

# 27 Jul 2019: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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## A. GS1 Related

### Category: INDIAN HERITAGE

#### 1. [Heritage by-laws for Purana Qila, Sher Shah Gate, Khair-ul-Manazil tabled](#)

#### Context:

Heritage Bye-laws 2019 for Centrally Protected Monuments Purana Qila, Khair-ul- Manazil and Sher Shah Gate drafted by the National Monuments Authority were tabled in the Parliament.

#### Details:

- By-laws drafted by the National Monuments have been laid on the table of both Houses of Parliament.
- The set of by-laws: one for Purana Qila and one for Khair-ul-Manazil and Sher Shah Gate has taken the total number of heritage by-laws drafted under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites

and Remains (Amendment and Validation) Act, 2010 to five.

### What does the By-law say?

- No construction activity is allowed in a 100-metre radius of protected monuments.
- Building work starting from 100 metres till 300 metres from such heritage structures are regulated by by-laws.
- The height of buildings in the regulated area is restricted by the by-laws for Purana Qila and Khair-ul-Manazil mosque and Sher Shah Gate.
  - The height of buildings would be restricted to 7.5 metres.
  - Among the design restrictions, French doors and large glass façades on the front street or along staircase shafts would not be allowed.
- Height restrictions are imposed in order to keep in tune with the heritage character of the area.
- These by-laws are among the regulations for construction around protected monuments.

### Khair-ul-Manazil mosque:

- According to the by-laws for Khair-ul-Manazil mosque and Sher Shah Gate were built in 1561
- The mosque's name means "the most auspicious house".
- The mosque, which is 20.75 metres in height with a five arched prayer hall made of rubble masonry, represents a leading example of mosque-cum-madrassa of early Mughal period.
- The gateway of the mosque was made by red sandstone following Mughal architecture, but the inside structure of the building was made in Delhi Sultanate pattern.
- This mosque was built by Maham Anga who was Emperor Akbar's wet nurse cum foster mother.
- It is stated that in 1564, Akbar was attacked near the mosque by an assassin while he was returning from Nizamuddin Dargah. Later it was used as Madrasa
- The Sher Shah Gate is double-storey, at 21 metres in height.

## B. GS2 Related

### Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

#### 1. New anti-terror clause will not be misused, says official

##### Context:

The Unlawful Activities Prevention (Amendment) Bill, 2019 passed in the Lok Sabha this week.

##### Background:

- The UAPA, is an upgrade on the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act TADA that lapsed in 1995 and the Prevention of Terrorism Act - POTA that was repealed in 2004 - originally passed in the year 1967.
- The Act assigns absolute power to the central government, by way of which if the Centre deems an activity as unlawful then it may, by way of an Official Gazette, declare it so.
- Till the year 2004, "unlawful" activities referred to actions related to secession and cession of territory. Following the 2004 amendment, "terrorist act" was added to the list of offences.

##### Details:

- The Bill amends the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 in order to provide special procedures to deal with terrorist activities, individuals and groups that foster terrorism in India.

- The bill is expected to give a big push to India's internal security machinery.
- Under the Act, the central government may designate an organisation as a terrorist organisation if it:
  1. commits or participates in acts of terrorism
  2. prepares for terrorism
  3. promotes terrorism, or
  4. is otherwise involved in terrorism.
- In addition to this, the bill empowers the government to designate individuals as terrorists on the same grounds.
- If the investigation is conducted by an officer of the National Investigation Agency (NIA), the approval of the Director General of NIA would be required for seizure of properties that may be connected with terrorism.
  - This amendment is proposed, as under the existing legislation, it becomes difficult to seek the approval seeking approval of DGPs of different states for seizure of properties when the accused owns properties in different states.
- While the Act allowed investigation of cases by officers of the rank of Deputy Superintendent or Assistant Commissioner of Police or above, the Bill, in addition to those mentioned in the Act, empowers the officers of the NIA, of the rank of Inspector or above, to investigate cases.
- In the Act, terrorist acts have been defined to include acts committed within the scope of any of the treaties listed in the second schedule to the Act. Nine treaties have been listed in the act, including the Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings (1997), and the Convention against Taking of Hostages (1979). Now, the Bill adds another International Convention for Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (2005), to the schedule.

