challenges in the Tokamak is the **sudden appearance of plasma instabilities**.

##### **Constraining the plasma to a defined space and ensuring beam collision:**

- Keeping the plasma constrained in a defined space and without touching the container wall is another major challenge. Additionally, plasma must be made to swirl around and made to collide to initiate the fusion of atoms.
- The above two requirements are being sought to be addressed by the Tokamak that creates a magnetic field in the shape of a torus to contain the plasma. They are also being used to generate swirls and induce beam collisions.
- Although alternative designs such as **z-pinch and stellarator** have been designed and tested, tokamaks are more popular for this function.

##### **Net energy output:**

- Given the high energy input necessary to initiate plasma-like conditions and operation of Tokamak, experimental tokamaks worldwide thus far **have not been able to demonstrate net energy production**.
- In the experimental tokamaks, the **input energy has been greater than the output energy**.

#### Global efforts:

- Thirty-five countries, including India, Russia, the United States, the United Kingdom, China, European Union, are collaborating to jointly build the largest Tokamak as part of the **International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER)** in southern France.
- Energy production is planned to be commenced from 2035.

#### Efforts in India:

- The **Institute for Plasma Research (IPR)** in Gandhinagar and the **Hot Plasma Project** at **Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics (SINP), Kolkata** are leading nuclear fusion research in India.

### Nut Graf

*The current breakthroughs achieved are significant steps forward towards mainstreaming the use of nuclear fusion energy and realizing the potential of virtually unlimited supplies of low-carbon, low-radiation energy.*

## D. GS 4 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## E. Editorials

### Category: POLITY

#### 1. Local job laws that raise constitutional questions

*Syllabus: Constitution of India — features, significant provisions and basic structure.*

*Mains: Constitutionality of Haryana State Employment of Local Candidates Act.*

#### Context

The Supreme Court will be hearing a petition to remove the stay on the Haryana State Employment of Local Candidates Act.

#### Haryana State Employment of Local Candidates Act

- The Act reserves 75% of jobs in the private sector in the State for local residents.
- The Act applies to jobs that pay up to ₹30,000 per month, and employers have to register all such employees on a designated portal.
- The Government may exempt a few industries and has exempted new start-ups and new Information Technology Enabled Services (ITES) companies, along with farm labour, domestic work, and promotions and transfers within the State.

#### Similar acts in other states

- **The Jharkhand State Employment of Local Candidates Bill, 2021**
  - Every employer shall fill up 75% of the total existing vacancies by local candidates to such posts where the gross monthly salary or wages are less than ₹40,000.
- **A.P. Employment of Local Candidates in Industries/Factories Act**
  - The Andhra Pradesh law, passed by the Assembly in July 2019, reserved 75% of jobs for locals in industries and factories, including any joint venture and project taken up under the public-private partnership (PPP) mode.

#### Constitutional questions arising from these Acts.

- **Against Article 19(1)(g)**
  - Article 19(1)(g) of the Constitution guarantees freedom to carry out any occupation, trade or business.

- Reasonable restrictions include public interest, and in particular related to specifying any professional or technical qualifications, or to reserve a sector for government monopoly.
- These Acts, by imposing private businesses to reserve 75% of lower-end jobs for locals, encroach their right to carry out any occupation.
- **The provision of reservation based on domicile or residence is unconstitutional**
  - **Article 16** of the Constitution provides for equality of opportunity for all citizens in public employment. It prohibits discrimination on several grounds including place of birth and residence.
  - However, it permits Parliament to make a law that requires residence within a State for appointment to a public office.
  - This provision is for public employment and not for private-sector jobs and the law needs to be made by Parliament, and not by a State legislature.
- **The questions on 75% reservation**
  - In the **Indra Sawhney case** in 1992, the Supreme Court capped reservations in public services at 50%. However, it said that there may be extraordinary situations that may need relaxation in this rule.
  - Telangana, Rajasthan and Maharashtra have passed Acts that breach the 50% limit.
  - Recently a Maharashtra Act was struck down by the Supreme Court on grounds of breaching the 50% limit which said “to fulfill the objective of equality”, and that to breach the limit “is to have a society which is not founded on equality but on caste rule”.

