

# 11 Nov 2021: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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*Nothing here for today!!!*

## B. GS 2 Related

### Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

#### 1. NSA meet seeks urgent help for Afghans

##### Context:

- The **Third Regional Security Dialogue on Afghanistan** was hosted by India in New Delhi.

##### Details:

- A joint statement titled the '**Delhi Declaration**' was issued after the National Security Adviser level meeting.
- The statement expressed concerns over the **deteriorating socio-economic and humanitarian situation in Afghanistan** and called for "**urgent humanitarian assistance**" to the Afghan people. It stressed that the incoming international aid should be unimpeded, and direct and it should be distributed in a non-discriminatory manner across all sections of the Afghan society.
- Given the implications of the developments in Afghanistan on the neighbouring countries and the region, the statement urged **close cooperation, consultation and coordination among the regional countries over the evolving Afghan scenario**.
- It called for collective **cooperation against terrorism and drug trafficking** in the region.

#### 2. Voices on Capitol Hill back CAATSA sanctions waiver for India

- The U.S. administration is to take a decision soon on the issue of sanctioning India under its **Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA)**, for the purchase of the **S-400 Triumf missile system** from Russia.
- There seems to be a growing consensus in the U.S. over providing India with a waiver under CAATSA given the deepening India-U.S. relationship and the strategic importance of India for the U.S.'s Indo-Pacific strategy.

This issue has been covered previously in the following article:

[UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis of 13th Oct 2021](#)

## C. GS 3 Related

### Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

#### 1. Climate finance is insufficient, says Glasgow draft document

##### Context:

- The member countries participating at the **COP 26** at Glasgow are in the process of preparing a draft document for the climate agreement to be adopted at the conference.
- **Climate finance for mitigation and adaptation of the impact of global warming** has emerged as a major point of difference between the developing and developed nations.

### Background:

#### **Failed promises of climate finance:**

- Developed nations like the United States, Canada, several countries of the [European Union](#), the United Kingdom and others have repeatedly reneged on their commitment to provide **\$100 billion of climate finance annually by 2020**.
- Developing countries like India have argued for unhindered **climate finance and transfer of green technology as major provisions for continued climate action by the developing countries**. This it argues is in line with the core **principle of equity and climate justice** as envisaged under the Paris Climate Deal.

### Details:

#### **Increasing climate finance:**

- A draft document under discussion observes that the promised climate finance by the developed countries would be insufficient to respond to the intensifying climate change impacts in developing countries. It **urges the developed countries to urgently scale up climate finance**.
- Addressing the COP 26, the Indian Prime Minister had stressed that nearly **a trillion dollars in finance** were needed from the developed countries.

#### **Mitigating GHG emission:**

- The draft document recognises that limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius by 2100 requires **rapid, deep and sustained reductions in global [greenhouse gas emissions](#)**, including reducing global carbon dioxide emissions by 45% by 2030, relative to the 2010 level, and to net zero around mid-century.
- It calls upon the member nations to **accelerate the phasing out of coal and subsidies for fossil fuels**.

## **Category: ECONOMY**

### **1. 'Jobs, demand, credit growth to kick-start investment cycle'**

#### Context:

- **Department of Economic Affairs' review of the economy** for the month of October.

#### Details:

- The review notes the existence of some critical **macro and micro growth drivers in the Indian economy**.
  - **Bank credit** has been buoyant over the last few months and there are forecasts for faster credit growth. Notably, there has been **healthy credit penetration in labour-intensive sectors** that augurs well for job creation.
  - There has been high growth in personal loans and loans for consumer durables indicating an **uptick in consumer spending and demand in the economy**.

- The Finance Ministry expects an accelerated uptick in demand, **fuller restoration of supply chains**, strong prospects of a revival in investment, a surge in bank credit and **easing of inflation pressures** in the coming months due to the recent cut in central excise duty on petrol and diesel prices.
- The Ministry projects that the stage is set for **India's investment cycle to kick-start and catalyse its economic recovery**.

