# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 26-06-2024

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# One election One phase

**Syllabus: GS-2: Indian Polity – Elections**

**Context:**

➢ *Recently, The IndianExpress published an article* **titled 'Why India needs one election, one phase.'**

**Multi-phase elections under scrutiny:**

➢ *Multi-phase elections were initially defended as* **necessary for the protection of voters and polling staff.**

➢ *However, recent multi-phase elections,* **held in extreme heat** *(45-50 degrees), led to several deaths.*

➢ *The prolonged nature of these elections has been* **criticized by political parties**, *the media, voters, and even the* **Chief Election Commissioner***acknowledged that elections should be shorter.*

**Historical context:**

➢ *Multi-phase elections were introduced* **when electoral violence**, *including murders, was common.*

➢ **Limited availability of security forces** *required rotating them across phases to cover sensitive polling booths.*

➢ *This approach was initially supported by political parties to ensure fairer elections in areas where local police were ineffective or politically influenced.*

**Current issues with multi-phase elections:**

➢ *Security forces take* **several days to move between phases,** *whereas criminals can act much faster.*

➢ **Rumors, fake news, and hate speech** *spread instantly via social media, causing harm during prolonged elections.*

➢ *The recent Lok Sabha elections saw* **high levels of communal rhetoric** *and widespread dissemination of fake news.*

**Social media's influence:**

➢ *The* **number of internet users** *has dramatically increased, with social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube playing a significant role.*

➢ **Many political influencers** *do not disclose sponsored content, reducing transparency and accountability.*

➢ *The launch of the Jio phone network in* **2016 further boosted internet access** *and social media usage in India.*

**Potential for single-phase elections:**

➤ *The Election Commission (EC) has improved security measures, including:*

➤ *Mapping* **vulnerable polling stations** *and taking action against potential troublemakers.*

➤ **Seizing illegal arms** *and requiring licensed arms to be surrendered.*

➤ *Enforcing* **non-bailable warrants** *against criminals.*

➤ *Existing laws can* **address hate speech, cyber crimes**, *and online abuse, with provisions for imprisonment.*

➤ **Sufficient paramilitary forces** *are now available to cover all polling stations in a single phase.*

**Implementation feasibility:**

➤ *A general election* **could be completed in 33-35 days,** *including time for candidate selection and political activities.*

➤ *This would* **reduce the cost and disruption** *of prolonged elections.*

➤ *Shorter elections would also* **limit the time for spreading misinformation** *and hate speech.*

➤ *Addressing the Prime Minister's concerns about the expenses and work disruptions caused by prolonged elections.*


# Poori Padhai Desh Ki Bhalai campaign

**Syllabus: GS-2: Schemes and Programs for welfare of weaker sections of society.**

**Context:**

➤ **Child Rights and You (CRY)** *launched a nation-wide awareness campaign to improve girl child participation in Indian schools.*

**About Poori Padhai Desh Ki Bhalai**

➤ **Duration:** *Seven weeks, starting June 24 and ending August 15.*

➤ **Locations:** *Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, Kolkata.*

➤ **Goal:** *Address gender disparities in education and increase school completion rates for girls.*

➤ **Challenges:** *Socio-economic issues, cultural norms, gender discrimination, early marriages, inadequate school facilities, long travel distances, and safety concerns.*

➢ **Consequences of dropouts:** *Child labour, underage marriage, teenage pregnancy, abuse, exploitation, child trafficking.*

➢ **Needed actions:** *Public provisioning, financial incentives, improved infrastructure, community engagement, enforcement of laws against child marriage, mass awareness.*

➢ **Current statistics***:*
  o *Less than 60% of girls are enrolled in higher secondary education;*
  o *35% are out of school at the secondary level;*
  o *12.25% drop out before completing secondary education.*

➢ **Benefits of educating girls:** *Delayed marriage, improved health outcomes, higher economic returns, increased productivity, better job opportunities, breaking the cycle of poverty.*

# PFRDA

**Syllabus: GS-3: Indian Economy – Pension sector.**

**Context:**

➢ **A new NPS balance lifecycle** *scheme will be launched in July-August that aims to balance out the risks and returns by Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA).*

