

25 Sep 2019: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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Category: SOCIAL ISSUES

1. Forensic laboratory constitutes special team for POCSO cases

Context:

In a move aimed at fast-tracking cases of crime against children, the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) has constituted a team of six officials to concentrate on evidence pertaining to the **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act and rape**.

Issue:

The Issue of pendency of cases of sexual assault against women and children has been covered in 10th September 2019 Comprehensive News Analysis, under GS Paper 2, Polity and Governance.

Details:

- Since Forensic evidence in crimes against women and children is a priority for FSL, the team would work on DNA samples, cyber evidence and other evidence required for POCSO and rape cases, which will expedite the proceedings.
- The team will have six officials under the technical supervision of the head of biology department.
- FSL has also got sanction from the government to hire 80 officials on different posts for the Crime Scene Management team, who will work round-the-clock to visit the spots and inspect the crime scene.
- Timely evidence collection is extremely important as evidence tends to get destroyed or ignored if there is a delay in collecting them from the scene of crime, thereby affecting the quality of investigation, hence, the need for a dedicated team.
- The move has been taken in a bid to bust the general perception among criminals that nothing will happen.

B. GS2 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

C. GS3 Related

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. No more waste mounds on Siachen glacier

Context:

The Indian Army has removed 130 tonnes of garbage from the Siachen Glacier and is cutting potential trash in rations.

Issue:

- On average, 236 tonnes of waste is generated every year on Siachen glacier.
- The biggest challenge is the high altitude as most posts are located between 18,000 and 21,000 feet.
 - Bana post is the highest on the glacier close to 22,000 feet.
 - At 18,000-19,000 feet, Indian and Pakistani posts face each other.
 - Beyond 20,000 feet, it is only India.
- Nothing degrades at sub-zero temperatures, so everything had to be brought down.

What is being done?

- The army is looking to cut waste in the rations and utilities delivered on the glacier and make Siachen garbage-free in 12-15 years.
- Earlier, waste disposal work was fragmented and intermittent.
- Based on a 2018 **concept note on waste management** on the glacier, the Army has made bringing down waste a part of the **Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)** for troops.
- The capacity of each person to carry is 10-15 kg due to the extreme weather.
- Since then, nearly 130 tonnes of waste has been brought down from the Siachen Glacier and disposed of.
- The three types of wastes are disposed of differently.
 - **Biodegradable waste** is rolled using baling machines.

- **Non-biodegradable, non-metallic waste:** three incinerators have been set up. The waste is burnt in the incinerators but they do not produce Carbon Monoxide. The ash is used as manure.
- **Metallic waste:** there are three extrication centres. Industrial crushers will be procured to crush it and send it down.
- The Army has collaborated with the civil administration there and barrels have been painted and set up in villages around to segregate waste.

Conclusion:

The process of waste generation is essentially rooted in the survival of troops present on the glacier and their need to be operationally prepared and logistically supported to undertake combat operations in such terrain and weather conditions. Since every item inducted into the glacier is a potential source of waste, the entire process of waste generation needs to be viewed holistically through total tonnage inducted into the glacier for requisite logistics support to these troops.

Operation Meghdoot:

- Operation Meghdoot was a code-name for the Indian Armed Forces operation to capture the Siachen Glacier in the Kashmir region, precipitating the Siachen Conflict.
- It was launched on 13 April 1984.
- This military operation was the first assault launched in the highest battlefield in the world.
- The military action resulted in Indian troops gaining control of the entire Siachen Glacier.

Siachen Glacier:

- Siachen is a 76.4 kilometre-long glacier in the Karakoram range.
- It covers around 10,000 square kilometres of uninhabited terrain.
- It sits extending across two disputed boundaries - with Pakistan and China.
- For the last 33 years, Indian troops have been deployed on the world's highest and coldest battlefield. They safeguard the nation's frontiers in temperatures of -40 to -50 degrees Celsius.
- The Siachen Glacier presents a unique set of environmental challenges for the human body, which has to make great adjustments to function at such extreme altitudes.
- Low oxygen levels, an increase in blood pressure due to reduced barometric pressure at high altitude, extreme cold, high levels of ultraviolet radiation and low humidity are just some of the adversities that Indian Army endures.

