

24 June 2021: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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B. GS 2 Related

Category: HEALTH

1. Twitter storm to save Unani medicine

Context:

All India Unani Conference and Aligarh Muslim University's A.K. Tibbia College have demanded **just treatment for the Unani system of medicine** in the newly formed **National Commission for Indian System of Medicine**.

Issue:

- It has been pointed out that the **Unani System** that has a considerable presence in the country and abroad has been **clubbed with regional systems of Siddha and Sowa Rigpa** in the Commission.
- The Ministry of AYUSH has permitted Ayurvedic postgraduates of surgery to perform surgical procedures while ignoring the right of Unani postgraduates in surgery with similar course contents and training.
- An appeal has been made for **an independent board, fair distribution of resources and appropriate representation in the Commission**.

National Commission for Indian System of Medicine:

- The **National Commission for Indian System of Medicine Bill, 2019** was introduced in Rajya Sabha in 2019 and was passed by both the houses of the parliament in 2020.
- The Bill sought to **repeal the Indian Medicine Central Council Act, 1970** and provide for a **holistic medical education system**.
- It established a National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (NCISM).

Functions of the NCISM:

1. **Framing policies** for regulating medical institutions and medical professionals of the Indian System of Medicine.
2. **Assessing the requirements** of healthcare-related human resources and infrastructure.
3. **Ensuring compliance** by the State Medical Councils of Indian System of Medicine of the regulations made under the Bill.
4. **Ensuring coordination among the autonomous boards set up under the Bill**.

Read more on [What is National Medical Commission Bill 2019?](#)

Unani Medicine:

- The Unani system of medicine **originated in Greece**, however, its **present form was saved by the Arabs**.
- Unani medicine is also known as **Unani Tibb, Arabian medicine, or Islamic medicine**.
- It is a healing philosophy that takes from ancient Greek medicine. In Arab, Unani means 'Greek.'

- It assumes the four main elements – **Fire, Water, Air and Earth** which corresponds to four humours – **Phlegm, Black bile, Blood, and Yellow bile** respectively.
- Unani was introduced in India by the Arabs and Persians.

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Model Tenancy Act is a model Act, says Puri

Context:

Housing and Urban Affairs Minister reiterated that **the Model Tenancy Act is a model Act** that would have **to be passed by the States**.

- The model Act would be applicable to future agreements and not to existing ones.

This topic has been covered in [June 3rd, 2021 CNA](#).

C. GS 3 Related

Category: ECONOMY

1. Banks get assets worth ₹8,441 crore from ED

Context:

Assets worth ₹8,441.5 crore have been transferred to public sector banks that suffered losses due to frauds committed by businessmen.

Background:

- The banks had suffered losses of ₹22,585.83 crore due to frauds committed allegedly by businessmen Vijay Mallya, Nirav Modi and Mehul Choksi.
- Based on the cases registered by the [Central Bureau of Investigation](#), the ED had taken up a **money laundering probe**.
- ED unearthed a complex web of **domestic and international transactions** and **stashing of assets** abroad by the accused persons and their associates.
- Dummy entities were used by them **for rotation and siphoning of the funds** provided by the banks.

Details:

- ED recently transferred attached shares worth ₹6,600 crore to a State Bank of India-led consortium as per an **order of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) Special Court**.
- The **Debt Recovery Tribunal**, on behalf of the consortium, sold the shares.
- **Prosecution complaints were filed** against all three accused.
- **Extradition requests were sent for them to the United Kingdom** (Mr. Mallya and Mr. Modi) and Antigua and Barbuda (Mr. Choksi).

Prevention of Money Laundering Act:

- PMLA is a legislation enacted in 2002 and came into force in 2005, that has the chief objective of preventing money laundering – the process of converting black money into white.

