

03 June 2021: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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A. GS 1 Related

Category: WORLD HISTORY

1. Remembering the Tulsa race massacre 100 years later

Context:

The U.S. President Joe Biden officially recognised one of the **worst incidents of violent racial hate** in the country's modern history — the **Tulsa Race Massacre of May-June 1921**.

Tulsa:

- Tulsa was the affluent, predominantly **African American neighbourhood** of Greenwood, **founded by descendants of slaves**.
 - It had earned a reputation as the “Black Wall Street” of the U.S.
- Tulsa was especially known for being an **unofficial sanctuary city for African Americans** suffering the consequences of harsh segregation in pre-civil rights America.

Tulsa Race Massacre:

- There were **widespread killings and damage to property** in Tulsa, Oklahoma, **targeting relatively well-to-do African Americans by rampaging white mobs**.
- The lethal violence resulted in the **deaths of hundreds**, bodily injury to thousands and millions of dollars of **damage to the homes and neighbourhoods burned down**.
- Survivors, fearing reprisals had to hold on with an elaborate attempt to **cover up the massacre and protect the perpetrators**.
- For years, **the massacre was barely mentioned** in government circles, and in newspapers and textbooks.
- The **Tulsa “Race Riot” Commission** was formed to investigate the events in 1997 and officially released a report in 2001.
- The U.S President has now **recognised the massacre**. By doing so, he became the **first sitting American head of state to recognise the incident**.

Way Forward:

- This gives an opportunity to introspect the policy actions that have sought to bridge **the racial discord that continues to haunt American society**.
- The greater challenge for Mr. Biden's government is to take a step beyond the question of reparations to survivors and **address the root causes of disparity that continue to plague American society**.
- The President has planned to address racial discrimination:
 - In the housing market by issuing new rules on fair housing practices and curbing inequities in the home appraisal process.
 - By directing more federal spending to small and minority-owned businesses.
 - By closing the wealth gap between the African American community and others through new initiatives focused on economic opportunities for minorities.

B. GS 2 Related

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Cabinet gives nod to Model Tenancy Act

Context:

The Union Cabinet approved the Model Tenancy Act.

Details:

- The model Act, if passed by the States and UTs, would **prescribe the norms for lease agreements, deposits, dispute handling** and other aspects of rental properties.
- States and Union Territories **can adopt the Model Tenancy Act** by **enacting fresh legislation** or they can **amend their existing rental laws**.
- **Separate rent authorities, courts and tribunals** will be set up in districts to protect the interests of both the owner and the tenant.

Significance:

- It will help **overhaul the legal framework** with respect to rental housing across the country, which would help **spur its overall growth**.
- It will enable the **institutionalisation of rental housing** by shifting it towards the formal market.
 - Through this, vacant houses could be unlocked for rental housing purposes.
- It will enable the **creation of adequate rental housing stock** for all the income groups thereby **addressing the issue of homelessness**.
- It is expected to give a fillip to **private participation in rental housing as a business model** for **addressing the huge housing shortage**.

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Palestine flays India's abstention

Context:

Palestine has **expressed concern on India's abstention** on a **resolution in the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)** to set up a **permanent commission to probe abuses** in Occupied Palestinian Territory including East Jerusalem and in Israel.

Background:

- India **abstained in the voting on the resolution** at the UNHRC that came up against the **backdrop of the latest round of conflict between Israel and the Gaza strip**, the coastal part of the Palestinian territories.
- The resolution was titled **"Ensuring respect for international human rights law and humanitarian law in Occupied Palestinian Territory including East Jerusalem and in Israel"**.
- The resolution is aimed at securing **Israel's compliance with international human rights**.
- India has maintained that a **two-state solution to equal sovereign rights** is the way forward to resolve the century-old crisis.

Also read: [Israel Palestine Conflict History, Israel Palestine Conflict Summary](#)

Details:

- Palestine said that India's abstention **stifles international efforts to protect the human rights of the Palestinian people.**
- It said that **India missed an opportunity** to join the international community at the **turning point on the path to justice and peace.**

Note:

- The **resolution was adopted** with the vote of 24 members.
- The passing of the resolution led to the **setting up of an independent commission of inquiry** to investigate the violation of international law by Israel.

C. GS 3 Related

Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. HC dismisses Juhi Chawla's plea on 5G

Context:

The Delhi High Court has termed the petition filed by actor Juhi Chawla against the roll-out of 5G technology in India as **defective and done for media publicity.**

Background:

- The actor had moved the Delhi High Court **against the rollout of 5G technology** in India.
- In her plea, she alleged that **no person, animal, bird, insect & plant will be able to avoid exposure to levels of RF radiation** that are 10 to 100 times greater than what exists today.
- The plea also demanded that the department concerned should certify that 5G technology is safe for humans and also animals and birds.
- This recent lawsuit by the actor and environmental activist has **rekindled the debate on the possible harmful effect of 5G on humans.**

What is 5G technology, and how is it different?

