

13 Mar 2022: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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B. GS 2 Related

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. [Pak. seeks joint probe into missile incident](#)

Syllabus: India and its neighborhood- relations.

Prelims: Agreement on pre-notification of flight testing of ballistic missiles 2005

Mains: India-Pakistan Relations and missile malfunction issue

Context:

- Pakistan demanded a joint investigation regarding the accidental firing of a missile which ended up in the neighboring country.

Background:

- Pakistan claimed an unarmed Indian supersonic missile was landed at a place 124 km within Pakistani territory.
- The Indian Defense Ministry regretted the incident and said a technical malfunction led to the accidental firing of the missile.
- Pakistan demands a joint probe to accurately establish the facts surrounding the incident.

Agreement on pre-notification of flight testing of ballistic missiles 2005

- An 2005 agreement between India and Pakistan on pre-notification of flight testing of ballistic missiles states that:
 - Each country has to notify the other at least three days in advance of the flight test it wants to undertake whether surface-to-surface, land or sea launched missiles.
 - The testing country must ensure that the launch site is not within 40 km, and the planned impact area is not within 75 km of either the International Boundary (IB) or the **Line of Control (LoC)**.
 - The planned trajectory should not cross the IB or the LoC and must maintain a horizontal distance of at least 40 km from the border.
- Before the test, the country must issue **Notice to Air Missions (NOTAM)** or **Navigational Warning (NAVAREA)** to alert aviation pilots and seafarers, respectively.

What are the reasons for the missile malfunction?

- A striking aspect of the episode is that the missile changed direction mid-air.
- First thing could be that the coordinates are not correct.
- The missile could have malfunctioned if the target data that has been fed into the missile gets corrupted, then takes a different direction altogether.

Nut Graf

The incident of missile malfunction raises several fundamental questions regarding security protocols and technical safeguards against accidental or unauthorized launch of missiles in a nuclearised environment.

2. Sanctions could cause space station to crash: Roscosmos

Syllabus: Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

Prelims: International space station (ISS)

Mains: Sanctions on Russia and Impact on International space station (ISS)

Context:

- Russia raised the threat of the International space station (ISS) falling to earth as Russian space agency Roscosmos is under sanctions from the U.S., EU and Canada.

Sanctions on Russia and Impact on International space station(ISS)

- The sanctions imposed on Russia since the invasion of Ukraine, could disrupt the operation of Russian spacecraft servicing the ISS.
- As a result, the Russian segment of the station could be affected, causing the 500-tonne structure to “fall down into the sea or onto land”.
- The Russian segment ensures that the station’s orbit is corrected (on average 11 times a year), including to avoid space debris.
- Know more about the [International space station\(ISS\)](#)

Nut Graf

Russian space agency Roscosmos warned that western sanctions against Russia could cause the International Space Station(ISS) to crash and the ISS could “fall down into the sea or onto land”.

C. GS 3 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Geneva Conventions and the Russia-Ukraine war

Syllabus: Global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India’s interests.

Prelims: Geneva Conventions

Mains: Application and relevance of Geneva Conventions in the Russia-Ukraine war and other recent incidents that violate international humanitarian laws.

Context

Russia’s armed invasion of Ukraine has increased hostilities and caused large-scale destruction of infrastructure in Ukraine.

Background

- As the Russian troops continue their operations in Ukraine, the claims of human rights violations have cropped up.
- Russia has denied the accusations of harming civilians.
- The Geneva Conventions have come into the foreground amidst the increasing casualties of civilians.

To read more about [Russia-Ukraine](#)

The Geneva Conventions

- It is a set of rules that prescribe guidelines for combatant behaviour during a war.
- It comprises four treaties, standardised in 1949.

- Three more protocols were later added which codify ethical and legal international norms for the humanitarian treatment of civilians who are affected by the war.
- The convention mainly focuses on,
 - Treatment of civilians and prisoners of war
 - Restricting the use of conventional or biological and chemical weapons
- The Conventions have been ratified by 196 states, including all UN member states.

The Four Geneva Conventions

- **First Convention** – It safeguards wounded and sick soldiers on land during the war.
 - The convention also extends to medical and religious personnel.
- **Second Convention** – safeguards wounded, sick and shipwrecked military personnel at sea during the war.
 - This Convention replaced the Hague Convention of 1907 for the Adaptation to Maritime Warfare of the Principles of the Geneva Convention.
 - This convention also extends to hospital ships and medical transports by sea.
- **Third Convention** – It is the most famous convention among all and it applies to the **prisoners of war**.
 - It includes a wide range of guidelines with respect to the humane treatment of prisoners, conditions of captivity, evacuation of prisoners, transit camps, food, clothing, medical facilities, and hygiene.
 - It also guarantees rights to religious, intellectual, and physical activities for the prisoners.
- **Fourth Convention** – Unlike other conventions that protect the military personnel, this convention extends protection to the civilians including those in occupied territory.