Category: ECONOMY

1. India accepts RCEP tips on investments

Context:

While India has not yet signed the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement, it has accepted the suggestions of other countries regarding rules on investments.

Concerns:

- Indian laws currently have a provision wherein companies investing in the country can be made to transfer technology or know-how to their domestic counterparts.
- The government and Reserve Bank of India also currently impose a cap on the royalties a domestic company can pay to its foreign parent or partner, for certain kinds of investments.

- These restrictions have been seen as major hindrances to investing in India, and other RCEP countries have argued strongly for their removal.

Details:

- India and the other RCEP countries are currently in the final phase of negotiations in Vietnam.
- India has so far agreed to several provisions that bring it in line with the investment rules applicable in most comparable countries, including:
 - Banning host countries from mandating that the investing companies transfer technology and training to their domestic partners
 - Removing the cap on the quantum of royalties domestic companies can pay their foreign partners.
- If the RCEP agreement is signed, these rules are expected to attract greater investment in India from the other 15 RCEP countries.
- While there is apprehension in the industry that removing the cap on royalty payments would lead to increased outflow in foreign exchange and deplete the ability of domestic firms to pay dividends to shareholders, there is also the view that removal of these restrictions will result in increased investments in India.

Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), its significance, India's concerns, etc. have been covered in great detail in 29th July 2019 Comprehensive News Analysis.

2. Insurers can tweak health products

Context:

IRDAI has notified a set of guidelines likely to make it easier for health insurers to tweak certain features of the cover provided to individuals.

Details:

- It has allowed insurance companies to do minor modifications such as changes in frequency of premium payments, change in policy wordings on certification basis without waiting for its approval.
- The guidelines include the one permitting collection of premium in installments and another increasing the maximum entry age.
- However, Insurers will have to ensure that the proposed modifications will not impact the benefit structure of the product, including the manner of settlement of the underlying benefits.
- The minor modifications proposed are to be placed before the Product Management Committee (PMC) of the respective insurance company and the PMC will have to approve the proposed minor modifications before they are implemented.
- IRDAI will issue a new Unique Identity Number (UIN) for the modified product.

What is the significance?

- General and standalone health insurers can now make changes in the sum insured options, decrease the minimum or increase the maximum premiums, lower the minimum entry age or increase the maximum entry age.
 - At present, the maximum entry age for a health insurance policy is 65 years.
- It is believed that this move would help in making the distribution of insurance products better and also help increasing transparency in the product offering.
- These guideline frameworks have also made the implementing process faster for the insurer compared to the earlier longer filing process.

Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDAI)

- The IRDAI is an autonomous, statutory body tasked with regulating and promoting the insurance and re-insurance industries in India.
- It was established by an act of Parliament known as the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority Act, 1999.
- It is headquartered at Hyderabad.
- IRDAI:
 - Protects the rights of insurance policyholders.
 - Provides registration certification to life insurance companies.
 - Renews, modifies, cancels or suspends the registration certificate as and when appropriate.
 - Promotes efficiency in the conduct of insurance business.
 - Regulates professional organisations connected with insurance and reinsurance business.
 - Regulates investment of funds by insurance companies.
 - Adjudicates disputes between insurers and intermediaries or insurance intermediaries.

3. RBI places withdrawal curbs on depositors of PMC Bank

Context:

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed restrictions on Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative (PMC) Bank, under which the depositors cannot withdraw more than Rs. 1,000 from their accounts.

