

**POLITY**
**1. Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023**

**In Context:** The Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 has been introduced in Lok Sabha, proposes changes to the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) which guides the criminal justice system.

**Key provisions and processes proposed in the Bill**

- **Greater use of technology:** Trials, appeal proceedings, recording of depositions including those of public servants and police officers, may be held in electronic mode. The statement of the accused too can be recorded through video- conferencing. Summons, warrants, documents, police reports, statements of evidence can be done in electronic form.
  - ✓ The search and seizure of articles and properties, the visit to a crime scene by a forensic expert, and the recording of the victim's statement shall be audio-videographed, preferably on a mobile phone.
  - ✓ The name and address of an arrested accused and the nature of the offense will be maintained by a designated officer in each police station and district, and shall be "**prominently displayed**" including in digital mode in every police station and district headquarters.
  - ✓ **Information to police too can be sent electronically**, and it shall be taken on record on being signed by the person sending it, within three days.
- **Communication devices:** The Bill adds electronic communication including "communication devices" to the provision on summons to produce a document. On the directions of a court or police officer, a person is required to produce any document — and now devices — that is likely to contain digital evidence for the purpose of an inquiry.
  - ✓ **Electronic communication is defined as** "the communication of any written, verbal, pictorial information or video content transmitted (whether from one person to another, from one device to another or from a person to a device or from a device to a person)."
- **Use of handcuffs:** A police officer may be permitted to use handcuffs while arresting a person if he is a habitual, repeat offender who escaped from custody, or has committed an organised crime, terrorist act, drug-related crime, illegal possession of arms, murder, rape, acid attack, counterfeit currency, human trafficking, sexual offence against children or offences against the state.
- **Specific safeguards: Section 41A of CrPC** — which has a prominent safeguard against arrests — will get a new number, **Section 35**. It has an additional provision: no person can be arrested without prior permission of an officer, not below the rank of a deputy SP, in cases where the offense is punishable with less than three years, or if the person is infirm above 60 years of age.
  - ✓ On receiving information in cognizable cases where the offense attracts 3-7 years, the police officer will conduct a preliminary inquiry to ascertain whether there exists a prima facie case to proceed within 14 days.
- **Mercy petitions:** There is a provision on procedures for the timeframe to file mercy petitions in death sentence cases. After being informed by jail authorities about the disposal of the petition of a convict sentenced to death, he, or his legal heir or relative can submit a **mercy petition within 30 days to the Governor**.
  - ✓ If rejected, the person **can petition the President within 60 days**. No appeal against the order of the President shall lie in any court.
- **Sanction to prosecute:** A decision to grant or reject sanction to prosecute a public servant must be reached by the government within **120 days** of receiving a request. If the government fails to do so, the sanction will be deemed to have been accorded. No sanction is required in cases including sexual offenses, trafficking, etc.
- **Arms in procession:** Section **144A of the CrPC** gives the district magistrate the power to prohibit the **carrying** of arms in any procession, mass drill or mass training, to preserve the public peace.
  - ✓ While the provisions granting powers to the DM to pass orders in urgent cases of nuisance or apprehended danger remain as they are in Section 144 of the CrPC, **the provision to prohibit carrying arms does not find a mention**.
- **Samples without arrest:** The Bill has provisions for the magistrate to order any person to give samples of his signature, handwriting, voice or finger impressions for the purpose of investigation without being arrested.
- **Detention by police:** There are provisions for police to detain or remove any person resisting, refusing or ignoring, or disregarding directions given as part of preventive action.
- **Trial in absence of the convict:** The Code of Criminal Procedure currently provides for recording evidence **in** the absence of the accused, a trial in absentia is not permitted. However the Bill provides that if the accused is not present, the court can proceed to try him 90 days after the date on which charges are framed.

**2. Bharatiya Sakshya Bill, 2023**

**IN CONTEXT:** Recently, the Union Home Minister introduced Bharatiya Sakshya Bill, 2023 .

**About Bharatiya Sakshya Bill, 2023**

- The Bharatiya Sakshya Bill that would repeal the current Indian Evidence Act of 1872.
- **Key provisions** :The bill makes electronic or digital records admissible as evidence, thereby they will have the same legal effect as paper documents.
- It repeals five existing provisions of the Evidence Act, modifies 23 provisions, and adds one new provision.
- The bill proposes amendments to 23 Sections and contains 170 Sections in total.
- In the bill, the scope of expansion for secondary evidence to include copies made from the original by mechanical processes, counterparts of documents, and oral accounts of document contents has been done.
- Through the bill, the government is aiming to introduce precise and uniform rules for dealing with evidence during the trial of cases.

