

SosinClasses

INSTITUTE FOR IAS EXAMINATION

(IAS, IFS, IPS, IRS, IRMS, IFoS & Other Civil Services)

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DAILY NEWS DIARY

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FOR PRELIMS AND MAINS

Warm Greetings.

- DnD aims to provide every day news analysis in sync with the UPSC pattern.
- It is targeted at UPSC – Prelims & Mains.
- Daily articles are provided in the form of Question and Answers
- To have a bank of mains questions.
- And interesting to read.
- Providing precise information that can be carried straight to the exam, rather than over dumping.

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GS 2**❖ INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

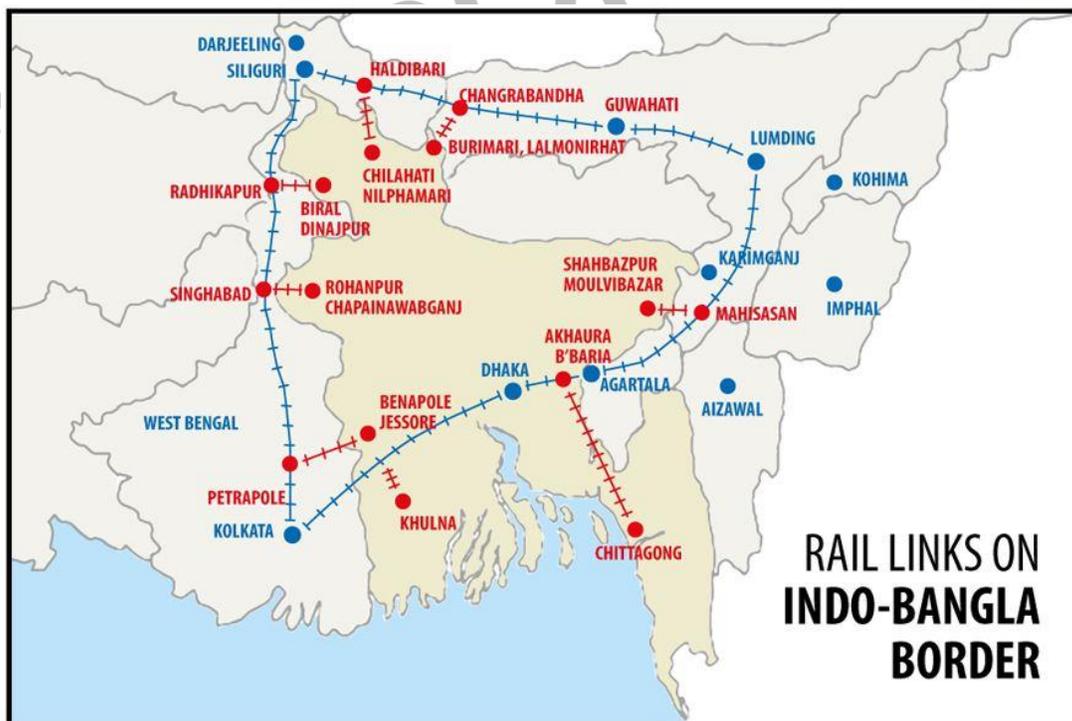
Q) “Passenger train services between India and Bangladesh resumed”. Discuss.

Context:

Two years after they were stopped due to the onset of the pandemic, passenger train services between India and Bangladesh resumed with the Bandhan Express setting off from Kolkata for Khulna and the Maitree Express starting its run from Dhaka for Kolkata.

History of Rail Connectivity:

- The Bandhan Express was resumed by rebooting a long-forgotten rail link between Kolkata and the industrial hub of Khulna, the third-largest city of Bangladesh.
- In 1965, this route was served by the Barisal Express, which was stopped due to the India-Pakistan war.
- The Modi government along with the Sheikh Hasina regime restarted that with Bandhan in 2017.
- The Bandhan Express was the second train to be flagged off after the introduction of Maitree Express between Kolkata and Dhaka Cantonment in April, 2008.
- It covers the distance between Kolkata and Khulna via Petrapole and Benapole border route to cater to the demands of the people from both the countries.
- The Bandhan Express was resumed in 2017 by rebooting a long-forgotten rail link between Kolkata and the industrial hub of Khulna.



