

07 Sep 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. Bangladesh PM favours early solution for Teesta, other issues

Syllabus: India and its neighbourhood-relations.

Mains: Important outcomes of the India-Bangladesh bilateral meeting and the latest developments in the bilateral relations between the two countries.

Context

During the latest visit of the Bangladesh Prime Minister to India, both countries discussed various bilateral issues.

Details

- The Bangladeshi PM after meeting her Indian counterpart said that India is the most important and closest neighbour to Bangladesh as both the countries share over **54 common rivers and 4,000 kilometres of border**.
- The Indian PM said that “In order to keep the spirit of 1971 alive, it is necessary that we confront those forces that want to hurt our common values.”
- The leaders of both countries signed about seven agreements that cover various sectors such as railways, science and technology, space cooperation, media, and water sharing.

Key outcomes of the bilateral meeting

- **Discussion on Teesta Water Sharing Treaty:** Various existing issues were discussed during the meeting including issues with the [Teesta Water Sharing dispute](#).
 - The Teesta River is a tributary of the Brahmaputra river that flows through Sikkim and West Bengal before merging with the Brahmaputra in Assam and the Jamuna (Brahmaputra) in Bangladesh.
- **Kushiyara water sharing agreement:** The most significant outcome of the meeting was the signing of an agreement on the sharing of **Kushiyara river water** between the lower Assam and Sylhet region in Bangladesh.
 - This is said to be the first such agreement in about 28 years after the conclusion of the Ganga Waters Agreement of 1996.

- **Real-time information sharing:** India further extended the timeline for sharing flood water-related information in real-time which will aid Bangladesh to address various challenges of annual floods.
- **Railways:** The Ministries of Railways of both countries signed an agreement that facilitates the training of personnel of the Bangladesh Railway in India.
- **Rupsha rail bridge:** Another important development is the inauguration of the Rupsha rail bridge which will play a key role in enhancing the connectivity between the countries.
 - The bridge will help connect Khulna with Mongla port and Petrapole and Gede in West Bengal.
- **Energy:** the two countries announced Unit 1 of the **Maitree power plant** which is a 1,320-MW supercritical coal-fired thermal power plant in Rampal in the Khulna division of Bangladesh.
 - This is expected to help Bangladesh counter the existing energy crisis and increase access to affordable electricity.
 - The project is being built at an estimated cost of over \$2 billion out of which \$1.6 billion will be in the form of Indian Development Assistance.
- **Discussions of Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA):** Acknowledging that India is the largest market in Asia for Bangladesh's exports and Bangladesh is India's largest development partner and largest trade partner in the region, discussions over CEPA are expected to start soon.
- **Rohingya issue:** Rohingya issue was another key issue discussed between the two leaders and India will continue to support the safe return of Rohingya migrants in a secure and expedited manner.

Bangladesh shares wish list of defence equipment from India

- Bangladesh has shared a wish list of military platforms and systems that its armed forces would like to procure from India.
 - This is in line with the **\$500 million defence Line of Credit (LoC)** extended by India to Bangladesh.
 - The LoC was extended in 2018 and is due for utilisation by April 2029.
- The wish list contains a wide range of equipment which include a floating dock, logistics ship, oil tanker and an ocean-going tug for the Bangladeshi Navy.
- Bangladesh through its vision of "**Forces Goal 2030**" is looking to modernise its armed forces by procuring new weaponry and improving infrastructure.
 - This has provided an opportunity for India to help Bangladesh with its demands and improve the defence cooperation between them.
- The Bangladeshi Army has already approved the procurement of
 - Five Bridge Layer Tanks (BLT-72) at a cost of nearly \$10 million
 - Seven portable steel bridges (Bailey) at a cost of over \$2.2 million
 - 11 Mine Protective Vehicles from the Tata Group at a cost of nearly \$2.2 million
- Other defence-related equipment proposed to be produced by Bangladeshi Army are:

- Mahindra XUV 500 off-road vehicles
- Door hardtop vehicles from Mahindra at a cost of nearly \$2.35 million
- Heavy recovery vehicles
- Armoured engineer reconnaissance vehicles
- Bullet proof helmets
- India can contribute to the modernisation of Bangladeshi forces by offering artillery guns, mortars, rockets, missiles, support vehicles, electronic and engineering equipment, radars, helicopters, military rakes, and ship-building services.

