

21 Oct 2021: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Indian team meets Taliban Dy. PM

Context:

India joined a 10-nation statement recognising [Taliban](#) in power in Afghanistan, at the Moscow format meeting.

Details:

- Indian officials reportedly met Taliban Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Salam Hanafi and offered humanitarian aid to the regime in Kabul.
- India is also considering the donation of a large consignment of wheat and other aid to Afghanistan.
- This is the first time India has officially announced aid for Afghanistan after the August 15 takeover of Kabul by the Taliban.
- Also, it marks a decided shift in India's previously tough stand on engaging with the Taliban.
 - The biggest challenge before India was whether it should recognize the rule of the Taliban or not, since there had not been any significant change in the ideology of the Taliban.
- India was also a signatory to the joint statement issued by representatives of China, Iran, Russia, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan which called on the Taliban to:
 - keep their commitment on forming an inclusive government
 - ensure that their territory is not used by terror groups to threaten the security of other countries
 - curb transnational drug routes
 - pursue friendly relations with neighbouring countries

Note:

- The Moscow format meeting is a part of a series of meetings on Afghanistan since 2017.
- The recent meeting concluded with a proposal to launch a collective initiative for an international donor conference convened by the [United Nations](#) to collect funds for Afghanistan's economic and financial reconstruction.

2. New air strikes hit Tigray

Context:

New airstrikes have hit the capital of Ethiopia's Tigray region.

Read more on the conflict between the Ethiopian government and Tigray rebels, covered in [17th November 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis](#).

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Can't outgoing CBI chief continue, asks court

Context:

The Supreme Court has asked the Union Government to respond whether it can, under "exceptional circumstances", continue with the outgoing [Central Bureau of Investigation \(CBI\)](#) Director rather than appointing an Acting chief.

- The government has failed to appoint the Director of the CBI on the expiry of the term of the last incumbent.

Issue:

- A petition has been filed by NGO Common Cause about how the law does not permit the Government to issue executive orders on its own, appointing interim CBI Directors.
- The petition had said that an interim appointment through an executive order was not envisaged in the statutory scheme.
- It is argued that such manoeuvres would hamper the functional autonomy of the elite probe agency that investigated several sensitive cases in the country.

Appointment of the CBI Director:

- The CBI draws its legality from the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act (DSPE) – 1946. Before the establishment of CBI, there was the Special Police Establishment. It was India's first agency to investigate corruption, set up in 1946 by the British.
- In 1963, the Home Ministry changed its name to the Central Bureau of Investigation and expanded its power. But, it is still governed by the 1946 Act.
- Before the Lokpal Act was legislated, the CBI Director was appointed by the DSPE Act. Now, the Lokpal Act governs the appointment of the CBI director.
- A search committee comprising of the Prime Minister as the chairperson, the Chief Justice of India (CJI) and the Leader of Opposition recommends the names.
- It begins with the Home Ministry preparing a list of IPS officers, who are eligible for the post on the basis of their seniority and experience in the field of probe.

- Department of Personnel prepares the final list on the basis of “seniority, integrity and experience in the investigation of anti-corruption cases”.
- The final list is examined by the search committee and a recommendation is sent to the government for the appointment of the CBI Director.

C. GS 3 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

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Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. The carbon markets conundrum at COP26

Context

- The article analyses the issues and concerns surrounding Article 6 of the [Paris Agreement](#).

Article 6

- Article 6 of the Paris Agreement aims at promoting integrated, holistic and balanced approaches that will assist governments in implementing their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) through voluntary international cooperation.
- Under this mechanism, countries that struggle to meet their emissions-reduction targets under their national climate plans or want to pursue less expensive emissions cuts, can purchase emissions reductions from other nations that have already cut their emissions more than the amount they had pledged.

Clean Development Mechanism (CDM)

- It is a market-based approach to reducing emissions of the [greenhouse gases](#) that contribute to climate change.
- It was created to make it easier for the industrialized countries that are parties to the [Kyoto Protocol](#) to meet their emissions-reduction targets, while contributing to development in poorer nations at the same time.
- Under the CDM, when a project (such as a wind farm) in a developing nation results in an overall fall in emissions it will receive ‘carbon credits’, called Certified Emission Reductions (CERs) based on the amount of emissions that have been reduced.
- An industrialized country (or a company based there) that needs to reduce its emissions can buy these CERs instead of investing in emissions reductions at home. The advantage of this is that more emissions can be reduced at a lower cost than by investing in a project in an industrialized nation.

