

## 24 Sep 2020: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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### A. GS 1 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## **B. GS 2 Related**

### **Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

#### **1. Sri Lanka Oppn. challenges new Bill in SC**

##### **Context:**

Opposition parties in Sri Lanka have moved the Supreme Court challenging the contentious 20th Amendment Bill, a day after it was tabled in the parliament.

**This topic has been covered in the [23<sup>rd</sup> September 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis](#).**

#### **2. G4 seeks time-bound reform of Security Council**

##### **Context:**

Foreign Ministers from the Group of 4 — India, Brazil, Japan and Germany — a group that is seeking permanent membership of the UN Security Council (UNSC), met virtually to further their objective.

##### **Details:**

- The Ministers reaffirmed their common resolve to take decisive steps towards comprehensive reform of the Security Council that was envisaged by Heads of State and Government in the 2005 World Summit.
- The four countries stressed delivering concrete outcomes, in writing and within a time frame.

**This topic has been covered in the [23<sup>rd</sup> September 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis](#).**

### **Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE**

#### **1. Eight Bills passed on last day of Rajya Sabha**

##### **Context:**

The Rajya Sabha was adjourned sine die, clocking a productivity rate of over 100%, despite it being one of the shortest monsoon sessions with only 10 sittings held.

##### **Details:**

- The House, on the last day of the monsoon session, passed eight Bills.
- During the day, the House passed the following legislations:

1) [The Foreign Contribution Regulation \(Amendment\) Bill, 2020](#).

2) J&K Official Languages Bill, 2020.

- The bill has included Kashmiri, Dogri and Hindi in the list of official languages of J&K in addition to Urdu and English.
- The Bill has been passed by both Houses.

3) The Bilateral Netting of Qualified Financial Contracts Bill, 2020.

- Bilateral netting refers to offsetting claims arising from dealings between two parties to determine the net amount payable or receivable from one party to the other.
- Under the bill, a qualified financial contract (QFC) is a bilateral contract notified as a QFC by a relevant authority such as the Reserve Bank of India, [Securities and Exchange Board of India](#), Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India, Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority or International Financial Services Centres Authority.
- These authorities may designate entities, such as non-banking financial companies or insurance or pension firms functioning under its jurisdiction, as qualified financial market participants to deal in QFCs.
- The bill allows for the enforcement of netting for qualified financial contracts.

4) The Occupational Safety Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020

5) The Industrial Relations Code, 2020

6) The Code on Social Security, 2020

7) The Appropriation (No.3) Bill, 2020

8) The Appropriation (No.4) Bill, 2020

## C. GS 3 Related

### Category: ECONOMY

#### 1. Labour Bills passed amid boycott

##### Context:

The Parliament passed three Bills that complete the government's codification of 29 labour laws into four codes, with the Rajya Sabha passing:

- The Industrial Relations Code, 2020
- The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020
- The Social Security Code, 2020
- The first of the four codes, the Code on Wages, was passed by Parliament in 2019.

**This topic has been covered in the [20<sup>th</sup> September 2020 Comprehensive News analysis](#).**

### Category: SECURITY

#### 1. 'MSMEs, start-ups not for non-personal data policy'

##### Context:

As per a survey by LocalCircles, a majority of MSMEs and start-ups are not comfortable with the draft non-personal data policy in the current form.

##### Details:

- LocalCircles said that 80% MSMEs and start-ups oppose non-personal data policy in its current form.
- It said that the startups and SMEs believe data sharing should be voluntary to start with and could be made mandatory later for firms with annual revenue of more than ₹500 crore.

Read more on this topic covered in the **2<sup>nd</sup> September 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis**.

## D. GS 4 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## E. Editorials

### Category: SOCIAL ISSUES

#### 1. Weighing in on the efficacy of female leadership

The editorial analyses the necessity to get rid of inherent biases and perceptions about the effectiveness of women in roles of authority, specifically with respect to India.

