

21 July 2019: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Four new Governors Appointed

Context:

Two Governors were transferred and four new appointments were made across six States by President Ram Nath Kovind. The changes have happened in Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar, Nagaland

Important for UPSC:**Appointment of Governors:**

- Though governor is appointed by the President, but the Home Ministry is the nodal Ministry for the selection of Governors, who act as a bridge between the Centre and the States.
- He is appointed by the president by warrant under his hand and seal. In a way, he is a nominee of the Central government.
- But, as held by the Supreme Court in 1979, the office of governor of a state is not an employment under the Central government.
- It is an independent constitutional office and is not under the control of or subordinate to the Central government.

Facts to remember:**New Governors:**

- Madhya Pradesh – Lalji Tandon
- Uttar Pradesh – Anandiben Patel
- West Bengal – Jagdeep Dhankar
- Bihar – Phagu Chauhan
- Nagaland – RN Ravi
- Tripura – Ramesh Bais

Further Study:

- Role of Governor in giving directions to the Legislative Assembly and the Speaker (in the context of ongoing Karnataka crisis).

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**1. Iran defends seizure of U.K. oil tanker**

(Importance for UPSC: Along with being an important event in the timeline of heightening tensions between US & its allies, and Iran, this issue is also important for the geographical locations. Straits of Hormuz and Gibraltar are important trade routes and potential questions in UPSC prelims. See today's question no 1 for reference.)

Context:

Britain denounced the Iranian seizure of a British-flagged oil tanker in the Gulf as a "hostile act". However, Iran said it had seized the vessel because it had been involved in an accident.

What is the issue?

- The 'Stena Impero' is an oil tanker owned by a Swedish company, Sten Bulk, but was flying the British flag.
- According to the Iranian government, the Stena Impero was involved in a collision with a smaller Iranian fishing boat in the Straits, which the IRGC (Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps) called a "violation of international regulations".
- However, U.K. officials say they believe that the seizure by Iran was in retaliation for the seizure of an Iranian tanker Grace-1 off Gibraltar by British forces earlier this month. The oil tanker is alleged to have violated U.S. sanctions on Syria.

Impact on India:

- When Iranian tanker was captured by Royal marines, Four Indians were among the crew on board the vessel, who were detained but later freed on bail without charges.
- Similarly, the ship's captain and 17 other crew members detained on board are Indians. India has reached out to the Iranian government to help release the 18 Indian crew members.
- The seizures of both tankers in the past few weeks highlights how India is being affected by growing tensions between the U.S. and its allies, and Iran.
- Indian sailors on various ships are under threat from the tit-for-tat actions on the high seas.
- At the same time, Indian diaspora i.e. lakhs of Indians living in the Gulf region would face the consequences of any open conflict.
- Also, for the past few weeks, Indian air carriers have avoided flying over parts of Iranian airspace after American FAA strictures, which has already meant crores in losses

2. China stresses need for united trade front

Context:

China has shown its interest in partnering with India to build a united front of emerging economies and developing countries to counter trade headwinds.

Details:

- China has invoked the principle of Panchsheel in protecting multilateralism and globalisation

What is Panchsheel?

- While signing a peace agreement with China; PM Nehru advocated adherence to five guiding principles known as Panchsheel.
- Panchsheel was signed on 28 April, 1954 and since then it has become a guiding principle of India's bilateral relations with countries also.
- Panchsheel includes the following five principles of foreign policy:
 1. Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty.
 2. Non-aggression against each other.
 3. Non-interference in each other's internal affairs.
 4. Equality and mutual benefit.
 5. Peaceful co-existence.
- These principles of Panchsheel were later incorporated in the Bandung Declaration, signed in the Afro-Asian Conference held in 1955 in Indonesia.
- They are the core principles of Non-alignment and still guide the conduct of India's foreign policy.

Issues on which Indian and Chinese interests converge:

- Reform of the World Trade Organisation,
- Defence of the UN system,
- Cybersecurity,
- Climate change.

Why change in China's attitude towards India?

- Wuhan spirit initiated a new bonhomie between Xi and Modi.

- Since then, the two countries have moved ahead of bitter memories of Doklam.
- However, the biggest factor in changing China's attitude towards India is its spiraling trade war with the U.S.
- According to China, the ugly path of unilateralism and protectionism has now affected the growth and stability of the world economy. This shows its concern and desperation towards multilateralism and globalisation, due to which it has become the global workshop of the world.

However, there are still some challenges which needs to be addressed to improve the relationship:

- Border dispute
- Huge Trade deficit

Way Ahead:

Although, China had increased imports of Indian rice and sugar, along with stepping up the review and approval process for Indian pharmaceutical products, for addressing Indian concerns on the issue of yawning trade gap. But clearly more needs to be done to address the deficit lest it spirals into other domains affecting the bilateral relationship.

C. GS3 Related

Category: ECONOMY

1. Govt. in talks with foreign lenders for loans to SMEs

Context:

The government is trying to garner \$14.5 billion in credit for small firms sourced from foreign lenders.

