



SAMARTHYA IAS · AHMEDABAD

DAILY UPSC COMPANION

Samarthya Current Affairs

Prelims facts · Mains frameworks · Practice MCQs

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Self-Listing Frameworks for Market Infrastructure Institutions



STORY 1 **The Hindu**

NSE Chairman Requests Regulatory Reconsideration for Self-Listing on Own Platform

National Stock Exchange Chairman Srinivas Injeti urged India's market regulator SEBI to reconsider allowing stock exchanges to list on their own trading platforms.

The statement follows NSE's stock market debut on rival BSE at an estimated valuation of \$47 billion, highlighting structural listing constraints for bourses.

India banned self-listing in 2015 due to potential conflicts of interest, whereas global markets like the US permit operators like NYSE parent Intercontinental Exchange to self-list.

NSE currently handles nearly 93% of India's cash market trading and approximately 75% of options trading volume, operating under heightened derivatives regulatory scrutiny.

For UPSC aspirants, understanding stock exchange listing regulations illuminates capital market architecture, regulatory conflicts of interest, and financial sector governance reforms.

UPSC RELEVANCE

Examines market regulation, governance of stock exchanges, conflict of interest, and capital market competitiveness.

PRELIMS FACTS

- Self-listing refers to a stock exchange listing its own shares on its own trading platform rather than a competing bourse.
- SEBI rejected self-listing for Indian stock exchanges in 2015 due to concerns over potential conflict of interest.
- Major global exchanges, including the New York Stock Exchange parent company Intercontinental Exchange, are self-listed on their own platforms.

MAINS FRAMEWORK

Intro: Market Infrastructure Institutions (MIIs) like stock exchanges play a pivotal systemic role, requiring a delicate balance between commercial ambitions and regulatory oversight.

DIMENSIONS

- **Regulatory Integrity:** Mitigating conflicts of interest when an exchange regulates listed entities while managing its own equity listing.
- **Capital Raising & Competitiveness:** Permitting exchanges to access capital markets seamlessly and match global governance standards in major financial centres.
- **Market Liquidity:** Addressing market concentration, where the National Stock Exchange commands over 90% of cash market volume and dominant options share.

Way forward: Establish independent regulatory committees within exchanges and robust SEBI oversight mechanisms to prevent conflicts before allowing self-listing.

PYQ LINK

Discuss the regulatory challenges faced by financial market intermediaries in India and the role of SEBI in maintaining market integrity.

KEY TERMS

Market Infrastructure Institutions

Self-listing

Conflict of Interest

Derivatives Trading

Capital Market Reforms

ACTS & ARTICLES

Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992

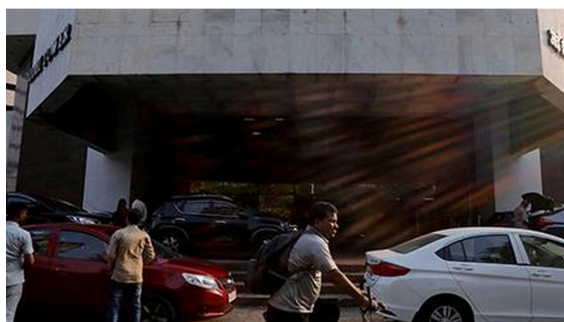
Securities Contracts (Regulation) Act, 1956

SEBI (Stock Exchanges and Clearing Corporations) Regulations, 2018

02

GS PAPER III - INDIAN ECONOMY

Strategic Disinvestment and Foreign Investment in Public Sector Banks



Government Evaluates Revised Financial Bids for Strategic Disinvestment of IDBI Bank

The Indian government is actively evaluating revised financial bids submitted by shortlisted global investors for the strategic sale of a 60.72% stake in IDBI Bank.

Shortlisted bidders include Prem Watsa-backed Fairfax Financial Holdings and Dubai-based Emirates NBD, both possessing established footprints in India's banking sector.

Both bidding entities have already secured mandatory security clearance from the Ministry of Home Affairs and 'Fit and Proper' approval from the Reserve Bank of India.

This marks the second instance of financial bid submissions, reflecting sustained investor interest despite prolonged regulatory and valuation procedures.

The case study provides UPSC students critical insights into public sector bank privatisation, cross-border banking acquisitions, and regulatory frameworks governed by RBI.

