

13 June 2019: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

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B. GS2 Related

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Free ride scheme for women to be reality within 2-3 months: CM

Context:

- Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said that the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation had submitted a concrete proposal for the implementation of the AAP government's 'free metro travel for women' scheme.
- He had announced that the Delhi government intended to subsidise travel in public transport for women commuters in the Capital.
- The Delhi government had asked the DMRC to submit a proposal regarding the implementation of

the scheme.

Details:

- The CM said that the DMRC has submitted a concrete proposal on the scheme. Two options have been proposed by them for implementation of the scheme.
- One is a long-term plan that will take one year to implement and will involve changing of the DMRC's software, tokens and cards. However, the second option would be a temporary arrangement.
- As per the second model, women shall be able to procure tokens at ticket windows and automatic ticket vending machines (ATVMs) by simply sharing their destination. There will be a separate entry gate for women, but their exit gates will remain common.
- The DMRC said it expects a 50% increase in women ridership after the rollout of the scheme, which means 45-50% of the riders will be women.

Merits of the proposal:

- The proposal not only encourages women to use public transport more, but also allows them to occupy public spaces more and exercise their right to work and commute much more freely.
- A move like this could increase productivity and women's participation in the economy.
- This move could make the Delhi metro (a state-of-the-art, air-conditioned public mode of transport) accessible to working-class women for whom the metro has always been an aspirational vehicle.
- Acknowledging large gender pay gaps, how women rampantly indulge in unpaid labour, or how public spaces are visibly gendered (there is a near absence of women on the streets of Delhi after a particular time), rules out the argument that this move would reinforce the idea that women are the 'weaker sex'.

Conclusion:

- The proposal would need the approval of the Fare Fixation Committee.
- The Delhi government believes that the scheme can be implemented in the next 2-3 months.

2. 'Enforcement of child labour laws lacking'

Context:

A top official of the Union Labour and Employment Ministry drew attention to the fact that implementation of the laws at the State and district levels has been lacking which is reflected through the continuing presence of child labour in the country – on World Day Against Child Labour, celebrated on the 12th of June every year.

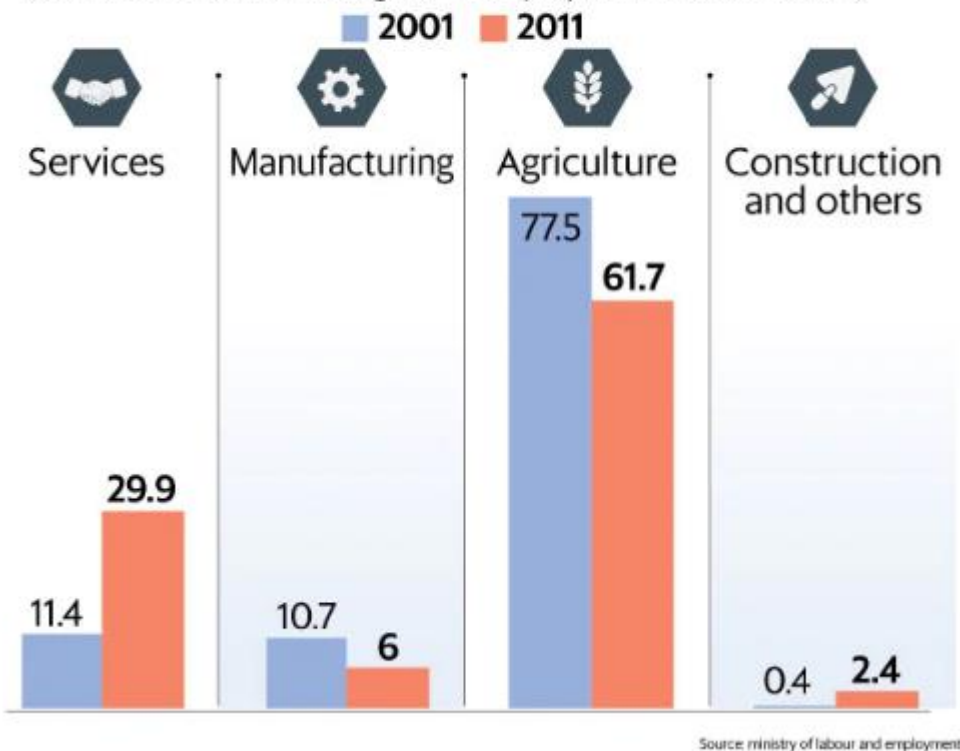
Statistics:

- The number of children engaged in labour had come down to 10.1 million, or 1.01 crore, according to the 2011 Census, from 1.26 crore in the 2001 census.
- Also, there are significant disparities across states.
- Across India in 2011, 3.9% of children under the age of 14 were engaged in child labour. The proportion was, however, much higher in some states such as Nagaland (13.2 %), Himachal Pradesh (10.3%) and Sikkim (8.5%).
- Nationally, the percentage of working children fell from 5% in 2001 to 3.9% in 2011 but the bigger change occurred in the nature of employment.
- India's children used to almost entirely work on farms, but are now moving to non-farm jobs - especially in the services sector.

