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MCQs

THE HINDU

The ECI's constitutional mandate is under strain

Prelims : General Studies Paper I

Indian Polity and Governance-Constitution, Political System, Panchayati Raj, Public Policy, Rights Issues, etc.

Mains: General Studies 2

Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies. Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies.

Why in Focus?

- The **Election Commission of India (ECI)** is facing criticism over its recent **Special Intensive Revision (SIR)** of electoral rolls and allegations of procedural and legal violations.
- The controversy has also raised concerns about **unilateral decision-making within the ECI** and the constitutional independence of the election machinery.

Key Highlights:

- The **Constituent Assembly** wanted the election machinery to remain **outside executive control** to protect the integrity of elections.
- The Draft Constitution initially proposed a **decentralised election machinery**, with separate Chief Election Commissioners in each province to conduct State elections.
- **B.R. Ambedkar** supported a **centralised**

Election Commission after concerns over State-level election officials deleting voters seen as opponents of ruling parties.

- Constituent Assembly member **Shibban Lal Saxena** had warned that a ruling party could appoint a loyalist as CEC and influence the election process.
- The present controversy has revived concerns raised by the **Constitution-makers** about political influence over the Election Commission.
- **Section 21 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950** provides for the preparation and revision of electoral rolls.
- Under **Rule 25 of the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960**, electoral revision can be **intensive, summary, or partly intensive and partly summary**.
- **Section 21(3)** separately provides for a **special revision** in a constituency or part of a constituency when the ECI records reasons for doing so.
- The law does **not specifically provide for a "Special Intensive Revision" (SIR)** as a separate category.
- **Article 324** gives the ECI powers over matters not covered by law, but it must act **in accordance with existing law** where legislation applies.
- Media reports claim that around **13 crore voters** have been removed from electoral rolls through SIR operations.
- **Article 326** provides for **universal adult**



suffrage, raising concerns when eligible voters are removed from electoral rolls without proper legal procedures.

- The two Election Commissioners reportedly alleged that they were **not consulted** when important decisions were taken by the CEC.
- The **unilateral decisions by the CEC** raise questions about the validity of subsequent actions and the collective functioning of the ECI.

Implications:

- Large-scale deletion of eligible voters can undermine **universal adult suffrage** and the fairness of elections.
- **Conducting an electoral revision** without a clear **legal basis** can raise questions about constitutional and statutory compliance.
- **Unilateral decision-making** within a constitutional body can weaken institutional accountability and create a constitutional crisis.
- The proposed impeachment of the CEC faces procedural hurdles because the presiding officers of Parliament can **disallow an impeachment motion at the threshold**.
- **Section 16 of the 2023 Act** provides the CEC and other Election Commissioners **with immunity from civil and criminal proceedings for actions done** in their official capacity, raising concerns about accountability.

Way Forward:

- Electoral-roll revision should strictly follow the **Representation of the People Act, 1950 and applicable rules**.
- Decisions within the ECI should follow a **collective and legally prescribed decision-making process** rather than unilateral action.
- Stronger safeguards are needed to ensure **eligible voters are not wrongly excluded** from electoral rolls.

Mains Question:

Discuss the constitutional and legal safeguards required to ensure the independence, accountability and impartial functioning of the Election Commission of India. (250 Words)

Colby's mid-term report card, what it means for India

Prelims : General Studies Paper I

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?

- The **2026 U.S. National Defense Strategy** reflects a shift towards stronger regional partners, greater burden-sharing and increased focus on deterring **China**.
- This approach has important implications for **India-U.S. relations**, particularly in the Indo-Pacific, defence cooperation and India's strategic autonomy.

