

29 May 2021: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. More voices against Lakshadweep changes

Context:

Concerns raised about the **Lakshadweep Development Authority Regulation 2021 (LDAR)**.

Details:

- In a letter to the **Vice-President and the Kerala Governor**, three prominent people have expressed concerns with respect to the LDAR 2021. They have argued that:
 - **It will destroy the delicate ecosystem of the coral isles, and the life and livelihood of the islanders.**
 - The **recent policy changes** give no consideration to matters like **land use, land ownership, ocean resource utilisation, and livelihood practices of the community.**
 - The culture and traditions of people who lived there had been violated by intervention into their food ethos (beef ban, opening liquor shops, etc.).

Read more on this issue covered in [UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis. May 28th, 2021 CNA.](#)

2. Children under mid-day meal scheme to get aid

Context:

The Centre has decided to give about **₹100 each to children** studying in **Class 1 to Class 8 in government schools**, who are **beneficiaries of the [Mid-Day Meal scheme](#).**

Details:

- It is aimed at **safeguarding the nutritional levels of children and ensuring their immunity is protected.**
- **₹1200 crore in total** would be given to 11.8 crore children through **direct benefit transfer** as a **one-time payment.**

Fund Allocation:

- The Central Government will provide additional funds of about **₹1200 crore to States and Union Territories.**
- The money comes from the **cooking cost component of the scheme.**
- The **Central allocation** for the Mid-Day Meal scheme in 2021-22 is **₹11,500 crore.**
 - Its **largest component is cooking costs**, which cover the prices of ingredients such as pulses, vegetables, cooking oil, salt, and condiments.
 - In 2020, the **minimum allocation for cooking cost per child per day** was set at ₹4.97 for Classes 1 to 5, and ₹7.45 for Classes 6 to 8, with the **Centre paying 60% of the cost.**

Issue:

- Children are being given **cash in lieu of the mid-day meal** in some places and **dry rations** in others. However, the quantities/amounts are too low to be even adequate for one nutritious meal a day.
- Noting that ₹100 per child amounts to less than ₹4 a day, even if it was a monthly payment, Right to Food activists also say this is **insufficient to provide the nutrition security** that is envisaged.
- With approximately 200 school days, each child should be getting something like ₹900-₹1300 annually [as cooking cost component].
- Also, while the **schools can purchase ingredients at wholesale prices**, with the same amount, parents will be able to purchase much less.

Way Forward:

- In 2020, **hardly any State provided free grain or transferred these cooking costs**. The children must be transferred the arrears from the previous year as well.
- **Enhanced take-home rations**, including eggs, vegetables, fruits, dal/chana, oil must be given in order to **ensure nutrition security**.

3. Centre tells West Bengal Chief Secretary to report to Delhi

Context:

Following the absence of the West Bengal Chief Minister at the review meeting on Cyclone Yaas with the Prime Minister, the **appointments committee of the Union Cabinet attached the State's Chief Secretary to the Centre**.

Details:

- The **Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT)** invoked **Rule 6(1) of the Indian Administrative Service (cadre) Rules, 1954** to place the services of West Bengal Chief Secretary Alapan Bandyopadhyay with the Government of India.
- The order asked the State government to relieve the officer with immediate effect and directed him to report to the DoPT office at North Block in Delhi.

What do the rules say?

- For the premier civil services — IAS, IPS and Indian Forest Service — **officers of the state cadre are allotted by the Centre from a pool of officers**.
- From time to time, a **certain number of officers are sent on central deputation**.
- The **Home Ministry is the authority in control of the IPS cadre**, the **Department of Personnel and Training for the IAS cadre**, and the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change for the IFS cadre**.
- The **Centre can take no action** against civil service **officials** who are **posted under the state government**.
 - Rule 7 of the All India Services (Discipline and Appeal) Rules, 1969, states that the "Authority to institute proceedings and to impose penalty" will be the state government if the officer is serving in connection with the affairs of a State, or is deputed for service under any

company owned or controlled by the Government of a State, or in a local authority set up by an Act of the Legislature of that State.

- **For any action to be taken** on an officer of the All India Services (IAS, IPS, IFS), **the state and the Centre both need to agree.**
- Rule 6(1) states that “provided that **in case of any disagreement**, the **matter shall be decided by the Central Government** and the **State Government shall give effect to the decision** of the Central Government.”

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. France and the Rwandan genocide

Context:

French President Emmanuel Macron asked for forgiveness for his country's role in the 1994 Rwandan massacre in which about 8,00,000 people, mostly ethnic Tutsis, were killed.

