



# Yojna IAS

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## DECEMBER 2023

### WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

**YOJNA IAS WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS**

**11/12/2023 TO 17/12/2023**

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# CURRENT AFFAIRS

## DECEMBER 2023

### EU REACHES HISTORIC DEAL ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE REGULATION

*This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "EU Reaches Historic Deal on Artificial Intelligence Regulation". This topic has relevance in the Science and Technology section of the UPSC CSE exam.*

#### GS 3: Science and Technology

#### Why in the news?

Policymakers in the European Union have reached a preliminary agreement on groundbreaking regulations that will govern the utilization of artificial intelligence (AI).

#### Background:

On December 8, EU member states and lawmakers reached a landmark agreement on the formulation of rules governing artificial intelligence (AI), including models like ChatGPT. Despite the prolonged negotiations, these regulations are slated to come into effect no earlier than 2025, allowing for considerable technological advancements in the interim.

#### Key Highlights of the Artificial Intelligence Act:

- **Origins and Objectives:** Initially drafted in 2021, the Artificial Intelligence Act aims to introduce transparency, trust, and accountability to the realm of AI. It seeks to establish a comprehensive framework to address risks posed to safety, health, fundamental rights, and democratic values within the EU.
- **Two-Tier Approach:** The Act adopts a two-tier approach, featuring transparency requirements applicable to all general-purpose AI models, with more stringent provisions for high-powered models.
- **Database of High-Risk AI Systems:** The legislation proposes the creation of an EU-wide database cataloging high-risk AI systems. It also outlines parameters for the inclusion of future technolo-

gies in this database, provided they meet the defined high-risk criteria.

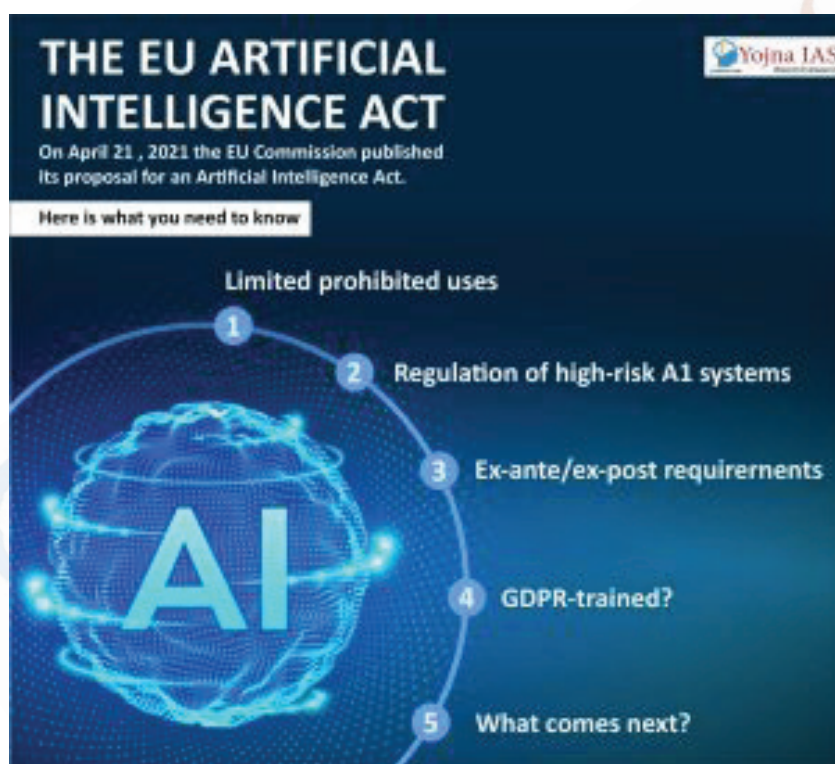
- **Balancing Act:** Striking a balance between promoting the adoption of AI and preventing potential harms associated with certain applications, the legislation reflects a nuanced approach.

