

22 Oct 2021: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. GS 1 Related

B. GS 2 Related

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. [SC says farmers have right to protest, but can't block roads](#)
2. [Do you want to revisit ₹8 lakh slab for EWS quota, SC asks Govt.](#)

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. [UN unveils fund for 'people's economy' in Afghanistan](#)
2. [Pakistan retained on FATF's 'greylist' again](#)

C. GS 3 Related

ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. [PM to attend climate meet in Glasgow](#)

ECONOMY

1. ['Need strategic reserves of coal and gas'](#)

D. GS 4 Related

E. Editorials

GOVERNANCE

1. [The poor conditions of protectors](#)

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. [Squaring off again in the Himalayan heights](#)

F. Prelims Facts

1. ['U.K., India joint military exercise is to keep peace and stability'](#)

G. Tidbits

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

Download the latest monthly updates at BYJU'S IAS & prepare for UPSC Mains 2021!

[Yojana Gist](#)

[Kurukshetra Gist](#)

[Current Affairs Magazine](#)

A. GS 1 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

B. GS 2 Related

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. SC says farmers have right to protest, but can't block roads

Context:

The Supreme Court has made it clear that while the farmers have the right to protest, the public roads must not be blocked to hamper free movement.

Details:

- This comes in the backdrop of an impasse between farmers and the Government over the [farm laws](#) and the subsequent protest by the farmers to withdraw these laws.
- In the Shaheen Bagh protests case, the Supreme Court had laid down a law stating that the right to protest should not hamper the right to movement of the public.

“Right to Protest” has been comprehensively covered in [January 22nd, 2020 CNA](#)

2. Do you want to revisit ₹8 lakh slab for EWS quota, SC asks Govt.

Context:

The [Supreme Court](#) has asked the Government if it wants to revisit the limit of ₹8 lakh annual income fixed for determining the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) category for reservation in NEET admissions for medical courses under the all-India quota.

This topic has been covered in [Oct 8th, 2021 CNA](#)

Issue:

- The Supreme Court's query is significant as the One Hundred and Third Constitutional Amendment of 2019, which introduced the 10% EWS quota, is itself under challenge before a larger Bench.
- The Amendment is under question for making economic criterion as the sole ground for grant of reservation benefits.

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. UN unveils fund for 'people's economy' in Afghanistan

Context:

The United Nations has set up a special trust fund to provide urgently-needed cash directly to Afghans through a system tapping into donor funds frozen since the Taliban takeover.

Details:

- Cash will be provided to Afghan workers in public works programmes, such as drought and flood control programmes.
- Grants would be given to micro-enterprises.
- Temporary basic income would be paid to the vulnerable elderly and disabled.

Concerns:

- According to the [International Monetary Fund](#), Afghanistan's economy is set to contract up to 30% in 2021 and this is likely to further fuel a refugee crisis that will affect its neighbouring countries, Turkey and Europe.
- The Taliban takeover saw billions in central bank assets frozen and international financial institutions suspend access to funds.
- While humanitarian aid has continued, the major concern is that the banks are running out of money, civil servants have not been paid and food prices have soared.

2. Pakistan retained on FATF's 'greylist' again

Context:

The Financial Action Task Force ([FATF](#)) has retained Pakistan in the 'greylist' yet again.

Details:

- The global terror financing watchdog has retained Pakistan in the greylist observing that it needed to further demonstrate that investigations and prosecutions were being pursued against the senior leadership of UN-designated terror groups.
 - The terror groups include the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), al-Qaeda and the Taliban.
- The Pakistan Government has two concurrent action plans with a total of 34 action plan items.
 - It has largely addressed 30 of the items.
 - Its most recent action plan from June 2021, which largely focused on money laundering deficiencies, was issued after the FATF's regional partner – the Asia-Pacific Group, identified a number of serious issues.
- At the previous Plenary in June 2021, the FATF had kept Pakistan in the list of "jurisdictions under increased monitoring" owing to its failure in prosecuting the top operatives of the Security Council-designated terror groups.

