TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. GS 1 Related
B. GS 2 Related

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
1. Red star over Solomon Islands

C. GS 3 Related

ENVIRONMENT
1. MPs’ panel lends voice against elephant trade

D. GS 4 Related

E. Editorials

INDIAN SOCIETY AND SOCIAL ISSUES
1. Is Hindi or English beneficial as the link language?

ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY
1. A window for inter-State collaboration, to breathe easy

ECONOMY
1. Growth pangs

F. Prelims Facts
1. El Nino and La Nina
2. Sovereign debt
3. Chennakeshava temple

G. Tidbits

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

A. GS 1 Related
B. GS 2 Related
Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Red star over Solomon Islands

Syllabus: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries.
Mains: Key facets of proposed deal between China and Solomon Islands and its geopolitical implications.

Context
The proposed China-Solomon Islands security cooperation agreement.

Background
- A document leaked on social media revealed that the Solomon Islands has proposed a deal aimed at increased security cooperation with China.
- This deal is regarded as an unprecedented one for China in the South Pacific region.
- The island’s move has raised alarms in various countries such as the U.S. and Australia which enjoy a high degree of influence in the region.

Key features of the proposed deal
The deal authorises China to send its “police, armed police, military personnel and other law enforcement and armed forces” to the islands upon the country's request, or if China views that the safety of its projects and personnel in the islands are at risk.

The deal also enables China’s naval vessels to use the islands for their logistics support.

There are speculations that China may build its next overseas naval base in the Solomon Islands after Djibouti (which also was initially regarded as a logistics support base).

### Solomon Islands’ increasing proximity to China

- The Soloman islands became independent in 1978 as a constitutional monarchy under the British Crown, with a parliamentary system of government.
- Since then, the Islands shared close security relations with Australia, which is the first responder to any crisis in the South Pacific.
- The island country also had close relations with Taiwan, which came to an end with the current government in the country.
- China offered five hundred million U.S. dollars as financial aid, which was nearly five times that Taiwan spent on the islands in 20 years.
- In 2019, the new government switched its ties with Taiwan to China.
- It is also said by the pro-Taiwan Opposition that the current government has been bribed by China.
- The government has said that the ties with China are aimed at diversification of its security partnerships, focusing on its security dependence on Australia.

### China’s Interests in Solomon Islands
• **Taiwan Factor** - The islands in the south pacific are countries where China has competition from Taiwan for diplomatic recognition.

China sees Taiwan as a breakaway province awaiting reunification, therefore any country that has relations with China will have to sever ties with Taiwan.

• The Solomon Islands was one among the six Pacific islands which had close ties with Taiwan.

• However, in 2019, the Solomon Islands, along with Kiribati have switched towards China.

• **Geopolitical interests** - These Pacific island states act as potential means to mobilise support for the great powers in international organisations such as the United Nations.

• **Maritime interests** - These islands have large maritime Exclusive Economic Zones and these ‘small island states’ are also seen as ‘big ocean states’.

• **Access to resources** - Solomon Islands have crucial reserves of timber and other mineral resources, along with fisheries.

• **Strategic interests** - The strategic location of these pacific islands allows China to indulge itself between U.S.’s military bases in the Pacific islands and Australia. This became significant after the emergence of the AUKUS.

**Geopolitical Implications**
The deal between the countries has become controversial both domestically and internationally as it has the potential to disrupt the traditional security mechanisms in the South Pacific region.

- The Pacific islands have been traditionally under the influence of the Western powers, such as the U.S., U.K., France, Australia and New Zealand.
- These countries have territorial possessions in the region and have also used the region as a nuclear weapons testing ground.
- This established structure has been challenged by China.

There were protests in the Solomon Islands in 2021 against the government for increasing ties with China.

- Australia has now increased its financial support to the island country and also extended its security mission till 2023 as the country hosts the Pacific Games.
- The U.S. is now planning to reopen its embassy in the Solomon Islands after 29-years.
- New Zealand has criticised China for attempting to militarise the region and causing unwanted tensions.
- There has been a growing dissatisfaction among the islands in the South Pacific over China’s economic policies and its adverse impact on their vulnerable economic and political systems.

