

# 23 Jan 2020: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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**Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE**

**1. India drop 10 ranks to 51st position in Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index**

**Context:**

- India - the world's biggest democracy **has slipped 10 places in the 2019 Democracy Index to 51st place.**
- The report, "A year of democratic setbacks and popular protest", was done by **the Economist Intelligence Unit** — the research and analysis division of **the Economist Group**, which is the sister company to '**The Economist**' newspaper.
- The report records how global democracy fared, **analysing 165 independent states and two territories.**

**Democracy Index:**

- Democracy Index is an index compiled by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), a UK-based company. It intends to measure the state of democracy.
- The index is based on **60 indicators** grouped in **five different categories**, measuring **pluralism, civil liberties and political culture.**
- In addition to a numeric score and a ranking, the index categorises each country in one of four regime types: **full democracies, flawed democracies, hybrid regimes and authoritarian regimes.**
- **Full democracies:** are nations where civil liberties and fundamental political freedoms are not only respected but also reinforced by a political culture conducive to the thriving of democratic principles. These nations have a valid system of governmental checks and balances, an independent judiciary whose decisions are enforced, governments that function adequately, and diverse and independent media.
- **Flawed democracies:** are nations where elections are fair and free and basic civil liberties are honoured but may have issues (e.g. media freedom infringement). These nations have significant faults in other democratic aspects, including underdeveloped political culture, low levels of participation in politics, and issues in the functioning of governance.
- **Hybrid regimes:** are nations with regular electoral frauds, preventing them from being fair and free democracies. These nations commonly have governments that apply pressure on political opponents, non-independent judiciaries, widespread corruption, harassment and pressure placed on the media, anaemic rule of law, and more pronounced faults than flawed democracies in the realms of underdeveloped political culture, low levels of participation in politics, and issues in the functioning of governance.
- **Authoritarian regimes:** are nations where political pluralism has vanished or is extremely limited. These nations are often absolute monarchies or dictatorships, may have some conventional institutions of democracy but with meagre significance, infringements and abuses of civil liberties are commonplace, elections (if they take place) are not fair and free, the media is often state-owned or controlled by groups associated with the ruling regime, the judiciary is not independent, and there are omnipresent censorship and suppression of governmental criticism.

**What does the report say?**

**India:**

- India's overall score fell from **7.23 to 6.9, on a scale of 0-10**, within a year (2018-2019) — the country's **lowest since 2006.**
- **India ranks eighth in the Asia and Australasia region**, behind Taiwan and Timor-Leste.
- The survey attributes the primary cause of the democratic regression to an **erosion of civil liberties in the country.**
  - The report talks about the repeal of both [Article 370](#) and Article 35A and the events that followed.
  - It notes that the government restricted Internet access in the state.
  - It pointed out that the NRC exercise in Assam excluded 1.9 million people from the final list,

- and that the vast majority of people excluded from the NRC are Muslims.
- On the CAA, the report says that it has enraged the large Muslim population, stoked communal tensions and generated large protests in major cities.

### **World:**

- The average global score also recorded its worst value ever, **down from 5.48 in 2018 to 5.44**.
- The fall is driven by a sharp regression in Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa, a lesser one in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, and by stagnation in the remaining regions that were covered.

## **2. Another extension for OBC sub-categorisation panel**

### **Context:**

The Union Cabinet has approved a six-month extension in the tenure of the commission to examine sub-categorisation of Other Backward Classes (OBC).

### **Details:**

- The commission was appointed in 2017 with an initial time frame of 12 weeks.
- The commission was appointed to look into the existing list of OBCs and categorise the castes that have not benefited from reservation in government jobs and education.
- It is one of the efforts of the Government to achieve greater social justice and inclusion for all.
- The Cabinet also approved an addition to the commission's terms of reference.
  - The commission will now also study the various entries in the Central List of OBCs and recommend correction of any repetitions, ambiguities, inconsistencies and errors of spelling or transcription.
- It is also expected to give its recommendations to ensure that these marginalised communities get the benefits of various schemes.

