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MCQs

THE HINDU

The Mahatma's unfinished work on the world stage

Prelims : General Studies Paper I

History of India and Indian National Movement.

Mains: General Studies 1

Modern Indian history from about the middle of the eighteenth century until the present-significant events, personalities, issues.

Why in Focus?

- Gandhi's assassination at the age of **78** raises questions about the further global role he could have played in spreading **non-violence**.
- His methods had already influenced movements beyond India, particularly the **American Civil Rights Movement**.

Key Highlights:

- The growth of **print media** helped Gandhi gain a global image, with the **Dharasana beatings** reportedly covered by around **1,300 newspapers worldwide**.
 - ◆ The **Dharasana Satyagraha in May 1930** was a **non-violent protest against the British salt tax** in colonial India.
- Gandhian methods influenced African-American activists, including **Bayard Rustin** and **James Lawson**, who visited India to study non-violent resistance.
- During the **Montgomery Bus Boycott**, Rustin applied Gandhian methods of civil

disobedience and voluntary surrender, while Lawson established a **Satyagraha training school in Nashville**.

- ◆ The **Montgomery Bus Boycott** was a **381-day mass protest against racial segregation on public buses in Montgomery, Alabama**, held from **December 5, 1955, to December 20, 1956**.
- Gandhi demonstrated that **non-violent resistance could be organised and replicated on a mass scale** against unequal power.
- Gandhian methods influenced movements such as **East Timor** and the largely non-violent initial phase of the **First Intifada** in Palestine.
 - ◆ The **First Intifada (1987-1993)** was a **Palestinian uprising against Israeli military occupation** in the **West Bank and Gaza Strip**.
- Gandhi had planned to contribute to a **world movement for spreading non-violence** after India's independence, with discussions for a global conference beginning before his death.

Implications:

- Gandhi's assassination prevented him from personally developing his proposed **global movement for non-violence**.
- Without Gandhi's physical presence, his ideas became largely a **moral and symbolic force** for non-violent activists across the world.
- The **Palestine question** is presented as a major test of whether Gandhian methods



could have been applied to prolonged conflict and unequal power.

Way Forward:

- **Non-violence and compassion** need to be rooted more deeply in global political discourse rather than remaining vague ideals.
- Gandhian methods can be understood as an **organised form of mass resistance** with potential relevance to global movements.

Mains Question:

Gandhian non-violence transformed a moral principle into an organised method of mass resistance with global influence. Discuss. (250 Words)

Other than outrage: On women, unsafe public spaces

Prelims : General Studies Paper I

Economic and Social Development- Sustainable Development, Poverty, Inclusion, Demographics, Social Sector Initiatives, etc.

Mains: General Studies 2

Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Why in Focus?

- Recent cases of **sexual assault against women and children** in Delhi have renewed concerns about the effectiveness of measures introduced after the **Nirbhaya case**.
- NCRB data shows an **80% rise in crimes against women**, from **2.4 lakh in 2012 to 4.4 lakh in 2024**, highlighting the continuing challenge of sexual violence.

Key Highlights:

- More than **50 crimes against women were reported every hour in 2024**, with high crime rates recorded in **Jaipur, Indore, Lucknow and Delhi**.
- The government has introduced measures such as the **Safe City project, Mission Shakti,**

women's helplines, emergency response systems, one-stop centres and fast-track courts.

- Several of these initiatives are funded through the **Nirbhaya Fund**, but recent crimes raise concerns about their effective implementation.
- **Safe City measures** such as lighting and CCTV systems are effective only when they are functional, regularly monitored and connected to a quick response system.

Implications:

- **Scheme-based policing** without proper implementation, monitoring and accountability limits the effectiveness of women's safety measures.
- Delays in investigation and the **backlog of cases** can undermine the promise of speedy justice for survivors.
- Women's safety must not be addressed through restrictions on their **freedom of movement**, such as avoiding public spaces or returning home early.
- **Patriarchal traditions and toxic masculinity** continue to contribute to a culture that enables sexual violence.

Way Forward:

- Shift from **scheme-based policing to preventive and outcome-based policing**, with public audits of vulnerable locations and clear deadlines for corrective action.
- Ensure that **CCTV cameras, lighting, police patrols and emergency systems** are functional and supported by trained and sensitised personnel.
- Reduce the **backlog of cases** and ensure timely investigation and trial of sexual violence cases.
- Address the deeper **culture of sexual violence and toxic masculinity** rooted in patriarchal traditions.

Mains Question:

Despite several measures introduced after the Nirbhaya case, crimes against women remain a major concern in India. Discuss the challenges in ensuring women's safety and suggest measures to improve the effectiveness of existing mechanisms. (250 Words)



What human brain tissue transplanted into mice showed us

Prelims: General Paper 1

Current events of national and international importance.

Mains: General studies 3

Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life

Why in Focus?

