

## 19 Apr 2022: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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#### A. GS 1 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

#### B. GS 2 Related

**Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE**

#### 1. Understanding the additional airbags mandate for vehicles

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

*Prelims: General Statutory Rules (GSR) notification on Airbags*

*Mains: Critical evaluation of government proposition of six airbags*

**Context:**

The government has proposed the installation of six airbags in all passenger vehicles (M1 category) to enhance safety for vehicle occupants.

**Previous legislation on Air Bags and Road Safety:**

- **Air Bags**
  - Airbag deployment for the passenger in the front seat of the vehicle, next to the driver, had previously been mandated by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.
  - This rule was applied for vehicles manufactured after April 1 2021. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the implementation timeline was extended.
- **Road Safety**
  - A government notice establishes guidelines for the safety of children under the age of four who ride or are carried on motorcycles. It required the use of a safety harness and a crash helmet, as well as a speed limit of 40 kmph.
  - The Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act of 2019 imposed harsh penalties to deter traffic rule violations and ensure strict enforcement.

**Know more about [Road Safety And Motor Vehicles \(Amendment\) Bill 2019.](#)**

An airbag is a vehicle occupant-restraint system that prevents serious injuries by interfering between the driver and the dashboard during a collision.

**General Statutory Rules (GSR) notification on Airbags:**

- According to the general statutory rules (GSR), vehicles from 2022 must have two side/side torso airbags, one each for the persons occupying front row outboard seating positions.
- It also mandates the fitting of two side curtain/tube airbags one each for the persons occupying outboard seating positions.
- All vehicles in the M1 category manufactured after October 1, 2022 are subject to these rules.
- The notification also instructs the deployment of curtain or tube airbags to cushion the vehicle's entire outboard sides.

- The airbags would be tested to ensure that they met the AIS-099 standards for occupant protection in the event of a lateral collision.

**Benefits of Additional Airbags:**

- According to the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, deploying the inflatable airbag in the above-mentioned position would help prevent torso injuries or ejection of the occupant from the vehicle.
- Tube airbags would help mitigate head injury in the event of a rollover or a crash. This has been made public in order to improve the safety of vehicle occupants in the event of a lateral collision.
- The move would ultimately ensure passenger safety across all segments, regardless of vehicle cost or variant.

According to the U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), frontal airbags saved a significant number of lives. It added airbags to prevent the passenger's upper body or head from hitting the vehicle's interior during a crash.

**Impact on prices of vehicles:**

- Installing four additional airbags in vehicles would increase its cost by ₹17,600.
- In some cases, the cost could be higher as companies will need to make engineering changes to the car's structure to accommodate the additional airbags.
- The fixed cost of an airbag would be determined by market forces and the volume of production.

Read more about [Road Safety](#) in the linked article.

**Nut Graf**

*The notification of mandatory airbags reflects that the government has adopted a multi-pronged strategy to address issues pertaining to road safety based on education, engineering, enforcement and emergency care. However, there are concerns as the decision comes against the backdrop of the automobile industry raising concerns that high taxation and stricter safety and emission norms for vehicles have made their products expensive.*

**Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS****1. The U.K.-Rwanda asylum plan**

*Syllabus: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests*

*Mains: Analysis of Rwanda Deal and migrant issue*

**Context:** This article critically evaluates the Rwanda deal between the governments of the U.K. and Rwanda.

### **What is the Rwanda Deal?**

- The U.K. and Rwanda Migration and Economic Development Partnership is another name for the Rwanda Deal.
- It is a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in 2022 by the UK and Rwandan governments.
- Under the terms of the agreement, Rwanda will accept asylum seekers who arrive in the United Kingdom through illegally facilitated and unlawful cross-border migration.
- Rwanda will accept anyone who is not a minor and has never been convicted of a crime.



