

20 Mar 2023: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis



TABLE OF CONTENTS
A. GS 1 Related
B. GS 2 Related
C. GS 3 Related
D. GS 4 Related
E. Editorials
SOCIAL JUSTICE
1. Universal Health Coverage
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
1. Slow steps to India-China border tranquillity
F. Prelims Facts
1. Hindu Succession Act
G. Tidbits
1. With family ID, U.P. hopes to plug gaps in delivery of schemes
2. Background radiation higher in Kerala, but no risk: study
3. Difficult to allocate public fund to art and culture: govt.
H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions
I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

A. GS 1 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

B. GS 2 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

C. GS 3 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: SOCIAL JUSTICE

1. Universal Health Coverage

Syllabus: *Issues Relating to Development & Management of Health*

Mains: *Challenges we face in achieving universal health care.*

Context: This article discusses the status of universal health care in India.

Introduction:

- The right to health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being. India's constitution guarantees the right to life, which includes the right to health, as a basic human right.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) has defined health as a certain totality of health to the realms of mental and social well-being and happiness beyond physical fitness, and an absence of disease and disability.
- However, achieving health in its wider definition requires addressing health determinants, which necessitates intersectoral convergence beyond medical and health departments.

Health as a Basic Human Right:

- Reality of healthcare in India is far from ideal. According to the National Health Profile 2021, India has only 0.55 doctors and 0.8 nurses per 1,000 population, which is far below the WHO-recommended minimum of 1 doctor and 2.5 nurses per 1,000 population.
- Moreover, India's public health spending is only 1.28% of its GDP, which is one of the lowest in the world.
- Despite the constitutional guarantee, access to health care in India is not universal.
 - According to the National Family Health Survey 2019-20, only 51.9% of women in India received full antenatal care, and only 61.3% of children aged 12-23 months received all basic vaccinations.
 - Furthermore, out-of-pocket expenditures account for 64% of total health expenditures in India, which can cause catastrophic health expenditures that can lead to poverty and indebtedness.

The Alma Ata Declaration of Primary Health Care:

- In 1978, the International Conference on Primary Health Care was held in Alma Ata, Kazakhstan.
- The Alma Ata declaration of primary health care, which mandated basic health care for all citizens, was not implemented in its entirety, resulting in partial coverage of the population and partial responsibility of the government to pay for health care.
- The National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) in India, which operationalized a Comprehensive Primary Health Care model, is a sensible move towards achieving UHC.

Limitations of AB-JAY:

- While the intentions of the Ayushman Bharat Jan Arogya Bima Yojana (AB-JAY) are noble, it has received criticism from various quarters.
- One of the primary concerns is that it is an insurance-based model and not a tax-funded model, which means that the financial burden of the scheme falls on the government and the beneficiaries.
- The scheme provides insurance cover to only those who have been identified as being below the poverty line, which means that a large section of the population is excluded from the scheme.
- Additionally, the scheme has been criticised for its narrow focus on secondary and tertiary care, which ignores the importance of primary care in promoting good health.

Newer concept of UHC:

- The focus on primary care, as mandated by the Alma Ata declaration of primary health care, must be revived to ensure that healthcare services are accessible, affordable, and of good quality for all citizens.
- A tax-funded model of Universal Health Care would ensure that healthcare services are available to all citizens without discrimination.
- It would also ensure that the burden of healthcare financing is shared by the government and the citizens, with the government taking the responsibility for providing healthcare services to all citizens.
- Such a model would also prioritise primary healthcare services, which are essential for promoting good health and preventing diseases.
- Additionally, a tax-funded model would ensure transparency and accountability in healthcare delivery.
- Government should also focus on intersectoral convergence beyond medical and health departments, such as women and child development, food and nutrition, agriculture and animal husbandry, civil supplies, rural water supply and sanitation, social welfare, tribal welfare, education, and forestry, to address health determinants.

