

## 26<sup>th</sup> Oct 2019: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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### A. GS1 Related

#### Category: SOCIAL ISSUES

#### 1. Reply to plea for entry of women into mosques: SC

##### Context:

A petition was filed in the SC challenging the prohibition of entry of Muslim women into mosques as illegal and has being a violation of their dignity. In the course of the hearing the SC has asked for the Governments view.

##### Background:

- In September 2018, a judgment of the Supreme Court of India ruled that all pilgrims regardless of gender, including women in the menstruating age group, should be allowed entrance to Sabarimala. The Constitution bench of the Supreme Court held that any exception placed on women because of biological differences violates the Constitution - that the ban violates the right to equality under

Article 14, and freedom of religion under Article 25.

- Following this historic verdict a petition was filed to allow women entry into the mosques, arguing that such a bar on Muslim women was “violative of Article 44 of the Constitution of India, which encourages the state to secure a Uniform Civil Code for all citizens, by eliminating discrepancies between various personal laws currently in force.” The petition claims that such a ban is hence unconstitutional.
- At present, women are allowed to offer prayers at mosques under the Jamaat-e-Islami and Mujahid denominations and are barred by the predominant Sunni faction.

## B. GS2 Related

### Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

#### 1. Activists cry foul as govt. notifies RTI rules

##### Context:

Following the amendments of the RTI Act in July 2019, The Right to Information Rules, 2019 have been notified by the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions.

##### Details:

- The new rules under the Right to Information Act that have reduced the tenure of Information Commissioners from five years to three.
- The new rules gives the government the discretion to decide on “conditions of service” for which no express provisions have been made in the rules.

##### Issues:

- Public consultation is mandated under procedures laid down in the Pre-Legislative Consultation Policy of 2014. The policy requires that all draft rules are to be placed in the public domain for comments/suggestions of people.
- The government has been given the “power to relax” the provisions regarding the appointment process, which raised serious concerns that the government could potentially invoke these powers to determine different tenures for different Commissioners at the time of appointment which would seriously undermine the independence of the Information commissioners.

### Category: HEALTH

#### 1. Experts urge Centre to eliminate trans fats

##### Context:

FSSAI launched a campaign to eliminate trans fats by 2022 following the WHO’s REPLACE programme, a step-by-step guide for the elimination of industrially-produced trans-fatty acids from the global food supply.

##### Details:

- Eliminating trans fats is key to protecting health and saving lives: WHO estimates that every year, Trans fat intake leads to more than 500,000 deaths of people from cardiovascular disease. Over 77,000 deaths annually are attributed to trans fats consumption in India.
- Consumer organizations and health experts have written to the Union Health Ministry asking it to

advance the 2022 deadline for the elimination of trans-fatty acids in Indian food to 2021.

- Industrially-produced trans fats are contained in hardened vegetable fats, such as margarine and ghee, and are often present in snack food, baked foods, and fried foods.
- Trans fat are made by adding hydrogen to liquid vegetable oils to make them more solid, and to increase the shelf life of foods. But healthier alternatives can be used that would not affect taste or cost of food.

## Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

### 1. Yemen govt. strikes deal with rebels

#### Context:

The Yemeni crisis precipitated by the country's long-running civil war, seems to be heading towards a settlement following the power-sharing deal between Yemen's southern separatists and the internationally-recognized government.

#### Background:

- The conflict has its roots in the failure of a political transition supposed to bring stability to Yemen following an Arab Spring uprising that forced its longtime authoritarian president, Ali Abdullah Saleh, to hand over power to his deputy, Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi, in 2011.
- The Houthi movement, which champions Yemen's Zaidi Shia Muslim minority fought a series of rebellions against Saleh during the previous decade, took advantage of the new president Hadi's weakness by taking control of their northern heartland of Saada province and neighbouring areas.
- Disillusioned with the transition, many ordinary Yemenis - including Sunnis - supported the Houthis and in late 2014 and early 2015, the rebels took over Sanaa.
- Alarmed by the rise of a group they believed to be backed militarily by regional Shia power Iran, Saudi Arabia and eight other mostly Sunni Arab states began an air campaign aimed at restoring Mr Hadi's government.
- The struggle for control has led to a large humanitarian crisis in the poor country. The UN considers Yemen to be the world's largest humanitarian crisis, with 14 million people at risk of starvation and repeated outbreaks of deadly diseases causing high levels of mortality.

## C. GS3 Related

## Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### 1. CSIR offers free mapping of Indian genomes

#### Context:

Following the Genome India project, the first such human genome mapping project in India the genomic data of 10,000 Indians are being catalogued.

