

18 Apr 2019: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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A. GS1 Related

Category: ART AND CULTURE

1. A grand celestial wedding in Madurai

Context:

- The Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple wore a colourful and festive look on the occasion of the celestial wedding of Lord Sundareswarar with Goddess Meenakshi.

Historical background:

- Meenakshi Temple (also referred to as Meenakshi Amman or Meenakshi-Sundareshwara Temple) is a historic Hindu temple located on the southern bank of the Vaigai River in the temple city of Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India.
- It is dedicated to Meenakshi, a form of Parvati, and her consort, Sundareshwar, a form of Shiva.
- The temple is at the center of the ancient temple city of Madurai mentioned in the Tamil Sangam literature, with the goddess temple mentioned in 6th century CE texts.
- Though the temple has historic roots, most of the present campus structure was rebuilt after the 14th

century CE, further repaired, renovated and expanded in the 17th century by Thirumalai Nayak.

- In the early 14th century, the armies of Delhi Sultanate led by Muslim Commander Malik Kafur plundered the temple, looted it of its valuables and destroyed the Madurai temple town along with many other temple towns of South India. The contemporary temple is the result of rebuilding efforts started by the Vijayanagara Empire rulers who rebuilt the core and reopened the temple.
- The Temple has been adjudged best 'Swachh Iconic Place' in India as on October 1, 2017 under Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi's Flagship Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.
- The Meenakshi wedding festival attracting over a million people over 12 days. It is called the "Meenakshi Thirukalyanam". The festival is celebrated in the Chithirai month, which typically falls about April. It marks the divine marriage of Meenakshi, and is the most attended festival.

Category: SOCIAL ISSUES

1. HC upholds increase in minimum wage

Context:

- The High Court of Karnataka has upheld the State government's notifications issued in 2016 and 2017 increasing minimum wage in 34 types of private industries.

Background:

- Effective April 1, 2018, the government in Karnataka notified revision of minimum wages, which has triggered a big debate in the state

What is per cent wage Increase?

- As per the notification, minimum wages went up across the board. The table below explains the extent of increase for the role of typist/data entry operator for Zone 1 (Bengaluru). The figures are in rupees per month.

	As on 1 April 2016	As on 1 April 2017	As on 1 April 2018
Basic	5590	5590	12746
VDA (Variable Dearness Allowance)	2703	3070	682
Total	8293	8660	13429
% growth over previous year		1%	55%

- The basic minimum wages are fixed every 3 to 5 years, while the VDA changes every 6/12 months. The basic wages were revised for this role on 1 April 2012 and thereafter the increase was only in VDA, which is supposed to correct for inflation. The basic wages were revised in 2018, wherein part of the VDA was also included. But the total salary increased by 55 per cent, as compared to 1 per cent increase the previous year. The increase in other roles is also significant - upwards of 30 per cent.

Code on Wages (CoW) Bill controversy:

- This increase comes in the context of the recent Code on Wages (CoW) bill presented in the parliament on 10 Aug 2017, by the then minister of State for Labour. This bill, yet to be passed by the parliament, was part of the BJP government's labour reform, which tried to set a National Floor Level for Wages (NFL) and National policy on minimum wages that are actually administered by the

individual States.

- CoW attempts to rationalise and revise minimum wages upwards and created a lot of reaction from the employers, who thought (mistakenly) the National Floor Wage would be over Rs 21,000 per month. It was later clarified that the NFL was not specified in the CoW bill. Incidentally, the minimum wage for a government employee was revised from Rs 18,000 to Rs 21,000 per month, recently. But the minimum wages for employees in private employment are far lower and despite that most employers beat the system by paying even less than the minimum wages

Why in Karnataka?

