

# 23 July 2019: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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*Nothing here for today!!!*

## B. GS2 Related

### Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

#### 1. [I would love to be a mediator on Kashmir: Donald Trump](#)

##### Context:

In his meeting with the Prime Minister of Pakistan at the White House, Donald Trump offered to be a “mediator” between India and Pakistan on the Kashmir issue.

##### Details:

- Donald Trump said that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi broached the subject during their

meeting in Osaka, Japan.

- However, the Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson has made it clear that no such requests were made by the Indian Prime Minister.
- Asserting India's traditional stand of rejecting any third party mediation on the Kashmir issue, the MEA spokesperson emphasised that, it has been India's consistent position that all outstanding issues with Pakistan are discussed only bilaterally.
- It was also asserted that any engagement with Pakistan would require an end to cross-border terrorism, referring to the agreements between India and Pakistan to resolve issues between them, as they did in the Shimla agreement of 1972 and the Lahore declaration of 1999.

### **India's position on the Kashmir issue:**

- India has consistently opposed third-party mediation in the Kashmir issue.
- New Delhi has always held that Kashmir is a bilateral dispute to be sorted out between India and Pakistan, and the US had previously upheld this stance.
- Islamabad, on the other hand, has always sought foreign intervention to resolve what it calls an outstanding issue between India and Pakistan.
- India has also refused to restart a dialogue with Pakistan despite repeated appeals from Khan, maintaining that Pakistan must first take action against terrorists operating from its soil.

### **Issues:**

- Ties between the India-Pakistan nosedived after the terror strike at Uri in 2016.
- It further deteriorated after a suicide attack by a Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorist that killed 40 soldiers in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama.
- Days later, India conducted air-strikes on a Jaish camp in Pakistan's Balakot.
- The Pakistan Air Force struck back, targeting civilian and military installations in India.

## **Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE**

### **1. Human Rights Bill cleared amid protests**

#### **Context:**

The Rajya Sabha passed the Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Bill, 2019.

#### **Details:**

- The Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Bill, 2019 was introduced in Lok Sabha by the Minister of Home Affairs, Mr. Amit Shah, on July 8, 2019 to amend the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993.
- The Act provides for a National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), State Human Rights Commissions (SHRC), as well as Human Rights Courts.
- The bill was cleared by a voice vote in the Rajya Sabha amid criticism from the Opposition that the legislation will ensure that only the government's nominees are appointed to the National Human Rights Commission.

#### **Provisions of the bill:**

- The bill seeks to give more administrative and financial powers to human rights bodies.
- **Composition of NHRC:** Under the Act, the chairperson of the NHRC is a person who has been a Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. The Bill amends this to provide that a person who has been

Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, or a Judge of the Supreme Court will be the chairperson of the NHRC.

- **Chairperson of SHRC:** Under the Act, the chairperson of a SHRC is a person who has been a Chief Justice of a High Court. The Bill amends this to provide that a person who has been Chief Justice or Judge of a High Court will be chairperson of a SHRC.
- **Term of office:** The Act states that the chairperson and members of the NHRC and SHRC will hold office for five years or till the age of seventy years, whichever is earlier. The Bill reduces the term of office to three years or till the age of seventy years, whichever is earlier. Further, the Act allows for the reappointment of members of the NHRC and SHRCs for a period of five years. The Bill removes the five-year limit for reappointment.
- **Powers of Secretary-General:** The Act provides for a Secretary-General of the NHRC and a Secretary of a SHRC, who exercise powers as may be delegated to them. The Bill amends this and allows the Secretary-General and Secretary to exercise all administrative and financial powers (except judicial functions), subject to the respective chairperson's control.
- **Union Territories:** The Bill provides that the central government may confer on a SHRC human rights functions being discharged by Union Territories. Functions relating to human rights in the case of Delhi will be dealt with by the NHRC.
- The Act provides for two persons having knowledge of human rights to be appointed as members of the NHRC. The Bill amends this to allow three members to be appointed, of which at least one will be a woman.
- Under the Act, chairpersons of various commissions such as the National Commission for Scheduled Castes, National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, and National Commission for Women are members of the NHRC. The Bill provides for including the chairpersons of the National Commission for Backward Classes, the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights, and the Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities as members of the NHRC.

## 2. Anticipatory bail Bill gets President's nod

### Context:

The President has given assent to the Code of Criminal Procedure (Uttar Pradesh Amendment) Bill, 2018.

