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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS



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S.NO.	TOPIC
1.	News Covered (The Hindu Delhi Edition)
2.	Urban apathy' drives down polling to 60.4% Helicopter crash kills Iran President
3.	Death of a President
4.	Radical democracy: why is it still relevant today?

NEWS COVERED (THE HINDU DELHI EDITION)

Syllabus:

- ❖ Prelims: Indian Polity and Governance – Constitution, Political System, Panchayati Raj, Public Policy, Rights Issues, etc.
- ❖ Mains: Salient Features of the Representation of People's Act, Appointment to various Constitutional Posts, Powers, Functions and Responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies.

'Urban apathy' drives down polling to 60.4%

EC flags low turnout in Mumbai, Thane, Nashik, Lucknow; Maharashtra records lowest turnout in Phase 5 at 54.33%; West Bengal, where violence broke out in many constituencies, logged 76.05%

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

The fifth phase of the Lok Sabha election on Monday saw a 60.48% voter turnout till 11.50 p.m., amid reports of minor incidents of violence from West Bengal.

Maharashtra recorded the lowest turnout at 54.33% this time, while West Bengal saw the highest at 76.05%.

The voting percentage in Bihar was 54.85, Jharkhand 63.09, Odisha 69.34, Uttar Pradesh 57.79 and Ladakh 69.62.

The Election Commission (EC) said in a statement that "parliamentary constituencies in various cities such as Mumbai, Thane, Nashik and Lucknow continued the trend of urban apathy as noticed



Patient wait: People wait to cast their votes in the Lok Sabha election in Saran of Bihar on Monday. PTI

in last Lok Sabha election in 2019." With this phase, polling has ended in all 48 seats of Maharashtra.

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MORE POLL REPORTS
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Baramulla logs 58.17% polling

Peerzada Ashiq
BARAMULLA

The Baramulla Lok Sabha seat in Kashmir Valley logged a poll percentage of

58.17 by 11.50 p.m. on Monday, breaking its record of 46.65% in 1996.

FULL REPORT
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Points Tofors in this News:

- ❖ What is urban Apathy.
- ❖ What low turn out means?
- ❖ Importance of voting.



What is the importance of voting in a parliamentary democracy?

- ❖ Voting is essential in parliamentary democracy as it allows citizens to elect their representatives and have a say in the decision-making process of their government.
- Exercise of constitutional right: Voting is a constitutional right that allows citizens to choose their representatives who will make decisions on their behalf. (Article 326).
- Ensuring representation: For adequate representation in the government, people can elect the candidate of their choice, who will represent their interests and needs in the Parliament.
- Holding political accountability: The election is an opportunity to hold politicians accountable for their work based on their previous performances.
- Encouraging participation and engagement: Voting allows citizens to have a say in the direction of their country and to participate in shaping the future of their community.

Why Vote?

- ❖ In democracies, voting is seen as a basic exercise that shows people's faith in the political process. The right to vote, after all, has also been secured by various disadvantaged groups – colonised people, women, racial and ethnic minorities – after long struggles.
- ❖ Voting gives each person a say in deciding who will hold positions of power in their society and is a crucial part of exercising one's citizenship.
- ❖ In that sense, the representation voting plays a role in people feeling like stakeholders in a system.
- ❖ Having the right to vote also makes one feel part of a larger community where their voice matters. Emmeline Pankhurst, a British suffragette, argued before women had the right to vote:
- ❖ "Men make the moral code and they expect women to accept it. They have decided that it is entirely right and proper for men to fight for their liberties and their rights, but that it is not right and proper for women to fight for theirs".

Lets write an Assay today: Can You?