**Objectives and Need**

- The Indian Evidence Act has been repealed because it fails to ‘address the technological advancement undergone in the country during the last few decades.’
- The new bill aims to align the laws with the contemporary needs and aspirations of the people.
- It aims to 'consolidate and to provide for general rules and principles of evidence for fair trial'

**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

**Should there be a blanket ban on smartphones in schools?**

**In Context:** Recently, UNESCO recommended a universal ban on the usage of smartphones in schools.

**Mobile & smartPhone users in India**

- ✓ India has 1.2 billion mobile phone users and over 600 million smartphone users. That figure is expected to cross a billion by 2026, according to a Deloitte study, indicating that a future world will be dependent on these small devices.
- ✓ However, one place where smartphone usage has become controversial is the classroom.

**Usage of smartphones in schools**

- ✓ **UNESCO’s ban:** UNESCO recommended a universal ban on the usage of smartphones in schools, saying that it was needed to tackle classroom disruption, improve learning, and help protect children from cyberbullying.
- ✓ **Delhi NCR’s advisory:** In a recent advisory titled “**Restrictions on the use of mobile phones in school premises**”, the Directorate of Education, Private School Branch, Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi, has highlighted the need for all stakeholders connected with school education such as students, parents, teachers and heads of schools “**to arrive at a consensus on the minimum use of mobile phones in the school environment so that a more meaningful learning atmosphere could be maintained in the classroom**”.

**Arguments against using smartphones by students**

- ✓ **Engagement on social media:** Children studying in schools are getting too much engaged in social media, playing games leading to complete decline in their focus on academic tasks.
- ✓ **UNESCO’s rationale:** UNESCO has clearly warned against an uncritical rush towards embracing digital products in educational settings.
  - There is little evidence of **digital technology’s added value in education**. But there is a **clear threat also**, with the report highlighting that mere proximity to a mobile device was found to distract students.
  - This is more than sufficient for us to understand that mobile phones should not be allowed in the education system.
- ✓ **Addiction & anxiety issues:** Psychologists also advocate that mobile phones are addictive in nature, and can hinder concentration and social skills, and cause an increased number of anxiety and mental illness cases.
  - Students are vulnerable to cyber bullying, comparisons, unrealistic standards, resulting in depression, feelings of inadequacy.
- ✓ **Disparities among students:** It might raise the disparities among students belonging to various socio-economic backgrounds, because students with access to the latest expensive devices could experience an advantage, while those with limited resources might feel left out or stigmatised.
  - The presence of mobile phones also increases the risk of theft, and schools may struggle to manage security.
- ✓ **Healthy learning:** It is argued that we should promote more face to face interaction to maintain academic integrity and to foster a healthy learning atmosphere.

- Because in those times when there were no mobile phones in the class, then also learning happened.

**Arguments in favour of using smartphones by students**

- ✓ **Blanket ban is not an answer:** In Finland, Australia, England or other developed nations, smartphones are definitely there. A blanket ban definitely cannot be an answer.
- ✓ **Edtech requirements:** Smartphones are everywhere. Children have access to it, and parents are giving it to them. Today's school children were born with it.
  - And with the increasing number of edtech products, which are coming into the market today with the world talking about digitalisation, including the government, it is not reasonable to put such bans.
- ✓ **Technology centric curriculums: The NEP (National Education Policy)** gives a lot of importance to smartphones. Even the state curriculum gives a lot of QR codes [for additional resources].
  - Researchers feel that this is the way to go forward, with AI coming into the big picture.
- ✓ **Frisking & additional pressure for school:** In our country, if you ban it, children are bringing it discreetly to the classes. Frisking happens inside the classrooms to see whether children are carrying it. So that brings in a lot of pressure on the school administration.

