

# 16 Dec 2019: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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*Nothing here for today!!!*

## B. GS 2 Related

### Category:HEALTH

#### 1. ‘Maternity scheme exclusionary, need benefits for all’

##### Context:

Concerns over the implementation of the **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)**.

##### Background:

- Under the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) it is envisaged to give a benefit of

₹5,000 to pregnant and lactating mothers for the birth of the first child. This would be disbursed in **three instalments upon meeting several conditionalities** — registration of pregnancy, at least one antenatal check-up, registration of childbirth and vaccinations.

- The remaining cash incentive of up to ₹1,000 is to be given under a separate scheme called **the Janani Suraksha Yojana** so that on an “average” women get a **total sum of ₹6,000**. The objective is to compensate women for wage loss due to childbirth.
- The scheme is also a way to meet a woman’s right under the **National Food Security Act, 2013**.

#### **Concerns:**

- Three years after a pan-India maternity benefits programme promising ₹6,000 to new mothers was first announced, the chorus on its **many exclusions** is growing louder leading to a demand for a scheme that is truly universal.

#### Lengthy documentation:

- The **lengthy documentation** work includes filling up six documents totalling 32 pages — an application form to be filled for each of the three instalments, an application for linking the Aadhaar card with a bank account, another one for linking the Aadhaar card with post office account and a feedback form. This could be a **big deterrent to illiterate sections**.

#### Documentation requirements:

- Applicants have to submit **at least nine documents for verification** — Aadhaar card (or enrolment slip when there is no card), an identity proof, voter ID card (as age proof) of the mother and her husband; ration card (for husband's address), copy of bank passbook and maternal and child protection (MCP) card. This leads to a **long and tedious documentation process**.
- A mother seeking benefits needs to provide proof of the address of her marital home, which proves challenging for a newlywed expecting a child and often residing in her natal home during pregnancy. This leads to the need for a **lot of effort from women** to procure the documents.

#### Issue of corruption:

- Eligible beneficiaries have to jump through several hoops to claim their entitlement. Women have to pay a **hefty bribe during the application process**.

#### Exclusion of vulnerable sections:

- The documentation work is likely to result in many women living on the margins, such as **sex workers, women in custody, migrant and those living in post-conflict situations** unable to claim benefits even though they are most in need of monetary compensation.
- The registration for the scheme requires an applicant to provide her husband’s Aadhaar details along with her own, **affecting single women which include unwed mothers, deserted wives, and widows**.

#### Newlywed woman:

- A mother is unable to get the compensation when she needs it the most, i.e. during the nine months of her pregnancy. While the scheme is solely for the first living child, it ironically leaves out those who are most likely to give birth to one — a newlywed woman.
- The requirement that the applicant has to be at least 19 years old also **leaves out younger brides**, who hesitate in getting their marriages registered as the legal age of marriage is 18 years. **30-35% of**

**first-time mothers are under the age of 18 years.**

- The application form requires separate undertakings from the woman and her husband that the child for whom they are seeking the benefit will be “the first living child for both of them”, further making it prohibitive.

Missed targets:

- Since the scheme came into effect in January 2017, it has benefited a total of 128 lakh women as per the government’s reply in Parliament. This is **80% of the total target** the government has set out for itself — 53 lakh women per year.

Low targets:

- Experts estimate that the **government’s target itself is 43% of the total 123 lakh first births in the country in a year** as derived from the population size of 133.9 crores in 2017 and the birth rate of 20.2 per thousand.

**Way forward:**

- Activists and grassroots workers must make a “formal representation” to the government highlighting their concerns so that corrective actions can be taken.
- There is a need for **reviewing the scheme and making it universal** by removing restrictions on the number of children as well as including all women, whether they are in the formal or informal sector, engaged in paid or unpaid work.
- The **sum promised should also be at least on par with minimum wages** for women in self-employment, unpaid work, or working for less than minimum wage.

## C. GS 3 Related

### Category:ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

#### 1. No deal as longest climate talks end

**Context:**

The end of the 2019 United Nations Climate Change Conference.

