

# 02 Apr 2019: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### A. GS1 Related

### B. GS2 Related

### C. GS3 Related

#### **ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY**

1. [Forest fires threatening Odisha's flora and fauna](#)

#### **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

1. [India gets surveillance satellite](#)
2. [Scientists trace likely methane source on Mars](#)

#### **ECONOMY**

1. [SEBI mulls SRO for investment advisers](#)
2. [RBI tweaks NPA divergence disclosure rules](#)

### D. GS4 Related

### E. Editorials

#### **POLITY AND GOVERNANCE**

1. [Ensuring access to justice](#)
2. [Space for campaign](#)

#### **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

1. [Deepening insecurity](#)
2. [Taking a cue from Japan](#)

### F. Tidbits

1. [A cafe that will serve science hot](#)

### G. Prelims Fact

1. [Dhimsa dance](#)
2. [WWF](#)

### H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

### I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

## A. GS1 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## B. GS2 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## C. GS3 Related

### Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

#### 1. Forest fires threatening Odisha's flora and fauna

##### Context:

Odisha had registered a sudden jump in forest fires across the State resulting in massive damage to flora and fauna.

### Details:

- As many as 5,332 fire spots had been noticed since November 1 last, the beginning of forest fire season, in the State.
- The month of March had alone registered 4,495 fire spots.
- As per statistics generated by SNPP (Suomi National Polar-orbiting Partnership) satellite, only 385 fire spots were recorded February while in January, only 55 fire incidences were detected.
- The month of April started with 11 fires on Monday as detected by Moderate resolution Imaging spectro-radiometer (MODIS) with a resolution of 1 km.

### Effects of Forest fire:

- The forest fires have caused a huge loss to the timber and other fruit and leaf-bearing trees and creepers of the forest.
- They also destroy wildlife and their habitat.
- Nests and eggs of ground-dwelling birds are lost.
- Reptiles also lose their young ones due to forest fires.

### Relaying information:

- - When a fire anywhere in the world is detected by NASA's MODIS (Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer) and VIIRS (Visible Infrared Imaging Radiometer Suite) satellites, the Forest Survey of India (FSI) analyses the data by overlaying the digitised boundaries of forest areas to pinpoint the location to the exact forest compartment.
  - The FSI relays news of the fire to the concerned State, so that the Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) in charge of the forest where the fire is raging is informed

Meanwhile, news of the fire would have reached the DFO from his guards in watchtowers and on patrol.

- The DFO decides whom to deploy. Usually, there is a master fire control room which is informed and which sends firefighters from local fire crew stations to fight the blaze.

### Forest fire management:

- Fire could only be tamed at the initial stage before it became a conflagration preventing anybody from even approaching it due to the intense heat generate.
- Prevention of human-caused fires through education and environmental modification. It will include silvicultural activities, engineering works, people participation, and education and enforcement. It is proposed that more emphasis be given to people participation through Joint Forest Fire Management for fire prevention.
- Prompt detection of fires through a well-coordinated network of observation points, efficient ground patrolling, and communication networks. Remote sensing technology is to be given due importance in fire detection. For successful fire management and administration, a National Fire Danger Rating System (NFDRS) and Fire Forecasting System are to be developed in the country.
- Fast initial attack measures.
- Vigorous follow-up action.
- Introducing a forest fuel modification system at strategic points.
- Fire fighting resources.

### MODIS:

- MODIS (or Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer) is a key instrument aboard the Terra

(originally known as EOS AM-1) and Aqua (originally known as EOS PM-1) satellites.

- They are designed to provide measurements in large-scale global dynamics including changes in Earth's cloud cover, radiation budget and processes occurring in the oceans, on land, and in the lower atmosphere.
- Terra's orbit around the Earth is timed so that it passes from north to south across the equator in the morning, while Aqua passes south to north over the equator in the afternoon.
- Terra MODIS and Aqua MODIS are viewing the entire Earth's surface every 1 to 2 days, acquiring data in 36 spectral bands, or groups of wavelengths (see MODIS Technical Specifications).
- These data will improve our understanding of global dynamics and processes occurring on the land, in the oceans, and in the lower atmosphere.
- MODIS is playing a vital role in the development of validated, global, interactive Earth system models able to predict global change accurately enough to assist policy makers in making sound decisions concerning the protection of our environment.

## Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### 1. India gets surveillance satellite

#### Context:

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) launched the country's first electronic surveillance satellite, EMISAT.

#### Details:

- Emisat, the chief payload on PSLV-C45, is meant for electromagnetic spectrum measurements.
- As many as 28 small satellites of international customers were also put in space as secondary riders.

#### How does EMISAT work?

- EMISAT is an advanced electronic intelligence (ELINT) satellite jointly developed by ISRO-DRDO.
- EMISAT is modelled after a famous Israeli spy satellite called SARAL (Satellite with ARGOS and ALTIKA). Both these satellites have the SSB-2 bus protocol — the core component for their sharp electronic surveillance capabilities across the length and width of a large country like India
- EMISAT also has a special altimeter (a radar altitude measuring device) called 'AltiKa' that works in the Ka-band microwave region of the spectrum. The electronic surveillance payload of EMISAT was developed under a DRDO's project called KAUTILYA.
- The main capability of EMISAT is in signal intelligence — intercepting signals broadcasted by communication systems, radars, and other electronic systems. The Ka-band frequency that EMISAT is sensitive to, allows the 436-kg EMISAT — India's newest spy in the sky — to scan through ice, rain, coastal zones, land masses, forests and wave heights with ease.

