

12 Apr 2019: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Two Bengal govt. schemes win UN awards

Context:

- Bengal has won the United Nations World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) awards.

Details:

- “Utkarsh Bangla” and “Sabooj Sathi” projects have won the prestigious World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) awards.
- “Utkarsh Bangla” got the topmost award and emerged a winner in Capacity Building Category.
- “Sabooj Sathi” ranked in the first five as a champion project under ICT application: E-Government category.

Utkarsh Bangla:

- Utkarsh Bangla Scheme was launched with an aim of providing vocational training to school dropouts.
- Objective of the scheme is to give vocational training to school dropouts by providing training ranging from 400 to 1200 hours free of charge.
 - Under this scheme, beneficiaries will be trained in driving, tailoring, repairing television and other electronic equipment’s, beautician courses etc.
 - On completion the courses beneficiaries are given Certificates would be given.
 - The state Vocational Education Department is the nodal agency in charge of implementing the scheme.
 - The syllabus for courses under this scheme has been made in line with the National Vocational Education Qualification Framework.

Sabooj Sathi:

- Sabooj Sathi is a scheme of West Bengal government for distribution of bi-cycles to estimated 40 lakh students of class IX to XII studying in Govt. run and Govt. aided Schools and Madrasahs.
- The scheme was launched in September 2015.
- The objective of the scheme is to empower the students, especially the girls and reduce drop outs in higher education.

WSIS awards:

- WSIS Prizes is a unique international contest developed in response to requests from the WSIS stakeholders to create an effective mechanism to evaluate and recognize individuals, governments, civil society, local, regional and international agencies, research institutions and private-sector companies for outstanding success in implementing development oriented strategies that leverage the power of ICTs as an enabler of the development.
- The WSIS Prizes contest is an integral part of the WSIS stocktaking process; set up in 2004 to assist WSIS implementation and follow-up.
- The contest was held for the first time in 2012, and rapidly gained attention and popularity within the ICT for Development (ICT4D) community.
- Building upon the outcomes of the United Nations General Assembly Overall Review on WSIS as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the WSIS Prizes reflect close linkages with achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- The WSIS Prizes contest serves as the platform for identifying and showcasing the success stories across the WSIS Action Lines defined in the Geneva Plan of Action and SDGs.
- It also provides us with models that can be replicated in the interests of empowering the community at the local level, providing everyone with an opportunity to participate in the contest and, most importantly, recognizing the efforts made by stakeholders to contribute to the development of society and their commitment to achievement of both the WSIS goals and SDGs.

2. Fighting fake news: can social media be kept on a leash?

Context:

On a public interest litigation petition seeking the imposition of curbs on social media use to ensure “the purity of election process”, the Bombay High Court directed that social media platforms would be expected to follow the voluntary code of ethics that had been developed by the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) and had been accepted by the Election Commission.

Details:

- Facebook recently said in a statement that the company had spent more than 18 months assessing “risk” across its platforms to help ensure that the Lok Sabha election was free from interference, both foreign and domestic.
- It was said that the company had focussed on key areas “including blocking and removing fake accounts; fighting the spread of misinformation; stopping abuse by domestic actors; spotting attempts at foreign meddling; and taking action against inauthentic coordinated campaigns”.

Issue:

- The volume of fake news spread via social media is massive.
- Besides churning out massive volumes of fake content, it is evident that individual operators on social media are trying to influence minds and voting patterns.
- While Facebook’s statement on what it has done ahead of the polls could be viewed as a suo motu initiative, the larger question of whether and how exactly social media platforms could be regulated under Indian law in the context of their apparent vulnerability to be used for disseminating fake news and manipulating opinions in the crucial run-up to the election, remains a rather grey area according to legal professionals.
- Existing legal provisions may be less than adequate to address the unique challenges posed by social media.
- Former Supreme Court judge Asok Kumar Ganguly said **Section 126 of the Representation of the People Act (RPA)** was incapable of regulating social media.
 - “We know scientific developments take place fast, whereas legislation is always slow,” the former judge said.
 - Section 126 places an embargo on the publishing and broadcasting of content that is likely to affect the election only when the content is being aired with 48 hours or less to go before voting.
- But former CEC S.Y. Quraishi contends that there are provisions to curb the misuse of social media. “Using the existing provisions, a candidate or a party’s expenditure can be monitored by the EC. The political advertisements also need to be cleared by the Commission,” said the former poll panel chief. However, he acknowledged the logistic challenge.
- Another issue is — freedom of expression. Too much control infringes one’s right to talk or campaign on social media.
- Jurisdiction was also a concern. Since all the social media companies are based outside India regulating them would be an issue.

Example of Germany:

- In Germany, if any content is posted on any platform by any individual [that] violates law and if the particular social media platform does not remove it, then the platform would be liable for such violation.
- India is yet to have anything of that sort.

Way forward:

- Since the legal options are limited for now voluntarily developed code by the stakeholders is the only alternative for free and fair elections and the court can always fill the gaps in law by providing

suitable directions.

- The Election Commission should keep a close watch on a candidate or a party's expenditure using the existing provisions.
- Free and fair elections v/s the Freedom of Speech debate has to take place on another level relating to intermediary liability.
- A solution can be arrived at by holding talks with the social media companies.

