

Today's Prelims Topics

Article 101(4)

Context

Khadoor Sahib MP Amritpal Singh, who has been detained under the National Security Act (NSA) since April 2023, has moved the Punjab and Haryana High Court seeking permission to attend the ongoing Parliament session.

About Article 101(4) of the Constitution

- **Article 101(4)** states: *"If for a period of sixty days a member of either House of Parliament is without permission of the House absent from all meetings thereof, the House may declare his seat vacant."*
- However, the **60-day period does not include:**
 - Any time when **Parliament is prorogued (not in session).**
 - Any time when Parliament is **adjourned for more than four consecutive days.**
- **Practical Implication:**
 - The **60-day absence is counted only for actual sittings of Parliament.**
 - This means the calculation of Amritpal's absence is based **only on active Parliament sessions**, not on the total calendar days since his detention.

Vacation of seat on account of absence

- Even if an MP crosses the 60-day absence limit, his seat will not be automatically vacated.
- The House **must formally vote to declare his seat vacant.**

Process for Seeking Leave

- Article 101(4) allows MPs to seek permission from the House for prolonged absences.
- MPs must submit a request to the 'Committee on Absence of Members from the Sittings of the House', which:
 - Review the leave applications.
 - Recommends approval or rejection to the House.
- **E.g. In 2023, BSP MP Atul Rai was granted leave for 23 consecutive sittings due to incarceration.**

Source:

- [Indian Express - Article 101\(4\)](#)
- [Digital Sansad](#)

SEBI's Proposed Framework for Fast-Track Follow-On Offerings by REITs & InvITs

Context

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has proposed a framework to streamline fundraising for REITs and InvITs.

Key Highlights of the Proposal

- **Fast-Track Follow-On Offerings (FPO) for REITs & InvITs:**
 - SEBI has proposed a **fast-track mechanism** for follow-on public offers (FPOs) to enable quicker access to capital.
 - REITs and InvITs need to **apply to all stock exchanges** where their units are listed and obtain **in-principle approval** for listing.
 - They must **designate one stock exchange** for the listing process.
- **Lock-in Period for Preferential Issue of Units:**
 - SEBI has proposed a lock-in period for units allotted to **sponsors and sponsor groups** through preferential allotment.
 - **15% of allotted units:** Locked-in for **three years** from the date of trading approval.
 - **Remaining units:** Locked-in for **one year** from the date of trading approval.
- **Due Diligence and Disclosure Requirements:**
 - SEBI has also proposed that **REITs and InvITs disclose financial information** in line with **public issue and listing norms**.
 - This move aims to improve transparency and align disclosures with established market regulations.

What are REITs?

- **Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs)** are companies that own or finance income-generating real estate assets.
- Investors can invest in a **diversified portfolio** of properties such as: **Office buildings, Apartments, Shopping malls, Hotels etc.**
- REITs allow individuals to invest in real estate **without owning physical properties**.

What are InvITs?

- **Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs)** are investment instruments that allow investors to invest in **infrastructure projects** like: **Roads & highways, Power distribution networks, Telecom towers etc.**
- They function similarly to **mutual funds**, pooling money from investors to finance **income-generating infrastructure assets**.
- InvITs are designed as a **tiered structure** with a sponsor setting up the InvIT which in turn invests into the eligible infrastructure projects either directly or via special purpose vehicles (SPVs).
- Some part of the investment is used by the InvIT as **loan** while other portion is used as **capital**. Unit holders receive returns in the form of **Dividend and Interest**.
 - **Both the dividend and interest are taxed.**
- As per the SEBI regulations, **InvITs must invest at least 80% of their assets** in projects that are completed and revenue-generating. ☑ Lowers risk for Investors.
- **InvITs and REITs** are recognised as borrowers under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Securities Interest (**SARFAESI**) Act.

UPSC PYQ

Q. Consider the following statements: (2023)

Statement-I: Interest income from the deposits in Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs) distributed to their investors is exempted from tax, but the dividend is taxable.

Statement-II: InvITs are recognized as borrowers under the 'Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002'.

