

05 July 2021: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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Nothing here for today!!!

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Category: SECURITY

1. IB sounds alert on Bangladeshi nationals

Context:

Eight Bangladeshi nationals **arrested in Andhra Pradesh with fake documents** have admitted that several of their countrymen had entered Indian territory along with them.

Details:

- Investigation officers suspect that **many Bangladeshis are secretly staying in Kolkata, New Delhi, Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, Goa and other cities.**

Issue:

- Due to poverty**, many Bangladeshis are entering India illegally by road **in search of work.**
- India has been witnessing immigration since independence. However, illegal migration is the most contentious issue because:
 - There are no authentic official statistics to ascertain the actual number of illegal migrants.
 - Many such Bangladeshis are **lured by terrorists** and are **helping banned organisations in creating unrest in India.**
- Illegal immigration from Bangladesh into Assam has also had serious **socio-political implications.**
- India's borders with Bangladesh being porous** pose a challenge to its effective management.

Note:

- India **does not** currently **have a national law on refugees.**

Geneva Convention (1951)

- The Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, also known as the Geneva Convention (1951) is a United Nations multilateral treaty that **defines who a refugee is**, and **sets out the rights of individuals who are granted asylum** and the **responsibilities of nations** that grant asylum.
- India is not a signatory** of the UN Refugee Convention, 1951 and the protocol of 1967.

1. Chinese astronauts complete first spacewalk at new station

Context:

Chinese astronauts successfully performed the country's first tandem spacewalk outside the new Tiangong station in orbit around the Earth.

- The **Shenzhou-12 spaceship** carried the three astronauts to Tianhe.
 - **Tianhe is the main module** of the first permanent space station by China.
- This is a major step in China's plans to have a **fully functioning space station by 2022**.
- China's first space station called Tiangong is set to be functional by the end of 2022 and is the second space station only after the [International Space Station](#).
- The space station China is building is called **Tiangong which means "Heavenly Space"**.

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: **ECONOMY**

1. Mixed bag

Context:

- Data on **India's merchandise exports** for the first quarter of the current fiscal year.

Details:

- India reported its **highest-ever merchandise exports at \$ 95 billion in the first quarter** of the current fiscal, 85 per cent higher than exports registered in the year-ago period.
- The fact that these increased exports were observed during a quarter when the second wave of the pandemic hit its peak, and there were varying degrees of lockdowns in states, makes it all the more noteworthy.

- Propelling the surge in exports were **non-rice cereals, iron ore, organic and inorganic chemicals, engineering goods exports**. Also, the agriculture-based rice and rose sectors have also witnessed rapid export growth.

Reasons for the increase:

- The merchandise exports have been driven by **robust demand in the external markets**. The rising vaccination coverage and economic recovery in key developed markets including the EU and the U.S. have bolstered demand.
- Also, the **exponential rise in commodity prices**, attributable to the reopening of major economies, as well as an increased appetite for raw materials and grains in China, has been a key contributor to the increased export growth.

Concerns:

- The article warns that despite the impressive performance on the export front, the Indian export sector continues to face the following concerns.

Structural issues in key sectors:

- The **crucial job-generating export sectors including readymade garments, leather and leather products and tea have posted double-digit declines from June 2019 levels**, reflecting the deeper structural problems in these sectors.
 - The **inadequate product variety, lack of market awareness among the producers** and sharp competition from other producing countries like Sri Lanka have resulted in decreased tea exports from India.
 - Short-sighted policy measures, **WTO mandated withdrawal of export incentives and a pandemic-induced slowdown** in orders has adversely impacted the export of leather goods from India.
 - The recent imposition of **import duty on cotton** does not augur well for India's ambition to emerge as a key source of cheap and quality cotton clothes.

Logistics challenges:

- A **container shortage and heightened congestion** have resulted in a rapid increase in freight rates out of Indian ports. This will lead to an increase in Indian goods and thus **adversely impact the price competitiveness of Indian goods in the price-sensitive international markets**.

Delay in implementation of announced policies:

- The central government had previously announced the **RoDTEP Scheme** in the light of the US challenging India's key export subsidy schemes in the WTO (World Trade Organisation) and the dispute panel in WTO ruling against India.
 - **RoDTEP stands for Remission of Duties and Taxes on Export Products.** It is a new scheme that is applicable with effect from January 1st, 2021, formed to replace the existing MEIS (Merchandise Exports from India Scheme). The scheme will ensure that the **exporters receive refunds on the embedded taxes and duties** previously non-recoverable.
- The [RoDTEP Scheme](#) was envisaged to help exporters from India even while ensuring that **India stays WTO-compliant**.
- The Government has so far **not notified the rates applicable under the RoDTEP scheme**. This has led to a scenario wherein exporters are still unsure of how to price their products while bidding for orders. This has led to **lower participation of Indian exporters in international biddings**.

