

04 June 2019: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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B. GS2 Related

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. [Mandatory Hindi goes out of draft education policy](#)

Context:

Following the protests in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, West Bengal and Maharashtra, the Human Resource Development has revised draft of the National Education Policy.

Background:

- The draft of National Education Policy had suggested the inclusion of Hindi in all the non-Hindi speaking states in the country.
- This had given rise to a controversy over the draft version which was seen by many in the southern states as an attempt to impose Hindi on school students.

Details:

- The updated draft retains the recommendation to introduce a three-language formula from Class 1, merely having removed the clause stipulating the specific languages that students must choose.
- The controversial sentence appeared in Section 4.5.9, titled 'Flexibility in the choice of languages'. It said: "...students who wish to change one of the three languages they are studying may do so in Grade 6, so long as the study of three languages by students in the Hindi-speaking States would continue to include Hindi and English and one of the modern Indian languages from other parts of India, while the study of languages by students in the non-Hindi-speaking States would include the regional language, Hindi and English."
- It has now been replaced by the following: "...students who wish to change one or more of the three languages they are studying may do so in Grade 6 or Grade 7, so long as they are able to still demonstrate proficiency in three languages (one language at the literature level) in their modular Board Examinations some time during secondary school."
- Kasturirangan, head of the committee that drafted the policy said that if the overall policy is looked at, there is substantial space devoted to recognising the diversity and multilingual nature of India, and giving autonomy to the states.
- He said that the clause stipulating the specific languages that students must choose was slightly out of the step with the spirit with which the policy was written and that the new formulation removes any such misunderstandings.

2. Delhi CM offers free travel to women in public transport**Context:**

- Chief Minister of Delhi announced that the Delhi government intended to subsidise travel in public transport for women commuters in the Capital.
- While the modalities of the scheme are still being worked out, the government intended to allow them free travel on metro trains and State-run buses.

Details:

- The government aims to launch the free-ride initiative in the next two or three months and has invited suggestions from the public about the implementation of the scheme.
- The government is working on a voluntary model for the scheme, where travellers can opt out of the subsidy.
- It was said that this [free travel] is a subsidy that the Delhi government will be providing on its own; no clearance from the Centre would be required.

Concerns:

- The decision has been taken just a few months ahead of the assembly elections
- Delhi Metro is a joint venture of the Delhi government and the Centre, and the Delhi Metro Act has no provision for "concessions".
- Multiple government sources, however, pointed out that the move would require a nod from the Lieutenant-Governor as well as the Centre which is an equal partner with the Delhi government in

the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation.

- Large sums of money will be involved and any delay in payment could lead to disruption of the existing arrangement.
- For a scheme of this nature and scale to succeed, advance planning is an absolute necessity. A number of questions still remain on how the scheme would be implemented.

Way forward:

- A mechanism will have to be devised to see how many women travelled. Right now, technologically there is no system in place to do so.
- Mode of reimbursements to DMRC has to be decided.

3. CAT can exercise same powers as HC

Context:

While dealing with a contempt case registered on the basis of reference received from the Principal Registrar of Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT), the Delhi High Court has held that the CAT, which adjudicates service matters, can exercise the same jurisdiction and powers, as a High Court, in respect of its contempt proceedings.

Details:

- A Bench of Justice Manmohan and Justice Sangita Dhingra Sehgal noted that the Supreme Court in its 2001 judgment has held that Section 17 of the Administrative Tribunals Act, 1985, confers jurisdiction on the CAT to punish for its contempt.
- The CAT has also framed the Contempt of Courts Rules, 1992, which provide the procedure for initiation of criminal contempt and suo motu contempt proceedings, respectively.

