

05 Sep 2019: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. GS1 Related

B. GS2 Related

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. [India, Russia against outside influence in internal issues: Narendra Modi](#)
2. [Hong Kong leader scraps extradition law](#)

C. GS3 Related

SECURITY

1. [Azhar, Hafiz and Dawood designated as terrorists](#)

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. [Chinese shoppers adopt facial payments](#)
2. [Modi to launch drive to promote artificial breeding](#)

ECONOMY

1. [India among top 10 nations in gold reserves](#)
2. [External benchmark-based lending must: RBI](#)

D. GS4 Related

E. Editorials

SECURITY

1. [Jurisprudence of the judicial rubber stamp](#)

ECONOMY

1. [Putting accident victims at the centre of vehicles law](#)

HEALTH

1. [Prospective Urban Rural Epidemiology \(PURE\) study](#)

F. Tidbits

1. [Kartarpur Corridor pact stuck over visitor fees](#)
2. [Vienna crowned 'most liveable city'](#)
3. [Students develop machine to paint high-rises](#)
4. [Megalithic sword unearthed in Kannur village](#)
5. [Declare hospitals violence-free zones, say doctors](#)

G. Prelims Facts

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

A. GS1 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

B. GS2 Related

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. [India, Russia against outside influence in internal issues: Narendra Modi](#)

Context:

India and Russia are against “outside influence” in the internal matters of any nation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, after comprehensive talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin. His remarks came against the backdrop of tension between India and Pakistan after New Delhi revoked Jammu and Kashmir’s

Scrapping of Article 370:

- India has categorically told the international community that the scrapping of Article 370 was an internal matter and advised Pakistan to accept the reality.
- Pakistan is trying to internationalise the Kashmir issue.
- Russia has backed India's move on Jammu and Kashmir, saying that the changes in the status are within the framework of the Indian Constitution.
- A joint statement issued said the two sides "underlined the primacy of international law and emphasised their commitment to the purposes and the principles stated in the UN Charter including the inadmissibility of interference in the internal affairs of member states."
- They shared the view that "implementation in good faith of universally recognised principles and rules of international law excludes the practice of double standards or imposition of some States of their will on other States."

Details:

- PM Narendra Modi is in Russia as the chief guest of the 5th Eastern Economic Forum.
 - It is an international forum held each year in Vladivostok, Russia, for the purpose of encouraging foreign investment in the Russian Far East.
 - Eastern Economic Forum is an international forum held each year since 2015 in September.
- PM Modi will also take part in the 20th India-Russia Annual Summit and hold bilateral talks with President Vladimir Putin.
- His visit to the far-east region of Russia is the first by any Indian prime minister.
- The talks between PM Modi and President Putin were aimed at finding new horizons of bilateral cooperation.
- The two leaders discussed ways to bolster cooperation in trade and investment, oil and gas, mining, nuclear energy, defence and security, air and maritime connectivity, transport infrastructure, hi-tech, outer space, counter terrorism and people-to-people ties.
 - A proposal has been made to have a full-fledged maritime route between Chennai and Vladivostok.
 - The two sides noted the pace of progress achieved in the construction of the remaining four of the six nuclear power plants at Kudankulam.
 - Modi said Russia will help train Indian astronauts for the manned space mission — Gaganyaan.
 - Russia expressed its support for India's candidacy for a permanent membership of the UNSC.
 - The sides intend to focus particularly on increasing the effectiveness of countering terrorism, extremism, drug trafficking, cross-border organized crime, and information security threats, in particular by improving the functionality of the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure.
 - Both sides expressed concern over the possibility of an arms race in outer space and advocated peaceful uses of outer space.
 - They reiterated their commitment to further strengthen global non-proliferation.
 - Russia expressed its strong support for India's membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group.
 - The two sides expressed their support for an inclusive peace and Afghan-led and Afghan-owned reconciliation in Afghanistan.
 - They reaffirmed their commitment to building equal and indivisible security architecture in Asia and the Pacific region.
 - The two sides signed 15 agreements/MoUs in areas such as defence, air, and maritime connectivity, energy, natural gas, petroleum and trade.

