

General Studies Paper-II

- Q1.** Examine the need for electoral reforms as suggested by various committees with particular reference to “one nation - one election” principle. (Answer in 150 words) [10]

Approach to Question:

- 1. Introduction:** Define the topic and its significance.
- 2. Identify the Need for Reforms:** Highlight challenges:
 - Frequent elections disrupt governance.
 - High costs for government and political parties.
- 3. Cite Key Committees:** Summarise recommendations from:
 - **Law Commission (1999):** Ban independent candidates, promote inner-party democracy.
 - **Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2008):** Recommend simultaneous elections and better financing regulations.
- 4. “One Nation, One Election”:**
 - Discuss advantages (cost savings, higher voter turnout).
 - Address challenges (constitutional amendments, impact on federalism).
- 5. Conclusion:** Emphasise the need for balance between efficiency and democratic integrity.

Answer:

Electoral reforms are vital for improving transparency and efficiency in democracy. One key proposal is “One Nation, One Election,” which aims to synchronise Lok Sabha and state elections to enhance governance and reduce disruptions from frequent elections.

Need for Electoral Reforms

Despite its evolution, India’s electoral system faces several challenges:

- 1. Frequent Elections:** Multiple elections disrupt governance due to the frequent imposition of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC).
- 2. High Costs:** Separate elections impose a heavy financial burden on the government and political parties.

Key Committees on Electoral Reforms

- 1. Law Commission (1999):** Recommended banning independent candidates and promoting inner-party democracy.

- 2. Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2008):** Suggested simultaneous elections and better regulation of election financing.

One Nation, One Election

Advantages

- 1. Cost Saving:** Reducing election expenses for both the government and political parties.
- 2. Higher Voter Participation:** A single, organised election could mobilise greater voter turnout.

Challenges

- 1. Constitutional Amendments:** Significant changes to the Constitution are required, needing political consensus.
- 2. Federalism:** Synchronisation might undermine state autonomy in election timing.

Achieving electoral reforms in India will require a careful balance of efficiency and democratic integrity.

- Q2.** Explain and distinguish between Lok Adalats and Arbitration Tribunals. Whether they entertain civil as well as criminal cases? (Answer in 150 words) [10]

Approach to Question:

- 1. Introduction:**

Explain Lok Adalats:

 - Provide key features (composition, voluntary participation, binding nature).
 - Discuss the jurisdiction, specifying the types of cases they handle (civil and compoundable criminal cases).

Explain Arbitration Tribunals:

 - Outline the key features (composition, contractual basis, binding decisions).
 - Clarify the jurisdiction, emphasising their focus on civil cases and exclusion of criminal matters.
- 2. Distinction:**
 - Create a clear table or bullet points to highlight differences, covering aspects like nature, composition, procedure basis, scope of cases, finality, confidentiality, and objective.
- 3. Conclusion:** Summarise the roles of both mechanisms in reducing court burdens and their respective strengths in dispute resolution.

Answer:

Lok Adalats: Lok Adalats, or People's Courts, are alternative dispute resolution forums established under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, in India.

Key Features:

1. **Composition:** Presided over by a judge and two other members.
2. **Voluntary:** Participation is voluntary for both parties.
3. **Finality:** Decisions are binding and treated as court decrees.

Jurisdiction:

1. **Civil Cases:** Handles property disputes, family matters, labour issues, etc.
2. **Criminal Cases:** Can entertain compoundable offenses.

Arbitration Tribunals: Arbitration Tribunals are formal mechanisms where an impartial arbitrator makes binding decisions based on the parties' submissions.

Key Features:

1. **Composition:** Consists of one or more arbitrators.
2. **Contractual Basis:** Governed by the agreement between the parties.
3. **Finality:** Decisions (awards) are binding, with limited grounds for appeal.

Jurisdiction:

1. **Civil Cases:** Deals with commercial disputes, contracts, etc.
2. **Criminal Cases:** Do not handle criminal matters.

Distinction

Feature	Lok Adalats	Arbitration Tribunals
Nature	Informal and conciliatory	Formal and adversarial
Composition	Judge and members	Arbitrator(s)
Basis of Procedure	Statutory (Legal Services Act)	Contractual agreement
Scope of Cases	Civil and a few criminal cases	Primarily civil; no criminal cases
Confidentiality	Generally public	Generally private

Both Lok Adalats and Arbitration Tribunals help ease the burden on traditional courts by providing alternative dispute resolution options.

Q3. "The growth of cabinet system has practically resulted in the marginalisation of the parliamentary supremacy." Elucidate.

(Answer in 150 words) [10]

Approach to Question:

1. **Introduction:** Briefly state the evolution of the cabinet system and its effect on parliamentary supremacy.
2. **Define Key Terms:** Define parliamentary supremacy and its significance.
3. **Discuss the Cabinet System:**
 - **Concentration of Power:** Explain centralised decision-making.
 - **Executive Dominance:** Highlight the cabinet's influence over legislation.
 - **Party Discipline:** Mention its impact on parliamentary expression.
4. **Analyze Implications:**
 - **Accountability:** Effects on oversight of the executive.
 - **Representation:** Impact on diverse viewpoints.
 - **Democratic Values:** Considerations on transparency and engagement.
5. **Suggest Solutions:** Recommend measures to restore balance, like enhancing oversight and promoting transparency.
6. **Conclusion:** Summarise the need to address the imbalance for democratic integrity.

Answer:

The cabinet system has evolved to enhance efficiency, but this development has marginalised parliamentary supremacy, shifting power away from the legislature.

Understanding Parliamentary Supremacy

1. Parliamentary supremacy ensures that parliament holds ultimate authority in law-making and oversight. However, the evolution of the cabinet system has altered this dynamic.

The Growth of the Cabinet System

1. **Concentration of Power:** Decision-making has become centralised within a small group of ministers, limiting the roles of individual parliamentarians.
2. **Executive Dominance:** The cabinet often makes key decisions with minimal consultation with parliament, overshadowing the legislative process.
3. **Party Discipline:** Strict enforcement of party discipline constrains independent expression among parliamentarians.

Implications

1. **Reduced Accountability:** Weakens parliamentary oversight, potentially leading to unchecked executive power.
2. **Diminished Representation:** Undermines the representation of diverse viewpoints and minority parties.
3. **Erosion of Democratic Values:** Compromises transparency and public participation.

Restoring the Balance

1. **Enhance Oversight:** Strengthen parliamentary scrutiny through committees and debates.

2. **Promote Transparency:** Increase transparency in cabinet decisions.
3. **Foster Independent Voices:** Support diverse perspectives within parliament.

