

27 Sep 2021: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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B. GS 2 Related

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. CJI backs 50% quota for women in judiciary

Context:

Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana has backed 50% representation for women in the judiciary.

Concerns:

- The CJI said women constituted only about 30% of the subordinate judiciary.
- In High Courts, women judges constitute 11.5%, and in the [Supreme Court](#), there are currently just four women Justices out of the sitting 33 (i.e, 12%).
- Of the 1.7 million advocates, only 15% are women.
- Only 2% of the elected representatives in the State Bar Councils are women. At present, there is no woman member in the Bar Council of India.

Way Forward:

- There is a need to increase gender diversity in legal education. Reservation of a significant percentage of seats in law schools and universities for women would be the first step.
- The inclusion of women judges and lawyers will substantially improve the quality of justice delivery.

2. Going digital for better health solutions: Centre

Context:

PM Digital Health Mission (PM-DHM) has been launched.

Details:

- The project will enable access and exchange of longitudinal health records of citizens with their consent.
- It will create a seamless online platform through the provision of a wide range of data, information and infrastructure services by leveraging open, interoperable, standards-based digital systems, while ensuring the security, confidentiality and privacy of health-related personal information.

- The mission aims to create interoperability within the digital health ecosystem, similar to the role played by the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) in revolutionising payments.
- It will allow people to access health facilities more easily.
- The key components of PM-DHM include:
 - A health ID for every citizen: this would work as their health account, to which personal health records can be linked and viewed with the help of a mobile application.
 - A Healthcare Professionals Registry (HPR) and Healthcare Facilities Registries (HFR): that will act as a repository of all healthcare providers across both modern and traditional systems of medicine. This will ensure ease of doing business for doctors/hospitals and healthcare service providers.
- The PM-DHM is being implemented in a pilot phase in six Union Territories.

Note:

- PM-DHM Sandbox created as a part of the Mission will act as a framework for technology and product testing that will help organisations, including private players intending to be a part of the National Digital Health Ecosystem, become a 'Health Information Provider' or 'Health Information User'.
- The nationwide rollout of PM-DHM coincides with the third anniversary of Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY).

Also read: [National Digital Health Mission](#)

C. GS 3 Related

Category: SECURITY

1. Maoist influence down from 96 to 41 districts: Home Ministry

Context:

Union Home Minister Amit Shah chaired the meeting to review the security and other developmental aspects in the Left-Wing Extremism (LWE)-hit States.

Details:

- According to data provided by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), the geographical influence of Maoists has contracted to only 41 districts in the country.
- Earlier, in 2010, 96 such districts in 10 States accounted for Left Wing Extremism (LWE).

- The Chief Ministers of Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Telangana, Maharashtra and Odisha were present, while Chhattisgarh, West Bengal and Kerala were represented by Directors-General of Police and Chief Secretaries. Andhra Pradesh was represented by its Home Minister.
- The LWE-affected districts in the State can avail ₹33 crore under the Special Central Assistance (SCA) and Security Related Expenditure (SRA) scheme for infrastructure-related projects.
 - Security Related Expenditure Scheme is under implementation since 1996. The objective of the scheme is to supplement the efforts of the States to deal with the Naxalite problem effectively.
- As per norms, State governments have to reimburse the amount incurred on the deployment of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) in a State.

Left Wing Extremism:

- Left Wing Extremism (LWE) is the term used to describe Maoist insurgency in selected states in India.
- LWE movement has its roots in the Naxalbari area of West Bengal in the late 1960s.
- The Maoist insurgents started running a parallel system of administration in parts of central and eastern India.
- Left-wing extremism (LWE) is one of the biggest internal security threats facing the country today.

Read more on [Left Wing Extremism \(LWE\) or Naxalism](#).

Category: ECONOMY

1. Govt.-industry panel drives policy to revive manufacturing

Context:

The Steering Committee for Local Value Addition, Manufacturing and Exports (SCALE) was set up in 2020 as a joint government-industry panel for fast-tracking growth of the Indian manufacturing sector.

Details:

- It is aimed at bringing the Indian manufacturing industries out of the import-dependence pitfalls exposed by the pandemic.
- It looks at ways to increase localisation, component manufacturing and employment in the country.

- The group is working on ideas to tap the global sentiment against China and strengthen Indian manufacturing for 17 sectors ranging from toys, textiles, furniture and e-cycles to drones and fisheries.
- It has no deadlines, drafts or voluminous reports. All its proposals are laid out in a presentation at best.
- It follows a rigorous process of consultations to align different factions of the industry with varying agendas at multiple levels and tries to nudge an alignment of interests where differences seem unmanageable, before it takes up the relevant issues with the government.

