

# 17 July 2019: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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## B. GS2 Related

### Category: EDUCATION

#### 1. [Schools turn nutrition gardens in Mizoram district](#)

##### Context:

The Deputy Commissioner of Lawngtlai, and her team designed a remedy for shortage of quality fruits and vegetables in the district, called: Kan Sikul, Kan Huan. In the Mizo language, it means 'My School, My Farm'.

##### Details:

- Lawngtlai is Mizoram's most backward and disaster-prone district.

- There is a shortage of quality fruits and vegetables with the deficiencies in the district's children belonging mostly to the Chakma and Lai ethnic minorities.
- Vegetables and fruits available in Lawngtlai town are costly.
- This is how the idea of involving school children, their parents and teachers to create a nutrition garden in each school developed.
- The aim is to make every school, Anganwadi, child care institution and hostel in Lawngtlai self-sufficient in the local variety of fruits and vegetables by March 2020. And also reduce malnutrition and stuntedness among children.
- The strategy is blending the Centre's Poshan Abhiyan with regular activities of departments such as Agriculture and Horticulture.
- Apart from the State government's farming experts, village heads and parents have also been asked to ensure the nutrition gardens function and the benefits are shared among the children.
- The role of the midday meal coordinator is to ensure that the children eat the produce from their respective gardens as far as possible.
- The programme does not involve expenses beyond providing the seeds of certain varieties of fruits and vegetables.
- The children are being taught manuring and making their own compost pit and the local people are providing water and other logistical help.

### **POSHAN Abhiyaan:**

- POSHAN Abhiyaan (National Nutrition Mission) is a flagship programme of the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD), which ensures convergence with various programmes i.e., Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme ([MGNREGS](#)) Anganwadi Services, Scheme for Adolescent Girls (SAG) of MWCD, Public Distribution System (PDS), Department Food & Public Distribution, National Health Mission (NHM), Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY), Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY), Swachh-Bharat Mission, and Ministry of Drinking Water & Sanitation.
- National Council on India's nutritional challenges under the chairmanship of Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog, has also been set up under the POSHAN Abhiyaan.
- The Council shall submit the report to the Prime Minister every 6 months.
- The Abhiyaan targets to reduce stunting by 2%, under-nutrition by 2%, anaemia (among young children, women and adolescent girls) by 3% and reduce low birth weight by 2% per annum respectively.
- The target of the mission is to bring down stunting among children in the age group 0-6 years from 38.4% to 25% by 2022.

## **Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE**

### **1. Rajasthan to bring law against mob lynching**

#### **Context:**

The government in Rajasthan has decided to bring a law to curb mob lynching and honour killing.

#### **Background:**

- The Supreme Court had used strong language while asking the Union Government to curb mob lynching. It had observed, "Citizens cannot take the law into their hands or become law unto themselves," and added that "horrendous acts of mobocracy" cannot become the new norm.
- The Supreme Court had taken notice of this dangerous trend threatening the rule of law in and passed comprehensive directions to states regarding preventive, remedial and punitive measures in respect

of mob lynching.

- The apex court also mooted a special law to deal with lynching and the appointment of a nodal officer in each district to combat the threat.
- However, stern directions from the Court does not seem to have changed anything at ground level.
- The Governments have not even complied with a direction by the Court to broadcast on radio and television and other media platforms that lynching and mob violence of any kind will invite serious consequence under the law.
- The SC had also directed that special courts should be constituted for trying lynching cases, and trial should be done on a day to day basis, to be completed within six months.
- Some argue that more than enacting a law, Union and State governments need to show greater political will to curb mob lynching.
- In some States, there have been instances of a section of the political class being 'considerate' towards lumpen vigilantes. In the absence of a strong political will, there is a possibility that the new law may not be diligently enforced.

#### Concerns:

- Rajasthan has been in news for mob lynchings.
- A mob thrashed 28-year-old Rakbar Khan to death on suspicion of cow smuggling in Alwar district in July last year.
- Earlier in April 2017, Pehlu Khan, a cattle farmer, was also lynched in Alwar as he was returning home from a market with two cows and two calves.
- From 2012-2019, 50 incidents of mob violence have taken place in Uttar Pradesh.

