

UPSC Daily Current Affairs 1 Jun 2021

1. US and EU relations in light of recent spy case by US using Danish Agencies

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

Why in the news?

- According to the Danish and European media report, the U.S. spied on top politicians in Europe, including German Chancellor Angela Merkel, from 2012 to 2014 with the help of Danish intelligence.

More on the news

- Danish public broadcaster Danmarks Radio (DR) said the U.S. National Security Agency (NSA) had eavesdropped on Danish Internet cables to spy on top politicians and high-ranking officials in Germany, Sweden, Norway and France.
- The NSA had taken advantage of surveillance collaboration with Denmark's military intelligence unit FE to do so.

Leaders under observation

- German Chancellor Angela Merkel, then-Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier and then-Opposition leader Peer Steinbrück were among those the NSA had spied.
- The NSA was able to access SMS text messages, telephone calls, and Internet traffic, including searches, chats and messaging services.

Snowden affair

- The U.S. spying, if confirmed, was going on during and after the 2013 Snowden affair, which erupted when former NSA contractor Edward Snowden revealed thousands of classified documents exposing the vast U.S. surveillance put in place after the September 11, 2001 attacks.
- Among other things, that documents showed the U.S. government was spying on its own citizens and carrying out widespread tapping worldwide, including of Chancellor Angela Merkel's mobile phone.
- **In November 2020**, Danmarks Radio reported that the U.S. had used the Danish cables to spy on Danish and European defence industries from 2012 to 2015.

2. Justice Mishra likely to head NHRC

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

Why in the news ?

- Former Supreme Court Justice Arun Kumar Mishra is likely to be the new Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).

Gradeup UPSC Exams Super Subscription (UPSC CSE & UPSC EPFO)	Access to All Structured Courses & Test Series	ENROL NOW
--	--	------------------

About National Human Rights Commission

- It is a statutory body which was established in 1993 under a legislation enacted by the Parliament, as per provisions of Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993, later amended in 2006.
- The commission is the watchdog of human rights in the country, that is, the rights relating to life, liberty, equality and dignity of the individual guaranteed by the Constitution or embodied in the international covenants and enforceable by courts in India.
- It was established in conformity with the Paris Principles, adopted for the promotion and protection of human rights in Paris (October, 1991) and endorsed by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 20 December, 1993.

Appointment

The chairperson and members are appointed by the president on the recommendations of a six-member committee consisting of

- a. the prime minister as its head,
- b. the Speaker of the Lok Sabha,
- c. the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha,
- d. leaders of the Opposition in both the Houses of Parliament
- e. The Central home minister.

Further, a sitting judge of the Supreme Court or a sitting chief justice of a high court can be appointed only after consultation with the chief justice of India.

Tenure

- The chairperson and members hold office for a term of three years or until they attain the age of 70 years, whichever is earlier.
- They are eligible for re-appointment.
- After their tenure, the chairperson and members are not eligible for further employment under the Central or a state government.
- The president can remove the chairperson or any member from the office under the following circumstances:
 - If he is adjudged an insolvent; or
 - If he engages, during his term of office, in any paid employment outside the duties of his office; or
 - If he is unfit to continue in office by reason of infirmity of mind or body; or
 - If he is of unsound mind and stand so declared by a competent court; or
 - If he is convicted and sentenced to imprisonment for an offence.

Note:

- Human Rights Day is observed **every year on 10 December**, which is the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

