INTERNATIONAL RELATION

Shift of focus-From Indo-Pacific to Indian ocean region

The Indian government has attached great focus on the Indo-Pacific region to strengthen the Quad. However, policy attention has shifted back to the Indian Ocean since October 2023 due to certain compelling reasons.

[QUAD =India+Australia+USA+Japan]

The need to shift focus from Indo-Pacific to Indian ocean region

1) **Deterioration of India-Maldives relations** -The Maldives, with Mohamed Muizzu as President, has adopted an anti-India attitude. Despite New Delhi's patience and diplomatic tact, Male continues to deepen its pro-China policies. China has recently announced a new agreement under which unspecified military assistance would be extended to Maldives.

2) **Regionalization of Israel-Hamas conflict** – Both the Western Indian Ocean and the Northern Indian Ocean that stretch from the Arabian Sea to the Suez have become active geographies.

There is gradual regionalization of the Israel-Hamas conflict. This was reflected in the attacks by Houthi rebels on international shipping which led to a massive drop in transits through the Suez Canal.

3) **Intensification of strategic contest between India and China**-China's strategic intent is to create an adverse environment for India's security by turning the country's neighbours against it. For ex- building of naval bases in Indian ocean littoral states such as Djibouti, Kyaukphyu, Gwadar, and Hambantota.

4) **Strategic ambiguity of European nations**-While European nations are concerned about China's illegal claims in the South China Sea, they fail to acknowledge China's **assertiveness** and **hostile intent** in Indian Ocean also. The geographic distance of the European nations from China gives them a sense of security.

way forward

1) **Priority to Indian ocean region**– India needs to convey a clear message to its strategic partners that while it is conscious of its Indo-Pacific responsibilities, it must prioritize the Indian Ocean region to secure its strategic interest in its immediate neighborhood.

2) **Review of IORA & CSC**-There is a need to review the working of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and the Colombo Security Conclave (CSC). IORA has been underperforming and CSC faces the danger of losing the Maldives due to its pro-China tilt.

3) **Creation of Indian Ocean Cooperation Organization**– There should be the creation of a new organization called Indian Ocean Cooperation Organization to bolster maritime security and optimizing the potential for the Blue Economy.

This group may comprise of four nations from the neighbourhood (India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Myanmar) and four island states (Mauritius, Seychelles, Comoros, and Madagascar).

4) **Strengthening Indian Navy**– Foreign Affairs Insights & Review ranked the Indian Navy the seventh most powerful in the world. To contain aggressive posturing of China and to become net security provider in Indo-Pacific, India should find new budgetary resources for its Navy to make it the third or fourth strongest.

ECONOMY

Recalibrating Non Personal Data

The importance of digitisation in achieving India's goal of becoming a USD 5 trillion economy cannot be emphasised enough. According to a NASSCOM report, data and Artificial Intelligence (AI) could contribute around USD 450-500 billion to India's GDP by 2025.

However, the rapid digitisation of government operations is leading to a significant increase in the amount of citizen data being generated. This data typically falls into two categories - Personal Data which includes information that can identify individuals, and Non-Personal Data (NPD) which excludes personal information.

Application of high value advanced analytics and AI to NPD across key sectors of the economy can help predict socially and economically sound outcomes. Junctures where such data-driven insights can better inform governance and public functions are meteorological and disaster forecasts, infrastructure capacity and citizen use-patterns, mobility and housing patterns, and employment trends, to name a few.

About Non Personal Data

Any data which is not personal data is categorised as non-personal data. In terms of origin, non-personal data can be data which is never related to natural persons (such as data on weather or supply chains), or data which was initially personal data, but has been anonymised (through use of certain techniques to ensure that individuals to whom the data relates to cannot be identified).

Types:

1. Public Non-Personal Data: Data collected or generated by the government in the course of publicly funded works. For example, anonymised data of land records or vehicle registration can be considered as public non-personal data.

2. Community Non-Personal Data: Raw or factual data (without any processing) which is sourced from a community of natural persons. For example, datasets collected by municipal corporations or public electric utilities.

3. Private Non-Personal Data: Data which is collected or generated by private entities through privately owned processes (derived insights, algorithms or proprietary knowledge).

NPD constitutes the primary kind of citizen data obtained by the government, which possesses the potential of serving as a 'public good'. To create synergies and devise scalable solutions, integration of NPD in the dispensation of public services is generally being advocated for.

▪ **Indian Context:**

The National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence, for instance, contemplates making some types of government data available for the 'public good' and mandating corporations to share aggregated data, as a means of overcoming the hurdle of limited data access within India's AI ecosystem.

