

13 Apr 2021: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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B. GS 2 Related

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Gyanvapi Masjid: HC moved against lower court's order

Context:

The managing committee of the Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi and the Uttar Pradesh Sunni Central Waqf Board have moved the Allahabad High Court to restrain the proceedings of a local court which recently directed the [Archaeological Survey of India \(ASI\)](#) to conduct a physical survey of the mosque compound adjacent to the Kashi Vishwanath temple.

This topic has been covered in the **10th April 2021 Comprehensive News Analysis.**

Category: HEALTH

1. Centre fast-tracks approval for more vaccine candidates

Context:

In a major shift in vaccine approval policy, the government has decided to fast track approvals for COVID-19 vaccines that have been developed outside India and have been granted emergency use authorisation (EUA) by other drug regulatory agencies.

Details:

- The decision was taken based on the recommendation made by the National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for COVID-19 (NEGVAC) to expand the basket of vaccines for domestic use and hasten the pace and coverage.
- The vaccines that would be eligible for the fast-track approval will include those that have been granted an EUA by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), European Medicines Agency (EMA), the U.K. Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and the Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Agency (PMDA) of Japan, or those that have been prequalified by the WHO for emergency use.
- Under the fast-track approval process, bridging studies will take place in parallel to mass vaccination.

Read more on Emergency Use Authorisation covered in **13th April 2021 Comprehensive News Analysis.**

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. 'Global cooperation benefits India, world'

Context:

India's External Affairs Minister's comments at [Raisina Dialogue](#).

Raisina Dialogue:

- This is an annual geopolitical event, hosted by the Ministry of External Affairs and Observer Research Foundation (ORF).
- It is designed to explore prospects and opportunities for Asian integration as well as Asia's integration with the larger world.
- Every year, leaders in politics, business, media, and civil society converge in New Delhi to discuss the state of the world and explore opportunities for cooperation on a wide range of contemporary matters.
- The Dialogue is structured as a multi-stakeholder, cross-sectoral discussion.

Details:

- India's External Affairs Minister said that the cooperation to counter global challenges such as the current pandemic is advantageous to both India and the rest of the world, highlighting India's recent initiatives to provide vaccines to a large number of developing countries to help them fight [COVID-19](#).
- He argued that as a result of international partnership and research, India was able to increase the manufacturing of vaccines developed elsewhere while also developing indigenous vaccines in the country.

Note:

- India has been the first responder on a number of crisis situations in the neighbourhood and beyond and the response to the pandemic is part of that same chain of initiatives.
- In terms of humanitarian assistance, whether it was an earthquake in Nepal, or a civil war in Yemen, or a cyclone in Mozambique, or a typhoon in Fiji, or a mudslide in Sri Lanka, or whether it is taking the Paris agenda forward through initiatives like the [International Solar Alliance](#), or how to respond collectively towards disaster resilience, India has been proactive in taking measures.

C. GS 3 Related

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. WHO urges halt on sale of live wild mammals in markets

Context:

The [World Health Organization](#) called for a halt to the sale of live wild mammals in food markets to prevent the emergence of new diseases such as COVID-19.

Details:

- Fresh guidance has been drawn up by the WHO in conjunction with the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the [United Nations Environment Programme \(UNEP\)](#).
- They called on all national competent authorities to suspend the trade in live caught wild animals of mammalian species for food or breeding and close sections of food markets selling live caught wild

animals of mammalian species as an emergency measure unless demonstrable effective regulations and adequate risk assessment are in place.

- The agencies recalled that some of the earliest known cases of COVID-19 had links to a wholesale food market in Wuhan.

Significance:

- Animals, particularly wild animals, are the source of more than 70% of all emerging infectious diseases in humans, many of which are caused by novel viruses.
- Wild mammals, in particular, pose a risk for the emergence of new diseases.
- Because traditional markets play a central role in providing food and livelihoods for large populations, banning the sale of live wild mammals could protect the health of market workers and customers alike.

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: SOCIAL ISSUES

1. A small step

Recent amendments to the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act and related issues have been covered in the **8th April 2021 Comprehensive News Analysis**.

