

27 Nov 2020: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. PM pitches for 'One Nation, One Election'

Context:

Prime Minister's suggestions on elections in India at the 80th All India Presiding Officers Conference.

Details:

- The Prime Minister pitched for 'One Nation, One Election'.
 - He was of the opinion that elections taking place every few months hampered development works.
 - Simultaneous elections refer to holding elections to [Lok Sabha](#), State Legislative Assemblies, Panchayats and Urban local bodies simultaneously, once in five years.

- He was also for a single voter list for all polls in the country.
 - It is argued that the preparation of a separate voters' list causes duplication of the effort and the expenditure.
 - A common electoral roll means that only one voter list should be used for Lok Sabha, Vidhan Sabha and other elections.
 - In its 255th report in 2015, the [Law Commission](#) recommended a single electoral roll.
 - In order to implement a common electoral roll, a Constitutional Amendment to Articles 243K and 243ZA is required. (Elections to panchayats and municipalities in the states are dealt with in Articles 243K and 243ZA).
- The Prime Minister urged the presiding officers attending the meet, to simplify the language of statute books and allow for an easier process to weed out redundant laws.

Read more on the concept, feasibility, merits and challenges associated with “[One Nation, One Election](#)”.

2. Beneficiaries of Roshni Act move SC

Context:

As the J&K administration continues to make the names of the beneficiaries of the now-nullified Roshni Act public, a petition has been filed before the Supreme Court by the beneficiaries claiming they were not even heard by the J&K High Court as it passed the directions.

Roshni Act:

- The Jammu and Kashmir States Land (vesting of ownership to the occupants) Act is also known as the Roshni Act.
- Enacted in 2001, the law sought to regularise unauthorised land.
- It envisaged the transfer of ownership rights of state land to its occupants, subject to the payment of a cost, determined by the government.
- The government said that the revenue generated would be spent on commissioning hydroelectric power projects, hence the name Roshni.

Issue:

- While the Act was passed to raise ₹25,000 crore for hydel projects, only ₹76 crore was collected.
- In 2018, the then Lieutenant Governor Satyapal Malik repealed the Act.
- Later, the High Court also scrapped the Act and directed the authorities to retrieve the land from the occupants.
- Now, a petition has been filed before the Supreme Court by the beneficiaries claiming they were not even heard by the J&K High Court as it passed the directions.

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Shringla in Nepal to mend ties

Context:

India's Foreign Secretary is in Kathmandu in a major outreach to Nepal, which has been caught in a bitter boundary dispute with India regarding the Kalapani region.

Read more about the [Kalapani dispute](#).

Details:

- They reviewed various aspects of Nepal-India relations covering trade, transit, connectivity, infrastructure, energy, agriculture, investment, culture, people to people relations among others.
- Both sides also discussed multiple plans like the [Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project](#) as well as the starting of an air travel bubble between Nepal and India.

Read more about [Air Transport Bubble Agreement](#).

C. GS 3 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: SOCIAL ISSUES

1. Policing faith

Context:

Recently, the Uttar Pradesh government proposed an ordinance seeking to prohibit “unlawful” religious conversions.

This topic has been covered in the [25th November 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis](#).

- These suggestions were contained in a report of the Uttar Pradesh State Law Commission submitted in 2019.

Concerns:

- The article argues that the ordinance represents a regressive march towards medievalism and a deplorable enthusiasm to police the private lives and beliefs of citizens.
- It seems to reject the phrase “freedom of religion” that several other anti-conversion laws in other states have employed to title their laws.
- Besides the use of force, coercion, undue influence and deceit, it has sought to include “alluring into marriage” as an additional ground for declaring an instance of religious conversion as illegal.
 - This seems to be inspired by similar legislation in Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.
- The U.P. proposal also envisages prison terms.
- There is also a prior declaration provision on an intended conversion.

- While the panel had suggested that conversion solely for marriage should be declared null and void, the State's note on the ordinance says it provides for invalidation of marriages solemnised solely for conversion.

