

15 May 2022: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis



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I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

A. GS 1 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

B. GS 2 Related

Category: SOCIAL JUSTICE

1. DCPCR challenges JJ Act change in apex court

Syllabus: Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and the performance of these schemes, mechanisms and laws

Prelims: About Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act

Mains: Amendments to Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act and their associated issues

Context

The Delhi Commission for the Protection of Child Rights moved to the Supreme Court contesting an amendment made to the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act.

Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act

- The [Juvenile Justice \(Care and Protection of Children\) Act](#) or JJ Act was enacted in 2015 to conduct criminal trials of minors or children in conflict with the law (CCLs) who are accused of petty or serious offences before the Juvenile Justice Boards (JJBs).
- The JJ Act also mentions provisions for children in need of care and protection.

Amendment to JJ Act

- The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Amendment Act was passed in 2021 to amend various provisions of the JJ Act, 2015.
- The amendments include authorising the District Magistrate to issue adoption orders under Section 61 of the JJ Act, in order to ensure speedy disposal of cases and enhance accountability.

- It also introduced amendments to Section 86 of the JJ Act which categorises serious offences which have maximum imprisonment of three to seven years against children as non-cognisable offences. The offences which are regrouped as non-cognisable include,
 - Sale and purchase of children
 - The exploitation of child workers
 - Use of children for begging
 - Vending, smuggling or trafficking narcotics and cruelty committed upon children by the staff of child care institutions (CCIs)

Read more about the [Juvenile Justice \(Care and Protection of Children\) Amendment Bill, 2021](#)

Cognisable offences

Cognisable offences are serious criminal matters where the police can arrest without any warrant and can start investigating without permission from a magistrate. These cases include among others Murder, Rape, etc.

Non-cognisable offences

Non-cognisable offences are less serious matters where the police cannot arrest without a valid warrant and also can start the investigation only when they obtain permission from a magistrate, for example, in cases like Assault and Defamation.

Concerns regarding the amendments

- The Delhi Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (DCPR) along with State child rights bodies of Punjab, West Bengal, Chandigarh and Rajasthan have urged the government to revert back the regrouping of offences.
- The DCPCR has initiated a writ petition in the Supreme Court seeking to declare the said amendment unconstitutional as it violates Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution.
- Child rights organisations believe that making these offences non-cognisable would make reporting processes much tougher, particularly for children from the marginalised sections, who are most often the victims of such crimes.
- The organisations say that the amendments are inconsistent as these crimes are serious enough to be non-bailable but not serious enough to be cognisable.

Nut Graf

The JJ Act guarantees the security, protection, education and well-being of the children. Hence, any anomaly in the Act must be immediately addressed and resolved as it can have severe adverse impacts on not just the physical but also the mental health of children.

Category: SECURITY

1. Experts wary of sleeper cells in Punjab

Syllabus: Security challenges and their management - linkages of organized crime with terrorism

Mains: Concerns about the Khalistan movement and the presence of sleeper cells.

Context

A recent chain of incidents has raised questions over the presence of sleeper cells in Punjab and neighbouring states.

Background

- On May 9th 2022, the headquarters of the Punjab police's Intelligence Wing in Mohali was attacked with a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG).
- One day before this attack, Punjab police had arrested two individuals and recovered an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) equipped with Royal Demolition eXplosive (RDX).
- A few days earlier, four individuals were arrested from Karnal by the Haryana police who recovered three IEDs and one pistol and claimed to have busted a Pakistan-based terror group.
 - These explosives have been transported to India from Pakistan through drones and were supposed to be delivered to Adilabad in Telangana.
- Also in a separate incident, on May 8th (2022) few 'Khalistan' flags were on the gate and walls of the Himachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly in Dharamshala.
- In April 2022, a fight started between different groups amid a clash due to the conduct of a march in the wake of the announcement by banned separatist outfit Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) to commemorate the foundation day of 'Khalistan'.

'Khalistan' Movement

- The Khalistan movement refers to a Sikh separatist movement that seeks to establish a Sikh homeland within the Punjab region.
- Punjab witnessed an era of militancy in the mid-1980s and early-1990s over the demand for 'Khalistan' (sovereign state for Sikhs).
- The proposed state consists of regions that currently include Punjab in India and Punjab in

Pakistan.

Concerns over sleeper cells

- A sleeper cell refers to a group of agents who lie inactive until they receive orders or mandates to act.
 - Considering the level of secrecy within such groups it is difficult for law enforcement agencies to detect and monitor their movements and activities.
- The recent incidents have raised concern over the presence of ‘sleeper cells’ or pro-militant elements in Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and other states.
- Experts believe that the recent events confirm that ‘Khalistan’ sympathisers are present and active.
- Experts say that the change in the leadership in Punjab has given a chance to the radical groups to attempt and gauge the strength of the new system and these groups cannot be ignored although the “Khalistan” movement has lost popular support in the region.