### **Terms of Reference:**

- To examine the extent of inequitable distribution of benefits of reservation among the castes or communities included in the broad category of OBC with reference to such classes included in the Central List.
- To work out the mechanism for sub-categorization.

## **Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

### **1. Cabinet approves pact with Brazil on criminal cooperation**

#### **Context:**

The Union Cabinet has approved an **agreement on bilateral legal and criminal cooperation** to be sealed during the visit of President Jair Bolsonaro of Brazil.

## Details:

- The agreement aims to **enhance effectiveness of both the countries in investigation and prosecution of crime through cooperation and mutual legal assistance in criminal matters.**
- It is expected to **bolster counter-terror cooperation** between the two countries.
- Apart from this agreement, three pacts, covering research in **minerals and mining, child behaviour and energy cooperation**, were approved by the Cabinet.
- The MoU in the energy sector will allow for **joint exploration in the petroleum and natural gas segment.**
- Under the MoU, both sides will work towards establishing cooperation in the exploration and production (E&P) initiatives in Brazil and India, research & development in this sector, exploring collaboration in liquefied natural gas projects in Brazil, India and third countries.

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## E. Editorials

**Category:POLITY AND GOVERNANCE**

### 1. Speakers and disqualification powers

#### Context

- The [Supreme Court](#) in its latest verdict has asked Parliament to make changes in the Constitution to strip Legislative Assembly Speakers of their exclusive power to decide whether legislators should be disqualified or not under the anti-defection law.
  - The Tenth Schedule provides the circumstances under which a Member of Parliament or a State Legislative Assembly can be disqualified for defecting to another party.
  - Disqualification petitions under the Tenth Schedule are decided by the Speaker of the concerned House.

#### The court made two important declarations

- First, the three-judge bench said that the Speakers of both the State Assemblies and the Parliament have to **decide on disqualification petitions for members within three months except for the existence of an extraordinary circumstance.**
  - It also held that courts have the powers to intervene if the proceedings are delayed.

- Second, the court recommended to Parliament that it strongly considers **removing the Speakers' disqualification powers and forming an independent tribunal** to take up these petitions.
  - Given the fact that a Speaker belongs to a particular political party, the Court has mooted that these disqualification petitions be decided by an independent permanent tribunal.

### Background

- The judges were ruling on the disqualification of a **Congress legislator in Manipur who joined the Bharatiya Janata Party** right after the 2017 Assembly elections.
- The Congress had asked the Manipur Speaker to disqualify him. The Speaker failed to act and kept the petition pending.
- After the Speaker failed to take any action on these petitions, a **writ petition was filed before the High Court of Manipur at Imphal**.
  - In 2017, the High Court stated that as the issue of whether a **High Court can direct a Speaker to decide a disqualification petition within a certain timeframe** is pending before a Bench of five judges of the Supreme Court, it could not pass any order in the matter.
  - Since the High Court refused to grant any relief, the appellant approached the Supreme Court in appeal.
- The question for the judiciary was to look at Speaker's powers to disqualify members and the extent to which courts can interfere with it.

### Kihoto Hollohan v. Zachillhu & others

- The present Bench referred to the five-judge Bench judgment in Kihoto Hollohan v. Zachillhu & others, which held, among other things, that a **Speaker does not enjoy immunity from judicial scrutiny** while deciding disqualification petitions under the Tenth Schedule.
- It was also held in this case that a Speaker or a Chairman, acting under the Tenth Schedule, is a Tribunal.
- So it made the **Speaker's order subject to judicial review on limited grounds**.
- It made it clear that the court's jurisdiction would not come into play **unless the Speaker passes an order**, leaving no room for intervention prior to adjudication.

### Rajendra Singh Rana vs Swamy Prasad Maurya

- The court, elaborating on a 1992 decision in Kihoto Hollohan vs Zachillhu and others, held that the **Constitution prohibits judicial intervention**.
  - This means that the court **cannot issue an interim order protecting the MLA or the MP** from disqualification proceedings.
- What the law does not prohibit is the court enforcing disqualification proceedings, which are quasi-judicial in character, **when they are unnecessarily delayed**.
- Thus according to Justice Nariman, when a **Speaker refrains from deciding a petition within a reasonable time**, there was clearly an error "which attracted the jurisdiction of the High Court in exercise of the power of judicial review".