Details:

- The directions, which have been imposed under Sub-section (1) of Section 35A of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 has barred the lender from extending any fresh loans or making any investments, except in government securities.
- A former chief general manager (CGM) of RBI has been appointed as an administrator to the bank.
- The PMC Bank has been barred from granting, renewing and loans and advances, make any investments, accept fresh deposits, etc, without the prior written approval from the RBI.
- The curbs will remain for six months from September 23, 2019 and could be extended further if the central bank desires so.
- PMC's collapse is unlikely to impact financial markets or other private or public sector banks as co-operative banks have meagre dealings in money markets as they largely depend upon deposits.
- Savings of up to Rs 1 lakh is guaranteed by the deposit insurance but anything beyond that would be repaid depending on the recovery under the RBI-appointed administrator.

Why has RBI imposed restrictions?

- Defaults appear to have surged in the past six months amid tight economic conditions.
- Some lumpy loans to real estate companies located in the financial capital have turned sour, making it difficult for the bank to meet its commitments.
- There were also mismatches between the data uploaded on the RBI server and manual entry data maintained by the bank.
- Speculation was common that the bank had an exposure of Rs 400 crore to one of the real estate firms, HDIL, which filed for bankruptcy recently.
- Its bad loans almost doubled to 3.76% of gross advances by March 2019, from 1.99% a year earlier.
- PMC Bank's membership shrunk to 51,000 in March this year from 62,000 a year earlier.

Co-operative banks – the weakest links:

- Cooperative banks are the weakest link in the financial system with their supervision and

administration falling within the purview of both state governments and RBI.

- At the end of March 2019, 1,542 urban cooperative banks were operating in the country, out of which 46 had negative net worth and 26 were under RBI administration.
- The year before, 39 had negative net worth and 20 were under RBI administration.
- While RBI cannot take any action unilaterally, it suggests a plan of action to the state government and leaves it to the discretion of the state on whether the lender should continue to operate or wind up.

Concerns:

- The collapse appears to have been sudden and is shrouded in mystery with the bank management voluntarily approaching the RBI to initiate the action instead of RBI initiating the process which is the practice.
- Normally, the RBI initiates the action after a regulatory supervision exposes wrongdoing and if it feels that the financials are weak for it to continue.
- The sudden freeze ahead of the festival season is set to upset calculations of customers.
- It is a big blow to a state that is heavily reliant on the cooperative bank structure to service millions of customers in its villages.

Category: SECURITY

1. Police gear up to scan underworld of Internet

Context:

Expert from Israel is training Kerala Cyberdome analysts to monitor the Darknet.

What is Darknet?

- Dark Net (or Darknet) is an umbrella term describing the portions of the Internet not open to public view or hidden networks whose architecture is superimposed on that of the Internet.
- Darknet provides anonymity to the users.
- Darknet is often associated with the encrypted part of the Internet called Tor network where illicit trading takes place such as the infamous online drug bazaar.
- A variety of darknet markets (black markets) allow for the anonymous, illegal buying and selling of drugs and other illegal or controlled substances, such as pharmaceuticals, and weapons.
- The services and websites running on the darknet is the dark web.

Are Dark Web and Deep Web one and the same?

- Deep Web is the area of the Internet which is not accessible through search engines. What can be accessed through search engines is called Surface Web.
- To get into the Deep Web one should know the right address.
- Dark Web is part of the Deep Web.
- While the Deep Web is accessible, the Dark Web is deliberately hidden.
- While incognito mode disables browsing history and web cache, the Dark Web is shielded by specialised software.
- Since the real world money trail carries the danger of exposure, Dark Web operators transact in virtual currencies, the most popular being Bitcoins.

Concerns:

The relative impermeability of Darknet has made it a major haven for drug dealers, arms traffickers, child pornography collectors and other criminals involved in financial and physical crimes so much so that one can buy anything from tigers to hand grenades to any kind of narcotic substances, provided the potential buyer finds the right website on the Darknet.

Details:

- Kerala Cyberdome is a technological research and development Centre of Kerala Police Department conceived as a Cyber Centre of excellence in cybersecurity as well as technology augmentation for effective policing.
- The Kerala police have set up a state-of-the-art lab complete with enabling software to intervene and crack down on the rising criminal activities over the Darknet, known as the underworld of the Internet.
- A pool of four analysts has been trained and deployed in shifts for round-the-clock monitoring of Darknet.
- Since the expertise for imparting training in tracking the Darknet is limited in the country, the analysts were given 14-day training by roping in an expert from Israel.