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange arrested in London

Context:

- The British police dragged Julian Assange out of the Ecuadorian embassy after Ecuador abruptly revoked his seven-year asylum, paving the way for his extradition to the U.S. for involvement in one of the biggest-ever leaks of classified information.

Background:

- Julian Paul Assange is an Australian computer programmer and the founder and director of WikiLeaks.
- He had been under the protection of Ecuador as an asylum seeker, and had been living in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London since 2012.
- Assange founded Wiki Leaks in 2006 and came to international attention in 2010 when WikiLeaks published a series of leaks.
- These leaks included the Collateral Murdervideo (April 2010), the Afghanistan war logs (July 2010), the Iraq war logs (October 2010), and Cable Gate (November 2010).
 - A diplomatic cable, also known as a diplomatic telegram or embassy cable, is a confidential text message exchanged between a diplomatic mission, like an embassy or a consulate, and the foreign ministry of its parent country.
- Following the 2010 leaks, the federal government of the United States launched a criminal investigation into WikiLeaks and asked allied nations for assistance.
- In November 2010, Sweden issued an international arrest warrant for Assange. He had been questioned there months earlier over allegations of sexual assault and rape.
- Assange denied the allegations, and said that he would be extradited from Sweden to the United States because of his role in publishing secret American documents.
- Assange surrendered to UK police on 7 December 2010 but was released on bail within 10 days.
- Having been unsuccessful in his challenge to the extradition proceedings, he breached his bail in June 2012 and absconded.
- He was granted asylum by Ecuador in August 2012 and remained in the Embassy of Ecuador in London until his arrest in April 2019.
- Assange has held Ecuadorian citizenship since 12 December 2017.
- Swedish prosecutors later dropped their investigation into the rape accusation against Assange; they applied to revoke the European arrest warrant in May 2017.
- The London Metropolitan Police indicated that an arrest warrant was in force for Assange's failure to surrender himself to his bail.
- During the 2016 Democratic Party presidential primaries, WikiLeaks hosted emails sent or received by candidate Hillary Clinton from her private email server when she was Secretary of State.
- The Democratic Party, along with cybersecurity experts, claimed that Russian intelligence had hacked the emails and leaked them to WikiLeaks; Assange consistently denied any connection to or cooperation with Russia in relation to the leaks.
- Ecuadorian president Lenín Moreno said on 27 July 2018 that he had begun talks with British

authorities to withdraw the asylum for Assange.

- UK police entered the London embassy at the invitation of the Ecuadorian ambassador and arrested Assange on 11 April 2019.

Details:

- Assange was arrested under an extradition treaty between the U.S. and Britain and was charged with conspiracy to commit computer intrusion.
- Assange, **arrested at Ecuador's Embassy**, faces up to five years in prison on the American charge, the U.S. Justice Department said in a statement. His arrest paved the way for his possible extradition to the U.S.
- Appearing before a London court, Mr. Assange said he was not guilty of failing to surrender to court in 2012, but his lawyer said Mr. Assange would not give evidence.
- Minutes later, the judge convicted him of skipping bail.
- U.S. prosecutors said they had charged Mr. Assange with conspiracy in trying to access a classified government computer with former Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning in 2010.

C. GS3 Related

Category: ECONOMY

1. Mutual funds' FMP investments worth Rs. 1,400 cr. at risk

Context:

- As much as Rs. 1,400 crore of investor money, parked in 40 fixed maturity plans (FMPs) of different mutual funds and maturing this year, could be in trouble.
- These schemes had invested in the debentures of Essel Group companies, which could not repay on time.
- Kotak Mahindra MF earlier said it could not fully redeem the investments in two FMP series that matured on April 8 and 10.
- Meanwhile, HDFC mutual fund (MF) also announced the extension of one of its FMP schemes that was due for maturity on April 15, by 380 days.

What are fixed maturity plans?

FMPs are closed-end debt funds with a maturity period that can range from one month to five years. Because debt funds enjoy long-term capital gains tax after three years, typically three-year FMPs are now popular. FMPs are predominantly debt-oriented, and their objective is to provide steady returns over a fixed-maturity period, thereby protecting investors from market fluctuations.

Why are FMPs in focus now?

A few FMPs holding paper of Zee/Essel Group have come up for maturity starting April 8. On maturity, these schemes should pay back full amount to investors which includes principal plus earnings on the portfolio. However, since these FMPs have paper belonging to Zee/ Essel Group in their portfolios, one fund house is repaying investors money minus their holding in Zee/Essel paper. Another fund house has proposed to rollover its FMP by a period of 380 days.

How do FMPs work?

An FMP portfolio consists of various fixed-income instruments with matching maturities. Based on the

tenure of the FMP, a fund manager invests in instruments in such a way that all of them mature around the same time. During the tenure of the plan, all the units of the plan are held until they mature on a specified date. Thus, investors get an indicative rate of return of the plan.

Where do FMPs invest?

FMPs usually invest in certificates of deposits (CDs), commercial papers (CPs), money market instruments, non-convertible debentures over a defined investment tenure. Sometimes, they also invest in bank fixed deposits.

Are FMPs liquid?

Since FMPs are closed-end funds, they can only be traded on the stock exchange where they are listed. However, trading in these units is negligible which makes FMPs illiquid. Compared to this, open-ended debt funds can be bought or sold on a daily basis.

What are the benefits of FMPs for investors?