UPSC RELEVANCE

Focuses on strategic disinvestment, banking sector reforms, foreign direct investment rules, and Reserve Bank of India governance.

PRELIMS FACTS

- Strategic disinvestment involves the sale of a substantial portion of government shareholding along with the transfer of management control.
- Bidders for banking stakes in India require security clearance from the Ministry of Home Affairs and 'Fit and Proper' certification from RBI.
- Prem Watsa-backed Fairfax Financial Holdings currently holds a 40% stake in CSB Bank under RBI's private bank ownership norms.

MAINS FRAMEWORK

Intro: The strategic sale of IDBI Bank represents a crucial benchmark in India's public sector banking reform and government asset monetisation agenda.

DIMENSIONS

- **Fiscal Implications:** Generating non-tax revenues to reduce fiscal deficit while reallocating capital to productive public infrastructure.
- **Banking Efficiency:** Infusing private capital, technological innovation, and strategic governance to improve non-performing asset management.
- **Regulatory Safeguards:** Balancing foreign ownership limits with national security clearances and financial stability norms enforced by RBI and MHA.

Way forward: Streamline regulatory clearance timelines while ensuring robust fit-and-proper scrutiny to attract credible long-term institutional investors.

Evaluate the progress of strategic disinvestment in India and its impact on public sector enterprise performance and fiscal health.

KEY TERMS

Strategic Disinvestment

Fit and Proper Assessment

Security Clearance

Private Sector Banking

Foreign Portfolio Investment

ACTS & ARTICLES

Banking Regulation Act, 1949

Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934

FDI Policy Guidelines for Banking Sector

03

GS PAPER III - INFRASTRUCTURE AND URBAN GOVERNANCE

Odisha Drafts Pedestrian Safety Rules for Mandatory Non-Motorised Transport Infrastructure



STORY 1 **The Hindu**

Odisha Drafts Pedestrian Safety Rules Making Footpaths Mandatory in Road Projects

The Odisha government introduced the draft Odisha Pedestrian Safety Rules, 2026, proposing mandatory pedestrian paths for all new, upgraded, or widened roads across the state.

The rules establish direct accountability for road-owning agencies, contractors, and design consultants if engineering defects lead to pedestrian deaths, disability, or serious injury.

Draft provisions mandate that pedestrian and non-motorised transport (NMT) facilities must be incorporated directly during the design and Detailed Project Report (DPR) stages.

Omission or dilution of NMT infrastructure will require explicit written justification and formal authorization from designated competent state authorities.

This initiative offers an exemplar for UPSC Mains answers regarding urban road safety legislation, public infrastructure planning, and contractor liability enforcement.

UPSC RELEVANCE

Addresses road safety policies, urban mobility, legislative accountability, and non-motorised transport infrastructure planning.

PRELIMS FACTS

- Non-Motorised Transport (NMT) includes walking, cycling, and human-powered vehicles, forming a core component of sustainable urban transport plans.
- The draft Odisha Pedestrian Safety Rules, 2026 mandate footpaths and NMT facilities at the Detailed Project Report (DPR) stage for all road projects.
- The proposed rules establish financial and legal accountability for road construction agencies and contractors if faulty designs lead to pedestrian casualties.

MAINS FRAMEWORK

Intro: Ensuring pedestrian safety through legislative mandates is vital for creating inclusive urban transport systems and reducing road traffic fatalities in India.

DIMENSIONS

- **Safety and Accessibility:** Protecting vulnerable road users by integrating barrier-free footpaths and cycle lanes into standard highway engineering.
- **Institutional Accountability:** Fixing civil and criminal liability on road owning agencies and consultants for structural design flaws causing accidents.
- **Environmental Impact:** Promoting walking and non-motorised transit to curb urban traffic congestion, vehicular emissions, and fossil fuel consumption.

Way forward: Implement state-level pedestrian safety laws nationwide while integrating smart traffic engineering and strict enforcement of NMT encroachments.

PYQ LINK

Discuss the urban infrastructure challenges in Indian cities and suggest measures to make urban transport safe, inclusive, and sustainable.

