

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. [GS1 Related](#)

B. [GS2 Related](#)

POLITY

1. [SC bans use of pet coke in National Capital Region](#)
2. [Procedure to remove ECs vague, says petition in SC](#)
3. [Government plans to amend Hindu Adoptions Act to check adoption under personal law](#)

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS/BILATERAL RELATIONS

1. [New U.S. policy is a "game-changer", says Ashraf Ghani](#)
 2. [For the sake of the Indo-Pacific](#)
- C. [GS3 Related](#)

ECONOMICS

1. [â,12.11 lakh crore for PSU banks to boost lending](#)
2. [â,15.35 lakh crore for new road project](#)
3. [India, U.S. to take up "high tariff", visa curbs in Washington meet](#)

D. [GS4 Related](#)

ETHICS, INTEGRITY, AND APTITUDE

1. [Doctors' participation in executions violates medical ethics: IMA](#)

E. [Prelims Fact](#)

F. [UPSC Prelims Practice Questions](#)

G. [UPSC Mains Practice Questions](#)

Nothing here for Today!!!

Category: **POLITY**

1. [SC bans use of pet coke in National Capital Region](#)

In news:

- The Supreme Court directed the prohibition of industrial use of **pet coke and furnace oil in NCR regions** from November 1, 2017.
- The order follows the recommendation of the **Supreme Court-appointed Environment Pollution Control Authority (EPCA)** to ban the sale, distribution and use of furnace oil and pet coke in the NCR.
- Their use is already prohibited in Delhi.

Basic Information:

Petroleum coke:

- Petroleum coke is a by-product of the **oil refining process**. As refineries worldwide seek to operate more efficiently and extract more gasoline and other high value fuels from each barrel of crude oil, a solid carbon material known as petcoke is produced.

Harmful effects of use of furnace oil and pet coke

- Petroleum coke, also called pet coke or petcoke, is a solid carbon material that resembles coal; it is a product of oil refining
- Petroleum coke or Pet Coke is used by industries as fuel and contains various dangerous chemicals and heavy metals such as Chromium, Vanadium, etc
- Pet coke also has high Sulphur contents which on burning releases large amounts of Sulphates into the atmosphere
- These harmful chemicals cause air pollution and lead to various health risks

Environment Pollution (Prevention & Control) Authority (EPCA)

- It is a Central Government constituted committee for the National Capital Region in compliance with the Supreme Court order dated January 7, 1998
- It was constituted under subsection (1) and (3) of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 by MoEFCC
- This authority was constituted with sole objective of assisting SC for protecting and improving the quality of environment and preventing, controlling and abating air pollution in Delhi NCR

2. [Procedure to remove ECs vague, says petition in SC](#)

Context:

- Ambiguity on the removal procedure of the Election Commissioners might affect the functional independence of the EC.

In news:

- A petition was filed in the Supreme Court pointing out the vagueness in the procedure for removal of Election Commissioners, saying it affects the panel's autonomy.
- **Petition contention:**
- Proviso to Article 324 (5) of the Constitution safeguards the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) from arbitrary removal.
- The CEC can be removed from office only by the order of the President, just like a judge of the Supreme Court. However, the same constitutional provision is silent about the procedure for removal of the two Election Commissioners. It only provides that they cannot be removed from office except on the recommendation of the CEC.
- The petition, seeks to provide Election Commissioners with the same protection against arbitrary removal as the CEC.
- The plea also sought direction to the Centre to provide an independent secretariat to the Election Commission.

Key Fact:

- The CEC and the Election Commissioners have a tenure of six years, or up to the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier, and enjoy the same status and receive salary and perks as available to apex court judges.
- The CEC and the Election Commissioners enjoy the same decision-making powers.

3. [Government plans to amend Hindu Adoptions Act to check adoption under personal law](#)

Context:

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development is set to initiate amendments to **the Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act, 1956 (HAMA)** so as to disallow any further adoptions under the personal law and instead bring it under the purview of the **Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015**.

Why such a move?

- A study that showed that among the adoptable 48,000-odd children across child care institutions, only 2,000 are linked to adoption agencies under JJ Act, half of them are children with special needs.
- The Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) presently has a waitlist of more than 17,000 prospective parents.
- There cannot be two parallel systems as it makes it very difficult to check instances of child trafficking.
- The adoption provisions under HAMA need to be repealed so that adoptions happen only through JJ Act.

THE HINDU ADOPTIONS AND MAINTENANCE ACT, 1956 (HAMA)

- HAMA allows couples from Hindu, Buddhist, Jain and Sikh communities to adopt children of parents belonging to these communities through a simple agreement.
- Adoptions under HAMA are between two individuals and it is very difficult to monitor cases of misuse, selling or trafficking of children.
- The JJ Act states that nothing in this Act shall apply to the adoption of children made under the provisions of the HAMA.
- Another recent study, by CARA, showed the extent of unregistered adoptions under HAMA.
- For Example-In Delhi less than 50 adoptions were officially registered in a year under HAMA, but 3,200 stamps were sold for the stated purpose of adoption where the deeds were simply notarised.

