

27 Oct 2022: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis



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A. GS 1 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

B. GS 2 Related

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C. GS 3 Related

Category: ECONOMY

1. The FM's call for industrial investment

Syllabus: Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

Mains: The trends in the Indian economy and the need for scaling up investments in the manufacturing sector.

Context

- Recently, the Union Finance Minister urged the industry giants to invest in the manufacturing sector.
- The Finance Minister likened the industry to Lord Hanuman by saying that the industry has not realised its own strengths and that it should progress with confidence.

The need for urging the industry to invest in manufacturing

- To strengthen private investment, the government in September 2019 reduced the tax rate for domestic companies from 30% to 22% if they stopped availing of any other tax SOPs.
 - Despite the move, investments in the manufacturing sector have failed to happen at the expected rate.
- According to experts, private sector investment in the country has been very weak in the last 10 years.
- Experts also warn about a prevailing economic slump in the economy as the analysis of the drivers of economic growth shows that the exports are under a threat due to a global slowdown and the government's ability to aid domestic demand will also become limited as the [fiscal deficit](#) comes down.
- Further, as the Indian economy is undergoing a K-shaped recovery, private consumption is only concentrated in a few areas of the income pyramid.

Current scenario

- As per the GDP estimates for the quarter ending in June, gross fixed capital formation (GFCF) at 2011-12 prices increased by 9.6% to ₹12.77 lakh crores, from ₹11.66 lakh crores in Q1 of FY20 which is in the pre-pandemic period.
 - Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF) refers to the net increase in physical assets (investment minus disposals).
 - GFCF does not account for the consumption (depreciation) of fixed capital and is a component of the expenditure approach to calculating GDP.
- Additionally, the overall GDP growth was found to be 2.8% at ₹36.85 lakh crores in Q1 FY23 as compared to ₹35.85 lakh crores in Q1 of FY20.
- The Manufacturing GVA (gross value added) also increased by 6.5% to reach ₹6,05,104 in Q1 FY23 as compared to ₹5,68,104 in Q1, FY20.
 - However, the comparison of the growth in manufacturing in the preceding quarter i.e. (April-June vs January-March) indicates that the sector experienced a 10.5% contraction.
- The private final consumption expenditure which is regarded as a key pillar of the economy, increased about 26% year-on-year for the June quarter but the private spending in April-June 2022 was about 2.4% (₹54,000 crores) less than that spent in the preceding quarter.
 - Additionally, the GFCF, which is seen as an indication of private investment, also reduced quarter-on-quarter by about 6.8%.
- Industrial production has posted growth in the five months of FY23 (April-August) as compared to the year earlier. However, the monthly numbers as per the [Index of Industrial Production \(IIP\)](#) and the S&P Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) for Manufacturing have been irregular and sporadic.

Trends in the domestic demand

- Domestic demand plays a crucial role in driving the growth of the economy as private companies would be encouraged to invest only if they can earn profits and this comes from demand.
- According to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), the consumer sentiment index in the country is still below the pre-pandemic levels despite being higher than what was seen in the last 12-18 months.
- As per the recent RBI's monetary policy report, data for Q2 show that aggregate demand has remained buoyant and is supported by the current recovery in private consumption and investment demand.
 - It also indicated that the seasonally adjusted capacity utilisation increased to 74.3% in Q1 which is the highest in the last three years.

- This coupled with household savings intentions being high might be the key for the investment cycle to kick in.

Recommendations

- According to experts, capital expenditure by the government is a prerequisite to private investment. In this context, the government's vision to spend aggressively on infrastructure in its Budget for this fiscal year is encouraging but this cycle must have begun much earlier.
- With the government having its intent set, the focus now must be on:
 - Recognising the right projects and investments should be made in productivity-enhancing infrastructure.
 - As the increasing inflation has the potential to derail public spending initiatives, efforts must be undertaken to scale up the agricultural produce which helps mitigate food inflation.