**Background:**

- The 2019 United Nations Climate Change Conference, also known as **COP25**, is the 25th United Nations Climate Change Conference. **It was held in Madrid, Spain**, from 2 to 13 December 2019 under the **presidency of the Chilean government**.
- The conference incorporates the **25th Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**, the 15th meeting of the parties for the Kyoto Protocol (CMP15), and the **second meeting of the parties for the Paris Agreement (CMA2)**.

**Concerns:**

- International climate talks ended **without any major progress or announcement**.
- The international community lost an important opportunity to show increased ambition on **mitigation, adaptation, and finance** to tackle the climate crisis.

#### No enhanced targets:

- **The Paris Accord** established the goal of avoiding a temperature increase of more than **5 degrees Celsius** (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) by the end of the century. So far, the world is on course for a 3- to 4-degree Celsius rise, with potentially dramatic consequences for many countries.
- The final declaration of the summit only underscored the “urgent need” to cut planet-heating **greenhouse gases** in line with the goals of the landmark 2015 Paris climate change accord. That **fell far short of promising to enhance countries’ pledges to cut greenhouse gases** next year which developing countries had lobbied the delegates to achieve.
- Calls for more aggressive actions to limit greenhouse gas emissions have not been addressed.

#### Lack of funding for adaptation:

- Another aspect of the negotiations is the language around **loss and damage under Article 8 of the Paris agreement**. These are **proposals for compensating developing countries for damages caused by climate change**. It’s a high priority for island countries facing rising sea levels and for African countries that have already experienced devastating extreme weather worsened by climbing temperatures.
- Delegates from almost 200 nations endorsed a declaration to help poor countries that are suffering the effects of climate change, although they **didn’t allocate any new funds to do so**.

#### Failure to take responsibility by the major polluters:

- Major polluters resisted calls to ramp up efforts to keep global warming at bay.
- Negotiators in Madrid left some of the thorniest issues for the next climate summit in Glasgow, including the **liability for damages caused by rising temperatures** that developing countries were insisting on. That demand was resisted mainly by the United States.
- **The US is set to exit the Paris agreement altogether** next year and thus would not be impacted by any provisions in the accord but is still making the process more difficult for the negotiators.

#### No final agreement on Carbon markets:

- The last part of the Paris regime that remains to be resolved is **Article 6**. This article describes **rules for a carbon market and** other forms of international cooperation. In the **COP24 conference, no agreement** could be reached on this topic. Multiple politically difficult decisions have to be made for this article.
- These carbon-trading mechanisms are important for how some countries plan to meet their goals, using tactics like restoring a section of tropical rainforest that can act as a net absorber of carbon dioxide. The trouble is that such schemes can be gamed to avoid making real cuts in emissions. There are also **some accounting problems in Article 6** that need to be resolved, like double-counting credits.
- **International trading of carbon can make overall emission cuts** **The final agreement on carbon markets’ regulation has been put off.**

#### Failure to recognize the scale of the crisis:

- **The negotiations were primarily meant to finalize the Paris rulebook**, a series of regulations that countries would use to meet their targets for cutting greenhouse gas emissions under the Paris agreement.

- **The overriding issue of how fast the world needs to cut greenhouse gas emissions has received little official attention.** Urgent UN talks on tackling the climate emergency are still not addressing the true scale of the crisis.
- Greenland's ice sheet is melting seven times faster than in the 1990s. Oxygen in the oceans is decreasing. A quarter of the world's population is at risk of water supply problems as mountain glaciers, snow-packs and alpine lakes are run down by global heating and rising demand.

#### **Additional Information:**

- The European Commission announced its European Green Deal, a plan to make the 28 countries in the EU “climate neutral” by 2050 and to halve its emissions by 2030.

### **Category: AGRICULTURE**

#### **1. Araku's aroma all set to spread overseas**

##### **Context:**

Efforts to pass on the benefits of the **growing coffee industry in Araku valley** to the locals.

