

# 15 July 2019: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### A. GS1 Related

#### *SOCIAL ISSUES*

- [1. Court relaxes rules for woman to abort foetus suffering from congenital anomaly](#)
- [2. Nearly half of sex offence cases not being investigated in time](#)

### B. GS2 Related

#### *INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS*

- [1. Visa-free year-long access for pilgrims to Kartarpur Sahib](#)
- [2. India must push for Afghan polls](#)

#### *POLITY AND GOVERNANCE*

- [1. Law Commission to be formed soon](#)

### C. GS3 Related

#### *ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY*

- [1. Speed restrictions and sound alerts mooted for protection of dolphins](#)
- [2. India is home to 1,256 species of orchid, says first comprehensive survey](#)

### D. GS4 Related

### E. Editorials

#### *POLITY AND GOVERNANCE*

- [1. Karnataka Conundrum](#)

#### *INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS*

- [1. Looming Challenges to India's Standing - On India's Foreign Policy](#)

#### *ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY*

- [1. Ecological Perils of Discounting the Future - On water crisis in Chennai and other urban centres](#)

### F. Tidbits

- [1. Next Dalai Lama must be chosen within China](#)
- [2. Plant trees for juvenile offence, SC tells doctor](#)
- [3. 'Victory Flame' ignited for 20th Kargil Diwas](#)
- [4. Mediterranean sharks face risk of 'disappearing'](#)

### G. Prelims Facts

### H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

### I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

## A. GS1 Related

### Category: SOCIAL ISSUES

#### 1. Court relaxes rules for woman to abort foetus suffering from congenital anomaly

##### Context:

The Delhi High Court has relaxed the law governing termination of pregnancy to allow a woman to abort her 25-week foetus diagnosed with a congenital anomaly which made it impossible for the child to remain alive after birth.

##### Abortion in India:

- Abortion in India is legal in certain circumstances.
- It can be performed on various grounds until 20 weeks of pregnancy.

- In exceptional cases, a court may allow a termination after 20 weeks.

### **Background:**

- Before 1971, abortion was criminalized under Section 312 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860.
- Except in cases where abortion was carried out to save the life of the woman, it was a punishable offense and criminalized women/providers, with whoever voluntarily caused a woman with child to miscarry facing three years in prison and/or a fine, and the woman availing of the service facing seven years in prison and/or a fine.
- Government of India instated a Committee in 1964 led by Shantilal Shah to come up with suggestions to draft the abortion law for India. The recommendations were accepted in 1970 and introduced in the Parliament as the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Bill. This bill was passed in August 1971 as the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act.
- The Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, 1971 provides the legal framework for making Comprehensive Abortion Care (CAC) services available in India. Termination of pregnancy is permitted for a broad range of conditions up to 20 weeks of gestation.
- As per the provisions of the MTP Act, only the consent of woman whose pregnancy is being terminated is required. However, in case of a minor i.e. below the age of 18 years, or a mentally ill woman, consent of guardian is required.
- The MTP Act 1971, was amended in 2002 to facilitate better implementation and increase access for women especially in the private health sector.

### **Issues:**

- The MTP Act does not have a definition of termination of pregnancy. For this purpose, it has been recommended to include a definition for termination of pregnancy.
- It has been recommended to replace the term "registered medical practitioner" with "registered health care provider". This would cover the expanded provider base being suggested, by bringing in Nurses and ANMs as well as Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopath practitioners as legitimate providers of abortion service.
- The MTP Act 1971 provides the legal framework for provision of induced abortion services in India. However, to ensure effective roll-out of services there is a need for standards, guidelines and standard operating procedures.

### **Details:**

- The mother, in her plea, had challenged certain sections of the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act.
- Assistance of medical experts from All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) to determine the condition of the foetus
- The experts observed that in a case where the condition of the foetus is incompatible with life, the rigour of Section 3(2) of the MTP Act deserves to be relaxed.

## **2. Nearly half of sex offence cases not being investigated in time**

### **Context:**

According to an analysis of crime data of seven States, Investigation into nearly half the sexual offences cases are not being completed within the stipulated 60-day period.

### **Background:**

- To check sexual crimes against women and children, the Centre approved the Criminal Law

(Amendment) Act, 2018 last year which prescribed the time-limit for completion of investigation.