- A **September study published in *Nature*** by Sergiu Pasca's group at Stanford University transplanted human brain tissue into mice whose cerebral cortex had been prevented from developing.
- The study provides a new way to understand **human brain development and neurological diseases**, while raising ethical questions about human brain tissue in animals.

Key Highlights

- Scientists first created **brain organoids**, which are small 3D pieces of human neural tissue grown from **induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs)** - adult cells that are genetically reprogrammed to behave like stem cells and can develop into different types of body cells).
- Normally, when human organoids are transplanted into rodents, they remain a small part of the animal brain and have limited connections.
- In this study, scientists genetically modified mice so that much of their **neocortex and hippocampus** did not develop. The mice also lacked a functioning immune system to prevent rejection of human tissue.
- Human cortical organoids were transplanted soon after birth. The human tissue grew into the empty space and formed about **92% of the mouse's cortical tissue** after three months.
- The graft developed different types of human brain cells, including **neurons, progenitor cells and astrocytes**. It also developed cells with features of **von Economo neurons**, which are absent in rodents.
- The human tissue became **electrically active** and formed connections with the remaining

mouse nervous system. Human nerve fibres even reached the **cervical spinal cord**.

- The mice showed measurable behavioural differences. However, the study does **not prove that human neurons directly caused these changes**.

Implications

- The transplanted tissue remained **immature** and did not develop the organised structure of a normal human cerebral cortex.
- The experiment did not create a **human brain inside a mouse**. It created a hybrid system where human tissue interacted with the remaining mouse nervous system.
- Brain organoids provide useful information but cannot fully reproduce a living human brain with normal **blood circulation, sensory inputs and long-distance neural connections**.
- The model could improve research on **developmental brain disorders, cerebral palsy, neurological diseases and drug testing**.
- Greater integration of human brain tissue may raise concerns about changes in an animal's **cognition, perception or capacity for experience**.
- Future experiments involving more mature grafts, **embryos or non-human primates** may require much stronger ethical scrutiny.

Way Forward

- Develop clear **ethical guidelines** for experiments involving human neural tissue in animals.
- Closely monitor changes in **brain development, behaviour, cognition and animal welfare**.
- Involve **neuroscientists, bioethicists, veterinarians and regulators** in reviewing advanced experiments.
- Use organoids, computer models and animal models together to reduce dependence on any single experimental method.
- Ensure that potential applications in **drug development and regenerative medicine** undergo rigorous safety and efficacy testing.



Mains Question

Human brain organoid transplantation into animals provides a new window into human brain development. Discuss its scientific potential, limitations and ethical concerns. (15 marks, 250 words)

Sri Lanka: chasing system change

Prelims: General Paper 1

Current events of national and international importance.

Mains: General studies 2

Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora.

Why in Focus?

- Sri Lanka's **2022 Janata Aragalaya (People's Struggle)** marked a major public rejection of the existing political system during the country's economic crisis.
- The subsequent rise of **Anura Kumara Dissanayake and the National People's Power (NPP)** reflected demands for political change, good governance and a new social contract.

Key Highlights

- In 2022, mass protests under the **Janata Aragalaya** demanded the resignation of President **Gotabaya Rajapaksa**, with the slogan **"Gota Go Home"** becoming a symbol of the movement.
- Protesters also demanded **"system change"**, expressing dissatisfaction with corruption, economic mismanagement and the wider political establishment.
- Ranil Wickremesinghe** became President after Gotabaya Rajapaksa left office. However, sections of the movement viewed his government as a continuation of the existing political system.
- In the **2024 presidential election**, **Anura Kumara Dissanayake** won with **42.31% of the vote**. His NPP coalition later secured a **historic supermajority** in the parliamentary election.
- The NPP government prioritised **economic**

stability, fiscal discipline and macroeconomic stability and continued the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** programme inherited from the previous government.

- The government also initiated high-profile **anti-corruption and law-enforcement actions**, including arrests of politicians, bureaucrats and suspects linked to organised crime and the 2019 Easter attacks.
- However, key promises remain pending, including **Provincial Council elections, a new Constitution, abolition of the executive presidency and repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA)**.

Implications

- Economic recovery vs social welfare** remains a major challenge, as fiscal austerity has placed pressure on poorer households despite efforts to restore macroeconomic stability.
- The demand for **systemic political reform** remains partly unmet, with several constitutional and institutional reforms still pending.
- Delays in **Provincial Council elections** raise concerns regarding democratic decentralisation and political representation, particularly in relation to commitments made to Tamil voters.
- Proposed changes affecting the **judiciary** and replacement of the PTA have generated concerns among opposition parties, legal experts and rights groups regarding institutional independence and human rights safeguards.
- The central challenge is moving from **change in political leadership to structural democratic reform**, including accountability, decentralisation and a stronger social contract.
- Sri Lanka's experience shows how an **economic crisis can generate demands for wider political reform**, but translating popular mobilisation into lasting institutional change remains difficult.