- the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeiTY) released the **National Data Governance Framework Policy (NPD Framework)** which was touted as the first building block of the digital architecture being conceived to maximise data-driven governance.
- It also proposes setting up of an **'India Data Management Office (IDMO)',** under the Digital India Corporation, which shall be responsible for framing, managing and periodically reviewing and revising the policy.

Different Concerns Associated with Non Personal Data

- **Sensitivity Issues Involved**: Unlike personal data, which contains explicit information about a person's name, age, gender, sexual orientation, biometrics and other genetic details, non-personal data is more likely to be in an anonymised form.
- **Lack of Effective Regulation**: Unfortunately, unlike Personal Data, there is a stark absence of regulation for NPD. As of date, less efforts have been made at the executive level to construct governance policies for the same.
- 'Report by the Committee of Experts on Non-Personal Data Governance Framework' highlighted the lack of effective regulation and stressed upon the urgency of effectively regulating the non-personal data in India along the lines of personal data.
- **Undue Advantage to Big Techs:** A government committee headed by Infosys co-founder Kris Gopalakrishnan in 2020 has suggested that non-personal data generated in the country be allowed to be harnessed by various domestic companies and entities, which raises significant concerns.The data sets will heavily favour big tech companies.
- **Issues of Mixed Datasets – Containing Both Personal and Non-Personal Data:**
- The reality of mixed datasets and the inevitable overlap between the two means that a clear demarcation is not tenable.
- The language of the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023 alludes to mixed datasets falling under the ambit of personal data protection standards, much like the application of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in Europe.
- **Lack of Effective Utilisation of NPD:** None of the above-mentioned laws (DPDP Act, 2023 and NPD Framework) provide for an enforceable regime for NPD in India. For this reason, vast reservoirs of NPD stand unregulated and are supported only by limited guidance in dissemination, use, or exchange thereof.
- **Unprotected Interflow Across Departments:** The unprotected inter-flow of NPD across government departments, third-parties, and citizens can make sensitive aspects of NPD vulnerable due to privacy breaches. This can unfairly benefit capacity-carrying actors like Big Tech.

The imperfect analysis of crucial public trends can result in faulty decision-making. Such exchange of data is also inefficient as it fails to unlock the power of interdisciplinary legislative and policy-making

Issues in NPD Framework:

- The NPD Framework, being a pioneering step, also exhibits several gaps. It formulates abstract high-level principles and objectives for NPD governance but lacks tangible, actionable guidance to achieve them.
- While legislation is expected, practical operationalisation is overlooked, leaving questions unanswered regarding stakeholder rights and obligations across sectors.
- Additionally, mechanisms for pricing of data and appropriate legal structures for data exchange are not addressed. The absence of standardised governance tools compounds these challenges.

Measures Need to be Adopted to Effectively Harness NPD

Critical Assessment of NPD Framework:

A critical evaluation of the NPD Framework to address the existing gaps will be beneficial. This will supplement MeiTY's effort to regulate NPD and will help forge data exchanges as suitable media to make NPD interoperable across sectors.

Formulating Blueprints Governing Data Exchanges:

Data exchanges are scalable ecosystems which galvanise multiple stakeholders. This makes them a fertile ground for deploying advanced analytics for outcome-oriented decision making and helps achieve economies of scale.

EX-In India, Telangana has created an agriculture data exchange, and the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs, in partnership with the Indian Institute of Science, has established the India Urban Data Exchange.

2

The Department of Science & Technology also plans to set up data exchanges to implement aspects of the <u>National Geospatial Policy</u>.

Recommendations of Expert Committee:
o   The Expert Committee constituted by the MeiTY to study various issues relating to non-personal data submitted its report in July, 2020. **The Committee made following recommendations:**
*   **Formulating Roles in NPD Governance Framework**: The data principal is the entity to whom the non-personal data relates to. This entity can be an individual, a community, or a company. Data principals may exercise rights over their data through a representative entity, called data trustee.
*   The Committee recommended establishing 'data business' as a new category of business in the country. Entities (including government agencies) which collect, process or store data beyond a threshold (as specified by the regulator) will be classified as data businesses.

Non-Personal Data Authority:
*   This regulatory authority will be established for putting in place the framework for governance of non-personal data. It will consist of experts in fields such as data governance and technology.

Sharing of Non-Personal Data:
*   Any entity may raise a data-sharing request for a: (i) sovereign purpose (such as national security or legal requirements), (ii) public interest purpose (policy making or better delivery of services), or (iii) economic purpose (to provide for a level playing field or for a monetary consideration).

