

12 July 2021: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. New population policy keeps all sections in mind: Adityanath

Context:

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister launched the State's **population policy for 2021-2030**.

Key highlights:

- The new policy aims at:
 - **Decreasing the total fertility rate** from 2.7 to 2.1 by 2026 and 1.7 by 2030.
 - **Increasing modern contraceptive prevalence rate** from 31.7% to 45% by 2026 and 52% by 2030.
 - **Increase male methods of contraception** use from 10.8% to 15.1% by 2026 and 16.4% by 2030.
 - **Decrease maternal mortality rate** from 197 to 150 to 98, and **infant mortality rate** from 43 to 32 to 22, and **under 5 infant mortality rate** from 47 to 35 to 25.
- It **targets stabilisation** and states that the State would attempt to **maintain a balance of population among the various communities**.
- The policy comes at a time when the Uttar Pradesh State Law Commission has prepared the proposed draft Bill under which a two-child norm would be implemented and promoted.
- A person who will have more than two children after the law comes into force would be debarred from several benefits such as government-sponsored welfare schemes and from contesting elections to the local authority or any body of the local self-government.
- According to the draft, **ration card units would be limited to four members of a family**.

Impact of rising population:

Across the world, concerns have been raised from time to time about the **increasing population being a hurdle in development**.

- In the Indian context, the **rising population is considered the root of major problems and prevailing inequality in society**.
- An increasing population can be an **obstacle to development**.
- The rising population **increases poverty**.
- People have to spend a large portion of their resources for bringing up their wards. It results in **less savings and a low rate of capital formation**.
- Besides, if there is no gap between the birth of two children, it will naturally **affect their nutrition**.

2. Lok Adalat resolves over 7,500 cases in Gurugram

Context:

More than 7,500 cases were disposed of at the Lok Adalats held in Gurugram as part of the second National Lok Adalat in 2021.

Lok Adalats:

- The establishment of the Lok Adalat **system of dispute settlement system** was brought about with the **Legal Services Authorities Act 1987** for expediting the system of dispute settlement.
- In Lok Adalats, disputes in the **pre-litigation stage could be settled amicably**.
- The Lok Adalats are formed to **fulfill the promise given by the preamble of the Indian Constitution**– securing **Justice** – social, economic, and political of every citizen of India.

Read more on [Lok Adalats: Background, Definition, Functions and Members](#)

Category: HEALTH

1. Three more Zika cases take Kerala's tally to 18

This topic has been covered in [July 10th, 2021 CNA](#).

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Kabul airport gets anti-missile system

Context:

Afghan authorities have installed an anti-missile system at Kabul airport to counter incoming rockets.

Details:

- The Taliban **have regularly launched rockets and mortars at government forces** across the countryside in Afghanistan.

- Over the years, the U.S. military installed several **C-RAMS (Counter Rocket, Artillery and Mortar Systems)** across its bases, including at Bagram, **to destroy incoming rockets targeting the facilities.**
- The USA and NATO are **due to end their military mission in Afghanistan.**
- In this backdrop, the Islamic fundamentalist group **Taliban's rapid gains in recent weeks have raised fears about the security of the capital and its airport.**
- The anti-missile system has proven useful in the world in repelling rocket and missile attacks.

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E. Editorials

Category: POPULATION RELATED ISSUES

1. Tapping on the potential of the youth

Context:

- In the context of **World Population Day on July 11**, the article analyzes India's demographic dividend.
 - World Population Day is marked on July 11 every year to focus attention on the importance of population-related issues. It was first observed by the [United Nations Development Programme \(UNDP\)](#) in 1989.

Demographic dividend of India:

- India's '[demographic dividend](#)' represents the potential for economic growth based on the age structure of the population.
 - **Over 62% of India is aged between 15 and 59 years**, and the median age of the Indian population is less than 30 years. This significant proportion of young people in the total population will help drive India's economic growth.

