

15 May 2021: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. [GS 1 Related](#)

B. [GS 2 Related](#)

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. [Bengal farmers get benefits of PM Kisan scheme](#)

C. [GS 3 Related](#)

ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. [U.S. slider turtles pose a threat in Northeast](#)
2. [186 elephants killed on rail tracks in over 10 years](#)

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. [What's Iron Dome system?](#)

D. [GS 4 Related](#)

E. [Editorials](#)

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. [Out of line](#)
2. [In COVID storm, the key principles driven home](#)
3. [Lend a helping hand to children the right way](#)

F. [Prelims Facts](#)

1. [Govt. may notify export refund rates by May end: DGFT Yadav](#)
2. [Sukhdev Thapar](#)
3. [21 members of vulnerable tribes infected](#)

G. [Tidbits](#)

H. [UPSC Prelims Practice Questions](#)

I. [UPSC Mains Practice Questions](#)

A. GS 1 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

B. GS 2 Related

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Bengal farmers get benefits of PM Kisan scheme

Context:

The farmers in West Bengal received the benefits of **PM Samman Kisan Nidhi (PM KISAN)**.

Details:

- About 7 lakh farmers in the State got benefits of the Central scheme where ₹2,000 were transferred to their bank accounts.
- During the day, the Prime Minister released the eighth instalment of over ₹20,000 crore to more than 9.5 crore farmer-beneficiaries under the scheme.

PM KISAN Scheme:

- The **central sector scheme** under the government of India that provides **income support to the farmers and their families** was launched in 2019.
- The scheme initially provided income support to all Small and Marginal Farmers' families across the country, holding cultivable land up to 2 hectares. Its ambit was later expanded w.e.f. 01.06.2019 to **cover all farmer families in the country irrespective of the size of their landholdings**.
- Under the scheme, an amount of **Rs.6000/- per year is transferred in three quarterly instalments of Rs.2000/- directly into the bank accounts of the farmers**, subject to certain exclusion criteria relating to higher-income status.
- The **responsibility of the identification of beneficiaries rests with the State/UT Governments**.

Read more on [PM KISAN Scheme](#).

C. GS 3 Related

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. U.S. slider turtles pose a threat in Northeast

Context:

The Red-eared Sliders are threatening to invade the natural water bodies across the Northeast.

Red-eared Slider



- The red-eared slider (*Trachemys scripta elegans*) derives its name from red stripes around the part where its ears would be and from its ability to slide quickly off any surface into the water.
- It is native to the U.S. and northern Mexico and is popular as a pet.
- It is a semiaquatic turtle.
- They have become an invasive species in many areas where they outcompete native species.
- The red-eared slider is included in the list of the world's 100 most invasive species published by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.

Concerns:

- The red-eared sliders found in the natural water bodies grow fast, virtually leaving nothing for the native species to eat.
- The red-eared slider has already affected states such as Karnataka and Gujarat, where it has been found in 33 natural water bodies.
- More than elsewhere in India, preventing this invasive species from overtaking the Brahmaputra and other river ecosystems in the Northeast is crucial because the Northeast is home to more than 72% of the turtle and tortoise species in the country.
- The Deepor Beel Wildlife Sanctuary and the Ugratara temple pond where red-eared sliders are found are home to 21 of the 29 vulnerable native Indian species of freshwater turtles and tortoises.

2. 186 elephants killed on rail tracks in over 10 years

Context:

According to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), a total of 186 elephants were killed after being hit by trains across India between 2009-10 and 2020-21.

Details:

- According to the data furnished by the Project Elephant Division of the Ministry, Assam accounted for the highest number of elephant casualties on railway tracks (62), followed by West Bengal (57), and Odisha (27).

Key measures taken:

- A Permanent Coordination Committee was constituted between the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) and the MoEFCC for preventing elephant deaths in train accidents. Among other initiatives undertaken by the Ministry are:
 - Clearing of vegetation along railway tracks to enable clear view for loco pilots.
 - Using signage boards at suitable points to alert loco pilots about elephant presence.
 - Moderating slopes of elevated sections of railway tracks.
 - Setting up underpass/overpass for safe passage of elephants.
 - Regulation of train speed from sunset to sunrise in vulnerable stretches.
 - Regular patrolling of vulnerable stretches of railway tracks by frontline staff of the Forest Department and wildlife watchers.

Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. What's Iron Dome system?

Context:

The Iron Dome aerial defence system intercepted a Hamas Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) that crossed from Gaza into Israel.

