

29 Sep 2021: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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A. GS 1 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

B. GS 2 Related

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Probe sought into 'custodial death' in Odisha

Context:

Following the controversy around the death of a Dalit youth, allegedly due to custodial torture, a probe has been sought.

Details:

- Custodial torture ranging from assault of various types to death by the police for extortion of confessions and imputation of evidence are not uncommon.
- Such a method of investigation and detection of a crime, in the backdrop of expanding the idea of 'humane' administration of criminal justice, not only disregards the human rights of an individual and thereby undermines his dignity but also exposes him to unwarranted violence and torture by those who are expected to 'protect' him.

Read more on [Custodial Violence | Status of Custodial Violence in India](#)

C. GS 3 Related

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. SC lashes out at firecracker firms

Context:

The Supreme Court lashed out at firecracker manufacturers for violating the spirit of its 2018 judgment banning toxic ingredients such as barium in fireworks.

Issue:

- Many firecracker manufacturers continued to use toxic ingredients fully knowing that the court had banned them.
- Children are employed in these factories and are exposed to the poison.
- The toxic ingredients end up poisoning the air and deteriorating the air quality.

Toxic nature

Conventional firecrackers contain chemicals which produce effects like bright lighting and colours. However, these chemicals can have adverse effects on human health and the environment



Initial ingredient	Use in crackers	Health hazards
Charcoal, potassium nitrate and sulphur	Black powder which is the primary fuel in the cracker	The dust released is hazardous when inhaled; different compounds formed can be carcinogenic
Strontium and lithium	Colouring agent (Red)	Strontium can replace calcium in the body which can be toxic; Lithium releases harmful fumes
Barium	Colouring agent (Orange)	Fumes can cause respiratory and other health issues
Nitrates, chlorates/ perchlorates	Oxidising agents	The compounds can hamper the growth of small children; they remain airborne for days and can be poisonous

Source: The Hindu

Details:

- The manufacturers contended that thousands of employees earn their livelihood in the industry.
- The bench said that it had to balance between employment, unemployment and the right to life and health of citizens. And asserted that its prime focus is the “right to life of innocent people”.
- The manufacture, sale and use of joined firecrackers [series crackers or laris] are banned as the same causes huge air, noise and solid waste problems – the Supreme Court had directed the Centre in 2018.
- However, the 2018 judgment had balanced employment concerns in the industry and the [right to life](#) of citizens by approving the government’s suggestions for “green crackers” and those with reduced emissions.

Green Crackers:

- Firework is a device that contains gunpowder and other combustible chemicals which causes striking effects and when ignited they explode. They are mostly used in celebrations, festivals, etc.
- Green crackers are those crackers that do not contain harmful chemicals that would cause air pollution. They are environmentally friendly.
- Green crackers are less harmful as compared to conventional firecrackers and less pollution emission will result in reduced air pollution.
- In green crackers, the commonly used polluting chemicals like aluminium, barium, potassium nitrate and carbon have either been removed or sharply reduced to slow down the emissions by 15 to 30%.

Read more on Green Crackers covered in [6th October 2019 Comprehensive News Analysis](#).

Category: ECONOMY

1. SEBI clears norms for gold exchanges

Context:

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has approved the framework for a gold exchange as well as for vault managers.

Details:

- This move would facilitate trading in securities tied to gold.
- The approval for the proposals made in the Union Budget paves the way for gold exchanges to be set up for trading in 'Electronic Gold Receipts' (EGRs) like in the case of other securities.
- Existing stock exchanges will be allowed to provide the platform for trading of EGRs.
- The denomination for trading the EGRs and conversion of EGRs into gold would be decided by the exchanges with the approval of [SEBI](#).
- The clearing corporation would settle the trades executed on the exchanges by way of transferring EGRs and funds to the buyer and seller, respectively.
- EGR holders, at their discretion, could withdraw the underlying gold from the vaults after surrendering the EGRs.
- SEBI-accredited vault managers would be responsible for the storage and safekeeping of gold deposits, creation of EGRs, withdrawal of gold, grievance redressal and periodic reconciliation of physical gold with the records of depository.
 - The vault manager would have to have a net worth of at least ₹50 crore.
- The broader objective of such exchanges is to move from being price takers to be price setters. Price discovery at the exchanges will lead to transparency in gold pricing.
- Such exchanges would enable investment liquidity and assurance in the quality of gold.

