



SAMARTHYA IAS · AHMEDABAD

DAILY UPSC COMPANION

Samarthya Current Affairs

Prelims facts · Mains frameworks · Practice MCQs

21 | September 2026
MONDAY

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Your Complete UPSC Current Affairs Companion

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Cyber Vulnerabilities and Artificial Intelligence Threats in Electoral Infrastructure



STORY 1 The Hindu

Russia reports mass AI-driven cyberattacks targeting parliamentary election infrastructure

Russia reported over 1,000 DDoS cyberattack waves targeting its parliamentary election infrastructure during the State Duma voting process.

Ella Pamfilova, chair of Russia's Central Election Commission, reported the attacks in Moscow, attributing them to highly coordinated professional groups.

More than 1,000 DDoS attack waves hit the digital voting infrastructure, aiming to disrupt polling across 450 State Duma parliamentary seats.

Officials noted that the cyber offensive utilized artificial intelligence tools and high-level coordination to overwhelm election servers with malicious web traffic.

Illustrates the growing threat of AI-driven cyber warfare on critical national infrastructure and democratic processes under GS Paper III Cyber Security.



STORY 2 The Hindu

Early Russian election returns show United Russia maintaining dominance in State Duma

Early election returns from Russia's parliamentary voting showed the ruling United Russia party maintaining a dominant lead across precincts.

The Central Election Commission in Moscow released initial counting data for 225 party-list seats in the lower house State Duma.

With 58% of precincts counted, United Russia secured nearly 58% of the vote for party-list seats, alongside 225 single-seat races.

The election marked the first lower-house parliamentary balloting held since Russia initiated its full-scale military conflict in Ukraine in February 2022.

Highlighted under GS Paper II International Relations regarding domestic political consolidation, geopolitical posture, and post-conflict electoral dynamics.

UPSC RELEVANCE

Examines the growing threat of AI-driven cyber attacks, Distributed Denial-of-Service (DDoS) vectors, and national security risks to critical democratic infrastructure.

PRELIMS FACTS

- A Distributed Denial-of-Service (DDoS) attack intentionally floods targeted web servers with artificial traffic to cause service disruption.
- Artificial intelligence tools are increasingly utilized by cyber threat actors to orchestrate automated, high-volume DDoS attack vectors.
- State Duma lower-house parliamentary elections in Russia determine 450 legislative seats through party-list proportional and single-seat systems.

MAINS FRAMEWORK

Intro: The integration of digital platforms into election management has heightened vulnerabilities to sophisticated cyberattacks. Modern cyber threats leverage artificial intelligence and high-volume DDoS vectors to disrupt administrative infrastructure and compromise public trust in democratic electoral processes.

DIMENSIONS

- **Technical Vulnerabilities:** AI-powered botnets and DDoS waves can saturate election server bandwidth, causing systemic delays in voting and result tabulations.
- **Asymmetric Threat Landscape:** Non-state and state-aligned cyber actors exploit low-cost digital tools to execute high-impact disruptions against democratic sovereign processes.
- **Institutional Preparedness:** Safeguarding election infrastructure requires real-time threat monitoring, air-gapped voting hardware, and international cyber intelligence sharing.

Way forward: Democracies must establish robust zero-trust architecture around election servers, deploy AI-driven counter-intrusion tools, and mandate periodic cybersecurity audits under statutory bodies like CERT-In.

PYQ LINK

Discuss the vulnerabilities of critical information infrastructure to cyberattacks and evaluate India's institutional framework for national cybersecurity.

KEY TERMS

Critical Information Infrastructure

DDoS Attack

Artificial Intelligence in Cyber Warfare

02

GS PAPER II - POLITY & GOVERNANCE

Electoral Roll Accuracy and Administrative Discrepancy Verification Protocols

STORY 1 **The Hindu**

Delhi electoral authorities issue notices over draft voter list logical discrepancies

Electoral authorities in Delhi issued Special Information Request notices over logical discrepancies and unmapped entries in draft electoral rolls.