Establishment of the EU AI Office:

- **Monitoring and Sanctions:** The Act empowers the EU to monitor and penalize violators through a newly established body, the EU AI Office, affiliated with the commission.
- **Enforcement Measures:** The EU AI Office holds the authority to impose fines amounting to seven percent of a company's turnover or 35 million euros—whichever is greater.

### Approval Process:

While a deal has been reached, formal approval from member states and the EU Parliament is still required to enforce the AI regulations.



Global Perspectives on Artificial Intelligence Regulation:

- **European Union's Progressive Approach:**
  - In May 2023, the European Parliament made strides toward a comprehensive regulatory framework with a preliminary agreement on the Artificial Intelligence Act. This ambitious legislation seeks to establish an EU-wide database for high-risk AI systems, with provisions allowing for the inclusion of future technologies meeting defined criteria.
- **United States: A Hands-Off Stance:**
  - The U.S., in contrast, currently lacks a comprehensive regulatory framework for AI and has ad-

opted a relatively hands-off approach to governance in this rapidly evolving technological landscape.

- China's Stringent Regulations:
  - China, in a departure from the U.S., has implemented some of the world's first nationally binding regulations for AI. Over the past year, it introduced laws specifically targeting certain types of algorithms, notably focusing on the regulation of recommendation algorithms and their impact on information dissemination.
- India's Evolving Position:
  - Initially adopting a stance of not considering specific laws for AI regulation, India has signaled a potential shift in perspective. Leading up to the G20 summit in September 2023, government officials hinted at the prospect of regulating AI. The upcoming Digital Personal Data Protection Bill 2022 is expected to extend its reach to AI developers, treating them as data fiduciaries responsible for the use of personal data.
- India's Role on the Global Stage:
  - Prime Minister Modi expressed India's commitment to a significant advancement in AI, emphasizing its potential to empower citizens. India, as a co-founder of the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI), will host the GPAI Summit 2023 in New Delhi from December 12-14. With 28 member countries and the EU, GPAI aims to guide the responsible development and usage of AI on the international stage. India's active involvement signals its dedication to contributing to the evolution of AI governance and technology.

SOURCE:

EU agrees landmark deal on regulation of AI (msn.com)

Q.1 With reference to the Artificial Intelligence Act of EU, consider the following statements:

1. The legislative proposal suggests establishing a pan-European database that compiles information on high-risk AI systems.
2. The Act features a two-tier approach, applying transparency requirements to all general-purpose AI models, with more stringent provisions for high-powered models.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

ANSWER: C

Q.2 Discuss the ethical dimensions and implications of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in contemporary society. Analyze the challenges posed by AI in areas such as privacy, bias, accountability, and job displacement. Examine the strategies and frameworks that can be implemented to address these ethical concerns and ensure responsible development and deployment of AI technologies.

## UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (UDHR)

*This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details " Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)". This topic has relevance in the Social Justice section of the UPSC CSE exam.*

### GS 2: Social Justice

#### Why in the news?

The 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was observed on December 10, 2023. The UDHR stands as a seminal document that safeguards human rights and fundamental freedoms for every individual.

#### Background:

In a historic moment on December 10, 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) gained approval from the UN General Assembly during a pivotal meeting in Paris. This landmark document served as a foundational element in shaping the post-World War II international order, responding to the atrocities of the war and seeking to establish a shared understanding of the fundamental rights and freedoms inherent to all individuals.

#### About:

The UDHR, a concise document comprising a preamble and 30 articles, delineates a comprehensive array of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. These rights, deemed universal, extend to all people, irrespective of nationality, ethnicity, gender, religion, or any other status. While not a legally binding treaty, the declaration has profoundly influenced the development of international human rights law, acting as a wellspring of inspiration.

#### Features:

- Preamble:
  - Sets forth the rationale behind the declaration, emphasizing the inherent dignity and equal, inalienable rights of all members of the human family.
- Articles:
  - Encompasses 30 articles articulating a broad spectrum of rights, including the right to life, liberty, and security, freedom of religion, expression, and assembly, the right to work and education, and the right to an adequate standard of living.

