

10 Dec 2022: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis



An eye for an eye only ends up
making the whole world blind

- Mahatma Gandhi



TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. GS 1 Related

B. GS 2 Related

POLITY

1. Uniform Civil Code

C. GS 3 Related

D. GS 4 Related

E. Editorials

GOVERNANCE

1. Food Safety Net

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. G20 as an alternative to UN security Council

F. Prelims Facts

1. Cyclone Mandous

2. Scramjet engine

3. Three Himalayan medicinal plants enter IUCN Red List

G. Tidbits

1. Centre introduces Bills to modify ST list in four States

2. ILO declaration urges countries to ensure labour protection

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

A. GS 1 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

B. GS 2 Related

Category: POLITY

1. Uniform Civil Code

Syllabus: Constitution of India — features and significant provisions

Prelims: About Uniform Civil Code (UCC)

Mains: Critical evaluation of the implementation of UCC in India

Context

- A [private member bill](#) was introduced in Rajya Sabha for the implementation of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) across the country.
- The Bill proposes to set up the National Inspection and Investigation Committee for the preparation of UCC and its implementation throughout the country.

Uniform Civil Code (UCC)

- A Uniform Civil Code (UCC) means that all sections of the society irrespective of their religion shall be treated equally according to a national civil code, which shall be applicable to all uniformly.
- UCC extends to cover a wide range of aspects such as marriages, divorce, maintenance, inheritance, adoption and succession of property which are currently governed by various personal laws.
- **Article 44** of the Constitution which is a part of [Directive Principles of State Policy \(DPSP\)](#) says that the state should endeavour to secure its citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India.

Criticism on the implementation of UCC

- The Opposition members have urged the withdrawal of the Bill as they believe that UCC will disrupt the secular fabric of the country.

- Members who opposed the legislation also said that the implementation of UCC will lead to unnecessary provocation and it is not feasible to be implemented in a country like India.
- Critics also believe that the legislation would cause polarisation in society and would be detrimental to the country.
- Opposition party members have also cited the 21st Law Commission Report which concluded that UCC is neither necessary nor desirable in the country.

***Nut graf:** The introduction of a private member bill in Rajya Sabha that aims to implement UCC throughout the country has met with severe opposition as they believe that the proposed legislation is against the spirit of the Constitution. The Law Ministry has urged the 22nd Law Commission of India to examine various aspects of the issue.*

C. GS 3 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: GOVERNANCE

1. Food Safety Net

Syllabus: Government Policies & Interventions for Development

Mains: Various issues with faulty Public Distribution system in India

Context: With the delay in the latest census, the administration must focus on expanding the food safety net.

Introduction:

- The [National Food Security Act \(NFSA\), 2013](#), through the Public Distribution System (PDS), provides a crucial safety net for roughly 800 million people.
- PDS provided a crucial respite during the COVID-19 lockdown.

- In response to the humanitarian crisis, the Government doubled the entitlements of the 800 million who were already covered by the PDS (from five kilograms per person per month to 10kg).
- The humanitarian crisis due to the COVID-19 lockdown showed that too many people were still excluded from the PDS in the country.

The exclusion problem:

- According to a recent report, more than 90 million eligible people have been excluded from legal entitlements under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TDPS) based on the calculations in population projections for 2021.
- The 2011 Census remains the source of data for arriving at the number of people to be covered by the scheme. This has resulted in the exclusion of a large chunk of the population (about 12%) in the subsequent years.
- The exclusion problem could be because the NFSA coverage ratios were too low to start with, or due to the 'freeze' in coverage in absolute terms (around 800 million).
 - Section 3(2) of the NFSA 2013 states that the entitlements of eligible households "shall extend up to seventy-five per cent of the rural population and up to fifty per cent of the urban population."
 - Section 9 of NFSA required that the total number of persons to be covered "shall be calculated on the basis of the population estimates as per the census of which the relevant figures have been published."

Judicial Intervention:

- The Supreme Court has taken up this issue in the Problems and Miseries of Migrant Labourers case, 2022.
- On July 21, 2022, the Court after agreeing to the request to increase coverage directed the Union of India to come out with a formula and/or appropriate policy/scheme with better inclusion and not restricted as per the census of 2011.
 - The Supreme Court, taking into account the delayed census, suggested the solution to use official population projections for 2021 that are available from the Registrar General of India.
- A delayed response by the Government on October 10, 2022, justified the freeze on PDS coverage under the NFSA.
- The Government response states that one of the "prime concerns" while fixing the ceiling at the time of enactment of the NFSA was that "as the standard of living of people would improve over a period of time, the coverage may be reduced".