Nut Graf:

*With the emergence of AUKUS and China’s aggressive policies, the geopolitics of the South Pacific region is undergoing a significant change in tandem with that of the Indo-Pacific which poses a threat of intensifying regional power rivalry and domestic volatility.*
C. GS 3 Related
Category: ENVIRONMENT

1. MPs’ panel lends voice against elephant trade

_Syllabus: Conservation_

_Prelims:_ *Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2021*

_Mains:_ *Key feature of the Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Bill and the concerns associated with it.*

_Context_


_Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2021_
- The Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2021 was introduced in the Lok Sabha by the Union minister of environment, forest and climate change in December, 2021.
- The Bill aims to amend the existing *Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972* (WPA).
- The Bill also aims to increase the number of species protected under the act and implement the provisions of *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)*.
- The 2021 amendment Bill proposes 50 amendments to the existing Act of 1972.
- The existing Act contains six schedules and the amended Bill seeks to reduce the total number of schedules to three Schedules
  - Schedule I - for species that will enjoy the highest level of protection
  - Schedule II - for species that will be subject to a lesser degree of protection
  - Schedule III - covers plants
- The Bill also authorises the union government to regulate or prohibit the trade, or possession or proliferation of invasive alien species.
As per the existing Act, state governments can declare areas next to national parks and sanctuaries as conservation reserves, for protecting flora and fauna, and their habitat.

- The Bill extends these powers to the union government.

The Bill provides for any individual to voluntarily surrender the captive animals or animal products to the Chief Wildlife Warden.

- No compensation will be paid to the person for surrendering such items.

Concerns regarding Elephants trade

- Section 43 of the existing Act clearly states that “No person having in his possession captive animal, animal article, trophy or uncured trophy in respect of which he has a certificate of ownership shall transfer by way of sale or offer for sale or by any other mode of consideration of commercial nature, such animal or article or trophy or uncured trophy.”

- The amended Bill proposes an exemption clause for elephants.

- The exemption clause says “This section shall not apply to the transfer or transport of any live elephant by a person having a certificate of ownership, where such person has obtained prior permission from the State government on fulfilment of such conditions as may be prescribed by the Central Government.

- The Standing Committee on Science and Technology, Environment, Forests and Climate Change has suggested not to encourage the sale and purchase of captive elephants.

- The Standing Committee acknowledges the fact that several religious and cultural institutions own elephants which play a major role in daily rituals and recommends that the government should bring in more checks to monitor the sale and purchase by religious institutions.
Nut Graf:

There is an urgent need to strike a balance between the traditions and conservation to ensure that private ownership and the trade of wild animals are not encouraged.

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: INDIAN SOCIETY AND SOCIAL ISSUES

1. Is Hindi or English beneficial as the link language?

Syllabus: Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India.

Mains: Arguments against making Hindi the link language of India.

Context:

- Union Home Minister suggestion, made at a meeting of the Parliamentary Official Language Committee, that people of different states should communicate with each other in Hindi rather than English has drawn criticism from several sections.

Arguments against making Hindi the link language:

Threatens unity of the country:

- Though the Home Minister has clarified that the suggestion was that hindi should be accepted as an alternative to English and not to local languages, yet this is being seen as imposition of Hindi on non-Hindi speaking population of the country.
- As against the objective to make Hindi language an important part of the unity of the country, such moves can instead act as a body blow to the unity of the country. Such imposition of Hindi language threatens to revive regionalism given that several states in the country's south are especially sensitive to the language debate because they were founded on the bedrock of linguistic subnationalism after intense and prolonged campaigns.
Harms linguistic diversity of India:

- The push for “one nation, one language” amounts to the imposition of a single language over the country’s diverse linguistic cultures. This could adversely impact the linguistic diversity of the country. Some of the regional languages are even older than Hindi and are part of the cultural heritage.
- According to Article 344(1) and the 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution, there are 22 official languages.

Large proportion of non-Hindi speaking population:

- Though Hindi remains the major language spoken in India, notably however non-Hindi speaking population is numerically higher than Hindi speaking population if one considers languages like Bhojpuri, Rajasthani and Chhattisgarh as distinct from Hindi.
- Residents of only 12 of the 35 States and Union Territories (UTs) reported Hindi as their first choice of language for communication (Census 2011). While 43% of Indians speak “Hindi”, only 26% speak Hindi specifically as their mother tongue. This questions the argument used for pushing Hindi as a link language.