#### Important judgements by the Court

- **M.A. Pai Foundation case, 2002** – The Supreme Court stated that private educational institutions have autonomy in their administration and management.
- **P.A. Inamdar case, 2005** – S.C. said that reservation cannot be mandated on educational institutions that do not receive financial aid from the state, as that would affect the freedom of occupation.
- **The Supreme Court, in 2002** – Said that preference given to applicants from a particular region of Rajasthan for appointment as government teachers was unconstitutional. Further added that reservations can be made for backward classes but this cannot be solely on account of residence or domicile.
- **In 1995, Rules in Andhra Pradesh** that gave preference to candidates who had studied in the Telugu medium were struck down on grounds that it was discriminatory against meritorious candidates.

#### Against Equality

- The Haryana Act is against the notion of equality of all citizens of India.
- The Haryana Act is about private sector employment and is questioned that any reservation requirement imposed on the private sector should not be higher than the limits on the public sector.
- The Constitution conceptualises India as one nation with all citizens having equal rights to live, travel and work anywhere in the country. These State laws go against this vision by restricting the right of out-of-State citizens to find employment in the State.
- The restrictions also affect the right to reside across India as finding employment becomes difficult.

To read more about the concerns about the Act refer to [CNA dated 08 Nov 2021](#)

#### Conclusion



The act is against the ideal enshrined in the Constitution and will have social as well as adverse economic implications on society. The courts along with looking at the fundamental rights perspective, should also look at whether these Acts breach the basic structure of the Constitution that views India as one nation which is a union of States.

### **Nut Graf**

*In recent years, three States have enacted laws that limit employment for citizens from outside the State. Apart from violating the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution, these laws challenge the conception of India as a nation, which deters the citizens to migrate from their State to other States to find work.*

### **2. Is the institution of Governor subverting federal structure?**

**Syllabus:** Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies.

**Mains:** The issues and concerns associated with the office of Governor

#### **Context**

Recent differences between Governors and the Chief Ministers of the States.

#### **Differences in opinion between Governor and CMs**

- The tensions between the Governor, who is appointed by the President, and the State government, headed by a popularly elected Chief Minister has existed in many States.
- In a democracy, which has a non-elected head of state and an elected head of government, different perspectives on legislative, administrative and political matters are bound to happen.
- The different perspectives have to be handled in a way that doesn't disrupt the functioning of the State.

To read about the recent issues between Governor and respective Chief Ministers, check CNA dated Feb 3, 2022.

#### **Role of Governor**

- The role of the Governor is well defined in the Constitution.
- Article 163 says that the Governor is bound by the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers. Although the government is administered in the name of the President or the Governor, the actual power that it exercises is with the directly elected bodies.
- The role of the Governor or the President is effectively just nominal.
- The Governor has the ability to engage with the government at a private level and the power of persuasion as a constitutional head.

#### **Key reasons for conflict between Governors and State governments**

- The Governor, as a nominal head of the state, cannot have a view different from the elected government, or should not express his dissent openly to the public.
- If the state law is in conflict with either a central law or raises the issue of repugnancy (when the provisions of two laws are so inconsistent and irreconcilable that it is impossible to do one without disobeying the other) the Governor has to place it before the President.

#### **Need for the Governor to function like the office of the President**

- The President of India is indirectly elected.
- The President has the opportunity, the facility and the duty to look upon anything that comes before him with only the Constitution in mind.
- The President can afford to take a view that is not popular either with the government or with public or media opinion. If the President goes along the grain of public opinion and is faithful to the letter and spirit of the Constitution, there is no way in which the President's view can be ignored.
- The office of the Governor is also conferred such powers.
- Discussions between the Governor and the Chief Minister are extremely important and must precede, accompany and follow serious decisions, negotiations, important analyses and decisions. But the law is clear that the elected government has the final say.

### **Need to relook the role of Governor**

- As said by Ambedkar and President Narayanan, the fault is not with the Constitution but with those who run it.
- If the role of the Governor needs a relook then it would also mean the role of the President needs a relook.
- If the country cannot do without a President, it is not clear how a State can do without a Governor.
- There are States with different political parties in which the Governor has been appointed by the present ruling dispensation in the Centre, but they are working cordially, despite some difficult incidents.

