BYJU'S **EXAM PREP** | **IAS**

18 Dec 2022: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

In a day, when you don't come across any problems - you can be sure that you are travelling in a wrong path

- Swami Vivekananda

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. GS 1 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

B. GS 2 Related

Category: POLITY

1. Judicial Delays

Syllabus: Structure, Organization & Functioning of the Judiciary

Mains: Impact of huge pendency of cases in the Indian courts

Context: Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud opined that pendency is a perennial drawback that affects the Supreme Court's role as the timely protector of citizens.

Pendency as a perennial drawback:

- The Supreme Court's statistics show that 70,362 cases are pending with it as of April 1, 2022.
- Data in Parliament reveal that there are 498 Constitution Bench cases pending in the Supreme Court as on December 13, 2022.
- 2,870 Public litigation petitions are pending in the Supreme Court.
- Special leave petitions and writ petitions number 4,331 and 2,209, respectively.
- The Supreme court is burdened with "frivolous" public interest litigation and bail applications which has reduced the efficacy of justice administration.
- Bail applications are also one of the reasons for the delay. About 10 bail pleas are heard every day by all 13 Benches of the Supreme Court.
  - The CJI has made it clear that bail petitions deal with the question of personal liberty and should not be delayed.
- About 487 pending election matters in the Supreme court.
- The total number of pending cases concerning crimes against women relating to "harassment, dowry cruelty and death, sexual harassment, domestic violence" are 283, according to data from the Integrated Case Management Information System.
- There are about 1,295 Contempt of court cases pending in the Supreme Court as on December 16, 2022.

Reason behind Judicial Delays:

- Filing of fresh cases is increasing with increase in the population of the country and awareness among the public of their rights.
- No specific timelines can be determined concerning disposal of cases due to the distinct and variable nature of each case.
- Vacancies of judges, frequent adjournments and lack of adequate arrangements to monitor, track and bunch cases for hearing are also factors which lead to pendency.

Nut Graf: *Law ministry data presented in the Parliament highlight the large number of cases pending before the Supreme Court.Reasons behind the delay in disposing of cases is a multi-faceted problem. Statistics show judicial pendency as a constantly looming shadow, threatening to engulf the good work of the judiciary on personal liberty and safeguarding rights.*

C. GS 3 Related

Category: INTERNAL SECURITY

1. United Liberation Front of Asom (Independent)

Syllabus: Threats from Non-State Actors

Mains: Various issues with Insurgency in North East

Context: This article talks about the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA).

About ULFA:

- ULFA was formed in April 1979 as an offshoot of the Assam Agitation that sought to free the State from foreigners.
- The outfit split into the larger pro-talks group and the Paresh Baruah-headed anti-talks faction, which renamed itself the ULFA(I) in 2013.
- It seeks to establish an independent sovereign nation state of Assam for the indigenous Assamese people through an armed struggle in the Assam conflict.
- The Government of India banned the organisation in 1990 citing it as a terrorist organisation, while the United States Department of State lists it under "other groups of concern."

Online recruitment:

- Outfit uses social media to recruit cadres.Sub-nationalist Assamese poems and similar content on social Media are used to convince youth to take up armed revolution against the "Indian colonialists" represented by the armed forces.
- Several spotters of the extremist group are assigned to recruit fresh faces from villages in Assam.
- In February 2022, the ULFA(I) refuted the "theories" that it undertakes recruitment drives through social media platforms and blamed the Assam police and the Army for creating fake Facebook accounts in the name of the outfit to discredit ULFA(I).
- But in April 2022, Chief Minister of Assam insisted that the outfit had used Facebook, YouTube and other platforms to lure and induct at least 47 boys and girls into its ranks within a few days.

