

# THE WASHINGTON HINDLOW HINDLOW

### 24th JAN, 2023

ovt. junks border wall plan

Contre hada

### BYJU'S AS

### Topics to be covered :

- 1. Democracy and its structural slippages Page 06
- 2. Needed, a new approach for data protection for minors Page 06
- 3. An India Chapter for foreign universities Page 07
- 4. The dark sky is a natural resource, and too much light is polluting it -Page 09
- 5. INS Vagir, fifth scorpene submarine commissioned Page 12

### Democracy and its structural slippages

 he democracy that is functional around the world today – even as it has a long history of evolution – was essentially a 19th century to 20th century western creation. Every civilisation, of course, claims to have had some form of democratic origin. But the institution of universal adult franchise and governance through regular and multi-party elections (the universal norm today) has at the most a 100 years or less of practice behind it. Even in the most "advanced" democracies such as the United States, "universal franchise" of the 1920s did not include African-American citizens. In Britain, women obtained the right to vote in the 1930s, in France in 1944, and in Switzerland as late as 1971, over two decades after their Indian sisters.

### **Devolution and capitalism**

Basic to democracy is the devolution of power, and with it, welfare from the elite echelons to the ground level. Devolution occurs on the premise of the individual and equality. In practice, is there a good record for these principles? If one is to go by the long view of history, the answer is 'yes, most effectively'. The near-universal abolition of autocratic monarchies and hereditary aristocracies and their replacement by governance through popular mandate (with exceptions) and the spread of economic resources, infrastructure, education, health, etc. to the masses, with all their shortcomings and lacunae, call for acknowledgment even as the demand for these grows every day, constantly, and legitimately.

Yet, there is an unbreakable link between the wide spread of this devolution and capitalism. In capitalism's basic requirement to seek freedom for resources such as land, labour, and movement from the autocratic restraints of medieval monarchies, the notions of the individual's rights and equality evolved, culminating in the notion of a free market for every kind of resource mobilisation, including labour. It also implied a great deal of uniformity.

It is important to note that human history has been witness to several experiences of equality, mostly in its religious form: non-theistic Buddhism and monotheistic religions such as Christianity, Islam and Sikhism were proponents



Harbans Mukhia

taught history at

Jawaharlal Nehru

University

of social equality. However, equality here demanded the subjugation of the individual to the community or society.

Clearly, humanity's urge for equality has erupted over and over again in different parts of the world at different times; it was the same urge that had led to the most recent experiment of Marxian socialism in about a third of the globe and a large chunk of the population. However, it is equally important to note that no egalitarian ideology has ever been able to create an egalitarian society. What it does is to reshuffle existing social hierarchies and create some space for the upward movement of the lower rungs. But the urge for equality has found diverse ways to seek utterance. Its current urge seeks to establish uniformity through the same or similar institutions and practices.

The uniformity takes the form of periodic multi-party "free and fair" elections and guarantees of various kinds of freedoms, especially of the market. The elections are a means of self-correction of government policies and actions.

### **The conduct of elections** Are elections truly free and fair?

To begin with, elections divide voters into a dubious majority and a minority. The majority-minority division of 50% plus one and 50% minus one is, in principle, hardly a decisive mandate even as this is treated as one empirically. But the practice of elections belies even this notion of "majority"; there is hardly a government anywhere in the world and at any time that governs through a majority of the mandate. Usually, 30% to 40% of the votes cast give a party a comfortable majority to rule legitimately. This is structured into multi-party elections through "the first past the post" principle; but even in a system such as the United States, Donald Trump could defeat Hillary Clinton even as she received some 2.5 million more popular votes than him, in 2016.

In practice again, contrary to theory, even as the voter is all alone in the polling booth voting as an untrammelled individual, her/his vote is still conditioned by numerous demands on it by family, community, religion, culture, and, above all, by the political alternatives offered by political parties. A loss of individuality is implicated here. The individual does not create the choices which are given by parties, very often wrapped in false propaganda and even more false promises. The individual has the "freedom" to choose one or another of these.

The complete equation of democracy with electoral politics draws one's attention away from any alternative form of governance. There is no space here for diversity.

