

07 Oct 2019: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. GS1 Related

B. GS2 Related

C. GS3 Related

ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. [Largest ever Arctic expedition](#)

SECURITY

1. [India starts sharing maritime data](#)
2. [Odisha camps to connect with tribals in Maoist-hit area](#)

ECONOMY

1. [Deposit Insurance](#)

D. GS4 Related

E. Editorials

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. [A Bill that undercuts key constitutional values](#)
2. [Criticism is not sedition](#)

ECONOMY

1. [A road to economic revival runs through agriculture](#)

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. [Best friends for now - On India- Bangladesh Relations](#)

F. Tidbits

1. [NRC: Dhaka says it's reassured by Narendra Modi's briefing](#)

G. Prelims Facts

1. [C40 Cities Climate Summit](#)
2. [Ramlila](#)
3. [National E-assessment Centre \(NeAC\)](#)

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

A. GS1 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

B. GS2 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

C. GS3 Related

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. Largest ever Arctic expedition

Context:

A 32-year-old polar researcher, a native of Kerala's capital Thiruvananthapuram, will be the **only Indian** among 300 scientists from across the world aboard the **multidisciplinary drifting observatory** for the

Study of Arctic Climate (MOSAiC) expedition.

MOSAiC expedition:

- MOSAiC is the **largest ever Arctic expedition** in history and will be the first to conduct a study of this scale at the North Pole for an entire year.
- It is spearheaded by the **Alfred Wegener Institute in Germany**.
- Multidisciplinary drifting Observatory for the Study of Arctic Climate (MOSAiC) expedition will help the researchers **better understand the impact of climate change** and aid in **improved weather projections**.
- The aim of the expedition will be to parameterise the atmospheric, geophysical, oceanographic and all other possible variables in the Arctic, and use it to more accurately forecast the changes in the weather systems.
- The mission aims for **manual observation and measurement**, as there has not even been a basic observation of the climate processes in the central Arctic from winter.

Details:

- Previous studies have been of shorter periods as the thicker sea ice sheets prevent access in winter.
- This research vessel has thus **locked itself into a large sea ice sheet (floe)**, before the winter, and will drift along with it.
- This expedition comes about 125 years after Norwegian explorer Fridtjof Nansen first managed to seal his wooden expedition ship, Fram, into the ice during a three-year expedition to the North Pole.
- The expedition is receiving funding from U.S. institutions such as the **National Science Foundation, the Department of Energy, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and NASA**.

Significance:

- The mission is aimed at studying the **impact of climate change on the Arctic** and how it could affect the rest of the world.
- The polar vortices that blasted cold air as far as Florida and the early heatwave in Europe are cited as the prime examples of the impact that a change in the Arctic weather system might entail.
- By combining measurements on the ice with data collected from satellites, scientists hope to **improve the increasingly sophisticated computer models for weather and climate predictions**.
- The mission will help in understanding the **processes at play in the far north** which is crucial for the world leaders to make the right decisions to curb climate change.

Polarstern:

- **Research Vehicle Polarstern** is a German research icebreaker of the Alfred Wegener Institute for Polar and Marine Research (AWI) in Bremerhaven.
- Polarstern was commissioned in 1982 and is mainly used for **research in the Arctic and Antarctica**.

Category: SECURITY

1. India starts sharing maritime data

Context:

The **Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR)** has started functioning as an

information-sharing hub of maritime data.

Details:

- At the just-concluded **Goa Maritime Conclave (GMC)**, National Security Adviser had offered countries in the IOR use of the facility to **track movement of vessels on the high seas**.
- The centre is actively interacting with the maritime community and has already built linkages with 18 countries and 15 multinational/maritime security centres.

IFC-IOR:

- The IFC-IOR was inaugurated in December 2018.
- The IFC is established at the Navy's **Information Management and Analysis Centre (IMAC)** in Gurugram.
- It is the **single point centre linking all the coastal radar chains** to generate a seamless real-time picture of the nearly 7,500-km coastline.
- Through this Centre, information on "**white shipping**", or **commercial shipping**, will be exchanged with countries in the region to **improve maritime domain awareness in the Indian Ocean**.
- It will function as an **information-sharing hub of maritime data**.
- It will be involved in **cuing incident responses to maritime security situations** through a **collaborative approach**.
- The IFC-IOR would also undertake the **conduct of exercises and training capsules** in maritime information collation and sharing.

