



International Religious Freedom Report 2022

For Prelims: USCIRF, International Religious Freedom Report 2022

For Mains: Effect of Policies & Politics of Countries on India's Interests , Religious Freedom in India and relation Issues

Why in News?

Recently, the [US Commission on International Religious Freedom \(USCIRF\)](#) has recommended for the **second year in the row to put India on a list (Countries of Particular Concern or CPCs)** for the worst violations of religious freedoms in 2021.

- Earlier, the US State Department released a [strong and critical report on human rights in India in 2021](#).

What is USCIRF?

- USCIRF is an **independent, bipartisan US federal government commission**, dedicated to defending the universal right to freedom of religion or belief abroad.
- It is an **advisory body to the US Congress**.
- USCIRF's 2022 Annual Report **provides recommendations to enhance the U.S. government's promotion** of freedom of religion or belief abroad.
- It is **Headquartered in Washington DC**.
- Established by the US government in 1998 after the inaction of the International Religious Freedom Act, **recommendations of USCIRF are non-binding on the state department**.
 - Traditionally, India does not recognize the view of USCIRF.

What are the Key Highlights of the Report?

- The Report's primary focus is on **two groups of countries**:
 - **Country of Particular Concern (CPC)**: It is a designation by the **US Secretary of State of a nation engaged in severe violations** of religious freedom under IRFA (**International Religious Freedom Act of 1998**).
 - **Special Watch List**: A "**Special Watch List**" country is one that is deemed not to meet all the CPC criteria but engages in or tolerates severe violations of [religious freedom](#).
- The Report also **includes USCIRF's recommendations of violent nonstate** actors for designation by the US State Department as **Entities of Particular Concern (EPCs), under International Review of Financial Analysis (IRFA)**.
- The report also **highlights important global developments and trends related to religious freedom** during 2021—including in countries that do not meet the criteria for CPC or SWL recommendations.
 - These include the [Covid-19 pandemic](#) and religious freedom, blasphemy and [hate speech law enforcement](#), transnational repression, religious intolerance in Europe,

deteriorating religious freedom conditions in South Asia, and political upheaval that raises religious freedom concerns.

What are the Latest Recommendations of USCIRF?

- **For the CPC List:**
 - Other than India, countries recommended for the CPC designation are **Afghanistan, Nigeria, Syria, and Vietnam.**
 - Countries recommended **for redesignating include Myanmar, China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea,** Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan as CPCs.
- **For A Special Watch List:**
 - Algeria, Cuba, and Nicaragua were **placed in 2021.**
 - **Others include** Azerbaijan, CAR, Egypt, Indonesia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Turkey, and Uzbekistan.
- **For EPCs:**
 - Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, the Houthis, Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP or ISIS-West Africa), and Jamaat Nasr al-Islam Wal Muslimin (JNIM).

What are the Concerns Raised about India?

- The report highlighted that the government had **“repressed critical voices”**, especially minority communities and individuals reporting on them.
 - It mentions the **arrest of rights activist Khuran Pervez in Kashmir**, and the July 2021 death of octogenarian Father Stan Swamy, arrested in October 2020 under the [Unlawful Activities Prevention Act 1967 \(UAPA\)](#).
- The report also touches on challenges faced by [Non Governmental Organisations \(NGOs\)](#), especially about foreign funding.
- It also highlights [anti-conversion laws](#). In October 2021, **Karnataka’s government ordered a survey of churches and priests** in the state and authorized police to conduct a door-to-door inspection to find Hindus who have converted to Christianity.

What is the State of Freedom of Religion in India?

- **Freedom of religion in India is a fundamental right** guaranteed by **Article 25-28** of the Constitution of India.
 - [Article 25](#) (Freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion).
 - [Article 26](#) (Freedom to manage religious affairs).
 - [Article 27](#) (Freedom as to payment of taxes for promotion of any religion).
 - [Article 28](#) (Freedom as to attendance at religious instruction or religious worship in certain educational institutions).
- Further, [Article 29 and 30 of the Constitution](#) deal with the protection of interests of minorities.

[Source: TH](#)

Military Spending of the Countries

For Prelims: Highlights of the Report

Why in News?

