

# 20 May 2019: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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## B. GS2 Related

### Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

#### 1. [HC: United Nations not a State under Article 12](#)

##### Context:

The Delhi High Court has ruled that the United Nations is not a State under Article 12 of the Constitution of India and is not amenable to its jurisdiction under Article 226 of the Constitution.

##### Background:

- A former UNO employee, found guilty of misconduct was convicted by a US Federal Court and

sentenced to 97 months of imprisonment and two years of mandatory probation.

- He was released and deported to India in May 2014.
- In his petition, he claimed that due process was not followed in his case.
- He had in November 2018, written a letter to the Ministry of External Affairs seeking a grant of permission to initiate legal action against the United Nations Organization (UNO) under section 86 of Civil Procedure Code, 1908.
- The provision provides that a foreign State may be sued in any Court with the consent of the Central government.

#### Contention:

- Petitioner argued, amongst other arguments, that the Latin maxim **Ubi jus ibi remedium** which means that **if there is a right, then there must necessarily be a remedy attached to it** is a settled law that no one should be left remediless and the petitioner has exhausted all his remedies and has made all possible efforts to invoke the prescribed provisions for appeal on due process.
- And that was the reason of his petition before the court as the last resort for direction to respondents' for their failure to follow due process of law in petitioner's case.
- It was also argued that Section 2 of Article II of the Schedule of the Act, 1947 which gives blanket immunity to UNO to waive its immunity is something which makes respondent it a judge in its own cause and is, therefore, against the basic tenets of justice delivery system.
- The petitioner was seeking to invoke the writ jurisdiction of the Court for the purpose of non-adherence of the due process which the UNO was bound to follow in order to ensure free and fair disciplinary process of the petitioner who was a serving officer with it.

#### Details:

- The Ministry replied that the consent of the Government of India is not required to initiate a legal suit against UNO as it is not a foreign state and is only an International Organization.
- It, however, said UNO and its officials enjoy immunity under the United Nations (Privileges and Immunities) Act, 1947.
- It also said as per Section 2 of Article II of the Schedule of Act, 1947, UNO has immunity from every form of legal process except insofar as in any particular case it has expressly waived its immunity.

#### Conclusion:

- It was observed by Justice Suresh Kumar Kait that the immunity granted is all comprehensive and applicability of any national law is subject to the waiver of the immunity by respondent.
- As respondent has not waived the said immunity, the clause relating to the observance of national laws will be of no help to the petitioner.
- Once this is the position in law, other arguments advanced by the petitioner which are founded on the premise that respondent is under an obligation to obey the laws of India, also lose their force.

## 2. The issues that mattered in an issue-less election

#### Context:

Lokniti conducted a nationwide post-poll survey, during the past one month after each phase of election. Lokniti is a research programme of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), Delhi. CSDS is an autonomous social science research institute. CSDS has primarily been involved in studying and understanding the democratic and electoral politics of India and its neighbourhood.

### Details:

- Only 12% of the voters interviewed across the country in the post-poll exercise spontaneously said in response to an unprompted question that when they finally went to vote, the issue of unemployment is what decided their vote the most.
- It is only on being asked a specific close-ended question on joblessness did most say that it was a serious issue for them.
- Similarly, price rise or inflation was reported as being the most important voting issue by merely 4% of the voters.
- Both these figures pale in comparison to those that were recorded in the pre-poll done by Lokniti just before the start of the election in late March. Back then, 21% of the voters interviewed in 19 States said that lack of jobs was going to be the most important voting issue for them. Price rise was a top-of-mind issue for 7% of the voters.
- Clubbing all economy-related answers such as unemployment, price rise, poverty, wages and salaries, GST and demonetisation together, then, overall, economic issues seem to have mattered most to 25% of the voters, a sharp decline of 13 percentage points from the 38% who reported in the pre-poll survey that economic issues was the first priority.
- Displacing unemployment as the number-one voting issue for voters was the issue of development, or *vikas*. In the survey, 17% of the respondents reported “development” and 9% matters related to development (roads, water, electricity, schools, hospitals and so on) as being the single-most important issue that determined their voting choice.
- This sudden shift of voter priorities from the specifics of the economy to either the general idea called “development” or to a refusal to answer the question is significant because not only does it highlight voter volatility but also may indicate voters identifying issues in tune with their vote choice.
- A State-wise look at what mattered to voters reveals that the issue of development trumped economic matters as the single most important voting issue by a large margin in West Bengal, Odisha, Karnataka, Uttarakhand, Jammu and Kashmir, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.
- Awareness of the Balakot strikes was also, once again, found to be subduing the negative impact that issues such as price rise and joblessness

