

## 21 June 2021: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

#### **1. Plan to put Lakshadweep under Karnataka HC**

#### **Context:**

The Lakshadweep administration has mooted a proposal to shift **its legal jurisdiction from the Kerala High Court to the Karnataka High Court.**

**Background:**

- **Lakshadweep administration** has been facing widespread **protests over its policies.**
- As many as 23 applications, including 11 writ petitions, have been filed against the Administrator and also against the alleged high-handedness of either the police or the local government of the islands.
- The proposal for shifting the legal jurisdiction from the High Court of Kerala to Karnataka comes amid these developments.

Read more on this topic covered on [May 28th, 2021 CNA.](#)

**Details:**

- **The jurisdiction of a High Court can be shifted only through an Act of Parliament,** according to the law.
- According to **Article 241 of the Constitution**, “Parliament may by law constitute a high court for a Union Territory or declare any court in any such territory to be a high court for all or any of the purposes of this Constitution.”.
- Clause 4 of the same article mentions that “nothing in this article derogates from the power of Parliament to extend or exclude the jurisdiction of a high court for a state to, or from, any Union Territory or part thereof”.
- Legal experts opine that **changing of high court would also mean extra-burden on the exchequer** as all the cases, at present under trial, would have to be heard again afresh.

**C. GS 3 Related**

**Category: DISASTER MANAGEMENT**

**1. Massive distribution of ex gratia will strain finances, says Centre**

**Context:**

**Government’s response to petitions in the Supreme Court to pay ₹4 lakh compensation to the families of every COVID-19 victim.**

**Details:**

- The government responded to the petitions in SC stating that the COVID-19 **pandemic was not a one-time disaster** and a broader approach was needed for compensation.
  - Broader approach encompasses a different **set of ‘Minimum Standards of Relief’ focussed on public health interventions, social protection and economic recovery for the affected communities.**
- Its argument was that massive distribution of compensation across the country at this point would **dry up precious financial resources of the Centre and the States.**
- The finances of State governments and the Central government are already under **severe strain due to the reduction in tax revenues and increase in health expenses.**
  - If the entire [State Disaster Response Funds](#) get consumed on ex gratia compensation for COVID-19 victims, sufficient funds might not be available for organising COVID-19 response or to take care of other disasters like cyclones, floods, etc.
- Besides, the MHA opines that **granting ex gratia compensation for one disease while denying it for those accounting for a larger share of mortality would not be fair or proper.**

## Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

### 1. Pact signed to conserve rare turtle in Assam

#### Context:

A major temple in Assam has signed a memorandum of understanding with two green NGOs for the long-term conservation of the rare freshwater black softshell turtle or the *Nilssonina nigricans*.

#### Details:

- A vision document 2030 was also launched after Turtle Survival Alliance India and Help Earth signed the pact involving the Hayagriva Madhava Temple Committee.
- The temple, revered by both Hindus and Buddhists, is at Hajo.

#### Black softshell turtle:



Image source: *The Hindu*

- Black softshell turtle (*Nilssonia nigricans*) is a **species of freshwater turtle**.
- It is found in **India (Assam) and Bangladesh**.
- It is called **Bostami turtle or Mazari**.
- Until sightings along the Brahmaputra's drainage in Assam, the black softshell turtle was thought to be "extinct in the wild" and confined only to ponds of temples in northeastern India and Bangladesh.
- The International Union for Conservation of Nature has in 2021 listed the turtle as "**critically endangered**".
- It **does not enjoy legal protection under the [Indian Wildlife \(Protection\) Act of 1972](#)**.
- It has **traditionally been hunted for its meat and cartilage, traded in regional and international markets**.
- Their shell is **light and flexible**. This allows them to move more easily in open water, or in **muddy lake bottoms**. It also allows them to move much faster on land than most turtles.