#### Details:

- Recently, Uttar Pradesh Law Commission submitted a report to state Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and recommended life imprisonment along with a heavy fine for committing the crime.
- The UP Law Commission also recommended that people who have been accused in mob lynching incidents be handed life imprisonment if the victim loses her life.
- Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot has promised to enact laws to check mob lynching and other hate crimes in the state.

#### Conclusion:

The SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989 — may not have ended caste discrimination, but it has acted as a great deterrent. Similarly, enacting a special law against mob lynching on the lines of the SC/ST Act may serve as an effective deterrent.

## 2. Central Universities Bill cleared

#### Context:

The Rajya Sabha passed the Central Universities (Amendment) Bill, 2019, for establishing a Central University and Tribal University in Andhra Pradesh.

#### Details:

- The Central Universities (Amendment) Bill, 2019 was introduced in Lok Sabha by Mr. Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank, Minister of Human Resource Development on July 8, 2019.
- The Bill seeks to amend the Central Universities Act, 2009, which establishes universities for teaching and research in various states.

- The Bill provides for the establishment of two central universities in Andhra Pradesh to be known as the Central University of Andhra Pradesh and the Central Tribal University of Andhra Pradesh.
- The Central Tribal University will take additional measures to provide higher educational and research facilities in tribal art, culture, and customs primarily to the tribal population of India.
- Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014 makes it obligatory to establish a Central University and a Central Tribal University in the Andhra Pradesh.
- Establishment of these two universities will increase access and quality of higher education and also facilitate and promote avenues of higher education and research facilities for the people of the State.

## C. GS3 Related

### Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

#### 1. Monitor biomedical waste management: NGT

##### Context:

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed all States and Union Territories to furnish a report on the amount of biomedical waste generated.

##### Background:

The National Green Tribunal was hearing a plea seeking directions for closure of all hospitals, medical facilities and waste disposal plants that were not complying with the waste management rules.

##### Details:

- A Bench headed by NGT Chairperson directed the District Magistrates across States to monitor compliance with the biomedical waste management rules twice a month.
- In addition, the states have been asked to set up common treatment and disposal facilities.
- Stating that a District Environment Plan needs to be in place across the country, the green panel said the plan can be operated by district committees comprising representatives from the respective panchayats, local bodies, regional officers and State pollution control boards.
- Environmental compensation will be imposed if the orders are not complied with.
- The compensation will be liable to be recovered from the said States and UTs at the rate of ₹1 crore per month till the non-compliance continues.

## D. GS4 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## E. Editorials

### Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

#### 1. The wheels to a low-carbon transport system

##### Editorial Analysis:

- Congested streets and polluted air are common experiences in India's metropolises, although the average Indian contributes only minuscule amounts of transport-related carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>)

#### emissions to global climate change.

- Patterns of road transport, however, diverge wildly between cities and districts.
- Delhi tops the charts and emissions are more than twice as high as other Indian megacities, such as Mumbai, Bengaluru or Ahmedabad.

#### What do studies show?

- Studies show that India's road transport emissions are small in global comparison but increasing exponentially.
- As a matter of fact, the **Global Carbon Project** reports that India's carbon emissions are rising more than two times as fast as the global rise in 2018.
- It is important to note that globally, **the transport sector accounts for a quarter of total emissions**, out of which three quarters are from road transport.
- Reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of road transport leverages multiple co-benefits, for example, improving air quality and increasing physical activity, which are critical for well-being, particularly in urban areas.
- Further, climate action also requires an understanding of how emissions vary with spatial context.
- In India, a study (which has been published in Environmental Research Letters), has revealed that **income and urbanisation are the key determinants of travel distance and travel mode choice and, therefore, commuting emissions**. As a matter of fact, the way cities are built and the design of public transit are critical for low-carbon mobility systems. The study is based on the most recent results of the Indian Census in 2011.

#### Some important statistics regarding emissions:

- It is important to note that the **average commuting emissions in high-emitting districts (Delhi) are 16 times higher than low-emitting districts (most districts in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh)**.
- Average per capita commuting emissions are highest for the most affluent districts, which are predominantly urban, and that heavily use four-wheelers for commuting.
- Experts opine that this is a surprising result, as **in other parts of the world such as the United States, commuting emissions are low in urban areas but high in suburban or ex-urban settings**. In contrast, average per capita commuting emissions are lowest for Indian districts that are poor, and commuting distances are short and rarely use three-wheelers.