Category: HEALTH

1. Another beginning

Context:

The Drug Controller General of India has formally approved another vaccine candidate “Sputnik V” under emergency use authorisation.

Issue:

- The recent approval comes as India grapples with a vaccine shortage.
- India is in a crisis. When it had the opportunity to conduct clinical trials in the right way, in the case of Covaxin and even Covishield, India rushed through its regulatory process.
 - This contributed to the hesitancy surrounding these vaccines.
- It is still a mystery why India did not plan for enough stocks like the U.K. and the U.S. did.
- In addition, the paucity of hospital beds, ventilators, black marketing of drugs are now being replayed in worrying proportions.

Way Forward:

- India must take a cue from countries like the U.K. and the U.S that no country can be entirely 'atmanirbhar' in vaccinating its population.
- While there are several vaccine candidates at various stages of approval that India can choose from, it must not repeat the same mistake of assuming that choice translates into immediate availability.
- All of the Indian companies that have tied up with foreign vaccine companies are private players.
 - While they may promise vaccines in the millions, it will always be the case that priority will be accorded to the highest global bidders.
- India must compete to ensure that vaccine is available to a large fraction of its adult population in quick time.
- The pandemic wave seems to have ebbed in the U.S., to some extent, because at least 30% of its adults have got one dose. For India, this job of scaling up was always going to be uphill.
- With more vaccines come inevitably more complications associated with adverse events and rare side effects. This is where India's pharmacovigilance programme must step up.
- India must constantly monitor the effects of medical drugs after they have been licensed for use, especially in order to identify and evaluate previously unreported adverse reactions.
- The easing up on conditions for facilitating more vaccines must be seen as a new beginning.

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. BIMSTEC needs to reinvent itself

Context:

The foreign ministers of [BIMSTEC](#) (the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) met virtually on April 1, 2021.

- The last ministerial meeting was held in August 2018.
- Their major task was to pave the way for the next summit (the grouping's fifth) due to be held in Sri Lanka.

BIMSTEC:

- BIMSTEC was established as a grouping of four nations — India, Thailand, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka through the Bangkok Declaration of 1997 to promote rapid economic development.
- BIMSTEC was expanded later to include three more countries — Myanmar, Nepal and Bhutan.
- It moved at a leisurely pace during its first 20 years with only three summits held and a record of modest achievements.

Unfolding rejuvenation:

- The grouping suddenly received special attention as India chose to treat it as a more practical instrument for regional cooperation over a faltering [SAARC](#).
- The BIMSTEC Leaders' Retreat, followed by their Outreach Summit with the BRICS leaders in Goa in October 2016, drew considerable international limelight to the low-profile regional grouping. This also opened up the path for its rejuvenation.

- The fourth leaders' summit, held in Kathmandu in 2018, devised an ambitious plan for institutional reform and renewal that would encompass economic and security cooperation.
 - It took the important decision to craft a charter to provide BIMSTEC with a more formal and stronger foundation.
 - The shared goal now is to head towards “a Peaceful, Prosperous and Sustainable Bay of Bengal Region”.
- India's External Affairs Minister observed that India saw a mix of “energy, mindset and possibility” in BIMSTEC.

Recent decisions:

- The foreign ministers cleared the draft for the BIMSTEC charter, recommending its early adoption.
- They endorsed the rationalisation of sectors and sub-sectors of activity, with each member-state serving as a lead for the assigned areas of special interest.
- The ministers also conveyed their support for the Master Plan for Transport Connectivity.
 - This will be adopted at the next summit.
- Preparations have been completed for the signing of three agreements relating to:
 - Mutual legal assistance in criminal matters
 - Cooperation between diplomatic academies
 - Establishment of a technology transfer facility in Colombo.