Nut Graf

Despite the “Khalistan” movement being considered dead as it has lost popular support, occasional incidents have been attempted by fringe groups to revive the movement. This is a sensitive issue with wide-ranging consequences that require the government and security agencies to respond carefully.

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: POLITY

1. Pardon and remission: Who grants them?

Syllabus: GS II, Polity, Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States

Prelims: Pardoning powers of President and Governor

Mains: Differentiating the pardoning powers of the President and Governor’s jurisdiction to release convicts.

Context: The governor's jurisdiction to refer the advice of the state government to the [President](#) to decide upon granting remission to life convicts, has been reserved by the Supreme Court.

A brief background:

- The context of granting remission to individuals under life imprisonment has come up in the wake of a petition from one of the convicts of the [Rajiv Gandhi assassination](#) case which is under examination by the apex court.
- A major concern has been raised through the petition regarding the delay in the release of the convict.
- It is alleged that the Tamil Nadu government had recommended the release of the convict and as a response to the advice tendered to the governor, it was referred to the President.
- It was then iterated by the Additional Solicitor General that only the President, according to the Constitution, holds the authority to consider a claim for pardon or remission and not the State [Governor](#), provided the offence involved was based on a Parliamentary law.

The extent of the pardon power:

- The President, under Article - 72, can grant pardons, reprieves, respites or remissions of punishment or suspend, remit or commute the sentence of any person convicted of any offence in various cases.
- These cases involve:
 - Those cases where the punishment or sentence is by court-martial
 - Cases where the punishment or sentence is for offence under law relating to the Union government's executive power
 - All cases of death sentences
- The President's power will not in any way affect a Governor's power to commute a death sentence.

Read more about the [Pardoning power of the President](#) in the linked article.

- Under Article 161, a governor can grant pardons, reprieves, respites or remissions of punishment or suspend, remit or commute the sentence of anyone convicted under any law on a matter which comes under the State's executive power.

Read more about the [Pardoning power of the Governor](#) in the shared link.

What does CrPC say about remission?

- The Code of Criminal Procedure ([CrPC](#)) provides for remission of prison sentences which depicts that the whole or a part of the sentence may be cancelled.

- Under **section 432** the 'appropriate government' may suspend or remit a sentence, wholly or partly, with or without conditions.
- Under **section 433**, the appropriate government may commute any sentence without the consent of the person sentenced.
- The appropriate government, under section 433, may commute:
 - A sentence of death for any other punishment provided by the IPC
 - A sentence of life imprisonment for an imprisonment term not more than 14 years or for fine
 - A sentence of rigorous imprisonment for simple imprisonment for any term for which the person might be sentenced or for fine.
 - A sentence of simple imprisonment for fine
- **Section 435** says that if the prisoner had been sentenced in a case by the CBI, or any agency that probed the offence under a central act, the state government can order such release only in consultation with the Central Government.

What can be inferred?

- In the case of death sentences, the Central Government may also concurrently exercise the same power as the State governments to remit or suspend the sentence.
- Therefore, it can be inferred that the power of remission under CrPC is different from the constitutional powers of the President and the Governor.
- Under the CrPC, the government acts by itself whereas, under Articles 72 and 161, the respective governments advise the President/Governor.

The road ahead:

- After analysing the provisions enshrined in the constitution and the relevant statute book regarding the pardoning power, the immediate constitutional question remains intact with respect to the governor's purview to refer a case of granting remission to life convicts to the President. This perplexity needs thorough legal scrutiny on the grounds of constitutional validity.
- Moreover, the larger issue that demands urgent attention is whether the primacy accorded to the centre's opinion under the CrPC in the case discussed, can be extended to remission that may be granted by the governor under Article 161.

Nut Graf

The arguments that surround the jurisdiction of the Governor to refer a case of granting remission to life convicts to the President and the questionable supremacy of the centre's opinion in the release of the convicts are to be addressed with legal acumen and on constitutional grounds, and through a consensus between the judiciary and the government.

Category: ECONOMY**1. Why are India's foreign exchange reserves falling?**

Syllabus: *GS III, Indian Economy, Issues relating to planning*

Prelims: *Forex Reserves, RBI*

Mains: *Impact of dollar on the economic situation of India.*

Context: The Indian rupee has hit an all-time low against the US dollar and is anticipated to weaken further.

Details:

- The International Monetary Fund ([IMF](#)) has reported an anticipated a considerable decline of the Indian rupee that might pass the 94 rupees to a dollar mark by the financial year 2029.
- There has been an estimated decline in the Indian currency with a steady loss of 4% against the dollar.
- The forex reserves have also dropped below \$600 billion.
- The RBI stated that India's forex reserves dropped to \$595.954 billion.

