

25 Jun 2022: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis



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A. GS 1 Related

Category: INDIAN SOCIETY

1. A small start that went on to change the lives of women

Syllabus: Role of women and women's organization

Mains: The significance of the inclusion of women in the Police force.

Context

All Women Police Stations in Tamil Nadu.

Background

- In 1973, the first-ever all-women's wing in the Chennai City Police was started.
- In 1992, the Tamil Nadu Government initiated the first All Women Police Station (AWPS) at Chennai's Thousand Lights police station, which was managed by an inspector, three sub-inspectors, six head constables and 24 constables.
- The objective was to encourage women to report cases of crime and harassment, which they would find difficult to narrate to a male officer.

Women in Khaki

■ In India, women were first deployed for policing in the Princely State of Travancore

■ Women were formally employed in police service in Kanpur in 1939

■ In 1972, the portals of the Indian Police Service (IPS) were thrown open to women and Kiran Bedi became the first woman IPS officer

■ In 1976, women IPS officers G. Thilagavathi and Letika Saran were posted to the Tamil Nadu cadre

Image source: The Hindu

The impact of including women in Police Stations and setting up AWPS

- This has helped to overcome the stigma of police stations not being a good place for women to visit.
- The inclusion of women in the police departments has also encouraged women to come forward to seek redress for their complaints.
 - The impact is seen more in cases of crime against women and children being reported.
- It has also helped raise awareness about various existing laws for women.
 - The personnel also raise awareness among students and educate them to report sexual abuse or inappropriate behaviour.
- At present, Tamil Nadu has 222 AWPSs and this model has been replicated in various other parts of the country.
- In 2021, about 75000 individuals, mostly women, had given complaints (including matrimonial disputes) at the AWPS in Tamil Nadu and over 72,428 complainants were redressed through counselling which would have been prolonged in the Courts.
- The women personnel play a significant role in handling serious crimes against women and children, such as rape, molestation, abduction, dowry deaths, cruelty by husband/relatives, sexual

harassment cases booked under the Indian Penal Code (IPC), the Prohibition of Women Harassment Acts and the [POCSO Act](#).

Nut Graf

The inclusion of women in the police department has played a key role in raising awareness about the laws on the crimes against women and has encouraged women and children to come and seek justice.

B. GS 2 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

C. GS 3 Related

Category: ENVIRONMENT

1. Climate change and crop failure

Syllabus: Environmental pollution and degradation

Mains: The consequences of climate change and irregularities in weather phenomena on agriculture.

Context

Climate change-induced deficient rainfall in Kerala.

Details

- Except for mild drizzles, the third week of June, which was supposed to experience the onset of monsoons, has been rather dry.
- The large rain deficiency during the month of June along with the soaring temperature levels poses the threat of crop failure.
- Further, a delayed or failed monsoon will impact a variety of crops and impact the capsule formation and the yield.
- Prolonged dry spells, delayed monsoons, intensity shifts and cloudbursts highlight the fact that there is a significant change in the rainfall pattern.

Seasonal rainfall | June 1 to 22, 2022

SUBDIVISION/ DISTRICTS	ACTUAL RAINFALL (MM)	NORMAL RAINFALL (MM)	PERCENTAGE DEPARTURE (%)	
Kerala	192.9	463.9	-58	Deficient
Lakshadweep	281	261.4	7	Normal
Alappuzha	198.5	415.8	-52	Deficient
Kannur	202.4	622.4	-67	Large deficient
Ernakulam	264.7	510.7	-48	Deficient
Idukki	156.8	510.3	-69	Large deficient
Kasaragod	257.1	699.3	-63	Large deficient
Kollam	125.7	323.6	-61	Large deficient
Kottayam	266.6	472	-44	Deficient
Kozhikode	286.2	637.6	-55	Deficient
Malappuram	197.6	446.1	-56	Deficient
Palakkad	87.5	316.5	-72	Large deficient
Pathanamthitta	209.4	371.9	-44	Deficient
Thiruvananthapuram	103.5	247	-58	Deficient
Thrissur	307.1	519.2	-41	Deficient
Wayanad	117	461.2	-75	Large deficient
Mahe	259.8	587.8	-56	Deficient

Percentage departure from normal value

Large excess: +60% and above | Excess: +20% to +59%

Normal: +19% to -19% | Deficient: -20% to -59%

Large deficient: -60% to -99% | No rain: -100%

Image Source: The Hindu

Consequences of climate change and irregularities in weather phenomena

On the cultivation of Cardamom

- Cardamom is one of the thermosensitive crops which has been impacted by increasing temperature, changes in weather patterns and extreme weather conditions.

