

### RULES FOR POLITICAL PARTIES TO USE STATE FUNDED MEDIA DURING POLLS

**Why in News?** In the run-up to the ongoing Lok Sabha elections, two opposition leaders were asked to modify specific parts of their speeches that they had made on Doordarshan and All India Radio (AIR) during the allotted broadcast time.

Prasar Bharati is India's state-run public broadcaster and the parent organisation of Doordarshan and AIR.

#### **What Changes were Asked from the Opposition Leaders?**

- **The CPI (Marxist) General Secretary Sitaram Yechury** had to delete references to the electoral bond scheme, drop terms “communal authoritarian regime” and “draconian laws”, and replace “bankruptcy” (of governance) with “failure”.
- On the other hand, **the All-India Forward Bloc (AIFB) leader G Devarajan** was made to remove the word “Muslims” from his speech about the Citizenship Amendment Act.
- According to a Prasar Bharati official, the TV and radio networks were simply following **rules set by the Election Commission of India (ECI)**.

#### **How ECI Allocates Time to Each Recognised Party for Public Broadcasting During Elections?**

- **Allocation of time:**
  - **Since the 1998 Lok Sabha elections**, recognised political parties have been allowed to freely use state-owned television and radio during polls.
  - **The amount of time** allowed to each recognised national and state party before the election campaign begins is **decided by ECI**.
- **Amount of time:**
  - **All national parties** (put together) get a minimum of 10 hours of telecasting time on Doordarshan's national channel, and at least 15 hours on its regional channels.

- Additionally, they get 15 hours of airing on regional AIR stations and 10 hours on the national AIR.
- **All State parties** (put together) get a minimum of 30 hours of telecasting time on the appropriate regional Doordarshan channel and AIR radio station.
- **Time allotted for the current Lok Sabha elections:**
  - The ECI allocated broadcast and telecast time to each of the six national parties and 59 state parties for the 2024 elections.
  - **For national parties**, out of the 10 hours prescribed, a total of 4.5 hours (45 minutes each) was allocated in both Doordarshan and AIR.
  - The remaining 5.5 hours was further allocated **on the basis of vote share** in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.
  - **Similar formulae were followed while allocating time to state parties.**
  - The ECI had allocated 54 minutes each on Doordarshan and AIR to CPI (M), and 26 minutes each on the two media to AIFB.

## What are the ECI's Guidelines on Speech Contents for Public Broadcasting During Elections?

- **Submit transcripts:**
  - Parties and their speakers are expected to submit transcripts of their speeches three to four days before recording.
  - These have to be approved by the concerned authorities in the respective AIR and Doordarshan stations.
- **The guidelines forbid:**
  - Criticism of other countries;
  - Attack on religions or communities;
  - Anything obscene or defamatory;
  - Incitement of violence;
  - Anything amounting to contempt of court;
  - Attacks against the integrity of the President and judiciary;

- Anything affecting the unity, sovereignty and integrity of the nation; and
- Any criticism by the name of any person.

## What are the Concerns Raised by the Opposition Leaders?

- According to the CPI(M) leader, **the censorship applied to his text is a patent denial of the right to dissent in a democracy.**
  - The deletion of the word ‘bankruptcy’ of governance and the suggestion to replace it with ‘failure’ only **endorses the authoritarian character of the government.**
- According to the AIFB leader, he unsuccessfully argued for the need to use the word ‘Muslim’.
  - According to him, the CAA is discriminatory to Muslims because it mentions every other minority community eligible for citizenship (except Muslims).

## WHAT IS NATIONAL SAVINGS CERTIFICATE (NSC)?



**The Prime Minister recently declared Rs 9.12 lakh investment in the National Savings Certificate (NSC) scheme in his nomination filing.**

**National Savings Certificate (NSC) is a fixed-income investment scheme launched by the government of India.**

- It aims at encouraging users, who are primarily low- to mid-income investors, to invest as well as save taxes.
- You can invest in NSC from the nearest post office in your name, for a minor or with another adult as a joint account.

