

PRELIMS MANTRA – 29 (21/03/2025 and 22/03/2025)**Section 79(3)(b) of the Information Technology Act:**

- Elon Musk-owned X company has challenged government's use of Section 79(3)(b) of Information Technology Act, 2000 to moderate and order removal of content on social media.
- Supreme Court struck down Section 66A of IT Act in *Shreya Singhal v Union of India (2015)*, which criminally punished, among other things, sending false information for purpose of causing annoyance or inconvenience.
- After this decision, Section 69A of IT Act became primary law governing this matter. It allows Centre to issue orders blocking any information generated, transmitted, received, stored or hosted in any computer resource, but unlike 66A, it contains safeguards against misuse.
- For blocking content under Section 69A, Centre must deem it "necessary". This "necessity", but, is only justifiable under grounds provided in Article 19(2) of Constitution which imposes reasonable restrictions on freedom of speech.
- Section 79 of IT Act provides for a "safe harbour" measure that exempts an "intermediary" (such as X) from liability for information published on platform by a "third party", that is, users of platform.
- But Section 79(3)(b) states that intermediary could be held liable if it does not immediately remove such unlawful information upon receiving actual knowledge, or on being notified by appropriate Government or its agency.
- Apex court limited the scope of this provision, ruling that requirement under Section 79(3)(b) will only kick in once a court order has been passed to that effect, or government issues a notification stating that content in question is related to grounds provided in Article 19(2).

Collegium:

- Supreme Court collegium unanimously decided to transfer Delhi High Court judge Justice Yashwant Varma back to Allahabad High Court, where he originally came from. This came after a large sum of cash was allegedly recovered from Justice Varma's residence after a fire.

What is the collegium?

- It is the system by which judges of the higher judiciary in India — the Supreme Court and High Courts — are appointed and transferred.
- Although not rooted in the Constitution or any specific law promulgated by Parliament, it has evolved over years through judgments of apex court popularly known as the "Judges Cases".
- Supreme Court collegium is a five-member body headed by incumbent Chief Justice of India (CJI), and comprising four other seniormost judges at that time.
- High Court collegiums are led by incumbent Chief Justice and two other seniormost judges of that court. Their recommendations must be approved by SC collegium.

Spring Equinox 2025:

- March 20, 2025, marks vernal or spring equinox in Northern Hemisphere.
- On this day, sun appears directly above Equator at noon.
- Equinoxes occur twice a year, in March and in September & are only times when both poles are sunlit at same time.

- In Northern Hemisphere, vernal or spring equinox, typically occurs between March 19 and 21, while autumnal or fall equinox occurs between September 21 and 24.
- The term is derived from Latin words "aequus" meaning "equal", and "nox" (meaning "night").
- On equinox, day and night are of equal length.
- Solstices mark days when Earth is extremely tilted toward or away from the sun.
- Summer solstice in Northern Hemisphere, between June 20 and 22, creates longest day and shortest night of year, as upper half of the earth is tilted towards sun.
- Winter solstice in Northern Hemisphere, between December 20 & 23, creates shortest day and longest night of year, with upper half of the earth is tilted towards sun.
- Persian new year, Nowruz, coincides with vernal equinox in northern hemisphere. It has been observed for over 3,000 years by followers of Zoroastrianism globally, including Parsi community in India. Nowruz begins on the first day of the Farvardin, the first month of the Iranian solar calendar at spring equinox and continues for 12 days.
- Vernal Equinox Day is a national holiday in Japan.

Mughal emperor Aurangzeb:

- Muhi al-Din Muhammad, commonly known as Aurangzeb, ruled for almost 50 years, longest serving ruler of Mughal empire.
- He died on February 20, 1707.
- His tomb is in Khuldabad, Sambhaji Nagar district (earlier Aurangabad), Maharashtra.
- It was Aurangzeb's own wish to be buried in a simple tomb, in keeping with Islamic austerity.
- His grave lies inside the complex of the dargah (shrine) of Sheikh Zainuddin, a 14th-century Chishti saint.
- Also buried in the same complex are Azam Shah, one of Aurangzeb's sons who briefly succeeded him as emperor, the first Nizam of Hyderabad, Asaf Jah I (1724-48), and Asaf Jah's son, the second Nizam, Nasir Jung (1748-50).
- Place earlier called Rauza, was later renamed Khuldabad, as Aurangzeb was given title of Khuld-Makani, or one who resides in eternity.
- Aurangzeb was a hardline Sunni Muslim, yet he is buried in the dargah of a Sufi saint.

World Happiness Report 2025:

- Published by Wellbeing Research Centre at University of Oxford.
- For eighth consecutive year, Finland has been named happiest country in world. Other Nordic nations-Denmark, Iceland, and Sweden-also retained their top positions.
- Rankings are based on people's self-assessed life evaluations, compiled through surveys conducted by Gallup in partnership with UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network.
- India ranked 118th, while neighbouring Pakistan stood at 109th.
- Costa Rica (6th) & Mexico (10th) in top 10 for first time.
- For fourth consecutive year, Afghanistan (ranked 147th) remains unhappiest nation in world.

Tirzepatide drug:

- Pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly announced launch of tirzepatide to be marketed as Mounjaro.