Utility of adopting English as a link language:

- An analysis of the data on migration and development indices show that there is a stronger case for English to be the link language rather than Hindi.
- Regions and states with a higher share of English speakers have higher Human Development Index (HDI) scores while states with a higher share of Hindi speakers have relatively low HDI scores. This is indicative of a positive correlation between a higher standard of living and a higher share of English speakers.
- The pattern of migration also offers a valuable insight. While States which have a high share of Hindi speakers have witnessed net out-migration predominantly non-Hindi speaking states have witnessed net in-migration. More people from the Hindi-speaking States have been migrating towards the non-Hindi speaking
regions in search of better livelihoods. This pattern was observed for all types of migrations including those done for work and education.

- In this respect English language would be more beneficial for citizens and it would be better to have Hindi speakers benefit by learning English rather than have non-Hindi speaking population learn Hindi.
- Notably, growth engines of Indian economy like the cities of Bengaluru, Hyderabad have been able to make a mark for themselves in the international arena partly attributable to the usage of English language which has functioned as a global link language.

Nut Graf:
Any move which comes across as imposition of Hindi language on the non-Hindi speaking population of the country threatens to stoke regionalism and undermine the linguistic diversity of India. Also given the fact that relatively more people from Hindi-speaking States migrate to non-Hindi States, and there is a strong correlation between a region’s HDI and a higher share of English speakers, it would be better to push English as a link language rather than Hindi.

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. A window for inter-State collaboration, to breathe easy

Syllabus: Environmental Pollution
Mains: Air pollution issue in Delhi; Scope of collaborative efforts in addressing the issue.

Background:
- Air pollution in Delhi has been a major challenge, especially so over the last few years. The persistence of stubble burning in Punjab remains a major contributor to winter pollution in Delhi.
The political blame game between the elected governments of Delhi and adjoining state of Punjab on the issue of air pollution undermined any collaborative action on the pollution issue.

Given that the same political party holds power in both Delhi and Punjab, this provides the ideal opportunity to resolve the air quality issue in Delhi and Punjab.

**Recommendations:**

- The following measures could be taken to ensure collaboration on the pollution issue.

**Engagement:**

- The people in charge in the two states must engage in talks setting aside their disagreements.
- This would provide the necessary impetus to take the issue forward. This will also help them arrive at a **common understanding of the issue** and also help in finding solutions that are amenable to both governments.

**Sharing information:**

- There should be the creation of **platforms for knowledge exchange**. This could involve information on **air quality levels and source assessment studies**.
- A common knowledge centre would facilitate cross-learning on possible solutions and also developing long-term strategies for pollution mitigation.

**Collaboration in execution:**

- Delhi and Punjab should not only **co-design solutions** that would improve air quality but also **collaborate to execute proven solutions**. They could jointly institutionalise a joint task force comprising experts from State-run institutions to pilot these solutions and assess their impact. This would ensure wider acceptance of the solutions.

**Market for diversified crops:**

- Given that ‘**paddy-wheat cycle**’ is one of the major factors for continued stubble
burning practice, there is the need to push for crop diversification to wean the farmers away from ‘paddy-wheat’ combination.

• However, the lack of an assured market for agricultural products, other than wheat and paddy, has acted as a deterrent and this necessitates the need to create a market for diversified crop products. The two states should consider appropriate policy measures to signal demand and create an assured market for diversified crop products.

Extending inter-state cooperation:

• Delhi and Punjab governments should going forward assert the need for extending inter-State cooperation to other States in the Indo-Gangetic plains through different inter-State forums such as the Northern Zonal Council.
• They must use this platform to highlight the need for coordination with neighbouring States to alleviate the pollution crisis.

Significance of collaboration:

• The high pollution levels has an adverse impact on the health of the citizens, with notable impact on children and elderly populations. Apart from the health impacts, air pollution also leads to economic losses. In 2019, Delhi and Punjab together faced economic losses estimated to be approximately ₹18,000 crore due to worsening air pollution. The collaboration which would help mitigate air pollution will no doubt address the above challenges.

Nut Graf

The collaboration between the governments of Punjab and Delhi will go a long way in mitigating air pollution in the region which would help address many of the health as well economic challenges posed by air pollution.

Category: ECONOMY

1. Growth Pangs
Syllabus: Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.

Mains: Concerns with the Indian economy.

The silent epidemic of non-communicable diseases:

Context:
- The World Bank bi-annual South Asia Economic Focus

Concerns with India’s economic status:

Downgrading of growth prospects:
- The World Bank has downgraded its 2022 growth projections for India from the earlier estimate of 8.7% to 8% GDP growth in 2022-23. This is estimated to drop further to 7.1% in 2023-24.
- The RBI projects lower growth at around 7.2%.
- A nowcast of high frequency indicators by the RBI suggests India’s growth experiencing a relative slowdown in the January to March 2022 quarter, compared to previous quarters.