Details:

- **France, which enjoyed close ties with Rwanda's Hutu-led government** of President Juvénal Habyarimana, has long been **criticised for its role in the killings of the Tutsi minorities** in 1994.
- In 2019, a 15-member expert committee was set up to investigate France's role in the genocide. This promised a new beginning with Rwanda.
 - The committee report blamed the then-President **François Mitterrand for a failure of policy towards Rwanda in 1994.**
- Rwanda had commissioned a separate inquiry that concluded that **France enabled the genocide.**

Hutu-Tutsi relations:

- The majority Hutus and minority Tutsis have had a troubled relationship in Rwanda that goes back to the **German and Belgian colonial period.**
- Colonialists ruled Rwanda through the Tutsi monarchy. They were the local administrative chiefs and enjoyed relatively better educational and employment opportunities. This led to widespread resentment among the majority Hutus.
- In 1959, Rwanda saw violent riots led by Hutus in which some 20,000 Tutsis were killed and many more were displaced.
- Amid growing violence, the Belgian authorities handed over power to the Hutu elite. King Kigeli V fled the country. In the 1960 elections, organised by the Belgians, Hutu parties gained control of nearly all local communes.
- In 1961, Hutu leader Grégoire Kayibanda declared Rwanda an autonomous republic and later the country became independent.
- Kayibanda became Rwanda's first elected President, while the Tutsis who fled the country formed armed insurgencies.
- Since then, Rwanda had been controlled by Hutus, until their genocidal regime was toppled by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) in 1994.

What led to the killings?

- The crisis escalated in the 1990s when the RPF, led by Paul Kagame, the current President, grew in strength and posed a serious challenge to the regime of President Habyarimana, who was backed by France and had defence ties with Israel.
- In 1993, Habyarimana, who rose to power in 1973, was forced to sign a peace agreement (**Arusha Accords**) with the RPF.
- This led to **resentment among Hutu militias** (backed by the government) towards the local Tutsi population (accused of collaborating with the RPF).
- The killings were a **pre-planned extermination campaign**. The militias, with support from the government, launched a violent campaign aimed at eliminating the entire Tutsi community.
- The **killings came to an end after the RPF, under Mr. Kagame's command, captured Kigali and toppled the Hutu regime**.
- The RPF initially went about establishing a multi-ethnic government with Pasteur Bizimungu, a Hutu, being the President. Mr. Kagame, a Tutsi, was his deputy.
- In 2000, Mr. Kagame assumed the Presidency and continues to be in power till today.

C. GS 3 Related

Category: **ECONOMY**

1. Govt. puts off decision on tax relief for COVID-19 supplies

Context:

The 43rd Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council meeting.

Read more on [Goods and Services Tax Council – Background and Composition](#)

Important Recommendations:

- A number of specified COVID-19 related goods have been **recommended for full exemption from IGST**, even if imported on a payment basis, for donating to the government or on the recommendation of state authority to any relief agency.
 - Earlier, IGST exemption was applicable **only when these goods were imported “free of cost” for free distribution**.
- Special session proposed to decide **GST Compensation Cess levy extension** beyond July 2022.

Details:

- The GST Council **failed to agree on immediate tax breaks** for critical pandemic relief supplies, including COVID-19 vaccines.
- With the **rising cases of Black Fungus**, amphotericin-B (medicine required for it) has been included in the exemption list, for tax-free imports.
- It has constituted a **Group of Ministers to recommend tax rates for individual items**.
- **Small taxpayers** would get **minor relaxations in compliance**.

- For the current year's estimated shortfall in **compensation cess collections** to meet States' dues, the **Centre will raise ₹1.58 lakh crore** to recompense States via back-to-back loans, like it was done in FY 2020-21.

Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. Apollo begins antibody cocktail for mild cases

Context:

The Apollo Hospital said that they have started an “antibody cocktail treatment” for COVID-19 patients, who have mild symptoms and comorbidities.

Details:

- A 65-year-old man from Delhi with multiple comorbidities, was the first COVID-19 patient to receive monoclonal antibody therapy.

Monoclonal antibody therapy:

- Monoclonal antibody therapy is a form of immunotherapy that **uses monoclonal antibodies (mAb) to bind monospecifically to certain cells or proteins.**
 - A monoclonal antibody is an **antibody made by cloning a unique white blood cell.**
 - All subsequent antibodies derived this way **trace back to a unique parent cell.**
- The objective is that this treatment will **stimulate the patient's immune system to attack those cells.**
- Monoclonal antibodies **bind to and 'neutralise' the SARS-CoV-2 virus.**
- This consequently helps fight the infection, similar to the natural antibodies produced when one gets infected with COVID.
- The reason this therapy is termed as an antibody cocktail is that it comprises a **mixture of more than two biological drugs (Casirivimab and Imdevimab) that mirror the human antibodies in the immune system.**
- **Both strengthen the immune defence system.**
- This drug is said to **restrict pathogens and virus from entering the patient's body, from where they otherwise would have derived nutrition and multiplied.**

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Democracy at stake in Nepal

Context:

- Nepal is facing its severest political crisis in decades. The country has seen repeated dissolution of Parliament in 2020 and 2021.

