

## 27 Feb 2021: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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### B. GS 2 Related

#### Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. [India, China agree to establish new hotline](#)

**Context:**

The Foreign Ministers of India and China have agreed to establish a new hotline.

**Details:**

- This is to ensure timely communication in the wake of the border crisis (LAC standoff) but differed sharply on the way forward to restore relations.
- The two sides stressed the need to advance the boundary talks to build up mutual trust and realise peace and tranquillity in the border areas.
- While the Chinese Foreign Minister stressed that the overall bilateral relations must be viewed separately from the border dispute, India made it clear to China that it is not realistic to insulate the relationship from the boundary crisis.

**2. India cannot abandon us, says Sri Lanka****Context:**

Sri Lanka has sought India's proactive support at the [UN Human Rights Council](#), where a resolution on the country will be soon put to vote.

**Details:**

- Pointing out that Sri Lanka would be very uncomfortable if countries in the region did not extend support in Geneva, the country's Foreign Secretary expressed hope that India, Pakistan, Nepal, and Bangladesh who are among members of the current Council will back Sri Lanka.
- He expressed hope as the countries had similarities in battling COVID-19 and facing allegations of human rights violations.

**Issue:**

- Tamil communities in the north and the eastern parts of Sri Lanka fear increasing abuses.

**Read more on Sri Lanka's Human Rights Crisis covered in 18<sup>th</sup> February 2021 Comprehensive News Analysis.**

- Tamil parties continue demanding full implementation of the 13th Amendment since the civil war ended in 2009.
- Despite Tamil parties seeking greater power devolution within an undivided, indivisible Sri Lanka, their demands are viewed as leaning towards separatism.

**Sri Lanka's Dilemma:**

- The foreign secretary expressed concerns that while a developing country should be able to make decisions based on economics and needs, unfortunately, a country like Sri Lanka "is not free to make that decision".
- Sri Lanka's foreign policy dilemma is that before making an economic decision, the strategic consideration of the powers in the Indian Ocean Region must be taken into account.

- He asserted that they are determined to balance factors such as seeing how best it can maintain neutrality, maintaining friendly relations for economic purposes with all the countries, and keeping India's strategic security concerns in mind.

#### **India's vote:**

- The appeal comes at a time when Indo-Lanka bilateral ties have come under strain, following a series of decisions taken by Colombo on development projects involving India and China.

**Read more on these issues covered in 3<sup>rd</sup> Feb 2021 CNA and 9<sup>th</sup> Feb 2021 CNA.**

- It remains to be seen how India might vote on the Sri Lanka resolution.
- The resolution draws from UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet's damning report on Sri Lanka's alarming path towards the recurrence of grave human rights violations.
  - Colombo has categorically rejected the report.

## **C. GS 3 Related**

### **Category: ECONOMY**

#### **1. 'Domestic businesses need more govt. support'**

##### **Context:**

Minister of External Affairs stressed the need for strong policies to foster and promote manufacturing in India and called for more governmental support for domestic businesses.

##### **Details:**

- He stressed that it is the business of the government to support domestic businesses.
- He pointed out that there existed a huge potential for manufacturing which had not been fostered by the right policies yet.
- It was emphasised that lot more people-centric policies are needed at home.

##### **Fifth Asia Economic Dialogue 2021:**

- Asia Economic Dialogue is a unique dialogue based in India where Asia gets together to talk trade, finance, and business opportunities.
- It is the flagship geoeconomics conference of the MEA.
- The Asia Economic Dialogue (AED) is jointly being convened by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and Pune International Centre (PIC).
- The theme of the fifth edition of the AED, and the second one organised by PIC is "Post Covid-19 Global Trade and Finance Dynamics".
- The AED 2021 virtual conference will see participation from Foreign Ministers of Asian countries, senior government officials, officials from multilateral organisations and industry leaders.

## **D. GS 4 Related**

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## E. Editorials

### Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

#### 1. Imparting direction to science in India

The article throws light upon the progress that India has made in science and technology research, problems faced in research and opportunities.

##### Publications:

- From the report published by the National Science Foundation of the U.S. in December 2019, India was the third largest publisher of peer-reviewed science and engineering journal articles and conference papers.
- The average yearly growth rate was 10.73% from 2008, which was greater than China's 7.81%.
- However, China and the United States had about thrice and twice the number, respectively, of India's publications.

