

## 02 Aug 2021: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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### B. GS 2 Related

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. [‘States too must ensure cases are not filed under Sec. 66A’](#)

**Context:**

In an affidavit submitted to the Supreme Court, the Centre has said that **States and their agencies share an equal responsibility** to ensure that people are not booked under Section 66A of the [Information Technology Act](#).

**Background:**

- **Section 66A** was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in a judgment in 2015.
- It has continued to be in use not only within police stations but also in cases before trial courts across India.
- **Recently, a Supreme Court Bench** said it was shocking that people were still booked and tried under Section 66A.

This topic has been covered in [July 6th, 2021 CNA](#).

**Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**1. Pak. finalises Bill to grant new status to Gilgit-Baltistan: report**

**Context:**

Pakistani authorities have finalised a law to award provisional provincial status to strategically located Gilgit-Baltistan.

**Gilgit-Baltistan:**



- Gilgit-Baltistan borders **China in the North and Kashmir and Ladakh to the southeast.**
- It shares a geographical boundary with Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, and India considers it as part of the undivided Jammu and Kashmir, while Pakistan sees it as separate from PoK.
- The **China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) also passes through this region.**
  - The main reason behind India's opposition towards China's One Belt One Road (OBOR) policy is the [China-Pakistan Economic Corridor \(CPEC\)](#), which is a part of OBOR.
- Three of the world's longest glaciers outside the Polar regions are found in Gilgit-Baltistan.

### **Indi's Stand:**

- India has clearly conveyed to Pakistan that the **entire Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, including the areas of Gilgit and Baltistan, are an integral part of the country** by virtue of its fully legal and irrevocable accession.
- India has condemned Pakistan's attempt to make **material changes to the disputed area.**
- India asserts that the **Government of Pakistan or its judiciary has no locus standi on territories illegally and forcibly occupied by it.**

## 2. UNSC Presidency: Jaishankar lays out policy perspective

### Context:

India has taken over the [Security Council](#) Presidency in August 2021.

### Details:

- External Affairs Minister laid out the **policy perspective that the Indian team at the U.N. will pursue during the Security Council Presidency.**
- He asserted that India's vision has been steered by **Dialogue and Cooperation, mutual respect and commitment to international law.**
- India is organising three high-level signature meetings, focusing on our priority areas: **maritime security, peacekeeping, and counterterrorism.**
- Maritime security, which is of significance in dealing with freedom of navigation in the [South China Sea](#), is likely to receive the bulk of Indian attention.
- Four major Asian conflicts are raging and diplomatic analysts believe that India should focus on resolving the conflicts in **Afghanistan, Myanmar, and Yemen** and find a lasting solution to troubles in **Syria.**
- The developments in Afghanistan and Myanmar especially are of immediate importance to India and the broader Asian region.

### Note:

- The presidency for the month of August will be India's first time at the helm of the UN's most important body during its 2021-22 tenure as a non-permanent member of the Security Council.
- India is an **elected non-permanent member of the Security Council** and had received the support of the Asia-Pacific countries in the election.
- The UNSC presidency is held by each of the council's members for a single month based on the alphabetical order of the member states' names.
- India had last assumed the UNSC presidency in 2011.
- It will again preside over the Council in December 2022, the last month of its two-year tenure.

## C. GS 3 Related

Category: SECURITY

## 1. Assam, Mizoram agree to ease border tension

### Context:

The Chief Ministers of Assam and Mizoram have sought to ease tensions along their troubled inter-State border following a discussion with the Union Home Minister.

### Background:

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

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

### Details:

- The Mizoram government claimed that a 509 square-mile stretch of the inner-line reserve forest notified in 1875 — under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation of 1873 — belongs to it. The Assam government, on the other hand, maintained that the constitutional map and boundary drawn by the [Survey of India](#) in 1933 was acceptable to it.
- **Satellite imagery** will be used for settling border disputes.
- For a more permanent solution to dealing with inter-State border issues, the **North Eastern Space Application Centre (NESAC)** has been asked to map and demarcate the State boundaries using satellite imaging.

