

30 Jan 2021: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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Nothing here for today!!!

B. GS 2 Related

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Govt. tightens oversight on funds received by NGOs

Context:

The Union Home Ministry has laid out a series of guidelines and charter to make NGOs and banks comply with the new provisions of the [Foreign Contribution \(Regulation\) Act \(FCRA\)](#).

- It says that donations received in Indian rupees by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and associations from any foreign source even if that source is located in India at the time of such donation should be treated as foreign contribution.
- It added that “donations given in Indian rupees (INR) by any foreigner/foreign source including foreigners of Indian origin like OCI or PIO cardholders” should also be treated as foreign contribution.

Details:

- As per the existing rules, all banks have to report to the Central government within 48 hours the “receipt or utilisation of any foreign contribution” by any NGO, association or person whether or not they are registered or granted prior permission under the FCRA.
- In September 2020, the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010, was amended by Parliament.
 - A new provision was inserted that makes it mandatory for all NGOs to receive foreign funds in a designated bank account at the State Bank of India’s (SBI) New Delhi branch.
 - All NGOs seeking foreign donations have to open a designated FCRA account at the SBI branch by March 31, 2021.
 - The NGOs can retain their existing FCRA account in any other bank but it will have to be mandatorily linked to the SBI branch in New Delhi.
- FCRA regulates foreign donations and ensures that such contributions do not adversely affect the internal security of the country.

Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA):

- FCRA regulates foreign donations and ensures that such contributions do not adversely affect the internal security of the country.
- The Act, first enacted in 1976, was amended in the year 2010 when a slew of new measures was taken by the Union Home Ministry to regulate foreign donations.
- In 2020, the FCRA Amendment Bill was passed by both Lok Sabha as well as the Rajya Sabha.

Read more on this topic covered in [25th September 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis](#).

2. ‘U.P. ordinance on conversion capable of public mischief’

Context:

The former Chief Justice of Delhi High Court has said that the controversial Uttar Pradesh Ordinance aimed at checking unlawful religious conversions for inter-faith marriages was “capable of great public mischief”.

- He said “The ordinance makes it a criminal offence for a person to convert another by coercion, misrepresentation and so on. There is nothing objectionable in that itself. But it greatly violates the freedom of conscience and the fundamental right to practice religion. It also strikes at the right to life and liberty guaranteed by the Constitution.”

This topic has been covered in **2nd January 2021 Comprehensive News Analysis**. For In-depth understanding of the issue, watch **Explained: Love Jihad Laws**.

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Myanmar poll panel rejects fraud claims

Context:

Myanmar’s Election Commission rejected allegations by the military that fraud played a significant role in determining the outcome of elections, in which Aung San Suu Kyi’s party won the majority of seats.

Background:

- In the November 2020 elections, Aung San Suu Kyi’s National League for Democracy party captured 396 out of 476 seats in the November 8 polls, allowing them to form the government for five more years.
- The military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party won 33 seats.
- Ever since, the military has been calling on the government and the Union Election Commission to review the results stating that it found irregularities in voter lists.
- Myanmar’s military chief also said that the Constitution could be revoked if the laws are not being properly enforced.

Details:

- The Election Commission said there was no evidence to support the military’s claims with respect to irregularities in voter lists.
- The decision came amid heightened tensions after the military refused to rule out the possibility of a coup if their complaints were ignored.
 - The military had ruled Myanmar for five decades until 2015.

Read more on a related topic covered in **16th November 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis**.

C. GS 3 Related

Category: ECONOMY

1. Economic Survey predicts 11% growth next fiscal

Context:

The Economic Survey 2021 was tabled in the parliament on the first day of the Budget Session ahead of the Union Budget 2021.

Economic Survey:

- The Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance presents the Economic Survey of India in Parliament every year, just before the Union Budget.
- This document is submitted to both houses of Parliament during the Budget Session.
- The Economic Survey reviews the developments in the Indian economy over the previous 12 months.
- It highlights the policy initiatives of the government, summarizes the performance on major development programs, and shows the growth prospects of the economy.

Please note that the Summary and Analysis of the ECONOMIC SURVEY will be holistically covered. Watch this space for the updates.

2. Plea seeks appointment of PMLA tribunal chief

Context:

The Supreme Court asked the government to respond to a petition seeking reasons for the delay in appointment of chairman and members to the appellate tribunal under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

Details:

- A plea was filed stating that the appointments to the appellate tribunal under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) should be made on a priority basis.
- According to the plea, the tribunal in New Delhi is struggling to dispense justice.
 - Particularly in the absence of its chairman and three members out of the sanctioned strength of four.
 - Also due to the acute shortage of administrative staff.
- The plea argued that the very object for constituting tribunals is to supplement the functions of High Courts and other courts and to ensure that the consumer of justice gets speedy redress.

