

30 Sep 2020: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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Nothing here for today!!!

B. GS 2 Related

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Why are Azerbaijan and Armenia fighting again?

Context:

Fresh clashes have erupted on the Armenia-Azerbaijan border, threatening to push the former Soviet republics back to war 26 years after a ceasefire was reached.

Details:

- Armenia (Christian majority) and Azerbaijan (Muslim majority) are a part of South Caucasia.
- The territorial dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan is over the Nagorno-Karabakh region.

Nagorno-Karabakh:

- Nagorno-Karabakh is an ethnically Armenian enclave within Azerbaijan that has been out of Azerbaijan's control since the end of a war in 1994.
 - This region has a 95% ethnically Armenian population.
 - It is internationally recognised as part of Azerbaijan.
- It broke away from Azerbaijan in a conflict that broke out as the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991.
- Though a ceasefire was agreed in 1994, Azerbaijan and Armenia frequently accuse each other of attacks around Nagorno-Karabakh and along the separate Azeri-Armenian frontier.
- Both sides have a heavy military presence along a demilitarized zone separating the region from the rest of Azerbaijan.

Background:

- The conflict can be traced back to the pre-Soviet era when the region was at the meeting point of the Ottoman, Russian and Persian empires.
- Once Azerbaijan and Armenia became Soviet Republics in 1921, Moscow gave Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijan but offered autonomy to the contested region.
- In the 1980s, when the Soviet power was receding, separatist currents picked up in Nagorno-Karabakh.
- In 1988, the national assembly voted to dissolve the region's autonomous status and join Armenia.

- When Armenia and Azerbaijan became independent after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the clashes led to an open war in which tens of thousands were killed. The war lasted till 1994 when both sides reached a ceasefire.
- By that time, Armenia had taken control of Nagorno-Karabakh and handed it to Armenian rebels. The rebels have declared independence, but have not won recognition from any country.
- The region is still treated as a part of Azerbaijan by the international community, and it wants to take it back.
- The region was particularly tense because of violent fighting between the two countries in 2016, which came to be known as the four-day war.
- The border between Armenia and Azerbaijan has been tense since 2018.

Concerns:

- The largely mountainous and forested Nagorno-Karabakh which is at the centre of the conflict is home to some 150,000 people. There is a possibility of displacement of the civilian population if a large scale war were to break out.
- The energy-rich Azerbaijan has built several gas and oil pipelines across the Caucasus to Turkey and Europe.
 - It includes the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline, the Western Route Export oil pipeline, the Trans-Anatolian gas pipeline and the South Caucasus gas pipeline.
 - Some of these pipelines pass close to the conflict zone.
 - In an open war between the two countries, the pipelines could be targeted, which would impact energy supplies.
- Military escalation would draw regional powers like Turkey and Russia deeply into the conflict.

Turkey's role:

- Turkey has historically supported Azerbaijan and has had a troublesome relationship with Armenia.
- In the 1990s, during the war, Turkey closed its border with Armenia and it has no diplomatic relations with the country.
- On the other end, the Azeris and Turks share strong cultural and historical links.
 - Azerbaijanis are a Turkic ethnic group and their language is from the Turkic family.
- After Azerbaijan became independent, Turkey established strong relations with the country, which has been ruled by a dynastic dictatorship.
- Turkey has also held a joint military exercise with Azerbaijan.
- Recently, the Turkish President has blamed Armenia for the most recent clashes and offered support to Azerbaijan.
- This fits well into Turkey's aggressive foreign policy, which seeks to expand Turkish interests to the former Ottoman territories.

Russia's stand:

- Russia sees the Caucasus and Central Asian region as its backyard. But the current clashes put the Russian President in a difficult spot as Russia enjoys good ties with both Azerbaijan and Armenia and supplies weapons to both.
- However, Armenia is more dependent on Russia than the energy-rich, ambitious Azerbaijan. Russia also has a military base in Armenia.
- Russia is trying to strike a balance between the two.
- Like in the 1990s, its best interest would be in mediating a ceasefire between the warring sides.