- The law was initially promulgated as an Ordinance on April 21, 2018 following an outcry over the rape and murder of a minor girl in Kathua in Jammu and Kashmir and the rape of a woman in Unnao in Uttar Pradesh.
- As per the government data, there are already 664 dedicated special courts with 2,021 public prosecutors and another 1,023 courts are planned.
- The Empowered Committee on the Nirbhaya Fund approved ₹767.25 crore for setting up 1,023 fast-track courts in November last year, but 10 months later the final nod from the Expenditure Finance Committee is awaited.
- Sources in the Ministry of Women and Child Development say 18 States have come on board to set up the new courts and it is now up to the Law and Justice Ministry to appoint judges and public prosecutors for them.

#### Details:

- The Supreme Court noted that trial had been completed in only 4% of the 24,000 cases of sexual offences that were filed from January to June.
- It is observed that, in many States, the fast-track courts designated to handle rape cases are also handling other criminal cases leading to delay in verdicts.
- According to the ITSSO analysis in the seven States — Haryana, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand — final reports were submitted only in 26,343 of the 47,662 sexual assault cases within the mandatory period.

#### Conclusion:

As the government plans to set up more courts, it will have to address lacunae like special courts handling other criminal cases apart from sexual offences.

#### Investigation Tracking System for Sexual Offences ITSSO:

- The Home Ministry launched an analytics tool — Investigation Tracking System for Sexual Offences (ITSSO) in February 2019.
- The tool monitors and tracks time-bound investigation.
- It is part of the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and System (CCTNS) that connects over 15,000 police stations across the country.

## B. GS2 Related

### Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

#### 1. Visa-free year-long access for pilgrims to Kartarpur Sahib

##### Context:

Pakistan has agreed for a visa-free year-long travel to Kartarpur Sahib.

##### Background:

- The Kartarpur shrine in Pakistan's Narowal district across the river Ravi is where Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of Sikhism, spent his final days.
- The shrine is highly revered by the Sikh community.
- It is about 4 km from the Dera Baba Nanak shrine in Gurdaspur.

- 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 project is seen as a 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 agreement was reached at the second formal meeting held at Wagah.
- Every day, 5,000 pilgrims will be allowed to visit the Gurdwara on foot, both as individuals or in groups.
- Visa-free travel will be allowed for the Indian passport-holders and OCI card- holders
- India proposed that the holy shrine be open to Indian citizens of all faiths. However, a message from the government of Pakistan reiterated that there will be provision for a permit system for the pilgrims travelling through the religious corridor.
- Pakistan was cautioned against building an earth-filled embankment that could create flooding problems at Dera Baba Nanak inside India.
- India also urged Pakistan to allow 'Nagar Kirtan' from Delhi to Nankana Sahib in Pakistan in July and during October-November 2019 as part of the celebrations to mark the birth of the first Sikh Guru.

## 2. India must push for Afghan polls

#### Context:

India must continue to push for Afghanistan elections, the former Afghanistan Ambassador to India and presidential contender Shaida Abdali has said.

#### Background:

- On July 10 and 11, the four-nation talks in Beijing agreed to step up efforts for an intra-Afghan dialogue between the Taliban and the Afghan government in the next few weeks.
- It is being seen as the next step in the reconciliation process.
- The recent discussions were led by U.S. special envoy where he claimed that substantial progress had been made on issues like the intra-Afghan dialogue, Taliban guarantees on terrorism, withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan, and a possible ceasefire.
- However, there is still some uncertainty over whether Afghan presidential elections, scheduled at present for September 28, will go ahead as planned.
- The elections have already been postponed twice this year, and many of the 18 candidates are worried that a further postponement till next year will jeopardise the entire process.
- Another issue is over the constitutional validity of President Ghani's government post-October, and the installation of an interim Afghan government in its place.

#### India's Role:

- India has publicly cautioned against postponing presidential polls, and has shown hesitation about joining talks with the Taliban, given the group's history as a terror group and its links with Pakistan.
- It is also not officially involved in any of the major regional multilateral conferences held for discussing Afghanistan's future.

