

## 26 Oct 2021: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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## A. GS 1 Related

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## B. GS 2 Related

### Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

#### 1. SC tells panel to fix maximum water level at Mullaperiyar dam

##### Context

- The Supreme Court has directed the Supervisory Committee to take an immediate and firm decision on the maximum water level that can be maintained at Mullaperiyar dam, amid torrential rain in Kerala.

##### Background

- It is a masonry gravity dam on the Periyar River in the Idukki District of Kerala.
- The dam is situated at the confluence of the Mullayar and Periyar rivers.
- The Periyar National Park in Thekkady is located around the dam's reservoir.
- The dam was built in the late 1800s in the princely state of Travancore (present-day Kerala) and given to British-ruled Madras Presidency on a 999-year lease in 1886.
- The dam is located in Kerala on the river Periyar, but is operated and maintained by Tamil Nadu state.
- The agreement was renewed in 1970.
  - Tamil Nadu was given rights to the land and the water from the dam as well as the authority to develop hydro-power projects at the site, and Kerala would receive rent in return.

##### Purpose of the dam

- The Periyar river which flows westward of the Kerala Arabian sea was diverted eastwards to flow towards the Bay of Bengal to provide water to the arid rain shadow region of Madurai in Madras Presidency which was in dire need of a greater supply of water than the small Vaigai River could provide.

- For Tamil Nadu, the Mullaperiyar dam and the diverted Periyar waters act as a lifeline for Theni, Madurai, Sivaganga and Ramnad districts, providing water for irrigation and drinking, and also for the generation of power in Lower Periyar Power Station.

### **Kerala Government**

- It states that it does not object to giving water to Tamil Nadu, their main cause of objection is the dam's safety as it is more than 100 years old.
  - Mullaperiyar dam has leaks and cracks in the structure. Increasing the level would add more pressure to be handled by the already leaking dam.
- Idukki district, where the dam is located, is earthquake-prone and has experienced multiple low-intensity quakes. So, the dam is situated in a seismically active zone.
  - A 2009 report by IIT Roorkee stated that the dam "was likely to face damage if an earthquake of the magnitude of 6.5 on the Richter scale struck its vicinity when the water level is at 136 feet".
- It poses danger to life and property to people living downstream.
  - Three million people live in the vicinity of the reservoir.

### **Tamil Nadu**

- On the orders of the [CWC](#), the Tamil Nadu government lowered the storage level from 152 feet to 142.2 feet, then to 136 feet, conducted safety repairs and strengthened the dam.
  - It becomes difficult to sustain agriculture if the water level is not increased.
- One estimate states that "the crop losses to Tamil Nadu, because of the reduction in the height of the dam, between 1980 and 2005 is a whopping ₹ 40,000 crores".
- The dam has been strengthened and there will be no threat to people and the tremors felt in the neighbourhood was minor.

### **Why controversy?**

- 2006: SC allowed Tamil Nadu to raise water height to 142 feet after strengthening the dam. (Total height of the dam is 176 feet) while permissible is 152 feet.
- But Kerala passed a law, the Kerala Irrigation and Water Conservation (Amendment) Act, 2006, to prevent the neighbouring state (TN) from raising the water level beyond 136 feet.
- Tamil Nadu challenged Kerala's dam height law in the [Supreme Court](#).

### **2014: Supreme Court order**

- Kerala dam law of 2006 is unconstitutional and void. Because Mullaperiyar is a dispute between two states, in such disputes, one state legislature cannot unilaterally enact a law in its own favour.
- Besides, in 2006 SC allowed Tamil Nadu to raise water height. By enacting this law, Kerala is interfering with our judicial function.
- Permanent Supervisory Committee

- The Committee shall inspect the dam periodically, more particularly, immediately before the monsoon and after the monsoon and keep a close watch on its safety and recommend measures that are necessary.
- The Committee shall be free to take appropriate steps and issue necessary directions to the two States Tamil Nadu and Kerala or any of them if so required for the safety of the Mullaperiyar dam in an emergent situation. Such direction shall be obeyed by all concerned.

#### Kerala's View

- Kerala is hit by floods and has requested that the water level should not go above 139 feet.

#### Supreme Court

- Supreme Court has asked officials of Kerala and Tamil Nadu to interact responsibly and settle on an amicable solution.

## C. GS 3 Related

### Category: ECONOMY

#### 1. Rains dent rubber output, imports to rise

##### Context

- Heavy rains in Kerala has disrupted rubber production.

