

FINDER

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Just war, power balance and modern conflict

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. Context

- The passage critiques the **decline of "just war" theory** and the rise of **realpolitik-driven military actions**

Just war theory is the idea, rooted in thinkers like **Hugo Grotius (Dutch diplomat)**, that **war can be morally justified** only if it meets strict conditions such as **legitimate cause, necessity, proportionality, and lawful conduct**.

- It invokes **Alexander Pope's** (English poet and translator) **balance of power** idea to argue that peace depends on equilibrium, now eroding.
- It is set against **recent U.S.-Israel actions on Iran** and the broader **West Asia conflict**.
- It highlights the **weakening of international law and global institutions like the UN**.

2. Evolution and Decline of Legal Frameworks

- Just war theory** sought moral limits on war but was diluted by state interests.
- The **Treaties of 1815 and 1839** attempted to guarantee neutrality (e.g., Switzerland and Belgium), but enforcement was inconsistent, exposing weaknesses in collective security.
- Hague Convention III (1907)** mandated **formal war declarations**, often ignored.
- League of Nations (Art. 12(1))** proposed **arbitration + 3-month cooling period** and **judicial settlement** to prevent war but failed.

- UN Charter (Art. 2(4))** banned use of force against territorial integrity or political independence, yet ambiguities persisted.
- Post-Cold War unipolarity** weakened the balance-of-power system.

3. Ambiguity and Misuse of Self-Defence

- Article 51 of the UN Charter** allows **self-defence against armed attack**, becoming a key justification for war.
- The U.S. has repeatedly invoked **anticipatory self-defence** to justify interventions in **Vietnam, Libya, Afghanistan, Iraq, Venezuela, and Iran**.
- The U.S. also used **state responsibility doctrine** in Latin America to protect its citizens.
- NATO's collective defence (Art. 5-allow joint response to attack)** exists, but allies showed **divergence in U.S. actions on Iran** saying **"This is not our war"**.
- U.S.-Israel strikes on Iran** were justified on nuclear concerns despite **international inspections**.

4. West Asia Conflict and Crisis of Global Order

- Israel's actions in **Gaza, Iran, Lebanon, Syria** are seen as **aggressive and illegal**.
- The war is seen as progressing in phases: **1st military then energy infrastructure finally aiming at strategic choke points**.
- Diplomacy (e.g., **Pakistan talks**) failed due to **rigid conditions**, highlighting the need for **step-by-step negotiations**.
- UN, WTO, and global order are weakening**, with human rights discourse seen as selective.
- The **just war concept survives only as a moral voice**, now resting with **people rather than states**.

- A sustainable solution lies in **revitalising multilateralism, clarifying international law on self-defence, strengthening UN-led conflict resolution, and restoring a balance of power to prevent unilateral aggression.**

The Xi-Trump summit – shadow boxing on Iran

Prelims: General Studies Paper - 1
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.

1. Background

- In **1972, U.S. President Richard Nixon visited China while the United States was struggling in the Vietnam War.**
- **Washington sought Beijing's diplomatic support** to secure a strategic and face-saving exit from the conflict.
- **China used the opportunity to improve ties with the U.S.** and strengthen its global political and economic influence.
- The situation is **often compared to present geopolitical tensions, where the United States may again require China's assistance** during a major international crisis.

2. Trump and the Iran Crisis

- The **U.S.-Iran conflict is presented as the central issue during Donald Trump's Beijing visit.**
- Iran has used asymmetric tactics and pressure in the Strait of Hormuz to counter the U.S.
- **Rising oil prices and disrupted energy supplies have increased** global economic pressure.
- Trump **faces declining domestic approval and political pressure before Congressional midterm elections.**
- The U.S. is searching for a face-saving diplomatic exit from the crisis.

3. China's Influence over Iran

- **China is Iran's largest economic partner** and purchases more than 80% of Iranian oil exports.

- **Extensive trade and energy relations have given Beijing** significant economic and strategic influence over Tehran.
- Pakistan, a close Chinese ally, reportedly keeps Beijing informed about developments in the U.S.-Iran negotiations.
- Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi's recent visit to Beijing highlighted China's growing diplomatic role in the Iran crisis.

4. Escalating Diplomatic and Strategic Tensions

- Iran **adopted a tougher stance after consultations** with China.
- Tehran **demanded reparations, sanctions relief, security guarantees, and closure of U.S. regional bases.**
- China and Russia threatened to veto a U.S.-backed UNSC resolution on Hormuz.
- Economic, military, and diplomatic pressures have complicated Washington's position.