Read more on the [Prevention of Money Laundering Act \(PMLA\)](#)

Debt Recovery Tribunals (DRT):

- DRTs were established to facilitate the debt recovery involving banks and other financial institutions with their customers.
- They enforce the provisions of the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions (RDDBFI) Act, 1993 and also Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interests (SARFAESI) Act, 2002.
- Appeals against orders passed by DRTs lie before Debts Recovery Appellate Tribunal (DRAT).

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: SOCIAL ISSUES

1. The gender technology gap has to end

Introduction:

- The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed and exacerbated the existing inequalities in the society.
- One major inequality which has been most noticeable during the pandemic has been the gender inequality in access to technology.

Manifestations of gender inequality in access to technology:

Digital device ownership and usage:

- In South Asia, only around 65% of women have access to a mobile, which has emerged as the major tool for digital connectivity in recent years.
- In families which share a digital device, it is more likely that the males of the family would have better access to such devices. Females have to face suspicion and opposition by trying to access the devices which could be attributed to patriarchal attitudes and cultural beliefs.

Limited or no access to the internet:

- According to Global System for Mobile Communications (GSMA) estimates, over 390 million women in low- and middle-income countries do not have Internet access. South Asia alone has more than half of these women.
- Only 14.9% of Indian women have been reported to be using the internet.

Non-neutral nature of technologies:

- In the App Store, most of the existing two million apps cater mainly to young men.

- Given that most technologies are created by men, for men, they **do not necessarily meet women's requirements.**

Concerns:

- The lack of equitable access to technology has a perceptible impact on women.

Access to critical information and services:

- The technological gaps have **prevented women from accessing critical services and information during the COVID-19 pandemic.**
 - In India, Bangladesh and Pakistan, fewer women than men received the necessary **information to survive COVID-19.**
 - The need to **register online for vaccination** has led to lower vaccination levels in women as compared to men.
- The information and access to health care have largely moved online and access to technology has become crucial to ensuring public health and safety.

Deepen existing inequalities:

- The lack of access to technology could **rob the technologically deprived women of the potential advantages of such technologies.** This will only deepen the existing gender inequality in society and render the achievement of gender equality more difficult.

Recommendations:

Addressing the social aspects:

- The mindset around digital technology and device ownership must change.
- This could be ensured by the **social and economic empowerment of women** through appropriate government policies and schemes.

Feminist technology:

- There is a need to **address the existing inequality through innovation.** Adoption of feminist technology should be the way forward.
 - **Feminist technology (also called "femtech")** is an approach to technology and innovation that is inclusive, informed and responsive to the entire community while acknowledging all the existing diversity.

Women focussed products:

- Interventions designed specifically for women need to be considered.
 - Examples: **Apps for women and mothers to access telemedicine consultation.** Digital networks to connect women to informal job opportunities while balancing caring for their families. **Built-in features on mobile phones such as an emergency button** connecting women to law enforcement if they face unwanted street harassment should also be considered.

Involving the private sector:

- Given that governmental policies alone cannot address this issue of inequitable technological access, the private sector should be involved too through appropriate policies and incentives.

Measures being taken by UN Women:

- UN Women has been undertaking the following measures and initiatives towards addressing the challenge of gender inequality in access to technology.
 - **The Generation Equality Forum aims to double the number of women and girls working in technology and innovation.**
 - It is encouraging investment in feminist technology and innovation to support women's leadership as innovators.
 - It also aims to reduce the **gender digital divide and ensure universal digital literacy by 2026** through digital empowerment programmes.
 - Its initiatives such as **EQUALS and International Girls in ICT Day celebration** aims to encourage more girls into taking STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) as their academic areas, enter digital technology careers, and aspire to be the next leaders in digital technology.

Read more on [UN Women](#).