High-profile figures including EAM S. Jaishankar, EC Sukhbir Singh Sandhu, L.K. Advani, and Manish Sisodia were flagged in Delhi.

The Election Commission's automated verification software identified hundreds of entries requiring document verification across multiple categories.

Discrepancy flags stem from software-driven data audits designed to purge duplicate voters, unmapped residential addresses, and outdated demographic details.

Crucial for GS Paper II Governance and Polity, demonstrating technology integration in voter list maintenance and statutory electoral integrity protocols.

UPSC RELEVANCE

Focuses on technology adoption in voter roll audits, statutory verification procedures, and ensuring universal franchise integrity.

PRELIMS FACTS

- Special Information Request (SIR) notices are statutory inquiries issued by election authorities to verify voter credentials flagged by audit software.

- Under Article 324 of the Indian Constitution, the superintendence, direction, and control of electoral rolls are vested in the Election Commission.
- Automated software verification in electoral rolls categorizes discrepancies primarily into logical errors, duplicate photos, and unmapped addresses.

MAINS FRAMEWORK

Intro: A clean, accurate, and updated electoral roll is fundamental to electoral integrity. Automated algorithmic auditing helps election management bodies detect logical discrepancies, duplicate entries, and unmapped addresses, preserving voter confidence in democratic representation.

DIMENSIONS

- **Technological Governance:** Algorithmic checks streamline voter list verification by flagging unmapped addresses and duplicate records across constituencies.
- **Administrative Transparency:** Issuing formal verification notices ensures due process, permitting citizens to correct record anomalies without suffering arbitrary disenfranchisement.
- **Inclusivity Challenges:** Automated audits must balance statutory verification rigor against the risk of inadvertently excluding vulnerable or highly mobile populations.

Way forward: The Election Commission must ensure transparent audit algorithms, provide accessible grievance redressal mechanisms, and conduct door-to-door verification to resolve flagged electoral roll discrepancies.

PYQ LINK

Evaluate the role of the Election Commission of India in conducting free and fair elections, focusing on voter list purification initiatives.

KEY TERMS

Election Commission of India

Electoral Roll Verification

Special Information Request (SIR)

Demographic Discrepancy Audit

Article 324

ACTS & ARTICLES

Article 324 of the Constitution of India

Representation of the People Act, 1950 (Section 22 - Correction of Entries)

Registration of Electors Rules, 1960

03

GS PAPER I - PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY & DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Bay of Bengal Depressions and Extreme Precipitation Events in Peninsular India



STORY 1 **The Hindu**

Bay of Bengal low pressure intensifies into depression threatening coastal West Bengal

A low-pressure area over the Bay of Bengal intensified into a depression, threatening heavy rainfall and squally weather in eastern India.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) issued warnings for coastal West Bengal, focusing heavily on Purba Medinipur and South 24 Parganas.

Gusty wind speeds are forecasted to reach 40-50 kmph along coastal zones, with heavy rainfall expected from September 22 to 26.

The tropical weather system developed over the east-central Bay of Bengal and adjoining north Andaman Sea, creating localized depression conditions.

Relevant for GS Paper I Geography and GS Paper III Disaster Management regarding tropical cyclones, depression formation, and coastal resilience.

STORY 2 **Google News**

Torrential rain triggers fatal landslides and flash floods across hilly Kerala districts

Heavy torrential rains triggered sudden landslides and flash floods in Kerala, resulting in casualties and localized infrastructure damage.

Emergency rescue teams responded across affected hilly districts in Kerala following severe rainfall alerts issued by weather authorities.

Six fatalities were confirmed during the flash flooding and landslide events, prompting red and orange meteorological alerts across multiple districts.

Saturated topsoil from monsoon precipitation destabilized fragile slopes in the Western Ghats region, leading to sudden debris flows.

Connects to GS Paper III Disaster Management and GS Paper I Physical Geography on ecologically sensitive Western Ghats vulnerability and disaster preparedness.

UPSC RELEVANCE

Examines monsoonal low-pressure systems, tropical weather disturbances, Western Ghats landslide dynamics, and urban flood resilience.