Developing countries

- India, China and Brazil, gained significantly under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) of the Kyoto Protocol.

A look at numbers

- India recorded 1,703 projects under the CDM which is the second-highest in the world.
- Total carbon credits known as Certified Emission Reductions (CERs) issued for these projects are around 255 million which corresponds to an overall anticipated inflow of approximately U.S. \$2.55 billion in the country at a conservative price of U.S. \$10 per CER.
- Therefore, logically, India has a lot to gain from a thriving carbon market.

Issue Area

- The Paris Agreement introduced new changes which will have a significant impact on the developing world.
 - The Paris agreement sets mitigation targets for the developing countries which were not present under the Kyoto Protocol.
 - Developing countries are faced with the dilemma of either selling their carbon credits in return for lucrative foreign investment flows or using these credits to achieve their own mitigation targets.
 - This has made Article 6 a highly sensitive issue that requires careful balancing of interests and expectations.

What should be debated?

The three critical issues that would be hotly debated in Article 6 negotiating rooms are CDM Transition, Accounting rules and Share of Proceeds to the Adaptation Fund.

1. CDM transition:

- Credits to the developing countries were issued under the due diligence of [UNFCCC](#).
- Therefore, the Article 6 mechanism should honour the previous decisions and allow for a smooth transition of these projects and credits to ensure not only the viability of these projects but also inspire trust among the private investors in the UNFCCC decision-making process.

Concerns

- Some countries have questioned the process of awarding such credits and raised doubts about the environmental integrity of these credits.
- There is greater acceptance for the transition of projects/activities, the same is not the case for the transition of credits.
- If the decision regarding the transition of CDM is not favourable, it could lead to a loss of billions of dollars worth of potential revenue to India alone.

Recommendation

- A new supervisory body can be formed under the Paris Agreement to re-examine the validity and rigour of such credits.

2. Accounting rules

- Article 6.4 mechanism is meant to incentivize the private sector and public entities to undertake mitigation activities for sustainable development.
- Under this mechanism, a country can purchase emission reductions from public and private entities of the host country and use them to meet its NDC targets.

Inference

- This may not be adjusted against the host country's NDC targets, instead, they are additional efforts by the Private and Public entities to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, and in fact, raise global climate ambition.
- This means, not all mitigation actions fall within the purview of its NDC.

Recommendation

- Being a developing country, India does not need to undertake economy-wide emission reduction targets at this stage of its development.
- Therefore, it can significantly gain from the market mechanism under Article 6.4 by selling emission reductions that lie outside its NDC.

3. Share of Proceeds (SOP) to the Adaptation Fund

Article 6.2

- Article 6.2 provides an accounting framework for international cooperation, such as linking the emissions-trading schemes of two or more countries.
- It also allows for the international transfer of carbon credits between countries.

Article 6.4

- It establishes a central UN mechanism to trade credits from emissions reductions generated through specific projects.
- For example, country A could pay for country B to build a wind farm instead of a coal plant. Emissions are reduced, country B benefits from the clean energy and country A gets credit for the reductions.

Difference of opinion between developed and developing

- Developing countries emphasize that the SOP must be uniformly applied to Articles 6.2 and 6.4 to

fund adaptation, developed countries want to restrict its application to Article 6.4.

- This would disincentivize the Article 6.4 mechanism and limit voluntary cooperation to the cooperative approaches under Article 6.2 favoured by developed countries.

Conclusion

- The carbon markets allow the developing countries to generate revenue and the developed countries to emit greenhouse gases in excess of the set threshold.
- Climate justice demands that developing countries get access to their fair share of global carbon space.
- Therefore, developing countries are nudged to take greater mitigation responsibilities, a facilitative carbon market mechanism that respects the principles enshrined in UNFCCC, which may accelerate their transition to low carbon development and would be a win-win solution for all countries.

Category: SECURITY

1. The outlines of a national security policy

Context

- Humans have innovated multiple tools and systems to protect their countries.
 - From bow and arrow to guns, from jets to nuclear bombs, countries have brought massive changes to their security architecture.
- One area where smaller countries can hit a larger neighbour is by making use of **cyberspace**.
 - Geography, population and GDP won't matter much but expertise does.
- The article discusses Cyber Warfare and Cyber technology as part of National defence policy.

Tools used in cyber war attacks

- It includes hacking, denial of service attacks, eavesdropping, identity theft, sabotage, insertion of rogue code.
- Use of drones, robots, satellites and advanced computers.
- Expansion can be further seen in the artificial intelligence and nanotechnology domains.

