

# 16 Aug 2019: Comprehensive News Analysis

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### A. GS 1 Related

#### **ART AND CULTURE**

1. [No more joy for those who make these things of beauty](#)

### B. GS 2 Related

#### **POLITY AND GOVERNANCE**

1. [Govt. making rules for us without us: transgenders](#)
2. [Odisha government's scheme for farmers runs into rough weather](#)

### C. GS 3 Related

#### **ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY**

1. [July hottest month on record for the earth](#)
2. [Microplastics in snow raise pollution worries](#)

#### **SECURITY**

1. [Modi announces new post of Chief of Defence Staff on I-Day](#)

### D. GS 4 Related

### E. Editorials

#### **POLITY AND GOVERNANCE**

1. [A Vision for India's Future](#)

#### **DISASTER MANAGEMENT**

1. [Lessons after the Great Deluge](#)

#### **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

1. [U.S.'s Threat on Withdrawal from WTO](#)
2. [Election in Sri Lanka](#)

#### **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

1. [A Cure to Ebola](#)

### F. Tidbits

1. [New cure for deadly strain of tuberculosis](#)
2. [Pak. observes 'Black Day' on India's I-Day:](#)
3. ['Smart' clothing gives boost to wearable tech](#)

### G. Prelims Facts

1. [Tiwa Tribe:](#)
2. [Diphtheria](#)
3. [Chhattisgarh hikes quota for OBCs, SCs](#)

### H. UPSC Prelims Practise Questions

### I. UPSC Mains Practise Questions

## A. GS 1 Related

### Category: ART AND CULTURE

#### 1. No more joy for those who make these things of beauty

#### Context:

- Kondapalli toy makers claim that, though platforms such as Lepakshi, Amazon and MyStateBazaar endorse the products promoting the craft, such a promotion has barely helped them in their sustenance.

### Kondapalli toys:

- Kondapalli Toys are the toys made of wood in Kondapalli of Krishna district, a village nearby Vijayawada in the state of Andhra Pradesh.
- Bommala Colony translates to Toys Colony in Kondapalli is the place where the art of crafting takes place.
- These toys have received a Geographical Indication Tag.
- These toys are one of the variety of toys assembled in the houses during the festivals of Sankranti and Navratri and is referred as “Bommala Koluva”.
- The art of crafting is a 400 year old tradition.
- The artisans who make the toys are referred as Aryakhastriyas, who have their mention in the Brahmanda Purana.
- They are said to have migrated from Rajasthan in the 16th century to Kondappali and claims their origin to Muktharishi, a sage endowed with skills in arts and crafts by Lord Shiva.

### Details:

- The art form which has got patronage from the rulers in ancient times is in decline due to
  - Lack of profits
  - Time taking to produce toys
  - Influence of western art
  - Fact those younger generations not encouraged towards this art.
- Competition from Chinese machine made toys is their main obstacle.
- They spend 10-20 hours-a-day making a dozen miniature buffaloes that are sold for a mere Rs. 300.
- While they toil their lives away making these toys, sustaining themselves in this competing age is major challenge
- Adding to their troubles is the scarcity of the ‘Tella Poniki’ wood, which gives the toys its unique character. No other wood can be a replacement to make these toys as Tella Poniki is malleable and can be easily chiseled into the desired shape.

### Way forward:

- The toys have a great demand both in abroad and in India.
- If the government sanctions us funds a timely manner, imparts training to the younger generation, coupled with an incentive, the craft can regain its lost glory.

## B. GS 2 Related

### Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

#### 1. Govt. making rules for us without us: transgenders

##### Context:

The Lok Sabha recently passed the Transgender Persons (Protection Of Rights) Bill.

