27 Apr 2019: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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A. GS1 Related

Category: SOCIAL ISSUES

1. Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)

- ICDS Scheme providing for **supplementary nutrition, immunization and pre-school ed**ucation to the children is a popular flagship programme of the government.
- It is one of the world's largest programs providing for an integrated package of services for the holistic development of the child. ICDS is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** implemented by state governments and union territories.
  - All components of ICDS except Supplementary Nutrition Programme (SNP) are financed through a 60:40 ratio (central: state).
  - The Supplementary Nutrition Programme (SNP) component was funded through a 50:50 ratio. The North East states have a 90:10 ratio.
- These services are **provided from Anganwadi centers established mainly in rural areas and staffed with frontline workers.**

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- In addition to fighting malnutrition and ill health, the **programme is also intended to combat gender inequality by providing girls the same resources as boys**.
- Implemented by the Women and Child Development Ministry

Beneficiaries

- Children in the age group of 0-6 years
- Pregnant women and
- Lactating mothers

Objectives of the Scheme are:

- to improve the nutritional and health status of children in the **age-group 0-6 years**;
- to lay the foundation for proper psychological, physical and social development of the child;
- to reduce the incidence of mortality, morbidity, malnutrition and school dropout;
- to achieve effective **co-ordination of policy and implementation** amongst the various departments to promote child development; and
- to enhance the **capability of the mother to look after the normal health and nutritional needs of the child** through proper nutrition and health education.

The following services are sponsored under ICDS to help achieve its objectives:

- Supplementary nutrition
- Pre-school non formal education
- Nutrition and Health information
- **Health checkup**
- **Immunization**
- **Referral services**

The last three services are related to health and are provided **by Ministry/Department of Health and Family Welfare** through NRHM & Health system.

Context

- As per a study published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition shows that a diet with relatively more protein is needed during the second and third trimesters of pregnancy for the growth and development of the baby.
- Accordingly the Centre's Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme provides supplementary nutrition services for children.

B. GS2 Related

Category: GOVERNANCE

1. SC Orders RBI to Disclose Annual Inspection Reports of Banks under RTI

Context

- The Supreme Court directed the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to **disclose information about its Annual Inspection Report of banks** and the list of wilful defaulters under the Right to Information Act (RTI).
- Earlier, the **apex court and the Central Information Commission (CIC), both had held that the**

RBI cannot deny information to an information seeker under the transparency law unless the material is exempted from disclosure under the law.

Annual Inspection Report of banks

- RBI is empowered under **section 35 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949** to conduct annual inspection of all commercial banks—**public, private and foreign**.
- It **conducts an on-site inspection of all banks once a year**.
- RBI officials visit the head offices and branches of banks to inspect the books
- Currently, the annual inspection is based on **a Risk-Based Supervision method** which focuses on "evaluating both present and future risks, identifying incipient problems and facilitates prompt intervention/early corrective action".
- It covers financial position, functioning of board and various links of the bank, details of assets and liabilities, treasury management, asset liability management, liquidity operations, para banking activities, etc.
  - o Earlier RBI used to follow the **CAMELS approach**—capital adequacy, asset quality, management, earning, liquidity and system and control.
- The content of the annual inspection report is discussed with the head of the particular bank before finalization. The **final report is then shared with the banks to enable them to take corrective steps**.

Details

- The Court, which did not initiate contempt proceedings against the RBI, warned **that any future violation of the transparency law would be "viewed seriously"**.
- SC bench also directed the federal bank to review its policy to disclose information relating to banks under RTI.

Background

- Few petitioners were **denied copies of inspection reports of ICICI Bank, Axis Bank, HDFC Bank and State Bank of India from April 2011 till December 2015**.
- They had sought the **inspection reports** under the RTI in December 2015.
- The RBI had stated that it was **exempt from disclosing information under Section 8(1)(e) of the RTI Act and Section 45NB of the Reserve Bank of India Act**.
- The RBI, in its defence, had said that it cannot disclose information as the annual inspection report of the **bank contained "fiduciary" information as defined under the transparency law**.
  - o To which SC had said in its judgment in 2016 that the RBI is not in any fiduciary relationship with any bank.

Central Information Commission (CIC)

- In 2011 the CIC said the **public has the right to know how banks are functioning** since significant amounts of public funds are kept in banks.
- Former CIC Shailesh Gandhi had **directed the RBI to disclose the names of banks that had been penalized** or served show-cause notices.
- However, the central bank defended its stance on the grounds of protecting fiduciary and commercial interests.

What is the impact of the Supreme Court order?

- The RBI will be required **to provide annual inspection reports and other material** (such as details of penalties) unless it is exempted under law.

- While this will provide greater transparency about the affairs of banks, **it has the potential to affect the regulatory process of the RBI**.
- Information contained in RBI annual inspection reports relating to banks is **highly sensitive**. The central bank through these efforts tries to ensure that the banking system remains smooth with minimum disruptions. **Greater bank disclosures help investors and depositors, but it can also have unintended consequences**.

