

# 06 Apr 2019: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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## B. GS2 Related

### Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

#### 1. [Pak. opens a route for flights out of India](#)

What's in the news?

- Pakistan has opened one route for west-bound flights from India more than a month after it shut its airspace for all civilian flights following the Indian Air Force's strikes at Balakot.

Context:

- In partial relief to airlines, Pakistan has opened one route for west-bound flights from India more than a month after it shut its airspace for all civilian flights following the Indian Air Force's strikes at Balakot.
- "Pakistan opened a route for west-bound flights around 5 p.m. on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2019. The impact of this announcement is yet to be assessed," said a senior official of the Ministry of Civil Aviation.
- A decision on opening a passage for planes overflying Pakistan and entering India is yet to be taken.

- The route that has been opened passes from near Mumbai and enters southern Pakistan. This is only one of the 11 exit and entry points between India and Pakistan, according to the official.
- Since the ban by Pakistan on the use of its airspace, several flights within Asia, between Asia and West Asia or Europe or the U.S. were forced to take a longer route, entailing an increase in flight duration and sometimes a halt for refuelling.
- This led to an increase in operational costs, forcing many airlines to cancel flights or hike fares.
- Air India's flights to the U.S. and Europe on 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2019 used the route restored by Pakistan.
- A senior airline official said, "Since the imposition of ban by Pakistan, the flying time for our flights from New Delhi had increased by 1.5 hours and from Mumbai by 30-40 minutes. The new route will save us 8-12 minutes depending on the winds."
- The official said, "It is not much of an advantage but we feel it is a beginning. The benefit is more for our flights from Mumbai to U.S. and Europe."
- Meanwhile, U.S. carrier United Airlines announced that it was suspending its flights between Newark and New Delhi beginning April 5, 2019 for two weeks but will continue to monitor the situation.
- However, it will continue to operate its non-stop flights to Mumbai.
- The International Air Transport Association's (IATA) spokesperson for Asia Pacific regions Albert Tjoeng said 220 flights were directly affected because of the airspace closure.

## 2. 100 fishermen to be freed, brought to Wagah

### What's in the news?

- Pakistan will release 100 Indian fishermen on 8<sup>th</sup> April, 2019, diplomatic sources on both sides have confirmed.
- According to the sources, Pakistan's officials have intimated India that the fishermen will be released from prison on April 7, 2019 and taken to the Wagah border on April 8, 2019.

### Context:

- The move comes a few days after India made a special appeal in a Note Verbale sent to the Pakistan High Commission in Delhi, asking for the release of 385 fishermen and 10 other prisoners.
- "There are 385 Indian fishermen whose nationality has been conveyed to Pakistan and who have been languishing in Pakistan jails. It is requested that urgent and concrete steps be taken to repatriate them to India at the earliest, along with their boats," the Ministry of External Affairs said in the note.
- According to the sources, India has been intimated about the release of 100 prisoners on 8<sup>th</sup> April, 2019 but Pakistan plans to repatriate a total of 360 prisoners in total, including five others, over this month (April), in weekly batches of 100.
- The last batch of 60 prisoners would be released by April 29, 2019. Activists say this release of fishermen is one of the largest such events.

### Concluding Remarks:

- In September 2010, Pakistan had released 442 Indian fishermen.
- MEA officials confirmed that arrangements are being made for the first batch of fishermen, many of whom are from the coastal town of Diu.
- However, officials declined to confirm if India was considering releasing any prisoners in a reciprocal move yet.
- Pakistan's High Commission has informed that more than 50 Pakistani fishermen and civilians, who have completed their prison terms and formalities, are awaiting repatriation by India.
- Mumbai-based peace activist Jatin Desai, who has been highlighting the issue, welcomed the decision by Pakistan to release the fishermen and called for both countries to release all fishermen being held in both countries at present.

- Desai also said that the Joint Judicial Committee on Prisoners must be revived, and is stalled at present, as Pakistan needs to nominate four retired judges for the committee, which hasn't met since October 2013.

### 3. U.S. count of Pak. F-16 reveals none are missing: report

#### What's in the news?

- Two U.S. officials have said they counted the F-16 aircraft in Pakistan and found none missing, throwing doubts on the Indian government's claim that it had shot down an F-16 during an aerial engagement with Pakistan on February 27, 2019.
- The officials' comments were made to U.S. magazine Foreign Policy.