***Nut Graf:** While India's Constitution guarantees health as a basic human right, the current healthcare system in India falls short of this ideal. A tax-funded model of Universal Health Care that prioritises primary healthcare services and is accountable and transparent in healthcare delivery is essential for achieving this goal of Health for All.*

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Slow steps to India-China border tranquillity

***Syllabus:** India and its Neighborhood – Relations*

***Mains:** Root Causes of Tension Between India-China Relations*

Context: This article discusses various attempts to ease the border situation between India and China.

Introduction:

- India and China are moving towards a new agreement to maintain peace and tranquillity along their disputed 4,000 km border.
- The clash between Indian troops and the Chinese PLA at [Galwan in 2020](#) and the recent altercation between troops at Yangtse in Arunachal Pradesh have highlighted the lingering boundary dispute as well as the complex Line of Actual Control (LAC).

- [Clash at Yangtze](#) suggests that new measures may be needed across the LAC, and not just in Ladakh.
- Events in 2020 have destroyed the trust that was built up with patience between 1993 and 2020. The bar for normality in China-India relations is now much higher.

Attempts to ease the border situation:

- Despite tensions, Indian and Chinese Ministers and officials have been meeting with each other regularly.
- India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar met his Chinese counterpart Qin Gang recently on the sidelines of the G-20 Foreign Ministers meeting in New Delhi.
- The two sides have managed to disengage in four of the six points, namely Galwan, Pangong Tso, Gogra Post and near Jianan Pass (PP15).
 - But two key areas remain unsettled, i.e., the Depsang Bulge and the Charding Ninglung Junction in the Demchok area involve nearly 1,000 square kilometres.
- The proposals for disengagement in the remaining areas were discussed in an open and constructive manner during the 26th Meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) on China-India Border Affairs, held in Beijing on February 22, 2023.
 - This could create conditions for restoration of normalcy in bilateral relations.
- The discussions have also reportedly taken up the issue of upgrading the border management means to replace the WMCC with a mechanism that will have both military and civilian officers.

Discussions on No-Patrol Zones:

- One proposal that has been discussed is the conversion of other parts of the LAC into similar no-patrol zones.
 - This could lead to a package settlement in the two remaining areas of Depsang and Charding Nala.
- The no-patrol zones could be confined to the places where the two sides have overlapping claims.
- Till 2020, both sides patrolled till the limit of these contending claims and there was a protocol that if the two patrols met, they would stop and display banners to ask the other side to go back to their area. Thereafter, the issue was dealt with through meetings at one of the five designated border meeting points.
- In 2020, Chinese journalist-scholar Qian Feng suggested that the concept of the “zone of actual control” could replace the “line of actual control” in some areas that had no obvious geomorphological features or population.
- Other areas, too, could be delimited as a “border belt” if they did not require population adjustment.

- Poor demarcation of border areas with no detailed maps has been at the root of the problem. Over the years, the Chinese have been able to shift goalposts at will, especially in relation to the Ladakh border.

***Nut Graf:** India and China are working towards a new agreement to maintain peace along their disputed border. Recent clashes have highlighted the complex Line of Actual Control (LAC) and the need for new measures. Discussions on upgrading border management means and creating no-patrol zones are being explored.*

F. Prelims Facts

1. Hindu Succession Act

Syllabus: GS-2; Social Justice

Prelims: About Hindu Succession Act

Context

A Member of Parliament has urged the Central government to include women from the Scheduled Tribes (ST) communities in Hindu Succession Act.

Hindu Succession Act

- The Mitakshara school of Hindu law was codified as the Hindu Succession Act, 1956.
- The Act governs the succession and inheritance of property among Hindus.
- According to Section 2 of the Act, the provisions of the Act apply to anyone who is a Hindu by religion which includes people belonging to the Virashaiva, a Lingayat community, or a follower of the Brahmo, Prarthana, or Arya Samaj.
 - As per Section 2(2) of the Act, the provisions of the Act shall not apply to the members of any Scheduled Tribes as defined under Article 366 of the Constitution unless the Union Government makes a notification in the Official Gazette to direct otherwise.
- The Hindu Succession Act of 1956 however only recognised male members as legal heirs.
- Through the Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005, women were extended coparcenary rights.
 - The law applied to ancestral property and intestate succession where such successions took place according to the law and not through a will.

