

## 30 Jun 2022: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

**Courage is not having the strength to go on; it is going on when you don't have the strength**

- Theodore Roosevelt



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*Nothing here for today!!!*

## B. GS 2 Related

### Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

#### 1. How Turkey made peace with Sweden and Finland joining NATO

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

*Prelims: NATO*

*Mains: Key provisions of the MoU signed between Turkey, Finland and Sweden and its implications.*

#### Context

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Turkey, Finland and Sweden through which Turkey has agreed to support Finland and Sweden joining [NATO](#).

#### Background

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

[UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis dated 14th May 2022](#)

#### Details about the MoU signed

- The MoU was signed in a trilateral meeting held in Madrid, Spain.
- The MoU was signed after the leaders of France and Sweden agreed to address the national security concerns of Turkey.
- Following this assurance, the President of Turkey agreed to support Finland and Sweden in their bid to join NATO.

#### Key provisions of the MoU

- A joint commitment between the three countries to counter-terrorism.
- Efforts would be undertaken to address the pending extradition of terror suspects through a bilateral legal framework.
- Investigating the financing and recruitment activities of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and all other terrorist groups.
- Finland and Sweden also assured that their respective national regulatory frameworks for arms exports would enable new commitments to the Allies.
- Finland and Sweden further vowed to act against disinformation and fully commit to the European Union's **Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)** and Turkey's participation in the **Permanent Structured Co-operation (PESCO)** Project on Military Mobility.

## Reasons for Turkey's withdrawal of opposition

- Finland and Sweden have assured to address counter-terrorism provisions in their countries.
  - Finland has committed to reforming its criminal code, and Sweden has promised to implement its new Terrorist Offenses Act
- Turkey was concerned about Finland and Sweden sheltering Kurdish activists and other militant organisations.
  - The EU and Washington both recognise the PKK as a terrorist organisation because of the brutal tactics employed during their insurgency against the Turkish state.
  - However, Finland and Sweden have now assured that they would go ahead with the pending extraditions of listed 'terror' suspects made by Turkey.
  - Turkey has announced that it would seek the extradition of 12 suspects from Finland and 21 from Sweden.
- Turkey also wanted the two countries to lift the embargoes on the weapons deliveries, which they had imposed in response to Turkey's 2019 military incursion into Syria.
  - There has been no clear definition of the category of weapons, but Finland and Sweden have assured to remove the arms embargo against Turkey.

## Impact on Turkey

- Turkey has claimed a full victory after securing agreements from Finland and Sweden.
- Turkey has also secured the promise of a long-sought meeting with the U.S.
- Also, the U.S. has shown interest to improve its engagements with Turkey after a strain in their relations caused due to Turkey's crackdown on human rights.

## Implications on Russia

- Russia shares a 1,340 km border with Finland and shares the Baltic Sea with Sweden despite not having a land border. This means that both countries are under direct threat from Russia.
- Finland, Sweden and Russia have maintained cordial economic cooperation since the late 1940s, but the relations have been strained due to the [Cold War](#) and Finland's neutrality principle.
  - Russia had warned Finland and Sweden against their decision to join NATO and had held that these countries need not worry about any security threat from Russia as they shared respectful and mutually friendly relations.
- If Sweden and Finland join NATO, the expansion of NATO would now surround Russia with NATO countries in the Baltic Sea and the Arctic.
  - This was the very reason (to maintain its influence in its immediate neighbourhood) why Russia interfered in Ukraine.
- The increased NATO presence would also impact Russia's interests in the Arctic region as both Sweden and Finland are part of the Arctic States.
  - Russia at present holds the [Arctic Council](#) chair (until 2023).

## Implications on NATO

- With Finland and Sweden joining NATO, the organisation will be further strengthened, guarantee security against Russia and also provide NATO with the power to engage.
- This eastward expansion of NATO will provide a strategic edge to NATO as it will be able to exercise military operations both on land and in the Baltic Sea, where Russia traditionally enjoyed a strategic position.