Nut graf: *Strong bilateral ties based on mutual trust and cooperation are extremely significant for both India and Bangladesh. In this context, all the outstanding issues in the bilateral relations must be resolved expeditiously in the spirit of friendship and cooperation.*

Category: POLITY

1. SC asks Punjab, Haryana CMs to meet on SYL canal dispute

Syllabus: *Issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure - Inter-state Relations*

Mains: *Sutlej-Yamuna Link Canal dispute*

Context

The Supreme Court sought an assurance from the Chief Minister of Punjab that he will meet his Haryana counterpart to discuss the construction of the Sutlej-Yamuna Link Canal which has been delayed for over 20 years.

Sutlej-Yamuna Link Canal



Image Source: www.thehansindia.com

- Sutlej-Yamuna Link (SYL) Canal once complete will help in sharing the waters of the rivers Ravi and Beas between the states of Punjab and Haryana.
- The construction of the SYL Canal was launched in April 1982 by then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in Kapoori village in the Patiala district of Punjab.
- The construction of the SYL Canal included the construction of a stretch of 214 km, out of which 122 km was to cross Punjab and 92 km in Haryana.
- However, the construction of Punjab's portion of the canal has been controversial which has delayed the completion of the SYL Canal.

The timeline of the dispute

THE LONG AND SHORT OF IT

122km, length of main SYL Canal in Punjab

495km, length of canals, including minors and distributaries in Punjab

Total area under planned network for Punjab: Nearly 1,400 acres

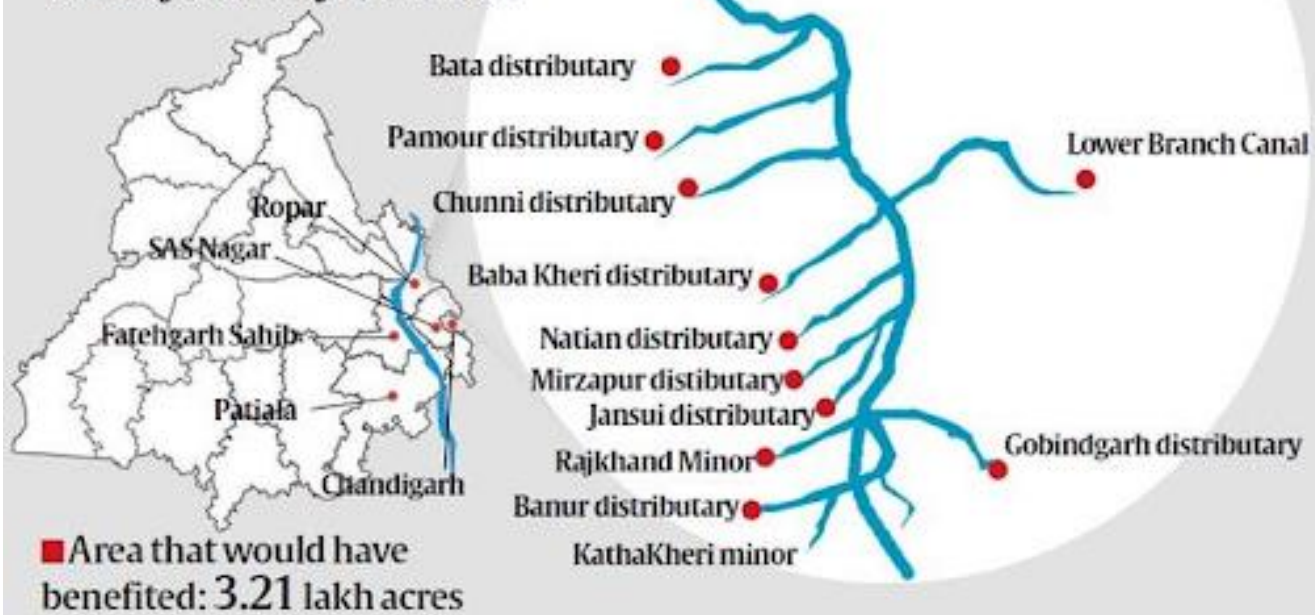


Image source: Indian Express

- 1960: [Indus Water Treaty](#) signed between India and Pakistan allowed India “free and unrestricted use” of Ravi, Beas and Sutlej.
- 1966: The reorganisation of Punjab and the formation of Haryana as a new state brought about the problems of sharing of river water between the two states.
- As Haryana required a share of the waters of the Sutlej and its tributary Beas, construction of the SYL canal linking the Sutlej with the Yamuna was proposed.
- However, Punjab refused to share the water breaching the Riparian principle which states that “the water of a river belongs only to the State and country or States and countries through which the river in question flows”.
- 1981: Both Punjab and Haryana agreed to the reallocation of river water.
- 1982: The launch of the construction of the SYL Canal.
 - Akali Dal started a protest in the name of Kapoori Morcha against the construction of the SYL Canal.

