

28 July 2021: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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A. GS 1 Related

Category: ART AND CULTURE

1. Dholavira in Gujarat on UNESCO World Heritage list

Context:

- **Dholavira, the archaeological site of a Harappan-era city** has been named in the UNESCO's World Heritage list.
 - The site had been on UNESCO's tentative list since 2014.

Read more about [Dholavira](#) in the linked article.

Background:

Dholavira:

- Dholavira is located in the **Kutch district of Gujarat**. It was discovered in 1968 by archaeologist Jagat Pati Joshi.
- After Mohen-jo-Daro, Ganweriwala and Harappa in Pakistan and Rakhigarhi in Haryana of India, **Dholavira is the sixth largest metropolis of the [Indus Valley Civilization \(IVC\)](#).**
- **Dholavira was a commercial and manufacturing hub** for about 1,500 years before its decline.
 - Dholavira was a hub for **copper metallurgy**. It is believed that traders of Dholavira used to source copper ore from present-day Rajasthan and Oman and UAE and export finished products.
 - It was also a **hub of manufacturing jewellery** made of shells and semi-precious stones, like agate and also used to export timber.
- From around 2000 BC, Dholavira entered a phase of severe aridity due to climate change and rivers like [Saraswati](#) drying up. Because of a **drought-like situation**, people started migrating toward the Ganges valley or towards south Gujarat and further beyond in Maharashtra.

Distinct features:

- The water management system, multi-layered defensive mechanisms, **extensive use of stone in construction** and special burial structures are some of the unique aspects of Dholavira.
 - Dholavira houses a cascading series of water reservoirs believed to be part of a **water harvesting system**.
 - Dholavira has a fortified citadel, a middle town and a lower town with **walls made of sandstone or limestone** instead of mud bricks as in other Harappan sites.
 - Dholavira had an enormous outer fortification running on all four sides.
 - The **funerary architecture featuring tumulus** — hemispherical structures like the Buddhist Stupas— are a unique feature of Dholavira.
 - There are remains of two open-air stadiums.
- A range of artefacts of copper, shell, stone, jewellery made of terracotta and ivory had been found at the site.

Details:

- In its release, UNESCO termed Dholavira as one of the most remarkable and well-preserved urban settlements in South Asia dating from the 3rd to mid-2nd millennium BCE (Before Common Era).
- Dholavira has become the fourth site from Gujarat and **40th from India to make it to the UNESCO's World Heritage list**. It is the first site of the ancient Indus Valley Civilization in India to get the tag.

For the list of all World Heritage sites in India refer to:

[UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India](#)

- **Other than India, Italy, Spain, Germany, China and France have 40 or more World Heritage Sites.**
- UNESCO's announcement comes just days after another site, [Kakatiya Rudreshwara \(Ramappa\) Temple](#) in Telangana, was admitted to the World Heritage List.

For more information on this refer to the following article:

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

B. GS 2 Related

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Biden, Kadhimi seal deal to end U.S. combat mission in Iraq

Context:

- U.S. President Joe Biden and Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi have sealed an agreement to **end the U.S. combat mission in Iraq by the end of 2021**.

Background:

- **A U.S.-led coalition invaded Iraq in 2003** based on charges that the then Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein's government possessed weapons of mass destruction and subsequently **Saddam Hussein was ousted from power**.
- In recent years, the U.S. mission has focused on helping defeat the **IS militants in Iraq and Syria**. Currently, there are 2,500 U.S. troops in Iraq.

Details:

- Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi has been facing increasing pressure from Iran-aligned parties and paramilitary groups who oppose the U.S. military role in the country.
 - The U.S. had carried airstrikes against Iran-aligned fighters along Iraq's border with Syria in late June.
- U.S. diplomats and troops in Iraq and Syria were targeted in three rocket and drone attacks earlier this month. Analysts believed the attacks were part of a campaign by Iranian-backed militias.
- Though the U.S. would end its combat mission, American forces will still operate in Iraq in an advisory role. It will continue to train and assist the Iraqi army to deal with the threat posed by ISIS.

