

26 July 2021: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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B. GS 2 Related

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. [35% of govt. schools, anganwadis have no tap water](#)

Background:

Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) launched a 100-day campaign to provide tap water access to government schools.

Details:

- The **100-day campaign to achieve 100% coverage, and provide potable piped water** supply for drinking and cooking purposes as well as tap water for handwashing and in toilets in every school, Anganwadi and ashramshala or residential tribal school, was **launched on October 2, 2020**.
- The other aims of the scheme were to **discuss and bring awareness** among rural community, anganwadi workers, school teachers, school management committees, etc about the **importance of [Water, Sanitation & Hygiene \(WASH\)](#)** and **assured availability of safe water to children for their overall development**.
- At the time, about 40% of schools and anganwadis already had tap water access.
- About 66% of schools and 60% of Anganwadi centres across the nation have got FHTC [Functional Household Tap Connections] through JJM in 10 months.
- Nine states and Union Territories have already achieved 100% coverage.

Issue:

- Over **a third of government schools and anganwadis still do not have tap water access**.
- There has been slow progress despite a Parliamentary Standing Committee pointing out the **importance of repeated washing of hands as part of COVID-19 safety protocols** for schools to reopen.
- There is a **wide disparity among States**.
 - In Jharkhand and West Bengal, less than 15% of schools and less than 10% of anganwadis have tap water access.
 - On the other hand, 80% of the schools in Uttar Pradesh have access to tap water.

Jal Jeevan Mission:

- Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) aims at the **universal coverage of provision of tap water connections to every rural home by 2024**.
- The programme will also implement source sustainability measures as mandatory elements, such as **recharge and reuse through greywater management, water conservation, rainwater harvesting**.

Read more on: [Jal Jeevan Mission](#)

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. China, Pak. outline 'joint action' to align Afghanistan strategies

Context:

China and Pakistan have said that they would jointly cooperate and work together in Afghanistan in the backdrop of the changing situation in the country.

Details:

- Besides, the Foreign Ministers of both the countries **proposed building the [China Pakistan Economic Corridor \(CPEC\)](#) into “a hub of regional connectivity”**.
- Both sides have reaffirmed their commitment to facilitate and support an **Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation process** and “their support for the peaceful reconstruction of Afghanistan”.
- They have outlined a joint plan on working in Afghanistan.
 - Immediate priority of avoiding the expansion of war and preventing Afghanistan from falling into a full-scale civil war.
 - Promoting the intra-Afghan negotiations between Kabul and the [Taliban](#) and establish a broad and inclusive political structure.
 - Resolutely combating terrorist forces.
 - Promoting cooperation among Afghanistan’s neighbours.
 - Exploring the construction of a platform for cooperation among Afghanistan’s neighbours.

Recent Developments:

- Taliban insurgents in Afghanistan have capitalised on the last stages of the withdrawal of the US and NATO troops to launch offensives.
- Taliban has **captured a swath of districts and border crossings and encircling provincial capitals**, indicating huge uncertainty around the future of the political and military situation in Afghanistan.
- The world is concerned as the instability **could reach neighbouring Central Asian countries**.

C. GS 3 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: **ECONOMY**

1. Lessons from India's food security response

Background:

India's food security scenario:

- India has made enormous progress in food production over the years.
- India has **achieved self-sufficiency in food production**. It has been registering record harvests over the last few years. In 2020, India produced over 30 crore tonnes of cereals and had built up a **food stock of 10 crore tonnes**. India has also achieved record exports of rice and wheat in FY21.
- However, there seems to be a **large degree of variability** between the different regions as well as sections of the population when it comes to nutritional security as is evident from the **high levels of stunting, wasting and malnutrition observed in India**.
- The COVID-19 pandemic seems to have only exacerbated this nutritional insecurity.

Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic:

- The COVID-19 pandemic has had a **disruptive impact on the food security of the poor and marginalized sections**.
- There has been an escalation in global hunger in 2020, much of it likely related to the fallout of COVID-19. 'The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World' estimates that around a tenth of the global population – up to 81.1 crore persons – were undernourished in 2020.

For more information on the findings of this report refer to the following article:

[CNA dated Aug 24, 2020: More evidence of India's food insecurity](#)

Governmental efforts:

- The government undertook several interventions to **ensure food and livelihood security**.