While the cabinet system has improved governance, it has also marginalised parliamentary supremacy. Addressing this imbalance is essential for maintaining democratic ideals of representation and accountability.

Q4. “The duty of the Comptroller and Auditor General is not merely to ensure the legality of expenditure but also its propriety.” Comment. (Answer in 150 words) [10]

Approach to Question:

1. **Introduction:** Introduce the CAG’s dual role from Article 148 of the Constitution: ensuring legality and propriety in public expenditure.
2. **Legality of Expenditure:**
 - **Constitutional Mandate:** Explain the CAG’s audit of government expenditures for legal compliance.
 - **Audit Reports:** Cite examples like PMAY to illustrate how legality is assessed.
3. **Propriety of Expenditure:**
 - **Transparency:** Discuss the significance of publishing audit findings, using examples like the Delhi International Airport.
 - **Advisory Role:** Mention the CAG’s advisory role in standardising financial reporting.
4. **Conclusion:** Summarise the CAG’s importance in enhancing accountability and governance beyond legal scrutiny.

Answer:

Article 148 of the Indian Constitution establishes the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India to audit government accounts and ensure fiscal accountability. This dual responsibility of ensuring both legality and propriety in public expenditure is crucial for maintaining fiscal discipline and safeguarding public interest.

Ensuring Legality of Expenditure

- **Constitutional Mandate:** The CAG audits all expenditures from the Consolidated Fund of India, ensuring compliance with laws as outlined in Article 266.
- **Audit Reports:** Annual reports, such as those on the **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY)**, scrutinise fund allocation and effectiveness of addressing housing shortages.

Ensuring Propriety of Expenditure

- **Transparency:** The CAG publishes audit findings online, such as those for the **Delhi International Airport** expansion, providing insights into the usage of taxpayer funds.

- **Advisory Role:** The CAG advises on financial account formats, as per Article 150, enhancing accountability through standardised reporting.

The CAG’s role goes beyond legal scrutiny to ensure that public expenditures are appropriate and beneficial. By fulfilling this dual responsibility, the CAG promotes accountability and enhances the governance framework in India.

Q5. Analyse the role of local bodies in providing good governance at local level and bring out the pros and cons merging the rural local bodies with the urban local bodies. (Answer in 150 words) [10]

Approach to Question:

1. **Introduction:** Briefly introduce the significance of local bodies in India’s governance structure, citing the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments.
2. **Role of Local Bodies in Good Governance:** Discuss how local bodies facilitate:
 - **Decentralised Decision-Making:** Empowering local communities.
 - **Community Engagement:** Enhancing transparency and participation.
 - **Inclusion:** Ensuring representation for marginalised groups.
3. **Pros and Cons of Merging Rural and Urban Local Bodies:**
 - **Present the advantages:** Integrated development, cost reduction, streamlined governance etc.
 - **Discuss the drawbacks:** Neglect of local needs, complexity in governance, imbalanced resource distribution etc.
4. **Conclusion:** Summarise the importance of preserving the unique identities of local bodies for effective governance.

Answer:

Local bodies play a crucial role in decentralised governance in India. Established through the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments, they aim to enhance grassroots participation. These amendments led to the formation of Panchayati Raj institutions in rural areas and urban local bodies (ULBs), making governance more accessible.

Role of Local Bodies in Good Governance

1. **Decentralised Decision-Making:** Local bodies empower communities, such as **Gram Panchayats**, which implement local development projects.
2. **Community Engagement:** **Ward Committees** and **Gram Sabhas** promote transparency and citizen input.

3. **Inclusion of Marginalised Groups:** Local bodies ensure representation for women, Scheduled Castes (SC), and Scheduled Tribes (ST).

Pros and Cons of Merging Rural and Urban Local Bodies

Pros:

- **Integrated Development:** Merging local bodies can enhance planning across urban-rural boundaries.
- **Cost Reduction:** Consolidation lowers administrative costs, freeing up resources for development.
- **Simplified Governance:** A single-window system streamlines administrative processes.

Cons:

- **Neglect of Local Needs:** Merging may overlook the specific needs of local communities.
- **Increased Complexity:** A larger governing body can complicate governance and coordination.
- **Skewed Resource Distribution:** Resources may be disproportionately allocated to urban areas, underfunding rural regions.

A balanced approach, respecting the unique identities of both rural and urban areas, is essential for effective governance.

- Q6. Public charitable trusts have the potential to make India's development more inclusive as they relate to certain vital public issues. Comment. (Answer in 150 words) [10]**

Approach to Question:

1. **Introduction:** Briefly define public charitable trusts and their role in addressing key social issues like healthcare, education, and poverty alleviation.
2. **Explain the Role of Public Charitable Trusts:** Highlight examples of trusts like Tata Trusts, NABARD-supported trusts, and SEWA Trust in promoting healthcare access, poverty alleviation, and empowerment.
3. **Challenges Faced by Trusts:** Discuss regulatory barriers (e.g., FCRA restrictions) and issues related to transparency and accountability.
4. **Conclusion:** Emphasise their potential to contribute to inclusive development, while also suggesting the need for better oversight and regulation.

Answer:

Public charitable trusts in India are vital in promoting inclusive development by addressing issues like education, healthcare, poverty, and rural upliftment. These trusts help bridge gaps in government efforts and ensure that marginalised communities benefit from economic growth.

Role of Public Charitable Trusts

1. **Healthcare Access:** Trusts like **Tata Trusts** improve rural healthcare by providing services such as can-

cer care and maternal health, complementing government initiatives in underserved areas.

2. **Poverty Alleviation:** Trusts supported by **NABARD** focus on rural entrepreneurship and agricultural productivity, helping small farmers and artisans improve their livelihoods.
3. **Empowerment:** The **SEWA Trust** empowers women in the informal sector through training and financial support, fostering economic inclusion.

Challenges

1. **Regulatory Barriers:** Trusts face challenges under laws like the **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA)**, which limit international funding and restrict scalability.
2. **Transparency Issues:** A lack of proper oversight can lead to mismanagement, making transparency crucial for maintaining public trust.

Public charitable trusts are key to making India's development more inclusive by addressing vital social issues. However, better regulation and transparency are needed to maximise their impact.