- **Capital protection and no interest rate volatility:** Since FMPs invest in debt instruments, they provide low risk of capital loss as compared to equity funds. Since the securities in the portfolio are held till maturity, FMPs are not affected by interest rate volatility.
- **Taxation benefit:** FMPs offer better post-tax returns than FDs as well as liquid and ultra short-term debt funds because they offer indexation benefits. Indexation helps to lower capital gains and thus lower the tax. Triple indexation allows an investor to take advantage of indexing his investment to inflation for 4 years while remaining invested for a period of slightly more than three years.
- **Lower expense ratio:** Since these instruments are held till maturity, there is a cost saving with respect to buying and selling of instruments, thereby resulting in a lower expense ratio for investors.

Category: ENVIRONMENT

1. India stares at a pile of solar e-waste

Issue:

- By 2050, India will likely stare at a pile of a new category of electronic waste, namely solar e-waste, says a study made public.
- At present, India's e-waste rules have no laws mandating solar cell manufacturers to recycle or dispose waste from this sector.
- India is poorly positioned to handle PV waste as it doesn't yet have policy guidelines on the same... a lack of a policy framework is coupled with the fact that even basic recycling facilities for laminated glass and e-waste are unavailable.
- Despite the e-waste regulation being in place for several years, only less than 4% of estimated e-waste is recycled in the organised sector as per the latest estimates from the Central Pollution Control Board.

Details:

- India is among the leading markets for solar cells in the world, buoyed by the government's commitment to install 100 GW of solar power by 2022.
- So far, India has installed solar cells for about 28 GW and this is largely from imported solar PV cells.
- Solar cell modules are made by processing sand to make silicon, casting silicon ingots, using wafers

to create cells and then assembling them to make modules.

- India's domestic manufacturers are largely involved in assembling cells and modules.
- These modules are 80% glass and aluminium, and non-hazardous. Other materials used, including polymers, metals, metallic compounds and alloys, and are classified as potentially hazardous, says the study.
- While the solar sector continues to grow robustly, there is no clarity on solar waste management in India.

E- Waste Management Rules:

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change notified the E-Waste Management Rules, 2016 in supersession of the e-waste (Management & Handling) Rules, 2011.

Features:

- E-waste rules include Compact Fluorescent Lamp (CFL) and other mercury containing lamps, as well as other such equipment.
- Rules will bring the producers under Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), along with targets.
 - Producers have been made responsible for collection of E-waste and for its exchange
 - Every producer shall provide detailed information on the constituents of the equipment and their components or consumables or parts or spares, along with a declaration of conformance to the RoHS (Restriction of Hazardous Substances) provisions in the product user documentation.
- A new arrangement entitled, 'Producer Responsibility Organisation' (PRO) is introduced to strengthen EPR further. PRO, a professional organisation, would be authorised or financed collectively or individually by producers, to share the responsibility for collection and channelisation of e-waste generated from the 'end-of-life' products to ensure environmentally sound management of such e-waste.
- Deposit Refund Scheme has been introduced as an additional economic instrument wherein the producer charges an additional amount as a deposit at the time of sale of the electrical and electronic equipment and returns it to the consumer along with interest when the end-of-life electrical and electronic equipment is returned.
- The process of dismantling and recycling has been simplified through one system of authorization and that the Central Pollution Control Board will give the single authorization throughout the country.
 - Further CPCB shall conduct random sampling of electrical and electronic equipment placed on the market to monitor and verify the compliance of RoHS provisions and the cost for sample and testing shall be borne by the producer.
 - The random sampling shall be as per the guidelines of CPCB.
 - If the product does not comply with RoHS provisions, the producers shall take corrective measures to bring the product into compliance, and withdraw or recall the product from the market, within a reasonable period as per the guidelines of CPCB.

Measures taken:

- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, MeitY, has initiated an E-waste Awareness programme under Digital India initiatives, along with industry associations from 2015, to create awareness among the public about the hazards of e-waste recycling by the unorganised sector, and to educate them about alternate methods of disposing of their e-waste.
- The programme stresses the need for adopting environmentally friendly e-waste recycling practices.
- The general public is also encouraged to participate in 'Swachh Digital Bharat', by giving their e-waste to authorised recyclers only.

2. A genetic method to empower conservation

Context:

A new genetic method has been developed by a team, including scientists from Bengaluru's National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS), hopes to make studying as well as conserving wild species quicker, easier and cost-effective.

Details:

- The new genetic method helps conservation by deriving information from animal sources containing extremely low-quality DNA — including faeces and cooked meat.
- Their method, described in the study published in the international journal *Methods in Ecology and Evolution*, relies on identifying multiple, short portions of DNA segments in a single experiment (a 'multiplex PCR'), followed by 'next-generation sequencing', in which multiple fragments of DNA can be decoded simultaneously, and several times, in an automated process.
- The team tested their method on Caribbean queen conches and tigers, two extremely different species that had strong conservation needs to show how this approach could be used generally.
- The team obtained DNA from the faeces, hair and saliva of 75 wild and captive tigers to identify individuals and close relatives, and RNA from 279 queen conch samples.
- They then decoded between 60 to 100 single nucleotide polymorphisms or SNPs, one of the most common types of change seen in genetic material, in these samples.

Significance:

- The new methodology helps identify the geographic regions these individuals belonged to.
- Apart from using this for animal monitoring, it could also potentially be used to obtain intelligence on wildlife trade.
- Testing several hundred samples simultaneously and decoding up to 1000 SNPs per sample would cost as low as \$5 (less than Rs. 350).
- The biggest advantage is that this would take just five days while older methods take at least a month.