An election that had promised to be issue-laden at the start of the year may just have ended up bypassing the real issues under the garb of “vikas” and nationalism.

## Category: HEALTH

### 1. Kerala sees surge in measles cases

#### Context:

The current global resurgence in measles is having its resonance in Kerala too, which has been witnessing a serious surge in the disease.

#### Measles:

- Measles is also known as rubeola or red measles.
- It is a highly contagious respiratory infection caused by a virus which causes a rash all over the body.
- Measles could be spread through infected mucus and saliva.
- It is the primary disease that leads to the death of children.
- Symptoms generally appear within 14 days of exposure to the virus. General symptom of the measles is body rash but before that, there are few more symptoms which could help to detect measles. Fever, hacking cough, red eyes, muscle pains, running nose, sore throat and sores inside the mouth.

- Measles, if not treated properly can lead to chronic complications like pneumonia, encephalitis etc. The other complications may include Bronchitis, reduction in blood platelets, severe diarrhea, sometimes even blindness.
- The measles vaccine is effective at preventing the disease, and is often delivered in combination with other vaccines.

**Details:**

- Kerala reports around 600 plus cases of measles every year. This year, as many cases have been reported in the first four months itself, with over 50% cases in the 19-40 year age group.
- There are also cases in the less than nine months age group, but fewer cases than before in the 1-5 years group.
- Majority of the cases are reported from Thiruvananthapuram, which has good vaccination coverage and amongst people who are well-nourished and have received at least one dose of vaccine in their lifetime.

**Issue:**

- When universal routine immunisation in childhood improves and the virus is still in circulation, the disease will naturally move to the older age group who may be unimmunised or whose vaccine-derived immunity has begun to wane.
- At a time when the State is moving towards measles elimination, adult measles is a major concern.
- Historically, measles has been a childhood disease.
- The epidemiological shift to older population presents new public health challenges because of the increased severity of the disease, especially in vulnerable populations like pregnant women and immunocompromised patients (HIV, organ transplant recipients on immunosuppressants, cancer patients), who cannot be vaccinated with the live attenuated measles vaccine.
- The changing epidemiology of measles has not just brought forth the several unknowns but also raised important questions on whether adult immunisation should be a policy, on vaccine potency and the adequacy of vaccine immune response.
- Though measles vaccine is highly immunogenic, as part of the national measles elimination strategy, a mandatory second dose at 15-18 months was introduced in 2010, so that there is better immune protection.
- It is fairly certain that those currently in the 18-40 years age group have not had the protection of the second dose and may be one reason for the increase in cases in this age group.
- The first vaccination age for measles has been fixed at nine months because till then, the maternal antibodies transferred in utero are supposed to afford protection to the child. If vaccinated earlier, the maternal antibodies might interfere with the immune response to vaccine.
- However, at Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Biotechnology, where studies are being carried out for testing the efficacy of measles vaccination in South India, it has been reported that children under the recommended vaccination age of nine months are highly susceptible to measles.

**Conclusion:**

Given measles' age shift to older age group, questions such as "Should the vaccination age be moved to 12 months for better vaccine response?", "Is a third dose of MMR (mumps-measles-rubella) necessary?", "Should it be recommended that all adults be given a dose of MMR as the virus is still in circulation?": need to be looked at from a research perspective by the State/National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation.

