

# UPSC Daily Current Affairs 22 Jun 2021

## 1. Juneteenth : the new federal holiday

(Topic- GS Paper I –World History Source- The Hindu)

### Why in the news?

- Recently, US President Joe Biden is soon expected to sign a law making June 19, or “Juneteenth”, a national holiday recognised by the federal government, commemorating the end of slavery after the American Civil War (1861-65).

### More on the news

- Juneteenth will be the first new federal holiday created in almost four decades, and will now enjoy the same status as the 10 existing annual holidays, which include Memorial Day, Veterans Day and Thanksgiving.
- **The last such holiday – Martin Luther King Jr. Day – was created in 1983, in honour of the civil rights hero.**

### About Juneteenth

- Juneteenth– the portmanteau of June and nineteenth– is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the US, observed on June 19 every year.
- At present, it is recognised as a holiday in 47 US states and the District of Columbia.
- It is also known as Emancipation Day or Juneteenth Independence Day.

### Background

- On January 1, 1863, then-president Abraham Lincoln issued **the Emancipation Proclamation**, which declared that “all persons held as slaves” within the states in rebellion “are, and henceforward shall be free.”
- Even so, more than two years after Lincoln’s proclamation, many slave owners continued to hold their slaves captive by hiding this information from them and keeping them for one more harvest season, as per the Congressional Research Service (CRS).

### Significance of Juneteenth

- On June 19, 1865, Major General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston and announced the end of both the Civil War and slavery.
- Since then, Juneteenth has become a largely symbolic date representing freedom for African Americans.

## 2. Myanmar's Suu Kyi thanks supporters for flower protests

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

### Why in the news?

- Recently, deposed Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi has thanked her supporters for defying the junta to celebrate her 76th birthday with flower protests, as her trial on a raft of criminal charges resumed.

### More on the news



- Protesters across the country have donned flowers in their hair — long a signature Suu Kyi look — to mark the birthday of the democracy icon, who turned 76 under junta house arrest.
- Many replicated the floral hairstyle and uploaded pictures onto social media.

### Background

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- Mass protests have been taking place across Myanmar since the military seized control on 1 February 2021.
- The Myanmar military has grabbed power in a coup - the third time in the nation's history since its independence from British rule in 1948.

### About the Military Coup

- In the November 2020 parliamentary election, Suu Kyi's party National League for Democracy (NLD) secured the majority of the seats.
- In the Myanmar's Parliament, the military holds 25% of the total seats according to the 2008 military-drafted constitution and several key ministerial positions are also reserved for military appointees.
- When the newly elected Myanmar lawmakers were to hold the first session of Parliament in 2021, the military imposed a state of emergency for one year citing massive voting fraud in the parliamentary elections.

### Who is in charge now?

- Military commander-in-chief **Min Aung Hlaing** has taken power.
- He has long wielded significant political influence, successfully maintaining the power of the Tatmadaw - Myanmar's military - even as the country moved towards democracy.
- He has received international condemnation and sanctions for his alleged role in the military's attacks on ethnic minorities.

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- In his first public comments after the coup, Gen Hlaing sought to justify the takeover.
- He said the military was on the side of the people and would form a "true and disciplined democracy".
- The military says it will hold a "free and fair" election once the state of emergency is over.

### How have people reacted?

- The protests over the coup have been the largest since the so-called Saffron Revolution in 2007, when thousands of monks rose up against the military regime.
- Protesters include teachers, lawyers, students, bank officers and government workers.
- The military has imposed restrictions, including curfews and limits to gatherings.

### Who is Aung San Suu Kyi?

- Aung San Suu Kyi became world-famous in the 1990s for campaigning to restore democracy.
- She spent nearly 15 years in detention between 1989 and 2010, after organising rallies calling for democratic reform and free elections.
- She was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991 while under house arrest.
- In 2015, she led the NLD to victory in Myanmar's first openly contested election in 25 years.

### 3. Raisi for nuclear talks, rules out Biden meet

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

#### Why in the news?

- Iran's President-elect Ebrahim Raisi has recently said that he will not allow nuclear negotiations (JCPOA) for the sake of negotiations.