- India's [Targeted Public Distribution System \(TPDS\)](#) through the distribution of subsidized and free food grains helped the poor and marginalized families in India tide against the pandemic-induced food crisis.
- The Government of India increased the entitlements given to **National Food Safety Act (NFSA)** beneficiaries in 2020.
 - Under the **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY)**, 81.3 crore NFSA beneficiaries received an additional 5 kg of foodgrains per person per month and 1 kg of pulses per family per month, free of cost, for eight months from April to November 2020.
 - Under the [Atmanirbhar Bharat](#) package, 8 crore migrants were provided 5 kg of foodgrains per month, free of cost.
- The introduction of the [One Nation One Ration Card \(ONORC\) scheme](#) will allow the beneficiaries to access their food entitlements from anywhere in the country. This is critical for a country like India with a massive mobile population and migration between States wherein portability of food entitlements could play a vital role in ensuring universal nutritional security.

Recommendations:

- There is a critical need to focus on a more resilient, equitable, and food-secure world.

Supporting the vulnerable:

- **Food support intervention should focus on at-risk groups**, including persons with disabilities, the elderly, single women-led households, transgender persons, HIV-affected persons, displaced persons, refugees and orphan children. The focus on these vulnerable and marginalized sections will help ensure that no one goes hungry.

Climate proofing agricultural sector:

- Given the inevitable negative impact of climate change on agriculture and food security, and the disproportionate impact on the poor and vulnerable sections, it is imperative to focus on **building a resilient agricultural system**.
 - Such a system would be **adaptive to changing weather** and needs. It would involve measures such as the use of **efficient irrigation systems, and the promotion of crops as per the agro-climate zones**.

Tackling food losses and wastage:

- As per available estimates, **a third of all food produced is wasted**. There should be enhanced efforts to prevent food losses.

- Apart from the **wasted opportunity cost** of using such food for the nutritional security of the poor and marginalized, such food wastage also accounts for around 3.5 gigatonnes of the CO2 equivalent annual **greenhouse gas emissions**.

Additional information:

- **The UN Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025** is a commitment of member States to undertake ten years of sustained and coherent implementation of policies and programmes towards sustainable food systems and food and nutrition security for all.
- **UN Food Systems Summit** and the **Nutrition for Growth Summit** are scheduled to be held in 2021.

2. Money changer

Context:

- Reserve Bank of India's plan to conduct pilot projects to assess the viability of using central bank digital currency (CBDC) in India.

Details:

- The RBI's move to conduct pilot projects marks a decisive and much-anticipated move forward on introducing an official digital currency for India.

For information on **Central bank digital currency and its significance for India**, refer to the following article:

[CNA dated July 23, 2021: RBI plans digital currency pilots soon](#)

Challenges:

- **Many existing laws need to be amended** to make the digital rupee a possibility. The much-awaited **Cryptocurrency and Regulation of Official Digital Currency Bill, 2021**, is yet to be introduced.
- Crucial decisions about the design of the currency with regards to how it will be issued, the **degree of anonymity** it will have, the **kind of technology** that is to be used will need to be deliberated upon. The aspect of anonymity of cryptocurrencies has been a major aspect of worry for the Indian regulators.

- The possible **impacts of the introduction of an official digital currency on people, the monetary policy, and the banking system** need to be adequately considered before the official issuance of the CBDC.
- Digital currencies are **vulnerable to cyberattacks**.

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. A climate risk

Context:

- Many regions in the Konkan coast and the southern peninsula have been witnessing **instances of extreme rainfall and flooding**.

Impact of climate change:

- There is an increasing amount of evidence pointing towards the impact of climate change on the Indian subcontinent.

Increased variability of rainfall:

- **Global warming has increased atmospheric moisture levels, contributing to short, intense spells of rains.** Aspects such as increased aerosol emissions, particulate matter pollution and changes in agriculture and forestry patterns could also be contributing to changed rainfall patterns.
- Though the monsoon is characterized by its unexpected variability, there seems to be an increase in this variability in the recent past. **The monsoon of 2021 began with a rainfall deficit but has since seen a revival.**
 - According to [India Meteorological Department \(IMD\)](#) data on the regional distribution of monsoonal rainfall, the 'South Peninsula' has seen 29% more rain from June 1-July 25 than what is normal for this period.

