

# 28 May 2019: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### A. GS1 Related

#### ***SOCIAL ISSUES***

1. [India among countries where women face most violence by partner](#)

### B. GS2 Related

#### ***POLITY AND GOVERNANCE***

1. [In joint family, brother-in-law has liability to pay maintenance to domestic violence victim: SC](#)
2. [Govt. bans cooking, kitchens on rooftops and basements](#)

#### ***INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS***

1. [Indo-Pak meet on Kartarpur corridor](#)

### C. GS3 Related

#### ***ECONOMY***

1. [SEBI tightens disclosure norms for listed debt securities](#)
2. [Draft export policy unveiled](#)

#### ***SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY***

1. [Akash test-fired successfully](#)

### D. GS4 Related

### E. Editorials

#### ***INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS***

1. [Global implications of the mandate](#)
2. [An India-US trade deal? No thank you](#)

#### ***GEOGRAPHY***

1. [It's there \(Long queue at Everest\)](#)

#### ***ECONOMY***

1. [Farmers' issues were not centre stage](#)

### F. Tidbits

1. [Coaching centres defying norms to be shut down](#)
2. [AI adoption to raise staff output by over 2 times](#)

### G. Prelims Facts

1. [BIMSTEC](#)
2. [Shanghai Cooperation Organisation](#)
3. [Pulmonary hypertension](#)

### H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

### I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

## A. GS1 Related

### Category: SOCIAL ISSUES

#### 1. India among countries where women face most violence by partner

#### Context:

Global estimates published by the World Health Organization indicate that about 1 in 3 (35%) women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime.

**Issue:**

- In India, there are a number of evil cultural traditions that account for violence against women. These include female infanticide and prenatal sex selection, early marriage, dowry-related violence, female genital mutilation (FGM), “honour” crime, and maltreatment of widows. Domestic violence, however, remains the most neglected.
- Violence against women, particularly intimate partner violence and sexual violence, is a major public health problem and a violation of women’s human rights
- Healthcare professionals cautioned that violence can negatively affect a woman’s physical, mental, sexual, and reproductive health, and may increase the risk of acquiring HIV in some settings.
- WHO has warned that intimate partner violence cause serious short-and long-term problems for women and adversely affect their children besides leading to high social and economic costs for women, their families and societies.
- A recent Thomson Reuters survey has ranked India as the world's most dangerous country for women, ahead of the war-torn Afghanistan and Syria.
- The 2016 National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data shows that a woman in India was raped every 13 minutes and six women gang-raped every day.
- Not only that, every 69 minutes a bride was killed for dowry; 20 foetus and infants were murdered each month and about the same number of women attacked with acid every month.

**WHO Global estimates:**

- In countries like India, intimate partner violence is the highest at 37.7% in the WHO South-East Asia region.
- As per figures released by WHO, the violence ranges from 23.2% in high-income countries and 24.6% in the WHO Western Pacific region to 37% in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean region.
- Explaining how gender-based violence is perpetrated, the global health organisation said that men are more likely to perpetrate violence if they have low education, a history of child maltreatment, exposure to domestic violence against their mothers, harmful use of alcohol, unequal gender norms, including attitudes accepting of violence, and a sense of entitlement over women.
- Women are more likely to experience intimate partner violence if they have low education, exposure to mothers being abused by a partner, abuse during childhood, and attitudes accepting violence, male privilege and women’s subordinate status.
- WHO together with UN Women and other partners has developed a framework for prevention of violence against women called Respect which can be used by governments to counter this menace.

**Laws in force:**

- In 1983, domestic violence was recognised as a specific criminal offence by the introduction of section 498-A into the Indian Penal Code.
- The Government of India passed a Domestic Violence Bill, 2001, to protect the rights of women who are victims of violence of any kind occurring within the family.
- An act called Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 also has been passed. This Act ensures the reporting of cases of domestic violence against women to a ‘Protection Officer’ who then prepares a Domestic Incident Report to the Magistrate.

**Way forward:**

- The response to the phenomenon of domestic violence must be a combined effort between law enforcement agencies, social service agencies, the courts and corrections/probation agencies.
- The role of non-governmental organizations in controlling the domestic violence and curbing its worse consequences is crucial.
- At present there is no single law in the Indian Constitution which can strictly deal with all the

different forms of domestic violence. There is an urgent need for such a law in the country.