**More about new scheme:**

➢ *The scheme aims to balance risks and returns,* **with 50% investment in debt** *and* **50% in equity.**

➢ *For subscribers* **over 45 years old***, the debt proportion will increase.*

➢ *Existing NPS subscribers* **can switch to the new scheme***.*

➢ *All pension funds will offer this new scheme.*

➢ *PFRDA targets 11 lakh new NPS enrollments from the private sector this financial year.*

➢ *An NPS scheme with assured returns is being developed, but no timeline is set yet.*

**Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) - Overview**

➢ **Establishment:** *Set up by the Government of India on 23 August 2003.*

➢ **Statutory Status:** *Became a statutory body with the enactment of the PFRDA Act on 19 September 2013.*

➢ **Purpose:** *Regulates and develops the pension sector in India.*

**Objectives**

➢ *To promote old-age income security by establishing, developing, and regulating pension funds.*
➢ *To protect the interests of subscribers to pension schemes.*

**Functions**

➢ **Regulates** *the National Pension System (NPS).*
➢ **Appoints and oversees** *intermediaries such as Pension Fund Managers (PFMs), Central Recordkeeping Agencies (CRAs), and custodians.*
➢ *Approves pension fund schemes.*
➢ *Ensures* **transparent and efficient management** *of pension funds.*
➢ **Educates and informs** *the public about pension schemes.*

## National Pension System (NPS)

➢ **Launch:** *January 2004.*
➢ **Applicability:** *Initially for government employees, later extended to all citizens.*
➢ **Structure:** *Defined contribution-based pension system.*

**Tiers:**

➢ **Tier I:** *Non-withdrawable account primarily meant for retirement savings.*
➢ **Tier II:** *Voluntary savings account with flexible withdrawal options.*

**Key Features**

➢ **Regulation:** *PFRDA sets the rules and guidelines for the functioning of pension funds.*
➢ **Transparency:** *Emphasis on transparent operations and disclosure norms.*
➢ **Choice:** *Subscribers can choose their fund managers and investment options.*
➢ **Portability:** *NPS account can be transferred across jobs and locations.*

# What is Enemy Agents Ordinance

## Syllabus: GS-3: Internal Security – laws.

## Context:

➢ *Jammu and Kashmir DGP R R Swain wants those assisting militants* **to be tried under the Enemy Agents Ordinance, 2005.**
➢ *This law is* **stricter than the Unlawful Activities** *(Prevention) Act (UAPA).*
➢ *It can result in* **life imprisonment or the death penalty.**

➢ *Swain believes* **militants should be killed,** *and their supporters treated as enemy agents.*

## Enemy Agents Ordinance:

➢ **Originated in 1917** *during Dogra rule in J&K.*
➢ **Punishes enemy agents** *or those helping the enemy with death or life imprisonment.*
➢ *Amended and continued after* **India's Partition in 1947.**
➢ *In 2019, the legal framework changed* **after the repeal of Article 370**, *but this ordinance remained.*

## Trials Under the Ordinance:

➢ *Conducted by a special judge appointed by the government with* **High Court consultation.**
➢ *Accused* **cannot hire a lawyer** *unless the court permits.*
➢ **No appeal against the special judge's verdict**; *only a High Court judge chosen by the government can review.*
➢ **Disclosure or publication of trial details** *is prohibited, punishable by up to two years in prison or a fine.*

## Past Applications:

➢ *Many Kashmiris have been tried under this ordinance.*
➢ *Maqbool Bhat,* **founder of the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front,** *was charged under this ordinance and hanged in 1984.*

# UN Launches Framework to Combat Online Misinformation

**Syllabus: GS-4: Ethics in daily life.**

**Context:**

➢ **UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres** *introduced the* **Global Principles for Information Integrity** *on June 24, 2024.*
➢ *The framework addresses threats from misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech online.*

**Background:**

> **Misinformation harms global stability**, *democracy, human rights, public health, and climate action.*
> **Advanced AI technologies worsen these threats**, *especially for vulnerable groups like children.*
> *The principles aim to* **empower people to demand their rights**, *including freedom of expression and opinion.*
> *Guterres urged governments, tech companies, advertisers, and the public relations industry to take responsibility for harmful content.*
> *Harmful information* **threatens the UN's missions**, *including peacekeeping and humanitarian efforts.*

