

## 12 Apr 2022: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b><u>A. GS 1 Related</u></b>
<b><u>B. GS 2 Related</u></b>
<b><i>POLITY AND GOVERNANCE</i></b>
1. <a href="#">Amending the Weapons of Mass Destruction Act</a>
<b><u>C. GS 3 Related</u></b>
<b><u>D. GS 4 Related</u></b>
<b><u>E. Editorials</u></b>
<b><i>INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS</i></b>
1. <a href="#">India and the U.K.: Crafting a new legacy</a>
<b><i>ECONOMY</i></b>
1. <a href="#">In pandemic shock, critical lessons for MSMEs</a>
<b><u>F. Prelims Facts</u></b>
1. <a href="#">NITI puts out Energy and Climate Index list</a>
2. <a href="#">Odisha's Barbara forest set for ecotourism push</a>
<b><u>G. Tidbits</u></b>
1. <a href="#">Govt. signs MoU to develop Electronics City</a>
<b><u>H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions</u></b>
<b><u>I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions</u></b>

#### A. GS 1 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

#### B. GS 2 Related

#### Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

#### 1. Amending the Weapons of Mass Destruction Act

*Syllabus: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.*

*Prelims: Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Amendment Bill, 2022*

***Mains: Critical evaluation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Amendment Bill, 2022***

**Context:**

Recently, the Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Amendment Bill, 2022 was introduced in the [Lok Sabha](#).

**Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD):**

Weapons of Mass Destruction are defined as atomic explosive weapons, radioactive material weapons, lethal chemical and biological weapons, and any weapons developed in the future which might have characteristics comparable in destructive effect to those of the atomic bomb or other weapons mentioned above.

**Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Amendment Bill, 2022:**

- In July 2005, the WMD and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Act was passed.
- Its main goal was to create a comprehensive set of laws prohibiting illegal activities involving all three types of WMD, their delivery systems, and related materials, equipment, and technologies.
- It established penalties for violating these provisions, including fines and imprisonment for a period of not less than five years (extendable for life).
- The Act was passed to comply with a UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1540 from 2004 that imposed an international obligation.

**UNSCR 1540:**

- The [United Nations Security Council](#) passed Resolution 1540 in 2004 in response to the growing threat of non-state actors gaining access to WMD material, equipment, or technology in order to commit acts of terrorism.
- UNSCR 1540 enforced three primary obligations upon nation-states —
  - To refrain from providing any assistance to non-state actors seeking to obtain weapons of mass destruction, related materials, or delivery systems.
  - To pass and enforce laws making non-state actors' possession and acquisition of such items illegal.
  - To enact and enforce domestic controls on relevant materials in order to prevent their spread.

### What has the Amendment added to the existing Act?

- The Amendment broadens the definition to include the prohibition of financing any activity related to weapons of mass destruction or their delivery systems.
- The central government will have the authority to freeze, seize, or attach funds, financial assets, or economic resources of suspected individuals in order to prevent such financing.
- It also prohibits people from providing financial or other services to others who are engaging in such behaviour.

### Need of the Amendment:

- The Amendment adapts to changing threats that deal with domestic laws and international agreements.
- Due to rapid advances in science, technology, and international commerce, one such review conducted in 2016 concluded that the risk of proliferation to non-state actors is increasing.
- **Two specific gaps are being addressed**
  - To align India's own legislation with international benchmarks, relevant international organizations such as the [Financial Action Task Force](#) are being consulted.
  - To address new types of threats that were not adequately addressed in existing legislation with technological advancements.
- They must be adaptable and flexible in order to keep up with non-state actors' shifting tactics.

### Concerns with the latest Amendment:

In Parliament, some members expressed concern on whether the new legislation could make existing business entities or people in the specific sector susceptible to a case of mistaken identity.

### International significance of this legislation:

- To prevent acts of terrorism involving WMD or their delivery systems, all nation-states must invest equally in a network of national and international measures.
- Such actions are required to strengthen global enforcement of export standards for sensitive items, as well as to prohibit the financing of such activities.
- Harmonization of global WMD controls may be possible if best practices on legislation and implementation are shared.

