

05 Oct 2019: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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B. GS2 Related

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. President commutes 20 death sentences in nine years

Context:

Based on the **recommendations received from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**, the President has **commuted death sentences to life imprisonment** in at least 20 cases over the past nine years.

Details:

- These commutations were based on the President's exercise of powers **under Article 72 of the Constitution** after the convicts filed **mercy petitions**.
- The **Ministry of Home Affairs** has **statutory powers to remit Life sentences of prisoners under the Code of Criminal Procedure**.
- The President can exercise his powers under Article 72 of the Constitution to commute the death sentence.

Release of eight Sikh prisoners:

- The ministry's decision to release the eight Sikh prisoners convicted **under the repealed Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA)** is seen as a one-off gesture as it is not in consonance with the guidelines regarding the 2018 "Cabinet decision to grant special remission to prisoners on the occasion of 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi."
- As per the guidelines, special remission will not be given to:
 - Prisoners who have been convicted for an offence for which the sentence is sentence of death or where death sentence has been commuted to life imprisonment.
 - Cases of convicts involved in serious and heinous crimes like dowry death, rape, human trafficking
 - Convicted under POTA, UAPA, TADA, FICN, POCSO Act, money laundering, FEMA, NDPS, Prevention of Corruption Act, etc.

Article 72: Pardoning powers of the President:

- Pardoning Powers Constitution empowered the president to grant pardons under article 72.
- He has the power to grant pardon against punishment for an offence **against union law, Punishment by a martial court or death sentence**.
- The **objective of judicial pardoning is to correct the judicial errors and afford relief from a sentence**.
- Pardoning powers of the president includes the following types-
- **Pardon:** with the grant of pardon convicts both conviction and sentence completely absolved.
- **Commutation:** with this, nature of the punishment of the convict can be changed.
- **Remission:** reduces the term of the imprisonment
- **Respite:** awards lesser punishment than original punishment by looking at the special condition of convict.
- **Reprieve:** stays the execution of awarded sentence for temporary period.

Article 161: Pardoning powers of the Governor

- Similar to the pardoning powers of the President, as per **article 161, Governor of a State** has the power to grant pardons, reprieves, respites or remissions of punishment or to suspend, remit or commute the sentence of any person convicted of any offence against any law relating to a matter to which the executive power of the State extends.
- President can grant pardon to a person awarded death sentence, but the Governor of State does not enjoy this power.
- The power of the President to grant pardon extends in cases where the punishment or sentence is by a Court Martial but Article 161 does not provide any such power to the Governor.

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Death toll in Iraq clash rises to 44

Context:

- There has been an escalation in **the violent demonstrations in Iraq**, sweeping across the country spontaneously, without public backing from any organised political group.
- About **44 Iraqis have died** in recent days in clashes between protesters and the security forces during street demonstrations.

Why are people protesting?

After decades of war against its neighbours, UN sanctions, two U.S. invasions, foreign occupation and sectarian civil war, the **defeat of the Islamic State insurgency in 2017 meant Iraq was at peace and free to trade** for the first extended period since the 1970s. Oil output is at record levels and Security is better than it has been in years.

- Two years after the defeat of Islamic State much of the country's nearly 40 million population live in **worsening conditions** despite the country's oil wealth.
- **Infrastructure** is decrepit and **deteriorating**.
- **War-damaged cities** have yet to be rebuilt.
- Armed groups still wield power on the streets.
- A **culture of corruption** has persisted since the era of dictator Saddam Hussein and has become entrenched under the rule of sectarian political parties that emerged after his fall.
- **Jobs are scarce**.
- Youth blame the situation on **corrupt leaders** who do not represent them.

What sparked the latest protests? Who organized them?

- The **inadequacy of state services and the lack of jobs** are the principal reasons for public anger.
- A series of **political moves by the government** has contributed, especially the demotion of a popular wartime military officer for reasons that have not been fully explained. Some at the demonstrations were protesting over the commander's removal.
- The protests do not appear to be coordinated by a particular political group.
- Social media calls for protests have gathered pace. The turnout has taken security forces by surprise.
- These protests are about **worsening economic and living conditions** and are taking place mostly in Baghdad and the Shi'ite Muslim-dominated south, but cut across ethnic and sectarian lines. It is not a sectarian protest.

Conclusion:

- It depends on how the government and security services handle the protests.
- More deaths are likely to fuel anger. But a heavy-handed crackdown could also scare protesters into staying home.
- If **tribal or factional armed groups get involved the situation could deteriorate**.
- The government has promised better employment opportunities for Iraqis.