### A reinforcement of identities

This democracy came to India in its most modern form: unconditional adult franchise and multi-party periodic elections. Yet, the operative categories of electoral politics here have mostly been pre-modern: identity politics of caste, sub-caste, community, region, language, etc. Not long ago we were familiar with acronyms such as AJGAR (Ahir, Jat, Gurjar and Rajput castes) and MY (Muslims and Yadavs) and so on, signifying the vote base of different political parties, or what came to be picturesquely called the 'vote bank'.

Jawaharlal Nehru had hoped that education and the experience of democracy would force a retreat on these operative categories and generate a more "modern" consciousness among the masses. What has emerged is contrary to this. The very success of these mobilisations has reinforced identities instead of weakening them. The Bharatiya Janata Party is determined to create the biggest vote bank which would be ever hard to defeat: the entire Hindu population, comprising 80% of the populace. It can afford to marginalise and thus disenfranchise all others in the residual 20%. Remember the explicit assertion of this strategy by the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister in the form of his line, "80 versus 20" during the run-up to the Assembly elections?

So, as long as we practise this form of democracy, its fault lines and, above all, its link with capitalism will remain unbroken. Yet, the fact that humanity has throughout history sought one or another form of social equality keeps the possibility of this urge erupting yet again more amenable to achieving a reality that has eluded us so far. What its form and its grade of success will be are hard to guess. What can be said confidently is that history is still unfolding and creating a future for us.

BYJU'S demos ~ the people kratia ~ power/rule



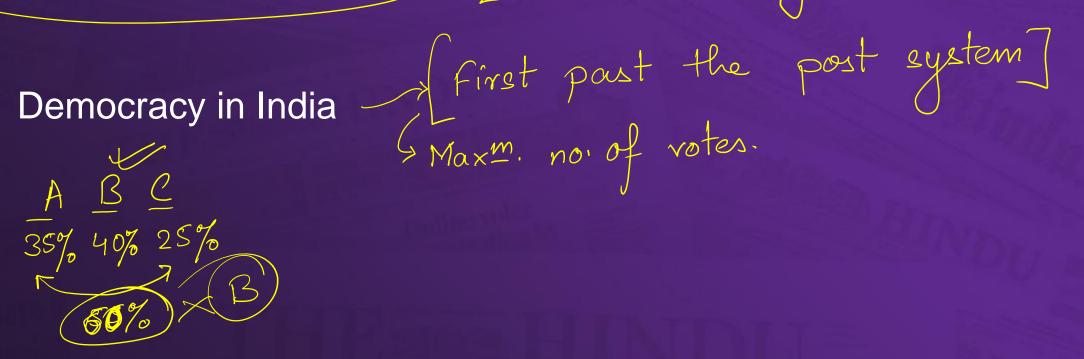
- Basic to democracy is the devolution of power, and with it,  $\bullet$ welfare from the elite echelons to the ground level.
- Devolution occurs on the premise of the individual and ulletRise of Capitalism , Free market economy. Urge for equality , non-theistic , Buddhiem
- ightarrow
- ullet

Marxiet Socialiem

## Representative electoral democracy

### Modern manifestation :

•





### Previous year question

Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible, but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary.

### BYJU'S

### Needed, a new approach to data protection for minors

ow freely should Indian teenagers access the Internet? And what responsibilities do platforms have towards their minor users? These are important questions to answer correctly to achieve India's digital ambitions. The draft Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Bill, 2022 currently provides for mandatory parental consent for all data processing activities by children, defined as any person aged under 18 years. This approach however misses the mark on two fronts.

### The gaps in the Bill

First, instead of incentivising online platforms to proactively build safer and better services for minors, the Bill relies on parents to grant consent on behalf of the child in all cases. In a country with low digital literacy, where parents in fact often rely on their children (who are digital natives) to help them navigate the Internet, this is an ineffective approach to keep children safe online.

Second, it does not take into account the "best interests of the child", a standard originating in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989. to which India is a signatory. India has upheld this standard in laws such as the Commissions for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005, the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012. However, it has not been applied to the issue of data protection. The Bill does not factor in how teenagers use various Internet platforms for self-expression and personal development and how central it is to the experience of adolescents these days. From taking music lessons to preparing for examinations to forming communities with



### Aparajita Bharti

is a founding partner at TOH, a public policy consulting firm in Delhi



is a senior analyst at TQH, a public policy consulting firm in

The principles of the 'best interests of children' and 'more responsibility on platforms' should inform India's approach to data protection for

Delhi

minors

people of similar worldviews, the Internet is a window to the world. While the Bill does allow the government to provide exemptions in the future from strict parental consent requirements, profiling, tracking prohibitions, etc., this whitelisting process does not acknowledge the blurring lines between what a platform can be used for. For example, Instagram is, strictly speaking, a social media platform, but is regularly used as an educational and professional development tool by millions of artists around the world.