PRELIMS FACTS

- A low-pressure area over the Bay of Bengal qualifies as a depression when sustained wind speeds range between 17 and 33 knots (31–61 kmph).
- Coastal districts in West Bengal like Purba Medinipur and South 24 Parganas are highly vulnerable to storm surges and squally winds during Bay depressions.
- Saturated topsoil on steep slopes in the Western Ghats significantly exacerbates flash flood and landslide hazards during torrential monsoon downpours.

MAINS FRAMEWORK

Intro: The seasonal transformation of Bay of Bengal low-pressure systems into intense depressions drives extreme rainfall events across coastal and peninsular India. Managing the resultant cascading disasters—such as coastal flooding and slope failures in fragile ecosystems—requires climate-resilient regional planning.

DIMENSIONS

- **Meteorological Mechanics:** Low-pressure systems over warm sea surface temperatures absorb thermal energy, intensifying into deep depressions that push heavy squalls inland.
- **Ecological Vulnerability:** Slope destabilization in ecologically sensitive zones like the Western Ghats leads to lethal landslides during intense cloudburst-like events.
- **Disaster Mitigation Deficits:** Inadequate early warning dissemination and unorganized drainage infrastructure compound urban and rural flood losses.

Way forward: Implement Doppler radar coverage for precise hyper-local forecasting, construct coastal bio-shields, enforce slope regulation codes in hill tracts, and strengthen NDRF pre-positioning protocols.

PYQ LINK

Explain the mechanism of tropical atmospheric depressions over the Bay of Bengal and discuss their impact on coastal and slope stability in India.

KEY TERMS

Monsoon Depression

Bay of Bengal Low Pressure

Landslide Susceptibility

Western Ghats Ecology

Disaster Risk Reduction

ACTS & ARTICLES

Disaster Management Act, 2005

National Disaster Management Plan, 2019

National Cyclone Risk Mitigation Project (NCRMP)



STORY 1 **Times of India**

Iran threatens painful military retaliation against US regional bases if attacked

Iran's military command warned that any renewed US military strikes would trigger immediate, continuous attacks on American bases across West Asia.

The Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters issued the warning via Iranian state news agency IRNA in Tehran against Washington and regional allies.

Iran warned that all regional US military bases and supporting host nations would be targeted without operational limitations or geographic boundaries.

The statement followed reports of imminent US military action, warning host nations that facilitating US strikes makes them direct conflict parties.

Directly addresses GS Paper II International Relations concerning West Asian geopolitical security, strategic autonomy, and maritime trade corridor safety.



STORY 2 **Times of India**

Trump issues sharp ultimatum against Iran threatening severe military escalation

The US President issued a sharp ultimatum regarding the ongoing conflict with Tehran, outlining potential economic or severe military escalations.

US President Donald Trump delivered the remarks during a televised interview in Washington following heightening military tensions in West Asia.

The administration outlined three distinct options ranging from economic containment to decisive military strikes against Iranian state infrastructure.

Rhetorical escalation intensified after Iranian military commanders declared readiness for asymmetric retaliation against US regional targets and installations.

Relevant to GS Paper II Foreign Affairs, analyzing deterrence dynamics, nuclear diplomacy, and regional geopolitical stability in the Persian Gulf.

UPSC RELEVANCE

Analyzes asymmetric warfare, regional alliance obligations, threats to energy chokepoints, and security implications for India's West Asian foreign policy.

PRELIMS FACTS

- Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters functions as the primary operational military command directing Iran's joint defense forces.
- The Strait of Hormuz, situated between Oman and Iran, serves as the primary maritime transit corridor for global oil shipments.
- Bilateral access agreements grant the US military access to logistics bases across multiple Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states.

MAINS FRAMEWORK

Intro: The rapid deterioration of security linkages between the US and Iran in West Asia highlights the fragility of deterrence mechanisms. Broadening threats of military strikes against regional bases threaten to destabilize global energy markets and critical maritime trade corridors.

