

01 Aug 2021: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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A. GS 1 Related

Category: ART AND CULTURE

1. Ruins of an Indus Valley Civilisation Site

Context:

- **Dholavira, the archaeological site of a Harappan-era city** has been named in the UNESCO's World Heritage list.

For more information on Dholavira and its distinct features refer to the following articles:

[UPSC Comprehensive News Analysis of 28th July 2021](#)

[PIB Summary and analysis of 27th July 2021](#)

B. GS 2 Related

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Sri Lanka seeks to reset relations with India

Context:

- Sri Lanka's new High Commissioner-designate to India through the nation's new **"Integrated Country Strategy" for India** aims to restore ties with it.

Background:

- In recent years, the **Indo-Sri Lanka bilateral relationship has been increasingly dominated by a transactional approach** that has resulted in a **growing trust deficit** between the two nations.
- The bilateral relationship has been under strain over a number of issues.

Cancelled port project:

- In February 2021 Sri Lanka had **scrapped the East Container Terminal project of Colombo** signed in 2019 with India.
- This came amid other signs of China gaining the upper hand in infrastructure deals in Sri Lanka.

Fishermen's issue:

- A major source of concern for the bilateral relations has been the **conflict in the Palk Bay**.
- Sri Lankan fishermen object to Indians using bottom trawlers and fishing illegally along their coast. There have been arrests of Indian fishermen which has led considerable backlash in India.

India overlooking SL's request for financial support:

- Sri Lanka has expressed disappointment over the lack of movement on the requests it made to India for assistance, including a **debt repayment waiver** for three years and a separate **currency swap for \$1 billion** to help with economic crisis.

Economic aspects:

- The negotiations for **Economic and Technology Cooperation Agreement** have remained deadlocked.
- Sri Lanka has been complaining of increasing protectionism and limited market access in India.

Details:

- Sri Lanka's Integrated Country Strategy for India proposes **building connectivity between the two nations, promoting trade and investment, as well as religious exchanges.**
 - The report recommends speeding up the West Container Terminal project that Sri Lanka offered after cancelling the ECT project, as well as the **Trincomalee Oil Tank Farm** and other pending projects involving India.
 - It advocates an **inter-agency committee on trade, investment and tourism** to increase foreign direct investment from India as well as exports from Sri Lanka.
 - The strategy paper advises promoting exchanges of Buddhist and Hindu scholars as well as Sri Lankan Catholic pilgrims.

Conclusion:

- **Bound by geography, economics, culture, history and democratic values**, India-Sri Lanka bilateral relations hold immense potential as well as significance for both nations.

2. India all set for UNSC presidency term

Context:

- India is scheduled to hold high-level meetings and briefings as part of its **month-long presidency of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).**

Details:

- India has outlined the following focus areas:

Maritime security:

- Maritime security is inevitable for the maintenance of international peace and security.
- In this direction, India proposes **international cooperation to tackle maritime crime and security issues.**

Counterterrorism:

- Terrorist acts pose immense threat to international peace and security.
- In this direction there is the need to enhance coordination between the U.N. and the **Financial Action Task Force (FATF)** to address the **link between money-laundering and terror-financing.**
- There is the need for enhanced attention on the **linkages between terror and transnational crime.**

Peacekeeping:

- **India is one of the top troop contributors to the U.N. missions.**

- A key priority would be to ensure the safety of the Indian peacekeeping personnel. The use of technology can be helpful in this direction.
 - India is expected to deploy a mobile app — **UNITE AWARE** — that will provide terrain information and “improve situational awareness” for peacekeepers.

C. GS 3 Related

Category: ECONOMY

1. SEBI urges peers to rethink bond market curbs

Context:

- **SEBI** has called on **RBI**, **IRDAI** and PFRDA to **relax investment regulations in bond market**.

Background:

NPA plagued banking system:

- Banks have been bearing the **burden of NPAs** and are **not in a position to provide long term capital** for corporations or infrastructural projects.

Small and heavily regulated bond market:

- The alternate financial route of **bond market remains small in the Indian economy**.
- There is very **little policy support for bonds** in the Indian economy.
 - Corporate bonds are not accepted as collateral under RBI’s Liquidity Adjustment Facility and also not counted under Statutory Liquidity ratio.
- The corporate bond market is also burdened by **strong regulations in India**.
 - There are restrictions that limit insurers exposure to private debt and infrastructure financing.
 - INVITS are mandated a minimum credit rating to be eligible for raising money from the bond market.