*Image Source: publicnewstime.com*

**Pros:**

- The agreement will combat "people smugglers," who frequently charge exorbitant fees from vulnerable migrants, resulting in mass drownings.
- This is a humane solution to the migrant problem, and it is intended to go after the gangs that operate these illegal crossings.

**Cons:**

- Several activists, refugee and human rights organizations have raised concerns about the dangers of transferring refugees and asylum seekers to third-country destinations without adequate safeguards.
- The agreement is "uncapped," meaning there is no upper limit on the number of migrants who can be sent to Rwanda during the five-year period of the agreement. This will lead to an unprecedented violation of human rights due to forced transfer.
- The deal also fails to mention the Rwandan government's economic right to work, access to healthcare, or any financial assistance provided to relocated persons.
- People who were already vulnerable when attempting dangerous sea crossings became even more vulnerable while detained.
- Rwanda also has a less-than-stellar human rights record, with government critics being silenced or imprisoned.
- Vulnerable child refugees in the UK face a "very significant risk" of being sent to Rwanda inadvertently.

Also read: [Rwandan Genocide](#)

**Other similar experiences:**

- **Australia-Papua New Guinea:** A similar off-shore processing agreement between Australia and Papua New Guinea was challenged in a class-action lawsuit.
- **Nauru and Australia:** In 2013, there was a riot at the Nauru Regional Processing Centre, with allegations of sexual abuse against women and children as well as self-harm among the inmates.
- **Israel:** Deals with third countries were struck by Israel to deal with an influx of asylum seekers and illegal immigrants from Sudan and Eritrea.

***Nut Graf***

*The Rwanda Deal brings into light the serious global issue of illegal and unlawful cross border migration. The deal unloads a British issue onto a less developed nation and shifts asylum responsibilities. It also evades international obligations and threatens the spirit of the Refugee Convention.*

**C. GS 3 Related**

*Nothing here for today!!!*

**D. GS 4 Related**



*Nothing here for today!!!*

## E. Editorials

### Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

#### 1. India can criticise Russia's Ukraine invasion

*Syllabus: Effect of Policies and Politics of Developed and Developing Countries on India's interests, Indian Diaspora.*

*Prelims: Sakhalin-1, Vankor and Taas-Yuryakh oil fields; Vadinar refinery.*

*Mains: India's stand on the Russia-Ukraine conflict - reasons and recommendations*

#### **Background:**

- India has taken a **neutral stand on the [Russia-Ukraine conflict](#)**. India has abstained from voting in critical votes against Russia both in the UN General Assembly as well as the UN Security Council. India has not directly criticized Russia directly so far.
- Unlike previously when India has yielded to U.S. pressure on it to cut oil imports from Iran, India has taken a somewhat strong stand against U.S. pressure when it comes to the sanctions on Russia. Instead of reducing its ties with Russia, in fact, **India has only gone on to further strengthen its ties with Russia even amidst the ongoing Russia-Ukraine crisis.**
  - In March and April, India has bought more Russian oil, at a discount, than it did in all of 2021, and is now accelerating coal imports as well.
  - India has been continuing with its defence deals with Russia.
  - India and Russia have been holding talks on the rupee-rouble payment mechanism. This would allow the bilateral trade to circumvent the economic sanctions against Russia.
- Indian External Affairs Minister has clearly stated that India does not recognise unilateral sanctions like the ones imposed against Russia and would only abide by the ones mandated by the [United Nations](#).
  - Notably, only about 30 to 40 countries have joined the sanctions regime against Russia, while India, China and much of South America and Africa have stayed out.

#### **Factors affecting India's stand on the issue:**

#### **Defence:**

- India's **defence hardware dependency on Russia** ranges around 60%, while dependency on spare parts is close to 85%.
- Notably, India also shares a special relationship with Russia when it comes to **transferring of technology and joint development of weapon systems**.