Category: POLITY

1. Two Voter IDs

- **Section 17** in the Representation of the People Act, 1950
    - No person to be registered in more than one constituency.—No person shall be entitled to be registered in the electoral roll for more than one constituency
- **Section 18** in the Representation of the People Act, 1950
    - No person to be registered more than once in any constituency.—No person shall be entitled to be registered in the electoral roll for any constituency more than once.
- " **Making false declarations**.—If any person makes in connection with—
    - the preparation, revision or correction of an electoral roll, or
    - the inclusion or exclusion of any entry in or from an electoral roll,
    - a statement or declaration in writing which is false and which he either knows or believes to be false or does not believe to be true, **he shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year, or with fine, or with both**."
- In the case of **Keshav Lal Thakur v. State of Bihar, (1996)**, the Supreme Court has clearly held that offence under Section 31 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950, **is a non-cognizable offence**.

Context

- AAP accuses Gautam Gambhir for having two voter IDs.

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Sri Lankan police looking for 140 with Islamic State links

Context

- The Islamic State (IS) has lately taken responsibility.

Background

- Previously forty or more Sri Lankans travelled to Syria to fight with IS could help explain how the terror network was able to build vital personal links in the very small community of Sri Lankan Islamist extremists so it could subcontract its attack plans to them.

Resemblance with earlier attacks

- The Easter weekend attacks are similar to the al-Qaeda attacks of the 2000s than to recent attacks of IS.
- Like the 2000 attack on the USS Cole in Yemen, the 2001 attacks in New York and Washington, the 2002 bombings in Bali, the 2003 truck bombs in Istanbul, the 2004 train bombings in Madrid, the 2005 tube and bus bombings in London, the **Sri Lanka bombings involved multiple attackers**

acting in concert. With the exception of September 11, all of these also involved Improvised Explosive Devices (IED).

Why Sri Lanka?

- Sri Lanka has a **4 per cent Muslim minority**; an undetermined number are from the Wahabi sect and others are Sufis. However, in that country's majority and hard-boiled nationalism, **everyone other than Sinhala Buddhists are suspected of being anti-national**.
- A **severe trust deficit exists based upon years of internal civil war and internecine violence** between various faiths and groups. The IS worked on this and recruited their fighters on the basis of propaganda brainwashing the local recruits.
- It is just the kind of situation tailor made for two things;
  o first, a demonstration of international radical extremist capability;
  o second to send home a message that these terror networks exist across the world and mother organisations still control them
- Sri Lanka **was a soft target**. Having successfully defeated the Tamil Tigers rebel group a decade ago through military might, **Sri Lanka has become complacent**. It has n**ot seen a pressing need to develop police and non-military intelligence** capacity to counter terrorism.
- At the same time, it has struggled with good governance and political stability.
- It has faced a major constitutional crisis
- Therefore in the competitive world of international terror, the **IS perceives a need to continue retaining its current primacy**; any leeway given to other major groups such as al Qaeda will see many years of effort in the Middle East wasted.

Why Christians were targeted?

- Targeting the **Sinhala majority** would be counterproductive as the retaliation from radical Sinhala groups such as Bodu Bala Sena would be intense.
- Targeting the **Tamil community** would similarly be counterproductive since the LTTE's networks may eventually be needed.
- The Christian community is 9.7 per cent of the population and historically no Christian-Muslim feud exists in the island. That is all the more reason that the **chances of retaliation against Muslims would be low**.
- The IS, with its caliphate-like aspirations, **would have viewed the killings at Christchurch, New Zealand as just the event to avenge with an act against Christians anywhere on the globe**. Easter was the most appropriate time as was the selection of churches and five-star hotels where western tourists (again largely Christian) would be present in large numbers.
  o The type of suicide bombings witnessed in Sri Lanka would have called for resource collection, planning, motivation of seven suicide bombers and very careful coordination without even an iota of a leak. Five weeks to plan is far too little time. Christchurch probably only became a justification.

Concerns for India

- The Sri Lanka attacks hold major implications for Indian security, in part because the main group behind the bombings, the **National Thowheed Jamath (NTJ),** is an ideological offspring of the rapidly growing, Saudi-funded **Tamil Nadu Thowheed Jamath (TNTJ).**
  o The TNTJ, wedded to fanatical Wahhabism, rails against idolaters. It helped establish the Sri Lanka Thowheed Jamath, from which the bomber outfit NTJ emerged as a splinter.
- Like the **2016 brutal Dhaka café attack**, the Sri Lanka slaughter was carried out by **educated Islamists** from well-off families. And just as Bangladesh blamed Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) for the attack, the **NTJ has ties with ISI's front organisation, Lashkar-e-Taiba**, which, through its Sri Lanka operations, has sought links with the TNTJ in India.

- NTJ leader Zaharan Hashim was inspired by fugitive Indian preacher Zakir Naik's sermons and received funds from Indian jihadists.

C. GS3 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

D. GS4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Lessons from a military encounter

Editorial Analysis:

- Some experts opine that talking to one's adversary in the midst of a war, a limited war or even hostility is often viewed as undesirable in the public mind.

India's Experience:

- However, the lesson from the long history of warfare and India's own experience in dealing with past crises is that talking to one's adversaries is a crucial requirement for de-escalation and for bringing the two sides back from the brink.
- Such talks are often done discreetly and soberly via the 'back channel', away from media attention and focussed on de-escalation, meeting the aims behind the war-talk and achieving an honourable exit from the tussle.

How did India and Pakistan fare recently?