2. Hong Kong leader scraps extradition law

Context:**Background:**

- Hong Kong is a semi-autonomous region and a part of China.
- The city was an outpost of the British Empire for 156 years, during which time it developed into a global business hub.
- In a 1984 joint declaration, the British agreed to give the city back in 1997, and China agreed to allow a high degree of autonomy for 50 years, including guarantees of free speech, capitalist markets and English common law under a “one country, two systems” arrangement.
- The “Fugitive Offenders and Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Legislation (Amendment) Bill 2019” was proposed by Hong Kong’s government in February 2019.
- It covers mainland China and other jurisdictions that don’t have an extradition agreement with Hong Kong.
- The protests against the extradition bill in the former British colony (Hong Kong) began in March, 2019 but snowballed in June and have since evolved into a push for greater democracy.
- The bill would have allowed extraditions to mainland China where courts are controlled by the Communist Party.

Details:

- Hong Kong’s Chief Executive has finally bowed to a key demand of protesters following three months of unrest and announced the withdrawal of the extradition Bill.
- After refusing for months to scrap the Bill, Chief Executive Carrie Lam conceded.
- The withdrawal was one of the protesters' key demands.
- The other demands are: the retraction of the word "riot" to describe rallies, the release of all arrested demonstrators, an independent inquiry into the police perceived brutality and the right for Hong Kong people to democratically choose their own leaders.

Concerns:

- China has regularly denounced the protests and warned about the impact on Hong Kong's economy.
- China denies it is meddling in Hong Kong's affairs but warned that it would not sit idly by if the unrest threatened Chinese security and sovereignty.
- It has also expressed concern about the damage to the city's economy, which is on the verge of a recession.
- However, the major concern is that it is not clear if the bill's withdrawal would help end the unrest.

C. GS3 Related

Category: SECURITY**1. Azhar, Hafiz and Dawood designated as terrorists****Context:**

Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) chief Masood Azhar, Hafiz Saeed of the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), his deputy Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi and underworld don Dawood Ibrahim who planned and executed the 1993 Mumbai serial blasts are the first four persons designated as “terrorists” under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

Concerns:

Concerns have been raised over the law, saying it could also be used against political opponents and civil society activists who spoke against the government may be branded as “terrorists.”

Details:

- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) issued a gazette notification declaring the four as 'terrorists' under clause (a) of sub-section (1) of section 35 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967.
 - The recently-amended Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act allows government to designate individuals as terrorists.
 - Previously only an organisation could be designated as a terrorist organisation.
 - Recent amendment empowers the NIA to seize properties, which previously required permission from the Director General of Police.
 - It allows NIA officers, of rank of Inspector or above, to investigate cases. Previously, only Deputy Superintendent or Assistant Commissioner of Police or above could do so.
- The UAPA was first amended in 2004, then in 2008 and in 2013.
 - The 2004 amendment was to ban organisations for terror activities, under which 34 outfits, including the LeT and the JeM were banned.
- To designate Azhar, the MHA mentioned five terror cases, including the Pulwama attack.
- Hafiz Saeed has been designated as a terrorist for his involvement in four cases — Red Fort attack (2000), Rampur attack (2008), 26/11 Mumbai attack (2008) and attack on a BSF convoy at Udhampur in Jammu & Kashmir (2015).
- Lakhvi has been designated as a terrorist for his involvement in four cases, including 26/11 Mumbai terror attack.
- The ministry said Dawood ran an international underworld crime syndicate and was involved in perpetrating acts of terror, promoting religious fundamentalism, terror financing, arms smuggling, circulation of counterfeit currency, money laundering, narcotics, extortion and benami real estate business in India and abroad. Dawood was also involved in assassination attempts on prominent personalities to create social disharmony and terrorise common man.
- It is asserted that the designations were in alignment with laws in the European Union (EU) countries, the U.S.A., China and Israel and even in Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Conclusion:

The designation of an individual as a global terrorist by the United Nations is associated with sanctions, including travel bans, freezing of assets and an embargo against procuring arms. The UAPA Bill, however, does not provide any such detail.

Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. Chinese shoppers adopt facial payments

Context:

China has embraced the facial payment technology.

What is facial payment technology?

Under the facial payment technology, the customers simply make a purchase by posing in front of point-of-sale (POS) machines equipped with cameras, after linking an image of their face to a digital payment system

Details:

- China's mobile payment infrastructure is one of the most advanced in the world, but the new systems which require only face recognition is being rolled out nationwide.
- The software is already widely used, often to monitor citizens it has been credited with catching criminals.
- Alipay the financial arm of ecommerce giant Alibaba has been leading the charge in China with devices already in 100 cities.
- Supporters of the technology call it a better option, as, in the traditional way, it's very dangerous to enter the password if someone is standing next to you. Now the payment can be completed with facial recognition, which is believed to be a more secure mode of payment.

Concerns:

- The Facial payment technology has raised major concerns over data security and privacy.
- Authorities have come under fire for using it to crack down and monitor dissent, particularly in China's surveillance-heavy region of Xinjiang.
- There have been concerns that the state could use this data for their own purposes, such as surveillance, monitoring, the tracking of political dissidents, social and information control, ethnic profiling, as in the case with Uighurs in Xinjiang.
- It is believed that it could even be used for predictive policing.

2. Modi to launch drive to promote artificial breeding**Context:**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to launch a major six-month drive to promote artificial insemination in cattle in 600 districts which have less than 50% coverage of the technology.

Issue:

Though some States such as Kerala and Tamil Nadu use artificial insemination rates for more than 70% of their cattle, currently, the national coverage is only 30%.

Details:

- The main benefit of using sex-sorted semen is that the farmer can ensure that only female calves or heifers are born.
- It would help in increasing farmers' income.
- Artificially inseminating cows using semen from genetically superior bulls would also improve the fertility and milk production capacity of the calves they produce, thus incentivising farmers to keep them longer rather than abandoning them.
- Of the 11.9 crore semen doses produced in the country every year, only 10 lakh are sex-sorted.
- Uttarakhand, in March 2019, became the country's first state to produce sex-sorted semen, which can enhance the possibility of birth of female calves to ninety percent.
- Currently, only four centres including two owned by the government produce such semen.
- The government would soon open 11 such centres across the country to promote widespread adoption of the technology and reduce costs.

Concerns:

- The government-subsidised price of a single semen dose is only Rs. 20; sex-sorted semen, on the other hand, can cost 500 to Rs. 600 per dose.
- Of the 11.9 crore semen doses produced in the country every year, only 10 lakh are sex-sorted.
- Using sex-sorted semen which increases the possibility of a female calf to about 90% drastically increases the cost of insemination, as the technology is still new in India.

Sex-sorting:

- Sex-sorting is a means of choosing what type of sperm cell is to fertilize the egg cell.
- Several conventional techniques of centrifugation or swim-up are used.
- Newly applied methods such as flow cytometry expand the possibilities of sperm sorting and new techniques of sperm sorting are being developed.
- It can be used to sort out sperm that are most healthy, as well as for determination of more specific traits, such as sex selection in which spermatozoa are separated into X- (female) and Y- (male) chromosome bearing populations based on their difference in DNA content.
- The resultant 'sex-sorted' spermatozoa are then able to be used in conjunction with other assisted reproductive technologies such as artificial insemination or in-vitro fertilization (IVF) to produce offspring of the desired sex - in farming animals but also in human medical practice.

Category: ECONOMY

1. India among top 10 nations in gold reserves

Context:

India has surpassed the Netherlands to move into the list of top 10 countries in terms of total gold reserves.

Details:

- According to the World Gold Council, India has gold reserves totalling 2 tonnes, which is marginally higher than the Netherlands' reserves of 612.5 tonnes.
- According to the World Gold Council, the U.S. leads the country list with total gold reserves of 8,133.5 tonnes followed by Germany with 3,366.8 tonnes.
- In terms of individual countries, India ranks 9th since the International Monetary Fund (IMF) occupies the third position after the U.S. and Germany.
- India's entry into the list of top ten countries comes at a time when the quantum of monthly purchases is the lowest in over three years.
- India's gold reserves have grown substantially in the past couple of decades from 357.8 tonnes in the first quarter of 2000 to the current 618.2 tonnes.
- India's neighbour Pakistan has seen its standing unchanged at the 45th position with total gold reserves of 64.6 tonnes.