### Energy:

- When the global crude oil prices have been on the rise, the cheaper oil imports from Russia offer India some solace. This is important not only from an energy security point of view but also from an economic point of view. The cheap oil imports will help India rein in inflation and rising [Current Account Deficit](#) which is important for the post-pandemic economic recovery in India.
- Indian oil public sector units have invested \$16 billion in Russian oil and gas fields in eastern Russia, with stakes in **Sakhalin-1, Vankor and Taas-Yuryakh**.
- Russia has made critical investments in the oil sector in India. Rosneft, a Russian oil major holds a considerable stake in the Vadinar refinery situated strategically on the Gujarat coast.
- Apart from the crude oil and natural gas segments, in the renewable energy sector too, Russia has been an important partner for India. While India has signed civil nuclear deals with a number of countries, including the U.S. and France, the only foreign nuclear power plants that actually exist are those built by Russia ([Kudankulam](#) in Tamil Nadu).

### China factor:

- India continues to face challenges along its northern frontier from China and Pakistan, and India would need Russia on its side in the case of an escalation.

### Reliable partner in Russia:

- Russia has offered consistent support as a **P-5 member of the UN Security Council**.
- Russia's support to India in multilateral institutions such as the [Financial Action Task Force \(FATF\)](#) and the Nuclear Suppliers Group has also been notable.
- Unlike Western countries which have commented on internal issues of India, Russia has never so far commented on such issues.

### Balancing ties with both sides:

- The neutral stand by avoiding taking sides, helps India maintain a continuum of ties with both sides and protect its national interests.
- A neutral stance will allow India to take part in groupings such as BRICS, RIC (Russia-India-China) and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), even as it continues engaging with the [Quad](#).



### Importance of India for the U.S.:

- India remains at the centre of the Quad grouping and remains **central to U.S.'s Asia Pacific policy**. Given this strategic importance of India to the U.S., it is highly unlikely that the U.S. would sanction India and thus India has continued its trade relations with Russia.

### Strategic autonomy:

- The refusal to abide by western sanctions is based on the **principles of non-alignment and strategic autonomy and is driven by national interests**.

### Recommendations:

- As the war drags on in Ukraine, the pressure on India to condemn Russia's unilateral military action in Ukraine is only likely to grow not only from the U.S. but also from European countries like U.K., Germany and France. In this direction, the article recommends that India would be best advised to express its condemnation of civilian killings in Ukraine even while maintaining an independent stand on unilateral sanctions.
- India has previously adopted a similar stand during the Iraq invasion by the U.S. In 2003, despite a growing partnership with the U.S., India had "deplored" the actions of the coalition forces led by the U.S. for its war on a sovereign Iraq, calling the invasion "unacceptable". India had also noted that despite India's differences with the U.S. on the war, it would continue to develop bilateral relations with the U.S.

#### *Nut Graf*

*While India's stand on the Russia-Ukraine conflict is based on India's national interests, India should condemn the unilateral Russian military action and civilian killings keeping in mind the ethical aspects and also India's standing in the global community.*

### Category: ECONOMY

#### 1. Cryptos and a CBDC are not the same thing

**Syllabus:** Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.

**Prelims:** Blockchain technology

*Mains: Arguments in favour of cryptocurrencies as against CBDCs.*

### **Background:**

#### **Increasing popularity of Cryptos:**

- The popularity of [cryptocurrencies](#) has been increasing. The **total valuation of cryptos stands at upward of \$2 trillion** — more than the value of gold held globally.
- The price of Bitcoin, the most prominent crypto, has increased since 2009 in spite of fluctuating prices.
- Today different kinds of cryptos exist; Bitcoin like cryptos, Alt coins and Stable coins.

#### **India's stand on cryptos:**

- Noting the threat posed by private cryptocurrencies to financial and macroeconomic stability and the lack of any underlying asset and speculation associated with cryptocurrencies, they are being **discouraged in India via taxation and capital gains provisions**.
  - Given the decentralized nature of cryptocurrencies, it would be difficult to track their use for illegal transactions and also difficult to regulate them.
- The Reserve Bank of India has announced that it will float a [Central Bank Digital Currency \(CBDC\)](#).

