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THE HINDU

English in India, a language that has earned its place

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?

- A recent **Supreme Court observation** has revived the debate over whether **English can be considered an indigenous language of India**.
- The article argues that English, though **not indigenous in origin**, has been **Indianised over time** and has become an important part of India's **multilingual society**.

Key Highlights

- **English entered India during British rule**, initially serving colonial interests such as **administration, commerce, and missionary activity**.
- Indians gradually **appropriated and transformed English**, using it for **nationalism, social reform, and intellectual expression**.
- Leaders such as **Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Dadabhai Naoroji, Swami Vivekananda, and Mahatma Gandhi** used English to communicate Indian ideas.

- After Independence, the **Constituent Assembly** recognised **Hindi as the Official Language of the Union** while retaining **English for official purposes**.
- English has become important in **higher education, administration, judiciary, legislature, and professional sectors**.
- The **Sahitya Akademi** recognises English as a language of **Indian literature**, while writers such as **R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, Amitav Ghosh, and Vikram Seth** developed Indian Writing in English.
- According to the **2011 Census**, around **129 million Indians** reported English as their **first, second, or third language**.
- India has developed its own form of **Indian English**, with distinctive **pronunciation, vocabulary, idioms, and rhetorical conventions** reflecting Indian society and culture.
- English can serve as a **bridge language** connecting India's different linguistic communities and linking India with the wider world.

Implications

- Treating the issue as a competition between **English and Indian languages** can create an unnecessary linguistic divide.
- Promoting Indian languages does not require **denying English its place** in India's linguistic landscape.



- Excessive focus on English, however, should not come at the cost of India's **linguistic diversity and regional languages**.
- India's historical experience shows that **multilingualism, rather than monolingualism**, has been a **defining feature of its society**.

Way Forward

- Promote **Indian languages and English together** rather than treating them as mutually exclusive.
- Strengthen **multilingual education** to preserve linguistic diversity while providing access to global opportunities.
- Recognise **Indian English** as a **product of India's own historical, cultural and literary evolution**.
- Continue expanding **English-language skills** while **protecting and promoting India's diverse linguistic traditions**.

Mains Question

"English may not be indigenous to India, but its historical evolution and widespread use have made it an integral part of India's multilingual identity." Discuss. (150 Words)

Do not write the obituary of international law yet

Prelims : General Studies Paper I

Current events of national and international importance

Mains: General Studies 2

Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate

Why in Focus?

- Ongoing conflicts in **Ukraine and Gaza**, instability in West Asia, and limited responses by international institutions have raised concerns about the effectiveness of **international law**.
- However, the continued reliance of states on international legal rules suggests that international law remains an important framework for **state conduct and international cooperation**.

Key Highlights

- **International law** seeks to regulate relations between states through **rules and legal principles**, rather than allowing power alone to determine outcomes.
- Even during conflicts, states continue to justify their actions using concepts such as the **UN Charter, sovereignty, territorial integrity, self-defense, and international humanitarian law**.
- States often follow **international law** not because of **sanctions**, but because they are influenced by the **rules and expectations of the treaties** they are part of.
- International law quietly enables everyday activities such as **international aviation, maritime transport, diplomacy, trade, communications, and travel**.
- Recent initiatives such as the **High Seas Treaty, pandemic preparedness efforts**, and the **UN Convention against Cybercrime** show that states continue to create and rely on international legal frameworks.
- International law also affects individuals through **passports, consular assistance, international travel, and refugee protection**.
- **Peace agreements, ceasefire arrangements, and negotiated settlements** depend on legal commitments that establish expectations and obligations between states.
- India's **Indus Waters Treaty** shows that **legal agreements can provide a basis for cooperation between countries even during political tensions**.

Implications

- International law **lacks a consistently effective mechanism to ensure compliance**, particularly when powerful states are involved.
- The international legal order continues to reflect **unequal power structures**, especially within institutions such as the **UN Security Council**.
- A **rules-based international order** gives developing countries greater scope to protect their interests through **negotiation rather than military or economic power**.



Way Forward

- Strengthen **international institutions** and mechanisms for ensuring compliance with international law.
- Adapt international legal frameworks to emerging challenges, including **cybersecurity, climate change, and pandemics**.
- Promote greater **fairness and representation** in international institutions.
- Continue using **negotiation, treaties, and legal commitments** to manage disputes and sustain international cooperation.
- For India and the **Global South**, strengthen support for a **rules-based international order** while advocating reforms that make it more equitable and effective.

Mains Question

“International law is under pressure, but its continued use by states demonstrates its enduring relevance.” Discuss the challenges facing international law and its significance for India and the Global South. (150 Words)

UPI and the cost of policy reversal

Prelims: General Studies Paper 1

Current events of national and international importance

Mains: General Studies 3

Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment

Why in Focus?