- In this regard, it is important to ask, how did Indian and Pakistani decision-makers fare in the end-February 2019 military encounter that the two sides found themselves in the middle of after the Pulwama terror strike?
- Going by the information that is currently available in open sources, and conversations with analysts in India and Pakistan, one would say that there were hardly any pre-existing/dedicated channels of communication between the two countries; the ones that were in place were not put to use; and very little bilateral conversation actually took place to de-escalate the crisis. That should be of great concern to us.
- Therefore, the military stand-off that followed the Indian Air Force strikes on Balakot, in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, should encourage the two sides to **urgently put in place dedicated bilateral conflict de-escalation mechanisms, in the absence of which the two nuclear-armed countries could potentially head towards an undesirable, inadvertent and unintended conflict with unpredictable outcomes.**
- It must be kept in mind that there is **nothing to guarantee that military crises can be finely calibrated and controlled by central decision-makers — they cannot be.**
- For instance, what would have been the nature of the escalation had the ordnance fired by the Pakistan Air Force actually hit forward military installations such as a Division HQ of the Indian

Army in Kashmir and involved casualties?

A Communication breakdown?

- The conversation at the Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) level, the highest military contact that currently exists between India and Pakistan and which has often played a de-escalatory role, was not activated during the crisis.
- Unlike previous years, since Pakistan did not have a National Security Adviser (NSA) or an equivalent official, there were no NSA-level talks either.
- The two High Commissioners, unsurprisingly but disturbingly, were called back to their home countries for consultations.
- **Some experts opine that if anything, it is during crisis periods that envoys should stay put in their respective High Commissions to find ways of defusing tensions and relaying messages and options back to their governments.**
- Curiously, India and Pakistan chose to do the exact opposite.

Back-channel Contacts:

- More significantly, some experts opine that there were apparently no back-channel contacts between India and Pakistan during the February 2019 crisis.
- During the Kargil conflict, on the other hand, **politically appointed interlocutors had conducted discreet discussions on de-escalatory measures between the two sides.**
- It is important to note that given the lack of abundant options for crisis communication, the two sides had to innovate on a war footing.
- **Media reports have suggested that the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) chiefs had communicated with each other about what might happen had the Indian pilot not been released by Pakistan, among other things**, something the Indian NSA also conveyed to Pakistan via the U.S. Parleys between the intelligence chiefs is an unlikely channel and contacts between them, while useful during crises, would not be able to achieve as much as between politically-empowered interlocutors.
- Experts opine that the fact that there were fears in Pakistan that India was preparing to launch missiles at its territory and that the Pakistani concerns about a possible Indian attack have not disappeared in Pakistan also goes to show the poor state of crisis communication between the nuclear rivals.
- It is not difficult to understand why India chose not to communicate with Pakistan in an effective and officially authorised manner. Doing so would have taken away the political utility of the 'teaching Pakistan a lesson' rhetoric: **how can India be seen to be talking to Pakistan at any level (except perhaps to threaten) when it is avenging the deaths of its solders?**
- Some experts opine that even such a calculation shouldn't have prevented India, from making high-level de-escalatory contacts with Pakistan, for doing so is nothing but wise statecraft. Not doing so allows domestic political calculations to trump the diktats of statecraft.

The rise in third parties:

- It is important to note that when the hostile parties do not talk to de-escalate, others tend to step in.
- As a matter of fact, February and early March 2019, witnessed a slew of efforts by third parties to ensure that India and Pakistan de-escalate from the nuclear brink.
- The Americans, Chinese, Russians, Saudis, Emiratis were all involved one way or another in defusing the tensions between the two countries.
- **During earlier crises, Washington was the only mediator, but this time around, thanks to the tensions between the U.S. and Pakistan and the rise of other prominent actors in the region, there were several interested parties in the fray, each with its own agenda.**
- Not only does the involvement of several parties make the situation more chaotic, it could potentially

lead to more miscommunication and mismanagement.

- Critics point out an important problem: **On the one hand, there was very little crisis negotiation between the principal parties to the conflict — India and Pakistan. On the other, there were several third parties who jumped into the fray for mediation, and it seemed as if both the sides were happily outsourcing their crisis management to third parties with differing agendas and motives.**
- It is important to note that outsourcing conflict management to third parties, especially in the absence of one's own mechanisms, is a recipe for disaster.

Concluding Remarks: The need to reinstate backchannel talks

- One of the biggest takeaways from the February 2019 crisis is the need to reinstate/re-establish high-level backchannel contacts with interlocutors in Pakistan, whether Islamabad or Rawalpindi.
- This is a lesson from various India-Pakistan crises, be it the backchannel through the 1999 Kargil conflict and the 2001-2002 crisis, discreet negotiations between the two sides preceding the 2003 ceasefire agreement and the post-Mumbai escalation.
- This is also a lesson the two Cold War rivals (U.S. and the Soviet Union) had learnt, that they had to keep talking to each other through the worst years of their rivalry. As a matter of fact, it took the Cuban Missile Crisis to convince the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. to negotiate arms control, discuss crisis management and put in place confidence-building measures, notwithstanding the state of their relationship.
- **Remember, the Cold War also had domestic political implications especially for the U.S., but that didn't prevent them from instituting conflict-management measures.**

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Backstop option

Larger Background:

- The 1998 Good Friday Agreement, signed by Prime Ministers Tony Blair and Bertie Ahern, conferred dual nationality on every resident of Northern Ireland.
- As part of the Good Friday agreement, which put an end to the insurgency in Northern Ireland two decades ago, the border between the two countries was opened, and the Republic gave up its claim to the northern counties of the island.
- Ireland, along with the rest of the EU, is insistent that this agreement is not compromised by Brexit, However, this opens up an irreconcilable problem for UK administration.
- It is important to note that the protestant majority, Northern Ireland (which is a UK Territory) and the catholic majority, Irish Republic (which is an independent country in the south), have had serious ethnic tensions within and between them.
- Since the UK plans to leave the EU, the Irish question has come to haunt all concerned governments as there is a fear that a new era of violence might start again.

