

29 Dec 2021: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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A. GS 1 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

B. GS 2 Related

Category: POLITY

1. 'Indianising' the legal system and SC's views

Topic: Structure, Organization and Functioning of the Judiciary

Prelims: [Important Supreme Court Judgments](#)

Mains: Indianising of the Indian legal system

Context:

- Recent calls for **Indianising the legal system in India**.

Details:

- At least two Supreme Court judges have in the past few months openly expressed the need to “Indianise” the legal system.
 - In September 2021, the Chief Justice of India called for the “Indianisation” of the legal system in a bid to **provide greater access to justice to the poor**. By Indianisation, he meant **adapting to the practical realities of the Indian society and localizing the justice delivery systems** to make them more relatable to the general populace.
 - Speaking on the “Decolonisation of the Indian legal system”, Justice S. Abdul Nazeer had noted the **unsuitability of the colonial legal system** for the Indian population and its detrimental impact on the goals set by the Indian Constitution and national interests. He had underscored the need to embrace the great legal traditions as per Manu, Kautilya, Katyayana, Brihaspati, Narada, Parashara, Yajnavalkya and other legal giants of ancient India.
- Ex-Chief Justice of India P.N. Bhagwati had emphasized the need to **build up our own jurisprudence** in the M.C. Mehta case, 1986.
- The **[public interest litigation mechanism](#)** in India can be considered an attempt to Indianize the legal system given that it recognizes the difficulties faced by the general populace in accessing the judiciary and provides a mechanism to address it.
- Several judgments since the 1980s **refer to the works of Manu and Kautilya**, the legal greats of ancient India. While some have upheld the observations made, the court has also differed from the views of these ancient texts on several occasions.
 - In the **[Justice K.S.Puttaswamy \(Retd\) vs Union Of India](#)**, Justice S.A. Bobde (retired), noted how even in the ancient and religious texts of India, a well-developed sense of privacy was evident. He mentions that **Kautilya’s “Arthashastra prohibits entry into another’s house, without the owner’s consent”**.
 - In its **Joseph Shine judgment decriminalising adultery**, the court differs with the references to **punishments for adultery in the Manusmriti**.

- In the [Sabarimala case](#), the court differs with the Manusmriti considering menstruating women as polluting the surroundings. This the court noted limits the ability of menstruating women to attain freedom of movement.

C. GS 3 Related

Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. The James Webb Space Telescope

Topic: Awareness in the field of Space

Prelims: James Webb Telescope - Features; Red shift phenomenon

Mains: Difference between Hubble and James Webb Telescope; Significance of the new James Webb Telescope

Context:

- The James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) was launched into space by the Ariane 5 rocket from French Guiana, South America.

Details:

- Billed as the next-generation telescope, the **James Webb Telescope is a joint project of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), ESA (European Space Agency) and the Canadian Space Agency.**
- The James Webb Telescope is a **space-based telescope.**
 - Telescopes in space help avoid atmospheric disturbance and thermal turbulence and thus provide clear and sharp images of objects in space. They can also detect objects further away than ground-based telescopes.
 - While the most giant ground-based telescopes revealed galaxies over 5 billion light-years away, the space-based Hubble space telescope has identified the farthest known galaxy located at 13.4 billion years in the past.
- The James Webb Space Telescope is designed to **detect signals in the infrared region of the electromagnetic radiation.**
 - According to the Big Bang theory, the universe has been in a constant state of expansion. As the universe expands, space stretches. As the light travels far in space, the wavelength elongates. This is called the red shift.

- Hence the light from the earliest stars and nascent galaxies after having traversed the vast stretches of the expanding space, turn into infrared rays before reaching the Earth. Thus an infrared telescope is apt to observe the ancient, early universe, which is the primary goal of the JWST.
- The spacecraft will be **placed at 'Lagrange point 2' in space**.
 - At this point, the Earth-Sun system's gravitational forces, and the spacecraft's orbital motion would balance each other. Thus the spacecraft in this location will orbit the Sun, tagging along with the Earth in 365 days. Thus the spacecraft will be permanently behind Earth.
 - This will help shield the telescope from the sun rays and help maintain the low temperatures required in infrared-based telescopes to detect faint signals from distant stellar objects.
 - The IR telescope must be cooled to -220 degrees C or lower.

