

30 Dec 2019: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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Category:HEALTH

1. 3 years on, a mere 30% of Poshan Abhiyaan funds used

Context:

Report on fund utilization in the [POSHAN Abhiyaan](#) program.

Background:

- **The Prime Minister's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nutrition or POSHAN Abhiyaan (National Nutrition Mission)**, is the Government of India's flagship programme which is aimed at improving **nutritional outcomes among pregnant women, lactating mothers and children**. It would benefit an estimated 10 crore people.
- It aims at **reducing the level of stunting, underweight, anaemia and low birth weight by 2022**.
- POSHAN Abhiyaan is a **multi-ministerial convergence mission** with the vision to ensure the attainment of **malnutrition-free India by 2022**. It will create synergy, ensure better monitoring, issue alerts for timely action, and encourage States/UTs to perform, guide and supervise the line Ministries and States/UTs to achieve the targeted goals.
- **The Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD)** is implementing POSHAN Abhiyaan in 315 Districts in the first year, 235 Districts in the second year; and remaining districts will be covered in the third year.
- For the implementation of POSHAN Abhiyaan, the four-point strategy/pillars of the mission are:
 - **Inter-sectoral convergence** for better service delivery
 - **Use of technology (ICT)** for real-time growth monitoring and tracking of women and children
 - Intensified health and nutrition services for the first 1000 days
 - **Jan Andolan**

Funding Pattern:

- The POSHAN Abhiyaan was launched with a total budget of ₹9,046.17 crores for three years.
- **50% of the sanctioned amount would be through budgetary support of the governments. The remaining 50% is from the World Bank or other multilateral development banks.**
- The budgetary support amount is further divided into 60:40 between the Centre and the States, 90:10 for the north-eastern region and the Himalayan States, and 100% for the Union Territories without legislature.

Details:

- An analysis of the funds utilised under the scheme paints a grim picture.

- The **State governments and the Union Territories have utilised only 30% of the funds released under the POSHAN Abhiyaan**, since 2017.
- Except for Mizoram, Lakshadweep, Himachal Pradesh and Bihar, none of the governments has used even 50% of the sum granted.
- During the financial year of 2019-20, funds under the scheme were released for 19 States even though 12 of these states had used less than a third of the funds released in the previous two years.

Reasons:

- The POSHAN Abhiyaan programme has been conceptualised to be implemented in phases. The fund utilisation is generally slow in the initial phase of such incremental schemes.
- A number of activities which have been planned under the **scheme like the Integrated Child Development Services-Common Application Software** meant to monitor anganwadis have had a slow start.
- **Lack of political will and action** to tackle the issue of malnutrition is the major reason why the governments have failed to utilise the available funds under the scheme.

Concerns:

- **The Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey (CNNS), released by the Ministry of Health and Welfare** in October 2019, showed that 35% of the children under the age of 5 are stunted and in this age group, 17% are wasted (low weight for height) and 33% underweight (low weight for age).
- In spite of the **alarming level of malnutrition in India** and the subsequent problems associated with it, there has been **underutilisation of the sanctioned amounts** by almost all states.

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. No legal rules framed yet for NRC: Ravi Shankar Prasad

Context:

Protests against the Central government over the proposed National Register for Citizens.

Details:

- The Union Law Minister has stated that it is possible that the National Register for Citizens (NRC) may be initiated as per a **2003-04 amendment of the Citizenship Act, which enjoins the government to prepare an NRC**.
- Allaying fears in some sections of the society regarding such an exercise, the Union Law Minister has clarified that:
 - NRC would be implemented through a **due legal process**.
 - The **rules for its implementation would be framed through adequate consultation** with all sections.
 - The data for the NRC would be collected and scrutinised by the registrars.
 - There is the **provision for appeals** against any order of the registrars.

For more information on NRC: [Click Here](#)

2. 'CAA is perfectly legal and Constitutional, does not relate to any Indian'

Context:

Law Minister's statement on the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) and the protests against it.

Details:

Article 246:

- Under **Article 246 of the Constitution, Parliament has got the exclusive power to make laws with respect to the matters listed in the Union List of the Seventh Schedule.**
- **Item 17 in the Union List** deals with **citizenship and naturalization of aliens.** Therefore, only Parliament has got sovereign powers to legislate on citizenship.