## B. GS2 Related

### Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

#### 1. In joint family, brother-in-law has liability to pay maintenance to domestic violence victim: SC

##### Context:

The Supreme Court has held that even the brother-in-law has a liability to pay maintenance to a victim under the Domestic Violence Act if they had lived together under the same roof in a shared household as part of a joint family at any point of time.

##### Details:

- In a nine-page order, the apex court Bench interpreted what the expression ‘domestic relationship’ means under the 2005 Act.
- They held that the term meant a “relationship where two persons live or have lived together at any point of time in a shared household when they are related by consanguinity, marriage or through a relationship in the nature of marriage, adoption or are members living together as a joint family”.
- The court further read the term “shared household” to include “such a household which may belong to the joint family of which the respondent is a member, irrespective of whether the respondent or the aggrieved person has any right, title or interest in the shared household”.
- It was also held that "An aggrieved wife or a female living in a relationship in the nature of marriage may also file a complaint against a relative of the husband or the male partner, as the case may be."

##### Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 (PWDVA):

- The Domestic Violence Act, a first of its kind law in India, came into force on 26 October 2006 to address violence against women within the home.
- It's a civil law aimed at providing a support system to women who have suffered violence at home
- Before the act, women could only seek recourse under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) sections 304B (dowry death) and 498A (cruelty by husband or his relative).
- For the first time, the act defined domestic violence. The definition includes not just physical abuse, which is more identifiable and is easier to prove (for example, using medical records), but also aspects like emotional and sexual abuse. It even includes threat of violence as part of the definition.
- The law enshrines principles of the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which India ratified in 1993.

#### 2. Govt. bans cooking, kitchens on rooftops and basements

##### Context:

In the wake of Surat fire tragedy that killed 22 students, the Delhi government has amended the “Unified Building Bye-Laws (UBBL) for Delhi 2016” for commercial buildings to include the changes. It has also ordered Delhi Fire Services to carry out an "immediate inspection" of all the buildings housing coaching centres.

##### Details:

- The amendment bars cooking activity of any kind on rooftop or basement.

- Storage of inflammable materials will not be allowed on rooftops.
- No temporary roofing over the roof or terrace using fibre reinforced plastic (FRP) or any inflammable material will be allowed.
- It also banned use of inflammable materials such as wooden panels, foam panels and carpets in passages, corridors or staircases.
- When a building catches fire, most of the people die due to carbon monoxide suffocation than burns. The amendment also made it mandatory to have carbon monoxide detectors in all rooms and also natural or mechanical arrangements for smoke ventilation in all corridors and passages at each level and staircases.
- Also, there should be doors with fire-resistance rating of at least one hour at the entrance of staircases of each floor if there are more than 10 people living on the floor, according to the amendment.

## **Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

### **1. Indo-Pak meet on Kartarpur corridor**

#### **Context:**

Officials from Pakistan and India held a meeting to discuss the modalities for a corridor linking Dera Baba Nanak shrine in Punjab's Gurdaspur district to Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Kartarpur across the border.

#### **Kartarpur Corridor:**

- Kartarpur corridor is a proposed border corridor between the neighbouring nations of India and Pakistan, connecting the Sikh shrines of Dera Baba Nanak Sahib (located in Punjab, India) and Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur (in Punjab, Pakistan).
- Currently under planning, the corridor is intended to allow religious devotees from India to visit the Gurdwara in Kartarpur, 4.7 kilometres (2.9 miles) from the Pakistan-India border, without a visa.

#### **Background:**

- The Kartarpur Corridor was first proposed in early 1999 by the prime ministers of Pakistan and India, Nawaz Sharif and Atal Bihari Vajpayee, respectively, as part of the Delhi–Lahore Bus diplomacy.
- In 2018, the foundation stone for the Kartarpur corridor was laid down on the Indian side. Two days later the foundation stone for the corridor was laid down on the Pakistani side. The corridor was initially intended to be completed before the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev in November 2019.
- The prime minister of India, Narendra Modi, compared the decision to go ahead with the corridor by the two countries to the fall of the Berlin Wall, saying that the project may help in easing tensions between the two countries.
- Currently pilgrims from India have to take a bus to Lahore to get to Kartarpur, which is a 125 km journey, despite the fact that people on the Indian side of the border can physically see Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur on the Pakistani side. An elevated platform has also been constructed for the same on the Indian side, where people use binoculars to get a good view.

