

10 Oct 2020: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

A. GS 1 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

B. GS 2 Related

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. What's happening in Kyrgyzstan?

Context:

Street protests have erupted in Kyrgyzstan following the parliamentary election.

Issue:

- The opposition alleges that the vote was rigged.
- Protesters captured several government buildings in the capital Bishkek, forcing the President, Sooronbay Jeenbekov, to flee the White House, the presidential palace.

Background:

- Kyrgyzstan, often referred to as ‘Central Asia’s only democracy’, had seen violent anti-government protests in the past.
- In 2005 and 2010, sitting presidents were forced out of office in the ‘Tulip’ and the ‘Melon’ revolutions.
- The current protests began after early results of the parliamentary election were announced.
- Even before the election, political fault lines were sharpening.

Details:

- Political parties in Kyrgyzstan should win at least 7% of the popular vote to enter Parliament.
 - The results showed that only four parties managed to cross the threshold and of that, three were pro-government parties.
 - The remaining 12 parties received only around one-third of the votes.
- The protesters have captured key government buildings, including the Parliament House and the presidential office.
- President’s whereabouts are unknown. Prime Minister resigned amid the upheaval.

Strategic importance:

- This landlocked Central Asian country that shares a long border with China has been key to the strategic plans of both Russia and China.
- Moscow sees the region as its backyard and plays hard politics to retain its influence.
- For China, the country, located at the centre of Eurasia, is a vital link in its [Belt and Road Initiative](#).
- China has built road and rail networks with Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.
- During the early stages of the Afghan war, the U.S. had used Kyrgyzstan for refuelling and other logistical purposes. The U.S. base was shut down in 2014 by Parliament.

Russia’s role:

- Moscow’s attempts to build stronger political and economic integration with the former Soviet region are suddenly facing critical challenges.
- The crisis poses an immediate foreign policy challenge to Russia’s Vladimir Putin.
- Kyrgyzstan is a member of the Russia-led Collective Security Treaty Organisation and hosts a Russian airbase. While Russia has cultivated strong ties with all political factions in Kyrgyzstan, radical political changes could throw up opportunities for its rivals.
- Belarus, another country in Russia’s backyard with a pro-Moscow President, is already witnessing political turmoil after August’s Presidential election.
- In the South Caucasus, the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, both former Soviet Republics, over [Nagorno-Karabakh](#), risks dragging Russia into a conflict.

C. GS 3 Related

Category: ECONOMY

1. RBI forecasts end to contraction by Q4

Context:

The Reserve Bank of India reiterated its resolve to revive growth impulses in the economy by extending its accommodative policy stance for the rest of this year as well as 2021-22. Its projections suggest that India's GDP is likely to contract by 9.5% with positive growth likely in the 4th Quarter of 2020-21.

Some of the key announcements:

- Key policy rates remain unchanged in the face of high inflation. (Repo rate at 4%).
- Risk weightages for home loans have been rationalised to spur growth in the sector.
 - It would play a significant role in boosting demand for the housing sector.
 - It would also give a fillip to the job-intensive real estate sector.
 - The move to extend the co-lending scheme to NBFCs and housing finance companies (HFCs) may infuse additional liquidity.
 - However, it is opined that strict due diligence norms and eligibility criteria will not benefit the realty sector.
- Real Time Gross Settlement payment system to go 24/7 from December 2020.

2. Indian cotton gets 'Kasturi' branding, logo

Context:

Union Minister for Textiles has unveiled a brand and a logo for Indian cotton.

Kasturi Cotton:

- India's premium cotton would be known as 'Kasturi Cotton' in the world cotton trade.
- The branding "Kasturi Cotton" would initially be applicable to long staple cotton that is grown in India and meets prescribed standards.

Cotton in Indian Economy:

- Cotton is one of the principal commercial crops of India and it provides livelihood to about 6.00 million cotton farmers.
- India is the 2nd largest cotton producer and the largest consumer of cotton in the world.
- India produces about 6.00 million tons of cotton every year which is about 23% of the world's cotton.
- India produces about 51% of the total organic cotton production in the world.