### What did the court say?

- Having cleared the confusion over contrasting past judgments, the three-judge bench, in its verdict, **set a time limit of three months for the Speakers to decide on disqualification petitions**.
- It also recommended that Parliament should seriously consider **taking away disqualification powers from the Speakers**. These powers could be given to an **independent tribunal headed by a former Supreme Court judge or a former chief justice of a High Court or form** "some other outside independent mechanism to ensure that such disputes are decided both swiftly and

## Category:INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

### 1. Soft power of India still untapped

#### Definitions

According to Joseph Nye, the term **hard power** is “the ability to use the carrots and sticks of economic and military might to make others follow your will.”

- Here, “**carrots**” are inducements such as the reduction of trade barriers, the offer of an alliance or the promise of military protection.
- On the other hand, “**sticks**” are threats including the use of coercive diplomacy, the threat of military intervention, or the implementation of economic sanctions.
- Ex: Surgical Strike in Pakistan, 2015 Indian counter-insurgency operation in Myanmar.

According to Joseph Nye, **soft power** is the ability of a country to persuade others to do what it wants without resorting to force or coercion. Soft power, he said, lies in a country’s attractiveness and comes from three resources:

- its culture,
- its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad),
- its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority).

#### Key Facts about India's film industry

- India is the world’s largest in terms of the number of films produced and second largest after Hollywood in terms of its global reach.
- Indian cinema is also the most diverse, contrary to the general tendency in the West and elsewhere to club all films under the generic name "Bollywood". Made in several regional languages, they have their own film-making styles, star systems and tell stories rooted in specific cultural matrix.
  - Tamil movies have an audience base in Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore and Fiji;
  - Bengali movies are hugely popular in neighbouring Bangladesh; and
  - Punjabi films too have a huge audience across the border in Pakistan.
- The films are shown in some 100 overseas markets, catalyzing the growth of trans-national creative networks, and collaborations.
- Big studios Columbia, Disney and 20th Century Fox are now striking co-production deals with Indian companies.
- Bollywood, considered a living example of the success of cultural openness, has all the traits to emerge as India's 'soft power' of the future, says a Deutsche Bank chief economist.

#### Movies as Soft Power

- In the past, the US has used **Hollywood** to not only fund wars, but also to increase recruitment in the armed forces and even convinced the entire world that it was only America that could safeguard freedom, liberty and equality for all.
  - The spread of American content helped create desirability for the American dream and way of life and cemented the hegemony of the U.S.
- **Aamir Khan’s Dangal** set new box office and critical records of sorts in China. The themes, which

include women empowerment and a statement against female infanticide, have made the local Chinese audiences as well as critics ask why their government is not promoting films on social themes.

- This development can be the foundation of a fresh new chapter in the book of Indian Cinema being a soft power.

A PWC report states that the media and entertainment industry **outperformed expectations in FY19 and was amongst the fastest-growing sectors with a growth rate of 13%**.

### Concerns

#### 1. GST Issues

Despite all these advantages, it is still far from being recognised as an important sector for the government.

- Initially, under the Goods and Services Tax regime, **the film industry was slotted under the 'luxury' category**. A tax rate of 28% was imposed on it. After an outcry, this was revised to 18%.
- However, GST poses a challenge: if a **particular movie appeals to a State government, that government can grant 'tax-free' status to that film**.
- With the GST in place, States can waive off the SGST (9%) alone. Therefore, a **movie deemed 'tax-free' is still liable to pay CGST**.

Deeming the entertainment sector as a 'luxury' sector undermines its soft power.

#### 2. Need for improvements in Infrastructure

India lacks the infrastructure to take films to interior areas.

- For a population of **37 billion people, India has less than 10,000 screens**, of which 6,700 are single screens. The procedure to convert a single screen theatre to a multiplex is tedious and costly.
  - New permissions and licenses are required, and existing licenses often hold little value.
- In stark contrast, **China has about 60,000 screens for a population of 1.4 billion**. These were created over the last decade with government support in the form of public-private partnership models, which makes the country a viable market for foreign film industries as well.
  - This has created revenue for the Chinese government as **foreign films have to share a sizeable amount of their profit with the state**.