- ❖ We do not have government by the majority, but by the majority who participate'

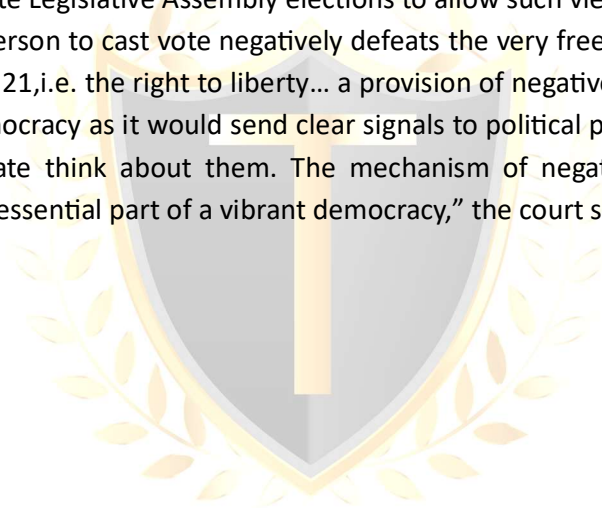
Approach:

- ❖ The quote talks about one of the fundamental contradictions associated with democracy. It is supposed to be a rule of the people, by the people, for the people. But if most people are not part of the process, then it cannot be any of those things. In modern times, this is not because of structural barriers to voting, often, but due to voter apathy.
- ❖ Democracy is often criticised as a rule of the majority over the minority, too, if enough safeguards are not instituted to keep autocracy at bay. However, in case of voter apathy or barriers to voting, the majority is not even registering its voice at all.
- ❖ This could be dangerous for the overall health of existing political mechanisms, since only a few people are picking the popular representatives. It could allow for the small voting population which votes to be identified, manipulated and polarised in favour of certain parties or candidates.
- ❖ Moreover, it implies that vast sections of people feel detached from the systems holding the power to impact their lives. The system includes lawmakers who can legislate on everything from taxes to



building more educational institutions to civil rights, or local political leaders who play a role in directing public works, road repair and construction, maintaining public parks, etc.

- ❖ Voter apathy is also often seen in mature democracies, which might hint at a sense of disillusionment with the process among a population over time, or a view that voting does not help change things. Many are also put off by the invisible levers that move politics, like behind-the-scenes lobbying and electoral funding by vested interests. Therefore, a lower voter turnout may imply the need for making the system more accountable to citizens.
- ❖ An analysis in *The Economist* a few years ago noted that young people in Britain and the US were less likely to vote when compared to older age groups. It argued that one reason could be that people do not see their representatives reflecting themselves. “Young people—who tend to be more cosmopolitan, liberal and hopeful than their elders—tend to be switched off by the negativity and cynicism of election campaigns targeting the unhappy old. Sadly, cynicism then breeds cynicism,” it said.
- ❖ In 2013, the Indian Supreme Court allowed for the option ‘None of the Above’ to be introduced in Lok Sabha and state Legislative Assembly elections to allow such views to be expressed.
- ❖ “Not allowing a person to cast vote negatively defeats the very freedom of expression and the right ensured in Article 21, i.e. the right to liberty... a provision of negative voting would be in the interest of promoting democracy as it would send clear signals to political parties and their candidates as to what the electorate think about them. The mechanism of negative voting, thus, serves a very fundamental and essential part of a vibrant democracy,” the court said at the time.





**HELICOPTER CRASH KILLS IRAN PRESIDENT
DEATH OF A PRESIDENT**

Helicopter crash kills Iran President, Foreign Minister

Agence France-Presse
TEHRAN

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian were confirmed dead on Monday after search and rescue teams found their crashed helicopter in a fog-shrouded mountain region, sparking mourning in the Islamic Republic.

Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei declared five days of mourning and assigned Vice-President Mohammad Mokhber, 68, to assume interim duties ahead of elections which will be held on June 28.

Earlier on Monday, state TV announced that “the servant of the Iranian nation, Ayatollah Ebrahim Raisi, has achieved the highest level of martyrdom” and broadcast pictures from Raisi’s life as a voice recited the Koran.

Condolences flooded in from Palestinian militant group Hamas, Lebanon’s



Rescue team members recover the body of a victim from the helicopter crash site in Varzaghan of Iran on Monday. AFP

Hezbollah and Syria, all members of the so-called Axis of Resistance against Israel and its allies, at a time of high West Asia tensions over the Gaza war.

