

01 AUGUST COMPREHENSIVE NEWS ANALYSIS

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B. GS 2 Related

Category: GOVERNANCE

1. The need for a distinction between blasphemy and hate speech

Syllabus: Government policies and interventions

Mains: Potential threat of Blasphemy laws to free speech

Context: Recent uproars on speeches and tweets with religious context attached to it have raised questions on effective regulations to govern criticism versus hate speech.

Introduction:

There isn't any formal legislation against blasphemy in India. Section 295(A) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), is the closest equivalent to a blasphemy law.

History and Interpretation of Section 295 (A):

- Under Section 295(A) any speech, writings, or signs that “with premeditated and malicious intent” insult citizens’ religion or religious beliefs is punishable with fine and imprisonment for up to 03 years.
- In 1927, a satire was published which was very offensive and hurt certain religious sentiments but the erstwhile High Court of Lahore observed that the author of this cannot be prosecuted under section 153(A) of IPC as the writing did not cause animosity or hostility between any communities.
- However, this incident led to the demand for a law to protect the sanctity of religions, and thus, Section 295(A) was introduced.
- The Supreme Court in Ramji Lal Modi case, 1957 affirmed that while Article 19(2) allows reasonable limits on freedom of speech and expression for the sake of public order, the punishment under Section 295(A) deals with aggravated form of blasphemy which is committed with the malicious aim of offending the religious sensibilities of any class.
- The Supreme Court decided that the connection between speech and disorder must be like a "spark in a powder keg".
- In 2011, The Supreme Court concluded that only speech that amounts to "incitement to impending unlawful action" can be punished.

Should there be a difference between blasphemy laws and [hate speech](#) laws?

- The wording of Section 295(A) is considerably too wide. It cannot be stated that intentional disrespect to religion is necessarily equivalent to incitement.
- Section 295A is considered a cognizable offense in which the police can arrest the alleged perpetrator without obtaining a warrant from a judge.
 - A simple complaint or an FIR is enough for someone to be arrested and charged with Section 295A.
- As per the Supreme Court the goal of hate speech rules in Section 295(A) is to prevent prejudice and ensure equality.
- Due to discrepancy between the judiciary’s interpretation and the actual wording of the law, it is being misused by the administration time to time
- The reason for this is because hate speech laws are based on the crucial distinction between

criticizing religion and encouraging prejudice or aggression towards individuals or a community because of their faith.

- According to the National Crime Records Bureau data there has been a significant increase in hate speech cases. While there were only 323 cases registered in 2014, it had increased to 1,804 cases in 2020.
- Many instances of misuse of Section 295(A) to penalize religious dissent, satire, and any comedic content with religious references with bogus cases and FIRs have been observed.
- Failing to articulate distinctions between criticism and premeditated hate speech reduces fair use of the Section and makes it more difficult to define and penalize the actual crime of hate speech.

How should one deal with incidents of blasphemy?

- The state must meet a very high bar before using public disturbance as an excuse to criminalize expression.
- Insulting religion or religious figures may be condemned but it should not be legally prosecuted or outlawed as they stand against the principles of a democratic society.
- Decriminalizing the Blasphemy law can lead to a free and democratic society with no screening of discourse and dissent.

***Nut Graf:** Laws on Blasphemy is mired with various controversies due to its vagueness and misuse of the law by the state. Therefore it is necessary to draw a clear distinction between blasphemy laws and [hate speech](#) laws. State must use utmost restraint before using such laws that criminalize free speech.*

C. GS 3 Related

Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. The technology powering hybrid electric vehicles

***Syllabus:** Indigenization of technology and developing new technology.*

***Mains:** Adoption of EV's in Indian Auto Market*

Context: In recent months, several automakers have launched hybrid electric vehicles in India, offering consumers more choices in the electric vehicle market.

What is a hybrid electric vehicle?

- A hybrid electric vehicle (HEV) uses electric motors along with an Internal Combustion Engine (ICE-Petrol/Diesel Engine) to run.
- It is powered by the electric motor alone, which uses energy stored in batteries, by the ICE, or both.

