

04 Nov 2020: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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A. GS 1 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

B. GS 2 Related

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. ‘Governor can rule on Rajiv convicts’ plea’

Context:

The Supreme Court has said that the Multi-Disciplinary Monitoring Agency (MDMA) investigation into the larger conspiracy behind [Rajiv Gandhi’s assassination in 1991](#) need not deter the Tamil Nadu Governor from deciding the plea for pardon of convicts, who have been serving their sentence in jail for over two decades.

Details:

The Supreme Court made it clear that it was reluctant to exercise its jurisdiction when the Governor was already seized of the convict's plea for pardon under Article 161 of the Constitution.

Pardoning Powers of the Governor:

- Article 161 of the Constitution talks about the Pardoning Power of the Governor.
- When a convict has committed an offence against state law, the concerned punishment can be granted the pardon, reprieve, respite and remission by the Governor of the state.

Read more about the [Pardoning Powers of the Governor.](#)

2. More children to get fortified rice

Context:

The government is planning to distribute fortified rice to children in anganwadis and government schools.

Details:

- The rice would be infused (fortified) with iron, folic acid and vitamin B-12.
- The government is planning to distribute fortified rice through the Integrated Child Development Services and Mid-Day Meal schemes across the country.
 - An existing pilot scheme to distribute fortified rice through the Public Distribution System in 15 districts has only been implemented in five districts so far, despite the lapse in more than half the project duration.
 - The Centrally sponsored pilot scheme was approved in February 2019.
 - Only Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Chhattisgarh have started distribution of fortified rice in their identified pilot districts.
 - **Read more about this pilot scheme in [PIB dated 3rd Nov 2020.](#)**
- The food ministry said that it would lay special focus on 112 aspirational districts.
- The Food Corporation of India has been asked to come up with a comprehensive plan to scale up the annual supply of fortified rice from the current 15,000 tonnes to at least 1.3 lakh tonnes.

Fortification of Rice:

- Fortification is the practice of deliberately increasing the content of an essential micronutrient, i.e. vitamins and minerals (including trace elements) in food, so as to improve the nutritional quality of the food supply.
- Generally, fortified rice contains Vitamin A, Vitamin B1, Vitamin B12, Folic Acid, Iron and Zinc.
- Fortifying rice involves grinding broken rice into powder, mixing it with nutrients, and then shaping it into rice-like kernels using an extrusion process.
- These fortified kernels are then mixed with normal rice in a 1:100 ratio, and distributed for consumption.
- Currently, there are only 15,000 tonnes of these kernels available per year in India.

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Indian Navy matches skills with three foreign fleets off Vizag

Context:

Phase I of the Malabar 2020 naval exercise by India, Australia, Japan and the U.S. has begun off the coast of Visakhapatnam in the Bay of Bengal.

Details:

- Exercise Malabar is an important opportunity to work in concert with like-minded nations to support a secure, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific region.
- This is the first time Australia has joined Malabar since 2007.
- This is the 24th edition of the exercise that began in 1992.
- This time, it is being held in two phases, in the Bay of Bengal and in the Arabian Sea.
- The four Navies would conduct a range of high-end training, including air-defence and anti-submarine exercises, aviation, communications and at-sea replenishment between ships.

Read more about the [Malabar Exercise](#).

Mission Sagar-II:

- The Navy began Mission Sagar-II.
- Under the mission, INS Airavat entered the Sudan port carrying 100 tonnes of food.
- Mission Sagar-II is a follow-up of Mission Sagar undertaken in May-June 2020, during which India delivered food and medicines to the Maldives, Mauritius, Seychelles, Madagascar and Comoros.

This topic has been covered in the [2nd November 2020 PIB Summary and Analysis](#).

C. GS 3 Related

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. Sri Lanka rescues 120 stranded whales

Context:

Sri Lanka's navy, coast guard, local volunteers and conservation experts have rescued nearly 120 stranded whales and pulled them back to the deep sea in an overnight operation.

Details:

- Whales are known to strand themselves on beaches across the world and they do so singularly or in groups.
- Whale beaching, also called Cetacean Stranding is the phenomenon in which cetaceans strand themselves on land (generally beaches).
- While individual strandings are mostly attributed to injury or sickness, it is not clear why exactly whales beach themselves in groups. However, there are a few theories that might explain this behaviour.
 - Some whales follow schooling fish or prey into shallow waters, which causes the whales to become disoriented, as a result of which they get stranded.

- Some whales panic from being trapped by a predator such as killer whales or sharks.
- Whales might be drawn to land by prey-rich currents.
- The shape of the beach and the coastline could also have a role to play. For instance, if the beach has gently-sloping shorelines, whales that are dependent on echolocation for navigation can be deceived.

