

23 Jan 2022: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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B. GS 2 Related

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. [India's reliance on Chinese goods surged in 2021](#)

Syllabus: India and its neighbourhood- relations.

Mains: Trends in India-China Trade Relations

Context

Indian imports from China have seen an increase of about \$16 billion in 2021, a two-thirds increase compared to 2020 imports.

Details

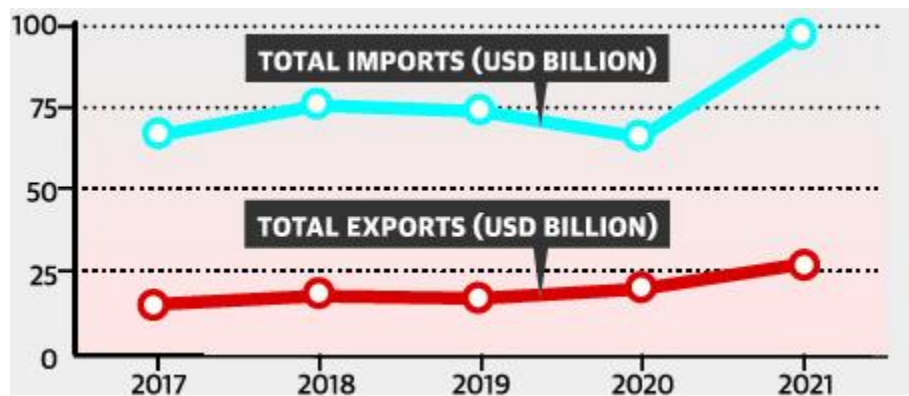


Image Source: The Hindu

- India's total imports from China crossed a record **\$97.5 billion** in 2021.
- The bilateral trade now stands at **\$125 billion**, crossing the \$100 billion mark for the first time.
- 8,455 different types of items have been imported from China.
- The list covers a range of chemicals, electronics, auto components and textiles.
- The top 100 items by value accounted for **\$41 billion**, up from \$25 billion in 2020.
- Integrated circuits increased by 147%, laptops and personal computers by 77%, and oxygen apparatus fourfold rise in imports.
- Intermediate products, particularly chemicals, saw striking growth.
 - For Example, Acetic acid saw an eightfold increase.

Reasons for the increase in Imports

- The recovery in domestic demand for finished products from China.
- Growth in India's exports worldwide has also increased the need for crucial intermediate inputs from China.
- Disruptions in trade with other countries have led to greater imports from China in the short-term.
- India imports finished goods for the Indian market, such as electronics, and also depends on China for a range of intermediate industrial products, which cannot be sourced from elsewhere and are not sufficiently made in India.

Conclusion

The rise in the imports of finished goods such as toys, electronics, or furniture, which could be manufactured in India is not a welcome sign and measures need to be taken to have long-term solutions to address the growing demand for these items.

To read more about – [India-China Bilateral Relations](#)

Nut Graf

Despite the border turmoil, continuous rise in the imports from China suggests a growing dependence of India on the Chinese products, this has reignited a debate on the “Atmanirbhar Bharat” (Self-reliant India) espoused by the Government of India.

C. GS 3 Related

Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. Adding radioactive substances in wearables unjustified

Syllabus: Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.

Mains: Presence of radioactive substances in products and associated concerns.

Context

Recently the **Authority for Nuclear Safety and Radiation Protection (ANVS)**, Netherlands issued a statement identifying various wearable products containing more radioactivity than legally permitted.

Details

- The Authority for Nuclear Safety and Radiation Protection identified products such as Magnetix Magnetic necklace, Magnetix Sport boost bracelet, Smiley Kids bracelet, Athletic necklace among others that contained radioactivity more than permissible limits.
- The agency warned the public against using “Quantum Pendant,” “anti-5G pendant” or “negative ion” jewellery items or sleep masks.
- An air purifier (negative ionizer) is a device that emits two million healthy negative ions per sec from the black brush on its top.
 - These ions may act on pollutants, make them negatively charged and get them collected on surfaces.
- The agency suggested that the “negative ion products” may contain radioactive substances.