### Features:

- **Interest Rates:** The certificates earn an annual fixed interest, which is revised every quarter by the government, thus guaranteeing a regular income for the investor.

- **Maturity Period:** Five years.
- The amount of NSCs that can be purchased has **no upper limit**.
- **Tax Saver:** As a government-backed tax-saving scheme, the principal invested in NSC qualifies for tax savings under Section 80C of the Income Tax Act **up to Rs. 1.5 lakhs annually**.
- **Accessible:** It can be **easily bought from any post office** on submission of the required KYC documents. Also, it is easy to transfer the certificate from one PO to another, as well as from one person to another, without impacting the interest accrual/maturity of the original certificate.
- **Loan Collaterals:** NSC certificates are **accepted as collateral** or security for **secured loans** in Banks and NBFCs.
- **Nomination:** The investor **can nominate** any **family member** (even a minor) so that they can inherit it in the unfortunate event of the investor's demise.
- **Premature Withdrawal:** Generally, one **cannot exit the scheme early** except on the death of an investor, on a court order, or on forfeiture by a pledgee who is a Gazetted Government Officer for it.
- **Eligibility Criteria for NSC:**
  - Hindu Undivided Families (HUFs), Trusts, and Private and public limited companies are not eligible to invest in NSC.
  - The individual must be a **resident Indian citizen**. Non-resident Indians (NRIs) are **not eligible** to invest in NSC.
  - There is **no age limit** for individuals to purchase an NSC.

## REGISTERED UNRECOGNISED POLITICAL PARTY



Recently, it has been noticed that less than a third of Registered Unrecognised Political Parties (RUPP) are contesting elections in India.

Registered Unrecognised Political Party (RUPP) are the parties which are either newly registered parties or those which have not secured enough percentage of votes in the

assembly or general elections to become a state party, or those which have never contested elections since being registered.

- **Allocation of symbols to RUPP:** Common symbols are provided to RUPPs based upon an undertaking that they would put up “at least 5% of total candidates with regard to said Legislative Assembly election of a State”.
  - Election commission of India made it mandatory for RUPPs to furnish audited accounts of **last three financial years**, expenditure statements of last two elections.
  - The EC receives the applications from RUPPs in prescribed proforma for allotment of symbol under **Provisions of Para 10B of the Election Symbols (Reservation & Allotment) Order, 1968.**

### What are registered parties?

- The Section 29A of the **Representation of the People Act, 1951** (RP Act) lays down the requirements for registration of a political party with the ECI.
- Any political party that seeks registration should submit a copy of its **memorandum/constitution**.
  - Such document should declare that the party shall bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of India. It should also bear allegiance to the principles of **socialism, secularism and democracy** and uphold the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India.

### Benefits

- **Tax exemption** for donations received under Section 13A of the Income Tax Act, 1961.
- Common symbol for contesting general elections to the Lok Sabha/State Assemblies and
- **Twenty ‘star campaigners’** during election campaign.

## RUSSIA - CHINA SUMMIT

**Why in news?** Recently, President Vladimir Putin arrived in Beijing for a two-day state visit. During this visit, he met with President Xi Jinping at the historic Great Hall of the People, seat of power of the Chinese Communist Party. Both the leaders signed and issued a joint statement on deepening China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era. Both leaders pledged to deepen their strategic partnership. This was Putin's first international visit since the start of his fifth presidential term.

### China – Russia friendship

- **Relationship – historical background**

- The relationship between China and the Soviet Union did not begin well.
  - When Chairman Mao Zedong visited Moscow after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, he was made to wait for weeks for a meeting with Joseph Stalin.
- During the Cold War, China and the USSR were rivals, competing for control of the global communist movement.
- Tensions between the countries rose dangerously in the early 1960s, and they fought a brief border war in 1969.
- The relationship began to improve after the death of Mao in 1976, but remained frosty right until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.
- In the post-Cold War-era, economic relations have formed the new strategic basis for Sino-Russian relations.
  - China became Russia's biggest trading partner, and the largest Asian investor in Russia.
  - China views Russia as a powerhouse of raw material and a valuable market for its consumer goods.
- The hostile approach of Western countries led by USA towards Russia after the annexation of Crimea in 2014 brought Moscow closer to Beijing.

