



## News Analysis (02 Aug, 2021)

---

 [drishtias.com/current-affairs-news-analysis-editorials/news-analysis/02-08-2021/print](https://drishtias.com/current-affairs-news-analysis-editorials/news-analysis/02-08-2021/print)

### India Assumes UNSC Presidency

---

#### Why in News

---

Recently, India assumed the presidency of the **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)** for the month of August 2021.

- This will be the **country's first presidency during its 2021-22 tenure as a non-permanent member** of the Security Council.
- India began its **two-year tenure as a non-permanent member of the UNSC in January 2021.**

This is India's **eighth term** on the UNSC.

#### Key Points

---

- **India's UNSC Presidency:**
  - India will **decide the UN body's agenda for the month** and coordinate important meetings on a range of issues.
  - It is going to **organise key events** in three major areas of **maritime security, peacekeeping and counter-terrorism.**
    - The Security Council will also have on its agenda several important meetings including **Syria, Iraq, Somalia, Yemen, and the Middle East.**
    - The Security Council will also be adopting important resolutions on **Somalia, Mali, & United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.**
  - Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi will be the **first Indian PM** to preside over a meeting of the UNSC.

The last time an Indian PM was engaged in this effort was the then PM **PV Narasimha Rao in 1992** when he attended a UNSC meeting.

- **Support from France & Russia:**
  - **France** has stated that it is dedicated to **collaborating with India over strategic problems** such as maritime security, peacekeeping, and counter-terrorism.
  - **Russia** welcomed the country gaining the UNSC presidency saying it is very **impressed by India's agenda**, which embraces **critical global concerns**.
- **Challenges for India at UNSC:**
  - **China Challenge:**
    - India is entering the UNSC at a time when Beijing is asserting itself at the global stage much more vigorously than ever. It heads at least six UN organisations and has challenged the global rules.
    - China's aggressive behaviour in the **Indo-Pacific** as well as the **India-China border** has been visible in all of 2020.
    - China has tried to raise the **issue of Kashmir** at the UNSC.
  - **Post Covid World Order:**

As the **global economy is in shambles with various countries facing recession and health emergencies**.
  - **Balancing USA and Russia and Unstable West Asia:**
    - With the situation **deteriorating between the US and Russia** and **increasing tensions between US and Iran**, it will be a **tough situation to handle for India**.
    - India **needs to uphold rule based world order** with due respect to human rights ensuring the national interest.

## United Nation Security Council

- **About:**
  - The **UNs Charter established six main organs of the UN, including the UNSC. Article 23** of the UN Charter concerns the composition of the UNSC.  
The other 5 organs of the UN are—the **General Assembly, the Trusteeship Council, the Economic and Social Council, the International Court of Justice, and the Secretariat**.
  - The UNSC has been given **primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security** and may meet whenever peace is threatened.
  - While other organs of the UN make recommendations to member states, **only the Security Council has the power to make decisions** that member states are then obligated to implement under the Charter.
- **Headquarter:**

The council is headquartered at **NewYork**.

- **Members:**
  - The UNSC is **composed of 15 members, 5 permanent and 10 non-permanent.**
    - **Five permanent members:** China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
    - **Ten non-permanent members:** Elected for two-year terms by the General Assembly.
  - Each year, **the General Assembly elects five non-permanent members (out of ten in total) for a two-year term.** The ten non-permanent seats are distributed on a regional basis.
  - The council's **presidency is a capacity that rotates every month among its 15 members.**
- **Voting and Discussions at UNSC:**
  - **Each member of the Security Council has one vote.** Decisions of the Security Council on matters are made by an affirmative vote of nine members including the concurring votes of the permanent members.
    - **A "No" vote from one of the five permanent members blocks the passage of the resolution.**
  - **Any member of the UN** which is not a member of the Security Council **may participate, without vote, in the discussion** of any question brought before the Security Council whenever the latter considers that the interests of that member are specially affected.
- **India as a Permanent Member:**
  - **India has been advocating a permanent seat in UNSC.**
  - **India has the following objective criteria**, such as population, territorial size, **Gross Domestic Product**, economic potential, civilisational legacy, cultural diversity, political system and past and ongoing contributions to UN activities especially to **UN peacekeeping operations.**

