

13 May 2022: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis



I measure the progress of a community
by the degree of progress which women
have achieved.

- Bhim Rao Ambedkar



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A. GS 1 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

B. GS 2 Related

Category: SOCIAL JUSTICE

1. On the question of notifying minorities

Syllabus: Mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of vulnerable sections.

Mains: The power to notify communities as minorities in India and its associated issues and challenges.

Context

A [public interest litigation \(PIL\)](#) that questions the competence of the Centre to notify minorities at the national level is being considered by the Supreme Court.

Power to notify minorities

- The **National Commission for Minorities (NCM) Act, 1992** in its **Section 2(c)** defines a minority as “a community notified as such by the Central government”.
- **Section 2(f)** of the **National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions (NCMEI) Act 2004**, which says “minority” for this Act, means a community notified as such by the Central Government,” also accords similar powers to the Centre.
- In 2005, the Central government notified five communities namely **Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Parsis** as minorities at the national level.
 - In 2014, the government notified **Jainism** as the sixth minority community.

Know more about - [Minority Protection in India](#)

Arguments raised in the public interest litigation (PIL)

- The PIL particularly challenges the validity of **Section 2(f)** of the **NCMEI Act 2004**, saying that it is arbitrary and violates the principles enshrined in Articles 14, 15, 21, 29 and 30 of the Indian Constitution.
- The PIL quotes the SC’s judgement in the **T. M. A. Pai Foundation vs State Of Karnataka case** (2002) which said that “for the purpose of determining minority, the unit will be State and not whole India”.

- The PIL also says that the Centre's notification has created an unusual situation wherein the communities declared as minorities by the Centre enjoy the status even in States/UTs in which they are in majority. Whereas, a few other communities are not accorded the status despite being minorities in those States/UTs.
- The PIL urges the SC to curtail the Centre's power to notify national minorities or order the Centre to notify those communities as minorities in States/UTs that are "socially, economically and politically non-dominant" apart from being numerically smaller.

Centre's Response

- The Centre has filed two affidavits in the case, wherein it has held that the Centre had the power to notify minority communities.
- The Centre defended the concept of minorities at the national level whereas it remains muted on the specific question.
 - i.e. the Centre has not taken a position, about continuing the national list of minorities while it highlighted its power to notify minorities under various Acts.
- The Centre has reiterated that it has concurrent powers with the States to ensure the welfare of minorities.
 - The centre quoted the examples of Maharashtra recognising Jews as a minority community and Karnataka recognising speakers of several languages as linguistic minorities and said that the States could have notified minorities within their jurisdiction.
 - But the Centre in its second affidavit claimed that the Centre alone was vested with the power to notify a minority community.
- The Centre in its first affidavit defended the constitution of the Ministry of Minority Affairs and the Sachar Committee to study the backwardness of a community in India.

Way forward

- The Centre said the PIL deals with crucial matters and sought time to consult with the States and other stakeholders before it could take a position.
- The Centre has said that it would take a position on the issue only after verifying various sociological and other aspects as any stand without thorough considerations would lead to an unintended complication in the country.

To read more about the issue refer to the following article:

[UPSC Comprehensive News Analysis dated 28th March 2022](#)

Nut Graf

A community that is a majority in a large portion of the country can be a minority in a particular State. Hence, there is a need for the Centre and the Supreme Court to undertake proactive measures to protect

the interests of these communities.

C. GS 3 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: POLITY

1. With delimitation over, a look at the slate for J&K

Syllabus: Syllabus: GS II, Polity, Statutory bodies

Prelims: Delimitation Commission

Mains: Necessity to carry out delimitation in Jammu and Kashmir and its implications.

Context: The article analyses the final report of the Delimitation Commission.

The background:

- The redrawn map of Jammu and Kashmir for the assembly election was notified by the [Delimitation Commission](#).
- As a consequence of the final report of the Commission, huge protests emerged among the political parties of Kashmir.
- It is alleged that there were significant concerns raised when the report was being drafted. However, the commission overlooked the recommendations and concerns of the political leaders.
- This has highlighted major shortfalls of the report, inviting enormous arguments.
- The commission agreed to invite sound recommendations of the legislative assembly and consider them once delimitation came into force and not before the elections.

For more details, watch the video:

Video link: <https://youtu.be/ZB8EUV-1CrI>

What is meant by Delimitation?

- Delimitation can be defined as an exercise that involves the redrawing of boundaries, particularly of electoral precincts, states and other municipalities.
- This exercise, in the context of elections, is carried out to ensure adequate representation of the people of the constituencies without any biases.