##### **Background:**

- The Central government has recently accorded the **prestigious 'Geographical Indication' (GI) tag to Araku Valley Coffee** along with four other varieties of Indian coffee. Others are **Coorg Arabica Coffee, Chikmagalur Coffee and Bababudangiris Arabica Coffee** of Karnataka and **Waynad Robusta Coffee**.
- The GI tag is primarily the certification of products of agricultural, natural or manufactured (handicrafts and industrial goods) originating from a definite geographical territory.
- The GI tag will help all the five coffee brands **get maximum market and price for their premium products across the globe**. Indian coffee is highly valued in the world market and sold as a premium product in Europe.
- Among the five, **Araku Valley Arabica Coffee**, produced through an **organic method**, is famous for its rich blend of good taste and invigorating aroma as well as purity. The coffee from the hilly areas of Visakhapatnam district and Odisha is produced by tribals through the '**integrated coffee development project**'.
- The tribals use **organic, green manures and adopt organic pest management practices**.

##### **Concerns:**

- Araku's coffee is world-famous, but its farmers who are mainly tribals are still struggling.
- While coffee grown in Araku is sold at premium prices, farmers growing it don't even get Rs 100 a kilo for the same coffee fruit. The major profit is siphoned off by the **middlemen**.

##### **Way forward:**

- By sourcing coffee directly and keeping middlemen at bay, and supplying the products straight to the consumers through online orders, a start-up has made it a point to **pass on benefits to the tribal people**.
- Further by engaging tribal people in the area for green coffee bean roasting and grinding, there is scope for **value addition locally** which will not only **increase the local employment opportunities**

**but also give the farmers higher returns.**

- Need to **train tribal people on scientific methods**, in collaboration with the Coffee Board, on how to enhance yield and produce better quality coffee.

## **Category:INTERNAL SECURITY**

### **1. Android vulnerable to cyberattack: MHA**

#### **Context:**

Alert issued by the Union Home Ministry.

#### **Details:**

- **The Union Home Ministry has sent an alert to all States** warning them about the vulnerability of the Android operating system to a **bug called ‘StrandHogg’** that **allows real-time malware applications to pose as genuine applications and access user data of all kinds.**
- This malware can then potentially listen to their conversations, access photo albums, read/send messages, make calls, record conversations and get login credentials to various accounts.
- This apart, things that such malware can access include private images, files, contact details, call logs, and location information.
- The information was shared by **the Threat Analytical Unit, Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre, Ministry of Home Affairs.**

#### **Warning signs:**

- While all versions of Android, including Android 10, are vulnerable to this bug, it may not be apparent to the affected users that malware applications are already onboard their devices.
- Pop-ups asking for permission to send notifications, messages, etc., are one of the main entry points for ‘StrandHogg’ to launch the attack.
- An app in which the user is already logged in asking him/her to log in again is another anomaly pointing to the possibilities of a cyberattack. Once users approve such requests, the malware would instantly access the mobile phone or tablet for specific purposes.
- Links and buttons that become non-functional, apps asking for permissions that are not required are among the other warning signs.

#### **Conclusion:**

- An alert has been sent to all senior police officials to **sensitize them to the threat.** Steps should be taken to **create awareness among the public on the vulnerability of Android to ‘StrandHogg’.**

## **D. GS 4 Related**

*Nothing here for today!!!*

### Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

#### 1. The distinct cry of an imperilled frontier

##### Context:

Protests in the Northeast states of India against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), 2019.

##### History of the region:

The British's arrival in the region:

- Provoked and compelled by the imperial ambition of Burmese Konbaung ruler, King Bagyidaw, whose army invaded and occupied Assam and Manipur starting 1819, the **British** intervened and **took over Assam** (which then was virtually the entire Northeast with the exception of Tripura and Manipur).
- It was **formally annexed in 1826 after the signing of the Treaty of Yandabo** to make it a **part of its Bengal province**.
- **Manipur** was left as a **protectorate state**.