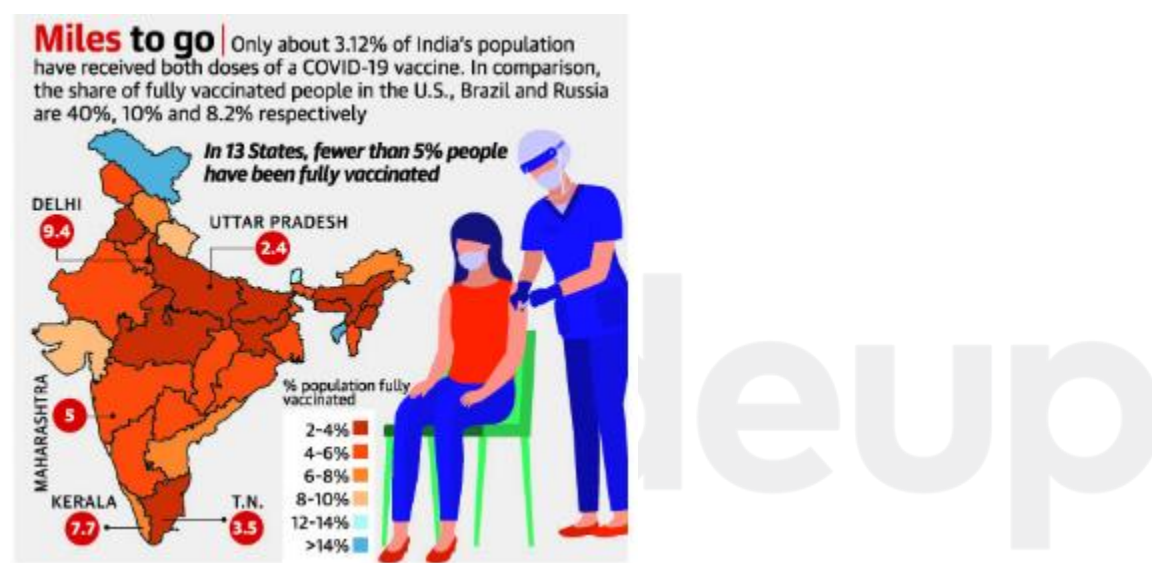
<p>Gradeup UPSC Exams Super Subscription (UPSC CSE & UPSC EPFO)</p>	<p>Access to All Structured Courses & Test Series</p>	<p>ENROL NOW</p>
---	---	-------------------------

3. SC bats for ‘one price for vaccines across nation’

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

Why in the news?

- Recently, the government claimed it will inoculate the “entire eligible population” by 2021-end, only to be barraged with questions from the Supreme Court about the efficacy of its policy, which allows the Centre to procure just 50% of the vaccines while leaving the States to buy their own.
- The court also challenged the differential vaccine pricing policy, saying “there needs to be one price for vaccines across the nation”.



Supreme Court observations

- The court highlighted the difference in vaccine prices between the Centre and the States.
- When the Centre can purchase vaccine in bulk for ₹150 per dose, the States have to pay ₹300 to ₹600.

How does the government regulate the pricing of drugs?

- To ensure accessibility, the pricing of essential drugs is regulated centrally through The Essential Commodities Act, 1955.
- Under Section 3 of the Act, the government has enacted the Drugs (Prices Control) Order.
- The DPCO lists over 800 drugs as “essential” in its schedule, and has capped their prices.
- The capping of prices is done based on a formula that is worked out in each case by the National **Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA)**.

4. China three- child Policy

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

Gradeup UPSC Exams
Super Subscription
(UPSC CSE & UPSC EPFO)

Access to All
Structured Courses
& Test Series

ENROL NOW

Why in the news?

- Recently, China will for the first time allow couples to have a third child in a further relaxation of family planning rules five years after a “two-child policy” largely failed to boost birth rates.
- It is major policy measures to actively address the ageing of population during the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-2025)”.

Background

- China’s one-child policy, which had been enforced by then-leader Deng Xiaoping in 1980, had remained in place until 2016, when fears of a rapidly ageing population undermining economic growth forced the ruling Communist Party to allow two children per married couple.
- While the relaxation did result in some improvement in the proportion of young people in the country, the policy change was deemed insufficient in averting an impending demographic crisis.

Census of China

- According to the National Bureau of Statistics said that 12 million babies were born last year, the lowest number since 1961.
- The census said China’s population was 1.41 billion in 2020, an increase of 72 million since the last census in 2010, reflecting a 5.38% growth in this period and a 0.53% annual growth.
- Forecasts say the population could peak in the next couple of years and most likely by 2025, when India will become the world’s most populous country.

Declining China Workforce

- China’s workforce in the 15-59 age bracket peaked at 925 million in 2011, according to the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security.
- That number was down to 894 million in this census and would drop to 700 million by 2050.
- The census recorded 264 million in the age group of 60 and over, up 5.44% since 2010 and accounting for 18.70% of the population.
- Those in the 15-59 age groups were 894 million persons, down by 6.79% since 2010 and accounting for 63.35% of the population.

