#### **MAINS MATRIX**

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#### "Consent is All"

#### Introduction

Consent lies at the heart of defining sexual autonomy and combating sexual violence. The recognition of consent as the fundamental legal and moral benchmark marks a transformative shift in the global approach to sexual offences. Recent legal reforms in France exemplify this evolution.

# 1. Core Principle: The Centrality of Consent

- The article underscores that consent is the defining element distinguishing lawful sexual activity from sexual violence.
- France's new law establishes
   that any non-consensual sexual
   act constitutes rape, regardless
   of the presence of physical force
   — a major legal milestone
   aligning law with moral
   accountability.

#### 2. Catalyst for Change in France

 Trigger: A landmark case involving Gisèle Pelicot, who accused her husband of drugging her and enabling her rape by multiple men. Outcome: The case led to 51
 convictions and acted as a
 watershed moment in French
 jurisprudence, reinforcing
 consent as the core pillar in
 defining sexual crimes.

### 3. Challenges for Survivors

Despite progressive laws, survivors face deep-rooted barriers:

- Social Stigma and Judgment:
   Victims are often disbelieved or
   blamed, as reflected in public
   discourse in India.
- Economic Disadvantage: Many lack financial and social capital to seek justice.
- Low Conviction Rates: In India, rape conviction rates hover around 27–28% (2018–2022), reflecting systemic inefficiencies despite strong legal provisions.

# 4. The Path Forward: Beyond Legal Reform

Laws alone cannot guarantee justice. A multi-dimensional approach is essential:

 Changing Community
 Mindsets: Early education and awareness to dismantle patriarchal norms and redefine gender roles.

- Reorienting Law Enforcement:
   Sensitization of police and judiciary to approach cases empathetically, guided by the principle of consent.
- Empowering Survivors:
   Strengthening institutional and psychological support systems to aid recovery and reintegration.

#### 5. Call to Action for Governments

- Governments must display zero tolerance toward sexual violence.
- Empathy-based governance is crucial — ensuring survivors are supported through every stage of investigation and trial.
- Failing to uphold these commitments risks stalling what the article terms as a "women's Arab Spring", symbolizing a broader movement for gender justice and autonomy.

#### Conclusion

The recognition of **consent as central to sexual rights** represents both a
moral and legal evolution. However, true
progress lies in societal transformation
— where justice is not merely a legal
outcome but a lived reality for every
survivor.

#### **HOW TO USE IT**

The principle of consent is the nonnegotiable cornerstone of sexual
autonomy and gender justice. While
progressive legal reforms (like in France)
are crucial, achieving true justice
requires a societal transformation that
dismantles patriarchal mindsets,
reforms institutions, and empowers
survivors, moving beyond mere
legislative change to empathetic
governance.

# Primary Relevance: GS Paper I (Indian Society)

- 1. Role of Women and Women's Organization:
  - How to use: The entire article is about women's agency, autonomy, and their struggle for justice.
  - Key Points:
    - Sexual Autonomy: Frame consent as the fundamental expression of a woman's bodily autonomy and her right to make choices about her own body.
    - Social Stigma: Discuss how social stigma and victim-blaming are major social barriers that prevent survivors from reporting crimes and accessing justice, perpetuating a culture of silence.

 Women's Movement: The reference to a "women's Arab Spring" signifies a powerful, ongoing social movement demanding gender justice, similar to other historical social reforms.

# 2. Social Empowerment:

 How to use: Empowerment is meaningless without control over one's own body and life.

### Key Points:

 True social empowerment for women is contingent on their right to sexual self-determination, which is protected by the principle of consent.

Primary Relevance: GS Paper II (Governance, Polity)

- 1. Government Policies and Interventions for Development in various sectors:
  - How to use: The government's response to sexual violence is a critical governance issue.
  - Key Points:
    - Zero Tolerance
       Policy: The call for governments to show
       "zero tolerance"
       translates into the need for robust implementation of laws, adequate funding for support systems (One-Stop Centers, Nirbhaya

Fund), and creating a safe environment for women.