- It had advised that Pakistan should continue to work to address its six strategically important deficiencies, which included enhancing international cooperation by amending the money-laundering law and demonstrating that assistance was being sought from foreign countries in implementing the UNSCR 1373 designations.
- UNSCR 1373 designations relate to the Counter-Terrorism sanctions regime.

This topic has been covered in [June 28th, 2021 CNA](#).

C. GS 3 Related

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. PM to attend climate meet in Glasgow

Context:

The Indian Prime Minister will travel to Glasgow to attend the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26).

Details:

- Earlier, climate negotiation delegations from the United States, the European Union and the United Kingdom travelled to Delhi to discuss India's climate goals.
- Apart from China, India, as a growing economy, and a major contributor to carbon emissions, is also the most important country in terms of ensuring the world meets its deadlines on countering climate change, and all eyes are on the clear time-bound commitments Prime Minister of India will make at the COP26 in Glasgow.

UN Climate Change Conference (COP26):

- The COP26 UN Climate Change Conference is set to be held from October 31 to November 12, 2021, in Glasgow.
- Leaders from over 190 countries would come together at the conference, along with citizens, researchers and negotiators.
- The goal is to try and create a strong global response to climate change and the threats it poses.
- The conference is being viewed as an important step towards the acceleration of the climate action plan.
- 2021 marks the 26th Conference of Parties, and hence, has been named the COP26.

Significance:

- COP26 holds importance in light of the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#) or IPCC's assessment report.
 - The reports threw light upon the possibility of droughts, extreme rainfall, rising sea levels and heat waves that the Earth can experience in the coming decades.
- The COP26 has four goals:
 - To achieve global net-zero by the middle of the century and keep 1.5 degrees within reach.

- To adapt to protect communities as well as natural habitats from the impact of climate change.
- Mobilisation of finances for the stated goals.
- To work together so that the rules could be listed out in detail and help in the fulfilment of the [Paris Agreement](#).

Conference of Parties:

- COP under the United Nations Climate Change Framework Convention had been formed to work towards stabilising the concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.
- As per the [UNFCCC](#), the member states were required to formulate measures that would help mitigate climate change.
- Member states were also required to cooperate in preparations for adaptation to climate change impact, and they also needed to promote public awareness, training and education in this aspect.
- Since 1995, the COP members have held a meeting annually.
- It has 198 parties and includes the US, India and China.
- India hosted COP8 in 2002.

Category: ECONOMY

1. 'Need strategic reserves of coal and gas'

Context:

The Centre has asked States to lift their hydropower output in a bid to conserve scarce coal supplies, stressing the need to build strategic reserves of imported coal and gas as was being done for petroleum products.

The Coal Crisis:

- Coal accounts for more than 70% of India's power generation.
- India, the world's second-largest coal importer with the world's fourth-largest reserves, must also compete for supplies with China.
- A surge in power demand combined with a fall in imports due to high global coal prices have led to supply disruptions and power cuts lasting up to 14 hours a day despite record supplies from state-run Coal India.
- Most of India's 135 coal-fired power plants have fuel stocks of less than three days.

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

Need for Strategic Reserves:

- At least in the foreseeable future, all the countries, especially major economies, will be dependent on fossil fuel supplies for base load and for grid balancing.
- And it is important for such economies to take measures to insulate themselves from these supply shocks of imported fuel. This becomes important in the backdrop of major supply disruptions due to the soaring global prices of coal, gas and oil.

- Keeping a strategic reserve of these fuels — gas, oil, imported coal would help the economies adjust and tide over these supply shocks at least in the short term.
- Many countries have started keeping strategic reserves because when it comes to a crunch, every country will meet its needs first.
 - For instance, Russia has curtailed gas supply to Europe because they want more gas to be consumed within their country.
- In the absence of a well thought out strategy, high prices will make energy security very challenging.

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: GOVERNANCE

1. The poor conditions of protectors

Context

- The article discusses problems faced by the Police in India.