### Details:

- The bill will pave the way for reintroduction of the provision of anticipatory bail, revoked during the Emergency in 1976.
- Barring Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, all other States in the country have the provision of anticipatory bail.
- With the Presidential assent, the provision of applying for an anticipatory bail in Uttar Pradesh has been restored after over four decades.
- As per the amendments, it will not be necessary for the accused to be present during the hearing for the anticipatory bail.
- It also provides for certain mandatory conditions or riders to be imposed by the court before considering granting the anticipatory bail, including not allowing the provision in case of serious crimes. Besides, there will be no anticipatory bail in cases where the punishment is death sentence and also cases under the Gangster's Act.
- Another amendment is that the court would have to decide on the application for an anticipatory bail within 30 days.

### What is anticipatory bail?

- Section 438 of Criminal Procedure Code dealt with the Anticipatory Bail.
- This provision allows a person to seek bail in anticipation of an arrest on accusation of non-bailable offence.

offence having committed by him.

- It is a direction to release a person on bail, issued even before the person is arrested.

## C. GS3 Related

### Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

#### 1. Perfect launch for Chandrayaan-2

##### Context:

Chandrayaan-2 was launched from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre at Sriharikota.

## Reaching for the moon

The GSLV rocket blasted off from Sriharikota on Monday and safely placed the Chandrayaan-2 spacecraft in earth's orbit, successfully completing the first step of a 48-day journey. It is expected to land on the moon on September 7, 2019

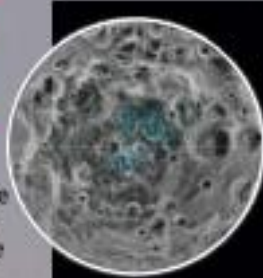


The launch comes barely a week after the 50th anniversary of man's first steps on the moon in 1969

If successful, scientists can carry out studies on the presence of water at the moon's south pole, unexplored by any nation before. ISRO suspects the region to contain water



China, Russia and the U.S. are the only other nations to have sent missions to the moon. Chandrayaan-2 will be the year's third bid at a moon landing, following China's successful launch of a lunar probe and the Israeli spacecraft that crashed on the moon in April



Surface ice distribution at the poles as detected by NASA's Moon Mineralogy Mapper instrument aboard India's Chandrayaan-1 lunar spacecraft



India has also announced plans for a manned space mission with a targeted flight in December 2021, besides proposing missions to study Venus and the sun



SOURCE: REUTERS

The GSLV Mark III, carrying Chandrayaan 2, blasts off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre on Monday. ■ S. R. RAGHUNATHAN

### Details:

- India's second lunar journey and its first-ever mission to be spearheaded by two women is headed to the moon's South Pole.
- The liftoff was aborted due to a technical snag, last week.



- The GSLV-Mark III vehicle has successfully injected Chandrayaan-2 in the defined orbit.
- The orbit is 6,000 km more than what was intended.
- The GSLV performed 15% better than the previous launch and the satellite will have more life, more fuel and more time to play with the manoeuvres.
- The spacecraft heads to the lunar South Pole and take the rover for a short ride on a place where no country has gone before.
- It is a giant leap for the country's ambitious low-cost space programme, the most complex and prestigious mission ever undertaken by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- If successful it will also make India the fourth country after Russia, the US and China to pull off a soft landing on the moon.

Read in detail about: [Chandrayaan 2 Mission](#)

## 2. Third trip in works to bring back samples

### Context:

ISRO has initiated talks with the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency for a mission in 2024.

### Details:

- In the next 4-5 years alone, major space-faring nations are planning to send at least seven missions to the lunar South Pole.
- There would be big dividends from that region, from mining to habitation.
- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has initiated talks on the nation's third moon shot in partnership with the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), according to indications.
- The first inkling about a Chandrayaan-3 came from the chiefs of ISRO and JAXA in November 2017 during the Asia Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum APRSAF-24 in Bengaluru.
- Two inter-governmental discussions during the Prime Minister's visit, in March this year and October 2018, also mention a 'joint lunar polar exploration mission'.

It is largely opined that the Department of Space must stop depending solely on ISRO and increasingly involve public and private sector entities, universities, start-ups and research labs to get this and other projects quickly off the mark.

## Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

### 1. Odisha renews effort to revive gharial population

#### Context:

Odisha has renewed its effort to revive the population of gharials.

#### Concerns:

- According to the wildlife wing of the Odisha State Forest Department, gharials, the large reptiles which were abundant in the main rivers and tributaries of the Indus, Ganga, Brahmaputra and Mahanadi-Brahmani, are now limited to only 14 widely spaced and restricted locations in India and Nepal.
- Odisha is the only state in India having all three species — gharial, mugger and saltwater crocodile.