**Details:**

- “It is necessary that a good neighbour like India remain engaged on major international and regional conferences that deal with Afghanistan and the peace process. India must remain an active participant so as to ensure that we don't reverse the gains of the last 18 years.”, Shaida Abdali said.
- The comment comes just as diplomats from the U.S., Russia China and Pakistan met in Beijing to discuss the peace process in Afghanistan.
- Mr. Abdali also appealed to the government to maintain its interest in Iran's Chabahar port as an alternative route for India-Afghanistan trade, despite the U.S. sanctions.

**Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE****1. Law Commission to be formed soon****Context:**

The Law Ministry has initiated the process of setting up a law commission.

**Background:**

- The Law Commission of India is an executive body formed by an order of the government.
- Its chief mandate is to bring about reforms in the legal domain in the country. The commission is chiefly composed of legal experts.
- The Law Commission is formed for a fixed term.
- It functions as an advisory body to the Law and Justice Ministry.
- The first ever Law Commission was created in 1834 via the 1833 Charter Act, under the chairmanship of Macaulay.
- There were three more law commissions during the British Raj before independence.
- The Indian Contract Act, The Indian Code of Civil Procedure the Indian Evidence Act, the Transfer of Property Act. etc. are the outcomes of the first four Law Commissions.
- The Government of India established the First Law Commission of Independent India in 1955 and is reconstituted every three years.
- The recent one is the 21<sup>st</sup> Law Commission is in function and its tenure is from 2015 to 2018.

**Details:**

- The three-year term of the 21st Law Commission ended on August 31 last year.
- India is left without a law commission since September 2018.
  - The 21st commission, under Justice B.S. Chauhan (retired), had submitted reports and working papers on key issues such as simultaneous polls to the Lok Sabha and the Assemblies and a uniform civil code.
- In 2015, a proposal was mooted to make the law panel into a permanent body either through an Act of Parliament or an executive order (resolution of the Union Cabinet).
- The move was shelved after the Prime Minister's Office felt that the present system should continue.

**Law Commission:**



- Law commission is the body which gives advice to the government on complex legal issues.
- The Cabinet approves reconstitution of the law panel for a period of three years.
- It is usually headed by a former Supreme Court judge or a former Chief Justice of a High Court.

## C. GS3 Related

### Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

#### 1. Speed restrictions and sound alerts mooted for protection of dolphins

##### Context:

Ministry of Shipping has planned to safeguard the population of the Ganges River Dolphin, in the country's dolphin reserve through which National Waterway-1 connecting Haldia to Varanasi passes.

##### Details:

- Restricting the speeds of vessels and blowing sirens and horns are few of the measures to be taken to ensure that the dolphins will not be adversely affected by the National Waterways Project.
- The other mitigation measures, according to the Ministry, include fitting vessels with propeller guards and dolphin deflectors to minimise dolphin accidents and using non-toxic paints for painting vessels.
- The Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary (VGDS), from Sultanganj to Kahalganj on the Ganga in Bihar is the only dolphin sanctuary in the country.
- The Ministry has admitted that the Sultanganj-Kahalgaon stretch of National Waterway-1 passes through it.

##### Concerns:

- A member of IUCN Species Survival Commission has blamed the Ministry's response for its limited understanding of behaviour and habitat of the Ganges dolphin.
- It is believed that the sound of sirens will not only disturb them more but also a number of other migratory birds and aquatic fauna.
- It is opined that using the Ganga for navigation will be detrimental to the biodiversity of the river.
- Experts also warn that dredging the river bed will disturb the ecosystem and river geo morphology.

#### 2. India is home to 1,256 species of orchid, says first comprehensive survey

##### Context:

The Botanical Survey of India has come up with the first comprehensive census of orchids of India putting the total number of orchid species or taxa to 1,256.

##### Classification of orchids:

Orchids have complex floral structure that facilitates biotic cross-pollination and makes them evolutionarily superior to the other plant groups. The entire orchid family is listed under appendix II of CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) and hence any trade of wild orchid is banned globally.