Death and injury on duty

- In 2020, a deputy commandant of Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA) — a special unit of CRPF, was seriously injured when an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) planted by Maoists exploded.
- Assistant Commandant N. Purushottam Bhalerao succumbed to injuries, along with nine other commandos when an IED went off during an anti-Maoist operation.
- In 2021, two Rajasthan police constables were killed after suspected drug smugglers opened fire when the constables were carrying out routine checks of vehicles at checkpoints in the Bhilwara district.

Police Commemoration Day

- National Police Commemoration Day is observed on October 21 every year.
 - It is observed to salute the spirits of police forces and their families and brave police martyrs who lost their lives fighting for the country.
- History
 - The Police Commemoration Day remembers the ultimate sacrifice of 10 police personnel who lost their lives on October 21, 1959, in Ladakh while fighting the Chinese army.
 - The Chinese army opened fire and threw grenades at the Indian police party which comprised 20 personnel. Apart from the 10 personnel who were martyred, seven were taken as prisoners and the remaining three managed to escape.
 - The incident went down in the history of the forces as an example of unflinching loyalty to the nation, dedication to duty and daring of the highest order.

Problems faced by the Police personnel

Despite the onerous nature of their duties, the police are a neglected lot.

- Non-stop work, irregular hours, lack of exercise, insufficient rest and sleep take a hit on their health leading to stress-related diseases such as depression and obesity.
- Due to large vacancies in the police forces, a huge responsibility rests on the available personnel to maintain law and order.
- They get paid low salaries, have a poor quality of life and are often deprived of basic facilities.
- The canteen and medical facilities are dismal.
- Items sold through the Central Police Canteens are not exempted from GST.
- Those who cleared recruitment exams in 2003 but joined the force in 2004 or later are not eligible for pension under the old norms.

Impact

- Work-life imbalance affects their morale and motivation, impacting their performance.
- The gruelling and tedious work hour regime can also deter many otherwise right kind of individuals from making a choice for the police profession, thus adversely affecting the quality of the manpower available for recruitment.
- The overall frustration may result in rude and offensive behaviour.

Way forward

- There are notable variations in the ex-gratia amounts given to the next of kin of the police who are killed. While certain States like Delhi and Tamil Nadu pay ₹1 crore, several other States dither to pay even half that amount.
 - While the Centre pays ex-gratia to the families of the Central Armed Police Forces which may be short of ₹1 crore, the balance should be borne by the States as ₹1 crore is reasonably sufficient to see the family through hard days.
 - The Centre and the States need to bring about uniformity in the amount paid.
- Care should be taken to ensure that the next of kin are not deprived of a decent living. Payments from the public exchequer need to be made judiciously.

Conclusion

It is high time the government takes note of the grievances of the police and paramilitary personnel and does not let their sacrifices go in vain.

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Squaring off again in the Himalayan heights

Context

- The article analyses the growing Chinese assertiveness along the India-China border.