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- Tirzepatide belongs to a new class of diabetes medicines that were approved for treatment of chronic obesity after they were found to be almost as effective as bariatric surgery for weight-loss.
- Called **incretin mimetics**, these drugs mimic action of certain gut hormones to improve secretion of insulin, inhibit secretion of glucagon that stimulates glucose production in liver, and also reduce appetite by slowing down digestion.

Strategic Petroleum Reserves:

- Government, through a **Special Purpose Vehicle called Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserve Limited (ISPRL)**, has established Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR) facilities with total capacity of 5.33 Million Metric Tonnes (MMT) of crude oil at 3 locations namely **(i) Vishakhapatnam (1.33 MMT), (ii) Mangaluru (1.5 MMT) and (iii) Padur (2.5 MMT) capacity.**
- To further augment the SPR capacity, Government, in July 2021, had also approved **establishment of two additional commercial-cum-strategic petroleum reserve facilities with total storage capacity of 6.5 MMT at Chandikhol (4 MMT) in Odisha and Padur (2.5 MMT) in Karnataka**, on a Public Private Partnership mode.

Purple Fest:

- A day-long 'Purple Fest', **celebrating talents, achievements, and aspirations of divyangjan, has been organised at Amrit Udyan, President's palace on 21st March 2025.**
- It is **organised by Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India.**
- It aims to raise awareness about different disabilities and their impact on people's lives and to promote understanding, acceptance, and inclusion of persons with disabilities within society.

Dokriani Glacier:

- Also known as Dokriani Bamak, it is a medium-sized glacier in the Bhagirathi basin of the Garhwal Himalayas, located near Uttarkashi in Uttarakhand.

National Institutional Ranking Framework:

- **Launched in November 2015** by Ministry of Education.
- **Five broad categories of parameters** identified in the NIRF and their weightage on scale of 10 are: **Teaching, Learning & Resources, Research and Professional Practice, Graduation Outcome, Outreach and Inclusivity, Perception.**
- **National Board of Accreditation (NBA) published ranking every year.**

- **Additions to 2024 edition of India Rankings are as follows:**
 1. Introduction of three new categories namely State Public Universities, Open Universities, and Skill Universities; and
 2. Integration of "Innovation" ranking into the India Rankings using NIRF framework.
- NBA directs institutions to upload data on student and staff strength, staff salaries, graduation index, placement details, funds received for research, and other parameters on its web portal. **Based on this data, the ranking is awarded without further verification or auditing.**
- **Annual Quality Assurance Report (AQAR): National Assessment and Accreditation Council's (NAAC) Annual Quality Assurance Report documents are audited & checked by expert committee sent by NAAC to institutions.**

Hawala:

- It **facilitates the transfer of funds without any physical money changing hands.** Hawala transactions pass through informal, unregulated channels on a trust basis.
- **Example:** Consider a person (let's call him 'A') working in Muscat who wants to send money to his father ('B') in Lucknow by hawala. 'A' will have to first deposit the money with a hawaladar in Muscat in exchange for a token - this can be a physical token, say a bank note, or some code that can be transferred via a phone call or through some other electronic means. Either way, 'A' has to pass the token on to 'B' who will then go to a hawaladar in Lucknow where he will collect the money in exchange for the token.

Coal Production in the Country Crosses 1 BT Mark:

- India has achieved milestone of one billion tonnes (BT) coal production in the fiscal year 2024-25.
- **India relies on coal for approximately 55% of its energy mix, and around 74% of the country's electricity is generated by coal-based power plants.**

Lewotobi Laki Laki:

- Indonesia's Mount Lewotobi Laki Laki volcano erupted.

Prime Minister Dhan Dhaanya Krishi Yojana:

- It has been **announced in Budget speech of 2025-26.**
- The programme will **cover 100 districts with low productivity, moderate crop intensity and below average credit parameters.**
- It targets enhancement of agricultural productivity, improve irrigation facilities and facilitate long-term and short-term credit.

PRACTICE MCQs

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Section 69A of IT Act 2000 allows Centre to issue orders blocking any information generated, transmitted, received, stored or hosted in any computer resource.
2. For blocking content under Section 69A, Centre must deem it necessary that is only justifiable under grounds provided in Article 19(2) of Constitution.
3. Section 79 of IT Act provides for a "safe harbour" measure that exempts an "intermediary" from liability for information published on platform by the users.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only

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

Answer: D

Q2. Consider the following locations in India:

- 1. Padur
- 2. Visakhapatnam
- 3. Mangaluru
- 4. Chandikhol
- 5. Chennai

India's Strategic Petroleum Reserve are in how many of the above locations?

- a) Only two
- b) Only three
- c) Only four
- d) All five

Answer: C

Q3. Consider the following statements National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF):

- 1. The National Board of Accreditation (NBA) has publish it.
- 2. It uses five parameters to calculate ranking.
- 3. It is calculated based on data submitted by institutions/universities without further verification.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: D

Q4. Consider the following statements about Mughal emperor Aurangzeb:

- 1. His tomb is in Khuldabad, Sambhaji Nagar district in Maharashtra.
- 2. Aurangzeb was given title of Khuld-Makani, or one who resides in eternity.
- 3. His grave lies inside the complex of the dargah of Sheikh Zainuddin, a 14th-century Chishti saint.

How many statements given above are correct?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) All three
- d) None

Answer: C

Q5. tirzepatide drug, recently seen in the news, for the treatment of –

- a) Obesity
- b) Cancer
- c) AIDS
- d) TB

Answer: A

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