## C. GS3 Related

## Category: ECONOMY

### 1. How Mahindra is making the table grapes business juicier in India

#### Context:

While building for itself a \$100-million empire in the fruits business, M&M has also helped raise the average farmer's output from 4 tonnes per acre to 12 tonnes.

#### Background:

- When Mahindra ventured into this business, farmers did not have knowledge about cultivating the right variety of grapes for the international market.
- Though Europe was very keen to buy from India, it had very stringent norms on chemical residue.
- So the company started training the farmers on how to manage that and it put its people on the ground as well as deployed agronomists to go to the fields and explain concepts.
- At that time, while other companies were just buying from farmers and trading in grapes, Mahindra invested in building capability and skills of farmers.
- Now, the company is working with about 1,400 farmers, helping them with modern practices. Their output too has grown substantially.

#### Details:

- In the firm lands of Nashik, Sangli and Baramati, a 'grape revolution' is gaining momentum.
- Once backed by traders, the grapes business in India is now being spearheaded by Mahindra & Mahindra, which has quietly built a \$100-million fruits business from Asia to Europe and North America, in a period of 15 years.
- Its commitment to farmers to increase their income is noteworthy.
- In 15 years, it has expanded grape cultivation areas in the country, after convincing farmers to switch to grape cultivation, which provides more yield than other crops such as sugarcane or rice.
- Having worked with farmers and helping them with technical know-how as well as better market access, Mahindra is also ensuring that the farmers get the best price from the international market.
- It is also inviting international experts at its own cost to advise farmers on grapes cultivation in accordance with international food safety norms.
- In the process, the company is building a solid grape ecosystem that could rival Egypt and other leading grape cultivating nations.

#### Expanding markets:

- In 2011-12, when Mahindra realised that Indian exporters were highly dependent on Europe, where there is restriction on consumption and no certainty in pricing, it started working towards developing new markets. The company then forayed into Canada, Malaysia and China, for which it had to develop new varieties in new geographies.
- To cater to big global retailers like Edeka in Germany, which prefer to buy directly from farmers, the company has set up a packing house in Nashik, which sources grapes directly from the farmers and packages them in accordance with world-class standards for export.
- The company declares to buyers that it follows fair trade practices — no child labour, payment of fair wages, providing proper support to employees and not indulging in exploitation of any kind, besides employing good agricultural practices.
- Mahindra is perhaps the first company in the world to use blockchain for fruits. Through blockchain, a customer in Europe or China, can know who the farmer is and when the grape was harvested,



besides other details,

This is a great example of how private enterprise, farmers and the government can work together to create a very sustainable export business model.

## **Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY**

### **1. Long-term plans to fight pollution gathering dust**

#### **Context:**

Air pollution level in Delhi nosedived last week and stayed in the 'very poor' category for two days partly due to dust storms and also because of non-implementation of long-term plans to fight pollution. Despite having a Comprehensive Action Plan for Delhi-NCR, many measures still remain on paper.

#### **Issues:**

- The top 14 most-polluted cities in the world are located in India, according to the World Health Organization; Delhi ranks six.
- Air pollution has been linked to lung cancer, stroke and heart disease. In 2017, 1.24 million people died in India due to air pollution, according to a study funded by the Indian government and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.
- Cardiovascular diseases and respiratory diseases kill the most number of people in the Capital and air pollution plays a "major role" in both.
- Authorities responsible for controlling air pollution have been pulled up multiple times by the Supreme Court in the past. But there is no respite from the pollution.
- It is believed that multiplicity of agencies involved -- Central government, State governments, municipal bodies -- also affects the implementation of plans.
- Though dust is a major cause of pollution, little has been done across Delhi to prevent dust from rising in the air, in terms of landscaping of roads or by planting shrubs, trees and grass along the sides of roads.
- There are three waves of pollution that happen in Delhi. One during the summer, that is mainly due to dust from other areas. Another during October November, when the stubble burning happens and wind speed is less, and the third during December due to temperature inversion. These are mainly due to meteorological conditions, which can be mitigated, but cannot be stopped.

