

10 Jan 2023: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

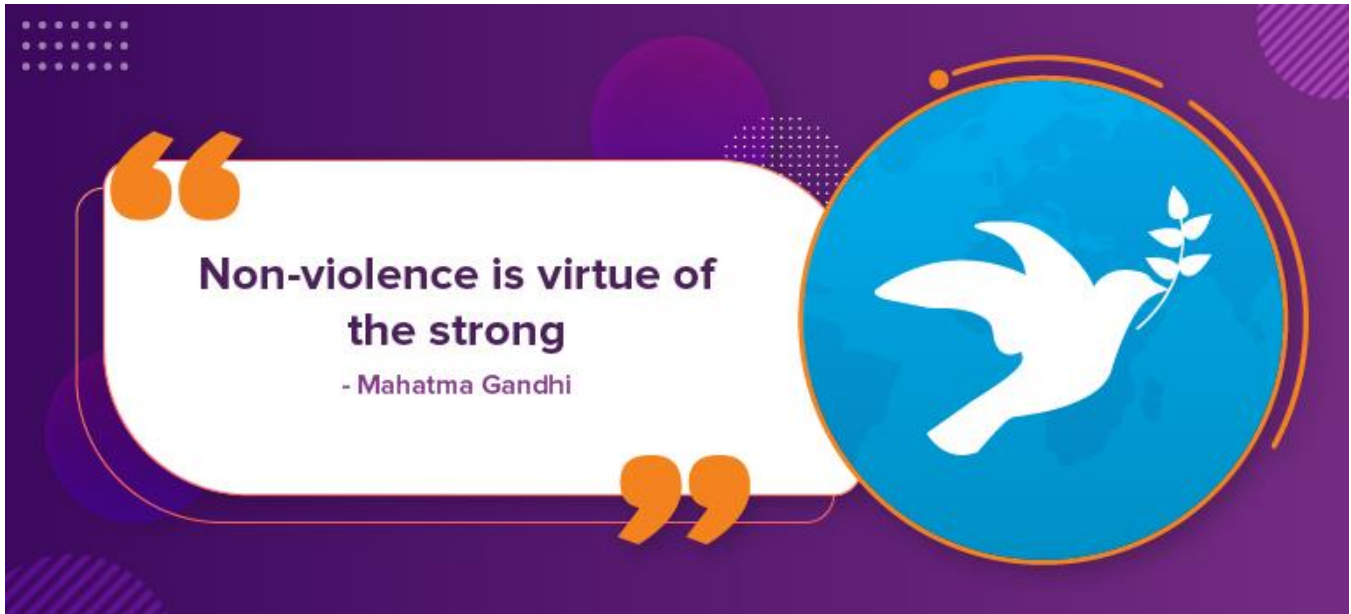


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A. GS 1 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

B. GS 2 Related

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. India, U.K sign and exchange letters for Young Professionals Scheme

Syllabus: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora.

Prelims: About Pravasi Bharatiya Divas and Young Professionals Scheme

Mains: Important developments in India-U.K. relations

Context

Against the backdrop of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2023, the governments of India and the U.K. signed and exchanged letters for the Young Professionals Scheme.

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas

- Pravasi Bharatiya Divas has been celebrated on the 9th of January since 2003.
- The [9th of January](#) commemorates the return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa to India in 1915.
- Since 2015, Pravasi Bharatiya Divas has been celebrated in a revised format, with a Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention being organised once every 2 years.
- The [17th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas](#) is being held in Indore, Madhya Pradesh between the 8th and 10th of January 2023.
- The theme of the 17th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is "Diaspora: Reliable Partners for India's Progress in Amrit Kaal".

Read more about - [Pravasi Bharatiya Divas](#)

India-UK Young Professionals Scheme

- The India-UK Young Professionals Scheme was launched by British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak in November 2022 at the G20 summit in Bali.
- The scheme was formulated as part of an [India-U.K. Migration and Mobility MoU](#) signed in May 2021.
- As part of the scheme, the UK government has agreed to allow increased mobility for a limited number of young people between India and the UK.
- The scheme will allow 3,000 Indians annually to go to the UK to live and work for up to two years.