### Use of personal data

Another issue in the current draft of the DPDP Bill is that each platform will have to obtain 'verifiable parental consent' in the case of minors. This provision, if enforced strictly, can change the nature of the Internet as we know it. Since it is not possible to tell if the user is a minor without confirming their age, platforms will have to verify the age of every user. The government will prescribe later whether verifiability will be based on ID-proof, or facial recognition, or reference-based verification, or some other means.

Whatever form verifiability takes, all platforms will have to now manage significantly more personal data than before, and citizens will be at greater risk of harms such as data breaches, identity thefts, etc.

Thus we need to shift our approach with respect to children's data before this Bill is brought to Parliament. To avoid the folly of treating unequals equally and blocking off access to the Internet for teenagers these steps are needed.

First, we should move from a blanket ban on

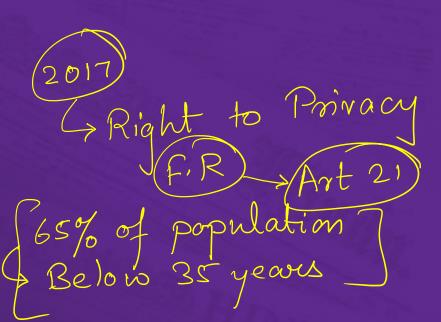
tracking, monitoring, etc. and adopt a risk-based approach to platform obligations. Platforms should be mandated to undertake a risk assessment for minors and not only perform age-verification-related corresponding obligations but also design services with default settings and features that protect children from harm. This approach will bring in an element of co-regulation, by creating incentives for platforms to design better products for children.

Second, we need to relax the age of mandatory parental consent for all services to 13 years in line with many other jurisdictions around the world. By relaxing consent requirements, we will minimise data collection, which is one of the principles that the Bill is built on. This relaxation in age of consent in tandem with the risk mitigation approach elucidated above will achieve protection for children online while allowing them access.

### Surveys needed

This solution draws on the experience and deliberations in the United Kingdom, and in the United States (California, New York, etc.) where age appropriate design codes have been introduced. To tailor this solution to the Indian context, the government should also conduct large-scale surveys of both children and parents to find out more about their online habits, digital literacy, preferences and attitudes.

We must design a policy in India that balances the safety and the agency of children online. We should not put the onus of keeping our young safe only on parents, but instead it should make it a society-wide obligation. We have to get this part of the data protection framework right as India's 'techade' cannot be realised without its young.



BYJU'S Regulatory ban L>Instagram platforms should make products suited for children. Way forward ~ Surveys 4

### Digital Data Protection Bill, 2022



Data breach

- The focus has been on individual personal data and it has been defined very clearly. The rights of individuals and the obligation of the data processors are the two major objectives.
- It is clearly highlighted that the guardians of the children would have to provide verifiable data about their children and would be responsible for their data.
- The 'deemed consent' has been introduced to cover non-consent-based grounds for processing data.

### Other objectives :

- The new bill seeks to establish a **Data Protection Board** (DPB) with the purpose to adjudicate on the matter of data protection.
- The new bill also relaxes the norms related to cross-border data flow as this was a matter of concern for big tech companies.
- It also eases compliance requirements for start-ups.
- There is recognition of alternate dispute resolution processes like arbitration.
- For the benefit of end users, a sort of deterrent has been provided for data leakages by imposing high penalties in case of a breach.



### An India chapter for foreign universities

their campuses in India has been

so compelling that the National

Education Policy (NEP) 2020

or a long time, proponents of the internationalisation of higher education have cherished the dream of foreign universities operating in India. For nearly two decades, they have emphasised the need to provide conducive conditions and an enabling framework for such institutions. But the idea failed to come to fruition due to the concerns of the regulatory authorities and governments in India as well as the foreign higher educational institutions.