- But before we discuss Karnataka, we must discuss Delhi. AAP Government scored the first goal for minimum wage increase. According to the March 3, 2017 notification, the minimum wages for an unskilled worker went up from Rs 9,724 per month to Rs 13,350, an increase of 37 per cent. The semi-skilled wages went up from Rs 10,764 to Rs 14,698 per month, an increase of 36.5 per cent. This, however, was stuck down on the 4th August 2018 by the Delhi high court, as the employers went to the court and claimed that they were not consulted adequately.
- Karnataka has followed the Delhi AAP game plan to significantly increase the minimum wages.. Karnataka was anyway struggling to attract youth to non- IT jobs because the IT industry sets very high salary standards. So the big revision is a far easier matter for Karnataka than a state like Uttar Pradesh.

What are implications for the rest of India?

The Karnataka model will be adopted by all parties. The larger companies will make some noise, but will adopt it, because they have no choice and will start looking at productivity improvement and automation to compensate for the increase in costs. The MSME sector will be impacted. Those who can manage the local compliance authorities will get away by paying less than the minimum wages. Those who want to comply in MSMEs will suffer. The only solution is to provide Skill Wage Incentive (SWI) to MSMEs to compensate up to 25 per cent of the salary for all new employees for the first three years. Already the Central Government has started National Apprentice Promotion Scheme (NAPS) under which employers are paid directly Rs 1,500 per month for 12 months as an incentive. Central government is paying 12 per cent EPF contribution of employers for all new employment in the next three years. Hence, the MSME Skill Wage Incentive can be easily be implemented on similar lines and hence is a must for MSME compliance.

B. GS2 Related

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. India, Vietnam hold naval exercise

Context:

- Navies of India and Vietnam held a four-day maritime exercise off Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam from April 13 with an aim to boost operational cooperation has ended on 17th April.

Details:

- Indian Navy's war ships Kolkata and Shakti participated in the annual exercise, comprising a harbour and a sea phase
- The exercise was undertaken as a part of the on-going overseas deployment of eastern fleet ships to South East Asian countries.

C. GS3 Related

Category: DISASTER MANAGEMENT

1. Rain, thunderstorm leave over 50 dead in four States

Context:

- Over 50 people were killed due to rain, coupled with thunderstorm and lightning in several parts of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra overnight. The unseasonal rain and storm also caused damage to property and crops in Gujarat and Rajasthan.

Details:

- Relief work: An ex gratia of Rs. 2 lakh each for the next of kin of those who lost their lives due to unseasonal rain & storms in MP, Rajasthan, Manipur & various parts of the country has been approved from the PM's National Relief Fund. Rs. 50,000 each for the injured has also been approved.
- Rajasthan Disaster Management Minister Master Bhanwar Lal Meghwal said 25 people died in the State. The State announced Rs. 4 lakh in compensation each to the bereaved families.
- Chief Minister of Rajasthan Ashok Gehlot directed officials to carry out a survey of losses immediately so that compensation could be given on time.

Cause for the rain:

- The unseasonal rain was part of a western disturbance.

What is western disturbance?

- A Western Disturbance is an extra-tropical storm originating in the Mediterranean region that brings sudden winter rain to the northwestern parts of the Indian subcontinent. It is a non-monsoonal precipitation pattern driven by the westerlies.
- Western Disturbances also bring heavy snowfall in the Himalayan Region and a cold wave to north Indian plains.

Category: INFRASTRUCTURE

1. DGCA to do safety audit of IndiGo

Context:

- The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is going to conduct a special safety audit of the low-cost carrier IndiGo following concerns about the snag-ridden Pratt and Whitney (P&W) engines, which power the airline's A320 Neo aircraft. While an annual audit of IndiGo was due in April, a special review will also be done of the airline's operations and engineering departments,

Details:

- Indian carriers IndiGo and GoAir have been inducting the P&W engine-powered A320 Neo aircraft since 2016. The former has 72 of these planes and the latter has 30.
- With rising glitches in Pratt & Whitney engine-powered A320neo planes, the central government has decided to meet various stakeholders to review the recurring problems. In India, budget carriers

IndiGo and GoAir use the P&W engines to power their A320neo aircraft.