Changing Demographics:

- As Assam was at the time unfamiliar with British colonial administration and education, **educated Hindu Bengalis from neighbouring Sylhet** became the favoured agents to fill the colonial bureaucracy and carry forward the colonial project.
- It is from this position of power, that Hindu Bengalis dominated Assam's political as well as cultural spheres.
- This was predicted to ultimately provoke a reaction from the Assamese middle class as it came of age. There was also the Muslim Bengali peasantry which migrated to Assam, but those who arrived before politics in India began polarising on religious lines, found it much easier to assimilate and adopt the Assamese identity.

Colonial policies:

- **Assam was separated from Bengal and made a separate chief commissioner's province in 1874.**
- In 1912, Curzon's 1905 partition of Bengal was withdrawn, and Sylhet came to be affiliated with the new province of Assam.

Partition phase:

- At the time of Partition, Sylhet's chance of remaining with India was for it to be treated as a part of Assam. The then Assamese leadership refused this as Assam would then have become Bengali majority.
- **Sylhet had to face a referendum separately** and by a thin Muslim majority was awarded to Pakistan. The current migration issue is also a consequence of this **bitter politics of antagonism of the past**.

## Concerns:

### The character of the Region:

- The Northeast is inhabited by diverse populations, sharing borders with several neighbours. Assertive ethnic politics, including secessionism and resistance to migration into the region, has been a defining character of the area.
- Grievances of indigenous populations are genuine, but it is difficult, even counterproductive, to try to resolve them by privileging one group over another.
- The CAA might result in a revival of the hostilities in the region.

### Language and survival:

- The response of the Northeast to the CAA is not merely tribal xenophobia as many have portrayed it to be, but a desperate survival throe.
- A closer look at the UNESCO classification of endangered languages will illuminate further the Northeast's reaction to the CAA.
- In the UNESCO list, several languages in the Northeast have already become extinct; many more are critically endangered. When a language dies, a world view dies with it.
- Going by **UNESCO's definition of endangered languages**, all of the 200 and more languages spoken in the Northeast, with the exception of Assamese and Bengali, are in the vulnerable category.

### Population anxiety:

- In the case of Assamese, though it is the language of the majority in the State with about 15 million speakers (Census 2011), they are still a tiny minority when the larger region of Bangladesh, Bengal and Assam is considered.
- Bengali speakers in Assam total about 9 million (Census 2011); however, neighbouring Bangladesh alone has 164 million speakers of the same language.
- There is the fear in Assam of **being overwhelmed by the changing demography of the region**. This situation is described as “**a majority with a minority complex**” whose consequences have resurfaced in the region time and again with bad effects. The CAA might perpetuate this “**population anxiety**”.
- In Assam, observers say the division between the Assamese-speaking Brahmaputra Valley and the Bengali-speaking Barak Valley is likely to deepen.

### Issue of marginalization:

- There is the fear of the locals being marginalized by the **influx of outsiders** into the region. They fear the CAA will only accelerate the rate of migration.
- Indeed, the ethnic and cultural diversity of the Northeast shows that migrants and their integration have always been a part of the historical reality of the region. **Large scale and rapid influxes, therefore, are the problem.**

### Consequences of Marginalization:

- Though the Rohingya crisis is generally projected as a Muslim versus Buddhist scenario, the core of the issue lies in the **feeling of marginalization among the ethnics**.
- The ethnic Rakhines, numbering about two million in the Rakhine state — shared with the Rohingya — were the ones feeling the pressure of a continuing population influx from Bangladesh, expanding the Rohingya population.
- That the Myanmar government favoured the Rakhines was always obvious but it may be noted that the crisis was precipitated when a previously unheard-of militant organisation, the Arakan Rohingya



Salvation Army, made a coordinated attack on 30 Myanmar police camps in August 2017.

- This major incident prompted the Myanmar government to begin its brutal ethnic cleansing campaign.
- Even now, the presence of seven lakh Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh close to the Chittagong Hill Tract, is making small ethnic Buddhist communities such as the Chakmas and the Marmas uneasy. They could become marginalised if the refugees were to be resettled among them.
- Such scenarios often result in violent reactions. **A demographic change of the region might result in a prolonged phase of violence and unrest in the region.**

#### Way forward:

- There is a need to show a strong commitment to protect the cultural and linguistic rights of Northeast communities.