In real time

The Navy's Information Fusion Centre-Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) in Gurugram is the single-point centre linking all coastal radar chain networks along the 7,500-km Indian coastline and in some neighbouring countries

■ The IFC tracks and monitors 75,000 - 1.5 lakh shipping vessels in real time round-the-clock



■ The IFC actively interacts with the maritime community and has already built linkages with 18 countries and 15 multinational and maritime security centres

■ The major centres with which regular exchange of maritime security information is being undertaken include Virtual Regional Maritime Traffic Centre, Maritime Security Centre- Horn of Africa, Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery, Information Fusion Centre-Singapore, and International Maritime Bureau-Piracy Reporting Centre

Significance:

- It will help in **countering the rise in maritime piracy in the Indian Ocean Region** - a privileged location at the crossroads of global trade, connecting the major engines of the international economy in the Northern Atlantic and Asia-Pacific.
- IFC-IOR would work towards **capability building in the region, coordination of incident response and disaster relief**, and in time, also share **submarine safety information**.
- IFR-IRO would also ensure that the entire region is benefited by **mutual collaboration and**

exchange of information and understanding the concerns and threats which are prevalent in the region.

2. Odisha camps to connect with tribals in Maoist-hit area

Context:

The government of Odisha has started to reach out to tribals living in the Maoist-hit '**Swabhiman Anchal**' in Odisha to include them in the government's developmental schemes.

Details:

- '**Jan Sampark Sibir**' has been organised by the administration.
- All **major departments** of the State government **open their counters** at these camps to include all residents — especially those left out in the **developmental schemes**.
- These camps also provide **free medical facility, Aadhaar card, ration card, construction worker identity card making facilities**.
- Horticulture and agriculture departments and banks counsel and provide **financial support** at these camps.
- A series of '**Jan Sampark Sibir**' is thought to be an attempt to **counter the Maoist propaganda**.

Swabhiman Anchal:

- **Swabhiman Anchal** is the **tribal-dominated** in Malkangiri district which was previously known as '**Bichhinnanchal**' or cut-off area.
- The area remained encircled by water on three sides after the construction of reservoirs at Machhkund in the 1960s and Balimela in the 1980s. There was no means of communication to the villages other than boat services.
- The erstwhile cut-off region in Malkangiri is now connected with **Gurupriya bridge**.
- In the past, the inhabitants of '**Swabhiman Anchal**' had protested against the **lack of development in the region**.
- It was alleged that in the past, **Maoists were trying to use these issues to create a support base in the region**.

Category: ECONOMY

1. Deposit Insurance

What is deposit insurance?

- Deposit insurance is a measure implemented in many countries to protect bank depositors, in full or in part, from losses caused by a bank's inability to pay its debts when due.
- Deposit insurance systems are one component of a financial system safety net that promotes financial stability.
- When a bank is liquidated, depositors are entitled to receive an insurance amount of ₹1 lakh per individual from the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation of India (DICGC).
- The ₹1 lakh insurance limit includes both principal and interest dues across the savings bank accounts, current accounts, fixed deposits and recurring deposits held with the bank.
- If one has multiple bank accounts with the same bank, then that person will receive only ₹1 lakh as insurance payout against all the accounts held in his/her name.
- By diversifying your deposits across multiple banks and holding accounts in different capacities — as an individual, joint account holder or guardian of a minor, one can maximise deposit insurance

Are co-operative banks covered by DICGC?

- Yes, deposit insurance covers all commercial banks and foreign banks operating in India, State, Central and Urban Co-operative Banks, local area banks and regional rural banks.
- When a bank fails to pay up the premium for deposit insurance, DICGC sometimes de-registers the bank and its insurance cover ceases.
- While scheduled commercial banks have rarely gone bust (RBI usually steps in to rescue/merge them before they fail), failures have been a more common occurrence with co-operative banks.
- Every insured bank pays premium amounting to 0.001% of its deposits to DICGC every year.

Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation of India (DICGC)

- DICGC is a wholly-owned subsidiary of RBI.
- The DICGC does not deal directly with depositors.
- The RBI (or the Registrar), on directing that a bank be liquidated, appoints an official liquidator to oversee the winding-up process.
- Under the DICGC Act, the liquidator is supposed to hand over a list of all the insured depositors (with their dues) to the DICGC within three months of taking charge.
- The DICGC is supposed to pay these dues within two months of receiving this list.