#### Women leadership across the Globe:

- With women leaders heading their governments, Germany, Taiwan and New Zealand have garnered much-deserved appreciation for having managed the pandemic much better than their neighbours.
- A detailed study by researchers in the United States reports that States which have female governors had fewer COVID-19 related deaths.
  - Perhaps partly because female governors acted more decisively by issuing earlier stay-at-home orders.
  - The authors of the study conclude that women leaders are more effective than their male counterparts in times of crisis.
- While it is dangerous to make sweeping generalisations based on one study, the important takeaway is the necessity of getting rid of inherent biases and perceptions about female effectiveness in leadership roles.

#### India's gram panchayats:

- A study was conducted by Nobel Laureate Esther Duflo and co-author Raghavendra Chattopadhyay, who used the system of mandated reservations of pradhans in gram panchayats to test the effectiveness of female leadership.
- **Note:**
  - The 1993 amendment to the Indian Constitution mandated that all States had to reserve one-third of all positions of pradhan for women.
  - Since villages chosen for the mandated reservations were randomly selected, differences in investment decisions made by gram panchayats could be attributed to the differences in gender of the pradhans.
- The study demonstrated that women perform significantly better than men in implementing policies that promote the interests of women.
- They concluded that pradhans invested more in rural infrastructure that served better the needs of their own gender.

#### Gender Equality:

- What needs evaluation is: What proportion of women stand for election to the various State and central legislatures? How many are elected? How many women occupy important positions in the executive branch of government?

- In addition to the importance of promoting more space for women in public policy, this is also an important goal from the perspective of gender equality.

### **Suffrage in India:**

- The right to vote is arguably the most important dimension of participation in public life.
- Independent India can rightly be proud of its achievement in so far as women's suffrage is concerned.
- In Independent India, women were allowed to vote from 1950 onwards. Therefore, women could participate on an equal footing with men from the first general election of 1951-52.
- This is in striking contrast to the experience in the so-called "mature democracies" of western Europe and the United States.
  - In the U.S., it took several decades of struggle before women were allowed to vote in 1920.
  - Most countries in Europe also achieved universal suffrage during the inter-war period. Since most able-bodied men went away to the battlefields during the First World War, increasing numbers of women could show that they were adequate substitutes in activities that were earlier the sole preserve of men.
  - This is believed to have mitigated the anti-female bias and earned women the right to vote in European countries.
- Also, India has had and have charismatic female leaders like Indira Gandhi, Jayalalitha, Mayawati, Sushma Swaraj and Mamata Banerjee among several others.

### **Concerns:**

#### **Underrepresentation of female ministers:**

- At present, there is an underrepresentation of female ministers in India.
- The female representation in the government at the Centre is probably not very far from the typical gender composition in Indian central and State governments.
  - Female members make up only about 10% of the total ministerial strength.
- The underrepresentation of women in Indian legislatures is even more striking.
- **Note:** Rwanda comes out on top with a staggering 60% of seats in its lower house occupied by women.

#### **The women's Bill languishes:**

- Attempts have been made to extend quotas for women in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies through a Women's Reservation Bill.
- When the bill was introduced (1996), male members from several parties opposed the Bill on various pretexts.
- Despite the fact that 24 years have passed since it was first presented in the Lok Sabha and the Bill has been introduced in successive Parliaments, there has been no success in this regard.
- Unfortunately, the fate of this Bill represents a blot on the functioning of the Indian Parliament.

### **Way forward:**

- The establishment of quotas for women is the best way forward.
- A sure way of increasing numbers of women in legislatures and subsequently in cabinets is by avoiding the logjam in the Parliament by reserving say a third of party nominations for women.
- Quotas have both a short-term and long-term impact.

- There is substantial evidence showing that increased female representation in policymaking goes a long way in improving perceptions about female effectiveness in leadership roles.
- It would decrease the bias among voters against women candidates.
- Voter perceptions about the efficacy of female leadership may change so drastically in the long run that quotas may no longer be necessary.
- Since women running for elections face numerous challenges, it is essential to create a level-playing field through appropriate legal measures.

