

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. [GS1 Related](#)

INDIAN SOCIETY

1. [Chanting mantras, breaking barriers: Kerala's first Dalit priest takes charge](#)

B. [GS2 Related](#)

POLITY

1. [SC brings back ban on firecrackers in Delhi-NCR region](#)
2. [MP govt announces Rs 2 lakh aid for widow remarriage](#)
3. [Matrimonial disputes should be heard in camera: SC](#)
4. [SC refers to Constitution Bench plea over conversion of Parsi woman](#)
5. [Impact evaluation: Why flagship BPL health insurance scheme is in rather poor health](#)

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS/BILATERAL RELATIONS

1. [Impact evaluation: Why flagship BPL health insurance scheme is in rather poor health](#)

C. [GS3 Related](#)

ECONOMICS

1. [Jobs big worry as economy remains in 'pessimistic zone', show RBI surveys](#)

D. [GS4 Related](#)

E. [Prelims Fact](#)

F. [UPSC Prelims Practice Questions](#)

G. [UPSC Mains Practice Questions](#)

Category: INDIAN SOCIETY

1. [Chanting mantras, breaking barriers: Kerala's first Dalit priest takes charge](#)

In news:

- Yedu Krishnan scripted history by becoming the **first Dalit priest** in Kerala to assume duties at the sanctum sanctorum of the Manappuram Lord Shiva Temple at nearby Thiruvalla.
- Yedu Krishnan is among six Dalits out of the 36 non-Brahmins recommended for appointment as priests by the Kerala Devaswom Recruitment Board.
- 36 non-brahmins were recently recommended for appointment in various temples under the Travancore Devaswom Board, which manages at least 1,248 shrines in the State, including the famous Lord Ayyappa temple at Sabarimala.

Category: POLITY

1. [SC brings back ban on firecrackers in Delhi-NCR region](#)

In news:

- The Supreme Court suspended the sale of firecrackers in Delhi and NCR till November 1, 2017 in a bid to test whether a Deepavali without firecrackers this year will have a **positive effect** on the health of citizens and a steadily deteriorating air quality.
- **November 2016 decision:** suspend sales of firecrackers to test itself to find out whether there would be a positive effect of this suspension, particularly during Deepavali period.
- **Key Points:**
- Adverse effects of burning of crackers during Deepavali have been witnessed year after year.
- The air quality deteriorates abysmally and the city chokes.
- It leads to closing the schools and the authorities are compelled to take various measures on emergent basis, when faced with a **health emergency**.
- **Sulphur in fireworks should not be permitted:** Sulphur on combustion produces **sulphur-dioxide** and the same is extremely harmful to health. The CPCB has stated that between 9 p.m. to midnight on Deepavali day, the levels of sulphur-dioxide content in the air is dangerously high.

2. [MP govt announces Rs 2 lakh aid for widow remarriage](#)

In news:

- Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has announced a slew of measures for women in the state, including a financial assistance of Rs two lakh for remarriage of widows.
- The Below Poverty Line (BPL) status would no longer be required for availing the widow pension in the state.
- Chouhan also announced a relaxation in the physical fitness parameters for female candidates appearing for a police constable recruitment test.
- Sanitary napkins would be made available at 50 per cent rates in the predominantly tribal blocks of the state.
- Seeking to ensure the safety and security of girls: school buses in the state would be equipped with CCTV cameras to prevent untoward incidents like eve-teasing.

- Laws ensuring due share to women in ancestral properties would be strictly implemented.

3. [Matrimonial disputes should be heard in camera: SC](#)

In news:

Historic verdict:

- A three-judge Bench of the Supreme Court, with a 2:1 majority, overruled its earlier orders to conduct matrimonial disputes cases through video conferencing
- **Bench Observation:** it is very doubtful whether the emotional bond can be established in a virtual meeting during video conferencing and it may even create a dent in the process of settlement.
- **Rulings:** matrimonial disputes should be conducted in camera in the spirit of Section 11 of the Family Courts Act of 1984 and video conferencing would destroy the privacy of the proceedings and probably defeat the cause of justice.
- **Earlier decision:**
- The majority judgment set aside a decision by a two-judge Bench of the Supreme Court, directing all high courts to issue administrative instructions to family courts across the country to open video conferencing facilities and use the technology to conduct marital disputes whenever one of the parties “ husband or wife ” requests for it.
- The court had said this would spare the parties the drudgery of appearing in person for the proceedings.

