

Q1. Discuss the key factors contributing to the low fiscal capacity of local self-governments in India. Also, highlight some innovative financing mechanisms that augment the fiscal resources of local bodies in India.

प्रश्न 1. भारत में स्थानीय स्वशासन संस्थाओं की निम्न राजकोषीय क्षमता के प्रमुख कारणों पर चर्चा कीजिए। साथ ही, स्थानीय निकायों के वित्तीय संसाधनों को बढ़ाने वाले कुछ नवाचारी वित्तीय तंत्रों को उजागर कीजिए।

(Answer in 150 words)

Local self governments were provided Constitutional status by 73rd & 74th Constitutional Amendment Act 1992, yet their fiscal capacity remain weak.

Factors responsible for low fiscal capacity

① Funds are not adequately devolved by state governments. due to lack of resources

② Taxation Powers are limited as very few functions are decentralised by states under schedule XI & XII

③ Ineffective usage of funds by untrained elected representatives

↳ luxurious spendings on Panchayat offices.

④. Low grants provided by Finance Commission that too 'tied grants' → reduce autonomy.

Measures to augment financial resources

①. Constitutional → representation of local bodies in state finance commission
↳ Compulsory devolution of certain powers under Schedule XI, XII

②. Institutional → entry of political parties in local elections
↳ training of functionaries for effective usage of funds.

③. Best Practices like "municipal bonds" in Danglore & Indore can be replicated.

As MS Aiyer in his "trade mill economies" highlight, for Indians to grow effectiveness of local bodies is essential.

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Q2. Discuss the various merits and demerits of bringing political parties under Right to Information Act 2005.

प्रश्न 2. राजनीतिक दलों को सूचना का अधिकार अधिनियम, 2005 के अंतर्गत लाने के विभिन्न लाभ और हानियों पर चर्चा कीजिए।

(Answer in 150 words)

RTI Act 2005 brought in revolutionary changes in bringing transparency in governance, but it excludes political parties.

Merits of Inclusion of political parties

- ①. Reduce corruption & use of money-muscle power by bringing transparency.
- ②. Enhance public trust in internal democracy of political parties.
- ③. ECI can improve its regulation over parties through effective oversight.
- ④. Inclusivity within political parties as people will hold them accountable in case of internal discrimination on gender, caste, religion lines.

5. Reduce crony capitalism as source of funding will be known & 'conflict of Interest' be checked.

Demerits

1. It may be used for anti-national or anti-social activities.

⇒ knowing demographic profile → radicalising those groups to influence govt. decisions

2. It is tough to share much information as 'right to privacy' of candidates/party members get violated.

3. May reduce risk-taking abilities of political parties which is essential for working democracy.

Nevertheless, as 'sunlight is the best disinfectant', political parties should be included in RTI Act.

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Presentation

Question
Interpretation

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Q3. What are the constitutional and legal provisions pertaining to Administrative Tribunals in India? Do you think tribunal needs reform?

प्रश्न 3. भारत में प्रशासनिक अधिकरणों से संबंधित संवैधानिक और कानूनी प्रावधानों का वर्णन कीजिए। क्या आपकी लगता है कि इन अधिकरणों में सुधार की आवश्यकता है?

(Answer in 150 words)

Administrative tribunals are meant for adjudication of administrative disputes in quasi-judicial set up.

Constitutional & Legal provisions

- ①. They were introduced by 42nd CAA 1976 under Article 323A & 323B.
- ②. Article 323A talks about central administrative tribunal (CAT) formed by central government.
- ③. Article 323B for state administrative tribunal
- ④. They work on the basis on 'principle of natural justice' & not bound by civil/criminal procedure code

5. In L. Chandra Kumar judgement, Supreme Court recognised the validity of tribunals.

Need for reforms.

Issues	Reforms
1. Reduce <u>high court's</u> oversight (against separation of powers)	High Court should be given a say in <u>appointment</u> & <u>removal</u> of these judges
2. Huge <u>vacancies</u> affect working	Timely recruiting through <u>legal provisions</u>
3. Lack of <u>accountability</u>	Provide <u>High Court</u> with rights to <u>check validity</u> of judgements.

Justice should not just be quickly disposed but also be 'just & fair' for upholding 'constitutional morality'

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Question Interpretation
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Q4. The recent judgement of the Supreme Court related to the appointment of Chief Election Commissioner and other election commissioners is a welcome step, but several other issues still affecting the functioning of the institution. Discuss. Also suggest necessary reforms to strengthen the election watchdog.

प्रश्न 4. मुख्य चुनाव आयुक्त एवं अन्य चुनाव आयुक्तों की नियुक्ति से संबंधित हालिया सर्वोच्च न्यायालय का निर्णय स्वागतयोग्य है, परंतु चुनाव आयोग की कार्यप्रणाली को प्रभावित करने वाले अनेक अन्य मुद्दे अब भी विद्यमान हैं। इन मुद्दों पर चर्चा कीजिए तथा संस्था को सुदृढ़ करने हेतु आवश्यक सुधार सुझाइए।

(Answer in 150 words)

In the Anoop Baranwal judgement Supreme Court provided for a selection committee for CEC & other ECs as "PM, CJI & LoP" for maintaining perception of independence of ECI.