- The agreement to end the combat mission in Iraq follows the U.S. decision to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan by the end of August. This is being viewed as **part of the U.S.'s larger policy shift to focus on the challenge posed by China**. The **Indo-Pacific strategy** of the U.S. is an indication of the U.S.'s intentions.

C. GS 3 Related

Category: ECONOMY

1. No landless farmers in new database

Context:

- Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar's statement in Lok Sabha on the **Centre's new National Farmers Database**.

Background:

Agristack initiative:

- The Central government had proposed an **Agristack initiative to create a digital ecosystem for the agricultural sector in India**.

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

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

- As part of the first step of this initiative, the government has initiated a **farmers database that would serve as the core of the Agristack**.
- Also, a data policy is being prepared specifically for the agriculture sector in collaboration with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).

Details:

- The Agriculture Minister has stated that the proposed National Farmers Database would be linked to the digital land record management system and would thus initially **only include farmers who were legal owners of agricultural land**.

Significance of the farmers' database:

- The availability of a database would serve an important role in the **formulation of evidence-based policies for the agricultural sector**.
- Also, the government can make use of the database for **targeted service delivery** with higher efficiency and in a focussed and time-bound manner.
- The database could be used to **select beneficiaries of government schemes**.
- The availability of data will make it possible to **implement digital technologies like Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning, Internet of Things** in the agricultural domain, thus opening up the sector to immense opportunities for improvement in productivity.

Concerns:

- As with all such databases, there are concerns about **data protection and consent**.
- Given the large number of landless farmers in the country and the **exclusion of landless and tenant farmers** in the proposed farmers' database, there are concerns over the exclusion of landless cultivators from the benefits of government schemes

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: DISASTER MANAGEMENT

1. Let's make room for the river

Context:

- European nations of **Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg and Switzerland** have been hit by **massive floods**.
 - Despite the fact that several towns were submerged in the Netherlands too, their superior organisation, better preparedness and an advanced flood management system helped them avoid casualties.

Details:

- The floods occurred as a **result of heavy rains**. In some areas of Germany and Belgium, a month's rain poured in just 24 hours.
- Heavy rainfall within a short period of time resulted in overflowing rivers, canals, and other water bodies. This caused **multiple rivers to burst their banks and flood the adjoining areas**.

Link between climate change and recent instances of heavy rains:

- The heavy rains and the subsequent flooding are being attributed to climate change.
 - The increasing concentration of **Greenhouse Gases** has led to the warming of the earth's atmosphere. **Warmer air has the potential to hold higher amounts of moisture** in them. This higher level of moisture content in the air can lead to heavy rainfall in a short time.
 - The **increasing temperatures at the poles result in the slower movement of storms in the mid-latitudes**. This leads to storms staying at a specific place longer.
- The combination of a slow-moving storm and the presence of surplus moisture in the atmosphere results in intense rainfall in one location within a short period of time.
- India too has been witnessing an increasing number of floods owed to heavy rainfall within a short period of time. Example – The 2018 floods in Kerala, the recurrent floods in Mumbai, etc.

For more information on the recent Mumbai floods and urban flooding in general, refer to the following article:

[UPSC Comprehensive News Analysis of 22nd July 2021](#)

Recommendations:

Disaster management measures:

- **Disaster readiness, planning and preparation** must be strengthened to deal with sudden, intense rain and consequent floods.
 - Need to have in place **advanced flood warning systems** based on a network of sensors to measure river water levels in real-time. This will be useful in forecasting impending floods. Any forecast of floods needs to be communicated in simple understandable language to the general public in a time-bound manner.