For more on this issue: [Click Here](#)

## 2. Probing the police

### Context:

Supreme Court has ordered a judicial inquiry into the killing of the four suspects arrested for the rape and murder of a veterinarian near Hyderabad.

### Concerns:

#### A case of retributive justice?

- The SC noted a peculiar feature of the FIR, registered by the Telangana police, and taken up for investigation by a Special Investigation Team.
- The FIR contains **IPC sections and Arms Act provisions** that relate to the offences by the four accused in snatching weapons from the police and trying to kill them while attempting to flee from custody. The court rightly questions how dead men could be investigated and prosecuted.
- Even though there is a claim that the SIT would investigate the cause of the deaths, it was possibly right on the court's part to doubt whether the police were genuine about establishing whether there really was an 'encounter'.
- The order underscores that the suspects were in the legal custody of the police when the incident took place, implying that it was primarily a '**custodial death**' and one that was yet to be established as an '**encounter**' — the latter being a term that can be used only when the police or any other security force is unexpectedly faced with armed adversaries.

#### Need for an intervention:

- **The necessity for a judicial inquiry has not been clearly established.**
- The top court took up the matter when the Telangana High Court was seized of it. The High Court had done well to pass orders to preserve the bodies, and to video-graph the autopsy — the footage of which should be handed over to a district judge. There was nothing to suggest that the High Court would not have ensured an impartial police investigation, especially when it was going by the **guidelines issued by the Supreme Court in 2014 in the PUCL vs. the State of Maharashtra case.**
- Without any finding that the proceedings before the High Court were ineffective, the top court has ordered a **probe by a three-member commission.**
- The SC has also **stayed the probe by the National Human Rights Commission**, possibly because

it wanted to avoid any parallel inquiry. If at all, it felt the need for an independent probe, the Supreme Court could have monitored the police investigation or transferred it to another agency. Instead, it has chosen **the Commission of Inquiry route** and given six months for the panel to come out with its findings.

- It would be unfortunate if the constitution of a judicial commission has the unintended consequence of the police waiting for the commission's findings and going slow on the criminal investigation. After all, **regular investigation based on the criminal procedure is always better than ad hoc enquiries that are mere fact-finding exercises.**

For more on this issue: [Click Here](#)

## F. Tidbits

### 1. RTI case: Centre files affidavit in sealed cover

- **The Information Commissions are the courts of appeal under the RTI Act**, and continuing vacancies lead to long delays in settling cases.
- The SC had issued a show-cause notice to the Centre and some state governments on their progress in making timely and transparent appointments to the Commissions asking them to file a status report.
- **The Department of Personnel and Training is the nodal Central Ministry for RTI.**
- The government agencies and departments have been using sealed covers to submit information to the judiciary.
- Retired judges have said **sealed covers are typically used in matters of national security or with regard to ongoing investigations.**

### 2. Pleas in SC speak of past judgments

- **Navtej Singh Johar case** dealt with the decriminalization of homosexuality.
- **Anwar Ali Sarkar verdict of the Supreme Court** states that if at all the state ventures to classify people on the basis of religion, it should be reasonable, based on intelligible differentia and have a rational basis with the objective sought to be achieved by the law.
- The Constitution Bench in the **S.R. Bommai judgment** lays down that the State cannot favour any particular religion. It is the government's duty to accord equal treatment to members of all faiths.
- A Constitution Bench in its **Shayara Bano (triple talaq case)** held that legislation which is manifestly arbitrary, capricious, irrational, excessive or disproportionate should be struck down.

### 3. Delay in sending official notifications to Parliament

- A study by a Parliamentary panel revealed that out of 233 statutory notifications containing rules and regulations from 14 Ministries, 125 notifications were presented to Parliament after a delay ranging from one to ten months, thereby **withholding information that should be available to all members.**
- As per the rules, the **notifications are required to be laid on the Table of the House within 15**

days of their publication in the Gazette if the House is in session, and if not, within 15 days of the commencement of the next session.

