

26 Apr 2021: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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A. GS 1 Related

Category: WORLD HISTORY

1. What happened to Armenians in 1915?

Context:

U.S. President Joe Biden has officially recognised the mass killings of Armenians by Ottoman Turks in 1915-16 as an act of genocide.

Was it a genocide?

- According to Article II of the **UN Convention on Genocide of 1948**, genocide has been described as **carrying out acts intended “to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group”**.

Details:

- Before the **First World War** broke out in 1914, **there were 2 million Armenians in the Ottoman Empire**.
- Armenians were largely living in the **eastern fringes of the Empire**. The Ottoman Turks released the **Turkish and Kurdish militias upon them**.
- Hundreds of thousands of Armenians were **deported from eastern Anatolia** (today’s Turkey) to concentration camps in the Syrian steppe.
- **Up to 1.5 million Armenians are estimated to have been killed in the early stage of the First World War** within the territories of the Ottoman Empire.

Background:

- In a way, the **Armenians were victims of the great power contests of the late 19th and early 20th centuries**.
- When the Ottoman Empire was in decline on its fringes by the last quarter of the 19th century, Armenians were seen by the rulers in Constantinople as a fifth column.
- The **resentment started building up after the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78** in which the **Turks lost territories**.
- In the **Treaty of Berlin**, big powers dictated terms to the Ottomans, including **putting pressure on the Sultan** to initiate **reforms in the provinces inhabited by Armenians**, and to guarantee their security against the Circassians and Kurds.
 - The Sultan saw this as a sign of strengthening ties between the Armenians and other rival countries, especially Russia.
- In 1908, the **Young Turks wrested control** from the Sultan and promised to restore imperial glory. Under the Turks when the administration was run by the famous “Three Pashas”, the **empire became more Turkic** and persecution against the ethnic minorities picked up.
- In October **1914, Turkey joined the First World War on the side of Germany**.
 - In the Caucasus, they fought the Russians, their primary geopolitical rival.
 - But the Ottomans suffered a catastrophic defeat in the Battle of Sarikamish by the Russians in January 1915.

- The Turks blamed the defeat on Armenian treachery and **Armenians in the Ottoman Army were executed**.
- On April 24, the Ottoman government arrested about 250 Armenian intellectuals and community leaders. Most of them were later executed. (April 24 is the Remembrance Day).
- After the fall of the empire, **many Ottoman officials** were tried and executed for the atrocities committed against Armenians.
- The Three Pashas fled the country and took refuge in Germany.
 - But Armenian resistance fighters under the banner of **Operation Nemesis** continued to hunt down Ottoman officials.
 - In 1921 the **Grand Vizier and key architect of the atrocities** was assassinated on the street of Berlin by an Armenian student.

Turkey's response:

- **Turkey has acknowledged that atrocities** were committed against Armenians but **denies it was a genocide** and challenges the estimates that 1.5 million were killed.
- Biden's announcement on the Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day could **infuriate Turkey**, America's [NATO](#) ally.

B. GS 2 Related

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. U.S. to allow India access to vaccine raw materials

Context:

The U.S. will immediately deploy supplies and other assistance to India, including raw materials for the COVID-19 vaccine Covishield.

The US Defense Production Act:

- The act was passed in 1950 in response to the Korean War.
- The act grants emergency powers that allow the U.S. government to control private-sector production decisions.
- As a consequence of the U.S.'s Defense Production Act, federal government purchase orders have to be prioritised over foreign orders.
- The DPA is regularly used by the Defense Department to acquire critical military capabilities.

C. GS 3 Related

Category: SECURITY

1. 'No volunteer list under cyber scheme'

Context:

The Union Home Ministry has said it does not maintain a centralised list of volunteers enrolled under the cybercrime volunteer programme since the **police is a State subject under the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution**.

Cyber Volunteer Programme:

- The MHA through its **cybercrime grievance portal** aims to raise a **group of cybercrime volunteers** to flag unlawful content on the Internet.
- The programme is expected to include 500 volunteers, 200 cyber awareness promoters and 50 cyber experts.
- The Cybercrime Volunteer Framework has been rolled out as a part of **cyber hygiene promotion** to bring together citizens to contribute to the fight against cybercrime in the country and assist State/UT LEAs in their endeavour to curb cybercrimes.

Read more on the Cyber Volunteer Scheme covered in the [20th April 2021 Comprehensive News Analysis](#).