- Between 2001 and 2011, the share of children engaged in non-farm work doubled to 40%.
- Child labour, though, is not a problem unique to India. According to data from the World Bank, there are 168 million children employed across the world.
- India contributes 6% of these workers, but in terms of proportion, it has the lowest rates of child labour in South Asia.

Services overtakes manufacturing as the largest non-farm child employer

(% of children under the age of 14 employed in various sectors)



Steps taken to prevent Child Labour:

- The Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act.
- The PENCIL [Platform for Effective Enforcement of No Child Labour] portal has been launched.
- In 2016, it raised the minimum age for work to 14 years but retained caveats that allowed younger children from underprivileged families to work in family-based enterprises.
- In 2017, India ratified conventions prescribing minimum age for employment (14 years in developing countries) and employment in hazardous conditions (18 years).
- The government also seeks to address child labour through the National Child Labour Project which identifies and rehabilitates child workers. In 2017-18, around 50,000 child workers were rescued or rehabilitated from child labour—but it is still a small fraction of the overall child labour force.

Issues:

- The definitions of what constitutes Child Labour are prone to exploitation with employers hiring child workers under the guise of being related to them and ensuring child labour is prevalent across the country.
- The Child Labour Act also allows states to crack down on child labour—but is used to mixed effect across the country.
- According to UNICEF, child labour in India has merely shifted from factories to employee homes and children are still engaged in harmful industries such as bidi production and fireworks production.

- This shift to informal home-based sectors makes it harder to detect child labour.
- Some states like Rajasthan, Maharashtra and West Bengal have launched relatively fewer prosecutions despite their larger proportions of child labour.

Way forward:

- Noting that parents, even those from poorer backgrounds, were beginning to want their children to go to school, particularly private schools, the change in mind-set needs to be encashed.
- Effective implementation of the legislations in place must be ensured at the delivery points, at the district and State levels.
- Globally, the International Labour Organization and UNICEF recommend a multi-pronged strategy to tackle child employment that involves better enforcement of laws, increasing awareness and strengthening education systems—India will need to do the same.

3. Triple talaq Bill to be sent to Parliament again

Context:

The Union Cabinet has approved the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2019, paving the way for the legislation to be introduced in the upcoming session of Parliament.

Background:

- The Supreme Court in August 2017 ruled that the practice of divorce through triple talaq among Muslims was “void” and “illegal”.
- The NDA Government formulated a bill called The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2017 and introduced it in the Parliament which was passed in December 2017 by the Lok Sabha.
- The bill makes instant triple talaq (talaq-e-biddah) in any form — spoken, in writing or by electronic means such as email, SMS and WhatsApp illegal and void, with up to three years in jail for the husband.
- MPs from RJD, AIMIM, BJD, AIADMK and IUML opposed the bill, calling it arbitrary in nature and a faulty proposal, while Congress supported the Bill tabled in the Lok Sabha by law minister.
- The bill faced stiff resistance in the Rajya Sabha.
- Several Opposition lawmakers called for it to be sent to a select committee for close scrutiny.
- A Bill to ban the practice of talaq-e-biddat was passed by Lok Sabha and was pending Rajya Sabha’s nod.
- Therefore the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Ordinance, according to which divorcing through instant triple talaq would be illegal, void and would attract a jail term of three years for the husband was issued.
- The Bill introduced in Parliament in 2018 had lapsed with the dissolution of the 16th Lok Sabha.

Details:

- The Bill, which would replace the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Second Ordinance, 2019, once passed, would put a curb on the practice of talaq-e-biddat, or instant triple talaq.
- The Bill would ensure gender equality and gender justice to Muslim women.
- The Bill would also help in protecting the rights of married Muslim women and prevent divorce by practice of ‘talaq-e-biddat’ by their husbands.
- The Bill declares the practice of triple talaq void and illegal, making it punishable by three years in jail and a fine.
- It also provides for payment of subsistence allowance to married Muslim women and dependent

4. Cabinet okays Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Teachers' Cadre) Bill

Context:

The Union Cabinet has approved the introduction of the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Teachers' Cadre) Bill in the upcoming session of Parliament, which will allow filling up of more than 7,000 existing vacancies by direct recruitment in accordance with the new quota system.

Issue:

- This had been a long-standing demand of Dalit and Adivasi activists and political parties.
- They had complained that the “13-point roster system” considering each department as a separate unit, which was mandated by a controversial Allahabad High Court judgement in April 2018 and upheld by the Supreme Court in January 2019, effectively made reservations negligible.

Details:

- The legislation would provide for 10% reservation for economically weaker sections (EWS) and restore an older system of reservation which would allow full representation of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes.
- The Bill will replace an ordinance approved by Cabinet in March, which restored the earlier “200-point roster system” considering the university or college as a single unit for the purpose of faculty reservations.
- The 200-point roster system makes the university or other educational institution the unit for reservation of posts in direct recruitment in teachers’ cadre, not the department.
- The new Bill will also pave the way for implementation of the 103rd Constitutional Amendment passed by Parliament in January, mandating a 10% quota in jobs and educational institutions to economically backward sections in the general category. This is over and above the older reservations for SC, ST and OBC communities.
- The new Bill is expected to improve the teaching standards in the higher educational institutions by attracting all eligible talented candidates belonging to SCs/STs/SEBCs/EWS” categories.

