

14 May 2022: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

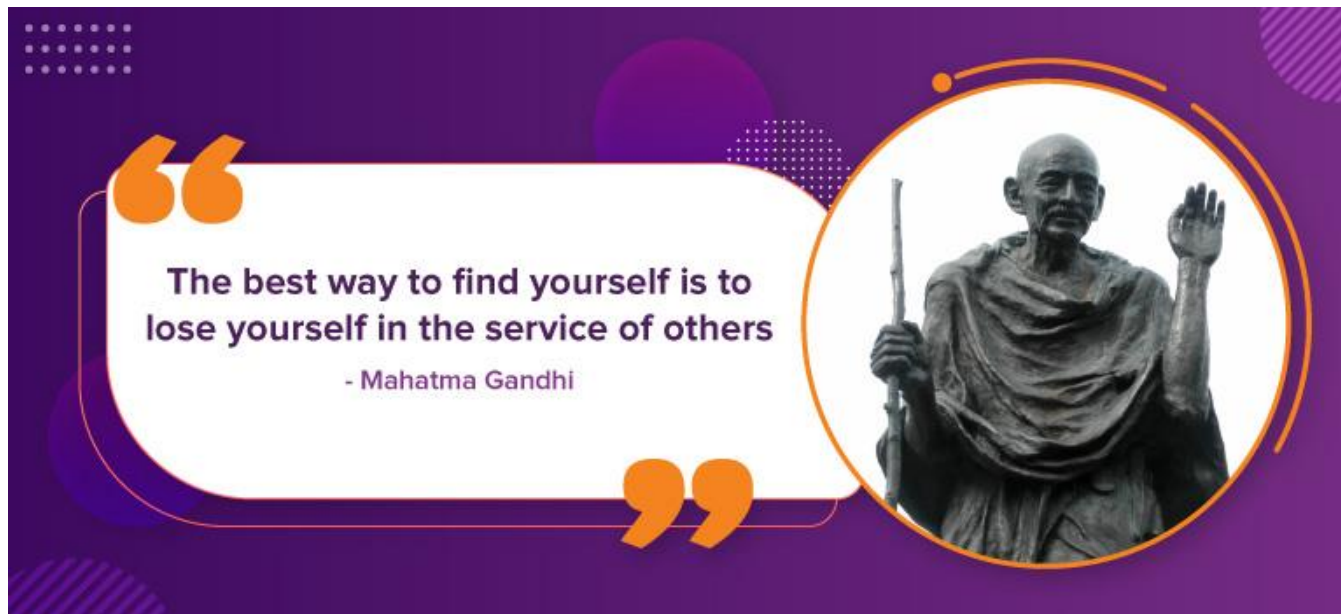


TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. <u>GS 1 Related</u>
B. <u>GS 2 Related</u>
<i>INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS</i>
1. Erdogan opposes Finland, Sweden joining NATO bloc
C. <u>GS 3 Related</u>
D. <u>GS 4 Related</u>
E. <u>Editorials</u>
<i>AGRICULTURE</i>
1. An industry barely hanging by a thread
<i>INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS</i>
1. Reforming WHO
2. The kernel of Sri Lanka's waterfront protests
F. <u>Prelims Facts</u>
1. ISRO tests booster for Gaganyaan
2. Indian rhinoceros
G. <u>Tidbits</u>
1. CCMB develops Indian mRNA vaccine platform
2. China, Russia, Pak. to attend SCO anti-terror meet in Delhi
3. Modi, Deuba to continue talks on hydropower, connectivity
H. <u>UPSC Prelims Practice Questions</u>

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions**A. GS 1 Related**

Nothing here for today!!!

B. GS 2 Related**Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS****1. Erdogan opposes Finland, Sweden joining NATO bloc**

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

Mains: Geopolitical implications of Finland and Sweden availing of NATO membership

Context

Turkey has opposed the plans of Finland and Sweden to join [NATO](#).

Background

- Finland's leaders said 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.
- However, the Turkish President has said that Turkey is "not favourable" towards Finland and Sweden joining NATO.