2. Malabar exercise: meeting to discuss Australia's entry

Context:

India will discuss its decision on whether to allow Australia into the [Malabar trilateral exercise](#) in the upcoming Quad Foreign Ministers meeting in Tokyo.

This topic has been comprehensively covered in the [20th July 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis](#).

C. GS 3 Related

Category: ECONOMY

1. Cairn seeks \$1.4 bn from Centre due to losses from tax demand

Context:

In its half-yearly statement, British oil explorer Cairn Energy Plc. has said that it is seeking \$1.4 billion from the Indian Government in losses arising from the expropriation of its investments to enforce a retrospective tax demand.

Details:

- It seeks the claim under the U.K.-India Bilateral Investment Treaty.
- The company is expecting an international arbitral tribunal to shortly give a decree on its challenge to the Indian Government seeking the amount in retrospective taxes.

Note:

- This is the second-most high-profile retrospective tax litigation against India.
- Recently, an international arbitration tribunal ruled that India's efforts to claim ₹22,100 crore in past taxes from Vodafone Group were in breach of fair treatment under the bilateral investment protection pact between India and the Netherlands.

This topic has been covered in the [26th September 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis](#).

2. 'Credit demand from priority sectors drops'

Context:

- Despite efforts by the government to boost credit supply by offering many a scheme to MSMEs and other priority sectors, the credit demand from priority sectors has dropped to a low 1.9% in the June quarter from 10.2% in 2019-2020.
- The government had offered a credit-driven boost to the economy to help small businesses tide over the impact of the pandemic.

What is Priority Sector Lending?

- Priority Sectors are those sectors that the Government of India and the Reserve Bank of India consider as important for the development of the basic needs of the country and are to be given priority over other sectors.
- The RBI mandates banks to lend a certain portion of their funds to specified sectors, like agriculture, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), export credit, education, housing, social infrastructure, renewable energy among others. This is known as Priority Sector Lending.
- This is to ensure that adequate institutional credit reaches some of the vulnerable sectors of the economy, which otherwise may not be attractive for banks from the profitability point of view.

Priority Sector Lending Certificates (PSLCs):

- Priority Sector Lending Certificates (PSLCs) are a mechanism to enable banks to achieve the priority sector lending target and sub-targets by the purchase of these instruments in the event of a shortfall. This also incentivizes surplus banks as it allows them to sell their excess achievement over targets thereby enhancing lending to the categories under the priority sector.

3. 'There will be competition to give better terms and prices to farmers'

This topic has been covered in the 27th September 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis. [Click here](#) to read.

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: SOCIAL JUSTICE

1. Going beyond the 'Me Too' movement

This topic has been covered in 12th January 2019 and 8th March 2019 Comprehensive News Analysis.

Also read about the [#MeToo Movement](#).

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Managing the global commons

Global Commons:

- 'Global Commons' refers to resource domains or areas that lie outside of the political reach of any one nation State.
- They are shared resources that cannot be managed within national jurisdictions.
- It is a term typically used to describe international, supranational, and global resource domains in which common-pool resources are found.
- Global commons include the earth's shared natural resources, such as the high oceans, the atmosphere and outer space and the Antarctic in particular.
- Cyberspace may also meet the definition of a global commons.

Read more on this topic covered in [13th February 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis](#).

Context:

- Various events that have occurred in 2020 so far such as the pandemic, record-breaking forest fires, floods and droughts in various places, and the rapid melting of Arctic ice are majorly due to the disruption of the environment.
- These events point towards the need to increase efforts in managing interactions with the environment on a global scale.

