

03 June 2019: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Centre in damage control mode over anti-Hindi protests

Context:

The government said that Hindi will not be thrust upon any state, amid a controversy over the draft version of the National Education Policy 2019, which is seen by many in the southern states as an attempt to impose Hindi on school students.

Back ground:

- The Anti-Hindi imposition agitations of Tamil Nadu were a series of agitations that happened in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu during both pre- and post-Independence periods.
- The first anti-Hindi imposition agitation was launched in 1937, in opposition to the introduction of compulsory teaching of Hindi in the schools of Madras Presidency by the first Indian National

Congress government led by C. Rajagopalachari.

- This move was immediately opposed by E. V. Ramasamy (Periyar) and the opposition Justice Party.
- The agitation, which lasted three years, was multifaceted and involved fasts, conferences, marches, picketing and protests. Mandatory Hindi education was later withdrawn by the British Governor of Madras Lord Erskine in February 1940 after the resignation of the Congress Government in 1939.
- The adoption of an official language for the Indian Republic was a hotly debated issue during the framing of the Indian Constitution after India's independence from the United Kingdom.
- After an exhaustive and divisive debate, Hindi was adopted as the official language of India with English continuing as an associate official language for a period of fifteen years, after which Hindi would become the sole official language.
- Efforts by the Indian Government to make Hindi the sole official language after 1965 were not acceptable to many non-Hindi Indian states, who wanted the continued use of English.
- To allay their fears, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru enacted the Official Languages Act in 1963 to ensure the continuing use of English beyond 1965.
- As the day (26 January 1965) of switching over to Hindi as sole official language approached, the anti-Hindi movement gained momentum in Madras State with increased support from college students
- The agitations of 1965 led to major political changes in the state.
- The Official Languages Act was eventually amended in 1967 by the Congress Government headed by Indira Gandhi to guarantee the indefinite use of Hindi and English as official languages.
- This effectively ensured the current "virtual indefinite policy of bilingualism" of the Indian Republic. There were also two similar (but smaller) agitations in 1968 and 1986 which had varying degrees of success.

New Education Policy 2019:

The draft NEP outlines an ambitious agenda with regard to language teaching:

- It states that preschool teaching would be in mother tongue.
- Calls for all students from pre-school or Class 1 onwards to be exposed to three or more languages, with the medium of instruction until Class 5 to be the child's mother tongue or home language.
- From Class 6 onwards, there can be greater flexibility in the choice of languages, "so long as the study of three languages by students in the Hindi-speaking States would continue to include Hindi and English and one of the modern Indian languages from other parts of India, while the study of languages by students in the non-Hindi-speaking States would include the regional language, Hindi and English.
- The draft suggested the inclusion of Hindi in all the non-Hindi speaking states in the country.
- The policy states: "Students will be required to attain proficiency in discussing their major in at least one Indian language through an appropriate written project or presentation in that language."
- It adds that a multilingual India is better educated and also better nationally integrated.

Details:

- Reacting to the developments, Information and Broadcasting Minister said the government has not taken any decision on the draft education policy.
- It was also said that there will be no imposition and "all languages will be promoted".
- The intent of the three language formula was to promote all Indian languages.
- It was made clear that it was a draft prepared by the committee, which would be decided by the government after getting public feedback.

SFI calls for rollback of 3 language formula:

- Students' Federation of India (SFI) issued a statement calling for "a unity among Hindi and non-

Hindi speaking people against the chauvinism and imposition, which they said will cut the basic idea of unity in diversity”.

- The development of regional languages, it argued, was key to the development of the nation and an important characteristic of the freedom struggle.
- It clarified that it does not stand pro or anti any language, as it has always exercised and celebrated the multi-linguistic nature of India.
- It said that the “imposition of Hindi over regional languages will not bring glory to our nation and to the language of Hindi”.
- The students’ union asked the government to “step forward to preserve and care each and every regional language to celebrate the linguistic diversity” of the country.