Source: IE

---

## Provincial Status to Gilgit-Baltistan: Pakistan

---

### Why in News

---

Recently, it has been reported that, Pakistani authorities have finalised a law (**26<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Bill**), to award **provisional provincial status to strategically located Gilgit-Baltistan.**



## Key Points

- **About Gilgit-Baltistan:**

- Gilgit-Baltistan is one of the **disputed territories** of India.
- It is a chunk of **high-altitude territory** located on the **north western corner of the Union Territory of Ladakh**.
- It is located strategically as it **borders Pakistan, Afghanistan and China**.

- **Background of Gilgit-Baltistan Dispute:**

- The region is **claimed by India as part of the erstwhile princely state of Jammu & Kashmir** as it existed in 1947 at its accession to India.

**Maharaja Hari Singh**, the last Dogra ruler of J&K, had signed the Instrument of Accession with India on 26<sup>th</sup> October 1947.

- However, it has been under **Pakistan's control since 4<sup>th</sup> November, 1947**, following the **invasion of Kashmir by tribal militias** and the Pakistan army.
- Following this invasion, India moved to the **United Nations Security Council** to raise the issue of Pakistan's invasion, on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1948.
- The UN Security Council passed a resolution:
  - Calling for **Pakistan to withdraw from all of Jammu and Kashmir** and then **India had to reduce its forces to the minimum level** following which a **plebiscite** would be held to ascertain people's wishes.
- However, **no withdrawal** was ever carried out and it remains a point of contention between two countries.

- **Current Status:**
  - Gilgit-Baltistan is an **autonomous region** now and after the bill is passed, it will become the **5<sup>th</sup> province of the country**.  
Currently, Pakistan has four provinces namely Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, and Sindh.
  - Presently, it has been ruled mostly by **executive orders**.
  - Until 2009, the region was simply called **Northern Areas**.
  - It got its present name only with the **Gilgit-Baltistan (Empowerment and Self-Governance) Order, 2009**, which replaced the Northern Areas Legislative Council with the Legislative Assembly.
- **Reasons for Making Gilgit-Baltistan a Province:**
  - Gilgit-Baltistan is the northernmost territory administered by Pakistan. It is **Pakistan's only territorial frontier, and thus a land route, with China**.
    - The Gilgit-Baltistan region is at the centre of the USD 65 billion **China Pakistan Economic Corridor** (CPEC) Infrastructure development plan.
    - The CPEC has made the region vital for both countries. The CPEC, which connects Gwadar Port in Pakistan's Balochistan with China's Xinjiang province, is the flagship project of China's ambitious multi-billion-dollar **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**.
  - Some experts on India-Pakistan relations also assert that Pakistan's decision might have come from India's reassertion of its claims after the 5<sup>th</sup> August, 2019 **reorganisation of Jammu & Kashmir**.
- **India's Stand:**
  - India maintains the Government of Pakistan or its judiciary has no locus standi on territories illegally and forcibly occupied by it.
  - India has clearly conveyed to Pakistan that the entire Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, including the areas of Gilgit and Baltistan, are an integral part of the country by virtue of its fully legal and irrevocable accession.
  - India has protested to China over the CPEC as it is being laid through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

**Source: TH**

---

## **e-RUPI: Voucher Based Digital Payment System**

---

### **Why in News**

---

The Indian government is going to launch an electronic voucher based digital payment system **e-RUPI**.

There are already many **countries using the voucher system** for example the **US, Colombia, Chile, Sweden, Hong Kong**, etc.

## e-RUPI



The infographic consists of four yellow circular icons on the left, each followed by a text block. The first icon shows a hand holding a smartphone with a QR code. The second icon shows a smartphone with a QR code and a document. The third icon shows a hand holding a smartphone with a QR code and a document. The fourth icon shows a delivery truck with a plus sign.