2. In a first, U.S. lawmakers take a step against India on Kashmir

Context:

The **United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations** has added an **appeal to end** what it calls a "**humanitarian crisis**" in **Kashmir** in its report ahead of the annual Foreign Appropriations Act for 2020.

Details:

- The amendment was proposed by **Senator Chris Van Hollen**, who visited Delhi as a part of a congressional delegation that **discussed the Kashmir situation** as well as **India-US bilateral relations, trade ties and defence purchases** with key officials.
- This is considered the **first step towards legislative action by American lawmakers** against India on the situation in Jammu and Kashmir.

What does the report say?

- According to the report notes with concern the **current humanitarian crisis in Kashmir** and calls on the Government of India to:
 - Fully **restore telecommunications and Internet services**
 - **Lift its lockdown and curfew**
 - **Release individuals** detained pursuant to the Government's revocation of Article 370 of the Indian constitution.
- This amendment, which was **accepted unanimously by the bipartisan committee**, is a strong expression of concern by the Senate about the situation in Kashmir and sends the signal that the U.S. is closely monitoring the human rights situation.

C. GS3 Related

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. Charging infra guidelines for electric vehicles get nod

Context:

The Ministry of Power has approved **new guidelines for the electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure**.

What are the new guidelines?

- In order to **address the range of issues of electric vehicle owners**, a phase-wise installation of an appropriate network of charging infrastructure throughout the country has been envisaged in the guidelines.
- It states that there must be **at least one charging station in a grid of 3 x 3 km in all megacities** and one **charging station every 25 km on both sides of highways**.
- To address concerns in **inter-city travel and long-range and heavy-duty EVs**, fast-charging stations for [vehicles] like buses/trucks shall be installed **every 100 km**.
- **Private charging** at residences/offices shall be **permitted**, with the decision of using fast or slow chargers resting with the consumers.
 - **The first phase of the plan (1-3 years)** will cover all megacities with a population of more than four million as per the 2011 Census, and all expressways and highways connected to these megacities.
 - **The second phase (3-5 years)** will cover other big cities such as State capitals.

Objectives of electric vehicle charging infrastructure guidelines:

- To **enable faster adoption of electric vehicles** in India by ensuring safe, reliable, accessible and affordable Charging Infrastructure and eco-system.
- To **promote affordable tariff** chargeable from EV owners and Charging Station Operators/Owners.
- To **generate employment/income** opportunities for small entrepreneurs.
- To proactively **support creation of EV Charging Infrastructure** in the initial phase and eventually

create market for EV Charging business.

- To encourage preparedness of Electrical Distribution System to **adopt EV Charging Infrastructure**.

The Indian government has been trying to finalise a standard charging format as part of its initiatives to encourage sales of EVs in the country. The latest approval on new guidelines will bring some clarity on the charging protocol.

2. Mizoram rejects proposed Forest Act amendment

Context:

The Mizoram government has rejected the Centre's proposal to amend the Indian Forest Act, 1927 asserting that, a reframed Indian Forest Act would challenge Mizo customary laws and practices, ownership and transfer of land as well as the powers conferred upon the autonomous district councils.

Background:

- **Mizoram does not come under the purview of the Indian Forests Act of 1927.**
- The **Mizoram Forest Act of 1955** governs the state's forests in line with customary laws.
- The same goes for most states in the Northeast where issues related to land are dealt with in accordance with customary laws.
- The Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change had invited feedback on the proposed amendment from the states.
- A group in Mizoram, called Zo Indigenous Forum, had petitioned the UN alleging that the Indian Forests (Amendment) Bill, 2019, would be against the indigenous people and their rights as guaranteed in the Constitution.
- The Mizoram government has now rejected the Centre's proposal to amend the Act.

Details:

- It is believed that its provisions are in conflict with the **special provisions the State enjoys under Article 371G** of the Constitution.
- Forest rights activists and tribal welfare organisations are against the bill that seeks to :
 - Give higher management powers beyond what is provided in the Forest Rights Act of 2006
 - Evict forest dwellers and promotes forest produce through private firms.

Article 371G of the Constitution:

- **Article 371G** limits the ownership of land to Mizoram's tribals except for setting up of industries by the private sector, land can now be acquired by the state government as per the provisions of Mizoram (Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement) Act, 2016.
- It limits the **Parliament's authority to enact any law that interferes with tribal religious laws, customs, including their justice system.**
- **Parliament cannot make law** on "religious or social practices of the Mizos, Mizo customary law and procedure, administration of civil and criminal justice involving decisions according to Mizo customary law, ownership and transfer of land, unless the Assembly... so decides".

