

26 Feb 2022: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. GS 1 Related

B. GS 2 Related

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. [Russia willing to talk with Ukraine](#)
2. [Additional sanctions on Russia by the US](#)

GOVERNANCE

1. [New Kerala Paradigm](#)

C. GS 3 Related

ECONOMY

1. [Legality of bitcoin](#)

SECURITY

1. [Surprise enemy with Indian weapons](#)

D. GS 4 Related

E. Editorials

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. [Inflection point for the West-led global order](#)
2. [Troubled waters](#)

F. Prelims Facts

1. [Conference on temple architecture](#)
2. [Appointment of High Court Judges](#)
3. [Radiation spike in Chernobyl](#)
4. [DoT seeks TRAI's norms to start 5G](#)
5. [Normandy format](#)

G. Tidbits

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

A. GS 1 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

B. GS 2 Related

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Russia willing to talk with Ukraine

Syllabus: *Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries*

Mains: *Possibility of a diplomatic resolution to bring an end to the Russia-Ukraine crisis.*

Context: The Russian President has expressed willingness to indulge in a high level negotiation with Ukraine. This was conveyed through a telephonic conversation with the Chinese President.

A brief background:

- Over the gradual progress of recent times, the Russia-Ukraine discontent has intensified to an alarming level with the emergence of new tensions in the entire landscape of geopolitics.
- The tension furthered with the onset of military action by Russia on the eastern borders of Ukraine.
- Besides, the Ukrainian army was called upon by Russia to uproot the existing government describing the leaders as neo-Nazis. Neo-Nazis are group of individuals who advocate the Nazi ideology that promotes racism, xenophobia, ultranationalism, anti-communism and other elements of the Nazi doctrine.
- Russia also accused Ukrainian nationalists of deploying weapons in the residential areas which was alleged to be an attempt to provoke the Russian military.
- The ongoing crisis and the onslaught on Ukraine has determined the weakness of [NATO](#) that resulted from a broken security architecture of Europe.

Read more about the issue in [CNA](#) dated 25th Feb' 22.

China's Take:

- China extended its support to Moscow by urging Europe to consider the legitimate security concerns of all the countries.
- It has been confirmed from the Chinese President that Russia has agreed to hold high level negotiations with Ukraine.
- China has condemned NATO and called it responsible for the continuity of the Cold War ideology which leans towards the geopolitical interests of America.
- China's intervention in the matter is a reflection of its two-pronged approach towards the Ukraine crisis.
- The two-pronged approach involves, calling for a dialogue and peaceful negotiations, at the same time, refraining from criticising Russia's action publicly.
- Overall, China's take on the entire situation is similar to that of India which is in favour of a diplomatic resolution instead of criticising Russia's invasion.

Conclusion:

The intentions of China to resolve the ongoing crisis between Russia and Ukraine is prominent and in future, China is likely to put efforts for a political settlement of the entire issue. However, the major question that arises is the possibility and feasibility of such negotiations between Russia and Ukraine especially after the tense developments.

Read the details of the [Russia-Ukraine Conflict](#) in the linked article.

Nut Graf

Considering the complex history of Ukraine, China calls for a balanced, effective and sustainable European security mechanism through peaceful negotiations that will intend to address the legitimate security concerns of all countries.

2. Additional sanctions on Russia by the US

Syllabus: *Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries*

Mains: *Implications of sanctions on Russia by the US on the global supply chain.*

Context: The US President has imposed additional sanctions on Russia in the wake of the ongoing crisis in Ukraine.

Highlights of the issue:

- The US termed the action of Russia on Ukraine as aggressive and as a result introduced strong additional sanctions with new limitations on what can be exported to Russia.
- These sanctions will have a long term impact on Russia and minimum impact on the US and its allies.

About the Sanctions:

- Several banks of Russia have been sanctioned along with restrictions on transactions of 13 major state owned enterprises in Russia.
- Several Russian elites and their family members have been sanctioned including many Belarusian individuals.
- There is a possibility that the sanctions will extend to Russia's import of sensitive technology concerning defence, aviation and the maritime sectors.
- This step of imposing additional sanctions on Russia has been taken by considering the agreement of 27 European countries, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Japan and many others according to the US.
- The EU eyed to freeze the assets linked to the Russian President and the Foreign Minister over their invasion of Ukraine. This is considered as a unique step in history towards a nuclear power by the international community.

Consequences :

- The ongoing Ukraine crisis has brought Europe and all the advocates of freedom in a dangerous juncture which poses threat not only to the security but also to the economic interests of the European countries.
- These sanctions on Russia will result in unprecedented diplomatic and economic challenges and isolate Russia from the global financial system and international community.

