

10 Jul 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. A multilateral platform in a polarised world

Syllabus: Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Prelims: About G20

Mains: Significance of G20, key challenges to G20 and the way forward for India

Context

G-20 Foreign Minister's meeting 2022 was held in Bali, Indonesia.

G-20 or the Group of Twenty

- The G20 is a strategic multilateral grouping that consists of the world's major developed and emerging economies.
- G20 was established in **1999** as a meeting for the finance minister and central bank governors after the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997-1998.
- G20 was formed as the existing geo-economic multilateral order was found ineffective to address the Mexican, Asian and Russian financial crises.
- G20 has no fixed headquarters, and the secretariat is shifted between the countries which assume the Presidency of the grouping each year.
- The G-20 agenda is fixed based on the guidance of Finance Ministers and central Governors which is finalised by a unique system of '**Sherpas**', who are special emissaries of G-20 leaders.

G20 members:

List of G 20 Members	
Argentina	Australia
Brazil	Canada
China	France
Germany	India
Indonesia	Italy
Japan	Mexico
Republic of Korea	Russia
South Africa	Saudi Arabia
United States of America	United kingdom
European Union	Turkey

- India has been a member of the G20 since its inception.
- The members are divided into **five groups** (India is in Group 2, along with Russia, South Africa and Turkey)
- **Permanent invitees:** Spain, the UN, the IMF, ASEAN, the African Union, etc.
- **G20 Troika:** Comprises countries that are presiding over the G-20 in the past year, the present year, and next year.

Significance of G20

- The G20 members represent:
 - Over 80% of global GDP
 - About 75% of international trade
 - Close to 60% of the global population
- G20 members collaborate to address key global issues like international financial stability, inclusive growth, mitigation of climate change, and sustainable development.
- Experts believe that the G20 is said to be a perfect blend of the old world and new world and developed and emerging economies.

- The G20 looks at the world in a more “Global South” perspective compared to other groupings such as OECD (OECD acts as a strategic advisor to the G20 and participates in all G20 meetings)
- The G20 played a crucial role in reviving the economies, lowering trade barriers and implementing economic and governance reforms post the global financial crisis in 2007.

Challenges to G20

- Changing dynamics in global politics due to the significant rise of China, expansion of NATO and the Russian aggression in Crimea and Ukraine.
- Increasing polarisation of the world in recent years.
 - At the G20 summit 2022, G-7 countries skipped the welcome reception and concert to protest against the presence of the Russian Foreign Minister.
 - Further, the Russian Foreign Minister walked out of a meeting when the Western countries criticised Russia for the war in Ukraine
- The issues like increasing geopolitical rivalries, possible dilution of the dollar-based due to the sanctions imposed after the invasion of Ukraine and the state of global economy post the COVID pandemic threaten the functioning of the grouping.
- Experts opine that the recent events in global politics have diluted the credibility of multilateral institutions in the world and have regarded it as **G-zero** which denotes “Every Nation for Itself”.

Way forward for India

- India is slated to take over the G20 Presidency in December 2022 and host the G20 summit in November 2023 in Pragati Maidan, Delhi.
- In the backdrop of current challenges, India is tasked with ensuring that the G-20 stays intact.
- The government plans to hold 100 preparatory meetings in different parts of the country.
- The government is also planning to conduct events related to the G20 summit in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh too despite there being opposition from China and Pakistan

***Nut graf:** At a time when there is growing polarization and fragmentation in the global geopolitical with increasing rivalries between the countries, It is important for India to take up the role of a leader and work towards protecting the multilateral institutions like G-20 and ensuring global order and stability.*

2. Amid protests, Gotabaya agrees to quit

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

Mains: Economic and political crisis in Sri Lanka

Context

The Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa will resign on July 13 after the protesters stormed the Presidential Secretariat and official houses of the President and Prime Minister.

Background

For detailed background on [crisis in Sri Lanka](#)

Details

- In the wake of a severe economic crisis, massive protests and rallies were held demanding the resignation of the President and Prime Minister in the island country.
- The protesters stormed the palatial official residence of the President and the heavily guarded Presidential Secretariat. Protesters also set fire to the private residence of the PM despite heavy security.
- These new demonstrations were part of the “[Gota go home](#)” protests.

