

24 Apr 2020: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. GS 1 Related

B. GS 2 Related

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. [New CJs for Bombay, Orissa, Meghalaya HCs](#)

HEALTH

1. [CSIR lab defends sanitisation tunnel after Ministry's advisory](#)

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. [Trump signs executive order restricting immigration](#)

C. GS 3 Related

ECONOMY

1. [Govt. to suspend IBC rules for up to one year](#)
2. [RBI to restart Operation Twist to manage yields](#)

D. GS 4 Related

E. Editorials

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. [Fishing in troubled waters during a pandemic](#)

HEALTH

1. [Protection for protectors: On safety of healthcare workers](#)

F. Prelims Facts

1. [Karnataka gives Devanahalli Chakota new wings](#)
2. [Kamakhya temple festival called off](#)

G. Tidbits

1. [Industries cannot be forced to pay wages: panel](#)
2. [Australia pitches for trilateral ties](#)
3. [DRDO develops mobile virology lab](#)
4. [\\$30 mn more for WHO: China](#)
5. [Bangladesh to turn back Rohingya boats, says Minister](#)

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

A. GS 1 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

B. GS 2 Related

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. New CJs for Bombay, Orissa, Meghalaya HCs

Context:

Centre has cleared appointment of the next Chief Justices for Bombay, Orissa and Meghalaya High Courts (HC).

Details:

The Supreme Court's Collegium headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde had made the recommendations on the three appointments.

How is the Chief Justice of a High Court appointed?

The Chief Justice and Judges of the High Courts are appointed by the President as per clause (1) of Article 217 of the Constitution.

- Every Judge of a High Court shall be appointed by the [President](#) after consultation with the Chief Justice of India, and the Governor of the State.
- In the case of appointment of a Judge other than the Chief Justice, the Chief Justice of the High Court is also consulted.
- For the purpose of elevation as Chief Justices, the seniority of Judges will be considered on the basis of their seniority in their own High Courts.
- They will be considered for appointment as Chief Justices in other High Courts when their turn would normally have come for being considered for such appointment in their own High Courts.
- Initiation of the proposal for the appointment of Chief Justice of a High Court would be by the Chief Justice of India.
- The Chief Justice of India would send his recommendation for the appointment of a Judge of the High Court as Chief Justice of that High Court or of another High Court, in consultation with the two senior most Judges of the Supreme Court. He would also ascertain the views of the senior most colleague in the Supreme Court who is conversant with the affairs of the High Court in which the recommendee has been functioning.
- After receipt of the recommendation of the Chief Justice of India, the Union Minister of Law, Justice and Company Affairs would obtain the views of the concerned State Government. After receipt of the views of the State Government, the Union Minister of Law, Justice and Company Affairs, will submit proposals to the Prime Minister, who will then advise the President as to the selection.
- As soon as the appointment is approved by the President, the Department of Justice will announce the appointment.

Category: HEALTH**1. CSIR lab defends sanitisation tunnel after Ministry's advisory****Context:**

In the wake of several advisories advocating against the use of sanitisation tunnels as part of efforts to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus, the Pune-based CSIR-National Chemical Laboratory (CSIR-NCL) and the Mumbai-based Institute of Chemical Technology (ICT) issued a joint statement on asserting that the advisories did not have any scientific basis.

Background:

- The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) had, in a recent advisory, cautioned against the spraying of disinfectants on people as part of measures to mitigate the COVID-19 pandemic.

- It had explicitly said that disinfectants are recommended for the cleaning and disinfection only of frequently touched areas or surfaces by those suspected or confirmed to have been infected by the virus.
- It was argued that the use of a disinfectant tunnel, in which sodium hypochlorite is sprayed to prevent the spread of COVID-19, may give a false sense of security and cause harmful side effects.

This topic has been comprehensively covered in 16th April 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis. [Click here](#) to read.