2. External benchmark-based lending must: RBI

Context:

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has made it mandatory for all banks to link floating rate loans to retail customers and loans to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) to an external benchmark.

Details:

- It has been observed that due to various reasons, the transmission of policy rate changes to the

lending rate of banks under the current MCLR framework has not been satisfactory

- The move is aimed at faster transmission of monetary policy rates.
- Banks have been reluctant to cut interest rates despite the RBI lowering the repo rate by 110 basis points (bps) between February and August, 2019.
- Some banks have already started to link home and auto loan rates to the repo rate, which is an external benchmark.
- At present, interest rates on loans are linked to a bank's marginal cost of fund-based interest rate (MCLR). Banks can choose from one of the four external benchmarks — repo rate, three-month treasury bill yield, six-month treasury bill yield or any other benchmark interest rate published by Financial Benchmarks India Private Ltd.
- It has to be noted that adoption of multiple benchmarks by the same bank is not allowed within a loan category.
- The interest rate under external benchmark shall be reset at least once in three months.
- Existing loans and credit limits linked to the MCLR, base rate or BPLR, would continue till repayment or renewal.

D. GS4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: SECURITY

1. Jurisprudence of the judicial rubber stamp

Context

- In August 2019, amendments to the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act ("UAPA"), India's signature anti-terrorism legislation, allowing the Central government to designate individuals as "terrorists", caused a furore.
- Critics warned that vesting such **sweeping powers in the hands of the political executive would prove to be a recipe for abuse**, and for political and social persecution.
- In response, it was argued that the **UAPA provided for a system of checks and balances** which would ensure that governmental abuse could be swiftly reviewed and rectified.

How the UAPA Tribunal Works?

A look at how the UAPA functions presently suggests that the **defenders of the law are too optimistic in their faith in "institutional correctives"**.

- **Before the 2019 amendments**, the UAPA could be used to ban associations and not individuals. To this end, the UAPA required, and **still requires that the ban must clearly set out the grounds on which the government has arrived at its opinion**; and it may then be **contested by the banned association before a Tribunal, consisting of a sitting High Court judge**.
- As a number of judgments have held, the task of a **UAPA Tribunal is to carefully scrutinise the decision of the government**, keeping in mind the fact that banning an organisation or a group **infringes the crucial fundamental freedoms of speech and association**.

Ban on Jamaat-e-Islami

- Kashmir-based Islamist political party was banned for five years by the Govt accusing it of supporting militancy by a recent **UAPA Tribunal Order**
- Created in 1942, JeI participated in Indian elections for more than two decades before becoming engaged with separatist politics following the onset of militancy in Kashmir in 1989.

Sealed covers and evidence

- The government's ban on the **JeI, J&K** was based on its opinion that the association was **"supporting extremism and militancy"**, "indulging in anti-national and subversive activities", and activities to "disrupt the territorial integrity of the nation".
- In support of this opinion, the government said that there existed a **large number of First Information Reports ("FIRs") against various members** of the association.
- Among other things, the JeI, J&K responded that for almost all of the FIRs in question, the **people accused had nothing to do with the association**. This, it was argued, could be proven by looking at the association's membership register, which had been seized by the government.
- One would think that such a case can be resolved straightforwardly: **had the government managed to prove that there existed sufficient evidence of wrongdoing against members of the JeI, J&K**, that would justify banning the organisation altogether.
- It is here, however, that things began to **get murky because the government then fell back on the increasingly convenient "sealed cover jurisprudence"**, submitting material that it claimed was too sensitive to be disclosed.
- Notably, the **evidence was not disclosed even to the association and its lawyers**, who were contesting the ban.

