

Why did the government get ZEE5 to remove 'Satluj'?

Prelims: General Studies Paper - 1
Indian Polity and Governance-Constitution, Political System, Panchayati Raj, Public Policy, Rights Issues, etc.

Mains: General Studies - 2
Separation of powers between various organs dispute redressal mechanisms and institutions.

1. What is the issue?

- **Satluj** (originally titled **Punjab '95**) is a film based on the life of **human rights activist Jaswant Singh Khalra**.
- **Jaswant Singh Khalra** was a **human rights activist** who documented **alleged human rights violations** during the **Punjab militancy (1980s-early 1990s)**.
- The film was **removed from ZEE5** shortly after its release following a **government notice**.
- Reports suggest the film is being examined under **Section 69A of the Information Technology Act, 2000**.

2. What is Section 69A of the Information Technology Act?

- **Section 69A** empowers the **Central Government** to **block online content**.
- It can be invoked on grounds such as **sovereignty and integrity of India, security of the State, defence of India, friendly relations with foreign States, public order**, or to prevent the commission of a **cognisable offence**.
- The blocking of content must follow the **procedure and safeguards** prescribed under law.
- Unlike **theatrical films**, content released on **OTT platforms** does **not require prior certification** from the **Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC)**.

3. What safeguards apply before blocking online content?

- The government must issue a **reasoned written order** explaining why the content is being blocked.
- The **publisher** should be given an **opportunity to be heard** before a final decision.
- The blocking order must also be reviewed by the **designated review committee**.
- The **Supreme Court**, in **Shreya Singhal v. Union of India (2015)**, upheld **Section 69A** because of these procedural safeguards.

4. What are the concerns and legal remedies?

- **Rule 16 of the Blocking Rules** allows the government to **keep blocking orders confidential**, including from the **affected parties**.
- This weakens the legal safeguards that led the **Supreme Court** to uphold **Section 69A**.
- Critics argue that **blocking orders should be made public**, as **confidential orders** make it difficult to **challenge the government's decision** in court.
- The case has raised concerns that **Section 69A** could function as a **post-publication censorship mechanism** for **OTT platforms**.
- If a blocking order is issued, filmmakers can challenge it before the **High Court** through a **writ petition under Article 226** of the **Constitution**.

Why is VAR controversial?

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.

1. What is the Video Assistant Referee (VAR)?

- VAR is a **technology-assisted refereeing system designed to minimise major errors in football.**
- It was **approved by the International Football Association Board (IFAB)** in 2016.
- It **reviews match incidents through multiple high-quality cameras** from a central hub.
- The VAR can recommend an on-field review of potentially incorrect decisions.
- The **final decision, however, remains with the on-field referee.**

2. When Can VAR Intervene?

- VAR **primarily reviews goal/no-goal decisions and penalty incidents.**
- It can **examine direct red-card decisions and their reversal.**
- It is also used in cases involving mistaken player identity.
- At the 2026 World Cup, **its scope includes wrongly awarded corner kicks.**
- It can **also correct an erroneous second yellow card leading to a player's dismissal.**

Red Card: A red card results in a player's immediate dismissal from the match for a serious offence/misconduct.

Yellow Card: A yellow card is an official warning for misconduct/serious foul play with a second yellow in the same match resulting in dismissal.

3. Why Did the Egypt–Argentina VAR Controversy Erupt?

- **Egypt's second-half goal was disallowed after VAR identified a foul** in the build-up.
- The **disputed foul occurred away from the area** where the goal-scoring sequence ended.
- **FIFA clarified that there is no fixed time or distance limit** for reviewing build-up fouls.
- **Egypt alleged that possible Argentine fouls before the winning goal were not** similarly reviewed.
- The Egyptian federation filed a complaint with FIFA over the alleged inconsistent treatment.

4. What are the Major Concerns Regarding VAR?

- **Similar incidents are often interpreted differently** by different referees.
- **VAR intervention is criticised for lacking consistency and uniformity.**
- **Excessive scrutiny of minor fouls** is alleged to make football a "soft" sport.
- **Fans, players and staff often lack clarity** about VAR-referee communications.
- The **controversy has raised wider concerns regarding transparency, fairness and consistency** in technology-assisted officiating.

Towards a more European alliance

Prelims: General Studies Paper - 1

Current events of national and international importance

Mains: General Studies - 2

Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

1. Why is NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) in focus?

- NATO, formed in **1949**, remains the **core security alliance of the West (32 members)**, but is under strain today.
- The **Russia-Ukraine war (in its 5th year)** has become its **main security priority.**
- At the same time, **U.S. commitment is being questioned**, creating uncertainty about **collective defence (Article 5).**
- This has triggered a wider debate on **Europe's dependence on the U.S. vs need for self-reliance.**

The **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)** is a **32-member military alliance founded in 1949**, led by the **United States**, to ensure **collective defence** against threats, originally aimed at countering **Soviet expansion in Europe**. Its core principle is **Article 5**, which states that an **attack on one member is treated as an attack on all**, making it the **cornerstone of trans-Atlantic security.**

2. What are the key challenges?

- The main **external challenge is Russia**, which opposes NATO's expansion and has invaded Ukraine.