- **Major Components of HEV:**

- A low-voltage auxiliary battery.
- A traction battery pack to store electricity.
- An electric generator.
- An AC/DC converter.
- An ICE

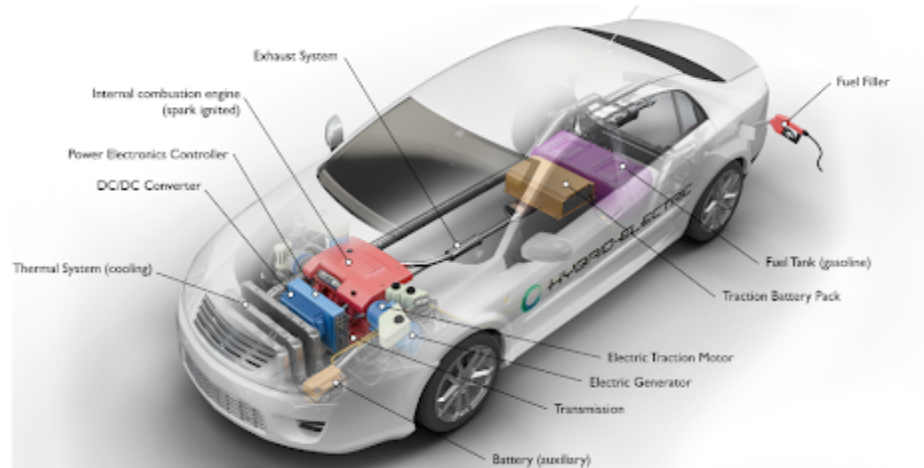


Image Source: afdc.energy.gov

Working of HEV powertrains?

- HEV powertrains are designed to power cars in 03 methods. They are,
 - Parallel
 - Series
 - Series-parallel (power split).
- A **parallel HEV** uses the best power source to power the vehicle based on the driving condition. It will alternate between the electric motor and the ICE to power the car.
- A **series HEV** uses only the electric motor to drive the wheels, while the ICE powers the generator, which in turn recharges the battery.
- A **series-parallel HEV** delivers a combination of both models and allows to split power. Here, power is routed from the ICE alone or from the battery to the electric motor to run the vehicle.

Moreover, in all three designs, the battery is charged through **Regenerative Braking Technology/System(RBS)**

How does regenerative braking work?

- Energy recovery happens in multiple ways based on the type of RBS.
1. A **kinetic system** can retrieve the energy lost during braking and then use this energy to recharge the battery.

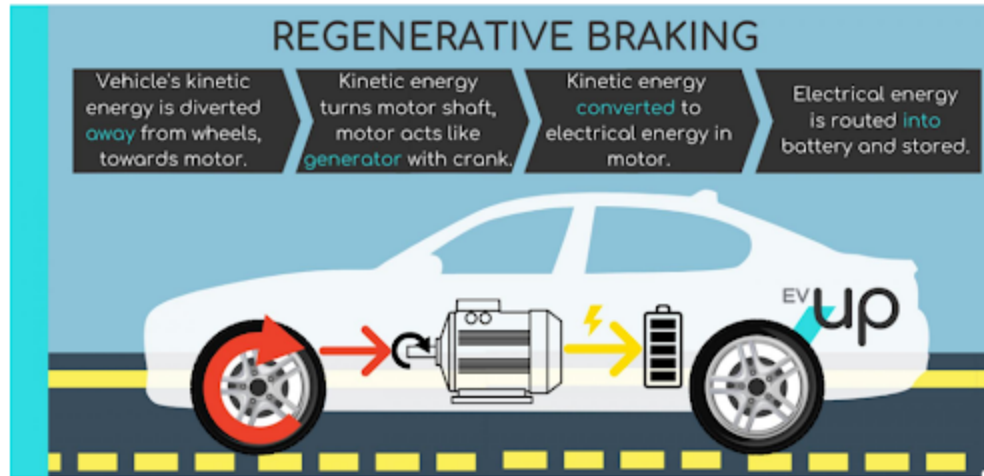


Image Source: evup.com

- **An electric system** generates electricity through a motor during sudden braking.
 - **A hydraulic system** uses pressurized tanks to store the vehicle's kinetic energy and can offer a high energy recovery rate which is ideal for heavy vehicles.
 - The amount of recoverable energy is decided by factors like stopping pattern and vehicle speed.
 - The ability to recover as much energy as possible while braking determines the efficiency of HEVs as higher energy recovery results in lower fuel consumption

