

05 Jul 2022: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

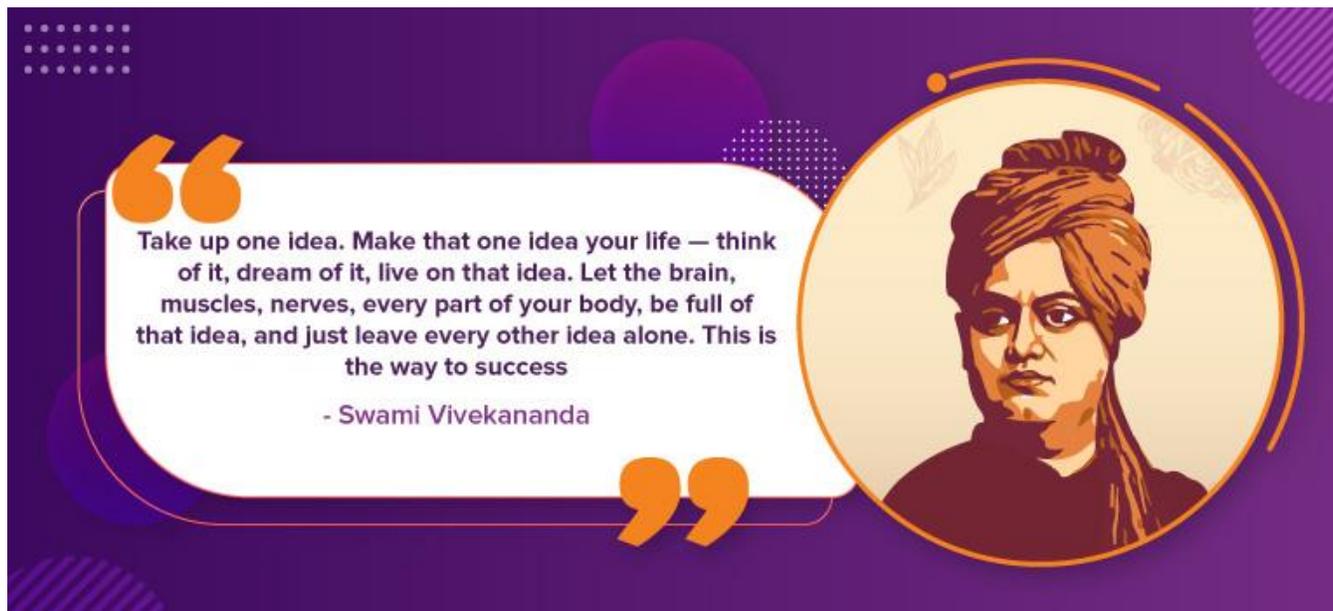


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A. GS 1 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

B. GS 2 Related

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Hotels can't force customers to pay service charge: Centre

Syllabus: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Prelims: Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)

Mains: Critical Evaluation of central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) guidelines on service charges

Context: The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) issued guidelines to prevent unfair trade practices, and to protect the interest of consumers with regard to the levy of service charges in hotels and restaurants.

What do the CCPA's guidelines say?

- The CCPA has issued five major guidelines regarding the levy of service charges by restaurants and hotels, which has for long been a contentious issue and has periodically triggered complaints from consumers.
- The guidelines say:
 - No hotel or restaurant shall add a service charge automatically or by default to the bill;
 - The service charge shall not be collected from consumers by any other name;
 - No hotel or restaurant shall force a consumer to pay the service charge and shall clearly inform the consumer that the service charge is voluntary, optional, and at the consumer's discretion;
 - No restriction on entry or provision of services based on the collection of service charge shall be imposed on consumers; and
 - The service charge shall not be collected by adding it along with the food bill and levying GST on the total amount.

Need for the CCPA guidelines:

- The CCPA investigated complaints about restaurants and motels levying service charges by default without first asking or telling customers.
- According to the Ministry, the National Consumer Helpline (NCH) has received a lot of consumer complaints about service prices.
- The rules also said that the price of food and beverages given by the restaurant or hotel includes a component of service.