DIMENSIONS

- **Regional Escalation Dynamics:** Open threats to declare regional host countries as combatants risk widening conflict boundaries across the Persian Gulf.
- **Economic Vulnerabilities:** Threats targeting key infrastructure threaten global oil pricing stability and freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz.
- **India's Strategic Interests:** Escalation endangers the safety of 8.5 million Indian expatriates in West Asia and threatens long-term energy import supply lines.

Way forward: India must maintain strategic autonomy, leverage multilateral diplomatic forums to advocate de-escalation, and diversify domestic energy import routes.

PYQ LINK

Examine the geopolitical instability in West Asia and evaluate its implications for India's energy security and diaspora interests.

KEY TERMS

West Asia Security Architecture

Strategic Deterrence

Strait of Hormuz

Asymmetric Warfare

Khatam al-Anbiya Command

ACTS & ARTICLES

UN Charter Article 2(4) - Prohibition of Threat or Use of Force

UN Charter Article 51 - Right of Individual or Collective Self-Defense

UNCLOS - Freedom of Navigation Principles

Political Fragmentation and Electoral Realignments in Western European Democracies



STORY 1 Times of India

Far-right AfD tops German state vote as ruling CDU suffers historical defeat

The far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) secured a major victory in state elections, dealing a severe setback to Chancellor Friedrich Merz.

Voters in the northeastern state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania delivered a decisive mandate, reshaping the regional political landscape.

Exit polls projected AfD winning 37% of the vote, defeating Social Democrats on 35.5% and reducing Merz's CDU to 5.5%.

Mainstream political parties reaffirmed their refusal to form governing coalitions with AfD, creating potential parliamentary stalemates in state governance.

Important for GS Paper II Comparative Politics, reflecting political polarization, far-right resurgence, and governance challenges in Western Europe.



STORY 2 Times of India

German Chancellor Merz faces intense political pressure following state election losses

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz faced mounting political pressure following historic electoral losses for his party across multiple state elections.

State parliamentary elections in Berlin and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania recorded unprecedented historic lows for the ruling Christian Democratic Union.

CDU secured just 5% in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and 20% in Berlin, placing behind the Left party's 24.5% projection.

Despite the political setback, Merz rejected calls to abandon his economic reform agenda, pledging to push forward with fiscal structural changes.

Connects to GS Paper II International Relations and Comparative Governance, illustrating European domestic political instability and economic reform frictions.

UPSC RELEVANCE

Examines political polarization, far-right electoral momentum, party coalition fragilities, and legislative governance in Europe.

PRELIMS FACTS

- The Alternative for Germany (AfD) is a right-wing populist political party that secured historic first-place finishes in German state elections.
- In Germany's federal parliamentary system, a 5% electoral threshold is required for political parties to gain representation in legislative bodies.
- 'Brandmauer' refers to the political consensus among mainstream German parties excluding far-right groups from governing coalitions.

MAINS FRAMEWORK

Intro: State election results in key Western European nations illustrate a structural realignment toward populist and anti-establishment political parties. The decline of traditional center-right parties creates legislative gridlock and challenges long-standing democratic coalition norms.

DIMENSIONS

- **Electoral Realignment:** Rising voter dissatisfaction with economic stagnation and immigration policy drives significant double-digit swings toward far-right parties.
- **Coalition Governance Friction:** Mainstream refusal to collaborate with radical parties results in fragile, highly fragmented state legislative majorities.
- **Policy Reform Impediments:** Weakened ruling coalitions struggle to enact necessary economic, structural, and energy transition reforms.

Way forward: Mainstream democratic parties must address core socioeconomic concerns, improve public delivery systems, and foster constructive legislative dialogue to restore institutional trust.

PYQ LINK

Discuss the impact of rising political polarization and far-right electoral gains on governance stability in European parliamentary democracies.

KEY TERMS

Alternative for Germany (AfD)

Christian Democratic Union (CDU)

European Electoral Shifts

Brandmauer (Political Cordons)

Comparative Parliamentary Systems

Federal Immigration Enforcement Accountability and Executive-Media Relations in the US



STORY 1 Times of India

US ICE officer shoots civilian in Austin triggering public protests and probe demands

A US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officer shot and wounded a civilian during a foot pursuit, sparking immediate public protests.