While NPD holds promise as a 'public good' and can enhance public services, its unregulated status poses risks, including de-anonymisation and unfair advantages for certain entities. The current governance framework, including the National Data Governance Framework Policy, lacks enforceability and operational clarity, leaving NPD largely unregulated and hindering its potential benefits

PRELIM FACTS

1.Section 153A of the IPC
The Supreme Court clarified that for an act to be considered an offense under Section 153A of the Indian Penal Code, it must cause animosity and discord between two or more groups or communities.
1. About– Section 153A of the IPC aims to penalize individuals who promote hostility between different groups based on factors like religion, caste, race, place of birth or residence, or language.
2. Accountability– The provision holds accountable those who
a. Spread hate through words (spoken or written), images, or signs to stir up discord, animosity, or unrest among people of different groups, religions, castes, or communities.
b. Spread disharmony and disturb the public tranquility of the people belonging to different racial and religious groups.
c. Assist in arranging activities that promote and train participants to use criminal force and violence against people of different racial and religious backgrounds.
d. This section also includes offenses involving moral wrongdoing.
3. Punishment:
a. The offense is cognizable offense and can lead to up to three years in prison, a fine, or both.
b. If the offense happens in a place of worship, the punishment can increase to five years in prison and a fine.
c. Additionally, under Section 153A, the offense is non-bailable, and the accused is tried by a first-class magistrate.
Note– A cognizable offense allows a police officer to investigate and make an arrest without needing a magistrate's order or a warrant.
4. Low conviction rate issue- According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), the conviction rate for Section 153A is notably low.
5. Safeguards against misuse:
a. Sections 153A and 153B need government approval before starting prosecution. This approval is necessary before the trial, not during the initial investigation.
b. To limit arbitrary arrests, the Supreme Court set guidelines in 2014 in the case of Arnesh Kumar v State of Bihar.
c. According to these guidelines, for crimes with sentences less than seven years, the police cannot arrest someone automatically before investigating.

2. IMT Trilateral Exercise- 2024
INS Tir and INS Sujata are set to join the upcoming India-Mozambique-Tanzania (IMT) Trilateral (TRILAT) Exercise 2024.
About   It is a joint maritime exercise scheduled from 21-29 Mar 24 among the Indian, Mozambique and Tanzania navies.
Objectives

3

1. Capability development to address common threats through training and sharing of best practices.

2. Enhancing interoperability.

3. Strengthening maritime cooperation.

First Edition   The first edition of IMT TRILAT exercise conducted in Oct 22.

Phases   The current exercise is divided into two phases

1. Harbour Phase:

a. During the harbor phase from March 21st to March 24th, 2024, Naval ships Tir and Sujata will interact with the respective Navies at the ports of Zanzibar (Tanzania) and Maputo (Mozambique).

b. This phase will start with a Planning Conference, followed by joint harbor training activities such as Damage Control, Fire Fighting, Visit Board Search and Seizure procedures, Medical Lectures, Casualty Evacuation, and Diving operations.

2. Sea Phase:

a. The sea phase of the exercise focuses on practical aspects of countering asymmetric threats, Visit Board Search and Seizure procedures, boat handling, maneuvers, and firing exercises.

b. Additionally, a joint Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) surveillance is planned during this phase.

3. Pushpak- Reusable Landing Vehicle (RLV) LEX 02 landing experiment

ISRO has successfully tested the Pushpak Reusable Landing Vehicle (RLV) LEX 02 in Chitradurga, Karnataka.

Reusable Landing Vehicle (RLV) LEX 02

This test, the second one in the sequence after RLV-LEX-01, showcased the autonomous landing capability of the RLV, known as Pushpak.

Reusable Landing Vehicle (RLV)

1. The RLV is conceptualized as a space plane with a low lift-to-drag ratio, requiring an approach at high glide angles that necessitates landing at high velocities of 350 km/h.

2. This design allows it to transport payloads to low Earth orbits and return to Earth for future use.

3. It uses various indigenous systems, including localized navigation based on pseudolite technology, along with instrumentation and sensor systems developed by ISRO.

Note- The Reusable Launch Vehicle-Technology Demonstrator (RLV-TD) Programme is designed as a sequence of technology demonstration missions aimed at achieving a fully reusable Two Stage To Orbit (TSTO) vehicle.

What was the method used for the experiment?

1. Challenging autonomous landing– The RLV LEX-02 mission showcased the autonomous landing ability of the reusable launch vehicle, named Pushpak, under challenging conditions after being released from a Chinook helicopter at 4.5 km altitude.

2. Automatic control adjustments– It approached the runway autonomously, making adjustments as needed, and landed precisely using its brake parachute, landing gear brakes, and nose wheel steering system.