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. How to grease the wheels of justice

The article talks about the need and the ways to address judicial pendency.

Judicial Pendency:

The term pendency is used to refer to all cases which have not yet been disposed of, without any reference to how long the case has spent in the judicial system.

Issues:

- At present, despite good intentions, the [Indian judiciary](#) is moving towards a disaster and needs immediate attention.
- More than 40% of cases are decided after three years in India, while in many other countries less than 1% of cases are decided after three years.
- If India does not act decisively and quickly, this percentage will keep increasing.
- The rich, the powerful and the wrongdoers make wrong use of the judiciary by getting their cases expedited or delayed as they wish.
- The increase in corruption and crime is a direct fallout of the sluggish justice delivery system, severely impacting the poor and marginalised. For them, the judicial process itself becomes a punishment.
- Data shows that about 70% of prisoners in India are undertrials and are mostly poor citizens.

Need for Speedy Justice:

- “Justice delayed is justice denied” is a legal maxim. It means that if legal redress or equitable relief to an injured party is available, but is not forthcoming in a timely fashion, it is effectively the same as having no remedy at all.
- People with problems, like people with pains, want relief and they want it as quickly and inexpensively as possible.
- A measure of the justice delivery system is the pendency of cases in courts across the country.

Ensuring Speedy Justice:

The following measures can be implemented to tackle this issue.

Filling Vacancies:

- Reduce the pendency of cases by filling sanctioned judicial positions, by expediting the process of judicial appointments.
- The responsibility of ensuring near-zero vacancies should be with the Chief Justices of the High Courts and the Chief Justice of India and they should be held accountable for the same.
- Filling all vacancies may result in a requirement of about 5,000 courtrooms. A simple solution would be to run 5,000 courts in two shifts.

Use of technology:

- In the backdrop of the pandemic, there is a dire need of improving working with the use of technology.
- The e-Committee of the Supreme Court has been in existence since 2005. It has made the following outstanding recommendations which are not being followed.
 - Computer algorithms should decide on case listing, case allocation and adjournments with only a 5% override given to judges.
 - All rational reasons and limits should be put on adjournments. Case listing should give the main weightage to 'first in, first out'.
 - Case allocation should take into account logical criteria. This would be a big step in reducing arbitrariness and the unfair advantage that the powerful enjoy.
 - The courts should focus on e-filing. This should be implemented in all seriousness and would also save about three lakh trees annually.
 - Virtual hearings must be considered. COVID-19 prompted the courts to adopt virtual hearings. If a hybrid virtual hearing model is not adopted, the backlog of cases could cross 5 crores in 2022. The dysfunctional justice system will be perpetually overwhelmed. All the courts in the country must switch to a hybrid virtual mode immediately and start disposing of cases.

Indianise Courts:

- In the backdrop of the increasing backlog of cases in the Indian courts, the Chief Justice of India has made a plea to 'Indianise' courts.
- That is to make them responsive to the needs of the Indian citizens.

Conclusion:

- All the recommendations are based on the Supreme Court's various decisions and the e-Committee's recommendations. These would require no changes in laws.
- At a conference, High Court Chief Justices and the Chief Justice of India and the government could make decisions on all of this.
- If all this is done, India's judicial system can rank among the 10 top countries of the world.
- These changes would make India the preferred nation for international investments and also fulfil the fundamental right to speedy justice of citizens.

2. In pursuit of happiness

The article talks about happiness as an objective of governance.

Details:

- The United Nations World Happiness Report was first published in 2012. Until then, happiness was not considered an objective of governance.
- Happiness has now emerged as a new measure of the quality of governance.