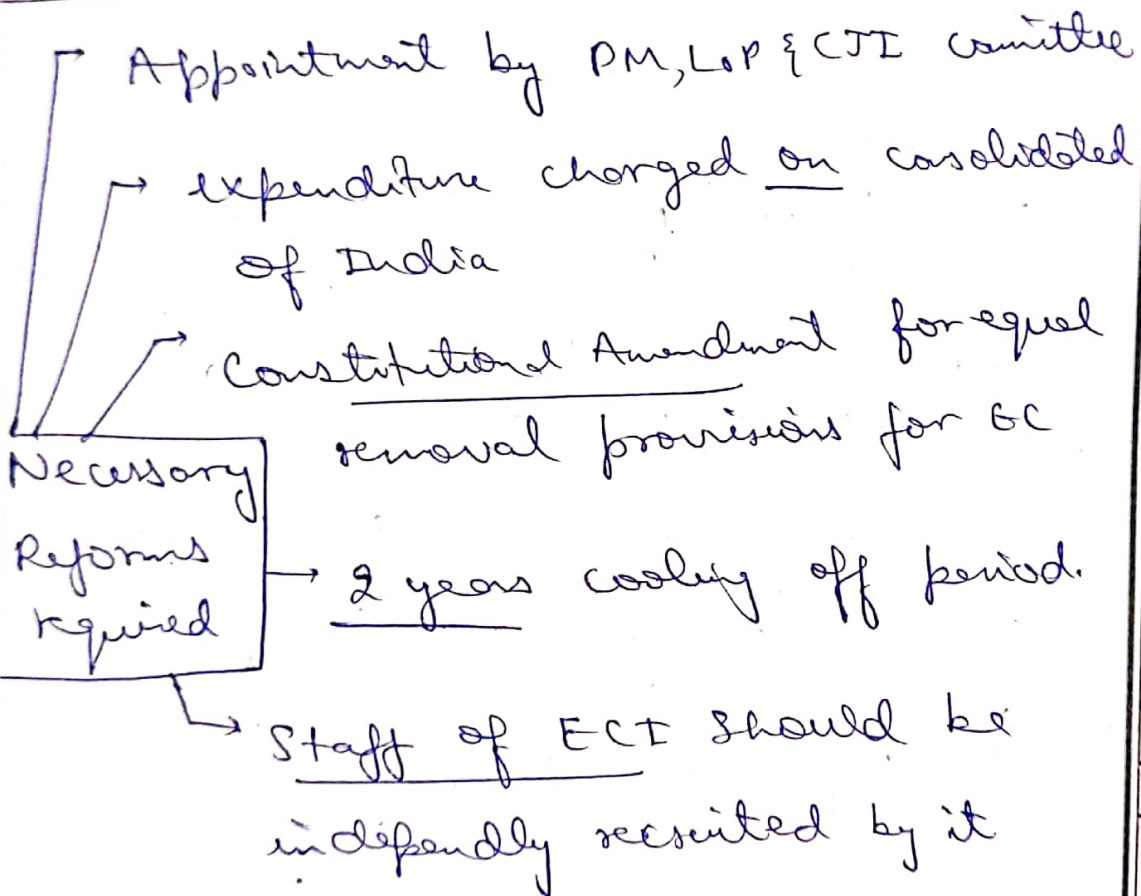
EC removal process not at par with CEC
 → no cooling off period for ECs may lead to conflict of interest

Other Issues remain → Expenditure are not charged on consolidated fund.

→ Dependent on central government & other officials for staff.

→ allegations of politicisation recently
 ↳ Bihar electoral roll controversy

Although the judgement could be remarkable in perception of independence but parliament come up with a law having "PM, Cabinet minister, LoP" as Committee giving majority to government.



ECI forms the 'bedrock of Indian democracy'. It should not just be independent but also seem to be independent for public