### Details:

- Odisha has released five reptiles into the Satkosia gorge of Mahanadi — the southernmost limit of gharials' home range in India.
- These gharials, were bred at the Nandankanan Zoological Park.
- The gharials are individually marked and fitted with radio transmitters for future identification and tracking of their migration route.
- They will help in gathering information on migration and factors affecting their survival.
- The Odisha State forest department began conservation of these crocodile species in 1975 by establishing three rearing centres — Tikarpada for gharials in Angul district, Ramatirtha for muggers in Mayurbhanj and Bhitarkanika for saltwater crocodiles in Kendrapara district.

### Gharials:

- Gharial or *Gavialis gangeticus*, a critically endangered species of crocodile, as per the IUCN Red List.
- The
- Gharial is listed on CITES Appendix I.
- In India, it is protected under the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972.
- The male gharial has a distinctive boss at the end of the snout, which resembles an earthenware pot.
- Foremost flowing rivers with high sandbanks that they use for basking and building nests.
- It is threatened by loss of riverine habitat, depletion of fish resources, and entanglement in fishing nets.
- It inhabits foremost flowing rivers with high sandbanks that it uses for basking and building nests. Adults mate in the cold season. The young hatch before the onset of the monsoon.
- It is one of the longest of all living crocodilians.

## D. GS4 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## E. Editorials

### Category: HEALTH

#### 1. Smoking e-cigarettes is more injurious to health

##### Background

- The Narendra Modi government's proposal to ban e-cigarettes and other **Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS)** needs to be welcomed as such a move will ensure that Indians, especially, **children, are kept away from these pernicious products.**

##### Implementation of directive

- The Health Ministry in 2018 issued an advisory asking the States to ensure that **products like e-cigarettes and e-nicotine-flavoured hookahs are not manufactured**, distributed advertised or sold.
- Following this, 15 States, including Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Jammu and Kashmir and Mizoram, banned them.
- Several of the bans were **under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act or the Poisons Act**, under which nicotine was included as a 'poison'.

- Further, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (Anti-Smuggling Unit) and the Drug Controller General of India directed all their officials to ensure compliance with the advisory.

### Recommendation by expert bodies

- Such a ban has also been recommended by the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**, which called for a “complete prohibition on ENDS and e-cigarettes in India in the greater interest of protecting public health, in accordance with the precautionary principle preventing public harm from a noxious agent.”

### How business attract Youth?

- Introduced about 10 years ago in India, **e-cigarettes rapidly gained popularity, especially among the youth.**
- A **misconception** among students, parents and teachers that these **cigarettes are free of nicotine** also contributed to their appeal.
- The reality is that the tobacco industry, **hit by the success of the state’s efforts to reduce tobacco use, had developed such products** to hold on to customers who would have otherwise quit.
- Research suggests that many youngsters, who would otherwise **have never started using nicotine, took up conventional smoking after being introduced to e-cigarettes.**
- While the tobacco companies **promote e-cigarettes as a ‘less risky’ smoking option**, some industry documents show that their real goal is to introduce ENDS products as an alternative to quitting.
- One company started selling its e-cigarette brand in 2014, promising that it will give the consumers the ‘pleasure of smoking any time anywhere’ (suggesting that they could use the product even at public places, where smoking is banned).
- The tobacco industry plans to expand by achieving these **twin objectives — attracting more youngsters and reducing quitting by adults.** After all, the industry’s end goal is profit and not improvement in health indicators. The fact that the industry continues to produce and sell conventional cigarettes, its flagship product that brings it the **greatest amount of profit, despite marketing e-cigarettes as an alternative is evidence enough of its sinister design.**

### Concerns

- Dozens of studies show that **smokers who use e-cigarettes are less, not more, likely to quit smoking.**
- In fact, most of them become ‘dual users’, continuing to smoke cigarettes while also taking to e-cigarettes. This makes them **vulnerable to added health risks.**
- A recent white paper by the ICMR has said that
  - ENDS users are almost at the same risk of contracting lung diseases and cancer as conventional cigarette users. In fact, ‘dual users’ are at greater risk of heart attacks.
- Further, the **industry claims that the sale of ENDS products does not violate any regulations** despite the fact that the companies are in clear violation of **WHO’s Framework Convention on Tobacco Control**, which prohibits the sale of any product that appeals to minors.
  - The marketing of ENDS products, targeted at youth, also impacts minors and schoolchildren. The industry’s assertion that e-cigarettes are safe is contradicted by the many fires and explosions caused by devices, resulting in injuries, loss of lives and property.
  - Further, their accidental ingestion by children has also caused some deaths.