4. [SC refers to Constitution Bench plea over conversion of Parsi woman](#)

In news:

- The Supreme Court referred to a Constitution Bench the question whether a Parsi woman can keep her religious identity intact after getting married to someone from another faith under the Special Marriage Act.
- **Senior advocates Indira Jaising arguments:**
- Denying a woman respect and the right to observe her religion merely because she married outside her faith was violative of her fundamental right to religion enshrined under Article 25 of the Constitution.
- A woman’s identity is not merged with that of her husband on marriage, Ms. Jaising argued.
- “**Doctrine of coverture**, ” which holds that a woman loses her identity and legal right with marriage, is violative of her fundamental rights. The doctrine is not recognised by the Indian Constitution.

5. [Impact evaluation: Why flagship BPL health insurance scheme is in rather poor health](#)

In news:

- The head of the Indian Council of Medical Research, Dr Soumya Swaminathan, has become the first Indian on the global leadership team of the World Health Organisation

Quantitative evaluation of the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY)

- One of the main objectives of any health insurance scheme is to provide financial coverage (or risk protection) by reducing such burden while enhancing use of healthcare
- RSBY has not been able to reduce out-of-pocket payment for healthcare for the poor, and they face the catastrophic impact of such payments

India and RSBY:

- Outpatient care comprises up to 70% of total healthcare utilization in India and 60% of total health expenditure
- It has by far been excluded from RSBY coverage
- Because OP is not covered, people could delay seeking care until they are more severely ill, which is costly both from the perspective of costs and health
- Despite rising healthcare costs, the scheme continues to be capped at Rs 30,000 since 2008
- For a family of 4 or 4.5 persons, this is grossly inadequate

Positive impact of the scheme

- One positive impact of the scheme was in non-medical spending
- The poor increased their household consumption level, or non-medical spending, after RSBY intervention
- This can be called “virtual income transfer”

Other schemes:

- An evaluation of the Yeshasvini scheme in Karnataka by researchers from Delhi University reported an over 70% reduction in out-pocket spending and a 30% reduction in borrowings
- Evaluating the Rajiv Aarogyasri scheme in Andhra Pradesh in 2012, the nonprofit think tank Centre for Global Development found reduced inpatient out-of-pocket spending among enrolled families in phase I of the study, but relatively small impacts on outpatient out-of-pocket spending, and catastrophic payments

Basic Information:

Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY)

- RSBY, a tax-financed health insurance that is managed through private insurance companies, was introduced in 2008 for inpatient care to Below Poverty Line (BPL) families
- The scheme aims to provide health insurance coverage to the unrecognized sector workers belonging to the BPL category and their family members shall be beneficiaries under this scheme
- Scheme enables them to receive inpatient medical care of up to ₹1,30,000 per family per year in any of the

- empanelled hospitals
- The scheme has won plaudits from the World Bank, the UN and the ILO as one of the world's best health insurance schemes

Category: INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS/BILATERAL RELATIONS

1. [India-EU talks in a muddle](#)

Failure of the EU "India Summit held in New Delhi

- Failed to agree on the resumption of talks on the investment and free trade agreement.
- Diplomatic officials say the tough comments are a signal of the growing unhappiness among European diplomats over the long period it has taken to get talks on the Bilateral Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA), as it is known, back on track after they broke down in 2013.

What's wrong?

- Commerce Ministry officials have repeatedly said that India is ready to restart talks, but would like to discuss a **comprehensive Free Trade Agreement including investment**, while the EU is keen to finalise the bilateral investment treaty first, given that India has allowed all its BITs with European countries and others to lapse in the past year.

