



# drishti

## News Analysis (05 May, 2021)

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### India-UK Virtual Summit

#### Why in News

Recently, the Prime Ministers of **India and the United Kingdom (UK)** held a bilateral virtual summit.

India thanked the UK for the prompt medical assistance provided by it in the wake of the **severe second wave of Covid-19** in India.



Key Points

- **Adopted ‘Roadmap 2030’:**
  - It will **elevate bilateral ties to a “Comprehensive Strategic Partnership”**.
  - It will provide a **framework for UK-India relations** across health, climate, trade, education, science and technology, and defence.
    - This will expand the UK-India health partnership to **enhance global health security and pandemic resilience**.
    - This includes **firming up international supply chains to ensure critical medicines, vaccines and other medical products** reach those who need them most.
    - Agreed to **expand the existing UK-India vaccines partnership**.
- **Launched Enhanced Trade Partnership:**
  - It **envisages facilitating market access in specific sectors**. It will **see Britain open up its fisheries sector** to more Indian players, facilitate more **opportunities for nurses, recognise Indian seafarers’ certificates** and enter into a joint dialogue on a **social security agreement**.
  - In return, **India lifted restrictions to enable British fruit producers** to export their produce to the country and improved access for medical devices.
  - They will also work towards reciprocal **opening up of legal services**.
  - Announced their intent to negotiate a comprehensive **Free Trade Agreement (FTA)**, including consideration of an interim trade agreement to deliver early gains.
  - Set an ambitious **target of more than doubling bilateral trade by 2030**.
- **Announcement of a new India-UK ‘Global Innovation Partnership’:**
  - The **UK is India's second largest partner** in research and innovation collaborations.
  - The new partnership **aims to** support the transfer of inclusive Indian innovations to select developing countries, starting with Africa.

- **Security & Defence:**
  - **Cooperation on Maritime Domain Awareness:**  
This includes new agreements on maritime information sharing, an **invitation to the UK to join India's Information Fusion Centre in Gurgaon** and an ambitious exercise programme which includes joint trilateral exercises.
  - **UK's Carrier Strike Group:**  
The **UK's Carrier Strike Group will visit India later this year to boost ties with Indian navies and air forces**, undertaking joint training exercises to enable future cooperation on operations in the Western Indian Ocean (**UK's Indo-Pacific Tilt**).
  - **Light Combat Aircraft Mark 2:**  
To support India's indigenous development of the **Light Combat Aircraft Mark 2**.
  - **Potential Collaborations:**  
Discussed the potential for further **industrial collaboration in areas such as maritime propulsion, space and cyber**, marking the start of a promising **new era of UK-India research**, capability and industrial collaboration on **Indian combat air** and beyond.
- **Migration:**
  - Enhance their migration relationship, to **make it easier for British and Indian nationals to live and work in each other's countries**.
  - Welcomed the signing of the India-UK **Migration and Mobility Partnership (MMP)** that is **aimed at reducing illegal immigration into the UK**.  
The issue of illegal immigration had been a sticking point between both sides for years. However it is understood that **MMP will help genuine immigrants and students and will reduce immigration-related crimes**.
- **Climate Change:**  
Agreed to work together to ensure an ambitious outcome at **Conference of the Parties (COP) 26** and expand the UK-India partnership on tackling **climate change**, including by accelerating the **development of clean energy and transport and new technology, protecting nature and biodiversity and helping developing countries adapt to the impact of climate change**.

### **Bilateral Military Exercises**

- Air Force Exercise '**Indradhanush**'.
- Navy Exercise Konkan.
- Army Exercise '**Ajeya Warrior**'

### **Way Forward**

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- India will elevate to a 21<sup>st</sup> century superpower. It will soon be ‘one of the biggest influences on the world’. It is looking for new partners in the global race. This **represents a great opportunity for the UK**. The **UK has much to offer India in education, research, civil society and the creative sector**.
- Further, India’s skilled labour, technological assistance and the vibrant market will open a lot of avenues for Britain which has recently parted ways with the European Union.