### **National Investigation Agency**

- National Investigation Agency (NIA) was established as per the NIA Act, enacted on 31st December, 2008.
- NIA is the Central Counter Terrorism Law Enforcement Agency in India.

### **Criticisms:**

- There are concerns that the amended law could be misused by governments in future.
- Among other concerns is that it unfairly targets social activists.
- It is argued that empowering NIA to seize state property without judicial scrutiny would amount to violation of federalism.

The home minister has defended the amendments stating "We have always said that we must have the strictest laws to deal with terror. There is a need to designate as terrorists individuals who participate in terror activities, radicalise youth and lure them into such activities, help terrorists and provide funds to terrorists. Such a provision is there in the US, China, Israel, European countries and even in Pakistan."

## **2. Private Bill urges state election funding**

### **Context:**

Congress MP Rajeev Gowda has moved a private member's bill - The Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill in the Rajya Sabha.

### **Details:**

- The private member bill, seeks to amend the Representation of the People's Act, 1951.
- The Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill, makes two key proposals.
  - It seeks removal of the limit and state funding of elections as part of reforms to the way polls

are financed in India. There is a proposal that the current per candidate expenditure limit of ₹70 lakh should be lifted.

- There should be state funding to ensure a “cleaner polity”, which is a public good.
- It is asserted that the limit is counter-productive and only helps those with black money to bribe individual voters, thus crippling honest candidates.
- Concerns were also raised about the elected representatives trying to reward those who contributed to their victory.
- It is argued that instead of imposing a limit, transparency should be brought in and the candidates should be allowed to legitimately raise funds.
- Proposal for a National Election Fund was made, under which each political party could be allotted funds according to their recent electoral performance.
- It is suggested that the National Election Fund have two components, with the first half of the amount being set aside and given to political parties based on their previous historical election performance, and the second half being allocated towards encouragement of newer parties.
- It was emphasised that the only way to cleanse the system and ensure a cleaner polity was to ensure state funding.

### **Current Situation:**

- A candidate contesting Lok Sabha polls can spend upto Rs 70 lakh, depending on the state they are contesting the poll from.
- Expenditure limit for candidates contesting Assembly Elections in bigger states is set at Rs 28 lakh while it is kept at Rs 20 lakh for smaller states.
- The law prescribes that total election expenditure shall not exceed the maximum limit prescribed under Rule 90 of the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961.

### **Criticism:**

- It is argued that removing the cap on poll expenditure would promote material populism.
- It is believed that once the poll spend limit is removed, the poor will be unable to contest elections.

## **3. Respond to plea on order, SC tells Centre**

### **Context:**

The Supreme Court has sought the response of the Central government, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and the State governments to a plea for the implementation of its July 2018 judgment laying down preventive, remedial and punitive measures to combat lynching.

### **Background:**

- In July 2018, condemning the incidents of lynching and mob violence against Dalits and minority community members, a three-judge Bench led by Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra asked Parliament to pass law establishing lynching as a separate offence with punishment.
- Supreme Court issued 11-point prescription to Centre, states to end mob lynching.
- The judgment said such law should be effective enough to instill a sense of fear in the perpetrators.
- Chief Justice Misra had even asked the Centre to frame a scheme under Article 256 to give directions to the States to prevent/control the instances and maintain law and order.
- It directed several preventive, remedial and punitive measures to deal with lynching and mob violence.
- The court had held the primary obligation of the government was to protect all individuals irrespective of race, caste, class or religion.
- The several measures which were mooted by the court in the judgment included the setting up of a

special task force in the States to procure intelligence reports about the people likely to commit such crimes or involved in spreading hate speeches, provocative statements and fake news.

- The court had also directed States to prepare a lynching/mob violence victim compensation scheme.
- The cases of lynchings should be exclusively tried by designated court/fast track courts in each district.