5. China's Possible Strategy and Global Implications

- **China may use the prolonged Gulf crisis to gain concessions** from the United States.
- Beijing **could demand easing of tariffs, sanctions, and technology restrictions.**
- Taiwan may emerge as a major bargaining issue during negotiations.
- **China may position itself as a mediator or guarantor** in any future settlement with Iran.
- Thus the Beijing summit could become a major geopolitical turning point similar to the 1972 U.S.-China rapprochement.

Why did NTA's 'Zero Error' policy fail?

Prelims: General Studies Paper - 1
Economic and Social Development-Sustainable Development, Poverty, Inclusion, Demographics, Social Sector Initiatives, etc.

Mains: General Studies - 2
Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

1. NEET 2026 Controversy

- The National Testing Agency (NTA) announced a **re-test** for **NEET 2026** after admitting the exam was **“compromised.”**
- Around **22 lakh medical aspirants** had appeared for the exam.
- The decision **triggered protests and criticism** from students and organisations like the Federation of All India Medical Association (**FAIMA**).
- FAIMA approached the **Supreme Court** demanding either:
 - ➔ **replacement of NTA**, or
 - ➔ **major structural reforms.**

2. Earlier NEET Paper Leak Issues

- **Paper leak allegations** and exam irregularities are not new in NEET.
- In **NEET-UG 2024**:
 - ➔ **67 students** scored full marks, compared to only **2 in 2023** and **none in 2022.**
 - ➔ This caused massive **rank inflation** and competition for limited seats.
- Around **13 lakh students qualified** for only **1.1 lakh MBBS seats.**
- Investigations later revealed that **155 students** allegedly benefited from leaked papers.
- Despite student demands, **no re-exam** was conducted in 2024.

3. Failure of NTA's “Zero Error” Promise

- After the 2024 controversy, senior IAS officer **Subodh Kumar Singh** was **removed as NTA Director General.**
- NTA functioned for over a year without a **full-time chief.**
- In 2026, new chief **Abhishek Singh** promised a **“Zero Error, Zero Tolerance”** policy.
- NTA claimed strong security measures such as:
 - ➔ **GPS-enabled vehicles**
 - ➔ **CCTV surveillance**
 - ➔ **Biometric authentication**
 - ➔ **Metal detector frisking**

➔ Centralised monitoring systems

- It also blocked **120 Telegram channels** spreading fake papers and rumours.
- However, the Rajasthan Police found that a **“guess paper”** containing **120 out of 410 questions** had circulated nearly a month before the exam.

4. Recommendations of the Radhakrishnan Committee

- After the 2024 controversy, the **Ministry of Education formed a committee headed by** former Indian Space Research Organisation chairman **K. Radhakrishnan.**
- The committee identified the **pen-and-paper model** as a major **security risk.**
- It recommended:
 - ➔ Shifting NEET to **Computer-Based Testing (CBT)**, and
 - ➔ Using **computer-assisted secure printing systems.**
- **NTA has not fully implemented these recommendations.**
- NTA currently has the capacity to conduct CBT for only **1.5 lakh students per day.**
- In 2026, it had only **552 CBT centres**, mainly used for **JEE** and **CUET** exams.
- Officials said discussions on **shifting NEET online** have continued for nearly **five years**, but **no major progress has been made.**

What has the IMD announced ahead of this year's monsoon?

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

1. IMD's New Block-Level Monsoon Forecast System

- The India Meteorological Department (**IMD**) launched a new system to provide **block-level monsoon forecasts** for the first time.

- The system currently covers:
 - ➔ **15 States**
 - ➔ **1 Union Territory**
 - ➔ **3,196 blocks** (about half of India's total blocks).
- Earlier, monsoon forecasts were available only at the **State** or **district** level.

2. Why Block-Level Forecasts are Important

- The **Indian monsoon** is highly **uneven and patchy**.
- Even if the monsoon reaches a district, **many villages or blocks may still remain dry**.
- District-level forecasts are often not useful for farmers deciding:
 - ➔ **when to sow crops**
 - ➔ **when to prepare fields**
- **Hyper-local forecasts** help farmers make better agricultural decisions and reduce crop risks.