- Asserts equality before the law and the right to seek asylum from persecution in other countries.

**Achievements of UDHR:**

- Acknowledged for inspiring over 70 global and regional human rights treaties.
- Catalyst for the decolonization movement, anti-apartheid movement, and various freedom struggles worldwide, addressing issues such as gender, LGBTIQ+ rights, and racism.

**Current Situation:**

- Amidst challenges to human rights in conflicts such as Israel-Hamas, Russia’s war in Ukraine, and internal conflicts in Myanmar and Sudan.
- UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres notes instances of misuse and abuse of the declaration for political gain but emphasizes its continued relevance.
- Amnesty International asserts that despite being ignored or exploited, the UDHR remains a testament to the possibility and realization of a global vision for human rights.

**Conclusion:**

The 75th anniversary of the UDHR underscores its enduring significance, with the document continuing to shape discussions on human rights globally. While challenges persist, its successes and failures serve as lessons for the world to honor its principles and strive for a more just and equitable future.

**THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS**  
 Adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1948, the Universal Declaration states fundamental rights and freedoms to which all human beings are entitled.

- We are all born free and equal.
- Everyone is entitled to these rights no matter your race, religion, sex, language, or nationality.
- Everyone has the right to life, freedom, and safety.

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You have the responsibility to respect the rights of others.  
 No one can take away any of your rights.

No one has the right to hold you in slavery.	You have the right to seek asylum in another country if you are persecuted in your own.	Every adult has the right to a job, a fair wage, and membership in a trade union.
No one has the right to torture you.	Everyone has the right to a nationality.	You have the right to leisure and rest from work.
You have a right to be recognized everywhere as a person before the law.	All consenting adults have the right to marry and to raise a family.	Everyone has the right to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their family.
We are all equal before the law and are entitled to equal protection of the law.	You have the right to own property.	Everyone has the right to an education.
You have the right to seek legal help if your rights are violated.	Everyone has the right to belong to a religion.	Everyone has the right to freely participate in the culture and scientific advancement of their community, and their intellectual property as artist or scientist should be protected.
No one has the right to wrongly imprison you or force you to leave your country.	You have the right to think, and voice your opinions freely.	We are all entitled to a social order in which we may enjoy these rights.
You have a right to a fair, public trial.	Everyone has the right to gather as a peaceful assembly.	Everyone's rights and freedoms should be protected unless they obstruct the rights and freedoms of others.
Everyone is innocent until proven guilty.	You have the right to participate in the governance of your country, either directly or by helping to choose representatives in free and genuine elections.	No State, group, or person can use this Declaration to deny the rights and freedoms of others.
You have the right to privacy. No one can interfere with your reputation, family, home, or correspondence.	You have the right to social security and are entitled to economic, social, and cultural help from your government.	
You have the right to travel.		

SOURCE:

Human Rights Day 2023 Theme and Overview | Viral News, Times Now (timesnownews.com)

Q.1 With reference to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), consider the following statements:

1. It was signed in the preceding year of world war II.
2. Right to seek asylum is one of the rights under UDHR.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

ANSWER: B

Q.2 Discuss the enduring significance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) 75 years since its adoption. Analyze its impact on shaping the global discourse on human rights, addressing challenges, and influencing international relations.

## GLOBAL RIVER CITIES ALLIANCE (GRCA)

*This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Global River Cities Alliance (GRCA)". This topic has relevance in the Environment section of the UPSC CSE exam.*

### GS 3: Environment

#### Why in the news?

The Global River Cities Alliance (GRCA) has been initiated by the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), the implementing body for the government's flagship Namami Gange program.

The Global River Cities Alliance (GRCA) is a collaborative initiative modeled after India's River Cities Alliance, established by the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) under the Ministry of Jal Shakti and the National Institute of Urban Affairs under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs in November 2021.

#### Participating Nations and Support:

- Nine nations are part of the GRCA, including India, Denmark, Cambodia, Japan, Bhutan, Australia, Netherlands, Egypt, and Ghana.
- Multilateral funding agencies such as the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank have pledged their support for the initiative.