Eroding Support Base:

- Information gathered from surrendered extremists points to the outfit finding fewer takers than in the past.
- The Indian Army is pre-training teenagers to improve their chances of recruitment in the security forces.
- The Indian Army is also organising vocational courses and coaching classes to prepare local youth from underprivileged families for admission to top colleges across the country. This outreach is also usually done through social media platforms.
- Once they join the organisation, the outfit forbids the use of mobile phones. This meant that they had to cut ties with the very social media channels that had initially drawn them to the ULFA(I). This is making youth quit the outfit.
- Improved connectivity including telecom and roads has ensured rapid development of the villages which further makes the recruitment difficult for the outfit.

Nut Graf: Recruitment to United Liberation Front of Asom is usually done through social media platforms. However, cadre strength of the outfit has been dwindling due to various reasons. The outfit is finding the "mobile phone" generation harder to control than those in the past due to its ban on use of mobile phones in the organisation.

2. Security of Border Areas

Syllabus: Left Wing Extremism

Mains: Role of Zonal Council in Cooperative Federalism

Context: 25th Eastern Zonal Council meeting was held in Kolkata on December 17, 2022.

Highlights of the meeting:

- Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah presided over the 25th Eastern Zonal Council meeting in Kolkata.
- Issues of cross-border smuggling and illegal infiltration along the India-Bangladesh border as well as left-wing extremism were raised at the meeting.
- In his inaugural address, the Union Home Minister suggested that States should also share the responsibility for the security of border areas along with the Border Security Force.
- The Union Home Minister said that Left Wing Extremism has almost been eliminated from the Eastern region of India and efforts should be made to sustain this decisive dominance over Left Wing Extremism.
- He urged states to ensure the creation of a district-level structure of the Narco Coordination Center (NCORD) mechanism and its regular meetings for the prevention of narcotics with the help of Artificial Intelligence.
- The meeting was attended by the Chief Ministers of West Bengal and Jharkhand, the Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar and Ministers from Odisha and other senior officials of the Ministry of Home Affairs and the States under the Council.

About Zonal Councils:

- Zonal Councils are statutory bodies established under the States Reorganisation Act 1956.
- They are advisory bodies and were established to promote interstate cooperation and coordination.
- There are five zonal councils in India, as follows:
  - *Northern Zonal Council:* Chandigarh, Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, and Rajasthan
  - *Central Zonal Council:* Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh
  - *Eastern Zonal Council:* Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, and West Bengal
  - *Southern Zonal Council:* Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana
  - *Western Zonal Council:* Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu, Goa, Gujarat, and Maharashtra
- Andaman and Nicobar Islands, as well as Lakshadweep, are not members but are special invitees to the Southern Zonal Council.
- The north-eastern states are not members of any of the above councils. Their problems are addressed by another statutory body, the North Eastern Council, created by the North Eastern Council Act, 1971.
- The Union Home Minister is the Chairman of each of these Councils.

- The Chief Ministers of the States included in each zone act as Vice-Chairman of the Zonal Council for that zone by rotation, each holding office for a period of one year at a time.
- Chief Minister and two other Ministers as nominated by the Governor from each of the States and two members from Union Territories included in the zone.

Nut Graf: Zonal council provides a decentralised way of discussing issues with States. There has been a significant increase in the frequency of meetings of the Zonal Council which enables the Centre and the States to co-operate to tackle Left Wing Extremism and Narcotics in Eastern States.

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. The challenges of quantum computing

Syllabus: Awareness in the field of computers.

Mains: Quantum Computing and associated concerns.

Prelims: Quantum computing.

Details:

- Quantum computers (QC) have the ability to take the advantage of quantum physics to solve problems that are extremely complex for conventional computers.
- QCs have wide-ranging applications and requires high amount of investment.
- Several initiatives taken in India in this regard are:
  - The government of India launched a mission in 2021 with allocation of ₹8,000 crore to study quantum technologies.
  - Indian army opened a quantum research facility in Madhya Pradesh.
  - Another facility was co-launched by the Department of Science and Technology in Pune.

Quantum Physics:

- Quantum physics describes the reality of objects at the subatomic scale. These objects are particles like electrons.

