

29 July 2021: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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B. GS 2 Related

Category: EDUCATION

1. PM to roll out academic credit bank

Context:

On the first anniversary of the National Education Policy (NEP), the Centre plans to officially roll out some initiatives promised in the policy.

Read more on [National Education Policy 2020](#).

Details:

- The initiatives such as a **credit transfer system** that will allow multiple entry and exit options in higher education, **engineering programmes in regional languages** will be officially rolled out.
- Multidisciplinary is also being encouraged with guidelines to be issued shortly, to **allow the merger of institutes** as well as to give students the choice of taking subjects such as social sciences, music and sports while getting engineering degrees, or even get a minor degree in emerging areas while majoring in a different subject.
- **National Digital Education Architecture (NDEAR)** and **National Education Technology Forum (NETF)** would also be established.
 - NDEAR would promote a “digital first” approach, support teaching and learning activities, and facilitate educational planning as well as governance and administrative activities.
 - NETF would provide a platform for the free exchange of ideas on the use of technology to enhance learning, assessment, planning, administration.

Academic Bank of Credit:

- The Academic Bank of Credit will be rolled out for students in over 290 top institutions from the current academic year 2021-22 onwards.
- All institutions in the top 100 of the National Institutional Ranking Framework as well as those who have achieved an A grade under the National Assessment and Accreditation Council will be allowed to participate in the credit transfer system.
- This system will **allow multiple entry and exit options for students**.

Hurdles in the implementation of the National Education Policy:

- Certain reforms mentioned in the NEP such as the **Higher Education Commission of India (HECI)**, the **four-year undergraduate degree**, and the **common university entrance test** are yet to be rolled out.

- The proposal for four-year undergraduate degrees has run into some opposition, especially from faculty at the premier University of Delhi. It will also have to wait for the **National Higher Education Curricular Framework**, which is still being prepared.

Category: POLITY

1. No immunity for acts of vandalism: SC

Context:

The Supreme Court held that **lawmakers cannot indulge in criminal acts on the Parliament or Assembly floors and then take cover behind the right to free speech.**

Background:

- MLAs in the Kerala Assembly had **vandalised the Speaker's dais, uprooted his chair, pulled out the mike system, computer, etc. in 2015.**
- The Kerala government **had cited privileges and immunity to MLAs and urged the court to drop cases against the leaders.**
- The accused leaders had claimed parliamentary privilege, arguing that the incident occurred inside the Assembly hall. They **claimed immunity from criminal prosecution.**
- The Kerala High Court, in an order passed, had refused to give its nod saying that the elected representatives are expected to uphold the prestige of the House or face consequences.

Details:

- The SC dismissed the Kerala government's plea seeking the court's nod to **withdraw cases against CPI(M) leaders for vandalism in the State Assembly in 2015.**
- It made it clear that **destruction of public property in the House cannot be equated with freedom of expression** and immunity to legislators can't be extended as immunity against criminal law.
- The bench asserted that the **privileges and immunity accorded to MLAs and MPs do not mean they will enjoy immunity from criminal acts** within the House and the trial court was correct in rejecting the application for withdrawal of FIR.
 - These privileges bear a **functional relationship to the discharge of the functions of a legislator.**
- It added that **privileges are not a mark of status**, which allow legislators to stand on a different pedestal, and privileges are also not a gateway to claim exemption from the law.
- It said that the boundaries of lawful behaviour apply to all, including MLAs who hold responsible elected office in the Legislative Assembly. Adding that no member of an elected legislature can claim either a privilege or an immunity to **stand above the sanctions of the criminal law, which applies equally to all citizens.**
- The court explained that the purpose of bestowing privileges and immunities to elected members of the legislature was to enable them to **perform their "essential functions" without hindrance, fear or favour.**

C. GS 3 Related

Category: DEFENCE

1. Second Rafale squadron operationalised

Context:

The Indian Air Force has operationalised its **second Rafale fighter squadron** by formally inducting jets into the No. 101 Squadron at Air Force Station Hasimara in West Bengal.

- The IAF has so far inducted **26 Rafale jets in eight batches.**

Read more on [Rafale Fighter Jets](#).

Also read [15th October 2019 Comprehensive News Analysis](#).