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: POLITY

1. A case for judicial federalism

Introduction

- The doctrine of [separation of powers](#) implies that each pillar of democracy – the executive, legislature and the judiciary – perform separate functions and act as separate entities. The executive is vested with the power to make policy decisions and implement laws. The legislature is empowered to issue enactments. The judiciary is responsible for adjudicating disputes.
- The Judiciary in comparison to the other two organs of the State has restricted powers to bring changes on the Socioeconomic front.

Limitations

- Courts cannot build better health infrastructure or directly supply oxygen; neither are they functionally bound to.
- Courts often lack the expertise and resources to decide social rights issues.

What Judiciary can do?

- It can ask tough questions to the executive and hold the executive accountable in various aspects of healthcare allocation.

Parmanand Katara v. Union of India (1989)

- The Supreme Court underlined the value of human lives and said that the right to emergency medical treatment is part of the citizen's [fundamental rights](#).
- Protection of life was held to be a sacred duty of the State.
- It held that the right to health forms an indispensable part of the fundamental right to life under Article 21.

Judiciary's role during Pandemic

- In the face of the COVID-19 health emergency, the High Courts of Delhi, Gujarat, Madras and Bombay, among others, have questioned and issued directives to the executive.

Examples:

- The Gujarat High Court issued a series of directions, including for laboratory testing and procurement of oxygen.
- The Nagpur Bench of the Bombay High Court was constrained to hold night sittings to consider the issue of oxygen supply. It directed immediate restoration of oxygen supply that had been reduced from the Bhilai steel plant in Chhattisgarh.
- The Delhi High Court directed the Central government to ensure adequate measures for the supply of oxygen. It cautioned that we might lose thousands of lives due to lack of oxygen.

Transfer of cases

139A. Transfer of certain cases

- Where cases involving the same or substantially the same questions of law are pending before the Supreme Court and one or more High Courts or before two or more High Courts and the Supreme Court is satisfied on its own motion or an application made by the Attorney General of

India or by a party to any such case that such questions are substantial questions of general importance, the Supreme Court may withdraw the case or cases pending before the High Court or the High Courts and dispose of all the cases.

Issues with the transfer in the current scenario

- One, the court has been unmoved to the actions and inactions of the executive even in cases where interference was warranted, such as the Internet ban in Kashmir.
- Two, where effective remedies were sought, when activists and journalists were arrested and detained, the court categorically stayed aloof. It acted as if its hands were tied.
- Three, in the top court the judges sit in Benches of two or more. The objective is to increase the discussions and deliberations between the judges to ensure deliberative justice.
 - In recent years, a pattern has been unfolding which depicts a lack of dissent in multiple cases amongst the judges and judgments are passed without disagreement.
 - The judgments passed were issues that had serious political ramifications.

These features, coupled with the unhealthy characteristics of an executive judiciary, makes the court's indication for a takeover disturbing.

Judicial federalism in India

- Many from different High Court Bar Associations spoke up against the move to transfer the cases from the High Courts to the Supreme Court. It underlines the re-emergence of internal democracy within the Bar.
- According to the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution, public health and hospitals come under the State List as Item No. 6. There could be related subjects coming under the Union List or Concurrent List. Also, there may be areas of inter-State conflicts. But as of now, the respective High Courts have been dealing with specific challenges at the regional level, the resolution of which does not warrant the top court's interference.
- In **Chandra Kumar v. Union of India (1997)**, the Supreme Court itself said that the High Courts are "institutions endowed with glorious judicial traditions" since they "had been in existence since the 19th century and were possessed of a hoary past enabling them to win the confidence of the people".
- The power of the High Court under Article 226 is wider than the Supreme Court's under Article 32, for, in the former, a writ can be issued not only in cases of violation of fundamental rights but also "for any other purpose". This position was reiterated by the court in **State of Orissa v. Madan Gopal Rungta (1951)**.

Conclusion

- The need for a uniform judicial order across India is warranted only when it is unavoidable — for example, in cases of an apparent conflict of laws or judgments on legal interpretation.
- Otherwise, autonomy, not uniformity, is the rule. Decentralisation, not centrism, is the principle.
- In the COVID-19-related cases, High Courts across the country have acted with an immense sense of judicial responsibility. This is a legal landscape that deserves to be encouraged. To do this, the Supreme Court must simply stay away.

Category: ENVIRONMENT

1. A green partnership

Context

- U.S.-India Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership initiative to combat climate change.

