10 June 2021: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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A. GS 1 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

B. GS 2 Related

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Shun vaccine nationalism, says UNGA president-elect

Context:

In a first for the Maldives, Foreign Minister Abdulla Shahid has been elected the President of the UN General Assembly for 2021-22.

Read more on this topic covered in the June 8th, 2021 CNA.

Details:

- The president-elect raised his **voice against vaccine nationalism** stating that it would destroy countries' efforts to eradicate the pandemic.
- He termed the **disparity in vaccination coverage** in developed countries and the rest of the world **unacceptable**.

Read more on this issue covered in the article "Close the vaccination gap, in global lockstep" in the June 3rd, 2021 CNA.

Note:

- The newly elected UNGA president said that **Human Rights would be a central theme** at the UNGA.
- He asserted that he, as President, would **refrain from taking sides on contentious issues such as Jammu and Kashmir** and remain impartial.
- He thanked India and **acknowledged the fact that it was one of the first countries that came out in his support**.

C. GS 3 Related

Category: ECONOMY

1. Centre announces hike in MSP for paddy, pulses, oilseeds

Context:

The Central government has **hiked the minimum support price (MSP)** for common paddy for the coming Kharif season.

Details:

- The decision was taken by the **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs.**
- It is about 4% higher than last year's price.
- The Centre said the higher rate of returns being promised for urad, tur and oilseeds was a deliberate policy move.

- The **differential remuneration** is aimed at encouraging **crop diversification**.
- Concerted efforts were made over the last few years to **realign the MSPs in favour of oilseeds, pulses and coarse cereals**.
  - This was to encourage farmers to shift to larger area under these crops and adopt the best technologies and farm practices, to correct the demand-supply imbalance.
- Added focus on **nutri-rich nutri-cereals** is to **incentivise its production in the areas where rice-wheat cannot be grown without long term adverse implications for groundwater table**.

Also read Rabi and Kharif Crops: Overview and Major Crops

What is Minimum Support Price?

- The MSP is the **rate at which the government purchases crops from farmers**, and is based on a calculation of at least **one-and-a-half times the cost of production incurred by the farmers.**
- It is a form of **government intervention to insure the farmers against a steep decline in the prices of their goods** and to help them prevent losses.
- The **Cabinet Committee of Economic Affairs announces MSP** for various crops at the beginning of each sowing season **based on the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP).**
- The CACP takes into account **demand and supply, the cost of production and price trends in the market** among other things when fixing MSPs.
- The government reports the MSP towards the **beginning of both cropping seasons i.e. Rabi and Kharif.**
- Read more on the Minimum Support Price (MSP) in the link.

Issue:

- Farmers are upset with the three farm bills passed by the government, with one of the reasons being that none of them mentions anything about MSP.
- While the government does declare the MSP twice a year, there is **no law that makes MSP mandatory.**
- The protesters have been **asking for a statutory entitlement for all farmers** so that a **remunerative MSP can be ensured for all farmers.**
- The farmers **want the government to guarantee an MSP when they will be dealing with private players.**

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. The promise and perils of digital justice delivery

Context:

- The e-Committee of the Supreme Court of India recently released its **draft vision document for Phase III of the e-Courts project.**

Background:

The e-Courts project:

- The e-Courts Project was conceptualized on the basis of the **"National Policy and Action Plan for Implementation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the Indian Judiciary – 2005"** submitted by e-Committee, Supreme Court of India with a vision to transform the Indian Judiciary by ICT enablement of Courts.

  - E-committee is a body constituted by the Government of India in pursuance of a proposal received from the Hon'ble Chief Justice of India to constitute an e-Committee to assist him in formulating a national policy on computerization of Indian Judiciary and advise on technological communication and management related changes.

- The e-Courts Mission Mode Project, is a pan-India project, monitored and funded by the Department of Justice, Ministry of Law and Justice, Government of India for the District Courts across the country.

- The e-Courts project envisages:

  - To **develop, install & implement decision support systems in courts.**

  - To **automate the judicial processes** to the extent possible.

