

30 Nov 2020: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. GS 1 Related

B. GS 2 Related

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. [China nod for downstream dam on the Brahmaputra](#)
2. [‘Iran will give a calculated response to scientist killing’](#)

HEALTH

1. [Lifetime risk of diabetes in metros alarming: study](#)

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. [First case under conversion ordinance in U.P.](#)

C. GS 3 Related

ECONOMY

1. [Farmers reject Centre’s call for talks, say Burari is an open jail](#)

D. GS 4 Related

ECONOMY

1. [Reaping the whirlwind](#)
2. [Historic Recession](#)

ENVIRONMENT

1. [The Paris Agreement is no panacea](#)

E. Editorials

F. Prelims Facts

1. [Organisation of Islamic Cooperation \(OIC\)](#)

G. Tidbits

1. [26/11 key accused wanted ‘medal’ for ‘top class’ input](#)
2. [In Colombo, Ajit Doval meets Sampanthan](#)

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

A. GS 1 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

B. GS 2 Related

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. China nod for downstream dam on the Brahmaputra

Context:

China’s media reported that authorities have given the go-ahead for a Chinese hydropower company to construct the first downstream dam on the lower reaches of the Brahmaputra river or Yarlung Zangbo as it is known in Tibet.

Details:

- It has been reported that a state-owned hydropower company has signed a strategic cooperation agreement with the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) government in this regard.
- The project is expected to play a significant role in realising China's goal of reaching a carbon emissions peak before 2030 and carbon neutrality in 2060.
- While the location of the new project is not clear, it could be at the "Great Bend" of the Brahmaputra and at the Yarlung Zangbo Grand Canyon in Medog county.
 - This is where the river falls spectacularly over a 2,000 metre-drop and turns sharply to flow across the border into Arunachal Pradesh.

Concerns:

- This will be the first time the downstream sections of the river Brahmaputra will be tapped.
- The construction of a dam would have potential ramifications for India.
- The recent development is seen as a new phase in China's hydropower exploitation.
- India has expressed concerns to China over the four dams on the upper and middle reaches.
- However, Indian officials have said the dams are not likely to impact the quantity of the Brahmaputra's flows in India greatly because they are only storing water for power generation and the Brahmaputra is not entirely dependent on upstream flows with an estimated 35% of its basin in India.
- If approved, a dam at the Great Bend would raise fresh concerns, considering its location downstream and just across the border from Arunachal Pradesh.

Note:

- In 2015, China operationalised its first hydropower project at Zangmu in Tibet.
- Three other dams at Dagu, Jiexu and Jiacha are being developed, on the upper and middle reaches of the river.

2. 'Iran will give a calculated response to scientist killing'

Context:

A leading Iranian nuclear scientist and a brigadier general in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard - Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, has been assassinated in Tehran.

This topic has been [29th November 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis](#).

Category: HEALTH

1. Lifetime risk of diabetes in metros alarming: study

Context:

A new research titled 'Lifetime risk of diabetes in metropolitan cities in India' has been published in Diabetologia (journal of the European Association for the Study of Diabetes).

Details:

- It shows that more than half of men (55%) and some two-thirds (65%) of women aged 20 years in India will likely develop diabetes, with most of those cases (around 95%) likely to be type 2 diabetes.
- India already has a significant health burden caused by diabetes and estimates suggest that 77 million adults have diabetes and this is expected to almost double to 134 million by 2045.
- The researchers noted that — urbanisation, decreasing diet quality and decreased levels of physical activity — are all contributing to this hidden epidemic.

Concerns:

- Diabetes is one of the most important threats to public health in India.
- Such high probabilities of developing diabetes will have severely negative implications for India's already strained health system.
- It would also increase the out-of-pocket expenditure on diabetes treatment.

Read more on “Diabetes” covered in [4th July 2020 PIB Summary and Analysis](#).

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. First case under conversion ordinance in U.P.

Context:

Recently, the Uttar Pradesh government proposed an ordinance seeking to prohibit “unlawful” religious conversions. The Uttar Pradesh police lodged the first case under the new ordinance.

This topic has been covered in the [25th November 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis](#) and [27th November 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis](#).

C. GS 3 Related

Category: ECONOMY

1. Farmers reject Centre's call for talks, say Burari is an open jail

Read about the Agricultural Reforms covered in [27th September 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis](#).

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: ECONOMY

1. Reaping the whirlwind

Context: The farmers' protest over the nature of farm acts passed by the Central Government.

