

# 24 May 2019: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### A. GS1 Related

#### **SOCIAL ISSUES**

1. [Women still under-represented in science, tech](#)

### B. GS2 Related

#### **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

1. [Great things are in store for bilateral ties, says Trump](#)
2. [Dalits face discrimination, violence in U.S.](#)

### C. GS3 Related

#### **SECURITY**

1. [Al-Qaeda's Kashmir head Musa killed in encounter](#)

#### **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

1. [Study pinpoints source of ozone-depleting gas](#)

### D. GS4 Related

### E. Editorials

#### **POLITY AND GOVERNANCE**

1. [The 2019 vote: an intoxicating verdict](#)

#### **ECONOMY**

1. [An economic agenda for New India](#)
2. [On the cards: Consumption, liquidity issues, labour reforms on the table of the new govt](#)

### F. Tidbits

1. [Pak. test-fires ballistic missile Shaheen II](#)

### G. Prelims Facts

### H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

### I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

## A. GS1 Related

### Category: SOCIAL ISSUES

#### 1. [Women still under-represented in science, tech](#)

##### Context:

Women remain considerably under-represented across STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) studies and careers, says UNESCO.

##### Details:

- According to the UNESCO, 29% of those in science research and development are women, with a low 19% in south and west Asia and a high 48% in central Asia.
- The reason being that most young women do not identify with STEM and assume these subjects won't align with their desire to be creative and make an impact in the world.
- Experts call it a detrimental trend as it would further widen the gender gap in the technology world.
- Also, by shying away from STEM studies or careers, women will only miss contributing to the next generation of technologies and innovations.

### Improving awareness:

- Microsoft has an initiative to encourage women to pursue careers in STEM and the technology major has been working to get students and young women excited about STEM subjects.
- Teachers and technologists have a responsibility to break the misperception among women that STEM does not relate to the world at large.
- By designing computer science curricula around societal challenges and giving young women more exposure to female role models, the academia can make a huge difference in building a passion for STEM subjects among students.

## B. GS2 Related

### Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

#### 1. Great things are in store for bilateral ties, says Trump

##### Context:

US President Donald Trump has said that he sees "great things" for India-US relations with the electoral victory of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the Lok Sabha elections. Congratulating Modi and the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on their BIG election victory, Trump said in a tweet on he looked forward to continuing important work together.

##### Details:

- "The U.S. Congress looks forward to continue working with India, and the Narendra Modi-led National Democratic Alliance government to advance our shared goals on a host of issues, including human rights, defense, trade and economic growth, and climate change.", said the Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman
- The listing of priorities for the India-U.S. partnership mentioned human rights first. It also referred to climate change.
- Richard Verma, former U.S. Ambassador to India, referred to the U.S. and India helping to guarantee the democratic and liberal order. Especially as America's challenges with China continue to escalate on trade and on security issues.

##### Way forward:

Strain on China-U.S. ties, presents a great opportunity for India to strengthen its bilateral ties with the U.S.

#### 2. Dalits face discrimination, violence in U.S.

##### Context:

A group of South Asia-focussed community organisations held a Congressional briefing on caste discrimination.

##### Details:

- The hearing's objectives included educating Congressional staff about how caste operates in the U.S., highlighting the damage it does to U.S. institutions, and advocating data collection, monitoring and legislation.
- Central to the discussion was a survey conducted by Equality Labs, which describes itself as a

“South Asian Community Technology Organization” that seeks to end discrimination in various forms.

- The briefing included testimony on caste discrimination and caste-based violence as well as a discussion of what is required in terms of sensitising American institutions to caste-based discrimination.
- The briefing’s recommendations included a need for monitoring and reporting of caste-based discrimination at the workplace, including sensitisation to caste issues in diversity workshops.

### **How is a briefing different from a Congressional hearing?**

- Congressional hearing has the power to make individuals testify or face penalties for not doing so.
- A briefing can occur when a group wants to highlight an issue and it requires a Congressional sponsor

### **Survey:**

- 1,500 people in the diaspora who identified as “South Asian” were sent a self-administered online survey with 47 questions related to caste. Of the respondents, 33% identified as ‘Brahmins’, 24% as ‘Dalits’, 7% as ‘Adivasis’ and 18% as ‘Shudras’.
- 52% of Dalit respondents feared their caste would be “outed” and 67% said they faced discrimination at the workplace.
- 41% of Dalits said they faced discrimination in educational establishments.
- 26% of Dalits who responded said they had experienced physical assault based on their caste.