- e-RUPI is a cashless and contactless instrument for digital payment developed by National Payments Corporation of India**
- Connects sponsors of the services with beneficiaries & service providers in a digital manner without any physical interface**
- Assures timely payment without involvement of any intermediary.**
- It can also be used for delivering services meant for providing drugs & nutritional support under Mother & Child welfare schemes, TB eradication programmes, etc**

## Key Points

---

- **e-RUPI:**
  - It is a **cashless and contactless method for digital payment**. It is a **Quick Response (QR) code** or SMS string-based e-voucher, which is delivered to the mobile of the users.
  - The users will be able to **redeem the voucher without needing a card, digital payments app, or internet banking access**, at the service provider.
  - It connects the sponsors of the services with the beneficiaries and service providers in a digital mode **without any physical interface**.
  - The mechanism also **ensures that the payment to the service provider is made only after the transaction is completed**.
  - The system is **pre-paid** in nature and hence, **assures timely payment to the service provider** without the involvement of any intermediary.
- **Different from Virtual Currency:**

In effect, **e-RUPI is still backed by the existing Indian rupee** as the underlying asset and specificity of its purpose makes it different to a **virtual currency** and puts it closer to a **voucher-based payment system**.

- **Issuing Entities & Beneficiary Identification:**

- The one-time payment mechanism has been developed by the **National Payments Corporation of India** on its **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)** platform, in collaboration with the Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, and National Health Authority.
- It has boarded **banks that will be the issuing entities**. Any corporate or government agency will have to approach the partner banks, which are both private and public-sector lenders, with the details of specific persons and the purpose for which payments have to be made.
- The **beneficiaries will be identified using their mobile number and a voucher allocated by a bank** to the service provider in the name of a given person would only be delivered to that person.

- **Uses:**

- **Government Sector:**

It is expected to **ensure a leak-proof delivery of welfare services** and can also be **used for delivering services under schemes** meant for providing drugs and nutritional support under Mother and Child welfare schemes, drugs & diagnostics under schemes like **Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana**, fertiliser subsidies etc.

- **Private Sector:**

Even the private sector can leverage these digital vouchers as part of their employee welfare and **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** programmes.

- **Significance:**

The government is already working on developing a **Central Bank Digital Currency** and the launch of e-RUPI could **potentially highlight the gaps in digital payments infrastructure** that will be necessary for the success of the future digital currency.

- **Future of Digital Currency in India:** According to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), there are at least **four reasons why digital currencies are expected to do well in India:**
  - **Increasing Penetration:** There is **increasing penetration of digital payments** in the country that exists alongside sustained interest in cash usage, especially for small value transactions.
  - **High Currency to GDP Ratio:** India's high currency to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ratio holds out another benefit of CBDCs.  
**Cash-to-GDP Ratio** or Currency in Circulation (CIC) to GDP Ratio or simply currency-to-GDP ratio shows the value of cash in circulation as a ratio of GDP.
  - **Spread of Virtual Currencies:** The spread of private virtual currencies such as Bitcoin and Ethereum may be yet another reason why CBDCs become important from the point of view of the central bank.
  - **Will Act as a Cushion:** Central bank digital currencies might also **cushion the general public in an environment of volatile private virtual currencies.**

Source: IE

---

## **112th Annual Day of National Centre for Disease Control**

---

### **Why in News**

---

Recently, the Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare presided over the **112<sup>th</sup> Annual Day celebrations of National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC).**

### **Key Points**

---



## Initiatives Launched at the Event:

### o **Genome Lab:**

- The **Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS) National Reference Laboratory** for **Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)** was inaugurated.
- WGS is a **comprehensive method for analyzing entire genomes**. Genomic information **has been instrumental in identifying inherited disorders, characterizing the mutations** that drive cancer progression, and tracking disease outbreaks.  
Rapidly **dropping sequencing costs and the ability to produce large volumes of data** with today's sequencers **make whole-genome sequencing a powerful tool for genomics research**.
- AMR is the resistance acquired by any microorganism (bacteria, viruses, fungi, parasite, etc.) against antimicrobial drugs (such as antibiotics, antifungals, antivirals, antimalarials, and anthelmintics) that are used to treat infections.
- The application of WGS for global surveillance can provide information on the early emergence and spread of AMR and further inform timely policy development on AMR control.