#### **Details:**

- The first jatha of Indian pilgrims is likely to visit Pakistan through the corridor in November to celebrate the birth anniversary of Sikh's first master Guru Nanak Dev.
- The officials met to discuss various issues including number of pilgrims who will be allowed to

## C. GS3 Related

### Category: ECONOMY

#### 1. SEBI tightens disclosure norms for listed debt securities

##### Context:

To further safeguard the interest of investors in listed debt securities, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has tightened the disclosure norms for entities that have issued such securities.

##### What are Debt Securities?

- Debt security refers to a debt instrument, such as a government bond, corporate bond, certificate of deposit (CD), municipal bond or preferred stock, that can be bought or sold between two parties and has basic terms defined, such as notional amount (amount borrowed), interest rate, and maturity and renewal date.
- Listing debt securities on a stock exchange is usually carried out to gain access to a wider group of investors.

##### Details:

- In a circular issued SEBI made it mandatory for such companies to disclose on their websites the schedule of interest and redemption obligations for the complete financial year.
- Further, the status of payments has to be updated within one day of the due date, which effectively means that any default or delay will be disclosed within a day of the due date.
- According to the SEBI, the enhanced disclosure norms have been issued to further secure the interests of investors in listed debt securities, enhance transparency and to enable Debenture Trustees (DTs) to perform their duties effectively and promptly.
- For privately-placed debt securities, SEBI has made it mandatory for the inclusion of a clause stating that at least 2% per annum interest would be paid over the coupon rate in case of a default in meeting the payment obligations.
- The additional interest would be payable by the company for the tenure of the defaulting period.

#### 2. Draft export policy unveiled

##### Context:

The Commerce Ministry has come out with a comprehensive draft of the export policy which includes product-specific rules with a view to provide a ready reckoner for exporters.

##### Details:

- The draft policy is circulated among various departments for suggestions and feedback.
- Based on inputs received it is proposed to bring out a comprehensive export policy for all ITC (HS) tariff codes including items which are 'free' for export and do not currently exist in the policy.
- It would cover conditions/restrictions imposed by partner government agencies on export.
- The draft policy aims at consolidating the export norms for each product as applicable at different government agencies.
- The updated draft has been prepared by including all existing policy conditions, all notifications and



public notices issued after January 2018. Besides, it also includes non-tariff regulations imposed by different government agencies.

- A similar policy exists for import purposes as well.

#### **ITC-HS code:**

- ITC-HS Codes are Indian Trade Clarification based on Harmonised System of Coding.
- It was adopted by India for import-export operations.
- Every product has been accorded eight digit HS codes.
- The compendium will help an exporter know all the applicable norms pertaining to a particular product, helping him/her understand policy conditions for that item.

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

#### **1. Akash test-fired successfully**

##### **Context:**

The DRDO successfully test-fired the new version of the Akash surface-to-air defence missile system with a new indigenously-developed seeker.

##### **Details:**

- This is the second successful test of the missile.
- Several variants of the missile Akash MK1, Akash-MK2 with improved accuracy and higher ranges are under development by the DRDO.
- India is slowly plugging the holes in its air defence elements by developing the advanced surface-to-air missile named MRSAM — Medium Range Surface to Air Missile in collaboration with Israel.
- Besides that, five regiments of the renowned S-400 air defence system are under procurement from Russia. The delivery is slated to begin in 2020.

##### **Akash Missile:**

- It is a medium range multi-target engagement capable missile.
- It was developed as part of the Integrated Guided-Missile Development Programme (IGMDP) other than Nag, Agni, Trishul, and Prithvi missiles.
- The supersonic missile has a range of around 25 km and up to the altitude of 18,000 metres.
- The missile uses high-energy solid propellant for the booster and ramjet-rocket propulsion for the sustainer phase.

