

24 July 2021: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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B. GS 2 Related

Category: **POLITY AND GOVERNANCE**

1. 'Gatekeeper Model' mooted to prevent suicides in prisons

Context:

National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS) has issued a **set of guidelines on the management of mental health issues of the prisoners and prison staff.**

Issue:

- The Bangalore Prison Mental Health Study points towards the **prevalence of mental illness and substance use disorder in about 80% of the prison population.**
- During the pandemic, the prisoners could face many vulnerabilities **impacting their mental wellbeing.**
- The prison staff are also **working under tremendous pressure** and faced **challenges in performing their duty** while safeguarding themselves from contracting the infection.

Details:

- NIMHANS experts said **prisoners with mental disorders had to be regularly assessed for the severity of suicidal risk** and also put on regular and supervised medication.
- According to it, to address the prisoner's mental health needs, the **correctional facility should have links to community-based initiatives like the District Mental Health Programme.**
- To prevent suicides triggered by mental health issues in prisons across the country, NIMHANS has recommended the **"Gatekeeper Model"**.
 - Under the "Gatekeeper Model", selected inmates, **trained to identify prisoners at risk of suicide**, would refer them for treatment or supportive services.
- The advisory said the concept of a **'Buddy System'** was found to have a good impact on the well-being of suicidal prisoners.
 - The Buddy System involves social support through trained prisoners called "buddies" or "listeners".
- Periodic telephone conversations with friends and family would also foster support.

Category: **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

1. Xi visits Tibet, first trip by leader in years

Context:

In many years, China's President Xi Jinping became the first Chinese leader **to visit Tibet as well as its southeastern border region with India.**

Details:

- It is Mr. Xi's first visit to the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) since taking over as the General Secretary of the Communist Party of China in 2012.
- The Chinese President's visit was to **inspect a newly opened and strategically important railway line.**
 - The **first bullet train line in Tibet** links **Lhasa to Nyingchi** near the border with **Arunachal Pradesh.**
- Also, China **recently completed several major infrastructure projects in Tibet's southern and south-eastern counties near the Arunachal border.**
 - It completed the construction of a **strategically significant highway through the Grand Canyon of the Yarlung Zangbo River** (as the Brahmaputra is called in Tibet).

Read more on this issue covered in [May 21st, 2021 CNA.](#)

Note:

- The **Seventeen Point Agreement** was signed on May 23, 1951.
- **China refers** to the agreement as signalling **the peaceful liberation of Tibet.**
- The **agreement has been rejected by the Dalai Lama.**
- Dalai Lama asserts that the Communist Party had both forced it on Tibet and subsequently violated its commitments, leading him to eventually **flee to India in exile in 1959.**

Category: HEALTH

1. Bird flu suspected in Kozhikode

Context:

Kozhikode is on high alert after a **suspected bird flu outbreak** has been reported from a private poultry farm.

Avian Influenza:

- [Avian Influenza \(AI\)](#) is a **highly contagious viral disease, affecting a large variety of birds,** including those known for human consumption such as chickens, ducks, turkeys, quails, as well as pet birds and wild birds.

Read more on Avian Influenza/Bird flu, covered in [10th January 2021 Comprehensive News Analysis.](#)

C. GS 3 Related

Category: SECURITY

1. More time for report on Data Bill

Context:

The **Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC)** examining the **Personal Data Protection Bill** has been given an **extension till the Winter Session** of Parliament to submit its long-pending report.

Details:

- The [Personal Data Protection Bill](#) seeks to **regulate the use of an individual's data by the government and private companies.**

Read more on Personal Data Protection Bill and related issues covered in [April 12th, 2021 CNA.](#)

2. Drone with explosives shot down

Context:

A drone (unmanned aerial vehicle) with explosives was shot down in Jammu.

Read more on the threats posed and the concerns associated with drone usage covered in [28th June 2021 CNA.](#)

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. SC dismisses plea challenging NGT ban on sale and use of firecrackers

Context:

The Supreme Court has **dismissed a challenge to a [National Green Tribunal \(NGT\)](#) ban on the sale and use of firecrackers** during the COVID-19 pandemic in the National Capital Region (NCR) and all cities and towns where the ambient air quality is in the poor or above categories.

Background:

- In December 2020, the NGT had ordered **that only green crackers would be permitted** for Christmas and New Year in such areas.