### o **Adaptation Plans under NPCCHH:**

- The **National Health Adaptation Plan on Air Pollution** and **National Health Adaptation Plan on Heat Related Illness** were launched under the "**National Programme on Climate Change and Human Health (NPCCHH)**".
- The **plan suggests setting up of a committee on air pollution** and health in the hospital, to preferably involve health officials from the departments of medicine, respiratory, medicine, paediatrics, cardiology, neurology, endocrinology etc, including emergency and nursing department.
- It also **highlights the need for preparations for logistics, drugs and equipment** that may be required to address such health problems, particularly respiratory and cardiovascular emergencies.
- It also **highlights the need for identification of vulnerable areas**, selection of air pollution hotspots as per **Air Quality Index (AQI)** levels, vulnerable population covering people less than five years of age, adolescents, pregnant women and the elderly.

### o **Information, Education & Communication (IEC) Materials:**

Under the "National One health Programme for prevention and Control of Zoonoses" IEC materials on 7 priority **zoonotic diseases** has been created namely:

**Rabies**, Scrub Typhus, **Brucellosis**, **Anthrax**, Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever (CCHF) , **Nipah**, **Kyasanur Forest Disease** in India.

## Objectives of NPCCHH

- To **create awareness among the general population (vulnerable community)**, health-care providers and Policy makers regarding impacts of climate change on human health.
- To **strengthen the capacity of the healthcare system** to reduce illnesses/ diseases due to variability in climate.
- To **strengthen health preparedness and response** by performing situational analysis at national/ state/ district/ below district levels.
- To **develop partnerships** and create synchrony/ synergy with other missions and ensure that health is adequately represented in the climate change agenda in the country.
- To **strengthen research capacity** to fill the evidence gap on climate change impact on human health.

#### **National Centre for Disease Control:**

##### ○ **About:**

- The National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), formerly **National Institute of Communicable Diseases (NICD)**, had its origin as the Central Malaria Bureau, **established at Kasauli (Himachal Pradesh) in 1909.**
- **NICD was transformed into the NCDC** with a larger mandate of controlling emerging and re-emerging diseases in **2009.**
- It functions as the **nodal agency in the country for disease** surveillance facilitating prevention and control of communicable diseases.
- It is also a **national level institute for training specialized manpower for public health, laboratory sciences and entomological services** and is involved in various applied research activities.

##### ○ **Control & Headquarter:**

- The Institute is under administrative control of the **Director General of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.**
- The Institute has its headquarters in Delhi.

##### ○ **Functions:**

- Undertakes **investigations of disease outbreaks** all over the country.
- Provides referral **diagnostic services to individuals**, community, medical colleges, research institutions and state health directorates.
- Engaged in **generation and dissemination of knowledge** in various areas like Epidemiology, Surveillance, and Laboratories etc.
- Applied integrated **research in various aspects of communicable as well as some aspects of non-communicable diseases** has been one of the prime functions of the Institute.

**Source: PIB**

---

## **Ozone Levels Exceeding Permitted Levels**

---

## Why in News

---

Recently, a **Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) study** has found that **ozone levels are exceeding the permitted levels even during winter in Delhi-NCR**, making the **smog more “toxic”**.

- Despite the pandemic and lockdowns, more days and locations witnessed higher and longer duration of ozone spells.
- CSE is a public interest research and advocacy organisation based in New Delhi.

### Ozone

- **Ozone (composed of three atoms of oxygen)** is a gas that occurs both in the Earth's upper atmosphere and at ground level. Ozone can be “good” or “bad” for health and the environment, depending on its location in the atmosphere.
- The ‘**good**’ ozone present in the **earth's stratosphere layer** protects human beings from **harmful Ultraviolet (UV)** radiation whereas the **ground level ozone is highly reactive** and can have **adverse impacts on human health**.
  - Ground level ozone is dangerous for those suffering from respiratory conditions and asthma.

