

14 Jan 2023: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis



TABLE OF CONTENTS
A. GS 1 Related
B. GS 2 Related <i>POLITY</i> 1. The buck stops with govt. to end hate speech: SC
C. GS 3 Related
D. GS 4 Related
E. Editorials <i>POLITY</i> 1. The Role of the Governor
<i>SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY</i> 1. Regulations of Deepfakes
F. Prelims Facts 1. MV Ganga Vilas
G. Tidbits 1. India's trade deficit with China races beyond \$100 bn
2. Rajasthan to form action plan for protection of geo-heritage sites
3. Alappuzha sees a decline in visiting waterbirds
H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions
I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

A. GS 1 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

B. GS 2 Related

Category: POLITY

1. The buck stops with govt. to end hate speech: SC

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

Mains: The problem of hate speech and challenges associated with it

Context: The Supreme Court has held that it is the responsibility of the government to curb hate speeches and hate crimes.

Background

- The Supreme Court was hearing several petitions which sought actions against hate speech and hate crimes in the country.
- The apex court had earlier directed the DGPs of Delhi, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh to register suo motu action against those indulging in “hate speech” by lodging criminal cases without waiting for formal complaints.
- Recently, the counsel for Uttar Pradesh said that it had registered about 580 cases of hate speech in 2021-2022 and out of these 160 were suo motu cases registered by the police.
 - Further, the counsel for Uttarakhand said that it had registered 118 cases out of which 23 were suo moto cases.

Hate Speech

- According to the Law Commission of India, “Hate speech generally is an incitement to hatred primarily against a group of persons defined in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief and the like. This, hate speech is any word written or spoken, signs, visible representations within the hearing or sight of a person with the intention to cause fear or alarm, or incitement to violence.”
- However, there is no specific legal definition of “hate speech”.
- Hate speech refers to words whose intent is to create hatred towards a particular group, that group may be a community, religion, or race.
- This speech may or may not have meaning, but is likely to result in violence.

Supreme Court's observations

- Justice K.M. Joseph said that despite not wanting the government to intervene in all the issues, the court would expect the government to intervene in certain issues when religious freedom, harmony and orderly progress are gravely affected.
- The Supreme Court Bench while hearing a batch of petitions that sought curbs on hate speech further pointed out the problem of hate speech on television.
 - According to the court, TV channels have become tools to spread particular agendas, inducing divisiveness and violent instincts in society in order to gain Television Rating Points (TRP).
 - The court called for free and balanced media in India.
- Judges of the Bench also highlighted the instances of “name-calling” by TV channels that violate the principles of ensuring “dignity” which is also part of the [Right to Life](#) enshrined under Article 21 of the Constitution.
 - Justice Nagarathna added that the exercise of [free speech \[Article 19\(1\)\(a\)\]](#) by one individual can not violate the right to dignity and free speech of others.

Government's stand

- According to the Additional Solicitor General who was appearing for the government, the government has intervened against the media only in “exceptional cases” and it is the duty and responsibility of the media to self-regulate and exercise prior restraint.
- He further added that there are sufficient checks and balances in place to curb hate speech and that the government was also considering legislation and introducing amendments to the [Code of Criminal Procedure \(CrPC\)](#) to address the issues pointed out by the apex court.

***Nut graf:** Noting that offences such as hate speech and crimes are considered as offences committed on the whole of society, the Supreme Court has urged the government to expedite its actions to tackle the problems associated with such offences.*

C. GS 3 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: POLITY

1. The Role of the Governor

Syllabus: Parliamentary Form of Government

Mains: Controversial nature of the position and powers of the Governor

Context: This article discusses the significance of the special address of the President and the Governor.

Introduction:

- The Constitution of India gives the [President](#) and the Governor the power to address a sitting of the legislature.
- Article 87 of the Constitution provides two instances when the President specially addresses both Houses of Parliament.
 - The President of India addresses both the Rajya Sabha and the Lok Sabha at the beginning of the first session after each general election when the reconstituted lower house meets for the first time.
 - The President also addresses both the houses at the beginning of the first session of each year.
- Similarly, Article 176 requires the [Governor](#) to make a special address at the first session of each year of every State Legislative Assembly and to both Houses wherever the State also has a Legislative Council.
 - The language of these provisions was borrowed from the rules of the House of Commons.
- Commonly referred to as the President's or Governor's Address, they are a constitutional requirement. A session of a new or a continuing legislature cannot begin without fulfilling this requirement.

Background:

- Neither House of Parliament of the United Kingdom can proceed with any public business unless it is opened either by the King himself or by Lords Commissioners acting on his behalf in the first session of the new Parliament.
 - The King's speech prepared by the incumbent government is thus the formal beginning of each new session of Parliament and states the government's policy.
- The [Constituent Assembly](#) decided to adopt this practice on May 18, 1949, as India adopted the Westminster model of parliamentary democracy.