Advantages of RBS:

- Better braking efficiency in stop-and-go traffic enhances fuel economy.
- Operating efficiency of vehicles will be enhanced through reduced fuel consumption and the extended range of batteries.
- RBS also helps in energy optimisation resulting in minimum energy wastage and reduced carbon emissions.
- RBS technology is also used in electric railways.
 - Frequent acceleration and braking of trains across many stations increases the potential for braking energy recovery enhancing energy efficiency.

Types of HEVs :

- Based on degree of hybridisation, the HEVs are categorized into micro, mild and full hybrid vehicles.
- **A full HEV** will have a more powerful electric motor with a larger battery compared to other types.
 - Therefore, it can power the vehicle for longer distances using just electric mode.
- A mild HEV use battery at traffic lights to support ICE as they cannot drive using only the

electric motor.

- Micro hybrids do not offer electric torque assistance as they lack an electric motor, but they have an idle stop-start system and energy management functions.
- **Plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs):**
 - These can be charged using a wall outlet, as they have an onboard charging port.
 - They generally use the electric motor until the battery is almost drained, and then automatically switch to the ICE.
 - Out of 1.95 million global shipments in 2022, 23% are PHEVs.

Advantages of using hybrid technology:

- Better fuel efficiency
- More power- High Torque at low speeds
- Minimum emissions.

Challenges :

- High vehicle cost, especially in a price sensitive market like India.
- Battery and the RBS adds to the higher cost of an HEV.
- The batteries in hybrids contain a high voltage, which can increase the risk of electrocution in the event of an accident.

Conclusion:

- Increase in the adoption of clean mobility solutions, rise in fossil fuel prices, and strict government rules for emission control is boosting the growth of the global EV market.
- HEVs will play a crucial role creating a local EV parts manufacturing ecosystem while simultaneously safeguarding the vast existing infrastructure and employment related to ICE manufacturing thus ensuring a faster and disruption-free technology transition.

Nut Graf: *The automotive industry is transitioning, with an increasing focus on hybrid and battery electric vehicles. New hybrid electric vehicles and their advantages over conventional internal combustion engine (ICE)-powered vehicles are helping in the transition from ICE market to EV's in India.*

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Representation, all the way up

Syllabus: *Appointments to various constitutional posts, 73rd and 74th Amendment Act*

Prelims: *Structure, organization and functioning of executive*

Context:

- Ms. Draupadi Murmu, the first scheduled tribe to be sworn in to the highest constitutional position of the country.
- She belongs to the Santhal Tribe.

Details:

How was it possible:

- One of the major reasons is the democratic decentralization that happened through 73rd and 74th Amendment Act
- The amendments mandated the reservation of seats for the members belonging to the scheduled tribe.
- Also one third of the seats were reserved for women.

Achievements:

- The representation has been expanded to considerable extent as evident from:
 - About 20 states have expanded the reservation from 33% to 50%.
 - Providing reservation to backward class.

Challenges/Concerns:

- Even after three decades of democratic decentralization, local governments have not become efficient units of local self-governance.
- Judiciary at times have been skeptical of the measures of expanding reservation to the backward class

Nut Graf: *Local self-government provides opportunity for people from the grass root level to become strong leaders.*

2. An Alarming fall

Syllabus: *Parliament - conduct of business, powers and privileges and issues arising out of it.*

Prelims: Function and responsibility of parliament.

Context:

- Due to Opposition party's protests in the parliament, the productivity and efficiency of the legislature have deteriorated.

Details:

- The recent furore seen in the parliament and the continued protest have brought to fore the challenges in efficient business of the Legislative body.

