

BIRLA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AND SCIENCE, PILANI

First Semester (2022-23)

GS F243: Current Affairs

Comprehensive Examination (Closed Book)

Time: 3 Hours

26 December 2022

Max Marks: 80

Instruction: Read all the questions very carefully and answer them based on your readings, classroom interactions, and your own experiences.

Q.1 What is the controversy related to judicial appointments in high courts and the supreme court? Who do you think is right in their stand-the supreme court or the government? Write your answer in about 400 words specifying your stand on the whole issue. **(20 Marks)**

Q.2 Following is an extract from a news published in a Hindi newspaper mentioning AQI level of two small cities in Bihar which makes them highly polluted cities in the country. However, this news does not seem to be drawing attention of English media as well as top policy makers and government functionaries. This gives an impression that only the people who live in Delhi and other metro cities and their lives matter to them. Would you agree with this statement? Why do you think smaller cities and towns are also falling into high pollution category areas? What kind of concerted efforts are required to overcome this problem? Write your answer in about 400 words. **(20 Marks)**

देश का दूसरा सबसे प्रदूषित शहर बना दरभंगा, दिल्ली से भी जहरीली हुई हवा; AQI 400 के पार (Jagran News Publish Date: Mon, 19 Dec 2022)

बिहार के शहरों की हवा लगातार खतरनाक हो रही है। मुख्य शहरों में वायु प्रदूषण का आलम यह रहा कि वायु गुणवत्ता सूचकांक (एक्यूआई) लगातार लाल निशान पर है। रविवार को केंद्रीय प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड की ओर से जारी वायु गुणवत्ता सूचकांक में दरभंगा प्रदूषण लेबल 446 के साथ देश का दूसरा सबसे प्रदूषित शहर रहा। वहीं, 179 शहरों की सूची में देश का सबसे प्रदूषित शहर बेगूसराय (474) रहा।

Q.3 What is G20 and why is it being discussed in India these days? Do you think India will have a chance to exploit G20 for improving its position internationally and also in securing important positions in other international bodies? Write your detailed answer in about 400 words. **(15 Marks)**

Q.4 Read the following editorial of a national newspaper carefully. Identify the issue commented upon in this editorial and write your opinion in about 400 words. **(15 Marks)**

Apart from apathy

Urban voting is low in part because politicians don't have too many deliverables for middle classes

December 5, 2022, 8:23 PM IST **TOI Edit**

The EC didn't mince words. "Urban (voter) apathy continues unabated from Shimla to Surat," it said on Saturday. In Shimla, the turnout was more than 10 percentage points lower than Himachal's state average of 75.6%. The trend held in the first phase of Gujarat polls

where the urban turnout was lower than the surrounding rural areas. The urban turnout in the first phase in Gujarat was also lower than the same in 2017. In Delhi's local polls, better-off classes largely stayed away.

The trend is not new. In the first three decades of elections, the relative participation of urban voters was greater. The gap between urban and rural turnout has widened since the 1980s. "Urban apathy" isn't irrelevant – urban India contributes to 60% of GDP and a very high proportion of taxes. As this paper has argued, improvement in urban governance has been hindered by the political executive holding back on the transfer of power to urban bodies envisaged three decades ago in the Constitution's 74th amendment.

There are certain unique factors about India's urban governance that are relevant to voter turnout. Political scientists have used surveys and election data to study the plausible reasons for the lower turnout in urban areas. The common thread running through some of the studies is that rural turnout is positively influenced by a more pronounced emphasis on group mobilisation and a greater need for the intervention of politicians to compensate for state failure. The second aspect is relevant even within urban centres. For example, in Delhi's 2020 assembly election the turnout in New Delhi, the seat of the government, was 52.15%, almost 20 percentage points lower than some constituencies with large slum clusters. Poorer urban Indians still need politicians to improve some services. Better-off classes, who can insulate themselves somewhat from civic non-governance, don't have a lot of incentive.

That the urban-rural vote divide is not decreasing even in national polls – where supposedly 'big' issues familiar to middle classes are debated – tells us that it's not apathy or not just apathy that keeps better off city Indians from voting. There's nothing wrong in electoral politics focussing on the rural areas, and more so on lower-income rural poor. But the disconnect between city middle-classes and elections is still something politicians should think about.

Q.5 Mention any four major domains (areas) of current issues and give one example each for all of them. Also, take any one example of current issues which transcend the boundary of more than one domains and explain. **(10 Marks)**