A look at facts

- India ranks third in emissions, behind the U.S. and China, although its per capita CO₂ emissions are less than 60% of the global average.

Details

- The Partnership envisages bilateral cooperation on strong actions in the current decade to meet the goals of the [Paris Agreement](#) by cutting greenhouse gas emissions.
 - Under the Paris agreement, each country has to set its own emission-reduction targets, known as National Determined Contributions (NDCs) and the pact's goal is to limit global warming to well below two degrees Celsius.
- Both India and the United States have set ambitious 2030 targets for climate action and clean energy.
- In its new nationally determined contribution, the **United States** has set an economy-wide target of reducing its net greenhouse gas emissions by 50-52 percent below 2005 levels in 2030.
- As part of its climate mitigation efforts, **India** has set a target of installing 450 GW of renewable energy by 2030.
- Through the Partnership, India and the United States are firmly committed to working together in achieving their ambitious climate and clean energy targets and to strengthening bilateral collaboration across climate and clean energy.

Significance

The Partnership will aim to:

- mobilize finance and speed clean energy deployment;
- Demonstrate and scale innovative clean technologies needed to decarbonize sectors including industry, transportation, power, and buildings; and
- Build capacity to measure, manage, and adapt to the risks of climate-related impacts.

India's Climate Change Policy

- India has traditionally approached climate change as a diplomatic issue, insisting that the developed world – because of their disproportionate role in causing the problem – should lead the way in reducing emissions, and provide the developing world with the finance and technology to do so.
- But many developed countries tend to view India's reluctance to commit to a net-zero emissions target as recalcitrance.
- India has however conveyed that the climate change crisis originated not here but in the industrialised world, which has used up much of the world's carbon space.

Way forward

- A forward-looking policy, therefore, should envision a new green development plan, provide funding and green technologies as compensation for the emissions space lost by poorer countries.
- For the India-U.S. agreement to yield results, Mr. Biden would have to persuade industry and research institutions at home to share knowledge and subsidise the transfer of technologies.

Conclusion

- This would be a win-win game, since it would aid sustainable development, boost employment, clean up the environment and, crucially, help all countries emerge healthier from the pandemic.

Category: HEALTH

1. The road ahead in India's augmented vaccination drive

Background:

CNA dated April 22, 2021: A recipe for vaccine inequity.

Vaccine pricing

- The decision to keep the 18 to 44-year age bracket under the 'other than Government of India channel' may discourage the socially and economically disadvantaged people such as labourers

and daily wage workers from seeking vaccination, as they may not be able to procure the vaccines at determined prices.

- The differential pricing regime announced by the Serum Institute of India and Bharat Biotech for the supply of their vaccines to the central government and state governments and the private sector is, however, a matter of concern. A rethink of the pricing strategies of these companies is called for.

Onus on the State Governments

- State governments can take a call on providing the vaccine to this age group free of cost.
- This may perhaps be a financial strain on cash-strapped State governments.

Way forward

- Flattening the COVID-19-curve and its downward trajectory rests on judicious vaccination deployment plans and the pace of vaccination.

Principle of benefit maximization

- The principle of benefit maximization holds that we should take that course of action which will maximize the benefit sought.
- More generally, it requires us to do that which will make everyone, on average, as well off as possible.
- One of the traditional formulations of this principle is the social philosophy known as utilitarianism, which holds that our most general moral obligation is to act in a manner that produces the greatest happiness for the greatest number.

Principle of equal respect

The principle of equal respect requires that our actions respect the equal worth of moral agents. We must regard human beings as intrinsically worthwhile and treat them accordingly. The essence of this idea is perhaps best expressed in the Golden Rule. We have a duty to accord others the same kind of treatment that we expect them to accord us. The principle of equal respect can be seen as involving three subsidiary ideas.

- First, it requires us to treat people as ends in themselves, rather than as means to further our own goals. We must respect their goals as well.
- Second, when we are considering what it means to treat people as ends rather than as means, we must regard as central the fact that people are free and rational moral agents.
 - This means that, above all, we must respect their freedom of choice. And we must respect the choices that people make even when we do not agree.

- Third, no matter how people differ, they are of equal value as moral agents. This does not mean that we must see people as equal in abilities or capacities. Nor does it mean that we cannot take relevant differences between people into account when deciding how to treat them. It is not, for example, a violation of equal respect to give one student a higher grade than another because that student works harder and does better.
 - That people are of equal value as moral agents does mean, however, that they are entitled to the same basic rights and that their interests are of equal value.
 - Everyone, regardless of native ability, is entitled to equal opportunity. No one is entitled to act as though his or her happiness counted for more than the happiness of others. As persons, everyone has equal worth.