### **Need to relook the appointment process of Governor**

- The convention of the Union government, the President, the Home Minister and the Prime Minister asking the opinion of the Chief Minister about an incumbent is a healthy convention.
- But more than the consultation aspect the entire selection process needs a relook.
- Apart from the first few years under Jawaharlal Nehru when persons of integrity, though not without political affiliation shed their political bias as soon as they entered Raj Bhavan, that has not been the case in subsequent years.
- The Governors signing the recommendation for President's Rule in states have been one of the most controversial.

### **Maintaining the balance enshrined in Constitution**

- Indian federalism has a tilt towards the Central government since we were coming from a national movement and there were concerns about the functioning of the federation.
- In practice, the Indian form of federalism has functioned well.
- The best way to resolve the differences is through mutual discussion.
- If there is a party that is guiding the Governor who has been appointed by a certain political party, then it's unlikely to be resolved through discussion.
  - In these cases, it is essential that courts function effectively.
- It is effectively very essential for understanding federalism. So, when things don't work out through engagement and statesmanship, it is the courts that have to give an answer quickly.
- The balance between the Centre and the States has been visualized by the framers of the Constitution.

- To maintain the balance, the President has an important role to play in the choices and the appointments of Governors.

### **Nut Graf**

*The recent controversies between the state legislatures and the Governors remain a cause of concern and impact the functioning of federal democracy. It is important for the Judiciary and the office of President to intervene to maintain the delicate balance in the federal structure enshrined in the Constitution.*

### **3. Wrong signal**

**Syllabus: Separation of Powers between various organs Dispute Redressal Mechanisms and Institutions**

**Mains: Key concerns and criticism against the court's ruling in the MediaOne case.**

#### **Context**

The Kerala High Court judgment in the Malayalam news channel MediaOne case.

#### **Background**

- The transmission of a Malayalam-language news channel, Mediaone TV, was barred by the Information and Broadcasting Ministry citing “security reasons”.
- The I&B Ministry did not renew the channel's permission to uplink and downlink signals after the Union Home Ministry declined security clearance.
- The channel along with its employees challenged the action.
- The Kerala High Court upheld the Government's order of revoking the broadcasting permission given to the channel.

#### **Concerns**

- Questions have been raised about the court's stand that is in line with the Government's stand that it was a national security issue and, hence, there is no need to abide by the principles of natural justice.
- The Government has not disclosed the reasons for its stand. And the court has accepted the submission of documents in a sealed cover and has agreed with the authorities that there were intelligence inputs that warranted the denial of security clearance, without the petitioners being shown the contents.
- The court's ruling is against the clause that any restriction on fundamental rights must not only be reasonable, but also pass the test of proportionality.
  - In this case, broadcasting involves the rights concerning media freedom, freedom to disseminate information and the freedom to consume information.
  - These fall under the framework of freedom of speech and expression.
  - The court seems to have accepted the restriction without examining its reasonableness.
- The ban on the channel not only violates the channel's right to broadcast but also its viewers' right to know.

#### **Court's Ruling in Pegasus Case**

- The Court said that national security cannot be used as an excuse to avoid judicial review of restrictions imposed by the state.
- Raising the issue of national security did not give a free pass to the Government, the court had noted.



### Criticism against the latest judgement

- It is seen that the recent ruling is against the [Pegasus judgement](#).
- The court is criticised for its claim that the case involved the broad aspect of 'right to privacy' that is not relevant in the MediaOne case.
- Further, the critics say it is unacceptable that the form of 'sealed cover' justice is being used as an aid to adjudication.
- If the practice of using confidential intelligence information to revoke the permission given to a channel is encouraged, freedom of the media will be in great peril.

### Conclusion

The Court needs to play a more proactive role in the circumspection against the misuse of national security that is being used to deny or curtail fundamental rights.

### **Nut Graf**

*In the recent ruling of the MediaOne case, the court took the executive's statements at face value when it had to examine it and find a balance between fundamental rights and national security. This lack of questioning by the court could have serious implications on the principle of checks and balances as the government could use this path to silence its critics.*

### **Category: ECONOMY**

#### **1. Frozen by uncertainty**

**Syllabus:** Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth.

**Mains:** Analysis of Monetary Policy Committee's accommodative policy stance.

### Context

The Monetary Policy Committee's decision to leave interest rates unchanged and retain its "accommodative" policy stance.