#### More on the news

- Mr. Raisi also ruled out meeting U.S. President Joe Biden but said there were "no obstacles" to resuming diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia, the Sunni-ruled regional rival of Shiite Iran, which have been severed for five years.

#### Vienna talks

- In Vienna, Mr. Biden has signalled his readiness to return to the deal and state parties — also including Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia — have lately been negotiating its revival in Vienna.

#### Iran nuclear deal

#### Background

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- Iran has completely withdrawn from JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) nuclear deal. The announcement came after the US troops killed **General Qassem Soleimani**.

### About the Iran nuclear deal

- The Iran nuclear deal (or the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)) was signed between Iran and the P5, plus Germany and the EU in 2015.
- The P5 is the 5 permanent members of the UNSC (US, China, France, Russia, and UK).]
- The deal aimed at curbing Iran's nuclear programme.

### Under the deal:

- most of Iran's enriched uranium was shipped out of the country
- a heavy water facility was rendered inoperable
- operational nuclear facilities were brought under international inspection
- In return, the deal involved lifting of international sanctions on Iran.

### Why has US pulled out of the deal?

- Trump and opponents to the deal say it is flawed because it gives Iran access to billions of dollars but does not address Iran's support for groups the U.S. considers terrorists, like Hamas and Hezbollah.
- They note it also doesn't curb Iran's development of ballistic missiles and that the deal phases out by 2030.
- They said Iran has lied about its nuclear program in the past.

## 4. Ajit Mishra Committee

(Topic- GS Paper II –Governance, Source- PIB)

### Why in the news?

- Recently, Government has come to the notice that certain section of the Press and some of the stakeholders have opined that three years time provided for the Committee on fixation of Minimum Wages and National Floor Wages is an attempt to delay the process.

### About the Ajit Mishra Committee

- The Central Government has constituted an Expert Group under the Chairmanship of Professor Ajit Mishra.
- The Committee is formed to provide technical inputs and recommendations on fixation of Minimum Wages and National Floor Wages to the Government.

### Tenure

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- **The tenure of the Expert Group is three years.**

#### Why the tenure would be three years?

- The government said that tenure of the Expert Group has been kept as three years so that even after the fixation of Minimum Wages and National Floor Wages, Government may seek technical inputs/advice from the Expert Group on subjects related to Minimum Wages and National Floor Wages, as and when required.

### 5. A case to decriminalise suicide

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

#### Why in the news?

- According to the World Health Organization, India has the highest suicide rate in the Southeast Asian region.

#### Reasons for Suicide

- Depression, chronic ill health, guilt, trauma, substance abuse, failure in exams, and loss of loved ones are some of the reasons which influence a person's decision to take his or her life.
- According to the National Crime Records Bureau, a total of 1, 34,516 cases of suicide were reported in 2018 in India.
- While the rate of suicide was 9.9 in 2017, it increased to 10.2 in 2018.

#### Crime and punishment

##### About Section 309

- The section 309 of the Indian Penal Code dictates the penal provision for attempting suicide.
- If a person is suffering from any mental trauma or illness, he or she should be given reformatory treatment rather than a deterrent punishment which is “simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year [or with fine, or with both]”.
- It is a colonial legal section which infact not decriminalized in India but the British Parliament decriminalised attempts to suicide in **1961 through the Suicide Act.**

#### Judgment in favour of Penal Provision of Suicide

- Those who favour the penal provision generally quote the judgment in **Gian Kaur V. State of Punjab** (1996) where the court held that the “right to life is a natural right embodied in Article 21” of the Constitution but “suicide is an unnatural termination or extinction of life and, therefore, incompatible and inconsistent with the concept of right to life”.

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- In **Aruna Ramchandra Shanbaug v. Union of India (2011)**, the Supreme Court endorsed the earlier judgment.

### Violation of Article 14 and 21

- In **Chenna Jagadeeswar v. State of Andhra Pradesh and P. Rathinam v. Union of India (1994)** where the court held that Section 309 of the Indian Penal Code is a violation of Articles 14 and 21 and is void and unconstitutional.