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. What Israel wants in Syria

Background:

Syrian Civil War

'Wait and watch' approach of Israel

- When the Syrian crisis unfolded in 2011-12, Israel took a cautious approach, primarily because it preferred a stable regime in Syria as it did not want chaos in the region— despite the absence of a formal peace treaty between them.
- But when Iran deployed militias and military assets in Syria in defence of Mr. Assad, it changed Israel's calculus.

Role of Hezbollah

- Across Israel's northern border, Hezbollah has already established a formidable presence.
- Both Israel's 1982-2000 occupation of southern Lebanon and the 2006 war on Lebanon were resisted by Hezbollah.
- Israel would not like to have more Iran-backed Shia militias across the Golan Heights, which it captured from Syria in the 1967 Six-Day War and which has been the de facto border between the two countries ever since.

Israel tactics

- It first started helping anti-Assad rebels in the Golan region by reportedly providing cash and medical aid.

- The plan was to create a buffer between the Golan Heights and the rest of Syria so that the pro-Iran militias could be stopped from coming face-to-face with Israeli troops.

Three goals

Israel had three key goals:

- Disrupt Iranian supplies for Hezbollah and other Shia militias;
- Stop the militias advancing towards the de facto border; and
- By continuously targeting them, weaken Iran's presence in Syria.

Syria is Israel and Iran's battleground

- For the Syrian government, support from Iran was a lifeline.
- While Russia provided air power in the civil war, Iran supplied ground troops.
- So, Mr. Assad did nothing to prevent the sprawling Iranian influence in his country despite Israeli attacks.
- And Iran's response to Israeli attacks has been only to deepen its footprints. As a result, Syria has emerged as a new theatre in the Israel-Iran geopolitical contest in West Asia, which could outlive the Syrian civil war.

Conclusion

- With Israel determined to contain Iran's growing influence in the region, at a time when the U.S. and other Western powers are reaching out to Iran to revive the 2015 nuclear deal which could leave it more powerful economically, the Israel-Iran contest is set to intensify further.

2. Endeavour, leadership and the story of a nation

Reference:

[India Bangladesh Relations](#)

F. Prelims Facts

1. PM CARES to fund 551 oxygen plants in hospitals

What's in News?

The **PM CARES Fund** has approved the allocation of funds for setting up 551 **Pressure Swing Adsorption medical oxygen generation plants** at public health facilities across the country.

Pressure swing adsorption (PSA):

- Pressure swing adsorption (PSA) is a **technology used to separate some gas species from a mixture of gases under pressure.**
- PSA **operates at near-ambient temperatures** (temperature relating to the immediate surroundings) and **differs significantly from cryogenic distillation techniques** of gas separation.
- **Cryogenic separation** is a commercial process that **takes place at very low temperature.**

PM CARES Fund:

- The Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency **Situations Fund (PM CARES Fund)** was **created** on 28 March 2020, following the COVID-19 pandemic.
- It will be used for **relief efforts against the coronavirus outbreak and similar pandemic like situations in the future.**
- **The Chairman of the PM-CARES fund** is the **Prime Minister** of India.
- The **Prime Minister has the power to nominate members.** The other members of the PM CARES Fund are the **Defence Minister, Home Minister and Finance Minister.**

Read more on [PM CARES Fund](#).

2. Compulsory Licensing

- Compulsory License is a licence **issued/authorised by the government** that allows the company or an individual seeking **other's intellectual property to use it** (making, using and selling a patented product or employing a patented process) **without having to seek the consent of the owner/the right holder**, by paying a **predetermined fee** for the license.
- **Indian Patents Act 1970** and the **Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights** deal with compulsory licensing.
- The **application for a compulsory license** can be made any time after **3 years from the date of sealing of a patent.**
- As per **Clause 92 of the Patent Act**, compulsory licenses can also be issued suo motu by the **Controller of Patents** pursuant to a **notification issued by the Central Government** in cases of national emergency, extreme urgency, public non-commercial use.

Read more on [Compulsory Licensing](#).

3. Deep Time Project

What's in News?

Deep Time project in the Lombrives Cave in **France** came to an end. For 40 days and 40 nights, a group of 15 members lived in and explored the cave as part of the project.