- It will also help NATO position its weapon systems, combat formation and plan its attack techniques to increase deterrence and defence.
- In 1997, NATO had proposed a rapprochement to build bridges with Russia but these rapprochement efforts came to an end as Russia annexed the Crimean Peninsula and invaded Ukraine.
  - However, with NATO encircling Russia from the West, Russia might look to return to the table and negotiate a deal.

### Implications on the geopolitics of the region

- This expansion and strengthening of NATO will ensure a secured Euro-Atlantic.
- NATO extended presence will securitise and protect the Baltic states, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, which were earlier at risk due to their close proximity to Russia and were wary of Russian attacks.
  - This expansion will enable NATO to establish advanced weapons like fifth-generation aircraft, technological weapon systems and strong political institutions across the allied countries.
- Also, the strengthening of NATO will help Ukraine win the ongoing war.

### Nut Graf

Finland and Sweden which have followed the principle of non-alignment have deviated from their traditional positions in the wake of the security threat from Russia and this fear of their national security has forced both the countries to join NATO.

## C. GS 3 Related

### Category: INFRASTRUCTURE

#### 1. Speeding major cause of death: Lancet study

*Syllabus: Infrastructure: Roads*

*Mains: The need for the government interventions regarding road safety*

#### Context

New Lancet study on fatal road injuries.

#### Details

- This Lancet study points out that interventions focusing on four key risk factors namely speeding, drunk driving, non-use of crash helmets and seat belts could help avoid about 25% to 40% of the 13.5 lakh fatal road injuries worldwide every year.
- This is the first study that provides country-specific estimates of the impact of addressing four key road safety risk factors through interventions for 185 countries.
- It says that in India, interventions to check speeding could help save 20,554 lives. promotion of crash helmets could save about 5,683 lives and encouraging the use of seat belts can save 3,204 lives.



**Safety check** | The table lists the country-wise number of lives that can be saved through interventions in key road safety risk factors. For instance, 20,554 lives can be saved in India every year if steps are taken to check vehicle speed



	Drunk-driving	Helmet use	Speeding	Seat belt use
<b>India</b>	NA	5,683	20,554	3,204
<b>U.S.</b>	5,188	14,121	22,353	2,409
<b>China</b>	248	13,703	88,374	13,228
<b>Mexico</b>	1,072	911	7,532	2,395
<b>S.A.</b>	2,684	176	6,233	3,718
<b>Thailand</b>	652	3,057	6,557	1,872
<b>Turkey</b>	72	202	3,064	1,691

Image source: The Hindu

#### Data on accident-related deaths in India

- About 14 lakh people die each year and up to 5 crore are injured due to road traffic injuries globally.
  - India accounts for close to 10% of all crash-related deaths while accounting for only 1% of the world's vehicles.
- According to a report by Road Transport and Highway Ministry in 2020, a total of 1,31,714 deaths were recorded due to road accidents.
  - Over speeding constituted about 69.3% of deaths
  - Non-wearing of helmets accounted for 30.1% of deaths
  - Non-use of seat belts resulted in 11.5% of deaths
- According to the data from Global Burden Diseases, 2017, over 2 lakh deaths were estimated in India due to road injuries in 2017.

#### The Decade of Action for Global Road Safety

- In 2010, the UN General Assembly proclaimed the period 2011–2020 as the Decade of Action for Road Safety.

- **Aim:** to stabilize and then reduce the forecast level of road traffic fatalities around the world by increasing activities conducted at the national, regional and global levels.
- The **second decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030** sets an ambitious target of preventing at least 50% of road traffic deaths and injuries by 2030.
- The Lancet report says that the current challenges in the field of road safety and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic are the key challenges to achieving the ambitious goal of the second Decade of Action for Global Road Safety.

