

02 Aug 2020: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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B. GS 2 Related

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. One ration card facility in 24 States now

Context:

The Union Food Minister has announced that Three more States —Manipur, Nagaland and Uttarakhand and the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir will now offer the 'one nation one ration card' facility.

- With this, the facility was is available in 24 States.

Read more about the One Nation One Ration Card Scheme, covered in 2nd May 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis.

2. 'Plea unilaterally listed by SC official'

Context:

Noted civil rights lawyer Prashant Bhushan has approached the Supreme Court for a declaration that a defective contempt petition against him was unilaterally listed by the court's Secretary General for judicial hearing before a Bench led by Justice Arun Mishra.

Details:

- The contempt petition was filed by Mahek Maheshwari against Mr. Bhushan's tweet on a photograph of Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde on a motorbike.

- This tweet and another one by him about the Supreme Court led to Justice Mishra Bench initiating suo motu contempt proceedings against him.
- Two days later, the same Bench resumed hearings in a 2009 contempt case.
 - This case concerned Mr. Bhushan's remarks about the judiciary in an interview with Tehelka magazine.

What is the Issue?

- Bhushan wants both these orders to be recalled, or, in the alternative, be heard as and when physical court hearings resume.
- In his petition, Mr. Bhushan contended that the Supreme Court Rules, 2013, required the defective contempt petition to be returned to Maheshwari. Instead, the Secretary General placed the case before a Bench of Justices Mishra, B.R. Gavai and Krishna Murari for hearing.
- He said the plea filed by Maheshwari was defective as it did not have the prior consent of the Attorney General or the Solicitor General. And that the Secretary General's action was "unconstitutional, illegal, void and non-est".
- Bhushan has said that the action of the Secretary General was illegal and amounted to usurpation of the role of the Chief Justice of India as the 'Master of the Roster'.

Read: [Master of Roster – Issues in News](#)

Category: HEALTH

1. ICMR fast-tracks approvals for Israeli research coordinated by DRDO

Context:

The Defence Research and Development Organisation ([DRDO](#)) is collaborating with Israel's Directorate of Defence Research and Development (DRDD) to conduct trials for rapid testing for COVID-19.

This topic has been covered in [24th July 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis](#).

C. GS 3 Related

Category: ECONOMY

1. Credit guarantee extended to larger firms, self-employed

Context:

The Centre has expanded its credit guarantee scheme for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to cover loans given to larger firms, as well as to self-employed people and professionals who have taken loans for business purposes.

Details:

- The Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme was rolled out as part of the Centre's [Aatmanirbhar package](#) in response to the COVID-19 crisis.
- It has a corpus of ₹41,600 crore and provides fully guaranteed additional funding of up to ₹3 lakh crore.
- Eligible MSMEs had to have an annual turnover up to ₹100 crore, with outstanding loans of up to ₹25 crore as on February 29, 2020.

Read more about Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme covered in 10th June 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis.

2. Samsung, Foxconn, 20 others apply under incentive scheme

Context:

The government has said that a total of 22 companies, have filed applications under the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme that aims to boost local manufacturing of mobile phones and components.

Details:

- This is expected to bring in additional investment of about ₹11,000 crore in electronics manufacturing, while leading to total production worth ₹11.5 lakh crore over the next five years

This topic has been covered in 1st August 2020 PIB Summary and Analysis. [Click here](#) to read.

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. Three States rank high in dhole conservation

Context:

A study has pointed out that Karnataka, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh rank high in the conservation of the endangered dhole in India.

What does the study say?

- Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Telangana and Goa will need to increase financial investments in the forest and wildlife sectors, and reduce the ease of granting forest clearances for infrastructure projects.
- It is important to improve habitat conditions and prey densities in the Eastern Ghats of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Odisha. Doing so would strengthen the link between dhole populations in the Western Ghats and central India.
- It highlights the need for a targeted management plan for scientific monitoring of the species.
- The Western Ghats perhaps supports the largest dhole population in the world and is, therefore, a critical conservation landscape for the species.

Dhole:



- Also known as Asiatic wild dog Dhole (*Cuon alpinus*) is native to Central, South, East Asia, and Southeast Asia.
- Dholes play an important role as apex predators in forest ecosystems.
- Dholes hunt in packs and tend to venture into forested landscapes adjoining protected areas.
- Besides the tiger, the dhole is the only large carnivore in India to be classified in the 'endangered' category by the [IUCN](#).
- It is protected under Schedule II of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Courting controversy in Rajasthan

What's in News?