### **Recommendation:**

- The article recommends that India should be more receptive to cryptocurrencies rather than adopting a very defensive approach to them based on the following arguments.

#### **Difficulty in curtailing the use of cryptos:**

- Cryptos which operate via the net can be banned only if all nations come together which is very unlikely to happen.

#### **Limitations of using CBDCs:**

- **A CBDC can only function as a fiat currency and not crypto.** However, cryptos can function as money.
- A centralised CBDC will require the RBI to validate each transaction which seems difficult under the current circumstances. Keeping track will be very complex which could make crypto such as the CBDC unusable unless new secure protocols are designed. So, CBDCs at present cannot be a substitute for cryptos.

#### **Advantages of cryptocurrencies:**

- The main advantages associated with cryptocurrency include **higher transaction speed, lower transaction costs, increased accessibility, security, privacy and transparency**.
- The underlying technology of cryptocurrencies like Blockchain and encryption allows one to tackle issues like forgery of currency.

### *Nut Graf*

*Given the advantages associated with cryptocurrencies and the limitations associated with Central Bank Digital Currency, India is well advised to be more receptive to the idea of cryptocurrencies rather than adopting a very defensive approach to it.*

## Category: EDUCATION

### 1. Consensus key for education

**Syllabus:** *Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Education*

**Mains:** *Arguments in favour of having state specific education policies.*

#### Context:

- Tamil Nadu state government is constituting a committee to draft its own State education policy.

#### Arguments in favour of state education policies:

- Rather than construing this move by the Tamil Nadu government as a challenge to the national education policy, the article argues in favour of having state education policies, based on the following arguments.

#### **Giving the states a voice:**

- The separate state education policies will help them give effect to the national educational policy in a considered, well thought out manner. This would help address some of the concerns raised by the states with regard to the formulation of the [National Education Policy](#) wherein the states have complained of their views being overlooked during the formulation of the NEP.
- This would also allow for building context-led policies, and deeper policy engagement, and thus ensure alignment from the grassroots to the national levels.

**More effectiveness of a decentralized approach:**

- State, district, block and even village level policies could enable a more meaningful implementation of the national policy as it may lead to a policy stack that serves the goals of national growth grounded in the local contexts.
- A more decentralized approach will be able to focus on the regional priorities and constraints.

**Education in the concurrent list:**

- Education, being on the concurrent list since 1976, is a joint and shared responsibility of the Union and the State governments.
- This necessitates coordination and collaboration between the states and the centre in the domain of formulating education policy.

**Concerns associated with centralization:**

- Many a change in the education system aligned with the 'one nation, one system' principle, particularly in higher education, have led to some adverse impacts.
- The common university entrance test (CUET), and undergraduate national eligibility test (NEET UG) have caused a monetary burden and inconvenience for students. Such national level tests favour students coming from the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) placing other students at a disadvantage primarily due to the differences in the syllabus and examination methods of the State boards and the CBSE.

***Nut Graf***

*State education policies should be promoted to supplement and complement the National Education Policy given their potential in addressing the regional priorities and constraints in a more effective manner*

**F. Prelims Facts****1. PM to open a slew of projects in Gujarat**

**Syllabus:** GS2: International Relations: Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

**Prelims:** WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine

**Context:** The Prime Minister of India will lay the foundation stone for an international centre of traditional medicine in Jamnagar.

### **WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine:**

- A new centre of the World Health Organization (WHO) for traditional medicine is being set up in Jamnagar, Gujarat.
- The WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine aims to channel the potential of traditional medicine, by integrating it with technological advancements and evidence-based research.
- Know more about [WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine](#).