Coverage by States:

- States are responsible for identifying people for PDS ration cards, once they are given the numbers to be covered by the Union government.
- Several State governments have used their own resources including poor States such as Chhattisgarh and Odisha to expand coverage beyond the centrally determined quotas.
- According to one estimate, in 2020, there were 809 million NFSA PDS beneficiaries supported by the central government.
- An additional 90 million people had access to the same (or more) benefits from the PDS as NFSA beneficiaries through their State governments.
 - States were subsidising another 51 million people, but their entitlements were less than those of NFSA beneficiaries.

Way Forward:

- The Union government must address the hardships of people who are deprived of the food security net through PDS by making necessary changes with respect to the present population trend.
- Robust procurement trends and a comfortable food stock position will make the expansion of the policy affordable.
 - Adjusting for population increase, as directed by the Supreme Court, will increase coverage by roughly 10% (from 800 million to 900 million).
- Expansion of the scheme to cover the excluded population will also aid the government to control the storage problem arising from its ballooning buffer stocks.
- The Supreme Court should be firm and direct the Government to start addressing the issue as soon as possible without waiting for the official census data.

***Nut Graf:** Delay in the latest census has affected millions of poor people in terms of food security. The National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013 should be amended to have an in-built mechanism for updating coverage annually to account for population increase which will result in universal or wider coverage.*

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. G20 as an alternative to UN security Council

***Syllabus:** Bilateral, Regional & Global Groupings & Agreements Involving India and/or Affecting India's Interests*

***Mains:** India's G20 Presidency as a watershed moment*

Context: On December 01st 2022, India assumed the presidency of the G20 forum, taking over from Indonesia.

Introduction:

- India will assume the G20 year-long presidency from 1st December 2022 to 30th November 2023.
- The forthcoming months will witness India hosting nearly 200 meetings with Ministers, Officials, Diplomats, Businessmen, NGOs, and Working Groups of G20.
- On 15th February 2022, the Union cabinet approved the setting up of the G20 Secretariat manned by the officers and staff of the Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Finance, and other concerned ministries and Departments.
- As the G20 President, India will set the Agenda for the year, identify the themes and focus area, conduct discussions and work out the outcome documents.
- India's G20 presidency also comes as many countries witness inflation and recession trends, compounded by the Russia-Ukraine war and the standoff between the European Union and Russia.
- Considering that the 2022 Bali declaration was virtually drafted by India, India has been recognised as a potential honest broker who may be able to end the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine.

Alternative to UNSC:

- Several countries are looking for an alternative to the [United Nations Security Council](#) (UNSC), which has been paralysed by the veto.
- Most recently, during the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the UNSC's credibility hit rock bottom.
- Any [UNSC reforms](#), particularly the expansion of its permanent membership, will be strongly resisted by the permanent members and a large majority of the General Assembly because it does not benefit anyone except those who aspire to be permanent members.
- The composition of G20 resembles an expanded Security Council which represents all the significant countries of the 21st century and is balanced between developed and developing countries.

G20 as a Political Organisation:

- The G20 is the premier forum for international economic cooperation which plays an important role in shaping and strengthening global architecture and governance on all major international economic issues.
- A gradual transformation of the G-20 from an economic body to a political body can be initiated on the basis of the Bali Declaration, which constitutes the consensus in the group on the Russia-Ukraine war.

- If the G-20 emerges as a peacemaker in Europe, it will attain legitimacy as a group to promote international peace and security
- A very significant difference between UNSC and G20 will be the absence of veto.
 - Absence of Veto will result in pushing for a solution, which is acceptable.
 - This will address the grave danger of a permanent member waging a war and vetoing every resolution against it.

India's leadership role:

- Being an honest broker in international peace and security is a role that is not new to India.
- India has taken strong positions on decolonisation and rights of the developing countries to play a role as a leader of the non-aligned world.
 - For instance, India was the author of several landmark resolutions of the UNSC on the question of Palestine.
 - India was a part of efforts made to prevent the expulsion of Egypt from the Non-Aligned Movement at the Havana summit when the Arabs turned against Egypt.
- As the President of G20, India shall highlight the Bali Declaration and present a road map during the preparatory process for the G-20 and persuade the sherpas to take it on its agenda.
- This will enhance India's capacity to deal with the crisis in a formal way within the G-20.
- It will also accomplish India's ultimate goal of securing the reform of the UNSC.
- After the successful negotiations, the UNSC can formalise the decision and implement it for international peace and security.

