

## 19 Oct 2022: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

“

By education I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man-body, mind and spirit. Literacy is not the end of education or even the beginning.

- M.K. Gandhi

”



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A. GS 1 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## B. GS 2 Related

### Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

#### 1. Gambia child deaths and cough syrups

*Syllabus: Bilateral agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.*

*Prelims: About diethylene glycol (DEG) and ethylene glycol*

*Mains: The Gambia Cough Syrup Scandal and its implications for India*

#### Context

A number of child deaths in the Gambia were linked to the use of contaminated cough syrups made and exported by an Indian manufacturer.

#### Background

- In September 2022, health authorities of Gambia initiated various investigations to examine if there is any link between the use of syrup for treating fever, cough, and cold and the deaths of several children due to acute kidney failures.
- Children reportedly fell sick within three to five days of consumption of the syrup and experienced fever, inability to pass urine, and vomiting, followed by kidney failure.
- Gambia started coordinating with the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) to investigate the incident and WHO issued a medical alert about four substandard cough syrup variants which were manufactured by a Haryana-based pharma company named Maiden Pharmaceuticals Limited.
- According to WHO, these cough syrup variants may have been contaminated with diethylene glycol (DEG) and ethylene glycol which could have caused acute kidney injuries.

#### What are diethylene glycol (DEG) and ethylene glycol and why are they used?

- As per WHO, diethylene glycol (DEG) and ethylene glycol are fatal to humans.
- WHO has listed the toxic effects of the consumption of these two chemicals which include vomiting, diarrhoea, difficulty passing urine, headache, altered mental state, and acute kidney failure/injury which can cause death.

- Diethylene glycol (DEG) and ethylene glycol are illegal adulterants that are used as solvents in liquid medications.
- Usually, common solvents like glycerine and propylene glycol are used in liquid medications to provide a liquid base for non-water-soluble paracetamol or acetaminophen.
  - These solvents also perform the role of preservatives, thickeners, sweeteners, and antimicrobial agents.
  - However, compounds or chemicals such as DEG and ethylene glycol are used as solvents to reduce expenses as they are comparatively cheaper.

### Similar incidents in the past

- Such instances of contamination-linked deaths have been reported in India, the U.S., Bangladesh, Panama, and Nigeria earlier as well.
- Cough syrup was held responsible for the death of 12 children in the Udhampur district of Jammu in 2019 and 2020 and high levels of DEG were found in the cough syrup.
- Much before in 1973, a similar incident was reported at the Children's Hospital, Egmore in Chennai that led to the deaths of 14 children.
- In 1986, a similar incident took place at J.J. Hospital in Mumbai which led to the deaths of 14 patients.
- In 1998, 33 children died in two hospitals located in New Delhi due to similar poisoning.

### Response by India

- The [Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation](#) (CDSCO) in collaboration with the State Drugs Controller of Haryana has initiated an investigation to find out the facts and details of the issue.
  - The CDSCO has also said that the importing country conducts quality tests and checks on the products before authorising their usage, as a practice.
- According to reports, the pharma company has so far exported these four cough syrups only to The Gambia and the Indian authorities are waiting for the WHO to share the “one-to-one causal relation of death” and the details of the product labels which help identify the source of the manufacturing of the products.
- Further, none of these four cough syrups is sold in India as Maiden Pharmaceutical Limited has no presence in the Indian domestic market and is only involved in exports.

To read more about the topic refer to the following article:

[UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis dated 15 Oct 2022](#)

***Nut graf:** The Gambia cough syrup tragedy can have serious implications on the Indian pharmaceutical industry and threatens India's reputation of being the "pharmacy of the world". This incident should act as a wake-up call for establishing strict quality controls in the country.*

## 2. Step up global efforts to defeat crime, says Modi

***Syllabus:** Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.*

***Prelims:** About Interpol*

***Mains:** The importance of international cooperation in order to combat organised crime.*

### Context

The Prime Minister of India called for increased global cooperation to counter the threats of terrorism, corruption, drug trafficking, poaching and organised crimes at the 90th [Interpol](#) General Assembly meet being held in New Delhi.

### Background

For background information about this topic refer to the following article:

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

### Details

- The Prime Minister of India said that it is important to ensure that there are no safe havens across the world for the perpetrators of organised crimes such as terrorism and drug trafficking.
- In recent times nations and societies are becoming more inward-looking and at this moment it is significant that India has urged for more international cooperation as the PM of India said that "Global cooperation for local welfare - is our call".
- PM Narendra Modi said that India has been fighting transnational terrorism even before the world realised the price of safety and security.
- The PM also acknowledged the increasing threat of cyber crimes and reiterated the need for formulating international strategies, setting up early detection and warning systems, safeguarding transportation services, and protecting communication infrastructure and critical infrastructure by enhancing technological cooperation and intelligence exchange.
- He also spoke about the role of corruption and financial crimes in terror funding and impacting democracies across the world.