- The [Governor](#) of Rajasthan, Kalraj Mishra repeatedly turned down the advice of the Council of Ministers to convene a session of the Rajasthan Assembly.
 - He insisted that a 21-day notice is essential for a session.
 - Subsequently demanded to know the purpose of calling it.
 - He laid out other conditions such as maintenance of social distancing norms and recording of proceedings.

- The request to summon the House was agreed to by the Governor, only after the Council of Ministers agreed to the 21-day notice.

The Governor's action has raised the question whether he has the power to turn down the recommendation of the Council of Ministers.

What are the powers of a Governor?

- In 2016, in the Nabam Rebia, Bamang Felix v. Deputy Speaker and others case, the [Supreme Court of India](#) (5 judge Constitution bench) examined the powers of the Governor, particularly with reference to summoning an Assembly session.
- The SC held that the **Governor's power under Article 174 to summon, prorogue and dissolve the house(s) must be exercised in consonance with the aid and advice of the chief minister and his council of ministers.**
 - The Governor is prevented [from taking] an individual call on the issue at his own will, or in his own discretion.
- The "discretion given to the Governor in respect of his relations with the Legislative Assembly is not only limited and restricted by the Constitution but also by the Rules framed by the Legislative Assembly under Article 208 of the Constitution.

Can the Governor direct the agenda or procedure of the legislature?

- According to a former Secretary-General of the Lok Sabha – D.T. Achary, the proceedings of the legislature are guided by rules made by it, and the Governor cannot have any say in it.
- He states that the rule of 21-day notice for the session was first set by the Lok Sabha and adapted by State legislatures. The Lok Sabha has since reduced it to 15 days. But the Speaker has the powers to call a session with a shorter notice.

When can the Governor act without the advice of the Council of Ministers?

- The Governor has special powers to advance tribal welfare, in some states.
- A Governor can reserve a bill passed by the legislature for the consideration of the President of India, and he or she can recommend President's rule in a State.
- If the Chief Minister and his Council of Ministers lose their majority, or they refuse to recommend a session in six months, or there is a reasonable doubt about their majority, the Governor could demand a session.
- The Governor invites a person who he thinks has the legislative majority to form a government, but the use of this power cannot be arbitrary.
- If there is a Council of Ministers with a majority, the Governor has to go by its recommendation to dissolve the legislature.
- In the event of a Chief Minister and his Council of Ministers losing the majority, the Governor can use his or her discretion to either explore the formation of a new government or dissolve the House.

Conclusion:

The misuse of the Governor's office by parties in power at the Centre to disturb State governments in control of the Opposition has remained a scourge.

- However, The Constituent Assembly very consciously limited the Governor's discretionary powers.
- According to the 2016 Supreme Court judgment, a Governor cannot have an overriding authority, over the representatives of the people, who constitute the state legislature and/or even the executive government functioning under the council of ministers with the Chief Minister as the head.

2. The subject of contempt of court

The editorial talks about the rationale for the provision for "contempt of court" and goes on to discuss if the judicial institutions need protection.

What's in News?

Contempt proceedings have been initiated by the Supreme Court of India, on its own motion, against advocate-activist Prashant Bhushan.

Contempt of Court:

- Contempt of court, is the offence of being disobedient to or disrespectful toward a court of law and its officers in the form of behaviour that opposes or defies the authority, justice and dignity of the court.
- Contempt of court, as a concept, seeks to protect judicial institutions from motivated attacks and unwarranted criticism, and as a legal mechanism to punish those who lower its authority.

How did the concept of contempt come into being?

- The concept is several centuries old.
- In England, it is a common law principle that seeks to protect the judicial power of the king, initially exercised by himself, and later by a panel of judges who acted in his name.
- Over time, any kind of disobedience to judges, or obstruction of the implementation of their directives, or comments and actions that showed disrespect towards them came to be punishable.

What is the statutory basis for contempt of court?

- There were pre-Independence laws of contempt in India.
- When the Constitution was adopted, contempt of court was made one of the restrictions on freedom of speech and expression.
- Separately, Article 129 of the Constitution conferred on the Supreme Court the power to punish contempt of itself.
 - Article 215 conferred a corresponding power on the High Courts.
 - Statutory backing to this power is provided by the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971.