Possible causes:

- According to the [RBI](#), the decline in the forex reserves is attributed to a fall in the dollar value of assets held as reserves by the RBI.
- Many experts advocate that the sudden fall of forex reserves is due to the arbitrary actions taken by the central bank to support the rupee.
- Analysts believe that the continuation of significant differences in long-run inflation between India and the US will contribute to further depreciation of the rupee against the dollar.
- The current account deficit of the country is expected to embark a 10 year high of 3.3% of the GDP as predicted by Morgan Stanly.
- The rising global oil prices have also impacted the rupee negatively and moreover, there is a lack of foreign funds to capitalise on the existing deficit.
- Consistent higher domestic price inflation in India has also been a reason for the reduction in rupee value.

Suggestive measures:

- The central bank must plan a roadmap and consider the differences in the rates at which the US Federal Reserves regulate the supply of currencies which may play the role of an important determinant in tracking the value of the rupee in the long run.
- Considering the present scenario, it is suggested that by selling dollars in the open market in exchange for rupees, the RBI can improve demand for the rupee and buffer the loss incurred.
- RBI continues to take active measures to control the domestic consumer price inflation by increasing the interest rates and tightening the liquidity.
- With the emerging rise in interest rates across the globe, the threat of global recession also increases as economies intend to follow rigid monetary conditions.

Nut Graf

Addressing the global scenario amidst the declining Rupee against the US Dollar, the central bank needs to consider the implications of rising interest rates and tightening norms and frame policies that are sustainable for the country's economic growth in the long run.

F. Prelims Facts**1. Blood marker identified for babies at risk of SIDS**

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

Prelims: About Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and butyrylcholinesterase enzyme

Context

A group of Australian researchers has recognised the biochemical marker that helps recognise newborn babies who are at risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)

- Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) is the sudden and unexplained death of a baby younger than 1-year-old.
- SIDS is also called cot death or crib death.
- SIDS is one of the major causes of high mortality rates among infants.
- Causes for SIDS can be
 - Complications in the functioning of the brain
 - Genetic abnormalities.
 - Issues with heart functioning

- Respiratory infections
- SIDS doesn't have any symptoms or warning signs which can be used to prevent it.
- The diagnosis of SIDS is confirmed only when the cause of death is unexplained even after a complete investigation.

Identification of biochemical marker to recognise babies at risk

- Researchers in their study found that babies who died of SIDS had reported lower levels of an enzyme called **butyrylcholinesterase (BChE)** soon after birth
- The BChE enzyme plays a crucial role in the brain's arousal pathway and low levels of the enzyme would decrease the ability of an infant to wake up from sleep or respond to its environment.
- The research team used dried blood spots taken at birth as part of a newborn screening program and compared BChE levels in babies who later died of SIDS, infants who died of other causes and other surviving infants.
- The levels of BChE enzyme were found lower in the infants who died of SIDS. This has helped ascertain that SIDS babies were inherently vulnerable to dysfunction of the autonomic nervous system, which controls unconscious and involuntary functions in the body.
- The findings help address the disease in the future and also answer the questions of the past.

2. Can plants grow only in soil from Earth?

Syllabus: GS - 3, Science and Technology; Awareness in the fields of Space

Prelims: Plants' ability to grow in the lunar regolith

Context

For the first time, scientists have grown plants in soil from the Moon.

Plants' ability to grow in the lunar regolith

- University of Florida researchers examined the plant's ability to respond biologically to the Moon's soil known as the lunar regolith.
- The experiment included planting seeds in lunar soil and adding water, nutrients and light
 - Since the researchers had only about 12 grams of lunar soil collected during the Apollo 11, 12 and 17 missions to the Moon, they used thimble-sized wells in plastic plates to culture cells.

- The 'pots' were filled with about a gram of lunar soil, the soil was moistened with a nutrient solution and Arabidopsis plant seeds were added.
- The plants were grown in non-lunar soils as a control group and all the seeds planted in the lunar soils sprouted but the plants grown were smaller and took more time to grow.
 - They were more varied in size than their counterparts.
- The investigations are a physical sign that plants were working to cope with the chemical and structural composition of the lunar regolith.
- This is also a first step towards cultivating plants for food and oxygen on the Moon or space missions.

G. Tidbits

1. Denial of justice would lead to anarchy, says CJI

- Chief Justice of India (CJI) said that speedy adjudication of disputes is the hallmark of a healthy democracy and denial of justice would lead to anarchy. He further added that the institution of the judiciary would be undermined soon as people look for extrajudicial mechanisms.
- He said that for the effective functioning of a healthy democracy and for the peace to prevail, it is essential for the people to believe that their rights and dignity are safeguarded
- He highlighted that one of the key challenges to the protection of rule of law and human rights is the inability of the formal justice system to deliver speedy justice to all and the justice delivery system in India is very complex and expensive.