- 1985: The then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and the chief of Akali Dal signed an agreement to set up a new tribunal.
- 1987: The Eradi Tribunal suggested an increase in the share of waters to both states.
- 1980s: Witnessed violent militant attacks against the construction of the SYL Canal.
- 1996: Haryana reached out to the Supreme Court in order to expedite the construction process of the SYL Canal.
- 2002 and 2004: The apex court issued directions to the then governments in Punjab to undertake construction work in its territory.
- 2004: The Punjab government unilaterally enacted the controversial Punjab Termination of Water Agreements Act of 2004.
- 2016: The Punjab Termination of Water Agreements Act was struck down by a constitution bench.
- 2020: The Supreme Court orders the governments of the two states to discuss and settle the SYL canal issue at the highest political level which is to be mediated by the Union government.
 - However, the Ministry of Jal Shakti which is playing the role of an arbitrator on behalf of the Union government had complained that Punjab has not joined the negotiating table.
- 2022: The Supreme Court has directed the Chief Minister of Punjab to meet with his Haryana counterpart and discuss the construction of the SYL Canal.
 - The court said the canal was meant to address water shortage and “Water is a natural resource and living beings must learn to share it, whether it be individuals, States or countries”.
 - The court also has held that in the larger interest of the country, the two states have to sit down and work it out and it cannot be left as a festering wound.

Nut graf: *Considering that the issue of construction of the SYL canal is a matter of security and affects the entire nation as other forces start to take over if the states fail to resolve the issue, the Supreme Court has directed the Punjab government to discuss the construction of the Sutlej-Yamuna Link Canal with the Haryana government at the earliest.*

C. GS 3 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: ECONOMY

1. For Vizhinjam, business as usual is not an option

Syllabus: Infrastructure: Ports

Prelims: Vizhinjam Port

Mains: Infrastructure - Ports; Environment and ecology

Context: Protest against the construction of the International Transshipment port by the Adani Group.

About the Vizhinjam port:

- Vizhinjam port is a deep water port.
- It is a significant port because:
 - It is proximate to east-west shipping routes.
 - It has a natural undredged draft of around 20 metres.
 - It is suitable for large vessels making it a unique site.
 - Moreover, it can become a hub to earn income and drive economic growth just like the hubs of Dubai, Singapore, and Shanghai.



