

03 May 2019: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Did China abandon its 'all-weather friend'?

Context:

After years of resistance to listing Masood Azhar, founder of Pakistan-based terrorist group Jaish-e-Mohammed, as a global terrorist, China has finally changed its position. Masood Azhar is now listed as a designated terrorist by the UN Security Council 1267 Committee imposing on him, a travel ban, arms

embargo and asset freeze.

Details:

- Earlier attempts to add Azhar to the United Nations blacklist, under the 1267 Committee, failed as Beijing put a hold on the process, saying the issue should be resolved through consultations.
- After the February 14 Pulwama attack, which killed at least 40 Indian security personnel, France, the United Kingdom and the United States co-sponsored a new listing application, which was also blocked by China.

Why was China blocking the listing application?

- The main reason for China's opposition to Azhar's terror designation was the Pakistan factor.
- Islamabad has robust economic and strategic ties with Beijing.
- China is also investing billions of dollars in Pakistan to build an ambitious economic corridor, connecting Kashgar in western China to Pakistan's Gwadar, a port city on the Arabian Sea.

Why did China change its position now?

- Both India and China have manifested their desire to deepen bilateral ties despite the structural problems they face.
- Prime Minister of India went to Wuhan in April last year for an informal summit with Chinese President even when bilateral ties were not at their best.
- The shadows of the Doklam stand-off between India-China armies and Beijing's repeated hold on Azhar as well as its opposition to India's Nuclear Suppliers Group membership continued to impinge on bilateral ties. Still India preferred to stay engaged with China as the Wuhan summit suggested.
- Beijing had shown in recent past that it is ready to do business with New Delhi even overlooking Islamabad's sensitivities.
- Last year, it dropped its opposition to adding Pakistan to the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) grey list, which allowed the listing to go through smoothly.
- The Azhar issue has cast shadows on China's commitment to fighting terrorism. Besides, JeM's role in multiple terrorist attacks in India has been well established.
- China's continued hold on his listing had weakened internationally its position against terror.
- Additionally, the "deradicalisation" camps for Uyghur Muslims it is running in Xinjiang had triggered international criticisms, particularly from the U.S.
- If the resolution was put to vote, China would have been left with an awkward choice — either to back it or use its precious veto power, further isolating itself among global peers. This appeared to have put China in a fix.
- However, China didn't have to completely abandon Pakistan, its "all-weather friend". The original listing application, which France, the U.K., and the U.S. had moved had a reference to the Pulwama terror attack. But that reference was removed from the application that went through - apparently at China's insistence.
- This is in line with Pakistan's Kashmir narrative that terror activities in the Valley are an indigenous uprising, and not controlled by any foreign player.

Conclusion:

The official listing talks about Azhar's ties with Jaish and al-Qaeda, but has no reference to his role in Kashmir violence. This was the compromise that India and its allies at the UNSC had to make to get Azhar listed. It allowed India to clinch a diplomatic victory, while China can say it changed its position not under any pressure but based on the "revised" listing request, and Pakistan can claim that the listing went through after "all the political references" were removed.

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. SC to hear petition to debar Rahul from polls

Context:

A petition was filed in the Supreme Court seeking direction to the Centre and the Election Commission to debar the Congress president Rahul Gandhi from contesting the Lok Sabha election till the issue of Citizenship is decided.

Details:

- The Supreme Court has agreed to hear a plea to direct the Election Commission of India (ECI) to debar Congress president Rahul Gandhi from contesting the Lok Sabha polls and “becoming a Member of Parliament” after he had “voluntarily acquired British nationality.”
- In a recent letter to Gandhi, the Home Ministry had said it has received a representation in which it has been brought out that a company named Backops Limited was registered in the United Kingdom in 2003 with Rahul Gandhi as one of its directors, where he has declared his nationality as British.
- The petition wanted a declaration that Mr. Gandhi “is not an Indian citizen and he is incompetent to contest as per the provisions of the Constitution read with the Representation of the People Act, 1951.”

Qualifications and Disqualifications to contest in Lok Sabha Elections:

- Article 84 (a) of the Constitution of India envisages that a person shall not be qualified to be chosen to fill up a seat in the Parliament unless he is a citizen of India.
- The minimum age for becoming a candidate for Lok Sabha election shall be 25 years.
- For contesting an election as a candidate a person must be registered as a voter. Representation People Act, 1951 precludes a person from contesting unless he is an elector in any parliamentary constituency.
- If a candidate is registered as a voter in Delhi, he/she can contest an election to Lok Sabha from any constituency in the country except Assam, Lakshadweep and Sikkim, as per the R. P. Act, 1951.
- The candidate must be mentally sound, should not be bankrupt and should not be criminally convicted.
- If a person is convicted of any offence and sentenced to an imprisonment of 2 years or more, this will be disqualification to contest elections.
- Even if a person is on bail, after the conviction and his appeal is pending for disposal, he is disqualified from contesting an election as per the guidelines issued by the Election Commission of India.

C. GS3 Related

Category: DISASTER MANAGEMENT

1. Odisha evacuates over 11 lakh

Context:

The State government of Odisha has evacuated over 11 lakh people from low-lying areas in 15 districts with the extremely severe cyclonic storm Fani expected to cross the Odisha coast.