##### Issue:

- The publications from India are not impactful.
- In the top 1% of the most cited publications from 2016 (called HCA, or Highly Cited Articles), India's index score of 0.7 is lower than that of the U.S., China and the [European Union](#).
- An index score of 1 or more is considered good.

Steps must be taken to ensure that the impact, and hence the citation of publications from India, should improve.

##### Patents:

- The World Intellectual Property Organization ([WIPO](#)) through their Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) is the primary channel of filing international patent applications.
- In its report for 2019, WIPO says India filed a modest number of 2,053 patent applications.
- During the same period, China filed 58,990 and the U.S filed 57,840 patents.
- China filed just 276 patent applications in 1999 but rose to become an innovation titan in 2019.

##### Steps taken:

- The Indian Government has put in place the National Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Policy in 2016 to stimulate a dynamic, vibrant and balanced intellectual property rights system.
- One of the objectives is human capital development.
- The mission to foster innovation, replicate it at scale and commercialise it is a work in progress consequent to the policy.

##### Science policies over time:

- India realised early as a republic the need to use science to become a welfare state.
- There have been four science policies after 1947.
- The draft of the fifth policy was released recently.

#### First Science Policy:

- Scientific Policy Resolution – India's first science policy adopted in 1958, aimed to develop scientific enterprise and lay the foundation for scientific temper.
- It led to the establishment of many research institutes and national laboratories.
- By 1980, India had developed advanced scientific infrastructure with sufficient scientific personnel.

#### Second Science Policy:

- The focus in the second science policy, Technology Policy Statement, in 1983, was technological self-reliance and to use technology to benefit all sections of society, while strengthening research in fields such as electronics and biotechnology.

#### Third Science Policy:

- The Science and Technology Policy 2003 was the first science policy after the economic liberalisation of 1991.
- It aimed to increase investment in research and development and brought it to 0.7%.
- The Scientific and Engineering Research Board (SERB) was established to promote research.

#### Fourth Science Policy:

- In 2013, India's science policy included Innovation in its scope and was called Science, Technology and Innovation Policy.
- The focus was to be one of the top five global scientific leaders.
- India achieved this through:
  - Building partnerships with States
  - Establishing more research and development centres
  - Collaborating in international projects such as the [Large Hadron Collider](#) in the European Union.

#### Draft of the Science, Technology and Innovation Policy 2020 (STIP 2020):

- STIP 2020 is the fifth science policy.
- It was released in January 2021 and offers hope to research in India.
- Vision of the policy:
  - To double the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) researchers, Gross Domestic Expenditure on R&D (GERD) and private sector contribution to the GERD every 5 years.
  - To position India among the top three scientific superpowers in the next decade.

- STIP 2020 defines an Open Science Framework which will create a “one nation, one subscription” solution that will give all individuals and institutions in India access to all top journals through a central subscription.
- This scheme would help in improving access to knowledge.
- It also defines strategies to improve funding for and participation in research.
- The policy seeks to define strategies that are “decentralized, evidence-informed, bottom-up, experts-driven, and inclusive”.
- It makes the right moves and strikes the right notes to make India future-ready.
- More specific directives and implementation with a scientific temper will be key to the policy’s success.

### **Way Forward:**

- There is a need to improve Gross Domestic Expenditure on R&D (GERD).
  - India’s GERD is currently around 0.6% of GDP.
  - This is quite low when compared to the investments by the U.S. and China which are greater than 2%.
  - Israel’s GERD is more than 4%.
  - A key reason is the low private sector contribution.
- STIP 2020 defines solutions to improve funding thus: all States to fund research, multinational corporations to participate in research, fiscal incentives and support for innovation in medium and small-scale enterprises.
  - The government should also invest more into research.
- There is a need for inclusion of under-represented groups of people in research, support for indigenous knowledge systems, using artificial intelligence, reaching out to the Indian scientific diaspora for collaboration, science diplomacy with partner countries, and setting up a strategic technology development fund to give impetus to research.

### **Conclusion:**

Science diplomacy is at the fore now with India offering COVID-19 vaccines to many countries; formulating a policy around it will yield dividends. Support for indigenous knowledge systems should enable them to improve upon their limitations in subscribing to transparency and verifiability.