- Further, the programme will be reciprocal, which also allows UK professionals to participate in a professional exchange by living and working in India.
- The scheme is similar to the Youth Mobility Scheme of the UK through which the country offers visas to students from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, San Marino, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan.
- **Eligibility:** Degree-educated Indian nationals between 18 to 30 years of age
 - Applicants under the scheme must hold a degree equivalent to at least three years of higher education and be able to express themselves in the host country's language.

Significance of the Scheme

- The scheme would help to ease the movement of skilled professionals and students between the two countries.
- India is the first visa-national country to benefit from such a scheme from the UK which highlights the increasing linkages between the two countries.
 - According to the data revealed recently, India overtook China as the largest source country for student visas issued by the UK in the 12 months ending June 2022.
- The scheme would also play an important role in furthering the bilateral relationship and strengthening their economies.
- Schemes such as this would facilitate the movement of students thereby eliminating key barriers in international trade.
- The move will also provide the most needed momentum to the negotiations of the [India-UK Free trade agreement](#).

***Nut graf:** Considering the deep cultural and historic ties India and UK share, the signing of the Young Professionals Scheme is a significant moment for the bilateral relations between the two countries as the scheme tries to address the critical challenge of skill shortages.*

Category: GOVERNANCE

1. The delay in the decennial Census

***Syllabus:** Government policies and interventions, and issues arising out of their design and implementation.*

***Prelims:** Decennial Census*

***Mains:** Issues associated with the delay in the decennial Census*

Context

- The decennial census exercise of 2021 has been postponed once again by the Union Government.
- The [Census 2021 exercise](#) has been postponed several times citing the COVID-19 pandemic and vaccination drive.

For more information on issues, refer to the following article:

C. GS 3 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: GOVERNANCE

1. A step towards fighting corruption

Syllabus: Important aspects of governance, transparency, and accountability; Role of Civil Services in Democracy.

Mains: Corruption in Public services.

Context: Supreme Court's judgment of December 2022 on the matter of corruption.

Background Details:

- In the Neeraj Dutta v. State (Govt. of NCT of Delhi) judgment (December 2022), the Constitution bench of the Supreme Court (SC) condemned corruption among [public servants](#). It also lowered the amount of evidence required to convict persons charged with corruption.
- The judgment was appreciated by many, who desire [probity in public administration](#) and demand deterrent penalties for criminal activities.
- The SC in several decisions of the past have given equally strong decisions, but still, the extent of corruption in public life stands undiminished.

Details on the ruling of the case:

- The apex court has debunked the myth that absolute proof of guilt alone would be required to convict an offender.
- The court has further ruled that in case of prosecution witnesses turning hostile, a conviction would be ordered if all the circumstantial evidence marshalled by the prosecution and produced before the court points to the guilt of the accused. This step would help in ensuring integrity in public services, specifically in the 'superior' services like the Indian Administrative Service and [Indian Police Service](#).
- There are two crucial aspects to getting rid of corruption in bureaucracy:
 - The severity of the law and its efficient application

- The strength of public opinion, which is required to carry forward the campaign for a clean public life
- There is always a demand for strict penalties like the death sentence. It should be noted that deterrence also works only up to a point. Moreover, it is a disregarded fact that the stricter the penalties, the higher will be the quantum of proof required by the courts. This reality probably convinced the SC to lower the bar for the quantum of evidence required to convict persons charged with corruption.
- The Court has also set the standard of 'preponderance of probability' in effect. It should be noted that it is usually not acceptable in criminal trials. The requirement of only conclusive proof (proof that does not leave an iota of doubt) has now been diluted. This implies that infirmities like the non-availability of the complainant (due to death or non-traceability) would not be absolutely rejected.
- This will also apply to cases where prosecution witnesses turn hostile, either due to inducement or intimidation.

Concerns associated with corruption:

- The nexus between offender and victim has become a part of the ethos. In several instances, general citizens themselves are willing to offer bribes to the public servant.
- It is also argued that the misdeeds of public servants are partly attributable to political corruption. In many states, acute unemployment has also resulted in the involvement of the applicant, the public servant, and politicians in illegal rackets that demand bribes in return for job positions.
- Moreover, in certain places, the fundamental rights of the citizens and services like construction and registration of property cannot be availed without bribing the administrative and political hierarchy.