#### 3. Lack of guidelines for courses related to the film industry

- The Hindi film industry was accorded industry status only in 1998, even though the first Indian film was made in 1913.
- The industry employs a vast number of technicians and creative professionals. But there are no formal rules for courses related to the film industry.
- The government created the **Film and Television Institute of India**, but its **curriculum is not binding on other private film schools**. There are barely any government academies catering to the industry.
- In contrast, **film education in the U.S.** is accorded the same importance given to journalism or biotechnology.

#### 4. Not enough incentives

- **Much like the U.S., India allows its States** to decide incentives for film shoots that take place within their territories.

- **American states** provide incentives such as tax shelters, cash rebates and grants to productions taking place in their territories.
  - During a film shoot, the location gains tourist attention. Films also generate seasonal employment by hiring local staff and parts of the crew. It is a lucrative venture to have a film shoot at site.
- It is because of this that countries like the **U.K. and Malta provide incentives** such as easy clearances and rebates up to 30-40% of the total cost of the projects filmed there.
- In **India, the incentives are much lower**, and in most states, the cash rebates are capped at nominal amounts which are not lucrative for big-budget productions.
- Moreover, though there is now a **single-window clearance** for shoots in many States, shooting at various spots such as **archaeological sites requires multiple permissions** and is a time-consuming and arduous process.

### Conclusion

- The film industry deserves more support for its growth and protection. With high export potential, the **content created helps disseminate the uniqueness of India's culture**.
- Yet, there are hardly any support tools from the government. The risk may be high, but the returns are good. Various countries are realising this and working to either strengthen their content-creating industries or become viable destinations for hosting shoots.
- Tapping into the potential of this multi-seasonal industry opens a plethora of opportunities: from better international awareness about the country to creating employment opportunities within.
- India's culture, heritage and its pluralism are its strengths. India must use its culture to leverage and accelerate its growth.

## 2. Myanmar's growing dependence on China

### Context

- Chinese President Xi Jinping concluded a two-day visit to Myanmar.

### Background

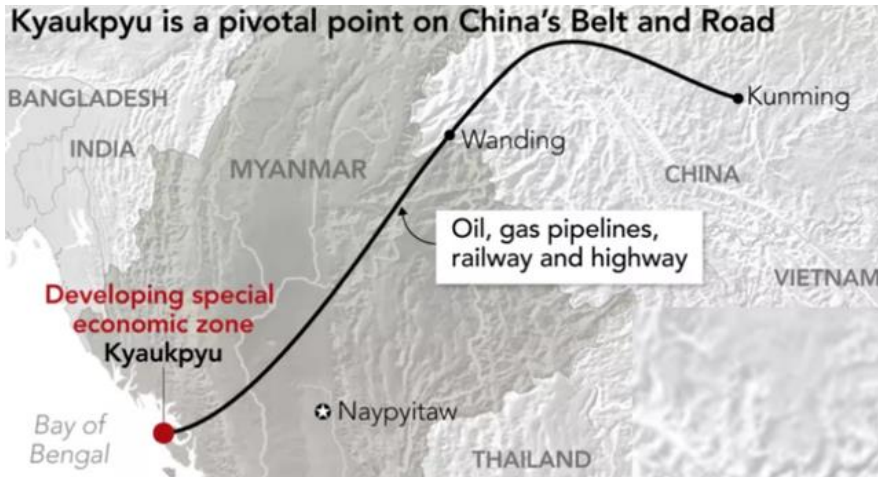
- The last visit by a Chinese President took place in 2001.
- The 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations was judged to be the ideal occasion to launch a major renewal and strengthen the process of the bilateral relationship.
- With the Myanmar visit, Xi has effectively completed his key neighbourhood trips, having travelled through the Maldives and Sri Lanka in 2014, Pakistan in 2015, Bangladesh in 2016, and Nepal in 2019.