What does an open-border imply?

- An open border in Ireland would imply either that Britain continues to abide by EU trading rules, or that another customs border be set up between Northern Ireland and Great Britain.
- But the latter is unacceptable to many in UK parliament and particularly to the hardliners from Northern Ireland in the Democratic Unionist Party, which Ms May depends on for her parliamentary majority.

Let's look at some of the main arguments in favour of Britain leaving the EU:

1. Migration:

- There is a rising fear among Britons towards losing jobs, social security welfare benefits etc. with the migration of people from both within as well as outside the EU.
- What exacerbates this issue are the repeated requests from some countries such as Germany towards sharing migrants across Europe. This is something that is disliked by a section of Britons.

2. Contributions towards the EU Budget:

- The UK contributes a significant share towards the EU Budget.
- According to some studies, the contributions made by the EU is not proportionate to the benefits that it receives in return.

3. Failure of the EU:

- The European Economic Community (EEC) had 6 members, 4 languages and a population of roughly 177 million people when it was founded. However, currently, the EU has 28 members, 24 languages and a population of well over 500 million people.
- People allege that the EU has failed on many fronts in creating one community and one identity. Some sections of people feel that jobs, living standards, were better during the earlier days of nation-states when compared to now.

4. Issue of Sovereignty:

- Some Britons feel that they are being controlled by the diktats from Brussels instead of having the power to make their own decisions.
- They do not want the bureaucracy of Brussels to dictate the laws which the U.K. should follow.

5. The Influential Role of Germany:

- Germany has started playing an influential role in dictating much of the policies which the EU is adopting.
- In a sense, it has indirectly translated towards Britain feeling marginalized within the EU.
- Britons are unwilling to tolerate an EU dominated by a German leadership.

6. Issues with the Economic Model:

- Some Britons are not happy with the manner in which the EU central bank had responded to the 2008 financial crisis which resulted in an economic recession.
- According to some studies, UK's economy is losing around 600 million Euros every week because of the burdensome regulations of the EU.

Arguments against Britain leaving the EU:

1. Allowing Immigrants Presents an Opportunity:

- Majority of the immigrants are young and thus would give a boost to economic growth. They would also help pay for public services, and widen the tax base.

2. Trade:

- Trade gets a major boost if Britain stays within the EU. Selling products to other EU member nations becomes easier with EU membership. Foreign companies may not be willing to invest in the UK if it is not a part of the EU. As a matter of fact, they may also move their bases out of the UK.

3. Issues of SecuritySome Brexit critics raise the point that leaving the EU may affect the ability of the UK to fight cross-border crime and terrorism. They believe that Britain would be more secure as a part of the EU.

Implications on India:

- India-UK trade may get a boost. This is because the stringent regulations of the EU is a big obstacle and with the UK leaving the EU, this obstacle can be done away with.
- It is important to note that the EU had banned Alphonso mangoes from India after it had reportedly found fruit flies in the consignments. Moreover, the weakening of the pound would also prove to be advantageous for Indian imports. It would also benefit Indian tourists visiting the UK and Indian students studying in the UK. On the flipside however, there may be a decrease of tourists from the UK visiting India.
- However, Indian businesses based in the UK would find it harder to access markets in the EU. This is because their products might become uncompetitive if they are asked to pay import duties upon entering the EU.
- After Brexit, it is believed that there would be more restrictions placed on Indian immigrants.
- Brexit would also affect the flow of FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) into India.

What's recently in the news?

- Recently, Journalist Lyra McKee's gruesome murder in Londonderry has brought into focus the fragile Irish peace process, more than 20 years after Britain and Ireland signed the historic Good Friday accord.

Editorial Analysis:

- **The attack, carried out by the so-called New IRA, opposed to the 1998 deal, also underscores the political stalemate following the collapse of power-sharing institutions in Northern Ireland.**
- McKee, 29, a freelance journalist and author, rose to prominence through her work on the victims of three decades of The Troubles.
- In March 2019, authorities held the New IRA, established in 2012, responsible for sending parcel bombs to transport hubs in London and a university in Scotland.
- In January 2019, it owned up a car bomb explosion at a Londonderry court, a sign of renewed militant activity, soon after the U.K. Parliament rejected the government's withdrawal deal from the EU over disagreements on the border with the Republic of Ireland.
- The so-called Irish backstop is designed to ensure – until an alternative is found – that Britain remains in a customs union with the EU, so as to protect the open border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.
- **The absence of customs checkpoints in the region over two decades has been critical to protecting the peace, and maintaining the status quo is a paramount demand notwithstanding Britain's eventual exit from the EU.**
- However, **champions of a hard Brexit are hostile to the backstop, which they fear will tie Britain permanently in a customs union and deny London the freedom to strike trade agreements with third countries.**
- The issue has divided Dublin and London, as also the Leave and Remain camps within Britain's

principal political parties.