- The Centre's decision comes after IndiGo's Kolkata-bound flight had to return to Chennai on January 3, following a mid-air engine failure. It was reported that a "loud bang" was heard followed by smoke and heavy vibrations
- This was the third such incident in one month involving an IndiGo plane.
- On December 10 last year, an IndiGo flight made emergency landing in Kolkata after its cabin was filled with smoke.
- On December 23, IndiGo A320neo flight from Port Blair to Kolkata reportedly suffered mid-air engine failure.

Problems in engine:

- There have been problems in different parts of the engine, including the combustion chamber, knife edge seal, lift-off seal, front hub corrosion and heating of oil near lift-off seal leading to smoke on board a flight, apart from vibration during climb.
- The engine-maker maintains that the problems are taking place as the engines are new into operations.

About DGCA:

- The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is the Indian governmental regulatory body for civil aviation under the Ministry of Civil Aviation. This directorate investigates aviation accidents and incidents. It is headquartered along Sri Aurobindo Marg, opposite Safdarjung Airport, in New Delhi.
- The Government of India is planning to replace the organization with a Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), modeled on the lines of the American Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)

Vision of DGCA:

- Endeavour to promote safe and efficient Air Transportation through regulation and proactive safety oversight system.

Functions:

1. Registration of civil aircraft
2. Certification of airports
3. Licensing of pilots, aircraft maintenance engineers, air traffic controllers and flight engineers, and conducting examinations and checks for that purpose
4. Carrying out amendments to the Aircraft Act, the Aircraft Rules and the Civil Aviation Requirements for complying with the amendments to ICAO Annexes, and initiating proposals for amendment to any other Act or for passing a new Act in order to give effect to an international Convention or amendment to an existing convention.
5. Formulation of standards of airworthiness for civil aircraft registered in India and grant of certificates of airworthiness to such aircraft
6. Conducting investigation into incidents and serious incidents involving aircraft upto 2250 kg AWW and taking accident prevention measures, including formulation of implementation of Safety Aviation Management Programmes
7. Checks on the proficiency of flight crew and other operational personnel such as flight dispatchers and cabin crew
8. Coordination of ICAO matters with all agencies, sending replies to State letters, and taking all necessary action arising out of the Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) of ICAO.
9. Granting Air Operator's Certificates to Indian carriers and regulation of air transport services operating to/from/within/over India by Indian and foreign operators, including clearance of

- scheduled and non-scheduled flights of such operators
10. Approval of institutes engaged in flying training including simulator training, AME training, air traffic services training or any other training related with aviation, with a view to ensuring a high quality of training
 11. Approval to aircraft maintenance, repair, design and manufacturing organizations and their continued oversight
 12. A nodal agency for implementing Annex 9 provisions in India and for coordinating matters relating to facilitation at Indian airports, including holding meetings of the National Facilitation Committee DGCA Organization Manual
 13. Rendering advice to the Government on matters relating to air transport including bilateral air services agreements, on ICAO matters and generally on all technical matters relating to civil aviation, and to act as an overall regulatory and developmental body for civil aviation in the country
 14. Keeping a check on aircraft noise and engine emissions in accordance with ICAO Annex 16 and collaborating with the environmental authorities in this matter, if required
 15. Regulation and oversight of matters related to Air Navigation Services. Coordination at national level for flexi-use of air space by civil and military air traffic agencies and interaction with ICAO for provision of more air routes for civil use through Indian airspace
 16. Promoting indigenous design and manufacture of aircraft and aircraft components by acting as a catalytic agent
 17. Approving training programmes of operators for carriage of dangerous goods, issuing authorizations for carriage of dangerous goods, etc.
 18. Safety Oversight of all entities approved/ certified/ licensed under the Aircraft Rules 1937.

D. GS4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. A crisis of credibility?

What's in the news?

- The Election Commission of India (EC) is a formidable institution which has led the world in electoral efficiency since its inception.
- However, in the 2019 general election, it has come under the scanner like never before in the wake of incidents involving a breach of the Model Code of Conduct, particularly those by the ruling party.