### Smog

- Smog is air pollution **that reduces visibility**.
- The term "smog" was first used in the early 1900s to describe **a mix of smoke and fog**.
- The smoke usually came **from burning coal**. Smog is common in **industrial areas, and remains a familiar sight in cities today**. Today, most of the smog we see is **Photochemical Smog**.
  - Photochemical smog is produced **when sunlight reacts with nitrogen oxides (NOx)** and at **least one volatile organic compound (VOC)** in the atmosphere.
  - Nitrogen oxides come from **car exhaust, coal power plants, and factory emissions**. VOCs are released from **gasoline, paints, and many cleaning solvents**. When sunlight hits these chemicals, they form **airborne particles and ground-level ozone - or smog**.

### Key Points

---

- **Now a Year-round Menace:**
  - Contrary to the notion that Ozone is a summer phenomenon, it has been found that gas has emerged as an equally strong concern during winter as well.

- **Occasional Exceedance:**
  - The **city-wide average largely remains within the standard with just occasional exceedance**. But the ‘good’ category days have fallen to 115 days in 2020, which is 24 days less than in 2019 in Delhi.
  - A location-wise analysis shows that **exceeding the eight-hour average standard is quite widely distributed** in the city.
  - **Even smaller towns of NCR**, including Bulandshahr in Uttar Pradesh and Bhiwani in Haryana, **appeared in the top 20 list of ozone-afflicted towns and cities**. South Delhi locations dominate the list with four mentions in top 10.
- **Suggestions:**
  - The study shows that the **transport sector is the highest contributor to NOx and VOCs**, hence there is **a need to take strong action on these high emitters** of NOx and VOCs including vehicles and other industries.
  - Ozone levels are **found to be exceeding the mark of 100 µg/m<sup>3</sup>** even during winter and are **highly sensitive to solar radiation**. Reducing the gases **will also reduce secondary particles** formed from these gases.
  - Ozone is now a round-the-year problem that is urgent and the situation **demands refinement of a clean air action plan** to add strategies for ozone mitigation, with stronger action on vehicles, industry and waste burning.
  - It is **important to calibrate AQI (Air Quality Index)** to report the most polluted eight-hour average of the day, ideally making it an hourly alert. Also the current practice of only city averaging needs to change to include alerts based on the worst affected area as is the global good practice.
- **Government Efforts:**
  - **Development of the National AQI** for public information under the aegis of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). AQI has been developed for eight pollutants viz. PM2.5, PM10, Ammonia, Lead, nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, ozone, and carbon monoxide.
  - The introduction of **BS-VI vehicles**, push for **electric vehicles (EVs)**, **Odd-Even** as an emergency measure and construction of the Eastern and Western Peripheral Expressways to reduce vehicular pollution.
  - Implementation of the **Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)** to tackle the rising pollution in the Capital. It includes measures like shutting down thermal power plants and a ban on construction activities.
  - Launch of the **National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)**: In order to deal with the issue of air pollution in a comprehensive manner at national level, the government came up with the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) with the goal to meet average ambient air quality standards at all locations in the country.

**Source: TH**

---

**‘Ashwagandha’ in Covid-19 Recovery**

---

---

## Why in News

---

Recently, **India and the UK** have collaborated to conduct a **study on ‘Ashwagandha (AG)’ for promoting recovery from Covid-19**.

- After the **trial’s success**, **‘Ashwagandha’ will be a proven medicinal treatment** to prevent infection and be recognised by the **scientific community worldwide**.
- This is the **first time that the Ministry of Ayush** has collaborated with a foreign institution to investigate its efficacy on **Covid-19 patients**.



---

## Key Points

---

- **About Ashwagandha:**
  - Ashwagandha (**Withania somnifera**) is a medicinal herb. It is reputed as an immunity enhancer.
  - It is classified as an **adaptogen**, which means that it can **help the body to manage stress**.
  - Ashwagandha also boosts brain function and lowers blood sugar and helps fight symptoms of anxiety and depression.
  - Ashwagandha has shown clinical success in **treating both acute and chronic rheumatoid arthritis**.
    - **Rheumatoid arthritis (RA)** is an autoimmune disease that can **cause joint pain and damage throughout your body**.
    - An autoimmune disease is a condition in which your immune system mistakenly attacks your body.