### Key Agreements signed during the visit

- During Xi's visit, China and Myanmar have **signed a total of 33 agreements**, Memoranda of Understanding (MoU), protocols, and exchanges of letters on areas including major infrastructure projects, railways, industrial and power projects, trade and investment.
- The two countries agreed on MoUs to undertake a feasibility study on the **Myanmar-China Power Interconnection Project** in addition to conducting feasibility studies for the **Yangon River Estuary West Bank Protection, Mandalay-Bagan Railway Line, and Watalone Tunnel projects**.
- Giving a big boost to China's efforts at seeking a greater presence in the Indian Ocean, the two countries signed a concession agreement and shareholders' agreement for the **Kyaukpyu Special Economic Zone (SEZ) deep seaport project**.



- The Kyaukpyu deep seaport is particularly critical for China as it would **provide it with an alternative to the Straits of Malacca**, which is currently their lifeline for energy transportation as well as a trade corridor.
- Making progress on the Kyaukpyu port is important also because it is linked to the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor, part of the [Belt and Road Initiative \(BRI\)](#), and therefore the China-Myanmar agreement on the port is touted as a big success for the BRI.



### Why Myanmar needs China?

Analysts are sceptical about these projects as there are no significant benefits for Myanmar.

- But the prime reason why they are supporting China is because the [International Court of Justice \(ICJ\)](#) is all set to deliver its judgment on the issue of violence against the Rohingya minority. Myanmar seeks support from China on this issue.
  - The joint statement issued during the visit stated that “The Chinese side supports the efforts of Myanmar to address the humanitarian situation and to promote peace, stability and development for all communities in Rakhine State.”
  - For Beijing’s support on the Rohingya issue, Naypyidaw has reconsidered some of the earlier tough positions it had taken on stalled projects.
- Because of the internal situation in Myanmar, most western countries are reluctant to fund projects in the country. Xi’s visit enhances **investments** in the country.
  - In the first 11 months of 2019, investment from China reached \$20.9 billion, accounting for 25.21% of all foreign direct investment, second only to Singapore.
- Beijing is also **supporting Myanmar via tourism**: Chinese tourist arrivals increased 150% in 2019 when compared with 2018.

### India’s Concern

- A Chinese-developed deep **seaport in the Bay of Bengal will complete the encirclement of India** — with **Sri Lanka** already having given its Hambantota port on a 99-year lease to China, which has also developed the **Gwadar port on Pakistan’s coast** on the Arabian Sea.
- China has already been given a **mediator’s status by Dhaka and Naypyitaw in their Rohingya crisis dispute** — adding to New Delhi’s isolation in South Asia.
- Even **Nepal**, which will have a high-speed rail link built by China, and **Sri Lanka**, which has a known pro-China Sri Lankan government, headed by brothers Gotabaya Rajapaksa as president and Mahinda Rajapaksa as PM, are heavily leaning on Beijing.
- From New Delhi’s perspective, these are problematic. India has taken a strong position against Belt and Road and it worries about the strategic implications of any Chinese bases in the Bay of Bengal

under guise of infrastructural projects.