### Category: AGRICULTURE

## 1. As monsoon recovers, Kharif sowing lag drops below 5%

### Context:

Signs of recovery in the sowing of Kharif crops as the monsoon is picking up pace and covering the whole country.

### Details:

- **Though the monsoon rainfall is just 2% below normal, the overall figures hide both geographical and temporal unevenness.**
- The biggest continuing lags are in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, where the three-week pause in the rains has resulted in a **lower sown area for rain-fed crops such as coarse cereals, oilseeds and pulses.**



- This is significant as the **rising prices of edible oils and pulses** have been major contributors to recent **inflation trends**.

Read more on [Rabi and Kharif Crops: Overview and Major Crops](#)

## D. GS 4 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## E. Editorials

Category: **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

### 1. The draw of space and nuclear technologies

The article talks about the **new ventures in space and nuclear technology** that have a huge potential to **benefit mankind**.

#### **Background:**

- Recently, Jeff Bezos blasted into space on Blue Origin's first flight with people on board, becoming the second billionaire to ride his own spacecraft.
- Another billionaire, Bill Gates, decided to launch his own nuclear reactor eyeing the possibility of exporting fast breeder reactors to power-hungry countries.
- Both these momentous events have been characterised as essentially aimed at the environment to reverse climate change.

#### **Concerns:**

- While critics called Blue Origin's space flight an expensive and wasteful adventure, Bezos insisted that he had an environmental vision. He said that his vision was to take all heavy industry, all polluting industry and move it into space, and keep Earth as this beautiful gem of a planet that it is.
- Despite the safety of nuclear reactors and nuclear weapon proliferation being a growing concern, Mr. Gates stressed the importance of nuclear power as the clean energy required to meet the requirements of the world.

#### **The future of atomic energy:**

- The expanded use of nuclear technologies offers immense potential to meet important development needs.
- This can help in satisfying the energy demands and mitigating the threat of climate change which are two of the 21st century's greatest challenges.
- It can help address energy poverty and facilitate economic development.
- Post Fukushima incident:
  - However, the Fukushima Daiichi accident in Japan in 2011 completely transformed the nuclear power situation beyond recognition and dealt a blow to plans for swiftly scaling up nuclear power.
  - As the global community turned its attention to strengthening nuclear safety, several countries opted to phase out nuclear power.
  - The nuclear industry was at a standstill **except in Russia, China and India.**
  - Even in India, the **expected installation of imported reactors did not materialise** because of the **liability law** and the **anti-nuclear protests** in proposed locations.
  - India had to go in for **more indigenous reactors** to increase the nuclear component of its energy mix.
  - More than 50 nations, which were seeking [IAEA](#) approval for nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, quietly withdrew their requests.
- After intensive efforts to strengthen nuclear safety and with global warming becoming a serious cause of concern, nuclear power is regaining a place in global debates as a climate-friendly energy option once again.
- Countries such as Japan and Germany reopened their reactors to produce energy.
- Organisations such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change ([IPCC](#)) and the International Energy Agency (IEA) recognise the ability of nuclear power to address major global challenges.

### Issues:

- It remains uncertain whether the value of this clean, reliable and sustainable source of (nuclear) energy will achieve its full potential any time soon.
- In some major markets, nuclear power lacks a favourable policy and financing framework that recognise its contributions to climate change mitigation and sustainable development.
- Without a framework, nuclear power will struggle to deliver on its full potential, even as the world remains dependent on fossil fuels.

### What is Bill Gates' plan?

- TerraPower, the nuclear company founded by Mr. Gates, has just announced an agreement with private funders for its Sodium fast reactor demonstration project.

- Since it falls within the advanced small modular reactor project of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), the Department will subsidise the project to the extent of \$80 million this year.

#### Benefits:

- The DOE and other nuclear enthusiasts also believe that small, factory-built, modular reactors will be cheaper and safer.
- It is believed that it would attract foreign buyers and will revive America's nuclear industry and enable the United States to compete in an international market now dominated by China and Russia.