- 5G stands for **5th generation mobile network.**
- It is a new global wireless standard after 1G, 2G, 3G, and 4G networks.
- The new network has been designed for **enhanced connectivity across devices** – cell phone or an IoT device in a smart home.
- The wireless technology is **meant to deliver much higher data transfer speeds** than what was possible on 4G. Also, **5G uses higher frequency waves than earlier mobile networks.**
- Higher frequency means a shorter wavelength.
 - 5G waves are able to travel a shorter distance than 4G waves.
 - Therefore, an extensive network of 5G requires more ground-based transmitters.

What are the concerns?

- 5G emits its own electromagnetic radiation like all other radio waves. The concern is that these radiations can be harmful to humans and other organisms.
- Besides, critics and studies claim that the **increased number of transmitters** will further **increase exposure** to the radiation, potentially **impacting a much wider number of people and animals**.

Arguments against the claims:

- Though the studies are accurate in their own regard, **none of them conclusively points out an impact to humans from Radio Frequency Radiations**.
- While the case that 5G is harmful to humans is not as strong, there are concrete understandings of radiations that suggest **no such connection is possible**.
 - Radio wave band that is used for mobile phone networks (including 5G) **is non-ionising**. Such radio waves **lack sufficient energy to cause cellular damage** by breaking DNA apart.

Existing guidelines:

- **Higher energy radiation** levels such as medical x-rays and gamma rays are known to **have health risks with extended exposure**.
 - For such energy waves, there are **strict advisory limits for exposure**.
- Guidelines on the use of radio waves are also in place, and the 5G spectrum falls easily under those limits.

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. 'Raise ethanol blending in surplus States'

Context:

The Indian Sugar Mills' Association (ISMA) has said that to **achieve the target of 88.5% ethanol blending**, it is important to increase the blending level to at least 12% in surplus States and adjoining ones.

Ethanol:

- Ethanol is a biofuel and a common by-product of biomass left by agricultural feedstock such as corn, sugarcane, hemp, potato, etc.
- It is produced mainly from molasses, a byproduct of sugar manufacture.
- Ethanol is basically alcohol of 99%-plus purity, which can be used for blending with petrol.
- Ethanol being a less polluting fuel will cut down carbon emissions.

Read more on "Ethanol Blending" covered in [UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis. January 29th, 2021.](#)

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Close the vaccination gap, in global lockstep

Vaccination apartheid:

- There is a **huge vaccination gap between advanced economies and developing countries**.
 - While the advanced countries like the U.S. have been able to vaccinate a substantial proportion of their adult population and hold large stockpiles of vaccines, only 2.1% of Africans have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine by the end of May 2021 and continue to be exclusively dependant on imports for their vaccination programmes.
- There is an urgent need to address this issue as doing so is not only morally right but would also be in everyone's interest.

Negative impact of vaccination apartheid:

Increasing mutations:

- The global vaccination programme is progressing at a very low pace and at the current pace, the whole world will not be vaccinated before 2023. The lack of a fully vaccinated world will only aid the **multiplication of variants which could be not only more contagious and deadly but would also render the existing vaccines ineffective**.

Economic disruption and its impact:

- The lack of an adequately vaccinated population will lead to periodic spikes in cases necessitating lockdowns and restrictions on movement. These lockdowns are **disrupting economic activity and people's livelihood, thus pushing millions into poverty**. If the vaccination gap persists, it risks reversing the trend in recent decades of declining poverty.
- It will also widen the existing inequalities between the haves and the have nots.

Widening existing inequalities:

- The economic disruption caused by the pandemic while affecting all countries will be **more severe on developing countries** since the advanced countries can rely on existing social security mechanisms and economic policy levers to limit the impact of the pandemic on their citizens. If the vaccination gap persists, it could lead to the widening of global inequalities.

Fuel geopolitical tensions:

- The economic turmoil will invariably increase geopolitical tensions.

Efforts at ensuring universal vaccination:

EU:

- In 2020, the EU supported the research and development of vaccines on a large scale and contributed significantly to the new generation of mRNA vaccines.