5. Indian Medical Council Amendment Bill cleared

Context:

The Cabinet has approved the Indian Medical Council (Amendment Bill), 2019, and the Homoeopathy Central Council (Amendment Bill), 2019, both of which had lapsed in the 16th Lok Sabha session. Both the Bills are now set to be reintroduced in the upcoming Parliament session beginning next week.

Medical Council of India:

- The Medical Council of India (MCI) is a statutory body with the responsibility of establishing and maintaining high standards of medical education and recognition of medical qualifications in India.
- It registers doctors to practice in India, in order to protect and promote the health and safety of the public by ensuring proper standards in the practice of medicine.

Background:

- The Ministry of Health had come across certain arbitrary action by Medical Council of India (MCI) in disregard to the provisions of the IMC Act and regulations made thereunder.

- Further, the Oversight Committee constituted by the Supreme Court to oversee the functioning of MCI had also cited instances of non-compliance of their instructions and subsequently, all members of the Oversight Committee tendered their resignation.
- In view of these developments, and to put an alternative mechanism in place of MCI so as to bring transparency, accountability and quality in the governance of medical education in the country, it was decided to supersede the MCI through the Indian Medical Council (Amendment) Ordinance, 2018 promulgated on September 26 and entrust its affairs to a Board of Governors consisting of eminent doctors.
- Subsequently, a replacement bill of the said ordinance namely, the Indian Medical Council (Amendment) Bill, 2018 was introduced in the Lok Sabha on December 2018 and passed on December 31 by the House.
- However, the Bill could not be taken up for consideration in the Rajya Sabha.

Details:

- The Indian Medical Council (Amendment Bill), 2019, is aimed at bringing in transparency, accountability and quality in the governance of medical education in the country and would provide for supersession of the Medical Council of India (MCI) for a period of two years from August 26, 2018.
- During this period, the Board of Governors shall exercise the powers and functions of the MCI as assigned under the IMC Act, 1956.
- The number of members in the Board of Governors will be increased from existing 7 to 12.

Homoeopathy Central Council (Amendment Bill), 2019:

- The Homoeopathy Central Council (Amendment Bill), 2019, meanwhile, seeks to extend the period for reconstitution of the Central Council from an existing period of one year to two years so that the tenure of the Board of Governors may be extended for a further period of one year with effect from May 17, 2019.
- This will help the Central Council of Homoeopathy in exercising the powers and performing the functions of the Council.
- The Bill will replace the Homoeopathy Central Council (Amendment) Ordinance, 2019 and extend the tenure of Government for another one year.
- The affairs of the Central Homoeopathy Council have been entrusted to a Board of Governors consisting of eminent and qualified Homoeopathy Doctors and eminent administrators.
- Till such time the council is reconstituted. The tenure has been extended since the council could not be reconstituted within one year due to the non-updation of state registers of Homoeopathy and coincidence of general elections.

Bill to amend the Dentists Act, 1948:

- In an effort to make the Dental Council of India more effective, the Union Cabinet also approved the introduction of a Bill to amend the Dentists Act, 1948.
- The Bill would help restructure the Dental Councils and the representation of Central government members and elected members would no longer be made mandatory in the Dental Councils.

6. Cabinet nod for Aadhaar as ID proof at banks, telcos

Context:

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved a Bill to allow voluntary submission of Aadhaar as identity proof for use by private entities such as banks and telecom companies.

Details:

- ‘The Aadhaar and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2019’, which will replace an ordinance, also gives a child an option to exit from Aadhaar on attaining 18 years of age.
- The amendments proposed are the same as those contained in the Ordinance promulgated by the President in March 2019.
- The Bill proposes deletion of section 57 of the Aadhaar Act that allows use of Aadhaar by private entities, while also providing for civil penalties for violation of Aadhaar.
- The decision would enable UIDAI to have a more robust mechanism to serve the public interest and restrain the misuse of Aadhaar.
- Subsequent to this amendment, no individual would be compelled to provide proof of possession of Aadhaar number or undergo authentication for the purpose of establishing his identity unless it is so provided by a law made by Parliament.
- For the convenience of general public in opening of bank accounts, the proposed amendments would allow the use of Aadhaar number for authentication on voluntary basis as acceptable KYC document under the Telegraph Act, 1885, and the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002.

C. GS3 Related

Category: ECONOMY**1. Easy money can't revive economy: SBI report****Context:**

State Bank economists have opined that an easy monetary policy will be ineffective to push the sagging growth engine and that what is needed is more direct and quicker fiscal measures. They opine that the Indian financial system is in need for some serious repair and the government should use the forthcoming budget for the same.

Issue:

- Growth plummeted to a nearly five-year low at 5.8% for the March quarter, pulling down the full-year GDP for FY19 to a low 6.8%.
- Questions have also been asked about the growth numbers by Former Chief Economic Advisor Arvind Subramaniam, who said the growth numbers during the Modi government's first innings till FY17 had been inflated by a whopping 2.5 percentage points.
- The ongoing crisis in the non-banking finance companies, which constitute up to a fifth of the overall lending in the economy, according to some watchers, needs immediate attention to revive the fortunes of the financial system.

