

# NEWS ANALYSIS THE HINDU

23 MAY 2018

# App will help voters to share malpractice proof

- Context-The Election Commission will launch a multi-lingual mobile application empowering people across the country to share evidence of malpractice by political parties, their candidates and activists ahead of the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, directly with the electoral body.
- The application, part of the steps taken by the Commission to prevent abuse of money and muscle power, allows for sharing of photos and short audio and video clips from the spot itself.
- “Geo-location of the reported incidents will also get recorded and the officials concerned will immediately receive the alerts.



- The growing abuse of social media bots for influencing public opinion has emerged as another major challenge for the Election Commission and plans are on to devise a counter mechanism.
- Bots are automated accounts often active on popular social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook, which use Artificial Intelligence to trigger and influence political debates with an objective to shape public opinion.

# Habitat loss may have triggered Nipah outbreak

- Context-According to a report by the **World Health Organisation**, there is “strong evidence” that the emergence of bat-related viral infections can be attributed to the loss of the animal’s natural habitats.
- “As the flying fox [fruit bat] habitat is destroyed by human activity, the bats get stressed and hungry, their immune system gets weaker, their virus load goes up and a lot of virus spills out in their urine and saliva.”
- Nutritional stress through the loss of food resources — a direct consequence of habitat loss and climate change — brings bats closer to urban areas.

# Model law for contract farming

- Context-After two drafts that received wide criticism from industry and farmers groups, Agriculture Minister released the model law.
- It is aimed at reducing farmers' risks by creating an assured market for their produce at a pre agreed price, while encouraging investment from agribusiness and food processing industries by enhancing productivity and cost efficiency.
- It provides for State-level boards to be set-up to promote and facilitate — rather than regulate — contract farming, and sets out a framework for registering and recording agreements.
- It also provides for a dispute settlement authority
- In India, 86% of farmers fall into the small and marginal category.



# Small farmers get a raw deal

- Context-Small & marginal farmers are missing out on the bulk of agricultural credit, as per information provided by the Reserve Bank of India, which showed they are receiving only 30-40% of loans meant for the sector.
- As per a report submitted by the RBI to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture in response to its queries, only 42.2% of agricultural credit disbursed in 2016-17 went to small and marginal farmers.
- The RBI's rules are that 18% of a bank's Adjusted Net Bank Credit must go to the agricultural sector and within this, 8% must go to small and marginal farmers.
- The data also shows that the onus of providing agricultural credit is falling on the public sector banks, with 12 out of 23 of the private sector banks for which data is available having failed to meet the 18% lending target for the agricultural sector in 2017.

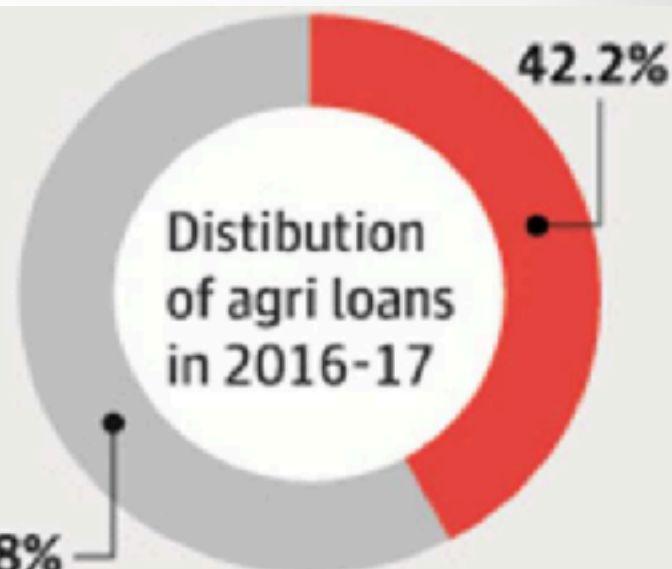


# On the margins



■ Marginal farmers ■ Big farmers

57.8%



## Geographical distribution of agri loans outstanding as of 2017

	₹Crore	in percentage
Metropolitan	65,611.7	9.5
Rural	2,39,132	34.5
Semi-Urban	2,80,153.3	40.5
Urban	1,07,112.6	15.4

Source: RBI

# Mains Answer Writing Practice

Q.) India's foreign policy has shifted away from the developing and neighbour countries. Elucidate.

Source-[www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/the-fading-appeal-of-soft-power/article23962433.ece](http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/the-fading-appeal-of-soft-power/article23962433.ece)