- The EU has been exporting large volumes of vaccines and contributing substantially to the vaccine roll-out in low-income countries even as it has undertaken vaccination of its own population.
- The EU with its member states and financial institutions has also been donating vaccines to neighbours in need. It also aims to donate more vaccines to low- and middle-income countries before the end of 2021.
- The EU has also been the main contributor to the **COVAX facility**, with around one-third of all COVAX doses delivered so far having been financed by the EU.
- The European industrial partners have committed to deliver 1.3 billion doses of vaccines before the end of 2021 to low-income countries at no-profit, and to middle-income countries at lower prices.

India:

- India's "**Vaccine Maitri**" is an example of global solidarity on ensuring universal vaccination.
- Vaccine Maitri is a humanitarian and commercial initiative undertaken by the Indian government to provide COVID-19 vaccines to countries around the world.

Multilateral institutions:

- The **International Monetary Fund** has proposed a \$50 billion plan to vaccinate 40% of the world population in 2021 and 60% by mid-2022.

Recommendations:

- Countries with the requisite knowledge and means should **increase their production capacities**, so that they can both vaccinate their own populations and export more vaccines.
- International organizations should facilitate the **transfer of knowledge and technology**, so that more countries can produce vaccines.
- Available **flexibilities within the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement** framework of the **World Trade Organization** should be made use of. Avenues like **voluntary licensing** should be encouraged and suitably incentivized. If that fails, other avenues like **compulsory licensing** should be activated.
- All countries must avoid restrictive measures that affect vaccine supply chains. The countries must **avoid resorting to "vaccine nationalism"** and should instead focus on closely coordinated multilateral action for the benefit of all. There is the **need for global multilateral action** to increase the production of vaccines and accelerate the roll-out worldwide as noted by the G20 leaders at the recently held Global Health Summit in Rome.

Conclusion:

- The COVID-19 pandemic has reiterated the fact that **health is a global public good**.
- The common global COVID-19 vaccine action to close the vaccination gap must be the first step toward genuine global health cooperation, as foreseen by the **Rome Declaration** recently adopted at the Global Health Summit.
- Universal vaccination of the world population is the only way to end the current pandemic.

Additional information:

Rome Declaration:

- The Rome Declaration was adopted at the **Global Health Summit 2021**.
- The Global Health Summit was organised by Italy in its role as president of the G20 in partnership with the European Commission.
- The Rome Declaration is made up of 16 mutually agreed principles. These principles aim at **guiding joint action to prevent future health crises and to build a safer, fairer and more equitable and sustainable world**.

Category: ECONOMY

1. A far-reaching tax measure

Context:

- The **U.S. proposal to impose a global minimum tax on foreign income earned by U.S. corporations** aimed to disincentivise American companies from moving their commercial functions out of the U.S. due to the increase in the U.S. corporate tax rate.

Background:

Base erosion and profit shifting:

- Base erosion and profit shifting (BEPS) refers to corporate tax planning strategies used by multinationals to **“shift” profits from higher-tax jurisdictions to lower-tax jurisdictions, thus “eroding” the “tax base” of the higher-tax jurisdictions**.
- Such BEPS strategies aim at **exploiting gaps and mismatches in tax rules** to avoid paying tax.
- Developing countries suffer from BEPS disproportionately. BEPS practices cost countries USD 100-240 billion in lost revenue annually.
- Working together within **OECD/G20 Inclusive Framework on BEPS**, over 135 countries and jurisdictions are collaborating on the implementation of 15 measures to tackle tax avoidance, improve the coherence of international tax rules and ensure a more transparent tax environment.

Read more on [Base erosion and profit shifting \(BEPS\)](#) in the linked article.

Addressing tax challenges posed by digitalization of the economy:

- As part of its global efforts to address the challenge posed by BEPS, in May 2019, the Inclusive Framework agreed to a Programme of Work for Addressing the Tax Challenges of the Digitalisation of the Economy.
- The Programme of Work is divided into two pillars:
 - **Pillar One addresses the allocation of taxing rights between jurisdictions** and considers various proposals for new profit allocation and nexus rules based on the concepts of “significant economic presence”.
 - **Pillar Two (also referred to as the “Global Anti-Base Erosion” or “GloBE” proposal)** calls for the development of a coordinated set of rules to address ongoing risks

from structures that allow MNEs to shift profit to jurisdictions where they are subject to no or very low taxation.

Global minimum corporate tax:

- The Pillar Two proposal aims to provide **jurisdictions with the right to “tax back”** where other jurisdictions have either not exercised their primary taxing right or have exercised it at low levels of effective taxation and in this direction recommends **a global minimum corporate tax**.
- This move intends to achieve minimum effective taxation of more than 10%.

