

16 May 2022: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

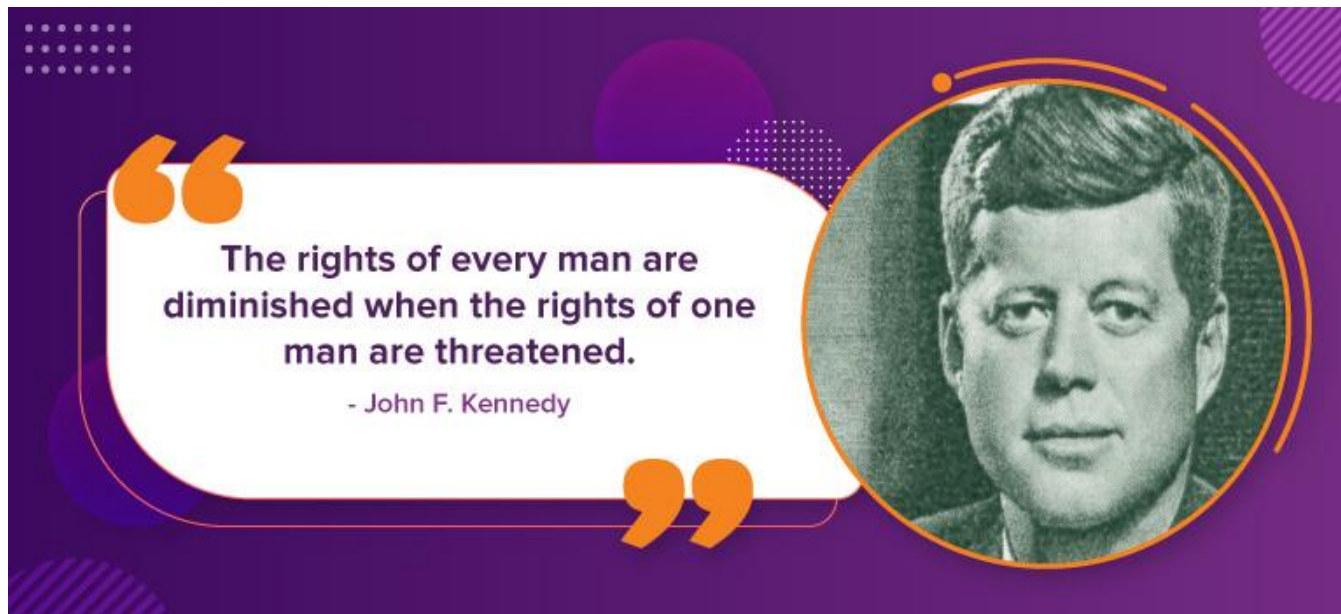


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A. GS 1 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

B. GS 2 Related

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Finland's bid to join NATO

Syllabus: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries

Mains: significance of Finland's membership in NATO and the path ahead

Context

Finland intends to join the [North Atlantic Treaty Organization \(NATO\)](#).

Background

- Finland had remained neutral in the last 20 odd years, this neutral position allowed France to improve their ties with both the Europe countries as well as with Russia during the European economic slump.
- In the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Finland is reversing its long-standing foreign policies.
- The leaders of Finland announced that the Nordic country must apply for membership in NATO immediately in the wake of [Russia's invasion of Ukraine](#).
- Sweden is also expected to undertake similar actions.

The significance of NATO's Membership

- Amid the concerns of cyber and hybrid attacks, violations of airspace and territorial sea by Russia, Finland and Sweden are looking forward to their membership in NATO as the membership offers them numerous advantages in this context.
- The NATO membership would relieve Finland and Sweden of their security issues to a certain level as all the countries involved in the highly volatile region would reach a deadlock until someone looks to break the gridlock through a change in policies.

Russia's Response

- Russia believes that the U.S is playing a role of an agent which is trying to attract countries towards NATO.
- Finland's and Sweden's interest to join NATO has increased Russia's security concerns as this expansion of NATO would surround Russia with NATO countries in the Baltic Sea and the Arctic.
- Russia warned the countries saying that it will be forced to take retaliatory military-technical actions to counter the threats to its national security.
- Russia is also set to suspend its electricity to Finland citing that Finland has not paid for the electricity sold in May.

Path Ahead

- Russia has cited NATO's expansions as a key cause of concern for Russia's security interests.
- In the coming days, many countries might be pushed towards NATO or other alliances to seek security guarantees.
- Estonia has asked NATO for the supply of anti-Russia command centres and improved air defence systems to address its security concerns near the Baltic.
- Russia's aggression on Ukraine has resulted in isolating Russia from most countries in the world.
- The war has severely impacted Russia's economy and is further heightened by the economic sanctions against them by the West.
- Many countries and corporations have already exited the Russian economy and have continued to decrease their dependency on Russia for their energy requirements, the path ahead for Russia looks bleak.
- Finland and Russia share a 1,300 km border and as Finland seeks NATO membership, Russia might increase its forces deployed along the Russian-Finland border.