Under which law have these guidelines been issued?

- The CCPA has issued guidelines under Section 18 (2) (I) of the [Consumer Protection Act, 2019](#).
- The guidelines are in addition to the Centre's 2017 guidelines which prohibit the levy of service charges on consumers by hotels and restaurants, and terms the charging for anything other than "the prices displayed on the menu card along with the applicable taxes" without "express consent" of the customer as "unfair trade practices".

Nut Graf:

The Department of Consumer Affairs has received several complaints saying service collecting charges lead to public embarrassment and spoil the dining experience. CCPA guidelines aim to ensure transparency to consumers.

C. GS 3 Related

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. Enforcing the single-use plastic ban

Syllabus: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

Prelims: Single-Use Plastics and Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)

Mains: Single-use plastic (SUPs) and steps undertaken to phase out the use of SUPs

Context:

- Recently, a ban on the use of single-use plastics that was notified by the Union Environment Ministry came into effect on July 1.

What are single-use plastics (SUPs)?

- The Centre defines single-use plastic as a plastic product that is designed to be used "just once" before being discarded or recycled.
- There is a list of 21 things that fall under the criteria of single-use plastic for the purposes of the ban.
- The Environment Ministry highlighted these items in August '21 when it notified the Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2021.
- The restriction does not apply to mineral water bottles or plastic bottles of aerated beverages, despite the fact that they are commonly associated with 'plastic pollution.'
- **Read more about [Plastic Wastes](#) in the linked article.**

Need for single-use plastic ban:

- Every year, India creates 3.5 million tonnes of plastic garbage.
- According to government figures, India's per capita plastic trash creation is 3 kilogrammes per year.
- This plastic is a significant problem since it adds to the tonnes of plastic that is never processed or recycled and instead ends up in our cities' landfills.
- India is prohibiting them not just to make some headway in reducing the country's plastic pollution, but also because, in the 4th United Nations Environment Assembly in 2019, India piloted a resolution on addressing single-use plastic product pollution.

Environmental damage from single-use plastics

- While 99 percent of plastic gets recycled, heavier plastics are more likely to be gathered by rag pickers and plastic trash recyclers.
- Because single-use plastic things are light and flexible, they are less likely to be recycled.
- Single-use plastics do not give a strong enough incentive to collect them, so they accumulate, leach poisons into the soil, and cause environmental damage to both land and water.
- Know more about [Measures undertaken to discourage the use of SUPs](#)

Three-pronged strategy for banning single-use plastic in India:

- The government is considering a three-pronged plan to phase out single-use plastic in India:
 - **High littering potential** - This refers to things that are readily discarded after use. The majority of them are throwaway things discovered in drains and are seen as products that contribute to littering.
 - **Low utility** - Plastic items that have the least amount of utilization or utility after use. After the container is opened, wrapping plastic sheets are rarely used.
 - **Alternative availability** - If other alternatives can be utilized in their stead. Paper bags, paper wrappings (which can be manufactured from recycled material), bamboo spoons in place of plastic spoons, and so on.

Issues with single-use plastic ban:

- Over time, single-use plastic has grown into a considerably larger sector, employing thousands of people and generating large revenue.
- Banks and financial institutions have a large stake in the single-use plastic business, and a total prohibition without an equal substitute will inflict tremendous disruption in India's retail trade working vertical.
- The prohibition would have a significant impact on Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) corporations owing to their reliance on plastic straws and plates.
- There is also a scarcity of biodegradable substitutes in India.
- Read in detail the [Way forward to Single-Use Plastic in India](#).

Nut Graf:

The single-use plastic ban is a significant step towards banning the use of plastic in India and moving towards a cleaner and greener future but it also comes with a set of concerns when it comes to certain industries such as FMCG, banking and financial institutions, etc. which have to be addressed.

Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**1. The need for space sustainability**

Syllabus: Awareness in the fields of Space

Mains: Sustainability in outer space and India's contribution

Context: Recently, the U.K. hosted the fourth summit for Space Sustainability in London in collaboration with the Secure World Foundation.