Also read: [Motor Vehicles \(Amendment\) Act, 2019](#)

**Nut Graf**

*Road traffic injuries are said to be the eighth leading cause of death worldwide for all ages and the first cause in the age group of 5-29 years. This requires the policymakers and the global road safety community to immediately intervene and undertake steps to address key road safety risk factors.*

## D. GS 4 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## E. Editorials

**Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

### 1. The Indian challenge in Afghanistan

**Syllabus: India and its Neighbourhood- Relations.**

**Mains: India- Afghanistan relations- Significance and challenges**

**Context:**

- A massive **earthquake measuring 5.9 on the Richter Scale, centred around Khost along the Afghanistan- Pakistan border** has resulted in massive loss of life and property in Afghanistan. Given that Afghanistan had already been battered by war for decades, the earthquake has come as a huge blow to the people of Afghanistan.
- **India stepped is a 'first responder'** within just 24 hours after the earthquake hit Afghanistan with the Indian Air Force moving in tonnes of relief into Afghanistan in the form of wheat and essential medicines.
- Afghan officials have welcomed the Indian aid and have also called for the restarting of small projects across the country.
  - India has around 400 projects in all the 34 provinces of Afghanistan.

### **Challenges in providing relief to Afghanistan:**

- There have been reports of **Indian aid being hoarded and diverted back to Pakistan**.
- The **Afghan banking and financial systems lack adequate infrastructure** and the continued sanctions against the Taliban regime have further limited the ability of the Afghan banking and financial system to collect and distribute the incoming international aid in the form of cash. Sometimes the aid agencies have had to use local hawala networks for transfers.
- While one of the main benefits of money and cash transfers is that such money will be spent within Afghanistan, which could provide an impetus to the Afghan economy, **the relatively underdeveloped economy of Afghanistan** will not be able to supply all the requirements for reconstruction. Pakistani industries and the economy are likely to benefit from such a situation. Any Indian attempt at reconstruction has to take this reality on board.
- The **security situation in Afghanistan** continues to remain a major concern for India, which was apparent from the recent attack on a gurdwara in Kabul by the Islamic State Khorasan (IS-K). Notably, in recent times, IS-K has become strongly anti-India, along with al-Qaeda.

### **Recommendations for India:**

- Amid reports of diversion of relief material, India should try and ensure **effective and equitable distribution of relief material to all without discrimination**. In this regard, India's move to send a technical team to monitor and coordinate the efforts for the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance is welcome.
- India should seek a different route to channel aid into Afghanistan. In this regard, the **Iranian route** instead of the present one through Pakistan should be explored to reach Afghanistan.
- While providing immediate relief to the affected population should remain an immediate priority for India, India should also in the long run seek to encourage Afghan industries to grow to be able to meet the developmental needs of the country.

### **Nut Graf**

*India's timely response in the aftermath of the Afghanistan earthquake, apart from providing relief to the affected Afghanistan population, also augurs well for India's image in Afghanistan and could help it build some degree of engagement with the current regime in Kabul.*

### **Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY**

#### **1. A direct approach to conservation**

*Syllabus: Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation*

*Mains: Payments for ecosystem services- Significance and impediments in its successful implementation*

#### **Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES):**

- Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) occur when the beneficiaries or users of an ecosystem service make payments to the providers of that service. It works through the establishment of performance contracts.
- People who can help provide the desired ecosystem service are rewarded based on their actions, or the quantity and quality of the services themselves.
- Payments for ecosystem services (PES) policies compensate individuals or communities for undertaking actions that increase the provision of ecosystem services such as **water purification, flood mitigation, or carbon sequestration**.

### **Significance:**

#### **Environmental conservation:**

- The PES system is one way to **conserve and increase ecosystem services** offered by the environment. This will contribute to environmental conservation efforts.

#### **Dual benefit:**

- PES could go a long way in incentivising local land stewards to manage threatened ecosystems. Hence it has the potential to achieve the **dual goals of conservation and poverty alleviation in tandem**.