Governance: This is a key takeaway. It means that the state's machinery—police, judiciary, healthcare—must treat survivors with dignity, sensitivity, and respect, ensuring they are not retraumatized by the very system meant to help them.

# 2. Judiciary and its role:

 How to use: The judiciary is the ultimate interpreter and protector of rights.

#### Key Points:

- The low conviction rate
   (27-28%) points to
   systemic failures in the
   judicial process, including
   delays, poor prosecution,
   and the difficulties
   survivors face in
   navigating the legal
   system.
- Courts have progressively interpreted laws to strengthen the principle of consent, but the gap between legal doctrine and ground-level judicial outcomes remains wide.

Primary Relevance: GS Paper IV (Ethics, Integrity and Aptitude)

#### 1. Ethics and Human Interface:

 How to use: Consent is fundamentally an ethical concept.

### Key Points:

- o The article highlights the ethical evolution from a mindset that may have excused sexual violence to one that places unambiguous respect for an individual's autonomy at its core.
- Accountability: The
  French law establishes
  that violating consent is a
  moral wrong, independent
  of physical force. This
  aligns with the ethical
  principle that the intent
  and impact on the
  victim are what define the
  wrongness of an act.

#### 2. Attitude:

 How to use: The "changing community mindsets" point is about cultivating the right attitude.

#### Key Points:

 An ethical and just society requires an attitude of respect, equality, and empathy. Combating sexual violence requires eradicating attitudes of entitlement, misogyny, and victim-blaming from a young age.

#### 3. Emotional Intelligence:

 How to use: The role of law enforcement and the judiciary demands high emotional intelligence.

# Key Points:

For a police officer or judge, handling a sexual assault case requires empathy, sensitivity, and the ability to make the survivor feel safe and believed. A lack of emotional intelligence in these officials can cause secondary trauma to the survivor.

Trump drops a bomb, on U.S. nuclear weapons testing

#### **Context and Background**

#### Event:

U.S. President Donald Trump announced that the United States would **resume nuclear** weapons testing after a 33-year moratorium.

# Timing:

Announcement coincided with Russia's test of a nuclear-capable cruise missile and a meeting between Xi Jinping (China) and Vladimir Putin

(Russia) — suggesting geopolitical signaling.

#### Symbolism:

Occurred when the **Doomsday Clock** stood at **89 seconds to midnight**, symbolizing
heightened global tension.

# **Key Issues and Analysis**

# 1. Impact on Power Equations

- China and Russia are likely to respond to the U.S. move, worsening global strategic instability.
- May trigger a new nuclear arms race, undermining decades of arms control efforts (e.g., START, CTBT).
- Could complicate the U.S.'s relations with allies and weaken its moral authority in disarmament diplomacy.

#### 2. Threat to Arms Control Architecture

- The announcement undermines the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).
- These treaties are foundational to post–Cold War disarmament efforts.
- By resuming testing, the U.S.
   violates the spirit (if not the letter) of these agreements, eroding global trust.

#### 3. Reactions and Global Fallout

- Other nuclear states (China, Russia, North Korea) may use this precedent to justify their own nuclear tests.
- The decision risks destabilizing existing deterrence frameworks and encourages states to expand arsenals.

# 4. Broader Environmental and Security Implications

- Resumed testing may have ecological consequences (radioactive contamination) and psychological effects on global security.
- Encourages rethinking of nuclear postures, especially among smaller powers and U.S. allies.

# 5. Undermining Global Disarmament Efforts

- Nuclear testing moratoria served as a confidence-building
   measure for over five decades.
- Trump's policy shift undermines the "grand bargain" of the NPT

   nuclear powers disarm gradually while non-nuclear states refrain from acquiring weapons.
- Weakens ongoing disarmament momentum and may push nations toward rearmament.

#### 6. Need for Renewed Global Dialogue

 The author calls for a global conversation to restore faith in

- arms control and nonproliferation.
- Warns that nuclear threats have re-entered global rhetoric.
- Advocates for a revitalization of disarmament diplomacy through transparent verification, renewed treaties, and multilateral trust-building.