Iron Dome System:

- Iron Dome is a **multi-mission system capable of intercepting rockets, artillery, mortars and Precision Guided Munitions** like **very short-range air defence (V-SHORAD)** systems as well as **aircraft, helicopters and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV)** over **short ranges of up to 70 km**.
- It is an **all-weather system** and can **engage multiple targets simultaneously** and be **deployed over land and sea**.
- The I-DOME is the mobile variant with all components on a single truck and C-DOME is the naval version for deployment on ships.

Genesis:

- The genesis of the Iron Dome dates back to the **2006 Israeli-Lebanon war**, when Hezbollah fired thousands of rockets into Israel.
- The following year, Israel announced that its state-run **Rafael Advance Systems would come up with a new air defence system** to protect its cities and people.
- It was **developed with Israel Aerospace Industries**.
- The Iron Dome was **deployed in 2011**.

How does it work?

- An Iron Dome battery **consists of a battle management control unit, a detection and tracking radar** and a **firing unit** of three vertical launchers, with 20 interceptor missiles each.
- The interceptor missile **uses a proximity fuse to detonate the target warhead in the air**.
- One of the system's important advantages is its **ability to identify the anticipated point of impact** of the threatening rocket, to calculate whether it will fall in a built-up area or not, and to **decide** on this basis **whether or not to engage it**.

Limitations:

- The system has limitations when it is overwhelmed with a barrage of projectiles.
- Another limitation is the system's **inability to cope with very short-range threats** as estimates put the Iron Dome's **minimum interception range at 5-7 km**.
- Also, the **cost of interception is high**.

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Out of line

Context:

The West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar visited the areas hit by post-poll violence in Cooch Behar.

Details:

- It is opined that this act by the Governor constitutes a **grave transgression of the bounds of constitutional propriety and highlights his disregard for the principle that** constitutional heads should not air their differences with the elected regimes in public.
- Some may believe that the gubernatorial office ought not to be an impediment to the incumbent yielding to the moral urge to condemn incidents of rare enormity. Yet, the larger **principle that the Governor should not offer public comment on situations best handled by the representative regime ought to hold good in all circumstances.**

The governor of a state is a very interesting appointee of our political system. Seen as **part of the checks and balances** the Indian democracy is proud of, the post is also seen as the one that is **often able to exercise authority in contravention of an elected government.**

Role of Governor:

- The governor acts as the **nominal head** whereas the **real power lies with the Chief Ministers of the states and his/her councils of ministers.**
- The governor also acts as an **agent of the central government.**
- Therefore, the **office of governor has a dual role.**
- The primary function of the governor is to **preserve, protect and defend the Constitution and the law as incorporated in his/her oath of office under Article 159 of the Indian Constitution in the administration of State affairs.**

Read more on **Governor – Power, Tenure, Qualifications, Appointment.**

Conclusion:

- Regardless of one's view of a regime's inaction, there should be no departure from the principle that **any advice or warning the Governor wants to give to the elected government ought to be in private and in confidence.**

2. In COVID storm, the key principles driven home

The article talks about **key measures that could have mitigated the traumatic fallout of the pandemic in India.**

Health care, not coverage:

- The most comprehensive document prepared so far in India, by the high-level expert group appointed by the Planning Commission, submitted in November 2011 concluded that “**progressive strengthening of public facilities**” is the only way to reach medical services to the population as a whole.
- After 2014, **insurance has been a focus** — through [Ayushman Bharat](#).
- However, the **focus has to be strengthening public health facilities** and making that the fundamental way of ensuring a healthy life for its people.

Reason over myth:

- **Science, rationalism and expertise must** have an upper hand over false faith, unscientific claims, misinformation and myth.
- **Public allocations for science** must be increased.
- Respected scientists or public health experts must be encouraged to **educate people at large, give out advice that the public could trust** and on occasion **question the policies of the government**.
- **Adherence to basic scientific and rational principles** will help people, and the world beat back the disease.

Data integrity, not hesitancy:

- Not recording or diligently sharing data has consequences, for India and the world.
 - **Infections and mortality data in India are many times more than the reported figures.** This is deeply damaging to India’s international standing as a reliable recorder of information.
- Besides, **data-hesitancy** – changing baselines, withholding periodic labour force surveys or consumption survey data, not recording deaths faithfully, **has deep practical implications**.
- **Honest and accurate tracking** will pave the way to **rescue the future with accurate predictions**.