D. GS4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: ECONOMY

1. The attack on Agroecology

What is Agroecology?

- It is recognized worldwide as a system that enhances fertile landscapes, increases yields, restores soil health and biodiversity, promotes climate resilience and improves farmers' well-being.
- Its practices are supported by many agricultural scientists, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, farmers' groups and several NGOs.
- It basically makes the best use of nature's goods and services while not damaging it. It works on enhancing healthy ecosystems, and build on ancestral knowledge and customs
- As an agricultural practice, Agroecology mimics natural processes to deliver self-sustaining farming that **grows a greater diversity of crops, drastically reduces artificial inputs** (pesticides, fertilizers, antibiotics) and **recycles nutrients** (plant and animal waste as manure).

Context

- National Academy of Agricultural Sciences, based on a brainstorming session that included industry representatives, sent a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi opposing Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF).
- ZBNF, developed and publicized by agro-scientist Subhash Palekar, has been adopted by Andhra Pradesh.

National Academy of Agricultural Sciences (NAAS)

- It was established in 1990 and owes its origin to the vision of the late Dr. B. P. Pal, noted Indian

agricultural scientist

- The Academy focuses on the broad field of agricultural sciences including crop husbandry, animal husbandry, fisheries, agro-forestry and interface between agriculture and agro-industry.
- The Academy's role is to provide a forum to Agricultural Scientists to deliberate on important issues of agricultural research, education and extension and present views of the scientific community as policy inputs to planners, decision/opinion makers at various levels.
 - To achieve this, the Academy organizes and supports national and international congresses, conferences, seminars, symposia, workshops and brainstorming sessions on critical issues in the field of agricultural sciences.
- One of its objective is to promote ecologically sustainable agriculture

Threat to powerful elites

- Farming in India, as in most other countries, is largely under the **control of powerful lobbies with vested interests and connections to deep pockets**.
 - These include fossil fuel, fertilizer and seed companies as well as scientists with funding connections to agribusiness.
 - These **lobbies perceive large-scale transitions to agroecology as a substantial threat to their influence on farming systems**.

Examples of Corporate Threats and criticisms

- **In Britain**, when public hearings were held in the early 2000s to discuss Genetically Modified (GM) crops, **corporations threatened to pull grants from scientists on the committees if they voted against GM**.
- **In some parts of Europe and in the University of California** when individual scientists published articles describing how GM foods and crops affected the health of human beings and insects adversely, they were personally attacked and vilified.
- When **glyphosate trials against Monsanto** were decided in favour of litigants who accused the company of causing cancer, some voices called to have only scientists on such juries.

Disturbing Trends

- With this introduction of fertilizers into the Agricultural ecosystem, there is **grave threat to food systems and biodiversity**
- As a result of industrial farming, **friendly insects are no longer part of the agricultural landscape**, water pollution is rampant, depleted soils are commonplace and falling groundwater tables have become the norm.
- The opportunity cost incurred from investing only in industrial methods of agriculture is one that has been **borne largely by the farming community and the natural systems**.
- The constant funding by the corporate groups to the scientists has become an established norm. It includes fields like Agriculture, pharmaceuticals and university research.
 - These papers published by the scientists funded by the corporates is it always legitimate? The questions are unanswered.
- So, the enemy is being made out to be Mr. Palekar but the real attack is on agroecology, for the threat it poses to entrenched institutions.

Conclusion

- ZBNF experiment is showing success largely because farmers are supporting it.
- The practice may not be all zero budget, may not be fully successful everywhere and will need to be adapted to India's various agroecological zones. But the ZBNF has led to sustainable agriculture
- Farmers appear to be listening to and following Mr. Palekar.

- If policymakers ignore the posturing and stay focussed on improving soil health and quality of life for farmers, while observing and supporting successes, farmers may even double their incomes and India's food security could sow new beginnings.