### Achievements of India in handling crisis situations

- The PM of India appreciated Indian police both at the Union as well as State levels for implementing more than 900 national and about 10,000 State laws in coordination.
  - He said that the police forces have played a huge role in safeguarding the democracy, diversity and rights of the people guaranteed by the Constitution.
- India had been one of the topmost contributors of troops to the [United Nations peacekeeping operations](#).
- Further, in recent years India has played a lead role in combating various global crises such as climate change and the COVID pandemic.

*Nut graf: Due to growing interconnectedness in the global order, crimes against people in one region can now impact the rest of the world and hence such crimes are to be treated as crimes against the whole of humanity and the law enforcement agencies from across the world must collaborate to devise protocols to counter such organised crimes.*

#### C. GS 3 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

#### D. GS 4 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

#### E. Editorials

**Category: HISTORY**

### 1. The dire need to talk about 1962

*Syllabus: GS1, History, Post-independence history of India.*

*Prelims: India-China war 1962.*

*Mains: India-China war 1962.*

**Context:** 60th observance of the 1962 India-China war. The war began on October 20, 1962.

**Details:**



- India as a nation commemorated the golden jubilee of the 1965 India-Pakistan war. And the celebration of the golden jubilee of the [1971 war](#) was commemorated with all-India debates, discussions, seminars, symposia, and exhibitions. These events were celebrated and commemorated publicly as they brought joy or a sense of accomplishment that enriched an individual or a group.
- However, the 60th anniversary of the 1962 India-China war will not be observed as it was a dark moment in the history of India. According to one report, India lost nearly 1,383 soldiers who were killed, around 1,047 were wounded, 1,696 went missing, and about 400 were taken as prisoners of war by China.

**For more on the India-China war, read here: [Sino-Indian War Started. October 20, 1962 - This Day in History](#)**

#### **Major issues of the war:**

- Though the then Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru was a great leader and highly respected in Asia, Africa, and Western countries, the misguided confidence in the short-term moral superiority and peaceful intentions of China resulted in a weakened Army. The Indian army was both ill-prepared and ill-equipped to face the realities of hard power.
- The strength of the Indian Air Force (IAF) was underestimated. Thus, its offensive fleet was not used. It has been suggested in various writings that the utilization of fighter aircraft would have been a game changer in the war as the Air force of China was at a severe operational disadvantage because of the high altitude of the airfields.
- There was a lop-sided power equation between the political, bureaucratic, and military leadership which was responsible for many ills. The top brass of the army could not go against political interference, despite the fact that the affairs were purely military in nature.
- The contribution of Indian Jawans on the front is praiseworthy and legendary but the unheralded, unsung, and back-breaking work of the transport and helicopter aircrew of the Indian Air Force is often overlooked. The pilots and co-pilots worked tirelessly flying troops round-the-clock.
- It is also argued that the frontline warfighter lived up to his credo but the senior military leadership could not deliver much in the field as per their rank and position.

#### **Future course of action:**

- The hindsight analysis should be channelized into knowledge and wisdom, which is required to be imparted to young civil and military mid-level and field grade officers.
- Politicians should also participate. The Government should open the documents that are still classified including the Henderson Brooks-Bhagat report.
- The war colleges of the three services namely the Defence Services Staff College (Wellington, Tamil Nadu) and the National Defence College (Delhi) should deeply examine the fateful period.

- The media should debate the issue more.

**Also read:** [India-China Conflict - Galwan Valley Clash](#)

***Nut Graf:** It is good to celebrate and rejoice in India's victories. But a deeper analysis of the dark phase of 1962 in Indian history should also be adequately discussed and lessons should be learned. Honest and open conversations can help us learn from misadventures and come out stronger.*

## F. Prelims Facts

### 1. Nihonshu

*Syllabus: GS-3; Science and Technology; Issues relating to intellectual property rights.*

*Prelims: Nihonshu or Japanese sake*

#### Context

- Recently, the Embassy of Japan, New Delhi, has filed an application seeking a [Geographical Indication \(GI\) tag](#) for Nihonshu or Japanese sake which is an alcoholic beverage.
- It is reportedly the first time that a product from Japan has filed for a tag at the Geographical Indication Registry in Chennai.

