

03 Nov 2021: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Set up police complaints bodies: NHRC

Context:

- Recommendations from the [National Human Rights Commission's \(NHRC\)](#) core advisory group on the criminal justice system.

Details:

- National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has asked the Union Home Ministry and the State Governments to **set up police complaints authorities** at the State/UT and district levels as per the judgment in the **Prakash Singh vs Union of India, 2006** case.
 - According to data provided by the Home Ministry to the Lok Sabha, only 16 States and UTs had implemented police complaints boards as per the Prakash Singh judgment.
- The NHRC group has asked the MHA and the Law Ministry to consider implementing the recommendations of the 113th report of the Law Commission to add **Section 114 B to the Indian Evidence Act**. This would ensure that if a person sustains injuries in custody, it is presumed that the injuries were inflicted by the police. This could act as a **strong deterrence against police violence**.
- The group also recommended **making the legal framework technology-friendly** to speed up the criminal justice system.
- The group also recommended installing CCTV cameras with night vision and involving trained social workers and law students with police stations as part of **community policing**.

C. GS 3 Related

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. COP 26, Glasgow

Context:

- The article discusses the major highlights of the second day of the ongoing [26th UNFCCC Conference of Parties](#) meeting in Glasgow.

Ending deforestation:

- In the COP26 climate summit's first major deal, leaders at the COP26 global climate conference have pledged to **stop deforestation by 2030** to help slow climate change.
 - According to the Global Forest Watch, in 2020 the world lost 2,58,000 sq. km of forests.
 - Felling trees contributes to climate change because it depletes **forests that absorb vast amounts of the warming gas CO₂**.
- This agreement expands a commitment by 40 countries as part of the **2014 New York Declaration of Forests**.
 - The New York Declaration on Forests is a voluntary and non-legally binding political declaration adopted in 2014. The Declaration pledges to halve the rate of deforestation by 2020, to end it by 2030, and to restore hundreds of millions of acres of degraded land.
- Over 100 national leaders have pledged to **halt and reverse deforestation and land degradation by the end of the decade**. Brazil – where stretches of the Amazon rainforest have been cut down – was also among the signatories.
- The pledge includes almost **£14bn (\$19.2bn) of public and private funds to invest in protecting and restoring forests**. Some of the funding will go to developing countries to restore damaged land, tackle wildfires and support indigenous communities.
 - Under the agreement, 12 countries pledged to provide \$12 billion of public funding between 2021 and 2025 for developing countries to restore degraded land and tackle wildfires.
- Governments of 28 countries also committed to **removing deforestation from the global trade of food** including animal husbandry and other agricultural products such as palm oil, soya and cocoa. These industries drive forest loss by cutting down trees to make space for animals to graze or crops to grow.
- More than 30 of the world's biggest financial companies have also promised to **end investment in activities linked to deforestation**.
- Though the environmental experts have welcomed the move, they have also warned on how a previous deal in 2014 had failed to slow deforestation at all.

Reducing methane emissions:

- While the main focus of efforts to curb global warming has been on carbon dioxide, experts point out that cutting methane emissions could be one of the most effective interventions to reduce near-term global warming. Although there's more CO₂ in the atmosphere and it sticks around for longer, individual methane molecules have a more powerful warming effect on the atmosphere than single CO₂ molecules given its **higher Global Warming Potential (GWP)**.
 - The Global Warming Potential (GWP) of a greenhouse gas is its ability to trap extra heat in the atmosphere over time relative to carbon dioxide (CO₂).
 - **Methane is one of the most potent greenhouse gases and is responsible for a third of current warming from human activities**. Some of the major sources of methane emissions include animal husbandry, landfill waste and oil and gas production.
- The US and the EU have announced a global partnership to cut emissions of the greenhouse gas methane by 2030. **The Global Methane Pledge aims to slash methane emissions by 30% by 2030 compared with 2020 levels**.