**Global scenario**

- ✓ In **England**, children are allowed to bring in their phones from about Year Four and Year Five, but they will have to deposit their phones.
- ✓ In **Finland**, from about 12 years of age they are allowed to bring their phones along with them and they are allowed to keep it in their hands even when the classes are run.
- ✓ Earlier, **Australia** had no restrictions, but post-COVID, looking at the mental well-being and the emotional well-being, at the behaviour problems which have started, they have also brought in some kind of restrictions with regard to usage of smartphones inside the campuses.

**Way ahead**

- ✓ **Deciding the minimum age:** Just like we have an age for the driving license, we have an age to be a voter, similarly, we can actually have an age for this, because our job in schools is to prepare them for life, even to use a smartphone in a better way.
- ✓ **Middle path - digital learning spaces:** The benefits of technology within the school can be addressed if the schools could advance their digital learning spaces.
  - Those should be open to the children to access, so that any time if they need any important information, there should be a mechanism for the children to access the information.
- ✓ **Sensitization:** Before we give anything to the children, the adults around the children need to be sensitised.
  - Any decision on this issue must prioritise student wellbeing and align with the institution's core values.

**PRELIM FACTS**

**1. Glyphosate:**

**In context:** Experts have recently warned pesticide sellers against the sale and storage of glyphosate as its exposure is known to cause cancer.

**About Glyphosate:**

- ✓ Glyphosate is a widely used herbicide that can kill certain weeds and grasses. It is used primarily in agriculture but also in forestry and lawn and garden care.
- ✓ Glyphosate is a small molecule made of a linear carbon chain with weaker bonds, which makes glyphosate less persistent in the environment. In India, it goes by various brand names, including Roundup, Glycel, and Brake.
- ✓ **Herbicidal Action:**
  - Glyphosate works by inhibiting an enzyme called EPSP synthase, which is essential for the synthesis of certain amino acids that plants need for growth.
  - By disrupting this enzyme, glyphosate interferes with the plant's ability to produce proteins, leading to the eventual death of the plant.
- ✓ **Broad-Spectrum:**
  - Glyphosate is considered a broad-spectrum herbicide, meaning it can effectively control a wide variety of plants, including grasses, broadleaf plants, and woody plants.
  - It is effective only on plants that grow above the water. It will not be effective on plants that are submerged or have most of their foliage underwater, nor will it control regrowth from seed.
- ✓ **Systemic Nature:**

- Glyphosate is a systemic herbicide, which means it is absorbed by the plant's leaves and then translocated throughout the plant's vascular system.
- This allows it to reach various parts of the plant, including the roots, leading to effective control of both above-ground and below-ground plant parts.
- Glyphosate is degraded in soil and water by microbes and binds tightly to soil particles, which prevents the leaching of glyphosate into groundwater.
- Glyphosate does not degrade quickly in plants. As a result, it is possible that glyphosate residues can occur in food products.

## **2. Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya Jan Aushadhi Kendras**

**IN CONTEXT:** Railways Ministry will establish Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya Jan Aushadhi Kendras at railway stations across the country.

### **About Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya Jan Aushadhi Kendras**

- ✓ These are set up under Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya Jan Aushadhi Pariyojana, which was launched by the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers in November 2008.
- ✓ Objective: To provide quality medicines at affordable prices for all, particularly the poor, so as to reduce out-of-pocket expenses in healthcare.
- ✓ They provide generic drugs, which are available at lesser prices but are equivalent in quality and efficacy as expensive branded drugs. All therapeutic medicines are made available from Jan Aushadhi Stores.
- ✓ Jan Aushadhi stores also sell allied medical products commonly sold in chemist shops so as to improve the viability of running the Jan Aushadhi store.
- ✓ Pharmaceutical & Medical Devices Bureau of India (PMBI) has been established under the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Govt. of India, with the support of all the CPSUs for co-coordinating procurement, supply, and marketing of generic drugs through the PMBKs.

### **Who can open a Jan Aushadhi Kendra?**

- ✓ State Governments or any organization / reputed NGOs / Trusts / Private hospitals / charitable institutions / Doctors / Unemployed pharmacists/ individual entrepreneurs are eligible to apply for the new Jan Aushadhi Kendra.
- ✓ The applicants shall have to employ one B Pharma / D Pharma degree holder as Pharmacist in their proposed store.

