

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. [GS1 Related](#)

B. [GS2 Related](#)

POLITY

1. [More seats for Sikkim Assembly](#)
2. [BC panel Bill to return to House](#)
3. [Union Ministers hold meeting on "triple talaq"](#)

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS/BILATERAL RELATIONS

1. [Right to access Internet non-negotiable: India](#)
2. [India to help Mauritius on digital locker](#)
3. [Rohingya repatriation deal signed](#)
4. [The new bipolarity in Asia](#)

C. [GS3 Related](#)

ECONOMY

1. [President signs bankruptcy ordinance](#)

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. [Particle accelerator for art revs up](#)

CYBER SECURITY

1. [Unite to fight dark forces in digital space: PM](#)

ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE AND ECOLOGY

1. [Bamboo ceases to be a tree, freed of Forest Act](#)

INTERNAL SECURITY AND DEFENSE RELATED DEVELOPMENTS

1. ["BrahMos increases strike range"](#)

D. [GS4 Related](#)

E. [Prelims Fact](#)

F. [UPSC Prelims Practice Questions](#)

G. [UPSC Mains Practice Questions](#)

Nothing here for Today!!!

Category: **POLITY**

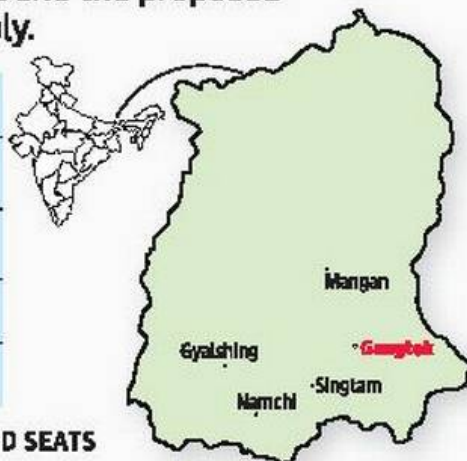
1. [More seats for Sikkim Assembly](#)

In news:

Wider representation

The number of seats in Sikkim assembly is set to increase from 32 to 40. A look at the present and the proposed composition of Sikkim Assembly.

	PRESENT SEATS	PROPOSED SEATS
Bhutia-Lepchas	12	12
Limboo-Tamang	0	5
Sangha	1	1
Scheduled Castes	2	2
Other communities	17	20



- The Home Ministry has proposed an increase in the number of seats in the Sikkim Assembly from 32 to 40. The

- expansion will be the first since the State merged with India in 1975.
- The seats are being increased to accommodate people from the **Limboo and Tamang communities**, notified as the **Scheduled Tribes** in Sikkim in January 2003.

Various provisions:

- As per constitutional provisions, the total number of seats for STs should be in proportion to the population.
- As per the Delimitation Act, 2002, the number of seats in an Assembly of any State can only be readjusted on the basis of the first census conducted after 2026.
- The final order made by the Delimitation Commission could not have been challenged by any court but the special constitutional provision to Sikkim allows them to make the changes.

2. [BC panel Bill to return to House](#)

In news:

- The Union government will reintroduce **the Constitution (123rd) Amendment Bill, 2017**, in the winter session of Parliament, which seeks to accord constitutional status to the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC).
- The decision comes after Opposition members in the Rajya Sabha managed to clear amendments to the Bill, making that version different from the one cleared by the Lok Sabha in the monsoon session.
- The President may specify the socially and educationally backward classes in the various States and Union Territories, in consultation with the Governors, and a law of Parliament will be required for amending the list of backward classes.
- Key Fact:** The NCBC, a statutory body created in 1993, was given limited powers: to recommend inclusion in or exclusion of a community from the Central list.

Grievance redressal

- The power to hear complaints of the OBCs and protect their interests remained with the National Commission for Scheduled Castes.
- Since the National Commission for Scheduled Castes deals with the grievances and safeguards of the SCs as well as the OBCs, it has limited capacity to address the needs of the OBCs.

3. [Union Ministers hold meeting on triple talaq](#)

In news:

- A group of Union Ministers including Home Minister discussed at length a draft law to put an end to instantaneous triple talaq, a Muslim way of divorce, which is said to be still in practice despite the Supreme Court striking it down.
- The Centre is planning to bring the legislation in the winter session.
- The Ministers also discussed whether a new legislation should be brought or the existing penal provisions be suitably amended to make it an offence.
- According to the law, a victim of triple talaq-e-biddat or instant triple talaq, would have no option but to approach the police for redressal of her grievances, as a Muslim clergy would be of no assistance to her.
- Even the police were helpless as no action could be taken against the husband in the absence of punitive provisions.

Category: INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS/BILATERAL RELATIONS

1. [Right to access Internet non-negotiable: India](#)

- Union Minister for Electronics and IT Ravi Shankar Prasad said that the right to access the Internet is non-negotiable and no single entity can have a monopoly over this.
- Prasad's comments follow the U.S. proposal to roll back earlier rules related to open internet, clearing the way for service providers to charge users differently based on content or restrict access to some content.