- Cardamom cultivators say that the inconsistent rains are causing yield loss and delay in flowering, and the fluctuations in temperature and humidity are causing pest attacks.
- Farmers highlight the fact that the average yield per acre has come down to 160-170 kg of dried cardamom from 250 kg in the past.

On the cultivation of Cashew nut

- The Aralam Farming Corporation Kerala Limited in Kannur, which accounts for about 90% of the raw cashew nut production in Kerala, witnessed a record fall in yield.
- The total yield has come down to 90 tonnes compared to 184 tonnes in the previous season (2021).
- The excess rainfall during the flowering season which continues till November (2021) impacted the fruit setting process as the nuts started sprouting which resulted in the loss of nearly 1,500 kg of nuts.
- Further, the increase in the temperature has affected the quality of the produce.

On Paddy cultivation

- Heavy rainfall at the beginning of the harvest season has severely impacted paddy cultivation.
- Further, heavy summer rainfall increased the frequency of bacterial leaf blight disease in paddy and caused severe losses to the farmers.

On Pest attacks

- The variations in temperature and relative humidity lead to the emergence of new pests and diseases, leaving many crops susceptible to attacks and outbreaks.
- Due to the increase in the frequency of pest attacks, farmers are forced to use local chemical pesticides which will have severe consequences on the fertility of the soil in the long term.

Other consequences

- In January 2021, a sub-zero temperature was recorded in Munnar and the cold wave severely affected the vegetable tracts in Vattavada.
- In Idukki, the temperature is increasing during the day and the night temperature is falling. This increasing gap in the daily range of temperature significantly impacts a high range of crops growing in forest-agro ecosystems.
- In Marayur, sugarcane cultivators lost an entire season, when Kerala experienced a very high rainfall of 105.5 mm as compared to the normal of 11.0 mm.
- Heavy rainfall will lower the soil fertility and turn it acidic and further as the topsoil is washed away there will be a depletion in organic matter.

- Also, the climate change and the resulting shift in the cropping pattern have impacted thermosensitive crops such as cocoa, black pepper, coffee and tea.

Nut Graf

The irregularities in the climate due to climate change have induced a shift in the cropping pattern and have far-reaching implications on the cultivation of various crops which pose a significant threat to the livelihoods, economy and food security of the country. This makes it crucial for the policymakers to develop adaptation and mitigation strategies at the earliest.

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: SOCIAL JUSTICE

1. The advent of 'app-solute' chaos in NREGA

Syllabus: Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes

Mains: National Mobile Monitoring Software application

Mains: Challenges associated with the National Mobile Monitoring Software application

Context

This article talks about the challenges associated with the National Mobile Monitoring Software application.

National Mobile Monitoring Software application

- The Ministry of Rural Development introduced the National Mobile Monitoring Software (NMMS) application in 2021.
- This application aims to improve citizen oversight and increase transparency in [National Rural Employment Guarantee Act \(NREGA\)](#) works.

- The app is deployed by NREGA Mates, local women at the panchayat level who are trained to monitor NREGA worksites.
- The major feature of the app is the real-time, photographed, geo-tagged attendance of every worker to be taken once in each half of the day.

