

23 Aug 2021: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. GS 1 Related

B. GS 2 Related

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. [Pro-Pak. slogans: NSA invoked against 4](#)

HEALTH

1. [Afghan returnees to get polio vaccines](#)

C. GS 3 Related

SECURITY

1. [Assam moves to ease fresh row with Mizoram](#)
2. [Hurriyat may face wrath of UAPA](#)

DEFENCE

1. [Malabar war games to begin](#)

D. GS 4 Related

E. Editorials

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. [Breaking the logjam, handing over the baton](#)

HEALTH

1. [Focusing on diseases sidelined by COVID-19](#)

F. Prelims Facts

1. [Vaccinated pilgrims can visit Kartarpur](#)
2. [Sainik Samman Pension Scheme \(SSSPS\)](#)

G. Tidbits

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

A. GS 1 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

B. GS 2 Related

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. [Pro-Pak. slogans: NSA invoked against 4](#)

Context:

The police invoked the stringent **National Security Act (NSA)** against four persons out of ten arrested for **allegedly raising pro-Pakistan slogans**.

Details:**The National Security Act**

- The National Security Act of 1980 provides for the provision of **preventive detention** in certain cases.
- The Act empowers the Central Government and State Governments to **detain a person to prevent him/her from acting in any manner prejudicial to the national security of India**, the relations of India with foreign countries, the maintenance of law and order, or the maintenance of supplies and services essential to the community.
- The act also gives power to the governments to **detain a foreigner** with a view to regulate his/her presence or expel from the country.

Read more on [National Security Act, 1980](#).

Category: HEALTH**1. Afghan returnees to get polio vaccines****Context:**

The Health Ministry has decided to **vaccinate returnees from Afghanistan with free polio vaccines** as a preventive measure.

Concern:

- **India received its “polio-free certification”** along with the entire Southeast Asia region on March 27, 2014.
- However, **wild polio virus cases continue to be reported in neighbouring Pakistan and Afghanistan** — the last two polio-endemic countries in the world.
- According to the WHO, failure to eradicate polio from these last remaining strongholds could result in as many as **2,00,000 new cases every year**, within 10 years, all over the world.

- Child vaccination drives, including polio campaigns, were **halted in both Afghanistan and Pakistan in 2020 to avoid the risk of COVID-19 transmission.**
- However, according to [UNICEF](#), polio immunisation campaigns were resumed in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Details:

- Vaccination of those coming in from Afghanistan will ensure that **people harbouring the virus will not be able to infect those around them.**
 - Afghanistan has suffered because of its **compromised disease surveillance and healthcare system.**
- The WHO has said that if enough people in a community are immunised, the **virus would be deprived of susceptible hosts and would die out.**
- High levels of vaccination coverage have to be maintained to **stop transmission and prevent outbreaks from occurring.**
- The move by the government is vital in **ensuring India's status as a polio-free country.**

C. GS 3 Related

Category: SECURITY

1. Assam moves to ease fresh row with Mizoram

Context:

Assam has taken fresh measures to ease fresh **tensions building up on the inter-state border between Assam and Mizoram.**

Background:

Recently, an **extensive border row** between Assam and Mizoram took a violent turn.

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

2. Hurriyat may face wrath of UAPA

Context:

A ban under the **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA)** may be imposed on both factions of the Hurriyat Conference, which has been spearheading the **separatist movement in Jammu and Kashmir** for over two decades.

What is the Hurriyat Conference?

- The Hurriyat Conference came into existence in 1993 with 26 groups, including some pro-Pakistan and banned outfits such as the Jamaat-e-Islami, the JKLF and the Dukhtaran-e-Millat.
- It also included the People's Conference and the Awami Action Committee.
- It broke into two factions in 2005, into a moderate group and a hardline one.