Land of Cyclones:

- As many as 26 of the 35 deadliest tropical cyclones in history have been Bay of Bengal storms.
- Bangladesh has seen the most casualties, accounting for over 40% of the world's tropical cyclone-associated deaths in the past two centuries (India accounts for a quarter of the deaths).
- In India, Odisha has seen most number of cyclones (98 between 1891 and 2002) but Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu have had the most casualties in recent times.

Why the East Coast?

- More cyclones are formed in the Bay of Bengal than Arabian Sea due to wind patterns (that keep oceans cooler on the western side).
- Even among those formed along the western coast, many move towards Oman instead of hitting Indian shores.
- Storms formed on the eastern coast, however, are more intense and since states on that side have relatively flatter topography compared to the western coast they can't deflect the winds.

Strength of Cyclones:

Cyclones are classified based on the wind speed around the low-pressure area.

- Wind speed of over 62 kmph is classified as a tropical cyclone and assigned a name.
- It becomes a severe cyclonic storm if the speed is between 89 and 118 kmph.
- A very severe cyclonic storm if the speed is between 119 and 221 kmph.
- Those with higher speeds are categorised as super cyclonic storms.

Precautions taken:

- The administration has made people in coastal areas aware of the risks, through loudspeakers, sirens and messages.
- National Disaster Response Force teams and Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force have been
- Teams of Flight operations from the Biju Patnaik International Airport in Bhubaneswar have been suspended.
- Educational institutions in the coastal districts have been closed till further orders.
- As many as 25 teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force (ODRAF) along with State fire service personnel have been deployed in the coastal districts.
- The Defence forces were on high alert to meet any eventuality.
- The Kolkata Port Trust has suspended shipping to the port.
- The Navy has put ships on stand by and deployed medical and relief teams to respond to any contingencies once cyclonic storm Fani hits Coast.
- INS Sahyadri, Ranvir and Kadmatt with relief material and medical teams embarked have been deployed and are maintaining south of the cyclonic storm to be the first responder and commence rescue operation as soon as the cyclone crosses coast.

Category: SECURITY

1. Indian Air Force hones preparedness in NE

Context:

The Indian Air Force has focussed on air defence preparedness in the eastern and north-eastern sector with

an eye on the country's 'eastern neighbour' by carrying out first-of-its-kind operation.

Details:

- IAF carried out a drill of its Sukhoi Su-30 jets from the civilian airport on the outskirts of
- It was the first-of-its-kind operation, also conducted in Kolkata and Durgapur in West Bengal, from civilian airports in the area of operation of the IAF's Eastern Air Command, headquartered near Shillong.
- This is the first time that the Sukhoi SU-30 class jets are conducting drills from any civil airfield in the Northeast.

Significance:

- The drill is expected to give the IAF more flexibility for coordination with civil air traffic during an emergency.
- The idea is to let the fighter jet pilots familiarise with the operating procedure at the civilian airfields and get exposure to a different environment besides adapting to other factors that come into play.
- From the western front earlier, the focus is now increased in the east since the eastern neighbour is increasing its capabilities, and it is necessary to have a serious deterrent in order to emulate any threat that may emerge in the future.
- 'Eastern neighbour' is believed to be a reference to China which has reportedly increased its air assets in Tibet.

Category: ECONOMY

1. Banks can declare defaulting IL&FS accounts as NPAs

Context:

The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) has allowed the banks to declare as non-performing assets the accounts of IL&FS and its group companies that have defaulted on payments.

Background:

- The NCLAT had in February prohibited banks from recognising any IL&FS group accounts as non-performing assets without first seeking approval from the tribunal.
- The RBI had moved the NCLAT, filing a plea to modify the order allowing the banks to declare the defaulting accounts of IL&FS as NPAs as per the banking regulations.
- The RBI had contended that banks had an obligation to mark bad loans as NPA in cases of non-payment, after the default of 90 days as per the existing circular and they could not be relieved of this duty.
- In this matter, earlier the NCLAT had observed that the RBI could not restrict it from passing orders in the issue.
- RBI had then said it was not on the question of the resolution process of the IL&FS and just wanted a modification on the order, which would allow banks to record NPAs on their books in terms of the master circular, which was also upheld by the Supreme Court.

Details:

- A bench headed by Chairman Justice S J Mukhopadhya lifted the embargo on the banks to declare the accounts of the debt-ridden IL&FS and its 300 group entities, which are unable to pay their debt.
- However NCLAT has also clarified that although the banks would declare the IL&FS accounts as

NPAs, they cannot initiate recovery process and debit money.

- The bench has observed that lenders must not withdraw support until a resolution is found of the IL&FS and its group companies.
- Presently IL&FS Group companies, with a collective debt of over Rs 90,000 crore, are going through resolution process.

Classification of IL&FS group companies:

- Now, all group companies of IL&FS are being classified according to their ability to meet payment obligations.
- Those able to meet all payment obligations are categorised as 'green'
- The companies able to meet only operational payments and senior secured debt obligations are categorised as 'amber'.
- Others are categorised as 'red'.

Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. Microbots are on their way to practical applications

Context:

Microbots - the robots that are the size of a speck of dust are being developed.