- The connection between law, governance and happiness has been gaining considerable attention over the years. This is because the report has shown time and again that countries with a higher GDP and higher per capita income are not necessarily the happiest.

United Nations World Happiness Report of 2021:

- Happiness was measured by also taking into consideration the effects of COVID-19 on the people and their evaluation of the performance of governance systems.
- The report shows that COVID-19-induced social distancing had a severe impact on happiness as sharing and community life were hugely affected during the pandemic.

India's Performance:

- The United Nations World Happiness Report of 2021 ranks India 139 out of 149 countries.
- India's gloomy performance on happiness is crucial when governance and the law are considered.
- Happiness has never been considered an explicit goal of public policy in India.
- The trust and confidence enjoyed by public institutions are quite pertinent in the happiness score sheet.

Role of Good Governance in Happiness of the Citizens:

- Guarantees of rights, participation, dignity and social justice are crucial in the determination of happiness in a society like India.
- The great degree of unhappiness in Indian society has a lot to do with the way the law and its institutions operate.
- People live in pain and anguish as their grievances remain unaddressed by the legal system.
- Every case that is decided by the courts need not necessarily bring happiness to the people.
- According to the World Justice Report, as many as 40% of people live outside the protection of the law in the world. More than 5 billion people fall into this 'justice gap'. India's share is very big in these figures.
- The estimated figure of 3.5 crore pending cases in various courts of the country is not merely a number as all those connected with these cases are in a state of anxiety. They are certainly not happy people.
- Typically, the criminal justice system for these people is a source of unhappiness.
- India's rule of law rank was 69 as per the World Justice report 2021.
 - It has a chilling effect on the right to life, liberty, economic justice, dignity and national integration.
- Justice in India hardly seems to take up the goal of happiness in society.
- Criminal justice drastically impacts the lives of people. It is capable of providing safety but it also leads to fear, stigma and repression. People are rarely satisfied with the police and courts in this country.

Ways to Improve India's Ranking:

- Law is capable of creating many positive obligations, which may lead to a collective conscience, care and cooperation.
- It is capable of making people feel that they have a role in resolving their problems through distributive justice.
- Additionally, data suggest that happy countries have lower crime rates.
 - Crime and its resultant suffering are a major source of unhappiness.
 - For instance, in Finland, Denmark, the Philippines, South Africa, India and Sri Lanka, at least one of the four crime variables share an inverse relation with the happiness score of the nation.
- Countries scoring high on the Rule of Law Index also score well on the index of happiness.
- In the report, happiness levels were significantly determined by various socio-demographic factors like health, education, crime rate, criminal victimisation and fear of crime. India should focus on improving these factors.

Conclusion:

Nations are now responding to the happiness index. Happiness is getting more importance as an objective of good governance. The United Arab Emirates was the first country in the world to have set up a Ministry of Happiness. The Ministry monitors the impact of policies through a happiness meter and takes measures to ensure a better life. Bhutan introduced Gross National Happiness as a measure of good governance. Honest and effective governments can create more socio-economic equality. This leads a greater number of people reposing trust in their government, which is an important condition for happiness.

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Germany as a development actor in a post-Merkel era

Context:

- With the era of Angela Merkel as Chancellor of Germany coming to an end, the eyes of the world, including India, are fixed on the general election in Germany.
- This time the elections in Germany are special as the Chancellor, who was in power for 16 years, is leaving office.
- Countries are curious as to how Germany would define its role as an important international agent in the fight against global challenges, including climate change, and fostering global sustainable development in line with the 2030 Agenda of the [United Nations](#).

Global Crises:

- Climate change, resource destruction and species extinction are limiting development opportunities and global scope for action more than ever before.
- Besides the old countries of the West, major emerging economies, including India, and regional powers are since long shaping the economic, political and cultural interdependencies of a more complex, dynamic, accelerated world.
- It is now time to act: to battle climate change and biodiversity loss, rising social inequalities and poverty, defend democracy and secure peace.

In this, Germany and India take on core roles in the coming two years.