Mr. Khamenei had urged Iranians on Sunday, as the search was still ongoing, to “not worry” about the leadership of the country, saying “there will be no disruption in the country’s work”.

Iran’s one-time top nuclear negotiator Ali Bagheri

was appointed Acting Foreign Minister.

A black flag was hoisted at a major Shia shrine in the city of Qom as a sign of mourning for Raisi, whom many had considered a favourite to one day succeed the Supreme Leader.

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STATE MOURNING IN INDIA

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A HARDLINE CLERIC

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Death of a President

Change at the helm comes at a time of domestic and regional uncertainties

The death of Iran’s eighth President, Ebrahim Raisi, and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, in a helicopter crash in northwestern Iran amid bad weather has sent shockwaves across West Asia. Raisi and others, including local officials, were travelling to Tabriz after inaugurating a dam with Azerbaijan’s President Ilham Aliyev, on the countries’ shared border when his chopper went down in Iran’s East Azerbaijan province. Raisi, a conservative cleric, rose to power in 2021 after eight years of rule by moderate President Hassan Rouhani, who signed the 2015 nuclear deal with the U.S. and other world powers. Mr. Rouhani’s promise of change and prosperity through dialogue did not materialise as the then U.S. President, Donald Trump sabotaged the deal in 2018 and reimposed sanctions on Iran. When moderates lost their face and morale, the conservatives tightened their grip on the state through Raisi. A confidant of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Raisi escalated a crackdown on civil rights at home, strengthened Iran’s ties with Russia and China, doubled down on its support for non-state militias such as Hamas and Hezbollah and expanded Iran’s nuclear programme. In three years, he emerged as one of Iran’s most powerful men and was seen as a potential successor to Mr. Khamenei.

The death of the President could not have come at a worse time for Iran. It is already struggling to stabilise a stricken economy, battered by U.S.-imposed sanctions, and trying to calm social tensions. The nuclear deal remains dead and West Asia is on fire. In April, Raisi oversaw an unprecedented attack on Israel following Israel’s strike on the Iranian consulate in Damascus. Israel’s meek response avoided an all-out war but tensions remained high. In recent years, Iran has also lost key officials. In the deaths of Raisi and Amir-Abdollahian, the Islamic Republic has lost an experienced, crisis-hardened cleric administrator and a seasoned diplomat. It is understandable that Iran would need time to get over the shock that it is in now. Given the geopolitical tensions, Raisi’s death could also fuel conspiracy theories, which could further inflame the region. So, it is imperative for Iran to get to the bottom of the crash. Another priority is that the transition to a new presidency is handled smoothly. First Vice-President Mohammed Mokhber will assume interim presidential powers and the country is expected to hold a presidential election within 50 days. A change in presidency is unlikely to alter Iran’s foreign policy direction, but the loss of one of the most experienced and ideologically disciplined defenders of the revolution and a transition amid domestic and regional uncertainties, is an added challenge to the Islamic Republic.

Points to note from this News:

- Why Iran matters.
- Significance of Iran for India and world.
- Axis of Resistance.

- ❖ Given the increased tensions in West Asia and the gung-ho attitude of Israel, with open American support, suspicion will be raised about the Israeli hand. Tel Aviv has denied this and distanced itself from the crash, but neither the United States nor Israel have any credibility left for the world to accept their innocence without serious cross-checks.