#### **Details:**

- The Supreme Court issued notices to the Centre and 11 states on a petition seeking implementation of the apex court's directions on guidelines to prevent incidents of mob lynching.
- The apex court was looking into a public interest litigation (PIL) filed by a Delhi-based NGO, Anti-corruption Council of India Trust.
- The court agreed to hear the fresh PIL despite refusing to list a contempt petition on a similar issue. The contempt plea was moved by one of the parties on whose petition the court, last year listed out the preventive, remedial and punitive measures.
- The petitioner contended before the bench that lynchings are on the rise, especially in the garb of cow protection.
- The petitioner has also demanded that Parliament should frame a law to make mob lynching a non-bailable and non-compoundable offence and have a timebound trial in such cases.
- States must also be asked to evolve compensation scheme for victims in mob lynching cases, the petitioner said.

#### **Laws to tackle the menace of Mob Lynching:**

- Manipur became the first to pass a law against lynching.
- Chief Minister of Rajasthan, Ashok Gehlot has stated his decision to enact a law tackling instances of mob lynching and honour killing in the state.
- The Madhya Pradesh cabinet has also asserted its will to introduce a provision in the state Assembly, making stringent laws against those convicted in cases of mob lynching.

#### **Following the Manipur example:**

- Manipur Government became the first in the country to hold public officials criminally accountable, if they fail to prevent hate crimes.
- Manipur's Anti-Lynching law laid down the duty and responsibility of the State Government to make arrangements for the protection of victims and witnesses against any kind of intimidation, coercion, inducement, violence etc.
- It prescribes the duty of the State officials to prevent a hostile environment against people of the community, who have been lynched.
- The Law in Manipur shows the way in which the Union and other governments need to move if they are serious about combating hate crimes.

Read about: [NHRC](#)

#### **4. Substandard teacher training colleges to be shut down**

##### **Context:**

As per the recommendations of the draft National Education Policy, the National Council for Teacher Education has begun the process of weeding out substandard teacher training colleges.

##### **Concerns:**



- The draft National Education Policy reports quotes AISHE data for 2015-16, and according to that, of the 17000 plus colleges in India that teach just a single programme, nearly 90% are teacher training institutes.
- “Moreover, according to the Justice J. S. Verma Commission (2012) constituted by the Supreme Court, a majority of these standalone teaching institutes – over 10,000 in number – are not even attempting serious teacher education, but are essentially selling degrees for a price.

**Details:**

- NEP report was prepared by the government-appointed committee led by eminent scientist K Kasturirangan.
- The Education Policy also says the teacher education sector has been beleaguered with mediocrity as well as rampant corruption due to commercialization.
- Large number of substandard teacher training colleges, is a big challenge facing today’s teacher education sector.
- It was pointed out that pointing out that the country produces 19.5 lakh teachers every year, though the annual requirement is less than three lakh.
- The draft states that the process of reviewing the performance of the institutions and closing down the corrupt or substandard ones will be immediately initiated through mandatory accreditation of all TEIs [Teacher Education Institutions] as multidisciplinary HEIs [Higher Education Institutions] within the next 3-5 years.

## B. GS2 Related

**Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS****1. Cambodia Denies 'Secret' Naval Base Agreement With China****Context:**

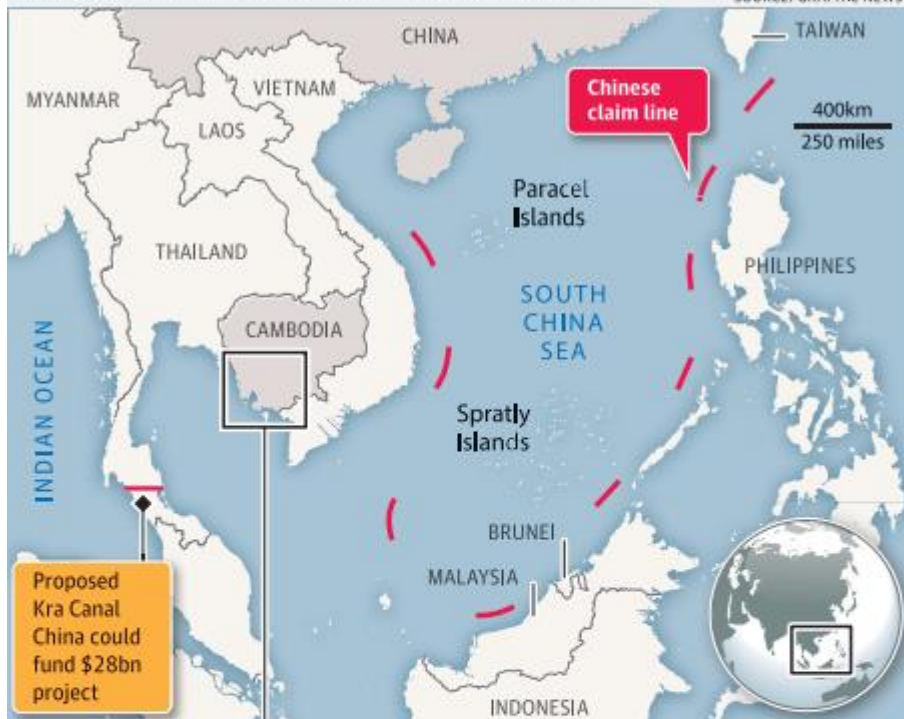
Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen has denied a report that his country had signed a secret agreement with China to allow the Chinese navy to use a naval base in the Gulf of Thailand.

