

# 21 Sep 2020: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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*Nothing here for today!!!*

## B. GS 2 Related

### Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

#### 1. Govt. tables Bill to amend FCRA

##### Context:

- A bill has been introduced in the Lok Sabha to make provisions of the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA), 2011 more stringent.
- The government has said there is a need to streamline the provisions of the said Act by strengthening the compliance mechanism, enhancing transparency and accountability in the receipt and utilisation of foreign contribution.

##### Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA):

- FCRA regulates foreign donations and ensures that such contributions do not adversely affect the internal security of the country.
- The Act, first enacted in 1976 was amended in the year 2010 when a slew of new measures was taken by the Union Home Ministry to regulate foreign donations.

Read more on [FCRA](#).

#### Need for amendment:

- The FCRA Bill, 2020, says the need to strengthen the Act has arisen due to several organisations "misutilising or misappropriating" the funds leading to the government cancelling 19,000 such registrations in the past few years.
- The annual inflow of foreign contribution has almost doubled between the years 2010 and 2019, but many recipients of foreign contribution have not utilised the same for the purpose for which they were registered or granted prior permission under the said Act.
- Many of the recipients were also found wanting in ensuring basic statutory compliances such as submission of annual returns and maintenance of proper accounts, leading to a situation where the Central Government had to cancel certificates of registration.
- Criminal investigations also had to be initiated against dozens of such non-governmental organisations which indulged in outright misappropriation or mis-utilisation of foreign contribution.

#### Provisions of the FCRA Bill 2020:

- It is a bill that proposes to include public servants in the prohibited category to provide that no foreign contribution shall be accepted by them.
  - Earlier, it was restricted to legislators, election candidates, journalists, print and broadcast media, judges, government servants or employees of any corporation or any other body controlled or owned by the Government.
  - It has also sought to prohibit any transfer of foreign contribution to any other association or person.
- It proposes to decrease administrative expenses through foreign funds by an organisation to 20% from 50% earlier.
- It seeks to make Aadhaar mandatory for registration.
- The amendment seeks to give the government powers to stop utilisation of foreign funds by an organisation through a summary enquiry.
  - Earlier it was supposed to be done only after the person or association had been "found guilty" of violation of the Act.

## 2. Make ethics code must for all news channels, NBA tells SC

#### Context:

The News Broadcasters Association (NBA) has told the [Supreme Court](#) to make its code of ethics against airing malicious, biased and regressive content applicable to all TV news channels.

#### Details:

- The NBA suggested that the Court direct the government to include its ethical code in the Programme Code of the Cable Television Networks Rules, 1994.
  - By doing so, all news channels, whether they are NBA members or not, will then have to follow the Programme Code containing the proposed amendments.

- The NBA suggested that:
  - The News Broadcasters Services Authority (NBSA) should be granted recognition as an “independent self-regulatory mechanism” to receive and deal with complaints.
  - The orders passed by the NBSA should be made binding and enforceable on the channels.
  - The penalties mentioned therein could be made more stringent.

**Note:**

The NBA affidavit came in response to an order by the Supreme Court to suggest steps to strengthen the self-regulatory mechanism to prevent or penalise airing of communal or derogatory content on electronic media.

**Category: HEALTH**

**1. ICMR’s second sero-survey ends**

**Context:**

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has completed its second national sero-survey to gauge the prevalence of COVID-19.

- The first such survey was conducted in May 2020.
- The survey’s objective was to estimate the national prevalence and spread of the infection in hotspots.

This topic has been covered in [31<sup>st</sup> July 2020 CNA - Banking on serology](#).

**Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**1. World Bank seeks ‘universal eligibility’**

**Context:**

The \$1 billion World Bank loan comes with a condition of “universal eligibility” in procurements.

**Background:**

- In April 2020 the World Bank’s Board of Executive Directors had approved a fast-track \$1 billion India COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health Systems Preparedness Project to help India prevent, detect, and respond to the [COVID-19](#) pandemic and strengthen its public health preparedness.
- It is the largest ever health sector support from the Bank to India.

**India COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health System Strengthening Project:**

- It is a joint initiative of the Government of India and [the World Bank](#).
- The World Bank has the \$1 billion loan disbursed by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD).
- The Railway Ministry is one of the implementing agencies of the project.

### What does the condition of “universal eligibility” mean?

- This would mean that all preferential market access policies, including Public Procurement (Preference to Make in India) Order, Micro Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME) Policy, certain benefits to start-ups, shall not be applicable on purchases made while implementing the national project.
- The contractors must agree to comply with the relevant provisions of the World Bank’s anti-corruption guidelines and prohibited policies of the [Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank \(AIIB\)](#).
- Apart from making way for universal eligibility in the supply system, the World Bank would have the right to review the procurement documents, inspect/audit all accounts, records and other files relating to the project.
  - Compliance to these conditions has been made mandatory for the funding.