About the Delimitation Commission:

- The Delimitation Commission has been headed by a retired Judge of the Supreme Court, the Chief Election Commissioner and the State Election Commissioner of Jammu & Kashmir as ex-officio members of the Commission.
- It has made the following recommendations to the Central Government in the final delimitation order:
 - Provision of at least two members (one of them must be a female) from the Kashmiri migrant communities in the Legislative Assembly and such members may be given power at par with the power of nominated members of the Legislative Assembly of the Union Territory of Puducherry.
 - The Central Government may consider giving the Displaced Persons from Pakistan occupied Jammu & Kashmir some representation in the legislative assembly by way of nomination of those representatives.

The Discontent: Challenges Ahead

- According to the Commission, the report has successfully addressed the issues raised by the members and reflected their support.
- Such a claim has resulted in the creation of a prominent gap between the commission's self-projection and the views of the Valley's political leaders.
- The government was firm with its decision to redraw the constituencies for Jammu and Kashmir for elections to be held under the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act 2019.

Also Read about [Article 370](#) in the linked article.

- With the decision to reorganize J&K, a large number of people including noted leaders of political parties were held captive under [preventive detention](#) along with the charges of sedition.

Read about the recent update on Sedition in [CNA](#) dated 12th May 2022.

- After notifying the redrawn constituencies, the Election Commission realised the urgent need to conduct elections in Jammu and Kashmir with an objective to offer leadership to the region which has been, so far, under non-local administration.
- This move of the election commission also added to the discontent with an enhanced risk of violence.
- The major challenge will be witnessed if the election results determine a sharp divide between Jammu and the Valley, leading to political instability.
- There is a possibility that the delimitation exercise can be nullified provided the Supreme Court declares the challenges put forth against the reorganisation act valid after a thorough hearing.

Shortfalls in the report of the delimitation commission:

- It does not summarise nor does it address the objections put forward by the people and representatives.
- There were arguments surrounding the reason for allocating six seats to Jammu and only one seat to Valley. The reasons behind the disproportionate allocation of seats have not been clarified precisely by the report.
- There is an inadequate explanation of the methodology that was applied in the allocation of seats.
- The reduction in the Muslim majority seats despite the fact that the Muslim community occupies the majority of the population of the region, has not been well defined with a rationale.

Way Forward:

- It is suggested that there must be clean and fair elections to restore peace in the region of Jammu and Kashmir.
- It should be the responsibility of the administration, legal authorities and the government to ensure a speedy revival of statehood for Jammu and Kashmir.
- Attention should be paid to the freedom of the individuals and to protect them from arbitrary arrests that dilute the spirit of nationalism among the people of the region.
- The stakeholders of policymaking in Jammu and Kashmir, in the upcoming days, must uphold a credible and accountable leadership regulating the misuse of draconian legislations. This would nurture and boost the true confidence of the people and the representatives for elections.

Nut Graf

The report of the delimitation commission has led to the emergence of several arguments about the delimitation exercise in Jammu and Kashmir. For peace to prevail in the valley, all the stakeholders must come together and ensure individual freedoms of the people of the region within the boundaries of the Indian Constitution.

1. Event Horizon reveals true colours of SgrA*

Syllabus: GS - 3, Science and Technology; Awareness in the fields of Space

*Prelims: About Event Horizon Telescope and Sagittarius A**

Context

Scientists from the Event Horizon Telescope (EHT) facility revealed the first image of the black hole at the centre of the Milky Way Galaxy.

Sagittarius A* (SgrA*)

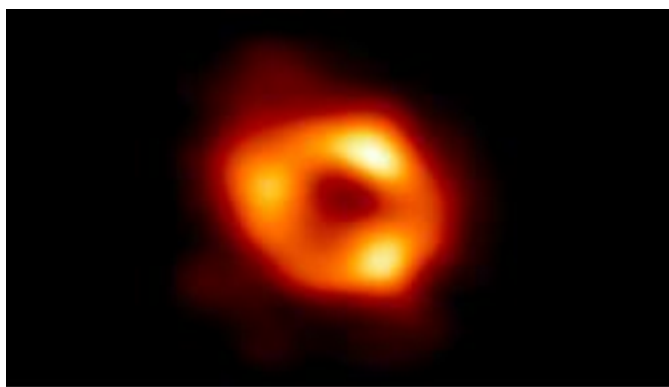


Image source: The Hindu

- **Sagittarius A* (SgrA*)** is a bright and very compact astronomical radio source located at the centre of the Milky Way Galaxy.
- It is the location of the supermassive black hole.
- **Sagittarius A*** is located near the border of the constellations Sagittarius and Scorpius.
- **Sagittarius A*** is around 27,000 light-years away from Earth.
- Astronomers have been unable to observe Sgr A* in the optical spectrum because of the effect of 25 magnitudes of extinction by dust and gas between the source and Earth.
 - Also, the physics of plasma flows around SgrA* changes on an hourly time scale, thus making it difficult to get a coherent image with all relevant information from photons corresponding to one orbit.