### Recommendations:

- India must take additional steps to meet new obligations and demonstrate to the international community its legislative, regulatory, and enforcement frameworks.

- On a domestic level, this Amendment will need to be implemented through proper outreach to industry and other stakeholders in order for them to understand their new responsibilities under the new provisions.
- India's WMD Act outreach efforts have spanned both regional and sectoral concerns. To explain the new aspects of the law, similar efforts will be required.
- It is also critical that India maintains a high level of international attention on WMD security. To avoid weak links in the global control system, even countries without WMD technology must be made aware of their role in the control framework.
- Through the IAEA ([International Atomic Energy Agency](#)) or on a bilateral basis, India can assist other countries in developing national legislation, institutions, and regulatory frameworks.

**Nut Graf**

*The latest amendment with respect to Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems is significant as now India can demand the same from those in its neighbourhood that have a history of proliferation and of supporting terrorist organisations.*

**C. GS 3 Related**

*Nothing here for today!!!*

**D. GS 4 Related**

*Nothing here for today!!!*

**E. Editorials****Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS****1. India and the U.K.: Crafting a new legacy**

**Syllabus:** *Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests*

**Mains:** *Developments in the India-U.K. bilateral relationship*

**Background:**

- There has been global disorder brought out by events such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict. Amid these tumultuous times, global powers have been seeking to recalibrate their foreign policies. Notably, however, **the India-U.K. relationship has been on an upward trajectory.**
- In this context, the article analyses the developments in the [India-U.K. bilateral relationship](#).

### **Details:**

- A **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership agreement** was concluded between India and the U.K. in May 2021. The agreement also established a **2030 Roadmap for India-U.K. relations.**
- Recently, the inaugural edition of the **India-U.K. Strategic Futures Forum, a Track 1.5 Dialogue** was held. The main objective of this Forum is to drive closer links and foster a long term strategic vision for India-UK relations.

### **Defence and security:**

- The two countries have ramped up defence and security ties in the domain of **maritime security, cyber security and counter-terrorism.**
- The two countries signed the **Defence and International Security Partnership in 2015.**
- The U.K. and India have agreed to strengthen their cooperation in the maritime security domain, especially in the Indo-Pacific region. This will boost strategic cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.
  - India is a key strategic partner for the U.K. in the Indo-Pacific. The U.K. is a regional power in the Indo-Pacific as it possesses naval facilities in Oman, Singapore, Bahrain, Kenya, and British Indian Ocean Territory.
- India and U.K navies have been conducting **joint exercises** in the region.
- A new **joint cyber security programme** is set to be announced by the two countries. This programme would work towards protecting online infrastructure in India and the U.K. This would help combat threats from cybercriminals and ransomware.

### **Trade and investment:**

- In January 2022, India and the U.K. concluded the first round of talks for an **India-U.K. [Free Trade Agreement](#)**. The two countries are expected to sign an early harvest deal very soon.
  - 2030 Roadmap aims to double bilateral trade between India and the U.K. by 2030.
- A comprehensive trade deal will help India have easy market access for its goods in the U.K., while such a deal would provide the U.K. with an opportunity to expand its markets beyond Europe since Brexit.
- India remains one of the top investors in the U.K.

### **Climate action:**

- India and the UK already have a strong history of partnership on climate, ranging from knowledge exchange and innovation in areas like electric mobility and power sector reform to climate resilience.
- At the recently concluded COP26 in Glasgow in November 2021, India and U.K. launched the ‘Green Grids Initiative – [One Sun One World One Grid](#)’ and ‘Infrastructure for Resilient Island States’ initiatives. This has provided an impetus to the India-U.K. Climate Partnership.
- Ahead of COP26, the UK pledged a \$1 billion investment from British Investment International into Indian green projects over the next five years. As part of this initiative, the U.K. has confirmed £70 million in funding to support the usage of renewable energy in India.