Also read: [Accountability of Public Servants](#)

Way Ahead:

There is a need for enlightened leaders who are not scared of powerful elements in bureaucracy and politics.

Also read: [Corruption Perceptions Index 2021](#)

***Nut Graf:** The issue of corruption in Indian bureaucracy and politics is still persisting. The Supreme Court's recent decision to lower the quantum of evidence in fixing charges of corruption is praiseworthy. However, there is a need for more such efforts from all stakeholders including the general public and the leaders.*

Category: INDIAN POLITY AND GOVERNANCE**1. Municipal corporations in India are gasping for funds**

Syllabus: Local self-governance.

Mains: Tax Collection by local bodies.

Prelims: Report on Municipal Finances.

Context: The Report on municipal finances was released by the Reserve Bank of India.

Details:

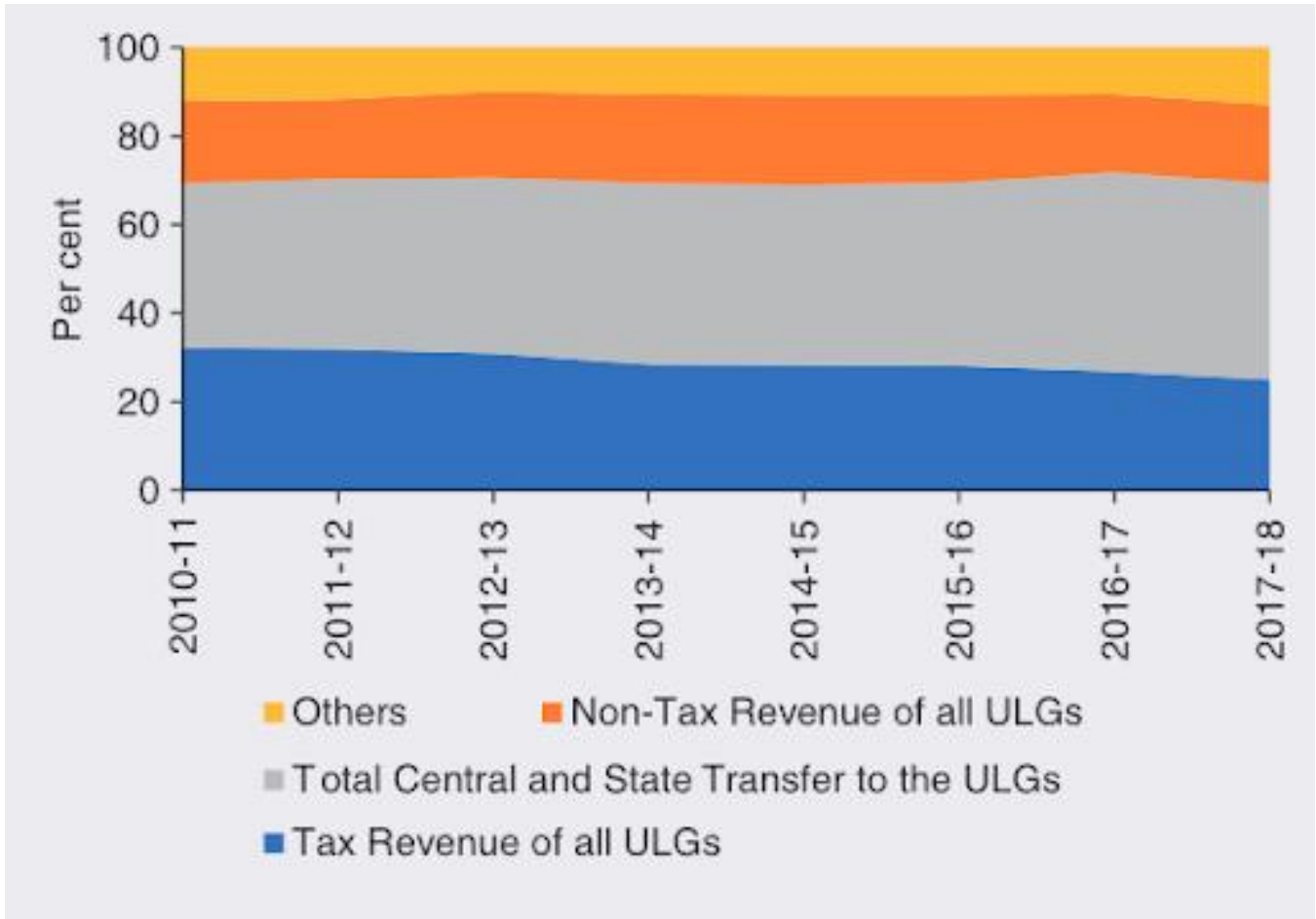
- It was found in the [Reserve Bank of India's \(RBI\)](#) analysis of the finances of urban local bodies that the combined budget of all the municipal corporations in the country is much smaller than that of the Central and State governments.
- The RBI's "Report on municipal finances" revealed the increasing dependence of municipal bodies on fund transfers from the State and the Centre, reflecting its limited revenue-earning capacity.
- Around 70% of the municipal bodies' funds are spent on salaries, pensions, and administrative expenses with the rest left for capital expenditure.

