

17 Apr 2022: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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A. GS 1 Related

Category: SOCIAL ISSUES

1. [‘Social media apps must take steps to protect women’](#)

Syllabus: Women and associated issues

Mains: Concerns with Social media abuse and Recommendations to prevent them

Context: Former Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) of Cyber Cell speaks about the need to counsel women who have been victims of abuse on social media.

Recent Social Media Abuse cases:

- **Bulli Bai case:** The Bulli Bai case is related to an online mock auction of women of a particular community in India. Photos of prominent women from this community were uploaded on the Bulli Bai app without their permission where they were auctioned virtually.
- **Clubhouse case:** the Clubhouse app case is a hate app case where derogatory comments were made against women of a particular community.

Concerns with abuse on social media

- The accused are young whose parents are unaware that they have a virtual alter ego.
- There is resentment toward a particular religious community, as well as hatred for the women who belong to that community.

Recommendations:

- **Victim Counseling:** Victims of social media abuse, like those who have been subjected to extortion, should receive counseling.
- **Special Grievance Cell:** All social media apps should have a separate grievance cell dedicated solely to women's safety issues, capable of working around the clock to prevent abuse and protect women on these platforms.
- **Generate Awareness:** Parents, teachers, and psychologists must collaborate to raise awareness among minors and teenagers so that they do not develop a false sense of identity and seek fake validation in the virtual world.
- **Redefine Women's safety:** We must redefine women's safety. It's impossible to talk about a woman's need to walk safely on the road while also abusing her online.
- **Use of Technology to Prevent Abuse:** The use of algorithms on social media platforms can easily track and block handles and users who use vulgar and inappropriate language or words towards women.
- **Focus on Research and Studies:** Cyberpsychology should be studied, and people should be taught how to use social media responsibly.

Nut Graf

The role of social media and online speech in civil society has come under heightened scrutiny in recent times. Online abuse takes several forms, contributing to religious and ethnic violence, and spreading Harmful misinformation. It is necessary to generate awareness about social abuse and redefine the meaning of women safety.

B. GS 2 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

C. GS 3 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: GOVERNANCE

1. Spectrum price row

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

Mains: Critical evaluation of the recommendations of TRAI on the spectrum pricing.

Context

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) proposed recommendations on the auction of spectrum, this will also include spectrum for 5G services.

Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)

- TRAI is a statutory body established in 1997 through the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act, 1997.
- It was established to create and nurture conditions and also provide a fair and transparent policy environment for growth in the telecommunications sector.
- TRAI regulates telecom services including fixation/revision of tariffs for telecom services that were earlier vested in the Central Government.

Read more about – [Telecom Regulatory Authority of India \(TRAI\)](#)

TRAI Recommendations

- All the spectrum in the existing bands of 700 MHz, 800 MHz, 900 MHz, 1800 MHz, 2100 MHz, 2300 MHz, and 2500 MHz is to be available for auction, along with airwaves in new bands like 600 MHz, 3300-3670 MHz and 24.25-28.5 GHz.
 - TRAI has in total recommended Over 1,00,000 MHz of airwaves for the auction.
 - The total spectrum on offer at reserve price is estimated to be around ₹5 lakh crore for 20 years.
- The reserve price for the **3300-3670 MHz band**, which has been regarded as the key spectrum for **5G** has been reduced by 35.5% to ₹317 crore/MHz, from ₹492 crore/MHz.
- The reserve price for the high-end **700 MHz band** has been reduced to ₹3,927 crore/MHz from ₹6,568 crore/MHz.
- TRAI has fixed the reserve price for spectrum bands for a 20-year holding period.
 - The prices to raise the holding period to 30 years would be 1.5 times the recommended prices for 20 years.
- TRAI also recommended various alternatives for the uptake of Captive Wireless Private Networks (CWP), which includes, the likes of private networks through telcos, independent isolated networks in company's establishments using telcos' spectrum, permitting the companies to avail spectrum on lease from telcos or directly from Department of Telecom (DoT) to set up their own isolated CWP.
- TRAI also said that companies can get the spectrum directly from the government and establish their own isolated CWPs.

Reasons for price cut

- The increasing financial burden on the telecom sector.
- To create a balance between rising revenues and maintaining the sustainability of the sector, in such a way that telecom companies have adequate capacities to make a capital expenditure for making a shift to adopt 5G technology.
- Further, in the previous spectrum auction, only about 37.1% of the total spectrum offered was acquired by the companies, mainly because of high prices.
 - The high-end **700 MHz band** saw no buyers in the last auction.
- The key reason is that the spectrum lying idle is a waste for the economy.
- TRAI added that the valuation of spectrum exercise is based on techno-economic methodology and is aimed to set the spectrum prices that encourage buyers to acquire radio frequencies in different bands and also ensure that buyers are discouraged from collusive behaviour.