Details:

- The CSIR-NCL and ICT said in a release that the efficacy of sodium hypochlorite, also known as hypo or bleach, ranging from 0.02% to 0.05% weight concentration was studied on personnel walking through mist tunnel unit besides antibacterial activity against standard microorganisms before and after exposure in the walk-through.
- Results indicated that [sodium hypochlorite used in this weight concentration range] did not show any adverse effects on the skin.
- Thus, 0.02% to 0.05% wt. sodium hypochlorite solution (200 to 500 ppm) has been recommended for external body surface sanitisation of personnel walking through the mist tunnel by following standard safety precautions.

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Trump signs executive order restricting immigration

Context:

U.S. President Donald Trump signed an executive order barring certain categories of immigrants from admission to the U.S. for 60 days.

Background:

- The decision has been taken ostensibly to protect Americans' jobs at risk from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- About 26 million Americans have declared themselves unemployed since the pandemic began.
- Mr Trump's policies have progressively tried to restrict both legal and illegal migration to the U.S.
- The Presidential order reads "Without intervention, the United States faces a potentially protracted economic recovery with persistently high unemployment".

Details:

- The immigration of the following categories of non-U.S. citizens is restricted for 60 days:
 - Those outside the U.S., those who do not already have a valid immigrant visa.
 - Those that do not have an official travel document other than a visa that is valid on the effective date of the proclamation or issued on any date thereafter that permits him or her to travel to the United States and seek entry or admission.
- The order has several exemptions, including for those who are already in the U.S. seeking to switch their visa status to permanent residency.
 - Entry into the U.S. for individuals who are already legal permanent residents is not suspended.

- The order also does not apply to spouses of U.S. citizens or those seeking entry on the EB-5 investor visa.
- Some immigrant visa holders such as doctors, nurses, healthcare workers and COVID-19 researchers and their spouses and minor dependents are exempt from the suspension order.
- The new order, while in effect, will prevent individuals from bringing their parents, adult children, or siblings into the U.S. (Mr. Trump has called this “chain migration”).

C. GS 3 Related

Category: ECONOMY

1. Govt. to suspend IBC rules for up to one year

Context:

In a major relief for corporate borrowers hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, the government has decided to amend the insolvency law to suspend up to one year provisions that trigger insolvency proceedings against defaulters.

Details:

- An ordinance would be promulgated to suspend three sections of the IBC (Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code) for up to one year.
- Sections 7, 9 and 10 of the IBC would be suspended for six months and the suspension time can be extended by up to one year.
 - Section 7 and 9 pertain to initiation of corporate insolvency proceedings by a financial creditor and an operational creditor, respectively.
 - Section 10 relates to filing of an application for insolvency resolution by a corporate.

Significance of the move:

- Amendments to the IBC would pave the way for banks to restructure loans.
- The decision in a way provides more leeway for corporate borrowers in repaying their loans.
- Currently, RBI norms prohibit restructuring of loans and resolution has to be done under IBC.
 - As per existing norms, if a payment default exceeds 90 days then the lender concerned has to refer the account for resolution under IBC or any other mechanism permitted by the Reserve Bank of India ([RBI](#)).
 - The lender does not have the option to restructure the loan.
- In March 2020, the government raised the threshold default amount for invoking insolvency proceedings under IBC to ₹1 crore from ₹1 lakh in order to prevent triggering of such proceedings against small and medium enterprises. Many such enterprises are under financial stress due to the lockdown.

Read more about the [Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code](#).

2. RBI to restart Operation Twist to manage yields

Context:

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced simultaneous purchase and sale of government bonds in a bid to soften long-term yields.

Details:

- The central bank will buy ₹10,000 crore of bonds maturing between 2026 and 2030 and sell the same amount of T-bills.
- Such open market operations are known as 'Operation Twist'.
- The move will also aid monetary transmission by prompting banks to pass on interest rate cut benefits to their customers.

Note:

- Operation Twist is the name given to a Federal Reserve monetary policy operation that involves the purchase and sale of bonds.
- Operation Twist was used by the RBI in December 2019 for the first time.

This topic has been covered in 21st December 2019 Comprehensive News Analysis. [Click here](#) to read.

Also watch: [Explained: Operation Twist](#)

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Fishing in troubled waters during a pandemic

Context

- As most countries in the Indo-Pacific region are battling the coronavirus pandemic, China is actively pursuing its military moves in the South China Sea by conducting military drills and deploying large-scale military assets to the maritime area.
- It has further consolidated power and has been exploiting energy resources in the sea.

