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THE HINDU

ANALYSIS

20 July 2026

PRELIMS · MAINS · EDITORIALS · PRACTICE MCQs

Compiled for
Sapna Chauhan

UPSC / STATE PCS · READ · ANALYSE · REVISE



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1

Statutory Protection for the National Song *Vande Mataram*

GS 2 · POLITY · NATIONAL SYMBOLS

WHY IN NEWS

The Centre will open the Monsoon Session by moving the **Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026** in the Rajya Sabha to grant statutory protection to the National Song *Vande Mataram*.

Song a criminal offence

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Centre will begin the Monsoon Session of Parliament on Monday with a move to grant statutory protection to the National Song *Vande Mataram*, listing the Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026.

This legislation seeks to amend the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971.

The statement of objects and reasons of the Bill by Union Home Minister Amit Shah said that the 1971 Act

provides that any act of in-



Amit Shah

offence. The proposed amendment seeks to extend similar protection to *Vande Mataram*.

According to the Bill, any act causing obstruction in the singing of the

ing of *Vande Mataram*... in order to prohibit any person from intentionally preventing the singing of the National Song or causing disturbance to any assembly engaged in such singing, it is proposed to amend Section 3 of the said Act to include the National Song also within its ambit, so as to make such acts punishable." The Bill circulated among Rajya Sabha members said.

The government's move comes amid year-long celebrations marking the 150th anniversary of *Vande Mataram*.

Earlier, the Union Home

Union Home Minister Amit Shah

- The Bill amends the **Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971**, which makes it punishable to **intentionally prevent the singing of the National Anthem** or cause disturbance to an assembly engaged in such singing; the amendment extends the same protection to *Vande Mataram*.
- It proposes to amend **Section 3** of the Act so that any act causing obstruction in the singing of the National Song, or insulting it in any form, becomes punishable.
- The move comes amid year-long celebrations marking the **150th anniversary** of *Vande Mataram*; earlier, the MHA directed States that the song be played or sung at official functions where the National Anthem, *Jana Gana Mana*, is rendered.
- **Article 51A(a)** — a Fundamental Duty of citizens to respect the Constitution, the National Flag and the National Anthem; the Constitution does not explicitly name a National Song.

★ About *Vande Mataram*

- ▶ Composed by **Bankim Chandra Chatterjee**; first published in *Bangadarshan* (7 Nov 1875), later included in the novel *Anandamath* (1882).
- ▶ Set to music and first sung by **Rabindranath Tagore** at the **1896 Kolkata session** of the INC; adopted for all-India occasions at the **1905 Varanasi session**.
- ▶ Adopted as the **National Song** (first two verses) by the Congress Working Committee in **1937**.
- ▶ **24 Jan 1950** — Dr Rajendra Prasad announced *Jana Gana Mana* as the National Anthem, with *Vande Mataram* honoured **equally** as the National Song.
- ▶ First used as a political slogan on **7 Aug 1905** during the anti-Partition/Swadeshi movement; the English daily *Bande Mataram* (1906) ran under Bipin Chandra Pal, with Sri Aurobindo as joint editor.

SYLLABUS / STATIC LINKAGE

- ↳ Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971 — protects the Constitution, National Flag & National Anthem; imprisonment up to three years.
- ↳ Debate: statutory protection of symbols vs freedom of expression under **Art 19(1)(a)** — ambiguity in defining 'disrespect', possible misuse against dissent.

