

## 09 Sep 2021: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

#### A. GS 1 Related

#### B. GS 2 Related

##### *INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS*

1. [India, Australia to hold 2+2 meet](#)
2. [India, Russia review Afghanistan situation](#)

#### C. GS 3 Related

##### *ECONOMY*

1. [Amid protests, Centre hikes MSP for rabi crops](#)
2. [Cabinet approves incentive scheme for textile sector](#)

#### D. GS 4 Related

#### E. Editorials

##### *ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY*

1. [Green hydrogen, a new ally for a zero carbon future](#)

##### *POLITY AND GOVERNANCE*

1. [A questionable quota policy](#)

#### F. Prelims Facts

1. [‘Take up ring road under Bharatmala project’](#)
2. [Sea and sand, on an expressway](#)

#### G. Tidbits

1. [Panel set up to draft Bill on drugs, cosmetics and medical devices](#)

#### H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

#### I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

### A. GS 1 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

### B. GS 2 Related

**Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

## 1. India, Australia to hold 2+2 meet

### Context:

- India and Australia will hold the **inaugural 2+2 Ministerial meeting** during the upcoming visit of the Australian Foreign Minister and Minister of Defence to India.

Also read: [India – Australia Relations](#)

### Details:

- The inaugural 2+2 discussions are to be a cornerstone of the **Australia-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership**, which is founded on a shared commitment to a **secure, stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific region**.
- The areas of discussion would include economic issues, cyber security, climate change, critical technology and supply chains. The discussion is also likely to include a **bilateral free trade agreement** between India and Australia.

For more related information refer to the following article:

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

## 2. India, Russia review Afghanistan situation

### Context:

- Meeting between Russia's Security Council Secretary-General and India's National Security Adviser in Delhi.

### Details:

- As part of the meeting, India and Russia conducted their first **detailed and extensive review of the situation in Afghanistan**.
- India and Russia have agreed to **coordinate their positions on the Afghanistan issue**.
  - The two sides have stressed the need to hold the Taliban to their promises of ensuring that they **won't allow Afghanistan to become a safe haven for terrorist organizations** and also take measures to curtail the increase in opium production and drug trafficking under the new Taliban regime.
  - India and Russia also agreed to undertake joint efforts aimed at creating conditions for launching a **peaceful settlement process in Afghanistan on the basis of an intra-Afghan dialogue**.
- The talks followed a day after CIA Director flew into Delhi to meet India's National Security Advisor.

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

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

## C. GS 3 Related

Category: **ECONOMY**

## 1. Amid protests, Centre hikes MSP for rabi crops

### Context:

- The government has increased the **minimum support price (MSP)** of Rabi crops.

### Background:

#### Minimum support price:

- Minimum support price (MSP) is the rate at which the government purchases crops from farmers.
- Currently, rates are fixed for 23 crops including some Rabi crops.

### Details:

- The government has increased the minimum support price (MSP) of **Rabi crops including wheat, mustard, safflower and masoor (lentil) dal, Rapeseed and Chana or gram.**
- While the MSP for wheat has witnessed a 2% hike, oilseeds and pulses such as mustard, safflower and masoor dal saw higher MSP hikes of up to 8%.

### Significance:

- The higher MSP will ensure a **higher remunerative price for farmers** and encourage them for sowing operations. It will also help **enhance the farmers' incomes.**
- The higher MSP hike for oilseeds and pulses will help **encourage crop diversification.** This will not only help close the gap between demand and supply for the oilseeds and pulses but also ensure sustainable usage of resources like soil and water.
- The government has also stated that the current increase in MSP is also proof of the **government's commitment to the MSP system** which has been under question after the **three agricultural reforms acts.**

### Lacunae:

- Some farm unions have pointed out that the **rate of inflation was higher than the MSP hike for most crops**, arguing that in real terms, the MSP for wheat has dropped 4%.
- Also, the farm unions have expressed concerns that **most farmers would not get the benefits as they were still unable to sell their crops at the MSP due to a lack of universal procurement.**