## **C. GS3 Related**

### **Category: SECURITY**

#### **1. Al-Qaeda’s Kashmir head Musa killed in encounter**

##### **Context:**

Al-Qaeda-affiliated Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind chief Musa was killed in an operation by security forces in Pulwama’s Tral.

##### **Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind:**

- Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind is a militant organization and Al-Qaeda cell in Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab led by Zakir Rashid Bhat aka Zakir Musa.
- The Global Islamic Media Front (GIMF), an Islamist propaganda organization that is associated with the terrorist group, al-Qaeda, and other jihadist groups had claimed that Zakir Musa had been named the head of Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind.
- The group has been in news for calling on Indian Muslims to attack Indian army patrols and checkpoints as well as companies interested in investing in India.
- The group had recently published material that encouraged Muslims across India and Kashmir to carryout lone wolf attacks.

### **Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

#### **1. Study pinpoints source of ozone-depleting gas**

**Context:**

Rogue emissions of a gas that harms the ozone layer are coming from eastern China, primarily from two heavily industrialised provinces, an international team of researchers said.

**Details:**

- The findings confirm what many scientists, environmental groups and policymakers had suspected after an initial study a year ago reported new global emissions of the gas, CFC-11, but could only locate the source generally as East Asia.
- It also confirms the results of several investigations, including one by The New York Times, which found evidence that factories in Shandong, one of the provinces specified in the study, were still making or using the gas to manufacture foam insulation.
- After the initial study last year, China denied that there were serious violations of the ban on the chemical, but also promised to eradicate any illegal production.
- The new research will add to international pressure on the Chinese government to curtail the illegal use of CFC-11.

**Chlorofluorocarbons:**

- CFC-11 is one of a class of compounds called chlorofluorocarbons that destroy atmospheric ozone.
- They are also potent greenhouse gases that contribute to atmospheric warming.
- Chlorofluorocarbons were outlawed for almost all uses by the Montreal Protocol, an international pact negotiated decades ago to preserve the layer of ozone that blocks ultraviolet radiation from the sun.
- Excessive amounts of some types of UV radiation can cause skin cancer and eye damage in people and are harmful to crops and other vegetation.

## D. GS4 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## E. Editorials

**Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE****1. The 2019 vote: an intoxicating verdict****Note to the Students:**

- The perspectives discussed in this editorial analysis can be used to write points for the Essay paper in case topics surrounding ‘single party rule’, or ‘majoritarian governments’, etc. are asked.
- This editorial analysis takes into account the perspectives covered in two articles, namely: “The 2019 vote: an intoxicating verdict”, and “It’s now a do-or-die situation for the Congress” published in the Hindu on the 24<sup>th</sup> of May, 2019.

**Editorial Analysis:**

- It is important to note that a general election is essentially meant to enable the citizens to decide whether or not to renew, if at all, the incumbent ruler’s tenure and on what terms.
- This involves a kind of judgment about the ruler’s record, his accomplishments and failures, his

flaws and foibles, strengths and weaknesses; in the same instance, the voter also gets to judge the ruler's democratic rivals, their claims to provide us with a more agreeable regime that would secure a better future for the realm.

- To its credit, in 2019 **the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) put in place a shrewd and sophisticated strategy that ensured that the voters only saw it as a vote for or against Prime Minister Narendra Modi.**
- The voters have spoken, clearly and firmly. Today, we have an unambiguous verdict. Although some have even labelled this a frightening verdict.

### Primacy accorded to the leader:

- It becomes an ominous verdict because the choice before the voters was never as stark as in 2019. Mr. Modi offered himself at the head of a 'majboot sarkar' (a decisive and robust governing arrangement that will deliver).
- **Not since 1980, when the Congress sought votes in Indira Gandhi's name, had a political party given primacy to an individual leader and his presumed transformational leadership, over and above any other calculus.**

### Redefining the office of the Prime Minister:

- It is important to reflect that behind the slogan of a 'majboot sarkar' were clearly delineated outlines of the prime ministerial authority.
- Some experts opine that currently, the office of the Prime Minister now stands redefined as a presidential arrangement.
- To the extent that the Prime Minister's job is a political leadership role, Mr. Modi stands tall — and alone — at the apex.
- Some experts opine that he need not share space or glory with any of his colleagues, in government or party. He will be able to commandeer the unquestioned allegiance and unreserved respect of the National Democratic Alliance parliamentarians — each one of them sought votes in Mr. Modi's name. Critics opine that this is a heady moment and cannot possibly augur well for the health of our constitutional system.
- Because **at its core our constitutional democracy is nothing but an elaborate arrangement for how power will be shared and authority exercised in this vast land among regions, States, communities, and citizens.** Critics opine that this finely chiselled equilibrium stands threatened because of the nature of the 2019 verdict.