Response from the industry

- The industry body Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) has expressed disappointment over the new recommendations.
- The industry body has regarded the recommendation as a “step backward” than going ahead towards building a digitally connected India.
- The service providers say that they expected and recommended 90% cuts in the prices whereas TRAI has proposed only a 35-40% reduction in prices which makes the spectrum pricing too high.
- It is also said that the extra charges of 1.5 times on the spectrum for a 30-year period will nullify the relief provided by the government in 2021.
- COAI notes that by introducing mandatory rollout conditions for 5G networks without factoring the high costs associated with such rollouts, the TRAI has deviated from the Government’s efforts of enhancing the ease of doing business.
- Allowing the private CWPNS for companies would discourage the industry to invest in networks and continue to pay more taxes.
- The Indian Space Association (association of all companies operating in the satellite communications and other space sector) said that making all spectrum available for sale in the coming auctions would be a “case of oversupply to terrestrial telecom at the cost of the satellite industry”.

Nut Graf

The latest recommendations from TRAI on spectrum pricing have received criticism from not just the telecom industry but also the satellite communications industry. In this context, it is crucial for the government to intervene and address the concerns of all the stakeholders for the betterment of the sector which plays a key role in boosting economic growth.

Category: ECONOMY

1. What’s fuelling inflation in rural India?

Syllabus: Indian Economy and issues relating to growth, development and employment.

Mains: The reasons for the increase in the rural inflation and its impact on the Indian economy

Context

The retail inflation rate has increased to 6.95% in March 2022.

Details

- The inflation rate has reached its highest level in one and a half years.
- The increase in the fuel price and the impact of higher global oil prices will be reflected in April.
- Experts estimate that the inflation will cross the 7% mark and will sustain at that rate till September.
- However, in many states the inflation rate has already crossed 7% and hovers around the 8% mark.
 - Example: West Bengal (8.85%), Uttar Pradesh, Assam (8.19%) and Madhya Pradesh (7.89%)

Comparing inflation rates in urban and rural areas

- Inflation in Urban areas has generally been higher than in rural areas by an average of around 0.8% points through the most of 2021
 - The exceptions are August when both were at 5.3% and May when rural inflation was 6.6% and urban inflation was 5.9%.
- In contrast, the inflation in the rural areas has outdone the urban inflation in the first three months of 2022.
 - From a 0.2% points higher inflation rate over urban India in January, the rural inflation reached 6.38% in February as urban inflation declined to 5.75%.
 - In March, urban inflation stood at 6.12% and inflation in the rural areas reached 7.66%.

Reasons for higher inflation in the rural areas

- Food inflation is the main factor for the increase in the headline inflation rate in March.
 - The increase in food inflation was more in rural India compared to that in urban India.
- Along with food inflation, inflation in fuel and light and clothing also resulted in the increase in rural prices. The comparison of the inflation rates of some of the items between rural areas and the urban areas confirms the same,
 - **Oils and fats** – 20.75% in rural (R) v/s 15.15% in urban (U)
 - **Clothing** – 9.9% (R) v/s. 7.74% (U)
 - Clothing saw higher inflation in rural areas due to increased demand.
 - **Footwear** – 12.2 (R) v/s 9.9% (U)
 - **Fuel and light** – 8.3% (R) v/s 6.3% (U)
 - Fuel prices are higher in rural areas because of connectivity issues.
 - **Personal care** – 9.3% (R) v/s 7.7% (U)
- A steady increase in the inflation of the education costs of about 1.5% points also had an impact on rural inflation.
- The relocation of labour between urban and rural areas because of the pandemic has also created volatility in India's demand dynamics.
- Further, vegetable prices reduced in the urban areas in February and March 2022, as they rose sharply in rural areas aggravating rural inflation.

Impact of rising rural inflation

- High inflation rates affect the poor the most. Especially the rise in the food inflation rate is a key cause of concern
- According to experts, it is estimated that the bottom 20% of the population in urban and rural India are the most affected ones.
 - The rural bottom 20% faced the highest inflation of 7.7% in March(2022) while the upper 20% of the rural populations witnessed 7.6% inflation.
- It is predicted that food inflation will continue to increase along with both fuel and core inflation (excluding food and energy prices) due to the crisis in the Ukraine conflict and increase in the costs of farm inputs, this will further increase the financial stress on the already burdened economy.
- Experts suggest that since the cost of production will be increased by about 8-10%, the Minimum Support Price would also be increased by about 12%-15%.

Nut Graf

The rising rate of inflation in the hinterlands of the country triggered by high rates of food, fuel and core inflation has been worrisome and a good monsoon season is required to ease the inflation trajectory in the coming months.