Also read: [Municipalities \(Article 243P- 243ZG\)](#)

Inadequate Taxes:

- The taxes earned by municipal corporations in India are extremely inadequate.
- The overall tax revenue of municipal corporations consisting of property tax, water tax, toll tax, and other local taxes, formed 31-34% of the total revenue in the FY18-FY20 period, which is very low in comparison to other countries.
- Moreover, the overall share of own revenue (both tax and non-tax) in the total revenue of urban local bodies in India has significantly declined (during FY18-FY20). However, the government transfers increased.
- The RBI studied the budgetary data of 201 municipal corporations in India. It was found that:
 - In the year 2017-18, the cumulative budget of Municipal Corporations was estimated to be 0.61% of the GDP.
 - As per the budget estimates for 2019-20, it improved marginally to 0.72% of the GDP.
 - It was noted that this share is much smaller than in various countries like Brazil (7%) and South Africa (6%).

Figure: Share of revenue of Urban Local Bodies

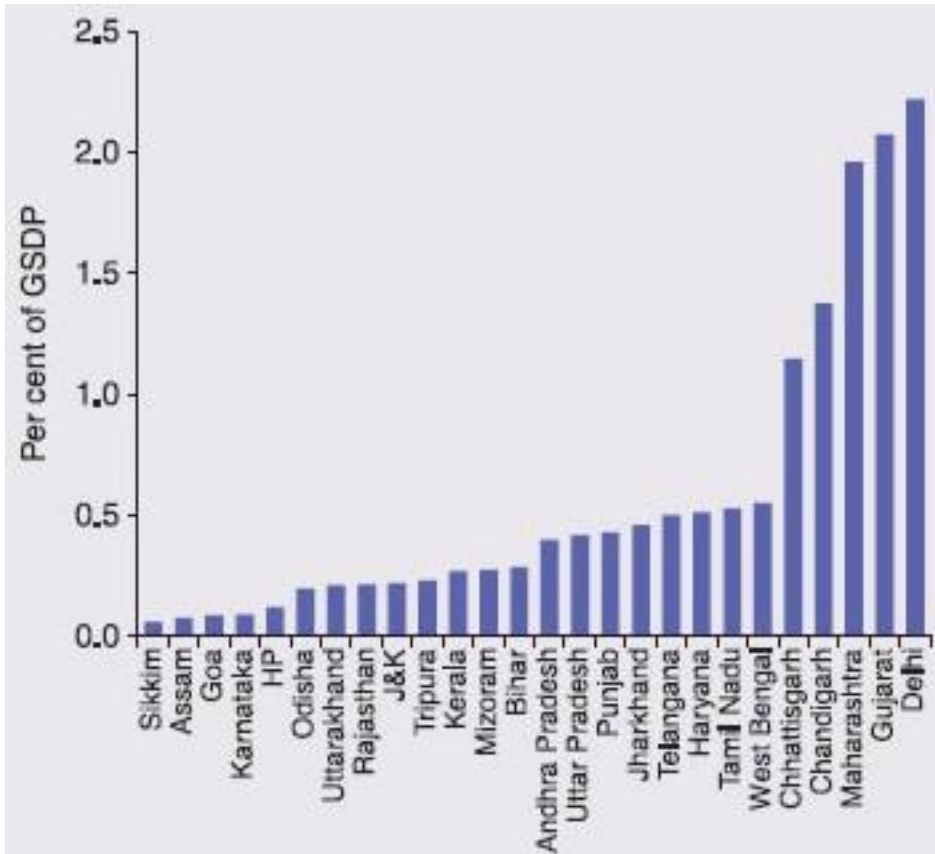


Source: Reserve Bank of India

State-wise distribution of taxes:

- The study observed large variations in the state-wise analysis of the municipal corporations’ own tax revenue. For instance,