- Nearly 90 countries have pledged support to this U.S. and EU-led effort. The Global Methane Pledge, first announced in September, now covers emissions from two-thirds of the global economy. While Brazil, one of the five biggest emitters of methane, has signed up, three other large emitter nations — **China, Russia and India** — **have not signed up**.

Infrastructure for Resilient Island States:

- India has launched the **Infrastructure for Resilient Island States (IRIS)** initiative for developing the infrastructure of small island nations.
 - IRIS initiative becomes critical given that these small island nations remain the **most vulnerable countries** facing the biggest threat from climate change. They face an existential threat due to climate change.
- The IRIS is a part of the **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)** initiative.
 - The Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) is a multi-stakeholder global partnership of national governments, UN agencies and programmes, multilateral development banks and financing mechanisms, the private sector, and knowledge institutions, launched at the **UN Climate Action Summit of 2019**. It aims to promote the resilience of new and existing infrastructure systems to climate and disaster risks in support of sustainable development.
- The new initiative is the result of cooperation between India, the U.K. and Australia and included the participation of leaders of small island nations such as Fiji, Jamaica and Mauritius.
- The initiative would involve setting up **norms and standards for resilient infrastructure** in small island states and coastal areas. IRIS would focus on **building capacity, having pilot projects** in small island developing states. The promotion of quality infrastructure in the Small Island States will benefit both lives and livelihoods in such states.
- India's space agency ISRO will build a **special data window for the small island nations** to provide them timely information about cyclones, coral-reef monitoring, coast-line monitoring through satellite.
- The initiative will make it easy for **SIDS** to mobilise technology, finance and necessary information faster and more effectively.

Meeting of Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDC):

- Speaking at the Ministerial meeting of Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDC) at the 26th international climate conference, Indian Union Environment Minister called upon the LMDC countries to work closely to **protect the common interests of the Global South in the ongoing climate negotiations**.
- Indian Environment Minister pointed out that the **climate finance** targets cannot continue at the levels decided in 2009, and emphasised that it should be at least **\$1 trillion**. He also called for a **system to monitor climate finance**.
- The Minister requested the LMDC members to join hands with India to support the global initiatives it has pioneered, including the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**, **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)** and the **Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT)**.

- **LeadIT is launched by India and Sweden along with the World Economic Forum** with the support of the Stockholm Environment Institute in 2019 during the United Nations Secretary-General Climate Action Summit. Currently, the Group has a membership of 13 countries and 15 companies, including Dalmia Cement, Mahindra Group and SpiceJet from India, committed towards **low carbon industry transition**. LeadIT members subscribe to the notion that energy-intensive industry can and must progress on low-carbon pathways, aiming to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. It will help in heavy industry transition as well as **meet Paris Agreement goals and create new sustainable jobs**.

One Sun, One World, One Grid:

- The new **Global Green Grids Initiative** **One Sun One World One Grid (GGI-OSOWOG)** has been announced at the ongoing COP26.
 - The new Global Green Grids Initiative One Sun One World One Grid (GGI-OSOWOG) is an **evolution of the International Solar Alliance's OSOWOG** multilateral drive to foster interconnected solar energy infrastructure at a global scale.
- This initiative aims to **tap solar energy and have it travel seamlessly across borders**. The initiative will work towards accelerating the making of large solar power stations and wind farms in the best locations, linked together by continental-scale grids crossing national borders.
 - The sun offers a huge source of energy for mankind. All the energy humanity uses in a year is equal to the energy that reaches the earth from the sun in a single hour. Given that the sun never sets and that half the planet is always receiving sunlight, there is the potential to harness solar energy continuously across the globe and trade this energy across borders to ensure adequate energy supply to meet the needs of everyone on earth.
- Over 80 countries have endorsed the **One Sun Declaration**.
- This initiative will bring together an international coalition of national governments, financial organisations, and power system operators.
- Realizing One Sun One World One Grid through interconnected green grids can be transformational, enabling all the nations of the world to meet the targets of the Paris Agreement to prevent dangerous climate change, to **accelerate the clean energy transition**, and to achieve the **Sustainable Development Goals**. These efforts can **stimulate green investments and create millions of good jobs**. By sharing the sun's energy, the nations can help build a more peaceful and prosperous world.