Example

- Cyber-attack from China.
- Studies point out that Malware introduced into the Indian electric grid may have hit Mumbai leading to a power crisis in the city for a few hours.

Inference

- The 21st century is not just about the mobilization of weapons or the size of the armed forces of men or overt and covert operations.

- It is about electronic operations from a remote centre beyond the front lines of ground forces, it is cyber warfare.
- Thus tracking the cyber warfare centres of the adversary and preparing for bilateral conflicts in the 21st century, will need a new national security policy.

Measures to be taken

1. Objectives:

- Indian companies, including critical infrastructure providers such as power grids, ports and radar systems, lack the IT infrastructure to prevent hacking from hostile state and non-state actors.
- India has to prioritize its assets to be protected and should be in a position to identify the culprits.

2. Priorities:

- National security priorities will require new departments for supporting several frontiers of innovation and technologies such as hydrogen fuel cells, desalination of seawater, thorium for nuclear technology, anti-computer viruses, and new immunity-creating medicines.
- This focus on new priorities requires a change in analytical thinking. Reforms will have to be introduced in the education system making science and mathematics education compulsory.
- Every citizen will have to be alerted to new remote-controlled military technology and be ready for it.

3. Strategy:

- The strategy required for this new national security policy will be to anticipate our enemies in many dimensions.
- India should develop and practise offensive cyber capabilities when needed as part of the strategy to secure its interests in cyberspace.
- China continues to pose cyber security threats to India. It is time we devise a new strategy.

Conclusion

- India should thus enhance its cyberspace capabilities, not delay the formulation of its cyber strategy as it is a serious national security risk.
- Deterrence in cyberspace, like in other domains, is based on the projection of an image. India's image as a cyber-power is in need of an urgent makeover.

Category: ECONOMY

1. Plugging the leak

Reference

[UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis of 20th Oct 2021](#)

2. The global tax revolution

Reference:

Global Minimum Corporate Tax

3. Is the coal crisis over?

Reference:

UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis of 17th Oct 2021

F. Prelims Facts

1. Kushinagar now hub of Buddhist tourist circuit

What's in News?

The Prime Minister has inaugurated the Kushinagar International Airport in Uttar Pradesh, which will help connect key Buddhist pilgrimage sites. Diplomats from 12 countries where Buddhism is practised, including Mongolia, Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Bhutan, Republic of Korea, Nepal and Japan, were also present.

- Kushinagar is the centre of the Buddhist circuit, which consists of pilgrimage sites at Lumbini, Sarnath and Gaya.
- Buddhist pilgrims consider Kushinagar a sacred site where, they believe, Gautama Buddha delivered his last sermon and attained 'Mahaparinirvana' or salvation.
 - It is believed to be the final resting place of Gautam Buddha.

Buddhist Circuit:

- The Buddhist circuit is a route that follows in the footsteps of the Buddha from Lumbini in Nepal where he was born, through Bihar in India where he attained enlightenment, to Sarnath and Kushinagar in Uttar Pradesh in India, where he gave his first teachings and his final resting place.

Buddhist Sites:

- **Lumbini, Nepal** – Siddhartha Gautama's (Buddha) birthplace.
- **Kapilavastu, Uttar Pradesh** – The place where Gautama Buddha spent his early years as Siddhartha.
- **Bodh Gaya, Bihar** – It is the place where Gautama Buddha attained Enlightenment.
- **Sarnath, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh** – It is the place where Buddha gave his first sermon. This was his first teaching after having attained enlightenment.
- **Rajgir, Bihar** – This is where Buddha lived and taught. He preached his two most famous sermons here.
- **Kausambi, Uttar Pradesh** – Kausambi is the place where Lord Buddha stayed and preached in the sixth and ninth years of his attaining enlightenment.
- **Shravasti, Uttar Pradesh** – Buddha spent 24 Chaturmasas/rainy seasons here.
- **Vaishali, Bihar** – The place where Gautama Buddha held his last sermon.

- **Kushinagar, Uttar Pradesh** – The place where Gautama Buddha attained Parinirvana. Parinirvana is commonly used to refer to nirvana-after-death, which occurs upon the death of someone who has attained nirvana during his or her lifetime.

G. Tidbits

1. PM invites oil majors to partner with India

What's in News?

The Prime Minister of India interacted with chief executives of global and Indian oil majors.

- Oil majors across the globe have been invited to partner with India in the exploration and development of the oil & gas sector in the country.
- He said that India's focus has shifted from 'revenue' to 'production' maximization.
- He touched upon the need to enhance storage facilities for crude oil and talked about the rapidly growing natural gas demand in the country.