Event Horizon Telescope (EHT)



Image Source: ESO.org

- The Event Horizon Telescope project is an international collaboration launched in 2009.
- EHT is a large telescope array composed of a global network of radio telescopes.
 - The EHT is composed of many radio observatories or radio-telescope facilities around the world, working together to produce a high-sensitivity, high-angular-resolution telescope.
- The EHT has formed to continue the steady long-term progress on improving the capability of **Very Long Baseline Interferometry (VLBI)** at short wavelengths.
- In 2019, the Event Horizon Telescope facility which is a collaboration of over 300 researchers, made history by recording and releasing the first-ever image of a black hole, named **M87*** a black hole at the centre of a **Messier 87** galaxy.
- On 12 May 2022, astronomers revealed the image of **Sagittarius A*** for the first time.

G. Tidbits

1. Retail inflation quickens to an almost eight-year high at 7.8%

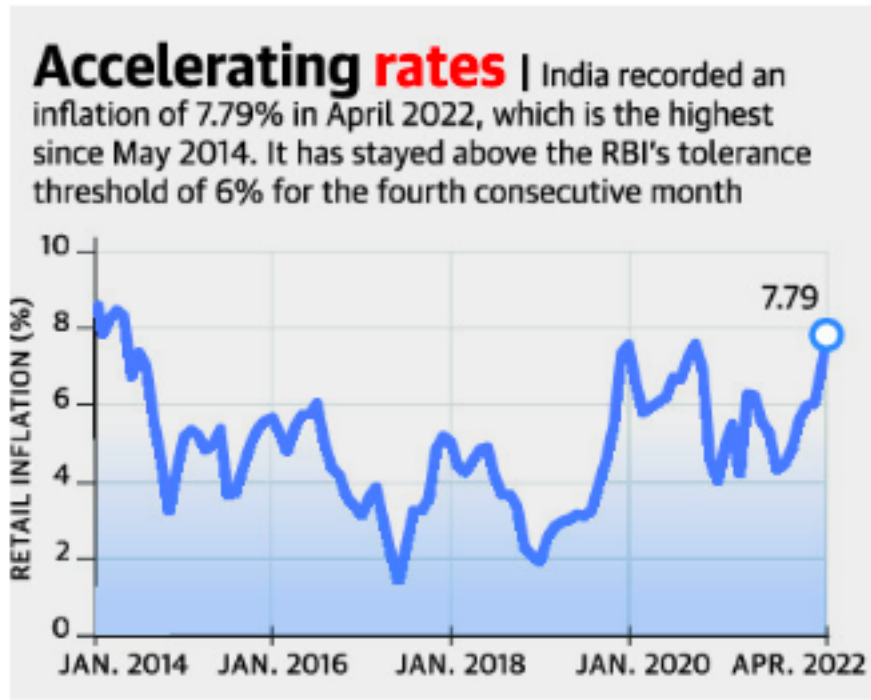


Image source: The Hindu

- Inflation faced by Indian consumers increased to an eight-year high of 7.8% in April 2022, from 6.95% in March 2022.
- The rural [inflation](#) increased to 8.4% with 7.1% in the urban areas.
- Food costs led to an increase in inflation as measured by the Consumer Food Price Index (CFPI) reaching 8.4%
- Experts believe that the increase in the global crude price has impacted food, fuel and light, and transport and communication prices in the CPI basket.

2. Finland leaders in favour of seeking NATO membership

- Finland's President and Prime Minister announced that the Nordic country must apply for membership in NATO immediately in the wake of [Russia's invasion of Ukraine](#).
- Sweden is also expected to undertake similar actions.
- These moves have gained prominence in the European security landscape as Sweden has avoided military alliances for over 200 years, while Finland has remained neutral post its defeat by the Soviets in World War II.

- Considering that this expansion of NATO would surround Russia with NATO countries in the Baltic Sea and the Arctic, Russia warned the countries saying that it will be forced to take retaliatory military-technical actions to counter the threats to its national security.