Source: Vizhinjam Seaport Limited

Issues with the port:

- **Impact on Local Population:**
 - The revenue generation is at the cost of the local residents, as around 350 families lost their homes to coastal erosion in a span of one year. This will be further worsened with the new developments apart from the continuing coastal erosion and frequent cyclones in the region.
 - The livelihood of the local residents is severely affected.
- **Impact on Ecology:**
 - The ecology of the region can be irreversibly destroyed and can trigger more hazards.
 - Port development can also unleash the deterioration of marine biodiversity.
 - Coastal erosion and accretion can be exacerbated by the deepening of harbour channels in ecologically sensitive areas, as evident from the siltation in Chennai and Visakhapatnam ports. The risk is far greater in Vizhinjam because of the order of magnitude.
 - A study in 2017 warned about the fallout for the marine ecosystem and shoreline from the construction of breakwater and dredging.
 - Similarly, a study showed that during the period of 2006-20, there was an erosion of around 2.62 square kilometres (approximately 650 acres) from the coast of Thiruvananthapuram alone.
 - The National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), Chennai released a shoreline report which was based on beach profile and satellite analysis. The report highlighted significant erosion on the northern and southern coast of the port. Accretion was also reported during the port construction from 2015 to 2021.
 - Another study related to the shoreline changes in Kerala, which was conducted by the National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management attributes most of the drastic shoreline changes during 1972-2010 to the infrastructure development along its coast.
 - **Also read:** [Coastal Erosion in India](#)
- **Issues with Project Documents:**
 - A false premise is presented citing negligible siltation and minimum literal drift on the project site.
 - The documents do not address the impacts of the port on the marine ecosystem and biodiversity despite the fact that the Vizhinjam-Poovar stretch is a biodiversity hotspot and a marine protected area.
 - Thiruvananthapuram has the highest percentage of erosion. However, these facts are ignored during environmental clearances.
- **Concerns with EIA**
 - The discussion of the impact on fauna, flora, and lakes in the [environmental impact assessment \(EIA\)](#) is purely pro forma.

- The EIA on the vital shoreline assessment (May 2013) has factual errors. For instance, there is no mention of the ecological consequences of the dismantling of two hills in the Western Ghats to provide rocks for the project.
- In addition to these, no funds have been allocated to maintain dredging.

Read more on [Coastal Regulation Zone](#) in the link.

Measures Ahead:

- High pollution penalties should be imposed on the creators of damage.
- The borrower and the financier must ensure sufficient safeguards to avoid marine pollution and biodiversity destruction in case of large-scale infrastructure projects.
- Moreover, the project must allocate enough funds to recognize the centuries-old rights of people on the sea and its resources. The very first order of business in case of infrastructure projects across the world is providing sufficient compensation to the displaced people and restoring their rights.
- Corrective action in the form of hard-engineering solutions like seawalls and soft responses like afforestation should also be adequately implemented.
- The gross neglect of the damage to marine biodiversity should be addressed by a proper EIA, including inputs from experts in ecology and oceanography.
- In addition to the above points, an independent assessment of measures taken should be a prerequisite for any further construction work. This should be monitored by the port authorities.

Nut Graf:

As approximately two-thirds of Kerala's coasts are eroding, adequate precautions are indispensable before proceeding with any development works in ecologically sensitive areas. It is extremely critical to have sustainable development with the scope of mid-course transformation.

F. Prelims Facts

Nothing here for today!!!

G. Tidbits

1. SC asks Centre, States to allay EWS quota concerns

- A Constitution Bench consisting of five judges, led by the Chief Justice of India U.U. Lalit is examining the validity of the 103rd Constitutional Amendment, which provides the 10%

reservation to economically weaker sections (EWS) of society in government jobs and educational institutions.