Central Administrative Tribunal:

- Part XIV-A of the constitution provides for the tribunals. The provision was added through 42nd Amendment Act, 1976. Article 323A and 323B provide for Administrative Tribunals and Tribunals related to other matters respectively.
- Under Article 323A, parliament is empowered to establish administrative tribunals for the adjudication of disputes and complaints with respect to recruitment and conditions of service of persons appointed to public services and posts in connection with the affairs of the union or of any state or of any local or other authority within the territory of India or under the control of the government of India or of any corporation owned or controlled by the government.
- The Administrative Tribunals Act in 1985 enacted by the Parliament authorises the central government to establish central administrative tribunal and the state administrative tribunals.
- The Central Administrative Tribunal was established for adjudication of disputes in case of recruitment and conditions of service of persons appointed to public services and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or other local authorities within the territory of India or under the control of Government of India.
- This was done in pursuance of the amendment of Constitution of India by Articles 323A.
- Setting up of such Administrative Tribunals aimed at reducing the burden on various courts and reduce pendency and provide to the persons covered by the Administrative Tribunals a speedy and relatively cheap and effective remedy.

4. CM revokes Naidu's decision, CBI can resume work in A.P.

Context:

Reversing his predecessor's orders, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has allowed the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to go ahead with investigations and raids in the State without prior permission of the State government.

Background:

- The previous government through an order issued in November 2018, withdrew the 'general consent,' virtually curtailing the Central agency's powers to conduct investigations in the State.
- The decision came after Chandrababu Naidu and the other Opposition parties alleged that the BJP-led NDA government was misusing Central agencies to target Opposition leaders and their governments.
- The controversial step triggered a chain reaction with West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee also withdrawing 'the general consent'.

Details:

It effectively means the CBI can now enter the State without obtaining permission from the Andhra Pradesh government.

What is General Consent?

- The CBI is governed by the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act that makes consent of a state government mandatory for conducting investigation in that state.
- The general consent is routinely given by State governments for periods ranging from six months to a year to the CBI and all agencies under the Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act, 1946.
- The consent is necessary as the jurisdiction of these agencies is confined to Delhi and Union Territories under this Act.
- There are two kinds of consent: case-specific and general. Given that the CBI has jurisdiction only over central government departments and employees, it can investigate a case involving state government employees or a violent crime in a given state only after that state government gives its consent.
- "General consent" is normally given to help the CBI seamlessly conduct its investigation into cases of corruption against central government employees in the concerned state. Almost all states have given such consent. Otherwise, the CBI would require consent in every case.

Does withdrawal of General Consent mean that the CBI can no longer probe any case in the two states?

- The CBI would still have the power to investigate old cases registered when general consent existed.
- Also, cases registered anywhere else in the country, but involving people stationed in state that has withdrawn general consent, would allow CBI's jurisdiction to extend to these states.
- There is ambiguity on whether the agency can carry out a search in either of the two states in connection with an old case without the consent of the state government.
- However, there are legal remedies to that as well. The CBI can always get a search warrant from a local court in the state and conduct searches.
- In case the search requires a surprise element, there is CrPC Section 166, which allows a police officer of one jurisdiction to ask an officer of another to carry out searches on his behalf.
- And if the first officer feels that the searches by the latter may lead to loss of evidence, the section allows the first officer to conduct searches himself after giving a notice to the latter.
- Withdrawal of consent will only bar the CBI from registering a case within the jurisdiction of such

5. Bombay High Court upholds law dealing with repeat rapists

Context:

The Bombay High Court has upheld the constitutional validity of a section of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) under which life imprisonment or death penalty can be awarded to repeat offenders in rape cases.

What is Section 376E?

- Under section 376E of the IPC, a repeat rape offender will have to be imprisoned for the rest of his life or sentenced to death.
- According to Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013, whoever has been previously convicted of an offence punishable under section 376 or section 376A or section 376D and is subsequently convicted of an offence punishable under any of the said sections shall be punished with imprisonment for life which shall mean imprisonment for the remainder of that person's natural life, or with death.