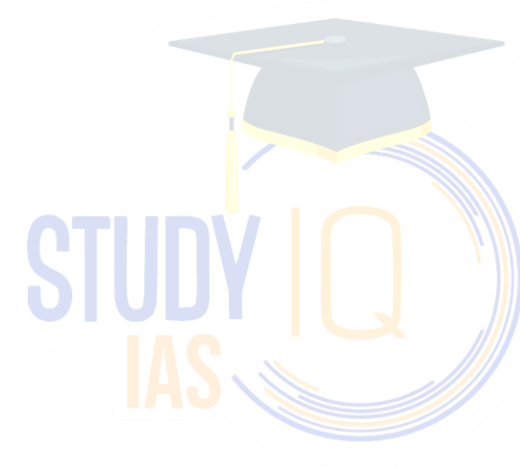
Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- (a) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement- II is the correct explanation for Statement- I
- (b) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement- II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I.
- (c) Statement I is correct but Statement II is incorrect.
- (d) Statement I is incorrect but Statement II is correct.

Answer: D

Source:

- [Indian Express - REITs & InvITs](#)



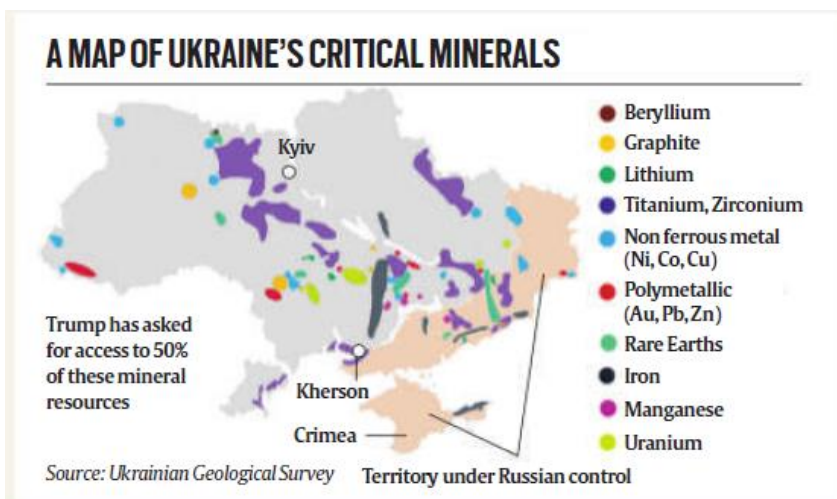
U.S. Interest in Ukraine's Minerals

Context

The U.S. has proposed access to **50% of Ukraine's critical minerals** in exchange for military and economic assistance.

Importance of Ukraine's Mineral Resources

- Ukraine is rich in minerals that are essential for:
 - **High-tech manufacturing**, including electronics and semiconductors.
 - **Defense systems**, such as missile guidance and advanced weaponry.
 - **Clean energy solutions - electric vehicles (EVs).**
 - **Strategic economic control**, as China dominates the global supply of many of these minerals.
- **Ukraine's Global Standing:**
 - It has **22 out of 50** strategic minerals classified as critical by the U.S.
 - **25 out of 34** minerals recognized as critical by the **European Union (EU)**.



Major Challenges Facing the U.S. Plan

- **Legal and Constitutional Barriers:**
 - Ukraine's **Constitution** states that its natural resources belong to **the Ukrainian people**.
 - Any foreign claim over these resources would require legal amendments.
- **Lack of Reliable Geological Data:**
 - Ukraine's mineral resources remain **underexplored**.
 - The most comprehensive geological surveys were conducted **before 1991** during the Soviet era.
- **Existing European Union Agreements:**
 - In **July 2021**, before Russia's invasion, Ukraine signed a "**strategic partnership on raw materials**" with the EU.
- **Russian Control Over Mineral-Rich Regions:**
 - Many of Ukraine's critical minerals are located in territories **occupied by Russia**.
 - Russian forces have taken control of **one-fifth of Ukraine**, including key rare earth deposits.

Source:

- [Indian Express - Mineral Resources of Ukraine](#)

SC stays Lokpal order on powers over HC judges

Context

The Supreme Court of India has stayed a Lokpal order that sought to bring High Court judges under its jurisdiction.