## **3. Jigyasa:**

**In context:** PM congratulates winners of Jigyasa - one of world's largest quizzes played more than 10 lakh times in 17 languages

- ✓ As India celebrates 75 years of independence, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav. Taking his grand vision forward, the Indian Oil Corporation in collaboration with The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas and The Ministry of Culture is launching Jigyasa: The AKAM Quiz.
- ✓ Jigyasa is a step towards creating awareness and taking forward the parampara of Gyan through technology, innovation, and inclusive learning. Jigyasa, the largest ever quiz organized by India, draws from the fountain of India's civilization history; however, true to the evolutionary nature of Bharatiya, it is hosted on state-of-the-art technology, supported by artificial intelligence and machine learning.
- ✓ We are happy to inform you that JIGYASA - the AKAM Quiz is the first quiz of its kind, open all across the world, with a special module for the age group of 13 to 18 years of age.
- ✓ One of the key motivations of Jigyasa is derived from PM Narendra Modi's commitment to Antyodaya. Jigyasa is truly inclusive in nature, encouraging global participation, taking care of the needs of Divyangjan, and being a blend of online and offline modes. JIGYASA will be available in English and 16 Indian languages.

Winning team members are eligible for a scholarship of INR 10 lakh each.

1. With an expected reach of 2 crore young adults, Jigyasa promises to kickstart a conversation on the idea and ideals of Bharatiyata across 742 districts of India, that is Bharat.
2. For those in the age group of 13-18 years of age, Jigyasa offers them the opportunity to qualify as district winners who subsequently go to State, Regional and National levels.
3. Jigyasa will be available in 17 languages, thereby capturing the diverse footprint of the world's only living civilization.
4. Jigyasa aspires to be truly inclusive in nature and supports Divyang Jan and those who are not a part of the formal education system.

## **4. Wildfires of Hawaii**

**In Context:** Multiple wildfires are raging through Hawaii, especially the island of Maui.





**Causes:**

**Man-made and natural causes**

- ✓ The exact cause of the fire is still not certain.
- ✓ Data from 2000-2017 shows that 85 percent of wildfires in the US are caused by humans and involve campfires, garbage burning, malfunctioning equipment and burning cigarettes.
- ✓ Natural causes of fire include volcanic activity and lightning strikes.
- ✓ Maui is home to one of the six active volcanoes of Hawaii.

**The winds of Hurricane Dora**

- ✓ The fire in Hawaii started in the wild and

was carried by the wind that was blowing at almost 100 kmph.

- ✓ The winds have their origins in Hurricane Dora, an unusually strong storm in the Pacific Ocean.
- ✓ The islands were caught between high and low pressure zones due to the hurricane, which resulted in the winds fanning the flames and making these difficult to control.

**The role of fossil fuel**

- ✓ Hawaii has lost 1.5 million acres of native forest, which were natural water and climate regulators.
- ✓ Without them there are disruptions in weather and temperature patterns.
- ✓ Climate change and forest loss are working together to make Hawai'i drier and hotter.
- ✓ One of the big reasons of climate change is the burning of fossil fuel which release large amounts of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

**5. Hydroponics Farming**

**IN CONTEXT:** Recently, the Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare informed the Lok Sabha that ICAR-Indian Institute of Horticulture Research, Bengaluru (IIHR) has developed a variant of hydroponics.

**About Hydroponics Farming:**

- ✓ Hydroponics is a viable alternative to traditional farming methods for soil less cultivation for enhancing productivity and water use efficiency.
- ✓ Hydroponics is a new concept in India and gaining popularity among entrepreneurs and innovative farmers, who are looking for sustainable and efficient ways to grow crops.
- ✓ At present, this technology is mostly confined to urban farming, rooftop gardening and commercial farming.

**ANSWER WRITING**

**Q. 'Communalism arises either due to power struggle or relative deprivation.' Argue by giving suitable illustrations. (250 words) 15**

**INTRODUCTION:** Communalism may be defined as the ideology (set of ideas) which states that society is divided into religious communities whose interests differ and are, at times, even opposed to each other. The antagonism practiced by the people of one community against the people of other community and religion can be termed as 'communalism'. Indian society comprises of large diversity across geographical distribution. Thus, ensuring unity and curtailing forces/causes of communalism becomes all the more challenging.