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Supreme Court of UK: Suspending Parliament was unlawful

Background

- The prime minister asked Queen Elizabeth II to **approve the suspension of Parliament from September 10 to October 14** on the basis of needing time to prepare a new legislative agenda.
- This could allow a **“no deal” Brexit to be forced through**
- The move to “prorogue” parliament will effectively lock lawmakers out of the building for several days in early September, possibly preventing them from making laws that would **force Britain's exit from the European Union to be delayed or even canceled if a deal cannot be agreed.**
- Britain is scheduled to leave the E.U. on Oct. 31, but currently has not accepted a withdrawal agreement which would lessen the shock of its departure.
- Johnson has pledged to **leave with or without such a deal**
 - Johnson's opponents have accused him of proroguing parliament in order to make a “no deal” Brexit more likely.

What is prorogation?

- The prorogation of parliament is when the Queen ends one parliamentary session so that another can begin.
- Prorogation can only happen when the Queen says so and it is only after the Prime Minister has requested it. **Lawmakers do not have a say in preventing prorogation.**
- In practice, it means sitting lawmakers will not meet for several weeks, meaning they cannot pass laws.

What might ‘no deal’ mean for everyday Brits?

- Britain's economy is closely tied to the E.U.'s. The **bloc is Britain's biggest trading partner**, accounting for 44% of all U.K. exports.
- As a member state, **Britain can trade with other members unburdened by customs checks or tariffs.**
 - Common regulations mean goods do not have to be examined when they cross borders. But when Britain leaves, those things will change.
- **Without a deal**, U.K. trucks arriving from the E.U. will **face customs checks the day after Oct. 31.**
 - It might mean exports from the U.K. are subject to stricter examinations at ports, **to check they comply with strict E.U. regulations.**
 - The increased costs to companies will almost certainly **mean lines at ports, shortages in shops and raised prices** across the board.
 - Without common regulations, Europeans will have no guarantee that **British products have been manufactured to the E.U.'s strict standards.**
 - And with Britain no longer enjoying free trade with the E.U., goods flowing in each direction will have to be tracked.
 - The result of that could be food rotting in the backs of trucks and reduced choice – and increased prices – for British consumers.

What was Johnson's Plan?

- In the 2016 Brexit referendum, and in the most recent U.K. election in 2017, no party campaigned to leave the E.U. without a deal.
- But Johnson was advocating leaving on Oct. 31 “do or die,” or in other words, with or without a deal.

Why did the Supreme Court get involved?

- Johnson has been accused of an unlawful “abuse of power.” Judges have been asked to determine whether he misled the queen.
- The politically neutral head of state is required to act upon the advice of the prime minister.

Earlier two British High Courts had come to opposite conclusions.

- First, the **High Court in London** ruled that the Prime Minister’s advice to prorogue is a political issue and, therefore, not justiciable. The courts cannot look into it.
- Second, the **Scottish High Court** — more correctly known as the Inner House of the Court of Session — took the opposite view.
 - It ruled the Prime Minister’s advice can be reviewed, not on ordinary judicial grounds of review but on fundamental constitutional principles.
 - Parliament’s role scrutinising government, which it called a central pillar of the British Constitution, is one such principle.
 - Therefore, any advice motivated by an intention to stymie Parliament is unlawful.

Questions before the Supreme Court of UK

The issue was essentially whether Johnson had the right to prorogue Parliament, and whether Britain’s courts had the power to stop him.

- **The Government argued** that the courts had no business jumping in because the decision to prorogue Parliament lay “in the territory of political judgment, not legal standards”.
- **But the court said** it was “firmly of the opinion” that the question of the “lawfulness of the Prime Minister’s advice to Her Majesty is justiciable”.
 - Courts “have exercised a **supervisory jurisdiction** over the lawfulness of acts of the Government for centuries”
 - The Justices reasoned: “Although the United Kingdom does not have a single document entitled ‘The Constitution’, it nevertheless possesses a Constitution, (which) ...includes numerous principles of law, which are enforceable by the courts in the same way as other legal principles... It is (the courts’) particular responsibility to **determine the legal limits of the powers conferred on each branch of government**, and to decide whether any exercise of power has transgressed those limits. **The courts cannot shirk that responsibility merely on the ground that the question raised is political in tone or context.**”

What did the SC say?