- **Potential of Ashwagandha:**

- The study suggests Ashwagandha as a potential therapeutic candidate for **alleviating the long-term symptoms of Covid-19.**
- Recently, a number of **randomised placebo-controlled trials** of AG in humans in India had demonstrated its efficacy in reducing anxiety and stress, improving muscle strength and reducing symptoms of fatigue in patients treated for chronic conditions.

A randomized controlled trial is a prospective, comparative, quantitative study/experiment performed under controlled conditions with random allocation of interventions to comparison groups.

- **Clinical Trials:**

Clinical trials in humans are classified into three phases: **phase I, phase II and phase III** and in certain countries formal regulatory approval is required to undertake any of these studies.

- The **phase I clinical studies** carry out **initial testing of a vaccine in small numbers (e.g. 20) of healthy adults**, to test the properties of a vaccine, its tolerability, and, if appropriate, clinical laboratory and pharmacological parameters. Phase I studies are primarily concerned with safety.
- **Phase II studies involve larger numbers of subjects** and are intended to provide preliminary information about a vaccine's ability to produce its desired effect (usually immunogenicity) in the target population and its general safety.
- **Extensive phase III** trials are required to fully assess the protective efficacy and safety of a vaccine. The phase III clinical trial is the pivotal study on which the decision on whether to grant the licence is based and sufficient data have to be obtained to demonstrate that a new product is safe and effective for the purpose intended.

**Source: TH**

---

## **Pangolin**

---

### **Why in News**

---

Recently, a pangolin was rescued by a team from Noida and handed over to the forest department.



## Key Points

---

- **About:**
  - The pangolin, also called **scaly anteater**, is an elongated, **armour-plated insectivore mammal**.
  - It uses these **scales** as armour to defend itself against predators by rolling into a ball when threatened.
  - Also, a pangolin's **long claws** help it to dig the ground for termites, which is its staple food.
- **Species of Pangolin:**
  - Seven species of pangolin are found across the world, of which, **two are found in India**, namely **Indian pangolin** (*Manis crassicaudata*) and **Chinese pangolin** (*Manis pentadactyla*).
  - The Indian Pangolin is found throughout the country **south of the Himalayas, excluding the north-eastern region** while the Chinese Pangolin ranges through **Assam and the eastern Himalayas**.
  - The Chinese pangolin is distinguished from other Asian pangolins by its almost helmeted appearance, smaller scales than the Indian pangolin.
- **Habitat:**

It is adaptable to a wide range of habitats including primary and secondary tropical forests, limestone and bamboo forests, grasslands and agricultural fields.
- **Threats:**
  - Once known to be found in large numbers, its population is rapidly declining in its range due to habitat loss and rampant poaching for its skin, scales, and meat.
  - It is a **highly trafficked mammal**; due to their huge demand for medicinal purposes, pangolins are smuggled through roads and rails and sent to China.

- **Protection Status:**

- As per **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**, the pangolin is part of the “red list”.

While the **Indian pangolin is listed as “endangered”** and the **Chinese pangolin has been listed as “critically endangered”**.

- All pangolin species are **listed in Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) Appendix I**.
- In India, pangolins, both Indian and Chinese, are **protected under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972**.
  - Therefore, hunting, trade or any other form of utilisation of the species or their body parts and derivatives is banned.
  - In India, hunting and poaching can invite prison time up to 7 years since it involves maximum protection under the section of the Wildlife Act.

**Source: IE**

---

## **Core Sectors Output**

---

### **Why in News**

---

Output at India’s eight core sectors **grew by 8.9% in June 2021 largely due to Base Effect** but the pace remained below the production levels seen before the **Covid-19** pandemic as well as its **second wave**.