##### How is it going to impact India?

- Supplies are constrained by a labour shortage and heavy rainfall has made tapping difficult which may force India to increase imports.

##### Rubber tree

- It is a quick-growing tall tree acquiring 20-30 meter height. It **begins to yield latex in 5-7 years after planting.**
- It requires a **hot and humid climate with a temperature of 25°-35°C and annual rainfall of over 200 cm.** The rainfall should be well distributed throughout the year.

##### Production in India

- Kerala is the largest producer of natural rubber.

##### Rubber Board

- It is a statutory body constituted by the Government of India, under the Rubber Act 1947, for the overall development of the rubber industry in the country.

It shall be the duty of the Board:

- To advise the Central Government on all matters relating to the development of the rubber industry, including the import and export of rubber.
- To advise the Central Government with regard to participation in any international conference or scheme relating to rubber.

## Category: ENVIRONMENT

### 1. CO2 emissions in 2020 above decadal average

#### Reference:

[UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis 25th Oct 2021](#)

## Category: SECURITY

### 1. BSF jurisdiction: parties in Punjab oppose Centre's decision

#### Reference:

[UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis of 17th Oct 2021](#)

## D. GS 4 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## E. Editorials

## Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

### 1. A festering crisis in the Palk Strait

#### Background:

- **Five fishermen from Tamil Nadu have lost their lives in the Palk Strait in 2021** in reported incidents between the Indian fishermen and Sri Lankan Navy.
  - Indian fishermen while trying to earn a living, reportedly cross the International Maritime Boundary Line, between India and Sri Lanka.
  - They are often intercepted in Sri Lankan waters by the Sri Lankan Navy for “illegal fishing”.
  - Tamil Nadu fishermen’s associations have accused the Sri Lankan Navy of brutally attacking the fishermen, while Sri Lanka has denied the allegations.

#### Issue:

#### **Palk Strait issue:**

- The fishermen’s deaths serve as a stark reminder of the **unresolved fisheries conflict in the Palk Strait**.

- The issue has become acute from the time Sri Lanka's 30 year-long civil war ended in 2009. At the end of the civil war, Sri Lanka's northern Tamil fishermen, who were displaced and barred access to the sea, began returning to their old homes. The resumption of fishing activities from North Sri Lankan fishermen led to tension with Tamil fishermen on the other side of the sea over the marine resources of the region.

#### **Bottom trawling:**

- The **practice of bottom trawling by Tamil Nadu fishermen** is a grave concern.
- The bottom trawling fishing method involves dragging large fishing nets along the seabed, scooping out prawns, small fishes and virtually everything else at one go. This practice is deemed **destructive and antithetical to sustainable fishing practices**. It involves a large volume of bycatch which could be destructive to fishing populations. As a result, the fish catch has fallen drastically and many varieties of fish have been vanishing.
- Also, incessant bottom trawling along the coast of Tamil Nadu over the years has meant that the Tamil Nadu fishermen are drawn to the relatively resource-rich Sri Lankan waters.

#### **Livelihood issue:**

- The **daily wage fishermen** are largely dependent on fishing and any disruption in the fishing activity poses a huge risk to the lives of their families.
- While the vessel owners have been able to reap substantial profits, the fishermen receive only meagre incomes while **facing huge risks to their lives**.

#### **Approach of Sri Lanka:**

- The Sri Lankan state's response to the problem has been largely a **military and legal one**, tasking its Navy with patrolling the seas and arresting "encroachers", banning trawling, and levying stiff fines on foreign vessels engaged in illegal fishing in its territorial waters.
- This has been inconsistent with the need for a more holistic humanitarian approach as proposed by the Indian side.

#### **Impact on the bilateral relation between India and Sri Lanka:**

- The Palk Bay conflict could be the biggest test yet to the bilateral relationship between India and Sri Lanka.
- The issue has **gained political mileage in both countries** and hence could have a disastrous impact on the relationship.

For detailed information on the India-Sri Lanka bilateral relations refer to the following article:

[India- Sri Lanka Relation: RSTV – Big Picture](#)

#### **Measures taken:**

- India and Sri Lanka have held many rounds of bilateral talks in the recent past to find a solution to this lingering issue.

- At the November 2016 meeting in New Delhi led by the Foreign and Fisheries Ministers from both sides, a **Joint Working Group** was constituted to expedite the transition towards ending the practice of bottom trawling at the earliest.
- The Indian government has been **attempting to divert Tamil Nadu fishermen to deep-sea fishing** as a viable alternative to bottom trawling in the Palk Bay strait.