- The 2020 UNDP report as well as a study conducted by The Lancet point out that as against the earlier fears of population explosion, **the Indian population would stabilize earlier than expected most likely in the next 12 years.**
- Thus the window available to India to leverage its 'demographic dividend' is narrower than earlier estimates and it is thus critical that India focuses its attention on safeguarding adolescents and young people's well-being to reap the benefits of the demographic dividend.
 - **At 253 million, India's adolescent population is among the largest in the world.**

Challenges in reaping demographic dividend:

Underfunded education sector:

- India's underfunded education system is inadequately equipped to provide the right education and skills to young people.
 - **Public expenditure on education in India constituted 4.4% of GDP in 2019 and only 3.4% of GDP in 2020.**
 - India stands 62nd in terms of public expenditure per student.
- Such an underfunded system would be plagued **by issues such as poor infrastructure, poor teacher-student ratio** which will, in turn, have a negative **impact on the learning outcome of the children.** This would adversely impact their employability or productivity.

Poor health indicators:

- Despite some commendable progress with respect to health indicators such as **infant mortality, stunting and under-nutrition levels in the child population of India**, the number continues to be higher than the global average or in comparison to countries at similar developmental stages as India.
- Unhealthy children would grow up to become unhealthy citizens which will not only impede their ability to a good living but also have a marked impact on the nation's progress.

Impact of the pandemic lockdowns:

- The impact of the pandemic on adolescents has been severe.
 - In India, more than 32 crore students have been affected by the **shutdown of schools** due to the pandemic induced lockdowns. This has severely **impacted the learning process of the students.**
 - The school lockdowns have also **affected the nutritional security** of a large number of children from poor households who are dependent on the [mid-day meal scheme](#) for their nutrition.

- Studies have indicated that school closures have had a serious **impact on the mental well-being of children**, with around 17% of young people likely to be suffering from anxiety and depression during the pandemic.

Gender perspective:

- The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic-induced crisis on adolescent girls has been huge.
 - Around 158 million school girls have been impacted by the closure of schools. Many of those who have dropped out are unlikely to go back to school.
 - India has registered an alarming **rise in the early marriage of girls** during the pandemic which could be attributed to the increased poverty levels during the pandemic.
 - There has also been an **increase in gender-based violence**. Restricted mobility due to lockdowns puts girls at risk of violence at home at the hands of caregivers or partners.
 - Adolescent girls continue to be at high risk during current times, given their vulnerability to abuse and trafficking.

Recommendations:

Ensuring continuum of the education process:

- The administration should balance the risks of transmission through children with the harm of prolonged school closures and **plan for a gradual re-opening of schools with appropriate precautions in place**.
- Opening schools with a **mix of online and offline options** could be an important step to addressing the learning needs and mental well-being of adolescents.

Collaborative efforts:

- Recognizing the long-standing effects that the pandemic could have on adolescents and youth, **collaborative actions by key ministries, government agencies, and civil society** is the need of the hour with special emphasis on inter-sectoral collaboration.
 - Example - Collaboration between the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Education Ministry.
- Coordination across departments can enable better solutions and greater efficiencies in tackling the challenges that our adolescents face.

Focussed efforts directed at adolescent girls:

- The Ministry of Education should take necessary steps to **ensure that adolescents girls continue their education during the pandemic and return to schools when they reopen**.

- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare must take appropriate steps to help adolescents safeguard their health through **continued access to menstrual hygiene products and strengthening outreach to girls in need via existing helplines.**

Conclusion:

- For India to be able to enjoy the fruits of this demographic dividend, the young population must be healthy, knowledgeable and skilled.
- Improving the lives of our adolescents in mission mode would not only improve their lives but also generate a virtuous cycle with healthier and educated young adults contributing substantially to securing India's future. Thus **India's welfare hinges on its young people's well-being.**

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Shaping a trilateral as Rome looks to the Indo-Pacific

Context:

- The recent **India-Italy-Japan trilateral**, organised by the Italian embassies in India and Japan.

