

26 May 2022: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis



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A. GS 1 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

B. GS 2 Related

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Understanding the nature of U.S.-Taiwan relations

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

Mains: The issue in Taiwan and its significance in the global geopolitical

Context

The President of the United States affirmed that the U.S. will help Taiwan militarily in case of invasion by China.

The Issue in Taiwan

Image Source: Voanews

- Taiwan is an island situated off the coast of the Chinese mainland across the Taiwan Strait.
- Post the defeat of the Kuomintang (Nationalist) government of China to their communist counterparts in the Chinese civil war (1945-1949), the Kuomintang fled to Taiwan.
- The Kuomintang shifted their Republic of China (ROC) government to Taiwan, as the Communist Party of China (CPC) formed the People's Republic of China (PRC) on the Chinese mainland.
- The PRC in China considers Taiwan a “renegade province” and is looking for ways to reunite the region with China. However, the ROC in Taiwan has preserved its membership in the [United Nations](#) and its permanent seat in the UN Security Council (UNSC).
- The relations across the Taiwan Strait got damaged due to the Cold War, as the PRC of China allied with the Soviet Union (USSR) and the ROC of Taiwan sided with the U.S, this caused the two Taiwan Strait crises of the 1950s.
- The changing geopolitics of the Cold War during the 1970s made the PRC and the U.S. come together to counter the increasing influence of the USSR, during which the PRC displaced the ROC as the official representative of the Chinese nation at the UN.
- The PRC pursued diplomatic relations with only those countries which accepted its “One China Principle” and recognised the PRC and not the ROC as China.
- Meanwhile, Taiwan became a multi-party democracy from a single-party state and China revamped its economic system, and towards the end of the Cold War, the two countries became economically entangled. However, they continue to compete for international recognition and prepare themselves for the worst.

Read more about [China-Taiwan Conflict](#)

Significance of the Taiwan issue

- As the democracy in Taiwan developed, public opinion shifted towards a new Taiwanese identity and a pro-independence stance on sovereignty.
- In recent years there has been a tense situation prevailing across the Taiwan Strait, as the powerful Democratic People's Party (DPP) government of Taiwan seeks to diversify economic relations away from China.
- This has provoked China as it has always seen Taiwan as a territory with high geopolitical significance because of its location as the First Island Chain between Japan and especially the South China Sea.
- There is a strong U.S. military presence in the region, and the present Chinese government has looked at aggressive means for reunifying Taiwan.
- China continues to undertake military drills and patrols across the Strait and the recent years have also witnessed record-breaking aerial transgressions of Taiwan's Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) by China.

Evolution of the US's stance on Taiwan

- **Shanghai Communiqué (1972)** - the U.S. accepted the “One China principle”, and the US acknowledged that Taiwan is a part of China.
- **Normalisation Communiqué (1979)** - According to this document, while the U.S. recognises PRC it only “acknowledges the Chinese position that there is one China and Taiwan is part of China”.
 - The US also started its unofficial relations with Taiwan through this document.
- **1982 Communiqué** - This document relieved China which had concerns regarding the continuous arms supply to Taiwan by the U.S. provisioned in the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) of 1979 which enabled the US to supply “defensive” arms.

The US’s stance on Taiwan in recent years

- The US’ position towards Taiwan in the wake of the cross-Strait crisis has been regarded as “strategic ambiguity”, which is visible in the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) of 1979.
- The TRA resulted in the termination of the U.S.-Taiwan mutual defence treaty signed in 1954.
 - According to TRA, the U.S. held that the establishment of bilateral relations with the PRC depends upon “the expectation that the future of Taiwan will be determined by peaceful means”.
 - It also says that the policy of the U.S. is “to maintain the capacity of the United States to resist any resort to force or other forms of coercion that would jeopardise the security, or the social or economic system, of the people in Taiwan”.
- There is no clarity whether the U.S. will be militarily involved in a situation where China attempts to invade Taiwan and the U.S. has used this strategic ambiguity with its own interpretation of the “one China principle” to maintain its strategic interests.
- The reasons which made the US President state that the U.S. will come to the rescue of Taiwan are also not clear.
- However, the US has shown its assertiveness recently and this suggests that,
 - The US had reassured its allies in the Indo-Pacific of a bolder stance by the US.
 - The US has given a strong message to China in the wake of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, that such actions will be dealt with stronger reactions.