Details:

Minimum Support Price (MSP)

1. Guaranteed Government procurement had secured protection of the farmers from demand and supply shock but the new farm bills have cast doubts over the future of [MSP](#).
2. The new provisions, on paper, seek to promote more choices for the farmers, seek to establish a '[Free market economy](#)' for their produce with a unified national market.
3. However, with the dismantling of MSP and mandis, the farmers will be exposed to the contracts with private players with little bargaining power.
4. Farmers need a strong unequivocal commitment from the Government with regards to MSP and it has to be more than just verbal assurances.

Concerns

1. **Deliberation** - Parliament passing the farm bills that have a significant impact on the agrarian sector without much deliberation in the Legislature has raised questions about the lack of political consensus and the need for such hastiness.
2. **Consultation** - Agriculture sector employs more than 50 percent of the total workforce in India and is the backbone of India's rural sector, but the farmers and the agriculture trade unions have been kept out of the loop and their views hadn't been elicited while drafting the bill.
3. **Electricity (Amendment) Bill 2020**
 1. Farmers have expressed their displeasure over this amendment and want an immediate withdrawal. Farmers believe that this amendment will spell an end to the subsidized electricity.
 2. Though subsidized power has led to environmental concerns such as depleting water tables, taking such a major reform without keeping the farming community and its representatives in the loop has heightened fear and distrust amongst the farming community.

2. Historic Recession

Context: The National Statistical Office data has revealed that the Indian economy has entered a recession in the July-September quarter (Quarter 2).

Background:

- A business cycle typically consists of an expansionary phase and a recessionary phase; these are defined by the increase or decrease in the overall output of goods and services respectively. The output is often measured in terms of Gross Domestic Product.
- In a scenario wherein the GDP contracts for a longer time or in other words, the recessionary phase extends for a longer time interval, the economy is said to be in a recession.
- A '**technical recession**' is one in which there have been two consecutive quarters of negative growth in real GDP.

Details:

- Gross Domestic Product provisional estimates for the second quarter of the financial year 2020-2021 has contracted by 7.5%, succeeding the first quarter shrinkage of 23.9%, hence marking the recession phase of the Indian economy.
- The overall GDP figures too have not been encouraging either, with the overall GDP figures being the lowest in the preceding 12 quarters.
- Though there is some optimism with the reduction in contraction in the second quarter with respect to the first quarter, a deeper look into the numbers of expenditure and gross value added across different industry categories quells such optimism.

Factors driving consumption

1. Private Consumption

1. The lack of private consumption expenditure amidst the pandemic has impacted the GDP figures, especially when it is one of the major bulwarks of the economy, with its share being more than half at constant and current prices.
2. The shortfall in private consumption expenditure can be broadly attributed to the COVID pandemic, reduced incomes, loss of jobs, pessimistic outlook towards the future.

2. Government Consumption

1. Government consumption spending has contracted by 22%, contrastingly it grew at 16% during the April-June quarter. This contraction along with a decline in private consumption expenditure has led the demand to plummet to new lows.
2. Gross fixed capital formation, exports and imports have seen a small uptick.
3. Electricity and other utility services along with agriculture have expanded and so have the power and water consumption, many of these expansions can be attributed to the resumption of industrial activities that had gone 'cold' during the lockdown.

Manufacturing sector expansion

- An anomaly has been witnessed in the manufacturing sector, with manufacturing GVA showing an expansion of 0.6% in the second quarter while at the same time, the [Index of Industrial Production](#) has contracted by 6.7% for the same period.
- This diversion between IIP and GVA is further compounded by comparing manufacturing GVA of quarters 1 and 2, where there is a contraction of 39% in Quarter 1 and an expansion of 0.6% in Quarter 2.
- Several economists have cautioned reading too much in the numbers saying that the incremental growth in GVA is mainly attributed to aggressive cost-cutting measures, soft raw materials cost and a trimmed wage bill.
- Low Base-effect and restocked inventory are also seen to be the reasons for such a recovery seen in the manufacturing sector.
- The financial and real estate sectors and professional services which contribute a quarter of the GVA have contracted. The poor performance of the financial sector must worry policymakers.

Need for a demand stimulus

- The economy is in need of a demand stimulus to propel the economy, it is important that this stimulus is spread across sectors to ensure that no sector is deprived of the much-needed stimulus.
- The demand stimulus can have a multiplier effect in terms of credit creation, job creation, private consumption expenditure.

Category: ENVIRONMENT

1. The Paris Agreement is no panacea

Details:

- Questions have been raised over the effectiveness of the Paris climate deal in securing the environmental future of planet earth.
- The scientific community has pointed out how the 2 degrees Celsius aim is far from the required target and the environmentalists have pointed out the nature of Nationally Determined Contributions and how the lack of accountability can hinder the efforts to contain climate change.