Difference between Hubble Telescope and James Webb Telescope:

- **Hubble telescope is in a very close orbit around the earth**, while the James Webb telescope will be 1.5 million kilometres away at the second Lagrange (L2) point.
- James Webb telescope will primarily look at the Universe in the infrared, while **Hubble studies it primarily at optical and ultraviolet wavelengths** (though it has some infrared capability).
- **James Webb telescope also has a much bigger mirror than Hubble**. This larger light-collecting area means that Webb can peer farther back into time than Hubble is capable of doing and will also be able to observe fainter stellar objects that Hubble cannot detect.
 - JWST will have about seven times as much light-gathering capability as Hubble.
- The James Webb Space Telescope also incorporates a **spectroscope**.
 - While a telescope can detect an object and show how it looks, the **spectroscope can analyse the light rays emanating from an object and reveal details about it**. From the spectral image, one can understand the elemental composition, the temperature of the stellar object, etc.

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. The pertinent issue of trust and the Indian politician

Topic: Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential

Mains: Challenges in Indian Politics

Introduction:

- "In politics, nothing is contemptible," cautioned author, essayist, and Conservative politician Benjamin Disraeli. Of course, he was mostly correct, as many politicians have criminal records and seem to lie frequently.
- However, some people empathize with voters, are sensitive to their needs, and have a vision that is bigger than party politics.

Trends based on Surveys:

- **Lack of Trust in Politicians:**
 - As a symbol of collective identity, membership in social networks is positively related with increased trust in politicians.
 - Those in urban regions reported less trust than those in rural areas probably due to the higher access to information in the urban areas.
- **Educational Level and Trust in Politicians:**
 - Higher levels of education are negatively related to trust in politicians.
 - Many politicians are without matriculation and have lower levels of education. Educated voters are better aware of political dishonest behaviour.
- **Criminal Background of Candidates:**
 - Several studies agree that parties are more inclined to nominate a candidate with a criminal record because they have a higher chance of winning.
 - While the majority of these conclusions are reasonable, it is puzzling that the two major parties have such high rates of criminal MPs and MLAs.

Conclusion:

To summarize, high levels of crime have the potential to destabilize India's democracy and jeopardize its well-being.

Category: HEALTH

1. Put out the data, boost the dose of transparency

Topic: *Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.*

Mains: *Concerns with Children's Vaccination and Precaution Dose for Health Workers.*

Context:

This article examines the criticality of two major announcements in the context of children's vaccination and precaution dose.

Two Major Decisions:

- Recently, the Prime Minister of India announced two key decisions.
 - First, all children in the 15-17 age bracket will be eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccines from January 3, 2022.
 - Second, all healthcare workers, frontline workers and people aged 60 years and above can get a third shot or 'precaution dose'.

Concerns associated with the Two Decisions:

- The vaccination that will be given as a precautionary dosage was not specified in the letter.
- Children will be given Covaxin, which is the only [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) approved vaccination with an emergency use list (EUL) for this age group available in India.
- It's unclear if the counsel was given on the basis of opinion or scientific proof.
- The term 'precaution dosage' is often interpreted as a tacit admission of a lack of proof.
- The development of the COVID-19 Omicron variation has had little effect on the risk in youngsters. In this context, the advantages of immunizing youngsters are limited, and they are ranked lower on the priority list for COVID-19 immunization.
- The 'targeted vaccination approach' is likely to meet a logistical barrier in identifying the youngsters who are eligible.
- The bulk of the older population suffers from one or more comorbidities. If they are needed to seek medical advice, it is estimated that up to 10 crore medical consultations will be required, with both indirect and direct costs.

Way Forward:

1. **First**, the conditionality of comorbidities and the need for advice by a doctor for ‘the precaution shot’ in the elderly should be done away with.
2. **Second**, there is scientific evidence and consensus on administering the third dose for immunocompromised adults.
3. **Third**, studies have found that a heterologous prime-boost approach is a better approach.
4. **Fourth**, technical experts should be given complete access to COVID-19 data for analysis and to find answers to those scientific and policy questions. Additional studies with primary data collection should be urgently commissioned for those policy issues which cannot be answered by existing data.
5. **Fifth**, vaccination for teenage children, exclusively with Covaxin has other implications.
6. **Finally**, the precaution dose and vaccination for children should not divert attention from the task of primary vaccination, 46 crore doses are still needed for the first and second shots.

