14 Sep 2020: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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A. GS 1 Related

Category: SOCIAL ISSUES

1. Life goes off the rails

Context:

- The Supreme Court, in an order on 31st August 2020 had directed the removal of 48,000 slums along the railway tracks in the national capital within three months.
- Lakhs of slum dwellers living alongside railway tracks in Delhi are racked with anxiety and uncertainty ever since.

This topic has been covered in the 12th September 2020 CNA.

B. GS 2 Related

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Monsoon session set for stormy start

Context:

The monsoon session of Parliament, delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, is set to begin with strict safety protocols in place.

Details:

- The session, with four-hour sittings for each House in shifts, including on weekends, will see 11 ordinances, which were cleared during the lockdown.
- Up to 45 Bills will be tabled in both Houses for approval.
- While Question Hour has been removed from the business of the day, questions that require written answers will be tabled, and a 30-minute Zero Hour for MPs to raise issues of importance has been added.

This topic has been covered in the 3rd September 2020 CNA.

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Status quo on LAC after Jaishankar-Wang meet

Context:

There is a freeze on all movements and activities along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh after External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar met his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, in Moscow and agreed on a five-point solution to ease the border tension.

This topic has been covered in the 12th September 2020 CNA.

C. GS 3 Related

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. Gas well fire put out 110 days after blowout

Context:

The flame in the Baghjan well in Tinsukia district of eastern Assam has been tamed, 110 days after it had a disastrous blowout.

Background:

This issue has been covered in the 18th June 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis.

Details:

- A blowout is an uncontrolled escape of gas at great speeds, usually due to equipment failure.

- The killing of the well entails injecting the killing fluid (a viscous cement mud) through the inlet of the blowout preventer to a depth of 3.5 km. The fluid is expected to plug subterranean perforations and block the surge of natural gas.

2. Smoke chokes U.S. West Coast as wildfire rages on

Context:

Northern California wildfire smoke that has posed a major health hazard to millions has choked the West Coast.

This issue has been covered in the 11th September 2020 CNA.

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: ECONOMY

1. Exploiting the Chinese exit

Context:

- The article analyzes the **economic opportunities which have opened up for India post the Chinese app ban in India.**

Background:

The Chinese app ban in India:

- The government in September 2020 banned 118 applications — a majority being Chinese, on grounds of national security and sovereignty threat posed by these apps.
- In June 2020, the government had banned 59 Applications on similar grounds.

For more information on this issue, refer to:

CNA dated July 5, 2020: The impact of the Chinese apps ban

- India has additionally blocked Chinese companies from contracting to work on its 5G mobile phone infrastructure.
- Notably, the announcement comes amid tension between India and China along the LAC.

The Chinese growth story:

- In order to appreciate the significance of the Indian move, the article examines the growth of the Chinese in the technology sector over the years.

Consolidating domestic market

- During the initial years of the global Internet boom, **the Chinese government began erecting censorship barriers and banned several popular Western websites and applications**. The Chinese intent behind such a move was to filter and screen Western content available to its citizens.
- This had forced IT giants like Google and others to either fully pull out of the Chinese market or drastically reduce their presence in China.
- The censorship and other restrictions of international companies in the field of the internet have **paid rich dividends for the domestic Chinese economy**.
- During this time the Chinese Internet market experienced a high growth rate. The active internet users in China grew from just over 300 million in early 2010 to over 900 million users currently.
- The Great Internet Wall of China had **helped insulate Chinese entrepreneurs from Big Tech of Silicon Valley.** This allowed home-grown firms such as WeChat and Alibaba a market to expand on their businesses.
- Though initially, the homegrown firms built copy cat versions of popular apps from Silicon Valley, they soon morphed into distinctly Chinese applications tailored solely to the home market.
- Baidu has replaced Google in China. Youku Tudou is YouTube, and Xiaohongshu is a version of Instagram. WeChat which began as a simple messaging app has diversified into other fields like social media, news, messaging, payments, and digital commerce.

Venturing into international market:

- Recognizing their mistake in failing to make themselves an IT outsourcing services superpower like India, China **has also been focussing on external markets**.
  - o Popular apps like **TikTok and PUBG** have captured international markets.
  - o The Chinese multinational technology company, **Huawei Technologies** is a leading global provider of information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure and smart devices.
- China has been **investing heavily in new technologies like [Artificial Intelligence](#)** and is leading global efforts in fields like "neural networks" and "deep learning". This would place China as a **technological superpower in the coming times**.
  - o Artificial neural networks, also referred to as neural networks, are computing systems vaguely inspired by the biological neural networks of a human brain. A neural network is a series of algorithms that endeavours to recognize underlying relationships in a set of data. Neural networks are used for solving many business problems such as sales forecasting, customer research, data validation, and risk management. And even for natural language understanding.
  - o Deep learning is part of a broader family of machine learning methods based on artificial neural networks. Deep learning AI is able to learn without human supervision, drawing from data that is both unstructured and unlabeled. Deep learning helps process data for use in detecting objects, recognizing speech, translating languages, and making decisions.