India's role:

- Even when India's political and diplomatic culture saw a departure from best past practices, it was expected that its official regime would always support multiparty democracy, progressive political action and changing fundamentals.
- In helping an unpopular and illegitimate regime in Kathmandu, India might not be benefitted nor will Nepal.
- India is being seen as backing an autocratic and unconstitutional regime, surviving in caretaker mode.
- In this backdrop, India should correct its course and not support an autocratic regime. It must facilitate reposing faith in Nepal's democracy and due processes.
- There should be a trade-off between the developmental aspirations of Nepal and the strategic concerns of India, in the light of changing geopolitical dynamics in the Himalayan region.
- The Kalapani-Limpiyadhura map issue, boundary issues can be resolved through serious political dialogue.

Read more on: [Kalapani Issue: Origins of Indo-Nepal Border Dispute](#)

Issue:

- While dissolution is not new to Nepal, dissolutions after the new Constitution of 2015 coming into force, that places safeguards against dissolution, raises concerns.
- The repeated dissolution of Parliament is a dangerous game plan by national and international forces to dismantle the federal republican democratic Constitution and restore the old Hindu monarchical state.
- With Parliament dissolved and with a President seen as favourable to him, Prime Minister (now caretaker Prime Minister) K.P. Sharma Oli will have the power to rule without being accountable.

Way Forward for Nepal:

- Nepal should work towards regaining its lost glory and avail its true development potential.
- It should decline harmful assistance of neighbours involved in geostrategic rivalries.
- On the domestic front, an increased focus should be on the country itself, instead of leveraging on vulnerabilities and the making of disruptive partnerships.
- In a functional democracy, statecraft is not supposed to be selfless until it relies on progressive policy and governance with an aim to further the mission of the greater common good.
- Despite all the flaws, Nepal should protect its democracy that is now at stake because of actions by political opportunists.

Category: ECONOMY

1. Humanity matters, capitalism needs an upgrade

Context:

The pandemic has brought to the fore – a clash between the needs of humanity and the principles of capitalism.

Issue:

- The capitalists argue that private producers of vaccines must make profits as compensation for investing in research and production. Also, that they are not morally compelled to serve them at a loss.
- In this scenario, the government must step in, buy from private producers and subsidise sales to poor people. For this, the government would need revenue.
- Taxes on private companies could be a significant source of revenue for the government.
- If private companies press governments for lower taxes and if the government is also pushed by them, on ideological grounds, to stay out of business, viz. not having any “public sector” production enterprises, governments find both their hands tied behind their backs in crises as they are blamed for breakdowns of public services.
- Similar is the scenario that the Indian government is facing at present.

How does capitalism expand?

- Capitalism expands by converting the commons into private capital.
- Economists justify that people will not care for something unless they own it. Businesses owning land and other natural resources use this as a justification.
 - Businesses convert natural capital into financial capital and use it for generating profits and more capital for themselves.
 - Over-exploitation of natural capital has led to the crisis of environmental sustainability and climate change.
- The concept of ownership of assets for creating wealth had gone too far with slaves being used as economic assets until moralists objected.

Creation of monopolies:

- With slavery being banned by law and the earth’s resources being limited, now, capitalism has moved on to convert knowledge into private property.
- Modern regimes of intellectual property rights (IPR) and patent lawyers help capitalists create intellectual property monopolies.
- Communities whose traditions produced the knowledge must pay those who stole it from them, in the name of patents.
 - People are prevented from using their own knowledge as they are when natural products, such as neem and turmeric, are patented by capitalists.
- The public contributes to the creation of scientific knowledge in many ways, for example, through government research and development grants and subsidies.

Product v/s Process Patents and Compulsory Licensing:

- India has been a spoiler in the global Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) regime which was promoted by the World Trade Organization in 1995 for uniform global IPR rules.
 - **TRIPS is founded on the principle of “product patents”.**
 - **India had a different approach to IPR based on “process patents”.**
- Product patents allow inventors of new drugs to have exclusive rights to produce and sell them for some years.
 - Producers can use their monopoly to fix higher prices and recover their investments in drug development. The quantum of production is limited to keep prices high.
 - The process patents route forced Indian producers to invent better processes for producing larger volumes at lower costs of generic versions of the medicine.
 - While this benefited citizens of poorer countries including India, Indian generic drug producers became threats to the pricing power of innovator drug producers from the West.
 - **TRIPS has a provision to enable governments to enforce ‘compulsory licensing’.**
 - During an emergency, an innovator company can be demanded to allow domestic, lower-cost producers to increase the supply of the drug in an emergency, with compensation (to the inventor).
 - Eg: This provision was used by the South African government to get drugs for AIDS produced by Indian low-cost producers while fighting the AIDS pandemic. Western companies do not like this provision.
 - **This is the same provision that South Africa and India want to invoke now to enable the production of the U.S. invented COVID-19 vaccines.**