India and two Child Policy

Constitutional Provision

- Entry 20-A in List III (Concurrent List) of the 7th Schedule deals with population control and family planning which was added through the 42nd Constitutional Amendment 1976.
- The National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution, headed by **M.N. Venkatachaliah had also recommended in 2002, that Article 47A to be inserted into the Constitution to control population explosion.**

<p>Gradeup UPSC Exams Super Subscription (UPSC CSE & UPSC EPFO)</p>	<p>Access to All Structured Courses & Test Series</p>	<p>ENROL NOW</p>
---	---	-------------------------

Current Status

- Presently, six states including Haryana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh have made the two-child norm mandatory for all panchayat members.
- In 2018, 412 panchayat members in Rajasthan had been removed from their posts because they failed to comply with the two-child norm.
- The Supreme Court has upheld the provision in several states that debars members with more than two children from contesting and holding panchayat posts.

Scenario of other state

Assam

- Assam Cabinet has decided that those with more than two children will be ineligible for government jobs from 2021.

Rajasthan

- For government jobs, candidates who have more than two children are not eligible for appointment.
- The Rajasthan Panchayati Raj Act 1994 says that if a person has more than two children, he will be disqualified from contesting election as a panch or a member.
- However, the previous government relaxed the two-child norm in case of a disabled child.

Madhya Pradesh

- The state follows the two-child norm since 2001.
- Under Madhya Pradesh Civil Services (General Condition of Services) Rules, if the third child was born on or after January 26, 2001, one becomes ineligible for government service.
- The rule also applies to higher judicial services.

Need for Two-Child Policy Norm

- India's population has already crossed 125 crores and India is expected to surpass the world's most populous nation-China in the next couple of decades.
- Despite having the National Population Control Policy (2000), India is the second-most populous country in the world.
- Thus, India's natural resources are extremely over-burdened and facing over-exploitation.

Criticism of the Two-Child Policy

- The restricted child policy will create a shortage of educated young people needed to carry on India's technological revolution.
- The problems like gender imbalance, undocumented children, etc. faced by China (as a result of the one-child policy) might be experienced by India.
- India's birthrate is slowing down to sustainable levels.

<p>Gradeup UPSC Exams Super Subscription (UPSC CSE & UPSC EPFO)</p>	<p>Access to All Structured Courses & Test Series</p>	<p>ENROL NOW</p>
---	---	-------------------------

- In 2000, the fertility rate was still relatively high at 3.2 children per woman.
- By 2016, that number had already fallen to 2.3 children.-

5. Sedition Law

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

Why in the news ?

- Recently, the Supreme Court said “it is time to define the limits of sedition” even as it protected two Telugu channels from any coercive action by the Andhra Pradesh government for their reportage of the COVID-19 pandemic in the State.

SC’s observations

- A three-judge Bench flagged indiscriminate use of the sedition law against critics, journalists, social media users, activists and citizens for airing grievances about the governments’ COVID-19 management, or even for seeking help to gain medical access, equipment, drugs and oxygen cylinders.
- The ambit and parameters of the **provisions of Sections 124A (sedition), 153A and 505** of the Indian Penal Code 1860 would require interpretation, particularly in the context of the right of the electronic and print media to communicate news, information and the rights, even those that may be critical of the prevailing regime in any part of the nation.

About Sedition law

- It is a crime under Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).
- It defines sedition as an offence committed when "any person by words, either spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representation, or otherwise, brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards the government established by law in India".
- Disaffection includes disloyalty and all feelings of enmity. However, comments without exciting or attempting to excite hatred, contempt or disaffection, will not constitute an offence under this section.

Punishment for the Offence of Sedition

- Sedition is a non-bailable offence. Punishment under the Section 124A ranges from imprisonment up to three years to a life term, to which fine may be added.
- A person charged under this law is barred from a government job.
- They have to live without their passport and must produce themselves in the court at all times as and when required.

Supreme Court rule in the case (Kedar Nath case)

<p>Gradeup UPSC Exams Super Subscription (UPSC CSE & UPSC EPFO)</p>	<p>Access to All Structured Courses & Test Series</p>	<p>ENROL NOW</p>
---	---	-------------------------

- In this case the court examined whether the constitutionality of Section 124A could be protected as a reasonable restriction on the right to free speech, with particular reference to the security of the state and public order.
- Supreme Court ruled in the Kedar Nath case that any act that had the “effect of subverting the Government” by violent means or create public disorder would come within the definition of sedition.
- The court ruled that disapproval of the measures of government with a view to their improvement or alteration by lawful means is not sedition.
- It held that “comments, however strongly worded, expressing disapprobation of actions of the Government, without exciting those feelings which generate the inclination to cause public disorder by acts of violence” would not attract the penal offence.

Note:

- **Tilak** was sentenced to six years in jail after he was held guilty of sedition by the Privy Council for writing a piece in his newspaper, Kesari, under the heading “**The misfortune of the country**”.