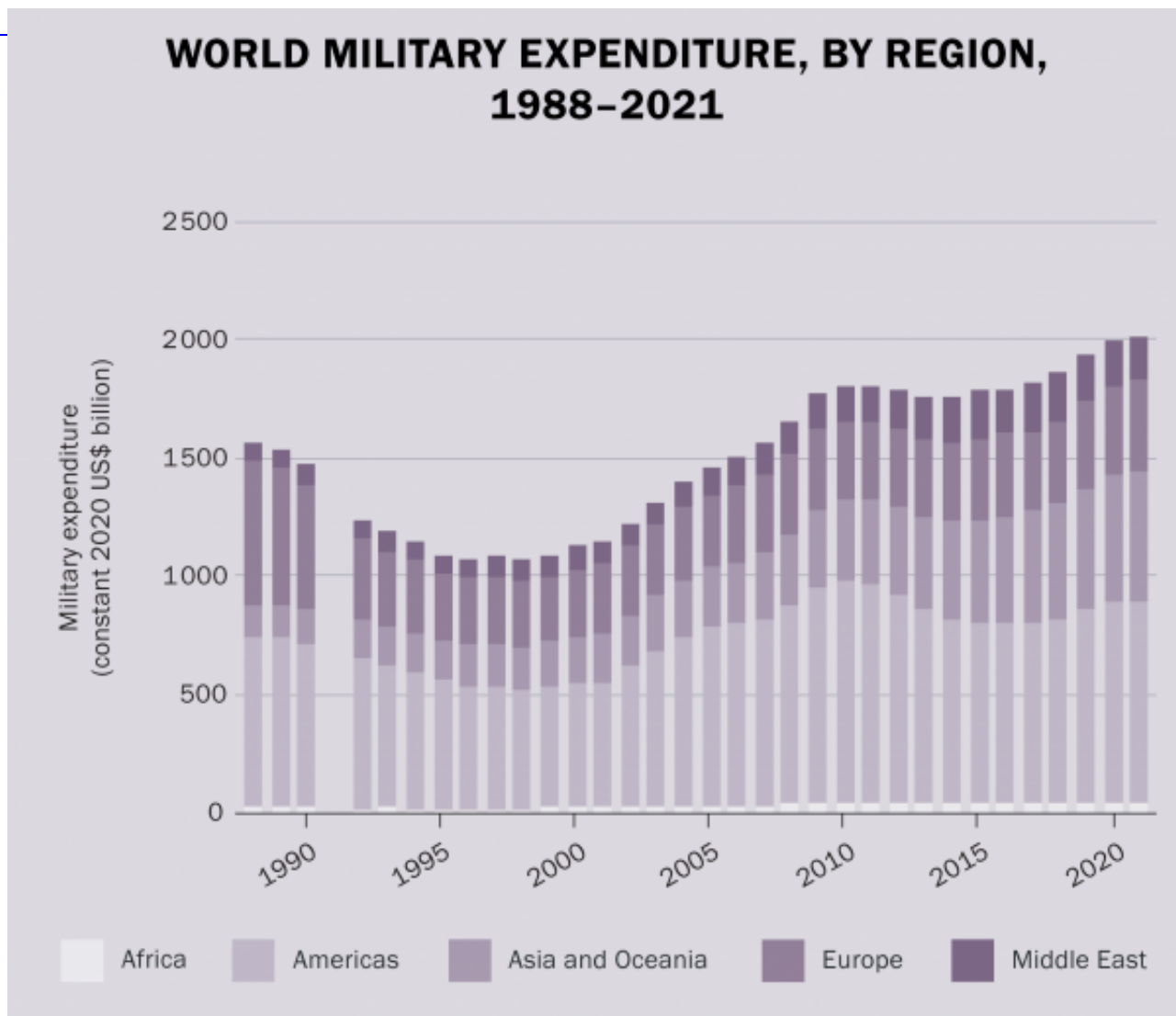
According to the latest data published by [Stockholm International Peace Research Institute \(SIPRI\)](#), world military spending continued to grow in 2021, reaching an all-time high of USD 2.1 trillion despite the economic fallout of the [pandemic](#).

- As a result of a sharp economic recovery in 2021, the global military burden—world military expenditure as a share of world [Gross Domestic Product \(GDP\)](#)—fell by 0.1 percentage points, from 2.3% in 2020 to 2.2% in 2021.

What is SIPRI?

- The SIPRI is an **independent international institute** dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament.
- It was **established in 1966 in Stockholm (Sweden)**

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What is the Scenario of the World?