The Case:

- In 2014, a session court in Maharashtra had pronounced death sentence to three convicts who were accused for the gangrape of a city-based photojournalist on August 22, 2013.
- The same year, the three were also convicted for raping a call centre employee.
- Both instances of gangrape had taken place in 2013 in the Shakti Mills compound.
- The trials in both the cases were held simultaneously and the court subsequently allowed a prosecution plea to charge the convicts under Section 376E.
- The law has been challenged by the three convicts.
- During arguments before the court, lawyer, arguing for the accused, had said that the accused could not have been charged under Section 376E as the second offence was not committed after conviction in the first.
- The trio, in April 2014, approached the High Court challenging the validity of Section 376E and contended that the sessions court acted beyond its power in awarding them the death penalty.
- The court said it did not find any merit in the challenge to the constitutional validity of Section 376E, and dismissed the petitions.
- The Bombay High Court has now upheld the constitutional validity of the section.
- Advocate General Ashutosh Kumbhakoni for the state government and Additional Solicitor General Anil Singh for the Centre supported the law, by stating that such law was necessary to tackle increasing cases of rape in the country.

JUSTICE TAKES ITS COURSE

2012

December 16: 23-year-old paramedical student gangraped in Delhi.

2013

February 3: Section 376E introduced by the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013.

July 31: 18-year-old telephone operator gangraped at Shakti Mills.

August 22: 22-year-old photojournalist gangraped at Shakti Mills.

September 4: Both survivors identify the three accused.

September 19: Mumbai Crime Branch files 600-page charge sheet against the accused.

October 16: Trial begins in

sessions court.

2014

March 21: Court awards life sentence to the convicts.

March 24: Court allows application to charge them under Section 376E of IPC.

April 4: Court awards death sentence; convicts move HC challenging law.

2018

November 21: State not prepared to argue in HC.

2019

January 25: HC pulls up State over delay in death penalty confirmation.

February 31: HC begins hearing arguments in case.

June 6: HC upholds death penalty for the convicts.

Way forward:

With the dismissal of the petitions, another Bench of the High Court will now take up for final hearing appeals filed by the convicts challenging their conviction and death penalty.

C. GS3 Related

Category: ECONOMY

1. Nilekani panel suggests 24x7 RTGS, NEFT, elimination of all charges

Context:

Nilekani panel has set a target for the government and regulators to achieve a ten-fold volume growth in digital payments over the next three years through customer-friendly pricing mechanisms and broadening access infrastructure.

Background:

- RBI had appointed panel headed by Nandan Nilekani for strengthening digital payments ecosystem.
- The committee had submitted its suggestions on promoting digital payments to Governor Shaktikanta Das last month.
- The report has made policy recommendations to all major regulators such as RBI, SEBI, IRDAI and DoT with the objective to reduce cash based payments.
- Additionally, the committee has put the onus on government to be at the forefront of the transition by

taking steps such as removing transaction charges on all digital payments made by customers to the government.

Details:

- To encourage digital payments, the Nandan Nilekani committee has suggested a host of measures, including elimination of charges, round-the-clock RTGS and NEFT facility, and duty-free import of point-of-sales machines.
- Initiatives such as removing transaction charges on digital payments made to government, inducing a competitive Merchant Discount Rates (MDR) pricing structure and easing KYC costs to banks are amongst the key recommendations put forward.
- Among other things, the panel has suggested that there should be no convenience fee on payments made to government agencies by customers and recommended that payment systems use machine-driven, online dispute resolution systems to handle complaints.
- The committee recommends that the RBI and the government put in place an appropriate mechanism to monitor the digital payment systems and make aggregated information based on blocks, and PIN code, available to all players on a monthly basis, so that they can make the necessary adjustments.
- Keeping in mind that digital transactions result in larger balances with the bank, the panel felt customers must be allowed to initiate and accept a reasonable number of digital payment transactions with no charges.

D. GS4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. A rocky road for strategic partners

Context:

U.S.A's recent decisions stand in sharp contrast to the first year of the Trump administration when it was actively wooing India as a strategic counterweight to China and because of its rapidly expanding market that was seen as providing great opportunities for American business. The editorial talks about the effects of recent decisions taken by the U.S. on India.