For more related information on flood forecasting, refer to the following article:

[UPSC Comprehensive News Analysis of 8th Oct 2020](#)

- There should be in place **dedicated local authorities** to respond to any flood warning. They should be adequately resourced and trained to evacuate residents to safety.
 - Regular practice drills need to be conducted in flood-prone areas.
 - **Flood-prone areas should be identified and area appropriate developmental policies** should be followed in such areas. This will help build long-term flood resilience.

Ecologically sensitive measures:

- The floods in Europe serve as a wake-up call to countries that even if a country has adequate resources and advanced infrastructure (physical as well as organisational), it can find no escape from extreme climatic events. Hence there is an urgent need to adopt pragmatic policies and **practices that are nature friendly**.
- There is the need to think beyond the conventional dependence on dikes, dams, walls and gates for protection from floods and implement **ecologically sensitive flood protection measures** like the ones adopted in the Netherlands. This could involve adopting measures such as:
 - **The widening of riverbanks** would help create adequate space for rivers to overflow. This would require **protecting natural floodplains from human encroachment and interference**. Existing encroachments should be removed.
 - **Deepening riverbeds** through timely desilting.
 - Desilting is the removal of fine silt and sediment that has collected in a river in order to restore its natural capacity.
 - **Alternate channels for excess water** should be created. Low-risk areas such as playgrounds, maidans, or agricultural fields should be earmarked to store excess rainwater. Drains must be built for diverting water into these storage units. This will relieve the stress on the existing drainage infrastructure.

For information on related topics like the Sponge cities mission, refer to the following article:

[UPSC Comprehensive News Analysis of 31st Oct 2020](#)

Category: EDUCATION

1. Weighing down the private unaided college teacher

Context:

- A recent survey conducted in Tamil Nadu on the status of the teachers in private unaided colleges and to understand the impact of the pandemic on their working and living conditions.

Details:

- The findings of the survey paint a **very sorry state of the teachers working in private unaided colleges.**

Pre-pandemic phase:

- Private-unaided college teachers have **received below-par salaries and have also lacked social security benefits** like Employee State Insurance and paid leave.

Pandemic phase:

- As per the survey, the working conditions and welfare of teachers have only worsened in the pandemic.
- There have been **large scale layoffs and pay cuts** during the novel coronavirus pandemic. Such teachers have been forced to take up odd jobs.
- The teachers in private-unaided colleges have also faced immense difficulty in online teaching due to **lack of Internet, lack of room/space, and lack of quality equipment.** Some respondents have even reported experiencing high **emotional distress** during this period linked to online teaching work.

Concerns:

- There has been increasing **privatization of the higher education sector in India.**
 - There has been an enormous growth of private higher educational institutions in India. According to the All-India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE), 2020 report, **at the all India level, 65% of the total colleges are private unaided colleges.**
- The sorry state of teachers in private-unaided colleges will invariably **have an impact on the quality of higher education in India.**

Recommendations:

- The article makes the following recommendations to help alleviate the condition of teachers in private unaided colleges.
 - Colleges should be made to pay complete arrears salary to the teachers.
 - Teachers laid off during the pandemic must be reinstated.
 - The teachers must be reimbursed for the expenditure incurred by them for online teaching during the pandemic.
 - The deplorable condition of private-unaided college teachers can be attributed to the absence of any state regulation of private higher educational institutions on matters relating to the working conditions of teachers and other employees. In this regard, the existing **laws need to be reviewed and amended to equip monitoring agencies to safeguard the welfare of teachers** in unaided private colleges.

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Needed: an anti-trafficking law

Background:

Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Care and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2021:

- The Government of India has proposed the Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Care and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2021.
- The Bill aims to tackle all aspects of trafficking including the social and economic causes of the crime, **punishment to traffickers, and the protection and rehabilitation of survivors.**

For detailed information on this topic refer to the following article:

[UPSC Comprehensive News Analysis of 19th July 202](#)

Concerns related to human trafficking:

- Human trafficking amounts to **gross violation of the human rights** of those trafficked.
- There has been a **rapid increase in trafficking during the pandemic**. The prolonged school closures and loss of family livelihood are being used by the traffickers to increase the human trafficking of thousands of women and children from the poorest sections of our society.
- Apart from being a crime in itself, **human trafficking is also the propeller of several other crimes**. It creates a parallel black economy that fuels **child labour, child marriage, prostitution, bonded labour, forced beggary**, drug-related crimes, corruption, terrorism and other illicit businesses.