- Germany, as the second biggest bilateral development donor globally (the United States is first), takes over the [G7](#) presidency in 2022.
- India presides over the G20 in 2023.
- These offer an opportunity to mutually strengthen the processes of club governance and ensure a focused dialogue among our political leaders and policy-making for a common future.
- Germany's ability to live up to this responsibility depends on the outcome of the elections and coalition negotiations.

Details:

- The field of international cooperation for sustainable development has moved from the Millennium Development Goals of the UN to the understanding that poverty alleviation and fighting rising inequalities go hand in hand with combating environmental and climate change.
- Development has been redefined as 'sustainable development' and therefore, as a challenge to be addressed by all countries, and in all societal and economic sectors.
- An important instrument for achieving sustainable development is international and transregional cooperation.
- Radically transformative structural policies are needed for the global common good and in line with the 2030 Agenda of the UN.

Achieving Sustainable Development:

- Core fields of action include reducing social inequalities, overcoming poverty and ensuring social justice, promoting social peace, political participation and cultural diversity, creating a climate-neutral and stable economic system, vehemently advocating for healthy ecosystems, stable climate and biodiversity.
- The key policy areas that need urgent attention have been highlighted again by the COVID-19 pandemic:
 - There is a need to make financial markets, digitalisation and the economy sustainable.
 - Social protection, food and health systems need to be more robust.
 - There is a need to strengthen education, science and innovation, inclusive institutions for social cohesion, and promote rules-based, regional and multilateral governance.

Way Ahead:

- This type of policy-making rests on cooperation on equal eye-level.
- This also means that a global cooperation policy for a sustainable future requires a strong governance architecture.
 - It can only be realised through the interplay of domestic and externally-oriented departments, different decision-making levels from local to global, and politics, business and society working together.

- The partners of cooperation for global transformative change are transition and high-income countries just as much as low-income countries.
- The upcoming COP26 in Glasgow serves as an important platform to negotiate investments into the greenhouse gas neutral transformations of India's energy and transport sectors.
- The multilateral level of cooperation must thus move to the centre, supported by bilateral and European cooperation on all continents.
- Germany as the third biggest economy, in terms of its share in global trade, must live up to its responsibility and set the course for these transformative changes.
- It can only do so in partnership, and especially in partnership with the big transition economies, including India.

Conclusion:

Germany in a post-Merkel era requires wise leadership in the Chancellor's office that turns its attention to younger generations and to the world, recognises the urgency of global cooperation policies for a sustainable future with India and the world, and supports them at the cabinet table.

Category: INTERNAL SECURITY

1. Tackling the Maoists

Context:

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

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

Details:

- The home minister noted that the geographical influence of the Maoists had reduced from 96 districts in 10 States in 2010 to 41 at present.
- Naxalites are active in select pockets untouched by development or linkages with the welfare state.
- The Communist Party of India (Maoist) is limited to the remote and densely forested terrains of central and east-central India.

Issues:

- Rather than dialogue with the Indian state by projecting its weaknesses and ensuring inclusion and welfare, the Maoists have resorted to armed struggle, invited state repression and sought to use this to recruit people.
- The Maoist strategy has led to some of India's poorest people, particularly the tribals in Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, being caught up in endless violence.
- This has also caused severe losses to the Maoists as well as anti-insurgent security forces.
- Frequent attacks have not only affected the security forces but also left many tribal civilians caught in the crossfire. A purely security-driven approach fraught with human rights violations has only added to the alienation among the poor in these areas.

- This has followed the predictable path of most Maoist revolts that retained armed struggle to achieve their aims rather than enabling genuine uplift of the poor.
- The Maoists fail to accept their flawed understanding of the nature of the Indian state and democracy.
- They are unwilling to accept that the poor people, whom they claim to represent, seek greater engagement with the electoral and welfare system.