Read more about [Whale Beaching](#).

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. Hitting fossil fuel companies where it hurts

Context:

- The **divestment movement against fossil fuel-based investments** is growing across the world.

Disinvestment movement:

- A committed campaign has been undertaken by various environmental organisations calling for divestment from fossil fuel companies, i.e., companies that extract, refine, sell and make profits from fossil fuels.
 - Divestment is the process by which money put into stocks and bonds of certain companies is withdrawn and also calls for restraining from investing in equity, providing loans or credit available to the fossil fuel industry.
- The purpose is to restrict fossil fuel companies which are **large contributors to pollution and the climate change process**.

Impact of the disinvestment movement:

Disinvestment commitments:

- The campaign has been successful to an extent given the disinvestment commitments being made.
 - As of 2019, it is estimated that more than \$11 trillion in assets has been committed to divestment from fossil fuels.
 - Goldman Sachs recently announced that it would no longer finance new oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and also would not provide capital for some of the worst kinds of coal mines, such as mountain-top mining.

Growing acceptance of the need to act:

- There has been a **growing acceptance of the need for climate action**. There is the growing realization that **disinvestment is required not only for ethical reasons but also because of the risk it poses to the global economy and financial system**.

- Climate change poses a major risk to the stability of the global economy and financial system given that more frequent and more intense climate disasters can have a devastating impact on the economy and subsequently the financial system. Hence, the risk posed by climate change needs to be assessed and acted upon in the financial decisions as well.
- There is a growing realization among the investment companies on the **critical need to navigate the challenges and capitalise on long-term economic and environmental benefits of a low-carbon world.**
- JP Morgan's Corporate and Investment Bank proposes establishing a Center for Carbon Transition and setting "intermediate emission targets for 2030" for its financing portfolio.

Rise in cost of raising capital:

- Divestment appears to be putting a squeeze on the investment industry.
- Companies have been reiterating that the divestment movement is making it difficult to raise capital as the banks and investors begin to shift away from fossil fuel companies.

Concerns:

- According to the 2020 report 'Banking on Climate Change' by the Rainforest Action Network, global banks have continued to finance the fossil fuel industry with \$2.7 trillion despite the [Paris Agreement](#) of 2015, where countries agreed to try to limit average global warming to well below 2 degree Celsius.
 - The financing has been in fossil fuel sub-sectors like oil from tar sands, Arctic oil and gas, fracked oil and gas, liquefied natural gas and mining of coal.
- This demonstrates how **misaligned the banking sector is with the goals of the Paris Agreement.**

Indian scenario:

- Arguments for divestment do not apply to India in the current context since India's contribution to the stock of [greenhouse gases](#) remains minimal.
 - **India's per capita greenhouse gas emission is less than two tonnes of CO₂/capita.**
- However, given that the **costs of production and storage of renewables are falling rapidly**, policymakers should also consider the **economic potential of making a transition** away from coal. This would involve providing pathways for coal power plants to retire in a meaningful time frame.

For more information on this topic, refer to:

[CNA dated Sep 7, 2020: 'Close old power plants'](#)

- Also, given that **India continues to remain vulnerable to climate change**, it is advisable that it resorts to a low carbon economy at the earliest.
 - As per the **Global Climate Risk Index 2019 released by the international environmental think tank 'Germanwatch'**, **India ranks 5th**. India suffers from climate change-induced or intensified water shortages, crop failures and flooding. India has also recorded the highest number of fatalities due to climate change and the second-highest monetary losses from its impact in 2018 owing to increased frequency and intensity of storms, floods, heatwaves, etc.

Category: EDUCATION

[1. Academia and the free will](#)

Context:

- The recently released **Academic Freedom Index**.

Details:

- **India has scored low in the international Academic Freedom Index (AFI) with a score of 0.352.** In the last five years, the AFI of India has dipped by 0.1 points.
 - The AFI uses **eight components** to evaluate the scores: freedom to research and teach, freedom of academic exchange and dissemination, institutional autonomy, campus integrity, freedom of academic and cultural expression, constitutional protection of academic freedom, international legal commitment to academic freedom under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and existence of universities.
- India's dismal score on the Academic Freedom Index is a **reflection of the critical issues plaguing the country's education system, particularly the higher education sector.**
- India has not fared well in components like institutional autonomy, campus integrity, freedom of academic and cultural expression and constitutional protection of academic freedom.

Concerns:

Political interference:

- Most universities in the country are subjected to unnecessary interference from governments in both academic and non-academic issues.