2. Nilgiri tribals tense as trekkers trash priceless rock art

Issue:

The rock paintings in Karikiyoor at Kil Kotagiri in the Nilgiri forests have withstood the forces of nature for some 5,000 years, but in just the last few years, close to 40% of the paintings have been destroyed by trekkers, tourists, and vandals.

Details:

- Members of the Irula tribal community, who have an ancestral link to the site, said they were extremely angered and disturbed at the damage by illegal trekkers, who have painted over religious symbols using whitener pens and political messages with chalk, while couples have carved their names on the rocks, permanently disfiguring the priceless pre-historic site.
- The site remained undisturbed till very recently, when a spurt in the number of tourists has led to many people organising illegal treks to the rock art site.
- Former director of the Tribal Research Centre in Udhamandalam, said the society that painted the symbols onto these rocks were contemporaneous with the Indus Valley civilisation.
- The rock paintings in Karikiyoor contain analogous-Indus script, meaning they resemble the script found in Indus civilization sites of northern India.

Way forward:

- Sites such as Karikiyoor need to be preserved to better understand the people that lived in the region, while also possibly deducing how certain technology and written scripts could have possibly diffused to southern India from the Indus peoples or vice versa.
- The rock paintings serve both, as a “historical record,” detailing the hunting habits and ways of life of the local communities, and also a ritualistic purpose.
- A plan has been made to set up a group to regulate tourist entry into the reserve forest — the rock paintings are found deep inside.
- Article 51 (A) of the Constitution - Fundamental Duties states that “to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture” is a fundamental duty. Citizens are morally obligated by the Constitution to perform these duties.
- The State Archeological Department, the Archeological Survey of India and also the Forest Department have a huge say in ensuring the site is protected. They need to act quickly to ensure that what remains of the rock paintings are preserved.
- The government should take proactive measures to protect the site. Failure to act will lead to the destruction and eventual loss of the site forever.

Irula tribes:

- Irula are a Dravidian ethnic group inhabiting the area of the Nilgiri mountains, in the states of Tamil

Nadu and Kerala.

- Irula tribe is officially designated as a Scheduled Tribe.
- Traditionally, the main occupation of the Irulas has been snake, rat catching and honey collection.
- The Irula speak the Irula language, a Dravidian language that is closely related to Tamil.

C. GS3 Related

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. Just 20% water left in 91 major reservoirs

Context:

Water storage in reservoirs of most States of west and south India has dipped to less than the average of last 10 years, the Central Water Commission (CWC) has said.

Details:

- The statement by CWC indicates a worsening water crisis.
- According to the Commission, “The water storage available in 91 major reservoirs of the country was 20% of total storage capacity of these reservoirs.
- In the western region, which includes Gujarat and Maharashtra, there are 27 major reservoirs with water storage that has dropped down to 11% of the total live storage capacity.
- Water storage during the current year is less than the storage of last year and is also less than the average storage of last 10 years during the corresponding period, the CWC said.
- Last year, several parts of Gujarat and Maharashtra received deficient monsoon showers. The situation is particularly grim in the Marathwada region of Maharashtra where water level in reservoirs have dipped to an all-time low.
- Private weather forecaster Skymet said that rainfall in Vidarbha, Marathwada, west Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat will be “poorer than normal”, while southern India is expected to receive below normal rainfall.
- 54% of the country's groundwater is declining faster than it is being replenished and there is a crippling dependence on monsoon rains to replenish most of India's key water sources-- underground aquifers, lakes, rivers and reservoirs.
- Close to half the country, about 600 million people, face severe scarcity year after year.

Conclusion:

- The statistics throw light upon the worsening water crisis in India. Among the first steps taken by the Modi government in its second phase is creation of a Jal Shakti Ministry under a full-fledged cabinet minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat.
- The new ministry amalgamates the ministries of water resources, river development and Ganga Rejuvenation with the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation.
- The creation of the ministry could not have been more fortunately timed.