Category: SECURITY

1. Mizoram and Assam to solve row amicably

Context:

An extensive **border row between Assam and Mizoram** took a violent turn.

This issue has been covered in [July 27th, 2021 CNA](#).

Details:

- Both the states have agreed to **continue discussions to resolve the border issue amicably.**
- They have also agreed to the **deployment of the Central Armed Police Forces in the disturbed areas** along their border.

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: EDUCATION

1. Virulence and variance

Context:

- In the backdrop of the novel coronavirus pandemic, the article evaluates the role of education in general and elementary education in particular and discusses the successful Japanese system of elementary education.

Significance of education:

- Education **yields both private and social returns.**

- Educated individuals will be able to **take up good paying jobs** and hence will be able to have access to better standards of living. Educated individuals will also be able to take more sound decisions when in doubt given their ability to differentiate between good and bad and thus will help them **grow and develop as a personality**.
- Education will, apart from imparting knowledge and skills, also **help inculcate good values, beliefs, and moral habits**. Thus education will help accrue social returns to society.
 - Example – When educated people follow rules such as queuing, using washrooms, washing hands, protecting public property, etc. the collective returns from such actions generate a huge social value such as cleaner, healthier and disciplined societies.

Significance of elementary education:

Foundational learning:

- Elementary education is the first and foremost phase of a child's education system. It plays a very critical role in one's educational life.
- Elementary education has certain targeted roles to play in a child's life such as enabling children to **learn reading, writing**, arithmetic and creativity along with character building, critical thinking, logical judgements, **communication and socialization skills, behavioural, social, cultural, cognitive, physical and emotional development**.
- Elementary education thus **helps lay a strong foundation for the child's educational journey**. It would facilitate quality learning all through life.

As a tool for societal transformation:

- Also given that it is **easier and more effective to inculcate the right values in children at a young age**, elementary education can be an important tool to address various challenges in society. This can be inferred from studies that have indicated social returns from education peaking at the elementary levels.
- Elementary education plays a **vital role in creating mindful and responsible citizens**.

Japanese elementary education system:

- Apart from the emphasis on core academic subjects like math, science and language in Japan, which reflects itself in the form of Japan ranking among the topmost countries in the **Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)**, an important aspect of the Japanese curriculum, is **its equal emphasis on non-cognitive elements of education**.
- The Japanese education philosophy transitioned from an extremely examination-focused, rote memorisation-based approach to the 'Chi-Toku-Tai' approach in the 1970s. '**Chi-Toku-Tai**' remains a defining feature of Japanese schooling.
 - Chi, meaning 'know' lays an emphasis on building **strong academic abilities**.
 - Toku, meaning 'virtue' lays an emphasis on inculcating **mindfulness, self-discipline, and cooperative abilities**.
 - Tai, meaning 'body' emphasizes **physical and mental well-being**.

- The Japanese elementary school curriculum is supplemented with **moral education, integrated studies and special activities.**
 - Moral education deals with norms that define **socially responsible and considerate behaviour towards fellow human beings and also nature.** This plays a vital role in shaping appropriate social as well as environmentally appropriate behaviour. A notable aspect of moral education is the **emphasis on 'collectivism'.** This could help **generate equitable and united societies.**
 - Integrated studies encompass experiential learning and independent thinking where students identify problems in their local communities and think of solutions. Activities such as these help **integrate schools with the community.**
 - The special activities encourage students to take part in activities such as organising events, maintaining the library, etc. This lets the student have firsthand experience of challenges and conflicts and the ways to resolve them.
- Thus the Japanese education system **focuses on ensuring holistic development,** going beyond the traditional approach of focussing only on the development of a knowledgeable mind.

Conclusion:

- As India prepares to re-open its schools along with the newly adopted New Education Policy, India should try and borrow some insights from the Japanese system.

Category: **ECONOMY**

1. Japanese education spells holistic development

Context:

- The **IMF's latest update to its World Economic Outlook report.**

Details:

- Though the latest report projects the global economy to expand at an unchanged pace of 6% (April forecast) this year, the **report notes a widening variance in the global recovery from the economic strains caused by the pandemic.**
 - While the world's advanced economies are forecasted to register faster growth than earlier forecasts, the **emerging markets and developing economies are expected to post appreciably slower recoveries.**
 - While some countries are normalizing their economic activities post the COVID-19-induced curbs, some countries are continuing to struggle in tackling the pandemic.
- The primary reason for this divergence seems to be the **difference in vaccine access** and the pace of vaccination coverage and the **ability of the countries to provide for additional fiscal support.**

Concerns:

- The **IMF** has warned that "countries lagging in vaccination, such as India and Indonesia, would suffer the most among G20 economies" in the event of the emergence of a super-contagious virus variant.