**Pride of place**  
PSLV-C45, carrying EMISAT and 28 international satellites, marked the first mission of PSLV-QL, a new variant of PSLV with four strap-on motors

**EMISAT:** It is a satellite built around ISRO's Mini Satellite-2 bus. It is intended for electromagnetic spectrum measurement

**436 kg** Lift-off weight | **748 km** Altitude | **800 W** Power

**NEXT MISSION**  
PSLV-C46 will launch RISAT-2B in May 2019

**PAYLOADS** The payloads carried by PSLV-C45 are Automatic Identification System from ISRO, Automatic Packet Repeating System from AMSAT, India, and Advanced Retarding Potential Analyzer for ionospheric studies from the Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology

CUSTOMER SATELLITES		
Country	Name	No. of satellites
Lithuania	BlueWalker1	1
	M6P	1
Spain	Aistechsats-3	1
Switzerland	Astrocast-2	1
U.S.	Flock-4A	20
	LEMUR	4

## Electronic Intelligence (ELINT)

- Electronic Intelligence includes the collection (recording) and analysis of intercepted signals. It primarily deals with radars signals.
- An ELINT system intercepts radar signal and analyzes it i.e. determines the frequency of carriers and subcarriers, modulation, bandwidth, power level, beam footprint parameters, and emitter location and motion.
- Basically, it creates an RF signature of a radar which can be used for locating and quickly identify the radar in subsequent encounters.
- Furthermore, based on RF signature information of a radar, jamming techniques can be developed to counter the radar.
- Space-based electronic intelligence, the realm that India just forayed into with EMISAT, is said to have been around since the early 1960s, pioneered by the U.S.
- At least three other space powers are said to be past masters at it — the U.S. as the leader is said to be having fifth-generation ELINT satellites; Russia is not far behind. Then comes China. Around 150 military satellites may be hovering over Earth right now.
- According to a few present and former defence scientists, one satellite for ELINT will not suffice and the country may need to have at least three more working in tandem.

## 2. Scientists trace likely methane source on Mars

### Context:

Scientists confirmed the presence of the life-indicating gas on the Red Planet (Mars) as well as where it might have come from.

### Details:

- Gas detected by Curiosity rover may have been released from fractured Martian permafrost.
- Two independent investigations pointed to an ice sheet east of Gale Crater as the likely source for the gas.
- The most likely source was a sheet of frozen methane beneath a rock formation, which the team believes periodically ejects the gas into the atmosphere.
- Giuranna from Rome's National Astrophysics Institute said that while methane is a sign of life on Earth, its presence on Mars doesn't necessarily constitute evidence of something similar on the Red Planet.
- Methane is important because it could be an indicator of microbial life. But life is not required to explain these detections because methane can be produced by abiotic processes.
- Though not a direct bio signature of life, methane can add to the habitability of martian settings, as

certain types of microbes can use methane as a source of carbon and energy.

- If founded to be extensive, the methane it contains "could support a sustained human presence" on Mars as a possible source of fuel for industrial processes and a propellant for returning manned missions to Earth.

### **Gale Crater:**

- Gale is a crater, and probable dry lake, on Mars near the northwestern part of the Aeolis quadrangle
- The crater was named after Walter Frederick Gale, an amateur astronomer from Sydney, Australia
- Aeolis Mons is a mountain in the center of Gale

## **Category: ECONOMY**

### **1. SEBI mulls SRO for investment advisers**

#### **Context:**

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has proposed a self-regulatory organisation (SRO) for the growing number of investment advisers to address issues related to the quality of advice given to investors by such entities.

#### **Detail:**

- The capital markets regulator released a consultation paper on Monday, which, among other things, proposed the strengthening of the existing regulatory framework for SROs by introducing features such as a governing board with public interest directors and a clear policy for arbitration and dispute resolution.
- SEBI was in receipt of a large number of complaints alleging charging of exorbitant fees, assurance of returns, misconduct etc. by investment advisers.
- Given the growth in this segment of the market, it is felt that the time is appropriate to initiate the formation of an SRO [for the sector]," stated the SEBI statement.
- The regulator has proposed a governing board with at least 50% public interest directors along with 25% representation each of shareholder directors and elected representatives.
- Further, the governing board can appoint a managing director or chief executive officer to manage the daily affairs of the SRO.
- Incidentally, the regulator has said that there was a need for an SRO for mutual fund distributors — that currently register with Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) — as well to bring in consistency in industry practices and also to take disciplinary action against alleged malpractices such as mis-selling of products and churning of portfolio, among others.

#### **Self-Regulatory Organisation (SRO):**

- SRO is the first-level regulator that performs the crucial task of regulating intermediaries representing a particular segment of securities market on behalf of the regulator.
- SRO would be seen as an extension of the regulatory authority of the SEBI and would perform the tasks delegated to it by the SEBI," said the paper.
- The role of SRO is developmental, regulatory, related to grievance redressal and dispute resolution as well as taking disciplinary actions.

SEBI has sought public feedback on whether there should be a single or different SRO for different categories of market intermediaries, and whether the minimum net worth criteria for SROs should be

enhanced from the current requirement of Rs.1 crore.

## 2. RBI tweaks NPA divergence disclosure rules

### Context:

The Reserve Bank of India on Monday asked banks to disclose bad loan divergences in their financial statements if the additional provisioning exceeds 10% of profit before provision and contingencies.