## **D. GS4 Related**

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## **E. Editorials**

### **Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

#### **1. Global implications of the mandate**

### Editorial Analysis:

- Experts opine that the clear and decisive mandate for Prime Minister Narendra Modi is a defining moment in India's democratic history.
- As a matter of fact, its extent, which is manifest from the highest-ever voter turnout in a general election and the share of votes won by the winning coalition, creates its own very unique set of circumstances.

### What are these unique circumstances?

- To put this in perspective, as the world's largest democracy, India has a staggering 900 million-odd voters, of whom about over 67% turned out, making it about a little over half-a-billion people participating in the general election of 2019.
- Out of this, the winning coalition is estimated to have earned close to 300 million votes.
- When we compare this with the next biggest democracy, the United States, which has a population of more than 320 million, the magnitude of the mandate earned by Mr. Modi becomes clear.
- It is a unique moment for India that the rising aspirations of people in one of the fastest growing economies have resulted in this kind of a mandate.
- Further, while it raises the bar on expectations, more importantly, it gives the leadership of the country the necessary wherewithal to take the kind of decisions that are needed to put India on a high growth trajectory.
- At a time when two of the largest economic powers in the world, the U.S. and China, are locked in a trade war of sorts, this mandate opens the window for India to take advantage of economic opportunities that are likely to develop in the geopolitical space.
- To get the Indian economy on the right trajectory, to spur our exports and to create jobs — while this kind of a mandate creates expectations, it also empowers the leadership to take the right decisions to realise the same.

### An opportunity to steer geopolitics:

- Experts opine that the poll result also paves the way for India to take its rightful place in the world order not just as a participant in the deliberations that happen at multilateral platforms but, more importantly, to set the course for the kind of change that we would like to see in the world.
- India over the last five years has taken a leadership position in quite a few initiatives such as the **International Solar Alliance**, while facilitating global action on climate change through the Paris Agreement.
- As a matter of fact, India has also projected its soft power through a global projection of yoga to shine the spotlight on how Indian spirituality can be a force for greater good.
- Now, with this kind of a political mandate and the unique set of global circumstances it has been delivered in, the expectation is even higher that India would take up its rightful role in steering geopolitics in a host of areas. These areas range from:
  1. global trade to regional conflicts
  2. setting the global direction in emerging technology areas such as artificial intelligence and space exploration, to name a few.
- It is also important to note that India's democracy after Independence is a very unique experiment, just a few years away from turning 75.
- As a matter of fact, there is no democratic parallel anywhere else in the world to the Indian context and the Indian experiment.
- This is missing in the manner in which the global media, especially influential western media outlets, have tended to view India.
- Experts opine that this mandate ought to be a wake-up call for global media outlets to shun their

myopic view of the democratic discourse in India. They must now discard the stereotypes they still use in their reportage.

### What else does the mandate imply?

- The mandate also places Mr. Modi as first among equals within his peer group of world leaders today.
- Further, while a whole generation of strong leaders have emerged from among the G20 nations, be it the U.S., Japan, Russia, Turkey, Australia, Indonesia or South Africa, **only Mr. Modi can credibly claim to have been tested by the largest number of voters in a free and fair election.**
- The mandate gives India's voice heft at key multilateral platforms.
- The mandate also creates the opportunity for Mr. Modi to advance Indian values and advocate uniquely Indian ways of solving global problems.

### Concluding Remarks:

- Experts opine that the mandate also calls for a new creed of techno-nationalism as a counter to borderless techno-activism that has threatened Indian interests through its pursuit of innocuous agendas (net neutrality and privacy) which have advocated measures inimical to India.
- Further, the political mandate also demands that India devise ways and means to stay ahead of the curve in emerging technology areas such as 5G and artificial intelligence, among others.
- It also calls for out-of-the-box thinking as India can no longer risk being left out of setting the course for technology changes that will not only shape the global economy but also geopolitical dynamics.
- It is important to note that India is also the largest open market to global technology majors which continue to locate their computing and storage infrastructure outside India and beyond Indian jurisdictions.
- The mandate demands that India leverage the strength of its democracy and the power of its markets to ensure that the global platforms play by rules that do not hurt the Indian national interest.
- In conclusion, while India continues to benefit from global digital innovations, this needs to happen within a framework that enhances Indian interests.