**Rise of communalism due to power struggle :**

- ✓ The rise of communalism in India can be attributed to the British policy of 'divide and rule'.
- ✓ They played Hindus and Muslims against each other by trying to project the Muslims as oppressed and offering them certain incentives.
- ✓ The issue of reservation in employment, separate electorate, partition of Bengal etc. was to drive a wedge between the two communities. The appeasement of hardliners from the two communities was also done with that objective.
- ✓ Even after independence, political parties across the spectrum have continued to invoke religion for political gains. The issue of Ram Mandir, Ghar Wapsi, persecution of minorities etc still continue to be used for political polarisation.

**Rise of communalism due to relative deprivation :**

- ✓ The rise of 'Aligarh movement' was a case in point as Syed Ahmed Khan believed that Muslims lagged behind the Hindus in socio-economic terms.
- ✓ Moplah revolution also had communal undertones overlapping with the economic differences. It basically pitted the Hindu Zamindars against the Muslim tenants.
- ✓ Muslims have a relatively low level of socio-economic development as compared to the Hindus. They also don't find adequate representation in politics or high government offices proportional to their population. This creates perception of alienation and gives rise to communal struggle.

- ✓ When political parties/civil society groups give communal colour to issues like Triple Talaq, Uniform Civil Code, target particular community for terrorism etc., it results in relative deprivation escalating into struggle for power.

**Conclusion:** Religion, when deliberately used as a tool for attaining power, both political and over resources, leads to the growth of communalism. The rising trend of communalism and the violent aftermath that follows it is a major threat to the integrity of India. So, efficient and effective measures must be adopted against the evil of communalism and checking its spread over the social fabric of India.

**MCQ**

1. **Recently**, The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi remembered victims whose lives were lost in the partition of the country, as the nation observes as 'Vibhajan Vibhishika Smriti Diwas' on which date:
  - a) **On 14<sup>th</sup> August.**
  - b) On 15<sup>th</sup> August.
  - c) ON 26<sup>th</sup> January.
  - d) None of the above
2. Considered the following statement
  1. Hydroponics is a viable alternative to traditional farming methods.
  2. It is soil less cultivation for enhancing productivity and water use efficiency.
  3. Hydroponics is a new concept in India and gaining popularity among entrepreneurs and innovative farmers.
 How many of the above statement is/are correct?
  - a) Only 1
  - b) Only 2
  - c) **Only 3**
  - d) None
3. Recently the Island of Maui is in news, considered the following statement?
  1. The island of Maui is the second-largest of the islands of the state of Hawaii.
  2. It is comes under the United States jurisdiction.
 Which of the following statement is/are correct?
  - a) Only 1
  - b) Only 2
  - c) **Both 1 and 2**
  - d) Neither 1 nor 2
4. Recently, the term 'sponge cities' initiative was in the news, it is mentioned in context of which of the following countries?
  - a) Australia
  - b) Philippines
  - c) Nigeria
  - d) **China**
5. Consider the following statements regarding Glyphosate:
  1. It is a widely used herbicide that can kill certain weeds and grasses.
  2. It is not biodegradable and results in leaching into groundwater.
 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
6. Cocoponics, which was recently seen in the news is, which of the following statement is related to it:
  - a) It is a recently discovered galaxy.
  - b) It is newly found plant disease.
  - c) It is Zoonotic disease.
  - d) **It is the soil-less production of vegetables.**
7. A young male tiger recently died in a road hit near Murdoli village in the buffer zone of the Nawegaon-Nagzira Tiger Reserve. The Tiger Reserve located at:
  - a) **Maharashtra**
  - b) Rajasthan
  - c) Gujurat
  - d) Nagaland
8. Consider the following statements with respect to the Pradhan Mantri Uchcharat Shiksha Abhiyan (PM-USHA) Scheme:
  1. It is an initiative of the Ministry of Education.
  2. It aims to improve the quality of higher education in State Universities.
  3. It is funded entirely by the Central Government.
 How many of the above statement(s) is/are incorrect?
  - a) **Only one**
  - b) Only two
  - c) All three
  - d) None of the above
9. Consider the following statements regarding India Web Browser Development Challenge (IWBCD):
  1. The challenge is spearheaded by NITI Aayog.
  2. The Indian Tech Start-ups, MSMEs, Companies and a subsidiary company of any foreign corporation are eligible participants in the challenge.
 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**
10. Consider the following statements regarding Earendel star:
  1. It is a massive B-type star that is more than twice as hot as Sun.
  2. It is located in the Andromeda Galaxy.
 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