Details:

- In a major foreign policy speech in October 2017, then U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson declared that India and America were “two bookends of stability — on either side of the globe” and that the “emerging Delhi-Washington strategic partnership” was essential to anchor the rules-based world order for the next hundred years.
- Even before Mr. Tillerson's speech India had come to be seen as a pillar of American policy in Asia.
- The term ‘Indo-Pacific region’ appeared prominently in the joint statement issued by Mr. Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the end of the latter's visit to the U.S. in June 2017. Since then, it has come to replace the term ‘Asia-Pacific region’ in American foreign policy jargon.
- In May 2018, the Pentagon changed the name of the U.S. Pacific Command to U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, emphasising not only the strategic linkage between the Indian and Pacific Oceans but

also the geo-political prominence of India in the U.S.'s Asian strategy.

Reverse in course:

The Trump administration seems to have reversed course in recent months. U.S. unilateral actions on three fronts have simultaneously demonstrated what amounts to downgrading India in American strategy.

1 – End to the waiver on import of oil from Iran:

- The announcement that Washington would not renew after May 2 the exemption that it had granted India and seven other countries regarding import of Iranian oil was one sign that American unilateralism had trumped coherent strategic thinking.
- The Iranian share of Indian oil imports stood at 10%.
- While it would not be impossible for India to replace Iranian oil, the American announcement failed to consider the strategic importance of Iran in Indian foreign policy and the damage it could do to India-Iran relations.
- Iran's strategic location and the common concerns of both countries regarding the future of Afghanistan and the threat of terrorism emanating from Pakistan make Tehran an ideal geopolitical ally of New Delhi.
- India is also engaged in building the Chabahar port in southeastern Iran, which could act as the gateway for India to Central Asia, bypassing a hostile Pakistan.
- Moreover, by forcing India to tamely accept the American diktat on Iranian oil, it has torn off the veneer of strategic autonomy that Indian policymakers had long touted as the fundamental creed of Indian foreign policy.

2 - U.S. threat to impose sanctions on India if it buys the S-400 missile defence system from Russia

- India had in October 2018 signed a deal with Russia for procuring S-400 missile defence system from Russia.
- The U.S. has argued that India's purchase of the S-400 systems will violate the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA).
- CAATSA is a U.S. federal law that requires the country to impose sanctions on states entering into major military deals with Russia.
- This puts India in a Catch-22 position.
- If it defies U.S. threats and goes ahead with the purchase, it would subject India to economic sanctions and curtailment of defence and high-tech cooperation with the U.S.
- If it buckles under American pressure and cancels the S-400 deal, it will have major negative implications for India's relations with Russia, its largest arms supplier and a time-tested friend.
- Furthermore, it will make it clear that India is for all practical purposes a lackey of the U.S., thus once again severely damaging its standing and credibility in international circles.

3 – U.S decision to stop access to preferential trade terms to India under the its Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) programme.

- Generalised System of Preferences (GSP), gives developing countries easier access to the U.S. market and lowers U.S. duties on their exports.
- Trump signed off on a presidential decree to that effect alleging, "India has not assured the United States that India will provide equitable and reasonable access to its markets."
- India is the largest beneficiary nation under the GSP scheme, and exported goods worth \$6.35 billion to the U.S. under the preferential regime last year. This is close to 10% of the goods exported by India to the U.S.
- While the Indian reaction to the American decision has been mild so far — the Commerce Ministry termed it unfortunate.

- It is bound to cause resentment in India, especially since U.S. Commerce Secretary had assured the government that benefits would not be cut off until after India's elections, thus allowing the new government time to reflect on the issue.

Conclusion:

- Taken together, these three decisions indicate that Washington is impervious to Indian strategic concerns and economic interests despite its earlier pronouncements that it considers India a valued "strategic partner".
- These decisions are part of a unilateralist syndrome that currently afflicts American foreign policy. Mr. Trump and his advisers, principally National Security Adviser John Bolton and Mr. Pompeo, no longer seem to discriminate between friend and foe when making important policy decisions.
- Such an attitude does not bode well for the future of America's relations with its friends and allies.
- Washington appears to have overlooked the fact that even the indispensable nation needs reliable friends and allies.