**Orchids are broadly categorised into three life forms:**

1. Epiphytic - plants growing on another plants including those growing on rock boulders and often termed lithophyte. These are abundant up to 1800 m above the sea level and their occurrence decreases with the increase in altitude.
2. Terrestrial - plants growing on land and climbers. They grow directly on soil, are found in large numbers in temperate and alpine region.
3. Mycoheterotrophic - plants which derive nutrients from mycorrhizal fungi that are attached to the roots of a vascular plant. About 60% of all orchids found in India, which is 757 species, are epiphytic, 447 are terrestrial and 43 are mycoheterotrophic. They are mostly associated with ectomycorrhizal fungi, are found in temperate regions, or are found growing with parasites in tropical regions.

**Details:**

- A State-wise distribution of orchid species point out that the Himalayas, North-East parts of the country and Western Ghats are the hot-spots of orchid plants.
- The highest number of orchid species is recorded from Arunachal Pradesh with 612 species, followed by Sikkim 560 species and West Bengal.
- Darjeeling Himalayas have also high species concentration, with 479 species.
- While north-east India rank at the top in species concentration, the Western Ghats have high endemism of orchids.
- There are 388 species of orchids, which are endemic to India of which about one-third (128) endemic species are found in Western Ghats.
- The publication points out that Kerala has 111 of these endemic species while Tamil Nadu has 92.
- Among the 10 bio geographic zones of India, the Himalayan zone is the richest in terms of orchid species followed by Northeast, Western Ghats, Deccan plateau and Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

## D. GS4 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## E. Editorials

### Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

#### 1. Karnataka Conundrum

**Context:**

The Karnataka Speaker has been asked not to decide the issue of MLAs' resignation or disqualification, by the Supreme Court.

**Details:**

- An order has been passed when one of the questions to be decided is whether the court can give such a direction to the Speaker.
- It now is revealed that legislators can be prevented from resigning by claiming that they have incurred disqualification.
- It was argued in court that “the rebel MLAs are trying to avoid disqualification by tendering resignations.”
- This is shocking, as the penalty for defection is loss of legislative office.
- Quitting the current post before joining another party is a legal and moral obligation.

- Defection is condemnable, especially if it is to bring down one regime and form another. But politicians cannot be tied down to parties against their will by not letting them leave even their legislative positions.
- Converting resignation into a disqualification matter is an attempt to deny a member's right to quit his seat in the legislature before joining another party, even if the crossing-over is a politically expedient measure.
- A disqualified member cannot become a Minister without getting elected again, whereas one who resigns can be inducted into an alternative Cabinet without being a member.

#### **Concerns:**

- The on-going proceedings represent an increasingly common trend in litigation on constitutional issues: the propensity of the political class to twist and stretch the law in their favour and leave it to the court to set things right.
- The Speaker already enjoys extraordinary powers under the Constitution.
- In addition to immunity from judicial scrutiny for legislative matters, such as whether a Bill is a money bill, presiding officers get to decide whether a member has incurred disqualification under the anti-defection law.
- Though the decision is subject to judicial review, many Speakers have evaded judicial scrutiny by merely not acting on disqualification matters.
- The question whether the Speaker's inaction can be challenged in court is pending before another Constitution Bench.
- Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu have instances of Speakers not acting on disqualification questions for years. The current crisis (Converting resignation into a disqualification matter) in Karnataka has exposed a new dimension to a political crisis.
- Accepting a resignation is a simple function of being satisfied if it is voluntary, while disqualification is decided on evidence and inquiry. The two should not be mixed up.

### **Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

#### **1. Looming Challenges to India's Standing – On India's Foreign Policy**

The editorial explains why India's foreign policy needs rework

#### **Background:**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has maintained a rapid pace, renewing contacts with world leaders ever since the results of general election 2019.
- He was the cynosure of all eyes at the G-20 meeting in June, in Osaka.
- At the BRICs informal meeting, also in Osaka, he called for the strengthening of the World Trade Organisation and for a global conference on terrorism.
- He discussed counter-terrorism and climate change issues at separate meetings with China's President Xi Jinping and Russia's President Vladimir Putin.
- He participated in the Japan-India-U.S. trilateral grouping, arguing for a rules based order in the Indo-Pacific region.
- He met with U.S. President Donald Trump, to discuss the future of India-U.S. relations.