Editorial Analysis:

- On April 8, 2019, in a letter to the President of India, a group of retired bureaucrats and diplomats, in the context of recent incidents, expressed concern over the EC's "weak kneed conduct" and the institution "suffering from a crisis of credibility today".

Some Areas of concern:

- The letter described the **Prime Minister's March 27, 2019 announcement**, of India's first anti-satellite (ASAT) test, as a **"serious breach of propriety [which] amounts to giving unfair publicity to the party in power"**.

- **Questions were also raised over the launch of NaMo TV without licence**, and a biopic on the life of the Prime Minister which was scheduled for release on April 11, 2019 when elections commenced.
- **The group also requested the Election Commission of India to “issue directions to withhold the release of all biopics and documentaries on any political personages through any media mechanism until the conclusion of the electoral process”.**
- They asserted that the release of such propaganda amounted to free publicity, and hence should be debited as election expenditure in the name of the candidate in question. The same standards should also apply to other such propaganda, an example being a web series titled “Modi: A Common Man’s Journey”.
- Other important issues highlighted in the letter included:
 1. transfers of top officials,
 2. voter verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT) audits,
 3. violations of the MCC by Rajasthan Governor Kalyan Singh (for which the group has requested his removal on account of “grave misdemeanour”) and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath (in his speech he referred to the armed forces as the army of Narendra Modi), and
 4. also corrosion of the political discourse in general.
- Needless to say, the questions being raised about the credibility of the EC are a cause for worry. It is, however, not the first time that the conduct of the commission has been questioned.

At the core of the Issue: Appointment of Election Commissioners

- Some experts take the view that the genesis of the problem lies in the flawed system of appointment of election commissioners, who are appointed unilaterally by the government of the day.
- This debate can be settled once and for all by depoliticising appointments through a broad-based consultation, as in other countries.
- **In its 255th report, the Law Commission recommended a collegium, consisting of the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and the Chief Justice of India.**
- **Political stalwarts such as L.K. Advani, and former Chief Election Commissioners including B.B. Tandon, N. Gopalaswami and S.Y. Quraishi supported the idea in the past even when in office.**
- However, successive ruling dispensations have ducked the issue, not wanting to let go of their power. It is obvious that political and electoral interests take precedence over the national interest.
- A public interest litigation was also filed in the Supreme Court in late 2018 calling for a “fair, just and transparent process of selection by constituting a neutral and independent Collegium/selection committee”. The matter has been referred to a constitution bench. It’s not a routine matter.
- **On issues of such vital importance, even the Supreme Court — which has always been described as the guardian angel of democracy — has to act with utmost urgency. If democracy is derailed, its future too would be in jeopardy.**
- Besides the manner of appointment, the system of removal of Election Commissioners also needs correction.
- **Only the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) is protected from being removed except through impeachment.**
- The other two commissioners having equal voting power in the functioning of the EC can outvote the CEC. The uncertainty of elevation by seniority makes them vulnerable to government pressure. The government can control a defiant CEC through the majority voting power of the two commissioners.
- **One has to remember that the Constitution enabled protection to the CEC as it was a one-man commission initially. This must now be extend to other commissioners, who were added in 1993, as they collectively represent the EC.**

Concluding Remarks: The Way Forward

- The EC's reputation also suffers when it is unable to tame recalcitrant political parties, especially the ruling party.
- **This is because despite being the registering authority under Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, it has no power to de-register them even for the gravest of violations.**
- The EC has been seeking the power to de-register political parties, among many other reforms, which the EC has been wanting.
- The reform was first suggested by the CEC in 1998 and reiterated several times.
- **The EC also submitted an affidavit to the Supreme Court in February 2018, saying it wanted to be empowered "to de-register a political party, particularly in view of its constitutional mandate".**
- It is important to note that elections are the bedrock of democracy and the EC's credibility is central to democratic legitimacy.
- Hence, the guardian of elections itself needs urgent institutional safeguards to protect its autonomy. It is time that action is taken to depoliticise constitutional appointments and the EC empowered to de-register parties for electoral misconduct.
- It is a step needed towards restoring all-important public faith in the institution.
- While these reforms may continue to be debated, nothing stops the EC from asserting the ample authority it has under the Constitution and being tough.
- It's not their discretion but the constitutional mandate. It did not need a reminder or a nudge from the Supreme Court.