Above the prescribed limits

- Researchers found that eight out of the 20 pendants were capable of exposing the wearers to an annual effective dose above the dose limit of **one mSv** for the public.
- The dose from the most radioactive pendant was **8 mSv/year**.

What is an mSv Unit?

- **Sievert (Sv)**, is the unit of radiation absorption in the **International System of Units (SI)**.
- The sievert takes into account the **relative biological effectiveness** of ionizing radiation.
- When the physical energy absorbed by tissues from x-rays, gamma rays or electrons is **one Joule/kg**, the biologically effective dose is considered to be **one Sv**.

- Since **Sv** is a huge unit, specialists use **milliSv** or “**mSv**”(one-thousandth of an Sv) as a unit.
- Skin dose in a chest x-ray exam is about **1 mSv**.

Cause of Concern

- The products tested contained radioactive materials and therefore continuously emit ionizing radiation, thereby exposing the wearer.
- Exposure to ionizing radiation can cause adverse health effects
- Wearing the products for extended periods could pose health risks that include tissue and DNA damage.
- Harmful effects of radiations are as follows:
 - Skin burns
 - Acute radiation sickness that causes cancer and hairfall
 - Temporary reduction in white blood cells.
 - Possible chromosomal damage.
 - Reduction in resistance to infection.
- In another IAEA supported project, researchers found that the undergarment industry in Malaysia and elsewhere advertised that their “negative ion undergarments” contain tourmaline, monazite and zircon, all known to contain uranium and thorium.
- Among the 13 samples of undergarments they assessed, three were capable of exposing their wearers to annual effective doses above **one mSV**.

Conclusion

Radiation exposure has adverse health effects and considering the potential health risk they pose, there is a need for policy intervention to prohibit their usage through law.

Nut Graf

With recent reports of the presence of radioactivity in wearable products, the IAEA has reiterated that the use of radioactive substances in toys and personal jewellery or adornments, is unjustified.

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: POLITY

1. Is suspension of MLAs up for judicial review?

Syllabus: State Legislature – Structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers and privileges and issues arising out of these.

Mains: Necessity to determine the purview of judicial review

Context: The suspension of legislators by the Maharashtra assembly has invited a series of arguments on its validity and this matter is pending in the court.

Overview of the Issue:

- The legislative assembly of Maharashtra has suspended 12 legislators on the grounds of disorderly conduct for a period of one year.
- There has been a deluge of questions pertaining to the long period of suspension and its validity.
- The Supreme Court is hearing the matter and has reserved its judgment on the same.

Thorough scrutiny by Supreme Court: Questioning the suspension

- A bench comprising Justice A.M Khanwilkar, Justice Dinesh Maheshwari and Justice C.T Ravikumar, questioned the rationale behind the suspension of the legislators beyond an ongoing session.
- According to Article 190 (4) of the constitution, the House may declare the seat of a member vacant who is absent for 60 days without permission. This raises the question of whether any suspension could cross this 60-day limit.
- The provisions of Representation of the People Act 1951, mentions that any vacancy in the house must be filled within six months of its occurrence through a by-election.
- This encouraged the bench to analyze whether a constituency can continue as unrepresented for the whole year due to the suspension of its representatives.
- The bench expressed deep concerns regarding the ongoing event as it determines the unlimited power of suspension that can be misused against a political party that has a slender majority in the house.

State Governments' take: Supporting the Suspension

- The Counsel for the State Government has conveyed a clear message in support of the unlimited power of the legislature to punish any of its members for breach of privilege during its proceedings.
- Once the power of the legislature to suspend the members is recognised, there can be no judicial review of the manner in which it was exercised.
- According to the rules of the house, the Speaker can direct a member to withdraw from the assembly for misconduct even for the remainder of the session. This decision is taken after passing a resolution in the house having the agreement of the majority.
- The counsel put forth the argument that during suspension, members continue to hold office, losing their voice in the legislature.

