

18 Feb 2022: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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B. GS 2 Related

Category: GOVERNANCE

1. SC lifts stay on Haryana quota for private jobs

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

Mains: Issues related to Haryana State Employment of Local Candidates Act.

Context

The Supreme Court squashed a Punjab and Haryana High Court order staying **Haryana State Employment of Local Candidates Act**.

Haryana State Employment of Local Candidates Act

- Is a controversial State Act which provides 75% reservation for locals in private sector jobs paying less than ₹30,000 a month.
- An employer faces a fine of ₹10,000 to ₹2 lakh for violation of the Act.

Industries' concerns

- It is said that the Act would impact 48,000 registered companies.
- Reservation in the private sector has not been mentioned in the Constitution.
- The law impacts employment as well as livelihood for many as there were no empirical studies that justify the act.
- The implementation of the law would have implications not only in Haryana but across India as States might be encouraged to draft similar laws.

Supreme Court's view

- The Supreme Court Bench set aside the stay order of the High Court on the ground that it did not give "sufficient reasons".
- The Bench observed that every law passed by the legislature was presumed to be legal.
- An order of stay on the implementation by a court of law should be reasoned.
- The SC requested the High Court to decide on the writ petition filed by industrialists within four weeks.
- The Supreme Court ordered the State government not to take any "coercive steps" against employers violating the Act.

To know more about the Act refer to [CNA dated 11 Feb 2022](#).

Nut Graf

Considering the far-reaching effects of the Act, not just on the state but across the country, the Court should act expeditiously and provide judgement that views India as one nation.

C. GS 3 Related

Category: SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

1. A miracle cure against HIV

Syllabus: Science and Technology – developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.

Prelims: Facts about anti-retroviral therapy (ART) and HIV infections

Mains: Stem cell therapy for HIV

Context

A U.S. patient has become the first woman and the third person to date to be cured of HIV after receiving a stem cell transplant from a donor.

Background

- At a Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections in the United States, researchers described the case of a 60-year-old woman who was diagnosed with an HIV infection in 2013. She was also later diagnosed with leukaemia in 2017.
- She received embryonic stem cells from a donor with a rare mutation that naturally blocks HIV from infecting cells. She was also given adult stem cells, from a relative.
- The adult stem cells boosted the immunity and possibly helped the embryonic stem cells fully integrate with the lady's immune system.
- After 14 months, doctors report that the woman has no sign of HIV in her blood and also has no detectable antibodies to the virus.

Prevalence of HIV/AIDS in India

- In 2019, HIV prevalence among adult males (15–49 years) was estimated at **0.24%** and among females at **0.20%** of the population.
- As of 2019, there were **23.48 lakh** Indians with HIV.
 - Maharashtra had the maximum at **3.96 lakh** followed by Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.
- As per the India HIV Estimation 2019 report, the estimated adult HIV prevalence is on a downward trend and stabilizing in India since the epidemic's peak in 2000.
- India's National Aids Control Organisation says that anti-retroviral treatment (ART) therapy is "freely available" to all those who require it that could be availed at dedicated centres across the country.

Anti-retroviral therapy (ART)

- The treatment for HIV is called anti-retroviral therapy (ART). ART involves taking a combination of HIV medicines every day.
- ART consists of tenofovir, emtricitabine and raltegravir.
- ART effectively suppresses replication, if taken at the right time and thus restores the immune system and halts the onset and progression of the disease as well as reduces chances of getting opportunistic infections.
- The main goal of HIV treatment is to reduce a patient's viral load to an undetectable level. An undetectable viral load means that the level of HIV in the blood is too low to be detected by a viral load test.

Read more on [HIV and India](#) in the link.

Previous cases of HIV recovery

- Only two people have reportedly been cured of HIV.
- Till now both the recoveries have relied on bone marrow transplants from donors who carried **CCR5 delta 32** mutations, that naturally make one immune to an HIV infection.
- The previous transplants involved adult stem cells and these cells from the bone marrow replaced their immune system.
- The body's natural tendency is to reject foreign stem cells and hence both donors suffered side effects called **graft-versus-host disease** and developed severe illnesses throughout their HIV remission.

Concerns with the new stem-cell therapy

- The woman was discharged from the hospital within 17 days of the transplant and did not develop graft-versus-host disease. However, it remains to be studied if the lady will further develop any side effects.
- Stem cell therapy is a complex exercise and is not accessible to most HIV patients.
- This therapy requires stem cells from a rare group of individuals with beneficial mutations.

