# 02 July 2021: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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# A. GS 1 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

# B. GS 2 Related

## Category: EDUCATION

### 1. In last academic year, only 22% schools had Internet

**Context:**

Union Education Minister has released the **Report on Unified Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) 2019-20** for School Education in India.
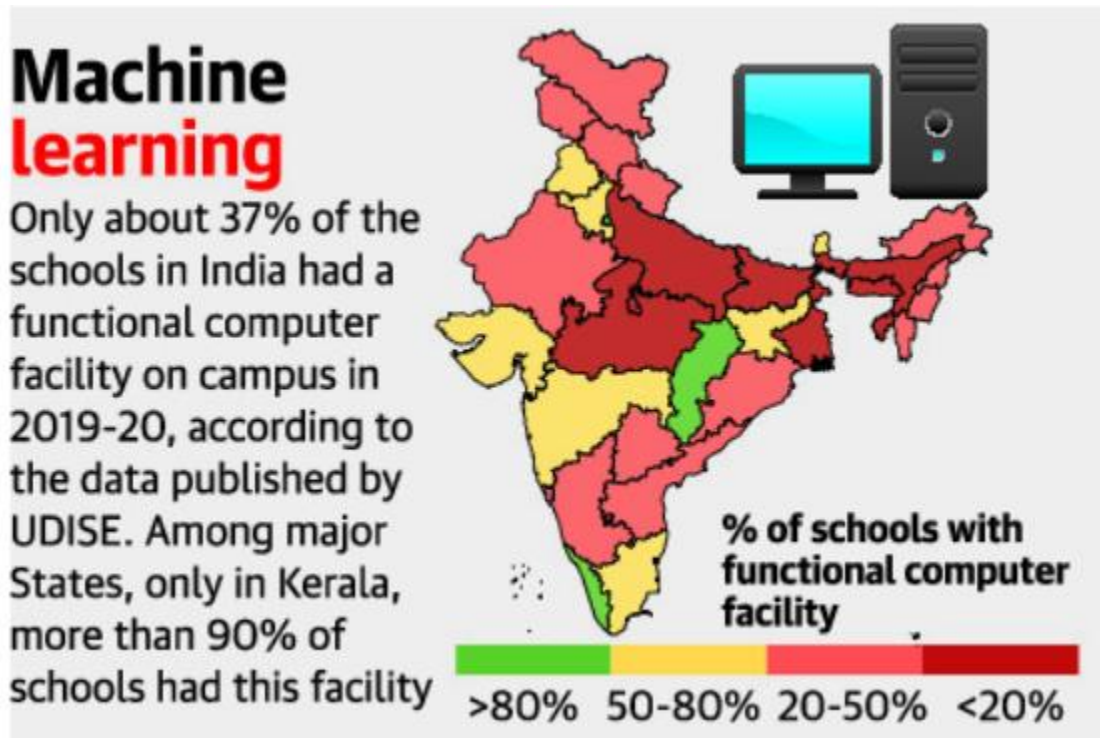
**(UDISE+) Report:**

- UDISE+ report **collates data from more than 15 lakh schools across India.**
- The **Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSEL)** has developed the UDISE+ system.
- The UDISE+ system of **online data collection** was developed in 2018-19 to overcome the issues related to manual data filling in paper format and subsequent feeding at the block or district level, which was in practice from 2012-13.
- Being an online application, UDISE+ has a number of entry-level checks built in the data entry module at all levels in real-time. That helps to improve data quality and speed up data entry and its verification.
- UDISE+ data is **hosted on the server of the National Informatics Centre (NIC).**

**Key Findings:**

- **The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)** at all levels of school education **has improved in 2019-20** compared to 2018-19.
  - 98% of students in Classes 1-8 attended school, though the GER for secondary and senior secondary students stood at 78% and 51% respectively.
- Efforts have been made to ensure universal accessibility of education for persons with disabilities.
  - **The enrolment of Divyang students** has increased by 6.52% (2018-19).
- **Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) has improved** at all levels of school education.
- Between 2012-13 and 2019-20, the **Gender Parity Index (GPI) at both Secondary and Higher Secondary levels have improved.**
  - At present, the **GPI is 1 or more at all levels of school education**.
- In 2019-20, **more than 90% of schools in India had hand wash facilities** as compared to only 36.3% in 2012-13.
- In the academic year that ended with school closures due to COVID-19, **only 22% of schools in India had Internet facilities**.
- Among **government schools**, **less than 12% had Internet** in 2019-20, while **less than 30% had functional computer facilities.**
  - This **affected the kind of digital education options** available to schools **during the pandemic**, as well as **plans for hybrid learning** in the days ahead.