Lokpal's Justification for Its Jurisdiction

- The **Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013**, defines public servants under **Section 14(1)(f)**, which includes:
 - Any person who is or has been a member, officer, or employee in a body, board, corporation, or authority established by an Act of Parliament or financed/controlled by the Central government.
- The **Lokpal argued that High Court judges qualify as public servants** because:
 - High Courts were established under **British Parliamentary Acts** (Indian High Courts Act, 1861 & Government of India Act, 1935).
 - **Article 214 of the Indian Constitution** only recognizes High Courts but **does not establish them**.
 - In contrast, **Article 124 explicitly establishes the Supreme Court**, making it a "**child of the Constitution**."
- **Supreme Court's Observations:**
 - SC observed that **all judges (High Court and Supreme Court)** are appointed under the Constitution, implying immunity from Lokpal jurisdiction.

Jurisdiction of Lokpal (Under Section-14 of the Lokpal Act)

- Prime Minister, Ministers, Members of Parliament and group A, B, C, and D of government employees.
- **Examination of Applicability to Judges and CJIs:**
 - Judges, including those of the Supreme Court, are "public servants" as per Section 2(c) of the Prevention of Corruption (PC) Act, 1988.
 - However, the Supreme Court is not a "body established by an Act of Parliament" but by Article 124 of the Constitution of India.
- **Interpretation of Section 14(1)(f):**
 - Section 14(1)(f) applies to entities established by an Act of Parliament or controlled/financed by the central government.
 - **Lokpal in its January 27, 2025 order clarified that:**
 - The Supreme Court does not qualify as such a body.
 - Judges and the CJI are not controlled or financed by the central government.

Source:

- [The Hindu - Powers of Lokpal over Judiciary](#)

I&B Ministry Warns OTT Platforms Against 'Obscene Content'

Context

The Union Information and Broadcasting (I&B) Ministry has issued an advisory to Over-the-Top (OTT) streaming services regarding the transmission of content prohibited by law.

Key Directives to OTT Platforms

- **Content Classification:** OTT platforms must implement age-based classification of content in accordance with the IT Rules, 2021.
- **Age-Gating for Mature Content:** Streaming services must enforce age restrictions on content meant for mature audiences.
- **Adherence to Indian Laws:** OTT services must ensure that their content does not violate Indian laws related to obscenity, indecency, and child protection.
- The advisory also refers to **various Indian laws** that prohibit obscene and pornographic content:
 - **Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986** – Prevents the portrayal of women in an indecent manner.
 - **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023** – It covers **obscenity-related offenses**.
 - **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act** – Protects minors from sexual exploitation and prohibits child pornography.
 - **Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000** – Regulates digital content and prohibits the publication of obscene or pornographic material online.

Existing IT Rules and Content Regulations

- The **IT Rules, 2021** already prescribe **age ratings** for content on **Indian streaming services** such as Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and Disney+ Hotstar.
- OTT platforms are required to have a **formal grievance redressal system**, structured as a **three-tier process**:
 - **First level** – The complaint is handled by the streaming platform itself.
 - **Second level** – The issue can be escalated to a **self-regulatory body**.
 - **Third level** – If unresolved, the complaint can be referred to an **inter-departmental committee of the Union government**.
- The **IT Rules do not completely ban** swearing, sex, nudity, substance abuse, or violence, but mandate that such content be **appropriately rated for older audiences**.

Source:

- [The Hindu - Advisory for OTT](#)

Places in News

Nauru

- The Pacific island nation of **Nauru** is planning to **sell citizenships** to finance the relocation of nearly **10,000 residents** from low-lying coastal areas threatened by **rising sea levels and flooding**.
- The funds will be used to develop a new township in the island's interior.

History & Economy of Nuru

- **Main Industry (Past): Phosphate mining** was the backbone of Nauru's economy from the **1900s to 1990s**.
- **Economic Decline:** Phosphate reserves were **depleted**, leading to severe economic problems.
- **Current Revenue Sources:** Australian aid, Fishing licenses, Hosting asylum seekers under a deal with Australia & New citizenship sales program.