D. GS4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Netanyahu's Israel

What's in the news?

- The parliamentary elections held in Israel on April 9, 2019 have underscored the structural shift in the country's democracy — the right wing reigns supreme.

Editorial Analysis:

Challenges which Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu faced:

- Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had faced serious challenges during the campaign. He faces corruption allegations that could lead to his indictment.
- The Blue and White party, formed a few weeks ahead of the election, had quickly risen to become the principal opposition force, giving Mr. Netanyahu a scare. He had lost some allies even before the elections. In the event, Mr. Netanyahu has emerged victorious.
- While both **Netanyahu's Likud party** and the Blue and White got 35 seats each (after 98% of the votes were counted), he could become Prime Minister for a fifth time with support from rightwing parties.

Certain Specifics on seats which were won:

- **Netanyahu's Likud party** has markedly improved its performance from 2015, when it had won 30 seats and still formed the government.
- The orthodox Jewish parties Shas and United Torah Judaism, which won seven and six seats respectively in 2015, secured eight each this time.
- The Union of Rightwing Parties and the right-nationalist Yisrael Beytenu have won five seats each, while the centrist Kulanu has got four.
- With the support of these potential allies, Mr. Netanyahu would have the backing of 65 MPs, well past the halfway mark in the **120-member Knesset**.

Looking back at the campaign trail:

- Netanyahu ran a contentious, ultra-nationalist campaign to drum up support for Likud and its allies.
- He had publicly aligned with Jewish Power, a fringe party known for its racist, anti-Arab views.
- If Mr. Netanyahu had said there wouldn't be any Palestinian state under his watch during the 2015 election campaign, this time, a few days ahead of the poll, he said he would annex parts of the West Bank to bring Jewish settlements under Israeli sovereignty.
- He also exploited the security concerns of Israeli voters by presenting himself as the only leader capable of keeping them safe from "Palestinian terrorists" as well as Iran.
- **Netanyahu is credited with stabilising the Israeli economy and, more controversially, clinching major diplomatic coups such as the U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital and the occupied Syrian Golan as Israeli territory, thanks to American President Donald Trump.**
- Netanyahu is now set to become the longest-serving Prime Minister, overtaking David Ben-Gurion, the country's founder. But the Israel he leads today is totally different from what even Ben-Gurion and the early socialist Zionists had imagined.

Concluding Remarks:

- With Mr. Netanyahu showing no interest in the peace process and the occupation of Palestine being deepened both militarily and through Jewish settlements in the West Bank, Israel, which is described by a Basic Law passed last year as "the nation state of the Jewish people", is a de facto apartheid state.
- Given his record, there is little reason to hope that Mr. Netanyahu will break the status quo during his next term.

Category: INTERNAL SECURITY

1. Closed road

What's in the news?

Recently, the Government has placed a ban on civilian traffic for two days a week on the 271-km stretch of National Highway 44 between Udhampur in Jammu and Baramulla in Kashmir. This ban came into force on April 7, 2019.

Editorial Analysis:

- Experts have opined that the ban on civilian traffic for two days a week on the 271-km stretch of National Highway 44 between Udhampur in Jammu and Baramulla in Kashmir, which came into force on April 7, 2019, is an ill-advised move.
- The ban, which is to last till May 31, 2019 is supposedly to enable the orderly conduct of the Lok Sabha elections in Jammu and Kashmir, in the light of the tragic February 14, 2019 suicide attack on a CRPF convoy on NH 44 at Pulwama, that killed 40 personnel.
- On Sundays and Wednesdays, between 4 a.m. and 5 p.m., only pre-determined categories of civilian traffic will be allowed on the highway with clearance from the authorities.
- For the rest of the time, the highway will be given over to the movement of troops.
- **Some experts have opined that as a measure to prevent another Pulwama-type attack, this is draconian.**

A Note on NH 44:

- NH 44 is the lifeline of the State — it is vital to move goods (including perishable agricultural produce), and along it lie many educational and medical institutions.
- In many cases, avoiding the stretch would greatly multiply the time and distance between two points. The government is at pains to emphasise that exceptions are in place for those in medical emergencies, lawyers, doctors, tourists, government employees, students, and so on.
- **But such a system of permits and bans militates against the freedom of movement at the heart of a democratic society.** To be sure, even before the ban, civilian traffic has not moved on the highway unfettered by checks. Such is the security challenge in J&K.
- But to officially segregate civilian traffic is to put people's lives at the mercy of a calendar, and to invite confusion about the organising principles of Indian troop deployment.
- The Pulwama attack was a wake-up call about the security drills in place to prevent terrorist strikes. It demanded an appraisal, so that the lives of soldiers and civilians alike can be secured.
- However, to throw civilians out of gear — as they were on the first day of the highway ban, on April 7, 2019 — defies logic. It also positions the administration against the people, as has become clear from the political and legal challenges to the traffic restrictions.