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: SOCIAL ISSUES

1. Needless row

The article throws light upon the recent amendment to the Rajasthan Compulsory Registration of Marriages Act.

Context:

Recently, the Rajasthan Assembly passed the Rajasthan Compulsory Registration of Marriages (Amendment) Bill, 2021.

Details:

- It mandates that all marriages, including child marriages, be registered.
- It says that the bride and groom can apply for registration of marriage to the marriage registration officer of the place where they have been residing for more than 30 days.
- The marriage between the bridegroom who has not completed 21 years and the bride who has not completed 18 years of age could be registered by the parents or guardians within 30 days of the marriage.
- Now registration can be done at the level of District Marriage Registration Officer as well as Additional District Marriage Registration Officer and Block Marriage Registration Officer level.

Arguments against the Bill:

- Critics argue that the bill violates the present law in force against child marriages.
- The furore is over the assumption that this amendment now promotes child marriages.
- The bill has generated a lot of controversy and outrage.

Arguments for the Bill:

- It has been asserted by the supporters of the bill that the controversy over the amendment is unnecessary, as it clearly does not amount to validating or legitimising child marriage
- The bill does not say that child marriage is valid. The bill says that after marriage, only registration is necessary. It does not imply that child marriage is valid.
- Under the law, child marriages are not void, but only voidable at the instance of one of the parties, who may approach the court for nullifying the marriage within two years of attaining majority.
 - Registering such a marriage may help establish the legal rights of the underage party and those of any children born and deter any attempt to deny the marriage later.
 - It may even help the prosecution of those solemnising child marriages and implement provisions relating to maintenance and residence of the girl whose marriage is invalidated later.
- The marriage registrar could also alert the child marriage prohibition officer after registering the marriage.
- A 2006 Supreme Court ruling mandated registrations of all kinds of marriages and the Rajasthan government has said it passed this legislation to govern this rule.
- There has never been any specific prohibition on registering child marriages.
 - The Supreme Court had observed that even though registration itself could not be proof of a valid marriage as such, it would have great evidentiary value in the matters of custody of children, right of children born from the wedlock of the two persons whose marriage is registered and the age of parties to the marriage.

Way Forward:

- It is a fact that child marriages have increased in the backdrop of the pandemic.
- These are linked to various social and economic factors, including poverty and unemployment which the Government must address if child marriage is to be curbed.
- Child marriages impact and discriminate against girls and make them vulnerable to domestic violence, morbidity during childbirth and hamper their wellbeing and development.
- In the light of the controversy over this bill, the Parliament must consider the Law Commission's recommendation to amend the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, to make child marriages below 16 years void, and those solemnised when either party was between 16 and 18, voidable.

Note:

Voidable is a term typically used with respect to a contract that is valid and binding unless declared void by a party to the contract who is legitimately exercising a power to avoid the contractual obligations.

Category: EDUCATION

1. Stopping short of social justice

The article talks about the bill passed by the Tamil Nadu government to do away with the requirement for candidates to qualify in the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) for admission to undergraduate medical courses in the State.

Read more on this topic covered in [Sep 16th, 2021 CNA](#).

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Identity and public policy

Context:

Some political parties have demanded that caste be enumerated in the Census.

Read more on this topic covered in [Aug 25th, 2021 CNA](#).

Demand for a Caste Census:

- The demand is for counting the Other Backward Classes because the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes are already counted.
- The demand has been accompanied by the argument that the efficacy of public policy for enhancing well-being across the population is tied to the enumeration of Indians by their caste.
- One approach to assessing this argument is by comparing development outcomes in States where political parties have adopted caste-based mobilisation (Eg: Tamil Nadu) with those in States where political programmes for ending deprivation have taken the social-democratic route (Eg: Kerala).
- A comparison of the developmental experience of these States would therefore be instructive.

Details:

- Variables compared are adult literacy, infant mortality and consumption.

- Each of these indicators is related to one of the three components of the [United Nations Development Programme's](#) Human Development Index.
- In a comparison of Tamil Nadu and Kerala, for consumption (a proxy for income) the gap between the general population and the SCs is greater in Kerala than it is in Tamil Nadu but smaller when it comes to the other two indicators.
- However, when it comes to the absolute level achieved, the SCs of Kerala are better off than the SCs of Tamil Nadu on all three indicators.
 - They are also better off than the general population of India.
 - They have superior consumption, literacy and infant mortality outcomes.
- The maximin principle helps in reducing the gap between the general population and the SCs.
 - According to the maximin principle, that policy is preferred which maximises the position of the worst off in society.