Know about- [India-Taiwan Relations](#)

Nut Graf

The U.S. has historically developed ways that balance its relations with the PRC of China and its relations with Taiwan. However, this fragile balance has been tested in the recent past due to the growing Chinese power and the consequent geopolitical developments in the region.

Category: HEALTH

1. The monkeypox virus: origins and outbreaks

Syllabus: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health

Prelims: Monkeypox disease

Mains: Details about the nature of the Monkeypox virus and the available remedies

Context

The recent outbreak of the Monkeypox virus across the world.

Details

- The outbreak has seen cases across 19 countries including U.K., Spain and Portugal.
- The current outbreak has gained the limelight as a few countries outside Africa (sporadic outbreaks have occurred in Africa) are being affected despite not travelling to regions where the disease is considered prevalent.

Monkeypox disease

- Monkeypox disease is caused due to the Monkeypox virus.
- The virus belongs to the poxvirus family and was first identified in monkeys in 1958.
- The first human case was reported in 1970 from the Democratic Republic of Congo and many sporadic outbreaks of animal to human as well as human to human transmission have been reported in Central and West Africa with significant mortality.
- Since the eradication of smallpox, monkeypox is said to be one of the dominant poxviruses in humans, with cases increasing over the years.
- As the transmission happens only due to close contact, the outbreaks are self-limiting.
- The incubation period is found to be between five to 21 days in the majority of affected people and is often mild or self-limiting.
- The outbreaks in Central Africa are considered to be due to their close contact with animals in the region.
- While monkeys are said to be the only hosts, the reservoir is not known and it is believed that rodents and non-human primates could be potential reservoirs.

Does the virus mutate?

- Monkeypox virus is a DNA virus with a large genome of around 2,00,000 nucleotide bases and since it is a DNA virus, the rate of mutations in the monkeypox virus is significantly lower compared to RNA viruses such as SARS-CoV-2.

- The low rate of mutation does not require large-scale genomic surveillance to provide details about the transmission of monkeypox.

What does the genome sequence reveal?

- The genome sequences conducted in Africa and other parts of the world reveal that there are two distinct subfamilies of the virus;
 - The Congo Basin/Central African subfamilies
 - The West African subfamilies
- The Central African/Congo basin subfamilies are believed to have a higher transmission and virulence rate as compared to the West African clade.
- According to recent genome studies, the sequences found across the world are identical and almost all genomes are reported to be of the West African subfamily which has lesser fatality compared to the Central African one.
- The virus genomes also show similarities with those from the outbreak in Nigeria during the 2017-2019 period suggesting that the present outbreak is not driven by a particular new variant, but possibly related to unique transmission networks.

Presence of vaccine

- As there is enough data about the virus and its transmission patterns there is enough information about effective means to prevent the spread, including a vaccine.
- Smallpox/vaccinia vaccine provides protection.
 - The vaccine was discontinued in 1980 following the eradication of smallpox, but the emergency stockpiles of the vaccines are maintained by many countries.
 - Since the younger generation of individuals is unlikely to have received the vaccine, the disease is seen more in younger individuals.
- Also, there is enough knowledge on the disease from African countries which have effectively managed the outbreaks in the past.
- With a vaccine available, efforts are to be focused on bridging the divide in health, knowledge, experience and infrastructure thereby helping in preventing and managing future outbreaks contributing to an equitable and global public health.

Nut Graf

With many countries still reeling from the COVID-19 pandemic shock, an outbreak of another disease would be devastating. However, due to the nature of the Monkeypox virus and with effective ways of containing the outbreak such as contact tracing and a vaccine already in place, countries are expected to prevent and manage the current Monkeypox outbreak.

C. GS 3 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: SOCIAL ISSUES

1. Women associated Issues

Syllabus: Women associated Issues

Prelims: MTP Act - provisions

Mains: Concerns related with abortion in India

Context:

- The judicial proceedings in the U.S. on the abortion rights issue.

For related information on this issue refer to the following article:

[CNA dated May 19, 2022: The 'Roe' draft ruling could affect other civil rights](#)

Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act:

- The [Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act](#) was first enacted in 1971 and then amended in 2021.
- It makes 'medical termination of pregnancy' legal in India under specific conditions.

Concerns:

- Despite the MTP Act, women continue to face major **obstacles in accessing safe abortion care**.
 - The **lack of awareness** about abortions and their legality often pushes women into unsafe abortion services.
 - More than a quarter of abortions (27%) are performed by the woman herself at home or are carried out by untrained people under unhygienic conditions using

damaging methods such as insertion of objects, ingestion of various substances, abdominal pressure, etc. As per a nationally representative study in 2014, abortions account for 10% of maternal deaths in India.