Article 14:

- The main arguments against the CAA have been that it goes against **Article 14 of the Constitution which guarantees equality before the law and equal protection before the law.**
- Defending the move, the Law Minister points to the fact that there have been many judgments from the Supreme Court where it has been stated that if there is **a reasonable classification of groups who form a class by themselves, then that legislation will be valid.**
- **A persecuted, victimised group** based on the faith of six communities from the three countries Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, which are declared Islamic countries, form that reasonable classification.

Religion-specific law:

- One of the main concerns against the CAA was that by its provisions it was leading to exclusion of Muslims from benefitting from the CAA.
- The Law Minister defending the CAA states that **historically-persecuted minorities should be given priority in granting citizenship.** The whole group of minorities mentioned in the CAA provisions have been persecuted only because of faith. The dwindling numbers in the three countries mentioned in the provisions of the CAA clearly point to the level of religious persecution against the minorities.

The fear among the minorities:

- There has been a palpable fear among the minorities that the CAA along with a possible NRC could only disadvantage them in terms of citizenship. **There is a continuum being drawn between the CAA, the NRC and the NPR by those protesting.**
- Clarifying against such arguments the Law Minister has stated that **CAA does not relate to any Indian. The CAA involves granting citizenship to people and is not about taking away anyone's citizenship.**
- The Census is an enumeration of Indians after every 10 years. It has a constitutional sanction. **The Census Act mandates that the statistics of individuals and households cannot be disclosed. The NPR** which is a register of usual residents and not citizens can **help release data which can be used by both the centre and the states for better targeting of welfare schemes.** The NPR has legal backing. Rule 3, sub-clause 4 of the citizenship rules states that the Central Government may decide the date by which a population register might be prepared.
- Allaying fears regarding a proposed National Register of Indian Citizens (NRIC), the Union Law Minister has clarified that any **NRIC** would be implemented only **through a due legal process** ensuring that it would not lead to harassment of genuine citizens.

Need for the Amendment:

- There have been concerns that there was no need for the CAA given that there were enough provisions in the unamended Citizenship Act to provide citizenship to persecuted minorities.
- **The Citizenship Amendment Act still allows individuals not covered under its provisions to be considered for citizenship.** The CAA only intends to hasten the process of citizenship through naturalization for the group of communities mentioned in the CAA provisions. Individual asylum, protection for people of all religions and from all countries will continue to exist.

Article 25:

- **Article 25 provides for all persons, not just citizens, the right to freely profess, practice and propagate religion.** The CAA intends to protect this right of the persecuted minorities.

Right to Protest:

- The people opposing the CAA have the right to protest and express their opinions. The government needs to **acknowledge the right to dissent and protest for all Indians.**
- **Any challenge to the CAA must follow the due process.** The Judiciary needs to look into the apprehensions and concerns regarding the CAA. **The use of violence is not excusable** in such protests.

C. GS 3 Related

Category:INTERNAL SECURITY

1. Chief of the Defence Staff can serve till 65, says govt.

Context:

- The creation of the post of **Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) in India.**

Details:

- The government has issued a gazette **modifying the Service Rules of the Army, Navy and Air Force to enable the appointment of the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) and fixing the upper age limit at 65.**
- **The service regulations have been amended and not the Acts.** The Centre amended the Army Rules 1954, Naval (Discipline and Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations, 1965, Naval Ceremonial, Conditions of Service and Miscellaneous Regulations, 1963 and Air Force Regulations, 1964.
- The service chiefs have a tenure of three years or 62 years of age, whichever is earlier, and it remains unchanged. Notably, however, the tenure of the CDS has not been fixed.

For more information on the Chief of Defence Staff, [Click Here](#).

2. Navy plans 24 submarines to strengthen fleet

Context:

The report submitted by the Navy to the parliamentary panel.