3. RLV-LEX-01 System reuse– All flight systems from RLV-LEX-01 were reused in this mission after receiving necessary certifications.

4. Agencies involved– The mission was carried out by Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC), Liquid Propulsion System Centre (LPSC), and ISRO Inertial Systems Unit (IISU).

4. Usha Mehta-Indian Freedom Fighter

The film "Ae Watan Mere Watan," centered on the life of Indian freedom fighter Usha Mehta, has recently been released.

About Usha Mehta

1. Birth– Usha Mehta was born in 1920 in the village of Saras, near Surat in Gujarat.

2. Mahatma Gandhi follower– She followed Gandhi's principles and was often called Ushaben.

3. Role in Indian Freedom struggle:

a. When she was eight years old in 1928, she joined a protest march against the Simon Commission.

b. On August 14, 1942, she and her associates set up the Secret Congress Radio during the Quit India Movement, which began broadcasting on August 27.

4. Awarded Padma Vibhushan– In 1998, the Government of India honored her with the Padma Vibhushan, the second highest civilian award in the country.

Setting up an underground station

Background– When the World War II began in 1939, the British suspended all amateur radio licenses across their Empire. Operators were required to surrender all equipment to the authorities, facing severe punishment if they didn't comply.

1. Congress radio station creation– Congress Radio was created during the Quit India Movement to spread the message of Independence, making it one of India's earliest radio networks. It was used by Gandhiji to promote Independence.

2. Organisers– Usha Mehta, along with Babubhai Khakar, Vithalbhai Jhaveri, and Chandrakant Jhaveri, played vital roles in organizing Congress Radio.

4

3. End to Congress Radio- To evade detection by the British, they regularly changed transmission locations. The operation was exposed when Nariman Printer was captured; he revealed the location of Congress Radio in exchange for immunity.

4. Congress Radio case:

a. The trial of the five accused— Usha Mehta, Babubhai Khakar, Vithalbhai Jhaveri, Chandrakant Jhaveri, and Nanak Gainchand Motwane (who sold essential equipment to the team)— stirred considerable excitement in Bombay.

b. Vithalbhai and Motwane were cleared of charges, while Mehta, Babubhai, and Chandrakant received harsh sentences.

c. Usha Mehta was freed from Pune's Yerawada Jail in March 1946 and is celebrated in nationalist media as "Radio-ben".

Quit India Movement

1. It was also known as the August Movement or Bharat Chodo Andolan, and it was a major act of civil disobedience.

2. It was led by Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian National Congress on August 8, 1942, at Gowalia Tank Maidan, also known as August Kranti Maidan, in Bombay.

3. The "Do or Die" slogan given by Mahatma Gandhi at Bombay's Gowalia Tank Maidan.

5.Arvind Kejriwal Arrested: Can a Chief Minister Serve While in Jail?

What does the Constitutional or legal provision say?

According to the law, under **Article 361**, the President of India and governors are immune from civil and criminal proceedings during their term. However, this protection doesn't extend to prime ministers and chief ministers.

1. No provision prohibits him from continuing as CM– According to constitutional experts, no constitutional or legal provision exists to prevent him from continuing. According to the rules, he loses his position only–

a. If he loses the majority in the House

b. His party asks him to step down

c. He resigns from the position

2. Conviction required for disqualification– According to section 8 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, conviction is necessary for disqualification. Since Kejriwal hasn't been convicted, he can legally stay in office. However, governing from prison presents practical challenges.

3. Practical challenges– Practical issues may arise as he would be required to lead Cabinet meetings, consult with colleagues on decisions, and review minutes for approval. However, in jail, he would be subject to the jail manual, which could pose difficulties.

What do the court judgments say?

Manoj Narula versus Union of India– In the case of Manoj Narula versus Union of India, the Supreme Court ruled that constitutional morality, good governance, and constitutional trust are fundamental criteria for holding public office.

ANSWER WRITTING

Q. international aid is an accepted form of helping resource – challenged nations. Comment on ethics in contemporary international aid. Support your answer with suitable example.

International aid refers to the assistance provided by one country or international organization to another country facing various challenges, exemplified by India's contribution of INR nearly 96 crore to Nepal for post-earthquake assistance in 2015. However, the ethics surrounding international aid have become increasingly important in contemporary scenario, as ensuring aid is delivered and utilized ethically is essential to its effectiveness and the well-being of recipient nations.

Ethical Foundations of International Aid:

• Humanitarian Assistance:

1.Altruism: Altruism, a fundamental ethical foundation of international aid, emphasizes selfless concern for the welfare of others. A prime example is the global response to the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami.