### What the critics say?

- Critics point out that in the recently concluded general elections, a manufactured ultra-nationalist hype was made to sweep aside entrenched regional sentiments and identities.
- They point out certain possible exceptions to this- that of the states of Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Regional leaders such as Mamata Banerjee, Naveen Patnaik, Chandrababu Naidu, Sharad Pawar and others would find themselves in the unhappy situation of having to take their cue from a Modi-led Centre.
- The 2019 verdict was the culmination of a carefully crafted persona on Prime Minister Modi.
- Some have pointed out that the 2019 verdict means that the armed forces would get a place of pride in the national scheme of things and would demand a voice in allocation of collective resources. They further point out that practised jingoism, against enemies at home and abroad, will produce further distortions in the nature of civilian control over the armed forces.
- Critics have argued that the 2019 verdict could also mean that the rigorous requirements of a polity based on the rule of law would be made to give way to a prime ministerial overlordship.
- This is an inevitable consequence of the strong leader syndrome, who feels he alone is in communion



with the inner aspirations and hopes of a billion-strong India.

### **The Need for the reinvention of the Indian National Congress:**

#### **(a) Looking at the decline of the INC:**

- Experts opine that the Congress party that led the freedom movement under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi and steered the state-making process under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru is on its last legs.
- The decline had started in the 1970s when Indira Gandhi imposed the Emergency, but was temporarily reversed with unexpected victories in 2004 and 2009.
- The 2014 election clearly signalled that the Congress had become largely irrelevant to the future of India's polity. The election verdict of 2019 has confirmed it. Experts point out that **the reasons for this decline are the deep-rooted culture of sycophancy within the party and the lack of an ideological backbone.**

#### **(b) A culture of sycophancy:**

- The culture of sycophancy has been evident in the upper echelons of the party for decades.
- This was famously embodied in the slogan "India is Indira, Indira is India", coined by Dev Kant Barooah, the president of the party during the Emergency.
- It was visible in the way Sanjay Gandhi acted as an extra-constitutional authority during the Emergency though he held no official position.
- The choice of Rajiv Gandhi, a political novice, as Prime Minister after the death of his mother in 1984 confirmed the fact that the sycophantic culture had become so deep-rooted within the Congress that it was impossible for its leaders to even consider appointing a person who did not belong to the Gandhi family as Prime Minister.
- Rahul Gandhi was made president of the party in 2017, despite his lack of political experience and clear demonstrations of political ineptitude and was projected as the prime ministerial alternative.
- The fact that UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi did not see the writing on the wall after the 2014 debacle and relinquish the leadership of the party was less a reflection of their political naiveté than their desire to control the party at all cost for their benefit.
- Their refusal to step down also flew in the face of the time-honoured tradition in established parliamentary democracies, such as Britain and Australia, that leaders of parties who lose elections immediately relinquish their position.
- Experts opine that now that the 2019 election has ratified the 2014 verdict, with Rahul Gandhi losing his Amethi seat, it is time that all members of the Gandhi family resign from their party positions for the greater good of the party.

**The only way the Congress can try to rejuvenate itself is by discarding its sycophantic culture, ditching the 'dynasty' for good, re-instituting inner-party democracy, and returning without reservation to its original inclusive creed as espoused by the Mahatma and Nehru.**

#### **Concluding Remarks:**

- Critics opine that the 2019 election has yielded an intoxicating result, with potentially deleterious effects for our constitutional polity.
- What is most frightening about 2019 is the collapse, once again, of the Congress as a pan-India party. The Congress did put up a spirited fight and yet it failed to slow down the Modi juggernaut.
- The spectacular underachievement of the Congress party means a depletion of Opposition ranks and voices in the Lok Sabha. This can only be an unhappy augury.
- At a moment when India should be celebrating its democratic vigour and vibrancy, it also ought to

gear itself up to safeguarding our republican virtues and constitutional values.