- However, there are experts who believe that these drastic sanctions on Russia and ignoring Russia's concerns will not be a sustainable approach to resolve the ongoing crisis and can bring bitter outcomes for Europe's security and trade interests.
- World's staple grain markets have been significantly hit by the shockwaves of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Grain exports from Russia have been stalled for the time being and the Ukrainian ports have been closed. This leads to the sufferings of countries that largely depend on imports of grains from the region raising concerns of global food inflation and hunger.

Conclusion:

- The US and its allies are clear in their decision to ostracise Russia from the global financial system on the grounds of its unlawful invasion of Ukraine. This will impact the entire set up of international trade which will not be a sustainable approach to continue with.
- Therefore, many experts envisage a precise diplomatic negotiation that addresses Russia's concerns, as an effective method to resolve the ongoing crisis and as a better alternative to bolstering the norms of NATO.

Nut Graf

The US has imposed additional sanctions on Russia calling the invasion of Ukraine as unprovoked and unlawful. These sanctions will target the core infrastructure of Russia's financial system with far reaching consequences for global trade unless resolved by diplomatic channels.

Category: GOVERNANCE**1. New Kerala Paradigm**

Syllabus: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors.

Mains: The developmental policy of Kerala as a sustainable model to be replicated by other states.

Context: There have been discussions to revamp the 'Kerala Model of Development'.

The Kerala Model: An Overview

- This model caters to the wide range of demands that intend to create an all-round development paradigm.
- This model has achieved international attention for its meticulous approach towards social development and environmental sustainability.
- The new Kerala model aims to create a framework that intends to deliver outstanding outcomes in social sectors, narrowing the gaps in income and in sharing of resources.
- It makes an attempt to form synergies between civil society, local government bodies and the state government.
- The idea of 'Nava Keralam' (New Kerala) focuses on private investments along with equal attention to protect the interests of the poor and marginalised sections of the society.
- The policy document addresses the need for infrastructure development and takes all measures to eradicate extreme poverty.

The need for a new model:

- The old Kerala model did not address the issues of unemployment and low levels of food consumption which ignited the need for policy reform in a holistic manner.
- In the wake of the pandemic, Kerala's high life expectancy rate has converted to high death rate along with increasing cases of alcoholism.
- Despite being the state with the highest literacy rate, it ranks 9th highest in terms of per capita income accompanied by a contraction in its Gross State Domestic Product and unemployment rate of 9% .
- The alarming rate of fiscal deficit of 4% of GSDP limits the scope of revival of Kerala's economy.
- Therefore, the new Kerala model comes as a hope to mitigate the crises by introducing effective developmental policies revamping the shortfalls of the old model.

Conclusion:

Kerala has set remarkable examples in terms of growth and development which can be a subject of case study for other states to replicate the new model and scale it up for a transition to participatory and community based development.

Nut Graf

The 'New Kerala' paradigm envisions infrastructure development using private investment and intends to eradicate extreme poverty.

C. GS 3 Related**Category: ECONOMY****1. Legality of bitcoin**

Syllabus: Mobilisation of resources

Prelims: Cryptocurrency

Mains: Necessity to regulate cryptocurrency

Context: The Supreme Court asked the Union Government to clarify the terms of legality of the digital currency bitcoin.

Details of the matter:

- A bench led by Justice D Y Chandrachud was hearing a case related to the gain bitcoin scam.
- This was in response to a report submitted by the Enforcement Directorate.
- The accused individuals have been brought under Public Money Laundering Act on the grounds of duping investors by guaranteeing lump sum monthly returns.

Read more about Cryptocurrency in CNA dated 17th Feb'22

Nut Graf

There is a necessity to introduce a regulatory framework for more elaborations on the legality of Cryptocurrency. This can prevent the emerging scams pertaining to cryptocurrency.

Category: TECHNOLOGY**1. Surprise enemy with Indian weapons**

Syllabus: Indigenisation of technology**Mains: Self-reliance in defence**

Context: The Prime Minister of India emphasised on the significance of customisation and uniqueness towards the establishment of vibrant defence systems.