Details:

- Support from the monetary policy — the RBI cut its key rates for the third time in 2019 and also changed the policy stance to accommodative to a nine-year low — is most welcome, the report said.
- The report underlines the need for help on the fiscal front.
- The note warned there were some limiting factors like the Food Corporation's massive borrowings from the National Small Savings Funds, which is already in excess of Rs.2 lakh crore or 1 percent of GDP.

Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. DRDO tests tech demonstrator

Context:

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) conducted the maiden test of an indigenously developed Hypersonic Technology Demonstrator Vehicle (HSTDV) along with several technologies.

Details:

- The DRDO launched a technology demonstrator vehicle to prove a number of critical technologies for futuristic missions from Dr Abdul Kalam Island off the coast of Odisha.
- The Ministry of Defence (MoD) made an announcement without identifying what the technology demonstrator was or if it met the objectives.

Hypersonic Technology Demonstrator Vehicle (HSTDV):

- Former DRDO Chief V.K. Saraswat had said in 2008, as the Chief Controller, R and D (Missiles and Strategic Systems), that through the HSTDV project the idea was to demonstrate the performance of a scram-jet engine at an altitude of 15 km to 20 km.
- Under the HSTDV programme, a demonstrator flight vehicle has been conceptualised to demonstrate the scramjet technology for a short duration of about 20 seconds.
- Once it is achieved successfully, India will join another select club of countries having such technology.
- Apart from being used as a vehicle for hypersonic and long-range cruise missiles, the HSTDV is a dual-use technology that will have multiple civilian applications including the launching of small satellites at low cost.
- The HSTDV cruise vehicle is mounted on a solid rocket motor, which will take it to a required altitude, and once it attains certain Mach numbers for speed, the cruise vehicle will be ejected out of the launch vehicle. Subsequently, the scramjet engine will be ignited automatically.
- In scram-jet technology, combustion of fuel takes place in a chamber in the missile at supersonic speeds.
- This is different from a ram jet system where the system collects the air it needs from the atmosphere during the flight at subsonic speeds and the propellants burn in the combustion chamber.

D. GS4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Starting at three

Editorial Analysis:

- India's far-sighted Right to Education Act is making slow progress in mainstreaming equity, in the absence of a strong political commitment in several States.

Opinions voiced over the draft National Education Policy:

- Experts have opined that the recent proposal to extend its scope to younger children through early childhood education is, however, wholly positive.
- The move suggested in the draft National Education Policy to put children three years and older in a stimulating nursery environment is a welcome logical measure.
- The pedagogical view is that the pre-school phase is crucial to stimulate a child's curiosity and help her prepare for schooling at age six.
- The NEP proposal to infuse the existing child development schemes, which are primarily nutrition-oriented, with a learning component is in line with this thinking on holistic development.
- Furthermore, an extension of the RTE would be a big step forward, but in the absence of measures that will deepen equity, the law cannot be transformative.

What should the Centre do?

- The Centre has to guarantee that in its totality, the Right to Education will encompass all schools bar those catering to minorities.
- This is necessary to achieve its moral goal of bringing quality schooling to all in the 6-14 age group; adding the early childhood section, now under the Ministry of Women and Child Development, will then be meaningful.
- Having said this, unfortunately, the evidence indicates that only 12.7% schools comply with the law's requirements, and at the pace seen since RTE became law in 2010, experts opine that it will take decades to achieve full coverage.
- Next, giving all children aged three and above the right to an education can become a reality only if the state is willing to live up to its promise of devoting more financial resources.
- An expenditure of 6% of GDP on education could have transformed the sector, given the large wealth generated since economic liberalisation. However, unfortunately, far less is spent — for instance, 2.7% in 2017-18.
- Experts opine that the lost years have cost millions a brighter future, but the draft NEP provides an opportunity to make amends.

Concluding Remarks: The Way Forward

- It is important to note that bringing more children into the formal stream needs a well-thought-out road map.
- The Centre has to play a leadership role to ensure that States, some of which have done a poor job of implementing the RTE Act, are persuaded to implement urgent reform.
- Next, the NEP's proposal to have well-designed school complexes, where pre-primary to secondary classes will be available, is in itself an ambitious goal that will require mission-mode implementation.
- Shortcomings in anganwadi centres must be addressed in the expansion plan.
- Further, state governments will have to fill teacher vacancies and ensure that the training of recruits is aligned to scientific, child-oriented teaching methods.
- Lastly, education reform is vital to prepare for a future in which cutting-edge skills will be necessary for continued economic progress.
- Changes to the RTE Act that will prepare all children for a more productive schooling phase can help make India's educational system morally fair and more egalitarian.

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Values to live by

What's in the news?

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Maldivian President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih recently held wide-ranging talks as the two countries signed six agreements to strengthen bilateral ties in a number of key areas including defence and maritime.
- PM Modi arrived in the Indian Ocean archipelago on his first foreign visit after re-election as Prime Minister to strengthen the bilateral ties, reflecting the importance India attaches to its 'Neighbourhood First' policy.