2. For a free referee

What's in the news?

- Amid repeated violations of the law and transgressions of the Model Code of Conduct in the ongoing election campaign, the Supreme Court came down heavily on the Election Commission of India for its lack of initiative in enforcing the law.

Editorial Analysis:

- In fact, the EC had appeared to be willing itself into inaction amid a flurry of abusive and divisive speeches by pleading powerlessness to act.
- However, on the 15th of April, 2019, the Supreme Court came down heavily on the EC for its lack of initiative in enforcing the law.

What soon followed?

- The EC cracked the whip soon after the court's censure and barred four leaders accused of intemperate speeches from campaigning for varying durations of time.
- By suggesting a clinical parity between BSP chief Mayawati's call for Muslims to not divide their votes, and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's speech in which he characterised the election as a contest between 'Ali' and 'Bajrang Bali', in a reference to Muslims and Hindus, the EC perhaps wanted to demonstrate impartiality.
- However, **experts believe that the Election Commission of India needs to do much more to be seen as a fair referee.** The incumbent members of the EC may end up expending the accumulated trust in the institution if they do not consistently and unfailingly demonstrate efficiency and neutrality in enforcing the law and the MCC.
- For now, the Election Commission of India has managed to redeem that hope to some measure, but not entirely.

Focus on the Election Commission:

- **Article 324 of the Constitution gives the commission the powers of “superintendence, direction and control” of elections.**
- Through the Representation of the People Act, other rules and orders, by the apex court and the EC, the system governing the Indian electoral process has evolved, and continues to do so.
- **The EC has powers to deal with newer challenges that crop up, such as the easy dissemination of misinformation with the help of technological tools in recent years.**
- While responding to new situations by changing the legal architecture is essential, the EC needs to build upon a fundamental premise of the rule of law, which is, ‘be you ever so high, the law is always above you.’
- Experts argue that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has brazenly violated a directive of the EC that campaigners must not seek votes by invoking the name of the soldiers.
- Critics also allege that the continuing raids by Central agencies targeting only Opposition leaders and the blatant partisanship of the public broadcaster, Doordarshan, smack of misuse of power by the incumbent government.
- It is important to note that the EC is vested with powers to ensure a free and fair election.
- Under Chief Election Commissioners like T.N. Seshan and J.M. Lyngdoh, the commission has in the past shown the capacity to come up with creative solutions that adhere to both the spirit and the letter of the law.
- Their examples should encourage the EC to find strength in its constitutional mandate and not plead helplessness in the face of challenges to its authority.
- The Supreme Court too made the EC conscious of its own powers once more.

3. What Supreme Court said on petition to disqualify tainted candidates

Note to the Students:

This analysis has been taken from a write-up featured in the Indian Express on the 18th of April, 2019.

Editorial Analysis:

- **In September 2018, a five-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court said that it was not within its powers to disqualify politicians facing criminal cases from contesting elections.**
- As a matter of fact, Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur, who will be the BJP candidate against Digvijaya Singh of the Congress in the Bhopal Lok Sabha constituency, has been chargesheeted in the 2008 Malegaon blast case and is currently out on bail.
- **The legal bar on contesting applies only to individuals who have been convicted by a court.**

Legal Precedents:

- “Though criminalization in politics is a bitter manifest truth, which is a termite to the citadel of democracy, be that as it may, the Court cannot make the law,” the Bench, headed by then Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra, said. (Public Interest Foundation & Ors vs Union of India & Anr, September 25, 2018)
- The judgment came on a batch of petitions and applications filed by the NGO Public Interest Foundation, former Chief Election Commissioner J M Lyngdoh, the Delhi BJP leader and lawyer Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay, and others seeking directions to the Election Commission of India to disqualify from elections those candidates against whom charges have been framed in criminal cases.
- **“Directions to the Election Commission, of the nature as sought in the case at hand, may in an idealist world seem to be, at a cursory glance, an antidote to the malignancy of criminalization in politics but such directions, on closer scrutiny, clearly reveal that it is not constitutionally permissible.**