- When the Constitution came into force, the President was required to address each session of Parliament. So during the provisional Parliament in 1950, the President gave an address for all three sessions.
 - At the suggestion of Speaker G V Mavalankar, the first Constitutional Amendment in 1951 changed this position.
- Similar provisions exist in other democracies. In the United States, it is referred to as the “State of the Union”.
 - In the American system, the President has the option of simply sending his written speech to Congress instead of personally going to deliver it. He also puts forward the position of his administration.

Significance of Special Address:

- The special address essentially highlights the government’s policy priorities and plans for the upcoming year. The address provides a broad framework of the government’s agenda and direction.
- The Calcutta High Court, while interpreting this provision in *Syed Abdul Mansur Habibullah v. The Speaker, West Bengal Legislative Assembly* (1966), held that the special address is not an idle or ceremonial formality. It keeps the members informed about the executive policies and legislative programmes of the State government.
 - The High Court further observed that the non-delivery of the special address hampers legislative debates and budgetary criticisms.

Disagreement on the text of the Speech:

- Recently, the Governor of Tamil Nadu skipped certain portions of the text of his customary address to the state’s legislature.
 - As a result, the Chief Minister of the state, M K Stalin, moved a resolution demanding only the original printed speech in Tamil be put in records.
 - Governor R N Ravi reacted to this in an unprecedented manner by staging a walkout from the House in protest even before the national anthem was played.
- The special address is a time-honoured constitutional convention in which the King or the President or the Governor must read out the exact text of the speech or special address which informs the nation or the State of the policies that an elected government intends to pursue.
 - There has never been an incident of the monarch in the U.K. or the President of India departing from the official text of his speech.
 - But there have been multiple occasions when a Governor skipped a portion of the address to the Assembly.

- During the [Constituent Assembly debates](#), B.R. Ambedkar rejected an amendment to Article 87 giving discretion to the President to also make an address on “other particular issues of policy he deems suitable for such address”.
- As per the Supreme Court, constitutional conventions are as much a part of the Constitution as its written text.

Conclusion:

- The constitutional role of the Governor is that of an elder statesman who brings a sense of gravitas to this high office, and by his oath, must preserve, protect and defend the Constitution and the law.
- Article 361 of the Constitution gives the Governor complete immunity from any legal action as the Constituent Assembly hoped that Governors would maintain the highest standards of righteousness and propriety.
- Constitutional morality consists of not only adherence to the written text of the Constitution but also to constitutional conventions. These conventions promote efficient coordination between the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government by filling in the gaps left by a written Constitution.

***Nut Graf:** The President or a Governor cannot refuse to perform the constitutional duty of delivering an address to the legislature. Recent instances of serious breaches of constitutional conventions made by Governors have hampered the functioning of duly elected State governments and it seems to destroy the steel frame of our Constitution.*

Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. Regulations of Deepfakes

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

***Mains:** Ethical and legal challenges of DeepFakes*

Context: This article discusses the need for [Artificial Intelligence](#) (AI) regulations in India.

Introduction:

- Deepfakes is defined as a compilation of artificial images and audio that are put together using machine-learning algorithms to spread misinformation and replace a real person’s appearance, voice, etc.
- The term originated in the year 2017 when an anonymous Reddit user under the name “Deepfakes” manipulated Google’s open-source, deep-learning technology to create and post pornographic videos.

- The technology is now being used for scams and hoaxes, celebrity pornography, election manipulation, social engineering, automated disinformation attacks, identity theft, and financial fraud.
- Currently, there are few provisions in Indian law that can be potentially invoked to deal with the malicious use of deepfakes.
- The lack of proper regulations creates avenues for individuals, firms and even non-state actors to misuse AI.

Issues with deepfakes:

- Deepfake videos are compelling and can be used to spread misinformation and propaganda. They compromise the public's ability to distinguish between fact and fiction.
- They can be used to depict someone in a compromising and embarrassing situation which amounts to an invasion of privacy and harassment.
- They have been used for financial fraud. Scammers are using AI-powered software to mimic voices and commit fraud.
- Deepfakes can also be a lethal tool in the hands of non-friendly neighbours and non-state actors to create tensions in the country.
- Deepfakes can be used to influence elections.
 - Taiwan is increasingly concerned that China is spreading false information to influence public opinion and manipulate election outcomes.
- Deepfakes can also be used to carry out espionage activities. Doctored videos can be used to blackmail government and defence officials into divulging state secrets.
 - In March 2022, a doctored video of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky instructing Ukrainian soldiers to surrender to Russian forces was posted on social media.
- Similar to this, deepfakes might be used in India to create content that is provocative, such as videos that claim to show the military or the police committing "crimes" in conflict zones. These deepfakes might be used to recruit terrorists, radicalise people, or incite violence.
- Deepfakes could also enable individuals to deny the authenticity of genuine content, particularly if it shows them engaging in inappropriate or criminal behaviour, by claiming that it is a deepfake.