- **Top Spenders:**
 - The **five largest spenders in 2021** were the US, China, India, the UK and Russia.
 - They accounted together for **62% of expenditure** and the **US and China alone accounted for 52%**.
- **Asia and Oceania:**
 - The military spending in **Asia and Oceania totaled USD586 billion in 2021**.
 - Spending in the region was **3.5% higher than in 2020**, continuing an uninterrupted upward trend **dating back to at least 1989**.
 - The increase in 2021 was **due primarily to growth in Chinese and Indian military spending**.
 - Together, **the two countries accounted for 63% of total military expenditure** in the region in 2021.
- **Increased Spending in Russia:**
 - Russia increased its **military expenditure by 2.9% in 2021**, to USD65.9 billion, at a time when it was building up its forces along the Ukrainian border.
- **NATO Members Spending:**
 - **Eight European [North Atlantic Treaty Organization \(NATO\)](#) members** reached the Alliance's target of spending 2% or more of GDP on their armed forces in 2021.
 - This is **one fewer than in 2020** but up from two in 2014.

What are the Highlights about India?

- India's military spending of **USD76.6 billion ranked third highest in the world**.
 - This was up by **0.9% from 2020 and by 33% from 2012**.
- Amid **ongoing tensions and [border disputes](#) with China and Pakistan** that occasionally spill over into armed clashes, India has **prioritized the modernization of its armed forces and self-reliance** in arms production.
- In a drive to strengthen the indigenous arms industry, **64% of capital outlays in the 2021 Indian military budget were earmarked** for acquisitions of domestically produced arms.

[Source: TH](#)

European Union Digital Services Act

For Prelims: European Parliament and European Union (EU), Digital Services Act (DSA), Russia-Ukraine conflict

For Mains: Digital Services Act, Cyber Security, IT & Computers

Why in the News?

Recently, the [European Parliament and European Union \(EU\) Member States](#) announced that they had reached a political agreement on the Digital Services Act (DSA), 2022.

- It is a landmark legislation to **force big Internet companies** to act against disinformation and illegal and harmful content, and to **“provide better protection for Internet users and their [fundamental rights](#)”**.

- The proposed Act seeks to end the **era of self-regulation by tech companies** and give ‘practical effect to the principle that **what is illegal offline, should be illegal online**’.
- In India, a bill ([Data Protection Bill 2019](#)) on similar issue is pending in [Parliament](#).

What is the DSA, and to whom will it Apply?

- **About:** As defined by the EU Commission, the DSA is **“a set of common rules on intermediaries’ obligations and accountability across the single market”**, and ensures **higher protection to all EU users**, irrespective of their country.
- **Objective:** The DSA will tightly regulate the way intermediaries, especially large platforms such as **Google, Facebook, and YouTube, function when it comes to moderating user content.**
- **Self Regulation Era is Over:** Instead of letting platforms decide **how to deal with abusive or illegal content**, the DSA will lay down specific rules and obligations for these companies to follow.
- **Applicability:** According to the EU, DSA will apply to a **“large category of online services, from simple websites to Internet infrastructure services and online platforms.”**
 - The obligations for each of these **will differ according to their size and role.**
 - The legislation brings in its ambit platforms that provide Internet access, domain name registrars, hosting services such as cloud computing and web-hosting services.
 - However, more importantly, **Very Large Online Platforms (VLOPs) and Very Large Online Search Engines (VLOSEs)** will face “more stringent requirements.”
 - For example, any service with more than **45 million monthly active users in the EU will fall into this category.**
 - Those with under 45 million monthly active users in the EU will be exempt from certain new obligations.
- **Implementation:** Once the DSA becomes law, each EU Member State will have the primary role in enforcing these, along with a new **“European Board for Digital Services.”**
 - The EU Commission will carry out **“enhanced supervision and enforcement”** for the VLOPs and VLOSEs.
 - Penalties for breaching these rules could be huge — as **high as 6% of the company’s global annual turnover.**

What do the new Rules State?