#### Recommendations:

- The distressing incidents are neither peculiar to this year, nor inevitable and hence there is the need for **more holistic and sustainable solutions to the issue**. Viewing the conflict merely through the prism of Tamil Nadu fishermen and the Sri Lankan Navy may not yield a solution to the problem. There is a need for a **more humanitarian approach** to the issue.
- A **moratorium on bottom trawling in the Palk Bay and support to the fishermen** is a good first step towards a solution.

## 2. A 'bubbles of trust' approach

#### Background:

##### Rise of China and its consequences:

- **China has been able to grow economically due to ongoing globalization.** Chinese firms have been able to secure significant market shares in open economies.
- However, there has been a **marked asymmetric globalisation** being observed. The Chinese market has not been open to foreign companies in the way foreign markets are to Chinese firms.
- The asymmetric **globalisation favouring China allowed Beijing to attain power**. It is now using that power to undermine liberal democratic values around the world.
- In such a scenario, there have been **calls for a global retreat from the free movement of goods, services, capital, people and ideas**.

#### Concept of bubbles of trust:

- The popular backlash against China is pushing many governments towards policies of self-reliance.
- Though the reorienting and de-risking of global supply chains is welcome, **pursuing technological sovereignty could be inherently self-defeating** as collective efforts could be more effective in harnessing critical and emerging technologies. Complementarities in capabilities can power innovation and growth.
- The article proposes a bubbles of trust approach.
- The **idea of 'bubbles of trust' offers a middle path between the extremes of technological sovereignty and laissez-faire globalisation**. Unlike trading blocs, which tend to be insular, bubbles tend to expand organically, attracting new partners that share values, interests and economic complementarities.

#### Quad's role:

- The **Quad countries – Japan, India, Australia and the U.S.** – with their convergence of values and geopolitical interests are uniquely placed to envelop their economies inside bubbles of trust.



- The U.S. is a global leader in intellectual property, Japan in high-value manufacturing, Australia in advanced niches such as quantum computing and cyber security, and India in human capital. This **configuration of values, interests and complementary capabilities** offers huge opportunities.
- The Quad countries will have to create a new form of economic cooperation based on the bubbles of trust approach.
- The **Quad's Critical and Emerging Technology Working Group** is well placed to develop the necessary 'bubbles of trust' framework, which could be adopted at the next Quad summit. The Working Group must seek to **strengthen geopolitical convergences**, increase faith in each member state's judicial systems, **deepen economic ties** and boost trust in one another's citizens. The Quad should **not allow differences of approach on privacy, data governance and the digital economy to widen**.
- The focus should not be on substituting China. Rather, it should be based on the Quad countries **managing their dependencies on China while simultaneously developing a new vision for the global economy**.

### Conclusion:

- Every measure needs to be taken to **address the skewed globalization pattern and its negative consequences**.
- The bubbles of trust offer a middle path between the extremes of technological sovereignty and laissez-faire globalisation and hence there is the need to promote it.

## Category: GOVERNANCE

### 1. A reminder that India still trails in the hunger fight

The recently released [Global Hunger Index](#) has ranked India at 101 out of 116 countries, with the country falling in the category of having a 'serious' hunger situation. The Indian government has expressed strong reservations over the process and parameters employed in the formulation of the GHI.

This issue has been covered previously in the following article:

[UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis of 18th Oct 2021](#)

## F. Prelims Facts

### 1. Thespian Rajinikanth given Dadasaheb Phalke Award

- The [Dadasaheb Phalke Awards](#) is the highest award in cinema.
- It is annually presented at the National Film Awards ceremony by the Directorate of Film Festivals.
- The award is named after Dhundiraj Govind Phalke, popularly known as Dadasaheb Phalke.
- Dadasaheb Phalke is regarded as the 'father of Indian cinema'.

### Context

- Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu presented the Dadasaheb Phalke Award to film actor Rajinikanth.



## G. Tidbits

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

**Q.1 Consider the following statements with regards to Dadasaheb Phalke awards and choose the correct ones.**

1. The award is named after Dhundiraj Govind Phalke, regarded as the 'father of Indian cinema'.
2. Dadasaheb Phalke Award was introduced by the government in 1969 and it was awarded for the first time to Devika Rani, "the first lady of Indian cinema".
3. Dadasaheb Phalke directed India's first feature film Raja Harischandra (1913).