What is the problem?

- As per the adoption regulations of the JJ Act, all child-care institutions were to be registered with CARA within six months of the legislation coming into force in January 2016.
- Twenty months later, 10 per cent of the total institutions are both linked to adoption agencies and registered under the Act.
- The recent ministry study found that there are 9,400 child-care institutions across the country, over half of which are unregistered.
- The ministry will issue an ultimatum to all child-care institutions asking them to register under the JJ Act by December 31, else shut down operations.
- This is aligned with May 2017 order by a Supreme Court bench in a case regarding exploitation of children in a Tamil Nadu orphanage that held that all child-care institutions have to be registered under JJ Act by the year end.
- Many institutions hold on to the children as their funding agencies give them grants based on the number of children with them.

Category:Â INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS/BILATERAL RELATIONS

1. [New U.S. policy is a "game-changer", says Ashraf Ghani](#)

Context:

- Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's visit to India

In news:

- **Issues discussed:**
- Regional counter-terror efforts.
- Enhancing New Delhi's defence assistance to Kabul

- Both sides expressed an appreciation for the U.S.'s new South Asia policy.
- **Defense support:**
- Narendra Modi and Mr. Ghani spoke about India's security support as a strategic partner, including the training of Afghan personnel at Indian military academies.
- The Indian side agreed to extend further assistance depending on the needs of the Afghan defence and police forces

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's remarks on the new U.S strategy : New U.S. strategy is a "game-changer" aimed at ensuring a regional approach to fighting terrorism, including making Pakistan act against "state sponsorship of sanctuaries" along the border with Afghanistan.

2. [For the sake of the Indo-Pacific](#)

Context:

- US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's visit to New Delhi this week
- Visit comes at an important moment for both countries and governments

India and USA

- The US-India relationship occupied high priority and visibility during the Obama administration
- The Donald Trump administration, too, has shown its commitment to the relationship, hosting Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Washington DC, earlier this year

Indo-Pacific region tensions:

- These range from mounting tensions with North Korea, the Rohingya crisis, and India's own standoff with China over Doklam to the lingering challenges in Afghanistan
- The US and India will increasingly need to work together on these
- The geo-economics of the Indo-Pacific are as important as the region's geopolitics
- There is a need to put options on the table in order to encourage private capital and cutting-edge technology to invest in the region

US-India commercial ties

- These have seen an uptick in recent years with PM Modi's market-oriented reforms
- India is currently the US's ninth largest goods trading partner
- India is also one of the fastest growing sources of foreign direct investment in the US, at nearly \$11 billion
- In a groundbreaking development illustrating growing economic convergence, the US delivered its first shipment of crude oil to the Paradip port a few weeks ago
- While two-way trade, and investment, between the two countries has increased significantly in the past five years, there is much room to expand the economic partnership

Challenges that American businesses encounter as they compete in the Indian market

- Market access barriers for medical devices,
- Tariff and non-tariff barriers on ICT products and agricultural goods,
- Lack of a strong intellectual property framework that benefits innovation and entrepreneurship

What India desires?

- On the US side, movement "even incremental" on a totalization agreement would be a welcome relief for temporary Indian workers and Indian companies from paying an annual social security payment

Shifts in the global economic order by 2050

- A recent report predicts dramatic shifts in the global economic order by 2050
- Six of the seven largest economies will be emerging economies led by China and India

Importance of economic linkage with the US

- India's position in a part of the world that contains the most important trade corridors necessitates deeper economic linkage with the US
- It is crucial for India to be able to develop its infrastructure, attract capital and cutting-edge technology, grow its economy and advance opportunities for its people
- India will only benefit by working with American businesses in order to attract private investment in a way that follows global standards for international development
- A fully realized US-India economic partnership is necessary to accomplish this

Category: ECONOMICS

1. [â‚¹2.11 lakh crore for PSU banks to boost lending](#)

In news:

- The Centre unveiled an ambitious plan to infuse â‚¹ **11 lakh crore** capital over the next two years into **public sector banks (PSBs)**.

Why?

- PSBs are saddled with high, **non- performing assets** and facing the prospect of having to take haircuts on loans

stuck in insolvency proceedings.

Importance:

- The move is vital for **the slowing economy**, as **private investments** remain elusive in the face of the **“twin-balance sheet problem”** afflicting corporate India and public sector banks reflected in **slow bank credit growth**.

Experts’ opinion regarding recapitalization:

- Recapitalization of banks is critical for revitalizing India’s growth momentum at a time when the global economy is recovering.

Funding patterns:

- Budgetary provisions of ₹18,139 crore and the sale of recapitalization bonds worth ₹135 lakh crore.
- The balance would be raised by the banks themselves by diluting the government’s equity share.