Note:

- The Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) had developed a mobile application called "Cott-Ally" to provide the latest news on weather conditions, crop situation and best farm practices.
- The CCI has opened 430 procurement centres in cotton-growing states and payments are made to farmers digitally within 72 hours.

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. Delhi cabinet gives nod for 'Tree Transplantation Policy'

Context:

The Delhi Cabinet has approved the 'Tree Transplantation Policy' for the preservation of trees in the Capital.

Details:

- 'Yuddh, Pradushan Ke Viruddh' (Fight against pollution), a huge movement to curb the rising pollution levels in the capital was started.
- Various measures including EV, tree transplantation, and preventing stubble burning will be taken up under the movement.
- One of the key components of this campaign is the tree transplantation policy.
- Cabinet also gave its nod for the installation of the second smog tower in the world.
 - The first smog tower in the world was set up in China.
 - Two smog towers are being installed in Delhi.

What is the tree transplantation policy?

- A minimum of 80% of trees affected by a development or construction project will be transplanted and as much as 80% of the transplanted trees must survive after transplantation.
- This is in addition to retaining the policy of planting 10 saplings for every one tree that is cut.
- A dedicated Tree Transplantation Cell will also be formed by the Delhi government and local committees, which will include government officials, citizens, RWAs to monitor the transplanted trees and to certify that the task has been done with due diligence.

Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. DRDO tests anti-radiation missile

Context:

RudraM-I, a new-generation anti-radiation missile (NGARM) has been successfully flight-tested by the Defence Research and Development Organisation ([DRDO](#)).

Details:

- The missile was launched from an SU-30 MkI fighter aircraft.
- The missile, integrated with the SU-30 MkI aircraft, has a capability of varying ranges based on the launch conditions.
 - It has a range of up to 200 km.
- The missile can be launched from altitudes of 500 m to 15 km and speeds of 0.6 to 2 Mach.
- It has an Inertial Navigation System (INS)-Global Positioning System (GPS) navigation with Passive Homing Head (PHH) for the final attack.
 - The PHH can detect, classify and engage targets over a wide band of frequencies.
 - It is a potent weapon for the Indian Air Force for suppression of enemy air defence effectively from large stand-off ranges.

- This is the first indigenous anti-radiation missile.

What are anti-radiation missiles?

- An anti-radiation missile can locate and target radiation-emitting sources such as enemy radars, communication sites and other radio frequency-emitting targets.
- They can play a key role in neutralising any jamming platforms of the enemy or take out radar stations, thereby clearing a path for fighter jets to carry out an offensive and prevent own systems from being jammed.

Note:

- The NGARM is being developed by Defence Research Development Laboratory (DRDL), Hyderabad, as the nodal agency.
- It is a joint effort involving DRDO labs, the IAF, Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. and several public and private sector enterprises.

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: SOCIAL ISSUES

1. Killing love with caste pride

Context:

A recent event of the murder of a Vysya man married to a Reddy woman, by her family has brought into focus the incidence of caste-related killings.

- According to the [National Crime Records Bureau](#), there were 28 ‘honour killings’ in 2014, 251 in 2015, and 77 in 2016 across India.

What is Honour Killing?

- Honour killing is defined as the killing of a relative, especially a girl or a woman, who is perceived to have brought dishonour on the family.
- The term ‘honour killing’ is also being used widely to describe the class of murders that family members commit while seeking to impose on young couples their medieval view that all marriages should be within their community.
- A crime in the name of ‘honour’ is one of a range of violent or abusive acts. This includes emotional, physical and sexual abuse and other coercive acts. These murders are driven by class, caste and patriarchal hegemony.
- Those instrumental in committing these killings are families of the couple. Either they kill the couple themselves or in association with other persons from the same caste or khap or community-based panchayats.