F. Prelims Facts**1. Childline 1098 may be merged with emergency helpline 112**

Syllabus: GS-2: Polity and Governance: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Prelims: Childline 1098

Context: Government is planning to merge Childline 1098 with national emergency helpline 112.

Childline 1098:

- Childline 1098 is a 24×7 emergency, free phone outreach for children in distress.
- It is the country's only dedicated helpline number for children.
- It is one of the world's biggest emergency helpline services dedicated to children.
- Recently, the government said the Childline will be "integrated" with the universal emergency helpline 112 of the Ministry of Home Affairs that provides assistance with services related to police, health and women's safety.
- Childline 1098 receives funding from the Ministry of Women and Child Development under the Integrated Child Protection Scheme, which is now part of Mission Vatsalya.

Issues associated with merger:

- After the government announced plans to merge Childline 1098 with the universal emergency helpline 112, civil society organizations are concerned about the future of children.
- It will have a negative impact on the country's largest emergency response system, which receives approximately 50 lakh calls per year.
- The merger will have an impact on children's rescue and problem-solving efforts.

2. Center extends tenure of green permits

Syllabus: GS-3: Environment and Ecology: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

Prelims: Environmental clearances (EC)

Context: The Union Environment Ministry has extended the tenure of environmental clearances (EC) granted for existing or new projects.

Need of Extending Environmental clearances (EC)

- An EC is a lengthy process that is required for projects larger than a certain size. It frequently entails an environmental impact assessment of a potential project, as well as public hearings with local residents who may be impacted by the project.
- The Central Government believes it is necessary to extend the validity of such ECs due to the time it takes to address local concerns, including environmental issues related to the implementation of such projects.
- One of the conditions of an EC is that the project must start construction during the period for which the EC was granted, and if it cannot, a new process must be started. As a result, projects become financially unsustainable.
- Due to “geological surprises, delays in forest clearance, land acquisition, local issues, and other factors,” nuclear power and hydropower projects had a “long gestation” period. These factors necessitate the extension of the validity of Environmental Clearance (EC) for such projects by the Central Government.

Know more about [Environmental Impact Assessment \(EIA\)](#)

Recent Changes in Duration of Environmental Clearances:

Project	Duration of Environmental Clearances
river valley projects	13-year
nuclear power projects and processing of nuclear fuel	15 years
Other Projects and activities	10 years
Mining leases are now granted for a period of 50 years	but the Environment Clearance is valid for 30 years

3. Yemen's Houthi rebels criticize U.S.-led task force in Red Sea

Syllabus: GS-2: International Relations: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests

Prelims: Houthis; Red Sea

Context: Yemen's Houthis criticized a new U.S.-led task force that will patrol the Red Sea following a series of attacks by the Iran-backed rebels in a waterway that's essential to global trade.

Red Sea:

- The Red Sea is an example of a faulted structure.
- The Red Sea is surrounded by Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia.
- The northern part of the Red Sea is more saline than the southern part mainly due to the Gulf of Suez that lies to the west of the Sinai Peninsula. Because,
 - The northern part of the Red Sea receives water from the Gulf of Suez.
 - The northern part of the Red Sea is a landlocked sea.
 - Salinity and temperature currents of the Indian Ocean largely regulate the salinity and temperature of the southern end.

Know more about [Yemen](#) and [Houthis](#)



4. A better millet for potential iron deficiency

Syllabus: GS-3: Science and Technology: Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.

Prelims: Reasons of Iron deficiency; millets

Context: This article examines the reasons for iron deficiency and ways to overcome it.

Poor absorption of dietary iron: Major reason of Iron Deficiency:

- It is more likely that body iron deficiency is caused by poor dietary iron absorption.
- Iron is poorly absorbed in poor cereal-based diets.

- This is due to a substance found in cereal grains called phytate, which binds tightly to dietary iron and prevents it from being absorbed.
- Drinking tea or paan after meals inhibits iron absorption due to inhibitory substances known as polyphenols, which bind iron tightly.
- Iron absorption from the intestine is also hampered by chronic body inflammation.

Ways to overcome Iron absorption blockade

- Eating fruits (vitamin C) with meals
- Avoiding tea with meals.
- Increased dietary iron intake in a natural manner, by eating iron-rich grains like millets
 - They are also high in calcium, zinc, magnesium, potassium, dietary fibre, and important vitamins such as thiamine, riboflavin, folic acid, and niacin.

Know more about [Millets in India](#)

G. Tidbits

1. DGCA unveils plan to ensure flight safety

- The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has implemented a monitoring system to detect non-compliance with flight safety regulations.
- It will notify the relevant authorities, who will be required to take immediate corrective action to address the deficiencies.
- The initiative's main goal is to find any significant non-compliance that lowers the safety standard and has a negative impact on flight safety.