Prevention of Money Laundering Act:

- The Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) was enacted by the Indian Parliament in 2002 to prevent money laundering in India.
- The act was amended in 2019 to further empower the Enforcement Directorate in dealing with money laundering cases. This has been covered in [9th August 2019 CNA](#).
- The chief objective of this legislation is to fight money laundering, that is, the process of converting black money into white.

Read more on [Prevention of Money Laundering Act](#).

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Wide aisle

Context:

The opposition parties have decided to move for a repeal of the three contentious [farm reform laws](#) during the Budget session of Parliament.

Concerns:

- The session began with around 20 Opposition parties boycotting the President's address to a joint sitting of Parliament.

This issue has been covered in [29th January 2021 Comprehensive News Analysis](#).

- The boycott indicated a worsening of the relationship between the government and the Opposition.
- The government and the Opposition are headed on a collision course in the Budget session of Parliament.
- The confrontation over these laws began in the last session when they were passed.
- Concerns were raised by the opposition that the laws were passed without detailed and proper consultation with political parties, experts and farmer representatives.

Details:

- In terms of the numerical strength, the government of the day has advantages over the Opposition, in both Houses of Parliament.
- With the Tamil Nadu and West Bengal Assembly elections round the corner, two key Opposition parties are expected to be largely absent, further reducing the Opposition's strength.
- The Opposition, despite its united front on the first day of the session, has a record of disintegrating in the face of the government's manoeuvring in previous sessions.

Issues for discussion:

- There will be a discussion on the Motion of Thanks to the President and later on the Budget.
- In legislative business, recent ordinances such as the Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Ordinance, 2020, which has provisions to deal with domestic and international arbitration and defines the law for conducting conciliation proceedings, and the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Ordinance, 2021, which is for merging the J&K cadre of All India Services Officers such as the IAS, IPS and the Indian Forest Service with the Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Mizoram Union Territory (AGMUT) cadre, will have to get a parliamentary nod.

Need for Parliamentary debate:

- The government draws its legitimacy from a parliamentary majority, but democratic conduct is more than enforcing the will of the majority.

- The government's conduct in Parliament and outside, where its critics are facing the strong arm of the state machinery, should meet the high standards India has set for itself as a democracy.
- Parliament is the temple of Democracy. The legislature needs to keep a check on the executive by means of questions and deliberations.
- Also, with an ongoing pandemic, the politics of avoidance should be avoided and executive accountability needs to be prioritized.
- Parliamentary debates are a necessary precursor to passing laws.

Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. A champion of science, pro-poor technology

Context:

- The year 1910 was very significant for India and science. This was the year the astrophysicist, Dr. Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar and C. Subramaniam were born.
- **January 30** is the birth anniversary of C. Subramaniam (CS), an architect of public policy for Indian science and of the 'Green Revolution' in the country.

Dr. Chandrasekhar:

- Dr. Chandrasekhar explored space and propounded the concept of black holes. He was concerned about processes of importance in the evolution of stars in the universe.

Contributions of C. Subramaniam:

- Subramaniam championed the cause of science and technology to solve societal problems.
- India is still benefitting from the long-term impacts of CS's several contributions to education, agriculture, science and technology to name a few.
- He was one of the architects of modern India and relied on evidence-based approaches in decision making.
- Transparency and probity were his powerful tools.
- He was a rare combination of being a visionary and a missionary at the same time, and Indian science remains a beneficiary.
- He was a revered promoter of scientific temper and a shining Ratna of Bharat.

Food sufficiency goal:

- Subramaniam was concerned about the problem of food security in India.
 - He sowed the seeds of the Green Revolution in Indian agriculture.
- In the 1960s when India faced scarcity of food grains, a superordinate goal that India become self-sufficient in food in five years was set.
 - The goal was realised and has been sustained since then.

Investments in Science:

- In addition to the above, CS championed the cause of planned public investments in science.
- The blueprint for linking science and technology to the development path of India was cast by CS even before the formation of the dedicated Science and Technology Ministry.
- This year, 2021, is significant for another reason — it is the golden jubilee year of the founding of India's Ministry of Science and Technology.
 - CS had an abiding trust in science and believed that technology alone could offer solutions to the problems faced by society.
 - He called for the practice of science to be celebrated not only by other scientists but also by citizens and humanity.

