

20 Apr 2021: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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Category: SECURITY

1. 'About 52% adults not clear on defences against cybercrime'

Context:

Survey conducted by online security solutions provider **on cybercrime**.

Key Findings:

- About **52% of adults do not know how to protect themselves from cybercrime**.
- **59% of the adults** in India had **become victims of cybercrime** in the past 12 months.
- **Cybercrime victims** collectively **spent 1.3 billion hours** trying to **resolve these issues**.
- Many fell victim to **identity theft** in the past 12 months and most are **concerned about data privacy**.
- 70% believe that **remote work has made it much easier for hackers and cybercriminals** to take advantage of people.

Cyber Security:

- Cyber security refers to **preventing any form of unauthorized and malafide access** to any of the **electronic digital device**.
- Cyber espionage, cyber attack, cyber terrorism and cyber warfare are various forms of Cyber-Crimes.

Read more on [Cyber-Crimes](#) and [Cyber-Security](#).

Cyber Volunteer Scheme:

- It is the plan of the Ministry of Home Affairs to rope in around 500 persons to flag unlawful content on the Internet for “improvement in the cybercrime ecosystem of India”.
- Its aim is to make **citizens contribute to the fight against cybercrime in the country**.
- It was launched by the **Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)**.
- **I4C** was established in 2018 under the Ministry of Home Affairs to act as a **nodal point at the national level in the fight against cybercrime**.
- I4C has **seven key components**.
 - National Cyber Crime **Threat Analytics** Unit,
 - National Cyber Crime **Reporting** Portal,
 - National Cyber Crime **Training** Centre,
 - Cyber Crime **Ecosystem Management** Unit,
 - National Cyber Crime **Research and Innovation** Centre,
 - National Cyber Crime **Forensic Laboratory Ecosystem** and

- Platform for **Joint Cyber Crime Investigation**

2. Tripura begins shifting of Mizoram Bru refugees

Context:

Shifting of **Mizoram Bru refugees for permanent settlement** at various places in Tripura has begun.

Details:

- The process of settlement of some 35,000 Brus is taking place to respect a **quadripartite accord** signed in New Delhi in January 2020.
- The Tripura government selected 16 places in four districts for the settlement. The government also formed four committees to oversee arrangements.
- The refugees, who have been residing in makeshift camps in Kanchanpur in north Tripura since 1997, constantly refused to return home, citing threats to life and repression. They fled Mizoram amid ethnic tension and Mizo hardline groups always opposed their repatriation attempts.

Bru-Reang Refugee Crisis:

- Around **5,000 families** consisting of around **30,000 Bru-Reang tribals** were forced to flee **Mizoram** and seek shelter in Tripura following ethnic tension.
- These people were housed in **temporary camps in North Tripura**.

Read more about [Bru-Reang Refugee Crisis](#) covered in 17th January 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis.

Category: ECONOMY

1. RBI sets up committee to review working of ARCs

Context:

The RBI has set up a committee to review the working of Asset Reconstruction Companies (ARC).

Details:

- The **six-member committee** will be headed by Sudarshan Sen, former executive director, Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- It has been set up to undertake a **comprehensive review of the working of ARCs** in the financial sector ecosystem and recommend suitable measures for enabling them to meet the growing requirements.

Terms of Reference of the Committee:

- The panel will **review the existing legal and regulatory framework** applicable to ARCs.
- It will **recommend measures to improve the efficacy** of ARCs.
- It will also **review the role of ARCs in the resolution of stressed assets**, including **under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC)**, and give **suggestions for improving liquidity and trading of security receipts**.
- It will also **review the business models of ARCs**.

Asset Reconstruction Companies (ARC)

- An ARC is a **specialized financial institution** that **buys the Non-Performing Assets or bad assets from** banks and financial institutions so that the latter can clean up their balance sheets.
- In a nutshell, ARCs are in the **business of buying bad loans from banks**.
- Banks can sell the bad assets to the ARCs at a mutually agreed value and concentrate on normal banking activities.
- The **Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act, 2002** provides the legal basis for setting up ARCs in India.