Conclusion:

- Kerala will be chosen as better performing, for the most disadvantaged have higher indicators there.
- This evidence suggests that identity-based public policy may not be as effective as one based on an identity-less or universalist approach.
- The universal approach is the hallmark of social democracy.
- It has been known for decades that gender inequality exists in India. Knowledge of low literacy and high infant mortality among females has not done much to spur counteracting public policy that will ensure women's empowerment.
- Therefore, another significant conclusion is that politics and not the availability of information drives public policy.

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Flood management that cannot be watered down

Context:

Many of Bihar's districts have been facing serious challenges with recurrent and massive flooding.

Background:

- Some of Nepal's biggest river systems originate in the Himalayan [glaciers](#) which then flow into India through Bihar.
- During the monsoons, these river systems flood causing many problems for Bihar.

- The Government of Bihar has raised the matter at regular intervals.

Steps Taken to Address the Issue of Flooding:

- In 2004, the Joint Project Office (JPO), Biratnagar, was established in Nepal to prepare a detailed project report to construct a high dam on the Nepal side (on Kosi, Kamla and Bagmati rivers).
- In 2020, in India, the [Central Water Commission \(CWC\)](#), Ministry of Jal Shakti (MoJS), convened a special meeting of the joint team of experts to ascertain the status of the detailed project report.

Issue:

- The Water Resources Department, Bihar has repeatedly requested the MoJS to expedite the progress of the detailed project report.
- Despite the best efforts made by the Government of Bihar, the task remains unaccomplished even after 17 years.
- The crucial matter of water sharing with Nepal has been flagged by India officially as well. Nepal's lack of prompt reciprocation is a grave matter of concern.
 - It is essential that Nepal shows the required will to find a long-term solution with India in ending a perennial disaster.

Flood protection work:

- As in the existing India-Nepal Agreement on water resources, the State government is authorised to execute flood protection works up to critical stretches inside Nepal territory along the India-Nepal border.
 - In recent years, all such works have had to be carried out amidst increasing local resistance.
- Even during the pandemic, the Government of Bihar was intensively engaged at two levels:
 - with local Nepalese authorities.
 - through appeals to the Central government for carrying out flood protection.
- After sustained coordination between the Centre and Bihar and expedited interventions by India with Nepal, Kathmandu gave its conditional permission for manpower and machinery operation in the Nepal area of the Kosi basin.
 - Accordingly, 21 out of the 22 works could be completed.
 - Some progress was made to facilitate the smooth movement of manpower, machinery and flood control materials across the Gandak and Kamla rivers situated on the Nepal side to carry out flood protection work.

Way Forward:

- By controlling the flooding and using the water resources for common developmental uses such as hydroelectricity, irrigation and waterways, [India-Nepal relations](#) can be strengthened even further.
- Some of the key aspects of India-Nepal flood management must be relooked into under the existing arrangements of India's federal system that offers a possibility of better coordination between the Centre and State governments.
- There is a need for process-driven coordination between the Centre and the Government of Bihar to handle the flooding in Nepal's Terai and North Bihar (largely the Mithilanchal region).
- Nepal's attitude towards mutual issues (water sharing, flood control, etc.) has been short of collaboration.
- Since bilateral cooperation remains the axis of water sharing and water management between the two countries, Nepal must play its part in ensuring a sustainable way forward.

In the best spirit of friendship, Nepal and India should restart the water dialogue and come up with policies to safeguard the interests of all those who have been affected on both sides of the border. It is time the two countries come together and assess the factors that are causing losses through flooding every year. Water cooperation should drive the next big India-Nepal dialogue.

F. Prelims Facts

1. Gulab crosses coast near Kalingapatnam

What's in News?

Cyclone Gulab crossed the north Andhra Pradesh and south Odisha coast triggering widespread rain in the region.

- The deep depression over the Bay of Bengal intensified into [cyclone Gulab](#).
- This is the third cyclone of 2021 after [Tauktae](#) and Yaas.
- Cyclone Gulab was named by Pakistan.

The Naming of Cyclones:

- In 2018, a panel was set up to coordinate and decide names for future cyclones.
- The panel consists of 13 countries—India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Oman, Maldives, Yemen, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Iran, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Saudi Arabia.
- These countries choose the names of cyclones in the north Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean.

- India has proposed names such as Gati, Tej, Murasu, Aag, Neer, Prabhanjan, Ghurni, Ambud, Jaladhi and Vega.

G. Tidbits

1. Beijing-Lhasa key road link completed

What's in News?

China has completed a key section of the Beijing-Lhasa expressway, a 295-km stretch from Lhasa to Nagqu.