#### **Comprehensive Action Plan and Graded Response Action Plan:**

- Following Supreme Court directions, in 2018, the Central Pollution Control Board came out with CAP for Delhi and the National Capital Region.
- CAP is a long-term plan which lays down systemic changes to be implemented to fight air pollution.
- CAP differs from other plans, as it fixes responsibilities of works to be done on different agencies and also issues deadlines.
- It divides the works to be done, along with deadlines into 12 major areas like air quality monitoring, action to reduce vehicular emissions, control measures for road dust, among others.
- GRAP is a set of emergency measures to be implemented to control air pollution, according to day-to-day air quality index.

#### **Way forward:**

- Experts say that improving public transport, dust control and waste management are the main areas in which Delhi has been lacking.

- Vehicular pollutants are a major cause of pollution and improving public transport would encourage people to use it and lead to less vehicles on road and lesser pollution.
- Another area that needs attention is cooperation with neighbouring States.
- The plans are in place. The need of the hour is implementation with strong political and public support. It is a question of implementing it on a scale that is needed and with strong level of stringency.

## 2. Odisha plans to restore coastal green cover

### Context:

The Odisha government has chalked out a ₹200-crore, five-year plan to restore the green cover lost due to Cyclone Fani in the coastal region. Nearly 22 lakh trees have been destroyed causing a damage of ₹537 crore when Cyclone Fani hit the State.

### Details:

- Chief Minister has directed the Forest Department to implement the 'Five-year action plan on revival of coastal shelter belt and afforestation programme' on a mission mode.
- The government would undertake the afforestation programme on 8,000 hectares over a five-year period.
- Under an urban tree plantation programme, five lakh saplings would be planted in five years. Also, about 30,000 uprooted trees would be replanted and restored in suitable places.
- The government targets to plant fruit-bearing plants in 12,000 hectares which would help revive the livelihood of many cyclone-affected people.
- Of the 1.3 crore saplings, the Forest Department will plant 80 lakh, while 50 lakh will be planted by different educational institutions, industrial and private areas.
- Different varieties of cyclone-resistant trees such as Neem, Karanja, Baula, Jamu, Korila, Chatian, Khaira, Arjun, Mahyoni, Ashok, Harida, Bahada, Shisu, Katha Champa and Dimiri will be planted.

## Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### 1. Evidence of water found on Ultima Thule: NASA

#### Context:

NASA has found evidence of a unique mixture of methanol, water ice, and organic molecules on Ultima Thule's surface — the farthest world ever explored by mankind.

#### Ultima Thule:

- Ultima Thule is a trans-Neptunian object located in the Kuiper belt.
- It is a contact binary, with two distinctly differently shaped lobes.
- The lobes likely once orbited each other until some process brought them together in what scientists have shown to be a "gentle" merger.
- At about 36 kilometers long, Ultima Thule consists of a large, strangely flat lobe -- nicknamed "Ultima" -- connected to a smaller, somewhat rounder lobe -- dubbed "Thule" -- at a juncture.

#### Details:

- The U.S. space agency has published the first profile of Ultima Thule — an ancient relic from the era of planet formation — revealing details about the complex space object.

- Researchers are also investigating a range of surface features on Ultima Thule, such as bright spots and patches, hills and troughs, and craters and pits.
- The largest depression is a 8-kilometer-wide feature the team has nicknamed Maryland crater -- which likely formed from an impact.
- Some smaller pits on the Kuiper Belt object, however, may have been created by material falling into underground spaces, or due to exotic ices going from a solid to a gas and leaving pits in its place.
- In colour and composition, Ultima Thule resembles many other objects found in its area of the Kuiper Belt. Its reddish hue is believed to be caused by modification of the organic materials on its surface.
- New Horizons continues to carry out new observations of additional Kuiper Belt objects it passes in the distance.