#### Some key metrics and a Prescription for the future:

##### (a) Linkages with health:

- Firstly, mayors and town planners should organise cities around public transport and cycling, thereby improving mobility for many, while limiting car use.
- It is important to note that the uptake of non-motorised transport emerges as a sweet spot of sustainable development, resulting in both lower emissions and better public health in cities. According to the recent **National Family Health Survey (2015-16)**, nearly 30% of all men are overweight or obese in southwest Delhi, but only 25% in Thiruvananthapuram and 13% in Allahabad. **These data correlate with high reliance of car use in Delhi and low demand for walking**.
- Another study investigates data from the **India Human Development Survey** shows that **a 10% increase in cycling could lower chronic diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular diseases for 0.3 million people, while also abating emissions**.
- Car use, in contrast, correlates with higher rates of diabetes. Therefore, fuel price increases, congestion charges or parking management could be a strategy that improves the well-being of individuals living in urban areas.
- In contrast, fuel price increases would be detrimental in poorer rural areas, impairing mobility where



there is a lack of alternatives.

**(b) Looking at a technology transition:**

- Experts opine that **India should strengthen its commitment in its strategy to transition to electric two and three-wheelers.**
- It is important to note that **India is the third-largest market for automobiles; about 25 million internal combustion engines were sold in 2017, including about 20 million two-wheelers.**
- As a matter of fact, **a recent study reports that India has 1.5 million battery-powered three-wheeler rickshaw (over 300,000 e-rickshaws sold in 2018).**
- In the coming years, experts judge that the electric three-wheeler market is expected to grow by at least 10% per year.
- In 2019, nearly 110,000 electric two-wheelers were also sold, and the annual growth rate may be above 40% per year.
- The current statistics even suggest that electric three-wheelers and electric two-wheelers, rather than electric cars, will drive the electric vehicle market in India. Electric car sales are minuscule and even falling (dropping from 2,000 in 2017 to 1,200 in 2018). **Consumers realise the practical advantages of lighter in weight two- and three-wheelers that require much smaller and less powerful batteries and are easily plugged in at home.**
- India is one of the world's largest producers and consumers in two- and three- wheelers and Indian companies can take a leading role in switching to electric vehicles. **This will also help in transforming India's vision of 'Make in India'.**

**(c) Role that should be played by decision makers:**

- Compact cities improve accessibility and reduce emissions from transport and even the building sector.
- Most Indian cities are already very dense, with few benefits expected by further high-rise.
- **City managers should ensure that existing urban areas provide short routes and fast access to schools, hospitals and jobs,** otherwise, residents would be required to travel long distances.
- To achieve this aim, mayors and decision-makers need to rethink how to deliver basic services such as education and health.
- Building schools and hospitals matters especially for informal settlements and are critical in achieving low carbon development as well as improving the quality of life.

**Concluding Remarks:**

- Providing access to public service, choosing rapid transit over car driving in cities and supporting the rise of electric two and three-wheelers will help drive India to a modern and low-carbon transport system fit for the 21st century.

**Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**1. Chinese check**

**Editorial Analysis:**

- Experts opine that the **Chinese economy is seeing the first signs of trouble after long years of sustained growth** that rode on cheap labour and high volumes of exports.
- As a matter of fact, data released by the **National Bureau of Statistics** recently revealed that the economy grew by 6.2% in the second quarter, its slowest pace in 27 years.
- This is in contrast to the growth rates of 6.4% and 6.6% reported for the first quarter and the full year

of 2018, respectively.

### Reasons attributed to falling growth:

- The faltering growth rate was due to a slump in exports in June 2019, amidst China's ongoing trade war with the United States and the downturn witnessed by sectors such as housing construction, where investor sentiments play a major role.
- Many economists believe that **the worst may not yet be over for China and that economic growth could further worsen in the coming quarters.**

### A promising sign for the Chinese economy:

- Experts point out that **just as growth seems to be faltering, the latest growth figures also showed that the retail sales and industrial output components of the growth numbers witnessed steady growth**, suggesting that domestic demand may be compensating for the dropping appetite for Chinese exports weighed down by high tariffs.
- Having said this, with China still heavily reliant on exports and its trade war with the U.S. showing no signs of coming to an end, **the pressure on growth is likely to remain for some more time.**
- So the Chinese government, which has tried to boost the economy through measures such as tax cuts, increased public spending and a relaxation in bank reserve requirements to encourage banks to increase lending, will hope that domestic demand for its goods will hold up the economy.