2

Aligning the Centre's Assurances with the Delimitation Bill

GS 2 · POLITY · REPRESENTATION

WHY IN NEWS

In April the Centre moved the **131st Constitutional Amendment Bill** and a **Delimitation Bill**; analysts note the Centre must align its verbal assurances with the actual text of the Bills as Parliament reconvenes.

ment Bill and the Delimitation Bill, which in combination proposed the following:
Increase the strength of the Lok Sabha to a maximum of 850 seats.
Allot those seats among States based on the population figures of the "latest Census" (which happens to be that of 2011 and delimit individual constituencies within each State immediately. As per the existing provisions of the Constitution, a fresh allocation among States and delimitation can happen only after the Census of 2027.
Reserve one-third of the Lok Sabha seats for women, which would otherwise have been along with

be reached for the passage of the Constitution amendment, which requires a two-thirds majority in the Lok Sabha. The amendment Bill was defeated in the Lok Sabha, and the Delimitation Bill was not put to vote.
The question, therefore, as Parliament convenes for a new session, is how the text of the Constitution can incorporate the promise of maintaining the current arrangement of proportional distribution of Lok Sabha seats.
The existing proportion of seats for each State is a constitutional guarantee written into Articles 81 and 82 of the Constitution. That guarantee has a sunset clause – the existing arrangement comes to an auto-

If the Centre wants to make good on its verbal assurance of maintaining the existing proportional share of each State in the Lok Sabha, it must extend the freeze that ends in 2026 into the future. The last two times, the freeze was imposed for 25 years each – in 1976 until 2001, and in 2001 until 2026. If the Centre plans to freeze the current arrangement for another 25 years, the references to the first Census after 2026 in Articles 81 and 82 can be amended to read "after 2051". Or it can be any other date into the future, as the case may be.
To ensure that each State gets a 50% increase in seats, the reference to the 1971 Census in Articles 81

The Bills propose raising Lok Sabha strength to 850

- Combined proposals: raise Lok Sabha strength to a **maximum of 850 seats**; allot seats among States on the **'latest Census' (2011)** and delimit constituencies immediately; reserve **one-third of seats for women**.
- As per existing provisions, fresh allocation among States and delimitation can happen only after the **Census of 2027**. The Amendment Bill was defeated in the Lok Sabha; the Delimitation Bill was not put to vote.
- The existing proportion of seats per State is a constitutional guarantee in **Articles 81 & 82**, with a **sunset clause** — it ends automatically once data of the first Census after 2026 is published.
- Arts 81–82 reference three Censuses: the **first Census after 2026** (next delimitation), the **1971 Census** (proportion of seats among States) and the **2001 Census** (population of constituencies within a State).
- The April Bills proposed to remove these separate references and tie both seat allotment and delimitation to the **'latest Census'**.
- To preserve each State's share, the freeze ending in 2026 must be extended — past freezes ran 25 years each (**1976 → 2001, 2001 → 2026**); e.g., 'first Census after 2026' could be amended to **'after 2051'**.
- For a uniform 50% seat increase, the **1971 Census reference** must be retained; for boundary-only redrawing within States, retain 1971 and amend the 2001 reference to the **2011 Census**.

★ Delimitation — Static Points

- Delimitation Commission** appointed by the President; works with the Election Commission; orders have the **force of law** and cannot be questioned before any court.
- Art 82** — readjustment after every Census; totals frozen till the first Census after 2026 (**42nd & 84th Amendments**).

3

M.P. Cabinet Approves Draft Uniform Civil Code Bill

GS 2 · POLITY · SOCIAL JUSTICE

WHY IN NEWS

The **Madhya Pradesh Cabinet** approved a draft **UCC Bill** banning polygamy and *nikah halala* and tightly regulating live-in relationships, while **exempting the State's tribal population**; it will be tabled in the Monsoon Session.

Metrol Mahapatra
The Madhya Pradesh Cabinet on Sunday approved the draft Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill, proposing a prohibition on practices like polygamy and *nikah halala*, while introducing strict provisions for live-in relationships. The Bill, however, exempts the State's large tribal population.
The Bill, drafted by a six-member committee, and scheduled to be tabled in the Legislative Assembly during the Monsoon Session, was approved at a special Cabinet meeting near Bhopal.
Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, who has stepped up his push for the UCC, over the past week, claimed that the proposed law had received support from all religious communities and that over 80% of Madhya Pradesh's population is Hindu.
"I don't know what the Congress sees in the Bill," he said, adding that the State's diverse communities and one law, he said, will ensure the unity of the State.
The draft Bill excludes the ST communities to protect their "unique cultural heritage" and traditional lifestyle.
"Respecting constitutional safeguards, this law will not be applicable to Scheduled Tribes," the official said.