- **“The judicial arm of the State being laden with the duty of being the final arbiter of the Constitution and protector of constitutional ethos cannot usurp the power which it does not have,” the order said.**
- The Bench, also comprising Justices Rohinton F Nariman, A M Khanwilkar, D Y Chandrachud, and Indu Malhotra, however, recommended to “Parliament to bring out a strong law whereby it is mandatory for the political parties to revoke membership of persons against whom charges are framed in heinous and grievous offences and not to set up such persons in elections, both for the Parliament and the State Assemblies”.
- This, “in our attentive and plausible view”, the court said, “would go a long way in achieving decriminalisation of politics and usher in an era of immaculate, spotless, unsullied and virtuous constitutional democracy”.
- “A time has come that the Parliament must make a law to ensure that persons facing serious criminal cases do not enter into the political stream. It is one thing to take cover under the presumption of innocence of the accused but it is equally imperative that persons who enter public life and participate in law making should be above any kind of serious criminal allegation,” said the order.
- “It is true that false cases are foisted on prospective candidates, but the same can be addressed by the Parliament through appropriate legislation. The nation eagerly waits for such legislation, for the society has a legitimate expectation to be governed by proper constitutional governance. The voters cry for systematic sustenance of constitutionalism,” the order further said.

4. The ethical act of voting

Note to the Students:

The points covered in this analysis will also help aspirants while writing essays. We have marked some of the key points in bold which can help elevate the quality of answers.

Editorial Analysis:

- During elections, we often hear myriad sentiments. The upper classes will tell you that poorer citizens vote only to get benefits such as cash, clothes, television sets and other consumer goods. The majority group will say that the minorities vote as a bloc since they have all been told whom to vote for. These are seen as examples of voters not doing their duty of voting for the best person, namely, the best political representative who will govern well. Those who support a particular party will say something similar about those who are voting for another party.
- It is as if when people vote for money or as a vote bank, they are not doing what they should. But then it could also be argued that a person who blindly votes for one ideology or another is pretty much doing the same thing.

Getting paid to vote

- What does it mean to perform the act of voting correctly? **It is often said that voting is a duty, but what kind of a duty is it? Is it to make a mark on a sheet or is it actually a particular process of thinking and deciding?**
- Consider the act of voting by those who get paid before they vote. This practice is not only endemic across States but is also done quite brazenly in some places. **Party members go house to house and distribute money and other goods. This is done in the open and is a performance in itself.**
- In other cases, people are given money and goods in more surreptitious ways. This cash-for-votes practice seem to go against the very grain of democratic election. But why so?
- **In the case of taking money or goods, voters see elections as a transaction.**
- **This goes against a fundamental principle of democratic voting, which is that voting is not a transaction.**
- When we do a job for someone we don't know, and which benefits that person, we generally expect

to get paid for that act. Voting is not a job in that sense. It is not a job which is eligible for some compensation.

- **There are some important fundamental questions which arise about voting: are we voting for our own sake or for the benefit of others? Does voting improve our well-being or that of others, the elected politicians? Or is it that the ultimate purpose of an individual's vote is to improve the well-being of the larger society?**

The Dilemma in electing someone:

