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MCQs

THE HINDU

In the crossfire: on India and the Saudi- Houthi 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.

Why in Focus?

- Rising tensions between **Saudi Arabia and the Houthis** threaten Indians in the region and India's energy security.

Key Highlights:

- The conflict began when the **Houthis captured Sana'a in 2014**, followed by Saudi Arabia's military intervention in 2015.

Houthis: An armed movement in Yemen associated with the Zaydi Shia tradition.

- Despite Saudi airstrikes, the Houthis **strengthened their control and military capabilities**.
- The **2022 ceasefire** reportedly collapsed in July 2026, leading to renewed Houthi attacks on Saudi infrastructure.
- Attacks on Saudi oil facilities **threaten regional**

stability and global oil supplies.

- Wider conflict involving **Iran, Israel and the U.S.** could affect India's energy supplies and maritime trade.
- India **needs to protect its citizens, secure energy supplies** and support diplomatic efforts.

Implications:

- The safety of Indians** living in the region may be threatened.
- Oil supply disruptions** may increase India's import costs.
- Conflict** may disrupt shipping and increase transportation costs.
- Prolonged conflict** may affect remittances sent by Indians working in West Asia.
- Wider regional conflict** may threaten India's strategic interests.

Way Forward:

- Prepare emergency and evacuation plans** for Indian citizens.
- Engage regional countries** to reduce tensions.
- Diversify oil sources** and strengthen strategic petroleum reserves.
- Work with regional partners** to protect shipping routes.
- Promote dialogue** and a peaceful settlement.



Mains Question:

“Conflicts in West Asia pose challenges to India’s energy security, diaspora and regional interests.” Discuss the implications and suggest measures India should adopt.(150words, 10marks)

BJP has no bad option, Congress has no good option

Prelims: General Studies Paper - 1

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?

- Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge has **sought an all-party meeting to discuss the Centre’s proposed delimitation exercise** before legislation is introduced in Parliament.
- The debate centres on increasing the Lok Sabha’s strength to **850 seats** and **protecting the representation of southern States**.

Key Highlights:

- **Delimitation** involves redrawing constituency boundaries and readjusting seat allocation.
- **Articles 81 and 82** deal with the **composition of the Lok Sabha and the readjustment of seats following the Census**.

Article 81: Defines the composition of the House of the People (Lok Sabha).

Article 82: Provides for the readjustment of seat allocation and constituency boundaries after each Census, subject to constitutional provisions. Parliament may provide for this process through legislation, including the establishment of a **Delimitation Commission**.

- Southern States such as **Kerala and Tamil Nadu** fear losing parliamentary representation **due to population-based redistribution**.
- The **42nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1976**, froze inter-State seat allocation based on the 1971 Census.

- The **84th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2001**, extended the freeze until the first Census after 2026.
- The **106th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2023**, provides for one-third reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies, subject to the prescribed census and delimitation process.
- Delimitation **requires transparent and impartial criteria to ensure fair constituency boundaries** and equal representation.

Implications:

- **Changes in seat allocation** could alter the balance of political power between States.
- **Population-based redistribution** could increase the influence of more populous States.
- **Regional disparities** could create tensions between northern and southern States.
- **Delimitation can reshape constituency demographics**, influencing voter representation and the responsiveness of elected representatives to local needs.

Way Forward:

- Make the delimitation proposal **transparent** and **allow public debate**.
- Consult **political parties and State governments** before finalising the framework.
- Balance **population-based representation with federal equity**.
- Ensure States are **not unfairly disadvantaged for successfully stabilising their populations**.
- Build **political consensus** on delimitation and women’s reservation.

Mains Question:

“Delimitation must balance population-based representation with federal equity.” Discuss.(250 words, 15 marks)

Falling short: On Marco Rubro”s second visit to India

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?

- U.S. Secretary of State **Marco Rubio** visited India amid strained relations and efforts to improve **trade and strategic cooperation**.
- Key differences include **tariffs, Russian oil imports, immigration and regional security**.

Key Highlights:

- India seeks to **rebuild trust** with the U.S. and strengthen their **strategic partnership**.
- **Trade tensions** remain a challenge, making a **Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA)** important.

Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA): An agreement between two countries to facilitate trade.

- India seeks stronger cooperation through the **Quad** to maintain a **free and open Indo-Pacific**.

Quad: A grouping of India, the U.S., Japan and Australia that cooperates to promote a free and open Indo-Pacific.

- U.S. ties with **Pakistan** and its stance on **Operation Sindoor** raise concerns about India's **security interests**.
- **U.S. visa restrictions** affect Indian professionals and add to bilateral tensions.
- Differences over **Russian oil imports** highlight India's need to protect its **energy security and strategic autonomy**.

Implications:

- **Tariff disputes** could disrupt trade and investment between the two countries.
- **Differences over Pakistan** may complicate strategic cooperation.
- **Pressure over Russian oil imports** could constrain India's energy choices.
- **U.S. immigration restrictions** may adversely affect the Indian diaspora.
- **Continued disagreements** risk weakening bilateral trust.

Way Forward:

- Work towards a mutually beneficial **Bilateral Trade Agreement**.
- Address **tariff and visa issues** through dialogue.
- Make independent decisions on energy imports to protect **strategic autonomy**.
- Improve **Quad cooperation** and Indo-Pacific security.
- Convert shared interests into concrete agreements to **build mutual trust**.