D. GS4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. A Bill that undercuts key constitutional values

Citizenship Amendment Bill:

- The Citizenship Amendment Bill seeks to allow **illegal migrants from certain minority communities in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan** eligible for Indian citizenship.
- The Bill seeks to **amend the Citizenship Act of 1955** and grant citizenship to people from minority communities — **Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians** — from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan after **6 years** of stay in India even if they do not possess any proper document. The current requirement is **12 years of stay**.
- They would not face deportation under the Passport (Entry into India) Act of 1920 and the Foreigners Act of 1946.
- The Bill provides that the registration of **Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholders may be cancelled if they violate any law**.
- The proposed legislation was cleared by the Lok Sabha in January, 2019 but not tabled in the Rajya Sabha.

Flawed logic:

- If the government goes ahead with its plan of implementing a **nation-wide National Register of Citizens**, with the **combined effect of the NRC and Citizenship Amendment Bill**, those who find

themselves excluded from it will be divided into two categories:

- **Muslims**, who will be deemed **illegal migrants**
- All others, who would have been deemed illegal migrants, but are **immunised by the Citizenship Amendment Bill**, if they can show that their country of origin is Afghanistan, Bangladesh or Pakistan.
- The logic appears to be that as these **three countries are Muslim-majority**, they may be subject to persecution on account of their faith, and, therefore, need refuge in a country such as India.
 - If the objective is the **protection of minorities**, then there is no explanation for why **Jews and atheists** (to take just two examples) have been left out.
 - There are **Muslim religious minorities** within these countries who are subjected to grave and serious persecution: the classic example is that of the **Ahmadis in Pakistan**.
 - There is no explanation for why only these three countries have been singled out. Lately, the **Rohingya community in Myanmar**, another neighbouring country, has been subjected to prolonged persecution, ethnic cleansing, and potentially genocide. However, the **government has been openly hostile towards the Rohingyas** and has even argued for their deportation before the Supreme Court.

Issues:

- Non-Muslims who are left out of a hypothetical nation-wide NRC will **not immediately receive legal immunity**, but will have to jump through further hoops before they are protected.
- By dividing the migrants into Muslims (but also, and atheists) and non-Muslims, the Citizenship Amendment **Bill explicitly, and blatantly, seeks to enshrine religious discrimination into law, contrary to our long-standing, secular constitutional ethos**.
- Though there are arguments that **Article 15** of the Constitution — that bars religious discrimination — applies only to citizens, **Article 14** of the same Constitution, guarantees to all persons equality before the law, and the equal protection of law.
- **Discriminatory treatment** and especially, discrimination that is arbitrary, and classifications that are unreasonable **violate the essence of the equal treatment clause**.
- A state that separates individuals and treats them unequally on palpably arbitrary grounds violates the prescription of Article 14, and the heart and soul of the Indian Constitution: respecting the dignity of all.
- The bill dramatically seeks to **alter the basis of citizenship in India**.
 - During the framing of the Indian Constitution, it was agreed that the primary basis for Indian citizenship would be **jus soli** — or, citizenship by birth (in the territory of India).
 - Over the years this principle has been diluted to an extent, with citizenship by descent replacing jus soli in certain respects.
 - The Bill, however, will be the first time that religion or ethnicity will be made the basis of citizenship.
 - That would do grave damage to the very idea of India as an inclusive and diverse polity, where religion has no bearing on who can become a full member of society.
- The **Citizenship Amendment Bill is closely linked to plans for a nationwide National Register of Citizens**.
- The link was explicitly drawn by the Home Minister: that the Citizenship Amendment Bill is required to protect (predominantly) non-Muslims who are excluded from the NRC.
- The major question that needs to be answered here is: **does India need a nationwide NRC?**
 - There is absolutely **no evidence** to suggest that there is a **huge influx of illegal migrants into India**.
 - Recent evidence suggests that **the rate of migration has been declining**.
 - The Assam NRC arose out of a very specific historical experience, and Assam's own position as a border State;
 - However, for the rest of India, Assam's own experience shows that an exercise such as this — flawed and riddled with errors as it is — will only lead to misery and exclusion on a

national scale.

Both exercises need to be urgently relooked into and challenged, at the level of popular movements, in the domain of Parliament, and before the courts.

2. Criticism is not sedition

What is the Seditious Law?