#### **Issue:**

- In the past, India did manage a shift from non-alignment to multi-alignment, could improve the relations with the United States without jeopardising our long-term relationship with Russia, and paper over the prickly relations with China without conceding too much ground; all the while



maintaining our strategic independence.

- The global situation has altered and rivalries among nations have intensified.
- There is virtual elimination of the middle ground in global politics, and it has become far more disputatious than at any time previously.
- Even the definition of a liberal order seems to be undergoing changes.
- Several more countries today profess support for their kind of liberalism, including Russia and China. At the other end, western democracy appears far less liberal today.

### **China, U.S. and Asian realities:**

- India needs to rework many of its policies in the coming five years.
- South Asia, in particular, and the region of highest priority, according to the new External Affairs Minister, needs close attention.
- The region is one of the most disturbed in the world and India has little or no say in any of the outcomes taking place.
- India-Pakistan relations are perhaps at their lowest point.
- India has no role in Afghan affairs and is also excluded from current talks involving the Taliban, the Afghan government, Pakistan, the U.S. and even Russia and China.
- India might have recouped its position more recently in the Maldives, but its position in Nepal and Sri Lanka remains tenuous.
- In West Asia again, India is no longer a player to reckon with.
- Across much of Asia, China is the major challenge that India has to contend with.
  - Smaller countries in the region are being inveigled to participate in China's programmes such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).
  - India and Bhutan are the only two countries in this region that have opted out of the BRI.
- Deepening India-U.S. relations today again carry the danger of India becoming involved in a new kind of Cold War.
  - India must ensure that it does not become a party to the conflicts and rivalries between the U.S. and a rising China, the heightened tensions between the U.S. and Russia, and also avoid becoming a pawn in the U.S.-Iran conflict.
  - There is little doubt that current India-U.S. relations provide India better access to state-of-the-art defence items; the recent passage of the National Defence Authorisation Act in the U.S. makes India virtually a non-NATO ally.
  - However, it could entail estrangement of relations with Russia, which has been a steadfast ally and a defence partner of India's for the better part of half-a-century.
  - Closer relations with the U.S. also carries the risk of aggravating tensions between India and China, even as China and the U.S. engage in contesting every domain and are involved in intense rivalry in military matters as well as competition on technology issues.
- The U.S.-China-Russia conflict has another dimension which could affect India adversely.
  - The strategic axis forged between the Mr. Putin's Russia and Mr. Xi's China will impact not only the U.S. but also India's position in both Asia and Eurasia, with India being seen as increasingly aligned to the U.S.

### **Way forward:**

- A major challenge for India will hence be how to overcome our current inadequacies in the realm of disruptive technologies rather than remaining confined to the purely military domain.
- The U.S., China, Russia, Israel and few other countries dominate these spheres as also cyberspace and cyber methodologies.
- New policy parameters will need to be drawn up by India, and our capabilities enhanced in areas such as artificial intelligence, biotechnology and cyber methodology, all of which constitute critical elements of the disruptive technology matrix.
- India also needs to devise a policy that does not leave it isolated in the region.

- India must pay greater heed to its economy.
  - Despite a plethora of official statements, the state of the economy remains a matter of increasing concern.
  - Statistics regarding the economy are being questioned.
  - Jobs, specially skilled jobs, are not available in sufficient numbers and this should be a matter for concern.
  - The ability to sustain a rate of growth between 8.5% and 9.5% is again highly doubtful.

The looming challenge for India would be to build a strong economic foundation, one that is capable of providing the kind of power structure needed for an emerging power, and also one possessing the best liberal credentials.

## **Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY**

### **1. Ecological Perils of Discounting the Future – On water crisis in Chennai and other urban centres**

The editorial talks about environmental degradation and the consequences that follow

#### **Issue:**

- A report prepared by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG), highlights how the encroachment of lakes and river floodplains has driven India's sixth largest city - Chennai to an inescapable situation.
- Chennai floods are a symbol of consistent human failings and poor urban design which are common to most urban centres in India if not urban centres across the world. The city is now in a water crisis.
- In Chennai, more than 30 waterbodies of significance have disappeared in the past century. Concretisation or the increase in paved surfaces has affected the percolation of rainwater into the soil, thereby depleting groundwater levels to a point of no return.
- When the consequences of environmental degradation begin to wreak havoc, it becomes difficult to draw the correlation between nature's vengeance with human failings.
- Urbanisation at the cost of reclaiming water bodies is a pan-India if not worldwide phenomenon.
- There are examples in cities such as Bengaluru, Hyderabad and even Mexico
- In Telangana, the byzantine network of tanks and lakes built by the Kakatiya dynasty has disappeared over the years.