Details:

- Thousands fit side-by-side on a single silicon wafer similar to those used for computer chips.
- They can pull themselves free and start crawling.
- The new robots take advantage of the same basic technology as computer chips.
- The microbots are powered by shining lasers on tiny solar panels on their back.
- The robots run on a fraction of a volt and consume only 10 billionths of a watt

Uses:

- The super-small robots can be controlled by shining light on it, and that could have all sorts of interesting applications.
- They could crawl into cellphone batteries and clean and rejuvenate them.
- They might be a boon to neural scientists, burrowing into the brain to measure nerve signals.
- Millions of them in a petri dish could be used to test ideas in networking and communications.

Challenges remain as, for robots that are injected into the brain; lasers would not work as the power source.

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E. Editorials

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. A global label

What's in the news?

- Recently, Masood Azhar was listed as a designated terrorist by the UN Security Council.
- Masood Azhar is the chief of the terrorist organization named, the Jaish-e-Mohammad.

Editorial Analysis:

- Experts opine that Masood Azhar's listing as a designated terrorist by the UN Security Council closes an important chapter in India's quest to bring the Jaish-e-Mohammad chief to justice.
- He eluded the designation for 20 years, despite his release in 1999 in exchange for hostages after the IC-814 hijack, and his leadership of the JeM as it carried out dozens of deadly attacks in India, including the Parliament attack of 2001, and more recent ones like the Pathankot airbase attack in 2016 and the Pulwama police convoy bombing this year.

China's previous positions:

- China's opposition to the listing has long been a thorn in India's side, given the toll Azhar and the JeM have exacted, and Beijing's veto of the listing three times between 2009 and 2017 had driven a wedge in India-China relations.

Patience and Persistence of Indian diplomacy:

- Despite the frustration over China's last hold on a proposal moved by the U.S., the U.K., and France just weeks after Pulwama, the government has done well to approach Beijing with what the Ministry of External Affairs called "patience and persistence".
- There is much disappointment, however, over the final listing released by the Security Council, with no mention of Mr. Azhar's role in any of the attacks against India, or directing the insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir.
- A specific reference to Pulwama, which was in the original proposal, was also dropped, presumably to effect China's change of mind on the issue.

Debunking Pakistan's claims of victory:

- Further, it is important to note that Pakistan's claims of a victory in this are hardly credible; Masood Azhar is one of about twenty 1267-sanctioned terrorists who have Pakistani nationality, and more are based there, which is hardly a situation that gives it cause for pride.
- It is necessary to recognise that India's efforts and those of its partners in the Security Council have been rewarded with a UNSC designation at its 1267 ISIL and Al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee.

Concluding Remarks: The Way Forward

- Experts opine that the focus must now move to ensuring its full implementation in Pakistan.
- But this is easier said than done.
- Pakistan's actions against others on the 1267 list have been far from effective, and in many cases obstructionist.
- Hafiz Saeed, the 26/11 mastermind and Lashkar-e-Toiba chief, roams free, addresses rallies, and runs a political party and several NGOs without any government restrictions.
- LeT's operations commander Zaki Ur Rahman Lakhvi was granted bail some years ago despite the UNSC sanctions mandating that funds and assets to the sanctioned individuals must be frozen.
- It will take constant focus from New Delhi, and a push from the global community, to ensure that Masood Azhar is not just starved of funds, arms and ammunition as mandated, but that he is prosecuted in Pakistan for the acts of terror he is responsible for.
- Further, Azhar and his JeM must lose all capacity to carry out attacks, particularly across the border.

- It is important to note that the Global terror financing watchdog, Financial Action Task Force will also be watching Pakistan's next moves closely, ahead of a decision, that could come as early as in June 2019, on whether to "blacklist" Pakistan or keep it on the "greylist".
- Both financial and political pressure should be maintained on Islamabad to bring the hard-fought designation of Masood Azhar to its logical conclusion.

2. Don't give in to polarization (Fallout of the recent terror attack on Sri Lanka)

Editorial Analysis:

- As reports about those behind the Easter Sunday attacks in Sri Lanka emerge, many questions remain about the motives of the extremists.
- As a matter of fact, the full picture of the formation of this extremist force and the objectives behind their heinous crimes may take time. However, they have succeeded in creating a spectacle of death, mayhem and fear.
- It is important to focus on the historical backdrop and the broader consequences of these attacks.
- Experts opine that in the months ahead, the climate of fear is going to drastically shape the workings of the state, the political character of future regimes and relations between communities.
- Currently, the political leadership in the country has descended into a blame game with this being an election year.
- The progressive forces committed to a plural and democratic society have a historical challenge before them, as **Sri Lanka is on the verge of falling into the abyss of polarisation.**

A Brief Look at History:

- The Easter attacks have implanted horrendous images in the minds of Sri Lankans.
- The fallout can tear apart the body politic of Sri Lanka with political shifts similar to the U.S. after September 11, 2001 and the July 1983 pogrom in Sri Lanka.
- The "war on terror" in the U.S. after 2001 led to the draconian USA PATRIOT Act, the detention and surveillance of Muslims and the institution of Homeland Security, undermining the democratic and liberal structures within the U.S.
- With many other countries sucked into the "war on terror" coupled with the Bush regime's military adventures in Afghanistan and Iraq, great social and political turmoil was created in West and South Asia, and fuelled extremist Islamist forces.
- In Sri Lanka, the "war on terror" manoeuvred an internationalised peace process between the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), by pushing for a deal between a so-called "failed state" and a "terrorist organisation".
- Eventually, as the peace process failed with heightened international engagement, Sri Lanka's version of a brutal "war on terror" cataclysmically ended the civil war with tens of thousands of lives lost in May 2009.
- On the other hand, the armed conflict itself escalated following the government-orchestrated July 1983 pogroms where over 2,000 Tamil civilians were massacred.
- That pogrom over-determined the political economy of the country with an ethnic conflict over the next two and a half decades.
- Indeed, the Easter massacre leading to hundreds of casualties is loaded with dangers of religious forces entering the mix of a country historically fraught with ethno-nationalist tensions and conflicts.