**Source: IE**

## India Receives Taiwan’s Assistance

### Why in News

Recently, India received **Covid-19** assistance from Taiwan including oxygen concentrators and cylinders.

- The aid **reflects the growing engagement between India and Taiwan**, especially **against the backdrop of the standoff with China** on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and China’s aggressive actions across the region, including **repeated violations of Taiwan’s airspace**.
- India, meanwhile, **has not yet accepted China’s offers of aid and assistance** and has preferred to source medical supplies from China on a commercial basis.

### Taiwan



- **Taiwan - the Republic of China (ROC)**, home to twenty-three million people, is an **island off the southern coast of China** that has been governed independently from mainland China since 1949.
- Its **neighbours** include **China** (officially the People’s Republic of China, PRC) to the west, **Japan** to the northeast, and the **Philippines** to the south.

- Taiwan is the **most populous state that is not a member of the United Nations (UN)** and the largest economy outside the UN.
- Taiwan is **Asia's 5<sup>th</sup> largest economy**.
- It is a **global leader** in chip manufacture and the **second-largest manufacturer of IT hardware, etc.**
- **Relationship between China and Taiwan:**
  - The **People's Republic of China (PRC)** views the island as a province, while in **Taiwan—a territory with its own democratically elected government—** leading political voices **have differing views on the island's status** and relations with the mainland.
  - China and Taiwan maintain a fragile relationship, which has improved during the past seven years but is periodically tested.
  - **'One China Policy'** is the diplomatic acknowledgement of China's position that there is only one Chinese government.
    - This means that countries seeking diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China (PRC, Mainland China) must break official relations with the Republic of China (ROC, Taiwan) and vice versa.

## Key Points

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- **India-Taiwan Relations:**
  - **Diplomatic Relations:**

India and Taiwan **do not have formal diplomatic relations** but since 1995, both sides have maintained representative offices in each other's capitals that function as de facto embassies. India has **backed the "one-China policy"**.
  - **Economic Relations:**
    - **Trade ties** amounted to **USD 7.5 billion in 2019**, up from USD 1 billion in 2000.
    - India and Taiwan **in 2018 signed a bilateral investment agreement**.
      - There are **around 200 Taiwanese companies** in the field of electronics, construction, petrochemicals, machine, Information and Communications Technology and auto parts operating in India.
    - In the **field of science and technology**, there are more than thirty ongoing government-funded joint research projects.
  - **Cultural Relations:**

Both sides have also expanded **educational exchanges** after a mutual degree recognition agreement in higher education was signed in 2010.

- **Challenge in the Relations:**
  - **One China policy:** India finds it difficult to realise the full potential of its bilateral relationship with Taiwan. At present, about 15 countries worldwide continue to recognise Taiwan as an independent state. India is not among the sixteen countries.
  - **Hurdles in Economic Cooperation:** Taiwan's increased investments have occurred in the face of **cultural challenges, bureaucratic hurdles, and pressure on India from domestic producers.**
- **Scope of Increasing Ties with Taiwan:**
  - **Taiwan is an important geographical entity in the Indo-Pacific region.** India's vision of the Indo-Pacific is inclusive and it must encourage the participation of Taiwan and other like-minded countries.
  - **India is already a major focus country in Taiwan's New Southbound Policy,** launched in 2016. Under this, Taiwan aims to increase its international profile by expanding political, economic, and people-to-people linkages.
    - Taiwan's reputation as the world leader in **semiconductor and electronics** complements India's leadership in **ITES (Information Technology-Enabled Services).**
    - This can contribute much to the "**Make in India**", "**Digital India**" and "**Smart Cities**" campaigns.
    - Taiwan's **agro-technology and food processing technology** can also be very beneficial for India's agriculture sector.
  - **Taiwan is an integral part of the regional supply chain mechanism,** and a **trade agreement with Taiwan** will help India remain connected to the regional economic dynamism, amidst its attempts to **de-couple from China.**

## Way Forward

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- The **two countries are vibrant democracies,** and **parliamentary interactions and visits** can **strengthen** their commitment towards the **rule of law and good governance.**
- The objective of this deepening engagement is **not to field ties with Taiwan as a countermeasure to growing animosity with China,** but to de-hyphenate India-Taiwan ties from India-China relations. Taiwan is reaching out to India; India too should reciprocate.