- Q7. Poverty and malnutrition create a vicious cycle, adversely affecting human capital formation. What steps can be taken to break the cycle? (Answer in 150 words) [10]**

Approach to Question:

1. **Introduction:** Define the link between poverty and malnutrition and its impact on human capital and economic development.
2. **Vicious Cycle Explanation:**
 - **Economic Barriers:** Explain how poverty limits access to nutritious food, citing India's Global Hunger Index.
 - **Healthcare Costs:** Discuss how malnutrition increases health issues and family expenses.
 - **Educational Impact:** Highlight cognitive delays from malnutrition leading to higher drop-out rates.
3. **Steps to Break the Cycle:** Mention key initiatives:
 - Mid-Day Meal Scheme for nutrition.
 - Poshan Abhiyaan for healthcare.
 - Assam's Orunodoi for social protection.
 - Self-Help Groups (SHGs) for women's empowerment.
4. **Conclusion:** Stress the need for coordinated efforts to address poverty and malnutrition for sustainable development.

Answer:

Poverty and malnutrition are closely linked, creating a vicious cycle that undermines human capital formation and hinders economic development.

How Poverty and Malnutrition Create a Vicious Cycle

1. **Economic Barriers to Nutrition:** Poverty limits access to nutritious food. For example, India ranks

111th out of 125 countries in the **Global Hunger Index 2023**.

2. **Healthcare Costs of Malnutrition:** Malnutrition leads to frequent illnesses, draining family resources and further entrenching poverty.
3. **Educational Limitations:** Cognitive delays due to malnutrition result in higher dropout rates, as highlighted by the **ASER report**.

Steps to Break the Cycle

1. **Access to Nutritious Food:** Programs like **India's Mid-Day Meal Scheme** provide essential meals to children.
2. **Healthcare Services:** Initiatives such as **Poshan Abhiyaan** offer maternal and child healthcare to combat malnutrition.
3. **Social Protection:** Schemes like **Assam's Orunodoi** support poor families in affording food and healthcare.
4. **Women Empowerment:** Initiatives like **Self-Help Groups (SHGs)** enhance household nutrition and economic stability.

Addressing poverty and malnutrition requires coordinated efforts in food access, healthcare, education, and social protection to foster human capital and sustainable development.

- Q8. The Doctrine of Democratic Governance makes it necessary that the public perception of the integrity and commitment of civil servants becomes absolutely positive. Discuss. (Answer in 150 words) [10]**

Approach to Question:

1. **Introduction:** Briefly define the Doctrine of Democratic Governance and its significance for civil servants.
2. **Importance of Positive Public Perception:**
 - **Trust and Accountability:** Explain how positive perceptions build trust, using the RTI Act as an example.
 - **Effective Service Delivery:** Discuss how a favourable image aids policy implementation, citing the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana.
 - **Reduction of Corruption:** Highlight how strong public perceptions deter corruption, referencing the Delhi Anti-Corruption Branch.
3. **Conclusion:** Emphasise the critical role of civil servant integrity and commitment in enhancing democratic governance.

Answer:

The Doctrine of Democratic Governance emphasises the crucial role of civil servants in maintaining public trust and effective governance. In India, a positive public perception of civil servants is essential for the success of democratic institutions.

The Need for Positive Public Perception in India

1. **Trust and Accountability:** Positive perceptions foster trust between citizens and the government, leading to greater civic engagement.
2. **Example:** The **Right to Information (RTI)** Act has empowered citizens to hold officials accountable, enhancing transparency in governance.
3. **Effective Service Delivery:** A favourable image helps civil servants implement policies successfully, as citizens are more likely to support trusted initiatives.
4. **Example:** The **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana** in Uttar Pradesh saw improved housing delivery due to the perceived commitment of officials.
5. **Reduction of Corruption:** Strong public perceptions of integrity can deter corruption and promote ethical behaviour among officials.
Example: The **Delhi Anti-Corruption Branch** effectively tackled corruption cases, leading to increased public trust during Arvind Kejriwal's administration.

The integrity and commitment of civil servants are essential for democratic governance in India. By maintaining ethical standards and engaging with communities, civil servants can foster a more equitable and effective democratic landscape.

- Q9. 'The West is fostering India as an alternative to reduce dependence on China's supply chain and as a strategic ally to counter China's political and economic dominance.' Explain this statements with examples. (Answer in 150 words) [10]**

Approach to Question:

1. **Introduction:** State the West's interest in India as a strategic ally against China's dominance.
2. **Economic Diversification:**
 - **Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF):** Highlight its role in enhancing trade and supply chain resilience.
 - **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI):** Mention U.S. companies like Apple and Microsoft expanding in India.
3. **Strategic Alliances:**
 - **Quad:** Describe the collaboration among India, the U.S., Japan, and Australia for a free Indo-Pacific.
 - **Global Governance:** Note support for India's bid for a permanent UN Security Council seat.
4. **Conclusion:** Conclude with the West's aim to balance global power by investing in India.

Answer:

The Western strategy to pivot towards India reflects a broader attempt to mitigate China's economic and geopolitical dominance, emphasising India's strategic importance in global power distribution.

Economic Diversification and Supply Chain Resilience

1. **Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF):** Launched in 2022, IPEF includes India to enhance trade co-operation and supply chain resilience.
2. **Encouraging Foreign Direct Investment (FDI):** Western nations are investing in India for manufacturing bases, with U.S. companies like Apple and Microsoft expanding operations there.
3. **Cybersecurity Collaboration:** The U.S. and India are enhancing cybersecurity cooperation to strengthen defenses against Chinese cyber threats.

Strategic Alliances and Defense Cooperation

1. **Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue):** The Quad—India, the U.S., Japan, and Australia—focuses on ensuring a free and open Indo-Pacific.
2. **Supporting India's Global Governance Role:** The West backs India's bid for a permanent UN Security Council seat to enhance multilateralism.

Western nations are promoting India's growth as a strategic power to diversify global influence, reduce reliance on China, and reinforce democratic alliances across Asia and beyond. Through targeted investments and collaborations, the West aims to establish a more balanced global power structure.

Q10. Critically analyse India's evolving diplomatic, economic and strategic relations with the Central Asian Republics (CARs) highlighting their increasing significance in regional and global geopolitics. (Answer in 150 words) [10]

Approach to Question:

1. **Introduction:** Introduce CARs' significance post-1991 for India's diplomatic, economic, and strategic interests.
2. **Diplomatic Relations:** Highlight India's early engagement and cultural exchanges, like scholarships for students.
3. **Economic Relations:** Discuss the growth in trade, particularly in pharmaceuticals and textiles, and energy projects like the TAPI pipeline.
4. **Strategic Relations:** Examine security cooperation against terrorism and the geopolitical balancing act amid rising Chinese and Russian influence.
5. **Increasing Significance:** Note the geostrategic importance of CARs for trade and countering extremism.
6. **Conclusion:** Emphasise the need to strengthen ties with CARs for regional stability and global positioning.

Answer:

India's relations with the Central Asian Republics (CARs) have significantly evolved since the Soviet Union's dissolution in 1991. The region has become crucial in global geopolitics due to its strategic location and rich resources.