Finland and Sweden's aspirations

- Since the onset of the Ukraine crisis, Finland and Sweden have sought the protection of NATO and are considering a paradigm shift of their respective security policies of neutrality and military independence.
- Recently held polls in the two countries suggest that a substantial majority of people are backing the countries to join NATO.
- Amid the concerns of cyber and hybrid attacks, violations of airspace and territorial sea by Russia, Finland and Sweden are looking forward to their membership in NATO as the membership offers them numerous advantages in this context.

Turkey's stance

- The Turkish President said that the country is not of a favourable opinion as Sweden and other Scandinavian countries allegedly support Kurdish and other militants whom Turkey considers to be terrorists.
- The Turkish President said that he does not want to repeat Turkey's past "mistake" of agreeing to readmit Greece into NATO's military wing in 1980.
 - He claimed that the action helped Greece take a stance against Turkey due to the backing of NATO.
- As NATO decides on all matters based on consensus i.e all the 30 member countries have potential veto power, Turkey might block the induction of Finland and Sweden into NATO.

Russia's Response

- Considering that this expansion of NATO would surround Russia with NATO countries in the Baltic Sea and the Arctic, Russia warned Finland and Sweden of retaliatory military-technical actions to counter the threats to its national security.
- Russia is also set to suspend its electricity to Finland citing that Finland has not paid for the electricity sold in May.

Nut Graf

Turkey's opposition to the induction of Sweden and Finland into NATO has further aggravated the already fragmented geopolitical situation of Europe. With Russia firmly opposing any expansion of NATO, especially in its borders, Europe's fissures are coming to the fore amidst the Russia - Ukraine conflict. Unless peace is restored and all the stakeholders come to the table for talks, there is fear of the conflict spreading to other parts of the globe threatening peace everywhere.

C. GS 3 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: AGRICULTURE

1. An industry barely hanging by a thread

Syllabus: Transport and marketing of agricultural produce and issues and related constraints

Mains: Issues and challenges associated with the jute industry in India and various government initiatives.

Context

This article discusses the issues with the jute industry in India.

Jute industry in India

- The jute industry in India is 150 years old.
 - India's first jute factory was established in Kolkata in 1854.
- India is the world's biggest producer of jute which is followed by Bangladesh and China.
- Jute is mainly grown in the states of West Bengal, Odisha, Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Andhra Pradesh.
- According to the Indian Jute Mills Association (IJMA), there are about 93 jute mills in India, of which 70 are in West Bengal.
- The jute industry employs over 4 lakh workers across the country and supports the livelihood of about 40 lakh farm families.

For more information about the issues with the jute industry refer to the following article:

[UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis dated 02 May 2022](#)

Government initiatives for the jute industry

- Golden Fibre Revolution and Jute Technology Mission
 - The Government of India, in 2006, launched a Jute Technology Mission which included four mini targets that included jute research, development of raw jute agriculture and its extension; processing and marketing of raw jute.
- **Jute Packaging Mandatory Act, 1987**
 - Under the Jute Packaging Materials (Compulsory Use in Packing Commodities) Act, 1987, the government prescribes mandatory jute packaging for various commodities.
 - A decision was taken to ensure a minimum of 100% of food grains and a minimum of 20% of sugar are to be compulsorily packed in jute sacking.
- **Jute-ICARE**
 - Improved Cultivation and Advanced Retting Exercise for Jute (Jute – ICARE) was launched in 2015 to introduce better agronomic practices among farmers in West Bengal and Assam.
 - The improved agronomic practices include -- line sowing of jute using seed drills, weed management by wheel hoeing instead of hand weeding and distribution of quality certified seeds at a 50% subsidy.

- **Jute Integrated Development Scheme (JIDS)**
 - JIDS was launched by the Government of India in 2015-16 with an aim to set up local units and agencies at far off locations around the country through collaboration with various bodies such as SHGs, cooperative societies, and NGOs.
 - The National Jute Board (NJB) is the implementing agency for JIDS.
- **Jute SMART**
 - Jute SMART is an e-govt initiative launched in December 2016 with an aim to promote transparency in the jute sector,
 - The initiative provides an integrated platform for procurement of B-Twill Jute sacking commonly known as jute sacking bags by the Government.
- **Jute Seeds Distribution Program**
 - The Union Textile Ministry launched the commercial jute seed distribution scheme in 2021.
 - The initiative was undertaken keeping in view the growing demand for Jute in the country and to improve the quality of Jute.