Source:TH

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## Covid-19: India's Leading Cause of Death

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### Why in News

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According to the most recent estimates by the **Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME)**, the **Covid-19 pandemic has emerged the biggest cause of death in India.**

IHME is an independent global health research centre at the University of Washington, US.

## Key Points

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- **Death due to Covid-19 Pandemic:**
  - India has recorded **more than 19 million cases of coronavirus**-second only to the US and has **confirmed more than 2,15,000 deaths.**
  - The **human toll of the pandemic is more than double the number of humans killed in over 320 natural disasters** during the recent two decades (2000-2019).
- **Other Top Causes of Deaths in India:**
  - Ischemic heart disease (second),
  - Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (third),
  - Strokes (fourth),
  - **Diarrhoeal diseases** (fifth),
  - **Neonatal disorders** (sixth),
  - **Lower respiratory infections** (seventh),
  - **Tuberculosis** (eighth),
  - **Diabetes mellitus** (ninth) and
  - **Chronic liver diseases**, including cirrhosis (tenth).
- **Reasons for Covid-19 being the Leading Cause of Death:**
  - The **'double mutant' B.1.617** Indian variant of SARS-CoV-2 has heightened risk.
  - Lives have been lost due to the **lack of preparedness of governments**, India's **poor health infrastructure, lack of medical oxygen** and even **medicines.**
  - The **Centre and state governments have been accused and held responsible** by the **Supreme Court** and High Court for undermining the scale of crisis and failure to manage it.
  - Experts have also been **unhappy with India's Covid-19 vaccine procurement and pricing policy.** States have to await their quota of vaccines.

## Way Forward

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- The IHME advises governments **to impose strict physical distancing norms** for six weeks at least once deaths cross 8 per million.
- The Supreme Court advised both Centre as well as states **to resort to lockdowns** if needed but to also ensure livelihoods weren't impacted.

**Source: DTE**

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## SUTRA Model

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## Why in News

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Many scientists are blaming the **government-backed model, called SUTRA (Susceptible, Undetected, Tested (positive), and Removed Approach)**, for having a larger role in creating the perception that a **second wave of Covid was unlikely in India**.

The **second wave** of Covid-19 has **claimed thousands of lives since April 2021**.

## Key Points

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- **About:**

- Scientists from the IITs of Kanpur and Hyderabad have applied the SUTRA Model **to predict the Covid graph in India**.

It first came into public attention when one of its expert members announced in October 2020 that India was “**past its peak**”.

- The model **uses three main parameters** to predict the course of the pandemic which are :
  - **Beta:** Also called **contact rate**, which measures **how many people an infected person infects per day**. It is **related to the R0 value**, which is the number of people an infected person spreads the virus to over the course of their infection.
  - **Reach:** It is a **measure of the exposure level** of the population to the pandemic.
  - **Epsilon:** It is the **ratio of detected and undetected cases**.



- **Problems with SUTRA:**

- **Variability:**

There have been many instances of the SUTRA forecasts being far out of bounds of the actual caseload and the **predictions of the SUTRA model are too variable to guide government policy.**

- **Too Many Parameters:**

- The SUTRA model was problematic as it **relied on too many parameters, and recalibrated those parameters whenever its predictions “broke down”.**
- The more parameters you have, the more you are in danger of ‘overfitting’. You can fit any curve over a short time window with 3 or 4 parameters.

- **Ignores Behaviour of the Virus:**

The SUTRA model’s **omission of the importance of the behaviour of the virus**; the fact that some people were bigger transmitters of the virus than others (say a barber or a receptionist more than someone who worked from home); **a lack of accounting for social or geographic heterogeneity and not stratifying the population by age** as it didn’t account for contacts between different age groups also undermined its validity.

