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10/20/2016

When i began my preparation, like everyone else, I used to spend 2- 2.5 hours reading the newspaper.

But that is a mistake, and I slowly learned. Here I am sharing my strategy.

My newspaper notes from the Hindu were very **MAINS centric**, what that means is that I used to keep the factual information to only the very important.

The focus was more on the issue, what it means, how can it be beneficial, what are the cons associated with it and finally if I could come up with, I would add certain solutions.

Thus, **my newspaper notes were very exhaustive**. I think that really helped me in getting a good score in GS papers for the Mains exam. My strategy was as follows:

Time Allotted

I would try to finish the newspaper in about **1 hour everyday**.

I would make sure that the time did not exceed 1 hour because if that is happening then in most cases you are wasting your time reading the unimportant bits.

If you are regular, the newspaper can easily be finished in 1 hour or less. Having said that, when I just started reading the newspaper I would end up spending around 2 to 2 1/2 hours on the newspaper.

Thus, **weeding out the unimportant and focussing on only the UPSC centric news is a skill which will be developed overtime. Be patient.**

Focus Areas

The mains syllabus of UPSC is very descriptive.

They mention almost every area from where questions can be asked. **That should be your guiding document while reading newspapers.**

Stick the syllabus near your study area so that it remains in constant view.

Based on that **any news item you read can be seen as useful for GS Paper 1,2,3,4 or from your optional perspective.**

If it doesn't fit any paper then it needs to be skipped. Eg. Sports news, celeb news, etc.

Initially it maybe a little overwhelming to ensure that the news articles you read are restricted only to the UPSC syllabus but overtime you will become a champ.

What to skip



Any news which is too controversial in nature, pure gossip, purely political in nature should be immediately skipped.

Also, any verbal battles between the politicians during elections, purely business related news, local news should also be skipped.

UPSC asks questions from news items which are purely ISSUE based.

Thus, any news which is to be read should be judged from purely that perspective.

Eg: If elections are on in a state, questions can be asked on making the process of election efficient in India, problems faced during elections, reasons for low voter turnout – how can that be changed etc.

Thus, while reading such news articles skip the party politics, the party numbers etc.

Sorting

This is **THE MOST crucial** part of newspaper notes. Your notes must be such that they can be used for easy revision.

If you cannot revise from your notes then no matter how well were they made, they are purposeless. Keeping that in mind, sort your notes either **TOPICWISE or DATEWISE**.

I used to make my notes datewise because I had no initial guidance as to how to make notes but I would strongly recommend that **you make your notes TOPICWISE**.

This can be done easily by creating separate notebooks for each GS paper and adding the respective news to that particular notebook.

Eg: The notebook for PAPER 3, can be used for any news item related to science, economics, security etc. For this purpose you may even sub divide your Paper 3 notebook based on the subcategories.

This will allow for quick revision on the day before the exam and better recollection of facts in the mains exam.

Content

Broadly the content of your newspaper notes should only be from the newspaper but many times we notice that newspaper articles are either very concise or do not deal with every aspect of that particular news.

In these cases, please refer to the internet (PIB, PRS, EPW or WIKI) that very instant and add info to your newspaper notes.

Do not postpone this for later as that “LATER” will never come. This way you would have covered a topic from various sources and would have exhaustive, good quality notes for the exam.

Copy verbatim or “In your own words”

Your notes should essentially be in YOUR OWN language. That is why they are called YOUR notes. Please do not copy the content from the newspaper.

That serves no purpose and is difficult to read. First, read the article while marking the important points.

Then make your notes based on what you understood from the article in a language that YOU understand. This will make it easy for you to read and understand your notes. Also, writing down after understanding helps in better recollection.

Loose Sheets vs. Notebook

This is the most frequently asked question. Honestly it doesn't matter. Do what suits you. If you like revising from loose sheets and think that you can use them while travelling to revise the day's news, then use loose sheets. If notebook seems more organised use that. **It doesn't matter as long as you find it comfortable.**

Colour Coding

I had a habit of colour coding my notes (using different colour pens) for which I was constantly mocked during classes and otherwise. I would use black for all headings, blue for the content and red to highlight the key words or anything important.

This made my notes very easy to read for quick revision as the day before the exam I would only read the portion I marked in RED. I found this habit useful as well as entertaining but then again to each his own. If you don't like to use three colours, don't use them.

If you do, then please go ahead and ignore all those who mock you. Trust me you will have the last laugh!

Finally all I want to say is that your notes should serve **your purpose** of clearing the UPSC exam. They should help you in your revision and easy recall. As long as they are useful in that whatever way suits you, **please follow only that and ignore what anybody else says.**

Some random samples from my notes (Please excuse the hand writing!):

28/2



Date
21/2/15

(*) "From license Raj to Appellate Raj"

Financial Sector Legislative Reforms Commission (FSLRC) suggested for having a single appellate authority for all financial sector watchdogs, including RBI.