- It is being studied by the Human Adaption Institute.
- Deep Time project investigated **how a lack of external contact would affect the sense of time.**
- It aimed at studying **how people adapt to drastic changes in living conditions, environments.**

G. Tidbits

Nothing here for today!!!

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. How did the Defense Production Act of the USA affect India during the pandemic?

- a. US violated India's EEZ under its provisions.
- b. US raised the prices of defence exports to India.
- c. US placed export controls on raw materials for COVID-19 vaccines.
- d. US withdrew from joint defence production projects with India.

Answer: c

Explanation:

- Defense Production Act of USA was passed in 1950 in response to the Korean War.
- The act grants emergency powers that allow the U.S. government to control private-sector production decisions.
- As a consequence of the U.S.'s Defense Production Act, federal government purchase orders have to be prioritised over foreign orders.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, the US placed export controls on raw materials for COVID-19 vaccines.
- Exports of critical raw materials used in the production of some Covid-19 vaccines were blocked by the US as a result of Biden's decision to invoke the US Defense Production Act.
- The US restrictions hit the output of major suppliers for the world. This includes vaccines like Covishield and Covovax, which the Serum Institute of India was expected to supply.

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

1. Compulsory licensing (CL) is when a government allows someone else to produce a patented product or process without the consent of the patent owner or plans to use the patent-protected invention itself.
2. It is one of the flexibilities in the field of patent protection included in the WTO's agreement on intellectual property — the TRIPS.
3. When a CL is issued, the patent owner loses rights over the patent and need not be compensated for copies of the products made under the compulsory licence.

Options:

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

Answer: b

Explanation:

- Compulsory licensing (CL) is when a government allows someone else to produce a patented product or process without the consent of the patent owner or plans to use the patent-protected invention itself.
- It is one of the flexibilities in the field of patent protection included in the WTO's agreement on intellectual property — the TRIPS.
- When a CL is issued, the patent owner would still continue to have rights over the patent, including a right to be paid compensation for copies of the products made under the compulsory licence.

Q3. Which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. The National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal has been set up under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology to allow reporting of cybercrimes.
2. Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) has been established under the Ministry of Home Affairs to act as a nodal point in the fight against cybercrime.
3. I4C has envisaged the Cyber Crime Volunteers Program to bring together citizen volunteers on a single platform to help them contribute to the fight against cybercrime by flagging any unlawful content for facilitating law enforcement agencies.

Options:

- a. 1 only

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

- The National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal has been set up under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) has been established under the Ministry of Home Affairs to act as a nodal point in the fight against cybercrime.
- I4C has envisaged the Cyber Crime Volunteers Program to bring together citizen volunteers on a single platform to help them contribute to the fight against cybercrime by flagging any unlawful content for facilitating law enforcement agencies.

Q4. Which of the following statements is/are INCORRECT?

1. India has procured the C-17 Globemaster from the USA.
2. It is manufactured by Boeing.
3. It is a large military transport aircraft used for tactical and strategic airlift missions to transport troops, cargo including heavy weaponry, medical evacuation and airdrop duties.

Options:

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- India has procured the C-17 Globemaster from the USA.
- C-17 Globemaster is manufactured by Boeing.
- It is a large military transport aircraft used for tactical and strategic airlift missions to transport troops, cargo including heavy weaponry, medical evacuation and airdrop duties.

Q5. The 'Deep Time' project, that aimed at studying how people adapt to extreme changes in living conditions and environment caused by isolation and darkness, was held recently in which country?

- a. Switzerland
- b. France
- c. USA
- d. Germany

Answer: b

Explanation:

- Deep Time project was held in the Lombrives Cave in France.
- Deep Time project investigated how a lack of external contact would affect the sense of time.
- It aimed at studying how people adapt to drastic changes in living conditions, environments.

Q6. Siachen Glacier is situated to the – [UPSC 2020]

- a. East of Aksai Chin
- b. East of Leh
- c. North of Gilgit
- d. North of Nubra Valley

Answer: d

Explanation:

- The Siachen Glacier is a glacier located in the eastern Karakoram range in the Himalayas.
- It is situated to the North of Nubra Valley.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Evaluate India's contribution to the 'Liberation of Bangladesh' War and what has been its biggest outcome today? (250 words; 15 marks) [GS 2, International Relations]
2. The U.S.-India Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership has the potential to aid sustainable post-pandemic development. Discuss (250 words; 15 marks) [GS 3, Environment]