### Concerns

Promoting excellence, preventing malpractices, safeguarding the interests of students and protecting national interests have been some of the major concerns. Many were wary of the cultural threat that this initiative posed. Some of those who were at the forefront of preserving the purity of Indian culture are now a part of the political dispensation. Policy planners and regulators have been particularly concerned about how to come up with a framework that attracts the best of the best and deters the fly-by-night kinds of universities.

On the other hand, the sought-after universities are concerned about the potential adverse effect of setting up offshore campuses with their accreditation, ranking and reputation. Truly reputed higher educational institutions operate on a not-for-profit basis and have no materialistic motives to go offshore. A few countries that have such offshore campuses had to hard-sell the institutions the idea by leasing land at almost no cost, bearing the bulk of infrastructure cost and promising them the academic, administrative and financial autonomy that they enjoy in their home country. India could hardly afford any such incentives. Whatever was offered was riddled with caveats and contradictions. Past setbacks notwithstanding,

the idea of having world-class universities establish and operate



former Adviser for

Education in the

is a Professor of

Management at

The initiative

the draft

regulation

may fail due to

contradictions in

personal

provided that "selected universities e.g., those from among the top 100 universities in the world will be facilitated to operate in India. A legislative framework facilitating such entry will be put in place, and such Planning Commission. universities will be given special dispensation regarding regulatory. Jamia Millia Islamia, governance, and content norms New Delhi, Views are on par with other autonomous institutions of India." Even though the NEP favoured a "legislative framework", the idea is being executed through a regulatory route by the University Grants Commission (UGC). There seems to be determination to get the idea going, even if it amounts to some dilution in standards. While the policy prescribed "facilitation" and "special dispensation" for the top 100 universities of the world, the draft regulation seeks to lower the standards by extending the scope to the top 500 universities, overall or in any discipline. Further, for the "educational institutions", just being "reputed" in their home country would be a sufficient requirement. The draft regulation doesn't seem concerned about the subjectivity and scope of discretion in the above articulation as it believes that the standing committee constituted by the UGC would do an unbiased and thorough job in processing the applications and identifying only the best institutions. Contradictions The initiative may still fail due to

contradictions in the regulation. The draft regulation demands that the quality of education imparted by these institutions in India must be on a par with the quality of courses at their campus in the country of origin. Yet, it insists that they must not "offer any such programme of study which jeopardises the national interest of India or the standards of higher education in India". It promises academic, administrative and

financial autonomy to foreign institutions but takes that away by asserting that they abide by all the conditions that the UGC and the Indian government prescribe from time to time. The provision that the foreign higher education institutions must not do anything "contrary to the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency or morality" might deter the best universities that most value their academic autonomy. Leaving aside the issue of whether the idea would succeed, one wonders why India is so keen on foreign higher education. During a media briefing, it was stated that foreign universities in India would stop the outflow of \$28-30 billion in foreign exchange. This does not corroborate the data on outward remittances for studies abroad, as reported by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). During 2021-22, foreign outflow on account of studies abroad was no more than \$5.165 billion. Even if we add to it the outflows of \$3.598 billion for education-related travel (though these do not necessarily relate to studies abroad), the total education-related outflows would be \$8,973 billion. One could argue that even \$5.165 billion is a substantive sum and must be stopped from flowing abroad, but the idea of import substitution in

### higher education is complicated. Students do not go abroad for degrees alone; they also go for the experience, post-study work visas, income opportunities and better career prospects. Studying in a foreign university in India would offer them none of these. Most critically, as they are able to finance a good part of their education abroad through jobs, assistantships and scholarships,

Still, India needs to have an enabling framework for the entry and operation of foreign higher educational institutions. It must, however, ensure that the best of the best set up their campuses in the country.

they find it more economical.





### Concerns :

Promoting excellence, preventing malpractices, safeguarding the interests of students and protecting national and cultural interests.

On the other hand, the sought-after universities are concerned about the potential adverse effect of setting up offshore campuses with their accreditation, ranking and reputation.



The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 provided that "selected universities e.g., those from among the top 100 universities in the world will be facilitated to operate in India. A **legislative framework** facilitating such entry will be put in place, and such universities will be given special dispensation regarding regulatory, governance, and content norms on par with other autonomous institutions of India."