6. AmbiTAG

(Topic- GS Paper III –Science and Technology, Source- DD News)

Why in the news?

- Recently, Indian Institute of Technology, Ropar (IIT Ropar) in Punjab has developed a first-of-its-kind IoT device – AmbiTag that records real-time ambient temperature during the transportation of perishable products, vaccines and even body organs and blood.

About AmbiTAG



**Gradeup UPSC Exams
Super Subscription**
(UPSC CSE & UPSC EPFO)

Access to All
Structured Courses
& Test Series

ENROL NOW

- AmbiTag continuously records the temperature of its immediate surroundings “from -40 to +80 degrees in any time zone for a full 90 days on a single charge.
- The device has been developed under Technology Innovation Hub – AWaDH (Agriculture and Water Technology Development Hub) and its Startup ScratchNest.
- The recorded data can be retrieved by connecting the USB with any computer.

Shape

- It shaped as USB device.

Benefits

- The recorded temperature further helps to know whether that particular item transported from anywhere in the world is still usable or perished because of temperature variation.
- This information is particularly critical for vaccines including Covid-19 vaccine, organs and blood transportation.
- Besides perishable items including vegetables, meat and dairy products it can also monitor the temperature of animal semen during transit.

7. Horticulture Cluster Development Programme

(Topic- GS Paper III – Agriculture, Source- DD News)

Why in the news?

- Union Agriculture Minister has recently launched Horticulture Cluster Development Programme.

About Horticulture Cluster Development Programme

- It is a central sector programme.
- It has been implemented by the National Horticulture Board (NHB) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.

Aims

- **Cluster Development Programme** aims at growing and developing identified horticulture clusters to make them globally competitive.

Key highlights

- The programme will address all major issues related to the Indian horticulture sector including pre-production, production, post-harvest management, logistics, marketing and branding.
- The programme is designed to leverage geographical specialisation and promote integrated and market-led development of horticulture clusters.

<p>Gradeup UPSC Exams Super Subscription (UPSC CSE & UPSC EPFO)</p>	<p>Access to All Structured Courses & Test Series</p>	<p>ENROL NOW</p>
--	---	-------------------------

- Based on the learnings from the pilot project, the programme will be scaled up to cover all the identified clusters.

8. Business Confidence Survey

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

Why in the news?

- Recently, a survey by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) shows that the worsening conditions and muted near-term expectations due to the second wave of COVID-19 have led to a “sharp deterioration” in overall business confidence among companies.
- The overall Business Confidence Index’ nosedived to 51.5 after reporting a decadal high value of 74.2 in the previous round of the survey released in March 2021.

About Business Confidence Index’

- It has been developed by the Delhi-based economic think tank National Council of Applied Economic Research.
- Its findings are based on responses from 500 firms.

Key Highlights of the Business Confidence Survey

- The ‘Overall Business Confidence Index’ nosedived to 51.5 after reporting a decadal high value of 74.2 in the previous round of the survey released in March 2021.
- About 70% participants reported weak demand conditions as a bothering factor in the current survey compared with 56% in the previous round.
- The corresponding number last year was 77%.
- “With household income being severely impacted and past savings already drawn down during the first wave of infections, demand conditions are expected to remain weak for longer this time around.”

Job Lost

- It added that since a much larger proportion of the population has been impacted in the current wave, there had been permanent impairment to income for many households which had faced job losses or had lost bread winners to COVID-19.

Government initiative

- The fiscal stimulus under Aatmanirbhar 2.0 and 3.0 schemes of the government will likely accelerate public investment, although private investment remains sluggish amidst still low capacity utilization.
- The Union Budget 2021-22, with its thrust on sectors such as health and well-being, infrastructure, innovation and research, among others, should help accelerate the growth momentum.

<p>Gradeup UPSC Exams Super Subscription (UPSC CSE & UPSC EPFO)</p>	<p>Access to All Structured Courses & Test Series</p>	<p>ENROL NOW</p>
---	---	-------------------------

- The central bank has projected the real GDP growth at 10.5 per cent in 2021-22.

About National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER)

- NCAER is a New Delhi based non-profit economic think tank.
- The NCAER do research in the field of economics. It was established in the year 1956.

gradeup

**Gradeup UPSC Exams
Super Subscription**
(UPSC CSE & UPSC EPFO)

Access to All
Structured Courses
& Test Series

ENROL NOW