 - In 2017-18, the own tax revenue of municipal corporations as a share of the State’s GDP was above the 1% mark in Chandigarh, Delhi, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, and Maharashtra.
 - However, it was just 0.1% or less in Assam, Goa, Karnataka, and Sikkim.

Figure: Municipal Corporations’ own tax revenue

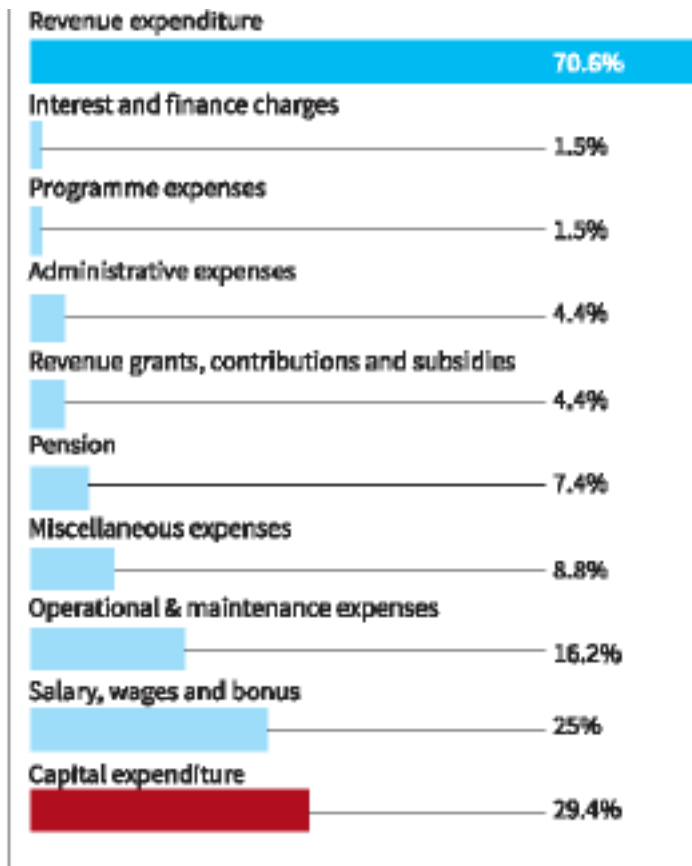


Source: RBI publication

Property tax-collection:

- Property taxes constituted more than 40% of the municipal corporations’ own tax revenue in the year 2017-18.
- Even though property tax is dominant in the overall share, it is much lower in India when compared to [OECD countries](#). This is majorly because of undervaluation and poor administration.
- The low number of property taxpayers is another issue plaguing the local bodies’ tax collection. For instance, out of the total 13.27 lakh assesseees in Chennai, only 6.94 lakhs paid the property tax.
- Furthermore, the lack of tax collectors has also impacted the revenues.
- Notably many major cities of India managed to increase their property taxes in FY18, FY19, and FY20, on the backdrop of increasing urbanization rates and rising population density.