3. Lend a helping hand to children the right way

Context:

The second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic has left many children orphaned and vulnerable in India.

Details:

- Before handing over an orphan child to any agency, family or person it is important to **be aware of the laws that are prevalent and procedures with regard to the care and the protection of orphan children** rather than face legal action for violations later.
- The **non-reporting of such children is also a punishable offence under the JJA** or the [Juvenile Justice \(Care and Protection of Children\) Act, 2015](#).
- Only once a **child is declared legally free for adoption by the Child Welfare Committee (CWC)**, adoption can be done either by Indian prospective adoptive parents or non-resident Indians or foreigners, in that order.
- Any voluntary or NGO which is not registered as per the requirement of the JJA cannot house children in need of care and protection.

Read: “How to adopt a child legally” covered in **12th May 2021 Comprehensive News Analysis**.

Many options to help

1. **Emergency phone outreach service** managed by the Women and Child Development department's nodal agency, the Childline India Foundation should be used.
 - These Childline units are civil society organisations duly approved by the government.
2. **The district protection officer concerned must be informed.**
 - The contact details can be found on the National Tracking System for Missing and Vulnerable Children portal maintained by the Women and Child Development department.
3. **The nearest police station or its child welfare police officer** who is specially trained to exclusively deal with children either as victims or juvenile delinquents **must be informed**.

Court directives to police:

- Ignorance of the law is not an excuse. If an orphan child is kept by someone without lawful authority, he or she may land themselves in trouble.
- According to the **Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956, the father, and in his absence the mother, is the natural guardian**. Not even a close relative can look after the child without authorisation.
- **The Supreme Court** in Bachpan Bachao Andolan vs Union of India directed all Directors General of Police, in May 2013, **to register a first information report as a case of trafficking or abduction in every case of a missing child**.
- At least **one police officer not below the rank of assistant sub-inspector** in each police station is mandatorily required to undergo **training to deal with children in conflict with the law and in need of care and protection**.
- **Each district** is supposed to have its **special juvenile police unit**, headed by an officer not below the rank of a Deputy Superintendent of Police.

Conclusion:

Article 39 of the Constitution prohibits the tender age of children from being abused. Therefore, orphaned children who have lost both their parents or abandoned or surrendered due to the COVID-19 pandemic must not be neglected and left to face an uncertain future. They must be taken care of by the authorities entrusted with responsibilities under the JJA.

F. Prelims Facts

1. Govt. may notify export refund rates by May end: DGFT Yadav

What's in News?

The **delay in setting the refund rates for taxes paid on exported goods** as per the **Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) scheme** has been **affecting exporters' pricing strategies**.

- The government is yet to release the necessary funds for RoDTEP's implementation as well as to pay outstanding dues on earlier incentive schemes.

RoDTEP scheme:

- The Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products scheme **was announced by the Government of India (GOI) in September 2019.**

Read more on [Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products](#).

2. Sukhdev Thapar

What's in News?

Sukhdev Thapar's birth anniversary.

- Sukhdev Thapar is a **revolutionary Indian freedom fighter**.
- He was involved in promoting national consciousness among the country's young people in the Punjab area.

Read more on [Sukhdev Thapar](#).

3. 21 members of vulnerable tribes infected

What's in News?

With the second wave of COVID-19 sweeping across the rural heartland of Odisha, infections are being reported among the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).

Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups:

- Particularly vulnerable tribal group (PVTG) (earlier: Primitive tribal group) is a **government of India classification created with the purpose of enabling improvement in the conditions of certain communities with particularly low development indices.**
- In 1973, the **Dhebar Commission** created Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs) as a separate category, who are less developed among the tribal groups.
- PVTGs have some **basic characteristics** – they are mostly homogenous, with a small population, relatively physically isolated, social institutes cast in a simple mould, absence of written language, relatively simple technology and a slower rate of change, etc.
- There are **75 PVTGs in India**.

Note:

- **Odisha has among the largest and most diverse tribal populations in the country.**
- Of the 62 tribal groups residing in Odisha, **13 are recognised as PVTGs.**
- According to the 2011 Census, Odisha's share of the country's total tribal population was 9%.
 - Tribals constitute 22.85% of the State's population.
- The **PVTGs such as Bonda, Birhor, Chuktia Bhunjia, Didayi, Dongaria Kandha, Hill Kharia, Juang, Kutia Kondh, Lanjia Saora, Lodha, Mankirdia, Paudi Bhuyan and Saora** have been identified on the basis of:
 - Stagnant or diminishing populations.