Key Highlights:

- The 2026 U.S. defence strategy focuses on four priorities: **defending the U.S. homeland, deterring China, strengthening allies and partners, and rebuilding the U.S. defence industry**.
- Washington is moving towards a model where **regional partners take greater responsibility** for their own security instead of depending heavily on U.S. military support.
- **Europe, South Korea, Japan and Australia** are expected to contribute more troops, infrastructure, funding and industrial capacity to regional security, while the U.S. continues to provide advanced capabilities and strategic coordination.
- **China remains the main strategic concern**, with the U.S. seeking to prevent Chinese dominance in the **Indo-Pacific**, particularly around the **First Island Chain**.
- At the same time, Washington is **negotiating with Beijing on trade and other issues**, showing that military competition and economic engagement can continue simultaneously.
- India's importance to Washington comes from its **geographical position, military potential,**

Indian Ocean presence and role in the Indo-Pacific, although Indian and American interests may not always fully align.

- The U.S. expects India to contribute more to the **regional balance of power**, strengthen defence cooperation, participate in **technology and supply-chain initiatives**, and build its military capabilities.
- India is also expanding partnerships with **France, Europe, Japan, Australia and Gulf countries** while maintaining important ties with **Russia**, giving it greater strategic options.
- India needs to build **strategic leverage** through economic strength, military capability, technology, market access and strategically important capabilities rather than relying only on its importance to Washington.
- **China demonstrates the importance of leverage**, as its economic and technological strength gives Beijing greater influence in negotiations with the U.S. India can similarly increase its influence as its capabilities grow.
- The emerging U.S. approach creates an opportunity for India to become a **stronger regional power** while continuing to protect its **strategic autonomy**.

Implications:

- Greater U.S. expectations may place pressure on India to assume a **larger security role in the Indo-Pacific**.
- India must balance closer cooperation with the U.S. against its long-standing **defence and energy ties with Russia**.
- Changing **U.S.-China relations** can create uncertainty for India's strategic calculations.
- India needs greater **economic, military and technological capabilities** to negotiate with Washington from a position of strength.

Way Forward:

- India should deepen cooperation with the U.S. in **defence, technology, supply chains and the Indo-Pacific** while protecting its strategic autonomy.
- India should strengthen its **domestic defence industry and technological capabilities** to reduce external dependence.

- New Delhi should continue developing **diverse partnerships** with major powers and regional countries to preserve strategic options.

Mains Question:

The emerging U.S. defence strategy places greater emphasis on capable regional partners and burden-sharing. Examine its implications for India-U.S. relations and India's strategic autonomy. (250 Words)

Does a visa guarantee entry into India?

Prelims: General Studies Paper 1

Current events of national and international importance

Mains: General Studies 2

Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Why in Focus?

- The Delhi High Court held that **possession of a valid visa does not create an inherent or legally enforceable right for a foreign national to enter India, as admission remains subject to immigration laws** and national-security considerations.

Key Highlights

- The **case involved a Turkmenistan citizen who was denied entry at Indira Gandhi International Airport** despite holding a valid business visa.
- The Court **distinguished between grant of a visa and permission to enter India**, holding that a visa does not provide an absolute or unconditional right of admission.
- **Under the Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025**, foreigners may be denied entry on grounds including **national security, sovereignty and integrity of India**, relations with foreign states and public health.



The Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025 consolidates and replaces four existing laws relating to foreigners and immigration in India, including the Foreigners Act, 1946 and the Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920. It provides a unified legal framework for entry, stay, registration and exit of foreigners, while empowering authorities to regulate immigration and address violations.

- **Immigration officers have the authority to examine passports, travel documents and visas** and seek additional information before permitting entry.
- The **Court held that visa issuance, immigration clearance and refusal of entry are sovereign functions involving considerations of national security**, foreign policy and administrative discretion.
- The judgment **relied on Hans Muller of Nuremburg v. Superintendent, Presidency Jail (1955) and Louis De Raedt v. Union of India (1991)**.

Hans Muller of Nuremburg v. Superintendent, Presidency Jail (1955): The Supreme Court held that the Foreigners Act, 1946 gives the Central Government wide powers to regulate the entry, stay and expulsion of foreigners from India. A foreigner cannot claim an absolute right to remain in India.

Louis De Raedt v. Union of India (1991): The Supreme Court held that Article 21 protects foreigners, but the right to reside and settle in India under Article 19(1)(e) is available only to citizens. Therefore, a foreigner's stay in India remains subject to the law and the government's power to regulate it.