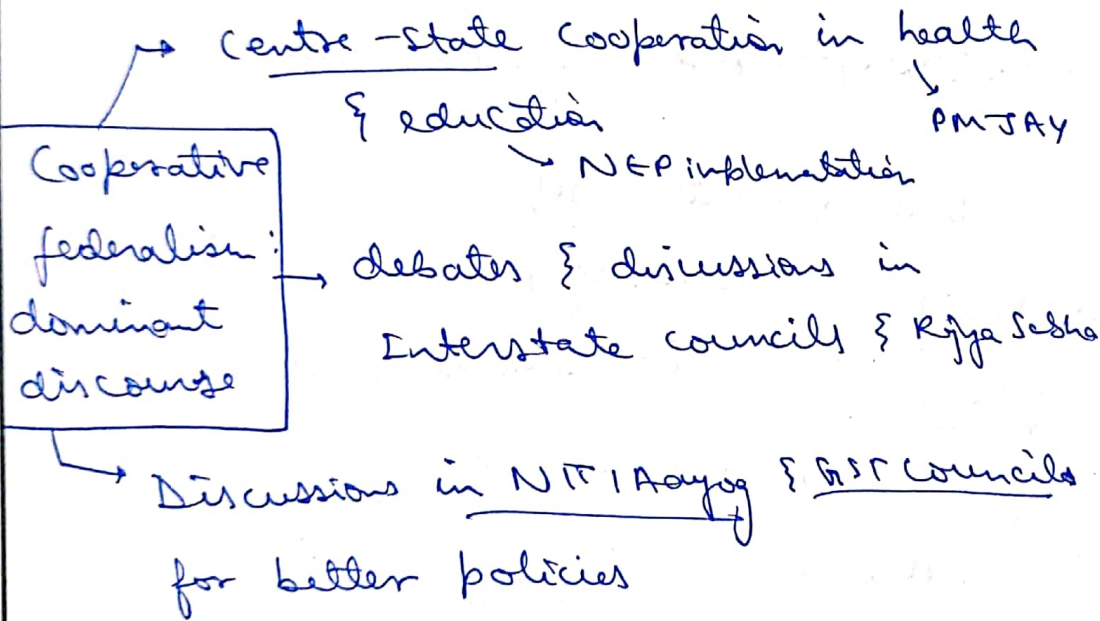
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Q5. The emergence of cooperative federalism as a dominant discourse in India reflects a shift towards greater collaboration between the Centre and the States. Discuss the key drivers of this shift and its potential benefits.

प्रश्न 5. भारत में सहकारी संघवाद का उभरता विमर्श केंद्र और राज्यों के बीच बढ़ते सहयोग को दर्शाता है। इस परिवर्तन के प्रमुख प्रेरक कारकों तथा संभावित लाभों पर चर्चा कीजिए।

(Answer in 150 words)

Cooperative federalism involves cooperation between Centre & states & among states for collaborative growth & development of the country.



Key Drivers of the shift

- ①. Fiscal Cooperation via GST Council (Article 279A) has led to collaboration for financial issues.
- ②. NITI Aayog's role in development

Planning in state collaborations

↳ Team-India initiative

3. Harmonious relationship between centre & states due to single political party in many states

4. Better conflict resolution via deliberative mechanisms ↳ zonal council's functioning → resolving border issues

↳ Political - better representation of voices of people.

Potential benefits

↳ Economic growth by reducing policy uncertainty

↳ realisation of federalism in the true spirit

Competitive cooperative federalism → overall development of India

The mantra of 'Sabke Sath Sabke Vikas' is essential for realisation of constitutional objectives enshrined in Preamble

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Presentation

Question
Interpretation

Content

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Q6. Elaborate different types of emergency provisions provided by the constitution of India. State wide ranging effects these provisions have on fundamental rights, federalism and finances.
 प्रश्न 6. भारतीय संविधान में प्रदत्त आपत्कालीन प्रावधानों के विभिन्न प्रकारों को स्पष्ट कीजिए। साथ ही, इन प्रावधानों का मौलिक अधिकारों, संघीय ढांचे और वित्तीय प्रणाली पर पड़ने वाले व्यापक प्रभावों को बताइए।
 (Answer in 150 words)

Emergency provisions are codified under Articles 352, 356 & 360 of Indian constitution to manage extraordinary circumstances.

1962

Types -

National Emergency (Article 352)

1971
1975

↳ Grounds : external aggression, war & armed rebellion.

↳ Effect on Fundamental rights

→ Article 358 : automatically suspends Article 19 if grounds are former two.

→ Article 359 : president can order suspension of some rights but not

Article 20 & 21 [44th CAA 1978]

↳ Federalism

↳ State govt. & legislative continue to exist

↳ State govt. & legislative continue to exist

President's rule (Article 356)

↳ Grounds : failure of constitutional machinery proclaimed by President

↳ federalism → dissolution of legislative assembly if ~~to~~ resolution passed by parliament [SR Bommai v/s UoI]

↳ Finances → remain the same.

Financial Emergency (Article 360) → never declared

↳ Grounds : situation of financial distress when economy may collapse.

↳ Federalism : salaries & allowances of state officials may be restricted

↳ Finances : President may reserve all money bills for consideration. Also salaries & expenses will be regulated.

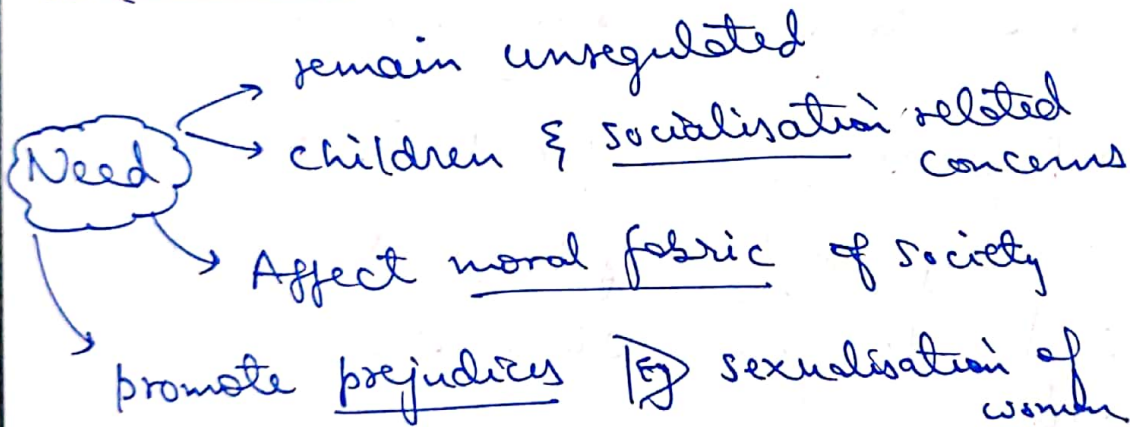
These provisions are often criticised as India to be unitary & dictatorial, but as per Ivory Towers, it is required for stability of country