- Unmarried and transgender people continue to **face stigma** and can be turned away from health facilities, forcing them to resort to unsafe abortions. Adolescents, given the mandatory reporting requirements under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO), 2011 law often resort to unsafe abortion practices.
- **The lack of quality abortion services in public health centres** remains a major hindrance in the access to abortion services for poor and marginalized communities. More than half (53%) of abortions in India are performed in the private sector, whereas only 20% are performed in the public sector mainly because public facilities often lack abortion services.
- The MTP Act by resting the decision of abortion solely on the doctor's opinion tends to **overlook the choice and bodily autonomy of women**. The insistence on consent for abortion by husbands or parents also goes against the principle of reproductive justice.
- There have been numerous reports of women being mistreated in health facilities and not provided medications for pain relief during abortions. The mortality rate due to abortion continues to remain significant.
- Sex determination and **female foeticide** continue unabated despite laws prohibiting the same.
 - As per a recent study, sex-selective abortions in India could be leading to 6.8 million fewer girls being born between 2017 to 2030.

Nut Graf

Mere laws like the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act won't suffice. There is a need to improve health systems to ensure good quality abortion care and recognize ensuring access to safe abortion as a reproductive rights issue rather than being a mere family planning and maternal health issue.

Category: ECONOMY

1. Be wary of growing exports

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

Prelims: Trends in India's exports

Mains: Concerns with export trends from India

Context:

- Exports from India have risen to record levels in recent years. Also, the evolving geopolitical environment has created export opportunities for countries such as India.
- In this context, the article argues for a more calibrated approach to exports from India.

Concerns with exports from India:

- The growing consumption in rich countries and the consequent rise in exports have come at a cost for developing countries such as India.

Emissions-embodied exports from India:

- India is one of the leading exporters of carbon emissions-embodied products, and concerningly as against the trend observed in other countries, there has been a **steady increase in the total carbon emissions embodied in exports**. In 1995, net exports were 75.8 million tonnes; it increased to 372 million tonnes in 2018.
 - Due to the stringent environmental measures adopted by developed countries, pollution-intensive industries show a tendency to relocate from developed countries to developing countries with low environmental standards. This is often termed as 'pollution haven hypothesis'. Developing countries eventually become pollution havens.
- India is the 4th largest exporter of carbon emissions-embodied products.

Environmental Kuznets curve:

- There is an inverted U-shape relationship between the income of a country and its environmental degradation. As income increases, environmental quality begins to deteriorate, but improves after some time.

Water intensive agricultural products export:

- Agricultural and food **products like rice and sugar** dominate India's agricultural exports. This amounts to the virtual export of water from India which will have an adverse impact on the long-term sustainability and food security of the country given the **water stress** already being observed in India.

Environmental issues being raked up by developed countries:

- Developing countries have begun **imposing environmental taxes** and are also considering imposing such taxes on imports as well. This will impact exports from developing countries like India.

- Notably, most developed countries are net importers of polluted goods produced elsewhere, especially in developing countries like India.

Recommendations:

- Developed countries that are consuming polluted goods produced elsewhere must take up proportionate responsibility in **global climate action**.
- Keeping long term sustainability in mind, **stricter environmental measures and implementation** should be ensured despite any adverse impact it might have on India's export potential and trade.
- The increased GDP as a result of expansion in export revenue should be utilised for **improving the environmental quality**.

Nut Graf

There is a need to balance the objectives of environmental sustainability and economic growth. This alone can ensure long term sustainable development of India.

F. Prelims Facts

Nothing here for today!!!

G. Tidbits

1. Frame policies to protect LGBTIQ+ workers, says ILO

- An [International Labour Organisation](#) (ILO) document on “**Inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) persons in the world of work**” urged its member countries and employer organisations to start social protection initiatives to address the barriers that LGBTIQ+ individuals face in society.
- The ILO held that LGBTIQ+ individuals face harassment, violence and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, gender expression which has an economic cost not just to the individuals and their families but also to enterprises and national economies at large.
- The ILO document recommended the review of national policies and labour laws that helps in identifying measures that improve the legal and policy environment and addresses discrimination and exclusions.