### Focus Area of Work:

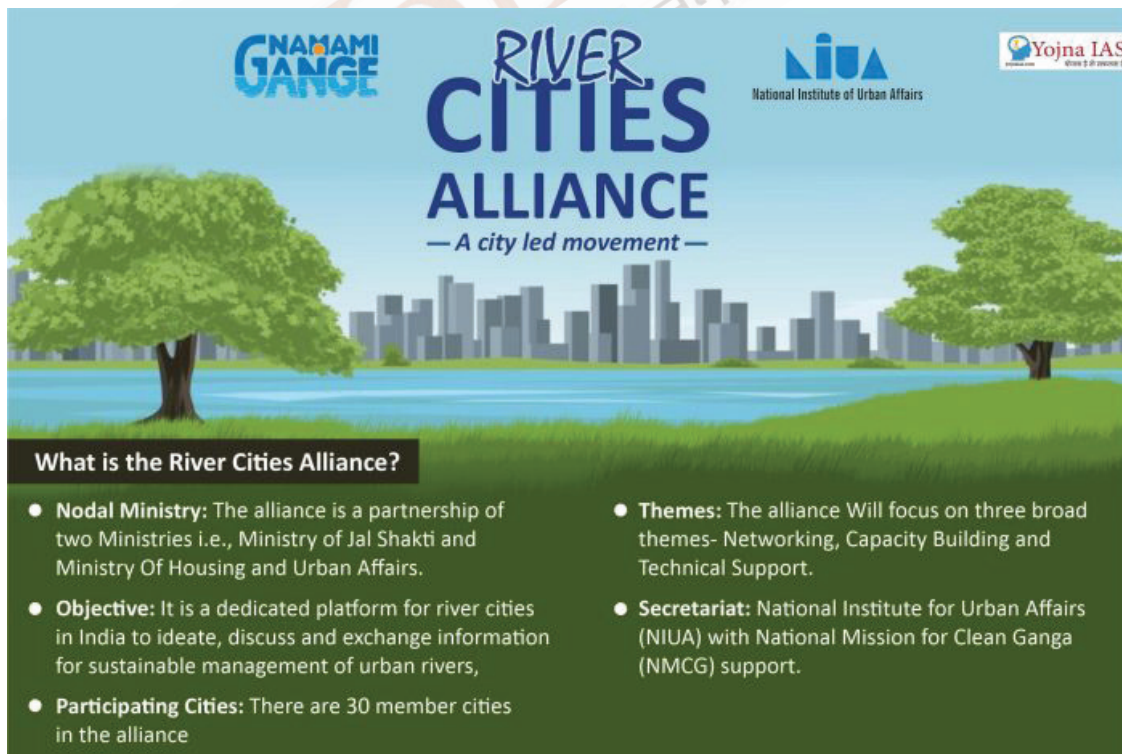
- The GRCA focuses on capacity building and knowledge exchange in integrated river management to address climate change impacts on ecosystems.
- The collaboration includes a comprehensive water monitoring program, sharing best practices for renaturing urban areas, and restoring aquatic ecosystems for sustainable urban development.
- Initiatives extend to restoring urban forests and lakes connected to rivers, emphasizing the importance of green spaces.

### River Cities Alliance in India:

- The River Cities Alliance in India serves as a platform for river cities to ideate, discuss, and exchange information for the sustainable management of urban rivers.
- It is a collaborative effort between the Jal Shakti Ministry and the Housing & Urban Affairs Ministry. The National Institute for Urban Affairs (NIUA) and the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) have joined forces for launching the River Cities Alliance.

### Objectives:

The primary objective is to provide participating cities with a platform for discussing and exchanging vital information on sustainable urban river management. This includes reducing impacts on rivers and water bodies, minimizing water footprints, preserving architectural heritage, and developing self-sufficient water resources through reuse and recycle strategies.



