

10 Aug 2021: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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B. GS 2 Related

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Govt. delaying Collegium recommendations, says SC

Context:

- The Supreme Court has lashed out against the central government over long delays in the appointment of judges to High Courts.

Details:

- The Supreme Court has pointed out the **Centre's long delay to act on the recommendations of the Collegium and appoint judges to High Courts**.
- This delay, the SC claimed has led to **large vacancies in the High Courts** and left the High Courts with minimal judicial strength. This has adversely **affected the early adjudication of important cases**, especially high-stake commercial issues.

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. PM sets out framework for maritime security

Context:

- As part of India's United Nations Security Council (UNSC) presidency, the Indian Prime Minister chaired a debate on maritime security titled, '**Enhancing Maritime Security — A Case for International Cooperation**'.
- Maritime security is one of the focus areas outlined by India during its month-long presidency of the **UNSC**.

For more information on this topic, refer to the following article:

[UPSC Comprehensive News Analysis of 1st Aug 2021](#)

Details:

- The Prime Minister outlined a **five-principle framework for maritime security**.
 - Removing barriers to **maritime trade**.
 - **Peaceful resolution of maritime disputes in accordance with international law**. This would be extremely important for promoting mutual trust and confidence, and ensuring global peace and stability.
 - Co-operation in **tackling maritime threats from non-state actors and natural disasters**.
 - **Conservation of maritime environment and marine resources**. This gains all the more significance amid reports of pollution from plastic waste and oil spills.
 - **Promoting maritime connectivity** based on global norms and standards. This would help boost maritime trade.
- The UNSC also adopted a 'Presidential [India's] Statement' which reaffirmed that the **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)** establishes the legal framework for maritime activities.

Measures taken by India:

- **SAGAR** ('Security and Growth for all in the Region') is a 2015 Indian framework for regional maritime security.
- India had **resolved its maritime boundary issue with neighbour Bangladesh** in line with international norms and laws.

C. GS 3 Related

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. IPCC report forecasts a future of severe weather

Context:

- "Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis"- **Sixth Assessment Report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)**.

Details:

- The report notes with concern about earth heading towards a temperature rise of 1.5 degrees Celsius over pre-industrial times by the 2030s itself. The report predicts that based on existing climate action commitments by countries, the **world is on track for global temperature warming by at least 2.7°C by 2100**.
 - The **2015 Paris Climate agreement** had sought to keep global warming below 2 degrees Celsius of pre-industrial levels by the turn of the century and endeavouring to limit it to 1.5 degrees Celsius.
- The report unequivocally attributes climate change to **unsustainable human activities**.
- The report points to the **dwindling of Arctic Sea ice, permafrost thaw, shrinking of glaciers** as physical evidence of the ongoing global warming.

Concerns:

- The report warns that this degree of global warming will give rise to some irreversible effects and will only **accelerate sea-level rise and worsen extremes such as heatwaves, droughts, floods and storms**.
- A high degree of global warming will accelerate climate change and this would have a severe **impact on lives, livelihoods and natural habitats**.

Observations and forecasts relevant to India:

Rainfall pattern:

- Global warming is likely to lead to an increase in annual mean precipitation over India, with **more severe rain expected over southern India** in the coming decades. Models also indicate a lengthening of the monsoon over India by the end of the 21st century.

- The **interannual variability of the summer monsoon is likely to increase**. The monsoon extremes are likely to increase over India and South Asia and the **frequency of short intense rainy days are expected to rise**.

For more related information, refer to the following article:

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

- This increases the threat of flooding in India.

Sea level rise:

- **The Indian Ocean is warming at a higher rate than other oceans**. The warming of the ocean would lead to a rise in sea levels. Relative sea-level around Asia increased faster than the global average.
- The **sea-level rise** would give rise to challenges such as **more frequent and severe coastal flooding in low-level areas, coastal area loss and shoreline retreat**.
 - With a long coastline of about 7,517-km, India would face significant threats from the rising seas. Across the port cities of Chennai, Kochi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Surat and Visakhapatnam, 28.6 million people would be exposed to coastal flooding if sea levels rise by 50 cm.