CRISIL’s assessment of capital requirement:

- CRISIL’s assessment of capital requirement for public sector banks to meet **Basel III** requirements is in the range of ₹14-1.7 lakh crore which will be met by the government’s relief package

Basic Information:

Non Performing Assets:

NPA is a loan or an advance where

- Interest and/ or installment of principal remain overdue for a period of more than 90 days in respect of a term loan.
- The account remains “out of order” in respect of an Overdraft/Cash Credit (OD/CC).
- The bill remains overdue for a period of more than 90 days in the case of bills purchased and discounted.
- The installment of principal or interest thereon remains overdue for two crop seasons for short duration crops.
- The installment of principal or interest thereon remains overdue for one crop season for long duration crops.
- The amount of liquidity facility remains outstanding for more than 90 days, in respect of a securitisation transaction undertaken in terms of guidelines on securitisation dated February 1, 2006.
- In respect of derivative transactions, the overdue receivables representing positive mark-to-market value of a derivative contract, if these remain unpaid for a period of 90 days from the specified due date for payment.

Categories of Non-Performing Assets (NPAs)

- **Based upon the period to which a loan has remained as NPA, it is classified into 3 types:**
- Substandard Assets: An asset which remains as NPAs for less than or equal to 12 months.
- Doubtful Assets: An asset which remained in the above category for 12 months.
- Loss Assets: Asset where loss has been identified by the bank or the RBI, however, there may be some value remaining in it. Therefore loan has not been not completely written off.

2. [₹15.35 lakh crore for new road project](#)

In news:

- **BharatMala Pariyojana** : The Centre announced a **₹1 35 lakh crore** road construction package, called **BharatMala Pariyojana**
- The Union Cabinet approved **34,800 km** of roads nationwide, including in border and coastal areas.
- **BharatMala Pariyojana**: new umbrella programme aimed at optimizing the efficiency of movement of goods and people across the country
- The BharatMala project will include economic corridors (9,000 km), inter-corridor and feeder route (6,000 km), national corridors efficiency improvement (5,000 km), border roads and international connectivity (2,000 km), coastal roads and port connectivity (2,000 km) and greenfield expressways (800 km).
- Further, the remaining road projects of 10,000 km under the National Highways Development Project will form a part of the programme.
- The project will be executed through the **National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL)**, Ministry of Road, Transport and Highways and State Public Works Department (PWDs).
- **Under the programme, roads will be built along the borders with Nepal and Bhutan**, bottlenecks on the existing Golden Quadrilateral highway network will be removed. Also, road connectivity to small industries will be ensured and manufacturing centres will be connected with national highways.
- Funding pattern: The BharatMala project will be funded in a three-pronged manner “ market, private investment and asset recycling of NHAI’s toll assets
- **Advantages:** With this program, India could get the much-needed cost competitiveness in the manufacturing sector by bringing down the logistics cost which is currently one of the highest amongst the emerging markets and way above that prevalent in developed economies.

3. [India, U.S. to take up “high tariff”, visa curbs in Washington meet](#)

In news:

India-U.S. Trade Policy Forum (TPF):

- Scheduled to be held in Washington DC on October 26
- **Agenda:** ways to iron out irritants including “visa curbs” of the U.S. and India’s “high tariffs” on manufactured products and “restrictions” on e-commerce, as well as steps to expedite the conclusion of negotiations on a bilateral social security pact (or totalisation agreement).

Concerns of India and the U S:

- The TPF, which is the main forum to resolve bilateral trade and investment issues, is also likely to take up the “challenges” that American innovative industries face due to India’s “weak” Intellectual Property Rights regime.
- It would also discuss the “non-tariff barriers” of the U.S. that are adversely impacting India’s agriculture, pharmaceuticals and other industrial exports.

Why is USIBC and US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF) important?

Industry bodies including USIBC and USISPF are working with the governments of both the countries on mechanisms to ensure greater engagement at the State-level, instead of focusing entirely on the Central/Federal-level discussions

Category:Â ETHICS, INTEGRITY, AND APTITUDE

1. [Doctors’ participation in executions violates medical ethics: IMA](#)

- **Resolution adopted by World Medical Association’s (WMA), during its general assembly in Chicago, U.S:** “it is unethical for physicians to participate in capital punishment, in any way, or during any step of the execution process, including its planning and the instruction and/or training of persons to perform executions.”
- In India, doctors are required to monitor vital signs during hanging and look for signs of life and then pronounce death.
- The national body of over three lakh doctors, Indian Medical Association (IMA) has written to the Medical Council of India (MCI) requesting that a guideline be introduced, stating that physicians’ participation in execution is “**unethical.**”

Nothing here for Today!!!

F. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

G. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

GS Paper I

1. Discuss the role of Women in the freedom struggle especially during the Gandhian Phase.

GS Paper III

1. “Success of “Make in India” programme depends on the success of “Skill India” programme and radical labour reforms.” Discuss with logical arguments.