Governing shared resources:

- For the management of shared resources, there is a need to balance both private and public interests.
- For example: Each individual farmer may benefit from turning on the pump to irrigate his/her land, but on a larger scale, it contributes to declining groundwater levels and electricity blackouts.
- The spread of zoonotic diseases like [COVID-19](#); greenhouse gas emissions; biodiversity reduction; overfishing; and the accumulation of plastic waste are some of the problems within the scope of global commons.
- Garrett Hardin, a biologist popularised the notion of the tragedy of the commons, which implies that communities cannot manage their shared resources and require governmental interventions to regulate resource use or privatise the resource.
- A political scientist Elinor Ostrom in her book on governing the commons demonstrated that communities can govern on their own their shared resources, often better than imposed, well-intended solutions from outside. Ostrom was recognised in 2009 for her work by the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences.

Challenges:

- The insights of what kind of governance might be successful at the local community level do not directly address the challenges we face on a global scale.
- The consequences of human activities on a global scale are only being recognised in recent times.
- The appropriate scale of governance of global commons is a highly debated topic.

- Some argue that top-down governance with binding agreements is the only effective solution for problems of a global scale.
 - Multilateral negotiations on climate change and other global commons over decades have had limited success.
- Others have emphasised a more decentralised multi-level or polycentric approach that builds on the observed successes of local solutions.
- Empirical research demonstrates that well-intended solutions imposed on community members are typically short-lived.

Way forward:

- There is no panacea to solve this problem. Coordinated activities at different scales are needed to address the challenges in managing the global commons.
- To manage our global commons, there is a need to facilitate and accommodate the self-governance of local commons, but provide safeguards at different levels to avoid exploitation and manage risks.
- When rural and urban communities are allowed to self-govern their shared resources, there could be risks involved for which cities and nations need to accept responsibilities.
- At the local levels, initiatives and solutions could be developed that fit the local context.
- When expertise is not available, higher-level organisations could facilitate learning from peers in similar conditions.
- Failures will be inevitable when local-level experimentation is simulated, and higher-level authorities need to provide insurance for those cases.
- If local initiatives are successful, higher-level authorities need to ensure that the outcomes of those successes will not be grabbed by outsiders.

Category: GOVERNANCE

1. A demarcation in the interest of public order

The editorial throws light upon the need for the role of the District Magistrate to be clearly differentiated from the role of the Police Commissioner.

Issue:

- Riots essentially result from failure to maintain public order.
- The sequence of related events, the instance of blockading roads or deliberately creating traffic jams as a form of protests and police action in restricting or ceding space are a case study of how a few public figures intervene to incite violence changing the nature of a peaceful protest; absence of immediate arrests leads to a riot and dithering on ordering firing results in its spread.
- The Police Commissioner of Delhi, responding to criticism of partisanship, pointed out that the criminal justice system, with its inherent checks and balances, should be allowed to work.

- The other perspective is that community-wide protest is not itself a crime and Delhi Police, having magisterial powers under the Criminal Procedure Code to take preventive action, failed to maintain public order.
- The public policy issue is that such delegation confuses powers with roles.
 - First, the distinction between independent actions, for which no political clearance is needed, by the District Magistrate to maintain public order and by the police to investigate crime and make arrests, was ignored.
 - Second, maintaining public order requires the District Magistrate to make hard choices between life and property to check violence. Though any death opens the door to an inquiry, there is no justification for lack of effective police action.
 - Third, the District Magistrate is expected to consider protest as legitimate, leveraging governmental action to prevent others from exploiting the grievance. (In Delhi, the police did not distinguish between wider political support and violence caused by a few.)

Click here to know more about the [Difference between the District Collector and District Magistrate](#).

Court's distinction of concepts:

- The Supreme Court (SC) has made a distinction between:
 - **Law and order**, relating to individual crime and
 - **Public order**, pertaining to a community at large.
- The SC has also emphasised that the two terms are not interchangeable. The two concepts have different objectives and legal standards.
 - **Law and order** consists of the analysis made by police of the situation in an area and their commitment to firm action and penalties under criminal law.
 - **Public order** is a duty imposed on the District Magistrate to assess whether it is necessary to rush to the spot where law and order has been breached to prevent violence spreading and ease tension.
- The District Magistrate's role is important in exceptional situations — for example, to prevent a breach of peace at a particular place; and also for grievance redress. If an official is allotted a dual role, to both keep in place law and order and maintain public order, this could lead to the displacement of one goal in favour of the other.
- The Supreme Court has formulated certain guidelines and rules when it comes to these distinct duties.
- **The first**, concerns the degree and extent of the reach of an act on society.
 - In Ram Manohar Lohia vs. State of Bihar, the SC held that in the case of public order, the community or the public at large have to be affected by a particular action as it embraces more of the community than 'law and order', which affects only a few individuals.
 - Agitated people deliberately destroying public/ private property affect public order only when they affect a particular community as a whole.
- **Second**, in the Madhu Limaye case, the Bench reiterated that "the emergency must be sudden and the consequences must be sufficiently grave for an imposition of restrictions.

- Extension of a restriction over a larger territorial area or for a longer duration requires a relatively higher justification and carefully assessed response.
- **Third**, in *Anuradha Bhasin vs. Union of India*, the Supreme Court held that prohibitive orders should not prevent legitimate expression of opinion, or grievance or exercise of democratic rights. Specific restrictions have to be tailored to the goal, nature and stage of the emergency, requiring the adoption of the least restrictive measure.

Measures being taken:

- In *Aldanish Rein vs State of NCT of Delhi*, the High Court directed the setting up of an oversight mechanism to periodically review the exercise of magisterial powers by Delhi Police.
- The Supreme Court, in a PIL, is examining whether police officers can act as magistrates in certain cases.
- The Supreme Court has also specifically recognised the importance of the assessment of the role of the District Magistrate, distinct from that of the police.

Way forward:

- The Seventh Schedule of the Constitution distinguishes between ‘police’ and ‘public order’.
- Judicial review of roles and proportionality of decisions for maintaining public order, to check whether they are the least intrusive measure, requires a policy rethink if such duties need to be delegated to the police.
- The National Police Commission also recognises the coordinating role of the District Magistrate, having more leverage than the police.
 - Kerala has both a District Magistrate responsible for public order and a senior police officer as city Police Commissioner focusing on crime.

Prevention through grievance redress and reliance on the least blunt instruments are critical for legitimacy, giving up a conflicting view.

Category: ECONOMY

1. The perils of state overreach

This topic has been covered in the **28th September 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis**.

F. Prelims Facts

Nothing here for today!!!

G. Tidbits

1. Afghan negotiator urges new era in ties with Pak

What's in News?

The chief of Afghanistan's peace negotiating team, Abdullah Abdullah is on a visit to Pakistan.

- Abdullah Abdullah is in Pakistan on a bridge-building mission meant to mend deep-rooted mistrust between the two countries.
- He said that the time has come for the two neighbouring countries to shun the suspicion that had dogged past relations.
- He asserted that the two neighbours are on the threshold of a new relationship characterised by mutual respect, sincere cooperation and shared prosperity.

2. India, Denmark in strategic green alliance

What's in News?

- India and Denmark have begun a new era of partnership in the form of a “far-reaching Green Strategic Partnership”.
- The green alliance will give Denmark a special place in delivering sustainable solutions to India.
- The partnership aims to create a framework for significant expansion of cooperation in areas of renewable energy, environment, economy, climate change and science and technology.

Note:

- The Ministry of External Affairs said over 140 Danish companies are currently participating in the “[Make in India](#)” initiative in India.

3. EU raises concerns over action against Amnesty

What's in News?

Expressing concerns about the government's investigation into Amnesty International (AI), the [European Union](#) said it hopes the global human rights agency can continue its work in India.

Details:

- The action against AI including freezing their funds followed a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) inquiry, and is part of the government's scrutiny of more than 20 international NGOs including Greenpeace, Compassion International, and Ford Foundation, over the past few years.
- The government defended its actions and said AI is in clear contravention of Indian law.