**What is the River Cities Alliance?**

- **Nodal Ministry:** The alliance is a partnership of two Ministries i.e., Ministry of Jal Shakti and Ministry Of Housing and Urban Affairs.
- **Objective:** It is a dedicated platform for river cities in India to ideate, discuss and exchange information for sustainable management of urban rivers,
- **Participating Cities:** There are 30 member cities in the alliance
- **Themes:** The alliance Will focus on three broad themes- Networking, Capacity Building and Technical Support.
- **Secretariat:** National Institute for Urban Affairs (NIUA) with National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) support.

### Current Developments:

- The River Cities Alliance in India currently comprises 142 river cities, serving as a dedicated plat-

form for members to enhance the state of urban rivers within their administrative boundaries.

- Recently, the NMCG signed a Memorandum of Common Purpose with the Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative (MRCTI), representing 124 cities/towns along the Mississippi River, USA, on the sidelines of COP28.
- The collaboration will discuss comprehensive water monitoring, best practices for urban area re-naturation, and initiatives for sustainable urban development.
- This collaborative effort showcases a commitment to proactive environmental stewardship and innovative solutions for sustainable river management on a global scale.

Source:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-led-global-river-cities-alliance-launched-at-cop28-9064183/>

Q.1 Regarding the Global River Cities Alliance (GRCA) recently seen in the news, consider the following statements:

1. It is a United Nations Led Initiative.
2. It is to be supported by the World Bank
3. All SAARC nations are part of the initiative.

How many of the above statement/s is/are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

ANSWER: A

Q.2 Examine the objectives, composition, and focus areas of the Global River Cities Alliance (GRCA) in the context of sustainable urban river management.

# ADVOCATES (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2023

*This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “ Advocates (Amendment) Bill, 2023”. This topic has relevance in the Polity and Governance section of the UPSC CSE exam.*

## GS 2: Polity and Governance

### Why in the news?

The Advocates (Amendment) Bill, 2023, underwent significant legislative progress, securing approval in both the Rajya Sabha in August 2023 and the Lok Sabha during the recent winter session. The primary focus of this bill is to streamline the legal system by eliminating touts, leading to the repeal of the archaic Legal Practitioners Act, 1879, and amendments to the Advocates Act, 1961.

The bill aligns with the government’s commitment to declutter the legal framework by repealing outdated laws, such as the Legal Practitioners Act, 1879, that have lost their relevance over time.

### Background

The legal landscape governing practitioners in India has witnessed significant changes over the years, transitioning from the Legal Practitioners Act of 1879 to the more comprehensive Advocates Act of 1961.

### Legal Practitioners Act of 1879:

- The primary objective of the 1879 Act was to consolidate and amend the law concerning Legal Practitioners in specific provinces.
- Section 2 of the Act defined a legal practitioner to encompass advocates, vakils, or attorneys of any High Court.
- The Act introduced a novel definition of the term “tout,” characterizing them as individuals who, in consideration of remuneration from a legal practitioner, secure the employment of that practitioner in legal business.

### Advocates Act of 1961:

- Enacted in 1961, the Advocates Act aimed to amend and consolidate laws related to legal practitioners. It also provided for the establishment of Bar Councils and an All-India Bar.
- Replaced three previous Acts governing legal practitioners: the Legal Practitioners Act of 1879, the Bombay Pleaders Act of 1920, and the Indian Bar Councils Act of 1926.

### Repeal of the Legal Practitioners Act of 1879:

- The Law Commission, in its 249th Report titled ‘Obsolete Laws: Warranting Immediate Repeal,’ recommended the repeal of the 1879 Act.
- Acknowledging these recommendations and those of the All-India Bar Committee in 1953, the Advocates Act of 1961 was enacted.

# Key Features of Advocates (Amendment) Bill, 2023



- The Bill empowers High Courts, district judges, sessions judges, district magistrates, and revenue officers to create and publish lists of touts.
- Authorities can exclude individuals named in the tout lists from court premises.
- Empowered authorities can direct subordinate courts to conduct inquiries into the conduct of individuals suspected to be touts.
- Inclusion in the tout list requires due process, ensuring individuals have an opportunity to contest their inclusion.
- Individuals acting as touts while listed may face penalties, including imprisonment for up to three months, a fine of up to Rs 500, or both.