- **The panel on Subordinate Legislation** has taken a serious view of the delay and recorded its displeasure over the lackadaisical approach that **negates the principle of accountability of the Executive to the Parliament** and the Constitutional mandate of the Parliament to monitor the functioning of the Executive.

## G. Prelims Facts

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Which of the following pairs of martial arts and associated states is wrongly matched?

- a. Mukna: Bihar
- b. Huyen Langlon: Manipur
- c. Silambam: Tamil Nadu
- d. Paika Akhada: Odisha

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

- Mukna is a form of folk wrestling from the north-east Indian state of Manipur. It is popular in Imphal, Thoubal and Bishnupur. The game is generally played on the last day of the Lai Haraoba festival and is an intrinsic part of the ceremonial functions.
- Huyen Langlon is an Indian martial art from Manipur. In the Meitei language, huyen means war while langlon or langlong can mean net, knowledge or art. Huyen Langlon consists of two main components: thang-ta (armed combat) and sarit sarak (unarmed fighting). The primary weapons of Huyen Langlon are thang (sword) and ta (spear).
- Silambam is a weapon-based martial art of India, more specifically from Tamilakam in the Indian subcontinent.
- Paika akhada is a martial art found in Odisha.

Q2. Which of the statements is/are correct?

1. Citizenship is listed under the union list of the 7th Schedule of the Indian Constitution.
2. Article 256 of the Constitution states that the executive power of every State shall be so exercised as to ensure compliance with the laws made by Parliament.

**Options:**

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2

d. Neither 1 nor 2

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

- Part XI of the Constitution, which governs the relationship between the Centre and the states, says categorically that states are bound to implement the laws passed by Parliament.
- Article 256 of the Constitution makes it a state's obligation to ensure compliance with central laws.
- Article 249 empowers Parliament to make laws even on state subjects in the national interest.
- Under Articles 251 and 254, the Centre is to prevail over the states in the event of any inconsistency between central and state legislations.
- The governor can recommend President's rule under Article 356, advising that the state cannot be run in keeping with the Constitution's provisions.

**Q3. Which of the following is wrongly matched?**

- a. Araku Valley Arabica coffee: Andhra Pradesh
- b. Kani shawl: Jammu and Kashmir
- c. Muga silk: Assam
- d. Toda embroidery: Madhya Pradesh

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

- Toda embroidery is associated with Tamil Nadu. The Toda embroidery, also locally known as "pukhoor", is an artwork among the Toda pastoral people of Nilgiris in Tamil Nadu. It is made exclusively by women.

**Q4. Which of the following statements is/are correct?**

1. The Maternity Benefit Amendment Act is applicable only for the biological mothers and not those who are adopting a child.
2. The Maternity Benefit Amendment Act makes crèche facility mandatory for every establishment employing 10 or more employees.

**Options:**

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

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

- The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 protects the employment of women during the time of her maternity and entitles her of a 'maternity benefit' – i.e. full paid absence from work – to take care for her child. The act is applicable to all establishments employing 10 or more employees.
- The Maternity Benefit Amendment Act has increased the duration of paid maternity leave available for women employees from the existing 12 weeks to 26 weeks.

- Maternity leave of 12 weeks is to be available to mothers adopting a child below the age of three months from the date of adoption as well as to the “commissioning mothers”. The commissioning mother has been defined as a biological mother who uses her egg to create an embryo planted in any other woman.
- The Maternity Benefit Amendment Act makes crèche facility mandatory for every establishment employing 50 or more employees. Women employees would be permitted to visit the crèche 4 times during the day (including rest intervals).

## I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. India is facing the prospect of an acute water crisis. Discuss the reasons for it and suggest a suitable way forward. (10 marks, 150 words)
  2. The excessive stress on the need for proper documentation to limit leakages can lead to large scale exclusion of beneficiaries of government schemes. Comment in the backdrop of the findings in the implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY). (10 marks, 150 words)
-