

18 Mar 2023: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis



TABLE OF CONTENTS
A. GS 1 Related
B. GS 2 Related GOVERNANCE 1. Textile Parks
C. GS 3 Related
D. GS 4 Related
E. Editorials GOVERNANCE 1. The forecast after a fake news campaign in Tamil Nadu
ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY 1. Left high and dry in the Nilgiris
POLITY AND GOVERNANCE 1. House Matters
F. Prelims Facts 1. Privilege Motion
2. Horseshoe Crabs
3. International Criminal Court
G. Tidbits 1. Namdapha National Park
2. Sokra Misawa Festival
H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions
I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

A. GS 1 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

B. GS 2 Related

Category: GOVERNANCE

1. Textile Parks

Syllabus: Government Policies & Interventions for Development

Mains: Significance of Competitive, sustainable and inclusive textile sector

Context: Seven states to get mega textiles parks.

Introduction:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently announced that '[PM MITRA Mega Textile Parks](#)' will be set up in Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.
- The scheme was announced in October 2021, and the parks will be set up by 2026-27.
- The total outlay for the project is ₹4,445 crore, though the initial allocation in the 2023-24 Budget is only ₹200 crore.
- State governments have offered to provide at least 1,000 acres of land for free for the parks and will also facilitate the provision of all utilities such as power and water.

Significance of the scheme:

- 'PM MITRA' textiles parks would provide integrated large-scale and modern industrial infrastructure facilities for the entire value chain of the textile industry.
- The Union government expects the parks to attract investments worth ₹70,000 crores, and generate jobs for 20 lakh people.
- PM MITRA mega textile parks are in line to boost the textiles sector in line with the 5F (Farm to Fibre to Factory to Fashion to Foreign) vision.
- The scheme also supports the government's policy of 'Make in India' and 'Make for the World'.
- These parks could be shining examples of sustainability, with zero liquid discharge, common effluent treatment, use of emission-free renewable energy and adoption of global best practices.

- The cluster-based approach will enhance the quality and competitiveness of products, boost exports and strengthen India's position in global supply chains.

***Nut Graf:** PM MITRA Parks represent a unique model where the Centre and State governments will work together to increase investment, promote innovation, create job opportunities and ultimately make India a global hub for textile manufacturing and exports.*

C. GS 3 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: GOVERNANCE

1. The forecast after a fake news campaign in Tamil Nadu

Syllabus: Government policies and interventions.

Mains: Fake news/Disinformation.

Details:

- A malicious fake news campaign in Tamil Nadu led to violence and a law and order crisis in early March 2023.
- The police acted promptly and countered the claims with factual reports, on-the-spot investigations, and personalized appeals.
- As most of the news is consumed through social media sources, the propagation of fake news is the biggest threat to democracy, specifically in an election season. Thus the issue should be ranked high as a potential threat to destabilize democratic institutions.

Details about the incident:

- On 1st March 2023, a significant political event in Tamil Nadu was attended by leaders of various political parties.

- On a subsequent day, video clips of migrant workers leaving Tamil Nadu for the Holi holidays started surfacing on social media. It was said that there was an exodus from the State because of incidents of violence.
- In order to support the narrative, fake news stories about the death of a migrant worker were seeded online.
- Even one of the reputed media groups projected these stories as news without verifying their authenticity.
- The fact checker (Alt News) stepped in and broke the cycle of disinformation.
- Significant actions were taken by the authorities.

Measures taken to address disinformation in different countries:

- The [European Union \(EU\)](#) has established the Code of Practice on Disinformation 2022. Some of the initiatives of the code are:
 - Transparent political advertising
 - Empowerment of researchers and fact-checkers
 - Steps to reduce manipulative behaviour
 - Tools for flagging disinformation
- The United Kingdom has also introduced an [Online Safety Bill](#), which is under review by a committee in the House of Lords.
 - The bill expects social media platforms (intermediaries) to actively monitor problematic content.
 - However, many companies are opposing the bill in the interest of privacy.

Measures taken in India:

- It is argued that there is no serious discussion or action in addressing the menace of disinformation in India.
- The Indian government has often adopted Internet shutdowns without due regard to proportionality. It is suggested that this is a non-transparent and autocratic approach.
- It is often criticized that the union government has greater power to strike down any content that is “unpalatable”. For instance,
 - The Union government can block access to any information in the interest of the sovereignty and the integrity of India, the security of the state, or public order through Section 69A of the [Information Technology Act, 2000](#).
- The Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 regulate content by online publishers of news and social media intermediaries.
- The draft amendment introduced in IT Rules 2021 intends to empower Press Information Bureau to flag inaccurate and fake information related to government bodies on social media.

