TABLE OF CONTENTS

- A. GS1 Related
- B. GS2 Related

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

- 1. A neutral Internet
- 2. The road to an open Internet
- 3. TRAI backs free data in a non-discriminatory way
- 4. Against gender rights
- 5. Eliminate torture
- 6. Follow law in dowry cases: SC

HEALTH ISSUES

- 1. One in 10 medicines fake; diseases becoming untreatable: WHO
- 2. India unlikely to cut malaria burden by half in 2020: WHO
- 3. India has the highest malaria burden in the world outside Africa

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS/BILATERAL RELATIONS

- 1. Singapore offers India logistical base
- 2. Beijing calls for dialogue
- 3. Staring at an Irish challenge
- C. GS3 Related

ECONOMY

- 1. IRFC to raise \$500 million via bond sale
- 2. Govt. may meld Make in India with Invest India, says Prabhu

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. Electric cars and us

ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

- 1. Even low air pollution levels can up asthma risk: study
- D. GS4 Related
- E. Prelims Fact
- F. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions
- G. <u>UPSC Mains Practice QuestionsÂ</u>

Nothing here for Today!!!

Category:Â POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. A neutral Internet

- The struggle to keep the Internet freely accessible to all got a welcome shot in the arm.
- The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) finally came out with clear guidelines in favour of Net neutrality that are consistent with its earlier stand on Facebook's Free Basics proposal.
- After consultation papers issued in May 2016 and this January, the regulator reiterated that there cannot be discriminatory treatment of websites on the Internet by service providers.
- In particular, TRAI warned providers against the practice of blocking certain websites and tinkering with content speeds.
- This, in a nutshell, means that service providers such as telecom companies cannot stand in the way of a consumerâ
 €™s access to content that would otherwise be provided to her without any undue hindrance.
- They cannot, for instance, charge consumers for access to certain content, or receive payment from websites promising greater promotion of their product over the rest.
- Quite notably, TRAI's decision comes in the wake of international focus on the U.S. Federal Communications Commission's decision to scrap regulations on service providers imposed during the Obama administration.
- While batting for the right to an open Internet, however, TRAI has been careful to allow some exceptions that allow companies to discriminate between content if it helps them regulate the flow of traffic or offer "specialised servicesâ€.
- While TRAI's new guidelines will help the cause of building the Internet as a public platform with open access to all, the concerns of service providers should not be dismissed altogether.
- The Internet has spread all over the world, so widely that many believe it is now an essential good. But the infrastructure that serves as the backbone of the Internet has not come without huge investments by private service providers.
- So any regulation that severely restricts the ability of companies to earn sufficient returns on investment will only

- come at the cost of the welfare of the public.
- In this connection, TRAI has been open to adopting a nuanced view that differentiates between various forms of content instead of imposing a blanket ban on all forms of price differentiation.
- The new policy, for instance, will still allow companies to justify the costs incurred in providing niche content to consumers.
- At the same time, TRAI's measured response is likely to effectively address the problem of anti-competitive practices adopted by certain providers.
- Interestingly, it has left it, with important caveats, to the government to decide on services that count as â €œspecialised†and deserve exceptional treatment by regulators.
- To this end, a proper mechanism needs to be instituted to make sure that the exceptions are not used as loopholes by the big Internet players.
- Policymakers will also need to think hard about creating an appropriate legal framework to prevent the capture of regulation by special interests.

2. The road to an open Internet

- Net neutrality creates rules of the road for a free and open Internet. It requires that barriers should not be created by telecom and Internet service providers for user choice by limiting their power to discriminate between content providers and different classes of content.
- Through binding rules and regulations, the power of access providers to selectively price or create technical imbalances is corrected. Such an argument immediately appeals to our sense of fairness, for it based on maintaining a level of equality in the use of a common resource.
- This finds express acknowledgement in the precedent of the Supreme Court where it has stated that the power to license spectrum and telegraphs is held by the government as a trustee of public interest.
- In one of the more recent judgments which arose from a presidential reference on the allocation of natural resources, the Supreme Court observed that, " <u>as natural resources are public goods, the doctrine of equality, which emerges from concepts of justice and fairness, must guide the state in determining the actual mechanism for distribution of material resources.</u> â€
- Taking this forward, TRAI in its recommendations on Net neutrality has suggested amendments to the various classes of telecom and Internet licences to have an express recognition of <u>a non-discriminatory principle for Internet content</u>. Such recommendations set a broad rule with tailored exceptions that are conditioned on touchstones of reasonableness.
- Beyond equality and reasonableness, which may seem evocative though fuzzy principles, a more tangible
 appreciation of Net neutrality is immediately felt on our liberty.
- The Internet today affords millions of Indians with an immediate audience without the traditional costs of distribution.
- Tinkering with its character, or carving it up in slices as would happen in the absence of Net neutrality, would fragment its community and the diversity of choice offered by it.
- This would impact both the right to speak and the ability to receive knowledge, hence impacting our right to freedom of speech and expression.
- Again, such realisation is found in the Differential Pricing Regulation issued on February 8, 2016, which prevented telecom companies from pricing access to Internet websites and content differently.
- In the explanatory memorandum to this regulation, TRAI states, "As observed by the Supreme Court, allowing citizens the benefit of plurality of views and a range of opinions on all public issues is an essential component of the right to free speech. This includes the right to express oneself as well as the right to receive.â€