#### Criticisms:

- Critics have challenged the move on several grounds such as the failure of earlier efforts to develop such reactors.
- They have highlighted the risk of turning inert uranium into plutonium and then using the plutonium as fuel.
- They have argued that it can even breed excess plutonium to fuel new fast reactors.
- What concerns them most is that plutonium is a nuclear explosive that can be used for developing a bomb. They are afraid that the availability of plutonium through commercial channels would be fraught with dangers.
- While TerraPower has announced that Natrium would be fuelled with uranium enriched to 20% U-235 rather than explosive plutonium, concerns are if the same restraint will be applied when Natrium reactor is offered for export.
- Currently, only a handful of nations can make 20% enriched uranium. Critics believe that there will be a rush to make 20% enriched uranium worldwide.
- The main objection to nuclear enrichment beyond a point in Iran arises from the fact that it would lead to weapon-grade uranium being available for them.
- The other objection is that the principal reason for preferring fast reactors is to gain the ability to breed plutonium. The way it is configured, the reactor would make and reuse massive quantities of material that could also be used as nuclear explosives in warheads.
- The claim that fast reactors are safer than light water reactors has also been called into question.

#### Focus on India and China:

- India's fast breeder reactor, which is not subject to international inspections, is seen as capable of feeding the nuclear weapons capability of India.
- And the recent reports that China is building two more fast reactors have immediately provoked international concerns about China's possible weapons plutonium production.
- The opponents of TerraPower believe that India and China will be encouraged in their efforts to develop fast breeder reactors and may even want to buy them from Mr. Gates.



## Conclusion:

The U.S. Presidents Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter made it U.S. policy to discourage the commercialising of plutonium-fuelled reactors. President Ford had announced that the U.S. would not support reliance on plutonium fuel and associated reprocessing of spent fuel until “the world community can effectively overcome the associated risks of proliferation.” The critics do not think that the world has reached such a stage. It remains to be seen whether the new ventures of Jeff Bezos and Bill Gates will strike a chord and benefit mankind.

## Category: HEALTH

### 1. The benefits of breastfeeding

UNICEF has highlighted the importance of breastfeeding by asserting that **it is among the most effective ways to protect maternal and child health and promote healthy growth** and optimal development in early childhood. Infants should be breastfed within one hour of birth, exclusively for the first six months of their lives, and be breastfed after six months in combination with solid, semi-solid and soft food until they are about two years old.

#### Advantages:

- It provides greater immunity for children against infection, allergies, cancers and obesity.
- It is known to improve brain maturation.
- It is also beneficial for the mother: as it promotes faster weight loss after birth, reduces postpartum bleeding, and protects her against breast cancer, ovarian cancer, and osteoporosis.
- Data from The Lancet show that more investment in breastfeeding could add \$300 billion to the global economy and prevent about 8,20,000 child deaths every year.

The advantages of breast milk are evidence-based.

#### Concerns:

- Globally only 25%-40% of babies are breastfed.
- During the late 19th century, an increase in infant mortality rate and a rise in non-communicable diseases during adulthood were attributed to bottle feeding.
- In India, the National Family Health Survey-5 data show that there has been a decline in early breastfeeding in as many as 12 of the 22 surveyed States and Union Territories while the share of institutional births has increased.

### **Steps taken to promote breastfeeding:**

- The World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) was established in 1991 to create awareness about the importance of breastfeeding.
- In 1992, WABA in coordination with [UNICEF](#) introduced World Breastfeeding Week during the first week of August every year.
- India enacted the Infant Milk Substitutes, Feeding Bottles and Infant Foods Act in 1992 with stringent regulations.

### **Ways to promote breastfeeding:**

- As women are entering the workforce in large numbers while society has shifted to a nuclear family system, maternity leave becomes essential. Such a move will ensure uninterrupted breastfeeding.
- There is a need for counselling and educating the parents.
- Breast milk banks must be established.
- Providing lactating mothers with subsidised breast milk pump equipment, and setting up exclusive facilities to breastfeed will prove to be beneficial for mothers to provide exclusive breastmilk for children up to six months.
- Assistance from the partner is indispensable. Therefore, paternity leave must also be extended to 12-16 weeks. Indian law currently allows for 15 days of paternity leave.