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Q7. The Supreme Court recently expressed worry about the regulation of content on OTT platforms, calling for legislative action to address obscene and immoral material. Discuss the issues of regulating OTT material in India, taking into account regulatory organisations' overlapping authorities and the need to balance free expression with societal sensitivities.

प्रश्न 7. हाल ही में सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने ओटीटी प्लेटफॉर्म पर सामग्री के विनियमन के बारे में चिंता व्यक्त की, अश्लील और अनैतिक सामग्री को संबोधित करने के लिए विधायी कार्रवाई का आह्वान किया। नियामक संगठनों के अतिव्यापी प्राधिकरणों और सामाजिक संवेदनशीलता के साथ मुक्त अभिव्यक्ति को संतुलित करने की आवश्यकता को ध्यान में रखते हुए भारत में ओटीटी सामग्री को विनियमित करने के मुद्दों पर चर्चा करें।
(Answer in 150 words)

Recently Supreme Court in Ranveer Alhabadia case came down heavily on him & expressed 'concern to regulate OTT platforms.



Issues with OTT regulation

- ①. Article 19(1) v/s 19(2) ∴ what is free speech & what is obscene is subjective.
- ②. May hamper innovation & creativity
↳ arrest of standup comedians

- ③. Regulatory authorities may misuse if it for promoting political interests
- ④. Further reduction in freedom of democracy rankings.
- ⑤. Overlapping functions affect effectiveness
 - ↳ Information & Broadcasting ministry v/s MEITY & further such regulations leads to unnecessary expenses.

Way forward → Regulatory policy formulation by defining objectively key terms (like obscenity) to reduce discretion.

→ Implementation should be only by higher officials like SP.

Crisis management - speedy disposal of cases without hampering reputation.

Free speech is bulwark of democracy any attempt to curtail it will affect democratic working - Romesh Thapar Judgement

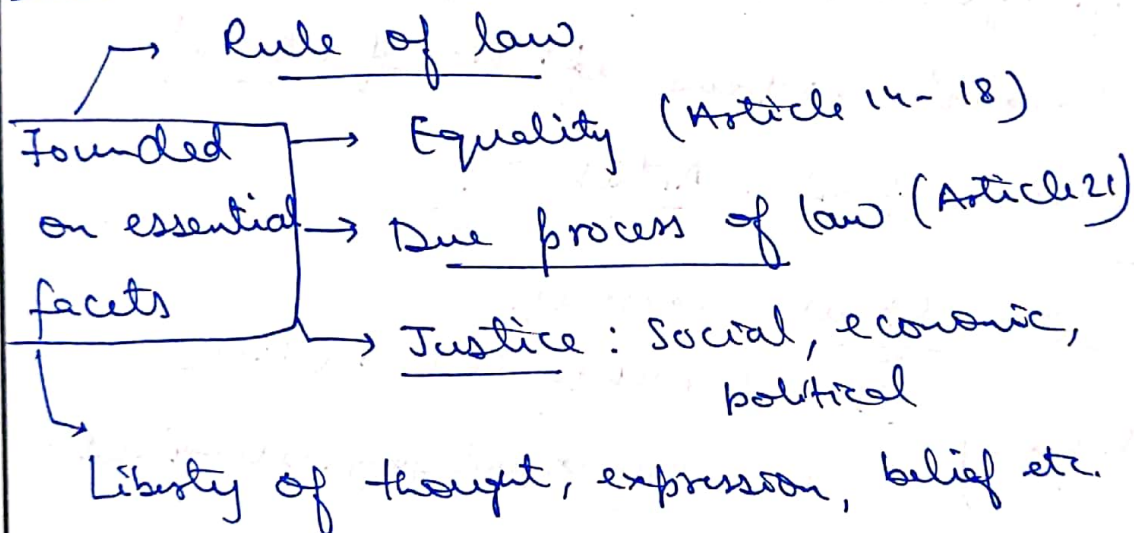
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Q8. Constitutional Morality' is rooted in the constitution itself and is founded on its essential facets. Explain the doctrine of Constitutional Morality' with the help of relevant judicial decisions.