Background:

Indo-Pacific region dynamics:

- The Indo-Pacific region is marked by challenges such as the geographical vastness of the area, **complex regional geopolitical problems, increasingly assertive behaviour of the Chinese in the region** and beyond and the **lack of robust multilateral organizations** to deal with the existing challenges.
- More and more countries have been reaching out to India as part of their Indo-Pacific strategy. India has also expressed great interest in forging new partnerships with like-minded countries interested in preserving peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific. **India has been engaging with key western nations as part of its own Indo-Pacific strategy** which is not only aimed at enhancing India's centrality in the region but also an attempt to counter China's increasing assertiveness.
- Countries that share similar values and face similar challenges are coming together to create purpose-oriented partnerships based on trade and security interests.

Details:

- Recently, **Italy** too, shedding its historic neglect of the region in its foreign policy realm has **signalled its intention to enter the Indo-Pacific geography, by seeking to join India and Japan in a trilateral partnership.**
- Italy has also expressed its intention to strengthen its otherwise below potential bilateral relations with India.
- This marked change in Italy's actions is based on the following factors:
 - **Risks emanating from China's strategic competitive initiatives** and the threat it poses to the EU in general and Italy in specific.
 - The **potential benefits that could accrue from a robust India-Italy bilateral relation.**

Significance:

- The India, Italy and Japan trilateral initiative could be used as a forum to foster and consolidate a strategic relationship between the three countries, and specifically, expand India-Italy bilateral relations. The **strengthening of the India-Italy partnership can help consolidate the EU-India strategic relationship further.**
- A strategic trilateral between India, Italy and Japan has, in the medium to long term, a lot of potential.
 - The **compatible economic systems** of the three countries could help create a virtuous and mutually beneficial contribution to the reorganisation of the global supply chains.
 - In the **security realm**, Italy, through its presence in the western Indian Ocean (anti-piracy operations off the coast of Somalia), could easily complement the India-Japan Indo-Pacific partnership.
 - That all three countries share the same values and the same rules-based world view could help them **coordinate at multilateral organizations.**

Recommendations:

Need for a clear strategy:

- Though the efforts towards the trilateral are welcome, they should be backed by appropriate efforts to institutionalize it. The three countries need to **define a common economic and strategic agenda.**

Comprehensive engagement:

- The trilateral cooperation should induce a strategic dialogue that should **include the economic, security and political dimensions.**

Conclusion:

- In the pushback against China, strategic cooperation between India, Italy and Japan can ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific.

Category: SOCIAL ISSUES

1. A Kerala model for an anti-discrimination law

Background:

Discrimination in India:

- Incidents of **discrimination against individuals based on religion, caste, ethnicity, marital status, gender, sexual orientation and even eating preferences** have become common in society.
- This manifests itself in various forms including housing discrimination, discrimination in employment, etc.

Challenges:

Lack of legal recourse:

- The absence of proper legal recourse for those who suffer from discrimination only makes matters worse for the victim.

Social stigma:

- Despite some existing laws and judicial precedents, the **existing social stigmas act as a hurdle in countering the existing discriminational attitude in Indian society.**
 - Example - Even though [Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code](#) was watered down by the Supreme Court of India to exclude consensual relations between adults of the same sex, social prejudice against members of the LGBTQIA+ community remains strong.

Lacunae in existing provisions:

- While **Article 15(1) of the Constitution of India** prohibits the state from discriminating against individuals on the basis of characteristics such as religion, race, caste, sex and place of birth, it **does not bar private individuals or institutions** from doing so.

- Also, it **does not expressly list ethnicity, linguistic identity, nationality, marital status, sexual orientation, disability**, physical appearance and other personal characteristics as prohibited grounds of discrimination.

New forms of discrimination:

- **Intersectional discrimination** - discrimination on the basis of the intersection of personal characteristics, such as that faced by Dalit women, has a bigger impact on the victims.

For related information on intersectional discrimination, refer to:

CNA dated June 1, 2021: Recognising caste-based violence against women.

- Discrimination operates on a wide variety of grounds in which while some have a direct impact, others have an indirect impact that is hard to notice. Such **indirect discriminations are hard to address**.