For related information refer to:

[CNA dated April 22, 2021: Exporters fret over delay in rebate rates](#)

Government target:

- The Trade Minister has announced that the government will make a concerted effort to achieve the **target of \$400 billion merchandise exports in FY22**. To achieve this, the government would be setting targets for sectors and countries.
 - India's highest exports in any year were \$330 billion in FY19.
- The government has set a **merchandise exports target of \$500 billion for FY23 and \$1 trillion in the next five years**.

Recommendations:

- Policymakers need to take appropriate measures to **restore the health of every constituent sector** if economically enduring long-term growth in exports is to be ensured.
- As acknowledged by the government, there is the need to **simplify the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) rules**. Allowing SEZs to do business with domestic tariff area, will help remove the disadvantages that industries in the domestic tariff area face. This will provide a much-needed impetus to exports from India.
- **District wise export promotion plans** should be prepared and implemented with relevant support to potential exporters.

For related information refer to:

[CNA dated March 23, 2021: Centre readies draft plan for district-wise export promotion](#)

- Relevant sector-wise and country-wise **export promotion councils** must be set up to help increase the exports.

Category: SECURITY AND DEFENCE

1. The problem now with the military synergy plan

Context:

- In the light of the ongoing deliberations of the **high-level committee for consultations on the creation of integrated tri-service theatre commands**, the article suggests a few recommendations in that direction.

For related information refer to the following article:

[CNA dated June 23, 2021: 4 theatre commands likely this year](#)

Details:

- The aim of the proposed integrated theatre commands is to bring about jointness and synergy in operations among the different military forces which would **increase the effectiveness of the forces** even while **reducing the cost of their operations** through the elimination of duplication and wasteful practices or processes.

For detailed information on this topic refer to:

[CNA dated Feb 28, 2020: What should India's joint command structure look like](#)

Recommendations:

National security strategy:

- The article argues that it is first essential to have a national security strategy.
- A **well-defined national security strategy** can help come up with appropriate military strategies, doctrines and required capabilities. That would help define the structures required for the conduct of synergised operations with the requisite communications and training requirements in the proposed integrated theatre commands.

Deliberations on the structure:

- The structure and functioning of the proposed integrated theatre commands should be finalized after **adequate deliberations and discussions with all stakeholders**. This will iron out any differences upfront and produce an effective, integrated theatre command.
- Thus **consultative strategizing is a prerequisite before a concrete structure is put in place**.

Joint planning:

- **Joint planning and training with war-gaming** should be prioritized. This will help the forces figure out the required structures with suitable command, control and communications for a future integrated theatre command.

Institutionalised structure:

- Integrated theatre commands require an **institutionalized higher defence organisation**, like the erstwhile Defence Committee of the Cabinet (DCC).
- This will help ensure **regular dialogue between the political and military leadership**, thus helping avoid knee-jerk responses during crises.

F. Prelims Facts

1. OFB workers slam 'draconian' Ordinance

What's in News?

The Union cabinet recently approved a plan **to split OFB into seven corporate entities**.

- **Employees of the Ordnance Factory Board are against the corporatization of the organisation.**

This topic has been covered in [June 17th, 2021 CNA](#).

2. Assam woman gets bail in sedition case

What's in News?

An Assam woman was **booked for sedition** for having lunch on a tablecloth resembling the Indian flag.

- She was also charged under the **Prevention to Insults of National Honour Act, 1971**.

Note:

- The display of the National Flag is governed by the provisions of two acts viz. **Emblems and Names (Prevention of Improper Use) Act, 1950** and **Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971**.
- Further, the government issues non-statutory instructions from time to time.
- The Flag Code of India serves as a single reference point about how to properly hoist the flag of India with due honour.
- **The Flag Code of India itself is not an act of parliament.** It is a set of laws, practices and conventions that apply to the display of the [national flag of India](#).

Sedition:

- Section 124A, IPC states: “Whoever, by words, either spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representation, or otherwise, brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards, the Government established by law in India, shall be punished with imprisonment for life, to which a fine may be added; or, with imprisonment which may extend to three years, to which a fine may be added; or, with fine.”
- According to the law, **disaffection includes disloyalty** and all **feelings of enmity**. However, disapprobation (criticism) of the **measures or administrative action** of the government to obtain their alteration by **lawful means is not an offence**.
- It is classified as “**cognisable**” and “**non-bailable**” — the accused cannot get bail as a matter of right, but is subject to the **discretion of the session’s judge**.

For an in-depth understanding of Sedition, watch [Explained: The Law of Sedition in India & Freedom of Expression](#).

3. Four years on, delay derails Railways’ CCTV project

What’s in News?

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between the **Indian Railways and RailTel** for the **installation of surveillance cameras at 983 stations across the country**. The project has been **inordinately delayed** and investigation has revealed irregularities in the tendering process.