A Look at Specifics:

- Some actors are drawing parallels between the perpetrators of the Easter attacks and the LTTE.
- However, the similarities are limited to the LTTE's use of suicide bombings and targeting of civilians.
- The LTTE had a clear agenda of creating a separate state and worked to build a base within the

Tamil community through a combination of separatist nationalist mobilisations, totalitarian control and ruthless elimination of dissent.

- In comparison, the extremist Muslim youth behind the Easter attacks are a fringe group and their nihilist politics without a social base is one of divisiveness and isolation.
- They have drawn as much on globally circulating contemporary technologies of terror as on the alienation of Muslim youth with rising global Islamophobia, but their politics are eschewed by the Muslim communities in Sri Lanka.
- In this context, even though the attacks were mainly against Christian churches, **the fallout may take unpredictable forms.**
- Thus far, the Christian communities' response has been restrained.
- However, chauvinist Sinhala Buddhist forces see these attacks as targeting state sovereignty and feel vindicated in their distrust of Muslims. Their anti-Muslim campaigns have greatly influenced the Sinhala population's prejudices against Muslims over the last decade; the Mahinda Rajapaksa regime stoked anti-Muslim violence and the Sirisena-Wickremesinghe government hardly addressed its continuation.
- It is important to note that even as reports of the perpetrators behind these harrowing attacks unfold, many international and national actors are projecting narratives to suit their geopolitical and power seeking agendas.
- Experts opine that the number of international actors now providing assistance to confront "terrorism" does not bode well given the disastrous history of internationalised engagement in Sri Lanka.
- **Further, there are social and political dangers in projecting hasty solutions either removed from or with limited understanding of problems.**
- While security in the aftermath of the attacks is a real concern, a solution solely focussed on militarised policing and surveillance is worrying.
- For close to a decade, progressives have called for demilitarisation.
- However, the current state of Emergency with militarised check points and surveillance are further militarising the country.
- In weeks before the Easter attacks there was much discussion of repealing the draconian **Prevention of Terrorism Act enacted in 1979**, which in no small measure was linked to torturing and alienating Tamil youth during the war and Sinhala youth during the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna insurrection.
- Experts opine that in Sri Lanka, one is now looking into the black hole of a far severe legal and surveillance regime, with little discussion of its long-term impact on democratic freedoms.

Political ramifications:

- In the panic and clamour for a security response, the ideological, economic and political ramifications of the current crisis are missed.
- Drawing on Islamophobic discourse, Muslims characterised as the "other" are called to explain and take responsibility for the Easter attacks.
- There are escalating demands to ban madrasas and Muslim women's attire without extensively consulting the Muslim community.
- Furthermore, as with the previous riots that targeted Muslim businesses, **scapegoating Muslims for future economic problems is a real fear.**

Impact on the Economy:

- The fragile national economy is bound to decline with a major hit on the significant tourist industry.
- The July 1983 pogrom and the armed conflict brought tremendous disorder and isolated Sri Lanka at a time when its peers such as Malaysia and Thailand gained economically from major foreign investments.
- In these times of protectionism, **an economic shock affecting international investment, capital**

flows and trade with Sri Lanka can lead to a national economic crisis.

Fertile ground for political gains?

- Even more dangerously, an authoritarian anti-terrorist leadership is now the kneejerk call for the upcoming presidential elections.
- Predictably, **the Rajapaksa camp gaining ground over the last year capitalising on mounting economic problems, is seeking further political gain out of this disaster.**
- They claim only a strongman leader can redeem the country.
- They are projecting their role in decimating the LTTE as the solution for the current crisis.
- However, the defeat of the LTTE was about taking on a totalitarian organisation with a pyramidal military structure, where the decapitation of the leadership led to its end.

Concluding Remarks:

- The challenge now beyond the immediate security concerns is mainly of social and political proportions.
- The attacks by extremist Islamist forces on the Christian churches can shift into conflicts that involve chauvinist Buddhist and for that matter Hindu reactionary forces.
- Hindutva in India, Buddhist extremism in Myanmar and the circulation of their ideologies and practices are imminent dangers for an already fraught Sri Lankan polity.
- The liberal and left forces in the country, and the Sinhala intelligentsia in particular, have to find the courage and discourse to take on the chauvinist anti-Muslim rhetorical barrage.
- **A likely casualty of the Easter attacks is going to be the rights of Muslim youth and the broader freedoms of the citizenry.**
- The challenge before the country is to turn national mourning and grief into a call for coexistence and democracy.

Category: INTERNAL SECURITY

1. Lost lives

What's in the news?

- Recently, the nation witnessed the death of 15 security personnel in a landmine attack in Gadchiroli, Maharashtra.
- This is yet another grim reminder of the Indian state's continued failure to crush naxalism.