## **2. The mental health needs of the homeless**

The editorial throws light upon how the ground realities during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic make a sound case for increased investments in the health and social sectors.

### **Issues:**

- Among the most affected during the COVID-19 pandemic are homeless persons and the ultra-poor, many of whom are employed in the informal sector. Oppressed classes suffer the most as a consequence of multidimensional poverty.
- They are exposed to greater adversity against the backdrop of intergenerational social disadvantage and lack of social security.
- There is plenty of evidence pointing to relative poverty and its co-relation to stress, mental health and well-being.
- Data suggest that deaths by suicide and common mental disorders have also been on the rise during the pandemic.

### **Distinctly deprived – homeless people with mental illness:**

- Distinctly deprived are homeless persons living with a mental illness. They are at risk of violent victimisation, assault and long-term incarceration.
- In India, close to two million individuals sleep in uncomfortable conditions, typically out of doors; 35% of them live with one or the other mental health concern.
  - Pathways into homelessness include abject poverty, conflict, natural or man-made disasters, lack of access to health and mental health care, social hardships, disruptions in care-giving and domestic violence.
- Historically, in a limited context of religiosity associated with renunciation and hearing voices (considered unique to the saint), a few were worshiped; however, the majority were feared, found to be repulsive and often treated as objects of ridicule.
- This has resulted in their occupying a lowly place in society's hierarchical structure to date.

### **Concerns:**

- Inadequate care staff has resulted in a grossly underwhelming caregiving climate. Services for this underserved group are scarce globally.
- They are susceptible to physical co-morbidities and co-occurring substance misuse, and unshielded against the consequences of homelessness, malnutrition, sexual violation, loss of support networks and kinship.
- Their experience of loneliness and hyper-segregation contributes to their low sense of self-worth and shrunken group identity, weakening their collective ability to influence change.

### **Way forward:**

#### **A person-centric action plan:**

- The UN set up a fund of \$2 billion to alleviate the distress of the ultra-vulnerable, including those living with a disability or chronic illness.
- **Tamil Nadu Example:**
  - The Tamil Nadu government, taking cognizance of the mental health needs of homeless persons, will take to scale Emergency Care and Recovery Centres (ECRC) that will support the treatment and community inclusion of this vulnerable section in 10 districts.
  - Various government departments and NGOs will together pursue the goal of improving mental health access and mitigating social and opportunity losses.

#### **Resistance to Parochial Practices:**

- Strong resistance has been built against narrow-minded practices which are giving way to newer dimensions of therapeutic and social care. However, much remains to be done.
- States must re-examine the role of social determinants of health in perpetuating unjust structures that normalise deprivation.
  - A person's social context and health intersect to help achieve a better quality of life.

#### **Early enrolment into care:**

- Early enrolment into care may result in a reduction of exposure to harm, injury and starvation, and better prognosis.
- An integrated approach will help address the stigma associated with this group.
- Additionally, facilitation of social needs care and livelihoods may reduce the recurrence of episodic homelessness, critical to sustaining and enhancing well-being gains.

#### **Partnering for alleviating the distress of the deprived:**

- Three sectors — the government, development and corporate sectors — must partner to ensure that the lives of those who live on the fringes matter.
- The mental health team that anchors the Centre may also lend further support to the District Mental Health Programme, and offer counselling support to address mental health issues in the context of the pandemic.

### **Conclusion:**

ECRCs are not a panacea to all distress undergone by homeless individuals. Issues of homelessness and mental ill-health independently present intractable problems; in combination, one may confront ethical dilemmas and emerging constraints and challenges. While it could be a powerful start to acknowledge the need to focus on minority mental health, there is a strong need to further build on care plans and mental health systems for the vulnerable.