Concerns with tribunal

- These tribunals **have given the Governments vast leeway to Prove the Govt's view and its case**, with this the tribunals have departed from some of the most fundamental principles of fair procedure, and act as little more than judicial rubber stamps
- Now, it would appear to be a very basic principle of justice that if an association is to be banned for unlawful activities, then the material on the basis of which that ban is justified **is put to the association so that it has a chance to defend itself**.
- To take a decision on the legality of a ban **by looking at secret material that is withheld even from the association itself is exactly akin to condemning a man unheard**.
- It is **kangaroo-court style justice**, which has no place in a modern democracy. However, this is exactly what the Tribunal did.
- To this day, **neither the association nor anyone reading the Tribunal's opinion has any way of knowing what the evidence was**.
 - In essence, therefore: the fundamental freedoms of speech and association have been violated on the basis of secret evidence passed from the government to the Tribunal; an association numbering in at least the thousands has been shut down for five years, and all its members made putatively unlawful, potentially criminal without even being told why.
- The testimony of a senior and former office bearer of the JeI, J&K about the association's efforts to distance itself from "unlawful activities", "extremism", and "terrorism" went un rebutted
- More importantly, as the JeI, J&K argued, **a look at its membership register would make it clear that its members had nothing to do with criminal activities**.
 - The problem, however, was that its membership register had been seized by the government.
 - Consequently, the JeI, J&K made a rather common-sense argument: **let the government produce the membership register, since it was in its possession**.

Justice denied by the Tribunal

- The government, however, refused to do so, and **instead submitted even this piece of evidence in a**

sealed cover.

- And the Justice of the Tribunal's response to this was that "the respondent Association has **not led any evidence to substantiate their defence that their office-bearers or members are not involved in the kind of activities alleged against them**".
- In short, therefore, **the Tribunal wanted the association to prove that their members were not committing illegal activities**, while the main source of evidence that the association would rely upon to prove exactly that, was in the hands of the government — and the association was not allowed to rely on it.

If, therefore, we take a step back and look at the Tribunal's opinion, two aspects stand out starkly.

- First, a five-year ban upon an association — going to the very heart of the freedom of speech and association, potentially making all persons associated with it criminal — **was upheld by a judicial forum on the basis of secret evidence** that the association had neither the chance to see, nor to rebut.
- And second, the most valuable piece of evidence **that the association had to defend itself was seized from it by the very government that had banned it**; and not only did the Tribunal wink at this, but then used the **absence of that piece of evidence against the association that it had been seized from, and in favour of the government that had seized it**.

Conclusion

- These "departures" have been made boundless, and boundlessly manipulable to the extent that they have swallowed up the most basic rules of procedural justice and fairness.
- What we effectively have now, is this situation: on the one hand, **every leeway is provided to the government, loopholes have been created where non-existed**, and every procedural and evidentiary standard diluted, while on the other, associations (comprising Indian citizens) are held to impossible standards in order to disprove the case against them.
- This is **not a jurisprudence that respects constitutional democracy or fundamental freedoms** such as speech and association.
- Rather, it is a **jurisprudence of the judicial rubber stamp**: courts acting to legitimise and enable governmental overreach, rather than protecting citizens and the rights of citizens against the government.
- It is a situation where in the words of a famous English judge the judiciary has gone from "lions under the throne" to "mice squeaking under a chair in the Home Office" – with "consequences that the nation will one day bitterly regret".

Category: ECONOMY

1. Putting accident victims at the centre of vehicles law

Introduction

- It is well known that India is one of the most accident-prone countries in the world, accounting for nearly **1,50,000 deaths — 10% of all motor vehicles-related fatalities worldwide**.
- However, the debate often revolves around how to minimize road accidents by incorporating deterrents into laws and **ignores the interests of the victims**.

Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act 2019

- The amended Act gives the victims some respite as it provides for an **enhanced insurance** compensation of ₹5 lakh in case of death of a person in a traffic accident and ₹2.5 lakh where there is

“grievous hurt”.