Editorial Analysis:

- Even before the recent attack which took the lives of 15 security personnel in a landmine attack in Gadchiroli, Maharashtra, a legislator and some security personnel lost their lives in a similar attack in the neighbouring State of Chhattisgarh ahead of polling.

Nature of the Attack:

- The fact this attack should occur despite the deployment of 30 companies of the Central Reserve Police Force — a company comprises 135 personnel — and 13 companies of the State Reserve Police Force as well as 5,500 personnel of the local police in Gadchiroli and neighbouring Chandrapur district **shows not only the audacity of the perpetrators but also the unpreparedness of the security forces.**
- **A Quick Response Team** was going down the road to Dadpur in Kurkheda where extremists had set

fire to three dozen vehicles of a road construction company earlier in the day when the explosion blasted the team to smithereens.

- The ease with which the extremists were able to torch so many vehicles is alarming, and the manner in which the response team blithely drove into an ambush is a shocking example of poor planning.
- Experts opine that the naxals set the bait and the security forces blindly took it.
- In the process, standard operating procedures, including letting a road-opening team lead the way, seem to have been ignored. Yet, the authorities still remain in a state of denial.
- It is no coincidence either that the perpetrators chose the Maharashtra Foundation Day, after the polling in the district, to send this violent message.

Concluding Remarks and concerns:

- The fact that the naxals should be able to control the narrative, remain on top of the intelligence, stay nimble and several steps ahead of the security planners should be a matter of deep concern.
- It is some comfort that the polling percentages in both Gadchiroli and neighbouring Chandrapur have risen, compared to the 2014 Lok Sabha election, from 70.04% to 71.98% and from 63.29% to 64.65%, respectively.
- However, the path of the voter to the polling booth in the naxal-dominated districts is still paved with disincentives.
- Unfortunately, the security forces deployed in the region have not been able to instil in them a greater level of confidence.
- On top of everything else, most of the police personnel who perished in this latest attack seem to have been local citizens.
- What effect could this have on the larger process of weaning away the populace from the naxalites?
- Even in the prevailing circumstances of a hostile external environment, India cannot afford to take the challenges of internal security lightly.

Category: ECONOMY

1. The gender ladder to socio-economic transformation

Editorial Analysis:

- India is in the middle of a historical election which is noteworthy in many respects.
- One among the many noteworthy points is the unprecedented focus on women's employment.
- As a matter of fact, the major national parties, the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Congress, have reached out to women, and their respective manifestos talk of measures to create more livelihood opportunities in rural and urban areas, which include incentives to businesses for employing more women.

What does the data show?

- Currently, the participation of women in the workforce in India is one of the lowest globally.
- The female labour force participation rate (LFPR) in India fell from 31.2% in 2011-2012 to 23.3% in 2017-2018.
- This decline has been sharper in rural areas, where the female LFPR fell by more than 11 percentage points in 2017-2018.
- Social scientists have long tried to explain this phenomenon, more so in the context of rising levels of education for women.
- The answers can be found in a complex set of factors including:

1. low social acceptability of women working outside the household,

2. lack of access to safe and secure workspaces,
 3. widespread prevalence of poor and unequal wages, and
 4. a dearth of decent and suitable jobs.
- Further, it is important to note that most women in India are engaged in subsistence-level work in agriculture in rural areas, and in low-paying jobs such as domestic service and petty home-based manufacturing in urban areas.
 - However, with better education, women are refusing to do casual wage labour or work in family farms and enterprises.

Education and work

- A recent study observed a strong negative relationship between a woman's education level and her participation in agricultural and non-agricultural wage work and in family farms.
- Essentially, women with moderately high levels of education do not want to do manual labour outside the household which would be perceived to be below their educational qualifications.
- The study also showed a preference among women for salaried jobs as their educational attainment increases; but such jobs remain extremely limited for women.
- It is estimated that among people (25 to 59 years) working as farmers, farm labourers and service workers, nearly a third are women, while the proportion of women among professionals, managers and clerical workers is only about 15% (NSSO, 2011-2012).
- However, it is not the case that women are simply retreating from the world of work.

Unpaid work carried out by women:

- On the contrary, time-use surveys have found that they devote a substantial amount of their time to work which is not considered as work, but an extension of their duties, and is largely unpaid.
- The incidence and drudgery of this unpaid labour is growing.
- This includes unpaid care work such as:
 1. childcare,
 2. elderly care, and
 3. household work such as collecting water.
- The burden of these activities falls disproportionately on women, especially in the absence of adequately available or accessible public services.
- It also encompasses significant chunks of women's contribution to agriculture, animal husbandry, and non-timber forest produce on which most of the household production and consumption is based.

Concluding Remarks: The Way Forward

- Experts opine that any government which is serious about ensuring women's economic empowerment and equal access to livelihoods must address the numerous challenges that exist along this highly gendered continuum of unpaid, underpaid and paid work.
- A **two-pronged approach** must entail facilitating women's access to decent work by providing public services, eliminating discrimination in hiring, ensuring equal and decent wages, and improving women's security in public spaces.
- It must also recognise, reduce, redistribute, and remunerate women's unpaid work.
- An ActionAid document, which has compiled a people's agenda through extensive discussions across States, provides critical recommendations to policymakers on issues of concern to Dalits, tribal people, Muslims and other marginalised communities with a focus on the needs of women.
- **On the question of work, women's demands include gender-responsive public services** such as free and accessible public toilets, household water connections, safe and secure public transport, and

adequate lighting and CCTV cameras to prevent violence against women in public spaces and to increase their mobility.

