

## 28 May 2023: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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*Nothing here for today!!!*

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#### Category: **HEALTH**

#### **1. Rights groups demand questions on disability should remain in NFHS-6**

*Syllabus: Issues related to Health.*

*Mains: Rights of persons with disability.*

*Prelims: NFHS-6.*

#### **Details**

- The National Family Health Survey (NFHS-6) will commence in July 2023.
  - NFHS is a large-scale, multi-round survey that collects and provides essential data and information on emerging health and family issues.
- It is guessed that the survey-6 might drop questions on disability.
- Notably, [NFHS-5](#) included questions and collected data about disabilities.
- Disability rights activists are demanding inclusion and correction.
- It is suggested that instead of leaving questions related to disability, NFHS needs to sharpen its approach and consult more people with disabilities.
- It is argued by many non-profit organizations (like Disability Rights India Foundation) that the decision to remove disability-related questions contradicts the principle of “leave no one behind” under the [Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016](#).
- Moreover, it is a regressive move as India is a signatory to the [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\)](#) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- As per the 2022 Missing Billion Report on ‘Reimagining Health Systems’, people with disabilities in India experience an average loss of 10-17 years in life expectancy.
- The World Health Organization’s global report on health equity for persons with disabilities emphasizes the benefits of monitoring to promote health equity.

Also read: [Sustainable Development Goals \(2012\)](#)

#### Way Ahead:

- The Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, and NITI Aayog should immediately intervene and include the required questions in the upcoming survey.
- In order to close the life expectancy gap there is a need for comprehensive health data.
- It is also important to ensure that the needs and experiences of people with disability are acknowledged and accounted for.
- The bridge between data collection and effective design policies should also be bridged.

**Nut Graf:** *It is found that disability-related questions have been dropped from the upcoming National Family Health Survey-6. It is argued that it might have serious repercussions on the inclusion of people with disability.*

## 2. Iron fortification: health risks of excessive iron intake

**Syllabus:** *Issues related to Health.*

**Mains:** *Iron Fortification.*

**Prelims:** *Iron fortification.*

#### Details

- Iron is important for many bodily functions. It is an essential mineral.
- It is helpful for the formation of haemoglobin. However, it can be harmful if taken in excess.
- The [fortification of food](#) with iron can help in the treatment of iron deficiency.

- A food staple like wheat, rice, and salt is fortified to provide up to two-thirds (10 mg/day) of the iron requirement of adult women, and the entire daily requirement of men.
- The 'tolerable upper limit' of salt intake is 40 mg/day. **Beyond this limit, the risk of adverse events begins to increase.** For example, it can severely impact patients with thalassemia.
- Only 5-10% of the ingested iron is absorbed, while the rest is excreted.

## Not a silver bullet

There is a defined level of iron intake beyond which the risk of adverse events begins to increase

- While women can excrete iron from the body through menstrual bleeding, men cannot. This makes men particularly vulnerable to excess iron intake
- The net benefit of iron fortification on haemoglobin formation is likely to be lower than thought
- Excess iron in the fortified diet will remain unabsorbed. Only about 5-10% of the ingested iron is absorbed
- Unabsorbed iron can lead to inflammation in the gastrointestinal lining and disrupt the colonic microbiota
- Excess iron has been closely linked to diabetes. Abnormal fat oxidation due to excess iron causes excessive serum triglyceridemia and excessive accumulation of triglycerides in muscle and liver tissues
- In very high amounts, iron can cause liver fibrosis, with subsequent progression to cirrhosis
- It is imperative to develop individualised strategies and ensure thorough monitoring to detect any adverse events at the earliest

**Of concern:**  
Excretion of iron is steady and very small, except when bleeding takes place, as with menstrual bleeding

Image source: The Hindu

### Way Ahead:

- Instead of mandatory iron fortification programmes, it is important to develop individualized strategies.
- Iron levels should be thoroughly monitored to detect any adverse events at the earliest.

**Nut Graf:** A recent study has found the harmful effects of iron fortification. It is suggested that instead of compulsory iron fortification, an individualized approach should be followed.

## C. GS 3 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## D. GS 4 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## E. Editorials

### Category: ENVIRONMENT

#### 1. Why are cheetah cubs dying in Kuno reserve?

*Syllabus: GS-3, Ecology and Environment.*

*Mains: Biodiversity Conservation.*

**Context:** Death of three Cheetah Cubs in Kuno National Park, Madhya Pradesh.

#### Introduction:

- Three of the four cheetah cubs that were born at the Kuno National Park, Madhya Pradesh after the reintroduction of the Cheetah died due to a natural cause.