Additional Protocols

- **Additional Protocols of 1977** – Further increased the protection to the victims of international (Protocol I) and non-international (Protocol II) armed conflicts.
 - **Protocol II** was the first-ever international treaty dedicated exclusively to the instances of non-international armed conflicts.
- **Additional Protocols of 2005** – Created the Red Crystal as an additional emblem that has the same international status as that of Red Cross and Red Crescent emblems.

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

- ICRC was established in 1863 as an independent and neutral organisation.
- It is mandated to protect human life and health, to ensure respect for all human beings, and to prevent and alleviate human suffering.
- It has its headquarters in Geneva (Switzerland).
- The ICRC is funded by voluntary contributions from the States party to the Geneva Conventions, Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, public and private donors.
- ICRC has been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize three times in 1917, 1944 and 1963.

Steps for prosecution under the Conventions

- According to **Article 8** of the Rome Statute of the **International Criminal Court (ICC)**,

- ICC has jurisdiction over war crimes, especially “when committed as part of a plan or policy or as part of a large-scale commission of such crimes.”
- Under the statute, ‘war crimes’ include:
 - Grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions
 - Wilful killing, torture, inhuman treatment, biological experiments, extensive destruction and appropriation of property
 - Compelling prisoners of war or other protected person to serve in the forces of a hostile Power and willfully depriving them of the rights to fair and regular trial
 - Unlawful deportation or transfer or unlawful confinement
 - Taking hostages
- For prosecuting combatants for war crimes, evidence could be collected for an investigation and trial at the ICC.

Application of the conventions in the Russia-Ukraine War

- The U.S., alleging that Russia has committed war crimes in Ukraine, has called for an investigation.
- There have been photographic and video evidence of lethal firing on civilians and video evidence of bombing on schools, houses, and apartment buildings across Ukraine.
- Experts argue that much of such evidence does not answer the main question of who ordered which crime.
 - The evidence must include information on orders received from commanding officers.
 - To examine such evidence, the ICC has started an investigation under its prosecutor.
- However, in 2019, foreseeing the possibility of its invasion of Ukraine, Russia withdrew its declaration under Article 90 of Protocol 1.
 - By withdrawing this declaration, Russia has the option of refusing access to international fact-finding missions or individuals to the Russian entities, who can hold Russia responsible for the violation of the Geneva Conventions.
- Further, the four conventions and the two additional protocols of 1977 were ratified by the Soviet Union, and not by Russia, hence the Russian government can deny any responsibilities under the Conventions.

Current Relevance of the Geneva Conventions

- In 2019, Amnesty International said that there has been an evident disregard for civilian protection and international humanitarian law in armed conflicts where four (Russia, U.S., U.K. and France) of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council are involved.
- Amnesty quoted the examples of
 - The U.S.-led coalition’s attack on Raqqa in Syria, which killed 1,600 civilians.
 - Destruction of civilian infrastructure and affecting the lives of many in Aleppo and Idlib by Russian forces
 - The war in Yemen where Saudi Arabia and the UAE-led coalition killed and injured thousands of civilians triggering a large-scale humanitarian crisis.
- Recent events highlight the fact that the Geneva Conventions, further backed by the ICC orders, have not been enforced by third parties against the conflicts.

- However, the conventions in the past have been successful in increasing global awareness on human rights violations across conflict zones, and also have led to sanctions against the violators.

Nut Graf

As the claims of casualties of innocent civilians continue to increase in Ukraine, the global human rights communities look towards the Geneva Conventions, which can help hold the Russian forces responsible for war crimes.

F. Prelims Facts

1. Villages along China border to open for tourism

Syllabus: Security challenges and their management in border areas

Prelims: Vibrant Village programme

Context: The Union government plans to open the villages along the Chinese border for tourists under the Vibrant Village programme.

Vibrant Village programme:

- The Vibrant Village programme was announced in the Union Budget 2022-23.
- The concept of the Vibrant villages programme (VVP) is to improve the living conditions for the people living close to the **Line of Actual Control (LAC)**.
 - LAC is Line of Actual Control is the borderline between China and India in the western sector of the borderland between India's Ladakh and China.

Significance of Vibrant Village programme:

- The VVP initiative intends to develop a strategy for improving the infrastructure of the communities at LAC and establishing road connections.
- As part of the programme, residential and tourism centers will be created. It will also make it easier to create decentralized renewable energy sources and improve road connections.
- Aside from that, direct access to Doordarshan and educational channels would be available.

2. Kerala tops in maternal, child health

Syllabus: Issues related to health

Prelims: Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)

Context: The latest Sample Registration System (SRS) special bulletin on maternal mortality in India (2017-19) was brought out by the office of the Registrar General of India

Findings of the Survey:

- Kerala has emerged on top in maternal and child health, recording the lowest Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) of 30 (per one lakh live births) in the country.
- National Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) is 103.
- Another State which has made significant gains in Maharashtra, whose MMR dipped from 55 to 38.

Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR): The maternal mortality ratio (MMR) is defined as the number of

maternal deaths during a given time period per 100,000 live births during the same time period.

G. Tidbits

Nothing here for today!!!

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements with respect to SARAS-3:

1. It is a radio telescope that is mounted on India's first multi-wavelength astronomical observatory AstroSat.
2. It was built to detect extremely faint radio wave signals from the "Cosmic Dawn".
3. SARAS-3 can be deployed on water bodies.

Which of the given statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: b

Explanation:

- SARAS-3 is an indigenously built telescope that was developed by the researchers of Raman Research Institute, an autonomous institute of the Department of Science and Technology. It is not mounted on India's first multi-wavelength astronomical observatory AstroSat. **Hence Statement 1 is not correct.**
- SARAS-3 is a niche high-risk high-gain experimental effort to detect extremely faint radio wave signals from the depths of time, from our 'Cosmic Dawn'. **Hence Statement 2 is correct.**
- Its chief distinguishing characteristic is that it can be deployed on water bodies. The many layers of soil were themselves a source of radio wave contamination for ground based telescopes. Given that the purpose is to detect a highly elusive signal, water would be an ideal medium, the group reckoned, to make such a sensitive measurement. **Hence Statement 3 is correct.**

Q2. Consider the following statements with respect to NASA's Perseverance rover:

1. It was designed as part of NASA's Mars 2020 mission to explore the Jezero crater on Mars.
2. It uses the heat of plutonium's radioactive decay for electric power.
3. The rover is carrying Ingenuity – the first helicopter to fly on Mars.

Which of the given statements is/are INCORRECT?

- a. 1 and 3 only
- b. 3 only

- c. 2 only
- d. None of the above

Answer: d

Explanation:

- The NASA Perseverance Rover is a part of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) Mars 2020 Mission. It is nicknamed 'Percy'. **Hence Statement 1 is correct.**
- Perseverance carries a radioisotope power system. This power system produces a dependable flow of electricity using the heat of plutonium's radioactive decay as its "fuel." **Hence Statement 2 is correct.**
- Perseverance also carried the Ingenuity helicopter (nicknamed Ginny). Ingenuity is a technology demonstration to test the first powered flight on Mars. **Hence Statement 3 is correct.**

Q3. Consider the following statements with respect to Pandavleni Caves:

1. These caves are early examples of Indian rock-cut architecture and represent Mahayana Buddhist tradition.
2. The caves have the magnificent idols of Buddha and the popular Jain Tirthankaras such as Vrishabhdeo.
3. These caves house the paintings of the Gupta Period.

Which of the given statement/s is/are INCORRECT?

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

Answer: a

Explanation:

- Nasik caves are ancient rock-cut caves built on the **Trirashmi hill** about 3004 feet above the sea, hence are called Trirashmi Caves. They are also known as Pandavleni Caves.
- The Pandavleni caves are a group of 24 caves which are **Hinayana Faith Buddhist Caves. Hence Statement 1 is not correct.**
- The caves have the magnificent idols of Buddha and the popular Jain Tirthankaras such as Vrishabhdeo, the icons of Bodhisattva, Veer Manibhadra Ji and Ambikadevi are also there. **Hence Statement 2 is correct.**
- Trirashmi caves are great examples of intricate carving and craftsmanship with outstanding sculptures.
- The Inscriptions in the Nasik Caves belong to the Kshatrapa dynasty, Satavahana dynasty. **Hence Statement 3 is not correct.**

Q4. River Umiam flows through which of these states?

1. Assam
2. Meghalaya

3. Mizoram
4. Arunachal Pradesh

Options:

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

Answer: a

Explanation:

- The River Umiam takes its origin from the Shillong Peak, the highest point in Meghalaya .
- The Kiling/Umiam flows through the states of **Assam and Meghalaya**. It is a north flowing river originating from the northern slopes of the Khasi hill range.
- The river passes through Mawphu, Thieddieng, Nongsteng areas and enters the River Umiam Shella Basin, crossing the international border into Bangladesh.
- **Hence Option A is correct.**

Q5. In India, separation of judiciary from the executive is enjoined by

- a. The Preamble of the Constitution
- b. A Directive Principle of state policy
- c. The Seventh schedule
- d. The conventional practice

Answer: b

Explanation:

Article 50 of Constitution of India is a directive principle of state policy. It gives a direction to the State to keep Judiciary independent of the Executive, particularly in judicial appointments.

Hence option B is correct

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Write a note on the Geneva Convention and evaluate its success. (10 Marks, 150 Words)[GS-2, International Relations]
2. The launch of the vibrant village programme to improve social and financial infrastructure in remote habitations along the border with China is seen as a matter of vital interest to India. Discuss. (10 Marks, 150 Words)[GS-2, International Relations]