Details:

- The article argues that the **decision to ban Chinese apps in India** is not only a geopolitical move but also a strategic trade manoeuvre that can **have a significant positive economic impact for India.**
- Banning these Chinese websites and applications to the Indian public effectively **allows our home-grown IT talent to focus on the newly arrived Internet user.**

Potential of Indian Market:

- With over 600 million internet users, **India is the second-largest online market in the world**, ranked only behind China.
- India has been witnessing the widening reach of Internet connectivity across the country with hundreds of millions of non-urban Indians emerging as new consumers. India is among the **fastest-growing markets for digital consumers** with the country recording double-digit growth over the past several years, driven by rapid internet growth in rural areas.
- The **data generated by this large consumer base** is a valuable commodity for internet-based companies.
  - The Chinese Internet industry could be interested in using data generated by the Indian consumers to test and implement the AI technologies they have been developing.
  - The big tech firms from Silicon Valley have been looking to consolidate their base in Indian markets.
- India is also unique in the sense that India hosts **diverse markets** given the regional barriers created by the numerous languages spoken in India. This provides an accretion of excellent smaller markets, with **opportunities for specialised Internet services** created for a local community.

Concerns with Indian approach:

- While big tech firms from Silicon Valley and China in both hardware and software have been in a tussle over the Indian consumer, **India's focus remains on exporting IT services** while paying little attention to servicing our own nation's tech market.
- While India's focus has been on exporting IT services, the vacuum created between the increasing demand and limited domestic supply has been filled by American Big Tech and by the Chinese.

Way forward for India:

Shifting focus to domestic market:

- The primary Indian IT objective must **shift focus from the export of IT services to servicing the domestic market.**
- Suitable policy corrections are required in this direction by the administration to attract investment in this sector.

Products modelled according to local needs:

- After the ban on several Chinese apps, India has had some copycat replacement websites and applications. But such copycat versions won't be enough for India to make full use of China's exit.
- The fundamental focus of the new digital products should be to **provide for regional necessities and preferences.**
- There is a need to create hyper-local and hyper-regional services of high quality that are also portable across our linguistic diversity. This could **help establish a strong Internet market in India.**

Focussing on accessibility:

- Technology companies all over the world have focused their efforts on 15% of the world's population with deep pockets while largely ignoring the other six billion denizens of the world's population.
- Indian entrepreneurs should focus on providing services and products of high quality that will be used by everyday Indians across the country with focussed attention towards increasing accessibility.

Technology export:

- India could consider sharing its technological know-how with other countries in the "south", such as those in Africa and Latin America. This would help **expand the market for Indian companies.**

Category: HEALTH

1. Reducing India's cancer burden

Context:

- The article discusses the necessary steps to be taken to help reduce India's cancer burden.

Background:

- As per the data provided by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)-National Centre for Disease Informatics and Research (NCDIR) National Cancer Registry Programme Report of August 2020, there are an estimated 13.9 lakh cancer cases in India.
- **India has witnessed a steady rise in cancer cases over the years**. India's cancer burden has increased by 2.6 times between 1990 to 2016.

For more information on this, refer to:

CNA dated Aug 19, 2020: Report predicts 12% rise in India's cancer burden

CNA dated Dec 26, 2019: Study warns of growing cancer burden across India

Details:

Government efforts:

- India is committed to **achieving a one-third reduction in cancer-related deaths by 2030 as part of the Sustainable Development Goals.**
- Given that personal hygiene accounts as a distant driver of cancer, t**he Swachh Bharat Abhiyan** could play a significant role in India's efforts in reducing the impact of cancer in India.
- The **FSSAI's new labelling and display regulations** will encourage inter-sectoral and multi-sectoral action against cancer-causing chemicals in food items.
- Initiatives such as the **National Tobacco Control Programme** will help address the major risk factor associated with cancer in Indian men.
- The Government of India has been implementing the **National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke (NPCDCS)** since 2010 up to District level under the National Health Mission.
- The government initiatives like Ayushman Bharat, Swasthya Bharat, Poshan Abhiyaan and Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana, the **National Health Policy focussed on preventive healthcare** would play a critical role in India's efforts against cancer.

Way forward:

- Given the socioeconomic impact of cancer, reducing cancer is a prerequisite for addressing social and economic inequity, stimulating economic growth and accelerating sustainable development.
- However, apart from investing in cancer treatment, there is also the need to focus on three key aspects: **risk reduction, early detection and programmatic and policy solutions**.

Risk reduction:

- As per the available data, nearly 50%-60% of cancer cases can be avoided by tackling the known risk factors effectively. **Promoting certain behaviour** can help reduce such potential risk factors.
  - **Tobacco use is a major avoidable risk factor for the development of cancer in 27% of cancer cases.** Other important risk factors include alcohol use, inappropriate diet, low physical activity, obesity, and pollution.
  - In men, the most common cancers are of the lung, oral cavity, stomach and oesophagus.