- The Supreme Court bench asked the governments at the Centre and the States to address a list of concerns raised in the court over the granting of reservation on a purely economic basis and whether it is a violation of the Basic Structure of the Constitution to exclude the SCs, the STs and other most impoverished Socially and Educationally Backward Classes in the country from its ambit.
- Economic reservation was introduced by amending Articles 15 and 16 of the constitution and adding clauses that empower the State governments to grant reservation based on economic backwardness.

Basic concerns | With the SC scrutinising the EWS quota, senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan had prepared the draft legal issues for the Bench to examine:

■ Whether the 103rd Constitution Amendment Act removes the basis of Indra Sawhney judgment that quota cannot be given on a purely economic basis

■ Whether the amendment breaches the Basic Structure of the Constitution in excluding the SEBCs, OBCs, SCs, STs from the scope of EWS reservation

■ Whether it breaches the

equality code and the Constitutional scheme by giving sanctity to the 'existing reservation', which is only created temporarily

■ Whether it breaches the 50% quota limit by permitting EWS reservations up to 10% over and above the existing reservation

■ Whether the imposition of EWS quota on private unaided institutions violates the Basic Structure



For an in-depth understanding of the Reservation System in India, watch below:

2. 'Limited change' in cities under clean air scheme

- An analysis by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) has pointed out that there is “barely any difference” in trends in particulate matter pollution (PM2.5) between the group of cities under the [National Clean Air Programme \(NCAP\)](#) and those outside its purview.
- The NCAP introduced in 2019 aims to cut down the pollution levels by 20%-30% with respect to PM2.5 and PM10 particles by 2024, using 2017 pollution levels as a base.
- The [Central Pollution Control Board \(CPCB\)](#) which coordinates the programme, considers only PM10 levels for disbursing funds and the PM2.5 particles which are smaller and more dangerous aren't monitored as robustly in all cities due to the lack of equipment.
- CSE in its national analysis of PM2.5 levels in cities for which data is available reported that only 14 of 43 (NCAP) cities registered a 10% or more reduction in their PM2.5 level between 2019 and 2021.
- Cities in states like Punjab, Rajasthan and Maharashtra are said to have registered a significant increase in PM2.5 levels between 2019 and 2021 whereas cities like Chennai, Varanasi and Pune have reported better improvement among NCAP cities.

3. India gets its first nasal COVID vaccine

- iNCOVACC which is India's first nasal COVID-19 vaccine, developed by Bharat Biotech, has been approved for primary immunisation of those who are 18 years old and above in emergency situations.
- iNCOVACC is expected to be a game changer in intra-nasal vaccine technology and delivery systems.
- iNCOVACC is a ChAd36-SARS-CoV-S COVID-19 (Chimpanzee Adenovirus Vectored) recombinant vaccine and is stable between two and eight degrees Celsius which makes it easy for storage and distribution.
- The vaccine offers dual advantages of enabling faster development of variant-specific vaccines and easy nasal delivery which facilitates mass immunisation to protect individuals from emerging variants thereby making it a crucial tool to counter future pandemics and endemics.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements with regards to Covid - 19 vaccines: (Level – Medium)

1. Bharat Biotech's COVID-19 recombinant nasal vaccine has been approved by the Ministry of Health's Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation for primary immunisation of those aged 12 years and above in emergency situations.
2. Nasal vaccines aim to overcome potential difficulties with mass vaccination and reduce the cost by doing away with the need for needles and syringes.
3. According to experts, there is very little evidence to back the effectiveness of nasal route of delivery so far and, apart from some flu vaccines, attempts to deliver vaccines like this have not been successful.

Choose the correct code:

- a. Only one statement is incorrect
- b. Only two statements are incorrect
- c. All three statements are incorrect
- d. None of the statements is incorrect

Answer: a

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is not correct**, Bharat Biotech's COVID-19 recombinant nasal vaccine has been approved by the Ministry of Health's Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation for primary immunisation of those aged **18 years and above** in emergency situations.
- **Statement 2 is correct**, Nasal vaccines aim to overcome potential difficulties with mass vaccination and reduce the cost by doing away with the need for needles and syringes.
- **Statement 3 is correct**, According to experts, there is very little evidence to back the effectiveness of this route of delivery so far and, save for some flu vaccines, attempts to deliver vaccines like this have not been successful.