- A unanimous decision of all 11 judges of the British Supreme Court — the largest constitutional bench possible — has declared **Boris Johnson’s decision to prorogue the British Parliament “unlawful, void and of no effect”**.
- The order to prorogue, which was based on Mr. Johnson’s advice to the Queen, has been “quashed”.

How did the SC come to this conclusion?

- First and foremost, is the advice to **prorogue justiciable**? The court concluded it is.
- Second, they addressed whether the prerogative of a prime minister can be inquired into and, again, **concluded that it can be challenged on the grounds of its limits**.
- This led to a third question: can the Executive use its prerogative to **stop Parliament making laws by exercising that prerogative to determine how long Parliament can function**?

It was the answer to this third question that led to the unanimous decision of all 11 judges to declare the prorogation unlawful.

- The judges decided that the **power to prorogue is limited** by its effect on the rest of the Constitution.
- In this case, it “**prevented parliament from carrying out its constitutional role**”.
- Distinguishing between prorogation and a recess, the Supreme Court said that the former meant Parliament cannot “meet debate or question ministers”. Its conclusion was blunt: “**the effect on the fundamentals of our democracy was extreme**”.

The case touched on the powers of all the key institutions of Britain’s unwritten constitution.

- To start with, it defined the powers of Parliament versus those of the judiciary.
- It determined at what point the jurisdiction of the legislature ends and that of the executive starts.
- It touched upon the constitutional role of the Queen.
- The Supreme Court has underlined that the **government and prime minister are the "junior" partners** in the British constitution - that **Parliament is the "senior" partner** - and the junior cannot tell the senior, which acts for the people, what to do.
- The Supreme Court is underlining that if there is an **exceptional use of executive powers by the prime minister that infringes on parliamentary democracy, judges have the power to intervene**.

Conclusion

- The Supreme Court was set up to resolve the most complicated legal and constitutional questions of the day - and in this judgement it has shown **it is not afraid to tread into matters that judges in previous eras would have feared to have been too political**.
- And this is why this judgement is so important for the future of the British constitution.

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. United Nations Climate Action Summit

Context

- United Nations Climate Action Summit was held in New York. It was convened to identify urgent and concrete solutions to climate change.

Mr. Modi’s speech

It covered four important aspects of India’s climate action — the push for renewable energy, electric mobility, mixing of biofuel to reduce consumption of fossil fuels, and the Jal Jeevan Mission.

- Modi reiterated India’s commitment to the creation of **175 GW renewable energy** capacity by 2022 under the Paris Climate Agreement.
 - He also said India’s renewable energy target will be increased to 450 GW
- India would spend approximately \$50 billion “in the next few years” on the **Jal Jeevan Mission** to

conserve water, harvest rainwater and develop water resources

- He said India had plans to make the **transport sector green** through the use of electrical vehicles.
- He also spoke of the need for behavioural change. “Need, not greed, is our guiding principle,”

New initiatives

Prime Minister Modi announced two international initiatives.

- First, a platform with Sweden and other countries, for **governments and the private sector to work together** to develop low carbon pathways for industry.
- Second, a **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure**. This initiative was approved by the Union Cabinet and ₹480 crore has been allocated for technical assistance and projects.
 - The U.K., Australia and island nations such as Fiji and the Maldives will be part of this coalition.

Issue Area

- To meet its Paris Pact target, India will need to add more than 20 GW of RE installation a year, more than double the rate achieved in the past four years.
- According to the clean energy research outfit, Mercom, the country added 8.3 GW of solar capacity last year. This is a 13 per cent dip from 2017. The fall in pace of adding solar installations has continued this year.
- Land acquisitions are a major worry for large-scale solar projects, the Mercom report noted.
- But policymakers should ill-afford to ignore it given that solar installations constitute nearly 60 per cent of the country’s RE energy mix under its Paris commitments.

