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DAILY NEWS DIARY

Of

25.11.2021

FOR PRELIMS AND MAINS

Warm Greetings.

- DnD aims to provide every day news analysis in sync with the UPSC pattern.
- It is targeted at UPSC – Prelims & Mains.
- Daily articles are provided in the form of Question and Answers
- To have a bank of mains questions.
- And interesting to read.
- Providing precise information that can be carried straight to the exam, rather than over dumping.

Enjoy reading.

THE HINDU - TH
INDIAN EXPRESS - IE
BUSINESS LINE - BL
ECONOMIC TIMES - ET
TIMES OF INDIA - TOI



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ESSAY PAPER

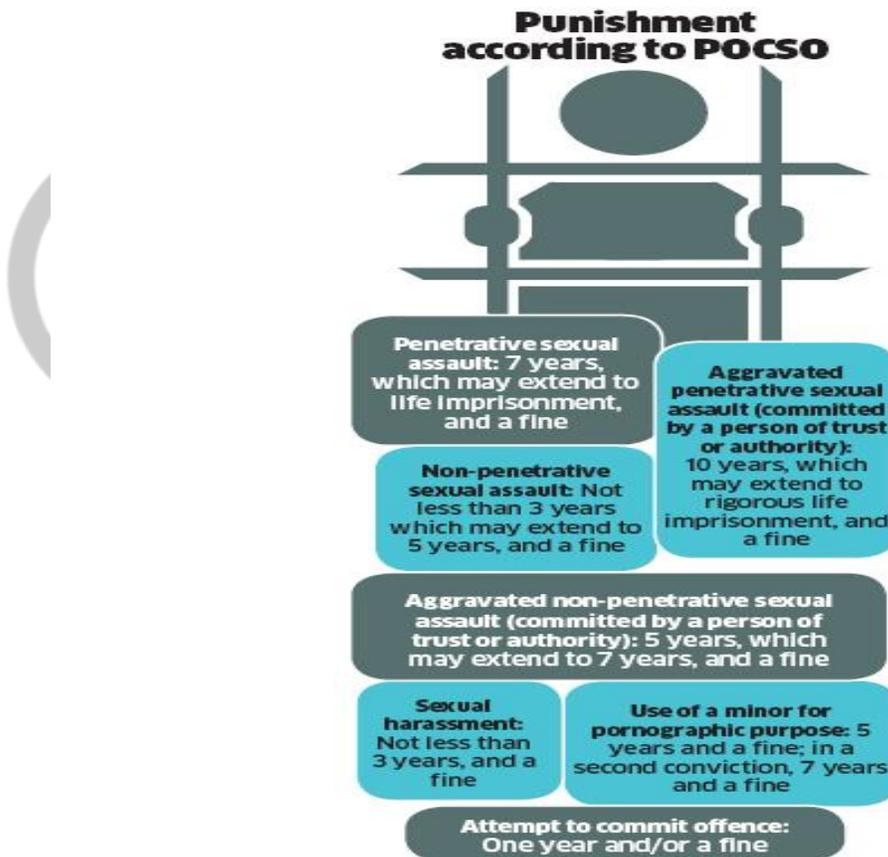
Editorial

Q- Explain how the High Court's ruling ignores specific provision defining aggravated form of sexual offence with the recent incident in mind?

INTRODUCTION = The recent Allahabad High Court verdict that a penetrative sexual assault on a 10-year-old boy by an offender did **not amount to an aggravated form of the crime** appears to be per incuriam, that is, a ruling handed down without due regard to the law and facts.

The offence that was proven in the trial, and endorsed without demur by the High Court, involved the **child being made to perform an oral sexual act** -

- The Court agrees that it was a **“penetrative sexual assault”** as defined by the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, as the accused had put his member into the victim's mouth.
- However, it did not amount to **“aggravated penetrative sexual assault”**, a crime punishable with a minimum prison term of 10 years that can go up to life.
- Instead, it was punishable under Section 4 of POCSO, which prescribes a minimum seven years. Accordingly, he reduced the trial court sentence of 10 years in jail to seven years.



The High Court is palpably in error, as it failed to note that a sexual offence takes **the character of an aggravated form of the same offence in certain circumstances under POCSO -**

1. The main circumstances involving aggravation given in Section 5 are where the offender is a police officer, a member of the armed forces, a public servant or someone on the staff of a jail, remand home, hospital, educational or religious institution, or any place of custody or care and protection.
2. However, these are not the only circumstances. Where the crime involves a group of offenders,
3. or is done repeatedly,
4. or when it pertains to the use of deadly weapons or causes grievous harm or injury,
5. or leads to physical or mental incapacitation, pregnancy, or disease, it is also an aggravated form of the offence.