Legislations against Honour Killing:

- Various sections of the [Indian Penal Code \(IPC\)](#) list punishments for murder, culpable homicide not amounting to murder, attempt to murder, party to a criminal conspiracy, etc.

Supreme Court Judgements:

- The Supreme Court has, in multiple occasions intervened to preserve the freedom of marital choice of individuals. It also once remarked that there is no 'honour' in 'honour killing'.
- The Supreme Court has said that adults are free to marry persons of their own choice and hurting couples, or summoning them before clan members, groups, or a khap, is absolutely illegal.
- The Prevention of Crimes in the Name of 'Honour' and Tradition Bill, 2010 was an outcome of the spate of murders and dishonourable crimes in the name of honour.
- Though killings and crimes were reported mostly from north India — especially Haryana, Punjab, Delhi and western Uttar Pradesh — as well as west India, the problem was widespread and almost every part of the country has witnessed such incidents.
- Supreme Court ruling in *Lata Singh v. State of U.P.* (2006) ordered "stern action" against all those threatening or carrying out threats against couples. The Supreme Court reiterated the fact that inter-caste marriages are not banned as per the Hindu Marriage Act and are in the national interest. It is illegal to stop them in any way.
- In fact, the apex court, in *Bhagwan Dass v. Delhi* in May 2011, deemed honour killings in the "rarest of rare" category of crimes that deserve the death penalty.

Way forward:

- Discrimination against Dalits is not limited to Hindu communities listed as Scheduled Castes, but extends to those who have converted to other religions too.
- There is a need for a redoubled effort to eliminate the evils of a stratified society.
- The 242nd Law Commission Report, too, sought a new law on 'prevention of interference with the freedom of matrimonial alliances'.
- Instead of protecting young couples, the police is reportedly found counselling them. Feudalistic entities have no compunction in committing crimes. The police turn a blind eye and the administration hardly questions them.
- In particular, administrators must give full effect to the various preventive, remedial and punitive measures recommended by the Supreme Court.
- There is a need to frame guidelines recognising honour killing as a separate offence. The Centre should examine the need for legislation to curb killings in the name of honour.

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. The right balance

Context:

- Following the Shaheen Bagh protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act 2019, the Supreme Court has ventured to hold that any such indefinite blockade of a public pathway is unacceptable.

Details:

- The Court's view arises from a straightforward balancing of two contrasting rights — the right to protest and the right to free movement.
- It has ruled that the administration must take action to remove encroachments and obstructions placed during such protests.
- The Court's assertion was made even while appreciating the existence of the right to peaceful protest against a legislation.

This topic has been covered in [8th October 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis](#).

What is the issue?

- The question raised here is whether the manner and content of a protest should always conform to forms deemed acceptable by the law.
 - Protests, by their very nature, are not always rooted in legality.
 - They derive legitimacy from the rightness of the underlying cause and the extent of public support.
 - In many cases, they are against laws and regulations perceived as unjust.
 - A flash strike, a spontaneous roadblock, a call for a complete shutdown, or a campaign to fill up jails by defying prohibitory orders — are not, in a strict sense, legal; but, are a part of the culture of protest in a democracy.
- Another aspect of the present ruling is the assertion that protests should be confined to designated places.
 - Such judicial certitude may lessen the effectiveness of the larger democratic need for public expression of dissent in a manner and place that would be most effective.

Way forward:

- While notified demonstrations are subject to regulations regarding time and space, it may not be possible to extend the same to spontaneous, organic and leaderless protests driven by a cause.
- The ruling should not become the basis for suppression of protests by the force of the state.

Conclusion:

While the need for balance between the right to protest and the right to free movement, and the rule that protests should take place at designated spots are beneficial from an administrative point of view, they must not become unquestionable principles to the point that render all protests that cause inconvenience to others, the target of the strong arm of the state.

Also read: “The right to protest in a free society” covered in [22nd January 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis](#).