### Details:

- The first component of the project deals with emergency response to the pandemic and would be implemented until April 2022.
- The Railways will spend ₹399 crore across its network to strengthen health infrastructure in the combat against COVID-19 in this financial year.
  - Railways would have to make procurements in accordance with the World Bank guidelines, the Railway Board said and added that the funds allocated should not be exceeded.
  - These funds would be utilised for establishing isolation wards by purchasing ventilators, oxygen cylinders, laboratory machines, Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) kits, face shields, hospital furniture, medical equipment, gloves, goggles and other consumables.

## C. GS 3 Related

### Category: ECONOMY

#### 1. Amid fierce protests, Rajya Sabha passes two farm Bills

### Context:

- Two of the three agriculture-related legislation aimed at liberalising the farm sector have been passed by the Rajya Sabha, these legislations were earlier passed in the Lok Sabha.
  - The legislations are the Farmers’ Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020, and the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020.
  - The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill was passed earlier.

This issue has been covered in [19<sup>th</sup> Sep 2020 CNA - Market failure - On agriculture reforms](#).

## D. GS 4 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## E. Editorials

### Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

## 1. Fair and unfair

### Context:

Madras High Court has decided not to pursue the ill-conceived attempt to initiate action against film actor Suriya for [contempt of court](#).

### Background:

- The actor had questioned the correctness of the Supreme Court in allowing NEET to be held across the country during the pandemic when the Court itself was holding virtual hearings out of fear of infection.
- It was clear from the beginning that it constituted no contempt, as it did nothing more than raise the question whether courts that went virtual in the interest of the safety of judges, lawyers, staff and litigants, could afford to risk the health of thousands of students.

### Details:

- The Advocate-General, whose opinion was sought by the Chief Justice of the High Court, declined consent for initiation of criminal contempt proceedings.
- In a detailed order, the Court has noted that “it is not the job of a constitutional court to use a sledgehammer for avoidance of something which can be perceived to be not capable of even being propped up as contempt, much less debated to the level of criminal contempt”, rightly so.

### Concerns:

- The 29-page order lays much emphasis on the idea that criticism about the judiciary should be restrained, lest the line of fair comment is crossed.
- There is a lengthy section on the need for prudence and restraint on exuberance, but such observations would be relevant only if made in the context of a harsh attack on the judiciary.

While the advice for restraint is reasonable and well-articulated, it should not open up the possibility of more such demands for contempt action in the name of deterring unfair criticism.

Read more on “Contempt of court” covered in the [27<sup>th</sup> July 2020 CNA - The chilling effect of criminal contempt](#).

**Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

## 1. Great power, little responsibility

### Issue:

- According to the World Population Review, in the last calendar year, eight countries — Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria, Turkey, Somalia, Iraq, Mexico and Libya — suffered at least 1,000 deaths each (mainly civilian deaths) through militarised attacks and battles.
- Including the Maghreb and Sahel regions of North and West Africa, over 25 countries are being ravaged by deadly wars currently.

- According to the [UN Refugee Agency](#), 79.5 million were displaced at the end of 2019, due to armed conflicts, persecution and other reasons.
- The way the present international system is structured poses enormous obstacles to peace.
  - Predominantly, the countries with economic and military might are escalating violence.

The International Day of Peace is an occasion for deep reflection about the prevalence of war, violence and insecurity in many parts of the world.

### **International Day of Peace**

- The International Day of Peace was established in 1981 by the [United Nations General Assembly](#).
- Two decades later, in 2001, the General Assembly unanimously voted to designate the Day as a period of non-violence and ceasefire.
- Each year the International Day of Peace is observed around the world on 21 September.
- The UN General Assembly has declared this as a day devoted to strengthening the ideals of peace, through observing 24 hours of non-violence and ceasefire.
- To mark its 75th anniversary, the UN has invited millions of people worldwide to join UN75, the largest and furthest-reaching global conversation on building a peaceful and prosperous future.
- The 2020 theme for the International Day of Peace is “Shaping Peace Together.”

### **Fuelling instability:**

- While on paper, the U.S., Russia and China uphold peace and stability as the permanent members of the UN Security Council, in practice, they fuel instability or interfere in most ongoing wars.
- The U.S., Russia and China have catapulted into the ranks of top sellers of weapons.
- Yemen tragedy:
  - The current US administration is abundantly selling lethal weapons to its Gulf allies in the name of their ‘security’.
  - The tragedy in Yemen, which the UN has declared as the world’s worst humanitarian disaster, is the outcome of indiscriminate attacks by the U.S.-backed coalition of Saudi Arabia and the UAE, whose geopolitical goal is to counterbalance Iran.
- Libya:
  - Libya going down into chaos is the result of the active involvement of mercenaries and weapons pumped in by Russia and the U.S.-allied Gulf Arab monarchies to push back Turkey’s influence.
- Similar to Syria, Yemen and Libya are victims of the conduct of great powers who arm and finance regional actors to prey upon weak states for counterbalancing rivals and sustaining profits of their military-industrial complexes.
- Clashes in Asia:
  - China’s hegemonic expansionism against its neighbours and its new Cold War with the U.S. have significantly raised risks of military clashes in Asia.
- Chinese small arms enable ethnic violence and extreme human rights abuses from South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo to Pakistan and Myanmar.