Way Forward

- Build an **inclusive social contract** through dialogue involving political parties, civil society, minorities and other stakeholders.
- Ensure **independent institutions**, including

the judiciary, election bodies and law-enforcement agencies, remain protected from political interference.

- Conduct **Provincial Council elections** and strengthen meaningful decentralisation and local participation.
- Reform counter-terrorism laws while ensuring compliance with **constitutional protections and international human rights standards**.
- Balance **fiscal consolidation with social protection** so that economic recovery does not disproportionately affect vulnerable sections.

Mains Question

Q. The Sri Lankan economic crisis of 2022 generated demands not only for economic recovery but also for systemic political change. Examine the challenges involved in converting popular movements into sustainable democratic and institutional reforms. (15 marks, 250 words)

KEYWORDS

Goods and Services Tax (GST)

- It was introduced through the **101st Constitutional Amendment Act of 2016** and implemented in **2017** to replace a web of central and state indirect taxes such as **VAT, Excise Duty and Service Tax** with a unified, **destination-based taxation system**.
- The system operates on a **dual model**, allowing concurrent taxation through **Central GST (CGST)** and **State GST (SGST)** for intra-state supplies, and **Integrated GST (IGST)** for inter-state trade, all governed by the **GST Council** established under **Article 279A**.
- To simplify compliance and correct **inverted duty structures**, recent **GST 2.0 structural reforms** reorganised the tax into two primary tiers of **5% and 18%**, eliminating the old **12% and 28% brackets**, alongside a **40% de-merit rate** for luxury and “sin” goods (like tobacco products).

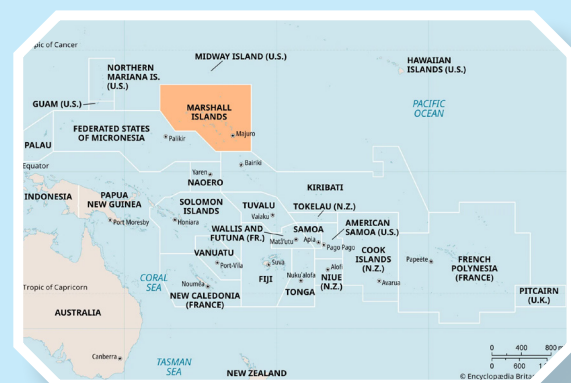
- Economically, GST eliminates the **cascading effect (tax on tax)** by providing a continuous chain of **tax credits** from the producer to the consumer, which has **formalised the economy** and driven record gross collections.

Nirbhaya Fund

- **Nirbhaya Fund** is a **dedicated, non-lapsable fund** established by the **Government of India** to improve the **safety and security of women and girls**.
- It finances **schemes, projects and initiatives** specifically aimed at enhancing women’s safety.
- The fund is administered by the **Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), Ministry of Finance**.
- The **Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD)** is the **nodal ministry** for appraising and recommending proposals for funding.
- MWCD also **reviews and monitors** the progress of sanctioned projects along with the concerned ministries and departments.
- The fund is guided by the **Ministry of Finance guidelines issued in 2015**.

Places in News

Marshall Islands





- A recent **United Nations (UN)** report presented to its human rights body urged the **United States** to take additional steps, such as providing **healthcare and releasing secret archives**, to address its **nuclear legacy in the Marshall Islands**.
- Geographically, the **Marshall Islands** is an independent nation of **low-lying coral atolls and islands** located in the **Micronesia region of the central Pacific Ocean**.
- Strategically, it is a **sovereign republic** operating under a **Compact of Free Association (COFA)** with the **United States**, meaning the US provides **financial aid and full defense** in exchange for **exclusive military access to its vast territorial waters**.
- The archipelago served as a major **nuclear testing ground during the Cold War**, with the **United States conducting 67 nuclear weapons tests** in the Marshall Islands between 1946 and 1958.
- The enduring **radioactive contamination** has created a **multi-generational human rights crisis**, contributing to health problems, the loss of ancestral lands and severe environmental degradation.
- This **nuclear legacy is being compounded by climate change**, as rising sea levels threaten the **Runit Dome**, a concrete structure built on **Runit Island** to contain radioactive soil and nuclear debris.

Kaliningrad



- Kaliningrad was in the news after **Russia warned of a possible nuclear response** if the Russian exclave were attacked or isolated by NATO.

- **Kaliningrad** is a **Russian exclave** on the **Baltic Sea**, separated from mainland Russia.
- It lies between **Poland and Lithuania**, both of which are **NATO members**.
- It was formerly the German city of **Königsberg** and became part of the **Soviet Union after World War II**.
- The region is **highly militarised**, hosting Russian **air defence, missile and naval forces**, giving Moscow a strategic position in northern and central Europe.
- Its isolated location also makes it a potential **logistical vulnerability** for Russia during a conflict.