- We are clearly helping somebody else by voting. If a person wins because of our votes, then he or she derives enormous benefit from being a member of the legislature. There is a direct benefit to the person who is elected — she enjoys a lot of power after being elected. This is the dilemma in electing somebody.
- **We are supposed to vote for free, whereas the result of our action ends up making another person better off.**
- So why is voting not seen as a business transaction since the winner of the election profits from the action of the voter? Why can't the voter who is enabling opportunity for another person's wealth ask for a share in that wealth? If voters do so, then they are behaving rationally.
- People who stand for elections understand this logic well and they deal with it merely as a problem of economics.
- Their calculation is also based on this understanding: let us say a person wins an election, because of which she expects to make one crore in the next year. The person needs enough votes to make this happen and spends in anticipation that she will be able to recoup the money if she wins. Giving money to voters is thus like an investment. The amount of payment to voters is really a measure of how much elected representatives hope to make during their tenure!
- When we vote based on our ideology, we are following the same logic as those taking money. Those for whom small amounts of money do not matter ask for other favours, including protection of their interests, whether their religion, their caste or even economic benefits appropriate to their class. When a group of rich people vote for a person who supports lower taxes, they are doing exactly the same as the poor, since voting is used as a transaction to get something they desire.
- **The dynamics of voting is thus a complex problem of rationality, similar to problems in rational choice theory.**
- First, how do politicians know that the people will vote for them after taking their money or listening to their promises, especially if more than one politician pays the same group of people or makes similar promises? Moreover, how do they know that enough people will vote for them to make them win? For the voter, it is a much simpler calculation. They get paid for a service they perform by voting. Interestingly, many of them do vote for the person they take money from, because they feel they are morally bound to do so.

For the larger good:

- **The fundamental problem lies in viewing voting as a transaction, the aim of which is to get some benefit for an individual or a group.**
- However, we have to recognise that voting is not like any other transaction.
- **The duty that is inherent in the act of voting is an ethical duty, not just a constitutional one.**
- **It is the duty of having to act not for individual benefit, such as money or ideology, but for the benefit of the larger society.**
- **Such benefit for the larger society will include others benefiting as much as each one of us does through each of our votes.**
- **That is, when we vote, we vote on behalf of others as much as on behalf of ourselves. This duty is the ethical rationality related to voting.**
- **It is also a recognition that a democratic action like voting is primarily for the good of**

something larger than one's self interests.

Category: ECONOMY

1. End of the runway

Editorial Analysis:

- Experts opine that with banks unwilling to throw in more money to rescue Jet Airways, and no saviours visible on the horizon, it seems as though the airline is destined to follow the flight path of Kingfisher Airlines, which bit the dust in 2012.
- **From over 120 aircraft, the storied airline is now down to just five.**
- **Almost all its leased aircraft have been repossessed by lessors.**
- On the night of 17th April, 2019 the airlines decided to temporarily suspend all its flights.
- Its experienced pilots have either moved to competitors or are queuing up before them now.
- And the Jet brand, which was once reputed, stands tarnished with passengers complaining of cancelled flights and delayed refunds.

The Case of Emergency funding:

- Jet Airways has been pleading for emergency funding of at least ₹400 crore.
- But banks have refused to budge, and rightly so. Currently, banks take the view that, more lending to the sinking airline would simply mean squandering money.
- **It is important to note that emergency funding is a viable option when there is a high possibility of the borrower's business bouncing back and enabling repayment of the money borrowed. However, this is not the case with Jet Airways now.**
- It was a different story a couple of months ago when the banks did attempt a bailout package for the airline. But the descent in the airline's fortunes since then has been rapid.
- Only a foolhardy banker would write a cheque for Jet now.
- **Besides, given the atmosphere of political uncertainty, bankers would think twice before trying to save a private airline that is probably beyond rescue.**
- No banker would like to get in the crosshairs of a new government. As it is, some are asking why banks should try to rescue the airline instead of taking it to insolvency court, which is the prescribed route for such cases.
- Some experts opine that it is interesting that the present government, despite all the pressure that has been brought to bear on it, has kept away from all the action. **Bailing out a private enterprise with public money is something that the present government would not want to be seen doing at this point in time.**
- Currently, the lenders consortium is still trying its best to find a suitor for the airline.
- They have invited expressions of interest from prospective bidders and will shortly call for bids.
- However, what will the prospective buyers bid for? The airline is now down to about 16,000 employees, has a debt overhang of ₹8,414 crore (as of March 31, 2018), and accumulated losses of over ₹14,000 crore.
- Its routes and departure slots at major airports have been appropriated by competitors, albeit on a temporary basis.
- If Jet Airways does not show up on the radar again in full force before the end of the summer schedule in October 2019, the routes and slots will be foregone.
- **It is important to note that for any prospective bidder, the attraction is not just the number of aircraft that the airline flies but also the routes, departure and landing slots, and parking rights. Besides, the brand loyalty, of course.**
- Jet scored high on these accounts, but not any more. In short, Jet today has more liabilities than