Way forward

- Anti-retroviral therapy (ART) has been successful in ensuring that proper treatment has resulted in better life spans comparable to those without HIV. Hence it needs to be made accessible across the world.
- A vaccine for HIV or a permanent drug that eliminates the virus is yet to be made available and would be the long-sought 'cure' for HIV.

Nut Graf

The new stem cell therapy for curing HIV is a welcome addition to the arsenal of treatments for HIV, but the focus needs to be given to widening the accessibility and reach of the available treatments and development of a vaccine against HIV for a long term solution.

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: INFRASTRUCTURE

1. India has still to get a good grip on road safety

Syllabus: Roads

Mains: Initiatives of the government to reduce the number of road accidents and fatalities.

Context: The urgency to ensure the safety of the roads in the country and the required joint efforts of the central and the state governments to make the roads accident resilient have been discussed in the article.

An Overview of the Situation:

- Road accidents and fatalities have been a major concern across the globe including India.
- There is an emerging need to develop road infrastructure and introduce policies to reduce the number of deaths that occur due to road accidents.
- It is estimated that globally 3500 people die on roads every day which accounts for preventable deaths and injuries involving children and young people worldwide.
- The [United Nations General Assembly](#) had expressed its responsiveness towards the alarming scenario with respect to unsafe roads and its implications by adopting the Global Action Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety in 2010.
- The Global Action Plan aimed to reduce the number of road accidents by the year 2020.
- In August 2020, the UNGA adopted a resolution for the betterment of global road safety and declared 2021-2030 as the Decade of Action for Road Safety.
- This sets an ambitious target of reducing 50% of road traffic deaths and injuries by 2030 achieving [SDG-6](#).
- The Ministry of Road, Transport and Highways, the Government of India, in alignment with the targets and objectives of the global action plan, declared to reduce 50% of the road accidents by 2025 and bring down the number of deaths due to road accidents to zero by 2030.
- The data put forth by the Ministry of Road, Transport and Highways and [NCRB](#) show that there is a reduction of road accidents in 2020.
- The number of deaths per 100 accidents reported an increase from 26.9 in 2001 to 28.63 in 2011 followed by an increase to 37.54 in 2020.



Image Source: WHO

The major Concern:

- Despite a number of interventions, awareness campaigns regarding road safety and setting up targets to reduce road accidents, there is a significant challenge to mitigate the fatality rate which has been increasing with time.
- The Motor Vehicles (Amendment) act 2019 that incorporated provisions of penalty for violation of traffic rules, has not been implemented uniformly in all states. The proper implementation of the act is necessary to achieve the target of a 50% reduction of road accidents.
- Insufficient manpower to enforce the traffic rules in many parts of the country adds to the increased volume of traffic.
- There is an inadequacy of funds to rectify the black spots on the road that are prone to accidents and to undertake traffic calming measures.

Way towards safer and sustainable roads:

- The government has been actively involved in adopting measures to enhance the safety of roads.

- However, better enforcement of traffic laws is a need of essence to curb the deaths emerging from road accidents.
- The State and the Centre are recommended to work in collaboration and coordination in order to strengthen the road infrastructure, smooth allocation of funds to rectify the black spots and step towards the ambitious targets of road safety in a pragmatic way.

Read more about Road Safety in Perspective, Sansad TV.

Nut Graf

In order to achieve the targets of bringing down road accidents and ensure road safety, the state and the central governments must work in cooperation and offer joint efforts. This will pave a way for safer connectivity to the people of this country.

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. The India- UAE free trade Agreement: To bond beyond oil

Syllabus: Bilateral agreements involving India

Prelims: Free Trade Agreements

Mains: The scope of India-UAE FTA beyond oil.

Context: India has stepped ahead on a new journey with a renewed approach to indulge in Free Trade Agreements (FTA) with its trade partners.

The Shift in Approach:

- With revamped objectives and renewed aspirations, India is eager to focus on gaining market access that shall facilitate the Indian industry's integration into the global value chain.
- It has been iterated that the signing of FTA by India will no longer be confined within the intention to join a group but it will also address the new dynamics of international trade and the Indian economy.