2. Indian children youngest to reach mobile maturity: McAfee

- A study conducted by McAfee among parents and children across 10 geographies revealed that Indian children are the youngest to reach mobile maturity.
- As per the report, smartphone use in the country among children in the age group of 10-14 is 83%, compared to the international average of 76%.
 - This poses high online risks to children in India
- Further, the study reveals that about 22% of Indian children experienced cyberbullying at some time, which is higher than the global average of 17%.
- Also, the study reveals that:
 - About 90% of parents globally recognise their role as protectors online, but only 56% of them used a password to protect their own smartphones
 - 42% of parents used passwords to protect their children's smartphones.

- About 73% of children looked to parents more than any other resource for help with online safety.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Which of the following statements best describes the newly launched “GatiShakti Sanchar” portal? (Level – Medium)

- a. It aims to provide a mechanism seeking to promote cooperation and collaboration among the neighbouring countries with respect to the development of cross border infrastructure projects.
- b. It will promote an integrated approach between state governments with respect to the development of interstate projects.
- c. It aims to provide a common single portal for Right of Way permissions for Telecom Service providers as well as infrastructure providers.
- d. It aims to mobilize private sector involvement in the development of financially viable transportation-based infrastructure in rural India.

Answer: c

Explanation:

- The Department of Telecommunication Launched the “GatiShakti Sanchar” Portal for Centralised Right of Way (RoW) approvals.
- “GatiShakti Sanchar Portal” is a collaborative institutional mechanism between all stakeholders including Central and State/UT Government(s), Local bodies, and Service Providers to facilitate the Right of Way (RoW) Application Process through a single interface.
- This portal aims to bring transparency, accountability and responsiveness to all stakeholders while processing the application.

Q2. Which of the following statements is/are incorrect? (Level – Medium)

- 1. India is the largest wheat producer in the world.
- 2. Among Indian states, Punjab is the state with the largest wheat production.
- 3. India has been the largest wheat exporter in the world over the last three years.

Options:

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

Answer: b

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is not correct**, According to the Food and Agriculture Organization, India is the **second-largest** producer of wheat in the world.
 - China is the largest producer of wheat
- **Statement 2 is not correct**, **Uttar Pradesh** is the largest producer of wheat in India
- **Statement 3 is not correct**, **Russia** is the largest exporter of wheat.
 - Although India is the second-largest wheat producer in the world, it accounts for less than 1% of the global wheat exports.

Q3. The Forests of this National Park have been traditionally inhabited by the two indigenous tribes of Gonds and Baigas. This place is known for its conservation efforts with respect to the hard ground Barasingha. The above description is in respect to which of the following National Parks? (Level – Easy)

- a. Kanha National Park
- b. Simlipal National Park
- c. Dudhwa National Park
- d. Gorumara National Park

Answer: a

Explanation:

- **Kanha National Park** is the largest national park in Madhya Pradesh.
- The region is the ancestral home of the Gond and Baiga tribes.
- Kanha NP is known for the conservation efforts for the reintroduction of Barasingha.

Q4. India has Free Trade Agreements with which of the following country/countries? (Level – Difficult)

- 1. UK
- 2. Canada
- 3. UAE
- 4. Australia
- 5. Israel
- 6. Sri Lanka

Options:

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

Answer: b

Explanation:

- India and the UAE have signed an FTA in 2022 with the aim of increasing bilateral merchandise trade to \$100 billion by 2030.
- An interim Free Trade agreement, between the Australia-India, was signed in 2022.
- An FTA between India and Sri Lanka was signed in 1999.
- India is still in the process of negotiating an FTA with the UK, Canada and Israel.

Q5. Which of the following is not included in the assets of a commercial bank in India? (Level – Medium) [UPSC 2019]

- a. Advances
- b. Deposits
- c. Investments
- d. Money at call and short notice

Answer: b

Explanation:

- **Assets** are those items that the bank owns.
 - Assets of a commercial bank in India include Cash in hand, Investments, Loans, Advances, Bills discounted and purchased, etc.
- **Liabilities** are those items that the bank owes to someone else.
 - Liabilities of a commercial bank in India include Capital and Reserves, Deposits, Borrowings, etc.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. How do the pardon powers of the President and Governor differ from the government's jurisdiction to release convicts? (10 Marks, 150 Words) (GS2 - Polity)
2. Northeast States will benefit from Bangladesh's offer of services at the Chittagong Port. Discuss. (10 Marks, 150 Words) (GS2 - International Relations)