### **Traditional Medicine:**

- The WHO describes traditional medicine as the total sum of the “knowledge, skills and practices indigenous and different cultures have used over time to maintain health and prevent, diagnose and treat physical and mental illness”.
- Traditional medicine in India is often defined as including practices and therapies — such as Yoga, Ayurveda, Siddha, etc.
  - Ayurveda and Yoga are practised widely across the country.
  - The Siddha system is followed predominantly in Tamil Nadu and Kerala.
  - The Sowa-Rigpa system is practised mainly in Leh-Ladakh and Himalayan regions such as Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Darjeeling, Lahaul & Spiti.

## **2. Guru Tegh Bahadur’s birth anniversary fete at Red Fort**

**Syllabus:** *GS1: Art and Culture: Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of Art Forms, literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times.*

**Prelims:** *About Guru Tegh Bahadur*

**Context:** The government will celebrate the 400th birth anniversary of Guru Tegh Bahadur.

### **Guru Tegh Bahadur:**

- Guru Tegh Bahadur was the ninth of the Sikh religion's ten gurus.
- Guru Hargobind bestowed upon him the name Guru Tegh Bahadur.
- Many hymns, including the Saloks, or couplets, were written by him for the Guru Granth Sahib. Adi Granth has a collection of his works.
- Guru Tegh Bahadur is known for travelling widely to preach Guru Nanak's teachings.

- Guru Tegh Bahadur was assassinated in Delhi in 1675 on the orders of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb.

Know more about [Guru Tegh Bahadur](#).

### G. Tidbits

#### 1. Lt. Gen. Manoj Pande is new Army chief

- The Vice Chief of Army Staff, Lt. Gen. Manoj Pande has been appointed the 29th Chief of the Army Staff.
- The Service chiefs can continue in office till 62 years of age or for three years, whichever is earlier, while the age limit for the CDS is 65 with no fixed tenure defined.

#### 2. Wholesale price inflation climbs to 14.55% in March

- Inflation in India's wholesale prices hit a four-month high of 14.55% in March 2022.
- The rise in inflation is driven by accelerating price rise across all categories of goods, with fuel and power as well as primary articles driving most of the gains.
- The high inflation is attributed to a disruption in the global supply chain caused by the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

### H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

#### Q1. In India, the wholesale price index is published by: (Level – Easy)

- a. Reserve Bank of India
- b. National Statistical Office (NSO)
- c. Economic Advisor, Ministry of Commerce and Industry
- d. Labour Bureau

**Answer: c**

#### **Explanation:**

- The Wholesale Price Index represents the price of a basket of wholesale goods. WPI focuses on the price of goods that are traded between corporations. It does not concentrate on goods purchased by the consumers.



- WPI data is published by the **Office of Economic Adviser, Ministry of Commerce and Industry.**
- **Hence option C is correct.**

**Q2. Consider the following statements with regards to the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution: (Level – Medium)**

1. The Sixth Schedule to the Constitution includes 10 autonomous district councils in 4 states.
2. The acts of Parliament or the state legislature do not apply to autonomous districts and autonomous regions or apply with specified modifications and exceptions.
3. The President of India is empowered to increase or decrease the areas or change the names of the autonomous districts.

**Choose the correct statement/s.**

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

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

- The 6th Schedule of the Indian Constitution protects tribal populations and provides autonomy to the communities through the creation of autonomous development councils that can frame laws on land, public health, agriculture and others.
- As of now, 10 autonomous councils exist in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram. **Hence Statement 1 is correct.**
- Acts of Parliament or state legislatures do not apply to autonomous districts and autonomous regions or only apply with specific modifications and exceptions. **Hence Statement 2 is correct.**
- The governor (**NOT President**) has the authority to reorganize and organize autonomous districts. The Governor has the authority to increase or decrease the size of the autonomous districts, as well as change their names. **Hence Statement 3 is not correct.**

**Q3. Consider the following statements with regards to the Khelo India programme: (Level – Difficult)**

1. 'Sports' is a state subject as per the Seventh Schedule of the Indian Constitution.