Concluding Remarks- The Way Forward:

- Some experts opine that in a State that is already under President's Rule, it has pushed the political class and the administration farther apart.
- The State's parties such as the National Conference and the Peoples Democratic Party have led the voices of protest.
- **Petitions have been filed in the J&K High Court arguing that the restrictions violate Articles 14, 19 and 21 of the Constitution.**
- **The effect of any response to the Pulwama attack ought not to be an increased alienation that places troops and local people in an us-versus-them timetable.**
- **It must, instead, be a doubling up of the security protocol to make life more secure and hassle-free for civilians and soldiers alike.**

Category: MODERN INDIAN HISTORY

1. 'Deep regret' is simply not good enough

Note to Students:

This editorial analysis takes into account some points reflected in the article, "Reflections on a massacre", published by the Hindu on the 12th of April, 2019 as well.

What's in the news?

Recently, British Prime Minister Theresa May, on the occasion of the centenary of the horrific Jallianwala Bagh massacre, said: "We deeply regret what happened and the suffering caused."

Larger Background:

A Brief Look at the Past:

- On April 13, 1919, Baisakhi day, following unrest in Amritsar after protests against the Rowlatt Act, Brigadier General (temporary rank) Reginald Dyer took a strike force of 50 rifles and 40 khukri-wielding Gurkhas into an enclosed ground, Jallianwala Bagh, where a peaceful public meeting of 15,000-20,000 was being held.
- Immediately and without warning, he ordered fire to be opened on the crowd.
- **The firing of 1,650 rounds was deliberate and targeted, using powerful rifles at virtually point-blank range.** The "suffering caused" included several hundred dead and many times more wounded. The officially accepted figure of 379 dead is a gross underestimate.
- Eyewitness accounts and information collected by Sewa Samiti, a charity organisation point to much higher numbers. Non-Indian writers place the number killed at anything between 500 to 600, with three times that number wounded.
- More was to follow after the proclamation, two days after the massacre, of Martial Law in Punjab: **the infamous crawling order, the salaam order, public floggings, arbitrary arrests, torture and bombing of civilians by airplanes — all under a veil of strictly enforced censorship.**

A history of evasion

- After calls for an investigation, including by liberals in Britain, a Disorders Inquiry Committee, soon to be known by the name of its Chairman, Lord Hunter, was set up.
- In his testimony, Dyer asserted that his intention had been to punish the crowd, to make a "wide impression" and to strike terror not only in Amritsar but throughout Punjab.
- The committee split along racial lines and submitted a majority and minority report.
- The majority report of the Hunter Committee, using tactically selective criticism, established Dyer's culpability but let off the Lieutenant Governor, Michael O'Dwyer.
- The minority report written by the three Indian members was more scathing in its criticism.
- By then Dyer had become a liability and he was asked to resign his command, after which he left for England.
- This decision for a quiet discharge was approved by the British Secretary of State, Edwin Montagu, and, after an acrimonious debate, also by the House of Commons.
- The conservative Lords however took a different tack and rebuked the government for being unjust to the officer.
- Similar sentiments in Dyer's favour came from the right-wing press — the Morning Post started a fund for him which collected £26,000 — as well as from conservative sections of the public who believed he had saved India for the empire.

- Rudyard Kipling, who had contributed £10 to the fund put an ambivalent comment on the wreath he sent to Dyer's funeral in 1927: "He did his duty as he saw it."

Reflections on a massacre:

- For Indians, the massacre that evokes strong emotions is not Nader Shah's slaughter of 30,000 people in Delhi in 1739 but Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar, where, a century ago, on April 13, 1919 troops commanded by General Dyer fired into an unarmed crowd, killing hundreds.
- The massacre at Jallianwala Bagh, like later ones in Lidice (1942) and My Lai (1968), was relatively small. It was nothing compared to the hundreds of thousands killed by the Japanese army in Nanjing in 1937-38 or by Indonesian soldiers in East Timor 1975 onward.
- **Jallianwala Bagh's importance lies not in the numbers killed but in what preceded it and in what followed. The Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act of 1919, better known as the Rowlatt Act, came into force a month before the massacre in Jallianwala Bagh.**
- It shocked most Indians who had expected to be rewarded, not punished, for willingly fighting alongside the British in the First World War.
- The massacre, followed by the feting and rewarding of its perpetrator, General Dyer, by the British public, removed all illusions about benign British rule in the country.
- **It also marked the start of a liberation struggle like no other under Mahatma Gandhi.**
- It took Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore to capture the full import of the outrage at Jallianwala Bagh.
- In his letter of protest renouncing the knighthood conferred on him, he wrote: **"The accounts of the insults and sufferings by our brothers in Punjab have trickled through the gagged silence, reaching every corner of India, and the universal agony of indignation roused in the hearts of our people has been ignored by our rulers — possibly congratulating themselves for what they imagine as salutary lessons."**
- Many massacres in history fade while some linger as grisly curiosities. The killing of every male inhabitant of the Persian town of Kernan in 1794 by Agha Mohammed Khan is better known for the latter's insistence that the eyeballs be brought to him in baskets and poured on the floor.
- Most massacres that endure in public memory are those for which countries are responsible. Like Jallianwala Bagh, they are never forgotten or forgiven but unfailingly recollected through generations with deep loathing for their perpetrators.
- No Pole can talk about the 1940 Katyn massacre of over 20,000 Polish soldiers and civilians by the Russians, with equanimity. Another, and more recent, the 1995 massacre of some 8,000 Bosnians by break-away Serbians, is commemorated by a vast sombre memorial that doubles up as a cemetery comprising over 6,000 graves in Srebrenica.