### Background

- The RBI's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) in its recent meeting, kept the policy interest rates unchanged and by a 5-1 majority voted to continue the 'accommodative' stance as long as necessary to revive and sustain growth while ensuring that inflation remains within the target going forward.
- The MPC noted there had been a loss in momentum of the economic activity as reflected in high-frequency indicators due to the spread of the [Omicron](#) variant.
- The MPC also noted that consumer price inflation has risen since its last meeting.
- Critics claim that this stance by the RBI indicates that the central bank has frozen into inaction by the immeasurable uncertainties surrounding the pandemic-hit economy.

### Current situation of the Economy

- Both the global and domestic economies have seen a loss of momentum in the wake of the Omicron wave and the prospects for the recovery have become riskier in the face of the uncertainties posed by the pandemic.
- In India, private consumption, which is crucial for domestic demand, has shown little signs of recovery.

- Further, the persistent increase in international commodity prices, a surge in volatility in international financial markets and global supply bottlenecks, and the risks to the outlook are heightened.
- The RBI's forecast of 7.8% growth is its forecast for GDP expansion in 2022-23 is lower compared to the 8.0%-8.5% projection made in the [Economic Survey](#).
- With the contact-intensive components of the services sector and private investment also being still, the central bank expects growth in the next fiscal to sharply slow down from a 17.2% expansion in Q1 to 4.5% in Q4.
- Consumer Price Index-based inflation is seen rising in the current fiscal quarter and averaging 5.7% after 'moving close' to the upper tolerance threshold of 6% in January 2022.
- The RBI governor acknowledges that the hardening of global crude oil prices poses a major upside risk to the outlook for price gains.

### Analysis

- An expected softening in vegetable prices on account of winter arrivals, and the improving prospects for foodgrains production have prompted the authorities to propose that the "improving inflation outlook" gives them comfort to continue to keep policy 'growth supportive'.
- The monetary policy would continue to be guided by its primary mandate of price stability over the medium term, while also ensuring a strong and sustained economic recovery.
- With the MPC's forecast for inflation to average 4.5% over 2022-23 predicted based on a normal monsoon, the RBI's panel has risked its primary mandate of ensuring price stability and imparting monetary momentum to the economy.

### Conclusion

At a time when inflation is peaking, prompting major central banks including the Federal Reserve in the U.S. to start normalizing policy, there is a real danger of the RBI falling behind the curve.

### Nut Graf

*The recent decisions of MPC show that the RBI, due to the uncertainties posed by the pandemic, has left behind its mandate of ensuring price stability to give momentum to the economy that is seeing a slow-paced recovery.*

## F. Prelims Facts

### 1. e-Shram registration

#### e-Shram portal:

- The [e-Shram portal](#) is meant to create a **national database of unorganised workers**. Under this portal, the unorganized workers would register on the portal and their data would be **seeded with their Aadhaar data**.
- The portal has been developed by the **Ministry of Labour and Employment**.
- As per Government estimates, there are **around 38 crore informal sector workers** in India.

#### Context:

- Around 25 crore informal sector workers in India, involved in 400 different occupations have so far registered on the e-Shram portal.

### 2. ABRV benefits

#### Aatmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana:

- Aatmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana (ABRY) was launched in 2020, as part of the Atmanirbhar Bharat package 3.0.
- Under ABRY, the **Government of India is bearing both the employees' share (12% of wages) and employers' share (12% of wages) of contribution** payable or only the employees' share, depending on the employment strength of the **Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) registered establishments**.
- This scheme being implemented through the EPFO, reduces the financial burden of the employers of various sectors/industries including MSME and will encourage them to hire more workers.
- The scheme aims to **incentivise employers to create new employment, along with social security benefits**.