#### Background:

- A genome is an organism's complete set of DNA, including all its genes. It contains all the information needed to build and maintain that organism.
- By sequencing the genome, researchers can discover the functions of genes and identify which of them are critical for life.
- Across the world, predictive diagnosis and precision medicine based on the genetic makeup of

patients are emerging fields in the treatment of diseases such as cancer and other genetic disorders.

- The Genome India project will aim to make predictive diagnostic markers available for some priority diseases such as cancer and other rare and genetic disorders.
- Through the Genome Project India wants to become part of the global endeavour to chart out the complex human genetic map.
- The newly opened IndiGen initiative, a programme managed by the CSIR-Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (IGIB) and the CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) proposes to offer free mapping of an individual's entire genome.
- The aim of the exercise is twofold: to test if it's possible to rapidly and reliably scan several genomes and advise people on health risks that are manifest in their gene and to understand the variation and frequency of certain genes that are known to be linked to disease.

## D. GS4 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## E. Editorials

**Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

### 1. India's big foreign policy shake-up

**Context:**

India's foreign policy is undergoing a series of fundamental transformations in terms of its underlying narratives, processes and desired endgames. The government's Hyper-activism marks a clear break from the past policies.

**Fundamental transformation:**

- One of the most striking features of the Modi government's foreign policy is its propensity for risk-taking quite unlike most previous governments in power.
- India has taken an offensive streak in the foreign relations realm, undoing the decades-old defensive Indian strategic behaviour.

**Examples:** India's action at Doklam, the surgical strikes against Pakistan in 2016 after the Uri terror attacks; and the Balakot air strikes in the wake of Pulwama attacks. These mark a fundamental policy shift and re-conceptualization of the country's external security orientation.

- Pakistan and terrorism remain the mainstay of its foreign policy and have come to dominate our foreign policy pursuits. There are unflinching invocations to these themes in almost all forums where India is represented as well as in bilateral meetings with countries.
- Present foreign policy, for the most part, has displayed unprecedented clarity of thought and action.

**Example:** India's reluctance to take part in China's OBOR owing to the issue of territorial sovereignty owing to its passage through PoK. India's reluctance to engage with the Taliban for negotiations.

- Decisive shift towards aligning with the USA. India's ties with the U.S. has acquired new found depth and breadth as compared to the pre-liberalization era of non-alignment.
- Economic and military power today are seen as tools to gain advantage vis-à-vis others, be it neighbours or the larger international system as is seen in India's quest for a place on the global high

table. Unceasing efforts to get into NSG, UNSC.

### Concerns:

- Though the offensive posturing is a definitive change vis a vis Pakistan, the adopted stance is yet to show the positive results as the terrorist strikes have continued unabated.
- Terrorism and Pakistan have come to dominate our foreign policy pursuits, instead of other forward-looking and system-shaping narratives. The unrelenting obsession would require compromises by the government in its negotiations with other countries in return for their pro-India stance.
- The fixation with terror and Pakistan also means that the country's valuable political and diplomatic capital as well as its accumulated goodwill in the comity of nations would have to be spent on tactical goals. **Example:** Cancelling the proposed PM's visit to Turkey, Banning import of palm oil from Malaysia owing to the pro-Pakistan stance taken by turkey and Malaysia.
- Over reliance on USA might lead to lack of strategic autonomy.
- Rigid stand adopted in certain cases might lead to long term losses for India. **Example:** India's reluctance to talk with the Taliban in spite of the changed scenario in Afghanistan. This will impede New Delhi's ability to play a noteworthy role in the emerging Afghan geopolitics at a crucial time such as this.
- Domestic politicization of foreign policy is a concern. This leads to the leadership weighing the domestic costs while making foreign policy decisions. It leads the leadership to a commitment trap as well as binds its hands when the external circumstances demand a change in behaviour.

### Way forward:

Though the unprecedented clarity and activism is a welcome relief from the old policies, there is a need for nuanced approaches to complex issues and long term vision for the policies. The foreign policy outcomes should be the basis of evaluation of the success of this change.

### Category: HEALTH

#### 1. Cutting risk

##### Context:

The WHO on world polio day officially declared that wild poliovirus type 3 has been eradicated. In spite of this progress in the global fight against polio, there is no room for complacency.

##### Significance:

- The eradication of type 3 virus opens up the possibility of switching from the currently used bivalent oral polio vaccine containing type 1 and type 3 to a monovalent vaccine containing only type 1.
- This would lead to lower costs.
- It also helps reduce the number of vaccine-derived poliovirus (VDVP) cases.
- Vaccine-associated paralytic polio (VAPP) can be greatly reduced if there is a switch from the bivalent to a monovalent vaccine containing only type 1, as type 3 poliovirus in the vaccine has the greatest propensity to cause vaccine-associated paralytic polio (VAPP). Though the risk of VAPP is small, it is caused when the live, weakened virus used in the vaccine turns virulent in the intestine of the vaccinated child or spreads to close contacts who have not been immunized.