- **New Procedures for Faster Removal:** Online platforms and intermediaries such as Facebook, Google, YouTube, etc. will have to add **“new procedures for faster removal”** of content deemed illegal or harmful.
- **Impose a Duty of Care:** Marketplaces such as Amazon will have to **“impose a duty of care”** on sellers who are using their platform to sell products online.
 - They will have to **collect and display information** on the products and services sold in order to ensure that consumers are properly informed.
- **Auditing Mechanism:** The DSA adds **“an obligation for very large digital platforms and services to analyze systemic risks they create and to carry out risk reduction analysis”**.
 - This audit for platforms like Google and Facebook will need to take place every year.
- **Independent Researchers:** The Act proposes allowing **independent vetted researchers** to have access to public data from these platforms to carry out studies to understand these risks better.
- **Ban Misleading Interfaces:** The DSA proposes to ban **‘Dark Patterns’ or “misleading interfaces”** that are designed to trick users into doing something that they would not agree to otherwise.
- **Crisis Mechanism:** The DSA incorporates a new crisis mechanism clause — it refers to the [Russia-Ukraine conflict](#) — which will be “activated by the Commission on the recommendation of the board of **national Digital Services Coordinators**”.
 - However, these special measures will only be in place for three months.
- **Transparency Measures:** It also proposes “transparency measures for online platforms on a variety of issues, including on the algorithms used for recommending content or products to users”.

[Source: IE](#)

UK Prime Minister Visit to India

For Prelims: Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative, India-UK FTA

For Mains: India's relations with the UK, Indo-UK Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2021, 2030 Roadmap for India-UK Relations

Why in News?

Recently, the **UK Prime Minister (PM) visited India**. In this visit, both the countries agreed on a joint statement titled 'Towards shared security and prosperity through national resilience'.



What are the Highlights of the Visit?

- **Respecting India-Russia Relations:** In the context of [Ukraine Crisis](#) and India's neutral stance, UK PM asserted that India's position on Russia is 'well known' and is not going to change.
 - India has historic relationship with Russian and everybody respects it.
- **Cooperation on Indo-Pacific:** The two countries had a shared interest in keeping the Indo-Pacific region free and open, particularly in the face of growing threats of Chinese coercion in [South China Sea](#).
 - Recently, the UK and India have agreed to strengthen their cooperation in the maritime domain as the **UK will join [India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative](#)** and become a major partner on maritime security issues in Southeast Asia.
 - India's **Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) is an open, non-treaty-based initiative** for countries to work together for cooperative and collaborative solutions to common challenges in the region.
- **Tackling Extremism:** They agreed to constitute a sub-group on [countering extremism](#) to further enhance cooperation between India and the UK in ensuring that all possible actions are taken against groups and individuals based in or operating out of either country.
- **Extraditing Economic Fugitives:** India conveyed to the UK, that bringing back [economic fugitives](#) to face justice was a "high priority" for the government.
 - Britain responded that it is concerned about this and doesn't welcome people who want to

use its legal system to evade the Indian laws.

- **Discussion on FTA:** Both leaders committed that [Free Trade Agreements](#) negotiations will conclude by the end of 2022.
- **Defence Cooperation:** They discussed the next generation of defence and security collaborations across five domains — land, sea, air, space and cyber.

What are the Recent Developments on India's Relations with the UK?

- Despite the challenge posed by the [Ukraine crisis](#), the India-UK relationship has been on an **upward trajectory**, exemplified by the conclusion of a [Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2021](#).
 - The agreement also established a [2030 Roadmap for India-UK relations](#), which primarily outlines the partnership plans for the bilateral relationship.
- Additionally, In January 2022, India and the UK managed to **conclude the first round of talks for an India-UK Free Trade Agreement**.
 - The negotiations reflected shared ambitions to secure a comprehensive deal between the **fifth (UK) and sixth (India) largest economies in the world** as technical experts from both sides covered over 32 sessions encompassing 26 policy areas.

Way Forward

- A **post-Brexit Britain** needs to make the best of its historic ties; having walked out of Europe, the country needs all the partners it can find and a **rising India is naturally among the top political and economic priorities**.
- Britain remains the fifth-largest economy, a **permanent member of the UN Security Council**, a **global financial hub**, a center of [technological innovation](#), and a leading cyber power.
 - It has a significant international military presence and wide-ranging political influence.
 - India should try harder to **leverage these British strengths for India's strategic benefit**.

[Source: IE](#)

Olga Tellis Case 1985

For Prelims: Supreme Court, Olga Tellis vs Bombay Municipal Corporation, in 1985 case, Right to Life of Pavement Dwellers, Prior Approval for Anti-Encroachment

For Mains: Right to Life, Judgments & Cases, Judiciary

Why in News?