- The 2019 vote has produced coherence and stability in our governing arrangements, yet energetic democratic vigilance will be needed in defence of the Republic.

## **Category: ECONOMY**

### **1. An economic agenda for New India**

#### **Note to the Students:**

This editorial analysis is from the article titled, “An economic agenda for New India” published in the Hindu Business Line on the 24<sup>th</sup> of May, 2019.

#### **Editorial Analysis:**

- In 2014 when Narendra Modi came to power, there were several challenges; India had a large number of people below the poverty line, so elimination of poverty in absolute terms was an important issue.
- The second was the large scale leakages in the delivery mechanism of the government’s social security schemes.
- There were gaps in the tax compliances. Macroeconomic parameters such as inflation, fiscal deficit, GDP growth rate were in unhealthy terrain.
- Concentration of wealth was a big concern. However, in the last five years, Modi has been successful in addressing some of these issues; others are part of our unfinished agenda.

#### **An aspirational middle class:**

- India’s aspirational middle class is rising again, looking for opportunities and ease of living.
- Experts point out that this middle-income group will be driving consumption demand and setting up businesses.
- As a matter of fact, in the past, India and China together accounted for almost 60 per cent of the global trade.
- If the government successfully removes certain capacity constraints like credit availability, high interest rates, land acquisition, tax complexities, connectivity and logistic support etc, it will help propel economic growth.
- The government has planned massive infrastructure investment over the next five years on roads, railways, airports, and housing.
- Employment growth is very important for the economy.
- The current government’s emphasis has been on entrepreneurship and self-employment, focusing on the manufacturing sector particularly MSME, which has been termed as the missing link.
- Currently, the government is working on achieving the 50th rank on Ease Of Doing Business (EODB). Further, it also has an investment- driven roadmap to become a \$5-trillion economy by 2024 and \$10-trillion by 2032.
- At present, most macroeconomic parameters are looking healthy. Inflation is low, GDP growth rate is high, fiscal deficit is under 3.5 per cent and tax-to-GDP ratio is at 12 per cent. But there are some challenges to be overcome.

#### **A look at the challenges that need to be overcome:**

- Various chambers of commerce are worried about the high real interest rates.
- Cost of deposits is an important cost component of our banking system. Fixed interest rate saving schemes determine the deposit rates. Central and State governments’ borrowings have a bearing on

the deposit rates.

- The government is maintaining its fiscal deficit targets; but with rising GDP there will be space for borrowing without disturbing the fiscal deficit. The RBI Governor too has said that there is a limit to which lowering of repo rate can be transmitted to lower real interest rate.
- What the country needs currently are **some structural changes to achieve low real interest rates**.
- The second important cost component for the banks is the risk premium determined by the level of NPAs and stressed assets. With reforms like IBC, NCLT and other legal changes, the government has set up the institutional mechanism to resolve the NPA problem.

### Banking reform:

- Further, of the 11 banks under the Preventive Corrective Action (PCA), five are out of it.
- The government is infusing capital and merging some of the weak banks.
- Credit off take, after an initial slow down, has now recovered. Last year (2018), the credit growth was around 14-15 per cent year-on-year.
- The benefits of the current government's reforms are being felt after a time lag.
- The government is also working on project revival under the '**Pragati**' initiative. It is trying to sort out certain complex problems faced by some NBFC and infrastructure companies like the IL&FS.
- Earlier the Financial Sector Legislative Reform Commission (FSLRC) had recommended certain reforms. Most of them have been implemented.
- **Financial Resolution and Deposit Insurance (FRDI) has to be implemented. Setting up Development Financial Institutions (DFI) to finance long-term gestation projects is also on the government's agenda.**
- Further, Indians need to understand the sanctity of taxpayer's money. Every penny that the government spends is the taxpayer's money. These are governance issues involved with the exchequer.
- **It is also important to note that the government is one of the biggest borrowers. Giving out doles will add to the inflationary pressure and fiscal deficit will rise.** Thus, efficiency and transparency in government expenditure are important. If government borrowing is used for asset creation, it expands the economy.
- If we invest ₹100 lakh crore in infrastructure development in the next 5-10 years, it will help the economy.
- Further, better targeting through the direct benefit transfer (DBT) scheme is an important goal for the government. The Central government refrained from giving a farm loan waiver despite the pressure. Good economics is good politics.
- Big-ticket reforms in land, labour and capital are very important for the industrialisation of the country.
- The government could not amend the Land Acquisition Act. However, land being a State subject, it is the States which are making changes. The Centre is pushing for digitisation of land records and land lease agreements; this will help in establishing ownership of land. Even for ease of doing business (EODB) ranking, the transfer of title is an important consideration.
- On the labour front, there have been efforts on the formalisation of labour. Ninety-three per cent of our labour force is in the informal sector. The working conditions in this sector are very poor. Provident Fund (PF), ESI, job security, social security etc. are not available. The government plans to consolidate the Labour Code and promote fixed-term contracts.