- UDISE+ data makes clear the **digital divide. The internet connectivity divide** is even starker.



**Machine learning**

Only about 37% of the schools in India had a functional computer facility on campus in 2019-20, according to the data published by UDISE. Among major States, only in Kerala, more than 90% of schools had this facility

% of schools with functional computer facility

>80%   50-80%   20-50%   <20%

**Source: The Hindu**

## Gross Enrolment Ratio:

- The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) compares the enrolment in a specific level of education to the population of the age group which is age-appropriate for that level of education.
- Eg: The GER of primary level is student enrolment in classes 1 to 5 expressed as a percentage of the population in the age group 6-10 years.
- GER greater than 100% might indicate the presence of over or underage children in a particular level of education.

## Gender Parity Index:

- The Gender Parity Index (GPI) of GER shows whether the representation of females in school education is in line with the representation of girls in the population of the corresponding age group.
- GPI value 1 or more shows that the GPI is favourable to the girls, while a GPI of less than 1 shows relative underrepresentation of girls in that specific level of school education.

## Pupil Teacher Ratio:

- The Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) at different levels of education show the availability of adequate number of teachers for teaching the children enrolled at different levels of education.
- A reduction in the PTR indicates that one teacher has to teach less number of children, resulting in improvement in quality of teaching.

# Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

## 1. 9 European nations clear SII jab

**Context:**

**Nine European countries** have given **recognition to the Covishield vaccine produced by the Serum Institute of India (SII).**

**Details:**

- The European Union (EU) has started the "Green Pass" facility, which will allow people vaccinated with an authorised set of vaccines to travel within its zone, covering 26 countries.
- India has raised concerns with the EU for **not recognising Indian vaccines Covishield and Covaxin for the Green Pass.**
- The **nine countries' move is a national move by them** and not by the EU, headquartered in Brussels.
  - The EU member-states that have recognised Covishield include Austria, Germany, Slovenia, Greece, Iceland, Ireland and Spain.
- Estonia has authorised all vaccines approved by GoI.
- Switzerland (Non-EU member) has also approved Covishield.

**Read more on this topic covered in July 1st, 2021 CNA.**

**Note:**

The World Health Organization **(WHO)** has said that **any COVID-19 vaccine it has authorised for emergency use should be recognised by countries as they open up their borders to inoculated travellers.**

## 2. 'Talks between Lanka and India are necessary'

**Context:**

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister is of the view that **talks between India and Sri Lanka are necessary to find a permanent solution to the attacks on Tamil Nadu's fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy.**

**This issue has been covered in  May 6th, 2021 CNA.**

## 3. India seeks Maldivian govt. action on 'repeated attacks' in media

**Context:**

India has sought Maldivian government action on persons behind media reports and social media posts attacking the dignity of its resident diplomats.

**Background:**

- President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih's government is seen to be a close ally of India, with enhanced development and defence cooperation since 2018.
- However, some government critics are **sceptical of greater military ties with India.**

- In May 2021, an announcement made in India, on the **Cabinet clearing a proposal to set up a second mission in the Maldives, sparked concern among sections.**

- This prompted a renewed **"#Indiaout" campaign on Maldivian social media.**

## Details:

- The High Commission of India said the **repeated attacks on resident diplomats were motivated, malicious and increasingly personal.**

- It urged the Foreign Ministry to take steps to ensure **enhanced protection of the Mission and its officials.**

- It urged the authorities to ensure action, in accordance with International Law and Maldivian Law against the perpetrators for **gross violations of the Vienna Convention of Diplomatic Relations.**

## Vienna Convention of Diplomatic Relations:

- Vienna Convention of Diplomatic Relations is an international treaty that **defines a framework for diplomatic relations between independent countries.**

- It was **adopted in 1961** by the **United Nations Conference on Diplomatic Intercourse and Immunities held in Vienna, Austria.**

- It specifies the **privileges of a diplomatic mission** that enable diplomats to perform their functions without fear of coercion or harassment by the host country.