Contradictions: Autonomy Academics





Blinding lights: The Chemrey Monastery before and after a power cut in March 2021, The number of stars that become invisible when the monastery is lit is 'striking', DORJE ANGCHUK

### The dark sky is a natural resource, and too much light is polluting it

A 2016 study reported that a fifth of India's people experience a high level of skyglow, non-natural light that increases the brightness of the night sky. The effects and consequences of this phenomenon makes the absence of a global treaty to reduce light pollution more conspicuous

### Vasudevan Mukunth

Kyba, Christopher C. M. et al, 'Citizen scientists report global rapid reductions in the visibility of stars from 2011 to 2022', Science, Vol 379, Issue 6629, pp. 265-268, January 2023. DOI: 10.1126/science.abq7781

December 14, 2022, the district administration of Ladakh designated six hamlets within the Changthang Wildlife Sanctuary as a "dark-sky reserve" - an area whose sky is free of light pollution. The designation meant that the

reserve had a responsibility to keep the skies dark, particularly for the astronomical observatories located in the

When private space venture company study light that is emitted parallel to the SpaceX's Starlink constellation of small ground. satellites began to obscure the view of Visible light emitted by many sources is ground-based telescopes around the divergent, so light emitted insufficiently Earth, the idea of the sky as a natural downward could find its way into the sky. resource capable of being polluted Almost all surfaces in cities reflect light. became popular. These incidents also meaning a portion of entirely down-cast rendered the absence of a global treaty to light will be reflected upwards, reduce light pollution more conspicuous. contributing to night-time light pollution. But while authorities safeguard telescopes' access to dark skies by actively that cast light at an angle below the plane lowering light pollution around their sites, of the horizon, capping the emissions of the night-sky elsewhere is actually these sources and calibrating their output becoming brighter thanks to 'skyglow', according to the total brightness at the

which has significant ecological, health and cultural consequences. The prevalence of skyglow

In a new study titled 'Citizen scientists report global rapid reductions in the visibility of stars from 2011 to 2022',

spot being lit.

The situation in India

researchers from Germany and the U.S. analysed a global database of what the China or Brazil - both rapidly dimmest star visible from a particular location is; the database had more than 51,000 entries submitted by citizen scientists. They found that non-natural light had increased the brightness of the artificial glow of the night sky, or skyglow, pinch of salt. by 9.2-10% every year between 2011 and 2022. Specifically, they reported that the March 2021, Dorje Angchuk, an engineer

skyglow had brightened around 6.5% over Europe, 10.4% over North America, and Hanle famous for his night-sky 7.7% over the rest of the world. photographs, tweeted pictures of the The finding is significant because it Chemrey Monastery, near Leh, before disagrees with satellite-based data, which and after a power cut. The number of has indicated that the rate of increase has stars that become invisible when the been around 2% per year. According to monastery is lit is striking. A 2016 study the new study, the discrepancy is reported that 19.5% of India's population probably because satellites are unable to the lowest fraction among G20

countries - experiences a level of skyglow sense' blue light emitted by LEDs and to that would at least keep the Milky Way galaxy out of sight and at most render "dark adaptation for human eyes" impossible. The effects include stimulating the cone cells in human eyes. which is possible only when an environment is considered to be well-lit. A 2017 study reported that between

2012 and 2016, India's lit area increased The researchers recommend light sources by 1.07-1.09% and the average radiance of "stably lit areas" - for example, excluding wildfires - increased by 1.05-1.07%.

### The consequences The 2017 paper noted a curious pattern:

"Regardless of historical or geographical context, humans tend to use as much The study had only a few observations artificial light as they can buy for about from Asia, South America and Africa. 0.7 percent of GDP." That is, even though Africa had just 452 observations between LEDs have become more efficient, their January 2011 and August 2022 in the utilisation hasn't decreased, which in turn

means the carbon emissions due to their database. There were no entries from production and use hasn't decreased. industrialising nations - in the study. The Numerous studies have also found that researchers themselves admit the data artificial light at night affects both people collected from Europe and North America and wildlife in significant ways. According to a 2003 report, lit beaches deter sea are representative, which means that their conclusions must be taken with a turtles from coming ashore to nest. A 2006 review found that skyglow keeps However, India isn't a blind spot. In trees from sensing seasonal variations. A 2017 study found that young

burrow-nesting seabirds don't take flight at the Indian Astronomical Observatory in unless the nesting site becomes dark. A 2019 study reported that clownfish eggs don't hatch when exposed to artificial light at night, killing the offspring. A 2020 study noted that skyglow interferes with multiple aspects of insect life and allows insect predators to hunt for longer. Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species adopted guidelines to address the problem at their meeting in Gandhinagar in 2020. By disrupting the circadian