KEY TERMS

Non-Motorised Transport

Pedestrian Infrastructure

Road Design Standards

Urban Mobility

Contractor Accountability

ACTS & ARTICLES

Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019

Article 21 (Right to Life and Safe Environment)

IRC:103 Guidelines for Pedestrian Facilities

04

GS PAPER III - AGRICULTURE

Scientific Cultivation and Productivity Enhancement in Sugarcane Agriculture



STORY 1 **The Hindu**

Uttar Pradesh Focuses on High-Yielding Sugarcane Varieties and Farming Mechanisation

The Uttar Pradesh government announced an agricultural strategy prioritizing high-yielding, disease-resistant sugarcane varieties and advanced scientific cultivation practices.

As arable land availability becomes increasingly constrained, state policies are shifting from expanding acreage to maximizing per-hectare crop productivity gains.

Key policy pillars include strengthening institutional seed distribution systems, promoting field mechanisation, and introducing digital governance reforms across sugar sectors.

The initiative targets economic resilience for millions of sugarcane cultivators by tackling crop disease vulnerabilities and reducing cultivation overhead costs.

For UPSC candidates, this policy shift illustrates productivity-led agricultural development, farm technology integration, and sustainable land management strategies.

UPSC RELEVANCE

Examines agricultural yield optimization, crop disease resistance, farm mechanisation, and sustainable land utilization.

PRELIMS FACTS

- Sugarcane is a tropical as well as subtropical crop that requires hot and humid climates with rainfall between 75 cm to 100 cm.
- Uttar Pradesh is India's leading sugarcane-producing state, shifting focus from land area expansion to yield productivity gains.
- Red rot disease is a major fungal threat affecting sugarcane crops, necessitating disease-resistant hybrid seed breeding.

MAINS FRAMEWORK

Intro: With land expansion reaching physical limits, agricultural growth in major commercial crops like sugarcane must rely on technological, seed, and mechanisation interventions.

DIMENSIONS

- **Yield Maximisation:** Deploying high-yielding and disease-resistant seed varieties to raise per-hectare cane production.

- **Farm Mechanisation:** Mitigating rural labor shortages by deploying specialized harvesters and precision farming equipment.
- **Resource Management:** Enhancing water-use efficiency through micro-irrigation and scientific soil nutrient management practices.

Way forward: Strengthen seed extension networks, incentivize smallholder farm machinery custom hiring centers, and promote bio-energy integration.

PYQ LINK

Examine the major bottlenecks in Indian agriculture and suggest technological innovations to boost crop yield and farmer incomes.

KEY TERMS

Sugarcane Productivity

Disease-Resistant Cultivars

Farm Mechanisation

High-Yielding Varieties

Crop Yield Per Hectare

ACTS & ARTICLES

Sugarcane Control Order, 1966

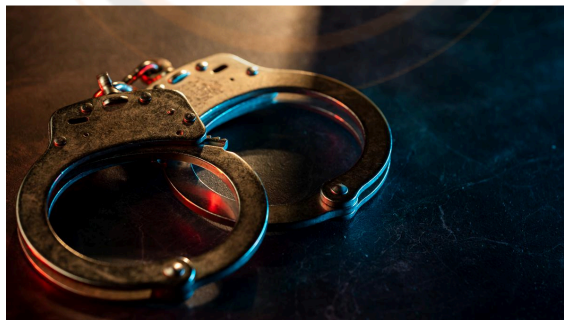
National Mission on Agricultural Extension and Technology (NMAET)

Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM)

05

GS PAPER II - GOVERNANCE AND CIVIL SERVICES

Institutional Reforms and Accountability in Public Service Examinations



STORY 1 The Hindu

Crime Branch Arrests Four More in MPSC Drug Inspector Paper Leak Probe

Mumbai Crime Branch arrested four additional individuals, bringing total arrests to 11 in the Maharashtra Public Service Commission (MPSC) Drug Inspector question paper leak.

The Special Investigation Team apprehended two candidate beneficiaries and two middlemen across Sangli, Buldhana, and Navi Mumbai for unauthorized paper distribution.

Invoked statutes include the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Maharashtra Competitive Examination (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024, and the Prevention of Corruption Act.

The case underscores rising law enforcement focus on financial profiteering rings that compromise state public service recruitment confidentiality.

UPSC aspirants can cite this case when analyzing administrative anti-corruption mechanisms, recruitment integrity laws, and criminal prosecution frameworks.