Also read: [Golden Fibre Revolution](#)

Nut Graf

With several mills closing their operations, the crisis in India's jute industry is being aggravated. This calls for the modernisation and the introduction of new technology in the jute mills along with the collaboration of all stakeholders which includes governments, industry bodies and jute mill associations to revive the industry.

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Reforming WHO

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

Mains: *The need to reform the World Health Organisation and the way forward.*

Context

The Prime Minister of India called for a reform of the [World Health Organisation \(WHO\)](#) while addressing the second global COVID-19 summit.

Need for reforming WHO

- Immediate reforms are required to further strengthen the WHO and its capabilities to respond to novel and known disease outbreaks to prevent the harm caused to the global community.
- Also, China's long delay in sharing crucial data regarding the novel coronavirus and the difficulties faced by the global health agency to convince China to permit investigations regarding the origin of the virus have highlighted the vulnerabilities of WHO.
- There is also a need to revisit the WHO's processes of vaccine approvals as the emergency use listing (EUL) of Covaxin was said to be intentionally delayed by the health agency without any basis or evidence.

Way forward

- Increase in the mandatory funding by members
 - For many years the mandatory contribution by the member states has constituted less than 25% of the total budget and the sizable amount of the funding is through voluntary contribution thus impacting WHO's responses.
- **Accord more powers to WHO**
 - There is a need to accord the agency with more powers to hold the member states accountable for breach of norms and to alert the WHO in case of disease outbreaks that could cause global harm.
 - According to legally binding international health norms, member states should set up core capacities to identify, report and respond to public health emergencies. However, the member states do not face penalties for non-compliance.
 - There is a need to bring in changes in this regard for ensuring better protection against future disease outbreaks.
- **Narrow mandate**
 - The organization has a very large mandate which includes all the activities that are aimed at improving the health of all populations worldwide.
 - The WHO's scope must be clarified and narrowed.
- **Governance of WHO**
 - The administration of the agency should be reformed to include alternative voices, such as from the civil society and other organisations working at grassroots levels.
- **Increase technical expertise**
 - The organisation must extend its collaboration with various specialists such as political scientists, lawyers, and information technology experts.

Nut Graf

The COVID-19 pandemic has raised several questions and doubts regarding the functioning of the WHO which is the only true democratic global health agency available. In this context, immediate reforms in the health agency are needed to create a stronger and more resilient global health security architecture.

2. The kernel of Sri Lanka's waterfront protests

Syllabus: India and its neighbourhood

Mains: Details about the 'Gota go gama' protests in Sri Lanka

Context

'Gota go gama' protests in Sri Lanka.

Background

For detailed background on the issue refer to the following article:

[Crisis in Sri Lanka](#)

Details

- The protests in Sri Lanka started in March 2022 with candlelight vigils at traffic junctions in Sri Lanka's capital Colombo.
- The demonstrators were protesting against power cuts imposed by the government as it did not have sufficient dollars to buy the diesel needed to run the power plants.
- These protests were democratic, non-violent, inclusive and creative.
- The protests got the support of people from every community irrespective of class, religion, gender or ethnicity.
- The protests were inspired by the Occupy Wall Street movement, Black Lives Matter, the Arab Spring, and the Indian farmers' movement.
- The young activists were supported by student and academic unions along with trade unions, the environmental movement, professional associations, and civil society groups which joined the movement much later.
- Young lawyers also stood by the demonstrators thus creating a safety net for the movement. Lawyers also mingled with the protesters and intervened if there was any tension or difficulty.

Participation of Tamils

- The Tamil dominated regions in the north and the eastern part of the country have not participated completely in these protests.

- The Tamil nationalists argue by saying that Tamil issues are not being addressed for them to support the protest.
- Despite not being fully involved in the protests, the Tamils have taken part in the local level protests in the country.
- Many from the Jaffna University Students Union and women from the north and the east have participated actively in the 'Gota go Gama' movement.