- The MoU signed four years ago was **envisaged under the “Nirbhaya Fund”** to enhance the safety of women passengers.

- As part of the scheme, RailTel was allotted the execution of Video Surveillance Systems at 983 railway stations across the country at an estimated cost of ₹500 crore.
 - It was described as one of the largest projects of its kind, involving the integration of Indian Railways and RailTel systems, with the collaboration of multiple agencies.

Nirbhaya Fund:

- The Nirbhaya Fund was **created by the Union government after the brutal gang-rape and murder** of a 23-year-old woman in Delhi in **2012**.
- The dedicated fund was meant for projects specifically designed for the **safety and security of women**.

Read more on [Nirbhaya Fund](#).

G. Tidbits

1. J&K administration bans drones in Srinagar

What's in News?

The Jammu and Kashmir administration **banned the sale, use and possession of unmanned aerial vehicles in Srinagar**.

Background:

- Recently, two Indian Air Force personnel were injured in a drone attack on the Air Force Station in Jammu.
 - Two explosives-laden drones had crashed into the airbase.
 - Suspicious sightings of UAVs **triggered a security alert**.

Read more on this topic covered in [June 30th, 2021 CNA](#).

Details:

- The order was **issued under Section 144 of the CrPC**. Violation of the guidelines would **attract punitive action**.
- The government departments are allowed to use drones for mapping, surveys and surveillance in agricultural, environment conservation and disaster mitigation sectors.

2. Taliban capture several districts in Afghanistan

What's in News?

Taliban captured several districts in Badakhshan province – Northeastern part of Afghanistan.

- The fall of the Panjwai district in the southern province of Kandahar, the birthplace of the Taliban, comes just two days after **the U.S. and NATO forces vacated their main Bagram Air Base near Kabul.**
- As the U.S plans to **withdraw from Afghanistan by September 11, 2021**, the **Taliban** have **made strides throughout the country.**
 - Their most significant gains have been in the **northern half of Afghanistan** (a traditional stronghold of the U.S.-allied warlords who helped defeat the Taliban in 2001).
- The **Taliban** now **control roughly a third of all 421 districts and district centres in Afghanistan.**

3. How Chhattisgarh has stalled a historic judgment

Salwa Judum:

- Salwa Judum was a militia that was mobilized and **deployed as part of anti-insurgency operations in Chhattisgarh**, aimed at countering Naxalite violence in the region.
- The militia, **consisting of local tribal youth**, received support and training from the Chhattisgarh state government.

Nandini Sundar & Ors vs State Of Chattisgarh (2011):

- In 2011, the Supreme Court of India declared **Salwa Judum to be illegal and unconstitutional**, and ordered its disbanding. The Court directed the Chhattisgarh government to recover all the firearms, ammunition and accessories.
- The use of surrendered Maoists and untrained villagers and youth in frontline counter-insurgency operations was criticised for its violations of human rights and **declared as a violation of Article 14 and Article 21 of the Indian Constitution.**
- **Article 14- Equality before law.** The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India; Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.

- [Article 21](#) - **Protection of life and personal liberty**. No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law.

Context:

- 10th anniversary of the Salwa Judum case.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The Constitution does not specify the strength of the State Public Service Commission (SPSC) but has left the matter to the discretion of the Governor.
2. The Chairman and members of an SPSC are appointed by the Governor, they can be removed only by the President.
3. Joint State Public Service Commission is a statutory body.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- A State Public Service Commission performs all those functions in respect of the state services as the UPSC does in relation to the Central services.
- The Constitution does not specify the strength of the State Public Service Commission (SPSC) but has left the matter to the discretion of the Governor.
- The Chairman and members of an SPSC are appointed by the Governor, they can be removed only by the President.
- Joint State Public Service Commission is a statutory body.

Read more on [Joint State Public Service Commission](#).

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

1. The Rabhas are a tribe from Assam.

2. Bagurumba is a folk dance in Assam which is performed by the Rabhas.

Options:

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

Answer: a

Explanation:

- The Rabhas are Scheduled Tribes in Assam.
- While Bagurumba is a folk dance in Assam, it is performed by the Bodos.
- Hamja is a folk dance performed by the Rabha tribes.
- The Hamja Dance is about paddy cultivation.
- Baikho Dera is the main festival of Rabhas.

Q3. The Sharda Act is one of the significant reforms initiated by the British in India. What does it deal with?

- a. Transfer of ancestral property
- b. Child marriage
- c. Remarriage of widows
- d. Prohibition of Sati & female infanticide

Answer: b

Explanation:

- The Child Marriage Restraint Act was a legislative act passed by the British on 28 September 1929.
- The act fixed the marriageable age for girls at 14 years and 18 years for boys.
- It is popularly known as the Sharda Act after its sponsor, Harbilas Sarda.