Nut Graf

Russia's aggression on Ukraine has recoiled and now haunts its own security as many countries that once followed a neutral stance are pushed towards NATO. This expansion of NATO will further irritate the already anxious Russia and hence there is a need for constant diplomatic exchange between both sides to maintain a geopolitical order.

Category: HEALTH

1. Understanding Long COVID and its effects

Syllabus: *Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health*

Mains: *Symptoms associated with Long COVID and various measures to address the same.*

Context

This article discusses the key symptoms associated with Long COVID.

Background

- With no universally-accepted definition, post-COVID Syndrome is regarded as signs and symptoms that develop during or after an infection consistent with COVID-19 which continue for more than 12 weeks and are not explained by alternative diagnosis.
- A recent Lancet report calls for more attention towards Long COVID syndrome.
- Survivors of COVID infection have exhibited lower health status compared to normal people.

Long COVID

- Reports have proved that a sizable number of people who have recovered from COVID-19 infections experienced long-term effects on multiple organs and systems.
- Long term effects have also been reported in people who did not exhibit any [COVID](#) related symptoms in their infection stage.
- Conventionally, **post-COVID** is regarded as symptoms that continue for four weeks after infection and **Long COVID** refers to symptoms that persist for 12 weeks past an infection.
- The symptoms include skin rashes, sleep difficulties, fatigue, muscle weakness, hair loss, joint pain, palpitations, dizziness, cough, headache, sore throat, chest pain, smell and taste disorders, anxiety and mobility issues.

Lancet study

- The study for the first time defined Long COVID as the longest time possible of two years.
- The study monitored the changes in the health outcomes in COVID survivors with different initial disease severity throughout the two years post an acute infection.
- The study points out that the share of individuals with at least one consequent symptom decreased from 68% at six months to 55% at two years.
- The study also reported an improvement in most of the domains, particularly in terms of anxiety or depression
- Nearly 89 % of individuals who were hospitalised for COVID, returned to their normal work by the end of two years.

- The study finds that at two years post-infection, long COVID symptoms were mainly related to a decline in health-related quality of life, exercise capacity, psychological abnormality, and increased dependence on health care post-discharge.
- At two-year check-up, the COVID-19 survivors still exhibited few symptoms, problems, discomfort, along with increased anxiety or depression
- Also, among the ones who had received higher-level respiratory support during their infection stage a higher number of survivors experienced persistent respiratory issues.

India's context

- The Indian government has formulated the National Comprehensive Guidelines for the management of post-COVID symptoms.
 - The document provides a detailed process to treat post-COVID complications affecting cardiovascular, gastrointestinal, nephrological, neurological and respiratory systems.
- Many hospitals in the country have established COVID wards to treat individuals with post-COVID symptoms.
- In January 2022, a hospital in New Delhi outlined that individuals infected in the second wave of COVID experienced four times more Long COVID conditions and multiple symptoms such as high-grade fever, diarrhoea and severe lung infection than those from the first wave.
 - The hospital reported that patients experienced severe weakness and fatigue even after a year post-infection.
- Experts believe that both Post COVID and Long COVID complications in India are fewer.
- Experts also added that the principles of immunology such as the immunogenic response to vaccination have largely remained uniform across the world but Long COVID symptoms will not be the same throughout the world as these are health conditions.

Nut Graf

As a significant proportion of COVID survivors are experiencing long term symptoms that can have severe implications on the overall health of the individuals, healthcare experts and policymakers must come up with a holistic medical management plan that can help address these symptoms and ensure a better quality of life.

C. GS 3 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

Category: SOCIAL ISSUES

1. This Delhi High Court split verdict needs to be resolved

Syllabus: Role of women and associated issues

Mains: Critical analysis of Delhi High Court's judgment on the issue of marital rape.

Context

Two judges of the Delhi High Court gave a split verdict on the question of criminalising marital rape leaving the law unchanged.

Details

- Exception 2 to Section 375 (marital rape exception) of the [Indian Penal Code \(IPC\)](#) states that sexual intercourse by a man with his own wife, the wife not being aged under fifteen years is not rape irrespective of her willingness or consent.
- The two judgments discuss several important issues in the course of the judgement, they differed on key issues such as availability of evidence, the importance of consent, and whether remedies were available to women survivors of domestic violence in other laws.