- “**Conduct or speech inciting people to rebel against the authority of a State or monarch**” can be considered as Seditious.
- The seditious law was incorporated into the **Indian Penal Code (IPC) in 1870** as fears of a possible uprising plagued the colonial authorities.
- Before Independence, this **charge was used by the British to suppress the freedom movement**.
- Ironically, the same **draconian law** has become a tool that the **country is now using against its own people**.
- Section 124 A of IPC 1860 states: “Whoever, by words, either spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representation, or otherwise, brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards the Government established by law is punishable with imprisonment for life.
- **Section 124A of the IPC defines seditious** and makes every speech or expression that “brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards the Government established by law in India” a criminal offence punishable with a maximum sentence of life imprisonment.
- It is classified as “**cognisable**” — the investigation process (including the powers to arrest) can be triggered merely by filing an FIR, without a judicial authority having to take cognisance — and “**non-bailable**” — the accused cannot get bail as a matter of right, but is subject to the discretion of the sessions judge.

Use of Seditious law during India’s Freedom Movement:

- The law was first used to prosecute **Bal Gangadhar Tilak in 1897**.
- That case led to Section 124A of the IPC (which deals with seditious) being amended, to add the words “hatred” and “contempt” to “disaffection”, which was defined to include disloyalty and feelings of enmity.
- In 1908, upon conviction for seditious in another case, and imprisonment, **Tilak** reportedly said, “**The government has converted the entire nation into a prison and we are all prisoners.**”
- **Gandhi, too, was later tried for seditious** for his articles in Young India, and famously pleaded guilty.
- Twice in the Constituent Assembly, some tried to include seditious as a ground for restricting free speech. But this was vehemently (and successfully) **opposed** for fear that it would be used to **crush political dissent**.

What is the issue?

- 49 eminent personalities spanning various fields wrote an open letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on lynchings across the country.
- The letter, signed by 49 eminent personalities, stated that “lynching of Muslims, Dalits and other minorities must be stopped immediately”, and that the slogan “Jai Shri Ram” has become a “provocative war cry”.
- Following which **the Bihar Police booked all the signatories of the letter**, written more than two months ago, **on the charges of seditious**, public nuisance and breach of peace.
- The FIR was filed under IPC sections 124A (seditious), 153B (assertions or assumptions prejudicial

to national integration, 160 (committing affray), 290 (committing public nuisance), and 504 (breach of peace).

Supreme Court judgements:

- In 1962, the Supreme Court decided on the constitutionality of Section 124A in **Kedar Nath Singh v State of Bihar**.
- It upheld the constitutionality of sedition, but **limited its application** to “acts involving intention or tendency to create disorder, or disturbance of law and order, or incitement to violence”.
- It distinguished these from “very strong speech” or the use of “vigorous words” strongly critical of the government.
- In 1995, the Supreme Court, in **Balwant Singh v State of Punjab**, **acquitted persons from charges of sedition for shouting slogans**.
- Instead of looking at the tendency of the words to cause public disorder, the Court held that **mere sloganeering which evoked no public response did not amount to sedition**, for which a more overt act was required; the accused did not intend to “incite people to create disorder” and no “law and order problem” actually occurred.

Concerns:

- A century ago, debates around sedition were about how the British abused it to convict and sentence freedom fighters.
- Today, unfortunately, Indians face the same question, except that instead of a foreign government, the country’s own institutions appear to be misusing the law.
- Now, anyone, be it university students or civil society activists, who utter even a single critical phrase is instantly targeted, without any introspection on why such criticism was voiced at all.
- The **broad scope of Section 124A means that the state can use it to chase those who challenge its power**, and the mere pressing of sedition charges ends up acting as a deterrent against any voice of dissent or criticism.

Way forward:

- The law and its application clearly **distinguish between strong criticism of the government and incitement of violence**.
- Even if the letter is considered hateful, or contemptuous and disdainful of the government, if it did not incite violence, it is not seditious.
- Unfortunately, Indian courts have, especially recently, repeatedly failed to appreciate this distinction.
- Even the threat of sedition leads to a sort of **unauthorised self-censorship, for it produces a chilling effect on free speech**. This misuse must be stopped by removing the power source itself.
- While private complaints targeting public figures are not unusual, courts should not, without sufficient cause, indulge the motivated outrage of litigious complainants.
- Superior courts do intervene to quell attempts by those claiming to be offended by some remark or public statements, but **it is time the lower judiciary stopped acting reflexively on frivolous complaints**.
- The court should have been aware of the ongoing national debate on retaining sedition as an offence under the IPC’s Section 124A and growing demand for its abrogation.
- The pervasive disregard for public opinion against the indiscriminate use of the sedition provision is disappointing enough.
- It is worse if the magistracy disregards Supreme Court judgments that say sedition is attracted only if there is incitement to violence, and does not apply to statements that contain mere opinions, howsoever strong they may be.