Figure: Percentage of the total expenditure of Municipal Corporations in India in 2017-18



Source: The Hindu

Also read: [Taxation in India - Direct taxes & Indirect Taxes, Features of Taxation System](#)

Nut Graf: *The Reserve Bank of India's report suggests that the majority of taxes collected by municipal corporations in India are spent on revenue expenditure, leaving little room for capital expenditure. The need of the hour is to review the tax collection of the local bodies and increase their share on par with countries like Brazil and South Africa.*

F. Prelims Facts

1. Places of Worship Act

Syllabus: GS-2; Governance; Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Prelims: Places of Worship Act

Context

The provisions of the Places of Worship Act of 1991 have been challenged through several petitions in the Supreme Court and the Centre has asked for time to clarify its stand on the validity of the Act.

Places of Worship Act, 1991

- The Places of Worship Act is legislation introduced to prohibit conversion of any place of worship and to provide for the maintenance of the religious character of any place of worship as it existed on the 15th of August, 1947.
- The Act was introduced under the leadership of the then Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao at a time when the [Ram Temple](#) movement was at its peak.
- Section 3 of the Places of Worship Act bars the conversion of places of worship of any religious denomination.
 - Further, the individuals who violate the provisions of Section 3 shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years and also be liable to a fine.
- According to Section 5, the Act shall not apply to the place of worship commonly known as Ram Janma Bhumi-Babri Masjid situated in Ayodhya (Uttar Pradesh).
- The Places of Worship Act has now been challenged in the court on the ground that it restricts the scope of judicial review, which is one of the basic features of the Constitution by imposing an arbitrary and irrational retrospective cutoff date and that it curtails the right to religion of Hindus, Jains, Buddhists and Sikhs.

Read more about - [Places of Worship Act of 1991](#)

2. Himalayan Griffon Vulture

Syllabus: GS-3; Ecology and Environment; Biodiversity

Prelims: About Himalayan Griffon Vulture

Context

A rare species of Himalayan Griffon Vulture was rescued by locals in Kanpur.

Himalayan Griffon Vulture

- The Himalayan Griffon Vulture (*Gyps Himalayensis*) is an Old World Vulture native to the Himalayas and the adjoining Tibetan Plateau.
- This raptor species is found in the steppes, valleys, and mountains of the Himalayan regions.
- The range of the vulture species is distributed from Mongolia, China, Bhutan, Nepal, Iran, India, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Afghanistan.
- This is one of the large species of vulture, and is the largest and heaviest bird found in the Himalayas.
- Himalayan Griffon Vultures can live up to 40-45 years of age.
- IUCN status: **Near Threatened**
- WPA status according to the Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2021: **Schedule I**

1. Centre adopts new standards for digital TV receivers

- The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has issued new specific standards for the manufacturing of digital televisions, security systems and chargers.
- New standards have been notified for the manufacturing of digital television receivers with integrated satellite tuners, Universal Serial Bus (USB) Type C receptacles, plugs and cables, and video surveillance systems.
- The new standards were issued in order to be in line with international standards in the area of electronics.
- The digital television receivers will now be equipped with in-built satellite tuners which will help save the cost of purchasing set-top boxes for viewing various channels and also enable the reception of Doordarshan (DD) and All India Radio (AIR) channels which facilitate the transmission of knowledge about various government initiatives and schemes.
- The standard set for USB Type C receptacles, plugs and cables is in line with the existing international standards and will also help in reducing e-waste as consumers will no longer need to buy different chargers every time they buy a new device.
- Further, the standard for Video Surveillance Systems must be adhered to in security applications that tries to enhance the quality and efficiency of surveillance systems.

2. Over 3.12 lakh Indian Railways posts lying vacant, says Ministry

- According to the Railway Minister, the Indian Railways is suffering from a significant staff shortage as over 3.12 lakh non-gazetted posts lie vacant across 18 zones of the country.
- The highest number of vacancies was seen in the northern zone (38,754), followed by the western (30,476), eastern (30,141), and central (28,650) zones.
- Further, out of the total vacancies in the central zone, close to 50% of the vacancies are in the safety category which mainly includes operation and maintenance staff like inspectors, drivers, train examiners, shunters, etc.
 - Non-gazetted posts include the staff of engineers, technicians, clerks, stationmasters, ticket collectors, etc.
- The increasing number of vacancies and the inability to fill posts in a timely manner has led to the railway staff working overtime and making several ticket booking windows non-operational which has resulted in the outsourcing of ticketing services.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. How many of the following statements is/are correct with regard to National Science Day? (Level - Easy)

1. It is celebrated every year on 28th February.
2. It commemorates the discovery of the “Chandrashekhar Limit”.
3. The theme for 2023 is “Global Science for Global Wellbeing”.