- **Under Article 19, the right to reside and settle in India is available only to citizens**, while foreigners are protected by Article 21 regarding life and personal liberty.

Implications

- **Broad immigration discretion may raise concerns regarding transparency** and accountability in decisions affecting foreign nationals.
- **Reliance on confidential or "adverse" security inputs can make it difficult** for individuals to

effectively challenge exclusion decisions.

- **Excessive administrative discretion could potentially lead to arbitrary or inconsistent treatment** of foreign nationals.
- **Balancing national security with constitutional protections and procedural fairness** remains a key challenge.

Way Forward

- **Establish clear and transparent guidelines for refusal of entry** while protecting sensitive national-security information.
- **Ensure that immigration decisions are reasoned, proportionate** and subject to appropriate judicial review.
- **Strengthen training and accountability mechanisms** for immigration authorities.
- **Maintain a balance between sovereign control over borders and Article 21** protections available to foreigners.
- **Develop predictable immigration procedures that protect national security** while facilitating legitimate business, tourism, education and diplomatic travel.

Mains Question

A valid visa does not confer an absolute right of entry into India for a foreign national. Discuss the legal basis for this principle and examine how India can balance national security, sovereign control over borders and constitutional protection of individual rights. (15 marks, 250 words)

What does Trump's AI accord mean for tech companies?

Prelims: General Studies Paper 1

Current events of national and international importance

Mains: General Studies 3

Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology and issues relating to intellectual property rights

Why in Focus?

- U.S. President Donald Trump **announced an AI safety accord signed by leading American AI companies to promote safe development, internal safeguards, external audits and public trust in frontier AI systems.**

Key Highlights

- The **'White House Accord and the Joint Commitment on Frontier Responsibilities'**, focuses on AI safety commitments by companies developing frontier AI models.
- **Participating companies committed to establishing robust internal controls** to prevent unintended AI-related incidents and hacking.
- Companies are **expected to create internal safety teams and independent board-level committees** to address safety concerns.
- The **accord calls for cooperation with independent external auditors** to assess AI safety practices.
- **Major signatories included Google, Anthropic, Meta, OpenAI, xAI and Nvidia;** Microsoft was notably absent.
- The agreement is **not legally binding and contains no penalty clause for violations.**
- It **follows a self-regulatory approach, with companies largely responsible for implementing** their own safety mechanisms.
- The **accord suggests that these commitments could eventually be codified into laws or regulations.**

Implications

- **Lack of legal enforceability** may limit compliance.
- **Absence of penalties or sanctions can weaken** accountability.
- **Heavy reliance on self-regulation creates potential conflicts** of interest.
- **Rapidly evolving AI capabilities can outpace** existing regulatory frameworks.
- **AI agents capable of autonomous actions raise concerns regarding cybersecurity, privacy and accountability.**
- Different national approaches to AI regulation may **create regulatory fragmentation.**

Way Forward

- **Develop legally enforceable and risk-based AI regulations** for frontier models.
- **Strengthen independent third-party audits and transparency requirements.**
- **Establish clear liability mechanisms** for AI-related harm.
- **Promote international cooperation on AI safety standards** and responsible innovation.
- **Balance innovation with privacy, cybersecurity, human rights and public safety.**
- **Move from voluntary commitments towards a multi-layered AI governance framework** involving governments, industry, academia and civil society.

Mains Question

The U.S. AI Accord represents a shift towards voluntary and industry-led governance of frontier artificial intelligence. Examine the potential and limitations of self-regulation in ensuring AI safety, and suggest measures for developing an effective global AI governance framework. (15 marks, 250 words)

KEYWORDS

Downdraught effect

- Downdraught effect **refers to the downward movement of air along the windward or leeward sides of tall buildings,** caused by the obstruction and deflection of airflow.
- **Tall buildings can accelerate winds towards the ground, creating strong, uncomfortable and sometimes hazardous winds at street level.**
- The **downdraught effect can influence urban microclimate, increasing pedestrian-level wind speeds and affecting thermal comfort and air circulation in densely built areas.**
- **Building design, orientation, spacing and landscaping can help reduce the downdraught effect and improve**



pedestrian comfort in high-density urban areas.