Arguments against the ordinance:

- While upholding the validity of the Freedom of Religion Acts of Madhya Pradesh and Odisha, in Stanislaus (1977), the Supreme Court had held that the "right to propagate" religion did not include the "right to convert". However, those early laws did not bar conversions by marriage.
- The Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and the proposed U.P. law would be vulnerable on that point.
- After the Court's "right to privacy" judgment, and the Shafin Jahan-Hadiya case (2018), it would be no more constitutional to use "marriage" as a ground for prohibiting conversion, as it involves the rights of privacy, choice and marital freedom.
 - The right to marry a person of one's choice is guaranteed under [Article 21](#).
 - Freedom of conscience, free profession, practice and propagation of religion of one's choice are guaranteed under Article 25.
- All the previous laws were seen as public order legislation (with the claim that "forced" or "fraudulent" conversions lead to disturbance of order).
- An inter-faith marriage, by itself, is unlikely to be seen by the courts as an event impinging on public order. Therefore, making marriage per se a ground for rendering conversion illegal would not survive judicial scrutiny.
- The U.P. ordinance uses the term "allurement by marriage", but its potential for misuse is the same.
- The provision on the mandatory prior declaration of an intent to convert is similar to the one struck down by the Himachal Pradesh High Court in 2012 as violating the right to keep one's faith a secret.

Despite the potential for deepening social discord and communal divides, it is a matter of concern that several states are keen to join this bandwagon against inter-marriages.

Category: HEALTH

1. A clear reading of the Ayurveda surgery move

Context:

- Recently, a Gazette of India notification was issued by the Central Council of Indian Medicine identifying surgical procedures that can be performed by post-graduate Ayurvedic doctors in Shalya (surgery).
- This has attracted several offended reactions.
 - The Indian Medical Association (IMA) has written a letter to the Prime Minister, engaging in excessive self-criticism.
 - Allopathic surgeons are outraged.
 - Social media and WhatsApp groups are abuzz with alarmist responses questioning the proficiency of Ayurvedic doctors in performing surgery.

[su_box title="Central Council of Indian Medicine" box_color="#7960a0" title_color="#ffffff"]

- Central Council of Indian Medicine is a statutory body under the Indian Medicine Central Council Act.
- It regulates the Indian medical systems of Ayurveda, Siddha, Sowa-Rigpa and Unani Medicine.[/su_box]

History - After 1947, what the state did:

- After Independence, the Indian state was faced with the difficult task of accommodating both the ascendant modern medicine brought in by the British and India's traditional systems of medicine, notably Ayurveda.
 - For a brief period, there actually existed integrated courses, wherein both Ayurveda and modern medicine were taught to students.
 - But these withered away partly due to opposition from purists in Ayurveda who were outraged by the dilution of their science.
 - Therefore, the degree in Ayurvedic medicine became largely an Ayurveda course.
- Subsequently, as modern medicine made rapid strides, Ayurvedic graduates experienced an identity crisis.

Details:

- Non-MBBS doctors have become an important cog in the modern medicine machine.
- They are resident doctors, intensive care duty doctors and operation theatre assistant surgeons.
 - In Maharashtra, the '108' emergency response ambulance service is manned by non-MBBS doctors.
 - During COVID-19, a large number of the quarantine centres were manned by these doctors.
- Incidentally, they work for less pay which allows hospitals to control costs and even make profits.
- In an effort to develop postgraduate programmes, Ayurveda medical colleges developed one in "Shalya" or "surgery".
 - This is awkward as unlike the vast pharmacopeia, there is really nothing called Ayurvedic surgery.
- Now, the controversial notification called the Indian Medicine Central Council (Post Graduate Ayurveda Education) Amendment Regulations, 2020 — by the Central Council of Indian Medicine authorises an MS (Ayurveda) Shalya Tantra, or General Surgery postgraduate degree holder on completion of his course to perform 58 surgical procedures. Some of the procedures in the list are rather complicated.