#### D. GS 4 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

#### E. Editorials

**Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

#### **1. The comrades and their divergent perspectives**

##### **Context:**

- The article discusses the **increasingly divergent perspectives of India and Russia in global geopolitics** and analyzes its potential impact on bilateral relations.

### Russia's perspectives:

#### **On India-China standoff:**

- Russian President through his recent statement on the [India-China border standoff](#) and ongoing de-escalation talks had emphasized the need to **debar any “extra-regional power” to interfere in the process.**
- The foreign policy experts point out this as an indication of **Russia's indifference towards India's legitimate concerns** and the downplaying of China's coercive military pressure against India.

#### **On Quad and the Indo-Pacific strategy:**

- Russia through its criticism of the Quad and the Indo-Pacific strategy has been reinforcing China's claim that the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue or [Quad](#) is aimed at containing Beijing's influence in the Indo-Pacific region.
- **Russia has rejected the Indo-Pacific construct in favour of the Asia-Pacific one** on the grounds that the Indo-Pacific construct is primarily an American initiative designed to contain both China and Russia.

#### **India's deepening relationship with the West:**

- Russia views the India-U.S. rapprochement as part of **U.S. attempts to expand its zone of influence.**

### India's stand:

#### **On standoff with China:**

- India claims the Chinese incursion and break from the status quo as being factors for the current standoff and **terms China as the aggressor.**
- China's border moves seem to be part of its larger **effort to undermine India's global position** and to reduce India to a state of isolation and impotence in global affairs.
- Given **China's increasingly assertive behaviour**, which goes against all the conventional rules of international politics, India seems to be attempting to rally support for itself against Chinese hegemony.

#### **On Quad and Indo-Pacific strategy:**

- India's support for the Indo-Pacific construct is an indication of **India's attempt to re-imagine a new geostrategic maritime role for itself** beyond the confines of the Malacca Strait and the Gulf of Aden.
- India has repeatedly asserted that no country can have a veto on India's participation in the Quad and it will be led by its **national interest objectives**.

#### **On strategic ties with the U.S. led west:**

- The bitterness and mistrust between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and China during the Cold War provided India leeway to use USSR as a counterweight against the Chinese. However, the **disintegration of the USSR** changed this. Russia was much weaker than the erstwhile USSR and incapable of helping India balance the potential threats from China and this **pushed India to diversify its relationships with other countries as an external balancing strategy against China**.
- Russia had been trying to build a trilateral grouping of Russia-India-China against a U.S.-led unipolar world. Though India did become a part of this grouping in the initial years, **China's dismissive attitude toward Indian capabilities, coupled with an emerging China-Pakistan nexus**, prevented the success of this trilateral. India, instead, invested its diplomatic energies in rapprochement with the United States and has **built a strategic partnership with the U.S.**
- Given **Russia's inability to influence the India-China relationship** and given the increasing hegemony of China, multilateral forums such as the Russia-India-China (RIC) grouping and **BRICS** (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) have little practical value for Indian diplomacy.
- India has become integrated in the global economic order and has strategic economic relations with the U.S. led West.
- India has **shed its traditional reliance on Russia for arms imports** and has started to buy sophisticated weapons from a wider global market including countries such as the U.S., Israel and France.
- As part of its external balancing strategy, **India has also deepened its ties with Japan and Australia**.
- The increasingly assertive behaviour of China seems to be only pushing India into a closer relationship with the U.S. which considers China a threat to its own global supremacy.

#### **Other irritants in the bilateral relation:**

- The **deepening engagement between Russia and Pakistan** has generated some unease in India. The increasing military cooperation via **defence equipment sales and "friendship" exercises** between the two armies point to the deepening of ties between the two countries.