Churchill's Comments:

- The speech that carried the day in the House of Commons in 1920 was that of Winston Churchill, no fan of Gandhi and his satyagraha.
- He called Dyer's deed "an extraordinary event, a monstrous event, an event which stands in sinister isolation"; privately he wrote that the "offence amounted to murder, or alternatively manslaughter".
- Significantly, Churchill, likening the event to "Prussian" tactics of terrorism, said that this was "not the British way of doing things". In other words, he was resorting to British exceptionalism: he was hanging out Dyer to dry as a rogue officer, while saving the larger colonial enterprise as benign.
- Dyer was certainly rogue, but he was not alone. He was one of a line of several such — John Nicholson, Frederick Cooper, J.L. Cowan — who resorted to severe disproportionate violence in 1857 and after the 1872 Kuka rebellion; he was also part of the despotic administration led by O'Dwyer (later assassinated by Udham Singh in 1940) which emboldened and then exonerated him.
- **In 2013, then Prime Minister David Cameron quoted the same Churchill epithet of "monstrous", adding that this was a "deeply shameful event in British history" and "we must never forget what happened here."**

- The Queen had earlier termed it as a “distressing example” of past history. Again, general homilies with hands nicely off and no admission of a larger culpability of racialised colonial violence that underpinned imperialism.

Editorial Analysis:

The criticism PM Theresa May has come under for lack of an apology:

- There was some expectation of a British apology on the occasion of the centenary of the horrific Jallianwala Bagh massacre, more so since the demand came this time not from Indians alone but also from a strong contingent of British MPs across political parties.
- Words are important, especially in the heavily-nuanced English language.
- In comparison, in a press conference in Brussels, Ms. May said that she “sincerely regretted” her failure in delivering a Brexit deal so far. “Deeply” is admittedly stronger than “sincerely”, but the nature of contrition expressed is identical.
- The second aspect of the statement that stands out is its passiveness — “what happened”, “the suffering caused”. **There is no hint of agency here; this could well be the statement of any observer and not of inheritors of the empire that committed the atrocity.**
- The blandness too is disturbing: one would have expected some sympathy for the victims or their descendants and some reference to the brutality of the massacre.

Concluding Remarks:

- Deep regret is all we may get instead of the unequivocal apology that is mandated.
- The expectation could be that time will add more distance to the massacre, making these calls for apology increasingly an academic exercise.
- We will no doubt also be advised to forgive and move on.
- The fact remains that there are many ways to heal a festering wound between nations, as Canada’s apology for the Komagata Maru shows; clever drafting is not one of them.

Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. Is India’s anti-satellite test a game-changer?

What’s in the news?

- On April 1, 2019, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully launched a PSLV C45 rocket with a payload of 29 satellites.
- Days before this, on March 27, 2019, in an operation called ‘Mission Shakti’, the Defence Research & Development Organisation demonstrated India’s ability in offensive defence capability, using a missile to destroy a satellite in Low Earth Orbit.

Note to the Students:

- **The following analysis points represent excerpts** taken from a discussion moderated by V. Sudarshan.
- The invitees to this discussion include D. Raghunandan (is with the Delhi Science Forum, a non-profit think tank on science and technology policy, where he works on defence, aerospace and strategic affairs) and Rajeswari Pillai Rajagopalan (who is the head of the nuclear and space policy initiative of the ORF and also technical adviser to the UN group of governmental experts on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space).
- The aim of this discussion is to look at India’s options and its role in the global governance of outer

Editorial Analysis:

- **Rajeswari Pillai Rajagopalan:** The anti-satellite (ASAT) test has been in the making for more than a decade actually. Ever since the first Chinese anti-satellite test in January 2007, there has been concern over India's own space assets and what kind of damage and destruction could happen should China decide to shoot down or temporarily disable one of our own satellites. That was the first time we recognised the importance of preserving outer space in a big way. A second important factor is that we did not want to repeat the experience of what happened in the nuclear domain. We don't want a Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons or NPT-like mechanism to come about in the space domain that would actually lead to a ban on India's future ASAT tests.

Raghunandan, how does knocking out a satellite in Low Earth Orbit actually promote deterrence?

- **Raghunandan:** My own feeling is the U.S., Russia and China have come to realise the somewhat limited nature of deterrence offered by anti-satellite weapons.
- None of them has developed large inventories of ASAT missiles or targeted a whole range of satellites of adversary nations. One must understand that all these nations have a few hundreds of satellites up in space which are used for military or dual purposes.
- How many satellites are you going to target and is knocking out one satellite going to really be a deterrent? Is it good to continue with killer missiles or are there other ways to disable adversary satellites? So I have my doubts about the deterrent capabilities of ASAT missiles, particularly as you may have noticed that all nations are extremely cagey about blowing up satellites in orbit because of the debris created. And if you have multiple such things going on, then you are obviously going to create multiple sets of problems. If the conflict between nations were to reach a stage where you are knocking out each other's satellites, then I think it would have already reached nuclear weapon threshold and then we are in a different ballgame entirely.

Rajeshwari, is the deterrence in space as complex as Raghunandan says it is?

- **Rajeswari Pillai Rajagopalan:** It is. And I would start with the fact that, so far, the established space players who have demonstrated the ASAT capability have not adopted deterrence as part of their space policy. So we are still in a good space right now where states have not made space a part of their deterrence policy. So that is an encouraging sign and that must be continued.

1. **Raghunandan:** I agree.

