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A. GS 1 Related

Category: GEOGRAPHY

1. [Time after time, MPs want to know if India is changing time](#)

Syllabus: Salient features of world's physical geography.

Prelims: Time zones in India

Mains: Need of Separate time zones and problems associated with it

Context: Members from both Houses have for two decades asked the Center at least 16 times if India proposes to have two time zones and the steps taken to implement it.

Know more about the [need of Separate time zones and problems associated with it](#)

B. GS 2 Related

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Women judges in SC have short tenures

Syllabus: Structure, organization and functioning of the Judiciary

Mains: Concerns associated with Short tenure of Women judges in Supreme court

Context:

- This article examines how the appointment of women judges has been reduced to a mere “symbolic gesture” with very short tenures in the Supreme court of India.

Concerns associated with Short tenure of Women judges:

- A little over five years is the average tenure for a judge in the Supreme Court.
- Only Justice Ruma Pal has completed a tenure of a little over six years between January 2000 and June 2006.
- Eleven women judges have adorned the Supreme Court, but a majority of them have a tenure of less than five years.
- **Disadvantages due to short tenure:**
 - Short tenures of office as judge in the Supreme Court likely reduces chances of being part of a Constitution Benches which decide important questions of law.
 - Justice Banumathi, who served as judge for a little less than six years, was part of a nine-judge Bench combination scheduled to examine matters of religious freedom originating from the Sabarimala review verdict.
 - The pandemic and her retirement left the job unfinished.
 - Short tenures may also mean not being part of or less time as a member of the powerful Supreme Court collegium.

- Justice Fathima Beevi was appointed as the first woman Supreme Court judge in 1989 nearly six months after her retirement from the Kerala High Court.
- Justice Indu Malhotra was the first woman advocate to be directly elevated as a Supreme Court judge.
- The entry of Justices Kohli, Trivedi and Nagarathna marked the first time three women judges were appointed at the same time in the Supreme Court.

Other Problems associated with Women judges of Supreme court:

- **Under-representation:** There is quite low representation of women at all levels in the legal field. Women on average constitute only around 30% of the judges in the lower judiciary.
- **Structural issues:** There are various barriers that women face in the legal profession, including bias, lack of judicial infrastructure, etc.
- **Social Concerns:** The continued prevalence of certain attitudes about the role of women in society – this issue is a problem a woman faces regardless of the type of employment.
- **Lack of Infrastructure:** lack of Judicial infrastructure is another barrier to women in judiciary with small courtrooms which are crowded and cramped, absence of restrooms, and childcare facilities are all barriers.

Recommendations to enhance the position of women in Judiciary:

- The demand for higher representation for women judges beyond 50% on the bench in the Supreme court should be considered seriously.
- In order to promote women in law and litigation, the focus should be to increase the number of girls choosing to study law after school.
- There should be some form of uniform policy of reservation for girls for entry into law colleges across the country.
- The women lawyers and judges at the top should raise their voices about the changes that can be made to improve the working conditions and representation of women in the legal profession.

The late US Supreme Court Judge Ruth Bader Ginsburg said that “*women belong in all places where decisions are being made...It shouldn't be that women are the exception.*”

Nut Graf

Adequate tenure of women judges would benefit the Supreme court from the rich experience and nuanced understanding of the law women judges bring to the table. A more representative gender jurisprudence would increase the willingness of women to seek justice and produce judgments that better reflect the diversity of Indian experiences.

C. GS 3 Related

Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. T cell immune responses seen a year after infection

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

Prelims: What are T Cells?

Mains: protective effect of memory T cell immune responses

Context: A new study from Wuhan addresses that no studies have been done to evaluate the protective effect of memory T cell immune responses against severe disease 12 months after primary infection.

What are T Cells?

- T cells are a part of the immune system that focuses on specific foreign particles.

- T cells circulate until they encounter their specific antigen and play a critical part in immunity to foreign substances.

What are T cells and why are they important?