- India with only around 7% of the total population fully vaccinated, lags behind the estimated global average of about 14%.
- The **divergence in the world's economies does not augur well for long term economic and social sustainability.**
- **The report has downgraded India's economic outlook** over the impact of the second wave of the pandemic in India. **Inflation, lack of demand in the economy and the government's reluctance to provide higher fiscal support** continue to remain major challenges for economic revival in India.

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. A judgment that must be taken in the right spirit

Context:

- In the context of the recent Supreme Court judgment in the **Union of India vs Rajendra N. Shah case** where the three-judge bench of the SC struck down certain provisions of the **97th Constitutional Amendment**, the article argues for the cooperative sector to be left in the domain of the States itself.

This topic has been covered previously in the following articles:

[UPSC Comprehensive News Analysis 21st July 2021](#)

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

- The article also argues that given that the organising principles and mechanism of the cooperatives differ from area to area and depend on the industry or crop, **the government must desist from striving for homogeneity in the cooperative sector** through measures such as the 97th constitutional amendment as well the recently formed Ministry of Cooperation.

Category: POPULATION

1. No need for a drastic population policy

Background:

- **Draft legislations aimed at controlling the population** have been proposed by the states of Assam and Uttar Pradesh.

For information on this topic refer to the following article:

[CNA dated July 12, 2021: New population policy keeps all sections in mind: Adityanath](#)

Concerns:

- The article argues against the proposed legislations based on the following arguments:

Stabilizing TFR:

- The stated aim of the policy is to reduce the **total fertility rate** in the states.

- As per the document on population projection, published by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in 2019, UP will reach a replacement rate (the rate at which women give birth to enough babies to sustain population levels) of 2.1 by 2025, and Assam by 2020. Hence there is no need for any drastic population policy.

Overlooking socio-economic factors:

- The proposed legislations seem to overlook the fact that the fertility rate depends on **socio-economic characteristics like education, income, maternal and child health conditions**, and other associated factors.
- Without measures to tackle these factors, the proposed legislation with its stated aim to bring down TFR will remain ineffective.

Unintended consequences:

- The population control policy of imposing a two-child norm could have other unintended consequences.
- Given the issue of preference for a male child in our patriarchal society, the two-child norm will only **increase sex-selective abortions of girl children, and female infanticide**, since couples will want to maintain both the two-child norm as proposed by the government as well as their preference for sons.

Problem of ageing:

- As per the population projection report, the proportion of people aged 60 years and above in India will increase from 13.8% in 2011 to 23.1% in 2036. The two-child norm would aggravate the problem of ageing in India.
 - The **number of workers will go down. The dependency ratio will rise.**
 - Government expenditure on the welfare of senior citizens will have to be increased. This will be a challenge given the limited resource base of India.

Experience of other countries:

- The experience of countries like China with respect to regulation of the number of children in the family indicates the concerns associated with such a policy.

For information on China's regulation of the number of children and the associated concerns, refer to the following article:

[UPSC Comprehensive News Analysis 2nd June 2021](#)

For more information on the concerns associated with the proposed population policies of the state of UP, refer to the following article:

[UPSC Comprehensive News Analysis 14th July 2021](#)

F. Prelims Facts

1. Chandrayaan-3 mission likely late next year

What's in News?

The Chandrayaan-3 mission is likely to be launched in 2022.

Chandrayaan-3:

- Chandrayaan-3 is **ISRO's third mission to Moon**.
- The Mission will target a **soft landing near the Lunar South-pole**.
- It will only include a lander and rover similar to that of Chandrayaan-2.
- Unlike its predecessor, Chandrayaan-3 **will not have an orbiter**.
- The Chandrayaan-3 lander will also be equipped with a **Laser Doppler Velocimeter (LDV)**.
- The Chandrayaan-3 **takes cues from the first Chandrayaan mission launched in October 2008** that made major discoveries including **finding evidence of water on the lunar surface**.