The incident occurred after a traffic stop in northern Austin, Texas, involving 28-year-old Venezuelan citizen Wilber Rafael Garces Perez.

The victim sustained a single gunshot wound to the torso and was hospitalized in serious but stable medical condition.

Local officials expressed disappointment over federal law enforcement actions, calling for an independent third-party investigation into the shooting.

Examines federal-local jurisdictional conflicts, immigration law enforcement standards, and civil liberties under GS Paper II Global Governance and Human Rights.



Austin Mayor demands third-party investigation into federal ICE officer shooting

Protesters gathered in Texas demanding an independent municipal inquiry after a federal immigration agent shot an unarmed Venezuelan national.

Austin Mayor Kirk Watson and Police Chief Lisa Davis addressed public concerns during a joint press briefing at City Hall.

City officials noted an overnight spike in federal ICE operations without prior coordination or joint operational involvement from municipal police.

Mayor Watson urged federal authorities to permit local police investigators full oversight access to maintain public transparency and institutional trust.

Fits GS Paper II Comparative Governance, focusing on federalism, police accountability mechanisms, and public administrative integrity.



US UN envoy defends White House executive ban on major media organizations

The US UN envoy defended executive orders restricting press access for select major news organizations from covering White House proceedings.

US Ambassador to the UN Mike Waltz defended the administration's ban against CNN, MS NOW, and Politico during national television broadcasts.

Three prominent media organizations were barred from federal press facilities, prompting constitutional legal challenges under the First Amendment.

The administration cited a 1965 Supreme Court precedent regarding newsgathering boundaries, while press freedom groups highlighted viewpoint discrimination risks.

Relevant for GS Paper II Constitutional Principles and Media Ethics, comparing freedom of expression boundaries across democratic governance models.

UPSC RELEVANCE

Examines federal vs local law enforcement jurisdictional boundaries, executive control over media access, and constitutional civil liberty guarantees.

PRELIMS FACTS

- US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) operates as a federal agency under the Department of Homeland Security.
- Under constitutional federalism principles, federal law enforcement officers operate under independent legal mandates distinct from municipal police authorities.
- The First Amendment of the US Constitution guarantees fundamental protections regarding press freedom and speech against government restrictions.

MAINS FRAMEWORK

Intro: Recent enforcement actions by federal immigration agents and executive restrictions on accredited press outlets emphasize friction between federal power, municipal accountability, and civil liberties. Balancing state security interests with democratic oversight remains a key governance mandate.

DIMENSIONS

- **Jurisdictional Conflict:** Independent federal operations conducted without local police coordination trigger public accountability concerns and inter-agency friction.
- **Human Rights & Oversight:** Civilian injury during law enforcement stops highlights the necessity of independent third-party inquiries and clear force standards.
- **Press Freedom Concerns:** Restricting news access based on perceived editorial alignment poses legal risks regarding viewpoint discrimination under public law.

Way forward: Institutionalize mandatory inter-agency operational communication protocols, ensure transparent civilian oversight of federal police actions, and protect press access to official proceedings.

PYQ LINK

Compare the legal and institutional protections for freedom of speech and expression between Indian constitutional jurisprudence and Western democracies.

KEY TERMS

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)

Federalism and Jurisdictional Oversight

Freedom of the Press

First Amendment Protections

Municipal-Federal Coordination

ACTS & ARTICLES

US First Amendment Protections

Immigration and Nationality Act (INA)

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 19 - Freedom of Information)

ASML begins operations in India to expand semiconductor lithography fabrication capacity

Semiconductor lithography leader ASML initiated official operations in India, linking its expansion to domestic chip manufacturing ecosystem goals.

ASML partnered with Tata Electronics and Indian government agencies to support semiconductor fabrication facilities across technology hubs.

The initiative aligns with India's multi-billion-dollar Semiconductor Mission, targeting advanced lithography supply chain integration and workforce development.