A Brief Note on the Agreements signed:

- The first Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was for cooperation in the fields of hydrography. Another was on health.
- The other agreements included on the establishment of passenger and cargo services by sea, cooperation in customs capacity building between the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs of India and the Maldives Customs Service.
- An MoU was also signed between the National Centre for Good Governance, Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances and Maldives Civil Service Commission on Training and Capacity Building Programme for Maldivian civil servants.
- **A technical agreement on sharing white shipping information between the Indian Navy and the Maldives National Defence Force was also signed.**
- Prime Minister Modi and President Solih held warm discussions, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said.
- A coastal surveillance radar system and a composite training centre for the Maldives defence forces were jointly inaugurated by the two leaders.
- Further, India has agreed on the construction of a Friday Mosque in the southern part of the Maldives where an urban development centre is being built.
- **The two countries have also agreed to start a ferry service between Kochi and the Maldives.**
- Prime Minister Modi said that the launch of RuPay Card in the Maldives will give a boost to tourism in the island nation.
- He said that maritime and defence ties are a top priority and the radar system will boost maritime security. India is committed to help the Maldives in every way possible, he added.

Editorial Analysis:

- Experts have opined that during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Male, his first trip abroad after his re-election, he delivered a speech rich in meaningful metaphors to the Maldivian Parliament.

A Note on the Prime Minister's Speech:

- As a matter of fact, he referred to the ties that bind India to the Maldives, and which could be extended to other maritime neighbours in the Indian Ocean as well.
- Pointing out that the waves that wash the Indian shores are the same as those that reach the shores of the Maldivian island chain, Mr. Modi called them "messengers" of peace, friendship and trust that exist between the two countries.
- Further, going beyond geographical proximity, the speech spelt out common interests in maritime cooperation, democracy, pluralism, climate change, and in battling the twin scourges of terrorism and radicalisation.
- The agreements announced during the visit followed these themes as well:
 - including MoUs on hydrography cooperation and sharing 'white shipping' information, and India's decision to fund a conservation project for Male's Friday Mosque built with coral in 1658.
 - The Prime Minister expressed a resolve for the common fight against terrorism and

radicalisation, which he called the “**litmus test for today’s leadership**”, and said “state sponsorship of terrorism” remains the biggest threat to all humanity today.

- On his next stop, for a few hours in Colombo, he spelt out the same message, making a detour after landing to visit the St. Anthony’s Shrine in Kochchikade, one of the sites of the Easter Sunday terror attacks that left more than 250 dead.
- Modi’s twin visits underlined several initiatives that he had promoted in his first tenure, including his commitment to “Neighbourhood First” and “Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR)” for the Indian Ocean Region.

Concluding Remarks:

- Going forward, it is necessary to ensure that these themes receive constant attention through steady communication, and that relations are not allowed to fray as they did in the first few years of that tenure.
- The next imperative is the delivery of all projects that India has committed to, on time and within the budgets estimated, an area where India’s reputation has suffered in the past.
- Finally, Mr. Modi chose to speak in Male about two important liberal values as common causes: democracy, which he called the Maldives a “glowing example of”, and inclusiveness.
- He repeated his motto, Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas aur Sabka Vishwas (together with all, for the development of all and with the trust of all), and his outreach to the mosque in the Maldives and the church in Sri Lanka reinforced the words.
- **Finally, these words must be buttressed by the power of example, as India’s neighbours will see whether the same values that India hopes to see in its neighbourhood are implemented within the country.**

2. Navigations in Bishkek

Editorial Analysis:

- Experts opine that at the 19th Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, India will have to navigate between two contradictory imperatives.

India- Navigating between contradictory imperatives:

- While on the one hand, India must act as a willing partner of regional cooperation led by China and Russia, on the other it must avoid being seen as a part of the ‘anti-American gang’.
- It could also be seen as a paradox that India wants to fight against terrorism through a body that includes states that pose the biggest threats to Indian security.

1. Trade and terrorism:

- In Bishkek, Russia and Central Asian countries are likely to express “broad support” for China in its escalating tariff fight against the U.S.
- India is equally concerned about this trade war, but it is unclear whether it will join the others in slamming U.S. protectionism.
- New Delhi is seemingly confident of dealing with the U.S. without necessarily supporting China.
- It is important to note that for Chinese President Xi Jinping, whipping up anti-Americanism serves to stave off mounting opposition against his anti-corruption campaign and concentration of power.
- It is also notable that **all SCO members barring India are enthusiastic supporters of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).**
- Experts opine that the summit is likely to have a muted agenda.
- SCO Secretary General Vladimir Norov has hinted at adopting documents to deepen multilateral

cooperation and discussing non-conventional issues such as the fight against drug trafficking, cooperation in IT, environmental protection and healthcare.