Constitutionality of the exception in terms of Article 14

- Article 14 of the Constitution guarantees the right to equality before the law and equal protection of laws.
- The articles aim to ensure that like classes are treated alike and don't prevent differential treatment of two classes of persons completely.
- The reasonable classifications under the article include:
 - **Condition of intelligible differentia:** two classes of persons can be treated differently if it is established that they are indeed distinguishable from each other.
 - There should be a rational relationship or a logical justification for a law which treats the two classes differently and the purpose of the law.
- The intelligible differentia in the case of marital rape exception is the difference between married and unmarried women. But according to Justice Rajiv Shakti, the marital rape exception is not in accordance with the second condition that is the purpose of the law.
 - According to him, lack of consent is what defines the wrong of rape and its harmful nature.

- He believes a non-consensual sexual act is considered rape irrespective of the woman's relationship with the perpetrator.
- As there is no rational relationship between the differentia (married and unmarried women) and the purpose of the law, he feels that the marital rape exception fails the test of reasonable classification and must be declared unconstitutional.

Differential views

- However, according to Justice C. Hari Shankar, the purpose of the marital rape exception is to prevent allegations of rape outside the marital sphere and thereby safeguard the institution of marriage.
- He believes that the differential treatment of married and unmarried women is not unconstitutional and is of the opinion that the recognition of marital rape would threaten the institution of marriage.

Arguments against this differential opinion of Justice C. Hari Shankar

- Experts have pointed out the examples of countries where marital rape is declared unconstitutional and argue that there is no evidence of a weakening or destruction of the institution of marriage.
- Critics question this opinion as it does not explain why it is 'legitimate expectation of sex within the purview of marriage' that determines the nature of sex in marriage and not the consent.
- Though the judge agrees that women's sexual autonomy deserves respect, and the expectation of sex within marriage ends when women's rights to sexual autonomy and bodily integrity begin, he does not recognise the fact that it means that non-consensual sex within marriage should be considered rape.
- Experts say that autonomy (the right of self-governance) is contrary to force and any attempts to force or compel an individual against their will or consent undermines the right to autonomy and even the institution of marriage cannot compel or force an individual.
- The opinion of the judge which confirms that rape by a stranger is worse than rape by a husband fails to acknowledge the horrifying experiences of rape victims.
- Critics say that marital rape in fact results in an increased breach of trust and fear of constant violation of bodily integrity thereby damaging the basic structure of the institution of marriage.

Nut Graf

There is no evidence that justifies 'non-consensual/forced sexual acts' to be less wrong or less harmful within the purview of marriage and hence it is important that the Supreme Court or the Parliament eliminates the exception to Section 375 of IPC and bring marital rape under the scope of rape law.

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. The importance of Lumbini

Syllabus: India and its neighbourhood- relations.

Prelims: Lumbini and other Important Buddhist sites in India

Mains: Significance of Lumbini to India and the measures that improve India's strategic presence in the region.

Context

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Lumbini.

Significance of Lumbini to India

- Important centre of Buddhism: Lumbini in Nepal is said to be the place of birth of Buddha and is one of the holiest places of the religion.
- China factor: There has been an increase in the Chinese presence and influence in Lumbini.
- The largest monastery has been built by the Chinese who also support and promote international conferences on Buddhism in Nepal.
 - The Chinese are trying to extend their soft power of [Buddhism](#) in Nepal.

Absence of India's strategic presence

- Despite being home to many sacred centres of Buddhism, India remains absent in Lumbini.
- Lumbini has monasteries from various countries but India does not have a monastery in Lumbini.
- India has helped to construct only a small museum building in the late 1990s so far.

Important Buddhist sites in India

- **Bodh Gaya** - the place of Lord Buddha's enlightenment
- **Sarnath** - the place of Buddha's first sermon
- **Kushinagar** - the place of Buddha's Mahaparinirvana
- **Shravasti and Rajgir** - places where Buddha preached for many years
- **Nalanda** - Buddhist monastic university



Opportunities for India to increase its strategic presence in the region

- India should look to increase its presence in the region and this can be done by first establishing an Indian monastery.
- Nepal is facing difficulties in implementing the plan of developing Lumbini which was formulated five decades ago by a United Nations Secretary-General appointed international committee.
 - India must look to extend its support in this regard.
- Developing a Buddhist circuit.
 - India and Nepal must collaborate together to develop the connectivity infrastructure between the major pilgrimage sites in Nepal and India as the existing network like Sunauli-Bhairahawa India-Nepal check post along the Uttar Pradesh-Nepal border are difficult to cross.
 - India must look to host an international conference on the development of the Buddhist circuit which will attract envoys from Buddhist countries thus increasing India's soft power influence.