ASML's entry provides crucial extreme ultraviolet and deep ultraviolet lithography expertise required for commercial-scale silicon wafer manufacturing.

Vital for GS Paper III Technology and Economy, covering semiconductor mission goals, global value chain integration, and industrial self-reliance.

Astrophysicists develop breakthrough diagnostic method to detect solar corona turbulence

Astrophysicists developed an innovative diagnostic method capable of detecting previously hidden magnetic turbulence inside the Sun's extreme outer atmosphere.

Solar physicists published findings detailing coronal plasma movement, shedding light on coronal heating and solar wind acceleration mechanisms.

The technique accurately measures micro-scale velocity fluctuations in plasma exceeding 1 million degrees Celsius within coronal structures.

Understanding coronal turbulence resolves long-standing physics enigmas regarding energy transport from the photosphere to outer interplanetary space.

Essential for GS Paper III Science & Technology and Space Exploration, enhancing solar storm prediction models and satellite protection infrastructure.

UPSC RELEVANCE

Focuses on semiconductor lithography supply chains, domestic manufacturing ecosystems, and solar coronal physics research.

PRELIMS FACTS

- ASML is the global monopoly leader in manufacturing Extreme Ultraviolet (EUV) lithography systems required for advanced semiconductor manufacturing.
- The solar corona is the outermost layer of the Sun's atmosphere, characterized by plasma temperatures exceeding one million degrees Celsius.

- Measuring micro-scale plasma turbulence in the solar corona helps scientists explain the coronal heating mystery and solar wind speed acceleration.

MAINS FRAMEWORK

Intro: Advancing national technological sovereignty requires establishing domestic semiconductor manufacturing capabilities alongside supporting cutting-edge fundamental scientific research. Integrating advanced global technology partnerships bolsters economic and scientific resilience.

DIMENSIONS

- **Industrial Supply Chains:** Partnering with advanced lithography providers enables local foundries like Tata Electronics to scale commercial wafer fabrication.
- **Fundamental Space Science:** Discovering diagnostic tools to detect solar coronal turbulence improves space weather predictions and protects orbital satellites.
- **Strategic Technological Autonomy:** Reducing reliance on external silicon supply chains safeguards domestic electronics, defense, and telecommunications sectors.

Way forward: Accelerate domestic chip manufacturing incentives, expand semiconductor talent pipelines, and fund indigenous space science observatories for advanced solar diagnostics.

PYQ LINK

Discuss India's Semiconductor Mission and evaluate the technological prerequisites required to establish advanced chip fabrication capabilities.

KEY TERMS

Semiconductor Lithography

ASML India Operations

India Semiconductor Mission

Solar Corona Turbulence

Space Weather Forecasting

ACTS & ARTICLES

India Semiconductor Mission (ISM)

National Quantum Mission

Science, Technology and Innovation Policy (STIP)

08

GS PAPER I / GS PAPER II - INDIAN SOCIETY & SOCIAL JUSTICE

Socio-Cultural Dynamics of Secularism and Post-Conscription Transnational Tourism

STORY 1 Google News

Italian government proposes legislative ban on full-face veils in public schools

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni announced legislative proposals to ban full-face religious veils, including burqas and niqabs, in schools.

Italian government leadership proposed the policy across educational institutions in Rome, drawing mixed international and legal reactions.

The proposed legislation seeks a nationwide prohibition on facial coverings across public primary, secondary, and higher educational facilities.

The announcement mirrors similar secularism regulations in Western Europe, balancing individual religious expression against national secular identity laws.

Directly relates to GS Paper II Comparative Constitutional Law and GS Paper I Society, analyzing secularism models, fundamental rights, and gender autonomy.



STORY 2 **The Hindu**

Israeli military veterans seek peaceful recovery along Himachal Pradesh Hummus Trail

Israeli military veterans are increasingly traveling to Dharamkot, Himachal Pradesh, to unwind along the Hummus Trail post mandatory military conscription.

Dharamkot, located near McLeodganj in Himachal Pradesh, serves as a tranquil Himalayan retreat for post-service Israeli backpackers.