***Nut graf:** At a time when private investments are not flowing in at an expected pace, the Government has urged the private sector to invest in manufacturing and has looked to spend aggressively on infrastructure with an aim to revitalise private investments.*

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: SOCIAL JUSTICE

1. Improving access to entertainment content

***Syllabus:** Vulnerable Sections - Disabled*

***Mains:** Policies and interventions to make India inclusive and participative for the differently-abled.*

Context: Designing entertainment content with the needs of the disabled in mind.

Introduction:

- Inaccessible physical environments, lack of mobility and transportation, unavailability of assistive devices and technologies, and inaccessible websites and services hinder equal

participation of persons with disabilities (divyangjan) in mainstream socio-economic and cultural activities.

- As per the Census 2011, there are 2.68 crore persons with disabilities in India.
- The Accessible India Campaign was launched in 2015 to make a barrier-free and conducive environment and accessible ecosystems to help persons with disabilities by providing equality of opportunity and an enabling environment.
- The [Accessible India Campaign](#) (AIC) promotes accessibility in websites, public documents, media content on TV and training of sign language interpreters.
 - The key objectives are also to develop accessible websites, upload accessible public documents and sign-language interpretation of public television news and entertainment programmes.

Tools to make entertainment disabled-friendly:

- Two important tools that help make entertainment content disabled-friendly are audio description and subtitling.
- **Audio description (AD)** (also referred to as “description” or “video description”) is defined as “the verbal depiction of key visual elements in media and live productions.”
 - AD is meant to provide information on visual content that is considered essential to the comprehension of the program.
 - In these cases, not providing AD would inhibit blind and visually impaired individuals from gaining a complete understanding of the given program.
- **Subtitling** is the process of translating spoken dialogue into written text on the screen for the benefit of those who cannot hear.
 - It is a type of audiovisual translation, with its own set of rules and guidelines.

Government Policies:

- Without being able to access the facilities and services found in the communities, persons with disabilities will never be fully included.
- The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act provides guidance to remedy this issue.
 - Section 29(h) of the Act requires the appropriate government to take measures to ensure that “persons with hearing impairment can have access to television programmes with sign language interpretation or sub-titles.”
 - Further, Section 42(ii) requires the appropriate government to take measures to ensure that “persons with disabilities have access to electronic media by providing audio description, sign language interpretation and close captioning.”
- In October 2019, the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (I&B Ministry) issued a letter to the Central Board for Film Certification ([CBFC](#)) requesting the Board to

motivate and persuade its associated members to make audio description part of the production and distribution of a film.

- The Union government under AIC has several objectives to enhance the proportion of accessible and usable public documents and websites that meet internationally recognized accessibility standards.
 - Conducting accessibility audits of 50% of all government (both Central and State Governments) websites and converting them into fully accessible websites.
 - Ensure that at least 50% of all public documents issued by the Central Government and the State Governments meet accessibility standards.
 - Enhance the pool of sign language interpreters.
 - Enhance the proportion of daily captioning and sign-language interpretation of public television news programmes.
 - Develop and adopt national standards on captioning and sign-language interpretation in consultation with national media authorities.

Steps towards inclusivity:

- ‘Saksham’, a non-governmental organisation for visually impaired persons has pioneered audio descriptions for films in India. It has developed an app called XL Cinema which syncs audio-described tracks with movies.
 - On buying an audio ticket for a movie that has been audio described, a user can hear the audio description of the movie in a theatre at the same time when the movie is being showcased.
- More than 1250 Sign Language Interpreters have been trained by the Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre through long-term, short-term and professional courses.
- Sugamya Bharat App, a crowdsourcing mobile application was launched on 2nd March 2021.
 - The App has been developed by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
 - It is a means for sensitising and enhancing accessibility in the 3 pillars of the Accessible India Campaign i.e. built environment, transportation sector and ICT ecosystem in India.

Way Forward:

- Many movie producers believe that there is a poor demand for audio descriptions in India. Until a critical mass of users puts pressure on platforms to provide audio description and subtitling, this issue will get pushed down the priority list of the powers that be.