Recently, the Constitution Bench judgment of the [Supreme Court in Olga Tellis vs Bombay Municipal Corporation, in 1985 case](#), held that pavement dwellers are different from trespassers may become a game-changer in the [Jahangirpuri \(Delhi\) case](#).

What were the Questions Discussed before the Supreme Court?

- **About the Issue:** The case started in **1981 when the State of Maharashtra and the Bombay Municipal Corporation** decided that **pavement and slum dwellers in Bombay city should be evicted** and **“deported to their respective places of origin** or places outside the city of

Bombay.”

- **Question on Right to Life of Pavement Dwellers:** One of the main questions was whether eviction of a pavement dweller would amount to depriving him/her of their livelihood guaranteed under [Article 21 of the Constitution](#).
 - Article 21 mandates that **“no person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law”**.
 - Approximately, there are **20 million pavement dwellers** in India.
- **Question of Prior Approval for Anti-Encroachment:** The Constitution Bench was also asked to determine if provisions in the **Bombay Municipal Corporation Act, 1888**, allowing the removal of encroachments without prior notice, were arbitrary and unreasonable.
- **Question on Trespassing:** The Supreme Court also decided to examine the question of whether it was **constitutionally impermissible** to characterize pavement dwellers as trespassers.

What was the Supreme Court's Judgement in Olga Tellis vs Bombay Municipal Corporation, 1985 Case?

- The ***Olga Tellis vs Bombay Municipal Corporation judgment in 1985*** ruled that eviction of pavement dwellers using unreasonable force, without giving them a chance to explain is **unconstitutional**.
 - It is a **violation of their [right to livelihood](#)**.
- The court had emphatically **objected to authorities treating pavement dwellers as mere trespassers**.
 - “They (pavement dwellers) manage to find a habitat in places which are mostly filthy or marshy, out of sheer helplessness.

What was the State Government's Defense?

- **Question of Estoppel:** The State government and the corporation countered that pavement dwellers should be estopped.
 - **Estoppel** is a judicial device **whereby a court may prevent or “estop” a person from making assertions**.
 - Estoppel may **prevent someone from bringing a particular claim** contending that the shacks constructed by them on the pavements cannot be demolished because of their right to livelihood.
- **Public's Right of Way:** They cannot claim any [fundamental right](#) to encroach and put-up huts on pavements or public roads over which the **public has a ‘right of way.’**

What did the Supreme Court rule Presently?

- **On Estoppel:** The court rejected the government's argument of Estoppel, saying **“there can be no Estoppel against the Constitution.”**
 - The court held that the right to life of pavement dwellers was at stake here.
- **On Right to Livelihood:** The **right to livelihood was an “integral component” of the right to life**.
 - If the right to livelihood is not treated as a part of the constitutional right to live, the **easiest way of depriving a person of his right to life would be to deprive him of his means of livelihood** to the point of abrogation.
- **On Prior Notice:** On the second question whether provisions in law allowing statutory authorities to remove encroachments **without prior notice was arbitrary**.
 - Such powers are designed **to operate as an “exception” and not the “general rule.”**
 - The procedure of eviction should lean **in Favour of procedural safeguards which follow the natural principles of justice** like giving the other side an opportunity to be heard.
 - The right to be heard gives affected persons an opportunity to participate in the **decision-making process** and also provides them with a **chance to express themselves with dignity**.
- **On Trespassing:** Finally, the court emphatically **objected to authorities treating pavement dwellers as mere trespassers**.

- The apex court ruled that pavement dwellers live on **“filthy footpaths out of sheer helplessness”** and not with the object of **offending, insulting, intimidating or annoying anyone.**
- They live and earn on footpaths because they have **“small jobs to nurse in the city and there is nowhere else to live.”**

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Q. Which Article of the Constitution of India safeguards one’s right to marry the person of one’s choice? (2019)

- (a) Article 19
- (b) Article 21
- (c) Article 25
- (d) Article 29

Ans: (b)

Exp:

- The right to marry is a component of the right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution of India which states that “No person shall be deprived of his life and personal liberty except according to the procedure established by law”.

[Source: TH](#)

Gratuity For Anganwadi Workers

For Prelims: Anganwadi Workers, Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)

For Mains: Centrally Sponsored Scheme, Aadhaar, Government Policies & Interventions

Why in News?