Rent-seeking culture:

- A majority of appointments, especially to top-ranking posts like that of vice-chancellors, pro vice-chancellors and registrars, have become highly politicised.
- Such political appointments, apart from choking academic and creative freedom, also lead to **corrupt practices, including those in licensing and accreditation**, thus promoting unhealthy **favouritism and nepotism** in staff appointments and student admissions. This reflects a 'rent-seeking culture' within the academic community.

Bureaucratization of the education system:

- Currently, many public educational institutions and regulatory bodies, both at the Central and State levels, are headed by bureaucrats.

National Education Policy, 2020:

- India's recently announced [National Education Policy \(NEP\)](https://byjus.com/nep-2020/), 2020 aims at overhauling the educational system in the country. The following provisions will go a long way in addressing some of the issues plaguing the educational system in India, particularly the higher education sector.
 - The NEP 2020 aims to **de-bureaucratise the education system by giving governance powers to academicians and ensuring enhanced autonomy to higher education institutions** by handing over their administration to a board comprising academicians. This may help de-bureaucratise the education system and reduce political interference to an extent.
 - The NEP 2020 emphasizes the **principles of creativity and critical thinking** and envisions an education system that is free from political or external interference. The NEP 2020 states that faculty will be given the "freedom to design their own curricular and pedagogical approaches within the approved framework, including textbook and reading material selections, assignments and assessments".

Conclusion:

- The NEP, 2020 envisions some much-needed measures for the Indian educational system and there is the need for political will to put these provisions into practice.
- This can ensure the fulfilment of the vision of **making India a global knowledge superpower and also achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal-4 (SDG 4).**

F. Prelims Facts

1. Mercury dips to 10°C, IMD may declare a cold wave

What's in News?

- With the nights in New Delhi getting cooler with the minimum temperature settling at 10 degrees Celsius (lowest for the season so far), the [India Meteorological Department \(IMD\)](#) has said that it may consider declaring a cold wave if the temperature continues to stay the same for another day.
- According to IMD, the temperature was five degrees below the normal temperature.

Cold Wave:

- A cold wave is a weather phenomenon that is distinguished by a cooling of the air, marked by a rapid fall in temperature.
- In plains, a cold wave is declared when the minimum temperature is 10 degrees Celsius or below and is 4.5 degrees Celsius less than normal for two consecutive days.
- A cold wave can cause death and injury to livestock and wildlife.
- Cold waves are associated with increased mortality rates in populations around the world.

2. Trade Union Congress

- The **All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC)** is one of the oldest trade union federations in India. It was **founded in 1920 with [Lala Lajpat Rai](#) as its first president.**
- Some of the important members include Joseph Baptista, N. M. Joshi, Diwan Chaman Lall, etc.
- The All India Trade Union Congress marked a distinct stage of growth in the labour movement in India.
- AITUC is a founder member of the World Federation of Trade Unions.

3. A lifetime of anti-apartheid struggle

Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay

- Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay was an Indian social reformer and freedom activist.

Freedom struggle:

- Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay is most remembered for her contribution to the Indian independence movement.

- Kamaladevi returned to India from London in 1923 to take part in Mahatma Gandhi's **Non-Cooperation Movement**. She joined the **Seva Dal, a Gandhian organisation set up to promote social upliftment**. Made in charge of the women's section of the Dal, she got involved in recruiting, training and organising girls and women of all ages across India, to become voluntary workers, 'sevikas'.
- Kamaladevi was a part of the seven-member lead team, announced by Mahatma Gandhi, in the famous **Salt Satyagraha (1930)**, to prepare salt at the Bombay beachfront.

Social causes:

- Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay played a significant role in the upliftment of the socio-economic standard of Indian women by **pioneering the co-operation movement among Indian women**.
- She became the first woman to run for a legislative seat in India (Madras Provincial Legislative Assembly).
- She played an active role in the **All-India Women's Conference (AIWC)**.

Indian art and culture:

- Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay played **a major role in the renaissance of Indian handicrafts, handlooms, and theatre in independent India**. She played a stellar role in institutes such as the National School of Drama, Sangeet Natak Akademi, Central Cottage Industries Emporium, and the Crafts Council of India. She stressed the significant role which handicrafts and cooperative grassroots movements play in the social and economic upliftment of the Indian people.