China Chases Indonesia's Fishing Fleets

- China has been hounding Indonesian fishing vessels in the Indonesian waters off the Natuna Islands.
- Chinese fishing fleets with the support of armed Chinese Coast Guard ships have been encroaching into areas that Indonesia considers exclusive.
- Indonesian fishermen are worried that the government is not doing anything to protect them.
- China's illegal fishing near the Natuna Sea carries global consequences, reminding regional governments of Beijing's expanding claims to the South China Sea through which one-third of the world's maritime trade flows.

Vietnam protests Beijing's Aggression

- The Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs reported that a Chinese Coast Guard vessel “rammed and sunk” a Vietnamese fishing boat carrying eight Vietnamese fishermen in the Paracel Islands in the South China Sea.
- It maintained that this violates “Vietnam’s sovereignty over the Paracel Islands, causes property losses and endangers the lives, safety and legitimate interests of the Vietnamese fishermen”.
 - It underlined that Chinese actions “also run counter to agreements reached by Hanoi and Beijing’s leaders.”
- The Vietnamese government lodged a diplomatic protest with China’s embassy in Hanoi, requesting the Chinese side to investigate the incident, strictly discipline the officers aboard the Chinese vessel aforementioned, prevent the recurrence of similar actions, and make adequate compensation for the losses of the Vietnamese fishermen.

Other instances of Chinese Belligerence

- Besides these incidents, there were satellite images showing a Chinese military plane landing on Kagitingan Reef in the West Philippine Sea.
- There are also reports that China recently opened a research station on Kagitingan and Zamora Reef, also in the West Philippine Sea, to gather data on the ecology, geology, and environment in the Spratlys.

U.S. State Department issued a statement condemning the act

- It said “We call on the PRC to remain focused on supporting international efforts to combat the global pandemic, and to stop exploiting the distraction or vulnerability of other states to expand its unlawful claims in the South China Sea.”

How have countries reacted?

- Among all the claimant countries, **Vietnam** has always taken a strong stand against Chinese actions in the South China Sea.
- Unlike the **Philippines**, which has changed its stance quite often with respect to Chinese activities in the South China Sea, and **Indonesia**, which recognised the Chinese threat in the Natuna Sea rather late, Vietnam has held a firm stand against China.
- Even with regard to its COVID-19 response, Vietnam was the first country in the [ASEAN](#) to suspend all flights to and from China as early as February.

Hence, China has always kept a watch on Vietnamese manoeuvres in the South China Sea dispute.

Window of opportunity

American ties with Vietnam have been on an upward trajectory in recent times.

- Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPS) are operations by U.S. naval and air forces that reinforce internationally-recognized rights and freedoms by challenging excessive maritime claims.
 - Vietnam has been an ardent supporter of the U.S.’s freedom of navigation operations (FONOPS) carried out in the South China Sea.
 - China has always taken a strong stand against these FONOPS of the U.S.
- China has flexed its muscles to match up to these operations.
 - In that direction, China also conducted anti-submarine drills in the disputed areas soon after the Pentagon deployed the U.S.-guided missile destroyer USS McCampbell in a FONOP in the South China Sea before the pandemic hit the U.S. mainland with full force.

Conclusion

- As China seeks to restore its global credibility, creating tensions in the South China Sea should be the least of its priorities.
- A more generous China during a global pandemic might go a long way in ensuring its global ascent.

Category: HEALTH

1. Protection for protectors: On safety of healthcare workers

Context

- Union Cabinet has promulgated an ordinance to amend the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 to make acts of violence against medical personnel a **cognisable and non-bailable offence** and also provide compensation in case of injury or damage or loss to property.

Examples

- Healthcare personnel sent to localities to collect samples from people who are suspected to have been infected or have come in contact with those who have tested positive for the virus have been attacked.
- Some doctors returning home from duty have been prevented from entering their homes and in some cases, even asked to vacate their premises.
- In Chennai, healthcare workers were attacked and decent burial of a neurosurgeon who died of COVID-19 complications was prevented.