- The compensation to be awarded following **hit-and-run accidents** has also been raised to ₹2 lakh when a victim dies and ₹50,000 when he/she suffers a grievous injury.
- Additionally, the Act now requires **insurance companies and the government to notify schemes relating to cashless treatment** during the ‘Golden Hour’ — the period of first 60 minutes from the occurrence of an accident when the risk of fatality can be minimised to the greatest extent.
- Further, it mandates **compulsory insurance of all road users, including pedestrians**, who will be covered through a ‘**Motor Vehicle Accident Fund**’.
- Lastly, it also provides for interim relief to be provided to the claimants.

Institutional Flaws

- The **National Crime Records Bureau** does not collate data pertaining to the socio-economic and demographic profile of victims of traffic accidents is a testament to the relative apathy shown by the state machinery.

Therefore these provisions, well-intentioned, are no doubt steps in the right direction. However, much more needs to be done if the accident victims are to be provided complete justice.

Unsettled Issues

1. First, closer **attention needs to be paid to the formula used to calculate the quantum of compensation**.
 - In the case of **Arun Kumar Agarwal & Anr v. National Insurance Co. Ltd & Ors (2010)**, the deceased was a homemaker.
 - The **Accident Claim Tribunal** reduced the amount of compensation from the calculated sum of ₹6 lakh to a sum of ₹2,60,000, stating **that she was unemployed**.
 - In light of the same, on appeal, the Supreme Court commented that: “The time has come for the **Parliament to have a rethink on properly assessing homemakers’ and householders’ work and suitably amending the provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act...** for giving compensation when the victims are women and homemakers.”
 - The **amended Act, however, does not account for such nuances**.
2. Second, many of the problems with the Motor Vehicles Act highlighted by the apex court in the case of **Jai Prakash v. M/S. National Insurance Co. & Ors (2009)** either remain unaddressed or are inadequately addressed by the amended version.
 - For instance, though **vehicle users who don’t give passage to emergency ambulance vehicle** are liable to be punished with fines, such punitive measures are likely to **remain ineffective** in the absence of an effective implementation mechanism.
 - Further, other factors that lead to a **poor response time, including lack of road infrastructure**, also need to be taken into account.
3. Another problem highlighted by the apex court for which the new **Act does not provided any remedy is that of procedural delays on the part of tribunals in claims settlement**.
 - The provision for interim compensation is bound to bring some respite to the victims but another unaddressed concern makes this stipulation susceptible to criticism.
4. An **absence of in-built safeguards in the compensation mechanism** allows for the money to be frittered away by unscrupulous relatives, touts and agents, especially in cases where the victim or his

nearest kin are poor and illiterate.

- It is to address this concern that the Supreme Court in Jai Prakash suggested **payment in the form of monthly disbursements of smaller amounts over a longer period of time** to victims or their kin, as against a lump-sum award.
- This has been overlooked by the new Act.

Way forward

- Understandably, many of the points raised above **cannot be specified statutorily**.
- Hence, the government needs to notify an institutional framework which encourages advocacy for victims and facilitates access to the various services.

Category: HEALTH

1. Prospective Urban Rural Epidemiology (PURE) study

Context

- According to the PURE study published in the Lancet, **Cardio Vascular Disease (CVD)** continues to be the leading cause of death across the world, but there are significant variations between rich and poor nations.

Categorization

- The **High Income Countries (HIC)** in the study were Canada, Saudi Arabia, Sweden and United Arab Emirates.
- The **Middle-Income Countries (MIC)** were Argentina, Brazil, Chile, China, Columbia, Iran, Malaysia, Palestine, Philippines, Poland, Turkey and South Africa.
- The **Low Income Countries (LIC)** were Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Tanzania and Zimbabwe.

Details

- CVD is the leading cause for death overall, there have been some transitions, particularly in the **high-income countries, which have managed to reduce the number of deaths from CVD**.
 - While in **HIC**, death from cancer is twice that of CVD, in **LIC**, including India, death from cardiac disease was three times that of cancer.
- The study establishes that though **risk factors** are lower in low income countries, factors such as **access to quality health care and lack of insurance** have a play, leading to the mortality
 - Access to **affordable, quality health care** is still a dream in many pockets in India.
 - A great amount of out-of-pocket expenditure (according to Health Ministry data for 2014-15, nearly 62.6 % of India's total health expenditure) often frustrates continuation of treatment, or adherence to drug regimens.
- In another paper, also published in the Lancet, on '**Modifiable risk factors, cardiovascular disease, and mortality**', researchers established indoor air pollution as an emerging source of risk for cardiovascular disease in LIC and MIC.