### **Key Points**

---

- **About Eight Core Sectors:**

- These **comprise 40.27% of the weight of items included in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP)**.
- The eight core sector industries in decreasing order of their weightage: **Refinery Products> Electricity> Steel> Coal> Crude Oil> Natural Gas> Cement> Fertilizers**.



- **Base Effect:**

- The base effect **refers to the effect that the choice of a basis of comparison or reference can have on the result** of the comparison between data points.
- For example, the base effect **can lead to an apparent under- or overstatement of figures** such as inflation rates or economic growth rates if the point chosen for comparison has an unusually high or low value relative to the current period or the overall data.
- Production of coal, natural gas, refinery products, steel, cement and electricity jumped by 7.4%, 20.6%, 2.4%, 25%, 4.3% and 7.2%, respectively, in June 2021, as against (-) 15.5%, (-) 12%, (-) 8.9%, (-) 23.2%, (-) 6.8% and (-) 10% in the same month last year.

- **Index of Industrial Production:**

- IIP is an indicator that measures the changes in the volume of production of industrial products during a given period.
- It is compiled and published monthly by the **National Statistical Office (NSO)**, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.
- It is a composite indicator that measures the growth rate of industry groups classified under:
  - **Broad sectors**, namely, Mining, Manufacturing, and Electricity.
  - **Use-based sectors**, namely Basic Goods, Capital Goods, and Intermediate Goods.
- **Base Year** for IIP is **2011-2012**.
- **Significance of IIP:**
  - It is used by government agencies including the Ministry of Finance, the Reserve Bank of India, etc, for policy-making purposes.
  - IIP remains extremely relevant for the calculation of the quarterly and advance **GDP (Gross Domestic Product)** estimates.

**Source: TH**

---

## **Delhi-Alwar RRTS Project**

---

### **Why in News**

---

The **Supreme Court**-Appointed Committee has permitted construction of a stretch of the proposed Delhi-Alwar **RRTS (Rapid Rail transit system)** corridor under the **Aravalli Biodiversity Park** and the extended ridge area.

### **Key Points**

---

- **Committee’s Report:**
  - The committee observed that the **project is in public interest** and since the proposed rail corridor will run **20 metres below the ground**, trees will not have to be cut.
  - There will be **no construction on the surface** in the Morphological Ridge area.
    - **A ridge** or a mountain ridge is a geographical feature consisting of a **chain of mountains or hills that form a continuous elevated** crest for some distance.
    - The Aravalli **ridge areas**, which are essentially extensions of the Aravalli ranges and extend over 7,000 hectares in Delhi, are **considered the lungs of the capital (Delhi)**.
- **Delhi-Alwar RRTS Corridor:**
  - It is a **164-km rapid rail corridor**, which will be a mix of **elevated tracks and tunnels**. It is slated to be implemented in three phases.
  - A 3.6-km stretch of the corridor is supposed to pass below the extended or ‘**morphological**’ ridge in South Delhi.
    - 1.7-km of the 3.6-km stretch under consideration will pass below the **Aravalli Biodiversity Park** near Vasant Kunj, Delhi.
- **Significance of Corridor:**
  - **Travel Time:**
    - It is expected to reduce travel time **between these places to 117 minutes – a little less than two hours**.
  - **Air Quality:**
    - It is expected to **improve the air quality in Delhi/NCR** (National Capital Region), because the share of public transport is expected to increase.
  - **Ease in Road Traffic:**
    - Road **traffic congestion is expected to ease with a better transport network** and the project is expected to address regional connectivity issues and develop an efficient multimodal transport system connecting Delhi-NCR with road, rail and air.

### **Aravalli Biodiversity Park**

- It is developed on 699 acres of land **located in South Delhi** near Vasant Vihar.
- The area is **highly degraded** due to past mining and infested with **Prosopis juliflora** (an Invasive Shrub).
  - The **biodiversity of Delhi is nearly extinct**.
- The **prime objective of ABP is to bring back the lost biodiversity of Delhi Aravallis**. The other objective of ABP is to promote nature education among students and create environment awareness among the public.
- It is also **helping in preserving the threatened medicinal plants of the Aravallis**.

**Source: IE**