## D. GS 4 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## E. Editorials

### Category: ECONOMY

#### 1. The case of demonetisation in India

##### Context

An assessment of popular narratives vs economic facts on the fifth anniversary of Demonetisation in India.

##### A popular narrative – What does it mean?

Narratives are the description of events, processes or stories often intertwined in the cultural belief systems of the society. These may be grounded more in myth than reality and thereby policy decisions based on these have devastating impacts at times on society.

##### Demonetisation – The story so far

The November 8, 2016 decision to demonetise large denomination currency to flush out undeclared hoards of cash was nothing new. It was experimented earlier on two previous occasions, in 1946 and 1978, with dismal results.

##### The stated objectives

1. Eliminating black money and corruption;
2. Moving towards “less cash and more digital economy”;
3. Increased tax compliance;
4. A windfall gain of ₹2 trillion – ₹3 trillion.

##### Results and the impacts

- Unlike the limited impact of similar events in 1946 and 1978, the latest demonetisation in 2016 resulted in widespread disruption in the economy, whose aftershocks are still being felt by society.
- The majority of observers have opined that this policy was a failure as only a fraction of its declared objectives could be achieved.
- Interestingly, more than 99.3% of cash returned to the system, pointing towards money laundering routes.

- Rubbing more salt to the wound, data shows that the cash in circulation now exceeds even the pre-demonetisation levels.

### **The euphoria surrounding the crackdown on “Black Money”**

- The deeply satisfying idea of striking a powerful blow through dramatic action against black money has always been in the psyche of the public. More often than not, it has been influenced by the stuff of epics, cinematic experiences and moral terms.
- Contrary to the popular belief, the lion’s share of black money is earned through perfectly legal activities rather than income from corruption or criminal activities.
- Moreover, black money is not mostly kept, in stacks of currency notes and gold, hoarded in safes, boxes, or secret cupboards, except in small quantities, but is mostly accumulated through real estate and other assets.
- We observed seemingly the narrative getting changed and focus from black money and fake currency to digital/cashless payments being elevated and taking the centre stage.

### **Capitalising on the moral economy of the poor**

- The ideals of collective sacrifice, nationalism and patriotism have always been at the deeply entrenched soft corners among the masses and invoking high moral values is a low hanging fruit for policymakers.
- For the poor, any endeavour towards penalising the rich is far more attractive than achieving social justice and equity.

### **Conclusion**

Falling prey to the popular narratives has shown to influence a much bigger role in economic policymaking historically than economists acknowledge. The case of demonetisation adds to the long list of such decisions which demonstrates that popular narratives can trump economic facts. An auto-immune shock for the otherwise steady and growing economy, leading to a plethora of hardships being faced to date, presents a case of pondering upon and learning a lesson for the future.

## **Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY**

### **1. Does India have a right to burn fossil fuels?**

#### **Context**

During the recent United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26), India has, for the first time, committed to achieving the net-zero emission target by 2070.

#### **The Pledges – Ambitious vs Ambiguous**

The Indian PM surprised observers across the world with some ambitious, commendable and unconditional five pledges (Panchamrit) on India’s decarbonisation during his speech at COP26:

1. Increase non-fossil energy capacity to 500 GWs by 2030.
2. Meet 50 percent of energy requirements from renewables by 2030.
3. Reduce the total projected carbon emissions by 1 BTs by 2030.
4. Reduce the carbon intensity of the economy by less than 45 percent.

5. Achieve net zero carbon by 2070.

Although these commitments appear to be our new tryst with destiny in terms of achieving sustainable development goals, more clarity on each of these targets could help in realising a few of the targets, if not all.

### **Clean Development vs Energy Dilemma**

- The country needs a large amount of energy for its economic development and our dependence on coal is huge as of now.
- Our commitments look like a fairy-tale when looked at the scenario at the grassroots level.
- The coal lobbyists and other factions do have their vested interests as well to jeopardise the cherished goals.