  - This forms the **legal basis for diplomatic immunity.**

**Read more on Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations**

# C. GS 3 Related

## Category: SECURITY

### 1. 'Army working to deal with drone threat'

**Context:**

Army Chief said that capabilities were being developed to deal with the drone threat.

**Issue:**

- His comments come in the backdrop of recent **explosions at the Jammu Air Force station.**

- With the easy availability of drones, drones would be increasingly used in all sorts of combat, both by state and non-state actors.

**Read more on this topic covered in June 30th, 2021 CNA.**

## Category: DISASTER MANAGEMENT

### 1. Oil well blowout: SC stays order on panel

**Background:**

- In May 2020, there was a continuous flow out of gas in Baghjan gas well in the Tinsukia district of Assam, following a blowout.
    - The Baghjan well is a purely gas-producing well in the Tinsukia district.
    - Since 2006, the gas well is being drilled by Oil India Limited (OIL).
- It underwent a blowout (uncontrolled escape of gas at tremendous velocity) on May 27, 2020.

**This issue has been covered in PIB Summary & Analysis for 10th June 2020.**

**Dibru-Saikhowa National Park:**

- Dibru-Saikhowa is a **National Park as well as a Biosphere Reserve** situated on the **south bank of the river Brahmaputra in Assam.**
- It is an identified **Important Bird Area (IBA)** notified by the Bombay Natural History Society.

# D. GS 4 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## Category: ECONOMY

### 1. What lies ahead for IBC and stressed assets resolution?

**Context:**

- Recent National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) rulings have put the spotlight on the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC). The article analyzes the effectiveness of the process and suggests steps to be taken to improve it further.

**Background:**

**IBC, 2016:**

- The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) has been the **key mechanism for addressing corporate distress and the accumulation of bad loans in the financial sector** since its implementation.

For more information on this topic refer to:

**Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC)**

- The initial version of the IBC that came into effect in December 2016 is quite different from the current version. **Section 29A and Section 49A** have helped in resolving some of the problems with the IBC.

**Performance over the years:**

- The **recoveries and resolutions have been quite good** since the implementation of the IBC.

- They have also **reduced the time required for the recovery and resolution** compared to other measures available to the lenders. As compared to the earlier timeline of five to six years on average, under IBC it has been around three years.

## Concerns/Challenges:

**Infrastructural deficit:**

- The IBC is plagued by infrastructure issues like the **unavailability of sufficient NCLTs and judicial members in them.**
- There continue to be a lot of vacancies in the NCLTs and there are a lot of **delays in appointments.**
- Also since a **lot of resolution plans finally end up in the NCLT**, the inadequately sourced NCLTs are unable to cater to the large number of cases.

**Long delays:**

- The **large numbers of legacy cases** continue to remain a major challenge in the timely disposal of cases.
- There have been **delays in almost all aspects of the process** right from the level of admitting a resolution application to approval and implementation of the resolution plan.
- These kinds of delays are a significant issue with the implementation of the code.

**Extent of haircuts:**

- There are concerns also about the extent of haircuts that banks and financial creditors have to take in order to achieve resolution.

**Promoter owned and run companies:**

- Unlike in most developed countries where the companies are run by professionals and the ownership is widely spread, in India, most companies are mainly promoter-owned and run which acts as an **impediment to the taking over of assets.**

## Recommendations:

- There needs to be **capacity building in terms of NCLT**. The NCLT should be adequately funded and provided with an adequate number of members as well as infrastructure to deal effectively with the cases brought in front of it.
- **Resolution within the mandated timelines** should be prioritized as it will help increase the predictability of the process.
- The article argues that the size of the haircut should not be the measure of the success of the IBC process but it should **focus on attracting more buyers or a more diverse range of strategic buyers to bid for assets,** and submit resolution plans under the code. These should be top priority for the IBC.
- The article also suggests **broadening the scope of who can submit a resolution plan**. It recommends letting promoters also submit resolution plans with adequate safeguards in place to avoid its misuse. It recommends certain relaxations to Section 29A.