- In reality the macroscopic object (Eg. Ball, person, table) can be at one particular location at a time and can be easily predicted. However, in case of subatomic particles the location can't be predicted with such accuracy. For instance, the location of an electron can't be pinpointed. It will be present in some volume of space, with a probability attached to each point in the volume: say, 10% at point A and 5% at point B on repeated probing.
- Erwin Schrödinger description:
  - In a famous thought-experiment in 1935, Erwin Schrödinger described one interpretation of the laws. There's a cat in a closed box with a bowl of poison. The cat is said to exist in a superposition of two states: alive and dead (until the box is opened). When the box is opened, the superposition will collapse to a single state. The state to which it collapses depends on the probability of each state.
- Another phenomenon of Quantum Physics is entanglement. When two particles are entangled and separated by arbitrary distance (more than 1000 km) causing the superposition of one particle to collapse, the superposition of the other particle would aslo instantaneously collapse.

Use of superposition in computers:

- The fundamental computational unit of a conventional computer, bit can be 0 or 1 at a time depending on the corresponding transistor state - on or off.
- The fundamental unit of a QC is qubit. It could be a particle like an electron.
- Some information can be directly encoded on the qubit. For instance, if the electron's spin is pointing up, it means 1 and if it is pointing down, it implies 0. But instead of being simply 1 or 0, the information is encoded in a superposition like 45% 0 plus 55% 1. This is a third type of state.
- The qubits are entangled for working together. If one qubit is examined to reveal its state, the states of all entangled qubits will also be revealed. The computer's final output is the state to which all the qubits have collapsed.
- It should be noted that one qubit can encode two states, so a computer with N qubits can encode 2N states.
- A computer (transistor-based) with N transistors can only encode 2N states whereas a qubit-based computer can access more states. Therefore a QC can access more computational pathways and find solutions to more complex problems.

Challenges in using Quantum Computers:

- Researchers have employed QCs to model the binding energy of hydrogen bonds and simulate a wormhole model. However, in case of more practical problems such as detecting the shape of an undiscovered drug or in exploring space several challenges exist.

- Engineering-related challenge: An actual QC requires at least 1,000 qubits whereas the present biggest quantum processor has only 433 qubits.
- Disturbances in systems: Qubits exist in superposition in specific conditions, often including very low temperature (~0.01 K), with radiation-shielding and protection against physical shock. Material or electromagnetic defects in the circuitry have the potential to 'corrupt' their states and cause bias in the eventual result.
- Error Correction: Rectification of error is tricky in QCs. A reliable error-correction would require each qubit to be attached to thousands of physical qubits.
- Informational Noise: Addition of qubits would result in amplification of errors which will further increase the informational noise.
- Infrastructural challenges: Quantum computers requires superconducting circuits along with lakhs of qubits, firmware, circuit optimisation, compilers and algorithms.

Nut Graf: Quantum computers have the ability to solve complex problems that a conventional computer can not solve. However, the Quantum Computing has several challenges in itself that requires immediate attention.

Category: INDIAN ECONOMY

1. What is causing delays and chaos at Delhi airport?

Syllabus: Infrastructure- Airports.

Mains: Increasing issues in Delhi Airport.

Context: Delays and long queues at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi.

Details:

- There have been delays and long queues at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi in the past few weeks.
- To address the issue and look into the matter closely a parliamentary panel summoned the CEO of Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL.) The Airports Authority of India has also issued a notice to investigate the "service quality requirements".

Service Quality Requirement:

- Schedule 3 of the Operations Management Development Agreement of 2006 prescribes "service quality requirements".
  - Under the Operations Management Development Agreement of 2006, some functions at Delhi airport were privatised and handed to DIAL.
  - DIAL has to submit quarterly report on "service quality requirements".