What else should the Govt do?

While India is shouldering its share of the climate burden, despite problems in climate finance flow, the **government also needs to strengthen its climate adaptation plans.**

- The existing internal framework, the **National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)** is more than a decade old. It **lacks the legal foundation to incorporate the key national commitment** under the Paris Agreement: to reduce the emissions intensity of economic growth by a third, by 2030.
 - Without an update to the NAPCC and its mission-mode programmes, and **legislation approved by States for new green norms** governing buildings, transport, agriculture, water use and so on, it will be impossible to make a case for major climate finance under the UNFCCC.
 - It is equally urgent to arrive at a **funding plan for all States** to help communities adapt to more frequent climate-linked disasters such as cyclones, floods and droughts.
- In this 2019’s Union Budget, Rs 100 crore was allocated to the **National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change (NAFCC)**, only a fraction of the total budget of over Rs 2,900 crore allotted to the Union environment ministry. This is 16% lower than the budget allocated to the NAFCC in 2017-18.
- India is correct in arguing that developed countries must do more, but a **combination of policy, budgetary support, and a people’s movement is needed** to battle the globe’s greatest challenge.

F. Tidbits

1. Gandhians to go on year-long yatra from Delhi to Geneva

- On the 2nd of October 2019, marking **150th Birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi**, a group of 50

Gandhians and activists will set off on a **year-long march from Delhi to Geneva**.

- The march will be undertaken, under the banner of **Jai Jagat 2020**.
- The aim of the march is to spread the message “**all for the planet and the planet for all**”.
- The Gandhians will be covering 10 countries and 14,000 km.
- The “**global peace march**” would include several marches from other parts of the world, including Europe and Africa, converging at Geneva on September 26, 2020, when the march from India is likely to reach the Swiss city.

2. Dadasaheb Phalke award for Amitabh Bachchan

- **Dadasaheb Phalke award** is conferred for “**outstanding contribution for the growth and development of Indian cinema**”.
- It was **introduced by the government in 1969** to commemorate the “father of Indian cinema” who directed Raja Harishchandra (1913), India's first feature film.
- The Dadasaheb Phalke award comprises a Swarna Kamal (Golden Lotus), a shawl and a cash prize of 1,000,000.
- Amitabh Bachchan will be receiving the country's highest film honour, the Dadasaheb Phalke award, this year.

3. Krishna water for Chennai from today

- The Andhra Pradesh State government has decided to release Krishna water to Chennai on a priority basis keeping in mind the needs of the metropolis.
- Telugu Ganga Project (TGP) Chief Engineer will release water from the Kandeluru reservoir.
- Krishna water will be released to meet the drinking water needs of Tirupati, Srikalahasti and Venktagiri.
- The Krishna Water Supply Scheme or Telugu Ganga Project (1996) and the New Veeranam Project (2004) were implemented using two important inter-State rivers — the Krishna and the Cauvery, both of which depend on the southwest monsoon (June-September).

Telugu Ganga Project:

- The Telugu Ganga project is a joint water supply scheme implemented in the 1980s by the then Andhra Pradesh chief minister N.T.Ramarao and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. G. Ramachandran to provide drinking water to Chennai city in Tamil Nadu.
- It is also known as the Krishna Water Supply Project since the source of the water is the Krishna river.
- Water is drawn from the Srisailem reservoir and diverted towards Chennai through a series of interlinked canals, over a distance of about 406 kilometres (252 mi), before it reaches the destination at the Poondi reservoir near Chennai.
- The main checkpoints en route include the Somasila reservoir in Penna River valley, the Kandaluru reservoir, the 'Zero Point' near Uthukkottai where the water enters Tamil Nadu territory and finally, the Poondi reservoir, also known as Satyamurthy Sagar.