Category: ECONOMY

1. The sum and substance of the jobs data

Context:

The report from the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) is out, garnering a lot of attention based on selective reading of tables and spurring partisan debates. This was the first time that the NSSO conducted the Periodic Labour Force Survey, which is an annual survey mapping unemployment to provide a closer trace of unemployment. The earlier five-yearly surveys used to come with a lag of over one or two years, thus reducing the possibility of timely analysis.

Details:

- The staggering increase in the unemployment rate, from 1.7% in 2011-12 to 5.8% in 2017-18 for rural men and from 3.0% to 7.1% for urban men, has generated wide ranging concerns.
- The report presents a more nuanced picture if we are to look beyond the partisan debates to policy implications of the data on employment and unemployment. Three takeaway points from these data are of particular policy relevance.
 1. While the unemployment rate is a frequently used measure of poor performance of the economy, under conditions of rising school and college enrolment, it paints an inaccurate picture.
 2. The reported unemployment rate is dominated by the experience of younger Indians who face higher employment challenges and exhibit greater willingness to wait for the right job than their older peers.
 3. The unemployment challenge is greatest for people with secondary or higher education, and rising education levels inflate unemployment challenges.
- These three conditions, taken together, suggest that part of India's unemployment challenge lies in its success in expanding education while not expanding formal sector jobs.
- Comparison of male employment and unemployment data from the National Sample Survey Office's (NSSO's) 68th round Employment survey conducted in 2011-12 and the new PLFS of 2017-18 illustrates each of these points.
- The unemployment rate is calculated by dividing the number of unemployed by the number in the labour forces, that is, the sum of employed and unemployed. This statistic ignores people who are out of the labour force — students, homemakers and the disabled.

Unemployment rate data:

- As long as the proportion of the population out of the labour force is more or less stable, the unemployment rate is a good indicator of the changes in the employment situation.
- However, India has seen massive changes in proportion of individuals enrolled in an educational institution over the past decade.
- For 15-19-year-old rural men, the proportion primarily engaged in studying increased from 64% to 72% between 2011-12 and 2017-18. As a result, while the proportion of the population aged 15-19 that is unemployed doubled from 3% to 6.9%, the unemployment rate tripled from 9% to 27%.
- Leaving the proportion of population unemployed (numerator) same while the denominator changes by removing students from the labour force can overstate job losses.
- The proportion of the population that is unemployed has increased only slightly for population aged 30 and above but increased substantially for younger men.
- It is important to recognise that in a country dominated by informal sector work, remaining unemployed is possible only for individuals whose families can survive without their immediate contributions.
- The unemployment rate has been traditionally high for men with secondary or higher level of education and this is the segment in which most of the increase in unemployment is located.

Conclusion:

- These observations taken together suggest that the roots of India's present day unemployment challenges lie in its very success.
- Educational expansion affects the unemployment debate by skewing the unemployment statistics and by creating greater competition for well-paid jobs among a rising population of educated youth.
- Rising prosperity allows young graduates to wait for well-paying jobs, creating an army of educated unemployed, before being forced to accept any work, frequently returning to family farms or starting small shops.
- Recognition of rising unemployment as a function of rising education forces us to grapple with different issues than a simple focus on unemployment statistics.
- If public policies such as demonetisation are responsible for rising unemployment, we would see across-the-board increase in unemployment for all age groups. That this phenomenon is located mainly among the young and well educated reflects a challenge that goes well beyond the temporary slowdown facing India post-demonetisation.
- Creating jobs for an increasingly educated workforce and ensuring that the new workers are well equipped to enter the labour force are twin challenges that deserve greatest priority.

Category: EDUCATION**1. Crisis defused – on draft National Education Policy 2019****Context:**

Following an outcry from political leaders in Tamil Nadu, a State that is quite sensitive to any hint of 'Hindi imposition' by the Centre, the draft of the National Education Policy has been revised. The revised draft retains the recommendation to introduce a three-language formula from Class 1, merely having removed the clause stipulating the specific languages that students must choose.

Details:

- The modified draft under the heading 'Flexibility in the choice of languages', has omitted references to the language that students may choose.