- **China – Russia friendship: concerns for India**
    - For New Delhi, the Russia-China defence axis throws up critical questions.
    - About 60-70% of Indian defence supplies come from Russia, and India needs regular and reliable supplies.
      - This is crucial especially at a time when Indian and Chinese soldiers are locked in a standoff at the border for the last four years.
    - Experts in India are also worried about a scenario in which Russia becomes a “junior partner” of China.
    - Analysts claim that if war broke out between India and China, Russia's response would be uncertain.
      - During the 1962 war, the Soviet Union did not support India. In contrast, Moscow backed India during the 1971 war.
      - However, today's Russia under Vladimir Putin is different from the old Soviet Union, and its stance might vary.
- 

## WHAT IS A DYSON SPHERE?



Recently, an international team of researchers based in Sweden, India, the US, and the UK have devised a way to search for unimaginably complex extraterrestrial megastructures, known as Dyson spheres.

**Dyson Sphere** is a hypothetical engineering project that **only highly advanced civilizations could build.**

- These Dyson spheres would allow a civilization to harness all of a star's energy.
- The prospect of such a construction was first **proposed** by physicist and astronomer **Freeman J. Dyson back in 1960.**
  - He envisioned them as a **solar-system-sized shell consisting of a 'swarm of objects'** that could travel on independent orbits around a star, such as our sun.

- The idea behind this is that the aliens commandeering this multi-faceted sphere would use it to harness the energy of the star to fulfil the energy needs of its technologically sophisticated people.

## Do Dyson spheres exist?

- Because of their infrared radiation, Dyson spheres are considered a type of **technosignature**—a sign of activity that distant astronomers could use to infer the existence of intelligent beings in the universe, according to a NASA report.
- A handful of Earth-based researchers have scanned infrared maps of the night sky in hopes of **spotting Dyson spheres**, but so far, nobody has seen anything out of the ordinary.

## WHAT IS PLUNGING REGION OF A BLACK HOLE?



A strange area around black holes called the “plunging region” has been spotted for the first time.

A **Black Hole** is a cosmic body of extremely **intense gravity** from which **nothing, not even light, can escape**.

- This intense gravity occurs because a large amount of matter has been squeezed into a very small space.

### **Formation:**

- A black hole can be formed by the **death of a massive star**.
- When such a star has exhausted the internal thermonuclear fuels in its core at the end of its life, the core becomes unstable and gravitationally collapses inward upon itself, and the star’s outer layers are blown away.
- **The crushing weight** of constituent matter falling in from all sides compresses the dying star to a point of zero volume and infinite density called the **singularity**.



## Event Horizon:

- The event horizon is the boundary around a black hole beyond which no light or other radiation can escape.
- Once an object crosses this boundary, it cannot escape the black hole's gravitational pull.

## About Plunging Region of a Black Hole:

- It is an area where **matter stops circling a black hole** and instead **falls straight in**.
  - It was predicted by Albert Einstein's **theory of general relativity**.
  - When any matter gets too close to a black hole, it rips apart and forms an orbiting ring around it called an **accretion disc**.
  - General relativity predicts there should be an inner boundary to the accretion disc past which nothing can orbit the black hole and instead plunges towards the black hole at near the speed of light.
  - **The region where this occurs** was named the "**plunging region**", within which it is impossible to stop the final descent past the black hole's event horizon.
  - The plunging region is just outside the event horizon.
  - Studying plunging regions could teach us about how black holes form and evolve, as well as reveal new information about the fundamental nature of space-time.
-