Plan for Space Sustainability

- The U.K. hosted the fourth summit for Space Sustainability in London and announced a new 'Plan for Space Sustainability.'
- The U.K. Space Sustainability plan mentions four primary elements:
 - To review the regulatory framework of the U.K.'s orbital activity;
 - To emphasize international engagement on space sustainability;
 - To try and develop safety and quality-related metrics that quantify the sustainability of activities;
 - To induce additional funding for active debris removal.
- **Aims of the Plan:**

- To “set a global commercial framework for the insurability, the licensing and the regulation of commercial satellites.”
- To reduce the cost for those who comply with the best sustainability standards and thus encourage a thriving ecosystem for the industry.

What does sustainability in outer space mean?

- In the last decade, the Earth's orbital environment has more than quadrupled. The intricacy of missions and slot allocation concerns rise as the cost of tasks decreases and the number of participants increases.
- With the growth of huge constellations and complicated satellites, there is an increased danger of collisions and radio frequency interference.
- Long-term sustainability focuses on space research and technology development to enable satellite reuse and recycling at every level. The proposal calls for active debris removal and in-orbit servicing.
- Because outer space is seen as a common natural resource, the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) issued a set of 21 non-binding rules in 2019 to ensure the long-term viability of space operations.

United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS)

- In 1958, the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) was founded.
- The [UN General Assembly](#) established it as an ad hoc multinational committee immediately after the launch of the first artificial satellite, Sputnik I, in 1957. India was one of the committee's 18 founding members.
- Its primary responsibility is to study and promote international collaboration in the peaceful uses of outer space.

Concerns with sustainability in outer space

- One of the most pressing concerns of space sustainability is orbital congestion.
- It is a direct threat to the mission's operations and safety, and it is likely to result in legal and insurance-related problems.
- Another significant concern is space debris.
- After completing a mission, the 'end-of-life protocol' requires space objects to be transferred to a cemetery orbit or a low altitude. In the long term, neither strategy is viable.
- Solar and magnetic storms are also possible threats to communication infrastructure.

India's contribution to space sustainability:

- India is home to potential start-ups such as Agnikul and Skyroot, who are working on tiny payload launch vehicles, and Dhruva Space, which is working on high-tech solar panels for satellites and satellite deployers.
- India is well on its way to developing a subsystem that will solve global sustainability concerns.
- To monitor space debris, the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) has launched ['Project NETRA'](#).
- The domestic monitoring system would offer real-time information on the state of debris, which would benefit future planning for space asset protection.
- At the 2+2 discussion in 2022, India and the United States struck a new accord for monitoring space objects.
- Controlled anti-satellite weaponry (ASAT) testing and the possibility of collisions must be handled cooperatively.
- ISRO is working on a docking experiment termed 'SPADEX' to allow in-orbit servicing. It considers docking a satellite on an existing satellite, providing assistance in refuelling and other in-orbit services, and boosting a satellite's functionality.

Way Forward:

- Today, any institution (public or private) with the required finances and technology may invest in space.
- Sustainable space practices would immediately help to lessen orbital overpopulation and collision risk while also fostering future innovations.
- The Plan for Space Sustainability, which involves private enterprises, is a timely move in the natural flow of progress. This might be used as a model for future space programmes.
- Many of the sustainability strategies are resource-intensive and costly for medium- and small-scale space operations.
 - In this instance, private attempts to improve sustainability standards would make access more difficult, offering an unfair advantage to programmes with steady finances.

Nut Graf:

In line with the U.K. space programme, the Indian space mission hopes to drive the sustainability factor internationally and provide an opportunity for the private sector to develop models that enhance operations' safety and reduce debris footprint.

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. A chaotic world, the perils of multilateralism

Syllabus: Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Mains: Arguments against multilateralism and associated recommendations

Context:

- In the light of the series of multilateral summits attended by the Indian Prime Minister, the article evaluates the effectiveness of multilateralism in the pursuance of Indian foreign policy.
 - The Indian Prime Minister has taken part in the **Quad summit, 14th BRICS virtual summit and G-7 summit** in the recent past.