## 2. An India-US trade deal? No thank you

### Note to the Students:

This analysis is taken from an article entitled, "An India-US trade deal? No thank you", as published in the Hindu Business Line on the 28<sup>th</sup> of May, 2019.

### Editorial Analysis:

- Experts opine that while the government formulates its policy priorities for NDA-II, grappling with the challenges confronting India-US trade ties is likely to be high on the agenda.
- As a matter of fact, **how this thorny issue is addressed by the government could have far reaching implications for India's economic growth.**

### What does India's list of grievances against the US include?

- India's list of grievances against the US include:
  1. problems encountered by its exporters of IT services,
  2. tariffs imposed by the US on exports of steel and aluminium products and
  3. the threat of the US to remove India from the list of developing countries enjoying preferential



access to its markets.

### What does the US's list of grievances against the US include?

- US complaints include:
  1. perceived barriers erected by India to its exports,
  2. India's recent measures related to e-commerce and
  3. its perennial criticism of India's intellectual property laws.

It is important to note that at the WTO, the two countries have divergent positions on many issues, including the crisis at the dispute resolution mechanism and WTO reform.

### What is needed to iron out the differences?

- In order to iron out the trade friction between the two countries, some strategic experts and foreign policy analysts have suggested that India should work towards a comprehensive bilateral trade deal with the US.
- No doubt it should be a high political priority for India to have an enduring and mutually beneficial trade link with the US.
- Crucially, experts opine that **any move by India for a comprehensive trade deal with the US should come only after a detailed examination of the fundamental reasons bedevilling trade relations between the two countries.**
- Further, despite the gradually deepening links between India and the US on geo-political issues, an important question arises: **why have the two countries failed to forge deeper trade ties?**
- Even a superficial analysis of the interests of the two countries would make it obvious that the path to strengthened trade relations is fraught with hurdles, many of which are insurmountable.
- As a matter of fact, **how does the US wish-list stack up against India's interests and concerns?** Experts point out that there are at least six grounds of concern, which arise from an India-US trade deal.

### India-US trade deal: Grounds of Concern

- Firstly, as the average tariffs in the US is 3.4 per cent, India's exports are unlikely get any significant boost, even if the US were to reduce its existing tariffs to zero.
- Secondly, India would be conceding considerable market access to the US by reducing/eliminating its tariffs from the existing average level of 13.8 per cent.
- It is important to note that as India is not price competitive in a large number of products, the country may find it extremely difficult to face import competition under a zero-duty regime.
- **This would pose severe risk to the manufacturing sector and could frustrate the Make in India flagship initiative of NDA-1.**
- Thirdly, on the agriculture front, India's farmers will be continuously exposed to the risk of being knocked out of the market by cheap and subsidised imports from the US. Tariff as a policy instrument would not be available to the government to regulate such imports.
- The consequences of such a situation can be extremely alarming.
- In particular, **the horticulture sector, dairy sector and wheat would come under extremely intense pressure from US imports.**
- As a matter of fact, the prospects of doubling farm income are likely to get dented by a comprehensive trade deal with the US.
- Fourthly, on the IPR front, India will get confronted by US to agree to its onerous demands, particularly for **extending the monopoly protection enjoyed by the US pharmaceutical companies in India.** This would require India to make crucial changes to its domestic laws and regulations, which would eventually destroy the generic pharmaceutical industry in the country.

- **This would result in a sharp increase in prices of medicines, thereby compromising the health of the sick and the needy in India.**
- Fifthly, the India-US trade deal would significantly erode the policy space currently available to the government to nurture the fledgling domestic digital economy in India.
- As a matter of fact, we are already witnessing a strong backlash unleashed by the US-based digital giants against some of the recent actions of the government, including data localisation for credit cards and the press note seeking to contain the unfair practices indulged in by retail platforms.
- Further, it is important to note that **the trade deal will certainly be used by the US-based digital giants to ensure that their interests in India are strongly protected. This will compromise the digital future of our country.**
- Another important question arises:

#### **Would the trade deal help India secure greater market access for its exports of services to the US?**

- If the past FTAs of the US are an indicator, the US is extremely unlikely to agree to India's demands for more access for its professionals under Mode 4 of Services.
- Further, given the strong emotions unleashed in the US against immigration, the US is not likely to show any flexibility to India in allowing the seamless movement of professionals.
- On the other hand, India would be required to grant considerable access to US firms in many sectors, including for financial services.

