

06 Oct 2019: Comprehensive News Analysis

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. GS1 Related

B. GS2 Related

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. [Nitaqat law- Indians stranded in Saudi seek help](#)

C. GS3 Related

ENVIRONMENT

1. [Green Crackers](#)
2. [Hindon River- Sanitation force to clean](#)

DEFENCE

1. [Army Battle Casualties Welfare Fund \(ABCWF\)](#)

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. [IGIB finds a protein with better precision in gene-editing](#)

D. GS4 Related

E. Editorials

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. [How will purchases from Russia affect India-U.S. ties?](#)

SECURITY

1. [Does the Citizenship \(Amendment\) Bill go against Article 14 of the Constitution?](#)

F. Tidbits

G. Prelims Facts

1. [Wild Life Week in India](#)
2. [Goa Maritime Conclave \(GMC\)](#)
3. [India is home to Asia's oldest bamboo](#)

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

A. GS1 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

B. GS2 Related

Category:INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Nitaqat law- Indians stranded in Saudi seek help

- Nitaqat is a **Saudization program introduced by the Saudi Ministry of Labour**.
- Enacted in 2011, the Nitaqat law makes it mandatory for all businesses in the private sector to reserve at least 10 percent of jobs for Saudi nationals.
 - The Nitaqat law makes it mandatory for local companies to hire one Saudi national for every 10 migrant workers.

- Based on their level of compliance, establishments are categorized into Blue, Green, Yellow and Red groups
 - Blue and Green businesses having the highest localization ratios,
 - Blue and Green establishments are rewarded for compliance
 - Yellow falling in the intermediate range
 - Yellow given more time to implement the changes
 - Red the least compliant.
 - companies in the Red zone are under pressure to comply
 - Therefore, the 'Nitaqat' law aims to gradually replace the existing expatriate workers with Saudi workers by **processes involving quotas and threats of punishment and also, tackles the issue of rising unemployment among Saudi nationals.**

Context

- Around 600 employees have been languishing in labour camps in Dammam without food, medicine, or wages.
- These workers, many of them working in Saudi Arabia for 5 to 30 years, were left in dire straits as their companies, mostly in the construction sector, **were listed in the 'Red' category after they failed to implement the Nitaqat.**

Details

- The employees had submitted a written complaint to Saudi Labour Court with the support of the Indian Embassy help desk and the verdict was in favour of them.
- But the company was not taking any step to execute the judgement
- Therefore the Union government should take up the issue in the diplomatic-level with the Saudi Ministry to take urgent steps to bring these workers home

C. GS3 Related

Category:ENVIRONMENT

1. Green Crackers

Context

- In a bid to resolve the crisis of air pollution, the Government has launched green firecrackers

Background

- The Supreme Court in October 2018 banned the sale, use and manufacture of crackers that weren't 'green' to reduce the pollution levels as firecrackers played a major role in exacerbating it
- This meant that these crackers couldn't be loud beyond a certain limit, had to be approved by the Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (PESO) and had to be **free of mercury, arsenic and barium.**
- The court also restricted the time that crackers could be burst on Deepavali and police officials were tasked with enforcement.
- However, compliant crackers weren't available in the market.

Hence this led to development of green Crackers which could reduce the impact of pollution

Green Crackers

- It has been developed by Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)
 - Components in firecrackers are replaced with others that are “less dangerous” and “less harmful” to the atmosphere
- The commonly used pollution-causing chemicals – aluminium, barium, potassium nitrate and carbon – have either been removed or sharply reduced in the green crackers
- They include environment-friendly fireworks such as sound emitting crackers, flowerpots, pencils, chakkar and sparklers.

Significance

- It would **reduce particulate matter pollution** by 30%.
 - On explosion, they reduce the dust and smoke typically associated with crackers by 30% and also decrease sulphur oxide and nitrous oxide emissions by 20%.
- These crackers **cost the same as the older** [banned ones] and are significantly greener
- A green logo as well as a Quick Response (QR) coding system has been developed for differentiation of green crackers from conventional crackers.
 - QR codes is a novel feature incorporated on the fire crackers to **avoid manufacture and sale of counterfeit products**.
 - This will also help the consumers to track the cracker using smart phones and other devices.
- This will also protect the livelihoods of millions of people engaged in manufacture and sale of fireworks across the country.

Challenges

- Cracker manufactures say they aren't sure if they will be able to supply and manufacture in sufficient quantities in 2019.
- It is too short a time before Deepavali (on the 27th and 28th) to manufacture and release them in the market.