Source:

The Advocates (Amendment) Bill, 2023 (prsindia.org)

Q.1 Regarding the The Advocates (Amendment) Bill, 2023 recently seen in the news, consider the following statements:

1. The Bill empowers only the High Courts and Supreme Court to create and publish lists of touts.
2. The Act introduced a novel definition of the term “tout”.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

ANSWER: D

Q.2 Critically Examine the Implications of the Advocates (Amendment) Bill, 2023, on Legal Practice in India. Analyze the Bill's Impact on Streamlining the Legal System.

## ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION (OIC)

*This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details " Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)". This topic has relevance in the International Relations section of the UPSC CSE exam.*

### GS 2: International Relations

#### Why in the news?

India has dismissed a statement from the OIC regarding the Supreme Court's verdict affirming the revocation of Article 370, which granted special status to Jammu and Kashmir.

#### Background:

India strongly rejected remarks by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) expressing concern over the Supreme Court's verdict on Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir.

The External Affairs Ministry spokesperson termed the OIC's statement "ill-informed and ill-intended," questioning its alignment with a human rights violator and promoter of cross-border terrorism. It was emphasized that such statements undermine the credibility of the OIC.

The OIC had expressed concern over the Supreme Court's verdict and reaffirmed solidarity with the people of Jammu and Kashmir. The Supreme Court's decision to uphold the revocation of Article 370 includes ordering the restoration of statehood by September 30, 2024.

#### Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC): An Overview

- Establishment: Founded in September 1969 after a summit in Rabat, Morocco, prompted by the criminal arson of Al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied Jerusalem.
- Size and Population: Second-largest organization globally after the United Nations. It represents over 1.8 billion people.
- Collective Voice: Acts as the collective voice of the Muslim world, advocating for their interests in economic, social, and political domains.
- Objectives:
  - Aims to preserve Islamic values.
  - Safeguards and defends national sovereignty and independence of member states.
  - Contributes to international peace and security.

- Membership: Comprises 57 member states spanning four continents.
- Headquarters: Located in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.
- Official Languages: Recognizes Arabic, English, and French as its official languages.



### Historical Background:

- In 1969, India, with the world's second-largest Muslim community, was invited to the founding conference of the OIC but was ejected at Pakistan's insistence.
- India stayed away due to concerns about joining a religiously founded organization and potential strain on bilateral relations, particularly on issues like Kashmir.

### Observer Status and Ongoing Relations:

- In 2018, Bangladesh proposed India for Observer status at the 45th session of the Foreign Ministers' Summit, but Pakistan opposed it.
- India advocates for a more inclusive approach within the OIC, expressing reluctance to join an organization built on religious foundations.
- Despite reservations, India, with strengthened ties to influential OIC members like UAE and Saudi Arabia, remains confident in managing statements from the grouping.

### Kashmir Issue and OIC Statements:

- The OIC has, at times, expressed concerns and called for resolutions aligning with the wishes of the Kashmiri people.

- In 2018, the OIC General Secretariat condemned the killing of Kashmiris by Indian forces, a stance consistently rejected by India.
- India maintains that J&K is an integral part of the country, and the OIC has no standing on the issue.

### **Diplomatic Milestones:**

- In 2019, India made its first appearance at the OIC Foreign Ministers' meeting as a "guest of honour," marking a diplomatic victory.
- This move was significant during heightened tensions with Pakistan post the Pulwama attack.

### **Recent Developments and Criticisms:**

- In 2022, the OIC called on the UN Human Rights Council regarding the hijab issue in Karnataka schools.
- The OIC urged India to ensure the safety and well-being of the Muslim community, criticizing the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, and the Babri Masjid verdict.