#### Context:

- The dogfight of February 27, 2019, resulted in an Indian aircraft being downed, and its pilot, Abhinandan Varthaman parachuting into the Pakistani territory, leading to his capture (and eventual release).
- Indian Air Force officials had said Wing Commander Varthaman had downed an F-16, based on his debriefing, when he was eventually released and returned to India.
- Various Indian government officials, including Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, also repeated the claim that an F-16 was downed.
- "The findings directly contradict the account of Indian Air Force officials, who said that Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman managed to shoot down a Pakistani F-16 before his own plane was downed by a Pakistani missile," the report said, adding that it was possible that Wing Commander Varthaman, in the heat of combat, flying a vintage MiG-21 Bison, "got a lock on the Pakistani F-16, fired, and genuinely believed he scored a hit."
- Wing Commander Varthaman has not directly and publicly said that he downed an F-16, the information was gleaned through IAF reports of his debrief.

#### AAMRAAM evidence

- Following the engagement, India had presented evidence of an AAMRAAM air-to-air missile — a device that can only be fired by an F-16, following the skirmish, saying that it proved that Pakistan had used the aircraft.
- Pakistan had denied both — that an F-16 was used and that it was downed. The AAMRAAM evidence casts serious doubt on Pakistan's claim that an F-16 was not used and the Foreign Policy story casts serious doubt on the Indian government's claim that an F-16 was downed.
- One senior official said Pakistan had invited U.S. officials to count its F-16s but some of the aircraft were not available at the time because of the conflict, the Foreign Policy report says.
- However, the count had now been completed and "all aircraft were present and accounted for," the official told the magazine.

#### Electronic Signatures:

- "Indian forces have confirmed sighting ejections at two different places on that day (27<sup>th</sup> February, 2019). The two sightings were at places separated by at least 8-10km. One was an IAF Mig-21 Bison and the other a PAF aircraft. Electronic signatures gathered by us indicate that PAF aircraft was an F-16," the IAF said in a statement.
- In addition to electronic signatures, radio transmissions of their ground forces intercepted by the Army also confirm that the PAF jet shot was an F-16, official sources said.

## Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

### 1. Booths accessible only by boat

#### What's in the news?

- Meghalaya, a hill State, has two polling stations that are accessible only by boat.

#### Context:

- One of them is the newly-created Kalatek in East Khasi Hills district and the other is Kamsing in West Jaintia Hills district.
- Both are under the Shillong Lok Sabha constituency.
- Kalatek has 756 voters while Kamsing, Meghalaya's smallest polling station, has 29.
  - The State's Chief Electoral Officer Frederick R. Kharkongor said boats have been readied for the polling officials and security personnel to reach the two booths before polling on April 11.

## C. GS3 Related

## Category: ECONOMY

### 1. May asks EU for a further Brexit extension till June 30

#### What's in the news?

- The U.K. and European Council president Donald Tusk appeared to be nearing a consensus on a further Brexit extension.
- Prime Minister Theresa May has written to Mr. Tusk, asking for an extension till at least June 30, 2019.
- It comes as Mr. Tusk himself was reported to be proposing a “flexextension” — an extension that could last till April next year (i.e. April 2020), but could also last a much shorter period were the U.K. to break the EU deadlock before that.

#### What did Prime Minister Theresa May say in her letter?

- In her letter, Ms. May acknowledged that if the U.K. still fails to ratify the agreement and be prepared to leave the EU by May 23, 2019, it would be under a “legal obligation” to hold the European parliamentary elections between May 23 and 26, 2019.
- “The government is, therefore, undertaking the lawful and responsible preparations for this contingency,” she assured Mr. Tusk in her letter. “The government is determined to bring this process to a resolution quickly.”
- It came as the BBC reported that Mr. Tusk was considering proposing a 12-month flexible extension that could be cut short if ratification happened before that.
- Earlier this week, Ms. May adopted a new approach to Brexit, after her withdrawal agreement was defeated by MPs last week. Ms. May is engaged in talks with Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn and has extended an “open invitation” to MPs to achieve a consensus.
- The government has indicated that it is not willing to open up the text of the legal treaty itself but is ready to negotiate on the political declaration on future relations that accompanies it.
- The Labour party is pushing for this declaration to require the U.K. to remain in a customs union with the EU (ensuring tariff-free movement of goods into and out of the EU) as well as to guarantee that the U.K. would continue to match the EU's high standards on worker and consumer rights and

environmental protections.