Read more on [ARCs](#).

Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. NASA Mars helicopter makes first flight on another planet

Context:

NASA successfully flew its tiny helicopter **Ingenuity** on Mars.

Details:

- Ingenuity's flight is the **first powered flight on another planet**.
- Ingenuity travelled to Mars attached to the underside of **Perseverance**, which touched down on Mars on February 18, 2021.
 - **Perseverance** is on a mission to **search for signs of extra-terrestrial life**.
- **Ingenuity's** goal, by contrast, is to demonstrate its technology works, and it **won't contribute to Perseverance's science goals**.
- It has a **wireless communication system**, and is equipped with computers, navigation sensors, and two cameras.
- It is **solar-powered**, able to charge on its own.

Read more on “Ingenuity helicopter” covered in [5th April 2021 Comprehensive News Analysis](#).
Note:

- The **first powered flight on Earth** was achieved by the **Wright brothers in 1903** in North Carolina.
- A piece of fabric from that plane has been tucked inside Ingenuity in honour of that feat.

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. The ordinance route is bad, repromulgation worse

Context:

The central government has repromulgated the ordinance that establishes a commission for air quality management in the National Capital Region, called the Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas Ordinance, 2020.

- This has **raised questions about the practice of issuing ordinances** to make law, and that of **re-issuing ordinances without getting them ratified by Parliament**.

Ordinance:

- The Constitution permits the central and state governments to make laws when Parliament (or the State Legislature) is not in session.
- As **lawmaking is a legislative function**, this power is provided for urgent requirements, and the law thus made has an automatic expiry date.
- The Constitution states that the **ordinance will lapse at the end of six weeks from the time Parliament (or the State Legislature) next meets**.

Details:

- While an ordinance was **originally conceived as an emergency provision**, it was used fairly regularly. State governments also used this provision very often.
 - In the 1950s, central ordinances were issued at an average of 7.1 per year. The last couple of years has seen a spike, 16 in 2019, 15 in 2020, and four so far in 2021.

- The issue was brought up in the Supreme Court through a writ petition by D.C. Wadhwa.
- In 1986, a **five-judge Constitution Bench** of the **Supreme Court ruled that repromulgation of ordinances was contrary to the constitutional scheme.**
 - It said that it would be a colourable exercise of power for the Government to ignore the Legislature and to repromulgate the Ordinance.
 - Such a scheme would be repugnant to the constitutional scheme as it would enable the Executive to transgress its constitutional limitation in the matter of lawmaking and to covertly and indirectly take on the law-making function of the Legislature.
 - However, the judgment did not stop the practice.
- In 2017, a **seven-judge Constitution Bench declared this practice to be unconstitutional.**
 - Even this judgment has been ignored.

Issues:

- Governments, both at the Centre and States, are violating this principle.

Central Government:

- The Indian Medical Council Amendment Ordinance was issued in September 2018 and reissued in January 2019.
- In the case of the ordinance on Commission for Air Quality Management, while the ordinance of October 2020 was laid in Parliament on the first day of the recent Budget Session, a Bill to replace it was not introduced. Now, the ordinance has been repromulgated.

State Government:

- In 2020, Kerala issued 81 ordinances, while Karnataka issued 24 and Maharashtra 21.
- Kerala has also repromulgated ordinances.

Conclusion:

- The **legal position** is clear, and **has been elucidated by constitution benches** of the Supreme Court.
- **Ordinances are to tackle exigencies when the legislature is not in session, and expire at the end of six weeks of the next meeting of the legislature.**
 - This time period is given for the legislature to decide whether such a law is warranted.
- **Repromulgation is not permitted as that would be a usurpation of legislative power by the executive.**
- The **legislatures and the courts should check the practice.** That is what [separation of powers](https://byjus.com/separation-of-powers/) and the concept of checks and balances means. By not checking this practice, the other two organs are also abdicating their responsibility to the Constitution.