Chandrayaan-3 is critical for ISRO as it will demonstrate India's capabilities to make landings for further interplanetary missions.

Chandrayaan-2:

- The Chandrayaan-2 mission, launched in July 2019, was scheduled to be an effort aimed at **landing a rover on the Lunar South Pole**.
- It was sent aboard the country's most powerful **geosynchronous launch vehicle, the GSLV-Mk 3**.
- However, the **lander Vikram**, instead of a controlled landing, ended up **crash-landing** on September 7, 2019, and stymied the effort.

G. Tidbits

1. Democratic values bind India, U.S., says Blinken

What's in News?

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's visit to India.

Details:

- The secretary of state highlighted that **democratic values and free citizenry bind India and the U.S. together**.
- The US secretary of state and India's External Affairs Minister discussed cooperation on a wide range of issues, including **Afghanistan, countering COVID-19, the Indo-Pacific strategy and the Quad**.
- On Afghanistan, both sides agreed that there was **no military solution to the conflict**, and that taking over the country by force would not help the Taliban gain the international recognition or legitimacy it desires, including the lifting of sanctions and travel bans against the **Taliban** leadership.
- Both the dignitaries also highlighted **cooperation in the Indo-Pacific as part of the 'Quad' with Japan and Australia**.
- The two sides also spoke about the Quad's initiative to provide Indian-made vaccines in the Indo-Pacific region.

- Blinken announced a \$25-million grant for India's vaccine programme, and promised to strengthen vaccine supply chains to enhance production.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements about Raja Mircha:

1. It is a variety of chilli from Andhra Pradesh considered as the world's hottest chilli.
2. It got GI certification in 2008.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: b

Explanation:

- It is a variety of chilli from Nagaland and is one of the hottest chillies in the world.
- It is also known as ghost pepper and bhut jolokia.
- It got Geographical Indication certification in 2008.
- As per the Scoville scale, the unit used to measure spicy heat of chilli peppers, Bhut jolokia measures over a million units.

Q2. Which of the following is/are the String Puppets?

1. Kathputli
2. Tholu Bommalata
3. Tolpavakoothu
4. Putala Nach

Options

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- Kathputli from Rajasthan and Putala Nach from Assam are forms of string puppets.
- Tholu Bommalata from Andhra Pradesh and Tolpavakoothu from Kerala are forms of shadow puppetry.

Read more [Forms of String puppets in India](#) and [Puppetry – Ancient Form of Art and Different Types in India](#)

Q3. Arrange the following Capitals from West to East:

1. Astana
2. Bishkek
3. Ashgabat
4. Dushanbe

Options

- a. 1-2-3-4
- b. 2-3-4-1
- c. 3-4-1-2
- d. 4-1-2-3

Answer: c

Explanation:

West to East: Ashgabat-Dushanbe-Astana-Bishkek.



Q4. Which of the following has/have been accorded the Geographical Indication (GI) tag?

1. Kancheepuram Silk
2. Arani Silk
3. Baluchari Saree
4. Patan Patola
5. Venkatagiri Sarees

Options:

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

Saree

- Kancheepuram Silk
- Arani Silk

GI Tag accorded to

- Tamil Nadu
- Tamil Nadu

- Baluchari Saree West Bengal
- Patan Patola Gujarat
- Venkatagiri Sarees Andhra Pradesh

Q5. In India, if a religious sect/community is given the status of a national minority, what special advantages it is entitled to? (2011)

1. It can establish and administer exclusive educational institutions.
2. The President of India automatically nominates a representative of the community to Lok Sabha.
3. It can derive benefits from the Prime Minister's 15-Point Programme.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

In India, if a religious sect/community is given the status of a national minority:

- It can establish and administer exclusive educational institutions.
- It can derive benefits from the Prime Minister's 15-Point Programme.
- Prime Minister's 15 point Programme for minorities is a programme launched by the Indian government for the welfare of religious minorities.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Critically evaluate the decision of the Supreme Court to strike down the 97th constitutional amendment. (250 words; 15 marks) [GS-2, Polity and Governance]
2. Under the GST regime, discuss measures to strengthen fiscal federalism. (250 words; 15 marks) [GS-2, Polity and Governance]