Conclusion:

Freedom of Speech and Expression is a fundamental right under Article 19(1)(a). Article 19(2) imposed reasonable restrictions. The first Amendment to the Constitution on June 18, 1951, imposed further restrictions. **To criticise the system is not sedition.** Recent court decision warrants an **urgent and fresh debate on the need to repeal the sedition law**, for it has **no place in a vibrant democracy**.

Category: ECONOMY

1. A road to economic revival runs through agriculture

Context:

- One of the world's fastest-growing economies, India, is now facing **sluggish growth**, with the Reserve Bank of India sharply **cutting GDP growth forecast to 6.1% for 2019-20**, which is lowest in the last six years.
- There has been a **sharp decline in the performance of key sectors**.

Issues:

- While some economists feel this slow pace is also a stage to bounce back and is cyclical, others see this as a **gross failure of economic reforms** and even a colonial legacy.
- The ripples of the slowdown are gradually moving to the primary sectors which are already losing balance under an unprecedented confluence of pressure.
 - Real agricultural and allied gross value added (GVA) grew by 2.9% during 2011-12 to 2017-18, while in the National Agricultural Policy (2000), it should have been around 4%, to attain an overall economic growth of 8%.
- **A highly skewed and unprecedented monsoon, erratic rainfall, and extreme natural events** are creating havoc which in turn are likely to **disrupt supply chains, fuel inflation** and have a **negative impact on consumption**.
- All these factors could further dampen the prospects of revival of the economy.
- The current **growth rate in the farm sector is less than adequate** to take on developmental challenges originating from the Sustainable Development Goals, mainly zero hunger, no poverty, life on land, and gender equality. Hence any key reforms packages in improving the economy should also **take cognisance of the crisis in the agricultural sector**.
- The sweet spot created by low oil prices in the past is slowly taking its turn to hit the economy to further cut down aggregate demand.

Addressing the slowdown:

- The key to addressing the slowdown lies in a **selective group of reforms in the key sectors**.
- The push must start with the **primary sector**.
- There is a great need to **accept the role of agriculture in invigorating crucial economic segments**.
 - The sector is a potential enabler and employer for more than 50% of the population;
 - It also has the potential to revive "animal spirits" by ensuring farm viability: increasing the ratio of farm to non-farm income to 70:30 by 2022-23 from the present 60:40.
 - According to the agriculture census 2015-16, the real income of farmers doubled in almost 20 years from 1993-94 to 2015-16.
 - **As the target to double farmers' income by 2022 is nearing, there must be fast-lane options and swift actions to ensure curated reforms on land, market, price, and ameliorate supply side constraints.**
 - The Agricultural Developmental Council (ADC) in line with the GST Council is a dire

need to make agricultural reforms **more expressive and representative**.

- For better income distribution, there is also a need to revisit **regional crop planning and the agro-climatic zone model** at the highest possible level so as to make agriculture the engine of **sustainable economic growth in India 2.0 by 2022**.
- There is immense need to **promote occupations that are less influenced by the slowdown** such as farming, handloom, handicrafts and others.
- Economic Survey 2018-19 states that the **working-age population will continue to rise through 2041**.
 - Therefore, there is an urgent need to **increase the job-to-investment ratio** which is currently very low.
 - Inter-State migration has a huge impact on personal consumption expenditure. Giving a policy **nudge to in-situ employment creation** is a must for a stable income and spending.
 - There must be efforts to have an accurate picture of unemployment data in order to have policy that is closer to facts.
- There is a need to reconsider the few distorting reforms that are often stated to revive the short-term chaos in the long run.