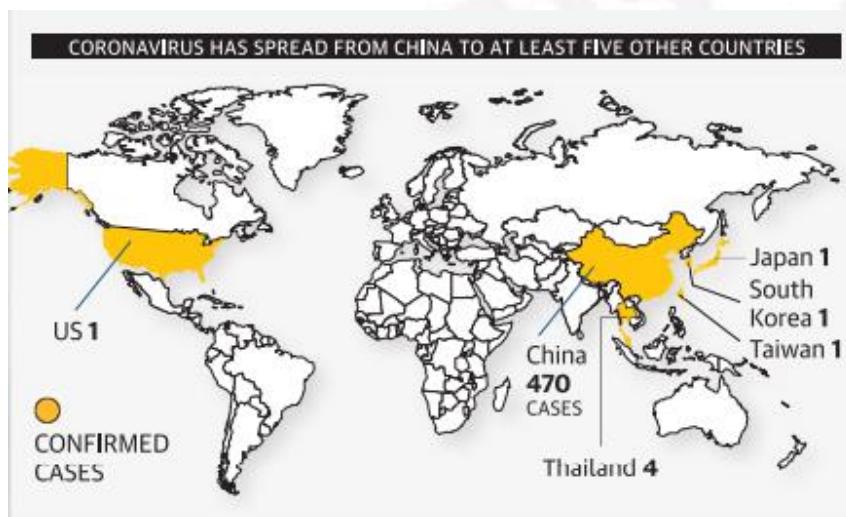
### Conclusion

- China keeps reiterating that it conducts its diplomacy with mutual respect and reciprocity as the guiding principle; smaller countries in Asia have found that China's projects have significant downsides.
- India, lacking China's economic muscle or infrastructure-building capacity, can only hope that Myanmar's caution will limit China's influence.

## Category:HEALTH

### 1. WHO's unexplained hesitancy

- Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses with some causing **less severe** common cold to **more severe diseases** such as **Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)** and **Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS)**.
  - It causes respiratory and intestinal diseases.
- A coronavirus has many "regularly arranged" protrusions on its surface, because of which the entire virus particle looks like an emperor's crown, hence the name "coronavirus".
- Apart from human beings, coronaviruses can affect mammals including pigs, cattle, cats, dogs, martens, camels, hedgehogs and some birds.
- Detailed investigations found that **SARS-CoV** was transmitted from civet cats to humans and **MERS-CoV** from dromedary camels to humans.



### Initial Symptoms

- Coronaviruses are transmitted between animals and people, according to the WHO.
- The agency said **common signs of the new coronavirus infection include** respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties.
- In more severe cases, the infection can cause pneumonia, SARS, kidney failure and even death.

### How to prevent the spread?

- WHO's standard recommendations to prevent the virus' spread include washing hands regularly,

covering mouth and nose while sneezing, and thoroughly cooking meat and eggs.

### Global economic and financial market impact

- A paper by Jong-Wha Lee and Warwick McKibbin estimates the global **economic loss due at SARS at \$40 billion in 2003.**
- A **2016 study by the Commission on a Global Health Risk Framework for the Future** estimated that pandemic disease events would cost the global economy over \$6 trillion in the 21st century — over \$60 billion per year.
- A **2017 paper by economists Victoria Fan, Dean Jamison and Lawrence Summers** estimated the expected **annual losses from pandemic risk** to be about \$500 billion — or 0.6% of global income — per year, accounting for both lost income and the intrinsic cost of elevated mortality.

### Market winners and losers

- **Winners**
  - Despite the disruption to the wider economy, virus outbreaks have tended to **benefit pharmaceutical stocks.**
  - Facemask manufacturers also outperformed.
- **Losers**
  - Tourism and travel-related stocks — hotels, airlines and luxury and consumer goods — tend to get punished.
  - People didn't take public transport, stayed away from work, stayed away from shops, restaurants, cinemas, conferences, etc.

The impact from the disease is massive on the economy, but almost all of it indirect, due to the precautionary behaviour of the population.

### How is the information disseminated to the public?

- The World Health Organization (WHO) has taken to Twitter to keep the public updated. With Twitter not available in China, WHO has been regularly posting updates on Weibo, a Chinese microblogging site.
- The update on WHO website about the virus is slow. Even on Twitter, there seems to be some unexplained hesitancy on WHO's part to retweet important information about the virus.

### Way forward

- Twitter is an excellent medium to quickly disseminate information, particularly for the WHO which has 5.1 million people followers. Therefore, it is crucial for the WHO to retweet important updates.
- It is also important for the WHO to keep its coronavirus 'disease outbreak news' page on its website regularly updated.
- Millions of Chinese are set to travel during the Lunar New Year holiday this week. In these circumstances, it is the WHO's responsibility to ensure that everyone is fully informed.

### 1. Centre seeks guidelines on execution of convicts

- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has sought a direction from the Supreme Court in fixing the deadline for filing of curative pleas after the rejection of review petitions.
- The MHA submitted that the court should “mandate all the competent courts, State governments, prison authorities in the country to issue death warrant of a convict **within seven days of the rejection of his mercy petition and to execute death sentence within seven days thereafter** irrespective of the stage of review petition/curative petition/mercy petition of his co-convicts. It would be permissible for the death convicts to file curative petition after rejection of review petition only within a time to be stipulated by this court”.