- T cells can act as “killer cells”, attacking cells which have been infected with a virus or another kind of pathogen.
- They can also act as “helper cells” by supporting B cells to produce antibodies.

Findings of Recent Study:

- **Independent of severity**
 - The T cell immune responses were detectable in individuals tested 12 months after infection and even when they had lost the neutralizing antibody response.
 - The researchers found that multifunctional T cell responses were detected for all SARS-CoV-2 viral proteins tested.
 - Memory T cell responses to the original strain were not disrupted by new variants.
- **Robustness of antibodies**
 - The study reveals the durability and robustness of the T cell responses against variants, including Delta, even after one year of infection.
 - Most importantly, the robust and longstanding T cell responses were seen in people who have not been reinfected or vaccinated.
 - This would mean even in the absence of vaccination, a person who has been infected by the virus even one year ago would have robust immune responses.
 - No studies have been done to evaluate if booster doses improve T cell immune responses.

Nut Graf

The adaptive immune response is a major determinant of the clinical outcome after SARS-CoV-2 infection and underpins vaccine efficacy. Current COVID-19 vaccines elicit robust T cell responses that likely contribute to remarkable protection against hospitalization or death.

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: ECONOMY

1. Beyond Record Exports

Syllabus: Indian Economy and issues related to planning, mobilisation of resources, growth development and employment

Prelims: FTA

Mains: Evaluation of the risk factors for Indian exports in the upcoming days and the identification of a sustainable way forward.

Context: The article analyses India's beyond record export growth rate that has hit a historic \$400 billion in the financial year 2021-22 and has been considered as the highest ever.

Attaining \$400 billion export target: The Significance

- The financial year 2021-22 has exemplified for the first time in several years wherein India has achieved its export target.
- An export growth hitting \$400 billion was not anticipated considering the impact of the pandemic on the country's economy.
- It has been inferred that the higher prices of commodities and oil facilitated an increase in the value of exports.
- The exports of petroleum, engineering, chemicals, cotton yarn, handloom, textile products have undergone considerable increase reflecting a signal of positivity in terms of growth.
- Despite India's remarkable achievement in meeting the exports target, a number of challenges are signified and need effective interventions.

A sign of hope for India:

- International trade, in the present time, has determined a shift in its global procurement preferences to diversify their dependence on China especially after the outbreak of COVID-19 virus.
- For instance, Australia has paved the way for India in the midst of its trade battle with China.
- India's shipments to the US also increased to 47%.
- All these events are in favour of expanding the scope of India's trade basket and experts believe that India can use this as an opportunity to establish its credentials as a credible alternative to China.

Assessing the challenges :

- The outlandish export growth rate of India has opened up umpteen trade opportunities for India with a prime focus in the area of [Free Trade Agreement](#) strengthening its position in the international market. However, there exists enormous possibility of competition in various sectors from India's Asian peers such as Vietnam and Bangladesh.
- Even though there has been an increase in exports and imports, India's [Trade Deficit](#) has shown a steep rise which is higher than the year hit by pandemic (2020-21) with a regular spike in monthly trade deficit.
- Imports have been observed to gain greater momentum than exports that added on to the trade deficit.
- The Ukraine-Russia conflict might result in the increase of India's farm produce exports like wheat and maize but this could pose the challenge of a prominent rise in India's energy import bill along with the rise in the costs of importing edible oils like sunflower oil which is produced majorly by Ukraine and Russia.
- It has been envisaged that India's trading scenario which is visibly import driven can translate into a 'term of trade' shock accompanied by elevated trade and current account deficits. As a result, there will be sustained pressure on the rupee as monetary tightening in the developing economies may suck out dollars from emerging markets.

- Most economists opined for a probable weakening of rupee in the upcoming days which could be of lesser benefits for the exporters.

Shortfalls impacting India's trade:

- Intra and Interregional differences in export infrastructure remain as an impediment to India's export promotion and needs to be addressed.
- Existence of weak trade support and growth orientation across the states
- Lack of proper research and development infrastructure to set up complex and unique exports.