Public sector versus private:

- Many economists do not like public sector enterprises. Private is better than public by the limited metric of shareholder returns/profits.
- On the other hand, the purpose of governments is to improve the all-round well-being of all citizens; not merely to provide products to customers who can pay good prices for them.
- **The COVID-19 crisis has revealed the inadequacy of capitalism to fulfil societal needs.**

Concerns:

- Money-driven capitalist values are far from human values.
- Money has become the supreme measure of success in all spheres: the wealth of individuals, the size of companies, and the scales of nations’ economies.
- With artificial intelligence algorithms in social media, capitalist enterprises are able to manipulate human minds. Their investors have become the richest people on the planet.
- New mRNA technologies on which some new COVID-19 vaccines are based provide the means to manipulate the composition of human bodies. Thus, allowing capitalists to create even more wealth for themselves off human beings.

Way forward:

- The COVID-19 crisis will not end capitalism. But capitalism must mutate to survive.
- The sustainable health of complex systems must be considered.
- Companies must rethink the purpose of their existence. It is imperative now that more human and less money values are adopted.
- If capitalist enterprises are not willing to fulfil public purposes, governments must create more public-spirited enterprises to provide public goods equitably to all citizens.

F. Prelims Facts

Nothing here for today!!!

G. Tidbits

Nothing here for today!!!

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q 1: Which of the following statements regarding 'National AI Portal' is/are correct?

1. It is a joint initiative by the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY), the National e-Governance Division (NeGD) and NASSCOM.
2. It serves as a central hub for AI-related news, learning, articles, events and activities, etc., in India and beyond.
3. The portal was launched in 2019.

Options:-

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

Answer: b

Explanation:

- The National AI Portal is a joint initiative by the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY), the National e-Governance Division (NeGD) and NASSCOM.
- It serves as a central hub for AI related news, learning, articles, events and activities, etc., in India and beyond.
- The portal was launched by the Union Minister for Electronics and IT, Law and Justice and Communications on the 30th of May 2020.

Q 2: The 'Great Gatsby Curve' deals with:

- a. inflation
- b. unemployment
- c. inequality and inter-generation mobility
- d. None of the above

Answer: c

Explanation:

- The “Great Gatsby Curve” highlights differences in mobility across countries.
- It shows the relationship between income inequality and intergenerational income mobility.
- The Great Gatsby Curve illustrates the connection between concentration of wealth in one generation and the ability of those in the next generation to move up the economic ladder compared to their parents.

Q 3: Which of the following are the three values of Olympism?

- a. excellence, friendship and respect
- b. excellence, friendship and honour
- c. fairness, teambuilding and equality
- d. discipline, inclusion and perseverance

Answer: a

Explanation:

- The three values of Olympism are excellence, friendship and respect.
- These values constitute the foundation on which the Olympic Movement builds its activities to promote sport, culture and education with a view to building a better world.

Q 4: Which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. An IAS officer may, with the concurrence of the state governments concerned and the central government, be deputed for service under the central government or another state government.
2. If there is a disagreement between the centre and state on the central deputation of an officer, the matter shall be decided by the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT).

Options:-

- a. Only 1
- b. Only 2
- c. Both
- d. None

Answer: a

Explanation:

- An IAS officer may, with the concurrence of the state governments concerned and the central government, be deputed for service under the central government or another state government.
- With respect to disagreement between the centre and state on the central deputation of an officer, Rule 6(1) of the Indian Administrative Service (cadre) Rules, 1954 states that “provided that in case of any disagreement, the matter shall be decided by the Central Government and the State Government shall give effect to the decision of the Central Government.”

Q5. Consider the following statements: (UPSC 2012)

1. Union Territories are not represented in the Rajya Sabha.
2. It is within the purview of the Chief Election Commissioner to adjudicate the election disputes.
3. According to the Constitution of India, the Parliament consists of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha only.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: d**Explanation:**

- Union territories such as Delhi and Puducherry have representation in Rajya Sabha.
- Election disputes are adjudicated by the respective state High Courts.
- As per the Constitution of India, the parliament of India consists of three parts:
 - The President
 - Rajya Sabha
 - Lok Sabha

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. India should remain fully engaged with Nepal at all levels and across the political spectrum. The safeguarding of India's vital interests demands such sustained engagement. A hands-off policy will only create space for other external influences, some of which, like China, may prove to be hostile. Discuss. [GS-2, International Relations] (15 marks, 250 words)
2. The Mid Day Meal Scheme is a hugely popular scheme that has already shown a lot of potential. It is imperative to strengthen it by making further investments towards improved quality. Comment. [GS-2, Polity and Governance] (15 marks, 250 words)