What is the government's plan?

- The government plans to source up to ₹1 lakh crore of loans from foreign institutions.
- The push for foreign loans comes on the heels of the government's announcement earlier this month that it was planning to borrow about ₹700 billion by issuing overseas sovereign bonds.

Why MSME sector?

- India's 63 million firms in the micro, small and medium firm sector are responsible for more than a quarter of the country's manufacturing and services output, and must be re-energised for the government to kick-start the economy.
- Small business sector is important for economy because it is seen as critical to job creation.
- However, a study by an RBI panel said the overall deficit in credit for the MSME sector is estimated at about ₹20-25 lakh crore.
- Credit availability for SMEs, which also account for about 45% of the country's exports, has worsened due to a liquidity crisis in the non-banking financial companies (NBFC) sector.
- The main reason for the liquidity crisis is the IL&FS issue.

Why not borrowing from domestic sources i.e. Indian banks?

- The government cannot go for Indian banks because they are not in a position to provide enough capital for the small business sector.
- State-owned banks have not been able to drive increased lending because they are burdened with more than \$145 billion in bad loans.

Who are the lenders?

- The government is in discussions with multiple foreign lenders, including Germany's state-owned development bank KfW Group, the World Bank and some Canadian institutions to extend lines of credit to small enterprises.

Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. Hyderabad gets facility to sequence 30 genomes a day

Context:

Recently, Next Generation Sequencing (NGS) facility, for sequencing human genomes, has been inaugurated in Hyderabad.

Details:

- It has been inaugurated at the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), a CSIR lab in Hyderabad.
- This facility would help in generating large-scale genomic data from Indian populations, which was critical for genetic diagnosis and therapy.
- It can sequence 30 human genomes or 384 diagnostic samples in a day.

What is Human Genome?

- The human genome is the genome of Homo sapiens. It is made up of 23 chromosome pairs with a total of about 3 billion DNA base pairs
- Human genome project (HGP) was an international scientific research project which got successfully completed in the year 2003 by sequencing the entire human genome of 3.3 billion base pairs.

Why to study human genome?

- As the goals of the human genome project were achieved, it led to great advancement in research.
- Today, if any disease arises due to some alteration in a certain gene, then it could be traced and compared to the genome database that we already have.
- In this way, a more rational step could be taken to deal with the problem and can be fixed with more ease.

Benefits of NGS facility:

- It would help patients suffering from rare genetic disorders
- It provides reliable sequencing data with better quality
- It has a better rapid turnaround time i.e. time interval from the time of submission of a process to the time of the completion of the process.
- It has a higher throughput i.e. number of samples tested in a given time.
- It is cost effective
- It can be used to assist researchers in achieving their sequencing related research goals.

Further Reading: [Human Genome Project](#)

2. Colistin banned in animal food industry

Context:

Manufacture, sale and distribution of colistin and its formulations for food-producing animals, poultry, aqua farming and animal feed supplements have been prohibited in an order issued by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

What is Colistin?

- Colistin is a valuable, last-resort antibiotic that saves human lives in critical care units.
- The order by Ministry directed manufacturers of colistin and its formulations to affix a label on the container reading thus: Not to be used in food producing animals, poultry, aqua farming and animal feed supplements: on the package, insert and promotional literature.

Why it has been banned for animal use?

- Indiscriminate use of colistin has led to rise of anti-microbial resistance in the country.
- In recent years, medical professionals have been alarmed by the number of patients who have exhibited resistance to the drug.
- In late 2018, researchers from Apollo Cancer Hospital, Chennai, and Christian Medical College, Vellore, claimed, in a paper in the Journal of Global Antimicrobial Resistance, that samples of raw food lifted from across Chennai had tested positive for colistin-resistant bacteria.
- Therefore, any move to discourage the arbitrary use of colistin in the food industry, particularly as growth supplements used in animals, poultry, aqua farms, would likely reduce the antimicrobial resistance within the country.
- If the use of colistin as a growth factor in animals is cut down and it is limited to therapeutic usage only, the chances of developing resistance to it goes down.

Challenges:

- As with all well-intentioned policies, the challenge is to implement the order.
- Usually the farmers are not aware of the presence of colistin, since it comes mixed in the feed.

Way Ahead:

- The ministry has done well to work in the direction of making sure that colistin does not enter the food we eat, and thereby, we don't develop resistance to the antibiotic.
- However, it is important to conduct awareness programmes for farmers, telling them about the danger of using colistin in feed.
- Since the bulk of colistin (nearly 95%) is imported from China, it would also be easy to stop importing it within a short time.

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND BIODIVERSITY

1. M.P. yet to form tiger protection force

MP is the State that has registered the most number of tiger deaths due to poaching since 2012. However, despite having resolved to constitute a Special Tiger Protection Force (STPF) more than seven years ago, Madhya Pradesh is yet to constitute the battalion.