Way forward:

- Ayurveda graduates including surgeons are a large workforce in search of an identity. If they are creatively and properly trained, they can play important roles in our health-care system.
- Given the right training, pay and identity, Ayurvedic surgeons can be trained to strengthen services and save hundreds of lives.
- AYUSH, or Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy, is a priority area for the present government. The revival of Indian medicine fits well into a certain narrative.
- The IMA in its opposition to such moves needs to be precise and constructive.
- Utilising India's large workforce of non-MBBS doctors to improve access to decent health care for ordinary citizens is one of the urgently needed and serious discussions.

Note:

- Sage Sushruta displayed his surgical dexterity at a time when the world had not yet woken up to the art and the science of surgery.
- There are detailed descriptions in the Sushruta Samhita, the ancient Sanskrit text on medicine and surgery, of procedures such as rhinoplasty where the nose is reconstructed with tissue from the cheek.
- It was thousands of years later that modern plastic surgeons described this procedure.

1. Storm warnings

Context:

Cyclone Nivar had raised fears of another epic disaster for millions of coastal residents in the south, but its passage overland was less destructive than anticipated. Read more on [Cyclone Nivar](#).

Details:

- Although property and agriculture have suffered considerable damage, the reported loss of lives is a relatively low toll for such a large-scale weather system.
- The [IMD](#) has been getting better at forecasting slow-moving, linear tropical cyclones in the Bay of Bengal, and multiple satellites now provide cyclone data.
- The deployment of over two dozen NDRF teams and disaster management equipment along the coast reassured civic agencies.

Issue:

- For suburban Chennai, the peak one-day rainfall of 31 cm wrought destruction mirroring what happened five years ago.
- Smaller inland towns have suffered inundation and severe losses.
- There is extensive documentation on the loss of its floodplains, lakes and peri-urban wetlands to encroachment, a key factor that is worsening monsoon flooding.
 - This land grab is made possible by the indulgence of successive governments.
- The governments have not shown the rigour to collect and publish data on annual flooding patterns, and measure the peak flows in the neglected rivers and canals to plan remedies.
- Shocking indifference to land use norms has produced an unstructured housing sector characterised by inflated, speculative prices but no foundation of civic infrastructure.

Way forward:

- The aftermath presents an opportunity to make a full assessment not just for distribution of relief but also to understand the impacts of extreme monsoon weather.
- The Tamil Nadu government has shown readiness in handling the acute challenge of a severe weather event.
- The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu made field visits, and in parallel, the Opposition mounted its own relief operations.
- Periodic papering of the cracks does not offer a sustainable solution to Chennai's evident civic decay.
- To keep Tamil Nadu competitive, governments and local bodies should hardwire urban planning and invest heavily for a future of frequent disruptive weather.

F. Prelims Facts

1. IMAC to be domain awareness centre

What's in News?

The Navy's Information Management and Analysis Centre (IMAC) will soon become a National Maritime Domain Awareness (NDMA) centre, with all stakeholders having their presence there.

Information Management and Analysis Centre (IMAC):

- Navy's IMAC is the nodal agency for maritime data fusion set up after the [26/11 Mumbai terror attacks](#).
- Approved by the Defence Acquisition Council in 2012, the IMAC became operational in 2014 at a cost of ₹450 crore.
- It is located in Gurugram.
- It is the nodal centre of the National Command Control Communication and Intelligence System (NC3I), which was established to link the operational centres and lower echelons of the Navy and the Coast Guard spread across the country's coastline, including the island territories.
- The IMAC tracks vessels on the high seas and gets data from the coastal radars, white shipping agreements, Automatic Identification Systems (AIS) transponders fitted on merchant ships, air and traffic management system and global shipping databases.

Note:

- After the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack, all fishing vessels more than 20 m long are mandated to have AIS transponders installed.
- At any point of time, there are 11,000-12,000 vessels present in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) as of now. This shows the magnitude of the challenge in tracking vessels.
- As part of improving transparency on maritime traffic on the high seas, the Navy had been authorised to conclude white shipping agreements with 36 countries and three multilateral constructs.
 - So far they have been concluded with 22 countries and one multilateral construct, of which 17 and the one multilateral agreement had been operationalised.