Impact on mountainous region:

- The report predicts that the **glaciers in the Hindu Kush Himalayan (HKH) region will keep shrinking and the snow cover will retreat to higher altitudes**.
 - Notably, the Karakoram glaciers had either slightly gained mass or were in an approximately balanced state.
- Glacier run-off in the high mountains will increase up to the mid-21st century and subsequently run-off may decrease due to the loss of glacier storage.
- **Extreme precipitation is projected to increase in major mountainous regions** with potential cascading consequences of **floods, landslides and glacial lake outbursts**.

Heat extremes:

- Heatwaves and humid heat stress will become more intense and frequent during the 21st century.

Cyclones:

- **Tropical cyclones will grow stronger and wetter due to global warming**.

For more related information on this issue, refer to the following article:

[UPSC Comprehensive News Analysis of 19th May 2021](#)

- This will pose a major challenge to India given its vulnerability to [cyclones](#) along both the Bay of Bengal coastline and the Arabian sea coastline.

India's stand on the issue of climate action:

- India is currently the world's third-largest greenhouse gas emitter, but per capita emissions are much lower.
- **India has been supportive of climate action.** India has been taking a lot of measures to reduce GHG emissions.
- India has been vocal about climate action based on the **principle of common but differentiated responsibility and respective capabilities.** India's argument has been that developed countries have used up far more than their fair share of the global carbon budget and hence reaching net-zero alone is not enough, as it is the cumulative emissions up to net-zero that determine the temperature that is reached. On these lines, India has not yet committed to a net-zero emission timeline.
- India's nationally determined contribution is to reduce not absolute emissions but the emission intensity of our economy.

Recommendations:

- Every country, government, business and individual must embrace the responsibility to **keep the goal of 1.5 degrees celsius.**
- The report recommended deep emission cuts and has asked countries to **strive to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.**
- The latest scientific assessment must influence discussions at the **Conference of Parties (COP26) meeting in Glasgow** scheduled later this year and give rise to more climate action from all stakeholders.

For more related information, refer to the following article:

[UPSC Comprehensive News Analysis of 25th July 2021](#)

Recommendations:

- Developed countries with legacy emissions need to effect deep emission cuts. Developing nations should also commit themselves to steeper emissions cuts based on the promise of support from developed countries.
- The **developing countries should be supported** adequately in their climate action endeavours in the form of **easy access to low carbon technologies through technology transfer and adequate funding for mitigation and adaptation.**

Category: **ECONOMY**

1. **Rs. 11,000 crore for self-sufficiency in edible oil production: PM**

Context:

- The Central Government has allotted an outlay of Rs. 11,000 crore for the **National Mission on Edible Oil-Oil Palm (NMEO-OP)**
 - The NMEO-OP's predecessor was the National Mission on Oil Seeds and Oil Palm.

Background:

India's heavy dependency on edible oil imports:

- Despite being a major agricultural exporting country, India lacks self-sufficiency in terms of edible oils and continues to be **heavily dependent on imports for its edible oil needs**. The **share of imported palm oil is more than 55%**.
- India's dependence on expensive imports has **driven retail oil prices to new highs**.

Details:

- The new mission will strive to ensure self-sufficiency in edible oil production. Under the NMEO-OP mission, the aim is to **reduce import dependence from 60% to 45% by 2024-25**, by increasing domestic edible oil production from 10.5 million tonnes to 18 million tonnes, a 70% growth target.
- The financial outlay will be **invested in the edible oil ecosystem** to ensure that all needed facilities right from seeds to the processing technology are available to farmers.
 - This financial outlay for NMEO-OP will be over a five-year period.
- North-eastern India and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands have been identified as prime locations for oil palm cultivation.
- Along with promoting the cultivation of oil palm, this **mission will also expand the cultivation of other traditional oilseed crops in India**.

Significance:

- The mission with its focus on increasing the production of edible oil will enable a reduction in import dependency to some extent and will **enable self-sufficiency in the longer run**.
- The reduction of edible oil imports will also enable the **saving of valuable foreign exchange for India**.
- The financial outlay will also **incentivize farmers to diversify their agricultural activities into oilseed production** and this can help **increase the income of the farmers** in a substantial way.

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. A circular economy for plastic

Context:

- The **proposed India Plastics Pact**.

Background:

Plastic pollution:

- Of the many sustainability challenges that impact societies, plastic waste remains one of the most prominent.