Strengthening the defence systems:

- Incorporation of innovation and new technologies in the defence sector will be a potential weapon in fighting our adversaries.
- In order to boost self reliance in defence manufacturing and production, the Union Budget 2022-23 has provided considerable assistance.
- The budget intended to provide a level playing field for private players and start-ups to flourish that would cater the demands of the defence industry.
- The government has decided to set up an independent nodal umbrella body to meet the wide range of requirements and bring in a more transparent, time bound and pragmatic approach in trial, testing and certification of defence equipment.
- Multiple avenues will be opening up for research and development in defence by bridging the gap between academia and industries. A 25% of defence R & D budget has been allocated for the purpose of bringing together industry, start-ups and academia.
- To further the development of defence start-ups with active participation of private players, a [Special Purpose Vehicle](#) model has been developed.
- This will engage the private industry not just as a vendor or supplier but a partner.
- The defence procurement list has conveyed positivity in terms of indigenisation.
- Government has been taking active steps to encourage self reliance in defence by improving the quality assurance process, building [Defence Industrial Corridors](#) and so on and so forth.
- Over 350 new industrial licences have been issued for defence manufacturing in the last seven years.
- Efforts have been made to incorporate information technology in defence to tackle the issue of cyber security which is also a form of threat to national security.

Towards a vibrant defence industry:

- Indigenisation of technology and its promotion in the defence sector is indispensable for fighting the adversaries with efficiency and confidence.
- The several policy interventions by the government exemplifies India's attentiveness towards establishing a self-reliant ecosystem for defence which is in line with the futuristic vision of Make in India.

Read more about [Atmanirbhar in Defence](#) in Perspective, Sansad TV

Nut Graf

Indigenisation of Indian weapons along with the incorporation of technology and innovation are essential for enhancing resilience towards India's adversaries leading to self-reliance in the defence sector.

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Inflection point for the West-led global order

Syllabus: *Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora.*

Mains: *Ukraine crisis and its impact on the World order*

Background

UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis of 25th Feb 2022

Concerns

1. Lack of coordinated approach from the west
 - Russia has shown resolve and a single-minded sense of purpose to achieve its objectives in Ukraine, however, the west is not projecting a united front against the aggression
 - This is due to delay in response, lack of leadership and unable to reach a consensus among the NATO countries leading to a grave crisis.
2. The energy factor
 - Many European countries have not voiced opinion against Russia due to their excessive dependence for their energy needs
 - With the EU importing 39% of its total gas imports and 30% of oil from Russia, and with the Central and Eastern European countries being almost 100% dependent on Russian gas, the reasons for internal EU dissonance are not that difficult to fathom.
3. A strong Beijing
 - Conceding the defeat without even throwing up a fight has emboldened the Russia-China 'axis'
 - The power has tilted in favor of these two powers defining a new international order

Nut Graf

Russia's full-scale unprovoked attack on Ukraine has resulted in chaos and destruction. The future global order will depend on how effectively the west responds to the crisis in Ukraine.

2. Troubled waters

Syllabus: *Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.*

Mains: *Resolving the fishing issue between Indian and Sri Lanka*

Context

- Sri Lankan Navy has arrested Indian fishermen

Complaints raised by Sri Lanka

- It has been accusing Indian fishermen of poaching in its waters.
- Indian trawlers violate the IMBL (international maritime boundary line) and fish in Lankan waters, depriving its own boats of catch.
- Trawlers used by the Indian fishermen damage the fragile ecosystem of the sea. They allege that heavy nets used by the Indian fishermen badly affect the region's marine life impacting fish production and marine biodiversity

Impact

- Its navy has been arresting Indian fishermen and capturing Indian vessels on charges of trespassing
- As per an estimate, Sri Lankan authorities have impounded 84 boats.

What is Bottom trawling?

- Bottom trawling is a method of fishing that involves dragging heavy weighted nets across the sea floor, in an effort to catch fish.
- It's a favoured method by commercial fishing companies because of two reasons
 - They can catch large quantities of product in one go.
 - Helps in catching deep water species.

Implications

- When dragging the large, weighted nets across the seafloor, everything that happens to be in the way gets swept up in the net too.
- This has an impact on the biodiversity of the ocean, and also means many species are being fished to the brink simply as a consequence of commercial activities, not as the target of them.

Issue

Indian fishermen use mechanised boats with highly exploitative fishing nets unlike most of the poor fishermen in Sri Lankan coast who use traditional fishing methods.

Why do the Indian fishermen venture into Sri Lanka waters?

- Depletion of fisheries on the Indian side
- It is driven by livelihood concerns

Joint Working Group on Fisheries (JWG) (2016)

- The JWG included
 - Expediting the transition towards ending the practice of bottom trawling at the earliest
 - Framing procedures for returning fishermen arrested by both sides, and
 - The possibility of joint patrolling.