Countries in focus:

- Under the new FTA strategy, the Government of India has offered priority to six countries to deal with, among which the United Arab Emirates is at the top of the list for an early harvest deal.
- Other countries on the list include the United Kingdom, the European Union, Australia, Canada, Israel and a group of countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council.

Rays of Positivity:

- The revisited and refurbished FTA strategy is a welcome move by India to promote its trade interests in important regions that will contribute to the overall economic growth.
- The fresh negotiations along with the government's willingness to indulge in interim and mini-trade deals will provide impetus to the entire gamut of India's trade.
- In September 2021, UAE expressed its intention to enter into bilateral economic agreements with eight countries and India was one among them.

- Over the progressive rhythm of time, UAE has emerged as a major economic hub in the world due to its strategic location. UAE, with its 'Vision 2021', has emphasized on diversification of its economy with enormous importance to the hydrocarbon sector followed by services and manufacturing.

Tales of India-UAE Relationship:

- The diplomatic relationship between the two countries flourished in 1972.
- The relationship has been boosted with the visit of the Indian Prime Minister to UAE in 2015 that marked the onset of a strategic partnership between the two countries.
- The Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi was invited as the chief guest at the Republic Day celebrations of 2017 transforming the bilateral relationship to a comprehensive strategic partnership.
- In September 2021, the India-UAE comprehensive economic partnership agreement was launched.
- Time has witnessed the deepening of India's trade relations with the UAE. This makes UAE the third-largest trading partner of India.
- With the new FTA, this relationship will be further strengthened.
- This will be an enabler of two-way investment that is anticipated to benefit India's export targets.
- UAE offers an attractive market for Indian electronics, automobiles and other engineering products.
- This partnership will also invite multinational investments from other geographies that will expand the business of both India and the UAE.

Way Ahead:

- Despite the existence of a number of positives arising from the new FTA, the complicated tariff structure of UAE which is in compliance with the GCC norms, needs to be addressed and negotiated in order to assist the Indian exporters.
- Therefore, it is suggested that the FTA agreement must try to introduce more transparency and predictability in terms of Non-Tariff Barriers to ensure a less cumbersome compliance procedure.

Nut Graf

Transparency and Predictability in UAE's Non Tariff Barriers (NBT) are required and should be specified by the FTA for a less cumbersome compliance procedure that will facilitate the exporters of India.

F. Prelims Facts

1. Milan Exercise 2022

Syllabus: *Various Security forces and agencies and their mandate*

Prelims: *Facts about Milan Exercise*

Context

Milan 2022 would be held in Visakhapatnam from February 26 to March 4, 2022.

Milan Exercise

- Milan is a Multilateral Naval Exercise hosted by India.

- The biennial multilateral naval exercise was started by the Indian Navy in 1995 at the Andaman and Nicobar Command.
- Milan 2022 is the 11th edition of the event and would be held under the aegis of Eastern Naval Command.

To read more about [Milan Exercise](#) click the link.

2. Indian Neutrino Observatory (INO)

Syllabus: Science and Technology

Prelims: Indian Neutrino Observatory (INO)

Context

Tamil Nadu has conveyed to the Supreme Court that it does not want the Indian Neutrino Observatory (INO) to be set up in a sensitive ecological zone in the [Western Ghats](#).

Indian Neutrino Observatory (INO)

- The setting up of an INO was approved by the Union cabinet for studying fundamental particles called the neutrinos.
- The location of the Observatory would be in the **Bodi Hills** region of the **Theni district** in Tamil Nadu.
- It involves,
 - The construction of an underground laboratory.
 - Inter-Institutional Centre for High Energy Physics (IICHEP) and Iron Calorimeter Detector (ICAL).
 - A magnetized Iron Calorimeter to study the properties of the neutrino, specifically, the mass hierarchy in various types of neutrino. It will be the largest in the world weighing over 50,000 tonnes.
- The Department of Science and Technology and the Department of Atomic Energy jointly support the project.

Read more on the [Indian Neutrino Observatory](#) in the link.

3. India's first water taxi service

Syllabus: Infrastructure: Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

Prelims: Water taxi service

Context

India's first water taxi service was inaugurated in Maharashtra.

Details

- The ₹8.37-crore project has shared expenditures from the State and Centre and will currently operate in three routes.
- The three routes include
 - Belapur to Ferry Wharf (the domestic cruise terminal)
 - Belapur to Elephanta Caves
 - Belapur to JNPT
- Seven speed boats, each with a capacity of 10 to 30 passengers and one catamaran with a passenger capacity of 50 to 60 will run on these routes.