- As per a 2021 report commissioned by Google – Closing the Plastics Circularity Gap, the world will have to manage more than **7.7 billion metric tonnes of plastic waste over the next 20 years** if urgent measures are not taken to address the exponential rise of plastic waste accumulation in the environment.

For more information on the challenges posed by plastic pollution, refer to the following article:

[Say No to Plastic: RSTV – Big Picture](#)

Details:

- The Plastics Pacts model is active in a number of countries including the U.K., South Africa, and Australia. It is now being brought to India. This will be the first such initiative in Asia. It is being brought to India by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and World Wide Fund ([WWF](#)) for Nature-India.
- The Plastics Pacts are **business-led initiatives** and aim to transform the plastics packaging value chain to make them more sustainable.
- The Plastics Pacts have four main targets:
 - **Eliminate unnecessary plastic packaging** through redesign and innovation
 - **Ensure reusability and recyclability** of all plastic packaging
 - Increase the **reuse, collection, and recycling of plastic packaging**
 - **Increase recycled content** in plastic packaging
- Targets and annual data reporting will be mandated for the above four targets for the companies which join the Plastics Pact.
- The Pact will develop a road map for guidance, form action groups and initiate innovation projects in the plastic value chain.

Significance:

- The India Plastics Pact will benefit society given the potential impact it can have on the economy and the environment.

Economic aspect:

Impetus to the plastic sector:

- The Pact will encourage the **development and maturing of the entire plastics production and management ecosystem in India.**

Boost to investment and jobs:

- The India Plastics Pact will help **boost investments in recycling infrastructure and create a new recycling capacity.** This will create additional jobs in the waste sector, and beyond.

Impetus to the informal sector:

- Integral to the Pact's framework is the involvement of the informal sector in the segregation, collection and processing of plastic waste. The plastics recycling sector is a source of livelihood for a

large number of people. **Post-consumer segregation, collection and disposal of plastics make up about half of the income of 1.5-4 million waste-pickers in India.**

Environmental significance:

Control further plastic pile up:

- The pact will **drive the circularity of plastics**. It will help increase demand for recycled content and reduce the use of virgin plastic. This will help reduce further pile-up of plastic waste in the environment.
- This will thus **help tackle plastic pollution**.

Cut down GHG emissions:

- The increased usage of recycled plastic and reduction of virgin plastic will help cut GHG emissions.
 - As per a 2019 report by the Center for International Environmental Law, by 2050, **greenhouse gas emissions from plastic could reach over 56 gigatonnes** which would amount to 10-13% of the remaining carbon budget.

In line with EPR provision of plastic waste management rules:

- The India Plastics Pact will **support the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) framework** of the government and improve solid waste management as envisioned in the [Swachh Bharat Abhiyan](#).
 - Provision 9(2) of the Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016, states that the primary responsibility for the collection of used multi-layered plastic sachet or pouches or packaging is of producers, importers and brand owners who introduce the products in the market.

For detailed information on EPR, refer to the following article:

[Extended Producer's Responsibility \(EPR\)](#)

Recommendations:

- The solution to plastic waste management must be **multi-pronged, systemic, and large scale**, to create a substantial impact.
- **India Plastics Pact should link globally with other Plastics Pacts**. This will ensure access to expertise and knowledge from different Pacts worldwide.

Category: SOCIAL ISSUES

1. Misinformation through a feminist lens

Online abuse of women:

- To add to the gender disparity in access to the internet, women are having to face online abuse.
- Though even men are targeted online, the attacks faced by both sexes are vastly different. Misinformation/disinformation targets men and women differently. **A large number of young women and girls have experienced online abuse and they are more vulnerable to such abuse.**

Forms of online abuse:

- According to a recent report of the **Special Rapporteur on violence against women for the United Nations Commission on Human Rights**, online abuse can involve a variety of activities.
- It can include actions like bullying, trolling, cyberstalking, defamation and hate speech, public shaming, and identity theft and hacking, sexual harassment and threats of sexual violence, or the sharing of intimate images and videos without permission.

Gendered disinformation:

- **Women are more prone to gendered disinformation.**
- **Misinformation and sexism have a symbiotic relationship.** Misinformation piggybacks on sexism to discredit vocal women and sexism uses misinformation to reinforce patriarchal norms.