Details:

- A probe into the funding of terror groups indicated the **alleged involvement of secessionist and separatist leaders**, including members and cadres of the **Hurriyat Conference**.
- Both factions of the Hurriyat are likely to be banned under **Section 3(1) of the UAPA**, under which “if the Central Government is of opinion that **any association is, or has become, an unlawful association**, it may, by notification in the Official Gazette, **declare such association to be unlawful**”.
- The proposal has been mooted in accordance with the Union government's policy of **zero tolerance against terrorism**.

Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA)

- The UAPA assigns **absolute power to the central government**, by way of which if the Centre deems an activity as **unlawful** then it may, by way of an **Official Gazette**, **declare it so**.
- Under UAPA, both **Indian and foreign nationals can be charged**.
- **The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act was amended in 2019. Following the amendments,**
 - The Act empowers the **Director-General of the [National Investigation Agency \(NIA\)](#) to grant approval of seizure or attachment of property**.
 - The Act **empowers the officers of the NIA, of the rank of Inspector or above, to investigate cases of terrorism** in addition to those conducted by the DSP or ACP or above rank officer in the state.
 - It allows **designating an individual as a terrorist**.

Read more: [Unlawful Activities \(Prevention\) Amendment Act - Background, Features and Concerns](#)

Note:

- So far, the **Union government has banned the Jamaat-e-Islami and the JKLF under the UAPA.**
- The ban was imposed in 2019.

Category: DEFENCE**1. Malabar war games to begin****Context:**

The Quad countries — India, the U.S., Australia and Japan — will carry out the Malabar naval exercise off the coast of Guam.

- It is taking place in the midst of a growing convergence of interests in the maritime domain as well as military cooperation among the [Quad](#) nations in the face of China's increasing assertiveness.
- Global concerns are mounting over China's growing military muscle-flexing in the Indo-Pacific region.

Malabar Exercise:

- Malabar Exercise **started off in 1992 as a bilateral naval exercise between Indian and US navies.**
- **In 2015, Japan joined the exercise Malabar** making it a trilateral naval exercise.
- **In 2020, the Australian Navy joined the Malabar Exercise** making it a quadrilateral naval exercise. Earlier, Australia joined the exercise in 2007.
- It is seen as a **reflection of the increasing partnership among the Quad countries.**
- China has been suspicious about the purpose of the exercise as it feels that the annual war game is an effort to contain its influence in the Indo-Pacific.
- The exercise is **not part of the framework of cooperation under Quad.**

Read more on [Malabar Exercise](#).

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Breaking the logjam, handing over the baton

Context:

- The Supreme Court Collegium led by the Chief Justice of India (CJI) has recommended/selected nine persons to be appointed to the Supreme Court.

Background:

Collegium System:

- The Collegium System is a system under which **appointments of judges to Supreme Court and High Courts and transfers of judges of High Courts** are decided by a forum of the Chief Justice of India and the four senior-most judges of the Supreme Court.
- The recommendations of the names of lawyers or judges are sent by the Collegium to the Central Government which acts on these recommendations.

For detailed information on the collegium system refer to the following article:

[Collegium System](#)

Delays in the appointment process:

- Every CJI during his tenure had taken up the filling up of vacancies as a matter of highest priority, but many could not succeed due to the complexity involved.
 - It had become **tough to build a consensus** among the collegium members around one person or a few persons.
- The **delay in the government accepting the recommendations** has been only adding to the delay in the appointment process.
- The vacancies had been **seriously affecting the functioning of the judiciary**.
 - On average, the [High Courts](#) suffer at least 40% vacancies. Some of them were functioning only with half their sanctioned strength.

Details:

- This is the first time ever that nine persons have been selected at one go.
- The Supreme Court is now near its full strength with one just vacancy left now. The near full strength will ease the pressure on the Supreme Court considerably.

Aspects involved in selection/recommendation:

- The norms to be followed in judicial appointments is a **judicious blend of merit, seniority, interests of the marginalised and deprived sections** of society, women, religions, regions and communities.