## 2. Coming soon, an all seeing radar imaging satellite

### Context:

RISAT-2B satellite is due to be launched before dawn on May 22 from Sriharikota.

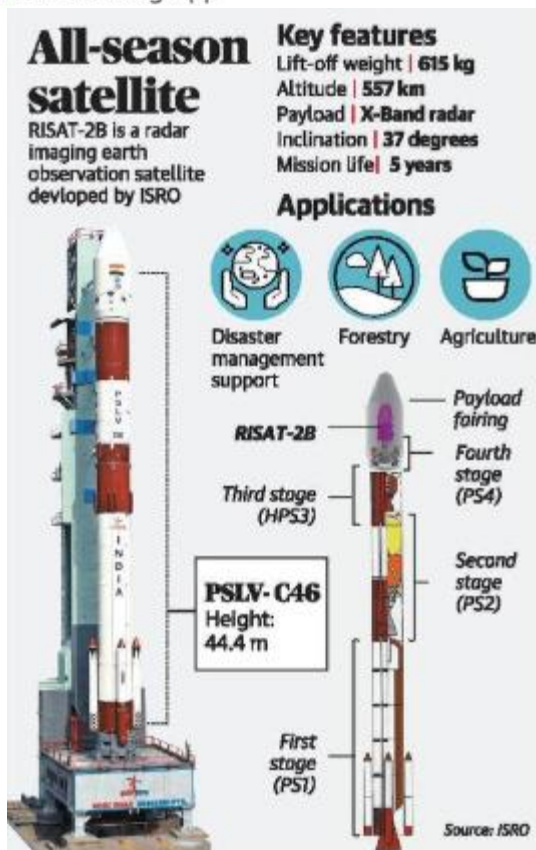
### Details:

- RISAT-2B will mark the resumption of a vital ring of Indian all-seeing radar imaging satellites after seven years.
- At least a half-dozen could be foreseen in the near future, mainly to add to the reconnaissance capability from about 500 km in space.
- A constellation of such space-based radars means a comprehensive vigil over the country.
- If ISRO orbited its first two radar satellites in 2009 and 2012, it plans to deploy four or five of them in 2019 alone.
- A radar imaging satellite is complex to assemble. Interpreting its images is equally complex. ISRO took almost 10 years to realise RISAT-1.

### Benefits of RISAT:

- When it is cloudy or dark, regular remote-sensing or optical imaging satellites — which work like a light-dependent camera — cannot perceive hidden or surreptitious objects on the ground.
- Satellites that are equipped with an active sensor, the synthetic aperture radar (SAR), can sense or 'observe' Earth in a special way from space day and night, rain or cloud. This all-weather seeing feature is what makes them special for security forces and disaster relief agencies.
- Radar imaging satellites pick up structures, new bunkers very well, and sometimes help to count them, too.
- In India radar imaging is also used for crop estimation because the main crop growing season of kharif is in May-September when it rains and gets cloudy.
- This data has been used extensively for forestry, soil, land use, geology and during floods and cyclone as well.





## D. GS4 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## E. Editorials

### Category: SECURITY

#### 1. Taking stock of Islamic State 2.0 – Lessons for India and Sri Lanka

##### Background:

- On Easter Sunday this year, Sri Lanka witnessed a series of coordinated bomb blasts, killing over 250 people.
- It was the heaviest toll in Sri Lanka in terms of lives lost since the civil war ended in 2009, thus ending a decade of peace.

##### Details:

- The organised attacks, on three churches and three hotels frequented by tourists, were clearly intended to forward a message. The way they were carried out further indicated that the dynamics were global though the perpetrators were locals.
- The pattern of attacks on the churches was not dissimilar from Islamic State (IS)-mounted attacks on churches in Surabaya in Indonesia in May last year, and in Jolo in the Philippines this year.
- The IS's statement soon after the attacks put to rest all speculation.
- IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi himself was to announce subsequently that the attacks in Sri Lanka were revenge for the fall of the Syrian town of Baghuz, the last IS-ruled village overrun by Syrian

forces in March this year.