- The **Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026** proposes amending Section 10A of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, creating legal scope for the government to notify charges on specified electronic payment modes.
- It includes a **proposed Merchant Discount Rate (MDR)** of 0.25–0.5% on UPI transactions above ₹2,000.

Merchant Discount Rate (MDR): A fee charged to a merchant by banks/payment service providers for processing a digital payment transaction. It is usually a small percentage of the transaction value.

Key Highlights

- The **proposed threshold would affect around 5% of UPI transactions by volume, but nearly 65% by transaction value**, mainly covering high-value payments.
- **UPI (Unified Payments Interface) was promoted through a zero-MDR regime to reduce cash dependence** and accelerate digital payments.
- UPI has **become a major payment system, processing more monthly transactions** than most global card networks combined.
- **MDR would nominally be charged to merchants, with collection through banks and the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) ecosystem.**
- The **actual burden could fall on merchants, consumers, banks or Payment Service Providers (PSPs)** depending on market competition and pricing behaviour.

Implications

- Higher transaction costs may **discourage UPI adoption**.
- **Lower UPI usage could weaken financial inclusion** and formalisation.
- **Reduced digital payments may affect tax compliance** and transaction traceability.
- **MDR costs may reduce investment** in UPI infrastructure and innovation.
- **High-value digital transactions** may become less attractive.

Way Forward

- **Maintain UPI's affordability to preserve its network effects** and financial inclusion benefits.
- **Evaluate the impact of MDR on merchants, consumers, banks and fintechs** before implementation.
- **Encourage transparent and competitive**



pricing across different payment modes rather than favouring or penalising specific platforms.

- **Explore alternative revenue sources that do not weaken India's transition** towards a digital and less-cash economy.

Mains Question

"The success of UPI lies not merely in digitalisation but in its affordability and accessibility. Examine the implications of imposing MDR on UPI transactions for financial inclusion, formalisation and India's less-cash economy." (250 Words)

Why does handloom remain a key part of India's economy?

Prelims: General Studies Paper 1

Current events of national and international importance

Mains: General Studies 3

Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment

Why in Focus?

- **National Handloom Day (August 7)** commemorates the launch of the **Swadeshi Movement in 1905** and honours India's weaving tradition.
- The **sector remains important for rural employment, women's empowerment, cultural heritage**, sustainability and India's global identity.

Swadeshi Movement (1905): A nationalist movement launched against the Partition of Bengal, promoting the boycott of British goods and use of Indian-made products.

Key Highlights

- Handloom **played a major role in the Swadeshi Movement**, with Mahatma Gandhi promoting the **spinning wheel (Charkha)** as a symbol of self-reliance and economic resistance.
- India's **handlooms were historically a major manufacturing strength**, with Indian textiles driving global trade long before the Industrial

Revolution.

- The sector **supports over 35 lakh weavers and allied workers across 31 lakh+ households**, with women constituting nearly **70%** of the workforce.
- Handloom is a **major source of rural non-farm employment and produces nearly 15% of India's cloth**, despite relying largely on manual technology.
- Traditional weaves such as **Tangaliya (Gujarat), Badturang (Odisha), and Siddipet Gollabhama sarees (Telangana)** demonstrate the potential for revival through design, market access and institutional support.
- The **National Handloom Development Programme** focuses on skill development, design innovation, technology adoption, branding and market access, while e-commerce and exports are helping artisan clusters reach wider markets.
- The **Office of the Development Commissioner for Handlooms, in collaboration with UNESCO**, is documenting India's languishing and endangered weaves.

Implications

- **Younger generations are leaving weaving due to low returns** and limited opportunities.
- **Fragmented markets and weak market access** constrain weavers' incomes.
- **Many traditional weaving techniques face gradual extinction** due to declining intergenerational skill transfer.
- **Limited branding, quality standardisation and GI protection restrict** India's global handloom competitiveness.

Way Forward

- **Make handloom aspirational for Gen Z** through designers, celebrities, influencers, digital storytelling and limited-edition collections.
- **Expand exports by strengthening quality standards, branding, GI protection** and action against cultural misappropriation.
- **Develop reliable data on handloom's contribution to GDP, exports, tax revenue, employment and household incomes.**



- **Create a national platform for States, cooperatives and producer organisations** to share successful practices and accelerate innovation.
- **Use India's traditional weaves as an instrument of soft power** and global cultural diplomacy.