- Amidst all the responsibilities that film studios have to discharge during a movie release, accessibility for the disabled takes a back seat.
 - Studios must realise that making disabled-friendly content is the right thing to do — morally, legally and commercially.
- Production houses often lack the know-how, human resources or adequate lead time to make new content disabled-friendly.
 - User organisations must undertake targeted interventions to sensitise filmmakers and engage in capacity-building initiatives.
- Civil society groups must draw on the court system to translate written legal guarantees into improved real-world outcomes.
- Citizens with disabilities must demand accountability from the government, filmmakers, streaming platforms and others in the entertainment ecosystem through the judicial process.
- Awareness generation and sensitization are key to bringing transformational change in society regarding accessibility.

Nut Graf: *Access to information creates opportunities for everyone in society. In India, the potential of the various tools to make entertainment content disabled-friendly has largely remained untapped. For a truly inclusive society, the entertainment industry should also strive to make its content and distribution of content more disabled-friendly and accessible.*

Category: WORLD HISTORY

1. Colonialism and its discontents today

Syllabus: *Colonisation and Decolonisation*

Mains: *Decolonisation of Education in India*

Context: Comments made on “foreign attacks” and “colonialism” recently by Indian External Affairs Minister Mr. S. Jaishankar in his address to the 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly has reignited the debate on the decolonisation process.

Introduction:

- Praising the “determination, innovation and enterprise of millions of ordinary Indians”, Mr. Jaishankar asserted that “They are rejuvenating a society pillaged by centuries of foreign attacks and colonialism”.
 - This formulation seemed like a distinction between “centuries of foreign attacks” and “colonialism”.
- As an ideology, colonialism has an inbuilt device to deal with the reactive moods of the colonised according to economic and political seasons.

Colonisation and Education:

- Colonialism and education are closely interlinked. Historically, education systems were used and abused in efforts to control colonies.
- Majoritarian nationalism picked up English as a de-colonisation plank.
 - For example, [Jyotirao Govindrao Phule](#) supported English education believing in its potential to wipe out discrimination against the lower castes.
- The knowledge of English has given Indians an edge in the global market. Though English continues to be a mark of privilege in some pockets of India, it has become a necessity and an important tool of communication.

Decolonisation of Education:

- Decolonization is the process of undoing colonisation practices. It involves reflecting on the structure of educational institutions, and their role within the larger society.
 - Within the educational context, this means confronting and challenging the colonising practices that have influenced education in the past, and which are still present today.
 - Calls for the decolonisation of the education system stem from lived experiences of inequalities that reflect historically uneven power relations and legacies of colonialism.
 - Hence, decolonising education demands recognising a historically specific set of colonial power relations, and how they continue to play out in structures, institutions, relations and processes today.
- The post-colonial science and science education is deeply mixed with colonial hangover and practices. Science should be made available locally. It will help its acceptance and understanding by the masses. It will enrich the scientific temper and the spirit of inquiry among the Indian masses.
 - Modern schools, colleges and universities should focus on Indianizing education instead of becoming part of western thoughts.
- The [National Education Policy 2022](#) tends to replace rote learning, as was promoted by our colonial masters to produce 'clerks' and rather emphasise conceptual understanding of subjects and issues to hone the analytical skills that were emphasised in olden times.
 - It is aimed at strengthening moral and basic education and offers us opportunities for equitable and qualitative development which is sensitive to particular cultural contexts.
 - The NEP might be able to raise a generation of Indian scientific thinkers. They would help us make sense of our ideas of scientific modernity rooted in Indian scientific thought.
 - The policy is in tune with the ideals of [Swami Vivekananda](#) who advocated education as a manifestation of perfection which is inherent in all human beings.

***Nut Graf:** Since independence, enormous changes have occurred in every social sphere which demonstrates the continued legacy of colonial history. No one-dimensional theory of colonialism and modernity can explain the changes that have occurred in different regions, especially in the education sector.*

F. Prelims Facts

1. Jalal-ud-din Akbar

Syllabus: GS-1; Indian History

Prelims: Facts about Akbar

Context: The Mughal emperor Akbar is said to have expired on 27th October 1605.