##### Highlights of the Bill:

- According to the Bill, a transgender is a person whose gender does not match with the one assigned at birth and includes transman or transwoman (whether or not such person has undergone sex reassignment surgery or hormone therapy or laser therapy), person with intersex variations, gender-queer and person having such sociocultural identities as ‘kinner’, ‘hijra’, ‘aravani’ and ‘jogta’.
- A transgender person has to obtain a Certificate of Identity which will confer rights and be proof of recognition of identity as a transgender person.
- An application for obtaining such a Certificate should be made to the District Magistrate (DM). The DM will refer such an application to a District Screening Committee.
- A National Council for Transgender (NCT) persons will be set up to advise the central government on policies, and legislation related to transgender persons. It will also monitor and evaluate such policies.
- The NCT will consist of representatives from (i) ministries such as social justice and empowerment, health, minority affairs; (ii) NITI Aayog; (iii) National Human Rights Commission and National Commission for Women; (iv) state governments; (v) nominated members from the transgender community; and (vi) experts from non-governmental organisations.

## Pros and cons

SALIENT FEATURES	COMMUNITY'S RESPONSE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definitions do not differentiate between transgenders, transsexuals, intersex persons and genderqueer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community differentiates between transgender, transsexual and intersex persons and dismisses the 'one-solution fits all' idea</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prohibition against discrimination in education, employment, healthcare, public facilities etc. Also prevents forced labour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of enforceability dilutes provision. Lived experiences riddled with discrimination</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certificate of identity can be obtained at the DM's office and a revised certificate is to be obtained if sex is changed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shuns provision as impinging on their right to self-determination. Fear it'll lead to bureaucratic discrimination</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government welfare measures and provisions of healthcare, including HIV surveillance centres, and sex reassignment surgeries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Step forward but medical community lacks knowledge of transgender bodies</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transgender persons may only change their first name</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prefer to take Guru's name since many have severed ties with their birth family</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting up of a National Council for Transgender persons (NCT), including various Ministers and five transgender persons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desire greater representation in decision making that affects them directly</li> </ul>

SOURCE: PRS INDIA

### Issues:

- The transgender community took a closer look at the Bill that was supposed to protect their rights, and found that barely any of their demands had been included.
- Their main concern is that the government makes rules without consulting them and it does not make any difference to their lives.
- The legislation has been criticised by the transgender community for replacing district screening committees with bureaucratic impediments.
- They have also highlighted that the provisions against discrimination have no enforceability.
- The Bill has also attracted disapproval for only providing separate definitions for intersex persons but no provisions for transgenders.
- The transgender community seek a Bill that would have separate provisions for transgender, transsexual and intersex persons.

## 2. Odisha government's scheme for farmers runs into rough weather

### Context:

The Odisha government's much-hyped Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA) scheme has gone haywire. The authorities are now facing a gigantic task of removing bogus beneficiaries who have already availed of the benefits.

### Details:

- Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had launched the scheme ahead of the simultaneous Lok Sabha and Assembly elections held in April and May 2019.
- He had assured that no eligible beneficiary would be left out of the scheme.
- The State government, which had increased the target of KALIA beneficiaries to 75 lakh families, has stopped disbursement of financial assistance following the revelation about bogus beneficiaries.

### Issues:

- A total of 51 lakh cultivators, loanee and non-loanee farmers, sharecroppers and landless agricultural labourers have been provided with financial assistance under the scheme so far.
- The authorities have now found out that all beneficiaries were not entitled to the benefits under the scheme and have asked the ineligible people to refund the money.
- More than one member of a family have managed to get assistance.
- In a majority of blocks, the number of applicants have outnumbered the number of ration card-holding families.

### KALIA Scheme:

- KALIA scheme is a package for farmers' welfare. KALIA stands for "Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation".
- This scheme was launched to accelerate agricultural prosperity and elimination of poverty.
- All small and marginal farmers along with landless agricultural households, vulnerable agricultural household, landless agricultural labourers and sharecroppers/actual cultivators are eligible under different components of KALIA.
- Financial aid of Rs.25,000 per farm family over five seasons will be provided to small and marginal farmers so that they can purchase seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and use assistance towards labour.
- Financial assistance of Rs 12500/ would be provided to each landless agricultural household for agricultural allied activities such as goat rearing, small layer poultry units, duckery units, fishery kits for fishermen, mushroom cultivation, bee-keeping and so on.
- The vulnerable cultivators/landless agricultural laborers would get financial assistance of Rs 10,000 per family per year to enable them to take care of their sustenance.
- The cultivator/landless agricultural laborers who are in old age, having disability/ disease and are vulnerable for any other reason would benefit from the scheme.