**Options:-**

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

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

- The Dadasaheb Phalke Award is India's highest award in the field of cinema. It is presented annually at the National Film Awards ceremony by the Directorate of Film Festivals, an organisation set up by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. The recipient is honoured for their "outstanding contribution to the growth and development of Indian cinema".
- Presented first in 1969, the award was introduced by the Government of India to commemorate Dadasaheb Phalke's contribution to Indian cinema. Phalke (1870–1944), who is popularly known as and often regarded as "the father of Indian cinema", was an Indian filmmaker who directed India's first full-length feature film, Raja Harishchandra (1913).
- The first recipient of the award was actress Devika Rani.

**Q.2 Consider the following statements with regards to the National Commission for Scheduled Castes in India:**

1. It is a constitutional body set up under the provisions of Article 338A of the Indian Constitution.
2. The Commission is also required to discharge similar functions with regards to the Anglo-Indian Community as it does with respect to the SCs.
3. Its functions include monitoring and investigating all issues concerning the safeguards provided for the SCs under the Constitution.

**Which of these statements is/are correct?**

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

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

- The National Commission for Scheduled Castes is an Indian constitutional body under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India established with a view to providing safeguards against the exploitation of Scheduled Castes and Anglo Indian communities to promote and protect their social, educational, economic and cultural interests, special provisions were made in the Constitution.
- Its functions include monitoring and investigating all issues concerning the safeguards provided for the SCs under the Constitution.
- Article 338 of the Indian Constitution deals with National Commission for Scheduled Castes. Article 338 A deals with National Commission for Scheduled Tribes.

**Q.3 Consider the following statements with regards to production of Rubber:**

1. Kerala is the top producer of rubber amongst all the Indian states.
2. Recently, the world's first Genetically Modified (GM) rubber plant developed by Rubber Research Institute was planted in Assam.
3. Rubber Board, headquartered at Kottayam, Kerala, under the administration of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, is responsible for the development of the rubber industry in the country by assisting and encouraging research, development, extension and training activities related to rubber.

**Which of these is incorrect?**

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

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

- Kerala is the largest rubber producing state of India (accounting for almost 90% of total rubber production in India).
- Recently, the world's first Genetically Modified (GM) rubber plant developed by Rubber Research Institute was planted in Assam.
- Rubber Board, under the administration of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, is responsible for the development of the rubber industry in the country by assisting and encouraging research,

development, extension and training activities related to rubber. It is headquartered in Kottayam, Kerala.

**Q.4 Which of the given statements is not true with regards to the Piprahwa relics?**

- a. They were gifted to Sri Lanka by the Indian government 141 years ago
- b. The relics include bone fragments, ashes and pieces of jewels of Buddha
- c. The relics are kept at Waskaduwa Viharaya in Sri Lanka
- d. None of the above

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

- One of the world's pre-eminent discoveries of relics of Gautama Buddha occurred at Piprahwa in 1898. William Claxton Peppé, a British landowner, excavated an ancient Buddhist stupa on the Birdpur estate near the border of India and Nepal.
  - The site is approximately 160 km from Kushinagar, the final resting place of Buddha, where he attained mahaparinirvana after death.
- He unearthed a large stone coffer containing gold, jewels, fragments of bone and five reliquary urns. An inscription on one of the urns identified the pieces of bone as the relics of the Lord Buddha which had been given to his own Sakya clan following his cremation.
- Some of these relics were gifted to Sri Lanka as a token of friendship and gratitude. They were kept at Waskaduwa Viharaya in Sri Lanka.

**Q.5 Consider the following statements:**

1. According to the Indian Patents Act, a biological process to create a seed can be patented in India.
2. In India, there is no Intellectual Property Appellate Board.
3. Plant varieties are not eligible to be patented in India.

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

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

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

- Article 3(j) the Indian Patents Act excludes from patentability "plants and animals in whole or in any part thereof other than microorganisms but including seeds, varieties, and species, and essentially biological processes for production or propagation of plants and animals". Hence, Statement 1 is not correct. Plant varieties are not eligible to be patented in India.

- The Intellectual Property Appellate Board (IPAB) has been constituted by the Indian Government to hear and resolve the appeals against the decisions of the registrar under the Indian Trademarks Act, 1999 and the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999. Hence, statement 2 is not correct.

## I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Examine the conflict between the two competing rights — freedom to protest and the right to free movement of the public. Apply this debate specifically to the ongoing farmers' protests against farm laws and evaluate. (15 marks, 250 words)[GS-2, Polity]
2. The failure to resolve the fishermen's dispute is hurting India – Sri Lanka relations. Elucidate. (15 marks, 250 words)[GS-2, International Relations]