Merit:

- In the **Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association and Another vs Union of India (1993)**, the Court spelt out the parameters within which to accomplish the task of selecting candidates for appointment to the higher judiciary. The most crucial consideration is the merit of the candidates. The merit is the ability of the judge to deliver complete justice.

Representation of all sections:

- Given **India's diversity** in terms of language, region, religion, community and caste, it becomes necessary that the state considers this diversity in the appointment process in every sphere including the judiciary and gives all these sections equal opportunity to be able to bring them into the mainstream.
- The overriding concern is to **ensure equal opportunities to all classes of people including backward classes or scheduled castes or scheduled tribes or minorities or women.**
- The selection of three women judges, with one of them having a chance to head the top court, a judge belonging to the Scheduled Caste and one from a backward community and the nine selected persons belonging to nine different States in the recent resolution of the collegium are all attempts in this direction.

Transparency:

- Given the fact that **India is perhaps the only country where the judges select judges to the higher judiciary**, it becomes absolutely necessary to make the norms of selection and appointment transparent.

Conclusion:

- With the Supreme Court Collegium showing the way in judicial appointments, the Government must match the pace and take the process of appointments to its logical conclusion at the earliest.

Additional information:

Article 142 of the Indian Constitution:

- Article 142 allows the [Supreme Court](#) to pass any order necessary to do “**complete justice**” in any case. “The Supreme Court in the exercise of its jurisdiction may pass such decree or make such order as is necessary for doing complete justice in any cause or matter pending before it...”

Category: HEALTH

1. Focusing on diseases sidelined by COVID-19

Background:

Non-Communicable Diseases:

- Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are medical conditions or diseases that are not caused by infectious agents.** These are chronic diseases of **long duration**, and generally with **slow progression** and are the **result of a combination of genetic, physiological, environmental and behavioural factors**.
- NCDs are the **silent killers of our generation**.
 - Nearly **71% of all deaths worldwide occur due to non-communicable diseases (NCDs)** such as hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, chronic respiratory diseases, and cancer.
 - One out of every four deaths occurs due to cardiovascular diseases, especially among younger patients. **In the Indian subcontinent, there is early onset and rapid progression of such diseases, and a high mortality rate.** Those with NCDs find that productive years of life are lost and there is high-out-of-pocket expenditure on treatment.

Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on NCDs:

Increased vulnerability:

- Available evidence points to the increased vulnerability of people with pre-existing NCDs to COVID-19 infection.
- The outcomes in COVID-19 patients with pre-existing cardiovascular disease risk factors or disease and diabetes can be worse than others.**

Disruption of NCD services:

- The COVID-19 pandemic has led to the disruption of NCD services.
 - The staff working in the area of NCDs have been reassigned to COVID-19 work. This has led to a **lack of staff for NCDs treatment**.
 - There is a **severe shortage of medicines and diagnostics services** available for NCDs.
 - The decreased availability of public transport has led to cancellations of planned treatments.
- The pandemic has severely **disrupted primary healthcare systems which form a critical part of the screening and management of NCDs**. As per a [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) survey conducted in May 2020, low-income countries were the most affected by this disruption.

Psychological impact:

- Lockdowns and reduced physical interactions led to loneliness, especially in the geriatric population. This resulted in **mental health disorders such as anxiety and depression**.
- The subsequent increase in **consumption of alcohol and tobacco and adoption of an unhealthy diet** increases the exposure to NCD risk factors.
 - Tobacco consumption has been linked to hypertension, cardiovascular diseases and stroke.

Recommendations:

- A paradigm shift is the need of the hour to **tackle the silent epidemic transition to NCDs**.

Attention to NCDs:

- The national and state health policymakers need to give requisite attention to the NCDs.
- **The National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke** needs to be expanded and adequately funded.
 - To address the challenge posed by NCDs, the [National Health Mission](#) launched the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke, in 2010, focusing on strengthening infrastructure, promoting good health, human resource development, early diagnosis, management and referral.

Prevention strategy:

- There have to be campaigns for **promoting a healthy lifestyle**.
- The importance of **physical activity and mental health** needs to be emphasized.