### Flawed vision

- They are also discussing the possibility of holding a confirmatory referendum. The move to talk to Labour has put Ms. May at odds with many in her party, who fear it will lead to a “softer” version of Brexit, while some in the Labour Party fear it is merely an empty gesture made by the government in an effort to force Labour to share responsibility for its (in their view) flawed vision of Brexit.
- However, with regard to the extension, much uncertainty remains. Ms. May faces resistance to any form of extension within her party.
- While an unsuccessful party no-confidence motion in her last year means she cannot be challenged again in this way, some have suggested that if there is an extension, they would try to be as “difficult as possible”.
- “We could veto any increase in the budget, obstruct the putative EU army and block [French President Emmanuel] Macron’s integrationist schemes,” suggested Jacob Rees-Mogg, a vocal Brexiteer.
- Even on the EU side, there are increasing concerns about whether granting an extension would be harmful to the EU.
- It is important to note that German Chancellor Angela Merkel has said that “till the very last hour”, Germany is determined to do everything possible to avoid a no-deal Brexit, others including French President Emmanuel Macron have signalled frustration. He has warned that the EU could not be held “hostage” to Britain’s internal Brexit battles.
- An emergency meeting of the European Council is due to take place on the 10<sup>th</sup> of April, 2019, at which Ms. May would need to have a clear road map to be able to persuade the remaining EU 27 leaders to back her in attempting to avoid a no-deal.

### Some More Perspectives:

- It is important to note that when David Cameron made an election manifesto commitment to hold a referendum on Britain’s EU membership back in 2015, he faced accusations of putting his party before his country.
- The Conservative Party has long been split on the country’s relationship with the EU, with many opposing it from the outset and pressing for Britain to leave ever since it joined the union.
- Hard-Brexiteer Jacob Rees-Mogg’s father had even attempted to take the government to court to prevent Britain from ratifying the **Maastricht Treaty (the EU’s official treaty)** in 1993.
- Now, several years on, both the Conservative Party and Labour remain as divided as ever, with the route ahead on Brexit revealing deep fractures that could have a profound long-term impact on them and on Britain’s political landscape.
- Prime Minister Theresa May’s decision to engage in talks with Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, has angered many MPs within her party. Two Ministers resigned in protest.
- Their opposition centres around both the Labour push for customs union membership as well as the calls for any deal to be subject to a confirmatory vote.
- They also dislike the idea of a long delay to Brexit that would require the U.K. to participate in European parliamentary elections on May 23, 2019.
- Even ahead of the talks between the government and Labour, some Conservatives signalled that they might be willing to vote against the government if the Labour Party brought a no-confidence motion to Parliament.

## 2. Jet Airways may land in Tata Group

### What’s in the news?

- The Tatas are learnt to be interested in acquiring the cash-strapped Jet Airways which has been put



up for sale by Indian lenders.

#### Context:

- In a bid to find a buyer at the earliest to mobilise an estimated ₹8,500 crore for revival, banks, led by the State Bank of India (SBI), decided to invite expression of interest (EoI) from interested parties on April 6, 2019 and the Tatas are planning to submit a bid, people familiar with the development said.
- The last date for submission of bids is April 9, 2019. A Tata Sons spokesperson said, “We do not comment on market speculation.”
- In November 2018, the Tatas, who run Vistara and AirAsia India in joint ventures, had held preliminary discussions to invest in Jet Airways. Tata Group chairman N. Chandrasekaran even took the proposal to the Tata Sons board for approval. However, they withdrew because Jet’s promoter wanted to retain control over the airline which was not acceptable to the Tatas.
- Now that Mr. Goyal is out of the scene, the Tatas may be interested in making a bid.

