

UPSC Daily Current Affairs 13 May 2021

1. Bangladesh rebuffs China on Quad warning

(Topic- GS Paper II–International Relation, Source- The Hindu)

Why in the news?

- Bangladesh’s government has asked foreign envoys in Dhaka “to maintain decency and decorum” after public remarks from China’s Ambassador to the country provoked a sharp response.
- The strongly-worded statement from the Foreign Ministry followed remarks by China’s envoy in Dhaka, Li Jiming, who warned Bangladesh to not consider joining the Quad grouping and said doing so would “damage” relations.

No plans to expand

- While the informal India-Australia-United States-Japan framework has no plans as yet to expand, China’s remarks were seen as an advance warning and followed similar recent comments by China’s Defence Minister who on visits to Colombo and Dhaka last month urged countries in **South Asia to not join any military alliances**.
- Some Chinese officials have described the Quad as an “Asian NATO” and as a military alliance, a label that its members have rejected.

Chinese and Bangladesh Relation

- Recently, Bangladesh and China have been deepening cooperation, including on COVID-19. China invited Bangladesh, along with Afghanistan, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, to a Foreign Minister-level virtual dialogue last month.
- The fourth such meeting organised with South Asian countries to discuss COVID-19 cooperation, and offered Chinese vaccines and a plan to set up an emergency reserve for supplies for South Asian countries.

About Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad)

- It is the informal strategic dialogue between **India, USA, Japan and Australia** with a shared objective to ensure and support a “free, open and prosperous” Indo-Pacific region.
- The Ministers met also discuss collective efforts in our shared commitments and close cooperation on counter terrorism, mentoring, assistance in disaster relief, airtime security, cooperation, development, finance and cyber security efforts.
- The idea of Quad was first mooted by **Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007**.
- However, the idea couldn’t move ahead with Australia pulling out of it, apparently due to Chinese pressure.
- In December 2012, **Shinzo Abe again floated the concept of Asia’s “Democratic Security Diamond”** involving Australia, India, Japan and the US to safeguard the maritime commons from the Indian Ocean to the western Pacific.

- In November 2017, India, the US, Australia and Japan gave shape to the long-pending "Quad" Coalition to develop a new strategy to keep the critical sea routes in the Indo-Pacific free of any influence (especially China).
- **Quad is criticised by China as Asian version of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).**

2. Article 311

(Topic- GS Paper II–Polity, Source- The Hindu)

Why in the news?

- Recently, suspended police officer Sachin Waze, arrested by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in connection with the Mukesh Ambani terror scare case, was dismissed from service by Mumbai Police Commissioner under Article 311 (2) (b) without a departmental enquiry.

About the Article 311

- The procedure laid down in Article 311 is intended to assure, first, a measure of security of tenure to Government servants, who are covered by the Article and secondly to provide certain safeguards against arbitrary dismissal or removal of a Government servant or reduction to a lower rank.
- These provisions are enforceable in a court of law.
- Article 311 says that no government employee either of an all-India service or a state government shall be dismissed or removed by an authority subordinate to the own that appointed him/her.

Exceptions article where a person can be dismissed without departmental enquiry (DE)

- As per Article 311 subclause 2 provision a, if a government employee is convicted in a criminal case, he can be dismissed without DE.
- Apart from this, under 311 (2) (c), a government employee can be dismissed when the President or the Governor, as the case may be, is satisfied that in the interest of the security of state it is not expedient to hold such an enquiry, the employee can be dismissed without DE.

3. Child marriages may go unnoticed amid lockdown

(Topic- GS Paper II–Social Issue, Source- The Hindu)

Why in the news?

- Recently, the child rights activists have observed that during the lockdown the cases of Child marriage being alarmed to see a slew of child marriages being reported in Karnataka.

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Number may go up

- A total of 2,180 child marriage cases were reported in Karnataka as per reports of Childline (1098) from April 2020 to January 2021.
- In December last year, of the 1,598 complaints, 365 were related to this category.
- The other complaints ranged from illegal adoptions, child trafficking and child labour to the need for medical help or shelter.
- The number of complaints eased when lockdown restrictions were relaxed, but were still worrying.
- With another lockdown in place and marriages being allowed in homes, the number of cases might go up.