Impact of the demonstrations

- The Parliamentary Speaker said that President Gotabaya Rajapaksa will step down from office.
- The PM Ranil Wickremesinghe also said that he would resign and facilitate an “all-party government”.
- These moves are said to be critical for the country’s stability as the task of forming an all-party government would be challenging as the Sri Lankan Opposition is fragmented and does not have a parliamentary majority.
- Further, a change in the leadership of the country will not mitigate its economic crisis but instead will aggravate the situation as the IMF may take more time to assess the stability of the new government and also the bilateral lenders might be skeptical about lending money to the country.

To know more about - [India’s aid to Sri Lanka](#)

Nut graf: *In the wake of a deepening economic crisis, increasing balance of payments problem, severe dollar crunch, and shortages and inflation of essential items, the recent political developments in Sri Lanka are expected to worsen the condition of the island country.*

C. GS 3 Related

Category: ENVIRONMENT

Syllabus: *Environmental pollution and degradation*

Mains: *Status of melting of glaciers in Drass, its causes and its impact.*

Context

A study by the journal Environmental Science and Pollution Research.

Details

- The study, which is based on the analysis of satellite images of 77 glaciers, observed that the glacier area decreased from 176.77 sq. km in 2000 to 171.46 sq. km in 2020, which is nearly 3% of the total glacier area.
- The pace of glacial recession varies among the glaciers ranging from 0.24% to 15%.
- The study highlights that the debris cover had a great impact on glacier melting, as the clean glaciers lost about 5% more than debris-covered glaciers.

Reasons for the fast paced glacial melting

- The study attributes this fast pace of glacial recession to the increasing vehicular movement in the region.
- The study also found that there was a significant increase in the black carbon concentration between 1980 to 2020.
- The increase in the black carbon concentration is due to the proximity to the National Highway as heavy vehicles are responsible for 60% of black carbon emissions.
- The region has been experiencing a massive military movement on both sides of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) since 2020.

Impact of glacial melting

- Melting of glaciers results in an increase in the sea levels, which in turn increases coastal erosion and impacts the lives and livelihoods of the people residing in the areas.
- Further, it elevates storm surges as warming air and ocean temperatures result in more frequent and intense cyclones, hurricanes and typhoons
- It also causes the extinction of various species (terrestrial and aquatic) as their natural habitat is impacted.
- Further, the melting of glaciers in the Himalayas will have a significant impact on the water resources as there will be a change in the glacier basin hydrology and downstream water budget.
- Melting of glaciers will also cause flash floods and sedimentation and in turn impacts important hydropower plants.
- The Melting of glaciers also leads to [Glacial Lake Outburst Floods \(GLOFs\)](#).

Nut graf: *Since the fast pace deletion of the glaciers in the Himalayan region has a significant impact on the regional water resources, hydrological processes, ecosystem services and transboundary water*

sharing, there is an immediate need for the governments of these countries to collaborate and intervene to arrest the pace of glacial melting.

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: ENVIRONMENT

1. Altering green laws

Syllabus: Conservation, Environmental pollution and degradation

Prelims: Environment (Protection) Act

Mains: Critical evaluation of the proposed amendments to the Environment (Protection) Act

Context

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has proposed to amend the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

Details

- The MoEFCC has proposed changes to four important acts namely:
 - The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986
 - The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974
 - The Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981
 - The Public Liability Insurance (PLI) Act, 1991
- The Ministry has proposed to scale down some of the punishments against environmental violations provided under these laws.

The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986

- The Environment (Protection) Act (EPA) was introduced in **1986**
- It was enacted under **Article 253** of the Constitution.
- This Act provides for the **protection and improvement of the environment**.
- The Act empowers the Central Government to establish authorities charged with the mandate of

preventing environmental pollution in all its forms and tackling specific environmental problems that are peculiar to different parts of the country.

- The EPA establishes the framework for studying, planning, and implementing long-term requirements of environmental safety and laying down a system of speedy and adequate response to situations threatening the environment.