Category: SECURITY

1. Protecting children in the age of AI

The article talks about the **need for protecting the rights, privacy, and well-being of children** in a world increasingly powered by virtual reality and [artificial intelligence \(AI\)](#).

Details:

- AI is **shaping behaviours, preferences, perceptions** of the world and much more.
- This has led to double imperatives of **getting all children online** and **creating child-safe digital spaces**.

Significance of AI:

- AI can offer **playful and creative opportunities for children**, that promote **enhanced literacy, social skills** and **language development**.
- In the field of education, **AI can and is being used to tailor learning materials and pedagogical approaches** to the child's needs.
 - Intelligent tutoring systems, tailored curriculum plans, and imaginative virtual reality instruction offer rich and engaging interactive learning experiences that can **improve educational outcomes**.

Concerns:

Bridging the digital divide:

- **Not everyone can tap into the opportunities** offered by this transformation.
 - According to [UNICEF](#) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), as many as **two-thirds of the world's children do not have access to the Internet** at home.

Unsafe virtual playgrounds:

- While **video gaming and chat forums** offer an online space for children to socialise with their friends, multiple reports identify such virtual playgrounds as **honeypots for child predators**.

Digital addiction:

- As an **ancillary consequence of the underlying business model**, AI systems driving many video games and social networks are designed to **keep children hooked** through algorithms and gimmicks.

- Children, from a tender age through adolescence, are becoming **digitally addicted**.

Post Truth discourse:

- Right when children and youth are **forming their initial views of the world, they are being sucked into virtual deep space**, including the universe of fake news, conspiracy theories, hype, hubris, online bullying, hate speech and the likes.

Classification through AI:

- While it is important for children to understand and appreciate different perspectives, preferences, beliefs and customs, to build bridges of understanding and empathy and goodwill, **AI is sorting them into tribes, and feeding them customised information**.
- Unless the **educational and performance data on children** is kept confidential and anonymous, it **can inadvertently typecast or brand children**, harming their future opportunities.

How to balance the tremendous good AI can do for children, while mitigating inadvertent harm and misuse?

Way Forward:

- Most countries **do not yet have the legal framework** in place. There is a need to **encourage and support the tremendous good AI can do** for children's growth and development, while **simultaneously mitigating the harm**.
- The next phase of the fourth Industrial Revolution must include an overwhelming push to extend Internet access to all children.
- There is a need for norms and standards to protect children online, similar to the **evolved norms and standards to protect children in the physical world**.
- There is a need for a multi-pronged action plan with **legal and technological safeguards**, greater awareness of how AI works behind the scenes.
- Children and young people **must be equipped with the knowledge, tools and awareness** to protect themselves, considering their unique vulnerabilities.
 - Tools like **trustworthy certification** and **rating systems** are needed to enable sound choices on safe AI apps.
 - **Anonymous accounts must be banned**.
 - **Enforceable ethical principles** of non-discrimination and fairness embedded in the policy and design of AI systems are needed.

Conclusion:

In short, a **safe online space for children, without algorithmic manipulation** and with **restricted profiling and data collection is the need of the hour**. Online tools that help prevent addiction, promote attention-building skills, expands children's horizons, understanding and appreciation for diverse perspectives, and help build their social-emotional learning capabilities are important.

Category: ENVIRONMENT

1. A huge, costly mistake

Context:

The governments of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh have signed an agreement that nudges forward a long-stalled multi-crore, controversial project to link the Ken and the Betwa rivers.

Read more on this topic covered in [23rd March 2021 Comprehensive News Analysis](#). Also read about the Ken-Betwa River Linking Project [here](#).

F. Prelims Facts

Nothing here for today!!!