Current Issues:

- The ill timed legislation leaves no room for desired deliberation
- The quality of debates and discussion are substandard.
- The parliamentary committee role and participation have been diluted
- Also the span and sessions of parliament have found to be inadequate
- Datas has shown that in the previous years the suspension of member of parliament(M.P.) have went up three times

Impact:

- It disrupts the legislative process of passing bills
- Making the entire session unproductive.

Measures to be taken:

- The efficient use of the tools, mechanism and business rule to ensure productive functioning of the legislature.
- Both the ruling and the opposition party should delve into dialogues and enhance the efficiency of the parliamentary session.

Nut Graf: Robust parliamentary proceedings are required for efficient functioning of the Democracy.

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Bringing Eurasia Closer

Syllabus: Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interest

Prelims: Important International institutions, agencies and their structure, mandate

Context:

- Recently, two containers from Russia's Astrakhan port reached Nhava Sheva port in Mumbai

International North-South Transport Corridor:

- It is a 7,200-km long multi-modal transport corridor combining road, rail and maritime routes.
- It connects Russia and India via central Asia and Iran.
- Purpose : To consolidate the Eurasian Free Trade Area
- The legal framework of INSTC was established under trilateral agreement between Russia, India and Iran
- Other Countries to sign the instrument of accession: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Oman, Syria and Tajikistan.

Significance:

- INSTC would reduce the cost of freight by 30% and time of journey by 40% as compared to the conventional deep sea route via the Suez Canal.
- Also untoward incidents like halting maritime traffic in the Suez Canal route (between Mediterranean sea and red sea) can be avoided.

Significance for India:

- Allow accessibility to Afghanistan and central Asia.
- Indian companies will be offered the opportunity to expand their business through a special economic zone around Chabahar.
- Reliance on Pakistan to access Afghanistan, central Asia and beyond will not be required.
- It can counter the BRI (Belt and Road Initiative) of China.

Nut Graf: *INSTC launch has great potential for India in expanding it's trade to Central Asia as well as to counter China's BRI.*

F. Prelims Facts

Nothing here for today!!!

G. Tidbits**1. AL NAJAH IV**

- India and Oman will carry out a military exercise with a focus on counterterror cooperation.

- Scope of the exercise includes “the establishment of joint command and control structures and elimination of terrorist threats, professional interaction, mutual understanding of drills and procedures”
- This will be the 04th edition between contingents of Indian Army and the Royal Army of Oman
- It is scheduled to take place at the Mahajan Field Firing Ranges, Rajasthan.
- The previous edition was organized in Muscat in March 2019.
- These exercises enhance the level of bilateral defense cooperation and act as a catalyst in bringing synergy and cooperation while undertaking such operations under the United Nations mandate.

1. Helicopters to armed forces

- In the utility category, Indian Air Force and the Army together have a requirement of over 400 helicopters and are meant to replace the Cheetahs and Chetaks.
- This requirement was to be met jointly by the light utility helicopters (LUHs) and the 200 Ka-226T utility helicopters to be built with technology transfer from Russia.
- Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. has received the Letter of Intent from the Services for the manufacture of indigenously designed and developed 12 LUHs.
 - The LUH is a 03-ton class new generation single engine helicopter designed and developed by Rotary Wing Research and Design Center of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) indigenously with features suitable for operations in the diverse operating conditions unique to India.
- Nine light combat helicopters (LCH) have been manufactured against the sanction of 15 limited series production (LSP) variants and are in the process of being handed over to the Services.
- The Indian Army is in negotiations for acquiring more Apache AH-64E attack helicopters from Boeing.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Which of the following are the examples of Residual Mountains? (Level- Medium)

- a) Aravalli
- b) Girnar hills
- c) Javadi hills
- d) Nilgiri hills

Options:

- 1. 1, 2 and 3 only
- 2. 2, 3 and 4 only

3. 1 and 4 only
4. 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer: d

Explanation:

1. Residual mountains are the remains of previously existing mountains that have been subjected to weathering and erosion for an extended period.
2. They owe their current shape to erosion by glaciers, rivers, wind, etc
3. Aravalli hills, Nilgiri Hills, Javadi hills, Girnar hills, Sierra of Spain are some of the examples of Residue mountains.