### **Conclusion:**

With a change in social, cultural and environmental factors, breastfeeding is no longer mother-centric. Governments must allocate specific funds, rigorously implement the law, invest in educating parents and health workers and involve civil society organisations and the media in spreading awareness. Breastfeeding has decreased during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, it is important that the promotion of breastfeeding should be a continuous process.

### **Category: ECONOMY**

#### **1. A cycle of low growth, higher inflation**

The article talks about the inflationary trends in India and calls for policy action to ensure higher demand and growth.

### **Issue:**

- In recent times, some economists have been arguing that the Government does not need to do anything with the economy and that it will revive by itself.
- These economists reason that, like after the [Great Depression](#), the economy rebounded worldwide, so will it in the present case.

**It is argued that this assumption is fallacious on four accounts:**

**Demand:**

- In the case of the Great Depression, demand was created by the Second World War effort.
- In the United States, its industrial capabilities could be used as a supply base for the entire Allied effort.
- In the current scenario, there is no war to create demand.
- Besides, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in demand destruction.
- The only bright spot in this scenario is that the western world has spent a lot of money stimulating the economy.
- In India, from the point of view of the exporter, rising freight costs and non-availability of containers is a significant impediment along with structural issues. Only the Indian IT sector is placed well to capitalise on rising demand in the world markets.

**Inflation:**

- India is suffering from stagnant growth to low growth in the last two quarters.
- Any growth in the current quarter will be illusionary because it comes on top of substantial negative growth in the first quarter of last year. This is known as the “low base effect”.
- Growing Inflation in India is because of high commodity prices and high asset price inflation (which is caused by loose monetary policy being followed across the globe, where the economy is infused with large amounts of money to stimulate growth).
  - Foreign portfolio investors have directed a portion of the liquidity towards our markets.
  - Compared to a developed capital market such as that of the U.S., India has a relatively low market capitalisation. It, therefore, cannot absorb the enormous capital inflow without asset prices inflating.
  - The wealthy upper class gets richer due to access to financial assets.
  - The middle and lower-middle-class get destitute due to regressive indirect taxes and high [inflation](#), with their wealth eroding due to the inflation.
- In the case of the lower middle class, inflation is lethal as they do not have access to any hard assets, including the most fundamental hard asset, gold.

**Fuel prices:**

- Supply chain bottlenecks have contributed to the inflation.

- Essential goods have increased in cost due to scarce supply.
- India's taxation policy on fuel has made things worse. Rising fuel prices percolate the economy by increasing costs for transport. This leads to the dangerous cycle of inflation and depleting growth.

### Concerns:

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) claims that this inflation is transitory in nature while inflationary expenses are entrenched.
- Inflation is here to stay because the RBI is infusing massive liquidity into the system by following an expansionary monetary policy through the G-SAP, or Government Securities Acquisition Programme.
- An added threat is the crowding out of the private sector.

### Interest Rate:

- The only solution for any central banker once he realises that inflation is entrenched is tightening liquidity and further pushing the cost of money.
- If this does not reduce inflation, repo rates will need to go up.
- Tightening the money supply is a painful act. Rising interest rates lead to a decrease in aggregate demand in a country, which affects the GDP. There is less spending by consumers and investments by corporates.

### Non-Performing Assets:

- Rising interest rates, lack of liquidity, and offering credit to leveraged companies instead of direct subsidies to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) will result in growing [NPAs](#) of the public sector banks.
- Our small and medium scale sector is facing a Minsky moment.
  - The Minsky moment states that every credit cycle has three distinct stages. The first stage is that of cautious lending and risk aversion by the bankers. The second stage is lending to trustworthy debtors who can pay the principal and its interest. The third stage is a state of euphoria caused by rising asset prices where bankers lend to debtors regardless of their ability to pay back interest, let alone the principal.
- The Minsky moment marks the decline of asset prices, causing mass panic and the inability of debtors to pay their interest and principal. India has reached its Minsky moment.
- This means that the public sector unit and several other banks will need capital in copious amounts to make up for bad debt.
- Several banks and financial institutions have collapsed in India.
- The Union government's Budget is in no position to infuse large amounts of capital.