### Way forward

- All these points make it clear that the **Central government has shown great foresight in bringing out the ban** proposal, a move that is likely to avoid causing another epidemic of nicotine addiction in the country.



- The ban **needs to apply to all forms of ENDS products**, including all ‘heat-not-burn’ devices that profess to be an alternative to the existing tobacco products.

## Category: EDUCATION

### 1. National Medical Commission (NMC) Bill

#### Context

- The National Medical Commission (NMC) Bill, seeks to replace the 63-year-old Medical Council of India (MCI) to reform the medical sector in India

#### Features of the bill

- The bill provides for the setting up of a medical commission in place of the Medical Council of India (MCI) and **repeal of the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956**.
- The NMC will be 29-member body which would comprise of 20 members selected through nomination, and nine through election
- The NMC will have authority over medical education — **approvals for colleges, admissions, tests and fee-fixation**.
- The Bill **puts a cap on fees on 50 per cent of seats** in MBBS and PG colleges.
- The medical colleges will have to conform to standards the NMC will lay down. Once they conform and are permitted to operate, there would be no need for annual renewals.
- The bill provides that the National Medical Commission will have **four autonomous boards**,
  - under-graduate medical education board,
  - post-graduate medical education board,
  - medical assessment and rating board and
  - Ethics and medical registration board.
- The Bill has also **removed the exemption hitherto given to Central institutions, the AIIMS and JIPMER, from NEET** for admission to MBBS and allied courses.
  - In doing so, the government has moved in the right direction, as there was resentment and a charge of elitism at the exclusion of some institutions from an exam that aimed at standardising testing for entry into MBBS.

#### National Exit Test (NEXT)

- The new Bill has the provision for making **national standards in medical education uniform** by proposing that the **final year MBBS exam be treated as an entrance test for post-graduation**
- It will allow medical graduates to **start medical practice, seek admission to PG courses, and screen foreign medical graduates who want to practise in India**.
- Per se, it offers a definite benefit for students who invest much time and energy in five years of training in classrooms, labs and the bedside, by reducing the number of tests they would have to take in case they aim to study further.
- **At present**, different medical colleges have different MBBS exam patterns. The NMC’s proposal is to ensure a uniform national pattern for final year MBBS exam so that all medical graduates who get the licence to practise conform to uniform national standards and quality.

#### Questions about NEXT?

- NEXT will undermine the federal system
- A few critics feel the test at the MBBS level would not suffice as an entry criterion for PG courses.

### Changes that have been from Original Bill proposed in 2017

- The government also decided to **scrap a proposal in the original Bill to conduct an additional licentiate exam that all medical graduates would have to take** in order to practise, in the face of virulent opposition.
- It also removed, rightly, a proposal in the **older Bill for a bridge course for AYUSH practitioners to make a lateral entry into allopathy.**

### Way forward

- It is crucial now for the **Centre to work amicably with States**, and the Indian Medical Association, which is opposed to the Bill, taking them along to ease the process of implementation.
- At any cost, it must **avoid the creation of inflexible roadblocks as happened with NEET** in some States.

## Category: SECURITY

### 1. The judicial presumption of noncitizenship

#### Background

- Abdul Kuddus, a resident of Assam had been **declared a foreigner by the Foreigner's Tribunal**
- But his name had appeared in the final draft of the NRC for Assam along with his family
- There is a conflict in inclusion under NRC and exclusion under Foreigner Tribunals. This was a case asking the SC if the **Foreigner Tribunal had powers to declare a person as foreigner.**
- The issue arose because, in the State of Assam, there are two ongoing processes concerning the question of citizenship.
  - The **first includes proceedings before the Foreigners Tribunals**, which have been established under an **executive order of the Central government.**
  - The **second is the NRC**, a process overseen and driven by the Supreme Court.

#### View of the Appellant

- The petitioners' case was that the two processes — that of the Foreigners Tribunal and of the NRC — should be kept entirely independent of each other, and without according primacy to one over the other.
- The appellants argued that the **Tribunal is not a competent authority to declare someone a foreigner, in the context of the NRC.**
- They viewed orders by the Foreigners Tribunal **as mere executive orders** that do not carry judicial weight.
- They cited the fact that **Tribunal orders are not judgments**, referring to a 2012 Amendment to the Foreigners (Tribunal) Order, 1964.