#### Value erosion:

- Earlier, it was estimated that they would invest about \$1 billion to acquire a controlling stake in Jet, but now there has been a sharp erosion in value as the airline is on the brink.
- Analysts estimate Jet’s total liability at more than \$2 billion, including bank and aircraft loans of ₹7,500 crore. Little is known about how much debt had been accumulated in last six months.
- “The last six months has been damaging for Jet Airways. The delay has eaten away the company. Six months back, the valuation could have been better. Now, it is up to the banks on how much haircut they can accept,” said Ansuman Deb, aviation analyst, ICICI Securities.
- It is understood that Singapore Airlines, which holds 49% stake in Tata SIA Airlines that runs Vistara, is assisting in the bidding process and may pick up a stake.
- According to analysts, the broader plan of the Tatas is to integrate its existing airlines ventures with Jet Airways. A combination of Jet, Vistara and AirAsia India can pose a tough challenge to IndiGo which is heading towards a near monopoly situation.
- “The Tatas will be a good option for Jet Airways. They can consolidate and combine the strengths. The Indian aviation sector needs consolidation,” said an analyst asking not to be named.
- “Air India will survive because it is running with government money, IndiGo will be getting all powerful with \$2 billion cash on its books of account. We need one more large airline to match up to IndiGo. Tatas can make it and give a tough competition to IndiGo. Others like SpiceJet and GoAir are too small,” he said.

## D. GS4 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## E. Editorials

### Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

#### 1. Privacy in the age of sunshine laws

##### Editorial Analysis:

- A Constitution Bench of the honourable Supreme Court of India has finally concluded hearing a crucial appeal (after being nine years in cold storage) under the Right to Information Act (RTI), 2005.

- One of the three crucial questions raised in this case pertains to whether judges are required to publicly disclose their assets under the RTI Act in light of Section 8(1)(j).
- This provision prohibits the sharing of personal information that has no nexus to public activity or which amounts to an unwarranted invasion of privacy unless the larger public interest justifies such a disclosure.

### Difficulty faced by the Judges:

- The five judges hearing the matter face a difficult choice.
- Any attempt by them to assert the fundamental right to privacy as the basis for not disclosing assets to the public would necessarily require an implied overruling of landmark judgments in PUCJ (2003) and **Lok Prahari v. Union of India (2018)**, in which smaller benches of the court rubbished the privacy claims of the political class while forcing them to publicly disclose not just their assets but also the sources of their income.
- The final ruling of the Constitution Bench will also impact the contentious Section 44 of the Lokpal Act, 2013, which requires all public servants (this includes judges) to disclose their assets but is silent on whether the disclosure should be to the competent authority or the general public.
- This provision has already been the subject of an amendment in 2016.

### As RTI application:

- This case has its origins in an RTI application filed in 2007 in which the Public Information Officer (PIO) of the Supreme Court was asked by Subash Agrawal whether the judges of the Supreme Court had complied with the terms of a resolution adopted in 1997, in which all judges had committed to disclosing information about their assets and liabilities to the Chief Justice of India (CJI).
- The resolution had specifically mandated that the information would remain “confidential”.
- In 2005, Parliament passed the RTI Act, creating a legal right to demand information held by public authorities which arguably also includes the CJI.
- Interestingly, Mr. Agrawal never actually asked for copies of the declarations filed by the judges with the CJI.
- He only wanted to be informed of whether any such declaration was filed by the judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts. Yet the PIO sought to invoke, among other sections, Section 8(1)(j) of the RTI Act to deny him this information.
- This provision of the RTI Act prevents public authorities from disclosing any “personal information” of citizens if such “disclosure had no relationship to any public activity or interest” or if such disclosure constitutes “an unwarranted invasion of the privacy of the individual” unless the PIO is “satisfied that the larger public interest justifies the disclosure of such information”.
- When the matter reached the Delhi High Court, both the single judge and the Full Bench concluded that judges, like other public servants, had a fundamental right to privacy. This right, it held, could only be curtailed if the RTI applicant demonstrated a showing of “larger public interest” as required by Section 8(1)(j) of the RTI Act.
- In other words, public servants as a class of employees cannot be forced to disclose their personal assets to the public merely because they hold public posts.
- However, in individual cases, if the person seeking such information could demonstrate a “larger public interest” such as wrongdoing or impropriety on the part of the public official, the information could be disclosed.

### The implications:

- It is likely that the Supreme Court will follow the Delhi High Court’s reasoning because of its own decision from 2012 in **Girish Ramchandra Deshpande v. Central Information Commissioner**.
- The court was faced with a case where an RTI applicant sought information on the service record and assets of a serving bureaucrat.

- In a very brief judgment, the Supreme Court ruled that the assets of the bureaucrat could not be revealed to an applicant under the RTI Act unless there was a showing of a larger public interest.
- The applicant could not demonstrate the larger public interest and was denied the information.