### Details:

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said banks should disclose bad loan divergences if the additional provisioning has exceeded 10% of the company's profit before provision and contingencies.
- The central bank altered the additional provisioning requirements, which previously stated that banks should disclose divergences if the provisioning has exceeded 15% of net profit after tax.
- The RBI further said disclosure has also to be made if the additional gross NPAs identified by RBI exceed 15% of the published incremental gross NPAs for the reference period.
- Since provisions and contingencies form a major part of banks' line item, the change in norms may mean that a few banks, particularly those making losses, will be spared from disclosing provision divergence.
- However, banks must compute these exposures separately and report to the Department of Banking Regulation on quarterly basis, it added.

## D. GS4 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## E. Editorials

### Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

#### 1. Ensuring access to justice

##### Editorial Analysis:

- It is important to note that the justice system in any democracy is set up, under the Constitution to serve the public without “fear or favour, affection or ill-will” as far as judges are concerned.
- However, some experts believe that the protagonists, as far as India is concerned, in operating the system have stopped that very access — judges through lack of prescience, and many lawyers through their dishonesty in many forms.

##### Revisiting judges' advice

- There was a time when at an informal meeting, all of the sitting judges of the Supreme Court advised the then Chief Justice of India to decide against the request of the then Central government to sit in other places in the country under Article 130 of the Constitution.
- The reason the judges decided against it was because they felt that the authority of the Supreme Court would get diluted. The reasoning, in retrospect, was fallacious.
- Many High Courts in this country have different Benches for meting out justice without ‘justice’ being ‘diluted’. For example, **the Bombay High Court has four Benches — in Mumbai, Aurangabad, Nagpur and Panaji (Goa) — and the quality of its decisions or status have**

**certainly not been diluted thereby.**

- The number of Benches depends on the size of the State, the idea being to facilitate easier access to justice.

### **Consequences of the Supreme Court not having more benches:**

- The direct consequence of the wrong decision has been three-fold.
- First, the Supreme Court sitting only in Delhi has resulted in excellent lawyers from other High Courts not appearing before the Supreme Court, possibly because it casts too large a monetary burden on their clients, many of whom are impoverished.
- Secondly, all lawyers, whatever their calibre or competence, who happen to be in Delhi now appear in the Supreme Court. Some of the good lawyers who were able to leave lucrative practices in the High Courts have settled down in Delhi, but they have established a monopoly, and, as a result, charge unconscionable fees even from charitable concerns — sometimes even when they do not appear at the hearing. This is also true of litigating lawyers at all levels of the judicial system.
- The third fallout of the failure to act under Article 130 is that the Supreme Court in Delhi has been flooded with work and been reduced to a District Court instead of a Court of Final Appeal and Constitutional Court as envisaged under the Constitution.

### **Unethical lawyers: A Perspective**

- Experts point out that the fault in actually denying access to justice to citizens is the fault of unethical lawyers alone. That lawyers are generally dishonest is a well-known fact.
- Lawyers are (frequently) humorously called liars, and because they are the middle-men between judges and the litigating public, they act like dishonest brokers.
- Some of the lawyers specialising in victim compensation cases do not charge any fees for their services and render services free of cost.
- They generally obtain a blank cheque from the victim which is filled in after credit of the compensation to the bank account of the victim.
- Victims who open bank accounts for the purpose of victim compensation are being duped by some of the lawyers who link their or their assistant's mobile number to the account so that they can have access to all the information of the transactions in the bank account.
- Some of the lawyers specialising in victim compensation cases thus take huge money as a percentage of compensation amount awarded towards victim compensation. Such a practice is frustrating the whole purpose of victim compensation.
- The procedure is similar to that adopted by some advocates dealing with Motor Accident Claim Cases under Section 166 (application for compensation) of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988. They agree to conduct the cases without a fee, but in the event of compensation being granted by the court, the advocates get a certain percentage.
- As a matter of fact, in some cases, as soon as an award of victim compensation is made by any Legal Services Authority (LSA), a statutory body to render free legal services to the impoverished all over India, the lawyer gets in touch with the victim and somehow convinces him/her to file a writ petition before the High Court to show that without such writ petition the compensation will not be disbursed by the State LSA (SLSA). Ultimately when the amount of compensation is finally disbursed by the SLSA, the lawyer takes credit and shows that it was because of his noble initiative that the victim got the relief, and in exchange claims a hefty share in the compensation.
- Such lawyers effectively create a perception of rendering a benevolent service by not charging any fees so the victim could never suspect him/her of any malpractice. Incidentally, according to a study carried out by a research organisation, Vidhi, in the Delhi High Court, **more than 70% of the delays in the disposal of cases are attributable to lawyers, a major reason being sometimes unjust pleas for adjournments.**

### Efforts Made to address the Issue:

- The litigating public and lawyers (including women and students) — either because they do not trust the judicial system or they distrust lawyers in particular, or for whatever reason — write hundreds of letters to the Chief Justice of India and the Chief Justices and Justices of each High Court for relief.
- Some issues raised in these letters are administrative or statutory in nature.
- Apart from these letters, hundreds of letters are written to Chief Justices for relief on the judicial side.
- It is also important to note that given the huge workload before all judges, it is not possible to deal with all letter-appeals simultaneously on the statutory, administrative or judicial side, unless they are drawn specifically to the Justices' attention.
- Unfortunately the disciplinary powers available to Bar Councils both in Delhi and in States are more often than not ineffective.
- Some are politically motivated and some States do not have disciplinary committees at all.
- The disciplinary jurisdiction over lawyers was originally with the courts.
- As far as the older High Courts are concerned, this is clear from the respective Letters Patents under which the courts were set up.
- This continued till the power was taken away by the Advocates Act, 1961. Significantly, the Law Minister at that time was Ashoke Sen, a well-known lawyer. The solution to the present situation is to give the disciplinary jurisdiction back to the courts and to repeal the Advocates Act, 1961.