- Subsistence level of economy associated with pre-agricultural stages of hunting, food gathering and shifting cultivation.
- Relative physical isolation.

G. Tidbits

Nothing here for today!!!

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q 1: Which of the following statements regarding Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) Yojana is/are correct?

1. It is a 100 per cent centrally funded scheme under which Rs 6,000 is transferred in three equal installments to eligible farmer families in a year.
2. The responsibility of identifying the landholder farmer family eligible for benefit under the Scheme and uploading the data of the eligible beneficiaries on the PM-KISAN Portal is that of the States/UT Administrations.
3. Under the Scheme, the States/UTs are required to set up Grievance Redressal Committees for looking into the grievances related to the implementation of the scheme.
4. Data of grievances received/disposed of by the states is maintained centrally.

Options:

- a. 1, 2 & 3 only
- b. 1, 2 & 4 only
- c. 1 & 4 only
- d. All of the above

Answer: a

Explanation:

- Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) is a 100 per cent centrally funded scheme under which Rs 6,000 is transferred in three equal installments to eligible farmer families in a year.
- The responsibility of identifying the landholder farmer family eligible for benefit under the Scheme and uploading the data of the eligible beneficiaries on the PM-KISAN Portal is that of the States/UT Administrations.
- Under the Scheme, the States/UTs are required to set up Grievance Redressal Committees for looking into the grievances related to the implementation of the scheme. No data of grievances received/disposed of by them is, however, maintained centrally. It is maintained at the state level.

Q 2: Which of the following can be considered competitive advantages of the red-eared slider over the native turtle species?

1. lower age at maturity

2. higher fecundity
3. larger adult body size

Select the correct option from below:

- a. Only 1
- b. Only 1 & 2
- c. Only 2 & 3
- d. All of the above

Answer: d

Explanation:

- The red-eared slider is included in the list of the world's 100 most invasive species published by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.
- They have become an invasive species in many areas where they outcompete native species.
- They mature at an early age as compared to other native turtle species.
- They have higher fecundity i.e ability to reproduce abundantly.
- They have a large adult body size thereby competing with the native turtle species for food and resources.

Q 3: Consider the following statements:

1. The red-eared slider is traded illegally in India.
2. Continuous releasing of exotic pet turtles in natural ecosystems increases the risk of parasite transmission to native species.
3. Because of their omnivorous diet and ability to adapt to various habitats, the red-eared slider has a great potential for impacting indigenous habitats.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a. 1 & 2 only
- b. 2 & 3 only
- c. Only 3
- d. All of the above

Answer: b

Explanation:

- The trading of the red-eared slider is legal in India. They are popular as pets.
- Continuous releasing of exotic pet turtles in natural ecosystems increases the risk of parasite transmission to native species.

- The red-eared sliders found in the natural water bodies grow fast, virtually leaving nothing for the native species to eat.
- Because of their omnivorous diet and ability to adapt to various habitats, the red-eared slider has a great potential for impacting indigenous habitats.

Q 4: Consider the following:

1. African Forest Elephant
2. African Savanna Elephant
3. Asian Elephant

Which of the above has/have been categorised as critically endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)?

- a. Only 1
- b. Only 1 & 2
- c. Only 1 & 3
- d. All of the above

Answer: a

Explanation:

- African Forest Elephant is categorised as critically endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
- African Savanna Elephant and Asian Elephant have been categorised as endangered by the IUCN.

Q5. In India, if a religious sect/community is given "the status of a national minority", what special advantages it is entitled to? (UPSC 2011)

1. It can establish and administer exclusive educational institutions.
2. The President of India automatically nominates a representative of the community to Lok Sabha.
3. It can derive benefits from the Prime Minister's 15-Point Programme.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

In India, if a religious sect/community is given "the status of a national minority":

- Under Article 30, it can establish and administer exclusive educational institutions.
- It can derive benefits from the Prime Minister's 15-Point Programme, a program launched by the government for the welfare of minority community in 2006.
- There is no communal electoral system in India that allows the President of India to automatically nominate a representative of the community to Lok Sabha based on religion, sect or community.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. The Governor of a state wears two hats, and therefore, dilemmas have arisen in practice. Comment. (10 Marks, 150 Words)[GS-2, Polity and Governance]
2. Pandemic leaves many children orphaned, but citizens must take the legal route to adopt them. Discuss the due process and procedures involved in an adoption. (15 Marks, 250 Words) [GS-2, Polity and Governance]