For more information on this topic refer to:

[CNA date July 24, 2021: Rise in extreme rainfall events](#)

Extreme weather events:

- Extreme events like **bursts of torrential localized rainfall and prolonged droughts and heatwaves** have not only increased in frequency but also in their intensity and duration over the years.

Change in pattern of cyclones:

- There has been a marked change in the cyclonic pattern in the Indian subcontinent.
- As against the historic trend of the Bay of Bengal playing host to most cyclones making landfall in India, **there has been a 52% increase in the frequency of cyclones over the Arabian Sea from 2001-2019 and an 8% decrease over the Bay of Bengal** compared to 1982-2002. The strength and duration of the cyclones over the Arabian Sea have also increased.
- These cyclones are bringing in more moisture from the Arabian Sea and contributing to extreme rainfall events over the western coast.

For more information on this topic refer to the following article:

[CNA dated May 19, 2021: Stormy start](#)

Recommendations:

Mitigation of GHG emission:

- **International climate change agreements to limit [greenhouse gas](#) emissions** are an inevitable long term measure to keep global warming under acceptable limits.

More advanced weather forecasting:

- Given the increasing likelihood of more frequent extreme weather events, **accurate forecasts** that are able to warn of such events at least three to five days ahead gain importance.

Climate proofing:

- The most important measure would be to undertake **climate-proofing of the most vulnerable regions**. There needs to be limited construction in places that have been marked vulnerable. **Proper planning** can insure against the inevitable extremities of nature.

Category: INTERNAL SECURITY

1. Are law and technology a solution to fake news?

Background:

Fake news:

- Fake news is disinformation that has no basis in reality, but is presented as fact. It is often **designed to manipulate both the intellect and emotions of a person.**
- **Instances of fake news have been on the rise** and the associated problems created by the dissemination of fake news have been a major concern for India of late.

Measures being taken:

- The Indian government has been attempting to bring in several **legal amendments to deal with the creation, propagation and effects of fake news.**
- Social media companies are investing money into **technological solutions such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) to identify fake news and its proliferation.**

For more related information refer to:

[CNA dated May 10, 2020: Police get a guide to detect fake news](#)

[CNA dated March 30, 2020: A new wave of the fake news pandemic is born](#)

Recommendations:

- The article argues that mere laws and technological solutions may not be enough to tackle the menace of fake news and suggests **empowering the general public to help them make a distinction between information and misinformation.**

Additional Information:

- The **Constitution of India under Article 51A (h)**, says, “It shall be the duty of every citizen to develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform.”

F. Prelims Facts

1. Telangana temple gets World Heritage tag

What's in News?

The 13th-century **Ramappa temple in Palampet, Telangana** has been declared a [UNESCO World Heritage Site](#).



Valuable site: The Ramappa temple in Palampet is known for its exquisite craftsmanship. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Details:

- It is the main Shiva temple in a walled complex built during the Kakatiyan period (1123–1323 CE) under rulers **Rudradeva and Recharla Rudra**.
- The temple was built by **Racherla Senapati Rudrayya, a general of Kakatiya king Ganapatideva, in the 13th century**.
- The main temple is surrounded by the collapsed structures of the Kateshwarayya and Kameshwarayya temples in Palampet.
- The temple is known for its **exquisite craftsmanship and delicate relief work**.
- The foundation is built with the “**sandbox technique**”, the flooring is granite and the pillars are basalt.
 - **The sandbox works like a cushion.** It absorbs stress from all sides. So, if an earthquake occurs the intensity is greatly reduced at the level of the sandbox before it reaches the construction.
- The lower part of the temple is red sandstone.
- **Pyramidal Vimana** (white gopuram) is made of lightweight porous bricks, so-called ‘**floating bricks**’ (bricks that reportedly float on water).
- The temple sculptures illustrate **regional dance customs and Kakatiyan culture**.

2. Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI)

- An Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) is a person who is **technically a citizen of another country having an Indian origin.**
- Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) Scheme was **launched in 2005** by making amendments to the **Citizenship Act, 1955.**
- In 2015, the person of Indian origin (PIO) card was discontinued and merged with the OCI card.