G. Tidbits

1. National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for COVID-19 (NEGVAC)

- In August 2020, the **Centre constituted** the National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for COVID-19 (NEGVAC).
- It was established to **provide guidance on all aspects of COVID-19 vaccination**, such as prioritisation of population groups, procurement, inventory management, vaccine selection, vaccine delivery and tracking mechanism.
- **NEGVAC comprising of technical experts, senior officials of Central Ministries concerned and Zonal representatives of States** has been entrusted with the **responsibility of leading the vaccine administration campaign**.

2. EU Council approves conclusions on Indo-Pacific strategy

What's in News?

The Council of the [European Union](#) has approved **conclusions on a European Union strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific**.

- The **renewed EU commitment** to the Indo-Pacific will have a **long-term focus** and will be based on **upholding democracy, human rights, the rule of law and respect for international law**.
- The strategy looks at **reinforcing the EU's strategic focus, presence and actions** with the aim to **contribute to regional stability, security, prosperity and sustainable development**, at a time of **rising challenges and tensions in the region**.

EU's Concerns:

- **Current dynamics** in the Indo-Pacific have given rise to **intense geopolitical competition** adding to increasing tensions on trade and supply chains as well as in technological, political and security areas.
- **Human rights** are also **being challenged**.
- These developments increasingly **threaten the stability and security of the region** and beyond, directly impacting the EU's interests.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements with respect to Ingenuity helicopter:

1. It made the first powered flight on a planet other than Earth.
2. It is a solar-powered helicopter.
3. Its objective is to assist Perseverance in its mission to search for signs of extra-terrestrial life.

Which of the given statement is/are correct?

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

- Ingenuity's flight is the first powered flight on another planet.

- Ingenuity travelled to Mars attached to the underside of NASA's Perseverance.
- Perseverance is on a mission to search for signs of extra-terrestrial life. However, the helicopter's mission is experimental in nature and completely independent of the rover's science mission.
- Ingenuity's goal is to demonstrate its technology works, and it won't contribute to Perseverance's science goals.
- Ingenuity is solar-powered, able to charge on its own.

Q2. In which of the following states are Bru (Reangs) recognised as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group?

1. Assam
2. Tripura
3. Manipur
4. Mizoram

Choose the correct option:

- a. 2 and 3 only
- b. 1 and 4 only
- c. 2 only
- d. None of the above

Answer: c

Explanation:

- The Brus also known as the Reangs, are spread across Tripura, Assam, Manipur, and Mizoram.
- They are recognised as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group in Tripura.

Q3. Consider the following statements with respect to Khajuraho Group of Monuments:

1. It is a group of Hindu and Jain temples and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
2. They are known for their nagara-style architectural symbolism.
3. All the temples are made of sandstone.

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

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

Answer: b

Explanation:

- Khajuraho Group of Monuments are a group of Hindu and Jain Temples in Madhya Pradesh patronised by Chandela Kings.
- The Khajuraho Group of Monuments are famous for their nagara-style architectural symbolism and their erotic sculptures.
- The temples at Khajuraho are all made of Sandstone.
- It is a UNESCO World heritage Site.

Q4. Consider the following statements with respect to Asset Reconstruction Companies (ARC):

1. SARFAESI Act provides the legal basis for setting up ARCs in India.
2. There is no specific limit on the extent of debt an ARC can take over from banks.
3. The ARC can take over only secured debts which have been classified as a non-performing asset.

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

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

- Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act, provides the legal basis for setting up ARCs in India.
- There are no specific ceilings or flooring limits on the extent of debt an ARC can take over from banks.
- The ARC can take over only secured debts which have been classified as a non-performing asset (NPA).

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. The world increasingly powered by Virtual Reality and Artificial Intelligence has given rise to the double imperatives of closing the digital divide and creating child-safe digital spaces. Discuss. (GS 3 Security) (15 Marks, 250 Words).

2. Re-promulgation of ordinances is a fraud on the Constitution and a subversion of democratic legislative processes. Elucidate. (GS 2 Polity and Governance) (10 Marks, 150 Words).