Category: ECONOMY

1. Income threshold to avail microfinance increased

Context:

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has raised the microloan limits.

Details:

- In a twin-move, the RBI has raised the household income limit for availing microloans while enhanced the lending limit to **Rs 1.25 lakh per eligible borrower from Rs 1 lakh earlier**.
- Similarly, the income limit has been raised to **Rs 2 lakh from Rs 1.6 lakh** for borrowers in urban and semi-urban pockets.
- The income and loan limits to classify an exposure as eligible asset were last revised in 2015.
- The recent move is to ensure a higher flow of funds to the economically weaker section as their role in the economy has grown over the years with the government's inclusive agenda.

Significance of the move:

- This change will provide more room for **NBFC-MFIs to lend and allow more households access to credit**.
- Microfinance lenders will use this increased limit to continue to lend to the over 50 million borrowers.
- The decisions would provide a shot in the arm to the country's microfinance sector as they could cater to a wider market now.

2. Supreme Court gives tax relief for food at incorporated clubs

Context:

In a significant judgment, the Supreme Court has held that supply of food, drinks and beverages by an incorporated members' club to its permanent members is not liable for sales or service tax.

Issue:

- The Bench was answering a reference on the question of **whether the doctrine of mutuality highlighted in the Young Men's Indian Association judgment of the Constitution Bench would survive the 46th Constitutional Amendment, which introduced Article 366 (29-A) into the Constitution**.
- The particular Article dealt with the taxation of sale of goods. Its clauses said that the supply or service of 'goods' like food or drink by an "unincorporated association or body of persons' would be taxable.

Details:

- The Supreme Court has ruled that the **doctrine of mutuality** continues to be applicable to incorporated and unincorporated members' clubs.
 - The doctrine of mutuality, based on **common law principles**, is premised on the theory that a **person cannot make a profit from himself**.
 - An amount received from oneself, therefore, cannot be regarded as income and is not taxable.
- Thus, **Sales Tax cannot be levied on Clubs**, whether **incorporated or unincorporated** for the **supply of food and drinks to permanent members**.
- The Court said such supply of goods **lacks the essential aspect of a sale — a seller and a buyer**.
- It was said that the **legal entity called the club and its members are one and the same**. The club, though a distinct legal entity, is only an agent of its members.
- The Supreme Court has held that, in the case of sales tax, both incorporated and un-incorporated

members' clubs are exempt from liability of paying sales tax.

- The Bench referred to the Constitution Bench judgment in the Young Men's Indian Association case and held that the **doctrine of mutuality between the club and its members would dominate the relationship between an incorporated members' club and its permanent members.**
- The rendering of service by the petitioner-club to its members is not taxable service under the Finance Act, 1994, the court held.

D. GS4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: ECONOMY

1. RBI rate cut

Context

- After the unconventional 35 basis points cut in interest rates in August 2019, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) returned to a normal 25 basis points cut.

Details

- Most analysts expected RBI to cut repo rate (the rate at which RBI lends to the banking system) anywhere between 35 to 40 basis points (a 100 basis points make up a single percentage point.) However, the RBI announced a cut of just 25 basis points.
 - The narrative in October picks the threads from August when the RBI spoke of the deteriorating demand situation. It had cut the repo rate by an unconventional 35 basis points then, and said this would help close the “negative output gap”. But now it has acknowledged “the negative output gap has widened further”.
 - A **Negative Output Gap** indicates surplus capacity in the economy. A widening of this gap means the industry is unable to use much of its capacity due to poor demand.
- The **Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)** cut the repo rate again based on the views of the MPC members on current and projected economic conditions.
- The **MPC** action was in line with the series of cuts by almost all major central banks across the globe, as counter-cyclical policy responses to the global slowdown.

GDP Growth Projections

The central bank also lowered its growth forecast to 6.1 per cent, down from its previous estimate of 6.9 per cent, suggesting that the slowdown is more severe than was previously believed.

- High-frequency indicators of economic activity remain weak, with a flat core infrastructure index growth, continuing weak automobile sales and a sharply lower services sector Purchasing Managers Index (PMI) showing a deep contraction
- Rural demand, proxied by sales of two-wheelers and tractors, contracted.
- Of greater concern is the fact that RBI's forward-looking surveys show an expected drop in capacity utilisation of manufacturing firms in Q2 FY20. The Business Assessment Index also fell in Q2.