- Furthermore, they want fair and decent living wages and appropriate social security including maternity benefit, sickness benefit, provident fund, and pension.
- Women have also expressed the need for policies which ensure safe and dignified working and living conditions for migrant workers.
- For example, in cities, governments must set up:
 1. migration facilitation and crisis centres (temporary shelter facility, helpline, legal aid, and medical and counselling facilities).
 2. They must also allocate social housing spaces for women workers, which include rental housing and hostels.
 3. They must ensure spaces for women shopkeepers and hawkers in all markets and vending zones.
- In addition to the above, women have strongly articulated the need to enumerate and remunerate the unpaid and underpaid work they undertake in sectors such as agriculture and fisheries.
- Their fundamental demand is that women must be recognised as farmers in accordance with the National Policy for Farmers; this should include cultivators, agricultural labourers, pastoralists, livestock rearers, forest workers, fish-workers, and salt pan workers.
- Thereafter, their equal rights and entitlements over land and access to inputs, credit, markets, and extension services must be ensured.
- Women also reiterate the need to recognise and redistribute their unpaid work in the household.
- For this, experts opine that the government must collect sex-disaggregated household level data with suitable parameters.
- In conclusion, unless policymakers correctly assess and address the structural issues which keep women from entering and staying in the workforce, promising more jobs — while a welcome step — is unlikely to lead to the socio-economic transformation that India currently needs.

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. Is India doing enough to combat climate change?

Note to the Students:

- This editorial analysis is a reflection of excerpts from a discussion between a panel of experts.
- The panel of experts include, Prof. T. Jayaraman, chairperson, Centre for Science, Technology and Society at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, and Prof. Navroz Dubash, professor at the Centre for Policy Research and coordinator of the Initiative on Climate, Energy, and Environment.

What's in the news?

- The UN Climate Action Summit would be held in New York in the month of September, 2019.

Editorial Analysis:

- The two experts, Prof. T. Jayaraman, chairperson, Centre for Science, Technology and Society at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, and Prof. Navroz Dubash, professor at the Centre for Policy Research and coordinator of the Initiative on Climate, Energy, and Environment talk about the fairness of the global climate regime, and what India could do to green its growth.
- In the following paragraphs, we present the excerpts of the discussion.

How serious is climate change as an issue today?

1. Jayaraman, weighed in with his arguments here.

- Climate change is certainly the most serious global environmental crisis that we face.
- It is not the only environmental problem, but it is unique in its multi-scalar characteristic, from the global to the local.
- And in many ways, it is arguably the most immediate.
- But there is also a substantial section of the world that does not see it in the same terms.
- That is perhaps one of the most serious aspects of dealing with this problem.

Navroz Dubash, weighed in with his arguments here.

- I think climate change has been with us for 25 years at least.
- At one level, for many people climate change has become an existential problem that risks undermining the conditions for productive life and therefore a problem that does not override but certainly permeates all kinds of other issues.
- For many others, it is a distant problem that is overwhelmed by more immediate issues.
- But this ignores the linkage between current issues and climate change.
- We don't have the option in India of thinking about anything that is innocent of climate change any more.

Global warming has touched about 1°C above pre-industrial levels. India is not responsible for the stock of CO₂ in the atmosphere, but can it afford to wait for developed countries to make their move or should it aggressively pursue its own measures?

1. Jayaraman, weighed in with his arguments here.

- I don't think there is an either/or about this.
- We must recognise climate change as a global collective action problem.
- If one country cuts its emissions to the bone, that is going to be of little use if the others do not follow suit.
- That country will suffer the consequences of climate change despite the extent of its sacrifice.
- Equally, waiting for others to do something and not doing something oneself is also not an option, especially in terms of adaptation.
- If India does more mitigation, that doesn't reduce the risk in India. It is not a local exchange.
- We have to have good intent, show it in action, but on the other hand, we must do far more than we are doing today to call the developed countries to account.
- They are nowhere near meeting their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) targets.
- And some countries we don't even have on board, like the U.S.
- We need to move climate change to the top of our foreign policy agenda. This is a critical move we need to make.

Navroz Dubash, weighed in with his arguments here.

- I agree that the performance of the developed world has been very poor compared to their capacities, wealth and promises.
- The extent to which we have to turn around globally is dramatic.
- Rapidly emerging countries are part of the story, but that does not mean countries that have already emitted a lot and have built their infrastructure shouldn't actually be creating space for countries like India. So where does that leave India? It is a bit of a dilemma. We are also one of the most vulnerable countries.
- I view it in the following way.

- One, there are a number of things that India could do that will bring development gains and also lead to mitigation benefits.

Some steps India can take:

- For example, how we design our cities: we want more sustainable cities, cities with less congestion and with more public transport because we want cities that are more liveable.
- Those kinds of cities will also be low carbon cities.
- Secondly, more mitigation in India does not mean India gets to keep those benefits.
- Because at the end of the day, we are only 6% or 7% of global emissions.
- But what we are recognising is that the global carbon system is an interlocked system.
- So, **what we have to think about is the global transition to low carbon systems** and there are spillover effects there, from changes in one economy to changes in another economy, changes in politics in one place to changes in politics in another place.
- It is important to note that in its Paris Agreement commitments, India had pledged to reduce its intensity of GDP emissions by 33-35% over 2005 levels by 2030, and at Copenhagen, by 20-25% by 2020.