#### **What are the proponents of the India-US trade deal optimistic about?**

- The proponents of the India-US trade deal are also optimistic on two issues, both of which need careful scrutiny.
- Firstly, **some experts have claimed that the trade deal will enhance India's access to high technology. This is not only incorrect, but also goes against the grain of the consistent stand of the US at various inter-governmental forums that technology transfer is governed by patents; and that it cannot direct its firms to share high technology.**
- In essence, the trade deal will certainly not have provisions that would facilitate technology transfer.
- Another aspiration being articulated by some supporters of the trade deal is that it will enhance US investments in India. However, **the link between bilateral investment protection treaty (BIT) and investment inflows is extremely weak.**
- On the contrary, based on a rigorous empirical exercise, UNCTAD's Trade and Development Report (2014) has concluded that "BITs appear to have no effect on bilateral North-South FDI flows".
- It is, thus, **unlikely that the India-US trade deal will result in enhanced investment inflows from the US into India.**
- In conclusion, the stark reality is that a bilateral trade deal with the US would be extremely skewed and loaded against India's economic interests.
- As a matter of fact, the injurious consequences for India would far outweigh the export gains of a few billion dollars.
- The proponents of the trade deal need to examine the nuts and bolts of a potential treaty and objectively assess its economic impact on the country.
- **India must not fall into the dangerous trap of initiating negotiation for a comprehensive trade deal with the US.**
- Instead, the two countries must continue to talk and address individual irritants in trade ties.
- The time for a comprehensive India-US bilateral trade deal has not yet come.

#### **Category: GEOGRAPHY**

##### **1. It's there (Long queue at Everest)**

## What's in the news?

- Mount Everest, the world's highest peak at 8,848 metres, draws adventurers from all over.
- However, Mount Everest, which is located on the Nepal-China border is fast becoming a dangerous place to visit even for the hardened mountaineer.

## Editorial Analysis:

- The inherent risks were this month highlighted with a photograph by Nirmal Purja, a Gorkha ex-soldier.
- The image, which went viral and altered the manner in which people worldwide imagine what it is to scale Mt. Everest, **showed a long queue awaiting a final tilt at the summit**, with all the dangers such a wait holds.

## A Look at Specifics:

- This season, at least 10 climbers have died or gone missing, including four Indians.
- Experts have been calling for Nepal to restrict the number of permits.
- Nepal awarded a record 381 for this spring, each fetching \$11,000 (climbing from the Tibet side is more expensive).
- Recently, 200 climbers ascended the summit, which is a new record for a single day.
- Last year (2018), 807 managed to reach the summit.
- In the year, 2012, the United Nations estimated that there were more than 26,000 visitors to the Everest region, and this figure has grown manifold since then.

## Stuck due to bad weather?

- Nepal officials argue that permits are not issued recklessly, and that jams such as this year's near the summit are on account of spells of bad weather, which result in mountaineers being compelled to summit within a narrow time-frame.
- Waiting in sub-zero temperatures at the rarefied altitude can be fatal — this season's deaths were mostly due to frostbite, exhaustion, dehydration and lack of oxygen.
- As a matter of fact, this year's drama has caught the public imagination, as happened in 1996 when eight persons died in a single day amid an unexpected storm — events of and around that day were the subject of Jon Krakauer's bestselling book, *Into Thin Air*.

## Concluding Remarks:

- The adventure industry that is built around the human desire to scale the peak has meant many amateurs take up the challenge, confident that support teams and specialised equipment will make up for their lack of adequate mountaineering experience.
- The fallout is that in case of a disaster not only are some of them unable to manage, but they hold up others, putting them in harm's way.
- The commercial operations have led to the Everest being called the world's highest garbage dump as **many climbers discard non-critical gear and fail to clean up the mess**.
- The authorities must learn from this year's tragedies and work out an optimum number of climbers and strengthen safety measures.