## C.GS 3 Related

**Category:ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY**

## 1. July hottest month on record for the earth

### Context:

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration announced that July was the hottest month on record.

### Details:

- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), tallied up global land and sea temperature recordings from 2019's seventh month and compared them to its 140-year data set, stretching back to 1880.
- It has announced that July 2019 was the hottest month ever recorded on Earth.
- The global average temperature for the month was 1.71 degrees Fahrenheit (0.95 degrees Celsius) above the 20th century average of 60.4 F (15.8 C). It was 0.05 F (0.03 C) warmer than the previous record, set in July 2016.
- Nine of the 10 hottest Julys have occurred since 2005, and the last five have been the hottest Julys ever.

### Reasons:

- A punishing heat wave swept across Europe and then settled over Greenland, where it triggered hundreds of billions of tons of ice melt.
- Sea ice in both the Arctic and Antarctic regions reached 41-year lows as well, according to NOAA.

### Way forward:

- In 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), made up of scientists from all over the world, said that it's crucial to stop global temperatures from warming beyond 2.7 F (1.5 C) above average.
- One of the key messages that comes out very strongly from this report is that we are already seeing the consequences of 1° C (1.8 F) of global warming through more extreme weather, rising sea levels and diminishing Arctic sea ice, among other changes.
- To hold warming below that 2.7 F threshold, the IPCC said, will require rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society

## 2. Microplastics in snow raise pollution worries

### Context:

The new study, conducted by scientists at Germany's Alfred Wegener Institute and Switzerland's Institute for Snow and Avalanche Research, found that microplastic particles can be transported tremendous distances through the atmosphere.

### Details:

- The study shows that minute microplastic particles have been detected in the Arctic and the Alps, carried by the wind and later washed out in the snow.
- It has called for urgent research to assess the health risks of inhalation.
- Infrared imaging technique were used to analyse samples collected between 2015 and 2017 from floating ice in the Fram Strait off Greenland.

- They then compared these with samples taken from from remote Swiss Alps and Bremen in northwest Germany.
- Concentrations of the microparticles in the Arctic were significantly lower than in the European sites, but still substantial.
- The team’s hypothesis for airborne transportation builds on past research conducted on pollen, where experts confirmed that pollen from near the equator ends up in the Arctic.
- Similarly, dust from the Sahara desert can cover thousands of kilometres and end up in northeast Europe.

#### Issues:

- Every year, several million tonnes of plastic litter course through rivers and out to the oceans, where they are gradually broken down into smaller fragments through the motion of waves and the ultraviolet light of the sun.
- These particles, defined as shreds less than five millimeters in length, are later washed out of the air by precipitation, particularly snow.
- The durable properties of plastics make them persistent and slow to degrade in the environment.
- It enters the food chains of even birds, animals and fishes. This results in significant global impacts on wildlife, from marine environment pollution.
- Majority of the microplastic in the snow comes from the air. This raises concerns as to how much plastic is being inhaled, stressing the need for urgent research into the effects on human and animal health.
- Little work had been done to determine the effects of exposure to these particles.

#### Category:SECURITY

### 1. Modi announces new post of Chief of Defence Staff on I-Day

#### Context:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his Independence Day address announced the appointment of a Chief of Defence Staff• (CDS).