### **Key setting for radicalism:**

- The question most often asked is why Sri Lanka was chosen by the IS to announce that it was business as usual.
- An IS attack of this scale had not been seen in this region previously.
- South Asia today is a virtual cauldron of radical Islamist extremist activity. From Afghanistan through Pakistan to the Maldives to Bangladesh, radical Islamist extremism is an ever present reality.
- Both India and Sri Lanka, however, prefer to believe that they are shielded from such tendencies. This belief needs a relook.
- In the case of Sri Lanka, it is by now evident that officials had turned a blind eye to the fact that certain areas such had become hotbeds of Wahabi-Salafi attitudes and practices.
- Muslim youth here have been radicalised to such an extent that it should have set alarm bells ringing.
- The example of Zahran Mohammed Hashim, who founded the National Thowheed Jamaath (NTJ) in 2014 in Kattankudy, and within a couple of years expanded its membership multi-fold, was one index of what was happening. He was able to transform the moderate Islamic landscape to a more radicalised one.

### **Islamic State:**

- The advent of the IS occurred at the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century, at a time when a new breed of terrorists had emerged, inspired by the Egyptian, Sayyid Qutb, and the Palestinian, Abdullah Azzam.
- Combining this with the practical theology of Afghan warlord Jalaluddin Haqqani made for a potent mixture.
- In addition to this, the IS introduced the concept of a new Caliphate — especially al-Baghdadi's vision of a Caliphate based on Islamic history.
- This further ignited the imagination of Muslim youth across the globe and became a powerful magnet to attract volunteers to their cause.
- Employing the themes of hijra and bay'ah, Sunni Muslims everywhere were urged to migrate to the Islamic Caliphate.
- At the peak of its power, the IS held territory both in Iraq and Syria, almost equal in size to the United Kingdom.

### **IS 2.0 and pivotal role of the Net:**

- Islamic State 2.0 remains wedded to this idea of a caliphate, even though the caliphate is no longer in existence.
- It retains its ability to brainwash over the Internet, making a special virtue of 'direct-to-home' jihad.
- It continues to manage a 'virtual community' of fanatical sympathisers who adhere to their doctrine.
- IS State 2.0 includes several new variations from the original concept.
- Returnees from the battlefields of Syria and Iraq appear more inclined to follow tactics employed by other 'oppressed' Muslim communities, as for instance the Chechens.
- In Sri Lanka, a close knit web of family relationships has ensured secrecy and prevented leakage of information, thereby opting for methods of old-time anarchists. Reliance on online propaganda and social media has vastly increased. The IS has also refashioned several of its existing relationships.
- Tactics have varied from 'lone wolf' attacks that were seen over the past year and more in the West, to coordinated, large-scale simultaneous attacks on multiple targets, as witnessed in Sri Lanka.
- IS 2.0 is likely to nurture two types: the less informed rabid supporters and a band of highly radical ideologues who can entice Muslim youth to their cause.
- The path to radicalisation of both segments is through the Internet.
- Time spent alone online listening to propaganda can produce fanaticism of the most extreme variety.

It could promote a binary world view of a conflict between ‘believers’ and ‘non-believers’, allowing radical Islamists to set the agenda.