## Key Recommendations:

> **Combating Disinformation and Hate Speech:***All stakeholders should avoid using or supporting disinformation and hate speech.*
> **Promoting Media Freedom:***Ensure access to information, maintain a free and independent media, and protect journalists and researchers.*
> **Enhancing Tech Company Responsibilities:**
> *Incorporate safety and privacy in products, apply policies consistently, and focus on groups targeted online.*
> *Prioritize crisis response and support information integrity during elections.*
> **Ethical AI Development:***Ensure AI is developed and used ethically and safely, upholding human rights.*
> **Reforming Business Models:**
> o *Tech companies should explore non-advertising-based models, prioritizing human rights, privacy, and safety.*
> o *Users should control their online experiences and personal data.*
> **Transparency in Advertising:***Advertisers should demand transparency to avoid funding disinformation or hate speech.*
> **Data Transparency and Accountability:***Ensure transparency, allow academic access to data, commission audits, and develop accountability frameworks.*
> **Protecting Children:***Governments should provide resources to protect and empower children.*

## Key terms:

**Misinformation:**

> *False or inaccurate information spread without the intention to deceive.*
> **Example:** *Sharing an incorrect fact or statistic that you believe to be true.*

**Disinformation:**

➢ *Deliberately false or misleading information spread with the intent to deceive or manipulate.*
➢ **Example**: *Creating and spreading a fake news story to influence public opinion or cause harm.*

## Hate Speech:

➢ *Speech or content that attacks or demeans a person or group based on attributes such as race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, or gender.*
➢ **Example:** *Posting derogatory or violent comments about a particular ethnic group on social media.*

## Government Initiatives:

## Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021:

➢ *These rules require social media platforms to appoint grievance officers, enable traceability of the originator of misinformation, and remove harmful content within a specified timeframe.*
➢ **Objective**: *Enhance accountability of social media platforms and ensure faster redressal of complaints.*

## Fact-Checking Units:

➢ *The government has set up fact-checking units under the Press Information Bureau (PIB) to verify and debunk misinformation related to government policies and schemes.*
➢ **Objective**: *Provide accurate information and reduce the spread of false narratives.*

## National Cyber Coordination Centre (NCCC):

➢ *An initiative under the Ministry of Home Affairs to monitor cyber threats, including misinformation and disinformation.*
➢ **Objective**: *Enhance national security by identifying and mitigating cyber threats.*

## Digital Literacy Campaigns:

➢ *Programs like Digital India and Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA) aim to improve digital literacy among citizens, helping them identify and avoid misinformation.*
➢ **Objective**: *Empower citizens to make informed decisions online.*

## Collaborations and Partnerships:

**Partnerships with Social Media Platforms***:*

➢ *The government collaborates with platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp to monitor and remove harmful content.*
➢ **Objective***: Ensure timely removal of misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech.*

**Initiatives by Independent Fact-Checking Organizations***:*

➢ *Organizations like Alt News, Boom Live, and Factly verify and debunk misinformation and disinformation across various topics.*
➢ **Objective***: Provide accurate information and promote media literacy.*

## Legal and Regulatory Measures:

**Legal Frameworks***:*

➢ *Laws such as the Information Technology Act, 2000, and the Indian Penal Code (IPC) include provisions to address misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech.*
➢ **Objective***: Provide legal recourse and penalties for spreading harmful content.*

**Supreme Court and High Court Directives***:*

➢ *The judiciary has issued directives to regulate and monitor the spread of misinformation and hate speech, emphasizing the need for stringent measures.*
➢ **Objective***: Strengthen the legal framework and ensure accountability.*

## Community and Grassroots Initiatives:

**Public Awareness Campaigns***:*

➢ *Various NGOs and civil society groups run campaigns to educate the public about the dangers of misinformation and hate speech.*
➢ **Objective***: Raise awareness and promote responsible online behavior.*

**Media Literacy Programs***:*

➢ *Initiatives aimed at educating students and communities about critical thinking and media literacy to help them identify and combat misinformation.*
➢ **Objective***: Build a more informed and resilient society*