assets to speak about. So, why will any serious bidder agree to take over the airline now?

Concluding Remarks:

- The fact is that the rescue act was mounted too late. That the airline was in trouble was known since October 2018, but the desperation set in only in February, 2019.
- Part of the blame for the delay lies with founder and chairman Naresh Goyal, whose reluctance to part with control over the airline put off not just prospective investors such as the Tata Group (which admitted to have been in talks for an investment in Jet) but also Jet's partner, Etihad Airways. **In the event, Mr. Goyal's decision to step down probably came too late in the day.**
- Goyal is a veteran of many a battle in the Indian skies and his influence over successive governments since the mid-1990s ensured that the skies were kept clear for him.
- **As a matter of fact, some experts point out that the 5/20 rule (a government norm under which national carriers are required to have five years of operational experience and a fleet of minimum 20 aircraft to fly overseas) was clearly designed to help Jet.** So were the restrictions on foreign investment in domestic carriers, until Jet decided to invite Etihad as a partner.
- But Mr. Goyal has run out of options now. After all, what goes around comes around.
- Jet Airways was a superb brand and had built strong loyalty among fliers. It is sad that it has to go. However, more unfortunate is the plight of Jet's employees, who will now be forced to work with competitors at lower pay scales, if at all they find openings.
- Also, fliers have to fork out 20-30% extra on fares thanks to the fall in airline seats.

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 with respect to western disturbances:

1. They are low-pressure depressions which occurs during winters, particularly the northern states of India.
2. They are basically a type of local winds which occur in north-western part of 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: a

Explanation: A Western Disturbance is an extratropical storm caused due to low pressure depressions in the Mediterranean region that brings sudden winter rain to the northwestern parts of the Indian subcontinent. It

is a non-monsoonal precipitation pattern driven by the westerlies.

They are not local winds but are the global phenomenon and is embedded with westerlies.

Q2) Where is the famous Meenakshi Temple found?

- a. Madurai
- b. Hampi
- c. Rameshwaram
- d. Khajuraho

Ans: a

Explanation: Self-explanatory

Q3) On which river bank the famous Meenakshi Temple of Madurai is found?

- a. Palar river
- b. Cauvery river
- c. Vaigai River
- d. Pennar river

Answer: c

Explanation: Meenakshi Temple (also referred to as Meenakshi Amman or Meenakshi-Sundareshwara Temple) is a historic Hindu temple located on the southern bank of the Vaigai River in the temple city of Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India.

Q4) Consider the following statements regarding The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA):

1. Its vision is to promote safe and efficient Air Transportation through regulation and proactive safety oversight system.
2. It is headquartered in Bangalore.
3. The Government of India is planning to replace the organization with a Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), modelled on the lines of the American Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)

Which of the statement/s is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 1 & 2 only
- c. 1 & 3
- d. None

Explanation: c

Explanation: It's headquartered along along Sri Aurobindo Marg, opposite Safdarjung Airport, in New Delhi.

Other two statements are correct.

Q5) Where was the recent India - Vietnam naval exercise held?

- a. Visakhapatnam, India
- b. Kochi, India
- c. Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam
- d. Gulf of Cambay, India

Answer: c

Explanation: Self-explanatory

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. What are 'Western Disturbances'? How do they influence India's weather? (10 marks -150 words)
2. On the one hand, people are dying of rain and thunderstorms in India. On the other hand, people are dying due to drought in rural India. Critically analyse. (20 marks-250 words)