Q2. Consider the following statements with respect to the Satluj Yamuna Link canal: (Level – Medium)

1. Once completed, it will enable sharing of the waters of the rivers Ravi and Beas between Haryana and Punjab.
2. In 1982, then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi launched the construction of the SYL Canal.
3. Water resources are under the State List, while the Parliament has the power to make laws regarding inter-state rivers under the Union List.

Choose the correct code:

- a. 1 & 2 only

- b. 2 & 3 only
- c. 1 & 3 only
- d. All of the above

Answer: d

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, Sutlej-Yamuna Link (SYL) Canal once complete will help in sharing the waters of the rivers Ravi and Beas between the states of Punjab and Haryana.
- **Statement 2 is correct**, The construction of the SYL Canal was launched in April 1982 by then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in Kapoori village in the Patiala district of Punjab.
- **Statement 3 is correct**, Water resources are under the State List, while the Parliament has the power to make laws regarding inter-state rivers under the Union List.

Q3. Which of the following Supreme Court cases are related to Section 66A of the Information Technology Act, 2000? (Level – Easy)

- a. Lily Thomas case, 2013
- b. Shreya Singhal case, 2015
- c. Suresh Kumar Koushal case, 2013
- d. Justice K.S. Puttaswamy case, 2017

Answer: b

Explanation:

- In the **Shreya Singhal case, 2015**, Supreme Court had declared Section 66A of the IT Act, which made the online posting of information considered “grossly offensive” a crime punishable by jail, as being violative of Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution and not saved under the ambit of reasonable restrictions defined in Article 19(2).
- The Supreme Court had held that the expressions used in Section 66A were open-ended, undefined and therefore arbitrary.

Q4. Consider the following statements: (Level – Difficult)

1. The cheetah is believed to have disappeared from the Indian landscape when the Maharaja Ramanuj Pratap Singh Deo of Koriya in the present day Chhattisgarh hunted and shot the last three recorded Asiatic cheetahs in India in 1947.
2. The cheetah was declared extinct from India in 1952.

3. Under the intercontinental cheetah translocation project at the Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh, eight cheetahs are being brought from South Africa.

Choose the correct code:

- a. 1 & 2 only
- b. 2 & 3 only
- c. 1 & 3 only
- d. All of the above

Answer: a

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, Maharaja Ramanuj Pratap Singh Deo of Korla in the present day Chhattisgarh is widely believed to have killed the last three recorded cheetahs in India in 1947.
- **Statement 2 is correct**, Cheetah was declared extinct from India in 1952.
- **Statement 3 is not correct**, Under the intercontinental cheetah translocation project at the Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh, eight cheetahs are being brought from **Namibia**.

Q5. Which of the following statements are correct about the deposits of 'methane hydrate'? (Level – Medium) PYQ (2019)

1. Global warming might trigger the release of methane gas from these deposits.
2. Large deposits of 'methane hydrate' are found in Arctic Tundra and under the seafloor.
3. Methane in the atmosphere oxidizes to carbon dioxide after a decade or two.

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, Global warming might cause the melting of ice triggering the release of methane gas from these deposits and has a significant impact on climate change.
- **Statement 2 is correct**, Large deposits of 'methane hydrate' are found in Arctic Tundra and under the seafloor.

- **Statement 3 is correct**, Methane in the atmosphere oxidizes to carbon dioxide after a decade or two.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Critically examine the latest developments in India – Bangladesh relationship. (250 words; 15 marks) (GS II - International Relations)
2. The controversy surrounding the Vizhinjam port project highlights the need to put port development with coastal management on a sustainable track. (250 words; 15 marks) (GS III - Environment)