Climate talks on Global Agenda

- The global climate discourse established itself with the [UNFCCC](#), the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development laid down certain fundamental themes for climate discourse for the future such as '[Common But Differentiated Responsibilities](#)' and '[Polluter pays](#)' principles.
- UNFCCC was seen as a template for balancing the right to development of developing countries and obligations of the developed countries.
- Rio Convention also approved a financial assistance mechanism to develop environment-friendly technologies to aid the developing countries.

Kyoto Protocol - operationalization of UNFCCC

- The Protocol provided fixed emission targets for developed countries and at the same time provided certain flexible mechanisms to go about achieving the targets.
- A key distinguishing aspect between the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement is the presence of punitive measures for lack of adherence to commitments under the Kyoto Protocol (which is absent in the Paris Agreement).
- The US Congress did not ratify it and subsequently, the US withdrew from the arrangement in 2001.
- Kyoto Protocol's end and shelving the values and spirit of Rio principles were all to be seen during the Copenhagen summit of 2009 where it was decided by the US and China that voluntary reduction of greenhouse gas emissions was the key for a global climate action plan.
- The Copenhagen Accord drafted by the US and the BASIC coalition of Brazil, South Africa, India, China in 2009 was virtually the birth of the Paris Agreement.

Kyoto Protocol-2

- This period bridges the gap between the end of the 1st Kyoto period (2012) and the start of the new global agreement in 2020.
- The second commitment period of the [Kyoto Protocol](#) commits countries to contain the emission of greenhouse gases, reaffirming its stand on climate action.

Paris Conference of Parties- the cornerstone of future climate action

- To hold the increase in global average temperature to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels.
- The Agreement also talks about reaching the global peaking of emissions by the second half of the century, recognizing that peaking will take longer for developing country Parties.

1. Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC)

1. NDCs marked a departure from the Rio principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR) in bringing all countries to commit to reduce emissions and combat climate change.
2. NDCs are the cornerstone of countries' efforts to achieve the targets set by the Paris agreement. NDC places great faith in the efforts of the countries in achieving the set goals, as

the countries must themselves set emission targets voluntarily and there is no penalty for failing to achieve them.

3. Lack of transparency in the targets achieved and a total absence of accountability when failing to achieve them has disappointed the environmentalists. The 2 degrees Celsius limit will not be achieved with the current level of national and international efforts via NDCs.

2. **Harsh realities of Paris Agreement**

1. The scientific community and environmentalists have expressed their concerns over the inadequacy of the agreement in securing a safer, cleaner and healthier planet.
2. The aim to limit the rise in temperature to 2 degrees Celsius has not gone down well as studies have revealed that even a 1.5 degrees Celsius rise would lead to catastrophic and irreversible changes such as almost over three-fourths of the coral reefs dying.
3. The 2-degree Celsius limit is just a figurative way to convince the global public that the global leadership and the institutions are taking the climate change realities seriously.
4. The 2 degrees Celsius target is a careful balancing of developed countries' lifestyles with the right to development of the developing countries.
5. The 'equity' principle enshrined in the Rio convention had to make way in the post-Paris agreement era.

3. **US withdrawal**

1. The US turned its back on the Paris Agreement signed at the UNFCCC Conference of Parties-21 in the year 2015.
2. The justification for the decision by the US administration was that the Paris deal was not in line with President Donald Trump's vision of 'Make America great again', for they believed that the deal would hurt the US economy, hamstrung its industries with emission norms, impair job creation.

Talanoa Dialogue

- It was adopted during the UN CoP-23 at Bonn.
- The conference made strides in determining the rules and framework for implementation of the Paris agreement 2015.
- Talanoa Dialogue is a process to assess where countries stand and what is the goal and how it is to be achieved.

Katowice Conference of Parties

- At the heart of talks during CoP-24 was the Paris "rulebook", which was mandated in 2015 to be finalized by the end of COP24.
- This is the detailed "operating manual" needed for the Paris Agreement to enter into force in 2020.
- The rulebook covers a multitude of questions, such as how countries should report their greenhouse gas emissions or contributions to climate finance, as well as what rules should apply to voluntary market mechanisms, such as carbon trading.

Future

- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) whose objective is to provide governments at all levels with scientific information that they can use to develop climate policies has echoed the need to have an economic as well as societal transformation to avoid a hotter earth.
- It requires a multilateral and universal approach to tackle the impending climate crisis. The Paris Agreement falls short of such a response.
- Strong institutions along with a global leadership committed to the goals of equity and climate justice are the needs of the hour.