Significance:

- The need for a more **equal, diverse, and sustainable world of technology** is inevitable, more so after the experience of the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Bringing an end to the gender technology gap **will help save lives and make livelihoods more secure in the face of any future pandemics.**
- Gender-equal technology is not just significant from an altruistic perspective but is also a **pragmatic approach given the economic dividends that it could yield.** Thus it could not only be advantageous for the social benefits it could bring but could also be financially viable for the developer.
 - Given the potential of women and girls as large consumer groups they could act as major profit drivers for the sector. According to GSMA, closing the gender gap in mobile Internet usage in low- and middle-income countries would **increase GDP by U.S. \$700 billion over the next five years.**

Category: EDUCATION

1. Blended learning won't work

Context:

- The recent circular by the [University Grants Commission \(UGC\)](#) proposing the shift to a blended learning (BL) approach under which the **higher educational institutions (HEI) would teach 40% of any course online and the rest 60% offline.**

Arguments in favour:

Student-friendly:

- As against the traditional classroom model which is teacher-directed, top-down, and employs a one-size-fits-all approach, **BL is student-driven, bottom-up, and customizable.**
- BL could also bring in the much-needed **flexibility in assessment and evaluation patterns** as envisioned in the recent [National Education Policy](#).
- This flexibility in the teaching and learning environments will lead to **improved student learning outcomes** and also **enhance self-learning opportunities for working students.**

Scope for institutional collaborations:

- BL would provide for increased opportunities for institutional collaborations at a distance. This will have a **perceptible impact on the quality of education** that such a system can provide for.

Enhanced role of a teacher:

- The enhanced student-teacher interactions envisioned in the BL system will **enable teachers to have a greater influence and effect on students' learning.**
- The adoption of a BL system will result in the shifting of the role of the teacher from being a mere knowledge provider to that of a coach and mentor.

Concerns:

Cost factor:

- The shift to a BL system will **require a substantial upfront investment.** Given that 60.56% of the 42,343 colleges in India are located in rural areas and 78.6% are privately managed, there are doubts over whether such institutes will be able to successfully implement BL. Only the big and elite institutions would be able to invest in technology and provide such learning.
- Even if these institutes are able to implement such a system, **the fee that they will have to charge to cover up the investments will be high** and may prove to be unaffordable for all sections of society.

Digital divide:

- Given that **internet penetration in India continues to be low** with a **skewed distribution between urban and rural areas**, the shift to the BL system could exacerbate the existing digital divide resulting in the exclusion of a large number of rural students.
 - As per available estimates, **Internet penetration is only 45% as of January 2021.**

Fails to acknowledge the heterogeneous nature of the student community:

- Given the fact that the students entering higher education come from diverse backgrounds, a uniform approach may not be the ideal way forward.
- Expecting the students to switch over quickly to collaborative and technology-enabled learning will be stressful for them and may **accentuate the existing dropout rate in higher education.**

Reduction in social contact:

- Given that the BL system will **entail a reduction of the student engagement in classroom environments**, there are doubts over the ability of the BL system to accrue all-round formation of the student including the development of their intelligent quotient, emotional quotient, social quotient, physical quotient and spiritual quotient.
- These are critical for personality development, character building and career formation as envisioned in the recent **National Education policy which calls for 'all round education of a student'**.

Recommendations:

Closing the digital divide:

- The government should **ensure equity in access to technology** and bandwidth for all HEIs across the country free of cost.

Appropriate teacher education:

- Digital training programmes for teachers should be ensured to help them adapt to the new system. This will make them more effective.

Re-designing of the curriculum:

- The new system needs to be complemented with a re-designed curriculum right from the school level up to the higher education level.

Conclusion:

- The blended learning (BL) approach could lead to the **actualisation of the three cardinal principles of education policy: access, equity and quality** provided the associated concerns are adequately addressed.

F. Prelims Facts

1. The 'Union government' has a unifying effect

British Cabinet Mission Plan (1946):

- The Cabinet Mission came to India aiming to **discuss the transfer of powers from the British government to the Indian leadership**.