- Phases I and II of the e-Courts project had dealt with the digitisation of the judiciary, i.e., e-filing, tracking cases online, uploading judgments online, etc.

Potential benefits of digital justice delivery:

Increased transparency:

- Automation of judicial processes can help increase the transparency of the process by increasing the **accessibility of information to its stakeholders**.

Enhance judicial productivity:

- It will help enhance judicial productivity, both qualitatively & quantitatively by **streamlining judicial processes.**

  - Phase II of the e-Courts project saw the development of the National Service and Tracking of Electronic Processes, a software that enabled e-service of summons.

Efficient and time-bound delivery of justice:

- By enabling efficient & time-bound citizen-centric services delivery it can help **rectify the long delays and difficulties for ordinary litigants** and hence help ensure delivery of justice. It will help make the justice delivery system affordable, accessible, cost-effective, predictable and reliable.

  - Around 3.27 crore cases are pending before Indian courts, of which 85,000 have been pending for over 30 years.

Continued access to the judiciary:

- The digital justice delivery has helped ensure judicial accessibility despite the lockdowns induced by the COVID-19 pandemic. Notwithstanding some hiccups, the Supreme Court and High Courts have been able to function online despite physical courts being forced to shut down.
- The **digital functioning of the courts enabled access to lawyers and litigants despite the lockdowns in place**.

For more related information on this topic refer to:

UPSC Comprehensive News Analysis of 14th Apr 2020

Details:

- Phase III of the e-Courts project continues with its commitment to the **digitization of court processes,** and plans to **upgrade the electronic infrastructure of the judiciary.**
- The vision document also envisages **large-scale data collection exercise** which could be used for future policymaking and help to make suitable interventions to address existing challenges in the system.
- The draft document proposes a **360-degree approach to data collection**, wherein a 360-degree profile of each person would be created by integrating all of their interactions with government agencies into a unified database.
- The draft vision document for Phase III **proposes an "ecosystem approach"** to justice delivery, under which it suggests a "seamless exchange of information" between various branches of the State, such as between the judiciary, the police and the prison systems through the **Interoperable Criminal Justice System (ICJS).**

Concerns:

- While the objective of digitization of the judiciary is a welcome move, certain recommendations in the draft vision document for Phase III are a point of concern.

Will further exclusion and inequity:

- Given the fact that the first layer of data creation happens at local police stations, which have historically contributed to the **criminalization of entire communities by labelling such communities as "habitual offenders"**, the proposed Interoperable Criminal Justice System (ICJS) will likely exacerbate existing class and caste inequalities that characterise the police and prison system.

Threat of profiling and surveillance:

- Given that the data collected, shared and collated through the e-Courts project will be housed within the Home Ministry under the ICJS, henceforth **localised data will become more centralized. This increases the threat of profiling and surveillance.**
- The 360-degree approach envisaged in the draft document poses the threat of targeted surveillance.

Privacy concerns:

- The data collection combined with extensive data sharing and data storage is a cause for concern given its possible **implications on the [Right to Privacy](#) of the citizens**.
- The integration of data allows the creation of an integrated database on a person with a variety of information relating to that individual, some of which may be purely civil, commercial or personal in nature.
- The **lack of a data protection regime law in India** further raises concerns over possible infringement on the right to privacy.

Recommendations:

- The article proposes **abandoning the ecosystem approach**. The e-Committee must prevent the "seamless exchange" of data between the branches of the state that ought to remain separate.
- The article also proposes that the e-Courts must move towards **localisation of data**, instead of centralization given the potential threat that such centralization poses.
- Given the potential advantage of data in addressing challenges in the judicial system, instead of altogether abandoning data collection, rather there is the need to focus on a system that can provide **anonymous, aggregated, and statistical information about issues without identifying the individuals**. This could be made possible by encouraging uniformity and standardisation of entry fields.