- **Rajeswari Pillai Rajagopalan:** As Raghu mentioned, there are other technologies available. Increasingly, the electronic and cyber warfare capabilities, any number of technologies that can be used through cyber through lasers to create temporary disruptions, and disabling somebody else's satellite and communications services to creating more permanent damage. So there are many ways of addressing this issue.

Raghunandan, in terms of evolution of our space military posture, how integrated are we in our capabilities?

- **Raghunandan:** Fortunately, ASAT capabilities have not fully been weaponised by all the countries. And, therefore, I think it affords a good opportunity to move forwards towards demilitarisation of outer space.
- The second aspect is that while India has articulated a doctrine with regard to nuclear weapons, which includes a declaration of no-first-use and so on, we do not as yet have a strategic doctrine with regard to the weaponisation in space.

- I think it would be good if India develops a doctrine for weaponisation in space as well as an integrated security doctrine which brings together nuclear, space and other advanced technologies so that you do have an integrated posture. The third point is that there is an added complication with regard to ASAT weaponry. That is, not all countries have their own dedicated military satellites which a third country can knock out and therefore disable that country's network-centric platforms and weapons systems. Many countries use third-party satellites. Many countries use dual purpose satellites. So it is not at all clear, for example, if India shoots down 'x' number of satellites belonging to a country, we have disabled that country's military communications. And this applies to any country.

Where are we in terms of disparities between us and China? What are we up against?

- Raghunandan: India has barely begun development of ASAT missiles.

China has been at this for more than a decade. They are believed to have worked on missiles targeting high latitude satellites at 36,000 km above the earth whereas we have only conducted the test at the Low Earth Orbit.

China has also been doing considerable work experimenting with laser-based weaponry and cyber weaponry which are likely to prove to be more effective than a whole battery of missiles targeting satellites. We are way behind.

Isn't there an inherent contradiction between our position on no weaponisation of space that we have adopted and a steady accrual of military assets in space that we are also doing at the same time?

1. Raghunandan: There is, in the sense that these two impulses are contrary. But I think that the real question to be asked is whether India's statement about weaponisation in space, wanting to dial back weaponisation, is more for public consumption than for actual pursuit of de-weaponisation in space.

If India is serious about wanting to de-weaponise space, then India should take active measures in the conference on disarmament along with other countries like Russia or China which have already initiated some proposals there. All of these have been completely stonewalled by the U.S., which disagrees with even the term 'weaponisation of space' and has resisted attempts to look for de-weaponisation of space, claiming that any moves in that direction denies the U.S. the ability for self-defence.

But if India is serious, India should declare no-first-use of the ASAT weaponry as we have done for the nuclear [weapons], and adopt a strong domestic doctrine on weaponisation of space just as we have a declared doctrine for nuclear weapons.

We are launching a lot of satellites for other countries. How much do you think our military programmes are being cross-subsidised by these launches?

- Raghunandan: I doubt it is very much. The major reason why India is popular as a launch destination is because of its lower costs. The incomes also will be correspondingly not very high.
- The second aspect is that all satellites we have launched have been Low Earth satellites.
- The real money in international launches lies in the communication satellites, the heavier satellites at 36,000 km above the earth. That's where the money is for telephony, television and the rest. We haven't yet broken into that league in terms of satellite launching.

Rajeshwari, can you give us an overview of what we are up against in terms of their militarisation in terms of space?

Rajeshwari Pillai Rajagopalan: China has shown it has much greater space competitiveness. For the longest

time, India was just doing four to five launches per year; on the other hand, the Chinese were doing this on an average of 20 a year. That has a certain consequence not just for the overall competitiveness in terms of the launch market... but when you look at the global commercial space market that is available (and that you don't want to lose it completely) and if you are not able to increase competitiveness, that's a serious problem. Second, there is another important component which is about how much of the growing requirements of the military are from the security sector within India that ISRO will be able to provide.

- There is a capacity gap. Even as China talks the language of peaceful uses of outer space, the reality has been that there is a flourishing military programme under the PLA leadership. The Chinese are also setting up a space station some time in the 2022-2024 time frame when the International Space Station is possibly winding down. This also leads to concerns as to how space activity in the future might shape [up].

Is there is a contradiction between the impulse towards disarmament and the impulse towards militarisation?

Rajeswari Pillai Rajagopalan: Again I would emphasise that our deterrence capability is not a war-fighting capability. We are still looking at a non-weaponisation of space. On militarisation I want to refer to a point that Raghu mentioned. Raghu said we need to prevent space militarisation. I like the idea of preventing space militarisation but I think there is a big difference between space militarisation and space weaponisation. And I think these two concepts are used in a very interchangeable manner. Space militarisation is something that has happened from the 1990s.

- In the first Gulf War, for instance, you actually saw technology playing a major role in warfare. Since then, most militaries around the world have come to recognise and acknowledge the possible use of space assets for military operations. What they call intelligence gathering, surveillance, reconnaissance, military communications, drone programmes. We cannot go back on all these developments. But what we are trying to prevent today is the early trend towards weaponisation. We don't want to weaponise outer space. For that again we do not have to put weapons in outer space.
- ASAT capabilities are the best example. That is warfare, that is weaponisation and that is something we are trying to see — if that can be stopped, that process can be halted. But again, we have been going back and forth, there are different understandings of what a space weapon is. How do you define these terms? There are major differences of opinion.
- Now that India has demonstrated this capability, India needs to play an even more active role in the global governance of outer space. But I have a slightly different opinion when it comes to who we partner with if India feels that we alone cannot go out into the global domain and create new rules of the road. We can certainly partner with like-minded countries.

