

INTERNATIONAL RELATION

G7 Digital Trade Principles

Recently, the Group of Seven (G7) wealthy nations agreed on a joint set of principles to govern cross-border data use and digital trade. The deal is a first step in reducing trade barriers, and could lead to a common rulebook of digital trade.

Earlier, India attended the 47th G7 Summit as a guest country.



Key Points

- **Digital Trade:** It is broadly defined as trade in goods and services that is either enabled or delivered digitally, encompassing activities from the distribution of films and TV to professional services.
- **G7 Digital Trade Principles:**
 1. **Open Digital Markets:** Digital and telecommunications markets should be competitive, transparent, fair, and accessible to international trade and investment.
 2. **Cross Border Data Flows:** To harness the opportunities of the digital economy and support the trade of goods and services, data should be able to flow freely across borders with trust, including the trust of individuals and businesses.
 3. **Safeguards for Workers, Consumers, and Businesses:** Labour protections must be in place for workers who are directly engaged in or support digital trade, providing decent conditions of work.
 4. **Digital Trading Systems:** To cut red tape and enable more businesses to trade, governments and industry should drive forward the digitisation of trade-related documents.
 5. **Fair and Inclusive Global Governance:** Common rules for digital trade should be agreed and upheld at the World Trade Organization (WTO). These rules should benefit workers, consumers, and businesses in developing economies, as well as those in developed economies, while safeguarding each country’s right to regulate for legitimate public policy objectives.

Significance:

- **Middle Ground:** The deal sets out a middle ground between highly regulated data protection regimes used in European countries and the more open approach of the United States. The deal envisages removing unjustified obstacles to cross-border data flows, while continuing to address privacy, data protection, the protection of intellectual property rights, and security.
- **Liberalise Digital Trade:** The agreement reached by the elite global group is considered to be significant as it could liberalise hundreds of billions of dollars of digital trade. Enabling cross border data flows and clarifying the framework for processing and storing data will be required to further expand the contribution of digital exports.

Associated Concerns:

- The G7 countries have raised concerns about situations where data localisation requirements are being used for protectionist and discriminatory purposes.
- The statement assumes significance as India has been contemplating measures for data localisation.

 1. Recently, India has scored 90.32% in UNESCAP Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation.
 2. In 2018, the economic value of digital trade-enabled benefits to the Indian economy is estimated to be worth up to USD 35 billion.

Data Localisation

- **About:** Data localisation is the practice of storing data on any device that is physically present within the borders of the country where the data is generated. As of now, most of this data is stored,

in a cloud, outside India. Localisation mandates that companies collecting critical data about consumers must store and process them within the borders of the country.

• **Advantages of Data Localisation:**

1. Secures citizen's data and provides data privacy and data sovereignty from foreign surveillance. Example - Facebook shared user data with Cambridge Analytica to influence voting.
2. Unfettered supervisory access to data will help Indian law enforcement ensure better monitoring.

• **Disadvantages of Data Localisation:**

1. Maintaining multiple local data centres may lead to significant investments in infrastructure and higher costs for global companies.
2. Splinternet or 'fractured internet' where the domino effect of protectionist policy can lead to other countries following suit.

• **Indian Scenario:**

1. Recently, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) barred three foreign card payment network firms from taking new customers on board over the issue of storing data in India.
2. India is contemplating an umbrella legislation on data protection, the Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019.
3. As per the bill, the Central Government shall notify categories of personal data as critical personal data that shall only be processed in a server or data centre located in India.
4. The Justice BN Srikrishna committee has recommended setting up of a data protection authority and placing restrictions on cross-border data flows.
5. India is also opposed to joining any global deal on e-commerce with the Prime Minister refusing to sign the Osaka Track, an overarching framework promoting cross-border data flow, at the recently held G-20 summit.

Way Forward

- **Global Cyber Security Framework:** Good regulatory frameworks are essential to address issues such as privacy and cybersecurity. Thus, on the sideline of negotiations of free flow to digital trade, a global framework for cybersecurity should be established.
- **Removing Bureaucratic Hurdles:** To maximise the positive impact of digital trade, issues such as undue red tape on digital enterprises, restricted cross-border data flows, and imbalanced copyright and intermediate liability regulations, need to be addressed.
- **Role of India:** There is an opportunity for India to play a leading role, not only at home, but also abroad in pushing for facilitative digital trade rules in its various bilateral and multilateral trade negotiations.