- ○ The agreement specifies 13 different types of services and the minimum time within which they should be provided.
- Some of the service parameters are:
  - ○ Maximum queuing time: Within a span of two years of the agreement, the airport should ensure that maximum waiting time for check-in is 5 minutes for business class and 20 minutes for economy.
  - ○ Security and customs, immigration and quarantine: It is suggested that atleast 95% of passengers should be cleared within 10 minutes.
  - ○ Baggage delivery: It is prescribed that the first bag should arrive on the conveyor belt within 10 minutes.
  - ○ Other service parameters include time taken to find parking space, maximum waiting time for taxis, and response to customer complaints.
- If the airport operator fails to conform to the prescribed standards, it is liable to pay 0.5% of the monthly revenue for every month that the standards are below the prescribed condition.

Reasons for Over-crowding at Delhi Airport:

- A record number of passengers are witnessed at the airport since the COVID-19 outbreak. The highest number of passengers was seen on December 11, 2022 when airlines carried approximately 4.27 lakh domestic passengers.
- The number of flights and passengers at Delhi airport have grown exponentially, whereas similar growth was not observed in terms of infrastructure.
  - ○ It should be noted that equipment like X-ray machines and door frame metal detectors is the responsibility of the airport under its capital expenditure. Whereas, the CISF provides personnel and their cost is met through the aviation security fee component of airfare (paid by passengers).
- The passenger traffic dropped to 56% (to 6.3 crore) in 2020 due to COVID-19. But as the fear of Omicron subside, the passenger numbers grew steadily since March 2022.
- The infrastructure expansion plans at various airports were not implemented due to the impact of COVID-19 on revenue, availability of manpower and material. The development of airports of Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai is far behind the growth curve.
- Furthermore, despite government granting in-principle approval to 21 greenfield airport projects, construction has only begun in 9 of them.

Nut Graf: The recent chaos and delays at the Delhi Airport signifies that the infrastructure growth has not kept pace with the increasing number of passengers and flights. The upgradation of the infrastructure is the need of the hour alongwith maintaining quality services.

F. Prelims Facts

1. Tal Chhapar blackbuck sanctuary

- The Tal Chhapar blackbuck sanctuary in Rajasthan has received a protective cover against a proposed move of the State government to reduce the size of its eco-sensitive zone.
  - The Rajasthan High court recently ordered a "complete prohibition" on any action to reduce the wildlife sanctuary's area.
  - The Court noted the destruction and relocation of exotic species of animals following an increase in human population around the sanctuary, and unplanned and rampant construction activities.
- The World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF) has also taken up a major project for the conservation of raptors in the sanctuary, spread in an area measuring 7.19 sq. km.
- The sanctuary is host to about 4,000 blackbucks, over 40 species of raptors and more than 300 species of resident and migratory birds.
- It is one of the top halting places for migratory birds such as harriers. The migratory birds pass through Tal Chhapar Sanctuary during September.

2. SWOT

- A NASA-led international satellite was recently launched from the U.S to conduct a comprehensive survey of the world's oceans, lakes and rivers for the first time.
- SWOT (Surface Water and Ocean Topography) is the advanced radar satellite designed to give an unprecedented view of the water on Earth, giving more details on the mechanics and consequences of climate change.
- A Falcon 9 rocket, owned and operated by SpaceX will carry SWOT into orbit.
- The SWOT incorporates advanced microwave radar technology that scientists say will collect height-surface measurements of oceans, lakes, reservoirs and rivers in high-definition detail over 90% of the globe.
- The data, compiled from radar covering the planet at least twice every 21 days, will enhance ocean-circulation models, bolster weather and climate forecasts, and aid in managing scarce freshwater supplies in drought-stricken regions.
- One of the main objectives of the mission is to explore how oceans absorb atmospheric heat and carbon dioxide in a natural process that moderates global temperatures and climate change.
- The SWOT's ability to discern smaller surface features will help study the impact of rising ocean levels on coastlines.
- More precise data along tidal zones would help predict how far storm-surge flooding may penetrate inland.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements with respect to Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting: (Level-Difficult)

1. It was launched by the Securities and Exchange Board of India to ensure an organisation's commitment to sustainability and its reporting at par with financial reporting.
2. It is applicable to the top 1000 listed entities by market capitalization and was made mandatory since its introduction in 2021.
3. It is a part of the larger - Business Responsibility Report (BRR) introduced for non-financial reporting.