Ways to resolve the ongoing issue:

- Judiciary has enough scope to examine the entire issue and ascertain the rationale behind the tenure of suspension of the legislators in an unbiased manner and uphold the supremacy of the constitution.
- Judicial creativity, in most instances, has successfully broadened the scope of constitutional provisions for the larger good of the public in matters that are not clearly defined. This will ensure to prevent the threat surrounding the vibrant nature of our democracy from arbitrary decisions of the executive.
- As judicial review is a part of the Basic Structure doctrine, there are hopes that the ongoing issue in Maharashtra will reach a solution with an unbiased intervention by the Supreme Court.
- However, all anticipations regarding the constitutional validity of the suspension of the legislators for a period of one year await for the final verdict of the court or a consensus that might take place between the state government and the judicial bench which might be a cumbersome task due to several complexities.
- On the other hand, there is a question regarding the extent to which judicial review can operate in this matter.

Read more about the [State legislature](#) in the linked article

Nut Graf

To bring an end to the complex situation emerging out of the suspension of the legislators, Judicial review can possibly be employed to keep a check on the arbitrary actions of the executive.

Category: SECURITY

1. What can cause an aircraft to fly into terrain?

Syllabus: Various Security Forces and their agencies and their mandate

Mains: Measures required to reduce the number of aircraft accidents.

Context: The Indian Air Force took an attempt to carry out preliminary findings through an inquiry into the Mi-17 V5 helicopter crash that led to the unprecedented demise of CDS (Chief of Defense Staff) Gen. Bipin Rawat, his wife and 13 other personnel.

Established Finding by the Indian air Force:

- It has been reported that unexpected change in the weather conditions resulted in the spatial disorientation of the aircraft's pilot that led to the Controlled Flight into the Terrain (CFIT).

What is meant by CFIT?

- A Controlled Flight into the Terrain is defined as an accident in which the aircraft collides with terrain, water or any obstacle during the course of a flight. During such a condition, the pilot is unable to identify the loss of control.
- This definition has been put forth by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) which determines the global standards for airline safety and security
- IATA mentions that a CFIT event is triggered by various possible factors such as environmental conditions, bad weather conditions and sometimes there are possibilities of flight crew errors.
- A study revealed that the approach-cum-landing phase of an aircraft accounted for two-thirds of all CFIT and contributed to 62% of fatal CFIT incidents.
- In the accident analysis report of IATA, it was estimated that 6% of 837 commercial aviation accidents were caused by CFIT incidents during 2008-17.
- Therefore, CFIT is considered as the second most frequent category of fatal accidents with 42 fatal accidents which is 28% of total fatal accidents found in aircrafts.

Suggested ways to avoid such accidents:

- Experts recommend that the way forward to avoid future aircraft accidents lies in the usage of a combination of technology and appropriate and adequate pilot training.
- The installation of Ground Proximity Warning System in the aircrafts will generate early signals that can alert the flight crew to take preventive measures against the onset of CFIT.
- Effective training of pilots to develop a situational awareness and carry out the right intervention must be emphasized in pilot training.

Nut Graf

For the prevention of aircraft accidents, there is a dire need for better technology incorporation along with proper

training of pilots.

F. Prelims Facts

1. Kerala gets its first ever scientific bird atlas

Context

The first-of-its-kind State-level bird atlas in India, has been created with The **Kerala Bird Atlas (KBA)**.