- The proposed **national ARC (Asset Reconstruction Company)** should be set up at the earliest. This will help cover up the legacy issues and thus free the system from the legacy burden.
- The IBC should not be the only solution for resolving stress. Apart from strengthening the IBC framework, it's equally important to look at the range of different options outside the IBC for resolving distress, like **one-time settlements, restructuring packages, etc.**

# Category: GOVERNANCE

## 1. Envisioning the post-pandemic smart city

### Context:

- The article analyzes the smart cities scheme and suggests necessary changes in approach and implementation in the post-pandemic world.

### Background:

### Challenges in urban areas:

- India's cities have had to face the challenges of infrastructure deficits, inadequate water supply, waste management, sewerage and transport arrangements, high levels of pollution and, with climate change, frequent extremes of floods and drought.

### Smart Cities Mission:

*Smart City:*

- The traditional understanding of smart cities involves a **technocentric vision,** with sensors everywhere, smart homes, high levels of connectivity, massive and ubiquitous data collection by various agencies, and a continuous flow of useful information to citizens.
- These will help governments allocate resources optimally and take timely decisions to raise efficiency and improve standards of living.

*Progress of the scheme:*

- Over the years, Smart Cities Mission projects converged with other infrastructure programmes such as **AMRUT**, the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation and **the PMAY (Urban),** the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, for housing.
- The smart cities mission has also got support from international agencies to adopt best practices on mobility and transport, energy and reducing carbon emissions.
- The latest official count shows that 5,924 mission projects worth ₹1,78,500 crore have been tendered under the Smart Cities Mission.

For detailed information on the smart cities mission, refer to:

### Smart Cities Mission

### Recommendations for the post-pandemic phase:

- The experience of the COVID-19 pandemic is a clear indication that the pathway for 'smart cities' needs to change and in this direction, the article suggests the following measures.

**Focus on health:**

- The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the lack of adequate health facilities in urban areas.

- One component of the smart cities mission scheme, **the Integrated Command and Control Centres (ICCCs)**, is a good example worth considering. These centres functioned as "war rooms" for COVID-19, and helped cities in fighting the pandemic through information dissemination, improving communication, predictive analysis and supporting effective management.

- Such a system should be replicated and expanded further to ensure that citizens have access to useful information like health alerts, vaccinations, hospital beds and topical advice.

**Mobility related:**

- The article suggests that **pedestrianisation should be encouraged** over motorisation where the **priority should be to move people rather than vehicles**.

- The available road spaces should be appropriately apportioned for bicycles as they are relatively safe and is capable of complementing public transport for last-mile connectivity.

**Environmental sustainability:**

- The development of the cities should appropriately **consider the environmental impact (climate change audit) and take remedial measures.**

- Additionally, there should also be an emphasis on **preserving existing wetlands, lakes while also creating new urban gardens and water bodies.**

- Such a "**green and blue" city** would mean less destructive flooding, more water to harvest and lower peak temperatures.

**Making it more democratic:**

- Democratising smart cities planning has to **ensure every section of society has a voice in the process** of selection and monitoring of projects undertaken in the mission.

- Given the ground-level awareness of the situation, the people will be able to better articulate their needs and this will help ensure better utilization of funds for the scheme.

**Social aspects of a smart city:**

- As against the traditional techno-centric vision of a smart city, the article also recommends a **social dimension to such smart cities** wherein there should be ample common spaces that allow for the people to intermingle.

**Conclusion:**

- The pandemic has come as a remarkable opportunity to review the paradigm of smart cities.

- Going forward the mission will have to **frame the plans around people and nature and avoid expensive technological solutionism.**

# F. Prelims Facts

**1. Red sanders worth ₹10 cr. seized, 7 held**

**Red Sanders:**

- *Pterocarpus santalinus* or **Red Sanders** is a tree **endemic to South India.**
- They are found in the **Tropical Dry Deciduous forest of the Palakonda** and **Seshachalam hill ranges of Andhra Pradesh** and also found in **Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.**
- It is used for various purposes such as **immunity medicine**; it is used in **Ayurveda and Siddha medicine.**
- While red sanders was classified as **endangered in 1997**, IUCN reclassified red sanders as **'near threatened' from the earlier 'endangered' in 2018.**

# G. Tidbits

*Nothing here for today!!!*

# H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

**Q1. Which of the following is/are treated as cruelty under Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act?**

1. The dehorning of cattle, or the castration or branding or nose-roping of any animal, in the prescribed manner.
2. If any person without reasonable cause, abandons any animal in circumstances which render it likely that it will suffer pain by reason of starvation or thirst.
3. If any person promotes or takes part in any shooting match or competition wherein animals are released from captivity for the purpose of such shooting.
4. The destruction of stray dogs in lethal chambers.