"The Code has removed the legal framework, children of married or unmarried parents – whether biological, adopted or born through surrogacy or assisted reproductive technology – will enjoy equal legal status," he said.
The Bill also seeks to set boundaries for live-in couples to submit an affidavit to the local registrar within a month of entering such a relationship, failing which could attract legal action.
While the minimum age for entering a live-in relationship remains at the proposed legislation provides that if other partners are below 21 years of age, information regarding the commencement and termination of the live-in relationship will be sent to their parents or guardians, and that the registrar will also share the record with the local police.

M.P. Cabinet meeting near Bhopal

- Drafted by a **six-member committee**; excludes **ST communities** (Bhil, Gond, Korku, Baiga, Sahariya, Bharia) covered under **Arts 342 & 366**, and communities protected under **Part XXI**, to preserve their 'unique cultural heritage and traditional lifestyle'.
- Declares **triple talaq** and *nikah halala* illegal and punishable; verbal divorce and informal panchayat decisions barred — marriage dissolvable only on **clear statutory grounds**.

- **Mandatory registration** of all marriages and divorces through government portals, to secure marital rights, alimony and legal protections.
- **Live-in relationships**: an affidavit must be filed with the local registrar within a month; minimum age remains **18**, but if either partner is **below 21**, information goes to parents/guardians and the record is shared with local police.
- Children of live-in relationships are **legitimate** with full inheritance rights; an abandoned woman can claim maintenance like a legal wife. The Code drops the term 'illegitimate' — children of married or unmarried parents (biological, adopted, via surrogacy/ART) enjoy equal status.

★ Uniform Civil Code — Key Facts

- ▶ **Art 44 (DPSP, Part IV)**: the State shall endeavour to secure a UCC throughout India.
- ▶ Personal laws today: **Hindu** (HMA 1955, HSA 1956), **Muslim** (Shariat Act 1937), **Christian** (1872/1869), **Parsi** (1936); the **Special Marriage Act, 1954** offers a civil option.
- ▶ **21st Law Commission (2018)**: UCC neither necessary nor desirable at this stage; the 2022 Commission sought fresh public/religious input.
- ▶ **Uttarakhand** and **Gujarat** have moved on UCC; **Goa** follows the **Portuguese Civil Code, 1867**.

4

NITI Aayog's Investment Friendliness Index (IFI)

PRELIMS + GS 3 · ECONOMY · FEDERALISM

WHY IN NEWS

NITI Aayog launched the **inaugural Investment Friendliness Index (IFI)** to benchmark state-level business reforms under the **Viksit Bharat @2047** vision.



- A comprehensive, **evidence-based macroeconomic framework** assessing how effectively subnational governments create and sustain an environment that attracts domestic and foreign private capital.
- Published by **NITI Aayog**; aim — to strengthen **competitive and cooperative federalism**. It covers all **28 States and 8 Union Territories**.
- Eight pillars: **Infrastructure, Business Climate, Resources, Government Policy, Regulatory Ease, Institutional Environment, Financial Health, Environmental Resilience**.

★ Findings

- ▶ Only **five States scored above 50**: Gujarat (56.6), Maharashtra (53.7), Tamil Nadu (53.3), Goa (53.1) and Odisha.
- ▶ Drivers: **Gujarat** — ports & infrastructure; **Maharashtra** — business climate & PE/VC; **Tamil Nadu** — exports & manufacturing.
- ▶ **FDI concentration**: Maharashtra, Karnataka, Gujarat, Delhi and Tamil Nadu take **85%** of India's FDI; the **Northeast** receives **less than 1%**.

5

Exercise Pitch Black 2026

PRELIMS · DEFENCE · INTERNATIONAL

WHY IN NEWS

India is participating in **Exercise Pitch Black 2026**, one of the Indo-Pacific's largest multinational air-combat exercises.