GOVERNANCE

Saksham Centres: DAY-NRLM

Recently, as part of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, a total of 152 Centre for Financial Literacy & Service Delivery (SAKSHAM Centres) across 77 districts of 13 states were launched.

The centres were launched under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) of the Ministry of Rural Development.

Key Points

SAKSHAM Centres:

- **About:** Centre for Financial Literacy & Service Delivery (CFL&SD) would act as a one stop solution/single window system for basic financial needs of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) households in rural areas.

Objective: To provide financial literacy & facilitate delivery of financial services (savings, credit, insurance, pensions etc.) to SHG members and rural poor.

Managed By: SHG network, largely at the level of the Cluster Level Federations (CLFs), with the help of trained Community Resource Persons (CRPs).

SAKSHAM Application: A mobile & web-based application called "SAKSHAM" has also been developed. It will be used by the community resource person of the Centre to know the penetration of various financial services for each SHG & village, identify major gaps and accordingly provide training and deliver the required financial services.

Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihood Mission

About:

- It is a centrally sponsored programme, launched by the Ministry of Rural Development in June 2011.

Aim:

- To eliminate rural poverty through the promotion of multiple livelihoods and improved access to financial services for the rural poor households across the country.

Functioning:

- It involves working with community institutions through community professionals in the spirit of self-help which is a unique proposition of DAY-NRLM.
- It impacts the livelihoods through universal social mobilization by inter alia organising one-woman member from each rural poor household into Self Help Groups (SHGs), their training and capacity building, facilitating their micro-livelihoods plans, and enabling them to implement their livelihoods plans through accessing financial resources from their own institutions and the banks.

Implementation:

- It is implemented in a Mission mode by special purpose vehicles (autonomous state societies) with dedicated implementation support units at the national, state, district and block levels, using professional human resources in order to provide continuous and long-term handholding support to each rural poor family.

Sub-Schemes:

- **MKSP:** In order to promote agro-ecological practices that increase women farmers' income and reduce their input costs and risks, the Mission has been implementing the Mahila Kisan Shashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP).
- **SVEP and AGEY:** As part of its non-farm livelihoods strategy, DAY-NRLM is implementing Start-Up Village Entrepreneurship Programme (SVEP) and Aajeevika Grameen Express Yojana (AGEY).
 1. SVEP aims to support entrepreneurs in rural areas to set up local enterprises.
 2. AGEY, launched in August 2017, to provide safe, affordable and community monitored rural transport services to connect remote rural villages.
- **DDUGKY:** Deendayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDUGKY) aims at building placement-linked skills of the rural youth and placing them in relatively higher wage employment sectors of the economy.
- **RSETIs:** The Mission, in partnership with 31 Banks and State Governments, is supporting Rural Self Employment Institutes (RSETIs) for skilling rural youth to take up gainful self-employment.

Outcomes:

- Today, ten years since the NRLM was first launched, India has the largest network of women's SHGs across the world. As of May 2021, there are 6.9 million SHGs in India with 75 million members across 7,83,389 villages.
- The Mission has achieved significant success in improving the last mile delivery of credit services through the agency of SHGs.
- The NRLM has enabled rural families to negotiate for greater access to essential services such as education and healthcare. It has had an impact on food security, improved school enrolment, access to land for women to grow food, and on gender issues with women's groups taking on issues like dowry, child marriage, and discrimination against girls.

POLITY

Public Safety Act: J&K

Ahead of the Home Minister's visit, around 700 people have been detained in the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) and a few under the stringent Jammu & Kashmir Public Safety Act (PSA), 1978.

Key Points

About:

- Under PSA, an individual can be detained on the basis of an executive order for a maximum of two years, without trial, if their act is prejudicial to the security of the State or the maintenance of public order.

Enforcement:

- Detention order is passed either by the Divisional Commissioner or the District Magistrate.