Related Information

Government Initiatives to Prevent Child Marriages

- The Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929 restricts the practice of child marriage.
- The Special Marriage Act, 1954 and the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 prescribe 18 and 21 years as the minimum age of consent for marriage for women and men respectively.
- The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 was enacted to address and fix the shortcomings of the Child Marriage Restraint Act.

About Jaya Jaitely Committee

- It had been proposed in Budget 2020-21.
- The committee has been set up under **Jaya Jaitely Committee** to examine matters pertaining to age of motherhood, imperatives of lowering Maternal Mortality Ratio and the improvement of nutritional levels among women.

Sustainable Development Goals

- Prevention of Child Marriage is a part of SDG 5 which deals with gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls.

4. Human parainfluenza viruses

(Topic- GS Paper III–Science and Technology, Source- The Hindu)

Why in the news?

- Recently researchers have improved a method in rodent models intended to help keep children healthy by engineering a short chunk of protein, or peptide that can prevent the attachment of human parainfluenza viruses to cells.

About the Human parainfluenza viruses

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- Human parainfluenza viruses, or HPIVs, are the leading cause of childhood respiratory infections, responsible for 30% to 40% of illnesses like croup and pneumonia.
- The viruses also affect the elderly and people with compromised immune systems.

Symptoms

- Human parainfluenza viruses (HPIVs) commonly cause upper and lower respiratory illnesses in infants, young children, older adults, and people with weakened immune systems, but anyone can get infected.

Transmission

Human parainfluenza viruses (HPIVs) usually spread from an infected person to others through

- a. the air by coughing and sneezing
- b. close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands
- c. touching objects or surfaces that have HPIVs on them then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes.

Different Types of HPIVs

- HPIV-1 and HPIV-2 both cause croup, with HPIV-1 most often identified as the cause in children. Both can also cause upper and lower respiratory illness, and cold-like symptoms.
- HPIV-3 is more often associated with bronchiolitis, bronchitis, and pneumonia.
- HPIV-4 is recognized less often but may cause mild to severe respiratory illnesses.

Note:

- HPIV-3 is the most prevalent among these viruses.
- There are currently no approved vaccines or antivirals for HPIV3 infection in people.

5. Green Urja Award

(Topic- GS Paper III–Environment, Source- PIB)

Why in the news ?

- Recently, the Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd. IREDA has been conferred with “Green Urja Award” for being the Leading Public Institution in Financing Institution for Renewable Energy this year by Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC).
- IREDA gets the award for the pivotal and developmental role it plays in Green Energy Financing.

About Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency

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- It is the only dedicated institution for financing Renewable Energy (RE) & Energy Efficiency (EE) projects in India.
- IREDA under the administrative control of Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE).
- IREDA has over the years sanctioned loans aggregating to Rs. 96,601 crores, disbursed Rs. 63,492 cores and supported more than 17,586 MW of RE capacities in the country till date.

6. Digital Foreign inward remittance advice

(Topic- GS Paper III–Economics, Source- TOI)

Why in the news?

- Digital payments provider PayPal has recently introduced an automated process to obtain monthly foreign inward remittance advice (FIRA), allowing Indian merchants to download their monthly digital FIRA issued by banks.

Benefits

- The automated process will not require sellers to place manual and individual requests, thereby reducing the time taken to file the paperwork.
- The initiatives at zero cost are aimed to empower Indian MSME exporters to seamlessly grow their business internationally.
- PayPal's monthly digital FIRA solution will allow merchants to download the FIRA from their PayPal account.
- The sellers will be notified via an email once the FIRA is made available.
- The simplified process also enables Indian sellers to apply for bill closure and get tax benefits at a much faster rate.

Related Information

- Previously, Indian sellers and freelancers had to send a manual request to PayPal's partner bank and also pay a fee for the service.
- The bank would then issue FIRA as a physical statement which could take up to 10 days and required the seller to visit the bank to collect the same.

7. Israel's Iron Dome air defence system

(Topic- GS Paper III–Defene, Source- Indian Express)


Why in the news?

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- Recently, in the conflict between Israel and Palestine, both sides have taken to air strikes and rocket attacks which is being intercepted by the Israeli Iron Dome air defence system.
- It appeared that the rockets were hitting an invisible shield.

What is the Iron Dome?

