Polity & Governance · GS - II

Discuss how Indian courts can balance the right to religious freedom with public safety and the State's responsibility to maintain public order.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 29/10/2026	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Article 25; freedom of religion; public safety; reasonable restrictions; judicial review; constitutional balance

Model Answer

Introduction

Religious freedom is an essential constitutional right in India. However, its exercise must be balanced with public safety, health and the lawful responsibilities of the State.

Constitutional Framework

Article 25 guarantees freedom of conscience and the right to profess, practise and propagate religion, subject to public order, morality, health and other constitutional provisions. Article 26 protects specified rights of religious denominations, also subject to constitutional limitations.

Role of the State

Authorities may take preventive measures when credible structural or security risks threaten human life. Such measures should be based on evidence, proportionate to the identified danger and consistent with applicable law. Restrictions should not be arbitrary or discriminatory.

Role of the Judiciary

Courts review whether administrative decisions comply with constitutional rights and legal procedures. They can examine the evidence supporting restrictions, the proportionality of the measures and whether less restrictive alternatives are feasible.

In the reported Race Course Masjid matter, the Delhi High Court declined to direct the authorities to permit prayers, citing safety concerns.

Way Forward

Authorities should ensure transparent safety assessments, timely structural inspections and clear communication with affected communities. Where feasible, safe alternatives should be considered without compromising public safety.

Conclusion

Constitutional governance requires protecting religious freedom while preventing avoidable risks to life. Evidence-based, proportionate restrictions and effective judicial review help maintain this balance.

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