Challenging the Detention:

- The only way the administrative preventive detention order can be challenged is through a habeas corpus petition filed by relatives of the detained person.
 1. The High Court and the Supreme Court have jurisdiction to hear such petitions and pass a final order seeking quashing of the PSA.
 2. However, if the order is quashed, there is no bar on the government passing another detention order under the PSA and detaining the person again.
 3. There can be no prosecution or any legal proceeding against the official who has passed the order.

Issues with PSA:

- **Detention Without Trial:**
 1. The PSA allows for the detention of a person without a formal charge and without trial.

2. It can be slapped on a person already in police custody; on someone immediately after being granted bail by a court.
3. Unlike in normal circumstances, a person who is detained under the PSA need not be produced before a magistrate within 24 hours of the detention.
 - **No Right to File Bail Application:**The detained person does not have the right to move a bail application before the court, and cannot engage any lawyer to represent him or her before the detaining authority.
 - **Section 8 of the PSA:**
 1. It provides a vast number of reasons for detention, ranging from “promoting, propagating, or attempting to create, feelings of enmity or hatred or disharmony on grounds of religion, race, caste, community, or region” to incitement, instigation, abetment and actual commission of such acts.
 2. It leaves it to district collectors or district magistrates to decide, giving a 12-day period within which an advisory board has to approve the detention.
 - **No Distinction Between Minor and Major Offences:**It allows detention for up to 1 year for disturbance of public order and 2 years for actions prejudicial to the security of the State.

Supreme Court on Public Safety Act:

- The Supreme Court (SC) has held that while detaining a person under the PSA, the DM has a legal obligation to analyse all the circumstances before depriving that person of his/her personal liberty.
- It has also held that when a person already under police custody is slapped with the PSA, the DM has to record “compelling reasons” for detaining that person.
- While the DM can detain a person multiple times under the PSA, he or she has to produce fresh facts while passing the subsequent detention order.
- Also, all the material on the basis of which the detention order has been passed, should be provided to the detained person for making an effective representation.
- The grounds of detention have to explain and communicate to the person in the language understood by the detained person.

Habeas Corpus

- It is a Latin term which literally means ‘to have the body of’. This writ is a bulwark of individual liberty against arbitrary detention.
- It can be issued against both public authorities as well as private individuals.
- The writ, on the other hand, is not issued where the:
 1. detention is lawful,
 2. the proceeding is for contempt of a legislature or a court,
 3. detention is by a competent court, and
 4. detention is outside the jurisdiction of the court.

Way Forward

- Now that the state has become a union territory, PSA should have been brought in line with the all-India legislation.
- Regional leaders remain India’s best bet in J&K, their continuing detention will not go well in pursuance of establishing peace and finding a political solution in J&K.
- The Supreme Court has held that in order to prevent misuse of this potentially dangerous power, the law of preventive detention has to be strictly construed and meticulous compliance with the procedural safeguards, is mandatory and vital.
- If citizens’ right to criticise a government becomes a law and order threat, the future of the republic as a functioning democracy becomes an open question.C

IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIM

Kaziranga National Park: Assam

The Central Empowered Committee (CEC), constituted by the Supreme Court, has asked the Assam government to take action on illegal construction in the identified wildlife corridors of the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve.

Earlier, Kaziranga National Park became the first in the country to use satellite phones and Dehing Patkai and Raimona were designated as National Parks and the Eco-sensitive zone of the Deepor Beel Wildlife Sanctuary was notified.

Key Points

Location:

- It is located in the State of Assam and covers 42,996 Hectare (ha). It is the single largest undisturbed and representative area in the Brahmaputra Valley floodplain.

Legal Status:

1. It was declared as a National Park in 1974.

2. It has been declared a tiger reserve since 2007.

International Status:

1. It was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1985.
2. It is recognized as an Important Bird Area by BirdLife International.

Biodiversity:

- It is the home of the world's most one-horned rhinos. Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary has the highest density of one-horned rhinos in the world and second highest number of Rhinos in Assam after Kaziranga National Park.
 - Much of the focus of conservation efforts in Kaziranga are focused on the 'big four' species - Rhino, Elephant, Royal Bengal tiger and Asiatic water buffalo.
1. The 2018 census had yielded 2,413 rhinos and approximately 1,100 elephants.
 2. As per the figures of tiger census conducted in 2014, Kaziranga had the third highest population in India after Jim Corbett National Park in Uttarakhand and Bandipur National Park in Karnataka.
- Kaziranga is also home to 9 of the 14 species of primates found in the Indian subcontinent.