### The way forward:

- Firstly, the Supreme Court should reconsider setting up Benches in different States in keeping with the recommendations of the Law Commissions (125th Report and 229th Report).
- Second, the Bar Council of India should exercise its powers under the Advocates Act, 1961 more effectively.
- If not, the disciplinary jurisdiction must be returned to the judiciary as was the position prior to the Advocates Act, 1961 by repealing the 1961 Act.
- Third, lawyers should be made irrelevant by referring more cases to trained mediators, as the Supreme Court has done in the Ayodhya dispute.

## 2. Space for campaign

### Note to Students:

- The issue concerning the Model Code of Conduct is in the news. Students must go through this issue in detail.
- It is important to note that with the announcement of dates, the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) has come into force and lays down a list of dos and don'ts for the political parties ahead of elections.

### Why in the news?

- Recently, the Election Commission of India ruled that Prime Minister Narendra Modi did not violate the Model Code of Conduct by announcing through a nationally televised address the demonstration of India's capability to bring down an operational satellite.

### Larger Background and Analysis:

#### What is the Model Code of Conduct?

- The Election Commission's Model Code of Conduct is a set of guidelines issued to regulate political parties and candidates prior to elections.



- The rules range from issues related to speeches, polling day, polling booths, portfolios, content of election manifestos, processions and general conduct, so that free and fair elections are conducted. When does the Model Code of Conduct come into effect?
- According to the Press Information Bureau, a version of the MCC was first introduced in the state assembly elections in Kerala in 1960.
- It was largely followed by all parties in the 1962 elections and continued to be followed in subsequent general elections.
- In October 1979, the EC added a section to regulate the ‘party in power’ and prevent it from gaining an unfair advantage at the time of elections.
- The MCC comes into force from the date the election schedule is announced until the date that results are out.

What restrictions does the Model Code of Conduct impose?

- The MCC contains eight provisions dealing with general conduct, meetings, processions, polling day, polling booths, observers, the party in power, and election manifestos.
- As soon as the code kicks in, the party in power — whether at the Centre or in the States — should ensure that it does not use its official position for campaigning.
- Hence, no policy, project or scheme can be announced that can influence the voting behaviour.
- The party must also avoid advertising at the cost of the public exchequer or using official mass media for publicity on achievements to improve chances of victory in the elections.
- The code also states that the ministers must not combine official visits with election work or use official machinery for the same.
- The ruling party also cannot use government transport or machinery for campaigning.
- It should also ensure that public places such as maidans etc., for holding election meetings, and facilities like the use of helipads are provided to the opposition parties on the same terms and conditions on which they are used by the party in power.
- The issue of advertisement at the cost of public exchequer in the newspapers and other media is also considered an offence.
- The ruling government cannot make any ad-hoc appointments in Government, Public Undertakings etc. which may influence the voters.
- Political parties or candidates can be criticised based only on their work record and no caste and communal sentiments can be used to lure voters. Mosques, Churches, Temples or any other places of worship should not be used for election propaganda.
- Bribing, intimidating or impersonation of voters is also barred.
- Holding public meetings during the 48-hour period before the hour fixed for the closing of the poll is also prohibited.
- ***The 48-hour period is known as “election silence”.***
- The idea is to allow a voter a campaign-free environment to reflect on events before casting her vote. Is the Model Code of Conduct legally binding?
- The fact is that the MCC evolved as part of the ECI’s drive to ensure free and fair elections and was the result of a consensus among major political parties.
- ***It has no statutory backing.***
- Simply put, this means anybody breaching the MCC can’t be proceeded against under any clause of the Code. Everything is voluntary.
- ***The EC uses moral sanction or censure for its enforcement.***
- The ECI can issue a notice to a politician or a party for alleged breach of the MCC either on its own or on the basis of a complaint by another party or individual.
- Once a notice is issued, the person or party must reply in writing — either accepting fault and tendering an unconditional apology or rebutting the allegation.
- In the latter case, if the person or party is found guilty subsequently, he/it can attract a written censure from the ECI — something that many see as a mere slap on the wrist.

**A Brief look at some of the previous MCC violations:**

- In the run-up to Gujarat polls in 2017, both BJP and Congress accused each other of violating the Model Code of Conduct. The BJP pointed to Rahul Gandhi's interviews to TV channels during the 48-hour period before polling, while the Congress accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of violating the same provisions by holding a 'roadshow' in Ahmedabad after casting his vote.
- During Goa elections, EC pulled up Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal for asking voters to "accept money from the Congress and BJP candidates but vote for the AAP".
- It is important to note that although the Commission rarely resorts to punitive action to enforce the MCC, there is one recent example when unabated violations forced EC's hand. During the 2014 Lok Sabha polls, the EC had banned BJP leader and now party president Amit Shah and SP leader Azam Khan from campaigning in order to prevent them from further vitiating the poll atmosphere with their speeches.
- ***The Commission resorted to its extraordinary powers under Article 324 of the Constitution to impose the ban.***
- It was only lifted once the leaders apologised and promised to operate within the Code.