Limitations on RBI

- The central bank has done the heavy lifting and monetary policy may well be nearing its limits in so far as its **ability to influence growth prospects is concerned**.
- **Inflation** is well within the target giving space to the RBI to focus on growth.
- **Crude oil prices** are back in the comfort zone, retreating from the spike in mid-September, and **food prices** are projected to remain soft on the back of a good monsoon.
- The monetary policy statement is unambiguous that the **RBI will continue with its accommodative stance** “as long as it is necessary to revive growth”.
- While this statement is credible, the problem is that the central bank can only facilitate lower rates and push banks to lend. It **cannot force borrowers to borrow** and this is evident from the soft trends in credit offtake in the last few months.

Conclusion

- The onus, therefore, **is on fiscal policy which alone can prod borrowing and investment**.
- To be fair, the government has been engaging the levers, and the corporate tax cut last month is a major move to get private investment going.
- However, the ₹1.45 lakh crore giveaway has **set off fears in the market of a fiscal slippage and higher borrowings by the government**.
- Therefore the government should pursue a more aggressive disinvestment programme to offset the expected shortfall in tax collections.

Category: EDUCATION

1. Tenure Track System (TTS) in IIT's

Context

- Aligning themselves with global peers, Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) **will now hire faculty on 5-6 year contract** as against the **current practice** of making hires permanent after a one-year probation period.
- At the end of the contract, based on a review of their teaching and research, the said faculty will either be retained and promoted as tenured faculty or find their contract annulled.

How does it work?

- All entry-level teachers in Indian Institutes of Technology — will join only as contractual teachers for five and half years and their positions will be confirmed as associate professors only if their performance is found to be “satisfactory.”
 - Under this system, an Assistant Professor may be hired **without the mandatory post-PhD experience** requirement
- Based on an **evaluation by an external committee at the end of 5.5 years**, he or she may either be granted tenure (made permanent) and promoted to the next higher level of associate professor or asked to leave.
- In certain cases, based on the recommendation of the external committee, an extension of two years may be granted to the candidate before being assessed again.

Why this move would be important?

- At present, a fresh faculty member is **placed on probation for a year** before confirmation without being subjected to any kind of a critical evaluation.

- According to the Council, this leads to a situation wherein “a large number of faculty, despite having very good credentials, do not put in enough effort on research and teaching”.
- Over the years, the number of faculty whose **performance is below par has risen to such an extent that “more than half” underperform.**
- The Tenure Track System is being seen as a silver bullet to **prevent further deterioration and to remove non-performers.**
- The tenure track combines academic freedom with responsibility and accountability.

Issues with TTS

- While the existing faculty will continue to function as permanent faculty under the older system, the new tenure tracking system will apply for fresh hires. Flogging a small subset of young faculty to improve the metrics using the threat of tenure track while **leaving the large majority of senior faculty unmonitored** will do little to achieve the prime objective.
- Keeping the young faculty on a tight leash can prove to be counterproductive. To begin with, the **power asymmetry that already exists between new recruits and the older faculty** will worsen. But tenure’s biggest disservice may be in the field of research. With constant pressure over their heads, young faculty **may end up being more risk-averse and refrain from working in unchartered, cutting-edge research areas.**

Major Problems haunting the institutions

If the introduction of TTS is a must to bring accountability in the system it has to be simultaneously matched in terms of research facilities. Any adaptation of US principles into our education system will be a futile exercise if basic facilities are unmet.

- Unlike in most U.S universities that have a tenure track system, it is extremely difficult for new appointees to hit the ground running as **even basic infrastructure to carry out research is not in place** at many of the newer IITs.
- There have been innumerable cases in the older IITs **where even securing lab space can take as long as a year or more.**
- While those working in **theoretical areas** might find it relatively easier to publish papers, **experimentalists** will be at a greater disadvantage as setting up labs will take longer. Added to this lack of good computer science faculty and failure to recruit people with relevant skill set is another major impediment.
- While the older IITs provide seed funding of about ₹20 lakh, the new IITs provide just a couple of lakhs of rupees. **Researchers will necessarily have to turn to funding agencies for grants.**
 - With a significant reduction in the number of research proposals getting funded, new faculty will be forced to compete with well-established researchers for a piece of the pie.
 - The **delay in disbursement of funds** by agencies is another problem.
- The biggest area of concern is the **upper age limit of 35 years for an assistant professor’s post**, which is not the case in the U.S. Since assistant professors are in the early 30s when they secure a position.