### Concluding Remarks:

- Foodgrain production in the country has moved from shortages to surplus.
- However, the agricultural policies are still being formulated with a 'deficit mind set'.
- It is a priority area for the new government to change this.
- Earlier all our commodity import-export policy was aligned with the requirement of consumers.
- Now it is being aligned to ensure that farmers get better price for their produce.



- Currently, low inflation with high growth rate is ideal but not at the cost of lower price realisation to farmers. A big challenge is doubling of farmers' income by 2022.

## 2. On the cards: Consumption, liquidity issues, labour reforms on the table of the new govt

### Note to the Students:

This editorial analysis is taken from the “Explained” section of the Indian Express, published on the 24<sup>th</sup> of May, 2019.

### Editorial Analysis:

- Experts opine that the next phase of reforms roadmap is expected in the backdrop of a cyclical downturn.
- Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth figures for January-March 2019, to be released on May 31, 2019 are expected to depict a loss of momentum in India's growth.
- As the new government takes shape, among its initial key focus areas are likely to be:
  1. revival of economic growth,
  2. repair of the financial sector,
  3. pursuit of direct tax and labour market reforms.
- A downward slide has already been seen in Index of Industrial Production (IIP), which contracted to a 21-month low of 0.1 per cent in March, 2019 on the back of weak investment and consumption demand.
- For the 2018-19 financial year as a whole, IIP growth stood at 3.6 per cent, much lower than 4.4 per cent recorded in previous financial year.
- Also, India's slowing consumption story and subdued growth in exports are factors which are expected to keep the country's growth rate under pressure in the months to come. While the automobile sector has been witnessing a subdued growth and the passenger car segment saw a decline of 16 per cent in the month of April 2019, the FMCG sector has also been seeing a slowdown in volume growth.
- It is important to note that currently, the economy is going through a cyclical downturn. The GDP growth in the second half of 2018-19 had fallen to around 6.5 per cent — below the trend rate of growth of India (7 per cent).
- Further, consumption demand, which was the bulwark of the economy, has weakened and private investment is yet to show signs of a pickup.

### Some Measures that can be implemented:

- Apart from measures from the Reserve Bank of India, a key element in the growth revival process will be speeding up bad loan resolution process under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), which will free up resources for banks to lend further.
- Addressing liquidity issues of the Non Banking Financial Companies' sector is expected to be another priority, as crisis in the NBFC sector threatens to engulf the entire financial sector.
- A number of NBFCs has put a stop to fresh loan disbursements while many are on the verge of defaulting on their repayments.
- **The government is also expected to further step up capital infusion in public sector banks and pursue consolidation by merging weak banks with strong banks.**
- Economists and market experts say that while the NBFC sector is choked for funds, their revival is critical for the economy as they account for a large part of credit disbursal in tier II and tier III towns.
- Besides, while the infrastructure segment has seen a pick up in credit demand over the last one year and additional credit to the segment rose by 1.65 lakh crore or 18.5 per cent in FY19, the credit

growth for the industrial segment continues to remain weak.

- There is a sense in the market that the private sector investment needs to revive as it may provide the necessary leg up to the economy. The overall credit demand for the industry went up by only 6.9 per cent in FY19 despite a strong demand from infrastructure segment.
- The IBC has been the most significant financial sector reform launched by the NDA government, aimed at speedy resolution of stressed assets of more than Rs 10 lakh crore.
- While a recovery rate of around 43 per cent points to early success of the law, delays in successful resolution in nearly 48 per cent of the cases has been its main hurdle. The IBC requires a corporate insolvency resolution process (CIRP) to be completed in 180 days, which can be extended by another 90 days to a maximum of 270 days. These time limits have been set to ensure that recovery of non-performing assets (NPAs) in a time-bound manner.