**"cVIGIL"- A Recent Measure Taken to enforce the Model Code of Conduct:**

- "cVIGIL" is a user-friendly and easy to operate Android application. It will be operational only where elections are announced.
- The app requires an Android smartphone equipped with a camera, good internet connection and GPS access. The operating system should be Android Jellybean and above. The application supports all the latest Android smartphones.
- ***"cVIGIL" will allow anyone in the election-bound state to report violations of Model Code of Conduct (MCC) that comes into effect from the date of announcement of elections and goes on till a day after the polls. By using this app, citizens can immediately report on incidents of misconduct within minutes of having witnessed them and without having to rush to the office of the returning officer to lodge a complaint.***
- The vigilant citizen has to click a picture or record a video of upto two minutes' duration of the scene of violations of the model code. The photo or video is to be uploaded on the app. The automated location mapping will be done by the app using the Geographic Information System.
- After its successful submission through the app, the vigilant citizen gets a Unique ID to track and receive the follow up updates on her or his mobile. A citizen can report many incidents in this manner and will get a unique id for each report for follow up updates. The identity of the complainant will be kept confidential. Once the complaint is lodged, the information beeps in the District Control Room from where it is assigned to a Field Unit. A field unit consists of Flying Squads, Static Surveillance Teams, Reserve teams etc.
- Each Field Unit will have a GIS-based mobile application called 'cVIGIL Dispatcher', which allows the unit to directly reach the location through navigation technology and take action.
- After a Field Unit has taken action, it messages and uploads the relevant document as 'action taken report' via the 'cVIGIL Dispatcher' to the returning officer concerned for his decision and disposal. If the incident is found correct, the information is sent to the National Grievance Portal of the Election Commission of India for further action and the vigilant citizen is informed about the action taken within a hundred minutes.

**How is misuse prevented in the App?**

- The app has inbuilt features to prevent its misuse. It will receive complaints only about Model Code of Conduct violations.
- The user will get 5 minutes to report an incident after having clicked a picture or a video.

- To prevent any misuse, the app will not allow uploading of the pre-recorded or old images and videos.
- The app will not facilitate saving of the photos or videos recorded using the 'cVIGIL' app into the phone gallery either.
- Further, the application will be active only in States where elections have been announced. The moment a citizen exits an election-bound State, the app will become inactive.
- So far, the complaints about violations of Model Code of Conduct often could not be followed instantly, leading to the violators escaping detection from the action squads. Also, the lack of any documented evidence in the form of pictures or videos was seen as a hurdle in verifying a complaint.
- Further, the absence of a robust response system to quickly and accurately identify the scene of occurrence of violations with the help of geographical location details hampered election officers' ability to apprehend the violators.
- The new app is expected to fill in all these gaps and create a fast-track complaint reception and redressal system.

### Editorial Analysis:

- Some experts take the view, that in ruling that the Prime Minister Narendra Modi did not violate the Model Code of Conduct by announcing through a nationally televised address, the demonstration of India's capability to bring down an operational satellite, the Election Commission has taken a possibly correct view of the Code's provisions.
- However, it remains a narrow technical view as it is a thin line that divides the idea of making a high-level declaration of a defence capability from using it for electoral advantage.
- As a matter of fact, opposition parties had accused the Prime Minister of violating the Model Code by touting the demonstration of the anti-satellite (ASAT) missile test as a significant achievement of the ruling BJP.
- CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury had formally complained to the EC.
- Further, there were questions about the timing of the test as well as the manner of announcement as the country is in election mode.
- A five-member committee formed by the EC concluded that the relevant provision was not attracted in this case.
- Part VII of the Code covering the "party in power" says that "...the misuse of official mass media during the election period for partisan coverage of political news and publicity regarding achievements with a view to furthering the prospects of the party in power shall be scrupulously avoided."
- **The committee's finding that there was no "misuse of official mass media" as Doordarshan and AIR took the feed from a news agency, and more than 60 channels did the same, is rooted in the letter of the code, not its spirit.**
- It is possible to come to an equally valid conclusion that Mr. Modi's action in making the announcement himself, rather than letting the DRDO, the agency involved, do so violates the bar on "furthering the prospects" of the ruling party by the nature of the publicity given to the achievement.
- The practice of using a private agency to record the announcement and asking it to share the feed, obliquely serves the purpose of generating publicity through the official media. As the legal maxim goes, what cannot be done directly cannot be done indirectly either.
- Given that Mr. Modi gave advance publicity to the announcement, there is really no virtue in claiming that DD and AIR were not used for the purpose.

### Landmark achievement in defence research:

- As a landmark achievement in defence research, it deserved a public pronouncement at a high level.
- Even then, letting the DRDO explain the achievement first would have served the purpose.
- That the motive was to proclaim the ASAT demonstration as an achievement of the regime in the field of national security became obvious when it was propagated by the ruling party that its

predecessor did not have the political will to approve such a test.

- Experts take the view that the BJP must demonstrate it will not use such achievements for partisan advantage.

### **Concluding Remarks: The Way Forward**

- **Statutory backing to Model Code of Conduct:** It is expedient to give statutory backing to the Model Code of Conduct leaving no vacuum for the Election Commission of India (ECI) to exercise its residuary power to enforce the Model Code of Conduct.
- **Power to derecognise political parties:** The power of the ECI to derecognise political parties on account of violation of the Model Code of Conduct may be incorporated in the Representation of People Act, 1951.