Some important questions arise:

- Are we in sync with what is needed from us?
- With the goal of keeping temperature rise to 2°C or below 2°C or 1.5°C, how does India's NDC fit in?

1. **Jayaraman, weighed in with his arguments here.**

- The very form of your question is problematic.
- You can do whatever you want with your NDC. It doesn't matter.
- The question is, as a developing country, in the matrix of all other NDCs, where does India fit and what are other NDCs like?
- In the scheme of things as they are, what are we doing? I think within that we are doing pretty well.
- I think the problem for India is hedging its future, not simply what we consume now or what we expect to gain in immediate terms.
- What is it that we want as our long-term future and how much of it in terms of carbon space do we need to hedge?
- But I repeat, with our NDC, though our performance is good, we cannot respond with more commitments in our NDC until we see serious action at the international level.
- In September, 2019, at the UN special session on climate, India should make it clear that we won't play ball unless it is clear that it is not enough for you to talk the talk, you should also walk the walk.

Navroz Dubash, weighed in with his arguments here.

- The Paris Agreement basically said, every country, please tell us what you can feasibly do within your country.
- It was always therefore going to be a relatively low set of pledges, and in that context India's doesn't push the envelope very far, doesn't do minimal stuff. So, how do we know whether the pledge is ambitious or not? There's no good way to know.
- The idea of the Paris Agreement is to get countries moving towards a low carbon economy, with the idea that each country will see that it is not too costly and not so hard and there are developmental benefits.
- The pledges in an ideal world are setting the floor not the ceiling — countries will fulfil and hopefully exceed those pledges. **And in India's case, we will probably exceed the pledges, because for reasons like urban congestion and air pollution, we will want to move in the**

direction of low carbon anyway, quite apart from climate change.

- Now, in terms of what the politics of it are, we can try and arm-twist the rich countries. They have definitely been recalcitrant, they have dropped their responsibilities. But at the end of the day, India is a deeply vulnerable country. **What we have learned in the last 20 years is that countries don't move further because of international pressure.** Certainly not the rich and industrial countries. They move further because they found ways, in their enlightened self-interest, to do so.
- If you look at the manifestos of the two national parties, climate change ekes in a small mention at the end, but it is really not thought through.
- In my informal conversations, they are still stuck in the language of saying we still need to have a lot more fossil fuels for more growth, when that is an open question in an era when the price of solar power is coming down and the price of storage is coming down.
- It is not a settled debate by any means, but we need to engage in that debate much more vigorously.

1. Jayaraman, weighed in with his arguments here.

- With regard to NDCs, I think we are risking a great deal if we take the current numbers in India in terms of consumption, energy as the benchmark for what we need.
- India still has huge development deficits.
- Unfortunately, the intersection between erasing development deficits and genuine adaptation has been poorly explored.
- So, every time there is a drought, some go around chanting 'climate change' when indeed it is regular climate variability. And we have always left our farmers at the mercy of the drought.
- So, I think in adaptation, **our focus should be understanding what our development deficits are.** At the same time, a whole new diversionary argument is emerging.

Findings from a recent paper:

- There is this recent paper from the U.S. that has appeared saying that India lost 31% of its potential GDP growth due to global warming between the 1960s and 2011. I don't buy that.
- Without accounting most importantly for institutions, if you simply examine temperature and GDP, you will get all kinds of correlations.
- What we really need to invest in is our conceptual agenda.
- Take electric vehicle mobility. Everybody says electric mobility is a good thing, and cheaper than conventional transport, by factoring in the cost of fossil fuels in terms of health, etc., using the Disability-Adjusted Life Years concept.
- But what that does is to make the users of public transport pay for the well-being of all the people still driving cars.
- So, arguing that electric mobility is cheaper really does not fly.
- Electric mobility is actually more expensive, in immediate terms, in terms of cost per vehicle kilometre.

Navroz Dubash, weighed in with his arguments here.

- I agree that the entry point for this conversation should be the development deficits.
- For example, to say that we need to find a way for cleaner transportation shouldn't actually lead to a conclusion that it should lead to more electric vehicles – the first priority has to be improved, more accessible public transport.

What could be the feasible climate diplomacy or politics for India under the UN framework or outside?

Navroz Dubash, weighed in with his arguments here.

- The climate game has now firmly moved to a series of multiple national conversations.

- The Paris Agreement process is an iterative process where countries put something on the table, they try to implement it, they see if they could do it more easily than they thought, and they come back to the global level. It is a two-level game but the driving force is at the national level. Countries are not going to be arm-twisted by international pressure.
- We can try, but what will drive them is enlightened self-interest. Where the global role is going to be important is in technological cooperation, in spill-over effects.
- One of the big success stories is the fall in renewable energy prices, driven by Germany's domestic programme that supported global prices for renewables.
- India has to play a role diplomatically, but our diplomatic game has to construct a development model that takes into account all our needs, including climate change, thinks a lot about adaptation, and keeps the pressure on the West on issues like finance and technology.