Way forward:

- The article written by Nobel Laureate and child rights activist Kailash Satyarthi argues that the economic growth and progress of India would remain meaningless if the scourge of human trafficking is allowed to continue.
- He calls upon the Parliament to urgently pass **a strong anti-trafficking law** to end the menace of human trafficking.
- The article commends the provisions in the proposed Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Care and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2021, but calls for necessary checks and balances against potential misuse of power by agencies, **periodic reviews of the law, and adequate allocation of resources for effective implementation.**

Additional information:

- Human trafficking is the only offence punishable under the Constitution of India itself, besides the practice of untouchability.
 - **Article 23(1) of the Indian Constitution explicitly prohibits and criminalizes human trafficking.**

F. Prelims Facts

1. Navy joins exercise along east African coast

Exercise Cutlass Express:

- The exercise is an **annual maritime exercise conducted** to promote national and regional **maritime security and maritime law enforcement capacity in East Africa and the Western Indian Ocean.**

Context:

- Indian Naval ship Talwar's participation in the Exercise Cutlass Express, 2021.

2. Plan for adjournment motion

Adjournment motion:

- Adjournment motion can be **introduced only in the Lok Sabha.**
- The primary object of an adjournment motion is to draw the attention of the House to a recent **matter of urgent public importance** having serious consequences and with regard to which a motion or a resolution with proper notice will be too late.
- The adjournment motion is an extraordinary procedure which, if admitted, leads to **setting aside the normal business of the House** for discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance.
- **The speaker is the final authority to give consent to an adjournment motion.**
- The right to move a motion for an adjournment of the business of the House is subject to the following restrictions:
 - Raise a matter which is definite, factual, urgent and of public importance.
 - Not cover more than one matter.
 - Be restricted to a specific matter of recent occurrence.
 - Not raise a question of privilege.
 - Not revive discussion on a matter that has been discussed in the same session.
 - Not deal with any matter that is under adjudication of court.
 - Not raise any question that can be raised on a distinct motion.

Read more on the [Adjournment Motion](#) in the linked article.

Context:

- The Opposition leaders are planning to move an adjournment motion in the Lok Sabha to discuss the [Pegasus issue](#).

G. Tidbits

1. '21.5 mn lost jobs in tourism sector'

- The **tourism industry has been among the hardest hit due to the COVID-19 pandemic.**

- There has been a significant drop in tourist arrivals (both foreign and domestic) and hence tourism expenditure, during the pandemic.
- Tourism direct gross value added (TDGVA) has witnessed a high decrease.
- An estimated 21.5 million people working in the tourism sector lost their jobs during the nine-month period from April 2020-December 2020.

2. SC mulls PM CARES Fund for orphans

- A report in the Supreme Court notes that over **75,000 children have been orphaned, abandoned** or has lost a parent during the [COVID-19 pandemic](#), and cautions that many of them **may become victims of human trafficking rackets or descend into crime**.

Context:

- Supreme Court Bench hearing a suo motu case on children impacted by the pandemic.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements with respect to the Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1952:

1. A commission set up under the Act shall have the powers of a civil court while trying a suit under the Code of Civil Procedure.
2. Inquiry commissions set up by the central government can make an inquiry into the matters relatable to any of the entries in Union List or Concurrent List only.
3. If a state has appointed an Inquiry Commission, then the Centre cannot set up a parallel commission on the same subject matter.