Constitutional guarantees

- The concepts of equality, reasonableness and liberty which underpin the social contract which gives rise to the Indian Constitution are not mere black letters of the law.
- They are more than mere limitations on state power in favour of individuals. By themselves, they are at their very best when they are put into motion by positive actions by regulators and governments.
- To achieve these objectives, there is a necessity to popularise the constitutional doctrine in ways and methods which seem immediate and cater to the daily problems of the modern world.
- The debates around Net neutrality in India have shown how a stand-up comedy video can spark a spontaneous campaign, spur more than a million people to send e-mails to a telecom regulation consultation when the stakes are clearly explained and there is a broad coalition of civil society voices.
- The Net neutrality campaign has not been without criticism and growing public disappointment. While such sentiments may arise from legitimate concerns, they are disproportionate to the greater benefit of raising public debate.
- To restrict any public policy measure, especially something as important as Net neutrality, to a restricted group of experts without a chance of public engagement betrays elitism.
- Further, the repeated rounds of public consultation which have brought on some amount of fatigue are due to the inherent complexity of the regulatory exercise.
- This also provides us a lesson that the enjoyment of Net neutrality will require constant, hard work â€" no victories are permanent.
- But for a moment we can pause to celebrate how TRAI's recommendations on Net neutrality provide hope that modern technologies can refresh constitutional doctrine and also deepen participatory democracy.

3. TRAI backs free data in a non-discriminatory way

- The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has stuck to its recommendation of allowing free data to consumers in a non-discriminatory manner by third-party aggregators while agreeing with the telecom department's views that government money can be used for connectivity rather than supporting free data scheme to rural subscribers.
- The regulator noted that data had become affordable due to a tariff war in the telecom sector, and that "concern with regard to availability of affordable data services has been mitigated.â€
- The authority tends to agree with the views of DoT (Department of Telecom) that a larger focus is required on

connectivity, content availability in local language and digital literacy. The resources could therefore be effectively utilised to address the said issues.

- In December last year, Trai had recommended that a "reasonable†amount of free data access â€" say a 100 MB per month â€" be provided to rural subscribers and the scheme could be funded from the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF).
- However, the DoT subsequently pointed out that cost of an Internet enabled mobile handset was a bigger â €œobstacle†than the tariff of Internet access, and that the latter had already been addressed to an extent through market competition.
- DoT questioned whether it would be worthwhile to provide a subsidy to those rural subscribers who already owned smartphones. It opined that the applicability of the proposed scheme was "limitedâ€, thus undermining its tenability.

4. Against gender rights

• The transgender community and its allies have erupted in anger over the decision of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment to re-introduce the original Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2016 in the winter session of Parliament.

Journey of the Bill

- The transgender community saw the Supreme Court's landmark decision in NALSA v. Union of India as a victory, as it recognised that transgender persons have fundamental rights.
- The judgment was followed by a private member's Bill, the Rights of Transgender Persons Bill, 2014, which was unanimously passed in the Rajya Sabha.
- Instead of introducing it in the Lok Sabha, the Ministry uploaded its own Bill, the Rights of Transgender Persons Bill, 2015, on its website in December for public comments.
- The 2015 Bill, which was largely based on the 2014 Bill, did away with the national and State commissions for transgender persons and transgender rights courts.
- The Bill was fairly progressive since it granted a transgender person the right to be identified as a â€~man', â
 €™woman' or â€~transgender'.
- However, the 2016 Bill, that was finally introduced in the Lok Sabha, came as a shock.
- A highly diluted version, it also pathologised transgender persons by defining them as "partly female or male; or a combination of female and male; or neither female nor maleâ€.
- Met with backlash, the Ministry set up an expert standing committee on social justice and empowerment to examine
 the Bill.

