

FINDER

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An alternative to Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhistan Bill

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

1. Context: VBSA Bill and NEP 2020 Implementation

- The **Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhistan (VBSA) Bill** aims to give statutory backing to the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**, adopted during the COVID period **without consultation with State governments**.
- The Bill is under examination by a **Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC)**, allowing stakeholders like teachers, students, and states to suggest amendments.
- It is criticised as a **constitutional overreach**, particularly in **Centre-State relations**.
- Since **education is in the Concurrent List**, the Bill is seen as undermining **cooperative federalism**

2. Key Provisions and Structural Changes

- The Bill expands Union powers beyond **Entry 66 of the Union List**, which is limited to **coordination and standard-setting** in higher education.
- It creates centralised bodies such as the **Regulatory Council**, **Accreditation Council**, and **Standards Council**.
- **Union-controlled councils** are given wide powers over **standards, inspections, and regulation**.
- The **Ministry of Education** gains authority over **funding allocation**, reducing institutional autonomy.
- The Bill dilutes consultative provisions of the **UGC Act (Section 13)**, weakening university participation.
- It covers **all HEIs (Higher Education Institutes)**, including **Central, State, private institutions, IITs, and IIMs**.

- Accreditation may be **outsourced to third-party agencies**, with emphasis on **output-based metrics** like **patents and global rankings**.

3. Criticisms and Challenges

- The Bill leads to **centralisation of power** and weakens the role of **State governments and SHECs (State Higher Education Councils)**.
- It reduces **institutional autonomy** by curtailing powers of **governing bodies**.
- **Bureaucratic control** increases, limiting **academic participation**.
- It lacks provisions for participation of **teachers, students, and academic bodies**.
- It does not clearly ensure **reservation policies** or **social justice for SCs, STs, and OBCs**.
- It may shift higher education towards **loan-based financing**, weakening **public funding commitment**.
- Concerns exist about **"Bhartiya Knowledge"** and possible impact on **multicultural perspectives**.
- **Output-based evaluation** may ignore broader outcomes like **social justice and local development**.
- Institutions may face **penalties or closure without mandatory State consent**.

4. Suggested Reforms and Way Forward

- Ensure **equal (50%) participation** of Union bodies and **SHECs** in regulation, accreditation, and standard-setting.
- Provide **statutory backing, funding, and a clear mandate** to SHECs.
- Establish a **Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC)** for **equitable fund distribution**, especially to State universities.
- Include **teachers, students, and academic bodies** in governance processes.

- Mandate **State consent** before closure or major regulatory actions.
- Shift from **output-based** to **outcome- and impact-based evaluation** aligned with national priorities.
- Create **regional councils** to reflect **socio-economic and cultural diversity**.
- Explicitly incorporate **social justice, affirmative action, and inter-regional equity**.
- Reaffirm **higher education as a public good** through adequate **public funding**

Bolstering deterrence through submarine dominance

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

1. Development of INS Aridhaman & SSBN Programme

- **INS Aridhaman** is the **third SSBN** (nuclear ballistic missile submarine) of India.
- Follows **INS Arihant (2016)** and **INS Arighat (2024)**.
- A **7000-tonne submarine** with **enhanced capabilities**.
- Can carry:
 - ➔ **24 K-15 Sagarika missiles**
 - ➔ **Eight nuclear-tipped K-4 or K-5 missiles**
- Represents a **technological upgrade** over earlier submarines.

2. Strengthening Nuclear Triad & Deterrence

- Boosts India's **nuclear triad (land, air, sea capabilities)**.
- Places India among **P5 nations** - the U.S., Russia, China, France and the U.K.- possess the nuclear triad capabilities
- Enhances **sea-based deterrence**, the **most resilient and survivable component**
- Counters **China's growing presence** and **Pakistan threats** in the **Indian Ocean**.

3. Changing Nature of Warfare & Strategic Importance

- Modern warfare is **multi-domain (land, air, sea interlinked)**.
- Example:
 - ➔ **West Asia conflict** shifting to **maritime domain (Strait of Hormuz)**
 - ➔ **Operation Sindoor** showed possible **naval dimension**
- Highlights need for **comprehensive deterrence** across all domains.
- Submarines are key for **stealth, survivability, and strategic response**.

4. Future Plans, Self-Reliance & Challenges

- SSBN programme promotes **defence self-reliance (Atmanirbharta)**.
- Reduced dependence due to **global supply chain disruptions** (e.g., **Russia-Ukraine war**).
- Future plans:
 - ➔ **4th Arihant-class submarine**
 - ➔ **Indigenous SSNs (nuclear attack submarine) by 2036 & 2038**
- Key challenges:
 - ➔ **Balancing cost vs modernization**
 - ➔ **Integrating AI & autonomous systems**
 - ➔ **Keeping pace with China's naval expansion**

Rebuilding ties: On India engaging with Turkiye and Azerbaijan

Prelims: General Studies Paper - 1
Current events of national and international importance

Mains: General Studies - 2
India and its neighborhood- relations.

1. Shift in India's Diplomatic Approach

- **New Delhi** has resumed **diplomatic engagement** with **Türkiye** and **Azerbaijan**.