Conclusion:

- Technology can indeed help revolutionise India's ailing judicial system, however, it cannot be an end in itself and the **use of technology needs to be ensured within the constitutional framework of the [fundamental rights](#) of citizens**.
- Phase 3 of the e-Courts project must devise ways to harness technology for service delivery without increasing surveillance risks

Category: HEALTH

1. South Asia's healthcare burden

Background:

- Despite recording comparatively lower infection and mortalities in the first wave of the pandemic, **South Asia has been devastated from the second wave.**
- **India, the largest country in South Asia, has been the most affected**. The "super spreader" events, fragile health infrastructure, citizens not following health protocols, and logistical mismanagement have resulted in record infections and death rates during the second wave.
- **Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka also remain vulnerable** to more infections and deaths due to the pandemic.
    - Bhutan is the only exception so far in South Asia. Bhutan's success in tackling the pandemic stems from a well-funded and prepared public health system with stringent measures, responsible citizenship, and an accountable government.

Details:

- The article discusses some of the **common lacunae in the health systems of the South Asian countries** of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, which have contributed to worsening the impact of the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Concerns:

Inadequate public health infrastructure:

- As against the World Health Organization's (WHO) prescribed standard of 1 doctor for 1000 people, **India's public healthcare sector has been operating at 0.08 doctors per 1,000 people**.
- India has **only half a bed available for every 1,000 people**, which is inadequate even for normal scenarios. Bangladesh and Pakistan have a bed to patient ratio of 0.8 and 0.6, respectively, and a doctor availability of less than one for every 1,000 people.

Low state investment into health sector:

- **State investment in the health sector remains highly inadequate**. Major public sector investments in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh have been **towards infrastructure and defence, with health taking a backseat**.
  - India spends a little over 1% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on the health sector. While India has the world's third-largest military expenditure, its health budget is the fourth-lowest.
  - In Pakistan, while the defence budget was increased despite the pressure of the pandemic, the spending on health has remained stagnant.
  - The gross underfunding of the health sector over the years has led to a crumbling public healthcare system in Bangladesh.

High out of pocket expenditure:

- **The booming private medical sector at the cost of the public health sector** has resulted in very high out-of-pocket health expenditure.
- While **ideally, out-of-pocket expenditure should not surpass 15% to 20% of the total health expenditure**, it is 62.67%, 73.87% and 56.24%, for India, Bangladesh and Pakistan respectively.

Skewed distribution of healthcare facilities:

- Despite housing a large rural population, the existing health facilities largely cater to the urban population. The **rural areas have limited access to quality and affordable healthcare facilities.**

Recommendations:

- The South Asia countries must prioritize investments in healthcare systems and **step up investment in their public healthcare sectors.**
- The countries must also work towards **broadening equitable access to healthcare through universal health coverage schemes.**

Conclusion:

- Given the high chances of another pandemic wave, South Asian countries via a well-thought-out vision and backed by requisite political commitment need to direct special attention and resources towards strengthening the health systems. The reforms should **make the public healthcare sector sustainable and pro-poor.**

Category: ECONOMY

1. Encouraging accord

- In the context of the Finance Ministers from the Group of Seven (G7) nations having reached a landmark agreement on setting **a global minimum corporate tax rate**, this article discusses the **potential advantages** of such a policy.

This issue has been discussed previously in the following articles:

UPSC Comprehensive News Analysis of 6th June 2021

UPSC Comprehensive News Analysis of 3rd June 2021

F. Prelims Facts

1. Antibody therapy evokes good response

What's in News?

Monoclonal antibody therapy was successfully used in two patients in Delhi and one of the patient's parameters improved within 12 hours and was discharged.

Monoclonal antibody therapy:

Monoclonal antibody therapy is a form of immunotherapy that **uses monoclonal antibodies (mAb) to bind monospecifically to certain cells or proteins**.

Read more on Monoclonal antibody therapy.

2. Dihing Patkai is Assam's 7th National Park

What's in News?

Assam government has notified Dihing Patkai (Dehing Patkai) as a National Park.

Details:

- Recently, **Raimona National Park was created in western Assam's Kokrajhar district**.
- The five older National Parks in the State are **Kaziranga, Manas, Nameri, Orang** and **Dibru-Saikhowa.**
- **UNESCO World Heritage Sites** in the state: **Kaziranga** and **Manas National Parks.**
- **Tiger reserves: Nameri, Orang, Kaziranga** and **Manas National Parks.**

Dihing Patkai National Park:

- The national park straddles across eastern Assam's Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts.