Way Ahead:

- In order to balance [free speech](#) (Article 19 of the Indian Constitution) and protect citizens from disinformation, a more studied, comprehensive, and calculated set of legislative actions is required.
- The Supreme Court in Tehseen S. Poonawalla vs Union Of India case (2018), held that it is the responsibility of the government (both Union and State) to take measures to curb the dissemination of “irresponsible and explosive content that have the potential to incite mob violence or lynching of any kind”.

Conclusion:

The fake news incident in Tamil Nadu serves as an indicator of what lies ahead in the run-up to the general elections of 2024 as voters rely on social media for information more than any other sources.

Nut Graf: *A disinformation campaign can not only lead to a law and order crisis but can also pose a serious risk to democracy, as most of the information is consumed through social media. Both the state and the central governments should collaborate to address this situation and come out with a robust framework to tackle the root causes of disinformation.*

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. Left high and dry in the Nilgiris

Syllabus: *Environment conservation and associated concerns.*

Mains: *Relocation from forests and associated concerns.*

Details:

- The Tamil Nadu Forest Department and more than 700 families in [Mudumalai Tiger Reserve](#) and Gudalur in the Nilgiris (including Kattunayakans, Irulas, Paniyas, and Kurumbas) signed the ‘golden handshake’ agreement.
- The agreement was made after the Mountadden and Wayanadan Chetty communities obtained an order from the Madras High Court in 2007 seeking relocation away from the forest due to a lack of basic amenities.
- The objective of the agreement was to benefit the local communities inside the tiger reserve and aid conservation efforts.
- However, the Adivasis claim that the Chettys wanted to relocate as they had no traditional ties to the forest.

- The first phase of the relocation started in 2017. Almost 569 families from the four Adivasi groups have been relocated so far.

Associated concerns:

- Adivasis are dissatisfied with the relocation as they have not received the promised compensation.
- An Adivasi rights activist highlights that many of the Adivasis are unaware of what they were owed in the first place because the promises were made with little paperwork and documentation.
- Though the Mountadden and Wayanadan Chettys have largely relocated, Kattunayakans and the Paniyas have not been resettled fairly.
- The two communities complain that they were cheated by a few Forest Department personnel, some landowners, or middlemen.
- The activists are trying to ascertain the level of fraud, but there are many challenges like:
 - The community is suspicious of outsiders and it is difficult to gain their trust.
 - They are illiterate and do not know the money and accounts clearly.
 - There is a lack of documents and evidence.
 - Many land brokers have cheated them by over-inflating the land prices or relocating them to government land.
- It is also argued by many experts that the funds for the relocation should have been granted by at least 2010 (as the land was affordable). Now with inflation, it is difficult to find adequate land for earning a living through agriculture.
- As there is no document to prove ownership of land, it is difficult to get compensation or a loan in case of crop failure.
- The government-built houses allocated to relocated families are in dilapidated condition. Several other structures suffered damage due to heavy rains in 2018 and 2019.
- Many cases of fraud have been perpetrated against Adivasi groups during the relocation process.
- The communities have a deep connection with the forests that are considered sacred groves and sites of worship. It is particularly difficult for older members of the community to leave the forest.
- They also fear an identity loss if they move out of the forests.
- Despite the allegations of fraud and cheating, the forest department is continuing the relocation process.

Conclusion:

- Though some state officials and forest staff are trying to address the concerns of the Adivasis, nothing concrete has been done or achieved till now.

- Many villagers are firm that they will not leave the forest until there are more favourable negotiations or at least what was promised in the original agreement is offered completely.

Nut Graf: The 'golden handshake' agreement between the forest dwellers of Mudumalai Tiger reserve and the forest department aims to benefit the local communities and aid the conservation efforts. However, there are several concerns associated with fraud and cheating that needs to be addressed by the government and forest officials.

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. House Matters

Syllabus: Parliament functioning and issues arising out of it.

Mains: Parliament functioning.

Context: Deadlock in the Budget session of the Parliament.

Details:

- The second part of the Budget session of Parliament is in a deadlock. The Congress party demands a [Joint Parliamentary Committee \(JPC\)](#) to probe allegations of dubious financial transactions and dishonest business practices against a leading corporate house.
- On the other hand, the leading Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is asking for an apology for remarks made in London (by Mr. Rahul Gandhi) about democratic backsliding in India.
- As the Indian diaspora is expanding, the ripple effect of politics in India is bound to go beyond its geographical boundaries.
- The Member of Parliament who spoke in London is not able to speak in Parliament and explain his remarks. There is also an initiative to terminate his membership in the house.
- It should be noted that democracy allows criticism and thus an initiative to terminate the membership is an ill-advised move that has the potential to amplify the fears of a democratic deficit in India.
- It is also accused that the ruling party is silent on the issue of the linkage of the big corporate house with public sector entities like Life Insurance Corporation and the State Bank of India.
- It is suggested that the government, the Rajya Sabha Chairman, and the Lok Sabha Speaker should cooperate with the Opposition and hold discussions on the controversy surrounding a big firm.
- It will ensure the government's credibility.
- It should be noted that there are precedents of the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) in cases of financial fraud.