G. Tidbits

1. Singapore PM's speech uncalled for, says India

- Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong criticized the decline of “Nehru’s India” to a state with almost half the Indian MPs facing “criminal charges”.
- The comments by the Singapore Prime Minister have led to a controversy between the two countries.
- The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) of India summoned Singapore’s High Commissioner to India, post the comments. Officials say that Mr. Lee’s comments were “uncalled for” and “unacceptable”.
- It is believed that Mr. Lee was referring to a 2019 report by the **Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR)**, which found that 233 or 43% of members who won the elections in 2019 faced criminal charges.
- However, government sources said it was not expected that a foreign head of government would cite this information, that pertains to India’s domestic politics, in a prepared Parliament speech.

2. India again backs diplomacy at UNSC

- India called for a diplomatic solution to the tensions at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) meeting called by Russia to discuss the Ukraine crisis.
- India is trying to balance its interests, given its strong relationship with both the U.S. and Russia.
- India’s interest is in finding a solution that can provide for immediate de-escalation of tensions taking into account the legitimate security interests of all countries and aimed towards securing long-term peace and stability in the region and beyond.
- India also added that the wellbeing of more than twenty thousand Indians in Ukraine is a priority.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements with respect to the Normandy Format:

1. The diplomatic grouping was created in January 2022 with the aim of finding a peaceful resolution to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine.
2. It is an informal forum that was set up by France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine.
3. It takes its name from the Normandy landings in the second world war.

Which of the given statement/s is/are **INCORRECT**?

- a. 1 only
- b. 1 and 3 only
- c. 2 only
- d. None of the above

Answer: a

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is incorrect.** The Normandy Format is a diplomatic grouping created in June 2014 to find a peaceful resolution to the conflict in Ukraine due to Russia's military aggression.
- **Statement 2 is correct.** It is an informal forum that was set up by France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine.
- **Statement 3 is correct.** It takes its name from the Normandy landings in the Second World War.

Q2. Which among the following is/are Earth Observation Satellites?

- 1. Bhaskara-I
- 2. INSAT-3D
- 3. SARAL
- 4. SCATSAT-1
- 5. Megha-Tropiques

Options:

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- All the satellites mentioned are Earth Observation Satellites. Hence **option d** is correct.
- Earth Observing Satellite (EOS) is a satellite that through space sends signals to Earth and monitors the changes which occur on the Earth's surface.
- These satellites can only be used for non-military purposes and mainly for environmental benefits.

Q3. Falkland Islands, recently in news, are located in?

- a. South China Sea

- b. Indian Ocean
- c. South Pacific Ocean
- d. South Atlantic Ocean

Answer: d

Explanation:



Image source: World Atlas

Q4. Which of the following are correctly matched?

Diseases	Vector
1. Malaria	Anopheles mosquito
2. Yellow Fever	Aedes aegypti mosquito

3. Japanese Encephalitis

Culex mosquito

Options:

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- All the options are correctly matched. Hence **option d** is correct.

Q5. What is the aim of the programme 'Unnat Bharat Abhiyan'? (UPSC CSE 2017)

- a. Achieving 100% literacy by promoting collaboration between voluntary organizations and government's education system and local communities.
- b. Connecting institutions of higher education with local communities to address development challenges through appropriate technologies.
- c. Strengthening India's scientific research institutions in order to make India a scientific and technological power.
- d. Developing human capital by allocating special funds for health care and education of rural and urban poor, and organizing skill development programmes and vocational training for them.

Answer: b

Explanation:

- **Option b is correct.**
- The **Unnat Bharat Abhiyan** launched by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) aims to **connect institutions of higher education**, including Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), National Institutes of Technology (NITs) and Indian Institutes of Science Education & Research (IISERs) etc. **with local communities to address the development challenges through appropriate technologies.**

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Discuss the potential of India – UAE bilateral relations beyond the trade in Oil. (250 words; 15 marks)[GS-2, International Relations]
2. Loss of lives by road accidents in India is one of the highest in the world. What are the causes behind it? Also, suggest ways to ensure better road safety in the country. (250 words; 15 marks)[GS-3, Infrastructure]