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Vying for influence over Kabul

Topic: Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Mains: Crisis in Afghanistan; Interests of Arab Gulf states; Implications on India

Context:

Pakistan hosted a special session of the [Organization of Islamic Cooperation \(OIC\)](#) to address the crisis in Afghanistan.

Background:

- The humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan is reaching a breaking point, with the populace lacking basic utilities and a severe winter looming.
- While Pakistan hosted the OIC, India received foreign ministers from Central Asian countries, with Afghanistan at the top of the agenda.
- Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan, all of which are OIC members, elected to prioritize discussions with India.
- Other schisms have emerged inside the OIC, particularly among the Gulf states, which are now spilling over onto the topic of Afghanistan and deciding influence over the country's new Taliban-led leadership.

What are the challenges?

- **Qatar's growing clout:** Qatar has taken on the role of mediator in Afghanistan. Qatar's new involvement in Afghanistan has given it a lot of diplomatic and political attention throughout the world. The Qatari leadership's backing for political Islam and organisations like the Muslim Brotherhood, as well as its rising influence and ambition, were generating concern.
- **Fundamental changes:** The UAE and Saudi Arabia launched an economic embargo against Doha in 2017, preventing it from pursuing geopolitical plans that challenged long-held power structures. This has resulted in significant changes in the greater Arab Gulf structure. Qatar reduced the risk by moving closer to Turkey and Iran. Qatar and Turkey are competing for the right to run Afghanistan's airports under the [Taliban](#) administration.
- **Role of Saudi Arabia:** The Saudis played a central role during the recent OIC special session. They repaired their broken relationship with Pakistan.
- **Stake of Pakistan in Afghanistan:** Pakistan's agency on the problem has become inextricable due to Pakistan's questionable 'kingmaker' reputation in Afghanistan and influence over the Taliban. The UAE's recent move to enable former Afghan government officials to seek refuge in the nation exemplifies this.

What are the Implications on India?

- India will be concerned by the Arab Gulf's interest in Afghanistan.
- India must reconsider the US's credibility as a partner, as well as the value of the [Quad's](#) relationship, if it ignores India's interests in Central Asia.
- Due to China's goal challenge in the Indo-Pacific area, it may result in a policy shift.
- It will almost probably lead to a disastrous escalation of India-Pakistan tensions, which are already teetering on the precipice at a time when India is threatened on two fronts by China and Pakistan.
- However, China, India, Russia, and Iran may have a shared goal in countering extremism and restoring regional stability.

Way Forward:

Under the shadow of the Taliban, the Arab Gulf is prepared to re-emerge as a major role in Afghanistan. From combatting terrorism to fresh diplomatic issues like Afghanistan, India has recognised the relevance of middle powers in the Arab Gulf to a fast-evolving global order during the last decade.

1. GI tag sought for Apatani textile product

Context:

- An application seeking a [Geographical Indication \(GI\) tag](#) for the **Arunachal Pradesh Apatani textile product** has been filed.

Details:

- The Apatani weave comes from the Apatani tribe living in Arunachal Pradesh.
- The woven fabric is known for its geometric and zigzag patterns and for its angular designs. Leaves and plant resources are used for **organic dyeing**.
- The tribe predominantly weaves **shawls known as jig-jiro, and jilan or jackets called supuntarii**.
- **Only women folk are engaged in weaving.**

2. RBI flags banks' capital buffer needs

Context:

- The **Reserve Bank of India's Report on Trend and Progress of Banking in India 2020-21**, notes that as of September 30, all Public Sector Banks and Private Sector Banks had maintained the capital conservation buffer well over 2.5%.

Capital Conservation Buffer:

- The capital conservation buffer is designed to ensure that banks **build up capital buffers during normal times** (i.e., outside periods of stress) which can be drawn down as losses are incurred during a stressed period.

3. Chinese space station has close shave with Elon Musk's satellites

- China has accused the U.S. of irresponsible and unsafe conduct in space over two “close encounters” between the **Chinese space station, Tiangong** and satellites operated by U.S based private company, **SpaceX**.
 - **Starlink** is a satellite internet constellation operated by SpaceX providing satellite Internet access to most of the Earth.

- China has complained to the UN space agency. China's claim is that members of the **Outer Space Treaty** are not only responsible for actions by the government entities but also for the actions of their non-government entities.