### Prescriptions for China to overcome the challenges facing it:

- China's quarterly GDP numbers, while useful in many ways, don't reveal very much about the underlying challenges facing the country.
- One is the **need to improve the credibility of data released by the Chinese government.**
- An even larger challenge is the urgent **need to restructure the Chinese economy from one that is driven heavily by state-led investment and exports to one that is driven primarily by market forces.**
- It is important to note that the **high-growth years of the Chinese economy were made possible by the huge amount of liquidity provided by the Chinese state and the large and affordable workforce that helped build China into an export powerhouse.**
- However, now, with China's tried and tested growth model facing the threat of getting derailed as the export and investment boom comes to an end, **the Chinese will have to build a more sustainable model**, or forfeit hopes of double-digit economic growth in the future.

### Concluding Remarks:

- As of now, there are no signs to suggest that the Chinese authorities are looking at implementing deep-seated structural reforms reminiscent of its early decades of liberalisation that can help fundamentally restructure the economy.
- There might not be a need for radical macroeconomic changes, but **China's economic troubles will not go away unless the government boosts domestic consumption and reduces the reliance on exports.**

## Category: ECONOMY

### 1. Rethinking KUSUM

#### Background:

## A Brief Note on the “Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan”:

- The proposed scheme consists of three components:

Component-A: 10,000 MW of Decentralized Ground Mounted Grid Connected Renewable Power Plants.

Component-B: Installation of 17.50 lakh standalone Solar Powered Agriculture Pumps.

Component-C: Solarisation of 10 Lakh Grid-connected Solar Powered Agriculture Pumps.

- All three components combined, the scheme aims to add a solar capacity of 25,750 MW by 2022. The total central financial support provided under the scheme would be Rs. 34,422 crore.
- The Component-A and Component-C will be implemented on pilot mode for 1000 MW capacity and one lakh grid connected agriculture pumps respectively and thereafter, will be scale-up on success of pilot run. Component-B will be implemented in full-fledged manner.
- Under Component A, **Renewable power plants of capacity 500 KW to 2 MW will be setup by individual farmers/ cooperatives/panchayats /farmer producer organisations (FPO) on their barren or cultivable lands.**
- The power generated will be purchased by the DISCOMs at Feed in tariffs determined by respective State electricity regulatory commissions (SERC). The scheme will open a stable and continuous source of income to the rural land owners.
- Performance Based Incentives @ Rs. 0.40 per unit for five years to be provided to DISCOMs.
- Under Component B, individual farmers will be supported to install standalone solar pumps of capacity up to 7.5 HP.
- Solar photovoltaics (PV) capacity in kW equal to the pump capacity in HP is allowed under the scheme.
- Under Component C of the scheme, individual farmers will be supported to solarise pumps of capacity up to 7.5 HP.
- Solar photovoltaics (PV) capacity up to two times of pump capacity in kW is allowed under the scheme.
- The farmer will be able to use the generated energy to meet the irrigation needs and the excess available energy will be sold to DISCOM.
- This will help to create an avenue for extra income to the farmers, and for the States to meet their RPO targets.
- For both Component-B and Component-C, central financial assistance (CFA) of 30% of the benchmark cost or the tender cost, whichever is lower, will be provided.
- The State Government will give a subsidy of 30%; and the remaining 40% will be provided by the farmer. Bank finance may be made available for meeting 30% of the cost.
- The remaining 10% will be provided by the farmer.
- Higher CFA of 50% will be provided for North Eastern States, Sikkim, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Lakshadweep and A&N Islands.
- **The Scheme will have substantial environmental impact in terms of savings of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.** All three components of the Scheme combined together are **likely to result in saving of about 27 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emission per annum.**
- Further, Component-B of the Scheme on standalone solar pumps may result in saving of 1.2 billion liters of diesel per annum and associated savings in the foreign exchange due to reduction of import of crude oil.
- **The scheme has direct employment potential.**
- Besides increasing self-employment, the proposal is likely to generate employment opportunity equivalent to 6.31 lakh job years for skilled and unskilled workers.