Green Crackers:

- Firework is a device that contains gunpowder and other **combustible chemicals** which causes striking effects and when ignited they explode.
- **Green crackers are those crackers that do not contain harmful chemicals** that would cause air pollution. They are **environmentally friendly.**
- Green crackers are less harmful as compared to conventional firecrackers and less pollution emission will result in reduced air pollution.
- In green crackers, the **commonly used polluting chemicals like aluminium, barium, potassium nitrate and carbon** have either been removed or sharply reduced to slow down the emissions by **15 to 30%.**

Details:

- The petitioners against the order, mostly firecracker manufacturers, said that the **ban was an impediment to their livelihoods.**

- The Tribunal had reasoned that the “**right to business is not absolute**. There is no right to violate air quality and noise level norms”.
- The Supreme Court also **dismissed arguments that bursting crackers was a fundamental right and an essential practice during religious festivals like Diwali**.
- It was said that **Article 25 (right to religion) is subject to [Article 21 \(right to life\)](#)**.
 - If a particular religious practice is threatening the health and lives of people, such practice is not entitled to protection under Article 25.

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. Empowering nature with biocentric jurisprudence

Context

- Judicial intervention to protect the Great Indian Bustard (GIB).

Background

The Great Indian Bustard

- GIBs are the largest among the four bustard species found in India, the other three being MacQueen's bustard, lesser florican and the Bengal florican.
- They are one of the heaviest birds with flight, preferring grasslands as their habitat.
- In general, birds in grasslands are considered an important indicator of how healthy the ecosystem is. Hence, GIBs are considered the flagship bird species of grasslands.

Decline in numbers

- Being terrestrial birds, they spend most of their time on the ground with occasional flights to go from one part of their habitat to the other.
- It is now nearing extinction due to collision with high voltage power lines.
- These bustards are prone to collision due to their poor frontal vision and inability to see the power lines from a distance.

Supreme Court

- The Court in M.K. Ranjitsinh & Others vs Union of India & Others said:
 - The Governments of Gujarat and Rajasthan have to expedite the procedure to convert the overhead cables into underground power lines.
 - The Governments have to install bird diverters where high voltage electricity lines cannot be moved underground.

Anthropocentrism and biocentrism

- Anthropocentric Approach to environment is narrowly aimed at preserving the welfare of humans. It literally means “human-centredness”. It says that nature primarily exists for humans.
 - Anthropocentrism argues that **of all the species on earth humans are the most significant** and that all other resources on earth may be justifiably exploited for the benefit of human beings.
- Biocentric Approach is oriented toward protecting non-human organisms and nature as a whole. It is based on a nature-centric value system.
 - Biocentrism treats environmentalism as a moral imperative independently of its impact on human flourishing.
 - It believes that human species is a mere component of the ecosystem.
- In protecting the birds, the Court has affirmed and emphasised the biocentric values of eco-preservation.

Species in danger

- Lions
 - There are about 20,000 lions in Africa today. Their numbers five decades ago was at 4,50,000.
- Orangutans
 - Threats include loss of habitat through deforestation, palm oil plantations, indiscriminate monoculture farming in the forests of Borneo and Sumatra.
- Rhinos
 - They are killed for the perceived medicinal value of their horns and are slowly becoming extinct.
- Lemurs
 - Deforestation and hunting are the greatest threats to the lemur.

Constitutional Obligation

- Article 48A of the Constitution of India imposes a duty on the government to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard forests and wildlife.
- Article 51-A (g), says that “It shall be duty of every citizen of India to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wild life and to have compassion for living creatures.”
- In the context of animal rights, the Supreme Court has brought some animal rights under the ambit of the right to life through an expansive reading in the case of Animal Welfare Board of India v. A. Nagaraja & Ors.

Global Examples:

- In 2008, **Ecuador** became the first country in the world to recognise “Rights of Nature” in its Constitution.
- **Bolivia** has also joined the movement by establishing Rights of Nature laws too.
- In 2010, the city of **Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania** became the first major municipality in the United States to recognise the Rights of Nature.

Conclusion

Therefore the Supreme Court intervention in M.K. Ranjithsinh was a much desired ruling promoting the biocentric approach to Environment.

Additional Information:

Tennessee River

- It is the largest tributary of the Ohio River.

2. The Ganga's message

Reference:

[UPSC Comprehensive News Analysis of 23rd July 2021](#)

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Return to troubles

Reference:

[UPSC Comprehensive News Analysis of 15th July 2021](#)

F. Prelims Facts

1. MVA govt. to join Climate Group's EV100 drive

What's in News?

Maharashtra government has announced its decision to become the **first state in the country to join hands with Climate Group's EV100 campaign.**

EV100

- EV100 is a global initiative **led by The Climate Group**, bringing together forward-looking companies committed to **accelerating the transition to electric vehicles (EVs) and making electric transport the new normal by 2030.**
- Climate Group, **an international non-profit**, will act as a bridge between private companies and the State government to ease the process of shifting their fleets to EVs.