- Moreover, Parliament has a role of fixing accountability which should not be overlooked. The government and the opposition should hold quality debates on issues of governance.

Nut Graf: *The Budget session of the Parliament is in a situation of a deadlock and thus it is important that all the stakeholders such as the Government, the Opposition, the Lok Sabha Speaker, and the Rajya Sabha Chairman should hold appropriate discussions to ensure transparency and credibility of governance.*

F. Prelims Facts

1. Privilege Motion

Syllabus: GS02-Polity

Prelims: Devices of Parliamentary Proceedings

Context: Congress moves a [privilege motion](#) against the Prime Minister.

Key Details:

- Congress general secretary wrote to the Rajya Sabha Chairman seeking privilege proceedings against Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his remarks on the family of former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru for not taking his surname.
- Privilege proceedings are requested under Rule 188 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Council of States for having cast reflections upon Members of Parliament.
- The Prime Minister had made the remarks during his reply to the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address in the Rajya Sabha on February 9 during the first part of the Budget session.

2. Horseshoe Crabs

Syllabus: GS03-Environment

Prelims: Endangered and endemic Species; Wildlife Trade

Context: Disappearance of Horseshoe crabs off Odisha's Coast.

Key Details:

- Members of the Odisha State Wildlife Advisory Board and scientists of the National Institute of Oceanography (NIO), Goa, appealed to the Union Ministry of Environment,

Forest and Climate Change to place the horseshoe crabs on the list of marine species for which a Species Recovery Plan has to be developed.

- Horseshoe crabs appear to be disappearing from their familiar spawning grounds along Chandipur and Balaramgadi coast in Odisha.
- Scientists have also urged the Odisha government to come up with a robust protection mechanism before the living fossil becomes extinct due to destructive fishing practices.

Horseshoe Crabs:

- It is a marine chelicerate arthropod living in shallow coastal waters on soft sandy or muddy bottoms and spawns (releases or deposits eggs) mostly on intertidal beaches at summer spring high tides.
- Despite their name, these animals are not crabs at all but are related to scorpions, spiders, and extinct trilobites.
- Horseshoe crabs are an extremely ancient group and are often referred to as living fossils.
- Horseshoe crabs have been around for more than 300 million years, making them even older than dinosaurs.
- The horseshoe crab has a hard exoskeleton and 10 legs, which it uses for walking along the seafloor.
- In India, horseshoe crabs are endemic to coastal West Bengal, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh and the stretch of beaches along the West Bengal-Odisha border is home to the largest population of the species in the country.
- Estuaries, along with mangroves and mudflats of eastern West Bengal, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh are important breeding sites for horseshoe crabs.

Threats:

- According to the [IUCN](#), all four surviving species of horseshoe crabs are at risk because of overfishing for use as food and bait, habitat loss and the production of biomedical products derived from their blood.
- Horseshoe crab blood is crucial in the preparation of rapid diagnostic reagents. All injectable medicines are tested on them.
 - A molecule has been developed from a reagent of horseshoe crabs to help treat pre-eclampsia.
- Poachers kill them for their meat which is popularly believed to have aphrodisiac qualities.

Conservation Status:

- It is in the Schedule IV of the [Wildlife Protection Act 1972](#), under which the catching and killing of a horseshoe crab is an offence.

- The IUCN has marked all species of horseshoe crabs under the endangered category.



Image Source: nytimes

3. International Criminal Court

Syllabus: GS02-International Relations

Prelims: Important International Institutions

Context: International Criminal Court issues arrest warrant against Vladimir Putin.

Key Details:

- The [International Criminal Court \(ICC\)](#) has issued an arrest warrant for Russian President Vladimir Putin for the “unlawful deportation” of Ukrainian children.
- ICC had also issued a warrant against Maria Lvova-Belova, Russia’s presidential commissioner for children’s rights.
- ICC had alleged that Putin was responsible both directly by committing the acts and for failure to exercise control properly over civilian and military subordinates who committed the acts or allowed for their commission.
- The crimes are dated from February 24, 2022, when Russia invaded Ukraine.
- ICC has no powers to arrest suspects, and can only exercise jurisdiction within its member countries and Russia is not a member of the ICC.