## **Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

### **1. Deepening insecurity**

#### **Editorial Analysis:**

- Some experts take the view that after 'Mission Shakti', which was India's anti-satellite test, there is a feeling that India needs this form of deterrence for its security.
- To be visibly strong in order to deter any enemy from attacking is a concern that goes back to pre-historic times. But when this ancient urge is exerted by nations with nuclear weapons, it must be an occasion to revisit the arms race, the Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) doctrine and their long-term implications.

#### **A Note on the Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) doctrine:**

- This doctrine emerged during the Cold War in the mid-20th century when the U.S. and the erstwhile U.S.S.R. had stockpiled so many nuclear weapons that if launched, the weapons could destroy both nations many times over.
- Since there was eventually a 'détente', or a relaxation of hostilities between the two, it is tempting to think that MAD is a valid doctrine that should continue to be applied by all countries with nuclear weapons capability.
- Questions arise: What is the basis of this belief? And does it actually work?
- For more than 100 years now, scientists and writers of science fiction alike have fostered the illusion that some day humankind will have a weapon so terrible that the fear of its impact will end war for all times.

#### **Deterrence and violence: A Perspective**

- Experts make the assertion that although many destructive weapons, including nuclear bombs and chemical weapons, have been deployed, but this has not ended war. On the contrary, the invention of increasingly deadly weapons, have fuelled a global arms race.
- Globally, the annual spend on armaments is now estimated to stand at about \$1.7 trillion. Estimates of the total number of nuclear weapons in the world range from 15,000 to 20,000, with each one of these weapons being far more powerful than the bombs dropped by the U.S. on Japan in 1945.
- The U.S. and Russia still maintain about 1,800 nuclear weapons in a state of high alert, ready for launch within minutes.
- According to the **Global Peace Index**, in 2017, the economic impact of violence globally was estimated at about \$14.76 trillion, which was 12.4% of global GDP.
- Since 2012, there has been a 16% increase in the economic impact of violence largely due to the

conflicts in Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq.

- It is vital to note that having competing weapons, in terms of quality and quantity, has not acted as a deterrent either in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or in the Syrian war or the prolonged conflict in Colombia. **What did finally end the conflict in Colombia, after almost 50 years, was a protracted process of negotiation between all parties of the conflict.**
- The Global Peace Index also shows that over the last 70 years, the per capita GDP growth has been three times higher in more peaceful countries. This is partly why, compared to 10 years ago, 102 nations are spending less on military as a percentage of their GDP.
- But that is a thin silver lining to a grim reality.
- Ban Ki-moon, while he was UN Secretary General, said, in 2009, “The world is over-armed and peace is under-funded .... The end of the Cold War has led the world to expect a massive peace dividend. Yet, there are over 20,000 nuclear weapons around the world. Many of them are still on hair-trigger alert, threatening our own survival.”
- **According to the website of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), the failure of the nuclear powers to disarm has heightened the risk that other countries will acquire nuclear weapons.**
- In 2017, the ICAN was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

#### **Double-edged sword:**

- Theoretically, MAD is supposed to eliminate the incentive for starting a conflict but it also makes disarming almost impossible.
- This is partly why, long after the Cold War ended, the U.S. is poised to spend enormous amounts of money over the next 10 years in updating and modernising its nuclear arsenal.
- The tragic irony of this trend is that nuclear defence, particularly with warheads riding on rockets of supersonic speed, actually deepens insecurity in both countries by causing millions of lives to perpetually be at the risk of instantaneous annihilation.
- All through the Cold War and even now, the MAD doctrine has been opposed on both moral and practical grounds by a variety of disarmament and peace groups.
- The most prominent of these, War Resisters’ International (WRI), which will turn 100 in 2021, has 90 affiliated groups in 40 countries.
- Such groups ceaselessly serve as a counter to all those who glamorise or justify war or an arms race. Above all, they constantly draw attention to the fact that the only true security lies in dissolving enmity by going to the roots of any conflict.

#### **Concluding Remarks:**

- Experts point out that once the joy about India’s technological achievements, in the realm of missiles, has settled down, perhaps attention can shift to the much bigger challenge of seeking answers to a key question: what really makes us, the world a whole, more secure?

## **2. Taking a cue from Japan**

### **Larger Background of the BRI:**

Six years ago, Chinese President Xi Jinping launched a mammoth infrastructure project straddling many countries and continents. Of the projects, the most ambitious is the \$60+ billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, aimed at linking China’s Xinjiang province with the Arabian Sea.

#### **What is it?**

- The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), also known as the One Belt One Road Initiative, is the most emblematic of China’s economic and industrial might, as of its ambitions for global, political and

strategic influence. The appellation has come to signify the many Beijing-backed infrastructure projects that predate Mr. Xi's ascent.

- When Mr. Xi announced the BRI's formal launch in Kazakhstan in 2013, there were few signs that the policy would command the heft and reach it has acquired since. BRI partnerships encompass infrastructure investments in the construction, transport, aviation, telecommunications and energy sectors stretching across many countries in Asia and Africa. A number of Latin American and Caribbean states recently signed a memorandum of understanding to join the BRI. The so-called 16+1 (China) grouping of central and eastern European countries includes 11 states from the European Union (EU). Rome endorsed the BRI last week, the first among the Group of 7 most industrialised nations to do so. The move has caused consternation in Brussels and Washington, which are grappling with the many fissures that have surfaced in the trans-Atlantic alliance.
- Typically, the terms around BRI bilateral tie-ups are fluid and amorphous in nature, premised on negotiation and accommodation rather than being underpinned by rigidly written-down rules and procedures. The upside to this style of doing things is the flow of investment on seemingly soft terms to places hard up for basic infrastructure. The politically neutral stance of Beijing-backed deals starkly contrasts with much western hypocrisy and high-mindedness about respect for the rule of law and human rights. The downside is the risk of falling into a prolonged debt trap and the uncertainty over contractual obligations between the parties. With the rise of populist forces in many countries in recent years, the world's open trading system has come under a protectionist strain. Perhaps, there are signs in the BRI of the beginnings of a different kind of globalisation.