**For more details, read here:** [UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis. May 26th, 2023](#)

#### Details:

- It is suggested that all the cubs were underweight and the major reason cited for their death is “extreme heat, weakness and malnutrition”.
  - Furthermore, ‘inexperience’ on the mother’s part in tending to her cub is also partly responsible for their death.
- According to experts, cheetah cubs in the wild have a very high mortality rate in comparison to tigers and lions.
  - They have a survival rate of only 10% and roughly the same fraction makes it to adulthood.
  - Moreover, according to a study conducted in 1994, 66% of cheetahs die due to predation, and nearly 16% due to “abandonment by the mother”.

#### Status of Project Cheetah:

- In September 2023, one year of cheetah reintroduction from Namibia will be complete.
- The official Cheetah Action Plan highlights that the survival of even half the cheetah would be an “indicator of success”.
- However, independent critics argue that there are some flaws in Project Cheetah. For instance,
  - The space and prey base in Kuno is very little for all 20 cheetahs.



- Raising cheetahs in fenced reserves in Africa can't be replicated in India as the cultural values in India promote coexistence with beasts like the tiger and lion conservation programmes.

### Research Analysis on India's Project Cheetah:

- According to research in Berlin, Germany, there were multiple shortcomings in the reintroduction plan. Some of them are:
  - The Kuno National Park is surrounded by villages with livestock farmers.
  - On the basis of prey density, the carrying capacity for cheetahs was calculated to be 21, which implies three cheetahs per 100 sq km.
  - According to the socio-spatial organization, adult male cheetahs can be territory holders or floaters. And thus territories are distributed in the landscape with a separation distance of 20-23 km.
  - It is predicted that only three males will occupy the entire national park leaving limited space for floaters or females. It will further force other males to settle outside the Kuno National Park.

Also read: [Re-introduction of Cheetah In India](#)

*Nut Graf: The death of cheetahs in Kuno National Park has highlighted the issues in the Project Cheetah. It is suggested by various experts that the Project needs to be reviewed to make it a success in real terms and ensure proper conservation of biodiversity.*

### Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

#### 1. Will AI tools help detect telecom fraud?

*Syllabus: GS-3, Developments in the field of Science and Technology.*

*Mains: Facial Recognition Technology (FRT).*

*Prelims: ASTR.*

#### Introduction:

- The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has started using 'Artificial Intelligence and Facial Recognition powered Solution for Telecom SIM Subscriber Verification' or ASTR.
  - It is an artificial intelligence-based facial recognition tool.
  - It aims to weed out incidents of fraudulently procured SIM cards being used across the country for financial and other cyber scams.

For details, read here: [ASTR Tool for Facial Recognition](#)

#### Significance of Artificial Intelligence in Telecom Frauds:

- India's telecom ecosystem is the second-largest in the world with around 117 crore subscribers.

- Manually identifying and verifying the documents will be a massive exercise for a large number of subscribers.
- Moreover, the existing text-based analysis is limited to finding similarities between the proof of identities and verifying the accuracy of such information. However, it cannot analyze photographic data to detect similar faces.

### **Artificial Intelligence and Facial Recognition powered Solution for Telecom SIM Subscriber Verification (ASTR):**

- The DoT, in 2012 asked all TSPs to share their subscriber database including pictures of users. ASTR analyzes this data and categorizes them into similar-looking images using facial recognition technology (FRT).
- It then uses “fuzzy logic” to compare textual details with pictures and identify similar-looking names of users or other KYC information to group them.
- Ultimately, ASTR identifies a person that has acquired SIMs in multiple names, dates of birth, bank accounts, address proofs, and other KYC documents.
- Additionally, it also identifies persons who have acquired more than 8 SIM cards (as it is not allowed as per the DoT rules).
- ASTR can detect and map nearly 68 facial features. It characterizes two faces as similar if there is a 97.5% match.