Hundreds of young travelers visit the pine forest hamlet annually, though local communities report shifts in eco-tourism balance and cultural dynamics.

The tranquil Himalayan enclave offers art therapy and retreat spaces for conscripts, while local authorities balance eco-tourism with anti-substance regulation.

Relevant to GS Paper I Human Geography and GS Paper III Environment, focusing on sustainable eco-tourism, socio-cultural impacts, and hill area carrying capacity.

UPSC RELEVANCE

Examines models of state secularism, religious dress restrictions, post-conflict trauma therapy tourism, and eco-tourism impacts on hill communities.

PRELIMS FACTS

- Dharamkot in Himachal Pradesh forms a core hub along the 'Hummus Trail', a network of destinations popular among post-conscription Israeli travelers.
- Mandatory military service in Israel applies to most young citizens upon reaching 18 years of age.
- European legal frameworks regarding secularism in schools allow restrictions on full-face veils based on public order and state neutrality grounds.

MAINS FRAMEWORK

Intro: Socio-cultural dynamics shape public policy across global contexts—from state enforcement of secular dress regulations in European schools to transnational post-conflict recovery tourism in India's Himalayan villages. Balancing individual expression, community norms, and sustainable governance is crucial.

DIMENSIONS

- **Secularism and Individual Rights:** State bans on full-face religious veils raise fundamental rights questions regarding freedom of conscience versus state-mandated secularity.
- **Transnational Post-Conflict Healing:** Post-conscription travelers seek peaceful retreats for psychological recuperation after completing mandatory armed military service.
- **Hill Community Ecosystem Impacts:** Concentrated backpacker tourism along fragile hill trails tests carrying capacities, requiring balanced anti-substance and eco-tourism regulations.

Way forward: Promote inclusive secular policies preserving individual dignity while strengthening community-led sustainable tourism frameworks in ecologically delicate mountain regions.

PYQ LINK

Contrast the Indian model of secularism with Western models, focusing on how public institutions balance individual rights against collective identity laws.

KEY TERMS

Secularism Models

Religious Freedom Protections

Hummus Trail Tourism

Post-Conflict Conscription Recovery

Eco-Tourism Carrying Capacity

ACTS & ARTICLES

Article 25 of the Indian Constitution (Freedom of Conscience and Religion)

European Convention on Human Rights (Article 9)

Himachal Pradesh Tourism Development and Registration Act

Practice MCQs (UPSC Prelims)

Attempt these questions on your own first. The answer key is on the next page.

GS PAPER III - CYBER SECURITY

Cyber Vulnerabilities and Artificial Intelligence Threats in Electoral Infrastructure

Russia reports mass AI-driven cyberattacks targeting parliamentary election infrastructure

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Distributed Denial-of-Service (DDoS) cyberattacks on critical infrastructure: 1. DDoS attacks primarily function by overwhelming a server or network with excessive internet traffic to render it unavailable to legitimate users. 2. In modern DDoS attacks, artificial intelligence tools can be deployed by threat actors to coordinate high-volume malicious traffic vectors. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| A. 1 only | B. 2 only |
| C. Both 1 and 2 | D. Neither 1 nor 2 |

GS PAPER I - PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY

Bay of Bengal Depressions and Extreme Precipitation Events in Peninsular India

Bay of Bengal low pressure intensifies into depression threatening coastal West Bengal

Q2. With reference to the formation of monsoon depressions over the Bay of Bengal, consider the following statements: 1. Low-pressure systems originating in the east-central Bay of Bengal often intensify into atmospheric depressions as they move toward the Indian coastline. 2. Coastal districts such as Purba Medinipur and South 24 Parganas are particularly vulnerable to squally winds and high-intensity rainfall from such depressions. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| A. 1 only | B. 2 only |
| C. Both 1 and 2 | D. Neither 1 nor 2 |

GS PAPER III - SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Semiconductor Ecosystem Expansion and Advanced Solar Physics Diagnostics

Astrophysicists develop breakthrough diagnostic method to detect solar corona turbulence