- **Dihing is the name of the river** that flows through this forest and **Patkai is the hill at the foot** of which the sanctuary lies.
- It is a **major elephant habitat** and 310 species of butterflies have been recorded there.
- The park has **47 species each of reptiles and mammals**, including the **tiger and clouded leopard.**
- The national park encompasses the erstwhile **Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary, the Jeypore Reserve Forest and the western block of the Upper Dihing Reserve Forest.**
- Short stretches of the **Dirak and Buri Dihing rivers have been included in the park.**

National Parks:

- Ministry of Environment & Forests defines a national park as "an area, whether within a sanctuary or not, that can be notified by the state government to be constituted as a National Park, by reason of its ecological, faunal, floral, geomorphological, or zoological association or importance, needed to for the purpose of protecting & propagating or developing wildlife therein or its environment."
- National parks in India are **IUCN category II protected areas.**

3. New plant species spotted in Wagamon

What's in News?

A **new plant species** belonging to the **coffee family** has been spotted in the **Wagamon hills in Kerala.**

- It has been named *Argostemma quarantena* to commemorate the millions who have died in the pandemic.
- It is a herbaceous species from the **family Rubiaceae**.
  - Herbaceous plants are plants **that have no persistent woody stem above ground.**
- It was found along the Idukki-Kottayam border.

4. Pakke Tiger Reserve

- Pakke Tiger Reserve is located in the **foothills of the eastern Himalaya in Arunachal Pradesh**.
- It **shares a boundary** with **Nameri National Park** in Assam.
- **Papum Reserve Forest lies to the east of Pakke Tiger Reserve.**
- Pakke is a haven for hornbills in north-east India, with four of the nine species – the Great Hornbill, the Wreathed Hornbill, the Oriental Pied Hornbill and the Rufous-necked Hornbill- found here. This makes the area extremely important for hornbills, especially considering that hunting and habitat loss threaten hornbill species in the rest of Northeast India.

G. Tidbits

1. Central deputation of officers very low, DoPT tells States

What's in News?

The Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) has addressed a letter to the State governments, cautioning them that not sending enough officers may affect future cadre review proposals.

Issue:

- According to DoPT, States have not been nominating enough officers for Central deputation.

- According to an official of Uttar Pradesh cadre, it was not that the officers were not willing to go on Central deputation but the **no-objection clearance was hard to come by.**

- The final **clearance for central deputation is given by the Chief Minister.**

Central deputation of officer:

- Every year, the **Centre selects officers** from an offer **list of officers of the All India Services** (IAS, IPS, IFS) that are **willing to go on Central deputation.**

- According to **Rule 6 (1) of the IAS (Cadre) Rules, 1954**, 'A cadre officer may, **with the concurrence of the State Government concerned and the Central Government**, be deputed for service under the Central Government or another State Government or under a company, association or body of individuals, whether incorporated or not, which is wholly or substantially owned or controlled by the Central Government or by another State Government.

- **In case of a disagreement, the Central government will decide the matter and the State Government or State Government concerned will abide by the decision** of the Central Government.

2. U.S. Senate passes huge innovation Bill

What's in News?

The U.S. Senate has passed the industrial policy bill.

Details:

- The Bill represents the largest investment in scientific research and technological innovation in generations.

- It seeks to pump more than $170 bn into **tech research to counter the growing economic threat from China.**

- The proposal aims to address a number of technological areas in which the U.S. has fallen behind China.

    - The Bill allocates $52 billion in funding for a previously approved plan to **increase domestic manufacturing of semiconductors.**

    - It authorises $120 billion over five years for **activities at the National Science Foundation** to advance priorities, including research and development in key areas such as **artificial intelligence and quantum science.**

    - And, it facilitates **tie-ups between private firms and research universities**.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. With reference to Minimum Support Prices (MSP), which of the following statements is/are incorrect?