2. Hindon River- Sanitation force to clean

- It is a tributary of the Yamuna
- Also known as Harnandi, the rain-fed river originates in the lower Himalayas in Saharanpur and passes through six districts in western Uttar Pradesh.
- The pollution levels here have earned it a 'dead river' status and its water declared ‘unfit’ even for bathing, according to the Central Pollution Control Board report of 2015.

Water Pollution

- The discharge of **untreated sewage and industrial effluents** into the rivers is mainly responsible for the pollution of the Hindon
- Those living along this river **dump their waste, be it sewage or solid waste**, into the river.

- A test by senior scientist from the Haryana State Pollution Control Board has confirmed several chemicals such as cadmium, chromium, nickel, cobalt, arsenic, lead, mercury and other heavy metals were found in the water samples

Health Impact

- The deteriorating quality of the water in the Hindon River is a health hazard, which could lead to serious kidney malfunction issues
- It can cause skin disease and other problems like hepatitis or even cancer
- Farmers use water from Hindon for agriculture
 - Vegetables and crops are grown using this polluted water because farmers have no other choice. This has poisoned the food chain and the food production is contaminated with chemicals

Context

- The Ghaziabad district administration will constitute a sanitation force to clean up the Hindon river

Details

- A sanitation force will be constituted for cleaning the river. Local residents can also be a part of it
- The irrigation department has been ordered to purchase the necessary equipment to weed out the water hyacinths
- The civil defence will also help in cleaning the river.

Category: DEFENCE

1. Army Battle Casualties Welfare Fund (ABCWF)

- The ABCWF has been set up under Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare (ESW), Ministry of Defence
- The ABCWF was instituted in July 2017 and was implemented retrospectively with effect from April 2016.
- The fund was created under the Charitable Endowments Act, 1890.
- This fund is in addition to the various schemes for the welfare of NoK (next of kin) and children of battle casualties in the form of additional ex-gratia.
 - In addition to the above assistance, the existing monetary grant includes ex-gratia (central) for various ranks ranging from ₹25 lakh to ₹45 lakh and Army group insurance, ranging from ₹40 lakh to ₹75 lakh.
- The ABCWF has been set up after a large number of **people offered to provide monetary assistance to the families of battle casualties** following an incident in February 2016 at Siachen where 10 soldiers lost their lives in an avalanche.

Context

- Heeding to a long-standing demand of the Army, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has given in-principle approval to enhance monetary assistance to the next kin of battle casualties from existing Rs. 2 lakh to Rs. 8 lakh

Details

- At present, financial assistance of Rs. 2 lakh was given to battle casualties in case of death and also to those sustaining 60 per cent and above disability besides to several other categories.
- The assistance is given in addition to liberalised family pension, financial assistance from Army group insurance, Army Welfare Fund and ex-gratia amount.

Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. IGIB finds a protein with better precision in gene-editing

To read about the topic: [Click Here](#)

D. GS4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. How will purchases from Russia affect India-U.S. ties?

Introduction

<https://byjus.com/free-ias-prep/upsc-exam-comprehensive-news-analysis-oct03-2019/>

Why is the S-400 deal important?

- The agreement to purchase the Triumf missile system **boosted India-Russia defence ties** at a point of inflection in 2018.
- Russia has traditionally been India's biggest defence supplier, but was surpassed by the U.S. in the last few years, a fact that had added to a **perceptible drift in bilateral ties**.
- Putin and Mr. Modi addressed this drift with a special "reset" summit in Sochi, which was followed by Mr. Putin's visit to Delhi, when the deal was announced.
- The Indian Air Force has also **backed the superior air defence system in that it will fill the gap in India's particular needs: countering its main adversaries and neighbours**, China and Pakistan's growing air power, while dealing with a depleting stock of fighter aircraft.
 - Pakistan has over 20 fighter squadrons, with **upgraded F-16s, and inducting J-17 from China** in large numbers.
 - China has 1,700 fighters, including 800 4-Gen fighters.
 - A **shortfall of over fighter squadrons has severely affected IAF's efforts** to pose a challenge to the enemies.

Is India the only country facing CAATSA sanctions?

By coincidence, CAATSA has now been invoked by the United States twice already, and **both times for countries buying the Triumf system from Russia.**

- In September 2018, the U.S. State Department and Treasury Department announced **sanctions on China's** Equipment Development Department (EDD), the military branch responsible for weapons and equipment, for the procurement of the S-400 Triumf air defence system and Sukhoi S-35 fighter aircraft. The sanctions were triggered when the People's Liberation Army's took delivery of the systems.
- **Washington expelled Turkey from the F-35 fighter jet programme** in July 2019 after the first delivery of S-400s was received, and says sanctions are still under consideration unless Turkey reverses its deal with Russia.