#### **Ensure adequate financing:**

- The PES system helps ensure finance flows towards the conservation of natural resources. They incentivize biodiversity protection and their more sustainable use.

#### **Outcome-based:**

- Also, this system has the ability to tether investments more directly to outcomes and hence could be considered more effective.

### **Concerns:**

- While tools like levies, fees, and fines for mobilizing finance towards conservation activities have gained governmental support and political will, there has been no such thing in the case of the PES system.
- **The monetisation of environmental benefits and lack of additionality** (how much environmental service would have been provided without conditional payments) remain two of the biggest issues around the PES system.
- The **lack of a solid institutional mechanism** to implement and monitor the PES system along with the **lack of sustainable funds** in this segment remain the main impediments to the successful implementation of PES in India.
  - Unlike in India, Latin America and African countries have witnessed successful implementation of the PES system.

### **Recommendations:**

- Initiatives like **the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB)** should be mainstreamed to help prioritize ecosystem restoration financing towards the more direct PES system.
- There is a need to have more evaluative studies to help understand the efficacy of the PES system.



- A global initiative such as the **United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative** to mobilise private sector finance to benefit people and the environment would help ensure timely and adequate funds towards the PES system.

## Nut Graf

*The Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) provides a valuable avenue to mobilize adequate and timely finances towards environmental conservation. Additionally, it will help bring in more people's participation in conservational efforts.*

## F. Prelims Facts

### 1. NewSpace India

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

**Prelims:** NewSpace India Ltd.

#### Context

The launch of ISRO's second dedicated commercial mission of NewSpace India Ltd.

#### Details

- The PSLV-C53 will carry on board three satellites from Singapore.
- The satellites include:
  - **DS-EO** - a Singaporean Earth Observation Satellite
  - **NeuSAR** - Singapore's first small commercial satellite carrying a SAR payload
  - **SCOOB-I satellite** - from the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

#### NewSpace India Ltd. (NSIL)

- NewSpace India is a demand-driven commercial arm of the Indian Space Research Organisation ([ISRO](#)) established in 2019.
- NSIL functions under the administrative control of the Department of Space (DoS) and the Companies Act 2013.
- The key objective of NSIL is to enable Indian industries to scale up a high-technology manufacturing base for space programmes through technology transfer mechanisms and catering to the emerging global commercial small satellite launch service market.
- NSIL is the 2nd commercial initiative of ISRO after Antrix.
- **Key functions of NSIL:**
  - NSIL will be the nodal agency for carrying out Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) productionisation and will be responsible for producing, assembling and integrating the launch vehicle.
  - Manufacturing of Small Satellite Launch Vehicles (SSLV) through Indian Industry partners.
  - It is responsible for providing launch services to global satellite customers.

- Building satellites meant for Earth Observation/communication and providing in-orbit delivery services for customers.
- Providing SatCom services including leasing of space segment capacity.
- Transfer of Technology and Spin-off Technologies to Indian Industries.

## G. Tidbits

### 1. Rupee weakens past 79 on dollar buying by FPIs, oil firms

- The Indian Rupee reached a new low of 79 against the US dollar.
- The rupee has weakened by about 6.3% against the dollar since the start of 2022.
- This fall in the value of the Rupee is attributed to the foreign portfolio investors withdrawing capital from the Indian equity market, rising crude prices, the deteriorating trade balance and the strengthening of the dollar.

## H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Which of the following statements are correct with respect to election to the Office of the Vice President of India? (Level – Medium)

1. The Vice-President is elected by an electoral college consisting of members (elected as well as nominated) of both Houses of Parliament.
2. The vote of a member from the Rajya Sabha has a higher value as compared to that of a member from the Lok Sabha.
3. Under the system of proportional representation by means of a single transferable vote as envisaged for the election of the Vice President, an elector must compulsorily mark as many preferences as there are a number of candidates.
4. The election shall be by secret ballot and the political parties cannot issue any whip to their MPs in the matter of voting in the Vice-Presidential election.