Path ahead

- Protesters demand that President Gotabaya Rajapaksa like his brother Mahinda Rajapaksa (former Prime Minister) must step down from office.
- It is important for new Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe to gain the confidence of Parliament and protesters to instil stability in the country.
- The several demands of the opposition in the parliament include,
 - Reinstating the 19th Amendment, particularly the provisions related to the independent judiciary and independent commissions
 - Abolishing the executive presidency through a 21st Amendment
 - Establishing the economic framework for International Monetary Fund (IMF) negotiations
- If the crisis further aggravates, Sri Lanka may face the Myanmar option which has been currently ruled out by the commander of the army as many of the security forces seem to have been supporting the current movement.
- Currently, the IMF is looking to further its negotiations with Sri Lanka as there is an all-party consensus about the same.

Nut Graf

Despite Sri Lanka facing one of its most severe crises ever in its history, the non-violent and democratic participation of the individuals along with various organisations to ensure accountability and good governance has provided the much-needed hope for the country to revive itself.

F. Prelims Facts

1. ISRO tests booster for Gaganyaan

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

Prelims: About Gaganyaan , HS200 boosters and GSLV Mk-III rocket

Context

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully tested the HS200 solid rocket booster for the Gaganyaan mission.

Gaganyaan mission

- Gaganyaan is the first human space flight programme of India's space agency ISRO.
- The mission aims to send a three-member crew to space by 2023.
- Before the manned mission, ISRO plans to send two unmanned missions to space as part of the mission.
 - These uncrewed missions are aimed at technology demonstration, safety and reliability verification and will be heavily instrumented to study the performance of systems before the crewed flight.
- The objective of the Gaganyaan mission is to demonstrate the indigenous capability to undertake human space flight missions to Low Earth Orbit (LEO).
- The total cost of the mission is said to be close to ₹ 10,000 crores.
- The launch vehicle used for this mission will be the [Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle GSLV Mk III](#)

Know more about the [Gaganyaan Mission](#).

HS200 boosters

- The HS200 booster is the 'human-rated' version of the S200 rocket boosters used on the GSLV Mk-III.
- The HS200 booster has been designed and developed at the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre in Thiruvananthapuram.
- The HS200 is the world's second-largest operational booster using solid propellants.
- The GSLV Mk-III launch vehicle will have two HS200 boosters that provide the thrust for the lift-off.
- The control system employed in the HS200 booster is one of the most powerful electro-mechanical actuators equipped with several redundancy and safety features.
- The successful testing of the booster is a significant milestone in the process of the Gaganyaan mission.

2. Indian rhinoceros

Syllabus: GS - 3, Environment and Ecology; Biodiversity

Prelims: Facts about Indian Rhino

Context

A rhino found in the Orang National Park with its horn sawed-off.

Indian Rhinoceros

- The [Indian Rhinoceros](#), also called the Indian rhino, or one-horned rhinoceros is a species native to the Indian subcontinent.
- The Indian Rhino is the largest of the rhino species.
- IUCN Status: **Vulnerable**
 - Javan and Sumatran Rhinos are categorised as **Critically Endangered**.
- Indian Rhino is listed under **Schedule I** of the [Wildlife Protection Act, 1972](#) and also under **Appendix I** of CITES.
- **Habitat:** Once widespread across the entire northern part of the Indian subcontinent, the Rhino populations have declined due to hunting. Rhinos can now be found in parts of Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Assam.

G. Tidbits

1. CCMB develops Indian mRNA vaccine platform

- The Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) has established the “proof of principle” of the first indigenous mRNA vaccine technology from India.
- Vaccines are said to work by preparing the immune system to identify disease-causing microorganisms and eliminate them, whereas, the mRNA technology trains the host cell’s immune system to elude real infections by introducing the mRNA of the disease-causing microorganism into the host.
- The indigenously developed mRNA vaccine platform can be used to fight against infectious diseases such as TB, dengue, malaria, chikungunya, and rare genetic diseases along with SARS-CoV-2.

2. China, Russia, Pak. to attend SCO anti-terror meet in Delhi

- Counterterrorism teams from Russia, China, Pakistan and Central Asian countries will meet in Delhi ahead of the [Shanghai Cooperation Organisation’s](#) Regional Anti-Terror Structure (SCO-RATS) meeting hosted by India.