**Details:**

## Spreading influence

China and Cambodia have signed a secret agreement that allows Beijing exclusive use of the Ream naval base on the Gulf of Thailand, according to a report

SOURCE: GRAPHIC NEWS



**1** China will get rights to part of the Ream facility, not far from the **Dara Sakor** international airport being built by a Chinese company, according to a *Wall Street Journal* report. Both China and Cambodia have denied the report

**2** China will use the base for 30 years,

with automatic renewals every 10 years after that. China could station military personnel, store weapons and berth warships at the facility

**3** Of the 190 acres, 62 acres will be dedicated to China's use

**4** This will be China's first dedicated naval staging facility in Southeast Asia

**The Ream** installation covers about 190 acres, including two facilities built with U.S. funding and used by the Cambodian navy, and a single pier

- The Wall Street Journal reported a bilateral agreement, signed earlier this year, would give China exclusive rights to parts of the Ream naval base, located near a large airport being built by China on the Gulf of Thailand in neighboring Koh Kong province.
- The Cambodian naval base in question is adjacent to Dara Sakor, a \$3.8bn investment zone near Sihanoukville that encompasses 20% of Cambodia's coastline, which is entirely funded and constructed by a Chinese company, Union Development Group (UDG).
- Suspicions had been raised that the project could be put to military use by Beijing when it was revealed that an airport, with a runway capable of handling military aircraft, was part of the development.
- The deal, akin to a lease agreement, would allow China "to use the base for 30 years, with automatic renewal every 10 years after that" for posting military personnel, storing weapons and berthing warships.
- Having access to a naval base on the Cambodian coast would extend China's influence in Southeast Asia and help bolster its disputed territorial claims in the South China Sea.
- Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines and Brunei all claim the same waters.
- Chinese money and tourists have transformed once slow-moving Sihanoukville near the Ream base. Chinese-funded development in the coastal city has transformed it into a boomtown filled with glitzy casinos catering to Chinese tourists.

- Chinese nationals now own more than 90% of businesses in Sihanoukville.

## C. GS3 Related

### Category: DISASTER MANAGEMENT

#### 1. China, Russia, France share satellite data on Assam floods

##### Context:

With Assam inundated by floods, several countries including China, Russia and France collaborated with India on sharing satellite images of the scale of inundation.

##### International Charter Space and Major Disasters:

- The International Charter "Space and Major Disasters" is a non-binding charter.
- It is a worldwide collaboration among space agencies, through which satellite-derived information and products are made available to support disaster response efforts.
- The Charter has been operational since November 2000.
- It provides for the charitable and humanitarian tasked acquisition of and transmission of space satellite data to relief organizations in the event of major disasters.
- Only agencies that possess and are able to provide satellite-based Earth Observation data can be members of the International Charter.

##### Details:

- As signatories to the International Charter Space and Major Disasters, any of the 32 member countries can send a 'request' to activate the Charter.
- This would immediately trigger a request by the coordinators to space agencies of other countries whose satellites have the best eyes on the site of the disaster.
- Based on an activation request by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), France's National Centre for Space Studies, China National Space Administration and ROSCOSMOS of Russia shared satellite images of the flood situation in the flood-affected districts of Assam with ISRO's National Remote Sensing Centre.
- ISRO's CARTOSAT satellites too got the Indian space agency its own images.
- Since 2000, when the Charter came into operation there have been about 600 activations and data from 61 satellites have helped with disaster operations in 125 countries.