Details:

- In the report tabled in December 2019, the Navy has stated that there are presently 15 conventional submarines and two nuclear submarines in its fleet. **The Navy has two nuclear submarines INS Arihant and INS Chakra, with the latter being leased from Russia.**

- To strengthen its underwater fleet, the Navy plans to build 24 submarines, including six nuclear attack submarines and another 18 conventional submarines.
- Along with the **Arihant Class SSBNs** which are nuclear-powered submarines equipped with nuclear missiles, the Indian Navy has plans to build six nuclear attack submarines. They are also planned to be built indigenously in partnership with private sector industries.
- **The Ship, Submersible, Ballistic, Nuclear (SSBN) is a nuclear powered ballistic missile submarine.**

Concerns:

Rising Chinese influence in the Indian Ocean region:

- The Indian Ocean Region, the area of operations of the Navy, has witnessed rising activities of the Chinese Navy. **The Chinese have increased their presence in the form of increased patrolling by submarines and ships.**

Aging Fleet:

- **A majority of the conventional submarines in the Indian Navy are over 25 years old.** Thirteen submarines are between 17 and 32 years, impairing the capability of the Indian submarines.

Delay in commissioning new submarines:

- The Indian Navy has been revamping its infrastructure, including procuring new ships to match the naval capabilities of the Chinese.
- Due to the delay in the new submarine construction projects like the **six submarines under Project 75** being carried out at Mazagaon Docks, Mumbai, the Defence Ministry has approved **Medium Refit cum Life Certification or MRLC of six older submarines.**

The sanctions on Russia:

- **The MRLC of submarine Sindhuraj was held up due to sanctions imposed by the U.S. on Russia.** This has impeded the ability of Russia to submit bank guarantees and the integrity pact under the MRLC framework.
- The sanctions imposed on Russia by the U.S. under its **Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA)** have severely impaired the capabilities of Russia to service the submarines it has leased out to India.

Category:ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. M.P. gets its first elephant colony in Bandhavgarh forest

Context:

Madhya Pradesh's first elephant colony.

Details:

- **Elephants are generally migratory in nature** and often travel hundreds of miles to look for newer habitats with enough food and water. They generally tend to return to their habitats at the end of the migratory period.
- However, a new pattern has been observed in the **forests of Bandhavgarh in Madhya Pradesh.** An elephant herd which had moved from the withering forests of north Chhattisgarh into the forests of

Bandhavgarh looking for food and water has stayed back for the first time over seasons and even bred two new calves.

- The herd has found plenty of space, food and water within the core area of the Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve, and that might be the primary reason for their not returning to the forests of north Chattisgarh.

Consequences:

- **The ‘Tiger State’ of Madhya Pradesh**, which in the 2019 census recorded the most number of estimated tigers at 526, thus securing the title, presently has no know-how on dealing with elephants.
- **The increased presence of elephants might lead to increased instances of man-animal conflicts.** The local forest staff will need to be imparted training on the techniques to avert man-animal conflicts.
- The possibility of conflict between the elephant herd and tigers is slim given that both animals can coexist within the same territory. **Given their dietary differences there is no competition between the two species. The presence of elephants will not alter the movement of tigers in the area.**

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: ECONOMY

1. India needs a bottom-up growth model

Context:

- In the backdrop of the **steady decline in the economic growth rates in India**, the author of this article offers a **critique of the growth model opted by India** and suggests an alternative.

Details:

Comparison between India and China:

- China and India, the two most populous countries in the world, achieved independence at around the same time and both were at similar developmental stages when they started out as independent nations.
- **More than 70 years later, China has progressed much faster.** India, on the other hand, is yet to reach the development indicators that China attained back in the early 1990s.
- The approach taken by the two countries to ensure prosperity for their citizens has been markedly different. While **China adopted a people-centric policy India has adopted the growth-centric approach.**

People-centric policies:

Chinese model of growth:

- The Communist Party of China demands that local officials address the needs of citizens effectively. Singapore’s government also follows a similar approach.

Indian model of growth:

- Within India itself there have been different models of development. The Constitution of India enables its States to adopt different models of development.
- Notable growth models in India include the '**Kerala model**', the '**Gujarat model**' and the '**common man's model**' being implemented in Delhi.

Kerala Model of growth:

- **Local, participative governance** has been a distinction of Kerala's model and the State has been well ahead of the rest of the country, **matching China in its Human Development Indicators in education, health, and women's inclusion.**

Delhi's common man's model:

- Delhi's government has adopted a **people-centric model of government**. One of the major interventions of the government was in the field of education.
 - The establishment of School Management Committees with parental involvement to monitor schools.
 - Teacher training budget has been raised five-fold.
 - The performance of Delhi's government schools has been impressive. The performance of government schools now exceeds the performance of private schools in Delhi.
- Public health expenditure has been increased steadily and now stands almost doubled compared to five years ago. 'Mohalla clinics' have been set up in poor colonies to provide accessible and affordable health care.
- The government has focused on providing basic facilities like piped water and electricity to poor and unauthorised colonies.
- An analysis of the outcome of the above schemes as computed by the government shows that **its programmes for improving the 'ease of living' of citizens have increased savings per family** by ₹4,000 per month. The increase in disposable incomes has resulted in additional consumer-buying power, estimated at ₹24,000 crores per annum.

