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THE HINDU

Not 'delulu' — an AI tutor for every child in India

Prelims : General Studies Paper I

Indian Polity and Governance-Constitution, Political System, Panchayati Raj, Public Policy, Rights Issues, etc.

Mains: General Studies 2

Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Why in Focus?

- India's test-preparation market is expanding rapidly, raising concerns about high coaching costs and unequal access.
- The article proposes using Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) to provide affordable, personalised learning to students.

Key Highlights

- India's test-preparation market is estimated at \$14.8 billion in FY26 and projected to reach \$23–26 billion by FY30.
- Around 2 lakh coaching centres operate across India, while 27% of students were taking or had taken private coaching, according to a 2025 National Statistical Office (NSO) survey.
- The proposed model is "public rails, private engines": the government provides digital infrastructure, standards and trust, while

private firms and teachers provide content and mentoring.

- The model could initially focus on Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) and National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (Undergraduate) [NEET-UG].
- AI can provide personalised learning, doubt-solving, adaptive practice and recommendations based on individual student needs.
- Aadhaar/DigiLocker, APAAR ID, open content registries and portable learning records can create an interoperable education ecosystem.

APAAR ID stands for Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry ID. It is a unique 12-digit student ID under India's "One Nation, One Student ID" initiative, designed to digitally store and manage students' academic records.

Implications

- Can reduce dependence on expensive private coaching and improve educational equity.
- Personalised AI tutoring can improve learning outcomes and examination preparation.
- Digital and connectivity gaps may exclude students without devices or reliable internet.
- Large-scale use of student data raises concerns about privacy, consent and cybersecurity.
- Open platforms could increase competition and innovation among teachers and ed-tech providers.



Way Forward

- **Build an open and interoperable education network** instead of a single government coaching platform.
- **Ensure free, multilingual and data-light access**, especially for rural and disadvantaged students.
- **Establish strong content accreditation, quality ratings** and outcome-based evaluation.
- **Ensure data portability, privacy and student ownership** of learning records.
- **Use AI to complement teachers, not replace them**, while keeping the government focused on building the digital infrastructure.

Mains Question

“How can Artificial Intelligence and Digital Public Infrastructure democratise access to quality test preparation in India? Discuss the opportunities and challenges of such an approach.” (250 Words)

The return of profanation as a new political language

Prelims : General Studies Paper I

Indian Polity and Governance-Constitution, Political System, Panchayati Raj, Public Policy, Rights Issues, etc.

Mains: General Studies 2

Departments of the Government; pressure groups and formal/informal associations and their role in the Polity.

Why In Focus

- The recent **student protest at Jantar Mantar** has raised questions about the role of **informal politics, dissent and unconventional forms of political expression** in Indian democracy.

Key Highlights

- Philosopher **Giorgio Agamben** uses the idea of **profanation** to describe how restricted or sacred things are brought back into common and ordinary use.
- The protest expressed **profanation through informality, casualness, and fearlessness**.

◆ Mainstream media labelled these expressions as **“anarchism”** and a **“collapse of political civility.”**

- The student protest used **humour, satire, memes, and informal expressions** to challenge established political authority.
- India’s freedom movement also used **non-cooperation, boycotts, public burning of foreign goods, and renunciation of titles** to challenge British authority.
- **Humour and satire** can become political tools when conventional forms of expression are restricted or suppressed.
- The protest reflects the growing role of **students and non-party groups** in demanding greater **accountability and transparency** in governance.
- Critics argue that **informal, street-based, and single-issue politics** may have limited capacity to produce lasting political change.
- Supporters argue that **informal political action** can become an important tool when formal political opposition fails to deliver results.
- The protest highlights the need to recognise **informal political participation** as part of democratic expression rather than judging democracy only through electoral outcomes.

Implications

- The rise of informal political movements could **broaden democratic participation** beyond established political parties and institutions.
- Excessive dismissal of unconventional dissent may **weaken democratic spaces for political expression**.
- Informal movements may increase **public accountability** by challenging established political authority through new forms of communication.