#### 7. Historical Reflection

- Post–World War II generations remember Hiroshima and Nagasaki's devastation; current leaders may not.
- There is a moral amnesia about nuclear horrors, making current policies riskier.

#### Conclusion

- Trump's decision represents a dangerous regression from decades of arms control progress.
- The move threatens to:
  - Reignite the nuclear arms race,
  - Undermine global security architecture, and
  - Erode trust among world powers.
- The author emphasizes the urgent need for responsible global leadership, renewed

diplomacy, and reaffirmation of non-proliferation principles.

#### **HOW TO USE**

The potential resumption of U.S. nuclear testing represents a regressive and dangerous shift in global geopolitics, threatening to dismantle decades of painstakingly built arms control architecture. It signals a return to great power nuclear rivalry, undermines global non-proliferation norms, and risks triggering a new, unpredictable arms race in an already volatile world.

Primary Relevance: GS Paper II (International Relations)

- 1. Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests:
  - How to use: This is the core application. The event strikes at the heart of global treaties and strategic stability.
  - Key Points:
    - Erosion of the CTBT and NPT: The U.S. move fundamentally undermines the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Even though the CTBT is not in force, the U.S. moratorium since 1992 had given it significant moral and

- political weight. Resuming tests shatters this norm.
- The "Grand Bargain" of the NPT: The NPT is based on a bargain: non-nuclear states forgo weapons, and nuclear states (P5) work in good faith towards disarmament. By resuming testing, a P5 member reneges on this promise, weakening the legitimacy of the entire non-proliferation regime and giving other nations a pretext to pursue their own weapons programs.
- o Impact on Strategic
  Stability: The action is
  likely to provoke
  reciprocal testing
  from Russia and China,
  leading to a qualitative
  nuclear arms race. This
  creates a more complex
  and dangerous security
  environment for all
  nations, including India.
- Potential Question: \*"The global nuclear non-proliferation regime is facing a crisis of credibility."
   Discuss in the context of recent developments."

Primary Relevance: GS Paper III (Security)

1. Security challenges and their management in border areas:

 How to use: While not a direct border issue, it fundamentally alters India's strategic security environment.

#### Key Points:

Impact on India's Strategic Calculus: A renewed nuclear arms race between the U.S., Russia, and China would have a direct impact on India's security. It could lead to advancements in nuclear weapon technology by India's neighbors (especially China), forcing India to reassess its own minimum credible **deterrence** and potentially leading to a regional arms dynamic.

Complicating India's
 Diplomatic Balancing
 Act: India values its
 strategic partnerships
 with the U.S., Russia, and
 France. A new phase of
 intense nuclear rivalry
 between these powers
 would make India's
 balancing act more
 difficult and constrain its
 strategic autonomy.

### 2. Challenges to Internal Security:

 How to use: The breakdown of global norms can indirectly impact internal security.

### Key Points:

o The erosion of the nonproliferation regime increases the long-term risk of nuclear terrorism and nuclear technology falling into the hands of non-state actors, as the taboo against nuclear weapons is weakened.

# Secondary Relevance: GS Paper IV (Ethics)

Relations: The decision can be critiqued on ethical grounds. It demonstrates a lack of responsible global leadership and a disregard for the catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences of nuclear testing, reflecting a failure of the ethical principle of "Do No Harm" on a global scale.

#### **Chinese Check**

# Subtitle OUR SUCCESS,

China has entrenched itself as the world's foremost factory

#### **Context and Background**

Event:

The article discusses the easing of U.S.–China trade tensions after a détente in the tariff war, following a meeting between U.S. President Donald Trump

and Chinese President Xi
Jinping in Busan, South Korea.

Underlying Theme:

Despite the temporary truce, the article argues that the **structural balance of global economic power** has shifted in China's favor, marking an **industrial and strategic realignment** in world trade.

#### 1. Historical Background

- 1980s Economic Reform:
   China began as a reluctant
   participant in World Bank/IMF
   neoliberal reforms, transitioning
   from an agrarian economy to a
   manufacturing powerhouse.
- Gradual Transformation:
   Through manufacturing depth, labor arbitrage, and supply-chain integration, China positioned itself as the indispensable node of global production.