Conclusion

- The introduction of the tenure track system **without addressing the underlying problems** researchers face is likely to make it even more challenging to find good talent.
- It is also unclear if the new IITs, which are just being built, will find themselves at a disadvantage in attracting talent.
- At this stage, one can only hope that the IIT Council has deliberated on these critical issues and not acted in haste or under duress.

2. NEET Examination Scam

Context

- A student in a medical college in Tamil Nadu had gained his seat through subterfuge — by having someone impersonate him at the NEET.

Details

- It is a case of impersonation in the National level Entrance cum Eligibility (NEET) test.
- It was operated with the help of middlemen to hire a medical student to write the test for the candidate, for a hefty consideration.
- This was a careful web of deception, right from submitting photos of the impersonator in the NEET application forms, to actually appearing for the examinations and single-window counselling for admissions, to submitting the application with the original student's photo at the allotted college.
- Further probe cast a shadow on the admission of more students, including in private medical colleges.
- It is evident that fraud has been committed, and serious lapses in procedures and processes were exploited by students eager to score a medical seat by hook or by crook.

Given that NEET was intended to standardise testing for admission into medical colleges and ensure a certain minimum quality, such lapses **erode the very core of its raison d'être**.

Steps to be taken

- The **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the National Testing Agency**, which conducts the examination, must **exhibit zero tolerance to such attempts to frustrate the integrity of the test**.
- Both these agencies must immediately set their energies to **identifying lacunae in the existing system** and ensure that a foolproof testing methodology is in place.
- **Using biometrics to identify students taking NEET** has been suggested, and its value in adding a further layer of checks and balances is indisputable.
- Parents and students too would do well to temper their vaulting ambition for an MBBS seat with a measure of rationality. There are only a limited number of MBBS seats available, and while that number is slowly growing, it will never equal the demand.

Category: CULTURE

1. Urdu is an Indian language, not a foreign language

Context

- Recently Punjab University, Chandigarh, had proposed to merge the Department of Urdu language with the school of foreign languages to be set up after merging departments of French, Russian, German, Chinese and Tibetan.

What is the origin of Urdu Language?

- According to the Urdu Language experts, the origin of Urdu language had taken place in India several centuries back.
- Historical references indicate that origin of Urdu had **taken place in Punjab state of India** and the great poet **Ameer Khusro, in his book 'Ghurrat-ul- Kamal' had written that Masood Lahori**

(Masood Saad Salman), a renowned poet who was born in Lahore in the 11th century) had composed poetry in Hindvi (Urdu), which is also called Dehlavi.

- Urdu was familiar with other names including Hindustani, Hindavi and Rekhta.
- This shows that Urdu was very much originated from Punjab as Lahore was the part of greater Punjab only before partition.
- The subject, object, auxiliary, verb, grammar, tenses of Urdu are very much Indian and like the Hindi language even if it has derived some root words from Persian and Arabic languages then they were changed into Urdu language in India.

How it got developed and flourished and where?

- As per the historical references after its origin in Punjab, Urdu got developed and flourished in Delhi along with part of Haryana state and some states in South where it was developed in the form of 'Dakhni (Deccani) language'.
- Historians say that it had developed and flourished in Delhi during the period of 'Delhi Sultanate' from 12th to 16th century and then during the period of the 'Mughal Empire' in Delhi from 16th century to 19th century when several court poets used this language in their great poetry and writings. And then it was also developed in Deccan states.

What is its connection with Deccan India?

- When Delhi Sultanate and then Mughal Empire spread its wings towards the Deccan, Urdu speaking people of Delhi spread the language in South where it got developed and flourished in Dakhan (Deccan) states mainly in Karnataka, nowadays Telangana, part of Kerala and Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra.
- During Bahamani Sultanate in Deccan from 14th to 16th century mainly in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Telangana, Urdu got flourished a lot as several scholars, who were the part of Deccan Sultanate used Urdu and local words which further got spread in other parts like Ahmednagar, Bijapur, Bidar and Golkonda.

What is Urdu's official status in India?

- It is one of the official languages under the Constitution of India, it is among the 15 Indian Languages written on the Indian Currency notes.
- It is one of the official languages in states like Kashmir, Telangana, UP, Bihar, New Delhi and West Bengal.