Source:

'Ill-informed, ill-intended': India rejects statement by Organization of Islamic Cooperation on Supreme Court verdict on Article 370 (msn.com)

Q.1 Regarding the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) recently seen in the news, consider the following statements:

1. India is one of its founding members
2. Recently OIC has intervened in Kashmir issue on India's behalf

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

ANSWER: D

Q.2 Examine the evolving relationship between India and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Assess the impact of India's rejection of OIC statements recently and its efforts to navigate the organization, highlighting key diplomatic challenges and achievements.

# ANTHRAX

*This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “Anthrax”. This topic has relevance in the Science and technology section of the UPSC CSE exam.*

## GS 3: Science and technology

### Why in the news?

Recently, there has been an outbreak of Anthrax disease in Zambia.

### About Anthrax

Anthrax, an infectious disease caused by the bacterium *Bacillus anthracis*, presents a considerable threat due to the resilience of its spores in the environment. This article delves into the various modes of transmission in humans, diagnostic approaches, available treatments, and preventive strategies against anthrax.

### Modes of Transmission in Humans

- **Cutaneous Anthrax:** The most prevalent form occurs when spores make contact with compromised skin, resulting in distinctive skin lesions.
- **Gastrointestinal Anthrax:** Arising from the consumption of contaminated meat, this form initially manifests symptoms akin to food poisoning before progressing to severe abdominal issues.
- **Inhalational Anthrax:** Recognized as the deadliest form, it initiates with flu-like symptoms and swiftly advances to severe respiratory distress and shock, primarily caused by inhaling anthrax spores.

### Diagnosis

- The identification of *Bacillus anthracis* in blood, skin lesions, or respiratory secretions relies on laboratory tests such as cultures, PCR, or ELISA. Anthrax exposure is not confirmed by a single test, necessitating a comprehensive approach integrating clinical findings and specialized tests.

### Treatment

- Antibiotics such as ciprofloxacin, doxycycline, or levofloxacin demonstrate efficacy in treating anthrax infections. Severe cases may warrant hospitalization for supportive care, encompassing fluid drainage and mechanical ventilation.