Country / Central Asia	West Asia
Kazakhstan	West Asia includes
Uzbekistan	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain,
Kyrgyzstan	Cyprus, Georgia, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.
Tajikistan	
Turkmenistan	
Afghanistan	

Importance of Iran for India -

Strategic - location (Chabahar Port, INSTC)

Economic - Energy

Cultural - Shia population



Areas of Cooperation

- ❖ Energy
 - ☛ India-Iran commercial ties have traditionally been dominated by Indian import of Iranian crude oil.
 - ☛ Iran has been one of the top source of crude oil for India. India can decrease the dependence on Saudi for oil and Iran oil is comparatively cheap
 - ☛ Indian firms are willing to invest upto \$20 billion in Iran's energy sector and setup petrochemical and fertilizer plants in Chabahar Special Economic Zone.
 - ☛ Iran has the world's second-largest reserves of natural gas, yet it is not a major exporter. The proposed Iran-Oman-India undersea gas pipeline can help India move towards clean energy
- ❖ Connectivity
 - ☛ Infrastructure projects like Chahbahar Port, International North South Transport Corridor will help India to bypass the overland route through Pakistan and help in better trade relations with West and Central Asia.
- ❖ Chabahar Port
 - ☛ lies in the Persian Gulf in Iran and will help India in expanding its maritime commerce in the region
 - ☛ will allow India to bypass Pakistan to transport goods to Afghanistan and Central Asia using a sea-land route
- ❖ International North South Corridor
 - ☛ A ship, rail, and road route for moving freight between India, Russia, Iran, Europe and Central Asia
 - ☛ Aims to provide the shortest multi-model transportation route linking the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea via Iran and St Petersburg.
 - ☛ The objective of the corridor is to increase trade connectivity between major cities such as Mumbai, Moscow, Tehran, Baku, Bandar Abbas, Astrakhan.
- ❖ Terrorism/Security
 - ☛ India and Iran both face the threat of terrorism by outfits like Al-Qaeda and Islamic State. Hence counter terrorism



RADICAL DEMOCRACY: WHY IS IT STILL RELEVANT TODAY?

Radical democracy: why is it still relevant today?

Scientific humanism and its political correlate offer a philosophical perspective of human freedom based on scientific knowledge in an age harangued by orthodoxy and regression

Prathmesh Kher

Periods of crisis call attention to the necessity for a radical reorganisation of society. This was the case with 19th century liberal democracy, which had degenerated into exploitation under capitalism, forcing revolutionaries to seek out a better alternative. In time, a large number of these radicals came under the influence of new collectivist doctrines, which offered a transitional dictatorship and centralised economic planning as a remedy to solve the defects of liberal democracy and capitalist exploitation.

The initial enthusiasm of that revolutionary age came to a close when the "spectre of communism" that had once threatened capitalist hegemony had itself degenerated into a dictatorship. The concurrent rise of 20th century fascism led to the development of a political situation where there were outright dictatorships on one end and what some called, the mere panacea of democratic formalities on the other. With the concluding period of the Second World War, millions were dead and the world was in a state of chaos. Many who had been champions of solving humanity's problems saw dictatorship as no solution at all. However, the question of reconciling the aspirations of freedom, and the desire for justice, continued to remain a quandary as before.

During this period of social crisis, the Indian freedom fighter and humanist philosopher Manabendra Nath Roy, and his Marxist colleagues, developed a theory which they felt offered a solution—they referred to it as radical democracy.

A new orientation

Before a contour of a radical democratic political economy can be laid out, a scientifically consistent philosophical outlook must be iterated. To this end, Roy and his colleagues developed the philosophy of new humanism.

Humanism, the radicals argued, was as ancient as human beings, and could only be enriched by the new discoveries in scientific thought. A humanism enriched by these new developments in the understanding of the natural world would be best described as 'scientific' or 'new' Humanism.

Human behaviour includes the capacity for rational thought, the radicals argued. "Morality results from man's intelligent response to his surroundings. Therefore, it can be deduced from his innate rationality. Since rationality is inherent in human nature, it is only necessary to remind him of his biological heritage, and he will regain faith in himself and undo the harm done to him," Roy writes in his *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution*. The realisation of the possibility of a secular rational morality opens up a new perspective before the modern world. The concepts of human dignity, sovereignty, and creativeness, have meaning only when they arise, not as a token to divine writ, but from the rational faculty of the individual.