F. Tidbits

1. Sri Lanka releases stamp on Mahatma Gandhi

- Department of Posts, Sri Lanka, has released a **stamp and first-day cover with Mahatma Gandhi** to commemorate his 150th birth anniversary.
- One of the stamps depicts the picture of Mahatma Gandhi in his youth.
- It was an occasion organised to **strengthen the friendly ties between India and Sri Lanka**.
- About **40 countries have issued stamps** to commemorate Gandhi's birth anniversary and 33 more countries are likely to release stamps.

G. Prelims Facts

1. India's first e-waste clinic

- The **Municipal Corporation (BMC)** and the **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)** have joined hands to set up the country's first e-waste clinic in Bhopal.
- The e-waste clinic would enable **segregation, processing and disposal of waste** from both **household and commercial units**.
- Electronic waste will be collected **door-to-door** or could be **deposited directly at the clinic in exchange for a fee**.
- The **CPCB** will provide **technical support** at the unit.
- The clinic is being conceived in compliance with the **Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016**.
- It is a **three-month pilot project**, which, if successful, would be replicated elsewhere in the country.

H. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

Q1. Consider the following statements with respect to Bru Tribes:

1. 'Bihu' is the most popular festival of Reang tribes.
2. They are well known for Hojagiri folk dance.
3. Bru tribe, subject to Ethnic Violence in the North Eastern State of Assam in 1997, fled to Tripura.

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

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

Answer: b

Explanation:

The Bru tribe also referred to as the Reangs, are spread across the northeastern states of Tripura, Assam, Manipur, and Mizoram. 'Buisu', not 'bihu' is the most popular festival of reang tribes. Hojagiri folk dance of Reang sub tribe is rather well known all over the world. A bout of ethnic violence forced thousands of people from the Bru tribe to leave their homes in Mizoram in 1997. The displaced Bru people from Mizoram have been living in various camps in Tripura since then.

Q2. Consider the following statements with respect to Lokpal Act:

1. It applies to public servants in and outside India.
2. A complaint under the Lokpal Act shall only relate to a period during which the public servant was holding or serving in that capacity.
3. Lokpal has superintendence over any investigation agency excluding the Central Bureau of Investigation CBI for cases referred to them by the ombudsman.

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

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

Answer: a

Explanation:

The Lokpal Act of 2013 Act allows setting up of anti-corruption ombudsman called Lokpal at the Centre and Lokayukta at the State-level. The Lokpal will have the power of superintendence and direction over any investigation agency including CBI for cases referred to them by the ombudsman. The Act also includes the Lokpal's own members under the definition of "public servant". It shall apply to public servants in and outside India. A complaint under this Act shall only relate to a period during which the public servant was holding or serving in that capacity.

Q3. Which of the following is correct with respect to the recently launched PRAKASH portal:

- a. The portal is launched for providing an interface between fly ash producers and potential ash users such as road contractors, cement plants.
- b. The portal is launched to track the progress of provision of free electricity connections to households in rural areas and poor families in urban areas under the Saubhagya Scheme
- c. The portal is launched for Geo-tagging assets created under Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana
- d. The portal is launched for improving coordination between the power, coal and railway ministries to ensure coal supplies to power plants.

Answer: d

Explanation:

Prakash stands for 'Power Rail Koyla Availability through Supply Harmony'. Apart from mapping coal stocks in mines, the portal will also help stakeholders monitor the movement of railway rakes and coal availability at power plants.

Q4. Which of these books were authored by Mahatma Gandhi:

- 1. Hind Swaraj
- 2. My Experiments with Truth
- 3. Unto This Last

Choose the correct option:

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

Answer: b

Explanation:

The Story of My Experiments with Truth is an autobiography of Gandhi. This book covers the life of Gandhiji from early childhood through to 1921. It was published in his journal Navjivan from 1925 to 1929. Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule is a book written by Gandhi in 1909. In it, he expresses his views on Swaraj, modern civilization, mechanisation, etc. The book was banned in 1910 by the British government in India as a seditious text. Unto This Last' is an essay and book on economy by John Ruskin. Gandhiji was influenced by this book.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. There are certain limitations on RBI's ability to influence growth prospects in the Economy and boosting the slowdown prevalent in the market. Explain the role of RBI and government in inducing demand in the market. (15 Marks, 250 Words)
2. Worsening economic conditions coupled with domestic instability and regional tensions looks like a new 'Arab Spring' is gaining momentum in Iraq. What are its probable global implications? (15 Marks, 250 Words)