Beyond passenger travel:

- The governments of both the countries have been working towards strengthening the rail link between them, and not just through passenger trains.
- In August 2021, the two sides started regular movement of freight trains between the newly-restored link between Haldibari in India and Chilahati in Bangladesh.
- The Haldibari-Chilahati rail link between India and the then East Pakistan was also operational till 1965 and stopped due to the war.
- This was part of the broad gauge main route from Kolkata to Siliguri at the time of Partition.
- The two sides envisage at least 20 freight trains to cross the border per month on this link.

Rail infrastructure:

- Once part of a single, seamless railway network under British rule, trains continued to pass between the two countries even after the Partition.
- The infrastructure to connect the two sides through railways was, therefore, largely present.
- Policymakers on both sides viewed this as an opportunity to deepen diplomatic ties using cross-border movements of goods and passengers.

Five rail links have so far been rebooted between India and Bangladesh:

Petrapole (India)-Benapole (Bangladesh), Gede (India)- Darshana (Bangladesh), Singhabad (India)-Rohanpur (Bangladesh), Radhikapur (India)-Biorol (Bangladesh) and the Haldibari-Chilahati link.

Source: Indian Express

❖ POLITY & GOVERNANCE**Q) Elucidate the origins of Section 124A. What is the present dispute around Section 124A?**

Context: By order dated May 11, 2022, a Bench presided over by the Chief Justice of India, has directed that the petitions challenging the Section 124A be listed for final determination in the third week of July 2022; and that in the meantime suspend the use of Section 124A IPC.

Historical background of Section 124A:

With effect from 1870, (as amended in 1955), Section 124A of the Penal Code read:

- “Whoever by words, spoken or written, brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection, towards the Government established by law in India shall be punished with imprisonment for life...”.
- “Sedition” is the vaguest of all offences known to the criminal law.
- In colonial times, it was defined expansively in order to uphold the majesty of British power in India.
- Before 1950, there were several Court decisions in operation on Section 124A; amongst them was Bal Gangadhar Tilak’s case (1897).

- Absence of affection: In Bal Gangadhar Tilak's case the Privy Council declined to grant leave to appeal, affirming that "disaffection" only meant "absence of affection in any degree towards the British rule or its administration or representatives", and that exciting of mutiny or rebellion or actual disturbance of any sort was "absolutely immaterial".
- With the establishment of a Federal Court by the Government of India Act, 1935, in Niharendu Dutt Majumdar and Ors. vs Emperor the Federal Court held that if the language of Section 124A were to be read literally "it would make a surprising number of persons in India guilty of sedition and that no one, however, supposes that it is to be read in this literal sense".
- However, in 1947 it was precisely in this literal sense that the interpretation of Section 124A was reiterated by a Bench of five judges of the Privy Council (AIR 1947 P.C. 82) in which it was declared that: "If the Federal Court had given their attention to Tilak's case (1897) they should have recognized it as an authority... by which they were bound".
- With the advent of the Constitution of India on January 26, 1950, this interpretation of Section 124A became "the law in force immediately before the commencement of the Constitution".

Section 124A after 1950

1. Article 372: It stated that all laws in force in the territory of India immediately before the commencement of the Constitution shall continue in force therein until altered or repealed or amended by a competent legislature or other competent authority.
2. Protected due to Article 19(2): In 1962, in criminal appeals arising from the states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court held that though Section 124A "clearly violated" the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression in Article 19(1)(a), it was not unconstitutional only because it was protected from challenge by the words "in the interests of public order" in Article 19(2).

Conclusion

This background has now become pertinent and relevant, because in a fresh batch of writ petitions filed in 2021, the constitutionality of Section 124A (IPC) has been once again challenged in the Supreme Court.

Source: Indian Express

GS 3

❖ ECONOMY

Q) Explain the significance of the Liquid Nano Urea (LNU).

Context:

During his visit to Gujarat, Prime Minister inaugurated the country's first liquid nano urea plant at Kalol.