### Editorial Analysis:



- Earlier in the year 2019, the Cabinet approved the **Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan (KUSUM)**.
- With a Budget allocation of ₹34,000 crore, and a similar contribution expected from the States, KUSUM aims to provide energy sufficiency and sustainable irrigation access to farmers.
- At present, despite burgeoning farm power subsidies, **nearly 30 million farmers, especially marginal landholders, use expensive diesel for their irrigation needs as they have no access to electricity.**
- It is also important to note that **more than half of India's net sown-area remains unirrigated.** Experts opine that KUSUM could radically transform the irrigation economy if the government chooses an approach of equity by design and prudence over populism.

#### **The situation on the ground and a few prescriptions:**

- Firstly, **KUSUM should aim to reduce the existing disparity among States with regard to solar pumps deployment and irrigation access.**
- The states of Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan together account for about half of the two lakh solar pumps currently deployed in the country.
- This is surprising given the low irrigation demand in Chhattisgarh and poor groundwater situation in Rajasthan.
- On the other hand, States such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, where penetration of diesel pumps is among the highest, have not managed to deploy any significant number of solar pumps. **This disparity highlights poor State budget allocation towards solar pumps and the lack of initiative by State nodal agencies.**
- To encourage more equitable deployment of 17.5 lakh off-grid pumps by 2022, **the Centre should incentivise States through target-linked financial assistance, and create avenues for peer learning.**
- Secondly, **KUSUM must also address inequity within a State.** For instance, 90% of Bihar's farmers are small and marginal. Yet, they have received only 50% of government subsidies on solar pumps. On the other hand, in Chhattisgarh, about 95% of beneficiaries are from socially disadvantaged groups due to the mandate of the State. Learning from these contrasting examples, **a share of central financial assistance under KUSUM should be appropriated for farmers with small landholdings and belonging to socially disadvantaged groups.**
- Thirdly, instead of a one-size-fits-all approach, **KUSUM should provide greater financial assistance to smaller farmers.** KUSUM proposes a 60% subsidy for the pumps, borne equally by the Centre and the States, and the remaining 40% will be the farmer's contribution — 10% as down payment and 30% through loans. Experts opine that **this unilateral financing approach will exacerbate the inter-farmer disparity given the inequity in access to credit and repayment capacity between small and large farmers.**
- As a matter of fact, **a higher capital subsidy support to small and marginal farmers and long-term loans with interest subsidies for large and medium farmers would be a more economical and equitable alternative.**
- Next, **solarising existing grid-connected pumps, as proposed under the scheme, needs a complete rethink.** Existing grid-connected farmers, who have enjoyed power subsidies for decades, would receive the same financial support as that received by an off-grid farmer. In addition, they would earn regular income from the DISCOM on feeding surplus electricity, furthering the inequitable distribution of taxpayers' resources. Instead, **the scheme should only provide Central government subsidy of up to 30% for solarisation, and use the proposed State support to incentivise DISCOMs to procure energy from the farmers.**
- Also, **solarising grid-connected pumps must include replacement of the pump.**
- Poor efficiency levels of the existing pumps would mean unnecessary oversizing of the solar panels and lesser available energy to feed into the grid.
- Moreover, instead of feeding surplus energy to the grid, solar pump capacity could be used to power post-harvesting processes, which complement the seasonal irrigation load and can enhance farm

incomes through local value addition.

- Further, the injection of solar power by farmers would require the entire agriculture electricity line (feeder) to be energised throughout the daytime, including for those not having solarised pumps.
- This would aggravate DISCOMs' losses on such feeders. Instead, **an effective alternative is to solarise the entire feeder through a reverse-bidding approach, and provide water-conservation-linked incentives to farmers as direct benefit transfer.**

### Concluding Remarks:

- KUSUM should not woo a certain section of farmers with short-sighted objectives.
- If designed better and implemented effectively, it holds the potential to catapult the Indian irrigation economy from an era mired in perpetual subsidy, unreliable supply, and inequitable distribution of resources to a regime of affordable, reliable, and equitable access to energy and water.