Q4. Arrange the following rivers from west to east:

- 1. Ramganga
- 2. Gomati
- 3. Ghaghara

4. Gandak

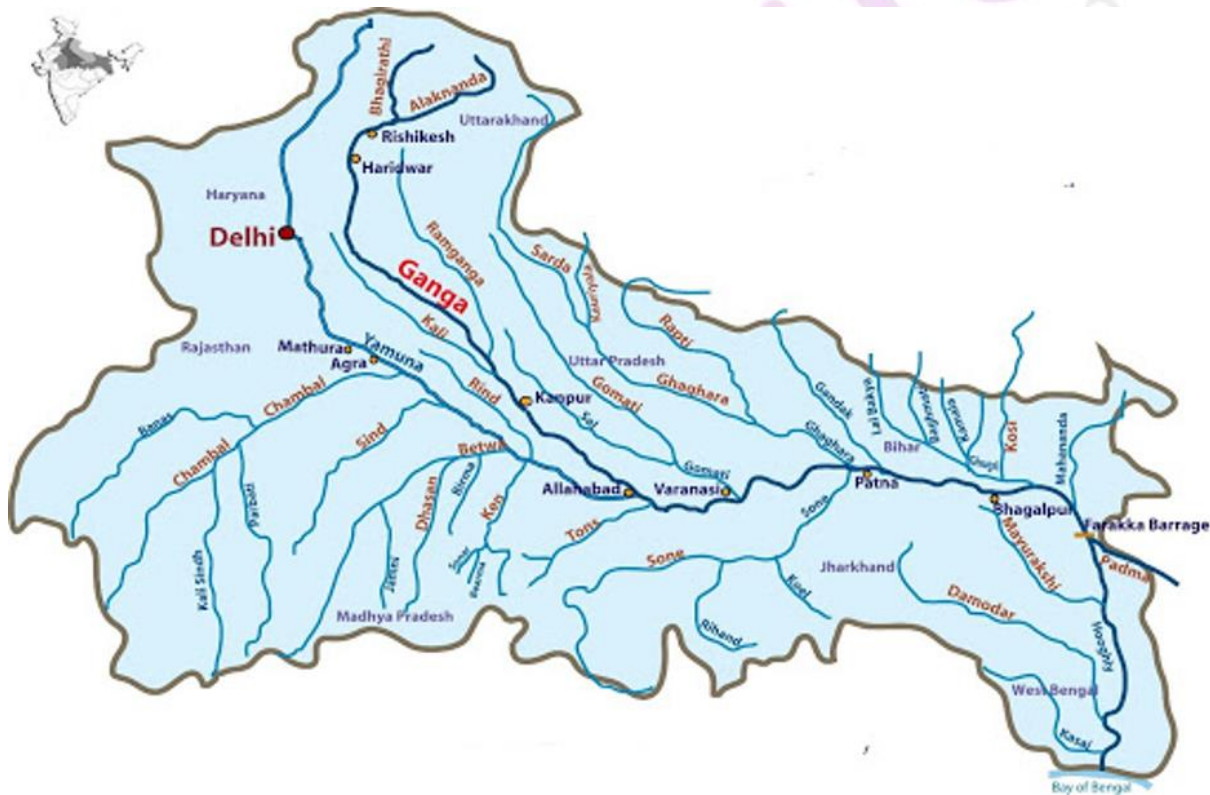
Options:

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

Answer: a

Explanation:

West to East: Ramganga – Gomati – Ghaghara - Gandak



Source: <http://www.cwc.gov.in/ugbo/gangabasin>

Q5. In India, other than ensuring that public funds are used efficiently and for intended purpose, what is the importance of the office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG)?

1. CAG exercises exchequer control on behalf of the Parliament when the President of India declares national emergency/financial emergency.
2. CAG reports on the execution of projects or programmes by the ministries are discussed by the Public Accounts Committee.
3. Information from CAG reports can be used by investigating agencies to frame charges against those who have violated the law while managing public finances.
4. While dealing with the audit and accounting of government companies, CAG has certain judicial powers for prosecuting those who violate the law.

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

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

- Comptroller and Auditor General does not exercise exchequer control on behalf of the Parliament when the President of India declares a national emergency/financial emergency. He/she has no such powers.
- CAG reports on the execution of projects or programmes by the ministries are discussed by the Public Accounts Committee.
- Information from CAG reports can be used by investigating agencies to frame charges against those who have violated the law while managing public finances.

Read more on [Comptroller and Auditor General of India: Role, Functions, Duties.](#)

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. The mandate given to the Chief of Defence Staff to bring in jointness by setting up 'Theatre Commands' has run into problems. Examine. (250 words; 15 marks) (GS 3 Security).
2. Discuss the constitutionality of Salwa Judum. (250 words; 15 marks) (GS 3 Security).