F. Tidbits

1. S. Korea court orders lifting of abortion ban

- South Korea's constitutional court has ordered the country's decades-old abortion ban to be lifted in a landmark ruling over a law that campaigners say puts women at risk.
- South Korea remains one of the few industrialised nations that criminalises abortion, except for instances of rape, incest and when the mother's health is at risk.
- But the nine-member bench ruled by seven to two that the 1953 statute aimed at protecting lives and traditional values "goes against the constitution" and ordered the law to be revised by the end of next year.
- "The abortion ban limits women's rights to pursue their own destinies, and violates their rights to health by limiting their access to safe and timely procedures," the court said in a statement.
- "Embryos completely depend on the mother's body for their survival and development, so it cannot

be concluded that they are separate, independent living beings entitled to rights to life."

- Under the ban, women who underwent the procedure could face up to a year in jail and a fine, while doctors who performed the procedure were given two years in prison.
- Under the current ruling, the ban will be automatically lifted on January 1, 2021 unless new legislation is introduced sooner by parliament to follow the court order.

G. Prelims Facts

1. Mission Shakti programme in Odisha

- Mission Shakti, Odisha's flagship self-help group programme, was launched by the Chief Minister in 2001.
- It was started with a target to organize 2 lakhs Women Self Help Groups (WSHGs) covering all revenue villages of the State. Since the formation of WSHGs has crossed 2 lakhs by 2008.
- Mission Shakti has been working holistically to encompass different aspects of women empowerment through SHG moments. These include expansion of credit linkage to as many SHGs as possible so that SHGs have paid-up capital to start economic activities.
- It has been riding through women Self Help Groups (WSHG) towards its mission goal.
- There have been multi prong approaches to make women prominently visible in development scene of Orissa.
- The major areas of operation include:
 - Micro credit
 - Entrepreneurship Development
 - Livelihood security
 - Agriculture & Allied
 - Health, Hygiene & Sanitation
 - Capacity building and resource management
 - IT and education

2. New early human species found: *Homo luzonensis*

- The human family tree has got a new branch with the unearthing of an unknown human species that lived on an island in Philippines some 50,000 years ago.
- The species was dubbed *Homo luzonensis*.
- Researchers said they were less than four feet tall.
- The newfound species is named *Homo luzonensis* in honor of Luzon, the island where the mysterious beings lived during the late Pleistocene epoch, more than 50,000 years ago.
- Though *luzonensis* short like the hobbit, it shares features with a number of other ancient human relatives.
- It has curved foot and finger bones like *Australopithecus* (a genus that includes the famous Lucy); premolars that have characteristics similar to those seen in *Australopithecus*, *Homo habilis* and *Homo erectus*; and small molars that look like those of modern humans, or *Homo sapiens*.

H. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

Q1) Consider the following statements:

1. Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA) was previously named as the Bangkok Agreement.
2. It is an initiative of UNESCAP (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific).

Which of the statement/s is/are correct?

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

The Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA), previously known as the Bangkok Agreement was signed in 1975. It is the oldest preferential trade agreement between countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Seven Participating States- Bangladesh, China, India, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Republic of Korea, and Sri Lanka are the parties to the APTA. It is an initiative of UNESCAP (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific).

Q2) Consider the following statements:

1. Project Sashakt is a comprehensive plan for the resolution of stressed assets in banking sector.
2. The strategy for Project Sashakt was recommended by Sunil Mehta Committee.

Which of the statement/s is/are correct?

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

Project Sashakt is a comprehensive plan for the resolution of stressed assets in banking sector. It aims to strengthen the credit capacity, credit culture and credit portfolio of public sector banks. It is a five-pronged strategy towards resolution of stressed assets, as recommended by Sunil Mehta Committee.

Q3) Logistics Performance Index is released by

- a. World Trade Organisation
- b. World Bank
- c. United Nations Commission on International Trade Law
- d. International Trade Centre

Answer: b

Explanation:

Logistic Performance Index (LPI) is released by World bank bi-annually, by comparing across 160 countries on logistic sector performance. Logistics Performance Index (LPI) analyses countries through six indicators namely custom, International Shipment, tracking & tracing of consignment, Infrastructure, logistic competence, and timeliness of consignment.

Q4) Consider the following statements:

1. Green bonds are debt instruments the proceeds of which are used for renewable energy projects.
2. YES Bank was the first to issue the first green bond in India

Which of the statement/s is/are correct?

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

Green bonds are debt instruments like normal bonds, but the proceeds are used for renewable energy projects, or for services that are ecologically sustainable. The bond is voluntary and may be issued by a financial institution, the government or even a company to raise funds for a defined period. India entered the green bond market in 2015 with the YES Bank issuing the first green bond for financing the renewable and clean energy projects particularly, for wind and solar.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. What is Bombogenesis? What are the conditions required for the formation of Bomb Cyclone? (10 Marks)
2. "Fake news is termed as yellow journalism. With the advent of new age digital and social media, fake news has pervaded all spheres of life." In the context of the above statement examine the legal and technical hurdles in regulating the fake news. Also, comment on how fake news affects conduction of free and fair elections. (15 Marks)