Way Forward

- Democratic institutions should provide **space for peaceful and unconventional forms of political dissent**.
- Informal movements should combine **public mobilisation with constructive engagement with formal institutions**.



- Political debate should distinguish between **peaceful political expression** and **genuinely abusive or violent conduct**.

Mains Question

Q. Examine the concept of “profanation” in the context of informal political expression. How can such forms of dissent influence democratic participation and challenge established political authority in India? (250 words)

Global space norms find a firm footing in India’s new re-entry rules

Prelims: General Paper 1

Current events of national and international importance.

Mains: General studies 3

Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.

Why in Focus?

- India observed its **third National Space Day** on August 23, marking three years since the successful landing of **Chandrayaan-3’s Vikram lander** near the Moon’s south pole.
- With the rapid growth of private space activities and increasing satellites in orbit, **IN-SPACe has issued India’s first guidelines for planned re-entry (return of a space object from space into the Earth’s atmosphere)**.

Key Highlights

- The growing number of satellites in **Low Earth Orbit (LEO)** has increased the need for safe disposal and controlled re-entry of space objects.
- IN-SPACe (Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre)** approval is now required for planned re-entry by Indian entities, whether the re-entry occurs inside or outside India.

IN-SPACe (Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre) was established in **2020** as an **autonomous, single-window agency under the Department of Space (DoS)**. Its objective is to **promote, enable and regulate private-sector participation in the space sector**, including authorising space activities and facilitating access to **ISRO facilities and expertise**.

- Foreign companies planning re-entry over Indian territory must use an **Indian-incorporated entity**, such as a subsidiary or joint venture, which will be responsible for complying with Indian laws.
- A re-entry is considered planned when an object is designed to **survive atmospheric re-entry** or is deliberately directed towards a specific landing or impact area.
- Operators must ensure that the expected **casualty risk remains below 1 in 10,000** and must assess fragmentation, debris, flight paths and components that may survive re-entry.
- IN-SPACe will re-check re-entry parameters around **three months before the operation**. Operators must also provide advance warnings to aircraft and ships in the affected area.
- The guidelines convert international principles on **space sustainability** into domestic requirements related to risk assessment, insurance and third-party liability.

Implications

- The rapid increase in satellites and space activities can lead to greater **orbital congestion and space debris**.
- A re-entering object may break apart and affect **airspace, maritime areas or another country’s territory**, creating cross-border concerns.
- Private space activities can create an **accountability gap**, as the company operating a spacecraft may be different from the state where damage occurs.
- Poorly managed re-entry can threaten the **long-term sustainability of outer space** and increase risks to satellites and human activities.



- Under the **Space Liability Convention, 1972**, the launching state can face **absolute liability** for certain damage caused by its space objects.
- India therefore needs to balance **space-sector innovation and commercialisation** with safety, national security and environmental sustainability.

Way Forward

- Strengthen IN-SPACe's technical capacity for **risk assessment, space-object tracking and re-entry monitoring**.
- Develop a comprehensive domestic framework covering **space activities, liability, insurance and space-debris management**.
- Improve international cooperation through the **United Nations and the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee (IADC)**.
- Encourage **Post-Mission Disposal (PMD)** and controlled de-orbiting to reduce the risk of uncontrolled re-entry and space debris.
- Maintain **clear and predictable regulations** so that safety and sustainability are ensured without discouraging private investment and innovation.

Mains Question

Q. With the rapid expansion of commercial space activities, planned re-entry of space objects has emerged as both a technological and governance challenge. Discuss the significance of India's IN-SPACe guidelines in ensuring space sustainability, accountability and liability management. (15 marks, 250 words)

Vande Mataram and the right to dissent

Prelims: General 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.

Why in Focus

- Parliament amended the **Prevention of**

Insults to National Honour Act, 1971 to extend similar criminal protection to **Vande Mataram** as the national anthem. The move raises questions about **fundamental rights, freedom of conscience and national symbols**.