STORY 2 **The Hindu**

Shiv Sena Leader Demands MPSC Mains Deferment Pending Reform Panel Report

Shiv Sena (UBT) MLA Aaditya Thackeray submitted a representation to Maharashtra Governor Jishnu Dev Varma requesting the postponement of MPSC State Service Mains.

The letter argues that examinations should be deferred until an expert reform committee, chaired by Additional Chief Secretary V. Radha, submits its report.

Thackeray emphasized that administrative reforms recommended by the panel must be implemented before conducting large-scale recruitment examinations.

The representation also advocated for age relaxation for candidates who risk losing attempts or eligibility due to systemic administrative delays.

This highlights key civil services issues regarding administrative reform implementation, student grievance redressal, and governance of recruitment timing.

UPSC RELEVANCE

Focuses on examination integrity, anti-corruption frameworks, administrative reforms, and state public service commission governance.

PRELIMS FACTS

- The Maharashtra Competitive Examination (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024 penalises paper leaks and unauthorized circulation of exam materials.
- Public Service Commissions are constitutional bodies established under Article 315 of the Constitution of India.
- Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (amended in 2018) covers public servant misconduct and commercial bribery linked to public recruitment.

MAINS FRAMEWORK

Intro: Maintaining the absolute integrity of public recruitment examinations is essential to protect youth aspirations and maintain trust in governance systems.

DIMENSIONS

- **Legal Deterrence:** Enforcing stringent statutory measures against organised cheating networks and compromised officials.
- **Institutional Accountability:** Streamlining Public Service Commission protocols, question paper logistics, and digital security measures.
- **Socio-Political Impact:** Preventing administrative delays and financial distress suffered by millions of civil services aspirants due to exam cancellations.

Way forward: Adopt standardized national digital security protocols, conduct independent security audits of exam vendors, and establish fast-track courts for paper leak cases.

PYQ LINK

Discuss the measures necessary to restore credibility, transparency, and fairness in public recruitment examinations in India.

KEY TERMS

Paper Leak Legislation

Public Examinations Act

Administrative Reforms Commission

Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita

Public Service Integrity

ACTS & ARTICLES

Article 315 to 323 (Public Service Commissions)

Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024

Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988

06

GS PAPER II - INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

High-Level US-China Bilateral Diplomacy and Strategic Alignment



US and Chinese Leaders Conclude Summit and Schedule Subsequent High-Level Talks

US President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping concluded a three-day state visit in Washington, scheduling two subsequent summit meetings for late 2026.

The leaders agreed to hold formal bilateral talks during the APEC summit in China in November and at the G20 summit in Miami in December.

Closed-door discussions encompassed critical global geopolitical topics, including Middle East conflicts, the Ukraine war, and stability on the Korean Peninsula.

President Trump characterized the 90-minute bilateral discussions as productive, highlighting prospective agreements beneficial for American agricultural exports.

For UPSC IR studies, this diplomatic agenda reflects executive summitry, bilateral trade negotiations, and global power rebalancing mechanisms.



US-China Bilateral Summit Signals Shift Toward Peer Governance Model

Diplomatic analysts noted that the high-level meeting between US and Chinese leaders structurally reinforced perceptions of a 'G-2' peer governance paradigm.

The bilateral engagement focused heavily on stabilizing bilateral trade in agricultural commodities like soybeans and corn to protect domestic economic interests.

Critics expressed concerns that public expressions of mutual warmth muted strategic friction on artificial intelligence, supply chain decoupling, and Indo-Pacific security.

The summit highlighted pragmatic economic dealmaking over ideological confrontation, influencing allied diplomatic stances across Europe and Asia.

This provides valuable context for UPSC answers examining strategic autonomy, US-China competition, and global trade architecture dynamics.

UPSC RELEVANCE

Analyzes global superpower dynamics, trade wars, diplomatic choreography, and strategic competition in multipolar global politics.

PRELIMS FACTS

- The G-2 concept refers to an informal economic and geopolitical grouping proposing joint strategic leadership between the United States and China.
- Agricultural trade, particularly soybean and corn exports, serves as a primary economic leverage point in US-China bilateral trade negotiations.
- The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and G20 summits serve as primary multilateral platforms for head-of-state diplomatic engagements.

MAINS FRAMEWORK

Intro: The evolving dynamic between the US and China reflects a transition toward a complex balance of economic interdependence and intense strategic rivalry.