Possible reasons for attacking healthcare workers

- The abuse and violence against healthcare workers after the outbreak of COVID-19 in the country has been due to fear and ignorance.
- In many cases, the fear of stigma and isolation resulted in attacks on healthcare workers who had gone to collect samples from those who were part of this congregation.

The ordinance awards the following punishments:

- Normal cases:
 - Jail term: 3 months to 5 years
 - Fine: Rs 50,000 to Rs 2 lakh.
- Serious cases:
 - Jail term: 6 months to 7 years
 - Fine: Rs 1 lakh to Rs 7 lakh.
- In case damage is caused to the vehicles and clinics of health workers, the guilty will be made to pay a fine which is double the market rate of the property damaged.

For more on this, refer to:

[CNA dated April 23, 2020](#)

F. Prelims Facts

1. Karnataka gives Devanahalli Chakota new wings

What's in News?

The citrus fruit Devanahalli Pomelo is getting a fresh cultivation push. The Karnataka Horticulture Department is set to provide the plant to interested farmers in Devanahalli and Doddaballapur regions.

Chakota:

- Devanahalli Pomelo, a citrus fruit, is popularly known as chakota.
- It is exclusively grown in the region around Devanahalli taluk, Bangalore Rural District, Karnataka, as an exotic crop variety.
- The Devanahalli Pomelo is protected under the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration & Protection) Act (GI Act) 1999 of the Government of India.
- The fruit enjoys a [Geographical Indication tag](#).

2. Kamakhya temple festival called off

What's in News?

With the lockdown, the annual festival at the Kamakhya temple has been cancelled for the first time in its recorded history.

Kamakhya Temple:

- Legends say the temple atop the Nilachal Hills, whose northern face slopes down to the Brahmaputra river, was built by the demon king Narakasura.
- Records are available from 1565 when Koch King Naranarayana had the temple rebuilt.
- Kamakhya is one of the 51 shaktipeeths, or holy sites, for the followers of the Shakti cult, each representing a body part of Sati, Lord Shiva's companion.
- There is no idol of the presiding deity but she is worshipped in the form of a yoni-like (female genitals) stone instead, over which a natural spring flows.

Ambubachi Mela:

- Ambubachi Mela is an annual Hindu mela held at Kamakhya Temple in Guwahati, Assam.
- The annual festival marks the menstruation of the goddess.
- The Ambubachi Mela symbolises the fertility cult of goddess Kamakhya.
- The festival is also known as 'Mahakumbh of the East' as it draws lakhs of devotees from all over the world.

G. Tidbits

1. Industries cannot be forced to pay wages: panel

What's in News?

The Parliamentary Committee on Labour, in its report on the Industrial Relations Code, 2019, has recommended that in case of natural calamities, payment of wages to the workers until the re-establishment of the industry may be unjustifiable.

Details:

- The Industrial Code makes it incumbent upon the employer to pay 50% wages to the workers/employees who are laid off due to a shortage of power, coal, raw material and such instances for 45 days.
- However, the committee has expressed reservation on payment of the prescribed percentage of wages to the workers in the event of closure of an establishment due to a natural calamity.
- The report states that, in case of natural calamities like earthquake, flood, super cyclone, etc. which often result in closure of establishments for a considerably longer period without the employer's fault, payment of wages to the workers until the re-establishment of the industry may be unjustifiable.
- It is opined that the ongoing lockdown to check the spread of COVID-19 can be counted as one such calamity.

Industrial Relations Code, 2019:

- The Industrial Relations Code, 2019 is an amalgamation of three laws — the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, the Trade Unions Act, 1926, and the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946.
- The law was introduced in the [Lok Sabha](#) in November 2019 and was subsequently referred to the Standing Committee on Labour.

2. Australia pitches for trilateral ties

- Australian High Commissioner-designate, in an address to the National Defence College (NDC), said that India and Australia would face common challenges in the Indo-Pacific as COVID-19 was stretching much of the world's governmental capacity.
- He called for greater cooperation, especially among India, Australia and Indonesia.
- "As a starting point, we should build on last year's successful trilateral maritime security workshop with Indonesia to identify new ways that our three countries can collaborate to be the best possible custodians of the Indian Ocean," he said.
- It is believed that cooperation between India and Australia in Southeast Asia is a natural fit.