Nut Graf: *The legitimisation of the G-20 as a global arbiter in international affairs will create a multilateral instrument where all members are equal. A consensus decision of G-20 should be universally acceptable which will promote a balanced outcome and address various ongoing international issues.*

F. Prelims Facts

1. Cyclone Mandous

Syllabus: *GS-1; Geography; Important Geophysical phenomena: Cyclones*

Prelims: *Cyclone Mandous*

Context: The landfall of Cyclone Mandous has brought about heavy rainfall in several parts of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

Cyclone Mandous

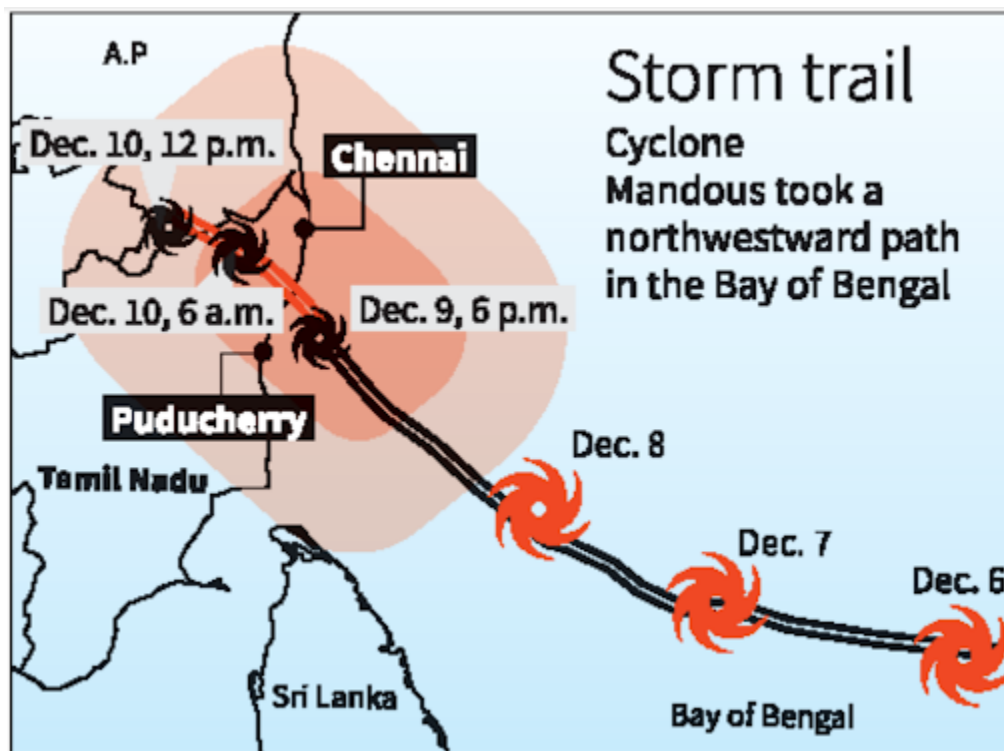


Image Source: The Hindu

- Cyclone Mandous is a cyclonic storm and was expected to bring heavy rainfall in parts of the county upon landfall by the [Indian Meteorological Department \(IMD\)](#).
- Cyclones are named by the [World Meteorological Organisation \(WMO\)](#), which maintains a list of rotating names.
- According to IMD, the name “Mandous” was proposed by the U.A.E. which is also a member of WMO.
- The term “Mandous” in Arabic means “treasure box”.
- A “Red alert” was declared in various areas and personnel of [National Disaster Response Force \(NDRF\)](#) and State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) were deployed in vulnerable areas.

2. Scramjet engine

Syllabus: GS-3; Science and Technology; Awareness in the field of Space

Prelims: Scramjet engine

Context: The Indian Space Research Organisation conducted a hot test of a Scramjet engine

Scramjet engine

- A scramjet is a supersonic-combustion ramjet engine in which the airflow through the engine remains supersonic (greater than the speed of sound).
 - A ramjet engine operates by the combustion of fuel in a stream of air compressed by the forward speed of the aircraft itself, as compared to normal jet engines where the compressor section compresses the air.
 - The airflow through a ramjet engine is at a subsonic speed (less than the speed of sound).
 - Ramjet engines can operate from Mach 3 to Mach 6.
 - Mach number is the ratio of the speed of an aircraft (vehicle) to the speed of sound.
- Scramjet-powered vehicles can operate at speeds up to Mach 15.
- Scramjet engines facilitate supersonic combustion by breathing oxygen from the atmosphere during flight.
- It then allows the oxygen to mix with hydrogen already stored in the vehicle, triggering combustion, and producing the required thrust to lift the satellite to its designated orbit.
- Such engines that can breathe oxygen from the atmosphere play a significant role in space technologies as they help reduce the need for propellants by about 70%.

