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MCQs

THE HINDU

A new security triangle emerges with the Makkah Pact

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?

- Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and Pakistan signed the **Makkah Joint Defence Agreement (MJDA)** on **August 7, 2026**, agreeing that an armed attack on one would be treated as an attack on all three.
- The agreement has raised speculation about a possible **"Muslim NATO"** and could reshape **West Asian security alignments**, with implications for **India**.

Key Highlights

- The **MJDA** contains a **collective defence commitment**, similar in principle to **NATO's Article 5**.
- The agreement follows Saudi Arabia's recent efforts to diversify its security partnerships, including the **Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement (SMDA)** with **Pakistan** and the **Multinational Maritime Defence Alliance (MMDA)**.

- Saudi Arabia has clarified that the MJDA is **not intended to create a military axis or sectarian bloc** and is not linked to **nuclear ambitions or an arms race**.
- The agreement brings together three major **Sunni powers** with complementary capabilities:
 - ◆ Saudi Arabia's financial resources, Türkiye's defence industry, and Pakistan's large armed forces.
- Possible areas of cooperation include **military exercises, interoperability of weapon systems, and joint development and production of defence equipment**.
- The agreement appears to be driven largely by **Saudi Arabia's security concerns**, including threats to its **oil and civilian infrastructure**, disruption around the **Strait of Hormuz and Bab al-Mandeb**, and internal security challenges.

Implications

- The MJDA's **long-term significance remains unclear** because its **specific security objectives** have not been clearly defined.
- The agreement could trigger **new regional alignments** and concern countries such as **Iran, Israel, and the UAE**.
- Its lack of formal linkage with the **Arab League, OIC or GCC** may limit its development into a broader regional security framework.
- Türkiye and Pakistan may be reluctant to confront Iran because of their **geographical**



proximity and potential post-war economic interests.

- Since all three members are **U.S. partners**, the MJDA could either complement or complicate the existing **U.S.-led security architecture** in the region.
- Pakistan may seek to use the MJDA to **increase its influence in West Asia**, but India's strong **economic, energy, and trade ties with Saudi Arabia** provide an important counterbalance.

Way Forward

- India should avoid overreacting while maintaining close **strategic engagement with Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and Gulf countries**.
- Strengthen India's **energy security**, economic partnerships, and defense cooperation with West Asian countries.
- Closely monitor the impact of emerging **regional security arrangements** on India's interests.
- Maintain **strategic autonomy** and diversified partnerships amid changing geopolitical alignments.

Mains Question

"The Makkah Joint Defense Agreement reflects the growing trend towards regional security arrangements in West Asia." Examine its significance and discuss its possible implications for India's strategic interests. (150 Words)

Podium finish: On India at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games

Prelims: General Studies Paper I

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

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?

- India finished **fourth** at the **truncated Commonwealth Games** in **Glasgow**,

exceeding expectations despite winning fewer medals than the previous edition.

- India won **39 medals, 13 gold, 17 silver, and 9 bronze**, compared with **61 medals** previously.

Key Highlights

- **Boxing** was a major contributor, with India winning **10 medals, 7 gold and 3 silver**, its **best-ever performance** in the sport at the Games.
- **Five women boxers**, Sakshi Chaudhary, Preeti Pawar, Jaismine Lamboria, Priya Ghanghas, and Arundhati Choudhary, and **two men**, Sachin Siwach and Ankush Panghal, contributed to the boxing success.
- India won **16 medals in athletics and para-athletics**, including **10 medals in athletics**, compared with 8 in Birmingham 2022.
- **Neeraj Chopra** won **silver in javelin**, contributing to India's strong showing in the event.
- **Gulveer Singh** became the **first Indian to win medals in both the 5000m and 10,000m**.
- **Tejaswin Shankar** won India's **first-ever decathlon medal**, while **Murali Sreeshankar** secured his second consecutive long-jump silver.
- **Asmita Dey and Harsh Singh** won India's **first gold medals in judo**, while **Mirabai Chanu** won her **third successive gold**, leading Indian weightlifters to **eight medals**.

Implications

- India's medal performance remains concentrated in a **limited number of sports**, despite improvements in athletics and other disciplines.
- To compete among the world's leading sporting nations, India needs **greater investment in priority sports** and stronger development systems.
- **Doping** remains a continuing challenge for India's sporting ambitions.