3. DRDO develops mobile virology lab

The Defence Minister has inaugurated through videoconference, a mobile virology research and diagnostics laboratory (MVRDL) for:

- Carrying out diagnosis of COVID-19.
- In virus-culturing for drug screening.
- Comprehensive immune profiling of patients towards vaccine development.
- Early clinical trials specific to the Indian population.

This topic has been covered in 23rd April PIB Summary and Analysis. [Click here](#) to read.

4. \$30 mn more for WHO: China

- China has said that it would donate another \$30 million to the World Health Organization (WHO), which is seeking more than \$1 billion to fund its battle against the pandemic.

- The pledge comes after U.S. President Donald Trump suspended funding to the WHO accusing the organisation of promoting Chinese disinformation about the Coronavirus, which emerged in Wuhan in 2019.

5. Bangladesh to turn back Rohingya boats, says Minister

- Bangladesh's Foreign Minister has said that the country would not accept two boats carrying hundreds of reportedly starving Rohingya refugees.
- Bangladesh has ordered increased patrols in the Bay of Bengal to stop the boats from entering the country.
- About one million Rohingya are in camps on the Bangladesh-Myanmar border having fled decades of persecution in their home region in Rakhine.

Read more about the [Rohingya Crisis](#).

Concerns:

- The new controversy over stranded Rohingya blew up a week after dozens starved to death on a boat that was left at sea for two months before it could land.
- Activists are fearful that large numbers of Rohingya, a persecuted Muslim minority from mostly Buddhist Myanmar, may be trapped on boats and unable to reach other countries.
- Rights group Amnesty International has said two fishing trawlers carrying some 500 Rohingya women, men and children are in the Bay of Bengal after being pushed away by Malaysia.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. The annual Hindu festival held at Kamakhya Temple in Guwahati symbolising the fertility cult of goddess is called:

- a. Tuloni Biya
- b. Ambubachi Mela
- c. Dehing Patkai Festival
- d. Majuli Festival

Answer: b

Explanation:

- Ambubachi Mela is an annual Hindu mela held at Kamakhya Temple in Guwahati, Assam.
- The annual festival marks the menstruation of the goddess.
- The Ambubachi Mela symbolises the fertility cult of goddess Kamakhya.
- The festival is also known as 'Mahakumbh of the East' as it draws lakhs of devotees from all over the world.

Q2. Consider the following statements with respect to Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary:

1. Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary is part of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve.
2. It is contiguous to the protected areas of Nagarhole and Bandipur of Karnataka and Mudumalai of Tamil Nadu.

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

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary is part of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve. Wayanad wildlife sanctuary is contiguous to the protected areas of Nagarhole and Bandipur of Karnataka on the north-east and Mudumalai of Tamil Nadu on the south-east.

Q3. Arrange the following from South to North:

- 1. Paracel Islands
- 2. Spratly Islands
- 3. Senkaku Islands
- 4. Pratas Islands

Options:

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

Arrangement from South to North:

Spratly Islands, Paracel Islands, Pratas Islands, Senkaku Islands.

Q4. Which of the following Geographical Tags are credited to the state of Karnataka?

- 1. Devanahalli Pomelo
- 2. Appemidi mango
- 3. Kinhall toys
- 4. Gulegudd Khana fabric

Choose the correct option:

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 1, 2 and 3 only
- c. 1, 2, 3 and 4
- d. 1 only

Answer: c

Explanation:

Karnataka has the highest number of GI-tagged products. The GI Tagged products Devanahalli Pomelo (Chakota), Appemidi mango, Kinhal toys, Gulegudd Khana fabric are all credited to the state of Karnataka.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Could China's aggressive moves in the South China Sea region, despite the pandemic, lead to enhanced cooperation between the U.S. and affected countries? Critically analyze.
2. Attacks on healthcare workers deprive people of urgently needed care, endanger health care providers, and undermine health systems. Comment.