Issue:

- On certain fronts, BIMSTEC remains a work in progress.
- A January 2018 study by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry had suggested that BIMSTEC urgently needed a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement to be a real game-changer. Ideally, it should:
 - Cover trade in goods, services and investment.
 - Promote regulatory harmonisation.
 - Adopt policies that develop regional value chains.
 - Eliminate non-tariff barriers.
- An effort to enthuse and engage the vibrant business communities of these seven countries, and expand their dialogue, interactions and transactions is lacking.
- Over 20 rounds of negotiations to operationalise the BIMSTEC Free Trade Area Framework Agreement, signed in 2004, are yet to bear fruit.
- Uncertainties over SAARC hovers, complicating matters.
 - Both Kathmandu and Colombo want the SAARC summit revived, even as they cooperate within BIMSTEC, with diluted zeal.
- China's decisive intrusion in the South-Southeast Asian space has cast dark shadows.
- The military coup in Myanmar, brutal crackdown of protesters and continuation of popular resistance resulting in a protracted impasse have produced a new set of challenges.

Achievements:

- Much has been achieved in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief and security, including counterterrorism, cybersecurity, and coastal security cooperation.
- India has led through constant focus and follow-up — to the extent that some member-states have complained about the over-securitisation of BIMSTEC.
- While national business chambers are yet to be optimally engaged with the BIMSTEC project, the academic and strategic community has shown ample enthusiasm through the BIMSTEC Network of Policy Think Tanks and other fora.

Way Forward:

- The trick to ensuring balance is not to go slow on security but to accelerate the pace of forging solid arrangements for economic cooperation.
- The goal now should be to overcome the obstacles leading to BIMSTEC's success.
- The trajectory of India-Nepal, India-Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh-Myanmar ties in recent years is an impediment to the grouping. A strong BIMSTEC needs cordial and tension-free bilateral relations among all its member-states.

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. In climate change noise, India's role as conductor

Issue:

- Climate action and climate leadership are being increasingly measured against a planetary imperative of emissions reducing to net-zero by 2050.
- In this backdrop, developing countries like India are faced with a dilemma.
 - They need the carbon space to develop but they are also among the most vulnerable countries to climate change.

This topic has been covered in **7th April 2021** and **8th April 2021** Comprehensive News Analysis.

F. Prelims Facts

1. Last two rhinos translocated under IRV 2020

What's in News?

The ambitious Indian Rhino Vision 2020 (IRV 2020) came to a close with the release of two rhinos in Assam's Manas National Park transported from Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary.

Indian Rhino Vision 2020:

- Indian Rhino Vision 2020 was a partnership among the Government of Assam, the International Rhino Foundation, and the World Wide Fund for Nature, the Bodoland Territorial Council, and the U.S. Fish & World Wildlife Foundation that aims to attain a population of 3,000 wild greater one-horned rhinos in seven of Assam's protected areas by the year 2020.

- Designed in 2005, the IRV 2020 is believed to have achieved its target of attaining a population of 3,000 rhinos in Assam.
- However, the plan to spread the *Rhinoceros unicornis* across four protected areas beyond Kaziranga National Park, Orang National Park and Pobitora could not materialise.

Note:

- Assam had at least five rhino-bearing areas till the 1980s.
- Better conservation efforts helped maintain the population of the one-horned herbivore in Kaziranga, Orang and Pobitora, but encroachment and poaching wiped the animal out of Manas and Laokhowa Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Manas, in focus for the near-extinction of the pygmy hog, lost the [World Heritage Site](#) tag it had received in 1985 along with Kaziranga from the UNESCO.
- But, the translocated rhinos helped Manas National Park get back its World Heritage Site status in 2011.

G. Tidbits

1. Nagaland's version of NRC triggers concern

What's in News?

An apex body of Naga tribes has asked the Nagaland government not to be hasty with the exercise to prepare the Register of Indigenous Inhabitants of Nagaland (RIIN).

- RIIN is seen by the Naga tribes as a variant of Assam's National Register of Citizens.

Background:

- The Nagaland government has reportedly been trying to revive the RIIN exercise that was launched in July 2019 with the stated objective of preventing outsiders from obtaining fake indigenous certificates for seeking jobs and benefits of government schemes.
- The State government had formed a three-member panel headed by retired bureaucrat Banuo Z. Jamir for examining and advising on the implementation of RIIN. But the exercise was suspended following protests from community-based and extremist organisations.