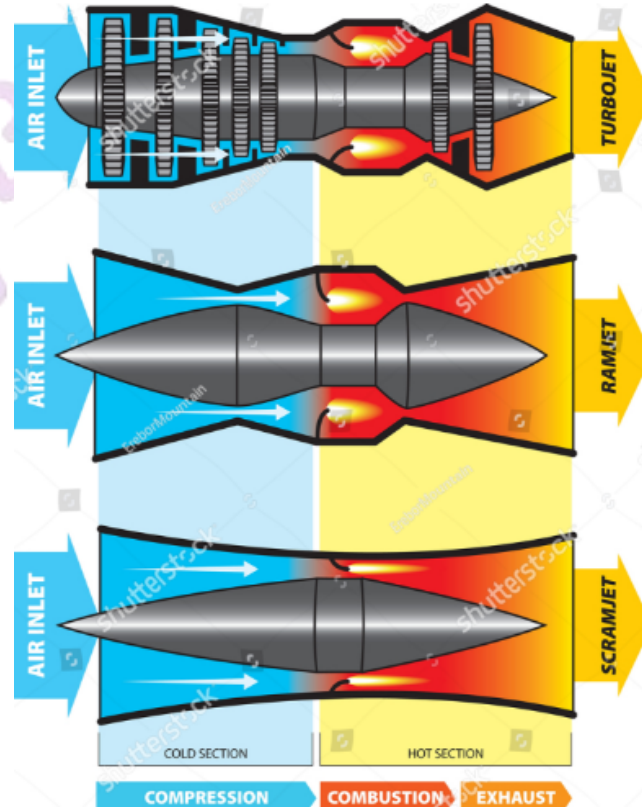


Image Source: Shutterstock

3. Three Himalayan medicinal plants enter IUCN Red List

Syllabus: GS-3; Environment and Biodiversity; Conservation

Prelims: About Meizotropis pellita, Fritillaria cirrhosa and Dactylorhiza hatagirea

Context: Three medicinal plant species found in the Himalayas have made it to [IUCN Red List](#) of Threatened Species.

Details

- **Meizotropis pellita**



Image Source: eFlora of India

- The species is commonly known as Patwa
 - It is a perennial shrub whose distribution is restricted and endemic to Uttarakhand.
 - The species is threatened due to deforestation, habitat fragmentation and the occurrence of forest fires.
 - The oil extracted from the leaves of this shrub contains strong antioxidants and it can be used as a promising natural substitute for synthetic antioxidants in pharmaceutical industries.
 - IUCN Status: **Critically endangered**
- **Fritillaria cirrhosa**



Image Source: eFlora of India

- It is a perennial bulbous herb commonly known as Himalayan fritillary.
- The plant is known as a strong cough suppressant and is used for the treatment of bronchial disorders and pneumonia in China.
- The species is experiencing a decline due to its long generation length, poor germination potential, high trade value, extensive harvesting pressure and illegal trade.
- IUCN Status: **Vulnerable**
- **Dactylorhiza hatagirea**



Image Source: ResearchGate

- The species is commonly known as Salampanja and is a species of orchid generally found in the Himalayas.

- The species is threatened by habitat loss, livestock grazing, deforestation, and climate change.
- The species is extensively used in Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and other alternative systems of medicine to cure dysentery, gastritis, chronic fever, cough and stomach aches.
- IUCN Status: **Endangered**

G. Tidbits

1. Centre introduces Bills to modify ST list in four States

- The Union government has introduced four Bills that propose to make changes to the list of Scheduled Tribes (ST) in four States namely Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh and Chhattisgarh in Lok Sabha by making amendments to the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950.
- The Bill proposes to add the Narikoravan and Kuruvikkaran hill tribes to the ST list of Tamil Nadu.
- The government through another Bill sought to introduce Betta-Kuruba as a synonym for the already categorised Kadu kuruba in the ST list of Karnataka.
- A Bill was also moved to add a number of synonyms in the Devanagari script for the already categorised Bhariya Bhumia tribe in the ST list of Chhattisgarh.
- Further, the Hattee community of the Trans-Giri region in Sirmaur district was added to the ST list of Himachal Pradesh.