To that end, Roy proposes in his *New Orientation*, "Revolution is not inevitable.... Fundamental changes in the structure of society take place only when there is a group of individuals who feel



ISTOCKPHOTO

the necessity, who see the possibility of fulfilling it, and who can develop an adequate amount of will to bring about the changes which are both necessary and possible." That is, women and men, cognisant of their own capacity for reason, and driven to reshape the conditions around them, can do so by cooperating with each other to develop a just and free society.

A radical approach to elections
Democracy, if it is to mean a mere regularised counting of votes is not much more than deception, particularly if the voters have not had a chance to raise themselves up in dignity. In parliamentary democratic conventions, demagogues take power, by promising utopia to a hapless electorate; though once in power the demagogue is evidently unable to deliver, and must invariably resort to strongarm tactics to ensure retaining political power.

The decay of liberal democracies encouraged the rise of various collectivist doctrines which denied the possibility of individual freedom, ridiculing it as an empty abstraction. These doctrines, in turn, proclaimed that in order to be free the individual must merge himself in the mass. This also favoured political demagogues who preferred a mob that acts on appeals to passions. It was easier to sway voters by calls to their sentiments than to their reason. The more backward a populace is, the more easily they could be swayed by appeals to emotional prejudices. "The character of a party is to be judged not by its ability to catch votes, but by the merit of its proclaimed principles and published programme. The people should be asked to vote not

for professions and promises, but by judging the record of a government... Under the formal parliamentary system, unscrupulous demagogues can always come to the top," he writes.

A conscious will to freedom, a sense of responsibility and the ability to critically examine the promises and programmes put before the people by parties and politicians are the preconditions for any successful democracy. One must become a judge as to whether such conditions exist in a given society. "To ensure that elections reflect an intelligent public opinion, there has to be an intelligent public opinion first," Roy writes.

The radical democratic approach to election begins with people in their localities meeting in local or regional conferences for discussions. Having come to understand political questions and economic problems for themselves, the people will see that they need not merely vote for this or that party to solve their problems. This would also cultivate the ability for independent judgement and as such the people could choose to elect candidates of their own choice, from amongst themselves.

These candidates would enjoy greater independence since they would not be dependent on any political outfit; they can rely on their own conscience and be directly responsible to the electorate. This would do away with the mechanical nature of party politics and the demagoguery and corruption that comes in its wake. Such 'people's committees' would not only have the ability to pick independent candidates from amongst themselves but also eventually become the locus of a pyramidal democracy. Empowered with the right of recall and the ability to hold

referendums, these organised local democracies would wield a direct and effective control of the mechanics of the State. A progressive democratic movement can occur only with the intelligent and conscious participation of the individuals who constitute a society. As such, the more individuals choose to think about and participate in the democratic process the more organically democratic it becomes.

A humanist economics

"It is indeed a stupendous task to plan the economic life of a fifth of the human race," Roy had written in his *People's Plan for Economic Development*. Centralisation of politics is concurrent with the centralisation of economics. Under the so-called 'free-market' economies this is done by capitalist concentration of wealth, and under nationalised economies it reverts to State capitalism.

Capitalism produces goods not with the primary consideration of supplying the needs of the people, but of selling them at a profit. When goods cannot be sold with sufficient profit, capitalists will curtail production. This is compounded in the case of countries like India where a large and continually expanding population is seen as detrimental to the economic development of the country. Rapid industrialisation is offered as a solution to many of these problems. However, industries can succeed only on the basis of a home market. A healthy export trade begins only when the home market is satisfied.

"Modernisation of agriculture is the greatest need of the economic life of our country if production of wealth is to be increased. But this is more a matter of organisation of rural economy than of mechanisation," Roy said in a 1949 lecture in Patna. Given the primacy for agriculture, the radical democrats cite three problems that need to be overcome in that regard. Firstly, a lack of irrigation which must be countered by the development of wells, reservoirs, canals, et al. Secondly, an improvement for the fertility of the land which could be incentivised by the State. Thirdly, the development of new roads, and the repair of old ones for the countryside. Finally, an organisation of rural consumers and local industries on a co-operative basis in order to provide employment and income for the rural populace.