Main proposals:

- The British Cabinet Mission Plan (1946) **contemplated a Central government with very limited powers whereas the provinces had substantial autonomy**.
 - There would be a Union of India, embracing both British India and the States which would deal with the following subjects: Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Communications.
 - All subjects other than the Union subjects and all **residuary powers would vest in the Provinces**.
- It proposed a **two-tiered federal plan** which was expected to maintain national unity while conceding the largest measure of regional autonomy.

- There would be **three groups of provinces** (i) Group 'A' was to include Madras, Bombay, U.P., Bihar, Central Province and Orissa (ii) Group 'B' was to comprise Punjab, Sindh, N.W.F.P. and British Baluchistan (iii) Group 'C' was to include Bengal and Assam.
- These groups would draft their own constitutions in consultation with their respective provinces included in each group.
- The Union would have an Executive and a Legislature constituted from British Indian and States' representatives.

Read more on the [Cabinet Mission](#) in the link.

G. Tidbits

1. IAF, Navy match skills with U.S. team

What's in News?

The Indian Navy and the Air Force are carrying out a two-day **passage exercise**.

- The passage exercise is being carried out with the **U.S. Navy Carrier Strike Group (CSG) Ronald Reagan** during its **transit through the Indian Ocean Region (IOR)**.
- The **Indian Naval warships** along with **aircraft from the Navy and Indian Air Force (IAF)** are engaged in **joint multi-domain operations with the U.S. Carrier Strike Group**.
- The exercise is being carried out **south of Thiruvananthapuram on the western seaboard**.
- INS Kochi and Teg, along with P-8I long-range maritime patrol aircraft and MiG 29K fighters, are participating in the exercise.
- Jaguar, Su-30 MKI fighters, Phalcon and Netra early warning aircraft, IL-78 air to air refueller aircraft are also taking part in the exercise.

Objective:

The aim of the exercise is to **strengthen the bilateral relationship and cooperation** by demonstrating the ability to integrate and coordinate comprehensively in maritime operations.

Note:

Passage Exercise (PASSEX) PASSEX is a naval exercise that is regularly conducted by the Indian Navy with units of friendly foreign navies, whilst visiting each other's ports.

2. China raising new units near borders

What's in News?

According to intelligence intercepts, China is raising new militia units comprising local Tibetan youth for **high-altitude warfare near Eastern Ladakh**.

- It is near the site of the recent border tensions **along the Line of Actual Control (LAC)**, as well as near **China's borders with Sikkim and Bhutan**.
- The new units are named **Mimang Cheton**. They are to be deployed in upper Himalayan ranges, in the eastern and western sectors of the India-China border.

- The new Mimang Cheton units are similar to India's elite and decades-old **Special Frontier Force** consisting of **persons of Tibetan origin**.

3. 'Climate crisis to hit sooner than feared'

What's in News?

According to a landmark draft report from the UN's climate science advisers, even if humans can tame planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions, climate change will fundamentally reshape life on Earth in the coming decades.

- It says that **prolonged warming beyond the threshold of 1.5 degrees Celsius** could produce **progressively serious** centuries' long and, in some cases, **irreversible consequences**.
- Earlier models predicted that **Earth-altering climate change would not be likely before 2100**.
- It pointed out that **dire consequences stemming from decades of carbon pollution are unavoidable in the short term**.

4. CCI probes Google for 'unfair' business practices

What's in News?

The Competition Commission has ordered a detailed probe against Google for alleged **anti-competitive practices in the smart television operating systems market** in India.

- Following a complaint, CCI had reached the prima facie view that Google was dominant in the relevant market for licensable smart TV device operating systems in India.
- It said that prima facie **mandatory pre-installation of all the Google applications under the Television App Distribution Agreement (TADA)** amounted to the imposition of unfair conditions on the smart TV device manufacturers.
 - This is in contravention of Section 4(2)(a) of the Competition Act.

Note:

Section 4 of the Competition Act pertains to **abuse of dominant position**.

