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MCQs

THE HINDU

How exposed is India to foreign tech?

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.

Why in Focus?

- **SpaceX's reported restriction of Ukraine's Starshield network** highlights the risks of relying on foreign-controlled technology.
- India's dependence on foreign satellite networks raises concerns about **strategic autonomy** and **national security**.

Key Highlights:

- **Starlink, OneWeb and Jio's satellite venture have Indian licences**, but foreign operators may retain network control.
- India developed **NavIC** to reduce dependence on foreign navigation systems, but **only three satellites provide navigation signals**.

NavIC (Navigation with Indian Constellation): India's indigenous satellite navigation system, developed by ISRO, to provide positioning and timing services over India and surrounding

regions.

- Indian organisations rely on foreign **cloud providers** such as Amazon Web Services (AWS), Microsoft Azure and Google Cloud, whose management systems may remain under foreign control.
- The **CrowdStrike update 2024** disrupted Indian airlines, airports and financial firms, exposing software vulnerabilities.

CrowdStrike Update (2024): A faulty software update released by CrowdStrike in July 2024 caused a global IT outage, disrupting airlines, airports, banks and other essential services, highlighting the risks of software dependence and inadequate testing.

- **UPI reduces dependence on Visa and Mastercard**, but foreign-linked banking networks remain vulnerable to sanctions.
- US sanctions after India's **1998 nuclear tests** disrupted helicopter engine supplies, forcing it to seek French alternatives.
- India was the **second-largest arms importer during 2021–2025**, while dependence on foreign engines also affects the **Tejas programme**.

Tejas Programme: India's indigenous programme to develop the Tejas Light Combat Aircraft, led by Aeronautical Development Agency with manufacturing by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited.

Implications:

- **Critical infrastructure** can be disrupted by



foreign service restrictions.

- **Strategic autonomy** and national security are weakened by dependence on foreign technologies.
- **Essential services** may be affected by software failures and cybersecurity vulnerabilities.
- **Supply-chain risks** can increase costs and create dependence on foreign suppliers.

Way Forward:

- **Indigenous satellite systems** should be strengthened through NavIC and domestic satellite communication capabilities.
- **Domestic cloud infrastructure** should be developed to reduce dependence on foreign management systems.
- **Cybersecurity** should be strengthened through open-source software and rigorous security testing.
- **Defence indigenisation** should be promoted while diversifying critical suppliers.
- **Digital payment resilience** should be improved through indigenous systems and safeguards against cross-border financial disruptions.

Mains Question:

Examine how dependence on foreign-controlled technologies affects India's strategic autonomy. Suggest measures to strengthen digital sovereignty and technological self-reliance. (10marks, 150words)

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in dire straits

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.

Why in Focus?

- Saudi Arabia faces simultaneous maritime threats from **Iran near Hormuz** and **Houthi forces near Bab al-Mandeb**.
- Disruptions threaten global energy supplies,

trade and the safety of around **nine million Indians in the Gulf**.

Strait of Hormuz: Connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and is vital for global oil shipments.

Bab al-Mandeb: Connects the Red Sea with the Gulf of Aden and is crucial for Europe-Asia trade.

Key Highlights:

- **Saudi Arabia and Yemen have long-standing tensions.** Saudi Arabia **backs anti-Houthi forces**, while the Houthis oppose its intervention.
- **Saudi Arabia is predominantly Sunni**, while the Houthis follow Zaydi Shia Islam.
- **Iran supports the Houthis**, but they retain their own interests and are not fully controlled by Tehran.
- **Iran's actions at Hormuz and Houthi attacks near Bab al-Mandeb** threaten Saudi security and oil transportation.
- **Saudi Arabia faces difficulties defeating the Houthis militarily**, risking prolonged economic losses and regional instability.
- **India's interests include energy security, trade, fertiliser supplies and expatriate safety**, given its Gulf energy dependence and large Indian diaspora.

Implications:

- **Energy prices** may rise due to disrupted oil supplies, increasing global inflation.
- **Trade balance** may worsen because of higher oil and fertiliser import costs.
- **Shipping costs** may increase due to higher freight charges and insurance premiums.
- **Indian diaspora** may face security risks, potentially requiring evacuations.
- **Regional stability** and maritime security may deteriorate due to prolonged conflict.

Way Forward:

- **Diplomatic dialogue** among Saudi Arabia, Iran and Yemen's conflicting parties should be promoted.
- **Ceasefire restoration** and negotiations to lift



blockades are essential.

- **Energy diversification** and stronger strategic petroleum reserves can reduce supply risks.
- **Diaspora protection** requires evacuation plans and consular support for Indians in the Gulf.
- **Maritime cooperation** should be strengthened to protect shipping and freedom of navigation.

Mains Question:

Examine how instability around the Strait of Hormuz and Bab al-Mandeb affects India's energy security and economic stability. (15 marks, 250 words).

The struggle to preserve a fair international law

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.

Why in Focus?

- South African jurist **Navi Pillay receiving the 2026 Nobel Peace Prize** has renewed attention to international law and human rights, amid concerns that powerful countries increasingly ignore international rules.

Key Highlights:

- The **liberal international legal order** emerged after the Second World War, emphasising human rights, international cooperation and peaceful dispute resolution.
- **International law prohibits the unlawful use of force and protects human rights**, but ongoing wars expose weaknesses in its enforcement.
- The term **"rules-based order"** is criticised for being vague, as it does not clearly specify which rules apply or whether they are legally binding.
- **Authoritarian international law** refers to the use or reshaping of international rules by authoritarian governments to protect their

power rather than promote justice and human rights.