For more information on Russia-Pakistan ties refer to:



### [CNA dated April 8, 2021: Russia to supply military gear to Pakistan](#)

#### The author's take:

- The article criticizes the current Russian foreign policy as being based on a flawed assessment of the current situation. It **warns against obsessive preoccupation with Russia's 'status' rivalry with the U.S.**
- The article suggests that Russia in fact stands to gain immensely from the multilateralism that the Indo-Pacific seeks to promote, and **being China's junior partner only undermines Russia's great-power ambitions.**

#### Conclusion:

- Despite some great changes in the global and regional politico-security environment, India has been able to maintain amicable ties with Russia. However, the recent events seem to be straining this bilateral relation.
- The divergent perspectives of India and Russia have only increased over the last few years.
- While **India continues to engage with Russia, it cannot endorse the Russian perspective on the Indo-Pacific and the Quad.**
- The recent **Geneva summit between the U.S. and Russian Presidents** holds immense significance for India given that a normalisation of relations between Washington and Moscow will have a profound impact not just on the two countries but will also diminish Russia's propensity to closely coordinate its South Asian policies with China.

For information on the recent Geneva summit, refer to:

### [CNA dated June 19, 2021: Cold peace](#)

- The **Russian attitude toward China's growing power and influence will be the touchstone of Russia's relations with India** as an increasingly pro-Beijing Russia might adopt more aggressive blocking of India's policy agendas.

For related information on [India-Russia bilateral relations](#), refer to the linked article.

## F. Prelims Facts

### [1. Navy team in U.S. for chopper training](#)

#### What's in News?

A team of Navy personnel reached the U.S. for training on the MH60R multirole helicopters.

#### Details:

- A \$2.2-billion deal was signed for **24 MH-60R multi-role helicopters** during the visit of former US President Donald Trump in February 2020.
- They are being procured under the **Buy (Global) category of the procurement procedure** through the Foreign Military Sales route of the U.S.
- The helicopters are **built by Lockheed Martin**.

#### Need for Multi-Role Helicopters (MRH):

- The Navy is facing an acute shortage of helicopters on its frontline warships as the procurement of new helicopters has been repeatedly delayed.
- There is a projected requirement of 123 multi-role helicopters.
- The MRHs in service, Sea King 42Bs, were inducted in the 1980s and are in need of replacement.

## 2. Work begins on Krivak class frigate

#### What's in News?

The formal commencement of the construction process of the second frigate of the additional Krivak class stealth ships.

- The stealth ship is being **built by Goa Shipyard (GSL) with technology transfer from Russia**.
- In 2016, India and Russia signed an Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) for **four Krivak or Talwar stealth frigates**.
  - Two to be procured directly from Russia and two to be built by the GSL.
- **The Krivak class was a series of frigates and guard ships built in the Soviet Union** primarily for the Soviet Navy since 1970.

G. Tidbits

## 1. 'Concerns on IT rules are highly misplaced'

#### What's in News?



Following the experts' comments at the U.N. stating that the IT Rules, 2021 are not in line with international human rights principles, India replied saying that the concerns of the experts are highly misplaced.

### **Details:**

- India defended the IT Rules saying that the Rules were **designed to empower ordinary users of social media**, and **the victims of abuse on social media platforms could have a forum for redressal of their grievances**.

### **IT Rules 2021:**

- Information Technology (Guidelines For Intermediaries And Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 was enacted by the government in February 2021.

Read **more on** [New Social Media Rules, IT Rules 2021: Provisions, Penalties](#)

- Several concerns had been raised by the social media platforms with respect to the new IT Rules.

Read about the concerns raised in relation to the IT Rules 2021, covered on [May 28th, 2021 CNA](#).

## **2. Suffering in silence**

- Over 2,300 **domestic violence complaints** were filed with the [National Commission for Women](#) between January and May in 2021, the highest for any year since 2000. This points to the challenge of domestic violence in India.
- This number, though high, suffers from **possible under-reporting** given that according to NFHS-5 data, 70% of women in the major states who faced physical violence did not inform anyone about it or were unable to reach out to the relevant authorities.