Maharashtra's EV Policy:

- Maharashtra recently unveiled its electronic vehicle (EV) policy.
- It aims to achieve **25% electrification of last-mile delivery vehicles by 2025.**

- Within six months from the day of notification of the policy, e-commerce companies, delivery and logistics players, and mobility aggregators will submit EV transition plans to the Transport Department.

2. Ten-fold rise in NSCS budget: Bhushan

What's in News?

A senior lawyer Prashant Bhushan has said that the Budget allocation for the **National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS)** increased 10 times from ₹33.17 crore in 2016-17 to ₹333.58 crore in 2017-18.

National Security Council:

- The National Security Council (NSC) in India is the executive **agency responsible for advising the Prime Minister's Office on issues of national security and strategic interest.**
- The NSC consists of two distinct bodies – **the Council Proper and the National Security Council Secretariat.**

Read more [National Security Council \(NSC\)](#)

National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS):

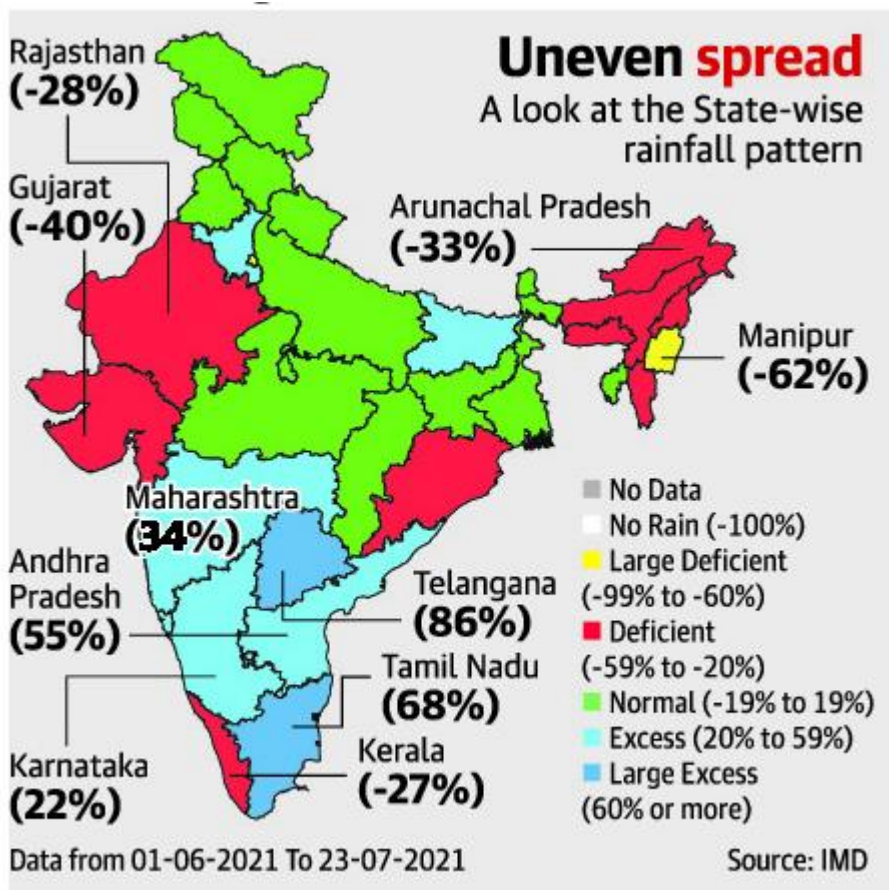
- The Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) was re-structured and renamed as the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS).
- The **NSC Secretariat is a permanent body that provides technical support to the Council Proper.**
- It is **headed by the Director General / National Security Adviser.**
- The NSCS **works under the PMO**, has **constitutional recognition and legal authority** as it was brought into the government's Allocation of Business (AOB) rules in 2019.

G. Tidbits

1. Rise in extreme rainfall events

What's in News?

The [India Meteorological Department](#) has pointed to **significant variations in rainfall across the country.**



- Climate scientists have warned that **monsoon patterns overall have been changing**.
- The southern peninsula received 29% more rain than normal while there was a huge rainfall deficit in the northeast.
- The frequency and strength of cyclones over the Arabian Sea have increased in the past two decades.
 - There is a 52% increase in the frequency of cyclones over the Arabian Sea from 2001 to 2019** and an **8% decrease over the Bay of Bengal** compared with the period 1982-2002, when **historically most cyclones have been in the Bay of Bengal**.
- The duration of cyclones has increased by 80%.
 - More cyclones were **bringing in more moisture from the Arabian Sea and contributing to extreme rainfall events**.