प्रश्न 8. 'संवैधानिक नैतिकता' संविधान में निहित है और इसके मौलिक तत्वों पर आधारित है। उपयुक्त न्यायिक निर्णयों की सहायता से 'संवैधानिक नैतिकता' सिद्धांत को समझाइए।

(Answer in 150 words)

According to Dr. B R Ambedkar Constitutional morality is about upholding the basic tenets that inspired constitution's forefathers to formulate it.



Relevant Judicial decisions -

①. Nartej Singh Johar V/s U.O.I → decriminalisation of homosexuality. Constitutional morality is about 'majority morality'.

②. Hussaina Kharoon V/s S of Bihar - SC released

40000 prisoners as there was huge delay due to failure of executive's functioning.

① Olga Tellis V/s Soj Mahorashtra - recognised 'right to shelter' as Fundamental right as constitution envisioned equality in basic needs

② Ranjitsinh V/s D.O.I - recognised right against extreme effects of climate change under Article 21.

Issues

- Judicial overreach
- ↳ MC Mehta case → closed industry around ganga → unemployed
- against separation of powers
- ↳ BSIV vehicles banned to protect environment

Therefore, Soli Sorabjee mentioned that in upholding constitutional morality SC should look at spillover effects to prevent adventurism.

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Q9. The Indian Constitution is one of the most comprehensive and well-drafted constitutions characterized by its intricate features, blending democratic principles, and socio-economic justice. In light of the statement, write salient features of the Indian Constitution.

प्रश्न 9. भारतीय संविधान एक विस्तृत और सुव्यवस्थित संविधान है जो लोकतांत्रिक मूल्यों और सामाजिक-आर्थिक न्याय के मिश्रण को दर्शाता है। इस कथन के आलोक में भारतीय संविधान की प्रमुख विशेषताओं को लिखिए।
(Answer in 150 Words)

"Indian constitution has been formed by sansaking all known constitutions of the world" — B R Ambedkar.

Salient Features

①. Subkiest & longest written constitution in the world.

②. Blend of rigidity & flexibility

↳ ~~Federal with unitary bias~~
Article 368 requires 2/3rd majority but amendment is possible.

③. Federal with unitary bias - Doroy Jennings

↳ more subjects in union list & residuary powers with union.

④. Balance of DPS Ps & Fundamental rights

↳ Article 44 together with Article 14
uniform civil code religion

5. Independent constitutional offices mentioned within constitution.

↳ ECI (Article 324), CAG (Article 148)

6. All India Services U/A 309-312

7. Democratic principles

↳ universal adult suffrage (Article 326)
↳ right to vote + get voted

8. Socio-economic justice under DPSP.

↳ Article 42: just & humane conditions for workers.

9. Emergency provisions that may change implementation of constitution on temporary basis.

"The constitution is only as good as the people who are enforcing it" — Dr. Ambedkar.

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Structure
Presentation

Question
Interpretation

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Q10. "India's evolving partnership with Saudi Arabia reflects a shift from transactional energy ties to a comprehensive strategic alliance." Discuss the key drivers of this transformation and its implications for India's role in West Asia.

प्रश्न 10. "सऊदी अरब के साथ भारत की उभरती हुई साझेदारी लेन-देन संबंधी ऊर्जा संबंधों से व्यापक रणनीतिक गठबंधन की ओर बदलाव को दर्शाती है।" इस परिवर्तन के प्रमुख चालकों और पश्चिम एशिया में भारत की भूमिका के लिए इसके निहितार्थों पर चर्चा करें।

(Answer in 150 Words)

Recently in April 2024, PM Modi visited Saudi Arabia & there were major declarations for improved ties.

Key Drivers of transformation

- ① Energy ties → 3rd largest importer of LNG & oil from Saudi.
- ② Economic ties → \$35 bn currently & is expected to rise further.
- ③ Connectivity - part of India middle east europe corridor (IMEC)
- ④ Diplomacy both countries cooperate for peace & stability in middle east.
- ⑤ Diaspora & remittances - around 1 lakh India live working especially in blue collar.

⑥. Investment - under Saudi's 'Khalifa' system invested \$10 bn in last 2 years.

⑦. India's middle east presence may rise with ties under h20, & expansion of BRICS.

Issues in the ties

①. Role of China → Saudi getting closer to China to diversify trade.

②. Instability in middle east reduced India's significance in the region & delayed projects.

③. Saudisation of workforce leading to unemployment of Indians.

④. India's growing closeness to Iran affect the ties.

Saudi's "2030 vision" to diversify

Saudi's economy is well inclined to India's prospects in improving ties & growing presence in the region.

Q11. India and Qatar have a strong trade relationship, particularly in the energy sector. Analyse the significance of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) imports from Qatar for India's energy security and economic growth.

प्रश्न 11. भारत और कतर के बीच मजबूत व्यापारिक संबंध हैं, खासकर ऊर्जा क्षेत्र में। भारत की ऊर्जा सुरक्षा और आर्थिक विकास के लिए कतर से तरलीकृत प्राकृतिक गैस (LNG) आयात के महत्व का विश्लेषण करें।

(Answer in 250 Words)

India - Qatar energy diplomacy goes back to cold-war era, & it has significantly contributed to India's development.