G. Tidbits

1. With family ID, U.P. hopes to plug gaps in delivery of schemes

- The Uttar Pradesh government has started an initiative to improve the last-mile delivery of welfare schemes in the State.
- The State government initiated a 12-digit family identification number scheme in January 2023 through which key data and information from 17 government departments are being collated.
 - The data collected through this scheme is also tallied with the data from ration and Aadhaar cards.
- Through the scheme, the government envisages providing family IDs to all beneficiary families and plugging the leaks in the delivery of schemes.
- This scheme of the UP government is similar to the Kutumba project in Karnataka.
 - The Kutumba project in Karnataka aims to provide a unique identity to families and act as a database of key data of the residents which can be used to extend seamless services and benefits of the government.

2. Background radiation higher in Kerala, but no risk: study

- A pan-India study conducted by the scientists at the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) has revealed that in a few areas of Kerala, background radiation levels emitted from natural sources including rocks, sand or mountains, are about three times higher than what has been assumed.
 - However, the higher rate of radiation does not translate to an elevated health risk.
- Radiations are emitted due to the disintegrating nucleus of an unstable element.
- Gamma rays are extremely energetic types of radiation that can pass unobstructed through matter.
 - Gamma radiations are harmless unless present in large concentrated doses.
 - Gamma radiation levels are to be monitored and assessed, especially around nuclear plants along with the average quantity of radiation that plant workers are exposed to.
- The [International Atomic Energy Agency \(IAEA\)](#) has specified the maximum radiation exposure levels which have also been adopted by India's atomic energy institutions.
 - As per the specifications, public exposure levels must not cross 1 milli-Sievert every year and those workers of the plants should not be exposed to over 30 milli-Sievert every year.

- The recent study conducted indicated that the average natural background levels of gamma radiation in India were 94 nGy/hr (nano Gray/hour) (close to 0.8 milli sievert/year).
 - Gray/hour refers to radiation emitted whereas sievert/year indicates biological exposure.
- The last such study, conducted in 1986 had measured the highest radiation exposure at Chavara, Kerala at 3,002 nGy/year whereas the recent study found that the levels in the Kollam district were 9,562 nGy/hr.
 - The high radiation levels in the Kollam district are mainly due to the monazite sands that are high in thorium.

3. Difficult to allocate public fund to art and culture: govt.

- According to the Ministry of Culture, the high disparity in basic rural infrastructure such as health, education and transportation makes it difficult for a developing country such as India to allocate a significant amount of public funds to the promotion of art and culture.
- The observations made by a parliamentary committee have revealed that the allocation for the Ministry of Culture was only about 0.075% of the total Budget for the FY 2023-24 which is significantly less than the allocations in countries like China, the UK, the US, and Australia, which spend about 2%-5% of their Budget for promoting art and culture.
 - However, officials of the Ministry have further said that the majority of the amount allocated to the promotion of art and culture in these countries is sourced from non-government sources.
- Under the Union Budget for 2023-24, the Ministry of Culture has been allocated ₹3,399.65 crores under revenue and ₹285.4 crores under capital heads for prioritised programmes.
- The Ministry is looking at and evolving various innovative methods to maximise the participation of non-government organisations for the promotion and conservation of art and culture in the country.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Which of the below statements are true? (Level – Moderate)

1. The tighter monetary policy is implemented to reduce the inflation in the markets.
2. It is associated with a reduction in the short-term interest rates by the central banks.
3. In India, increasing the Cash Reserve Ratio is an example of tight monetary policy.

Options:

- A. 1 and 2

- B. 2 and 3
- C. 1 and 3
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: C

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, Tightening of monetary policy is usually implemented to tackle rising inflation.
- **Statement 2 is not correct**, in case of tighter monetary policy, the central banks look to **increase short-term interest rates** in a bid to shrink the money supply.
- **Statement 3 is correct**, In India, increasing the cash reserve ratio and the repo rate by RBI is an example of tight monetary policy.