### **Conclusion:**

As a result of the above causes, credit growth is at a multi-year low of 5.6%. Banks do not want to risk any more loans on their books. The Indian economy is in a vicious cycle of low growth and higher inflation unless policy action ensures higher demand and growth. In the absence of policy interventions, India will continue on the path of a K-shaped recovery where large corporates with low debt will prosper at the cost of small and medium sectors. This means lower employment as most of the jobs are created by small and medium sectors.

### **Note:**

- A K-shaped recovery occurs when, following a recession, different parts of the economy recover at different rates, times, or magnitudes. This is in contrast to an even, uniform recovery across sectors, industries, or groups of people.

## **F. Prelims Facts**

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## **G. Tidbits**

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## **H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions**

**Q1. Who among the following are entitled to Free Legal Services?**

1. BPL cardholders
2. A woman is entitled to free legal aid irrespective of her income or financial status
3. An industrial workman
4. A member of a Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe

**Options:**

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

**Answer: c**



**Explanation:**

- Article 39 A of the [Constitution of India](#) provides for free legal aid to the poor and weaker sections of the society, to promote justice on the basis of equal opportunity.
- Article 14 and Article 22 (1), obligate the State to ensure equality before the law. To receive those services, the person acquiring them should fall under the following categories:

People with disability	Women and children
People who are members of SC & ST communities	Victims of poverty (beggars) and human trafficking
Industrial workmen	People under custody
People who are victims of natural disasters, caste or ethnic violence, etc.	People with an annual income lower than 1 lakh

**Q2. Which of the following are the advantages of Direct Seeding of Rice (DSR)?**

1. It helps in saving irrigation water
2. Less labour required
3. Planting cost is saved
4. It will save energy

**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: d****Explanation:**

- Direct seeding is the sowing of seeds directly in the soil, by-passing the need for nurseries and irrigation.
- Direct seeded crops require less labour and tend to mature faster than transplanted crops. In this method, plants are not subjected to stresses such as being pulled from the soil and re-establishing fine rootlets. It will save energy and planting cost is saved.
- It is an economical measure that helps in conserving water, nutrients, etc.

**Q3. Consider the following statements:**

1. Under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, disabilities have been increased from 7 to 21 and the State Governments will have the power to add more types of disabilities.
2. Every child with benchmark disability between the age group of 6 and 18 years shall have the right to free education.

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

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

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

- Under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, disabilities have been increased from 7 to 21.
- Only the Central Governments will have the power to add more types of disabilities.
- State governments must take measures to minimise the impact of disability.
- Every child with benchmark disability between the age group of 6 and 18 years shall have the right to free education.

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

1. Halam Tribes are native to the state of Tripura, Assam and Sikkim.
2. Longai River is a trans-boundary river in India and Myanmar.

**Options:**

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

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

- Halam Tribes are native to the state of Tripura, Assam and Mizoram.

- The name Halam was coined by the Tipra Maharaja. As per their oral tradition they called themselves "Riam".
- Longai River is a trans-boundary river in India and Bangladesh.

**Q5. Which of the following parties were established by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar? (UPSC 2012)**

1. The Peasants and Workers Party of India
2. All India Scheduled Castes Federation
3. The Independent Labour Party

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

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

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

- All India Scheduled Castes Federation and The Independent Labour Party were established by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

## I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Of late, billionaire entrepreneurs have ventured into space and nuclear domains through ambitious initiatives. To what extent can these ventures benefit mankind? (250 words; 15 marks) [GS 3, Science & Technology]
2. OBC reservation in All-India Quota medical seats puts an end to a discriminatory policy. Critically analyse. (250 words; 15 marks) [GS 2, Polity]