### **Note:**

**National Science Day (NSD) is celebrated on February 28th to commemorate the discovery of Raman Effect by Sir Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman. He went on to receive a Nobel Prize for this discovery in the year 1930.**

## **Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE**

### **1. A colonial relic**

#### **Context:**



A session's court in Delhi has affirmed the belief that a rational scrutiny of outlandish claims by the police is necessary for protecting the liberty of those jailed on flimsy, often political, reasons.

### **What's in News?**

- The sessions court in Delhi, rejecting the purported evidence presented by the Delhi Police against climate change activist Disha Ravi, as "scanty and sketchy", has granted bail to her.
- 22-year-old Disha Ravi was arrested for editing a document shared among a network of activists raising global support for the farmers' protests against three central laws.

### **Details:**

- The order of bail is notable for subjecting the specific charges to strict judicial scrutiny at a fairly early stage.
- In particular, the judge has applied the established test for a charge of sedition under Section 124A of the [IPC](#) to pass muster: that the act involved must constitute a threat to public order and incitement to violence.
  - He found that there was not even an iota of evidence indicating that the 'toolkit', a shared Google cloud document with ideas on how to go about amplifying the protests, in any way incited violence.
  - He was clear that there was no causal link between the violence and Ms Ravi.
- This conclusion confirmed the widespread criticism that the arrest was unnecessary.

### **Sedition Law:**

- Section 124A, IPC states: "Whoever, by words, either spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representation, or otherwise, brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards, the Government established by law in India, shall be punished with imprisonment for life, to which a fine may be added; or, with imprisonment which may extend to three years, to which a fine may be added; or, with fine."
- According to the law, disaffection includes disloyalty and all feelings of enmity. However, disapprobation (criticism) of the measures or administrative action of the government to obtain their alteration by lawful means is not an offence.
- It is classified as "cognisable" and "non-bailable" — the accused cannot get bail as a matter of right, but is subject to the discretion of the session's judge.
- As far as the history of this particular provision itself is concerned, this was brought at a certain point of time when the British Indian Government wanted to clamp down on people who were asking for independence.

Read more on [Sedition](#).

For an In-depth understanding of the Sedition Law, watch [Explained: Sedition Law \(Sec 124A IPC\)](#).

### **Concerns:**

- The episode highlights a trend that has caused concern in recent times.

- The tendency to treat instances of dissent, especially involving strident criticism of policies and laws as attempts to provoke disaffection and disloyalty.
- It is significant that the judge not only saw freedom of speech and expression, but went on to say that an attempt to reach a global audience is part of that freedom.
- In the backdrop of the claim that those who prepared the toolkit made common cause with Khalistani separatists, the judge showed refreshing clarity in maintaining that mere interaction with a group with dubious credentials could not be used to consider someone culpable.

### **Conclusion:**

- The bail order must but be routine judicial responses to cases in which there is a mismatch between the accusation and the evidence.
- There is no place in a modern democracy for a colonial-era legal provision such as sedition.
- The article suggests that Sedition Law, too broadly defined, prone to misuse, and functioning as a handy tool to repress activism deserves to be scrapped.

## **F. Prelims Facts**

### **1. Second wave of infections unlikely: expert**

#### **What's in News?**

One of India's leading mathematicians who is involved with the National 'Super Model' initiative led by the Department of Science and Technology said that India is unlikely to see a second wave in COVID-19 infections.

- The reason, he said, is because around 60% of India's population had already been exposed to the virus and the country had reached herd immunity, or where the number of susceptible individuals was too few to allow the virus to exponentially grow.
- Whether herd immunity levels have been reached is subject to debate, because the ICMR reported that only 21% of Indians were estimated to have been infected, as per its third national serological survey. The Super Model's estimate is about thrice that number.

#### **National Super Model Initiative:**

- Inspired by India's history of using mathematical models for disaster management planning of metrological events, the Department of Science and Technology (DST) has initiated a COVID-19 Indian National Supermodel.
- This is to help monitor the future transmission of infection, thus aiding decisions involving health system readiness and other mitigation measures.
- This exercise would pool in expertise in the field and create one model for the entire country that will be subjected to rigorous tests required for evidence-based forecasting, routinely practised in weather forecasting communities.

### **2. U.S. welcomes India-Pak. ceasefire agreement**

#### **What's in News?**



The United States has welcomed the announcement by India and Pakistan that they would observe the 2003 ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC).