The committee report

- The standing committee invited public comments and thereafter held multiple rounds of consultations.
- Its report criticised the 2016 Bill for its stark deficiencies and recommended re-drafting the definition of a â
 € transgender personâ € to make it inclusive and accurate; providing for the definition of discrimination and setting
 up a grievance redress mechanism to address cases of discrimination; and granting reservations to transgender
 persons.
- However, its substance lay in its insistence that the law must grant equal civil rights to transgender persons
 (marriage, divorce and adoption), thus opening the door for the legal system to take steps to undo its oppressive
 heteronormative (the presumption that heterosexuality is the norm) and cisgendered (the presumption that peopleâ
 €™s gender identity is aligned with their anatomical sex) foundation.
- The Ministry's decision to re-introduce the 2016 Bill disregards the pre-legislative consultative policy which requires Ministries to grant a minimum of 30 days for public comments and to place a summary of feedback/comments received from the public/other stakeholders on their website.

5. Eliminate torture

- Enacting a law prohibiting torture is both a moral imperative and a pragmatic necessity.
- The Union government has informed the Supreme Court that it is seriously considering the 273rd Report of the Law Commission, which has recommended that India ratify the United Nations Convention against Torture and pass a law to prevent torture and punish its perpetrators.
- A few months ago, the court had sought the Centre's response to a petition filed in public interest by former Union Law Minister Ashwani Kumar, who complained about the delay in India ratifying the UN Convention, which it had signed in 1997.
- The petition had also favoured a standalone legislation to prohibit torture. The court disposed of the matter without any direction after being informed that the matter was under serious consideration.
- The Centre should now act on its own with a sense of urgency. There can be no reason to further delay legislative measures to eliminate all forms of torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading forms of treatment.
- At an earlier hearing, the court had itself highlighted why a standalone law is needed.
- India has made many requests for extradition of offenders from other countries, and the absence of an anti-torture law may prevent these countries from acceding to India's requests.
- Earlier this month, extradition courts in the United Kingdom refused to send two persons to India to face trial, one of them on the ground that there was "no effective system of protection from torture in the receiving stateâ€.
- Conditions in India's prisons, especially the chronic problem of over-crowding, are a reason for the country's extradition requests failing.
- Few would disagree that ratifying the UN Convention and following it up with a domestic law against torture will not only be in the national interest but also have positive implications for the protection of human rights.
- Custodial violence continues to be prevalent in the country. The recent example of a bus conductor being forced to confess to murdering a schoolchild is a pointer to the use of torture as an investigative tool among policemen.
- The Prevention of Torture Bill was passed by the Lok Sabha in 2010 to address the problem, but it lapsed after it was referred to a Select Committee in the Rajya Sabha.

- The Law Commission, to which the question was referred in July this year, produced a report within three months. It also submitted a draft Bill for the government's consideration.
- The government should accept the recommendations without delay as it not only provides a penal framework for punishing public servants who inflict torture, but also lays down that just compensation be paid to victims.

6. Follow law in dowry cases: SC

- The Supreme Court said it did not intend to frame guidelines for the police regarding registration of FIRs on subjecting a married woman to cruelty for dowry, as the process had to be governed by statutory provisions.
- The top court was hearing pleas filed by NGOs Social Action Forum and †Nyayadhar†alleging that such guidelines had created roadblocks in the registration of FIRs and the penal provision be allowed to operate as per the statute.
- On July 27, the two-judge Bench had voiced concern over 'abuse' of the anti-dowry law and directed that no arrest should 'normally be effected' without verifying charges as violation of human rights could not be brushed aside.
- It passed a slew of directions to deal with complaints under Section 498A of the IPC and observed that many such complaints were not bona fide.

Category:Â HEALTH ISSUES

1. One in 10 medicines fake; diseases becoming untreatable: WHO

- An estimated one in 10 medical products circulating in low- and middle-income countries like India is either â €œsubstandard or falsifiedâ€, says a new research report from the World Health Organisation (WHO).
- According to WHO, these medicines not only fail to treat or prevent diseases but can also cause serious illness or even death.
- Substandard and falsified medicines particularly affect the most vulnerable communities.
- The report highlighted that since 2013, the WHO has received 1,500 reports of cases of substandard or falsified products. Of these, *antimalarials and antibiotics are the most commonly*
- Most of such reports (42 per cent) come from the WHO African Region, 21 per cent from the WHO Region of the Americas, and 21 per cent from the WHO European Region.