Liquid Nano Urea (LNU):

- Urea is chemical nitrogen fertiliser, white in colour, which artificially provides nitrogen, a major nutrient required by plants.
- LNU is essentially urea in the form of a nanoparticle.
- It is sprayed directly on the leaves and gets absorbed by the plant.
- Fertilisers in nano form provide a targeted supply of nutrients to crops, as they are absorbed by the stomata, pores found on the epidermis of leaves.
- According to IFFCO, liquid nano urea contains 4 per cent total nitrogen (w/v) evenly dispersed in water.
- The size of a nano nitrogen particle varies from 20-50 nm. (A nanometre is equal to a billionth of a metre).

Significance of LNU:

- This patented product is expected to not only substitute imported urea, but to also produce better results in farms.
- Apart from reducing the country's subsidy bill, it is aimed at reducing the unbalanced and indiscriminate use of conventional urea.
- It will help increase crop productivity, and reduce soil, water, and air pollution.

Using LNU:

The liquid nano urea produced by Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative (IFFCO) Limited comes in a half-litre bottle priced at Rs 240, and carries no burden of subsidy currently. By contrast, a farmer pays around Rs 300 for a 50-kg bag of heavily subsidised urea. According to IFFCO, a bottle of the nano urea can effectively replace at least one bag of urea.

How efficient is LNU?

- While conventional urea has an efficiency of about 25 per cent, the efficiency of liquid nano urea can be as high as 85-90 per cent.
- Conventional urea fails to have the desired impact on crops as it is often applied incorrectly, and the nitrogen in it is vaporized or lost as a gas.
- A lot of nitrogen is also washed away during irrigation.
- Liquid nano urea has a shelf life of a year, and farmers need not be worried about "caking" when it comes in contact with moisture.

❖ SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**Q) Analyse the features and strategic significance of the Astra Missile.****Context:**

The Ministry of Defence has signed a contract with Bharat Dynamics Ltd (BDL) for the supply of the Astra Mark-1 for deployment on fighter jets of the Indian Air Force and Indian Navy.

Astra Missile:

- The Astra Mk-1 is a beyond visual range (BVR), air-to-air missile (AAM).

- The Astra project was officially launched in the early 2000s with defined parameters and proposed future variants.
- The missile has been designed and developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- It will be deployed on fighter jets like Sukhoi-30 MKI and Tejas of the IAF and the Mig-29K of the Navy.
- BVM missiles are capable of engaging beyond the range of 20 nautical miles or 37 kilometres.

Range and its Variants:

While the range for Astra Mk-1 is around 110 km, the Mk-2 with a range over 150 km is under development and Mk-3 version with a longer range is being envisaged. One more version of Astra, with a range smaller than Mk-1 is also under development.

Strategic significance:

- The missile has been designed based on requirements specified by the IAF for BVR as well as close-combat engagement, reducing the dependency on foreign sources.
- AAMs with BVR capability provides large stand-off ranges to own fighter aircraft.
- It can neutralise adversary airborne assets without exposing adversary air defence measures.
- Stand-off range means the missile is launched at a distance sufficient to allow the attacking side to evade defensive fire from the target.
- Astra is technologically and economically superior to many such imported missile
- The missile can travel at speeds more than four times that of sound and can reach a maximum altitude of 20 km, making it extremely flexible for air combat.

Q) Technologies such as 'Kisan Sabha' & 'Gur Bhatti' for Rural Development have been developed by:

- a. Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology
- b. NITI Aayog
- c. CSIR
- d. Indian Institute of Science

 **Hey from Yesterday –**

Q) Which of the following statement/s is/are correct about India-U.S. trade relations?

1. The U.S. surpassed China to become India's top trading partner in 2021-22.
2. India enjoys a positive trade balance with the U.S.

Options:

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: c

Explanation:

- Statement 1 is correct, The U.S. surpassed China to become India's top trading partner in 2021-22
- Bilateral trade between the U.S. and India reached \$119.42 compared to \$115.42 between China and India.
- Statement 2 is correct, Exports to the U.S. stand at \$76.11 billion in 2021-22 compared to imports from the US which accounts for \$43.31 billion.
- Hence, India enjoys a positive trade balance with the U.S.

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