- **Further, terrorism is likely to be approached from the angle of improving the situation in Afghanistan and not necessarily of curbing the terrorist elements emanating from Pakistan.**
- China is sure to offer its experiences of dealing with counterterrorism, and the deradicalisation measures it has taken in Xinjiang.
- It is also important to note that China's achievement in expanding its high-speed rail network to restive Xinjiang comes with enormous economic and security implications for Eurasia.
- China has also enhanced its military projection capabilities to meet any potential crises beyond its western frontiers.
- **Kyrgyzstan is the latest to create an international near-border trade centre in Alai district bordering China.**
- Experts opine that if the regional countries switch to adopting the Chinese railway track gauge of 1,435 mm, then China will be successful in uniting Eurasia to challenge a united Europe.
- As the situation unfolds, China and Russia are adopting a new era of global strategic partnership. Where India fits in is the question.

On the sidelines:

a. India- China:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi's meeting with President Xi on the sidelines of the summit will be critical, especially as Mr. Modi is now being guided by his new External Affairs Minister.
- This meeting also comes after China's decision to withdraw its technical hold on listing Jaish-e-Mohammad chief Masood Azhar as a global terrorist at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).
- The key concern for the two leaders is the impact of the U.S.-China trade war, but judging from the trends, both sides seem to be gearing up for a big settlement of pending bilateral issues.

b. India- Russia:

- Modi's meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin is important to save the S-400 contract deal against Washington's mounting threat to act under CAATSA.
- It is also important to note that India and Russia have an ambitious economic agenda drawn up for 2019, and Mr. Putin might reiterate his invitation to Mr. Modi to be the chief guest at the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok in September, 2019.
- It would be a good opportunity for India to explore Russia's Far East region not just for developing economic cooperation but also for exploring the prospects of transferring skilled labourers to offset Chinese demographic threats in the region.
- **Russia is also keen that India joins the Arctic: Territory of Dialogue Forum.**
- Experts opine that India seems committed to work within the SCO to develop a 'cooperative and sustainable security' framework, to make the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure more effective, and participate in efforts to bring about stability in Afghanistan.
- Even though the regional aspirations of Central Asian countries contradict India's goals, these countries back India's proposal for a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism.
- Modi is certain to bring up India's resolve to fight terrorism by drawing the SCO's attention to the attacks in Pulwama and Sri Lanka.
- However, China would not like India to use the SCO to name and shame Pakistan.
- India may stick to its position on BRI, but accelerating progress on the International North-South Transport Corridor, the Chabahar Port, the Ashgabat Agreement and the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway should be very much on the cards.

c. A Look at the Pakistan policy:

- The India-Pakistan stalemate endures but the environment has changed a little since India's air strikes in Balakot.
- Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has been less belligerent, but whether the Pakistani military is taking tougher measures to curb anti-India terror groups is not known.
- Khan will have to demonstrate clearly if he wants Mr. Modi to give diplomacy a chance should they meet on the margins of the SCO meet.
- **Modi might chart a new policy course in favour of normalising ties, especially since India has scored a point with Masood Azhar being designated as a global terrorist at the UNSC.**
- Further, it is also important to note that Pakistan places high hopes on the SCO to regulate key regional security issues (Afghanistan and Kashmir) even though the SCO discourages bilateral disputes to be raised.
- Its other agenda would be to sell the Gwadar Port as a potential passage to landlocked Central Asian states, besides promoting the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor for regional economic integration and security cooperation.

Concluding Remarks:

- To be sure, none of the institutional-level measures including the joint SCO military exercises have so far entailed any satisfactory results in jointly fighting against terrorism.
- Nevertheless, the SCO is relevant for India to garner support for reforms of the UNSC to make the latter more representative and effective.
- India has been lending support to the member countries' candidatures for non-permanent membership of the UNSC for a long time.

3. Trump keeps India on tenterhooks

Note to the Students:

This editorial analysis is taken from the Hindu BusinessLine, published on the 13th of June, 2019.

Editorial Analysis:

Importance of the upcoming G20 Summit:

- It is important to note that the G20 Summit, to be held in Osaka, Japan on June 28-29, 2019 brings together leaders from the world's developed and rising economies.
- The Summit will be an important occasion for Prime Minister Modi to meet Presidents Trump, Xi Jinping and Putin, after his decisive electoral victory.

The impact of President Trump:

- President Trump has shaken up the world order and given new shape to global power equations.
- The US now has a leader, who is determined to significantly change the strategic, political, economic, cultural and sociological norms, which have shaped international relations, in the post World War II era.
- It may be simplistic to characterise President Trump as a bigoted racist, because he called for a ban on visas for immigrants from some Muslim countries. However, it is important to note that he enjoys a personal rapport with rulers of countries like Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Egypt.
- His son-in-law, Jarred Kushner, evidently shapes his views of the Islamic world. **Kushner has strong emotional ties with Israel. He moulds Trump's hard line towards Iran.**
- Trump's economic policies have led to serious erosion of the US's commitment to globalisation.

They have been marked by unilateral trade sanctions on China and even friends and allies.