Mains Question

"Handloom is not merely a cultural heritage but a strategic economic asset for India. Discuss its contribution to employment, women's empowerment, sustainability and India's soft power. Suggest measures to make the sector aspirational and globally competitive." (250 Words)

KEYWORDS

CTD (Conductivity–Temperature–Depth) tags

- CTD (Conductivity–Temperature–Depth) tags are **animal-borne electronic sensors used to collect oceanographic data**.
- They **measure conductivity (salinity), temperature and depth** as marine animals move through the ocean.
- The collected **data can be transmitted via satellite when the animal surfaces, creating valuable ocean profiles**.
- Scientists are **attaching these tags to sharks to monitor ocean heat and improve understanding of hurricane intensification**.
- CTD tags **provide a cost-effective mobile ocean-observing system**, especially in remote areas where research vessels and buoys have limited coverage.

Green Energy Corridor (GEC) Project

- Green Energy Corridor (GEC) is a **dedicated transmission infrastructure project to integrate solar and wind energy into India's electricity grid**.
- It was **launched in 2015 to facilitate the transmission and evacuation of renewable energy from resource-rich states to demand centres**.
- **GEC Phase-I covers 9 states:** Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.

- **GEC Phase-II covers 7 states:** Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.
- GEC **strengthens grid stability, energy security and renewable-energy integration, supporting India's transition towards a low-carbon electricity system**.

United Nations Convention against Cybercrime

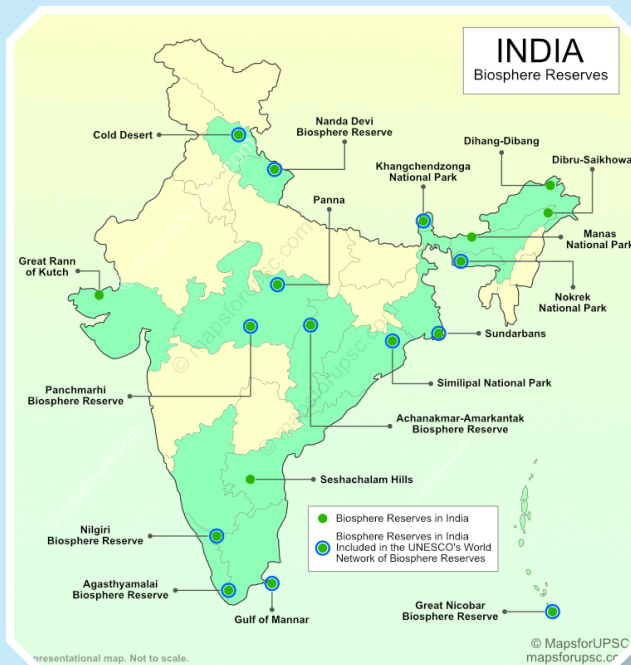
- The **United Nations Convention against Cybercrime** was adopted by the **UN General Assembly on 24 December 2024** through **Resolution 79/243**.
- It is the **first comprehensive global treaty** aimed at preventing and combating **cybercrime**.
- The Convention **strengthens international cooperation** in combating crimes committed through **information and communication technology systems**.
- It provides mechanisms for **sharing electronic evidence** related to **serious crimes** among countries.
- It was **opened for signature on 25 October 2025** in **Hanoi, Vietnam**, and will remain open for signature at **UN Headquarters, New York, until 31 December 2026**.
- The Convention will **enter into force after 40 States become Parties**, with its implementation reviewed by the **Conference of the States Parties**.



Places in News

Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve (ABR)

- Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve (ABR) is located in the southern Western Ghats, spread across Kerala and Tamil Nadu; it was established in 2001 and added to UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves in 2016.
- It covers about 3,500 sq km and includes parts of Thiruvananthapuram and Kollam (Kerala) and Tirunelveli and Kanniyakumari (Tamil Nadu).
- The reserve is a major biodiversity hotspot, harbouring endemic species such as the Nilgiri tahr and lion-tailed macaque, along with around 2,254 plant species.
- Important protected areas include Shendurney, Peppara and Neyyar Wildlife Sanctuaries and the Kalakkad-Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve; the Kani tribe is an important indigenous community of the region.
- Rivers such as Thamirabarani, Neyyar and Karamana originate in this region, making it important for water security, biodiversity conservation, climate regulation and traditional medicinal knowledge.



Colombia

- Colombia is a country in northwestern South America and is the only South American country with coastlines on both the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean.
- It shares land borders with Panama, Venezuela, Brazil, Peru, and Ecuador.
- Bogotá, the capital of Colombia, is located on a high plateau in the northern Andes Mountains.
- Most of the population lives in the mountainous interior, particularly in the Andean region.
- The Andes Mountains dominate the western part of the country and strongly influence its climate, vegetation, soils, and agriculture.
- Colombia's culture and society strongly reflect its history as a former Spanish colony.