Towards a sustainable way:

- There is a necessity for timely actions on the policy front that can have potential in tackling high shipping rates, container shortages and re-alignment of trade routes around the Black Sea. This will result in the creation of more export opportunities.
- A speedy conclusion of Free Trade Agreement pacts with countries like the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada, can be extremely beneficial for India and its exporters to gain access to larger markets.
- The Foreign Trade Policy for 2015-20 needs to be revised to create a robust ecosystem for India's exports.
- Important recommendations from the parliamentary committee must be put into effect without delay. For example, the parliamentary committee suggested the inclusion of the [Special Economic Zone](#) and the sectors like pharmaceuticals, steel and chemicals under the Remission of Duties and Taxes on Export Products Scheme ([RoDTEP](#)) and this suggestion was given effect with extensive delay.
- Therefore timely implementation of essential policies and recommendations could assist in balancing the tectonic shifts in trading patterns which is at present nurtured by the European crisis and demands a COVID-induced inward-looking shift in nations' approach towards globalisation.

Read more about India's export surge in [CNA](#) dated 24th Mar'22**Nut Graf**

India's significant export growth that reached \$400 billion is accompanied by several risks in the upcoming days. Effective and timely policy interventions that address the issues of trade deficit and high import energy bill, are required for the creation of more export opportunities for India to reap the benefits of the historic gain in a sustainable manner.

F. Prelims Facts**1. Bend and aim: DRDO's corner-shot weapon gives police a critical eye**

Syllabus: GS-3: Security Challenges: Defense equipment

Prelims: A corner-shot weapon system (CSWS)

Context: Recently, the Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) developed a corner-shot weapon system (CSWS).

Corner-Shot Weapon System (CSWS):

- A corner-shot weapon system (CSWS) is designed and developed by the Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO).
- It is at an advanced stage of being inducted by the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and the Jammu and Kashmir police.
- The CSWS is a special purpose weapon designed by the Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE), Pune.
- **Functions:**
 - It can engage targets located around the corners as the system bends.
 - It captures video feeds thus saving soldiers from any surprise counter attack.
- **Features:**
 - Day-night firing capability, color display, digital zoom, zeroing facility, hot keys, high power battery along with status display.

2. A new feather in his cap

Syllabus: GS3: Environment and Ecology: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

Prelims: Hornbill Nest Adoption Program

Context: The Hornbill Nest Adoption Program of Arunachal Pradesh celebrates a decade of successful conservation

The Hornbill Nest Adoption Program

- The Hornbill Nest Adoption Program (HNAP) is a community-based conservation initiative that was started in 2011.
- The HNAP model is unique as it brings together two sets of external protectors to help hornbill parents breed.
- The Hornbill Nest Adoption Program was launched as a partnership with the Ghora-Aabhe Society (a local NGO) and the Arunachal Pradesh Forest Department (PTR management).
- In 2017, the Pakke Paga Hornbill Festival Committee was also included as a fourth partner.
- HNAP operates in the forests outside Arunachal Pradesh's Pakke Tiger Reserve.

About Hornbill:

- Hornbills are indicators of the health of a forest.
- They are seed dispersers and rightly called the 'farmers of the forest'.
- Pakke Tiger Reserve and its environs harbour **four species:** the great hornbill, rufous-necked hornbill, wreathed hornbill and the oriental pied hornbill.

Know more about the [Great Indian Hornbill](#)

G. Tidbits

Nothing here for today!!!

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements with regards to the Sansad Ratna award:

1. The award was established in 2010 to honor the top performing MPs.
2. The award was established based on the recommendation given by Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam.
3. The selection committee for the award is headed by the Lok Sabha speaker.