Strengthening primary health care system:

- The primary health system needs to be strengthened to **prevent, diagnose and provide care for NCDs**.
 - PHC system can tackle up to 80% of health needs and can reduce the need for specialized health care services. Thus strengthening the primary health infrastructure will help lessen the burden on hospitals.
- Primary healthcare systems must be **adequately resourced and trained** to ensure that persons at risk of NCDs receive appropriate screening, counselling and treatment. The administrations should **ensure essential NCD medicines and basic health technologies in all primary healthcare facilities**.
- **Screening for NCDs at the grassroots level** and the delivery of locally relevant and contextual messages for health promotion and prevention of NCDs will be critical interventions in the fight against NCDs. The **ASHA workers** can be appropriately trained and equipped to play this role.
 - As part of [Ayushman Bharat](#), the Government is supporting the States for **strengthening Sub Centres and Primary Health Centres as Health and Wellness Centres** for the provision of comprehensive primary care that includes preventive and health promotion at the community level with a continuum of care approach.

For more related information on the primary health care based rural healthcare system in India, refer to the following article:

[CNA June 4, 2021: Rural health care needs fixing, and now](#)

Use of telemedicine:

- There is the need to ensure that those at the highest risk continue receiving treatment for NCDs in spite of any future lockdowns or travel regulations.
- Telemedicine can help maintain a degree of continuum in healthcare services disrupted by the pandemic. Also, it can help reduce travel expenses, thus lowering patients' expenditure burden.

Curtail tobacco and alcohol consumption:

- India's response plan to address the growing burden of NCDs must include tobacco and alcohol cessation activities.

Additional information:

- In 2013, the **WHO Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of NCDs 2013–2020 (Global NCD Action Plan)** was adopted by the World Health Assembly to strengthen global and national responses to prevent and control NCDs.
- The Global NCD Action Plan includes a global monitoring framework and nine voluntary global targets to be attained by 2025.

- The World Health Organization has set a **target of 25% relative reduction in overall mortality from cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes, or chronic respiratory diseases by 2025.**

F. Prelims Facts

1. Vaccinated pilgrims can visit Kartarpur

What's in News?

Pakistan has decided to allow fully vaccinated Sikh pilgrims to visit Gurdwara Darbar Sahib, Kartarpur with strict COVID-19 protocols.

Kartarpur Corridor:

- India and Pakistan have signed an agreement to **operationalise the Kartarpur corridor** that will **facilitate pilgrims from India to visit the Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib in Pakistan.**
- The corridor connects Darbar Sahib in Pakistan's Kartarpur with the Dera Baba Nanak shrine in the Gurdaspur district and facilitate visa-free movement of Indian Sikh pilgrims.
- The pilgrims have to just obtain a permit to visit Kartarpur Sahib.
- It was **established in 1522 by Sikh faith founder [Guru Nanak Dev](#).**
- The Kartarpur shrine has **one of the last copies of the original Guru Granth Sahib.**
 - It is believed that the Guru Granth Sahib contains not only the wisdom of the 10 Gurus but is itself the 11th and last Guru.
- The corridor at Narowal, around 125 km from Lahore, was opened on the occasion of the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak in November 2019.

Read more on the [Kartarpur Corridor](#) in the link.

2. Sainik Samman Pension Scheme (SSSPS)

- It is a Central Scheme for the **grant of pension to freedom fighters and their families from the Central Revenues.**
- The Scheme provides for the grant of pension to **living freedom fighters and their families - if they are no more alive, and to the families of martyrs.**
- On their demise, **pension is provided to their eligible dependents viz.** spouses and thereafter, unmarried and unemployed daughters and dependent parents, as per prescribed eligibility norms and procedure.

- The Ministry of Home Affairs (Freedom Fighters Division) is the implementing agency.

G. Tidbits

Nothing here for today!!!