### Technology:

- The newer areas of cooperation include the emerging field of **fintech**.
- India and the U.K. also plan to hold **the first Strategic Tech Dialogue**, a ministerial-level summit on emerging technologies.
- One of the most notable successful collaborations in the technological domain is the one between Oxford-Astra Zeneca and the Serum Institute of India in producing Covishield vaccines in India.

### Conclusion:

As India seeks to carve out a new role for itself in the evolving global order as a ‘leading power’ and the U.K. recalibrates its strategic outlook post-Brexit, this is a unique moment in India-U.K. ties. Both countries should work towards strengthening the mutually beneficial relationship.

#### **Nut Graf**

*Over the recent years, the India-U.K. bilateral relationship has grown from strength to strength. The two countries share a diversified relationship in the domain of economy, security, technology and climate action.*

### Category: ECONOMY

#### 1. In pandemic shock, critical lessons for MSMEs

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

**Mains:** Significance and challenges in the MSME segment; Impact of the pandemic on MSMEs; Ensuring financial resilience of MSMEs to future economic shocks.



### Significance of the MSME segment:

- Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are critical for achieving the overall objectives of **economic growth and development in India**.
  - MSME sector is a significant contributor in terms of industrial output and accounts for a substantial **share of gross domestic product and export**.
  - MSMEs being **employment-intensive** create large employment opportunities. Also notably these jobs can accommodate the semi-skilled workers and often help distribute industries more evenly. Hence the role of MSMEs in **inclusive growth** is substantial.

### Challenges faced by MSMEs:

- Use of **obsolete technology** resulting in low productivity.
- The bulk of MSMEs are in the **informal sector** which lacks registration and the necessary financial documents to avail of financial services.
- **The skill gap** in workers.
- **Scarcity of adequate infrastructure resources**.
- Poor access to potential markets.

### Impact of the pandemic on the MSME sector:

- The [COVID-19 pandemic](#) has adversely impacted the MSME sector. The turnover of MSMEs has decreased substantially owing to a **decrease in demand, erratic supply of raw materials and labour shortage**. The demand and supply shocks caused by the COVID-19 pandemic induced lockdown have severely impacted the financial standing of the MSMEs.
- The MSME sector has still been struggling to survive and recover from the pandemic-induced shocks. The slow recovery of markets due to business uncertainties and payment delays have been major impediments to recovery.
- Despite some well-intended initiatives under the ‘**Atmanirbhar Bharat**’ package, very few MSME firms made use of the financial assistance scheme due to lack of demand and business uncertainties.

### Recommendations:

- An examination of the impact of the pandemic on the MSME segment reveals that the MSMEs which suffered the most were the ones that lacked **financial planning for business uncertainties** in order to overcome economic shocks.
- A firm’s resilience depends upon its financial resources in the face of economic disruptions and given the chances of similar pandemics in the future or similar economic disruptions by other factors such as a sudden change in government policies, wars, and natural catastrophes such as floods and drought, etc., the article suggests the following **financial safety net measures**.

**Uncertainty Corpus Fund for Small Businesses:**

- The Government should initiate an 'Uncertainty Corpus Fund for Small Businesses' funded through mandatory contributions from the firms as a certain percentage of their turnover with the government also contributing to the corpus fund.
- This fund can play the role of an **emergency fund** and can be used to meet the financial needs of small firms during business uncertainties.
- This would enable small firms to meet their working capital requirements and also in investing in new technology or new business opportunities to cope with uncertainties.

**Small Business Insurance Scheme:**

- The 'Small Business Insurance Scheme', similar to term insurance should be set up for MSMEs. Such insurance coverage can provide for economic uncertainties.
- Such a scheme would boost the confidence of small firms during normal business times and make them more competitive by giving them a sense of security in times of an abnormal business cycle.