### Concluding Remarks:

- It is important to note that a lot has happened on the privacy front since 2012.
- The litigation and the civil society campaign against Aadhaar resulted in a unanimous judgment from nine judges of the Supreme Court declaring informational privacy as a component of the fundamental right to privacy.
- Experts opine that when the Constitution Bench decides on Mr. Agrawal's appeal, it will most likely be viewing the privacy right enshrined in Section 8(1)(j) of the RTI Act through the lens of the Aadhaar judgment.
- If the Bench decides that all Supreme Court and High Court judges have a fundamental right to privacy (only two of the five judges hearing the case have voluntarily disclosed their assets) and that judges cannot be forced to disclose their assets to the public, questions will be asked as to why the court forced politicians to publicly disclose their assets and sources of income.
- It would then be only a matter of time before politicians and their spouses seek the overturning of the PUCL and Lok Prahari judgments, thereby turning back the clock on electoral transparency.

## 2. Encroachers on their own lands

### What's in the news?

- In Chhattisgarh, the Forest Rights Act potentially allows 7.4 million tribal and other traditional forest dwellers to claim land rights.
- However, half these claims have been rejected and the land siphoned off, often arbitrarily.

### Editorial Analysis:

- Examples abound of people who have lost access to parcels of land in the forest that they and their families have foraged for generations.
- The village, Patkalbeda, located in Antagarh panchayat of Kanker district in Chhattisgarh, is mostly forest area, though not classified as a reserve forest or a protected area.
- The deciduous forests of this region, which make up the northern half of Bastar, are classified as 'moderately dense' by the forest law. Collecting and trading this produce with townsfolk has been a generations-old practice.
- In April 2018, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated a section of that railway line connecting Dallirajhara, in Balod district, and a traditional source of iron ore, to Bhanupratappur in north Bastar. The proposed 235 km-long track would connect the Rowghat mines (that local experts say has enough iron ore to last a century) to the mainland, and reduce the Bhilai Steel Plant's dependence on the Dallirajhara mines, which have iron ore that is estimated to last for only a few years.
- "The Rowghat-Jagdalpur line will reduce rail distance between Raipur to Jagdalpur by about 260 km. This will boost socio-economic interaction between the capital of Chhattisgarh and backward areas in and around Bastar region," a Press Information Bureau statement said then.
- It is important to note that the rail project has been in the works for several decades but because of its location in the heart of the Bastar region, and proximity to regions with Naxalite presence, it saw glacial progress.

### Implementing the FRA

- As per the provisions of the FRA, forest dwellers have individual rights and villagers have community rights over tracts of land that they are allowed to manage in ways they deem fit. Any



transfer of land for non-forest purposes requires the prior consent of gram sabhas.

- Unfortunately, in some instances, villagers and tribal people have had a portion of their land taken away for railway projects, etc. In certain cases, Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) forces are stationed there and attempts by villagers to point out stretches of their land have now been made inaccessible, and are being thwarted by the heavily armed patrol.
- The experiences of these villagers exemplify the two major challenges in implementing the FRA effectively. **Forest land that should ideally be managed by the gram sabha is not always legally transferred to the village community, and, sometimes, individuals are unable to claim ownership of their land.**
- It is also important to note that the Supreme Court, on February 13, 2019, ordered that all Adivasis and forest dwellers whose claims under the FRA have been rejected should be evicted from the forests by July 2019.
- This was on the back of a petition in the court by some environment groups demanding that those who didn't have proof to identify themselves as forest dwellers be marked as encroachers and evicted. Their presence, it was argued, endangered wildlife and forest conservation efforts.
- Following protests, the court temporarily stayed its own order on February 28, 2019, and directed the States to compile the reasons for rejecting the claims and explain whether and how due process had been followed.

#### A land of minerals:

- Chhattisgarh, 45% of which is forest area, hosts some of India's richest mineral deposits, including coal, iron ore, bauxite and limestone.
- Forest land was once the fiefdom of the British. Following Independence, it was seen as the exclusive turf of the forest bureaucracy. However, after the enactment of the FRA and with mounting instances of the exploitation of this economic wealth to the detriment of Adivasis, the state's control over these forests is being contested by the tribal and forest-dwelling populace.