#### Details:

- The announcement comes 20 years after a review committee on the Kargil War had suggested it.
- The announcement was made for the creation of the post of Chief of Defence Staff to provide “effective leadership at the top level” to the three wings of the armed forces, and to help improve coordination among them.
- The timing of the announcement is significant because it comes in a year of rapid-fire changes in the top echelons of the Army and Air force.
- At present India’s Prime Minister receives advisory on military matters from the National Security Adviser. This has been especially so after the Defence Planning Committee was created in 2018, with NSA Ajit Doval as its chairman, and the foreign, defence, and expenditure secretaries, and the three Service Chiefs as members.

#### What is the office of the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)?

- The CDS is a high military office that oversees and coordinates the working of the three Services.

- The three forces will continue to have their own chiefs. However, the four-star officers heading these three services will reported to the Chief of Defence Staff.
- It offers seamless tri-service views and single-point advice to the Prime Minister on long-term defence planning and management, including manpower, equipment and strategy, and above all, “jointmanship” in operations.
- The officer concerned will be in a position to advise on matters related to all the three services -- Army, Navy and Air Force -- thus making India's armed forces integrated.
- The Chief of Defence Staff will be a 'first among equals', a fourth four-star officer who will be senior to the three other service chiefs.

### Background:

- The recommendation for creating the post of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) was first made after the 1999 Kargil War.
- A high-level committee that was set up to examine the gaps in the country's security system in the wake of the Kargil War had recommended that the three services should have a Chief of Defence Staff.
- The committee had said this person, a five-star military officer, should be the single-point military adviser to the Defence Minister.
- Besides the high-level committee on Kargil War, a group of ministers that was formed in 2001 to explore necessary reforms required to improve India's national security had also favoured creating the post of Chief of Defence Staff.
- Moving in a similar direction, in 2012, the Naresh Chandra Task Force recommended that post of a permanent chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (CoSC) should be created.
- The CoSC comprises chiefs of the Indian Army, Indian Navy and the Indian Air Force. The senior-most among them would act as the chairman.
- One of the reasons why a decision on creating the post of Chief of Defence Staff could not be taken in the past 20 years was that a political consensus could not be created on it.
- In 2016, the government informed Parliament that this consultation process could not be completed because all political parties had not responded.

### Why was CDS needed?

- The case for a CDS has been built around the argument that it is necessary to have a professional body of the highest standing to facilitate 'jointmanship' and render single-point military advice to the government on matters of national security.
- CDS would play a role in fostering inter-services jointness in terms of budgeting, equipment purchases, training, joint doctrines and planning of military operations-an imperative of modern warfare
- It is believed that this step will make our national security more effective and more economical.
- In the book 'Reforming and Restructuring: Higher Defence Organisation of India', published by Centre for Joint Warfare Studies, Brigadier (Dr) Rajeev Bhutani (Retd) said, "Probably, India is the only country in the world, where the Secretary Department of Defence -- a generalist civil servant drawn from diverse background and who serves in the Ministry of Defence for a fixed tenure -- has been made responsible for 'the Defence of India and every part thereof including preparation for defence'."
- In most democracies, the CDS is seen as being above inter-Service rivalries and the immediate operational preoccupations of the individual military chiefs. The role of the CDS becomes critical in times of conflict.
- Most countries with advanced militaries have such a post, albeit with varying degrees of power and authority. The United States Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCS), for example, is extremely powerful, with a legislated mandate and sharply delineated powers.

## D. GS 4 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!s*

## E. Editorials

### Category:POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

#### 1. A Vision for India's Future

##### Context:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi prescribed the future vision for India in his **Independence Day speech**. enterprises who were anxious about the recent burst of tax activism

##### Visions for the Future:

- Population control.
- Elimination of poverty.
- Conservation of Water, supported by the creation of a separate ministry.
- Regulation of plastic use and management of solid waste.
- Development of tourism.
- Development of local enterprises.
- Indian economy could well be on the way to be a **\$5-trillion economy** in the next five years.
- An extension of 'one nation one tax' to 'one nation, one poll'.