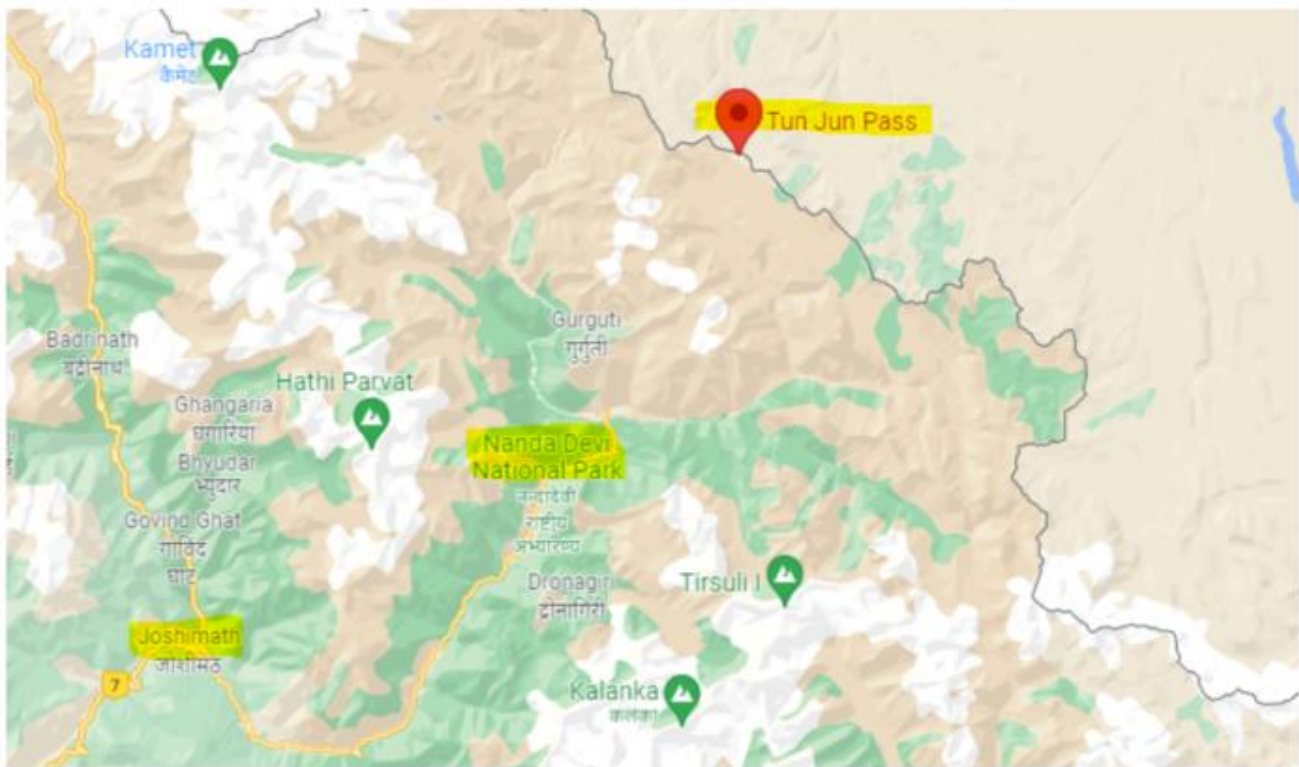
An aggressive focus on India

- Threat from China has persisted for a long time and it looks like they are not interested in ending the prolonged deployment along the border area.
- They have stepped up the border infrastructure, placed advanced military equipment and we have witnessed a sharp increase in the number of military exercises directed towards India.
- These actions are not limited to Ladakh but have also been initiated in the middle and eastern sectors of the 3,488-kilometre-long Line of Actual Control (LAC).

Border incidents

1. Barahoti in Uttarakhand

- Barahoti is a disputed area between the two sides but it has been a demilitarised zone. No persons in uniform enter the area.
- This was violated when Chinese soldiers reportedly crossed over to Barahoti ridge through Tun Jun Pass.
 - The Barahoti ridge lies north of the Nanda Devi National Park.
 - The ridge is connected to Joshimath, where the Indian Army and ITBP have camps to counter any major PLA operations.
 - The ITBP monitors the nearly 350 km border in Uttarakhand which is part of the Line of Actual Control that divides India and China.
 - They damaged some infrastructure, including a bridge and is believed that the group stayed in the vicinity for around three hours.



2. Arunachal Pradesh

- China has increased the number of military exercises across the contested border in Arunachal Pradesh, denoting the PLA's intention to keep the Indian military under pressure.
- It will carry a risk of triggering an unintended escalation.

Reasons for PLA's aggressive approach against India

1. Reestablishing the credibility of China's Army

- The first is its institutional interest as the 'army of the revolution' which is now losing its primacy to the PLA Air Force and PLA Navy when it comes to Taiwan or the South China Sea.
- With China having resolved its boundary disputes with most countries, the only major adversary available for the PLA to reassert its importance is India.

2. India's growing presence and development of infrastructure in the border area

- India is now expanding its footprint in those areas along the border which it had previously abstained. This expansion is due to better connectivity and the development of infrastructure.
- India's intervention in Doklam to protect its interests may have allowed China to reconsider its India strategy, reinforcing its apprehensions about territorial losses.
- Western scholars say that there is a strong constituency in the PLA that wants to put India in its place, evoking an eerie parallel to the discourse in Mao's China after 1959.