The agro foundation:

- He realised that the economic freedom of every citizen of India was heavily reliant on the 4Es: Education, Environment, Economy and Empowerment of our farmers.
- The National Agro Foundation (NAF) was his gift to the nation on his 90th birthday.
- NAF, in its journey of 21 years, has lived up to his ideals. It institutionalised his will through farmer-centric programmes.

Conclusion:

- His call for “science for [the] economic freedom of humanity” and his voice for pro-poor technology must be worked upon.
- The best way to pay tribute to a patriot like Mr. Subramaniam is to connect to science and see to it that it brings relief to the poor.

F. Prelims Facts

Nothing here for today!!!

G. Tidbits

1. WHO team begins fieldwork in Wuhan to trace virus origins

What's in News?

Fieldwork has begun in Wuhan for the coronavirus origins probe that will take place in a food market presumed to be “ground zero” of the pandemic.

- The Huanan market, which remains boarded up is believed to have been the first major cluster of infections.
- The WHO investigation has been hobbled by delays. The WHO insists the probe will be bound tightly to the science behind how the virus jumped to humans.
- However, there are fears over access and the strength of evidence a year after the virus emerged in Wuhan.

2. Fiscal deficit soars to 146% at ₹11.6 lakh cr.

What's in News?

The government's fiscal deficit soared to ₹11.58 lakh crore or 145.5% of the Budget Estimate (BE) at the end of December 2020.

- This is mainly on account of lower revenue realisation.
- Revenue realisation was hit by disruptions in normal business activity following the coronavirus pandemic and lockdowns.

Note:

For the fiscal year 2020-21, the Centre had pegged the fiscal deficit at ₹7.96 lakh crore or 3.5% of the GDP.

Fiscal Deficit:

- Fiscal deficit is termed as the difference between the total revenue and total expenditure of a government in a financial year.
- The condition of fiscal deficit arises when the expenditure of a government is more than the revenue generated by the government in a given fiscal year.

Read more on **Fiscal Deficit**.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. The journal 'Prabuddha Bharata' was started by:

- a. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose
- b. Bal Gangadhar Tilak
- c. Sister Nivedita
- d. Swami Vivekananda

Answer: d

Explanation:

- 'Prabuddha Bharata' is a monthly journal of the Ramakrishna Order, started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896.
- The journal 'Prabuddha Bharata' has been an important medium for spreading the message of India's ancient spiritual wisdom.
- Its publication was started from Chennai (erstwhile Madras), where it continued to be published for two years, after which it was published from Almora.
- Later, in April 1899, the place of publication of the Journal was shifted to Advaita Ashrama and it has been continuously published from there since then.

Q2. Consider the following statements with respect to Economic Survey of India:

1. It is compiled and presented by the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance.
2. It is submitted to both houses of Parliament during the Budget Session.
3. The Economic Survey is presented as a part of the Budget.

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

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

- The Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance presents the Economic Survey of India in Parliament every year, just before the Union Budget.
- This document is submitted to both houses of Parliament during the Budget Session.
- The first Economic Survey of India was presented in 1950-51 as part of the Union Budget. After 1964 it was **separated from the Budget** and presented each year during the Budget Session before the presentation of the budget.

Q3. Which among these tribes rear Changthangi and are the traditional producers of the Pashmina wool in the Ladakh region?

- a. Balti Tribe
- b. Dogra Tribe
- c. Changpa Tribe
- d. Bakarwal Tribe

Answer: c

Explanation:

Changpa tribes are nomadic high-altitude pastoralists rearing the prized Pashmina goat in Ladakh for Cashmere wool. These tribes rear Changthangi and are the traditional producers of the Pashmina wool in the Ladakh region

Q4. Consider the following statements with respect to STARS project:

1. It is an education reform initiative in India which is financially aided by the World Bank.
2. It is a centrally sponsored scheme under the Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSEL).
3. This project will be implemented through the Samagra Shiksha Scheme.

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

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

d. None of the above

Answer: d

Explanation:

All the given statements are correct.

Read about [STARS project](#).

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. What do you understand by Money Laundering? What are the challenges facing India in the implementation of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act? (10 Marks, 150 Words) [GS-3, Economy].
2. In the absence of parliamentary debates, the rationale behind the provisions of a law is hard to understand. Analyze. (15 Marks, 250 Words) [GS-2, Polity and Governance].