DIMENSIONS

- **Bilateral Trade Realities:** Managing supply chain dependencies, agricultural tariffs, and technology export controls between the world's top two economies.
- **Global Power Choreography:** The institutional recognition of a bilateral 'G-2' paradigm impacting regional security in the Indo-Pacific.
- **Multi-Sector Conflicts:** Balancing diplomatic consensus with ongoing disputes over artificial intelligence standards, Taiwan, and Middle Eastern geopolitical influence.

Way forward: Middle powers like India must maintain strategic autonomy, diversify trade partnerships, and strengthen domestic industrial capability amid superpower maneuvering.

PYQ LINK

Examine how the strategic posture and trade disputes between the US and China affect the economic and security interests of developing nations.

KEY TERMS

G-2 Formulation

Strategic Competition

Bilateral Trade Diplomacy

Geopolitical Equilibrium

State Visit Diplomacy

ACTS & ARTICLES

Article 51 (Promotion of International Peace and Security)

APEC Charter Framework

WTO Multilateral Trade Agreements

07

GS PAPER II - INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND INDIAN DIASPORA

Proposed Reform of US Employment-Based Green Card and Immigration Framework



STORY 1 **Times of India**

US Lawmaker Introduces Bill Seeking Points-Based System to Replace Employment Visas

US Republican Senator Tommy Tuberville introduced the 'Americans First Immigration Act', proposing to end the Green Card lottery and existing employment-based green card categories.

The legislation proposes replacing traditional employer-sponsored immigrant visas with a points-based system prioritizing education, English proficiency, and high-paying job offers.

Under the bill, US employers would be required to certify that hiring a foreign national would not displace or adversely affect domestic workers.

The proposed measure has been referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee, representing growing domestic legislative pressure on skilled immigration categories.

This legislative development is highly relevant for UPSC topics regarding global Indian diaspora dynamics, cross-border labor mobility, and foreign visa policies.

UPSC RELEVANCE

Examines international migration policies, skilled labor mobility, diaspora welfare, and merit-based visa systems.

PRELIMS FACTS

- Employment-based green cards currently allow foreign national professionals to obtain permanent residency in the United States based on employer sponsorship.
- A points-based immigration system evaluates applicants based on standardized criteria such as education level, age, language proficiency, and wage offers.
- Indian technology professionals represent the largest single group of applicants facing backlogs under US employment-based visa categories.

MAINS FRAMEWORK

Intro: Proposed legislative modifications to high-skilled migration frameworks in major economies directly affect the global mobility of Indian professionals and diaspora economic contributions.

DIMENSIONS

- **Impact on Indian IT & Services Sector:** Potential disruption to cross-border personnel movement and business models of Indian technology firms.

- **Shift to Merit Metrics:** Evaluation of points-based frameworks prioritizing high wage offers, specialized degrees, and language proficiency over employer sponsorship.
- **Economic Remittances:** Broader macro-economic consequences on foreign exchange inflows and reverse brain drain dynamics in India.

Way forward: India should engage in bilateral labor mobility partnerships and accelerate domestic high-tech industrial creation to retain top engineering talent.

PYQ LINK

How do changes in the immigration policies of Western nations impact the Indian diaspora and India's economic remittances?

KEY TERMS

Employment-Based Green Cards

Points-Based Immigration System

Labor Market Protectionism

Indian Diaspora

High-Skilled Migration

ACTS & ARTICLES

Article 19(1)(e) (Right to Reside and Settle)

US Immigration and Nationality Act (INA)

India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership Framework

08

GS PAPER III - ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Community-Owned Renewable Energy Models and Land Monetisation



STORY 1 Times of India

Iowa Farmer Uses Wind Turbine Lease Revenues to Pay Down Agricultural Debt

A 75-year-old Iowa farmer utilized three wind turbines installed on less than 3 acres of her 160-acre property to generate \$35,000 annually in steady lease income.

The inflation-indexed land lease revenues allowed the farm owner to pay off over \$280,000 in legacy agricultural debt, reducing liabilities from \$350,000 down to \$67,000.

The case illustrates how family agricultural operations leverage clean energy infrastructure leasing to hedge against volatile crop prices and falling farm income.

Commercial wind installations consume minimal surface footprint, permitting uninterrupted agricultural cultivation alongside utility-scale electricity generation.