Which of the given statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: a

Explanation:

- A commission set up under the Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1952 shall have the powers of a civil court while trying a suit under the [Code of Civil Procedure](#).
- Inquiry commissions set up by the central government can make an inquiry into the matters relatable to any of the entries in Union List, State List or Concurrent List.
- Inquiry commissions set up by the state government can make an inquiry into the matters relatable to any of the entries in Concurrent List or State List only.
- If the Centre has appointed an Inquiry Commission, then the state government cannot set up a parallel commission on the same subject matter without the consent of the central government.

- If a state has appointed an Inquiry Commission, then the Centre can set up a parallel commission on the same subject if it believes that the scope of the inquiry can extend to other states.

Q2. Consider the following statements with respect to Dholavira:

1. It is in the Khadir Island in the Rann of Kutch and is located on the Tropic of Cancer.
2. Beads, terracotta, gold, ivory have been excavated from the site.
3. The city demonstrates a sophisticated water management system.
4. The first actual remains of horses were found in this region.

Which of the above is/are correct statements?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 and 3 only
- c. 1, 3 and 4 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3 only

Answer: d

Explanation:

- Dholavira, inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage list is in the Khadir Island in the Rann of Kutch and is located on the Tropic of Cancer.
- Beads, terracotta, gold, ivory have been excavated from the site.
- The city demonstrates a sophisticated water management system.
- The first actual remains of horses were found in Surkotada in Gujarat.

Q3. Which among the following is a U.S. Naval Forces Africa (NAVAF) led, all-domain exercise in East African coastal regions and the West Indian Ocean?

- a. RIMPAC
- b. Exercise Cutlass Express
- c. Exercise Sea Breeze
- d. Exercise Cobra Gold

Answer: b

Explanation:

- Exercise Cutlass Express is a U.S. Naval Forces Africa led all-domain exercise sponsored by U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM).
- It is an all-domain exercise in East African coastal regions and the West Indian Ocean.
- The 2021 edition of the exercise involves the participation of 12 Eastern African countries, US, UK, India and various international organisations like the International Maritime Organisation (IMO),

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Interpol, European Union Naval Force (EUNAVFOR), Critical Maritime Routes Indian Ocean (CRIMARIO) and EUCAP Somalia.

Q4. "Nauka" recently seen in news is:

- a. A space laboratory launched by Russia to be integrated with the International Space Station.
- b. An orbiting infrared observatory that will complement and extend the discoveries of the Hubble Space Telescope.
- c. A module on the International Space Station used as a docking port for spacecraft and as a door for cosmonauts to go out on spacewalks, launched by JAXA.
- d. India's mission to explore the deep ocean with a focus on deep-sea mining and underwater robotics-related technologies.

Answer: a

Explanation:

- Nauka is a space laboratory launched by Russia to be integrated with the [International Space Station \(ISS\)](#).
- It was launched by Russia and will serve as the country's main research facility on the space station.
- Nauka will be attached to the critical Zvezda module on the ISS.

Q5. There has been a persistent deficit budget year after year. Which action/actions of the following can be taken by the Government to reduce the deficit? (UPSC 2016)

1. Reducing revenue expenditure
2. Introducing new welfare schemes
3. Rationalizing subsidies
4. Reducing import duty

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 and 3 only
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer: c

Explanation:

- A budget deficit is when spending exceeds income.
- Reducing revenue expenditure, rationalizing subsidies will help in reducing the expenditure thereby reducing the deficit.
- Introducing new welfare schemes will lead to additional expenditure.

- Reducing import duty will reduce the income received by the government in the form of import duties.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Welfare of teachers is largely neglected in India and the pandemic has worsened their conditions. In this context, examine the working conditions faced by teachers along with suggestions to improve their status. (250 words; 15 marks) [GS-2, Governance]
2. The recent floods in Europe call attention to the global need for countries to implement nature-friendly policies and ecologically sensitive flood protection measures. Discuss. (250 words; 15 marks) [GS-3, Disaster Management]