INTERCEPTORS vs ROCKETS




■ Streaks of light show in Ashkelon as the Iron Dome intercepts rockets launched from the Gaza towards Israel on Wednesday. Reuters

In videos on social media, rockets from Gaza can be seen intercepted by Israel's Iron Dome system in Tel Aviv. When an interceptor's sensor detects an incoming rocket, it detonates its own rocket, sending out fragments. If the timing is right, fragments will hit the rocket's warhead, detonating it. How the interceptor approaches the rocket is critical; here, we look at three different approaches.

SIDE APPROACH


Targeting the rocket from the side increases the chance of a miss but the interceptor's blast can still, on occasion, hit the rocket's warhead.



Source: Theodor A Postal via The New York Times


FRONT APPROACH

The most effective tactic. The interceptor's warhead is in the best position to have its fragments strike the rocket's warhead and blow it up.



REAR APPROACH

Chasing the rocket from behind means the metal fragments usually fly before the interceptor can get near the rocket's warhead.



- It is a short-range, ground-to-air, air defence system that includes a radar and Tamir interceptor missiles that track and neutralise any rockets or missiles aimed at Israeli targets.
- It is used for countering rockets, artillery & mortars (C-RAM) as well as aircraft, helicopters and unmanned aerial vehicles.
- It was developed with Israel Aerospace Industries.

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Background

- The genesis of the Iron Dome goes back to the 2006 Israeli-Lebanon war, when the Hezbollah fired thousands of rockets into Israel.
- The following year, Israel announced that its state-run Rafael Advance Systems would come up with a new air defence system to protect its cities and people.
- The Iron Dome was deployed in 2011.

How does it work, and what makes it so effective?

- The Iron Dome has three main systems that work together to provide a shield over the area where it is deployed, handling multiple threats.
- It has detection and tracking radar to spot any incoming threats, a battle management and weapon control system (BMC), and a missile firing unit.
- The BMC basically liaises between the radar and the interceptor missile.
- It is capable of being used in all weather conditions, including during the day and night.

Related Information

India Defence

- India also is in the process of buying **S-400 air defence systems from Russia** for over \$5 billion which also caters to the three threats (rockets, missiles and cruise missiles).
- S400 has to cater to shooting down missiles, aircraft in some 300 to 400 km range.
- India has also have **Akash short-range surface-to-air missiles**, and Russian systems including **Pechora**.
- India is also buying two National Advanced Surface to Air Missile System-II from the US to protect Delhi.

8. Inflation eases to 4.29%; base lifts IIP

(Topic- GS Paper III–Economics, Source- The Hindu)

Why in the news?

- India's retail inflation, measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), eased to 4.29 per cent in the month of April on decline in food prices.

More on the news

- India's retail inflation slowed to a three-month low of 4.29% in April, from 5.52% in March, helped by softer food prices as well as a base effect.
- Separately, industrial output surged by 22.4% in March, lifted by the statistical impact of the year-earlier period's Index of Industrial Production (IIP) being significantly lower on account of the national lockdown to contain COVID-19 imposed that month, data from the National Statistical Office showed.

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- According to a Reuters poll, Consumer price inflation was predicted to cool to 4.2 per cent in April, just above the RBI's 4 per cent mid-point target and down from March's four-month high of 5.52%,.

About Index of Industrial Production

- The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) is an index that shows the growth rates in different industry groups of the economy in a fixed period of time.
- It is compiled and published monthly by the National Statistical Office (NSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.
- **The Base Year for IIP calculation is 2011-2012.**
- It is a composite indicator that measures the growth rate of industry groups.
- The eight core sector industries represent about 40% of the weight of items that are included in the IIP.
- The eight core industries in decreasing order of their weightage: Refinery Products (28.04 %)> Electricity (19.85 %)> Steel (17.92 %) > Coal (10.33 %)> Crude Oil (8.98 %)> Natural Gas (6.88 %)> Cement (5.37 %)> Fertilizers (2.63 %).

Significance

- It is the measure on the physical volume of production.
- It is used by government agencies including the Ministry of Finance, the Reserve Bank of India, etc, for policy-making purposes.
- It remains extremely relevant for the calculation of the quarterly and advance Gross Domestic Product (GDP) estimates.