#### A Perspective on the FRA: Focus on Chhattisgarh

- The FRA was enacted to recognise the close connection of Adivasis share with forests and their natural claim to forest land and its produce.
- Since the FRA came into force on December 31, 2007, there have been 4.2 million title claims over 14 million acres of forest land nationwide, of which only 1.8 million have been accorded, according to November 2018 data from the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
- Chhattisgarh topped the list among States. Nearly 8.9 lakh title claims, by individuals and communities, were made in the State.
- Only 4.16 lakh claims, or less than half, were actually granted. The rejection rate was also highest in Chhattisgarh among the States, the data indicate.
- **"Chhattisgarh epitomises the necessity of the FRA. It has rich natural wealth, which corporations and industry desire. There is a large tribal population that is dependent on the forests. Yet, awareness of the FRA is poor, from the district administration level to the forest officials,"** says Alok Shukla, convenor of the Chhattisgarh Bachao Andolan, a coalition of activist groups that works on FRA matters.
- In Chhattisgarh, the FRA has the potential to secure the rights and livelihoods of more than 7.4 million Adivasis and traditional forest dwellers, who constitute 32% of the State's population and are spread over at least 3.02 million hectares in over 11,500 villages.
- Only 5% of the total Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes population in Chhattisgarh has claimed individual forest resource rights.
- There are no data on titles recognised in favour of women.
- Community forest resource rights have also not been recognised in Chhattisgarh, says Puja Priyadarshini, a lawyer and activist with the Community Forest Resource-Learning and Advocacy,

an NGO network that among other things analyses the political impact of FRA implementation.

### **The procedure of staking a claim:**

- A key reason for complications in implementation of the FRA is the process of staking a claim. Adivasis may claim individual rights over forest areas if they can prove that they have been residents of the area before December 13, 2005.
- Their claims are vetted by a three-layered system: the gram sabha, where the claims are first submitted; a sub-divisional-level committee (SDLC) headed by a government officer; and a district-level committee (DLC) headed by the district collector.
- Forest claims have to be accompanied by documentary evidence such as government identity cards, statements by elders, and physical evidence of possession or use of land.
- The gram sabha's forest rights committee verify the claims. If the gram sabha is satisfied, it directs the claims to the SDLC for review. If approved, the claim is forwarded to the DLC, which is the final legal authority to approve or reject claims.
- The FRA specifies that claimants can't be rejected without a personal hearing and they need to be provided, in writing, the reasons for rejections.
- "Most of the rejections take place at the gram sabha level," says Shukla. "And often forest and village officials, who are not supposed to be in the gram sabha committees, call the shots. The asymmetry of power is very evident in these interactions."
- Keshav Shori, founder of DISHA, an organisation that scouts forests for Adivasi settlements to educate residents about the FRA and the need to file title claims, says that in the pursuit of forest land, officials frequently concoct rules, or bring in provisions of irrelevant legislation to lay claim to forest land. "The FRA says land cannot be taken away by the government until forest rights are recognised. Often, rules that apply to non-forest lands, such as the Land Acquisition Act or the Panchayat Act, are used to capture forest land," he says.
- In March 2019, the Environment Ministry granted clearance for diverting more than 841.5 hectares of forestland for mining coal in Chhattisgarh's Parsa block. The region is part of the pristine Hasdeo Arand forests. The coal will be mined from the area for use in captive power plants operated by the Rajasthan Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Limited. The mining operations will be handled by Rajasthan Collieries Limited, a unit of Adani Enterprises.
- While there are cases pending in the Supreme Court regarding the allotment of these mining contracts, Shukla says similar exercises are imminent in southern regions of Bastar, that were so far inaccessible because of Naxal activity. "The takeover of forest land by private corporations has led to a certain level of activism and Adivasis are standing up for their rights in Sarguja and Parsa. But a lot more training and awareness programmes are required in these regions (Antagarh and Kanker) to avert situations like these," he says.

### **Political consequences:**

- The demand for due recognition of forest rights was reflected in the Assembly election results in Chhattisgarh in 2018.
- In the rural constituencies, the BJP lost favour with the voters, while the Congress made marginal gains, largely because it promised to properly implement the FRA.
- Overall, the Congress swept the State.
- After the Supreme Court order, Congress president Rahul Gandhi asked Chief Ministers in Congress-ruled States to file a review petition against the mass eviction of Adivasis and other forest dwellers. Soon after coming to power, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel convened a meeting of district authorities and civil society organisations to discuss ways in which the FRA could be better implemented.
- "There was a lot of latent anger regarding the poor implementation of the FRA. That impacted the BJP in the election. The Congress has taken over only recently, so the expectations that people have from the party might carry over into the Lok Sabha elections too," says Shori.