Key Highlights

- **Jana Gana Mana** was declared the National Anthem in 1950, while **Vande Mataram** was given equal honour because of its role in India's freedom struggle.
- The **Constituent Assembly did not give Vande Mataram the status of a national anthem**. Its official recognition came through a statement by Dr. Rajendra Prasad on **January 24, 1950**.
- In **1937**, the Congress Working Committee decided that only the **first two stanzas** should be used at official gatherings because the later stanzas contained devotional references to Hindu goddesses.
- The **2026 amendment** protects both the national anthem and national song from intentional prevention or disturbance during their singing. It **does not make singing compulsory** or prescribe that all six stanzas must be sung.
- The amendment provides punishment of **up to three years' imprisonment, fine, or both**. Repeat offenders face a **minimum one-year imprisonment**.
- In **Bijoe Emmanuel v. State of Kerala (1986)**, the Supreme Court protected the right of individuals to remain silent during the national anthem when their silence arose from a **genuine religious conscience**.
- The Court held that **Article 51A fundamental duties cannot override Fundamental Rights** under Part III. Respect for national symbols therefore does not automatically mean compulsory participation.

Implications

- The issue creates a balance between **respect for national symbols and freedom of conscience under Article 25**.
- If the law is interpreted as forcing citizens to participate in a devotional version of the song, it could raise concerns regarding **religious freedom and secularism**.
- There may be confusion between **not**

participating and **intentionally disrupting** a performance. The amendment criminalises disruption, not respectful non-participation.

- The controversy highlights the importance of **constitutional morality**, especially when national identity intersects with religious beliefs.
- Excessive or selective use of criminal law could create a **chilling effect on freedom of expression and individual conscience**.
- The issue also shows the continuing importance of **judicial review** in maintaining the balance between national interests and Fundamental Rights.

Way Forward

- Clearly distinguish between **respectful non-participation and deliberate disruption** while enforcing the law.
- Ensure that criminal provisions are not interpreted as creating a **compulsion to sing or participate**.
- Protect **freedom of conscience under Article 25** while maintaining respect for national symbols.
- Provide clear administrative guidelines for schools, public institutions and official functions to prevent arbitrary enforcement.
- Follow the constitutional principles laid down in **Bijoe Emmanuel**, particularly the protection of **silence, conscience and peaceful dissent**.

Mains Question

Q. The protection of national symbols must be balanced with individual freedom of conscience. Discuss the constitutional principles involved in the recent extension of legal protection to Vande Mataram in light of the Supreme Court's judgment in *Bijoe Emmanuel v. State of Kerala*. (15 marks, 250 words)

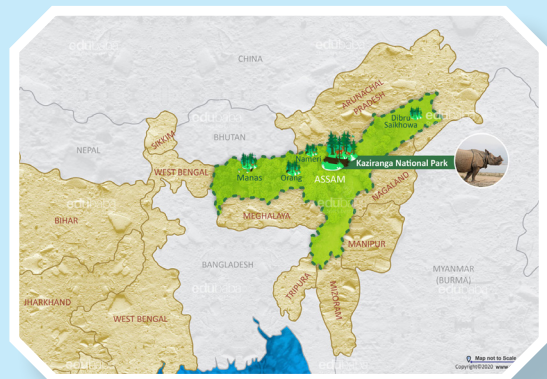
KEYWORDS

Shigellosis

- Shigellosis is an **infectious disease caused by Shigella bacteria and primarily affects the intestinal tract**.
- It **spreads mainly through the faecal-oral route**, including consumption of contaminated food or water and person-to-person contact.
- **Common symptoms include diarrhoea, fever, abdominal cramps and the passage of blood or mucus in stools**.
- **Children under five years of age are particularly vulnerable** to Shigellosis, especially in settings with poor sanitation and hygiene.
- **Prevention focuses on safe drinking water, proper sanitation, hand hygiene and hygienic food handling**, while severe or dysentery-like cases may require appropriate antibiotic treatment.