Is a sanctions waiver possible for India?

- The exit clause in the CAATSA states that "The [US] **President may waive the application** of [CAATSA] sanctions if the President determines that such a waiver is in the national security interest of the United States."
- In August 2018, the U.S. Congress also modified the waiver clause to **allow the President to certify that a country is "cooperating with the United States Government on other matters** that are critical to United States' strategic national security interests".

Government officials including Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale, National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and Mr. Jaishankar have all expressed the hope that the U.S. will exercise this waiver for the S-400 deal to India for a number of reasons:

- That a militarily stronger India is in the U.S.'s interests,
- That India cannot completely drop its traditional dependence on Russian defence equipment without being weakened.

What happens if a waiver is not granted?

- **Section 235 of the CAATSA legislation** stipulates 12 kinds of punitive sanctions that the U.S. could place on a country conducting significant transactions in defence, energy, oil pipelines and cybersecurity technology with any of the U.S.'s "adversaries", and according to the Act, the **S. President may impose "five or more of the sanctions described"**.
- These measures include export sanctions, cancellation of loans from U.S. and international financial institutions, ban on investments and procurement, restrictions on foreign exchange and banking transactions, and a visa and travel ban on officials associated with any entity carrying out the sanctioned transactions.
- **None of these is expected to go into process until India takes delivery of the five S-400 systems** it has paid an advance on, which are expected to begin in about 20 months and conclude by 2023.

Implication on India's Arms Procurement from Russia

CAATSA, if implemented in its stringent form, is likely to affect India's arms procurement from Russia in a number of ways.

- First, India's planned procurement from Russia, particularly the S-400 air defence system, Project 1135.6 frigates and Ka226T helicopters, **will come under the immediate scanner of US authorities**, as they are mandated to deter exports of key Russian defence entities
- Second, **CAATSA is likely to affect all the joint ventures (JVs) – existing or planned** — between Indian and Russian defence companies.

- Some of the existing JVs that may come under the scanner are: Indo Russian Aviation Ltd, Multi-Role Transport Aircraft Ltd and Brahmos Aerospace.
- Third, the Act will also **affect India's purchase of spare parts**, components, raw materials and other assistance for which Indian entities are dependent on Russia for domestic licence manufacturing and maintenance of existing equipment.

How would India react to USA on S-400?

- India's firm-footed response to the **S. threat of sanctions on the Russian S-400 is in sharp contrast** to its decision to "zero out" oil purchases from Iran, which were sanctioned by the U.S. in 2018, and denotes that while the **government is prepared to diversify its energy sources**, it will not be bullied on its defence security options.
- CAATSA has the potential to heighten India's traditional insecurity about the United States as a reliable partner, and **sour New Delhi's defence and security cooperation with Washington**
- Given the stakes involved, the government hopes that the U.S. will put its burgeoning strategic, defence and business bilateral relationship with India above its rancour with Russia.

Conclusion

- While CAATSA is unlikely to be imposed on India anytime soon, it is nonetheless a dampener on an otherwise booming defence relationship between India and the United States.
- It is also practically impossible for India to ignore Russia in view of the latter's importance in meeting some of the critical defence hardware requirements of the Indian armed forces and also because of the overwhelming share of Russian weaponry in the Indian arms inventory, the upkeep of which necessitates New Delhi's continued dependence on Moscow for the foreseeable future.

Category: SECURITY

1. Does the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill go against Article 14 of the Constitution?

To read about the topic: [Click Here](#)

F. Tidbits

Nothing here for today!!!

G. Prelims Facts

1. Wild Life Week in India

- It is celebrated all over the country in the month of October from 2nd to 8th October every year with the view to preserve the animal life of the India

- Wildlife Week was conceptualized in 1952 with the overall goal of raising awareness to serve the long-term goal of safeguarding the lives of wildlife through critical action.
- The Government of India organizes a variety of activities during this great period through the environmentalists, activists, educators who encourage and accelerate the people mind to become aware of the wildlife conservation

2. Goa Maritime Conclave (GMC)

Context

- The Navy hosted the second edition of GMC attended by **10 Indian Ocean littoral states and observers from a few friendly foreign countries.**

Details

- It was set up in 2017 to identify common threats in the Indian Ocean region and evolve cooperative mechanisms to tackle them.
- The theme for the conclave is “Common Maritime Priorities in IOR and need for Regional Maritime Strategy”.
- The conclave focused on **capacity building among IOR Navies to tackle emerging maritime threats**, in addition to discussing cooperative strategies for enhancing interoperability among partner maritime agencies.
- Intelligence sharing concerning terrorism, drugs and trafficking are some of the areas where there is mutual cooperation

3. India is home to Asia's oldest bamboo

Context

- An international team of researchers **found two fossil compressions or impressions** of Bamboo Culms (stems)
- They were named **Bambusiculmus Tirapensis** and **B. Makumensis** - as they were found in the Tirap mine of Makum Coalfield in Assam.
- These belonged to the **late Oligocene period** of about 25 million years ago.