Mains Question:

"Despite shared strategic interests, unresolved economic and geopolitical differences continue to challenge India-U.S. relations." Examine the major challenges and suggest measures to strengthen bilateral ties. (150 words, 10 marks)



KEYWORDS

National Mobile Monitoring System (NMMS)

- The **National Mobile Monitoring System (NMMS) App** was launched in 2021 by the **Ministry of Rural Development** to improve transparency in rural employment programmes.
- The app is used to monitor attendance under the **Viksit Bharat–Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) Act, 2025**, which replaced **MGNREGA** as the rural employment guarantee framework.
- It records workers' attendance through **time-stamped and geo-tagged photographs** at worksites.
- The system aims to **reduce fake attendance and improve monitoring**, although poor internet connectivity and technical glitches may pose challenges.
- It includes **liveness detection** to verify that the **person in front of the camera is a real, live worker, not a dummy image or old photograph**.

Durga Puja

- Durga Puja is celebrated **annually to honour Goddess Durga's victory over the demon Mahishasura**, symbolising the triumph of good over evil.
- The festival is celebrated with great enthusiasm in **West Bengal, Assam, Tripura and other parts of India**, particularly among Bengali communities.
- **Durga Puja in Kolkata** was inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in **2021**.
- The festival is associated with elaborate **pandals, artistic idols, cultural performances and community celebrations**.
- **Vijayadashami (Dashami)** marks the culmination of Durga Puja, symbolising the victory of good over evil and **traditionally involving the immersion of Goddess Durga's idols**.

Starlink Project

- **Starlink** is a satellite internet network developed by **SpaceX**, a private aerospace company, to **provide high-speed internet connectivity worldwide**.
- It uses a large constellation of satellites in **Low Earth Orbit (LEO)**, approximately 550 km above Earth, **reducing communication delays**.
- The project was announced in **January 2015**; the first 60 operational Starlink satellites were launched in **May 2019**.
- Starlink can improve internet access in **remote and rural areas** and **support communication during natural disasters** and emergencies.
- Major concerns include **space debris, satellite collisions and interference with astronomical observations** due to the growing number of satellites.

United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

- The **United Nations Security Council** is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations, established in **1945**, with primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security.
- It has **15 members: five permanent members (China, France, Russia, the UK and the USA)** and **ten non-permanent members** elected by the UN General Assembly for two-year terms.
- The five permanent members hold **veto power**, allowing **any one of them to block a substantive resolution**.
- The UNSC can impose **economic sanctions, establish peacekeeping operations and authorise the use of force** to maintain or restore international peace and security.
- Under the **UN Charter**, **all UN member states are obligated to comply with UNSC decisions**, making it distinct from UN bodies that primarily issue recommendations.
- India has served as a **non-permanent member of the United Nations**

Security Council (UNSC) eight times, most recently in **2021–2022**.

Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC)

- The **Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC)** was established on **1 April 2002** as an attached office of the **Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas** to provide analytical support to the government in the petroleum and natural gas sector.
- Its establishment followed the dismantling of the **Administered Pricing Mechanism (APM)** and the abolition of the **Oil Coordination Committee (OCC)**.
- The organisation maintains a **data bank on India's oil and gas sector**, covering production, consumption, imports and exports.
- The institution assists the government in administering **petroleum subsidy schemes**, including subsidies for domestic LPG and Public Distribution System (PDS) kerosene.

Places in News

Mediterranean Sea

- On 20 October 2026, **British RAF Typhoon jets escorted French Rafale aircraft** during **Exercise Rummy**, a simulated nuclear-strike mission over the Mediterranean Sea
- The **Mediterranean Sea** is an intercontinental sea bordered by Europe to the north, Africa to the south and Asia to the east.
- It connects to the **Atlantic Ocean through the Strait of Gibraltar** and to the Red Sea through the Suez Canal.
- The **Suez Canal**, located in Egypt, connects the Mediterranean Sea with the Red Sea and **is a major route for global trade and energy transportation**.
- The Mediterranean region has a **Mediterranean climate**, characterised by hot, dry summers and mild, wet winters.

- The **Mediterranean Sea** is bordered by **22 countries** across three regions: **Europe (11)**: Spain, France, Italy, Malta, Monaco, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania and Greece; **West Asia (6)**: Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine (Gaza Strip) and Cyprus; **North Africa (5)**: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt.



Line of Actual Control (LAC)

- The Line of Actual Control (LAC) was in news due to the **Ministry of External Affairs acknowledging disturbances** caused by the People's Liberation Army's patrolling behaviour.
- The **Line of Actual Control (LAC)** separates Indian-controlled territory from Chinese-controlled territory and **serves as the de facto boundary between the two countries**.
- The LAC is **not mutually agreed upon or fully demarcated**, leading to differing perceptions of its alignment in several areas.
- The LAC is divided into **three sectors**: Western (Ladakh), Middle (Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand) and Eastern (Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh).
- India estimates the LAC to be approximately **3,488 km long**, while China estimates it at around 2,000 km.
- Unlike the **Line of Control (LoC)** between India and Pakistan, the LAC separates areas controlled by India and China **without a mutually agreed alignment along its entire length**.



West Bank

- The West Bank has witnessed **renewed violence following an attack near Hebron on 23 October 2026**, in which two Israeli soldiers were killed.
- The **West Bank** is a landlocked Palestinian territory in West Asia, located **west of the Jordan River and bordered by Israel and Jordan**.
- The territory, along with the **Gaza Strip**, forms part of the Palestinian territories; East Jerusalem is also **claimed by Palestinians as the capital of a future Palestinian state**.
- Israel captured the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, during the **Six-Day War of 1967**.
- The territory's status **remains a major issue in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict**.
- The **Oslo Accords (1993–1995)** established limited Palestinian self-government through the Palestinian Authority and **divided the West Bank into Areas A, B and C with different levels of Palestinian and Israeli control**.