The ongoing monsoon floods across India is unprecedented. India is seeing a **threshold rise in widespread extreme rains that cause floods across the country**.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Privilege motion can be moved only against the ministers.
2. The Speaker/RS chairperson can decide on the privilege motion himself or herself or refer it to the privileges committee of Parliament.

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?

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

Answer: a

Explanation:

- The Members of Parliament are granted certain privileges individually and collectively so as to perform their duties properly. But if any of the members disregards or misuses any of these privileges or rights, it is considered as a breach of the privilege motion and is liable for punishment under the parliamentary laws.
- Privilege motion can be moved against any member of the parliament.
- The Speaker/RS chairperson can decide on the privilege motion himself or herself or refer it to the privileges committee of Parliament.

Read more [Privilege Motion – Breach of Privilege Motion & Cases](#)

Q2. Consider the following pairs:

Storm Centres

1. Kanpur
2. Jhansi
3. Lucknow
4. Faizabad
5. Bihar

Leaders of the 1857 Revolt

Nana Sahib
Rani Laxmibai
Begum Hazrat Mahal
Maulvi Ahmadullah
Jaidayal Singh

Which of the above pairs is/are correctly matched?

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

Storm Centres

Leaders of the 1857 Revolt

- | | |
|-------------|-------------------------------|
| • Kanpur | Nana Sahib |
| • Jhansi | Rani Laxmibai |
| • Lucknow | Begum Hazrat Mahal |
| • Faizabad | Maulvi Ahmadullah |
| • Rajasthan | Jaidayal Singh/Hardayal Singh |
| • Bihar | Kunwar Singh/Amar Singh |

Read more: [Revolt of 1857 – Causes, Impact, Failure, List of Important Leaders Involved](#)

Q3. With reference to Madhubani Paintings, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. It has its origins in the Maithili village of Bihar.
2. Madhubani paintings bear the Geographical Indication (GI) tag.

Options:

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

- Madhubani painting has its origins in the Maithili village of Bihar.
- Madhubani paintings bear the Geographical Indication (GI) tag.

Read more on [Madhubani Paintings](#).

Q4. Which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. Biosimilars have a simple structure, while chemical drugs have a complex structure relatively.
2. Biosimilars are sensitive to storage and handling, while chemical drugs are stable.

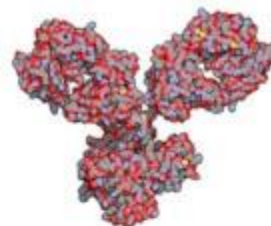
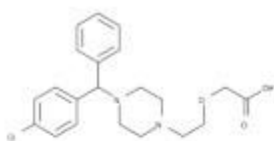
Options:

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

Answer: b

Explanation:

- A biosimilar is a biological medical product highly similar to another already approved biological medicine.
- Chemical drugs have a simple structure whereas biosimilars have a relatively complex structure.
- Biosimilars are sensitive to storage and handling, while chemical drugs are stable.



Chemical drugs/Generics

- Low Molecular weight
- Simple structure
- Chemically produced
- Standardized manufacturing process
- Possible to obtain exactly the same molecule
- Stable
- Non immunogenic
- Bioequivalence

Biologics/Biosimilars

- High molecular weight
- Complex structure
- Produced by living cells
- Specialized manufacturing process
- Possible variability among different batches (as for biologics)
- Sensitive to storage and handling
- Immunogenic
- Complex comparability exercise

Image source: <https://www.jacionline.org/>

Q5. Consider the following in respect of 'National Career Service': [UPSC 2017]

1. National Career Service is an initiative of the Department of Personnel and Training, Government of India.
2. National Career Service has been launched in a Mission Mode to improve the employment opportunities to uneducated youth of the country.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: d

Explanation:

- National Career Service (NCS) project is a Mission Mode Project launched by the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India.
- It was launched for establishing quick and efficient career-related services across the country by revamping the existing nationwide set-up of Employment Exchanges into IT-enabled Career Centers.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. India must take its laws on waste management seriously to stop microplastics pollution. Discuss by highlighting the extent of microplastic pollution in the Ganga river. (250 words; 15 marks) [GS-3, Environment and Ecology]
2. In a recent ruling, the Supreme Court of India has sought to move away from an anthropocentric basis of law. It upheld the biocentric principles of coexistence which has come as a shot in the arm for nature conservation. Examine. (250 words; 15 marks) [GS-3, Environment and Ecology]