Significance:

- The SEBI’s pitch for relaxation on regulations vis-a-vis the bond market will help in the **growth of the bond market in India**.
- This would allow for a freer flow of funds from provident and pension funds, insurance firms into corporate and infrastructure debt bonds. This will make the bond market a **more functional source of finance for industry and infrastructure projects**. This is inevitable for the faster economic revival of the Indian economy.
- This will also help **take off some burden from the banking system in India**.

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. End-to-end genome sequencing

Context:

- Scientists from the TelomeretoTelomere (T2T) Consortium have reported the **most complete sequencing of the human genome until now.**

Background:

Human genome:

- The human genome is the **complete set of nucleic acid sequences for humans**, encoded as deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) within the 23 chromosome pairs in cell nuclei.
- The DNA consists of a doublestranded molecule, each of which is built up by four bases – adenine (A), cytosine (C), guanine (G) and thymine (T). Every base on one strand pairs with a complementary base on the other strand (A pairs only with T, and C only with G).

Human Genome Project:

- The Human Genome Project (HGP) was an international, collaborative research program whose **goal was the complete mapping and understanding of all the genes of human beings.**
- The Human Genome Project gave the first complete human genome sequence in 2003.

Details:

- The study has added around 200 million new base pairs to the last draft of the human genome that was published in 2013.
- The study has **discovered 115 new protein coding genes.**
 - Protein-coding genes are DNA sequences that **get transcribed on ribonucleic acid (RNA) as an intermediate step before protein synthesis.** These proteins define the characteristics of the person. These proteins carry out the instructions encoded in the genes.
- The total size of the genome they have sequenced is close to 3.05 billion base pairs.

Lacunae:

- Around 0.3% of the total genome may still have errors.
- Among the sex chromosomes, only the X chromosome has been sequenced. Hence the sequence has no information about the Y chromosome.

Significance:

- The new findings will help **provide a better understanding of the human body.**
- The development marks a significant **technological feat.** The technology used by the Telomereto-Telomere Consortium used sequencing technology that could scan 20,000 base pairs at one go as against the few hundred pairs previously.
- The genome draft will form a standard for comparison in future sequencing attempts.

Category: ECONOMY

1. Is RBI planning a digital currency for India?

Context:

- Reserve Bank of India's plan to conduct pilot projects to assess the viability of using **central bank digital currency (CBDC) in India.**

For detailed information on central bank digital currency (CBDC), its significance and possible challenges in its adoption refer to the following articles:

[UPSC Comprehensive News Analysis 23rd June 2021](#)

[UPSC Comprehensive News Analysis of 26th July 2021](#)

F. Prelims Facts

1. Stellar mid-life crisis: What ails the middle-aged Sun?

Gyrochronology:

- It is one of the **methods used to estimate the age of stars.**
- There is a **relationship between rotation rate and age, the rotation rate of a star slows down with age.** When the stellar wind escapes from the star, it carries with it a part of the angular momentum of the star, which results in its slowing down.

2. Vanishing permafrost

Permafrost:

- Areas with ground temperatures that **remain below zero degrees Celsius for more than two years** are called permafrost. These permanently frozen grounds are most common in regions with high mountains and in Earth's higher latitudes—near the North and South Poles (Tundra and Taiga regions).

Permafrost thawing:

- **Rapid global warming is accelerating permafrost collapse** (permafrost thawing) all over the world.
- When thawing, permafrost **releases its long-buried elements into the environment**— its organic gas is converted into greenhouse gases (carbon dioxide and the extremely potent methane), its mercury can be toxic for humans and animals. It can also lead to the **coming back to life of thousand-year-old viruses** and lead to an outbreak of new diseases.
- Permafrost thaw poses a significant **threat to infrastructures** in the mountainous regions as well as the arctic. This could lead to loss of life and property

G. Tidbits

1. Govt. framing standards for services sector: Goyal

- **Services exports from India, which were \$17 billion in 2001-02, jumped to \$205 billion in 2020-21.**
- India has been progressing rapidly in service sectors such as healthcare, home delivery, telecom and technology.
- India is rapidly progressing to become **one of the world's largest digital markets**, be it fintech, edutech or telemedicine.