Diplomatic Relations

1. **Historical Context:** India was among the first countries to establish ties with the CARs, focusing on high-level engagements.
2. **Cultural Exchanges:** Scholarships for Central Asian students are a key example of India's soft power.

Economic Relations

1. **Trade and Investment:** Trade, especially in pharmaceuticals and textiles, has grown, with substantial potential for further expansion.
2. India's trade with the CARs remains limited due to connectivity challenges. Major exports include pharmaceuticals and textiles, but China and Russia dominate trade due to their geographical proximity.

Strategic Relations

1. **Geopolitical Dynamics:** China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) dominates Central Asia, prompting India to explore alternatives like the INSTC and Chabahar port. Security concerns in Afghanistan also impact India's engagement.
2. **Security Cooperation:** India collaborates with the CARs on combating terrorism and drug trafficking.

Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges: Security threats and China's influence.

Opportunities: Geopolitical shifts provide India a chance to enhance its strategic footprint.

India's deepening ties with CARs are crucial to countering China and securing energy resources, though connectivity and security issues must be addressed.

Q11. What are the aims and objects of recently passed and enforced, The Public Examination (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024? Whether University/State Education Board examinations, too, are covered under the Act? (Answer in 250 words) [15]

Approach to Question:

1. **Introduction:** Briefly introduce the Act's enforcement in 2024, focusing on its aim to tackle organised cheating and unfair practices in public examinations.
2. **Aims and Objectives:** Highlight the key aims such as enhancing fairness, preventing malpractices, and supporting exam reforms.
3. **Key Provisions:** Summarise important aspects like:
 - Applicability to central exams (UPSC, SSC, NTA).

- Punishments for offenders.
- Types of unfair means covered (impersonation, tampering).
- Investigation protocols and the National Technical Committee's role.

4. **Coverage of University/State Education Board Exams:** Discuss the Act's exclusion of these exams, explaining that it focuses on central exams while states can draft their own laws to address similar issues.

5. **Conclusion:** Emphasise the Act's role in promoting exam integrity at the national level and the potential for states to follow suit for local exams.

Answer:

The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024, effective from June 21, 2024, addresses organised cheating in Indian public examinations to ensure fairness and transparency.

Key Aims:

1. **Enhance Fairness:** Ensure a transparent and credible system where students are fairly rewarded.
2. **Prevent Malpractices:** Target organised cheating, impersonation, and other unfair practices.
3. **Support Reforms:** Complement existing government initiatives, like self-attestation and reduced exam cycles.

Key Provisions:

1. **Applicability:** Covers central exams like UPSC, SSC, and NTA exams.
2. **Punishments:** Offenders face 3-5 years imprisonment, with up to 10 years for organised crime, along with fines.
3. **Unfair Means:** Lists 20 offenses, including impersonation and tampering.
4. **Investigation Protocols:** Investigations will be led by officers of suitable rank.
5. **National Technical Committee:** Enhances IT security for computerised exams.

Coverage of University and State Education Board Examinations:

1. **Exclusion from the Act:** The Act primarily targets central examinations and does not explicitly cover university or state education board examinations. However, the provisions could serve as a model for states to draft similar legislation to address malpractices at these levels.
2. **State Discretion:** The Act leaves it to the discretion of state governments to enact similar laws, potentially leading to variations in how unfair practices are tackled across different regions.

This framework reflects the government's intent to safeguard the credibility of public examinations while encouraging states to adopt similar practices for educational board and university exams.

Q12. Right to privacy is intrinsic to life and personal liberty and is inherently protected under Article 21 of the constitution. Explain. In this reference discuss the law relating to D.N.A. testing of child in the womb to establish its paternity.

(Answer in 250 words) [15]

Approach to Question:

1. **Introduction:** Define the Right to Privacy as a fundamental right under Article 21, crucial for individual dignity.
2. **Intrinsic Nature of the Right to Privacy:**
 - **Judicial Recognition:** Highlight Justice K. S. Puttaswamy vs. Union of India (2017) affirming privacy as essential to personal liberties.
 - **Scope:** Explain how it covers personal choices in family and reproduction without state interference.
3. **Legal Framework for DNA Testing in Paternity:**
 - **Legislative Provisions:** Mention the Indian Evidence Act, 1872, emphasising the need for maternal consent for prenatal DNA testing.
 - **Ethical Considerations:** Discuss the balance between a mother's privacy and a father's right to know.
4. **Conclusion:** Conclude by stressing the importance of upholding the Right to Privacy while addressing the legal and ethical dimensions of DNA testing for paternity.

Answer:

The Right to Privacy is a fundamental right recognised by the Supreme Court of India as part of the right to life and personal liberty under Article 21 of the Constitution.

Intrinsic Nature of the Right to Privacy

1. **Judicial Recognition:** The Supreme Court affirmed that privacy is essential for personal liberties in *Justice K. S. Puttaswamy vs. Union of India* (2017), stating that it protects human dignity.
2. **Constitutional Provisions:** Article 21 ensures that individuals cannot be deprived of life or personal liberty except by law, encompassing personal choices regarding family, marriage, and reproduction.
3. **Scope:** The right to privacy covers various aspects of personal freedoms, allowing individuals to make decisions about their bodies without undue state interference.

Law Relating to DNA Testing of a Child in the Womb to Establish Paternity

Legal Framework

1. **Legislative Provisions:** DNA testing laws fall under the *Indian Evidence Act, 1872*, which em-

phases the need for consent, particularly from the mother when the testing is carried out during pregnancy.

2. **Consent Requirement:** The necessity of obtaining maternal consent raises both ethical and legal questions, especially regarding privacy and autonomy.
3. **Judicial Precedents:** The Supreme Court's rulings in cases such as *Vishakha vs. State of Rajasthan* (1997) underscore the protection of women's rights and personal choices.

Ethical Considerations

1. **Right to Privacy vs. Right to Know:** Striking a balance between a mother's right to privacy and a father's right to know paternity is critical, often influenced by the child's welfare.
2. **Confidentiality:** DNA testing results must be handled with care to protect all parties from potential stigma or discrimination.

The right to privacy under Article 21 is essential for individual dignity and liberty. In the context of DNA testing for paternity, both legal and ethical dimensions must be considered to balance maternal privacy with paternal rights, ensuring that judicial decisions uphold constitutional values.