- **Location:** A tiny island nation in the **Pacific Ocean**, about **4,000 km northeast of Sydney, Australia**.
- **Size:** **21 sq. km** (one of the world's smallest countries).
- **Population:** Around **10,000** people.
- **Capital:** No official capital, but **Yaren** functions as the administrative center.

Source:

- [Economic Times - Tiny Island](#)

News in Shorts

Microsoft Unveils New Quantum Chip: Majorana 1

- Microsoft has announced a breakthrough in quantum computing with the unveiling of a new chip, Majorana 1.

Quantum Computing

- **Quantum Computing:** Quantum computing aims to perform calculations that would take **classical computers millions of years.**

- It has applications across various fields, including:

- **Medicine** – Drug discovery and protein folding simulations.
- **Chemistry** – Complex molecular simulations.
- **Aerospace** – Enhancing simulations for advanced materials and fuel efficiency.



- **Challenges in Quantum Computing:** The fundamental unit of quantum computing is the **qubit (quantum bit).**
 - **Problem with existing qubits:**
 - They are extremely fast but **difficult to control.**
 - They are **prone to errors**, which limits their reliability.

What Makes Majorana 1 Different?

- The chip is built using a new material composed of **indium arsenide and aluminum.**
- It uses the first-ever **topoconductor (topological superconductor).**
 - A topoconductor is a special category of material that can create an entirely new state of matter – not a solid, liquid or gas but a topological state.
- Majorana 1 relies on a subatomic particle called the **Majorana fermion.**
 - The Majorana fermion was first theorized by **Italian physicist Ettore Majorana in 1937.**

Source:

- [The Hindu - Majorana 1](#)

V Anantha Nageswaran's term as CEA extended

- The government has extended the term of chief economic advisor (CEA) V Anantha Nageswaran by two years till March 2027.

About Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) of India

- CEA is a key government official responsible for providing economic analysis and policy advice to the Government of India, particularly to the Ministry of Finance.
- He holds the rank of Secretary to the Government of India.
- He is the ex-officio cadre-controlling authority of the Indian Economic Service.
- CEA is head of the **Economic Division** of the Department of Economic Affairs, Union Ministry of Finance.
- **Main Functions:**
 - Provides expert economic advice to the Finance Minister and the Government on key issues like: Inflation, GDP growth, Employment trends etc.
 - Prepares and presents the **Economic Survey of India**, which is released before the Union Budget.
 - This document provides a detailed economic analysis and forecasts for policy decisions.



Source:

- [Business Standard - CEA](#)

Coalition for Environmentally Sustainable AI

- The **Coalition for Environmentally Sustainable Artificial Intelligence (AI)** was launched recently.

About Coalition for Environmentally Sustainable AI

- It is a global initiative with 100+ partners, including 37 tech companies, 11 countries, and 5 international organizations, to promote AI's environmental sustainability.
- It was launched at the **AI Action Summit in Paris**.
- It is led by **France, United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and International Telecommunication Union (ITU)**.
- **Key objectives:**
 - Encourage AI's role in **decarbonization, pollution reduction, biodiversity preservation, and ocean protection**.
 - Develop **standardized environmental metrics** for AI.
 - Promote **comprehensive life cycle analysis frameworks** for AI technologies.
 - Prioritize **sustainable AI research**.

Source:

- [UNEP](#)

Case Study

Transformation of Koraput's Tribal Food Basket

Introduction

Koraput, a district in Odisha, is a biodiversity-rich region with a predominantly tribal population. Despite several government schemes, the district suffered from high levels of undernutrition and poverty.

- **According to NFHS-5 (2019-21) data:**
 - 43% of children under five years are stunted (low height-for-age).
 - 33% of children are underweight.
 - Only 17% of children receive an adequate diet.
 - More than 50% of women suffer from anaemia.