1. They are announced by the Government of India at the end of the sowing season.
2. MSP is fixed twice a year on the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) and its recommendation is binding.
3. MSP also covers commercial crops.

Options:

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

Answer: a

Explanation:

- The Minimum Support Price (MSP) is the rate at which the government purchases crops from farmers.
- They are announced by the Government of India at the beginning of the sowing season.
- MSP is fixed twice a year on the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) and its recommendations are not binding and are only advisory in nature.
- MSP also covers commercial crops.
- MSPs cover:
    - Cereals (paddy, wheat, maize, sorghum, pearl millet, barley and ragi)
    - Pulses (gram, tur, moong, urad, lentil)
    - Oilseeds (groundnut, rapeseed-mustard, soyabean, sesamum, sunflower, safflower, nigerseed)
    - Commercial crops (copra, sugarcane, cotton and raw jute).

Q2. Consider the following pairs:

Name of the Paper/Journal	Name of the Founder/Editor
1. Young India	Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi
2. Navjivan	Sachindranath Sanyal
3. Jugantar	Barindra Kumar Ghosh and Bhupendranath Dutt

Which of the above pairs is/are correctly matched?

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

- Young India was a weekly paper or journal in English published by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi.
- Navjivan was also published by Mohandas Gandhi.
- Yugantar, the weekly magazine was started by Barindra Kumar Ghosh, Bhupendranath Dutt.

Q3. Which of the following National Parks are in the state of Assam?

1. Kaziranga National Park
2. Dibru Saikhowa National Park
3. Nameri National Park
4. Orang National Park
5. Dihing Patkai National Park
6. Raimona National Park

Options:

a. 1, 2, 3 and 6 only
b. 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 only
c. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 only
d. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6

Answer: d

Explanation:

- There are 7 national parks in the state of Assam with Dihing Patkai recently being notified as a National Park.
- National Parks in Assam are: Kaziranga, Manas, Nameri, Orang, Dibru-Saikhowa, Raimona and Dihing Patkai.

Q4. Consider the following statements:

1. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is a member of the Alliance for Financial Inclusion (AFI).
2. RBI has four deputy governors, two are from the outside and two from within the central bank.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a. 1 only
b. 2 only
c. Both
d. None

Answer: c

Explanation:

- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is a member of the Alliance for Financial Inclusion (AFI).
- AFI is an international policy institute and public policy network that specializes in financial inclusion policy for the unbanked and underbanked population of the world.
- Institutions comprising central banks, financial regulatory institutions, and financial inclusion policymakers from 80 least developed and developing countries are its members.
- AFI is headquartered in Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia.
- As per the RBI Act, RBI should have four deputy governors – two from within the ranks (in RBI), one commercial banker and another economist to head the monetary policy department.
- Of the four deputy governors, two are from the outside and two from within the central bank.

Q5. Which of the following is/are the principal feature(s) of the Government of India Act, 1919? (UPSC 2012)

1. Introduction of dyarchy in the executive government of the provinces
2. Introduction of separate communal electorates for Muslims
3. Devolution of legislative authority by the centre to the provinces

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

- The Government of India Act 1919 was an act of the British Parliament that sought to increase the participation of Indians in the administration of their country.
- The act was based on the recommendations of a report by Edwin Montagu, the then Secretary of State for India, and Lord Chelmsford, India's Viceroy between 1916 and 1921. Hence the constitutional reforms set forth by this act are known as Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms.
- Dyarchy was introduced, i.e., there were two classes of administrators – Executive councillors and ministers.
- The subjects were divided into two lists – reserved and transferred.
- It provided for devolution of legislative authority by the centre to the provinces.
- While the act extended consolidated and communal representation, the introduction of separate communal electorates for Muslims was not provided for in the GOI Act 1919.

1. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) enablement of the Indian judicial system gives us a rare opportunity to transform the legal system. Comment. Also, highlight some of the challenges with the implementation of the 'Ecosystem' Approach. (15 Marks, 250 Words) [GS-2, Governance]
2. The rise of phishing attacks poses a significant threat to individuals, organizations and security apparatus. Discuss. (10 Marks, 150 Words) [GS-3, Security]