Details:

- The Naga Hoho, the apex tribal body that had objected to the RIIN in 2019, has reacted to the State government's alleged bid to implement RIIN with a tentative timetable for different stages of the updating process.
- The tribal body is apprehensive of dreadful consequences if the advocates of RIIN implement the process with December 1, 1963 (the day Nagaland attained statehood) as the cut-off date.
- This date is likely to exclude Nagas who have come from beyond the boundaries of Nagaland.
- According to the Naga Hoho, Naga tribes living in Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh in India and in Myanmar have a legitimate claim to their ancestral homeland.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements with respect to Raisina Dialogue:

1. It is an inter-government security forum.
2. It is hosted by the Ministry of External Affairs and Observer Research Foundation (ORF).
3. It is designed to explore prospects and opportunities for Asian integration as well as Asia's integration with the larger world.

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

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

- Raisina Dialogue is an annual geo-political event.
- It is organised by the Ministry of External Affairs and Observer Research Foundation (ORF).
- It is designed to explore prospects and opportunities for Asian integration as well as Asia's integration with the larger world.
- Every year, leaders in politics, business, media, and civil society converge in New Delhi to discuss the state of the world and explore opportunities for cooperation on a wide range of contemporary matters.
- The Dialogue is structured as a multi-stakeholder, cross-sectoral discussion.

Q2. Consider the following statements:

1. Indian Rhino Vision 2020 aimed at attaining a population of 3,000 wild greater one-horned rhinos in seven of Assam's protected areas by the year 2020.
2. Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary has the highest density of greater one-horned rhinos.
3. Kaziranga National Park is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a tiger reserve hosting greater one-horned rhinos.

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

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- Indian Rhino Vision 2020 aimed at attaining a population of 3,000 wild greater one-horned rhinos in seven of Assam's protected areas by the year 2020.
- Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary has the highest density of greater one-horned rhinos.
- Kaziranga National Park is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a tiger reserve hosting greater one-horned rhino.
 - It is also recognized as an Important Bird Area by BirdLife International for the conservation of avifaunal species.

Q3. Consider the following statements with respect to Jallianwala Bagh Massacre:

1. The Lieutenant-Governor of Punjab at the time of the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre was General Reginald Dyer.
2. Lord Chelmsford was India's Viceroy at the time of the incident.
3. The gatherers wanted to peacefully protest the arrest and deportation of two national leaders, Satyapal and Saifuddin Kitchlew.

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

Answer: a

Explanation:

- The Jallianwala Bagh Massacre took place on the 13th of April 1919.
- The Lieutenant-Governor of Punjab at that time was Michael O'Dwyer. Lord Chelmsford was India's Viceroy.
- The Rowlatt Act was passed by the British government to increase their grip on power over the common folk. This law was passed in March 1919 by the Imperial Legislative Council which gave them the power to arrest any person without any trial. To abolish this act, Gandhi and the other leaders called for a Hartal (suspension of work) to show Indians' objection to this rule.
- The Jallianwala Bagh massacre or the Amritsar Massacre took place when many villagers gathered in the park for the celebration of Baisakhi. The gatherers wanted to also peacefully protest the arrest and deportation of two national leaders, Satyapal and Saifuddin Kitchlew.

Q4. Which of the following magazines were started by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar?

1. Mooknayak
2. Equality Janta
3. Bahishkrit Bharat
4. Udbodhana
5. Hindoo Patriot

Choose the correct options:

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar started magazines like Mooknayak, Equality Janta and Bahishkrit Bharat.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. The 'net-zero' emission target presents a conundrum for fast-growing developing countries such as India. In the light of this statement, discuss an equitable way to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions. (15 Marks, 250 Words) [GS-3, Environment and Ecology]
2. Medical termination of pregnancy laws should recognise the primacy of women's agency. Elucidate. (10 Marks, 150 Words) [GS-1, Social Issues]