2. UN warns hunger is expected to rise in 23 global hotspots

- **The Food and Agriculture Organization and World Food Program** in their latest report have warned of a rise in global hunger hotspots in the next three months.
- It has warned of catastrophic situations in Ethiopia's embattled Tigray region, Drought hit southern Madagascar, Yemen, South Sudan and northern Nigeria.
- The report notes acute hunger not only increasing in scale but also the severity.
- Overall, **over 41 million people worldwide are at risk of famine, food insecurity and death.**

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Arrange the following in the correct Chronological order of their arrival in India:

1. Danes
2. Portuguese
3. English
4. French

Options:

- a. 1-2-3-4
- b. 2-3-1-4
- c. 2-1-3-4
- d. 1-2-4-3

Answer: b

Explanation:

- Portuguese-English-Danes-French
- In 1498, Vasco da Gama of Portugal discovered a new sea route from Europe to India. He reached Calicut by sailing around Africa via the Cape of Good Hope. This was the first arrival of European in India by Sea route.
- The British East India Company sometimes was established in 1600.
- The Danish formed an East India Company and arrived in India in 1616.
- French East India Company was established in 1664.

Q2. Consider the following statements:

1. Out of all the European colonial powers that came to India, it was the Dutch who had the shortest presence in comparison to the Portuguese and the English.
2. The first factory founded by Dutch in India was at Masulipatnam
3. The Battle of Colachel permanently ended Dutch presence in South India when the Travancore army defeated an army of the Dutch East India company

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- The Dutch East India Company was created in 1602 as “United East India Company” and in India, they established the first factory in Masulipatanam in 1605, followed by Pulicat in 1610, Surat in 1616, Bimilipatam in 1641 and Chinsura in 1653.
- The Dutch had the shortest presence in India in comparison to the Portuguese and the English. Dutch presence on the Indian subcontinent lasted from 1605 to 1825.
- The Battle of Colachel was fought in 1741 between the Indian kingdom of Travancore and the Dutch East India Company. During the Travancore-Dutch War, King Marthanda Varma’s forces defeated the Dutch East India Company’s forces.

Q3. Which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. The Sun is the largest object in our solar system, comprising 99.8% of the system’s mass.
2. The diameter of the Sun is 190 times that of the Earth

Options:

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both
- d. None

Answer: a

Explanation:

- The Sun is the largest object in our solar system, comprising 99.8% of the system’s mass.

- The diameter of the Sun is 109 times that of the Earth

Q4. With reference to the InSight mission, which of the following statements is/are incorrect?

1. It is part of NASA's Discovery Program
2. InSight is the first mission dedicated to looking deep beneath the Martian surface.

Options:

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both
- d. None

Answer: d

Explanation:

- The Interior Exploration using Seismic Investigations, Geodesy and Heat Transport (InSight) mission is a robotic lander designed to study the deep interior of the planet Mars. It is intended to study the interior structure and composition of Mars as well as to detect Marsquakes and other seismic activity, advancing understanding of the formation and evolution of terrestrial planets
- It is part of NASA's Discovery Program
 - The Discovery Program is a series of Solar System exploration missions funded by the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) through its Planetary Missions Program Office.
- As of June 2021, the most recently selected Discovery missions are VERITAS and DAVINCI+, the fifteenth and sixteenth missions in the program.

Q5. Consider the following statements:

1. The Rajya Sabha has no power either to reject or to amend a Money Bill.
2. The Rajya Sabha cannot vote on the Demands for Grants.
3. The Rajya Sabha cannot discuss the Annual Financial Statement.

Which of the statements given above is / are correct?

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

Answer: b

Explanation:

- Though the Rajya Sabha has no power either to reject or to amend a Money Bill or vote on the Demands for Grants, it can discuss the Annual Financial Statement.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Write a note on Assam- Nagaland border dispute. (10 Marks, 150 Words)[GS-2, Polity]
2. What do you understand by 'Genome Sequencing'? Discuss the advantages and limitations of Genome Sequencing. (15 Marks, 250 Words)[GS-3, Science and Technology]