Details

- KBA is said to be Asia's largest bird atlas in terms of geographical extent.
- KBA has been conducted as a citizen science-driven exercise with the participation of over 1,000 volunteers of the birdwatching community.
- KBA has created strong benchmark information about the distribution and abundance of bird species across all major habitats, giving momentum to futuristic studies.
- The KBA accounts for nearly **three lakh records** of **361 species**, that includes,
 - 94 very rare species
 - 103 rare species
 - 110 common species
 - 44 very common species
 - 10 most abundant species
- The KBA is considered to be a valuable resource for testing various ecological hypotheses and suggesting science-backed conservation measures.

Key Findings

- It was found that the species count was higher during the dry season than in the wet season.
- The species richness and evenness were higher in the northern and central districts than in the southern districts.
- Most of the endemics were concentrated in the Western Ghats while the threatened species were mostly along the coast.

2. Two species of fungi associated with basal stem rot found

Context

Researchers from Kerala have identified two new species of fungi from the genus **Ganoderma** that are associated with coconut stem rot disease.

Details

- Researchers have found two new species of fungi and have genotyped and identified genetic biomarkers for the two fungi species.
- The two Fungi species have been named **Ganoderma Keralense** and **Ganoderma Pseudoapplanatum**.

Butt rot or Basal stem rot of Coconut



Image Source: The Hindu

- The basal stem rot of coconut is known by several names in different parts of India:
 - **Ganoderma wilt** in Andhra Pradesh
 - **Anaberoga** in Karnataka
 - **Thanjavur wilt** in Tamil Nadu
- The infection begins at the roots; the symptoms include discolouration and rotting of stems and leaves.
- A reddish-brown secretion is seen and this secretion is reported only in India.
- Once infected, recovery of the plants is highly unlikely.
- In the final stages, the flowering decreases and the coconut palm dies.

G. Tidbits

1. Mahatma's favourite hymn out of Beating Retreat list

Context

The traditional Christian hymn “Abide with me”, believed to have been a favourite of Mahatma Gandhi, has been dropped from the list of tunes for the Beating Retreat ceremony in 2022.

Beating Retreat ceremony

- **Beating Retreat** is an old military tradition, dating back to the days when troops disengaged from the battle at sunset.

- As soon as the buglers sounded the ‘retreat’, troops ceased fighting and withdrew from the battlefield.
- Beating Retreat is performed every year on the **evening of January 29** at **Vijay Chowk** in the national capital.
- Beating Retreat **marks the end** of the **Republic Day celebrations**.
- “Abide with me” was played by “Massed Bands” every year; instead, three other songs would be played in the 2022 celebrations.
- The three tunes to be played by “Massed Bands” in 2022 are “Kadam kadam badhaye ja”, “Drummers call”, and “Ae mere watan ke logon”.
- The national song **Vande Mataram** was played for the **first time** in **2020**.

2. Taliban delegation heads for Oslo talks

Context

Afghan regime to meet Western officials in Oslo (Norway) to discuss human rights and humanitarian aid.

Details

- This is the Taliban’s first official meeting with the West since seizing power in Afghanistan will focus on transforming the atmosphere of war after a 20-year insurgency against NATO forces.
- The Taliban stormed back to power in August 2021 as NATO troops began their withdrawal from the country.
- No country has yet recognised the Taliban’s government.

Crisis in Afghanistan

- The humanitarian situation in Afghanistan has worsened since the Taliban’s takeover.
- International aid has halted and the U.S. has frozen **\$9.5 billion** in Afghan central bank assets held overseas.
 - The Taliban are faced with economic hardship since countries around the world stopped foreign aid, which financed around 80% of the Afghan budget.
- Millions of Afghans have been out of work since the Taliban takeover.
- A harsh winter, severe drought and the coronavirus pandemic have exacerbated conditions for Afghans.
- Hunger threatens **23 million** Afghans or **55%** of its population.
- The Taliban have also imposed many constraints on women, from restricting their travel without being accompanied by a male relative to effectively prohibiting girls from higher education.

Agenda of the Oslo Meeting

- Formation of a representative political system in Afghanistan.
- Respond to the urgent humanitarian and economic crises.
- Address the issues of security and human rights.