Category: ECONOMICS

1. [Jobs big worry as economy remains in "pessimistic zone", show RBI surveys](#)

Context:

- Recently released RBI's Consumer Confidence Survey and other important surveys.

Survey:

- Consumer Confidence Survey is a survey undertaken by the RBI.
- It obtained responses on household perceptions and expectations on the general economic situation, the employment scenario, the overall price situation and their own income and spending.
- It was conducted in six metropolitan cities- Mumbai, Kolkata, New Delhi, Chennai, Hyderabad, Bengaluru.

Key Highlights:

- The survey indicated that more people see consumer confidence declining, business sentiment in manufacturing dipping, inflation on the rise and growth sliding.
- There are two sub-indices in the survey- Current Situation Index (CSI) and Future Expectations Index (FEI)
- The CSI slipped further into the pessimistic zone, reflecting deterioration in sentiments on the employment scenario, the price level and income. Same was the case with the FEI which slipped relative to its previous reading in June 2017.
- There are five main variables in the survey on which responses from public were sought. These are Economic situation, Income, Spending, Employment and Price level.
- 7 per cent of respondents say the economic situation has worsened in September 2017 as against 25.3 per cent in the same period last year. The response for "one year ahead expectation" shows a decline to 50.8 per cent on the issue of economy "will improve" down from 66.3 per cent in December 2016. The response for the current perception on the general economic situation showed 34.6 per cent saying "improved" as of September 2017, down from 44.6 per cent in September 2016.
- Employment prospects have been the biggest cause of worry for respondents. 7 per cent of respondents believed current perception about employment has "worsened", which is much higher than the 31.4 per cent in November 2016.
- The perception of people on income levels has also come down to 26.6 per cent in September 2017 from 37.3 per cent in November 2016
- Despite gloomy sentiment on income, more than 80 per cent of respondents reported increased spending over the past year, which could partly be attributed to higher prices.

Key Highlights from other surveys:

- RBI's Survey of Professional Forecasters on Macroeconomic Indicators, said that forecasters have moderated their growth expectation for 2017-18 and 2018-19 in view of tempered assessment of private consumption demand and industrial growth.
- Real gross domestic product (GDP) and real gross value added (GVA) are likely to grow by 6.8 and 6.6 per cent, respectively, in 2017-18 and at 7.4 per cent each in 2018-19.
- The survey also says headline Consumer Price Inflation and Core Inflation are going to grow to 5.0% and 4.9% in Q2 in 2018-19.
- On the external front: improvement in external trade in both this as well as next year.
- In another survey- Industrial Outlook Survey of the Manufacturing Sector for Q2 of 2017-18- business sentiment in the manufacturing sector has worsened.

Nothing here for Today!!!

Nothing here for Today!!!

F. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

G. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

GS Paper III

1. How globalization has led to the reduction of employment in the formal sector of the Indian economy? Is increased informalization detrimental to the development of the country?

GS Paper IV

Case study

You are recently posted as district development officer of a district. Shortly thereafter you found that there is considerable tension in the rural areas of your district on the issue of sending girls to schools.

The elders of the village feel that many problems have come up because girls are being educated and they are stepping out of the safe environment of the household. They are of the view that the girls should be quickly married off with minimum education. The girls are also competing for jobs after education, which have traditionally remained in boys' exclusive domain, adding to unemployment amongst male population.

The younger generation feels that in the present era, girls should have equal opportunities for education and employment, and other means of livelihood. The entire locality is divided between the elders and the younger lot and further subdivided between sexes in both generations. You come to know that in Panchayat or in other local bodies or even in busy crossroads, the issue is being acrimoniously debated.

One day you are informed that an unpleasant incident has taken place. Some girls were molested, when they were en route to schools. The incident led to clashes between several groups and a law and order problem has arisen. The elders after heated discussion have taken a joint decision not to allow girls to go to school and to socially boycott all such families, which do not follow their dictate.

1. What steps would you take to ensure girls' safety without disrupting their education?
2. How would you manage and mould matriarchic attitude of the village elders to ensure harmony in the inter-generational relations? (250 words) (25 Marks)