- However, the broader recommendation regarding the implementation of a three-language formula remains, something Tamil Nadu, which will not budge from its two-language formula, is averse to.
- The gist of the original sentence in the draft NEP was that students could change one of the three languages of study in Grade 6, provided that in Hindi-speaking States they continued to study Hindi, English and one other Indian language of their choice, and those in non-Hindi-speaking States would study their regional language, besides Hindi and English.
- The revised draft merely says students may change one or more of their three languages in Grade 6 or 7, “so long as they still demonstrate proficiency in three languages (one language at the literature level) in their modular Board examinations some time during secondary school”.

Issue:

- Ever since the Constitution adopted Hindi as the official language, with English also as an official language for 15 years initially, there has been considerable tension between those who favour the indefinite usage of English and those who want to phase it out and give Hindi primacy.
- In Tamil Nadu, it is seen as a creeping imposition of Hindi in subtle and not-so-subtle forms.
- The tension has been managed based on the statesmanship behind Jawaharlal Nehru’s assurance in 1959 that English would be an associate language as long as there are States that desire it.
- One would have thought that with the ascent of coalition politics the instinct to stoke differences based on language would die out. Unfortunately, it keeps coming up, especially in the form of imposing the three-language formula on States.

Conclusion:

- Language is primarily a utilitarian tool. While acquisition of additional tools can indeed be beneficial, compulsory learning should be limited to one’s mother tongue and English as the language that provides access to global knowledge and as a link language within India.
- It is time attempts to force Indians proficient in their mother tongue and English to acquire proficiency in a third are given up.

F. Tidbits

1. Triple talaq Bill will be brought again

- The government will bring the Bill to ban the practice of instant triple talaq once again in Parliament, Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said.
- Triple Talaq is a form of Islamic divorce which has been used by Muslims in India, especially adherents of Hanafi Sunni Islamic schools of jurisprudence.
- The contentious Bill had lapsed as it could not be passed by Parliament and was pending in the Rajya Sabha.
- The Opposition had been opposing provisions of the Bill in the Rajya Sabha, where the government lacked the numbers to ensure its passage.
- Bills that are introduced in the Rajya Sabha and are pending there do not lapse with the dissolution of the Lok Sabha. But Bills passed by the Lok Sabha and pending in the Rajya Sabha lapse.

2. Assess methodology of groundwater recharge: NGT

- The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has constituted a committee to take groundwater samples to assess the methodology used in recharging it.
- The directions came following a plea which alleged that steps undertaken by government agencies were “unscientific”.
- Grievance in the application is that groundwater recharge by the Delhi Jal Board, Delhi Development

Authority, Public Works Department, New Delhi Municipal Council and the South Delhi Municipal Corporation, through rainwater harvesting structures, is not scientific and is resulting in contamination of groundwater,” the Bench observed while noting the allegations in the plea.

- The Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) will be the nodal agency for the compliance and coordination of the orders.
- Earlier, the NGT had imposed a fine of Rs. 5 lakh each on educational institutions in the Capital for failing to install rainwater harvesting systems within the stipulated time.

3. ‘UdChalo’ to give a new lease of life to wounded soldiers

- In a bid to make wounded soldiers, who are now confined to wheelchairs, self-reliant, an initiative ‘UdChalo’ is all set to take off at the Army’s Paraplegic Rehabilitation Centre (PRC) in Punjab’s Mohali.
- UdChalo is a travel portal that caters for the personal travel of the military and paramilitary forces personnel by aggregating defence fares and getting exclusive discounts.
- The PRC has joined hands with UdChalo with an aim to empower the disabled military veterans.
- PRC provides institutionalised care to soldiers, who are wounded in military or insurgency operations and can’t adequately provide for themselves the constant medical care associated with quadriplegia and paraplegia.