Recommendations:

Anti-discrimination law:

- A **comprehensive anti-discrimination legal framework** is required to fill the existing legal lacunae.
 - It should bring within its mandates **both private and public entities**.
 - **All forms of discrimination** should be acknowledged and dealt with in the law.
- Such a bill must balance the anti-discrimination mandate with other rights guaranteed by the Constitution and it could be restricted in pursuance of a legitimate objective.
- The article suggests that the States should lead the way, by enacting anti-discrimination laws in their respective jurisdictions. The anti-discrimination law should **prescribe civil penalties for those who engage in discriminatory practices**.

Institutional set up:

- There should be **appropriate institutions outside the judiciary to adjudicate complaints of discrimination and to provide policy recommendations to the State government**.

Affirmative action:

- The anti-discrimination efforts should be complemented via **affirmative action to empower the historically marginalised sections of society**.

Conclusion:

- Though an anti-discrimination law is not a panacea for the **problems of inequality and social prejudice that are deeply rooted in our society**, it is still a necessary step in this direction.

F. Prelims Facts

1. Bihar's Kesaria Buddha stupa waterlogged

What's in News?

Kesaria Buddha stupa is waterlogged following floods after heavy rainfall in the catchment areas of river Gandak in Nepal.

Kesaria Buddha Stupa:

- Kesaria Buddha Stupa is a nationally protected stupa. [ASI](#) has declared it a **protected monument**.
- Its first construction is dated to the **3rd century BCE**.
- The original Kesaria stupa is said to **date back to the time of [emperor Ashoka](#)** (circa 250 BCE) as the remains of an **Ashokan pillar was discovered there**.
- It is regarded as the **largest Buddhist stupa in the world** and has been drawing tourists from across several Buddhist countries.
- The stupa is in the **east Champaran district of Bihar**.
 - East and West Champaran districts share their borders with Nepal in many places.

2. HAL set to deliver first batch of 3 LCH

What's in News?

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) is gearing up to deliver the first batch of three **Light Combat Helicopters (LCH) to the Indian Air Force (IAF)**.

- These are part of the **15 Limited Series Production (LSP) helicopters approved for the Army and the IAF**.
- Of the 15 LSP helicopters, 10 are for the IAF and five for the Army.
- The LCH is the **lightest attack helicopter in the world** weighing **5 tonnes**.

- It has been designed and developed by the HAL to meet the specific and unique requirements of the Indian armed forces and can operate at heights of 12,000 feet.

Note:

- The **Army Aviation operates smaller utility helicopters** but does not have attack helicopters in its fleet.
 - However, it has pitched for attack helicopters of its own to operate with its strike corps.
- The **attack helicopter fleet is operated by the Air Force** which provides close air support to the Army.
- The **IAF operates the older Mi-25 and Mi-35 Russian attack helicopters** which are in the process of **being phased out**. It has inducted **22 AH-64E Apache attack helicopters from the U.S.**
- At present, the Army has **90 Advanced Light Helicopters (ALH)** and **75 Rudra, weaponised ALH, helicopters in service** which are indigenously designed and developed by the HAL in addition to the **older Cheetah and Chetak utility helicopters** which are in need of urgent replacement.
- The Army will start receiving the **Apache attack helicopters** from 2023, six of which have been contracted under a deal from the **U.S. in February 2020**.

3. Puri decked up for annual Rath Yatra

What's in News?

The world-famous **Rath Yatra** will be conducted without devotees in view of the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic.

- Rath Yatra is a Hindu festival associated with **Lord Jagannath held at Puri in Odisha**.
- The festival commemorates **Jagannath's annual visit to Gundicha Temple via Mausi Maa Temple near Balagandi Chaka, Puri**.

Read more on Rath Yatra covered in [Comprehensive News Analysis 05 July 2019](#).

4. A ride to safety

Global Education Coalition (GEC):

- In 2020, [UNESCO](#) launched the Global Education Coalition (GEC), to protect the **right to education during the pandemic and beyond**.
- Global Education Coalition (GEC) brings together more than 175 members from the UN family, civil society, academia, and the private sector focusing on **three key issues, namely connectivity, teachers, and gender** to ensure continuous access to education for all.