Recently, the [Supreme Court](#) held that [anganwadi workers](#) were entitled to gratuity, a basic social security measure.

What was the Supreme Court's Judgement?

- The Court recognized their right to be paid gratuity under the [Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972](#).
- The court **underscored that it was time for the Centre and the States to “collectively consider” bettering the service conditions of anganwadi workers** and helpers.
- It also said that the [Integrated Child Development Scheme \(ICDS\)](#) deserved far greater attention in public policy.
 - The scheme acts as an **“institutional mechanism for realization of child and women rights”**.
 - Yet these services are regarded as **State Charity rather than as enforceable**

entitlements.

- Thus, a relook into their **service conditions was necessary to ensure quality** in the delivery of services and community participation.

Who are Anganwadi Workers?

- Anganwadi is a **centrally sponsored scheme** implemented by the States / UTs which serves as a rural child and maternal care centre in India.
- It was **started by the Government of India in 1975** as part of the **ICDS** program to combat child hunger and malnutrition.
- Anganwadi centers provide a package of six services: **supplementary nutrition, pre-school non-formal education, immunization, health check-up, nutrition and health education, and referral services.**
- The beneficiaries under the **Anganwadi Services Scheme** are identified based on **Aadhaar**.

What is the Importance of Anganwadi Workers?

- The court held that anganwadi workers and helpers taking care of the **nutrition needs** of around **158 million children** who were considered the **“future resource of the country”**.
 - They perform a bouquet of vital services at the grassroots level and were often the bridge between the government and beneficiaries under the **National Food Security Act, 2013 and the ICDS**.
- **Anganwadi workers and helpers served in disadvantaged areas** and catered to the needs of underprivileged groups.
 - They formed the **backbone of the ICDS**.
- **Socialized childcare** contributes to the liberation of women.
 - It lightens the burden of looking after children, provides a potential source of remunerated employment for women and gives them an opportunity to build women’s organizations.

What is Gratuity?

- Gratuity is a benefit that is payable under the **Payment of Gratuity Act 1972**.
- Gratuity is a **financial component** offered by an employer to an employee in recognition of his/her service rendered to an organization.
 - It is a part of the **salary an employee** receives and can be viewed as a benefit plan designed to aid an individual in his/her retirement.
- Gratuity is paid by an employer when an employee leaves the job after serving the same organization for a **minimum period of 5 years**.
 - One can consider it to be a **financial “Thank you”** to an employee for rendering continuous service to an employer.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Q. With reference to the provisions made under the National Food Security Act, 2013, consider the following statements: (2018)

1. The families coming under the category of ‘below poverty line (BPL)’ only are eligible to receive subsidized food grains.
2. The eldest woman in a household, of age 18 years or above, shall be the head of the household for the purpose of issuance of a ration card.
3. Pregnant women and lactating mothers are entitled to a ‘take-home ration’ of 1600 calories per day during pregnancy and for six months thereafter.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only

(d) 3 only

Ans: (b)

Explanation:

- The issue of food security has been addressed by the Government through the Public Distribution System and the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS).
- The National Food Security Act (NFSA) enacted on 5th July 5, 2013 marked a shift in the approach to food security from welfare to rights-based approach.

[Source: TH](#)

World Malaria Day 2022

For Prelims: World Malaria Day, Efforts to Control Malaria

For Mains: Health, Malaria and its Eradication

Why in News?

[World Malaria Day](#) is observed on 25th April every year to spread awareness of the global effort to control and ultimately eradicate malaria.

- World Malaria Day was first held in 2008. It was **developed from Africa Malaria Day**, which was an event that had been observed since 2001 by African governments.
- The theme 2022 is "**Harness innovation to reduce the malaria disease burden and save lives.**"

What is Malaria?