**Options:**

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

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

- The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act was enacted in 1960 and was authored by acclaimed dancer and animal lover, Rukmini Devi Arundale.
- It was enacted to prevent the infliction of unnecessary pain and suffering on animals.
- As per the provisions of the law, the Government of India formed the Animal Welfare Board of India in 1962.
- The Animal Welfare Board of India was started under the stewardship of Rukmini Devi Arundale.

- It falls under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying.

Intentional infliction of pain and suffering to animals is termed cruelty under the act. Under the law, cruelty is:

- If any person without reasonable cause, abandons any animal in circumstances which render it likely that it will suffer pain by reason of starvation or thirst.

- If any person promotes or takes part in any shooting match or competition wherein animals are released from captivity for the purpose of such shooting.

**Q2. Which of the following is/are the right bank tributaries of Krishna?**

1. Musi
2. Koyna
3. Ghataprabha
4. Tungabhadra
5. Munneru

**Options:**

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

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

- River Krishna originates in Mahabaleshwar in Maharashtra.

- It flows through Sangli and drains the sea in the Bay of Bengal.

- The river flows through the states of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

- Tungabhadra River is the main tributary which itself is formed by the Tunga and Bhadra rivers that originate in the Western Ghats.

- Its Right bank tributaries are: Koyna, Doodhganga, Ghataprabha, Malaprabha and Tungabhadra.

- Its Left bank tributaries are: Bheema, Peddavagu, Musi, Paleru, Munneru.

**Q3. Consider the following statements with respect to Public Interest Litigation (PIL):**

1. The concept of PIL originated and developed in the USA.
2. Locus standi is not a necessity for PIL.

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

a. 1 only
b. 2 only

c. Both
d. None

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

- Public Interest Litigation (PIL) implies litigation for the protection of public interests.

- Any matter where the interest of the public at large is affected can be redressed by filing a Public Interest Litigation in a court of law such as Pollution, Terrorism, Road safety, Constructional hazards, etc.

- The expression 'Public Interest Litigation' has been borrowed from American jurisprudence, where it was designed to provide legal representation to previously unrepresented groups like the poor, the racial minorities, unorganized consumers, citizens who were passionate about the environmental issues, etc.

- Locus standi implies that only the person/party whose rights have been infringed upon can file petitions.

- Locus standi is not a necessity for PIL.

**Q4. Which of the following methods can be employed to reduce the ill-effects of Non-Performing Assets (NPA)?**

1. Sell the NPAs
2. Compromise Settlement
3. Pumping money into the banking system

**Options:**

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

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

- A nonperforming asset (NPA) refers to a classification for loans or advances that are in default.

- Selling the NPAs to Asset Reconstruction Company (ARC) or the bad banks is a method of removal of NPAs from the bank's balance sheet.

- Compromise settlement is executed by the banks in order to recover non-performing assets (NPAs). Eg: A one-time settlement or OTS is a type of compromise settlement. Under this method, the borrower (the one who has defaulted) proposes to settle all the dues at once, and banks agree to accept an amount lesser than what was originally due.

**Q5. How does the National Rural Livelihood Mission seek to improve livelihood options of rural poor? (2012)**

1. By setting up a large number of new manufacturing industries and agribusiness centres in rural areas
2. By strengthening 'self-help groups' and providing skill development
3. By supplying seeds, fertilizers, diesel pump-sets and micro-irrigation equipment free of cost to farmers

**Select the correct answer using the codes given below:**

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

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) is a poverty alleviation project implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India. This scheme is focused on promoting self-employment and organization of rural poor by strengthening 'self-help groups' and providing skill development.

# I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. The pandemic has come as a remarkable opportunity to review the paradigm of smart cities. Examine. (250 words; 15 marks) [GS-2, Governance].
2. The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), notified in 2016, has been the key mechanism for addressing corporate distress and the accumulation of bad loans in the financial sector since its implementation. Discuss its effectiveness and the way forward. (250 words; 15 marks) [GS-3, Economy].