#### **The Telangana Example:**

- In Telangana, tanks have been the lifeline of the State because of its geographical positioning.
- The State's topography and rainfall pattern have made tank irrigation an ideal type of irrigation by storing and regulating water flow for agricultural use.
- The Chief Minister of Telangana launched a massive rejuvenation movement in form of "Mission Kakatiya" which involves the restoration of irrigation tanks and lakes/minor irrigation sources built by the Kakatiya dynasty.
- From the perspective of inter-generational justice, this is a move towards giving future generations in the State their rightful share of water and, therefore, a life of dignity.
- The city of Hyderabad is now moving towards a sustainable hydraulic model with some of the best minds in the country working on it.
- This model integrates six sources of water in a way that even the most underdeveloped areas of the city can have equitable access to water resources and the groundwater levels restored in order to avoid a calamity of the kind that has gripped Chennai.

### Other Examples:

- Mexico city has created a new executive position of a resilience officer to save its sinking urban sprawls.
- Bengaluru can reclaim Kundalahalli lake (once a landfill) through corporate social responsibility funds in a Public Private Partnership model.
- Hyderabad and the larger state of Telangana has rebuilt its resilience through a combination of political will and well-designed policies such as the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Scheme and Mission.

What has happened in Chennai now or what happened in Kerala last year in the form of floods are not a case of setting alarm bells ringing, but of explosions. The urban centres must not shy away from adopting, remodelling and implementing some of the best water management practices to avoid disaster. If concrete steps are not taken now, we have to be prepared to face the consequences of nature wreaking great havoc on humanity.

## F. Tidbits

### 1. Next Dalai Lama must be chosen within China

- The Chinese authorities have cautioned that the successor of the Dalai Lama has to be decided within China and any interference by India on the issue will impact bilateral ties.
- The Chinese officials and experts said the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama must be approved by the Chinese government and the selection should take place within the country based on an over 200-year old historical process.
- The 14th Dalai Lama fled to India in 1959 following a crackdown on an uprising by the local population in Tibet.
- India granted him political asylum and the Tibetan government-in-exile is based on Dharamsala in Himachal Pradesh since then.
- The Dalai Lama is 84 years old now and the issue of his successor has gained prominence in the last couple of years.
- India has maintained its stand on the Dalai Lama.
- Government of India's position on His Holiness the Dalai Lama is clear and consistent. He is a revered religious leader and is deeply respected by the people of India. There is no change in that position. His Holiness is accorded all freedom to carry out his religious activities in India.
- The Indian government had issued a note nearly a year back to senior officials, asking them not to attend events organised by the Tibetan government-in-exile.
- India has also been supporting the 'One China' policy, which states that Taiwan and Tibet are part of China's mainland.
- Beijing made the 'One-China' policy a prerequisite for countries to establish diplomatic ties with it.

### 2. Plant trees for juvenile offence, SC tells doctor

- A 32-year-old doctor has been ordered by the Supreme Court to plant 100 trees in the next one year as punishment for attempting to commit murder at the age of 16.
- A doctor practising at Murshidabad in West Bengal, was sentenced to three years' imprisonment for the crime. The Calcutta High Court had confirmed the sentence.
- The Supreme Court, after investigation of records found out that the doctor, under the law would ideally be considered as a "child in conflict of law", as he was 16 years old at the time of murder. It was held that he is too old to be called that at this age.
- It was opined that that the ends of justice would be met by directing the petitioner to perform community service.

- The Supreme Court's suggestion was seconded by the State of Uttar Pradesh, which found the planting of trees as an apt punishment for the doctor.