What are the kinds of contempt of court?

- The law codifying contempt classifies it as civil and criminal.
- Civil contempt: It is committed when someone willfully disobeys a court order, or wilfully breaches an undertaking given to the court.
- Criminal contempt: It consists of three forms:
 - Words, written or spoken, signs and actions that “scandalise” or “tend to scandalise” or “lower” or “tends to lower” the authority of any court.
 - Prejudices or interferes with any judicial proceeding.
 - Interferes with or obstructs the administration of justice.

What is the rationale behind the provision?

- Making allegations against the judiciary or individual judges, attributing motives to judgments and judicial functioning and any scurrilous attack on the conduct of judges are normally considered matters that scandalise the judiciary.
- The rationale for this provision is that courts must be protected from tendentious attacks that lower its authority, defame its public image and make the public lose faith in its impartiality.

What is the punishment?

- The punishment for contempt of court is simple imprisonment for a term up to six months and/or a fine of up to ₹. 2,000.

What is not contempt of court?

- Fair and accurate reporting of judicial proceedings will not amount to contempt of court.
- Any fair criticism on the merits of a judicial order after a case is heard and disposed of is not contempt.

Is truth a defence against a contempt charge?

- For many years, truth was seldom considered a defence against a charge of contempt. There was an impression that the judiciary tended to hide any misconduct among its individual members in the name of protecting the image of the institution.
- The Act was amended in 2006 to introduce truth as a valid defence, if it was in public interest and was invoked in a genuine manner.

Category: EDUCATION

1. Education and NEP

The editorial talks about the key proposals of the draft National Education Policy and the major challenges involved.

This topic has been covered in 30th July 2020 and 31st July 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis.

Category: DEFENCE

1. The 'game-changer' fighters – Rafale fighter jets

This topic has been covered in **15th October 2019** and **28th July 2020** Comprehensive News Analysis.

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. Will environment regulation be weakened?

Context:

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has published the draft [Environment Impact Assessment](#) (EIA) Notification 2020, with the intention of replacing the existing EIA Notification, 2006 under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

- The editorial talks about the key changes in the Environment Impact Assessment Notification compared to the past.

This topic has been covered in **1st August 2020** Comprehensive News Analysis. [Click here](#) to read.

F. Tidbits

1. Novel coronavirus circulated unnoticed in bats for decades, study says

What's in News?

A study published in Nature Microbiology says that the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2), has been circulating unnoticed in bats for decades.

- Bats have been the primary reservoirs for novel coronavirus.
- The SARS-CoV-2 virus is likely to have diverged from closely related bat viruses called the Sarbecovirus, 40-70 years ago.
- The authors analysed the evolutionary history of SARS-CoV-2 using genomic data on sarbecoviruses.
- The results suggest the presence of a single lineage circulating in bats with properties that allowed it to infect human cells.
 - This was also the case with the bat sarbecoviruses related to the 2002 SARS lineage.
- Recently, Chinese researchers had found that SARS-CoV-2 is most closely related to RaTG13 sarbecovirus, which was isolated from a horseshoe bat in Yunnan province in 2013.
 - There was 96% genome sequence identity between SARS-CoV-2 and RaTG13.

Significance of the study:

- The findings demonstrate how critical it is to undertake a genomic analysis of bat viruses.
- Many species of bat harbour several viruses which can cross over to new hosts. When their habitats are disrupted, more such threats are likely to emerge.

Read: [How bats harbour several viruses yet not get sick?](#)

2. NEP drops Mandarin from language list

What's in News?

The National Education Policy (NEP) has dropped Mandarin (Chinese) from its list of foreign languages that can be taught in schools.

Details:

- The language was included in the draft policy released in May 2019, but is missing from the final document approved by the Cabinet.
- However, Higher Education Secretary has pointed that Schools are free to offer other languages.
- The plan for teaching Mandarin in Indian schools and Hindi language instruction in Chinese schools was part of an Education Exchange Programme signed by both countries in 2006, which was renewed by Prime Minister Modi during his visit to China in 2015.
 - The plan included a Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2012.
 - In 2014, the CBSE then introduced Mandarin in some schools, but the plan floundered due to unavailability of Chinese language teachers.
- Since 2017, the government has systematically curbed annual scholarship programmes with China as well.
- The U.S., Australia, Japan and South Korea that offer Chinese at the school level.