For information on global minimum corporate tax refer to:

UPSC Comprehensive News Analysis of 27th April 2021

Details:

- The recent U.S. proposal is similar to Pillar Two, except for the rate of the effective minimum tax. While the OECD was considering a 10-12% rate, the U.S. has proposed a 21% rate.
- The U.S. proposal indicates that the U.S. is pushing the **OECD** to swiftly achieve consensus on the global minimum tax rate, in the absence of which the U.S. proposes to apply its domestic law version of Pillar Two at a rate of 21%.

Significance of global minimum corporate tax:

Curtail tax evasion:

- A global corporate minimum tax will help curb tax base erosion and profit shifting.
 - Some of the world's biggest corporations, including digital giants such as Apple, Alphabet and Facebook, as well as major corporations such as Nike and Starbucks **pay very low effective rates of tax**. These companies use their subsidiaries to shift profits out of major markets into low-tax countries.

Impetus to more sustainable reforms:

- A global minimum corporate tax will neutralize the impact of tax incentives and ensure that companies choose to be situated in a particular country based on other commercial benefits.
- With tax incentives neutralised, countries may have to compete on other factors like **better regulatory regimes, ease of doing business, access to global talent**, among others. Hence the countries will be incentivized to undertake such more meaningful and sustainable reforms.

Concerns associated with global minimum corporate tax:

Against the autonomy of nations:

- The calls for a global minimum corporate tax have been criticized by countries such as Ireland, which argue that this provision **goes against the principle of fiscal autonomy**. The proposal infringes upon the tax sovereignty of nations.

Render small economies uncompetitive:

- The global minimum tax rates would also **render the smaller jurisdictions and economies incapable of competing with larger economies**. In a world where there are income inequalities across geographies, a minimum global corporation tax rate could **crowd out investment opportunities for developing economies and play to the advantage of advanced economies**.
- They argue that the fight against unfair tax competition envisioned through the global minimum corporate tax has become a **fight against competitive tax systems which could actually prove beneficial for economic growth**.

Scope for disagreements and implications:

- The U.S. push for a global minimum corporate tax at a 15% rate can cause international disagreements. Several countries have taken a different approach to the rate of global minimum tax. While France and Germany have expressed support, the EU has raised concerns regarding the high rate proposed by the United States.
- The disagreements on tax allocations may actually **lead to a tax-related trade war or entrenchment of unilateral levies** which will only further harm both global and national economies already struggling amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Impact on India:

- India has been part of the Pillar Two discussions and has not objected in principle to the proposal.

Positive:

- The proposal will help **increase India's tax revenues** since the proposal would also cover offshore structures set up by Indian companies.
 - Start-ups and large Indian conglomerates commonly use offshore structures for conducting global operations. Revenue from such operations is often retained offshore and not repatriated to India.
 - The State of Tax Justice report of 2020 notes that **India loses over \$10 billion in tax revenue due to the use of offshore structures**, particularly through investments made by Indian residents through Mauritius, Singapore and the Netherlands.

Negative:

- **The lower tax rate tool often used by India to attract foreign investment into India may become ineffective** with the introduction of a global minimum corporate tax rate.

F. Prelims Facts

1. The surprise visitor in Walong

What's in News?

The rare subspecies of the **male Koklass pheasant** called the *Pucrasia macrolopha meyeri* has been photographed for the first time in India.

Koklass pheasant:



Image source: The Hindu

- **Koklass pheasant** is described as a **resident bird of the Western Himalayas**.
- They are **not known for migration** and are essentially residential birds of mid-altitude dense forests in the Himalayas.
- Of the **nine subspecies** identified across the world, **four are found in the states of Uttarakhand, Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh** in India.
- The male subspecies — meyeri — had not been recorded outside China and Tibet.
 - The bird has a **distinctive golden ring** and its **emerald green head distinguishes it from the female**.
- The bird has been declared extinct in Tibet.
- The **golden collar is not seen in the other subspecies found in India**.

Other rare sightings in the Northeast:

- Of the 1,293 species of birds, over 900 are found in the Northeast parts of India.
- The rare **Mandarin duck** showed up after a century in **Assam's Maguri Motapung wetland** in February 2021 and was also spotted at **Siikhe lake, Ziro in Arunachal Pradesh**.
- In January 2021, the rare **Indian golden oriole** was spotted in Assam.
- A pair of **black-necked cranes** was also sighted on the outskirts of the **Panbari range of Manas National Park**, for the first time in Assam.

G. Tidbits

Nothing here for today!!!

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q 1: Which of the following is not the function of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)?