IAF Rafales refuelling from an IL-78 tanker

- A large-scale **biennial** multinational **air warfare** drill focused on high-end, complex air-combat training — among the region's biggest collective air-defence and strike simulations.
- **Host:** the **Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF)**; the 2026 edition features forces from **20 nations**.
- Core aircraft-deploying participants: **USA, Japan, India, Indonesia, Singapore, France, Germany, Spain, South Korea, Thailand, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea** and host **Australia**, with embedded personnel from the UK, Canada and New Zealand.

★ Prelims Pointer

- ▶ Pitch Black is **hosted by Australia (RAAF)** — don't confuse with bilateral drills.
- ▶ India–Australia exercises: **AUSTRAHIND** (Army), **AUSINDEX** (Navy), **Malabar** (multilateral naval).

6

The Missing Jobs for India's Gen Z

GS 3 · ECONOMY · EMPLOYMENT

WHY IN NEWS

India has one of the world's largest youth populations (**371 million**, UN 2025) — a 'demographic dividend' that pays off only if young people move from classrooms into decent, productive work. That transition is faltering.

- **Gen Z** = born **1997–2012** (working age 15–26); Millennials = 1981–96 (aged 27–42). PLFS 2023–24: **~29.94 crore** working-age Gen Z vs ~35 crore Millennials.
- A large share is still studying (**41.7% of young males, 38.4% of females**) — partly explaining delayed labour-market entry.
- Among young male entrants: **15.8%** unpaid family workers, **12.3%** casual workers, and only **14.8%** regular wage earners.
- Among Gen Z females: **~35%** in domestic duties (outside the labour force), **10.7%** unpaid family workers, and only **4.7%** regular wage earners.
- Women bear the burden disproportionately — **27.1%** of Gen Z females are in domestic duties only, against **0.32%** of males — reflecting childcare burdens, safety concerns, mobility constraints and social norms.
- The disconnect points to an **education–labour market mismatch**; India's jobs debate is too often discussed in silos — unemployment, skilling, women's work and informality are one connected failure of labour-market transition.

★ Way Forward

- ▶ Expand **labour-intensive sectors**; strengthen **school-to-work** pathways and apprenticeships.
- ▶ Enable women's participation: **childcare support, safe transport and formal-hiring incentives**.
- ▶ Skilling must complement — not substitute for — **actual job creation**.

7

India-UK CETA: Turning Market Access into Market Share

GS 3 · ECONOMY · TRADE

WHY IN NEWS

The **India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)** reflects New Delhi's more mature approach to FTAs — balancing liberalisation with domestic sensitivities.

- Unlike the 2009 **ASEAN FTA** (which tilted the balance against India), CETA guards domestic sensitivities — echoing the **New Zealand FTA**, where India protected its **dairy** sector.
- It offers **zero-duty access on 99%** of India's exports, covering almost the entire value of bilateral trade.
- But smaller firms often lack documentation and compliance capacity; **MSMEs** may struggle with the UK's stringent **SPS, technical and sustainability standards** — a bigger hurdle than tariffs.
- India has historically underutilised FTAs (low awareness, high compliance costs) — the **ASEAN trade deficit widened from ~\$10 bn (2017) to ~\$44 bn (2023)**.
- The UK takes only **~3%** of India's merchandise exports and **~1%** of imports, but is a high-income market where India runs a **trade surplus**; the gain could narrow if the UK's price-inelastic exports (e.g., luxury vehicles) grow faster than India's labour-intensive, price-sensitive exports.
- The **Double Contribution Convention** aids Indian IT/professional services; risks remain from the UK's **steel safeguard quotas** and stricter **carbon-related trade rules**.

★ Core Takeaway

- ▶ FTAs deliver only with **robust industrial ecosystems and competitive firms**.
- ▶ CETA's success ultimately lies in **converting market access into market share**.