Policy on deepfakes:

- Recently, Taiwan's cabinet approved amendments to election laws to punish the sharing of deepfake videos or images.
- China has also introduced regulations prohibiting the use of deepfakes deemed harmful to national security or the economy. These rules apply to content creators who alter facial and voice data and came into effect on January 10, 2023.

- The European Union introduced the Code of Practice on Disinformation in 2018.
 - It was signed by online platforms like Facebook, Google, Twitter, Mozilla (2018), Microsoft (2019), and TikTok (2020).
- The U.S. has the bipartisan Deepfake Task Force Act to assist the Department of Homeland Security in countering deepfake technology.
- Currently in India, very few provisions under the [Indian Penal Code \(IPC\)](#) and the Information Technology Act, 2000 can be potentially invoked to deal with the malicious use of deepfakes.
 - Section 500 of the IPC provides punishment for defamation.
 - Sections 67 and 67A of the Information Technology Act punish sexually explicit material in explicit form.
 - The [Representation of the People Act, 1951](#), includes provisions prohibiting the creation or distribution of false or misleading information about candidates or political parties during an election period.

Way Forward:

- The adoption of laws to address the problems and difficulties new technologies bring about frequently lags behind. In India, the legal framework related to AI is insufficient to adequately address the various issues that have arisen due to AI algorithms.
- The Union government should introduce separate legislation regulating the nefarious use of deepfakes and the broader subject of AI. Without interfering with the innovation in AI, legislation should recognise the issues with deepfake technology and provide provisions to address them.
- Media literacy for consumers is also one of the most effective tools to combat disinformation and deep fakes.
 - The greater the public awareness of the technology and its uses, the more they will be able to think critically about the media they consume and apply caution where needed.

Nut Graf: *The legal ambiguity on the subject of deepfakes, along with lack of accountability and oversight, is a potent mix for a disaster. Artificial Intelligence systems must be utilised responsibly and it is imperative to thoroughly assess any potential damages, dangers, and concerns. Incorporation of proper policy, regulation and education guardrails is necessary to build and deploy AI services ethically and responsibly.*

F. Prelims Facts

1. MV Ganga Vilas

Syllabus: GS-3; Economy; Growth and Development

Prelims: About MV Ganga Vilas

Context: The Prime Minister of India flagged off the [MV Ganga Vilas](#) river cruise from Varanasi.

MV Ganga Vilas

- MV Ganga Vilas is the world's longest river cruise.
- MV Ganga Vilas is the first ever indigenously made cruise vessel in India.
- MV Ganga Vilas has three decks with 18 suites that can house 36 tourists.
- The river cruise vessel will cover a distance of 3,200 km from Varanasi to Dibrugarh via Bangladesh in about 51 days.
- The cruise will cover various well-known tourist destinations including World Heritage Sites and National Parks such as Kashi, Patna Sahib, Bodh Gaya, Vikramshila, Dhaka and the Sundarbans.
- Further, the cruise will connect National Waterway 1 (NW1) and National Waterway 2 (NW2) and cross about 27 river systems.

G. Tidbits

1. India's trade deficit with China races beyond \$100 bn

Trade imbalance

Chinese customs data on Friday showed bilateral trade had climbed 8.4% last year to \$135.98 billion



■ **India's imports accounted for \$118.5 billion of 2-way trade, up from \$97.5 billion the previous year**

■ **India's exports to China fell from \$28.1 billion to \$17.48 billion**

■ **Trade deficit widened to \$101.02 billion, up by 45%, from the \$69.4 billion seen in 2021**

Image Source: The Hindu

- India's bilateral trade with China has reached a record \$135.98 billion in 2022 mainly on account of the increasing Indian imports of Chinese goods.
 - Out of the \$135.98 billion, India's imports accounted for \$118.5 billion.

- However, India's exports to China experienced a drop in 2022 from \$28.1 billion to \$17.48 billion which has pushed an already significant trade deficit over the \$100 billion mark for the first time ever.
- Furthermore, according to Chinese customs data, China's overall foreign trade reached a record high in 2022.
 - ASEAN countries are the biggest trading partners of China followed by the [European Union \(EU\)](#).