### **Details:**

- This year, the UN Secretary-General is campaigning for a global ceasefire so that everyone’s attention shifts to fighting the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The UN as well as regional organisations like the [African Union](#) and the European Union are trying to negotiate a cessation of hostilities in various war zones.

### **Way forward:**

- There is a need to diagnose the core problem, which is, the unjust structure that privileges great powers and permits their plots — and challenge it.
- The world must strive for altering the structure and nature of world politics.
- Intellectuals, social movements and responsible states should prioritise struggling for an equitable world order.

## F. Prelims Facts

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## G. Tidbits

### 1. U.S. says UN sanctions on Iran back in force, others disagree

#### What's in News?

The U.S. has unilaterally proclaimed that UN sanctions against Iran are back in force and promised to punish/impose consequences on those who violate them.

- Major countries including its allies have disregarded the proclamation saying that it lacks legal basis.

#### Background:

- The sanctions in question were lifted in 2015 when Iran signed on to the international agreement – Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.
- The 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA, sought to prevent Iran from producing a nuclear weapon by putting curbs on its atomic programme in exchange for economic incentives.
- President Donald Trump withdrew the U.S. from the landmark accord in 2018, saying the deal was insufficient.

### 2. WHO clears protocol for COVID-19 herbal medicine trials

The [World Health Organization](#) has endorsed a protocol for testing African herbal medicines as potential treatments for the coronavirus and other epidemics.

- WHO experts have endorsed a protocol for phase III clinical trials of herbal medicine for COVID-19.
- A charter and terms of reference for the establishment of a data and safety monitoring board for herbal medicine clinical trials have also been endorsed.
- The endorsement comes months after a bid by the President of Madagascar to promote a drink based on Artemisia - a plant with proven efficacy in malaria treatment.

## H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements with respect to the Kakatiyas:

1. They were initially the feudatories of the Western Chalukyas of Kalyana.

- Prataparudra I established a sovereign dynasty.
- Ganapathi Deva and Rudramadevi are the notable rulers of the Kakatiya dynasty.

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

- 3 only
- 2 and 3 only
- 1, 2 and 3
- None of the above

**CHECK ANSWERS:-**

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

- The 12th and the 13th centuries saw the emergence of the Kakatiyas.
- They were at first the feudatories of the Western Chalukyas of Kalyana, ruling over a small territory near Warangal.
- Prataparudra I established a sovereign dynasty in 1163 CE.
- Ganapathi Deva and Rudramadevi are the notable rulers of the Kakatiya dynasty.

**Q2. Consider the following statements with respect to the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP):**

- It was started by the Ministry of Health and Family Affairs with the assistance of the World Health Organisation.
- It was launched in the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 to strengthen the decentralized laboratory based IT enabled disease surveillance system.

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

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

**CHECK ANSWERS:-**

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

- Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) is an initiative by the Ministry of Health and Family Affairs that started in 2004 with the assistance of the World Bank.
- It was started in the year 2004.
- Among its objectives are:
  - Strengthening/maintaining a decentralized laboratory based IT enabled disease surveillance system for epidemic prone diseases to monitor disease trends.
  - Detecting and responding to outbreaks in the early rising phase through trained Rapid Response Teams (RRTs).

**Q3. "Tulung La" is located in:**



- a. Arunachal Pradesh
- b. Sikkim
- c. Ladakh
- d. Himachal Pradesh

**CHECK ANSWERS:-**

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

Tulung La is located in Arunachal Pradesh.

**Q4. Which of the given pairs are correctly matched?**

1. Chendamangalam Dhoties and Set Mundu – Kerala
2. Muga Silk – Assam
3. Arani Silk – Tamil Nadu
4. Kandangi Saree - Karnataka

**Choose the correct option:**

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

**CHECK ANSWERS:-**

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

Tamil Nadu has got the registration of Geographical Indication Tag for Kandangi Sarees.

## I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. As long as there is no effort to obstruct the course of justice, criticism, whether fair or unfair, does not warrant initiation of contempt proceedings. Comment. (GS 2 Polity and Governance) (15 Marks, 250 Words).
2. The way the international system is structured poses enormous obstacles to peace. In light of the statement, examine the role of permanent members of the UN Security Council in the ongoing wars. (GS 2 International Relations) (15 Marks, 250 Words).