8

Vikram-1: India's Private Sector Reaches Orbit

GS 3 · SCI-TECH · SPACE

WHY IN NEWS

The launch of **Vikram-1**, built by **Skyroot Aerospace**, from Sriharikota marked the Indian **private sector's first orbital flight** — an engineering triumph now seeking commercial viability.

- A **four-stage launcher** offering a satellite 'cab service' — customers pick their **orbit and schedule** rather than accept a rideshare slot and drop-off point, at a commensurate premium.
- Targets a price **below the PSLV** and above the (projected) SSLV, aided by **carbon-composite** structures; a larger **Vikram-2** is planned.
- Founded in **2018** by two former ISRO engineers; engine tests in 2020 and a suborbital flight in 2022.
- ISRO held a ~six-decade state monopoly over launch activities in India while private firms were limited to being suppliers; reforms since 2020 and the **2023 Space Policy** opened commercial entry, and 2024 allowed up to **49% FDI** in launch vehicles via the automatic route.
- Government goal: grow the space economy from **~\$8 bn to \$44 bn by 2033** alongside satellite manufacturing, communications, navigation and earth observation. India is now only the **third country** to host private enterprise with demonstrated orbital capability.
- Next milestone — **commercial viability**: repeatability and stable costs amid SpaceX, Rocket Lab and scaling Chinese firms; India also lacks a **Space Activities Act**, leaving liability to policy, contracts and international commitments — long-term regulatory uncertainty.

★ **Prelims Pointer**

- ▶ **IN-SPACE** — single-window promoter/regulator of private space activity; **NSIL** — ISRO's commercial arm.
- ▶ Skyroot's **Vikram** series honours **Dr Vikram Sarabhai**, father of the Indian space programme.

 Mains Practice Questions — Reframed**GS 2 · Polity****10 Marks**

Statutory protection for national symbols must be balanced against the freedom of expression. Critically examine in the light of the proposed amendment to the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971.

राष्ट्रीय प्रतीकों को वैधानिक संरक्षण देने और अभिव्यक्ति की स्वतंत्रता के बीच संतुलन आवश्यक है। राष्ट्रीय अपमान निवारण अधिनियम, 1971 में प्रस्तावित संशोधन के संदर्भ में समालोचनात्मक परीक्षण कीजिए।

GS 2 · Polity**15 Marks**

Delimitation exposes the tension between representational equity and federal balance. Discuss with reference to Articles 81 and 82 and the census 'freeze' ending in 2026.

परिसीमन प्रतिनिधित्व की समानता और संघीय संतुलन के बीच तनाव को उजागर करता है। अनुच्छेद 81 व 82 तथा 2026 में समाप्त हो रही जनगणना 'रोक' के संदर्भ में चर्चा कीजिए।

GS 1 · Society**15 Marks**

A Uniform Civil Code promises gender justice and national integration, yet must reconcile with India's social diversity. Examine in the context of recent State-level UCC initiatives.

समान नागरिक संहिता लैंगिक न्याय और राष्ट्रीय एकीकरण का वादा करती है, फिर भी उसे भारत की सामाजिक विविधता के साथ सामंजस्य बैठाना होगा। हाल की राज्य-स्तरीय पहलों के संदर्भ में परीक्षण कीजिए।

GS 3 · Economy**10 Marks**

“Market access is not market share.” Analyse the opportunities and constraints the India-UK CETA presents for India's MSMEs and export competitiveness.

“बाज़ार तक पहुँच का अर्थ बाज़ार-हिस्सेदारी नहीं है।” भारत-यूके CETA द्वारा भारत के MSME और निर्यात प्रतिस्पर्धात्मकता के लिए प्रस्तुत अवसरों एवं बाधाओं का विश्लेषण कीजिए।

🕒 **Prelims Practice — 10 MCQs**

Q1. Consider the following statements about the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971:

1. It currently protects the National Flag, the National Anthem and the Constitution.
2. The Constitution of India explicitly names *Vande Mataram* as the National Song.
3. The 2026 amendment seeks to extend protection to *Vande Mataram*.