### What does data from the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India tell us?

- However, according to data from the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India, as on March 31, 2019, out of total 1,143 that were undergoing resolution under the IBC, a total of 548 cases exceeded the 180-day deadline.
- This reflects that in nearly 48 per cent of the cases (or 548 CIRPs), a resolution could not be achieved within 180 days.
- A total of 362 cases — or 31.67 per cent of the ongoing CIRPs — surpassed the outer limit of 270 days set out in the IBC.
- **Ensuring that time lines set out in the law are adhered to is crucial for timely recovery of the loans, which will boost capital available, helping improve credit availability and supporting growth.**
- Post poll, the government expenditure would require a commensurate growth in revenue collections, an area where the government struggled in the previous financial year.
- Both direct tax revenue and Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenue have fallen short of the revised budget estimates for 2018-19 by at least Rs 1 lakh crore.

### Areas that may receive attention:

- Going ahead, meeting the already declared direct tax targets for this financial year is going to be a slippery slope, which could prompt the tax department to scale down its targets in the full Budget for 2019-20 expected to be presented by the new government in mid-July, 2019.
- On the GST front, no major rejig of tax rates, barring few minor items where there could be some discrepancy, is in the offing.
- The focus for this financial year is expected to be more on boosting compliance, simplifying procedures and perhaps a move towards inclusion of some of the items that are currently out of GST's ambit such as natural gas and aviation turbine fuel.

### Concluding Remarks:

- A dedicated focus on compliance and maintaining rates is being seen necessary for protecting the gross GST revenue target which may falter given the steep monthly aim of Rs 1.15 lakh crore.
- Labour reforms did not complete the course mapped out by the government in its first term.
- In his independence day speech in August 2015, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had spoken about codification of labour laws into four codes.
- The labour and employment ministry had drafted four labour codes: **industrial relations, wages, social security and welfare, and occupational safety, health and working conditions by amalgamating, simplifying and rationalising the relevant provisions of the existing 44 central labour laws, yet not even a single code got enacted through the legislative route.**
- Lastly, employment generation, especially of good quality and with decent wages, would be crucial,

especially in absence of a strong economic growth.

## F. Tidbits

### 1. Pak. test-fires ballistic missile Shaheen II

- Pakistan has successfully test-fired surface-to-surface ballistic missile Shaheen-II, capable of hitting targets as far as 1,500 kilometers away, bringing major Indian cities under its range.
- The Pakistan Army said in a statement that the launch was aimed at ensuring operational readiness of the Army Strategic Forces Command.
- Shaheen-II Missile is capable of carrying both conventional and nuclear warheads.
- It is said that the missile fully meets Pakistan's strategic needs towards maintenance of desired deterrence stability in the region.

## G. Prelims Facts

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## H. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The Montreal Protocol is an international treaty designed to protect the ozone layer.
2. The Montreal Protocol currently calls for a complete phase-out of HCFCs by 2020.

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: a**

**Explanation:**

The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (a protocol to the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer) is an international treaty designed to protect the ozone layer by phasing out the production of numerous substances that are responsible for ozone depletion. The Montreal Protocol currently calls for a complete phase-out of HCFCs by 2030.

Q2. "Kundhei" is a variety of the string puppet of

- a. Rajasthan
- b. Odisha
- c. Karnataka
- d. West Bengal

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

The string puppets of Orissa are known as Kundhei. Made of light wood, the Orissa puppets have no legs but wear long flowing skirts. They have more joints and are, therefore, more versatile, articulate and easy to manipulate. The puppeteers often hold a wooden prop, triangular in shape, to which strings are attached for manipulation. The costumes of Kundhei resemble those worn by actors of the Jatra traditional theatre. The music is drawn from the popular tunes of the region and is sometimes influenced by the music of Odissi dance.

**Q3. Consider the following statements:**

1. The membership of International Solar Alliance is open only to the countries that lie between the Tropic of Cancer and Capricorn.
2. Its headquarters is in Haryana.

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:**

The membership of International Solar Alliance was open to the countries completely or partly between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn but is now extended to all members of UN.

## I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. India and Japan can provide an alternative to BRI. Discuss. (15 Marks, 250 Words)
2. IBSA is widely viewed as a unique voice for the Global South. It is in India's interest to revitalise IBSA. Analyse. (15 Marks, 250 Words)