- Present to the central government an annual report on the safeguards available to the children

- b. Inquire into violation of child rights and recommend initiation of proceedings in such cases
- c. Undertake and promote research in the field of child rights
- d. Deciding the quantum of reservation of seats for children belonging to economically weaker sections in all private unaided schools.

Answer: d

Explanation:

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) is a statutory body established in 2007 under an act of Parliament, the Commissions for Protection of Child Rights (CPCR) Act, 2005. It functions under the Ministry of Women & Child Development of the central government.

- Deciding the quantum of reservation of seats for children belonging to economically weaker sections in all private unaided schools is not its mandate.

The Act that constituted the NCPCR laid down its functions and mandates:

- Assess and review the safeguards that are provided for child rights protection in India under existing laws and also suggest measures for implementing them effectively.
- Present reports on the workings of the laws in this domain to the central government as and when necessary.
- Inquire cases of child rights violations and initiate proceedings.
- Study the factors that prevent the enjoyment of rights of children impacted by terrorism, riots, natural calamities, communal violence, trafficking, HIV/AIDS, torture and exploitation, maltreatment, prostitution and pornography, and suggest remedial measures for them.
- Enquire into the needs of children requiring special care and protection such as disadvantaged and marginalised children, children in conflict with the law, children of prisoners and children without families, and also recommend remedial measures thereof.
- Review current policies with respect to children's rights and protection by studying treaties and international instruments and suggest changes as needed.
- Conduct research in the field of child rights.
- Advocate child rights and promote/disseminate the idea through mass campaigns, seminars, etc.
- Undertake investigation into specific complaints received from children or anyone else on their behalf.
- Encourage the incorporation of child rights in school curriculums and train teachers in that respect.
- The Commission is also mandated with responsibilities under two other acts, namely:
 - Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012
 - Right to Education Act, 2009

Q 2: Which of the following statements regarding Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act 2013 is/are correct?

1. The Act envisages the setting up of the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) at every office of the organisation or institution, having more than 100 employees, to hear and redress complaints pertaining to sexual harassment.
2. An aggrieved woman can file a written complaint to ICC within three months from the date of the incident.

3. Before initiating an inquiry, steps are to be taken to settle the matter between her and the respondent through conciliation.

Options:

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

- The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 ("POSH Act") came into force in 2013.
- It is framed to provide protection to women at the workplace against sexual harassment. The Act further lays down rules for the prevention and redressal of sexual harassment complaints by female workers.
- As per the POSH Act, an employer that has 10 workers or more is required to set up an internal complaints committee for the redressal of 'sexual harassment' complaints at such entity and to regulate and administer complaints on sexual harassment.
- An aggrieved woman can file a written complaint to ICC within three months from the date of the incident.
 - This time limit can be extended by a maximum period of 3 months with reasons to be recorded in writing by the ICC if it is satisfied that there were circumstances that prevented the aggrieved female from filing the complaint.
- Before initiating an inquiry steps are to be taken to settle the matter between her and the respondent through conciliation.

Q 3: Consider the following statements about the India Cycles4Change challenge:

1. The India Cycles4Change challenge was launched in 2020 as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.
2. The challenge was launched last year under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

India Cycles4Change challenge was launched in 2020 under the Smart Cities Mission by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Q 4: Consider the following statements:

1. The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is a permanent intergovernmental international organisation announced in 2001 in Shanghai.
2. The Heads of State Council (HSC) is the supreme decision-making body in the SCO.
3. The HSC meets once a year and adopts decisions and guidelines on all important matters of the organisation.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is a permanent intergovernmental international organisation announced in 2001 in Shanghai.
- The Heads of State Council (HSC) is the supreme decision-making body in the SCO.
- The HSC meets once a year and adopts decisions and guidelines on all important matters of the organisation.

Q5: Recently there was a proposal to translocate some of the lions from their natural habitat in Gujarat to which one of the following sites? (UPSC-2017)

- a. Corbett National Park
- b. Kuno Palpur Wildlife Sanctuary
- c. Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary
- d. Sariska National Park

Answer: b

Explanation:

- In 2017, there was a proposal to translocate some of the lions from their natural habitat in Gujarat to Kuno Palpur Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Kuno Palpur Wildlife Sanctuary lies in the Sheopur district of northwestern Madhya Pradesh.
- It received the status of a national park in 2018.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Write a note on measures taken by the Government for the orphaned children due to COVID-19 and discuss the problems faced in their identification. (10 Marks, 150 Words) [GS-2, Polity and Governance]

2. Despite 5G enabling a new kind of wireless network which has the potential to connect everyone and everything, it is beset with various challenges. Examine. (10 Marks, 150 Words) [GS-3, Science and Technology]