2. ILO declaration urges countries to ensure labour protection

- The seventeenth Asia and the Pacific Regional Meeting of the [International Labour Organisation](#) (APRM of ILO) set 10-point priorities of national action for the member countries to address the issues of dwindling wages of workers, inflation and unemployment.
- The Singapore Declaration was adopted during the meeting which acknowledged the fact that social dialogue was key to address labour market challenges and devising solutions to crisis situations.
- Through the Declaration, the ILO has urged the governments to ensure labour protection for all through the promotion of freedom of association and the recognition of the right to collective bargaining including for workers in vulnerable situations and in the informal economy, as enabling rights for decent work.
- The Declaration also called for closing gender gaps in the world and undertaking measures that increase women's labour force participation and promote equal pay

- Additionally, the declaration has urged the governments to improve governance frameworks and ensure freedom of association to safeguard the rights of migrant workers.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. "Information" under the Right to Information Act, 2005 includes which of the following?

1. Records
2. e-mails
3. Opinions
4. Logbooks
5. Samples

Options:

- A. 1, 2 and 3 only
- B. 3, 4 and 5 only
- C. 1, 2, 4 and 5 only
- D. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Answer: D

Explanation:

- According to **Section 2 (f)** of the Right to Information Act, any material in any form, including records, documents, memos, e-mails, opinions, advices, press releases, circulars, orders, log books, contracts, reports, papers, samples, models, data material held in any electronic form and information relating to any private body which can be accessed by a public authority under any other law for the time being in force are the types of information which can be obtained.

Q2. Which amongst the following plants is/are categorised as critically endangered in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species?

1. Meizotropis pellita
2. Fritilloria cirrhosa
3. Dactylorhiza hatagirea

Options:

- A. 1 only
- B. 1 and 2 only

- C. 2 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: A

Explanation:

- Three medicinal plant species found in the Himalayas have made it to [IUCN Red List](#) of Threatened Species.
- **Meizotropis pellita: Critically endangered**
- Fritilloria cirrhosa: Vulnerable
- Dactylorhiza hatagirea: Endangered

Q3. Which amongst the following statements is the best description of Supplementary Grant?

- A. It is granted for meeting an unexpected demand upon the resources of India, when on account of the magnitude or the indefinite character of the service, the demand cannot be stated with the details ordinarily given in a budget.
- B. It is granted when the amount authorised by the Parliament through the appropriation act for a particular service for the current financial year is found to be insufficient for that year.
- C. It is granted when a need has arisen during the current financial year for additional expenditure upon some new service not contemplated in the budget for that year.
- D. It is granted when money has been spent on any service during a financial year in excess of
of
the amount granted for that service in the budget for that year. It is voted by the Lok Sabha after the financial year.

Answer: B

Explanation:

- The Supplementary grant refers to the grant required to meet the required expenditure of the government.
- Supplementary grant is granted when the amount authorised by the Parliament through the appropriation act for a particular service for the current financial year is found to be insufficient for that year.

Q4. Consider the following statements:

1. The Concept of Single Citizenship is borrowed from the British Constitution.
2. The citizenship of India can be acquired in four ways.
3. Citizenship ends if the citizen has been ordinarily resident out of India for seven years continuously.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: C

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, In India, the concept of single citizenship is adopted from the British constitution that is from united kingdom
- **Statement 2 is not correct**, There are **five ways** in which Indian citizenship can be acquired namely:
 - By Birth
 - By Acquisition or Incorporation of Territory
 - By Descent
 - By Registration
 - By Naturalization
- **Statement 3 is correct**, The Union Government may, by order, deprive any such citizen of Indian citizenship if citizen has been ordinarily resident out of India for a continuous period of seven years, and during that period has neither:
 - been at any time a student of any educational institution in a country outside India, nor
 - In the service of a Government in India, nor
 - In the service of an international organisation of which India is a member, nor
 - Registered annually in the prescribed manner at an Indian consulate

Q5. The world's second tallest statue in sitting pose of Ramanuja was inaugurated by the Prime Minister of India at Hyderabad recently. Which one of the following statements correctly represents the teachings of Ramanuja?PYQ (2022)

- A. The best means of salvation was devotion.
- B. Vedas are eternal, self-existent and wholly authoritative.
- C. Logical arguments were meant for the highest bliss.
- D. Salvation was to be obtained through meditation.

Answer: A

Explanation:

- Ramanuja was influenced by the Alvars and he firmly believed that intense devotion to Vishnu was the best means to attain salvation.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. [Without any veto powers available, the G20 has the potential to replace the United Nations Security Council. Comment.](#) (250 words; 15 marks) (GS-2; International Relations)
2. [The National Food Security Act, 2013 needs to be more flexible when it comes to inclusion of beneficiaries. Do you agree? Elaborate.](#) (250 words; 15 marks) (GS-2; Governance)