Jalal-ud-din Akbar

- Jalal-ud-din Akbar, who is famously known as Akbar, was born on October 15 in 1542 in Umarkot which is currently located in the Sindh province of Pakistan.
- He was the son of the Mughal emperor [Humayun](#) and Hamida Banu Begum.
- Akbar reigned from 1556 to 1605 and is regarded as the greatest Mughal emperor of India.
- Akbar is known for his religious tolerance, empire-building, administrative and financial reforms and patronage of the arts.
- Akbar built a hall called **Ibadat Khana** (Hall of Prayer) at his new capital, Fatehpur Sikri wherein he invited learned scholars from all religions like Hinduism, Jainism, Christianity and [Zoroastrianism](#) and used to conduct religious discussions with them.
- Akbar also set up a new religion called **Din-i-Ilahi/Tawhid-i-Ilahi** (Divine Monotheism) which believes in one God and Sulh-i-Kul (equal toleration and respect to all religious sects).
- Akbar's court is also known for housing extraordinary officials who are called Akbar's Navratna as they were nine in number and they included the likes of -
 - Birbal, Tansen, Abul Fazal, Faizi, Raja Man Singh, Raja Todar Mal, Mullah Do Piazza, Fakir Aziao-Din and Abdul Rahim Khan-I-Khana.

G. Tidbits

1. GEAC gives its nod for commercial cultivation of GM mustard yet again

- The [Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee \(GEAC\)](#) which works under the aegis of the Union Environment Ministry has once again cleared the proposal for the commercial cultivation of genetically modified (GM) mustard plant.
 - The GEAC had earlier given a nod to the proposal in 2017, but the Ministry vetoed it and had asked the panel to conduct more studies on the GM crop.
- The GEAC gave the required approvals for the cultivation of GM mustard and it will be the second GM crop after GM cotton that has been commercially cultivated in the country.
- The GEAC has allowed the environmental release of two varieties of genetically engineered mustard [Dhara Mustard Hybrid (DMH-11)], so that it can be used for developing new parental lines and hybrids under the supervision of the Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR).
- The committee has also imposed certain conditions for the clearance which include:
 - The approval is for a limited period of four years and is renewable for two years at a time based on the compliance report.
 - External experts will visit the growing sites of the crop at least once during each season.
 - The applicant [Centre for Genetic Manipulation of Crop Plants (CGMCP)] must also develop and deposit the DNA fingerprints of the approved varieties to the ICAR.
- However, several activists have raised concerns about the decision of the GEAC and have asked the Centre not to approve any of these decisions.

2. ISRO to boost NavIC, widen user base of location system

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is undertaking a series of efforts aimed at improving the [NavIC](#) (Navigation with Indian Constellation) which is India's indigenous Regional Navigation Satellite System.
- Plans and efforts are underway to give NavIC a global reach and ensure that more people are motivated to install and use it.
- NavIC is a constellation of seven satellites and is similar to the Global Positioning System (GPS) of the U.S., Galileo of the European Union and GLONASS of Russia.

- NavIC is currently available for use in mainland India and within 1,500 km around it. However, the system is not used widely because mobile phones have not been made compatible with processing its signals.
 - The government has urged the manufacturers to add compatibility and has set a deadline of January 2023.
- According to the chairman of ISRO, adding the L1 band into NavIC would be a major change as this bandwidth is part of the GPS and is the most used bandwidth for civilian navigational use.
 - At present, the NavIC is only compatible with the L5 and S bands and only provides short code.
 - Long Code becomes crucial for the use of the strategic sector as it prevents the signal from being breached.

3. Bats evicted from Manipur cave for tourism, says study

- A zoological study in Manipur revealed that a colony of bats was removed from a Manipur cave system with a Palaeolithic past to make it tourist-friendly.
- The Khangkhui (Khangkhui Mangsor) is a natural limestone cave located in Manipur's Ukhrul district and the excavations by archaeologists have shown that the cave was home to Stone Age communities.
 - The cave was also used as a shelter by the local people during the Second World War after the Japanese forces advanced to Manipur and the adjoining Nagaland.
- Further, the cave also housed a large roosting population of bats belonging to the Rhinolophidae and Hipposideridae families.
 - A study by researchers of the [Zoological Survey of India \(ZSI\)](#) has now revealed that the bats were killed and evicted from the Khangkhui cave after 2016-17 to make it "more tourist-friendly".
- The researchers from ZSI had earlier recorded Blyth's horseshoe bat in the Khangkhui cave during two extensive field surveys in 2019 and 2021.
 - This bat was one of 12 new species added to Manipur's mammalian fauna. The others included the ashy roundleaf bat, the intermediate horseshoe bat, the northern woolly horseshoe bat, the greater false vampire bat, the hairy-faced bat, Hodgson's bat, Hutton's tube-nosed bat and the round-eared tube-nosed bat.
- The latest study also makes a note of places in Manipur where bats are eaten for their medicinal properties or as a supplementary source of protein.
- Another serious threat to bats is the placing of illegal bird traps.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Which of the following are the functions of Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)? (Level – Medium)