Significance of LNG imports

Qatar is largest LNG exporter for India helping in -

- ①. Fulfilling energy needs like powering rickshaws, Cooking supply
- ②. Reduce emissions as LNG is less polluting than LPG or coal.
- ③. Allows for development of industries & power plant → electricity security & income generation.

④ LNG imports have also acted as a tool for enhancing diplomatic ties with qatar → economic growth.

↳ 15 bn \$ trade between the two

⑤ Improved gas connections in rural areas under PM Ujjwala Yojana & piped natural gas program.

However challenges remain -

① US pressure - trump administration's emphasis that India should buy natural gas from USA.

② Piracy concerns in the gulf region leads to disruption in supply chain.

③ Cost issues - qatar's L.P.G is way more expensive than USA.

④. Instability in middle east after Israel-Iran conflict has led to supply chain disruption.

⑤. Environmental concerns - India's movement to 'green energy' under green hydrogen mission will reduce dependence on fossil.

Way Forward → Strategic balance between middle east & USA

→ Good Better connectivity through IMEC & Ashgabat agreement's expedite.

→ Collaboration with other countries (Saudi, UAE) to ensure stable supply chain.

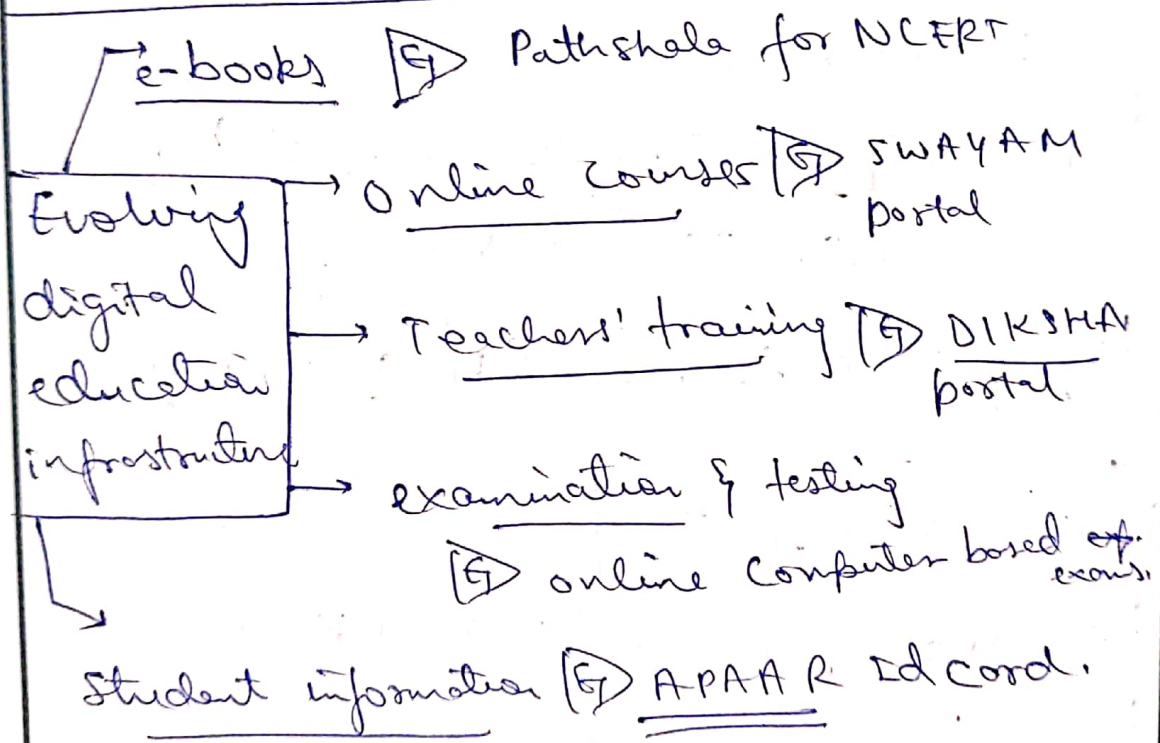
India's energy security is essential for becoming a 'Vishat Bharat' by 2047.

Q12. India's evolving digital infrastructure has played a key role in promoting inclusive education. Critically discuss the opportunities and challenges this transformation presents.

प्रश्न 12. भारत के उभरते डिजिटल बुनियादी ढांचे ने समावेशी शिक्षा को बढ़ावा देने में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाई है। इस परिवर्तन से उत्पन्न अवसरों और चुनौतियों पर आलोचनात्मक रूप से चर्चा करें।

(Answer in 250 Words)

With the world entering into 4th Industrial revolution, AI & digital infrastructure have entered the education domain as well.