2. 'Governor has very limited powers'

- A Rajya Sabha member argued that the Governor had very limited powers under the Constitution.
- If a Bill violated some provisions of parliamentary legislation, the Governor could only refer it to the President, or he could send it back to the legislature with his comments.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements with respect to Desert National Park (DNP):

1. It is spread over three districts in the State of Rajasthan
2. DNP is a spectacular representative of the desert ecosystem
3. The DNP is the most important site for the Globally Threatened Great Indian Bustard

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

d. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: b

Explanation:

- Desert National Park, situated in the west Indian state of Rajasthan, is one of the largest national parks.
- Desert National Park is situated in Jaisalmer and Barmer districts of the Indian state of Rajasthan. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
- It is an excellent example of the ecosystem of the Thar Desert. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- The DNP is the most critical habitat for the globally threatened Great Indian Bustards long-term survival. Other notable birds include the endangered Oriental White-backed Vulture (*Gyps bengalensis*) and the Long-billed Vulture (*Gyps indicus*) etc. BirdLife International has identified bird species that are representative of the Biome. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

Q2. Which of the following are the features of the Government of India act of 1935?

1. It introduced, for the first time, bicameralism and direct elections in the country.
2. It extended the principle of communal representation by providing separate electorates for Sikhs, Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians and Europeans
3. It provided for the establishment of a Reserve Bank of India to control the currency and credit of the country

Options:

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- The **Government of India act, 1919** introduced, for the first time, bicameralism and direct elections in the country. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
- **Government of India Act 1919** extended the principle of communal representation by providing separate electorates for Sikhs, Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians, and Europeans. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
- **Other features of the Act:**
 - The British Parliament retained its supremacy over the Indian legislatures both provincial and federal.
 - A Federal Railway Authority was set up to control Indian railways.
 - The act provided for the establishment of the **Reserve Bank of India**. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
 - The Act also provided for the establishment of federal, provincial and joint Public Service Commissions.
 - The subjects under the Federal List were divided into two: Reserved and Transferred.

- The reserved subjects were controlled by the Governor-General who administered them with the help of three councilors appointed by him.
- The transferred subjects were administered by the Governor-General with his Council of Ministers (not more than 10). The Council had to act in confidence with the legislature.
- The Act gave more autonomy to the provinces.
- Diarchy was abolished at the provincial level.

Q3. Which of the following countries share a border with the Red Sea?

1. Djibouti
2. Egypt
3. Jordan
4. Saudi Arabia
5. Sudan
6. Yemen

Options:

- a. 1, 3 and 6 only
- b. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 only
- c. 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 only
- d. 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 only

Answer: d

Explanation:

- The Red Sea is an example of a faulted structure.
- The Red Sea is surrounded by **Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Yemen.**
- The northern part of the Red Sea is more saline than the southern part mainly due to the Gulf of Suez that lies to the west of the Sinai Peninsula.



Q4. With respect to Millets, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. Millets are gluten-free and have a low glycemic index
2. Their micro-nutrients composition is better as compared to rice or wheat
3. Karnataka is the highest producer of Ragi in India

Options:

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- Most of the millets are non-acid forming, non-glutinous, highly nutritious, and easily digestible foods.
- Due to **low glycaemic index (GI)** being gluten-free, it helps in a slower release of glucose over a longer period of time thus reducing the risk of diabetes mellitus.
- Wheat, rice, and other cereal grains contain far less fiber and essential minerals than millets.
- Karnataka, followed by Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, Maharashtra, and Andhra Pradesh are the top ragi producers in the country.
- **Hence all the statements are correct.**

Q5. Consider the following statements:

1. In the tropical zone, the western sections of the oceans are warmer than the eastern sections owing to the influence of trade winds.
2. In the temperate zone, westerlies make the eastern sections of oceans warmer than the western sections.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: c

Explanation:

- In the Northern hemisphere of the tropical zone, the Northeast trade winds transport warmer water westward in the ocean. Due to trade winds, the western section of the ocean in tropical zones is warmer than the eastern section.
- Similarly, the Westerlies are important in transporting warm, equatorial waters and winds to continents' western coasts. Westerlies make the eastern section of the ocean warmer than the western section in temperate zones.
- **Hence both the statements are correct.**

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Rising inflation hurts the poor in the rural areas. In the light of the statement examine the factors fuelling higher inflation. (10 Marks, 150 Words)[GS-3, Economy]
2. How does the free electricity scheme in Punjab work? Discuss its impact on the consumers and the Government. (15 Marks, 150 Words)[GS-2, Polity and Governance]