### **Lessons for India:**

- India is already in the cross hairs of the IS, and the announcement that the IS has created a separate ‘province’ should not be ignored.
- Links between IS groups in Sri Lanka and India currently stand exposed and they should be cause for concern.
- The kingpin of the Easter blasts, Hashim, was linked to jihadis in Tamil Nadu and Kerala.
- Indian authorities may do well to revisit the September 2018 criminal conspiracy case registered in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, which contained certain over-arching plans by the IS to target Hindus and non-Muslim activists in India.
- The National Investigation Agency (NIA) during its investigations has since come across links connecting IS units in Kerala and Tamil Nadu with the NTJ in Sri Lanka. These need to be pursued further.
- The number of Indian returnees from Syria may be small, but each of them would have come back having lost all sense of purpose.
- Their memories would only be of relentless artillery barrages, rocket fire and the air strikes that battered IS strongholds into submission. This is bound to nurture feelings of revenge — mainly against the West but extending to other segments as well.
- The attacks on luxury hotels and churches in Sri Lanka do smack of revenge against so-called atrocities on the IS in their Syrian stronghold.

### **Conclusion:**

- The real threat that the IS, however, poses is that it is able to convince the Muslim extremist fringe that their time has come. The idea is the medium.
- As the IS morphs into IS 2.0, territorial flexibility is being replaced with strategic flexibility.
- Radicalisation, in any event, has less to do with numbers than with the intensity of beliefs.
- The struggle is not against presumed disparities or injustices meted out to Muslim minorities. Rather, it reflects the quest for a new militant Islamist identity.
- It has more to do with the internal dynamics of Muslim societies, which across the world appear to be tilting towards radicalist tendencies. Saudi funding and the role of foreign preachers are playing a significant role in this.

## **Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

### **1. Ten years on – On the need for reforms and reconciliation in Sri Lanka**

#### **Background:**

- On 18 May 2009, a brutal conflict which lasted almost three decades came to an end. It's estimated that at least 100,000 people lost their lives. Many thousands are still missing.
- The war was fought along ethnic lines. A desire for an independent state amongst parts of the Tamil minority gave rise to an armed separatist rebel group, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, also known as the Tamil Tigers. They took on the Sri Lankan military and both sides stand accused of committing atrocities against the civilian population.
- It's been 10 years since the end of the civil war in Sri Lanka. For thousands of people, missing family members and friends are a constant reminder of the trauma of the conflict.

**Issues:**

- As Sri Lanka completes 10 years since the brutal and decisive war against Tamil militants came to an end, it must be acknowledged that the country has not achieved much tangible progress towards ethnic reconciliation, accountability for war-time excesses and constitutional reform that includes a political solution.
- The fruits of peace are limited to the revival of economic activity, but the pervasive grievances of the Tamil minority remain.
- Some progress has been made in resettlement and rehabilitation, but complaints abound.
- Many say their land continues to be held by the military, which also controls huge swathes of state-owned land.
- Preliminary steps were taken towards forging a new Constitution, but the process seems to be at a standstill.
- There is no sense of closure for families affected by the disappearance of thousands over the years.
- The creation of an 'Office on Missing Persons' has not inspired enough confidence.
- There is no mechanism to secure justice for those massacred in the closing stages of the war.
- What continues is the fractious politics of leaders of the national parties. Jockeying for power has overshadowed the promise of good governance, economic growth and a push towards a constitutional settlement.

**Details:**

- Half the period since the end of the war was marked by triumphalism and also warding off international pressure for an inquiry into possible war crimes.
- The year 2015 brought to power a new regime, a fresh promise of democratic governance, and the infusion of a spirit of political and constitutional reform.
- Any reckoning at the end of 10 years would possibly have been marked by a tabulation of peace-time gains and failures.
- The Easter Sunday bombings have taken the country back to the time when terrorism was the dominant theme.
- This time, there is no real 'underlying cause' to address; no group or organisation to talk to; and no tangible political grievances to redress.
- The serial blasts, executed by fanatical elements apparently inspired by the Islamic State, may be a flashpoint for a fresh round of inter-ethnic and inter-religious tension.
- Already there was some indication Sinhala mobs attacked predominantly Muslim villages in waves, destroying property and threatening the people.
- Anti-terrorism laws and emergency regulations are back in full measure.
- The biggest adverse fallout is that a new dimension has been given to inter-ethnic suspicions that may deepen distrust among communities.