Details:

- The recently completed section is located at an average altitude of 4,500 metres above sea level, which Chinese media have termed the world's highest expressway.
- Earlier, China had launched a high-speed bullet train connecting Lhasa with Nyingchi, a strategically located Tibetan town located close to Arunachal Pradesh.

Read more on this topic covered in [May 21st, 2021 CNA](#).

2. GoM set up to rationalise GST rates

What's in News?

The government has tasked a Group of Ministers (GoM), led by the Karnataka Chief Minister to propose a rationalisation of tax rates and considering the merger of different tax slabs, within two months.

GST Rates:

- Currently, the GST regime has five broad tax rate slabs of zero, 5%, 12%, 18% and 28%, with a cess levied over and above the 28% on some goods, and special rates for items like precious stones and diamonds.
- The GoM shall review the current tax slab rates and recommend changes in the same as may be needed to garner required resources (and) review the current rate slab structure of GST, including special rates, and recommend rationalisation measures, including the merger of tax rate slabs, required for a simpler rate structure in GST.

- This sets the stage for an overhaul of the multiple tax rates under the Goods and Services Tax regime.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q.1 Which of the following correctly describes the mandate of the Justice A.K. Rajan committee that was recently constituted?

- To recommend a policy to the MOEFCC for clearing illegal encroachments in wetlands
- To study the impact of NEET on medical admissions in Tamil Nadu
- To suggest changes to the farm laws
- To investigate financing routes of Naxals in Dantewada and Bastar

Answer: b

Explanation:

A special high-level committee of 9 members headed by the former Justice A. K. Rajan was formed to conduct a detailed review regarding the extent to which the NEET system for admission to medical colleges in Tamil Nadu has affected the students and its impact on them and in case the students have been facing excessive hardships, the new procedure to alleviate these problems to be devised.

Q.2 Consider the following statements with regard to PM Digital Health Mission:

- It was launched in 2016 to augment India's digital health infrastructure.
- It includes a unique health ID for every citizen that will also work as their health account, to which personal health records can be linked.
- It will enable access and exchange of longitudinal health records of citizens with their consent.

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?

- 1 only
- 1 and 2 only
- 1 and 3 only
- None of the above

Answer: a

Explanation:

- PM Digital Health Mission was launched in 2021 to help strengthen India's medical sector and health facilities of the country.
- It includes a unique health ID for every citizen that will also work as their health account, to which personal health records can be linked.
- It will enable access and exchange of longitudinal health records of citizens with their consent.

Q.3 Which country recently became the first European country to elect a women-majority Parliament?

- a. France
- b. Norway
- c. Sweden
- d. Iceland

Answer: d

Explanation:

- Recently, Iceland became the first country in Europe to elect a female majority parliament.
- Unlike some other countries, Iceland does not have legal quotas on female representation in parliament, though some parties do require a minimum number of candidates to be women.
- Voters elected 33 women to the country's Althing (national parliament of Iceland), up from 24 in the last election.
- No other country in Europe had previously surpassed the threshold of 50 per cent.
- However, Sweden and Finland have 47 per cent and 46 per cent women in parliament, respectively.

Q.4 'Judima Rice Wine', a popular beverage in the North-East, is brewed by which indigenous tribe?

- a. Bodos of Assam
- b. Kukis of Mizoram
- c. Dimasa tribe of Assam
- d. Garo tribe of Meghalaya

Answer: c

Explanation:

- Judima is a rice wine made from sticky rice, which is steamed and mixed with traditional herbs.
- The wine is a speciality of the Dimasa tribe of Assam.

- It has a distinct sweet taste, takes about a week to prepare and can be stored for years.
- It has now been granted the Geographical Indication Tag.
- It is the first beverage from the northeastern region to earn the GI Tag.

Q5. Which one of the following suggested that the Governor should be an eminent person from outside the State and should be a detached figure without intense political links or should not have taken part in politics in the recent past?

- a. First Administrative Reforms Commission (1966)
- b. Rajamannar Committee (1969)
- c. Sarkaria Commission (1983)
- d. National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (2000)

Answer: c

Explanation:

- Sarkaria Commission on inter-state relations in its report dealt with the role of Governors.
- It suggested that the Governor should be an eminent person from outside the State and should be a detached figure without intense political links or should not have taken part in politics in the recent past.

Read more on [Sarkaria Commission](#).

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Government officials should be held accountable when their actions violate constitutional and civil rights. Explain the statement with relevant examples. (10 Marks, 150 Words) (GS 2 Polity and Governance).
2. Should women be provided reservation in the Indian judiciary? Critically examine. (15 Marks, 250 Words) (GS 2 Polity and Governance).