Challenges associated with the application

- **Compulsory attendance** - NREGA wages are fixed based on the amount of work done every day, and the workers are not expected to clock a fixed amount of hours. This flexibility had contributed a lot to the success of NREGA.
 - However, the feature of marking the attendance twice a day mandates NREGA workers to be present at the worksite for the entire day or travel twice to mark their attendance. This is causing difficulty for the workers.
- **Affects women workers** - NREGA has traditionally had a higher share of women workers (54.7% in FY 2021-22) and has played a key role in transforming the working conditions for women in rural areas.
 - As the women have to balance the burden of household chores along with NREGA works, the feature of marking the attendance twice a day would significantly affect women workers.
- **Challenges with internet connectivity** - the app requires a stable network for real-time monitoring and internet connectivity is a major challenge in rural India.
 - This impacts the ability of the workers to mark their attendance and results in the loss of wages.
 - This problem has been reported in states like Kerala, Jharkhand and Tamil Nadu.
- **Impact on NREGA Mates** - the role of a NREGA Mate was envisaged to empower rural women to manage attendance and work measurement in their panchayats. But with the advent of the app, an individual must mandatorily have a smartphone to become a Mate.
 - This new condition disqualifies several women who do not own smartphones from becoming Mates and smartphone-owning men are likely to be given preference as Mates.
 - Further, women could become proxy Mates (officially registered, but men work and get paid).
 - Many individuals who are working as Mates say that adequate training has not been provided to them which is causing errors in recording workers' attendance resulting in delays or non-payments.
- **Problems in implementation** - With no records of physical attendance, there is no proof for workers of their attendance and work done which can be used by the workers as evidence.
 - Experts feel that this erodes transparency and increases chances for corruption as funds are siphoned off by faking attendance records.

Recommendations

- Experts feel that rather than focusing on complex technological reforms, social audits must be strengthened.
 - Social audits are people-centric instruments, where the citizens of the panchayat play a key role in the functioning of NREGA.
 - Such social audits have worked efficiently, allowing the local right holders to participate in investment decisions and hold the authorities accountable.
- Any plans of reforms that are meant to improve citizen oversight and transparency are to be implemented only after thorough consultation and discussion with all the stakeholders such as NREGA workers, functionaries, or government field officials.

Nut Graf:

The National Mobile Monitoring Software application has various challenges associated with its implementation which is causing difficulties for the workers and eroding the transparency of the NREGA scheme. There is an urgent need for the Ministry of Rural Development to intervene and revisit the strategy.

F. Prelims Facts

1. Invasive weed, 17 plants stifling Kaziranga

Syllabus: Conservation, Environmental pollution and degradation

Prelims: Invasive plant species

Context

Invasive plant species are impacting the health of the [Kaziranga National Park](#) and Tiger Reserve.

Details

- At present, there are 18 identified invasive plants in the tiger reserve which are impacting the indigenous grasses, shrubs and trees the herbivores sustain on.
- The list submitted to the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) did not contain **parthenium** and **lantana**, which are considered the “usual culprits” of many protected areas in India.
 - Parthenium is believed to have come to India as contaminants in a consignment of wheat imported from the U.S. in the 1950s.
 - Lantana was brought by the British as ornamental plants from South America.
- The list includes **Ipomoea** (*Ipomoea carnea*) and **Mimosa** (*Mimosa himalaica*) but marked them as largely controlled.

- Some weeds have herbal properties, but their toxicity outweighs their utility.
 - **Example:** Wild boars love to gorge on the succulent rootlets of the **Leea macrophylla** or 'kukura thengia' that are fast clogging the patrolling paths and grasslands.
 - **Cestrum diurnum** or day-blooming jasmine of West Indies origin which are thriving on the Brahmaputra sandbars is a rich source of Vitamin D3.

2. Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC)

Syllabus: GS-2; International Relations; Global groupings and agreements

Prelims: The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States

The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC)

- The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) was launched in December 2011 in Caracas, Venezuela, with the signature of the 'Declaration of Caracas'.
- CELAC is an intergovernmental mechanism for dialogue and political agreement, which permanently includes 33 Latin American and Caribbean countries.
- CELAC is a regional forum that binds together all Latin American and Caribbean countries.
- CELAC aims to be a single voice and structured political decision-making in the political arena and cooperation in support of regional integration programs.

Objective: To advance the gradual process of regional integration, unity and careful balance of the political, economic, social and cultural diversity of Latin America and the Caribbean people.

G. Tidbits

1. U.S. Supreme Court overturns abortion right

- The U.S. Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade 1973 judgement which was considered a landmark judgement in extending women in America the right to have an abortion before the foetus is viable outside the womb — before the 24-28 week mark.
- Abortion rights that have been available to women will now be determined by individual States.
- About 20 States have laws restricting or banning abortions.