##### Significance:

- Combining earth observation assets from different space agencies allows resources and expertise to be coordinated for rapid response.
- In the past, ISRO too had provided information to other space agencies in response to similar requests and is a standard practice.
- The Charter has brought space assets into play for numerous floods, earthquakes, oil spills, forest fires, tsunamis, major snowfalls, volcanic eruptions, hurricanes and landslides

## C. GS3 Related



## Category: ECONOMY

### 1. 'Indian telecom sector will create 3,00,000 jobs in next 18 months'

#### Context:

Telecom Secretary and Telecom Commission chairman Aruna Sundararajan has said that India's telecom sector will create up to 3,00,000 jobs in the next 18 months.

#### Details:

- It is believed that a majority of these positions will come up in rural areas of the country.
- The sector has already created over 1,00,000 jobs since the introduction of the National Digital Communications Policy-2018 (NDCP).
- The Telecom Ministry had earlier said that the new framework (NDCP) would draw investments worth \$100 billion into the country's telecom industry in five years.
- Since then, a total investment of around \$16 billion has already been announced by the private sector companies and government via USOF [Universal Service Obligation Fund].
- While most of the sectors are face jobless growth, owing to low physical infra creation requirement, in the telecom sector, jobs creation would be a natural outcome, as about 95% of the investment in the sector goes into infrastructure creation.
- It was also highlighted that the government was in the final stages of putting together a comprehensive revival package for BSNL and MTNL and post implementation, these would return to growth and profits.

#### Challenges:

- Several challenges have put a significant pressure on the PSUs.
- The PSUs have had to carry the burden of legacy staff which have significantly skewed their cost structures.
- The PSUs have had to make do with providing 2G and 3G services whereas the market has moved towards data-oriented services like 4G.
- The onus of connecting the remote, unprofitable parts of the country has been largely fulfilled by PSUs.

## Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

### 1. Kerala may have undercounted jumbos

#### Context:

The response to a question in the Lok Sabha on India's elephant numbers has indicated that Kerala may have undercounted almost 2,700 elephants in the latest elephant census.

### Mammoth count

Table lists State-wise population estimates of elephants as per census conducted during 2017



State	Count	State	Count
Karnataka	6,049	Uttar Pradesh	232
Assam	5,719	Tripura	102
Kerala	5,706	Andhra Pradesh	65
Tamil Nadu	2,761	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	25
Odisha	1,976	Bihar	25
Uttarakhand	1,839	Manipur	9
Meghalaya	1,754	Mizoram	7
Arunachal Pradesh	1,614	Madhya Pradesh	7
W.B. (north+south)	682	Haryana	7
Jharkhand	679	Himachal Pradesh	7
Nagaland	446	Maharashtra	6
Chhattisgarh	247		

#### Details:

- In 2017, the Union environment ministry reported that there were 27,312 elephants on average in the country according to figures collated from 23 States, a decline from the 29,576 elephants recorded as the mean figure in 2012.
- The exercise was part of the elephant census, conducted once in 5 years under the aegis of Project Elephant.
- The environment ministry said that as per the updated figures of 'census of wild animals', 2017 figures there were 29,964 elephants on average, or a slight increase from 2012's mean.
- A scientist associated with the census said that the discrepancy had resulted from Kerala's insistence in 2017 on using a technique called the 'direct count' method.
- Because sighting animals in the wild is hard, researchers over the years have used several proxies as well as statistical techniques to estimate population.
- The method in vogue is the 'indirect count' method that estimates populations in a region based on sightings of elephant dung.

#### Project Elephant:

- Project Elephant(PE) was launched by the Government of India in the year 1992 as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme.
- The Project is being mainly implemented in 16 States / UTs, viz. Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal.
- According to the Elephant Census report, Karnataka has the highest number of elephants, followed by Assam and Kerala.