1. **Jayaraman, weighed in with his arguments here.**

- All that we do domestically should be framed in the context of development deficits.
- Within that context, whatever we can explore or do, we should. For instance, how do we ensure that we double the productivity of our main food crops? If we do something that is concrete, we will see the nexus between agricultural productivity and climate and climate variability, and learn something for the future.
- My great disappointment is with the Indian private sector. They are willing to donate, willing to tell farmers how to be sustainable, invest in such kinds of activities outside their firms.
- But making their own firms models of sustainability, sustainability within the plant boundary, drivers of innovation, they still have to measure up.
- I think part of the reason for our not-so-coherent engagement with the international process is perhaps that we are not defining our own local priorities as clearly as we could and should have.

F. Tidbits

Nothing here for today!!!

G. Prelims Facts

1. National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC)

The National Commission for Scheduled Castes (SCs) is a constitutional body in the sense that it is directly established by Article 338 of the Constitution.

Appointment of the Commission:

- When the Constitution was framed, Article 338 had provisions for the appointment of a Special Officer for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) to investigate all matters concerned with the constitutional safeguards for SCs and STs and to report on their working to the President.
- He was designated as the Commissioner for SCs and STs and assigned the said duty.
- In 1978, the Government (through a Resolution) set up a non-statutory multi-member Commission for SCs and STs; the Office of Commissioner for SCs and STs also continued to exist.
- In 1987, the Government (through another Resolution) modified the functions of the Commission and renamed it as the National Commission for SCs and STs.
- The 65th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1990 provided for the establishment of a high-level multi-member National Commission for SCs and STs in the place of a single Special Officer for SCs and STs.
- This constitutional body replaced the Commissioner for SCs and STs as well as the Commission set up under the Resolution of 1987.

- Again, the 89th Constitutional Amendment Act of 2003 bifurcated the combined National Commission for SCs and STs into two separate bodies, namely, National Commission for Scheduled Castes (under Article 338) and National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (under Article 338-A).
- The separate National Commission for SCs came into existence in 2004. It consists of a chairperson, a vice-chairperson and three other members.
- They are appointed by the President by warrant under his hand and seal.
- Their conditions of service and tenure of office are also determined by the President.

Functions of the commission:

- To investigate and monitor all matters relating to the constitutional and other legal safeguards for the SCs and to evaluate their working
- To inquire into specific complaints with respect to the deprivation of rights and safeguards of the SCs
- To participate and advise on the planning process of socio-economic development of the SCs and to evaluate the progress of their development under the Union or a state
- To present to the President, annually and at such other times as it may deem fit, reports upon the working of those safeguards
- To make recommendations as to the measures that should be taken by the Union or a state for the effective implementation of those safeguards and other measures for the protection welfare and socio-economic development of the SCs; and
- To discharge such other functions in relation to the protection, welfare and development and advancement of the SCs as the president may specify.

H. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

Q1. Mulshi Dam is built across the River:

- a. Mula
- b. Mutha
- c. Koyna
- d. Manair

Answer: a

Explanation:

“Mulshi” is the name of a major dam on the Mula river in India. It is located in the Mulshi taluka administrative division of the Pune district of Maharashtra State. Mula-Mutha is formed by the confluence of the Mula and Mutha rivers in the city of Pune, which later meets the Bhima River, which itself later meets the Krishna River and finally emptying to the Bay of Bengal.

Q2. Consider the following statements with respect to the classical dance form - Odissi:

1. There are three traditions of the Odissi dance.
2. Odissi includes both North and South Indian Ragas.

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

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2

d. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: c

Explanation:

Odissi is a major ancient Indian classical dance that originated in the Hindu temples of Odisha. There are three traditions of the Odissi Dance viz. Mahari, Gotipua and Nartaki Schools. A distinctive feature of Odissi is that it includes both North and South Indian Ragas, which in 20th-century scholarship has been grouped as the Hindustani and the Carnatic music.

Q3. Consider the following statements with respect to Mesozoic Era:

1. The ancestors of major plant and animal groups that exist today first appeared during the Mesozoic Era.
2. It is during this era that the continents began to move into their present-day configurations.

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

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

Mesozoic Era is the second of Earth's three major geologic eras of Phanerozoic time. Its name is derived from the Greek term for "middle life." The ancestors of major plant and animal groups that exist today first appeared during the Mesozoic, but this era is best known as the time of the dinosaurs. Earth's climate during the Mesozoic Era was generally warm, and there was less difference in temperature between equatorial and polar latitudes than there is today. The Mesozoic was a time of geologic and biological transition. During this era the continents began to move into their present-day configurations. At the outset of the Mesozoic, all of Earth's continents were joined together into the supercontinent of Pangea. By the close of the era, Pangea had fragmented into multiple landmasses.

Q4. Consider the following statements with respect to New Development Bank

1. It is a multilateral development bank jointly founded by the BRICS countries.
2. It is headquartered at Manila in Philippines.

Which of the given statement/s is/are incorrect?

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

Answer: b

Explanation:

Statement 2 is incorrect. The headquarters of New Development Bank is at Shanghai in China. The New Development Bank, formerly referred to as the BRICS Development Bank, is a multilateral development bank established by the BRICS states.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Forging a consensus on designating Masood Azhar as a global terrorist is a victory for Indian diplomacy. Comment (15 Marks, 250 Words)
2. The process of examining complaints of EVM malfunction stifles free speech and has the effect of deterring complaints. Critically Analyse. (15 Marks, 250 Words)