#### 2. U.S.-China Economic Power Shift

Irony Highlighted:

The U.S., which once dominated global trade and technology cycles, now struggles with **short-term political cycles** (4-year elections) that make it less capable of **long-term industrial planning** compared to China's decades-long strategy.

- Concessions to China:
  - U.S. reduced some tariffs

- Paused additions to the "no-trade list" of Chinese firms
- Rolled back some measures on fentanyl supply chain issues
- China agreed to resume purchases of U.S. farm products (e.g., soybeans)
- Eased export restrictions
   on critical minerals

# 3. U.S. Tariff Offensive and Its Limitations

### Initiated:

During Trump's presidency (since 2017)

#### Short-term Gains:

- U.S. goods trade deficit with China narrowed by ~30%
- However, this was due to trade diversion, not genuine reindustrialization.

#### • Trade Diversion:

Imports shifted from China to Mexico, Vietnam, and ASEAN countries — "nearshoring and friend-shoring."

#### Chinese Adaptation:

China diversified its export markets and adjusted pricing, absorbing much of the shock with minimal long-term harm.

## 4. Human Geography of Impact

#### • U.S. Impact:

- Chinese retaliatory tariffs targeted farm-based commodities, hurting rural constituencies that supported Trump.
- Federal subsidies offered temporary relief.

### • China's Impact:

- Affected exportprocessing hubs (e.g.,
  Guangdong, Suzhou)
  where workers in
  electronics,
  semiconductors,
  smartphones bore shortterm costs.
- However, China's
   economy remained stable
   due to domestic
   stimulus measures and a
   dual-circulation strategy
   (balancing domestic and
   global demand).

# 5. Broader Economic and Strategic Consequences

# China's Rise:

- From a manufacturing partner to a geoeconomic superpower.
- Established dominance over intermediate goods, high-end technology, and critical minerals.

 Became the central hub of global supply chains.

#### U.S. Position:

 Still the world's largest consumer market, but increasingly dependent on Chinese industrial inputs.

#### • Systemic Shift:

The trade war revealed a decisive inversion of power:

- The U.S. as the consumer of last resort,
- China as the producer of first importance in the world economy.

#### 6. Conclusion

- The U.S.-China trade war underscored a new global industrial order:
  - The U.S. remains
     consumption-driven and
     politically constrained,
  - China has entrenched itself as the world's foremost manufacturing hub, wielding technological and supply-chain leverage across sectors.

#### **HOW TO USE IT**

The U.S.-China trade war, rather than weakening China, has revealed a fundamental and structural shift in global economic power. China has successfully transitioned from being the

"world's factory" for low-end goods to becoming the **indispensable**, **hightech core of global supply chains**, giving it significant geoeconomic leverage that short-term tariff policies cannot easily dismantle.

Primary Relevance: GS Paper III (Economy)

- 1. Effects of Liberalization on the Economy, Changes in Industrial Policy and their effects on Industrial Growth:
  - How to use: China's rise is a case study of state-led industrial policy and strategic integration into the global economy.

### Key Points:

- China's Strategic Industrial **Policy:** Contrast China's long-term, statedirected industrial planning with the U.S.'s short-term, politicallydriven approach. China's focus on moving up the value chain—from assembly to mastering intermediate goods, high-end technology, and critical minerals—is a key takeaway for any nation's industrial strategy.
- Limits of
   Protectionism: The U.S.
   tariff offensive failed to
   achieve its core goal of re-industrialization. Instead,

(to Vietnam,
Mexico) rather than trade
creation in the U.S. This
demonstrates the
limitations of
protectionism in a deeply
interconnected global

economy.

it led to trade diversion

- The "China + 1" Strategy: The trend of "nearshoring and friendshoring" is highly relevant for India. It presents a massive opportunity for India to position itself as a reliable alternative manufacturing hub, which is the core idea behind India's Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme.
- Potential Question: "The rise of China as a global manufacturing hub offers important lessons for India's own industrial development." Discuss."
- 2. Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment:
  - How to use: The global supply chain realignment is a critical external factor affecting India's economic planning.
  - Key Points:
    - India's opportunity lies in leveraging this shift. The government's focus

on Atmanirbhar Bharat (Self-Reliant India) and improving Ease of Doing Business is directly aimed at capturing the supply chains moving out of China.