### Related Information

#### About Euthanasia

- It is also called mercy killing, act or practice of painlessly putting to death persons suffering from painful and incurable disease or incapacitating physical disorder or allowing them to die by withholding treatment or withdrawing artificial life-support measures.
- Because there is no specific provision for it in most legal systems, it is usually regarded as either suicide (if performed by the patient himself) or murder (if performed by another).
- **In Aruna Shanbaug v Union of India, the Indian Supreme Court made a clear distinction between 'active' and 'passive' euthanasia.**
  - **Passive euthanasia** means withdrawing life support to induce death in a natural way.
  - **The active euthanasia** means injecting legal drugs to induce death.

#### Note:

- The right to life has been seen as a basic feature of the Constitution, thereby making it both fundamental and permanent.

### 6. Integrated power development scheme

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

#### Why in the news?

- Recently as a part of the ‘Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav’, a 50 kWp Solar roof top was inaugurated in Solan, Himachal Pradesh under the Integrated power development scheme.

#### About Integrated Power Development Scheme

- It was launched on 3rd December 2014.
- It is a flagship scheme of the Ministry of Power.

#### Nodal Agency

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- Power Finance Corporation (PFC) is the Nodal Agency for operationalization and implementation of the scheme under the overall guidance of MoP.

### Components

- Strengthening of sub-transmission and distribution networks in the urban areas.
- Metering of distribution transformers / feeders / consumers in the urban areas.
- IT enablement of distribution sector and strengthening of distribution network under R-APDRP for 12th and 13th Plans by carrying forward the approved outlay for R-APDRP to IPDS.
- Schemes for Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and IT enablement of balance urban towns are also included under IPDS. Scope of IT enablement has been extended to all 4041 towns as per Census 2011.
- Underground cabling to include additional demand of States and smart metering solution for performing UDAY States and Solar panels on Govt. buildings with net-metering are also permissible under the scheme.

### Broad Objective of the Scheme

- 24x7 Power supplies for consumers.
- Reduction of AT&C losses as per trajectory finalized by MoP in consultation with States.
- Providing access to power to all households.

### Related Information

#### About 'Go Green' Initiative

- The project further reinforces the 'Go Green' Initiative of the government envisaged in Urban Distribution scheme of government of India.
- Under the ongoing 'Go Green' Initiative in form of Rooftop Solar, solar panels are also installed in Uttar Pradesh (10 MWp), Karnataka (8 MWp), Kerala (5 MWp), West Bengal (4 MWp), Uttarakhand (3 MWp) and Himachal Pradesh (1 MWp).

## 7. Indian Certification of Medical Devices (ICMED) 13485 plus Scheme

### (Topic- GS Paper III –Health, Source- AIR)

#### Why in the news?

- Recently, the Quality Council of India (QCI), and the Association of Indian Manufacturers of Medical Devices (AiMeD) have launched **Indian Certification of Medical Devices (ICMED) 13485 Plus Scheme**.

#### About Indian Certification of Medical Devices (ICMED) plus Scheme

- The ICMED 13485 PLUS, as the new scheme has been christened, will undertake verification of the quality, safety and efficacy of medical devices.

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- ICMED 13485 Plus has been designed to integrate the Quality Management System components and product related quality validation processes through witness testing of products with reference to the defined product standards and specifications.

### Significance

- This is the first scheme around the world in which quality management systems along with product certification standards are integrated with regulatory requirements.
- This scheme will be an end to end quality assurance scheme for the medical devices sector in India.
- This scheme provides the much-needed institutional mechanism for assuring the product quality and safety.
- This will also help in eliminating the circulation and use of sub-standard medical products or devices of doubtful origin that could prove to be serious health hazards.

### Background

#### About Indian Certification of Medical Devices scheme

- The scheme was launched for certification of medical devices in 2016 by the Association of Indian Medical Device Industry (AIMED) in collaboration with the Quality Council of India (QCI) and the National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB).

#### Objective

- To fill the regulatory vacuum in quality certification space for medical devices in the country.