## 2. Tapping the potential of communities to end AIDS

### Background:

#### 2016 United Nations General Assembly Political Declaration on Ending AIDS:

- Countries had agreed to a historic and urgent agenda to accelerate efforts towards ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030.
- The Political Declaration provides a global mandate to Fast-Track the AIDS response over the next five years.
- Global leaders recognized that no country has ended AIDS and that no country can afford to step back from responding to HIV.
- As Member States begin to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, it was acknowledged that ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030 would only be possible if Fast-Track Targets are met by 2020.
- The targets and commitments, adopted in the Political Declaration on Ending AIDS: on the Fast-Track to Accelerate the Fight against HIV and to End the AIDS Epidemic by 2030, **will guide the world in addressing the critical linkages between health, development, injustice, inequality, poverty and conflict.**

### A shared vision:

- The 2016 Political Declaration calls on the world to achieve the following goals in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:
- Reduce new HIV infections to fewer than 500 000 globally by 2020.
- Reduce AIDS-related deaths to fewer than 500 000 globally by 2020.
- Eliminate HIV-related stigma and discrimination by 2020.
- The Political Declaration affirms that these goals can only be realized with strong leadership and the engagement of people living with HIV, communities and civil society.

### Editorial Analysis:

- The UN Sustainable Development Goals include ensuring good health and well-being for all by 2030.
- This includes the commitment to end the AIDS epidemic.
- In many countries, continued access to HIV treatment and prevention options are reducing AIDS-related deaths and new HIV infections.
- However, there are still too many countries where AIDS-related deaths and new infections are not decreasing fast.

- In fact, they are rising in some cases, though we know how to stop the virus.
- An important question arises: **Why are some countries doing much better than others?**

### The role of the Community:

- Success is being achieved where policies and programmes focus on people, not diseases, and where **communities are fully engaged from the outset in designing, shaping and implementing health policies.**
- This is how real and lasting change is achieved and this is what will reduce the devastating impact of AIDS.
- Adopting the latest scientific research and medical knowledge, strong political leadership, and proactively fighting and reducing stigma and discrimination are all crucial.
- However, **without sustained investment in community responses led by people living with HIV and those most affected, countries will not gain the traction necessary to reach the most vulnerable.** It is only by doing that can one end the AIDS epidemic.
- It is also important to note that **community services play varying roles depending on the context.** They often support fragile public health systems by filling critical gaps. They come from — and connect effectively with — key populations such as gay men, sex workers, people who use drugs, and transgenders.
- They provide services that bolster clinic-based care and they extend the reach of health services to the community at large. They also hold decision-makers to account.
- It is important to note that by signing the **2016 UN Political Declaration on Ending AIDS**, countries affirmed the critical role that communities play in advocacy, coordination of AIDS responses and service delivery.
- Moreover, they recognised that community responses to HIV must be scaled up.
- They committed to at least 30% of services being community-led by 2030. However, most countries are nowhere near reaching that commitment. And where investment in communities is most lacking, there is often weaker progress being made against HIV and other health threats.

### Concluding Remarks:

- All over the world, **communities are demonstrating time and again that they can, and do, deliver results.** Since the beginning of the epidemic in India until now, communities have been the most trusted and reliable partners for the National AIDS Control Organization and the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS.
- They are fully engaged in many aspects of the National AIDS Response, including prevention, care, support and treatment programmes.
- There are over 1,500 community-based organisations reaching out to key populations.
- **In India, there are around 300 district-level networks of people living with HIV which are supporting treatment programmes** through psychosocial support, treatment literacy and adherence counselling.
- Finally, our communities present us with a lot of untapped potential. **Unleashing this is the key to gaining the momentum we need to make faster progress towards reaching UNAIDS Fast-Track targets.** The more we invest in communities, the closer we get to ending the AIDS epidemic.

## F. Tidbits

### 1. Bihar transgenders to get ₹1.5 lakh for surgery

- Transgender members in Bihar opting for sex change operation will be granted ₹1.5 lakh.
- Those who refuse to give them house on rent, show disparity in providing them health-related facilities and violate their rights will get jail term from six months to two years.