## D. GS4 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## E. Editorials

## 1. Sovereign Bonds

- The issuer of a bond promises to pay back a fixed amount of money every year until the expiry of the term, at which point the issuer returns the principal amount to the buyer.
- When a government issues such a bond it is called a sovereign bond.
  - These are government debt securities issued in overseas markets in foreign currency denominations such as dollars, euros and yen.
- Currently, the government of India only issues bonds in the domestic market in rupees to finance the deficit between its expenses and revenues.
- Typically, the more financially strong a country, the more well respected is its sovereign bond. Some of the best known sovereign bonds are the Treasuries (of the United States), the Gilts (of Britain), the OATS (of France), the Bundesanleihen or Bunds (of Germany) and the JGBs (of Japan).

### And what is the controversial part?

- The current controversy relates to **India's sovereign bonds that will be floated in foreign countries and will be denominated in foreign currencies.**
- In other words, both the initial loan amount and the final payment **will be in either US dollars or some other comparable currency.**
- This would differentiate these proposed bonds from either **Government Securities** (or G-secs, wherein the Indian government raises loans within India and in Indian rupee) or **Masala bonds** (wherein Indian entities — not the government — raise money overseas in rupee terms).
- The difference between issuing a **bond denominated in rupees and issuing it in a foreign currency** (say US dollar) is the incidence of exchange rate risk.
  - **If the loan is in terms of dollars**, and the rupee weakens against the dollar during the bond's tenure, the government would have to return more rupees to pay back the same amount of dollars.
  - **If, however, the initial loan is denominated in rupee terms**, then the negative fallout would be on the foreign investor

### So, why is India borrowing in external markets in external currency?

- There are many reasons why. Possibly the biggest of these is that the **Indian government's domestic borrowing is crowding out private investment and preventing the interest rates from falling** even when inflation has cooled off and the RBI is cutting policy rates.
  - If the government was to borrow some of its loans from outside India, there will be **investable money left for private companies to borrow**; not to mention that interest rates could start coming down.
  - In fact, the significant decline in 10-year G-sec yields in the recent past is partially a result of this announcement.
  - For fiscal year 2019-20, the government plans to borrow at least Rs 7 trillion from the Indian markets. It is believed that **shifting some of this borrowing abroad will relieve the pressure on local interest rates.**
- **Second at less than 5%, India's sovereign external debt to GDP is among the lowest globally.** In other words, there is scope for the Indian government to raise funds this way without worrying too much about the possible negative effects.
- **Thirdly, a sovereign bond issue will provide a yield curve — a benchmark — for Indian corporates who wish to raise loans in foreign markets.** This will help Indian businesses that have increasingly looked towards foreign economies to borrow money.
- **Fourth**, this could make the Indian government more disciplined in reining in the fiscal deficit.

Foreign borrowers are quick to exhibit their displeasure if things go awry (this option is not here locally since banks are mandated by law to invest a portion of their deposits in government bonds)

- Lastly, the timing is great. Globally, and especially in the **advanced economies where the government is likely to go to borrow, the interest rates are low** and, thanks to the easy monetary policies of foreign central banks, there are a lot of surplus funds waiting for a product that pays more.

In an ideal scenario, it could be win-win for all: Indian government raises loans at interest rates much cheaper than domestic interest rates, while foreign investors get a much higher return than is available in their own markets.

### **Then why are so many cautioning against this move?**

- Rajan has questioned the assumption that borrowing outside would necessarily reduce the number of government bonds the domestic market will have to absorb.
  - That's because if fresh foreign currency comes into the economy, the RBI would have to "neutralise" it by sucking the exact amount out of the money supply. This, in turn, will require selling more bonds.
  - If the RBI doesn't do it then the excess money supply will create inflation and push up the interest rates, thus disincentivising private investments.
- The **volatility in India's exchange rate is far more than the volatility in the yields of India's G-secs** (the yields are the interest rate that the government pays when it borrows domestically).
  - This means that although the government would be borrowing at "cheaper" rates than domestically, the eventual rates (after incorporating the possible weakening of rupee against the dollar) might make the deal costlier.
- India is still vulnerable to global economic risks because of the twin deficit problem. The fiscal deficit is high. While India does have a glide path to reduce the fiscal deficit, most governments have had a tough time in sticking to this goal and have resorted to fudging numbers.
  - Indeed, the gross public sector borrowing – if one includes the centre, states and government-owned enterprises – is close to 8.5 percent of GDP.
  - The current account deficit is also high and could even go up further in case of an economic revival through increasing investment demand. (If investments exceed savings, it has to be financed by foreign borrowings). These are big risk factors.
- Once the tap is opened, there is a **real risk that governments might get addicted to this form of funding**.
  - As former RBI governor YV Reddy has argued, unless a limited liability company, government debt is held in perpetuity.
  - There is no write-off of government debt when times are bad. Moreover, all governments are liable to pay off debts incurred by their predecessors notwithstanding whether they were democracies or despotic regimes.

