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Headlines:

- Supreme Court Considers Guidelines to Regulate Police Conduct During Mass Demonstrations
- India's Proposed Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency (CAFE) III Norms
- Gender-Responsive Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Inclusive Growth
- Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, 2026
- 650th Birth Anniversary of Guru Ravidas: Legacy and Contemporary Relevance



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1. Supreme Court Considers Guidelines to Regulate Police Conduct During Mass Demonstrations

(GS Paper II – Constitution, Polity & Governance)

Why in News?

The Supreme Court has indicated that it may frame uniform guidelines to regulate police conduct during large-scale demonstrations while hearing petitions alleging police excesses during recent protests. The Court reaffirmed that the right to peaceful protest is a constitutional guarantee and emphasized the need to balance Fundamental Rights with the State's responsibility to maintain public order.

Key Constitutional Provisions

- **Article 19(1)(a):** Guarantees freedom of speech and expression.
- **Article 19(1)(b):** Guarantees the right to assemble peacefully and without arms.
- **Article 19(3):** Permits reasonable restrictions on peaceful assembly in the interests of public order, sovereignty, and integrity of India.
- **Article 21:** Protects the right to life and personal liberty, including protection against arbitrary or excessive use of force.
- **Entry 1, State List (Seventh Schedule):** 'Public Order' is a State subject, making States primarily responsible for maintaining law and order during public demonstrations.

Supreme Court's Observations

- The right to peaceful protest is an essential facet of constitutional democracy.
- Police action during demonstrations must satisfy the principles of legality, necessity, proportionality, and accountability.
- Allegations of excessive use of force should be subjected to independent and impartial examination.
- Both citizens and law enforcement agencies should exercise self-discipline to preserve democratic order and peaceful public discourse.

Need for Uniform Guidelines

- Establish a uniform Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for crowd management across all States.
- Ensure graduated and proportionate use of force, with coercive measures employed only as a last resort.
- Promote transparency through proper documentation, videography, and accountability mechanisms during crowd-control operations.
- Balance citizens' Fundamental Rights with the State's constitutional obligation to maintain public order and public safety.

Issues Raised

- A petition has sought a ban on the use of metallic pellet/projectile guns for crowd control, contending that such measures violate the constitutional principles of necessity, proportionality, and reasonableness.
- The matter underscores the need to safeguard the rights and safety of both protesters and law enforcement personnel during public demonstrations.

Way Forward

- Frame comprehensive national guidelines governing police conduct during public demonstrations.
- Institutionalise regular training in human rights-based and non-violent crowd management techniques.
- Ensure prompt, independent, and impartial investigations into allegations of police excesses.
- Encourage dialogue and coordination between authorities and protest organisers to facilitate peaceful assemblies and minimise confrontation.
- Leverage technology, including body-worn cameras and videography, to enhance transparency, accountability, and public trust in policing.

2. India's Proposed Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency (CAFE) III Norms

(GS Paper III – Environment, Energy & Infrastructure)

Why in News?

The Ministry of Power has released the draft Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency (CAFE) III norms, proposing stricter fuel-efficiency and carbon emission standards for passenger vehicles to accelerate India's transition towards cleaner mobility, enhance energy security, and support climate commitments.

What are CAFE Norms?

- CAFE norms prescribe sales-weighted average fuel efficiency and CO₂ emission targets for a manufacturer's entire fleet of passenger vehicles, rather than individual vehicle models.
- They aim to reduce fuel consumption, lower greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, promote cleaner technologies, and reduce dependence on imported crude oil.

Key Features of CAFE III

- Proposes reducing average fleet emissions from about 113 gCO₂/km to 77 gCO₂/km by FY 2031–32.
- Introduces Carbon Neutrality Factors for compatible alternative-fuel vehicles.

- Provides Super Credits for Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs), Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicles (PHEVs), strong hybrids, and flex-fuel vehicles.
- Permits banking, trading, and purchase of compliance credits to provide flexibility to manufacturers.
- Assesses compliance over multi-year blocks to facilitate a phased transition.