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1: Consider the following statements:

1. Every Census in independent India from 1951 to 2011 has published data on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, but not on other castes.
2. The responsibility of conducting the decennial Census rests with the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India which come under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: a

Explanation:

- Every Census in independent India from 1951 to 2011 has published data on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, but not on other castes.
- Census till 1931 published the caste data.
- The responsibility of conducting the decennial Census rests with the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Q2: Which of the following was/were the objectives of the Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) 2011?

1. To enable households to be ranked based on their Socio-Economic status.
2. To make available authentic information that will enable caste-wise population enumeration of the country.
3. To make available authentic information regarding the socio-economic condition, and education status of various castes and sections of the population.

Select the correct option from below:

- a. Only 1
- b. Only 2
- c. 1 & 3 only
- d. All of the above

Answer: d

Explanation:

- The Ministry of Rural Development commenced the Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) 2011, in rural areas and in urban areas it was carried out by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development.
- Its objectives were:
 - To enable households to be ranked based on their Socio-Economic status.
 - To make available authentic information that will enable caste-wise population enumeration of the country.
 - To make available authentic information regarding the socio-economic condition, and education status of various castes and sections of the population.

Q3: Which of the following statements regarding Malabar Naval Exercise is/are correct?

1. It focuses on Passage Exercises amongst the 4 Quad countries.
2. It started in 1992 as a bilateral exercise between the Indian and US navies.
3. Japan joined the exercise in 2015.

Select the correct option from below:

- a. 1 & 2
- b. 1 & 3
- c. 2 & 3
- d. All of the above

Answer: c

Explanation:

- The Malabar Exercise involves simulated war games.
- It includes diverse activities, ranging from fighter combat operations from aircraft carriers through maritime interdiction operations, anti-submarine warfare, diving salvage operations,

amphibious operations, counter-piracy operations, cross-deck helicopter landings and anti-air warfare operations.

- Malabar Exercise started off in 1992 as a bilateral naval exercise between Indian and US navies.
- In 2015, Japan joined the exercise Malabar making it a trilateral naval exercise.
- In 2020, the Australian Navy joined the Malabar Exercise making it a quadrilateral naval exercise. Earlier, Australia joined the exercise in 2007.

Q4: Consider the following statements regarding the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees:

1. The Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1950.
2. The High Commissioner reports annually to the General Assembly.
3. The work of the High Commissioner shall be of an entirely non-political character.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a. 1 & 2
- b. 1 & 3
- c. 2 & 3
- d. All of the above

Answer: d

Explanation:

- UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is an international organisation working for saving lives, safeguarding the rights and providing a better future for refugees, forcibly displaced communities and stateless people.
- The Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1950 in the wake of the mass displacements caused due to the Second World War in Europe.
- The High Commissioner reports annually to the General Assembly.
- The work of the High Commissioner shall be of an entirely non-political character.

Read more on [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees \(UNHCR\)](#).

Q5: The Gandhi-Irwin Pact included which of the following? (UPSC-2020)

1. Invitation to Congress to participate in the Round Table Conference
2. Withdrawal of Ordinances promulgated in connection with the Civil Disobedience Movement

3. Acceptance of Gandhiji's suggestion for enquiry into police excesses
4. Release of only those prisoners who were not charged with violence

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Answer: b

Explanation:

- The [Gandhi-Irwin Pact](#) was concluded on 5th March 1931 and is also known as the Delhi Pact.
- Solution by Viceroy Irwin - proposed Congress to suspend civil disobedience movement and participate in the Second Round Table Conference.
- It included the withdrawal of Ordinances promulgated in connection with the Civil Disobedience Movement.
- Gandhiji demanded the release of political prisoners not convicted of violence from jails.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Judicial reforms are the need of the hour, as the current appointment process to the Supreme Court remains opaque. Critically Evaluate. (10 Marks, 150 Words) (GS 2 Polity and Governance).
2. Strengthening the primary healthcare system will help tackle the burden of non-communicable diseases. Discuss. (10 Marks, 150 Words) (GS 2 Health).