1. It monitors substantial acquisitions of shares and take-over of companies.
2. It prohibits insider trading
3. It manages foreign exchange reserves
4. It has oversight of the payment and settlement systems
5. It conducts audits and inquiries of stock exchanges

Options:

- a) 1 and 4 only
- b) 1, 2 and 5 only
- c) 2, 3, 4 and 5 only
- d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Answer: b

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct,** It monitors substantial acquisitions of shares and take-over of companies.
- **Statement 2 is correct,** It has powers to curb insider trading.
- **Statement 3 is not correct,** The **Reserve Bank of India** is the custodian of the foreign exchange reserves and is vested with the responsibility of managing their investment.
- **Statement 4 is not correct,** The **Reserve Bank of India** as a central bank has an operational role in oversight of the payment and settlement systems.
- **Statement 5 is correct,** SEBI conducts audits and inquiries of stock exchanges.

Q2. Consider the following statements: (Level – Difficult)

1. During the first few years of Akbar's reign, Miran Khan acted as his regent.
2. Akbar had divided the empire into 12 subas or provinces.
3. Akbar married the Rajput princess Jodha Bai, daughter of Raja Bharamal of Amber.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1, 2 and 3

d) None

Answer: b

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is not correct**, During the first few years of Akbar's reign, **Bairam Khan** acted as his regent.
- **Statement 2 is correct**, In c. 1580 CE, Akbar divided the empire into 12 subas or provinces. These were Bengal, Bihar, Allahabad, Awadh, Agra, Delhi, Lahore, Multan, Kabul, Ajmer, Malwa and Gujarat.
- **Statement 3 is correct**, Akbar married the Rajput princess Jodha Bai, daughter of Raja Bharamal of Amber.

Q3. Khangkhui Mangsor Cave recently seen in news is in the State of: (Level – Difficult)

- a) Assam
- b) Manipur
- c) Tripura
- d) Arunachal Pradesh

Answer: b

Explanation:

- Khangkhui (Khangkhui Mangsor) is a natural limestone cave located in **Manipur's** Ukhrul district.
- Excavations by archaeologists have revealed that the cave was home to Stone Age communities.

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

1. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has the 'sole right' to issue banknotes in India.
2. The Coinage Act, 2011 gives the RBI the power to design and mint coins in various denominations.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: a

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, Reserve Bank has the sole authority to issue banknotes in India.
- **Statement 2 is not correct**, As per the Coinage Act, 2011 the **Government of India** is responsible for the designing and minting of coins in various denominations.

Q5. With reference to Convertible Bonds, consider the following statements: (Level – Medium) PYQ (2022)

1. As there is an option to exchange the bond for equity, Convertible Bonds pay a lower rate of interest.
2. The option to convert to equity affords the bondholder a degree of indexation to rising consumer prices.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, A convertible bond is a mix between an equity and debt instrument and as there is an option to exchange the bond for equity, Convertible Bonds pay a lower rate of interest.
- **Statement 2 is correct**, The option to convert to equity affords the bondholder a degree of indexation to rising consumer prices as equity prices can differ widely from the given interest and the difference in that can be used as a hedge for inflation.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. [India's reluctance in permitting GM crops is based more on politics than science. Critically Analyze.](#) (250 words; 15 marks) (GS-3; Environment)
2. [Colonialism resides more in our thinking than physical symbols. Do you agree? Elaborate.](#) (250 words; 15 marks) (GS-1; Culture)