- **About:**
 - [Malaria](#) is a life-threatening **mosquito borne blood disease caused by plasmodium parasites**. It is predominantly found in the **tropical and subtropical areas of Africa, South America as well as Asia**.
 - The parasites spread through the bites of infected female **Anopheles mosquitoes**.
 - After entering the human body, parasites initially multiply within the liver cells and then attack the Red Blood Cells (RBCs) resulting in their rupture.
 - There are 5 **parasite species that cause malaria in humans**, and 2 of these species – **Plasmodium falciparum and Plasmodium vivax** – pose the greatest threat.
 - **Symptoms** of malaria include fever and flu-like illness, including shaking chills, headache, muscle aches, and tiredness.
 - It is **preventable as well as curable**.
- **Malaria Vaccine:**
 - Known by its lab initials as **RTS, S but branded as Mosquirix, the vaccine has passed lengthy scientific trials that found it to be safe and reducing the risk of malaria by nearly 40%**, the best recorded.
 - It was developed by GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) company and approved by the **European**

Medicines Agency in 2015.

- The RTS, S vaccine **trains the immune system to attack the malaria parasite** (Plasmodium (P.) falciparum, the deadliest species of the malaria parasite).
- **India's Scenario:**
 - Malaria Burden: The [World Malaria Report \(WMR\) 2020](#) released by [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#), which gives the estimated cases for malaria across the world, indicates that India has made considerable progress in reducing its malaria burden.
 - India is the only high endemic country which has reported a decline of 17.6% in 2019 as compared to 2018.

What are the Initiatives to Curb Malaria?

- The **WHO** has also identified 25 countries with the potential to eradicate malaria by 2025 under its [‘E-2025 Initiative’](#).
- **In India, malaria elimination efforts were initiated in 2015** and were intensified after the launch of the National Framework for Malaria Elimination (NFME) in 2016 by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
 - NFME is in line with WHO’s Global Technical Strategy for Malaria, 2016-2030, which guides the WHO **Global Malaria Programme (GMP)**, responsible for coordinating WHO's global efforts to control and eliminate malaria.
- The [National Strategic Plan for Malaria Elimination \(2017-22\)](#) was launched in July 2017 which laid down strategies for the following five years.
 - It gives year-wise elimination targets in various parts of the country depending upon the endemicity of malaria.
- Implementation of the [High Burden to High Impact \(HBHI\) initiative](#) was started in four states (West Bengal, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh) in July 2019.
- [Distribution of Long Lasting Insecticidal Nets \(LLINs\)](#) to high burden areas has led to a reduction in endemicity in these otherwise very high endemic states.
- [The Indian Council of Medical Research \(ICMR\)](#) has established Malaria Elimination Research Alliance-India (MERA-India) which is a conglomeration of partners working on malaria control.

[Source: IE](#)

UGC Norms for Dual & Joint Degrees

Why in News?

Recently, the [University Grants Commission](#) has released **Academic Collaboration between Indian and Foreign Higher Education Institutions to offer Joint Degree, Dual Degree, and Twinning Programmes Regulations, 2022**.

- Under these regulations collaborating institutes will be allowed to offer three kinds of programmes — **twinning, joint degrees and dual degrees**.

What are the Key Points of the New Regulations?

- **Dual Degree Programmes:** The approved amendments include a provision for **“dual degree programmes”** — both the Indian and foreign institutions will give separate and simultaneous degrees for a course of the same discipline, and at the same level.

- **Easing Regulation:** Indian universities that meet a **minimum academic standard** will not need UGC's permission to offer such programmes.
- **Joint Degrees:** Students enrolling for these programmes will have to go **abroad to earn credits**, but they will not have to seek admission separately while doing so.
 - In the draft amendments, foreign partner institutions were required to be among the **world's top 1,000 in global rankings**.
- **Dual Degrees:** For dual degrees, students will have to **complete at least 30%** of their course credit at the foreign institution.
 - The degrees awarded by both the **Indian and foreign institutions** will indicate the credits earned at the respective institutions.
 - At the end of the course, the student will be **awarded two degrees**, separately and simultaneously, by the Indian and foreign institution.
- **Twinning Arrangement:** A student can study a programme partly in India and partly in a foreign university, but the diploma or degree will be awarded just by the Indian university.
 - Students will have to **complete up to 30% of the course's credits** at the foreign institution by means of an exchange programme.
- **Exception:** The new regulations are not applicable to programmes offered online and in the open and distance learning mode.
- **Significance:** The new regulation will prompt the Indian students to get a foreign degree and enhance their employability in international market.

What is University Grants Commission?

- It came into existence on **28th December, 1953** and became a **statutory body by an Act of Parliament in 1956**, for the coordination, determination and maintenance of standards of **teaching, examination and research in university education**.
- The head office of the **UGC is located in New Delhi**.

[Source: IE](#)