### **Why did China push for it?**

- The BRI is, above all, a response to slowing domestic economic growth earlier this decade, accentuated by a slump in Chinese exports to developed countries following the 2007-08 economic meltdown. As infrastructure spending at home became less sustainable, Beijing shifted the emphasis in a big way to boosting the global competitiveness of domestic businesses.
- During the BRI's fifth anniversary in September, Mr. Xi described this flagship programme as an economic cooperation initiative rather than a geopolitical or military alliance. But the more common narrative is that the large infrastructure investments in the least developed and developing countries have enabled Beijing to leverage its influence around the world, potentially altering the established rules of the global order.

### **How many major BRI projects are in the works?**

- It is hard to put a precise number on them because projects are negotiated informally between investor and recipient countries.
- But they are clearly in the thousands, unprecedented in the history of development cooperation, in terms of the volume of investment and potential benefits.
- Let us begin with the Greek harbour of Piraeus. Backed by Chinese investment, the port has climbed from the world's 93rd container port in 2010 to 38th in 2017.
- This stupendous success has apparently raised expectations even higher. A most strategic BRI venture is the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL), which would connect Malaysia's less developed east coast to southern Thailand and the capital Kuala Lumpur.
- The newly elected government of Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad suspended the project last year, owing to reservations about the cost of financing by the China Communication Construction Company. Following Beijing's willingness to address Kuala Lumpur's concerns, the ECRL has been brought back on track with revisions to its pricing and size. There are other large Malaysian gas and oil pipeline projects that were suspended owing to the alleged misappropriation of funds during the previous government. They might eventually be revived, just as the rail project.
- By far the most ambitious BRI project is the \$60+ billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Once the Gwadar city port in coastal Balochistan is built, its strategic location, near the Strait of Hormuz, will connect the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Oman, the arterial route to world oil transport. The

force of Balochi opposition to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, as to most other projects, essentially comes down to a demand to reallocate its promised benefits rather than an outright roll-back. India has opted to stay out of the BRI owing to concerns of national sovereignty and integrity, choosing instead to stick with the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. New Delhi's reservations are entirely understandable, given that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, a core BRI endeavour, passes through the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

### Where does the BRI go from here?

- Many BRI projects are said to have overshot their original estimated cost. The burgeoning debt burden recipient countries have thus accumulated has led to questions over the long-term viability and benefits of such ventures. While these may be legitimate concerns, it is equally true that it is still early days in the evolution of the BRI. Another concern for the BRI is its current dependence on the U.S. dollar to fund the bulk of its projects.
- But unlike some years ago, its stocks of the greenback are in limited supply. Conversely, the renminbi is yet to emerge as a full-fledged global currency. That may leave China with the option of adopting a co-financing strategy. Such cooperation with multilateral banking institutions would be a welcome balancing act. Western critics have attacked the initiative as new colonialism, or Marshal Plan for the 21st century. China has generally played down such comparisons, drawing parallels with the U.S. endeavour to rebuild Europe as a counter to the Soviet Union after World War II. Beijing has embarked upon a 'Made in China 2025' industrial policy, an audacious bid for global dominance in artificial intelligence, aerospace, and 5G telecommunication, among others.
- Washington's current trade dispute with China aims fundamentally to challenge this growing dominance. It has even portrayed Chinese competition in terms of an ultimate threat to U.S. national security, invoking provisions rarely used in international trade disputes. The outcome of negotiations between the world's two largest economies to break the deadlock would echo across the Belt and Road process. Italy's endorsement of the BRI is a potential game changer.
- Other major economies may follow Rome's lead, in much the same way as the initial resistance to China's Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank eventually evaporated. That opens room to indulge in some idle speculation about how closely or little the new Silk Road would one day resemble the current order of things. The answer would depend upon who among its innumerable participants can wield the maximum influence and ultimately emerge winners or losers. One day, the BRI might remain Chinese in all but name. That may be the next phase of globalisation in the making.

### Editorial Analysis:

- Experts opine that as the countdown begins for the second edition of the Belt and Road Forum (BRF) later this month, Beijing is jubilant.
- Recently, China demonstrated that President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) had steamed into the heart of Europe.
- As a matter of fact, during President Xi's Europe visit, Italy became the first G7 country to formally subscribe to the China-led BRI.

### How do the Chinese interpret the recent deal?

- The Chinese have interpreted Rome's decision as a historic event that revives ties between the European and Chinese civilisations.
- During his visit, President Xi also spoke about joint venture prospects in other countries, including in Africa.
- That apparently tickled a nostalgic nerve in European capitals, where it has been difficult to separate the guilt of colonisation from a whiff of romance.