How many of the given statements is/are correct?

A. One statement only
B. Two statements only
C. All three statements
D. None of the above

Answer: A

Explanation:

- **Statement 01 is correct,** Sustainable Reporting is the disclosure and communication of environmental, social, and governance(ESG) goals. It also includes the company's progress towards ESG goals. It was launched by the Securities and Exchange Board of India to ensure an organisation's commitment to sustainability and its reporting at par with financial reporting**.**
- **Statement 02 is incorrect,** SEBI has mandated that the BRSR will be applicable to the top 1,000 listed entities by market capitalisation for reporting on a voluntary basis for FY 2021–22 and on a mandatory basis from FY 2022–23.
- **Statement 03 is incorrect,** the Business Responsibility and Sustainability Report (BRSR) will replace the existing Business Responsibility Report (BRR).

Q2. Which of the following is the application of 'Glyphosate' recently seen in news: (Level-Medium)

A. It is applied to the leaves of plants to kill weeds.
B. It is used to treat mild to moderate post-operative or post-traumatic pain.
C. It is used to treat cancer.

D. It is used as a cleaning agent to clean up oil spills in marine ecosystems.

Answer: A

Explanation: The Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has restricted the use of glyphosate, a widely used herbicide, citing health hazards for humans and animals.

- Herbicide is an agent, usually chemical, for killing or inhibiting the growth of unwanted plants, such as residential or agricultural weeds and invasive species

Q3. Consider the following pairs with respect to the protection status of Olive Ridley Turtles: (Level-Difficult)

1. Wildlife Protection Act, 1972: Scheduled 1
2. IUCN Red List: Critically Endangered
3. CITES: Appendix I

How many of the given pairs is/are correctly matched?

A. One only
B. Two only
C. All three
D. None of the above

Answer: B

Explanation:

- Protection Status of Olive Ridley Turtles
  - Wildlife Protection Act, 1972: Scheduled 1
  - IUCN Red List: Vulnerable
  - CITES: Appendix I

Q4. How many of these countries border Peru? (Level-Medium)

1. Bolivia
2. Brazil
3. Chile
4. Colombia
5. Ecuador

Options:

A. One only
B. Three only
C. Four only
D. All Five

Answer: D

Explanation:

Peru
Administrative Divisions

— International boundary
–·–· Region boundary
★ National capital
⊚ Region capital

Peru has 25 regions and one province (Lima Province).

Q5. Consider the following pairs: (CSE-PYQ=2017) (Level-Difficult)

Traditions	Communities
1. Chaliha Sahib Festival	Sindhis
2. Nanda Raj Jaat Yatra	Gonds
3. Wari-Warkari	Santhals

Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched ?

A. 1 only
B. 2 and 3 only
C. 1 and 3 only
D. None of the above

Answer: A

Explanation:

● **Pair 01 is correctly matched,** Chaliha is the most important festival for the Sindhi community. Chailo Sahib or Chaliha is a forty-day festival which falls in the months of July - August when Sindhis observe fast for forty days to please their God Jhulelal.
● **Pair 02 is incorrectly matched,** The three-week-long Nanda Devi Raj Jat is a pilgrimage and festival of Uttarakhand. Only the deities of Garhwal Division took part in it. Gonds are not native to Uttarakhand.
● **Pair 03 is incorrectly matched,** Wari- Warkari is a religious movement within the bhakti spiritual tradition of Hinduism, geographically associated with the Indian state of Maharashtra celebrated by Marathas.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. United Liberation Front of Asom-Independent (ULFA-I) is fast losing its cadre strength. Comment. (10 Marks; 150 Words) (GS-3; Internal Security)
2. What is quantum computing? How is quantum computing used across industries?(15 Marks; 250 Words) (GS-3; Science and Technology)