#### Questions before the SC?

- Is the **Foreigners Tribunal the 'competent authority' to declare someone a foreigner**, under paragraph 3 of the Schedule to the Citizenship Rules, 2003 (2003 Rules)?
- **Does res judicata apply to orders by the Foreigners Tribunal?** Meaning, once you have been declared a foreigner by the Tribunal, are you barred from approaching it a second time?
- Should the **Supreme Court create an appellate forum**, exercise its power under Article 142 of the Constitution, for those appealing exclusion from the NRC?

### What did the SC say?

- The Court held that **orders by the Tribunal prevail over orders by the government** to include/exclude names from the NRC.
- The Court rejected their argument, holding that the **Tribunal is the competent authority under the parent Act of the 2003 Rules**.
  - According to **Schedule to the Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003 (the “2003 Rules)** stipulated that a person who had been declared an illegal immigrant or foreigner by the competent authority would not be included in the consolidated list or the final National Register of Citizens
- The Court invoked **Section 6A of the Citizenship Act, 1955, which states that the Tribunal is competent to declare someone a foreigner**.
- Further, the Court stated that the appellants had **failed to establish who an alternate competent authority could be**. Hence, it declared that orders of the Tribunal are “quasi-judicial” and not merely executive.

### Outcome

- As a result of this judgment, those **excluded from the NRC may only file an appeal before the Foreigners Tribunal**.
- But if they have previously already been declared a foreigner by the Tribunal, **their only option is to file a fresh writ petition before the High Court of Guwahati**.
- The Supreme Court rejected the petitioners’ arguments, and held that the “opinion” of the **Foreigners Tribunal was to be treated as a “quasi-judicial order”**, and was therefore final and binding on all parties including upon the preparation of the NRC.

### Issues with the Judgment

- Neither in their form nor in their functioning do Foreigners’ Tribunals even remotely resemble what we normally understand as “courts”. It means that these tribunals are not effective as that of the courts in efficacy.
  - First, Foreigners **Tribunals were established by a simple executive order**.
  - Second, qualifications to serve on the **Tribunals have been progressively loosened** and the vague requirement of “judicial experience” has now **been expanded to include bureaucrats**.
- Unsurprisingly, over the last few months, **glaring flaws in the working of the Foreigners Tribunals have come to light**. Questions in Parliament showed that as many as 64,000 people have been **declared non-citizens in ex-parte proceedings, i.e., without being heard**.
- Testimonies reveal these people **are often not even served notices telling them that they have been summoned to appear**.
  - Alarmingly, an investigative media report featured testimony by a former Tribunal member who stated that his compatriots competed to be what was jokingly referred to as “the highest wicket-taker”, i.e. the one who could declare the highest number of individuals “foreigners”.

### Supreme Court has failed to perform its duties

When adjudicating upon a person’s citizenship — a determination that can have the drastic and severe result of rendering a human being stateless — only the highest standards of adjudication can ever be morally or ethically justifiable. But in further **strengthening an institution — the Foreigners Tribunal — that by design and by practice manifestly exhibits the exact opposite of this principle, the Supreme Court failed to fulfil its duty** as the last protector of human rights under the Constitution.

- The Court attempted to justify this by observing that “**fixing time limits and recording of an order rather than a judgment** is to ensure that these cases are disposed of expeditiously and in a time

bound manner”.

- When the stakes are so high, when the consequences entail rendering people stateless, then to allow such departures from the most basic principles of the rule of law is morally grotesque.

### Similar case of insensitivity from the past

The Court’s observations in the Kuddus case, and indeed, the manner in which it has conducted the NRC process over the last few months, can be traced back to two judgments delivered in the mid-2000s, known as **Sarbananda Sonowal I and II**.

- In those judgments, relying upon unvetted and unreviewed literature, **without any detailed consideration of factual evidence**, and in rhetoric more reminiscent of populist demagogues than constitutional courts, the **Court declared immigration to be tantamount to “external aggression”** upon the country; more specifically, it made the astonishing finding that constitutionally, the **burden of proving citizenship would always lie upon the person who was accused of being a non-citizen**.
- A parliamentary legislation that sought to place the burden upon the state was struck down as being unconstitutional.
- What the rhetoric and the holdings of the Sonowal judgments have created is a climate in which the dominant principle is the presumption of non-citizenship.