To learn more about - [The Environment \(Protection\) Act, 1986](#)

Proposed Amendments to Environment Protection Act

- The MoEFCC has proposed to modify provisions of the EPA by replacing provisions that provide for imprisonment with ones that prescribe fines.
 - This doesn't apply to violations that cause grave injury or loss of life.
 - At present, the violators face imprisonment of up to five years or a fine of up to ₹1 lakh or both. If the violations continue, an additional fine of up to ₹5,000 for every day would be levied during which such a violation continues.
 - Further, the jail term can also be extended to seven years.
- Proposed amendments also include the appointment of an '**adjudication officer**' who will be entrusted to decide on the penalty against environmental violations
 - These funds collected would be accumulated in an "**Environmental Protection Fund.**"

The need for amendments

- Various reports have highlighted that the existing legislations have been less effective.
- A study by the Centre for Science and Environment pointed out that Indian courts took about 9 to 33 years to clear a backlog of cases for environmental violations.
- At the start of 2018, nearly 45,000 cases were pending trial and about 35,000 cases were additionally added in the same year.
- Further, over 90% of the cases were pending trial in five of the seven environment laws enacted

Arguments for the proposed amendments

- Experts feel that the new amendments would reduce delays in the adjudication of environment related cases as the existing procedures were extremely time-consuming.
- Further, the proposed changes would regard certain categories of crimes as "civil crimes" which makes it easier to hold organisations accountable.

Arguments against the proposed changes

- Critics feel that the existing stringent provisions were meant to prevent violations and scaling down the punishments will lead to large-scale environmental violations.

- Few experts feel that these changes will encourage a pollute-and-pay attitude
- They also believe that the amendments would provide a chance for corruption as adjudicating officers are provided with arbitrary powers.

***Nut graf:** Acknowledging the fact that the issue of pollution control needs much attention, the Environment Ministry has proposed to decriminalise the existing provisions of the Environment, Air and Water Acts as these existing criminal provisions have largely been inefficient.*

F. Prelims Facts

1. Red Pandas and Singalila National Park

Prelims: Red Pandas and Singalila National Park

Context

Red Pandas are to be released from Darjeeling zoo to Singalila National Park in a rewilding programme.

Red Pandas

- The Red Panda is a carnivore indigenous to the eastern Himalayas, foothills of western Nepal and southwestern China.
 - It is also found in mountain ranges of Tibet, Sikkim, Assam Bhutan
- The Red Pandas are characterised by reddish-brown fur on the upper part and blackish fur on the lower part.
 - It has a roundish skull with medium-sized upright ears and blackish nose and eyes.
- Red pandas are shy, solitary and arboreal animals and considered an indicator species for ecological change.
- **IUCN status: Endangered**
- Red pandas are listed under **Schedule I** of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972
- The Red panda is the state animal of **Sikkim**.

To know more about - [Red Pandas](#)

Singalila National Park

- Singalila National Park is located on the Singalila Ridge in Darjeeling, West Bengal.
- The park is part of the Eastern Himalayas.
- The National Park is located at an altitude of more than 7000 feet above sea level.
- Singalila along with Neora Valley National Parks is a protected area for Red Panda
- The park hosts a large number of mammals such as leopard cat, barking deer, yellow-throated marten, wild boar, pangolin, Himalayan black bear, clouded leopard, serow and takin.

G. Tidbits

1. MGNREGS site supervisors left in the lurch in their wait for salary payments

- The ‘Mate’ or site supervisors under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) across the country are facing several problems in receiving their wages.
- According to the MGNREGS, the wages of unskilled workers is to be paid within 15 days and the Centre has to compensate in case of delay.
 - However, the Mates, who are the supervisors of the programmes, are listed as **semi-skilled workers** because of the specialist nature of their job.
- The wages of Mates come from the “material component” out of which 60% is paid by the Union government which has been released erratically due to bureaucratic delays and chronic fund shortages.
- States have urged the Centre to de-link the wages for skilled and semi-skilled workers from the material component which helps in reducing the delays.
- In Karnataka, the Mates are paid the same rates as the unskilled workers, but in addition to that they get an incentive which comes from the material component and is released when the state gets from Centre. This has reduced delays to an extent.