Category: HEALTH

1. Saving lives under the long shadow of the pandemic

The editorial highlights the fact that, along with fighting the COVID-19 virus, there is a growing need to make mental health and suicide prevention a priority.

Concerns:

- The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted populations around the world in multiple ways.
- Mental health has been affected severely owing to the fear of being infected and anxiety about an uncertain present and future.
- Necessary precautions such as social distancing, limited interactions and mask usage have become the new normal, with huge social, physical, economic and mental consequences.
- Previous studies suggest an elevated risk of suicide during such times.
 - There is some evidence that ‘deaths by suicide increased in the United States during the 1918-19 influenza pandemic, and among older people in Hong Kong during the 2003 Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) epidemic’.
- Lockdowns have led to isolation, in turn, heightening anxiety and causing depression in societies, particularly in vulnerable communities.
- Dire socio-economic conditions arising from the pandemic such as mass migration, unemployment and economic distress make at-risk groups even more vulnerable during these times.
- The fear of getting infected, coupled with a lack of knowledge and the economic fallout has created a new level of stress not seen by many before.
- This situation is the worse among vulnerable populations who are susceptible to greater risks of infections, such as health-care workers, infected people, the elderly, migrant workers, those from resource-poor backgrounds, women facing domestic violence, individuals with compromised immunity, and those suffering from physical or psychological problems.

Pre-pandemic situation in India:

- Before the pandemic, India’s progress as one of the fastest-growing economies led to large paradigm shifts in the daily lives of its citizens.
- Major lifestyle shifts led to the rise of many lifestyle disorders in the last decade.
- Mental health disorders are one of the disorders of most concern, which have been swept under the carpet of stigma and discrimination.
- Many suicides are related to psychological disorders and distress.

Initiatives:

- India has created a task force to develop a national suicide prevention strategy.
- The plan incorporates the three universal strategies, including a ban or reduction in access to highly hazardous pesticides, reduction in consumption and availability of alcohol, and a non-sensationalised and responsible portrayal of suicide by the media.
- The media would need to follow the Press Council of India’s guidelines on reportage of suicide and also create awareness about suicide prevention.

Way Forward:

- There is a growing need to make mental health and suicide prevention a priority.
- At an individual level, any early signs of poor mental health such as a sudden change in behaviour, substance use, anxiety, disturbed sleep and difficulty in communication should not be ignored.
- Being informed and limiting oneself to authentic sources of information and reducing exposure to distressing news is a good mechanism to help a person cope with the situation.
- A system intervention can focus on identifying, supporting and referring suicidal individuals at all levels of the health-care system.
- There is an urgent need for destigmatising suicide as a phenomenon and ensure there is an increase in the number of functional and accessible helplines.
- Suicide prevention requires a mix of a top-down and a bottom-up approach, ensuring that all interventions are rooted in empathy.

1. Amid pandemic gloom, 544 reasons for India to cheer

What's in News?

- The [Zoological Survey of India \(ZSI\)](#) and the Botanical Survey of India (BSI) have released their annual publications, 'Animal Discoveries 2019' and 'Plant Discoveries 2019' respectively.
- Both the ZSI and BSI have been releasing 'Animal Discoveries' and 'Plant Discoveries' since 2007 and this is the 13th publication in the series.

Details:

The publications include:

- A rock-dwelling gecko, *Cnemaspis anandani*, endemic to the Western Ghats.
 - Also known as Anandan's day gecko, it is a species of diurnal, rock-dwelling, insectivorous gecko.
- *Sphaerotheca magadha*, a burrowing frog discovered in the farm fields of Jharkhand.
- *Enoplotrupes tawangensis*, a dung beetle from Tawang.
- *Amomum nagamiense*, a wild ginger variety, discovered from the forest behind Kohina Zoo in Nagaland.
- *Pteris subiriana*, a wild fern found in Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra.