A Look at the Political Situation in Ireland:

- Meanwhile, the Northern Ireland Assembly, responsible for the exercise of devolved authority in the region, has remained in suspended animation since 2017.
- Northern Ireland's two main parties, the **pro-British Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)** and the **Sinn Féin, the Irish republican party, are divided on several issues of governance.**
- This has lent credence to the view that the 1998 accord has merely managed sectarian divisions rather than cement relations between communities.
- The DUP, which props up the Conservative government in London, has consistently opposed the backstop, despite the promise it holds to protect the open border between Northern Ireland and the Republic.
- But the party could yet play a constructive part in breaking the Brexit stalemate by backing Prime Minister Theresa May's withdrawal agreement.
- This prospect has gained strength following the Conservative hardliners' suggestion that they could support Ms. May's deal if the DUP were also to come on board.

Concluding Remarks:

- A meeting of minds on this question would save the U.K. from the grave danger of crashing out of the EU without an agreement.
- It would equally guarantee peace in Northern Ireland.

Category: GOVERNANCE (EDUCATION)

1. Competing for the best

Editorial Analysis:

- The flow of academics, for decades, has been from India to other countries.
- **One can find top Indian talent, for example, at many American universities.**
- They include the dean of the Harvard Business School and the dean of Harvard College, and a number of university presidents as well as professors in many fields.
- This flow of talent has heavily impacted the availability of highly qualified academics in Indian universities.

Steps Taken to Counter the Brain Drain:

- To counter this "brain drain" and to quickly improve top Indian institutions, the Narendra Modi government introduced flagship programmes such as the:

1. Global Initiative of Academic Networks (GIAN),
2. Visiting Advanced Joint Research Faculty Scheme (VAJRA), and
3. Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration (SPARC).

- It was reported recently that there are just 40 foreign teachers at all of the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) — 1% of the total faculty of 5,400 — despite the government's goal to attract 20% international faculty at higher education institutions such as the IITs.
- This is despite the fact that internationalisation in general and the appointment of global staff is central to the new 'Institutions of Eminence' programme.
- The goal is even more lofty after the IIT Council, last year (2018), recommended the recruitment of

foreign faculty on a tenure basis.

- The Graded Autonomy Regulations of the University Grants Commission also now allows the highest performing universities to hire up to 20% foreign faculty on tenure basis.
- It is virtually impossible for India to attract large numbers of international professors of high standing and ability without dramatic changes in many aspects of the existing governance structure in higher education. Dramatically enhanced funding would also be required.

A Look at the talent pool:

- There are two kinds of international academics to be considered.
- The first category is accomplished senior professors — these would be very difficult to lure to India. Established in their careers, with attractive international salaries, and often with family and other obligations, they are embedded both in their universities and locales.
- The other group are younger scholars who may have fewer ties to universities and societies, and are thus more mobile.
- Further, some, depending on their disciplines, may have difficulty in locating a permanent academic job at home due to a tight academic job market.
- They also will not add to the immediate prestige of the Indian university which hires them since they do not have an established reputation. However, they can provide quality teaching, research and they often bring a useful international perspective.
- The main possibilities for mobility are academics of Indian origin (non-resident Indians) who have successful careers abroad and who might be attracted back. **The major recent initiative of the Indian government, GIAN, has been successful in attracting many academics of Indian origin from different countries for shorter durations.**
- However, the experiences of two prominent universities sponsored by Indian and other regional governments — the South Asian University in Delhi and Nalanda in Bihar — show that offering higher salaries with exemption from taxation has not been very successful in attracting senior faculty of foreign origin.
- In some ways, the best Indian universities would require a kind of **"cultural revolution"** to join the ranks of global world-class universities — and to be able to lure top faculty.
- The structural and practical realities of Indian universities make them generally unattractive to academic talent from abroad. A few examples indicate some of the challenges.

Scales of salary

- **Indian academic salaries are not globally competitive, even taking into account variations in living costs. In the U.S., senior academics at research universities typically earn around ₹8,970,000 and up annually, and those at top universities can earn ₹13,800,000 or more.**
- The average salary for a full-time academic is ₹5,037,000, with those in high demand fields in the sciences, business and others earning significantly more. In comparison, the total emoluments offered to a professor in an IIT located in one of the Indian metro cities, in accordance with the latest Pay Commission's minimum pay scale with house rent allowance is around ₹2,640,000.
- China, which is also actively luring top international faculty to its research universities, is offering salaries of ₹6,900,000 or more along with additional research funding.
- International faculty cannot be offered long-term appointments in Indian public institutions. A five-year contract is all that is available. Thus, there is little job security.
- Obtaining research funding is difficult and the resources available, by international standards, are quite limited.
- **On the other hand, a few 'elite' private universities such as O.P. Jindal, Azim Premji, Ashoka, Shiv Nadar, Ahmedabad, Krea, and the management institute Indian School of Business have adopted different strategies; for instance, ranging from attracting foreign nationals, to Indians who studied at prestigious foreign universities to their institutions by offering higher salaries**

and other benefits than are available to local hires.