Q13. What changes has the Union Government recently introduced in the domain of Centre-State relations? Suggest measures to be adopted to build the trust between the Centre and the States and for strengthening federalism. (Answer in 250 words) [15]

Approach to Question:

1. **Introduction:** Define the significance of Centre-State relations in India's federal framework and their impact on governance.
2. **Recent Changes:**
 - **Cooperative Federalism:** NITI Aayog's role in fostering collaboration.
 - **Finance Commission:** Effects of the 15th Finance Commission's tax share reduction on states.
 - **Disaster Response:** Increased state flexibility in utilising the State Disaster Response Fund.
 - **Inter-State Council:** Revitalisation for addressing federal challenges.
 - **Ease of Doing Business:** Promotion of competitive federalism to improve business environments.
3. **Measures to Strengthen Federalism:**
 - **Dialogue:** Establish forums for Centre-State discussions.

- **Autonomy:** Grant states more autonomy in governance.
- **Cooperative Projects:** Initiatives like Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat to enhance unity.

4. **Conclusion:** Highlight the need for a collaborative approach to strengthen federalism and promote equitable growth.

Answer:

Centre-State relations play a vital role in India's federal framework, shaped by constitutional provisions, judicial interpretations, and administrative practices. Recent developments highlight the evolving governance dynamics in this diverse nation.

Recent Changes in Centre-State Relations

1. **Cooperative Federalism Initiatives:** The Union Government has emphasised cooperative federalism through mechanisms like the NITI Aayog, which promotes collaboration between the Centre and states for development planning.
2. **Finance Commission Recommendations:** The 15th Finance Commission's decision to lower states' tax share from 42% to 41% has significant implications for their financial stability, underscoring the need for equitable fiscal measures.
3. **Disaster Response Funds:** States now have increased flexibility in using the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) for localised disasters, recognising their distinct needs in managing emergencies.
4. **Inter-State Council Reinvigoration:** Revitalising the Inter-State Council helps address contemporary federal challenges, facilitating discussions among states on issues such as water disputes and internal security.
5. **Ease of Doing Business Rankings:** The introduction of competitive federalism through ease of doing business rankings encourages states to enhance their business environments, fostering cooperation with the Centre.

Measures to Build Trust and Strengthen Federalism

1. **Enhanced Dialogue:** Establish regular forums for dialogue between the Centre and states to discuss issues of mutual concern and policy implementation, ensuring that states' perspectives are heard and considered.
2. **Greater Autonomy:** Grant states more autonomy in local governance and financial management, enabling them to tailor solutions to their unique challenges and circumstances.
3. **Cooperative Federalism Projects:** Initiatives such as *Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat* encourage cultural exchanges, nurturing unity and collaboration.

Enhancing federalism in India requires a comprehensive approach involving legislative, executive, and judicial

actions, all focused on collaboration, fair resource distribution, and respect for regional identities. This ensures that all regions progress toward growth and social cohesion.

Q14. Explain the reasons for the growth of public interest litigation in India. As a result of it, has the Indian Supreme Court emerged as the world's most powerful judiciary?

(Answer in 250 words) [15]

Approach to Question:

- 1. Introduction:** Define PIL and its importance in enhancing justice access for marginalised groups, referencing Articles 32 and 226 of the Indian Constitution.
- 2. Growth of PIL:**
 - **Judicial Activism:** Note the Supreme Court's encouragement of PILs, especially under Chief Justice P. N. Bhagwati.
 - **Protection of Marginalised Groups:** Cite *Bandhua Mukti Morcha vs. Union of India* (1984) as an example of proactive judicial involvement.
 - **Legal Aid Movements:** Discuss the role of free legal services in empowering individuals to file PILs.
- 3. Supreme Court as a Powerful Judiciary:**
 - **Expansive Rights Interpretation:** Mention the Vishaka Guidelines (1997) to illustrate broad rights interpretations.
 - **Enhanced Judicial Review:** Highlight the court's role in reviewing legislative and executive actions.
- 4. Concerns with PILs:**
 - **Judicial Overreach:** Discuss concerns regarding cases like the 2G Spectrum case.
 - **Frivolous Litigations:** Address the impact of frivolous PILs on the judicial system.
- 5. Way Ahead:**
 - **Specialised Benches:** Suggest creating specialised benches for efficiency.
 - **Enhanced Legal Framework:** Propose strengthening the legal framework for clearer PIL processes.
 - **Public Awareness:** Emphasise promoting rights awareness to encourage public participation.
- 6. Conclusion:** Summarise PILs' transformative role in social reforms and the need to address challenges to maintain judicial integrity.

Answer:

Public Interest Litigation (PIL) has reshaped India's judicial landscape, enhancing access to justice for marginalised groups. Enshrined in Articles 32 and 226 of the Indian Constitution, PIL allows individuals or groups to approach

the High Courts and Supreme Court for the enforcement of fundamental rights.

Reasons for the Growth of Public Interest Litigation in India:

- 1. Judicial Activism:** Under Chief Justice P. N. Bhagwati, the Supreme Court of India supported petitions made to help the poor and disadvantaged.
- 2. Protection of Marginalised Groups:** The *Bandhua Mukti Morcha vs. Union of India* case (1984) highlighted how the court took an active role in safeguarding the rights of vulnerable groups.
- 3. Legal Aid Movements:** Free legal services have enabled people to file Public Interest Litigations (PILs), leading to more public involvement in the legal system.

The Emergence of the Supreme Court as the World's Most Powerful Judiciary:

- 1. Expansive Interpretation of Rights:** The Supreme Court has broadly interpreted rights, exemplified by the Vishaka Guidelines (1997) for addressing workplace harassment.
- 2. Broad Rights Interpretation:** Under Article 21, it has extended rights to areas like privacy and environment.
- 3. Enhanced Judicial Review:** The court actively reviews legislative and executive actions, reinforcing its constitutional role.

While Public Interest Litigation (PIL) has played a vital role in India, several concerns have emerged:

- 1. Judicial Overreach:** PILs sometimes lead to the judiciary encroaching on executive or legislative functions, blurring the separation of powers.
- 2. Lack of Accountability:** The relaxed procedures in PILs may lead to petitions being filed without proper evidence or accountability, risking baseless claims.
- 3. Frivolous Litigations:** The rise of frivolous PILs increases the burdens on judicial system, diverting attention from more serious issues.

To ensure that Public Interest Litigation (PIL) remains an effective tool for justice in India, the following steps can be considered:

- 1. Specialised Benches:** Establishing specialised benches could improve efficiency in handling PILs cases.
- 2. Stricter Scrutiny of PILs:** Courts should screen petitions more carefully to prevent frivolous and politically motivated cases, ensuring only genuine public issues are addressed.
- 3. Balancing Judicial Activism:** The judiciary should exercise restraint in areas traditionally handled by the executive or legislature, maintaining the separation of powers while addressing critical public concerns.