- **Interestingly, European countries also appear to be moving towards an era of increasing religious, cultural and ethnic conservatism, especially on issues of immigration.**

Course of Action PM Modi would need to take:

- PM Modi will move deftly in pursuing India's strategic interests. He will, however, find that while Trump may wish to work harmoniously with Putin's Russia, his efforts to do so are becoming increasingly difficult.
- There are strong, bipartisan, anti-Russian sentiments in both Houses of the US Congress.
- US Congressional legislation mandates the imposition of financial/banking sanctions on countries buying new weapons systems from Russia.
- The former Defence Secretary, General Mattis, had assured India that Congressional sanctions would be waived for its purchase of S 400 Air Defence Missiles from Russia.
- **The Trump Administration, however, now maintains that sanctions on purchases of all Russian weapons systems will remain.**
- It is important to note that this US policy has serious implications for our national security.
- New Delhi plans major purchases and manufacture of defence equipment from Russia, including missiles, frigates, submarines, fighter aircraft, helicopters, automatic rifles and tanks.
- The US cannot, on the one hand, categorise us as "strategic partner" in the Indo-Pacific, while undermining our defence preparedness, by sanctions against our preferred defence purchases, on the other.
- Currently, India is widening its options, by increasing defence cooperation with countries like France and Israel.
- However, India would have to devise carefully crafted financial and other measures, so that unilateral American sanctions do not compromise either her defence preparedness or her long-standing defence partnership with Russia, which has stood by her, in difficult times.

The China factor:

- The Americans have belatedly realised the serious damage that they have inflicted on themselves, because of overly liberal transfers of technology, for the past three decades, to China.
- President Trump is now determined to ensure that China will not secure a lead over the US, in cyberspace and communications.

(a) 5G Networks:

- The most serious differences between the US and China are now arising from competition, over which country dominates cyberspace worldwide, on 5G networks.
- The US realises that it would lose the battle for global dominance of cyberspace if China's Huawei wins the battle against Apple, while ensuring that Chinese technology giants like Alibaba, Bytedance, Baidu and Didi, prevail over their American counterparts, like Amazon, Facebook, Google and Uber.
- Thanks to liberal transfers of technology from the US, **Huawei is a formidable organisation internationally.** It leads the world in 5G-technology today. Its revenues reached \$107 billion last year (2018).
- The US Government has banned Huawei and cautioned the world about the hazards of technological, industrial and data thefts, which Huawei poses.
- Experts opine that President Trump has to now prevail upon the world, to back the US, in this battle. He has called on US friends, allies and partners across the globe, to reject the offers of Huawei and even ban, or drastically restrict, Huawei's activities.
- It is important to note that given Trump's propensity for unconventional and unilateral actions, these countries will have to carefully consider the proposals he makes.

- **Members of the European Union are presently keeping an open mind on American calls to reject Huawei sponsored 5G technology.**
- Currently, Canada has an open mind, while Australia and New Zealand, heavily dependent on American intelligence inputs, have rejected Huawei's 5G offers.
- Having said this, while the UK would appear to be leaning on the side of rejecting Huawei, Germany and other European powers like Italy, still appear to have an open mind.

(b) A situation developing countries face:

- Developing countries, including those in India's neighbourhood, will find it difficult to overlook the cost advantages that turning to Huawei provides.
- India would have to assess the implications of its South Asian neighbours like Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka turning to China for 5G.
- Interestingly, Vietnam rejected Huawei 4G services; it has successfully completed trial of a 5G broadcast station. Hanoi reportedly prefers to operate, if possible, its 5G networks by its own Viettel mobile carrier, and not Huawei.
- It is important to note that Chinese President Xi Jinping signed an agreement with Russian President Vladimir Putin on June 5, 2019 in Moscow, for "the development of 5G technologies and the pilot launch of fifth generation networks in 2019-2020". Huawei's current chairman, Guo Ping, added that he was "very happy" with the agreement, "in an area of strategic importance like 5G".
- Given this development, **it is entirely possible and indeed likely, that Huawei will be the preferred choice for 5G networks across Central Asia, together with Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan.**

Concluding Remarks:

- The Telecom Minister, Ravi Shankar Prasad, recently announced that 5G trials would commence in India, "within the next 100 days".
- He said that the next spectrum auctions, which will include 5G airwaves, would also be held this year (2019).
- He indicated that security concerns would naturally be kept in mind, while arriving at any decision on the future 5G networks.
- In conclusion, New Delhi will have to carefully weigh the pros and cons of any decisions it takes on this crucial, but highly complex, issue.
- We will have to move very carefully on any decision on this issue.
- Many could, however, well ask that given US efforts to limit our options on issues of vital national security interest like weapons acquisitions, should we allow the Trump Administration and US Congress to believe that they can also exercise coercive vetoes, on issues involving the future of our vital communications systems? This is an important question which needs to be addressed.

F. Tidbits

1. NFR saves big through solar energy

- The sun has helped the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) save big on energy expenditure without having to spend on installing solar panels.
- The shift to solar energy at railway stations, level crossings, barracks, and other set-ups has coincided with the NFR's push for electrification of 6,242 km of its tracks.
- The NFR had during the 2018-19 fiscal commissioned solar panels leading to a saving of Rs.1.88 crore.
- This was after paying two executing agencies — one from New Delhi and the other from Hyderabad — for the solar energy at rates fixed by them.

- It has been a win-win deal for NFR and the agencies which set up the solar panels and solar plants free of cost.
- The assets will belong to Northeast Frontier Railway after 25 years.