## 2. Cabinet approves incentive scheme for textile sector

### Context:

- The Union Cabinet has cleared an outlay of Rs. 10,683 crore on a **production linked incentive scheme in the man-made fibre apparel, fabrics, and technical textiles sectors.**

### Background:

- The textile industry plays a significant role in the Indian economy by providing direct employment to an estimated 35 million people, by contributing 4 per cent of GDP and accounting for 35 per cent of

gross export earnings. The textile sector contributes 14 per cent of the value-addition in the manufacturing sector.

#### Significance:

##### **Aid in new investment:**

- The new scheme could help **draw new investment of more than Rs. 19,000 crore.**

##### **Leverage multiplier effect of the textile sector to employment generation:**

- The PLI scheme would provide a big boost to the textile sector.
- **The textile sector is an employment intensive sector** and the investment in the textile sector would have a multiplier effect on the Indian economy especially in job creation.
- The scheme could aid in the **creation of 7.5 lakh direct jobs.**

##### **Align India's capacity with world textile market trends:**

- **Two-thirds of India's textile exports now are cotton-based whereas 66-70% of world trade in textiles and apparel is MMF-based and technical textiles.**
- The PLI incentives aim to boost investment in new capacities in man-made fibre (MMF) apparel, MMF fabrics, and 10 segments or products of technical textiles.
- India's focus on the manufacture of textiles in the MMF sector is expected to help boost its ability to compete globally in the textiles market.

##### **Targeting balanced development:**

- Given that **priority would be given for investment in aspirational districts, tier-three, tier-four towns and rural areas**, the new scheme would promote balanced regional development.

## **D. GS 4 Related**

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## **E. Editorials**

### **Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY**

#### **1. Green hydrogen, a new ally for a zero carbon future**

##### Context:

- The article discusses the **prospects of using green hydrogen as an alternative to existing fossil fuels.**

##### Green Hydrogen:

- 'Green hydrogen' is hydrogen made by **electrolysis of water using renewable power from wind and solar.**
  - Electrolysis splits water into hydrogen and oxygen.

### Significance of green hydrogen:

#### Imperative for the target of 'net zero' emission:

- Green hydrogen can be a viable alternative to fossil fuels and can be utilised for the generation of power and will be a major step forward in achieving the target of 'net zero' emission.
- Fossil fuels are responsible for the production of over 830 million tons per annum of carbon dioxide, which is giving rise to global warming and climate change. Thus the use of green hydrogen in place of carbon-intensive fossil fuels will **help mitigate greenhouse gas emissions** and will be imperative to achieve the target of expert guidelines on global warming to remain under 1.5° C.

#### Pollution-free energy source:

- Also given that green hydrogen only emits water as its emission product, the usage of green hydrogen will also **help end the premature deaths due to air pollution**.
  - In 2018, 8.7 million people died prematurely as a result of air pollution from fossil fuels.

#### Alternative source of energy:

- The International Energy Agency (IEA) forecasts the additional power demand to be to the tune of 25%-30% by the year 2040 to meet the energy requirements of the growing population.
- Green hydrogen can be an important alternative fuel source given **the circular nature of this fuel as compared to the fast depleting reserves of fossil fuels**.
  - Hydrogen offers a circular sustainable fuel utilization cycle wherein water is electrolyzed to give hydrogen fuel which is burnt to give energy and water again.
- Also for a country like India which is the world's fourth-largest energy-consuming country (behind China, the United States and the European Union), increased usage of green hydrogen will help it reduce its dependence on imported fossil fuels and thus **help usher in energy security while also helping save valuable foreign exchange**.

#### Abundantly available:

- **Hydrogen is the most abundant element on the planet** making it easily available. However, it should be noted that given its high reactivity it is rarely available naturally in its elemental form.
- **Water which is a source of green hydrogen is easily available.**

#### Energy-rich source:

- **Hydrogen has an energy density almost three times that of diesel.** This makes it a rich source of energy.