Ineffectiveness of the 'Ease of Doing Business' approach:

- An analysis of the different growth models and their effects prove that **growth must be bottom-up to be equitable and sustainable.**
- **India has climbed many rungs on the World Bank's 'Ease of Business' rankings.** Yet, investments to increase production have not increased much because consumer demand has slumped, even for basic items.
- There has been **growing anger amongst the citizens against the globalisation paradigm** which suggests a growth-centric model of development. Citizens want their governments to generate more jobs domestically and to implement policies that increase incomes at the bottom of the pyramid rather than facilitating only further growth at the top.
- There is plenty of evidence to show that **India has not benefitted from the opening of its economy and liberalisation post-1991.** India's decision to not be part of the RCEP deal shows that India is now standing up to pressure from the Washington Consensus economists who continue to advocate that more free trade is the solution to India's economic problems.

The Indian context:

- **India ranks very low in terms of human development in the domain of education and health.** In spite of India being a larger economy it ranks lower than its poorer subcontinental neighbours in terms of the Human Development Index.
- **India is the most water-stressed large economy in the world.** Indian cities rank among the most polluted in the world.
- **India's economic growth is not generating enough jobs for its burgeoning population of youth.** The employment elasticity of India's growth (numbers of jobs created with growth) is amongst the worst in the world. **Unemployment** of persons with vocational education has gone up between 2011-12 and 2017-18, from 18.5% to 33%.
- India's complex, socio-economic environmental system is under great stress. India needs to **improve on many fronts simultaneously balancing the mostly opposing objectives of social equity, economic growth and environmental sustainability.**

Way forward:

- The policymakers and the government must focus on **building an ecosystem which enables domestic competitive enterprises to grow and generate jobs** for the youth and in the process increase citizens' incomes. Such a scenario will offer the following advantages:
 - **Growth of incomes in India will lead to increased disposable income in the hands of the people.** This will lead to increased demand. Given the huge market opportunity that India offers for the companies, India will become more attractive for investors.
 - **A stronger domestic industrial system will give India more headroom in trade negotiations.** One of the reasons for India opting out of the RCEP deal was because of the concern that the domestic industries would not be able to compete with products from more industrialised countries like China. India would be losing out on the benefits that would have accrued by being a part of RCEP. A stronger domestic industrial system would enable India to become part of the multilateral trade deals in the future.
- **India's industrial and entrepreneurial ecosystem's growth must be accompanied by an improvement in the environment.** Industrial growth without considering its harmful effects on the environment is not a sustainable approach to growth and development of a country. India needs to consider **an integrated approach** which considers both 'Ease of Doing Business' and 'ease of living' aspects. While 'Ease of Doing Business' gauges health from a business perspective, 'ease of living' should become the measure of the health of the whole system.
- **India urgently requires an employment and income strategy to guide its industry and trade policies.** The policies should focus on **creating more employment opportunities and increasing income of the people.**

Category:POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Governance Index

Context:

Good Governance Index (GGI) released by the Government of India.

Details:

- **The Good Governance Index (GGI) involves a nation-wide comparative study of States on governance.**

- The GGI involved grouping the Indian states into groups considering the different developmental stages of the state or the topographical and geographical features.
- The findings of the GGI's inaugural edition are significant in many respects.

Impressive show by the southern states:

- The southern states of Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh have put up an impressive performance. **Traditionally, the south has been ahead of others in several parameters of development.**
- Tamil Nadu has been ranked first under the GGI. Its strength has been the ability to ensure stable and smooth delivery of services.