Steps that can be initiated

- Some States have shown limited successes with government-sponsored health insurance schemes, the Centre's Ayushman Bharat Yojana will have to take much of the burden of hospitalisation for complications of non-communicable diseases.

- Therefore National and State schemes running on mission mode, including the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, CVD and Stroke **will have to step up efforts to target people at risk with life-saving interventions.**
- With better **insurance and improving hospital standards**, it is possible for **LIC** to head towards similar outcomes
- The need of the hour is out-of-the-box solutions combined with inspiration from models of those who seem to have belled this particular cat.
- Any plans that target the risk factors and prevent the onset of non-communicable diseases will clearly have to be truly game-changing, and incorporate the environmental angle as well.

F. Tidbits

1. Kartarpur Corridor pact stuck over visitor fees

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah has asserted that the Modi government was committed to completing the Kartarpur Sahib corridor within the stipulated time.
- The assurance of the Home Minister came a day after India and Pakistan held a meeting of the technical committee at Zero Point in Gurdaspur in Punjab on the opening of the corridor, amid fresh tensions between the two countries after Jammu and Kashmir's special status was scrapped.
- The agreement on the Kartarpur Corridor project, could not be signed after Pakistan declared that it would charge fees from the visitors. The two sides, which met in Attari, were in agreement on most points, but the final pact stalled over key differences.
- In a historic first, a Sikh Jatha or procession arrived in Amritsar in August 2019 from Nankana Sahib, the birth place of Guru Nanak, in Pakistan.
- The event was part of the celebrations regarding the Guru and was the first time that such a procession was received in India in the last seven decades.

Kartarpur Corridor:

- The corridor will connect Darbar Sahib in Pakistan's Kartarpur with Dera Baba Nanak shrine in Gurdaspur district and facilitate visa-free movement of Indian Sikh pilgrims.
- The pilgrims will have to just obtain a permit to visit Kartarpur Sahib.
- It was established in 1522 by Sikh faith founder Guru Nanak Dev.
- Pakistan and India are still discussing the modalities regarding the opening of the corridor at Narowal, around 125 km from Lahore, on the occasion of 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak in November.

2. Vienna crowned 'most liveable city'

- An annual survey by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) presented a list of the world's most liveable cities due to increase in cases of petty crimes and poor air quality.
- Each year, the EIU gives 140 cities scores out of 100 on a range of factors such as living standards, crime, transport infrastructure, access to education and healthcare, as well as political and economic stability.
- Austria's capital Vienna has retained its ranking as the world's most liveable city.
- Vienna — known for its convenient public transport, refreshing Alpine tap water and varied cultural life — scored 99.1 points out of 100.
- Vienna once again came ahead of Melbourne, which had held the top ranking for seven years until losing it to Vienna in 2018.
- The top two cities were followed by Sydney, Osaka and Calgary.
- Europe claimed eight of the top 20 spots, with cities in Japan, Australia, New Zealand and Canada making up the rest.

- For the first time, the index noted the effects of climate change on liveability, with New Delhi plunging in the rankings to 118th (a drop of six ranks) and Cairo at 125th place due to poor air quality, undesirable average temperatures and inadequate water provision.

3. Students develop machine to paint highrises

- Electronics and Communication Engineering student at Amrita Engineering College has developed a Wallpbot - the prototype of a machine to paint high-rises without human involvement.
- This was tested at The Business Incubator (TBI), Amrita University.
- The final-year student did some research and found that wall painters face a lot of health hazards.
- According to WHO, these workers are in a high-risk category since they are exposed to toxic chemicals and lead in paint which leads to long-term and health issues and diseases like cancer.
- As a solution, they have created a 3D-animated model of a robot that could paint the walls.