Conclusion:

- Whatever the reason for the slowdown, the opportunity to speed up must accommodate a **diverse body of opinion and options for sustainable and inclusive growth**.
- The conventional approach of fiscal and monetary stimulus options to address the relics of a slow pace would only give immediate relief and not an enduring solution.
- Hence key policy measures as they exist now must reach out to emancipate that which is dragging growth while stimulating key sectors.
- The occasional dip in growth due to various reasons will slow the pace to achieving a \$5-trillion economy by 2024.
- This is the **right time to execute a slew of doable agricultural reforms** as the role of agriculture in reversing the slowdown is immense in the light of its nearly 20% contribution to a \$5-trillion economy.
- Therefore, a **blend of efforts from a range of sectors, agriculture and allied sectors is warranted to enable overall growth**.

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Best friends for now – On India- Bangladesh Relations

Context:

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was on a four-day India visit, the first full bilateral meeting since both countries went to polls, marking a new chapter between New Delhi and Dhaka.

Details:

- India and Bangladesh have come closer over a decade-long engagement that began with Ms. Hasina's return to power in 2008.
- There has been an improvement in the strategic sphere, and alignment on regional and global issues, connectivity and trade.

India- Bangladesh Relations:

- India and Bangladesh share 4096.7 km. of border, which is the longest land boundary that India

shares with any of its neighbours.

- Assam, Tripura, Mizoram, Meghalaya, and West Bengal share border with Bangladesh.
- India was one of the first countries to recognize Bangladesh and established diplomatic relations with Bangladesh immediately after its independence in December 1971.
- Bilateral relations between Bangladesh and India have witnessed unprecedented heights over the last few years.

Key areas of co-operation:

- The two countries have committed to **upgrading port facilities**.
- There has been a commitment to **implement India's under-utilised Lines of Credit**.
- MoU has been signed for a **coastal surveillance system**.
- Agreements have also been signed on **education, culture and youth**.
- The two countries will also coordinate better **border management and counter-terror cooperation**, and are also working on a **regional trilateral energy sharing arrangement with Bhutan**.
- Modi and Ms. Hasina **inaugurated three projects**. The projects include **import LPG from Bangladesh**, inauguration of the Vivekananda Bhavan at Ram Krishna Mission in Dhaka and inauguration of Bangladesh-India professional skill development Institute at the Institute of Engineers in Khulna.

Areas that need attention:

- Despite many forward-looking paragraphs in the joint statement, both the countries have failed to make headway on **river-water sharing agreements**.
 - Chief among them is the **Teesta agreement**, for which a framework agreement was inked in 2011, but which has not moved forward since, chiefly because of tensions between the Central and West Bengal governments.
 - The long-pending upgrading of the **Ganga-Padma barrage project**, the draft framework of **interim sharing agreements** for six rivers — Manu, Muhuri, Khowai, Gumti, Dharla and Dudhkumar — as well as the draft framework of interim sharing agreement of the **Feni river** are also pending.
- This task must not be taken lightly between two countries that share 54 transboundary rivers, and where water management is key to prosperity, and often a source of tensions and humanitarian disasters.
- Growing concerns in Bangladesh over the **National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam** are another source of tensions.

Conclusion:

India-Bangladesh border is one of India's most secured. Relations between the two countries have reached a stage of maturity. Bilateral ties can be expected to grow stronger in the future. It is for India to take the lead to remove these irritants.

F. Tidbits

1. NRC: Dhaka says it's reassured by Narendra Modi's briefing

- A senior Bangladesh government official has **assured India that Dhaka will go by the assurances given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, and **not the public statements** by other Indian leaders, on the National Register of Citizens (NRC) issue.
- It was asserted that the visiting Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, and her delegation felt reassured after

the conversation with the Prime Minister.

- Modi had reportedly clarified that the NRC was a long-drawn, multi-phase process, which had been mandated by the Supreme Court, and the government was only carrying out court rulings.
- Significantly, it was assured that after the process was completed, **Bangladesh was prepared to study cases of Bangladeshi-origin migrants individually**, and take them back if the claims were verified.

G. Prelims Facts

1. C40 Cities Climate Summit

- C40 is a **network of the world's megacities** committed to addressing climate change.
- The C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group (C40) is a group of **94 cities** around the world.
- It represents **one-twelfth of the world's population** and **one-quarter of the global economy**.
- C40 is focused on **tackling climate change** and **driving urban action** that reduces greenhouse gas emissions and climate risks, while increasing the health, wellbeing and economic opportunities of urban citizens.
- C40 is also positioning cities as a leading force for climate action around the world, defining and amplifying their call to national governments for greater support and autonomy in **creating a sustainable future**.
- While C40 originally targeted megacities for their greater capacity to address climate change, C40 now offers three types of membership categories to reflect the diversity of cities taking action to address climate change, i.e, **Megacities, Innovator cities and Observer cities**.
- The categories consider such characteristics as population size, economic output, environmental leadership, and the length of a city's membership.