G. Tidbits

1. Women in public life

- **Sucheta Kripalani** was an Indian freedom fighter and politician.
 - She participated in the **Quit India Movement**. She was an associate of Gandhi, working with him to bring normalcy in areas hit by riots during the Partition. She was a **member of the Constituent Assembly**.
 - She was **India's first woman Chief Minister**, serving as the head of the Uttar Pradesh government from 1963 to 1967.

2. 'Omicron can disrupt health systems'

- The WHO has warned that the **highly transmissible Omicron coronavirus variant** could result in large numbers of hospitalisations, and cause widespread **disruption to health systems and other critical services**.
- COVID-19 surges have wreaked havoc around the world, with many nations trying to strike a **balance between economically adverse restrictions and controlling the spread of the virus**.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements with regards to the famous Sun temple of Odisha:

1. It was built in the 13th century by King Narasimhadeva I of the Eastern Ganga Empire.
2. It was declared a UNESCO world heritage site in 1984.
3. Sailors once called this Sun Temple of Konark the Black Pagoda because it was supposed to draw ships onto the shore and cause shipwrecks.

Choose the correct statements:

- a. 1 & 2 only
- b. 2 & 3 only
- c. 1 & 3 only

- d. All of the above

Answer: d

Explanation:

- Konark Sun Temple is a 13th-century CE Sun Temple at Konark, on the coastline of Odisha. Also called the Surya Devalaya, it is a classic illustration of the Odisha style of architecture or Kalinga architecture.
- The temple is attributed to king Narasimhadeva I of the Eastern Ganga dynasty about 1250 CE.
- This temple was called the "Black Pagoda" in European sailor accounts as early as 1676 because it looked like a great tiered tower that appeared black and also its magnetic power that drew ships into the shore and caused shipwrecks. The temple served as an important landmark for sailors in the Bay of Bengal.
- Declared a UNESCO world heritage site in 1984, it remains a major pilgrimage site for Hindus, who gather here every year for the Chandrabhaga Mela around the month of February.

Q2. Who amongst the following decides the date of the election for the speaker of the State Legislative Assembly?

- a. Governor
- b. President
- c. Chief Minister
- d. State Election Commission

Answer: a

Explanation:

- The date for the Speaker's election of the State Legislative Assembly is notified by the Governor.

Q3. Which of these products has/have been conferred a GI tag in India?

1. Manipuri Black Rice from Manipur
2. Rasagola from Odisha
3. Bhagalpur Silk from Bihar
4. Feni from Goa
5. Patan Patola from Rajasthan

Choose the correct code:

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

- Patan Patola, a unique textile weaving art, is from the area of Patan in the North Gujarat region of western India and not Rajasthan.

Q4. Which of these given statements with regards to the Indian Council for Cultural Relations is not correct?

- a. It is an autonomous organisation of the Government of India, involved in India's external cultural relations (cultural diplomacy), through cultural exchange with other countries and their peoples.
- b. It was founded in 1950 by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, independent India's first Culture Minister.
- c. It has been assigned the responsibility of facilitating the celebration of the International Day of Yoga by Indian Missions/Posts abroad since 2015.
- d. ICCR has instituted several awards, which are conferred upon foreign nationals for their contributions in different fields, such as Distinguished Indologist Award and Gisela Bonn Award.

Answer: b

Explanation:

- The Indian Council for Cultural Relations is an autonomous organisation of the Government of India, involved in India's global cultural relations, through cultural exchange with other countries and their people.
- It was founded in 1950 by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the first Education Minister of independent India.

Q5. For the measurement/estimation of which of the following are satellite images/remote sensing data used? (UPSC-2019)

1. Chlorophyll content in the vegetation of a specific location
2. Greenhouse gas emissions from rice paddies of a specific location
3. Land surface temperatures of a specific location.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- The visible/near-infrared reflectance properties of leaves from several eucalyptus species were studied to determine appropriate indices for remote sensing of chlorophyll content.
- Remote sensing is used in measuring greenhouse gas emissions from rice paddies and land surface temperature also at some specific locations.
- Indian scientists study high-resolution maps generated by satellite imagery of cloud-prone rice paddy cultivation regions.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Anti-dumping duties can be an effective trade weapon to protect domestic industries but could also have adverse consequences when applied unwisely. Examine in the context of the India-China trade relationship. (250 words; 15 marks)(GS Paper 3/Economy)
2. High levels of criminality in politics could wreck India's democracy. Discuss. (250 words; 15 marks)(GS Paper 2/Polity)