2.Global Solidarity: The principle of global solidarity underscores the shared responsibility of the international community in assisting nations facing challenges. An excellentillustration is the establishment of COVAX for equitable access to COVID-19vaccines.

• Developmental Assistance:

1.Capacity Building: Capacity building, a critical ethical foundation, emphasizes empowering nations to become self-sufficient and resilient. The Marshall Plan post World War II exemplified this principle by focusing on long-term recovery of Europe.

2. Education and Health: The ethical imperative to enhance education and healthcare is paramount in international aid efforts. This is exemplified by agencies like UNICEF, which actively promote education, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which has made significant contributions to improving healthcare around the world.

• Ecological Sustainability: With growing environmental concerns, international aid increasingly includes projects for sustainable development and environmental conservation. An example is the Green Climate Fund, which supports projects that mitigate the impacts of climate change in vulnerable countries.

Ethical Issues and Criticisms:

• Conditional Aid:

1.Political Manipulation: International aid often faces criticism for being influenced by political motives rather than solely addressing humanitarian needs. For instance, U.S. aid to Central American countries has been accused of prioritizing political interests over the welfare of the recipients.

2.Economic Dependencies: Certain forms of aid have inadvertently created economic dependencies rather than promoting self-sufficiency. Haiti, despite receiving substantial aid, continues to struggle with economic hardships, demonstrating increased dependence on external assistance.

• Corruption: Inequitable distribution of aid has often resulted in corruption, where funds intended for relief and development are embezzled or misappropriated. In the case of Haiti's earthquake relief efforts in 2010, corruption within the aid distribution system hindered effective relief efforts.

• Armed Conflicts: Aid can also be misused to fuel armed conflicts, as seen in cases where humanitarian assistance inadvertently supports warring factions rather than benefiting the affected populations. Such misuse can have severe ethical implications for international aid efforts.

The ethical dimensions of international aid are complex and multifaceted, highlighting the need to strike a balance between noble intentions and potential pitfalls. This balance is paramount to ensuring that international aid better serves its intended purpose while upholding the principles of fairness, compassion, and global environmental responsibility.

MCQs

1. 'Right to Privacy' is protected under which Article of the Constitution of India?
   (a) Article 15   (b) Article 19
   (c) Article 21   (d) Article 29

2. Which of the following were the causes behind the launch of 'Non-cooperation movement'?
   1. Punjab wrongs of 1919
   2. Resentment with Rowlatt Act
   3. Khilafat wrong
   How many of the above options is/are correct?
   (a) Only one   (b) Only two
   (c) All three   (d) None

3. Consider the following statements regarding Sinkholes.
   1. Sinkholes are depressions formed in the ground when layers of the Earth's surface start collapsing into caverns.
   2. They are formed in areas of "karst" terrains, where the rock below the surface of the Earth can be easily dissolved by groundwater.
   3. They are formed due to natural processes or human activity.
   How many of the above statements is/are correct?
   (a) Only one   (b) Only two
   (c) All three   (d) None

4. Consider the following places:
   1. Gulmarg   2. Kargil
   3. Nubra Valley   4. Hemis
   How many of the above places are situated in Ladakh?
   (a) Only one   (b) Only two
   (c) Only three   (d) All four

5. The 'Lisu tribe' resides in:
   a) **Arunachal Pradesh**
   b) Andaman & Nicobar Islands
   c) Jharkhand
   d) Kerala

6. Consider the following statements with respect to the "Manjusha Art":
   1. The art form is made up of bamboo, jute, and paper.
   2. Abstract geometric patterns are often depicted in Manjusha art.
   3. The art form is completely based on the folklore of Bihula-Bishari.
   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

7. 'Hemoglobin A1C test (HbA1C) test', seen in the news recently, measures:
   a) **Diabetes**
   b) Cervical Cancer
   c) Heart Conditions
   d) Levels of Cholesterol in the Blood

8. Which one of the following is the primary purpose of the Space-borne Assistant and Knowledge Hub for Crew Interaction (SAKHI) app onboard the spacecraft?
   a) Providing television facilities for the crew during long journeys.
   b) **Providing real-time information and assistance to astronauts**.
   c) Monitoring and controlling spacecraft systems.
   d) Facilitating communication between the crew and mission control.

9. Which one of the following statements about 'core inflation' is correct?
   a) It includes the price changes of all goods and services.
   b) **It excludes the price changes of food and energy due to their volatility**.
   c) It measures inflation experienced by low-income households.
   d) It is always lower than headline inflation

10. The 'Gulf of Tonkin' is a body of water located in:
    a) The Indian Ocean
    b) **The South China Sea**
    c) The Pacific Ocean
    d) The Caspian Sea