Q2. Consider the following statements with respect to Aravalli range: (Level-Easy)

1. It acts as a major barrier preventing the spread of the desert
2. The highest peak is Guru Shikhar
3. All the rivers in Rajasthan originate from the slopes of the Aravalli range

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: a

Explanation:

- **Statement 01 is correct**, Aravalli range acts as a barrier to check further spread of desertification to the east of Rajasthan and subsequently to Gangetic plains.
- **Statement 02 is correct**, Guru Shikhar is the highest peak of Aravalli with 1722 meters, located near Mount Abu.
- **Statement 03 is incorrect**, Chambal, the only perennial river of Rajasthan, originates from the Northern slopes of Vindhya Range

Q3. Al Najah is joint military training exercise between India and (Level-easy)

- a) Bahrain
- b) Oman
- c) Qatar
- d) United Arab Emirates

Answer: b

Explanation:

- It takes place between contingents of the Indian Army and the Royal Army of Oman.
- Fourth edition of Al Najah is set to take place at the Mahajan Field Firing Ranges, Rajasthan.
- Focus of fourth edition will be on Counter terrorism operations.

Q4. Which of the following is/are correctly matched? (Level-Difficult)

1. Kerch Strait -Black Sea with the Sea of Azov
2. Strait of Messina- Tyrrhenian Sea with the Ionian Sea
3. Strait of Dover- North Sea with English Channel

Options:

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- **Statement 01 is correct,** The Kerch Strait is in Eastern Europe connecting Black Sea and the Sea of Azov separating the Crimean Kerch Peninsula in the west from the Taman Peninsula of Russia in the east.



Image Credit: The Economist Intelligence Unit

Statement 02 is correct, The Strait of Messina is a narrow strait between the eastern Sicily and western tip of Calabria in Southern Italy.

- It connects the Tyrrhenian Sea to the north with the Ionian Sea to the south, within the central Mediterranean.



Image Credit: www.jcvi.org

- **Statement 03 is correct**, Dover Strait marks the boundary between the English Channel and North Sea separating Continental Europe from Great Britain.



Image Source: Wikipedia

Q5. Consider the following statements:(Level-Difficult)(CSE-2022)

1. Vietnam has been one of the fastest growing economies in the world in the recent years.
2. Vietnam is led by a multi-party political system.
3. Vietnam's economic growth is linked to its integration with global supply chains and focus on exports.
4. For a long time, Vietnam's low labor costs and stable exchange rates have attracted global manufacturers.
5. Vietnam has the most productive e-service sector in the Indo-Pacific region.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a) 2 and 4
- b) 3 and 5
- c) 1, 3 and 4
- d) 1 and 2

Answer: c

Explanation:

Statement 1 is correct. Economic reforms initiated in 1986, along with beneficial global trends, have helped Vietnam move from being one of the world's poorest nations to a middle-income economy in one generation.

- Between 2002 and 2021, GDP per capita increased 3.6 times, reaching almost US\$3,700.

Statement 2 is incorrect. Vietnam is a one-party socialist republic.

Statement 3 is correct: Vietnam's export-led growth strategy and global integration are the major contributors in its growth and poverty reduction.

Statement 4 is correct: By minimizing trade and foreign investment restrictions, Vietnam attracted several multinational companies. Along with this and its low wages, it became an attractive platform for manufacturing and exports.

Statement 5 is incorrect: Vietnam has one of the most productive e-service sectors in the Indo-Pacific region but cannot be called the most productive e-service sector in the entire Indo-Pacific region.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. What are the pros and cons of hybrid electric vehicles? How is it different from normal EVs? (15 Marks, 250 Words)(GS3- Science and Technology)
2. What is the history of Section 295 (A) of the Indian Penal Code? What has the Supreme Court ruled? (10 Marks, 150 Words)(GS2- Polity)