Context:

- C40 Cities Climate Summit will be held in Copenhagen, between October 9-12, 2019.

2. Ramlila

- **Ramlila** literally translating to Rama's lila or play is any dramatic folk re-enactment of the life of Rama according to the ancient Hindu epic Ramayana or secondary literature based on it such as the Ramcharitmanas.
- Ramlila is a series of scenes that include **song, narration, recital and dialogue**.
- It particularly refers to the thousands of - Hindu god Rama-related dramatic plays and dance events, that are staged during the festival of **Navratri**.
- After the enactment of the legendary war between Good and Evil, the Ramlila celebrations climax in the Dussehra (Dasara, Vijayadashami) night festivities where the **giant models of Evil such as of demon Ravana are burnt**, typically with fireworks.
- The Ramlila festivities were declared by UNESCO as one of the "**Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity**" in 2008.

3. National E-assessment Centre (NeAC)

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman inaugurated the **Income Tax Department's National E-assessment Centre (NeAC)**.
- The launching of NeAC is in line with the **Prime Minister's vision of Digital India**.
- NeAC aims to reduce **face-to-face interaction** between taxpayers and tax officials. The setting up of NeAC will improve the **taxpayer service**.
- It will also reduce the grievances of taxpayers. The centre will promote **ease of doing business**.

- The NeAC will be an independent office looking after the **exclusive work of e-assessment**.

Functions of the NeAC:

- NeAC will impart greater **efficiency, transparency, and accountability in the tax assessment**
- It **ends the physical interface** between the taxpayers and the tax officers.
- The taxpayers will receive notices on their registered e-mails and on the registered accounts on the web portal.
- **Real-time alerts through SMS** will be sent to the taxpayers.
- It will specify the issues for which their cases have been selected for scrutiny.

H. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The President, under Article 72 and the Governor under Article 161 has the power to grant pardon to a person awarded death sentence.
2. While the President's power to grant pardon extends in cases where the punishment or sentence is by a Court Martial, the Governor does not enjoy such power.

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: b

Explanation:

Similar to the pardoning powers of the President (**Article 72**), 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 the 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.

Q2. Which of the following state/s DO NOT come under the purview of Indian Forests Act of 1927?

1. Mizoram
2. Orissa
3. Uttar Pradesh

Choose the correct option:

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

Answer: a

Explanation:

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.

Q3. Consider the following statements with respect to the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution:

1. The schedule lists the official languages of India.
2. The schedule recognises 22 languages as official languages of the Republic of India.
3. Gondi, Bodo, Dogri and Santhali were added to the list of official languages by 92nd Constitutional Amendment Act

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

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

The schedule lists the official languages of India and recognises 22 languages as official languages of the Republic of India. Of these languages, 14 were initially included in the Constitution. Subsequently, Sindhi was added in 1967 by the 21st Constitutional Amendment Act; Konkani, Manipuri and Nepali were added in 1992 by 71st Constitutional Amendment Act; and Bodo, Dogri, Maithili and Santali were added in 2003 by 92nd Constitutional Amendment Act. At present, as per the Ministry of Home Affairs, there are demands for inclusion of 44 more languages in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution, one among those is "Gondi".

Q4. Consider the following statements:

1. Output gap is expressed as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP).
2. A negative output gap occurs when actual output is less than what an economy could produce at full capacity.
3. A negative gap means that there is spare capacity in the economy due to weak demand.

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

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

An output gap indicates the difference between the actual output of an economy and the maximum potential output of an economy expressed as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP). A

country's output gap may be either positive or negative. A negative output gap occurs when actual output is less than what an economy could produce at full capacity. A negative gap means that there is spare capacity, or slack, in the economy due to weak demand.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. With India facing an economic slowdown, it is an ideal time to implement agricultural reforms for the revival of the economy. Analyse. (15 Marks, 250 Words)
2. Lack of clarity with respect to manner of deportation of those left out of the NRC exercise could cast a shadow over the “best of the best” of ties between India and Bangladesh. Analyse. What are the other areas of bilateral relations that need attention? (15 Marks, 250 Words)