Nutrition Security Transformation Model (2013-2022)

- To address this issue, the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) initiated a community-based nutrition literacy program (2013-2022) to empower tribal communities toward nutrition security.
- **Objectives:**
 - **Diversify household food baskets with nutritious foods.**
 - Enable **nutrition-sensitive farming** (crop diversity, backyard poultry, pisciculture).
 - Improve **sanitation, hygiene, and Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices.**
 - Facilitate **community-driven transformation toward nutrition security.**

Implementation Strategy

- **Step 1: Community Sensitization**
 - **Assessing nutritional status** of women, children, and adolescents.
 - Consolidating **secondary data** and presenting findings to the community.
 - Engaging in **discussions** to identify **nutrition challenges and solutions.**
- **Step 2: Selection of Community Champions**
 - Villagers **nominated men and women** from **various caste groups.**
 - Selected individuals underwent a **residential training program on nutrition and farming.**
- **Step 3: Residential Training Program**
 - Conducted **over six months** with **sessions lasting 2.5 days each.**
 - Topics covered:
 - **Balanced diet and dietary diversity.**
 - **Sanitation, hygiene, and IYCF practices.**
 - **Nutrition-sensitive agriculture** (crop diversification, backyard poultry, pisciculture).
- **Engagement Methods:**
 - Group discussions, role-playing, interactive learning.
 - Real-life scenario analysis and problem-solving.
 - Exploring caste, class, and gender-based nutrition disparities.
- **Key Learnings from the Training:**
 - Participants realized the **importance of eating both dal and vegetables daily.**
 - Awareness increased about **traditional rice varieties as a nutritional asset.**
 - Participants shifted focus from **“dish count” to “food group count”** for dietary diversity.

Community Engagement and Capacity Building

- **Strengthening Social Cohesion:**

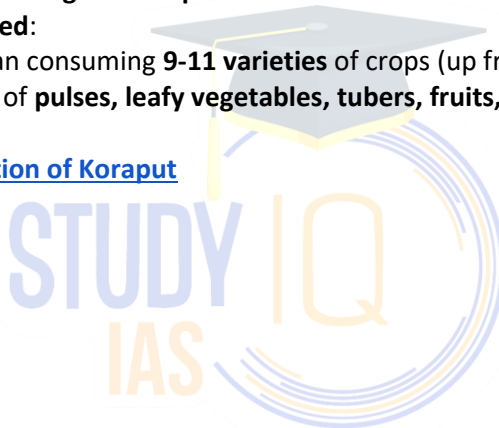
- Training programs **broke hierarchical barriers**, enabling **men and women to interact across villages**.
- Participants **planned crop diversification strategies** and **home garden expansion**.
- Recognized the **power of collective decision-making** to demand **government entitlements**.
- Created **songs and messages** on **balanced diet, hygiene, sanitation, and women's support**.
- **Empowering Community Champions:**
 - **Over 200 men and women from 70+ villages** became "community champions".
 - Identified **further training needs** in: Seed treatment, Vermi-composting & organic fertilizers, Mushroom production etc.
 - Over **1,000 villagers trained** over **10 years**, creating a **sustainable resource base**.

Impact and Outcomes - Agricultural Transformation

- **Crop diversity increased significantly:**
 - **Before:** 71% of households cultivated only **2-3 crops**.
 - **After:** Over 60% of households cultivated **4-5 crops**.
- **Home gardens became more productive:**
 - **Before:** 90% had **home gardens for only five months**.
 - **After:** 50% had **home gardens operational for 7-9 months**.
- **Dietary diversity improved:**
 - Households began consuming **9-11 varieties** of crops (up from 4 varieties).
 - Increased intake of **pulses, leafy vegetables, tubers, fruits, poultry, fish, and wild food**.

Source:

- [The Hindu - Transformation of Koraput](#)



Editorial Summary

Building resilient Telecom Infrastructure

Context

The Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure has recently released a report assessing Indian telecom networks' preparedness in the event of disasters. The report provides recommendations for State governments to enhance disaster resilience in telecom infrastructure.

Importance of Telecom Networks in Disaster Management

- **Telecom networks are crucial for disaster response** as they enable **quick communication** between:
 - State & National Disaster Management Authorities.
 - Local municipalities & State/Union governments.
- Disruptions in telecom networks can **hinder relief efforts**, putting **lives and property at risk**.

Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)

- CDRI is an international partnership that aims to build climate and disaster-resilient infrastructure.
- It was launched in **2019 by the Government of India** at the UN Climate Summit.
- CDRI's members include national governments, UN agencies, multilateral development banks, private sector and academia.
- CDRI's goal is to help countries upgrade their infrastructure to be more resilient to climate change and disasters.

Key Challenges in Disaster-Prone Areas

- **High Risk in Coastal and Seismic Zones:**
 - **Coastal regions face heightened vulnerability** as they host **undersea cable landing stations**, connecting India to the **global internet**. Disruptions in these cables can lead to **massive network failures**.
 - **Cyclones and earthquakes pose a significant risk**, potentially damaging **telecom towers** and **cabling infrastructure**, leading to prolonged service outages.
- **Power Failures: The Biggest Issue:**
 - **Telecom towers heavily rely on uninterrupted power supply**, but disasters often cause **long blackouts**, delaying network restoration.
 - **According to the CDRI report** power failures are the primary cause of telecom outages, more than physical damage to towers or cables.
 - **Restoring power to telecom towers during disasters is crucial** to maintaining communication networks for emergency response.
- **Structural Weakness of Telecom Towers:**
 - Many towers are **not built to withstand high wind speeds**, especially in **cyclone-prone states** like Odisha, West Bengal, and Andhra Pradesh.
 - Poorly designed **overhead telecom cables often snap during storms**, leading to **complete service breakdowns**.
 - In **flood-prone regions**, **diesel generators stop working** when water levels rise, further complicating power restoration efforts.

Solutions for Building a Disaster-Resilient Telecom Network

- **Strengthening Power Infrastructure:**
 - **Ensuring uninterrupted power supply** to critical telecom sites.

- **Emergency fuel reserves** should be maintained to power telecom towers in disaster-hit regions.
 - E.g. Odisha provides 50 litres of fuel per telecom operator during cyclones to keep networks operational.
- **Alternative power sources like solar or hybrid energy solutions** should be implemented to reduce dependency on the electricity grid.
- **Building Stronger Telecom Towers:**
 - Towers in cyclone-prone areas should meet higher wind resistance standards to prevent collapse.
 - Mandatory disaster-proofing for new telecom infrastructure should be enforced to withstand extreme weather conditions.
- **Shifting to Underground Fiber Optic Cables & Implementing a "Dig-Once" Policy:**
 - Overhead telecom cables are highly vulnerable to storms and cyclones; shifting to underground fiber optic cables can significantly reduce disruptions.
 - **Dig-once policy** should be implemented, ensuring that underground fiber cables are laid **alongside water, gas and drainage infrastructure**.
 - This minimizes repeated disruptions and lowers long-term maintenance costs.
- **Enhancing Disaster Monitoring & Emergency Response:**
 - Real-time tracking of telecom asset damage using AI-driven software and data analytics for quick restoration.
- **Financial Resilience Through Parametric Insurance:**
 - CDRI has recommended parametric insurance to financially support telecom operators during disasters.
 - **This ensures quick compensation**, allowing operators to rapidly restore damaged infrastructure.

Future Roadmap for Telecom Resilience in India

- **Short-Term Initiatives (1-2 Years):**
 - Strengthening backup power systems at telecom towers with solar/hybrid solutions.
 - Implementing real-time damage monitoring tools for quick response.
 - Upgrading telecom infrastructure in high-risk coastal and seismic areas.
- **Medium-Term Initiatives (3-5 Years):**
 - Expanding underground fiber optic networks nationwide.
 - Mandatory disaster-proofing of all new telecom towers in vulnerable regions.
 - Establishing a coordinated response mechanism to minimize service downtime during disasters.
- **Long-Term Vision (Beyond 5 Years):**
 - Achieving a 100% disaster-resilient telecom infrastructure across India.
 - Developing national and state-level telecom disaster preparedness frameworks.
 - Encouraging public-private partnerships (PPP) for investment in climate-resilient infrastructure.

Source:

- [The Hindu - On building resilient telecom infrastructure](#)