The report further says that substandard or falsified medicines promote <u>antimicrobial resistance in people</u>.

2. India unlikely to cut malaria burden by half in 2020: WHO

- India accounted for 6% of global malaria cases and 7% of deaths caused by it in 2016, according to a report released by the World Health Organisation (WHO).
- This is in the same ballpark as last year, though the WHO figures also suggest that India is unlikely to reduce its case burden beyond 40% by 2020.
- In contrast, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Kyrgyzstan achieved malaria-free status in 2015 and 2016 respectively.
- There were an estimated 4,45,000 deaths from malaria globally in 2016, compared with 4,46,000 estimated deaths in 2015. About 80% of the deaths were accounted for by 15 countries, namely India and 14 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Challenges

- A key impediment to eliminating malaria is a weak surveillance system. India and Nigeria, two major contributors to the global burden of malaria, were able to detect only 8% and 16% of cases respectively via the system.
- Moreover, 51% of *Plasmodium vivax* cases â€" the milder cousin of the *falciparum* â€" were traced in India. This could at least be partially explained by resistance to chloroquine, the first line treatment to *P. vivax* infections that has been detected in pockets of the country earlier this decade.
- For a long time, *falciparum* dominated India's case burden and, though its share has decreased, there is a slight increase in malaria cases by other parasites.

Low funding

- Bhutan, Nepal, Thailand, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Indonesia, says the WHO, are among the countries poised to reduce malaria incidence by over 40% by 2020.
- India â€" due to low funding per person at risk and resistance to certain frontline insecticides â€" is only expected to achieve a 20%-40% reduction.
- In 2016, an estimated Rs. 13,000 crore was invested in malaria control and elimination efforts globally by governments of malaria endemic countries and their international partners.
- The majority (74%) of investments in 2016 was spent in the WHO's Africa region, followed by the WHO regions of Southeast Asia (7%), the Eastern Mediterranean and the Americas (each 6%), and the Western Pacific (4%).
- "India has reduced its new malaria cases by one third, and even crossed the malaria mortality targets of 2020,†said Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare J.P. Nadda at a high-level round table on â€~Accelerating the Elimination of Malaria in the Southeast Asia Region'.
- He further added that with nearly three-fourths of the share of the regional burden, India's successes had significantly contributed to the reduction of the burden of malaria for the entire Southeast Asia region.
- The Union Minister noted that a majority of malaria cases in the country occurred in its bordering districts, forests and tribal areas.

3. India has the highest malaria burden in the world outside Africa.

- India recorded 6% of the world's new malaria cases in 2016 which stood at 216 million, according to the World Malaria Report 2017 by World Health Organization (WHO).
- According to the global health body, 15 countries accounted for 80% of all malaria cases globally in 2016.

- 1. Nigeria accounted for the highest proportion of cases globally at 27 per cent.
- 2. Democratic Republic of Congo had 10%,
- 3. India 6% and
- 4. Mozambique recorded 4% of the global malaria cases.
- India had also witnessed a total of 331 malaria deaths in 2016, making it the highest in the entire Southeast Asia region. The malaria deaths in India were only less to WHO's Africa region where the figure soared as high as 33,997 for the Democratic Republic of Congo.
- Odisha, the highest endemic state of India, reported an increase in cases in 2016 (to double the number in 2013). The other countries had no major outbreaks reported.
- Between 2014 and 2016, substantial increases in case incidence occurred in the WHO Region of the Americas, and marginally in the WHO Southeast Asia, Western Pacific and African regions.
- In 2016, 85% of estimated vivax malaria cases occurred in just five countries (Afghanistan, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia and Pakistan. In 2016, there were an estimated 445,000 deaths from malaria globally, compared to 446,000 estimated deaths in 2015.