2. Supreme Court recognises sex work as a ‘profession’

- The Supreme Court directed the police not to interfere nor undertake criminal proceedings against adult and consenting sex workers, this has gained significance as the order recognises sex work as a “profession” and ensures that the practitioners are entitled to dignity (right to a dignified life under [Article 21](#)) and equal protection under the law.
- The SC held that sex workers must not be “arrested or penalised or harassed or victimised” whenever there is a raid on any brothel, “since voluntary sex work is not illegal and only running the brothel is unlawful”.
- The court also said that the media should be careful and not publish or telecast any photos that would result in disclosure of their identities.
- Further, the court said that if a minor is found living in a brothel or with sex workers, it should not be presumed that the child was trafficked.

3. India's palm oil imports said to hit 11-year low

- Curbs on palm oil exports by Indonesia and India's decision to permit duty-free imports of soy oil will result in a 19% fall in the imports of palm oil to India.
- India permitted duty-free imports of 2 million tonnes of soy oil and sunflower oil each to control the local edible-oil prices.
- Soy oil imports are expected to increase by 57% to a record 4.5 million tonnes which might put pressure on Malaysian palm oil prices and boost the soy oil imports thereby supporting U.S. soy oil futures prices.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

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

1. Out of the seven union territories, only two have representation in the Rajya Sabha.
2. An independent member of a House (elected without being set up as a candidate by any political party) becomes disqualified for being a member of the House if he joins any political party after the expiry of six months from the date on which he takes his seat in the House. This means that he may join any political party within six months of taking his seat in the House without inviting this disqualification.
3. American Senate has no nominated members.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

d. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: c

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is not correct**, Currently, there are **eight** UTs in India and **three** of them namely Delhi, Puducherry and Jammu & Kashmir have representation in the Rajya Sabha.
- **Statement 2 is not correct**, According to the **10th Schedule (Anti Defection Law)**, If any member who is independently elected joins any party, the member can be disqualified on the grounds of defection.
 - The six months timeline is available only for **nominated members**.
- **Statement 3 is correct**, The US Constitution prescribes that the Senate be composed of two senators from each State (therefore, the Senate currently has 100 Members). And the American Senate has no nominated members.

Q2. With respect to Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2021, which of the following statements is/are correct? (Level – Difficult)

1. It prohibits specific single-use plastic items which have “low utility and high littering potential” by 2030.
2. The provisions will not apply to commodities made of compostable plastic.

Options:

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

Answer: b

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is not correct**, It prohibits identified single-use plastic items which have low utility and high littering potential by **2022**.
- **Statement 2 is correct**, The ban will not apply to commodities made of compostable plastic.

Q3. Which of the following statements is/are correct with respect to Vermin? (Level – Medium)

1. The Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 does not define the term ‘vermin’.

2. An animal can be declared as vermin only for a period as specified in the Central Government Notification.
3. Once declared a vermin the species is deemed to be included in Schedule V, opening them up to be hunted.

Options:

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, The Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 does not define the term 'vermin'. However, Schedule V of the Act contains a list of animals designated 'vermin', which includes rats, crows and foxes.
- **Statement 2 is correct**, The Wildlife (Protection) Act empowers the Central government to issue notifications declaring any wild animal, other than those specified in Schedule I and part II of Schedule II, as vermin for any specified area and a specified period.
- **Statement 3 is correct**, Once declared a vermin the species is deemed to be included in Schedule V, opening them up to be hunted.

Q4. Which of the following reports is/are published by International Labour Organization (ILO)? (Level – Difficult)

1. Global Wage Report
2. World Employment and Social Outlook Report
3. World of Work Report

Options:

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- The **International Labour Organization** publishes flagship reports such as Employment and Social Outlook, Global Wage Report, World Social Protection Report, and World of Work Report.

Q5. The money multiplier in an economy increases with which one of the following? (Level – Easy)
[UPSC 2021]

- a. Increase in the Cash Reserve Ratio in the banks
- b. Increase in the Statutory Liquidity Ratio in the banks
- c. Increase in the banking habit of the people
- d. Increase in the population of the country

Answer: c

Explanation:

- The multiplier effect is the proportional amount of increase or decrease in final income that results from an injection or withdrawal of spending.
 - Hence an increase in the banking habit of the people will increase the money multiplier in an economy.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. A robust GDP is built on the foundations of a healthy youth. Comment. (250 words; 15 marks) (GS II - Governance)
2. What are 'pollution havens'? Is it time for the developed nations to be called out for exporting their waste? Discuss. (250 words; 15 marks) (GS III - Environment)