Animal Discoveries 2019:

- It is an annual publication by the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI).
- The 2019 edition lists 368 faunal species as new to science and 116 species as being spotted for the first time in India.
- It provides details of about 360 new species, 4 subspecies and 4 fossil species as well as 116 species spotted for the first time in India.

Plant Discoveries 2019:

- It is an annual publication by the Botanical Survey of India (BSI).
- It lists 180 new plant species and 73 species spotted for the first time in the country.
- Among the newly discovered plants this year, are those with horticulture value as well as those which can serve as alternative foods.
- The number of plant species found in India accounts roughly for 12% of all flora species in the world.

2. Citizen poll throws up three contenders for national butterfly tag

What's in News?

A citizen poll was conducted to identify the national butterfly. The nationwide poll was organised by the National Butterfly Campaign Consortium.

How will the national butterfly be chosen?

- The organisers will submit the names of the top three to the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change.
- The onus is on the Centre to choose one among them to be given the “National butterfly” tag.

Details:

- The three top-voted butterflies have unique features such as the ability to camouflage as a dead leaf, exhibit iridescence to stave off predators, and aid farmers in getting rid of pests.
- They are: Krishna Peacock (*Papilio krishna*), Indian Jezebel (*Delias eucharis*), and Orange Oakleaf (*Kallima inachus*).
- **Indian Jezebel:** also known as the Common Jezebel has a vibrant colour pattern, including vermilion (haldi – kumkum), it is known to deter its predators with its flashy wing colours. Widely distributed, the species can be spotted in gardens and other lightly wooded areas.
- **Krishna Peacock:** is a flagship species for biodiversity and conservation. It is generally found in large numbers in the Himalayas.
- **Orange Oakleaf:** is commonly known as dead leaf for its ability to camouflage as a dry autumn leaf while striking a stationary pose with its wings closed. This enables the species to prevent it from being devoured by birds. It can be found in the moist forests of the northern Western Ghats, central, northern and northeastern parts of India.

3. UN’s World Food Programme wins 2020 Nobel Peace Prize

What’s in News?

The United Nations’ [World Food Programme \(WFP\)](#) won the Nobel Peace Prize for its efforts to combat hunger around the world and improve conditions for peace in areas affected by conflict.

Concerns:

- The organisation states that one in nine people worldwide still does not have enough to eat.
- It states that the COVID-19 pandemic could double hunger worldwide.

Details:

- United Nations’ World Food Programme (WFP) has been a driving force in efforts to prevent the use of hunger as a weapon of war and conflict.
- It helps some 97 million people in about 88 countries each year.
- WFP runs a logistics service that has dispatched medical cargoes to over 120 countries throughout the pandemic to help governments and health partners fighting COVID-19.
- It also has provided passenger services to ferry humanitarian and health workers where commercial flights were unavailable.

G. Tidbits

1. Expect China-style development for Sri Lanka: Gotabaya

What's in News?

A high-powered Chinese delegation visited Sri Lanka.

- Following the meeting with a high-level delegation from Beijing in Colombo, a statement from Sri Lanka's President's office said plans were afoot to:
 - Recommence discussions on the Sri Lanka-China Free Trade Agreement.
 - Swiftly complete the China-backed Hambantota Industrial Zone and the Port City in Colombo (a flagship \$1.4 billion project in China's Belt and Road Initiative).
- President Rajapaksa sought China's help to reduce the trade deficit between the two countries.
- There were no mentions of new loans or renegotiation of Sri Lanka's existing debt of over \$5 billion to China.
 - China had also sanctioned a \$500 million loan in March 2020 to help Sri Lanka cope with the pandemic.

2. Labour Bureau study gleans migrant data

What's in News?

Labour and Employment Minister has asked the expert group of the Labour Bureau to finalise the survey on migration at the earliest so that data on the number of migrant workers can be compiled.