#### Nihonshu

- Nihonshu is considered a special beverage made from fermenting rice.
- Nihonshu is said to be an integral part of the lifestyle and culture in Japan as traditionally people in Japan drink nihonshu on special occasions like festivals and weddings.
- The making of Nihonshu involves three main raw materials namely rice, koji-kin (a type of fungal spore) and water.
- An alcoholic fermentation method known as parallel multiple fermentation is used in the production of Nihonshu.
  - The process involves raw material treatment, koji making, starter culture-making, mash making, pressing, heat sterilisation and bottling.
- The Embassy of Japan, while filing the application mentioned that in the past, the economy of Japan was based around rice.
- The nihonshu production gave rise to the hierarchical Toii system (Toii is the person responsible for sake brewing) which is likened to a guild system.

## 2. Six spider species discovered across the country

**Syllabus:** GS-3; Environment; Biodiversity

**Prelims:** New species of spiders

### Context

Arachnologists from the Centre for Animal Taxonomy and Ecology (CATE) have discovered six new species of spiders from across the country.

### Details

- The new species of spiders were discovered in the Garo hills in Meghalaya, the Thar desert in Rajasthan, Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary, Kottappara hills near Kothamangalam, Thumboormuzhi butterfly garden near Athirappilly, and the University of Calicut campus.
- **Studies at Garo hills of Meghalaya:** studies led to the first spotting of the genus *Siamspinops* from India with a new species *Siamspinops garoensis*.
  - This species belongs to the family of **flat spiders** named Selenopidae.
  - This spider lives in the crevices of rocks on hills.
  - The spider is yellowish-brown in colour and measures about 10 mm in length.
  - A black circle around its eyes and black patches on the abdomen was also observed.
- **Jumping spiders:** two new species of spiders under the family of jumping spiders (Salticidae) were discovered in the Thar desert of Rajasthan and the Kurichiyad forest ranges of the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary.
  - *Afraflacilla miajlaensis* discovered in the Thar region is characterised by white fine hairs on a black head and black horizontal lines on the abdomen.
    - This spider stays among dry leaf blades.
  - *Afraflacilla kurichiadensis* discovered in the Wayanad region is characterised by red patches around the eyes and white hairs on the abdomen.
    - The species also has bulged first pair of legs
    - This spider lives in the moist deciduous forest of Kurichiyad.
- **Feather-legged spiders:** *Philoponella rostralis* is another newly found species of spider that lacks a venom gland and belongs to the family of Uloboridae (feather-legged spiders).
  - This species is named *Philoponella rostralis* because of the presence of a beak-like structure on the male reproductive organ.
  - This spider makes a special type of web under the leaves and it can subdue the prey with the help of woolly silk produced from their cribellum.
- **Spiny-legged spiders:** Two new species of spiders belonging to the family of Oxyopidae (spiny-legged spiders) have been discovered in the Thumboormuzhi butterfly garden, near the Athirappilly waterfalls, and on the Calicut University campus.



- The members of this family are famously called lynx spiders because of their lynx-like feeding behaviour.
- *Oxyopes peetham* is the one with a yellowish body.
- *Oxyopes thumboormuzhiensis* is named so to signify the locality where the spiders were spotted.

## G. Tidbits

### 1. Solar Alliance approves funding mechanism

- The [International Solar Alliance \(ISA\)](#) in its General Assembly meeting in New Delhi approved the “**Solar Facility**” which is a payment guarantee mechanism.
- The move is expected to boost investments in solar power projects and stimulate investments into solar projects through two financial components namely **Solar Payment Guarantee Fund** and **Solar Insurance Fund**.
- The objective of the facility is to attract private capital to flow into “underserved markets” in Africa and ISA aims to crowdsource investments from across the globe and proposed projects in Africa would be able to purchase payment guarantees or partial insurance premiums from these funds.
- The key mission of ISA is to unlock about \$1 trillion of investments in solar power by 2030 while reducing the cost of the technology and its financing.

### 2. Grazing animals key to long-term soil carbon stability: IISc study

- A study undertaken by researchers at the Centre for Ecological Sciences (CES) and the Divecha Centre for Climate Change (DCCC), IISc, has shown that grazing animals play a key role in maintaining long-term soil carbon stability.
- The study reveals that large mammalian herbivores such as the Yak and Ibex play a crucial role in stabilising the pool of soil carbon in grazing ecosystems such as the Spiti region in the Himalayas.
  - Experimental removal of such herbivores from these ecosystems increased the fluctuations in the level of soil carbon, which can have severe adverse implications on the global carbon cycle.
- The study reveals that the soil contains more carbon than all plants and the atmosphere combined and it is essential to ensure its persistence.
  - The soil pool is a reliable sink for trapping carbon and thus maintaining stable levels of carbon in the soil is key to mitigating the effects of climate change.