Significantly, **Section 5(m) adds “whoever commits penetrative sexual assault on a child below 12 years” to this list.**

The High Court seems to have missed either this legal provision while reducing the sentence, or the fact that the child was about 10 years old when the offence took place. The fact that the convicted person will stay in jail for seven years will not obviate the deleterious effect of the ruling — that a particular act, amounting to a penetrative sexual act, does not attract the punishment prescribed for its aggravated form — will have on lower courts trying similar cases. It is a matter of coincidence that this ruling came from the Allahabad High Court on the same day as the Supreme Court’s judgment underscoring the importance of not diluting the gravity of an offence against a child by ignoring the plain meaning of POCSO’s provisions. The verdict in Sonu Kushwaha vs State of U.P. is a fit case for review, as it seems to be based on an error of law.

GS 2

Q- Write a brief note on the findings of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) 5 and their implications for Indian Society?

BACKGROUND = The complete results of the NFHS-5 were made public. The NFHS-4 was released in 2014-15 and the latest, which captured population health indicators in 2017-19, was delayed due to the pandemic -

1. **Births in institutional facilities**, such as a hospital, **improved** by nearly eight percentage points.
2. But **children who were either stunted or displayed signs of wasting only dropped** by a maximum of three percentage points, shows a comparison of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) 5 and 4.

Hunger watch

The nutritional status of children in India barely improved in 2019-20 from the levels in 2015-16, the National Family Health Survey-5 data show

(IN %)



Indicator	2019-20	2015-16	2005-06
Children under five who are stunted	35.5	38.4	48
Children under five who are wasted	19.3	21	19.8
Children under five who are underweight	32.1	35.8	42.5
Children aged six months to 59 months who are anaemic	67.1	58.6	69.4

- India has also officially hit a **Total Fertility Rate (TFR) of 2.0** that indicates a **decrease** from the 2.2 in the NFHS-4.

According to the UN Population Division, a TFR of about 2.1 children per woman is called replacement-level fertility. If replacement level fertility is sustained over a sufficiently long period, each generation will exactly replace itself.

- The urban TFR is 1.6 and rural 2.1.**

What do they mean -

- This is a significant feat for the country's family-planning programme, which does not include coercive policies.
- These findings bust the population-explosion myth and show that India must steer away from coercive measures of population control.
- While the increase in the use of modern contraceptive methods is heartening, an increase in female sterilisation coupled with continued stagnation in male sterilisation uptake shows that the onus of family planning still lies with women.
- An overall survey of the major differences between the NFHS-5 and NFHS-4 suggests that the use of contraceptives has improved from 53.5% to 66.7% and institutional births increased from 78.9% to 88.6%.
- The proportion of children (12-23 months) who were fully vaccinated improved from 62%-76% and children under six months who were exclusively breastfed also showed a sharp improvement from 54.9% to 63.7%.
- Though the gains in childhood nutrition were minimal, women and men (15-49) who had a below normal body mass index (BMI) each dropped roughly four percentage points.
- Those overweight (or had a higher BMI than ideal) increased by around 4 percentage points.
- Abnormal BMIs are linked to an increase in obesity and other non-communicable diseases.
- India's battle with anaemia also appears to have faltered. The proportion of anaemic children (6-59 months) increased from 58% to 67%. Women aged 15-49 who were

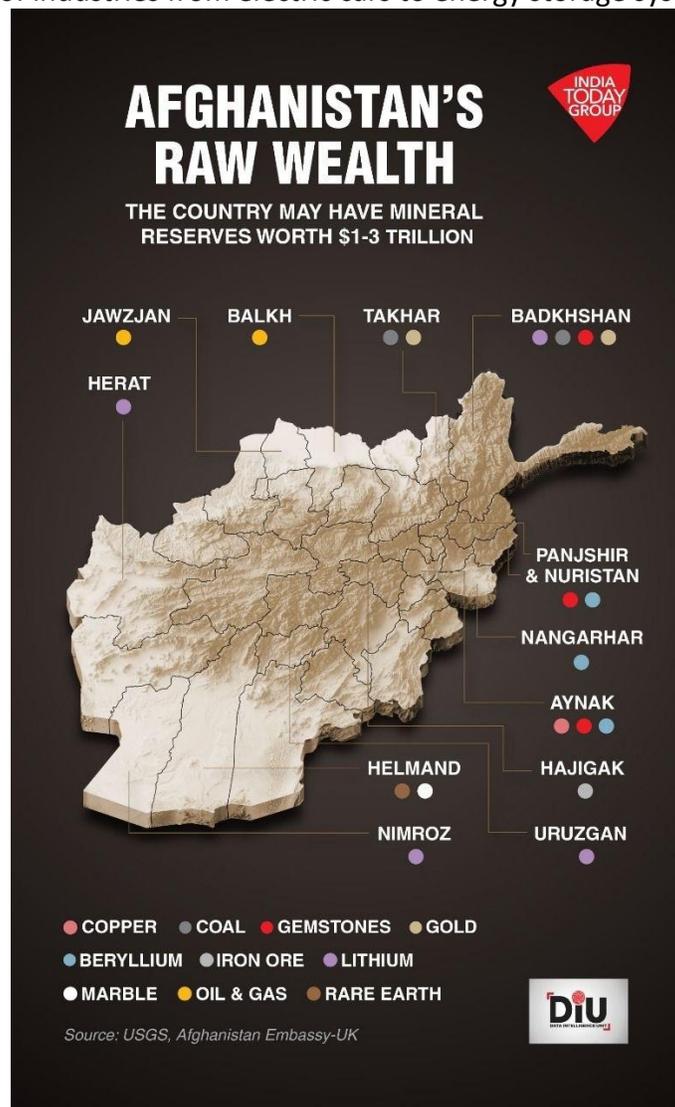
anaemic increased from 53% to 57% and men of the same age increased from 29% to 31% between both editions of the NFHS.