Significance

- Reduces dependence on imported petroleum, thereby strengthening India's energy security.
- Supports India's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement and the Net Zero by 2070 target.
- Encourages innovation, cleaner technologies, and investment in electric mobility.
- Improves fuel efficiency, lowers fuel consumption, and helps reduce urban air pollution.
- Strengthens the global competitiveness of India's automobile industry in the transition towards low-carbon mobility.

Challenges

- Excessive compliance flexibility may dilute the effectiveness of emission reduction targets.
- Limited EV charging infrastructure and domestic battery manufacturing ecosystem.
- Higher transition costs for automobile manufacturers.
- Balancing ambitious emission targets with affordability, consumer preferences, and the automobile industry's transition capacity.

Global Best Practices

- United States: Introduced CAFE standards (1975) to improve fuel efficiency and reduce dependence on imported oil.
- China: Follows a Dual Credit System, combining Corporate Average Fuel Consumption (CAFC) standards with mandatory New Energy Vehicle (NEV) credits to accelerate EV adoption.
- European Union: Implements fleet-wide CO₂ emission standards to promote low-emission and zero-emission mobility.

Way Forward

- Progressively tighten fuel-efficiency standards while ensuring regulatory certainty and industry preparedness.
- Expand EV charging infrastructure and strengthen domestic battery manufacturing under clean mobility initiatives.

- Promote research, innovation, and indigenous development of advanced automotive technologies.
- Align fuel-efficiency regulations with India's energy security, industrial competitiveness, and climate goals to accelerate the transition towards sustainable low-carbon transport.

3. Gender-Responsive Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Inclusive Growth

(GS Paper III – Science & Technology | Inclusive Growth)

Why in News?

Recent discussions on Artificial Intelligence (AI) have highlighted the need for gender-responsive AI governance to ensure that AI-driven productivity gains contribute to inclusive growth and support India's vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, particularly by empowering women in the informal economy.

Why Gender-Responsive AI?

- Around 82% of working women in India are engaged in the informal sector, including agriculture, home-based work, domestic services, and micro-enterprises.
- AI can improve women's access to information, markets, financial services, healthcare, education, and government welfare schemes.
- Inclusive AI systems can enhance women's productivity, incomes, digital participation, and economic empowerment.
- Gender-responsive AI ensures that technological innovation benefits all sections of society and does not reinforce existing inequalities.

Government Initiatives

- IndiaAI Mission: Promotes AI innovation, computing infrastructure, and indigenous AI capabilities.
- India AI Governance Guidelines (2025): Emphasise fairness, transparency, accountability, privacy, and equity in AI deployment.
- BHASHINI: Facilitates multilingual AI solutions to improve digital accessibility.
- Skill India, DAY-NRLM, DDU-GKY, and Mission Shakti: Support AI literacy, digital skilling, and women's economic empowerment.

Significance

- Promotes inclusive and equitable economic growth by expanding opportunities for women.
- Enhances women's workforce participation, productivity, and entrepreneurship.
- Reduces the digital gender divide through accessible AI technologies.
- Improves access to public services, financial inclusion, and livelihood opportunities.

- Supports ethical, responsible, and human-centric AI governance.
- Contributes to achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure).
- Advances India's vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 through technology-led inclusive development.

Challenges

- Persistent digital divide and limited AI literacy among women.
- Algorithmic bias leading to discriminatory outcomes.
- Technology-facilitated gender-based violence, including deepfakes and online harassment.
- Limited availability of AI tools in regional languages.
- Underrepresentation of women in AI research, development, and policymaking.

Way Forward

- Mainstream gender impact assessments in AI policies and public procurement.
- Expand AI literacy and digital skilling through community-based programmes.
- Promote ethical, transparent, and explainable AI systems with robust grievance redressal mechanisms.
- Strengthen digital safety frameworks and multilingual AI platforms.
- Encourage greater participation of women in AI innovation, governance, and entrepreneurship.

4. Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, 2026

(GS Paper II – Governance | Education | Transparency & Accountability)

Why in News?

The Union Government has introduced the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, 2026 in the Lok Sabha to strengthen the legal framework against examination paper leaks, organised cheating, and other unfair practices in public examinations.