For UPSC GS-III, this highlights rural income augmentation strategies, agricultural debt resolution mechanisms, and land-lease models for clean energy.



STORY 2 **Times of India**

Goulburn Residents Commission Australia First Community Owned Solar Farm and Battery Storage

In Goulburn, Australia, 300 local community investors successfully operationalized a 1.4 MW community-owned solar farm integrated with a 4 MWh battery storage system.

The 12-year development initiative raised \$3.3 million in local community equity backed by \$2.3 million in New South Wales state government development grants.

Built on a repurposed former industrial site, the facility generates enough renewable power to supply 500 local homes directly through the regional electricity distribution grid.

The project stands as Australia's first community-financed utility solar facility incorporating large-scale battery storage to improve regional microgrid resilience.

This initiative provides an instructive model for UPSC questions on decentralized renewable energy financing, community cooperatives, and energy transition governance.

UPSC RELEVANCE

Evaluates decentralised solar/wind energy generation, community financing, rural debt mitigation, and energy grid storage integration.

PRELIMS FACTS

- Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) facilitate the integration of intermittent solar and wind power into central electrical grids.
- Lease-based land monetisation for renewable energy infrastructure allows agricultural landowners to generate stable supplemental income.
- Community energy projects involve local equity participation and governance in power generation facilities.

MAINS FRAMEWORK

Intro: Decentralised renewable energy projects paired with battery storage offer a scalable model for clean transition, grid stability, and rural economic diversification.

DIMENSIONS

- **Socio-Economic Benefits:** Supplying dual revenue streams for farmers through agricultural land leases while shielding agricultural households from debt.
- **Grid Resilience:** Pairing distributed generation with battery energy storage systems (BESS) to smooth out peak demand and intermittency.
- **Financing Innovations:** Deploying community equity funding alongside government capital grants to democratize clean energy ownership.

Way forward: Scale up PM-KUSUM scheme implementations, encourage cooperative ownership models, and simplify micro-grid integration regulations.

PYQ LINK

Discuss the potential of decentralised renewable energy models in achieving India's clean energy targets and improving rural livelihoods.

KEY TERMS

Community Solar Farm

Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)

Land Lease Monetisation

Decentralised Renewable Energy

Grid Infeed

ACTS & ARTICLES

Electricity Act, 2003

National Tariff Policy for Renewable Energy

PM-KUSUM (Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan)

09

GS PAPER I - WORLD HISTORY AND CULTURE

Viking Age Numismatic Hoards and Early Trade Networks



Archaeologists Uncover Major Viking Age Silver Coin Hoard in Sysma Finland

An amateur metal detectorist discovered Finland's largest known Viking Age silver coin hoard, containing over 4,000 ancient coins near the village of Sysma.

Archaeologists from Lahti Museums excavated approximately 4.5 kilograms of silver artifacts divided between two birch-bark containers buried 39 feet apart.

Preliminary scientific analysis dates the coin hoard to between AD 1000 and AD 1050, shedding light on early medieval Northern European trade routes.

Prompt reporting by the finder enabled professional heritage conservationists to systematically recover and preserve the fragile organic birch-bark packaging.

This discovery provides UPSC aspirants a classical illustration of numismatic archaeology, historical trade route mapping, and cultural asset preservation protocols.

UPSC RELEVANCE

Examines early medieval numismatics, trade route archaeology, material cultural preservation, and ancient monetary economics.

PRELIMS FACTS

- Numismatics is the study or collection of currency, including coins, tokens, paper money, and related objects.
- Birch bark was historically used across Northern and Eastern Europe as a durable material for writing and organic storage containers.
- Viking Age silver hoards commonly contain a mixture of minted coins, bullion, and hacksilver used in weight-based trade systems.

MAINS FRAMEWORK

Intro: Archaeological numismatic discoveries provide essential tangible evidence for mapping ancient and medieval trans-regional trade networks and economic monetization.

DIMENSIONS

- **Economic History:** Analyzing silver coin hoards to map international bullion movement, trade balances, and local currency adoption.
- **Archaeological Methodology:** Systematic recovery and preservation protocols for organic storage media like birch bark and metallic artifacts.
- **Cultural Exchange:** Demonstrating connectivity between Northern Scandinavian trade hubs and broader European/Asian commercial circuits.

Way forward: Strengthen community-reporting frameworks for amateur archaeological finds while improving institutional conservation facilities.