**Nut Graf**

*As evident from the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic, financial resilience for the MSME sector remains the major requirement to enable these firms to face future economic shocks. In this direction financial safety net measures such as 'Uncertainty Corpus Fund for Small Businesses', and 'Small Business Insurance Scheme' can lend the necessary resilience to MSMEs.*

**F. Prelims Facts****1. NITI puts out Energy and Climate Index list**

**Syllabus:** GS3: Environment and Ecology: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation.

**Prelims:** Energy and Climate Index List

**Context:** Recently, [Niti Aayog](#) released the Energy and Climate Index list.

**Energy and Climate Index List:**

- The State Energy and Climate Index (SECI) is the first index that aims to track the efforts made by States and UTs in the climate and energy sector.



- It is released by NITI Aayog.
- The Index ranks states and Union Territories (UTs) on six parameters including discoms' performance, energy efficiency and environmental sustainability.
- The States have been categorized based on size and geographical differences as larger and smaller States and UTs.
- The index is based on 2019-20 data.

### **Energy and Climate Index List 2022:**

- Gujarat has topped the list for larger States.
- Gujarat, Kerala and Punjab have been ranked as the top three performers in the category of larger States.
  - Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh were the bottom three States.
- Goa emerged as the top performer in the smaller States category followed by Tripura and Manipur.
- Among UTs, Chandigarh, Delhi and Daman & Diu/Dadra & Nagar Haveli are the top performers.
- Punjab was the best performer in discom performance, while Kerala topped in access, affordability and reliability category.
- Haryana was the best performer in the clean energy initiative among larger States and Tamil Nadu in the energy efficiency category.

## **2. Odisha's Barbara forest set for ecotourism push**

**Syllabus:** GS-3: Environment and Ecology: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation.

**Prelims:** Barbara Forest

**Context:** The Barbara forest in Odisha will soon be open for tourists.

### **About Barbara Forest:**

- The teak and sal trees dominate the Barbara forest, which has been dubbed Asia's largest teak and sal forest.
- It was India's only forest guarded by Central Reserve Police Force jawans to keep the timber mafia at bay.
- The forest spans three Odisha districts: Khordha, Nayagarh, and Ganjam.
- It was named after a British forest officer's wife, who was killed in a tiger attack in the area 100 years ago, according to legend.

- The Khordha Forest Division's Barbara landscape is an enriched area with several century-old plants sown by the British in 1910.
- Though the CRPF deployment in Barbara was supposed to last three years, the State Government kept extending it due to the ongoing threat from the timber mafia.

### G. Tidbits

#### 1. Govt. signs MoU to develop Electronics City

- The Dialogue and Development Commission of Delhi (DDCD) has partnered with industry experts to develop Electronics City in the Capital.
- The Delhi Electronics City initiative will help to boost the design, manufacture, sales and service of electronics to feed domestic as well as global demand.

### H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

**Q1. 'Godana', an old practice of tattooing, is prevalent in which of the following states?**

- a. Rajasthan
- b. Chhattisgarh
- c. Punjab
- d. Karnataka

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

The practice of tattooing is widely prevalent across **Chhattisgarh**. It is a form of body art practised mostly by women on women, mainly amongst the Adivasi and 'lower' caste communities from this region. The word used for this practice is godana, which refers to the piercing of the body with needles.

**Hence option B is correct.**

**Q2. Which of the following is the only forest in India to be guarded by the Central Reserve Police Force?**

- a. Barbara forest
- b. Baikunthapur forest
- c. Molai forest
- d. Saranda forest

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

- The teak and sal trees dominate the Barbara forest, which has been dubbed Asia's largest teak and sal forest.
- It was **India's only forest guarded by the Central Reserve Police Force jawans to keep the timber mafia at bay.**
- The forest spans three Odisha districts: Khordha, Nayagarh, and Ganjam.
- It was named after a British forest officer's wife, who was killed in a tiger attack in the area 100 years ago, according to legend.
- **Hence option A is correct.**

**Q3. Consider the following statements with regards to river pollution:**

1. Lower levels of dissolved Oxygen are a negative sign for the marine organisms in the water body.
2. Raman spectroscopy technique can be used to detect microplastics in water bodies.
3. Microbes such as Cyclops, Daphnia, Spirogyra, Spirochaeta and E. coli, are well-known bio-indicators of water contamination.