2. India's climate commitments are bold, but meeting them will be a challenge, say experts

Context:

- **India has announced an enhanced climate action target** for itself at the ongoing 26th COP of the UNFCCC.

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

[UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis of 2nd November 2021](#)

Details:

- Some environmental experts have expressed doubts over India's stiff climate action targets.
 - **Achieving net zero by 2070 would require India to peak emissions by 2040**, following which emissions will have to start to reduce. Available studies suggest that for a 2070 net zero year and peaking year of 2040, India would have to **reduce the emissions intensity (emissions per unit GDP) by 85%**. This appears a stiff target as notably, India has so far only been able to reduce its emission intensity by 24% from the 2005 levels.
 - To enable such a steep reduction, the share of non-hydro renewable energy has to increase to 65% from the current 11% and the share of electric cars in passenger sales has to go from current 0.1% to 75% by 2040 while the share of fossil energy in primary energy has to decrease from 73% to 40%. These appear **too steep a target given India's financial and technical resources at present**.
- Some experts have pointed out that while it had become increasingly difficult for India to dodge the calls to announce a net zero date, India, however, should have said that it will reach net zero by 2070, only if other developed countries themselves commit to reaching net zero before 2050 and also offer financial and technological help to developing nations like itself. **It should have taken up conditional targets.**

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. Climate pledge

Context:

- At the UNFCCC COP26 summit in Glasgow, PM Narendra Modi announced that India will commit to ambitious, enhanced climate targets and cuts in carbon emissions in its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

India's new climate commitment:

- Renewable energy would be tapped in a big way in India. **By 2030, India will ensure 50% of its energy will be sourced from renewable sources.** India plans to generate **500 GW of renewable energy by 2030**. This marks a 50 GW increase from its current target of 450 GW.
- **India also committed to reducing its carbon emissions until 2030 by a billion tonnes.**
- **By 2030, India will reduce the carbon intensity of its economy to less than 45 per cent.**
- **India will achieve net-zero emissions latest by 2070.**

Why the announcement was a surprise:

- This is notable given that so far India was the only major emitter that had not committed to a timeline to achieve net-zero carbon dioxide emissions.
- It has also argued against the concept of net-zero carbon targets.

- India's G20 Sherpa and Minister Piyush Goyal even suggested during the G20 summit in Rome that India could not switch to non-fossil fuel and end coal-based thermal plants unless it was made a member of the [Nuclear Suppliers Group](#).

Need for an immediate shift in the Government's priorities:

- As per the Centre for Science and Environment, the promise to reduce emissions by one billion tonnes would need a reduction in India's carbon output by a massive 22% by 2030.
- On Net Zero, the target of 2070 is two decades after the global goal at mid-century and would require the world's other growing economies including China to peak emissions, preferably by 2030 itself.
- India meets about 12% of its electricity needs through renewable energy, and ramping that up to 50% by 2030 will be a tall ask too.

Conclusion:

- When it comes to climate change, countries must remember that they are not in competition with one another but trying together to outrun the clock.
- Thus, it is hoped that the commitments made by India will inspire other countries, particularly the developed world that has lagged behind in fulfilling combined promises of billions of dollars to fund emerging economies, LDCs and the most climate-vulnerable countries.

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Trade and climate, the pivot for India-U.S. ties

Context:

- Trade and climate are two areas that are interrelated and will lend strength to the India-U.S. partnership.

Background:

- [India-US relations](#) have become increasingly multi-faceted, covering cooperation in areas such as trade, climate, defence and security, education, science and technology, civil nuclear energy, space technology and applications, environment, and health.
- Joint efforts will be in creating a free and open Indo-Pacific — one that advances democratic values and confronts autocracies globally and locally.

Areas of convergence:

- Shared concerns about China provide the U.S.-India partnership a much-needed impetus to overcome the awkward efforts for deeper collaboration.
- Both countries are collaborating under the "Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership".
- The partnership will proceed along two main tracks which will build on and subsume a range of existing processes:
 - the strategic clean energy partnership and the climate action.
 - finance mobilisation dialogue.