### **Historic burden and Right to Burn**

- The global north vs south arguments in terms of owning the responsibility for reducing the emission now, often face an impasse due to different viewpoints.
- While historically we can establish that the developed nations have contributed more towards global warming and climate change, this should not mean that we shy away from the fact that it is a common goal.

### **The Alternatives**

- While we are no doubt still dependent on and one of the largest importers of coal, the arguments for its affordable, reliable and domestically available nature are questionable.
- As we are geographically blessed with a huge amount of renewable resources from solar to hydro and wind energies, tapping them with technological development will reduce the burden.

### **The Development Models**

- The blind faith in the models adopted by the west centuries ago for economic development without paying attention to the current needs and technological gains needs to be changed.
- The south-south cooperation and evolving our own growth parameters will help in achieving the overall development addressing the issues of employment, technology, energy, poverty and self-reliance.

### **Conclusion**

- Blaming some for historic injustices and shunning the responsibilities for undoing the wrongs that have been done is not going to lead us to a better future. We also need to realise the damage we will inflict on the poor among us, the flora and fauna and to the planet as a whole if we repeat our mistakes.

## **F. Prelims Facts**

### **1. India, U.S. monitoring defence trade projects**

#### **Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI):**



- The initiative aims to **facilitate co-production and co-development of defence equipment between India and the U.S.**
- It aims to **enhance the bilateral defence trade relationship** between the two countries.

**Context:**

- The 11th Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) meeting was held between India and the U.S.

**Additional information:**

- India and the U.S. have recently signed the first project agreement for **Air-Launched Unmanned Aerial Vehicle** under the Joint Working Group Air Systems of the DTTI.

**2. Kalaris back on track post-lockdown**

**Kalaripayattu:**

- Kalaripayattu, also known simply as Kalari, is an **Indian martial art that originated in Kerala.**
- It is one of the **oldest surviving martial arts in India**, with a history spanning over 3,000 years.
- It is a martial art designed for the ancient battlefield (the word “Kalari” meaning “battlefield”), with weapons and combative techniques. It originated as part of military training for warriors.

**3. Coringa set for fishing cat collaring project**

**Context:**

- Conservation biologists of the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Dehradun, will soon begin collaring 10 fishing cats (*Prionailurus viverrinus*) in the Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary (CWS) in Andhra Pradesh for a better understanding of the species.

**Fishing cats:**

- The **fishing cat (*Prionailurus viverrinus*)** is a medium-sized wild cat. It is predominantly **nocturnal.**
- The fishing cat hunts in water. It has specialized features like partially webbed feet and water-resistant fur that helps it to thrive in wetlands.
- The fishing cat is **threatened by the destruction of wetlands**, which are increasingly being polluted and converted for agricultural use and human settlements. The conversion of mangrove forests to commercial aquaculture ponds is a major threat. Another threat to the fishing cat is the **depletion of its main prey – fish** due to unsustainable fishing practices and over-exploitation of local fish stocks.
- **Since 2016, the fishing cat is listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List.** In India, the fishing cat is included in Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and thereby protected from hunting.
- The fishing cat is the **state animal of West Bengal.**

**Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary:**

- **Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary** is an estuary situated near Kakinada in Andhra Pradesh. It constitutes a large stretch of **mangrove forests** in India.
  - The sanctuary is a **part of the Godavari estuary**.
- The sanctuary is yet to be declared as a **Ramsar site** despite facing various threats to its ecology.

## G. Tidbits

### 1. Balance between environmental, defence concerns a better goal: SC

- While hearing a plea against the environmental clearance given to widen the Char Dham roads by felling trees, the Supreme Court has called for a **balance between defence requirements and environmental concerns**.
- The Court has expressed doubts over its intervention on environmental grounds given the security concerns amid the recent border skirmishes on the border with China.
- These roads are **crucial to the defence preparedness of India along the Indo-China border**. The widening of the roads will be necessary for the transport of heavy military equipment like missile launchers and even tanks to the border.