Aruna Asaf Ali:

- Aruna Asaf Ali was an Indian political activist and freedom movement activist.
- An active participant in the Indian independence movement, Aruna Asaf Ali participated in public processions during the **Salt Satyagraha** and was arrested.
- She rose to prominence during the **Quit India movement** when she hoisted the Indian National flag at the Gowalia Tank Maidan, Bombay during the Quit India Movement in 1942. In fact, when all the major leaders and all members of the Congress Working Committee were arrested, young **Aruna Asaf Ali presided over the remainder of the Congress session**.
- She was called the **Grand Old Lady of the Independence Movement** in her later years.
- She also edited **Inquilab**, a monthly magazine of the Congress Party, along with **Ram Manohar Lohia**.
- Post-independence, she remained active in politics, becoming Delhi's first Mayor.

G. Tidbits

1. 'States cannot make isolated plans for vaccine distribution'

Context:

The Health Ministry has said that it has asked the State governments to refrain from making isolated plans for vaccine distribution.

- The States have been asked to work with the Central government and to adhere to its directions.
 - The Central government has set up an expert committee on vaccine administration.

- The states have been advised to create a database according to the blueprint issued by the Central government and also take stock of the storage and transport facility for the distribution.
- They have been asked to set up committees under Chief Secretaries for administration to ensure time-bound implementation of the Central government direction.

2. PM to meet 20 large global investors

What's in News?

Prime Minister will chair a virtual meeting with 20 large global investors managing assets of more than \$6 trillion with the objective of reiterating India's attractiveness as an investment destination.

This topic has been covered in the [3rd November 2020 PIB Summary and Analysis](#).

3. The south tops in governance

- The [Public Affairs Index 2020](#) was released recently.
- The index measures the quality of governance at the state/U.T. level on three dimensions of development - **Equity, growth and sustainability**, using 50 indicators.
 - Equity index - Uses social, economic and gender-related indicators such as malnutrition, women in legislature, slum population and crimes against SCs/STs.
 - Growth index - Uses indicators such as expense on agriculture, student-teacher ratio, electricity availability, fiscal deficit and unemployment rate.
 - Sustainability index - Uses indicators such as renewable energy, land degradation, waste management and air quality.
- **States in the south ranked high in the index while those in the east and some northern states ranked low.** Kerala was the best-governed state while Uttar Pradesh was the poorest in 2019 among the large states.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Khudai Khidmatgar movement was led by:

- a. Mohammad Ali Jinnah
- b. Abdul Ghaffar Khan
- c. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan
- d. Syed Ahmed Barelvi

CHECK ANSWERS:-

Answer: b

Explanation:

The Khudai Khidmatgar was a non-violent movement against British occupation of the Indian subcontinent. It was led by Abdul Ghaffar Khan, a Pashtun freedom fighter, in the North-West Frontier Province.

Q2. Which of the following is another term that describes "Whale Beaching"?

- a. Cetacean Stranding
- b. Whaling
- c. Aqua Stranding
- d. None of the above

CHECK ANSWERS:-

Answer: a

Explanation:

Whales are known to strand themselves on beaches across the world and they do so singularly or in groups. Whale beaching, also called Cetacean Stranding is the phenomenon in which cetaceans strand themselves on land (generally beaches).

Q3. Consider the following statements with respect to Aruna Asaf Ali:

1. She hoisted the national flag in Bombay during the Quit India Movement.
2. She was the editor of the "Inquilab" monthly magazine.
3. She is known as the Grand Old Lady of the Independence Movement.

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

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

CHECK ANSWERS:-

Answer: d

Explanation:

- Aruna Asaf Ali was an Indian political activist and freedom movement activist.
- She hoisted the Indian National Flag at the Gowalia Tank Maidan, Bombay during the Quit India Movement in 1942.
- She also edited Inquilab, a monthly magazine of the Congress Party, along with Ram Manohar Lohia.
- She was called the Grand Old Lady of the Independence Movement.

Q4. Consider the following statements with respect to Kamala Devi Chattopadhyay:

1. She became the first woman to contest for and win a legislative seat in India.
2. She is a Ramon Magsaysay Awardee.

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

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

CHECK ANSWERS:-

Answer: b

Explanation:

- Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay was an Indian social reformer and freedom activist.
- She is most remembered for her contribution to the Indian independence movement.
- She became the first woman to run for a legislative seat in India (Madras Provincial Legislative Assembly). Though she could campaign for only a few days, she lost only by a small margin of 55 votes.
- She is a Ramon Magsaysay Awardee.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Climate action would not only help address the challenges posed by climate change but will also help capitalize on the long-term economic and environmental benefits of a low-carbon world. Comment. (10 marks, 150 words)(GS Paper 3/Environment and Ecology)
2. The low score of India in the international Academic Freedom Index (AFI) is a reflection of the critical issues plaguing the country's education system, particularly the higher education sector. Analyze. (10 marks, 150 words)(GS Paper 2/Education)