Category: SECURITY

1. Navy steps up anti-piracy patrol

Context:

In an expansion of its Mission Based Deployments (MBD) in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), the Navy

deployed its P-8I long-range maritime surveillance aircraft for anti-piracy sorties from Salalah in Oman to patrol the Gulf of Aden.

Details:

- Long-range maritime reconnaissance Anti-Submarine Warfare aircraft P-8I undertakes anti-piracy patrol sorties from Salalah in the Gulf of Aden and other piracy prone areas in keeping with our MBD philosophy, to keep IOR safe and secure for all.
- The P-8I provides long-range Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA).
- Since 2008, India has been conducting anti-piracy patrols in the commercially crucial Gulf of Aden.
- This was the second time the P-8I operated from Salalah for anti-piracy this year.
- Besides escorting Indian flagged vessels, ships of other countries have also been provided protection. No ship under Indian escort has thus far been hijacked by pirates.
- Under the MBD concept, the Navy now maintains a ship at every choke point in the IOR at any point of time.
- As part of expanding maritime engagement, India has stepped up cooperation with Indian Ocean littoral states and maritime neighbours.
- Under the 'Neighbourhood First' policy, the Navy undertakes Joint Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) surveillance with Maldives, Seychelles and Mauritius and Coordinated Patrols (CORPAT) with Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand and Indonesia.
- Search and rescue and capability-enhancement activities have also emerged as major areas.

Navy's Mission Based Deployment:

- The Navy's mission-based deployment plan deploys mission ready ships and aircraft along critical sea lanes of communications and choke points in IOR.
- Under this mission-based deployment plan, Indian Navy's 14-15 ships will be deployed year-round in region.
- These deployments are expected to meet any eventuality across spectrum of operations ranging from acts of maritime terrorism and piracy to Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief (HADR) missions.
- The areas where these ships and corvettes and surveillance aircraft are being deployed include the Malacca Strait, North Andaman Sea, Andaman Sea, Andaman Sea including Bangladesh and Myanmar, Lakshadweep islands and Maldives, besides Madagascar and Persian Gulf.

D. GS4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: ECONOMY

1. Make up for lost time – On India's deepening economic crisis

Context:

The editorial talks about the need for well-crafted economic remedies and strategies, essential to resolve the economy's structural problems.

Issues:

- Official estimates released on the new government's first day in office, show GDP growth slowed to a five-year low of 6.8% in 2018-19, even as the unemployment rate rose to a 45-year high of 6.1% in 2017-18.
- Agriculture gross value added (GVA) growth is estimated at negative 0.1% and manufacturing GVA growth at 3.1% in the January-March quarter.
- The economy is struggling with an investments and a manufacturing slowdown, rural distress, unremunerative farm incomes, stagnating exports, a banking and financial mess and a jobs crisis. Sales figures from fast moving goods makers and continuing production cuts at car manufacturers confirm that consumption spending have slowed.
- The economy is also beset by a consumption slowdown as reflected in the falling sales of everything from automobiles to consumer durables, even fast-moving consumer goods.
- Private investment is not taking off, while government spending, which kept the economy afloat during the last NDA government, was cut back in the last quarter of 2018-19 to meet the fiscal deficit target of 3.4%.

Details:

- The present government in its previous tenure began well but soon lost direction.
- The announced plans for structural reforms spanning an overhaul of labour and land policies and a much-needed manufacturing push, 'Make In India', had been abandoned by the end of 2015.
- Demonetisation had marginal to low impact on extinguishing black money, curbing fake notes, reducing currency in circulation, and lowering the proportion of high notes in the economy, in addition to the poorly designed rollout of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime.
- Despite repeated reminders to the Prime Minister's Office from Finance Ministry bureaucrats, the decrepit public banking system and the problems of the financial sector received little policy attention.
- Even the insolvency and bankruptcy reform, a sound economic reform, that got rolled out is already in danger of getting diluted.
- The Constitution was hurriedly amended for rolling out reservations based on economic criteria.
- Fiscal giveaways for middle class Indians and farmers dominated the Interim Budget presented in February, ignoring the magnitude of challenge on the economic front.
- Redistributive taxation policies alone cannot be considered a remedy. Deeply entrenched factors hinder the poor's access to income-enhancing skills, education, health and job opportunities and obstruct the trickle-down of growth to the poor.