Issues:

- India's rhetoric of climate justice is likely to be received poorly by the U.S.

- The US continues to take a hard line in terms of trade and is trying to push and get the maximum advantage that it can get from India.
- Protectionist tendencies affect both countries' relations, such as imports from India are subject to increased tariffs in the form of carbon border adjustment mechanisms or "CBAMs".
- Climate-inspired trade tensions that might even lead to new trade wars can hardly bolster the strategic partnership.

The interlinks

- Climate and trade are interrelated in many ways, from commercial dissemination of cutting-edge carbon mitigation and adaptation products and technologies to the carbon emissions that come with the transport of goods and humans from one country to another.
- If India and the U.S. coordinate in incentivising & sharing climate-related technologies and align approaches for reducing emissions associated with trade, the relationship can be a net positive one.

Solutions:

- India and the U.S. could find opportunities to align their climate and trade approaches better, starting with a resolution of their disputes in the [World Trade Organization \(WTO\)](#) on solar panels.
- The two countries could also chart a path that allows trade to flow for transitional energy sources, such as fuel ethanol.
- India currently bans imports of ethanol, as it seeks to ramp up its own ethanol blend mandates and build a domestic sector.

Conclusion:

- Thus, concerted action on both the climate and trade fronts is mutually beneficial and will lend additional strength to the foundation of a true partnership for the coming century.

F. Prelims Facts

1. RBI issues revised PCA framework for banks

Prompt Corrective Action Framework:

- Prompt Corrective Action is a framework under which banks with weak financial metrics are put under watch by the Reserve Bank of India. It aims to check the problem of Non-Performing Assets ([NPAs](#)) in the Indian banking sector.
- PCA is intended to help alert the regulator as well as investors and depositors if a bank is heading towards financial stress. **PCA helps RBI monitor key performance indicators of banks** such as – **capital to risk-weighted assets ratio (CRAR), net NPA, Return on Assets (RoA) and Tier 1 Leverage ratio.**
- Certain structured and discretionary actions are initiated in respect of banks hitting such trigger points. Thus the PCA framework allows for a **structured early-intervention mechanism.**

Context:

- The RBI has issued a revised Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework.
 - **Capital, asset quality and leverage** will be the key areas for monitoring in the revised framework.

- The revised PCA framework will be effective from January 1, 2022.

2. COVID-19 as a tale of job hardship and marginalisation

- The **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)** region hosts about 23 million migrant workers as per the 2017 estimates of the International Labour Organization. About three-quarters of this migrant workforce hails from South Asian and Southeast Asian countries.
- **The feminisation of the workforce** across multiple sectors of the economy has been a growing trend with women accounting for 39% of migrant workers in the GCC (International Labour Organization, 2017). Women migrant workers include those in skilled jobs like nurses and those in the semi-skilled or unskilled category such as domestic workers, care workers, cleaning crew, manufacturing workers, salon staff and salespersons.
- Most jobs are on **temporary contracts** and most workers are engaged in **low-wage occupations**. Such a condition makes these **workers vulnerable to abuse and exploitation**.
- The **onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated the vulnerabilities of women migrant workers**. Many of the semi-skilled and unskilled workers lost their jobs, wages and their accommodation too.
- Given the plight of Indian women migrant workers in West Asia, there is the **need for gender-centric, rights-based safeguards**.

G. Tidbits

1. As schools reopen, study warns of deepening divides

- The **National Coalition on the Education Emergency** report “**A Future At Stake — Guidelines and Principles to Resume and Renew Education**”, warns that as children return to physical classes after 18 months of school closures, a business as usual approach will lead to a **deepening of existing educational inequity**.
- The **inequality in accessing online classes** has had an adverse impact on the education of the children more so of the children of the rural and urban poor, migrants, minorities, Dalit, Adivasi and other backward communities.
- The report calls for **focus on children’s mental health** and also enhanced **support for the educational needs of the most disadvantaged**.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements with regards to the Defense Acquisition Council and choose the correct ones:

1. It is the highest decision-making body in the Defense Ministry for deciding on new policies and capital acquisitions for the three services (Army, Navy and Air Force) and the Indian Coast Guard.
2. The Chief of Defense Staff is the Chairman of the Council.
3. It was formed after the Group of Ministers’ recommendations on ‘Reforming the National Security System’, in 2001, post the Kargil War (1999).