### 2. Offer ‘enable’, ‘disable’ options in cards: RBI

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has asked issuers of credit and debit cards as well as those of non-bank prepaid payment instrument to provide the **option of disabling and enabling cards**, a move aimed at customer convenience.
- Issuers of cards have been asked to provide cardholders a facility for enabling ‘card not present’ (domestic and international) transactions, ‘card present’ (international) transactions and contactless transactions.
- Furthermore, the RBI said that **customers should have the facility to switch on or off and set or modify transaction limits for all types of transactions.**
- **Prepaid gift cards** and those used at mass transit systems **have been kept out** of this new rule.

### 3. Pak. seeks UN, U.S. help to resolve conflict with India

- Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has urged the international powers, including the UN and the U.S., to help **de-escalate tensions with India**, urging that they must act to prevent the two nuclear-armed countries from reaching a point of no return.
- Khan also demanded that the **UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) be allowed along the Line of Control.**
- India maintains that the **UNMOGIP, established in January 1949**, has outlived its utility and is **irrelevant after the [Shimla Agreement](#)** and the consequent **establishment of the LoC.**

### 4. Meet Vyom Mitra, first Indian ‘woman’ to ride to space

- Vyom Mitra is a **half-humanoid**, set to take the first unmanned flight to space under Gaganyaan.
- She can **switch panel operations, ECLSS** [environment control and life support systems] functions, be a companion, converse with the astronauts, recognise them and also respond to their queries.
- **Two trial flights** without crew will take place with a humanoid.
- The humanoid will simulate the human functions required for space before real astronauts take off before August 2022.

### 5. Poll panel successfully tests facial recognition technique

- The **State Election Commission of Telangana** successfully tested the **facial recognition**

**application for voter verification at polling stations** using real-time authentication capabilities.

- The application uses latest technologies like artificial intelligence, big data and machine learning.
- An analysis of the tendered votes during the previous elections to the local bodies revealed that there was violation in the voting procedure leading to conduct of re-poll in these areas.
- However, it was made clear that the application is **only an additional aid to personnel on election duties and not in lieu of the existing identification systems.**

## 6. Women politicians trolled more: Amnesty India

### What's in News?

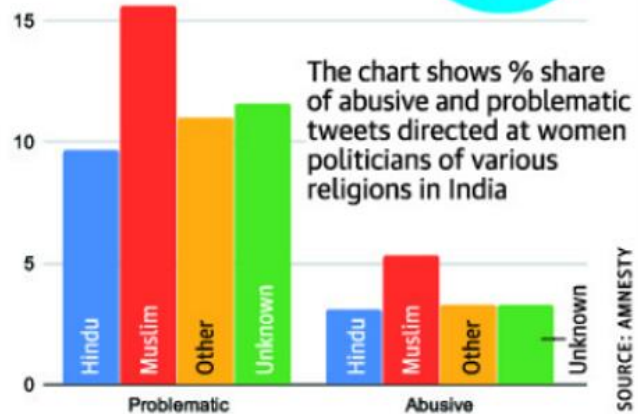
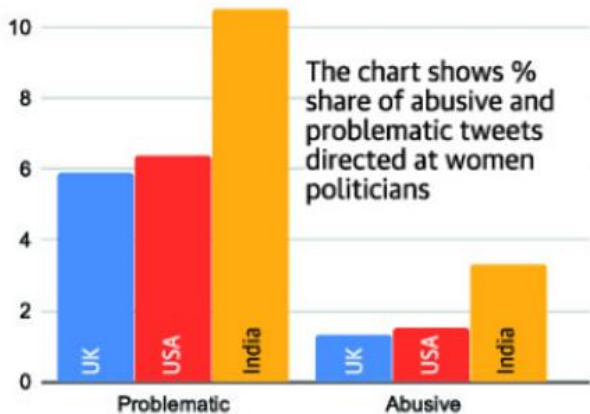
Amnesty India had carried out a study of 95 politicians during the 2019 Lok Sabha elections in India.