- Further, nitrogen was seen to be a critical factor underlying the carbon level fluctuations as nitrogen can either stabilise or destabilise the carbon pool and grazing by herbivores changes the interactions in a stabilising manner.

### 3. India-U.K. form joint group to enhance defence cooperation

- The Defence industry organisations of India and the U.K. have decided to create a new Defence Industry Joint Working Group (JWG) for more effective cooperation and the inaugural meeting was convened on the sidelines of DefExpo 2022 in Gandhinagar.
- The U.K. recently issued its first Open General Export License in the Indo-Pacific region to India which will shorten the delivery times for defence procurement.
- The Royal Air Force (RAF) recently conducted a subject matter expertise exchange with the Defence Research and Development Organisation ([DRDO](#)) during the visit of Eurofighter Typhoon, Voyager and A-400 in New Delhi and also held joint-flying exercises with the Indian Air Force (IAF).
- A stronger U.K.-India defence relationship is a crucial element of both governments' Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

## H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

**Q1. Consider the following statements with respect to global arms imports and exports.**

**(Level – Medium)**

1. India has been the largest importer of arms from 2017 to 2021.
2. India accounts for over 25% of the total global arms import.
3. Russia was the largest global arms exporter in the period spanning 2017 to 2021.

**How many of the above statements is/are correct?**

- a. One statement only
- b. Two statements only
- c. All three statements
- d. None of the statements

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

- **Statement 1 is correct**, India was the world's largest importer of major arms in 2017-21.

- **Statement 2 is not correct**, Despite a significant decrease, India still accounts for about **11%** of total global arms imports.
- **Statement 3 is not correct**, The **United States** was the world's largest arms exporter responsible for about 38.6% of international arms sales between 2017 and 2021.
  - The five largest arms exporters in 2017–21 were the United States, Russia, France, China and Germany.

**Q2. Consider the following statements about Global Astrometric Interferometer for Astrophysics (GAIA) spacecraft. (Level – Medium)**

1. It is a space observatory of NASA.
2. The mission aims to construct by far the largest and most precise three-dimensional map of our galaxy including stars, planets, comets, asteroids and quasars, among others.

**Which of the above statements is/are correct?**

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

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

- **Statement 1 is not correct**, GAIA is a space observatory of the **European Space Agency (ESA)** which was launched in 2013.
- **Statement 2 is correct**, The mission aims to construct by far the largest and most precise three-dimensional map of our galaxy including stars, planets, comets, asteroids and quasars, among others.

**Q3. India's National Maritime Heritage Complex is being set up in which of the following states? (Level – Easy)**

- a. Tamil Nadu
- b. Maharashtra
- c. West Bengal
- d. Gujarat

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

- National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) is being set up in **Lothal in Gujarat**.
- It is a first-of-its-kind complex in India and this centre will showcase India's rich and diverse maritime heritage.

**Q4. Consider the following statements about the global carbon cycle. (Level – Difficult)**

1. Soil contains more carbon than all plants and the atmosphere combined.
2. Depending on the soil conditions, nitrogen can either stabilise or destabilise the soil carbon pool.

**Which of the above statements 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**, Studies have revealed that the soil contains more carbon than all plants and the atmosphere combined and it is essential to ensure its persistence.
- **Statement 2 is correct**, Depending on the soil conditions, nitrogen can either stabilise or destabilise the soil carbon pool.

**Q5. Consider the following statements: (Level – Difficult) PYQ (2019)**

1. In the revenue administration of Delhi Sultanate, the in-charge of revenue collection was known as 'Amil'.
2. The Iqta system of Sultans of Delhi was an ancient indigenous institution.
3. The office of 'Mir Bakshi' came into existence during the reign of Khalji Sultans of Delhi.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

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

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

- **Statement 1 is correct**, Amil were the officers in charge of revenue collection in the administration of the Delhi Sultanate.
- **Statement 2 is not correct**, The Iqta system was a unique type of land distribution and administrative system introduced during the reign of Iltutmish.
  - The original Iqta system has its origins in Persia and the Middle East.
- **Statement 3 is not correct**, Mir Bakshi was the head of the military department during the reign of the **Mughal Empire**.

### I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Unless a robust financing route is put into place, any project of the International Solar Alliance would fail to fulfil its objective. Critically analyze. (250 words; 15 marks) (GS III - Science & Tech)
2. Cyber threats have emerged as the biggest threats by non-state actors in recent times. How is the Indian government dealing with such issues? (250 words; 15 marks) (GS III - Internal Security)