Choose the correct statement/s:

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

Answer: b

Explanation:

- Sansad Ratna Award was established in 2010 by the Prime Point Foundation and e-magazine PreSense. **Hence statement 1 is correct.**
- It aims to honor “top performing” Members of the Indian Parliament, based on the suggestions given by Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, Former President of India. **Hence statement 2 is correct.**
- Many eminent citizens, including retired bureaucrats, professionals, social workers and academicians of Chennai are associated with the Awards Committee. T S Krishnamurthy, Former Chief Election Commissioner of India is the ‘Patron’ of the Awards Committee. **Hence statement 3 is not correct.**
- These are the only awards presented by citizens and the Indian civil society to honour the top performing Parliamentarians in the government of India.

Q2. Which of the following fundamental rights in India is/are available exclusively to minority communities only?

- a. Article 29 & 30
- b. Article 29 only
- c. Article 30 only
- d. Article 28, 29 & 30

Answer: c

Explanation:

- Article 30 states about the Right of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions
 - All minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice

- The state shall not, in granting aid to educational institutions, discriminate against any educational institution on the ground that it is under the management of a minority, whether based on religion or language
- Article 30 of the Indian Constitution states the right of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions.
- It says: "All minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice."
- **Hence option C is correct.**

Q3. Consider the following statements with regards to the Olive Ridley Turtles:

1. They are a part of Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
2. They are best known for their unique mass nesting called Arribada.
3. Odisha's Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary is known as the world's largest rookery (colony of breeding animals) of sea turtles.

Choose the correct code:

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- Olive Ridley Turtles have been given legal protection under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife Protection Act 1972.
 - The Olive Ridley Turtles are also protected by CITES under Appendix 1.
 - They are also listed in the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), also called Bonn Convention.
- The unique mass nesting of Olive Ridley Turtles (female turtles assemble on the same beach to lay eggs) is called Arribada.
- Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary is a marine wildlife sanctuary located in Odisha and is a very popular tourist attraction of Odisha in India. It is the world's largest nesting beach for Olive Ridley Turtles.
- **Hence all the statements are correct.**

Q4. Which of the following sets of nations represent BIMSTEC members?

- a. India, Pakistan, Nepal
- b. Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar
- c. Sri Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia
- d. India, Maldives, Thailand

Answer: b

Explanation:

- Bay of Bengal Initiative on Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation.
- The BIMSTEC states are those which are on the shore or are adjacent to the Bay of Bengal and are dependent on it.
- There are seven nations in BIMSTEC. There are five Southasian nations:
 - Bangladesh
 - Bhutan
 - India
 - Nepal
 - Sri Lanka
- There are two southeast Asian nations:
 - Myanmar
 - Thailand
- **Hence option B is correct.**

Q5. With reference to India's biodiversity, Ceylon frogmouth, Coppersmith barbet, Graychinned minivet and White-throated redstart are

- a. Birds
- b. Primates
- c. Reptiles
- d. Amphibians

Answer: a

Explanation:

- Ceylon frogmouth, Coppersmith barbet, Graychinned minivet and White-throated redstart are **birds**.
- Srilanka frogmouth are found in the Western Ghats. Its IUCN status is "least concern". *Batrachostomus moniliger* is its scientific name.
- Coppersmith Barbets, also known as Crimson-breasted Barbets, are a type of bird that can be found throughout the Indian Subcontinent. It has the least concerned IUCN status.
- *Psilopogon haemacephalus* is its scientific name. From the Himalayas to China, the Grey Chinned Minivet is a bird species. Its scientific name is *Pericrocotus Solaris*.
- In India, Nepal, Bhutan, and China, the white-throated redstart is a bird species. The IUCN has also designated it as a species of least concern. *Phoenicurus schisticeps* is its scientific name.
- **Hence A is the correct option.**

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Women's representation in India's higher judiciary has remained much below par since India's independence. Discuss. (250 words; 15 marks)[GS-2, Polity]
2. Is it feasible to adopt the mechanism of daylight saving in India? Discuss the implications of adopting such a system. (250 words; 15 marks)[GS-1, Geography]