❖ International Relations

Q- Elaborate on strengthening Afghanistan-China's relation in the aftermath of the Taliban regime?

BACKGORUND = A number of Chinese companies have already begun "on-site inspections" of possible projects to tap lithium deposits in Afghanistan, having received the green light to do so from the Taliban regime.

Lithium is one of many resources in Afghanistan present in large deposits but as yet untapped, largely because of years of political instability and the lack of infrastructure. It is a valuable resource for a range of industries from electric cars to energy storage systems.



A Chinese company secured the rights to mine one of the world's biggest copper reserves in Afghanistan at Aynak more than a decade ago, but has not yet begun work on extraction.

China – Afghan Relation -

Besides the five companies present in Afghanistan, another “at least 20” state-owned and private firms had made inquiries about lithium projects. Chinese company representatives were “most concerned about basic guarantees of security and social order in Afghanistan”, but also “praised the Afghan Taliban’s friendliness toward Chinese investors”.

The Taliban Government has said it would welcome Chinese investment and support President Xi Jinping’s Belt and Road Initiative, and was also open to extending the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to Afghanistan.

Security situation

The security situation, not to mention a dire economic crisis including food shortages, are among the many challenges –

1. A train carrying 1,000 tonnes of humanitarian aid was sent to Afghanistan from China’s western Xinjiang region. China is willing to continue to provide humanitarian aid to Afghanistan within its capacity and work with the international community to help Afghanistan alleviate temporary difficulties and realise economic reconstruction as well as independent development as Security of their investments is a primary concern in the region.
2. China would “urgently provide 200 million yuan [\$30.96 million] worth of grains, winter supplies, vaccines, and medicines to Afghanistan” as well as 3 million vaccines.

GS 3

Snippets

❖ Economic Development

Q- Centre’s cryptocurrency ban plan said to spur heavy selling. Explain how?

- Plans by the government for a new bill that would bar most private cryptocurrencies has triggered heavy selling in the country’s digital currency markets, as investors look to exit positions despite the losses, said traders and investors.

10.	The Cryptocurrency and Regulation of Official Digital Currency Bill, 2021	To create a facilitative framework for creation of the official digital currency to be issued by the Reserve Bank of India. The Bill also seeks to prohibit all private cryptocurrencies in India, however, it allows for certain exceptions to promote the underlying technology of cryptocurrency and its uses.
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- The government will allow only certain cryptocurrencies to promote the underlying technology and its uses. The bill, if passed, would effectively ban Indian citizens from transacting in most cryptocurrencies.
- **How -**
 1. The dollar-linked stable coin tether (USDT) slumped 25% to almost ₹60 after news of the bill.
 2. A second crypto investor said the value of his portfolio had fallen to about ₹22,000 from ₹34,000 on Tuesday as a result of the heavy selling.
- “I am contemplating selling because the future is so unclear,” said an investor.
- Several exchanges were facing deposit and withdrawal challenges due to the high volume of selling.
- There are an estimated 15-20 million cryptocurrency investors in India, with total crypto holdings of about ₹400 billion, according to industry estimates.



Q- Before the 19th century, the East India Company (EIC) had to pay Indian merchants in which of the following modes for its purchased goods in India?

- a. Crude oil and petroleum products
- b. Gold and silver
- c. Capital machineries
- d. Sugar, tea, silk and porcelain



Q- Consider the following statements regarding The Cryptocurrency and Regulation of Official Digital Currency Bill, 2021 –

1. The bill's main agenda is to regulate cryptocurrency and ostensibly ban all private cryptocurrencies in India
2. However, the Central Bank Digital Currency is still on charts and it allows for certain exceptions to promote the underlying technology of cryptocurrency and its uses.

Choose the CORRECT answer using the code below-

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both
- d. Neither

Ans – c

EXPLANATION:

10.	The Cryptocurrency and Regulation of Official Digital Currency Bill, 2021	To create a facilitative framework for creation of the official digital currency to be issued by the Reserve Bank of India. The Bill also seeks to prohibit all private cryptocurrencies in India, however, it allows for certain exceptions to promote the underlying technology of cryptocurrency and its uses.
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