Way Forward:

- The Maoist insurgency still has potency in South Bastar in Chhattisgarh, the Andhra-Odisha border and in some districts in Jharkhand. These States must focus on expansive welfare and infrastructure building even as security forces try to weaken the Maoists.
- The Maoists must be compelled to give up their armed struggle and this can only happen if the tribal people and civil society activists promoting peace are also empowered.
- The Indian government should not be satisfied with the mere weakening of the Maoist insurgency and reduce commitments made for the developmental needs of some districts of concern.
- The Union government and the States must continue to build on the successes such as the expansion of welfare and rights paradigms in limiting the movement and also learn from failures that have led to the continuing violence in some districts.

F. Prelims Facts

1. Bypolls to three Lok Sabha, 30 Assembly seats on Oct. 30

What's in News?

The Election Commission of India has announced by-elections in the Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Khandwa and Mandi Lok Sabha and 30 Assembly constituencies across the country.

What are bypolls?

- By-elections, also known as bypolls are conducted to fill in the elected offices that have become vacant between general elections.
- In most cases, bypolls are conducted after the incumbent dies or resigns.
- They can also be conducted when the incumbent becomes ineligible to continue in office.

Note:

- As per the [Representation of the People Act \(RPA\)](#), bypolls are not held for vacant seats if the tenure of the Assembly expires within a year.

2. Defence Ministry issues order for OFB dissolution

What's in News?

The Defence Ministry has issued an order for the dissolution of the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) with effect from October 1, 2021, upon which its assets, employees and management would be transferred to seven newly constituted defence public sector undertakings (DPSUs).

- This would mean the end of the OFB, the establishment of which was accepted by the British in 1775.

Background:

- Earlier, the Union Cabinet had approved a long-awaited reform plan to corporatize the OFB, which has 41 factories, into seven fully government-owned corporate entities on the lines of DPSUs.

Read more on this topic covered in [June 17th, 2021 CNA](#).

3. Gadkari reviews Zojila tunnel work

Zojila tunnel:

- The 13.5-km tunnel will be Asia's longest bi-directional tunnel and will allow all-weather connectivity between Ladakh and Srinagar, which is disrupted during the winter months.
- It is located at 11,578 feet above sea level.
- This tunnel will not only provide all-weather connectivity for the first time, but will also be of strategic value to the armed forces.
- The main objective of the project is to provide all-weather connectivity to the strategically important Leh region in Jammu & Kashmir which at the moment is limited to at best 6 months because of snow on the passes and threat of avalanches.
- This project along with other ongoing projects like the 6.5 km long Z-Morh tunnel at Gagangir would ensure safe, fast and cheap connectivity between the two regions of Kashmir and Ladakh.

G. Tidbits

1. 'Lockdowns slowed green energy push'

What's in News?

According to a report by the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA), lockdowns slowed renewable energy installations in the country.

Key Highlights of the Report:

- As part of its commitment to reducing [greenhouse gas](#) emissions, India has said that it would install 175 gigawatts (GW) of green energy by 2022 and 450 GW by 2030 but only 7 GW of such capacity was added in the financial year 2020-21.
 - The pace of renewable energy installation is lagging behind India's 2022 target.
- In its analysis of monthly volumes and prices at the [Indian Energy Exchange \(IEX\)](#) (the largest power exchange in India), the IEEFA study found that the amount of power traded increased by 20% over 2020, by 37% from the 2019 figure and by 30% over 2018.
 - This led to prices on average increasing by 38% from the 2020 rates.
 - Had there been more access to renewable energy, particularly wind and hydropower, it could have contributed to lower energy prices.
- Coal stocks hit a new record high at the end of 2020-21 and exceeded the monthly averages of the previous five years.

- Greater reliance on coal imports will increase thermal power prices in India, leading to higher prices for the ultimate consumer.

Renewable Energy Targets and Achievement:

Target and achievement

India has installed 43.94 GW of solar energy capacity until July 2021 while the target is to generate capacity of 100 GW by March 2023. The table lists the renewable energy targets for various sources and the installation capacity reached by July 2021



Source	Target capacity	Installed capacity*
Solar energy	100 GW	43.94 GW
Wind energy	60 GW	39.58 GW
Small hydro energy	5 GW	4.79 GW
Bio energy	10 GW	10.17 GW

Source: Central Electricity Authority

*till July 2021

Suggestion:

- The electricity system needs flexible and dynamic generation solutions such as battery storage, pumped hydro storage, peaking gas-fired capacity and flexible operation of its existing coal fleet.
- Government should accelerate the deployment of such sources to help meet peak demand and also balance the grid at a lower cost.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements with respect to Right to Information:

1. Only an individual who is above 18 years of age is eligible to seek information.
2. The right to information has been recognized as a fundamental right.