### **Associated Concerns:**

- There is a challenge of misidentification due to the inaccuracy of the technology.
- There can be an underrepresentation of certain groups of people in FRT.
- Technical errors like bad lighting, facial expression, ageing, etc. can hamper its accuracy.
- Concerns are also associated with privacy, consent, and mass surveillance.
- FRT will consume a large amount of data to both train and operate.
- Moreover, in many incidents, an individual might not be aware of or in control of the processing of their data.
- It is also argued that no public notification was issued about the use of ASTR on user data.
- In India, there is no data protection law or an FRT-specific regulation.

### **Way Ahead:**

- A paper published by NITI Aayog on India’s national strategy towards harnessing the potential of AI talks about due consent and voluntary use of FRT. This approach should be followed in letter and spirit.
- Many countries use FRT adhering to the local personal data protection regimes. This strategy can be emulated in India as well.
- Moreover, FRT should be limited to instances where both public interest and [constitutional morality](#) can be in sync.

**Also read: [Facial Recognition - Uses & Concerns: RSTV – Big Picture](#)**

**Nut Graf:** *The Department of Telecom is using a facial recognition technology called ASTR to detect SIM cards acquired fraudulently. However, there are several concerns associated with its use that need to be addressed on an urgent basis as it might compromise the privacy of citizens.*

## F. Prelims Facts

### 1. New Parliament's Architecture & Sengol sceptre

*Syllabus: GS 1- Culture and History.*

*Prelims: New Parliament's Architecture & Sengol sceptre.*

#### Details

- The new parliament building will be inaugurated on 28th May 2023.
- The old building was opened in 1927. It had wooden panelling and high ceilings.
- The tradition of red upholstery, carpeting, and wall cladding for the [Rajya Sabha](#) and green for the Lok Sabha will continue.
- The new Lok Sabha can accommodate 888 members and can further expand to 1272 during joint sessions of Parliament while the Rajya Sabha can seat 384 members.
- There are almost 92 chambers for Cabinet Ministers and party offices.
- Each seat will have a biometric-based digital voting console and a smart screen for members to access documents.
- The Chairperson and Speaker's seats at Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha are placed at a higher elevation. Thus making it 'disruption proof'.
- The teakwood in the Parliament house came from Maharashtra, the sandstone from Rajasthan, the carpets from Mirzapur in Uttar Pradesh, and the bamboo flooring from Tripura.

For detailed information on the new building, read here: [UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis. May 27th, 2023](#)

#### Sengol:

- In the north, the Sengol (sceptre) is called *Rajdanda* or *Darmadanda* and is an essential element of power that is passed on to the newly appointed king.
- It is mentioned in Kalidasa's epic poem *Raghuvamsa*.

Read more on [Chola Sengol](#) in the linked article.

### 2. Governing Council of NITI Aayog

*Syllabus: GS 2- Polity.*

*Prelims: Governing council of NITI Aayog.*

- Chief Ministers of various states did not attend the eighth [NITI Aayog](#) Governing Council meeting on 28th May 2023.

- It is argued that the absence of the Chief Ministers might hinder the pace of development in those States.
- It should be noted that governing council meetings provide an opportunity for the Centre and the States to identify key developmental issues and resolve them jointly.
- It is highlighted that the Centre and the States can work together as Team India and achieve the vision of Viksit Bharat @ 2047 - Reaching the last mile.

### 3. Iraq unveils \$17-bn project linking Europe, West Asia

*Syllabus: GS 2- International Relations.*

*Prelims: Iraq project linking Europe and West Asia.*

- In order to transform itself into a regional transportation hub, Iraq presented an ambitious plan of developing road and rail infrastructure linking Europe with the Middle East.
- It is a \$17-billion project and is called “Route of Development”. It would stretch 1200 km from the northern border with Turkey to the Gulf in the south.
- The project will serve as a pillar of a sustainable non-oil economy.
- The estimated time of project completion is 3-5 years.
- The development has begun at the commercial port of Al-Faw, where its capacity is being expanded.
- The project will also comprise the construction of nearly 15 train stations along the route including the cities of Basra, Baghdad, and Mosul.

## G. Tidbits

### 1. Telangana’s gongadi shawls refashioned into shoes

- The wool of Deccani sheep has been handcrafted for generations into an all-weather shawl called a Gongadi in Telangana.
- It is done by the Kuruma and Kuruba pastoral communities of the Deccan region.
- Gongadi is a resilient fabric.
- Three Ahmedabad-based entrepreneurs have repurposed the fabric into all-weather shoes for farmers.