Developing a Buddhist circuit

- The Buddhist sites in India such as Bodh Gaya require attention and focus as they have been built in an unplanned manner.
- There is a need to formulate better policies and develop Bodh Gaya as a sacred place for pilgrimage for both Hindus and Buddhists.
- A high-level committee with representatives from all the stakeholders could be created in order to address the problems and develop the Buddhist sites.

- Bodh Gaya can be developed along the lines of Lumbini and India can set up an international museum of Buddhist traditions in Bodh Gaya and invite all Buddhist countries to participate.
- Efforts must be undertaken towards making the entire Buddhist circuit of Lumbini-Bodh Gaya-Sarnath-Kushinagar to be declared a [UNESCO World Heritage Site](#).

Nut Graf

The Indian Prime Minister's visit to Lumbini has gained significance as the visit opens up opportunities for India to collaborate better with Nepal to improve its strategic presence in the region and also help showcase to the world that India follows the principles of peace, compassion and non-violence preached by the Buddha.

Category: GOVERNANCE**1. The road to safety**

Syllabus: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors

Mains: Various measures that can help reduce the number of fatal accidents in the country.

Background

- All the megacities in India experience about 50,000 accidents annually.
- About 25% of these accidents are fatal.
- Over 50% of these accidents are due to overspeeding and 25% of them are due to dangerous driving.
- Close to 50% of those who lose their lives are pedestrians and 50% of these avoidable deaths are due to bus and truck accidents.

Initiatives aimed at reducing accidents

- The deaths due to accidents in Delhi peaked in 2009 and there has been a gradual decrease in the number despite the increase in the number of vehicles on account of interventions made by the Delhi Police.
- The Delhi Police have undertaken interventions on black spots, traffic calming measures, enhanced enforcement and a drive to enforce strict lane discipline, starting with the compliance on the bus lane.
- Delhi has also automated driving test centres, further reducing the margin of human intervention which has often been criticized for its inefficiency owing to corruption.

Changes brought in by these interventions

- These interventions have made sure that Indian drivers have adequate skill sets as automated driving test centres have ensured strict compliance with the issue of learner's and driving licences which are now issued only after a test on a basic understanding of road signages, traffic rules and a driving skill test.
- Compliance with the road design to accommodate all users.
 - Example: Buses are required to adhere to the rules of the bus lane thereby providing space to accommodate other users.
- The installation of cameras which recognise speeding vehicles and capture the number plate with the automatic number plate recognition system saw an increase in the number of challans issued and ultimately slowed down the speed of vehicles in the city.

Recommendations

- Mandatory simulators and psychological tests must be used in the regulatory framework of issuing licences, especially for drivers of heavy transport vehicles.
- Designing the roads in such a way that they accommodate all users such as pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, etc.
- Adoption of advanced technology such as artificial intelligence in the traffic management systems.
- Collaboration of multiple agencies such as the road-owning agency, the municipal body, the traffic police and the transport enforcement wing in the enforcement of traffic discipline.
- Improving the efficiencies of public transportation.
- **Mobility as a Service (MaaS) solutions** - It is a platform where the information of all the modes of transport is integrated.
 - This provides the option for the passenger/commuter to choose the mode of transport based on feasibility.
 - A government-backed digital solution with all mobility options would make public transport more efficient and provide last-mile and first-mile connectivity.

Nut Graf

The cost of human lives lost in accidents is huge and there is a need for structured efforts by the governments at all levels along with a collective behavioural change in the minds of the general public to improve traffic safety.

F. Prelims Facts

Nothing here for today!!!

1. Indian company produces tactical battery for battlefield

- A company in Bengaluru has produced a rugged tactical battery and is now planning to sell it to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) forces in Europe.
- Pravaig Field Pack is a heavy-duty power bank that is portable and weighs 14 kilograms.
- The Pravaig Field Pack is a tactical battery that aims to support the operational ability of modern soldiers in battlefield conditions.
- It is important to digitally connect modern military and special forces personnel who have to operate in high-risk zones such as Ukraine and Libya, and this power bank becomes handy while using gadgets that require constant power back-up.
- The field pack can be used to recharge military equipment and can be used to deploy remote sensors, operate drones and be used in tactical operations which involve multiple weapons systems.