Inter-sectional challenges:

- **Misinformation like other forms of abuse and discrimination has inter-sectional challenges.**
- Organised disinformation and sexism intersect with Islamophobia, casteism, religious bigotry and other forms of discrimination. This only increases the impact on women from such vulnerable sections.

Vulnerability of women even in high positions:

- Even women in high positions are not spared from online abuse.
 - A 2020 report by Amnesty International noted a considerable number of female politicians receiving hateful mentions on social media platforms like Twitter. A substantial proportion of them was either sexist or misogynistic.
 - Women journalists are at great risk of being under such attacks on their social media platforms. A recent report by UNESCO on online harassment faced by women journalists says that political actors instigate and fuel online violence campaigns against women journalists.
- This is indicative of the extent of online abuse against women and girls and their vulnerability to it.

Concerns:

Impact on the girls and women:

- Online abuse can have a devastating impact on the girl or woman who faces such abuse.
- It causes tremendous distress. It **affects their emotional or physical wellbeing**. It results in physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm, and erodes self-esteem among the girls and women who face such abuse.
- It can **potentially silence women and force women — including journalists and politicians — out of jobs.**

Impact on society:

- While organised misinformation and trolling affect women on a personal level, it also has a **significant impact on society.**

- A healthy democracy is participatory and promotes gender inclusiveness. Sexism and misinformation intimidate women from taking vocal stands and silences them. As a result of this increasingly hostile online environment, **many women self-censor or are driven offline entirely**, out of fears for their safety. This would deprive society of any progressive ideas coming from such women. This would be **antithetical to a progressive society**.
- With the advent of a virtual society, offline violence against women has extended to online, which makes it easier for people to commit violence without consequences. **Online abuse is a part of gender-based violence (GBV)**.
- The online crisis facing women and girls **threatens global progress on gender equality**.

Lack of measures to address the challenge:

- Rather than addressing such behaviour, **often women are asked to either ignore the abusers or block such handles**.
- The author also criticizes the social media platforms of not doing enough to stop such incidents.

Conclusion:

- Online gender-based violence is just as destructive as offline violence.
- Online violence against women and girls should be accorded necessary attention and **addressing online abuse should become a part of the feminist discourse**.

F. Prelims Facts

1. Tribals in Rajasthan seek more panchayats in scheduled areas

Fifth Schedule areas:

- The **Fifth Schedule of the Constitution** deals with the administration and control of Scheduled Areas as well as of Scheduled Tribes residing in any State other than the States of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.
- **At present, 10 States** namely Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan and Telangana have Fifth Schedule Areas.
- Tribal habitations in the states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir have not been brought under the Fifth or Sixth Schedule.
- As per **Article 244(1) of the Indian Constitution**, Scheduled Areas means such areas as the President may by order declare to be Scheduled Areas.

Criteria:

- The criteria followed for declaring an area as Scheduled Area are:
 - Preponderance of tribal population;
 - Compactness and reasonable size of the area;
 - Under-developed nature of the area; and
 - Marked disparity in economic standard of the people.

Special Provisions for Fifth Schedule Areas:

- The **Governor** of each State having Scheduled Areas shall annually, or whenever so required by the President, make a **report to the President regarding the administration of Scheduled Areas** in that State.
- The **Union Government shall have executive powers to give directions to the States** as to the administration of the Scheduled Areas.
- The Constitution provides for the establishment of a **Tribes Advisory Council (TAC)** in any State having Scheduled Areas. The TAC would consist of not more than twenty members of whom, three-fourths shall be the representatives of the Scheduled Tribes in the Legislative Assembly of the State. The TAC shall advise on such matters pertaining to the welfare and the advancement of the STs in the State as may be referred to them by the Governor.
- The **Governor may direct that any particular Act of Parliament or of the Legislature of the State shall or shall not apply to a Scheduled Area** or any part thereof in the State, subject to such exceptions and modifications, as specified.
- The **Governor may make regulations** like –
 - prohibit or restrict the transfer of land by or among members of the Scheduled Tribes in such area;
 - regulate the allotment of land to members of the STs in such area;
 - regulate the carrying on of business as money-lender by persons who lend money to members of the STs in such area.