- Three surveys would be carried out by the Labour Bureau on migration, domestic workers and professional bodies.
- The expert group has been set up for a period of three years to provide technical advice to the Labour Bureau regarding the surveys.
- The migration survey to be undertaken by the Labour Bureau will provide estimates of the number of migrant workers in the country, along with an assessment of the issues being faced by them.
- Survey on domestic workers who form about 3% of the workers in the country, would be a first of its kind and would help the government identify the problems faced by domestic workers in order to formulate policies for their benefit.

3. SC questions NCPCR on repatriation of children

What's in News?

The Supreme Court has sought a response from the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), to its request to eight states to produce children living in care homes before the local child welfare committees for their immediate repatriation with their families.

National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR):

- NCPCR is India's apex child rights body.
- It works towards achieving a child rights-centric approach in all the laws, programmes, policies and administrative mechanisms in India.
- It functions under the Ministry of Women & Child Development of the central government.
- The NCPCR has been constituted by the Government as an act of Parliament as mentioned above. Hence, it is a statutory organisation.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Which of the following is not a species of butterfly found in India?

- Indian Jezebel
- Krishna Peacock
- Orange Oakleaf
- Garden Tiger

CHECK ANSWERS:-

Answer: d

Explanation:

- A citizen poll was conducted to identify the national butterfly.
- The nationwide poll was organised by the National Butterfly Campaign Consortium.
- The three top-voted butterflies are Indian Jezebel, Krishna Peacock, Orange Oakleaf.
- Garden Tiger is a brown-and-white moth.

Q2. "Cnemaspis anandani" recently in news, is:

- A rock-dwelling gecko endemic to the Western Ghats
- A dung beetle from Tawang
- A wild ginger variety discovered from the forests in Nagaland
- A wild fern found in Kerala

CHECK ANSWERS:-

Answer: a

Explanation:

- The Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) and the Botanical Survey of India (BSI) have released their annual publications, 'Animal Discoveries 2019' and 'Plant Discoveries 2019' respectively.
- The publications include:
 - A rock-dwelling gecko, *Cnemaspis anandani*, endemic to the Western Ghats.
 - *Sphaerotheca magadha*, a burrowing frog discovered in the farm fields of Jharkhand.
 - *Enoplotrupes tawangensis*, a dung beetle from Tawang.
 - *Amomum nagamiense*, a wild ginger variety, discovered from the forest behind Kohina Zoo in Nagaland.
 - *Pteris subiriana*, a wild fern found in Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra.

Q3. Consider the following statements with respect to "Langa & Manganiar":

1. They are famous for their folk dance called Kalbeliya.
2. They are Muslim communities predominantly residing in the Jaisalmer and Barmer districts of Rajasthan.
3. They play a traditional percussion instrument called "Khartal".

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

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

CHECK ANSWERS:-

Answer: b

Explanation:

- Langa and Manganiyar are hereditary professional Muslim musicians mostly residing in Jaisalmer and Barmer districts of Rajasthan.
- Khartal is a traditional percussion instrument, it is an important part of Rajasthani music.
- This instrument is played by the Manganiyars and the Langa communities in Jaisalmer and Barmer.
- Kalbelia or Kбелиya is a dance from Rajasthan, performed by the Kalbeliya tribe.

Q4. Kyrgyzstan shares borders with:

1. China
2. Uzbekistan
3. Tajikistan
4. Turkmenistan
5. Russia
6. Kazakhstan

Choose the correct option:

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

CHECK ANSWERS:-

Answer: a

Explanation:

Kyrgyzstan shares borders with Kazakhstan, China, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. The Supreme Court ruling on “protests” that seeks to strike a balance between the right to protest and the right to free movement could lead to suppression of protests by the force of the state. Critically examine. Also discuss the provisions regarding the right to protest peacefully enshrined in the Indian Constitution. (15 Marks, 250 Words) (GS 2 Polity and Governance).
2. India needs a comprehensive law to curb killings in the name of honour and prohibit interference in the matrimonial choice of individuals. Examine. (15 Marks, 250 Words) (GS 1 Social Issues).