Primary Relevance: GS Paper II (International Relations)

- 1. Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests:
  - How to use: The U.S.-China rivalry is the defining geopolitical context of the 21st century.
  - Key Points:
    - o India's Strategic
      Dilemma and
      Opportunity: India must
      navigate a complex
      landscape. It has a deep
      trade relationship with
      China but a strategic
      partnership with the U.S.
      This forces India to walk a
      tightrope, balancing
      economic pragmatism
      with strategic security.
    - Geoeconomics over
       Geopolitics: The article
       shows that economic
       power (control over
       supply chains) is as
       potent a tool as military
       power.
       China's "geoeconomic"
       strength allows it to

withstand geopolitical pressure. This is a crucial lesson for India's foreign policy.

The case for a Board of Peace and Sustainable Security

#### 1. Context and Background

Occasion:

Written as the **United Nations** (UN) approaches its **80th** anniversary.

Central Problem:

The UN Security Council
(UNSC) was designed to prevent
catastrophic war, but today it
reacts to conflicts rather than
preventing them.
It often engages too late or too

early, failing to sustain peace once violence ebbs.

Core Argument:

The current institutional structure of the UN — particularly the UNSC — lacks continuity, momentum, and political engagement once immediate crises end.

# 2. Diagnosis: What's Wrong with the Current System

#### A. Structural Issues

- UNSC's design: Suited for war prevention, not for long-term peacebuilding.
- Peacekeeping missions:
   Stabilize conditions but lack a

**political strategy** to sustain transitions.

- Peacebuilding Commission:
   Valuable but lacks authority and political initiative.
- Result: The UN forgets and loses momentum once violence stops.

#### **B. Political Divisions**

- The problem isn't only political it's institutional.
- The UN lacks a permanent body dedicated to political accompaniment during post-conflict transitions.
- Reform is essential but too slow and overly ambitious, focusing on rewriting rather than evolving.
- 3. Proposed Solution: A 'Board of Peace and Sustainable Security'

#### A. Purpose and Mandate

- To fill the institutional void between conflict response and sustainable peace.
- Would not challenge the UNSC or intrude on national sovereignty.
- Occupies a clearly defined space — providing structured political engagement during and after conflict.

#### **B.** Tools and Approach

 Focus on political accompaniment, not military action.

- Reinforce negotiated dialogue, regional diplomacy, and postconflict institution-building.
- Operate in coordination with the UN Secretary-General and the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC).

#### C. Role and Function

- Would subsume PBC's
   coordinating role, strengthen
   UN peacekeeping and
   peacebuilding outcomes, and
   maintain continuity between
   war and peace phases.
- Avoids duplication of UNSC or Secretary-General powers (under Article 99 of the UN Charter).

# 4. Institutional Design and Representation

#### A. Composition

- A rotating membership representative, not permanent.
- Balance between regional representation (Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, the Caribbean, West Asia).
- Membership to reflect the reality of international power distribution but remain inclusive.

#### B. Agenda

 Guided by peace-building priorities, not by geopolitical interests.

- Would coordinate closely with regional organizations (e.g., African Union, ASEAN, OAS).
- Support renewal and continuity rather than ad-hoc crisis responses.

### 5. Advantages of the Proposed Board

#### A. Sustained Peace Efforts

- Creates continuity of political engagement from conflict to peacebuilding.
- Aligns peace efforts with governance and development.

### **B.** Preventive Security

- Moves away from reactive crisis management toward preventive security.
- Avoids militarization of peacekeeping and prioritizes nationally led approaches.

#### C. Institutional Stability

- Builds institutional memory within the UN system.
- Prevents "drift" and renewal
   fatigue in long-running missions.

#### D. Political Balance

- Ensures sovereignty protection while giving the UN a stable, sustained role.
- Offers a disciplined, coordinating body to manage peace transitions.