### **Conclusion**

- In small quantities, sovereign bonds in foreign currencies won't probably be harmful. But, the big question remains whether governments will stick to these small portions and whether that is good enough to get some of the theoretical benefits.

## **Category: SECURITY**

### **1. Automated Facial Recognition System (AFRS)**

#### **Context**



- The Central government wants to create a “repository of photographs of criminals in the country,” and wants to put a system in place to track “missing children and unidentified dead bodies,” through facial recognition.

### Details

- The AFRS solution will be a **web-based application hosted at the NCRB data centre in Delhi**, with connectivity to police stations through the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS).
- The system shall offer *logical algorithms and user-friendly, simple graphical user interface* making it easy to perform facial matching. Face images can be captured from CCTV feeds and alerts generated if a blacklist match is found.
- The system would have the **option to upload bulk subject images and generate alerts if images match with the registered faces in the database.**
- The system shall be able to broadly **match a suspect or criminal's photograph with a database created using images available with passport, CCTNS, prisons, state or national automated fingerprint identification** system or any other image database available with the police/other entity.
- The RFP said the system should be able to identify faces of individuals by extracting features, contours and other prominent points. It should be able to match facial images with change in facial expression, direction, angle, lighting, age, hairstyle, beard, glasses, scars, marks and tattoos.
- It will enable a hand-held mobile with an app to capture a face on the field and get the matching result from the backend server. Authorised requests for search, matching and verification of facial image would come from police stations

### Concerns

- No data protection law yet
- Surveillance framework is opaque, vague and prone to misuse. AFRS will not only create a biometric map of our faces, but also track, classify, and possibly anticipate our every move.
- Can lead to 360 degree profiles
  - The system will treat each person captured in images from CCTV cameras and other sources as a potential criminal, creating a map of her face, with measurements and biometrics, and match the features against the CCTNS database.
  - This means that we are all treated as potential criminals when we walk past a CCTV camera — turning the assumption of “innocent until proven guilty” on its head.
- The use of AFRS **raise issues of privacy and security and questions about how many agencies will access the system and what sort of safeguards are proposed.**
  - Facial recognition makes data protection close to impossible as it is **predicated on collecting publicly available information and analyzing it to the point of intimacy.**
  - It can also potentially trigger a seamless system of mass surveillance, depending on how images are combined with other data points.
  - Chilling effect is a change in individual behavior which is legal, but considered deviant. **Fearing social judgment or sanctions, people routinely self-censor their words and actions.** But with CCTVs and AFPRs systems, the risks are greater.
- The concern about potential misuse of the system for purposes other than criminal investigation and the legal framework governing its use has been highlighted by privacy and transparency activists.

### Technical Issues

- **Accuracy rates of facial recognition algorithms** are particularly low in the case of minorities, women and children, as demonstrated in multiple studies across the world.
- **Use of such technology** in a criminal justice system where vulnerable groups are over-represented makes them susceptible to being subjected to false positives (being wrongly identified as a criminal).



Image recognition is an extremely difficult task, and **makes significant errors even in laboratory settings**.

- Deploying these systems in consequential sectors like law enforcement is ineffective at best, and disastrous at worst.
- The notion that sophisticated technology means greater efficiency needs to be critically analysed.