For related theory on [multilateralism](#) in International Relations, refer to the linked article.

Arguments against multilateralism:

- Despite multilateral organizations and groupings providing a much-needed avenue for the exchange of ideas between world leaders and the seeking of common ground on important issues, the article expresses concerns over the functioning of some of these multilateral groupings.

Lack of much-needed consensus on major developments/issues:

- Given the **massive geo-political churn** being observed in recent times and the often different stands taken by different countries based on their national interests, the various intergovernmental organisations and groupings may not be the right place to build consensus on various issues and challenges. Given that there is **very little commonality in views or stands of the different countries**, cooperation and collaboration between the different countries in multilateral settings is bound to be ineffective.
- The lack of much-needed consensus was very much evident in the recently concluded G7 summit in Germany.
 - The G7 made its own statement on the Ukraine war while keeping aside the views of other member countries like India which was invited to take part in the summit. There was also a perceptible difference in views among the member countries with respect to dealing with Russia for its aggression on Ukraine.

- Also, other critical issues such as environment, energy, climate, food security, health, gender equality and democracy found little interest.

Usage of multilateral groupings for national interests:

- There have been numerous examples of different countries using the platform of major multilateral organizations to advance their own interests often overlooking the interests of other members of the grouping.
- At the recently held 14th virtual BRICS summit, China the host country brought in 13 like-minded countries through the back door for a high-level dialogue on global development. This amounts to resorting to unfair means to expand the BRIC grouping with countries considered friendly to China. China seems to think that BRICS would be an extension of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which was designed to dominate the world by getting small and weak countries into a debt trap.
- Also, China has so far resisted India's inclusion in groupings such as the **Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)** even after India met the criteria of a liberalised economy.

Contradictions within the groupings:

- There continue to remain contradictions between the members of different multilateral groupings. This **reduces the scope for common vision and action among the constituent member countries.**
- For example in the case of the BRICS grouping, while China and Russia are two permanent members of the Security Council, the other three India, South Africa and Brazil are aspirants to permanent membership of the UNSC. Also, there continue to remain noticeable differences between the economic development levels of the constituent countries.
- Notably, the BRICS grouping had been propped up with the idea of creating a catalyst for an alternative to the existing global architecture and organizations like the Bretton Woods Institutions.

Impact of bilateral differences:

- The bilateral differences between the member countries often affect the effectiveness of the multilateral grouping of which they are members.
 - The **border stand-off between India and China**, two important members of BRICS will no doubt undermine the scope for cooperation under the BRICS grouping.
 - Similarly, the **bilateral disputes between India and Pakistan** have had a visible negative impact on the functioning of the [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation](#) (SAARC) and have reduced the potential of this organization.

Success of bilateral engagements:

- The limited gains of India at multilateral engagements like the BRICS and G7 summits have been in contrast with the success observed by India in its bilateral engagements with countries like the United Arab Emirates (UAE).
- Despite the limited timeframe that was available for the bilateral meetings between India and UAE, this was much more productive in terms of agreements and outcomes as compared to the much-hyped multilateral summit interactions of the G7.

For more related information on the India-UAE relationship refer to the following article:

[CNA dated June 28, 2022: Modi's two summits](#)

Nut Graf:

Given the increasing misuse of multilateral groupings for vested interests, the glaring lack of consensus on burning issues among the member countries and the limited effectiveness that these multilateral groupings have had, it would be much more prudent for India to work bilaterally with potential allies rather than in multilateral platforms.

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. Right intent, confusing content

Syllabus: Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment.

Prelims: E-Waste (Management and Handling) rules

Mains: Proposals in the new draft rules and concerns associated with them

Context:

- **Draft E-waste (Management and Handling) Rules, 2022** had been released for public comments in May 2022 by the Environment Ministry.