Options:

- a. Only 1 statement

- b. Only 2 statements
- c. All 3 statements
- d. None

Answer: b

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, National Science Day is celebrated every year on the 28th of February.
- **Statement 2 is not correct**, National Science Day is celebrated to commemorate the discovery of the “Raman Effect” by **Sir C.V. Raman** on 28 February 1928.
- **Statement 3 is correct**, The theme for National Science Day 2023 is “Global Science for Global Wellbeing”.

Q2. Consider the following statements: (Level - Moderate)

1. Alzheimer’s disease is a neurological disorder that causes dementia.
2. It is a genetic disease.
3. There is no drug available for the disease.

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, Alzheimer's disease is a progressive neurologic disorder that causes the brain to shrink (atrophy) and brain cells to die.
 - Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia.
 - Dementia is a syndrome in which there is a deterioration in cognitive function affecting memory, thinking and social abilities.
- **Statement 2 is not correct**, Alzheimer's disease is thought to be caused due to the abnormal build-up of proteins in and around brain cells on account of age-related changes.
 - Thus **Alzheimer's disease is not a genetic disease**.
- **Statement 3 is not correct**, There are drugs such as **Aducanumab and Lecanemab** approved to treat Alzheimer's disease.

Q3. How many of the statements is/are correct regarding the Bureau of Indian Standards? (Level - Moderate)

1. It is a statutory body.
2. It is responsible for certifying only the products manufactured in India.
3. It is under the Ministry of Commerce.

Options:

- a. Only 1 statement
- b. Only 2 statements
- c. All 3 statements
- d. None

Answer: a

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) is a statutory body established under the provisions of the Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 2016.
- **Statement 2 is not correct**, BIS is the National Standard Body of India established for the harmonious development of the activities of standardization, marking and quality certification of goods and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.
 - Foreign Manufacturers Certification Department (FMCD) under BIS is responsible for managing manufacturing units located overseas and performing factory audits to determine whether a manufacturer complies with all the necessary requirements illustrated by BIS.
- **Statement 3 is not correct**, BIS works under the aegis of the Department of Consumer Affairs of the **Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution.**

Q4. Which of the following are correctly matched? (Level - Difficult)

- 1. Operation Ganga: 2022, to evacuate Indians from Ukraine.
- 2. Operation Raahat: 2021, to evacuate Indian Citizens from Afghanistan after the Taliban Takeover.
- 3. Operation Safe Homecoming: 2011, to evacuate the nationals stuck in Libya during the civil war.

Options:

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- **Pair 1 is correct**, Operation Ganga was launched in 2022 to bring back Indians stranded in Ukraine.
- **Pair 2 is not correct**, Operation Raahat was an operation launched by the Indian Armed Forces to **evacuate Indian citizens and foreign nationals from Yemen during the 2015 military.**
 - **Operation Devi Shakti** was India's mission to evacuate its citizens and Afghan partners from Kabul after its takeover by the Taliban.
- **Pair 3 is correct**, Operation Safe Homecoming was an operation launched by India in February 2011 to evacuate its nationals, who were fleeing from the Libyan civil war.

Q5. Indigo cultivation in India declined by the beginning of the 20th century because of: (Level - Moderate) (PYQ 2020)

- a. peasant resistance to the oppressive conduct of planters
- b. its unprofitability in the world market because of new inventions
- c. national leaders' opposition to the cultivation of indigo
- d. Government control over the planters

Answer: b

Explanation:

The major reason for the decline in the cultivation of Indigo in India was the invention of synthetic indigo, which **made natural indigo non-profitable for farmers and traders.**

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. “The state of municipal finances in India indicates systemic issues in fundraising and spending.” Comment. (15 marks, 250 words) (GS II - Polity)
2. “The Neeraj Dutta v. State Govt. of NCT of Delhi case has created new precedence with regards to probity in governance and administration.” Elaborate. (15 marks, 250 words) (GS II - Governance)

Read the previous CNA [here](#).