### 3. 'Victory Flame' ignited for 20th Kargil Diwas

- Marking the 20th anniversary (1999-2019) of 'Operation Vijay', Defence Minister ignited a 'victory flame' at the National War Memorial.
- The victory flame would be passed on to a team of motorcyclists, who will carry it over 11 towns and cities to merge with the eternal flame at the Kargil War Memorial in Drass, Jammu and Kashmir.
- Kargil War was an armed conflict between India and Pakistan, which ended with decisive Indian victory.
- It took place between May-July 1999 in Kargil district.
- In India, war is also referred as Operation Vijay, the name of Indian operation to clear Kargil sector.
- During Kargil war, IAF had conducted Operation Safed Sagar as a part of Operation Vijay of the Indian Army

### 4. Mediterranean sharks face risk of 'disappearing'

- A report by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) has highlighted that the sharks are at risk of disappearing from the Mediterranean as overfishing and plastic pollution choke populations of the endangered hunters.
- More than half of shark and ray species in the Mediterranean are under threat.
- The report singled out Libya and Tunisia as the worst culprits, with each country's fishery hauling in about 4,200 tonnes of sharks a year, three times that of the next biggest Mediterranean fisher, Italy.
- While some species are targeted for food, many of the sharks fished in the Mediterranean are bycatch caught up in nets set for other fish.
- In addition, the explosion of plastic pollution is endangering shark populations, either through the animals ingesting or becoming enmeshed in refuse items.
- Sharks have been around for more than 400 million years and are particularly vulnerable to population decline due to their slow maturation and long gestation periods.
- The IUCN Red List of endangered species counts 79 endangered shark and 120 endangered ray species.
- But an even bigger problem is difficulty in tracking sea-based populations; the IUCN currently lacks sufficient data on nearly 200 shark species to make a classification.

## G. Prelims Facts

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## H. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

Q1) Consider the following statements:

1. Samagra Shiksha Scheme subsumes the three Schemes of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Teacher Education (TE).
2. The Scheme will be implemented as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme.

Which of the statement/s is/are correct?

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

d. Neither 1 nor 2

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

Samagra Shiksha Scheme is an overarching programme for the school education sector extending from pre-school to class 12. It has been prepared with the broader goal of improving school effectiveness measured in terms of equal opportunities for schooling and equitable learning outcomes. It subsumes the three Schemes of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Teacher Education (TE). The Scheme will be implemented as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme through a single State Implementation Society (SIS) at the State/UT level.

**Q2) Attappadi Reserve Forest is located in:**

- a. Tamil Nadu
- b. Kerala
- c. Telangana
- d. Andhra Pradesh

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

Attappadi Reserve Forest is a protected area in Kerala. It is one of many reserved forests and protected forests of India. It is an informal buffer zone bordering the Silent Valley National Park (in Kerala) to the West.

**Q3) Consider the following statements:**

1. Coral Polyps produce a limestone skeleton as they grow.
2. Corals are the longest living animals on Earth.

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:**

Coral polyps are actually the animal that is coral. One branch of "coral," or the exoskeleton produced by coral, is covered in thousands of polyps known as a coral colony. Coral polyps consist of a tiny bag-like body with an opening lined with tentacles. As these polyps grow, they produce a limestone skeleton. After they die (usually a few years), the skeleton is used as a foundation for a new polyp, eventually building the formations of a reef. Studies show that some corals can live for up to 5,000 years, making them the longest living animals on Earth.

**Q4) Consider the following statements:**



1. Start-Up Village Entrepreneurship Programme (SVEP) is a Sub component of National Rural Livelihood Mission
2. Any Rural poor who is willing to be entrepreneurial and self-reliant is eligible to be part of this programme.

Which of the statement/s is/are correct?

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

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

The Start-up Village Entrepreneurship Program is a sub component of Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) of the Ministry of Rural Development. SVEP aims to support entrepreneurs in rural areas to set up local enterprises. Any Rural poor who is willing to be entrepreneurial and self-reliant is eligible to be part of this programme. Highly vulnerable beneficiaries under MGNREGA, marginalized sections, women, SC and ST communities and rural artisans will be given specific preference in selection, as part of this programme.

## I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. The principles of Integral Humanism offer powerful solutions for political, social and economic cooperation across the world. Elucidate. (15 Marks, 250 Words)
2. Critically analyse the provisions of the Aadhaar amendment bill, 2019. (15 Marks, 250 Words)