Way Forward

- Identify **priority Olympic sports** and direct greater investment towards them.



- Strengthen **athlete development, training infrastructure and support systems** to improve India's performance at global competitions.
- Use the opportunity to host the **2030 Commonwealth Games in Ahmedabad** to build stronger sporting infrastructure and prepare for the larger goal of hosting the **2036 Olympics**.
- Maintain a strong focus on **anti-doping measures** and clean sport.

Mains Question

"India's improving performance in multi-sport events has raised its global sporting aspirations, but significant gaps remain." Discuss the measures required to make India a leading sporting nation. (150 Words)

The stakes in India's delimitation debate

Prelims: General Paper 1

Current events of national and international importance.

Mains: General studies 2

Parliament and State legislatures—structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.

Why in Focus?

- The Centre is planning a **fresh delimitation of Lok Sabha constituencies**, which may change political representation before the **2029 elections**
- The issue is important because it affects **federal balance, representation of States, and implementation of women's reservation**

Key Highlights:

- The government proposed to **increase Lok Sabha seats (up to 850)**, redistribute seats using **2011 Census**, and **reserve 33% seats for women**
- As per **Articles 81 and 82 of the Constitution**, delimitation will automatically happen after the **Census 2027 data is published**

Article 82 provides that delimitation (readjustment of seats and constituencies) should take place after every Census through a law made by Parliament.

However, through the **42nd (1976) and 84th (2001) Constitutional Amendments**, this process was **frozen until after 2026**, so the next Census (likely 2027) will trigger delimitation.

- A **Constitutional Amendment is required only if existing provisions are changed**, not for routine delimitation
- The process will follow: **reallocation of seats → redrawing constituencies → implementation of women's reservation**
- Current seat distribution is based on the **1971 Census** due to a freeze in **1976 (extended in 2001)**
- Likely outcome is that **northern States (UP, Bihar, Rajasthan) may gain seats**, while **southern States may lose relative share**

Implications:

- **Federal balance may be disturbed** as southern States could lose political influence while northern States gain more seats
- **Demographic disadvantage may arise** as States that controlled population growth may be penalised
- **Delay in completion may affect elections** and create uncertainty before the **2029 Lok Sabha elections**
- **Unequal representation may continue** as differences in MP-to-voter ratio weaken **one person one vote one value**
- **Risk of gerrymandering (manipulation of constituency boundaries to favour a party) may increase**, distorting fair electoral outcomes
- **Political consensus may be difficult**, leading to tensions between Centre and States

Way Forward:

- Ensure **independent and transparent functioning** of the Delimitation Commission
- Build **broad political consensus** to uphold **cooperative federalism**
- Adopt a **balanced formula** combining



population with **equity and development factors**

- Introduce **strong legal safeguards against gerrymandering** with scope for judicial review
- Implement **women's reservation carefully along with delimitation** to ensure fair representation

Mains Question:

"While delimitation ensures equal representation, it can disturb the federal balance in India." Examine. (250 words, 15 marks)

A common blueprint for India's industrial heat electrification

Prelims: General Paper 1

Current events of national and international importance.

Mains: General studies 2

Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

Why in Focus?

- India's energy transition is moving beyond electricity generation to **electrifying industrial heat**, especially in **MSMEs (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises)**.
- This is important for **reducing emissions, improving energy security, and boosting manufacturing competitiveness**.

Key Highlights:

- India has already made strong progress in **renewable energy (RE)**, with **solar tariffs falling by about 85%** due to supportive policies and private investment.
- The next step is to reduce **fossil fuel use in industries**, where heat demand is high

Industrial heat electrification: Instead of burning coal or gas to generate heat for boilers and steam systems, industries can shift to using **electricity (especially from renewable sources like solar and wind)** to produce the same heat in a cleaner way.

- There is **no single solution**: each industry

needs **facility-level assessment** to understand energy use, steam flow, and waste heat.

- Before electrification, industries should improve efficiency using tools like **pinch analysis (method to optimise heat use)**.
- Different technologies suit different needs:
 - ◆ **Heat pumps** → low/medium temperatures
 - ◆ **Electric boilers** → high-temperature steam
 - ◆ **Mechanical Vapour Recompression (MVR)** → reuse of vapour
 - ◆ **Thermal Energy Storage (TES)** → store and use heat when needed
- Affordable **renewable electricity supply** is essential, but costs remain high due to **open access rules, network charges, and grid issues**.
- New financing models like **ESCO (Energy Service Company)** and **heat-as-a-service** can reduce upfront investment burden.