Opportunities of this transformation

①. For Students

↳ personalised learning based on individual capacity by AI

- ↳ remote learning with quality education
 - ↳ MIT courses on Youtube
- ↳ Improved accessibility to everyone.
 - ↳ ed-Tech platforms in rural India

2) For Teachers

- ↳ Facilitation in teaching using AI Chatbots
- ↳ better presentation of concepts by animation & 'smart learning'
- ↳ improved training (PM DIKSHA)

3) For Government

- ↳ reduce paper leaks by CBT exams
- ↳ better monitoring of attendance of teachers & their performance
- ↳ aid act as alternative to low teacher ratio by using online classes / recorded lectures

Challenges in this transformation

- ① Digital Divide - Oxfam 2023 : only 61% urban & 29% rural population have internet
- ② Gender Divide - Oxfam 2023 - women are 37% less likely to own mobile phone.
- ③ Digital literacy is lacking - not everyone can utilise online education
- ④ 'Reproduction of classes' - people lacking social-economic capital will be unable to access better education despite increased competition.

Therefore, government is focusing on education 4.0 - slowly integrating technology in education together with PMADISHA for digital literacy & BHARATI NET for reducing digital divide.

Q13. India's role in Africa is evolving beyond trade to include peacekeeping, capacity building, and infrastructure development. Critically examine how India can contribute to conflict resolution and sustainable development in Africa.

प्रश्न 13. अफ्रीका में भारत की भूमिका व्यापार से आगे बढ़कर शांति स्थापना, क्षमता निर्माण और बुनियादी ढांचे के विकास को भी शामिल करने की दिशा में बढ़ रही है। आलोचनात्मक रूप से जाँच करें कि भारत अफ्रीका में संघर्ष समाधान और सतत विकास में किस प्रकार योगदान दे सकता है।

(Answer in 250 Words)

India sees Africa as the 'next growth pole'. India - Africa have historical ties going back to indentured labour system & Gandhiji's popularity in Africa.

India's evolving role

①. Trade - majority energy imports by India, & pharmaceuticals & electronic equipments to Africa.

②. Peacekeeping - India's contribution under UN peacekeeping. Also under TEAM-9 initiative India tries to focus on regional stability in west Africa.

③ Capacity building - under NEPAD (new economic partnership for African development), India focuses on skill development, education in Africa.

↳ IIT Madras in Tanzania as educational diplomacy.

④ Infrastructure development - under India Africa forum summit (IAFS) & Indian Economic & Infrastructure development initiative India is focusing on it.

↳ India-Japan Cooperation for sea route.

Challenges in this process -

①. Regional instability due to coups, terrorism & insurgency

↳ Sudan Crisis

②. Rising role of China which uses debt-trap diplomacy for exercising influence. \Rightarrow Eritrea port acquired

③. Piracy related issues damage the trade ties & increase costs.

④. Issue of connectivity especially with west African countries reduces the significance.

\rightarrow India to act as voice of global south

\Rightarrow G20 : AU as members

Way forward

\rightarrow Economic Cooperation with stable countries like South Africa

\rightarrow Multilateral forums should be

used \Rightarrow BRICS, G20 for Cooperation

\rightarrow expedite connectivity projects for trade & tourism

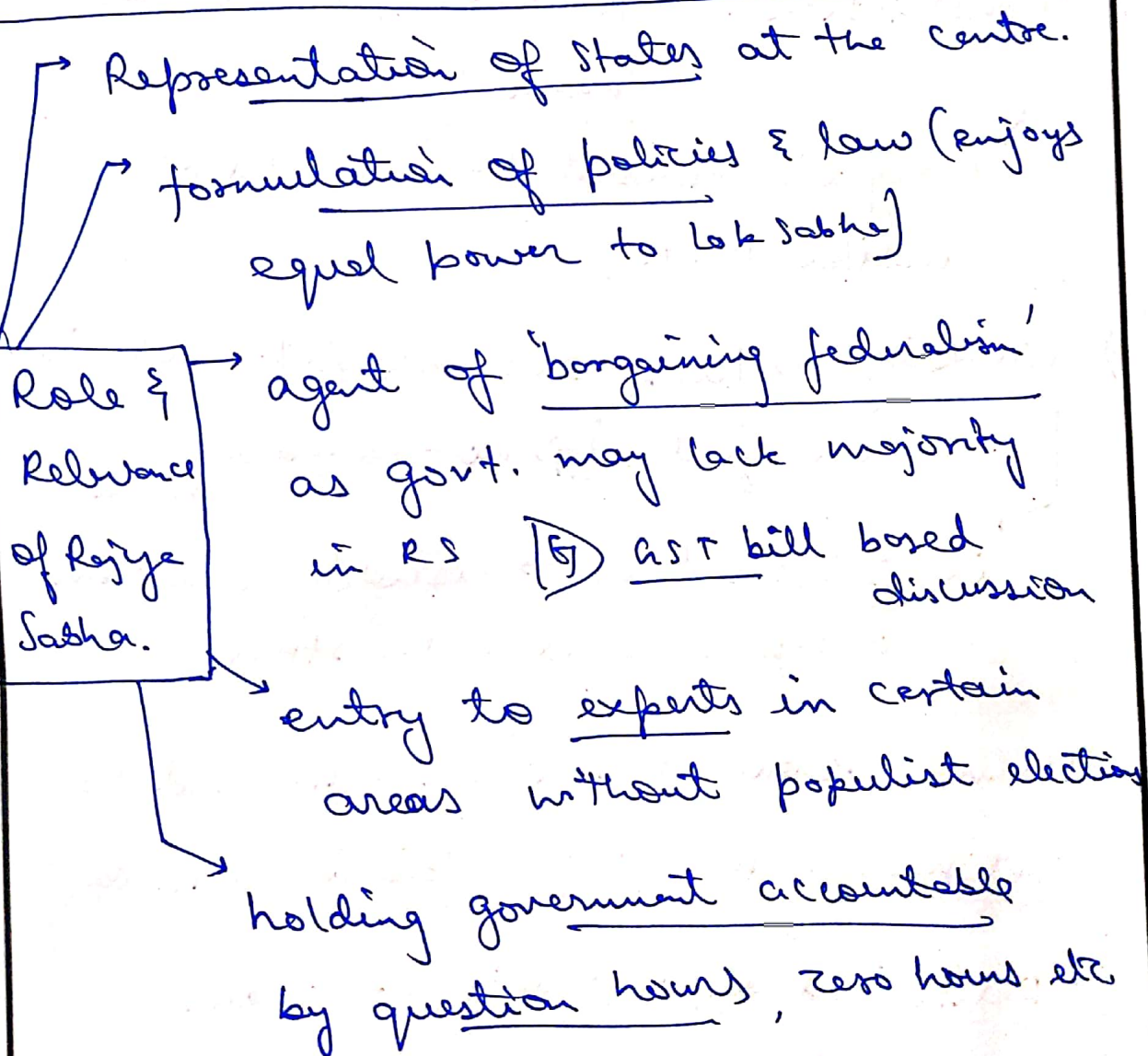
For the ties to flourish, India should adopt altruistic policy with Africa for regional development & growth