Places in News

Kaziranga National Park



- **Kaziranga National Park** is located in **Assam** and is one of the last largely **undisturbed natural areas** in northeastern India.
- It is situated in the **Brahmaputra Valley floodplain** and covers about **42,996 hectares**.



- The park is home to the **world's largest population of the one-horned rhinoceros**, making it a major conservation success.
- It also supports significant populations of **tigers, elephants, wild water buffalo, bears**, and the **Ganges River dolphin**.
- Kaziranga is an important habitat for **migratory birds** and has rich **aquatic and terrestrial biodiversity**.
- The **Brahmaputra river system** creates dynamic processes such as **riverbank erosion, sedimentation, formation of new land and water bodies**, and changes between **grasslands and woodlands**.
- The park has strong legal protection under the **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**, and was declared a **Tiger Reserve** in 2007.

Lake Bogoria



- **Lake Bogoria**, along with other lakes in **Kenya's Rift Valley**, is currently in the news because its **water levels have surged to heights not seen in half a century** due to extreme rainfall.
- It is a **saline, alkaline (soda) lake** located in a **volcanic region of the Great Rift Valley in Kenya**, creating a highly specialized and unique ecological environment.

- The lake is renowned for its **intense geothermal activity**, hosting **over 200 hot springs** and the **largest concentration of true geysers in Africa** along its shores.
- It holds immense global ecological significance, being a designated **Ramsar wetland of international importance** and part of the **Kenya Lake System UNESCO World Heritage site**.
- The highly alkaline waters support abundant growth of **blue-green algae (cyanobacteria)**, which serves as the **primary food source** for one of the **world's largest populations of Lesser Flamingos**.

Kinmen Islands



- **Kinmen** is in the news after **Taiwan's President visited the frontline island** to mark the anniversary of the **1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis**, reaffirming Taiwan's resolve never to yield territory to China.
- It is a **group of islands administered by Taiwan (Republic of China)** but geographically situated **just a few kilometres off the coast of southeastern mainland China**, near **Xiamen, Fujian province**.
- Because of its **extreme proximity to the Chinese mainland**, Kinmen functions as a **heavily fortified military outpost** and a crucial **strategic buffer in the Taiwan Strait**, a body of water that connects the **East China Sea to the north** and the **South China Sea to the south**.

- The island has been under **Taiwanese control** since the end of the Chinese Civil War in 1949 and was a **primary target** during the 1958 Second Taiwan Strait Crisis.
- It remains one of the most sensitive **geopolitical flashpoints in East Asia**, symbolizing **Taiwan's defensive resolve** and acting as a frequent site for **cross-strait tensions and maritime disputes**.

Species In News

Greater One-Horned Rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*)

- The **Greater One-Horned Rhinoceros (Indian Rhino)** is the **largest of the three Asian rhino species** and is mainly found in **India and Nepal**.
- It has a **single horn** and thick, **armour-like skin**; adults can weigh up to **2,800 kg** and live for about **45-50 years**.
- It mainly inhabits **floodplain grasslands, swamps, and riverine forests**, particularly in the **Terai region**.
- In India, it is found mainly in **Assam, West Bengal, and Uttar Pradesh**; **over 70% of its population is in Assam's Kaziranga National Park**.
- The species declined sharply due to **hunting and habitat-related pressures**, with only around **200 individuals** remaining by the early 20th century, but it has since made a major **conservation recovery**.
- As a **mega-herbivore**, it helps maintain ecosystems by **grazing grasslands** and creating **waterholes through wallowing**.
- *Rhinoceros unicornis* is classified as **Vulnerable** on the **IUCN Red List**.
- It is protected in **eight protected areas in India: Kaziranga, Pobitora, Manas, Orang, Jaldapara, Gorumara, Dudhwa, and Katarniaghat**.
 - ◆ **Four protected areas in Nepal- Chitwan, Bardia, Shuklaphanta, and Parsa.**