- The faculty diversity of O.P. Jindal Global University, for example, stands out among these with 71 full-time foreign faculty from 32 countries. The key motivation for hiring foreign faculty at all these institutions is to improve international competitiveness and secure positions in global rankings, which in turn would also attract more motivated students.

Concluding Remarks:

- These new private institutions with, by Indian standards, considerable resources have proved that it is possible to attract foreign faculty, at least those with an Indian ethnic background.
- But the challenges faced by public institutions, even those of as high quality as the IITs and the best universities, seem insurmountable, at least in the context of the current Indian higher education environment and bureaucratic and legal framework.

Category: SOCIAL JUSTICE

1. The long wait for safety

Editorial Analysis:

- A year after the launch of the Safe Cities programme, not much headway has been made in making cities safer for women.

A watershed moment:

- It is important to note that following the horrific gang rape of a young woman in a moving bus in New Delhi in December 2012 and the public outcry that followed it, the United Progressive Alliance-2 government set up the **Nirbhaya Fund**, named after the victim as she was referred to by the media, to ensure the safety of women across the country, with an initial corpus of ₹1,000 crore.
- The fund was announced at the fag end of that government's term, and so little was spent from it.
- Over six years, the amount increased to ₹3,600 crore, but reports emerged that the money was not being used. Faced with severe criticism for this, the National Democratic Alliance government approved in March 2018 ₹2,919 crore from this corpus for the Safe Cities programme for eight major cities — Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Ahmedabad, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Lucknow — for three years.
- The Centre and the States share the expenses for the scheme (60:40). The amount given by the Central government is ₹2,016.50 crore.
- The Centre invited proposals from the Director Generals of Police (DGP) of these eight cities as well as from Municipal Commissioners.
- A leading newspaper (The Hindu) tracked the status of implementation of the Safe Cities programme in six of the eight cities and found that not a single penny had been spent by the local administrations despite funds being released by the Centre.
- The police in many cities said that tendering for works proposed by them under the programme (such as installation of CCTV cameras, PCR vans, e-toilets and pink patrol bikes and cars) will begin only after the Lok Sabha election is over.
- In Delhi, senior officials drew a blank when asked about the execution of the scheme.

Public Pressure on Political Parties:

-
  o Public pressure forced both the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Congress to give more primacy to women's safety in their 2014 manifestos, however, critics allege that the same is

not the case this time.

- o Critics allege that despite the BJP's 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' scheme, which aims to "prevent gender-biased sex selective elimination, ensure survival and protection of the girl child, and ensure education of girls", and the Congress's plan to develop a Citizens' Charter for Women's Safety and Security, the promise to fight against gender violence is drowned in the din of claims and counter-claims by political parties this election season.
- o Critics further point out that both the BJP and the Congress look at women's safety only through the prism of criminal investigation — the BJP talks about 'forensic facilities' and 'fast-track courts', and the Congress proposes a 'separate investigative agency' for heinous crimes against women.
- o The focus on making public spaces safe and accessible for women through sustained campaigns is entirely absent.

Case in Point: Lucknow

• In Lucknow, women police constables wearing headphones lend a patient ear to complaints from women on the other end of the line, type out complaints, and submit them online for further action.
• The call centre is not far from the U.P. Police Headquarters. The 'Women Power Helpline 1090' was launched to ensure that police help is only a phone call away.
• Victims don't need to go to the police station to file a complaint. The requirement to file an FIR, too, has been dispensed with in order to encourage women to break their silence without fear of reprisal, often from their own families.
• As many as 45 women constables have been tasked with answering complaints about lewd phone calls, online abuse, stalking and sexual harassment. The helpline, which was launched in 2012, registers about 730 complaints a day. Once a complaint is filed, a male constable calls the offender and rebukes him for his misdemeanour, warns him of police action and, in rare cases when this is insufficient, books him for a crime. The grievance is considered resolved only after following up with the victim over 45 days.
• "We tell the offender that he is being put on the police radar; that if he doesn't change, there will be legal action. So, it is both reformatory and punitive. But when there are incidents that require immediate action, say a case of rape, we lodge an FIR immediately," says Uttar Pradesh Director General of Police O.P. Singh.
• The data collected from calls made to the helpline offer an insight into the State. The most number of complaints come from Lucknow, Kanpur, Prayagraj, Varanasi and Gorakhpur. Data from 2018 show that 53% of women who called the helpline were non-working women. Thirty-four per cent of the calls came from college students. More than 70% of the complaints were about lewd phone calls. Incidents of cyber-harassment increased by four times in 2018 from the previous year (2017).

• The U.P. police plans to double the capability of this unique initiative under the Safe Cities programme and add 40 more computer terminals, says Uttar Pradesh Director General of Police O.P. Singh.
• The Central government has approved ₹194 crore for Lucknow from the Nirbhaya Fund. Proposals also include integrating 1090 with another helpline, UP 100 (the Uttar Pradesh Police Emergency Management System); setting up an integrated control room linked to 1,500 CCTVs; pink outposts for facilitating easy filing of complaints by women; 100 pink patrol scooters, 100 pink SUVs, 74 pink toilets, and public transport buses that are GPS-enabled and equipped with panic buttons and CCTV cameras.
• A Data Analytics centre at the 1090 call centre has also been proposed.
• Richa Rastogi, a local women's rights activist, raises some important points. She points to the need to look at women's safety beyond violent crimes in public spaces. "A safe city must have provisions for shelter homes for women who have escaped from violent marriages and sometimes from their own parents who want to get them married without their consent. There is also a need to deploy protection officers mandated under the Domestic Violence Act," says Rastogi.
• She adds that an earlier initiative to introduce pink autos in the city failed as they were mostly operated and used by men. "We need to have women drivers. This will ensure women's empowerment and make women commuters feel safe," she says.