Considerable progress by the “BIMARU” states:

- **The dubiously-labelled “BIMARU” states seem to be catching up with the other states in development.**
- Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh have performed well in terms of ranking in the nine sectors considered for the GGI. In spite of their lower developmental states, they have featured in the top 10 rankings of a few sectors.
- In the agriculture and allied sectors, almost all the “BIMARU” states are within the top 10 categories.
- **In the composite ranking, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh are ranked fourth and ninth, respectively.**

Concerns:

- Any index is bound to have some shortcomings, at least in the first round. The GGI also has certain shortcomings with respect to the indicators considered.
- **Important indicators** like farmers' income, the prevalence of micro-irrigation or water conservation systems and inflow of industrial investment **have been left out.**
- **The “ease of doing business” indicator, has been given disproportionate weight** in the sector of commerce and industries, to the virtual exclusion of growth rate of major and micro, small and medium enterprises.
- The question of whether **process-based or outcome-based indicator** should get more importance in the design of such a study has not been satisfactorily addressed.

Significance:

- Notwithstanding the shortcomings in GGI, the Centre's attempt to address the problem of the absence of a credible and uniform index for an objective evaluation of the States and Union Territories is a welcome move, keeping in mind **India's size and complexity.**
- The move of the central government to institute the GGI **will incentivise States to competitively deliver on public services to the citizens.**
- The significant observation regarding the “BIMARU” states' impressive performance in the index brings forth the key message that these northern States can catch up with others in due course of time if the political leadership shows the will to stay focused on development.

Way forward:

- The GGI **requires fine-tuning and improvement** in its subsequent editions.

- The GGI must serve as a **guiding tool for the states for better policymaking and implementation.**

F. Tidbits

1. Red sand boa rescued in M.P., five nabbed

- A **red sand boa snake**, worth around ₹1.25 crore, was rescued from five persons, who were trying to sell it.
- **The rare non-poisonous snakes are used for making certain medicines, cosmetics** and in black magic, and are in huge demand in the international market.
- The accused have been **charged under the Wildlife (Protection) Act.**

2. Cyclone Sarai batters Fiji, two killed

- **Tropical Cyclone Sarai** has made landfall **in Fiji.**

3. More naval personnel may be held for spying: A.P. DGP

- Under **‘Operation Dolphin’s Nose’**, sleuths of Andhra Pradesh Intelligence, the Navy and the Central intelligence wings busted the espionage racket and arrested seven Navy sailors.
- The police, arrested seven Navy sailors of Visakhapatnam, Karwar and Mumbai naval bases and a Mumbai-based hawala operator on charges of leaking secret information to Pakistan.
- The hawala operator, who had links with Pakistani handlers, targeted the young Indian Navy officers and honey-trapped them by using some women on various social media sites.

4. Industrial Health Clinic to spread wings

- **The Telangana Industrial Health Clinic Ltd (TIHCL), a one-of-its-kind initiative of the State government to handhold micro and small manufacturing enterprises from slipping into sickness,** is ready to extend services to units in other States.
- Since its inception as a **fin-tech non-banking finance company**, the TIHCL has been helping a number of MSMEs revive their businesses.

G. Prelims Facts

Nothing here for today!!!

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. The Qutub Minar was built in honour of the first emperor of the slave dynasty, Qutubuddin Aibak.
2. The Alai Darwaza was built by Alauddin Khilji.

Options:

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

Answer

-
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Q2. Which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. The Santhal Parganas Tenancy Act, 1876 prohibits the sale of Adivasi land to non-Adivasis in Santhal Pargana region.
2. Birsa Munda's struggle against the exploitation and discrimination against tribals led to the passing of the Santhal Parganas Tenancy Act, 1876.

Options:

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

Answer

Q3. Which of the following best describes Project 75?

- a. Production of indigenous submarines
- b. Increasing the average speed of freight trains in India by 75 % by 2022
- c. Increasing the immunization cover to 75% by 2020
- d. Production of indigenous air-to-air missile system

Answer

Q4. In which of the following states is the Bandhavgarh National Park located?

- a. Uttar Pradesh
- b. Chhattisgarh
- c. Madhya Pradesh
- d. Jharkhand

Answer

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Notwithstanding the shortcomings in its inaugural edition, the Good Governance Index addresses the problem of the absence of a credible index for an objective evaluation of the States and Union Territories. Comment. What is the significance of such an index? (10 marks, 150 words)
2. India is endowed with a complex socio-economic environmental system which requires it to simultaneously balance the mostly opposing objectives of social equity, economic growth and environmental sustainability. Comment. (10 marks, 150 words)