##### Additional information:

- Vaccine-derived polioviruses (VDPVs) are rare strains of poliovirus that have genetically mutated

from the strain contained in the oral polio vaccine.

- The oral polio vaccine contains a live, attenuated (weakened) vaccine-virus. When a child is vaccinated, the weakened vaccine-virus replicates in the intestine and enters into the bloodstream, triggering a protective immune response in the child. Like wild poliovirus, the child excretes the vaccine-virus for a period of six to eight weeks. Importantly, as it is excreted, some of the vaccine-virus may no longer be the same as the original vaccine-virus as it has genetically altered during replication. This is called a VDPV.
- VAPP is caused when the live, weakened virus used in the vaccine turns virulent in the intestine of the vaccinated child or spreads to close contacts who have not been immunized.

**To know more about types of Poliovirus strains and announcement by the World Health Organisation (WHO) on eradication of wild poliovirus type 3 (WPV3), [Click Here](#).**

**Category: GOVERNANCE**

### **1. A Lifeline called Jan Soochana**

**This issue has been covered in 14th September 2019 Comprehensive News Analysis. [Click Here](#) to read.**

## **F. Tidbits**

### **1. Supreme Court reserves verdict in Karnataka MLAs case**

- Following the en masse resignation of the dissident MLAs in Karnataka and their subsequent disqualification under Anti-defection law the Disqualified MLAs had approached the SC.
- Following the arguments from both sides the SC has reserved the judgment.

### **2. U.S. to deploy 'mechanised forces' in Syria**

- The U.S. Defence secretary has stated that US will strengthen its military presence in Syria with "mechanized forces" to prevent Islamic State fighters from seizing oil fields and revenue generated from them.

## **G. Prelims Facts**

### **1. Birth Anniversary of poet saint Bhagat Namdev ji**

- Sant Shiromani Namdev Maharaj , also transliterated as Nam Dev, was an Indian poet and saint from Maharashtra.
- Namdev was influenced by Vaishnavism, and became widely known in India for his devotional songs set to music (bhajan-kirtans).
- His philosophy contains both nirguna and saguna Brahman elements, with monistic themes.
- Along with the works of sants such as Jnanesvar and Tukaram, the writings of Namdev are at the foundation of beliefs held by the Varkari sect of Hinduism.
- Considered the doyen of the Bhakthi movement in India, he spread the message of unity, religious tolerance and harmony.
- Bhagat Namdev's writings were also recognized by the Gurus of Sikhism and are included in the holy book of Sikhism, the Sri Guru Granth Sahib compiled in 1604.

## H. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

**Q1. Consider the following statements regarding SAFAR- India:**

1. SAFAR stands for System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research.
2. The SAFAR system is developed by Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune, along with India Meteorological Department (IMD) and National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF).
3. It provides location specific information on air quality in near real time and its forecast 1-3 days in advance for the first time in India.

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

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

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

All the statements are correct.

**Q2. Which of the following tiger reserves are correctly matched with their state locations?**

1. Kawal : Telangana
2. Pakke: Assam
3. Nagarhole: Tamil Nadu
4. Buxa : West Bengal

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

- a. 1 and 3 only
- b. 1, 2 and 3 only
- c. 1 and 4 only
- d. 1, 2, 3 and 4

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

- a. Pakke: Arunachal Pradesh

b. Nagarhole: Karnataka

**Q3. Which of the following statements regarding NAM are correct?**

1. The NAM was established in 1961 in Belgrade, Yugoslavia.
2. After the United Nations, NAM is the largest grouping of states worldwide.
3. India recently withdrew from NAM.

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

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

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

India is still a member of NAM.

**Q4. Which of the following statements are correct regarding the Representation of peoples act, 1951?**

1. The act deals with qualification and disqualification of members of both houses of Parliament.
2. According to it, a person convicted of any offence and sentenced to imprisonment for not less than two years, shall be disqualified from the date of such conviction and shall continue to be disqualified for a further period of six years since his/her release.
3. It provides the conditions for the qualification of voters to be eligible for voting.

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

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

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

Representation of people's act 1950 provides for the conditions for the qualification of voters to be eligible for voting.

**I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions**

1. In the backdrop of the RCEP trade negotiations moving towards a possible conclusion, discuss the



- possible advantages and disadvantages of India's membership to RCEP. Suggest way forward. (15 marks, 250 words)
2. The representation of people's act 1951 is a key legislation for the electoral system of India. Discuss. Enumerate the salient features regarding the disqualification provisions in the act. (10 marks, 150 words).

Read previous [CNA](#).