Through PILs, the Supreme Court of India has emerged as a powerful judicial body with a significant impact on social reforms. Addressing the challenges associated with PILs is crucial in maintaining the integrity and effectiveness of this vital judicial tool.

Q15. Discuss India as a secular state and compare with the secular principles of the US constitution. (Answer in 250 words) [15]

Approach to Question:

- 1. Introduction:** Define secularism as the separation of religion and state, crucial for tolerance and minority rights, highlighting the different implementations in India and the U.S.
- 2. Secularism in India:**
 - **Constitutional Guarantee:** Mention the inclusion of 'secular' in the Preamble (1976) and Articles 25-28, ensuring religious freedom.
 - **Pluralism:** Highlight public holidays for various religious festivals.
 - **Personal Laws:** Explain the system of religion-based personal laws.
- 3. Secularism in the United States:**
 - **Constitutional Framework:** Reference the First Amendment's establishment clause.
 - **Uniform Civil Code:** Emphasise the U.S. approach to a uniform legal framework.
- 4. Comparison:**
 - **Similarities:** Separation of religion and state, protection of religious freedom, and judiciary's role in landmark cases.
 - **Differences:** Explicit mention of 'secular' in India, personal laws vs. a uniform civil code, and the varying degrees of separation.
- 5. Conclusion:** Summarise how India and the U.S. reflect secularism differently, shaped by their unique contexts while ensuring religious freedom.

Answer:

Secularism ensures the separation of religion and state, fostering equal treatment of all religions. This principle is vital for promoting tolerance and protecting the rights of minorities. Both India and the United States embody secular principles, yet their implementations differ due to unique historical and cultural contexts.

India as a Secular State:

- 1. Constitutional Guarantee:** The term 'secular' was added to the Preamble of the Indian Constitution in 1976. Articles 25-28 guarantee freedom of religion and the management of religious affairs.
- 2. Pluralistic Society:** India's diversity is reflected in public holidays for major festivals such as Diwali, Eid, and Christmas, showcasing respect for various religions.
- 3. System of Personal Laws:** Personal laws, including the Hindu Marriage Act (1955) and the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act (1937), allow different communities to follow their customs.

Comparison of Secular Principles:

Similarities:

- 1. Constitutional Enshrinement:** Both emphasise the separation of religion and state.

- 2. Protection of Religious Freedom:** Both countries guarantee freedom of religion. The Indian Constitution (Articles 25-28) protects the right to practice and propagate religion, while the U.S. First Amendment safeguards the free exercise of religion.
- 3. Diversity of Religions:** Both nations acknowledge and respect religious pluralism. India recognises its diverse religious landscape, while the U.S. is a multicultural society with multiple faiths coexisting.

Comparison:

- 1. Conceptual Foundation:** Both India and the U.S. uphold religious freedom, but India allows some government involvement in religious affairs for social harmony, while the U.S. emphasises strict separation and non-establishment.
- 2. Diversity vs. Uniformity:** India's secularism accommodates a wide range of religions, focusing on pluralism and coexistence. In contrast, the U.S. model promotes individual rights with an emphasis on uniformity in law application.
- 3. Government Role:** The Indian government can support religious institutions as long as fundamental rights are upheld, whereas in the U.S., any government action that appears to endorse a religion can be deemed unconstitutional.

Both nations embrace secularism but manifest it differently based on their unique contexts. India's secularism features pluralism and government involvement, while the U.S. emphasises strict separation and individual rights. Understanding these differences clarifies how each nation navigates the relationship between religion and the state.

Q16. The Citizens' charter has been a landmark initiative in ensuring citizen-centric administration. But it is yet to reach its full potential. Identify the factors hindering the realisation of its promise and suggest measures to overcome them. (Answer in 250 words) [15]

Approach to Question:

- 1. Introduction:** Define the Citizens' Charter and its goal of enhancing public service delivery through transparency and accountability.
- 2. Significance:**
 - **Quality Standards:** Note benchmarks like the online driver's license application.
 - **Grievance Redressal:** Highlight the National Grievance Redressal System.
 - **Transparency:** Emphasise public disclosure of service metrics.
 - **Citizen Participation:** Mention local successes, e.g., Pune.
- 3. Challenges:**
 - **Lack of Awareness:** Citizens may not know their rights.

- **Inadequate Implementation:** Limited penalties for non-compliance.
 - **Limited Scope:** Not all departments may be covered.
 - **Bureaucratic Resistance:** Internal pushback against reforms.
 - **Insufficient Training:** Public officials may lack necessary training.
4. **Measures to Overcome Challenges:**
 - **Awareness Campaigns:** Educate citizens about rights.
 - **Strict Compliance:** Introduce penalties and rewards.
 - **Regular Reviews:** Update the Charter periodically.
 - **Expand Scope:** Include all government departments.
 5. **Conclusion:** Summarise the Charter's role in citizen-centric governance and the importance of addressing challenges for effective public services.

Answer:

The Citizens' Charter is a crucial initiative aimed at enhancing public service delivery through transparency, accountability, and a focus on citizen needs. However, it has not yet fully realised its potential for effective citizen-centric administration.

The Citizens' Charter as a Landmark Initiative

1. **Quality Service Standards:** The initiative sets benchmarks, exemplified by the online application system for driver's licenses, which has expedited processing times.
2. **Grievance Redressal Mechanisms:** The National Grievance Redressal System allows citizens to raise and track complaints, enhancing accountability.
3. **Enhancement in Transparency:** The Charter mandates public disclosure of service delivery metrics, fostering an open governance framework.
4. **Citizen Participation:** Municipalities like Pune have effectively engaged citizens in implementing the Charter, thereby improving local services.

Factors Hindering Full Realisation

1. **Lack of Awareness:** Many citizens remain unaware of their rights and the services available under the Charter.
2. **Inadequate Implementation:** The absence of strict penalties for non-compliance limits the effective execution of the Charter.
3. **Limited Scope:** The Charter's application may not cover all departments, creating access gaps.
4. **Bureaucratic Resistance:** Internal resistance within bureaucracies hampers the adoption of citizen-friendly practices.
5. **Insufficient Training:** Public officials often lack training, affecting service quality.

Measures to Overcome Hindrances

1. **Awareness Campaigns:** Implement programmes to educate citizens about their rights and available services.
2. **Strict Compliance:** Establish penalties for non-compliance and rewards for adherence.
3. **Regular Reviews:** Periodically update the Charters to ensure relevance.
4. **Expand Scope:** Ensure comprehensive coverage across all government departments.

The Citizens' Charter is a vital step toward citizen-centric governance. Overcoming challenges like awareness and accountability is crucial to unlocking its full potential, leading to more effective public services.