G. Tidbits

1. Richard Branson takes off first in space tourism race

What's in News?

Virgin Galactic's crew have successfully completed the flight to space.

- Virgin Galactic space tourism company was founded by Richard Branson.

Details:

- Mr. Branson along with his five crewmates from Virgin Galactic space tourism company **hurtled into space aboard a winged rocket ship**.
- It reached an altitude of about 88 kilometres over the New Mexico desert and then safely landed.
- The crew experienced three to four minutes of weightlessness and saw the curvature of the earth.
- It was intended as a confidence-boosting mission for Virgin Galactic, which plans to start taking paying customers on joyrides.
- Ms. Bandla became the third Indian-origin woman to fly into space after Kalpana Chawla and Sunita Williams.
- **Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin company** intends to send tourists past the so-called **Karman line 100 kilometres above the earth**.
 - **Karman Line** is recognised by international aviation and aerospace federations as the threshold of space.
 - The Karman Line is an attempt to define a boundary between Earth's atmosphere and outer space.
- But NASA, the Air Force, the Federal Aviation Administration and some astrophysicists consider the boundary between the atmosphere and space to begin 80 kilometres up.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The Chenab is the largest tributary of the Indus.
2. The Bari Doab lies between the Ravi and the Chenab rivers.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: a

Explanation:

- The Chenab is the largest tributary of the Indus.
- The area enclosed between Beas and Ravi rivers is called Bari doab.

Q2. With reference to Kesaria Stupa, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. It is a Buddhist stupa in the State of Sikkim.
2. It is regarded as the largest Buddhist stupa in the world.

Options:

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

Answer: b

Explanation:

- Kesaria stupa is a Buddhist stupa in the State of Bihar. The stupa is in the east Champaran district of Bihar.
- It is regarded as the largest Buddhist stupa in the world.

Q3. Which of the following statements about Hawa Mahal is/are correct?

1. It was built by Maharaja Sawai Pratap Singh
2. Mr. Lal Chand Usta was the architect.

Options:

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

- Hawa Mahal, also known as the “Palace of Breeze”, was built in 1799 as an extension to the Royal City Palace of Jaipur.
- It was built by Maharaja Sawai Pratap Singh.
- Mr. Lal Chand Usta was the architect of Hawa Mahal.
- The five-storey palace was built in the form of Krishna’s crown because Sawai Pratap Singh was devoted to Krishna.

Q4. Consider the following statements about Lok Adalat:

1. It can deal with cases pending before a court and also with disputes at the pre-litigation stage.
2. It is one of the components of the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) system.
3. Lok Adalat shall have no jurisdiction in respect of matters relating to divorce or matters relating to an offence not compoundable under any law.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- The establishment of the Lok Adalat system of dispute settlement system was brought about with the Legal Services Authorities Act 1987 for expediting the system of dispute settlement.
- It can deal with cases pending before a court and also with disputes at the pre-litigation stage.
- It is one of the components of the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) system.

- Lok Adalat shall have no jurisdiction in respect of matters relating to divorce or matters relating to an offence not compoundable under any law.

Q5. Which of the following best describes/describe the aim of the 'Green India Mission' of the Government of India? (2016)

1. Incorporating environmental benefits and costs into the Union and State Budgets thereby implementing the 'green accounting'.
2. Launching the second green revolution to enhance agricultural output so as to ensure food security to one and all in the future.
3. Restoring and enhancing forest cover and responding to climate change by a combination of adaptation and mitigation measures.

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

- Green India Mission comes under the umbrella of the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC).
- It was launched in 2014.
- Its aim is restoring and enhancing forest cover and responding to climate change by a combination of adaptation and mitigation measures.

Read more [Green India Mission \(GIM\)](#).

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Examine the grounds for a law that provides for anti-discrimination and equality as a civil right. (250 words; 15 marks) (GS 2 Polity).
2. Strategic cooperation between India, Italy and Japan can ensure a free Indo-Pacific. Analyse. (250 words; 15 marks) (GS 2 International Relations).