Which of these statements are correct?

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct:** The Defence Acquisition Council is the highest decision-making body for deciding on new policies and capital acquisitions for the three services (Army, Navy and Air Force) and the Indian Coast Guard.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** It is chaired by the Defence Minister.
- **Statement 3 is correct:** It was formed after the Group of Ministers' recommendations on 'Reforming the National Security System'.

Q2. Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA), a United States federal law, does not impose sanctions on which of the following nations?

- a. Afghanistan
- b. Iran
- c. North Korea
- d. Russia

Answer: a

Explanation:

- The Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) is a United States Federal Law that has imposed sanctions against Iran, Russia and North Korea.

Q.3 Consider the following statements with regards to Ayushman CAPF scheme:

1. It will provide healthcare services to the serving and retired CAPF personnel from all seven forces, viz. Assam Rifles, BSF, CISF, CRPF, ITBP, NSG and SSB, and their dependents through the Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY IT platform.
2. A dedicated call centre for support and grievance redressal for CAPF personnel has also been set up.
3. Under this scheme, any medical expense done by the CAPF personnel will be reimbursed up to the limit of Rs. 5 lakh per family.

Which of these statements are incorrect?

- a. 1 & 2 only
- b. 2 & 3 only

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** The government has extended the Ayushman CAPF healthcare scheme benefits to the personnel of all Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), viz. Assam Rifles, BSF, CISF, CRPF, ITBP, NSG and SSB, and their dependents. It is not extended to retired personnel.
- **Statement 2 is correct.**
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** The scheme provides cashless medical cover.

Q.4. Consider the following statements with regards to the recently released guidelines on NPAs by the Union Finance Ministry:

1. Staff accountability need not be examined in the case of NPA accounts with outstanding of up to Rs. 20 lakh.
2. The accountability exercise, whenever needed, must be completed within 3 months from the date that the account is declared as NPA.
3. If NPA is caused by external factors such as changes in government policies or natural calamities, it should not attract a staff accountability examination.

Which of these statements are incorrect?

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

Answer: a

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** For examining staff accountability, banks may decide on a threshold of Rs 10 lakh or Rs 20 lakh, depending on their business size.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** Banks will have to complete an accountability exercise within six months from the date an account is classified as NPA.
- **Statement 3 is correct:** The guideline says that if NPA is caused by external factors such as a change in government policy, natural calamities, non-release of government subsidy/grant — it should not attract a staff accountability examination.

Q.5. Consider the following statements:

1. The motion to impeach a Judge of the Supreme Court of India cannot be rejected by the Speaker of the Lok Sabha as per the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968.

2. The Constitution of India defines and gives details of what constitutes 'incapacity and proved misbehaviour' of the Judges of the Supreme Court of India.
3. The details of the process of impeachment of the Judges of the Supreme Court of India are given in the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968.
4. If the motion for the impeachment of a Judge is taken up for voting, the law requires the motion to be backed by each House of the Parliament and supported by a majority of total membership of that House and by not less than two-thirds of total members of that House present and voting.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** The Speaker may admit or reject the motion.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** The Constitution of India does not define or provide any detail of what constitutes 'incapacity and proved misbehaviour'.
- **Statements 3 and 4 are correct.**

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Illustrate the key initiatives announced by India during COP26 summit at Glasgow. (250 words; 15 marks)[GS-3, Environment & Ecology]
2. Examine the plight of Indian migrant workers in West Asia with special emphasis on the challenges faced by women workers. (250 words; 15 marks)[GS-2, International Relations]