Which of the above statements is/are INCORRECT?

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

Answer: a

Explanation:

- The right to information has been recognised as a fundamental right under Part III of the Constitution by the Supreme Court in several cases.
- The RTI Act, 2005, provided an extended regime for enabling effective implementation of the fundamental right to information.
- Any citizen can request information by making an application in writing or through electronic means together with the prescribed fees.

Q2. Under the Constitution, a person shall be disqualified as being a member of the State legislative assembly in which of the following cases?

1. if he is found guilty of certain election offences or corrupt practices in the elections.
2. if he is of unsound mind and stands so declared by a court.
3. If punished for preaching and practising social crimes such as untouchability, dowry and sati.
4. if he holds any office of profit under the Union or state government (except that of a minister or any other office exempted by state legislature).

Options:

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

A person can be disqualified for being selected as and for being a member of the Legislative Assembly or Legislative Council of a State if he/she

- a. holds an office of profit under GOI or any State Government, other than that of a Minister at the centre or any state or an office declared by a law of the State not to disqualify its holder (many States have passed such laws declaring certain offices to be offices the holding of which does not disqualify its holder for being a member of the Legislature of that States).
- b. is mentally unsound as declared by a competent court.
- c. is an undischarged insolvent.
- d. is not an Indian citizen or has voluntarily got the citizenship of a foreign State or is under any acknowledgement of adherence/allegiance to a foreign nation.
- e. is so disqualified by or under any law made by Parliament.

Q3. Which of the following chemicals are barred from usage in firecrackers?

1. Antimony

2. Lithium
3. Mercury
4. Arsenic
5. Lead

Options:

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

Antimony, Lithium, Mercury, Arsenic and Lead have been barred from usage in firecrackers by the Supreme Court in 2017. These chemicals are proven to be hazardous for respiratory systems and can cause serious ailments like asthma, lung cancer, shortness of breath, hormonal imbalances, and many other respiratory diseases.

Q4. With respect to anti-defection Law, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. Under the Anti-defection Law, the power to decide the disqualification of an MP or MLA rests with the presiding officer of the legislature in consultation with the Election Commission of India.
2. Supreme Court has observed that anti-defection cases should be decided by Speakers in six months' time in all circumstances.

Options:

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- Under the anti-defection law, the power to decide the disqualification of an MP or MLA rests with the presiding officer of the legislature. Consultation with the Election Commission of India is not required.
- The law does not specify a time frame in which such a decision has to be made. However, the Supreme Court observed that anti-defection cases should be decided by Speakers in three months' time.

Read more on [Anti-defection Law](#).

Q5. Which one of the following National Parks has a climate that varies from tropical to subtropical, temperate and arctic? (UPSC 2015)

- a. Khangchendzonga National Park
- b. Nandadevi National Park
- c. Neora Valley National Park
- d. Namdapha National Park

Answer: d

Explanation:

- Namdapha National Park has a climate that varies from tropical to subtropical, temperate and arctic.
- It is the largest protected area in the Eastern Himalaya biodiversity hotspot and is located in Arunachal Pradesh.
- Its habitat changes with increasing altitude from tropical moist forests to Montane forests, temperate forests and at the higher elevations, to Alpine meadows and perennial snow.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Should Civil servants shed the principle of Anonymity and engage actively on social media? Critically Examine. (10 Marks, 150 Words)[GS-2, Governance]
2. The past few years have seen a consistent decline in naxalite activities but their potency in select areas has not reduced. Discuss the way forward. (10 Marks, 150 Words)[GS-3, Internal security]