### 2. Ukrainian drones attack Russian oil pipeline stations

- Ukraine launched a series of drone attacks on oil pipeline installations in Russia including the Druzhba oil pipeline.
  - Notably, the Druzhba oil pipeline sends Western Siberian crude to Europe.
  - It is one of the world's largest oil pipelines.
  - Druzhba has the potential to pump more than 2 million barrels per day.
- Several media reports highlight that the frequency of Ukrainian drone attacks inside Russia has increased.
- However, Ukraine has not acknowledged the launching of attacks.



- The Druzhbha pipeline has become severely under-utilized as Europe reduced its dependency on Russian energy after [Russia's invasion of Ukraine](#).

## H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

**Q1. With respect to The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, which of the following statements is/are correct? (Level- Moderate)**

1. A “child” means a person who has not completed eighteen years of age.
2. Under the 2006 Act, a person who is married before the minimum specified age may apply to annul the marriage. The petition must be filed within five years of attaining majority.

**Options:**

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both
- d. None

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

- Statement 1 is not correct: “Child” means a person if a male, has not completed twenty-one years of age, and if a female, has not completed eighteen years of age.
- Statement 2 is not correct: According to the 2006 Act, a person who marries before reaching the required minimum age may seek to have the marriage annulled, but it should, and for that, the petition must be filed within 2 years of attaining a majority, i.e., at the age of 20.

**Q2. Consider the following statements with respect to Hakki Pikki tribal community: (Level- Moderate)**

1. They are a semi-nomadic tribal group from Karnataka.
2. The society is matriarchal, where the groom gives dowry to the bride's family.
3. Hakki Pikki tribe have been making arduous journeys to the African continent to sell herbal products.

**How many of the above statements are correct?**

- a. Only one
- b. Only two
- c. All three
- d. None

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

- Statement 1 is correct: Hakki Pikki are a semi-nomadic tribal group from Karnataka.

- Statement 2 is correct: The society is matriarchal, where the groom gives dowry to the bride's family.
- Statement 3 is correct: Hakki Pikki tribe travel to African continents to sell herbal products.

**Q3. Consider the following Pairs: (Level- Difficult)**

**Exercise      Countries Involved**

1. Al-Mohed Al-Hind: India & Saudi Arabia
2. DUSTLIK: India & Uzbekistan
3. Ekatah: India & Maldives
4. Zair-Al-Bahr: India & UAE

**How many pairs given above are correctly matched?**

- a. Only one pair
- b. Only two pairs
- c. Only three pairs
- d. All four pairs

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

EXERCISE	COUNTRIES INVOLVED
Al-Mohed Al-Hind	India & Saudi Arabia
DUSTLIK	India & Uzbekistan
Ekatah	India & Maldives
Zair-Al-Bahr	India & Qatar

**Q4. Which of the following statements with respect to Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT), is/are correct? (Level- Moderate)**

1. Belgium-headquartered SWIFT is a messaging network used by banks and financial institutions globally for quick and faultless exchange of information pertaining to financial transactions.
2. Each participant on the platform is assigned a unique eight-digit SWIFT code or a bank identification code (BIC).
3. It holds securities and money.

**Options:**

- a. 2 only
- b. 1 and 3 only
- c. 1 and 2 only
- d. None

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

Statement 1 is correct: SWIFT is the global messaging software and is headquartered in Brussels, Belgium. It is a global member-owned cooperative.

Statement 2 is correct: Each participant on the platform is assigned a unique eight-digit SWIFT code or a bank identification code (BIC).

Statement 3 is not correct: It does not hold securities and money. It allows financial entities to send and receive messages about financial transactions in a secure, standardized, and reliable environment.

**Q5. Which of the following provided a common factor for tribal insurrection in India in the 19th century? (Level- Easy)**

- a. Introduction of a new system of land revenue and taxation- of tribal products
- b. Influence of foreign religious missionaries in tribal areas
- c. Rise of a large number of money lenders, traders and revenue farmers as middlemen in tribal areas
- d. The complete disruption of the old agrarian order of the tribal communities

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:** The major factor for tribal insurrection in India was the complete disruption of the old agrarian order of the tribal communities.

## I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Iron fortification in excess can lead to dangerous consequences. Discuss. (15 marks, 250 words) [GS-3, S&T]
2. Examine the role and significance of the National Health Family Survey (NHFS) in healthcare planning. (15 marks, 250 words) [GS-2, Governance]