Read more on this topic covered in **26<sup>th</sup> February 2021 Comprehensive News Analysis**.

- The White House called for the two countries to build upon this progress and the State Department encouraged a reduction in tensions and violence along the LoC.
- This is a positive step towards greater peace and stability in South Asia, which is in our shared interest, it said.
- The European Union (EU) and the United Nations also welcomed the ceasefire agreement.

## G. Tidbits

### 1. India 'out of recession', GDP grows 0.4%

#### What's in News?

As per the data from the National Statistical Office (NSO), India's economy has resurfaced to growth territory in the third quarter of the fiscal year 2020-21, with a 0.4% rise in the GDP.

- As per revised data, GDP had shrunk in the first two quarters by 24.4% and 7.3% amid the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns, marking a technical recession.
- India's farm sector remained resilient, with a 3.9% growth in Gross Value Added (GVA) to the economy in the third quarter, after recording a 3.3% and 3% rise in the first two quarters, respectively.
- Services including trade, hotels, transport and communication remained in trouble, with GVA declining 7.7%.
- The Finance Ministry said the resurgence in manufacturing and construction augured well for them to drive growth in FY22 and added that services, which account for more than 50% of India's GVA and the biggest source for pushing consumption, had done remarkably better in Q3.

## H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

**Q1. Consider the following statements:**

1. Brazil is the world's largest coffee producer, immediately followed by India.
2. India exports both Robusta and Arabica varieties of coffee.
3. India is the only country in the world where the entire coffee cultivation is grown under shade, hand-picked and sun-dried.

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

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

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

- While Brazil is the world's largest coffee producer, India is the sixth-largest producer of coffee in the world, accounting for about 5% of world coffee production.
- India exports both Robusta and Arabica varieties of coffee.
- India is the only country in the world where the entire coffee cultivation is grown under shade, hand-picked and sun-dried.

**Q2. Which of the following pollutant/s is/are NOT included in the measurement of Air Quality Index (AQI)?**

1. Ammonia
2. Carbon Monoxide
3. Carbon Dioxide
4. Ozone
5. Sulphur Dioxide

**Choose the correct option:**

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

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

- Air Quality Index (AQI) has six categories of air quality. They are: Good, Satisfactory, Moderately Polluted, Poor, Very Poor and Severe.
- The measurement of air quality is based on eight pollutants.
- Following pollutants are included in the measurement of Air Quality Index (AQI): Particulate Matter (PM10), Particulate Matter (PM2.5), Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), Sulphur Dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), Carbon Monoxide (CO), Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), Ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>), and Lead (Pb).

**Q3. Consider the following statements:**

1. Sri Lankan Tamils are a minority population in the Northern Province and in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka.
2. Sri Lanka has been facing diplomatic challenges with the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in connection with its civil war.

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

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

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

- Sri Lankan Tamils constitute an overwhelming majority of the population in the Northern Province and are the largest ethnic group in the Eastern Province.
- They are members of the Tamil ethnic group native to Sri Lanka.
- They constitute a majority in the Northern Province, live in significant numbers in the Eastern Province and are in the minority throughout the rest of the country. 70% of Sri Lankan Tamils in Sri Lanka live in the Northern and Eastern provinces.
- Sri Lanka has been facing diplomatic challenges with the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in connection with its civil war.

**Q4. Consider the following statements:**

1. Index of Eight Core Industries is prepared and released by the Office of the Economic Adviser (OEA), Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).
2. Index of Eight Core Industries is released quarterly.
3. Crude oil has the highest weight among the core industries included in arriving at the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).

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

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

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

- Index of Eight Core Industries is prepared and released by the Office of the Economic Adviser (OEA), Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).
- Index of Eight Core Industries is released every month. The index is calculated by using the Laspeyres formula of weighted arithmetic mean of quantity relatives.
- The core sectors of the Indian economy are coal, crude oil, refinery products, fertilisers, steel, natural gas, electricity and cement.
- Refinery products category has the highest weight in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).

## I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. In a modern democracy, the repeated misuse of sedition law underscores the need to scrap it altogether. Critically comment. (15 Marks, 250 Words) [GS-2, Polity and Governance]
2. Throw light upon the progress India has made in science and technology research and evaluate the Draft of the Science, Technology and Innovation Policy 2020. (15 Marks, 250 Words) [GS-3, Science and Technology]