Issue:

- In order to circumvent the FCRA regulations, Amnesty UK remitted large amounts of money to four entities registered in India, by classifying it as Foreign Direct Investment ([FDI](#)).
- A significant amount of foreign money was also remitted to Amnesty (India) without MHA's approval under FCRA.
- According to the Ministry of Home Affairs, the rerouting of money was in contravention of extant legal provisions. It asserted that human rights cannot be an excuse for defying the law of the land.

- MHA also added that India, by settled law, does not allow interference in domestic political debates by entities funded by foreign donations.

Read more about the **Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA)**

4. Maharashtra modifies Forest Rights Act

What's in News?

The Maharashtra Governor has issued a notification modifying the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006.

- The decision is likely to provide a major relief to Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest-dwelling families residing in the scheduled areas of the State.
- The move aims to:
 - Prevent the migration of forest-dwelling families outside their native villages.
 - Provide them housing areas by extending the village site into forest land in their neighbourhood.
- It will enable tribals and other traditional forest dwelling families to build houses in the neighbourhood forest areas.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements with respect to Mizoram:

1. Mizoram shares an international border with Myanmar only.
2. It has the highest proportion of tribal population among all the states in India.
3. Tripura, Manipur, Assam and Nagaland border the state.

Which of the given statement/s is/are correct?

- a. 1 and 3 only
- b. 1, 2 and 3
- c. 2 and 3 only
- d. 2 only

Answer: d

Explanation:

- Mizoram shares an international border with Myanmar and Bangladesh.
- Among States, Mizoram has the highest proportion of Scheduled Tribes (94.43) and Uttar Pradesh has the lowest proportion of Scheduled Tribes (0.57).
- It has the highest proportion of tribal population among all the states in India.
- Tripura, Manipur and Assam border the state.

Q2. Consider the following statements with respect to Cat Que virus:

1. It infects both humans and livestock species.
2. It is an arbovirus.
3. Pigs are its primary mammalian hosts.

Which of the given statement/s is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 and 3 only
- c. 1, 2 and 3
- d. None of the above

Answer: c

Explanation:

- CQV belongs to the Simbu serogroup.
- One of the arthropod-borne viruses (arboviruses), the CQV may cause febrile illnesses, meningitis, and paediatric encephalitis among humans.
- Arbovirus is an informal name used to refer to any viruses that are transmitted by arthropod vectors.
- It infects both humans and economically important livestock species.
- The presence of CQV in Culex mosquitoes in China and pigs in Vietnam suggests the susceptibility of Asian countries to CQV.

Q3. Consider the following statements with respect to RBI guidelines on Priority Sector

Lending (PSL):

1. All scheduled commercial banks and foreign banks with a sizable presence in India must set aside 40% of their Adjusted Net Bank Credit (ANDC) for PSL.
2. Regional rural banks, co-operative banks and small finance banks have to allocate 75% of Adjusted Net Bank Credit (ANDC) to PSL.
3. Bank finance to start-ups up to Rs. 50 crore shall be considered as PSL.

Which of the given statement/s is/are INCORRECT?

- a. 1 only
- b. 1 and 2 only
- c. 3 only
- d. None of the above

Answer: d

Explanation:

Self-explanatory.

Q4. Consider the following statements with respect to the Malabar Exercise:

1. It is a bi-annual Trilateral Maritime Exercise conducted between the navies of India, the United States and Japan.
2. It started off as a bilateral exercise between India and Japan in 1992.

Which of the given statement/s is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: d

Explanation:

- Malabar Exercise is an annual Trilateral Maritime Exercise conducted between the navies of India, the United States and Japan.
- Although it started off in 1992 as a bilateral exercise between India and the US, Japan joined in 2015 to make it a trilateral exercise.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) play an important role in fostering international rule of law. Critically examine. Also analyse the impact that multiple international arbitrations could have on India's reputation as an investment destination. (15 Marks, 250 Words) (GS 3 Economy).
2. What do you understand by "Global commons"? Discuss how governing the global commons is the defining challenge for current and future generations. (15 Marks, 250 Words) (GS 2 International Relations).