- They had agreed to set up a hotline between their Coast Guards to address the long-standing issue of fishermen

Way forward

- The governments of the two countries should call an early meeting of the Joint Working Group as it was last held in 2020
- The Centre should speak to Sri Lanka and secure the release of Indian fishermen.
- It also needs to sit with the Tamil Nadu government and work out a solution to the crisis brewing in the waters between the Tamil Nadu coast and Sri Lanka.
- The Central and the State Government should consider providing additional incentives and concessions to fishermen
- The Indian government can also propose assistance for the fishermen of the Northern Province as a gesture of goodwill.

Nut Graf

India and Sri Lanka must bring all the stakeholders together, activate the Joint Working Group on Fisheries and secure the livelihoods of their respective population

F. Prelims Facts

1. Conference on temple architecture

Syllabus: *GS I, Salient aspects of architecture from ancient to modern times*

Prelims: *Temple architecture of India*

Context: Devayatanam is a unique conference on the temple architecture of India which was inaugurated at Hampi in Karnataka.

About the Conference:

- Devayatanam aims to highlight the richness of Indian culture that is reflected through the fascinating architecture of Indian temples.
- It is an international conference which is organised by the Archaeological Survey of India, Ministry of Culture.
- The conference on Indian temples will echo the philosophical, religious, social, economic, technical and scientific significance of the temples.
- Various discussions on temple architecture and their importance will be held by the experts and eminent scholars.
- The focus of the discussion will be on:
 1. Temple- Formless to form
 2. Evolution of temple architecture
 3. Regional developmental forms
 4. Different Styles of architecture
 5. Temples as epicentre of art, culture, education, administration and economy
 6. Temples as the protector of environment
 7. Culture diffusion in Southeast Asia

About Temple Architecture:

- Temple construction was a traditional practice not only in the sub-continent but this practice travelled till the south-east and east Asia. There are more than 2 million Hindu temples in the country.
- Nagara, Dravida and Vesara are major kinds of temple architecture found in India.

Read more about [Temple Architecture in India](#) in the linked article

2. Appointment of High Court Judges

Syllabus: GS II, Polity, Appointment to various Constitutional posts.

Prelims: High Courts, Appointment process

Context: For the first time, a Union Law Secretary has been elevated as a judge of the Delhi High Court.

Details of the matter:

- This appointment was held by the Supreme Court [Collegium](#) and has been considered as a break in tradition.
- The appointment is on a contractual basis till the appointee turns 60 years of age.

Read in details about the [Appointment of High Court Judges](#) in the linked article

3. Radiation spike in Chernobyl

Syllabus: GS III, Disaster Management

Prelims: About Plutonium

Context: A rise in the levels of radiation was observed in the Chernobyl exclusion zone and a warning has been given for the seizure of the nuclear plant by the invading Russian troops to evade disastrous consequences.

Overview of the issue:

- The Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant is considered as the most radioactive place on earth. It has been suggested to seize the nuclear plant on the grounds of disaster management and environmental sustainability.
- If the situation is not controlled, there is a possibility of harmful radioactive emissions of Plutonium-239 that can become a nuclear bomb threatening numerous lives and the environment.

4. DoT seeks TRAI's norms to start 5G

Syllabus: GS III, Technology, Awareness in the field of IT

Prelims: About 5G network

Context: The Department of Telecommunications has urged Telecom Regulatory Authority of India to speed up the submission of its recommendations on 5G spectrum.

Read the details of [5G](#) in the linked article

5. Normandy format

Syllabus: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora.

- It is a diplomatic grouping created in 2014 by French, German, Russian and Ukrainian diplomats
- The forum acted as a platform to resolve the issue of alleged Russia-backed separatism in eastern Ukraine and to find a peaceful resolution to the conflict
- The Normandy Format showed great promise as it facilitated the signing of the Minsk agreements in 2014 and 2015
- With time it was unable to resolve the deadlock, the grouping became largely defunct in 2019.

G. Tidbits

Nothing here for today!!!

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Which of the following statements is/are correct with respect to Swami Dayananda Saraswati?

1. He founded Arya Samaj a Hindu reform movement
2. He stressed on One God and rejected idol worship.
3. He wrote many books. His major contribution is the Karmyogi

Options:

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

Answer: b

Explanation:

- Dayanad anglovedic trust and Management society in lahore in 1886 , was an attempt to unite the samaj and its activities.
- He was the founder of the Arya Samaj which was a reform movement of the Vedic dharma.
- They also worked for the protection of widows and other social work like providing relief to victims of natural or manmade calamities.
- He wrote many books. His major contribution is Satyarth Prakash. Other books include the Sanskarvidhi, Rigved Bhashyam, etc.
- People he inspired include Shyamji Krishna Varma, MG Ranade, VD Savarkar, Lala Hardyal, Madan Lal Dhingra, Bhagat Singh and many others. He was also admired by Swami Vivekananda, Subhash Chandra Bose, Bipin Chandra Pal, Vallabhbhai Patel, Romain Rolland, etc.