**Options:**

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

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

- **Statement 1 is correct,** The Vice-President is indirectly elected by an electoral college consisting of members (elected as well as nominated) of both Houses of Parliament.
- **Statement 2 is not correct,** The value of the vote of each Member of Parliament would be the same.

- **Statement 3 is not correct**, Under the system of proportional representation by means of a single transferable vote as envisaged for the election of the Vice President, an elector must compulsorily mark his/her **first preferences** and marking the rest is up to his/her choice and is not compulsory.
- **Statement 4 is correct**, The election shall be by secret ballot and the political parties cannot issue any whip to their MPs in the matter of voting in the Vice-Presidential election.

**Q2. Consider the following statements with respect to Marine Exports from India.**  
(Level – Medium)

1. Marine exports from India have witnessed a decline in the last three years owing to the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Frozen shrimp remains the major export item from India, both in terms of quantity as well as value.
3. The USA is the topmost importer of Indian seafood both in terms of value as well as volume.

**Which of the following statements are correct?**

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

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

- **Statement 1 is not correct**, The Marine exports from India have witnessed growth and have recorded an all-time high in FY 2021-22.
- **Statement 2 is correct**, Frozen shrimp has remained the major export item in terms of quantity and value.
- **Statement 3 is correct**, the USA is the largest importer of Indian seafood both in terms of value as well as volume.

**Q3. Which of the following statements is/are correct with respect to mRNA vaccines?**  
(Level – Easy)

1. Unlike the traditional vaccines, mRNA vaccines do not contain a weakened/ inactivated virus but rather enables the body itself to produce the virus protein to trigger an immune response.
2. Currently, India does not have any domestically developed mRNA vaccine available in the country.

**Options:**

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

- **Statement 1 is correct**, The mRNA vaccines function differently from traditional vaccines.
  - Traditional vaccines stimulate an antibody response by injecting a human with antigens.
  - mRNA vaccines inject a fragment of the RNA sequence of a virus directly into the cells, which then stimulates an adaptive immune response.
- **Statement 2 is not correct**, **Gemcovac-19** is the first mRNA vaccine developed in India and the third mRNA vaccine to be approved for COVID-19 in the world.

**Q4. Which of the following statements best describes the Tunguska event? (Level – Difficult)**

- a. The largest volcanic activity ever recorded in human history.
- b. The hypothetical situation in which a large asteroid impact would wipe out a substantial share of the human population.
- c. The meteor air burst that occurred in 1908 leading to the destruction of vast swathes of forest in the Russian Siberian Taiga.
- d. It is the largest known recording of fast radio bursts from the Hawaii Mauna Kea Observatories.

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

- The Tunguska event refers to an explosion that occurred near the Podkamennaya Tunguska River in Yeniseysk Governorate, Russia in 1908 which was said to have occurred due to a meteor airburst of small asteroid or comet.

**Q5. Which one of the following groups of plants was domesticated in the 'New World' and introduced into the 'Old World'? (Level – Difficult) PYQ (2019)**

- a. Tobacco, cocoa and rubber
- b. Tobacco, cotton and rubber
- c. Cotton, coffee and sugarcane
- d. Rubber, coffee and wheat

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

- Tobacco, cocoa, and rubber were introduced into India by the Europeans in the late medieval or early modern era and so these are the groups of plants that were domesticated in the 'New World' and introduced into the 'Old World'.

## I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. [What do you understand about the Internet of Things \(IoT\)? Discuss its various applications and ways to safeguard applications from potential risk. \(15 Marks, 250 Words\) \(GS III - Science and Technology\)](#)
2. [Discuss the benefits of Payments for Ecosystem Services \(PES\). \(10 Marks, 150 Words\) \(GS III - Ecology and Environment\)](#)