2. Khelo India Athletes under the scheme are provided annual financial assistance of ₹ 6.28 lakh per athlete per annum which includes ₹ 1.20 lakh per annum as Out of Pocket Allowance and ₹ 5.08 lakh for other facilities like coaching, sports science support, diet, etc.
3. Khelo India Centres notified under the Scheme at district levels in various States/Union Territories are eligible to receive ₹ 5 lakh per discipline as a one-time grant and ₹ 5 lakh per discipline as a recurring grant.

**Choose the correct code:**

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

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

- The Constitution of India's Seventh Schedule deals with the distribution of legislative powers between the Union and the States, as defined by several articles. The subject of sports is included in the Indian Constitution's State List.
- Under the 'Talent Search and Development' vertical of the Khelo India Scheme, Khelo India Athletes identified and selected under the scheme are provided annual financial assistance of ₹ 6.28 lakh per athlete per annum which includes ₹ 1.20 lakh per annum as Out of Pocket Allowance and ₹ 5.08 lakh for other facilities like coaching, sports science support, diet, equipment, consumables, insurance charges, etc.
- Further, each Khelo India Centre notified under the Scheme at district levels in various States/Union Territories is eligible to receive ₹ 5 lakh per discipline as a one-time grant and ₹ 5 lakh per discipline as a recurring grant.
- **Hence all the statements are correct.**

**Q4. Consider the following statements with regards to the Chief of the Army Staff in India: (Level – Medium)**

1. Appointments to the office are made by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC).
2. The COAS reaches superannuation upon three years in the office or at the age of 62, whichever is earlier.
3. General Maharaj Shri Rajendrasinhji Jadeja was the first Chief of the Army Staff of the Indian army.

**Choose the correct code:**

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

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

- The COAS (also called the Army Chief) is the head of the Indian Army Headquarters and the highest-ranking officer of the Indian Army.
- The COAS is the principal advisor to the Defence Minister on matters exclusively relating to the army and is also a key military adviser to the president, the supreme commander of the armed forces.
- The appointments to the office of the army chief are made by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC). The central government committee comprises the Prime Minister, the Minister of Home Affairs and the Defence Ministry.
- The COAS reaches superannuation upon **three years in the office or at the age of 62**, whichever is earlier.
- General Maharaj Shri Rajendrasinhji Jadeja was the first Chief of Army Staff of the Indian army, and the second Indian, after Field Marshal K. M. Cariappa, to become Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army.
- **Hence all the statements are correct.**

**Q5. In the context of recent advances in human reproductive technology, "Pronuclear Transfer" is used for (Level – Difficult) [UPSC 2020]**

- a. fertilization of egg in vitro by the donor sperm
- b. genetic modification of sperm producing cells
- c. development of stem cells into functional embryos
- d. prevention of mitochondrial diseases in offspring

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

- The mother's egg is fertilized with the father's sperm first, resulting in a zygote in pronuclear transfer. The egg and sperm pronuclei are then removed from the zygote and inserted into a fertilized donor egg that has had its own nucleus removed. The mother's uterus is then implanted with the zygote derived from the donor egg.

- Human offspring produced through the use of assisted reproductive technologies, specifically mitochondrial manipulation (or replacement) technologies and three-person in vitro fertilization, from the genetic material of one man and two women (IVF).
- In general, the reproductive technologies used to produce three-parent babies aim to replace or mitigate the effects of mutations in the DNA of cellular organelles known as mitochondria, which are found in the cell cytoplasm. The various approaches could aid women in overcoming infertility and preventing the transmission of potentially debilitating mitochondrial diseases to their offspring.
- **Hence option D is correct.**

### I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Illustrate the differences between cryptocurrency and Central Bank Digital Currency. (250 words; 15 marks) [GS-3, Economy]
2. What is the U.K. and Rwanda Migration and Economic Development Partnership and what does it mean for refugees and asylum seekers?. (250 words; 15 marks) [GS-2, IR]