- The key **internal challenge** is the **U.S.-Europe divide**, especially under Trump (U.S. President).
- The U.S. argues it **bears most of NATO's costs**, while Europe contributes less.
- Differences emerged when **European countries refused to support U.S. action against Iran**.
- There is also a **conceptual divide**, with Europe seeing NATO as **defensive and regional**, while the U.S. views it as a **global military tool**.

3. What recent developments show tensions?

- The U.S. has proposed a **military drawdown in Europe**, including reducing fighter jets and naval assets.
- U.S. has also **reduced support to Ukraine**, making Europe the **main financier**.
- The U.S. is pushing members to spend **5% of GDP on defence**, but only **5 of 32 countries** may meet this by 2026.
- Additional tensions include the **Greenland issue with Denmark** and **direct U.S.-Russia engagement**.

The **Greenland issue** refers to tensions between the **United States and Denmark** after the U.S. showed interest in **acquiring Greenland for its strategic Arctic importance**, which Denmark firmly rejected as a **sovereignty matter**.

- Most importantly, the idea of **making Article 5 conditional on money or loyalty** has created serious uncertainty.

4. What is the way forward?

- In the short term, Europe is **balancing relations by cooperating with the U.S. while avoiding its wars**.
- At the **Ankara Summit (July 2025-NATO meeting)**, members agreed to **increase defence spending**, pledged **\$50 billion in defence deals and €70 billion to Ukraine**, and reaffirmed **commitment to Article 5**.
- In the medium term, the goal is a **"stronger Europe within a stronger NATO"**, with Europe taking more responsibility.
- In the long term, Europe aims to build **independent military capability**, ensure **deterrence against Russia**, and achieve **strategic autonomy**.

KEYWORDS

Parrot Bornavirus 4 (PaBV-4)

- **Parrot Bornavirus 4 (PaBV-4)** is a **highly contagious virus** that affects **psittacine birds** such as **parrots, macaws, cockatoos, lovebirds, budgerigars, and parakeets**.
- It causes **Proventricular Dilatation Disease (PDD)**, a **fatal disease** that damages the **nervous system** and disrupts the **digestive system** of birds.
- Scientists have **identified and genetically characterised PaBV-4 in India for the first time**.
- The discovery raises concerns for the **exotic pet trade** and the **conservation of threatened parrot species**.
- **PaBV-4** has previously been reported in **Canada, Israel, Japan, South Korea, and the United States**.

Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC)

- The **Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC)** is a **statutory body** under the **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting**, established under the **Cinematograph Act, 1952**.
- It regulates the **public exhibition of films** in India under the **Cinematograph Act, 1952**.
- A film can be **publicly exhibited** in India only after obtaining **CBFC certification**.
- The **CBFC** consists of a **Chairperson** and **non-official members**, all appointed by the **Central Government**.
- The certification process is governed by the **Cinematograph Act, 1952**, the **Cinematograph (Certification) Rules, 1983**, and the **guidelines issued by the Central Government**.

UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea)

- India and New Zealand elevated ties to a **strategic partnership**, reaffirming **freedom of navigation and overflight in the Indo-Pacific** under **UNCLOS**.

- Known as the “**constitution of the oceans**”, UNCLOS was framed during the **Third UN Conference on the Law of the Sea (1973-1982)** to replace the ‘**freedom of the seas**’ doctrine and **1958 Geneva Conventions**, addressing issues like **resource protection**.
- **Adopted in 1982 and in force since 1994**, It is the **global treaty governing oceans**, with **172 parties including India**, though the **United States is not a member**.
- It defines maritime zones such as the **Territorial Sea (12 nautical miles)** with **full sovereignty** and the **EEZ (200 nautical miles)** with **sovereign rights over resources**.
- It also ensures “**innocent passage**” for foreign vessels, provided it is **continuous and non-threatening**.
- UNCLOS established bodies like the **International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS)** and the **International Seabed Authority (ISA)**, and **India ratified it in 1995**.

Places in News

Phu Quoc

- Phu Quoc is **Vietnam’s largest island and is situated in the Gulf of Thailand**.
- It **lies close to the Cambodian coast and west of Vietnam’s mainland**.
- Phu Quoc National Park **forms part of the UNESCO-recognised Kien Giang Biosphere Reserve**.
- The island is being developed as a major venue for the the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders’ Meeting in 2027
- Phu Quoc is traditionally known for the production of fish sauce and black pepper.
- Phu Quoc was recently in the news after a tourist boat capsized near the island, killing at least 15 Indian tourists