Details

- Yunnan Province in China now has the highest diversity of bamboo, but the **oldest fossil in that region is less than 20 million years old**
- But a new fossil record has shown that **India is the birthplace of Asian bamboo**, and they were formed about **25 million years ago in the north-eastern part of the country.**
 - This clearly indicates that Asian bamboo was born in India and then migrated to China
 - This finding further strengthens the theory that bamboo came to Asia from India and not from Europe.
- They also found two impressions of bamboo leaves belonging to new species **Bambusium deomarensense**, and **B. arunachalense**, named after the Doimara region of Arunachal Pradesh where it was discovered.

- These leaves were found in the late Miocene to Pliocene sediments, indicating that they were between 11 and three million years old.

Key Facts

- Paleobotany deals with the recovery and identification of plant remains from geological contexts, and their use in the reconstruction of past environments and the history of life.
- With over 49,000 plant species reported as of 2018, India holds about 11.5% of all flora in the world.
- The European bamboo fossil is about 50 million years old
- Bamboo fossils are not very common in India as they are known only from the Siwalik sediments

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. With reference to Central Public Works Department in India

1. The Centralized public works can be traced to efforts of Lord Dalhousie
2. It comes under the control of Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs
3. Activities of this department has always been restricted to India

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 3 only
- c) 1 and 2 only
- d) 2 and 3 only

Answer: c

Explanation:

- CPWD came into existence in July, 1854 when Lord Dalhousie established a central agency for execution of public works and set up Ajmer Provincial Division.
- It looks after all the construction of government office buildings, residential accommodation for government employees, institutional buildings like the I.I.T., hospitals, public auditoriums, conference halls like Vigyan Bhavan, and hotels such as "The Janpath" and "The Ranjeet". etc.
 - A number of other buildings, like Libraries, research institutes, airports, radio and T.V. Centres, Telecommunication building, factories and workshops are also looked after by the C.P.W.D.
 - Activities of the C.P.W.D. are not restricted to building construction alone. The department also looks after engineering, construction of granaries, warehouses, bridges and canals that have helped the country in its fight against food shortage.
- Activities of the department have extended beyond the borders of the country.
 - The Sonali-Pokhra road project in **Nepal**, a hospital for children in **Kabul** and the department had been appointed as consultant for work of the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Institute at **Mauritius**.

Q2. Van Vihar National Park is in the state of:

- a) Rajasthan
- b) Gujarat
- c) Uttar Pradesh
- d) Madhya Pradesh

Answer: d

Explanation:

- Van Vihar National Park is located in Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh
- It is developed and managed as a modern zoological park, following the guidelines of the Central Zoo Authority.

Q3. Consider the following about Brihadisvara Temple:

1. It was built by Rajendra Chola
2. It is a Hindu temple dedicated to Vishnu
3. The temple is a part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site known as the "Great Living Chola Temples"

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) None

Answer: a

Explanation:

- Rajarajesvaram or Peruvudaiyar Koyil, is a Hindu temple dedicated to Shiva located in Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu
- It follows Dravidian architecture
- It is called as Dhakshina Meru (Meru of south).
- Built by Raja Raja Chola I between 1003 and 1010 AD, the temple is a part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site known as the "Great Living Chola Temples"
- Built out of granite, the vimana tower above the sanctum is one of the tallest in South India

Q4. Mount Vesuvius is in which country?

- a) USA
- b) Italy
- c) Indonesia
- d) Japan

Answer: b

Explanation:

- It is a somma-stratovolcano located on the Gulf of Naples in Campania, Italy
- It is considered as one of the world's most dangerous volcanoes and is also the only active volcano on Europe's mainland
- When Mount Vesuvius erupted in AD 79 it had destroyed the towns of Pompeii and Herculaneum

Context

- Ancient scrolls charred by Vesuvius could be read once again with the help of US scientists who are working on deciphering words using new x-ray technique



I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. As a sovereign country, is India able to enforce its sovereign functions in terms of defence and economy independently? Justify your opinion. (15 Marks)
2. The Citizenship Amendment bill could be a major security challenge both internally and externally. Examine. (15 Marks)