2. Pandemic fuelled rise in child sexual abuse online: report

What's in News?

The Global Threat Assessment report 2021 has been launched by WeProtect Global Alliance.

- WeProtect Global Alliance is a global movement of more than 200 governments, private sector companies and civil society organisations working together to transform the global response to child sexual exploitation and abuse online.

Key Findings:

- COVID-19 created a perfect storm of conditions that fuelled a rise in child sexual exploitation and abuse across the globe.
- COVID-19 had contributed to a significant spike in child sexual exploitation and abuse online.
- In the past two years, the reporting of child sexual exploitation and online abuse has reached its highest level.
- The rise in child 'self-generated' sexual material is another trend that challenges the existing response.
 - The Internet Watch Foundation observed a 77% increase in child 'self-generated' sexual material from 2019 to 2020.

The report calls for prioritising prevention activities against abuse, creating safe online environments for children, besides calling on all with a role to protect children to work together to improve the response.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q.1 Kushinagar is a significant place in Buddhism since

- a. It is Gautam Buddha's final resting place

- b. Gautam Buddha spent 24 rainy seasons here
- c. Gautam Buddha gave his first sermon here
- d. Gautam Buddha attained enlightenment here

Answer: a

Explanation:

Buddhist pilgrims consider Kushinagar a sacred site where, they believe, Gautama Buddha delivered his last sermon and attained 'Mahaparinirvana' or salvation. It is believed to be the final resting place of Gautama Buddha.

Q.2 Which of the following nations share a boundary with the Black Sea?

- 1. Russia
- 2. Romania
- 3. Greece
- 4. Turkey
- 5. Bulgaria

Options:-

- a. 1 & 2 only
- b. 2, 3 & 5 only
- c. 1, 2, 4 & 5 only
- d. 1 & 3 only

Answer: c

Explanation:

Black Sea is bordered by Bulgaria, Russia, Georgia, Ukraine, Romania, Turkey.



(Image Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Sea)

Q.3 Under the Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS), resident individuals are permitted to remit up to which of the following amounts in a financial year?

- a. \$1,00,000
- b. \$2,50,000
- c. \$5,00,000
- d. \$10,00,000

Answer: b

Explanation:

- Under the Liberalised Remittance Scheme, all resident individuals, including minors, are allowed to freely remit up to USD 2,50,000 per financial year (April – March) for any permissible current or capital account transaction or a combination of both.
- Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS) is a measure to facilitate Resident Individuals (including minors) to remit funds outside India.
- There can be multiple remittances under LRS but the cumulative amount of all the transactions should be within the limit prescribed under LRS i.e. USD 250,000. Once a remittance is made for an amount up to USD 2,50,000 during the financial year, a resident individual would not be eligible to

make any further remittances under this scheme, even if the proceeds of the investments have been brought back into the country.

Q.4 Consider the following statements with regards to the impact of increased temperatures.

1. Rising temperatures shorten the time in which the plants reach maturity.
2. Rising temperatures result into smaller yields.
3. The WHO European region is the most affected when it comes to deaths due to heat exposure.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a. 1 & 2 only
- b. 2 & 3 only
- c. 1 & 3 only
- d. All of the above

Answer: d

Explanation:

- Exposure to excessive heat has wide-ranging impacts for all plants and humans, often amplifying existing conditions and resulting in premature death and disability.
- Rising temperatures shorten the time in which the plants reach maturity.
- Rising temperatures result into smaller yields.
- The WHO European region is the most affected when it comes to deaths due to heat exposure.

Q.5 Consider the following statements: (UPSC 2019)

1. Agricultural soils release nitrogen oxides into environment.
2. Cattle release ammonia into environment.
3. Poultry industry releases reactive nitrogen compounds into environment.

Which of the statements given above is/ are correct?

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- Agricultural soils represent a very large, and growing, global source of nitrous oxide.
- Cattle release ammonia into the environment.

- The poultry industry releases reactive nitrogen compounds into the environment.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. The recent export of about 500 tonnes of rice from India has triggered an uproar in several European countries on the grounds that it was genetically modified (GM) rice. Examine the implications and why India must assuage importers that its produce is compliant with trade demands on GM foods. (250 words; 15 marks)[GS-3, Environment and Ecology]
2. With regard to climate change negotiations, explain the significance of Article 6 of the Paris Agreement. (250 words; 15 marks)[GS-3, Environment and Ecology]