#### The Scheme has been launched with two levels of certification:-

- a. ICMED 9000 certification which is ISO 9001 plus additional requirements
- b. ICMED 13485 which is ISO 13485 plus additional requirements

#### About Quality Council of India

- The Quality Council of India (QCI) set up in 1997.
- It is an autonomous body attached to the Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion, Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- The Chairman of QCI is appointed by the Prime Minister on recommendation of the industry to the government.

#### Accreditation boards of the QCI

- National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB) and National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL) are the two accreditation boards of the QCI.
- These two bodies work closely to support the Government and regulators to ensure that the data provided by accredited conformity assessment bodies is robust, reliable, trustworthy in terms of decision making, compliance testing and standards setting.

- Indian industry is represented in QCI by three premier industry associations namely Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM), Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI).

## **8. Power ministry extends timeline for transmission charges waiver for RE by 2 years**

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

### **Why in the news?**

- Recently, the Ministry of Power has issued an order for the extension of the waiver of Inter-State Transmission system (ISTS) charges on the transmission of electricity generated from solar and wind sources for projects to be commissioned up to 30th June 2025.
- Earlier, it was applicable till June 30, 2023.

### **Significance of the move**

- It will help to promote the development of solar, wind, Hydro Pumped Storage Plant and Battery Energy Storage System, trading of Renewable Energy in the power exchanges, and seamless transmission of Renewable Energy power across the states.
- This will promote the Hydro Pumped Storage Plant and Battery Energy Storage System projects for meeting the balancing requirement of the grid caused due to large scale integration of Renewables in the Electricity Grid i.e. around 450 GW by 2030.
- The waiver of transmission charges has also been allowed for the trading of electricity generated/ supplied from Solar, Wind, PSP, and BESS in Green Term Ahead Market (GTAM) and Green Day Ahead Market (GDAM) for two years i.e. till 30th June 2023.
- The buyers of renewable energy will also have an opportunity to sell their surplus power in the power exchanges or allow in advance the sellers to sell in the power exchange.
- This amendment Order will be a boost to renewable energy and also a step forward to achieve the targets of the Government of India in meeting the international obligations towards climate change.

## **9. World Investment Report 2021**

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

### **Why in the news**

- The World Investment Report 2021 by the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), released recently.

### **Key highlights**

### **Global Scenario**

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- The global FDI flows have been severely hit by the pandemic and they plunged by 35 per cent in 2020 to \$1 trillion from \$1.5 trillion the previous year.
- Lockdowns caused by COVID-19 around the world slowed down existing investment projects and prospects of a recession led multinational enterprises (MNEs) to reassess new projects.
- The pandemic boosted demand for digital infrastructure and services globally. This led to higher values of Greenfield FDI project announcements targeting the ICT industry, rising by more than 22 per cent to \$81 billion.

### India and Report

- India ranked 18 out of the world's top 20 economies for FDI outflows, with 12 billion dollars of outflows recorded from the country in 2020 as compared to 13 billion dollars in 2019.
- The report said in India, FDI increased 27 per cent to \$64 billion in 2020 from \$51 billion in 2019, pushed up by acquisitions in the information and communication technology (ICT) industry, making the country the fifth largest FDI recipient in the world. Major project announcements in the ICT industry included a \$2.8 billion investment by online retail giant Amazon in ICT infrastructure in India.
- The country's export-related manufacturing, a priority investment sector, will take longer to recover, but government facilitation can help.
- **India's Production Linkage Incentive scheme**, designed to attract manufacturing and export-oriented investments in priority industries including automotive and electronics can drive a rebound of investment in manufacturing.
- Investments from India are expected to stabilise in 2021, supported by the country's resumption of free trade agreement (FTA) talks with the European Union (EU) and its strong investment in Africa.

### About UNCTAD

- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) was established in 1964 to promote development-friendly integration of developing countries into the world economy.
- **UNCTAD is a permanent intergovernmental body headquartered at Geneva in Switzerland.**

### Some of the reports published by it are:

- Trade and Development Report
- World Investment Report
- The Least Developed Countries Report
- Information and Economy Report
- Technology and Innovation Report
- Commodities and Development Report

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