- **Ignores the Reason For Change:**

- New **variants** showed up in the SUTRA model as an increase in value of parameters called ‘**beta**’ (that estimated contact rate).
- As far as the model is concerned, it is observing changes in parameter values. **It does not care about what is the reason behind the change.**

**Source:TH**

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## **Asiatic Lions**

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### **Why in News**

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Recently, eight **Asiatic lions** at Hyderabad’s **Nehru Zoological Park** have tested positive for the deadly **coronavirus**.

- It is the **first known** case of the human infecting the felines and making them sick in India.
- Earlier in 2020, **Tiger being infected with Covid-19** was reported in New York (Bronx Zoo).

### **Key Points**

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- **About:**
  - The Asiatic Lion (also known as the Persian Lion or Indian Lion) is a member of the ***Panthera Leo Leo*** subspecies that is restricted to India.
    - Its previous habitats consisted of **West Asia and the Middle East before it became extinct in these regions.**
  - Asiatic lions are **slightly smaller than African lions.**
  - The most striking morphological character, which is always seen in Asiatic lions, and rarely in African lions, is a **longitudinal fold of skin running along its belly.**
- **Distribution:**
  - Asiatic lions **were once distributed to the state of West Bengal in east and Rewa in Madhya Pradesh, in central India.**
  - At present **Gir National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary** is the only abode of the Asiatic lion.
    - In 2020, the Gujarat Forest Department announced an **increase in the population of Asiatic lions** in the Gir forest region.
- **Threats:**
  - Its **vulnerability to unpredictable events** such as a plague or a natural disaster, **poaching** and **locals near the Gir National Park killing the lions** in retaliation for attacks on livestock.
- **Protection Status:**
  - **IUCN Red List:** Endangered
  - **CITES:** Appendix I
  - **Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972:** Schedule I
- **Conservation Efforts:**
  - The **“Asiatic Lion Conservation Project”** has been launched by the **Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC).**
  - It has been **approved for three financial years from 2018 to 2021.**
  - It envisages **scientific management with the involvement of communities** in coordination with multi-sectoral agencies for **disease control and veterinary care** for overall conservation of Asiatic lions.

## **Nehru Zoological Park**

- It is **one of the largest zoos of India** and one of the top sightseeing places to visit in Hyderabad, Telangana. **Run by the Forest department, Government of Telangana,** the zoo has been named after Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of the country.
- It was **opened to the public in the year of 1963.**
- It is situated near the historically important **Mir Alam Tank, which is 200 year old and is the first multi-arch masonry dam in the world.**

**Source:TH**

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# World Press Freedom Day 2021

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## Why in News

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The **World Press Freedom Day (WPF)** is an annual celebration of press freedom, observed on **3<sup>rd</sup> May** every year.

- The main celebration is organized by the **UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)**.
- The **theme for WPF 2021** is “**Information as a Public Good**”.

## Key Points

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- **Background:**
  - The day was proclaimed by the **UN General Assembly** in 1993, following the recommendation of **UNESCO’s General Conference** in 1991.
  - The day also **marks the 1991 Windhoek Declaration** (adopted by UNESCO). It aimed towards the ‘development of a free, independent and pluralistic press’.
- **Three Key Highlights of WPF 2021:**
  - Steps to ensure the **economic viability of news media**.
  - Mechanisms for ensuring **transparency of Internet companies**.
  - **Enhanced Media and Information Literacy (MIL) capacities** that enable people to recognize and value, as well as defend and demand, journalism as a vital part of information as a public good.
- **World Press Conference 2021:**
  - The 2021 Global Conference was **hosted by UNESCO** and the Government of **Namibia**.
  - It called for **urgent attention to the threat of extinction faced by local news media** around the world, a crisis worsened by the Covid-19 pandemic.
  - It **put forward ideas** to tackle the challenges of our online media environment, push for more transparency of internet companies, strengthen safety of journalists, and improve their working conditions.

## Freedom of Press in India

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- Freedom of press is **not expressly protected by Indian legal system** but it is **impliedly protected under article 19(1) (a) of the constitution**, which states - "All citizens shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression".
- In **1950**, the Supreme Court in **Romesh Thappar v. State of Madras** observed that freedom of the press lay at the foundation of all democratic organisations.