G. Prelims Facts

1. Ramanujan prize for U.K. mathematician

- The **SASTRA Ramanujan Prize**, founded by Shanmugha Arts, Science, Technology & Research Academy (SASTRA) located near Kumbakonam, is awarded every year to a young mathematician, judged to have done outstanding work in Ramanujan's fields of interest.
- The prize carries a citation and an award of \$10,000.

- It is conferred annually **on mathematicians** from across the world:
 - Who are **less than 32 years** of age
 - Who are **working in an area influenced by Srinivasa Ramanujan**.
- The award was instituted in 2005.
- The SASTRA Ramanujan Prize for 2019 will be awarded to mathematician Adam Harper, Assistant Professor with the University of Warwick, England.
- The citation said Mr. Harper was awarded the prize “for several outstanding contributions to analytic and probabilistic number theory.”

H. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Aadhaar Cards are issued by Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) only.
2. UIDAI functions under NITI Aayog.
3. Foreign Nationals residing in India are eligible to apply for Aadhaar Card.

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: d

Explanation:

The Unique Identification Authority of India or UIDAI is an agency under the central government of India mandated to collect demographic and biometric information of the country's residents, store the data in a central database, and issue to each resident of the country a 12-digit unique identity number called Aadhaar. The Aadhaar Act, 2016 states that every resident shall be entitled to obtain an aadhaar number. The Act further defines residency as an individual who has resided in India for a period or periods amounting in all to 182 days or more in the 12 months immediately preceding the date of application for enrolment. UIDAI functions under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

Q2. Consider the following statements with respect to "Nirbhaya Fund":

1. It was created with a Rs. 100 crore corpus, aimed at enhancing the safety and security for women in the country.
2. It is a non-lapsable corpus fund.
3. The Fund is administered by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

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

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

Answer: b

Explanation:

The Nirbhaya Fund was created by the Ministry of Finance in 2013 with a corpus of Rs 1000 crore. It is aimed at enhancing the safety and security for women in the country. It is a non-lapsable corpus fund. The Fund is administered by the Department of Economic Affairs of the finance ministry.

Q3. Which of the following are classified as Critical Vulnerable Coastal Areas?

1. Sundarban region of West Bengal
2. Vembanad in Kerala
3. Bhitarkanika in Odisha

Choose the correct option:

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

Sundarban region of West Bengal and other ecologically sensitive areas identified are as under Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 such as Gulf of Khambat and Gulf of Kutchh in Gujarat, Malvan, Achra-Ratnagiri in Maharashtra, Karwar and Coondapur in Karnataka, Vembanad in Kerala, Gulf of Mannar in Tamil Nadu, Bhitarkanika in Odisha, Coringa, East Godavari and Krishna in AP are treated as Critical Vulnerable Coastal Areas (CVCA) and managed with the involvement of coastal communities including fisher folk who depend on coastal resources for their sustainable livelihood.

Q4. Consider the following statements:

1. The Sustainable Development Goal 3 dealing with consolidated goal on health explicitly mentions Tuberculosis.
2. The Government is committed to achieving the target of TB elimination by 2030 in line with the WHO targets for TB elimination.

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:

The consolidated goal on health is SDG 3. One of these targets, (Target 3.3), explicitly mentions TB. SDG 3 also includes a target (Target 3.8) related to universal health coverage (UHC) in which TB is explicitly mentioned. This includes an indicator on the coverage of essential prevention, treatment and care interventions. WHO's End TB strategy serves as a blueprint to countries to reduce TB incidence by 80%, TB deaths by 90% and to eliminate catastrophic costs for TB affected households by 2030. The Government

of India is committed to achieving the target of TB elimination by 2025, 5 years ahead of the WHO targets.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. The relative impermeability of Darknet has made it a major haven for drug dealers, arms traffickers, child pornography collectors and other criminals. Examine the statement and suggest measures to check the growth of Darknet. (15 Marks, 250 Words)
2. What is Agroecology? What are the problems and concerns associated with implementing Agroecology in India? (10 Marks, 150 Words)