## G. Tidbits

### 1. RBI holds rates to spur growth

- The **Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)** has decided to keep the **benchmark repo rate unchanged at 4%** and has voted to **continue the 'accommodative' policy stance** to ensure the economy's recovery in the post-pandemic phase.
- MPC has decided to maintain the accommodative stance as long as necessary to revive and sustain growth on a durable basis while ensuring that inflation remains within the target going forward.
- This indicates that the monetary policy would continue to be guided by its primary mandate of **price stability over the medium term**, while also ensuring **a strong and sustained economic recovery**.

### 2. Indo-Pacific region will shape the century: Blinken

- Reiterating the **importance of the Indo-Pacific region**, the U.S. Secretary of State has stated that much of this century is going to be shaped by what happens in the Indo-Pacific region.
- The Indo-Pacific is the **fastest-growing region in the world**, accounting for **two-thirds of global economic growth over the past five years** and home to **half the world's population**.

## H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

**Q1. It is an internationally significant waterway located in Northwestern Turkey. It connects the Black Sea with the Sea of Marmara. The strait being talked about is:**

- a. Bab-el-Mandeb
- b. Strait of Tartar
- c. Kerch Strait
- d. Bosphorus Strait

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

- The Bosphorus Strait is a narrow, natural strait and an internationally significant waterway located in northwestern Turkey. It connects the Black Sea with the Sea of Marmara.



**Q2. Which of the given statement/s is/are correct?**

1. The One Ocean Summit is organized by UNESCO in cooperation with the World Bank.
2. The agenda of the One Ocean summit is to build international cooperation for anti-piracy.
3. The UNESCO is the custodian of unique ocean places, through 232 marine biosphere reserves and 50 marine World Heritage sites of outstanding universal value.

**Options:**

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

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

- One Ocean Summit is being organised by France, in cooperation with the United Nations and the World Bank.
- The objective of the Summit is to mobilise the international community to take tangible action towards preserving and supporting healthy and sustainable ocean ecosystems.
- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization is the UN agency in charge of ocean sciences. Founded in 1960, UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), brings together 150 countries, coordinates global programmes such as ocean mapping, ocean health monitoring and tsunami risk prevention, as well as numerous scientific research projects. The agency is also the custodian of unique ocean places, through 232 marine biosphere reserves and 50 marine World Heritage sites of outstanding universal value.

**Q3. Consider the following statements with respect to Madhvacharya:**

1. He is the founder of Tattvavada.
2. The Bhakti movement vocalist Purandara Dasa was a follower of Madhvacharya's philosophy.
3. His name at birth was Ilaya Perumal.

**Which of the given statements is/are INCORRECT?**

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 3 only
- c. 1 only
- d. None of the above

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

- Madhvacharya was a Hindu philosopher and the chief proponent of the Dvaita school of Vedanta. Madhva called his philosophy Tattvavāda meaning "arguments from a realist viewpoint". His name at birth was Vasudeva.
- Purandara Dasa is a prominent composer of Dasa Sahithya, a poetic form of the Madhwa philosophy
- Ramanuja's Tamil name was Ilaya Perumal.

**Q4. Which of the following statements with respect to the scheme 'Krishi Udan 2.0' is/are correct?**

1. The scheme aims to ensure seamless air transportation and associated logistics for agricultural produce from the North Eastern states, hilly and tribal regions of the country.
2. The scheme was launched by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.
3. The scheme was announced by the finance minister during the Union Budget 2022-23.

**Options:**

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

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

- The Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) launched the Krishi UDAN scheme.
- Krishi UDAN Scheme was launched in August 2020, on international and national routes to assist farmers in transporting agricultural products so that it improves their value realisation.



Q5. Which of the following is not included in the assets of a commercial bank in India?

- a. Advances
- b. Deposits
- c. Investments
- d. Money at call and short notice

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

- For the banks, the deposits represent the liabilities of the banks as they have to pay interest on it, while loans advanced and investments made by banks represent their assets as they help the banks earn interest.
- The deposit is a liability owed by the bank to the depositor.

## I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. A law on job quota for locals not only violates fundamental rights, it also breaches the basic structure of the Constitution. Do you agree? Justify. (15 Marks, 250 Words)[GS-2, Polity]
2. Allowing the State to raise the national security ground to restrict media freedom without any checks can lead to dangerous consequences. Examine. (10 Marks, 150 Words)[GS-2, Polity]