### Conclusion

- Apart from the absurdity of imposing such a rule in a country that already has a vast number of marginalised and disenfranchised people, it is this fundamental dehumanisation and devaluation of individuals that has enabled the manner in which the Foreigners Tribunals operate, the many tragedies in the context of the NRC
- It is clear that if Article 21 of the Constitution, the right to life, is to mean anything at all, this entire jurisprudence must be reconsidered, root and branch.

## F. Tidbits

### 1. Plea in SC seeks action to save numbers of indigenous cows

- The Supreme Court has asked the Union government to respond to a petition pleading to restrict the import of exotic bulls to prevent cross-breeding, which has led to the depletion of indigenous cows.
- The petition also demands immediate shutdown of unauthorised slaughter houses.
- According to the petitioner, appeal follows the failure of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) to pass any directions despite the shocking state of affairs in which Indian cows, which are there for the past 35,000 years, are vanishing day by day due to cross breeding and indiscriminate slaughter.
- The petitioner stated that the government has not taken any steps to prevent the “depletion of indigenous cows” despite its legal liabilities to protect biodiversity and environment under the Bio Diversity Act and the Environment Protection Act.

### 2. State to promote startups with competition

- The Maharashtra State Innovative Start-up Policy, 2018 provides for organising various events and competitions throughout the year to provide global exposure to the startup ecosystem and to further deepen the engagement between the Government of Maharashtra and the startup ecosystem.
- The state government will conduct a Business Plan Competition (BPC) to give a boost to industrial and economic growth and promote budding entrepreneurs and startups.
- It would be organised by the Maharashtra State Innovation Society (MSInS).

- Individuals, organisations, groups or establishments can participate in the competition with an innovative business idea aimed at addressing a problem faced by the district, which can be converted in to a business model.
- In the districts, the BPC will be organised annually by the respective District Innovation Councils.
- The competition will be divided into three categories wherein applicants will suggest an innovative solution to an existing problem, or come up with an innovative product/process or service for the growth and betterment of the district.
- It also aims to provide a platform to schools, colleges and other institutions or individuals to propose innovative business ideas to address issues faced by local communities and society.
- Participants will have to submit proof of concept and the business plan to participate in the competition. The winner will get a work order of up to Rs. 5 lakh from the department that the business model is related to. T
- The district-level innovation society will mentor the winners for six months and they will be invited to participate in the Maharashtra Startup Week.

## G. Prelims Facts

### 1. Ikka Race

- The Ikka race holy month of 'Sawan' has a 200-year-old history.
- Ikka is a horse driven cart. The race is held at an event called Gahrebaji.
- The tradition was started by pandas of the city and they have continued to patronize it.
- Around 1940s, zamindars of Allahabad and neighbouring areas started participating in this unique race.
- Winner gets accolades and appreciation of the cheering crowd as a reward for winning the race.
- Both Hindus and Muslims participate enthusiastically in this race.
- As per the rule, horses used in commercial activities are banned.
- Only racing horses can canter (movement of horse wherein it moves in fast steps) and not gallop.

## H. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Wood's Despatch is known as Magna Carta of Indian Education.
2. It laid the foundation of Indian educational system and the establishments of Universities in Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai.

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:**

1854 Wood's Despatch on Education in 1854 laid the foundation of Indian educational system and the establishments of Universities in Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai. The despatch came to be considered as the Magna Carta of English education in India.



**Q2. Consider the following statements:**

1. African Development Bank is a multilateral financing agency.
2. All the African countries are its members.
3. India is also a member of the bank.

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

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

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

All the statements are correct. India is the only South Asian Nation member of the African Development Bank.

**Q3. Corruption of Perceptions Index (CPI) is published by:**

- a. World Bank
- b. International Monetary Fund
- c. Transparency International
- d. World Trade Organisation

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

The Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) is an index published annually by Transparency International since 1995 which ranks countries by their perceived levels of public sector corruption, as determined by expert assessments and opinion surveys.

**Q4. Consider the following statements:**

1. Sangai festival is celebrated in the State of Manipur.
2. The brow-antlered deer "Sangai" is found only in Manipur.

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 Sangai is an endemic and endangered subspecies of brow-antlered deer found only in Manipur,

India. Sangai festival is celebrated in the State of Manipur and is named after the state animal.

## I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Amendments proposed to the RTI Act will impact daily fight against corruption. Comment. (10 Marks, 150 Words)
2. With the successful launch of Chandrayaan 2, India has taken a significant step towards recognition as a space power. Discuss. (15 Marks, 250 Marks)