Read more about the issue - [UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis dated 06 May 2022](#)

2. U.S. House passes gun-safety legislation

- The U.S. House of Representatives passed crucial gun-safety legislation for the first time in 30 years.
- The House passed the Bill, after a Supreme Court ruling broadly expanded gun rights.
- Gun control has been a divisive issue in the United States and the latest move is to address the issues of several instances of mass murders in recent times.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements with regards to invasive species: (Level – Difficult)

1. A species is termed invasive if it's previously absent in that ecosystem and has been introduced in that area from outside mostly by human intervention.
2. Invasive growth of the grass *Paspalum distichum* has changed the ecological character of large areas of the Keoladeo National Park, reducing its suitability for certain waterbird species including the Siberian Crane.
3. The Ministry of Environment and Forests issues approval along with quarantine certificates for the export of wild animals and articles under the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972.

Choose the correct code:

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct,** A species is termed invasive if it's previously absent in that ecosystem and has been introduced in that area from outside mostly by human intervention.
- **Statement 2 is correct,** The invasive growth of the grass *Paspalum distichum* has changed the ecological character of large areas of Keoladeo National Park, reducing its suitability for certain waterbird species including the Siberian Crane.
- **Statement 3 is correct,** Under the articles of the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972, the Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change (MoEFCC) issues approval and quarantine certificates to export wild animals.

Q2. Consider the following statements with regards to Intelligence Bureau: (Level – Medium)

1. IB was founded on December 23, 1887, as the “Central Special Branch” by the Secretary of State for India in London.
2. IB technically falls under the authority of the Ministry of Home Affairs.
3. The Director of the Intelligence Bureau (DIB) has always been an IPS officer.

Choose the correct code:

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, Intelligence Bureau (IB) was founded on December 23, 1887, as the “Central Special Branch” by the Secretary of State for India in London.
 - The IB is considered the oldest surviving intelligence organization in the world.
- **Statement 2 is correct**, IB technically falls under the authority of the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- **Statement 3 is correct**, The Director of the Intelligence Bureau (DIB) has always been an IPS officer.

Q3. VL-SRSAM missile system, often seen in the news, stands for (Level – Easy)

- a. Very Light – Short Range Surface to Air Missile
- b. Vertical Launch – Short Range Surface to Air Missile
- c. Vertical Launch – Supersonic Range Surface to Air Missile
- d. 5th generation Launch - Short Range Surface to Air Missile

Answer: b

Explanation:

- VL-SRSAM stands for **Vertical Launch Short Range Surface to Air Missile**.
- VL-SRSAM has been designed and developed jointly by three facilities of the Defence Research and Development Organisation for the deployment of Indian Naval warships.
- The VL-SRSAM system has been designed to strike at the high-speed airborne targets at the range of 40km to 50km and at an altitude of around 15km.

Q4. Consider the following statements with regards to NITI Aayog: (Level – Easy)

1. The ex-officio chairman of the NITI Aayog is the Prime Minister.
2. Vice-Chairperson of the NITI Aayog is appointed by the President of India.
3. The CEO of NITI Aayog will be in the rank of the Secretary to the Government of India.

Choose the correct code:

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, The ex-officio chairman of the NITI Aayog is the Prime Minister.
- **Statement 2 is not correct**, The Prime Minister appoints the Vice-Chairperson of NITI Aayog.
- **Statement 3 is correct**, The CEO of NITI Aayog will be in the rank of the Secretary to the Government of India.

Q5. At the national level, which ministry is the nodal agency to ensure effective implementation of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006? (Level – Easy) [UPSC 2021]

- a. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
- b. Ministry of Panchayati Raj
- c. Ministry of Rural Development
- d. Ministry of Tribal Affairs

Answer: d

Explanation:

- The Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006 recognizes the rights of the forest-dwelling tribal communities and other traditional forest dwellers to forest resources, on which these communities were dependent for a variety of needs, including livelihood, habitation and other socio-cultural needs.
- The **Ministry of Tribal Affairs** is the nodal agency to ensure the effective implementation of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Despite claims of bringing transparency and ensuring proper monitoring of the schemes the National Mobile Monitoring Software (NMMS) App is beset with challenges. Examine. (10 Marks, 150 Words) (GS II - SOCIAL JUSTICE)
2. Has the emergence of All Women Police Stations (AWPS) assisted in curbing violence against women? Critically Evaluate. (10 Marks, 150 Words) (GS I - INDIAN SOCIETY)