India's response

- In response to the PLA's actions on the LAC, the Indian military has also inducted more modern military platforms and systems on the China border which has been backed by infrastructure construction.
- Vast operational experience of Indian troops in hostile climatic and terrain conditions can help India to challenge China's assertiveness.

Weakness

- Demonetization and COVID-19 have affected India's defense spending.
- Technological Asymmetry
 - Indian Air Force (IAF) would need about 60 fighter jet squadrons by 2020 for a serious two-front threat from China and Pakistan but it is currently at 30 with numbers further reducing.
 - The Indian Navy Chief proposed for another aircraft carrier but was declined due to a dearth of funds.
 - The parliamentary standing committee on defence has repeatedly warned about the abnormally high share of vintage equipment in the Indian Army's profile.
- Majoritarian Politics has affected India's Interest
 - India's policy change in Kashmir may have troubled the United Arab Emirates-brokered backchannel deal with Pakistan.

- Infiltration continues further aggravating violence in the region.
- Bangladesh's minorities are living in fear because of extreme events in the country.
 - India may have put pressure on Dhaka to address violence.
 - However, India should also be careful that its influence is not treated as interference.
- Lack of institutional checks and balances on the political executive.
 - In the Ladakh border crisis, the Government and its supporters were in denial about the Chinese ingress into the Indian Territory.
 - Use of euphemisms like 'friction points' for places of Chinese ingress or
 - removal of an official report about Chinese presence across the LAC from the Defence Ministry's website or
 - Non-acknowledgement of Indian soldiers in Chinese captivity after the Galwan clash have been done to evade political accountability.
 - Parliament has not been allowed to ask questions or seek clarifications; nor has the parliamentary standing committee deliberated upon the issue.
 - Large sections of Indian media have been complicit in this cover-up, keeping the public in the dark and blocking the feedback loop that keeps democratic governments honest and responsive.

Geopolitics arising out of the great power competition in the Indo-Pacific

- India's active participation in [Quad](#) has irked China, it sees the grouping as a threat against its expansionist interests in the South China Sea.
- U.S.-India defense relations, expanded trade relationship has further made China look at India with suspicion.

Way forward

- India has been applying a combination of building up pressure through military presence, economic policies, and diplomatic advances. India needs to keep up and build upon this pressure.
- China's aggression in Ladakh is an opportunity for India to redefine its security architecture.

F. Prelims Facts

1. 'U.K., India joint military exercise is to keep peace and stability'

What's in News?

Exercise Konkan Shakti.

- It is one of the biggest joint exercises being held between the United Kingdom's Carrier Strike Group (CSG) and India's armed forces.
- It is the 1st tri-service exercise between India and the United Kingdom.
- In the exercise, there will be a re-entry of the UK's Carrier Strike Group (CSG) into western Indian Ocean waters.

- UK's HMS Queen Elizabeth aims to strengthen cultural ties with India with an intent to "demonstrate that democracies that have similar views of the world want to work together to keep peace and stability".

G. Tidbits

Nothing here for today!!!

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q.1 'Right to Protest' is considered as an implicit part of which of the following fundamental rights?

- a. Article 14
- b. Article 19
- c. Article 21
- d. Article 32

Answer: b

Explanation:

- Article 19 offers the right to protest. Although the word protest is not explicitly mentioned in the fundamental rights of the Indian Constitution, it is implicitly derived from the in-depth reading of Article 19.
- The right to protest is protected under Article 19(1)(a), Article 19(1)(b) which gives citizens the right to freedom of expression and the right to meet peacefully without weapons. These two articles constitute the right of protest on the basis that a protester can exercise his right to hold a protest against any issue of national or social interest.
 - The right to freedom of expression means that each person has the right to freely express his or her opinions through a means such as gesture or mouth, etc.
 - The right to peaceful assembly without weapons is to hold public meetings or to close a procession.

Q.2 Consider the following statements with regards to parole and furlough:

1. Unlike parole, furlough is granted periodically irrespective of any reason, and merely to enable the prisoner to retain family and social ties, and to counter the ill-effects of prolonged time spent in prison.
2. Parole is not a right, and is given to a prisoner for a specific reason, such as a death in the family or a wedding of a blood relative.
3. Prison is a state subject and all states have their own rules for parole, furlough, remission and premature release based on the good conduct of the prisoners.