3. How the New Forecasting System Works

- The new system combines:
 - ➔ **AI-based analysis**
 - ➔ Nearly **100 years of IMD weather data**
 - ➔ **Global weather models**
 - ➔ Two forecasting models are **blended together** to improve accuracy.
- The framework was developed by the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (**IITM Pune**).
- It provides **probabilistic forecasts** for the next **four weeks**.
- The selected States belong to the **monsoon core zone**, where agriculture depends heavily on rainfall.

4. Challenges and Broader Significance

- The system faces a major test in **2026** because:
 - ➔ An **El Niño** event is developing,
 - ➔ Rainfall from July onwards may be **below normal**.
- Forecasting a **weak and irregular monsoon** is more difficult than predicting a strong one.

- IMD also launched a special **10-day monsoon forecast model** for Uttar Pradesh with a very high **1 km resolution**.
- This became possible due to Uttar Pradesh's large network of **automatic weather stations**.
- The broader goal is to:
 - ➔ Make weather forecasts more **agriculture-oriented**,
 - ➔ Combine **AI with traditional weather models**,
 - ➔ Eventually expand **block-level forecasting across India**.

KEYWORDS

Appointment of the CBI Director

- The appointment of the **Director of Central Bureau of Investigation** is governed by the **Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946**, as amended by the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013.
- The **CBI Director** is appointed by the **Central Government** on the recommendation of a **three-member Appointment Committee** comprising the **Prime Minister**, the **Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha**, and the **Chief Justice of India** or a **Supreme Court judge** nominated by the **CJI**.
- In the absence of a **recognised Leader of Opposition**, the **leader of the single largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha** is included in the committee.
- The 2021 amendments to the **Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act, 1946** empower the **Central Government** to extend the **tenure of the CBI Director** beyond the initial **two-year term** through **annual extensions**, subject to a maximum total tenure of five years.

Polyendocrine Metabolic Ovarian Syndrome (PMOS)

- The **Endocrine Society** (an international organisation of scientists and physicians working on hormone-related disorders) has proposed renaming **Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS)** as **Polyendocrine Metabolic Ovarian Syndrome (PMOS)**.

- Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) is a **hormonal and metabolic disorder affecting women of reproductive age**.
- The new term PMOS highlights **the condition's impact on endocrine, metabolic, and reproductive systems**.
- The syndrome is **associated with irregular menstrual cycles, infertility, insulin resistance, obesity, and diabetes**.
- The renaming aims to improve understanding, diagnosis, and treatment of the disorder worldwide.

National Testing Agency (NTA)

- The **National Testing Agency (NTA)** was established by the Ministry of Education as an **independent, autonomous, and self-sustaining** testing organisation under the **Societies Registration Act, 1860**.
- It conducts **transparent, efficient, and international-standard examinations** for admissions and fellowships in **higher educational institutions**.
- The NTA aims to improve **equity and quality in education** through **research-based, fair, and reliable** testing systems, ensuring **error-free** examination processes from **test preparation to evaluation**.

Place in News

Leatherback Turtle Sanctuary, Megapode Sanctuary & Coral Sanctuary

- In October 2022, the **Andaman and Nicobar Administration notified three new wildlife sanctuaries** in the southern Nicobar Islands.
- The Leatherback Turtle Sanctuary was declared on parts of Little Nicobar Island (LNI) to **protect important nesting sites of leatherback turtles (IUCN: Vulnerable)**.
- The Megapode Sanctuary covers the entire Menchal Island for the conservation of **the endemic Nicobar Megapode bird (IUCN: Vulnerable)**.

- The Coral Sanctuary was **established around the whole of Meroe Island to conserve coral reef ecosystems**.
- These **sanctuaries were created as part of the environmental clearance conditions** linked to the proposed Great Nicobar transshipment port project.
- The **Nicobarese tribal council opposed the move, stating that the declarations were made without proper consultation** and could affect their traditional access to the islands

Species In News

Najash rionegrina

- Najash rionegrina was an **ancient rear-limbed snake** that lived around **95 million years ago**.
- A well-preserved fossil discovered in Argentina is helping scientists better understand the **evolution of snakes**.
- Its skull revealed the presence of a **cheekbone (jugal bone)**, a feature that has almost completely disappeared in modern snakes.
- Researchers also found skull and spinal characteristics suggesting that Najash spent part of its time **underground**.
- Scientists believe it was a **large-bodied snake**, similar to present-day Python species. Like modern pythons, it may have **hidden underground** while hunting on the surface.