### Examples from the world

- A **New York Times** report revealed how the **Chinese government** was using a vast, 'secret' system of advanced facial recognition technology to track and control the Uighurs, a Muslim minority community.
- At least one study carried out at **Massachusetts Institute of Technology** has revealed that FRS from giants like IBM and Microsoft is less accurate when identifying females. In the US, many reports have discussed how such softwares are particularly poor at accurately recognising African-American women.
- **Amazon's "Rekognition"**, incorrectly identified 28 members of US Congress as other people arrested for crimes.
- **San Francisco in the US banned the use of facial recognition** by the city's police and other agencies.
- **Police departments in London** are under pressure to put a complete end to use of facial recognition systems following evidence of discrimination and inefficiency.
  - An independent study of the use of facial recognition by London's Metropolitan Police found that the technologically, it is a failure in real world scenarios, reaching the wrong conclusion 81% of the time.

### Conclusion

- Therefore it is crucial to have safeguards to prevent against this, and more importantly, to carry out feasibility studies and evidence about the use of technology in public spaces.

## F. Tidbits

### 1. 698 Mughal-era coins recovered by U.P. police

- The Uttar Pradesh police have recovered a treasure trove of 698 "rare" Mughal-era silver coins dating back to the 16th and 17th century.
- A few of the coins are said to be from the eras of emperors Akbar and Aurangzeb.
- The coins have been sent to the Archaeological Survey of India.
- According to ASI, these are rare 16th/17th century Mughal-era coins with legends in Persian and kalima in Arabic.

### 2. Iran tests medium-range missile

- Iran has test-fired a medium-range ballistic missile that traveled 1,000 kilometers from its southern launch point into northern Iran, according to a US official with direct knowledge of the event.
- The launch of the Shahab-3 missile did not pose a threat to shipping or US bases, the official said, and remained inside Iran for the duration of its flight.
- Nevertheless, it served as a signal to the US and Europe and could serve to further increase tensions in the region.
- The missile was launched from Iran's southeastern coastline along the Gulf of Oman and landed in northern Iran.
- While analysts opined that Iran's missile test might be destabilizing given the volatile situation in the

Persian Gulf, it did not violate any United Nations resolutions — which has been a source of frustration to critics of the Iran deal.

- UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which endorsed the Iran nuclear deal, "called upon" Iran to refrain from activities related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons.
- Iran's missile test comes amid a widening crisis between Iran and Western powers, and friction between the US and its allies over how to deal with Iran.

## G. Prelims Facts

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## H. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The point when the moon is closest to the earth is called Perigee.
2. The point when it is farthest from it is called Apogee.
3. When a full moon occurs at its Apogee, it is called a Blue moon.

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

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 3 only
- c. 1, 2 and 3
- d. None of the above

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

When a full moon occurs at its Apogee, it is called a supermoon. The second full moon in a month is called a "Blue moon".

Q2. Consider the following statements:

1. The Geneva Conventions comprise treaties, and protocols, that establish the standards of international law for humanitarian treatment in war.
2. India is a party to the 1949 Geneva Conventions.

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

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

The Geneva Conventions comprise four treaties, and three additional protocols, that establish the standards of international law for humanitarian treatment in war. India is party to the 1949 Geneva Conventions and

several weapons treaties but not the 1977 Additional Protocols.

Q3. "*Dracaena cambodiana*" recently seen in news is

- a. A type of superbug.
- b. A dragon tree species that has been reported from India.
- c. A newly found drug to combat wombat-killing disease
- d. Most deadly bug responsible for destroying cotton produce

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

Researchers have discovered *Dracaena cambodiana* – a Dragon tree species in Assam's West Karbi Anglong dist. The plant yields dragon's blood — a bright red resin. This is for the first time that a dragon tree species has been reported from India.

Q4. Consider the following statements with respect to Wombats:

- 1. Wombats are Marsupials.
- 2. They are endemic to India.

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

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

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

Wombats are short-legged, muscular marsupials that are native to Australia. They are endemic to Australia and a few offshore islands. They are largely nocturnal and walk on all four limbs.

## I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

- 1. Citizenship Amendment Bill carries the danger of making discrimination a formal part of India's refugee policy. Critically Analyse. (15 Marks, 250 Words)
- 2. In the backdrop of growing list of spacefaring nations, there is an urgent necessity for an international law on ownership in space. Explain the need for such Global guidelines. (15 Marks, 250 Words)