A radical democratic programme includes provisos for unemployment insurance, old age pension, and other provisions for the upliftment of the citizens. But these must be made with the principle that economic produce is in line with use and with reference to human needs, with a specific focus on the development of health infrastructure, housing and education.

Why radical democracy?

The conditions of the contemporary world present a dismal picture for those who desire for freedom and do not see it as a contradiction to justice. Even as humanity is the most aware it has been about the cosmos and the laws that govern it, it is simultaneously the closest it has ever been to disintegration.

The way out must be one that harkens to the principles of scientific thought and humanist philosophy. Roy writes in *New Humanism*, "The brain is the means of production, and produces the most revolutionary commodity. Revolutions presuppose iconoclastic ideas. An increasingly large number of men and women, conscious of their creative power, motivated by an indomitable will to remake the world, moved by the adventure of ideas, and fired with the ideal of a free society, can create the conditions under which democracy will be possible"



Points to be noted from this News

liberal vs Radical Democracy (Theories of Democracy)

MN Roy's views on Human Behaviour

Making the representative accountable by—

A radical Approach to elections.

Suggestions by MN Roy - Humanist Approach
(critique of capitalism,
favoured focus on Agriculture)

- ❖ Roy's ideal of radical democracy-highly decentralized democracy based on a network of people.

Question:

Discuss the radical Approach on voter behaviour and elections · (150w /10M)

Question (History) , Paper 1, II

Critically examine the Radical Humanist perspective on Indian National Movement. (UPSC CSE Mains 2016 - Political Science and International Relations, Paper 1)

- ❖ Radical Humanism was advocated by MN Roy. He published his thoughts in New Humanism-A manifesto. He said radical humanism was called radical because it rejected many traditional political and philosophical assumptions and humanism as its focus was entirely on the needs and conditions of human beings.
- ❖ Radical humanists did not articulate a clear perspective of Indian National Movement. However, their philosophical and ideological orientations help us understand their perspective.
- ❖ MN Roy and his followers quit the congress and dissolved their "League of Radical Congressmen" to create "Radical democratic Party" in 1939. They were opposed to the congress regarding World War II. They favored Indian support to the British to defeat the German fascist. They criticized the congress for the launch of Quit India Movement in 1942 and remarked it as Congress callous criminal neglect of national defense. Roy was criticized for his unpatriotic stand.
- ❖ When it became clear that the allied forces would win the war, Roy was convinced that India would gain freedom peacefully. In 1944, he drew up a 10 year plan for reconstruction of peoples plan. It focused on agriculture, social service and self- financing.
- ❖ In 1945, Radical democrats drew up a draft constitution for independent India. It envisaged the dissolution of feudal provinces and integration based on linguistic and culture homogeneity. The village committees and gram sabhas were given extensive powers such as igniting legislations recall of representatives and were conceived as main power centers.



- ❖ Roy believed in revelation by concert persuasion. He called this New Orientation. He advocated party less organized democracy and co-operative economy.
- ❖ Radical humanists placed individual at the center of their philosophy. Individual was to be on and in himself. Society and all other things were means to achieve this end. They were against supervisions and supernatural power. They advocated
- ❖ Rationalism
- ❖ Democracy
- ❖ Scientific approach to politics.
- ❖ They separated philosophy from religion and took it clore to science.
- ❖ Roy had witnessed capitalism and communism and was unsatisfied with both. One sacrificed Individual and the other sacrificed freedom.
- ❖ Radical humanist were concerned with both individual and freedom.
- ❖ Roy established the Frankfurt school in Dehradun. He started National Renaissance Institute. He believed that through Radical humanism, the greatest good of the greatest member could be achieved.
- ❖ Thus Radical humanists with their perspective of scientific humanism and cosmopolitan look favored freedom by peaceful means and revolution by consent. They were convinced that rationalism of each individual would guide him to proper action.