Read more on [Overseas Citizen of India and OCI card](#)

G. Tidbits

Nothing here for today!!!

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Which of the following bills can be introduced in the Parliament only with the prior recommendation of the President?

1. Bills that seek to alter the boundaries of any state under Article 3
2. Money Bill under Article 117
3. State bills that impose restrictions on the freedom of trade under Article 304
4. Bills affecting taxation in which states are interested under 274

Options:

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

Bills that can be introduced in the Parliament only with the prior recommendation of the President include:

- Bills that seek to alter the boundaries of any state under Article 3.
- Money bill under Article 110.
- State bills which impose restrictions on the freedom of trade under Article 304.

- Bills affecting taxation in which states are interested under 274.

Q2. Consider the following statements with respect to the Ramappa Temple:

1. It was constructed during the reign of the Kakatiyas, by Ramappa, the general of King Ganapathi Deva.
2. Ibn Battutah had remarked that the temple was the “brightest star in the galaxy of medieval temples of the Deccan.”

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- Ramappa temple which has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site is a temple that was built by Racherla Senapati Rudrayya, a general of Kakatiya king Ganapatideva, in the 13th century.
- Ramappa was the sculptor of the temple.
- Famous Italian merchant and explorer Marco Polo had visited the temple. Marco Polo, during his visit to the Kakatiya Empire, allegedly called the temple "the brightest star in the galaxy of temples".

Q3. Which of the following statements best describes NASA's Artemis?

- a. It is a supersonic parachute that will help NASA missions to land on Mars
- b. It is NASA's program to return astronauts to the lunar surface.
- c. It is a telescope specially designed to detect X-ray emissions from very hot regions of the Universe
- d. It is a mission that will image regions beyond the Sun's outer corona

Answer: b

Explanation:

- Artemis is NASA's program to return astronauts to the lunar surface by 2024.

- NASA wants to send the first woman and the next man to the Moon by the year 2024, which it plans on doing through the Artemis lunar exploration program.
- ARTEMIS stands for Acceleration, Reconnection, Turbulence and Electrodynamics of Moon's Interaction with the Sun.

Q4. With reference to the Quit India Movement, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. Lord Linlithgow was the viceroy of India during Quit India Movement.
2. The communists did not join the movement.
3. 'Jatiya Sarkar' was formed in Satara during Quit India Movement.

Options:

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

Answer: a

Explanation:

- The Quit India movement was officially launched by the Indian National Congress (INC) led by Mahatma Gandhi on 9 August 1942. The movement gave the slogans 'Quit India' or 'Bharat Chodo'.
- Lord Linlithgow was the viceroy of India during Quit India Movement.
- Some parties did not support the movement. There was opposition from the Muslim League, the Communist Party of India and the Hindu Mahasabha.
- Independent parallel governments were established during the Quit India movement in different parts of the country.
- 'Jatiya Sarkar' was formed in Tamluk in West Bengal. It was called 'Prati Sarkar' in Satara.

Q5. The acidification of oceans is increasing. Why is this phenomenon a cause of concern?

1. The growth and survival of calcareous phytoplankton will be adversely affected.
2. The growth and survival of coral reefs will be adversely affected.
3. The survival of some animals that have phytoplanktonic larvae will be adversely affected.
4. The cloud seeding and formation of clouds will be adversely affected.

Which of the statements given above is /are correct? [UPSC 2012]

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

Answer: a

Explanation:

- The uptake of atmospheric carbon dioxide is occurring at a rate exceeding the natural buffering capacity of the oceans.
- Ocean acidification is the decrease in the pH of the Earth's oceans, caused by the uptake of carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the atmosphere. The following will be affected due to ocean acidification:
 - The growth and survival of calcareous phytoplankton will be adversely affected.
 - The growth and survival of coral reefs will be adversely affected.
 - The survival of some animals that have phytoplanktonic larvae will be adversely affected.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Illustrate the disaster risk being posed by increasing extreme weather events. What measures do you suggest to mitigate the impact? (250 words; 15 marks) (GS 3 Disaster Management).
2. India needs to move forward on introducing an official digital currency. Critically evaluate. (250 words; 15 marks) (GS 3 Economy)