### 6. Style and Functioning

- Would not be a forum for general debates but a working institution.
- Engages where others withdraw.
- Functions through continuity and adaptation, ensuring accountability without confrontation.
- Reassures states that peace processes won't be abandoned.

# 7. Implementation Strategy

- Can be established under Article
   22 of the UN Charter, which allows the General Assembly to create subsidiary bodies.
- The precedent exists UNGA has done so before.

#### 8. Vision and Broader Message

- The UN must evolve rather than rewrite itself entirely.
- Institutions must be built for continuity, not just moments of crisis.
- Reform should restore first
   principles diplomacy, political engagement, and sustained peace.
- The 'Board of Peace and Sustainable Security' would:
  - Address the UN's weakest link — lack of political continuity.

- Integrate political accompaniment into the UN system.
- Serve as a bridge between war prevention and peace sustainability.

#### 9. Conclusion

- The author calls for meaningful, practical reform—not cosmetic or rhetorical.
- Reform means restoring diplomacy and continuity, not redistributing power.
- This new board would institutionalize peace, ensuring the UN can manage conflict transitions effectively.

"The UN must create a new institution that can sustain peace beyond war."

— Nirupama Rao

#### **HOW TO USE IT**

The proposal highlights a critical structural gap in global governance: the lack of a dedicated, continuous political mechanism to bridge the transition from conflict cessation to sustainable peace. It advocates for pragmatic, incremental UN reform to address the "forgotten phase" of peacebuilding, moving beyond the reactive and often gridlocked UN Security Council.

Primary Relevance: GS Paper II (International Relations)

- 1. Important International institutions, agencies and fora-their structure, mandate.
  - How to use: This is the core application. The entire article is a critique and a reform proposal for the United Nations system.
  - Key Points:
    - Diagnosing the UNSC's
      Limitations: Use the
      author's analysis to
      explain why the UNSC is
      often ineffective. Its
      design is for crisis
      management and war
      prevention, not for the
      long, patient, and
      politically nuanced work
      of post-conflict
      peacebuilding and
      institution-building.
      The veto power of the P5
      often leads to paralysis.
    - The "Institutional
      Gap": The proposal
      identifies a clear gap.
      After a peacekeeping
      mission stabilizes a
      situation or a conflict
      ends, there is a "political
      vacuum". The UN system
      lacks a body with the
      mandate and continuity to
      guide the difficult
      transition from war to
      stable peace, leading to
      relapse into conflict.

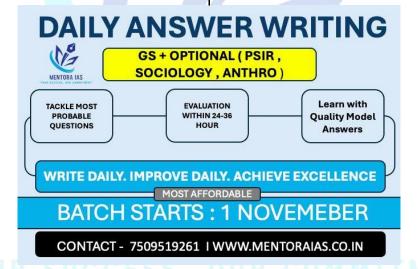
- A Model for Pragmatic Reform: The proposal is a classic example of how to think about reforming international institutions. Instead of the nearimpossible task of UNSC reform (changing permanent membership/veto), it suggests creating a new, complementary body under the UN General **Assembly (using Article** 22). This is a practical, "work-around" reform.
- 2. Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.
  - How to use: India has a direct stake in UN reform and global peacekeeping.
  - Key Points:
    - India's Stakes and
      Role: As a leading
      contributor to UN
      Peacekeeping and a major
      proponent of UNSC
      reform, India would
      strongly support such a
      initiative. It aligns with
      India's call
      for multilateralism that
      is more representative,
      effective, and
      responsive.

Soft Power and Global Leadership: Championin g such a forward-looking proposal enhances India's profile as a responsible global power that offers constructive solutions to world problems, rather than just critiquing the existing system.

# Secondary Relevance: GS Paper IV (Ethics & Governance)

 Ethics in International Relations: The proposal is rooted in the ethical principles of responsibility and solidarity. It argues that the international

- community has a moral responsibility not to abandon countries after the guns fall silent, ensuring that peace is "sustained" and not just "enforced."
- Good Governance (at a Global Level): The board is envisioned as a body that ensures continuity, coordination, and accountability in international efforts—principles that are the hallmark of good governance, applied here to the global stage.



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