Increasing awareness:

- There is a need for a multisectoral approach that brings together government, private practitioners and civil society to **increase health literacy regarding cancer.**
- In women, breast, cervix, ovary and gall bladder cancers are the most common forms of cancer. Timely and quality information on the symptoms can **help in identifying cancer in its early stages** and this will reduce the mortality rates due to cancer substantially.

Strengthening health infrastructure:

- The existing health systems need to be strengthened so that there is greater access to screening, early detection, and timely, affordable treatment.

Focussing on cancer research:

- **Domestic cancer research is of crucial importance to guide our efforts on cancer prevention and control**.
- Making **cancer a notifiable disease** could help drive cancer research further by providing greater access to accurate, relevant data that can drive policy decisions.
  - A notifiable disease is any disease that is required by law to be reported to government authorities. The collation of information allows the authorities to monitor the disease.

Data-driven policies:

- There is a need to **focus on programmatic and policy solutions for large-scale impact**.
- Programmatic and policy-level solutions need to be driven by data. The information collected through the National Cancer Registry Programme can be helpful in this direction.

F. Prelims Facts

1. Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (MP-IDSA)

What's in News?

The Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (MP-IDSA) has informed its faculty that they "will be unable to disburse salary and pension for August and September 2020".

- It is a premier think tank functioning under the Ministry of Defence (MoD).
- The MP-IDSA was established in 1965 as a registered society and is funded by the MoD.
- It is governed by the Executive Council (EC) with Defence Minister as the President and Defence and Foreign Secretaries as ex-officio members.

- All decisions related to the institute are taken by the EC with the approval of the MoD.
- As a full grant institution, the MP-IDSA is eligible for all Central Pay Commissions.

G. Tidbits

Nothing here for today!!!

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements reagrding the National Program for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, CVD and Stroke (NPCDCS):

1. The program is being implemented under the National Health Mission.
2. The NPCDCS program has two components.
3. India is committed to achieving a one-third reduction in Non-Communicable Disease-related deaths by 2030 as part of the Sustainable Development Goals.

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

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

CHECK ANSWERS:-

Answer: d

Explanation:

- National Program for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, CVD and Stroke (NPCDCS) program is being implemented under the National Health Mission.
- The NPCDCS program has two components viz. (i) Cancer (ii) Diabetes, CVDs and Stroke.
- India is committed to achieving a one-third reduction in Non-Communicable Diseases related deaths by 2030 as part of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Q2. Consider the following statements with respect to notifiable diseases:

1. A notifiable disease is any disease that is required by law to be reported to government authorities.
2. The Centre has notified several diseases such as cholera, diphtheria, tuberculosis, AIDS.
3. Failure to report a notifiable disease is a criminal offence.

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

a. 3 only
b. 1 and 2 only
c. 2 and 3 only
d. None of the above

CHECK ANSWERS:-

Answer: d

Explanation:

- A notifiable disease is any disease that is required by law to be reported to government authorities.
- The Centre has notified several diseases such as cholera, diphtheria, encephalitis, leprosy, meningitis, pertussis (whooping cough), plague, tuberculosis, AIDS, hepatitis, measles, yellow fever, malaria, dengue.
- Any failure to report a notifiable disease is a criminal offence and the state government can take necessary actions against defaulters.

Q3. Which of these countries have a coastline on the Mediterranean Sea?

1. Albania
2. Turkey
3. Syria
4. France
5. Serbia
6. Israel

Choose the correct option:

a. 1, 2, 3 and 6 only
b. 2, 4 and 5 only
c. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 only
d. 3, 4 and 6 only

CHECK ANSWERS:-

Answer: c

Explanation:

Serbia does not have a coastline on the Mediterranean Sea.

Q4. Consider the following statements with respect to the Joint Session of the Parliament:

1. A joint session is presided over by the Chairman of Rajya Sabha or the Speaker.
2. The joint sitting of the Parliament is called by the Rajya Sabha Chairman.
3. In case of a disagreement between both the houses with respect to Constitution Amendment Bills, there is no provision for a joint session of Parliament.

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

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

CHECK ANSWERS:-

Answer: b

Explanation:

- Such a session is presided over by the Speaker, and in his/her absence, by the Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha. In the absence of both, it is presided over by the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha.
- If any of the above are not present, any other member of the Parliament can preside by consensus of both the Houses.
- The joint sitting of the Parliament is called by the President.
- In case of a disagreement between both the houses with respect to Constitution Amendment Bills, there is no provision for a joint session of Parliament.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. The decision to ban Chinese apps in India is not only a geopolitical move but can also have a significant positive economic impact for India. Comment. (15 marks, 250 words)(GS Paper 3/Economy)
2. In light of the increasing cancer burden in India, enumerate the steps taken by the government and also suggest necessary measures to help tackle this emerging challenge. (15 marks, 250 words)(GS Paper 2/Health)