Context:

- On the occasion of the **International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples**, tribal outfits in Rajasthan have demanded the inclusion of over 165 village panchayats of seven districts in the scheduled areas under the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP).
- The demand is based on the fact that the population of Scheduled Tribes in these panchayats had crossed 50%, making them eligible to be declared as scheduled areas.
- This they claim would facilitate the control of local communities over minor minerals and minor forest produce as well as development activities in the region while also ensuring statutory protection of the tribal population.

G. Tidbits

1. 'India mulls sharp cuts in EV levies after Tesla push'

- As per senior government officials, **India is considering reducing import duties on electric cars** based on the value of the imported EVs.
- The slashing of import duties would be done **balancing the concerns of the domestic players** and it would be dependent upon global EV companies providing some benefit to the domestic economy in the form of **commitments to take up local manufacturing** in the times to come.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. The grouping “extended troika” is seen in news in which of the following contexts?

- a. Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) negotiations.
- b. Afghanistan peace process.
- c. The Israeli–Palestinian peace process.
- d. Abraham Accords.

Answer: b

Explanation:

- Extended troika consisting of Russia, China, the United States and Pakistan is scheduled to meet soon in Doha on the Afghanistan peace process.

Q2. Consider the following statements:

1. The territorial sea extends seaward up to 12 nautical miles from its baselines and includes not only the surface but also the airspace.
2. Only civilian foreign ships are allowed innocent passage through the territorial waters.
3. The U.S. has not ratified the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Which of the given statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

- As per the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the sovereignty of a coastal State extends beyond its land territory and internal waters to an adjacent belt of sea, described as the territorial sea.
- The territorial sea extends seaward up to 12 nautical miles from its baselines and includes not only the surface but also the airspace over the territorial sea as well as to its bed and subsoil.
- As per the UNCLOS, all ships, including warships, regardless of cargo, armament or means of propulsion, enjoy the right of innocent passage through the territorial sea.
- Foreign ships exercising the right of innocent passage through the territorial sea shall comply with all such laws and regulations and all generally accepted international regulations relating to the prevention of collisions at sea and in a manner not prejudicial to its peace, good order, or security.
- The U.S. has not ratified the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Q3. Marburg virus belongs to which of the following categories?

- a. Coronaviruses
- b. Togaviruses
- c. Paramyxoviruses
- d. Filoviruses

Answer: d

Explanation:

- Marburg virus is a hemorrhagic fever virus of the Filoviridae family of viruses.
- Marburg virus causes Marburg virus disease in humans and other primates, a form of viral hemorrhagic fever.

Q4. Consider the following statements with respect to ISHAAN UDAY Scheme:

1. It is a scheme launched for the financial turnaround of the Power Distribution Companies (DISCOMs) owned by the North-Eastern states.
2. The scheme is being implemented by the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region.

Which of the given statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- The Ministry of Human Resource Development and the University Grants Commission has taken special interest with regard to the promotion of higher education in the NER.
- For improving the GER, promoting higher education and encouraging children belonging to the economically weaker sections of the NE region, the UGC has launched the “Ishaan Uday” Special Scholarship Scheme for North Eastern Region.
- Only first-year undergraduate students are eligible to apply for the scholarship.

Q5. Consider the following statements in respect of Trade Related Analysis of Fauna and Flora in Commerce (TRAFFIC):

1. TRAFFIC is a bureau under United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

2. The mission of TRAFFIC is to ensure that trade in wild plants and animals is not a threat to the conservation of nature.

Which of the above statements is/are correct? [UPSC 2017]

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

Answer: b

Explanation:

- TRAFFIC is a leading NGO working globally on trade in wild animals and plants in the context of both biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.
- Established in 1976 by IUCN and WWF to respond to the growing threats posed by unsustainable and illegal wildlife trade, TRAFFIC plays a leading role as a global wildlife trade specialist.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. The IPCC's new findings provide powerful evidence and potential indicators of climate change that are inevitable and irreversible. Discuss the strategies for mitigation of climate change. (15 Marks, 250 Words)[GS-3, Environment and Ecology]
2. Sexism and misinformation intimidate women from taking vocal stands and are antithetical to a progressive society. Elaborate. (10 Marks, 150 Words)[GS-1, Social issues]