### Challenges in its utilisation:

#### Storage:

- The major challenge in the usage of green hydrogen will be its storage.

- **Given the very low density of hydrogen**, it will require large volumes for its storage. Alternatively if one chooses to store it in the liquid form, reducing the storage space requires the **maintenance of temperatures as low as minus 253° C**. This will entail huge costs.

#### **Cost:**

- The **'production cost' of 'Green hydrogen'** has been considered to be a prime obstacle to the usage of green hydrogen.
  - According to studies by the International Renewable Energy Agency, the production cost of this 'green hydrogen' is expected to be around \$1.5 per kilogram by adopting various conservative measures.

#### **Initiatives using green hydrogen:**

- **Saudi Arabia** is working to establish a \$5 billion **'Green hydrogen' manufacturing unit**.
- The **Indian Railways** have announced the country's first experiment of a **hydrogen-fuel cell technology-based train** by retrofitting an existing diesel engine.

#### **Conclusion:**

- It is high time that India focus its attention towards going in for clean energy, decarbonising the economy and adopting 'Green hydrogen' as an environment-friendly and safe fuel for the next generations.

#### **Additional Information:**

- **Black hydrogen** is produced by the use of fossil fuels.
- **Pink hydrogen** is produced through electrolysis, but using energy from nuclear power sources.
- **Blue hydrogen** is when natural gas is split into hydrogen and CO<sub>2</sub> either by Steam Methane Reforming (SMR) or Auto Thermal Reforming (ATR), but the CO<sub>2</sub> is captured and then stored. As the greenhouse gases are captured, this mitigates the environmental impacts on the planet.

## **Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE**

### **1. A questionable quota policy**

#### **Context:**

- Odisha state government proposed a **15% reservation for government school students in medical and engineering colleges**.

#### **Background:**

- **About 62% of students attend government and government-aided schools in India**. The other 38% go to private institutions.
- Considering the state of Odisha, a much higher percentage of students go to government schools.

#### **Significance of the quota policy:**



- The quota would help some sections of the society which have long been deprived of good education and decent jobs.
- The move will help **reduce inequity arising from the lack of physical and economic access to coaching institutions** suffered by poor students enrolled in government schools.
- The move will also **help compensate for the poor condition of government schools** which are plagued by issues such as poor quality of teachers and infrastructure.

#### Concerns:

##### **Lack of political will in improving government schools:**

- By reserving seats in higher technical institutions for government school students rather than focusing on improving the quality of education in the government schools, the government seems to be admitting the sorry state of affairs in government-run schools.
- The proposal indicates a lack of political will in improving government schools.
- The state seems to be **running away from its responsibility of improving education in government schools** where an overwhelming majority of the children study. This does not augur well for the learning outcome of children studying in government schools.

##### **Benefits to few:**

- It is very likely that the benefits of quota would be cornered by the creamy layer of students with better access to coaching and additional technology-enabled resources.
- There **might also be an urban bias in the benefit-sharing**.

##### **Mere populism:**

- The author argues that the current policy rather than being an attempt at social engineering, seems to be **more of competitive populism** as observed in recent instances of caste-based reservations.

##### **May give rise to inferiority complex:**

- If the current proposal is given effect, it is going to have a negative impact on the morale of teachers and students who are likely to grow up with an inferiority complex as compared to those in private schools.
- This will only **deepen the mindset that government schools are typically backward and inferior to private schools**.