## **F. Prelims Facts**

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## **G. Tidbits**

## 1. Workers lost \$3.5 tn in wages due to pandemic

### What's in News?

The [COVID-19](#) pandemic is taking a heavier toll on jobs than previously feared, the UN has said.

- The International Labour Organization (ILO) found that by the mid-year point, global working hours had declined by 17.3% compared to December 2019 (equivalent to nearly 500 million full-time jobs).
- ILO chief said that global labour income had shrunk by 10.7% during the first nine months, compared to the same period in 2019 (amounting to \$3.5 trillion, or 5.5% of the overall global GDP).

## 2. CAG: Rafale vendors yet to confirm tech transfer

### What's in News?

The Comptroller and Auditor General's (CAG) observation while auditing the offset policy in defence deals.

- The CAG has said that the French aerospace major Dassault Aviation and European missile maker MBDA have till date not confirmed the transfer of technology for the indigenous development of the engine for the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) by the DRDO, under the offset contract relating to the ₹60,000 crore deal for 36 Rafale fighter jets.

### Offset Policy:

- To develop the Indian defence industry and bring in high technologies, an offset policy was adopted.
- The offset policy was adopted in 2005 for all defence capital imports above ₹300 crore.
- Under the policy, the foreign vendor is required to invest at least 30% of the value of the contract in India.

## 3. U.S. House panel holds hearing on rights in Asia

### What's in News?

The Committee on Asia and the Pacific and Non-proliferation held a hearing on the topic titled: Stemming a Receding Tide: Human Rights and Democratic Values in Asia.

- The restrictions in Kashmir, dilution of Article 370, National Register of Citizens (NRC) and Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) were discussed at a U.S. House of Representatives subcommittee hearing on human rights in Asia.

## 4. China vows to go carbon neutral by 2060

### What's in News?

Beijing seized the climate agenda by vowing to go carbon neutral by 2060.

- The goals, which include a pledge to reach peak emissions in 2030, are the most concrete ones yet announced by China.
- China is the world's biggest polluter and accounts for a quarter of the planet's greenhouse gas emissions.

## H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

**Q1. Consider the following statements with respect to the Consolidated Fund of India:**

1. It includes all revenues received by the government by way of direct taxes and indirect taxes.
2. The money borrowed and receipts from loans given by the government are a part of the Consolidated Fund of India.
3. Revenue generated from asset sale, earnings from state-run companies, disinvestment receipts go into the Consolidated Fund of India.

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

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

**CHECK ANSWERS:-**

**Q2. Which of the given pair/s is/are NOT correctly matched?**

1. Farakka Barrage – West Bengal
2. Prakasam Barrage – Telangana
3. Jobra Barrage – Maharashtra
4. Hathnikund Barrage – Haryana

**Options:**

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

**CHECK ANSWERS:-**

**Q3. Consider the following statements with respect to Adjournment Sine Die:**

1. It is the termination of a session of the House by an order made by the President.
2. It means terminating a sitting of Parliament for an indefinite period.
3. It ends the very life of the existing House, and a new House is constituted after general elections are held.
4. The presiding officer of a House can call a sitting of the House at any time after the House has been adjourned sine die.

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

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

**CHECK ANSWERS:-**

Q4. India is a signatory to which of the following convention/s?

1. U.N. Convention on Narcotic Drugs – 1961
2. U.N. Convention on Psychotropic Substances – 1972
3. U.N. Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances – 1988
4. UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime- 2000

**Choose the correct option:**

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

**CHECK ANSWERS:-**

## I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. The examples of women leadership garnering appreciation for effective handling of the pandemic presents a case for India to ponder over the low representation of women in the legislatures. Comment. (GS 1 Social Issues) (15 Marks, 250 Words).
2. During a disaster, whether man-made or natural, poor and oppressed classes are exposed to greater adversity against the backdrop of intergenerational social disadvantage and lack of social security. Analyse the statement in the light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and suggest measures. (GS 1 Social Issues) (15 Marks, 250 Words).