### 2. Centre approves incentives for sugar cane, cotton, jute farmers

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved a slew of measures that will **support farmers growing sugarcane, cotton and jute**.
  - The CCEA has **increased the price of ethanol extracted from sugarcane juice and molasses** for blending in petrol.
  - The CCEA also approved a committed **price support to the Cotton Corporation of India (CCI)** as reimbursement for its losses in procuring cotton produce from farmers at **minimum support prices (MSP)** over the past seven years.
  - The CCEA approved **reservation norms for the mandatory use of jute in packaging**, stipulating that 100% of foodgrains and 20% of sugar must compulsorily be packed in jute bags.

## H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements with respect to MPLADS funds:

1. Funds released to district authorities under MPLADS are not lapsable.
2. The MPLADS is a Central Sector Scheme fully funded by the Government of India.
3. The Ministry of Rural Development is the administrative ministry for the scheme at the Centre.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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



**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

- The MPLADS is a Central Sector Scheme fully funded by the Government of India wherein funds are allocated to the MPs to carry out developmental activities in their constituencies. Under this scheme, funds released to district authorities under MPLADS are not lapsable.
- Initially, the MPLADS was under the control of the Ministry of Rural Development. The 1st Guidelines were issued in February 1994, covering the concept, implementation and monitoring of the Scheme. The MPLAD Scheme was transferred to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation in October 1994.

**Q2. Consider the following Pairs:**

Martial Arts	State
1. Kalaripayattu	Kerala
2. Mardani Khel	Rajasthan
3. Pari-Khanda	Uttar Pradesh
4. Thoda	Madhya Pradesh

**Which of the above pairs is/are correctly matched?**

- 1 only
- 2 and 3 only
- 1, 3 and 4 only
- 1, 2, 3 and 4

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

- Mardani Khel is an armed Indian martial art from Maharashtra.
- 'Pari Khanda' the famous martial art form created by Rajputs is practised in the state of Bihar.
- Thoda is a martial art form of Himachal Pradesh.

**Q3. With respect to Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary, which of the following statements is/are correct?**

1. It is the second-largest stretch of mangrove forests in India.
2. The Sanctuary is declared as a Ramsar site.

**Options:**

- 1 only
- 2 only

- c. Both
- d. None

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

- Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary is an estuary situated near Kakinada in Andhra Pradesh. It constitutes a large stretch of mangrove forests in India.
  - The sanctuary is a part of the Godavari estuary.
- The sanctuary is yet to be declared as a Ramsar site despite facing various threats to its ecology.

**Q4. Which is the best description of Janjatiya Gaurav Divas?**

- a. It is the day to remember the contributions of tribal freedom fighters
- b. It is observed every year to convey the importance of Nurses in the healthcare system
- c. It is a day to acknowledge the contributions of women who have fought against trafficking
- d. It is celebrated every year to honour animal welfare and animal rights activists

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

- Janjatiya Gaurav Divas is a day to commemorate the contributions of tribal freedom fighters.

**Q5. With reference to the cultural history of India, the memorizing of chronicles, dynastic histories and Epic tales was the profession of who of the following?**

- a. Shramana
- b. Parivraaj
- c. Agrahaarika
- d. Maagadha

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

- With reference to the cultural history of India, the memorizing of chronicles, dynastic histories and epic tales was the profession of Maagadha.
- Shramana means seeker, one who performs acts of austerity.
- Agraharika means one who looked after lands given in charity.
- Parivraajaka means one who roams about around places.

## I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Multiple provisions in the Indian Constitution and several laws prohibiting the practice of manual scavenging haven't been able to eliminate this practice in the country. Examine the causes and suggest ways to overcome this problem. (250 words; 15 marks) [GS-2, Social Justice]
2. Do you support the Indian government's argument of 'Common but differentiated responsibility' when it comes to mitigating the effects of climate change? Support your answer with appropriate examples. (250 words; 15 marks) [GS-3, Environment and Ecology]