Case in Point: Delhi

• The city police says its women officers patrol outside schools and colleges to ensure that women students are safe. "All the Station House Officers are directed to increase patrolling in winter as the streets are more lonely then and visibility is low. Police booths and facilitation desks are also provided at identifiable places in crowded areas," says Geeta Rani Verma, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Police Unit for Women and Children).

• The Delhi police was sanctioned ₹663.67 crore under the scheme. It was also the only city to receive 100% funding from the Centre. The Delhi police plans to procure hi-tech 'field devices' for enhanced real-time responses to crimes in the city; have dedicated women safety patrol vans equipped with dashboards for viewing live feeds from CCTV cameras across the city; and GPS tracking facilities. However, despite the scheme being approved more than a year ago, a senior official seems to know little about it.

Case in Point: Chennai:

• In 2016, Chennai was gripped by horror when a 24-year-old Infosys employee was hacked to death at a busy railway station in broad daylight.

• In January 2019, a woman was molested at the Taramani MRTS station by railway staff.

• The Chennai Corporation and police have an elaborate plan to augment the infrastructure in the city to ensure safety of women.

• The local body plans to have 617 'safe zone clusters' in places considered crime hotspots and where surveillance cameras and street lights are to be installed.

• These safe clusters will cover 19 bus stands, 10 colleges, 70 schools, seven shopping malls, seven IT parks and 56 railway stations as well as markets and places of worship.

• As many as 500 e-toilets for women are to be set up in public places and 30 mobile toilets for women police staff on bandobust duty at the cost of ₹27.77 crore.

• The city police also plans to conduct a GIS-based heat map of areas of crime against women that is to be integrated with notification services on mobile applications.

• A 24x7 emergency app to track women in distress and a helpline service for women are on the cards, officials claim. The total amount sanctioned to the city under the Safe Cities project is ₹426 crore.

• However, critics allege that all these plans remain only on paper.

Case in Point: Hyderabad

• Among the initiatives Hyderabad has already undertaken to ensure that women are safe, the police counts its SHE teams as a success.

• The aim of the SHE teams is to curb 'eveteasing' in all aspects and in all places.

• In the last four and a half years, the SHE teams in Hyderabad have received 12,000 petitions. But these teams mostly have male officers.

Case in Point: Bangalore

• The Bengaluru police launched pink Hoysalas, or patrolling vehicles, to exclusively address women and child safety issues.

• However, these pink Hoysalas are often used for other policing jobs. Although this was started as a service that would have exclusive women patrolling staff, many of the Hoysalas are run by male police personnel.

Concluding Remarks:

• An overemphasis on technology and policing will enhance security, but not necessarily make cities safer for women or enhance their access to public spaces.

• Besides policing, we need to look at urban planning and designing gender-friendly spaces. We need to effect a change in cultural and social norms through campaigns.

• Globally, wherever cities have made significant changes, it has been because of the municipal authorities. Whether it is New York, London, Bogota, or Seoul, it is because the mayoral system has been strengthened. For cities we must ask for stronger local bodies.

• Conversations with police officials across cities show that it is not only the State authorities, but also the civic authorities who have a role to play in securing the safety of women in public places.

F. Tidbits

1. Let S.A. Bobde panel finish probe first, says ex-judge A.K. Patnaik

Context

- Justice A.K. Patnaik, the retired Supreme Court judge appointed by the court to c**heck a lawyer's claim of a "larger conspiracy" against Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi,** said that he would not begin his assignment until the in-house inquiry into a former court staffer's complaint of sexual harassment against the Chief Justice was completed.

Details

- A.K. Patnaik, who has been tasked with probing an alleged conspiracy against the Chief Justice of India, has made the right decision by choosing to wait for the end of the in-house inquiry into a former woman employee's complaint of sexual harassment by the CJI and subsequent victimisation, before starting his work.
- Justice Patnaik intends to wait **as he wants to avoid any clash with the Justice Bobde Committee inquiry**
- Justice Patnaik pushed the pause button so the **complainant would have no reason to fear prejudice**.

2. 1 million species risk extinction due to humans: draft UN report

Context

- According to a draft UN report up to one million species face extinction due to human influence.
- The report sequences how humanity has undermined the natural resources upon which its very survival depends.

Details

- There is accelerating loss of clean air, drinkable water, forests, pollinating insects, protein-rich fish and storm-blocking mangroves all this poses threat and add up to increasing consequences of climate change
- Biodiversity loss and global warming are closely linked
    - The direct causes of species loss, in order of importance, are shrinking habitat and land-use change, hunting for food or illicit trade in wildlife body parts, climate change and pollution
- The report warns of "an imminent rapid acceleration in the global rate of species extinction".