2. Rajasthan to form action plan for protection of geo-heritage sites

- The State government in Rajasthan will be coming up with an action plan for the protection of 10 geo-heritage sites in the State on the lines of the conservation of archaeological monuments.
- The geo-heritage sites in the state identified by the [Geological Survey of India](#) include Udaipur, Pali, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur, Bundi and Chittorgarh districts.
 - The geo-heritage sites have geological features with significant scientific and educational values.
- The Mines Department is formulating strategies to address the threats to the geo-heritage sites and the State government has also sought the permission of the Union government for the auction of garnet, limestone and potash blocks.
- Further, the Union government has also formulated a draft legislation for the protection of geo-heritage sites and has notified it in the public domain.

3. Alappuzha sees a decline in visiting waterbirds

- A recent survey conducted as part of the Asian Waterbird Census 2023 indicates that there is a shift in migration patterns of waterbirds.
- The survey conducted in the northern parts of Alappuzha has revealed that duck species such as Northern shoveler, Common teal and Eurasian wigeon, sighted in the previous surveys, were totally missing in the latest round of the survey.
- According to experts, climate change has impacted the number of birds visiting the region and the exact impact of climate change on bird migration and the environment can only be known after conducting more studies and analysis.
- The survey was jointly organised by the Social Forestry wing of the Forest Department and a birdwatching group called Birders Ezhupunna.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. With reference to the MV Ganga Vilas, consider the following statement:
(Level - Moderate)

1. It is the world's longest river cruise from Varanasi to Dibrugarh.
2. The cruise vessel has been jointly made by India and Bangladesh under Public Private Partnership.

Which of the statements is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: A

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, MV Ganga Vilas is touted to be the world's longest river cruise.
 - The river cruise vessel will cover a distance of 3,200 km from Varanasi to Dibrugarh via Bangladesh in about 51 days.
- **Statement 2 is not correct**, MV Ganga Vilas is the first ever **indigenously made cruise vessel in India**.

Q2. The city of Soledar which was recently in the news, is located in?(Level - Easy)

- A. Syria
- B. Yemen
- C. Ukraine
- D. Russia

Answer: C

Explanation:

- The city of Soledar is a small town center of the Donbas region, located in eastern **Ukraine**.

**Q3. With reference to the PM SVANidhi scheme, consider the following statements:
(Level - Difficult)**

1. It provides a platform for the farmers to carry out digital transactions.
2. It facilitates micro-credit by giving farmers Letters of Recommendation (LOR) for easy access to loans.

Which of the statements is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: D

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is not correct**, PM SVANidhi scheme is a Central Sector Scheme to facilitate street vendors to access affordable working capital loan for resuming their livelihoods activities, after easing of lockdown.
 - The target beneficiaries of the Scheme include Street vendors/ hawkers vending in urban areas and the vendors of surrounding peri-urban and rural areas
 - The objectives of the scheme include:
 - To facilitate working capital loan up to Rs.10,000 at subsidized rate of interest
 - To incentivize regular repayment of loan
 - To reward digital transactions
- **Statement 2 is not correct**, PM SVANidhi scheme has helped in providing occupational recognition to **street vendors** by giving them Letters of Recommendation (LOR) for easy access to loans.

Q4. With reference to Mission LiFE, which was recently in the news, consider the following statements: (Level - Moderate)

1. It has been launched jointly by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
2. It sensitizes people about sustainable livelihood via Green Talks and Green Pledges.

Which of the statements is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: B

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is not correct**, The Prime Minister of India launched Mission LiFE.

- India proposed the LiFE Movement to the United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow in 2021.
- Mission LiFe is a global initiative by India to help the world in its fight against climate change and lead to a sustainable way of life.
- **Statement 2 is correct**, The vision of the Mission LiFE vision is to promote a lifestyle that is in sync with the environment and does not hurt our planet. It sensitizes people about sustainable livelihood via Green Talks and Green Pledges.

**Q5. With reference to the “G20 Common Framework”, consider the following statements:
(Level - Easy) PYQ - 2022**

1. It is an initiative endorsed by the G20 together with the Paris Club.
2. It is an initiative to support Low Income Countries with unsustainable debt.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, G20 Common Framework is the Common Framework for Debt Treatments beyond the Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI). It is endorsed by the G20 members together with the Paris Club.
- **Statement 2 is correct**, It was announced in November 2020 to deal with the issue of unsustainable debts faced by Low Income Countries countries.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. [Striking a balance between the independence of news channels and their right to free speech may form the very basis of a safe and robust society. Comment.](#) (250 words; 15 marks) (GS-2; Polity)
2. [Does the increasing trade gulf with China point towards ineffective trade policies of the Indian government? Critically analyze.](#) (250 words; 15 marks) (GS-3; Economics)