##### Chief of Defence Staff

- He also announced the creation of the position of Chief of Defence Staff:
- To improve **coordination** among forces.
- To restructure the **military-civilian relations** in a manner that suits the security challenges of the present times better.

##### Concerns:

- A **crisis in the economy** is being anticipated, supported by the current slump in rural and urban demand and investment slowdown.
- The appeal to produce locally and consume locally may go against the **globalist prescriptions** of development.
- There are threats to the country's **social fabric**.
- Jammu and Kashmir will need quietness and time to return to normalcy.

### Category:DISASTER MANAGEMENT

#### 1. Lessons after the Great Deluge

##### Context:



In the context of **recurring floods**, Kerala needs to adopt watershed-based master planning and review building byelaws.

### Unique Geography of Kerala

- The state has a steep climb down from the **900m high** elevations of the **Western Ghats to the coast of Malabar**.
- It has resulted in a vast network of **44 fast flowing rivers** that drain the rainwater.
- The rivers support the land fertility and a unique set of flora and fauna.
- However, a substantial portion of revenue lands in the State are wetlands and forests, which has resulted in a shortage of buildable land parcels.

### Large-scale urbanisation

- The drainage basin has seen massive urbanisation over the last two decades.
- The linear development has been along major road networks.
- It has completely ignored the varying and ecologically sensitive landscape.

### What went wrong?

- All landslide and flood-affected areas in the State are in **Ecologically Sensitive Zones (ESZ-1)**, as categorised by the **Madhav Gadgil report**.
- The **Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA)** report prepared by the UN after the floods in 2018 looks at some of the gaps in law and policy.

### Policy Initiatives:

- The **State Action Plans on Climate Change** elucidate measures for disaster-risk reduction in the wake of an increasing frequency of heavy rainfall.
- Plans and laws such as **Integrated Water Resources Management** and **Coastal Regulation Zone Notification** hold key solutions to natural disasters that are linked to water management.

### Challenges:

- The floods in 2018 brought high levels of **silt from the highlands**, reducing river depths and narrowing river mouths. A year later, this silt has not been cleared, reducing the carrying capacity of rivers.
- Most of the laws and policies are not implemented or followed to the letter.
- There is a lack of **holistic and coordinated measures** within planning departments.
- Key pieces of legislation for housing and land use in fragile zones are missing.
- The **Kerala Conservation of Paddy Land and Wetland Act, 2008** has suffered too many dilutions even as rampant reclamation of paddy lands continues.
- A **databank on paddy lands and wetlands**, as mandated by laws, is absent.
- Specialised expertise and experience are not readily available locally for an intensive and sensitive hydrology-driven master plan.

### What needs to be done?

- **Post-disaster management of land and geography** needs creative actions by the authorities and people in order to reverse the damage already done.
- Preparation of a **watershed-based master plan** and legislated guidelines for each major river basin, especially those that impact densely populated settlements.

- A review and revision of building bye-laws for urban and rural areas in accordance with bettering environmental sustainability.
- The judgment of the **High Court of Kerala** mandating that ‘natural drains and streams shall not be obstructed by this development/building permit’, must be implemented.
- The State should facilitate a complete overhaul of processes to hire technical expertise which allows access to necessary skills for disaster risk reduction.
- Serious strategies are required by the government and the people to reclaim **groundwater percolation and flood plains**.

### Master plan focus

1. There must be a demarcation of **ecologically sensitive zones** using existing village survey maps and public participation.
  - There must be clear land use plan for these zones specifying flood plains, protected forest areas, agricultural and plantation zones, with details of the types of crops, building usages permitted and the density of buildings permitted.
2. There must be strategies such as **transfer of development rights** to buildable zones in cities to compensate owners in non-buildable areas.
3. The master plan should focus on permitting only **ecologically sensitive building strategies** for these areas by proposing new construction techniques.
  - Controlled development can be proposed using building height rules, floor area ratio control, and restrictions on cutting and filling natural land.
4. The plan must specify the strategies to make sure that all infrastructure projects are carried out in a **scientific manner** with strict scrutiny.
  - This should include roads built on difficult terrain and all public infrastructure projects in wetlands and the High Ranges.