Background

- The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024 was enacted to curb unfair practices in recruitment and entrance examinations conducted by designated public authorities.
- The Act applies to public examinations conducted by notified public authorities, including examinations for recruitment and admission to higher educational institutions.

- The Amendment Bill seeks to enhance deterrence and ensure faster investigation and prosecution of examination-related offences.

Key Features

- Prescribes stricter punishment, including imprisonment of up to 10 years and a fine of up to ₹50 lakh for serious offences.
- Provides for time-bound investigation to ensure speedy disposal of cases.
- Introduces stringent action against organised paper leak syndicates, impersonation, examination fraud, and other unfair practices.
- Aims to strengthen coordination among investigating agencies for effective enforcement.

Significance

- Protects the sanctity, credibility, and fairness of public examinations.
- Promotes merit-based recruitment and admissions, ensuring equal opportunities for candidates.
- Protects the interests of lakhs of genuine aspirants by ensuring a fair and transparent examination process.
- Enhances transparency, accountability, and public trust in examination systems.
- Acts as a strong deterrent against organised examination fraud and malpractices.
- Supports good governance by strengthening institutional integrity and reducing corruption in recruitment processes.

Challenges

- Effective implementation across States and examination agencies.
- Tackling technologically advanced cheating methods and cyber-enabled paper leaks.
- Ensuring timely investigation, prosecution, and conviction.
- Balancing stringent enforcement with safeguards against misuse.

Way Forward

- Strengthen cybersecurity and encrypted digital examination systems.
- Leverage AI-enabled surveillance and data analytics to detect irregularities.
- Improve coordination among examination bodies, law enforcement agencies, and State governments.
- Establish robust whistle-blower and grievance redressal mechanisms for timely reporting of examination malpractices.
- Conduct regular security audits, capacity building, and awareness programmes to uphold examination integrity and protect the interests of genuine aspirants.

5. 650th Birth Anniversary of Guru Ravidas: Legacy and Contemporary Relevance

(GS Paper I – Indian Culture | Medieval History)

Why in News?

The 650th birth anniversary of Guru Ravidas is being commemorated across the country through various initiatives, drawing attention to his enduring contributions to the Bhakti Movement, social equality, and spiritual reform.

Who was Guru Ravidas?

- Guru Ravidas (c. 15th–16th century CE) was a renowned Bhakti saint, mystic poet, and social reformer from Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh).
- He emerged as a prominent voice against caste discrimination, untouchability, and social exclusion during medieval India.
- He preached the ideals of equality, devotion, and human dignity, transcending barriers of caste and social status.
- Several of his devotional hymns are included in the Guru Granth Sahib, reflecting his enduring influence across religious traditions.



Teachings and Philosophy

- Advocated equality, universal brotherhood, and the inherent dignity of every individual, rejecting discrimination based on caste or birth.
- Emphasised Bhakti (devotion), righteous conduct, and inner purity over ritualism and external religious practices.
- Envisioned an ideal society called "Begampura", free from inequality, fear, oppression, and suffering.
- Promoted the values of compassion, humility, selfless service, and ethical living as the foundation of both spiritual and social progress.

Legacy and Contributions

- Strengthened the Bhakti Movement by making spirituality accessible to all, irrespective of caste or social status.
- Inspired movements advocating social justice, equality, and human rights, leaving a lasting impact on India's reform traditions.

- Several of his hymns were incorporated into the Guru Granth Sahib, reflecting his enduring spiritual and literary influence.
- His philosophy continues to inspire efforts towards social harmony, communal amity, and national integration.

Contemporary Relevance

- Guru Ravidas's teachings remain highly relevant in combating caste discrimination, social exclusion, and inequality.
- His vision of Begampura resonates with the constitutional ideals of Justice, Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity enshrined in the Preamble.
- His emphasis on human dignity, compassion, and social harmony supports the goal of building an inclusive and equitable society.
- His message continues to inspire initiatives promoting social cohesion, inclusive development, and national integration, making his philosophy relevant to contemporary India.

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