G. Tidbits

1. With self-reliance push, China looks to reset ties with world

What's in News?

China, chastened by the impact of COVID-19, a trade war with the U.S., and a reassessment by many countries of their dependence on Chinese supply-chains, is making an accelerated push to reframe the nature of China's engagement with the world.

- Its aim is to essentially make China less reliant on the world and to make the world more reliant on China.
- "Dual circulation" is the name that Beijing has given this approach favoured by Mr. Xi (China's President), of boosting the domestic economy (or internal circulation) while recalibrating China's external relations (the other circulation).
- In order to safeguard China's industrial security and national security, the focus must be on building production chains and supply chains that are independently controllable, secure and reliable, and to strive for important products and supply channels to all to have at least one alternative source, he said.

Note:

- The key difference with India's own "self-reliant" emphasis is that China is at the same time embracing new trading arrangements such as the [Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership \(RCEP\)](#), from which India withdrew, and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), the other big regional trading bloc that succeeded the TPP after America's withdrawal (which Mr. Xi has expressed interest in joining).
- Trading agreements, in China's view, will open new markets and help increase trade dependencies on China overseas — China is already the biggest trading partner for many of the RCEP's members — even while China is moving to erect ever-higher non-tariff barriers for foreign firms, particularly in sensitive sectors — all while positioning itself as a defender of globalisation.

Agreements like the RCEP failing to adequately address this contradiction was one key reason why India ultimately withdrew from the negotiations, receiving no assurances of a level playing field, even as it was asked to open up its economy.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Which of the following is the nodal agency to implement price stabilization measures under Operation Greens:

- a. Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP)
- b. National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Limited (NAFED)
- c. Farmer Producer Organisation (FPO)
- d. Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers' Welfare

CHECK ANSWERS:-

Answer: b

Explanation:

- NAFED is an agricultural cooperative organisation established with the objective of promoting cooperative marketing of agricultural produce to benefit farmers.
- It was established in 1958 to promote the trade of agricultural products and forest resources.
- With its headquarters in New Delhi, it is today one of the largest procurement as well as marketing agencies for agricultural products in India.
- It is the nodal agency to implement price stabilization measures under Operation Greens.

Q2. Consider the following statements:

1. India is among the world's top five honey producers.
2. Nosema disease is a fungal disease that affects honey bees.
3. A Beekeeping Development Committee was set up under the Chairmanship of Bibek Debroy for identifying ways of advancing beekeeping in India.

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

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

CHECK ANSWERS:-

Answer: c

Explanation:

All the statements are correct.

Q3. Consider the following statements:

1. The treaty of Sugauli was signed between the British East India Company and the Gurkha rulers of Kathmandu.
2. It was signed at the end of the Anglo-Nepal War.
3. Under the treaty, one-third of the Nepalese territory was lost to the British.

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:

- The treaty of Sugauli was signed between the British East India Company and the Gurkha rulers of Kathmandu.
- It was signed at the end of the Anglo-Nepal War.
- Under the treaty, one-third of the Nepalese territory was lost to the British.

Q4. "Pichvai Paintings" is a traditional art form that has its origin in which of these states?

- a. Odisha
- b. Maharashtra
- c. Bihar
- d. Rajasthan

CHECK ANSWERS:-

Answer: d

Explanation:

Pichwai paintings also known as "Pichvai" is a traditional Indian art having its origins in Rajasthan. Pichwai art features intricate paintings portraying Lord Krishna (Sreenath Ji) which is done on fabric using dark rich hues.

1. Anti-conversion laws barring inter-faith marriages will lead to the path of social regression. Discuss. (10 Marks, 150 Words) (GS 1 Social Issues).
2. India must utilise its large workforce of non-MBBS doctors to improve access to decent health care. Elucidate (10 Marks, 150 Words) (GS 2 Health).