- Significant diplomatic capital has to be invested to ensure that the developed countries do not feel that they are burdened and the developing countries' concerns of the right to development are not forgotten.

F. Prelims Facts

1. Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

- The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is one of the largest inter-governmental organizations with a membership of 57 states spread over four continents.
- The Organization is the collective voice of the Muslim world.
- It endeavours to safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony among various people of the world.

Read more about [Organisation of Islamic Cooperation \(OIC\)](#).

G. Tidbits

1. 26/11 key accused wanted 'medal' for 'top class' input

What's in News?

A U.S. court has set the date of hearing for the extradition of Pakistani-origin Canadian businessman Tahawwur Rana, who has been declared a fugitive by India for his involvement in the 2008 Mumbai terror attack case.

- The Mumbai terror attack in 2008 was a horrific terrorist attack by 10 heavily-armed terrorists from Pakistan.
- Pakistani national [Mohammed Ajmal Kasab](#), the lone terrorist captured alive, was hanged to death in 2012.

Read more on [Mumbai Terror Attacks \(26/11\)](#).

2. In Colombo, Ajit Doval meets Sampanthan

What's in News?

India's National Security Adviser (NSA) met a senior Sri Lankan Tamil leader R. Sampanthan before wrapping up his two-day visit for a trilateral discussion on maritime cooperation and security.

- The meeting with Mr. Sampanthan, whose Tamil National Alliance has ten MPs in the 225-member legislature, assumes significance, as India has highlighted its concerns about the rights of the Tamil minorities.
- A joint statement issued by New Delhi and Colombo had said: "Prime Minister Modi called on the Government of Sri Lanka to address the aspirations of the Tamil people for equality, justice, peace

and respect within a united Sri Lanka, including by carrying forward the process of reconciliation with the implementation of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution.”

Background:

- The Rajapaksa administration has promised to draft a new Constitution.
- However, some prominent members of the government openly oppose the Amendment and the provincial council system consequent on the Indo-Lanka Accord that was signed in 1987.

Read more on the [13th Amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution](#).

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Which of the following are left-bank tributaries of River Brahmaputra?

1. River Dhansiri
2. River Lohit
3. River Subansiri
4. River Dibang
5. River Kameng

Choose the correct option:

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

CHECK ANSWERS:-

Answer: a

Explanation:

Rivers Dhansiri, Lohit and Dibang are the left bank tributaries of River Brahmaputra, while Rivers Subansiri and Kameng are right bank tributaries.

Q2. Which of the following rightly describes Mission SAMPARK?

- a. The mission is aimed at tracing patients with HIV/AIDS, who are left to follow up and are to be brought under Antiretroviral therapy (ART) services.
- b. The mission is aimed at formulating developmental policies for accelerating growth of the telecommunication services.
- c. The mission launched in the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic to have a safe arrangement to fly passengers between two countries.
- d. The mission is aimed at assisting the needy disabled persons in procuring standard aids and appliances that can promote their physical, social and psychological rehabilitation.

CHECK ANSWERS:-

Answer: a

Explanation:

- Mission Sampark is an initiative of the Government of India to reach out to all the Lost to Follow up Patients Living with HIV/AIDS.
- The mission is aimed at tracing those who are left to follow up and are to be brought under Antiretroviral therapy (ART) services.

Q3. Consider the following statements with respect to the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) :

1. It is the second-largest inter-governmental organization after the United Nations.
2. Its Permanent Secretariat is in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.
3. The OIC has permanent delegations to the European Union.

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

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

CHECK ANSWERS:-

Answer: d

Explanation:

All the statements are correct.

Q4. Kibber Wildlife Sanctuary is located in:

- a. Uttarakhand
- b. Himachal Pradesh
- c. Punjab
- d. Uttar Pradesh

CHECK ANSWERS:-

Answer: b

Explanation:

- Kibber Wildlife Sanctuary is located on the bank of Spiti River in Himachal Pradesh.
- It is India's only cold desert wildlife sanctuary.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Recent farm acts aim to increase the availability of buyers for farmers' produce thereby ensuring the goal of doubling farmers' income. Critically discuss various apprehensions in its effective implementation along with concerns it has generated in various federal units. [GS 3, Economy]
2. Pandemic has led the Indian economy into a recession. Discuss the measures needed to be taken by the Government to revive private consumption in order to improve overall demand in the economy. [GS 3, Economy]