Way forward:

- Current scenario calls for economic growth model or strategies for reducing poverty, unlike temporary reliefs such as public provision of toilets, cooking gas connections and dwellings or Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) wage jobs and income supplement schemes.
- Reducing poverty needs economic growth to generate sustainable livelihoods for the poor.
- If production is less capital-intensive, more organised sector jobs will be created. Plus, labour's bargaining power will improve.
- For the role they play in jobs creation, smaller firms ought to be incentivised with easy credit and taxation norms.
- In response to the questions raised over unemployment and GDP statistics, credibility in the collection, estimation and presentation of official statistics has to be addressed appropriately by including eminent economists and statisticians.

The cumulative neglect of reforms over the years by successive governments has ensured that the economy is falling short of both its growth potential and the people's aspirations. Mere pursuit of fiscal and monetary policy adjustments is not going to unlock India's economic growth potential, which is impossible without

banking, land and labour reforms that no government so far has been able to deliver. The top economic priority for the new government ought to be credible course correction in its attitude to policy — its formulation, articulation and the setting of goals.

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Realising grand objectives – On addressing India’s regional policy challenges

Context:

The editorial talks about the many regional policy challenges inhibiting India’s performance.

Challenges:

While the broad directions of India’s foreign relations — with the neighbourhood, Afghanistan, the U.S., China, Indo-Pacific, Russia, and Europe — have been set over the past several years, the main factors inhibiting India’s performance are ultimately domestic in nature. Three stand out:

1 - Trade:

- India’s trade-to-GDP ratio is higher than China’s or the U.S.’s. India’s market, and access to it, remains a valuable lever with other countries.
- But much of India’s commerce involves raw materials and low value-added goods, and is still insufficiently integrated into global supply chains.
- With global trade stagnant and the World Trade Organization at a standstill, the only way for India to seize a larger share of exports is through well-negotiated preferential trade agreements.
- India’s past record in this department has been poor, leaving some sectors exposed to dumping and others unnecessarily cloistered.
- A smarter trade agenda will not only create jobs and drive reforms at home, it could become a potent strategic tool in international affairs.

2 – Defence:

- India has the world’s fifth largest defence budget but is also the world’s second largest arms importer.
- Not only does this compromise national security, it means that India cannot offer an alternative as a defence supplier to countries in its region.
- Defence indigenisation will require
 - Financing for defence capital expenditure
 - Assessments of costs
 - Technology transfer capabilities
 - Fair competition between the Indian private and public sectors

3 - Overseas project implementation:

- India’s outgoing aid budget has been relatively low, reflecting a scepticism of grant aid from India’s own experience as a recipient.
- Instead, it has now started to explore other financing options.
- Indian overseas credit has increased significantly, with over \$24 billion extended primarily to South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Africa.
- But building on several recent steps will significantly increase the country’s delivery and regional credibility. These include

- Better project planning
- More attractive and competitive financing terms
- More reliable disbursement of funds
- Enhanced coordination and communication with the private sector for implementation.

Conclusion:

Many regional policy challenges would be addressed with these three major fixes. These would also demand tackling vested interests. Key policy interventions in these three areas will now be necessary for India to realise its grander objectives.

F. Tidbits

1. Immunotherapy boosts survival chances for lung cancer patients

- An immunotherapy treatment helped significantly boost survival rates among patients suffering from advanced lung cancer, according to the results of a clinical trial cited by researchers.
- Almost 25% of patients who received the drug pembrolizumab and had not previously received chemotherapy were alive after five years, said the study.
- Unlike chemotherapy, immunotherapy works by leveraging the body's own immune system to fight disease.