Causes for the spread of Malaria

- Plasmodium falciparum is the most prevalent malaria parasite in sub-Saharan Africa, accounting for 99% of estimated malaria cases in 2016. Outside of Africa, P. vivax is the predominant parasite in the WHO Region of the Americas, representing 64% of malaria cases, and is above 30% in the WHO South East Asia and 40% in the Eastern Mediterranean regions.
- The report also mentions between 2014 and 2016, a total of 582 million *insecticide-treated mosquito nets (ITNs)* were reported by manufacturers as having been delivered globally.
- The report states some of the challenges impeding countries' abilities to stay on track and advance towards elimination *include lack of sustainable and predictable international and domestic funding*, risks posed by conflict in malaria endemic zones among many others.
- Among the 41 high-burden countries, overall, funding per person at risk of malaria remains below \$2.

Category:Â INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS/BILATERAL RELATIONS

1. Singapore offers India logistical base

- India and Singapore agreed on greater cooperation and activity in the Strait of Malacca and the Andaman Sea even as the two countries concluded a wide ranging naval agreement for maritime cooperation including logistical support.
- Strait of Malacca and Indian Ocean are key sea lanes of communication
- The two countries concluded a bilateral agreement for naval cooperation, which includes maritime security, joint exercises and temporary deployments from the naval facilities of each other and mutual logistical support.
- Early this year, the Indian Navy permanently deployed a frontline warship at the mouth of the strait to keep an eye on the increasing Chinese movements in the Indian Ocean as part of its mission-based deployment.
- The agreement would give the Navy the ability for extended deployments in the region.
- Ng said it made sense for countries to cooperate not only to establish maritime security but also to maintain freedom of navigation because "we know it is a lifeline for economiesâ€.
- "We will conduct exercises and patrols in your waters as you do in ours. We try to economise and support each other,†he said.
- The comments assume significance as the strait is considered a critical choke point for global commerce and is seen by China as a vulnerability for its energy security. The development is likely to be followed closely by Beijing.
- Sitharaman said Singapore had accepted India's proposal to institutionalise naval engagements in the shared maritime space, including setting up maritime exercises with like-minded countries and other ASEAN partners.
- The two countries also agreed to explore joints projects in research and development.

2. Beijing calls for dialogue

- China has reiterated its "double freeze†call to ease tensions on the Korean peninsula, frayed by launch of a powerful new ballistic by North Korea.
- China and Russia have proposed the "double freeze†or "double suspension†proposal. It calls for North Korea halting its nuclear and missile programme in return for the U.S. and South Korea suspending their major military exercises.

3. Staring at an Irish challenge

- Well ahead of the Brexit referendum last year, politicians across the political spectrum in Britain highlighted the importance of dealing with the impact that leaving the European Union (EU) would have on the island of Ireland.
- In a joint effort shortly before the referendum, former Prime Ministers Tony Blair and John Major came together to warn that the stability of Northern Ireland and the long-fought-for peace was at stake.
- The Troubles â€" the period of deep civil and political unrest in Northern Ireland, from the 1960s to the 1990s that pitted largely Protestant Unionists against largely Catholic separatists â€" are in the past, thanks to rapprochement that culminated in the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, though the political situation remains sensitive.
- Membership of the EU has played a significant role in maintaining that environment with strong economic ties between Northern Ireland and the EU state of Ireland, as well as close personal links. Over 35,000 people cross the border between the two each day, while 1,77,000 lorries and 1.85 million cars cross each month.
- With Britain set to leave the EU â€" and the single market and customs union â€" the future relationship between Ireland and Northern Ireland was always going to present a challenge.

How could the open border remain while Northern Ireland, as part of the U.K., exited the customs union?

• Unsurprisingly, the issue was put forward as the priority area from Europe along with resolving the issue of citizenâ €™s rights (those of EU citizens in Britain and vice-versa) and the so-called divorce bill.

- However, while progress has been made on the other issues, including Britain stepping up its offer of what it is willing to pay the bloc, the Irish question remains as intractable as ever, with the intensity of the debate heating up over the past month.
- Last week, Irish Taoiseach (or Prime Minister) Leo Varadkar issued a strong ultimatum to Britain, insisting that Ireland needed written assurances that there would be no hard border â€" including no physical infrastructure on the border â€" in Ireland before Brexit negotiations with the remaining 27 member states could move to the so-called second phase, when the crucial future shape of the trade relationship is to be discussed.
- Some sections of the British media have highlighted divisions within Europe, suggesting, for example, that German Chancellor Angela Merkel was pushing a tough line, and that the uncertainty over her political future could be to Britain's advantage.
- Europe, however, has maintained a remarkably unified line on Brexit, including on issues relating to individual nations.
- All signs point to this being the case on Ireland too, including comments by Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney who this week pointed out that Ireland would not have to exercise a veto to block a Brexit deal if its concerns about Brexit were not addressed, because other EU nations were committed to standing by it.