Conclusion

Though the talks do not intend to recognize the Taliban, the focus will be on finding solutions to address the current political situation in Afghanistan that could lead to a humanitarian disaster.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements with respect to Chakmas:

1. Chakmas are predominantly Buddhists
2. They are found in Northeast India, Bangladesh, and Nepal
3. Chakma language is part of the Indo-Aryan language family

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, Chakmas are predominantly Buddhists in faith.
- **Statement 2 is not correct**, They are found in **northeast India, West Bengal, Bangladesh, and Myanmar**.
 - Chakmas were originally residents of the Chittagong Hill Tracts of former East Pakistan (Bangladesh); they fled when their land was submerged by the Kaptai dam project on the Karnaphuli River in the 1960s.
- **Statement 3 is correct**, Chakma language is part of the Indo-Aryan language family of the Indian subcontinent, and is closely related to the Bengali language.

Q2. Which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. The national tiger count takes place every four years to estimate the total number of tigers in India.
2. Karnataka had the highest number of tigers in the 2018 tiger census.

Options:

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

Answer: a

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, The national tiger count takes place once every **four years** to estimate the total number of tigers in India.
- **Statement 2 is not correct**, Madhya Pradesh with 526 Tigers had the highest number of tigers followed by Karnataka with 524 Tigers and Uttarakhand with 442 Tigers Population according to the 2018 tiger census.

Q3. Consider the following Pairs:

Tiger Reserve	State
1. Mudumalai	Tamil Nadu
2. Pench	Madhya Pradesh
3. Panna	Arunachal Pradesh

Which of the above pairs is/are correctly matched?

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

Answer: a

Explanation:

Tiger Reserves	State
Mudumalai	Tamil Nadu
Pench	Madhya Pradesh
Panna	Madhya Pradesh

Read more about [Important Tiger Reserves in India](#)

Q4. Basal stem rot (Thanjavur Wilt) is a disease which affects

- Cotton
- Coconut
- Tobacco
- Wheat

Answer: b

Explanation:

Butt rot or Basal stem rot disease of Coconut

- The basal stem rot of coconut is known by several names in different parts of India:
 - Ganoderma wilt** in Andhra Pradesh
 - Anaberoga** in Karnataka

- **Thanjavur wilt** in Tamil Nadu
- The infection begins at the roots; the symptoms include discolouration and rotting of stems and leaves.
- Researchers from Kerala have identified two new species of fungi from the genus **Ganoderma** that are associated with coconut stem rot disease.
- A reddish-brown secretion is seen and this secretion is reported only in India.
- Once infected, recovery of the plants is highly unlikely.
- In the final stages, the flowering decreases and the coconut palm dies.

Q5. With reference to the history of ancient India, Bhavabhuti, Hastimalla and Kshemeshwara were famous (UPSC CSE 2021)

- Jain monks
- Playwrights
- temple architects
- philosophers

Answer: b

Explanation:

- **Bhavbhuti** was the court poet of Maukhari king **Yashovarman** (Kannauj) who ruled around 730 AD.
 - The works attributed to poet Bhavbhuti are **Mahaviracharita**, **Malatimadhava** and **Uttararamacharita**
- **Hastimalla** was a **13th century Kannada poet** and a playwright in the Hoysala Empire.
 - His works include **Purvapurnava**, **Vikrantakaurava**, **Subhadra-Maithilikalyana** and **Anjana Pavananjaya**
- **Kshemeshwara** was an 11th-century Sanskrit poet from Kashmir.
 - **Dasavatar Charita** is his important work.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Critically examine the power of the legislative assembly to suspend MLA's and the issues that have cropped up in recent cases. (250 words; 15 marks)[GS-2, Polity]
2. Discuss the concerns surrounding the usage of radioactive substances in wearable devices and gadgets. (250 words; 15 marks)[GS-3, Science & Technology]