Explain how numismatic evidence serves as a critical source for reconstructing ancient and medieval trade routes and political history.

KEY TERMS

Viking Age Numismatics

Hoard Discovery

Archaeological Recovery

Early Medieval Trade Networks

Birch-Bark Containers

ACTS & ARTICLES

UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater/Terrestrial Cultural Heritage

Antiquities and Art Treasures Act (Contextual parallel in India)

10

GS PAPER II - COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Executive Power and Parliamentary Stability in the United Kingdom



STORY 1 **Times of India**

UK Prime Minister Rules Out Early General Election To Focus On Living Costs

UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak explicitly dismissed speculation regarding an early general election, committing his administration to address living costs and business stabilization.

Speaking prior to the Labour Party conference in Liverpool, the Prime Minister rejected suggestions of holding a general election alongside scheduled regional council elections.

Sunak reaffirmed his commitment to completing his executive mandate rather than subjecting the country to an unexpected national electoral campaign.

Political commentary had speculated on a potential snap election following improved Labour Party polling numbers since Sunak assumed prime ministerial leadership.

This development serves as a useful comparative politics reference for UPSC students examining parliamentary executive tenure, election timing, and governance stability.

UPSC RELEVANCE

Focuses on parliamentary executive stability, early election mandates, governance priorities, and comparative constitutional systems.

PRELIMS FACTS

- Under the UK Dissolution and Calling of Parliament Act 2022, the power to dissolve Parliament rests with the Monarch on the advice of the Prime Minister.
- The maximum tenure of a UK Parliament is five years from the date of its first meeting.
- Westminster parliamentary systems mandate that the Prime Minister maintain the confidence of the majority in the lower house of Parliament.

MAINS FRAMEWORK

Intro: The exercise of prime ministerial power regarding election timing illustrates the balance between seeking political advantage and maintaining executive governance stability.

DIMENSIONS

- **Executive Stability:** Prioritizing policy execution and economic management over frequent electoral contests.
- **Economic Governance:** Addressing persistent cost-of-living challenges and business support measures during period of parliamentary mandate.
- **Constitutional Prerogative:** Strategic utilization of legislative dissolution laws in parliamentary democracies.

Way forward: Focus executive priorities on long-term structural economic reforms while ensuring political predictability for investment markets.

PYQ LINK

Compare the powers and tenure stability of the Prime Minister under the Westminster parliamentary system in India and the United Kingdom.

KEY TERMS

Fixed-term Parliaments

Prime Ministerial Prerogative

Cost of Living Governance

Snap Elections

Comparative Parliamentary Systems

ACTS & ARTICLES

UK Dissolution and Calling of Parliament Act 2022

Article 85(2)(b) of Indian Constitution (Dissolution of Lok Sabha parallel)

Practice MCQs (UPSC Prelims)

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

GS PAPER III - ECONOMY

Self-Listing Frameworks for Market Infrastructure Institutions

NSE Chairman Requests Regulatory Reconsideration for Self-Listing on Own Platform

Q1. Regarding the listing regulations of Stock Exchanges in India, consider the following statements: 1. Self-listing allows a stock exchange to list and trade its own shares on its own platform. 2. In India, SEBI currently permits stock exchanges to self-list on their own platforms to access capital smoothly. 3. Globally, major exchanges such as the New York Stock Exchange allow self-listing under regulatory oversight. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| A. 1 and 2 only | B. 1 and 3 only |
| C. 2 and 3 only | D. 1, 2 and 3 |

GS PAPER III - INDIAN ECONOMY

Strategic Disinvestment and Foreign Investment in Public Sector Banks

Government Evaluates Revised Financial Bids for Strategic Disinvestment of IDBI Bank

Q2. Which of the following regulatory clearances are mandatory for a foreign strategic investor acquiring a controlling stake in a commercial bank in India? 1. Security clearance from the Ministry of Home Affairs. 2. 'Fit and Proper' assessment by the Reserve Bank of India. 3. Concurrence from the NITI Aayog's Disinvestment Panel. Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| A. 1 and 2 only | B. 2 and 3 only |
| C. 1 and 3 only | D. 1, 2 and 3 |

GS PAPER III - INFRASTRUCTURE AND URBAN GOVERNANCE

Odisha Drafts Pedestrian Safety Rules for Mandatory Non-Motorised Transport Infrastructure

Odisha Drafts Pedestrian Safety Rules Making Footpaths Mandatory in Road Projects

Q3. In the context of urban infrastructure policies, what does 'Non-Motorised Transport' (NMT) primarily refer to?