### Global Best Practices

- **Copenhagen in Denmark** has come up with active cloudburst responsive planning as a process to develop the city in line with climate change needs.
- After the floods in Kerala in 2018, the Chief Minister’s team visited the **Netherlands** to learn how cities with high levels of a water footprint are dealing with climate change issues.

## **Category:INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

### **1. U.S.’s Threat on Withdrawal from WTO**

#### Context:

U.S. President Donald Trump reiterated his rhetoric against countries with a ‘**Developing Country**’ tag for gaining unfair advantages. He also threatened to pull the U.S. out of the **World Trade Organization (WTO)**.

#### The Developing Country Status

- Nearly **two-thirds of the 164 WTO members** have classified themselves as developing countries.
- Countries like China have argued that their developing country status is justified given their **low per capita income**.
- The status allows countries to seek partial exemptions from the WTO's rules for free and fair trade between countries.
- It allows countries to impose **higher tariffs on imports** from other countries.
- It allows to offer **more subsidies to local producers** in order to protect their domestic interests.
- Developed countries find this to be **unfair on their producers** who are put at a relative disadvantage.
- Trump particularly targeted India and China for "taking advantage" of the U.S. by classifying themselves as "developing countries" at the WTO.

### Possible Outcomes of Trump's Move:

- It may further expand the global trade war by using it as a convenient pretext to justify **trade barriers such as retaliatory tariffs** against China and other countries.
- This will help bolster the "**America First**" approach.
- Even if countries like China and India offer to lower their tariffs, Mr. Trump refuse to reciprocate in the way of lowering U.S. tariffs, as it would harm the interests of local American producers.

## 2. Election in Sri Lanka

### Context:

Sri Lanka is again at the **crossroads of Democracy**, with **presidential elections** due before December.

### Opening of Democratic Space

- The **climate of fear and continuing militarisation** were reversed by a great degree.
- With the fear of abductions gone and repression decreasing, dissent and the culture of protests have returned along with greater freedom for the media.
- In the **war-torn regions**, people now take to the streets demanding the release of military-held lands and answers on those who have disappeared in the war.

### Challenges:

- The previous regime, which decimated the **Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam** consolidated considerable power until it was dislodged in January 2015.
- **Economic woes** were rampant as demonstrated by the high level of rural indebtedness.
- Stated plans, from **economic reforms to a constitutional political settlement**, are yet to be implemented.
- The failed 52-day **political coup in October 2018** illustrated a capacity to rapidly politicise state institutions.
- There are allegations of active politicisation of the military and bureaucracy.
- **A Sinhala Buddhist nationalist base**, supporting reactionary forces such as the **Bodu Bala Sena**, has been built by mobilisations based on **Islamophobic discourse**.
- It was further emboldened after the **Easter Sunday attacks** in April.
- The Urban Development Authority under the Defence Ministry has mobilised considerable investment in **urban real estate**, coupled with brutal slum demolitions and evictions for the "beautification" of Colombo.
- Such a social base combined with state power can drastically change the character of state and society.

- Economic concerns could force the new regime to succumb to cut deals with **external powers**, particularly with **China**.
- In the past, Sri Lanka was among the first to sell sovereign bonds in the international markets. And with time, they will align with one or the other great power depending on the fear of the stick they wield and the carrots they offer.

## Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### 1. A Cure to Ebola

#### Context:

A randomised trial has shown two candidate **drugs** to be highly effective in curing Ebola, especially if treatment is started early.