Uneven recovery:
- Post-pandemic growth has been uneven. India’s recovery varies widely across sectors.

Poor fiscal status:
- India faces high fiscal deficit and high debt numbers and this is not good for India’s long term economic prospects.
- India’s external situation is going to get tricky going forward with current account deficit rising to record levels, because of elevated oil prices. Foreign investment into India also looks shaky given the global context.

Inflation pressure:
- While the growth estimates have gone down, the inflation projections have increased. The RBI projects inflation to be around 5.7% up from its previous
estimate of 4.5%. Economists expect inflation to trend much higher, even above 7% in the first half of the year, and well over the comfort threshold of 6% over the full year.

- India’s inflation, which is measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), has stayed above the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)’s upper tolerance limit of 6% for three months running.
- The high inflation rates would adversely impact people’s real incomes and also impact the manufacturing sector by increasing input costs of production.
- The continued accommodative stance by the Monetary Policy Committee despite spiralling inflation calls into questions the efficacy of monetary policy.

**Unemployment:**

- CMIE data suggest that over the last five years, India has lost two crore jobs outside agriculture. Unemployment can affect the goal of sustained economic growth and inclusive growth.

**Tepid consumption:**

- There has been a dampened post-COVID recovery in India’s household consumption. The incomplete labour market revival leading to lower income and the high inflation would only exert downward pressure on consumption expenditure.
- This weak demand does not augur well for economic recovery in India.

**Geopolitical turmoil:**

- The Russia-Ukraine conflict has triggered fresh challenges to the Indian economy. The geopolitical uncertainty and supply-chain disruptions are being caused by the war.
- The inflation effects due to high oil and food prices has added to the pressures on the Indian economy.
Nut Graf

- Though some headline indicators may be reflecting an uptick in India’s economic prospects, the economic recovery remains ragged and vulnerable. Appropriate policy measures are needed to overcome the challenges to the Indian economy.

F. Prelims Facts

1. El Nino and La Nina

*Syllabus: GS-1; Geography; Important Geophysical phenomena*

*Prelims: El Nino and La Nina*

**Context:**
The India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecasts ‘normal’ monsoon in India and no El Nino Conditions.

**El Nino**
- El Nino literally means ‘little boy’ or ‘Christ child’.
- El Nino refers to the large-scale ocean-atmosphere climate interaction linked to unusual warming of surface waters across the central and east-central Equatorial Pacific.
- El Nino is the “warm phase” of a phenomenon called the El Nino-Southern Oscillation (ENSO).
- It is associated with high pressure in the western Pacific.
- This condition results in heavy rains in Peru robbing the Indian subcontinent of its normal monsoon rains.
- The larger the temperature and pressure difference, the larger the rainfall shortage in India.

**La Nina**
- La Nina literally means ‘little girl’ and is also known as ‘cold event’.
- During La Nina conditions the water temperature in the Eastern Pacific gets colder
than normal. Due to this, there is a strong high pressure over the eastern equatorial Pacific and a low pressure in the Western Pacific and off Asia.

- La Nina causes drought in Peru and Ecuador and heavy rains in Australia, high temperatures in Western Pacific, Indian Ocean and good monsoon rains in India.
- La Nina is beneficial for the Indian monsoon.

Read more about **El Nino and La Nina**

1. Sovereign debt

_Syllabus: GS-3; Economy; Important Economic terminologies_

_Prelims: Sovereign debt_

_Context:_

The Sri Lankan government decided to default on all its foreign debt as it awaits financial assistance from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

_Sovereign debt:_

- Sovereign debt refers to the debt issued or accumulated by any government.
- Sovereign debt is issued by the government usually in the form of securities.
- Sovereign debt is also referred to as government debt, public debt, and national debt.
- Governments borrow money to finance various expenses that they cannot meet through their tax revenues.
  - Governments must pay interest on such debt along with the principal amount.
- Governments take sovereign debt by issuing bonds, bills or other debt securities, or by taking loans from other countries or organizations such as the IMF.