- Conducted **Foreign Office Consultations** after a period of **strained relations**.
- Marks a **significant policy shift** compared to the **past year's stance**.

2. Background: Tensions after Operation Sindoor (2025)

- Relations worsened after the India-**Pakistan conflict** and **Operation Sindoor (May 2025)**.
- India was critical of countries seen as **supporting Pakistan**.
- **Türkiye, Azerbaijan, and Malaysia** questioned India's **strikes on terror camps**.
- India:
 - ➔ **Excluded envoys** from briefings
 - ➔ **Alleged Türkiye & Azerbaijan support to Pakistan** (military/technological)
- Resulted in:
 - ➔ **Dip in trade and tourism**
 - ➔ **Boycott calls** from public discourse

3. Escalation and Strategic Alignments

- India avoided routing evacuations via **Türkiye & Azerbaijan** during the **Iran crisis (2025)**.
- Emergence of **informal groupings**:
 - ➔ **India-Armenia-Greece** (counter bloc)
 - ➔ **Pakistan -Türkiye-Azerbaijan** (existing alignment)
- Diplomatic ties were effectively in a **freeze**, with **heightened rhetoric**.

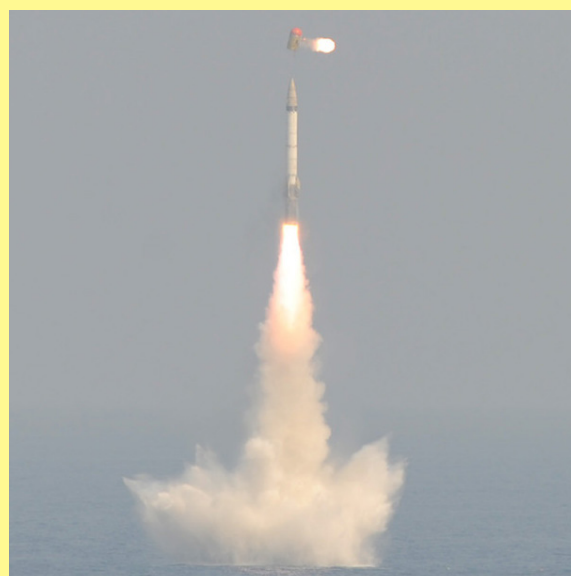
4. Renewed Engagement & Strategic Lesson

- Recent moves:
 - ➔ Visit by **MEA Secretary (West) Sibi George** to **Baku**
 - ➔ Invitation to **Turkish Deputy Foreign Minister**
- Indicates **mutual interest** in **restoring ties**.
- Key lesson:
 - ➔ India must adopt **pragmatic diplomacy**, not **emotional reactions**

- ➔ Avoid **boycott politics** and **over-escalation**
- ➔ Maintain **strategic autonomy** without falling into **rigid blocs** or **Pakistan-centric framing**

KEYWORDS

Sagarika missile



- The **Sagarika missile**, also known as **B-05** or **PJ-08**, is a **submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM)** with a **range of around 750 km**.
- Its **multiple designations** were deliberately used by **DRDO** as a **tactical measure** to maintain **secrecy** during its development.
- The missile is about **10 metres long** with a **diameter of 0.74 metres**, and its **weight** is estimated between **6-7 tonnes** (with some sources suggesting up to **10 tonnes**).
- It is capable of carrying a **warhead of approximately 1,000 kg (1 tonne)**.
- Developed by the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** and reportedly manufactured by **Bharat Dynamics Limited**, the missile was **officially inducted into service in 2018**.

Gov.in AppStore

- The **Gov.in AppStore** is a **government-owned mobile application platform** designed to host apps developed for the **delivery of public services** through mobile devices.
- It provides **Indian mobile application developers** with a dedicated **hosting ecosystem**.
- The platform is built on a **service-oriented architecture (SOA)** and leverages **cloud-based technologies**, while adopting **open standards** wherever feasible.
- It is India's **first indigenously developed AppStore**, ensuring a **wide public reach**.
- Additionally, **Central, State, and Union Territory (UT) Ministries/Departments** are already integrated into this platform.

'D-Voters'

- **'D-Voters' or 'Doubtful Voters'** are a category of voters in **Assam** whose Indian citizenship credentials could not be verified or were deemed suspicious, a concept introduced by the **Election Commission of India in 1997** during an intensive revision of electoral rolls.
- Individuals categorized as D-Voters are **entirely disenfranchised**, meaning they are **not issued an elector's photo identity card (EPIC)**, are **barred from casting their votes** in elections, and **cannot contest** for any public office.
- The terms "doubtful voter" or "dubious citizen" are strictly **administrative and electoral categories**, as they are **not explicitly defined** anywhere in the core citizenship laws of India such as the **Citizenship Act of 1955** or the Citizenship Rules of 2003.
- The **burden of proving citizenship lies with the individual**, whose case is transferred to quasi-judicial bodies known as **Foreigners Tribunals**, where they must present **legacy data and documents** to prove their Indian nationality.
- A D-Voter **cannot be included in the National Register of Citizens (NRC)** until officially cleared by the tribunal, and failing to prove their citizenship can result in them being **declared "foreigners"** and sent to **transit camps or detention centres** for potential deportation.