**Choose the correct code:**

- a. 1 & 2 only
- b. 2 & 3 only
- c. 1 & 3 only
- d. All of the above

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

- Reduced biodiversity, shifts in species distributions, displacement or reduction of fishery resources, and expanding algal blooms are all consequences of ocean oxygen decline. Thus, Ocean deoxygenation is a negative sign for marine organisms.
- Raman spectroscopy is a spectroscopic technique that can be used to determine the chemical composition of materials by detecting vibrational, rotational, and other states in a molecular system. Recently, the Raman spectroscopy technique was used to detect microplastics in water bodies.

- The microbes such as Cyclops, Daphnia, Spirogyra, Spirochaeta, and E. Coli, are well-known bio-indicators of water contamination.
- **Hence all the statements are correct.**

**Q4. Arrange the following Indian languages in the decreasing order of the number of people who regard it as their mother tongue, as per the 2011 census:**

1. Marathi
2. Bengali
3. Tamil
4. Telugu

**Choose the correct code:**

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

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

- According to Census 2011 language data, **Hindi** is India's most widely spoken language.
- Hindi is the mother tongue of 43.63 percent of Indians, making it the country's most spoken language, followed by **Bengali**.
- **Marathi** (6.86 percent) is India's third most spoken language, according to the 2011 census.
- Southern languages such as **Telugu (-0.49%)**, **Tamil (-0.21%)**, **Kannada (-0.08%)**, and **Malayalam (-0.33%)** have been steadily declining over the last decade.
- Bhili or Bhilodi, a Rajasthani language with 1.04 crore speakers, was the most spoken unscheduled language, followed by Gondi with 29 lakh speakers.
- **Hence option A is correct.**

**Q5. Which of the following organisations publishes the Energy and Climate Index list?**

- a. Bureau of Energy Efficiency
- b. Ministry of New and Renewable Energy
- c. NITI Aayog
- d. Atomic Energy Commission of India

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

- The State Energy and Climate Index (SECI) is the first index that aims to track the efforts made by States and UTs in the climate and energy sector.
- **It is released by NITI Aayog. Hence option C is correct.**
- The Index ranks states and Union Territories (UTs) on six parameters including discoms' performance, energy efficiency and environmental sustainability.
- The States have been categorized based on size and geographical differences as larger and smaller States and UTs.

**Q6. Indigo cultivation in India declined by the beginning of the 20th century because of [UPSC 2020]**

- a. peasant resistance to the oppressive conduct of planters
- b. its unprofitability in the world market because of new inventions
- c. national leaders' opposition to the cultivation of indigo
- d. Government control over the planters

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

Because of its high value as a trading commodity, indigo was often referred to as blue gold. It has been the foundation of textile export from India for centuries. As its demand increased during the industrialization in Britain (as it was most suitable for cotton and also required for navy uniforms), its production also increased and so did the oppression by white planters. Peasant resistance (E.g. Indigo revolt) led to a reduction in planters' oppression. However, the indigo plantations moved away from Bengal and into Bihar. That is where the Champaran satyagraha took place during the Gandhian era. However, it was in reality its unprofitability in the world market because of new inventions that led to a reduction in its production. These inventions took place in Germany where the foundation of the Industrial Revolution was not the mechanization of processes but the invention of scientific techniques like modern synthetic chemistry. By the late 19th century nearly all indigo came from indigo bush plantations in India. The German chemist Adolf Baeyer succeeded in making it in the laboratory in 1878, but it took nearly three decades to find a method of making synthetic indigo on a large scale.

**Hence option B is correct.**

1. Despite the challenge posed by the Ukraine crisis, the India - U.K. relationship has been on an upward trajectory. Evaluate with focus on their priorities in the Indo-Pacific region. (250 words; 15 marks) [GS-2, International Relations]
2. Critically examine the Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Amendment Bill, 2022. (250 words; 15 marks) [GS-2, Polity & International Relations]