## Category: ECONOMY

### 1. Farmers' issues were not centre stage

## Editorial Analysis:

- Experts point out that in November last year (2018), thousands of farmers marched to Parliament to highlight the agrarian crisis and demand higher crop prices, full loan waivers and drought relief.
- As a matter of fact, there were quite a few such protests in 2018, and considering their scale, many believed that it was likely that the discontentment of farmers, who also make up an important voting bloc given that half the country's population is engaged in farm-related work, would hurt the prospects of the BJP in the parliamentary election.
- However, with the Narendra Modi-led Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) winning with a thumping majority for the second time, the anti-government sentiment among farmers has to an extent been successfully neutralized.

## Priorities while voting

- Lokniti's post-poll survey found that the majority of farmers did not vote on issues that directly concern them. Development ('vikas') was important — 15% of farmers went to the polling booths with this as their single-most important agenda. Unemployment was second (10%).
- Surprisingly, only 5% had farming or related issues as their most important agenda when they went to cast their votes.
- This may also be considered a failure of farmers' movements and the Opposition which did not politicise farmers' issues sufficiently in the few months before the election.
- It is important to note that farmers' distress was very much on the national agenda until the beginning of the election year.

## What did the Survey find?

- Despite mass protests last year (2018), 68% of farmers were found to be satisfied with the performance of the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre, with 27% saying that they were 'fully satisfied' and 41% saying they were 'somewhat satisfied' when probed further.
- The survey also found that among respondents who reported agriculture as their main occupation, 39% voted for the BJP (NDA 47%) and 20% voted for the Congress (UPA 26%).
- These figures are almost the same as the overall vote shares of both parties.
- In other words, farmers did not vote differently from the rest.
- As far as their respective caste groups are concerned, 52% of upper caste farmers were found to have voted for the BJP and only 13% chose the Congress.
- When further segregated, one finds that 41% of peasant proprietors voted for the BJP, which is 22 percentage points lower than the rest of the upper caste farmers.
- The number of peasant proprietors who voted for the Congress was almost the same.
- However, with 34% voting for the BJP and 18% voting for the Congress, the gap between the Congress and the BJP was much more narrow in the case of Dalit farmers.

## Direct cash transfers: Role of PM-KISAN Yojana

- The survey suggests that some action by the government at the eleventh hour, such as providing direct cash transfers through the PM-KISAN Yojana, and the ultra-nationalistic campaign of the BJP might have helped the party assuage the angry farmers and shift the narrative from farmers' issues to development and nationalism.
- PM-KISAN, under which ₹2,000 is transferred to the bank accounts of farmers with small land holdings every four months, seems to have made them swing in the BJP's favour.
- Further, among the farmers who had benefited from PM-KISAN and credited the Central government for the same, 56% voted for the BJP (NDA 65%) and only 8% chose the Congress (UPA 11%).
- On the other hand, among those who credited the State government, the figures were almost the same



for both (UPA 30%, NDA 29%).

- As a matter of fact, two-fifth of those who credited the State government voted for parties other than UPA and the NDA.
- Among farmers who had heard about India's air strikes in Balakot, 42% voted for the BJP while 17% voted for the Congress. Contrary to this, among those who had not heard about the strikes, the gap was merely three percentage points, with 31% voting for the BJP and 28% for the Congress.
- The cash transfers through PM-KISAN and the wave of nationalism just weeks before the election seem to have clearly swept farmers' issues away from the centre stage.

### Concluding Remarks:

- In conclusion, with the BJP back in power, it is important to highlight three key promises made by the party to farmers in its manifesto. These include:
  1. zero-interest loans for up to ₹1 lakh;
  2. extension of PM-KISAN to the rest of the farmers; and
  3. pension to small and marginal farmers.
- Finally, considering the fiscal burden these schemes would add, at the moment it doesn't seem like they will be implemented in their entirety.
- An important question arises: will these schemes merely end up as poll gimmicks or will they add anything substantial to farmers' plates?
- It might be too early to answer these questions.