The way forward

- The ratcheting up of tensions over Ireland has overshadowed progress on other issues, particularly around Britainâ €™s divorce bill, on which this week significant process appeared to have been made following British concessions.
- While some have suggested that movement on those issues that once seemed intractable suggest that concerns about Ireland are being overblown, that argument misses a crucial difference â€" the huge political sensitivity around the Irish question.
- As one spokesperson for the Irish government highlighted this week, failure to resolve the issue could lead to a resurgence of violence, and warned that there was a true threat of paramilitary action should a controlled border be reinstated.
- The controversy comes amid yet further blows to Britain. Last week Australia, a country with which a free trade deal was touted as one aspect of the bright future that awaited Brexit Britain, expressed strong objections to plans to share quotas for low-tariff food imports currently imposed by the EU between Britain and the EU.
- This would disadvantage the country by placing greater restrictions on what could be exported.
- India too has been stepping up on the importance it places on the freer movement of professionals in any negotiations on a future trading agreement, a highly political sensitive issue in Britain.
- The issues highlight one of the problems at the heart of Brexit: while the Leave side has from the outset sought to position the process as a U.K.-centric one of taking back control, it has proved anything but that with the collective and individual concerns of other member-states taking centrestage.

Category:Â ECONOMY

1. IRFC to raise \$500 million via bond sale

- The Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC) has hit the international debt market with a \$500 million bond sale as part of its fund raising plans.
- The IRFC is in the dollar bond market with a benchmark issue, planning to raise about \$500 million.

2. Govt. may meld Make in India with Invest India, says Prabhu

- The Centre is mulling a new approach that institutionalises the combined strengths of its †Make In India†(MII) and †Invest India†initiatives with an aim to streamline them for attracting more investments, including from overseas, in the manufacturing sector.
- The MII was unveiled in September 2014 to "transform India into a global design and manufacturing hub†while â€~Invest India' is the government's investment promotion and facilitation agency.
- The government was also trying to improve the Start-up India policy by studying why only 74 start-ups had qualified for tax benefits since the policy was unveiled in January 2016.

Category:Â SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. Electric cars and us

- Over the next 15 years, however, Indian driving is likely to be disrupted by electric vehicles that the Indian government seems keen on introducing, without transitioning to hybrids.
- Far less polluting and carbon-emitting, the electric car, however, poses a challenge to Indian driving practices. The motor is much quieter than the engine and the transmission system has fewer parts too.

Electric mobility

- Another crucial, efficiency-boosting attribute of the electric car will be regenerative braking. The electric motor powering the car can reverse its role, becoming a generator and charging the battery.
- The generator load is the resistance that provides braking torque and it can be varied if you want to just bring down the speed, not stop the car altogether.
- Electric cars present a unique opportunity for Indian drivers. Instead of tamping down the technology, we can instead change our habits â€" be mindful of lanes, wait our turn, be polite and respectful of others and their needs, and make our driving smoother, as well as make best use of regenerative braking.

Category:Â ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. Even low air pollution levels can up asthma risk: study

• Air pollution can increase the risk of asthma in adults, even at low levels, a study has warned.

- Researchers found that Australians aged 45-50 who lived less than 200 metres from a major road had a 50 per cent higher risk of asthma, wheeze and lower lung function over a five-year period than those who lived more than 200 metres from a major road.
- They noted that the increase in these health issues was despite <u>Australia's relatively low safe nitrogen dioxide</u> (NO2) limit of 30 parts per billion per year. Australia has relatively low air pollution levels compared with developing South East Asian countries.
- However, the study found that even these are associated with increased risk of asthma and poor lung function in adults. Governments need to investigate ways of reducing emissions on these roads, particularly trucks using diesel.
- Diesel is much more harmful than petrol because of the composition of the fuel. When it burns, diesel produces more pollutants.
- The study found the rapidly increasing prevalence of asthma after the second half of the 20th century strongly suggested environmental exposures played a major role.
- In particular, the role of traffic-related air pollution (TRAP) exposures in exacerbating or causing asthma has attracted substantial interest.

Nothing here for Today!!!

Nothing here for Today!!!

F. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

G. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

GS Paper II

• Net Neutrality is important in the current era of digital world. Explain the constitutional dimensions of Net neutrality.

GS Paper III