rhythm, artificial light at night can hamper the production of melatonin, an influential hormone in the human body which affects sleep, moods and cognition. A small 2009 review concluded that

circadian disruption increased the risk of breast cancer among night-shift workers by 40%. Starry skies have also inspired countless works of science and poetry. When Los Angeles had a big power cut in 1994, many people phoned local

authorities to report a "silvery cloud" at night. It became evident later that they were really seeing the Milky Way. In 2020, Australian researchers wrote in a paper, "The erasure of the night sky acts to erase Indigenous connection to the stars, acting as a form of ongoing cultural and ecological genocide.



Changthang wildlife sanctuary



It has been found that non-Natural light had increased the brightness of the artificial glow of the night sky, or skyglow, by 9.2-10% every year between 2011 and 2022. Specifically, they reported that the skyglow had brightened by around 6.5% over Europe, 10.4% over North America and 7.7% over rest of the world.

### Consequences



Breast Cancer

- Energy consumed
- Circadian rhythms are impacted
- Trees and the seasonal variation
- Impact the nesting of sea turtles
- Young burrow- nesting seabirds do not take flight unless it is dark
- Beaching of large marine species
- Clownfish eggs do not hatch when exposed to artificial light
- Changed behavioral patterns in insects

### *INS Vagir*, fifth Scorpene submarine, commissioned

Navy chief says it is the third submarine inducted into the Navy in a short span of 24 months; the sixth submarine, *Vagsheer*, is expected to be delivered to the Navy by the end of this year

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

he fifth Scorpene class conventional submarine was commissioned into the Indian Navy as *INS Vagir* in the presence of the Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral R. Hari Kumar, at the Naval Dockyard in Mumbai on Monday.

The sixth and the last of the French-origin Scorpene-class submarines, *Vagsheer*, being built in India under technology transfer is currently undergoing sea trials and will be delivered to the Navy in 2024, the original manufacturer Naval Group said.

With this, the Navy now the has 16 conventional and rien one nuclear submarine in con service. con It includes seven Rus-

sian Kilo class submarines, four German HDW submarines, five Scorpene class submarines, and the indigenous nuclear ballistic missile submarine, *INS Arihant*.

"Vagir will be the third submarine inducted into the Navy in a short span of 24 months. This is no small achievement, and underscores the coming of age of India's shipbuilding industry and the maturing of our defence ecosystem. It is also a shining testimony to



Adding firepower: INS Vagir was launched into water on November 12, 2020 and commenced sea trials on February 1, 2022. EMMANUAL YOGINI

we the expertise and experience of our shipyards to construct complex and complicated platforms," Admiral Kumar said at the

commissioning ceremony. "These aspects also serve to reinforce the Indian Navy's unequivocal commitment and steadfast

resolve to be a fully Aatma In an important step that Nirbhar force by 2047," he will enhance the endurance of the Scorpene-The Navy chief further class conventional submacomplimented the submarines of the Indian Navy, rine's Commanding Officer the Defence Research and and his team for pushing Development Organisation through "all major trials, (DRDO) and Naval Group including those of weahave reached an agreepons and sensors, within a ment to fit the indigenous short span of just 11 fuel cell-based Air Independent Propulsion (AIP)

Agreement reached on AIP modules

### **<u>The Hindu Bureau</u>** NEW DELHI

veloped by the DRDO's Nathat val Materials Research Laboratory and the land-based prototype has been tested. "This new endeavour

system on INS Kulvari

soon. The AIP has been de-

between DRDO and Naval Group France will be a very significant step towards the detailed design certification of the energy module, which will be performed by NMRL," the DRDO said.





Name	Pennant No.	Date of Commission
Vagir	S 25	23 Jan 2023
Kalvari	S 21	14 Dec 2017
Khanderi	S.22	28 Sep 2019
Karanj	S 23	10 Mar 2021
Vela	S 24	25 Nov 2021



C

V

Project 751





Air Independent Propulsion

### Practice Questions for Mains :



- 1. Democracy in its present form has got certain lacunae, but it still is the best form of governance available. Comment. (15 marks,250 words)
- 2. What is light pollution? Discuss the consequences that it has on the natural ecosystem. (10 marks,150 words)