- However, **Freedom of press is also not absolute**. It faces **certain restrictions under Article 19(2)**, which are as follows-
  - Matters related to interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency or morality or in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence.
- **Related Rankings/Findings:**
  - India has been **ranked 142<sup>nd</sup> out of 180 nations** in the **World Press Freedom Index, 2021**, published by Reporters Sans Frontieres (RSF) or Reporters Without Borders.
  - Reports such as '**Freedom in the World 2021** (Freedom House, US)', '**2020 Human Rights Report** (US State Department)', '**Autocratisation Goes Viral** (V-Dem Institute, Sweden)' have all highlighted **intimidation of journalists in India**.

Source: DTE

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## Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana

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### Why in News

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More than 28.68 crore loans for an amount of **Rs. 14.96 lakh crore** have been sanctioned by banks, NBFCs and MFIs since the launch of **Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY)**.

### Key Points

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- **About Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY):**
  - **Launch and Aim:**
    - It was **launched by the government in 2015** for providing loans up to **Rs. 10 lakh to the non-corporate, non-farm small/micro-enterprises**.
  - **Funding Provision:**
    - **MUDRA**, which stands for **Micro Units Development & Refinance Agency Ltd.**, is a financial institution set up by the Government.
    - It **provides funding** to the non-corporate small business sector **through various last-mile financial institutions** like Banks, **Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs)** and **Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs)**.
    - **MUDRA does not lend directly to micro-entrepreneurs/individuals**.
  - **Three Products:**
    - MUDRA has created three products i.e. '**Shishu**', '**Kishore**' and '**Tarun**' as per the stage of growth and funding needs of the beneficiary micro unit.
      - **Shishu:** Covering loans up to Rs. 50,000.
      - **Kishore:** Covering loans above Rs. 50,000 and up to Rs. 5 lakh.
      - **Tarun:** Covering loans above Rs. 5 lakh and up to Rs. 10 lakh.
  - Loans under this scheme are **collateral-free loans**.

- **Achievements:**

- **Loans** have been given to **disadvantaged sections of society such as women entrepreneurs, SC/ST/OBC borrowers, Minority community borrowers, etc.** The focus has also been on **new entrepreneurs**.
- As per a survey conducted by Ministry of Labour and Employment, PMMY helped in **generation of 1.12 crore net additional employment from 2015 to 2018.**  
Out of the **1.12 crore** of estimated increase in employment, **women accounted for 69 lakh (62%).**

Source: PIB

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## **Purchasing Managers' Index**

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### **Why in News**

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The seasonally adjusted **IHS Markit India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI)** was at 55.5 in April 2021, little changed from March's reading of 55.4.

### **Key Points**

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- It is a **survey-based measure** that asks the respondents about changes in their perception about key business variables as compared with the previous month.
- The **purpose** of the PMI is to provide information about current and future business conditions to company decision makers, analysts, and investors.
- It is **calculated separately** for the manufacturing and services sectors and then a **composite index** is also constructed.
- The PMI is a number **from 0 to 100.**
  - A print **above 50 means expansion**, while a score below that denotes contraction.
  - **A reading at 50** indicates no change.
- If **PMI of the previous month is higher** than the PMI of the current month, it represents that the economy is contracting.
- It is **usually released at the start of every month.** It is, therefore, considered a good leading indicator of economic activity.
- PMI is **compiled by IHS Markit for more than 40 economies** worldwide.  
**IHS Markit is a global leader** in information, analytics and solutions for the major industries and markets that drive economies worldwide.
- As the official data on industrial output, manufacturing and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth comes much later, PMI helps to make informed decisions at an earlier stage.

- It is **different from the Index of Industrial Production (IIP)**, which also gauges the level of activity in the economy.
  - IIP covers the broader industrial sector compared to PMI.
  - However, PMI is more dynamic compared to a standard industrial production index.

**Source: TH**

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