### Looking at the geopolitics:

- The geopolitical subtext of the visit is also fairly obvious.
- With its ties with the U.S. souring, China is making a bold move to chip away at the real or contrived fault-lines of the Trans-Atlantic Alliance.
- As in 2017, when there were plenty of red faces in China when India did not grace the BRF, there is once again a fear in Beijing that New Delhi may repeat the embarrassment.
- **India had stayed out because of sovereignty concerns as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, the flagship of the BRI, passes through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.**
- The question then arises whether there is a third way out of the problem that would allow India to hold on to its position against official participation, but yet convey to the Chinese that New Delhi has no ingrained ill-will towards the BRI.

### What New Delhi can learn from Japan?

- Perhaps, New Delhi can pull a leaf out of Japan's play book.
- In 2017, after Tokyo had decided that it needed to rebuild bridges that had collapsed following a maritime dispute over a few East China Sea islands, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe decided to send his trusted party ally, Toshihiro Nikai, to China.
- Nikai, the secretary general of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, though an established heavyweight, was technically not a part of government.
- His presence signalled that Tokyo continued to have reservations about the BRI, but was nevertheless open to an engagement with the enterprise, provided a course correction was carried out in the future.
- Significantly, Mr. Nikai's delegation included the head of Keidanren, Japan's Business Federation lobby — a pointer that its current misgivings apart, Japan could be open to business within the ambit of the BRI.
- Taking the cue from Japan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi can also tap an influential party heavyweight to lead an Indian non-official delegation to the BRF, along with business leaders and reputed scholars.

### Concluding Remarks:

- In conclusion, it is important to note that a mature and pragmatic Indian response, which keeps the door open for a future partnership with the BRI, may help keep afloat the reset achieved in the year 2018, following the informal summit between Mr. Modi and Mr. Xi in Wuhan.

## F. Tidbits

### 1. A cafe that will serve science hot

- 'Café Scientifique' is the first of its kind initiative in the State of Kerala aimed at popularising Science.
- The café envisages to bring science back into popular culture by demystifying scientific research for the public and empowering non-scientists to comfortably assess science and technology issues, particularly those that impact social policymaking.
- Café Scientifique is a grassroots public science initiative based on the French Café Philosophique model.
- Originating in England, the concept quickly gained popularity and was adopted by other countries.
- The plan is to organise meetings of science enthusiasts in the district every month at a café or a convenient place, where one or more scientists are invited to talk to the public about new developments in science.



- The project is also aimed at making science relevant, powerful and important to the public, especially the younger generations.
- Various topics such as universe, climate change, evolution, genetics and human-animal relations will be discussed in every monthly gathering.

## G. Prelims Facts

### 1. Dhimsa dance

- It is a tribal dance form, is performed by the Porja caste women.
- A group of 15–20 women forms a circle and dance praising the deity for the welfare of their domestic life.
- They also dance at weddings since the women pray for a peaceful and happy married life.
- The dance is originated in Koraput district in Odisha but has almost become an official dance of Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh.

### 2. WWF

- The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) is an international non-governmental organization founded in 1961, working in the field of the wilderness preservation, and the reduction of human impact on the environment.
- It was formerly named the World Wildlife Fund, which remains its official name in Canada and the United States.
- WWF is the world's largest conservation organization with over five million supporters worldwide, working in more than 100 countries, supporting around 1,300 conservation and environmental projects
- The Living Planet Report is published every two years by WWF since 1998; it is based on a Living Planet Index and ecological footprint calculation.
- In addition, WWF has launched several notable worldwide campaigns including Earth Hour and Debt-for-Nature Swap.
- Its current work is organized around six areas: food, climate, freshwater, wildlife, forests, and oceans.

## H. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

Q1. Consider the following statements with respect to Dhimsa:

1. It is a tribal dance form.
2. The dance originated in Vishakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh.

Which of the following statement/s is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:** It is a tribal dance form, is performed by the Porja caste women. The dance is originated in Koraput district in Odisha but has almost become an official dance of Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh.

Q2. Select the INCORRECT statement:

- a. The First schedule contains the list of states and union territories and their territories
- b. The Fifth Schedule contains provisions as to the Administration of Tribal Areas in the States of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.
- c. The Seventh Schedule to the Constitution of India defines and specifies allocation of powers and functions between Union & States.
- d. The Tenth Schedule contains provisions as to disqualification on ground of defection.

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:** Fifth Schedule contains provisions as to the Administration and Control of Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes. Sixth Schedule contains provisions as to the Administration of Tribal Areas in the States of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.

Q3. Who among the following do not find mention in the Second Schedule of the Indian Constitution?

1. Prime Minister
2. President
3. Attorney General

Selected the correct answer:

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:** Second schedule lists the emoluments for holders of constitutional offices such as salaries of President, Vice President, Ministers, Judges, Speaker & Deputy Speaker of the house of people, Chairman and the Deputy Chairman of the Council of States and the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman of the Legislative Council of a State and Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India.

Q4. Consider the following Statements:

1. Danda Nata is one of the oldest folk dance forms of Orissa.
2. The dance is performed by men and women to Worship Lord Shiva

Which of the following statement/s is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

- The dance is done mainly to worship Lord Shiva.
- Only male persons take part in this festival.
- The participants are known as the 'Bhoktas'.

Q5. "Living Planet Report" is published by:

- a. United Nations Environment Programme
- b. World Health Organisation
- c. NITI Aayog
- d. World Wide Fund for Nature

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:** The Living Planet Report is published every two years by WWF since 1998; it is based on a Living Planet Index and ecological footprint calculation.

## I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Analyse the causes of forest fires, various approaches to fight the forest fires and the measures to mitigate them. (10 Marks)
2. Critically analyse the key provisions of the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018 and discuss the way forward.