Q17. In a crucial domain like the public healthcare system the Indian State should play a vital role to contain the adverse impact of marketisation of the system. Suggest some measures through which the State can enhance the reach of public healthcare at the grassroots level. (Answer in 250 words) [15]

Approach to Question:

1. **Introduction:** Define healthcare as a fundamental right for dignity and well-being, referencing Article 47 of the Indian Constitution.
2. **Role of the Indian State:**
 - **Strengthening Primary Healthcare:** Improve Primary Health Centres (PHCs) for rural services.
 - **Public-Private Partnerships:** Collaborate with private entities to enhance public health.
 - **Telehealth Integration:** Highlight initiatives like eSanjeevani for digital access.
 - **Community Health Workers:** Explain ASHA's role in care and education.
 - **Public Health Financing:** Advocate for allocating 3% of GDP for quality healthcare.
3. **Adverse Impacts of Marketisation:**
 - **High Out-of-Pocket Expenses:** Financial strain from expensive private treatments.
 - **Access Inequality:** Concentration of facilities in urban areas, neglecting rural regions.
 - **Resource Distribution:** Over-concentration of super-speciality hospitals in cities.
 - **Regulatory Challenges:** Need for better oversight in private healthcare.
4. **Measures to Enhance Access:** Capping Treatment Costs, Expanding Coverage, Insurance Reforms, Subsidised Medicines, Quality Assurance, Legislative Regulation etc.
5. **Conclusion:** Summarise the need to enhance primary healthcare and ensure universal access for a healthier society in India.

Answer:

Healthcare is a Fundamental Right vital for individual dignity and well-being. The Indian Constitution, through Article 47, mandates that the State ensure the health of its population.

Role of the Indian State in Addressing Marketisation:

1. **Strengthening Primary Healthcare:** Enhancing Primary Health Centres (PHCs) to provide foundational rural health services.
2. **Public-Private Partnerships:** Collaborating with private entities to improve resource allocation while prioritising public health.
3. **Telehealth Integration:** Initiatives like *eSanjeevani* enhance access to healthcare through digital consultations.
4. **Empowering Community Health Workers:** ASHAs (Accredited Social Health Activists) play a critical role in delivering primary care and health education within communities.
5. **Increasing Public Health Financing:** Allocating 3% of GDP to ensure quality healthcare and preparedness for emergencies.

Adverse Impacts of Marketisation:

1. **High Out-of-Pocket Expenses:** Expensive treatments in private hospitals place a financial strain on families.
2. **Access Inequality:** Advanced medical facilities are often concentrated in urban areas, neglecting rural regions.
3. **Resource Distribution Issues:** Super-specialty hospitals are over-concentrated in cities like Mumbai.
4. **Regulatory Challenges:** Incidents of overcharging in private hospitals highlight the need for stronger oversight.

Measures to Enhance Public Healthcare Access:

1. **Capping Treatment Costs:** Setting limits on essential treatments to ensure affordability.
2. **Expanding Health Coverage:** Broadening *Ayushman Bharat* to include more individuals.
3. **Insurance Reforms:** Revamping policies to provide inclusive coverage for vulnerable populations.
4. **Subsidised Medicines Availability:** *Jan Aushadhi Kendras* make essential drugs accessible and affordable.
5. **Quality Assurance in Private Healthcare:** Enforcing standards and conducting regular audits in private facilities.
6. **Legislative Regulation:** Implementing laws such as the *Maharashtra Clinical Establishments Act* to regulate healthcare practices.

The Indian State must focus on enhancing primary healthcare, increasing funding, and ensuring universal access to affordable services to build a healthier society.

Q18. E-governance is not just about the routine application of digital technology in service deliv-

ery processes. It is as much about multifarious interactions for ensuring transparency and accountability. In this context evaluate the role of the 'Interactive Service Model' of e-governance. (Answer in 250 words) [15]

Approach to Question:

1. **Introduction:** Briefly define e-governance and highlight ISM's role in improving citizen participation and inclusivity.
2. **E-Governance Beyond Technology:**
 - **Transparency:** Mention platforms like the Open Government Data Platform and e-Procurement for open governance.
 - **Accountability:** Cite e-Samadhan for grievance redressal and community audits for oversight.
3. **Role of ISM:**
 - **Citizen Engagement:** Reference feedback platforms for direct citizen input.
 - **Accountability:** Emphasise complaint tracking and responsiveness systems.
4. **Challenges in ISM:**
 - **Digital Divide:** Limited access to digital services in rural areas.
 - **Privacy and Cybersecurity:** Highlight privacy concerns and data risks.
5. **Way Forward:** Strengthen cybersecurity and promote digital literacy for citizens and employees.
6. **Conclusion:** Summarise ISM's potential in enhancing governance through transparency, accountability, and engagement.

Answer:

E-governance goes beyond digitalising services; it transforms interactions between government, citizens, and stakeholders. The *Interactive Service Model* (ISM) consolidates previous frameworks to create avenues for direct citizen participation, promoting inclusivity and accessibility in governance.

E-Governance Beyond Technology**Enhancing Transparency:**

1. **Public Access to Information:** Platforms like the *Open Government Data Platform* provide easy access to government data.
2. **Real-time Monitoring:** Systems like the *Public Financial Management System* (PFMS) track government spending in real time.
3. **E-Procurement:** The *Central Public Procurement Portal* (CPPP) ensures transparent procurement, reducing corruption.

Enhancing Accountability:

1. **Grievance Redressal:** *e-Samadhan* allows citizens to lodge and track complaints.
2. **Community Audits:** NRLM enables community audits, involving citizens in governance oversight.

Role of ISM in Governance

1. **Citizen Engagement:** Platforms like the *Citizens' Feedback Program* enable citizens to provide input on government services.
2. **Accountability:** Systems like *e-Samadhan* foster government responsiveness through complaint tracking.

Challenges in ISM

1. **Digital Divide:** Limited access to digital services in rural and disadvantaged areas.
2. **Privacy Concerns:** Use of personal data, such as biometrics in Aadhaar, raises privacy issues.
3. **Cybersecurity Risks:** Vulnerabilities in government systems risk data breaches.

Way Forward

1. **Strengthening Cybersecurity Protocols:** Implementing comprehensive cybersecurity measures to protect sensitive information.
2. **Promoting Digital Literacy:** Conducting training sessions for citizens and government employees to improve digital skills and capabilities.

With appropriate policies, frameworks, and continuous adaptation to technological changes, the *Interactive Service Model* can foster a more engaged, informed, and satisfied citizenry. By advancing the agenda of good governance, it can contribute significantly to enhancing transparency and accountability in public administration.