Recommendation

- Production of food currently is against the order of the nature so we need transformative change in production to stop the damage
- According to experts "If we're going to have a sustainable planet that provides services to communities around the world, we need to change this trajectory in the next ten years, just as we need to do that with climate."

G. Prelims Facts

1. Manjira Wildlife Sanctuary

- It is a wildlife sanctuary and **reservoir** located in Sangareddy district of Telangana.
  - The reservoir, located in the sanctuary, provides drinking water to Hyderabad and Secundarabad.
- Originally a crocodile sanctuary, today more than 70 species of birds are spotted here and is home for the vulnerable species Mugger Crocodile.
  - Mugger Crocodile IUCN status: Vulnerable

Manjira/Manjra/Manjeera River

- It is a tributary of the river Godavari.
- Manjra is the main river which has its origin near the Gaukhadi Village of Beed district.
- Terna River is an important tributary of the Manjira River

Context

- The Manjeera barrage and the Singur reservoir going dry this summer has forced the crocodiles from the Manjeera Wildlife sanctuary to search for any place where water is logged.

2. Southern River Terrapins (Batagur Affinis)

- The species still known locally in Cambodia as the **"Royal Turtle"** because it was historically protected by a royal decree and the eggs were considered a delicacy reserved for the king.
- **IUCN: Critically Endangered**
- They are found in Malaysia, Indonesia and Cambodia.

Threats

- These species were once feared extinct because of hunting, trafficking and illegal sand mining.
- Furthermore young terrapins are also vulnerable to predators such as water birds and monitor lizards, and to accidental entanglement in fishing gear.

Context

- Twenty critically endangered 'Royal Turtles' were released into a remote stretch of a Cambodian river.

H. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

Q1. The Wangala Festival is celebrated in the region of

a) Goa
b) Arunachal Pradesh
c) Meghalaya
d) Uttarakhand

Ans: c

Explanation:

Wangala -- Meghalaya, Nagaland and Assam

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    - Also known as the 'Hundred Drums Festival', Wangala is celebrated by the people of the Garo tribe from Meghalaya, Nagaland and Assam. Various food items made from rice—a staple in this region—and rice beer (called chubitchi/chubok/chu)are consumed during the festivities.
    - The date of the Wangala varies from village to village and it takes place between September and December.
    - Typically, the celebrations are accompanied by dance and music, with people from across the village participating.

Q2. Consider the following statements about Power grids in India

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    1. India has four Electricity Grids
    2. All of them are connected except Southern grid
    3. All the grids are being run by the state-owned Power Grid Corporation

Which of above statements are incorrect?

a) 1 and 2 only
b) 2 and 3 only
c) 1 and 3 only
d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: a

Explanation:

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    - India has five electricity grids - Northern, Eastern, North Eastern, Southern and Western.
      - In 1991 North Eastern and Eastern grids were connected.
      - In 2003 WR and ER-NER were interconnected.
      - 2006 North and East grids were interconnected thereby 4 regional grids Northern, Eastern, Western and North Eastern grids are synchronously connected forming central grid operating at one frequency.
      - 2013 Southern Region was connected to Central Grid in Synchronous mode with the commissioning of 765kV **Raichur-Solapur Transmission line thereby achieving 'ONE NATION'-'ONE GRID'-'ONE FREQUENCY'.**
    - The union territories **of Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep are not connected** to the National Grid. Both territories are archipelagos located far away from the mainland
    - All the grids are being **run by the state-owned Power Grid Corporation**

Q3. Bepicolombo is a mission to study which planet?

a) Mercury
b) Venus
c) Mars
d) Jupiter

Ans: a

Explanation:

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    - BepiColombo is an **unmanned joint mission** of the European Space Agency (ESA) and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) to the planet Mercury on an Ariane 5 rocket.
    - The spacecraft was named after **Italian scientist Giuseppe "Bepi" Colombo**
    - The mission will perform a comprehensive study of Mercury, including its magnetic field, magnetosphere, interior structure and surface.

Q4. With reference to Gram negative Bacteria, consider the following statements

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    1. Gram negative bacteria have additional outer membrane, which prevents drugs from getting inside.
    2. Gram negative bacteria are generally considered the more difficult to treat.

Which of above statements are correct?

a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both
d) None

Ans: c

Explanation:

Gram negative vs Gram positive bacteria – what's the difference?

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  -
    - There are two major classes of bacteria, known as Gram positive and Gram negative. They take their names from how they respond to the Gram staining test, which in turn was named after Danish scientist Hans Christian Gram, who developed the technique.
    - A bacterium is known to be **Gram negative or Gram positive based on its reaction to the test – Gram positive bacteria stain purple**, and Gram negative do not.
    - **Gram negative bacteria are generally considered the more difficult to treat**. They include such nasties as E. coli, Salmonella, Pseudomonas, and the Gonococcus bacteria – responsible for the sexually transmitted infection gonorrhoea.
    - Antibiotics have a tough time dealing with Gram negative bacteria because of their additional outer membrane, which prevents drugs from getting inside.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Explain the significance of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS). Also illustrate with examples how local self-governments can ensure sustaining nutrition initiatives.
2. Fighting international terrorism requires Global Counter-Terrorism Cooperation. What steps should the world initiate to prevent the growing menace of Terrorism?

Read previous CNA.