- This is the first such official meeting to be held in India since the stand-off along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).
- The team from Pakistan will be attending the meeting in India for the first time since both countries became members of SCO in 2017, while an Indian team travelled to Pakistan to attend the SCO-RATS exercises 2021 in Pabbi.
- In October, joint anti-terrorist exercises called “Manesar-Antiterror-2022” will be held in Manesar on the outskirts of Delhi.
- India is expected to host the SCO summit in 2023, where the leaders of the eight-member grouping of China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan will be travelling to New Delhi.

3. Modi, Deuba to continue talks on hydropower, connectivity

- The Prime Minister of India and his Nepal counterpart will discuss connectivity and electricity projects during their bilateral talks when the Indian PM travels to Lumbini to attend Buddha Purnima celebrations.
- The bilateral talks will be focused on expanding the shared understanding and cooperation of both the countries in multiple sectors such as hydropower, development, partnership and connectivity.
- This is the PM’s first visit to Nepal since the start of the Kalapani-Susta dispute between the two countries in 2020 as Nepal amended its Constitution to incorporate a new map with parts of India in its territory.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements: (Level – Difficult)

2. The superintendence, direction and the conduct of all elections to the Legislative Council shall be vested in the State Election Commission.
3. Under the Constitution, a person shall be disqualified for being chosen as and for being a member of the Legislative Council of a state if he/she was convicted of promoting enmity between different groups or for the offence of bribery

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is not correct,** The superintendence, direction and the conduct of all elections to Parliament and to the Legislature of every State and of elections to the offices of President and Vice-President shall be vested in the Election Commission.
 - The State Election Commission is responsible for the conduct of elections to the 3rd tier of governance i.e. the Panchayati Raj Institutions and the Urban Local Bodies.
- **Statement 2 is not correct,** According to the Representation of the People Act, 1951, a person shall be disqualified for being chosen as and for being a member of the legislative council of a state if he/she was convicted of promoting enmity between different groups or for the offence of bribery.

Q2. Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) which intends to combat terrorism, separatism and extremism at the regional and global levels is an organ of (Level – Easy)

- a. European Union
- b. Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)
- c. North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)
- d. Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)

Answer: d

Explanation:

- The Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) is a permanent organ of the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)**.
- Its headquarters is located in Tashkent, Uzbekistan
- The objective of RATS is to help member states fight extremism, terrorism and separatism.

Q3. Consider the following statements: (Level – Medium)

1. This national park is sometimes referred to as Mini Kaziranga.
2. It is located on the north bank of the Brahmaputra River in the Darrang and Sonitpur districts of Assam

The above statements best describe:

- a. Dibru - Saikhowa National Park
- b. Manas National Park
- c. Nameri National Park

d. Orang National Park

Answer: d

Explanation:

- Orang National Park is a national park in India located on the northern bank of the Brahmaputra River in the Darrang and Sonitpur districts of Assam.
- Orang National Park is sometimes referred to as Mini Kaziranga.

Q4. Madtsoiidae recently seen in the news is a/an (Level – Difficult)

- a. Fossil of dinosaur
- b. Extinct group of medium-sized to gigantic snakes
- c. New species of banana from a remote tropical rain forest on the Little Andaman islands
- d. Bird that is considered extinct in the wild endemic to the Western Ghats

Answer: b

Explanation:

- Madtsoiidae is an extinct group of **medium-sized to gigantic snakes**.
- These snakes are said to have appeared during the Late Cretaceous and are mostly distributed in the Gondwanan landmasses.

Q5. Bisphenol A (BPA), a cause of concern, is a structural/key component in the manufacture of which of the following kinds of plastics? (Level – Difficult) [UPSC 2021]

- a. Low-density polyethylene
- b. Polycarbonate
- c. Polyethylene terephthalate
- d. Polyvinyl chloride

Answer: b

Explanation:

Bisphenol A (BPA) is an industrial chemical mainly used to make polycarbonate which is a hard and clear plastic used in many consumer products.

1. Identify the problems faced by the Jute industry in India in the recent past. Suggest ways to overcome these issues. (250 words; 15 marks) (GS III - Agriculture)
2. The covid pandemic brought to light the ineffectiveness of the World Health Organization. In the light of this statement, suggest the reforms needed to make the WHO's working more effective. (250 words; 15 marks) (GS II - International Organizations)