- According to S Radhakrishnan, some reforms included in the Indian Constitution were influenced by Dayananda.
- Dayananda was poisoned during his stay at the palace of the Maharaja of Jodhpur, Jaswant Singh II. He succumbed to the injury suffered at Ajmer, where he was sent for better treatment on 26th October 1883. He was 59.
- Karmayogi is a biography of E. Sreedharan written by M.S. Ashokan not by Dayananda Saraswati.
- He also denounced idol worship.
- **This makes option 'b' as the correct answer.**

Q2. Consider the following statements:

1. The most common plutonium isotope formed in a typical nuclear reactor is the fissile Pu-239
2. Plutonium-244 is the most stable isotope of plutonium

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

- Plutonium-239 is a primary fissile isotope used for the production of nuclear weapons.
- Plutonium-239 is also one of the major isotopes of Plutonium which is used as fuel in thermal spectrum nuclear reactors along with Uranium-235 and Uranium-233. It is commonly formed in a nuclear reactor by transmutation of individual atoms of one of the isotopes of uranium present in the fuel rods.
- It is dangerous and carcinogenic.
- Plutonium-244 has a half life of 80 million years which is longer than any of the other isotopes of Plutonium. Therefore, it is the most stable isotope of Plutonium.
- Plutonium-244 decays through spontaneous fission.
- **This makes option 'c' the correct answer.**

Q3. With respect to Ammonia, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. Ammonia is the second largest chemical product produced in the world, behind sulphuric acid
2. Majority of Ammonia produced is used in agriculture as a fertilizer.
3. Ammonia is used in wastewater treatment, used as an Anesthetic and in the manufacture of plastics

Options:

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

Answer: a

Explanation:

- Ammonia has a wide range of uses which makes it the second largest chemical product produced in the world.
- It is used in agriculture as a potential component of fertilizers, wastewater treatment, several industries like paper, rubber, leather, cosmetics and so on.
- It is also used in cold storages, refrigerating systems and pharmaceutical products.
- Ammonia cannot be used as an anesthetic agent because it lacks narcotic properties.
- **This makes 'a' as the correct option.**

Q4. Which amongst the following statements is the best description of 'Snapback Mechanism'?

- a. A process created by the Council of Europe for the Legal protection of human rights
- b. A procedure introduced by United States to unilaterally reimpose sanctions on Iran
- c. Security Council resolution to hold Russia accountable for its aggression against Ukraine
- d. A procedure introduced by Quad to advance a free and open Indo-Pacific

Answer: b

Explanation:

- Snapback mechanism is a procedure initiated by the US at the United Nations Security Council in a bid to unilaterally reimpose sanctions on Iran.
- The clause of snapback allows the US to impose sanctions without any veto.
- This was on the grounds alleged by the US that Iran breached the norms of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.
- **This makes option 'b' the correct answer.**

Q5. With reference to the Indian Judiciary, consider the following statements.

- 1. Any retired judge of the Supreme Court of India can be called back to sit by the Chief Justice of India with prior permission of the President of India.
- 2. A High court in India has the power to review its own judgement as the Supreme Court does.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only

- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: c

Explanation:

- With the prior consent of the president, a retired judge of the Supreme Court can be appointed as the Chief Justice of India as the basic qualification demands for an individual who is a distinguished jurist in the President's judgement.
- According to Article 124 (2) of the constitution, the President appoints the Chief Justice of India.
- The individual must be an Indian citizen to be eligible for the appointment as the CJI.
- Any individual who has served as a judge of a High Court for at least five years or has served as an advocate in the High Court for ten years can also be eligible for the post of CJI.
- High courts can review its own order under Article 226 of the constitution. This was reiterated by the Kerala High Court that elaborated the legal propositions on High Courts acting as court of record can review its own judgements.
- **This makes option 'c' as the correct answer.**

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Discuss the economic impact of Russia -Ukraine confrontation on India and the best possible ways to shield our economy. (250 words; 15 marks)[GS-3, Economic Development]
2. What efforts have been made by the government to make India Atmanirbhar when it comes to defence equipment? Evaluate the success of these efforts.(250 words; 15 marks)[GS-3, Technology]