1. Chennakeshava temple

_Syllabus: GS-1; Indian Heritage and Culture; Architecture from ancient to modern_
Prelims: Chennakeshava temple

Context:
Devotees attended the rathotsava at the historic Chennakeshava temple in Belur

Belur’s Chennakeshava temple

- The temple was commissioned by the Hoysala king Vishnuvardhana to mark his victories against the Cholas in 1116 AD.
- The temple is located at Belur (also called Velapura) in Hassan district of Karnataka.
- The temple is constructed on the banks of the Yagachi River.
- It is a Vaishnava temple that also includes themes of Shaivism, Shaktism, Jainism and Buddhism.
- It is a remarkable example of the Vesara style of architecture and is a testimony of the artistic, cultural and theological heritage of the 12th century Hoysala Empire.

Read more about - Vesara style of architecture

G. Tidbits
Nothing here for today!!!

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. With respect to the financial powers of the Governor, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. Money bills can be introduced in the state legislature only with his prior recommendation.
2. He can make advances out of the Consolidated Fund of the State

Options:

a. 1 only
b. 2 only
c. Both

d. None

CHECK ANSWERS:-

Answer: a

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, Money bills can be introduced in the state legislature only with prior recommendation of the Governor.
- **Statement 2 is not correct**, The Governor can make advances out of the **Contingency Fund of the state** to meet any unforeseen expenditure.

Q2. Which of the following differences between the traditional El Nino and the El Nino Modoki is/are correct?

1. Traditional El Nino is characterized by strong anomalous warming in the eastern equatorial Pacific whereas the El Nino Modoki is associated with strong anomalous warming in the central tropical Pacific

2. Traditional El Nino results in diminished hurricanes in the Atlantic, whereas in the El Nino Modoki there are greater number of hurricanes with greater frequency

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a. 1 only

b. 2 only

c. Both

d. None

CHECK ANSWERS:-

Answer: c

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, Traditional El Nino which is characterized by strong anomalous warming in the eastern equatorial Pacific and the El Nino Modoki is
associated with strong anomalous warming in the central tropical Pacific and cooling in the eastern and western tropical Pacific.

- **Statement 2 is correct**, Traditional El Nino results in diminished hurricanes in the Atlantic, whereas with the El Nino Modoki there is a greater number of hurricanes with greater frequency

Q3. Consider the following Pairs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the case</th>
<th>Elements of the Basic Structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. S.R. Bommai case</td>
<td>Secularism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Kuldip Nayar case</td>
<td>Free and fair elections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Kihoto Hollohan</td>
<td>Harmony and balance between fundamental rights and directive principles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which of the above pairs is/are correctly matched?

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

**CHECK ANSWERS:**

Answer: a

**Explanation:**

- In the **S.R. Bommai case**, the Supreme Court adjudicated that a State Government cannot follow a particular religion and discussed at length the concept of **Secularism**.

- In the **Kuldip Nayar case**, the court adjudicated matters regarding the **Open Ballot System** which, according to the petitioner, violates the principle of 'secrecy' which is the essence of **free and fair elections**.
• The Kihoto Hollohan case mainly deals with the matters regarding Anti Defection Law Hence option a is correct.

Q4. With respect to First Buddhist Council, which of the following statements is/are correct?
   a. It was conducted under the patronage of King Kalasoka of Sisunaga dynasty.
   b. It was held at Vaishali.
   c. The monk who presided over the first council was Mahakassapa.

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

CHECK ANSWERS:-
Answer: c

Explanation:
   • Statement 1 is not correct, It was conducted under the patronage of King Ajatasatru of Haryanka dynasty.
   • The second Buddhist Council was conducted under the patronage of King Kalasoka of Sisunaga dynasty.
   • Statement 2 is not correct, It was held at Sattapani caves (Sattaparnaguha) in Rajagriha. The second Buddhist Council was held at Vaishali.
   • Statement 3 is correct, the first council was presided over by Mahakassapa.

Q5. ‘Triclosan’, considered harmful when exposed to high levels for a long time, is most likely present in which of the following?
   a. Food preservatives
   b. Fruit-ripening substances
c. Reused plastic containers
d. Toiletries

CHECK ANSWERS:-

Answer: d

Explanation:

- **Triclosan** is an ingredient added to many consumer products intended to reduce or prevent bacterial contamination, like antibacterial soaps, toothpastes, body washes, etc.

- Hence option d is correct.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

Q1. Highlight the significant features of the French Constitution and discuss the similarities and differences with the Indian Constitution.

(15 Marks, 250 Words)(GS II - Polity)

Q2. Should English be promoted as the link language in India? Critically examine.

(10 Marks, 150 Words)(GS I - Indian Society)

*Read the previous CNA [here](https://byjus.com).*