Implications:

- **High initial investment** makes it difficult for MSMEs to adopt new technologies.
- Many industries lack **data and technical knowledge** about their own heat systems.
- **Electricity cost and grid limitations** reduce the attractiveness of electrification.
- Shortage of **skilled workforce** for installation, operation, and maintenance of advanced systems.
- Risk of **wrong technology choice** without proper assessment.
- Lack of **coordination and planning** may lead to uneven or slow implementation.

Way Forward:

- Create a **national policy framework** for industrial heat electrification with clear guidelines.
- Promote **cluster-based planning** at district level based on local industry and renewable potential.
- Reform **open access policies** and reduce extra charges to make renewable power cheaper.
- Encourage **innovative financing** (ESCO,

leasing, blended finance) and **demand aggregation** to lower costs.

- Strengthen **skill development programmes** for engineers and technicians.
- Start **pilot and demonstration projects** to test technologies and build industry confidence.

Mains Question:

“Industrial heat electrification is a key step in India’s clean energy transition.” Examine its importance, major challenges, and suggest measures to scale it effectively. (15 mark, 250 words)

KEYWORDS

Multinational Maritime Defence Coalition

- **Saudi Arabia** and **13 other countries** have established the **Multinational Maritime Defence Coalition** to strengthen **maritime security** in West Asia.
- The coalition aims to protect **freedom of navigation** and shipping through the **Bab el-Mandeb Strait, Red Sea, and Gulf of Aden**.
- The coalition was announced on **30 July** after military officials from several countries met in **Riyadh**.
- Its members include **Bahrain, Bangladesh, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Türkiye, and Yemen**.
- The coalition is **defensive in nature**, does not target any **state, alliance, or international organisation**, and will operate in accordance with **international law** and **state sovereignty**.
- **Saudi Arabia** is the **founding and leading state** and will host the coalition’s **permanent headquarters**.

Species In News

Arara Nut (*Joannesia princeps*)

- **Arara Nut (*Joannesia princeps*)** is a **rare tree endemic to Brazil** in **South America** and belongs to the **Euphorbiaceae family**.
- It is a **large tree** that can grow up to **15-20 metres** tall, with a **wide canopy** and an erect trunk.
- Its leaves are **digitately compound**, with a **palm-like arrangement**, similar to those of the **Silk Cotton Tree** and **Baobab**.
- The tree produces **large fruits** containing **2-3 egg-shaped seeds**.
- The seeds contain an oil with a **strong purgative action** and are considered **poisonous to humans**.
- In **Kerala**, the Arara Nut tree is reportedly found only at the **Thiruvananthapuram Zoo**.



Places in News

Louvre Museum



- The **Louvre Museum** featured in the news to mark the anniversary of its **public opening (August 10, 1793)**
- Originally constructed as a **medieval fortress**, it was later transformed into a **royal palace** and served as the residence of **French monarchs** until **King Louis XIV moved to Versailles (1682)**
- Its establishment as a **public national museum** is linked to the **French Revolution (1789)**, which aimed to **open royal art collections to the public**
- The main courtyard features the famous **Louvre Pyramid (glass-and-steel entrance)** designed by **I. M. Pei (Chinese-American architect)**
- Located in **Paris, France**, it is the **world's largest art museum**, known for masterpieces like **Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa** and the **Venus de Milo**.

Jazan Port

- Located in **southwestern Saudi Arabia**, Jazan is a **strategic port city** along the **Red Sea coast**, situated close to the **border with Yemen**
- It is a **vital energy hub** hosting a massive **Saudi Aramco refinery complex** capable of processing up to **400,000 barrels of crude oil per day**
- Due to its **strategic position near the Bab al-Mandeb Strait**, Jazan plays a key role in **Red Sea shipping security** and **regional geopolitics**

- The region features the **Jazan Economic City (JEC)**, an **industrial mega-project** aimed at developing:

- ◆ **Heavy manufacturing**
- ◆ **Power generation**
- ◆ **Commercial port infrastructure for global trade**