Q14. Critically examine the role and relevance of Rajya Sabha in the Indian parliamentary system. Suggest some reforms to enhance its effectiveness and accountability.

प्रश्न 14. भारतीय संसदीय प्रणाली में राज्यसभा की भूमिका एवं प्रासंगिकता की समालोचनात्मक समीक्षा कीजिए। उसकी प्रभावशीलता और उत्तरदायित्व बढ़ाने हेतु कुछ सुधार सुझाइए।

(Answer in 250 Words)

Rajya Sabha is India's parliament's 'second chamber' often referred as 'house of elders', & forms a major part to uphold the federalism through bicameralism



Special Powers

- ↳ Article 312 : Can create All India Service
- ↳ Removal of vice president
- ↳ Article 249 : parliament can legislate on state subjects.

However there are certain issues -

- ①. Constitutional → lack of powers over money bills
↳ unequal representation of states unlike USA.
- ②. Working → lack accountability mechanism on govt. ↳ no-confidence motion
↳ in joint sitting → usually Lok Sabha overpowers due to strength.
- ③. Human Resources → often criticised as 'retirement home' for failed politicians
↳ Politicised appointments over eminent personalities → against 'democratic representation'

Reforms required —

- ①. Replicating USA model → each state getting equal representation.
- ②. Money bill (Article 110) should be allowed to be questioned under Supreme court to prevent bypassing ^{Rs.}
- ③. PM Speaks (as in UK) should be compulsory in Rajya Sabha.
- ④. Annual Calendar of parliamentary sittings to reduce discretion of government.
- ⑤. Increasing seats of Rajya Sabha to be more inclusive & representative.

Rajya Sabha is an essential part of Indian Parliament & for its effective working these reforms are required

Q17. What do you understand about the doctrine of proportionality in judicial review? Examine how doctrine of proportionality led to Striking down of Electoral bond scheme?

प्रश्न 17. न्यायिक समीक्षा में 'प्रमाणिकता का सिद्धांत' (Doctrine of Proportionality) से आप क्या समझते हैं? इस सिद्धांत के आधार पर चुनावी बॉन्ड योजना को रद्द किए जाने की प्रक्रिया की विवेचना कीजिए।

(Answer in 250 Words)

Doctrine of proportionality aims to strike a balance between nature of action performed by the executive or legislative, and its impact on rights of individuals.

It has been used in various judgements to prevent violation of fundamental rights of individuals.

① K.S. Puttaswamy judgement → Privacy can be taken only if intended benefits outweigh loss in privacy.

②. Maneka Gandhi case → SC removed the restrictions on foreign visit due to disproportionality.

It helps in promotion of "Constitutionalism" & upholding constitutional morality.

↳ SR Bommai judgment → not proportional to impose Article 356 for failure of law & order.

Striking Down Electoral Bonds

Electoral bonds scheme provided for anonymous donations to political party to protect Right to privacy of donors under Article 21.

However, according to SC in ADR v/s UoI, in the case electoral bonds are also violating right to information (Article 19) of the public.

And as public will be voting without knowing who is donating to

When, it goes against informed decision making of people to democratically elect their political parties,

Therefore, Supreme Court declared electoral bonds as unconstitutional as it doesn't uphold proportionality i.e., for protecting privacy even a larger right (specified in this case), i.e., right to information is getting violated.

Through this doctrine SC has time & again protected constitutional rights of the public & reduced unchecked power of executive.