2. Navy hosts information sharing workshop

- The Indian Navy is hosting a maritime information sharing workshop under the aegis of the Information Fusion Centre — Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) at Gurugram.
- Over 41 delegates from 29 countries of the IOR are participating in the event.
- The workshop aims to acquaint participants about IFC-IOR and its information sharing mechanisms and promote sharing of best practices in this field.
- This aims to yield better response to the myriad security and safety challenges that IOR faces.
- Issues such as maritime terrorism, piracy, human and drug trafficking, humanitarian assistance as well as disaster relief and the legal perspective of combating these challenges would be looked into.
- The IFC-IOR was inaugurated in December last year. The centre has thus far established linkages with more than 16 countries and 13 international maritime security agencies.

3. Survey reveals 86% of Internet users fall victim to fake news

- 86% of Internet users have been duped by fake news, most of it spread on Facebook, according to a global survey.
- Respondents said they want both governments and social media companies to crack down on these activities, which are contributing to a growing distrust of the Internet as well as negatively impacting economies and political discourse.
- The U.S. took the lion's share of the blame for spreading fake news, followed by Russia and China.
- It also revealed widespread distrust of social media firms and growing concerns over privacy and biases baked into algorithms used by Internet companies.
- The poll, which relied on both in-person and online interviews was conducted between December 2018 and February 2019 on behalf of the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI).

4. How much plastic is in your diet?

- People worldwide could be ingesting 5 g of microscopic plastic particles every week, equivalent in weight to a credit card, researchers have found.
- Coming mostly from tap and especially bottled water, nearly invisible bits of polymer were also found in shellfish, beer and salt, scientists from the University of Newcastle reported.
- Another study calculated that the average American eats and drinks in about 45,000 plastics particles smaller than 130 microns annually, while breathing in roughly the same number.
- In the last two decades, the world has produced as much plastic as during the rest of history, and the industry is set to grow by 4% a year until 2025.
- More than 75% of all plastics winds up as waste. A third of that some 100 million tonnes is dumped or leaches into Nature, polluting land, rivers and the sea.
- On current trends, the ocean will contain one metric tonne of plastic for every three metric tonnes of fish by 2025.

G. Prelims Facts

Nothing here for today!!!

H. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Duty of a Pro-tem Speaker is to administer the oath of office to new members of the house.
2. The pro-tem speaker also has same powers, privileges as that of the Speaker.

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

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

- Pro-tem Speaker is the temporary speaker who presides over the first meeting after the election.
- The process by which the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker are selected by members of the Parliament is held under the Pro-tem Speaker.
- The president/governor will administer the oath of the office for the pro-tem speaker.
- Duty of a Pro-tem Speaker is to administer the oath of office to new members of the house. He also enables the House to elect the new Speaker.
- The pro-tem speaker also has same powers, privileges as that of the Speaker.
- Once the new Speaker is elected, the office of the pro tem speaker ceases to exist. He also administers the floor test.

Q2. Consider the following statements:

1. Cost Push Inflation occurs when the general prices of the commodities decrease.
2. Demand pull inflation occurs as a result of mismatch in demand.

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

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

Answer: b

Explanation:

Cost Push Inflation occurs when the general prices of the commodities increase as a result of increase in production costs. Demand pull inflation occurs as a result of mismatch in demand. When the aggregate demand in an economy strongly outweighs the aggregate supply, prices go up. When concurrent demand for output exceeds what the economy can produce, the four sectors compete to purchase a limited amount of goods and services. That means the buyers bid prices up again and cause inflation. This excessive demand, also referred to as "too much money chasing too few goods," usually occurs in an expanding economy.

Q3. Consider the following statements:

1. A proclamation imposing President's Rule must be approved by both the Houses of Parliament within two months from the date of its issue.
2. It can be extended for a maximum period of five years with the approval of Parliament, every six

months.

3. Every resolution approving the proclamation or continuance of the President's Rule can be passed by a simple majority.

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

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

A proclamation imposing President's Rule must be approved by both the Houses of Parliament within two months from the date of its issue. However, if the proclamation is issued at a time when the Lok Sabha has been dissolved or the dissolution of Lok Sabha takes place during the period of two months without approving the proclamation, then the proclamation has to be approved by the Lok Sabha within 30 days from its first sitting after its reconstitution, provided the Rajya Sabha approves it in the meantime.

If approved by both the Houses of Parliament, the President's Rule continues for six months. It can be extended for a maximum period of three years with the approval of Parliament, every six months. However, it is provided that beyond one year, the President's Rule can be extended by six months at a time only when the following two conditions are fulfilled:

- A proclamation of National Emergency should be in operation in whole of India, or in the whole or any part of the state; and
- The Election Commission must certify that the general election to the legislative assembly of the concerned state cannot be held due to difficulties.

Every resolution approving the proclamation or continuance of the President's Rule can be passed by a simple majority, that is a majority of the members present and voting of that House. It must be passed both the Houses separately.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. The Right to Information Act is not all about citizens' empowerment alone; it essentially redefines the concept of accountability. Discuss. (10 Marks, 150 Words)
2. Throw light upon the impediments in disposing huge quantities of discarded solid wastes. Suggest measures to safely remove the toxic wastes that have been accumulating in our habitable environment. (15 Marks, 250 Words)