For information on the existing E-waste Management Rules, refer to the following article:

[Electronic Waste](#)

Details:

- The new draft Rules depart significantly from the previous regulations in the following ways.
 - The draft rules state that producers of e-goods have to ensure **that at least 60% of their produced e-waste is recycled by 2023**. This marks a significant shift from the current collection rate targets to recycling rate targets.
 - The new draft rules also introduce a market for **e-waste recycling certificates**.
 - The draft rules also propose the setting up of a **Steering Committee** to oversee the “overall implementation, monitoring, and supervision” of the regulations. This committee would be suitably empowered to ensure smooth implementation of the proposed regulations.
 - The draft e-waste Rules also proposes expanding the definition of e-waste and more clearly specifies the penalties for violation of rules.
 - It also introduces an **environmental compensation fund** based on the ‘polluter pays’ principle.

Concerns:

Unrealistic targets:

- The article argues that the proposed e-waste recycling target appears unrealistic due to the following reasons.
 - The **e-waste recycling segment in India is still in its infancy** and most of the current recycling is carried out by the informal sector using inefficient and unsafe technologies, which may not be able to scale up and meet the targets for recycling.
 - The **technical feasibility and commercial viability of different recycling technologies** and approaches are still evolving and the lack of a matured technology will act as a major impediment to the growth of the e-recycling segment in India.

Lack of clear guidelines on the regulation of different stakeholders:

- The new draft rules lack any provisions on **regulating registered collectors, dismantlers, and producer responsibility organisations**. This can undermine the regulation of these entities to carry out their responsibilities in an environmentally safe manner.
- Despite the significant share of e-waste processing done by the informal sector in India, the new draft rules seem to be silent on the integration of this informal sector and instead place the responsibility of such integration on the State governments.

Lack of clear-cut provisions with respect to recycling targets:

- The new draft rules do not provide a clear understanding of whether the recycling target applies to every component of an e-product or the aggregate weight.

- This is a major loophole as this could be misused by producers who can resort to recycling materials like plastic, copper and glass that are easy and inexpensive to recycle while neglecting the materials like rare earth metals that are **costly and technologically more difficult to recycle but perhaps have a greater environmental footprint**. This would undermine the underlying objective of having such management rules.

Lack of representation in the Steering Committee:

- While the proposal for an institutional mechanism such as the steering committee is welcome, the **lack of adequate representation from science/academia and civil society organisations** in the Committee remains a major concern.

Nut Graf:

The core changes proposed by the Draft E-waste (Management and Handling) Rules, 2022 require careful deliberation with all the relevant stakeholders before the Rules are finalised.

F. Prelims Facts

1. 'Dhyana Mandir to be built at Alluri birthplace'

Syllabus: GS1: History: The Freedom Struggle — its various stages and important contributors/contributions from different parts of the country.

Prelims: Alluri Sitarama Raju, Rampa rebellion

Mains: Contribution of Alluri Sitarama Raju in India's Freedom struggle.

Context: The Prime Minister virtually unveiled a 30-foot bronze statue of Alluri Sitarama Raju at ASR Nagar, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

Alluri Sitarama Raju:

- India is celebrating the 125th birth anniversary of Manyam Veerudu Alluri Sitarama Raju.
- Alluri Dhyana Mandir would be constructed at Mogallu, the birthplace of freedom fighter Alluri Sitarama Raju, in the West Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh.
- Alluri Sitarama Raju and other tribal leaders sacrificed their lives in the freedom struggle.
- He launched Rampa or Manyam Rebellion in the form of a guerrilla war in 1924.
- The Rampa Rebellion coincided with Mahatma Gandhi's Non-Cooperation Movement.

Know more about [Alluri Sitaram Raju](#).

G. Tidbits

Nothing here for today!!!

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following pairs of newly launched digital initiatives and their descriptions.

1. Digital India Bhashini- Artificial Intelligence-based language technology solution for Indian languages.
2. Digital India GENESIS- National deep-tech startup platform to support startups in tier-II and tier-III cities of India.
3. Meri Pehchaan- National single sign on for one citizen login.