- (a) 1 and 2 only
(c) 2 and 3 only

- (b) 1 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Q2. With reference to *Vande Mataram*, consider the following statements:

1. It was composed by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and appeared in *Anandamath*.
2. It was adopted as the National Song by the Congress Working Committee in 1937.
3. It was first sung at the 1896 Kolkata session of the INC.

- (a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q3. Articles 81 and 82 of the Constitution deal with:

- (a) Anti-defection provisions (b) Composition & readjustment of the Lok Sabha
(c) Delimitation of Assembly seats only (d) Financial emergency

Q4. The Delimitation Commission's orders:

1. Are laid before Parliament for approval by simple majority.
2. Have the force of law.
3. Cannot be called in question before any court.

- (a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q5. The Uniform Civil Code is provided for under which part of the Constitution?

- (a) Fundamental Rights (b) Directive Principles of State Policy
(c) Fundamental Duties (d) Preamble

Q6. Which State/UT follows the Portuguese Civil Code of 1867 as a form of common civil code?

- (a) Uttarakhand (b) Gujarat
(c) Goa (d) Puducherry

Q7. Regarding NITI Aayog's Investment Friendliness Index (IFI), consider the following:

1. It covers all 28 States and 8 Union Territories.
2. It is built on eight pillars including Environmental Resilience.
3. Gujarat topped the inaugural index.

- (a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q8. Exercise Pitch Black 2026 is hosted by:

- (a) India (b) United States
(c) Australia (d) Japan

Q9. Consider the following statements about Vikram-1:

1. It was developed by Skyroot Aerospace.
2. It was India's first privately built rocket to reach orbit.
3. It was launched from Thumba, Kerala.

- (a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3



Q10. With reference to the India–UK CETA, consider the following statements:

1. It offers zero-duty access on about 99% of India's exports.
2. The UK accounts for nearly one-third of India's merchandise exports.
3. The Double Contribution Convention benefits Indian professionals.

- (a) 1 and 2 only
(c) 2 and 3 only

- (b) 1 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

ANSWER KEY

Q1 **B**

Q2 **D**

Q3 **B**

Q4 **B**

Q5 **B**

Q6 **C**

Q7 **D**

Q8 **C**

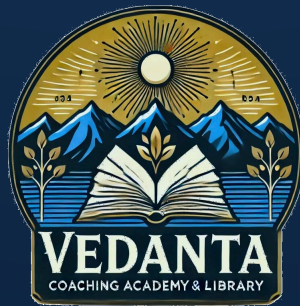
Q9 **A**

Q10 **B**

★ **Rapid Revision — One-Liners**

- ▶ **Vande Mataram** — Bankim Chandra Chatterjee · *Anandamath* (1882) · National Song since 24 Jan 1950.
- ▶ **Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971** — Flag, Anthem, Constitution; up to 3 years' imprisonment.
- ▶ **Arts 81 & 82** — Lok Sabha composition & readjustment; seat freeze ends with first Census after 2026.
- ▶ **UCC** — Art 44 (DPSP); Goa follows Portuguese Civil Code, 1867; M.P. draft exempts STs (Arts 342 & 366).
- ▶ **IFI** — NITI Aayog · 8 pillars · 28 States + 8 UTs · Gujarat topped (56.6).
- ▶ **Pitch Black 2026** — biennial air-combat exercise · host RAAF (Australia) · 20 nations.
- ▶ **Gen Z** — born 1997–2012; PLFS 2023-24 shows only 14.8% of young males are regular wage earners.
- ▶ **CETA** — zero duty on 99% of India's exports to the UK; Double Contribution Convention aids services.
- ▶ **Vikram-1** — Skyroot Aerospace; India's first private orbital launch; 49% FDI (automatic route) since 2024.

📝 **MY NOTES & REVISION SPACE**



THOUGHT OF THE DAY

"The future depends on what you do today."

"भविष्य उसी का है जो आज परिश्रम करता है।"

Compiled for **Sapna Chauhan**
Vedanta Coaching Academy & Library