G. Prelims Facts

1. Great Grey Owl

- The great grey owl is a very large owl, documented as the world's largest species of owl by length.
- It is distributed across the Northern Hemisphere, and it is the only species in the genus *Strix* found in both Eastern and Western Hemispheres.
- In some areas it is also called Phantom of the North, cinereous owl, spectral owl, Lapland owl, spruce owl, bearded owl, and sooty owl.
- IUCN Conservation status: Least Concerned

2. Global Entrepreneurship Summit

- The Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES) is the preeminent annual gathering that convenes entrepreneurs, investors, and their supporters globally.
- It is organised annually since 2010.
- The ninth edition of the Global Entrepreneurship Summit is all set to roll out in The Hague.
- The Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES) 2019 is being hosted by the governments of the United States of America and the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and is the first edition of the event to be held in the European Union.
- The GES 2017 event in India in Hyderabad hosted more than 1,500 entrepreneurs from around the world, and focussed on the issue of ‘Women First, Prosperity for All’. It was the first edition of the GES to take place in South Asia
- The key focus areas of the summit include the five global challenges surrounding water, agriculture, healthcare, connectivity, and energy.

3. Nipah virus

- Nipah Virus (NiV) infection is a emerging zoonosis that causes a severe disease in both humans and animals. The virus was first identified in Kampung Sungai Nipah in Malaysia and in Singapore in 1998.
- At that time, it was primarily caused in pigs and through them got transferred to the humans.

- As quoted by the World Health Organisation, the natural host of the virus are fruit bats of the Pteropodidae Family, Pteropus genus.
- The spread of the virus is rapid and fatal. The mortality rate with the infected patients is as high as 70%
- Nipah Virus is an airborne transmission infection and can affect those who come in direct contact with contaminated bodies such as pigs or bats carrying the virus.
- Infected Bats shed the virus through the excreta and secretions. Human-to-human transmission has also been documented.
- NiV is also capable of causing disease in pigs and other domestic animals.
- Direct contact with the Pigs is the prime mode of transmission of the virus in humans.
- Human monoclonal antibody, an immunoglobulin is effective in aggravated case has been procured by India.

4. Organisation of Islamic Cooperation

- The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation is an international organization founded in 1969, consisting of 57 member states, with 53 countries being Muslim-majority countries.
- The organisation states that it is "the collective voice of the Muslim world" and works to "safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony".
- The OIC has permanent delegations to the United Nations and the European Union.
- The official languages of the OIC are Arabic, English, and French.

H. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

Q1) Consider the following statements:

1. Sashastra Seema Bal is under the administrative control of Ministry of Defence.
2. It is one of India's Central Armed Police Forces.

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:

Sashastra Seema Bal is currently under the administrative control of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

Q2) Consider the following statements:

1. Core inflation represents the long run trend in the price level.
2. Core inflation does not consider the inflation in food and fuel.

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

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only

- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: c

Explanation:

Core inflation is the change in costs of goods and services, but does not include those from the food and energy sectors. This measure of inflation excludes these items because their prices are much more volatile.

Q3) Consider the following statements:

1. Montreux Record is maintained as part of the List of Ramsar wetlands of international importance.
2. Bhitarkanika Mangroves and Chilika lake are listed under Montreux Record.

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 Montreux Record is a register of wetland sites on the List of Ramsar wetlands of international importance where changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring, or are likely to occur as a result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference. Loktak Lake and Keoladeo National Park are listed under Montreux Record.

Q4) Solar Radiation Management is a process through which:

1. The reflectivity of the Earth's atmosphere is increased.
2. The efficiency of Solar Panels is increased.

Choose the correct option:

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

Answer: a

Explanation:

Solar Radiation Management, also popularly known as Solar Geo-Engineering is a process through which the reflectivity (albedo) of the Earth's atmosphere or surface is increased, in an attempt to offset some of the effects of GHG-induced climate change. The technique mimics big volcanic eruptions that can cool the Earth by masking the sun with a veil of ash or similar other things.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. There is neither credible evidence of a jobs crisis in India, nor of its absence. Discuss the need for a statistical system to provide precise and real time estimates of several such critical indicators. (15 Marks, 250 Words)
2. Critically comment on the impact of urbanization on the socio-economic situation in India. (15 Marks, 250 Words)