2. [India to help Mauritius on digital locker](#)

In news:

- The Government of India will assist Mauritius to develop and set up digital locker services.
- The government will offer technical support and advisory services to Mauritius. The decision was taken during a bilateral meeting during the conference.
- Besides, in similar separate meetings with Iran and Denmark, it had been decided to collaborate on issues related to IT.

3. [Rohingya repatriation deal signed](#)

Memorandum of Understanding:

- Bangladesh and Myanmar have signed a memorandum of understanding on the return of Rohingya people who fled the Rakhine state in the wake of a military crackdown.
- At least 600,000 Rohingya people have fled Myanmar to the neighbouring Bangladesh since the army started an operation in August following an attack by Rohingya militants.

Rohingya crisis:

- The stateless Rohingya have been the target of communal violence and vicious anti-Muslim sentiment in mainly Buddhist Myanmar for years.

- They have also been systematically oppressed by the government, which stripped the minority of citizenship and severely restricts their movement, as well as their access to basic services.

4. [The new bipolarity in Asia](#)

New bipolarity in Asia:

- S. President Donald Trump makes no secret of the fact that he believes in a world governed by self-interest, with little room for shared responsibility
- In contrast, Chinese President Xi Jinping is projecting himself as a firm believer in globalisation and free trade
- It is against this backdrop that there are signs of a new bipolarity taking shape in Asia
- It possibly seeks to replace similar attempts by the U.S. previously “such as the pivot to Asia” to counter China and its aggressive designs in the region
- Implicitly, though not as yet explicitly, it seeks to create a coalition of all those willing to align with the U.S. against China’s expanding ambitions and its inexorable march towards dominance in Asia

Anti-China:

- Talks held recently at the level of officials between the U.S., Japan, Australia and India (the Quadrilateral) are seen as an indication of this
- As China’s expansionist attitudes intensify, more countries in East and Southeast Asia are expected to align with the Quadrilateral group of countries
- Vietnam could be one such country, but quite a few other countries in the region could follow suit

Attitudinal changes

- The recent Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meetings provided a further glimpse of attitudinal changes that are in the making
- Trump and PM Modi made use of this occasion to announce that the two countries were prepared to work together for the future of Asia
- It is a euphemism for what many see as keeping a check on China’s aggressive designs in the region
- It is, perhaps, for the first time that India has indicated a resolve to align openly with the U.S. to tackle broader issues in the Indo-Pacific region

China’s acceptance:

- The recent 19th Chinese Communist Party Congress placed special emphasis on a strong military “capable of winning wars”
- The deliberations left little room for any adjustment or compromise to accommodate the concerns of other countries of Asia, or for that matter the U.S.
- The deliberations of the Party Congress have further emboldened China to pursue its preferred course of action

Advantage that China possesses

- Apart from its massive military build-up, China is positioned most advantageously as far as economic aspects are concerned
- It is today the most important trading partner for over 90 countries
- Its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has caught the imagination of the world, including that of Europe
- Most countries of Asia and Europe, including many of India’s neighbours, do not seem to have a problem with the BRI

Sustaining bipolarity not going to be easy

- Latent concerns about Chinese expansionism have not prevented several Asian nations from endorsing and backing the BRI
- Most Asian nations also show no inclination or desire to blame China for siding with Pakistan, which continues to shelter high-ranking global terrorists, including Jaish-e-Mohammed chief Masood Azhar
- Even Mr. Trump, during his recent visit to China, seemed to have softened his criticism of China, after China produced some attractive mega deals
- All this only exposes the vulnerabilities of bipolarity in the extant situation today

India emerging as a leader

- In Asia, India, Japan and, to an extent, Vietnam appear willing to endorse the U.S. initiative to build up opposition to China’s designs
- India has lately taken up issues well beyond South Asia, such as North Korea and China’s actions in the South China Sea
- Currently, India is emerging as one of the countries in the region firmly committed to freedom of navigation and over-flight
- Also, for unimpeded commerce based on the principles of international law, particularly the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea
- This puts it in direct confrontation with China, as also in opposing China’s ambitions in the Indian Ocean and the Indo-Pacific

Way Forward

- As the outlines of a new bipolarity in Asia become clearer, and with the formal setting up of the Quadrilateral, China is certain to regard all this as an attempt to encircle it
- This will pave the way for a new round of turmoil as China might use both force and inducements to win more and

- more Asian countries to its side
- The consequences of this could be quite significant for peace and stability in the Asian region

Category: ECONOMY

1. [President signs bankruptcy ordinance](#)

In news:

- President Ram Nath Kovind gave his assent to the ordinance approved by the Union Cabinet to amend the **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC)** to strengthen the regime.
- The ordinance aims at putting in place safeguards by prohibiting wilful defaulters, those associated with non-performing assets (NPAs), and the habitually non-compliant, from regaining control of the defaulting company or stressed assets through the back door in the garb of being a "resolution applicant".
- The amendments also provide for fine ranging from Rs. 1 lakh to Rs. 2 crore for those violating these norms.
- The ordinance aims at putting in place safeguards to prevent unscrupulous, undesirable persons from misusing the IBC.
- The amendment also provides such check by specifying that the Committee of Creditors (CoC) should ensure the viability and feasibility of the resolution plan before approving it.

Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. [Particle accelerator for art revs up](#)

In news:

- The world's only particle accelerator dedicated to art was switched on at the Louvre in Paris
- It will help experts analyse ancient and precious works

Key Fact:

- The 37-metre AGLAE accelerator housed underneath the huge Paris museum will be now be used for the first time to routinely study and help authenticate paintings and other items made from organic materials
- It can determine the chemical make-up of objects without the need to take samples
- The AGLAE works by speeding up helium and hydrogen nuclei to speeds of between 20,000 to 30,000 km per second and then bombarding the object, which emits radiation that can be captured and analysed

Objects being tested

- Among the first objects to be tested by the newly configured accelerator were Roman votive statues of the household gods
- They were uncovered from the ancient forum of Bavay close to the border with Belgium

Category: CYBER SECURITY

1. [Unite to fight dark forces in digital space: PM](#)

In news:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for sharing of information and coordination among nations to ensure that "digital space does not become a playground for the dark forces of terrorism and radicalisation".
- Speaking at the Global Conference on Cyber Space (GCCS), attended by delegates from 131 countries, Mr. Modi pitched for creating "cyberwarriors" to keep the digital space safe.
- Modi said: "Cyberwarriors who will remain on the alert against cyberattacks. We need to ensure that cyberprotection becomes an attractive and viable career option for the youth."
- Modi launched the Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance (UMANG) mobile app.

Category: ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE AND ECOLOGY

1. [Bamboo ceases to be a tree, freed of Forest Act](#)

In news:

- After 90 years, the bamboo has legally ceased to be a tree with the government, amending the **Indian Forest Act** and axing the bamboo "taxonomically a grass" from a list of plants that also included palms, skumps, brush-wood and canes.
- Importance:**
 - In doing so, the government hoped to promote cultivation of bamboo in non-forest areas to achieve the "twin objectives" of increasing the income of farmers and also increasing the green cover of the country.
 - This will now create a viable option for cultivation in 12.6 million hectares of cultivable waste land.
 - It will encourage farmers and other individuals to take up plantation/block plantation of suitable bamboo species on degraded land, in addition to plantation on agricultural land and other private lands under the agro-forestry mission
- Bamboo grown in the forest areas would continue to be governed by the provisions of the Indian Forest Act.
- For several years now, the classification of the bamboo "with its multifarious uses as an edible item, furniture and construction" as a tree meant that it couldn't be easily ferried across State borders. It also required permits from village councils and couldn't be cultivated in non-forest areas.

Key Fact:

- The current demand of bamboo in India is estimated at 28 million tonnes.
- Country has 19% share of the world's area under bamboo cultivation, its market share in the sector is only 6%.
- At present, it imports timber and allied products, such as pulp, paper, and furniture.
- In 2015, it imported about 18.01 million cubic metres of timber and allied products worth Rs.43,000 crore.

Category: INTERNAL SECURITY AND DEFENSE RELATED DEVELOPMENTS

1. [BrahMos increases strike range](#)

In news:

- The successful test of the **air-launched BrahMos** cruise missile greatly enhances India's strike range not just on the borders but across the Indian Ocean.

Effectiveness:

- China is increasing its presence in the Indian Ocean to safeguard its critical energy lanes.
- If fired [BrahMos] from Andaman and Nicobar islands, the whole of Malacca Straits gets within striking range.
- With BrahMos now on Su-30MKIs even Gwadar gets compromised. It gives striking range.

Nothing here for Today!!!

Nothing here for Today!!!

F. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

Which of the statement/s given above is/are CORRECT?

1. 1 only
2. 2 and 4 only
3. 3 and 2 only
4. 1, 2, 3 and 4

Which of the statement/s given above is/are INCORRECT?

1. 1 only
2. 2 only
3. Both 1 and 2
4. None of the above

1. 1,2,3,4,5
2. 1,3,4,5,6
3. 2,3,4,5,6
4. 1,2,3,5,6

Which of the statement/s given above is/are INCORRECT?

1. 1 only
2. 3 only
3. 1 and 3
4. 2 and 3

G. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

GS Paper III

- "Digital space should not become a playground for the dark forces of terrorism and radicalization" Comment. (250 words)

GS Paper IV