Which of the above digital initiatives and their descriptions are correct?

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- **Digital India Bhashini** - The Ministry of State for Electronics and Information Technology has held a brainstorming session with Researchers & Start-ups to shape strategy for Digital India BHASHINI. BHASHINI stands for BHASHa Interface for India, the National Language Translation Mission (NLTM).
- **Digital India GENESIS** - GENESIS stands for Gen-Next Support for Innovation Startups in Digital India. It is a project to help companies identify, assist, develop, and succeed in small towns across India.
- **Meri Pehchaan** - 'Meri Pehchaan' is a National Single Sign On for One Citizen Login. National Single Sign-On (NSSO) is a user authentication service in which a single set of credentials provides access to multiple online applications or services.
- **Hence all the statements are correct.**

Q2. Which of the following statements is/are correct with respect to reserves and production of lithium and Cobalt?

1. The “lithium triangle” in Africa is believed to hold the world’s biggest lithium reserves.
2. Currently, China is the world’s leading lithium-producing country.
3. India is the world’s largest producer of cobalt.

Options:

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 3 only
- c. 2 only
- d. None of the above statements

Answer: d**Explanation:**

- The Lithium Triangle is an area rich in lithium deposits that straddles Argentina, Bolivia, and Chile. **Hence statement 1 is not correct.**
- Chile has the world's largest known lithium reserves. **Hence statement 2 is not correct.**
- The mining industry in the Democratic Republic of Congo accounted for more than two-thirds of global cobalt production in 2021. **Hence statement 3 is not correct.**

Q3. Which of the following best describes the words- ‘Kurinji’, ‘Mullai’, ‘Marutham’, ‘Neithal’ and ‘Paalai’ mentioned in the Tamil Sangam literature?

- a. The different ecological regions
- b. The five aspects of warfare
- c. The popular flowers of the region
- d. The five famous kings of the region

Answer: a**Explanation:**

- The rich cultural history of the Tamils will be featured in a project relating to the new Parliament being constructed by the Union government in New Delhi.
- Soil samples from five ecological regions mentioned in ancient Tamil Sangam literature — Kurinji, Mullai, Marutham, Neithal and Paalai — have been collected and sent to the capital recently.
- **Hence option A is correct.**

Q4. Which of the following statements is/are correct with respect to windfall tax?

1. A windfall tax is a tax levied by governments against certain industries/companies when economic conditions allow those industries/companies to experience above-average profits.
2. Recently, the Union government of India has imposed a windfall tax on domestic oil producers and refiners.

Options:

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

Answer: c**Explanation:**

- Windfall taxes are primarily levied on the companies in the targeted industry that have benefited the most from the economic windfall, most often commodity-based businesses. It is a tax levied by governments against certain industries when economic conditions allow those industries to experience above-average profits.
- Recently, the Union government of India has imposed a windfall tax on domestic oil producers and refiners.
- **Hence both the statements are correct.**

Q5. In which of the following relief sculpture inscriptions is 'Ranyo Ashoka' (King Ashoka) mentioned along with the stone portrait of Ashoka? PYQ (2019)

- a. Kanganahalli
- b. Sanchi
- c. Shahbazgarhi
- d. Sohgaora

Answer: a**Explanation:**

- Kanaganahalli is a town in Karnataka near Sannati. The emperor, his queen, and attendants are engraved on a slab in this sculptural representation, with Ranyo Ashoka (Raja Ashoka) named alongside the stone picture of Ashoka. It is the first sculpture of Ashoka with his name engraved on it.
- **Hence option A is correct.**

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. [A ban on the use of single-use plastics that was notified by the Union Environment Ministry in 2021 came into effect this year. Analyse the provisions and how can it be enforced effectively? \(250 words, 15 marks\) \[GS-3, Environment\]](#)
2. [Space debris poses a serious threat to space assets. Examine the risks and possible solutions. \(250 words, 15 marks\) \[GS-3, S&T\]](#)