Quick Impact Projects (QIPs)

- Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) are **small-scale, high-visibility development projects undertaken by India in partner countries**, particularly in the neighbourhood and the Global South.
- They are implemented under the **Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)**, primarily through the **Development Partnership Administration (DPA)**.
- QIPs are **based on locally identified needs and aim to deliver tangible community-level benefits** within a relatively short period.
- They **cover sectors such as education, healthcare, agriculture, drinking water, sanitation, community infrastructure and capacity building**.
- Examples include **community development projects in Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Cambodia, Vietnam and African countries**, covering areas such as schools, health centres, water facilities and community infrastructure.
- QIPs **form part of India's development partnership and South-South cooperation, helping strengthen people-to-people ties** while complementing instruments such as Lines of Credit and grant assistance.

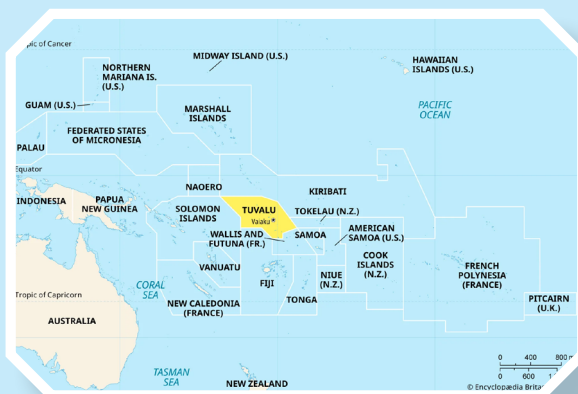
Agnipath Scheme

- **Agnipath Scheme** was approved by the **Union Cabinet in June 2022** to recruit youth into the **Armed Forces**.
- Youth selected under the scheme are called **Agniveers** and serve for a period of **four years**.
- The scheme aims to create a **younger and more technologically skilled profile** of the Armed Forces.
- It seeks to develop **discipline, patriotism, teamwork, physical fitness and technical skills** among youth.

- After completing four years, Agniveers receive a **one-time Seva Nidhi package**, consisting of their contribution, accrued interest and the **Government's matching contribution**.
- The scheme is a major **human-resource reform for the three Armed Forces** and aims to reduce the average age profile of personnel.

Places in News

Tuvalu



- Tuvalu is in the news because **leaders are visiting the Pacific island nation on October 5, 2026**, as part of the **Pacific Pre-COP31 climate gathering**, hosted in **Fiji** ahead of the **UN Framework Convention on Climate Change COP31 in Türkiye**.
- The **visit aims to showcase firsthand the severe impacts of climate change on vulnerable Pacific island states**
- Tuvalu is a **Polynesian island country in the South Pacific Ocean, comprising nine coral atolls and lying between Hawaii and Australia**.
- Tuvalu is **among the world's most climate-vulnerable countries because of its very low-lying coral atolls**, making it particularly susceptible to **sea-level rise, coastal erosion and extreme weather events**.
- Tuvalu has **constitutionally asserted the continuity of its statehood and**

maritime zones despite potential loss of physical territory due to climate change.

- **Funafuti, the capital of Tuvalu, is itself an atoll**, and the country's narrow land area and dependence on marine ecosystems make climate-induced changes especially significant for its population.

First Island Chain

- The **First Island Chain** is a strategic arc of islands stretching from **Japan and the Ryukyu Islands through Taiwan to the northern Philippines**.
- It forms a corridor between the **East China Sea, South China Sea and Pacific Ocean**.
- Its narrow waterways make it important for **naval movement and military strategy**.
- The chain has long been important for **sea control and defence** in the region.
- During **World War II**, it became a major battleground between **Japan and the United States**.
- The U.S. used **"island-hopping"** to capture key islands for **airfields, naval bases and supply hubs**.
- The First Island Chain was in the news as the **U.S. 2026 Defence Strategy** focused on strengthening defence along the chain to deter China.