Tiger state:

- MP was famous as the 'Tiger State' at least until 2006 when it boasted the most number of tigers with an estimated 300 in its six reserves.
- However, Madhya Pradesh lost out to Karnataka in 2010 and fell behind Uttarakhand too in 2014, according to the Status of Tigers in India report.
- In the absence of an independent elite unit to protect tigers in the State, 30 deaths due to poaching have been reported between 2012 and 2018.

Reason for the decline:

- Unlike Karnataka and Uttarakhand which have contiguous forests, Madhya Pradesh has a patchy cover running through fragmented reserves and human habitations. Therefore it's a challenge to protect tigers and prevent man-animal conflicts.

- In fact, more than 50% of the deaths in the State categorised as deaths due to poaching happen outside reserve limits.
- Often, tigers get electrocuted upon contact with high tension wires laid by farmers to protect their fields from wild boars
- The main obstruction to tiger corridors and natural habitats is caused by big landlords whose encroachments in the form of resorts and farmhouses

Way Ahead:

- The state is now going to emulate the Gujarat model of wildlife conservation wherein locals have been roped in and mortalities have been successfully brought down.

About STPF (Special Tiger Protection Force):

- It was due to be constituted under an agreement, signed among the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), the State's Chief Wildlife Warden and field directors of Bandhavgarh, Kanha and Pench tiger reserves.
- The agreement was signed in 2012.

D. GS4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Will be updated shortly!!!

F. Tidbits

Nothing here for today!!!

G. Prelims Facts

1. New species of shark squirts clouds of light

Context: A new species of pocket-sized pocket shark has been found in the Gulf of Mexico.

Details:

- Name of the species: American pocket shark, or *Mollisquama mississippiensis*
- The pouches near its front fins squirt little glowing clouds into the ocean.
- It is only the third out of more than 500 known shark species that may squirt luminous liquid.
- The other two are the previously known pocket shark and the taillight shark, which has a similar gland near its tail.
- The objective of luminescence might be to conceal the shark from prey or from predators.

2. CSR Journal excellence awards

- The third edition of The CSR Journal excellence awards will award 18 corporate houses in 6 categories.
- The six categories include education and skill training, women empowerment and child welfare, health and sanitation, environment, agriculture and rural development and sports.
- The theme of the event is 'India First'.

H. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

Q1. Arrange the following in the order of their occurrence on a globe from north to south:

1. Strait of Hormuz
2. Strait of Malacca
3. Strait of Gibraltar
4. Sunda Strait

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

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

Answer

Answer: b

Explanation:

Approx Latitudinal locations:

1. Strait of Hormuz – 26.6 degrees North
2. Strait of Malacca – 4 degrees North
3. Strait of Gibraltar – 36 degrees North
4. Sunda Strait – 5 degrees South

Q2. With reference to mode of dismissal, consider the following pairs:

Constitutional Body

Type of Decision

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Removal of President | Executive decision |
| 2. Removal of SC judge | Legislative decision |
| 3. Removal of UPSC chairperson | Executive decision |

Which of the pair(s) given above are correctly matched?

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

Answer

Answer: c

Explanation:

- The president stands removed when the motion for his/her removal is passed by the second house. Since there is no need for sign of executive, this is a purely legislative decision.
- On the other hand, all other constitutional authorities require either the bill or the order to be signed by the president. Thus, it is an executive decision.

Q3. Which of the following terms is not associated with black holes?

- a. Gravitational Lensing
- b. Chirped pulse amplification
- c. Event horizon
- d. Schwarzschild Radius

Answer

Answer: b

Explanation:

Chirped pulse amplification means **Chirped pulse amplification (CPA)** is a technique for amplifying an ultrashort laser pulse up to the petawatt level with the laser pulse being stretched out temporally and spectrally prior to amplification. For this technique, Donna Strickland and Gérard Mourou received the Nobel Prize in Physics in 2018.

Q4. Consider the following statements about IUCN Red List:

1. It is compiled by the inter-governmental data sources which are shared as per the regulations of global commons.
2. It not only assesses new species, but reassesses existing species to check their status for any improvements.

Choose the correct option:

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

Answer

Answer: b

Explanation:

Statement 1 is incorrect – The Red List process has become a massive enterprise involving the IUCN Global Species Program staff, partner organizations and experts in the IUCN Species Survival Commission and partner networks who compile the species information to make The IUCN Red List the indispensable product it is today. Therefore, it is not restricted to government sources.

Statement 2 is correct. It not only assesses new species, but reassesses existing species to check their status for any improvements.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Critically discuss the discretionary role of speaker in maintaining balance between the treasury and opposition in the times of political crisis. (15 Marks, 250 Words)
2. 'It is time that India stops punching below its weight, when confronted with an adverse scenario between two heavyweights, in the Indo-Pacific region.' Critically analyse, with reference to recent US – Iran crisis. (15 Marks, 250 Words)