## F. Tidbits

### 1. Coaching centres defying norms to be shut down

- Delhi Home Minister ordered the fire department to close down all coaching centres operating above fourth floor of buildings and are in violation of fire norms, in wake of the Surat fire accident.
- The Minister also ordered an immediate inspection of all buildings housing such coaching centres and asked officials to take strict action as per fire safety guidelines to prevent recurrence of such incidents.

### 2. AI adoption to raise staff output by over 2 times

- Adoption of Artificial Intelligence is expected to help double the rate of industrial innovation, and may result in an over two times jump in employee productivity in India by 2021, a study by tech giant Microsoft said.
- The organisations that have adopted AI saw tangible improvements of 8-22% in areas such as customer engagement, margins and competitiveness.
- Artificial intelligence (AI), sometimes called machine intelligence, is intelligence demonstrated by machines, in contrast to the natural intelligence displayed by humans and animals. Colloquially, the term "artificial intelligence" is used to describe machines that mimic cognitive functions that humans associate with other human minds, such as learning and problem solving.

## G. Prelims Facts

### 1. BIMSTEC

- Bay of Bengal Initiative on Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is a



sub-regional grouping involving seven countries in South Asia and South East Asia.

- The BIMSTEC states are those which are on the shore or are adjacent to the Bay of Bengal and are dependent on it.
- They are Thailand, Myanmar from South East Asia and Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Nepal and India from South Asia.
- The international organization was formed on 6<sup>th</sup> of June 1997, through the Bangkok declaration and is headquartered at Dhaka in Bangladesh.

## 2. Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

- The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation is a permanent intergovernmental international organisation proclaimed in Shanghai on June 15, 2001 by six countries – People's Republic of China, Russian Federation, Republic of Kazakhstan, Republic of Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Tajikistan and Republic of Uzbekistan.
- It was established on the basis of the "Shanghai Five" mechanism.
- The main purposes of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation are:
  - Strengthening mutual trust and good-neighbourly relations among member states.
  - Promoting their effective cooperation in political affairs, economy and trade, scientific-technical, cultural, and educational spheres as well as in energy, transportation, tourism, and environment protection fields.
  - Joint safeguarding and presenting regional peace, security and stability.
  - Striving towards creation of democratic, just, reasonable new international political and economic order.

## 3. Pulmonary hypertension

- Pulmonary hypertension is a type of high blood pressure that affects the arteries.
- It causes the narrowing or destruction of capillaries.
- This impedes blood flow through the lungs, leading to eventual weakening of the heart muscles due to increased strain in pumping blood.
- One of the symptoms of the condition is shortness of breath, even when at rest.
- It occurs in individuals of all ages, races, and ethnic backgrounds, although it is much more common in young adults and is approximately twice as common in women as in men.

## H. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

Q1. Dr. Lee Jong-wook Prize for Public Health is awarded by:

- a. World Health Organisation
- b. Indian Medical Association
- c. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
- d. United Nations Organisation

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

The Dr LEE Jong-wook Memorial Prize for Public Health was established in 2008, and is awarded to individuals, institutions, and governmental or nongovernmental organizations who have made an outstanding contribution to public health by the World Health Organisation.

Q2. Consider the following statements:

1. BIMSTEC is headquartered at Dhaka.
2. Pakistan and India are members of BIMSTEC.

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:**

Bay of Bengal Initiative on Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is a sub-regional grouping involving seven countries in South Asia and South East Asia. The BIMSTEC states are those which are on the shore or are adjacent to the Bay of Bengal and are dependent on it. They are Thailand, Myanmar from South East Asia and Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Nepal and India from South Asia.

**Q3. Consider the following statements:**

1. Mudhumalai National Park shares border with Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.
2. It is declared as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

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: d**

**Explanation:**

Mudhumalai National Park also declared a tiger reserve is located in Tamil Nadu. It shares its boundaries with the states of Karnataka and Kerala. The Western Ghats Nilgiri Sub-Cluster including all of Mudumalai National Park, is under consideration by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee for selection as a World Heritage Site.

## I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Analyse the issue of Domestic Violence faced by Indian Women in the light of global estimates published by the World Health Organisation that highlights India among countries where women face most violence by partner. (15 Marks, 250 Words)
2. Write a brief note on the influence of Sufi Movement on contemporary India. (10 Marks, 150 Words)