Q3. In the context of solar physics, why is detecting magnetic turbulence in the Sun's corona significant? 1. It provides insights into the coronal heating mechanism, where the outer atmosphere is vastly hotter than the solar surface. 2. It enhances predictive modeling for solar wind acceleration and space weather disturbances impacting satellite electronics. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| A. 1 only | B. 2 only |
| C. Both 1 and 2 | D. Neither 1 nor 2 |

GS PAPER II - COMPARATIVE CONSTITUTIONAL LAW

Socio-Cultural Dynamics of Secularism and Post-Conscription Transnational Tourism

Italian government proposes legislative ban on full-face veils in public schools

Q4. In comparative constitutional jurisprudence, how does the Western European model of secularism differ fundamentally from the Indian model of secularism? 1. Western European secularism generally enforces a strict separation of state and religion, permitting general prohibitions on religious symbols in public institutions. 2. Indian secularism relies on principled distance, maintaining equal respect for all religions while reserving state authority to reform socio-religious inequalities. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
B. 2 only
C. Both 1 and 2
D. Neither 1 nor 2

GS PAPER II - GOVERNANCE

Electoral Roll Accuracy and Administrative Discrepancy Verification Protocols

Delhi electoral authorities issue notices over draft voter list logical discrepancies

Q5. With reference to electoral roll management in India, what is the primary purpose of issuing a Special Information Request (SIR) notice to voters? 1. To notify voters whose draft electoral roll records exhibit software-flagged logical discrepancies or unmapped addresses for statutory document verification. 2. To automatically disenfranchise citizens who have migrated between administrative districts without prior notice. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
B. 2 only
C. Both 1 and 2
D. Neither 1 nor 2

GS PAPER II - COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Political Fragmentation and Electoral Realignments in Western European Democracies

Far-right AfD tops German state vote as ruling CDU suffers historical defeat

Q6. In European parliamentary democracies, what does the political term 'Brandmauer' (firewall) refer to in coalition building? 1. A constitutional bar that prohibits populist parties from contesting national parliamentary elections. 2. An informal political consensus among mainstream parties to exclude far-right or extreme parties from governing coalitions. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
B. 2 only
C. Both 1 and 2
D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer Key — Practice MCQs

Quick reference and explanations for the practice questions on the previous page.

Q1: C**Q2: C****Q3: C****Q4: C****Q5: A****Q6: B****Q1 Option C · Both 1 and 2**

Both statements are correct. A DDoS attack works by flooding targeted digital infrastructure with massive traffic to disrupt normal operations. As reported during election infrastructure cyber offensives, threat actors increasingly utilize coordinated artificial intelligence tools to automate and amplify DDoS traffic waves.

Q2 Option C · Both 1 and 2

Both statements are correct. Low-pressure areas forming over the Bay of Bengal frequently intensify into atmospheric depressions, bringing heavy precipitation and squally winds (40–50 kmph) to coastal West Bengal districts such as Purba Medinipur and South 24 Parganas.

Q3 Option C · Both 1 and 2

Both statements are correct. Detecting micro-scale plasma turbulence in the solar corona provides crucial data on energy transfer mechanisms responsible for heating the corona to over one million degrees Celsius and accelerating solar winds, which directly improves space weather forecasting.

Q4 Option C · Both 1 and 2

Both statements are correct. Western European secularism emphasizes strict separation and public neutrality (such as proposed school bans on full-face veils in Italy), whereas Indian secularism adheres to principled distance ('Sarva Dharma Sambhava'), treating all religions equally while permitting targeted state intervention for social reform.

Q5 Option A · 1 only

Statement 1 is correct. SIR notices are statutory verification requests issued when automated software flags unmapped or contradictory voter list entries. Statement 2 is incorrect because the process affords citizens due opportunity to confirm credentials rather than effecting automatic disenfranchisement.

Q6 Option B · 2 only

Statement 2 is correct. In German democratic governance, 'Brandmauer' describes the political consensus maintained by established mainstream parties to refuse forming coalition governments with far-right parties like the AfD, despite significant voter share gains.