2. 'Only one State can decide on remission'

- The Supreme Court held that remission or premature release of a convict has to be considered in terms of the policy applicable in the State where the crime was committed and not where the trial was transferred to and concluded.
 - The Court said once the crime was committed in a state, after the trial concluded and judgment of conviction came to be passed, all further proceedings such as the remission or premature release are applicable in the same states where the crime was committed and not the State where the trial was transferred and concluded for any exceptional reasons under the orders of the court.
- The [Supreme Court](#) further held that under Section 432(7) of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), 1973, there cannot be a concurrent jurisdiction of two State governments on the matters of remission.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Which of the following statements is/are correct with respect to the place Lumbini in Nepal?
(Level – Medium)

1. According to Buddhist tradition, Queen Mahapajapati Gotami gave birth to Siddhartha Gautama in Lumbini.

2. Ashoka had visited Lumbini, and a pillar exists in Lumbini to commemorate the visit of the Emperor.
3. Lumbini is proposed to be included in the list of UNESCO world heritage sites in the upcoming session of the World Heritage Committee.

Options:

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is not correct**, According to Buddhist tradition, **Queen Mahamayadevi** gave birth to Siddhartha Gautama in Lumbini.
 - Mahapajapati Gotami was the foster mother, stepmother and maternal aunt of the Buddha.
- **Statement 2 is correct**, Ashoka had visited Lumbini, and a pillar exists in Lumbini to commemorate the visit of the Emperor.
- Statement 3 is not correct, Lumbini has been listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site in 1997.

Q2. Which of the following statements best describes Project 75-I? (Level – Easy)

- a. The project envisages the indigenous construction of a diesel-electric class of submarines equipped with the state-of-the-art Air Independent Propulsion system.
- b. The project envisages the indigenous construction of nuclear-powered submarines.
- c. The Project envisages the indigenous construction of four state-of-the-art stealth guided-missile destroyers.
- d. The project envisages the indigenous construction of two nuclear-powered aircraft carriers for the Indian Navy by 2030.

Answer: a

Explanation:

- Project-75 (I) envisages the indigenous construction of six modern conventional submarines with contemporary equipment, weapons & sensors including Fuel-Cell based AIP (Air Independent

Propulsion Plant), advanced torpedoes, modern missiles and state-of-the-art countermeasure systems.

Q3. Which of the following statement/s is/are correct with respect to the Chief Election Commissioner of India? (Level – Medium)

1. He/she has a tenure of six years, or up to the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier.
2. The CEC enjoys the same status and receives the salary and perks as available to judges of the Supreme Court of India.
3. The CEC can be removed from office through a motion adopted by Parliament on grounds of proved misbehaviour or incapacity.
4. The Constitution has explicit prescriptions regarding the qualifications for the appointment of a person as the Chief Election Commissioner.

Options:

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, CEC has a tenure of six years, or up to the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier
- **Statement 2 is correct**, The CEC enjoys the same status and receives the salary and perks as available to judges of the Supreme Court of India.
- **Statement 3 is correct**, The CEC can be removed from office through a motion adopted by Parliament on grounds of proven misbehaviour or incapacity.
- **Statement 4 is not correct**, The **Constitution has not prescribed the qualifications** (legal, educational, administrative or judicial) of the members of the Election Commission.

Q4. Which among the following pairs of Cup and associated sport is/are correctly matched? (Level – Difficult)

1. Thomas Cup -Badminton
2. Davis Cup -Tennis
3. Ryder Cup -Golf

Options:

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

- All the above pairs are matched correctly.
- Hence **option c** is correct.

Q5. Which of the following statements are correct about the deposits of ‘methane hydrate’? (Level – Difficult) [UPSC 2019]

1. Global warming might trigger the release of methane gas from these deposits.
2. Large deposits of ‘methane hydrate’ are found in Arctic Tundra and under the seafloor.
3. Methane in atmosphere oxidizes to carbon dioxide after a decade or two.

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, Methane hydrate has been found beneath seafloors and buried inside Arctic permafrost and beneath Antarctic ice and global warming might trigger the release of methane gas from these deposits.
- **Statement 2 is correct**, Large deposits of ‘methane hydrate’ are found in Arctic Tundra and under the seafloor.
- **Statement 3 is correct**, when methane is anthropogenically emitted, methane is oxidized in the atmosphere a decade or two later.
 - Once oxidized, the carbon in each methane molecule is converted to CO₂, which then stays in the atmosphere as CO₂ for another century or more.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. The marital rape exception creates a legal fiction where, even if all the requirements for rape are otherwise fulfilled, the law deems not to be rape if the parties are married. Do you think the marital rape law is necessary? Justify. (15 Marks, 250 Words) (GS1- Social Issues)
2. The focus of NATO must be on ending Russia's territorial aggression and not on expanding NATO. Analyze. (10 Marks, 150 Words) (GS2- International Relations)