#### Way forward:

- The government should focus its attention on **improving the quality of education in government schools**.
- This could involve taking some of the following measures.
  - **Capacity building of teachers** to implement new pedagogic practices
  - **Filling up vacant teaching posts**
  - Improving the availability of necessary infrastructure in government schools
  - **Use of technology** to improve learning outcomes

- **Outlay of sufficient funds to the public education system**

For more related information on the topic of government schools, refer to the following article:

[UPSC Comprehensive News Analysis of 6th Aug 2021](#)

## F. Prelims Facts

### 1. 'Take up ring road under Bharatmala project'

- **Bharatmala Pariyojana is a new umbrella program for the highways sector** that focuses on optimizing the efficiency of freight and passenger movement across the country by **bridging critical infrastructure gaps** through effective interventions like the development of Economic Corridors, Inter Corridors and Feeder Routes, National Corridor Efficiency Improvement, Border and International connectivity roads, Coastal and Port connectivity roads and Green-field expressways.
- It also emphasizes improving efficiency of existing corridors through the development of **Multimodal Logistics Parks** and elimination of chokepoints and **improving connectivity in North East** and leveraging synergies with Inland Waterways.
- It lays emphasis on the use of technology & scientific planning for Project Preparation and Asset Monitoring.

### 2. Sea and sand, on an expressway

#### Therukoothu:

- **Koothu or Therukoothu** is an ancient folk art that originated from the **early Tamil country**.
  - There is mention of therukoothu in Silappatikaram.
- It is an informal dance structure, in which performances generally depict scenes from ancient epics such as Ramayana, Mahabharata and Tamil classical epics. There is **traditionally no spoken dialogue, only songs**.

## G. Tidbits

### 1. Panel set up to draft Bill on drugs, cosmetics and medical devices

- The Union government has constituted a committee for framing the **New Drugs, Cosmetics and Medical Devices Bill**.
- The committee would examine the present **Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940** and submit a draft document for a new bill.
- The eight-member panel would be headed by the [Drugs Controller General of India](#).

## H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. With reference to Minimum Support Price (MSP), which of the following statements is/are correct?



1. Minimum Support Price was introduced by the Centre for the first time in the year 1991 to reduce the impact on farming because of LPG reforms.
2. The government announces the MSP at the start of each cropping season.
3. MSP doesn't have any legal stature.

**Options:**

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

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

- MSP for the first time was introduced in the 1960s to incentivise the farmers and boost production.
- The minimum support prices are announced by the Government of India at the beginning of the sowing season for certain crops on the basis of the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP).
- There is no statutory backing for these prices or any law mandating their implementation.

**Q2. Therukoothu, a street theatre form, is practised in the State of**

- a. Andhra Pradesh
- b. Karnataka
- c. Kerala
- d. Tamil Nadu

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

- It is a street theatre form practised in the State of Tamil Nadu.
- The stories are derived from the Puranas, the Mahabharata, and the Ramayana.

**Q3. Which of the following pollutants is/are emitted from cement industries?**

1. Particulate Matter
2. Carbon Monoxide
3. Sulphur Dioxide
4. Nitrogen Dioxide

**Options:**

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

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

- The cement industry has been categorized as a highly polluting industry by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).
- The main pollutants emitted from cement industries include Particulate Matter, Carbon Monoxide, Sulphur Dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) and Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>).

**Q4. Consider the following statements with respect to PMGDISHA Scheme:**

- 1. It is applicable only to rural areas of the country.
- 2. The implementation of the Scheme would be carried out under the overall supervision of the Ministry of Rural Development.

**Which of the above statements is/are correct?**

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

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

**Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharata Abhiyan (PMGDISHA)**

**Q5. With reference to the cultural history of India, the term 'Panchayatan' refers to (2014)**

- a. An assembly of village elders
- b. A religious sect
- c. A style of temple construction
- d. An administrative functionary

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

- The main shrine is built on a rectangular plinth with four subsidiary shrines that are smaller and at the 4 corners.

- There are a total of five shrines and hence the name, Panchayatana.

## I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Illustrate how 'Green hydrogen' can lead us towards a zero carbon future? (250 words; 15 marks)[GS-3, Environment]
2. Reservation is a tool for social engineering but is often wrongly applied as a result of competitive populism. Discuss with a relevant example. (250 words; 15 marks)[GS-2, Polity and governance]