Q2. Identify the country/group based on the below statements: (Level – Easy)

1. India had a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement with it since 2011.
2. We conducted the inaugural session of “Veer Guardian” exercise with them in 2023.
3. India has a clean energy partnership, and a nuclear deal with them.

Options:

- A. USA
- B. Japan
- C. European Union
- D. Australia

Answer: B

Explanation:

- The inaugural edition of the bilateral air exercise “Veer Guardian” between the Indian Air Force and Japan Air Self Defence Force was conducted in Japan in January 2023.
- Japan and India had signed a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement in 2011.
- Japan and India had announced the "India-Japan Clean Energy Partnership (CEP)" in March 2022 during the visit of the Japanese Prime Minister to India.
- The landmark “India-Japan Agreement for Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy” came into force in July 2017. The agreement was signed in Tokyo during the visit of Prime Minister Narendra to Japan in November 2016.

Q3. How many of the statements are true regarding the International Criminal Court (Level – Moderate)

1. It is the main judicial body of the United Nations.
2. India was one of its founding members.
3. It can take up cases based on Suo moto cognizance.

Options:

- A. Only 1 statement
- B. Only 2 statements
- C. All 3 statements
- D. None of the statements

Answer: A

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is not correct**, The International Criminal Court (ICC) is an intergovernmental organisation and international tribunal headquartered in The Hague.
 - The ICC is governed by the Rome Statute
 - The ICC is not part of the UN.
- **Statement 2 is not correct**, India is **not a member** of the International Criminal Court.
- **Statement 3 is correct**, ICC investigates and tries people charged with serious and grave crimes such as genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression. The ICC can start investigation in three ways:
 - A state-party brings a case to the Court
 - The Court takes a suo motu cognizance
 - The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) refers a case to the Court.

Q4. Which of the statements are true regarding Convalescent Plasma Therapy?
(Level – Difficult)

1. It has been designated as the best cure for the Covid-19 infections.
2. It includes transfusion of only the plasma part of the blood into the patient.
3. The donor must have in the past been infected and should have recovered from the disease.
4. It can be used only for the treatment of infectious diseases.

Options:

- A. 1 and 3
- B. 2 and 3
- C. 2 and 4
- D. 1, 3 and 4

Answer: A

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is not correct**, The **WHO recommended against the use of Convalescent Plasma Therapy** because such therapies did not increase the clinical improvement or reduce the mortality risk.

- **Statement 2 is correct**, Under Convalescent Plasma Therapy, convalescent plasma, or blood plasma collected from patients who have recovered from an infection, will be used to treat various infectious diseases.
- **Statement 3 is correct**, Under Convalescent Plasma Therapy, the donor must have in the past been infected and should have recovered from the disease.
- **Statement 4 is not correct**, Studies have found that convalescent plasma therapy is associated with a survival benefit in patients with hematologic cancers and few other genetic diseases.

Q5. Consider the following statements: (Level – Easy) [PYQ-2020]

1. The Constitution of India defines its basic structure in terms of federalism, secularism, fundamental rights and democracy.
2. The Constitution of India provides for 'Judicial review' to safeguard the citizens' liberties and to preserve the ideals on which the Constitution is based.

Which of the statements given above is/ are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 or 2

Answer: D

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is not correct**, In the landmark Kesavananda Bharati case 1973, the Supreme Court laid down a new doctrine of the “Basic Structure of the Constitution”.
 - There is no mention of the term “Basic Structure” anywhere in the Constitution of India.
- **Statement 2 is not correct**, There is no direct reference to the provision of the “Judicial review” in the constitution which empowers the courts to invalidate laws.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. [“We need to re-conceptualize our understanding of Universal Health Care”](#). Comment. (10 marks;150 words) (GS-2; Health)
2. [“Recent NSS Report data suggests India’s path towards universal access to safe and clean water and energy is still several steps away”](#). Discuss. (10 marks; 150 words) (GS-2; Social Justice)