- | | |
|---|--|
| A. Automated electric rapid transit buses operating on dedicated corridors. | B. Human-powered modes of transport including walking, cycling, and rickshaws. |
| C. Off-grid solar-powered autonomous vehicles operating in zero-emission zones. | D. Hydrogen fuel-cell commercial transport networks operating in urban areas. |

GS PAPER III - AGRICULTURE

Scientific Cultivation and Productivity Enhancement in Sugarcane Agriculture

Q4. With reference to sugarcane cultivation in India, consider the following statements: 1. Sugarcane is grown exclusively as a tropical crop across Southern Indian states. 2. Red rot is a major disease affecting sugarcane productivity. 3. Shifts in sugarcane agricultural strategy prioritize productivity gains per hectare over land area expansion. Which of the statements given above are correct?

- A.** 1 and 2 only
- B.** 2 and 3 only
- C.** 1 and 3 only
- D.** 1, 2 and 3

GS PAPER I - WORLD HISTORY AND CULTURE

Viking Age Numismatic Hoards and Early Trade Networks

Archaeologists Uncover Major Viking Age Silver Coin Hoard in Sysma Finland

Q5. In historical and archaeological research, the term 'Numismatics' refers to:

- A.** The study and decipherment of ancient rock inscriptions and epigraphs.
- B.** The scientific study or collection of coins, tokens, and monetary objects.
- C.** The analysis of ancient organic materials such as birch-bark manuscripts.
- D.** The study of ancient burial mounds and megalithic structures.

GS PAPER III - ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Community-Owned Renewable Energy Models and Land Monetisation

Goulburn Residents Commission Australia First Community Owned Solar Farm and Battery Storage

Q6. In renewable energy systems, what is the key functional role of a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)?

- A.** Converting solar thermal energy directly into mechanical propulsion.
- B.** Storing excess renewable energy generation to smooth grid delivery and manage supply intermittency.
- C.** Eliminating transmission line losses across long-distance high-voltage DC grids.
- D.** Extracting green hydrogen from rainwater during solar peak hours.

Answer Key — Practice MCQs

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

Q1: B

Q2: A

Q3: B

Q4: B

Q5: B

Q6: B

Q1 Option B · 1 and 3 only

Statements 1 and 3 are correct. Self-listing involves an exchange listing its shares on its own platform, which is allowed in major global markets like the US (e.g., NYSE's parent company Intercontinental Exchange). Statement 2 is incorrect because SEBI rejected self-listing in 2015 due to potential conflicts of interest, requiring Indian stock exchanges to list on competing bourses.

Q2 Option A · 1 and 2 only

Statements 1 and 2 are correct. As demonstrated in the IDBI Bank strategic disinvestment process, bidders require security clearance from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and a 'Fit and Proper' assessment from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Statement 3 is not a mandatory statutory clearance for individual banking sector investors.

Q3 Option B · Human-powered modes of transport including walking, cycling, and rickshaws.

Non-Motorised Transport (NMT) refers to human-powered modes of transportation such as walking, cycling, and other non-motorized vehicles. The draft Odisha Pedestrian Safety Rules mandate continuous NMT and pedestrian infrastructure at the design stage for road projects.

Q4 Option B · 2 and 3 only

Statements 2 and 3 are correct. Red rot is a severe fungal disease of sugarcane, and state policies like UP's are focusing on per-hectare productivity and high-yielding disease-resistant varieties. Statement 1 is incorrect because sugarcane is grown extensively in both tropical (e.g., Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu) and subtropical belts (e.g., Uttar Pradesh).

Q5 Option B · The scientific study or collection of coins, tokens, and monetary objects.

Numismatics is the study or collection of coins, tokens, paper money, and related monetary objects, which provides vital primary evidence for reconstructing economic and trade history.

Q6

Option B · Storing excess renewable energy generation to smooth grid delivery and manage supply intermittency.

A Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) stores excess renewable power during periods of high generation (like sunny or windy conditions) and dispatches it during peak demand, solving renewable energy intermittency and stabilizing the power grid.