- The state government has also formed a transgender welfare board to look into their problems and protect their rights.
- The announcement was made by the Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi, on the occasion of Kinnar Mahotsva, an annual cultural programme of the transgender community.
- Bihar is the first State which has started organising an annual festival of the transgender community Kinnar Mahotsva and brought the members on a platform.

## 2. 321 protected monuments, sites encroached upon: govt.

- According to the government, over 300 Centrally-protected monuments and sites, including World Heritage Sites, across the country are under encroachment.
- Among the monuments that have encroachments are
  - Purana Qila in Delhi
  - Ellora Caves in Maharashtra
  - Sun Temple in Konark in Odisha
  - Brahma Temple in Pushkar, Rajasthan.
- Despite the steps taken by the Archaeological Survey of India under the provisions of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958 and Rules, 1959 to keep the historical monuments free from encroachments, there have been encroachments.
- The need of the hour is impact study to assess the impact of the illegal constructions or encroachments on the sites.

## 3. Sewer deaths: Centre calls for quick response units

- The Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry has asked all States and Union Territories to set up emergency response sanitation units (ERSU), which would include trained cleaners wearing protective gear.
- The ministry is concerned by the incidents of workers dying while cleaning sewers and septic tanks.
- While manual scavenging is officially banned, under the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and Their Rehabilitation Act (PEMSRA), 2013, incidents of private individuals, local bodies and contractors forcing people to enter sewers and tanks to clear blockages continue to be reported.
- To implement the provisions of PEMSRA Act, 2013 regarding hazardous cleaning of sewers/septic tanks, it is advised that States/Uts/ULBs should set up an ERSU, on the lines of the fire service station, in capital cities of each State/UT and in all major cities having a municipal corporation and/or water and sewerage board with population of more than one lakh.
- The District Magistrate or municipal commissioner would be designated as the Responsible Sanitation Authority, which would organise the staff for the ERSU.

## G. Prelims Facts

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## H. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Advaita Vedanta is a non-dualistic school of Hinduism with its roots in the Vedas and Upanishads.
2. Swami Vivekananda spread Advaita Vedanta to the west.

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:**

Advaita Vedanta is a non-dualistic school of Hinduism with its roots in the Vedas and Upanishads. It recognizes one reality and one God. Swami Vivekananda was a great lover of Vedantic philosophy. He spread Advaita Vedanta to the west via the Ramakrishna Mission.

**Q2. In the IUCN Red List, Bengal Florican or Bengal Bustard is classified as:**

- a. Extinct
- b. Near threatened
- c. Vulnerable
- d. Critically Endangered

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

Bengal Florican or Bengal Bustard is Native to Indian Subcontinent. It is Critically Endangered as per the IUCN Red List.

**Q3. Consider the following statements with respect to Sustainable Catchment Forest Management (SCATFORM) project:**

1. Assam has launched the SCATFORM project.
2. The SCATFORM project aims to address issues such as forest cover loss, promotion of bamboo plantation.

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:**

Tripura has launched the SCATFORM project. It is undertaken with the assistance of JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency). The SCATFORM project aims to address issues such as forest cover loss, promotion of bamboo plantation, agroforestry based livelihood, eco-tourism development, development of value addition for bamboo and other Non-Timber Forest Product (NTFP) in order to create alternate livelihood opportunities for local communities.

**Q4. Consider the following statements:**



1. National Company Law Tribunal was constituted based on the recommendation of the Justice Eradi committee.
2. It is the adjudicating authority for insolvency resolution process of companies and limited liability partnerships under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016.

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:**

The National Company Law Tribunal is a quasi-judicial body in India that adjudicates issues relating to Indian companies. The tribunal was established under the Companies Act 2013 and was constituted on 1 June 2016 by the government of India and is based on the recommendation of the Justice Eradi committee. The National Company Law Tribunal is the adjudicating authority for insolvency resolution process of companies and limited liability partnerships under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016.

## I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Discuss the provisions in the Constitution as well as the steps taken by the Government for eliminating the most prevalent social evil of Child labour in the Indian society. (15 Marks, 250 Words)
2. Cyber security is an important arena of internet when the country is moving forward towards a cashless society and digitization. Highlight the need for a comprehensive cyber security policy in India. (15 Marks, 250 Words)