4. Megalithic sword unearthed in Kannur village

- The State Archaeology Department in Kozhikode has unearthed a Megalithic era iron sword, a chisel and a few decorated pottery from a rock-cut cave at Pothuvachery in Kannur district.
- The 105-cm sword, believed to be 2,500 years old, was found during a scientific clearance at the historical site.
- It is however believed that the sword is not a rare one. Previously, a sword was discovered from a similar rock-cut cave from a site at Kuruvattur in Kozhikode.
- The implements indicate the technological advancement of the Megalithic people.

5. Declare hospitals violence-free zones, say doctors

- The Indian Medical Association (IMA) reacting to the Health Ministry's proposed draft Bill, has said, that the "Laws are needed but it is not enough,".
- The Health Ministry's proposed draft Bill states that anyone who attacks a doctor at a hospital may be jailed for up to 10 years or fined 10 lakh.
- The Ministry has asked for feedback from the public on how to improve the draft Healthcare Service Personnel and Clinical Establishments (Prohibition of Violence and Damage to Property) Bill, 2019.
- IMA has requested that the government declare hospitals as safe zones with structured security.
- It has written to the Prime Minister stating that the safety and security of the hospitals have to be ensured in the interest of the patients.
- It is opined that inadequacies of infrastructure and human resources in public sector and out of pocket expenditure in the private sector are the root causes of violence.
- High expectations, lack of understanding of limitations, patient load, and lack of professional counselling are also contributory factors.
- It is not possible to provide quality treatment to the public in an atmosphere of fear and violence. Violence in the hospitals will only increase the sufferings of the patients.
- The IMA has been engaging the Central Government on this issue through an Inter-Ministerial Committee right from 2015.

G. Prelims Facts

Nothing here for today!!!

H. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Eastern Economic Forum is an international forum always held in Vladivostok, Russia
2. It is held biannually

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

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

Answer: a

Explanation:

Eastern Economic Forum is an international forum held each year in Vladivostok, Russia, since 2015 in September. It is held, for the purpose of encouraging foreign investment in the Russian Far East.

Q2. Consider the following statements:

1. Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act 2019, does not allows government to designate individuals as terrorists.
2. It allows National Investigation Agency officers, of rank of Inspector or above, to investigate cases.

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

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

Answer: b

Explanation:

The recently-amended Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act allows government to designate individuals as terrorists. Previously only an organisation could be designated as a terrorist organisation. Recent amendment empowers the NIA to seize properties, which previously required permission from the Director General of Police. It allows NIA officers, of rank of Inspector or above, to investigate cases. Previously, only Deputy Superintendent or Assistant Commissioner of Police or above could do so.

Q3. Consider the following statements:

1. Sex-sorted semen can be used to ensure that only female calves or heifers are born.
2. Artificial insemination can improve the fertility and milk production capacity of the calves they produce.

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

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

The main benefit of using sex-sorted semen is that the farmer can ensure that only female calves or heifers are born. Artificially inseminating cows using semen from genetically superior bulls would also improve the fertility and milk production capacity of the calves they produce, thus incentivising farmers to keep them longer rather than abandoning them.

Q4. Consider the following statements:

1. Darbar Sahib Kartarpur shrine was established by Sikh faith founder Guru Nanak Dev.
2. Kartarpur gurdwara is on the banks of River Ravi

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

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

The Kartarpur shrine in Pakistan's Narowal district across the river Ravi is where Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of Sikhism, spent his final days. The shrine is highly revered by the Sikh community. It was established in 1522 by Sikh faith founder Guru Nanak Dev. The Kartarpur shrine has one of the last copies of the original Guru Granth Sahib; there are some who believe that it contains not only the wisdom of the 10 Gurus but is itself the 11th and last Guru.

I. UPSC Mains Practise Questions

1. Violence on doctors and hospitals is a complex phenomenon and will require multidimensional institutional response. A law for deterrence alone might not have the desired impact. Discuss. (15 Marks, 250 Words).
2. Chinese shoppers have adopted facial payments in cashless drive. What are the concerns that facial payment system rises. Is it feasible to adopt such a system in India? Comment. (15 Marks, 250 Words).