**Conclusion:**

- As prospects of accountability for past crimes and constitutional reform recede, some sections, including the incumbent regime, may believe economic development may be enough to propel the country forward.
- But when tensions persist among communities, nothing can make up for the absence of reconciliation and trust among all sections.
- Sri Lanka now needs a shared sense of nationhood among all its peoples.

### 1. Experts urge administration to plant trees which can withstand cyclones

- Plant lovers have urged the Bhubaneswar city administration to undertake plantation of native species which could withstand strong cyclonic winds in future.
- A rapid assessment carried out by a group of scholars in Bhubaneswar says 99% of trees had suffered damage when Cyclone Fani hit the city.
- As many as 1,677 trees having 10 cm girth were recorded along different road stretches in various localities.
- Native species such as Karanja (*Pongamia pinnata*) and Chhatiana (*Alstonia Scholaris*) were found to have withstood ferocious wind speed of Fani in Bhubaneswar.
- Although the fig plants like *Ficus bengalensis* and *Ficus religiosa* survived Fani's fury, most of their branches were lost. Kadamba (*Anthocephalus cadamba*) trees suffered heavy loss in the cyclone.
- Native species such as Karanja, Chhatiana, Nimba (*Azadirachta indica*), Bahada (*Terminalia bellerica*), Jamun (Jambul), Amba (mango) and Arjuna (*terminalia*) trees withstood the high wind speed. These trees lost only 50% of their branches. These species should get priority when plantation would be undertaken in future.
- Meanwhile, the government sources said that 3,290 uprooted trees have already been replanted in Bhubaneswar.

## G. Prelims Facts

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## H. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

Q1. The Golden Triangle of South-East Asia is

- a. An extensive opium producing area
- b. An area prone to high intensity Earthquakes
- c. One of its kind biodiversity hotspot
- d. The area infested with insurgency and terrorism

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

Golden triangle and Golden crescent are two principal areas of illicit opium production. The Golden Triangle is the area where the borders of Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar meet at the confluence of the Ruak and Mekong Rivers.

Q2. Consider the following statements:

1. Karakoram Wildlife Sanctuary is located in Jammu and Kashmir.
2. It is known for a migratory population of Chiru.
3. Shahtoosh is a specific kind of shawl, which is woven with the down hair of Chiru.

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

- a. 1 only
- b. 1 and 2 only
- c. 3 only



d. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

Tibetan Antelope or Chiru is native to the Tibetan plateau. The Karakoram Wildlife Sanctuary is a high altitude wildlife sanctuary located in the easternmost reaches of the Karakoram range in Leh District, Jammu and Kashmir. It is important as one of the few places in India with a migratory population of the Chiru.

Q3. Consider the following statements:

1. Rani Ki Vaav is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
2. It is located in Rajasthan.
3. It was built by Queen Udayamati.

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

- a. 1 only
- b. 1 and 2 only
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

Raani Ki Vaav is Located in Gujarat and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It was built by Queen Udayamati as a memorial to her deceased husband Bhimdev I.

Q4. Consider the following statements:

1. Sankirtana is a traditional performance of Ramayana.
2. It is one among UNESCO's list of Intangible Cultural Heritages.

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: b**

**Explanation:**

Sankirtana is a form of performing art involving ritual singing, drumming and dancing performed in the temples and domestic spaces in Manipur. The performers narrate the many stories of Krishna. It is practiced primarily by the Vaishnava community in Manipur and by the Vaishnava Manipuri population settled in the neighbouring States of Tripura and Assam. "Sankirtana: Ritual singing, drumming and dancing of Manipur" was inscribed on the Representative List of the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

## I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. India should deliver on its projects in Nepal without worrying about Nepal joining the BRI. Comment. (15 Marks, 250 Words)
2. Does India need a law on criminalising fake news? Discuss. (15 Marks, 250 Words)