3. Ujjwala LPG scheme: 90-lakh beneficiaries don't take refills

- According to a reply to an RTI application, it was seen that 90-lakh beneficiaries of the central government's flagship scheme, **Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)**, did not take refill gas cylinders and over one crore beneficiaries got their refills only once in the financial year 2021-22.
- PMUY beneficiaries are said to have availed of 14.17 crores of free refills under the scheme, across the country.
- Experts say that these figures should be looked at by considering the fact that during the COVID-19 pandemic, the government provided up to three free of cost LPG refills to PMUY beneficiaries between April and December 2020.
- To read more about the [Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana \(PMUY\)](#), check the linked article.

4. 'GDP growth to be almost 8% this fiscal'

- The Finance Ministry in its monthly economic review said that the capital expenditure driven fiscal stance of the Union Budget 2022-23 will help the economy overcome inflationary headwinds and register about 8% real growth in 2022-23.
- Quoting the International Monetary Fund's 8.2% forecast, the Ministry held that India would be the fastest growing economy in the financial year 2022-23.
- The robust growth in the economy is reflected by the remarkable performance of e-way bill generation, toll collections, electricity consumption, PMI manufacturing and PMI services and the record GST collections for March 2022.
- The Ministry also attributed the decline in the forex reserves to pressure from the outflow of foreign portfolio investments (FPI) due to tightened monetary stance of central banks in advanced economies.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. The Global COVID Virtual Summit has been hosted by whom? (Level – Easy)

- a. G20
- b. USA

- c. WHO
- d. EU

Answer: b

Explanation:

- The Global COVID Virtual Summit has been hosted by the USA.
- Hence **option b** is correct.

Q2. What is the significance of Lumbini? (Level – Difficult)

1. Birthplace of Lord Gautama Buddha
2. A UNESCO World Heritage Site
3. Site of the historic Mayadevi temple

Options:

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, Lumbini is the birthplace of Gautama Buddha.
- **Statement 2 is correct**, Lumbini has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1997.
- **Statement 3 is correct**, Maya Devi Temple is an ancient Buddhist temple situated at Lumbini.

Q3. Which of the following statements are correct? (Level – Medium)

1. The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) is headed by the Union Home Minister.
2. It carries out immediate search & rescue and emergency relief operations following a disaster.
3. It was established by the National Disaster Management Plan of 2019.

Options:

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

d. None of the above

Answer: d

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is not correct,** The [National Disaster Management Authority \(NDMA\)](#) is headed by the **Prime Minister of India**.
- **Statement 2 is not correct,** Its primary purpose is to coordinate response to natural or man-made disasters and for capacity-building in disaster resiliency and crisis response. It is also the apex body to lay down policies, plans and guidelines for Disaster Management to ensure a timely and effective response to disasters.
 - **National Disaster Response Force (NDRF)** carries out immediate rescue and relief operations during natural disasters.
- The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) is a statutory body constituted in accordance with the **Disaster Management Act, 2005**.

Q4. Which country has expressed interest to join NATO following Russia's invasion of Ukraine? (Level – Easy)

- a. Poland
- b. Belarus
- c. Finland
- d. Turkey

Answer: c

Explanation:

- Finland's President and Prime Minister announced that the Nordic country must apply for membership in NATO immediately in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.
- Hence **option c** is correct.

Q5. Consider the following pairs: (Level – Difficult) [UPSC 2019]

Sl. No.	Sea	Bordering Country
1.	Adriatic Sea	Albania
2.	Black Sea	Croatia
3.	Caspian Sea	Kazakhstan
4.	Mediterranean Sea	Morocco
5.	Red Sea	Syria

Which of the pair given above are correctly matched?

- a. 1, 2 and 4 only
- b. 1, 3 and 4 only
- c. 2 and 5 only
- d. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Answer: b

Explanation:

- The **Adriatic Sea** is bordered by countries such as **Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro, and Albania.**
- The **Black Sea** is located between **Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, Russia and Georgia.**
- The **Caspian Sea** is bordered by Russia, Iran, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.
- The **Mediterranean Sea** is bordered by 21 countries which include Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Montenegro, Morocco, Spain, Turkey, etc.
- The **Red Sea** is bordered by 6 countries namely **Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Egypt, Sudan, Eritrea, and Djibouti.**

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. How are minorities defined in India? What safeguards have been given to the minorities by the Indian Constitution? (250 words; 15 marks) (GS II - Polity)
2. Assess the success and shortcomings of the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana. How far has the scheme been able to achieve its objectives? (250 words; 15 marks) (GS II - Governance)