#### Background:

- In 2018, Ebola struck the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**, making 2,619 people ill and killing 1,823 (**overall fatality rate of about 67%**).
- The first step towards finding a cure was taken in 2005 by veteran Congolese microbiologist **Jean Jacques Muyembe Tamfum**, who helped discover Ebola virus in **1976** and is now tasked with bringing the current outbreak under control.
- Tamfum transfused blood of Ebola survivors into eight people with disease and though **antibodies** were not isolated, seven of the eight survived.
- In 2006, antibodies isolated from two survivors led to the development of **mAb114**.

#### Details:

- Earlier, Merck's preventive Ebola vaccine (**rVSV-ZEBOV-GP**), which has had a 97.5% efficacy, helped slow the virus's spread, but was not able to stop the disease in its tracks.
- Now, four candidate drugs — **Zmapp, remdesivir, REGN-EB3 and mAb114** — have been tested in a randomised trial.
- Preliminary results, of nearly 69% of the total number of participants show that two of the candidates, REGN-EB3 and mAb114, were highly effective in treating people infected with the virus.
- **REGN-EB3** is a **cocktail of three antibodies** generated by injecting Ebola virus into a mice model that has a human-like immune system.
- **mAb114**'s development goes back to the Ebola outbreak in 1995 in Congo.
- The **overall mortality** among patients randomly chosen to receive REGN-EB3 and mAb114 was 29% and 34% respectively.
- Further, REGN-EB3 cured the disease in 94% of such patients, while, in the case of mAb114, it was 89%.
- In the case of Zmapp and remdesivir, the overall mortality was way higher at 49% and 53% respectively.
- The striking difference in efficacy was in patients who were **recently infected** (and so had a low viral load).

#### Challenges:

- A high coverage will be required to **prevent future outbreaks**.
- When an outbreak occurs it is difficult to trace **primary contacts** and contacts of contacts

- There is mistrust among the infected people towards authorities and health-care workers.
- We will have to wait till end September or early October before final analysis of all the trial data is performed.

## F. Tidbits

### 1. New cure for deadly strain of tuberculosis

- The new treatment which cures highly drug-resistant strains of tuberculosis and drastically shortens the treatment period has been discovered.
- The three-drug regimen consists of bedaquiline, pretomanid and linezolid — collectively known as the BPaL regimen.
- Pretomanid is the novel compound that has been developed by the New York-based non-profit organisation TB Alliance and which received the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval.
- Last year, there were more than half a million drug resistant TB cases in the world.
- With the treatment involving five pills of the three drugs daily taken over just six months, it is easier to administer.
- Usually and in many places in the world the treatment for (multiple) drug resistant TB would take anything between 18 to 24 months.

### 2. Pak. observes 'Black Day' on India's I-Day:

- Pakistan observed 'Black Day' on the occasion of India's Independence Day to protest New Delhi's move to revoke the special status to Jammu and Kashmir (Article 370).
- Black flags were hoisted on roof tops and vehicles across the country to symbolise the protest.
- Protest rallies were taken out in major cities, while seminars were organised at various places to highlight Pakistan's stand on the Kashmir issue.
- Pakistan has approached the UN Security Council against India's decision with the help of its closest ally, China.
- Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has questioned the international community's silence on the Kashmir issue and warned that it will have severe "repercussions" in the Muslim world, "setting off radicalisation" and "cycles of violence".
- Ladakh lives it up in its transition to Union Territory

### 3. 'Smart' clothing gives boost to wearable tech

- Researchers in Singapore have invented 'smart' clothing they say can boost signals and save battery life on wireless devices such as headphones and smart watches.
- The invention called "metamaterial" allows radio waves like Bluetooth and Wi-Fi to glide across clothing between wearable devices instead of radiating outwards in all directions.
- Metamaterial helps sensors and wearable technology such as Apple Watches and AirPods to establish stronger connections faster and save energy.
- T-shirt is said to increase the wireless connectivity of devices around the body by 1,000 time.
- It is also said that, it could be used for measuring the vital signs of athletes or hospital patients.