Which of these statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- Furlough and parole envisage a short-term temporary release from custody.
- While parole is granted for the prisoner to meet a specific exigency, furlough may be granted after a stipulated number of years have been served without any reason.
- The grant of furlough is to break the monotony of imprisonment and to enable the convict to maintain continuity with family life and integration with society.
- Parole is given to a prisoner for a specific reason, such as a death in the family or a wedding of a blood relative.
- Parole is not a right and it is just a privilege for the prisoner who is deemed to be fit to re-interact with society. Although furlough can be claimed without a reason, the prisoner does not have an absolute legal right to claim furlough. The grant of furlough must be balanced against the public interest and can be refused to certain categories of prisoners.
- Prison is a state subject and all states have their own rules for parole, furlough, remission and premature release based on the good conduct of the prisoners.

Q.3 Consider the following statements with regards to the Financial Action Task Force (FATF):

1. The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is an inter-governmental body established in 1989 during the G20 summit in Paris.
2. The objectives of the FATF include setting standards and promoting effective implementation of legal, regulatory and operational measures for combating money laundering, terrorist financing and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system.
3. Its Secretariat is located at the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) headquarters in Paris.

Which of these statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: b

Explanation:

- The Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering (FATF) was established by the G-7 Summit that was held in Paris in 1989.
- The objectives of the FATF include setting standards and promoting effective implementation of legal, regulatory and operational measures for combating money laundering, terrorist financing and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system.
- FATF Secretariat is located at the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) headquarters in Paris.

Q.4 Consider the following statements with regards to United Nations Development Programme (UNDP):

1. The UNDP Executive Board is made up of representatives from 36 countries around the world who serve on a rotating basis.
2. It is funded entirely by voluntary contributions from member nations.
3. The nodal agency for all matters related to UNDP in India is the Department of Economic Affairs, Finance Ministry, GOI.
4. The UNDP is governed by an administrator, who is the third-highest ranking UN official after the Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary-General.

Which of these statements is/are correct?

- a. 1 & 2 only
- b. 3 & 4 only
- c. 1, 2 & 4 only
- d. All of the above

Answer: d

Explanation:

- The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is a United Nations organization tasked with helping countries eliminate poverty and achieve sustainable economic growth and human development. It is headquartered in New York City.
- UNDP helps to eradicate poverty, reduce inequalities and exclusion, and build resilience so countries can sustain progress. As the UN's development agency, UNDP plays a critical role in helping countries achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.
- The UNDP Executive Board is made up of representatives from 36 countries around the world who serve on a rotating basis.
- The UNDP is funded entirely by voluntary contributions from UN member states.
- The UNDP is governed by an administrator, who is the third-highest ranking UN official after the Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary-General.
- The Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance is the designated nodal department that approves and signs the Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) with UNDP.

Q.5 Why are dewdrops not formed on a cloudy night? (UPSC-2019)

- a. Clouds absorb the radiation released from the Earth's surface.
- b. Clouds reflect back the Earth's radiation.
- c. The Earth's surface would have low temperature on cloudy nights.
- d. Clouds deflect the blowing wind to ground level.

Answer: b

Explanation:

- Dewdrops are formed due to the condensation of water vapour in the air.
 - When humid air comes into contact with some cold surface, water vapour present in it condenses on the cold surface in the form of droplets. These tiny drops of water are called dew drops.
- On a cloudy night, the clouds reflect back the heat emanating from the ground. Hence the ground never gets cold enough for the dew to be formed.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. India marked a major milestone in its fight against the COVID-19 pandemic by completing 100 crore vaccine doses in a record time. In light of this, analyse the factors that helped India achieve this feat. (15 marks, 250 words)[GS-2, Governance]
2. Despite the onerous nature of their duties, the police are a neglected lot. Discuss with relevant examples. (15 marks, 250 words)[GS-3, Internal Security]