### Findings:

- Twitter is a toxic space for Indian women politicians, who face substantially higher abuse on the social media platform than their counterparts in the U.S. and the U.K., according to a study. One out of every seven tweets mentioning them is problematic or abusive, with many women targeted by a relentless flow of threats and sexist, religious, racist and casteist slurs.
- While all women are targeted, Muslim women politicians faced 55% more abuse than others.
- The report quotes one of the women leaders, which say: “Women do not enter politics because the price of constant online harassment and trolling was too high.”

## Softer targets

Women politicians from India faced significantly more abusive and problematic tweets compared with their counterparts in the U.S. and the U.K. Muslim women politicians, in particular, faced more such tweets than others



## G. Prelims Facts

### 1. China coronavirus death toll hits 17, over 470 infected

## What's in News?

The previously unknown and contagious coronavirus strain emerged from the central city of Wuhan, with cases now detected as far away as the U.S.

This topic has been covered in 22<sup>nd</sup> January Comprehensive News Analysis. [Click here](#) to read.

## 2. Bal Shakti Puraskar

- The **Bal Shakti Puraskar** is given to children in the fields of **innovation, social service, scholastic, sports, art and culture and bravery**.
- It carries a **medal, a cash prize of Rs 1 lakh, a certificate and a citation**.
- For more on the Bal Shakti Puraskar, check [PIB dated 22 Jan 2020](#).

## H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The Chief Election Commissioner and the other Election Commissioners have equal powers to take all decisions relating to the elections.
2. The Chief Election Commissioner is appointed by the President; however, he cannot be removed from office by the President.

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: c**

**Explanation:**

The Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and the two Election Commissioners have equal powers to take all decisions relating to elections as a collective body. They are appointed by the President of India. The Chief Election Commissioner cannot be removed from his post easily on account of any political reasons. This is necessary so as to preserve the independence of the Election Commission. The Chief Election Commissioner of India can be removed from his office by the Parliament with a two-thirds majority in both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha on the grounds of proved misbehaviour or incapacity. Other Election Commissioners can be removed by the President of India on the recommendation of the Chief Election Commissioner.

Q2. "Tallinn Manual" relates to:

- a. Artificial Intelligence
- b. Zoonotic Diseases
- c. Outer space treaty

d. Cyber conflicts and cyber-warfare

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

Tallinn Manual is an academic, non-binding study on how international law (in particular the jus ad bellum and international humanitarian law) applies to cyber conflicts and cyber warfare.

**Q3. Consider the following statements with respect to the World Health Organization (WHO) :**

1. WHO is a member of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG).
2. The annual publication of the WHO - World Health Report (WHR) began with the inception of the organisation in 1948.
3. World Health Assembly is the forum through which the WHO is governed by its member states.

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

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

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

The World Health Organization (WHO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations that is concerned with international public health. It was established on 7 April 1948, and is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. The WHO is a member of the United Nations Development Group. The World Health Report (WHR) is a series of annual reports produced by the World Health Organization (WHO). First published in 1995, the World Health Report is WHO's leading publication. World Health Assembly is the supreme governing body of the WHO. It is this forum through which the WHO is governed by its member states. It is the world's highest health policy-setting body and is composed of health ministers from member states.

**Q4. Consider the following statements with respect to Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) :**

1. CBI comes under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
2. It is a statutory body.
3. The CBI acts as the "National Central Bureau" of Interpol in India.

**Which of the given statement/s is/are incorrect?**

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

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is the premier investigating agency of India. CBI operates under the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions. It acts as the “National Central Bureau” of Interpol in India. The establishment of the CBI was recommended by the Santhanam Committee on Prevention of Corruption (1962 -1964). The CBI is not a statutory body. It derives its powers from the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946. The CBI acts as the “National Central Bureau” of Interpol in India.

## I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Indian cinema is one of the strongest global cultural ambassadors of a New India. How can the Indian government explore movies as an instrument of soft power? (15 Marks, 250 Words)
  2. Is the Supreme Court justified in asking the Parliament to cut down powers of the Speakers? How will this impact the functioning of India’s legislatures? (15 Marks, 250 Words)
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