3. Assam's displaced get a taste of UN camps

What's in News?

Camps similar to ones the United Nations runs for the Rohingya in Bangladesh, Kurds in Syria and other conflict refugees across the globe have been set for those displaced by the floods in Assam.

- The camps were redesigned after the 2018 flash flood in eastern Assam's Golaghat district caused by the 25MW Doyang Hydroelectric Project in Wokha district of Nagaland.
- At present, Child-friendly spaces [CFS] have been included as an integral part of the relief camp management system.
- Technical assistance was provided by [UNICEF](#) to the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) in the development of the policy guidelines for managing the CFS.

4. Chief of U.S.-based ‘terror group’ arrested, says Iran

What’s in News?

Iran has declared that it has arrested Jamshid Sharmahd – the head of a US-based terrorist group.

- He is the leader of the opposition royalist group known as the Kingdom Assembly of Iran, or Tondar (Farsi for Thunder).
- Iran alleges that the “Thunder terrorist group” operates in the United States.
- He is accused of being behind a deadly 2008 bombing in the southern city of Shiraz and of other, abortive attacks.
- He is also accused of leading armed and sabotage operations inside Iran.

G. Prelims Facts

1. Volcanic Venus

What’s in News?

According to a recent study, Venus may still be geologically active.

- It was earlier believed that the surface of Venus had cooled and hardened so much that hot material deep within its surface could not puncture through to the surface.
- Now, a study has identified 37 active volcanoes on the surface of Venus by numerically modelling the activity on the planet.

Significance:

- It may help identify target areas for future missions.

2. Arab world’s first nuclear plant achieves criticality

What’s in News?

United Arab Emirates has announced the start-up of its Barakah nuclear power plant.

- Barakah was built by a consortium led by the Korea Electric Power Corporation.
- The plant is located on a sparsely populated strip of desert on the Persian Gulf coast. It has 4 nuclear reactors.
- It will have a total capacity of 5,600 megawatts, which is almost a fifth of the country’s current installed generating capacity.
- Its first nuclear reactor has achieved first criticality.
- This has opened the way for commercial operations.

Read more about [Arab’s first Space Mission to Mars](#).

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The atmosphere of Venus is denser than the Earth's atmosphere.
2. Venus rotates in the clockwise direction in retrograde rotation.

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:

- The atmosphere of Venus is denser than the Earth's atmosphere.
- Venus rotates clockwise in retrograde rotation once every 243 Earth days. Therefore, a Venus sunrise occurs in the west and sunset in the east.

Q2. Consider the following statements with respect to Bal Gangadhar Tilak:

1. He is the founder of the Deccan Education Society.
2. He launched the Home Rule League in Madras.

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: a

Explanation:

- All India Home Rule League was launched by Tilak in April 1916 at Belgaum. Annie Besant launched the Home Rule League in September 1916 at Madras. They had the common objective of achieving self-government in India. There was an informal understanding between both the leagues wherein Tilak's league worked in Maharashtra (except Bombay), Karnataka, Berar and the Central Provinces.

Q3. Dhole is placed under which of the following categories in the IUCN Red List?

1. Critically Endangered
2. Endangered
3. Vulnerable
4. Extinct in the Wild

Answer: b

Explanation:

- Also known as Asiatic wild dog Dhole (*Cuon alpinus*) is native to Central, South, East Asia, and Southeast Asia.
- Besides the tiger, the dhole is the only large carnivore in India to be classified in the 'endangered' category by the IUCN.
- It is protected under Schedule II of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

Q4. Consider the following statements with respect to Barakah nuclear power plant:

1. It is the largest Nuclear Power Plant in the world.
2. It is the United Arab Emirates's first nuclear power station.
3. It is located in the Persian Gulf coast.

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

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

- Statement 2 and 3 are correct.
- Barakah nuclear power plant is not the largest Nuclear Power Plant in the world. It will have a total capacity of 5,600 megawatts.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. With the freedom of speech and expression being recognised as a fundamental right, is a law for criminal contempt asynchronous with India's democratic system? Critically analyse. (15 Marks, 250 Words).

-
2. In the backdrop of several questions being raised about the constitutionality of governors' actions on many occasions in the recent past, discuss the discretionary powers of the Governor mentioned in the Constitution of India and how these discretionary powers have led to controversies. (15 Marks, 250 Words).