(*) Thermal power plants in India.

Feb 2015

India's coal based power plants rated worst in the world according to Centre for Science & Environment (CSE) under the Green Rating Project.

A plant following all best practices gets 80% score whereas Indian plants get 23%.

THE WAY AHEAD	should be given more powers to enforce compliance.	should be only for supercritical/ ultra supercritical plants.	sequence in which plants are asked to supply power) should ensure polluting plants are not called first because they are the cheaper.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National norms for PM are weak and need to be brought in line with global standards. National norms for SO_x, NO_x and mercury are absent and need to be established with short breathing room to install new abatement technologies. Monitoring by regulators should be strengthened - they 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ash policy should support higher usage of ash. Coal washing capacity needs to be doubled to meet increased use. Regulations/incentives to ensure improvement in capacity utilisation. Approvals for new capacities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Old inefficient plants should be closed at an aggressive pace. Efficiency improvement schemes like Perform, Achieve and Trade (PAT) should be strengthened with ambitious targets and more thorough analysis of plants' performance. The dispatch order (i.e. the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearances given to new capacities should be based on best achievable water consumption practices and levels. Water tariffs should be increased to curb excessive use.

(*) India - Sri Lanka Nuclear pact.

colombo's first such deal with any country

(*) India's air quality mobile app SAFAR =
air.



useful for
APP also

Date

11th June '15

Right to Clearance - Telangana

- similar to RTI, RTC recognises that businesses have right to know why project proposals are being delayed.
- to demand redress for unnecessary procrastination.
- RTC will have fine of Rs. 1000 on officials for each day of delay in granting clearance to a project.
- allow businesses to know exact reason why a proposal is stuck.
- 15 day time limit for clearing mega projects of over Rs. 200 crore & 30 days for smaller projects. If govt dept miss deadline, project will get automatically approved.

Bibek Debroy Committee → effective measures along with timeline.

- commercial ATCing practices & greater decentralisation of power.
 - Entry of private sector to Indian Railways (not privatisation of railways) a quasi-judicial body.
 - having an independent regulator for railways.
 - exposing railway production units to competition.
 - dedicated freight corridor should be made separate from Indian Railways.
- In 2012, there was a committee by Sam Pitroda had suggested for evolving railways at 5-6 lakh crore in 10 years.

- railway employees have an issue with this.
- railway board which is extremely centralised may have a major issue with this.

(*) Dadaab in Kenya biggest refugee camp of the world.



India Neutrino observatory

Date

377

- set to open in Theni district (Madurai) TN.
- will have a Magnetized Iron Calorimeter (largest in the world)
- INO needs to be built deep in the earth because in the atmosphere there are a no. of neutrinos which may interfere with the neutrinos detected under the earth.
- Neutrinos are very useful because:-
 - they can pass through all matter.
 - Neutrinos can be used to detect plutonium content and monitor & detect pilferages. (This can help in ensuring terror groups cannot acquire nuclear weapons)
 - Neutrinos can help us detect mineral & oil deposits in the earth.
 - Neutrinos can also help in detecting defects deep within the earth & be the answer to early warning system for earthquakes.
- Geo neutrino - found in the earth. Decay of Uranium, Thorium, ~~Plutonium~~ Potassium in earth's crust.

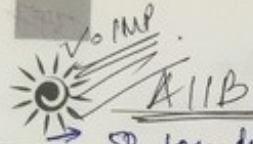
Analyzing geoneutrines using earth tomography can help us understand seismological data of the earth.

sahyadri corridor

19th/20th June

- Saigardi port, connecting S.P to Digni station.

→ ... 1992-93 came under B.N. Srikrishna



Definite Q. do extensive research.

Date

- 50 founding members. (including India)
- Focus on infrastructure development in Asia.
- Initial authorised capital stock of 100 billion.
- regional members will be majority share holders holding 75% of shares.
- UK is the first G7 nation to join AIB.
- China, India & Russia are 3 largest share holders.

PUB AP

Delhi govt set up the Swraj fund to be given to each of the 70 assembly constituencies. Though this citizens can implement programmes prioritised by them against their area.
RWA not clear about the fund yet.

- ④ Route Across America (RAAM) is the world's longest bike race won by Hilander Mahajan & his brother Mahendra.
→ 1st Indians to win.
Starts from west coast of America & ends at east coast.
50% longer than Tour De France.

④ Aghazankulam good trading post between the Sangam pandyas & Rome.
Madurai was capital of pandyas.

→ Leap second account for earth's rotation slowing down.