G. Tidbits

1. Namdapha National Park

- After a gap of eight years, a tiger has been spotted in the [Namdapha National Park](#) and Tiger Reserve in Arunachal Pradesh.
 - It was the second tiger spotted in Namdapha after one in 2015.
- Namdapha, India's easternmost tiger reserve lies on the international border between India and Myanmar within Changlang District in Arunachal Pradesh.
- It is one of the biggest biodiversity hotspots in the Eastern Himalayan region and the fourth-largest national park in India.
- It is crossed from east to west by the Noa Dihing River that originates at the Chaukan Pass on the Indo-Myanmar border.
- The land cover changes with increasing elevation from tropical evergreen forest to temperate broadleaf and mixed forest.
- The park spans a wide altitudinal range from 200 m to 4,571 m at Dapha Bum, the highest point in the park.
- It was declared the country's 15th tiger project in 1983.
- It is the only park in the world to have the four feline species of big cats namely the Tiger, Leopard, Snow Leopard and Clouded Leopard and a number of lesser cats.
- Hoolock Gibbons, a highly endangered and only 'ape' species found in India dwells in this park.

2. Sokra Misawa Festival

- Sokra Misawa Festival is celebrated by Tiwas tribals in Karbi Anglong district, Assam.
- Tiwa tribal boys perform rituals wearing headgears called sakrashata during the festival.
- Tiwas worship nature during this spring-time festival and then prepare their fields for the next crop.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. 'Kudumbashree', one of the largest women's self-help networks in the world, seen in news is associated with which of the following States? (Level-Medium)

- A. Andhra Pradesh
- B. Karnataka
- C. Kerala
- D. Tamil Nadu

Answer: C

Explanation: Kudumbashree is the poverty eradication and women empowerment programme implemented by the State Poverty Eradication Mission (SPEM) of the Government of Kerala. The name Kudumbashree in the Malayalam language means 'prosperity of the family'.

Q2. Consider the following pairs: (Level-Difficult)

National Waterway (NW)

1. NW 16
2. NW 37
3. NW 46
4. NW 100

Details of Waterways

Barak River
Gandak River
Indus River
Tapi River

How many pairs given above are correctly matched?

- A. Only one pair
- B. Only two pairs
- C. Only three pairs
- D. All four pairs

Answer: D

Explanation:

- **Pair 01 is correctly matched**, Barak River (Lakhipur -Tuker Gram) in Assam was declared as National waterway 16.
- **Pair 02 is correctly matched**, Gandak River (Bhaisalotal Barrage to Hazipur) in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh was declared as National Waterway 37
- **Pair 03 is correctly matched**, Indus River in Jammu & Kashmir was declared as National Waterway 46.
- **Pair 04 is correctly matched**, Tapi River (Hatnur Dam to Gulf of Khambhat) in Maharashtra and Gujarat was declared as National Waterway 100.

Q3. Which of the following statements is/are correct w.r.t Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Vikas Mission? (Level-Medium)

1. Under the Mission, Minor Forest Produce (MFP) gathered by tribals will be processed in Vandhan Kendras and marketed through Van Dhan Producer Enterprises.
2. TRIFED would be the nodal agency for implementing the scheme.
3. It aims to transform villages with significant tribal populations into 'model villages' (Adarsh Gram).

Options:

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: A

Explanation:

- **Statement 01 is correct**, The Mission seeks to achieve livelihood-driven tribal development in the next five years through the formation of Van Dhan groups who have been organized into Vandhan Kendras. The MFP gathered by tribals will be processed in these kendras and marketed through Van Dhan Producer Enterprises.
- **Statement 02 is correct**, TRIFED would be the nodal agency for implementing the scheme. The products produced will be marketed through Tribe India Stores.
- **Statement 03 is incorrect**, Pradhan Mantri Adi Adarsh Gram Yojana aims to transform villages with significant tribal population into model villages (Adarsh Gram) covering a population of 4.22 crore (About 40% of the total Tribal Population).

Q4. Consider the following statements with respect to Tiwa Tribes: (Level-Difficult)

1. Sokra Misawa is a Spring Time Festival of the Tiwas where they worship the deities of nature.
2. They are recognized as a Scheduled Tribe within the State of Tripura.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both
- D. None

Answer: A

Explanation:

- **Statement 01 is correct**, Sokra Misawa Festival is celebrated by Tiwas tribals in Karbi Anglong district, Assam.
 - Tiwas worship nature during this spring-time festival and then prepare their fields for the next crop.

- **Statement 02 is incorrect**, Tiwas are recognized as a Scheduled Tribe in Assam excluding the autonomous districts.

Q5. Where was the First Session of the Indian National Congress held in December 1885?
(PYQ-CSE-2008) (Level-Easy)

- A. Ahmedabad
- B. Bombay
- C. Calcutta
- D. Delhi

Answer: B

Explanation: The Indian National Congress conducted its [first session](#) in Bombay from 28 to 31 December 1885.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. [Frequent disruptions in the parliament put a significant dent on our democratic values. In that light, suggest measures to increase the productivity of the Parliament.](#) (250 words; 15 marks) (GS-2; Polity)
2. [Fake news has emerged as one of the biggest social threats in recent times. Give suggestions to curtail the spread of this menace.](#) (250 words; 15 marks) (GS-2; Governance)