For detailed information on the issue of domestic violence refer to:

[CNA dated April 13, 2020: Women's safety during lockdown](#)

[CNA dated May 28, 2019: India among countries where women face most violence by partner](#)

## **H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions**

**Q1. With reference to the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, which of the following statements is/are correct?**

1. It applies to the conduct or commission of an act that harms or injures or has the potential to harm or injure an individual. It does not include omission.
2. Domestic violence includes physical, financial, sexual violence and not emotional abuse which is the major drawback of this act.
3. The law also covers children.

**Options:**

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

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

- The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 says that any act, conduct, omission or commission that harms or injures or has the potential to harm or injure will be considered domestic violence by the law.
- Domestic violence includes physical, financial, sexual violence, emotional abuse as well as verbal abuse.
- The law also covers children.

**Q2. Consider the following statements with respect to Green Hydrogen:**

1. This is produced from fossil fuels with carbon capture and storage technologies and is less polluting.
2. Green hydrogen can be used in industry and can be stored in existing gas pipelines to power household appliances.

**Which of the above statements is/are correct?**

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

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

- Hydrogen generated entirely from renewable power sources is called green hydrogen.
- Green hydrogen can be used in industry and can be stored in existing gas pipelines to power household appliances.
- Blue Hydrogen is produced from fossil fuels with carbon capture and storage technologies and is less polluting.

**Q3. Arrange the types of coal on the basis of carbon content from the highest to the lowest rank:**

1. Peat
2. Bituminous
3. Anthracite
4. Lignite

**Options:**

- a. 1-2-3-4
- b. 2-3-1-4
- c. 3-2-4-1
- d. 4-3-2-1

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

- The ranking of the types of coal depends on the types and amounts of carbon the coal contains and on the amount of heat energy the coal can produce.
- Anthracite is the most mature coal and thus has the highest carbon content of any type of coal.
- Lignite coal (brown coal) is the lowest grade coal with the least concentration of carbon.
- Peat is a soft, organic material consisting of partly decayed plant and mineral matter. When peat is placed under high pressure and heat, it undergoes physical and chemical changes to become coal.
- Highest to lowest ranking: Anthracite, Bituminous, Lignite, Peat (least concentration of carbon).

**Q4. NISHTHA recently seen in the news is a**

- a. Campaign launched by the Department of Pharmaceuticals to provide quality medicines at affordable prices
- b. Program aimed at improving learning outcomes at the elementary level through an Integrated Teacher Training Programme
- c. Web portal for citizens to report children sighted as abandoned, lost or with a suspicious person

- d. Scheme under which cash benefits are provided to pregnant women in their bank account directly

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

- NISHTHA stands for National Initiative for School Heads' and Teachers' Holistic Advancement Programme.
- NISHTHA is the world's largest teachers' training programme of its kind.
- It is a program aimed at improving learning outcomes at the elementary level through an Integrated Teacher Training Programme.
- The basic objective of this massive training programme is to motivate and equip teachers to encourage and foster critical thinking in students.
- It was launched under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Samagra Shiksha in 2019–20.

**Q5. What is/are common to the two historical places known as Ajanta and Mahabalipuram? (UPSC 2016)**

1. Both were built in the same period.
2. Both belong to the same religious denomination.
3. Both have rock-cut monuments.

**Select the correct answer using the code given below.**

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 3 only
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. None of the statements given above is correct

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

- Ajanta rock-cut cave monuments were built during 200 BC-650 AD by the Vakataka kings. These are Buddhist monuments.
- Mahabalipuram was built between the 7<sup>th</sup> and the 8<sup>th</sup> centuries by the Pallavas. It is a Hindu group of monuments.
- Both have rock-cut monuments.

1. Evaluate the Centre's latest move to engage with the political leadership in Kashmir. (250 words; 15 marks) (GS 2 Polity and Governance)
2. Russia's uncritical advocacy of China's global vision is what seems to be leaving India quite confounded. Discuss keeping Indian interests in mind. (250 words; 15 marks) (GS 2 International Relations)