- Governments may invoke **state sovereignty** to resist international scrutiny and oppose international courts such as the **International Criminal Court (ICC)**.

International Criminal Court (ICC): A permanent international court established by the Rome Statute (1998) to prosecute individuals for genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and the crime of aggression.

Implications:

- **Credibility of international law** weakens when states comply selectively with international rules.
- **Human rights violations** may increase when accountability mechanisms fail to prevent impunity.
- **Sovereignty claims** can shield governments from legitimate international scrutiny.
- **Weak enforcement powers** limit international institutions' ability to resolve disputes and prevent violations.
- **Declining trust** in multilateral institutions undermines international cooperation and global stability.

Way Forward:

- **Institutional independence** should be strengthened to ensure effective international action.
- **Accountability mechanisms** should address violations of international humanitarian and human rights law.
- **Legal compliance** with the UN Charter and treaty obligations must be promoted.
- **International cooperation** should respect sovereignty while protecting legitimate international interests.
- **Civil society and independent media** should promote transparency and accountability.

Mains Question:

"The effectiveness of international law depends not only on its rules but also on states' willingness to comply with them." Examine this statement



in the context of rising authoritarianism and suggest measures to strengthen multilateralism. (10marks,150words)

KEYWORDS

AUSTRAHIND 2026

- The 5th edition of the India–Australia joint military exercise **AUSTRAHIND 2026** commenced on 19 October at Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.
- The exercise is being conducted from **19 October to 1 November 2026**, with approximately 120 personnel each from the Indian and Australian armies.
- Its theme is **“Joint Sub-Conventional Operations in Island and Coastal Environment under Chapter VII of the UN Mandate.”**
- The Indian contingent includes troops from the **Garhwal Rifles**, while the Australian contingent comprises personnel from **13 Brigade**.
- For the first time, **New Zealand** is participating as **an observer**; the exercise focuses on interoperability, coastal and island operations.

Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation

- **CORSIA** (Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation) is the first global market-based measure adopted by the **International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)** to address CO₂ emissions from international aviation.
- Its objective is to achieve **carbon-neutral growth from 2020 levels** and support ICAO's long-term goal of net-zero emissions by 2050.
- CORSIA applies only to **international flights**; domestic aviation is excluded.
- The scheme uses carbon offsetting and measures such as **Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF)** and technological improvements to reduce aviation emissions.
- **India opted out of the voluntary pilot (2021–2023) and first (2024–2026)**

phases; under the framework described, **offsetting requirements for Indian airlines become mandatory from 2027**.

Index of Core Industries (ICI)

- The **Index of Core Industries (ICI)** is a monthly index released by the **Office of the Economic Adviser**, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, to track industrial production.
- The core industries traditionally comprised **eight sectors**, accounting for 40.27% of the weight in the **Index of Industrial Production (IIP)**.
- In 2026, the ICI series was revised to a **2022–23 base year**, and **Iron Ore** was added as the ninth industry.
- The other eight sectors are **Refinery Products, Electricity, Steel, Coal, Crude Oil, Natural Gas, Cement and Fertilizers**.
- Under the revised series, **Electricity** has the **highest weightage at 30.93%**, followed by Refinery Products at 22.57%.

Rashtriya Ekta Diwas (National Unity Day)

- Rashtriya Ekta Diwas (National Unity Day) is observed annually on **31 October** to commemorate the birth anniversary of **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel**.
- Sardar Patel, **India's first Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister**, played a crucial role in the **integration of princely states** into the Indian Union.
- Rashtriya Ekta Diwas was introduced in **2014** to promote national unity, integrity and security.
- The **Statue of Unity**, dedicated to Sardar Patel, is located at **Ekta Nagar, Gujarat**, near the Sardar Sarovar Dam.
- The observance includes the **Run for Unity**, pledge-taking ceremonies and other activities promoting national integration.

Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)

- GRAP is an **emergency framework to control air pollution in Delhi-NCR through graded measures** based on Air Quality Index levels.
- GRAP was **approved by the Supreme Court in 2016 and notified in 2017**.
- The **Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM)** oversees its implementation in coordination with relevant authorities.
- It has **four stages**: Stage I-Poor (201–300), Stage II-Very Poor (301–400), Stage III-Severe (401–450) and Stage IV-Severe+ (above 450).
- Measures include **dust control, construction restrictions, curbs on polluting vehicles and industrial emission controls**.

Places in News

Denisova Cave

- Scientists discovered remains of a previously unknown Ice Age mammal, nicknamed **Yak X**, in Denisova Cave, Siberia, using ancient DNA analysis.
- Denisova Cave is located in the **Altai Mountains of southern Siberia, Russia**.
- **Yak X** was an **extinct bovine species closely related to modern yaks**, whose evolutionary lineage diverged from modern yak ancestors around 400,000 years ago.
- The oldest identified remains date to around **250,000–200,000 years ago**.
- The cave is famous for the discovery of **Denisovans**, an extinct human lineage related to Neanderthals and modern humans.



Species In News

Bryde's Whale

- A report highlighted that whales **continue to wash ashore on Gujarat's beaches**, but public awareness and monitoring have declined.
- The **Bryde's whale (Balaenoptera edeni)** is a baleen whale belonging to the family **Balaenopteridae**.
- It is found mainly in **tropical and subtropical waters** across the world's oceans.
- It feeds primarily on **small fish and krill** and generally inhabits warm waters throughout the year.
- The **IUCN Red List** classifies Bryde's whale globally as **Least Concern (LC)**.