What is immunotherapy?

- Immunotherapy, also called biologic therapy, is a type of cancer treatment that boosts the body's natural defenses to fight cancer.
- It uses substances made by the body or in a laboratory to improve or restore immune system function.
- Immunotherapy may work by: Stopping or slowing the growth of cancer cells.

2. Brain zapping can help retrieve lost memories

- Forgotten memories can be retrieved by stimulating a specific brain region using electrical currents, scientists have found for the first time.
- The research, shows that the left rostralateral prefrontal cortex plays a critical role in memory recall.
- The study said that the fact that people do better on memory task when this region is excited with electrical stimulation provides causal evidence that it contributes to the act of memory retrieval.

Left rostralateral prefrontal cortex:

- The left rostralateral prefrontal cortex is important for high-level thought, including monitoring and integrating information processed in other areas of the brain.
- This area is located behind the left side of the forehead, between the eyebrow and the hairline.

G. Prelims Facts

1. Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB)

- Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) is one of India's Central Armed Police Forces.
- It is currently under the administrative control of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).
- Prior to 2001, the force was known as the Special Service Bureau (SSB).
- The Special Service Bureau (also abbreviated SSB) was set up in early 20 December 1963, following

the Sino-Indian War.

- It is entrusted with guarding the country's border with Nepal and Bhutan.
- It has specialist jurisdictions for national border patrol, security, and integrity.

H. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

Q1) Consider the following statements:

1. Nanda Devi is the second highest mountain in India.
2. The mountain is located entirely within India.
3. Nanda Devi National Park, surrounding the mountain is a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Which of the following statement/s is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 1 and 2 only
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: d

Explanation:

Nanda Devi, the second highest mountain in India is located in Uttarakhand. It is the highest mountain located entirely within the country. The mountain is located between the Rishiganga valley on the west and the Goriganga valley on the east.

Q2) Consider the following statements with respect to Generalised System of Preferences (GSP):

1. It is a trade program designed to promote economic growth in the developing world.
2. It provides duty free entry of selected goods from GSP beneficiary countries.
3. The preferential treatment is reciprocal.

Which of the following statement/s is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 1 and 2 only
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: b

Explanation:

GSP is a unilateral, non-reciprocal and non-discriminatory benefit extended by the U.S. and other developed countries to developing countries.

Q3) Arrange the following events in chronological order with the earliest being first:

1. Second Round Table Conference
2. Salt Satyagraha

3. Quit India Movement
4. Gandhi Irwin pact

Choose the correct option

- a. 1-2-3-3
- b. 1-4-2-3
- c. 2-4-1-3
- d. 2-1-4-3

Answer: c

Explanation:

- The Salt March, also known as the Dandi March from 12 March 1930 to 6 April 1930
- The 'Gandhi-Irwin Pact' was a political agreement signed by Mahatma Gandhi and Lord Irwin, the then Viceroy of India, on 5 March 1931 before the second Round Table Conference in London.
- The Quit India Movement, was launched at the Bombay session of the All-India Congress Committee by Gandhi on 8 August 1942, during World War II, demanding an end to British Rule of India.

Q4) Which of the following is known as the metal age?

- a. Paleolithic age
- b. Mesolithic age
- c. Neolithic age
- d. Chalcolithic age

Answer: d

Explanation:

The Chalcolithic Age denotes the first period in which metal was used. It is also called as the Copper-Stone Age, referring to the initial use of pure copper along with its predecessor tool making material – stone.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. In the last two decades, the prevalence of illicit drug trafficking has assumed alarming proportions in India, highlighting the need for a national policy to tackle drug abuse. Discuss. (15 Marks, 250 Words)
2. With a worsening water crisis, India will be formally categorized as a "water stressed" country by 2020. A country where per capita availability of water is less than 1,000 cubic metres or less. Can a new water ministry tackle the worst water crisis in India's history? Critically analyse. (250 Words, 15 Marks)