Rivers and Highways:

- National Highway 37 passes through the park area.
- The park also has more than 250 seasonal water bodies, besides the Diphlu River running through it.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns. Amidst all the turmoil, the primary principle in any action towards Afghanistan should be guided by humanitarian concerns. Examine. (250 words)

Ans:

Introduction

India has always been a strong proponent of an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned, broad-based and inclusive process of peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan. However, a collapse of the Afghan government and return of the Taliban marks the beginning of a new phase in the India-Afghanistan relationship. Indian Prime Minister in G20 meeting has called for the international community to provide Afghanistan with immediate and unhindered access to humanitarian assistance.

Body**Humanitarian Crisis in Afghanistan**

- UNHCR has published a report that states that half the population in Afghanistan (more than 20 million people) are in need of lifesaving humanitarian assistance.
- An estimated 270,000 Afghans have been newly displaced inside the country since January 2021.
- The number of civilian casualties has risen 29 per cent during the first quarter of this year compared to 2020.
- The UN has received only 35% of the funds needed for its relief operations.
- The banks are running out of money, civil servants have not been paid and food prices have soared, leaving millions at risk of severe hunger.
- The country is struggling with drought and severe poverty following the decades of war.
- The U.S. has frozen the reserves of Afghanistan making the situation vulnerable.
- The Taliban government's refusal to allow women to work and stopping girls from schooling have complicated the issue.

Global response so far

- The EU committed \$1.15 billion for Afghanistan and neighbouring countries where refugees have fled.
- Other countries including the U.S. and China pledged \$1.1 billion at a donor conference in Geneva last month.
- India has not announced any monetary or food assistance.

Possible Way forward for India

- India could contribute to international agencies that are working with displaced Afghans, particularly for about one million children at the risk of starvation.
- It could also help Iran and the Central Asian states that are housing refugees with monetary assistance.
- The Government could also consider liberalising its visa regime for Afghans, which at the moment has cancelled all prior visas to Afghan nationals.
- India, presently, is releasing very few e-visas for Afghans desperate to travel here.
- As a goodwill gesture, India could once again send food aid, including wheat, grain, fortified biscuits and other packaged food, directly to Kabul.

- India could implement the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 to protect the minorities in Afghanistan.
- As and when the situation stabilizes medical visas, visas for students who have already secured admission can be considered.

Conclusion

In the unfolding situation, New Delhi will have to quickly reorient its Afghan strategy. At the same time, Delhi must be prepared to discuss what are real and serious differences with key regional and international partners on the Taliban and the future of Afghanistan. Despite India's foreign policy orientation moving more towards the US and the West, the new Afghan strategy will have to be synchronized with an entirely different set of players.

DAILY QUIZ

Q1. Consider the following statements about International Solar Alliance General Assembly:

1. It is the apex decision-making body of International Solar Alliance (ISA).
2. It meets biannually at the Ministerial level at the seat of the ISA.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q2. Which of the following has launched the Geospatial Energy Map of India?

- a. Indian Space Research Organisation
- b. Geological Survey of India
- c. The Energy and Resources Institute
- d. **NITI Aayog**

Q3. The "South Seitah" region was in news recently, is located in the

- a. Antarctica
- b. Arctic
- c. Great Himalayas
- d. **None of the above**

Q4. Consider the following statements:

1. Sowa-Rigpa or science of healing is based on indigenous medicine of Tibet.
2. Hippocrates is considered as the father of the Sowa-Rigpa or science of healing.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q5. Consider the following statements about *Allium negianum*:

1. It is an orange species from the Uttarakhand Himalayas.
2. It can be found along open grassy meadows, sandy soils along rivers, and streams forming in snow pasture lands along alpine meadows.
3. It is restricted to the region of western Himalayas and hasn't yet been reported from anywhere else in the world.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. **2 and 3 only**
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3