## G. Prelims Facts

### 1. Tiwa Tribe:

- Tiwa is an indigenous (Tibeto-Burman race) community inhabiting the states of Assam and Meghalaya and also found in some parts of Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur.
- They are recognized as a Scheduled tribe within the State of Assam.
- They were known as Lalungsin the Assamese Buranjis, Colonial literature and in the Constitution of India, though members of the group prefer to call themselves Tiwa (the people who were lifted from below).
- A striking peculiarity of the Tiwa is their division into two sub-groups, Hill Tiwa and Plains Tiwas, displaying contrasting cultural features.

### 2. Diphtheria

- Diphtheria is a serious bacterial infection usually affecting the mucous membranes of nose and throat.
- The bacterium *Corynebacterium diphtheriae* causes diphtheria.
- Diphtheria typically causes a sore throat, fever, swollen glands and weakness.
- Some strains of this bacterium produce a toxin, and it is this toxin that causes the most serious complications of diphtheria. The bacteria produce a toxin because they themselves are infected by a certain type of virus called a phage.
- Potentially life-threatening complications can occur if the toxin enters the bloodstream and damages other vital tissues.
- Medications are available to treat diphtheria. However, in advanced stages, diphtheria can damage the heart, kidneys and nervous system.
- Diphtheria spreads through Airborne droplets and contaminated items.
- One also come in contact with diphtheria-causing bacteria by touching an infected wound.

### 3. Chhattisgarh hikes quota for OBCs, SCs

- Chhattisgarh Chief Minister has announced to increase the reservation for Other Backward Classes and Scheduled Castes in government jobs and education.
- He announced that 27% reservation would be provided to the Other Backward Classes (OBCs), 13% to Scheduled Castes (SCs) and 32% to the Scheduled Tribes (STs).
- Till now, the OBCs and SCs were getting 14% and 12% reservation, respectively, in educational institutions and government jobs, while the STs had 32% quota.
- A second type of diphtheria can affect the skin, causing the typical pain, redness and swelling associated with other bacterial skin infections. Ulcers covered by a gray membrane also may develop in cutaneous diphtheria.

## H. UPSC Prelims Practise Questions

Q1. With reference to the importance of 'kolam' in the cultural landscape of India, consider the following statements.:

1. It is a traditional way of drawing practiced across the North Eastern states.
2. It is believed to bring prosperity to homes.
3. It is made using rice flour.

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

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

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

Kolam is a traditional way of drawing practiced across south India.

Q2. With reference to the Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA) scheme, consider the following statements:

1. KALIA is a Central Sector Scheme.
2. The scheme was launched to accelerate agricultural prosperity and eliminate poverty.
3. Under the scheme, both landed and landless farmers will be assisted with financial aid.

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

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1 and 3 only

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

KALIA scheme was conceived by the state Government of Odisha to support farmers. All small and marginal farmers along with landless agricultural households, vulnerable agricultural households, landless agricultural labourers and sharecroppers/actual cultivators are eligible under different components of KALIA.

Q3. A population of Tiwa tribe inhabit which among the following states of India?

- a) Tamil Nadu
- b) Assam
- c) Punjab
- d) Madhya Pradesh

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

Tiwa is an indigenous (Tibeto-Burman race) community inhabiting the states of Assam and Meghalaya and some parts of Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur.

**Q4. Consider the following statements:**

1. Kondapalli toys are made in Odisha.
2. Thanjavur dolls are made in Tamil Nadu.

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

- a) 1 only is correct
- b) 2 only is correct
- c) Both 1 and 2 are correct
- d) Neither 1 nor 2 is correct

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

Kondapalli wooden toys are made in Kondapalli, a village near Vijayawada in the state of Andhra Pradesh.

## I. UPSC Mains Practise Questions

1. In modern India, poverty, insufficiency and class conflicts are slowly giving way to a confident, inclusive, empowered nation. Discuss. (250 words, 15 marks)
2. Globalisation affects different countries differently. Do you agree with the statement? Justify your answer with reference to India. (250 words, 15 marks)