Read more on the [Competition Commission of India \(CCI\)](#)

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. With reference to anti-defection law, which of the following statements is/are incorrect?

1. An independent member of a House becomes disqualified to remain a member of the House if he joins any political party after such election.
2. A nominated member of a House becomes disqualified for being a member of the House if he joins any political party after the expiry of six months from the date on which he takes his seat in the House.

Options:

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

Both the statements are correct. The Tenth Schedule of the Constitution includes the following provisions with regard to the disqualification of MPs and MLAs on the grounds of defection:

- If an elected member gives up his membership of a political party voluntarily.
- If he votes or abstains from voting in the House, contrary to any direction issued by his political party.
- If any member who is independently elected joins any party.
- If any nominated member joins any political party after the end of 6 months from the date on which he takes his seat in the House.

The decision on disqualification questions on the ground of defection is referred to the Speaker or the Chairman of the House, and his/her decision is final. All proceedings in relation to disqualification under this Schedule are considered to be proceedings in Parliament or the Legislature of a state as is the case.

Q2. Electoral Trust can receive contributions from which of the following individuals/companies?

- 1. Indian citizens
- 2. Domestic companies which are registered in India
- 3. Foreign Entity
- 4. Firm or Hindu Undivided Family
- 5. Any other electoral trust

Options:

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

Answer: b

Explanation:

An Electoral Trust is a non-profit company established for orderly receipt of the voluntary contributions from any person (or company) for distributing the same to the respective political parties, registered under Section 29A of the Representation of People Act, 1951.

Electoral trust can receive voluntary contributions from:

- Citizens of India
- A company registered in India
- A firm or Hindu undivided family or an association of persons or a body of individuals, resident in India.

The electoral trust cannot accept contributions from:

- An individual who is not a citizen of India
- Any foreign entity whether incorporated or not
- From any other electoral trust

Q3. Which of the following authorities hold the office during the pleasure of the President?

1. Advocate General
2. Attorney General of India
3. Chief Election Commissioner
4. Civil Services of the centre
5. Governor

Options:

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

Answer: b

Explanation:

- The doctrine of pleasure has its origin in England.
- It means that the holder of an office under the pleasure of the president can be removed at any time, without notice, without assigning cause, and without there being a need for any cause.
- Governors of the states, Attorney General of India, Civil Services of the centre hold the office during the pleasure of the President.
- Chief Election Commissioner, though appointed by the president, does not hold the office under the pleasure of the President.
- Advocate General holds the office at the pleasure of the Governor.

Q4. Consider following statements about the Thanjavur Maratha kingdom:

1. Venkoji was the founder of the dynasty.
2. The Thanjavur Maratha Rajas were more in favour of Tamil as it was the language of the land.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: a

Explanation:

- The Thanjavur Maratha kingdom of the Bhonsle dynasty was a principality of Tamil Nadu between the 17th and 19th centuries.
- Venkoji was the founder of the Thanjavur Maratha kingdom.
- The language used in the kingdom was Sanskrit and Telugu. The Thanjavur Maratha Rajas were more in favour of these two languages.
- This period saw a decline of the Tamil language.

Q5. Consider the following pairs:

Region often in news	Country
1. Chechnya:	Russian Federation
2. Darfur:	Mali
3. Swat Valley:	Iraq

Which of the above pairs is/are correctly matched? [UPSC 2016]

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

Answer: a

Region often in news	Country
1. Chechnya:	Russian Federation
2. Darfur:	Sudan
3. Swat Valley:	Pakistan

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. The Tamil Nadu government's decision to shun the usage of the term 'Central government' in its official communications and replace it with 'Union government' is a major step towards regaining the consciousness of our Constitution. Critically analyse. (250 words; 15 marks) [GS-2, Polity and Governance]
2. Evaluate the 'Blended Learning' model, involving a mix of online and offline courses, that has been recently proposed by the UGC for higher educational institutions. (250 words; 15 marks) [GS-2, Education]