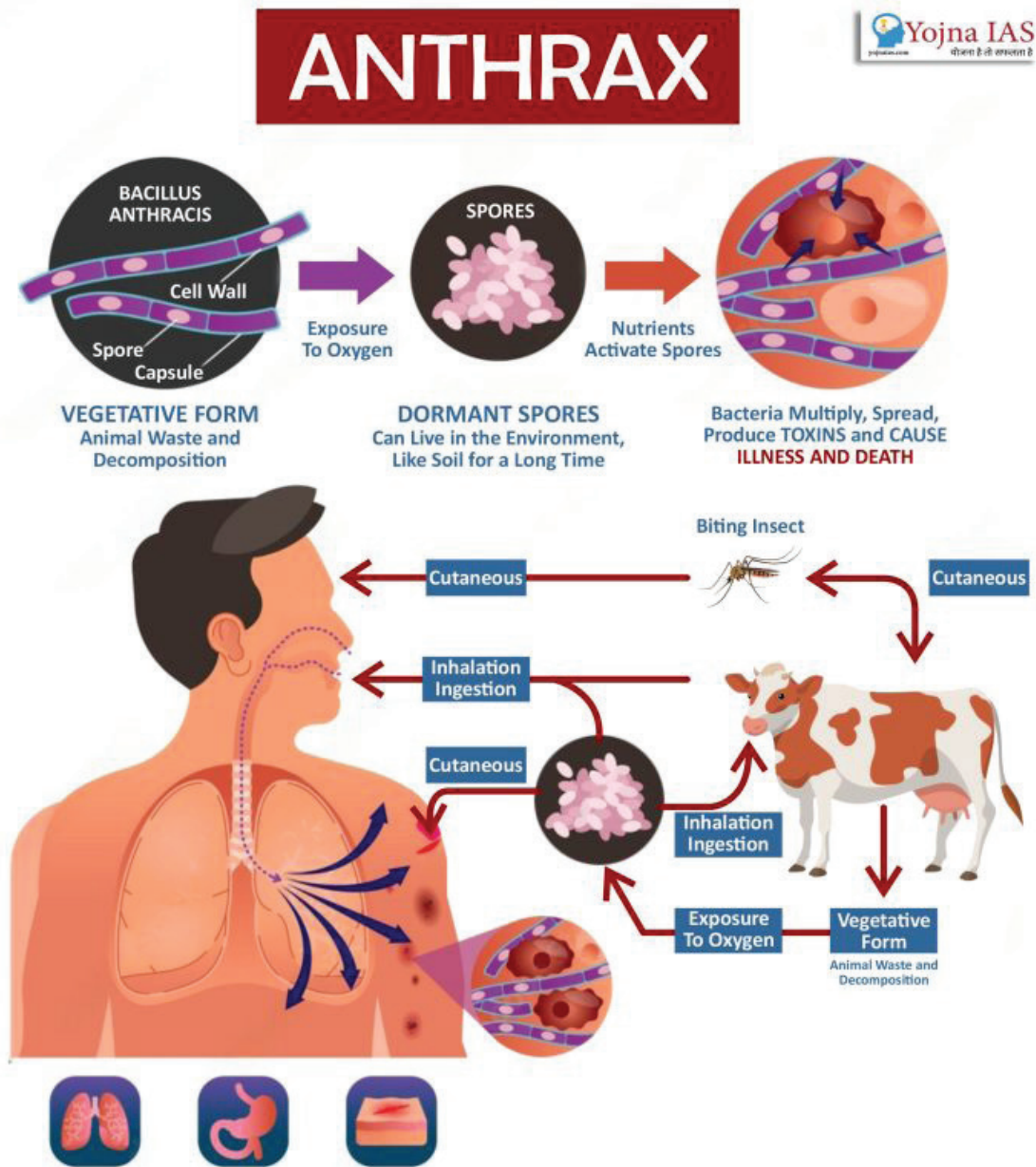
### Prevention

- Vaccines, tailored for both animals and humans, particularly target high-risk groups. Mitigating contact with potentially infected animals or their products is essential, emphasizing proper hygiene and handling procedures for animal products to avert transmission.



## Conclusion

Comprehending the modes of transmission, facilitating prompt diagnosis, and ensuring timely treatment are pivotal in managing and preventing the spread of anthrax. Vaccination and meticulous adherence to safety protocols play indispensable roles in safeguarding both human and animal populations from this infectious disease.



## About Zambia

### Geographical Overview:

Zambia, situated in south-central Africa, is a landlocked country surrounded by eight neighboring nations—Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe. Its strategic location makes it a hub in the heart of the continent.

### **Economic Significance:**

Renowned as one of the world's major producers of copper and cobalt, Zambia plays a pivotal role in the global electronics industry. In addition to these minerals, the country exports a diverse range of agricultural products, including maize, tobacco, sugar, cotton, and flowers. This economic diversity contributes significantly to Zambia's position in the international market.

### **Cultural and Linguistic Diversity:**

English serves as the official language, fostering communication and administrative processes. However, Zambia's cultural landscape is rich and varied, with over 70 local languages spoken across the nation. Prominent among these are Bemba, Nyanja, Tonga, and Lozi, reflecting the country's linguistic tapestry.

### **Tribal Identity:**

Zambia is characterized by a tapestry of tribes, each contributing to the nation's cultural mosaic. Key tribes include the Lozi, Bemba, Ngoni, Tonga, Luvale, and Kaonde.

Source: 5 countries in East and southern Africa have anthrax outbreaks, WHO says, with 20 deaths reported, ET HealthWorld (india-times.com)

Q.1 Anthrax disease is caused by:

- (a) Bacteria
- (b) Virus
- (c) Protozoa
- (d) Fungi

ANSWER: A

Q.2 Evaluate the Efficacy of Pandemic Management Strategies in India. Discuss Lessons Learned from the COVID-19 Pandemic and Propose Recommendations for Enhancing Future Pandemic Resilience in the Country.