Q19. 'Terrorism has become a significant threat to global peace and security.' Evaluate the effectiveness of the United Nations Security Council's Counter Terrorism Committee (CTC) and its associated bodies in addressing and mitigating this threat at the international level.

(Answer in 250 words) [15]

Approach to Question:

1. **Introduction:** Define terrorism as a global threat affecting societies and economies and introduce the CTC's role.
2. **Global Security Threats:**
 - **Economic Disruptions:** Example of the Manchester Arena bombing.
 - **Political Instability:** Taliban's resurgence in Afghanistan.
 - **Human Rights Violations:** Actions of Al-Shabaab in Somalia.
3. **Effectiveness of the CTC:**
 - **Legal Frameworks:** Resolution 2396 on foreign fighters.
 - **International Collaboration:** NATO's efforts against ISIS.
 - **Capacity Building:** Strengthening local law enforcement.

4. Challenges:

- **Resource Gaps:** Vulnerabilities in the Sahel region.
- **Civil Liberties:** Privacy concerns from measures like PRISM.
- **Technological Advances:** Use of encrypted apps by terrorist groups.

5. Way Forward:

- **Community Interventions:** Engaging local communities to prevent radicalisation.
- **Global Strategies:** Updating counter-terrorism strategies to address new threats.

6. **Conclusion:** Emphasise the CTC's progress and the need for a comprehensive approach to combat terrorism effectively.

Answer:

Terrorism remains a significant global threat, disrupting societies, economies, and human rights. The United Nations Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) plays a crucial role in combating this issue through various strategies, although its effectiveness faces several challenges.

Terrorism as a Global Security Threat:

1. **Economic Disruptions:** Terrorism hinders economic growth, notably impacting sectors like tourism, as seen in the 2017 Manchester Arena bombing, which affected the UK's tourism industry.
2. **Political Instability:** The Taliban's resurgence in Afghanistan following the 2021 U.S. troop withdrawal led to significant instability and mass displacement.
3. **Human Rights Violations:** Groups like Al-Shabaab in Somalia perpetrate severe human rights abuses, including kidnappings and mass killings.

Effectiveness of the CTC:

1. **Legal Framework Development:** Resolution 2396 focuses on preventing foreign terrorist fighters' travel and enhancing border security.
2. **International Collaboration:** The CTC fosters collaboration, evident in NATO's joint efforts against ISIS in Iraq and Syria.
3. **Capacity Building:** The CTC has strengthened local law enforcement capabilities in regions like the Horn of Africa.

Challenges:

1. **Resource Gaps:** Countries in the Sahel face logistical challenges, leaving them vulnerable to groups like Boko Haram.
2. **Balancing Security and Civil Liberties:** Counter-terrorism measures can violate privacy rights, as seen with the U.S. government's PRISM program.
3. **Technological Advancements:** Terrorist groups use encrypted apps for secure communication, complicating surveillance efforts.

Way Forward:

1. **Community-Based Interventions:** Focusing on local communities to build resilience against radicalisation is vital, particularly in vulnerable regions like South Asia and the Middle East.
2. **Comprehensive Global Strategies:** The international community must prioritise the updating strategies to counter emerging threats, such as cyberterrorism and bioterrorism.

The CTC has made notable strides in combating terrorism by creating legal frameworks, fostering international cooperation, and cutting off financial networks supporting terrorist groups. A multipronged approach focusing on legal reforms, technological adaptation, and global partnerships is essential to fully address the ever-evolving threat of terrorism.

Q20. Discuss the geopolitical and geostrategic importance of Maldives for India with a focus on global trade and energy flows. Further also discuss how this relationship affects India's maritime security and regional stability amidst international competition?

(Answer in 250 words) [15]

Approach to Question:

1. **Introduction:** Briefly state the Maldives' strategic location in the Indian Ocean and its significance for India.
2. **Geopolitical Importance:**
 - **Maritime Security:** Highlight the Maldives' role in monitoring crucial shipping lanes for India's energy imports.
 - **Energy Security:** Mention collaborations on maritime surveillance to protect energy routes.
 - **Trade Policies:** Note initiatives like SAFTA to strengthen economic ties.
3. **Geostrategic Importance:**
 - **Countering Chinese Influence:** Discuss the Maldives' significance in the India-China rivalry.
 - **Surveillance Capabilities:** Explain the potential for deploying radar systems for maritime monitoring.
4. **Impact of the Relationship:**
 - **Positive Effects:** Increased naval presence and joint efforts against piracy.
 - **Negative Effects:** Challenges from growing Chinese influence and reliance on Maldivian political stability.
5. **Conclusion:** Summarise the importance of the India-Maldives relationship for maritime security and regional stability, emphasising the need for strengthened engagement.

Answer:

The Maldives, situated in a pivotal location in the Indian Ocean, holds significant geopolitical and geostrategic importance for India. Its strategic position is crucial for safeguarding India's maritime security, ensuring regional stability, and facilitating global trade and energy routes, particularly given the increasing international competition.

Geopolitical Importance of Maldives for India

1. **Security of Maritime Routes:** The Maldives is essential for monitoring vital shipping lanes in the Indian Ocean, which are crucial for India's energy imports from the Middle East. Maintaining a presence in the Maldives enhances India's ability to secure these maritime passages.
2. **Energy Security:** India collaborates with the Maldives on maritime surveillance to protect energy shipment lanes, including joint patrolling initiatives to deter threats to shipping.
3. **Strengthening Trade Policies:** Through initiatives like the *South Asian Free Trade Area* (SAFTA), India aims to bolster economic ties and reduce trade barriers, promoting regional stability.

Geostrategic Importance of the Maldives for India

1. **Countering Chinese Influence:** The Maldives is a focal point in the India-China competition. Engaging with the Maldives is crucial for countering China's growing presence through investments and infrastructure projects.
2. **Enhanced Surveillance:** India can leverage its proximity to deploy advanced radar systems in the Maldives, improving maritime traffic monitoring and preempting security threats.

Impact of the India-Maldives Relationship**Positive Effects:**

1. **Strengthening Naval Presence:** Increased naval patrolling boosts India's maritime security.
2. **Combating Piracy:** Collaborative efforts can strengthen operations against piracy and illegal activities.

Negative Effects:

1. **Growing Chinese Influence:** China's involvement through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) challenges India's strategic interests.
2. **Political Stability Dependence:** India's relationship with the Maldives is contingent on the Maldivian government's stability, making it vulnerable to political upheavals.

The relationship between India and the Maldives is crucial for shaping India's maritime security and enhancing regional stability. Strengthening this partnership is essential for navigating the complexities of geopolitical dynamics in the Indian Ocean.