- An analysis in March, 2019 by the CFR-LA finds that implementation of forest rights could be a key poll issue in a fourth of India's 543 parliamentary constituencies.
- In Chhattisgarh, this could resonate in the Bastar, Kanker, Raigarh and Sarguja constituencies, CFR-LA says, given that 43-70% of the voters in these areas stand to gain from proper implementation of the FRA.

## F. Tidbits

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## G. Prelims Facts

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## H. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

**Q1) Consider the following statements:**

1. The Wancho are a tribal people inhabiting the Patkai hills of Longding District in the state of Arunachal Pradesh, India. The Wancho language belongs to the Tibeto-Burman family.
2. The prime festival of the Wancho is Oriah, a festival between March to April, for a period of six to twelve days interspersed with prayer, songs and dances.

Which among the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 Only
- b) Both 1 and 2
- c) 2 Only
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

- The Wancho are a tribal people inhabiting the Patkai hills of Longding District in the state of Arunachal Pradesh, India.
- They have a population of 35,000. Culturally Naga, they are ethnically related to the Nocte and Konyak Naga of the Mon and Tirap districts.
- The Wancho language belongs to the Tibeto-Burman family.
- Tattooing plays a major role among the Wancho tribe. According to tradition, a man is tattooed on his four limbs and his entire face, with the exception of certain regions around the eyes and the lips. The women adorn themselves with necklaces and bangles, along with some light tattooing as well.
- The prime festival of the Wancho is Oriah, a festival between March to April, for a period of six to twelve days interspersed with prayer, songs and dances.

**Q2) Consider the following statements:**

1. CRR indicates the quantum of cash that banks are required to keep with the Reserve Bank as a proportion of their net demand and time liabilities (NDTL).
2. SLR prescribes the amount of money that banks must invest in securities issued by the government.

This is not kept with RBI but with banks themselves.

Which among the above statements is/are **incorrect**?

- a) 1 Only
- b) Both 1 and 2
- c) 2 Only
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

- CRR indicates the quantum of cash that banks are required to keep with the Reserve Bank as a proportion of their net demand and time liabilities (NDTL).
- SLR prescribes the amount of money that banks must invest in securities issued by the government. This is not kept with RBI but with banks themselves.
- The banks and other financial institutions in India have to keep a fraction of their total net time and demand liabilities in the form of liquid assets such as G-secs, precious metals, approved securities, etc. The Ratio of these liquid assets to the total demand and time liabilities is called Statutory Liquidity Ratio.

**Q3) Consider the following statements:**

1. Sikkim shares its international borders with China, Nepal, and Bhutan.
2. Mizoram shares its international borders with Myanmar and Bangladesh.

Which among the above statements is/are **correct**?

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

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

- Sikkim shares its international borders with China, Nepal, and Bhutan.
- Mizoram shares its borders with Myanmar and Bangladesh.

**Q4) Consider the following statements:**

1. The Election Commission of India is a constitutional body responsible for administering elections in India.
2. According to Article 324 of Indian Constitution, the Election Commission of India has superintendence, direction, and control of the entire process for conduct of elections to Parliament and Legislature (state legislative assembly & state legislative council) of every State and to the offices of President and Vice-President of India.

Which among the above statements is/are **correct**?

- a) 1 only

- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

- The Election Commission of India is a constitutional body responsible for administering elections in India.
- According to Article 324 of Indian Constitution, the Election Commission of India has superintendence, direction, and control of the entire process for conduct of elections to Parliament and Legislature (state legislative assembly & state legislative council) of every State and to the offices of President and Vice-President of India.
- The President has the power to select Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners.
- They have a tenure of six years, or up to the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier.
- They have the same status and receive pay and perks as available to Judges of the Supreme Court of India.

## I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. The Indian Civil Aviation sector has come under considerable scrutiny. Examine the problems that plague this sector and discuss viable solutions. (12.5 Marks; 250 Words)
2. The issue concerning Electoral bonds is recently in the news. To what extent have electoral bonds brought financial transparency into the electoral process? Examine. (12.5 Marks; 250 Words)