2. Ancient Buddhist site finally in focus

- The ancient Buddhist site on the bank of Bhima river near Kanaganahalli (forming part of Sannati site) in Kalaburagi district, has garnered attention.
- The ASI has now come up with a plan for the conservation of the site at a cost of ₹3.5 crores and work has just begun. The conservation project includes resetting of the remains of Maha Stupa retrieved in the excavation to their original positions without much ornamentation and reconstructing fallen portions of the Ayaka platforms.
- An Ashokan edict was also found that provided a new avenue for the historical research on Mauryan Emperor Ashoka and Buddhism in its early years.
- Kanaganahalli excavations discovered an ‘abandoned well’ which turned out to be the magnificent Maha Stupa, which was referred to as Adholoka Maha Chaitya (the Great Stupa of the netherworlds) in the inscriptions.
- The Stupa is considered to be one of the largest of its time and the stone-portrait is considered to be the only surviving image of the Mauryan Emperor which had the inscription ‘Raya Asoko’ in Brahmi on it.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Which of the following statements about Red Panda is/are correct? (Level – Medium)

1. The red panda has been listed as endangered on the IUCN Red List
2. It is the state animal of Sikkim
3. Red panda is a Schedule – I animal, according to wildlife (Protection) act, 1972.

Options:

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, IUCN status of Red Panda: **Endangered**
- **Statement 2 is correct**, The Red panda is the state animal of **Sikkim**.

Statement 3 is correct, Red pandas are listed under **Schedule I** of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

Q2. Consider the following Pairs: (Level – Medium)

National/Zoological Park	State
1. Singalila National Park	West Bengal
2. Padmaja Naidu park	Andhra Pradesh
3. Neora Valley National Park	Uttarakhand

Which of the above pairs is/are correctly matched?

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

Answer: a

Explanation:

- **Pair 1 is correct**, Singalila National Park is located in Darjeeling, West Bengal.
- **Pair 2 is not correct**, Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park is located in Darjeeling, **West Bengal**.

- **Pair 3 is not correct**, Neora Valley National Park is a national park in Kalimpong district, **West Bengal**.

Q3. With reference to Sannati, which of the following statements is/are correct?

(Level – Difficult)

1. It is located on the banks of the Bhima River in Kalaburagi district of Karnataka.
2. The only available sculpture of Emperor Ashoka, in a limestone relief along with his consort, was found here.

Options:

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, Sannati is an ancient Buddhist site located on the banks of the Bhima River in the Kalaburagi district of Karnataka.
- **Statement 2 is correct**, The only available sculpture of Emperor Ashoka, in a limestone relief along with his consort, was found in Sannati.

Q4. Which amongst the following is the best description of 'Operation Blue Star'?

(Level – Easy)

- a. The operation was launched by the Indian Army to recapture the Indian territories from Pakistani intruders in the Kargil-Drass sector
- b. It was a military operation to eliminate armed militants who were holed up in the Golden Temple.
- c. It was an anti-insurgency operation launched by the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).
- d. An operation to seize control of the Siachen Glacier in Kashmir.

Answer: b

Explanation:

- Operation Blue star was a military operation carried out in 1984 to **eliminate armed militants who were holed up in the Golden Temple**.

- It was launched on the orders of the then prime minister Indira Gandhi to eliminate Jarnail Singh. Bhindranwale and his followers who had sought cover in the Amritsar Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple).

Q5. Consider the following statements: (Level – Difficult)

1. It is one of the successor states of Yugoslavia.
2. It is a landlocked country.
3. It is not part of European Union.

The above statements best describe:

- a. Bulgaria
- b. Kosovo
- c. North Macedonia
- d. Serbia

Answer: c

Explanation:

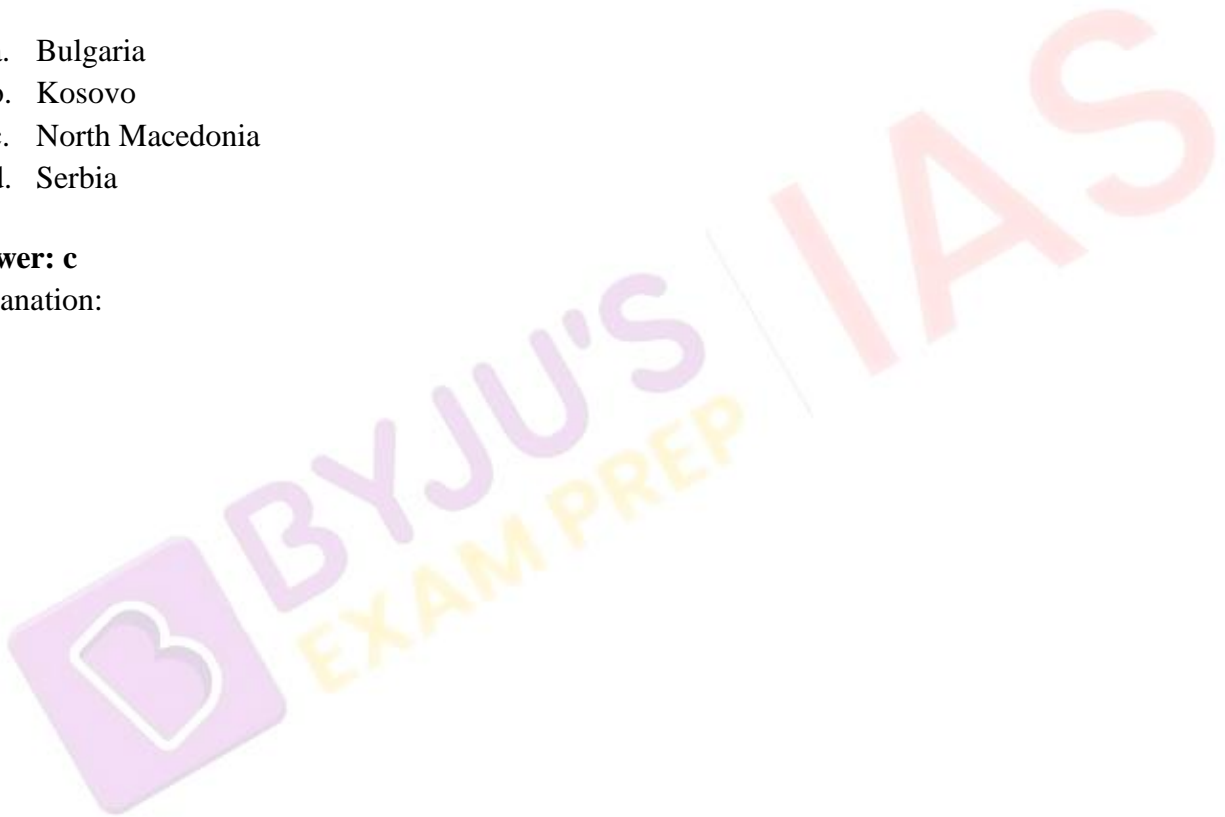




Image Source Britannca

- North Macedonia emerged from the breakup of Yugoslavia in the 1990s.
- North Macedonia has been an EU candidate for 17 years.
- North Macedonia is a landlocked country.

Q6. Consider the following pairs: (Level – Difficult) PYQ (2022)

Wetland/Lake	Location
1. Hokera Wetland	Punjab
2. Renuka Wetland	Himachal Pradesh
3. Rudrasagar Lake	Tripura
4. Sasthamkotta	Tamil Nadu

How many pairs given above are correctly matched?

- a. Only one pair
- b. Only two pairs
- c. Only three pairs
- d. All four pairs

Answer: b

Explanation:

- **Pair 1 is not correct**, The Hokera wetland is located near Srinagar in **Jammu and Kashmir**.
- **Pair 2 is correct**, Renuka Wetland is located in the Sirmaur district of **Himachal Pradesh**.
- **Pair 3 is correct**, Rudrasagar Lake, also known as Twijilikma, is located in Melaghar, **Tripura**.
- **Pair 4 is not correct**, Sasthamkotta lake is located on of Kollam district of **Kerala**.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. [Will new penalties on environment violations soften the blow for air, water and land polluters? Critically Comment. \(10 Marks, 150 Words\) \(GS III - Environment\)](#)
2. [G20 grouping finds itself in a difficult situation amid growing disunity. Examine. \(10 Marks, 150 Words\) \(GS II - International Relations\)](#)